

House on Haunted Hill

By

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Story by

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NOTE: THE HARD COPY OF THIS SCRIPTS CONTAINED SCENE NUMBERS.
THEY HAVE BEEN REMOVED FOR THIS SOFT COPY.

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN

And in the darkness, a TICKING sound is heard. Soft and steady -- soothing -- and then a BANG!

SMASH UP ON:

INT. HOSPITAL - BASEMENT NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT

A HAND punching a CARD into the huge, ticking TIME CLOCK on the wall: 7:00 a.m.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - A bleary-eyed MALE NURSE beginning his day. Alone inside a small wood and glass cubicle, he rips off yesterday's day-at-a-time calendar page, revealing today's date: October 11, 1931.

Goes to the Victrola inside the cubicle. Cranks the turntable up to speed. Puts the huge needle down on a spinning 78: we hear the song crackling through the empty halls of the hospital -- depression-era Muzak: Horace Heidt & His Musical Knight's "Keep Your Sunny Side Up"

The Nurse sharpens the last of a half-dozen pencils to needle-points, sits down at his desk, and begins the tedium of jotting entries into a tall stack of Patient Records.

Beat. And then he hears a soft, almost paw-like tapping on the glass. He looks up: a PATIENT with a heavily bandaged head is standing there, his eyes as dull and lifeless as marbles.

The Nurse waves the Patient away. Goes back to his work. Beat. And then the tapping is heard again. The Nurse snaps his head up, about to bark at the man -- but the words stop dead on his tongue:

Standing on the other side of the glass are now two dozen patients. Likewise bandaged, staring silent and dead-eyed at him.

Unnerved, the Nurse's finger slowly stretches towards a buzzer-button just below the desk-top. It never makes it. Because --

A HAND - lashes into frame and grabs the Nurse's fingers. The Nurse looks up.

In addition to the mass of Patients outside the cubicle, there are now six of them inside it, surrounding him. The Nurse's eyes shoot to the still-locked doors of the cubicle, and he utters one confused word --

MALE NURSE

-- how -- ?

-- and then someone rams all six of his needle-sharp pencils eraser-deep into his throat.

The Nurse gurgles and staggers -- falls back against the Victrola, hitting the turntable crank as he goes down, causing it to start spinning like a pinwheel.

"Keep Your Sunny Side Up" now blares through the halls triple-time, sounding like a thousand manic chipmunks. And to the beat of that tune, the Patients smash the CONTROL PANEL inside the cubicle until it shorts-out and explodes! Which pops open

INT. PATIENT CELLS -

- and sends dozens more wild, raving Humans rampaging through the hospital, while EVERY ELECTRIC LIGHT in the place strobes maniacally, and ORDERLIES & OTHER NURSES are chased down like rabbits by Patients and beaten to pulp, and

INT. "THERAPY" ROOMS -

- filled with devices that look straight out of the Spanish Inquisition are trashed to toothpicks, and some of the STAFF are forced into devices and tortured as PATIENT RECORDS are spindled and ignited -- flaming torches used to set everything in the place ablaze, and A WOLFPACK OF PATIENTS kamikaze down-

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

-- fling open a set of double doors marked "Cerebral Hygiene," shouting: "Vannacutt!" And we see --

INT. CEREBRAL HYGIENE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- two people in surgical scrubs: the moustached Doctor named VANNACUTT and a FEMALE NURSE wielding a 16mm camera. As the two whip around, startled by the shouts, we see the object of their ministrations: A PATIENT on a gurney being

filmed as his internal organs are slowly and methodically extracted -- while still alive.

And then all hell breaks loose as the WOLF PACK descends:

DR. VANNACUTT manages to yank down a LEVER on the wall labeled "Lockdown" before he's swallowed by the Mob;

From somewhere in the house, we hear heavy gear, cables and doors loudly shutting down the house.

The NURSE is clubbed to the floor with her own camera. And amidst all the vengeful shouts and wails, a curious thing happens:

As one of the Patients picks up the Nurse's blood-spattered camera and puts it to his eye, the image on screen abruptly

SMASHES TO:

INT. CEREBRAL HYGIENE ROOM - CONTINUED - GRAINY BLACK & WHITE

-- and dead silence -- and we find ourselves watching old soundless 16mm footage of what happened next: a blur of scalpels and saws as the Patients viciously vivisect Vannacutt and Nurse, who've been crammed together on that same gurney. The B&W CAMERA PUSHES IN TIGHT on Vannacutt's screaming maw -- and suddenly we hear SOUND AGAIN --

-- but, for some reason, it's not a human cry, but the CROWING OF A ROOSTER -- and when we PULL BACK OUT we see that what we're now watching is the Crowing Rooster and four blazing camera lenses that was the logo of the old PATHE NEWSREEL. The stentorian VOICE OF PATHE booms OVER:

VOICE OF PATHE
October 11, 1931: Los Angeles!

Dithering, Bernard Herrmann-like strings swell up.

CUT TO (B&W)

A PATHE NEWS HEADLINE CARD: "HOSPITAL OF HORROR!"

CUT TO (B&W)

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT - NEWSREEL FOOTAGE

A WHIPLASH PAN from the ocean to a GRANITE BUILDING high atop the Pacific Palisades. Smoke and flames shoot from every window and door as Firemen look on helplessly.

VOICE OF PATHE

A conflagration of Biblical proportions incinerates nearly everything and every one inside what was once Tinsel Town's most celebrated psychiatric facility: The Vannacutt Neuropathic Institute. But the secret this inferno burned free was far more frightening than any picture that Hollywood could ever produce!

CUT TO (B&W):

EXT. THE HOUSE - MORNING - NEWSREEL FOOTAGE

L.A. Sheriff's and Coroner's Investigators poking through the Institute....

INT. THE HOUSE - VARIOUS ROOMS - MORNING - NEWSREEL FOOTAGE

QUICK CUTS OF GRUESOME IMAGES:

-- BODIES manacled to walls; rows of SKULLS riddled with drill-holes; a huge VAT filled with blood

VOICE OF PATHE

-- a Sanitarium of Slaughter supervised by a surgeon gone mad --

CUT TO (B&W)

ECU -- a formal PHOTOGRAPH of the man himself, mustache waxed, eyes intense as a mesmerist's, seeming to stare a hole right through us --

VOICE OF PATHE

-- Richard Benjamin Vannacutt --

and --

INT. LIMBO SET -

-- suddenly, stepping right through VANNACUTT'S FACE and strolling solemnly towards us in bright video-taped color is:

CHRISTOPHER LEE. He addresses the CAMERA:

CHRISTOPHER LEE

-- murdered by his own patients before

every one of them perished in the blaze. Ironically, the only humans to escape the conflagration --

-- behind him, we see SILENT NEWSREEL FOOTAGE of five people.

EXT. THE HOUSE - MORNING (CHYRON INERT)

-- three ORDERLIES, two NURSES -- clothes and faces sooty and singed, each coughing up a storm as they're treated at the scene --

CHRISTOPHER LEE

-- were five of Vannacutt's equally sadistic Staff, all of whom, until the day they died, insisting that they were only following "Doctor's Orders."

BACK TO SCENE

The SCREEN behind him goes black.

CHRISTOPHER LEE

But our story doesn't end there. For, some years later, the gutted interior of the Institute was refurbished as a private residence. It has yet to be inhabited. Many say because the spirits of the vile Vannacutt and his Victims still walk the long corridors inside this place now known, simply, as: "The House On Haunted Hill."

A sudden SMASH of shrill, discordant HORNS scares us out of our skin -- and behind Mr. Lee, an IMAGE is seen again:

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT (TO BE SHOT AS PART OF A LATER SCENE)

...high atop a bluff, swaddled in shadows cast by a full moon that seems to have one of Vannacutt's eyes piercing down on it.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Charming.

INT. ROLLS ROYCE LIMOUSINE - TRAVELING - DAY

CAMERA PULLS BACK FROM A SMALL WALNUT SHROUDED TELEVISION SET... revealing a savagely beautiful young woman, EVELYN STOCKARD-PRICE, sitting like the queen of fucking-England in

the back of her limousine. She's been watching all this on the 12" TV set inside the limousine, a look of perverse amusement on her face.

ON THE TV: Mr. Lee smiles for the CAMERA.

CHRISTOPHER LEE

I'm Christopher Lee. More of
"Terrifying, But True" in just a
moment --

EVELYN

No need, baby.

She zaps the TV dead with a button on the armrest.

EVELYN

You just gave me exactly what I needed.

She reaches for the phone.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - DAY

A beeping CELL PHONE is retrieved from a coat pocket, punched to life, and brought up to the lips of

STEVEN PRICE - a 30ish bespectacled man.

While not handsome in the classical sense, he still exudes an incredible appeal -- the kind that comes from incredible self-confidence, more money than God, and the most maniacal imagination in recorded history.

PRICE

(into phone)

Price.

(listens; sarcastic)

Evelyn, how nice...

(beat, listens)

Well, that is **fascinating** -- but I'm
gonna have to get back to you -- they're
trying to shoot me here.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - Price buttoning the phone dead as a NEWS CREW of two videotapes him: an ENG Cameraman named BENNY and a 20-something Katie Couric wannabe with a microphone in Price's face -- KIRSTEN SAVAGE.

They're all standing amidst a sprawling landscape of futuristic-looking buildings and rides: a spanking new theme park. We see the great steel arch that bears the place's

name:

TERROR-INCOGNITA
A New Adventure From Steven Price

KIRSTEN

Business or pleasure, Mr. Price?

PRICE

My wife. Where were we?

KIRSTEN

Your roller coaster that is, quote:
"unlike any that has ever come before
it."

PRICE

Absolutely. No cheap thrills. A genuine
Journey To The Brink Of Madness.

He gestures grandly towards the huge and extremely tall
expanse of steel girders and tracks in front of them.

KIRSTEN

Sorry, but it just looks like a generic
roller coaster to me. What's the
gimmick?

Price beckons them to an elevator at the base of the ride.

PRICE

Ever seen one that starts at the
top? 20 stories worth of top?

KIRSTEN

And then what happens?

PRICE

(smiles)

I think it's something better
experienced than described.

The Elevator door whooshes open. He bids them enter.

PRICE

After you.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The DOORS CLOSE and the elevator starts up. Through small

ports in the sides they see the beams of the roller coaster's superstructure dropping down past them as the cabin rises.

KIRSTEN

Sources have told this reporter that the real reason your Park's opening has been delayed was a near-fatal accident on one of the rides here. Comment?

PRICE

I wouldn't be opening this place tomorrow if every single thing down to the beheaded Beanie Babies hadn't tested 100% safe.

-- he's cut off by a loud GROANING sound like metal under stress.

BENNY

What the hell was that?

PRICE

(all confidence)

Growing pains: new steel's gotta bend and stretch a little before finally settling in.

Another GROAN. A yelp escapes from Kirsten's mouth.

PRICE

Don't worry. In the fifteen year history of Price Amusements we've yet to lose a single customer.

The GROANING stops. But Kirsten and Benny remain nervous.

KIRSTEN

First time for everything.

PRICE

I've designed and built six of these places -- take my word for it, everything's fine.

BENNY

(nervous)

How long 'til we're out of this thing?

PRICE

Five, ten seconds, we're almost to the top --

-- the elevator LURCHES to a DEAD STOP.

Kirsten and Benny look at each other -- anxiety on overdrive. Price tries to reassure them, but he's not looking real relaxed anymore, either.

PRICE

Look: even if, God forbid, something
...unexpected...should happen, there's
always the safety cable --

-- and now the cabin is rocking: sharp and nasty spasms that are buffeting them into each other --

BENNY

-- that does what?

PRICE

Keeps the cab from just --

-- he sees something out the window --

PRICE

-- oh, shit --

A loud CRACK! The cabin starts dropping -- fast. All three of them scream.

OUT THE WINDOW: we see the SUPERSTRUCTURE of the roller coaster flying by. The sound of cables screeching free of pulleys.

Benny's camera is wrenched from his hands and bounces around the cabin. Kirsten's eyes are crazed with terror.

KIRSTEN

Do something!

PRICE

Like what?? This isn't supposed
to be happening!!

The scenery outside the window is a blur.

BENNY

OhJesusohChrist!

The ground is coming up to meet them; the noise inside the cabin is deafening.

Benny starts jumping up and down; Kirsten is pounded to the floor. Price braces himself for impact.

KIRSTEN

Please! Something! Oh-God!

PRICE

Maybe if I --

With all his strength, Price throws himself across the cabin and stabs an unmarked button on the elevator control panel --

-- the cabin suddenly stabilizes --

-- the elevator door opens --

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - DEPARTURE DOCK - DAY

-- revealing the cabin to be just where it should be: high atop the roller coaster, right across from the dock where the cars depart. They never fell so much as an inch -- all an illusion.

The expression on Price's face has changed to a wicked grin. He looks at the two terrified souls on the elevator floor:

PRICE

From here on, it gets really scary.

A MAN IN OVERALLS (SCHECTER) stands on the dock, waves the News Crew towards a rear car.

SCHECTER

Room for two more.

The front car is already full with People strapped in so tight they're immobile.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. AMUSEMENT PARK - DEPARTURE DOCK - DAY

Price still on the departure dock, punching up a number on his cell phone. In the b.g. we can see the cars containing Kirsten, Benny and the others, zooming at incredible speeds on 45 degree banks, upside-down loop-de-loops, the works. All with screams of sheer pleasure accompanying.

PRICE

(into phone)

Alright, Princess: now what were

you babbling?

He listens for a moment -- then his eyes crimp shut with disgust.

PRICE

(into phone)

Congratulations: on a scale of one-to-ten, you just hit a 73 on the Perversity Meter. I don't suppose for once we could just celebrate at some nice, quiet little restaurant --

Schechter taps Price on the shoulder.

SCHECTER

Houston, I think we may have a problem.

PRICE

(into phone)

Evelyn, go stir your cauldron or something for a sec.

Price turns and watches in the distance as the coaster car takes a screaming hair pin turn.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - MOVING - DAY

Kirsten and Benny in the rear car, wild with delight --

-- until they see the front car derail, snap free from theirs, and go hurtling into mid-air. Screams of panic heard from the People in that car as they plummet to their deaths.

Kirsten screams with horror, Benny retches, as their car continues to zip along the track and out of our sight.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - DEPARTURE DOCK - DAY

PRICE

Problem where? Looked good to me.

SCHECTER

"Dummy 6" keeps losing his arm.

PRICE

So disengage his Flail Arm Mechanism and just make him a screamer.

VOICE ON PHONE (EVELYN)

Steven!!

PRICE

(back into phone)

Here, dear -- with a suggestion --

INT. ROLLS ROYCE LIMOUSINE - TRAVELING - SIMULTANEOUS

Evelyn is livid, as she listens to Price on the phone:

PRICE (V.O.)

-- forget it. Last birthday the Manson Family Ranch, the year before that: Jonestown.

EVELYN

Oh. You think this is a request. Well, think again. I'm telling you: "Haunted Hill" is exactly where we're having my party this year. You'll find the guest list on your desk by the time you get back --

INT. PRICE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a two-page document with the title "Guest List."

It's being turned into spaghettini by a large document shredder.

PAN OVER TO - Steven Price typing mile-a-minute on a computer, talking to himself as he inputs his own Guest List.

PRICE

You want it, Precious, you got it: the party of your very short goddamn life.

A tentative DOOR-KNOCK heard O.S. behind him:

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Uh, Mr. Price? The Dreamworks people are getting a little...antsy.

PRICE

Tell 'em I'm right there.

He mouses his cursor up to a box marked "SEND", the list disappears, his hard drive starts chugging, and he gets up from his chair and exits. CAMERA remains on the working screen.

Beat. And then a SHADOW flashes across the screen for a moment.

Another beat. And the sound of clicking computer keys is heard. A "message box" appears on screen:

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DELETE guestlist.doc?

The Cursor clicks on **YES**. ZAP! A blank screen. And then the keys start clicking again, and we see a new Guest List being typed in.

Starting with the name:

Ms. Jennifer Jenzen
Executive Vice-President of Marketing
Paragon Pictures

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. FILM SET - DAY (WE NEED TO RE-WORK THIS SCENE FOR LOCATION)

The name "**Ms. Jennifer Jenzen**" etched in gold-leaf cursive on the top of a small CHROME AND ONYX-INLAID CUBE.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Gorgeous.

PULL BACK - and we see MS. JENZEN -- a rodent-eyed, thin lipped 30-something Exec who only needs "Screaming Bitch" stamped on her forehead to complete the picture. She's sitting staring at the Cube, the elegant paper it came in torn to shreds on her desk.

JENZEN

So what the fuck is it?

She's addressing her "assistant," a lovely, but harried-looking young Woman of 19, SARA WOLFE.

SARA

I don't know, Ms. Jenzen.

JENZEN

Well, who's the damn thing from?

SARA

(shrugs)

Messenger just dropped it off.
No return address.

JENZEN
You didn't think to ask?

SARA
I was in the middle of --

JENZEN
-- being utterly fucking useless,
what else is new.

Sara's face flushes with anger, but she keeps her cool.

SARA
There's something there on the side --

She's pointing to a small, SILVER CRANK jutting out of one of
the Cube's sides. A legend is etched beneath it:

Rotate Once To Operate

JENZEN
I'm aware of that.

Well, she is now, anyway. She twists the crank and a tinkling
music box-like TUNE begins to play: Lennon/ McCartney's
"Birthday," but in 3/4 time, like some schizoid Viennese
waltz.

JENZEN
It's not my goddamn birth --

-- and she stops herself in mid-word as, suddenly: the top
of the Cube pops open like a jack-in-the-box! And, slowly,
like it's on some mini-hydraulic lift, ANOTHER CUBE,
identical to this one, starts to inch up into view --

-- which has its own tiny SILVER CRANK in its side. But
etched beneath this one is a warning:

Do Not Rotate Under Any Circumstances!

Without a nanosecond's hesitation, Jenzen reaches out her
hand --

SARA
-- I wouldn't --

-- and turns the smaller crank. Beat. Nothing happens.

JENZEN

-- no kidding: that's why you're
making ten bucks an hour and I'm --

-- and BANG! A SKELETAL ARM comes FLASHING OUT from the
smaller cube and SLASHES HER FINGER with a RAZOR!

JENZEN

Jesus!!

-- it's no more than a paper cut, but it's bleeding and it
hurts -- and then they both see written on the tiny razor:

Learn To Follow Instructions!

Sara can't help herself -- lets loose a little snort of
laughter. Jenzen goes ballistic, smashes the lid shut on the
Cube.

JENZEN

You think this is fucking funny??

SARA

No, no, it's just --

JENZEN

-- well, here's a better one: you're
fired.

SARA

What?

JENZEN

And here's your goddamn severance!

She slams the Cube hard into Sara's hands.

CUT TO:

INT. SARA'S CUBICLE - JUST AFTER (WE NEED TO RE-WORK THIS
SCENE FOR LOCATION)

The Cube sits in a wastebasket next to the desk that Sara's
angrily cleaning out. She's SLAMS her entire blotter into the
trash -- which hits the Cube's crank and starts the music
playing again. Sara, startled, looks over -- and sees:

AN ORNATE IVORY-COLORED CARD - begin to ascend from the
Cube. It starts with the words:

Now Try And Follow These:

And then all we see are Sara's wide, growing-wider, eyes as she reads the rest.

SARA

...wow....WOW! Hey, Ms. Jenzen -- ?

JENZEN (O.S.)

Are you still fucking **here**??

Sara starts to flush with anger again -- and then stops, a small smile coming to her lips as she continues to stare at the card.

SARA

On my way out. Thanks for the valuable parting gift.

She snatches the ivory card and stuffs it in her purse.

SMASH TO:

INT. HEARSE #1 - MOVING - NIGHT

Where Sara Wolfe sits, decked out in near-dead-ringers clothes and hair-do as we last saw on Jennifer Jenzen: black silk suit, stiletco heels and an up-sweep -- holding that same ivory-colored card in her hand:

Steven K. Price

COMMANDS YOU TO ATTEND

A Very Unique Birthday Celebration For

Mrs. Evelyn Stockard-Price

And then the CAMERA WHIPLASH CRANES BACK from Sara and the vehicle in which she's sitting, to reveal the grand vista of:

EXT. WINDING ROAD - NIGHT

which snakes crazily up the Pacific Palisades, the crashing waves of the ocean seen in the background. We see that the vehicle Sara is riding in is the lead car of a MOTORCADE comprised of four '50's vintage HEARSEs.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

The man's insane.

And we whip back towards the source of this voice:

INT. HEARSE #2 - MOVING - NIGHT

where we see this Man's well-tanned hand holding the same ivory card, which continues:

***Terror, Humiliation, Perhaps Even
MURDER
Will Be The Entertainment***

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Don't get much better than that.

INT. HEARSE #3 - MOVING - NIGHT

where we see the well-manicured hands of this Woman, her left holding an 8mm Camcorder; her right, the same card:

***With ONE MILLION DOLLARS Paid
To Those That Survive The Entire Night***

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Terrific: what's the catch?

INT. HEARSE #4 - MOVING - NIGHT

where we see hands of a Man barely out of his teens, his muscular right hand holding that same card as well:

***Inside the Walls Of
THE HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL***

Suddenly the screech of brakes is heard -- Hearse #4 jolts to a halt. The invitation flies from the Young Man's hand and to the floor, the rest of its text unread.

EXT. "THE HOUSE" - NIGHT

We see the reason for the sudden stop of the cortege. An ancient CHRYSLER K CAR is parked clear across the road, barring the entrance to the gate of a razor-wire security fence that encircles the premises. Beat. And then a short, slight MAN steps out of the vehicle. In the glare of the Hearses' headlights his features look cadaverous. Between that and the fact he's jittering like a hummingbird on speed, he makes a pretty unsettling presence.

The Man walks slowly towards the hearses, beckoning the riders out.

MAN (PRITCHETT)

This is the end...by car anyway.
What with the '94 quake and El Nino,
the driveway's been pretty much
destroyed. 'Shame. Have to hoof it
from here.

The well-tanned Man from Hearse #2 steps out: DR. DONALD W. BLACKBURN -- he could be anywhere from 19 to 90. The only thing that's clear is all the cosmetic surgery he's had makes him look like George Hamilton, circa 1962. He asks the obvious:

BLACKBURN

If you don't mind me asking... Who are you?

PRITCHETT

Name's Pritchett. Watson Pritchett.
I own the house, my father built it.
And now I just need to get you into
it. So...

The Camcorder Woman steps out of Hearse #3: a Jenny Jones-clone named MELISSA MARR, 27.

MELISSA

Where's Steven Price and his huge,
throbbing checkbook?

PRITCHETT

Not with you, is he? Well, I'm sure
he'll turn up any second now... If
you'll just come along...

The Muscular Young Man from Hearse #4 steps out: a good-looking specimen named EDDIE MOSES, 23.

EDDIE

I wanna know first: to what do I
owe this honor? I mean, I never
even heard of this guy.

PRITCHETT

I'm just the Greeter -- and
in that capacity, I now urge you
all strongly to --

And then Sara-as-Jenzen regally alights from Hearse #1.

SARA

But the million bucks each, that's
for real?

PRITCHETT

(a forced chuckle)

It better be -- he still owes me
\$25 grand for renting the place
for the night! Here, let's get
you some illumination so you
can make your way safely!

He grabs a flashlight from his car and shoves it in Sara's
hand.

PRITCHETT

Just point and walk, sis -- the
place is right up --

-- and as if on cue, a battery of magnesium floods suddenly
light up the night like high noon, revealing the House in all
its glory.

PRITCHETT

(startled)

...there.

Sitting high atop a bluff over the Pacific, a sprawling
grey-stone structure. One-third Eames, to one-third Wright,
to one-third Bauhaus.

It might look innocuous in the daylight, but right now it
looks like Albert Speer's Playhouse. And underscoring the
creepy ambience is MUSIC now blaring from speakers perched
atop the gate: Marilyn Manson's screeching Goth-metal cover
of "Sweet Dreams (Are Made Of These)".

BLACKBURN

Nice touch, Pritchett: subtle.

EDDIE

As a tumor.

PRITCHETT

Wish I could take the credit, but --

SARA

-- guess we know where Mr. Price is
now.

PRITCHETT

He must've beaten us all here!

EDDIE

'Less the place really is haunted.

PRITCHETT

Nonsense! Just bad press. All the deaths that occurred inside -- my own father's included -- all perfectly normal fatal accidents.

MELISSA

You better be wrong. I didn't come all this way for "normal."

She starts making her way up the disaster of a driveway. Dr. Blackburn and Sara look at each other and shrug.

They start likewise walking towards the house. The only one left is Eddie. He stares at the little man.

EDDIE

You're totally full of shit, aren't you?

PRITCHETT

(brightly)

You'll never know 'til you walk through that door!

Eddie dismisses him with a flap of his hand and sprints to catch up with the others. Pritchett yells after him:

PRITCHETT

You wouldn't consider getting my check and running it back down here?

No response. Beat. Pritchett gets out of his car.

PRITCHETT

Didn't think so. Asshole.

He starts jittering his way up the drive.

INT. GRAND FOYER - SOON AFTER

Cold. Flinty. Two stories high and domed, with a stained glass skylight topping it. Despite their varied states of confusion, the four Guests stop in their tracks as they enter, struck dumb with awe.

EDDIE

...Jesus H. Christ.

MELISSA

So where's the party?

SARA

Looks like we're it.

BLACKBURN

More to the point. Where's our host?

MELISSA

More to the point: what in the name of fuck is that?

She's pointing up at the stained glass skylight. It seems to depict a Man with dozens of hideous creatures hovering round his head. And above them all looms a huge something with wings and flaming claws.

BLACKBURN

More of Price's spook-house bullshit.

PRITCHETT (O.S.)

Not at all!

They turn to see Pritchett's head poking through the doorway -- putting as little of himself as possible inside the house proper.

PRITCHETT

Part of the original structure. When it was still an asylum. Guy who ran the place -- Dr. Vannacutt -- found it "inspirational." From some German cathedral a million years ago: "Driving the Demons From the Mind."

BLACKBURN

I'm moved beyond words.

MELISSA

The hint of still weirder shit to come, I can only hope.

She whips the Camcorder to her eye and starts recording every detail of the skylight. Dr. Blackburn rolls his eyes. Pritchett starts calling loudly:

PRITCHETT

Mr. Price? Mrs. Price? Somebody? Hello??

BLACKBURN

Pritchett, take it down a couple hundred decibels, what is your problem?

PRITCHETT

Problem? No problem -- just want to get my money and get on home -- you know, things to see, people to do?

He laughs weakly; starts shouting again:

PRITCHETT

Mr. Price?? Mrs. Price??

Melissa Marr continues to shoot up a storm of tape in the room, as overexcited as a five-year-old who's lost her Ritalin.

MELISSA

I knew this whole place'd be pure gold! Pritchett, point me in the direction of the goddamn ghosts! If I can get something bizarre enough on tape, I think I can parlay it into getting me some kind'a Robert Stack "Unsolved Most-Wacked-Out Home Videos" gig. No more five afternoons a week of sex-change-Nazis-and-the-lesbos-that-love-'em.

EDDIE

You've got your own TV show?

MELISSA

The guy whose hair I do has his own TV show. All I've got is a blow-dryer and a dream.

Sara's staring at something that's making her more nervous by the second:

SARA

Uh, excuse me -- but does anybody know any logical reason why those little demons would be moving?

She's pointing to the skylight.

MELISSA

Where?

She whips her camera up at the stained glass. Zooms in. Tense beat. And then lowers the camera, sighing in disappointment:

MELISSA

...birds. Just seagulls or something walking on the glass, goddammit.

EDDIE

Cheer up: before the night's through, I'm sure one of us'll get hacked to pieces by somebody or something.

VOICE (O.S.)

I may start right now.

All heads turn again -- standing in the open front doorway, dressed absolutely to kill is a not-terribly-pleased-looking EVELYN STOCKARD-PRICE.

EVELYN

Who the fuck are all of you??

-- and right on that beat: the huge dome of STAINED GLASS above them all EXPLODES!

All heads whip up -- as time seems to stand still -- and it begins raining COLORED SHARDS in the foyer.

MELISSA

Oh...my...God....

IN SLOW MOTION -- We see the rest of the Guests instinctively start to duck and cover against the deluge -- all except EVELYN who's staring up at the descending projectiles with a profound look of annoyance on her face.

EDDIE - notices that a huge DEMON-HEADED GLASS SHARD is hurtling, razor-point-down, for Evelyn's head! With an athlete's reflexes, he hurls his body at hers --

EDDIE

-- Jesus, lady! --

-- tackling her to the floor, the giant SHARD missing her skull by literally a hair. It plunges six inches deep into the parquet, THWANGS like an arrow into a target.

Beat of absolute sheer STUNNED SILENCE. And then:

MELISSA

Wow.

Everyone else stares at Evelyn, who's not moving.

SARA

Is she...alright?

EDDIE

I thought she was dead. For sure.

EVELYN

Not even fucking close.

(seething; to Eddie)

Get...off...of...me.

It's like being spit at by a cobra; Eddie doesn't have to be told twice. Leaps off her, and Evelyn slowly, angrily gets to her feet, a trickle of blood coming down her cheek from a small cut there. A VOICE is heard from somewhere O.S.

VOICE (O.S.)

Not dead now, but soon.

All eyes look up to see: STEVEN PRICE perched on the balcony rail above them in formal wear, legs crossed, cigar in hand, blowing out smoke through highly bemused lips.

PRICE

She's been marked for it. The House does that. Happened to Pritchett's father. Likely happen to you all. Isn't that what you told me, Mr. Pritchett?

PRITCHETT

(looking away)

I can't remember at the moment.

Blackburn applies his handkerchief to Evelyn's bleeding cheek. She recoils:

EVELYN

Don't touch me!

PRICE

I'm impressed: I don't think Evelyn's ever said those words to anything with genitalia.

EVELYN

I'm not laughing, Steven.

PRICE

You shouldn't be -- you were nearly just killed, sweetheart.

(to the guests)

And now that our birthday girl is finally here, let the games begin!

EVELYN

Haven't they already?

Price just smiles.

PRICE

Sure is a funky old house, ain't it?

She glares back at him, steaming.

EVELYN

Could we have a word?

PRICE

Oh, I think we're going to have several.

Evelyn doesn't have to be invited, she's already stomping halfway up the stairs. Price smiles down at the Guests:

PRICE

This'll just take a moment -- you'll find food and booze in the main salon, knock yourselves out.

Evelyn grabs him hard by the arm and yanks him back into the shadows; they disappear from sight. The Guests just stand there.

EDDIE

So, what? The thing with the glass? Price did that?

MELISSA

I hope not.

SARA

Of course he did, for God's sake.

(beat)

Didn't he, Mr. Pritchett?

PRITCHETT

I can't comment until I get paid.

BLACKBURN

I'm surrounded by idiots.

Blackburn walks off into the Main Salon near the Foyer. The others shrug and follow him, except for Pritchett, who shouts upstairs:

PRITCHETT

Mr. Price???

No response from anyone. Pritchett's eyes jitterbug all around him -- he sees he's standing there alone. As nonchalantly as he can, he quick -- steps towards the Salon and the others -- passing right by a barely perceptible black dot in the wall, no larger than a dime --

TRAVELING THROUGH WALLS

-- and we PUSH IN on this DOT, until we're inside it, on the OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL and see that's it's connected to a COAXIAL CABLE, which we FOLLOW past ancient, decaying beams and mortar, past VERMIN -- rodent and insect, both -- that skitter maniacally right in our faces -- and then right into the innards of the multi-wired CABLE itself -- emerging out near...

A VIDEO MONITOR

-- that's atop a table with several other monitors and a literal Circuit City's worth of electronic and computer equipment, all of it inside a --

INT. SMALL GRIMY ROOM

-- in which sits Steven Price's engineer SCHECTER, in his coveralls, eating a sandwich, as he mans Haunted House Central Control. He hits a combination of keys on the computer. On one of the Monitors we see a door somewhere inside the House rapidly open-and-shut, open-and-shut.

Nods with satisfaction, then YELPS! as he spots a MILLIPEDE wriggling out of his tuna salad, straight into his mouth.

SCHECTER

Jesus!

He flicks the insect away, nearly gagging. It lands on another VIDEO MONITOR that is trained on a room on the upper floor of the place. Some space that looks like it was going to be a bedroom, once upon a time: a lot of strange, ultra-modern furniture: all of it metal and of bizarre angles and shapes. And then into that room storms Evelyn and Price.

PUSH IN on that video screen and suddenly we're there:

INT. EVELYN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Evelyn slams the door behind her.

EVELYN

I gave you a goddamn guest list two pages long -- where the hell are they?

PRICE

Shredded. Sorry. Decided to whip up one of my own: a group so hungry for money that they'd be willing to do anything. I thought you'd be more comfortable with your peers.

EVELYN

I guess it was stupid of me not to expect something this twisted from you. Well, congratu-fucking-lations, Steven: Round One, you win.

PRICE

Well, not quite. See, those people down there: they aren't the ones I invited.

EVELYN

Then who are they?

PRICE

You tell me. I don't know how you managed to hack into my Mac, but: bravo.

EVELYN

What are you talking about? You think I invited them?

PRICE

Sure know it wasn't me. And if you say it wasn't you -- then who the hell did, Evelyn?

EVELYN

It you really loved me, Steven, you'd find a way to drop dead in the next three seconds.

PRICE

Finding ways for me to die at these things is really your deal, isn't it?

The "O.J." knife with the not-quite-retractable blade? Your "Jim Jones Kool-Aid" that was exactly that?

EVELYN

All accidents until proven otherwise.

He goes to her and begins brushing her hair with his fingers.

PRICE

You know how happy I'd be if that was really true, Evelyn? And how positively goddamn delirious if you weren't fucking every living thing in our area code at the same goddamn time!

EVELYN

Which part of that fantasy turns you on most: me with other men -- or just the other men?

PRICE

You know everything you do gets me hot.

His grip on her hair suddenly tightens and twists.

PRICE

-- just not always in the sexual sense.

EVELYN

You're hurting me.

PRICE

I know.

She jabs his hand with a plasma-red, Dragon Lady-length thumbnail. He lets her go and sucks on a knuckle -- she's drawn blood.

PRICE

Now, there's the simple country gal I married. Let's go back down and greet your guests -- show them the real you: corny as Kansas on the Fourth of July.

EVELYN

My guests were shredded. It's your sick little scene now, Steven: enjoy. I'm going to go run scalding water on the places you just touched me, and then I'm

calling a cab.

She storms into the bathroom adjoining and slams that door.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN SALON - JUST AFTER

Just off the foyer. The furniture, though dust-caked and rotting is antique Deco and sumptuous. Liquor and a lavish buffet have been set out on a sideboard that looks like one of Dali's limp pocket-watches. As Price enters the room grimly, he's descended upon by an angry Pritchett:

PRITCHETT

Mr. Price: I've done everything we agreed on, your guests are all here and in one piece -- my 25 thousand now, please.

Price produces an envelope from his jacket and taps it.

PRICE

Right here, Mr. Pritchett. As well as five other bona fide, bank drafts for one million dollars each. Made out to cash.

EDDIE

And we get this money when?

PRICE

The second the sun hits tomorrow morning. Assuming you have stayed the entire night - and you're still alive, of course. Any other questions?

SARA

Yeah. Why's there five checks?
There's only four of us.

PRICE

You're forgetting my lovely wife; she's part of the same winner-take-all as the rest of you.

SARA

What're you talking about?

PRICE

Oh, sorry. Detail I guess I forgot to

mention. You die, you lose. Your check gets divvied-up by those still amongst the living.

BLACKBURN

What are you playing here, Price?

PRICE

A very, very scary game. But then look at the bright side: if there's only one of you still upright at dawn, you'll be leaving here with five million dollars in your pocket.

EDDIE

This is nuts.

PRICE

Yeah. But, hey, anybody who's not "comfortable" with the rules, you're free to walk, anytime. Seven digits poorer, goes without saying.

PRITCHETT

I'm ready now.

PRICE

Alright, Mr. Pritchett, let me just sign the damn thing.

Price sits at a rusting octagonal wire-and-steel desk, knives open his envelope, and produces a pen.

PRITCHETT

Two "T"s at the end of the name.

Price looks up, puts the pen down.

PRICE

Just for the record: what are the rest of your names?

BLACKBURN

Donald W. Blackburn, M.D.

MELISSA

Melissa Margaret Marr, Celebrity.

EDDIE

Eddie Moses, Communications Attache -- which translated from ancient bullshit

means: I work for a Messenger service.

Beat. All eyes have now turned to Sara, who's just standing there nervously.

PRICE

And you, young lady?

She blurts out the lie as one word:

SARA

Jennifer-Jenzen-Executive-V.P.-
Paragon-Pictures.

PRICE

Very good. Well, I think I can say with complete honesty: I've never heard of any of you.

EDDIE

Then what the hell are we doing here?

MELISSA

How'd you make your guest list, Price: throw darts at a phone book?

PRICE

You're not my list.

BLACKBURN

I got an engraved -- literally -- invitation -- with my name --

PRICE

-- I'm sure you did.

SARA

This is all maybe getting a little too strange --

PRICE

-- I wouldn't worry, Ms. Jenzen: the unexplainable will probably explain herself before too long. In the meantime, let's all relax, have a drink, the evening's young --

PRITCHETT

-- it's getting older by the second.
Mr. Price, if I could just please have --

PRICE

Sorry, Pritchett, here you go.

He signs the check and hands it to Pritchett who spins on his heels and starts quickly for the foyer.

PRICE

I think you're gonna miss the bash of a lifetime --

PRITCHETT

-- my loss --

PRICE

-- even if I give you a million as well?

PRITCHETT

Wouldn't know what to do with it all --

-- and then, suddenly, we hear the distant sound of heavy MACHINES at work. Pritchett freezes for a moment.

PRITCHETT

Oh, no.

SARA

What's going on?

CUT TO:

INT. GEAR ROOM -

Heavy rusted GEARS somewhere in the house, CRUNCHING as they begin to turn.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND FOYER -

Where Pritchett is sprinting like a madman to the exit.

PRITCHETT

Please -- God-in-Heaven, no --

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN SALON

The NOISE inside the room, inside the entire house, is deafening. Price senses something:

PRICE

The windows --

Pritchett makes the long run across the huge room towards:

CUT TO:

INT. GEAR ROOM

The ancient LEVERS snapping down like punches.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN SALON

BAM! The windows being sealed off by heavy IRON PLATES slamming into place.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND FOYER

BAM! The front door being likewise sealed by a descending IRON PLATE -- nearly decapitating Pritchett.

PRITCHETT

You can't do this to me!

INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS (NOTE: TBA)

BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! Every window, door, and portal of any kind in the house likewise being slammed-sealed shut.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN SALON

-- where everybody stands silent, breathless, and not a little afraid, as the sound of SLAMMING IRON is heard echoing everywhere in the distance.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND FOYER

Pritchett making a literal last dive for the one window in the foyer that is still partially unsealed, its iron plate closing fast --

PRITCHETT

-- NOOOOOOOOO!!! --

-- BAM! The ancient LEVERS smashing down all the way to the concrete floor: mission completed.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN SALON

That final BAM! resounding in the Main Salon. And then silence.

MELISSA

Now that is enter-fucking-tainment!

Eddie Moses tries to yank up one of the plates -- all he gets for his efforts is two handfuls of rust.

EDDIE

This thing's going nowhere.

BLACKBURN

If this is someone's idea of a joke --

-- an agonized SCREAM in response; it's coming from the Foyer --

PRICE

-- Pritchett's not laughing.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND FOYER

Price & Guests entering and greeted by the sight of:

Watson Pritchett - Hair wild, clothes torn, SCREAMING as he tries to pry the cast-iron plate off the Foyer window with his bare hands --

PRITCHETT

-- NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! --

-- he's ripping his fingernails off, blood coursing down his arms. PRICE runs to him, yanks him from the window and to the floor.

PRICE

Pritchett!!

Pritchett stops screaming, looks up at Price in utter terror.

PRICE

Blackburn! His hands, do something!

Blackburn races over, takes one look. Yells to Sara:

BLACKBURN

Bottle of vodka on the sideboard:
get it!

She races into the other room. Blackburn takes his handkerchief and puts it on Pritchett's wounds. Pritchett doesn't so much as whimper, keeps staring at Price. In a daze:

PRICE

Pritchett, what the hell just happened here?

Pritchett looks up at him, eyes not quite focused.

PRITCHETT

Lockdown.

Sara dashes back in with the bottle of vodka.

SARA

What does that mean?

Blackburn takes the liquor and begins cleaning/disinfecting Pritchett's wounds.

PRITCHETT

A mechanism. From the old Asylum. For Emergencies. Sealed the whole place shut. Top to bottom. That's how come they all burned to death in '31. Dr. Vannacutt threw the switch. If he was gonna die, they all were gonna die, and so they were toast.

MELISSA

No wonder they're still pissed off.

PRITCHETT

The only ones who survived were five of Vannacutt's staff butchers.

BLACKBURN

Why in God's name wasn't this thing removed years ago??

PRITCHETT

It was on my Dad's list of "things to do." But the House did him first.

EDDIE

You said that was an accident.

PRITCHETT

I lied. The House is alive and we're all gonna die.

BLACKBURN

Oh, for chrissake --

SARA

-- uh, excuse me, just one quick question? How long before this damn thing unseals itself?

PRITCHETT

Don't know that it does.

SARA

Well, then, how 'bout maybe we call someone?

PRITCHETT

Hasn't been a telephone in this House in over 60 years.

Blackburn, Price and Melissa Marr all chime in unintentional unison:

BLACKBURN/PRICE/MELISSA

I've got my cellular.

SARA

Well, flip a coin and somebody dial 911!

PRITCHETT

Won't do any good.

SARA

Why not?

And then, simultaneously, we hear the same beep-beep-beep from the three cellular phones and see the same flashing message on their LED screens: "No Service - No Service - No

Service."

PRICE

Must be those plates -- interfering
with the signal somehow.

PRITCHETT

Not the plates: the House. Why is no one
listening to me?? It's alive! And once
it's made up its mind, it won't let
anything out.

EDDIE

So, what? You're saying we're stuck
here the rest of our lives?

PRITCHETT

A cleaning crew's supposed to arrive
at 9:30 tomorrow morning -- I think
the power of the house fades at dawn.

EDDIE

-- well, let's hear it for small
miracles --

PRITCHETT

-- but I imagine we'll all be mutilated
beyond recognition by then.

MELISSA

Goodbye, bad times -- hello, Prime Time!

She starts shooting tape again -- everything and everybody.

SARA

There is something seriously screwed-up
going on here, and I don't believe it's
about ghosts --

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

-- oh, it sure ain't, sweetheart.

Heads turn: walking slow, smug and regal down the great
staircase into the foyer is EVELYN STOCKARD-PRICE, her coat
discarded, her neckline loosened -- she realizes she's here
for the night.

EVELYN

Take a bow, Steven, you've outdone
yourself tonight -- scared holy hell
out of even me.

BLACKBURN

If that's the fact, Price, okay, you've had your fun -- now open the goddamn --

PRICE

-- asking the wrong guy -- wasn't me who closed it.

EVELYN

Sure it wasn't. Hey, anybody else here make their living with thrills'n'chills for the kiddies? Don't raise your hands all at once.

PRICE

Huh. And here I had a completely different theory.

EVELYN

Really? Well, let it rip.

PRICE

Oh, no-no-no -- much more bang for everyone's buck to nail the bitch --

EVELYN

-- the sadistic prick --

PRICE

-- in the act.

SARA

Uh, excuse me? Don't think I'm not having the time of my life watching this train wreck that's your marriage -- but this isn't what I had in mind... I want to know that we can get out of here if we need to.

PRITCHETT

Believe me, we need to.

SARA

Pritchett, this "lockdown" thing -- it's gotta have like a master control -- you know machinery, gears, whatever -- somewhere in this place?

PRITCHETT

The basement -- but, believe me,

you don't want to go down there.

SARA

No, you don't want to go down there. I am going down there. And I'm going to find **reverse** on this thing and floor it.

PRITCHETT

You'll never find it, it's a maze down there.

SARA

Well, that leaves you with two options then, doesn't it: either show me where and maybe we get out of here -- or it's spend-the-night-sleep-tight.

Pritchett leaps to his feet.

PRITCHETT

It's actually very easy when you know the way.

EVELYN

A word of advice, honey? God knows what kind of freak-outs Steven's got set to spring in this place. If I were you, I'd bring something to protect yourself with. Baby, don't you think now's the time to I break out your "party favors?"

Price suddenly looks uneasy.

PRICE

What are you talking about?

EVELYN

Must be getting old, Stevie -- you're repeating yourself -- this is the exact same set-up you used for the Son-Of-Sam Hunt back in '94.

(to Sara)

Girlie, open up that casket there and see what you find.

Sara glares at her, but does as she's told: goes to the large ebony casket that supports Evelyn's BIRTHDAY CAKE. Sara looks back at Evelyn suspiciously... then sets the cake aside and lifts the lid.

Inside that, seemingly free floating in space, are SIX MINI-

COFFINS -- no more than eight inches long, their doors likewise propped open, revealing inside each a gleaming new GLOCK 9mm AUTOMATIC. Each pistol black gunmetal in color, of course.

EVELYN

Ooooh, nice: firearms this time.

MELISSA

The warped factor here just gets bigger and bigger.

EVELYN

Steven's sense of humor just makes you want to bust a gut, don't it?

SARA

I'm in stitches.

Sara takes one of the guns and attempts to eject the magazine. Nothing happens. She looks:

SARA

The clip's been welded shut.

EVELYN

On all of them, probably.

Evelyn takes one of the pistols and points it at her husband.

EVELYN

So how's a girl to know if these things are loaded, baby?

PRICE

Only one way I can think of, Sweetheart.

Tense beat, ala Eastwood and Hackman staring each other down at the end of "Unforgiven." Then Evelyn lowers the gun.

EVELYN

No. I think we'll let the young lady have first crack.

SARA

I don't want a gun, I just want out. Let's go, for God's sake.

PRICE

I'll meet you down there.

EDDIE
(to Sara)
Take the gun.

Sara takes the pistol from Evelyn, and Pritchett unenthusiastically beckons Eddie and Sara towards a hallway leading to the basement. Price trots towards another door off the Salon.

EVELYN
And where are we off to, Mr. Price?
Check the wiring on the animatronic
Mummies?

PRICE
A simple leak, if it's okay with you.

And he disappears down the hall. Melissa Marr jams a cigarette in her mouth.

MELISSA
Wow...

She flicks her lighter, sparking a flame to life --

SMASH TO:

INT. BASEMENT STAIRWAY - JUST AFTER

-- a flurry of crackling SPARKS showers Watson Pritchett as he twists the '20's vintage knob light switch. He leaps back with a frightened yelp.

We see a brief BURST OF LIGHT from the ancient sconces on the walls, revealing a series of moldy, cobwebbed and rubble-strewn basement gallery, and a series of five glass cases filled with the mummified remains of human bodies... One very odd human figure rides upon a mummified horse.

INT. BASEMENT GALLERY

An odd multi-walled gallery from which five corridors lead out, extending like the spokes of a wagon wheel --

-- and then every LIGHT down there SHORTS OUT with one loud SIZZLING POP! Total darkness. Beat.

PRITCHETT'S VOICE
Y'know, this'd actually be funny -- if I
didn't know for a fact I'd be pleading
for a quick, painless death in the next

few seconds.

SARA'S VOICE

Could somebody please just gag him
or something?

Sara reaches into her bag and pulls out the flashlight
Pritchett gave her earlier.

EDDIE

You're a handy little thing to have
around.

Suddenly, a terrible cracking sound is heard above Sara's
head. She aims her light at the large beam overhead. Just
then, the beam gives way. Eddie pulls her away just in
time.

SARA

And you're not really as large and
useless as you seem.

EDDIE

I'm better than that.

SARA

Don't push it.

She thrusts the flashlight into Pritchett's hand.

SARA

Now take us where this damn thing's at.

INT. SMALL GRIMY ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Price bursts through a hinged panel and whisper-shouts to
Schechter behind the computer/video console.

PRICE

-- hey! Next time give me a couple
seconds notice before you wing a gag
like that!

SCHECTER

The lockdown thing.

PRICE

I mean, not that it didn't give Evelyn
the kind of coronary I had in mind,
just...

SCHECTER

-- it wasn't me.

PRICE

Rewind that.

SCHECTER

I was just sitting here -- it happened.
I had nothing to do with it.

PRICE

Then who did??

SCHECTER

No idea. I didn't even know the damn
thing still worked!

PRICE

It works.

SCHECTER

Maybe it was just its time to finally
fall apart.

PRICE

No. Somehow -- I don't know how --
she did it.

SCHECTER

Pretty amazing feat: all that shit
down the basement and your wife's
up in the bedroom the whole time.

PRICE

Don't take your eyes off her for a
second. I think she just declared War.

INT. MAIN SALON - SIMULTANEOUS

Evelyn, a huge drink in her hand, holding forth to a not
terribly interested Dr. Blackburn. Melissa Marr's oblivious,
Camcorder to her eye, slowly dollying herself out of the
room.

EVELYN

We'd've been splitsville years ago, with
me the richest single woman in recorded
history -- but Steven doesn't "believe"
in divorce.

BLACKBURN

Not too big on it myself -- but then again, not on marriage either.

EVELYN

Oh, he's got no problem with that:
I'm his fourth.

BLACKBURN

I'm confused.

EVELYN

No need for divorce and that messy
division-of-assets thing when they kick
before you do.

MELISSA

All three of his previous wives
just up and died?

EVELYN

Damnedest thing: each one, freaky little
"accidents" --

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - SIMULTANEOUS

Sara, Eddie and Pritchett continue searching.

SARA

You should really open this place to the
public, Pritchett -- a spa for people
without enough stress in their lives.

PRITCHETT

I said we shouldn't come down here. Very
treacherous -- physical and metaphysical
levels, both. There've been no
refurbishments to this part of the house
-- it's exactly as it was in 1931.

VOICE (O.S.)

Is that a fact, Mr. Pritchett?

They all whip around -- spooked to the max. Pritchett shakily
trains the flashlight on who or what's behind them: Price.

PRICE

Sorry.

SARA

Good way to get your head blown off.

PRICE

I'll try not to remember to warn Evelyn.

They soon pass a broken wall. Rubble and debris litters the floor. Pritchett moves them quickly past the spot. This doesn't go unnoticed.

EDDIE

What's in there?

PRITCHETT

(too quickly)

Nothing.

Sara takes the flashlight from Pritchett's hand and aims it, into the dark hole beyond.

ANGLE ON THE DOOR

The light glints on a HUGE STEEL DOOR. A grime-covered WINDOW is set at eye-level. A black mold corrodes away the edges.

SARA

Nothing? That seems like quite a door to hold back "nothing".

Pritchett just stares at the door for an uncomfortably long moment...

EDDIE

What is it? What's in there?

PRITCHETT

(finally)

The Soul of the House. Everything that's corrupt about it... My father trapped it in there just before he died. You see, he purchased the house to restore it... We were going to live here... Nothing can live here. I was just a kid... The first time I saw it, I thought it was beautiful... It was just a dark mist turning into the corner of the room... then it started to move... then death started to happen... First the workers.. six in all... then my father...

SARA

Ghosts killed your father?

PRITCHETT

Not ghosts... at least not what you're thinking... Vannacutt used to dump the bodies of his failed experiments somewhere in the house...

SARA

And you think it's in there?

PRITCHETT

Accumulated evil... festering for decades...

(switching gears)

But I'm a drunk... so don't listen to me.

EDDIE

So you're saying as long as that door stays locked, we're okay?

PRITCHETT

Hell NO!! The House will kill ya!

Pritchett's oblivious: he's shining his light back down the corridor -- at its terminus it splits into four new corridors.

PRITCHETT

I think we go down there and take a right.

The trio follow Pritchett. WE remain staring at the STEEL DOOR. Almost imperceptibly -- or is it the darkness playing tricks on us? One of the streaks of mold seems to have grown longer.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Pritchett leading the three others down a new corridor, clearly clueless as to where the hell they are. Shines the flashlight up to find they're in --

INT. ELECTRO-SHOCK ROOM

a small room containing a large leather table with a myriad of mildewed buckle-straps attached. Behind the table: a monolithic brass and wood DYNAMO that looks powerful enough to keep Orange County lit for a year.

PRITCHETT

Electro-shock therapy. There's several of them hooked together... Dr. Vannacutt liked to zap his patients in multiples of ten. More energy-efficient or something. Let's try a left.

They turn left. A small, barely noticeable arc of electricity zaps from a dangling, half-severed wire.

CUT TO:

INT. SATURATION CHAMBER ROOM

Pritchett dead-ended in another room.

PRITCHETT

Damn-it-all! This is the Saturation Chamber! Left again!

He all but yanks Price along with him, Price blurting as he disappears from frame:

PRICE

What's a "Saturation Chamber"?

EDDIE and SARA linger, staring at the big, cast-iron capsule-shaped contraption. We hear Pritchett's Voice in the distance, explaining:

PRITCHETT (O.S.)

New wrinkle on an old theory for treating schizophrenia. 19th Century, I think: what would drive a sane man mad should make a madman sane. The Vannacutt version was: bombard the patient with aural and visual stimuli far more frightening than any hallucination they could ever produce, it'd traumatize 'em back to "normalcy."

EDDIE

Did it work?

Eddie looks up: Pritchett and Price are nowhere to be seen.

EDDIE

Hey! Where'd you guys go?

PRITCHETT (O.S.)

Left, goddamnit!

SARA

(grabbing Eddie's arm)
C'mon -- I've got like zero interest
in getting lost down here.

He guides her out of the room and down --

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

-- to his left.

PULL BACK -- And we see, simultaneously, Pritchett, Price and flashlight walking down the corridor that was to their left -- Eddie and Sara walking down the one that was to their left: a long, snaking passage going in the completely opposite direction.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Eddie and Sara navigating the various twists and turns in the darkness.

EDDIE

Hey, Price! Pritchett!

Sara's gaze falls on: A RAGGED HOLE above their heads, broken into the wall of the corridor. CABLES and WIRES can be seen inside the hole.

SARA

Lemme try something. Gimme a boost.

Eddie grabs her by her butt. She bristles.

SARA

-- hey, pal, that wasn't code for --

-- and with his considerable strength, lifts Sara in the air so she's sitting on his hands like a chair --

EDDIE

-- where you need to go?

As much as she tries to stifle it, Sara lets loose a giggle.

SARA

Three steps forward -- I want to get up
there.

EDDIE

Why?

SARA

This whole place can't be wired
to just one circuit --

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Pritchett and Price taking a hard right into --

INT. GEAR ROOM

We recognize the rusted gears from the "lockdown" sequence.

PRITCHETT

Bingo!

He shines the light through the cavernous space: an immense mechanism of cams, pulleys and counterweights. Price stares in absolute awe -- this is something straight out of the Industrial Revolution.

He eyes the bank of long-handled, mother-of-pearl tipped levers.

CUT TO:

INT. WALL - CONTINUOUS

Sara with her hands deep in the recess behind the wall sconce, yanking and re-connecting wires until -- she gets a spark.

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - SIMULTANEOUS

It burns her fingers and she yelps -- but the lights in the corridor FLICKER ON for a moment. And then again. And again. It's a lousy source of illumination, but...

SARA

-- better than nothing. Down, big
fella'.

Eddie lowers her back down to earth -- his hand lingering for a moment on her bottom. Their eyes meet for a nanosecond.

SARA

Thanks.

EDDIE

Most fun I've had all day.

SARA

You need to get out more.

They start walking down the weirdly pulsing corridor.

EDDIE

So, who are you really?

Sara stiffens for a second. Then, calmly:

SARA

What? Deep down inside?

EDDIE

Start with the name you were born with,
and we'll work forward from there.

SARA

I told you already: Jennifer Jenzen,
Executive V.P. of --

EDDIE

I don't think so...

SARA

Why not?

EDDIE

Most of my business is making deliveries
to high rollers. And I have yet to meet
one Executive who could tie their own
shoes -- let alone rewire an entire
house. You don't fit the bill -- not
even close.

SARA

(grinning)

There's always exceptions.

EDDIE

Not in the movie biz. So, c'mon,
gimme the truth.

Ahead of them, Sara sees the corridor splits into two.

SARA

The truth is, if we keep taking rights,
we're going to have to end up where we
started.

She beckons him to follow her, starts walking down the
corridor to the right.

SARA

Look, we're all gonna be out of here in
a little while and go our separate ways,
all a million bucks richer. What's it
matter who I am or who I'm not?

There's no response from Eddie.

SARA

Okay... So let's say, hypothetically,
I'm not exactly who I should be -- okay,
so you're right, you're a genius, I
don't know anybody who could've ever
seen right through me like that --
does that end the discussion?

No response from Eddie.

SARA

Alright, look: my real name is Sara,
and I'm a secretary -- was, anyway -- to
the real Jennifer Bitch who was invited
here, and now you know and I'm begging
you don't tell anybody, 'cuz I'm out of
a job and could really use even a tenth
of that money, okay?

No response from Eddie.

SARA

Can I just get a "yes" or a "no"??

She turns: Eddie's nowhere to be seen.

CUT TO:

INT. GEAR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pritchett and Price stand in the "Lockdown" control room,
staring at a rusted lever that Price has snapped off.

PRICE

We may have to...look for other
means to get out of here.

Price looks around the room.

PRITCHETT

What happened to what's-their-names?

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Sara trotting down one CORRIDOR --

SARA

Eddie...?

INT. BASEMENT - ANOTHER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Sara moving and picking up speed:

SARA

If this is your idea of funny, think again!

INT. BASEMENT - ANOTHER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Sara moves even faster:

SARA

In fact, you're really starting to piss me off!

INT. BASEMENT - ANOTHER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

And suddenly, she slams on the brakes -- because at the far end of this Corridor, she spots:

EDDIE - quick-stepping right-to-left through the intersection ahead.

SARA

Hey, pal: game called on account of boredom, let's go --

And then she sees: in the strobe-flicker of light, his EYES look devoid of pupils, as though replaced by something METALLIC.

SARA

Eddie...??

Eddie keeps walking, turns into another corridor and

disappears from sight.

SARA

What is your problem?

She runs after him.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - ANOTHER CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Sara again spots Eddie at the other end.

SARA

Hey!

He keeps on walking, turns into a room, disappears from sight.

SARA

You know, I was actually starting to like you, you creep!

Nonetheless, she chases after him into --

CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE ROOM

Sara stops, scared. God-knows what this room's purpose was long ago, now it's just a space filled with enormous glass tanks, vat-like things filled with BLOOD. But no Eddie. She shouts to the air:

SARA

Okay, you win. You've successfully creeped me out.

-- and then her EYES GO WIDE as she spots

EDDIE -- perched above a Vat -- he's teetering, his equilibrium like a marionette's -- in danger of dropping right into the Vat!

SARA

What are you doing --

-- Eddie drops like a stone into the Vat.

SARA

-- Eddie!!

She scrambles up to the top of the Vat, looks down into it: nothing but that thick opaque muck -- but there's SOMETHING ROILING beneath it. Sara plunges her arms down into it --

SARA

-- Eddie! Eddie! Oh my god!

-- BAM! Something does -- yanking her down hard into the Vat -- and continuing to pull -- she's to her shoulders in it -- and her head's about to go in --

SARA

-- Eddie!!

VOICE (O.S.)

Over here.

Sara darts the one eye still above the muck-line behind her.

EDDIE MOSES -- is standing in the doorway, a completely baffled expression on his face.

EDDIE

What's going on, you lose something down there?

SARA -- looks back down into the Vat in horror. Lets out a scream. Whatever's in there releases her arms and she goes tumbling ass-over-teakettle down to the floor, her arms released.

Eddie runs to her, takes her in his arms, sopping himself in the same blood.

EDDIE

What are you doing? Are you okay?

Sara has no answer.

INT. THE MAIN SALON - SHORTLY AFTER

Pritchett enters the room. The blood-caked Eddie and Sara stumble in, right behind them. Pritchett grimaces...

PRITCHETT

Now it's marked the two of you.

EVELYN

I suppose it's too much to hope that all that blood means --

A grim-faced Price enters.

EVELYN
(disappointed)
-- nope, he's still alive.

She pours herself another huge drink.

PRICE
Evelyn, could you just zip it for a moment? It looks like we're stuck here 'til morning -- let's make the best of it.

EDDIE
Best of a nightmare.

SARA
There is something very not normal going on here!

PRITCHETT
This? This is nothing. You've only been dealing with the House itself. You have no idea what you're tinkering with. Sooner or later, the darkness that is at the core will get out... One of you will release it... Not meaning to, of course... then...
(singing)
...Bye, bye, Miss American Pie...

SARA
Pritchett, what is this "core of darkness"?

PRITCHETT
I thought you understood.... It's the souls of Vannacutt's dead... The insanity... The horror... Victims burned alive... All that pain percolating somewhere in the house for seventy-some years...
(singing)
...singing this will be the day that I die... This will be the day that I....

He makes a beeline for the sideboard.

BLACKBURN

There must be some other way out.

PRICE

Well, until that's found, I think it's a good idea we all stick together.

(turns to his wife)

Or wouldn't that fit into your plans, baby?

EVELYN

Fine with me. Just somebody then better go and round up Melissa Marr.

PRICE

Where is she?

EVELYN

Stalking the wild poltergeist.

INT. HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUS

VIDEO IMAGE: A DARKENED HALLWAY rife with grainy shadows. The image cruises down the corridor, peering into the twisting passageways that intersect our path as we drift like some Flying Dutchman.

INT. HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUS

and we see that we've been watching from the POV of Melissa Marr's CAMCORDER. She's gliding up and down the hallway, eye glued to the viewfinder, taking in every square inch of the place.

POV CAMCORDER

The bumps and pits in the carved-stone CORRIDOR walls are becoming more vivid.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Melissa seen taking a left into ANOTHER HALLWAY.

POV CAMCORDER

an ODD SHADOW plays in the corner at the end of this new hallway. The CORRIDOR appears to grow smaller, more claustrophobic.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Melissa letting loose a half-uneasy, half-exhilarated gulp.

She stops walking. Slowly lowers the Camcorder, scans the end of the hall with her naked eye:

Other than having the creepy ambience as the rest of the house, the hall appears normal again: large and long without a trace of anything extraordinary. She returns her eye to the viewfinder.

POV CAMCORDER

the SHIFTING SHADOW she saw before disappears into an OPEN DOOR at the end of the hall.

MELISSA (O.S.)

Curiouser and curiouser. We're talking a fifty share, minimum.

-- just then: a murmur of MANY VOICES heard around her.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Melissa lowers the CAMCORDER, eyes darting everywhere, scared -- but she sees nothing. CAMERA back up to her eye. She moves to the doorway. As she turns the corner, we see the PATTERN ON THE WALL. It is really a painting done in ANAMORPHOSIS - it has now become a terrible Gothic demon, ready to strike.

POV CAMCORDER

We reach the vault-like door and peer down the steps that disappear into a pool of darkness. The VOICES heard again. Indistinct basso. Emanating from somewhere below. We descend down the stairs.

INT. BASEMENT - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

MELISSA comes to a stop at the bottom of the stairs: her eyes go wide at the sight before her.

WILD IMAGES painted by some long-dead madman, start on the floor, sweep up across the wall and onto the ceiling.

SHE PEERS CLOSER, sees: that they're images of torture and death painted in blood. MELISSA stares at them, wide-eyed. She puts the camera back up to her eye.

POV CAMCORDER

the IMAGES come alive: WRITHING in AGONY, what passes for their mouths open wide in silent screams. Melissa is awe-

struck:

MELISSA (O.S.)

Fuck me bald.

She moves down the corridor to a room at the end. A sign proclaims "CEREBRAL HYGIENE". As she nears, the voices grow louder. And now mixed in with them are terrible MOANS.

INT. CEREBRAL HYGIENE ROOM -

Melissa enters --

POV CAMCORDER

A strange room filled with odd devices is laid out before us. Clearly left over from another era, quack electric machines and bizarre instruments line the walls.

In the middle of the room, a small group of PEOPLE in white stand huddling urgently around something, their backs to us. A MAN in white, off to the side, is filming whatever it is going on with a spring-wound 16mm CAMERA.

MELISSA (O.S.)

Jesus...

And then the Huddled Group whips around, revealing the objects of their-activity:

TWO HUMANS -- crammed together on one gurney: a Woman in a savaged Nurse's uniform; a Man, in what little is left of his surgical scrubs, a name plate pinned right into his flesh: "Vannacutt."

Both SCREAMING like banshees as they're being VIVISECTED.

It is the identical image we saw on the B&W footage from 1931 at the beginning of the movie.

ANOTHER ANGLE

With a GASP, MELISSA pulls the camera from her eye.

She looks at the room: the equipment is all there but the room is completely EMPTY of anything living.

She lets out a small sigh of relief and TURNS to leave --

-- and suddenly in front of her is... THE PATIENT... that Vannacutt and Nurse had originally been dissecting. He's

jittering so fast he's a blur. And then he lunges at her.

INT. MAIN SALON - SIMULTANEOUS

The SCREAMS of Melissa Marr echo wildly in the room -- long, agonized HOWLS that just grow louder and louder. Everyone looks up in alarm -- with the exception of Evelyn, whose sole focus is on pouring herself a new drink.

EVELYN

Could be old Melissa found what she was looking for.

As the SCREAMS grow even more hideous, Price and Guests dash out of the room. Pritchett downs the rest of his huge tumbler of Scotch, then proceeds very halfheartedly after them -- and then the SCREAMS stop. Pritchett sits back down in his chair, pours another drink.

PRITCHETT

She's dead. Chalk up one for the House.

INT. HALLWAY

Price and Blackburn striding down a long hallway, eyes darting everywhere, shouting:

PRICE

Melissa!

BLACKBURN

Ms. Marr!

And then hearing from down in the basement:

EDDIE (O.S.)

Oh, Jesus: down here!

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Price and Blackburn arrive to see Eddie and Sara standing outside the door labeled "Cerebral Hygiene."

PRICE

What?

BLACKBURN

Is she alright?

SARA

....I don't...know.

The two men follow their gaze. To the FLOOR. Lying there is MARY'S CAMCORDER the lens shattered, the hand-grip broken off.

BLACKBURN

Something just must've...frightened her, that's all.

SARA

Yeah...something.

Sara holds up her finger: it's drenched with fresh blood. And with it, she points into the empty room. On the tile is a wide, red and glistening DRAG MARK leading from the doorway to the foot of the half-rotted... OPERATING TABLE.

PRICE

Jesus.

Price and Blackburn run into the room. Blackburn kneels down, examines the drag mark. Utterly baffled and not a little unnerved:

BLACKBURN

It just...stops here.

Sara sticks her head in the door, nervously:

SARA

Maybe....maybe she went up on the table.

Price runs a finger along the table bed; he's able to dig a trench the entire length of it through the three-inches-deep worth of dust.

PRICE

Nobody, nothing's been on this in...67 years.

Eddie stomps into the room, frightened and frustrated, trying to make sense of it all:

EDDIE

Well, she went somewhere! She didn't just up and disappear into thin air!

SARA

No...not air --

The three men turn to look at her -- Sara's staring at

something above them: a spot on the... CEILING directly over the Operating Table, where the bloody DRAG MARKS resume, continuing all the way to the point where concrete ceiling meets equally solid wall, and then vanish altogether.

SARA

-- into the House.

They just stare at the sight in dead, scared-shitless silence.

HEARD OVER:

EDDIE (V.O.)

There's gotta be some way out --

INT. MAIN SALON - SOON AFTER

Eddie seen haranguing a near-dead drunk Pritchett:

EDDIE

-- of this place, goddamnit, Pritchett!

PRITCHETT

Yes.

Pritchett drains the last drops of his tumbler of Scotch.

PRITCHETT

Alcoholic coma, if you hurry.

He starts to pour another --

-- Eddie swats both glass and bottle out of his hand; they SHATTER on the floor. In this tension-packed room, the sound is magnified a hundred-fold. Blackburn all but jumps out of his skin.

BLACKBURN

Jesus H. Christ!

PRITCHETT

Oh dear.

BLACKBURN

(to Eddie)

If you don't calm the hell down I'm gonna strap you in for electro-shock!

EDDIE

(waving his pistol)

How you gonna manage that with a new
blow-hole in your dome?

SARA

Hey, if everybody's gonna kill each
other, could you do it in another room?
I'm trying to get something accomplished
here.

We see that Sara's sitting at a desk in the room, fiddling
with the innards of Melissa Marr's camcorder.

EDDIE

What the hell good is fixing that
gonna get us?

SARA

An answer, I hope: exactly what -- or
who -- Melissa was taping.

EDDIE

And then where are we?

BLACKBURN

Put it this way: if it's your face on
that tape, Mr. Moses, we're one gunshot
away from solving all our problems --

EDDIE

-- fuck you!

SARA

I got it! Something, anyway...

The room goes silent -- on the PLAYBACK SCREEN on the side of
the CAMCORDER, an erratic, wildly rolling IMAGE can be seen.

Everyone present, Pritchett included, starts gravitating
towards Sara and the desk. She hits the STOP button on the
Camcorder.

SARA

The motor's working, but the tape's
pretty much D.O.A. -- I could only
rewind it back a couple of feet. Don't
blink, this is probably the first and
only showing.

She punches PLAY. And we see on the

CAMCORDER'S PLAYBACK

soundless: a vision of free flight -- the lens capturing what it saw as it dropped to the ground: a wild, herky-jerky, ass-over-teakettle melange of --

WALL/CEILING/MARY'S HAIR -- and, finally: FLOOR as the lens smacks TILE, fractures into a starburst of cracks, topples onto its side. And through this veil of JAGGED, SPIDERY LINES, we see:

MARY'S HAND drop into frame -- lie still for a moment -- and then start VIOLENTLY SPASMING, as a BLOODSTORM starts spattering it from O.S. Until the color of her flesh can no longer be seen --

A METAL CRUNCH is heard from inside the CAMCORDER, and the image on the screen goes to BLACK.

INT. MAIN SALON - CONTINUOUS

No one moves -- they're all frozen there, staring at the dead screen. Beat. And then: the sound of light APPLAUSE is heard.

Heads turn towards its source, and we see:

EVELYN STOCKARD-PRICE leaning against one of the walls, her hands slowly, almost angrily CLAPPING. She doesn't speak, she seethes:

EVELYN

Game, set and match, Steven. You've outdone yourself. And I know it's not good manners to ask the magician how he did it, but inquiring minds are desperate to know: just what did really happen to Ms. Marr?

PRICE

Asking the wrong person again.

EVELYN

I mean, did she stage it all for you and then go hide -- or did you just flat out kill the little bitch --

PRICE

-- I pose you the same question --

EVELYN

-- and who's next on your list?

PRICE

If I had one, Evelyn, I think you know who'd be first and last --

EVELYN

-- oh, for chrissake, that's a given; we all know that knocking me off is the bottom line here --

PRICE

-- that wasn't my original plan, but it is starting to look more attractive --

EVELYN

-- thank you! All the cards finally on the goddamn table!

She produces one of the Glocks and points it at him.

EVELYN

Just know I'm not gonna make it easy for you. We still don't know the answer to the Million Dollar Question --

-- Evelyn fires the gun into the wall just to the left of Price's head. It smashes a hole there the size of a fist.

PRICE

Jesus!

EVELYN

Question answered.

PRICE

They weren't loaded when I put them in there!

EVELYN

Funky little house, ain't it?

(turns to the Guests)

Friends, your hostess is now going to retire for what's left of the night. If you need me, I'll be in the bedroom upstairs -- but try and fight that need: the door'll be locked, I'll be trying to sleep, and if anyone so much as breathes in the keyhole, I'm gonna empty this thing into their fucking head. Thank you all for the bestest birthday a girl could have.

She walks away and begins climbing the stairs. Price turns to the guests to see that every eye in the room is staring at him -- and not without fear. Price is astonished, then just shakes his head with disgust.

PRICE

Even if I were inclined, I've had better -- and a lot safer -- opportunities to kill off a wife.

BLACKBURN

Three times, to be exact.

PRICE

Excuse me?

BLACKBURN

Accidents. Fatal. Each of your prior wives, so we've been informed.

PRICE

Can't imagine by who. I don't suppose the truth would interest you: that I've never had another wife but Evelyn.

No response, just looks of confusion.

PRICE

Married. Once. Same woman. All these years. She just slithered up the stairs.

EDDIE

Prove it.

PRICE

Prove it how?

Sara strides to the coffin-cabinet and withdraws one of the Glocks.

PRICE

And what are you planning on doing with that?

She cocks it.

SARA

I just decided a million bucks is worthless if you ain't around to spend it. There is a way out of this place, and I'm gonna either find it or create

it.

(to Eddie)

Coming or staying?

Eddie looks at his options: Price, Blackburn & Pritchett -- or Sara.

EDDIE

Yeah, what the hell, I'll go.

BLACKBURN

Yeah, me too.

Blackburn takes a gun from the coffin and cocks it.

SARA

More the merrier.

BLACKBURN

No. I'm going back to try and find Ms. Marr. If she's hurt, I'll tend to her. Dead, then I'm coming back for him.

He glares at Price and exits in the opposite direction.

Long beat. Price stares at the befuddled Pritchett who seems to be having a quiet conversation with himself.

PRITCHETT

I think...I may have the answer.

PRICE

What?

PRITCHETT

I remember...it was a long time ago...my father said: when the House was finally completed, make sure...we-christen-it-with-this-bottle-of-dirt-cheap-champagne-that-should-still-be-in a cupboard somewhere!

Pritchett is out of his chair extremely fast for someone with a near-lethal blood alcohol level. As he makes his exit, he grabs one of the last Glocks. Turns sheepishly to Price:

PRITCHETT

Nothing personal.

He chambers a shell and exits. Beat. Price is alone in the room.

PRICE
Evelyn, goddamnit -- !

INT. SMALL GRIMY ROOM - JUST AFTER

-- and bursts through the hinged panel into computer central, shouting:

PRICE
-- Schecter, how is she pulling
this off!?

Schecter doesn't turn, all his attention focused on the computer screen, his fingers stopped dead in the their tracks upon the keys as though suddenly terrified by something.

Price looks at the computer screen. Two words typed there:

Someone Else

PRICE
What does that mean?

Schecter stays frozen. Price is beside himself:

PRICE
Schecter, what the hell does it mean??

He whips Schecter around in his swivel chair -- and comes literally face-to-face with -- a Man who no longer has a face! It's like someone took a giant melon-baller to Schecter's head, scooping out everything -- just leaving the rind that's the interior wall of his skull. Well, mostly everything: there's still bits of bloody brain pulp hanging from the bone. Needless to say: he's dead.

Price turns away, gagging in horror -- and his eye is caught by a flash of motion in a --

VIDEO MONITOR -- the one trained on the Main Salon

A FIGURE (VANNACUTT) DRESSED ALL IN WHITE standing by the sideboard, looking up into the CAMERA -- a strange stainless-steel device in his hands that looks half-surgical saw/half-speculum. Something dark and wet dripping from its knife-sharp edges.

PRICE
Someone else. Not Evelyn --

Price's Eyes jump to --

VIDEO MONITOR - THE ONE TRAINED ON THE BEDROOM

-- plain as day, there's Evelyn under the covers.

Price's eyes dart back to the SALON MONITOR -- the Figure in White is no longer there. But Price catches a flash: the door to the corridor just swinging shut! Price jumps to his feet and tears-ass out of the small room, screeching:

PRICE

There's someone else in the House!

INT. CORRIDOR - MAIN FLOOR - SIMULTANEOUS

Eddie and Sara pulling with all their might on the iron grate to one of the windows. Eddie stops.

EDDIE

You hear somebody?

SARA

No -- keep pulling, it's moving!

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - SIMULTANEOUS

Dr. Blackburn, armed with Sara's flashlight and his medical bag, strides with determination through the labyrinth. Then stops when he hears a faint VOICE in the distance:

DISTANT VOICE (O.S.)

Blackburn!

Blackburn finds he's stopped right by the door to the "Cerebral Hygiene" room.

BLACKBURN

(suddenly nervous)

Ms. Marr...?

INT. EVELYN'S BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

We see the locks on the door, deadbolt and knob-lock both, SNAP OPEN simultaneously. Beat. In the distance, a VOICE:

DISTANT VOICE (O.S.)

Someone else -- !

The door SLAMS. WHIP-PAN to Evelyn's bed: clearly it's been slept in -- but now it's completely empty.

INT. VANNACUTT'S STUDY - SIMULTANEOUS

Pritchett on his hands and knees going through a large cabinet, tossing books and papers over his shoulder in a frenzy of frustration.

DISTANT VOICE (O.S.)
-- in the House!

PRITCHETT
(to himself)
I know, I know -- it's gotta be here somewhere!

INT. GRAND FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Price tearing down the stairs:

PRICE
You sonovabitch, where are you,
I saw you!!

INT. CORRIDOR - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Eddie and Sara drop their arms from the window, exhausted. But there is now a space about two inches wide between IRON GRATE and OPEN WINDOW.

SARA
We can do it...

EDDIE
Sure, with three days and a blowtorch.

SARA
It's a thousand years old -- we just need a crowbar or something to get leverage -- the sucker'll pop!

EDDIE
No prob: I'll just hop down the hardware store --

SARA
-- no. The basement -- the room with all the controls to this thing: big long iron levers just lying there --

EDDIE

-- not a chance -- there's too much weirdness down there I don't think even bullets are gonna stop.

SARA

You're starting to sound like Pritchett.

-- and then the LIGHTS zap to BLACK and Sara SHRIEKS --

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

-- Pritchett shrieks as the LIGHTS ZAP BACK ON -- blinding -- then OFF AGAIN -- then ON --

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

-- the lights in the wall sconces are strobing like an epileptic's worst nightmare. The sheer schizo-psychedelia of it all has Dr. Blackburn frozen in his tracks --

INT. BASEMENT STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

-- as is Price.

-- then the SOUND starts. Price is first to hear it -- it puts an expression on his face like someone is ramming both eardrums with icepicks over and over again:

A LOUD CRACKLING ELECTRIC SURGE -- on-again, off-again, in direct sync with the dimming of the lights. What makes it so especially unsettling is the noise that accompanies each Sledgehammer Surge: a straining, strangulating CRY. A noise like a calf would make as its throat is slit.

The light-show be damned, Price leaps down the stairs, sprinting towards the Noise.

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

-- likewise Dr. Blackburn --

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

-- likewise Sara and Eddie, running as fast as they can --

INT. BASEMENT GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

Price spies Blackburn at the other end of a Corridor, shouts over the Noise to him:

PRICE

Where is it??

BLACKBURN

I don't know!!

Sara and Eddie appear, spot them; Sara shouts:

SARA

What is it??

PRICE

Something with the power, I don't know!!

And then Pritchett is seen at the far end of another Corridor.

PRITCHETT

It's down there!

He's pointing to a long corridor - a light strobes at the end.

EDDIE

What's down there?

PRITCHETT

(awe-struck)

The...Fourth of July.

BLACKBURN

What are you babbling, you lunatic??

And then clarity comes to Price's eyes.

PRICE

Electro-shock.

INT. HALLWAY/ELECTRO-SHOCK THERAPY ROOM - BASEMENT

-- and the Noise suddenly stops. The lights stop pulsing. Pitch dark and dead quiet.

Eddie squints and points at something deeper in the room.

EDDIE

There's something --

-- MOVING inside the Room. Blackburn lashes his arm out, stopping anyone from going any further into the room. He whispers:

BLACKBURN

Don't move, don't make a sound...

In the darkness, in the distance, they can make out

AN ANIMATE PRESENCE at waist level. Pale. With something flowing from its sides, almost wing-like. And it's squirming, undulating like a snake -- and then, softly this time, that calf-like cry. High-pitched, almost female-sounding.

Price ducks under Blackburn's arm and starts walking slowly into the room, towards it. No one tries to stop him.

ON PRICE as he gets closer, and can see that whatever it is, it's perched atop one of the TABLES --

-- the CRY -- and Price steps closer, and he can make out to the side of the table, something that looks like....a hand?

-- the CRY -- closer now: a hand discerned -- human -- with rings on the fingers, polish on the nails --

PRICE

...Ms. Marr...?

-- no response -- just the CRY -- Price reaches out to touch that hand --

SARA

Is it Melissa??

-- a look of horror comes to Price's face:

PRICE

OH JESUS NO!!

-- and then lights flash BLINDING WHITE -- and the bug-eyed face of EVELYN STOCKARD-PRICE is seen -- screaming that CRY through the RUBBER BITE-DOWN that's been taped tight to her teeth --

-- her head, her torso, her limbs BUCKING like they're jet-propelled against the leather straps restraining her --

-- as the MASSIVE VOLTS of electricity from the DYNAMO she's wired to punch into her like ten thousand razors at once --

-- and Price reaches for her instinctively --

-- only to have Blackburn lunge in and yank his hand away --

BLACKBURN

-- are you crazy!?!

-- and for a moment all anyone can do is watch as Evelyn gets jolted and slammed again and again and again -- and sparks fly from the electrodes on her head and smoke starts to billow --

PRICE

Turn it off!! Somebody turn
the damn thing off!!

En masse, the Guests charge into the room, scrabbling everywhere around the DYNAMO, looking for a wire, anything they can use to stop the current ripping through her body --

-- and Price is near-insane, smashing buttons, yanking switches off their moorings as he watches the pupils disappear from the eyes of his bucking, jerking wife --

-- and Sara pulls a cord from a socket in the wall and nothing happens --

-- and Blackburn spies something running down the table leg --

-- and Price is literally SCREAMING --

-- and Blackburn yanks the table-leg wire with all his might --

-- and everything stops. The light show. The screaming. The smoke.

-- and Evelyn, too. Her body drops back down on the table with a horrible THUD. Her eyes stare sightlessly. Blackburn leans over her. Head to her chest, a finger to her neck. Beat. And then he stands back up straight.

BLACKBURN

I'm sorry --

PRICE

-- she's not dead! Just have to
get her heart pumping again!

SARA

Mouth-to-mouth!

Price yanks the bite-piece from Evelyn's mouth -- a plume of purple ARTERIAL BLOOD spews from her lips and cascades all over her face.

EDDIE

Oh, Jesus....

PRICE

Adrenaline -- in your bag, Blackburn,
you must have --

BLACKBURN

-- even if we were in the E.R.,
Price: it's too late -- her heart's
burst!

Price puts his ear on Evelyn's chest -- listens -- his face falls.

PRICE

No...

Sara puts two fingers to Evelyn's wrist pulse. Feels.

SARA

She's gone.

Even Pritchett gets into the act, taking the flashlight and shining it into Evelyn's fixed pupils.

PRITCHETT

They don't get any deader.

Price strokes his wife's hair, tears begin to form in his eyes.

PRICE

No.

With his other hand, Price begins to unbuckle the restraints.

SARA

I...don't think...anybody should be
touching the body.

PRICE

I think I'll do what I damn well please.

BLACKBURN

She's right, Price. It's a matter
for the police.

He takes Price's hands firmly and removes them from Evelyn.

PRICE

It is in-fucking-deed. At the risk of stating the obvious: this wasn't exactly a goddamn suicide.

He smacks the now-loose steel-and-leather restraint with his hand -- in the tense silence of the room, the buckle BANGS like a GUNSHOT against the table, over and over again.

PRITCHETT

House 2, Guests 0.

PRICE

I think, Pritchett, we've got a situation here that even you can't explain away as "ghosts." This is ice-cold homicide by person -- or persons --

He glares furiously at his Guests.

SARA

-- not entirely unknown.

She cocks her pistol and aims it at Price.

PRICE

Convenient place to point blame, hon', but this time, the only wrong one: for all I know, somebody should be pointing that gun at you.

She shakes her head and keeps the gun where it is.

SARA

I was upstairs with Eddie --

EDDIE

-- that's the fact, bud --

SARA

-- where the hell were you?

PRICE

Upstairs, too. Come with me, I'll show you another body, a friend of mine named Schecter --

BLACKBURN

-- what was he doing here?

PRICE

Running all the bells and whistles we
set up to scare hell out of everybody --

EDDIE

-- the stained glass --

PRICE

-- yeah, we did that --

SARA

-- the window and door grates --

PRICE

-- no -- that's when everything went
ragtime -- whoever else is in this house
has been doing everything since -- I
thought it was Evelyn --

BLACKBURN

-- which is why you killed her.

And now he takes his pistol and cocks it at Price.

PRICE

I was upstairs!

SARA

I never saw you --

BLACKBURN

-- I did: down here.

EDDIE

And I think that's case --

-- likewise producing his gun and chambering a shell.

EDDIE

-- closed.

PRICE

Pritchett, you're not joining
this necktie party?

PRITCHETT

I was upstairs looking for... well,
uh... moral support. I don't know
what's going on down here, but I like

you, and if you say the house didn't
kill your wife --

Pritchett fumbles out his pistol.

PRITCHETT

-- then I guess then it had to be
you. Sorry.

PRICE

Thank God -- I was afraid I'd be
lynched without a quorum.

SARA

If you've got a gun on you, Price,
I'd hand it over now.

PRICE

Not just yet. Would any of you be
interested in knowing exactly why I
ended up here in the basement?

SARA

Fascinated.

PRICE

I was chasing after somebody I saw
in the salon.

BLACKBURN

Oh, really: who?

PRICE

Didn't catch his or her name, just
followed them down here. Somebody all in
white surgical gown.

PRITCHETT

(suddenly terrified)
Vannacutt!!

PRICE

Or somebody wanting me to believe that.

SARA

Well, I don't.

PRICE

Then just wait -- maybe this whoever's
got you next on the Asylum's equipment-
test list. Maybe a literal mind-blow

inside the "Saturation Chamber."

SARA
I'll take my chances.

PRICE
Well, I can't, sweetheart.

And now Price produces his gun.

BLACKBURN
If there really is someone else in this house, I think the four of us can handle the situation.

PRICE
I think one of you has been part and parcel of making this situation!

SARA
The gun, Price; hand it over: now.

Price cocks his pistol.

PRICE
Don't test me, I'm real prepared to use this to stay alive --

SARA
-- confirming everything we already know --

PRICE
-- I'll take the chance, come morning and cops, I'll be proved right --

-- Sara advances --

EDDIE
-- you lose either way, Price --

SARA
-- listen to the man --

PRICE
-- listen to me, goddamnit --

SARA
-- no more --

-- she reaches for his gun --

PRICE

-- no!

And Price pulls the trigger right in her face!

SARA

NO!!

Only...there's no explosive report, no whine of bullets -- just this CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! from Price's gun.

The room freezes for a moment -- wide-eyed shock all around. Price looks down at his Glock: the weld on the clip's been broken.

PRICE

Who fucked with my gun??

Freeze broken: Eddie lunges for him.

EDDIE

You sonovabitch!!

And he tackles Price to the floor, punching the gun from Price's grasp and nailing him in the face a few times for good measure. Price is down for the count.

Pritchett walks towards the stairs. Blackburn looks to Sara:

BLACKBURN

Now what do we do? We've got to hold him somewhere 'til the police --

SARA

-- the "Saturation Chamber." Where he wanted to put me.

Pritchett stops in his tracks on the stairs, alarmed.

PRITCHETT

What would drive a madman sane would drive a sane man mad.

(pauses)

I need a drink. Anyone wants me, I'll either be upstairs or dismembered.

INT. SATURATION CHAMBER ROOM - JUST AFTER

Price lets out a scream as Eddie SLAMS the door to the "Saturation Chamber". Price's face appears in the small

porthole.

Sara twists the WHEEL that seals tight the cast-iron, capsule-shaped device. Asks Blackburn:

SARA

Pretty old and rusted out -- you sure
this thing'll hold him?

Through the single small window on the side, we can see a furious, panicked Price slam his full weight against the inside of the door. It doesn't budge a millimeter.

BLACKBURN

Don't think it'll be a problem.

SARA

(to Eddie)

C'mon.

Through the Chamber window, we see Price make another futile CRASH against the door.

EDDIE

Shouldn't somebody like, stand guard
or something -- just in case?

BLACKBURN

I'll stay, if it'll ease your mind.

EDDIE

You sure? You'll be alright by yourself?

Blackburn pats the gun in his jacket pocket.

BLACKBURN

I'm not worried.

Sara nods, takes Eddie's hand and disappears up the stairs.

Blackburn and Price stare at each other on opposite sides of the tiny window. Price is screeching something at him, but we can't hear a word through all that iron.

BLACKBURN

Can't quite make that out -- what?

Price silently bellows.

BLACKBURN

You want to see how this thing

works? Weird request, but okay...

Blackburn leans over and starts twisting dials and flipping every switch he can find on the CONTROL PANEL of the capsule.

We see Price look up in alarm: a CIRCLE OF PULSING LIGHTS is dappling down on him. It looks almost quaint: like a Victorian carousel at night.

BLACKBURN

You've got to let me know how it all turns out. Professional courtesy and all that.

And with Price seen yelling and pounding through the window, BLACKBURN walks away and disappears into the dark of the basement. He passes right by the huge, sealed STEEL DOOR where Vannacutt stashed his corpses. The tendrils of mold on the metal have expanded to the length of a man's arm.

INT. SATURATION CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Price is down on the floor of the capsule, a look both of fear and an engineer's curiosity on his face, as he stares up at the CIRCLE OF LIGHT that has begun to spin faster and faster --

-- and then whatever anxiety he has abruptly drops from his face. Aside from a little eye-strain, absolutely nothing's happening to him. He stands and examines the source of the light. Sees on the ceiling of the capsule: it's nothing more than a spinning mirror ball-like apparatus flecked with colored glass. He's unimpressed:

PRICE

Technology by Fred Flintstone.

He turns away from it, braces himself against a wall,

SEE STORYBOARDS FOR THIS SEQUENCE - WHICH SHOWS STEVEN PRICE BEING TORMENTED BY LIGHT, SOUND, FURY AND HALLUCINATIONS.

SMASH TO:

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Where we view Price from outside the Capsule. Through its tiny window we see him silently jerk, spasm and scream -- all while standing inside the utterly empty Saturation Chamber.

OVER we hear almost bestial-sounding grunts.

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - SIMULTANEOUS

Sara and Eddie move through the corridor - stopping at every junction. They're hopelessly lost.

EDDIE

I think we should have taken a right back there.

SARA

Back where?

They scan the maze of interconnecting passageways behind them.

EDDIE

Good point.

SARA

(pointing to another hallway)
Let's try down here...

They move in that direction, turning a corner and passing several doorways. Eddie glances at the door they're about to pass and stops.

EDDIE

Hey, check it out.

Sara stops and looks at the wire glass door. A nameplate reads: **DR. RICHARD B. VANNACUTT**

SARA

Vannacutt's office.

She tries the door handle. It's unlocked. They move inside, slowly.

INT. VANNACUTT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Inside is an amazing collection of debris, partially ransacked.

File cabinets are open and the floor is littered with papers. On shelves are bottles of specimens of body parts and dead sea life, floating in formaldehyde.

Sara moves over to Vannacutt's desk and begins going through the drawers. Eddie stares at the specimens.

EDDIE

What are you looking for?

SARA

Maybe there are notes or drawings of this place, showing how those plates work.

Eddie pulls a picture from the wall... The glass is cracked. Sara looks back at Eddie and moves to him.

SARA (cont'd)

What've you got?

EDDIE

Class of 1931.

ECU - THE PICTURE shows the various doctors and nurses in resident. The banner above the corroding image states: **THE VANNACUTT INSTITUTE STAFF FOR 1931**. Below each face is a name and position.

SARA

Cheery looking bunch.

EDDIE

Better living through electricity.

Sara notices something about the photo.

SARA

Holy shit! Now we know how the guest list was made up. Look, these names... Head Nurse, Ruth-Ann Stockard... Bjorn Jensen, Electro Therapy... Jasper Marr, Thomas Steven Price... They're all here!

EDDIE

Wait a minute... What are you saying?

SARA

Everyone that was invited is related to one of the staff who was here when the place burned. There are five of us...

Suddenly, another voice is heard...

PRITCHETT

And five that didn't die.

Sara and Eddie just about jump out of their skins!

Pritchett is standing in the doorway in his usual sloshed condition.

EDDIE

Shit, Pritchett!!!

PRITCHETT

Price didn't make the guest list... The house did. It wants vengeance.

EDDIE

How's a goddamn building gonna send out invitations?

PRITCHETT

What's life, anyway? Waves...? Sound...? Light...? Electricity...? I don't know... Phone lines...?

SARA

Or an on-line computer.

EDDIE

That's crazy!

SARA

What about that other guy?

PRITCHETT

Schechter? Wrong place at the wrong time... like you.

Eddie stares at the photo.

EDDIE

I don't see Blackburn's name on here...

CUT TO:

INT. ELECTRO-SHOCK ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Dr. Blackburn opens the door to the room and walks grimly into it, staring at Evelyn's dead body, still strapped to the table.

BLACKBURN

The late Mrs. Steven Price.

From his medical-bag, he removes a scalpel.

BLACKBURN

Tragic, tortured Mrs. Steven Price.

With a blur of quick slashes, he cuts her limbs and torso free of their moldy restraints.

BLACKBURN

Lovely Mrs. Steven Price.

Now accessible, he parts the top of her nightgown. Runs a finger slowly from the tip of her chin down to her bare breasts.

BLACKBURN

Creamy, cool...and now very cooperative Mrs. Steven Price.

His tongue darts from his lips and he begins planting long, lingering kisses all over her neck --

-- FLASH: of a hypodermic being pulled from Blackburn's bag --

-- Blackburn kissing everywhere around her breasts --

-- FLASH: of the air bubbles in the needle being plunged out of the tip: squirt! --

-- bubbles of Blackburn's saliva dampening her nipples, his tongue swabbing concentric circles within her aureole --

-- FLASH: the needle into the crook of Evelyn's elbow --

-- Blackburn's mouth dancing down to her belly -- he's begun to hyperventilate with excitement -- and

A HAND comes languidly into frame, begins stroking his lush dyed locks --

VOICE (O.S.)

I've missed you.

BLACKBURN

I've missed this.

And Dr. Blackburn tosses the hypo away and hoists himself to meet the eager, waiting mouth of the now very alive EVELYN STOCKARD-PRICE -- who starts to vigorously respond to Blackburn's touch. He reluctantly pulls himself away.

BLACKBURN

Easy. You've got to keep still for a bit, the last thing we need is a

coronary.

EVELYN

You're the Doctor, sweetheart. 'Guess the atropine worked, then.

BLACKBURN

Convinced all those that needed convincing: you're an official dead lady.

EVELYN

And what's Steven's status?

BLACKBURN

Still alive, but it's just a matter of time. And then will come your miraculous resurrection --

EVELYN

-- "oh, no, Officer, I'm very much alive -- just a joke to beat my husband at his own clever game -- What? What do you mean he's dead? It's all my fault, I may as well have killed him myself!"

BLACKBURN

"But you didn't, Ma'am. We have all these witnesses that saw..." well, whoever it ends up being that finally shoots him --

EVELYN

-- the James Dean wannabe with the hair trigger --

BLACKBURN

-- or might turn out to be -- very big surprise -- that Jenzen girl. The little bitch has the right stuff. She nearly put a bullet in Price right after your "demise."

EVELYN

So what stopped her?

BLACKBURN

It's complicated. But don't worry --

EVELYN

-- there's already been way too many complications for a very simple plan. You ever find out what happened to Melissa Marr?

BLACKBURN

Not yet.

EVELYN

So we don't even know if she's alive or dead --

BLACKBURN

-- Price killed her, there's no other explanation --

EVELYN

-- there's plenty: for all we know, Steven's got her spying on us right now --

BLACKBURN

-- bullshit --

EVELYN

-- the whole thing is falling apart!

Blackburn starts stroking her, trying to calm her.

BLACKBURN

It's not, baby. Just a matter of minutes now, before somebody pulls the trigger --

EVELYN

-- but nobody has yet, Donald. They just haven't been brought to that breaking point. They have to believe proof-positive that their lives are in danger.

BLACKBURN

How much more do they need than your death at his hands?

EVELYN

But they didn't see it happen, they still have doubts. What we need is another body, and Steven's bloody hands right next to it!

BLACKBURN

And how the hell are we going
to do that?

EVELYN

Okay: this may sound crazy, but --

-- and in one savage blur of motion, Evelyn drives
Blackburn's scalpel right into his chest!

Blackburn just stands there motionless, looking at her
confused. She clears up any gray areas: thrusting deep and
yanking down, gutting him like he's a trout.

INT. MAIN SALON - UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Eddie trots into the room, carrying the thick base of a
wrought-iron floor lamp. To Sara:

EDDIE

This is the best we're gonna do.

SARA

It'll have to do.

They start out of the room. Watson Pritchett remains morosely
sitting in his chair.

SARA

You coming, or are you waiting
for Blackburn?

PRITCHETT

Blackburn's dead.

SARA

Excuse me?

PRITCHETT

He would have been back by now.

Beat. Eddie and Sara look at each other: nahhhh. And then:

SARA

Hey: Dr. Blackburn...?

Nothing in response. Sara grabs Pritchett and they head for
the basement.

INT. BASEMENT - CORRIDOR - SIMULTANEOUS

-- the beautiful blood-caked FEET of Evelyn Stockard-Price seen walking across the concrete.

Her gore-sopped HAND seen, traveling upwards -- we follow it --

-- as it undoes the lock on the door of the now pitch-dark --

INT. SATURATION CHAMBER ROOM

Beat. And then the inert body of STEVEN PRICE slumps out. Evelyn walks out of frame. Beat. Then a WHIMPER is heard. It seems to be coming from the throat of Steven Price.

INT. BASEMENT - CORRIDORS - SIMULTANEOUS

The lights have begun strobing again. Sara, Eddie and Pritchett move quickly down corridor after corridor --

SARA

Dr. Blackburn??

-- finally stumbling into:

INT. SATURATION CHAMBER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- where the circle of pulsing lights inside the Chamber itself are as bold and blinding as looking into the sun. Lighting up the entire room, they can barely make out a thing -- except:

A FACE -- frozen in a scream that's pressed against the capsule's window.

EDDIE

Well, at least Price is still under wraps.

Sara squints. And then her eyes grow wide --

SARA

It's Blackburn.

-- the FACE in the window comes into focus:

DR. DONALD W. BLACKBURN

The trio moves to the Chamber amidst the blinding lights, shield their eyes and throw the door open -- A BODY -- comes tumbling out, the door closing shut behind it.

The three of them are in shock. Blackburn's face is still

pressed against the window. And then Sara re-opens the door.

And they see: there's nothing attached to Blackburn's head, it's just propped in the small sill of the window. And the body on the floor just happens to be missing same.

And then Sara sets her teeth, and pulls out her gun.

INT. BASEMENT - CORRIDORS - JUST AFTER

Sara and Eddie on a mission, Glocks in hand and ready, stalking like cats through the maze of corridors.

EDDIE

Price!!

SARA

He's gotta still be down here.

Pritchett is less enthused.

PRITCHETT

You know, that crowbar, that window?
Maybe we should just call it a --

SARA/EDDIE

-- Pritchett, shut the fuck up.

PRITCHETT

Oh, dear.

SARA

Price!

PRITCHETT

Oh, dear.

EDDIE

Pritchett -- !

And then he sees that Pritchett's staring slack-jawed into the:

INT. MORGUE ROOM

-- the table where the body of Evelyn Stockard-Price once lay is now empty and blood-soaked.

EDDIE

Price, what the fuck did you do?

Eddie turns, enraged, to Sara. She's nowhere to be seen.

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - SIMULTANEOUS

Sara is wending her way down a passage, gun now lowered slightly. For what she's in pursuit of is something that seems not only non-threatening, but familiar: a soft, high-pitched VOICE that sounds in pain, crying:

VOICE (O.S.)

Please.....anyone....help me?

SARA

Melissa...?

VOICE (O.S.)

For the love of God....please...?

SARA

Melissa, it's Sara -- is that you?

VOICE (O.S.)

Sara...?

SARA

Keep talking, I'll find you!

VOICE (O.S.)

Something....happened --

SARA

-- I'm coming --

VOICE (O.S.)

-- something horrible...I don't understand --

The Voice is somewhere close now -- within just a few feet of her -- but Sara can see no one.

SARA

If you can stand, if you can just raise your arm --

-- and then, from behind a tall pile of stone and mortar rubble, rises a bloody and absolutely terrified

STEVEN PRICE -- so freaked-out his Voice is just a squeak.

PRICE

I woke up on the floor....there

was Dr. Blackburn...I don't know
what happened!

Sara's surprise quickly fades -- replaced by cold, stone
anger.

SARA

I do.

Price rises and starts to slowly approach her, hands in front
of him, stretched in supplication.

PRICE

Then tell me, please -- help me...!

SARA

Don't think so. Stay the fuck back.

PRICE

Please! I need your help.

SARA

Not even for a million dollars, Mr.
Price.

-- and Sara squeezes the trigger --

PRICE

-- no!! --

-- the first shot splits a brick right next to his ear --
pieces flying everywhere --

-- the next six are all right on torso-target. .45 caliber
slugs that make a nice round black hole as they hit him --
huge ragged explosions of blood and meat as they exit.
Hideous. Bonnie and Clyde died in their sleep in comparison.
Pritchett and Eddie enter on the run.

EDDIE

What the hell are you shooting --

-- and then he sees the riddled Price on the ground.

EDDIE

Oh. Jesus.

PRITCHETT

Poor Mr. Price --

SARA

-- fuck Mr. Price! --

He takes the shaking, wild-eyed Sara in his arms. She doesn't weep, just stands there spasming with shock.

EDDIE

It's okay, everything's okay now.

SARA

He's dead...?

Eddie takes one more look at the carnage...

EDDIE

Don't think it's even an issue.

SARA

We're safe?

PRITCHETT

Uhhhh...

EDDIE

What?

PRITCHETT

Okay -- I'll admit it: I'm totally, clinically insane. But I'm still the only one who actually got a check tonight. It's yours -- if you just get me the hell out of here now.

EDDIE/SARA

You got yourself a deal.

They exit the room, heading for the stairs, not looking back at Price's corpse for a second. Beat. And then, emerging from the shadows, strolls EVELYN who walks over to her husband's body, talking to it:

EVELYN

Steven, you poor, absolutely clueless geek. All it would've taken was a simple divorce -- and ripping our pre-nup to little pieces.

She kneels down next to the bloody corpse, whispers:

EVELYN

But no matter how it ended, please know just one thing: from that first moment I

set eyes on you, I've always loved...
your money. You, personally -- well,
frankly just the sight of you has always
turned my stomach.

A HAND suddenly lashes out and grabs her hard by the
throat.

VOICE

Is that a fact, Princess?

EVELYN'S EYES widen in horror as she chokes out a GASP: The
hand belongs to STEVEN PRICE, and he literally picks her up
by her neck and brings her to her feet.

PRICE

Well, you could have saved us all a
great deal of time, not to mention
money, if you'd just let me in on it
years ago.

With his free hand, he rips off his shirt -- and the blood-
squirched Kevlar vest underneath it.

PRICE

This kind of special effects crap
doesn't come cheap -- and I had to pay
out of pocket! No write-offs here!

He begins moving toward her. She instinctively backs away,
slowly being cornered in an alcove.

EVELYN

How --

In the alcove is a door -- a very familiar door -- the sealed
steel portal leading to Vannacutt's body dump. The metal is
so corroded its surface is misshapen with rust.

PRICE

-- you must be kidding. You're talking
to Steven Price -- every place you've
gone, every person you've seen, every
word you and Blackburn ever said to each
other: bugged, taped, seen and heard as
it happened!

He squeezes tighter, now with both hands; she can barely
breathe.

EVELYN

Steven --

PRICE

-- anything, sweetheart, you need only
speak --

EVELYN

-- what...are...you...going...to --

PRICE

-- just what you wanted everyone here
to believe in the first place: I'm going
to murder you, Evelyn, with the greatest
of pleasure --

EVELYN

-- wit...nesses --

PRICE

-- witnesses to what? You're already
dead, Evelyn! Happy Birthday, baby --

-- and before Evelyn can even let out a gasp, he's SLAMS her
up against a door.

Her body smacks against the rusted metal with a rotted CRACK!
The "solid" door EXPLODES inward in a shower of rust. The
rest of the door drops with a thud from its moldy hinges,
sending Price and Evelyn hurtling down with it, into the
room.

INT. DECAYING ROOM

Stunned for a moment Evelyn and Price suddenly become aware
that there is another presence in the room:

something DARK -- CHURNING -- TERRIBLE.

EVELYN'S EYES look across the floorboards: the DUST on the
floor stands up on end and starts to move like metal filings
being pulled by a magnet.

EVELYN

Steven...? Are you doing that?

A dazed Price pulls himself to his feet, he can only hold the
cut that the fall has opened on his forehead and stare at the
movement on the floor.

PRICE

No...

EVELYN

No. OhmyGod, Pritchett was right --
The house **IS** haunted.

EVELYN tries to right herself. Price's EYES fix on the wall behind her, trembling.

PRICE

Evelyn... Get up... NOW!

EVELYN

Steven??

She turns and follows his gaze:

A CREEPING DARKNESS is gathering on the wall behind her.

PRICE

It's the Patients -- the Evil -- we've
released it --

Price tries to move, but he can't -- just stands there,
paralyzed with the surreal horror of it all.

EVELYN scrambles to her feet. Price backs up in horror.

EVELYN

NO -- !!

Evelyn BOLTS for the door. She doesn't get far. Because,
suddenly THE CHURNING SHADOWY MASS springs forward! Grabbing
Evelyn and SLAMMING her back against the wall.

She tries to cry out -- but the dark shape on the wall has
begun to ENGULF her, literally corroding her flesh!

BLACK TENDRILS like acid-tipped vines, scuttle all over
her, eating every inch of her body: Her TEETH drop from
their gums, her EYES rot out of their sockets, her RIBS
sizzle from her chest -- until she no longer has solid
human form --

She's just a flat, silent-screaming image burnt/etched flush
into the wall -- just like the gruesome images Melissa Marr
saw through her Camcorder, "painted" on the corridor walls
outside Vannacutt's operating room.

Price, every limb shaking, backs out of the room into the --

INT. BASEMENT - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

-- his eyes shooting every which way in fear of God-knows-what new nightmare -- it doesn't take long. Subtle at first -- glimpses caught out of the corner of his eye -- of SHADOWS in the room seeming to move:

-- PHFT! -- on the ceiling -- Price whips his head up --

-- PHFT! -- did he see something on the rear wall -- ?

-- PHFT! -- motion from a corner of the floor --

THEN all the SHADOWS IN THE ROOM - begin to move together toward the center of the room -- coalescing into one huge MASS OF DARKNESS.

Price doesn't hang around to see what happens next -- he bolts from the room -- only to smack right into: AN OLD RUSTED MEDICAL CABINET that swings open to reveal inside one of its doors: a 1920's vintage ANATOMICAL CHART with all the human organs and parts cut up and re-arranged so that they are displayed alphabetically, viewing top-to-bottom.

And then Price's whole face goes fright-white: on the inside of THE OTHER DOOR are the organs and parts of MELISSA MARR likewise cut up and alphabetized -- her decapitated head near the bottom, labeled "skull."

Price GASPS and dashes back down the corridor to find that the Mass of Darkness has evolved into a HUGE, constantly morphing THREE-DIHENSIONAL BEING that lets out a nails-on-blackboard SCREECH and charges right for him.

INT. UPSTAIRS - HALLWAY

Where Sara, Eddie and Pritchett are trying with all their might to pry open the slightly-ajar window -- when they hear:

PRICE (O.S.)

He was right! Pritchett was right!

PRITCHETT

I am.

Sara and Eddie dash further down the...

INT. UPSTAIRS KALLWAY

... where Price staggers into the doorway that leads to the basement stairs -- frenzied, nearly all his strength gone:

PRICE
It's...the House!

And then the MASS OF DARKNESS swirls into sight from below -- envelops Price -- and sucks him back downstairs, screaming.

The door slams shut!

Beat. The three of them just stand there speechless. Then:

EDDIE
What --

SARA
-- was that??

PRITCHETT
Something...that should probably
be...avoided --

-- they turn tail and tear from the room, back to

INT. HALLWAY

where they rush toward the partially pried-open window.

SARA
The opening's still too small,
we'll never get through!

EDDIE
For chrissake give me a hand!

Three pairs of HANDS grab onto the pry-bar and throw all their weight behind it. As they strain and the metal shrieks:

SARA
Pritchett: what is going on?

PRITCHETT
He must've unsealed the room!

SARA
How, he's supposed to be dead!

A POWERFUL GROAN reverberates through the house: the sound of timbers bending and twisting.

EDDIE'S HEAD whips right - out of the corner of his eye, something seen MOVING:

THE DOOR TO THE BASEMENT - it's turning BLACK -- GANGRENOUS -- it's PUTREFYING before their eyes -- bowing in and collapsing as it ROTS.

SARA

I think...it's time...to go.

They whip around and run down the hall toward the living room. As they near the end they are stopped dead in their track.

THEIR POV:

A WALL nearby TWISTS and BENDS into a new and different WALL -- one with DOORS that now swing open -- leading to some dark oblivion.

INT. HALLWAY

They stare at the sight before them.

PRITCHETT

Hail Mary, full of grace -- the house is growing!

EDDIE

It's not going to let us out!

SARA

(sensing something)

No. It's just trying to frighten us.

EDDIE

It's succeeding!

SARA

All the plates sealing the windows and doors -- there's got to be some way of raising them manually. They didn't just appear out of thin air -- there's got to be pulleys, cables or something, that make them go up and down.

PRITCHETT

In the attic?

The WALL at the end of the corridor is bending and twisting, taking on a new, hideous shape.

EDDIE

If you know where it is, get there!

PRITCHETT

Me? You've gotta be kidding.

The SHADOW THING rounds the bend at the end of the corridor -- it's enveloped the entire CEILING.

Pritchett looks at Sara and Eddie plaintively --

SARA

Move!

-- then BOLTS reluctantly down the hall. Just as THE THING OF SHADOWS drops down from the ceiling; begins spreading out across the floor and sinking into the floorboards. Disappearing. And then a terrible SILENCE.

EDDIE

Where did it go?

SARA

Run.

EDDIE

What --

-- and then the FLOORBOARDS of the corridor start EXPLODING in a path toward Sara and Eddie.

SARA

I said run!

They race down the corridor. Behind them the floor is ripping up, sending debris into the air.

Sara and Eddie dash into another corridor. Shit! A cul-de-sac, terminating with nothing but solid wall. They whip back around, only to see:

THE EXPLODING FLOOR banging a hard right and hurtling straight down the cul-de-sac right for them!

Trapped, they just stare terrified and helpless - and then Eddie looks up and spots:

An ORNATE CHANDELIER hanging above them.

The EXPLODING FLOORBOARDS are nearly upon them.

EDDIE LEAPS up grabbing the bottom on the fixture. He begins pulling himself up.

A FLOORBOARD next to Sara's foot detonates -- she screams:

SARA

EDDIE!

He grabs her and pulls her up -- just as every floorboard she's standing on ERUPTS AND GOES FLYING, opening a HUGE CHASM below them!

The two of them exchange a glance that is simultaneously I'm okay/you're okay/are we both going nuts? That's when they hear a METALLIC SCREECH above them:

THE CHANDELIER is ripping out of the ceiling. PING! BAM! Two of the three remaining screws pop free and go flying -- the chandelier's mount takes a 90-degree screech'n'jolt - and Sara's already tenuous grip is lost. She crashes helplessly down into the CHASM, disappearing into the black void below.

INT. DECAYING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sara lands with a THUD, buried knee-deep in the rotted floor of the room below. The Room -- where Evelyn met her demise.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Eddie manages to swing the chandelier over to the side where the floor is still intact.

INT. DECAYING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sara's just about cleared her head from the fall -- when her eyes go wide. Looks down: she's SINKING INTO THE FLOOR.

She cries out -- and suddenly everything beneath her just lets go. And she's hurtling like a rock down into:

INT. SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

SARA lands on her face in some pitch-black space.

When her eyes adjust, she sees she's in a vault-like room that is filled with stalagmite-like MOUNDS OF DIRT AND ROCK. Bizarre geological formations, each one unique in its own skewed way, it appears for a moment as though Sara has fallen across time and space and onto the surface of a planet we don't even have a name for yet.

INT. THE HOUSE - VARIOUS ROOMS - SIMULTANEOUS

The full ANGER of this place is now manifesting:

-- WALLS writhe and twist in fury, forming

-- STAIRWAYS that shake themselves into splinters of frenzy;

-- CARVINGS in the wainscotted paneling that become animate and turn upon themselves, cannibalizing the writhing, screaming walls that spawned them.

INT. HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUS

EDDIE PEERS into the hole in the floor: there is only darkness that seems to go on forever.

EDDIE

Sara...? Sara...?

INT. SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBER - SIMULTANEOUS

As Sara tries to pull herself to her feet she sees: DIRT and ROCK beginning to FALL from the strange FORMATIONS surrounding her. And then all becomes clear as to where and who she's with:

Beneath all that effluence are the REMAINS of Vannacutt's VICTIMS. Some are missing body parts. Some are only body parts. Some are bound with leather straps as if they were just dumped there after dying on the electro-shock or dissection table.

SARA, lets out the SCREAM of her life.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Eddie hears her and bolts madly down the hall.

EDDIE

Sara!

He races toward the stairwell leading to the basement.

INT. SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Sara leaps to her feet and tries to reach for the hole in the ceiling - it's just out of reach.

Then she senses something else in there with her. Reluctantly, she turns around:

The Shadow Thing appears, festering on the wall. It quickly

splits into parts and disappears into the rotted corpses. AND THEY START TO MOVE.

Rising to life, foul breath bellowing into them, slowly starting to come towards her in a dance macabre --

VOICE (O.S.)
(a whisper)
Sara.

Sara looks up to see EDDIE in the opening above.

EDDIE
Grab my hand.

He bends down to grab for her, but she's just out of reach.

DECAYING HANDS AND ARMS are suddenly grabbing at Sara, tearing at her clothes, shredding the flesh beneath them bloody with their long, post-mortem nails.

SARA
Eddie!!!

Eddie takes his jacket off and lowers it down to Sara. She grabs hold, and Eddie begins pulling her up.

INT. ATTIC - SIMULTANEOUS

Pritchett finds himself in the cavernous attic, standing before the massive pulley and counterweight system that's the upper half of the lockdown mechanism.

Through the grooved channel that one of the iron plates slides up and down on, Pritchett can look down and see the Foyer and the plate blocking the front door.

There's a hand crank attached to a series of block-and-tackles that ultimately connect to the massive counterweight to the front door's plate.

With all his effort, he turns the crank, but can only manage a half revolution --

-- creak-crunch -- but something moved down there! You can hear it! How much, how high, he can't see, but maybe it's enough.

PRITCHETT
If there is a God...

He puts his full weight behind him and grabs the crank again -- pushes down -- and the thing breaks off in his hand.

PRITCHETT

No-no-no!!!! Why me, why me, you sonovabitch!

In hysterical frustration, he throws the broken flange of metal as hard as he can at the wall. He misses the wall entirely and the crank just pinballs impotently between cables and counter-weights with a series of mocking CLANKS! and PINGS!

PRITCHETT

Whyyyyyyyy??????

As he tears at his hair, screeching, suddenly he notices light on his hands. He turns, and the:

DIM GLOW from a soon-to-rise sun falls on his face. He SEES:

that, somehow, all that caroming that his errant crank did has caused one of the IRON PLATES to raise slightly. There is now a THREE FOOT OPENING in the attic dormer window.

PRITCHETT'S EYES glance nervously upward.

PRITCHETT

Is it too late to take back a couple of things I said?

INT. DECAYING ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Eddie pulls Sara all the way up and out of the subterranean chamber. They slump back on the fetid floor, exhausted.

EDDIE

You okay?

SARA

Yeah. And under other abnormal circumstances, I think this would be the time to seriously jump your bones.

EDDIE

Better put it on hold 'til we find Pritchett.

SARA

I don't do groups.

Eddie laughs -- and then his mouth stays open with no sound coming out. He's staring as:

The area around the hole in the floor begins to turn a familiar black. And is creeping fast towards Sara's shoe.

SARA

What?

EDDIE

Jesus!

She rips her shoes off.

EDDIE

Pritchett??

They both bolt and head for the basement stairs.

INT. ATTIC - SIMULTANEOUS

Pritchett moves to the window and freedom. He is about to make it outside when he stops.

PRITCHETT

Oh, c'mon -- don't grow a conscience now, f'chrissake!

He continues out the window -- stops again. Looks heavenward, angry and guilty at the same time. Yells to his deity:

PRITCHETT

Alright, alright! I won't leave 'em here to die!

He crabs himself back into the attic, runs over to the grooved channel that the front door's iron plate slides on. Shouts down through the slit to the Foyer:

PRITCHETT

I found the way out!

INT. MAIN SALON - CONTINUOUS

Sara and Eddie hear the Voice coming from the Foyer:

PRITCHETT (O.S.)

Anybody still alive? I'm giving you ten seconds! Two-four-six-eight --

Sara and Eddie dash into the Foyer.

SARA

-- hey! --

PRITCHETT (O.S.)

(slightly disappointed)

-- ten.

EDDIE

Pritchett, is that you?

PRITCHETT (O.S.)

Up here --

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

A metallic POP! and PING! is heard. Pritchett's eyes dart to the machinery: a strand of the rusted cable holding the window open has snapped free, and the rest are in an advanced state of fray.

PRITCHETT

-- I think you better hurry -- there's something of a time issue here.

INT. GRAND FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Sara and Eddie start up the stairs - behind them the hallway is turning black with decay.

SARA

Move!!

They race up the stairs --

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

-- arriving in another part of the attic.

Sara looks around, trying to get her bearings.

EDDIE

Pritchett!

A DISTANT VOICE

PRITCHETT (O.S.)

Over here!

The attic is a labyrinth of dangling cables, counterweights and their often neck-high metal moorings. Sara moves toward

the sound of his voice, Eddie hangs back, sensing something.

SARA slowly wends her way through all the mishigas.

UNSEEN by her, down by her carefully treading feet, the Shadow Mass is filtering up through the slits in the attic's floor.

SARA edges her way around a tall iron fly-rail --

-- and something grabs at her hand. She's had enough, she reaches back to slug it -- then stops:

It's Pritchett.

PRITCHETT

Please. It's been a bad enough day --

-- and now the SHADOW MASS has re-assembled to its new, full enormity. It begins to barrel across the attic towards Pritchett and Sara, who don't have a clue -- Eddie does...

EDDIE

Get out of the way!

Sara turns back toward him. Eddie rushes and pushes her to the side as the Shadow Mass is just about to envelop her.

And EDDIE is STRUCK full-force -- he instantaneously turns to a blackened mass.

SARA

Eddie!!

And then the wind from outside kicks up, blowing EDDIE AWAY like so much powder. And Sara just crumples.

At the other end of the attic, the Shadow Mass is TURNING back toward them.

Pritchett rushes in -- GRABS SARA -- and pulls her towards the small dormer window -- the CABLE holding the plate snaps three of its last four strands --

-- Pritchett pushes Sara through the window -- just as the CABLE holding the plate finally breaks, trapping Pritchett inside!

It's now back to near pitch-black again in there. Pritchett turns to see:

The FACES of all of Vannacutt's VICTIMS taking form in the immense Shadow Mass -- all with that revenge-on-the-living look in their empty-socket eyes.

Suddenly from the swirling dark center of the mass... THE FLAMING HEAD OF DR. RICHARD VANNACUTT appears... BLASTING a HOT BREATH at Pritchett, who is freaking out.

PRITCHETT

I'm just the contractor's son! I had nothing to do with your current condition!

The words seem to have little impact on the steadily approaching Mass of Faces.

-- and then suddenly SUNLIGHT POURS in behind him. Sara has pried the plate up with a LIGHTNING ROD -- one that's in the process of bending in two under all the weigh

SARA

I think if you're coming, Mr. Pritchett, it's now or never.

The Mass of Faces starts to creep up Pritchett's shoe. With a screech, he flings himself backwards, literally diving through the open window --

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

-- as the LIGHTNING ROD SNAPS -- and the IRON PLATE comes guillotine-slamming back down -- right onto Pritchett's foot!

He screams and hysterically yanks at his ankle --

-- his foot emerging safe-and-sound and whole, the shredded remnants of a white sock blowing in the morning sea-breeze.

Sara and Pritchett exchange looks. They're both missing shoes. They shrug. The sunlight warms their faces.

FADE TO BLACK

And in the darkness, we hear a familiar Voice:

CHRISTOPHER LEE (V.O.)

The Police and Coroner arrived at the House on Haunted Hill at 7:30 a.m. Pacific Standard Time.

FADE BACK UP ON:

EXT. "HOUSE" - MORNING

A fleet of milling Cops, Paramedics, Fire Officials, Ambulances, the works. Sara seen getting her legs treated. A blank-faced Pritchett being grilled by L.A. Sheriffs.

Gurneys toting very full body bags from the house. One gurney carrying a half dozen vary small bags: Melissa Marr, most likely.

CHRISTOPHER LEE (V.O.)

Watson Pritchett told the Police that they need a Sherman tank to get into the house. But when the first officer on the scene tried the front door knob, it opened without so much as a squeak.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - (NEWSREEL FOOTAGE) - VARIOUS SHOTS

-- Grand Foyer

-- Main Salon

-- Basement

-- Corridors

CHRISTOPHER LEE (V.O.)

And for all the horror that Pritchett described, the House was found to be utterly unexceptional and undisturbed -- even the dust still in place.

We see that what he's saying is true: there's no evidence that anything ever happened here. Even the basement -- the Electro-shock and Saturation Chamber -- appear exactly as when we first saw them. Even the restraints that were cut have been made whole again.

INT. LIMBO SET - NIGHT

SLOW PULL BACK to Christopher Lee on the "Terrifying, But True!" set, talking to us, as the footage continues to play on a screen behind him.

CHRISTOPHER LEE

And not one sign of the party's
hosts, Steven and Evelyn Price.
The only person not surprised
by this was Watson Pritchett.

ON THE SCREEN BEHIND HIM

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

A close-up of Pritchett seen, talking:

PRITCHETT

They're part of the House now.
That's the way it works.

BACK TO SCENE

CHRISTOPHER LEE

The truth will likely be never
known. Unless on some strange
whim, you decide to spend the
evening inside the House on
Haunted Hill.

(he smiles)

Good night.

And walks O.S. The TV CAMERA pans back to the projection
screen.

As the "Terrifying, But True" credits crawl, underneath them
we see the old silent black & white footage we've seen
before:

INT. CEREBRAL HYGIENE ROOM (B&W)

1931. The "Cerebral Hygiene Room." The rampaging Patients
huddling around an operating table. A blur of scalpels and
saws as they viciously vivisect Dr. Vannacutt and his Nurse,
crammed together on the same gurney.

THE IMAGE FREEZES

as the TV show credits end.

But before it fades out, we see that something has changed in
this footage:

The two Humans being vivisected on that gurney are different:

The Doctor in surgical scrubs has Steven Price's face.

His nurse is Evelyn.

Pritchett's Voice heard as the image starts to fade:

PRITCHETT (V.O.)
It won't stop until it's got
every one --

THE END