

The Door
by
John Carlon

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Lightning tears through the night sky as barren trees whisper and dance in the wind. A heavy rain beats down from above.

A WOMAN runs past reaching branches, a CHILD in her arms. Her breath comes in panicked gasps.

She jerks a glance over one shoulder.

WOMAN

Help me! Please somebody...

Thunder blasts the rain drenched woods, drowning out her pleas.

EXT. CITY - DAY

The sky is choked with dark clouds.

Far below, a car motors past a final stop light and merges onto a large four lane highway. It leaves the sprawling metropolis in its wake.

All is silent but the soft sound of the wind whipping past.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The Woman barges through a side door and into a kitchen. She throws it shut and locks it. The child begins to cry.

A large knife on the counter. She grabs it.

WOMAN

Shh... It's okay baby.

She looks out the window.

A MAN bulls out of the trees. He holds something in his hands.

A glint of steel. An AX.

He passes a shovel jutting from the ground near a partially dug hole and heads straight for the house.

The Woman turns. Flees with the child into the

FOYER

and mounts the stairs.

As she reaches the top she hears an explosion of wood and glass as the Man kicks in the kitchen door.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Still far below, the car moves through the divided countryside on a modest two lane. Dismal and gray, the weather hasn't improved.

The wind still whips past. Calm and soothing.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

The Woman crouches in the corner as she comforts the child.

WOMAN

Be quiet and wait for mommy... OK?

The child nods his head as she kisses him. Hugs him.

She moves with stealth into the

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

and closes the bathroom door behind her.

She tip toes down the hall, screams

WOMAN

Up here, asshole!

and runs noisily down into a

BEDROOM

where she ducks behind the door and brings the knife up.

From where she hides she hears the man stalking her with heavy feet.

On the stairs.

Down the hallway.

He bursts into the room. The Woman lets out a crazed scream and throws herself at him.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The car appears closer as it scoots down a poorly paved country road. The occupants still remain hidden beneath the faded roof.

A TUNNEL comes into view. A black mouth in the side of a small mountain.

It swallows the car with a gentle asphalt hum.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

The child kneels before the closed door. He stares through the crack under the door and into the hallway.

Crashes come from other rooms in the hall. Footsteps move back and forth.

Shoes pop into view and the child scurries to the far side of the bathroom. Cringes behind the tub.

He sees the shadow of the Man standing outside the door.

The handle turns slowly.

Without warning the door flies open with a loud crash.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

The car sits at a crossroads. Turns left.

Wheels whisper over loose dirt.

It begins to rain and windshield wipers jump to life.

The car approaches an old covered bridge and disappears inside.

A soft thunder of old boards echo as the unseen car crosses over.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Man stands at the sink. Scalding hot water pours out of the faucet. He stares at his hands, dirty and smeared with drying blood.

Somewhere a clock CHIMES the half hour.

He plunges them into the water and scrubs furiously.

Lightning flashes outside as he dries his hands.

He turns to the table and grabs up the long black object laying there.

A SHOTGUN.

The Man moves towards the door. His body fills the frame until all is black.

When he emerges on the other side, walking away, he is in

INT. UPSTAIRS ROOM - NIGHT

He sets the shotgun on the edge of a large wooden desk. Opens an ancient record player and drops the needle in place.

Vinyl barks out, scratches and settles into an old fifties tune. The song is "We Belong Together" by Robert and Johnny.

The Man takes a seat behind the desk. Pulls out a large book from a drawer and begins to write something in it.

With a deep throated roar he clears the desktop in a fit of rage.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The car pulls up in front and stops. Windshield wipers still beat back the rain as the engine dies.

All is calm and quiet. Rain gently patters across the roof of the car.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Door stands ajar at the far end of the hall. Light spills out across the wooden floor.

The song plays its last, replaced by the -- schick schick -- schick schick -- of the records end.

A grandfather clock ticks loudly nearby. Its hands slow down. Gears grind to a halt.

Lightning washes over everything and grows in brilliance until all that is left is a blinding whiteness.

A car door slams loudly and

FADE TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

JOHN wakes with a start, eyes blinking off sleep. He sits up and grabs his gauze wrapped head. Winces. Groans.

JOHN

Oh, god..

He stares out the windshield at the wipers. They play a familiar tune on the wet glass, -- schick schick -- schick schick --. Stretching across the seat he turns them off.

In the rearview mirror he catches his reflection. With his hands he inspects his face as if seeing it for the first time.

John looks at the drivers seat. Empty. Into the back. Empty. With a frown he opens the door.

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

An ancient Victorian rises before John, eerie and monolithic.

He wades through the overgrown grass towards the porch. Looks around.

JOHN

Hello?

The sun peeks through parting clouds, shedding light on the dreary landscape.

John fumbles through his jacket. Finds two Polaroid photos with names written on them.

INSERT - POLAROID PHOTOS:

-- Of a woman with My Wife Sarah written at the bottom.

-- Of a young boy with My Son Jason written at the bottom.

BACK TO JOHN

He smiles. Puts the photos back and pulls out two slender pill bottles. He studies them. Takes a pill from each. Pops them in his mouth and

BOOM

The blast seems to start in the house, spreads outward and ends in a crackle of thunder.

He jerks toward the source of the noise. The House.

JOHN
What the...?

Mounting the stairs, he peers in through the front door. A dark shadow moves inside. He knocks.

JOHN
Hello?

Tries the handle. It moves freely but the door doesn't budge so he pushes harder. It cracks open slightly but instantly slams shut as if by someone on the other side.

JOHN
I see you. Open the door.

Nothing.

He puts his shoulder into it. The door flies open with a BANG and John sprawls into the

INT. FOYER - DAY

A soft, white noise hum blankets the house. Furniture hides under moth eaten sheets like dirty ghosts frozen in time.

John picks himself up. Eyes glide across the features of the house. He sniffs at the air and furrows his brow.

He peers into the room on his left. A fireplace. Cold and lifeless.

Something shuffles on the stairs. He looks up as a shadow merges with the deeper darkness of the second floor.

JOHN
Stop this. Right now.

The room falls into gloom as the sun goes back into hiding.

John mounts the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

A large grandfather clock leans against the wall. John stands before it. Stares up into its lifeless face. The hands are frozen at 11:34.

He flicks a light switch but nothing happens.

The hall is wide and divided by a deep red carpet runner that ends at the foot of a massive door. Several smaller closed doors line either side of the hallway.

He creeps forward. Halts. Muted whispers are coming from behind this large door.

JOHN
Who's there?

THE DOOR has a large brass doorknob with an elongated figure eight engraved on the face. Carved into the dark oak is a two faced depiction of the Roman god Janus.

He reaches out and tries the handle. Finding it locked, he pounds his fist against it.

JOHN
I know you're in there... Open the door.

Something WHIMPERS behind him. The eerie sound jerks him around and he follows it back the way he came.

JOHN
Hello?

He peers into a bathroom. Empty.

JOHN
Where are you?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Down here.

John moves to the top of the stairs and sees a woman standing in the foyer. A young boy looks in through the front door. It is SARAH and JASON from the Polaroid photos.

JOHN
Who are you?

SARAH
John, it's us.

He shakes his head.

JOHN
Us who?

SARAH
Your wife and son.

John snatches the photos from his pocket. Studies the images.

JOHN

Sarah.

He rushes down the stairs into the

FOYER

and throws his arms around her.

JOHN

Oh thank god.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

John sits next to Sarah on the porch. An opened photo album in his lap.

Jason stands in the yard under a gray sky. He stares intently at the house.

JOHN

I thought I was having a nightmare.

SARAH

Why?

JOHN

Because I woke up here. I knew where I was but not how I got here.

He rubs his bandaged temples.

JOHN

Everything is foggy.

SARAH

Because of the accident.

JOHN

What happened?

Sarah shrugs her shoulders.

SARAH

We were gone when it happened.

JOHN

I don't remember.

Sarah lets out a brief sigh.

SARAH

That's not the only thing.

JOHN
I don't even recognize myself.

SARAH
You have amnesia. Give it time.

They sit there in uncomfortable silence as Sarah writes on something.

SARAH
This will help you.

She holds up two sticky name tags.

INSERT - NAME TAGS, which reads:

HELLO, my name is:
Sarah

and

HELLO, my name is:
Jason

BACK TO SARAH

SARAH
We're the only ones here, remember that.

She peels off her name tag and sticks it on her shirt.

SARAH
But just in case.

John watches his son. Trying not to feel humiliated, he changes the subject.

JOHN
I had bad dreams about this place when I was his age.

SARAH
What happened?

JOHN
I remember someone saying, "Stay away from that door. Evil lurks inside."

SARAH
Who would say something like that?

JOHN
I can't remember.

SARAH

Had to be your grandpa. It was his house.

JOHN

Maybe.

SARAH

And that gave you nightmares?

JOHN

No. Something else. Why won't my brain work?

SARAH

You know why... or will, I hope.

Jason moves across the lawn to get a new perspective on the house as John changes the subject again.

JOHN

He's acting strange.

SARAH

Losing a father the way he has will do that.

JOHN

He didn't lose me.

SARAH

No, but you've forgotten certain things. You're a stranger to him.

He looks at her with guilty eyes and sighs heavily.

JOHN

I know stuff.

For the first time, John finally looks at the photo album. He traces the empty space between the photos with his finger.

JOHN

I almost remember the photos, but the things that happened in between...

He shakes his head.

JOHN

They're gone. When will those come back?

SARAH
Soon. With a little help of course.

JOHN
I screwed up.

A phone begins to ring inside the house. Quietly at first but builds in intensity.

John rubs his temples and rises from his chair.

JOHN
I'll get it.

At the door he turns around. It has just begun to rain.

Sarah bends next to Jason in the yard. She whispers in his ear as they both stare at John.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A large table dominates the center of the room flanked by chairs.

An old rotary phone hangs on the wall, ringing.

John steps in and answers.

JOHN
Hello.

The phone spits out static and he jerks the phone away from his ear. Hears a voice saying something.

JOHN
Hello?

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Get out... get out of my house.

JOHN
Who is this?

The line continues to crackle.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Now!

John jumps. Begins to sway.

JOHN
(weakly)
I don't know who you think...

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
If you don't... I'll kill your
family and then I'll...

John slams the phone into it's cradle and stumbles into the table. Collapses into one of the chairs.

SARAH (O.S.)
So who... John!

He glances at her as she enters.

SARAH
Your nose.

John reaches a hand up and wipes away blood. He stares at it.

JOHN
Not again.

He moves to the sink and cleans himself up.

SARAH
Who was on the phone?

JOHN
I don't know. Crank call maybe.

SARAH
What did they say?

He grabs a glass from the cabinet. Fills it with water.

JOHN
Get out of my house.

John drags the pill bottles out of his shirt pocket. Looks at them. Shakes his head and puts them back.

SARAH
What?

He turns to face her.

JOHN
Get out... or I'll kill you.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

John walks down the darkened hallway. Light spills from one of the rooms. He stops and peeks in.

It does it again, faster. The clock isn't keeping time.

He stares at it. Hypnotized.

SARAH (O.S.)
You coming to bed or what?

Snapping out of it, he walks away. The hands speed up in a blur and returns to its original time.

CLICK

The countdown continues.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sarah lays in a large bed. Antique night stands with small lamps sit on either side. A book is open before her.

John enters and plops down beside her.

JOHN
(to himself)
A clock running backwards?

SARAH
What?

JOHN
The clock in the hall. You mess with it?

SARAH
No.

JOHN
Strange. The hands are moving backwards.

SARAH
It's broken.

JOHN
Ya think? Even so, clocks can't do that.

SARAH
Well apparently this one can.

Sarah gives him a wicked smile and closes her book.

SARAH
Be a dear and grab the lights.

John quickly reaches out and grabs a lamp off the night stand.

JOHN
Now what?

SARAH
Smart ass.

He puts it down and crosses the room. Flicks the light switch and sends the room into shadows.

As he moves back towards the bed something catches his attention out one of the windows.

A STRANGER stands in the yard beside a mound of dirt. A shovel juts from the ground behind him. Smoke billows around his head from the cigarette he is smoking.

John stands transfixed. Watching.

SARAH
What are you doing?

JOHN
There's someone out there.

Sarah gets out of bed and stands next to John. He pushes her away from the window.

JOHN
Get back. What if its him?

SARAH
Who?

JOHN
The crank call. The one that threatened...

The Stranger flicks the cigarette away and picks something up off the ground. He stalks toward the house.

JOHN
Shit! Stay here.

John is out the door before she can say anything.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

John peeks around the corner. Empty.

He keeps low as he crosses to the counter. Grabs a knife.

EXT. SIDE YARD - NIGHT

The door springs creak as John slips through the screen door and into the night.

He moves to where he saw The Stranger. Nothing. No mound of dirt. No shovel.

John sniffs at the air and turns around. He kneels before a smoldering cigarette butt. Flicks it with the knife.

As he rises to his feet he scans the yard one final time.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

John shuffles in to find Sarah fast asleep.

JOHN

Nice. Someone wants to kill us and she's sleeping.

He shakes his head in disgust as he crawls under the sheets.

Listening to the faint snores of Sarah, John stares at the ceiling.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Feet shuffle across a dirty tile floor. A light pops on overhead. Dim and dirty.

Everything is caked with grime and crumbling with age.

A leaky faucet drips into a tub full of filthy water.

Through the looking glass, the bathroom is framed like a living photograph hanging on a wall of darkness.

On this side of the mirror the emptiness is filled with the hum of the ocean caught in a seashell.

John leans in close. Moves his head back and forth. Examining his face. The bandages.

Blood dribbles from a soaked patch in the side of his head.

JOHN

Shit.

With shaky hands he slowly unwraps his head and something shifts beneath the bloody bandage.

He leans in closer to get a better look. Blood is now flowing freely.

One final pull on the bandage and a large section of his head tumbles free.

John scrambles to catch it. Fumbles it through his fingers and it clatters into the sink.

JOHN

No. No. No. That's not right.

He reaches up and explores the hole. Brains and blood pour out onto his shoulder.

JOHN

Oh god no...

His hand digs into his head. All the way to the wrist.

More brains and blood escape as he feels around inside his own skull until he finds something.

John pulls his clenched hand free. It emerges from his head with a slurping pop.

He turns on the water. Starts cleaning off his hand and the object he found.

JOHN

What the hell?

In his hand he holds a skeleton key.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

John stands before The Door. Head newly bandaged.

He holds the key next to the handle. They both bear the same insignia. An elongated figure eight.

Noises float into the hall from the other side. Music. Screaming. Murmured conversations. Angry words. All held in check by the impossibly loud ticking of a clock.

The key slides in.

Turns.

Tumblers click and a BOOM rattles through the air.

The Door begins to open. Like a seal being broken, a WOMAN'S VOICE rushes from the room in a long breathy whisper.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

John...

Light floods into the hallway. It wraps around John until all is washed away in a blinding haze of white.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

John wakes with a start and blinks against the sudden brightness.

Jason stands beside the bed looking around the room. His gaze ends on his father.

JASON

Daddy?

JOHN

Hey buddy.

JASON

What is it?

JOHN

Just a bad dream.

Jason nods his head knowingly.

John pulls himself up against the headboard and smiles.

JOHN

You sleep okay?

JASON

Mom made breakfast.

JOHN

How about a big hug for your old man?

John reaches for him but Jason flinches back a step.

JOHN

Hey... what's the matter?

Jason shakes his head.

JOHN

Okay. I'll be right down.

John frowns as Jason turns and runs from the room.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

John paces back and forth. He looks nervously at the mirror with each pass as he chews at his fingers.

He finally stops and approaches the mirror. He lets out an anxious breath and timidly reaches for the bandages.

JOHN
Here goes nothing.

The bandages unravel and fall away. He closes his eyes.

With a final tug the bandage falls to the floor. Blind fingers search the side of his head for the unthinkable.

His eyes snap open and he looks at his head for the first time outside of a nightmare.

On the back and sides of his head is a wicked spiderweb of partially healed scars.

He breaths a sigh of relief. A nervous laugh escapes his lips.

JOHN
Better than a hole in my head.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sarah stands at the sink washing dishes.

JOHN
Good morning.

John walks up to Sarah and tries to kiss her. She pulls away.

SARAH
(coldly)
You missed breakfast.

JOHN
Sorry.

SARAH
I see you finally took the bandages off.

JOHN
Had to make sure I hadn't lost my mind.

Sarah gives him a confused look. John shakes his head.

JOHN
Nothing. Just a weird dream I had
last night.

SARAH
Remember anything new?

JOHN
No.

SARAH
You will. Eventually.

John takes a seat. Shakes his head.

JOHN
I'm still feeling a bit lost.

SARAH
You take your medicine?

Sarah sets the pill bottles in front of him. He shakes his
head.

JOHN
They fog up my mind. Confuse me.

SARAH
You have to do it. That's why we're
here.

JOHN
I know.

John goes to the counter. Grabs a glass of water.

Outside the window, Jason plays in the yard.

JOHN
He's afraid of me.

SARAH
Wouldn't you be? He can't
understand all this.

JOHN
It's not my fault.

Sarah turns on him sharply.

SARAH
Isn't it?

JOHN
I don't know.

SARAH
Well, until you do... until you get
your mind straight... we're stuck
here.

John wraps his head in his hands.

JOHN
Stop it, please. This is hard
enough without you attacking me.

SARAH
Whatever.

And she storms from the room.

He gets up and goes to the door. Watches his son a moment
before stepping out.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Faint whispers escape from behind The Door. Something blocks
the light from beneath it.

The handle slowly turns and stops.

EXT. SIDE YARD - DAY

Clouds gather in the sky. Rain blurs the horizon. Thunder
rumbles gently from far away.

Jason sits on the ground. Something shiny dangles from one
frail hand. He watches the house.

John kneels beside him.

JOHN
Whatcha got there?

Jason jerks his hand away. Startled.

JASON
Nothing. It's moms.

JOHN
Can I see?

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

Sarah pulls laundry from the dryer. She glances out the window as Jason reaches his hand out to show John something.

She shakes her head and lets out a weary sigh.

EXT. SIDE YARD - DAY

John fingers a pretty locket attached to a gold chain while Jason watches nervously.

JOHN
It's dirty.

Using his shirt, John attempts to clean it.

JOHN
Anything inside?

As he starts to pry it open Jason snatches it back. He gets to his feet and walks away from John.

JASON
I'll give it to her.

John grabs him by the waist and pulls him back.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Sarah heads up the stairs with a basket full of clothes balanced on her hip.

The stairs groan and the clock loudly ticks away the time.

EXT. SIDE YARD - DAY

John holds Jason close. Stares at him.

JOHN
Hang on a second.

Jason squirms in place.

JOHN
You know I love you right?

JASON
I guess.

JOHN
And why we have to be here?

Jason reaches out a small hand and strokes John's temple.

JASON
Something bad happened.

JOHN
Yes. And for me to find my
memories.

JASON
I forget things too.

John smiles.

JOHN
Like what?

Jason only shakes his head.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Sarah walks the length of the hall and disappears into
Jason's bedroom.

From behind The Door, faint music and muted voices trail down
the hallway.

The clock begins to toll.

Sarah pokes her head out.

SARAH
Hello?

EXT. SIDE YARD - DAY

Jason and John sit on the steps leading into the kitchen.

JASON
Is there a bogeyman?

JOHN
Of course not.

Jason cocks his head.

JASON
You sure?

JOHN
Positive.

Jason thinks for a moment.

JASON
Well... I saw the bad man last
night.

John shakes his head with anger.

JOHN
That was not the bogeyman.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Sarah puts clothes into the bureau drawers. A mirror hangs on the wall above. She leans in to examine her face. Satisfied she walks away and a

DEAD WOMAN

stands right behind where Sarah had just been. Its face hidden behind a mass of long black hair. Ghostly pale skin, broken and torn. Dried blood covers the dirty night gown hanging from its bony shoulders.

It cranes its head to follow Sarah.

EXT. SIDE YARD - DAY

JASON
He wants to hurt us.

JOHN
He won't. I promise.

John kisses him on the forehead.

JOHN
Okay?

JASON
Don't forget.

JOHN
(laughing)
I won't.

John stands up and pulls Jason off the steps.

JOHN
Now. How about we...

A loud SCREAM explodes from within the house.

Jason covers his ears and quivers.

JOHN
Stay here.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

John rushes out of the kitchen into the

FOYER

and looks up the stairs. Heavy thuds echo down from the second floor.

He rushes up the stairs and into the

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

where The Door stands partially open.

John pulls himself down the hall. He approaches The Door and peers inside.

SARAH (O.S.)
What are you doing?

John jumps and turns to see Sarah standing in the doorway to the master bedroom, a folded shirt in her hands.

JOHN
Holy shit! You just scared the piss out of me.

She laughs.

SARAH
Sorry.

JOHN
Not funny. Why is this door open?

Sarah cranes her neck out and looks at The Door.

JOHN
You're not to go in there.

A look of shock crosses her face.

SARAH

I didn't.

John raises his arms and looks around.

JOHN

Then who did?

She shrugs her shoulders.

JOHN

And the screaming and banging
around up here? Suppose that wasn't
you either.

Sarah starts to get angry.

SARAH

I don't know what your deal is but
I didn't make any noises and I sure
as fuck didn't open that damn door.

John stands there fuming.

She raises the shirt in her hands.

SARAH

I was putting away laundry asshole.

His resolve breaks and he slumps against the wall.

JOHN

But...

Something moves by the stairs. They both turn to see

JASON

as he peeks at them from around the corner of the wall.

Sarah rushes to him.

SARAH

Hey baby. You okay?

He shakes his head. Tears streak down his chubby cheeks.

She turns on John.

SARAH

Nice!

Sarah leads Jason towards the stairs and out of sight.

John stands dumbfounded for a moment and turns back to The Door.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

The walls are lined with bookshelves. A giant desk, burnt and ruined, sits in the center of the large room. An old record player sits on one corner.

John slowly walks into the room and looks around. The shelves at the front of the room are lined with books. They all appear to be "How To" books for the human body and mind.

JOHN

This is it?

He moves further into the room. The shelves on either side are full of similar "How To" books, but gradually grow sparse and empty towards the back.

John approaches one of the dusty shelves. There are odd markings in the dust. He runs his finger through the old footprints left behind by the books that once stood there.

It produces a series of twangs, like guitar strings snapping.

Something collides with the floor behind him. He spins.

On the back wall, between two windows, the shelves have long since collapsed. They lay broken and discarded on the floor. A large dark stain is now in their place.

JOHN

What happened here?

He reaches out and touches the stain. John instantly winces, grabbing his head in pain.

The light begins to fade outside and the room dims.

He stumbles towards the desk. Leans on it.

The Door begins to slowly close as a tinnitus ring fills the air.

John opens his eyes on a large black book sitting on top of the desk. MEMORIES is printed across the cover above an elongated figure eight.

Angry voices rise up from the corners of the room as The Door slams shut.

JOHN

No.

Picking up the book, John runs for The Door.

He fumbles with the handle when a voice like an avalanche bellows

VOICE (O.S.)

YOU!

John turns.

With doubled vision the room looks old and dirty, then new and clean. Blurring back and forth.

Each time both images merge, a black smoldering mass with burning eyes reaches out for John.

It vanishes as his vision redoubles.

JOHN

Get away from me!

He claws at his head.

A roar takes up and drowns out everything. Lighting strikes outside and floods the room in a white brilliance and

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

John throws out his hands.

JOHN

Let me out!

He stares at the ceiling. Confused.

Blood trickles from his nose and ears.

Sarah and Jason stand over him. John notices that Sarah now wears the locket around her neck.

JOHN

What happened?

He tries to sit up. His face screws up in pain.

SARAH

Just lay there.

JOHN

I don't...

SARAH
You passed out.

John looks down at himself. The black book is on the floor beside him.

JOHN
I went in... I knew I shouldn't,
but I did.

SARAH
It's just a room.

JOHN
No. It isn't. Something bad
happened in there.

SARAH
Is that where it happened? Your
accident?

He shakes his head.

JOHN
Something else. Worse.

John struggles up and stares at the book. He cups his head between his hands.

JOHN
It's going to explode.

Sarah reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out the pill bottles.

SARAH
You need to take your medicine.

JOHN
I'm afraid to.

He stands up and wobbles.

JOHN
What if it doesn't work or makes
things worse?

Sarah takes his arm and leads him into the bathroom.

SARAH (O.S.)
It couldn't hurt.

JOHN (O.S.)
That's easy for you to say.

Everything is still but the ticking of the clock and the rush of water coming from the bathroom.

The Door looks on. Waiting.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

John lays in bed and stares at the ceiling. The black book on the night stand next to him.

Sarah comes in and sits down beside him.

JOHN
Is he asleep?

SARAH
No thanks to you.

JOHN
I don't know what got into me.

SARAH
I do.

John looks at her.

JOHN
You believe in houses that are haunted?

SARAH
Its in your head, John.

JOHN
But it isn't just me. He heard the noises too.

He thinks for a moment. Not sure if he should go on.

JOHN
He said he saw a bad man.

SARAH
He didn't mention it to me and I haven't seen or heard anything.

John lets out a weary sigh.

JOHN
So I just imagined it all?

SARAH
I think you think it happened.

JOHN
Great.

SARAH
You take your medicine?

JOHN
(agitated)
No. I didn't.

SARAH
It might help you remember.

JOHN
Maybe I don't want to.

SARAH
What are you so afraid of?

JOHN
I already told you.

She motions to the book.

SARAH
Where did that ugly thing come
from?

JOHN
My imagination.

SARAH
Don't be an asshole.

He rolls away from her.

JOHN
From that room.

SARAH
What's in it?

JOHN
I don't know. Haven't looked.

Sarah stares at her husbands back. Rolls over and flips off
the light.

SARAH
Maybe things will be better in the
morning.

John stares at the window with worry as lightning flashes in the distance.

The storm is getting closer.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

John snores softly.

Rain dances against the window.

THE STRANGER (O.S.)

Wake up.

His voice is deep and gravelly.

John stirs. Opens his eyes and looks around.

JOHN

Sarah?

Lightning flashes outside and lights the room up.

He bolts upright at the sight of The Stranger.

THE STRANGER

Get up!

The Stranger stands at the foot of the bed. His features are lost in the darkness.

JOHN

What the f...?

The Stranger charges the bed and grabs John by the collar.

He drags him from the bed. Pins him against a wall.

THE STRANGER

What are you doing in my house?

The Stranger pulls his arm back and drives his fist into John's face.

THE STRANGER

Think you can lay in my bed? Fuck my wife?

John tries to free himself.

JOHN

This isn't your...

The Stranger smashes his fist into John's face again

THE STRANGER
I warned you!

and throws John across the room.

THE STRANGER
This is your fault. You're making
me do this.

John crawls to his feet as The Stranger moves in on him.

JOHN
I didn't do anything!

He charges the dark figure and tackles him.

They tumble into the

HALLWAY

where the two get to their feet and square off.

John has his back to The Door. It slowly opens. Spills light
across the side of his face.

The Stranger takes a step backwards

THE STRANGER
This isn't finished.

and runs for the stairs with John on his heels.

John reaches the top of the stairs. Trips. Tumbles down and

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Crashes into his bed. The force bounces him onto the floor.

John leaps to his feet and flips on the light.

JOHN
Son of a bitch.

He races into the hallway. Comes back. Paces.

Sarah stares at him, startled.

SARAH
What are you doing?

JOHN
That mother fucker was here. In
this house.

SARAH
Who?

JOHN
Who do you think?

Eyes cleared of sleep she finally sees the state of her
husband.

SARAH
Your face.

Blood runs from his mouth and nose. A shiner forms over one
eye that is partially filled with blood.

He looks in the mirror over the dresser.

JOHN
Bastard.

SARAH
You're starting to scare me.

John stalks from the room.

SARAH
Where you going?

JOHN (O.S.)
To call the police.

She jumps out of bed.

SARAH
Wait a minute.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

John sits on the toilet. Sarah cleans him up.

JOHN
We need to call the police.

SARAH
Maybe we should wait.

JOHN
Look at my face Sarah. He
threatened to kill us.

She sighs and sits on the edge of the tub.

SARAH

Don't get mad, just hear me out.

He motions to his face.

JOHN

Let me guess. I imagined it.

Sarah goes to John and places her hands on his head.

SARAH

The accident. It broke you.

John tries to pull away. Sarah doesn't let him.

SARAH

You won't take your medicine.

JOHN

You think I'm crazy.

SARAH

Confused.

He gets up. Paces the floor. Shakes his head.

JOHN

You think I did this to myself?

SARAH

I don't know. One day you're talking about crank calls and strangers. The next its haunted houses. Now this.

John plops down onto the toilet seat. Reaches into his shirt pocket. Removes his bottles of medicine.

JOHN

I get a bad feeling every time I look at these. Like I shouldn't do it.

He grabs her hands. Implores.

JOHN

Like there's another way, another answer.

She pulls her hands free.

SARAH
Answer to what?

JOHN
I don't know.

SARAH
I think you're afraid to get
better.

JOHN
That's insane.

SARAH
Is it?

John hides behind his hands. Lets out a massive sigh of
resignation.

JOHN
I don't know what to do anymore.

SARAH
Take your medicine. See what
happens.

JOHN
Fine.

He opens the bottles and drops a pill from each into his
hand.

JOHN
Hope you're right.

She gives him a wicked smile

SARAH
I'm always right.

and walks out.

John listens to her walking away. A door closes.

He spins around, yanks open the seat and throws the pills
into the toilet.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

John sits at the table with the black book before him. He
stares at the cover.

Sarah walks in and looks out the window above the sink. A light rain patters against the glass.

SARAH
A storms coming.

Her voice is far off and muted as though heard through plugged ears. Everything is except for John.

JOHN
Hmm.

He traces the figure eight with his fingers. Sarah continues to move about the kitchen.

With an unsteady hand John opens the book.

SARAH (O.S.)
How long are you going to keep doing this?

JOHN
Doing what?

There are old photos on the page. Faces of people he does not recognize.

SARAH (V.O.)
Don't pretend that you don't know.

John frowns as he thumbs through the book. Some of the photos appear damaged. Faces scratched and torn away in haste or anger.

Further still and missing photos are replaced by hateful words. Bitch. Slut. Whore.

JOHN
I have no idea what you're talking about.

SARAH (O.S.)
Are you even listening to me?

Once past the photos the book turns into a journal. The entries are erratic and sloppy.

INSERT - ENTRY, which reads:

"I followed her into town. She was with him again. Right in front of everyone. She is forcing my hand."

JOHN TURNS THE PAGE

"I can't do this anymore. One word
keeps drumming around inside my
head... murder."

BACK TO SCENE

John scoots away from the book.

JOHN
Oh my god.

SARAH (O.S.)
This is exactly what I'm talking
about.

He sits transfixed by the black book before him.

SARAH (O.S.)
Hello!?

JOHN
Hang on.

John delves deeper into the book. Past pages and pages of
writing.

A door slams and small feet clap across the floor. A child
begins to whimper incessantly.

SARAH (O.S.)
Honey, you're all wet.

John rubs his temples as the child begins to sob.

SARAH (O.S.)
Your neck... what happened?

The phone begins to ring.

SARAH (O.S.)
Oh... what have you done?

More sobs. John grabs his head. The phone rings louder.

JOHN
Quiet.

SARAH (O.S.)
Look at this.

Blood begins to leak from John's nose.

SARAH (O.S.)
Get off your lazy ass and...

John turns on them violently.

JOHN
What!?

The kitchen is empty and sound has returned to normal as the phone rings at full volume.

He gets up and looks around in confusion.

John answers the phone.

JOHN
Hello?

Static is all he hears. Then a voice emerges. Cuts in and out.

CALLER (V.O.)
He murdered his family.

John scans the kitchen. Still empty.

JOHN
Who?

CALLER (V.O.)
The man who lived at --
(line crackles)
house.

JOHN
What are you talking about?

The connection gets worse. The Caller is barely making it through the static.

CALLER (V.O.)
Listen -- found -- this journal.

John snaps around and stares slack jawed at the book on the table.

JOHN
Who are you?

SARAH (O.S.)
Your wife.

He jumps around. His wife stands in the doorway with a bag of groceries.

JOHN
Where did you go just now?

SARAH
I was at the store.

Jason peeks around the edges of her skirt.

JOHN
I was just...

Remembering the phone he puts it back to his ear. The line is dead. He slams it back onto the receiver.

Sarah sits down the bag. Points at John.

SARAH
Your nose.

He roughly rubs at his temples.

JOHN
Before the phone rang... you were here. In the kitchen. Talking to me.

SARAH
I wasn't here. Honey, you're bleeding.

JOHN
I know!

She backs away.

SARAH
Okay. Sorry.

John falls into a chair and slumps his shoulders. His throat juggles a nervous laugh.

JOHN
I'm losing it.

Sarah drags a hand through his hair.

SARAH
Things will change. You'll see.

JOHN
You know how to tell time?

JASON
No.

John points to the face of the clock.

JOHN
The little hand tells you the hour
and the big hand tells you the
minutes.

JASON
What time is it?

John frowns.

JOHN
I don't know.

JASON
It doesn't tell time?

With his free hand, John make a clockwise motion

JOHN
The hands are supposed to move this
way.

and then reverses to a counter-clockwise motion.

JOHN
But these are moving backwards.

JASON
Is it broken?

JOHN
I think so.

John puts him down as the clock ticks back another minute. It hits the half hour and begins to chime loudly.

Jason covers his ears in fright and runs towards the stairs. John watches him go and shakes his head.

The clock ticks back another minute. Faster than it should.

JOHN
Stupid clock.

JOHN

What...

Dark tendrils fan out across the water as the boiling intensifies.

A HEAD begins to emerge from the roiling waters. The face hidden behind a mass of mangled black hair. A GUTTURAL CREAK tears from unseen lips.

John tries to sit up. Cries out in a frenzied plea.

JOHN

Sarah!

A pale and bony hand juts out of the water. With a warning finger the Head lets out a crackling whisper

HEAD

Sssshhh...

that ends in a rumbling avalanche.

As John pulls away, WICKED HANDS burst up from under the water and drag him beneath the surface.

His hands flail helplessly against the porcelain.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

The sounds from behind The Door are reaching a fever pitch as it opens wider.

With a surreal echo the clock ticks impossibly loud.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

John stares wide-eyed through the turbulent water. Shadowy figures stand over him. A dead woman and child. They watch as The Stranger violently pins him to the bottom of the tub.

He tries to scream but water rushes into his mouth. He chokes and fights for air.

John tears at the hands around his neck as the water starts to turn black.

INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Sarah enters the foyer and stares up at the second floor.

SARAH
John? That you?

She starts up the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Wood creaks loudly in protest. Whispers rise to an angry buzz. A loud tearing scratch echoes through the hall and transforms into a scream of rage.

The Door slams shut and a violent shudder snakes down the hall.

All is now silent but the gentle ticking of the clock.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

John explodes from the blackened water and spills onto the tile floor gasping for air. Foul water pours from his nose and mouth.

Sarah frantically pounds on the door.

SARAH (O.S.)
John... open the door.

John flails on the floor, still unable to breathe. He lets out a strangled cry as he expels the last of the water and passes out.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

John sits hunched over on the toilet. He caresses the back of his head. With his other hand he dabs a rag to his bloody nose and split lip.

Sarah mops up water from the floor with a towel.

JOHN
I didn't fall asleep and I wasn't dreaming.

SARAH
What you're saying is impossible.

JOHN
I know it is... but it happened anyway!

SARAH
You don't need to yell.

John slumps back with a sigh.

JOHN
It was him.

SARAH
Who?

He quickly sits up and glares at her.

JOHN
Who do you think?

Sarah throws the wet towel into the tub.

SARAH
I don't know what to think. You're acting crazy.

JOHN
Look at me! I'm getting the shit kicked out of me.

He gets up and starts to pace.

JOHN
It was different this time. There were... others.

Sarah looks at him with worry.

SARAH
Others?

JOHN
A woman and a child. Oh god, I think...

SARAH
What?

JOHN
They're trying to tell me something.

She grabs his pill bottles from the sink, takes him by the wrist and sits him down. She holds the bottles in front of his face.

SARAH
You need to take your medicine.

He knocks the bottles out of her hand.

JOHN
Fuck that!

JASON (O.S.)
Is daddy okay?

They both turn to see Jason standing in the doorway. He is dressed for bed and clutches his doll tightly to his chest.

John dumps his head into his hands and moans.

SARAH
Everything is fine, baby. Get in bed and we'll be right there.

Jason stares at John for a moment and then disappears into the hallway.

Sarah turns on John.

SARAH
Take your medicine or don't, but you need to get your shit together or I'm out of here.

She stalks from the room.

John bends over and picks up the bottles. He stares at them, then at the door. A tear trickles down his cheek and he swats it away.

He tucks the bottles into his shirt pocket and follows her.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Soft voices drift out of Jason's room.

Thunder crashes outside. Lightning chases it and the hallway jumps.

Something moves behind The Door.

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jason lays in bed. John sits next to him holding his photo album. It is white and pristine compared to the one he found inside the room.

Sarah stands in the doorway.

Jason reaches up and touches John's face.

JASON
He lives here.

JOHN
Who does sport?

JASON
The bad man.

SARAH
Who?

John tosses a glare at Sarah.

JASON
The one from outside. The one
trying to get daddy.

SARAH
You mean he used to live here.

Jason only shakes his head.

JASON
He's still here.

Sarah shoots John a disgusted look.

SARAH
See what you're doing to him.

JOHN
I haven't done anything.

JASON
It's true! I saw it. I saw them.

Sarah let's out a long sigh.

SARAH
Whatever, I'm going to bed.

Jason and John watch her as she disappears into the hallway.

JASON
Is mommy mad?

JOHN
Not at you kiddo.

John opens the photo album and lays the book in Jason's lap.
The photos are from a birthday party.

JOHN
You remember this?

Jason nods.

JOHN
Tell me.

JASON
I was five and all my friends were
there. I had fun.

JOHN
You got lots of presents I bet.

Jason nods excitedly.

JASON
Lots.

John holds up Jason's bear to his ear.

JOHN
What? No... Really?

Jason cracks a smile.

JASON
He can't talk.

JOHN
Sure he can. Want to know what he
said?

Jason nods again with vigor.

JOHN
He said...

JASON
Come on.

John smiles with delight.

JOHN
He said the person who gave him to
you at that very same birthday
party loves you very much.

Jason looks at John with an air of seriousness.

JASON
You gave it to me.

JOHN

I know.

Jason's face splits in a wide grin and he jumps up to hug his dad tightly.

JASON

You remember.

JOHN

I'm starting to.

Jason lies back down, the joy gone as fast as it came.

John flips through more photos and comes to several pages missing photos. He frowns.

JASON

I don't want to stay here anymore.

JOHN

I'm afraid we have to.

JASON

How long?

JOHN

Till I figure things out I guess.

Tucking the album under his arm, John crosses to the door. He turns to gaze upon his son and smiles.

JOHN

Night champ.

Jason stares back as John flips off the light.

INT. FOYER - DAY

John skips down the stairs in shorts, a T-shirt, and running shoes. He pokes his head into the kitchen.

JOHN

Going for a run. Be right back.

Jason is playing with toy cars near the front door. As always the teddy bear is close at hand.

JOHN

Where's your mother?

Jason only shrugs his shoulders.

JOHN
Tell her I went out.

JASON
Okay.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

John comes out the front door and looks toward the sky. It is gray and dismal. The ground is wet and muddy.

He bolts down the stairs and heads down the drive. Rounding a group of trees, he vanishes down the road.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Jason continues to play.

A floorboard creaks from somewhere upstairs.

Something whispers to him from the top of the stairs.

JASON
Mommy?

EXT. MUDDY ROAD - DAY

John splashes through puddles. The dark road is narrow and closed in with a canopy of trees. His breathing is harsh and fast.

Far ahead of him is a bright patch of light.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Jason mounts the last step and looks around. He pulls up next to the bathroom door when the clock strikes the hour.

He jumps around and stares at it, transfixed.

Something moves just out of sight and The Door begins to creep open with eerie protest.

Jason moves past the bathroom door and as he does a

DEAD BOY

steps out into the hall. Water drips from the Dead Boy and starts forming a dark puddle on the floor. He watches Jason approach The Door.

JASON
Mommy? Where are you?

He cranes his neck to peer into the darkness trapped behind
The Door.

EXT. MUDDY ROAD - FURTHER

John stumbles to a stop at the entrance to the old wooden
bridge. He gulps in giant mouthfuls of air as he massages his
temples.

JOHN
Definitely out of shape.

His words echo strangely.

JOHN
Hello!

The word screams back at him from all directions. A loud
groan escapes the bridge and John backs away.

On the other side he can just make out the crossroads. A
shaft of light from a break in the clouds illuminates it.

He looks around and listens. There is nothing but the sound
of his breathing and the beating of his heart.

JOHN
Get a hold of yourself John.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

The Door is open wide and Jason still stares into it's vast
maw. Slithering sounds and evil whispers float in the air.

JASON
I'm not a scared of you.

His body says he very much is. He clutches his teddy bear
tight.

Jason takes a peek over his shoulder to see if anyone is
watching. There is.

The Dead Boy stands in the same place. His face is crusted
with black. Dead white eyes bulge in a bloated face. Water
pours from his mouth and nose.

Jason's mouth works open in silent terror.

EXT. MUDDY ROAD - DAY

John takes one last look at the crossroads on the other side of the bridge. The light is gone. He is alone and the only thing making any noise.

He turns to start back toward the house. Freezes.

At the side of the road stands a battered sign. It is rusty with age and run through with buckshot. It reads DEAD END.

JOHN

Nice.

A CHILD SCREAMS from somewhere in the woods. Definitely from the direction of the house. It sends John into a frenzied scramble.

JOHN

Jason!

He tears down the road and into the darkness of the trees.

INT. FOYER - DAY

John busts through the front door. Slides to a halt. He is out of breathe.

JOHN

Jason? Sarah?

He hears thumps from upstairs followed by a clatter of tiny feet and a muted giggle.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

John stares down the length of the hall. The Door is open and Jason's teddy bear lies at the threshold.

JOHN

God... no.

He timidly passes the bathroom. Closes in on The Door.

JOHN

Jason! Come out of there... Now!

Jason doesn't answer so he moves closer still.

JOHN

Baby, please. Come to daddy.

The double barrel of a shotgun rises and points at John's back.

A floorboard creaks and John spins to see

JASON

standing by the bathroom. He looks different. Hollow eyed. Pale. Water drips from his hair.

He points the wicked looking double barrel shotgun at John.

JOHN

Where did you... put that thing
down.

Jason shoots a wicked grin at John and with an innocent voice

JASON

No...

that ends in a deep rumbling bass.

John staggers backward. His vision begins to shutter. Begins to blur.

JOHN

Listen to daddy. Put the gun down.
It's dangerous.

Jason takes a step toward his father.

John drops to his knees. Tries to clear his eyes.

JOHN

Jason, please... Sarah!

Jason pulls back the hammers one at a time. CLICK. CLICK.

JASON

You can't stop it.

He levels off the shotgun.

JOHN

Jason, no!

JASON

You're dead daddy.

Jason's finger tightens around the trigger as John clamps his eyes shut and

BOOM

The Door slams shut behind John and he screams.

Something clatters to the floor and a giggle fades into the distance.

John snaps open his eyes. His vision clears. He is alone and the shotgun lies on the floor.

He stares at it, stunned.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The storm is back with more rain. Thunder and lightning play softly outside.

John stomps in and slams the shotgun down on the table. Plops into a chair.

JOHN

Where the hell have you been?

Sarah moves to and fro. All that can be seen is her mid-section as she bustles around the room.

She answers in that far off muted tone.

SARAH (O.S.)

No where.

JOHN

Maybe you should start paying more attention to what your son is doing.

SARAH (O.S.)

I was. Where were you?

JOHN

Fuck all what I was doing. How did he get a hold of this and where?

Sarah moves in front of the table.

SARAH (O.S.)

I don't know what you're talking about.

JOHN

This!

He points to the gun with both hands.

JOHN
He could have killed me. Worse!
Himself!

Sarah walks away.

SARAH (O.S.)
You're overreacting.

JOHN
The hell I am. I may have some
issues right now, but I still know
a thing or two.

SARAH (O.S.)
You don't know anything.

John launches from his chair and turns toward Sarah. The room is empty.

From far off the front door opens slowly.

JOHN
Get back here! I'm not done with
you!

He turns and looks down the foyer hall. Sarah stands there with her coat on. She holds Jason's hand. He hides behind her coat.

SARAH
Done with who?

JOHN
(scathingly)
You...

Sarah takes a wary step backward.

She leans down and whispers something in Jason's ear. He takes off up the stairs.

SARAH
What's this about?

JOHN
You know damn well. We were just
talking about it.

SARAH
Honey... we just got back.

JOHN
Bullshit. And don't honey me.

SARAH

Calm down.

JOHN

Fuck! calm down. Jason could have killed me.

SARAH

What? How?

John throws his arms toward the table.

JOHN

With that!

Sarah looks confused. John turns and finds there is nothing on the table. He looks under the table. Nothing.

JOHN

But...

He grabs at his hair with clenched fists. Rocks back and forth, shaking his head.

SARAH

What's going on?

John lunges at her. Grabs her by the arms and shakes her. She drops her purse to the floor.

JOHN

It's this house. It's trying to drive me mad.

Sarah stares at the purse. Tries to worm free. John follows her gaze.

Contents of the purse have spilled onto the floor. Among them is a stack of Polaroids held together with a rubber band. She snatches up the purse and shoves them back inside.

JOHN

What are those?

SARAH

You're not ready for those.

John grabs at the purse as Sarah jumps back.

JOHN

The missing photos. Give them to me.

She holds up her hands.

SARAH
Stop! Look at yourself. You're
acting crazy.

John backs up and slides into a chair, defeated.

JOHN
I need to know.

SARAH
It's too soon. Trust me.

Sarah sets the purse on the counter. Out of reach.

SARAH
You have to remember us first. And
not by reading a name tag or
knowing we're the only ones here.

She lays her hands on the sides of his head.

SARAH
With this. You have to remember us
with this.

Sarah reaches into his shirt pocket and produces the pill
bottles. She grabs a glass and fills it with water.

SARAH
You haven't taken these yet have
you?

He looks off into a corner of the room. Tears threaten to
spill onto his cheeks as shakes his head.

She hands him the glass and sets the bottles in front of him.

SARAH
Now be a good boy.

She pats him on the head and walks out.

John just sits there, staring at the bottles.

EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

The house rises from a sea of fog. Lightning arcs across the
sky. Thunder chases it.

The storm is close.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

All is silent but the methodical ticking of the clock.

A long and deep whispering moan comes from all around as The Door creeps open.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

John is lost in a heavy sleep. The ticking of the clock intrudes for a short time until it fades away and is replaced by a drawn out breathy whisper.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

John...

His eyes snap open. Blinking the sleep from his eyes, he looks around. He reaches out to the other side of the bed only to find it empty.

JOHN

Sarah?

John starts to close his eyes when the whisper returns.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

John...

He sits up. The room is dark and full of shadows. He just makes out Sarah standing at the foot of the bed. A sigh of relief.

JOHN

You scared me.

She doesn't move.

JOHN

What are you doing?

She crawls onto the bed. Makes her way to John. Straddles him.

JOHN

Mmmm... I like that.

He reaches up and caresses her back.

JOHN

You're freezing.

He moves on to her face. His hand touches something wet.

JOHN
And wet. Are you...

Something moves near the bedroom door.

BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)
Daddy...

JOHN
(annoyed)
Go back to bed Jason.

A small figure emerges from the darkness of the hallway.

BOY'S VOICE
Daddy...

JOHN
I said go back... Jason?

The Dead Boy stands in the doorway, pouring death all over the floor.

It reaches out.

JOHN
No.

John tries to sit up but Sarah shoves him down. Pins him.

She draws her face close to his. It isn't Sarah. The pale face is framed with matted black hair and large gashes break up a once beautiful face.

John SCREAMS in horror as he struggles with the Dead Woman.

JOHN
Get off me!

The Dead Woman opens her broken mouth wide and blood spills onto John's face.

With a final heave he throws her from the bed.

He starts for the door but the Dead Boy with the gushing head still stands there. Reaching.

John trips as he backs away and falls into a corner of the room.

Unseen on the other side of the bed he hears scratching and cracking.

He watches in terror as one hand, then another, appears. They drag a bloody and broken heap into view.

The Dead Woman crawls across the floor in a erratic and stilted manner.

JOHN
No! This isn't real!

He looks to the door and beyond The Dead Boy stands The Stranger, watching.

JOHN
Son of a bitch!

The Dead Woman reaches John and grabs him by the wrists. He tries to tear her hands away as she lets out a horrid and continuous gibbering sound.

JOHN
No. No. No.

A light pops on. Still fending off the Dead Woman, John doesn't notice.

Hands reach for him. Normal hands. Sarah calls to him from far away.

SARAH (O.S.)
John... John. Wake up!

John throws out his arms in one last ditch effort to push off his attacker.

With a mighty SLAP the world comes crashing back and Sarah sails across the room. She lands in a motionless heap.

He stares in shock and disbelief. The nightmare is gone but another one is starting.

JOHN
Sarah?

Her shoulders lurch up and down with uncontrollable sobs.

John scrambles to her side.

JOHN
Sarah. I'm sorry.

He reaches for her. She turns and slaps at his hands.

SARAH
Get away from me!

He cowers from the venom in her voice.

JOHN

I didn't... I was... a nightmare.

He tries to go to her again. She kicks him away.

SARAH

You're crazy!

She stumbles to her feet and flees the room. A door slams further down the hall.

John sits and stares at the dark, empty doorway.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Light spills into the darkened hallway from the master bedroom and from underneath the closed bathroom door.

The Door flexes. A deep warning moan builds in pitch until everything snaps to

DARKNESS

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

John snores softly on an old sofa. A blanket hangs off of him.

Jason, still in his pajamas, prods him with one tiny finger.

John opens his eyes. Props himself up.

JOHN

Hey.

JASON

What are you doing here?

John thinks for a moment.

JOHN

Giving your mom some room.

JASON

Why?

John sighs.

JOHN

I did something bad.

Jason peaks over his shoulder, then back to John and whispers.

JASON
You grounded?

With a laugh, John sits up.

JOHN
Something like that.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

John finds Sarah sitting at the table in her robe. Her hair is a mess. Dark bags hang under her eyes. She stares blankly at the table.

He puts his hand on her shoulder. She pulls away.

JOHN
I'm sorry.

Sarah shakes her head as he sits down next to her.

JOHN
It was an accident. I was having
this horrible dream and...

SARAH
Enough excuses. I'm sick of it.

JOHN
Sick of what?

SARAH
You!

JOHN
You think I'm making all this shit
up?

She shrugs her shoulders.

JOHN
Look at me.

He suddenly stands up, scooting the chair away from the table. Sarah flinches.

JOHN
Look at me!

John motions to his battered face.

JOHN
Is this a delusion?

He pulls down his collar to expose a purple ringed bruise around his neck.

JOHN
How about this? Did I do this to myself?

She turns on him.

SARAH
I don't know!

John plops back into the chair.

JOHN
Something is wrong. With this house... with us.

SARAH
(coldly)
You take your medicine?

He slams his fists into the table.

JOHN
Would you get off that already!

Sarah starts to sob.

SARAH
You're acting insane and I don't know what to do.

She pulls a tissue from her robe. Wipes her face.

SARAH
You haven't even tried. It might help.

JOHN
But it doesn't. Everything just starts all over. I get foggy... confused. I don't want to do it anymore.

SARAH
(mumbling)
And this is so much better.

JOHN
What was that?

SARAH
Nothing.

JOHN
Answer me.

She shakes her head in fear.

JOHN
Fuck it.

He launches out of the chair. Sarah flinches again and raises her hands to fend off an attack.

Seeing this reaction, John withers.

JOHN
What is happening here?

SARAH
I don't know.

JOHN
God damn it Sarah. Ever since I got back I feel you're hiding something.

John moves behind her. Puts his hands on her shoulders. He squats down with his head next to hers.

JOHN
What aren't you telling me?

She tears out of his grasp and sprints to the door.

SARAH
Maybe I am. Look at yourself. How you're acting.

JOHN
And?

SARAH
You're not ready for the truth and that means none of us are.

Sarah turns and disappears down the foyer hall.

JOHN
What the fuck does that mean?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

John stares out a window, a blanket wrapped around him. He looks haggard and beat.

He watches Jason hop in the car as Sarah opens the drivers door. She looks back at him and climbs inside.

As the car turns out of the drive he throws off the blanket and moves away from the window.

INT. CAR - DAY

Jason sadly watches the house through the rain streaked rear window as they drive away.

All around them the storm is building.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

John looks around. He moves to his night stand. Rips open the drawer and riffles through it. Nothing.

He goes to Sarah's night stand. He yanks open the drawer and freezes.

Reaching in, he pulls out a battered pack of cigarettes.

JOHN

Who do you belong to?

He stuffs them into his pocket and moves on to the

BATHROOM

where he looks through the medicine cabinet. Finding nothing, he sprints to the

KITCHEN

and starts in on the cabinets there.

High up on a shelf he finds a bottle of whiskey. He pulls it down and slams it on the table. Reaching inside his pocket, he throws the pack of cigarettes next to it.

Moving on to more cabinets he grabs a glass and sits down at the table.

He pours whiskey into the glass and sniffs at it. Takes a large swallow. Gags.

JOHN
Where are you?

He toys with the cigarettes. Takes one out and smells it. Puts it in his mouth and lights it. Inhales deeply and instantly starts coughing.

JOHN
Where would you put it?

He leans back. Scans the room. His eyes stop on something he hadn't noticed until now. Sarah's purse. It dangles from the handle on the pantry door.

JOHN
Gotcha.

John pries it open and peeks inside. He drags out a large envelope and the stack of photos he had seen fall out earlier.

Pulling off the rubber band, he sorts through them. A look of shock sets in.

JOHN
Son of a bitch.

He tosses them aside and tears at the envelope. Pulls out a letter and reads

"PETITION FOR DIVORCE"

His whole body slumps into the chair as he stares at the legal document.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

A buzzing hum rises from behind The Door. The clock ticks away loudly.

From downstairs a loud crashing starts as John begins destroying the kitchen with unintelligible curses of rage.

The record player starts up and begins to play that old fifties tune again. Muted. Far away. Scratchy.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The car pulls into the driveway. The rain comes down harder than it has been.

Sarah and Jason run for the shelter of the porch.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Sarah shakes water from her coat and hangs it up. She begins to help Jason with his own.

SARAH
We're home.

The house is strangely silent. As if waiting in anticipation of some dreaded event.

SARAH
John?

Glass clinks against glass. She looks down the foyer hall and into the kitchen.

John sits amid rubble, pouring himself a drink. Smoke hangs in the air around his head from the cigarette dangling between his lips.

She turns to Jason.

SARAH
Honey, why don't you go play in your room.

He shoots her a worried look as he heads upstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

John watches Sarah through a haze of smoke as she walks down the foyer hall. He drums his fingers on the table.

She stops in the doorway and scans the room.

SARAH
I thought you quit?

JOHN
(sarcastically)
Well apparently I forgot that.

SARAH
What happened?

John continues to drum his fingers.

On the table before him sits the two photos he keeps to help remind him who his wife and son are if ever he becomes confused. The other photos sit to one side.

SARAH
What the hell is going on?

JOHN
I should ask you.

SARAH
What?

JOHN
Don't play coy with me.

SARAH
I don't...

John violently slides the stack of photos he found at her and takes a sloppy swig from his glass.

SARAH
Where did you get these?

He stubs out his cigarette and gives her a look of disdain.

JOHN
Where you were hiding them, where else?

She sucks in a nervous breathe.

SARAH
I told you...

John slams his fists down on the table.

JOHN
You told me what!

She backs up into the hallway.

SARAH
Please, you have to listen.

JOHN
I don't have to do shit.

SARAH
You're not thinking straight.

JOHN
Oh... I think I am.

He produces the envelope from beneath the table and throws it at her. It lands at her feet.

SARAH
What is that?

He points to the photos in her hands.

JOHN
Apparently a result of those.

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jason can hear the angry muted voices of his parents.

He rocks back and forth on his bed. Eyes clamped shut and his hands cover his ears.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

She glances at the photos.

SARAH
I don't understand.

John launches from the chair and leaps at her. He grabs the back of her head and the hand holding the photos. He shoves them in her face.

JOHN
Who is that Sarah?

SARAH
You're not ready.

He pulls her into the kitchen. Pushes her. She collides with the table and knocks over the bottle of whiskey.

JOHN
(mockingly)
For what? The truth?

SARAH
Yes!

John snatches the photos out of her hand. Fans them out on the table above the two he always keeps with him.

Sarah moves away and stumbles on the debris littering the floor.

SARAH
You're not well.

He scoops up the envelope on the floor. Rips it open and slams it on top of the photos.

JOHN
You cheat on me and you want a divorce.

SARAH
What?

John starts slamming his hand on top of the paper.

JOHN
Divorce Sarah! You filed for divorce.

He wads the paper in a clenched fist and advances on her. She backs away but is stopped by the counter.

He shakes the paper in her face.

JOHN
Who is he?

She starts to cry.

SARAH
You know who he is.

JOHN
The hell I...

SARAH
John. Please.

Sarah tries to shove away but he snatches her shirt. Pulls her face to his.

JOHN
Who is he?

SARAH
It's you god damn it. It's you!

She wilts in a fury of sobs as he looks at her in stunned silence.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

John sits on the sofa with the photos set out on the coffee table. The content of the photos revealed for the first time.

They all show a family lost in happier times. John's family.

JOHN
You should have told me.

SARAH
I couldn't. There's something wrong
with you. You're sick.

JOHN
I don't recognize myself in these.

SARAH
If we weren't isolated here, if we
didn't have these name tags or
these photos...

She picks up the two John keeps with him. Shows them to him.

SARAH
You wouldn't even know who we were.

JOHN
I know who you are.

SARAH
Everything but what we look like
maybe. You can't see us. You can't
see yourself. We're lost.

JOHN
I'm sorry.

SARAH
This isn't going to work. I thought
with the accident... your memory
loss.

JOHN
I don't understand.

SARAH
No. You don't remember.

He frowns at her.

SARAH
These things that are happening to
you. They were happening before the
accident.

JOHN
Before?

SARAH

Yes. Shortly before the accident
you kept talking about that man.
That you found something out.

JOHN

Found what out?

Sarah shrugs her shoulders.

SARAH

You became evasive. Started
accusing me of cheating and saying
really creepy things.

JOHN

Like what?

SARAH

The answer was at the bottom of a
six foot hole. Together forever...

Her voice catches in her throat.

SARAH

Even in death. The one you repeated
the most was, "No rest for the
wicked."

She smooths out the paper and lays it on the table.

SARAH

I couldn't take it anymore. It was
like you were possessed or
something.

JOHN

So you filed for divorce.

SARAH

But something happened. You had
your accident. Everything changed.

JOHN

And you hoped I wouldn't remember.

SARAH

I don't know what I hoped. Maybe
something would change but they
aren't. They won't...

Sarah holds up her arms. Motions to the house around her.

SARAH

Not as long as we're stuck here.

John has tears in his eyes. His hands working at the sides of his head.

JOHN

This is insane. How could I forget so much?

EXT. SIDE YARD - NIGHT

The sky is black and rain pours in a steady flow.

John stuffs several full trash bags into a wooden bin attached to the house.

He lights up a cigarette and surveys the woods. They whisper to him as their branches dance in the wind.

The night sky lights up and John spots The Stranger standing beneath the trees.

JOHN

Hey!

Lightning strikes again and The Stranger is gone.

With one last suspicious scan of the yard he flicks his cigarette away and goes back inside.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

John stares out the window. Watches the yard and the woods.

He moves through the now clean kitchen and into the

FOYER

where he checks the front door. He peers into the living room at his makeshift bed and heads up the stairs.

The only noise is that of the clock ticking.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sarah lays in bed reading a book. John enters and crosses to the window. He looks out and scans the grounds again.

SARAH

What are you doing?

JOHN

Nothing.

He moves to the bed opposite Sarah.

SARAH

You can't stay here.

JOHN

I know.

John paces the room.

JOHN

I wish I could explain all of this to you but it doesn't make sense.

SARAH

You need to get it figured out and soon.

JOHN

I'm trying. These dreams or hallucinations... whatever they are.

He looks at her. Defeated.

JOHN

I can't tell what is real anymore.

SARAH

Then take your medicine and it will all go away. Trust me.

JOHN

I'm afraid.

SARAH

Of what?

JOHN

Losing you and Jason.

SARAH

You already have. Don't you see that?

JOHN

Things can change can't they?

SARAH

I don't know what to tell you anymore.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

John walks down the hall. Past the grandfather clock and Jason's room.

JASON (O.S.)
Daddy?

He backs up and looks into the darkened room.

JOHN
You should be asleep.

JASON
The bad man is here.

John enters

JASON'S ROOM

and sits next to his son.

JOHN
No. He isn't.

JASON
He never leaves.

A sad frown crosses John's face.

JOHN
Its going to be okay. I promise.

JASON
What if it isn't?

JOHN
I won't let him hurt us. I'll stop him.

John gets up and stands by the door.

JASON
How?

JOHN
I'm working on that. Now go back to sleep and let me worry about this.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT - LATER

The clock continues to tick backwards.

A floorboard creaks as something moves behind The Door.
It's handle turns and with a deep groan it starts to open.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

John snores softly on the sofa. The bottle of whiskey and a half empty glass sit on the table.

Above the drumming of the rain a noise drifts in from outside. Thunder bombards the house and John's eyes snap open.

He gets up. Moves to the

FOYER

and checks the front door. Locked.

He moves down the short hall into the

KITCHEN

and peers out the window above the sink.

The Stranger is bent over in the yard with a shovel in his hands. He digs a hole.

JOHN

That's it.

He reaches into a drawer and pulls out a large butcher knife.

EXT. SIDE YARD - NIGHT

John creeps to where he saw The Stranger. Unable to see him in the dark he follows the scraping sound of the shovel.

The sounds stop and so does John. He strains to make out anything in the dark when the night sky flashes.

The yard is empty. No hole. No Stranger.

John spins, trying to locate him. Shouts into the night.

JOHN

Where are you?

He moves to where the hole had been.

JOHN

What do you want?

A rumbling groan builds up around John that transforms into

THE STRANGER (O.S.)

You know.

and ends in a cascade of thunder.

JOHN

Leave my family alone. Leave me
alone.

A wicked finger of lightning shoots from the sky. It crashes beyond the trees with a loud explosion.

Smoke rises into the air. It is lit by an orange glow as something burns in the distance.

John stands in the rain and stares into the abyss.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sarah enters in her robe. John sits at the table. He looks like hell. Dark bags under his eyes, one bruised, swollen and filled with blood. His face is dirty and in need of a shave.

SARAH

You're up early.

JOHN

Couldn't sleep.

SARAH

Want some coffee?

He shakes his head.

JOHN

Leaving soon.

John gets up and goes to the phone.

SARAH

Where?

Holds the receiver to his ear. Listens.

JOHN

Damn it!

He violently toggles the cradle. Slams the phone back in place.

SARAH
What is going on?

JOHN
He was back last night.

SARAH
Not this again.

JOHN
He was digging a hole in the yard.

Sarah goes to the window over the sink and looks out.

SARAH
I don't see anything.

JOHN
Of course you don't. You never see anything.

SARAH
Calm down.

JOHN
Don't tell me to calm down. First he threatens to kill us. And now he's digging a hole?

Sarah shakes her head as if she doesn't understand.

JOHN
What do you do with holes Sarah?

SARAH
I don't know.

JOHN
You put things in them... You bury something you want to hide. You...

He looks at her long and hard. His face changes instantly, as if he has just discovered something.

JOHN
Bury your family.

SARAH
Okay. That's not creepy.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

John races down the stairs with Sarah on his heels.

SARAH

Where are you going?

JOHN

To do what I should have done
already.

SARAH

You can't just leave us here.

JOHN

I'm going in to town to talk to the
sheriff. I'll be right back.

He hops into the car. The engine turns over. Sputters. Dies.

Sarah watches him as he tries again, beating at the steering
wheel in frustration. It won't start.

While having an epileptic fit in the drivers seat, John tries
again. The engine finally catches and roars to life. Revving
hard, the wheels kick up mud as it tears out of the driveway.

INT. CAR - DAY

John drives too fast. Erratically. The car slips across the
muddy road. Behind the wheel, John rocks back and forth.

Rain pours down as the wipers blur across the windshield --
schick schick -- schick schick -- .

JOHN

Come on. Come on.

Lightning fills the sky. The radio pops on in a blare of song
and static. It is that same old fifties tune.

He hammers at it. Tries to turn it off.

The song is lost in a flurry of stations as it stops on an
angry PREACHER in the middle of a sermon.

PREACHER (V.O.)

You can not hide your sins from the
Lord, just as you can not hide
yourself from your sins.

John throttles the radio harder. It skips across the airways
and back to the song.

JOHN

Off god damn it. Off!

The car slips and John returns to the wheel. Gets it under control as the radio skips back to the Preacher.

PREACHER (V.O.)

And on the day of reckoning, be certain that your sins will seek you out...

John turns the knobs. Pushes the buttons. It won't turn off.

JOHN

God damn you.

PREACHER (V.O.)

For all eternity.

That last word echoes strangely in the car as the radio fades out and dies.

He looks back at the road and stands on the brakes.

JOHN

Son of a...

The car veers sideways and comes to a stop in the middle of the road.

John stares out the window and is unable to believe what he is seeing.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

John stands before the smoking ruins of the bridge. He trudges through the mud and peers down at the swollen river below.

JOHN

Fantastic.

The entire middle section of the bridge is gone.

John heads back to the car. Turns and notices the sign again, "Dead End". His face tightens in a fit of rage.

He bends over and picks up a rock. Throws it at the sign and misses.

JOHN

Fuck you!

John charges the sign and starts kicking at it.

With his anger worked off, he leans against it and stares at the ground.

JOHN
Now what?

INT. FOYER - DAY

John enters to find Sarah and Jason sitting on the stairs waiting for him.

He heads straight to the

KITCHEN

with Sarah in tow.

SARAH
What happened?

John goes to the phone and puts it to his ear.

JOHN
Shit!

He slams the phone back in the cradle.

SARAH
You weren't gone very long.

JOHN
The road was blocked.

John paces in front of the phone.

SARAH
Blocked?

JOHN
I saw it happen last night.

SARAH
Saw what?

JOHN
Lightning struck something beyond the trees. Now I know what it was.

SARAH
I don't understand.

JOHN
The bridge Sarah. The damn bridge
burnt down.

SARAH
Oh my god.

JOHN
Looks like we're stranded here.

SARAH
What if something happens?

John turns on her sharply.

JOHN
Happens?

He moves in on her. Grabs her head in his hands.

JOHN
Happens?

Her face flinches as she tries to pull free.

SARAH
John, please. You're hurting me.

JOHN
Something has been happening,
Sarah. You're just too blind to see
it.

Sarah begins to cry.

SARAH
I'm sorry.

JOHN
You're god damn right you are.

He pushes her away and storms out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rain plays off the windows as the storm picks up steam.

John sits on the sofa. A lit cigarette in one hand and a
drink in the other. His head bobs as he fights off sleep.

The black book is spread open on his lap. John absentmindedly
mumbles certain words of the entry on the page.

INSERT - ENTRY, which reads:

"Jealousy and murder. They are the demons knocking on the door to my mind. I must stay away from that door lest I open it and they get the better of me."

BACK TO JOHN

The clock upstairs chimes the hour.

He snaps to and looks around.

INT. TOP OF STAIRS - NIGHT

An old record scratches to life. Plays the old fifties tune as the final chime on the clock rings out and fades into rhythmic ticking.

John pokes his head out of the living room and peers up the stairs. He cocks his head to find the source of the music.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Door stands sentry at the end of the hallway. All the doors along the sides are wide open.

Everything is still but the distant music and the ever faithful clock.

JOHN

Sarah. That you?

He makes his way down the hall and the music grows louder.

As he reaches Jason's door he hears a loud warning creak from the floorboards behind him and then a long BREATHY WHISPER

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

John...

breezes past him. As if hit by a draft of air, the hair around his ear ruffles.

He spins around to find an empty hall. Another wooden creak.

Someone is on the stairs.

JOHN

Who is that?

He sneaks over to the stairs and sees

THE STRANGER

standing halfway down the staircase. He holds something in his hands.

The storm outside unleashes a fury of light and John sees what is in the hands of The Stranger.

An evil looking ax.

JOHN

God. No.

John races down the hall and starts for Jason's room. The door slams in his face. He tries the handle. Locked.

He runs past the bathroom as that door slams shut. John tears a look over his shoulder as footsteps hit the landing.

The Stranger is there.

JOHN

Sarah!

He runs to the master bedroom but the door slams shut on him and he fumbles with the handle

JOHN

Sarah. Open the damn door.

The Stranger slowly advances on him.

The Door creaks open behind John. Now free, the music gets louder as does the myriad of voices gibbering from within.

John's panic doubles and he attacks the bedroom door.

JOHN

He's coming. Let me in.

With a final assault, the bedroom door flies open and sends John crashing into the darkness.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

John turns to slam the door shut but The Stranger is already there. He fills the doorway with his black presence.

John stumbles into the room and falls onto his back. He frantically crawls away.

JOHN
What do you...

The Stranger charges him. The ax comes up in a brilliant arc as lightning dances off the blade. It crashes into John with a sickening thud.

JOHN
Ugh.

John raises his hand to fend off the second blow. His arm disappears with a crunch. Blood splatters across his face.

JOHN
Help me!

More blows. Faster and harder. Thunder collides with the sky in an unending volley.

John's body jumps with each strike of the ax. He watches as the blade comes at him and vanishes. His vision jars violently.

JOHN
(weakly)
Please. No more.

JOHN'S POV - as he stares up at The Stranger, a final blow dislodges his head at an odd angle. Off to one side stands the Dead Woman and Dead Boy.

They watch in mute silence as LIGHTNING washes everything away in a blinding glare.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Door slams loudly shut from above.

John lurches from his sleep and explodes off the couch. He tries to go everywhere at once. Find escape from the nightmare. He gibbers incoherently.

As he calms down and takes in his surroundings, his lips move to find the right word.

JOHN
Murder.

John collapses to the floor and starts to weep.

The house is silent once more save the ticking of the clock.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

John sits at the table and stares at nothing. He is a complete mess. Heavy bags hang under bloodshot eyes. A partial beard grows from a battered and bruised face.

SARAH (O.S.)
You don't look so hot.

He continues to stare.

JOHN
I don't feel so hot.

Sarah sits across from him.

SARAH
Rough night?

He finally looks at her with wet eyes.

JOHN
You could say that.

John pulls open the book of memories. Past the photos and to the final page of written entries.

JOHN
I know what he wants... what he did.

SARAH
Who?

He rotates the book and slides it to her.

JOHN
Look for yourself.

She leans down and reads the final entry.

INSERT - JOURNAL ENTRY:

"They are gone. Safe. I have seen to that. All that is left now is to join them.

Together. Forever."

BACK TO SARAH

She flips to the next page. There are no words, only pencil marks. Four lines with a slash through each one. Rows upon rows of them.

Page after page. They are filled with them. She finally reaches a half finished page and looks up at John.

SARAH
What are these?

He shrugs his shoulders.

SARAH
Did you do this?

JOHN
I found that book. That shit was already in there. Its his.

Sarah just looks at him. Confused.

JOHN
Don't you see what it means?

SARAH
Not really.

JOHN
That is his book. This was his house.

SARAH
I'm not following you.

Anger starts to surface in him.

JOHN
He murdered his family. In this house and buried them out there.

Sarah lets out a long winded sigh.

SARAH
Oh, John.

JOHN
Think about it. That man. The things I've experienced... seen.

SARAH
Hallucinations.

John slams his palms on the table.

JOHN

No! Jason knows the truth.

SARAH

Lower your voice and leave him out of this.

JOHN

I saw him burying something. I've seen their ghosts.

He motions to his body.

JOHN

For god sakes, I've felt their pain. They're trying to tell me something.

John snatches up her hand.

JOHN

He threatened us. He still is and he doesn't want us digging up the truth.

SARAH

This is insane. I can't do this anymore.

She turns to walk away but he yanks her back around and slaps her across the face.

JOHN

You're not going anywhere.

Sarah holds a stunned hand to her face but instead of crying she gets angry.

SARAH

You bastard.

JOHN

We have to stay together. Do this together.

SARAH

Together? This isn't about us. This is about you.

Sarah pulls free and yanks something from her pants. She slams them on the table. The medicine bottles.

SARAH

The only way this is going away is
if you take your fucking medicine
or...

JOHN

Or what?

She wearily shakes her head.

SARAH

Its to late to turn back the clock
now.

She turns her back on him and leaves. John shouts after her.

JOHN

No it isn't. You'll be thanking me
later. You just hide and watch.

He looks to make sure she is gone.

JOHN

Bitch.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Sarah bustles around the room packing clothes into a
suitcase.

She disappears down the hallway. Returns with a small child
sized suitcase and an armful of Jason's clothes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The soft noises of Sarah packing drifts into the room. John
sits on the sofa staring at the wall.

Jason stands in the doorway and watches him.

JASON

Daddy?

John doesn't budge. Doesn't even blink.

JASON

Daddy?

John turns his head slowly.

JOHN

Yes?

JASON
Are we leaving now?

John goes to his son. Guides him into the

FOYER

and looks up the stairs toward the noise Sarah is making.

JOHN
No. We're not.

Jason steps away from John. Shoots a look of fear at him.

JASON
We have to. Before the bad man
comes back.

JOHN
I'll stop him if he does. Okay?

Jason shakes his head furiously as John tries to calm him down.

JASON
I wanna go daddy.

JOHN
We couldn't even if we wanted to.

JASON
You can't stop him.

JOHN
I can and I will.

He bends down and hugs Jason. Jason doesn't hug him back.

JOHN
I love you.

Tears streak down Jason's cheeks. A defeated slump in his shoulders.

JASON
Doesn't matter.

JOHN
Why?

JASON
He won't never stop.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Sarah stands at the window and watches the lightning and thunder fight overhead. Tears flow down her reddened cheek.

JOHN (O.S.)
What are those?

Sarah turns and looks at the packed suitcases sitting on the bed.

SARAH
Suitcases.

JOHN
I can see that. Why are they there?

SARAH
(imploring)
We need to leave this house. We've stayed too long already.

JOHN
We can't leave here.

SARAH
No... you can't.

JOHN
It isn't safe out there. You need me.

Before she can stop it, a short humourless laugh explodes from her lips.

SARAH
We're not safe in here. From you.

JOHN
Don't talk like that.

SARAH
You're living in a fantasy John.
You need to wake up.

JOHN
Why can't you see it? He killed before and he will do it again.

Sarah roughly grabs his head in her hands and shakes it like he did hers earlier.

SARAH
Its all in your head. Can't you see
that?

John pushes her away from him.

JOHN
Unpack your things or I will.

SARAH
No.

JOHN
I won't allow you to leave. We have
to stay together.

SARAH
Try and stop me.

He clenches his fists and his knuckles crack with the strain.

JOHN
Do. Not. Force my hand Sarah.

SARAH
Why? What are you going to do?

As if struck with an idea, his anger fades. He looks out the window were the storm continues relentlessly.

He grabs Sarah by the wrists

JOHN
I'll prove it to you. Show you I'm
not crazy.

and bounds from the room.

INT. SHED - EVENING

John rips open the door and charges in. He moves to a wall of tools but doesn't find what he is looking for.

He goes to a corner where long handled gardening tools lean against the wall and finds what he needs.

Grabbing the shovel he stalks from the shed.

INT. SIDE YARD - EVENING

As he lights a cigarette he watches the storm overhead. The wind whips at his hair and clothes.

He drives the shovel into the ground. Pulls out a chunk of muddy earth. Tosses it aside.

JOHN
We'll see who's living in a
fantasy.

With wild eyes he attacks the ground.

From the front of the house comes the sound of a door banging closed.

He turns to see Sarah and Jason scrambling into the car.

JOHN
What are you doing?

John flicks his cigarette into the grass. Plants the shovel into the ground and runs after them.

The car peels out in the muddy driveway and shoots for the road.

JOHN
God damn it!

He charges back into the house.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

John picks up the phone and dials a number. The line crackles and clicks.

JOHN
Please.

It starts to ring through. With a series of clicks, a MALE VOICE answers.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Hello?

JOHN
Sheriff? Oh thank god.

The line spits out static as lightning strikes outside.

JOHN
We're in trouble. The bridge is...
Hello?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Who is this?

JOHN
He murdered his family.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Who?

JOHN
The man who lived at this house.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
What are you talking about?

JOHN
Listen. I found out what he did. I
read it in this journal that
belonged to him.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Who are you?

Lightning strikes close and the lights flicker from the surge. Thunder beats against the roof.

JOHN
Now that I know what he did, he
wants my family.

The line crackles and dies in a burst of static.

JOHN
Hello?

He toggles the receiver hard

JOHN
God damn it.

and slams the phone into the cradle.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

John charges out the door and looks toward the road. Rain starts to pour from the sky.

He leaps down the stairs and starts across the lawn.

A door slams behind him and he skids to a stop. He turns back to the house and sees

THE STRANGER

coming to a halt on the porch.

They stare each other down, waiting to see who makes the first move.

The Stranger leaps from the porch.

John dashes away from the road and into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

John crashes through the trees as a ground fog begins creeping up around him. The deeper he goes the thicker it becomes.

The Stranger, unseen but heard, pursues him.

JOHN
I won't let you do it.

He races deeper into the woods, his breath comes hard and fast.

John trips. He scrambles to his feet and runs off in another direction.

Branches break loudly behind him. The Stranger is close.

JOHN
I'll kill you first.

John rounds a large tree and spills over a large root.

Impossibly loud cracks, as though trees are being broken in half, come at him. Fast.

John picks up a fallen limb, readies to defend himself when a shadow appears out of the fog.

It moves back and forth. In and out of the darkness and the fog. Here one minute, there another. Swift. Elusive.

John turns to meet it only to have it disappear and reappear somewhere else.

JOHN
Face me you coward.

He bangs the limb against trees. Rushes at shadows. Bellows insane war cries.

The woods suddenly go silent and John scowls at the fog around him. Nothing moves. He shouts after The Stranger.

JOHN

You shouldn't have come back.

The words echo back to him and he hears someone running away from him. He turns to see The Stranger dart to his right and he gives chase.

JOHN

You should have just let it be.

The Stranger dodges trees. Trips. Jumps back up. Runs.

Thrashing through the trees with the heavy limb in his hands, John draws closer.

JOHN

Let the dead rest in peace.

The Stranger glances over his shoulder. He is very close. Almost close enough to make out his features.

JOHN

I'm going to kill you for what you did.

John sounds deranged. An unnatural smile on his face.

The Stranger suddenly changes direction and darts behind a tree.

John picks up speed. Rushes around the tree. Raises his weapon and

THE STRANGER

rushes around the tree, a dark silhouette against the white fog. He has a tree branch for a weapon very similar to John's.

He swings. John swings. They both let loose a primal scream.

The branch fills up John's vision as it closes in on his head. He wasn't fast enough.

With a hollow thud, someone turns out the lights.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - LATER

John slowly opens his eyes. The trees sway above him. He blinks away the rain that pours onto his face.

He quickly sits up and looks around for The Stranger. A gash on his forehead bleeds.

Rising to his feet he walks a short distance to the remains of a barb wire fence. He looks around. Lost.

Reaching into his pocket he pulls out a cigarette. Lights it.

JOHN
I can't do this.

He stumbles past the fence post and trips over something. It slides heavily through the brush.

Reaching out he grasps the object. Pulls it into view. He holds an ancient ax.

John hefts the ax in his hands. Feels the weight of it and smiles.

Moving on he breaks through the trees and skids to a halt. He stares at the side of his house.

JOHN
What the...

He walks past the shovel sticking in the ground and the hole he had started digging. The ax slips from his hands as he stares at the house in disbelief.

John looks towards the driveway. The car is back.

Drawing his attention, a light turns off in an upstairs window. The master bedroom. His room.

He stares at it intently and out of the darkness beyond the window

THE STRANGER

emerges, looking out at him. John has trouble seeing him but it looks like The Stranger just reached out or pushed someone away from the window.

JOHN
Sarah?

John flicks the cigarette away and picks the ax up off the ground. He stalks towards the house.

JOHN
This ends now.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

John rushes in, greeted by a loud commotion upstairs and a SCREAM.

JOHN

Sarah!

He flies up the stairs and into the

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

past the backwards ticking clock.

The Door stands wide open onto a wall of black.

John slowly creeps past the bathroom. Past Jason's room. He clings to the wall, as far away from The Door as possible, and peeks into the

MASTER BEDROOM

Reaching in, he flips on the light. Ax raised, he jumps into the room. It is empty.

Shadows dart past the doorway behind him as feet pound across the wooden floor.

JOHN

Sarah.

He pokes his head out into the

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

in time to see Sarah and Jason plunge down the stairs.

JOHN

Wait. We need to stay together.
He's in here.

The clock begins to vibrate loudly. Chimes echo chaotically.

As John stops before it. The minute hand is a blur of motion as it twitches and stops on 10:59.

Everything is calm and quiet. The pendulum swings back and forth. John is mesmerized when for the first time the minute hand clicks forward.

It rings the top of the hour with a horrific cacophony of hells bells.

A door slams downstairs and breaks John from his trance.

JOHN

Stop!

He launches towards the stairs and down into the

FOYER

where he rips open the front door in time to see the car careening out of sight.

John blows out a massive breathe of exhaustion

JOHN

Not again.

and tiredly runs after them.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

John trudges through the mud and rain. His breathe comes in explosive bursts.

JOHN

(weakly)

Sarah. Jason.

He stumbles and drops the ax. Frantically grabs it and scrambles back to his feet.

A light cuts through the darkness ahead.

EXT. ROAD - FURTHER

John slides to a stop and looks towards the source of the light.

The car faces the bridge, headlights beaming across the burnt remains.

All the doors are open, revealing an empty interior. Sarah's purse lies in the mud along with one shoe. The drivers side window busted out.

JOHN

Sarah!

John looks around, frantically trying to find which way they went. Something rustles in the trees to his right and he turns toward it.

Far off in the distance he hears a faint, terror filled voice.

SARAH (O.S.)
Help me! Somebody please...

JOHN
No.

Tightening his grip on the ax, he charges into the woods after them.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

John races through the trees. Stumbles. Tries to catch his breath.

Stooped over, hands on knees, he hears Sarah SCREAM and the terror in that sound propels him forward.

EXT. SIDE YARD - NIGHT

John bulls out of the woods in time to see the side door to the house slam shut.

JOHN
Sarah. Stop.

He looks around quickly, in search of The Stranger.

Passing the shovel and the hole he started, he heads after Sarah and his son.

JOHN
Please god, let me stop this.

He grasps the handle to the door and finds it locked.

JOHN
Sarah. Open the door.

Face against the glass, he peers into the darkened kitchen.

John hefts the ax back over his shoulder and brings it down on the door. Wood splinters but it doesn't budge.

SCREAMS filter through the house in a surreal echo.

The ax strikes the door again and it jars slightly away from the frame. He steps back and kicks the door with all his might.

With an explosion of glass and wood, the door caves in.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

John stares down at The Door. It stands wide open. Bright pulsating light spills out into the hall.

Hugging the wall, John pulls himself towards it.

As he reaches the master bedroom he hears something dripping onto the floor.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

John cautiously walks in. The ax raised and ready.

JOHN

Sarah?

His foot slips in something and he backs up. He reaches out and finds the light switch. He flips the switch to see

BLOOD

running down the walls. Dripping from the ceiling. Flowing into a growing pool on the floor.

John SCREAMS

JOHN

No!

and runs from the room to

JASON'S ROOM

throwing on the lights.

JOHN

Jason?

He slams open the closet. Searches through the clothes. The bed flips over violently as John looks for his son.

The room is empty.

JOHN

Where are you?

John charges out into the

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

and sees movement under the bathroom door.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

From the other side, John grips the handle and turns it slowly. Ghostly whimpers echo from the tiled corners of the room.

The door flies open as John rushes in. He hammers at the light switch.

There is no one here. The tub is filled with a murky water that spills onto the flooded floor. Jason's teddy bear, wet and limp, in a pile next to it.

John collapses to his knees and crawls to the bear, sobbing.

JOHN

Oh... please no.

He holds it in his hands. Water starts to pour from the stuffed toy as John grips it tighter, his sadness turning to anger.

JOHN

What have you done?

John launches to his feet and turns to see himself in the mirror. Blackened, tear filled eyes. Scraggly beard. A bruised and battered face.

He draws closer, inspecting the stranger he sees reflecting back at him.

And he snaps.

JOHN

Noooooo....!

In a fit of rage he attacks the mirror, smashes his hand into the reflection of his face. Cracks spread out across the mirrors surface.

A broken reflection stares back at John. It seems to make him even angrier and he slams his fist into it again.

JOHN

This can't be happening.

The spiderweb of cracks grow and impossibly expand out to the walls around the mirror. John doesn't notice.

As he turns to leave, the floor pitches under him and vibrates. A deep groaning fills the room.

John spins back to the mirror as the cracks begin to fill with a brilliant white light.

JOHN

What the...

He steps closer as the rays of light spill around the broken pieces of the mirror and fan out.

The room rocks and sends John reeling. Light continues to spread until that is all there is and fades to

SERIES OF FLASHBACKS - THE STRANGER'S POV

The images come fast and chaotic.

WOODS - NIGHT

Chasing a woman through the woods. She claws her way through the trees.

The storm rages overhead. Lightning arcs across the sky chased by thunder.

FOYER - NIGHT

Climbing the stairs, the ax thumping against the stairs as he drags it.

Voices, panicked and muffled from the floor above, draw him forward.

THE STRANGER

We'll be together, forever.

Lightning flashes and

MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Attacking the woman with the ax. It arcs in and out of view, blood flying through the air.

The light overhead shatters as the ax slams into view and the room drops into darkness.

Thuds of the ax as it strikes flesh and wood. Again and again.

Lightning flashes and

BATHROOM - NIGHT

Hunching over the tub. Water splashes over the sides as he drowns a small child.

Tiny hands beat at his relentless arms. He shakes the child violently and the body goes limp.

He stands up, watching the child sink. Turning, he faces the mirror.

Lightning flashes and The Stranger's reflection is

JOHN

his face bloody and wet from the brutal murders. The reflection recedes as the room expands and then advances on a collision course with the mirror.

Lightning flashes and

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The mirror explodes, pulling John back to reality and a new nightmare.

He collapses to the floor. In a fury he pounds his bloody fists into the tiles.

JOHN

No! It isn't true.

John pulls out the battered Polaroids of his wife and son. He stares at them as he shakes his head and tears streak down his cheeks.

JOHN

It's all in my head.

Insane laughter escapes his lips.

JOHN

This can't be real.

He repeats the same phrase over and over as he rocks himself.

JOHN

It can't be. It can't be.

Thunder beats at the roof overhead and breaks John free from his shock.

His eyes widen and bulge with a new realization.

John grabs the axe and picks himself up off the floor. He runs from the room.

EXT. SIDE YARD - NIGHT

As he crosses towards the shovel jutting from the ground, John tosses the ax in disgust. It flies into the woods and lands next to the remains of a barb wire fence.

Pulling the shovel loose, he stares at the partial hole he had dug earlier.

He thrusts the shovel into the mud and frantically digs. Like a broken record, John mumbles.

JOHN

Not them. Don't let it be them.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Pulsating light spills out of The Door. The old fifties tune plays as angry voices bounce off the walls.

The storm rages on as the clock ticks down.

EXT. SIDE YARD - LATER

John stands in a deep hole, mud and dirt fly over his shoulder.

JOHN

Not them. Not them.

He tosses the shovel away. Gets on his knees and starts tearing at the earth.

JOHN

They're not here. I knew it.

An uneasy laugh gets stuck in his throat. It instantly dies as his hand drags something long and stringy from the muck.

He thumbs away the mud and gasps at the sight of

SARAH'S LOCKET

JOHN

No.

John renews his assault on the bottom of the hole. His frantic fingers uncover a

SKULL

and he falls back against the wall of the grave.

JOHN
(weakly)
No.

Rain washes over him. Water pours in from the sides of the grave and slowly washes away more dirt and mud to reveal

TWO SKELETONS

One belongs to an adult. The other a child with a disintegrating teddy bear tucked under one arm.

John shakes his head in denial.

JOHN
This isn't right.

He hops out of the grave and starts shoving in piles of mud with his hands.

JOHN
It's a trick.

He throws an exhausted arm towards the house.

JOHN
You did this to me.

Finally finished, John cranes his head around to look at the house. The window to the room trapped behind The Door pulsates.

John shouts at the house.

JOHN
This isn't finished!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

John shambles in through the shattered door. Looks at the mud splattered all over the floor. The mud on his pants and shoes.

He holds out his hands. They are blistered and torn, a mangle of wet soil and blood.

JOHN
Sarah!

John walks to the center of the room.

JOHN
Jason!

Nobody answers. All is silent and still.

He goes to the sink and turns on the water. He stares at his hands before he plunges them in the water and tries to wash it all away.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

John paces the floor. Mumbles incoherently.

Each time he passes the phone he stops as if trying to make a decision.

Finally gathering his courage, he yanks the phone off the hook and awkwardly dials out a number. The line starts to ring.

Lightning blazes outside followed by a crack of thunder. John flinches when a Voice answers on the other end of the line.

VOICE (V.O.)

Hello.

John jerks the phone away from his ear. Shocked, he stares at it. At the familiar voice on the other end. The Stranger's voice. His voice.

The air splits with a deafening tinnitus ring and drowns everything out. Muted and hollow.

Words try to form on his lips but shock prevents them from escaping. He drags the phone back to his ear.

Sound rushes back and

THE STRANGER/JOHN (V.O.)

Hello?

John swallows hard. His voice cracks.

JOHN

Get out... get out of my house.

THE STRANGER/JOHN (V.O.)

Who is this?

The line crackles as lightning strikes outside.

JOHN

Now!

Thunder beats at the house as something clatters loudly against the kitchen table. John turns slowly, afraid of what it might be.

THE STRANGER/JOHN (V.O.)

I don't know who you think...

John stares at the kitchen table and the object now sitting there next to his pill bottles. Just as it had been before it vanished earlier, the shotgun is back.

JOHN

If you don't, he...

Unable to look away from the gun, John finds the correct words.

JOHN

I'll kill your family and then
I'll...

The phone goes dead with a loud click but he finishes anyway

JOHN

Kill you.

He throws the phone at the wall. It bounces off and clatters to the floor, dancing at the end of the cord.

John rubs his temples, slaps the sides of his head.

JOHN

Wake up John, wake up. This can't
be.

He hears something towards the front of the house. A car door slamming.

Grabbing the shotgun, he opens the breach and finds it empty.

JOHN

Shit.

He quickly grabs up the pill bottles and stuffs them into his shirt pocket.

Wielding the harmless weapon before him, he goes to investigate.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

John cautiously approaches the front door. Something outside is casting an eerie orange-red glow. It lights up the foyer.

He peers outside to witness a horror in progress.

JOHN

No.

The house is ringed in fire as the woods burn. Ash and bright embers rain from the sky. Smoke clouds the air as rain from the storm is burned away.

A dark figure steps from the flames, a walking ember. It is a hellish version of The Stranger.

JOHN

No. Go away.

John pits his body against the door. Grabs the handle with both hands and watches The Stranger getting closer.

Leaving behind a smoldering trail, he approaches. The wall of fire closes in on the house behind him.

JOHN

You can't come in here.

The Stranger looks in at John. Reaches for the handle.

With a sizzle, John jerks his hands back. He tries to shake the burns away.

The Stranger pushes on the door. It starts to open.

Planting his feet, John leans into the door and shoves it closed.

A voice like that of a crackling, raging inferno splits the air on the other side of the door. The words are barely recognizable.

THE STRANGER/JOHN (O.S.)

I see you. Open the door.

JOHN

Please... Don't come in here.

The Stranger heaves his shoulder into the door. John can't hold him out. He turns and flees to the safety of the stairs.

Halfway up, John hears a crashing behind him. He turns to see the burning shell of The Stranger sprawled on the floor, looking up at him as he escapes to the

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

John peers around the edge of the wall. He watches The Stranger slowly climb the stairs, bringing the wall of destruction and fire with him.

John is transfixed as he stares at The Stranger that is him yet not him, at the nightmare that is closing in.

JOHN

This is just a dream, it isn't
real.

He turns and runs down the hall.

A dark pool of water spreads out from the bathroom.

As John edges past, avoiding the reaching puddle, his son stands in the doorway. Blackened by death. Water pours from his mouth and nose.

Dead accusatory white eyes follow John.

JOHN

I didn't do it... I don't remember.

John charges further down the hall. He trips, sprawling to the floor and slides to a stop in a pool of blood. The shotgun flies from his hands, landing just inside The Door.

He looks up to see the shattered remains of his wife, staring down at him with those same accusatory dead white eyes.

With horror, John scoots away from the nightmare.

JOHN

This can't be real. I'm having a
bad dream.

She reaches a mutilated hand towards him and a insane laughter bubbles from John's lips.

JOHN

I'm ready to take my medicine now.
I just want to wake up.

John climbs up the wall and to his feet. Looks back the way he came.

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

Through The Door and past John, The Stranger has arrived and hell follows him.

John turns and rushes into The Room, kicking the shotgun as he does and slams The Door shut.

Outside The Door, floorboards cry out as The Stranger draws closer.

John reaches for the handle and notices a key in the lock. He frantically twists at it and gets The Door Locked.

He picks up the shotgun, backs away and collides with the desk. Something barks out behind him and he spins around to face it as the record player blares out that fifties tune.

He circles the desk. Drops the shotgun down on its partially scarred surface and collapses into the chair.

The Door shutters in its frame as The Stranger tries to get in. Its horrific voice blasts through The Door.

THE STRANGER/JOHN (O.S.)

I know you're in there... Open the door.

JOHN

No!

Whispering voices spring up all around. John covers his ears, clamps his eyes shut, and starts rocking in the chair.

JOHN

This isn't real. This isn't real.

Suddenly everything goes silent.

John opens his eyes. Relaxes.

Something moves to the right of him and even as he turns to see what it is he throws himself from the chair.

The ghastly visages of his wife and son stand watching him from across The Room. Dead Sarah lifts her arm and points at the desk.

JOHN

What do you want?

Rising to his knees, John looks to the desk. The shotgun lays there next to the black book of memories. The Stranger's book. His book.

JOHN

You're not real.

The book explodes open. An unseen hand flips through the pages, stopping at the last page of entries.

John reads it.

JOHN

They are gone. Safe. I have seen to that. All that is left now is to join them. Together. Forever.

Dead Sarah's gory arm points at him.

JOHN

I didn't do that. That isn't me!

Her lips part and a crackling voice pours out of her mouth.

DEAD SARAH

Take your medicine.

John feels for the pill bottles in his pocket.

JOHN

Yes. Yes! I want to wake up.

He screams at The Room through laughter that is not quite sane.

JOHN

You'll see. I'll make this all go away.

Reaching into his pocket, he stops. Grabs his dead wife's hand instead.

JOHN

I'm sorry. I'll do it. I'll get better. You'll see.

Smoke starts to creep into The Room. The walls start to crumble and disintegrate. Hot embers pour from the cracks.

DEAD SARAH

Do it. Now!

John flinches. Grabs for his pocket and pulls out the medicine bottles, only they aren't medicine bottles any longer. They are

SHOTGUN SHELLS

and he looks at them. Dumbfounded.

He drops them to the desk and digs through his clothes trying to find the pill bottles.

JOHN
Where are they?

The book comes to life again. It flips through pages until it reaches the ones filled with the pencil marks and comes to rest on the half finished page.

DEAD SARAH
Again.

John's eyes hover over the pages, studying the marks.

He looks to his dead wife. To his dead son. To the shotgun sitting on the desk.

As understanding hits him he slumps down in the chair.

JOHN
No. Not this.

He turns back to his dead family.

JOHN
I didn't do this. I can't...

John digs at his eyes as if trying to wipe this nightmare away.

JOHN
I don't remember.

Dead Sarah lifts her hand and points at the shotgun. Her hair explodes away from her face and she screams

DEAD SARAH
Again.

Plaster and burning embers shower down from the walls and ceiling.

JOHN
No.

He rises from the chair and moves about the room, taking everything in.

John notices something he had not the very first time he walked through The Door. The broken and empty shelves. The blood stain on the wall.

The path of destruction is all tied together. It fans out neatly from the desk as if it had exploded.

His face reveals the realization of what is happening. He reaches with his hand and gropes for the damage at the back of his head.

Unsteady fingers trace the spiderweb of scars there.

JOHN

Impossible.

His hands fall limply to his sides as he mindlessly walks back to the chair and sits down in the epicenter of the destruction.

John draws a pen from the desk. Looks at his dead wife as though seeking approval.

Taking a deep breath, he makes a diagonal mark through four vertical ones.

The book slams shut.

JOHN

How can this be? How can I forget
the things I've done?

He grabs the shotgun and opens the breach. Reaches out for the shotgun shells that were once medicine bottles he carried with him everywhere, waiting for just this moment.

The shells slide into the holes and the breach closes.

His demons close in on him, leaving a trail behind them that sizzles and boils. The room is falling down around him.

John thumbs the hammers back. CLICK. CLICK.

JOHN

(weakly)
I'd really like to wake up now.

The shotgun hovers near his mouth. He opens wide and prepares to take his medicine.

The Door, now burning and smoking, opens to reveal a demonic version of himself. It watches. Waiting.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

All is still and quiet. The hall looks untouched but older, run down.

The grandfather clock ticks loudly. Slowly. The minute hand struggles at 11:33. It starts to chime out of tune. With each clang of the hellish bells a

SERIES OF SHOTS - EMPTY HOUSE - DAY

-- The bathroom - the faucet drips into an empty tub.

-- Jason's bedroom - a stuffed bear on the bed.

-- John and Sarah's bedroom - a faint stain on the floor.

-- The upstairs hallway - The Door stands wide open.

BACK TO SCENE

Winding down, the pendulum stops.

With a broken twang the clock freezes at 11:34.

Thunder rumbles off in the distance as the storm gives up its last flash of lightning.

The Door starts to slowly close as a white haze washes over everything and as it fades

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

An ancient Victorian, eerie and monolithic, rests under a cloudy sky.

An approaching storm fills the horizon. The yard is still wet and muddy from the one that has just passed.

A car sits in the drive at the front of the house. Windshield wipers working back and forth.

Through the passenger window, sits a man. His bandaged head rests against the glass, sleeping.

A loud groan escapes the house as The Door continues to close. It is impossibly loud, even out here.

The sound gets louder. Faster.

The Door slams shut and John jerks awake inside the car. He grabs his head in pain.

FADE TO BLACK.