JOHN DIES AT THE END

Screenplay by
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Based on the novel by
David Wong

Breakdown Services - Casting - Partial Draft
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DAVID V.O
Solving the following riddle will reveal the awful secret behind the universe, assuming you do not go utterly mad in the attempt. If you already happen to know the awful secret behind the universe, feel free to fast-forward ahead.

CU HANDS unwrap a shiny new wooden-handled HAND AX.

DAVID V.O (CONT’D)
Let’s say you have an ax. Just a cheap one, from Home Depot.

EXT. SNOW YARD - DAY

The camera pans across a snow covered yard as a brutal, winter wind whips through. A strong arm is swinging the ax, chopping SOMETHING in the snow.

DAVID V.O
On one bitter winter day, you use said ax to behead a man. Don’t worry, the man is already dead. Or maybe you should worry, because you’re the one who shot him.

A hand swings the axe while the other hand firmly grasps a HEAD by the hair.

DAVID V.O (CONT’D)
He had been a big, twitchy guy with veiny skin stretched over swollen biceps, a tattoo of a swastika on...

CU - A SWASTIKA tattoo on a blue, swollen tongue poking out of the dead mouth.

DAVID V.O (CONT’D)
Teeth filed into razor-sharp fangs, you know the type. And you’re chopping off his head because, even with eight bullet holes in him, you’re pretty sure he’s about to spring back to his feet and eat the look of terror right off your face.

The ax swings through one last time and on impact, the wooden handle snaps in a spray of splinters.
DAVID V.O (CONT'D)
You now have a broken ax. So, after a long night of looking for a place to dump the man and his head, you take a trip into town with your ax. You go to the hardware store, explaining away the dark reddish stains on the broken handle as barbecue sauce.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY
CU - DOLLAR BILLS go into a cash drawer and a brown BAG with the end of an AX HANDLE sticking out is handed across the counter.

DAVID V.O
The repaired ax sits undisturbed in your house until the next spring when, on one rainy morning, you find in your kitchen ...

INT. DAVE'S KITCHEN - DAY
CU - The newly-reconstituted ax sits in the corner of the kitchen window - a driving rain lashes the window outside. Suddenly we swish pan to...

A CREATURE that appears to be a foot-long SLUG with a BULGING EGG SAC on its tail. Its jaws bite a nearby FORK in half with what seems like very little effort. A hand grabs the ax and...

DAVID V.O
You grab your trusty ax and chop the thing into several pieces. On the last blow, however...

The ax strikes a METAL LEG of the overturned kitchen table and chips out a NOTCH right in the middle of the blade.

DAVID V.O (CONT'D)
Of course, a chipped head means yet another trip to the hardware store.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY
We reprise the previous visit to the hardware store, but instead of an ax handle, we are handed a shiny new AX HEAD.

DAVID V.O
As soon as you get home with your newly-headed ax, though...
INT. DAVE’S LIVING ROOM - DAY

BAM! The front door blows open to reveal...

The REANIMATED BODY OF THE DEAD GUY standing there.

    DAVID V.O
    You meet the reanimated body of the
guy you beheaded last year. Only
he’s got a new head, stitched on
with what looks like plastic weed
trimmer line, and wears that unique
expression of “you’re the man who
killed me last winter” resentment
that one so rarely encounters in
everyday life. So you brandish your
ax.

The dead guy takes a long look at the weapon with his
squishy, rotting eyes and in a gargly voice he screams...

    DEAD GUY
    That’s the same ax that slayed me!

    DAVID V.O
    Is he right?

CUT TO:

EXT. DAVE’S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

DAVID WONG is fast asleep, sprawled on the couch in his small
living room. Dave is twenty-something, Caucasian, casually
dressed in “slacker-ware,” with dark, long hair. Across from
him is a TELEVISION.

THE TV SWITCHES ON by itself - static and white noise. Dave
continues to sleep.

On the TV, an oddly-shaped FACE coalesces out of the static.
A Michael Jackson face, a face like a mask, features that are
human but off. Wide, too-large eyes, a nose not quite
centered. Looking right out at Dave. Watching him.

Suddenly, a CELL PHONE screeches. Instantly, the TV changes
channels and a DVD sales infomercial for “psychic” Dr. Álbert
Marconi appears on screen.

Dave wakes, oblivious to the TV. He digs the phone from his
pocket, glances at the number. A little twinge of fear
crosses his face. He disconnects the call without answering.

The world is silent again, save for the infomercial which
shows cosmic imagery, with a “new-age” music soundtrack.
We see an image of the dapper and handsome Dr. Albert Marconi with slicked back silver hair. A deep-voiced narrator intones solemnly:

**INFOMERCIAL NARRATOR**

He’s a seeker of truth, in an age of fear. Dr. Albert Marconi. Unafraid of unseen forces swirling around us...

The phone rings again. Dave closes his eyes and answers.

**DAVE**

Hello?

**JOHN (O.S.)**

Dave? This is John. Your pimp says bring the crack shipment tonight, or he'll be forced to stick you. Meet him where we buried the Korean whore. The one without the goatee.

**DAVE V.O**

That was John’s code. It meant “Bring your gear and come to my place as soon as you can, it’s important.”

**DAVE**

John, it’s three in the-

**JOHN (O.S.)**

-Oh, and don’t forget, tomorrow is the day we kill the President.

Click. Dave realizes John is gone and closes his phone.

**DAVE V.O**

That last part was code for, “Stop and pick me up some cigarettes on the way.”

**EXT. DAVE’S SHED - NIGHT**

Dave’s BLACK 1973 FORD BRONCO is parked next to a wooden SHED beside his house. Dave humps a duffle bag of GEAR and throws it into the back of the Bronco.

Dave moves back inside the shed and we can see in the dim glow that it’s got a “Clubhouse of the Living Dead” vibe with an array of strange, oddball paraphernalia displayed... a STUFFED CAT with six legs, two large MASON JARS containing a hideous slug-like CREATURE and a huge yellow-striped SPIDER, and a rack of odd WEAPONRY, including swords and crossbows. Dave finds what he is looking for, a medieval-style TORCH and some heavy RUBBER GLOVES.

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Dave tosses the stuff in the Bronco, pulls a nickel-plated 9mm COLT from the gear bag and slides it into his pocket. He slams the door shut.

EXT. JOHN’S APARTMENT FRONT DOOR – NIGHT

JOHN, 24, with a head of curly long hair like a deflated Afro, opens the door to his apartment and immediately gestures toward a cute and frightened-looking YOUNG WOMAN (Shelly) on his sofa.

JOHN
Dave, this is Shelly. She needs our help.

Shelly is 19, blank powder-blue eyes, chestnut curls in a ponytail. She has a WHITE BANDAGE on her temple. John steps into his kitchen and returns to place a cup of coffee in her hands.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Shelly, tell us your story.

SHELLY
It’s my boyfriend. He... he won’t leave me alone. He’s been harassing me for about a week. My parents are gone, on vacation and I’m... I’m terrified to go home.

She shakes her head, apparently out of words.

DAVE
Miss-

SHELLY (barely audible)
Morris.

DAVE
Ms. Morris, I strongly recommend a women’s shelter. They can help you get a restraining order, keep you safe, whatever. There are three in this city, and I’ll be happy to make the call-

SHELLY
-He, my boyfriend, I mean, he’s been dead for two months.

Dave lets out a long sigh and sees John cast a little gleeful glance his way, as if to say “see how I deliver for you, Dave?”
SHELLY (CONT’D)
I—I didn’t know where else to go. I heard, you know, through a friend of mine that you two handle, um, unusual problems. They say you’re the best.

DAVE
Whoever calls us “the best” has pretty low standards.

JOHN
Okay. When he comes, you can see him?

SHELLY
Yes. I can hear him, too. And he, uh...

She brushes the bandage on the side of her skull.

DAVE
He hits you?

SHELLY
Yes.

DAVE
With his fist?

SHELLY
Yes.

John looks up from his coffee indignantly.

JOHN
Man, what a dick!

Dave rolls his eyes and glares at John.

JOHN (CONT’D)
(turning professorial)
From our experience, spiritual beings that can manipulate objects in the physical world are rare and extremely powerful.

DAVE
Look, Miss, I don’t want to-

JOHN
Dave, I told her we would look into it tonight. I thought you and I could head over there and show this bastard what’s what.
INT. FORD BRONCO DRIVING - NIGHT

Shelly sits in the passenger seat as the Bronco races down a dark road, hugging herself, looking blankly out the windshield.

SHELLY
So, do you guys, like, do this a lot?

JOHN
Sometimes. Been doing it for a couple years now.

SHELLY
How does somebody get into this?

JOHN
There was an incident. A series of incidents, I guess. A dead guy, another dead guy. Some drugs. It’s kind of a long story. Now, we can see things. Sometimes. I have a dead cat that follows me around, wondering why I never feed it. Oh, and I had one hamburger that started mooing when I ate it.

(glances at Dave)
You remember that?

Dave grunts, says nothing.

DAVE V.O
It wasn’t mooing, John. It was screaming.

EXT. SHELLY’S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Bronco stops in front of a simple two-story farmhouse. From the back of the Bronco, Dave grabs the unlit torch and tosses John a wide LEATHER STRAP, which John slings over his shoulder like a bandolero. The strap carries a HOLSTER which fits neatly across John’s chest, containing a SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN PISTOL.

John steps up on the porch and pushes open the front door.

INT. SHELLY’S HOUSE - NIGHT

They step into the dark living room. Shelly moves to flip on a light, but Dave stops her with a hand motion. John hefts the torch and touches his lighter to it. A foot-tall FLAME erupts from the head and they slowly creep through the dark house by its flickering light.
JOHN

Where do you see him, mostly?

SHELLY

(nervously)
The basement. And once I saw him in
the bathroom. His hand, it, uh, came up through the toilet while I-

DAVE

Okay. Just show us the basement door.

SHELLY

It’s in the kitchen, but I-guys, I don’t wanna go down there.

JOHN

It’s cool, stay here. We’ll go down and scope it out.

John and Dave clomp down the stairs, torchlight pooling down the stairwell.

INT. SHELLY’S BASEMENT - NIGHT

It’s a nice, modern basement. Washer and dryer, one of those waist-deep floor freezers, a hot water heater making a soft ticking sound.

JOHN

Well, he’s not here.

DAVE

Big surprise.

They stand around for a moment. John uses the torch to light a cigarette.

JOHN

She seems like a nice girl, doesn’t she? You know, she reminds me of Amber. Amy’s friend. When she came to my door, for a second I actually thought it was her. By the way, I wanna thank you for comin’ along, Dave, sort of being my wingman on this. I’m not saying I’m going to take advantage of her distress or anything, but...

Dave ruefully shakes his head then stops. He has tuned John out. Something is off here. Dave turns to the large floor FREEZER. He moves over and opens the lid.
DAVE
Oh, geez.

It is a TONGUE, rubbery and purplish and not quite human. It is longer, animal-like, twisted inside a ziplock bag and coated in frost. And it isn’t alone; the freezer is filled with HUNKS OF FLESH, some in clear bags, some bigger chunks in pink-stained butcher paper.

JOHN
Well, I think it’s obvious. Those stories of UFO’s that go around mutilating cows? I think we just solved it, my friend.

DAVE
(sighs)
It’s a deer, you jackass. Her boyfriend hunts, apparently. That’s what hunters do; they keep the meat.

Dave nudges around and finds other painfully normal freezer stuff underneath including a FROZEN TURKEY, some SAUSAGES. Dave suddenly drops the lid, turns and stares at John.

DAVE (CONT’D)
John, did I hear you say you thought she looked like Amber?

JOHN
Yeah.

DAVE
John, Amber’s almost as tall as me, just under six feet. Blonde hair, kind of top-heavy.

JOHN
Yeah, cute as hell. I mean–

DAVE
And you think Shelly looks like her? The girl sitting upstairs?

JOHN
Yeah.

John turns to face Dave, already getting it.

DAVE
John, Shelly is short. Short with dark hair. Blue eyes.

John sighs, plucks out his cigarette and flings it to the floor.
JOHN
God Dammit. I knew she was too good
to be true.

They turn to the stairs, and freeze. Shelly is suddenly
there, behind them, sitting halfway up the stairs--looking
innocent, playing the part, wary eyes reflecting torchlight.

DAVE
So Shelly...John and I are having a
problem here. We’re both seeing
completely different versions of
you.

As Dave speaks, his hand casually drifts toward the gun in
his pocket.

DAVE (CONT’D)
Now, John has eyesight problems
because of his constant
masturbation, but I don’t think–

SHELLY BURSTS INTO SNAKES. That’s right. One second she’s a
girl, then the next, her body spills out of itself, falling
into a dark, writhing puddle on the ground. It’s a tangle of
long, black serpents, rolling over each other and down the
steps. Dave and John leap out of the way as the snakes
slither off into the darkness. They get their bearings and
Dave strides up the stairs toward the exit door -- reaches
for the knob.

At that instant the DOORKNOB begins to melt and transform,
turning pink and finally taking the shape of a FLACCID PENIS.
It flops softly against the door, as if a man was cramming it
through the knob hole from the other side. Dave recoils and
looks back to John in horror.

JOHN
That door cannot be opened.

They stumble back down the stairs, John jumping the last
five, shoes smacking on the concrete. The snakes flee from
the firelight and disappear under shelves and between
cardboard boxes.

JOHN (CONT’D)
They love to play games, don’t
they?

DAVE
It’s all they have time for.

John stops cold. Dave looks at what he’s seeing.
Meat. Dozens of the wrapped and now partially-unwrapped hunks from the freezer, lay neatly on the floor in an almost ceremonial fashion, the objects arranged in the rough shape of a man. John moves the torch toward the head area, where he finds a FROZEN TURKEY still in the Butterball wrapper. Under it, wedged between turkey and torso, is the disembodied deer tongue, FLAPPING AROUND on its own accord.

JOHN
Hmmmm. That’s different.

They both jump back as the turkey, the tongue, and a slab of ribs LEVITATE OFF THE FLOOR. Suddenly the man-shaped arrangement of meat becomes animated, raising up on two arms made of game hens and country bacon, planting two hands with sausage link fingers on the floor. The thing stands upright. It’s about seven feet tall, its turkey head swiveling side to side to survey the room, the tongue swaying uselessly below.

Without warning, it flings out a CHAIN OF LINK SAUSAGES from its “arm” and the sausage cord cinches tight around Dave’s neck. John’s shotgun is out of his holster in a flash, he cocks both barrels and draws down on the meatstrosity.

MEAT MONSTER
You disappoint me. All those times we have dueled. In the desert. In the city. You thought you had vanquished me in Venice. You’ll never defeat me, Marconi! I have sealed this house with my powers. You cannot escape!

Dave chokes, unable to breathe as John looks up at the thing with incredulity.

JOHN
Marconi? As in, Doctor Albert Marconi? The guy who hosts Magical Mysteries on the Discovery Channel?

John steps up combatively and glares at the thing.

JOHN (CONT’D)
You dumbass. Marconi is fifty years old. He has white hair. Dave and I aren’t that old combined. We’re not your nemesis. Your nemesis is probably off giving some seminar, standing waist-deep in a pile of his own money.

The thing turns its turkey at John, releasing Dave.
JOHN (CONT’D)
OK. Tell ya what, if we can get you
in touch with Marconi so you two
can work out your little
differences, will you release us?

MEAT MONSTER
You lie!

DAVE
(catching his breath)
No, we know him. We’re in the same
business, we have a direct line.
Now, we can’t get him down here,
but surely a being as superhumanly
powerful as you can destroy him at
a distance, right? Here.

The thing watches Dave fish out his cell phone and dial.

INT. CONVENTION HALL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The camera follows behind a MYSTERIOUS MAN in a slick, black
Armani suit and two hot FEMALE ASSISTANTS, clad in black
leather, as they stride down a backstage corridor. A cell
phone beeps and one of the assistants answers it. Behind the
assistant we can see into the dark convention hall. Visible
inside is a LARGE SCREEN which illuminates a rapt AUDIENCE.
On the screen a VIDEO begins to play. It’s the same cosmic
imagery and “new-age” music from the infomercial we saw
earlier. The deep-voiced narrator intones solemnly:

INTRO VIDEO NARRATOR
He’s a seeker of truth, in an age
of fear. Unafraid of unseen forces
swirling around us. Willing to face
down the legions of evil and
helping his fellow man to find a
path from darkness into the light.
From sold out engagements in Rome,
Tel Aviv, Madison Square Garden and
Las Vegas...

FEMALE ASSISTANT
Sir.

She holds out the cell phone and the man takes it.

INT. SHELLY’S BASEMENT - NIGHT

DAVE
Hello, Doctor. Yes, John’s feeling
better. Thank you for asking. I’m
afraid we have a Situation 53 here.
(MORE)
DAVE (CONT’D)
Would you be willing to speak directly to, er... the manifestation? Yes, I will.

Dave offers up the phone to Meaty.

DAVE (CONT’D)
Do we have a deal?

The meat monster hesitates, then finally nods its turkey up and down. Dave hands it the phone.

MEAT MONSTER
So! We meat again, Marconi. You thought you had vanquished me but I-

The beast SPONTANEOUSLY COMBUSTS into a ball of unholy blue light. With a shriek, it leaves our world. The lifeless cuts of meat slap to the floor piece by piece, the cell phone clattering next to the pile. John and Dave stare in silence.

JOHN
Damn, he’s good.

INT. CONVENTION HALL CORRIDOR – NIGHT

Dr. Albert Marconi snaps the cell phone shut and hands it to his assistant. Concurrently, inside the convention hall, his dramatic entrance music swells and, as the audience bursts into applause, Marconi strides inside.

CUT TO BLACK:

Main Title up:

JOHN DIES
At the End

FADE IN:

AERIAL SHOT –

A bird’s eye POV as the camera emerges from dusky clouds to reveal a small, nondescript MIDWEST TOWN below. SUPERIMPOSE CARD which reads:

TWO YEARS EARLIER

EXT. THEY CHINA FOOD! – NIGHT
The camera glides down Main Street and moves in toward a small storefront window in which a sign reads: They China Food!

INT. THEY CHINA FOOD! RESTAURANT - EVENING

The camera zeros in on David Wong sitting alone at a window booth of a small run-down Chinese restaurant.

DAVE V.O
My name is David Wong. I once saw a man's kidney grow tentacles, tear itself out of a ragged hole in his back and go slapping across my kitchen floor, but that's another story.

David stares blankly out of the window, occasionally glancing across the street at the credit union CLOCK SIGN that flashes 5:32 PM. Dave compares the time with his watch.

In a doorway across the street Dave notices something. A DARK SHAPE emerges from an alcove. It has the outline of a man, but is pitch black. This is a Shadow Man. Dave watches as the thing floats up like a plume of smoke and slips soundlessly off into the night.

Dave starts to get up, but sweating and overwhelmed by a dizzy spell, falls back into the booth. He looks down at his trembling hand.

DAVE V.O (CONT'D)
More side effects. It's always like this when I'm on the Sauce. I dosed six hours ago.

Dave takes slow deep breaths, trying to chill out. He turns to watch a small ASIAN WAITRESS deliver a PLATE of chicken-fried rice to a bearded GUY on the other side of the room. Dave squints intently at the rice plate.

DAVE V.O (CONT'D)
My count had 5,829 grains of rice on her plate. The rice was grown in Arkansas. The guy who ran the John Deere harvester was nicknamed Cooter. I'm not a genius, I'm not psychic, either. Just side effects, that's all.

Dave gets the shakes again, wills himself to stop and begins unwrapping the napkin off the flatware set in front of him. Close on the FORK as Dave clutches it.
DAVE V.O (CONT’D)
This fork was manufactured in Pennsylvania six years ago, on a Thursday. A guy once used it to scrape a dog turd from his shoe.

Dave drops the fork and takes a deep breath and closes his eyes. He opens them, and jerks back in shock. A MAN is now sitting across from him in the booth.

ARNIE
David Wong? Did you doze off there?

DAVE
Hey, uh...you’re Arnie, right?

He nods and shakes Dave’s hand.

ARNIE
Sorry I'm late.

ARNIE BLONDESTONE is in is late forties, uneven haircut and a bad mustache. He wears a shabby gray suit and tie with a fat Windsor knot. There is an awkward moment as Arnie stares at Dave, noticing the pale skin and beads of sweat on his forehead.

ARNIE (CONT’D)
You don't look Asian, Mr. Wong.

DAVE
I'm not. I was born right here. Had my last name changed. Thought it would make me harder to find. You know Wong is the most common surname in the world?

Arnie gets right to it and produces a little NOTEBOOK.

ARNIE
Your family is still around?

DAVE
I was adopted. Never knew my real dad. You could be my dad, for all I know. Are you my dad?

Arnie shifts in his seat.

ARNIE
Eh, I don't think so.

DAVE
Anyway. My adopted family moved away, I won't tell you where they are.

(MORE)
DAVE (CONT'D)
But get out your pen because you'll want to write this down. My biological mom? She was institutionalized.

ARNIE
That must have been hard. What was the-

DAVE
- She was a strung-out, crank-addicted cannibal, dabbled in vampirism and necromancy. Blew her welfare check every month on black candles. Sure, Satan would do her favors now and then, but there's always a catch with the Devil. Always a catch.

Arnie looks up from his note-taking.

ARNIE
Really? And I thought my mom was bad because she wouldn't let me watch Space Ghost. Are you pulling my leg?

DAVE
No. This is what I do when I'm nervous. She was bipolar, that's all. Couldn't keep a house. Isn't the other story better, though? You should use it.

Arnie shoots Dave a practiced look of reporterly sincerity.

ARNIE
I thought you wanted to get the truth out, your side of it. If not, then why are we even here, Mr. Wong?

DAVE
You're right. Sorry.

Arnie eyes Dave, sizing him up. He moves his gaze to the other OBJECT on the table. Dave rests his fingers on it. It is a small CANNISTER, about the size and shape of a spool of thread, made of flat, brushed metal.

DAVE V.O
I could blow your world away, Arnie. If I show you what's in this container, you'd never sleep another full night, never feel at one with the human race until the day you died. But we're not ready for that, not yet.
ARNIE
Tell me about your friend John.

DAVE
Like what? We went to school together? That's not his real name, either.

ARNIE
You guys already got a little bit of a following, don't you? I found a couple of discussion boards on the web devoted to you and your friend, your...hobby, I guess. So, you're, what, sort of spiritualists? Exorcists? Something like that?

The camera moves in on Dave’s eyes.

DAVE V.O
Okay, enough farting around.

DAVE
You have eighty-three cents in your front pocket, Arnie. Three quarters, a nickel, three pennies. The three pennies are dated 1983, 1993 and 1999.

Arnie grins the superior grin of the “I'm the smartest man in the room” skeptic, then scoops his coins out of his pocket. He examines them, confirms Dave is right. Arnie gulps, coughs out a laugh.

ARNIE
Well I'll be damned! That's a neat trick, Mr. Wong.

DAVE
If you flip the nickel ten times, you'll get heads, heads, tails, heads, tails, tails, tails, heads, tails.

ARNIE
I'm not sure I wanna take the time to-

DAVE
-Last night you had a dream, Arnie. You were being chased through a forest by your mother. She was lashing you with a whip made of... knotted... penises.

Arnie's face falls, like an imploded building.
DAVE V.O
That's right, Arnie. Everything you know is wrong.

Arnie croaks out a whisper.

ARNIE
You got my attention, Mr. Wong.

DAVE
Oh, it gets better. A lot better.

The camera slowly moves into Dave's face.

DAVE V.O
Bullshit. What it gets is worse. A lot worse.

Dave breathes deep and begins spinning his tale to Arnie who grabs his pen and begins taking notes.

DAVE
It started a couple years ago. We were just a year or two out of high school. Just kids. So that friend of mine, John, he had a band...

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON - a KICK DRUM SKIN - scrawled in a bloody font are the words: THREE-ARM SALLY. A thumping backbeat kicks in as a blistering guitar riff cuts through the air.

EXT. MUDDY FIELD - NIGHT

John is at the mike, playing guitar and leading his 4 piece band on vocals. He wears a T-shirt with a logo that reads: Vista Pines Facility for the Criminally Insane.

JOHN
(sings)
Hair! Hair! Haaairrr! Camel Holocaust! Camel Holocaust!

In the middle of a muddy field, Dave stands watching the band among a crowd of a hundred or so high school and college-age PARTY-GOERS. The stage is just a grid of wooden crate pallets and car headlights illuminate the place.

DAVE V.O
Telling the story now, I'm tempted to say something like, "Who would have thought that my friend John would help bring about the end of the world?"
EXT. MUDDY FIELD BY PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Dave turns and wanders away. As he passes a BEER KEG hanging off the bed of a pickup truck, Dave sees a friend, FRED CHU. Fred is a little, wiry young man with shoulder-length hair and a goatee.

DAVE
Hey, Fred.

Fred hands Dave a cup of beer. Dave grabs it as Fred offers up a toast.

FRED
Here's to all the kisses I've snatched...and vice versa.

DAVE
Amen.

They clink cups.

A few yards behind them, they can hear a GIRL(Amy) pleading with an older TEENAGE BOY(Justin White) who wears a "Limp Bizkit" T-shirt.

AMY
Dammit, Justin. Please, give it back to me.

JUSTIN
What 'chew thinkin' girl? Git yo' hand off me!

Back at the keg, Dave brings the beer to his lips and THWACK! An object slams into his drink, his cup is knocked out of his hand and beer sprays everywhere. Dave looks up to see Justin and his TEENAGE FRIENDS laughing at him. Dave flips Justin the bird and then looks down at the truck bed and, in the center of a pool of beer, lies a PROSTHETIC HAND, soaked in brew! Dave gingerly picks up the plastic hand and examines it.

AMY
Could I have that back?

Dave looks up to find Amy standing beside him, face flushed, eyes brimming with tears. She’s about 19, long reddish hair.

DAVE
I bet this comes in hand...y.

Dave gives the prosthesis back to the unsmiling Amy. She gulps and, as inconspicuously as possible, slides the prosthetic over the stump on her left forearm.
DAVE (CONT'D)
Amy, right? Hey, I'm sorry about the joke. Really. Want a beer?

His charm offensive is not working.

AMY
No! My dog just bit some Jamaican guy and I've got to find her.

FRED
Wow, man. My uncle lost his foot in his riding mower. Says he can still feel it. What's it called "Fantasy Leg Situation" or something like that?

AMY
(sarcastic)
Not that you deserve an intelligent answer, but, yeah, it's "phantom limb syndrome." Every amputee goes through it. And it goes away. Asshole.

Amy glares at them and leaves.

DAVE
Good one, Fred.

Dave pours himself another beer, then hears giggling from a group of GIRLS.

EXT. MUDDY FIELD BY RASTAFARIAN - NIGHT

He wanders over, finds them surrounding a BLACK GUY (ROBERT) with dreadlocks, an overcoat and Rastafarian beret. The girls have their hands over their mouths, eyes bulging, screaming for the guy to do it again.

DAVE
What's up? Is this man exposing himself?

One girl looks pale, on the verge of tears. Another throws up her hands and walks away, head shaking.

GIRL
Oh my gawd! This guy just levitated! Right off the ground.

DAVE
(asks blandly)
How high?
ROBERT
You gotta love the skeptic, mon.

Robert speaks in a lilting Rastafarian patois.

GIRLS
Show him! Show him!

DAVE
What, about six inches above the grass, right? Balducci levitation?
Made famous by that magic hack David Blaine in his television special?

The man’s gaze freezes on Dave. Big, white, toothy smile. Dave recoils a bit from his penetrating stare and then notices a BANDAGE wrapped around his left hand.

ROBERT
Let’s see...what can I do to impress Mr. Skeptic mon? Ah, lookee there. You didn’t wash behind your ears, did ya?

Dave lets out a loud, sarcastic, theatrical sigh as the man reaches out to the side of Dave’s head, presumably to pull out a shiny quarter from behind his ear.

DAVE
A quarter. Right?

Robert suddenly yanks back his closed fist and opens it to reveal a long, wriggling BLACK CENTIPEDE. One of the girls squeals. Robert holds the wriggling thing up for everyone to see. The Rastafarian passes his hand in front of the bug and in a blink, THE CENTIPEDE IS GONE. The girls gasp. Dave checks his watch, feigning boredom.

DAVE (CONT’D)
Well, the bug’s a nice touch.

ROBERT
You wanna know where it went, mon?

DAVE
No. But, you know, don’t get me wrong. I am one entertained son of a bitch.

ROBERT
I got other talents, you know.

DAVE
Yeah, but I bet all your really good tricks are back at your apartment, right?

(MORE)
DAVE (CONT'D)
And you’d be happy to show them to me, if only I were sixteen and female?

ROBERT
Do you dream, mon? I interpret dreams for beer.

DAVE
Well, I don’t have any beer so I guess I’m outta luck.

ROBERT
I tell you what, Mister Skeptic Mon. I’ll do it just like Daniel in the Old Testament. I’ll tell you the last dream you had, then I’ll break down its meaning for you. But if I’m right, you gotta buy me a beer. Okay, mon?

DAVE
Sure. I mean, you’ve obviously been blessed with supernatural gifts. What better way to use them than to fish for free beers at parties.

ROBERT
You had this one early this morning, in the middle of the thunderstorm. In the dream, you were back with your girl Tina...

DAVE V.O.
Whoa, how’d he know--

ROBERT
-and you come home, she’s there with a big honkin’ pile of dynamite and one of those big cartoon plunger detonators, ready to blow. You ask her what she’s doin’ and she says this, and shoves down the handle and, Boom! Your eyes snapped open. The explosion in your dream became the clap of thunder outside your window. So tell me, mon. Am I close?

DAVE V.O.
Ho. Lee. She. It.

Robert smiles. All eyes on Dave, the naked shock on his face.

DAVE
(holding up his hands)
Okay, okay. You made a lucky guess, somebody probably told you about--
ROBERT
You see, you gotta ask yourself, mon. You gotta be brave to ask the scary questions. How did your mind, David, know the thunder was coming?

DAVE
What? How’d you know my...you’re full of–

ROBERT
The thunder came right as she hit the detonator in your dream. Your mind started the dream thirty seconds before the thunderclap. How did it know the thunder would be coming at that moment, to coincide with the explosion at the end? We’ve all had those dreams, mon. But how could your mind have known the thunder was coming? Because time is an ocean, not a garden hose. Space is a puff of smoke, a wisp of cloud. Your mind is a flying cornsnake, hovering through the-—

This guy is getting to Dave. He grits his teeth, turns and walks away.

DAVE
Whatever. Whatever.

ROBERT
Want me to tell you where your daddy really was when you were in the hospital with that broken leg?

Dave stops in his tracks, turns and locks eyes with Robert.

ROBERT (CONT’D)
Want me to tell you the name of your soulmate? Or how she’ll die?

Dave tries to take a step back but he’s rooted, almost dizzy.

ROBERT (CONT’D)
Do you want to know when the first nuclear bomb will go off on American soil? And which city?

Dave awkwardly mumbles, makes a dismissive motion and stumbles away into the crowd.

ROBERT (CONT’D)
Hey! You owe me a beer, mon! Hey!

Dave looks over his shoulder fearfully as he hurries away.

Breakdown Services - Casting - Partial Draft
Back on stage, John and his band bring their final song to a crashing conclusion. The crowd hoots in appreciation.

EXT. MUDDY FIELD - BY VAN - NIGHT

A last piece of drum kit is loaded into a van. Dave walks up.

JOHN
Dave! Look! Can you believe how much sweat I have on this shirt?

DAVE
That's... really...somethin', John.

JOHN
We’re all meeting at the One Ball. You comin’?

DAVE
No. But John, you know that one-handed girl, Amy?

JOHN
She’s coming with us. Robert told her Fred Chu found her dog and he’s waiting over at the One Ball. Why don’t you come with?

DAVE
No. I gotta go to work in like seven hours.

JOHN
Yeah, me too. But I gotta buy Robert a beer first.

DAVE
Who?

JOHN
Uh, that Rasta dude.

John gestures toward a group of girls and guys and, sure enough, Robert is standing there laughing among them, rainbow beret and dreadlocks. Amy, too. Dave looks over just in time to make eye contact with the Jamaican, who shouts:

ROBERT
You owe me a beer, mon!

JOHN
The man likes his beer. Hey, I heard there was somebody from a record company out there tonight.
DAVE
I don’t like the guy, John. There’s something not right about him.

JOHN
You like so few people, Dave. He’s cool. He bet me a beer he could guess my weight. Got it on the first try. Amazing stuff. So, you comin’ to the One Ball, or what?

Dave shakes his head ‘no’ while the group piles into the van and drives away. Alone, Dave turns and walks over to where his Bronco is parked.

At the Bronco, Dave is surprised to find a YELLOW LABRADOR DOG sniffing at his door. Dave looks back to the van, but it’s gone. He shrugs, unlocks the door and, without an invitation, the dog leaps into the passenger seat.

DAVE
Help yourself.

Dave reaches over and grabs the dog’s tag which reads: I’m MOLLY. Please return me to Amy Larking (413) 555-1201.

DAVE (CONT’D)
Okay, Molly. Tomorrow you and me’ll go visit Amy. See if we can’t get back in her good graces.

Dave digs into his pocket for the car keys. Suddenly he lets out a yelp of pain and yanks his hand back out of his pocket. He looks at his hand.

CLOSE ON the palm of Dave’s hand, etched into the skin, is the phrase, YOU OWE ME ONE BEER.

Dave sits there, in the dark, staring at his hand in horror as Molly barks at his hand. He suddenly jerks open the door leans out and retches in the weeds. Dave spits and opens his eyes... sees MOVEMENT in the puddle. Something long and black and wriggling.

It’s the CENTIPEDE!!

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. DAVE’S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dave is sprawled on his living room couch asleep in front of the TV. THE TV SWITCHES ON by itself - static and white noise. The strange FACE of the “Static Man” coalesces out of the static. It watches Dave.
Dave’s cell phone screeches. He peels his eyes open and finds himself on his living room couch. The TV is on but filled only with static. Dave squints at his clock. Quarter after 2 a.m.

DAVE
Huh, hello?

JOHN
David? It’s John. Where are you?

Voice scratchy, breathing heavier than he should be. Like a man just after a fist fight.

DAVE
I’m home. Where am I supposed to be?

Long pause.

JOHN
Is this the first time I’ve called tonight?

Dave sits straight up, fully awake now.

DAVE
John? What’s going on?

JOHN
I can’t get out of my apartment.

DAVE
What?

JOHN
I’m scared, Dave. I mean it. It can’t be real. It can’t. The way it moves, the way it’s made... this is not a product of any kind of evolution or anything. But it still managed to bite me.

DAVE
What?!?

JOHN
Can you come over?

DAVE
I’ll be there in twelve minutes.

Dave hangs up, pulls on some clothes and as he exits the room almost kills himself tripping over Molly the dog who is curled up in the doorway.
INT. BRONCO DRIVING - NIGHT

Fat drops of rain slap the windshield. Molly is in the passenger seat. Dave’s cell phone rings. Close-on phone. John’s number pops up on the glowing display.

DAVE
Yeah, John. You okay?

JOHN
Dave, I’m sorry to wake you up. I got a problem and I need you to listen-

DAVE
John, I’m on my way over. You called me five minutes ago, remember?

JOHN
What? No, David. Stay away. There’s somethin’ in here with me. I can’t explain it. I don’t think it’ll kill me, it seems to just want to keep me here. Now, I need you to get out to the mall on highway 59. Find a cop there named-

DAVE
Just calm down. You’re not making sense. Look, John, we’ve been friends since kindergarten, but these phone calls are starting to freak me out. I want you to sit down somewhere, try to chill out. Nothin’ you’re seeing is real.

A pause.

JOHN
How do I know this is really you?

DAVE
You’ll know in just a few minutes. I’m comin’ up on your block now. Just chill, like I said. John?

Nobody there. Dave accelerates, rain drumming the windshield.

EXT. JOHN’S APARTMENT FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Dave pounds on the door to John’s apartment. No answer. He pounds again. He tries the knob and realizes the door has been unlocked the whole time. It is dark inside.
DAVE

John?

Nothing.

INT. JOHN’S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Dave tries a tentative step into the apartment.

DAVE

John? Can you hear me? I’m going to call the-ooomfff!!!

Dave is hammered by a flying body tackle and lands hard on the carpet, pounding the breath from his lungs.

JOHN

(screams)

It almost killed you!

John screams, inches from Dave’s face.

JOHN (CONT’D)

You’re an idiot, you know that?
You’re an idiot for coming here.
We’re both gonna die now. You could have brought help but now we’re both gonna die in this room.

He sits up off Dave and in the darkness John’s head whips back and forth, as if searching for a sniper. He puts a finger up to Dave’s face.

JOHN (CONT’D)

Shhhhhh. I don’t see it. When I say ‘go,’ we’re goin’ to the other side of the room as fast as physically possible. You can clear it in three steps, dive at the end. Move like the devil himself were after you. Ready?

DAVE

John, listen to me. If you let me take you to the hospital, we’ll tell them you’ve been poisoned or something.

JOHN

Ready, Go!

John pushes to his feet, sprints across the room and flings himself over an overturned sofa next to the wall. He sails over it, smacking into the wall behind it with a heavy thud.
Dave calmly stands, walks over and turns up the floor lamp. He sees John fearfully peering from behind the overturned sofa. Next to it is an arm chair, on the other side a capsized coffee table, a furniture fort.

DAVE

John...

John stands up, eyes wide. He put his hands out to Dave, fingers splayed.

JOHN

(low and dead serious)
Dave, do not move.

DAVE

What?

JOHN

(whispers)
I’m begging you. I know you don’t believe me. But when you turn around, you will. But do not scream. If you do, you’re dead. Now. Very slowly, turn around.

Very slowly, as asked, Dave turns. Nothing is there. He faces John again, his expression telling him that he saw nothing.

JOHN (CONT’D)

It moved. There.

John points to the corner, near the ceiling. Very slowly, Dave turns and, craning his neck, follows John’s pointed finger to the spot on the wall he so desperately needs Dave to see. Still nothing. He turns back to John, and now revealed to us, floating just above Dave’s head is...

A HIDEOUS CREATURE that seems to be assembled from spare parts. It has a barbed tail like a scorpion, seven dangling legs, each ending in a pink infantile hand. Its lizard-like head has a bank of a dozen mismatched eyes over a sharp, black beak.

Dave does not see the creature.

DAVE

John, you can either come with me to the hospital, or I’m calling an ambulance. But what I’m not going to do is-

JOHN

The door! Go!

John hurdles the sofa, then runs and throws himself through the open door. Dave sighs and looks around John’s apartment.
The creature hovers and watches as Dave finds and pockets John’s keys, then pokes around some more and finds his jacket on the floor. Dave grabs for it, then yanks his hand back in pain. Something has jabbed his finger.

Close on finger as a DOT OF BLOOD wells to the surface of the skin. Dave gingerly reaches into the jacket’s front pocket, and pulls out...a cheap, plastic SYRINGE. There is BLACK RESIDUE inside, like used motor oil.

Dave searches the jacket’s pockets and finds a FEDEX RECEIPT. Close on receipt – destination Old Mall Road, Hwy 59.

27 EXT. JOHN’S APARTMENT PARKING LOT – NIGHT

Dave finds John pacing back and forth in the parking lot, rain pelting him, fists clenched. He tosses John his jacket.

DAVE
Get in the car!

John opens the Bronco door and climbs in.

28 INT. BRONCO IN JOHN’S APARTMENT PARKING LOT – NIGHT

Dave ducks into the car but doesn’t start it. Molly is in the back seat.

JOHN
(climbing in)
Just tell me you could see it. At least that.

DAVE
I didn’t see it. Tell me what **this** is.

Dave holds up the syringe. John rubs his eyes, a man exhausted.

JOHN
You don’t wanna touch that. What time is it?

DAVE
Just past three in the morning.

JOHN
What day?

DAVE
Friday night. I mean, Saturday morning. It feels like Friday night because I’ve barely slept yet. And we got work today, remember?

Breakdown Services – Casting – Partial Draft
JOHN
You shouldn’t have come here.

DAVE
You called me. You begged me.

John leans back, closes his eyes and mumbles.

JOHN
I did? When?

DAVE
Tell me what this stuff is, John. They’re gonna ask me. Tell me before you fall asleep.

JOHN
I remember now. Calling you. It’s hard, everything’s running together. I called and called and called. Like a shotgun, firing in every direction hoping to hit somethin’. I bet I called you twenty times.

DAVE
Twice. You called me twice. John, answer my question.

JOHN
Really? You kept getting weird on me. You know what I think? I think you’ll be getting calls from me for the next eight or nine years. All from tonight. I couldn’t help it, couldn’t get oriented. Kept slipping out of the time... you’ve got a voice mail message three years from now that’s freaking hilarious.

Dave carefully puts the syringe into his pocket and starts the car. John reaches over, grabs his wrist. John’s eyes are open and alarmed.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Wait. Where are we gonna go? Where are we gonna be safe from this thing?

DAVE
Emergency room, John. I’m not playing this game with you. I don’t know what else to do. You’re on a bad trip, or whatever they call it. Maybe you can just sleep shit like this off. I don’t know because I’m not a dope fiend or a doctor.
JOHN
No. The hospital’s no good. We’ll go to your place, or somewhere. Anywhere but here. Someplace safe.

EXT. DENNY’S COFFEE SHOP – NIGHT
29

The yellow sign of the deserted restaurant shines like a beacon in the black rainy night.

INT. DENNY’S COFFEE SHOP – NIGHT
30

Dave sips a coffee as John smokes a cigarette and shoots furtive glances out the front window.

DAVE
Well? How are you doin’? Any better?

JOHN
Dave. I saw things...

His voice trails off, sucks on his cigarette instead.

DAVE
Okay. Back up. You don’t know the name of the drug?

JOHN
Robert called it the “Soy Sauce.” But I’m thinking now that was just a nickname and that it wasn’t, you know, actual soy sauce.

DAVE
Robert? Oh, right. The Fake Magical Jamaican. What’s his last name?

JOHN
Marley.

DAVE
Of course. Robert Marley. And he gave you the-

Dave’s cell phone chirps. He ignores it.

JOHN
Yes. He did. We were in the One Ball parking lot. Passing around a joint and the Jamaican guy pulls out the Sauce. “It be openin’ doors to other worlds, mon,” he says. We made him do it first, saw that he didn’t die.

(MORE)
JOHN (CONT'D)
It seemed to make him pretty happy
and then Dave, well, the guy, I
know it sounds unbelievable, but
the guy shrunk himself, made
himself three feet tall. We all
laughed our asses off, then he was
back to normal size again.

DAVE
And you still actually tried that
shit?

JOHN
Are you kidding? How could I not?
The phone sings its electronic ditty again.

DAVE
Did anybody else do it?

JOHN
Are you gonna get that?

DAVE
John, you avoid my question one
more time and I will come over this
table and punch you right in the
face.

JOHN
It’s not that easy, Dave.
Everything’s mixed up, like if
somebody made you watch ten movies
at once and then quizzed you a year
later on what happened in one of
‘em. That stuff... Dave, I’m
remembering things that haven’t
happened yet—I mean, that didn’t
happen. Even right now, all that
stuff at the Mall. Did we go to the
Mall? You and me?
The phone chirps a third time.

DAVE
No, John. We’ve never been to the
“Mall” together. Are you the only
one who took this “sauce?”

JOHN
I don’t know, that’s what I’m
tryin’ to say. We went to Robert’s
trailer, but Head and the guys
didn’t come. I think they got
nervous when they saw a needle come
out. Now please, please, please get
your phone or turn it off.
DAVE
All right, all right.

Annoyed, Dave pulls out the phone, and answers it.

DAVE (CONT’D)
Yeah.

JOHN O.S.
David? It’s me.

The voice is John’s. Dave’s eyes go wide as he glances at John seated in front of him.

DAVE
Is this a recording?

JOHN O.S.
What? No. I don’t know if we’ve talked tonight, but we don’t have much time. I think I called you and told you to come here. If so, don’t do it. If I haven’t called, then obviously you should still stay away regardless.

DAVE
Who is this?

John, in the booth there with Dave, shoots him a look.

JOHN O.S.
It’s John. Can you hear me?

DAVE
(voice trembling)
I can hear you and I can see you. You’re sitting right here next to me.

JOHN O.S.
Well, just talk to me in person, then. Oh, wait. Do I look like I’m injured in any way?

DAVE
What?

JOHN O.S.
Sorry, I gotta go. Say hello to me.

Click. He is gone. Dave sits there, stunned, the phone still pressed to his ear.

JOHN
Was that me? That was me, wasn’t it?
Dave snaps the phone shut and stares into his coffee.

JOHN (CONT’D)
I’m sorry, Dave. I really am. For messin’ up your sleep cycle and for everything that’s about to happen, the people that are going to, uh, explode.

Dave is already up, walking out.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Bronco drives through the rain.

INT. BRONCO DRIVING - NIGHT

Dave drives, anguished and pissed. Molly is in the back seat and John is sprawled in the passenger seat.

DAVE
John? You need to wake up. We gotta go to work. John? John? John? I can see you breathing, so I know you ain’t dead. Are you awake? John?

Dave pulls the car over, and grabs John by the arm.

INT. BRONCO BY SIDE OF ROAD - NIGHT

John’s head lolls over and Dave can see that John’s eyes are wide open, staring blankly out the window. Dave puts his hand on John’s chest, checks him out.

DAVE
(mutters)
Still breathing...

Molly whimpers, pokes her head out of the back seat and nudges him. He grabs Molly by the collar and sees her tag again: “I’m Molly, I belong to Amy...” Dave reaches under his own collar and pulls out a ST. CHRISTOPHER MEDALLION on a silver chain. Close-on the image of St. Christopher. Dave flips the medallion over and engraved in the silver surface it reads:

In deep? Call St. Dom’s parish. Any time.
492-555-5555.

DAVE (CONT’D)
Fuck it.
He flips open his cell and dials. The phone rings twice and a groggy voice answers:

VOICE (FATHER SHELNUT)
St. Dom’s.

DAVE
Yeah, uh, I need a priest.

FATHER SHELNUT
Well, this is Father Shelnut. What can I do for you?

DAVE
Um, hi. Do you have any experience with, like, demon...ism? Demonology, I guess. Like possession and hauntings and all that?

FATHER SHELNUT
Wellllll... I can’t say that I’ve personally dealt with anything like that. Look, people that say they’ve seen things or, say, hear voices in their head, well we usually refer them to a counselor or, you understand, a lot of times medication can–

DAVE
No, no, no. I’m not crazy.

Dave glances over at John, still catatonic.

DAVE (CONT’D)
Other people have–

FATHER SHELNUT
No, no, I didn’t mean to imply that. Look, why don’t you come talk to me. And even if you need to talk to a professional I got a brother-in-law who’s real good.

Dave thinks it over for a moment, lets out an anguished sigh and rubs his temple with his free hand.

DAVE
What do you think it’s like, Father?

FATHER SHELNUT
What what’s like?

DAVE
Being crazy. Mentally ill.
FATHER SHELNUT
Well, they never know they’re ill, do they? You can’t diagnose yourself with the same organ that has the disease, just like you can’t see your own eyeball. So, I suppose you just feel regular and the rest of the world seems to go crazy around you.

DAVE
Okay, but let’s just suppose I honestly, I mean, in reality, ran into something from beyond the-OW!!

Dave suddenly flings himself upright in the car seat, dropping the phone. Dave shoves his hand into his pocket, tries to pull out the syringe but can’t. His eyes are watering as he frantically tears the syringe free and out of his pants, turning out the white pocket with it. There is a DIME-SIZED HOLE in the white fabric, STAINED BLOOD RED.

A DROP OF THE BLACK GOO is now hanging out of the end of the syringe. Molly barks at the Soy Sauce.

DAVE V.O
I’ll try to explain this without cursing, but the black shit from Planet X that came out from that motherfucker looked like it had grown hair. Little fine, stiff hairs. No, not hairs. Fucking spines. Like a fucking cactus. Did I mention that the stuff was moving? Twitching?

Dave opens the window and considers tossing the syringe. Instead he pulls a lighter from the console and holds the butane flame to the squirming blob. It burns, (is that a scream!?) curling up and around like an earthworm. The end of the syringe browns and melts. Dave hurls it out the window. Dave roots around the car floor and finds the phone.

DAVE
Uh, are you still there? Hello?

FATHER SHELNUT
Yes, son. Just calm down, okay? Nothing you’re seeing is real.

Dave takes a deep breath trying to calm himself. Reality begins to bend.(Visual Effect) Is time beginning to distort??

DAVE V.O
I could feel it. That strange, venomous warmth spreading through my thigh.

Breakdown Services - Casting - Partial Draft
DAVE
Look, I appreciate your time but I’m really starting to think there’s nothing you can–

FATHER SHELNUT
Son, I’m going to be honest with you. We both know you’re fucked.

DAVE
Uh, excuse me?

FATHER SHELNUT
Your Mom writes on the wall with her own shit. Big changes are coming to Deadworld, my son. Waves of maggots over oceans of rot. You’ll see it, David. You’ll see it with your own eyes. Do you understand?

Dave jerks the phone away from his ear, looks at it like it might bite. He flips it shut. He takes a deep breath, trying to calm himself. He starts up the car again and pulls out onto the road.

INT. BRONCO DRIVING - NIGHT

Suddenly...

...from the darkness behind Dave, a very cold and very BONY HAND reaches up and closes around his mouth. Before Dave can react, SOMETHING long and cold and wet and twitching slides across his neck and down his shirt. Dave cranks the wheel and claws at the hand.

The Bronco skids across the road. The thing on his neck continues to writhe -- it’s the texture of a slug or a leech but with a long tail. Dave screams. The Bronco blows through an intersection blinking yellow lights, he stomps on the brake and it goes into a powerslide, the rear of the truck trading places with the front.

VOICE (ROGER NORTH)
No, no. Keep driving, she will not bite if you keep driving.

Dave stomps the brake and the car skids to a stop. He screams and grabs at the monster on his chest. Another hand reaches around and snatches his wrist with a quick, clean move.

VOICE (ROGER NORTH) (CONT’D)
Be calm. Drive. Just drive. She will leave you alone. If you drive.
Dave gets his other hand into his pocket and claws free the pistol. The creature bites, Dave gasps and his limbs stop in protest. A hand reaches up from the back seat and very slowly takes the Smith from his hand.

VOICE (ROGER NORTH) (CONT’D)
Drive. Just drive.

The pain relents. Dave gasps and eases his foot onto the accelerator. He tries to look down at the thing that has him, its tail sticking out of the neck of his shirt. It has inch-long STALKS all along its back, each ending in what looks like a SMALL BLACK EYE. Several of the stalks tickle his chin as it worms its way around, the end of the creature resting over his shoulder, squirming gently back and forth on the leather of his jacket.

DAVE
(shrill warble)
"WANNA YOU WANNA AARGH?"

VOICE (ROGER NORTH)
You’re doing fine. Now tell me what you were doing before I made myself known.

DAVE
J..J..John, wake up!

John, still slumped in the passenger seat, does not stir. Dave grimaces and turns his attention back to the intruder in the back seat.

DAVE (CONT’D)
Who–who the fuck are you?

ROGER NORTH
My name is Roger North.

DAVE
Congratulations. Now who are you and what’s this fucking thing you–

ROGER NORTH
Please answer my question. Where were you going in such a hurry?

DAVE
The emergency room. Why? What’s it to you? What’s happening tonight?

Dave reaches up and adjusts the REARVIEW MIRROR to see in the back seat. He sees a MAN, thin, in his thirties, brown hair, buggy eyes and a beak-like nose. He speaks robotically, with difficulty. He is wearing a white, furry woman’s hat, what looks like a blue Wal-Mart vest with a little plastic toy SHERIFF’S BADGE tacked to the breast.
The man is holding Dave’s gun by the barrel, glancing at it with detached curiosity.

DAVE (CONT’D)
You’re...you’re not from around here, are you? Do you know me? Can you tell me that? Or where you’re from or who sent you?

ROGER NORTH
I’m from right here, so far as you know it. Who sent me means very little. My interest is only in you and in your desperation not to answer my question. It is said out of genuine concern for your safety... the very important role you must play. Korrok is a powerful adversary. Things are in motion, Mr. Wong.

The slug-creature on Dave’s chest begins pulsing gently, making gulping twitches. Dave very slowly and non-threateningly reaches out and adjusts the heat, then casually punches in the CIGARETTE LIGHTER. In the rearview mirror he sees North, with a very grave expression, staring out the window as shadows and street lights flicker across his face.

ROGER NORTH (CONT’D)
Fascinating.

DAVE
What?

Dave glances down at the lighter. The slug on his chest slowly curls its tail around, coming to rest along his neck and earlobe.

ROGER NORTH
They harvest insects here, do they not? For their honey? Do the bees know they make the honey for you? Or do they work tirelessly because they think it is their own choice? Have you never noticed that, after hearing a new word for the first time in your life, you’ll hear it again within twenty-four hours? Do you ever wonder why sometimes you’ll see a single shoe lying along the road?

A single tear rolls down North’s cheek. The lighter clicks.
ROGER NORTH (CONT‘D)
I am at a loss. I have been
watching you for some time, but
there are great gaps in my
knowledge. You know, I observed a
man who masturbated until he bled.
Did he want to do that? And you,
when you are alone you–

Dave yanks the lighter free, the COILS ORANGE with heat. Dave
slams on the brakes and racks the steering wheel. He jams the
lighter onto the lump in his shirt where he estimates the
creature’s head will be.

The truck spins and tilts up on two tires for a sickening
moment, just as the slug thing shrieks and thrashes wildly
inside his shirt. The truck falls back down on four wheels
with a thud.

35 INT. BRONCO STOPPED BY ROAD - NIGHT

A small yellow flame dances around a hole in Dave’s shirt.
Dave grabs around for the slug thing and wrestles it free.
Dave holds up the creature and sees its CIRCLE OF TINY TEETH,
each curled and needle-sharp. A thin, straw-like APPENDAGE
emerges from the center, about as long as a finger and whips
around, flecking little droplets of blood. Dave opens the
driver’s side door and flings the flopping thing out into the
middle of the street.

Dave spins around in his seat and sees North pawing around
the floorboard for the gun. Dave throws a wild punch at
North’s face, misses. Dave grabs the pistol off the floor,
gets the drop on him and jams the barrel under North’s chin.
They sit like that for a long moment, both breathing out
puffs of steam.

DAVE
Okay, okay. This thing I’ve got
pointed at you, you know what it
does?

ROGER NORTH
I believe I have an idea, yes.

DAVE
And have you ever heard the old
human saying, ‘I want to shoot you
so bad, my dick’s hard?’

ROGER NORTH
I don’t believe I-
DAVE
Maybe you’ll hear it again in the next 24 hours if you don’t try to fuck with me. Shut up and don’t move.

Dave slowly takes the gun off North and crawls out the side door and stands up into the wind. He turns and looks around the empty street and sees the squirming monster crawling to the sidewalk. Dave stalks over toward the creature, lifts his boot and stomps on it.

Dave grunts random curses under his breath as he pounds the thing, again and again, hammering with his boot heel. The SLUG EXPLODES in a spray of brown and red. Dave keeps stomping, flecks of blood spraying with each impact, until the monster is a wet, twisted stain.

DAVE (CONT’D)
“Things are in motion,” huh?

He kicks the shredded remains into a sewer grate nearby, then moves back toward the truck.

The back door of the truck is open now and as he approaches he sees that NORTH IS GONE. Dave gets in, slams the door and reaches for the keys.

VOICE
David Wong?

Startled, Dave practically jumps out of his skin and spins to his left to find a BALD BLACK GUY in a suit standing at his driver side of the car.

DAVE
Uh, yeah...

The man flashes a BADGE.

DETECTIVE
Detective Lawrence Appleton. Please step out of the car. Your friend too.

DAVE
(weakly)
He’s... resting.

DETECTIVE
Get the fuck out of the car.

EXT. VISTA OF DAVE’S TOWN - SUNRISE

The pre-dawn twilight fades as the bloody sun rises.
Dave is alone in the “interview” room at the Police Station; the one-way mirror is to his left. In the reflection we see Dave slumped in the chair, disorganized black hair, beard stubble.

The police detective steps in, lays a thick MANILA FOLDER loaded with photos on the table. The detective sports a goatee and shaved head. A white COP follows him. His white partner has a crew cut with a mustache. Almost a G. Gordon Liddy, a cookie-cutter cop from central casting.

DETECTIVE
I want to thank you for coming down, Mr. Wong. I bet it’s been quite a night for you. Been a long night for me, too, as a matter of fact.

DAVE
Okay. Where’s John?

DETECTIVE
He’s fine. He’s talking to another officer just a few rooms from here.

DAVE
John is talking? Really?

DETECTIVE
Don’t worry, man. Since you’re both gonna tell the unvarnished truth, you don’t gotta worry about your stories matching, do you? Just tell me what you did last night.

DAVE
Went to a party out by the lake. I came home just after midnight. I was asleep by two.

DETECTIVE
You sure about that? You sure you didn’t go over to the One Ball Inn down on Grand Avenue for a nightcap? Your buddies were all there.

DAVE
No, I had work this morning. I went straight home.
The camera moves in on Dave.

DAVE V.O
As I spoke, a strange, jittery energy began to rise up in me, radiating from the chest out. At that moment things began to clarify, to become simple. All of a sudden I was startled to find I could see the cop’s next question coming before he spoke it, word-for-word... “Have you heard the name...”

DETECTIVE
Have you heard the name Nathan Curry? Guy your age, parents own a body shop here in town?

DAVE
No.

DAVE V.O
How about Shelby Winder?

DETECTIVE
How about Shelby Winder? Heavy girl, senior at East Side High? Ring a bell?

DAVE
No. Sorry. What happened?

The camera moves into Dave’s darting, beady eyes.

DAVE V.O
Everything was obvious now, all the walls of the maze turned to glass. I immediately knew two things: this list of people had all been at the party last night and they were all now dead or heading there. Now how do you know that? How do you know any of this? Magic? You know damn well why. That black shit John took made blood contact with you. Now you’re getting high, partner. On the Soy Sauce. It’s got you.

DETECTIVE
We don’t know. That’s why I got four hours of overtime already today. At least nine people were at the One Ball at closing time, twelve hours ago. Three of them are missing. Your friend is here. The rest are dead.

The detective pauses for effect.
DETECTIVE (CONT’D)
Your friend is the only known survivor of the “One Ball Nine” and now don’t take offense at this but he ain’t lookin’ too healthy right about now. Did he say anything this morning?

The white cop across the room puts his hands on his hips. The Detective keeps his gaze on Dave.

DAVE
John called me last night, talking crazy. Paranoia, hallucinations, the whole “Monsters in his apartment” bit. Said he couldn’t remember how he got where he was, like that.

DETECTIVE
Did he say what he was on?

DAVE
No.

DETECTIVE
You know we can find out anyway, right? We’re not interested in booking a bunch of your raver friends for poppin’ pills. To somebody like me, the dead bodies are what matters. And if somebody’s sellin’ poison, right now, as we talk—

DAVE
I’d tell you if I knew. So, what, that’s how everybody died? Overdose?

The Detective says nothing and flips open the manila envelope. He fans out FOUR PHOTOGRAPHS. One is a mug shot of a young black guy. Dreadlocks. The others are a collage of red. He points to the mugshot.

DETECTIVE
What about that guy? You know him?

DAVE
He was there. Whatever John was on, this guy gave it to him. John told me.

DETECTIVE
That’s Bruce Matthews. Runs an amateur unlicensed pharmaceuticals operation on the corner of 30th and Lexington.
Dave nods toward the red photos. The first picture is just LUMPS on the floor, on carpet, a wet, purplish black. It looks like somebody has tossed down a bucket of raw steaks and chicken bones. The next picture is a close-up of one wall, deep red splatters over half the surface area, occasional bits of meat stuck here and there.

**DAVE**
And those?

The detective points to the mug shot of the “Jamaican.”

**DETECTIVE**
Before.

He points to the red-drenched pictures.

**DETECTIVE (CONT’D)**
After.

Dave turns his eyes away, suddenly sweating heavily as the Detective stares him down.

**DAVE**
What could even do that to a person? A bomb? Some kind of-

**DETECTIVE**
Nothing you know how to do, I’m sure of that. Maybe somethin’ not, uh, not within our bounds of familiarity. What I need from you is-

The door slams open and the detective’s words trail off as a heavy-set COP rushes in and whispers in his ear. The Detective’s eyebrows shoot up and the two of them quickly exit the room. Outside the door we can hear a commotion, hurried SHOUTS and feet shuffling on floor tile.

The Detective storms back into the room, eyes wide.

**DETECTIVE (CONT’D)**
Your friend is dead.

We hear a sound...CLICK! A voice recorder, clicking off.

**INT. THEY CHINA FOOD! RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

Arnie grumbles an apology, fishes out a NEW BATTERY and goes about changing it. Dave glances over at Arnie’s discarded notebook, notices that he has abandoned his note-taking just after the words “Three-Arm Sally.”
ARNIE
...got your cell phone bill, did it list the call you got at Denny's?

DAVE
What? I'm sorry.

ARNIE
The call you got from your friend at Denny's when your friend was sitting there next to you without a phone. Was that call on your cell phone bill?

DAVE
Not that kind of service plan.

Arnie scratches his head, knits a question with his eyebrows.

ARNIE
So the black stuff, this "Soy Sauce," it's a drug, right?

DAVE
Well, I'll get to that.

ARNIE
And it makes you smarter? When you take it, it lets you read minds and all that?

DAVE
Not really. It heightens your senses. I think. I don't know. When you're on it, it's like overload, like if you hooked your car radio up to one of those interplanetary SETI antennas. You get shit from all over the place, can see things you shouldn't be able to, but I don't think it would help you do your taxes.

ARNIE
And you still got some of this stuff?

Arnie glances furtively down at the silver cannister.

DAVE
I'm getting to that.

ARNIE
You're on it right now? That's how you did the thing with the, uh, with the coins and the dream and all that earlier?
DAVE
Yeah. I took some today. It’s fading though.

ARNIE
So the effects don’t last that long.

DAVE
The side effects don’t last that long. The effects will last the rest of my life, I think.

Close on Dave.

DAVE V.O
Maybe longer.

Arnie scratches his forehead.

ARNIE
So, the kids that died, this is that rave overdose, right? I remember all that a couple years ago, seein’ it in the news. They thought they had gotten ahold of some tainted Ecstasy or somethin’ like that? So you were the guy that--

DAVE
--something like that.

ARNIE
And if I contact this Detective Appleton, he’ll remember talking to you?

DAVE
Good luck finding him.

Arnie scribbles some notes, then pauses.

DAVE (CONT’D)
So? What do you think?

ARNIE
I think you’ve probably got a book here, if you flesh it out a little.

DAVE
A book?! Meaning a work of fiction? Meaning it’s all bullshit?

Arnie shrugs.
ARNIE
A story is a story. I’m just a feature reporter, so the fact that you think it happened is my story. You know, I don’t remember leaving the house with any change in my pocket. You could have slipped those coins to me.

DAVE
Without you feeling it? And the thing with your dream? Come on, Arnie.

DAVE V.O
Gotta love the skeptic, mon.

ARNIE
I think you’re trying to be one of those mentalists, like that Dr. Albert Marconi on TV.

DAVE
Dr. Marconi may be theatrical...but believe me, he’s not an act.

ARNIE
Well I saw Marconi’s show in Vegas and your story seems to be a lot of the same kind of hocus pocus to me. And, you know, one time I saw this other guy, a sleight-of-hand artist who, as part of his show, would call somebody out of the audience and steal the glasses right off their face. No kidding. He’d send the poor sap back to their seat and they’d be squinting around, tryin’ to figure out why they couldn’t see all of a sudden.

Arnie looks Dave directly in the eye.

ARNIE (CONT’D)
There’s no magic, Mr. Wong. Just knowing tricks the other guy doesn’t know about. I can make myself invisible just by standin’ behind ya.

Dave stands up.

DAVE
Come with me. I wanna show you somethin’.

ARNIE
Where are we going?
DAVE
Just out to my truck.

Dave gets up and moves to the door. They make their way out to Dave’s Bronco in the parking lot.

EXT. THEY CHINA FOOD! PARKING LOT – NIGHT

Dave approaches the rear and drops the tailgate, revealing a white sheet covering a LARGE BOX the size of one of those plastic portable dog carriers.

DAVE
What’s the weirdest thing you’ve ever seen, Arnie?

Arnie grins, looking over the box. Like a damn kid at Christmas.

ARNIE
Well, one time I was down in my basement and there’s just a bare light bulb and out of the corner of my eye, you know, it sort of looked like my shadow back there was movin’ without me. It was just for a second and like I said, it was just one of those tricks of light you get out the corner of your eye. But I tell ya, I didn’t go back down there until it was broad daylight out.

DAVE
I need you to get in that mindset, Arnie. We’re out here, in public with lights on and the whole world’s solid and lined up real neat. But down in that basement, in the dark, alone, you believed in things. Dark things. I need you to open yourself up like that. Okay? Ready?

Arnie nods and Dave throws back the sheet. Long pause.

DAVE (CONT’D)
Do you see it?

ARNIE
No. Or, you know, it’s an empty cage.

DAVE
Turn your head, so you’re looking at me.

(MORE)
You should see the box out the corner of your eye, just like the shadow in the basement.

ARNIE
Okay.

Arnie’s grin is fading. He is losing patience fast.

DAVE
You ever go in the bathroom at night, Arnie, and for a second, you glimpse something in the mirror other than your reflection?

ARNIE
Let’s go back inside, okay? Your story was more interesting.

Dave grabs Arnie by the lapels of his coat and gets in his face.

DAVE
You’re going to die, Arnie. Some day, you will face that moment. And at that moment either you will face complete non-existence, or you will face something even stranger.

Arnie’s face stiffens as Dave’s words sink in.

DAVE (CONT’D)
On an actual day in the future, you will be in the unimaginable, Arnie. It is physically impossible to avoid it. Think about that, right now. Set your mind on it.

Silence, for a few seconds. Arnie nods a little, takes a deep breath.

ARNIE
Okay.

DAVE
Now, without turning your head, look at the box.

Arnie does and instantly recoils, yelps, stumbles and finally falls on his ass.

ARNIE
(gasps)
Oh, shit! Shit!! What the shit is that? Sh-shit! Shit!
Dave throws the sheet back over the box, closes up the Bronco. Arnie scrambles to his feet and quickly backs up pointing at the Bronco.

**ARNIE (CONT’D)**

How did you do that? And what the fuck was that thing? What the fuck?

**DAVE**

There’s no name for it in this world. Pretty freaky, isn’t it?

**ARNIE**

You—you made me see something. Something out of my own head. You freaked me out so I would see something.

**DAVE**

No, it’s really there. I’m surprised you saw it so easy. You must have an open mind. Most people don’t see it that fast, unless they’re stoned or drunk.

Arnie keeps stepping back, muttering.

**DAVE (CONT’D)**

I want to tell the rest of the story, Arnie. I need to. I need to get it out. But you need to take it for what it is. The truth. Are you ready to do that?

Arnie looks at Dave with uncertainty, then nods.

**ARNIE**

Okay. Until I figure it out for real, okay.

**DAVE**

Eh, that’ll have to do. Come on.

Arnie takes a deep breath as Dave leads him back toward the restaurant. (Breakdown Services - Casting - Partial Draft)

**DAVE (CONT’D)**

Anyway, so the cop comes in and tells me John is dead...

INT. POLICE STATION INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Dave is out of his chair and halfway to the door.

**DAVE**

“Wha-how??!”
The cop stops him cold with a stiff-arm to the chest.

DETECTIVE
Now calm down. He went into a convulsion or somethin’ and his pulse stopped but–now listen to me here—we got ambulances, they’ll be here in thirty seconds. We got Vinny doin’ CPR on him. Vinny’s a lifeguard in his off hours. That boy’s in the hands of people who know what they’re doin’.

Dave knocks the hand away from his chest. The white cop drops his arms and steps toward them. The Detective’s lips peel back slightly to reveal gritted teeth.

DETECTIVE (CONT’D)
Here’s what you’re gonna do, son, you’re gonna wait here. I’ll be back in five minutes and you are gonna start telling me the truth. I am gonna get to the bottom of this case and if you obstruct me you will live the rest of your days wishing you had not.

The Detective turns and exits the room. Dave stands there, lost, listening to the confusion of SHOUTS and controlled panic outside. The SIREN of an ambulance can be heard. A tear rolls down his cheek.

Dave’s cell phone chirps. Dave looks toward Officer Liddy, now standing placidly in the middle of the room blocking his path to the door. He gestures toward his pocket as if to ask if he minds. The cop says nothing. Dave answers the phone.

DAVE
Yeah.

JOHN
Dave? This is John.

DAVE
What?! Did you get out?

JOHN
Yes and no. Are you still at the police station?

DAVE
Yeah. We were both–

JOHN
Have I died yet?

A long pause from Dave’s end.
JOHN (CONT’D)
Dave? Can you hear me?

DAVE
Um, yeah. I–everybody ran out of the room. They said you had–

JOHN
No, there’s no time to explain all this. Leave the police station, right now, during the commotion. They’ll have EMT’s hauling my body out, lots of people will be standing around, looking. Just walk out. Don’t run, that’ll attract attention. Just calmly walk out, like your business is done there. Nobody will stop you. Trust me. Also, is there any way you can steal my body? No, probably not. Never mind. We’ll have to work around that. Okay, have you reached the sidewalk yet?

DAVE
No, I’m still standing in the room. I can’t leave.

Dave lowers his voice to a whisper.

DAVE (CONT’D)
There’s a guy still in here with me, another cop.

JOHN
No, there’s not. Check the mirror.

Dave hangs there in utter confusion for a few seconds, then looks to his left. In the mirror, Dave is standing there talking on his cell, COMPLETELY ALONE. Dave looks directly at the cop, then in the mirror, back to the cop. The cop suddenly moves in his direction.

DAVE
I don’t get it.

JOHN
He’s not real, Dave. Not in the, uh, traditional sense.

DAVE
(backing up)
He’s coming toward me.
JOHN
Just go. Just walk out. You’re gonna start seeing things like this from time to time. It’s important that you not freak out.

The cop is just one step away now. His mustache twitches, as if he is starting to grin underneath it.

DAVE
So he, uh, can’t hurt me?

JOHN
Oh, I’m pretty sure he can.

A hand darts out and clenches Dave’s face. The cop’s fingers dig into Dave’s cheeks, squeezing. He shoves Dave back and slams him hard against the wall. Dave claws at the cop’s arm, then hauls off and smacks him across the nose with his cell phone.

The cop keeps his grip on Dave and jerks him in close. Face-to-face, Dave notices the COP’S MUSTACHE TWITCHES again as if this amuses him greatly. To Dave’s horror, the mustache keeps twitching and then one end of it begins to CURL UP AND PEEL OFF. Finally the MUSTACHE DETACHES completely, leaving a patch of PINK, SHREDDED SKIN.

The MUSTACHE THING flaps its halves like bat wings—flies over and lands right on Dave’s face. G. Gordon Liddy’s mustache bites Dave above the right eyebrow!

Dave howls and slaps at the thing with his left hand, then, with all his strength, shoves a knee into the detective’s guts just below the ribs.

The mustache bat flitters over to Dave’s ear and clamps down. Dave yelps and slaps at it again. The cop still has hold of Dave by the neck so Dave lifts his knee and puts his boot on the guy’s neck. With all his strength Dave kicks down and yanks at the same time, when suddenly, to his amazement...

THE COP’S ARM TEARS OFF AT THE SHOULDER!!

The cop has a six-inch BLOODY HOLE on one shoulder now.

The DETACHED ARM, on its own, suddenly WHIPS around Dave’s neck and coils around it like a python. No hint of bone in there now! The arm makes two muscular loops around until the ragged stump hangs under his chin like a meat scarf.

Dave thrashes around, tries to pry the thing off. The arm snake is all muscle, tensed and wiry, slowly constricting off his windpipe. The mustache bat flits around Dave’s head, taking stinging little bites here and there.
Relentlessly, the cop stands up from the floor, reaches for Dave with his remaining arm. Dave opens the door and flings himself out of the room—

INT. POLICE STATION HALLWAY - DAY

—and it is over! The thick bundle of armsnake has vanished from Dave’s neck, as has the flying mustache!

Dave stands up shakily, sees four GUYS hustling down the hall with an EMPTY STRETCHER. Dave sticks his finger in his mouth, it comes out BLOODY. His cell phone is still in his hand but cracked with a busted mouthpiece from its tour as a nose club.

As people rush past him, Dave gets it together and strolls back through the police station, finally walking right out the front door.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Dave walks, heart pounding. A FAT MAN in a shiny business suit strides by and time begins to DISTORT as Dave looks at him.

DAVE V.O
I realized that this man would die in just two weeks, a heart attack while trying to knock his cat out of a tree with a broomstick.

Time still distorted, Dave watches a 1998 Trans-Am gleam past in the street with two YOUNG MEN driving.

DAVE V.O (CONT’D)
I could tell from the posture of the driver that the car was stolen and that its owner was dead. The fan belt would break in 26,931 miles.

Dave rubs his temple.

DAVE
Man, I gotta focus on one thing at a time or my brain’s gonna melt and run out of my ears like strawberry jam.

Dave takes a deep breath and time comes back to normal. He is startled as is cell phone rings. He puts the broken thing to his ear.
JOHN (ON PHONE)
Dave? It’s me. Where are you right now, Dave?

DAVE
I’m on the sidewalk outside the cop shop, walking. Where are you? Heaven?

JOHN
When you hear a song on the radio, where is the song?

DAVE
What? What? John...

JOHN
Just keep walking. Go toward the park. Don’t freak out. Are you freaking out?

DAVE
I don’t know. I can’t believe this phone still works.

JOHN
The hot dog guy should be just ahead, maybe half a block. See him?

Dave walks a dozen steps and sees a CART with a yellow and orange UMBRELLA hanging over it. The HOT DOG GUY is painfully thin, looks about a hundred and sixty years old.

DAVE
Okay.

JOHN
Buy a bratwurst from him.

Dave steps up and buys a brat wrapped in a hot dog bun with a sheet of wax paper for $3.15. Dave continues walking along the sidewalk toward the park.

DAVE
Okay. I have the bratwurst.

JOHN
Put it up to your head.

Pause.

DAVE
I’m going to have to ask you why, John.

JOHN
I have to show you something.
Dave shrugs, glances around, and trying to be as inconspicuous as possible, lays the sausage against his ear.

JOHN
Dave? Can you hear me?

John’s voice, comes clear as day through the tube of seasoned meat. Dave glances down at the cell phone and gets the point. The cell phone display is black, the GLASS BUSTED out of it. A green circuit board is poking out of one side.

DAVE
All right, all right. I’m hearing you through some kind of psychic vibration or whatever and not the phone. I get it. You could have just told me that.

JOHN
I can’t get you through the cell any more. You have to talk through the bratwurst from now on. Sorry.

Dave rubs his eyes, exhausted.

JOHN (CONT’D)
The only reason you can hear me is because you got some of the Soy Sauce into your system, from the syringe. But it’s not very much and it won’t last long.

DAVE
What is that stuff, John? The Sauce...it was alive. I swear it–

JOHN
Listen. You gotta get over to Robert’s place. There aren’t any cops there now, but there will be. We have sort of a narrow window here. Take a cab to Wally’s and get your car, then go to Shire Village on Lathrop Avenue. It’s a trailer park, south of town.

DAVE
I don’t have any cash. I had five bucks and I just spent three of it on the bratwurst.

JOHN
That bratwurst cost three bucks? Holy crap. Okay. Give me a second. All right. Check between the sausage and the bun.

(MORE)
You’ll find a hundred dollar bill folded up in there.

Dave examines the bratwurst bun, finds nothing.

DAVE
There’s no money in the bratwurst.
Just a piece of lettuce.

JOHN
Oh, okay. Do you have your ATM card?

CUT TO:

EXT. SHIRE VILLAGE TRAILER PARK - DAY - LATER
Dave’s Bronco pulls into a run-down trailer park.

INT. BRONCO - DAY
Dave puts the bratwurst to his head.

DAVE
John?

Dave is greeted with a burst of static, but then John’s voice comes in, fainter than before.

JOHN
Dave?

DAVE
Yeah.

JOHN
What, did you drive under a bridge just now?

DAVE
No. We’re at the trailer park. Finally. Which one is Robert’s?

Static again. Then:

JOHN
It’s wearing off. Don’t talk, just listen. Go inside and-

Static.

JOHN (CONT’D)
—and as long as you absolutely remember not to do that, you’ll be fine. Good luck.
DAVE

What? John, I didn’t catch the–

Dead. The voice is gone, the static is gone. Up ahead one TRAILER stands out. YELLOW POLICE TAPE all around it.

INT. ROBERT MARLEY’S TRAILER - DAY

Dave is in the doorway as the trailer door swings open. He cautiously enters. The blood and guts have been cleaned up. The carpet is still discolored and the walls are forever stained a faded reddish-brown. There is a sofa and a chair pocked with cigarette burns. Dave glances into the open kitchenette, then turns and walks to the other end. He reaches the bedroom and pushes open the door.

It’s dark and empty. All the windows are covered with foil. Against the wall is a TELEVISION and what looks like yard compost with something like twigs sticking out. Dave is startled to see the TV click on.

ONScreens - Static...and then a shot of the interior of the empty trailer. Dave looks closely at it. Suddenly a FIGURE appears walking into the trailer living room. Dave looks intently and suddenly realizes the figure is HIMSELF!!

Dave investigates the back of the TV, looking for a tape or DVD player. He finds the power cord but it’s just hanging off the ground - THE TV IS NOT PLUGGED IN!!

As Dave pokes around the back of the TV, we can see the screen go to static and the bizarre image of the “Static Man” watching him appears! Oblivious, Dave notices that the back panel of the TV has been removed and a strip of what looks like RED SEAWEED leads out of it and into a large, DEAD FISH. The gut of the fish has been slit open and bulging out of it is a pink, WET MASS. Close to it is an AQUARIUM TANK filled with a thick, yellowish substance and at the bottom is a wrinkled GRAYISH MASS that could be a human brain or possibly a meatloaf. It is all connected, everything in the pile, by tendons and tissue. It’s some kind of MEAT MACHINE!

ONScreens

As Dave looks back at the TV screen the image is back to a shot of the living room again, only now onscreen Dave is in a conversation with another figure who SUDDENLY DRAWS A GUN AND SHOOTS ONSCREEN DAVE! Onscreen Dave slumps to the ground.

Dave is stunned watching these events unfold when suddenly...Thump. A faint sound, from the other end of the trailer. Dave steps into the hall. Nothing. THUMP. A heavy sound, violent. Dave moves toward the kitchen. He looks around the counter, floor and appliances. Nothing. Dead silence.
Dave gently reaches for a kitchen KNIFE on the butcher’s block when- THUMP. The refrigerator. THUMP. No. The freezer section at the top. The little door up there rattles with the sound, like it was bumped- THUMP.

With one last thump, the freezer door flies open. A round, frosty LUMP the size of a coffee can tumbles out of the freezer, falls to the floor, and rolls to a stop in front of Dave. He suddenly bolts for the exit. As Dave reaches for the front door knob he glances out the window and sees...

POV - OUT TRAILER WINDOW OF TRAILER PARK

... a SEDAN parked out there where none had been before. Plain white, but too many antennas. Cop car. Somebody getting out. The Detective.

Dave spins around, searching for a back exit and sees a SLIM DOOR leading out of the kitchen. However, it means stepping over the possessed Jar which is now sitting on the linoleum, steaming faintly, rocking back and forth. Dave can now see that the thing is a bundle of duct tape, something wrapped in frosty layer after layer of the stuff.

A look back outside. His cop friend is surveying the exterior of the trailer. Dave drops to the floor.

Pock! A hollow snapping sound, from the freezer Jar. The thing hops an inch off the floor and so does Dave when he hears the sound. It does it again, jumps higher. Something trying to punch its way out from inside- Snap. Ka-chunk. POCK! POCK!! POCK!!! There is a bulge now on the side of the container, strands of duct tape fibers popping out in the center. Fear keeps Dave’s ass velcroed to the carpet. The Jar convulses, and...

FOONT! The Jar erupts, ejaculates, gives birth in a cloud of stringy tape bits. A shotgun-hole blows out from the guts of the can and a little blur of an object zips out and bounces off the paneled wall above Dave. This offspring falls to the carpet, bounces and lands next to his shoe. A little shiny METAL CANISTER, the size of a pill bottle. Not moving or growling or glowing. Just sitting. Waiting.

Dave looks at the little metal vial. Dave raises his foot to kick the vial away, then reconsideres.

DAVE V.O.
You know what’s in there, right?
Nope. No idea. You know Robert had a stash of the shit, and if he had a stash, he couldn’t just cram it under his bed. That black shit moves. It has a will, an attitude. It bites. And then I realized, all at once, what I had come here for. John led me here, of course.

(MORE)

Breakdown Services - Casting - Partial Draft
DAVE V.O. (CONT'D)
When I was on the stuff, that little hit in my thigh, I could communicate with the dead, with John. When it wore off, I could not. My one chance to save John lay inside this bottle. It was decided, then. Just like that.

Dave picks up the bottle, it’s cold as an ice cube. He finds a seam and twists the top half off. Out tumble two tiny, COLD PEBBLES. Perfect and black in his palm, like two coal-flavored Tic-Tacs.

DAVE V.O. (CONT'D)
And what is it you’re doing, exactly? For all you know, this stuff oozed out of a crashed meteorite. You’ve found it in the home of a dead man, after following a trail of dead bodies to get here. So go ahead, put it right in your mouth, dipshit.

Dave sees the capsules sitting innocently in the palm of his hand and then—SEES THEM MOVE, wriggling in his hand like a couple of fat, black maggots! Dave flings them to the carpet.

ON THE CARPET
- the things twist, change, grow tiny little black LIMBS. Two flat appendages grow out of one of them, begin to twitch, move, flap. A blur now. Wings. The thing makes a terrible, insectile fluttering sound against the carpet. Then, the Tic-Tac launches itself at Dave, a faint, dark streak. Dave doesn’t realize his mouth is hanging open until ...WHAP! In an instant the thing has shot into his mouth! Dave coughs, hacks, convulses and swallows!

Dave opens his eyes, looks desperately for the other one. Hard to spot on the dark carpet— There! It buzzes, it flies. So fast it vanishes from sight. Dave clamps his lips shut, slaps his hand over his mouth for good measure. The thing lands on his left cheek and Dave swats it with his free hand. He suppresses a scream, brings his hand away from his face and finds it bloody.

DAVE V.O.
OH SON OF A MOTHERFUCK THE FUCKING SOY SAUCE IS DIGGING A FUCKING HOLE INTO MY FUCKING FACE!

Dave falls flat on the floor, thrashing and rolling like a seizure. His face and shirt are wet and sticky with blood.
DAVE V.O. (CONT’D)
I’ll throw myself at the cop and beg him to take me to the emergency room, to pump my stomach, to bring in an exorcist, to call in the Air Force to nuke this whole town into radioactive dust and bury it under sixty feet of concrete.

Footsteps can be heard, footsteps just outside the door. CU Dave’s eyes.

DAVE V.O. (CONT’D)
And then... calm. Almost Zen. That’s what came next, a complete, leveling inner cool...that Soy Sauce feeling.

The doorknob begins to turn.

DAVE V.O. (CONT’D)
I wanted to run, to duck, to act. But the body is a slow, wet mechanism of muscle and bone that creeped even as my mind flew. And so, just like that, I stepped outside of it.

ECU on Dave’s eyes as time stops. The second hand on the wall clock stops!

DAVE V.O. (CONT’D)
I had a full 1.78 seconds before the detective would step through the door. A supercomputer can do over a trillion mathematical equations in one second. To that machine, one second is an eternity. OK. Think.

Dave is pinned to the floor. A massive rushing sound is heard. Is it the blood flowing through him or...?

DAVE V.O. (CONT’D)
You are standing on the thin, cool crust of a gigantic ball of molten rock hurtling through frozen space. You’re in a situation that could threaten the nature of said existence on said molten ball, depending on which decision you make. But wait.

Visual Effect - Dave’s body, the entire trailer seems to be moving at an impossible speed, as if a tornado is blowing through.

Breakdown Services - Casting - Partial Draft
DAVE V.O. (CONT'D)
There are a shitload of subatomic
particles in the universe, each set
into outward motion at the moment
of the Big Bang. Thus, whether or
not you move your right arm now, or
nod your head, or choose to eat
Fruity Pebbles or Cornflakes next
Thursday morning, was all decided
at the moment the universe crashed
into existence seventeen billion
years ago. Thus it is physically
impossible for you to deviate— I
never finished this thought, as I
suddenly realized I was no longer
in the trailer.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Sun. Sand. The desert. Dave looks around, sees desert
spanning from horizon to horizon. God’s sandbox.

DAVE V.O.
Was I dead?

A chain link fence. Brown, dead grass. People around Dave, in
ash-coated rags like refugees. Dave sees a LITTLE GIRL
approach. She is deformed, filthy, a good chunk of her face
missing. One eye. Dave looks away and...

INT. FACTORY - NIGHT

White. And noise. Mechanical sounds, like being inside a car
engine. Dave is now in a large building, very clean, and a
MAN stands in front of him wearing a blue uniform, watching a
small computer screen near an assembly line of small
CARTRIDGES. A massive red sign reads “NO SMOKING OR OPEN
FLAME ON THE PRODUCTION FLOOR” with a cartoon explosion
underneath it. Dave steps forward toward the man.

DAVE
Uh, hey.

The guy stirs, turns. His eyes meet Dave’s. From the guy’s
POV we see that Dave is NOT THERE, just a phantasm. The man
shrugs and turns back to his monitor.

Dave scans the large room full of people at various machines.
None of them can see him.

DAVE V.O.
I was there, but I was not there. I
looked down and could not see my
feet.

(MORE)
DAVE V.O. (CONT'D)
You’re out of your body, my friend, floating in the breeze. Your feet are still in the trailer.

INT. ROBERT MARLEY’S TRAILER - DAY

And in a blink, Dave is back in the trailer, on the floor. He breathes a sigh of relief, as...

The cop steps through the door and stops cold at the sight of Dave. Dave climbs awkwardly to his feet with his hand on his bloody face. Dave notices the man holds two red plastic GASOLINE CANS. The Detective sets the gas cans at his feet, lights a cigarette and smokes in silence.

DAVE
So, I suppose you’re wondering why I’m here.

He shakes his head slightly.

DETECTIVE
Same as everybody. You’re trying to figure out what in the name of Elvis is going on. Everybody ‘cept me. Me, I don’t even wanna know no more. I bet you’re wondering what I’m doing with these here gas cans.

He studies Dave’s bleeding face, then reaches into his pocket and hands him a handkerchief. Dave presses it to his cheek.

DAVE
Thank you. I, uh, fell. On a...drill.

The Detective picks up a gas can, unscrews the cap, and starts splashing the orange liquid around the living room. Dave watches, then takes a tentative step toward the door. In a blur the Detective whips his hand out of his jacket and suddenly there is a REVOLVER aimed right at Dave’s face.

DETECTIVE
You leavin’ already?

Dave puts his hands up in surrender and the Detective nods down toward the other gas can.

DETECTIVE (CONT’D)
Help me.

DAVE
I’ll be glad to. But first I want you to tell me what happened to my friend John.
DETECTIVE
Well, you know he’s gone, right?

DAVE
Meaning?

DETECTIVE
Just gone.

Dave very slowly picks up the gas can and removes the cap. The Detective puts his gun away. Dave soaks the couch.

DETECTIVE (CONT’D)
You know a kid named Justin White, Mr. Wong? High school kid?

DAVE
You asked me that back at the police station. I remember now. The Limp Bizkit kid - talks like he’s some kind of junior gangster. He’s one of the missing, right?

DETECTIVE
He’s the guy who called in the-the whatever happened here about four in the morning.

REALITY PEELS AWAY

CLOSE ON - Dave - (Visual Effect) as he can see reality peel away to reveal what’s in the cop’s mind...

EXT. ROBERT MARLEY’S TRAILER - PREVIOUS NIGHT

The Detective exits his car and sees YOUNG PEOPLE running away, peeling out in their cars. The Detective approaches the open trailer door.

INT. ROBERT MARLEY’S TRAILER - PREVIOUS NIGHT

He moves into the doorway and sees the BLOODY MESS and the PINK PILE of what’s left of the Rastafarian Drug Dealer. Wailing on the floor, on his hands and knees, is Justin White.

DETECTIVE V.O.
I thought he was stabbed in the gut or somethin' but I looked closer and there was something on him. All over Justin, his arms and his face.

Justin appears to be covered in THICK WHITE HAIRS, all over him, like little twisted bits of fishing line.
Justin is screaming in agony. Justin’s got his hands on the floor and the hairs are crawling up his fingers and wrists and up under his sleeves.

**DETECTIVE V.O. (CONT’D)**
And this stuff, whatever it is, it’s movin’, it’s alive. On one side of the room I got a guy sprayed all over the walls like he stepped on a land mine and then there’s this. I notice real fast that this swarm is oozing out from the pile of dead guy next to us.

The Detective turns and bolts out of the trailer.

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**51**
**EXT. TRAILER - COP CAR - PREVIOUS NIGHT**

The Detective runs out to his car and frantically grabs a CAN OF PEPPER SPRAY and then races back toward the trailer.

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**52**
**INT. ROBERT MARLEY’S TRAILER - PREVIOUS NIGHT**

The Detective sprints through the front door and stops in his tracks. Justin is standing there, perfectly fine - no sign of any infestation. He’s checking his hair in the mirror.

**JUSTIN**
What up 5-0?

**DETECTIVE V.O.**
Just like that. He’s standing there, no sign of these things nowhere, the bugs or whatever.

---

**53**
**INT. ROBERT MARLEY’S TRAILER - BACK TO PRESENT - NIGHT**

Back to present - Dave stares at the Detective.

**DAVE**
But you’re still gonna burn this place down?

**DETECTIVE**
That’s right.

**DAVE**
And you’re not gonna let me go.

The Detective is silent for a moment.
DETECTIVE
So, you understand my mood. You understand why I’m out committin’ felonies today. There are dark things happenin’ and I got the real lonely feeling like I’m the only one who knows, the only one who can do anything about it.

The Detective moves toward the door, blocking Dave’s exit. He sets the gas can down, almost empty now, and gestures to it.

DETECTIVE (CONT’D)
Pick it up, and toss it out the door, in the yard.

Dave hesitates and the detective puts his gun on him again. Dave does as he is asked. The Detective pulls out his lighter and flips the igniter. Standing there, a little yellow flame flickering in his hand, he says...

DETECTIVE (CONT’D)
You know, everybody’s got a ghost story, a UFO or a bigfoot story.

The Detective gazes into the lighter flame as he speaks, as if mesmerized. With a soft double-click his thumb pulls back the HAMMER of the gun.

DETECTIVE (CONT’D)
Now what I think, is that stuff is both real and not real at the same time. I ain’t no Star Trek fan and I don’t know about other dimensions and all that. But I am an old school Catholic and I do believe in Hell. I believe it ain’t just rapists and murderers down there; I believe its demons and worms and vile things, the grease trap of the universe. And the more I think of it, the more I think it’s not some place ‘down there’ at all, that it’s here, all around us. We just don’t perceive it. Just like how the country music radio station is out there, in the air, even if you ain’t tuned to it. But I think somehow, through some chemistry or magic or some voodoo, that Jamaican S.O.B. tuned into it, into Hell itself. With that, he opened the door. He became the door.

Dave nods, opens his mouth, then closes it again.

DETECTIVE (CONT’D)
And me, I intend to close it.
The Detective raises his gun, takes point blank aim at Dave and SHOOTS.

VISUAL EFFECT - ECU - slow motion - the BULLET exits the barrel of the gun.

ECU - Dave’s eyes - As the bullet travels toward him at 620 feet per second, Dave steps out of time and can see...

--- A shot of a production line as THOUSANDS OF .38 CARTRIDGES are fabricated. The camera pans by a sign which reads: Worthington Munitions. We focus on a SINGLE CARTRIDGE as it moves down the fabrication line. It passes the massive red sign we saw before which reads “NO SMOKING OR OPEN FLAME ON THE PRODUCTION FLOOR” with a cartoon explosion underneath it. 4

Suddenly, we see the SAME MAN IN THE SAME BLUE UNIFORM at the same factory from earlier. As previously, Dave calls to the man.

DAVE V.O.

Uh, hey.

As the man turns to look for “phantom” Dave...our cartridge passes into the machine that adds its pinch of gunpowder, and a HOUSEFLY crawls into the casing a split-second before the lead bullet is rammed into it.

--- The now-defective bullet is dropped into a box, packaged and sealed.

--- At the Police Station the Detective opens the new ammo box and slides the defective shell into his revolver, slaps the cylinder shut.

We cut back to the slow motion bullet as it streaks across the room and punches hard into Dave’s sternum. Still in slow motion, the impact knocks Dave backward - but the defective bullet, unable to penetrate his sternum, ricochets off the bone, bounces off the wall and tumbles to the floor by Dave.

Black. And then a FLUMPH sound, like a lit gas grill. Dave’s eyes blink open. How much time has passed?

Dave feels a wet bloody patch right in the middle of his shirt, winces with the pain. Dave coughs and rolls over on his side.
He fingers the hole in his shirt and realizes there is no hole in his sternum. Dave raises his head and sees the COUCH IS A BONFIRE, the entire living room in flames.

Dave looks over and sees the TV. The “STATIC MAN” PEERS OUT of the tube, watching him.

Dave bolts, crawling on hands and knees. The smoke is filling up the room fast. He scrambles down the hall. The place is like an oven, a blast furnace. He crawls into the kitchen, looks back and sees the fire racing toward him. He lowers his head to the linoleum, a few inches of fresh air down there.


Dave is flung backward and finds himself looking at the grill of a car, his car, Ford Bronco symbol inches from his face. The car reverses itself and wrenches free of the wreckage that had been the kitchen wall. There is now a rupture, frayed with tufts of insulation and shredded aluminum siding. Dave flings himself out of the hole, falls onto the cool grass outside.

57

EXT. ROBERT MARLEY’S TRAILER - DAY

Dave coughs and starts to pass out, the trailer a roiling fireball behind him. Dave hears a DOG BARK.

VOICE
David? You alive?

That voice again, from nowhere. Dave struggles to his feet, sees his Bronco sitting about twenty feet away, and to his amazement, at the wheel is Molly the Dog!! Dave stares at this for a good moment. He staggers to his feet and stumbles to the car, gets in.

58

INT. DAVE’S BRONCO IN TRAILER PARK - DAY

He shoves the dog over and sits behind the wheel. Dave throws the car into gear and burns rubber out of there. He powers out onto the highway, loses control, then veers over to the shoulder and stops behind some trees. Dave collects himself, checking his extremities for injuries.

DAVE
Okay, I know for a fact you didn’t drive my car just now, cause if you did, then I am officially certifiable.
Molly whimpers and Dave pets her. She nuzzles him affectionately. Somewhat delirious, Dave talks to Molly.

DAVE (CONT’D)
You know, if you and I could find your owner, we’d score some real points. Girls love it when you return their lost pets to ‘em. Amy’s pretty cute and I think I’m kind of into her. I’m not even freaked about her stump...it’s sorta cool in a weird way. I remember the injury, when she lost her hand in junior high school. I never should have made that joke at the party.

Dave starts up the car again, drives.

INT. BRONCO DRIVING - DAY

Molly suddenly barks. Dave looks over at the dog and suddenly realizes with mild, exhausted amusement that with a little attention he can understand Molly.

DOG
Woof!
Meat!

Dave notices the bratwurst still on the dash.

DOG (CONT’D)
Woof! Woof!
Meat! Tube meat!

Dave grabs the bratwurst and sets it on the seat next to her. She sniffs it, barks. Dave turns and her big brown eyes are looking right into his.

DOG (CONT’D)
Woof!
David!
Woof! Woof!
You understand me? This is John.

Dave decides to roll with it.

DAVE
Uh... hello.

DOG
Woof!
We’re in big fuckin’ trouble, Dave.
DAVE
No shit, fluffy. How did you work the pedals?

DOG
Woof!
You can hear me so I guess you took the Soy Sauce. Why? Didn’t I tell you not to? And what happened to your face?

DAVE
Your second question answers your first. So. What up, dog?

The dog stares at Dave for several seconds before replying,

DOG
Rrrrruff!
Here’s what I know. There are two people still alive from last night other than me. Fred Chu and your girlfriend Amy – yeah I know you like her. But I don’t know a whole lot else because my own body ain’t workin’ so well. I know we’re all together, he’s got us, and we’re on the move. I do know that once we get where we’re goin’, something bad is gonna happen.

DAVE
Wait. You’re with Amy? And who’s got you?

DOG
Arrr-ooof!
Justin White, or the thing that used to be Justin. He stole a vehicle, some kind of truck.

DAVE
So that’s four still alive, including Justin.

DOG
Woof!
Justin White ain’t alive. He’s a walking... hive or whatever. There’s nothin’ left of Justin inside him. In a couple days, Justin will hatch just like the Jamaican did.

Visual Effect of clouds of white fuzz swarming out of the exploded Jamaican’s corpse.
DOG (CONT’D)
Anybody in the vicinity when that happens will become a spawning pod thing. Dave, the last world these things showed up in was saturated within one hundred days. Don’t ask me how I know that, neither, because I don’t know.

DAVE
I got another question. Everybody who took the Soy Sauce is dead or comatose. Except me.

DOG
“Grr....Woof! Ruff...”
You got a little taste of it before getting a full dose, so you were probably able to adjust. But you should have figured out by now, Dave... you don’t choose the Soy Sauce. The Soy Sauce chooses you. If it can’t use you, it kills you. But from what I hear, it plays with you first. Meat! Meatmeatmeat!

Molly starts wolfing the bratwurst off the seat.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVE’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

60

Dave pushes through his front door, heads for his bedroom. He finds an old nylon duffel bag and tosses an armload of clothes and stuff into it. He throws on a clean shirt, turns and moves quickly back down the hall and stops cold. Standing in the living room, blocking his path is Justin White. Their eyes meet and Justin smiles.

DAVE
Justin?

Justin opens his mouth and emits a RUMBLING SOUND, like something boiling up from his lungs. He closes it again, gathers himself and says brightly...

JUSTIN
Dude. I need ya to come roll with me, yo. Know what I’m sayin’?

DAVE
Where uh, are we going, Justin?

Dave casually reaches his hand back toward his waistband, where his gun is waiting.
JUSTIN
Why you frontin’ here, bro? You
know what time it is. Stop callin’
me Justin like nothin’s changed,
yo.

DAVE
What should I call you, homey?

JUSTIN
Just call me ‘Shitload.’ Because
there’s a shitload of us in here.
Now I know you strapped. But before
you think about pullin’ that nine
mill I think you better hear what I
gots to...

The left side of Justin’s scalp disappears in a SPRAY OF PINK
BRAIN MATTER. Justin is thrown backwards, Dave’s finger
squeezing the trigger as fast as it can twitch, gunshots
shattering the air. Bursts of blood flick out from Justin’s
chest and thighs and gut, shots landing and backing him
across the room. He stumbles and falls against a wall, but
never goes down. The gun clicks dry, but Dave squeezes the
trigger about twenty more times just to be sure. Justin
rights himself, looks down at his wounds, sighs like a man
who has dropped his pie in his lap.

JUSTIN (CONT’D)
As I was sayin’ yo, your little
nine is useless against–

His words are cut off when the empty gun Dave hurls at him
smacks off his cheek, knocking him backwards once more.

JUSTIN (CONT’D)
Son of a bitch. Cut that shit out.
Listen to me.

As he speaks, Dave looks around for something else to throw,
finds nothing.

DAVE
Okay. I’m listening, Shitload.

JUSTIN
We’re takin’ a trip, dude.

Dave can’t take his eyes off Shitload’s GAPING HEAD WOUND. We
can see movement there, a crawling white fuzz over the
exposed meat, like his innards are growing gray hair.

DAVE
Uh, I don’t think that’s gonna
happen.
Justin moves toward Dave. Dave can see now that the WHITE HAIRS are stitching up each of Justin’s wounds.

Dave throws a flailing punch that misses by a foot. The Justinmonster fires out a low punch, the impact exploding in Dave’s groin. Dave doubles over and collapses to the carpet. Dave then quickly pushes himself back to his feet. Dave takes another swing at him, misses—Justin punches Dave again. In the crotch. Dave falls backward, catches himself on a kitchen chair, then picks it up and swings it. Dave cracks the chair over Justin’s shoulder. Justin shrugs it off and in a blur throws three more rabbit punches that each landed solidly on Dave’s balls. Dave goes down and stays down.

Darkness, barking and footsteps. Dave comes to consciousness to find Molly’s wet nose in his face.

INT. BEER TRUCK - NIGHT

A door clangs shut, a latch clicks into place. Dave opens his eyes, to see stacked cardboard boxes bearing beer logos. Sitting on one stack is a very pale and shaky Amy, scratched and dirty, wearing the same outfit from the party. Molly is curled up on the floor beside her. Sitting across a row of green Heineken cases is Fred Chu.

The engine starts and they are jolted into motion. Dave raises his head and looks around the dim cargo area. Sitting in the corner, cross-legged and wearing hospital pajamas, is John! He stares intently at the wall, not blinking.

FRED
We heard the shots. Are you the one who hurt him? I saw his head.

DAVE
I was aiming for his heart but, yeah, I did get him.

AMY
Good.

FRED
Can he be killed?

DAVE
Look, I don’t know—

FRED
I mean, you gotta understand what’s happenin’ here. The guy who attacked you, he ain’t no man, okay? He’s been invaded by body snatchers.

Dave shakily gets to his feet.
DAVE
Yeah, I pieced that together. Where the hell is he taking us?

Amy peeks out a crack in the wall of the truck.

AMY
We’re on Highway 59 – he said something about the old Mall.

FRED
Christ, the Mall of the Dead? Why there?

Dave turns his attention to John.

DAVE
How long has John been like this? I mean, does he ever say anything?

AMY
He mumbles. But he hasn’t moved since he was brought in.

Dave shuffles over to John.

DAVE
Wake up.

Nothing. Dave nudges John with his foot.

DAVE (CONT’D)
Wake up, asshole. Look, you started this. Now wake up.

A soft voice comes from behind Dave.

AMY
Hey.

Dave turns and Amy’s eyes meet his. He tries to come up with something clever.

DAVE
Uh, I found your dog.

AMY
I know. Thanks.

Dave decides to “man up” and gently puts his arm around Amy.

DAVE
Listen, I’ll get us out of here. Don’t worry. John’s got a plan.

Shot of catatonic John.

Breakdown Services - Casting - Partial Draft
AMY
Was that before he fell into the coma, or after. Or did I miss something?

DAVE
Well, uh..

Dave notices Molly nuzzling John’s frozen body and sees John’s hand reach over to pet the dog. There is a JOLT through John’s body, like an electrical shock. Suddenly John is on his feet, confused, looking at his hands like he was surprised to have them. He spots Dave.

JOHN
Dave, where are we?

DAVE
On our way to that abandoned mall on Highway 59.

JOHN
Yeah, that’s the place. Man, I thought I was a dog. And Amy, Dave’s really into you. I think he told me, or he told the dog.

Dave punches John hard in the shoulder.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Ow! Did you say we were going to the mall or that we were coming back from it?

DAVE
Going.

JOHN
Oh, yeah, that’s right, cause Fred’s alive.

FRED
What!?

JOHN
Oh, nuthin’. Nevermind. Oh, have I got a headache.

DAVE
Look, John, cut the shit. That thing up there in the cockpit is real, real as any of us—and it can make us really dead. Now does anyone understand what it wants with us?
FRED
Well, we were talking about that. Amy thinks he eats human flesh to survive. I believe he’s making a suit of human skin, using the best parts from each of us.

JOHN
Holy crap. He’ll be gorgeous.

Dave sighs, rubs his forehead with both hands.

DAVE
Nooooo. It’s none of that. Look, you know the story of the Trojan horse? A few soldiers get inside the enemy camp riding in this big horse statue? Well, that drug the Jamaican was on, it let something through. Robert became the horse. And those things, the white flying wormy things, they came through. Now they’re in Justin and now he’s looking to open the gate and let their buddies in.

AMY
How do you possibly know that?

DAVE
I pieced it together through inductive reasoning and information relayed to me by John whilst talking through the dog there.

Amy nods, as if this answer was proper and expected.

DAVE (CONT’D)
John, how much alcohol does liquor have to have in it before it’ll burn?

JOHN
Anything over eighty proof. Those two boxes over there and that white box in the corner will make nice firebombs. Fred’s flannel shirt should make good wicks.

AMY
What have you got in mind?

JOHN
When that Jusin-thing opens this door, I say we set his bitch ass on fire.

Breakdown Services - Casting - Partial Draft
Later - Half a dozen full MOLOTOV COCKTAILS are lined up near the rear door, each with a fuse of wet cloth jutting out. John finishes the last one.

JOHN (CONT'D)
If I die, I want you to tell everybody I died in the coolest way possible.

AMY
Um, yeah, if I don’t come back, there’s a loose floorboard under my bed. There’s a diary I need retrieved and burned so my mom doesn’t find it.

DAVE
Consider it done.

John and Amy look to Fred.

FRED
Bring it on. I got no regrets.

John then looks to Dave.

JOHN
Dave, you got any final requests, in case this don’t end well?

DAVE
Yeah. Avenge my death.

The truck pulls through the entrance to the weed-choked parking lot surrounding the looming ABANDONED SHOPPING MALL. The place has been empty for a decade. Trash is strewn everywhere, a couple rusted-out car hulks are there. Windows are boarded up on the deteriorating brick structure, as are the front doors.

As the truck pulls up to a stop, John whispers...

JOHN
Okay, it’s go time. You’re gonna have to throw the bottles hard, really rear back and wing the things at him.

They take positions in a circle by the door, each holding a high-proof cocktail. John, with his lighter, lights all the wicks. The latch clicks and scrapes.
The door slowly grinds open. A band of pale moonlight appears at the floor as the door slides upward. Surprisingly, Justin looks mostly normal, skin pale under the moonlight, blonde hair rustling in the stiff breeze.

Only now both of his eyeballs are protruding about six inches from his skull. The pupils at the end of their new white and pink stalks twist horribly in their direction, staring at the foursome for a very long and terrible moment.

They are so caught off guard by this image that it kills the momentum, all of them frozen, jaws hanging open, expecting the person next to them to make the first move.

Amy breaks the paralysis by weakly tossing a flaming bottle at Justin/Shitload. The Justin monster watches as it misses and bounces harmlessly to the ground, rolling to a stop. The wick flickers and goes out. Shitload curls his twin optical skull-erections down and looks at the sad bottle draining its contents into the dirt.

JUSTIN
Put that shit down, leave the dog
and come with me, fools.

They stand there a moment, then comply. Justin, seeming to realize his eyes are dangling from his skull, in a series of sickening, jerky neck movements, sucks them back in.

EXT. MALL OF THE DEAD ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Justin leads them across the dusty lot to the main mall entrance. One of the front doors is ajar. Propped next to the door is a FEDEX BOX which almost certainly was a delivery mistake. Justin pushes in through the door, indifferently kicking the box inside as he passes.

INT. MALL OF THE DEAD - NIGHT

Justin leads them through the dark concourse, boarded up and broken out mall shops on either side. The floor is a mess of trash and pools of water from the collapsing ceiling above. Justin turns and stops at a BLANK WALL.

John catches Dave’s eye and, as they both stare hard at the wall, they can see an ILLUSORY IMAGE OF A LARGE DECORATIVE DOORWAY.

JOHN
(to Amy)
You see that door?

AMY
I see a wall. No door.
JOHN
(nods to Dave)
I feel like we should look for a save point.

Justin grabs Amy by the collar.

JUSTIN
Yo, she’ll be allowed to walk up outta here if you all cooperate. I need her to open the ghost door. You know, she gives me a feeling I enjoy in my pants. But if you give me static or try to play the motherfuckin’ fool, when she’s done what I need, you’ll watch as I melt her body from the feet up. Bit at a time, first the skin, then muscle, then bone, joint by joint, over the next twelve hours. You feel me, dude?

FRED
Yeah, but what happens to us? I mean, either way?

JUSTIN
That’s a stupid-ass question. The same thing happens to all you people, regardless of what you do. Now sit your white asses down.

One by one they sit, forming a circle.

JUSTIN (CONT’D)
This world is shit, yo. How do you people be gettin’ around in this, all in these bodies and shit? You act all scared that I’m gonna kill ya, when it’s the best thing I could do for you, yo. Deadworld, man, it’s alternating layers of rot and shit and shit like that.

DAVE
Deadworld? Is that where you’re from?

JUSTIN
No, dude. That’s where you’re from. It’s where we are now. This place, it’s a horror show. If the guy next to you decides to knock you out of this world forever, he can do it with just a piece of metal or, hell, even his bare hand.

(MORE)
JOHN

Uh, thank you.

John’s eyes never move as he speaks, and suddenly Dave can see a look there, a confidence. Dave follows his gaze, back toward the front doors and sees what John is seeing. Dave quickly looks away again.

Suddenly there is a burst of movement, shuffling feet and shouts. John makes his move, on his feet, running and then diving. He skids on the floor and seizes the white FedEx box.

Shitload is on him fast, Bruce Lee-fast. He delivers a kick to John’s gut that actually knocks him back a couple of feet and wrenches the box from his arms. Shitload looks baffled, moves to throw the box aside but stops cold. He looks at the label, then at John, then at Dave, then at the label again.

JUSTIN

What’s in here?

John says nothing. Shitload stiffens his arm toward John in a ‘Heil Hitler’ motion. This confuses them for a second—before a SLIT APPEARS in Justin’s palm and something like a MOUTH puckers there. A thin stream of thick, yellow ACID drips onto the floor, gathering in a small, smoking puddle that quickly eats through the tile floor with a soft hiss.

JUSTIN (CONT’D)

Tell me.

Dave looks at the label on the box. The package is addressed to “Care of John,” to this mall on Highway 59.

DAVE FLASHES BACK: seeing the receipt for this package back in John’s apartment.
JUSTIN (CONT’D)
Tell me, or I’ll melt your face, yo. What is it, like, a bomb?

JOHN
Why don’t you open it and we’ll both find out?

JUSTIN
Take it outside.

JOHN
Okay.

John bends over to pick it up.

JUSTIN
Stop! Leave it where it is.

JOHN
Okay.

Justin tears open the box, roots around inside with his hand and then pulls out a sheet of wrinkled NOTEBOOK PAPER. Justin examines the big ink pen letters which read:

“JOHN LOOK OUTSIDE BY THE TRASH CAN NEAR THE FRONT DOORS”

Justin turns to John.

JUSTIN
What’s out there? A weapon? You tryin’ to gank me?

John doesn’t answer. Justin tosses aside the note and strides out the front doors. Through the doors they can indeed see a TRASH CAN out there. Justin walks out to it, looks down, kicks around at the base of it with his feet. He stands there for a moment, hands on his hips, when suddenly a THUNDEROUS BOOM echoes through the mall—

Justin is blown clear off his feet out onto the sidewalk. A mechanical ka-chunk of a pump shotgun is heard and a second shot sounds, then a third.

Seen through the doorway, a figure hurls a BUCKET OF LIQUID onto Justin’s still moving corpse. Suddenly Justin’s body erupts in a BALL OF FLAME.

From the darkness, in steps the Detective, loading shells into a pistol-grip RIOT GUN. He looks right at Dave, training the gun on him.

DETECTIVE
I guess there’s no gettin’ rid of you.

(MORE)
DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
(points gun away)
There any more of 'em?

DAVE
No, I don’t think so.

DETECTIVE
Come on. All of you. Let’s get to my car.

As they scramble to their feet, John leans over and picks up his FedEx box. A PACK OF CIGARETTES and a LIGHTER slide out into his hand. He plucks one cigarette out, lights it.

INT. DETECTIVE’S SUV - NIGHT

Thirty seconds later they are all piled into an SUV. The Detective and Dave in front, John, Amy and Fred are in the back.

DAVE
Those things you saw take over Justin—they’re looking for hosts, okay? Now there was a drug that the guy, the one who exploded, was-

DETECTIVE
Stuff is black, right?

DAVE
Oh. You’re, uh, familiar with it?

DETECTIVE
Sounds like you and I both got long stories to tell. So anybody that takes this stuff is a potential host for those flying worm things?

DAVE
Actually, I dunno.

The Detective rubs his eyes and jams the key into the ignition.

DETECTIVE
I’ve been up 48 hours straight and this case ain’t gettin’ any clearer.

The Detective starts up the car and accelerates through the deserted mall parking lot.

DAVE
Me too. Adrenaline keeps me goin’.
DETECTIVE
Yeah. That, and those loud, piercing voices in my head.

DAVE
What kind of--
The cop’s EYES EXPLODE. He shrieks as TWO SPRAYS OF BLOOD fleck over the windshield. Amy screams. John and Fred bellow “OH, FUCK,” simultaneously.

LITTLE WHITE RODS POUR DOWN the cop’s face, swirl around inside the SUV. He lets go of the steering wheel. Dave grabs for it.

EXT. MALL OF THE DEAD PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The SUV careens out of control, and with a shriek of tearing metal, HITS A MALL PARKING LOT RAMP and FLIPS THROUGH THE AIR. In a hellacious crash the vehicle finally bangs to a stop in the middle of the parking lot. Silence.

INT. SUV - UPSIDE DOWN - NIGHT

Dave is hanging upside down by his seat belt. He gets his bearings and cranes his neck over and sees HUNKS OF MEAT flying off what had been the Detective in juicy ragged pink and yellow layers. Out from the meaty shreds come rushing masses of the TINY WHITE DEMON ROD THINGS, swirling around the interior of the truck like rice in a blender. The swarm makes a sound that’s a kind of shrill electricity of madness, screeches and howls.

Dave is frantic, patting around for the clasp to the seat belt. The little white streaks are buzzing around his face now, past his ears, skipping over his skin. Glass shatters in the back seat as the others fight their way out. Dave runs his hand over his forearm and a thousand of the rods scatter off into the air. Suddenly, hands are grabbing Dave, pulling at the seat belt. A hand comes into view and with a flick there is suddenly a switchblade there, cutting at the strap. John cuts Dave free and drags him out of the wreckage.

EXT. MALL OF THE DEAD PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Everybody is yelling, panicking at the sight of the cloud of white insects blowing around Dave like pillow feathers. The things now settle on Dave’s arm again and are landing on his neck and face. Dave brushes the things off, swats at them in the air.

John comes running from the direction of the parked beer truck, carrying one of their home-made Molotov cocktails.
He cracks the bottle, seizes Dave’s arm by the wrist, and douses his arm with it. John then produces his lighter, and before Dave can react, sets Dave’s arm on fire. Dave howls and John forces him down, rolling his arm in the dust, patting out the flames.

Dave sits up, tries to focus his eyes, tries to get to his feet, falls back down on his ass. He sees Amy on her knees in the dirt, bruised and battered. Molly is there, licking Amy’s face.

Dave notices Fred, off by himself, thrashing around like he is on fire. The swarm has found him and the rush of the things pours out of the wrecked SUV like a kicked hornet’s nest. They are pouring into Fred. He is coughing, choking, the rods gushing into his wide-open mouth. In seconds it is over and Fred collapses as if dead.

John and Dave stare toward Fred in dull shock, a silence settling over the scene. Only Amy moves. She sprints toward the upended SUV, roots around in there and grabs something.

Fred twitches, then flops onto his back, then clumsily gets to his feet. John and Dave flinch and scramble to their feet. Fred—if it is still Fred—looks confused for a moment, then brushes himself off.

FRED
It’s okay, guys. I’m okay. I’m okay.

Amy comes back from the truck holding the detective’s RIOT SHOTGUN and pushes it into Dave’s hands.

FRED (CONT’D)
Whoa, guys. Guys, we’re all shook up here. Okay?

AMY
(whispers)
That’s not Fred. Not anymore.

FRED
Guys, look, I don’t know what you think you saw but I’m still Fred in here. Ask me anything, I’m me. We were all in that car when the cop exploded. Any of us could be infected or whatever, but we gotta hang together. We’re like, the good guys here. Right?

Dave looks down as if deferring to the shotgun. Molly lets out a low growl. Dave closes his eyes, lets out a long breath and relaxes the gun.
DAVE
Fred, go out to the highway and flag down a car.

69B EXT. MALL OF THE DEAD PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Relieved, Fred turns toward the highway. Dave waits for about five seconds, then steps forward, jerks up the shotgun and blows Fred’s head off his shoulders. John sprints up toward Fred’s prone body, begins dragging it.

JOHN
Get him to the wreck! These things are starting to come out of him!

Amy sprints to help him and together with Dave’s help they drag Fred’s body back to the wreckage of the SUV and lay him against the rear door. A familiar FUZZY CLOUD is emerging from the ragged stump that had been Fred Chu’s head.

69C EXT. MALL OF THE DEAD PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dave looks at it, stunned, until Amy rips the shotgun from his hands, turns and, one-handed, fires into the gas tank of the SUV. Fred Chu’s corpse goes up in a massive fireball of flames, sending the three friends flopping to the ground. They all stumble to their feet, watching thousands of these little particles swarm out of Fred, burning like sparks over a stirred campfire. They back away from the fire, in the general direction of the mall.

JOHN
Do you think that’s all of them? The worms, whatever they are? Do you think we got all of ‘em? Because I got a feeling that if just a few of them get away, hell, if just one of them gets out and gets into a body, they’ll multiply. Lay eggs and do what they do.

As they pass the beer truck, John jumps onto the open tailgate. He grabs his GEAR BAG and begins rummaging through it. John pulls on a flannel shirt and a down vest.

DAVE
John, what’re you doing now?

JOHN
I’m not gonna stand by while some white fuzz from another dimension invades our world and infects every last man, woman and child. We’re gonna go through that ghost door and clean house.
He tosses Dave an automatic PISTOL.

DAVE
What? Why?

JOHN
Cause we’re the only ones who can. We were chosen. By the Soy Sauce. You in?

Dave sighs.

DAVE
Yeah. I guess so.

John holds out a BASEBALL BAT from his duffle. The head of the bat is wrapped with glued-on PAGES FROM THE BIBLE. Four large NAILS form spikes on the end. Dave slings it over his shoulder.

John pulls on a welder’s FACE MASK with a wicked skull illustration on it, flips it up. He brandishes a cool PAINTBALL RIFLE, jacks in an AIR TANK which compresses with a soft whoosh. John displays a stickfeed TUBE filled with PAINTBALLS.

JOHN
Modified for spray or shoot. Filled my balls with gasoline and holy water. Dealer’s choice. Come on.

John jumps down from the truck and leads them toward the mall.

INT. MALL OF THE DEAD - NIGHT

They move down the desolate dark corridor and arrive at the mysterious wall. The glimmering “ghost door” awaits them. John looks at Amy and nods.

JOHN
Ghost Door.

AMY
All I see is a wall.

John digs into his bag and hands Amy an old pair of cardboard 3D GLASSES. She puts them on and the door becomes visible.

AMY (CONT’D)
Oh. Cool.

John reaches for the ghost door knob and his hand passes right through it.
JOHN
Shit. It’s a Ghost Knob.

With her good hand Amy reaches for the door knob and, like John, her hand passes right through the Ghost Knob.

DAVE
Doesn’t make any sense. Justin, Shitload, whatever his name was, said he needed Amy to open it.

A look of determination crosses Amy’s face.

AMY
I know why he wanted me.

Very deliberately, she loosens her prosthetic hand and drops it to the floor. Amy takes a deep breath and then reaches out with her stump toward the “ghost knob.” As her stump nears the knob, an illusory PHANTOM HAND becomes visible. She flexes the phantom fingers, grabs hold of the knob and turns.

With a rumble, a VERTICAL SLIT forms in the wall and then tears open, widening. The wall MELTS and peels back like a curtain until there is a door-sized opening before them. Beyond it is a tiny, round room the size of an elevator. John steps through the door. Molly trots into the open doorway. Dave turns, puts his hands on Amy’s shoulders.

DAVE
Go.

AMY
What? No.

DAVE
John and I are the only one’s left who know, the only ones who can do anything about it. But you can get out of here. Wait someplace safe. Give us an hour. Then if we’re not back take my truck and–

AMY
David, I can’t even drive.

Dave presses his cell phone into her hand.

DAVE
Then call a cab. I’m dead serious. If we’re not back in an hour. Take the cab straight to the airport and fly away, anywhere. Stay far away from this town and forget you ever knew me.

(MORE)
Dave (Cont'd)
We've gone this far and you're still okay and I want to do this one good thing while I've got the chance.

Amy blinks back tears and gives Dave a quick kiss on the cheek. A bit surprised, Dave steps inside the round room.

Amy
Wait, what about my dog?!

Instantly the wall FOLDS CLOSED.

INT. ROUND ROOM ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Suddenly Dave, John and Molly are thrown to the ceiling as their room plummets downward. They both howl in terror. Just as quickly, it comes to a smooth stop and the door opens.

INT. CYLINDER CAVERNS - NIGHT

Dave, John and Molly move out into a large, domed cavern. In the center of the space is a large CYLINDER OF BLACK GLASS that disappears all the way up to the ceiling. They look around, but there appear to be no exits. From the darkness a FIGURE steps out. It is Roger North. Dave draws the pistol.

Roger North
I have a thousand questions to ask but no time to ask them.

Dave
(to John)
This is the guy, the one with the slug in my truck last night.

John
Okay Slug Man. Can you explain just what the fuck this place is?

Roger turns and looks at the black cylinder.

Roger North
What do you think you're looking at there?

John
You're gonna be looking at my fist, and then Dave's dick, if you don't-

Roger North
-Take a moment and try to understand what you're seeing. Imagine a garment, woven from a single thread.

(MORE)
And imagine that same continuing thread was used to weave another garment similar to the first. So you have a thread that is simultaneously part of two garments, but at some point the thread stops being part of one garment and becomes part of the other.

John waves his hand impatiently.

JOHN
Who gives a shit?

North gestures toward the column.

ROGER NORTH
This is the thread. The key to ending this, is through here.

DAVE
You want us to go through what exactly? What’s in there? Hell? Is that what happened, this thing opened up and a bunch of you monstrous fuckers came crawling in? That’s why we’ve got so much weird shit in this town?

ROGER NORTH
The opening has always been here, you just needed the drug to see it. This is the reason sentient life began on your world. But no man has been able to travel back through this portal.

DAVE
(screams)
Then what the fuck are you talking about?

ROGER NORTH
The only ones who can travel back and forth are the Shadow Men. The ones who lived but have been torn from their bodies through death. They are unrestricted by matter and as such, can exist in one dimension and then the next. The column you see here is a containment that was built, but not by men. It’s up to you two to pass through.

DAVE
You just said no one could—
ROGER NORTH
There is a reason why you have drawn so much interest, Mr. Wong. The others have devoted more time and resources than you can imagine to developing an ability to pass from one side to the next with no success. But now we realize that you and John here apparently can.

DAVE
Who’s “we”?

ROGER NORTH
I have enlisted an ally from your world.

North turns away and from the darkness appear THREE SHADOWY FIGURES. Striding forward is Dr. Albert Marconi and his two black-clad female assistants!

DAVE
(scoffs)
You trusted this guy? He's just an infomercial dude.

JOHN
Don't be so hasty Dave. Dr. Marconi brings a lot to the table. I've listened to his discs. The guy knows his stuff.

DR. MARCONI
Thank you, John. The source of our current manifestation is on the other side of this portal. The entity is called Korrok.

DAVE
And what does this "Korrok" look like?

DR. MARCONI
No one in our current dimension can possibly know that.

DAVE
Great. That's specific.

DR. MARCONI
You’ll know him when you see him. Believe me. He can’t be destroyed by conventional means. But I do have a plan.

Marconi takes a small BACKPACK from his assistant and neatly slides out a small CHROME CYLINDER.
DR. MARCONI (CONT’D)
They call it the “Tripper.”

DAVE
And it came from where, exactly?

DR. MARCONI
I have followers in the military. This is an experimental Cold War
weapon designed to take down a city the size of Moscow. Contained
inside this detonator is a block of C-4 explosive, surrounded by a
highly-potent, military-grade hallucinogenic. Obviously, it was
never used— but it should work. If you get the opportunity, detonate
it...like this.

Marconi demonstrates the detonating sequence of the device.

DR. MARCONI (CONT’D)
It may not kill this Korrok. But it’ll certainly fuck up his shit. Severely.

John takes the backpack.

JOHN
I like the concept, Doctor.

Dave looks to John, who nods with steely expression.

DAVE
Fine. How do we get in?

ROGER NORTH
Just decide that you want to, and you will.

Dave steps up to the cylinder, reaches out a hand and touches
the surface. It’s like cut black onyx. The column is as solid
as stone, but then suddenly Dave sees his fingers push into
it, like it was made of warm wax. His hand vanishes up to the
wrist and then elbow and then he disappears into blackness.

EXT. GREEN FIELDS - DAY

Dave falls into a beautiful field of tall grass. He gathers
his senses and climbs to his feet to find himself in an
immense expanse of sunny greenery with low grassy foothills
in the distance. John, Molly and their gear bag tumble to a
stop beside him.

A distance below a CROWD OF PEOPLE are moving uphill toward
their position.
There are a hundred, all wearing hoods, and otherwise NAKED, except for large cod-pieces. Dave notices that they are holding up a large, colorful BANNER on a pole. John gets to his feet and scans the hooded nakedness.

DAVE  
(points to hills)  
Look. It’s the valley our town is built in, but there’s no town.

JOHN  
(ogling the bare bodies)  
Yeah, we’re in an alternate universe. And this is “Eyes Wide Shut” world.

The crowd silently surrounds them. Molly sniffs the air.

From the crowd, a LARGE MAN emerges, no hood, wearing a suit, black with wide pinstripes, and a short, red tie. He spreads his arms.

LARGEMAN  
Gentlemen. Welcome.

His face is human, but off. This is the face from Dave’s TV. The man wears some kind of latex mask with wig.

LARGEMAN (CONT’D)  
Come.

The man gestures in a direction and the crowd clears a path for them. Largeman leads the way through the naked crowd. Dave and John can now see the large banner clearly. It is a CARTOONISH PAINTING of Dave, depicted as a muscular warrior, Molly at his feet, teeth bared with the flesh of some slain enemy in her jaws. John is shown bearing a fistful of flame and with an enormously exaggerated crotch bulge.

LARGEMAN (CONT’D)  
A select few interested parties were allowed to come and observe your arrival. Our style of dress here is quite different, so we thought removing the garments would lessen your discomfort.

JOHN  
Yes. It’s a nice touch.

They are led down the gauntlet of nudity to a grassy hill. They reach a DOOR cut into the side of the hill, leading to an underground building. The door slides open and they are led down a hall to a large, round cathedral-type chamber.
FINAL SEQUENCES EXCLUDED AT REQUEST OF PRODUCER AND DIRECTOR.