

T H E F O R E V E R G I R L

written by

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INT. ROCKPORT SPORTING GOODS - NIGHT (2025)

Fluorescents BUZZ. Half the ceiling is dead. The store feels abandoned — until the front glass door BEEPS faintly.

LAURIE (16) slips inside through the busted lock. Hoodie up. Bare hands. She scans the aisles like she's done this before.

A plastic bin of lacrosse sticks waits by the entrance — she ignores it.

HER POV: mirrors from the changing rooms. In some, her own reflection. In others — for a blink — a warped flash of a white clown mask from another decade. Gone when she turns.

She moves to a case of hunting knives. Taps the glass. Locked.

From her pocket, a thin metal shim. She works the latch.

The silence is unnatural. Even her breathing sounds loud.

WHUMP.

Something heavy shifts deeper in the store. Not random. Deliberate.

Laurie freezes. Her eyes flick to a convex security mirror above the fishing aisle.

REFLECTION: a tall, still figure at the far end. Watching. The angle changes, and it's gone.

She pulls a knife free. Then grabs a compact aluminum baseball bat. The grip tape SQUEAKS in her palm.

FOOTSTEPS. Slow. Coming closer.

Laurie slides into the camping section, ducking between display tents. She waits. Listening.

The footsteps stop.

A faint, broken melody drifts through the dark:

("I think we're alone now...")

Not sung. Played. Like a warped cassette somewhere in the aisles.

Her hand tightens on the bat.

EXT. SPORTING GOODS PARKING LOT - SAME

Police cruiser headlights sweep across the storefront. Tires crunch.

CUT TO:

INT. STORE - SAME

Red-blue flashes stutter through the windows. Laurie edges toward the side exit - blocked by a fallen ladder. She pivots back.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT DOORS - SAME

OFFICER VEGA (24) and OFFICER RAMIREZ (30s) approach. Weapons low but ready. Vega taps the glass.

VEGA

Rockport PD! Store's closed, kid.

CUT TO:

INT. STORE - CONTINUOUS

Laurie hesitates. She glances to the mirrors again - empty now, except for a single white feather lying on the floor.

RAMIREZ (O.S.)

Come on out. Hands visible.

Laurie steps into view. Bat in one hand, knife in the other.

She drops the knife. Keeps the bat.

Vega opens the door.

VEGA

Easy. That's it.

They cuff her. As Vega leads her out, Laurie looks back once more. The aisle is empty. The feather stays where it fell.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - NIGHT

Phones ring. Typing hums. Coffee brews.

Laurie sits cuffed at a table. Hood down now, hair tangled, eyes wide.

DETECTIVE CHEN (40s, sharp, calm) leans against the desk.
DETECTIVE MILLER (50s, weary) sits across from Laurie. Vega and Ramirez hover nearby.

MILLER

You know how this looks, right?
Breaking and entering, armed with a
knife.

Laurie doesn't answer. She just stares at the glass window of the office - at her own reflection.

For a flicker - she sees the mask there instead of her face.

CHEN

Talk to us, Laurie. What were you
looking for in there?

LAURIE

(quiet)
Protection.

MILLER

From what?

CUT TO:

(Black-and-white presentation. Subtle film grain. 1.85:1.
Period SFX / AM radio hiss.)

INT. MONROE KITCHEN - EVENING (1967)

Small clapboard rental on a quiet block. A table radio hums news under dinner clatter.

ED MONROE (40s), factory tired, carves meatloaf. MARLENE (40s) pours milk. DANNY (10) steals peas. LAURIE (16)-cardigan, floral dress-stares out the window more than she eats.

RADIO ANCHOR (V.O.)
 ...escape out of Rockport
 Penitentiary... last seen in black-
 and-white stripes... considered-

Ed snaps the knob OFF.

ED
 We don't feed that into the house.

DANNY
 He got a hook?

ED
 Danny.

MARLENE
 Windows stay latched tonight, hear?

Laurie nods, automatic.

ED
 What time you off at the diner?

LAURIE '67
 Ten. Maybe ten-thirty. Norma's on
 register.

MARLENE
 Then home. Not Mike's car, not the
 lane. Home.

Laurie gives that tiny adult-ending nod teens do when they're
 not agreeing.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET DINER - NIGHT (1967)

Neon script, chrome trim. Inside, cigarette haze and a
 JUKEBOX murmur.

INT. DINER - LATER (1967)

NORMA (40s), waitress, flicks ash. Laurie busses.

NORMA
 Lock your windows. And tell your
 daddy I said so.

LAURIE '67
 Yes, ma'am.

Door DINGS. MIKE (17)—letterman jacket—tries to look casual.

MIKE
Lemon pie left or just a rumor?

NORMA
Rumor. Pecan if you behave.

MIKE (TO LAURIE)
Drive later?

LAURIE '67
After close. Ten-thirty.

NORMA (CALLING)
Ten-thirty and not a minute past.
Windows, Laurie.

Laurie's "sure" smile says she won't.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FIELD — LATE (1967)

Band practice winds down. Long shadows across turf. Laurie and Mike share fries on the bleachers.

A distant SIREN fades from the prison's direction. Mike clocks her listening.

MIKE
"Probably nothing," right?

She forces a grin.

INT. LAURIE'S BEDROOM — SUNSET (1967)

Laurie clicks window latches: click... click... click. Repeats it like a charm.

LAURIE '67 (UNDER BREATH)
Windows. Windows.

Mirror POV: as she turns, a stripe-patterned blur by the hedgerow behind her—gone when she whips around. She shakes it off, grabs her cardigan.

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION — DUSK (1967)

Mike's CHEVY idles. He pumps gas. An ATTENDANT (19) reads a comic.

ATTENDANT

Radio says they ain't found that fella.

MIKE

He's halfway to Ohio.

ATTENDANT

Maybe he's under your car.

(grins)

Mike laughs too loud. His hand shivers capping the tank.

Laurie glances down the road: a WHITE SEDAN slides by, no plates. Her stomach drops.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOVERS' LANE — NIGHT (1967)

Oaks crowd a dirt turnaround. Cars scattered—fogged windows, doo-wop from somewhere far.

Mike kills the lights. In the windshield reflection, their faces float like ghosts.

CUT TO:

INT. CHEVY — CONTINUOUS (1967)

Awkward laughter, soft kisses the sweet clumsiness of firsts.

From the trees: a BRANCH CRACK.

LAURIE '67

Did you hear—

MIKE

Raccoons.

He dials the radio. TOMMY JAMES & THE SHONDELLS bleed in AM-thin—"I Think We're Alone Now" drifting like it's coming from down a well. (No lyrics quoted.)

They kiss. Another CRACK, closer.

Laurie's breath fogs glass. She wipes a porthole clear—

REFLECTION POV: Behind Mike, in the driver's side arc of glass: a BLACK-AND-WHITE STRIPED PRISON UNIFORM. A CHEAP PLASTIC CLOWN MASK, yellowed RUBBER BANDS pinching the cheeks. In a lowered hand: an OLD, RUSTED MEAT HOOK.

LAURIE '67
Mike, get in the—

The hook PUNCHES through the passenger window. GLASS ERUPTS. Laurie SCREAMS, tumbles over the shifter, boots the door and spills into—

CUT TO:

EXT. OAKS / LOVERS' LANE — CONTINUOUS (1967)

Branches rake at her. The SONG doesn't fade with distance—it swells, wrong, like it's following her.

Behind: a low, steady BREATH. The head turns—RUBBER BANDS TWANG.

Laurie ducks behind a fallen trunk. Silence. Then leaf-dragging: the HOOK trails.

She squeezes her eyes shut, forcing her breath quiet.

She opens one eye—
The CLOWN MASK is RIGHT THERE, inches over the log, listening to her heartbeat.

She bolts.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM SERVICE ROAD — NIGHT (1967)

She sprints across gravel, stumbles, bloodies a knee. A distant BARN with a single swinging bulb. She makes for it.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED BARN — NIGHT (1967)

A BARE BULB swings—light/dark slices. Dust hangs. Laurie eases the door mostly shut, presses to it, gulping air.

CINEMATIC ENTRANCE

A boot toe edges into light PRISON STRIPES the CHEAP MASK tilts into glow—jaw painted in a fixed smile, RUBBER BANDS trembling with breath. The RUSTED HOOK drags wood with a teeth-setting SCREECH.

Laurie's hand finds a PITCHFORK. She lifts. The bulb swings away—he VANISHES.

Overhead: hay rustle.

She looks up—nothing. Looks down—
He's INSIDE ARM'S REACH, mask filling frame.

The hook LASHES. She JAMS the fork into a post; the hook
CATCHES between tines with a squeal. For a beat, they're
tethered.

She SHOVES OFF, slips past, dives for the door. He wrenches
free—WOOD SPLINTERS. The slide bolt is SET. Her fingers
fumble—up—CLICK—She bursts out into—

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM SERVICE ROAD — CONTINUOUS (1967)

Moonlight and dust. She runs. The hook catches the door,
WRENCHES it off a hinge. She clears a fence

The hook SAILS and SINKS into a fence post—rust flakes shower
her hair. She crabs backward, panting.

He doesn't climb; he WALKS to the gate. Calm as a clock.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED SERVICE STATION — NIGHT (1967)

Cinderblock, broken windows. A crooked PAYPHONE. Laurie slams
the receiver, dials with shaking fingers.

OPERATOR (V.O., FILTERED)

Operator.

LAURIE '67

Please— get the sheriff— he's—

Through the busted window: a SHADOW slides over gravel like
an eclipse.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Ma'am?

The MEAT HOOK TAPS the glass. Once. Twice. Metronome steady.

Laurie lowers the receiver like it might explode.

A long, held beat. Neither moves.

The SONG SWELLS—that same AM-thin melody—but there's no radio
here.

LAURIE '67 (BARELY SOUND)
Who are you?

The mask TILTS. Listening.

He lifts the latch with the HOOK TIP and LETS HIMSELF IN.
Laurie bolts through a back doorway into

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD — CONTINUOUS (1967)

Open scrub. No cover. The barn light swings far off.

Laurie collapses to her knees, spent. The shadow STRETCHES
toward her.

Her breath calms—almost a surrender.

The hook enters frame, slow and certain.

The melody PEAKS.

He DRIVES the hook. A single, brutal motion. Laurie's hand
spasms in the grass. HOLD on her face. A faint wind moves her
hair. The world waits.

CUT TO:

Her eyes OPEN to a different light—

HARD CUT — INTERROGATION BRIDGE (2025)

Fluorescent HUM replaces the song.

INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM — NIGHT (2025)

Laurie (16) stares at the tabletop like it might start
playing the tune.

CHEN
Black-and-white stripes... plastic
mask... metal hook.

Laurie nods once.

MILLER
And you died.

Laurie doesn't give him that satisfaction. She glances at the
clock: 11:36 PM.

CHEN (GENTLE)

Next decade?

Laurie inhales. The room seems to tighten—somewhere far away, that AM-thin melody threatens to start again.

BLEED FROM 1967:

Black-and-white SMEARS to blown-out VHS color. Tracking jitter. Tiffany's cover of "I Think We're Alone Now" punches in-too bright, too eager.

ON-SCREEN TITLE: 1987

(VHS color pop. 1.85:1. A little tape warble on cuts. Era-bright synth pads under the mix.)

EXT. COMMUNITY POOL — LATE AFTERNOON (1987)

Sun-baked suburbia. Boom box on a towel blasting Top 40. Teens cannonball. Lifeguard whistle chirps.

LAURIE (16) — cutoff shorts, oversized tee — laughs with KACEY (16) and BRETT (17) as they tow a float to the deep end.

Beyond the CHAIN-LINK FENCE, in the heat shimmer: a FIGURE IN PLAIN WHITE (buttoned cloth shirt, loose cloth pants). Still. Watching.

Laurie squints. A truck passes; the figure is gone.

A kid SPLASHES near the grate; Laurie's already moving, plucking him up with a practiced scoop.

KACEY

You're a machine, Mon-roe.

Laurie's eyes drift back to the fence. Nothing there.

A faint HOLLOW BREATH (through latex) under the summer noise. She can't place it.

CUT TO:

EXT. BARRETT HOUSE — NIGHT (1987)

A quiet split-level on a cul-de-sac. Sprinklers tick. Porch light hums.

INT. BARRETT HOUSE — LIVING ROOM — NIGHT

VHS glow. A sitcom laugh track burbles from the TV. Toys underfoot.

Laurie sets a CORDLESS PHONE on the coffee table, checks the front and back deadbolts. The BARRETT KIDS — TINA (8) and MATTY (6) — race in capes.

LAURIE
Upstairs by nine, deal? And stay
behind me if you need water.

They salute like tiny soldiers. Thunder rumbles far away (or maybe a neighbor dropping a weight).

RING.

Laurie answers.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Barrett residence.

Only AIR on the line. In it: that faint, mask-hollow EXHALE.

LAURIE (FIRM) (CONT'D)
Wrong number.

She hangs up, forces a smile for the kids.

MONTAGE — SLOW BURN, 80s SUBURBIA

— Laurie rinses glasses in the kitchen; the BACK PORCH LIGHT flickers once.

— Through blinds: a WHITE SHIRT passes the hedge gap.

— A FRIDGE HUM mimics the breathing; she kills the light, listens — silence.

— Upstairs, she tucks Tina and Matty in; a NIGHTLIGHT paints soft stars.

RING.

LAURIE (LOW) (CONT'D)
If you're bored, call a movie line.

A soft LAUGH filters back — wrong, too close to the receiver. CLICK.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD / POOL NEXT DOOR — SAME

Moon on water. A FLOAT bumps tile. In the bushes: POV through CHEAP RED CURLS attached to a latex mask. INHALE / EXHALE fills the sound.

A WOOD-HANDLED BALE HOOK lifts a section of chain-link, then lowers it soundlessly.

CUT TO:

INT. BARRETT HOUSE — KITCHEN — MINUTES LATER

Laurie fills a PITCHER. The CORDLESS rings again. She lifts it without hello.

We hear the song from somewhere outside, tinny: a neighbor's TV, or nothing at all — Tiffany's "I Think We're Alone Now" cover, chorus riding the summer air. (No lyrics quoted.)

Laurie sets the pitcher down. The song shouldn't be that clear with the windows shut.

BACK DOOR HANDLE twitches. Just once.

LAURIE

Nope.

She slides the deadbolt.

UPSTAIRS HALL — CONTINUOUS

Laurie cracks the kids' door. Both asleep. Nightlight steady.

From the LINEN CLOSET VENTS: the breathing again. She leans in; towels, cedar blocks — nothing.

She turns away; a WHITE SHAPE crosses the far end of the hall in the corner of her eye.

CUT TO:

DOWNSTAIRS — LIVING ROOM — MOMENTS LATER

The TV fizzles to static for one frame, then returns. Laugh track hiccups.

The FRONT DOORKNOB jiggles, stops.

RING.

LAURIE (QUIET) (CONT'D)

Leave us alone.

Silence. Then a WHISPER not made of words – just breath pushing through rubber.

CLICK.

She grabs a FIREPLACE POKER.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRCASE / ENTRY – CONTINUOUS

From behind the frosted SIDELIGHT: a tall silhouette in WHITE, head tilted, listening. The hook tip glints as it slides down the glass – screee.

Laurie backs up the stairs, keeping eyes on the door.

The SONG outside SWELLS a touch. Wrong place, wrong volume.

UPSTAIRS HALL – CONTINUOUS

WHISPER through the return vent – EXHALE / INHALE. Closer.

KIDS' ROOM: Laurie kneels by the beds.

LAURIE (HUSHED)
Shoes on. Quiet game. Stay behind
me.

Tiny hands scramble into sneakers.

CUT TO:

DOWNSTAIRS – KITCHEN / SLIDING DOOR – SAME

The lock CLICKS. The door eases open a fraction. A LATEX CLOWN MASK edges in – cheap shine, RED CURLS ragged with age.

He steps into the kitchen: PLAIN WHITE SHIRT & CLOTH PANTS hanging loose. The BALE HOOK rests against his leg, wood handle worn dark.

He LISTENS. Breath fogs the inside of the mask; moisture beads and runs.

CUT TO:

UPSTAIRS HALL – CONTINUOUS

Laurie leads the kids past the stairs toward the ATTIC PULL – stops. No. Too trap-like. She pivots toward the back stairs.

A FLOORBOARD creaks below.

LAURIE (WHISPER) (CONT'D)
Change of plan.

BACK STAIR / MUDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She eases the MUDROOM DOOR open. The GARAGE beyond is shadow-blue. She points to the side yard gate.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
On my count. Three. Two-

From the kitchen: the breathing SURGES.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
ONE. GO.

They burst into-

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE YARD - CONTINUOUS

Sprinkler mist. Laurie hustles them along the fence line.

The HOOK darts through a KNOTHOLE, catches Laurie's sleeve, nearly pins her. She yanks free, fabric tears.

LAURIE (TO KIDS)
Fence. Now!

Tina and Matty scramble up the cedar slats; Laurie BOOSTS them. Tiny sneakers disappear over the top.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Stay behind me!

She drops back to the grass-

The Clownvict is already IN THE YARD, between her and the house. Close enough for her to hear saliva move with his breath.

In the neighbor's yard, the SONG shifts louder - the cover's chorus peaking like a dare.

Laurie squares the POKER. He tilts his head, listening to her more than the song.

He FEINTS; she swings; he catches the shaft, YANKS her off balance, then LETS GO - making her fall to a knee. He wants her standing when he kills her.

SIRENS faint. A block away.

Laurie bolts for the front, cutting around him-

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT WALK / PORCH - CONTINUOUS

RED-BLUE strobes flicker at the end of the street. The FRONT DOOR looms.

She hits the steps, hand on the knob as-

The CLOWNVICT appears in the doorway from inside, like he was always there. The BALE HOOK rises.

For a half-second: Laurie's shock, his mask breathing roaring in her ear, the chorus peaking across the cul-de-sac-

The hook DRIVES under her ribs and LIFTS. Her breath leaves in a single, small sound.

The POLICE hit the porch, shoving the door at the same instant - it bumps her foot as it swings. They FREEZE, face-to-mask with him, and suddenly he's gone. A side hallway is emptying air and a swinging chain lock.

Laurie sags on the threshold, eyes on the flashing lights she almost reached. Blood strings from the hook wound as he retracts it out of frame.

She works her jaw; no words come. If they did, they'd be: Stay behind me.

Her head turns toward the lawn where two small shapes crouch behind a bush. She almost smiles.

CUT TO BLACK.

ON-SCREEN TITLE: 1997

(Grainy VHS flicker, pulsing alt-rock needle-drop: Garbage's "#1 Crush" or something with that jagged 90s edge.)

EXT. STATE COLLEGE CAMPUS - NIGHT (1997)

Students spill from a FRAT HOUSE - red solo cups, flannel shirts, chokers, and frosted tips.

A "KILLER MOVIE NIGHT" banner flaps on the lawn - the projector screen outside flickers with HALLOWEEN II.

LAURIE (20, sharper, still haunted) walks with her roommate NATALIE (19, theatre major, loves meta jokes).

NATALIE

You realize you're the only person
here
not buzzed or baked?

LAURIE '97

I don't need the extra paranoia.

NATALIE

It's not paranoia if it's a horror
movie.
It's called survival instinct.

They pass a handmade POSTER on a bulletin board: "DON'T LAUGH
— Campus Prankster Strikes Again?" (smiley face defaced into
a clown.)

Laurie clocks it. Doesn't smile.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMPUS LIBRARY — LATE NIGHT (1997)

Study groups thin out. Fluorescent HUM. Laurie and Natalie
settle at a carrel by the window. Natalie flips through a
battered FANGORIA.

NATALIE

Rule one: the virgin always makes
it.
That checks out for you.

LAURIE '97

You think that's funny?

NATALIE

I think it's comforting. At least
one of
us gets out alive.

A SHADOW drags across the glass. They freeze. A STUDENT
outside with headphones lopes past.

Laurie's gaze shifts — faintly, in the darkened window, a
CLOWN MASK shape seems to hover behind them. She turns —
nothing there. The reflection is empty.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS QUAD — SAME (1997)

Sodium lights BUZZ. The wind pushes paper cups across the grass.

A FIGURE in ORANGE PRISON SCRUBS leans against a lamppost, watching the party. The cracked CLOWN MASK — hair matted — stares across the quad. A battered HOOK glints in his hand.

A DRUNK FRAT GUY stumbles close, squints.

DRUNK FRAT GUY
Yo, costume's badass, dude. Where's
the carnival?

The figure doesn't move. Just BREATHES.

The frat guy peels off, unsettled.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM HALLWAY — NIGHT (1997)

Natalie fumbles keys at their door. Laurie notices something carved into the wood at eye level:

DON'T LAUGH

She goes tight, shoves Natalie inside.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM ROOM — CONTINUOUS (1997)

A PHONE RINGS. Natalie answers, half-joking —

NATALIE
Hello? You've reached final girl
central.
(listens, frowns)
Wrong number.

She hangs up. Immediately — it RINGS again.

Laurie rips it from her.

LAURIE '97
(quiet, hard)
Who is this?

A hush. Ragged breathing. Underneath: soft, stifled chuckles — like more than one person trying not to laugh.

VOICE (V.O.)
 (through mask, almost a
 whisper)
 Alone now.

The line CLICKS dead.

Laurie stares at the receiver. Then —

The HALL LIGHT outside their door FLICKERS.

NATALIE
 Laurie—

LAURIE '97
 Pack your bag. Shoes. Now.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM COMMON ROOM — NIGHT (1997)

Students laugh at I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER on VHS.
 Onscreen: the hook-wielding killer taunts.

Behind them: the REAL CLOWNVICT '97 stands in the doorway,
 unnoticed, breathing through the mask.

Laurie steps in — freezes.

LAURIE '97
 Turn around. Now.

They laugh — think she's doing a bit. The Clownvict lifts the
 HOOK.

SCREAMS shred the room as he wades forward. A COUCH flips.
 The TV SMASHES to snow.

CUT TO:

SEQUENCE: CAMPUS CHASE (1997)

— STAIRS: Laurie drags Natalie down. A FIRE ALARM is yanked;
 SPRINKLERS erupt.

— HALLWAY: Red STROBE lights pulse. Students slip in the
 water. A wet HOOK scrapes cinderblock, sending sparks.

— SCIENCE LAB: Beakers SHATTER as the hook carves benches.
 Gas hisses from a cracked line; emergency fans WHIRL.

– GIRLS' BATHROOM: Laurie smears "DON'T LAUGH" off a mirror with her sleeve – it's written in lipstick. Footsteps approach. A STALL DOOR swings – empty.

– LIBRARY STACKS: The breathing through the mask ECHOES. Laurie crouches between shelves, holding her breath as the hook slides across metal. Natalie squeezes her eyes shut.

NATALIE

(whisper)

You're the Final Girl. You know what to do.

LAURIE '97

(whisper back)

Not if he keeps coming back.

The hook dips into frame – testing the aisle. Silence.

A beat. Then Laurie bolts –

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS CLOCKTOWER – NIGHT (1997)

They burst onto the roof. Wind HOWLS. City lights smear below. The big BRONZE BELL hangs above like a guillotine.

The Clownvict follows, drenched, mask streaked and cracking.

NATALIE

We can jump!

LAURIE '97

We won't make it.

She squares off – yanks a CAMPUS SECURITY REVOLVER from her waistband (lifted at the desk downstairs).

LAURIE '97 (CONT'D)

Stay behind me.

The BELL TOLLS midnight – a deafening, body-shaking CLANG.

CLOWNVICT '97

(soft, through mask)

Alone now.

He lunges.

They CLASH – the hook rings off the revolver's frame. BOOM – Laurie FIRES. He STAGGERS – then drives the HOOK into her side.

Laurie GASPS, staring at Natalie.

LAURIE '97

Run.

Natalie hesitates – sobbing – then bolts for the stairwell.

The Clownvict LIFTS Laurie, the hook glinting against the neon skyline. Blood strings in the wind.

The BELL TOLLS again.

Her scream cuts–

SMASH TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD 2007

Grimy handheld. Desaturated sick-greens and nicotine browns. Sound is wet, loud, mean.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKWOODS TRUCK STOP – NIGHT (2007)

Rain slashes a flickering OPEN 24 HRS sign. Mud everywhere. A stray dog, ribs showing, gnaws something unidentifiable.

LAURIE (16) – hood up, chipped black nail polish, bruised knuckles – trudges to the door. She's soaked, out of breath, wired.

A lifted DODGE RAM idles. Its driver, HANK (30s, mean for sport), hawks a gob into the rain and watches Laurie like she owes him money.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER – CONTINUOUS (2007)

Grease film on everything. A tiny TV blares shock news. COUNTER GUY (20s) thumbs his phone, doesn't look up.

COUNTER GUY

Kitchen's closed 'til she shows.
You want chips, pick a color.

LAURIE '07

Payphone?

He chin-juts toward the bathroom corridor.

COUNTER GUY (CALLING AFTER)
 If it eats your quarter I don't
 know you.

Laurie shoulders past COUPLE arguing about cigarettes. The
 woman bumps Laurie on purpose.

WOMAN
 Watch it.

LAURIE '07
 Sorry.

WOMAN (MOCKING)
 Sor-ry.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK STOP HALL / PAYPHONE — MOMENTS LATER (2007)

Fluorescent tube BUZZES. The payphone is sticky, receiver
 cracked.

Laurie dials with shaking fingers.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
 Rockport PD—

The line SQUEALS, then a cheap CLOWN LAUGH bleeds in.

CLOWNVICT (V.O.)
 You'll be—

Laurie slams the receiver down, staring at it like it bit
 her.

Behind her, a bathroom door OPENS. HANK steps out, wiping his
 hands on his hoodie.

HANK
 You runnin' from a boyfriend or
 runnin' from a boyfriend.

LAURIE '07
 Neither.

HANK
 Cool story. Need a ride or—

LAURIE '07
 No.

He smirks, blocks the hall.

HANK
Say please.

She pivots, shoulders past him hard enough to knock his shoulder into the wall.

HANK (CALLING) (CONT'D)
Yeah. You'll be.

Laurie doesn't look back.

CUT TO:

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY — LATER (2007)

Rain heavier now. Laurie walks the narrow shoulder. Every passing truck wind-slap nearly knocks her into the ditch.

A pair of HEADLIGHTS slow beside her. The WHITE SEDAN. Windows too dark.

It paces her. Then glides ahead and disappears into the trees.

She stops, breathing hard. Somewhere in the forest, metal scrapes metal— faint.

The sludge-metal COVER of the song starts so low it's like tinnitus.

LAURIE '07 (TO HERSELF)
Fuck me...Not again.

She leaves the road for the woods.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS / ABANDONED FARM DRIVE — NIGHT (2007)

No light except lightning. The WHITE SEDAN is parked crooked. No one inside.

Beyond, a sagging FARMHOUSE. One window flickers.

Laurie crouches by the car, palms the hood — still warm.

A CHIME of metal. Not a bell — metal on metal.

She circles wide toward the house.

CUT TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE – NIGHT (2007)

The smell hits first: wet rot, mold, old pennies. The entryway tilts a few degrees, floor swollen from leaks.

A BARE BULB stutters overhead.

CINEMATIC ENTRANCE

A figure steps into the half-light: bulked up, shoulders like a freezer. KHAKI SCRUBS caked in dried blood. The LATEX CLOWN MASK is MOSS. COVERED, MOLDY, and BROKEN IN CHUNKS, exposing pitted foam and a glimpse of sweaty skin beneath.

In his fist: an ALMOST COMICALLY LARGE HOOK, too big to be practical, edges nicked and black. He just STANDS, breathing. The mask's seams WEEP moisture.

LAURIE '07 (LOW, MEAN)
Come on then! Let's end this. You
skull fucking, mother fucker

CLOWNVICT '07 (ALMOST TENDER)
Alone now.

LAURIE '07
Suck my fat dick , you fucking twat
cunt.

He moves with ugly grace.

Laurie HURLS a metal toolbox at his head. He doesn't bother to dodge. It hits; he doesn't blink. The box explodes hardware across the floor.

She bolts deeper into

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN / LAIR – CONTINUOUS (2007)

Flies. A slick, black drain. Meat hooks HANG empty. A slurry of rainwater and rust drips from the ceiling into pans.

Laurie grabs a FILLET KNIFE off the counter. The handle is sticky.

She holds her breath, listening. The sludge cover PULSES through the pipes.

A whisper of metal. She spins—

He's IN the doorway already.

She DRIVES the knife for his ribs. He LEANS and lets her cut KHAKI; the blade skitters off something plate-hard beneath.

He catches her wrist with his free hand. Calm. Clinical.

CLOWNVICT '07

Shh.

He slams her into the fridge. It bounces in the frame. A shelf collapses inside; jars shatter.

Laurie headbutts the mask. It leaves a smear of green-black gunk on her forehead.

She goes for his eyes. Latex slides under her fingernails. He doesn't make a sound. He finally HITS her once – short, brutal – and the world SQUEALS.

INT. FARMHOUSE BASEMENT – LATER (2007)

Chain rattle. Concrete sweat. Laurie blinks awake CUFFED to a support post with a length of chain.

Her face is swollen. A tooth is loose.

The hook drags across the concrete somewhere in the dark, drawing lazy circles.

LAURIE '07 (SPITS BLOOD)

That all you got?

Silence. Then a BREATH near her ear she didn't hear approach.

CLOWNVICT '07 (O.S.)

You make it mean.

She jerks – he's behind the post now. The hook slides along the chain, finding the PADLOCK. A gentle TAP-TAP like testing a melon.

LAURIE '07

Do it. Quit breathing at me and do it.

He doesn't. He leaves her there. The hook sound recedes.

OTHER VOICE (O.S.) (MALE, TERRIFIED)

Hey! Hey– anybody– oh God–

A WET-TEAR sound. Then SCREAMING. Then GURGLING. Then nothing.

Laurie saws her chain against the post bolt, skin tearing on iron. She works like a trapped animal.

The sludge cover crawls toward the CHORUS, distorted to hell.

She levers the bolt free. The chain GIVES an inch— enough to slide her hand out if she's willing to leave some skin.

She is. She YANKS; palm RIPS; she's free. She stumbles into—

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT HALL / STAIRS — CONTINUOUS (2007)

Bulbs pop as she passes. She moves on ADRENALINE. Blood fingerprints on the wall mark her path.

She reaches the stairs—

The hook SLAMS the railing. Wood explodes. He's there, filling the hall.

LAURIE '07

Come on, you rotted—

He crosses the hall in two steps and LIFTS her by the throat. Feet kick air.

CLOWNVICT '07 (SOFT)

Alone.

She JAMS her thumbs into the mask seam, trying to peel it. Skin shows — not rot, just human — sweaty, pale. His eyes flick to hers— an odd, almost hurt expression.

For a weird second, both hesitate.

She uses it. KNEE to his groin. He FOLDS an inch. She drops, hits the stairs on her back, SLIDES through plaster dust into —

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM — CONTINUOUS (2007)

Rain hammers the windows. The TV, unplugged, TURNS ON by itself — the sludge cover of the song now FULL VOLUME.

Laurie lunges for the front door. The CHAIN is on.

She throws her weight. The screws SCREAM out of the jamb. The door opens an inch—

The hook PIERCES the wood beside her face – WHAM – pinning it shut.

Laurie pulls the SAWED-OFF from a wall rack (a relic, rusted). She SNAPS it open. Empty.

She screams in pure rage.

The hook PARES down the door, carving a clean crescent. She bolts down a side hall–

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM – CONTINUOUS (2007)

Mildew blooms like maps. She kicks the WINDOW LATCH. Stuck. She hits it again. Again. It GIVES.

She gets one leg out–

The hook SHEARS the door hinges behind her. The door falls, revealing him filling the frame, mask WEEPING.

LAURIE '07 (THROUGH TEETH)
Let's end this.

He steps onto the tub edge, balancing with impossible stillness for a man that size. The hook rises– so big it nearly eclipses her view of him.

At the edge of hearing, the song's CHORUS finally distinguishes itself from the sludge.

She tries to squeeze the rest of the way out– her hoodie catches on a nail. She's trapped for a single, awful beat.

He DRIVES the hook–

–It MISSES her throat by a finger's width as she DROPS out the window. The hook BURIEDS in the exterior siding.

She hits the mud outside, rolls, RUNS.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMYARD – CONTINUOUS (2007)

She sprints for the tree line. Behind her, the hook TEARS free.

He steps into the doorway, rain needling his mask.

CLOWNVICT '07 (ALMOST CHEERFUL)

Now.

He comes FAST.

Laurie reaches a fence, throws herself over— slips, lands hard. She crawls. The chorus PEAKS.

Her hand finds a BROKEN BOTTLE. She whirls and JABS it into his forearm seam as he grabs for her ankle.

For the first time, a SOUND — not pain so much as surprise.

He recovers instantly. The hook rises—

LAURIE '07 (A BREATH)

Not again.

He DRIVES the hook. The camera whips to the trees as blood MISTS the rain.

On the wind, the chorus warps and slows— a broken record grinding to a stop.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD 2017

INT. SUBURBAN KITCHEN — NIGHT (2010S)

LAURIE (late 30s/early 40s) — hair tangled, mascara smeared, sweats, robe. A bottle of vodka sweats on the table beside a half-cleaned shotgun. Pills scattered like candy.

She downs two, then chases with vodka.

From upstairs: LAUGHTER. Her KIDS (15 & 17) horse around. For a moment she smiles — then slams the shotgun closed.

A KNOCK at the back door — just the wind rattling. She checks the lock anyway.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S BEDROOM — LATER

She's passed out in bed, TV still on, pistol under pillow.

The TV fuzzes to static. The sound of BREATHING comes through.

NIGHTMARE MONTAGE — LAURIE'S POV

1967: The SHADOW CLOWNVICT in silhouette at the end of a hallway, whispering boo.

1987: The NEON-MASK version, stabbing in strobe light.

1997: A Scream-style parody figure, knife flashing, mocking her with meta quips.

2007: The MOLDY MASK and massive HOOK scraping the wall, breathing wet and heavy.

All of them flicker and overlap, leaning close.

CLOWNVICTS (CHORUS, LAYERED WHISPERS)
You always die.

Laurie SCREAMS awake — gun drawn — finger on trigger — aimed at her own reflection in the dresser mirror.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM — DAY

Her kids sit across from her. She paces with coffee, pouring vodka in when she thinks they're not looking.

TEEN 1 (17)
Mom. You gotta stop this.

TEEN 2 (15)
Yeah. Nobody's after us. Nobody's ever after us.

Laurie SLAMS the mug down.

LAURIE
You don't get it. He comes back.
Every time. He—he changes. Mask.
Voice. Knife. Hook. But it's him.
It's always him.

TEEN 1
You sound crazy.

LAURIE
Crazy's what's kept me alive.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT — NIGHT

Weapon racks: shotguns, rifles, machetes, knives. Laurie sharpens a blade, swigging vodka. A wall of clippings: Babysitter Murder, 1967... Truck Stop Killer, 2007... all circled, connected with yarn.

Her kids peek down the stairs.

TEEN 2
She's losing it.

TEEN 1
Or she's getting ready.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY — NIGHT (DREAM)

Laurie walks down her house hall. Each door flickers to a different decade.

1987 dorm room — dead friends slumped.

1997 frat house — blood splashed over posters.

2007 farmhouse basement — HOOK sparks against concrete.

At the end: her kids' door. The Clownvict fills the frame, mask shifting through all versions.

CLOWNVICT (CHORUS)
You can't save them.

He lunges—

CUT TO:

INT. SUBURBAN BEDROOM — REAL

Laurie JOLTS awake, gun aimed at the door. The kids burst in.

TEEN 1
Jesus, Mom!

TEEN 2
Put it down!

Laurie lowers it, trembling.

LAURIE
I'm not losing you too.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN — NEXT MORNING

Her kids eat cereal, wary. She packs a duffel: knives, pistol, ammo, vodka bottle.

TEEN 1
Where are you going?

LAURIE
Wherever he is. Before he gets here.

TEEN 2 (SOFT)
You'll die, Mom.

LAURIE
I already have.

CUT TO:

Messy fortress. Bottles everywhere. Every drawer has a weapon in it.

Laurie is shaking while loading her pistols . To calm herself she takes a mansized swig of whiskey and chases it down with some pills.

TEEN 1
(whisper, angry)
She's drunk. Again.

TEEN 2
She's worse than drunk. She's obsessed.

Laurie slams the bottle down and glares at them.

LAURIE
You think I like this? You think I want to live like a goddamn soldier? He's real. He's coming.

Teen 1 shakes her head, pulls teen 2 upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY – LATER

The kids whisper in their rooms.

TEEN 1
She's gonna drink herself to death.

TEEN 2
Or get us killed first.

A SOUND outside cuts them off – an ENGINE idling. Lights sweep the curtains.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

The WHITE SEDAN sits in the drive. Headlights cut through the blinds.

Laurie's there instantly, shotgun in one hand, bottle in the other.

LAURIE
(quiet, almost relieved)
I told you.

The stereo CLICKS ON by itself. That dreamy-goth cover plays, warped.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRS / ENTRYWAY – MOMENTS LATER

The wall SHUDDERS with a heavy hit. A picture frame falls.

Laurie shoves her kids toward the upstairs closet.

LAURIE
In. Now. Don't come out.

TEEN 1
Mom—

LAURIE
DO IT!

She locks them in.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS

The CLOWNVICT steps into view: khaki scrubs smeared with blood, mask rotted and wet at the seams. The HOOK scrapes the wall as he drags it.

Laurie faces him, trembling but fierce.

LAURIE
It's me. Always me.

He lifts the hook.

The song CHORUS hums through the house.

Laurie FIRES. The blast rocks the hallway. Smoke everywhere.

He doesn't fall. He just keeps coming.

CUT TO:

INT. CLOSET – CONTINUOUS

The kids clutch each other, shaking. They hear:

- Laurie SCREAM.
- Furniture shattering.
- Another GUNSHOT.

Then silence.

Teen leyes brim.

TEEN 1
Mom..

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN – MOMENTS LATER

Laurie staggers in, bleeding from her side, dragging the shotgun. She sees the kids creeping from the closet.

LAURIE
No. Back.

Behind her – The Clownvict fills the doorway. Mask dripping. Hook gleaming.

Laurie shoulders the shotgun. It CLICKS empty.

She hurls it aside, pulls a HUNTING KNIFE from her belt.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
 (to her kids)
 Run.

TEEN 2
 We're not leaving you!

LAURIE
 RUN!

They bolt for the back door.

Laurie CHARGES the Clownvict with the knife. He meets her with the hook.

The kids burst into the yard just as—

Through the kitchen window: Laurie SLAMMED against the wall, the hook punching through. Blood sprays.

Teen 1 SCREAMS. Teen 2 drags her away.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET — CONTINUOUS

The kids stumble into the night, soaked in tears.

Behind them, the house windows light up with shadows of the fight. Laurie's silhouette thrashes, then goes still.

The music drops to a faint whisper:

TEEN 1
 I think we're alone now..

CUT TO:

(V(STARK MODERN REALISM. 2.39:1. COOL FLUORESCENTS, PRACTICAL SIRENS. INDUSTRIAL/DARKWAVE REMIX OF "I THINK WE'RE ALONE NOW" BLEEDS IN AS THREAT NEARS.)

INT. ROCKPORT POLICE STATION — EVENING (2025)

A lived.in bullpen. Whiteboard calendars, birthday cupcake tray, evidence banker boxes.

ROOKIE VEGA (24) and OFFICER RAMIREZ (30s) play cards. DISPATCH AUDIO chatter under it all: traffic stops, a lost dog, a noise complaint.

DETECTIVE CHEN (30s) types quietly, headphones around her neck. DETECTIVE MILLER (40s) stirs burnt coffee.

At the far end: LAURIE (16), cuffed to a bench, eyes moving like a field technician mapping exits. She doesn't blink much.

VEGA

You wanna buy in, Monroe? Winner gets your... uh—

Laurie doesn't answer. She studies the vent grilles, the camera dome, the sightlines to the front doors.

MILLER (DRY)

She's busy planning the heist.

Chen watches Laurie clock the room and can't help respecting the thoroughness.

CHEN (SOFT, TO LAURIE)

You hungry?

Laurie shrugs. The shrug says: Food is not the point.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Unit twelve, check a suspicious parked on Willow and Grant. White sedan. No plates.

Laurie looks up. Chen clocks that, too.

MILLER (OFF THE DISPATCH)

It's always a white sedan.

The fluorescents BUZZ. One FLICKERS. Vega taps it with a baton like that will help.

From outside, a far-off SIREN drifts past and fades. For a moment, the room feels almost safe.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM — LATER (2025)

Soft hum. One-way glass. Laurie sits across from Chen; Miller leans against the wall.

CHEN

Start simple. Rules. If you had to
brief me like a rookie.

LAURIE

He finds me by midnight. He learns.
I learn back. People don't believe
me until they watch themselves die.

MILLER

Cheery.

LAURIE (TO CHEN)

If the song starts, we're out of
time.

CHEN

The song—

Laurie nods once. Chen doesn't press. Not yet.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Twelve to base, sedan's moved
along. Negative contact.

The HVAC exhales. Then — tiny, almost subsonic — a BEAT. Like
a heart behind the wall.

Laurie hears it first. Her posture changes. Chen senses the
change and goes still.

MILLER

What.

LAURIE

He's near.

CUT TO:

INT. BULLPEN / FRONT LOBBY — DUSK (2025)

Vega smirks at Ramirez, deals again. The FRONT DOORS reflect
the bullpen like a ghost image.

Outside the glass: the parking lot sodium lamps HUM.

Then — one by one — they go DARK down the row.

Ramirez notices. Opens his mouth—

The lobby glass SPIDERS with a CRACK like ice.

VEGA
Earthquake?

The INDUSTRIAL REMIX slides into the silence like an oil slick – bass you feel in your bones more than hear.

MILLER (O.S.)
Lock it down! Now!

Vega and Ramirez jump, scramble for the crash bars–

The outer doors BLOW INWARD, showering glass. A tall SILHOUETTE fills the doorway –

armor.plated ORANGE DOC RIG, fractured, hyper.real CLOWN MASK; a MONSTROUS HOOK fused along the right forearm. LEDs along the hook's spine FIZZLE, then die.

He steps forward and DRAGS the hook across the aluminum frame; the sound is a SCREAM.

The REMIX gets louder without any source to point at.

Vega raises his sidearm–

LAURIE (O.S.)
Don't be alone!

Too late – the killer CROSSES the lobby in three surgical motions. Vega goes down in a whirl of orange and steel. Ramirez FIRES; rounds spark off plating. The hook LIFTS Ramirez and THROWS him across the desk like a practice dummy.

ALARM KLAXONS kick in. Red strobes paint the walls.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM – SAME (2025)

The door SHUDDERS in its frame with the lobby impacts. Chen's hand is already on her keys.

CHEN (TO LAURIE)
We move. Stay with me.

LAURIE
He wants me isolated. That's the rule.

MILLER
So we break it.

Chen UNLOCKS the cuffs. Laurie rubs at her wrists once, then stands – lighter with her hands free, heavier with what that means.

The REMIX seeps through the wall like water. A faint HARMONY traces the old chorus – recognizably that song but cold.

CUT TO:

INT. BULLPEN / HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS (2025)

Siren wash. Smoke from a discharged extinguisher hangs low.

CINEMATIC ENTRANCE –

Through the blown doors, the CLOWNVICT (2025) steps into the bullpen, steady as a metronome. Mask: a composite – cheap plastic shine over ballistic plates, jawline fractured into a permanent grin. Suit: armored orange with DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS stenciled along the spine. Hook: heavy, mirror.bright, sleeved in scuffed alloy; LEDs now DEAD.

He turns his head, listening to the song only he and Laurie seem to truly hear.

Miller shoulders a patrol rifle.

MILLER

On me.

Chen positions herself to cover Laurie without crowding her – a protective orbit.

The killer STARTS FOR THEM.

Miller fires a controlled pair – THUNK.THUNK into plate. Chen flanks; Laurie angles opposite, keeping bodies in her periphery – not letting the rule take root.

The killer FEINTS left, then blurs right; the hook SHEARS a desk corner clean off. Paper snow. The REMIX rides the clatter, swelling.

CHEN (INTO RADIO)

Dispatch, station under attack.
Officer down. Lock district. Lock
it now.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

Copy–

Her voice WARBLER as the song bleeds into the channel.

CUT TO:

INT. RECORDS HALL — MOMENTS LATER (2025)

Metal shelving canyons. Evidence boxes loom. The trio moves fast, quiet, stepping over glass, past a sign reading EVIDENCE: 1960s ARCHIVE.

Laurie touches the box labeled ROCKPORT PD — 1967 like it's a gravestone. She doesn't stop.

MILLER

Armory in the basement.

LAURIE

Stairs, not elevators. He'll cut the car.

CHEN

He learns you.

LAURIE

Every time.

They reach the stairwell—

—The HOOK SPEARS through the door seam from the other side. Miller YANKS Laurie back a half step before it would've pinned her shoulder. The hook withdraws, leaving a GOUGE.

MILLER (TO LAURIE, GRUDGING)

Good call.

They veer away down a side hall lined with glass-fronted offices.

The REMIX dims... then SWELLS from a different direction. He's herding them.

LAURIE (TO CHEN)

He'll want me in a box. Corners the swing of the hook, makes it clean.

CHEN

So we don't give him the box.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNITY ROOM – CONTINUOUS (2025)

Stacked chairs. Vending machines. A COFFEE URN steams. The room is an island of normalcy.

Laurie moves to the vending machine, palms it – heavy. She and Miller TOPPLE it to block one door. Chen drags collapsible tables to brace the other.

MILLER

A minute. That's all we're buying.

The REMIX thins to a whistle. The CHORUS MELODY peeks through and then hides again.

LAURIE

He's not used to us picking ground.

CHEN (RADIO)

Units converging are ten out.

MILLER

He'll be done in two.

Silence. Their breathing. The hiss of the urn.

The HOOK TIP TAPS the glass window once. Twice. A courtesy knock.

LAURIE (TO BOTH)

Eyes up. Don't listen to the song.

CLOWNVICT (O.S., THROUGH GLASS)

You'll be—

Miller FIRES through the glass midword. The window ERUPTS. Silence again – except the song.

CHEN

Move.

They reroute, slipping through a side service corridor—

CUT TO:

INT. SERVICE CORRIDOR / EVIDENCE CAGE – MOMENTS LATER (2025)

Cement. Wire cages. Chen swipes a badge. BUZZ. Gate slides.

They enter the EVIDENCE CAGE. Lockers labeled by year. Chen throws a vest at Laurie. Miller yunks a SHOTGUN from the training rack.

Laurie scans the lockers, then pops ROCKPORT PD — 1987 / 1997 / 2007 / 2010s like old friends.

In a 2010s bin: a BOWIE KNIFE in an evidence bag. She tears it open with her teeth.

MILLER (EYEING HER)
Catalog much?

LAURIE
He leaves souvenirs.

Something SHADOWS the frosted glass slit in the cage door.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
He wants me alone.

The hook PUNCHES THROUGH the wire like paper. Laurie SNARES the shaft with the evidence chain and YANKS like a bridle.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Now!

Chen empties her mag into the WRIST SEAM. Sparks. One LED on the hook gutter-flares, then goes DEAD. The killer recoils a step — almost surprised.

CLOWNVICT (O.S.) (GLITCHED)
—lo— now.

MILLER (TO CHEN)
We're not winning a stand.up.

CHEN
Back to the interview room.
Cameras. Mics. People listening
counts.

Laurie nods: not alone. That's the rule to break the rule.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY / INTERROGATION SUITE — CONTINUOUS (2025)

They hustle. The REMIX trails them like static, sometimes ahead of them, sometimes behind.

A downed officer groans by the copier. Miller drags him into an office without stopping. Chen leads with calm urgency.

They reach the interrogation suite.

CHEN (INTO RADIO)
 Dispatch, open channel, patch all
 units to interview one. Keep line
 hot.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
 Copy. You're live.

PATROL (V.O.)
 Unit nine on Eastlake. We're with
 you, Detective.

EMT (V.O.)
 We hear you. Breathing.

JANITOR (V.O., FAINT)
 I'm here too.

Laurie hears it — people. The opposite of alone. It steadies
 her.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM — CONTINUOUS (2025)

Chen shoves the table aside, clears a lane. Miller posts at
 the hinge, shotgun up.

Laurie rolls her shoulders once — the way fighters do before
 walking back in.

The REMIX presses against the door like a storm about to
 break.

CLOUD OF VOICES (COMMS, V.O.)
 We're with you. / Copy. / You got
 this. / Not alone.

The door BUCKLES. Wood chips fly.

MILLER (TO CHEN, QUICK)
 If he gets through me, you run.

CHEN
 Not happening.

LAURIE (QUIET, TO BOTH)
 Breathe.

The door EXPLODES INWARD.

The CLOWNVICT fills the frame— larger, more there than he's
 ever been. The song is a wall now.

Miller FIRES; the hook BATS the barrel; the blast shreds the clock on the wall - hands freeze at 11:58.

Chen TOSSES something-

-A SAWED.OFF SHOTGUN arcs across the room.

Laurie SNATCHES it midflight and RACKS it: a clean, final CH.CHUNK that punches a hole in the song.

She steps to center, between the doorway and the detectives.

LAURIE (2025) (CONT'D)
Stay behind me.

The REMIX inhales-

-And we SMASH TO BLACK on the beat before the trigger pull.

FADE TO BLACK.