

EPICENTER

FADE IN:

INT. BERKELY SEISMOLOGICAL LAB - NIGHT

Banks of computer monitors surrounded by empty desks. A lone ceiling light illuminates a plastic happy-face jack-o-lantern.

SEISMOGRAPH

Paper rolling. The needle begins to vibrate. Intermittently.

COFFEE CUPS

Begin clinking a seismic opera.

THE LAB DOOR

Blows open. HELEN BRADBURY, the senior lab tech enters. She is breathing heavily. Helen flips the light switch on.

The room illuminates. Reveals--

JOSH WATERS(17)

A wirery high school intern. Hunched over his desk. Sleeping on his open textbook. He recoils from the light.

Josh is wearing a fully hooded wolf man mask.

HELEN  
Christ! Don't you feel that!?

JOSH  
Feel what?

Helen walks over to the Seismograph.

JOSH  
I thought I was dreaming.

HELEN  
Come here and take a look at this.

Josh rises. Shuffles to the Seismograph.

HELEN  
(re: the mask)  
And take that ridiculous thing off.

Josh lifts the mask off and reveals a fresh crop of acne.

JOSH  
(re: the seismograph)  
Holy shit!

The needle scribbles a wildly.

HELEN  
Go back to your desk and find out  
where this started. I'll bet it's  
not far from here.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO BAY - NIGHT

A lone fishing boat, the Pac Belle, slowly chugging away from the city. At the helm is BRAD FERGESON, 16, he struggles to maintain his balance as the boat is tossed by the choppy waters.

Brad turns to the rear deck.

BRAD  
Hold on tight! It's going to get  
rough!

THE REAR DECK

Seated is WENDY and MELISSA CHAPMAN, 16, twins. Every adolescent boy's dream.

WENDY  
Turn around! I'm fucking getting  
sick.

BRAD  
We're almost there.

Brad points straight ahead.

BRAD  
I can see it.

WENDY  
I don't care. I wanna go home.

BRAD  
You're the one that wanted to go to  
Alcatraz on Halloween.

MELISSA

(to Wendy)

Don't worry. Brad knows what he's doing. He helps his dad do those fishing charter things on the weekends.

A huge swell tosses the boat. Water saturates everything. Wendy and Melissa SCREAM in unison.

Brad spins the wheel and shoves the throttle forward. The engine races.

ON BRAD

He sees a huge swell heading directly at them.

BRAD

(to himself)

Fuck me.

Brad grips the steering wheel to brace himself as the water engulfs the bridge.

Brad falls backwards onto the rear deck.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Josh is looking at a computer screen.

The lab phone RINGS. Helen answers.

HELEN

Yeah, I'm here...not yet...we're working on it...I'll let you know as soon as we figure it out...

Helen puts the receiver back on the phone. Turns to Josh.

HELEN

Have you got that for me yet?

JOSH

Yeah.

He touches the screen where the epicenter was.

JOSH

I...I got to go. Shit. I got to go.

HELEN

Josh? What's going on? Are you  
okay?

Josh quickly gathers his belongings.

JOSH

I'm sorry, but I've got to get out  
of here.

Josh bolts out of the lab.

Helen walks to Josh's work station. Leans over. Focuses  
on--

THE COMPUTER SCREEN

Indicates the epicenter was in the San Francisco Bay.

EXT. THE PAC BELLE - NIGHT

The bay is calm. The boat lights are out. The engine has  
stalled. A lone buoy RINGS in distance.

Melissa bends over Brad. Trying to revive him.

Wendy holds her stomach. Losing the battle with her nausea.

MELISSA

C'mon Brad.

Melissa grabs Brad's shoulders and shakes him.

MELISSA

Please...wake up.

WENDY

We're gonna die. I know it. We're  
going to fucking die.

MELISSA

Would you shut up and die  
already. You're the reason we're  
stuck out here in the first place.

Melissa lowers her head to his chest. Listens for a  
heartbeat.

MELISSA

(to Wendy)

Give me your sweater.

Wendy returns a reluctant look.

MELISSA

Hurry.

Wendy tosses her sweater to Melissa. Melissa folds the sweater to create a makeshift pillow.

Melissa places her hand under Brad's head. She gently lifts his head and slides the sweater underneath. Melissa carefully lowers his head onto the sweater.

Brad emits a shallow COUGH.

Melissa rubs her fingers together. She feels a warm liquid.

MELISSA

He's bleeding.

WENDY

What are we going to do?

MELISSA

We'd better get him to a hospital. Give me your cell phone.

WENDY

I didn't bring it. You know how mom likes to track where we are on that thing...bitch.

Melissa forages through Brad's coat pockets.

WENDY

What are you doing?

MELISSA

Hopefully Brad wasn't as stupid as us...

Melissa extracts a cell phone from his coat pocket.

WENDY

Thank God.

The cell phone screen reads: 1 MISSED CALL.

MELISSA

He had it on "vibrate". Josh tried to call him.

Melissa opens the phone and presses the talk button.

MELISSA  
C'mon Josh...pick up the  
phone. Please.

Wendy stands. Paces. Trying to get warm.

MELISSA  
Josh? It's me. Melissa. Brad's  
hurt...he's bleeding...I don't know  
where we are...we were close to  
Alcatraz, but the fog is starting  
to roll in...okay...hurry.

Melissa closes the cover. Shoves it into her jeans' pocket.

WENDY  
Well?

MELISSA  
He's with the Harbor  
Master. They're on the way.

WENDY  
How long?

MELISSA  
How the hell would I know. Josh  
said that there should be a  
emergency light down below. I'm  
going to go look for it. You stay  
with Brad.

THE GALLEY

Melissa wades through a puddle of water as she searches the  
cabinets. She hold Brad's cell phone up. The screen  
illuminates the galley.

Melissa finds a box of wooden matches in a plastic  
bag. Continues searching.

WENDY (O.S.)  
Lissa...better get out here.

MELISSA  
What is it?

WENDY (O.S.)  
It's Brad. He's waking up.

Melissa splashes out of the galley.

REAR DECK

Brad sits upright. Wendy holds the sweater to the back of his head.

Melissa kneels next to Brad.

MELISSA

You okay?

BRAD

My freakin' head hurts.

MELISSA

You took quite a tumble. The back of your head is bleeding. I found some matches. Let me take a look.

Melissa steps around in back of Brad. Strikes a match.

MELISSA

(to Wendy)

Pull the sweater away...slowly.

Wendy pulls the sweater away. Revealing a deep gash. Hair. Blood. Bone.

Wendy turns away. Leans over the railing. Hurls.

Wendy sees something stir in the water.

WENDY

Lissa...come here.

MELISSA

Oh gross. You think I want to look at your puke.

WENDY

Seriously. You'd better come see this.

Melissa lights a second match and crawls to the rail.

THE WATER SURFACE

Churns violently. Consuming every last drop of bile.

MELISSA (O.S.)

(re: the match)

Ow!! Shit!

Melissa drops the match into the water. Starts a small fire on the surface.

The water churns violently. The flame extinguishes. Silence. Calm.

BRAD

Crawls to Wendy and Melissa.

BRAD

What is it?

WENDY

There's something out there.

BRAD

Maybe it's just a lone sea lion.

MELISSA

Do sea lions catch on fire?

BRAD

Probably some sludge left over from the Cosco Busan spill.

Melissa strikes another match. Leans over the rail. Observes.

MELISSA

Look.

Melissa moves her hand back and forth. The water surface churns. Mirroring Melissa's movements.

WENDY

Lissa you're freaking me out.

BRAD

Better step ba--

The surface water geysers up and snakes around Melissa's wrist.

Wendy SCREAMS hysterically.

Brad grabs Melissa by her ankles.

MELISSA

Help me! Help me!

Wendy grabs one of Melissa's Nikes.

BRAD

I got you! Let go you motherfucker!

## RESCUE BOAT

A small inflatable equipped with a large outboard motor skips across the bay. The HARBOR MASTER, 45, sits in the rear. Steering the craft across the bay.

Josh sits in front. Holds a small parabolic microphone. Clutches the earcup to his headphones. Listens to the screams. Motions in that direction.

## THE PAC BELLE

The struggle continues. Brad maintains his grip. Wendy yanks on Melissa's shoe. The shoe comes off. Sends Wendy crashing into Brad. Melissa's limbs slip through his hands.

Melissa sinks into the abyss.

The water churns. Then calm. Then a few bubbles containing Melissa's last breath.

BRAD

Fuck! Fuck!

WENDY

Melissa! Melissa!

Brad grabs Melissa's Nike and pounds it on the deck.

Wendy stands. Shivers. Tears stream down her face.

Brad gathers himself. Sprints to the galley.

## THE GALLEY

Brad tears open the cabinet doors. Digs through the contents. Pots, pans, kitchen utensils scatter behind him.

Finally. Brad grabs a hand-held emergency light. Flips the switch on.

The light flickers. Brad shakes the light violently. The light stays on.

Brad moves out onto the rear deck. Stands at the railing. The light beam sweeps across the bay water to see--

## HYDROPHIBIC MODULES

Thousands. They respond to the light beam as it moves across the water.

BRAD

Surveys the water.

WENDY (O.S.)

Brad.

BRAD

Shhh....

A boat motor HUMS in the distance.

BRAD

Hear that.

WENDY (O.S.)

It's gotta be Josh.

RESCUE BOAT

The THUD of the Modules against the boat becomes pervasive. The engine SPUTTERS. Then stalls.

HARBOR MASTER

What the f...

Josh turns to the rear of the boat. Rips his headphones off.

JOSH

What's the matter.

HARBOR MASTER

How the hell would I know? Toss me that emergency bag. Probably some ass-hole's illegal fishing net got the motor all tangled up.

The Harbor Master digs a light stick out and breaks it in two. Steps to the rear of the boat and kneels. Sticks his hand into the water to feel what's on the propeller.

The glow from the light stick reveals the modules surrounding them.

Josh sees the modules moving to the light.

JOSH

Kill the light!

## HARBOR MASTER

What'd you sss....

Three oily tentacles wrap around his neck, mouth and eyes. The Harbor Master flips into the water.

Josh stands. Watches. Horrified. The glow from the light stick slowly fades out. The water calms. Bubbles.

Josh pulls an aluminum oar from beneath the emergency bag. Brad paddles to the Pac Belle.

## BRAD AND WENDY

Sit. Brad reaches behind his head. Feels the blood.

## WENDY

How's your head?

## BRAD

I don't want to know.

A voice in the distance.

## JOSH (O.S.)

Brad...Wendy...Melissa!

Brad and Wendy spring up. Brad turns the light on. Waives his arms.

## JOSH (O.S.)

I can see you. Turn off you light.

## WENDY

Hurry Josh! Hurry!

## JOSH (O.S.)

I heard a boat coming this way...from Alcatraz. I'll bet it's from the Mayor's Halloween party.

## BRAD

I'll get the flare gun.

Brad hands the light to Wendy. Strides to the galley.

## RESCUE BOAT

Brad's flare gun DISCHARGES. The night sky turns magenta.

Josh sees the moduels move to the light of the flare. Except one.

JOSH  
I think I see a body!

Josh changes course. Paddles to the floater.

BRAD (O.S.)  
Are you sure? Be careful.

JOSH  
Yeah. I can see it now. Shoot off  
another flare!

Another flare DISCHARGES. The sky lights up.

JOSH  
Its got one shoe on.

WENDY (O.S.)  
One shoe? It's Melissa! Melissa!

Brad paddles next to the floater. Covered with the modules.

It's Melissa. What's left of her.

Josh moves closer. Observing. The floater's eyes  
open. The tongue shoots up and forms an oily noose around  
Josh's neck. Pulls Josh into the water. The water  
churns. Calm. Bubbles.

THE PAC BELLE

Brad and Wendy are leaning over the rail.

BRAD/WENDY  
(in unison)  
Josh! Josh!

The rescue boats drifts into view. Empty.

Brad and Wendy turn and slide down. Silent. They sit next  
to each other. Brad puts his arm around Wendy.

A Blue and Gold Fleet boat approaches.

MATCH CUT TO:

## BLUE AND GOLD FLEET BOAT

Costumes mixed with tuxedos. Opulent. Brad and Wendy sit on the floor. Out of place. The boat CAPTAIN, 50's, approaches.

CAPTAIN

Here's a blanket.

Brad accepts the blanket spreads it over Wendy. The Captain takes a knee next to Brad and Wendy.

CAPTAIN

That's quite some story you have there. Oil monsters coming up from the bottom of the bay, devouring human flesh, light, energy.

BRAD

But it's true. Josh wrote all about it last year. That's why he was out there...he knew what was happening.

The Captain stands. Turns to see the MAYOR, late 50's, distinguished. They turn and walk away together.

MAYOR

So, are they going to be okay?

CAPTAIN

The girl's in shock, but I think she'll be okay. The boy's got a pretty good gash on the back of the head. He's rambling on about something to do about oil monsters...

MAYOR

Hold that thought.

They approach the Mayor's PRESS SECRETARY, mid 20's, he hands a martini to the Mayor. The Mayor leans to his confidante.

MAYOR

Want a good Halloween story? Listen to this.

The three men break out into laughter as we--

FADE OUT: