

# **The Devil's Raincoat**

Screenplay by Rob Tomaro

Music and Lyrics by Rob Tomaro

**Second Draft – January, 2010**

## **The Songs**

The Devil's Raincoat  
Have Mercy  
Mea Culpa  
Highway 120  
When The Penny Drops  
Crazy Disneyland  
Don't Be So Nice  
It's Our Time, Now  
Baby, You

The Dream Palace - a work for symphony orchestra. It appears here as underscore for the final scene.

## **Cast of Characters**

### **The Clairs and their predicament.**

A Rock Band. They are all in their early twenties, except Bobby, the guitar player, who is 35. Their name is short for The Clairvoyants. At the end of each concert, Cassandra and Billy go into the audience and perform the Ganzfeld Experiment (see definition overleaf). They attempt to contact the departed spirit of a loved one from a volunteer in the audience who is chosen at random. They are general quit successful in this.

The Clairs had several hits a few years ago on an independent label and still have a devoted cult following. They were on the cutting edge of pop culture and highly touted in the press. They received a quarter million dollar advance from their record company, which was split evenly among them. Then, their next two CD's sold poorly and they were dropped by their label.

Unfortunately, by that time, they all thought they were on the way to fame and fortune and were living way beyond their means. So, now they are all deeply in debt, with large houses which are on the verge of foreclosure. And the record company is threatening to bring a lawsuit to recoup the quarter million dollar advance, which the band has never paid back. They are desperate for a break.

Jackson Beal – Guitar player. Leader and founder of The Good Dogs, a band who had several hits and big following in the early 1980's. The Dogs fell apart in 1990 when he was sent to prison. He got out 10 years later, in debt and desperate. Could be played by a 37 year old Nick Nolte.

Bobby Lechaux– The Clairs' original guitar player and founder. At 35, he is the oldest member. He went to High School with Jackson Beal and was one of the founding members of the Good Dogs. Long greasy black hair. Bad skin. Looks like he hasn't slept in a week. He's a tweaker

(methamphetamine addict). 5' 11" and thin as a rail from speed. Jumpy. Always looking around.

Cassandra Edwards– Lead singer of the Clairs. Beautiful, 25 years old. Blond. Raw, tawny good looks. Tough.

Billy – The drummer. Innocent. A pure spirit. Psychically gifted, clairvoyant and clairaudient. He would have fit in perfectly in the San Francisco hippie scene of the 1960's.

Deirdre - the lead singer who joins the band after Cassandra's disappearance. She's 19. A little toughie from the streets. She could be played by a slightly younger Pink.

Eddie – The bass player. Handsome. Steady. Master's degree in Psychology, which he walked away from when the Siren song of Rock and Roll got too loud in his ears to ignore.

Pauly – Italian. From the streets of North Jersey. Shady. Tough past. Family may be mobbed up. He won't say. He's the keyboard player. Disgruntled. Embittered, from slogging through the trenches of the underbelly of the music business, first on the East Coast, and now on the West Coast. He is also a computer whiz.

Rudy – Jackson's partner in crime. Tall, Germanic. Light hair, bad skin. Could be played by Bill Hurt.

Julie and Pete – The Bride and Groom.

Senator Norman Jeffries – Julie's father.

### **The Ganzfeld Experiment** – A clinical definition:

A procedure used in paranormal investigations. The object is to eliminate all external sensory stimuli as a clairvoyant subject attempts to communicate with a departed spirit. The premise is that with all stimuli eliminated, clairvoyant and clairaudient perception will be heightened and communication with the spirit world will be clearer.

Before the session, the subject has two halves of ping pong balls taped over his/her eyes to eliminate visual stimuli. Earphones are placed on the head, which transmit a noise-canceling signal into the ears.

## Scene 1 – Mea Culpa

Screen is black. Sound fades up. We begin to hear 40,000 people rhythmically clapping and chanting. Half of the crowd yells: “Good Dogs, Good Dogs!!!” and the other half answers: “Woof, Woof, Woof!!!” This is repeated over and over, like a mantra. Scattered sounds of noise makers and party horns here and there somewhere in the throng.

Picture fades up on an aerial view of the audience at an outdoor rock concert chanting for the Good Dogs to come on. Pan to the stage from the audience’s POV. Rock band gear is lit up. There is a huge banner on the back wall behind the drum set, which is on a big riser. The banner reads: “Happy New Year 1990 from the Dogs to all their fans. We love you! Woof. Woof. Woof!!!”

The scene shifts to just offstage right, in the downstage wing. Hand held camera comes around a corner, past roadies and stage hands, and we find Jackson and Bobby standing next to each other about to go onstage. The drummer and keyboard player are already onstage fiddling with their gear. The backstage area is dark.

Cut to a reverse angle shot of Jackson and Bobby seen full face from onstage, looking at them in the wing. They are bathed in the glow of the lights from the stage. Jackson has a gold top Les Paul guitar on a strap around his shoulder. He is tuning it as they speak. Bobby does the same with a Gibson Flying V sunburst electric guitar.

We see three women standing a few feet behind them. They are the Poodles, the band’s background vocalists. They wear matching throw back Go Go Girl outfits and have little poodle bows in their hair, which is piled high, a la the 1950’s. They look apprehensive. They are picking up a bad vibe from the two guys.

We overhear Jackson and Bobby’s conversation, which we pick up in mid -sentence.

JACKSON

. so, for God’s sake man, give it a rest. We’ll straighten this out later. Get ready to go on, man. This is, like, the biggest gig of our lives and you’re hassling me about bread, now man? How many times do we have to go through this?

BOBBY

Until your manager calls my guy and tells me you sent him the check.

JACKSON

I sent the damn check! Jesus, Bobby. You helped me change a few words, man. I sent you ten grand.

BOBBY (angry)

Which is peanuts! I know what you made off this record so far, man, and it's still comin' in. I only want what's fair. You're a selfish bastard, bro. I want what's comin to me and I want it now. You know what kinda pressure I'm under.

JACKSON

You got the same split on the advance as the rest of us, Bobby. Only you blew it on eight balls and hookers. That's not my fault.

BOBBY (furious)

You cheap son of a bitch... I'm gonna....

They are interrupted as a local Radio DJ comes running onto the stage from the stage left wing. The crowd roars. He is wearing a headband and an outfit he thinks Bruce Springsteen might have in his closet, somewhere. He looks cheesy. He grabs the microphone.

DJ (roaring at the crowd)

Good Dogs. Good Dogs....

He holds the mike out to crowd and they respond:

AUDIENCE

Woof. Woof. Wooooof!!!

## DJ

Here they are, all the way from LA... to ring in the New Year and the new decade with all you Dog catchers....here, with their number one hit single: Mea Culpa.... Let's give a big, Phoenix welcome to...The Good Dooooogs!!!

Back to the hand held camera shot of Jackson and Bobby in silhouette seen from behind in the wing as they walk onstage waving and smiling to the crowd, which goes crazy when they see Jackson.

Cut to the camera zooming in on Bobby, his back to the audience as he plugs his guitar into a stack of Marshall amps on stage left.

Cut to a close up of his face. It is dark with anger. He twists one of the tuning pegs, plucks a string, and glances across the stage at Jackson, who is on stage right on the other side of the drums.

Jackson plugs into his own Marshall stack. He glances over at Bobby, hoping for a better vibe.

Cut back to Bobby, who looks up at the sky. It is beginning to rain, lightly. He turns to Jackson, gives him one last dirty look before turning to face the audience and walking to his stage right microphone. Bobby flashes a phone smile and waves at the crowd.

Jackson finishes tuning his ax and chuckles darkly to himself, shaking his head. He is remembering something, something from long ago. He mutters under his breath to himself as he, too, turns around and walks to his stage left microphone.

“Hence, horrible shadow. Unreal mockery, hence.”

Cut to a close up of the stick in the drummer's right hand, beating out quarter notes on his high hat cymbal to establish the tempo of their opening number before the rest of the band comes in.

The image of the beating drumstick turns into a shot of a windshield wiper on the driver's side window of a car, seen from the driver's point of view. Heavy rain beats down on the windshield. The wiper is moving at exactly the same speed as the drumstick we've just seen, with the beat of the song, which we hear on the soundtrack as the band begins to play it. We are in a speeding car.

It is later that night, after the gig. The road is dark. We are on a twisting mountain road. The headlights barely make a dent in the fog. The scene is in silence. We see the people in the car talk. We see their mouths move but all we hear is the performance of the Dogs doing the song at the concert earlier that night, accompanied by the audience in the background clapping

along. Occasionally, we hear Jackson, who is singing lead, pause in between the verses as he yells into the mike for the crowd to sing along, which they do, on the choruses.

Jackson is driving. Bobby is in the front passenger seat. The three Poodles are in the back.

Another shot of Jackson driving, taken from slightly above and in front of the speeding car. He has a look of deep consternation on his face. We hear him deliver the spoken introduction to the song. He barely whispers it into the mike, but it booms out over the giant stadium:

### **Mea Culpa**

JACKSON  
(spoken)

"Forgive me, father, for I have sinned. It's been five weeks since my last confession. I will gratefully accept any penance you have to offer in the hope of removing this blot upon my soul."

(verse) JACKSON sings:

"Bless me father, I woke up yesterday  
and I knew something's wrong  
something no one would say

Spent my life tryin' to cover it up  
but whatever I did, it was never enough."

(chorus) The Poodles join in on harmony parts. We hear the audience singing along, as well.

"I am beside myself  
I cannot hide myself  
I must reveal myself to you

Mea mea culpa"

POV: from the back seat of the car, shot in between the heads of two the three Poodles. We see them look at each other. They are scared.

“I can't resign myself  
I must define myself  
It's time to find myself anew

Mea maxima culpa”

POV: from outside of the car once again, looking into the front windshield through the driving rain. As the windshield wipers slap back and forth in time to the beat, we see Bobby in the front passenger seat.

Cut to Bobby’s mouth: We can see he is yelling, angrily.

Cut to a two shot, once again from outside the front of the car, looking in. Jackson is driving and Bobby is poking him in the shoulder with his left hand as he is yelling and waving an open bottle of Jack Daniels around with his right hand. He is clearly drunk and enraged. He has picked up his harangue about royalties from Mea Culpa and the debate has escalated out of control into a full-blown rant.

Cut to a shot of Jackson driving, seen from outside of the car, again, through the wipers. He is trying to calm Bobby down and drive at the same time. He looks back over his shoulder at the Poodles in the back seat. The song comes up a little louder:

“I am beside myself  
I cannot hide myself  
I must reveal myself to you

Mea mea culpa”

Cut to a shot of Jackson’s face seen from the Poodles POV. He is wordlessly pleading with them to do something to chill Bobby out.

Cut to a shot of the Poodles from Jackson’s POV. They stare helplessly back at Jackson. One of them shakes her head in dismay. There is nothing they can do.

On the soundtrack, Mea Culpa is getting even louder. Underneath the beat of the rhythm track, we begin to hear an orchestral underscore, dissonant, ominous. It is seeping into the song, but it is, eerily, in the wrong key.



JACKSON (verse)

“The little prince who gets put in a box  
and nobody knows who has the key to the locks  
you hold it in and you learn not to shout  
and spend the rest of your life tryin’ hard to get out”.

(guitar solo)

Cut to a shot of Bobby. He continues to wave the bottle around as he is yelling at Jackson.

Cut to the shot from outside the car and in front of it. Jackson is trying desperately to steer in the blinding rain. He manages to snatch the bottle out of Bobby’s hand. Jackson takes a big pull from the Jack to steady his nerves.

JACKSON (verse)

“So bless me father and here are my sins  
I had a life that was over before it begins.  
Three Hail Marys and an act of contrish  
and a five dollar bill in the donation dish.”

POV from above the car as it careens around a bend in the winding mountain road.

Shot of the Poodles in the back seat. They are terrified. The one in the middle clearly mouths the words:

Jackson, for God’s sake slow down. Slow down, dammit!!”

(chorus)

“I can't resign myself  
I must define myself  
It's time to find myself anew

Mea maxima culpa”

Shot of the drop off on the right side of the road, straight down thirty feet. You can’t see the bottom. The scenery is a blur.

The ominous orchestral, wrong key underscore has become so loud and insistent that it is drowning out Mea Culpa almost completely.

POV from in front of the car again. Camera is on Jackson as he takes another hit of the Jack. He is looking at Bobby and yelling back at him now. He looks back at the road. Too late.

Close up on Jackson's eyes, wide with terror, as the car skids and slides.

Shot from the backseat again, between the two girls, who throw up their hands in front of their faces.

Shot of them from the front. Their mouths are open in a silent scream.

Shot from behind them looking forward, again. The car roars off the road to the right, headed for the edge of the hill.

Shot of Jackson's face as the car goes over the hill.

Jump cut to a grainy, black and white shot of a white wooden car on a roller coaster, going off the rails of its track and careening out into the night.

The whole screen fills up with a shot of a sign. We just have time to read it before the car blasts through it and goes over the side. It says:

HIGHWAY 120

Shot of skid marks on the highway. They point to the edge of the hill and stop where the car has gone over.

Shot of the HIGHWAY 120 sign. It is scattered around in pieces, but you can still sort of read it.

The car slams into a huge abandoned campfire at the bottom of the hill. Clouds of grey ash fly up and obscure everything.

As the ash settles, we look into the car. One Poodle is moving in back. The other two are dead, one with her eyes open. Shift to the front seat. Bobby is moaning and half conscious. Jackson is unconscious.

Grey ash settles on the car like snow. Just before it covers the windshield completely, we catch a glimpse from in front of the car of Jackson's right hand by his side. He is still clutching the bottle of Jack, which trickles out onto the console.

Fade to black.

## Scene 2 – Clippings

Fade up on the front page of *Variety*, which fills the screen. As we read the headlines, we hear a mournful, lonely sounding acoustic guitar in the background playing the introduction to a gritty delta style blues song: *The Devil's Raincoat*. It is slow and in a minor key.

On the cover of *Variety* is a picture of Jackson in court, in handcuffs. He is being sentenced.

Headline: FROM THE DOGHOUSE TO THE BIG HOUSE.

“Jackson Beal, leader of the Good Dogs, has been sentenced to twelve years in prison for vehicular manslaughter in the death of singers “Peppermint” Patti McCandliss, Jessica Malveau, and Laura Bailey in an accident outside of Sedona, Arizona.

Screen goes to black. A harmonica enters on the soundtrack as *The Devil's Raincoat* continues.

Another shot of the same article from *Variety*. There is a photo of Bobby. He is in the audience in court, looking at Jackson, who is standing in cuffs at his sentencing. The caption reads:

“Band mate Bobby Lechaux: ‘I did everything I could to try to help my friend and partner Jackson Beal to deal with his alcohol dependency problem. I, along with the other members of the Dogs, are terribly saddened by this outcome.’”

Overhead shot. We see a prison courtyard at night and a lone figure in it standing in the rain. His face is obscured by the hood of a prison sweatshirt, which is drenched. We see the faint glow of a burning cigarette in his right hand. We zoom in to a close shot of another issue of *Variety*, which he holds in his left hand. There is a smiling photo of Bobby standing with Cassandra. The caption reads:

“Three years after the disbanding of The Good Dogs, singer Bobby Lechaux is back with a new band, The Clairs, seen here with lead singer Cassandra Edwards.”

We pull back and above as the print in the caption begins to blur in the rain.

A final shot of Jackson standing in the rain in the prison exercise yard.

Fade to black.

### **Scene 3 – Sunrise in Busted Paradise**

White letters come up on the black screen:

EIGHT YEARS LATER

Camera fades up on a shot of a spacious backyard of an LA mansion.

Through a large bay window, we see the sun beginning to rise over palm trees, which ring the perimeter of the property. We still hear “The Devil’s Raincoat.” The singer comes in. It should be sung by Howlin’ Wolf. As Mr. Wolf is unavailable, it should be sung by Taj Mahal.

We hear the following line, spoken. It should sound like Howlin’ Wolf is yelling at a rowdy audience over a crappy microphone at a Delta roadhouse:

“Listen, man. If you got to go through hell to get what you want, make sure you’re wearin’ an asbestos suit!!”

We hear audience laughter from the club.

### **The Devil’s Raincoat**

(verse) (sung)

“Sometimes you don’t know what you got  
Until you get it home.

Sometimes you don’t know what you bought  
Until you try it on.”

Back to daybreak through the bay window. Short shots in quick succession of the backyard, which has fallen into decay. The pool is empty. Its paint is peeling. The leaves of autumn flutter in circles at the bottom of it.

The grass is a patchwork quilt of brown spots and weeds.

Reverse angle. We see the back of the house, shot from the other side of the pool. A blue and white striped beach umbrella over a wooden patio table is dirty and has a tear in it.

Under the umbrella, Jackson is asleep in a chair at the table. We can’t see his face.

(chorus) (sung)

“It looked so good in the store  
It looked so good on the rack  
But I didn’t find out ‘till I put it on my back  
I bought the Devil’s Raincoat  
I bought the Devil’s Raincoat”

POV, once again, through the bay window, looking out over the palms and the sunrise.

Now, the camera moves through the window and pauses just over Jackson’s right shoulder. His head is slumped to the right. He snores lightly. We can see a moustache, stubble. His hair is wild. He’s wearing a dirty Hawaiian shirt. One is reminded of Nick Nolte’s mug shot.

On the table, there are two CD covers. We read the titles on them: “The Clairs: Speak, Ghost, Speak!” The cover photo shows The Clairs in a darkened room, instruments over their shoulders, faces lit eerily by the candles they are holding, as if they are about to begin a séance.

The other CD cover is: “The Clairs: The Ghostess with the Mostess.” Cover photo is of Cassandra, the beautiful lead singer of the Clairs, floating down from a cloud, dressed like Stevie Nicks. She extends her arms in a universal embrace to all us mortals below.

We pan farther down over Jackson’s shoulder to the table. A bottle of Jack Daniels, almost empty, serves as a paperweight. Under it is a page from the entertainment section of the L.A. Times. He has circled an article in wild concentric rings, and then fallen asleep with the pencil in his hand after the point broke off.

As we see a shot of the article, we hear Jackson reading the article in a mumbled, drunken voice-over from the night before:

#### JACKSON

“The rock group The Clairs has been invited to perform at the wedding of Washington socialite Julie Jeffries, daughter of Congressman Norman Jeffries, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. When questioned about her choice of The Clairs to perform at her nuptials, Julie told us, ‘I’m a huge Clairs fan. It’s, like, so unbelievable that they’re going to play at my wedding.’ The wedding will take place April twenty-sixth at the Jeffries estate in Georgetown in Washington, D. C.

You might remember The Clairs. They were poised to become the next big thing a few years ago. Their gimmick? They’re psychic, clairvoyant (hence, The Clairs). They do a séance after each show. Oooooooh! Creepy! If you care to find out what’s

become of them, they'll be performing tonight at Crispy's on La Brea. Fifteen-dollar cover.

We hear Jackson yawn.

Two drink minimum. Valet Parking available.”

End of voice over. We see the article blow away, revealing another paper underneath it. It's a printout of an email. As we read it, we hear Rudy's voice:

RUDY

“Jackson, the Jeffries wedding score I told you about is the big enchilada. Mega payday. Meet me at ten, tomorrow night. Usual place on Los Felices. Don't be late and don't be drunk. Rudy”

(End of email)

(Verse two of The Devil's Raincoat – sung)

“If you give him an inch,  
They say he'll take a mile

You think your life's a cinch,  
Then you see him smile.”

As the song continues, we pan to the interior of the house. We see framed photos on the walls of The Good Dogs taken in their heyday in the 1980's. We focus on the smiling face of a much younger Jackson Beal in a flowered shirt.

Pan to the right. There is a framed gold record on the wall: “To commemorate the selling of 500,000 copies of “The Devil's Raincoat” by Jackson Beal. March 13, 1989.

Pan a little farther to the right. Another gold record: “To commemorate the selling of 500,000 copies of “Mea Culpa” by Jackson Beal. January 1, 1990.

Cut to extreme close up of Jackson sleeping.

We are going into his dream. The following sequence should be grainy, hazy and sepia toned:

Shot of the outside of a rundown building. Sign in front: “Seaside Heights Goodwill Industries.”

We go inside. We hear the recording of “The Devil's Raincoat” coming from speakers in the ceiling. It is piped in as Musak. It sounds tinny and distorted.

(Sung)

“In for a penny, baby, you’re in for a pound  
You better call Dr. Faust and tell him what you found

You bought the Devil’s Raincoat  
You bought the Devil’s Raincoat.”

We are at a rack of ratty, used clothes. A hand reaches out and pulls an old, beat up tan raincoat off the rack. We see the guy. He has matted hair, black moustache, and pocked skin, skinny. He doesn’t try it on. He walks up to the cashier, tosses down three limp dollar bills on the counter and walks out without ever looking at the girl. As the door closes, we fade back up on the wall with the gold records.

The vision goes back to normal. We are out of the dream.

Shot of the wall with the gold records, again. We pan farther to the right and pull back to reveal eight empty rectangular shapes that used to have gold records in them. All that is left is an outline of each one, etched in grime onto the wall. A nail protrudes from the center of each dingy rectangle. We are meant to assume that Jackson has had to hock them.

Then, we’re back outside again. Shot of Jackson asleep again, camera over his shoulder.

(Ominous music creeps in softly. It is the same music as the orchestral underscore we heard during the car crash scene.)

Shot of him sleeping from another angle. Then, we go back into his dream state. Out of Technicolor and back into grainy, hazy, sepia tone:

Cut to a shot of a man seen from behind, walking up a long flight of wooden stairs. It is the guy who bought the raincoat. The stairs and the wooden walls of the staircase are painted white. There are dingy light bulbs in the staircase every few feet. Some of the bulbs are missing. One of them flickers faintly on and off.

We focus on the man’s back. He is wearing the filthy, old raincoat. We hear a sound rising. It is a rollercoaster, rumbling just overhead. The stairs lead to the rollercoaster ride platform, the place where you get on the train.

The man continues to mount the stairs, wearily. We see a shot of him from the side. We see the cuffs of the sleeves of the raincoat are frayed.

Then we see him from the front, but not his face. We see one of the buttons on the front of the coat is loose, hanging by a thread.

All these shots are brief, sketchy glimpses.

The rollercoaster is getting louder and louder. The man is about to open the door to the platform at the top of the stairs. His hand is on the door handle, which is chipped and rusty.

Quick cut to a shot of a twelve-year-old boy, seen from behind. He is alone in the front seat of the last rollercoaster car in the train. No one else is on the ride. The coaster is roaring around a turn. It is on a seaside boardwalk amusement park. The final curve takes the coaster veering out over the ocean.

As the roller coasters cars go by, we see they are fashioned to look like little dinghies. They have a boat hull's shape and a badly painted anchor on either side of the car, near the front.

Full shot of the boy's face.

He is screaming in terror as the coaster whips around the curve. We see him scream but we don't hear the sound, just the sound of the coaster getting louder and louder.

As the little fleet of boat shaped cars screeches around the final curve, the last car, the one containing the boy, is whipped around to the right by centrifugal force. It breaks loose from the rest of the cars, crashes through the wooden railing, and goes sailing into the night sky, out on a sloping trajectory, and down, down toward the ocean.

Jump cut to Jackson's car going over the cliff twelve years ago.

Jump cut to the sign: HIGHWAY 120

A final shot of the boy, face on. He screams as the car descends toward the ocean. His scream is silent.

All the shots in this sequence should be very brief, very quick glimpses.

Quick cut back to Jackson, this time from overhead, in normal vision. We see him twitch in his sleep.

End of scene.

#### **Scene 4 – Trust me, fearless leader!!**

Jackson walks into the joint on Los Felices the following night to meet Rudy, the guy who sent him the email in scene 2. He sees him seated at a booth. He's a tall, tough looking Germanic guy. Got bad skin and a bad suit.

RUDY

Oh my, the Iceman cometh.



JACKSON  
(Gives a little military salute)

On time and sober, Sarge.

He flops down across from him in the booth. Takes out a pack of cigarettes, tosses them down. Reaches inside his beat up suede leather coat. Feels around all the pockets for his lighter.

JACKSON  
What the bite? I like what you told me, so far. Fill in the holes.

Calls out across the room to the bartender:

JACKSON  
Yo. ...Yo, baby!! Two over here, on him. Thank you, mahn-sewer!!

RUDY  
Ain't no holes in this thing, Big Dog. This shit is caulked up and ready to float us off into the sunset, (if) we just put tab A into Slot B, you know what I'm sayin'?

JACKSON  
Yeah. Yeah.

RUDY  
You know what I'm sayin', (if) we just don't, you know, go off on a tangent and screw it up. \$6.5 mil. \$6.5. That's a lot of Tastycakes, camper.

JACKSON  
Yeah. Go on, man.

RUDY  
(Looks around like he's in a silent movie melodrama. The walls have ears.)

Got a guy, who put me onto a guy, that's got an international guy with a yen to get everything that's on the home computer up in Senator Jeffries office in his house. I'm talking NASA. Black Ops. Air force prototypes. I mean, stuff that's gonna be on the Military Channel twenty years from now. So, dig. He's

not supposed to, but my guy knows, absoute –eh, moiré, that the good Congressman downloads all his high level stuff from the Armed Services Committee files at Langley onto his Mac at home so he can work on it over the weekend without having to deal with the beltway traffic on Saturday morning. He got a little lazy. Got a little sneaky. So, you know, like Jerry Garcia, may his stoned ass rest in peace, like Jerry said, man, “One man gathers what another man spills.”

JACKSON

What are we lookin’ for? I’m mean the way you laid it out, we siphon the Intel off his Mac onto a flash drive and then we make the scene back downstairs. But, what are we after?

RUDY

That’s what so cool about this.

He leans in. He’s relishing this. This is the punch line.

RUDY

We don’t have to cherry pick the Intel. We just drain the whole thing into the cyber trough and let the guys on the other end separate the wheat from the chaff. Boom.

JACKSON

Oh, Big Daddy. That works for me.

RUDY

Now, of course, which brings us to the tough part. Tough part is your department. You got to find a way to get into the party, which means you got to get into The Clairs, and they ain’t lookin’ for a new guitar player, far as I know.

JACKSON

He gives a little laugh and pulls a Clairs CD out of his suede coat pocket.

You know who’s in the Clairs, man?

Rudy shrugs. Jackson pokes his finger at the photo on the back.

Bobby. My old pal Bobby from the Dogs.

RUDY

You mean...

JACKSON

Yeah. Got a little score to settle with Bobby. Yeah. My old pal owes me one, dude. Time to collect.

RUDY

Alright. Whatever. Do your thing. One more thing. Absolutely no paper trail. No texts. No emails. No phone messages. No little notes left on the doorstep. Right?

Jackson nods. The drinks arrive. He hands one to Rudy and they raise their glasses.

JACKSON

And so, as my dear friends in the tribe say: "Mazel Tov."

They lift their glasses and drink.

RUDY

Yeah. Let's hope we have our act, together. Mazel only goes so far.

JACKSON

Trust me, fearless leader.

He laughs. He goes into a "Boris and Natasha" accent from "Rocky and Bullwinkle". It is, apparently, a riff they both enjoy.

JACKSON

"Traht me, feerless leeder!"

Rudy and Jackson raise their glasses and look at each other. They speak at the same time.

RUDY and JACKSON

"Moose and Squirrel must die!!"

## **Scene 5 - Jackson makes the scene.**

Shot of the Clairs, onstage at Crispy's later that same night. Wide shot from the audience's POV of the band.

Close up of Cassandra singing harmony, then we shift to Eddie, the bass player, who is singing lead on "Have Mercy".

### **Have Mercy**

EDDIE (sings)

(verse 1)

"Wrote a note last night  
and put it under your door"

Shot from the band's POV onstage looking out into the audience. We see a waiter walk through the crowd to a table in front of the stage that has a "Reserved" sign on it. Following close behind him is Jackson, still wearing the same rumpled Hawaiian shirt and leather pants he fell asleep in last night by the side of the pool. He is smiling and rather jaunty. Sits down, pulls a pack of cigarettes out of his leather coat. Surveys the band.

Close up of Bobby, who looks up from his guitar just as Jackson comes in. He stops playing. His right hand drops to his side. His face is a masque, stunned. Doesn't know how to react. It's clear he's seeing Jackson for the first time since he got out of prison. We see a close up of his fingers. The guitar pick falls to the floor.

EDDIE

"Said I'm sorry for way  
That I hurt you, before"

Shot of Jackson. He gives Bobby the "Ozzy" Devil horn salute with his right forefinger and pinky. Waves and smiles. All is forgiven. A couple people in the audience have come over. He happily signs a couple of autographs.

EDDIE

"Baby, please can we make a new start?"

I'm on my knees, beggin', honey,  
With all my heart..."

Shot of Cassandra. She is smitten with Jackson, immediately. There is an instant attraction. Just as she is looking at him, his gaze wanders back to the stage to her. Their eyes lock briefly. Then, she regains her composure and jumps back into the performance, singing harmony and moving around.

(chorus) EDDIE AND CASSANDRA

"Have mercy, baby  
Have mercy on me.

Sometimes the one who needs your mercy most  
Deserves it the least.

Have mercy, baby  
Have mercy on me  
'cause I'm the one who needs your mercy most  
and deserves it the least.

(verse 2)

EDDIE

"Once upon a time you held me close in your heart  
It would be such a crime if we drifted apart.

Baby, please can we make a new start?  
I'm on my knees, beggin', honey,  
With all my heart..."

(chorus) EDDIE AND CASSANDRA

Shot of the audience applauding enthusiastically as the song ends.

PAULEY (THE KEYBOARD PLAYER)  
(to the audience)

Alright. So, now...we got a celeb in the house, Y'all.

Scattered applause. The crowd knows who Jackson is.

PAULEY

That's right. That's right. Come on, man. Give it up for Jackson Beal from "The Good Dogs."

The crowd manages a respectable round of applause.

PAULY

Jackson, how are you, man? Thanks for makin' this. It's great to see you out and about, man.

JACKSON

Doin' great, Pauley, thanks.

Looks over at Bobby and flashes that smile, again. Bobby has still not quite recovered from the shock of seeing Jackson, yet.

JACKSON

Hey, Bobby. What's up? You look like you seen a ghost, man.

Bobby opens his mouth to speak, then closes it again. Looks down at his Flying V like something's crawling across the face of it.

Pauley senses the awkwardness of the moment and breaks it up with a quip.

PAULEY

Hey, we're the Clairs, man. We see ghosts all the time.

The audience loves this and applauds heartily.

We're gonna take a short break. Y'all stick around. Let's hear it one more time for Jackson Beal in the house!!

More applause. The band goes on break. Bobby and the drummer exit stage right, presumably to the alley for a smoke. Pauley and Eddie come down and chat with Jackson, who keeps glancing over their shoulders at Cassandra, who is toweling down in a little area just offstage right. She keeps glancing at him, too

## Scene 6- Jackson meets Cassandra

Shot of Jackson walking backstage. He finds the band's tiny dressing room, knocks on the door. Cassandra, thinking it's a band mate or a friend, answers breezily from inside:

CASSANDRA

It's open!

Shot of Jackson from behind. He gives the door a little push and it swings open with a rusty, creaking sound.

Cassandra, who has her back to him and is applying eyeliner at the mirror, laughs and swings around:

Jeez, you think someone would spring for some WD-40. I mean, it's.....

She sees him and freezes.

We see Jackson from her POV.

JACKSON

Hey. Sorry... Just wanted to tell you how great you sound. You sing, like, incredible.

CASSANDRA

Oh. Man. I'm like... a big fan. I loved... really loved the Dogs, man.

JACKSON

Me too...uh, I'm a fan, too.

CASSANDRA (giggles)

Uh..of the Dogs?...you're fan of your own band?

JACKSON

No, ...of yours..I'm a big fan of yours.

She is clearly captivated by this. Whatever he is doing, it's working.

CASSANDRA

Oh, that's interesting. For how long?

JACKSON

Looks at his watch.

For...twenty five, minutes and...eleven seconds.

CASSANDRA

She laughs. The ice, if there was any, has clearly broken. She extends her hand to him.

My friends call me Cassie.

He smiles at her. She smiles back.

Fade to black.

### **Scene 7 – The Ganzfeld Experiment**

We rejoin the band. They play the last few bars of something hot. The audience goes wild.

EDDIE

Well, that's it. That was our last tune. It's midnight. Now, I'm sure all you diehard Clair fans know what happens now. What are we gonna do now?

AUDIENCE

We're gonna go Ganzo!!!

EDDIE

What? I didn't hear you.



AUDIENCE (louder and more drunk)

We're gonna go Ganzo!!!

EDDIE

Oh yeah. So, who wants to go first?

A young woman walks forward from the bar. She looks like she hasn't slept for days. She timidly steps up to the lip of the stage and raises her hand as if she is answering a question in fourth grade.

YOUNG WOMAN

Please, it's my Mom. She passed away last year. Can you help me talk to my mom?

Close up on Cassandra. She looks at the young woman with real empathy. Cassie comes down off the stage and walks toward her.

Close up on the young woman, who breaks into tears as Cassie approaches her.

Fade to black

### **Scene 8 – Alas, Poor Bobby**

It's still later that night. As this scene plays out in silence, we hear a voiceover of Cassandra back in the club earlier, putting the young woman into a Ganzfeld trance.

CASSANDRA

At the first tap of my finger on your arm, you will begin to relax.

We track Bobby. He's walking home after the gig, carrying his bass because he's lost his license and his car. He's coughing. He's jonesing. He's a tweaker, a methamphetamine addict, and he needs to find some product, pronto.

CASSANDRA

Let your mind slip beneath the surface of your awareness.

We see Jackson's shoulders from behind. He's watching Bobby walk away, down the dark alley.

CASSANDRA

Picture yourself easing into a warm bath.

We see Jackson start to move towards him.

Fade to black.

### **Scene 9 – Jackson gets the call**

White letters on a black screen:

ONE WEEK LATER

Jackson is sitting by the empty pool, again. It's late at night. He's smoking and drinking and staring at a turquoise Princess phone attached to a long wire that leads across the lawn into the house. Sound of cicadas. Wind flapping through the rip in the umbrella over his head.

It rings. He lets it ring five times. Lifts the receiver. Waits a moment. Puts down his glass. Lifts it to his ear.

JACKSON

It's your dime, baby. (long pause) Hey, Pauly. What's up? (pause) Yeah. I heard man. I heard. Nobody's knows nothin'? (pause) Well, you know, you'll forgive me, man, but actually it's quite believable. You know what I'm sayin'. You know what I'm sayin', Pauly. He's a tweaker. That's what they do. They disappear. His dealer might be after him, could be anything, man. (pause) Oh? When's the gig? Uh, hang on let me check my schedule. (Long pause, during which he lights a cigarette.) I think I'm open, man. (pause) Uh, what?..... Well, I really haven't auditioned for anything in a while, man. (pause) Oh, then that's cool. That's cool. I'll be there. But you know, call me if he shows up between now and then. Solid, see you then.

He hangs up the phone, then leans back and takes a drag. As he is mulling over the progression of events, he absentmindedly reaches his hand up to the tear in the umbrella and pulls the two pieces together, holds them a moment, like they just might mend themselves. Then, he lets them go. They flop apart. He takes another drag on the cigarette and watches the breeze drifting through the tear in the umbrella.

Fade out.

### **Scene 10 – On the Highway 120**

The Clairs, minus Bobby, are sitting in a rehearsal room at SIR (Studio Instrument Rental). They are onstage with instruments.

PAULY

This is just bizarre, man. This is just surreal.

CASSANDRA

We got no choice man. We got, like, twenty gigs comin' up.

PAULY

So, we're gonna go from one "has been" rock star to another? Does this strike anyone else as weird?

CASSANDRA

He still has a big following, man. He was the Dogs. He wrote the songs. Bobby was in the background, playing rhythm.

PAULY

And just when did you become an expert, Cassandra? I thought you were into roadies.

CASSANDRA and BILLY (THE DRUMMER)

(at the same time)

Screw you, Pauly.

EDDIE

Hey. Cut the crap right now. Are you nuts, you two?  
Can we please just keep our act together and get through this?

The door opens. Jackson walks in, holding a guitar case. He and Cassandra lock eyes, very briefly.

EDDIE

Hey, man. What's up? Thanks for comin', man.

JACKSON

No problem. Thanks for giving me a shot. Hi, everybody.

BILLY

Hey. Well, you know man...I know I speak for everyone when I say that it's, like, surreal and weird to even ask you to, like, audition but...

JACKSON

Hey, man. Don't apologize. It's all good. What do you wanna play?

BILLY

Anything you want. man. How about one of your tunes from the Dogs? I love all that stuff.

General assent all around.

JACKSON

Wanna try somethin' new? I wrote this when I was inside and haven't had a chance to air it out, yet.

EDDIE

Wow. That would be like, an honor to work on a new tune of yours, man.

Jackson passes out some sheets of music, then steps up to the mike as he straps his gold Les Paul over his shoulder.

JACKSON

It's called: Highway 120. The groove is sort of like a Dick Dale surfer thing and....

Close up of Jackson's face. He's appears distracted suddenly, like he is staring at something far away. We go into Jackson's consciousness.

Jump cut to the "Highway 120" sign from the night of the car crash. It flashes across the screen, quickly. Cut to the car going over the cliff.

Cut to Jackson's dream of the rollercoaster car going over the side of the tracks. These images flash across the screen very rapidly.

Back to the shot we last saw of Jackson in front of the microphone.

BILLY  
Hey...you OK, man?

Jackson rubs his eyes, shakes his head, and pulls it back together.

JACKSON  
Yeah. Yeah...Here's the tempo.

He steps up to the mike and counts off the number, which is hard, fast, and driving indeed, like a Dick Dale surfing song. Jackson sings:

### **Highway 120**

JACKSON (verse 1)

"Baby's back  
up from from the South

So sweet, butter wouldn't melt in her mouth  
So hot, she will burn up your money

but you won't find out she left you 'till she hits the 120

(Verse 2)

Baby's a witch  
Don't need no broom

Temperature changes when she walks in the room  
makes the day go from cloudy to sunny

but you won't find out she left you 'till she hits the 120

(Bridge)

Gris Gris  
Voodoo spell  
She' ll make you dance just like a monkey from hell

Firetruck  
Power slide

She knows the 120 is the road to ride,  
knows the 120 is the road to ride, now

(verse 3)

Baby's gone.  
She's outa sight.  
Her turbo's burnin' a hole in the night.  
Don't try to find her or you'll smell somethin' funny:

Your hair will catch fire when you hit the 120"

(end of song)

While they're playing the tune, Jackson is intently looking at the neck of his guitar as he threads his way through the demanding signature lick that cycles through the tune. As the song goes on, it begins to settle into a fierce groove. Jackson's guitar playing is kicking Billy's drumming in the ass.

As they play, The Clairs exchange glances. It's clear they've found their new guitar player.

EDDIE

Cool. Uh, Jackson, that was great man. Thanks. Can I give you a buzz, later?

JACKSON

Solid.

He leaves.

BILLY

Well, I think we found our guy.

CASSANDRA

He smoked that freakin' thing.

PAULY

Yeah, but here's the thing, though. Does it bother anybody else that he's used to bein' in charge, like completely in charge? What are we lettin' ourselves in for?

CASSANDRA

It's not permanent, Pauly. We just gotta make it through these next few gigs. Then, if there's a problem, you know, sayonara, we find a real replacement.

They rest of the band nods. Pauly still looks apprehensive.

Fade out.

### **Scene 11 – When the Penny Drops**

It's a week later. The Clairs are onstage at Crispy's. They're tearin' it up. Jackson is playing a ton of guitar. Cassandra is singing her heart out. She and Jackson exchange knowing glances. They are well on their way to falling in love. Jackson is singing lead on "When the Penny Drops," the first piece he's written in collaboration with Eddie and Cassandra.

#### **When the Penny Drops**

JACKSON

**(Chorus)**

When the penny drops  
and the truth comes out  
and you find out  
what you should have known before

When the penny drops  
you'll scream and shout  
and your heart will hit the floor

(verse 1)

My friends tried to tell me  
but I could not hear  
showed me but I couldn't see

I could sooner believe that day was night  
than believe she could cheat on me

It could come in a phone call  
or come in a whisper  
or by looking into somebody's eyes

Suddenly you find you're the last one to know  
Angel baby's been tellin' lies  
yeah..... when the penny drops.

**(chorus)**

(verse 2)

When the penny drops and you hear that sound  
of your life fallin' down to the ground  
you'll ask: "How could I be such a fool?"  
but there won't be anyone around

That perfect face, those perfect eyes  
those perfect lips tellin' perfect lies  
Ain't no way to deny it, now  
you got to face the truth, somehow  
yeah. when the penny drops

**(chorus)**

(bridge)

Just when you think your life has turned a corner  
Just when you think you figured out the rules  
The phone'll ring and suddenly you're nowhere  
You feel like you're crazy  
You feel like a fool

(verse)

She could never do that to me  
you say it over again  
But you don't know what you can't see  
and everyone sees what they can

When the penny drops, who hears the sound?  
when love is gone, who is still around?  
It's you and me and all the others



all lined up  
all her lovers  
yeah. when the penny drops

### Scene 12 – Cassandra says the G word

The Clairs are hanging out at a table after the gig. The crowd is filtering out the door. Waitress brings beers.

EDDIE

(He tries to impersonate Clark Gable in “Gone With the Wind.” It sucks, but it’s funny.  
It’s a routine they do every night.)

Thank you, Esther, my dear. You are so very, very, very.

ESTHER

(Like Scarlet O’Hara. She’s batting her eyelashes.)

Oh, my, my, my, Master Eddie. You will turn mah  
head.

Laughs all around. She leaves. The Clairs turn to Jackson. The mood changes. Serious, now.

Eddie and Billy look at Cassandra. Billy gives her a nod.

CASSANDRA  
(sipping her drink)

So, Jackson, the Ganzfeld Experiment.

EDDIE

It’s a rule, man, a Clairs rule. You have to do it to be in the  
band.

JACKSON  
(laughs)

Oh, yeah. We talked about this.

CASSANDRA

So, when do you think you'd like to give it a shot?

JACKSON

(he looks at her)

Hey, man. What the hell. I'm playing in The Clairs, right, the Clairvoyants. It ain't The Monkees, you dig? You join The Monkees, you gotta dance on the beach. You Join The Clairs, you know, you gotta do the thing, the ...what is it?

BILLY

The Ganzfeld--

JACKSON

The Ganzfeld Experiment. Yeah, I'll have a bash.

CASSANDRA

After the next session?

JACKSON

Cool. I'm out. Nighty-night.

He leaves.

CASSANDRA

So, how do you think he'll do?

BILLY

Hard to say. Remember my first time? Yikes.

EDDIE

Hey, guy's got balls to even do it.

BILLY

Here, here.

They raise their glasses.

Fade out.

### Scene 13 – The Hook up.

Cassandra and Jackson are alone in her apartment, late, relaxing on her couch. We sense he has been telling her something important, something intimate about his past. As the camera finds them, we let the aftermath of whatever that was settle in for a moment,

JACKSON

And it's always the same.

He pours them both a glass of wine.

CASSANDRA

Jeez.

He nods, puts down the bottle.

JACKSON

Same dream. Been having it since I was twelve.

She raises her eyebrows, like “this I gotta hear,” pulls a little closer, snuggles into him.

JACKSON

I'm in the last car of a rollercoaster ride. Only one on the ride. I'm twelve years old. Thing feels like it's doin' about 60. And...I'm screaming. I'm screaming...for mommy or daddy or Baby Freakin' Jesus to save me, 'cause I know tonight's the night...tonight's the night it goes flyin' off into the ocean. Last curve on the ride goes to the right. Swings way out...way out over the ocean. The two left wheels of the car are off the rails. The car is tipping, like, thirty degrees hard to starboard. I'm looking down at the ocean. I know this ride. Dad would take me and my sister Jody on it every Saturday night in the summer. It's on the boardwalk at Seaside Heights. where I spent every summer at my Grandma's house.

He leans back, lights a cigarette.

JACKSON

Sometimes, in the dream, the thing crashes over the rail and I wake up screaming before it hits the water. Most nights, though, I make it through the final turn. It slows down. Comes to a stop. But, the safety bar across my chest won't release. I can't get it to go up. I look up at the carny guy who's runnin' the ride to let me out, but he just laughs. He's sittin' at the controls. And he's always wearing the same greasy raincoat. Smells like rotten meat.

CASSANDRA

Is that where you..?

JACKSON

Yeah. “Devil’s Raincoat.” That’s where it came from. I thought if I wrote it out in a song, just, you know, got it out of my head and onto paper...then the dream might just..... go away.

He gives her a little smile. Pours more wine.

JACKSON

Didn’t work. Then, in the dream, the same thing happens, next. He looks at me, sitting there in the car, unable to get out, and he says:

We flip into the dream. We see the carny guy from little 12 year old Jackson’s POV, as he is trapped in the car, unable to release the restraining bar. Little Jackson looks to his right. The carny guy is sitting behind the podium with the levers and buttons that control the ride. He stubs out a cigarette, shakes his head, and laughs. He flips up the collar of the Devil’s Raincoat and says:

CARNY GUY

Don’t you get it, kid?... Everything happens again,.... immediately.

Back to Cassandra’s apartment.

JACKSON

I can’t even say anything to him, I’m so scared. He stubs out his cigarette and pushes the lever forward. Thing starts up again. Nothing I can do about it.

He is suddenly overwhelmed by this memory/dream. He has to put down his wine glass, or he will spill it. He is shaking. Whatever “cool guy” persona he has put in place in order to impress her on this first date, all that is crumbling around him. He breaks down and cries like you cry when you’re a kid, when something makes your little childhood world fall apart, and all you can do is cry your heart out.

JACKSON

Damn dream is kicking my ass, man.

She strokes his neck.

Close up on Cassandra’s face. She’s with him, now. She knows they will be together, whatever comes their way.

Fade to black.

### **Scene 14 – The Scottish Play**

Soft, ominous music comes up. It is the same music from the night of the car crash.

It is later that night. We're in Cassandra's living room. She and Jackson are on her couch, under a blanket. She's curled up in his lap, asleep. He has also dozed off, but he begins to stir as he hears dialogue from an old black and white movie that's flickering across the TV screen across the room from the couch. It's Macbeth.

We go into the movie, into the play, which we join near the end of Act I.

Macbeth has had his friend Banquo killed for his own greedy purposes. Now, we're in the scene where Banquo's ghost has come back to haunt Macbeth and accuse him of his dark deeds. The screen fills up with a grainy black and white image of the old movie:

Macbeth is horrified at the sight of Banquo's ghost, which occupies his (Macbeth's) own place at the table in the great hall.

MACBETH

(to Banquo's ghost)

“Never shake thy gory locks at me”.

We see Jackson's face on the couch, bathed in the baleful light from the TV. He is half awake and half asleep. The scene on the TV is seeping into his dream. We go into his dream state.

Flash back to the night of Bobby's disappearance. We see the exact same shot that opened scene 8, (“Alas, poor Bobby). POV over Jackson's shoulder tracking him as he follows Bobby down the alley.

We see the TV screen, again.

MACBETH

“Avaunt! And quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;

Thou hast no speculation in those eyes

Which thou does glare with!”

Jump cut: Back in the dream. Two shadows on the brick wall of an alley. They seem to be struggling with each other.

Next shot: We see what the shadows are. Bobby is straddling a figure on the ground. He has a beer bottle raised above his head and is about to bring it down on whoever is underneath him. Bobby's face is wild, completely out of control with rage. The bottle pauses at the apex of its trajectory. Freeze frame. Music comes up.

Back to the present reality. We see Jackson on the couch. He is moving his head back and forth, as if he is trying to get away from something.

Back in the dream. We see Bobby from the other side. Same gesture from another angle. We see Bobby's hand raising the bottle up to strike again, only now we can see a tattered sleeve and hanging buttons at the wrist. He is wearing The Devil's Raincoat, the one carny ride operator bought in the dream sequence in scene 3.

Back to Jackson on the couch. A tighter shot on his face. He is sweating and twitching in his sleep.

Back in the dream. It is a continuation of the tracking shot over Jackson's shoulder as he follows Bobby down the alley.

Now, we finally see what happened that night:

We see Bobby stop. He hears someone behind him. He turns, ready to defend himself, a wild look in his eye. We see him relax as he sees who it is. He recognizes Jackson. Relaxes further. Big smile. Coughs. Takes a deep breath. Then he intones, in a passable Laurence Olivier impersonation:

“Who's there?”

This is Banquo's first line to Macbeth in The Scottish Play.

JACKSON

Replies without missing a beat. This is a routine they know from High School and have done with each other many times.

“A friend.”

This is, of course, Macbeth's first line in response to Banquo. They are re-creating the roles they played in High School.

BOBBY

“What, sir, not yet at rest? The king’s a-bed:  
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and  
sent forth great largess to your offices”.

Back into character as himself. He has forgotten the next line.

BOBBY

Uh... like....something, something.....whatever.

By now Jackson has caught up with him. They both laugh at this attempt to recite their old lines from their youth. They give each other the knuckle pump, then the soul brother handshake from the 70s.

JACKSON

Bobby, you remembered your lines from high school.

BOBBY

Yeah. Jeez. My brain’s good for hardly nothin’ at this point, but I still know some of my lines from Macbeth. Dig that.

JACKSON

Oh no!! Now you done it, man ! Now you done it!!

Alarmed. Looks rapidly around.

BOBBY

What, man? What’d I do?

JACKSON

The M word, man. You said the M word.

Bobby gives him a look. He doesn’t understand.

JACKSON

Remember what Mr.Scherzer told us? It’s an old theater superstition. You never refer to that play by its name. It’s really bad luck. You’re supposed call it “The Scottish Play.” You can call the king Macbeth, but you gotta call the play “The Scottish Play.”

BOBBY

Oh, damn. Yeah. I forgot all that, man.

JACKSON

So, now, you have to do the thing he told us to do if you slip up and call it the M word. Remember? It's the antidote. You have to turn around three times and curse, to remove the bad luck.

Bobby's meth addiction is really wringing him out. He is desperate to get to his man and score. He starts walking down the alley.

BOBBY

The hell with that noise. I don't believe in that stuff.

Jackson falls in step with him. Laughs it off.

BOBBY

So, you're not still mad at me for all the shit that went down after the crash? You gotta know how pissed off and strung out I was. I wasn't myself, man. I never woulda gone off like that if I was in my right mind.

JACKSON

All water under the bridge my good man. But, to make up for it, I gotta ask a favor.

BOBBY

(Apprehensively)

What kinda favor?

As they turn a corner in the alley, they see three very skanky teenage girls huddled together. Their wretched faces are faintly illuminated from the glow of a crack pipe over which they all hover. They are crouching behind a dumpster filled with reeking garbage.

Jackson sees them, and makes a funny connection.

JACKSON

Oh, my god. Are we still in The Scottish Play? Look, man, it's the three witches.

Bobby looks at him quizzically.



JACKSON

It's the Three freaking Weird Sisters from Act I.

Bobby gets it. He laughs and walks over to the girls. He speaks in a loud stage voice, which startles the hell out of them. The one in the middle almost drops the crack pipe. Almost.

Bobby assumes his old role as Banquo. He gestures blandly at them with his left hand and gives a stage half turn to his right to address Jackson.

BOBBY

“What are these so wither'd and so wild in their attire,  
that look not like the inhabitants o' the earth?”

The girls are freaked. Their eyes are bugging out. Their mouths drop open. They think they are being busted by undercover Narcs.

Bobby turns back to the girls. Strokes his chin in consideration of the question he is about to posit. He addresses the three girls.

BOBBY

“Live you? Are you aught that man may question?  
You seem to understand me,  
By each at once her chappy finger laying upon her  
Skinny lips: you should be women, and yet your beards—“

The girls finally realize that they are just being messed with by some foreigners or whatever. They snap out of their stupor and all yell at the same time. Each one has a cogent rejoinder to Bobby, which they spit out with unbridled enthusiasm.

WITCH NUMBER ONE

Oh, screw you, man!

WITCH NUMBER TWO

Did you just tell me I have a beard?

WITCH NUMBER THREE

Yeah, C' mere, you jerk. I'll stick my chappy finger up your ass!!

Bobby and Jackson dissolve in laughter and scurry past them. We see the two of them go down the alley and disappear in a vanishing point of light which shines down from an overhead streetlamp

JACKSON

So, Bobby, that favor...

Bobby is scratching and coughing. He is desperately in need of a hit.

BOBBY

Uh.. now might not be the best....

JACKSON

No, Bobby, I've got to talk to you now... I need a gig...I want to join The Clairs... come on...it's be like a Dogs reunion... between your new fan base and our Dogs fans, we could make some serious...

Bobby pauses a moment, sizing Jackson up. He lights a cigarette. Looks at Jackson. Shakes his head. Looks away.

BOBBY

You're kidding, right?

JACKSON

Do I look like I'm kdding you, man? This is the only thing I'm asking. Look, I went away. I did the time and we both know what really happened that night.

Bobby throws the butt away. He is instantly on guard and defensive.

BOBBY

As a matter of fact, and of legal record, as you well know and has been repeatedly established, I have no recollection of what happened that night.

JACKSON

You can save that crap for your lawyer, pal. Now, we can do this nice or nasty. Which do you prefer?

BOBBY

You're threatening me? You show up outa nowhere demanding a gig and now you're threatening me. You know, you always were an arrogant S.O.B. Jackson. This is not the Good Dogs. I am no longer under your frickin' thumb, man..

He walks away, turns a corner. There is another dumpster with a number of empty liquor bottles strewn in front of it.

Jackson follows him.

JACKSON

Don't you walk away from me, you prick.

BOBBY

And don't you threaten me, you has been. The Clairs is my baby. I sweated blood to make it happen, and now I'm gonna turn it over to you because of some shit that happened years ago?. Get lost.

He walks a bit farther on.

Jackson catches up to him, grabs him by the left shoulder and spins him around.

JACKSON

You think the slate is clean between you and me, you jerk?

As he is spun around, Bobby's street reflexes take over and he swings at Jackson, catching him with a right to the temple.

## BOBBY

That's it, bitch. Now you're gonna get the beat down I should given you years ago.

They go at it, punching back and forth. Bobby tackles Jackson and they roll around on the ground. Bobby winds up on top, straddling Jackson. Bobby, out of control with fury and his addiction, grabs an empty liquor bottle (ironically, it's Jack Daniels) and tries to bring it down on Jackson's head. Jackson reaches up as the bottle comes down and, using both hands and all his strength, snatches it away.

Bobby, still straddling Jackson, grabs another bottle, raises it high above his head, gives a blood curdling scream and is about to smash it over Jackson's head. Jackson has the other bottle in his right hand, brings it up and smashes against the left side of Bobby's head, shattering it.

Bobby is stunned. The bottle falls from his hand and smashes on the pavement. Blood gushes out of the left side of his head. His left hand comes up, touches the side of his face. He looks quizzically at the hand in the dim light of the alley. He cocks his head to one side in bewilderment. Bobby's eyes roll back into his head. He slumps over, rolling off Jackson and onto the ground.

Jackson rolls away from him.

Bobby is lying on his back. He begins frothing at the mouth. His legs are twitching. He is having a seizure, brought on both by the blow and his addiction.

Jackson, revolted at what is happening, scoots backwards until his back is up against the brick wall next to the dumpster. He watches in horror as Bobby gradually stops moving.

Close up on Bobby's face, half turned outward. His eyes are half opened and blank. His tongue is swollen and protruding.

Close up on Jackson. He is curled up against the wall, almost in a fetal position, knees tucked up into his chest. He drops his head down to his knees. We see him shaking his head back and forth in mute despair.

\*\*\*

Jump cut back to the present. Back in Cassie's living room. Jackson is staring in mute horror at the TV. His cheeks are shaking. A rim of dried spittle has formed around the left side of his mouth. He is fully awake, now.

The music is rising to a screeching crescendo.

We see the screen again. Macbeth reels in horror. He stumbles back, away from the apparition, away from his own guilty conscience:

MACBETH

“Hence, horrible shadow!  
Unreal mockery, hence!”

Jump cut to one last shot in the alley. We see Jackson strike Bobby on the side of head with the bottle. We see the bottle shatter. We see the blood spurt from Bobby’s head.

Back to the scene in the living room. That does it. Jackson flips out.

He throws his wine glass at the tube. It bounces off the screen, falls to the linoleum floor and shatters. Red wine is dripping down the front of the TV screen. It looks black.

He jumps up, inadvertently tossing Cassandra off his lap and onto the floor in a heap.

Cassandra wakes up, groggily.

CASSANDRA

What the hell?

Jackson slides back down onto the floor next to her. His back is up against the front of the couch. His knees are pulled up to his chest. His arms are wrapped tightly around his knees. He is rocking back and forth. It is the same position he was in that night after he killed Bobby.

JACKSON

That was horrible. Horrible. Please, Cassandra. Please, turn it off.

Cassandra is conscious enough to do as he asks. She finds the remote and clicks the TV off. The sudden silence has a faint, high pitched ping at the back of it. There is a little metallic taste in the air, like they’ve both been sucking on pennies for some reason. She tosses the remote and goes to him. She approaches gingerly, like she’s just found wounded Bambi in a forest.

CASSANDRA

Baby, what happened? Did you have that dream again?

His breathing begins to steady. He starts calming down. She is holding him. His breathing returns to normal.

Jackson tries to manage a smile.

JACKSON

Different one. The hits just keep on comin'.

CASSANDRA

Look, whatever it is, whatever's goin' on, just let it slide. You got me, now. I am totally here for you.

Jackson nods. He tries to get his breath back.

JACKSON

I don't know what I'd do without you, right now. Everything else in my life is nuts.

They embrace. It'll be alright. They'll make it through tonight, at least.

### **Scene 15 – Crazy Disneyland**

It is the next morning. Jackson is at her kitchen table having coffee and reading the paper. Cassandra walks in. She carries a couple of pieces of paper and an acoustic guitar.

CASSANDRA

Morning, sunshine. I got a surprise for you.

Jackson is still shaken up by the dream from last night. He answered a bit sarcastically.

JACKSON

Oh. I love surprises. I'm so in the mood for a surprise.

They both laugh.

JACKSON

(In a voice like a little kid)

Is it a pony, mommy? Did you buy me a pony?

They laugh again.

CASSANDRA

I wrote a song about your dream, man.

He looks at her. What? This was the last thing he expected. How she she know what he was dreaming last night?

CASSANDRA

Your dream, man. Your roller coaster dream.

JACKSON

(More sarcasm)

How charming. Of course. Now is the perfect time for me to be reminded of that dream. Now that I'm almost recovered from the one that almost did me in last night.

A pause. He doesn't want to hurt her feelings.

JACKSON

Just kidding. Lay it on me baby.

This makes her happy. She sits across from him with her guitar. Puts the sheet of lyrics on the table. She grabs a pick and begins to bang out a C minor chord in a "Bo Diddley" rhythm. She begins to sing "Crazy Disneyland."

Half way through the song, we segue out of the kitchen scene and into the studio, where The Clairs are recording it a few nights later.

### **Crazy Disneyland**

CASSANRA sings:  
(verse 1)

I don't know what this is  
but I know what it's not.

My mind is on fire  
and my nerves are all shot

There's something wrong with my brain  
I just don't understand

It's like a crazy roller coaster  
in a crazy Disneyland.

In crazy Disneyland,  
things are not what they seem.

The Dwarves went out on strike  
and left Snow White in a dream.

The wolf called the cops  
on Red Riding Hood.

Nothing here acts quite the way that it should.

(chorus – sung twice)

I'm in the last seat  
in the last car  
on the last ride out tonight.

It's closing time  
in Crazy Disneyland  
and they're turning out the lights.

(verse 2)

There's a man in my car  
who swears that he's a king.

He throws his hands up and screams:  
"I'm in charge of everything."

Crazy Mother Superior  
throws him out the door

then she whispers to me:  
"My faith is stronger than yours."

No one knows how they got here  
or how to get out.

The guy who runs the ride,  
someone said he has clout.

The ride stops and I scream:  
"Tonight, I will leave!"

He just starts it up again and says:



"The next one's on me."

(chorus – repeats twice)

(Coda – repeat several time and fade)

I don't know what this is,  
but I know what it's not.

End of song.

RECORDING ENGINEER

Ah, bless you, my children. I think that was it. I think that was the golden boy. Come on in and listen to that one.

The band is in high spirits. They leave the recording room and go into the control booth to hear the playback. Jackson and Cassandra are alone for a moment in the recording room.

CASSANDRA

What do you think, baby?

JACKSON

Baby, I love it.

He comes over and gives her a bear hug. Picks her up and spins her around. She squeals with delight.

JACKSON

You know, I'm getting into this. I'm really feeling like I'm, you know, part of the band, now.

CASSANDRA

You're in like Flynn, dog.

They go into the control room. As they listen to the playback, there is a general mood of exuberance.

Jackson leans over to Billy.

JACKSON

Hey. What the hell. Let's do it. Let's do that Ganzfeld thing.

BILLY  
You mean it?

JACKSON  
Yeah. Today I become a Clair. A chocolate Éclair. Time to suit up.

Billy and Cassandra exchange glances.

### **Scene 16 – Jackson Goes Ganzo**

It is later that night. The engineer is gone. Cassie is with Jackson in the studio. She dims the lights. He sits down on a chair which has been placed in the center of the room. Billy comes in with a set of earphones, which he hands to Jackson.

JACKSON

No last minute call from the Governor? No final words?

BILLY  
I guess you know what I'm about to tell you, but this is serious stuff man, so I have to run it down to you. Just to be sure.

Jackson nods.

We hear Billy reciting the following speech as a voiceover. During the speech, we see Billy and Cassandra matching the actions to the words, that is, they tape halves of a ping pong ball over Jackson's eyes. Then, we jump to a shot of Eddie in the control room. He tests the level of the white noise that is being generated from the recording console and piped into a set of earphones which Cassandra carefully places on Jackson head. Pauly is standing behind him in the control booth, leaning up against the wall and smoking a cigarette.

Soft underscore begins beneath Billy's speech.

BILLY

The Ganzfeld Experiment was developed in the '30's by Dr. Wolfgang Metzger, who was interested in codifying the process by which clairvoyants submit themselves to a trance state in order to channel communication with the spirits of the departed. The premise is, that by eliminating visual and auditory stimuli from this plane of awareness, the medium becomes more open to communication with the spirit world. A ping pong ball is taped over the eyes to eliminate visual input. Earphones transmit white noise to the brain in order to cancel out external sound. You've seen those commercials for earphones that you use on planes to cancel out engine noise? Same principle.

After a few minutes of transmission of the signal through the phones, Cassandra will talk you into the trance state. Just relax. Nothing might happen the first time. Just relax and let yourself go. It's called Ganzfeld Experiment, not the Ganzfeld Ultimatum. Let's see what we get. It's all good, man.

He gives Jackson a little pat on the shoulder and backs off. He nods to the control booth. Eddie is seated at the console. He nods back. We see Pauly standing behind him, leaning against a wall, smoking a cigarette. We hear a soft whisper of sound come up. It is the white noise in the earphones. Cassandra and Jackson are alone in the room. She comes over to him. She leans in and whispers:

CASSANDRA

Baby, you sure you wanna do this? You been having some funky dreams lately.

JACKSON

No, I'm good. Matter of fact, I'm hoping this will shed some light on that stuff. I've had it with the midnight rollercoaster. Time to face it and get off.

CASSANDRA

Alright, then. Listen, ain't nothin' but a thang. Like fallin' off a log. I'm gonna give you a few prompts, every minute or so. When I touch your arm, that's the signal to allow yourself to slip into a lightly deeper state of receptivity. You cool?

JACKSON

Go, baby.

Cassandra sits in a chair directly facing Jackson, about three feet away. She bows her head. We see her eyelids begin to flutter.

We hear the soft beginnings of the same ominous music that we heard as we saw Jackson and Bobby vanish at the end of the alley.

Cut to a close up of the earphone over Jackson' right ear. We hear the level of white noise increase.

After a few moments, we hear Cassandra's voice. She is communicating telepathically to Jackson. We join Jackson in the inner world into which he is being immersed.

CASSANDRA

Jackson, I am with you internally, now. I am speaking to you telepathically. Nod if you understand me.

Jackson nods.

CASSANDRA

At the first tap of my finger on your arm, you will begin to relax, to let your mind slip beneath the surface of your awareness. Picture yourself easing into a warm bath.

She taps his arm. The music rises a bit.

Blackout.

Then, we find ourselves projected into a hazy scene. We see what transpires from Jackson's POV. We hear feet walking in heavy boots on a cobbled walk way. It sounds like several men in a hurry. We can make out the interior of a castle. Sconces on the wall hold flaming torches, which emit a greasy glare. We hear voices up ahead and see a glow. We are approaching a large chamber. Jackson looks around him. He is one of the people in this scene, and is accompanied by several burly companions. They are bearded, fierce, and dressed in the tartans of 15<sup>th</sup> century Scottish clansmen.

CASSANDRA

At the second tap, you will be entirely immersed in a deep internal state. I will give no further prompts or suggestions. We will trust that whoever you are destined to meet will present themselves to you.

Jackson is about to turn the corner into the large chamber. The music rises once again. He turns the corner. He finds himself in a large banquet hall in the castle. Royal guests, in various states of inebriation, are feasting and drinking. Dogs roam freely, barking and snatching food from the hands of their masters. Servants are bustling throughout the room carrying large salvers heaped

with steaming meat.

As Jackson enters the room, all the guests rise and bow. The din of a moment ago is cut off. The echo of voices rings off the stone walls and fades quickly away. Jackson stops in the middle of the room with his retainers. All eyes are upon him.

Close up of Jackson's face. He becomes self-conscious. Why are they all staring at him?

He looks down at himself. He is clad as his kinsman are, in the tartan of his clan. He feels something on his brow. He touches it. His fingers brush the sharpened points of the triple crown. With a sick lurch in his stomach, he realizes he has somehow, morphed into Macbeth.

He is in the Scottish play. He knows where they are. They are at the top of Act III, Scene IV. He feels trapped. He feels as if he is being sucked into a situation over which he has no control.

Quick jump cut. We see Jackson as a twelve year old boy. On his head he is wearing a red paper crown with little points, the kind you find at children's birthday parties. He is alone on the rollercoaster at Seaside Heights, New Jersey. It screeches around the final turn. He looks down over the side. He is over the ocean. He screams. The paper crown flies out into the night.

Quick cut to the shadow scene of Bobby's death in the alley. We see a shot of Jackson's arm. It is clad in The Devil's Raincoat. His hand holds the Jack bottle. It comes down with the bottle onto the side of Bobby's head. We see the image in a clearer and more graphic way than we did, previously.

Back to the banquet scene. All eyes are still on him. We see his face, now bearded. He has physically morphed into Macbeth. He touches the beard. He looks as if he is trying to hold back from being sick.

He feels words rise up from his gut. Something beyond his control is compelling him to speak, as if he is a puppet. He tries with all his might to stifle them, but he cannot. Somehow, he knows if he delivers Macbeth's first line, it will draw him inexorably into The Scottish Play. We see him struggle with himself. He is trying desperately to keep from speaking. It is no use.

The words issue from his throat as if he is vomiting, as if he is barking. He addresses his guests:

JACKSON

"You know your own degrees; sit down: at first  
And last the hearty welcome."

THE GUESTS

(as one)

"Thanks to your majesty."

Music comes up higher. Two huge doors bang open at the end of the room. Jackson is startled.

He looks there. People are entering the hall, walking toward him. He turns to his guests. All eyes are still on him. No one else has seen the doors open.

Bobby's ghost enters. He is dressed in the clothes he wore at the time of his death. His guitar gig bag is slung over his shoulder. It is streaked with blood, as is his hair, and face. He wears a grey polyester "Member's Only" jacket with epaulets and zippers. It too, is streaked with blood.

He is flanked by the three crack smoking "Weird Sisters" he accosted the alley on the night of his murder. But, they have turned into the three "Poodle" girls from the Good Dogs who were killed in the car crash. They wear the clothes we saw on the three crack addict girls, but they still have their pink "Poodle" bows in their hair, which is in the beehive hairdos they wore when they performed with the Dogs.

Bobby walks directly to the stool which has been left empty for Macbeth at the head of the massive table and sits down. The girls sit in three stools around the side of the table to his immediate left. They seem to have no interest in anything that goes on around them.

Bobby unzips the bag. The zipper sound is way too loud. Instead of a guitar, he takes out a bagpipe. Takes a deep breath. He plays the intro to "The Devil's Raincoat", which we heard in scene 2 played on harmonica. He looks at Jackson and says, in a cracked whispery voice.

BOBBY

"Sometimes you don't know what you bought until you try it on."

Bobby gestures to Jackson with one of the pipes.

BOBBY

Looks a little tight in the shoulders, man.

Jackson feels himself all over, like someone looking for a lost set of keys in a pocket. He feels something shift on his body, like a snake has coiled itself around his torso. He looks down. He is wearing The Devil's Raincoat, but across his chest, on top of the coat, he still has on the tartan sash and medallion of office of the king.

Once again, Jackson feels words rise, unbidden, up through his gorge.

We can tell by his face that he fully sees Bobby as the murdered Banquo, fully realizes who he is, now.

JACKSON

(as Macbeth, spoken to Bobby, as Banquo's ghost)

"Never..."

He tries to swallow the words, then he spits them out like he's spitting out poison. He points shakily at Bobby.

JACKSON

“Never shake thy gory locks at me!”

ROSS

(a courtier)

“Gentlemen, rise: his highness is not well.”

We hear the clatter of chairs and stools falling backward onto the stone floor as the courtiers rise to attention. They are startled by this outburst from their liege lord. The only ones still seated at the table are Bobby and the girls, who still seem completely uninterested in the proceedings.

Jackson is approached rapidly by Lady Macbeth, in full courtly dress of the period. Lady Macbeth is played by Cassandra, but it is not Cassandra. It just looks like her.

We can see by the change in his expression that he recognizes Cassandra, and, horribly, sees that she too has been sucked into this hellish version of the play. He is astonished. He cannot speak to her. All he can do is point at Bobby's ghost on the stool at the head of the table. He extends his arm. We follow the gesture from his POV. On his outstretched hand we see several rings with large stones in them.

LADY MACBETH

(to Jackson, scornfully, in a harsh stage whisper)

“Why do you make such faces? When all's done,  
You look but on a stool.”

Jackson points plaintively at Bobby, who sneers and mouths Macbeth's next line along with him as Jackson delivers it:

JACKSON

“Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo!”

LADY MACBETH

“Feed and regard him not. Are you a man?”

Bobby smiles and applauds sarcastically, then hands the bagpipe to one of the girls. She grabs

one of the three protruding chanters (wooden pipes) and yanks it off. She drops a white rock into the top of it. Takes out a lighter. It's no longer a bagpipe. It's a crack pipe. The girls start passing it around. Another girl hands Bobby a pewter goblet. He drinks. He turns back to Jackson.

BOBBY

(as Bobby, to Jackson as Jackson)

Woopsy! Now you done it. Bro, I think you're in Dutch with the old lady.

He makes a circular gesture with the goblet in the air, then takes another drink.

BOBBY

Maybe you should, you know, twirl around three times and curse.

JACKSON

(He is practically hysterical now)

“Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!  
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;  
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes  
which thou dost glare with!”

The courtiers gasp and recoil in confusion.

Jackson leans over and speaks in a horrified whisper as an aside to Lady Macbeth. Over his shoulder we see, once again, Bobby smirking and mouthing Macbeth's line as he delivers it:

JACKSON

“It will have blood. They say blood will have blood”.

BOBBY

(like he's been waiting to say this)

Uh, if it's all the same you man, I'll have a seven and seven.

Bobby's ghost erupts in a fit of laughter. It sounds like sandpaper on wood.

Jump cut to little Jackson on the rollercoaster. He is entering the final curve, again. He is in the front seat. Looks out over the ocean. Full shot.



Then, his terrified face turns directly to the camera. His hair is whipping around. The paper crown is back on his head. Something like blood drips down from it, down his forehead and into his left eye.

We hear Bobby's laughter building and echoing in the huge hall.

We see the backseat of the rollercoaster car over little Jackson's shoulder. It is occupied by Bobby and the girls. Bobby has his arms around a girl on either side of him. He is talking excitedly into the ear of the girl to his right. They are laughing in pure delight. Behind them, we see the lights of the concession stands on the Boardwalk in the distance whirl by in a blur.

### JACKSON

(in the voice of himself as a boy, screams)

"Hence, horrible shadow! Unreal mockery, hence!"

This seems to annoy Bobby. He leans forward from the backseat and gives him a playful smack on the back of the head, which knocks the crown off, again and it goes flying off once again into the night. The girls think this is hilarious. But, the smack is as loud as a cannon.

The smack from Bobby triggers a big, swooshing rush of air and sound. We hear what sounds like the rising orchestral glissando at the end of "A Day in the Life" by the Beatles.

Shot of the earphone over Jackson's right ear.

Shot of Jackson's face, full on. He is pale and sweating. His eyes are still closed

Shot of Cassandra, still seated on the chair in front of Jackson. Her eyes are closed. She is still in the trance.

Jackson's consciousness breaks the surface of reality like he's jumped into a freezing pond. He gasps.

We're out of the trance state and back in the studio. Jackson, his face bathed in sweat. He rips off the headphones. He rips off the ping pong balls and throws them down. He jumps up. He yanks the headset from around his neck like it was strangling him. He throws it down. It bounds off the studio floor with a crack, breaking one of the earphones. He begins to faint.

Cassandra and Billy rush forward. They catch him as he is about to keel over and carry him to a couch. They are both talking at once: "Loosen his belt. He can't breathe." "Get a washcloth. Get cold water on his head. He's running a fever," etc.

We shift to Pauly and Eddie in the control booth. Eddie is still seated at the console. Pauly is still standing behind him. He lights another cigarette, then leans over Eddie's shoulder and says:

PAULY

Gee. That went well.

Fade to black.

**Scene 17 – The Hammer comes down.**

The band is gathered in the recording studio. It is the night following Jackson's Ganzfeld Experiment. The lights are dim. The mood is heavy.

EDDIE

We've been served with papers by the record company's attorneys. They are calling in the quarter mil advance. All of it now, or they come after everything. The band is named as an entity, and we are each named, individually.

BILLY

Can they do that? Our lawyer said they weren't gonna do that.

EDDIE

He was wrong. They changed their mind.

CASSANDRA

Why? Why now?

PAULY

Our lawyer figures that since we're back in the news again, since we got some buzz, what with Jackson onboard and all, and since that guy on "Entertainment, Now" started blabbing about "new record company interest in The Clairs," our guy says it's a pre-emptive strike to suck up everything we make over the next five years.

BILLY

Makes sense. Sucks, but it makes sense.

PAULY

Only one not named in the suit is Jackson. They even tagged Bobby, you know, in case he comes through the door with a quarter mil in his gig back sometime in the next four weeks, which is how long we have to come across with the dough, or they start putting the spikes to us.

CASSANDRA

What do we do?

PAULY

Our lawyer, and I use the term loosely, is gonna meet with them, see if we can hold it off.

EDDIE

He's got the meeting scheduled for the week after the DC wedding gig. Then, he meets with us and we see if we have any other options.

BILLY

How about moving to the Indonesian Archipelago. There's an option.

CASSANDRA

Look guys. I think we're all panicking a bit.

PAULY

A bit, Cassandra? Do you know what kind of deep shit we're in here?

CASSANDRA

You can't get blood from a stone, Pauly. They know that. Let's see what our guy comes up with.

Nobody's buying it.

CASSANDRA

I gotta book.

She leaves. The guys all look at each other.

BILLY

Do they have rock clubs in Outer Mongolia?

### **Scene 18 – Pauly gets the Pitch**

Jackson and Pauly sit down at a booth in a sleazy bar. A fake Tiffany lamp with red plastic sides

casts a dim pallor over the proceedings.

Cut to a shot of the Tiffany lamp. One plastic panel begins to smolder. The light bulb is burning a hole through it. A little smoke begins to come out. The plastic panel begins to blister and turns black. They glance up at it and ignore it.

They both have drinks. Pauly pulls a basket of peanuts into his chest, begins methodically shelling and eating them throughout the scene. He tosses the shells on to the floor.

PAULY

So?

JACKSON

Yeah.

PAUL

So, you know. I'm here. You got my attention. What' up?

JACKSON

Got to let you know, like, from the edge, it's pretty wild, man. I mean, it's real. It's all for real, but, you know, it's ...out there.

He gestures to someplace far out there.

PAULY

Man, situation we're in? Position we find ourself in now, I'll listen to anything. I'll listen to like: I-met-some-aliens-who-discovered-a-gold-mine-in-Peru-type-anything. Madon, we're in some deep shit. I mean can you feature that? Freakin' record company smells blood in the water and the, like, the fangs come out. Where's the compassion in that?

JACKSON

Yeah,

PAULY

Where is it? It's not there, you dig?

JACKSON

I got to ask you somethin'.

PAULY

(mumbles through a mouth full of peanuts)

Shoot.

JACKSON

Just how good are your computer hacking skills?

Pauly's eyebrows goes up. He forgets about the peanuts for a moment. Considers what he is going to say rather carefully.

PAULY

Can't break into heavily fire walled industrial stuff. But any home computer, with the usual safeguards? That should pose no problemo, whatsoever.

JACKSON

(thinks a moment, then leans in)

All right. Get ready to be happy.

Fade out.

### **Scene 19 – Welcome to Starbucks. May I help you?**

Night, once again, at Chez Beal. Jackson is outside, under the ripped umbrella once again, with a bottle. We get the feeling that the house holds too many memories, that he's more comfortable at his usual station, poolside. He's on the Princess phone with Rudy. The TV is on at the edge of the pool. It's The History Channel. Something with Hitler in it.

We see Jackson from behind, seated at the table. We are looking out at the same view we saw at the beginning of the film in the "Sunrise in Busted Paradise" scene. He's looking at the TV, which is propped up on a little wrought iron table at the edge of the pool.

JACKSON

Yeah. Rudy, I'm tellin' you I didn't have to do nothin', dog. No. No convincing required. A no convincing type conversation, like, ensued. Yeah...yeah. I'm sure of it. I'm sure he can do the thing. (long pause) Alright, so now, we got a lot of strands floating around and, of course, no written memos anywhere, so let's tell the tale one more time so there won't be no slip ups. We get to the Jeffries estate at 7:00 PM. We should clear security by around 7:20.....

Unbeknownst to Jackson, Cassandra has showed up unexpectedly. She has dropped by to

surprise him with dinner. She has two brown paper bags of groceries in her hands. We see her ring the door bell. No answer. We see her walk in, come through the house and walk through the sliding glass doors, which are open out to the back patio. She walks up to within eight feet of him. His back is to her. She is still holding the two large paper bags.

CASSANDRA

Hey, sugar. Noticed you were getting' skinny, so I figured I'd--"

He doesn't hear her, but something about the tone of his voice on the phone stops her dead in her tracks. She freezes. She doesn't mean to, but she begins to eavesdrop on his conversation. We can see by the perplexed look on her face that something she hears him say on the phone has riveted her to the spot, silently.

Jackson is still on the phone to Rudy.

Reverse angle. We see from the front, looking back toward the house. POV directly over the top of the TV. We see Cassandra eight feet behind him, the back of the house framed behind her. Her mouth begins to fall open as she hears what he is saying. Jackson, unaware of her presence, absent-mindedly looks at images of Hitler on the History Channel with the sound very low as he speaks to Rudy:

Close up on Jackson.

JACKSON

.....Alright. So, now, the gig is over. Cassandra and Billy are doing Ganzfeld with the Bride and Groom on the dance floor. Pauly and I slip away up the main staircase to the Senator's office...

The scene goes silent. No TV. No sound of Jackson's voice.

Ominous music comes up. Close up on Cassandra's face. She is slipping into a sort of terrorized trance.

Extreme close up of her eyes. They begin to cloud over. Her eyelids begin to flutter. Against her will, something is pulling her deeper into a psychic trance.

Extreme close up of Jackson talking into the phone and laughing, but we just see his lips moving. No words are heard.

We hear a sound like someone who has suddenly been immersed underwater. Cassandra's legs buckle. She drops to her knees on the flagstone patio. She is immersed in trance now, unaware of her surroundings. But, reflexively, she still clutches the two bags of groceries to her chest.

Reverse angle, once again with the POV from behind the TV. We see Jackson's face from the

front. He is laughing and talking to Rudy on the phone. We still cannot hear what he is saying.

We go into slow motion:

Shot of - The two bags of groceries slumping to the ground. A grapefruit falls out of one bag, rolls about two feet, stops. A tomato falls out of the other bag, does the same thing.

Back to normal motion: The screen is filled with a shot of Cassandra's face. It is a rictus of horror. Her eyes roll up and back, revealing the whites. Her eyelids close. Her eyeballs begin to twitch beneath the lids. Uncontrollable rapid eye movement. She is falling, spontaneously, into an even deeper trance.

Shot of Cassandra from eight feet above her and ten feet away. The camera is an eye in the sky suspended above the pool. It then swoops down and zooms in to her eyes.

Blackout. Very briefly.

Image comes back up. We are in her trance with her.

We see her trance scenes in the same hazy, grainy sepia tone in which we viewed Jackson dreams. She is looking at visions from the future that flicker and play on the inside of her eyelids. A private screening of a movie nobody should have to see.

Trance shot - We see Jackson and Pauly slinking up a huge marble staircase and enter the Senator's office. We hear voices over a microphone boom up the stairs. It is Cassandra and Billy conducting the Ganzfeld experiment with the wedding party back downstairs in the adjacent ballroom.

Trance shot - Jump cut to the dance floor of the ballroom. In her trance, Cassandra sees herself in full Ganzfeld gear, deep in trance, assisted by Billy.

Reverse angle.

We see Cassandra from behind and, beyond her, the Bride and Groom and the guests. The bride is crying tears of joy. Her new husband holds her close. The guests are visibly moved. Cassandra is channeling the spirit of the Bride's departed grandmother.

Now, we see Pauly and Jackson in the office. Jackson is hovering over Pauly, who is hard at work at the computer.

We see an extreme close up of a computer disc being spat out of the front of a Mac PowerBook G4 laptop computer.

Pauly snatches it up like it's the winnings at a roulette table. He kisses it. He looks at Jackson. He nods and winks.

Music rises ever higher.

Reality shot – We're out of the sepia tone. Cut to a full on face shot of Cassandra. Something brings her out of the trance. She struggles to her feet. Her legs are like rubber, but she's standing. And she is angry. Everything is in silence except the orchestral underscore, which is pumping. We read Cassandra's lips. She screams at Jackson, but we do not hear her scream:

CASSANDRA

What are you doing? What the hell are you doing?

We are back in slow motion: Jackson jumps up, startled, still faces the pool. He doesn't know where that came from. He looks at the TV, cocks his head to the side like a confused dog. Did Hitler just ask him a question?

CASSANDRA

(still in silence. We read her lips.)

I said: What are you doing?

This, he hears. He whirls around. He throws down the phone. He's very angry. We see his mouth form the words:

JACKSON

(also in silence)

How long have you been standing there?

There ensues a kind of ballet, a pas de deux for two angry lovers, interspersed with flash forward premonitions from Cassandra's trance state.

(Once again: to make the premonitions stand out from the live action on the patio, they should be shot in the same grainy sepia that we've come to expect from all the dream sequences in the movie.)

Shot from above, as if they are being tracked by a police helicopter - Cassandra and Jackson, circling each other like hyenas around the bags of spilled groceries. Both are screaming at each other.

Premonition shot - Cut to a newspaper Headline: "MILITARY SECRETS FEARED FALLEN INTO HANDS OF TERRORISTS" There is an article beneath this, but we don't have time to read it before we jump back to:

Reality shot - Jackson and Cassandra. Cassandra lunges forward. She grabs the bottle of Jack



Daniels and hurls it into the pool.

Then, she snatches the Princess phone off the table and tries to throw it into the pool.

Unfortunately, the cord, which extends from the kitchen, won't go that far. The turquoise phone snaps back on its cord, boomerangs in mid air, and clatters to the flagstone patio, where it shatters into several pieces.

Jackson stops, crosses his arms on his chest, drops his chin down, taps his toe, and gestures at the broken phone with his chin, as if to say: "Well, there you go. Are you happy now?"

Premonition shot - A press conference on CNN – the President's Press Secretary is at a podium bearing the presidential seal in front of a room packed with reporters. All their hands are up and waving, wildly. As he speaks, we see the crawl move across the bottom of the screen: "Senator in spy arrest." He looks directly into the camera. We hear him.

#### PRESS SECRETARY

We do not know yet how extensive—

Reality shot – The rest of his address is cut off as we jump to a shot of Cassandra. We are thrown back in silence, now, except for the underscore music, which is screaming. She kicks the TV off the little stand and into the pool. It hisses as it drops beneath the surface.

Underwater shot: We see, very briefly, Hitler's image on the TV. He give the Nazi salute, then the TV emits a bright light, then it goes blank as it sinks to the bottom of the pool.

Back to the scene on the patio. Cassandra is still yelling at Jackson. Her lips mouthing words, furiously. The scene is still in silence. She is at the fallen bags of groceries. She grabs the grapefruit and hurls it at Jackson. He ducks it as deftly as Bush ducked the shoe.

Premonition shot - Back to a TV shot. CNN: It is Senator Jeffries, being led from the front door of his house in handcuffs. He is being frog marched out to a police cruiser in his circular drive. The lights atop the squad car whirl around, casting him now in red, now in blue, now in red, now in blue, as he performs the perp walk in his own driveway.

The car's back door is already open. He is flanked by two burly men with moustaches, wearing thin, navy blue plastic windbreakers emblazoned with the white logo: "U. S. Marshal."

The senator lifts his cuffed hands to his face to shield himself from the glare of camera and video lights. He tries to hide his face behind a manila folder.

He is jerked along. Papers fall out of the folder as he walks. No one tries to retrieve them. We watch them, briefly, as they blow away down his driveway, along with everything he has imagined his life would be.

As Jeffries reaches the car, one of the Marshals grabs the back of his head and shoves it down hard, ostensibly to avoid hitting it on the roof as he is put in the back seat, but you know it's more than that.

Reality – Out of sepia, again. Back in silence. Shot of Cassandra – She holds the tomato, the one that plopped out of the second bag, in her right hand. Jackson is jiggling back and forth at the edge of the pool and trying to calm her down. Batter up! She hurls it at him from ten feet away.

Jackson sees it coming, does a little embarrassed jig to the left. It splats on his chest. He is wearing his Hawaiian shirt. Aloha! Looks like he's been on the business end of a firing squad.

Then, the live sound from the scene in progress comes rushing up, like we are coming out of the trance along with Cassandra. It is the same whooshing sound we heard when Jackson came out of his Ganzfeld trance. Then, the whoosh vanishes.

Silence. We have just enough time to listen to a breath of wind blow through the palms before we hear Cassandra. She is no longer screaming. Her anger has risen to a new level. She is too angry to scream.

#### CASSANDRA

I trusted you. I trusted you.

She moves back through the house, slams the front door, gets in her Jetta and lays rubber on the driveway like Big Daddy Roth off the mark at the quarterfinals.

Shot of Cassandra face full on, behind the wheel, seen through the driver's side windshield.

It starts to rain. Distractedly, she flips on the windshield wipers.

Close up of a shot on the windshield wiper's from her POV in the driver's seat. It is the same shot as the first one we saw in the scene with Jackson behind the wheel, before the crash. Once again, the wipers beat time along with ominous underscore music.

She's a half block away from Jackson's house, going fast. She's on her cell phone, trying to call someone.

#### CASSANDRA

Pick up. Pick up, damn it...hey.... Hey!



## **Scene 20 – Life Support**

Eddie, Pauly and Jackson are in Cassandra’s hospital room. She is in a coma. She is hooked up to life support machines. We hear all the requisite beeping and whizzing sounds associated with that.

Eddie is in the corner. Jackson is kneeling at the bedside, holding her hand. He won’t let anybody come near her. No one can understand what he is saying. He is crying, disconsolately.

Pauly is at the window. Looking out at the early morning traffic. Billy enters.

EDDIE

What are they sayin’?

BILLY

It’s the classic thing, man. She could come out of it tomorrow, or in a year, or never. They don’t know squat.

JACKSON

(Softly, to her.)

Oh, baby. Baby, what did you do?

There is a long pause.

PAULY

At least, you know, maybe the record company will cancel the lawsuit.

Eddie and Billy look at him like, maybe they didn’t hear what they thought they just heard.

Fade out.

## **Scene 21 - Another audition, another show**

The remaining band members are back in the rehearsal studio.

EDDIE

What did Yogi Berra say about Déjà vu all over again?

BILLY

We have to find a sub for Cassandra, man. Pauly, doesn't the contract for the wedding specify the line-up?

PAULY

Yeah. The contract specifically says we have to appear with "a female vocalist". If we don't have one, we're in breach. Senator Jeffries is a lawyer, a Washington lawyer.

Door opens. DEIRDRE walks in. She is 19, stunning.

Shot of Billy. He is instantly smitten.

Eddie flips through the audition sign-up sheet, which is five pages long.

EDDIE

Alright! Here we go. If it's three o'clock here in scenic downtown L.A., you must be...

As Eddie searches down the list, the girl throws a duffel bag on the floor, walks to the mike, grabs it. She blows into it to see if it's on. Then, she taps it a couple of times. Speaks into it. Her voice booms across the room.

DEIRDRE

Deirdre. Outa Seattle. You can call me Dee. If you like me, you can call me Dee Dee. If you don't like me, you can call me a cab, because the air in town sucks, man. What do you want to start with? I know all of Cassandra's stuff.

The guys look at each other. Whoa.

Fade out.

## **Scene 22 – Pauly makes an observation**

Jackson, Billy, Pauly, and Eddie are at Crispy's having a drink. They all look beat. The table is strewn with resumes and headshots of female vocalists.

Eddie is looking at pages of notes on all the girls. He throws it down on the table.

EDDIE

Up to me? I got to go with that, uh, Deirdre.

JACKSON

Me too.

BILLY

Me three. I mean, she has Cassandra's thing down to a science. To me, she nailed it, man.

And...

He pokes his finger into onto the audition notes for emphasis.

Check this out... .. Am I trippin' or does she sort of look like Cassandra, which is, like, a bonus.

EDDIE

Dude, I was thinking the same thing. Somethin' about the eyes.

PAULY

And the boobs.

BILLY

Pauly, you're such a jerk.

PAULY

(Innocently)

What'd I say? Can't I make an observation? And what about the attitude on her, that mouth? Madon. (pronounced: Mah – dohne)

JACKSON

Yeah, she's got some mouth on her, alright, but when she opens it to sing, stand back.

EDDIE

We got no time to screw around, boys. We're on a plane to DC in two weeks.

He lets this sink in.

EDDIE

Should I call her?

Pauly looks around for peanuts.

PAULY

Does it bother anyone else that she looks like she's fourteen?

BILLY

I think she's gorgeous and her voice is killin'. I don't care if she looks like she's twelve. The chick kicks ass.

JACKSON

Yeah, I got to go with Billy. Hell, let's go after the Miley Cyrus demographic. Our fan base could use a little face lift.

PAULY

You mean your fan base could use one, don't you?

Billy and Eddie look at Pauly.

EDDIE

Jesus, you are becoming a prick. What is up with you?

Jackson looks at Pauly, and keeps his eye on him as he speaks to Eddie.

JACKSON

Make the call, Eddie.

They nod.

PAULY

You know, you boys are becoming so sensitive, so delicate.

He does a little mock effeminate dance in a circle.

PAULY

Is this a rock band or my Grandma's Mah Jong club?

He picks up his drink and moves to another part of the club. As he walks away, we can just hear him say:

Pussies.

Jackson, still looking at Pauly, gets up from the table.

JACKSON

I'll catch up with you guys, later.

Billy and Eddie leave. Jackson walks over to Pauly, who is, once again, stuffing himself with peanuts and throwing the shells on the floor.

Jackson looks at this for a second, then shakes his head.

JACKSON

Gee. Is the circus in town?

Pauly doesn't look up.

JACKSON

Time for your noon feeding, Dumbo?

Pauly ignores him. He is fuming about something. He keeps shoveling in the peanuts. Suddenly, Jackson snatches the basket of peanuts out of his hands and throws it against the wall as hard as he can. He puts everything about his situation into this; Cassandra's accident, Bobby, the blank spaces in his life where gold records used to be, it all goes against the wall with the basket.

The basket explodes onto a dart board like a bomb. Shells and husks float down all around Jackson and Pauly, who are framed in a tableau, the fluttering husks are followed by a greasy white paper basket liner, which drifts down last, like a little parachute.

A few other patrons look at them briefly and then resume their conversations, unfazed. Apparently, this sort of thing is not entirely out of place in this establishment.

Jackson sits down in the booth opposite Pauly.

JACKSON

I am gonna fuck you up in about two seconds (if) you don't tell me what's goin' on.

PAULY

(Offended.)

What do you mean?

JACKSON

You know exactly what I mean. You're antagonizing everyone. You're drawing attention to yourself at the exact time when you should be blending in with the scenery. So, tell me what's going on, and I mean right now.

Pauly pauses, gives a world-weary sigh, and reaches for his drink.



PAULY

Alright. I'm sick of it. I'm sick of the whole scene. I've been starving and bleeding for Rock and Roll on two coasts, now. I'm tired of being treated like shit by club owners and record company mooks. I'm tired of sliding amplifiers through the back doors of greasy kitchens to get to the stage. And... And... I am sick, to the point of death, of The Clairs. I've had it up to here with the phony new age psychic bullshit. It's a con. I'm tired of duping the rubes that fall for this crap. I'm tired of being a shill for Cassandra and Eddie and fucking Billy. And now, they want me to climb back up on the same bankrupt bandwagon and start beating the drum all over again? Please.

JACKSON

Are you telling me you can't keep your shit together for two more weeks? What do you think the point of this exercise is? Do you think we're just winding our watches here? (pauses.) Look. I don't care what your thing is. Playtime is over. Everything is on the line. Promise me right now you'll pull it together or that's it.

Pauly squints at him, then picks up the drink again.

PAULY

Oh, really. That's what?

JACKSON

Or I'll have you replaced. All it takes is one all to my guy. I'll ship in a pro from Dover. He'll just show up at the wedding. He'll be one of roadies and nobody will be any the wiser, Ollie.

PAULY

Is that right?

JACKSON

That's right.

Pauly stands, leans over the table, and gets up in Jackson's face.

PAULY

My friend, some of us know which way the wind is blowing and some of us...

He pokes Jackson in the chest.

...some of us couldn't find a shit storm with a flashlight and a map.

Pauly leaves.

Fade out.

### **Scene 23 – The Tune Up**

It is a week later. The Clairs are onstage at Crispy's doing a tune up performance in preparation for their wedding gig.

Deirdre is singing Cassandra's solo on a tune of Eddie's. It has an edgy, aggressive, punk feel that fits her personality perfectly:

#### **Don't Be So Nice**

DEIRDRE

“You and me been keepin’ company for a long time  
Every day, we have less to say.

When I ask what is wrong you say nothing at all”.

She looks back at Billy and he responds with a great drum fill, lifting the energy of the tune into the chorus.

(chorus)

“Don't be so nice  
Don't be so nice  
Why don't you tell the truth, tell the truth  
For the first time in your life?

Don't be so nice  
Don't be so nice  
What don't you tell the truth  
About what's on your mind?”

She pulls the mike out from the microphone stand and begins to prowl down toward the lip of the stage, picking out guys from the audience, singing to them, taunting them. It's hot.

A look passes from Eddie to Pauly to Jackson. They nod, knowing that something interesting is happening with this new singer, something unexpected.

DEIRDRE

(verse)

“I know you got a girl or two on the side, now  
I can see that you don’t want me  
When I ask what is wrong you say nothing at all

(chorus)

(bridge)

And it’s all there for any fool to see  
The handwriting’s on the wall for you and me”

(chorus)

The song ends. The night is over. The audience filters out. Billy is on the drum riser, breaking down his cymbals. Deirdre comes back to him. She is standing on the stage left side of the riser, watching him out of the corner of her eye as she retrieves her purse and sips from a bottle of water.

BILLY

Dee, that was great. You killed it.

DEIRDRE

Glad you dug it, man. I got some serious Keds to fill.

BILLY

If she were here, she’d be the first one comin’ across the room tellin’ you how good it was.

DEIRDRE

Really?

BILLY

Yeah. I know Cassandra.

Deirdre gives him the once over as he’s packing his stuff up.

DEIRDRE

So, what are you up to, now?

BILLY

Nada.

She lets a moment go by.

DEIRDRE

Then, how about buying a substitute chick singer a drink?

#### **Scene 24 - Hook up Numero Dos**

Later that night. Billy and Deirdre are at Billy's apartment drinking white wine on the couch.

Their faces are illuminated by five candles on a big coffee table in front of the couch. Incense fills the air. It could be a scene from 1968.

On the floor in the corner, there is an old, fold out portable phonograph, which is playing a Ravi Shankar album.

The phonograph has a two inch speaker imbedded in its side. Ravi Shankar sounds like he's playing his sitar in the men's room down the hall.

BILLY

I actually wanted to be an artist, but I could never quite manifest what I saw in my mind onto the canvas. It came out all stilted, like a cardboard copy of the Taj Mahal instead of the real thing. So, I stopped painting and got into the drums. Drums are visceral, down to earth. I needed something that would root me to the earth plane. Then, when I was 17, a friend helped me to see that I had the sight, not a huge amount, not like Cass, but enough to know that if I nurtured it over time, something good would happen. And Cassandra's helped me with that. God, I hope she pulls through. I don't know what I'd do without her.

He lets this settle into the air a bit.

And so, what about you Dee? What's your story? Boy, far as the Clairs are concerned, you sure floated out of the sky at the right time.

DEIRDRE

Oh, well you know, it was kind of the same thing for me. I was such a dork in high school. It was my older sister who turned me on the fact that I had the gift.

BILLY

You have a sister? Tell me about her.

DEIRDRE

(changing the subject.)

Hey. Let's see how good you really are.

She takes off her shoes. She moves closer to him. Sits cross-legged in a half lotus position, facing him on the couch. Their knees are touching.

DEIRDRE

Close your eyes.

He does. So does she.

DEIRDRE

What am I thinking about?

Billy scrunches up his forehead. He's really concentrating.

BILLY

I'm picking up...Mayan cultural vibes. You're thinking of...Mayan Astronomy.

Pause. He peeks at her with one eye open. Deirdre shakes her head "no."

BILLY

Alright. I was a little off. Uh, let's see...Egypt, you're going back to Egypt. You're...projecting your awareness back to a previous life in The Land of the Pharaohs.

Deirdre shakes her head "no" again. Billy looks a little deflated.

DEIRDRE

Here's a hint. It rhymes with "Why doesn't he shut up and kiss me?"

BILLY

(looks at her quizzically)

Would that be a rhetorical question?

She pounces on him.

Fade out.

**Scene 25 - Pizza, Beer, and Aliens**

Close up of Cassandra. She is lying on her back, still in a coma. Her breathing is regulated by the machine, which beeps and whirs.

Pull back to reveal Deirdre. She is sitting at the left side of the bed facing Cassandra. She has her back to the door leading to the hallway.

She is wearing the Ganzfeld gear. Her eyebrows are pooched tightly forward as she concentrates. A bead of sweat breaks out at her hairline and drips down to her right eyebrow.

Cut to her internal trance state. We see her surroundings from her POV. She seems to be in a foggy environment. She is sitting on a wooden bench of some kind, but it's shifting beneath her weight, back and forth.

Through the fog, she can just discern an identical bench ten feet away across a clearing. She seems to be in a forest. There is no one in the other bench. She speaks internally to Cassandra:

DEIRDRE

Cass. Cassie. Come on, sis. I know you're trying but you have to try harder...I need you here...Time is running out and I need to know what you know.

Perhaps because she is unable to make contact with Cassandra internally, she begins to speak aloud, although she is unaware she is doing it.

DEIRDRE

Remember when we would hide in the closet when Dad came home drunk. You told me you would never leave me, that you would always protect me. It's the only thing that could get me to stop crying. I'm not gonna let you break that promise.

She starts to cry. Deep, hacking sobs as she remembers her childhood, which was rife with neglect and abuse. She takes out the ping pong balls and takes off the phones and reaches for a box of tissues. She becomes aware of a presence. Someone is standing behind her. She turns in her chair.

It is Jackson. He is still and mute as a statue. In his right hand, he holds a bouquet of flowers.

Deirdre is furious at this intrusion.

DEIRDRE

How long have you been standing there? Don't you have any manners?

Jackson moves around the foot of the bed to the other side of the room. He takes yesterday's

flowers out of a vase, drops them into a trash basket, and replaces them with the new ones.

JACKSON

Nice to see you, too, Dee. Yes, they are lovely. Yes, it was thoughtful of me to bring them.

He turns and faces her.

JACKSON

How's that for manners? And how stupid of me not to have guessed. I had an inkling, but I couldn't put it together.

DEIRDRE

What are you planning to do, Jackson?

Jackson shrugs.

JACKSON

I don't know. Couple of beers? Pizza. The History Channel Report on Ancient Astronauts. I love that one.

DEIRDRE

You can lose the smart ass, right now. Or I'll play you her phone message to me. The last thing she said before the unscheduled trip to Starbucks was "He and his little friends are planning to--" And somehow, I don't imagine that sentence ends with "create a foundation for starving children."

She spits out every word like it's a pebble she's throwing across the room.

DEIRDRE

So, what are you and your little...friends...planning...to do?

Jackson throws a tray off a chair and sits.

Deirdre moves out of her chair, comes around the bed and sits on it, facing him in the chair across from her. She leans in to him.

DEIRDRE

Look I don't care what you got goin' on. All I know is what my sister's voice sounded like. She was furious, furious and scared. So here's the deal. You love my sister?

He looks at her. He wasn't expecting this.

DEIRDRE

Speak up, Sherlock, do you love my big sister?

JACKSON

(Retreating into his typical sarcastic stance.)

Deirdre, someday, I know, you will get over this shyness. You will come out of your shell and really speak your mind.

Deirdre will not be distracted by his bullshit.

DEIRDRE

'Cause here's the deal. You keep your nose clean and your boys in line and we make it through this gig with no problems, and when my sister comes out of her coma, and trust me pal, she will. (Pause). When she comes around, I will go to bat for you and I'll get you out of the doghouse, Mr. Good Dog.

(He snorts, derisively)

DEIRDRE

Conversely, if you start some shit, when my sister wakes up, you're on your own. You think I got a temper? Man you don't even--

JACKSON

Excuse me...Pardon me...If you're about to deliver a lecture on the subject of Cassandra's temper, I might be able to save you the trouble. I have a busted phone, a ruined shirt, and a TV set at the bottom of a pool that stand as artifacts and mute witness to your sister's temper, thank you very much.

DEIRDRE

If you think--

JACKSON

And, if you feel, welling up within you, a discourse on the nature of good and evil, morality, and man's place in the universe, you can skip that, too.

He's beginning to get angry, for real. His poise and his pose are slipping.

JACKSON

Look at me. I been around the block in this business twenty times before you could pull yourself up to the rail of your crib. I did my best. I had a life. And now I got a bunch of empty frames on a wall where my life used to be. So don't lecture me, Dee, and don't tell me what to do.



The look on her face is clear. She's not budging and she's not buying it. We see a shot of his face. And we can tell he's seen that look before, on the faces of a fading parade of former girlfriends. Then, his expression changes. He's gonna do what he always does in this situation. He gonna tell some pretty lies to get through it.

His tone softens. He manages a little laugh.

JACKSON

Alright, Uncle! I give.

He jumps up and does a little jig. He hoped this would get a laugh, but no.

JACKSON

It was just some shit we were foolin' around with over beers, one night. Me and Pauly. We figured the Senator's probably got some cash in an office, somewhere. you know, so, we'd slip away at some point and...It was stupid, stupid and we dropped it. So, chill out.

Deirdre softens her tone a bit. She wants to believe this. She wants to believe something.

DEIRDRE

Serious?

JACKSON

Yeah. Dumb, huh? Dumb late night Rock and Roll drunk talk.

DEIRDRE

Well, I've heard that before.

JACKSON

And it was over with the light of day.

DEIRDRE

You swear? You're tellin' me the truth.

JACKSON

That's it. Promise.

Pause. He tries to arrange the flowers, ineptly. Deirdre comes over to the vase, pushes his hand away, and begins to arrange them tastefully.

JACKSON

So, join me for Pizza, beer and Aliens?

DEIRDRE

Can I bring Billy?

JACKSON

By all means. He'll love the program. The boy's practically an honorary Alien, himself. See you back at Chez Beal.

Jackson leaves. Deirdre looks at Cassandra.

DEIRDRE

He's full of shit, Cass. But that's the best I can do, right now.

Fade out.

### **Scene 26 – Some Heavy Shit**

The following night, late. Deirdre and Billy in his apartment. The candles and the incense are going. Ravi's on the phonograph in the corner.

They assume the same configuration on the couch in which we found them at the end of Scene 25. Deirdre is sitting in the half lotus position facing Billy.

Billy is smoking a joint. He is a little high. He holds it out to her. She shakes her head "no" and waves it away. We have joined them in the middle of a conversation, one that has affected Billy.

DEIRDRE

That's all I know, and now you know it, too.

There is a long pause. Billy exhales and shakes his head.

BILLY

Whoa.

DEIRDRE

Yeah.

BILLY

Whoa, Dee. That's some heavy shit.

She puts her hand under his chin. Lifts his face up a little bit so he is compelled to look her in the eye.

DEIRDRE

It gets heavier.

He looks very uncomfortable. He is not in his comfort zone.

DEIRDRE

Look, I didn't want to drag you in to this, but let's face it, you're in it already. Whatever those two are really planning do that night is gonna change all our lives forever. And we won't be goin' to Disneyland. Whatever it is, I can smell it from here, and it's bad.

Billy is squirming in his seat, now.

DEIRDRE

Now, the reason I'm tellin' you this, Billy... Listen to me. I need you to focus. Look, put that shit down.

She grabs a joint out of his hand and stubs it out.

DEIRDRE

The reason I'm telling you this is I need help and you're the only one in the world who can help me.

This sobers him up completely. The specter of acting like a responsible adult totally blows his high.

DEIRDRE

The reason I can't reach Cassandra with Ganzfeld is she is hurt and she can't contact me clearly like she usually does. This means I need to go deeper into trance to get to where she is and I can't do it, myself. I need you to Ganzfeld me and give me the prompts so I can go really deep.

He nods.

BILLY

Of course, Dee. Of course I will.

She gives him a hug.

Fade out.

### Scene 27 - Billy and Dee Dee and Ganzo 3

Later that night. Deirdre's in a chair in the Ganfeld gear. Billy is in a chair facing her. His eyes never leave her face. He's been waiting for her to emerge from the trance for quite a while.

The Ravi Shankar record continues to play on the little phonograph on the floor in the corner.

Deirdre's head is slumped to her chest. She appears to be in a deep sleep. Suddenly, she gasps for air, jumps to her feet and throws the phones down. She jumps up so hard, the needle on Billy's phonograph scrapes across the face of the record and bangs off the spindle.

Billy jumps, up startled. Deirdre pulls out the ping pong balls and throws them down. She stumbles to the couch, falls on it, sobbing. He goes to her. Kneels down. Touches her shoulder.

BILLY

Dee Dee. My God. What? What happened in there?

She looks up, sniffs, grabs a tissue, smiles weakly at him.

DEIRDRE

I couldn't see her, but I could hear her. It was like a bad cell phone connection. Billy, It's gonna be OK. She told me not to interfere with Jackson and Pauly.

Billy is taken aback. This is a surprise.

BILLY

But you said, unless we--

DEIRDRE

I know what I said. But Cassandra told me it's being handled at a higher level. Her exact words: "at a higher level." All you and I have to do is play our parts.

He winces. He's not sure he wants to hear what comes next.

BILLY

Which is what?

She smiles at him, knowingly. He looks back at her with a look, like: Uh oh, what am I getting into?

Fade out.

### **Scene 28 – Julie’s Wedding**

Exterior shot of the Jeffries mansion at night. It is the night of Julie’s wedding. Guests arrive in limos and sedans, which wend their way up a circular drive and deposit them at the front door.

Paparazzi are held back behind ropes on three sides by security guards with ear pieces in their ears. The cameras click and flash, click and flash.

Shot of the rear entrance. A van pulls up. The side doors open. The Clairs get out, dressed in all their Rock and Roll finery. A security guard hustles them into the back entrance while talking loudly into a walkie-talkie.

SECURITY GUARD

I got ‘em. Walkin’ em through, now.

Shot of the interior of the back entrance – The Clairs are being rushed through an industrial sized kitchen. They thread their way past a riot of frenzied cooks, through clouds of steam and the whirl of blenders churning up foire gras.

They are sliding on the greasy floor as they dodge a half-dozen frantic waiters who are blasting in and out of the double doors at the end of the room.

Deirdre is wearing high heels and a kind of punk, deconstructed formal gown, a style my niece would call “Angry Ballerina”. She’s a bit out of practice in the heels. She almost goes down as she hits a grease spot, but Billy reaches out and scoops her up. She gives him a giggle and a grateful smile.

Cut to:

### **Scene 29 – It’s Our Time, Now**

The Clairs are onstage in a large Georgian style ballroom which has been transformed into performance space. They are bathed in light from two spotlights operated from the rear of the hall. At the rear of the stage, computer controlled automatic lights (called Go Bo’s) flash and change configuration in a pre- determined program that goes with the music.

The dance floor is jammed with young couples, at the center of which is the Bride and Groom. He grabs her waist, leans her way over to the left and plants one on her, in the classic style of that famous photo of the sailor and the girl in Times Square on V-E day.

The crowd roars its approval at the kiss. Confetti and balloons cascade from the ceiling.

Deirdre is ranging back and forth across the stage and looking like a caged panther in her black on black “Angry Ballerina” frock. She speaks to the audience:

DEIRDRE

Before we do our next number...before we do our next number...can we send some love out to Cassandra, who couldn't be with us here, tonight?

Big round of applause. Scattered shouts of “We love you Cassandra” “Get well soon, Cassandra.”

DEIRDRE

Thank you. Cass needs your love and your prayers. Thank you so much.

She looks back at Billy. He points at her with his drumstick. He's ready, ready for their final tune and ready to do his part with whatever comes next.

DEIRDRE

Alright, then. This is for you, Julie and Pete. We wish you all the best, and everything wonderful that life has to offer. It's your time, now.

The band begins the intro. Deirdre sings.

### **It's Our Time, Now**

DEIRDRE

(verse)

“If you give all you can,  
And I give what I am,  
We'll win.  
It's our time, now.

Just hold on with both hands  
and nothing can stand in our way.  
It's our time, now.

(Bridge)

When things get rough,  
We'll all hang tough.  
It's our time, now.

(verse)  
If life is worth living,  
it's worth giving all that you got.  
It's our time, now"

### **Scene 30 - Come to Daddy**

As the song ends, we fade up on an overhead shot of the ballroom.

It is past midnight. The light from the chandeliers has been dimmed. There is pin drop silence in the room, which is filled to capacity with everyone huddled around a chair, which has been placed in the center of the dance floor.

Deirdre is seated in the chair wearing the Ganzfeld gear. She is slipping into the trance state. Billy gives her the second prompt and her head drops to her chest.

JULIE  
(in a hushed whisper to Pete)  
Pete, it's happening.

She looks at him with tears in her eyes.

JULIE  
Honey, I'm gonna hear from Grandma. I just know it.

He draws her close to his chest. They look back at Deirdre.

Ominous music begins.

Cut to Cassandra, lying in her hospital room. We hear the whir of the life support machines. Camera moves in close. Her eyes flutter beneath closed lids. Rapid eye movement. Music modulates a bit higher.

Cut to Deirdre in the gear in the chair back in Washington. Her eyebrows are knitted, once again, with the effort of focusing her will. And, once again, a single bead of sweat forms at her hairline and drips down to her right eyebrow. Unexpectedly, we see a little smile play at the corner of her mouth.

We cut to Pauly and Jackson moving quickly up the stairs from the foyer to the upper floor.

They slip into the Senator's office. Jackson quietly closes the door. Pauly moves to the desk, turns on the computer. It boots up.

Jackson walks to the other side of the room, sits in a couch which faces the desk.

We see Pauly seated behind the desk in the Senator's chair. The laptop is in front of him. We see his face suddenly illuminated with the light emanating from the computer, which is now fully booted and ready to go.

PAULY

Yes.

He goes to work, clicking away at the keyboard.

PAULY

Now...come to daddy, you bitch.

He is so intent on what he's doing that he doesn't notice what happens next. Jackson is still seated on the couch. Suddenly, his eyes roll back up into his head. His eyelids droop closed and begin to flutter rapidly. Music once again modulates higher.

Cut back to Cassandra. We see her eyes flutter beneath their closed lids, again.

Cut back to Deirdre. Same eye movement.

Cut back to Jackson. He begins to tremble, slightly. His breathing becomes rapid and shallow. Then, he slumps to his right. He is out cold. Through the combined thought power generated by Cassandra and Deirdre he has been induced into a trance.

### **Scene 31 – Two Paths Diverge in the Wood**

We cut to a full screen shot of Jackson's face. He is asleep in a sitting position. His face seems to be moving closer, then farther away, closer, then farther away.

Camera pulls back to reveal that he is sitting in an old fashioned wooden swing. This explains the forward and backward motion of his face.

The swing is suspended by chains that are anchored high up in a very old oak tree. The swing has a slotted cane back. It could seat at least three people.

He opens his eyes. He is looking at something, straight ahead of him. He smiles.



Camera shifts to his POV. What he is looking at is Cassandra. She is seated twenty feet away, in an identical swing under a nearly identical oak tree. She is dressed in the clothes she wore on the cover of “The Clairs: the Ghostess with the Mostess,” that is, she looks like Stevie Nicks.

This is the clearing and the “benches” that we saw, dimly, when Deirdre was trying to contact Cassandra internally in her hospital room in scene 25. Now, though, there is no fog. We see everything clearly.

Cassandra is still, physically, in a coma back in L.A. She has joined Jackson in this little bucolic scene, internally.

They sit for a moment, both rocking gently back and forth. We realize that the swings are swinging themselves.

We hear a gentle rising of sound, a gradual crescendo like somebody is turning up the sound on a TV next door. We hear wind through the leaves and animal calls.

The camera reveals that we are in a beautiful forest, at sunset. It could be an old forest in Germany, but, unexpectedly, we see occasional splashes of tropical color, improbably bright exotic plants. And mixed in among the usual woodland creatures you would expect to find in a European forest, we see tropical fauna as well, brightly colored parrots, monkeys, Macaws.

JACKSON  
(ever the smart Alec)

Honey.....you never told me you had a sister.

CASSANDRA  
She’s a cutie, isn’t she?

JACKSON  
She’s a pip. Where are we, Cass?

She gives this a little bit of thought.

CASSANDRA  
We’re somewhere else.

JACKSON  
What’s going on?

CASSANDRA  
We’re at a trial.

He is suddenly on the defensive.

JACKSON

But, I haven't done anything yet.

CASSANDRA

Not yours. Mine.

JACKSON

What have you done?

CASSANDRA

It's what I am about to do that matters.

JACKSON

Where are the judges? Where is the jury?

CASSANDRA

They're here. We don't have the eyes you need to see them, but they're here.

Both swings, seemingly on their own, stop swinging at the same time. She walks across the mossy clearing and sits next to him on his swing.

We see the forest in front of them from a little above and behind them both as they sit on the swing. The clearing ends in light brush a few feet beyond the oak tree beneath which Cassandra was sitting.

We see there is a path that leads out of the clearing. Twenty feet beyond the clearing, the path diverges into two paths that gently separate and lead to two different parts of the forest. Both paths are dusted with what appears to be brick red oxide sand. It glows faintly with a burgundy colored light which emanates from somewhere beneath the ground.

We see Cassandra and Jackson from behind, seated on the swing. She lifts her right arm and points beyond the clearing to where the path diverges into two.

CASSANDRA

In two minutes, I have to get up and walk down one path or the other.

JACKSON

Two minutes? They got time up here. Up here in "somewhere else"?

CASSANDRA

Yeah. But it's measured in a different way. Listen.

She shifts her weight. She takes his hand.

CASSANDRA

If I take the path to the left, I'll wake up in my hospital bed with a headache and a sore throat and I'll be yelling for cigarettes and martinis a few minutes after that. If I take the path to the right, then...

JACKSON

(He gets it.)

Oh. Oh, baby. No...no

He can't hold back his tears. She touches the back of his neck.

CASSANDRA

Honey, I need you to listen. I only have time to say this once.

He straightens up. He's gonna be a good soldier, damn it.

CASSANDRA

If you do what you're planning to do, I gotta go... I gotta go there.

She points to the path the right. As she points to it, our vision of it and the surrounding forest seems to slip like a skip in a DVD. Then, it slips back into focus.

CASSANDRA

If you stop...if you can stop it, I get the cigarette and the martini and the headache, which is apparently gonna be a doozy. (pause) They want me to tell you something else. I'm supposed to have a kid in about two years. The kid is supposed to be special, special in some way that's important.

JACKSON

Our kid?

She shrugs. She doesn't know.

He nearly breaks down. Then, he straightens up. He looks at her.

JACKSON

Cassandra, I killed Bobby. I killed my Bobby to get in the band to get there tonight.

And now he does break down. When he recovers, he looks at Cassandra.

CASSANDRA

I know.

JACKSON

You do? How do you know?

Allows herself a little smart Alec moment, too.

CASSANDRA

I'm the Ghostess with the Mostess. I know things.

He looks at her.

She gets serious, again.

CASSANDRA

They told me. They told me a little while ago.

Jackson looks up at the overhanging branches of the oak tree. He sees a Koala who is sitting about ten feet up and scratching himself. The Koala stops and stares back at Jackson.

JACKSON

I always thought that, once you put certain things in motion, there was no going back. I've always been stubborn like that. But this, this...

CASSANDRA

You might not believe it, but somehow...at sometime...everything gets put right, again. The worst, the absolute worst stuff gets put right again. If not, how could things go on? They couldn't, honey.

JACKSON

I didn't think it was possible for me to feel for anyone what I feel for you, Cass. I have to tell you that, in case things go wonky down the line.

Cassandra takes his hands.

CASSANDRA

(tenderly)

I know, baby.

Suddenly, he remembers.

JACKSON

Jeez. Pauly. What's Pauly doing?

CASSANDRA

He's bangin' on the computer like it's a slot machine, baby. You gotta go.

JACKSON

Can I...can I watch you walk away? Just to be sure you're cool.

She nods. She rises. She kisses him on the cheek.

CASSANDRA

Bye, baby. I love you.

She walks away before she has a chance to break down. He watches her take the path to the left. Another blip on the screen, then it re- focuses, then the burgundy light on the sand begins to fade. She disappears into the forest.

JACKSON

(murmurs to himself)

That's my good girl. That's my good girl.

He calls after her. He can't resist:

JACKSON

You know, your sister's a pain in the ass, too!

Then, he looks up at the Koala again and murmurs to himself.

JACKSON

"If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly."

He speaks directly to the camera.

JACKSON

Act I, Scene VI. You can look it up.

### **Scene 32 – The Pro From Dover**

Cut to Deirdre in the chair back in the ballroom. We are back in the present, in real time. No time has elapsed while the last scene played out in the forest. Deirdre's head involuntarily jerks sharply to the right.

Cut to Jackson on the sofa up in Jeffries' office. He wakes with a start.

JACKSON

Huh! Oh...oooh.

He rubs his forehead. He's coming around. Pauly looks up for the first time.

PAULY

What, did you fall asleep? And here, I'm doin' all the work. Some guys got it easy.

Jackson rises and walks over to Pauly, slowly.

JACKSON

Pauly.

He doesn't hear him, too intent on the final steps of the download.

JACKSON

Pauly!!

PAULY

Take it easy, man. I got it. I'm there.

He hits a button.

PAULY

Bingo!

Shot of the computer screen. We see a massive download of files onto a disc that Pauly plugged into the side of the laptop.

JACKSON

Change of plan, man. We walk.

Pauly finally focuses on him.

PAULY

What?

JACKSON

We can't do this, man. It was never a good idea. Let's go.

PAULY

You're joking. You're pullin' my chooch, right?

Pauly stares at Jackson.

PAULY

You got, like, five seconds to tell me you're joking.

With a loud whir and click, the disc is ejected from the front of the computer. Pauly grabs it. Jackson is around the front of the desk in a flash. He grabs Pauly's hand.

PAULY

Have you lost your freakin' mind? Get offa me! Get the hell offa me!!

He pushes Jackson hard. Jackson bangs off a bookshelf. A vase with some cut flowers falls off the shelf, hits the floor, shatters.

Pauly reaches inside his coat, pulls out a black automatic pistol.

JACKSON

My. My. Aren't we clever.

PAULY

Amazing what will fit into the guts of a synthesizer. Move over there and sit down. School's in session.

He motions with the pistol. When Jackson is seated, Pauly speaks.

PAULY

Did you really think I would trust you, you washed up freak? I had a feelin' you wouldn't have the guts to go through with this, and so did Rudy, by the way. Yeah, he got in contact with me, so I'm pullin' the strings, now. I'm the pro from Dover, so just be a good boy and maybe there'll still be some Tastycakes in this for little Jackson.

Cut to a shot of Jackson. Slowly, he gets to his feet.

Pauly is alarmed at this. He has the gun, but Jackson has 30 pounds and four inches on him.

PAULY

Hey, Count Jerkula. What'd I just say? Sit back down.

JACKSON

Since schools in session, allow me to contribute a couple of fun facts, Pauley. Fun fact number one: Did you know I did Bobby?

PAULY

How 'bout that. I had an idea.

JACKSON

Yeah. I did my friend so I could get here do this. Only thing, I can't stand to shave my own face in the mirror, anymore. Fun fact number two: You shoulda sprung for a silencer. That shot's gonna sound like a cannon bouncin' off this exquisite walnut paneling.

Pauly snickers at hm. He grabs a cushion off a chair and puts it in front of the muzzle of the gun.

PAULY

Too bad for you, genius. Now, what was that you said in the studio that night? Oh, yeah: "No last words?"

JACKSON

Naw. Just a piece of advice.

He drops the sarcastic pose and looks him straight at him.

Shot of Pauly. He doesn't like the look in Jackson's eye.

JACKSON

First thing you learn in a bar fight. Never back a guy into a corner who's got nothin' to lose. Check this shit out.

He lunges forward. Pauly shoots him twice in the chest. The shots knock him back three feet against the door to the office. Feather stuffing from the pillow explodes into the room like confetti when Pauley shoots through it. It floats down onto both of them in wispy, white puffs.

There is a little blood coming from the corner of Jackson's mouth. He manages a weak smile at Pauly, fumbles for the door handle, then he's outside.

Pauly is dumbstruck. He just stands there with the gun.

Jackson reaches the top of the stairs, trips, rolls all the way down.



Two women at the bottom of the stairs look up from their conversation, martini glasses in hand. They scream at just about the same time.

Four black suited Secret Service agents appear, immediately. The first two bound up the stairs. They don't even glance at Jackson, who is sprawled on the third and fourth stairs of the staircase. The third one stands over him with his gun pointed directly at his forehead. The fourth one is patting him down for weapons.

Cut to the office. Pauly is lying face down on the carpet. A Secret Service guy has his knee in his back. Another one is wrenching his hands behind his back and putting zip cuffs on his wrists.

Cut to the living room. It is bedlam. The guests are being hustled from the room out onto the street by a battery of secret service guys. We hear the sirens of EMS trucks in the distance.

Two Secret Service guys stand over Jackson, who is sprawled on his back, coughing up blood on a very expensive Sarook Persian carpet.

Billy and Deirdre run in, run over to him. The guards look at each other. One nods to the other. They let the kids go to Jackson.

### **Finito - Scene 33 – The Bridge of Souls**

Jackson is dying. Deirdre and Billy huddle over him.

Jackson looks up at Deirdre. He smiles, weakly.

JACKSON

I told your sister what a pain in the ass you are.

DEIRDRE

What did she say?

JACKSON

(coughs) She said you're a cutie, (coughs) which is also true.

His face contorts with pain. He suddenly becomes delirious. He seems to be fumbling with imaginary buttons on his chest.

JACKSON

Deirdre. Get this offa me. Don't let me die with this thing on.

Deirdre closes her eyes. She is going internally where he is, seeing what he's seeing. She opens

them. Billy gives her a confused look. Deirdre starts to cry, then wills herself to pull it together. She straightens up.

DEIRDRE

Billy, would you help me, please? I think this button is broken.

She mimes undoing imaginary buttons down Jackson front. What's happening is, Jackson, in his delirium thinks he is wearing The Devil's Raincoat again, as he was in the Macbeth scene during the Ganzfeld Experiment.

He is expiring quickly.

Just as she is doing this, we dissolve from a shot of her fingers undoing imaginary buttons to a shot of a girl's hand undoing real buttons on the Devil's Raincoat.

We see a scene is playing out "on the other side," simultaneously to Jackson dying on the floor of the Senator's house.

Jackson is sitting, once again, on the swing beneath the oak tree. He looks a bit confused. He is surrounded by the three Poodle girls still dressed like the three Weird Sisters from Macbeth. They are attending him with a kind of ritual formality, like ladies in waiting. They draw him up to his feet. They remove the Devil's Raincoat in the way that squires might divest a knight of his suit of armor.

One of the girls throws the filthy coat into the woods. Instantly, three jackals appear, snarling and spitting. They rip it to shreds, fighting over it. Still ripping and fighting over it, they scamper back into the forest and are gone.

We hear the orchestral introduction to "The Dream Palace."

Bobby walks into the clearing from the path on the right, the one that goes to the afterlife. Floating around him in the air are the eight gold records Jackson had to hock. Bobby is smiling. He sees Jackson's bewildered expression as he watches the records float towards him.

BOBBY

Oh. Yeah, man. It's cool. Sometimes, you get stuff back.

Bobby and the girls lead him into the path on the right. After walking for awhile, they go down a little embankment and come to a river. There is a small wooden boat with a mast in the center of it tied off to a little tree by the bank. The boat looks like the rollercoaster car that was shaped like a dinghy in Jackson's dream. It is white with an anchor painted on the front of either side in blue trim.

BOBBY

This is as far as we can take you. We got to catch a ride. You need to get

to the other side of the river.

JACKSON

What's there?

BOBBY

I don't know.

Jackson steps into the boat. Turns back to Bobby. There passes a look between them of forgiveness on both sides, of a kind of unstated reconciliation. Jackson addresses Bobby with a line from Macbeth, spoken to Banquo earlier in the play, before the treachery occurs, spoken at a time when they (Macbeth and Banquo) were still friends:

JACKSON

"Give me your favor".

BOBBY

(with a smile)

"Very gladly".

JACKSON

"Good repose the while"

BOBBY

"Thanks, sir. The like to you".

Bobby and the girls turn around and begin to walk back into the forest.

Jackson steps into the boat. He seems comfortable in it. He grew up on the Jersey shore. He finds a sail folded and stowed under the seat. He attaches it to a lanyard and runs it up the little mast.

It is the striped umbrella from the picnic table in his backyard. The rip is still there.

He looks under the seat, again. He finds a whale bone needle and a spool of mariner's thread.

Slowly, he begins to mend the hole in the umbrella, closing it up, stitch by stitch, so that the umbrella will act as a sail to get him across the river.

Jump cut to the rollercoaster. The Carny guy is ascending the stairs, once again, just as he did in the dream sequence in the opening scene. We see him from behind.

Cut to a close up of Jackson's hands. His left hand pulls the two halves of the umbrella together. With his right hand, he gives a sharp tug on the whale bone needle and pulls a stitch tight.

Cut to the Carny guy's back, still coming up the stairs. As we hear the sound of Jackson's stitch pull closed on the sail, we see the seam that holds the sleeve to the left shoulder of the coat pulls apart. The sleeve drops slightly. We can see his shirt through the gap between the sleeve and the shoulder of the coat.

Farther down the staircase, we see Bobby ascending it, followed by the three girls.

Close up, once again, of Jackson's hands. He pulls another stitch tight.

Close up on the side of Bobby's head, which still bleeds slightly from the wound inflicted on him when Jackson hit him with the bottle. As he moves up the stairs, we hear the sound of Jackson pulling another stitch closed on the umbrella. At the same time, we the wound heal and close up on Bobby's head. The dried blood around it disappears.

Cut to Jackson. He pulls the final stitch tight. The tear is fixed. As soon as the final stitch is in place, a brisk wind comes up, filling the sail. The boat lurches off the mooring and sails across the river.

He disembarks and walks into the forest. He sees a bridge in the forest in the middle distance. No river runs beneath it, just the mossy forest floor.

From out of the forest emerges a line of disembodied souls, floating two inches above the ground. They form a procession and approach the bridge. Jackson takes his place in line. He draws nearer to the bridge, which glows phosphorescently in the twilight, like it has been painted by George Seurat. Jackson closes his eyes as he moves forward. His thoughts go to Cassandra.

JACKSON

Bye, baby. I love you.

Jump cut to Cassandra. She has come out of the coma and is sitting up in her hospital bed in the wee hours of the morning. We see rain coming down outside her window.

She has on headphones and ping pong balls over her eyes. We see tears dripping from under the ping pong balls and moving down her cheeks. She silently forms the words "Bye, baby. I love you."

We hear the intro to "Baby, you," which plays as underscore for the final scene. We hear Jackson sing:

## **Baby, You**

JACKSON

(verse)

“If I have anything in this world that’s mine,  
There is one thing I know that’s true  
That the last thing on earth I could leave behind is you,  
Baby, you  
Baby, you”

Jump cut back to the forest. We see the procession of souls in the distance, moving toward the bridge. We are looking over Cassandra’s shoulder. She is hiding behind a tree, watching the procession as it floats by.

We hear Cassandra sing the next verse:

CASSANDRA

“And when they open the book at the end of time  
And they see what my life went through,  
the best thing in there they could hope to find is you,

Baby, you  
Baby, you”

Flash back to scene 13 – The Hook up

Jackson and Cassie are back on her couch the first night they were together. Jackson is pouring wine. We can’t hear him speak but we know he is telling the rollercoaster story. He gestures with his hands, describing the arc of the coaster as it moves into the final curve. Jackson and Cassandra sing the chorus together:

JACKSON AND CASSANDRA

(chorus)

“‘cause you’re all I got  
You’re all I got  
You’re all I got to show

You’re all I got  
You’re all I got  
You’re all I got to show  
I was here.”

Jump cut to twelve year old Jackson in the rollercoaster. Bobby and the girls are in the back seat. It is a few moments after Bobby slapped Jackson's head in Scene 16 coming into the final curve.

The coaster comes to a stop. Little Jackson can't release the safety bar. Bobby jumps out. He goes to the carny guy, who looks like he's been expecting him. The carny guy is wearing The Devil's Raincoat. Bobby offers him a cigarette. After they light up, Bobby pulls out a roll of bills.

**BOBBY**

Nice coat. What'll you take for it?

The carny guy reaches out, takes the roll, slips it in his pocket. Stubs out the cigarette. Pushes a lever under his podium. The safety bar on the kid's car releases with a hiss of steam and a rusty groan. The kid jumps out, runs down the stairs, crying.

The carny guy leaves. The sisters join Bobby on the platform. One of them produces a can of lighter fluid from her purse. Another takes out a lighter. The girls start down the stairs. Bobby douses the coat with fluid. Lights it on fire. Tosses it into the front seat of the car. Leaves.

Shot of Bobby and the three girls walking in the sunset away from the rollercoaster. They stroll along the Seaside Heights Boardwalk. They stop at a cotton candy concession. Bobby holds up three fingers. The guy begins making cotton candy for the Poodles. Close up of the pink cotton candy whirling around in the glass case. It whirls faster and faster.

Pull back. We're looking through the cotton candy case, back toward the rollercoaster. We see the Rollercoaster in flames, set against the night sky. The flames are reflected in the ocean, which is still as a pond.

Pull back farther. Little Jackson is about thirty feet away, standing in front of a roulette wheel concession on the Boardwalk. He's watching the ride burn. The roulette wheel behind him begins to spin, though no one is there in the booth. Little Jackson isn't crying anymore. His face is calm. We see the flames from the burning ride reflected in the corneas of his eyes.

Jumps cut to Jackson's eyes back in the forest. He steps onto The Bridge of Souls. We look ahead at the souls in the procession in front of him. As each one reaches the end of the bridge, they begin to float up into the sky.

We see Jackson face as he approaches the end of the bridge. In a moment, it will be his turn to go.

We see him smile. He is thinking of Cassandra, again.

Shot of her in the hospital bed. She has taken off the earphones and the ping pong balls. She no longer needs them. Once again, she mouths the words "Bye, baby. I love you."

Shot of Cassandra behind the tree, looking at the procession drifting up into the sky at the end of the bridge. Jackson has reached the end of the bridge. We hear him sing the final verse of "Baby, You." :

JACKSON

(verse)

"So, if you ever decide to forgive the past  
As you look back on the life you knew,  
Maybe your smile will come back  
When you think of me and you  
Baby, you  
Baby, you

Shot of Cassandra's face, illuminated by the sunset. She comes out from behind the tree. We track her eyes. They are filled with tears. She smiles through the tears. Her head rises. Reflected in her eyes, we know she is watching Jackson float up into the sky. He has made it. His soul is ascending.

Jackson's voice is joined, once again, by Cassandra's as they sing the final chorus:

JACKSON AND CASSANDRA

"'cause you're all I got  
You're all I got  
You're all I got to show

You're all I got  
You're all I got  
You're all I got to show  
I was here.....here with you."

She says, one last time, and this time we hear her:

CASSANDRA  
`Bye, baby, I love you.

The end