

"80's NIGHT"

DEAD BY MIDNIGHT

written by

Adam J. Nadworniak

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Address

Phone

E-mail

1. INT. MILLHAVEN HIGH - HISTORY CLASS - AFTERNOON

Rows of seniors in fluorescent purgatory. On the board: PANIC / MEDIA / MORALITY.

MR. CRANE (40s) finishes a lecture. A ketchup stain on his tie like an accidental kill.

MR. CRANE

Every generation panics about something. Comics, rock, video games.

(eases into it)

Eighties horror? Slashers? Garbage... or mirror?

He scans for hands. JESS STILES (17) is already halfway up. ZOE, KAYLA, TIFF, MIA clock it.

MR. CRANE (CONT'D)

Ms. Stiles. Please don't get me fired.

JESS

Horror isn't rot. It's rehearsal. We practice being scared so we're less useless later.

ZOE

(aside, dry)

We remain useless.

KAYLA

Professionally.

MR. CRANE

Counterargument: gore desensitizes.

JESS

Counter-counter: avoidance desensitizes. Horror is empathy calisthenics.

(beat)

Plus practical effects build character.

MIA

(to camera app)

I'd like to subscribe to this newsletter.

TIFF
Do you accept Afterpay?

MR. CRANE
And the phones—?

ZOE
Romans had coliseums. We just have
better angles.

Bell shrieks. CHAIRS SCRAPE.

MR. CRANE
Essays Monday. And Ms. Stiles— no
citing DVD extras.

JESS
Then I'll cite my soul.

She grins. They spill out.

2. INT. MILLHAVEN HIGH - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Locker slam symphony. Spirit Week flyers: FRIDAY THE 13TH -
TONIGHT.

The five drift in a practiced V-formation.

MIA
Millhaven Horror Society check-in.
Share your red flag.

ZOE
Sarcasm as love language.

KAYLA
Carbs as coping mechanism.

TIFF
Men named Tyler.

JESS
Cinema. Diagnosed.

A JOCK shoulders by.

JOCK
Touch grass.

ZOE
Touch a book.

KAYLA
Touch soap.

TIFF
Touch therapy.

He peels off. Victory.

MIA
So. Menu tonight?

JESS
Analog feast. Beta tape entrée.
Aesthetic side of tetanus.

ZOE
I'm full on dread.

They share a look: same joke, same family.

3. INT. MILLHAVEN HIGH - LIBRARY NOOK - LATER

A hidden corner: dusty plants, banned book display. Jess lays out a velvet cloth (it's actually a sweater) and presents a battered Betamax cassette. Masking tape label:
THE BABYSITTER MASSACRE (1984) - LOST CUT (WORKPRINT)

MIA
Counterfeit.

KAYLA
Hexed.

ZOE
Hot.

TIFF
Litigation.

Jess pulls out a beige rotary phone, cord coiled like a snake.

TIFF (CONT'D)
Oh wow, a murder Frisbee.

JESS
Prop-correct. Potentially the
phone. At minimum: same model, same
year, same juju.

KAYLA

And we're... plugging that into a wall?

JESS

Into the fabric of the night.

A beat. They're in. Zoe's mouth tilts: of course.

4. EXT. MILLHAVEN - DINER - MAGIC HOUR

Neon EAT hums. Pumpkins in windows. They cram a booth.
WAITRESS (50s), diet sarcasm.

WAITRESS

No fake blood on the seats.

MIA

Only authentic tears.

ZOE

And cash tips.

WAITRESS

I like you today.

Menus slap down.

JESS

Tonight: grindhouse trailer. Then workprint. No phones, no "elevated horror" discourse.

KAYLA

I identify as lowered standards.

TIFF

I identify as atmosphere.

MIA

I identify as content.

ZOE

She identifies as a cautionary tale.

WAITRESS

Storm's coming. If the lights die, blame Reagan.

ZOE

We do anyway.

Sodas arrive. Fry mountain arrives. Life is momentarily solved.

MIA
Warm-up: top Final Girl.

KAYLA
Nancy. Girlboss booby traps.

TIFF
Gale Weathers. Power bob.
Journalism.

ZOE
Sidney. Trauma but make it cardio.

JESS
Laurie. Blueprint. Knife before
nuance.

They clink. A quiet shared look lingers on Jess. She's glowing.

ZOE
You okay?

JESS
I get happy when art threatens me.

KAYLA
Diagnostic criteria updated.

Thunder mutters far away.

5. EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DUSK (WALK & TALK)

Leaves hiss. A dad battles tangled lights.

DAD
Curfew at ten.

ZOE
(to Jess)
He thinks we're curfew girls.

JESS
We're myth girls.

They pass a plastic skeleton in a yellow slicker.

KAYLA
Gorton's Corpse-man.

TIFF
Breaded in hubris.

MIA
Would watch.

ZOE
You will.

6. INT. JESS'S HOUSE - ENTRY/HALL - NIGHT

Cozy suburban. Family photos. Thunder now a real thing.

Shoes off. Bags down.

JESS
Garage is theater. Concessions à la
panic.

MIA
My brand.

They move deeper.

7. INT. JESS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - THE SHRINE

Posters (Halloween, Elm Street, Shocker), bootlegs, enamel pins, a replica hook on a stand, a cardboard standee of a slicker slasher. Shelves sag under tapes.

Jess clears space on the desk and thunks the rotary down.

TIFF
Museum of red flags.

JESS
Library of context.

KAYLA
Gift shop of tetanus.

A Polaroid on the mirror: the five at a much earlier movie night, baby faces, cheap costumes. Jess straightens it.

ZOE
You keep that like it's cursed.

JESS
It's proof.

ZOE

Of what?

JESS

That I wasn't always wrong.

Beat. Zoe files that.

The rotary dial gives a tiny click settling. No one notices.

8. INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - SNACK MONTAGE (EXPANDED)

- Kayla discovers Capri Suns like treasure.
- Tiff ices cupcakes R.I.P. with cruel calligraphy.
- Mia labels containers: GORE-CHATA, BLEED-O-NAISE, NECRO-NACHO.
- Zoe salts popcorn like she's hexing an ex.
- Jess lines up a box fan, VHS head cleaner, and a roll of duct tape like a surgeon's tray.

TIFF

If we die, bury me cute.

MIA

Bury me trending.

KAYLA

Bury me horizontal.

ZOE

Bury him. Whoever "him" is.

JESS

Him is structure.

They laugh. The storm taps the window with skeletal fingers.

9. INT. GARAGE - NIGHT - MICRO-CINEMA (EXPANDED)

A CRT on an AV cart. Betamax deck. Thrift speakers. Beanbags. A whiteboard at command center.

Jess wheels in the rotary on a milk crate, posts it by the deck like an altar.

JESS (CONT'D)

Behold, conduit.

ZOE

Behold, liability.

She writes: THE 80s NIGHT DRINKING GAME and prints rules with ceremony:

1. Drink on "Who's there?"
2. Double on dropped keys.
3. Finish if cops arrive late.
4. Sip for tracking lines / tech glitches.
5. Chug for bad decisions.
6. CHEKHOV'S AXE = celebration shot.
7. "It's probably nothing" = eye-roll + sip.
8. Heavy breathing pre-attack = sip.
9. Fake-out cat = finish snack.
10. DON'T HANG UP.

KAYLA

Rules eight through death.

TIFF

I love a values system.

MIA

I love a lawsuit.

They settle into nests. Cozy, dumb, invincible.

10. INT. GARAGE - LATER

Lights go low. The CRT glow owns the room.

Jess holds the Betamax like a sacrament.

JESS

For anyone who ever felt safer when
the monster stayed on the screen.

She feeds the tape. WHIRR. Tracking lines crawl.

ON TV - LEADER

3 ... 2 ... 1 ...

GRINDHOUSE TRAILER detonates:

- RACHEL (19) in mom jeans, umbrella shredded.

- HOOK scraping wood.
- Radio DJ yammering about prank calls.
- Title: THE BABYSITTER MASSACRE (1984)

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 She took the call... now it's off the
 hook!

The girls groan-laugh.

ZOE
 Cocaine's WGA credit.

MIA
 Local 666.

Jess is rapt - too rapt.

KAYLA
 Hey. Earth to Jess.

JESS
 I'm good. I'm... happy.

A soft beep from inside the deck - a test tone - slips past them.

The trailer freezes on Rachel clutching a phone. It smash-cuts to black, then a flicker: WORKPRINT stamped in the corner.

11. ON TV - 1984 OPENING SHOTS (ADDED TEXTURE)

Rachel locks a deadbolt. Chain. Checks windows. Lightning pops white-blue.

She passes a fire axe on a wall bracket. Lingers.

A tiny TV in the corner plays a monster movie on mute. She switches it off; the room gets louder.

She picks a rogue kernel off the carpet and laughs at herself.

RACHEL
 Get a grip.

The wall phone sits like a totem.

12. INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Zoe points at the axe on screen.

ZOE
Chekhov cameo.

KAYLA
We manifest an axe in every room.

TIFF
Manifest me an exit.

MIA
I'm manifesting ad revenue.

Jess scoots the rotary an inch closer to the CRT. The coiled line catches glow.

ZOE
Can we not put the cursed object
center stage?

JESS
Ambience.

ZOE
Ambience is a gateway drug.

The dial ticks once. Nobody clocks it.

13. ON TV - 1984 KITCHEN / RADIO

Rachel flicks on lights. Turns up the radio.

DJ (V.O.)
Storm advisories... landlines acting
up across Millhaven. Keep your
lines open, folks-

The word "open" bends and warps like someone pressed a finger on tape.

She turns the knob. The warble stays. She turns it off. The warble stays.

A beat. She shrugs it off.

14. INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

The group refines the whiteboard: Tiff doodles a tiny Hookman in the corner. Kayla adds "Drink if someone asks 'Whose there?'"

ZOE
Whose there?

KAYLA
Grammar homicide. Drink.

MIA
(to camera, mock serious)
If found footage taught us
anything, it's that we deserve
this.

JESS
Shh. First ring's coming.

They half-laugh it off — then listen.

15. ON TV - 1984 LIVING ROOM / FIRST RING

Rachel's hand hovers near the wall phone as if it's magnetic.

RING.

She flinches. Hand retreats. The phone RINGS again.

She lets it ring out. Looks proud of herself.

16. INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

ZOE
Yes, queen! Subvert that trope!

They raise cups. The box fan shifts a degree louder on its own.

MIA
We got AC poltergeist.

KAYLA
Millhaven's finest.

Jess writes SUB-RULE A: "We stay on speaker." SUB-RULE B: "We don't split up."

ZOE
We will absolutely split up.

JESS
We'll do it beautifully.

A gentle pressure change bellies the garage door inward. Rain taps stronger.

17. ON TV - 1984 UPSTAIRS SWEEP

Rachel ascends barefoot. Synth thump heartbeat.

She checks the kids - JOSH (8) and EMILY (6) - sleeping lumps. She tucks them with expert tenderness.

Closet door sits ajar. She nudges it. It creaks open an inch again.

She pushes harder. It stays shut. For now.

RACHEL
Night, monsters.

She moves on.

18. INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Mia frames the TV in her phone for a cheeky story. In the phone's reflection, Rachel sits on the garage floor among them.

Mia blinks. Looks behind her - empty.

MIA
Fun.

TIFF
No.

ZOE
We pick no.

Jess's eyes shine. She hears something none of them do.

19. ON TV - 1984 LIVING ROOM - THE CALL

Rachel stands center room. Decides to be brave. Lifts the receiver.

RACHEL (ON PHONE)

Hello?

Her voice comes out of the CRT — and out of the garage speakers, a whisper of bleed.

The beige rotary on the crate RINGS.

Once.

Twice.

They all freeze. Jess is the only one who moves.

She hits SPEAKER on the base.

JESS

(soft)

Rachel?

Rachel flinches on screen. Turns toward the "sound."

RACHEL (ON TV)

Who is this?

ZOE

(whisper)

You did not just—

KAYLA

We're stupid. We're so stupid.

The line deepens, wet and warm:

HOOKMAN (PHONE)

You'll be dead by midnight.

Lightning blows the room white.

The garage lights die.

Breathing in the dark. Someone's can hisses open by accident. Someone stifles a laugh that's actually a sob.

JESS (in dark)

Nobody hang up.

CUT TO BLACK.

20. BLACK / SFX (BUTTON)

In darkness: the storm's rumble, the rotary's low dial tone bending into something that's not a dial tone.

Zoe whispers like a prayer you say with middle fingers.

ZOE (O.S.)
We're so dumb. I love us.

21. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - NIGHT (LIGHTS OUT → COMING BACK)

Pure black. The storm breathes outside. We hear breaths, a nervous giggle that's not meant to be a giggle.

A click. The bare bulb hums to a low, sickly life. Dim now; cozy not cozy anymore.

They're all still in their spots, but bunched closer without meaning to. The CRT holds paused static, the WORKPRINT watermark faint.

ZOE (CONT'D)
Okay. New rule: we don't
acknowledge that, or the universe
escalates.

KAYLA
Fully subscribe.

MIA
Also liking and sharing.

TIFF
Can we... put on a lamp or six?

Jess crosses, turns an extra clamp light to bounce against the garage wall-warmer. The light catches all the taped-up posters and Jess's careful chaos.

JESS
We good?

ZOE
Define "good."

KAYLA
Alive-adjacent.

MIA
I'm measuring my heart rate in
nachos.

Rachel (on the frozen TV image) is mid-breath, mid-fear, mid-life. The phone cord across her wrist like a vein.

They all look at her. Then avoid looking.

TIFF
We could... take five.

ZOE
Take... what? Courage? New pants?

MIA
Bathroom break. Group policy:
nobody pees alone.

KAYLA
I veto bonding activities.

JESS
Guys— it's us. It's just us.

Beat. They all meet her there.

JESS (CONT'D)
I want the vibe back. We earned it.
This night is supposed to be
stupid. Please let it be stupid.

That lands like an apology no one asked her for.

ZOE
Then... we go back to stupid.
(gestures)
Play?

Jess nods. She doesn't press play yet. She looks at them.
Really looks.

JESS
We okay on snacks?

KAYLA
Carb-positive.

MIA
Hydration-negative.

TIFF
Emotionally retail therapy.

ZOE
Educationally doomed.

JESS

Good. I love us when we're accurate.

She presses PLAY. The tape coughs forward. Static becomes rain.

They re-settle, letting themselves be kids again for one more minute.

22. INT. GARAGE - LATER (THE LULL)

Same scene, ten minutes later. The movie plays low. The storm has become a metronome.

They're sprawled differently now: Tiff with a cupcake half-eaten but still Instagram-pretty; Mia with a notebook actually jotting a list; Kayla lying on her back, eyes on the rafters; Zoe crisscross applesauce, chin on fist; Jess perched on a crate, queen of a cardboard kingdom.

MIA

Okay. If we die tonight— purely hypothetically for engagement— top five horror deaths?

ZOE

You're building content off our obits.

MIA

I diversify revenue streams.

TIFF

We're in the garage of a girl who alphabetizes terror. Respect the hustle.

KAYLA

Top five deaths:
 (one finger)
 Decapitation via impractical farm equipment.
 (two)
 Liquid nitrogen face smash.
 (three)
 Laser grid cube sushi.
 (four)
 Bee swarm— poetic.
 (five)
 Ghost cat. Death by allergies.

ZOE

You are not allowed to write wishes
in the air.

MIA

I want mine to be surprising but
narratively satisfying.

TIFF

Mine will be hot.

ZOE

Mine will be preventable. On brand.

They laugh. The movie murmurs on: Rachel drawing curtains, a
wind scream.

JESS

Okay, okay— better prompt.
(glances to them)
Origin story. Why horror?

Groans. Eye rolls. They answer anyway.

MIA

You know mine. Final Girl YouTube
sucked me in. I stayed for the
community.

TIFF

I started with costumes. Stayed
because the plots are pettier than
me.

KAYLA

I pretended for a crush. Then the
crush left and the movies stayed.

ZOE

My mom. She bartended nights. She'd
come home wired and we'd put on
trash and talk like we were smarter
than it.

(beat)

She was smarter than it.

The group goes quiet a respectful second. Zoe shrugs like she
didn't say anything.

They all glance to Jess. She knows it's her turn.

JESS

I...

(tries to keep it simple)

(MORE)

JESS (CONT'D)

It makes noise when the world goes quiet.

(beat)

And it tells you what to feel when you can't feel anything yet.

That opens the door to a silence no one bolts. The room breathes with them.

KAYLA

Okay, now I want the monster back.

They laugh. Not mean. Grateful for the pivot.

MIA

Addendum: if I die—

(points at Zoe)

—clear my browser tabs.

ZOE

Too late, I already monetize your shame.

TIFF

If I die, bury me in something with pockets.

KAYLA

If I die, it's because I ran out of snacks.

JESS

If I die—

(she smiles)

—you have to finish the movie.

They boo like she said something corny. Maybe she did. Maybe it's perfect.

23. INT. GARAGE - WHITEBOARD CORNER (MICRO-SCENE)

Close on the whiteboard: rules, doodles, the tiny Hookman sketch wearing a party hat.

Zoe uncaps a marker, writes under DON'T HANG UP:

RULE 11: WE DON'T LEAVE ANYONE ALONE FOR ANY REASON.

ZOE (O.S.)

Contractual.

Kayla draws a little axe next to "Chekhov's Axe."

Mia adds "DRINK IF SOMEONE SAYS 'THIS ISN'T FUNNY'" in the margin.

TIFF (O.S.)
I'm adding "NO OUIJA." I don't do
dead group chats.

JESS (O.S.)
I love us like this.

We hold on the board like it's the real spell they're casting.

24. INT. GARAGE - SNACK ISLAND (MICRO-SCENE)

Mia and Tiff replenish drinks. The storm underlines the clink of ice.

MIA
For the record, if we live, I'm
cutting this together and calling
it "We Outsmarted a Slasher With
Snacks."

TIFF
For the record, you can't upload
trauma without my glam time.

MIA
You always look glam.

TIFF
I woke up like this— but I still
approve filters.

They clink cups. It's little, but it's love.

Across the garage, Zoe and Kayla are picking at stale licorice.

KAYLA
Did you and Jess... fight? Earlier?

ZOE
We don't fight. We... orbit different
suns.
(beat)
She's just... all in. On everything.
It's admirable and exhausting.

KAYLA
She's a dog with a VHS bone.

ZOE
She's a person.
(then, soft)
A really good one.

They both glance at Jess— who's watching the movie like she's praying.

25. INT. GARAGE - SAME (GROUP DRIFT)

They all end up back in their spots. Jess finally lets herself relax. The room feels like a fort.

JESS
Okay. Group quiz.
(announcer voice)
Which trope are you?

ZOE
Cynical voice of reason who still
dies in act two.

KAYLA
Stoner who outlives everyone
through luck and snacks.

TIFF
Friend who looks amazing while
tripping and then secretly saves
you.

MIA
Camera kid who knows when to stop
rolling.
(beat)
Maybe.

They all look at Jess.

JESS
Archivist who actually believes.
(then)
I know. Eye roll. But somebody has
to catalog the apocalypse.

Zoe smiles despite herself, shakes her head.

ZOE
You're ridiculous.

JESS
I'm curated.

A long beat where the movie's soundscape takes center: radio whispering weather, Rachel washing a dish, the squeak of a window latch.

The rotary dial ticks once. It sounds like a mouse heart.

No one moves. A few shiver, but not from the cold.

KAYLA

Tell me I didn't hear that.

ZOE

We are not acknowledging the universe.

MIA

I'm acknowledging nothing. Except I have to pee.

TIFF

Buddy system.

Mia and Tiff look around the garage. There is no bathroom.

MIA

House house?

JESS

Go, but together. No strays.

ZOE

Text if the mirror does the thing.

KAYLA

Text if a clown pops out of a cabinet.

MIA

I'll text "unfollow."

They head for the door.

26. INT. JESS'S HALLWAY / BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS (SLOW, NATURAL)

Dim house. Storm-washed lamplight leaks in through blinds. Mia and Tiff pad quietly, on tiptoe by instinct.

TIFF

I hate this hallway when it's quiet.

MIA
I hate that you said that while
we're in it.

In the bathroom, Mia flips the light. It flickers. Not supernatural—just old.

Mia does her business. Tiff pretends not to listen to the most human sound on earth.

TIFF
So— Zoe and Jess.

MIA (O.S.)
They love each other. It just
scares them to say it out loud, so
they use sarcasm as a condom.

TIFF
That metaphor belongs in prison.

MIA (O.S.)
So do we.

Flush. Faucet. The mirror sits there like a dare. Tiff avoids it consciously; Mia catches that and smirks.

MIA (CONT'D)
Look.

TIFF
No.

MIA
Look.

They both look.

It's just them.

TIFF
We win.

MIA
Ten bucks something blinks when we
leave.

They back out, facing the mirror like it's wildlife you don't turn your back on.

In the hall, the family photos are a gauntlet— Jess at five, Jess at ten, a missing dad in a few, a mom who exists when she can.

A photo of Jess with a boy a few years older—an arm around her at a Halloween porch. It looks like a brother; it looks like a past.

TIFF
I always forget she had—
 (stops herself)
—has... a lot.

MIA
We all do.

They stand there a second longer than they need to. The storm gives them cover.

27. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - SAME TIME (LENGTHENED, QUIET)

Zoe and Kayla alone with Jess and the TV. The movie has Rachel in a kitchen, carefully turning every light on.

KAYLA
You okay?

JESS
Define "okay."

ZOE
She means: are you going to burn
down the town with love if this
tape disappoints you.

JESS
It won't.

Beat.

JESS (CONT'D)
...It can't.

Kayla sits up. Zoe watches Jess with that mix of fondness and concern reserved for siblings in everything but blood.

KAYLA
What happens if it does?

Jess considers that. She doesn't have a clean answer, so she offers a true one.

JESS
Then I still have you.

That quiets the air in a warm way.

ZOE
Gross. Friendship. Vomit emoji.

KAYLA
I'm allergic.

They grin. The movie gives them a gift: Rachel muttering to herself in 80s sincerity.

RACHEL (ON TV)
It's fine. You're fine. It's just the storm.

ZOE
Drink. Rule eight- "It's probably nothing."

They sip sodas. It's almost a spell.

The rotary clicks again- slightly louder, like a frog in the throat. The girls hear it this time and choose not to move.

KAYLA
How do you have a prop that... makes noise?

JESS
Metal settles. Springs breathe. Old things—all they do is remember how to be alive.

ZOE
And sometimes try again.

Jess leans forward, elbows on knees, eyes on the grain. She speaks softly, to the TV or to herself.

JESS
Come on, Rachel. Be smarter than your script.

Onscreen, Rachel's hand hovers over the phone.

KAYLA
Call that manifestation.

ZOE
Or narcissism.

JESS
Same hat.

Footsteps. Mia and Tiff return, a little more relaxed.

MIA
We peed without summoning a demon.

TIFF
We think.

ZOE
Show me.

TIFF
No.

They all laugh—the last pure, unbroken one of the night.

The storm rolls in closer, like a stagehand pushing a backdrop.

On the TV, in that cozy, wrong living room, the phone begins to ring again.

Rachel's eyes close for courage. She lifts the receiver.

Everyone in the garage leans an inch forward, subconsciously.

We stay with them longer than we need to, letting the scene be human, letting the silence before the voice become a character.

RACHEL (ON TV / ON PHONE)
Hello?

A breath across two worlds. Not the Hookman's yet. Just her—alive, afraid, brave.

Jess doesn't touch the rotary. Not yet. She lets Rachel be alone for three heartbeats.

It's beautiful.

RACHEL (ON TV / ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
If this is a joke, I'm not laughing.

Zoe lifts her drink. Soft, ritual:

ZOE
Rule eleven.

They all take the smallest sip. Together.

Hold on their faces as the sound between worlds changes—like a station tuning itself.

28. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The girls stare at the TV.
 Rachel's on screen, the receiver pressed to her ear.

RACHEL (ON TV)
 Who is this?

The rotary phone on the crate gives a slow, lazy tick-tick.

ZOE
 Okay... did the prop just-

KAYLA
 Nope. We are not doing that sentence.

MIA
 Someone explain how old plastic makes noise by itself.

TIFF
 Ghost warranty expired in 1989.

JESS
 (quiet, awed)
 It's syncing. It's... tracking frame rate.

ZOE
 You're saying the VCR just connected to long-distance hell?

JESS
 Maybe. Or maybe this is the fun part.

The thunder outside cracks.
 Rachel on the TV jerks; she thinks the sound is in her world.

RACHEL (ON TV)
 Hello? Who's there?

The girls all laugh, on reflex.

MIA
 Drink.

They sip.
 But none of them really swallow.

29. INT. GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jess sits closer to the phone than anyone likes.
Zoe paces behind her.

ZOE
You're gonna pick that thing up and
unleash Comcast of the Damned.

JESS
What if it's part of the show?
Interactive marketing before
interactive existed.

KAYLA
That's literally your kink.

JESS
History? Yes.

MIA
Fine. If she answers, we all scream
in unison.

TIFF
Please no screaming. My hair is
humidity-fragile.

The phone RINGS.
Once.
Twice.
It sounds... real. Not TV-real.
Jess hesitates, then presses the speaker button.

JESS
Hello?

On screen — Rachel flinches, looks right at them.

RACHEL (ON TV)
Who... who is this?

A beat.
Then Zoe starts laughing nervously.

ZOE
Tell her it's Blockbuster, her late
fees are due.

JESS
(into phone)
Rachel? Can you hear me?

RACHEL (ON TV)
You're... not supposed to be here.

The storm flickers the bulb.

KAYLA
What does that even mean?

RACHEL (ON TV)
He said nobody's real after
midnight.

The line distorts — low feedback hiss, almost voices inside
it.

Jess kills the speaker. The hiss vanishes.

They all exhale like surf.

30. INT. GARAGE - MINUTES LATER

The group sits in a nervous semicircle.
Snacks forgotten. Phone silent. TV muted.

MIA
Okay, poll: we collectively
hallucinated that.

ZOE
No. We're too self-aware for shared
delusion.

KAYLA
We're also too sober.

TIFF
Speak for yourself.

JESS
It was her. I swear.

ZOE
Jess, it's a movie. She's tape.

JESS
And we're what-pixels?

That lands heavier than intended.

MIA
(laughing to defuse)
If we are, I demand better
lighting.

TIFF
And royalties.

KAYLA
And catering.

They manage real laughter.
The mood loosens just enough for Zoe to hit play again.

31. ON TV - THE BABYSITTER MASSACRE (1984)

Rachel moves through the dark house. Lightning flash. A silhouette behind her, gone.
The Hookman's shadow on wallpaper - brief, almost subliminal.

Radio static bleeds in:

DJ (V.O.)
Millhaven PD reports an escaped
patient from St. Mary's. Residents
should secure doors-

She clicks the radio off.

RACHEL (ON TV)
Too late.

32. INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

MIA
I love when exposition is literally
broadcast.

KAYLA
Drink for plot convenience.

ZOE
Wait-St. Mary's? That's our St.
Mary's. The closed one by the lake.

They all look at each other.

TIFF
Coincidence is my least favorite
genre.

JESS
Or it's meta geography. Maybe the
movie was shot here.

ZOE

Then explain why my ears hurt.

Thunder answers her.

33. INT. GARAGE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

They try to reset.

Zoe puts on an old radio under the CRT.

Tinny speakers play a half-static ballad - "Total Eclipse of the Heart."

KAYLA

Irony level: maximum.

MIA

The universe ships itself.

They hum along, soft, half-sarcastic.

Rachel on screen does the same thing as she tidies to the radio.

ZOE

Okay nope, she's singing our song.

TIFF

Jess turn that off.

Jess reaches for the radio knob-

Rachel reaches for hers at the same time.

Both radios click off together.

Everyone freezes.

KAYLA

I hate synchronicity.

ZOE

New rule: no more rules.

34. INT. GARAGE - SAME

Long, quiet beat. Only rain and breathing.

MIA

So we're just gonna pretend we didn't open a portal?

ZOE

Pretending is how adults survive.

KAYLA
What if we help her?

Everyone looks up.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
Like in the movie Frequency. We
tell her what's coming.

ZOE
Kayla, we can't save fiction.

JESS
Why not?

Beat.

JESS (CONT'D)
If she can hear us, she's real
enough.

TIFF
We barely survive real people.

MIA
But it's so on-brand. Meta-
activism.

They laugh, but nobody argues. Zoe picks up the rotary,
stares at it.

ZOE
Okay, Final Girls Anonymous. What
do we say?

JESS
Rule One. We don't hang up.

She presses the speaker again.

35. ON TV - RACHEL'S HOUSE / GARAGE SPLIT SOUND

Rachel walks past the phone again. It RINGS.
She picks up, eyes wide.

RACHEL
Please... just stop calling.

JESS (THROUGH SPEAKER)
Rachel. Listen to me. You need to
lock the back door. Now.

Rachel freezes.

RACHEL
Who is this?

ZOE
We're friends. From the future.
Just go.

RACHEL
You're crazy.

KAYLA
So are you. Lock the door.

Rachel glances toward the kitchen. Footsteps creak in the hall. She runs, slams the bolt.

MIA
Holy shit, it worked.

TIFF
We're life-coaching a VHS victim.

RACHEL (ON TV)
Whoever you are— thank you.

For a moment the worlds sync: Rachel looking at them, them looking back.

Then the feed warps. Picture smears. The rotary phone sparks faintly.

ZOE
Jess— unplug it.

JESS
Not yet.

The screen flickers white. A low hum rises — not thunder.

Jess leans closer, mesmerized.

Cut to BLACK.

Sound bleeds: a heartbeat, static, the storm turning electrical.

36. ON TV - 1984 LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The picture swims slightly. RACHEL (19) stands center room, bare feet planted, FIRE AXE in one hand, receiver in the other.

RACHEL (ON PHONE)
If you're real— prove it. Tell me
something only I would hear.

Her eyes flick to the mantle clock: 11:07.

37. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

The girls huddle around the rotary on speaker. Rain buzzes at the garage door like bees.

JESS
Josh's truck is in the upstairs
hallway. You trip over it every
time.

On screen, Rachel's mouth parts— surprise and fear sharing a face.

RACHEL (ON TV / ON PHONE)
How do you know that?

ZOE
Because set decorators are mean.
Also— turn on every light. Don't
leave shadow pockets.

KAYLA
And don't put your back to a
window. Please. We like you.

Rachel moves— flips on lamps. Her breath steadies because theirs is steady.

RACHEL
Okay. If you're from the future...
how does this end?

JESS
We don't let it end you.

A beat. Rachel swallows, nods like she can hold that line in her mouth.

She crosses to the wall phone, tugs the cord out to its limit so she can see the whole room. Professional now. Coaching works.

38. ON TV - 1984 KITCHEN

Rachel checks the back door bolt. A RADIO on the counter whispers back to life without being touched.

DJ (V.O.)
...escaped patient from St. Mary's...
described as wearing a-

The signal warps; the voice becomes multiple voices, some of them the girls', echoing half-phrases.

MIA (V.O., BLEED)
-don't hang up-

TIFF (V.O., BLEED)
-behind you-

Rachel claps the radio off. The whispers continue under the floorboards. She presses the heel of her hand to her ear.

RACHEL
It's like the storm is... talking.

39. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

The girls listen to the same under-voice bleeding through the rotary- their own words bouncing back delayed and bent.

KAYLA
I hate being my own jump scare.

ZOE
Stay on script. If the universe
starts quoting us, we're
influential.

JESS (into phone)
Rachel, list your safe zones. Out loud. Make the house obey you.

RACHEL (O.S.)
(front room. kitchen
sightlines. stairs if I
have to- not yet-)

Jess ticks each with a marker on the whiteboard like a coordinator at war.

40. ON TV - 1984 STAIRS / HALL

Rachel climbs slowly, phone cord taut. The kids' room door is closed now.

From behind it- a soft thump. Then a giggling hush that is not children.

RACHEL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
Emily? Josh?

No answer. She sets the phone on the hall table, picks up the axe two-handed, then-

- stops and picks the phone back up, tucking it under her ear.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
You said don't hang up.

JESS (V.O.)
Good girl.

Rachel flinches at "girl," then forgives it because the voice carries kindness.

She nudges the door. Creak.

41. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

MIA
We need a plan for if he's in there.

TIFF
Plan A: nope.

KAYLA
Plan B: Rachel runs. We guide. You don't fight the franchise monster in act two.

ZOE
Plan C: if we die, we were cool about it.

Jess is scribbling on the whiteboard:

Don't turn your back on doors

Corners = death

Windows = lies

Stay talking

She catches herself writing "I promise" and caps the pen hard.

42. ON TV - KIDS' ROOM

Rachel eases into the dark. The nightlight hums. Shapes in beds.

She crosses to Emily, touches her shoulder- the shape is pillows.

Josh's bed- blankets and a stuffed bear. No kids.

Rachel's throat tightens.

RACHEL (ON PHONE)

They're not here.

KAYLA (V.O.)

Closet. Check the closet-

Rachel yanks the closet door. Empty.

She drops to knees, looks under bed- just dust bunnies.

In the window reflection, a yellow slicker passes behind her then isn't there when she turns.

RACHEL

I saw him-

ZOE (V.O.)

He's using reflections. Kill the mirror angles.

Rachel lifts the nightlight and unplugs it. The hum dies. The room gets darker but the corners get honest.

She breathes easier in true dark.

43. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

MIA

She just got smarter than the DP.
I'm in love.

TIFF

We need to find the kids.

JESS

He's moved them for leverage. He wants the babysitter to break the rules.

ZOE

What rules?

JESS

His rules. The script he thinks he's in.

KAYLA

So we break his script first.

Jess nods, eyes on the screen like she can steer the frames.

44. ON TV - 1984 UPSTAIRS HALL / BATHROOM

Rachel edges into the bathroom. Medicine cabinet mirror gleams like a dagger.

We hold on it. She doesn't open it. She kneels, opens the under-sink cabinet instead- cleaning supplies, a first-aid kit. She pockets gauze and tape.

She pauses, looks at her reflection. The mirror breathes. Just once. She tilts her head, copies the breath, then turns away.

RACHEL (ON PHONE)

I'm not playing.

45. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

ZOE

Queen of not giving the movie what it wants.

MIA

Add it to the board: deny the montage.

TIFF

What about the kids?

The rotary hisses- a child's giggle flickers through the line like it's underwater.

KIDS' VOICES (V.O., BLEED)
 Rachel— down here—

KAYLA
 Basement. Of course.

ZOE
 Basement is a killzone.

JESS
 Or a bridge.

They don't love the way she said that.

46. ON TV - 1984 STAIRS DOWN / BASEMENT DOOR

Rachel descends to the landing. The basement door is ajar.
 Wet footsteps lead inside.

She reaches for the light. The bulb pops. Darkness.

RACHEL (ON PHONE)
 Talk to me so I don't hear him.

JESS (V.O.)
 We're with you. Hand on the rail.
 Three steps, pause. Breathe.

Rachel obeys. Step. Step. Step. Pause. Breath.
 Her breathing and Jess's cadence sync.

She reaches the bottom. The furnace grumbles like a beast.

From the dark: a child's hissed cry.

EMILY (O.S.)
 Rachel...?

RACHEL
 Emily? Answer me again.

EMILY (O.S.)
 (closer, wrong)
 Raaachel.

Rachel's hand tightens on the axe.

47. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

KAYLA
Nope. That's him.

ZOE
Rule: children in basements are
demons.

TIFF
Write it on the board twice.

MIA
Rachel, do not chase the voice. He
wants you off the phone.

RACHEL (V.O.)
I'm not hanging up.

The girls exchange a look: respect.

JESS
Find something that belongs to you.
Ground with it. Now.

48. ON TV - 1984 BASEMENT

Rachel crouches, one hand on concrete, patting in the dark—
— finds a Polaroid box. She opens it, pulls one— a lake day,
her hair wet, late sun. She's laughing at someone out of
frame.

She presses the photo to her chest; her breath slows.

RACHEL
Mine.

Something skitters to the left— she shifts, axe up—

The Hook punches through a shelf where her head was a
heartbeat ago— splinters spray. She ducks, smashes the hook
with the axe back, runs up the stairs two at a time, the
phone line stretching taut—

The cord catches. Yanks her back. She doesn't let go of the
receiver. She rips the base off its mount and drags it behind
her like a dead animal.

She reaches the landing, slams the basement door, throws the
deadbolt.

Silence but for her heart.

49. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

The girls cheer— then shut up because cheering feels like tempting the gods.

MIA
You just speedran a basement.

TIFF
That was cardio to watch.

ZOE
Status check— are we changing the movie or is the movie changing us?

Jess doesn't answer. She's busy scribbling TIME: 11:23 on the whiteboard, then MIDNIGHT in big block letters.

JESS
We have thirty-seven minutes to keep her alive.

KAYLA
And then what? Credits?

JESS
Or a breach.

They hate that more.

50. ON TV - 1984 LIVING ROOM / FRONT DOOR

Rachel staggers in, drags a chair under the front doorknob, braces it.
She turns— her own reflection in the picture window is off by a frame.

Her reflection smiles when she isn't. Then catches up.

RACHEL (ON PHONE)
He's changing the house.

JESS (V.O.)
Then we change the rules.

ZOE (V.O.)
Narrate everything. Like you're telling a friend where you are.

RACHEL

Front room. Phone on speaker. Axe
in hand. Windows closed. Lights on.
Breathing... still mine.

The hook taps the glass from inside the reflection— not in
the real room.

Tap. Tap. Tap.

The reflection tilts its head.

Rachel doesn't look away.

The tapping stops.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I'm not playing with you.

She puts the photo on the mantle— a ward.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I'm not hanging up, either.

We hold on her face as the score under the scene— a low synth
throb— starts to synchronize with the hum of the garage
lights, two worlds breathing together.

SMASH TO BLACK.

ON TV - 1984 LIVING ROOM / BASEMENT DOOR

Rachel sets the phone base on a table, breathing hard.
The lightning outside glows magenta-blue, that fake 80s
lightning that never existed in real life.
It washes her face in VHS fuzz.

She stares at the front door. Every pane of glass flickers
like it's trying to remember its reflection.
The hook taps from the outside again — slower, almost testing
her patience.

RACHEL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

I see you. I know what you want.

HOOKMAN (O.S., LOW)

You'll be dead by midnight.

His voice comes through the phone — distorted, deep.
The phone cord pulses like a vein.

52. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - SAME

The same magenta lightning flashes across the garage walls, momentarily coloring the 2025 world like it's trapped on film.

MIA

That was... our power grid or hers?

KAYLA

Both? Neither? Multiverse of dumbassery?

Jess stares at the rotary phone – it's not plugged in. The wall outlet is empty. The cord still glows faintly blue.

JESS

Guys...

ZOE

Please say you see that too.

TIFF

We all see the murder glow, yes.

The CRT flickers, image warping – Rachel's 1984 world leaking into the screen borders, bending the edges of the garage's reality.

ZOE

This is— oh god, this is literally Poltergeist.

KAYLA

Drink.

They all take a sip because the ritual is all that's holding them together.

53. ON TV - 1984 FRONT DOOR

Rachel stands inches from the door. Behind her, the house shifts – walls hum like deep speakers, colors flatten and oversaturate.

The kids' laughter drifts again, now echoing faintly in the garage speakers.

RACHEL

Leave them alone!

HOOKMAN (O.S.)

They hung up.

Rachel freezes.
She looks at the receiver — still live.

RACHEL
No... I— I didn't—

HOOKEMAN (O.S.)
You will.

54. INT. GARAGE - INTERCUT

MIA
He knows us.

TIFF
We gave him our voices. Through the
call.

ZOE
Jess, turn it off.

JESS
We can't. We're past "off."

The rotary phone vibrates across the crate, spinning its dial
by itself.

Each click echoes as if inside the garage walls.
Click. Click. Click.

A faint synth line hums up under it — Carpenter-esque,
minimalist, slow.

KAYLA
Oh good, soundtrack's awake.

ZOE
This isn't funny.

KAYLA
Drink.

They drink.

JESS
(quiet)
We crossed a threshold.

55. ON TV - 1984 STAIRWAY

Rachel edges down the hallway again, flashlight trembling. Each picture frame she passes shows something else: her friends, her parents, then the girls in the garage.

She stops.

In one frame, Jess is staring back at her through static.

RACHEL

Jess?

The voice comes faintly through the garage speakers – like surround sound.

ZOE

Okay, this is new.

JESS (into phone)

Rachel... do not hang up.

The walls behind Rachel pulse with stormlight.

RACHEL (ON TV)

Then tell me how to end this.

JESS

You survive it. You outlast the script.

56. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The girls watch, transfixed.

Mia starts recording with her phone.

Her screen shows them – but also Rachel standing behind them.

MIA

Okay... okay, we're officially haunted.

ZOE

Delete that.

MIA

What, delete the evidence?

The video glitches, snow flickering.

When it clears, Mia's screen shows the 1984 living room instead of the garage.

MIA (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

Jess grabs the phone, stares at it.

It shows Rachel's world — from Rachel's POV.

Jess touches the screen — the light ripples like water.

57. ON TV - 1984 HOUSE / GARAGE CONNECTION

Rachel's flashlight pans across her own living room.
For half a second, the garage appears in the beam — Zoe,
Kayla, Jess, staring through.

RACHEL
Are you still there?

JESS
Always.

The static hum grows louder, filling the air like pressure.

TIFF
Feels like altitude sickness.

KAYLA
Feels like God buffering.

The rotary phone rings again.
They all jump.

It rings a second time — this one sounds like it's coming
from inside the walls.

58. INT. JESS'S HOUSE - VARIOUS / INTERCUT

Quick cuts:

The upstairs hallway lights flicker to faded 80s yellow.

The kitchen calendar changes to OCTOBER 1984.

The TV in the living room powers on by itself — snow and
tracking lines.

The whole house is starting to look like an artifact from the
movie.

ZOE
Jess... your house is time traveling.

JESS
Good. Maybe it'll get to a better
decade.

MIA
You're really calm about this.

JESS
I've been waiting for something
impossible to happen my whole life.

ZOE
Cool. Maybe next time it can be
pizza delivery.

59. ON TV - 1984 KITCHEN / BASEMENT DOOR

Rachel's flashlight cuts out.
She taps it - flickers back in strobe flashes.
Each strobe: closer.
The Hookman.
Slicker dripping.
Hook glinting.
Standing in the doorway behind her.

RACHEL
Jess...?

JESS (V.O.)
Run.

Rachel swings the axe blindly. The light catches metal.
Sparks.

60. INT. GARAGE - INTERCUT

The girls watch like it's live sports.
They scream, cheer, wince - and then notice-

- Blood splatter appears on the inside of the garage screen.
It's not on the TV; it's on their side.

TIFF
That's not ours, right?!

ZOE
Do I look like a hematologist?!

MIA
Jess- the phone!

Jess looks at the phone.
Blood seeps from the seams of the rotary dial.

JESS
He's crossing over.

61. ON TV - 1984 FRONT ROOM / MIRROR WALL

Rachel backs up.
Every mirror now reflects the garage, not her house.
The girls see themselves reflected from inside the movie.

RACHEL (ON PHONE)
You said I had to stay on the line-

JESS
You do. You just have to last until
midnight.

ZOE
That's... what, fifteen minutes?

KAYLA
Thirteen.

TIFF
Unlucky number. Fantastic.

62. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - BUILDING TENSION

The storm outside peaks.
Rain blasts sideways.
The garage door rattles.
The CRT hums, screen shaking.

MIA
It's like it's sucking power.

KAYLA
Or building it.

Jess picks up the phone again.
Lightning flashes- her reflection in the screen wears
Rachel's face.

She drops the receiver.

JESS (whisper)
He's not coming out.
He's pulling us in.

63. ON TV - 1984 HOUSE / FRONT ROOM

Rachel spins toward the window.
 Outside - the same storm.
 But when the lightning hits, she sees the garage beyond her
 yard, like two dimensions overlapping.

RACHEL (ON PHONE)
 Jess! What's happening?!

JESS (V.O.)
 The worlds are syncing!

ZOE (V.O.)
 That's bad, right?!

KAYLA (V.O.)
 Define "bad!"

The phone cord whips violently, sparking electricity - the
 sound is identical to the thunder.

64. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The lights explode into neon white.
 Posters peel off the walls, curling like film stock melting.
 The air shimmers with that VHS heat haze effect.

MIA
 Jess- unplug it!

JESS
 It's not plugged in!

Zoe grabs her shoulder.
 Jess turns - half her face flickers into static, then snaps
 back to normal.

TIFF
 Oh my god.

ZOE
 You're glitching!

JESS
 We're all glitching!

The rotary rings again - louder than thunder.

JESS (CONT'D)
 Everybody- hold on!

65. EXT. JESS'S HOUSE - SAME (BREACH MOMENT)

Outside - the street is pure chaos.
Rain frozen midair like film stutter.
Lightning rips the sky open in a jagged VHS whiteout.

From inside the garage - a massive electrical explosion of light erupts through the windows, shaped like an old TV test pattern.

Then, silence.

Smoke.

A slow pan through the garage door as it creaks open...

Inside: the CRT still smoking.

The phone lies melted on the floor.

And two silhouettes stand in the haze - RACHEL (1984) and the HOOKMAN.

Both real. Both breathing.

CUT TO BLACK.

66. INT. JESS'S GARAGE - NIGHT (MOMENTS AFTER THE BREACH)

Smoke and static snow. The CRT hisses.

RACHEL (1984) stumbles forward, bare feet on concrete, clutching the fire axe.

Across from her, the HOOKMAN straightens, rain steaming off his slicker like he brought his own weather.

ZOE

He's in 4K. I hate this for us.

KAYLA

I hate bills, but sure, let's add murder.

TIFF

Jess...?

JESS steps in front of Rachel.

JESS

Hey, fisherman- welcome to modern horror.

She flings a socket wrench. The Hookman knocks it aside with the hook- clang.

MIA
Yeah he has DLC now.

RACHEL (dazed; to the girls)
You're... real.

ZOE
We get that a lot.

The Hookman lunges. Chaos explodes.

67. INT. GARAGE → KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

They bolt into the house. Jess slams the door— deadbolt,
chain—
The Hook's tip punches through the wood like a can opener.

JESS
Run-run-run—

RACHEL freezes at the counter, eyes locked on an iPhone
charging.

RACHEL
What is that?

KAYLA
Phone. Anxiety rectangle. You'll
hate it, we all do.

She snatches it, swipes. LOCKED. FACE ID REQUIRED.

RACHEL
It reads faces?

ZOE
Yeah, but it's shallow.

HOOKMAN (O.S.)
(through door)
Don't hang up.

The chain tears free. Door swings—

68. INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS (FIRST MODERN HIT)

Hookman strides in. The ceiling LEDs flicker— then switch to
sickly 80s yellow.

He swings. Jess yanks Rachel down; the hook splits the Alexa speaker in half.
The severed Alexa gasps: "I didn't catch—" dies.

MIA
Same, girl.

TIFF yanks a cast-iron skillet, whangs his shoulder. It dents the slicker. He staggers one step.

TIFF (to the others)
Cast iron supremacy!

He backhands her with the hook's flat— WHUMP— she crashes into the fridge, slides down, dazed but breathing.

ZOE
We are not dying in a kitchen.
That's a Scream 2 deep cut!

KAYLA
Laundry room! Bottlenecks and
bleach!

They sprint.

69. INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tight space. Machines hum. Detergent everywhere.
Kayla slams the door. Jess braces it with her shoulder. The Hookman pounds on the other side, the metal warping.

MIA
Okay plan: we blind him with Tide,
then emotional honesty.

RACHEL
Where are the candles? Where are
your weapons?

ZOE
Our weapons are sarcasm and poor
choices.

JESS (to Rachel)
He'll cheat space. He does that.
(to all)
On three, we dump him.

KAYLA hands out detergent pods like grenades.

KAYLA
Taste the rainbow.

JESS
Three- two- one-

They yank the door. The Hookman surges in- everyone pitches pods; the pellets burst into blue goo across his mask and slicker. He roars- frictionless footing.

JESS (CONT'D)
Now!

They shove him back across the suds- he eats tile, hook clanging.

MIA
Dawn 1, death 0!

They slam the door again and bolt out the back.

70. EXT. JESS'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS (CHASE #1)

Rain slashes sideways. String lights whip like vines. They sprint past a kiddie pool, a flamingo float, a half-deflated duck.

RACHEL
(awestruck at neighboring houses)
These windows are so... big.

ZOE
Yeah, we live in targets.

The Hookman crashes through the back door, slips on the detergent trail, then cleaves the flamingo in pure spite.

KAYLA
Environmental storytelling!

They vault the fence-

71. EXT. NEIGHBOR'S YARD / PATIO - CONTINUOUS

Automatic patio lights click on. Cameras blink red.

MIA
Smile for the Ring doorbell- run!

A motion-activated sprinkler hisses to life— the water flickers with static, turning to glittering snow midair.

RACHEL
Your rain... is broken.

ZOE
Our everything is.

Hookman lands in the yard, puts his boot on a garden hose. It snakes like film stock, wraps Jess's ankle— He yanks. Jess eats concrete, hard. Rachel swings the axe— BANG— sparks as it bites the hook.

RACHEL (to Jess)
Up! Come on!

They tear free, crash through a side gate to the—

72. EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Rain-sheened asphalt. A rideshare Prius creeps up, confused by the chaos.

RIDESHARE GUY (20s)
Uh... Stiles? You texted "SOS"? Is that like, a band?

The Hookman steps into the headlights.
The driver's eyes go saucer-wide.

RIDESHARE GUY
Nope.

He floors it—the car fishtails past, mere inches from the Hookman.

TIFF
This town is useless!

ZOE
Correct.

SIRENS far off. Not close enough.

JESS
Back inside— basement! Full circle!

KAYLA
Basement is a kill box!

JESS
It's also our axe.

Rachel meets her eyes— trusts her. They sprint.

73. INT. JESS'S HOUSE - FOYER / STAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

They slam inside. The front camera chimes "Motion detected."

CAMERA (O.S.)
Front door opened.

ZOE
Thank you, narc.

A framed family photo falls and shatters— the broken glass shows two Rachels for a blink. Both breathing. Everyone freezes— then the Hookman's shadow spills down the hall like ink.

JESS
Move!

Up the stairs—

74. INT. JESS'S HALLWAY / BEDROOMS - CONTINUOUS

They blast into Jess's room— the Hookman standee in the corner greets them like a jump-scare.

TIFF
I hate your decor!

JESS yanks open the closet— props, masks, Hookman dolls. The real Hookman looms in the doorway, clocking the shrine to himself.

He pauses. Takes it in.

ZOE
He's seeing his merch.

KAYLA
Is he flattered?

MIA
Is he litigious?

The Hookman tilts his head, steps into the room, slower now, like a pilgrim visiting his own church. Rachel grabs a Hookman mask off the wall and hurls it at his face.

It sticks in the detergent goo; he rips it off with a snarl that warps the room tone.

RACHEL

You're not God. You're a man in a coat.

HOOKMAN

(soft; closer)

I'm whatever you watch.

He swings— WHAM— his hook catches the replica hook on the display stand; both tangle.

Jess tackles him with the stand, buying a second.

JESS

Everybody out!

They dive into the hall. Jess slams the door, wedges a chair.

The handle turns anyway.

ZOE

He doesn't respect boundaries!

KAYLA

Or furniture!

They sprint to—

75. INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Small tile room. One window, rain-streaked.
Mia locks the door, backs to the sink.

MIA

Okay— okay— regroup. Weapons check:
axe, sarcasm, three Capri Suns.

TIFF

I've got eyeliner. It's waterproof.
We can blind him with beauty.

Outside, the hallway bends, a fisheye distortion, as the Hookman walks past.

Rachel turns on the shower— steam filling the room.

ZOE

We don't have time for hair.

RACHEL

We make fog. He likes mirrors. Give him one he can't use.

Jess catches it- nods.

JESS

Steam blind. Counter-ambience. I like it.

The bathroom fills with vapor, a whiteout box.

The door EXPLODES inward- the Hookman bursts through, swinging blind.

KAYLA

Scatter!

He grabs Mia by the hoodie- yanks. Rachel chops the towel bar; it drops; she hooks it under his elbow- leverage- Mia drops free.

MIA

Oh my god I love you!

They pile out-

76. INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

The group barrels down, slipping on rain from the Hookman's coat.

He appears at the top landing like a wet guillotine, begins descending way too fast for a human.

ZOE

He has no chill and no knee cartilage!

KAYLA

Basement or front door?!

A flash of police lights across the curtains- a squad car skids up.

ZOE

Front door! Cops!

They yank it open- two OFFICERS mid-run to the porch- they see the Hookman in the stairwell, freeze correctly.

OFFICER #1
Freeze! Put- put the- whatever that
is- down!

The Hookman simply turns his head. The house's electricity re-pulses. The officers' radios scream white noise.

He keeps coming.

OFFICER #2 lifts his taser- fires- the darts stick in the slicker- the charge absorbs into static, arcs up the hook- BLAM- trips the breaker- whole house goes dark again.

OFFICER #2
Great.

The Hookman reaches the bottom step.

JESS
Basement! Now!

77. INT. BASEMENT STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

They thunder down, cops right behind them.

OFFICER #1
Stay behind us!

ZOE
Happily!

The basement is the same as before- but wrong: the worklight swings, casting VHS scan lines through the air.

On the wall- the FIRE AXE. Chekhov's destiny.

MIA
Chekhov's Axe, baby!

KAYLA rips it free and shoves it into Jess's hands.

KAYLA
Final Girl privileges.

JESS
We share the title.

RACHEL meets Jess's eyes. Mutual understanding passing like a live wire.

Upstairs- thudding. The Hookman is coming down the stairs in that horrible slow-quick way.

OFFICER #2
Get behind the boiler!

The squad steps forward, guns drawn.
Hookman appears halfway down the stairs. The officers fire—
pop-pop-pop—
White static sprays like shredded tape. He keeps coming.

OFFICER #1
What the—

The Hook swings. Officer #2 takes it on the forearm— meaty
rip— blood paints the cement. He screams; Officer #1 drags
him behind the furnace.

JESS (to the girls, urgent)
He wants me. He knows I pulled him. I'll pull him back.

ZOE
Jess, no.

RACHEL
He follows open lines. You can't—
not without—

JESS
A phone. I know.

She looks around— and sees it: the rotary phone, melted and
dead— but the cord pulses faintly, leading toward the floor
drain like a vein.

MIA
I hate symbolism!

TIFF
Kill it with therapy!

JESS
No— kill it with narrative.

She wraps the cord around her wrist.

ZOE
Jess— don't you dare—

JESS
We finish what we started.
Together.

The Hookman steps off the last stair, fills the room.

Jess raises the axe.

78. INT. BASEMENT - "WELCOME TO MODERN HORROR" FIGHT

It's messy, mean, frantic:

- Jess swings, connects- CRACK- splits the slicker; static bleeds white where blood should be.
- Rachel feints, then shoves a shelf over; it buries the Hookman for a half second.
- Zoe hurls paint cans; Mia yanks extension cords; Kayla whips a broom like a spear.
- Tiff stomps the live sprinkler valve- WHOOSH- water detonates into glittering VHS snow midair, making him strobe.

He shrugs off debris, smashes Rachel into the support post- thud- she slides down, gasping. Jess dives between them.

JESS (CONT'D)

Hey, icon- look at me.

He does. That's the move. She's the one he wants.

JESS (CONT'D)

You were scary on tape. In person?
Kinda mid.

He swings, furious- Jess wraps the phone cord up the hook's shank- yanks. It bites metal.

JESS (CONT'D)

Rachel- now!

Rachel kicks the breaker box- SPARK- the phone cord lights like a fuse.

The Hookman howls- a modem scream- the cord yanks back toward the drain, dragging Jess an inch- two-

ZOE

Jess!

JESS

I'm not hanging up!

79. INT. BASEMENT - SECONDS LATER (TURN)

The pull shifts: the cord is taking him, not her. Jess braces her feet on the cement, hauls the line, wraps another loop around the hook- doubles the leverage.

KAYLA
Physics montage!

MIA
We can be the montage!

TIFF
We are the montage!

They pile in— each girl grabbing the cord with Jess, tug-of-war with a ghost.

The Hookman slides toward the drain— boots gouging concrete— he snarls, hooks the floor, metal screeching—

RACHEL staggers up, hammers his boot with the axe— CRACK— he slips— lurches—

HOOKMAN
(torn between worlds)
Don't— hang— up—

JESS
Good night, sequel.

She gives a final haul— the Hookman whips forward— the drain becomes a shrieking vortex of snow and tape— he vanishes in a ripping FWOOMP— the cord snaps clean—

Silence. Only the sprinkler snow drifting down.

The girls collapse in a heap, shaking, alive.

ZOE
Did we—?

KAYLA
We did. We did we did we did—

MIA
Group cry later— cops bleeding now!

OFFICER #2 (O.S.)
I'm— alive— ow— hate— horror—

TIFF
Relatable.

Rachel looks at Jess. Jess is trembling, soaked, glitching at the edges like a bad stream.

RACHEL
Jess...?

JESS
I think... it wants a trade.

The sprinkling snow in the air reverses for a beat— drifting upward.

Rachel realizes. Shakes her head.

RACHEL
No.

Jess smiles. Brave and stupid and hers.

JESS
Don't hang up on each other.

The snow surges— the room brightens— Jess's outline stutters— the cord around her wrist gives one last twitch—

FLASH.
Jess is gone.

80. INT. BASEMENT - AFTERMATH (BUTTON)

Silence. The sprinkler stops. The work light steadies. The girls stand in a stunned circle with Rachel at the center.

ZOE
We're not done, right? Because
grief has like... six more steps.

KAYLA
We skipped denial and went straight
to carbs.

MIA
I'm getting the wounded cop
upstairs and then I'm stealing his
radio.

TIFF
I'm getting waterproof mascara. For
triage.

Rachel stares at the empty spot where Jess stood.
Then up at the rotary cord on the floor, still warm.

She kneels, picks it up like a relic, wraps it around her own wrist— not tight. Promise-tight.

RACHEL
(soft)
We don't hang up.

A faint beep from the melted phone base— a single ring from nowhere—
Then quiet.

SMASH TO BLACK.

81. INT. BASEMENT - MINUTES LATER

Police lights strobe through the small windows.
Paramedics patch Officer #2, muttering, "I'm switching to rom-coms."

Rachel sits wrapped in a blanket, studying the LED flashlight like it's alien tech.
ZOE crouches beside her, handing a Gatorade.

ZOE
Electrolytes. Time-travel hangovers
are brutal.

RACHEL
(flipping the cap)
It glows.

KAYLA
Everything glows now. Even our
food.

Rachel tastes it, winces.

RACHEL
It's blue. Why is it blue?

MIA
Corporate optimism.

82. INT. JESS'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

The surviving girls huddle amid toppled furniture and cord smoke.
The TV is dead black, but the reflection shows faint tracking lines.

TIFF

So, um... what do we tell the cops?
"Hi, we opened a cursed VHS and the
Gorton's Fisherman went live"?

ZOE

They'd just say, "Have you tried
turning it off and on again?"

KAYLA

We did. That's how we got here.

Laughter sputters into silence. They all glance at the spot
where Jess vanished.

83. INT. JESS'S ROOM - SAME

Rachel wanders through Jess's horror shrine: posters, masks,
Beta tapes, the Hookman action figure in its cracked case.

She touches a Walkman, presses play.
A-ha's "Take On Me" clicks on, slightly warped.
Her reflection in the dark window flickers between 1984 and
now.

RACHEL

(soft)

You wanted to live in my world.
Now I'm in yours.

Lightning flashes- the reflection blinks Jess's face for half
a second.

84. INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The others argue around the kitchen island.

MIA

So what- we wait for round two?

TIFF

Horror rules: if there's no body,
there's a sequel.

ZOE

We had a body. It dissolved into
cable TV.

KAYLA
Then we kill the sequel. End the
franchise.

They turn as Rachel enters, hair damp, Jess's denim jacket on
her shoulders.

RACHEL
We can send him back.

Beat.

MIA
Cool, she talks like the Terminator
now.

RACHEL
Jess is still there.
I felt her— through the cord.

ZOE
What, like ghost Wi-Fi?

RACHEL
Like connection.
If I open the line again, I can
trade him for her.

Silence.

KAYLA
That's the worst idea I've ever
loved.

85. INT. GARAGE - LATER

They've re-set the battlefield: CRT upright, cords spliced to
a car battery.
The storm still rumbles outside.

ZOE
If we fry the neighborhood grid,
we're trending on Reddit.

MIA
Hashtag #GirlsJustWannaHaveFuneral.

Rachel kneels before the TV, looping the melted phone wire
into the jack.
Sparks dance.

RACHEL
 We open the call.
 He answers.
 We hang up.

TIFF
 Simple! Except for the murder demon
 part.

86. INT. GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel hits PLAY on the Betamax.

The static returns— faint image of the 1984 house, empty,
 door ajar, phone off the hook.

KAYLA
 It's like waiting for FaceTime with
 Hell.

The audio warps:
 "...by midnight..."

ZOE
 He's punctual.

Rachel grips the receiver. The line clicks alive.

RACHEL
 Come on... pick up.

JESS (V.O., STATIC)
 Rach?

The girls freeze.

RACHEL
 Jess?! Where are you!?

JESS (V.O.)
 Feels like film stock. Heavy. He's
 here—

A metallic scrape interrupts.
 Then a new voice: Hookman.

HOOKMAN (V.O.)
 Miss me?

The garage lights dim to yellow.

87. INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The CRT flickers between Jess's face and the Hookman's. Every frame of him degrades the room— tools rust, soda cans age.

ZOE
We're oxidizing in real time!

KAYLA
Rachel, hang up!

RACHEL
Not yet— I see her!

On-screen Jess reaches toward the camera.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Grab my hand!

Rachel presses her palm to the screen— static arcs around her fingers.

MIA
She's doing E.T. with Satan!

TIFF
Just let her finish the call!

88. ON SCREEN - 1984 HOUSE

Jess's hand meets Rachel's through the shimmer.

Behind Jess, the Hookman rises— hook raised.

RACHEL (V.O.)
No— behind you!

Jess whirls, slams the axe into him. He staggers; film burns white— she looks back at Rachel.

JESS
Now.

Rachel hangs up.

The screen erupts in feedback.

89. INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

A concussive boom.
All light dies.

Silence. Smoke. The girls cough, blinking through the haze.

Then— a single phone ring echoes from the floor.

Rachel reaches down, answers.

RACHEL

Jess?

JESS (V.O., clear)
Tell Blockbuster I'm late.

Tears, laughter, relief all at once.

ZOE

She's in the sequel.

MIA

We just green-lit her afterlife.

90. EXT. JESS'S HOUSE - DAWN

Police, news vans, stretchers.

Reporters swarm.

The girls sit on the curb, wrapped in blankets again.

Rachel stares at the sunrise like it's science fiction.

REPORTER (O.S.)

Authorities are still investigating
the bizarre power surge that—

ZOE

If they say "possible gas leak,"
I'm suing.

KAYLA

Smile, you're on every camera ever.

91. INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The survivors nurse giant lattes.

Rachel studies people scrolling on phones.

RACHEL

Everyone looks... down.

MIA
Yeah. Horror of our generation.

TIFF
You'll fit right in.

RACHEL
I'm not sure I want to.

They clink cups anyway.

92. INT. GARAGE - NIGHT (LATER)

Empty now.
The CRT sits dark.
On the wall: the whiteboard, half-erased.
Only one line still legible:
DON'T HANG UP.

A faint hum under the silence— the VHS rewinding itself.

93. ON SCREEN - INSIDE THE MOVIE

Jess walks down a sun-bleached Main Street 1984.
Everything looks too bright, too fake.
She's wearing the same jacket, humming "Don't You (Forget
About Me)" under her breath.

She passes a store window— the reflection shows Rachel
watching her.

They share a knowing smile.

94. INT. JESS'S HOUSE - GARAGE - SAME

The old rotary phone sits on the floor.
It rings once.
No one there to answer.

Lightning flashes through the window.

95. TITLE CARD: "THE BABYSITTER MASSACRE WILL RETURN"

Cut to black.

Then the AFTER-CREDITS TRAILER flickers up:

80s voice-over, grainy neon text—

“COMING SOON ... THE BABYSITTER MASSACRE 2: RETURN OF THE
HOOKMAN!”

Montage of ridiculous kills, screaming coeds, synth stabs—

Final shot: a shadow creeping up behind a figure—
Jess whirls, shotgun cocked.

JESS
I hate sequels.

BOOM - CUT TO BLACK.