

THE BRINGING

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FIRST BORN FILMS

THIS FILM IS BASED ON ACTUAL EVENTS

FIRST BORN FILMS

OVER BLACK SCREEN:

The following footage was taken from The Cecil Hotel security cameras in Downtown Los Angeles in February of 2013.

FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL ELEVATOR - SECURITY CAMERA POV - NIGHT

The elevator door opens. It's empty.

ELISA LAM, A Chinese woman in her early 20s enters the elevator from the hallway. She's dressed casually in a RED HOODED SWEATSHIRT and a DARK SKIRT. At this moment she appears calm.

Elisa steps towards the buttons and leans forward. As she steps back we see that four buttons have been pressed.

She stands back in the corner of the elevator and waits. The door remains mysteriously open. After a few moments she walks curiously towards the open door and then suddenly--

DARTS HER HEAD INTO THE HALLWAY.

She looks both ways before jumping back into the elevator. Something has scared her.

Although nobody enters the frame, from the way she positions herself against the wall, she is trying to hide.

Slowly, she peaks her head out again, but this time she's--

THRUST INTO THE HALLWAY AGAINST HER WILL BY AN UNSEEN FORCE.

She's pulled out of frame for a moment, but slowly returns as if she's released. She hurries back into the elevator and this time desperately hits every button in an attempt to get the door to closed. But it remains open.

She steps back into the hallway and motions with her hands in a desperate attempt to reason with this UNSEEN FORCE, but she again falls under it's control. She manifests physical contortions with her arms and hands unnatural to any human not being bound against their will, yet the force remains unseen.

Her face indicates that she'd be screaming in pain were we able to hear audio.

Then, as if possessed, she surrenders to this power and slowly walks off and out of frame.

She does not return.

The door remains open and we hold on it for thirty seconds building tension until it mysteriously - and finally - closes.

We slowly FADE TO BLACK and hold in the darkness to live in this moment for a few more beats.

SMASH CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: THE FORCEFUL SPRAY OF WATER FROM A SHOWER HEAD.

INT. SHOWER - CONTINUOUS

We move down from the blonde hair and sunken, scabby face of CASEY, a woman in her 20s who was likely very attractive and sexy before drug addiction took over. She rubs soap over her track mark covered arms and visible rib cage.

She's under the influence of something and the shower feels incredible.

ELECTRONIC MUSIC can be heard playing from--

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

In the adjacent room, JASON, 30s, thin but hauntingly defined, mixes a concoction of white powder and yellowish powder along with some baking powder. This room is incredibly seedy and police sirens can be heard from outside its open window.

He partitions the drug concoction into empty capsules and puts them into a large zip lock bag containing hundreds of others.

CASEY (O.S.)
(from shower, drugged
pleasure)

Holy fucking shit, J. You have to
get in here. This shower feels
amazing.

JASON

You're on four mollys, retard.
Getting hit by a bus would feel
amazing.

CASEY (O.S.)

Shut up, asshole. Just get in here
and fuck me.

JASON

Uh. Some of us are trying to work
here.

(estimates the amount of
pills)

Think I'll be able to move two
hundred of these tonight or should
I make more?

CASEY (O.S.)

Shit as good as this, we'll be able
to sell double and check out of
this hell hole tonight.

Jason rolls his eyes.

JASON

I'll be able to.

(under breath)

Leave your junky ass here.

IN SHOWER--

Casey moves her hand over her breasts and down between her legs.

CASEY

Are you getting in here or what?

IN ROOM--

She moans with pleasure and Jason cracks a smile. He's into her more than he leads on.

JASON

Alright, alright. Chill, you little
sex addict.

He dips their ROOM KEY (**ROOM 1417**) into the powder and snorts some and then rubs a bit more on his gums. He leans his head back and shuts his eyes in ecstacy, but he's startled when--

THE TV TURNS ON BY ITSELF.

It's loud and getting louder playing the stock channel advertising the hotel they're in.

MAN'S VOICE ON TV
*Located in the heart of Downtown
Los Angeles, the historic Cecil
Hotel will whisk you back in
time...*

...it continues and gets louder and when Jason stands to make sense of what's happening, he realizes that he'd been sitting on the remote control. He chuckles to himself, grabs the remote, and turns the TV off.

He removes his boxer shorts, rubs a bit more molly on his gums, and in the dark reflection of the TV we see his naked body walk towards the bathroom.

We hold on the DARK SCREEN for a few moments until--

A SHADY APPARITION slowly passes in the reflection and follows him into the bathroom.

IN SHOWER--

Jason enters, and when Casey turns to kiss him he immediately turns her around and enters her forcefully from behind.

JASON

Is that what you wanted, you little
junky whore?

CASEY

(bites lip)
You know that's the shit I like.

We move out of the shower and onto--

THE BATHROOM MIRROR.

It's fully steamed and a CIRCLE begins to form from an unseen finger.

INSIDE SHOWER--

Casey is now facing Jason, her back pressed against the wall as he holds her up and continues thrusting. They both shut their eyes and enjoy the moment.

ON SHOWER HEAD--

The water sputters a bit, but neither notice, and in between the sputters we can hear the distant whispers of a girl's voice speaking in Chinese.

ON MIRROR--

The circle is now fully formed. A line begins to form diagonally from the top to the bottom within the circle.

ON SHOWER HEAD--

The shower sputters again and more faint whispers can be heard, but this time--

JASON

What did you just say?

CASEY

Nothing. Don't stop.

ON SHOWER HEAD--

The clear water sprays more powerfully and slowly transitions from clear to the dark color of motor oil.

As the couple near climax, their eyes remain closed and oblivious to the coat of dark sludgy water that's now covering their naked emaciated bodies.

ON JASON'S BACK--

Long stringy black hairs glide slowly down his spiny back along with small fleshy chunks of matter. The dark water is now rising in the tub.

As Casey reaches climax her eyes open and we close on her FACE.

She screams.

CLOSE ON: Jason's face. It's completely covered in the black sludge and stringy hairs. He opens his eyes.

JASON

What the fuck?

He looks down at the ankle deep sludge and dark muck spraying from the shower and in a panic tries to turn the water off. When he does his hand is badly scalded and steams from the heat of the handle which is lava red.

He screams in pain and when they both step out of the shower--

THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT.

JASON (CONT'D)

(playing tough)

Who the fuck is out there?

Slow push onto Casey's trembling face as she notices the mirror.

CASEY
Jason... Jason...

She motions to the mirror and as he wipes the matter off his face we angle on the mirror: A FULLY FORMED PENTAGRAM surrounded by intricately drawn PAGAN SYMBOLS is now complete.

The door opens by itself and they're thrust back against the wall, cracking the tiles as they're held against their will. They try to squirm and scream, but their mouths are forced shut, and then as if being sewn (though we can't see the needle or thread), their mouths are sewn shut. Blood squirts from each puncture.

Their bodies contort in unnatural positions and we can hear their bones crack. Their eyeballs are ripped from their sockets and also sewn shut.

They're released from the wall, and sway lifeless standing up in the sludge. The bath curtain is ripped from the unseen force and wraps them up tightly like cocoons. They're lifeless bodies fall to the ground and are dragged out of the bathroom as the door slams shut.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE UP:

THE BRINGING

FROM OFF SCREEN--

NEWS REPORTER
A gruesome discovery in the water tank of a downtown Los Angeles hotel has been identified as missing Canadian tourist, Elisa Lam.

FADE IN:

EXT. THE CECIL HOTEL - ROOF - DAY

From the POV of aerial choppers, medics and detectives investigate the water tanks atop the roof.

Our CREDIT SEQUENCE begins over the following NEWS MONTAGE:

NEWS CASTER

It stretches believability that anybody could end up dead inside a water tank and yet very little makes sense about her strange disappearance.

--A YEARBOOK STYLE photo of ELISA LAM passes across the screen.

--REPORTERS interview terrified and overwhelmed guests outside the hotel.

GUEST 1

I just feel so bad for her parents.

GUEST 2

The water for the first three seconds was coming out black... we just thought it was sediment, and after it cleared we drank it, but it had a funny sweet taste.

(shakes head)

I can't even talk about it.

GUEST 3

(scared)

And then one night in the middle of the night, the water just-- came on by itself... something is so not right about this place.

--Clips of flowers and a small memorial for Elisa on the sidewalk in front of The Cecil Hotel.

ON NEWS--

NEWS CASTER

LAPD have released the following video and are encouraging anyone with any information to come forward.

INSERT: Clips of the opening elevator sequence.

A PRESS CONFERENCE--

POLICE CHIEF

We are currently conducting an investigation into the death of Elisa Lam. The autopsy is scheduled for tomorrow.

CUT TO:

EXT. FLOATING HOME - LAKE UNION, SEATTLE - ESTABLISHING

Rain falls slowly upon the dark waters of Lake Union and down the windows of the old floating home. The Space Needle and downtown Seattle can be seen in the hazy distance.

INT. FLOATING HOME - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

We pass along the cluttered office space and along framed press clippings on the wall. **"Fifteen Year Old Cold Case Solved By Seattle Detective"**. -- **"Seattle Detective Finds Missing Woman Held Captive For Years"** etc.

A TV can be heard from the next room and we transpose through the wall into--

THE BEDROOM--

The NEWS plays from a TV across from the bed where a couple lay asleep.

NEWS CASTER

While so many questions remain unanswered, the death of Canadian tourist Elisa Lam has now been ruled an accidental drowning with no signs of foul play.

(a beat)

This is sure to add to the notoriety of the Cecil Hotel which was one time home to serial killer, Richard Ramirez who killed fourteen people while living at the hotel.

INSERT: A clip of the crazed Ramirez rocking back and forth in his court room chair.

NEWS CASTER (CONT'D)

Ramirez is currently serving out a life sentence at the federal penitentiary in Greenbae, California.

INSERT: The iconic image of Ramirez's evil gaze as he displays A PENTAGRAM TATTOO on the palm of his hand.

We push slowly onto the PENTAGRAM TATTOO until it fills the screen.

THE TV SHUTS OFF MYSTERIOUSLY--

THE MAN in bed awakens suddenly and lets out a terrified scream. He's covered in sweat, unaware that the TV was ever on.

This man is JOHN BROOKS. He could be 35 if life hadn't aged him at least ten years. He's handsome, but worn. He catches his breath and turns to his girlfriend PATRICIA who is now awake.

PATRICIA

Jesus Christ, John. Again?

He shakes his head.

JOHN

I'm sorry, it's nothing. Just-- go back to sleep.

She looks over at the alarm clock: 8:30. She exhales.

PATRICIA

I have to get to work, but this is definitely not nothing.

(she puts her shirt on)

This is the fifth time in two weeks.

JOHN

It's just nightmares. It comes and goes.

PATRICIA

Well it's coming enough for me to want to know who I'm getting involved with.

He chuckles to lighten the mood as if she's being ridiculous.

JOHN

It's just old cases. Stuff that'll never go away. I wish it would, but that's all it is. Nightmares.

Patricia sits down and tries to make an effort.

PATRICIA

So what about the old cases?

JOHN

Just--

But he can't elaborate. She shakes her head.

PATRICIA

Exactly. Either talk to me or--

talk to someone, but--

(exhales)

I don't know how many more days I
can wake up to this.

She starts to leave.

JOHN

Patricia, wait.

PATRICIA

I've gotta' get to work. We can
talk later.

He holds her arm as she passes, but he can't elaborate.

She releases his grasp and walks out. John turns and looks out at the grey Seattle morning and the rain slowly falling down the windows. We see in his face that what's troubling him is more complex than he's leading onto.

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - MORNING

ANGLE ON: A framed photo of John, younger, with what looks like his wife and their young son. They stand in front of a sailboat. It's a sunny day and one of those "best day ever" shots.

John, now showered and dressed, is haunted by this image, but rather than return it to his desk, he buries it deep into a file cabinet behind folders.

He collects a few files and exits the office.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - LATER THAT DAY

Rain continues outside as John shares black and white surveillance photos with a DISTRESSED WOMAN. The photos show a man leaving a shady motel with a woman.

JOHN

I'm sorry, Mrs. Prescott. I know
this isn't what you were hoping to
find, but--

MRS. PRESCOTT

No, this is exactly what I was expecting, it's just a different student than the one I thought he was fucking.

(shakes head)

Although he's probably fucking them all.

(she closes the file)

I'm gonna' kill this motherless pig.

JOHN

(fights laughter with a cough)

Well I'd strongly advise against that and consider a good divorce attorney instead.

She shakes her head and turns to leave. John clears his throat suggestively. She turns.

MRS. PRESCOTT

What?

JOHN

There's still the matter of--

(a beat)

Look, I know I'm not doing the Lord's work here, but--

MRS. PRESCOTT

Right. Your fee. On top of all this, I'm the one that has to pay.

John shrugs. He's not proud of where his career has taken him. She retrieves her check book from her purse.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT OF DINER - DAY

John hustles through the rain towards his old RANGE ROVER. His phone rings from his pocket.

He retrieves it and looks: RESTRICTED. Just as he's about to answer it, his phone dies.

JOHN

Fuck. Come on, John.

He angrily opens the car door, but the phone slips out of his hand and into a puddle.

JOHN (CONT'D)
God damnit.

He looks down, but stops. Strangely, the phone glows from within the puddle and appears to be ringing again. John reaches down and grabs it and enters his car.

INT. RANGE ROVER - CONTINUOUS

He quickly plugs the phone into his car charger, shakes some water off of it and answers.

JOHN
(into phone)
Hello?
(looks at phone)
Hello?

Through some static a VOICE can be heard. Though not clear what is being said, we sense concern.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Yes, this is John Brooks.
(he listens, nods)
Right, yeah, I have heard about
that. -- No, I wasn't aware of how
it all ended, but-- either way, I'm
very sorry for your loss.
(he listens, considers)
Well, I really don't take cases
like this anymore, but--

He's again cut off and by the look on his face there's a deep sense of urgency from the other line.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I see, it's just--
(but he's cut off again by
the desperate pleading)
No, alright, alright, sure. I could
be in Vancouver in say--
(looks at watch)
Two or three hours?

He nods and takes out a piece of paper and writes:

LAM - 2346 NOTTINGHAM COURT - VANCOUVER

He hangs up and thinks for a moment. He's a bit pensive, but something does vitalize him about what he's just heard. It's as though this is the first meaningful call he's gotten in some time.

INT. RANGE ROVER - DRIVING - DAY

John drives through a suburban neighborhood, looking down at the address on the paper and up at corresponding house numbers. He looks down and then up and then--

BREAKS SUDDENLY.

JOHN
(panic, but relieved)
Fuckin' A.
(a beat)
I'm sorry! I didn't see--

He's cut off not by what it said, but by the man he almost hit: a NON DESCRIPT LOOKING MAN who stares blankly at John before walking off.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Alright. Weirdo.

He shakes his head and then looks towards a modest, poorly manicured home that matches the address. He pulls up and parks in the driveway.

EXT. RANGE ROVER - CONTINUOUS

John steps out and walks towards the front door. He stops when he notices an older ASIAN MAN looking down at him from the upstairs window. There's an unsettling sadness to his gaze. John can feel this.

The front door opens and GALE CHAN, CHINESE, 30s, greets him. She's sad, but hopeful.

GALE
You must be John. I'm Gale, we spoke on the phone.

John nods. They shake.

JOHN
Nice to meet you.

GALE
We can't tell you how appreciative we are that you could come up on such short notice.

They enter the home.

INT. LAM HOME - MOMENTS LATER

While Gale prepares some tea in the kitchen, John looks around the sparsely furnished living area. It's lifeless and cold with no decorations of any kind aside from an old PORTRAIT OF THE LAMS: Elisa, her father and mother who stand stoic, almost strict. John looks on with great compassion and sadness, much like he did towards the photo of his own family.

JOHN

(turning towards kitchen)
That man I saw up in the window,
was that?--

GALE

Mr. Lam, yes. He may or may not come down. As you can imagine this has all been very difficult for him.

John nods.

JOHN

How are you related to the family?

GALE

Oh, I'm not. I'm sorry, I hadn't explained. I volunteer at the Chinese Canadian Society and I've been helping him translate with reporters and police.

(she looks at photo of the Lams)

Mr. Lam's English is-- broken at best and the situation has made it...

JOHN

I understand.

She walks in and sets the tea tray down on the table next to some files. John takes the tea and sips.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Thank you. -- Do you mind me asking how you found me?

GALE

I'd seen a piece recently on TV about the DeSilvo Murders you'd helped solve some years back and it mentioned you were now in private practice.

(MORE)

GALE (CONT'D)

(a beat)

It mentioned some of your other cases. Really impressive.

He nods. *Thanks.*

JOHN

Some personal matters kind of led me away from police work. And--

(he considers)

It can take it's toll after a while.

GALE

Well we'd tried a few investigators in and around Los Angeles after the LAPD closed the case.

JOHN

What happened there?

She considers as it's all very strange.

GALE

The few that returned our calls wanted nothing to do with it.

JOHN

Did they mention why?

GALE

Only that they weren't interested and one even-- well, I'm sure you've seen the video of Elisa and some of the implications and rumors that have run wild online.

JOHN

(shakes his head, no)

Like I said, I'm just getting familiar with the case now.

GALE

Well, here's a copy of the video we got from police, I'm sure you'll see why people are saying what they're saying about it.

(she slides disk and files)

There's been some... *paranormal* speculation.

JOHN

There always is these days.

GALE

Ridiculous, I know, but it's kind of scared some people off and the rest don't seem to want to take it seriously.

JOHN

Well, I hope you know, that would never be the direction my investigation would take.

She nods. John looks through the files.

JOHN (CONT'D)

And what is it that you're hoping I can do that the police can't?

GALE

Anything, really. There's just so many unanswered questions and it's as if the police simply gave up.

(she looks through files)

No signs of trauma and here,

(she looks at photo of
water tank)

They needed a chain saw to get into this tank, I mean, how could she have gotten in there on her own?

What was she even doing in this horrible part of town in the first place?

John nods and looks at the photos and considers. It puzzles him as well.

JOHN

What brought her down to Los Angeles?

Gale shakes her head.

GALE

We don't really know. She was scheduled to start school up in Santa Cruz and when she didn't register for classes the school contacted Mr. Lam and then, well...

Gale is silent.

JOHN

But had she expressed a desire to visit friends in LA, or sightseeing, anything...

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

(thinks)

Had her friends indicated anything like this?

Gale thinks for a moment. This answer is challenging.

GALE

This is going to sound strange, I know, but the Lams are very traditional. Mrs. Lam in particular.

JOHN

Meaning?

GALE

She was home schooled her entire life and the idea of leaving home as an unmarried woman - even for college - was forbidden. It was only after Mrs. Lam passed last year that Mr. Lam opened up to the idea of it.

(a beat)

But Elisa didn't really have any friends.

John nods. Something becomes clear.

JOHN

Well I can tell you right off the bat that this behavior is very much in line with cases I've dealt with involving runaways.

Gale's perplexed.

JOHN (CONT'D)

All due respect to the Lams, but kids being sheltered like this, it can lead to a kind of... manic state when they - *break free* - so to speak. They'll go places they wouldn't normally go, do things they wouldn't normally do. They're easily vulnerable to unsafe environments... people...

(looks at files)

Not only that, when police close a case like this, it's unfortunate and frustrating, but it's ruled accidental because,

(shakes head)

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

There's really no other explanation.

AN OLDER FRAIL HAND appears on John's shoulder startling him. He turns suddenly and is met by the pale, trembling, desperate face of MR. LAM. His gaze is unsettling, but indicates: *please*.

MR. LAM

(broken English)

No - accident.

John nods and respectfully removes Mr. Lams hand from his shoulder.

JOHN

I'm very sorry, Mr. Lam. I can't imagine how hard this is for you. Believe me, I understand the need for closure, that's why I do the work I do, but--

John looks down at the files and considers the mysteries.

JOHN (CONT'D)

--A case like this, as I said, I haven't taken on in some time. Mostly because of the toll it can take, not only on me, but you as well. A lot of times it only leads to more confusion and anger. You'll understand if I need to take a few days to review everything before I make the commitment.

Mr. Lam's gaze remains distant and confused, but Gale nods. She understands.

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

John's at his desk examining the surveillance video of Elisa in the elevator. He's at a complete loss, but is engaged in the mystery of it all.

He rewinds to the 2:12 mark and zooms in onto his monitor.

JOHN

What the...

...her fingers appear to pull backwards and stretch nearly two inches longer in length. He shakes his head and looks through the files.

CLOSE ON: No signs of physical trauma. And then: No drugs.

He freezes on the video and zooms onto her FACE. She's terrified and this emotion resonates with John. It's like he wants to be able to help her right here and now.

THREE LOUD KNOCKS from the door downstairs startle him.

He turns.

A beat.

PATRICIA (O.S.)
(from downstairs)
John? Are you there? It's Patricia.

He leaves his desk and when he walks downstairs we hold on the monitor.

The image is frozen, but Elisa's head turns slowly and stares directly at the camera.

CUT TO:

THE FRONT DOOR--

John opens the door and is met by Patricia who is holding a box containing some clothes and CDs and things.

JOHN
What's this?

PATRICIA
Some of your things from my place.

JOHN
Come on, Patricia. Come in.

PATRICIA
No, I can't stay.

She hands the box to him. He takes it reluctantly.

JOHN
Please. I'll put some coffee on. We can talk.

PATRICIA

I'm sorry. I know I was abrupt when I left the other day, and I understand there's things you aren't ready to share, but it's not just you... I'm not really in a place for this right now.

John collects his thoughts.

JOHN

Listen, I understand but--

PATRICIA

(firm)

John, I just can't right now.

And she turns and leaves.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

It's raining and he stands with the box as he watches her walk down the dock towards the parking lot.

He's at a loss.

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

He sits down and looks over the case and out the rainy window. It's all he's got right now. He exhales and leans back in his chair and gets back into his research.

THE SOUND OF A PLANE LANDING OFF SCREEN.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAX - NIGHT

We're on John looking out the window as the plane lands.

INT. BAGGAGE CLAIM - NIGHT

John stands and waits for his bag. There's a lot of commotion at the airport and it's a bit disorienting. Every sound is amplified. The laughter from a group of students sounds slightly unnerving, and then--

SURFER

(abrupt)

'Scuse me, man.

John is nudged slightly by the surfer retrieving his board. Flashes of light cause him to turn, but it's only paparazzi snapping a celeb walking out of the airport.

John chuckles a bit and grabs his bag.

EXT. CURBSIDE - NIGHT

John's wearing his rain jacket but is immediately hit by a gust of warm air.

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)
Won't be needing these here.

He turns and startles at the sight of an ASIAN GIRL roughly the same age as Elisa. She removes her RED PATAGONIA JACKET. He exhales.

JOHN
No, no, we won't.

ASIAN GIRL
You were on my flight. Happens to me every time I leave Seattle.

John chuckles.

JOHN
Enjoy the sunshine.

ASIAN GIRL
You too.

She walks off. John stands in line for a taxi.

INT. TAXI - DRIVING - NIGHT

John looks out the window as DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES approaches. The driver is a good natured MEXICAN MAN who talks animated into his blue tooth.

DRIVER
(into blue tooth)
You scored a goal? That's great, buddy. Your mother better have gotten a photo for what I paid for that new phone.

(laughs)
Alright, my man. This is my last fare. I'll be home soon to celebrate, but this doesn't excuse you from homework.

John looks up at the PHOTO CUBE dangling from the rear view of the driver's kid in soccer uniform and family pics with his wife. The driver ends the call.

JOHN

Sounds like you've got a future
Pele in the family?

Driver laughs.

DRIVER

We'll see. If it was up to me, he'd
be playing baseball, but you know
how it goes. -- You got kids?

John thinks for a moment. This is a tough question for him, but he shakes his head, no.

JOHN

First I gotta' learn how to hold
onto a gal.

They both laugh.

DRIVER

I feel ya'. That's the tricky part
right there, amigo.

They both laugh. The driver notices something up ahead. The car slows.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Ah, shit.

(re: traffic)

Welcome to Los Angeles. Looks like
we gotta' make a little detour
around downtown to get you to the
Marriott. Laker's game tonight.
Don't worry, I'll cut the fare.

JOHN

Whatever you gotta' do.

The driver takes the next exit.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - NIGHT

The driver turns off a street of renovated warehouse lofts and John notices a line of trash fires, tents, and commotion along the street approaching in the distance.

DRIVER

Brace yourself for a few blocks
here. It ain't pretty.

They approach the neighborhood and motion slows as John examines the condition. People are laying on the sidewalk, a young family is huddled together in a sleeping bag, and a violent looking man punches at nothing and screams profanities. The rows of barrel fires, trash scattered throughout the street, stray dogs with patches of fur missing and countless other human beings at the end of their line makes it feel like the edge of the earth.

JOHN

What is this?

DRIVER

Skid Row... or as I like to call it
the world's largest outdoor insane
asylum.

John can't believe it. A police cruiser just passes by prostitutes getting into a car and drug deals without doing anything.

JOHN

Good thing the cops are on top of
it.

DRIVER

(chuckles and shakes head)
City designates fifty blocks here
for these animals to roam free so
they stay away from the nicer parts
of town. It's kind of an unspoken
agreement.

(turns)
Fucked up, right?

John can't believe it. He looks out at what looks like a dead body just laying on the street shrouded in newspapers.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Let's just say you're not gonna' be
finding that girl you're looking
for here--

JOHN

Excuse me?

DRIVER

You know, like you said before.
Holding onto a chick before you
have kids.

JOHN
(half chuckles)
Oh. Right. Right.

The cab continues driving through this practically war torn looking area.

The cab stops at RED TRAFFIC LIGHT on MAIN STREET.

The car is illuminated with an eerie red glow and John looks out the left window.

The red glow emanates from the RED NEON SIGN of the CECIL HOTEL and it's as if John is hypnotized by it.

DRIVER

Once we cross Main here, you're pretty much in the clear, but always best to keep your head up...

...the driver continues to talk but all sound dissolves as John looks at the Cecil Hotel. And then--

THUD THUD THUD

Three soul penetrating knocks hit against the right window and when John turns he's met by the gaze of a face you couldn't conjure in your worst nightmares.

It's an ageless, ANDROGYNOUS LOOKING WOMAN, with a tattered black shawl covering the back of her balding scalp. She's almost inhuman and her shawl seems to blow in a breeze that only exists in her world.

The gaze from her dark eyes is vacant, but all knowing and it casts a spell on John.

She slowly raises her veiny, dirty, frail hand and moves it towards the window as if to touch him through the window.

In the silence, we hear the sounds of violent waves crashing and the echoed screams of a young boy in distress:

YOUNG BOY (O.S.)
Help! Dad! Help me!

The ANDROGYNOUS WOMAN'S MOUTH opens to speak and though he could never hear what she's saying through the closed window, her voice speaks directly within John's mind's eye. It's deep, almost robotic, akin to the effect put on someone's voice being interviewed whose identity must be concealed.

ANDROGYNOUS WOMAN
*How will you seek salvation for
your sins?*

The waves crash again and the young child cries.

YOUNG BOY (O.S.)
*Help! Please, Dad! Help!... Hey...
Hey...*

The young boy's voice TRANSPOSES to--

DRIVER
...hey... Hey, buddy. Hey!

When John snaps out of it, he looks to the right. The woman is gone. He looks to the left and he's at the Marriott.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
This is it. Marriott, right?

JOHN
Yeah, sorry, I must have... dozed off I think.

Driver nods and motions at the fare: \$45.

DRIVER
Call if forty even for the detour.

John nods. He's still in a bit of a fog and hands him two twenties without realizing he's neglected a tip. He simply takes his bag, steps out and slams the door. The driver shakes his head - *asshole* - and drives off.

John enters the Marriott.

INT. MARRIOT ROOM - NIGHT

John pours a whiskey from the mini bar and looks out over DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES. He's still rattled from the experience he had as he sips his drink.

He surveys the skyline until he lands on the THREE WATER TANKS atop the CECIL HOTEL and can see the red glow that's visible from here.

FROM OUTSIDE THE WINDOW: We push slow on John's puzzled, yet slightly obsessed expression.

CUT TO:

INT. NOISY DOWNTOWN LA POLICE STATION - DAY

Phones ring frantically in the chaotic station as cops haul in criminals in varying states of intoxication and insanity.

A no nonsense officer, DETECTIVE HOLTZMAN, 50s, leads John through the station and towards a FILE ROOM.

HOLTZMAN

...we even brought in a Vegas illusionist and they couldn't tell us how she could have gotten into those tanks, let alone onto the roof without tripping the alarm.

They enter the FILE ROOM.

JOHN

And how reliable is the hotel's security?

Holtzman chuckles.

HOLTZMAN

That place? I was surprised they had cameras in the elevator but all the security checks out.

(a beat)

It's a shame. She seemed like a nice kid, but what happens to you you let happen to you.

JOHN

Meaning?

HOLTZMAN

She should have never been there in the first place. What's a kid who's not a hooker or a junky doing down on Skid Row?

John understands.

JOHN

I got my first look last night.

HOLTZMAN

Shangri La, right?

Holtzman grabs some files and hands them to Brooks.

HOLTZMAN (CONT'D)

There's not much here that we haven't already given the family.

John looks through the file. It's on a photo of a BLACK MAN in his 60s.

JOHN

I wanted to ask you about this man,
James Rondoman?

HOLTZMAN

(nods)

Most everyone on Skid Row that came forward who had seen Elisa put her at least twice with him. He runs a homeless shelter down on Alvarado.

JOHN

He checks out?

Holtzman nods.

HOLTZMAN

Man of God type. One of the few people doing anything good down there. Kind of a religious nut if you ask me, but nothing turned up aside from he gave her some food and a bed a few nights,

(smiles)

And a little prayer.

(shrugs)

He's clean.

JOHN

So she didn't spend all of her nights at The Cecil?

HOLTZMAN

Apparently not, but hotel records indicate she never checked out during her entire stay.

John writes some notes and Holtzman is itching to get out of this conversation but John continues to look through another file. One catches his eye. A PHOTO of a BATHROOM, the tub filled with black water, it's curtain missing, and some broken wall tiles.

JOHN

I hadn't seen this... There was,

(reads)

Blood on the floor. A cracked wall.
Have you been able to track down
the occupants?

Holtzman shakes his head.

HOLTZMAN

No, but if I'd just taken a shower
in human remains I wouldn't have
stuck around to fill out a rate
your stay card either.

John's a bit taken aback by Holtzman's irreverence, but he shrugs it off and looks at the photos of the dark water.

JOHN

My God. Was that what this was?

HOLTZMAN

Body decomposing in a water tank
and this was on the fourteenth
floor right underneath. You do the
math.

John's horrified.

JOHN

(first he's heard)
But do you know who they were?

HOLTZMAN

(shakes head)

It's a cash only type place, so
unfortunately no paper trail.
Junkies most likely - hotel said it
was a guy and a girl. Young couple.

(considers)

We did find a boat load of pills so
I wouldn't expect them to come
forward anytime soon.

Holtzman notices John's increasing frustration at Holtzman smart-alecy tone.

JOHN

It just seems like, you, I mean,
I've dealt with a lot of dead end
cases, but--

(closes the few files)

A case of this magnitude closed so
soon...

Holtzman shoots him straight.

HOLTZMAN

Buddy, look. I'm gonna' level with
you. You're working for the family,
I get that. I respect that.

(MORE)

HOLTZMAN (CONT'D)

I can't imagine what they must be going through and I'm more than happy to share all the information we have here, but here's the reality.

(a beat)

I had three detectives I put on this thing. Good cops with families and pensions on the line.

John turns.

HOLTZMAN (CONT'D)

They threatened to turn in their badges if they had to spend one more minute on this case.

JOHN

I don't follow.

HOLTZMAN

Well follow this: That hotel. This case. It's one big mind fuck. So you find something substantial, I'm all ears, but don't come in here wasting my time with things that go bump in the night.

John laughs in disbelief.

JOHN

You're not implying that this was something paranorm--

Holtzman cuts him off. He knows where he's going with this, but Holtzman isn't the type of guy that wants to even hear that word, but doesn't entirely rule it out.

HOLTZMAN

How much do you know about the Hotel?

JOHN

Just what I've read online. That it's in a bad neighborhood filled with junkies, prostitutes... lowlifes mostly.

HOLTZMAN

Well then you might want to do a little more homework so you know exactly what you're getting yourself into.

Holtzman leaves without saying anything else. He's clearly spooked about something and John looks at him in disbelief that this is what he's dealing with.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - DAY

John stands across the street from the Cecil Hotel. He looks around. The neighborhood hasn't changed much in years. Old theaters, signage, abandoned store fronts, dollar stores and the like. Skid Row is kept at bay, but several half homeless looking types pass by, all giving strange looks. There's a feeling of paranoia on the street.

He looks up at the Cecil Hotel. It's fourteen stories tall and wouldn't stand out as out of the ordinary aside from some windows covered in tin-foil and a few boarded up.

He continues looking and doubles back to a room on the fourteenth floor, directly in the middle.

The silhouette of a VOLUPTUOUS WOMAN stands smoking in the window and seems to be looking directly at John. She stands for a few moments before turning into the room.

John crosses the street.

INT. CECIL HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

John enters. Surprisingly, the facade is nice. It's classic like a modified Grand Central Station. It's tinted in a yellow hue.

Despite it's elegant touches, the clientele in the lobby is disturbing. John passes a heavy set woman with two young kids - both filthy - sitting next to a man whose head nods up and down.

John stares as the heavy woman reaches into a jar filled with dark water and retrieves a hot dog that she feeds her two kids. John shakes his head.

There's a commotion at the check in desk. AN OVERWEIGHT CLERK whose name tag reads REGGIE argues with a TRANSGENDER PROSTITUTE.

REGGIE

Get the fuck outta' here, freak show.

TRANSGENDER

Come on, man. I got five bucks.
Three hours nap, that's all I'm
askin'.

Reggie turns and grabs a baseball bat.

REGGIE

I'm gonna' give you a three year
nap if you don't hit the bricks.

John tries to remain undetected as he passes by and beelines
it to the elevator.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Whoa, whoa, whoa. What room you in,
slick?

John stops. Turns.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

You got a key?

JOHN

No, I was just--

REGGIE

You were just leaving if you ain't
got a room.

He motions to a sign above the ELEVATOR: **NO VISITORS ALLOWED.**
ALL GUESTS MUST SHOW ROOM KEY TO FRONT DESK UPON ARRIVAL.

John considers.

JOHN

Sorry, I just wanted to take a look
around.

REGGIE

Well this ain't a museum, so either
get a room or get out.

John considers. He nods.

JOHN

Alright. I'll take a room.

But Reggie's curious about him.

REGGIE

You're not some kind of kiddie
fiddler or some shit, are you?

(MORE)

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Well dressed guy, what are you
doing here?

JOHN
(raises hands in
innocence)
Just passing through.

Reggie considers and nods.

REGGIE
Sixty a night for a shared bath.
Eighty for private.

JOHN
(looks around)
Private.

He removes his wallet and Reggie sees his cash.

REGGIE
Actually it's a hundred a night for
a private bath.

John can't believe he's being hustled, but concedes.

JOHN
Whatever, man. You got it.

Reggie nods and looks through the log. John hands him the cash. Reggie nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Key?

REGGIE
Check ins not til four. Room's not
ready.

JOHN
(frustrated)
Can't I just go up and look around?

Reggie looks up.

REGGIE
Look around for what?

JOHN
(concedes)
Four o'clock. You got it.

Reggie shakes his head and writes him a receipt.

REGGIE

Show this to the guy when you come back and he'll give you a key.

John nods. He turns and looks around the lobby one last time and at the dirty kids gnawing on the hot dogs. He shakes his head unsettled and leaves.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

John works at the library's modern digital archive computers. The library is classic with gothic images painted on the lofted ceiling.

HE TYPES: CECIL HOTEL and several news sources come up. HE SELECTS: LOS ANGELES TIMES and sees that records come up dating all the way back to the 1940s.

We MONTAGE over clips: TWO MORE SUICIDES AT THE CECIL HOTEL -- MAN FALLS TO HIS DEATH AND KILLS PASSERBY AT THE CECIL -- SUICIDE -- SUICIDE -- IMAGES OF MURDERED BODIES -- SUICIDE -- MURDER -- IMAGE OF A GROSSLY DISMEMBERED HUMAN FIGURE over and over again with CECIL HOTEL -- CECIL HOTEL.

He pulls up other files.

CLOSE ON: THIRD UNSOLVED MURDER AT CECIL HOTEL. John scrolls onto an article showing the DISMEMBERED BODY OF THE **BLACK DAHLIA** **ELIZABETH SHORT**...he reads... resident of The Cecil Hotel.

JOHN

Jesus Christ.

He continues onto a PHOTO of A CRAZED MAN: AUSTRIAN SERIAL KILLER JACK UNTERWEGER -- Three prostitutes killed -- Cecil Hotel

WOMAN (O.S.)

Excuse me.

John's turns. It's the librarian.

LIBRARIAN

I just wanted to let you know we're closing in a half hour so if there's anything you wanted printed out, you should send it down now.

John nods.

JOHN

Thanks.

She leaves and he continues research. We slow push on his face. He's a bit alarmed as he examines a TIME MAGAZINE PIECE with that crazed photo of Richard Ramirez. Ramirez seems to be looking directly at John and it takes a bit of effort for John to look away and continue reading.

RICHARD RAMIREZ... KILLED FOURTEEN WOMAN while living on the FOURTEENTH FLOOR, paying FOURTEEN DOLLARS a night at THE CECIL HOTEL.

John checks with his notes: ELISA was in room 1403. The junky couple was in 1417.

The coincidence of the 14 strikes John as strange and writes down the number on a pad, circles it, and continues reading..

JOHN (CONT'D)

You gotta' be...

(kidding me... he reads
quietly to himself)

Ramirez conducted elaborate Satanic
rituals in the basement of the
Cecil Hotel???

(leans back)

Who the fuck is running this place?

He types: **CECIL HOTEL -- SATANIC WORSHIP** and more drop files come and the name **ALEISTER CROWLEY** catches his eye.

He opens this article and leans in.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(reading quietly, with
escalating disbelief)

Known occultist Aleister Crowley
resided at the Cecil Hotel in
London England where he believed to
be... in contact with a demonic
being named... "LAM"???

(gives up)

What the---

He shuts all the files and leans back and exhales. It's all too much.

He takes out his phone. He makes a call.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Gale, hi, it's John.

INTERCUT to GALE at work.

GALE

How are you? How's it going?

John's not sure how to answer.

JOHN

(exhales)

Did Mr. Lam ever mention anything about Elisa having any interest in the Occult?

Gale's silent.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You know, witchcraft, black magic... anything like that?

GALE

I'm sorry, but I thought you had said your investigation wouldn't--

JOHN

No, I know, but I want to cross it off the list now. This hotel she was at, it wasn't just a cheap rough around the edges type place, it's got a -- rich -- history of things of that nature.

Silence on the other end.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Gale?

He looks at his phone: CALL LOST.

A MAN (O.S.)

(taunting)

Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

And then some laughter. John turns on three men in BLACK HOODED SWEATSHIRTS walking off laughing. One of them turns--

John's taken aback and we turn on this man. His face is heavily pierced and tattooed green and red with prosthetic horns beneath his forehead and yellow contacts in his eyes making them appear lizard like. Aside from his frightening appearance, his demeanor is more that of a punk.

PIERCED FACE MAN

Rude to talk in libraries, man.

The group laughs and walk off. John shakes it off and looks back at the phone. When he turns again. They're gone.

EXT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

It's getting dark and John walks outside where he tries to ring Gale again but he can't get a signal. He hears the laughing again behind him, but tries to ignore.

PIERCED FACE MAN

Hey, man... Yo... yo.

John keeps walking.

PIERCED FACE MAN (CONT'D)

Hey, cell phone boy. Where you going?

JOHN

(flustered)

Sorry, I gotta' go.

He turns and in the darkness they're hard to make out. They just stand there facing him, smoking, as if any moment they could run after him.

PIERCED FACE MAN

Alright, man. We'll see you around.

John stops. Stands his ground.

JOHN

I'm sorry. Do I know you?

They don't say anything, and then--

PIERCED FACE MAN

Not yet.

They all laugh.

John turns and startles--

HE RUNS INTO SOMEONE.

JOHN

I'm sorry.

It's the librarian. She reaches down to pick up some papers she's dropped. The men continue to laugh.

LIBRARIAN

Your print outs. You left without taking them.

JOHN

Sorry. And Thanks.
(he chuckles a bit)
Have a good night.

LIBRARIAN

You too.

She walks off. John exhales and looks back to where the hooded men where standing. They're now gone.

John hustles off.

INT. CECIL HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

John enters the lobby carrying his bag. He enters cautiously, but tonight it's quiet and surprisingly peaceful. Without the riff raff the elegance of the facade is really felt. This was once a nice hotel.

His footsteps echo as he reaches the front desk. There is nobody here.

JOHN

(towards office door)

Hello? -- Hello? -- Is anybody here?

John rings the bell. He turns and looks back cautiously towards the door.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

You must be John.

John turns. Seemingly from nowhere, a YOUNG CLERK, "BILL" (his name-tag reads) appears from behind the front desk. He's almost too handsome and polished to be working here. He has a classic look.

BILL

Sorry, I didn't mean to alarm you.

JOHN

(looks around, chuckles slightly)

Where the hell did you come from?

BILL

I was in the back... 'get that all the time. I'd say I was a little light on my feet but I don't want to give you the wrong idea.

They both laugh a little at the bad joke. JOHN: *All good either way.*

JOHN

I think you have my key.

Bill nod. He looks through the desk.

BILL

Right here. Room ten twenty nine.

JOHN

Hmm?

BILL

Is that ok? You had requested a room with a private bath and it's one of our more recently renovated.

JOHN

No, no. That's fine...

...but something struck John as strange about the number, but he shakes it off. Bill hands John the key.

BILL

If there's anything you need. Anything at all. Please don't hesitate to ask. My name's Bill--
(motions to the name-tag)
'Got the tag to prove it.

John laughs a little. This guy's strange, but pleasant. John walks towards the elevator. He looks around the peaceful lobby.

JOHN

I gotta' say, I like this place a lot better at--

When he turns towards the desk. Bill is gone.

JOHN (CONT'D)

--night.
(a beat)
Spoke too soon.

He arrives at the elevator. He hits the up button. It's all the way at the top and we watch as the arm stops at every single floor.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Figures.

He exhales impatiently and looks to his right at a long hallway that in the shadows seems to go on forever... A MAN coughs in the darkness and John can make out the silhouette of a man sitting against the wall, his arm stretched out like a junky.

The elevator is about to arrive and John can hear talking from inside of it, but when it opens--

It's empty.

John shuts his eyes for a moment. This place is fucking weird, but--

JOHN (CONT'D)

It's just an old - weird - fucking hotel.

He could turn to leave, but he doesn't.

He enters the elevator.

As he steps in we monitor his entrance from the POV of a security camera. He presses the button for 10. When the door closes we CUT BACK and we're in the elevator with him.

He quietly hums to himself (sounds like it could be Van Morrison's MOONDANCE) as the elevator rises.

It stops abruptly on the SIXTH FLOOR.

The door opens and John immediately covers his mouth from a putrid smell.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Fucking Christ. That's awful.

The smell gets stronger, and he hits the door close button frantically, but the door remains open. He slowly inches to look down the hall, but the only thing eerie about it, is how normal it is. Plain, perhaps a bit institutional, but freshly painted and clean. The only sound is the buzzing of a fluorescent light that is struggling to stay lit.

He steps back in and hits the DOOR CLOSE button again, and this time FROM THE POV OF THE SECURITY CAMERA, he looks out and looks both ways.

The door closes and we're back inside the elevator with John.

We're TIGHT ON: His face. But as we pull back, we're immediately hit with--

ELISA LAM standing right next to him. She's facing John, drenched in water, dressed in her red sweatshirt and skirt. Her face is a pale grey bluish color.

John is oblivious.

She tries to reach her hand up to touch him, but something is holding her back. The elevator rises.

Elisa opens her mouth in an attempt to speak, but all we can hear is delayed echoes of her scream that John is also oblivious too. She tries harder to scream, but rather than sounds coming out, her mouth stretches open inches wider than a human mouth could naturally and--

A THICK BLACK FLOOD OF SLUDGE OOZES FROM HER MOUTH.

The only reaction John can experience is that putrid odor seems to return and he covers his mouth looking as the elevator reaches his floor.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Fuck. That's so bad.

He reaches the tenth floor and the door opens. He's quick to exit, and as the door closes, we see ELISA attempt to step out, but the door closes on her, leaving only faint echo of--

ELISA

Leeeeeeeaaaaave.

This registers with John, but when he turns, the door closes and the squeak of the elevator running up blends with it enough to be passed off as just that- the sound of the elevator.

As he walks off, we hold on the elevator dial that rapidly travels up to the 14th FLOOR where it stops.

EXT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

John slowly walks down the dimly lit hallway, his pace slows as the theme from the TV SHOW **BEWITCHED** can be heard from a room. The door is propped open from the RATTLING BATHROBE that hangs on the door. There's maniacal laughter coming from the room over the TV show theme.

John approaches slowly and the slight breeze from the hall window opens the door ever so slightly. John can see two elderly legs covered in varicose veins sitting in a chair atop a sea of clutter on the floor.

THE TV MUTES SUDDENLY.

OLD MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(demanding)
Who's there?

John quickly paces past and around a corner.

The door slams.

He passes a door labeled: BATHROOM. From within he hears a slapping sound and the moans of a man pleasuring himself.

John's had it.

JOHN
Fuck this.

But when he turns, he steps back startled.

BLACK WOMAN (O.S.)
Yo, man. You got the key for the other bathroom?

John shakes his head terrified and we turn on a MONSTROUSLY DEFORMED BLACK WOMAN with large GROWTHS AND BOILS covering her face and body.

JOHN
No. I'm sorry. I don't.

He steps back slowly but she become agitated.

BLACK WOMAN
I gotta' go so bad and this fools been in there all night.

John steps back and sees the room numbers going up... 1023... 1025... he paces quickly to get to his room.

She can tell he's scared.

BLACK WOMAN (CONT'D)
Come on, man. I ain't contagious. I ain't gonna' hurt you.

JOHN
I don't have a key. I have my own bathroom.

But John's put his foot in his mouth. She steps towards him.

BLACK WOMAN
Man, I'll be in and out in two seconds, I'm about to explode.
(MORE)

BLACK WOMAN (CONT'D)
I'll put toilet paper on your seat
and everything. Give you the star
treatment.

He gets to his room. He retrieves the key from his pocket, fumbles with it and it drops to the ground.

CLOSE ON: His hand reaches for it and her DEFORMED HAND missing THREE FINGERS brushes up against his. He grabs it.

JOHN
I said no! Leave me alone!

He thrusts forward, and she steps back, but only gets more aggravated. He gets the key in the lock, turns it, and enters inside, slamming the door in her face.

IN ROOM--

He quickly locks the door and the two bolts and chain locks as she pounds aggressively on it from outside.

BLACK WOMAN
Ass hole!

John looks out the peep hole and he sees her crouch down. He's perplexed but when he looks down, a DARK YELLOW FLUID starts to seep from under the door. John steps back in disgust.

JOHN
What the fuck!?

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(from hall, stern)
Jolene, what the Hell are you
doing?

BLACK WOMAN (O.S.)
I warned this prick. He wouldn't
let me use his toilet.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Get the fuck up! You wonder why
people treat you like an animal!

BLACK WOMAN (O.S.)
Man, get your fuckin' hands off me!

John can hear a forceful altercation that gets softer and softer as they travel down the hall. A door slams loudly from off screen and the argument stops.

He grabs a towel from the bathroom and cautiously mops up the mess and then carefully opens the door and puts the towel out in the hall that's now completely quiet.

He closes the door again, locks it, and walks into the room.

The room is basic, but clean. John tosses the key onto a desk and then crashes onto his bed. He puts his arm over his eyes and lets out a long exhale.

We PUSH SLOW onto the room key and onto the number: 1029

PARTY (O.S.)

(flashback)

*Happy birthday to you... Happy
birthday to you...*

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S FLOATING HOME - **FLASHBACK** - DAY

Happy birthday continues. We're on a CALENDAR: OCTOBER. A DATE: 29th. Written on that date: **CHRISTOPHER'S BIRTHDAY**.

We turn on the party: John, his wife, their son Christopher and all their friends are celebrating on a rare sunny Seattle day. Sailboats pass by on the lake as John puts the birthday cake on a table.

PARTY

*Happy birthday, dear Christopher...
Happy birthday to you!*

Everyone cheers. It's a great vibe. Christopher leans to blow the candles out, but they remain lit. Everyone laughs and turns to John giving him that "you put trick candles" look. But John's puzzled. He turns to Christopher.

JOHN

Come on, Chris. With everything you got.

When Christopher turns, he's shirtless and soaking wet over his dead skin and sunken face. He looks up at John.

CHRISTOPHER

I can't, Dad. I'm dead.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S ROOM - HOTEL CECIL - MORNING

John awakes suddenly - our first glimpse into what he's been dealing with internally. The sun shines brightly into the room and he covers his eyes a bit to block it. He's fully dressed from the night before. He turns to the TV perplexed.

It's playing the stock ad for the hotel.

TV

*Located in the heart of Downtown
Los Angeles, the historic Cecil
Hotel will whisk you back in
time...*

John turns the TV off. He looks around the room and out the open window trying to get his head together as if from a bad hangover. He's quick to take his shirt off and walk into the bathroom. He runs the water.

A BIT LATER--

John, now cleaned up, is looking through the files at a desk in the room.

He's on the file he had discussed with Holtzman. A photo of a BLACK MAN in his 60s. **JAMES RONDOMAN**. We track the important bits of what he's reading: **WORKS AT LAMP HOMELESS SHELTER -- SEEN TWICE WITH ELISA** -- John considers and looks at his photo again. He closes it and puts it in his messenger bag.

EXT. HALLWAY - A BIT LATER

John's door opens and he cautiously steps into the hallway. An attractive young FRENCH COUPLE pas by and paired with the sunlight from the hall windows, everything feels ok here.

He walks towards the elevator. A friendly JANITOR mopping up turns to him.

JANITORS

Elevator's down for repairs. Stairs
are at the end of the hall.

John nods.

JOHN

Thanks.

He passes the BATHROOM. The door is open and it's freshly cleaned.

He walks and opens the door to the stairs.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

He looks down the spiral staircase that seems to go down for infinity and then up at the ATRIUM WINDOW on the top and slowly walks up.

EXT. ROOF DOOR - STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

He examines the door leading to the roof and the FIRE ALARM WILL SOUND SIGN... through barred windows he can see the THREE WATER TANKS on the roof. He's trying to make sense of it all. He pulls the bars to see if they're loose and around at any other way you could out there.

JOHN

(to himself)

How did you get out there?

His attention is diverted by the sounds of a woman's high heel shoes slowly ascending the stairwell.

He looks down, and three floors below, he can see a WOMAN'S HAND with red painted nails running her hand seductively up the railing.

He walks down.

Just as they're about to cross paths he braces, expecting something out of the ordinary, but when they meet his expression is pleasantly surprised.

WOMAN (O.S.)

(sexy, friendly)

Top of the morning to you.

JOHN

You as well.

We turn onto a woman, "DOREEN", (think Paz De La Huerta). This is the woman John had seen in the window yesterday. She's dressed in a revealing dress that's one part classic Hollywood starlet and one part high class call girl dressed to look the part. There's something incredibly seductive about her and even her subtlest expressions are a come on.

She's smoking a joint and offers it to John.

DOREEN

(pleasantly stoned)

Wanna' hit?

John chuckles.

JOHN

No thanks. I'm good.

DOREEN

Come on. It's practically legal
here.

JOHN

Well, it's actually legal in
Washington, but it's a little early
for me.

DOREEN

Maybe later then.

She inhales again and stands directly in front of him,
leaning forward ever so slightly. Her breasts inches away
from him. John clears his throat and starts to blush a
little.

JOHN

I think I saw you yesterday... up
in the window?

DOREEN

(considers)

Oh? Peeping Tom are we?

JOHN

You were a little hard to miss.

She smiles a little and considers.

DOREEN

I'll take that as a compliment.

She moves a little closer to John and he steps back a bit
flustered. This woman is incredibly sexual.

DOREEN (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I don't bite.

(smiles)

Unless of course you're into that
kind of thing.

John laughs.

JOHN

Alright, alright... I'm sorry, but
I really have to go.

DOREEN

Well if you change your mind - and most guys do - I'm in room fourteen hundred.

And the picture becomes clear. She's a hooker or so he thinks.

JOHN

Oh, I see now. For a minute there my self esteem was off the charts.

She's a little confused and just shrugs but shoots him the kind of fuck me eyes every man wants to see, hooker or not. John's eyes widen: Wow.

John turns and walks down. She opens the door.

DOREEN

See you around, John.

She enters the 14th floor and the door closes behind her. John stops.

JOHN

Wait, what? Hey.

He hustles up the stairs and tries to open the door, but it's locked.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hey, wait. How did you know...
(he bangs the door again,
but nobody answers, he
gives up)
...my name.

He looks at the number 14 on the door and it only adds to his confusion, but now he seems determined to figure what the hell is up with this place.

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT DESK - CECIL HOTEL - DAY

Reggie, the rude day man, is now at the front desk. John walks up.

REGGIE

Help you?

John opens his wallet.

JOHN

Yeah, I think I'm gonna' stay a few more nights, but I was hoping to move up to the fourteenth floor?

Reggie shakes his head.

REGGIE

Under construction.

JOHN

I just talked to someone who was staying up there.

REGGIE

Construction worker?

JOHN

No, a woman. Staying in room fourteen hundred.

Reggie shakes his head.

REGGIE

It's under construction, pal. Stop breaking my balls. You want more nights or not?

JOHN

Yeah, fine.

He fishes through his wallet and hands the guy cash.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

John looks down the street where Skid Row begins. Even in the day it looks like downtown Port au Prince. He's hesitant to go down there.

He stops a passerby.

JOHN

Excuse me.

Man stops.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Alvarado?

The guy motions down the Skid Row street and carries on. John takes a breath and walks down the street.

EXT. SKID ROW - **MONTAGE** - LATER

There's distant screams and police sirens. John steps carefully over legs shrouded in a blanket and passes an OLD WOMAN feeding stray cats from a tub of cat food in her shopping cart.

OLD WOMAN

Here we go, come and get it.
(to John without turning)
Few of this litter is pregnant so
they need to get their nutrition.
Lot's of new babies coming.

John nods.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

This one's my favorite.

She picks it up and turns to John.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

Here, you wanna' pet her?

John turns and the cat SCREECHES and John steps back as the cat jumps from her arms and scurries away.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

(slightly sinister)
She doesn't like you very much.

John shakes his head and carries on. Her gaze follows him down the street.

MONTAGE FORWARD--

John talks to a woman outside of a TEXTILE PLANT who motions directions to him.

MONTAGE FORWARD--

The sun beats down hard and John covers his eyes... it's all very chaotic down here and the BLARE of a WOMAN PREACHING atop a CRATE through a MEGAPHONE penetrates his ears. John stands and listens as he waits for the crosswalk to turn.

PREACHER WOMAN

(megaphone)

...and as we stand here right on
the precipice of Hell and
Salvation, you need to make a
decision. Will you chose God or
will you chose Satan?

The crosswalk turns to walk and John crosses.

EXT. LAMP HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

John notices the shelter and walks towards it.

INT. LAMP HOMELESS SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

John enters. He looks at beds being made in the sleeping area and over at the cafeteria where lunch is being cleaned up. A few homeless remain finishing their meals.

He turns and notices a YOUNG GIRL, a teen prostitute type, dressed in a ragged sweat suit, sitting and reading a magazine in the lounge area. She seems to recognize John and he notices this. Something shocks her about him. She gets up as if to speak to him, but paranoia sets in and she walks out.

John is perplexed, but shrugs it off as just another weirdo. He walks towards the glass covered check in area. Two BLACK WOMEN are working.

WOMAN 1

Help you?

JOHN

Yes, I was hoping to meet with James Rondoman. I understand he works here.

WOMAN 1

Who?

John looks at his file to make sure he's got it right.

JOHN

James Rondoman?

WOMAN 2

He's talkin about Rondo. He's not here.

They go back to work.

JOHN

Do you know when he'll be back?

WOMAN 2

Rondo works nights. Runs dinner, usually here around 7:30, but it's supposed to rain tonight, so we're gonna' be busy. He expecting you?

John looks out at the sunny day. Seems strange. He shakes his head. He notices the girl again.

JOHN

No, I'll just come back then.

He turns and walks out... The women shrug.

EXT. LAMP HOMELESS SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

John notices the girl walking off.

JOHN

Excuse me.

She paces faster.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hey.

John catches up with her. She stops. When she turns, John is taken aback. This close he can see that she's recovering from a bad beating and tries to hide it with her hair. She looks at him.

GIRL

It is you.

She swallows nervously.

JOHN

How do you know me?

She looks around paranoid and turns to him.

GIRL

(getting flustered)

I don't know.

She turns and walks off.

JOHN

Hey, wait.

GIRL

(as though he's in great danger)

(MORE)

GIRL (CONT'D)

Just... you shouldn't be here...
you should leave.

She runs off looking around as if anyone on the street could be watching her. She darts into the street haphazardly. A car skids. Almost hits her. The car honks.

DRIVER

Get outta' the street you crazy
bitch!

John tries to cross but another car speeds past.

JOHN

Hey!

But she cuts into an alley and disappears. John shakes his head and looks around at a loss.

INT. MEXICAN DINER - DAY

John sits at a table by the window in the bustling Mexican diner. He looks out the window with increasing paranoia as people pass by. He turns back to his open computer and some notes.

He's making connections about the NUMBER 14. Elisa's room. The junky's room. Doreen's room. The Ramirez connection. 14 murders. 14th floor. \$14.00.

JOHN

Fourteen... fourteen...

He tries to think of anything he may know about it's significance before typing into GOOGLE: **THE NUMBER 14 - SIGNIFICANCE OF.**

A list comes down.

He's surprised when all web pages are BIBLICAL. He reads and talks to himself quietly.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Fourteen years from David to the
Exile of Babylon...

(this isn't what he's
looking for, he continues
to surf)

The number of stations of the cross
when Jesus was killed.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)
(he looks at something
else that seems more
concrete)

Under the book of Proverbs a Fear
of the Lord is stated...

...and we CLOSE ON: **FOURTEEN TIMES.**

John leans back to think.

He looks up at a MIRROR behind the DINER COUNTER and standing
directly behind him is--

THE ANDROGENOUS WOMAN. She reaches her arms forward towards
him. All sound dissolves in the restaurant.

ANDROGENOUS WOMAN
(deep, haunting)
*Are you ready to confess your sins
to God?*

JOHN
Leave me the fuck alone!

He turns and swipes his arm, but when he does it's merely a
waitress filling his coffee and the coffee pot shatters on
the ground.

WAITRESS
(speaks frantically in
Spanish and then)
What's your problem, man?

John stands and looks into the mirror. The Androgenous Woman
is gone and he looks around paranoid. Some male patrons stand
ready to defend the woman.

John gets himself together.

JOHN
I'm sorry... I thought I saw--
(looks around)
I'm sorry.

MANAGER
Hey, man. Get lost.

He leans down to help the woman clean up her mess.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
I said get outta here before I call
the cops!

JOHN

Alright, relax. I'm leaving.

He collects his things and looks around the shop and exits.

EXT. STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

John's paranoia is growing as he walks down the street. Every face that passes him seems suspicious of him.

His phone rings.

It's GALE.

JOHN

(into phone, flustered)

Hello?

INTERCUT TO GALE. She's confused.

GALE

John, is everything ok?

John thinks.

JOHN

It's... fine.

GALE

Are you still in Los Angeles?

JOHN

Yes, why?

GALE

I got an email from the Marriot
saying you'd checked out.

He realizes.

JOHN

I'm sorry, I was going to call you.

GALE

Where are you?

JOHN

I've checked into the Cecil.

GALE

(a bit concerned)

The Cecil?

JOHN

For a few nights at least,
there's... Look, I think there's a
lot the police have overlooked here
and-- I'm not really sure what I
have yet, but I need to keep
looking into the hotel.

GALE

Ok, well, I spoke to Mr Lam when
you checked out of the Marriott and
he was very discouraged... he
wanted me to let you know that he
was sorry he couldn't talk more
when you'd met, but that he's very
appreciative of what you're doing.

(a beat)

Are you sure everything's ok?

This calms John a bit, as if his purpose is now in check
again. He nods.

JOHN

I'm not giving up on this.

We pull back as John concludes the talk and hangs up. Storm
clouds can be seen in the distance moving closer to the city
as the sun begins to set.

INT. STAIRWELL - CECIL HOTEL - EARLY EVENING

John walks up the stairs and tries once again to open the
14th floor, but it's again locked.

He hears someone on the floor below enter the stairwell and
he races down and catches the door to floor 12 before it can
close.

INT. TWELFTH FLOOR - EARLY EVENING

He walks down the 12th floor towards the open window at the
end... He looks out onto the fire escape and sees that you
can climb up to 14.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - EVENING

It's now dark outside and thunder clouds can be seen. They
start grumbling. He carefully makes his way up the fire
escape.

AT 14th FLOOR WINDOW--

He looks through the window and it is in fact completely under construction. There's paint cans, wood, saws, drop clothes etc.

The window is locked. He knocks on it. The glass is thin and flimsy.

JOHN

Hello!? Is anybody in there? Hello!

He waits for a moment and nobody responds. He notices the thunder cloud. He looks through the window down the empty hall.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

He smashes it with his elbow and kicks the remaining glass from the sides with his shoe.

He carefully steps in and takes a moment to collect himself.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hello? Is anybody up here?

He opens a room's door... it's empty and under construction. And then another... he's all alone up here.

He gets to 1400 and stops.

This door is closed and he puts his ear up to the door and can faintly hear a radio playing an oldie: *It never rains in Southern California... seems it often heard that kind of talk before... It never rains in California, but girl don't they warn ya... when it rains, man it pours...*

He considers for a moment and knocks on the door.

There's no response.

He shakes his head and continues down the empty hallway. He looks at his notepad: **ELISA: ROOM 1403**. He carefully opens the door.

He turns the light on.

The room has been completely gutted.

He closes the door and continues past the ELEVATOR.

As he walks down the hall--

A DARK APPARITION EXITS THE ELEVATOR AND PASSES BEHIND HIM.

John hears the slight sound of feet shuffling, but when he turns--

NOTHING IS THERE. Just the sounds of some tarp rustling in the breeze from the open window.

He continues down the hall. He looks at his notepad again: **ROOM 1417 - unknown occupants - fled hotel.**

He opens that door slowly and the squeal of rats cause him to jump.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Agh!

He stands back against the door opening as THREE LARGE RATS race over his feet and scurry down the hall.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Fuck.

He catches his breath and enters the room slowly. He turns the light on revealing that this room has also been gutted.

John enters the bathroom, turns the light on and when he does he has to cover his mouth from the smell.

JOHN (CONT'D)

My God.

The tiles are cracked from where the junkies were thrown against the wall and the tub, while empty, still has a dark stain lining it's edges.

Just as he's about to exit, he notices the MIRROR. At first sight it's just badly smudged, but a closer look reveals a more intricate design, though he can't make it out.

He turns on the shower and the sink, turning them both up all the way. As the steam begins to rise, he walks back into the room and looks out the window.

Rain comes down harder with more thunder and lightening and the lightening illuminates a LARGE STONE GARGOYLE from the building across the street that seems to stare directly at him.

In the reflection of the window, though John doesn't notice--

A DARK APPARITION PASSES BEHIND HIM AND ENTERS THE BATHROOM.

The steam from the bathroom begins to fog the room window and he turns and walks back towards the bathroom.

The bathroom is completely steamed up and he turns the shower and sink off wafting some steam into the room so he can see the mirror.

Just as the mirror becomes visible again--

A STRONG CLAP OF THUNDER and LIGHTENING shuts the POWER IN THE HOTEL OFF.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Son of a bitch.

He turns his phone on using it's glow to see. He pushes it closer to the mirror and steps back a bit.

JOHN (CONT'D)
What the--

He can see the elaborate Satanic imagery and as he pushes his phone closer he can make out something in the lines of the drawing. He wipes his hand across to see, but his phone shuts off.

He's left in the darkness, but just before he can turn his phone back on, there's a clap of thunder and the lightening illuminates the mirror.

John screams!!

The reflection of the two junkies pressed up against the wall with eyes and mouths sewn shut can be seen.

He turns his phone on again and when he turns.

They're gone.

John breaths heavily and steps backwards out of the bathroom and into the room.

The bathroom door SLAMS SHUT by itself and John races out of the room, dropping all his files.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

It's pitch black save for the glow from the windows in the hallway from the other buildings who still have power.

He opens his phone to try and navigate through the construction.

He steps over some paint cans and then startles when he hears breathing.

He moves his phone up but there's nobody there.

The light on his phone times out, and when he turns it on again he can see--

A FIGURE down the hall whose back is turned and hunched over.

JOHN

Who's there?

He drops his phone and when he picks it back up again and turns it to see--

THE FACE OF AN ELDERLY MAN whose EYES are GOUGED OUT is directly in front of his face.

ELDERLY MAN

(in German accent)

Guten tag.

John screams and steps back against the wall and thrashes his arms forward in self defense. The light on his phone times out again. And when lightening again illuminates the hall. The man is gone.

A DOOR SLAMS SHUT DOWN THE HALL.

John turns to run but trips over boards and cans from the construction. His phone slides down the hall and into the darkness.

He slides backwards terrified and when lightening strikes again he can see that he's in front of room 1400.

He pounds on the door.

JOHN

Is anybody in there?

There's no answer. All he can hear from within is that oldie that continues to play eerily slow... *It - never - rains...* (AND THEN SPEEDS UP FASTER THAN NORMAL) *in Southern California...*

In the darkness his phone illuminates. It's ringing. He steps towards it and picks it up.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(trembling)

Hello?

Some static and then--

YOUNG BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)
Dad! Help! Help me!

JOHN
(cries)
Christopher?

But the young boy's voice transposes to DEMONIC LAUGHTER.

The phone shuts off and he looks at it desperately as if to try and call the number back. He's on the verge of a total breakdown.

Lightening strikes and John stares into the OPEN EMPTY ELEVATOR. He races towards the stairs... When LIGHTENING hits again--

ELISA LAM'S HEAD POPS OUT, but John cannot see this.

ELISA
(echoed)
Leeeeeeeeave.

John hears this and turns but is only met by darkness.

The glow from the buildings outside is enough to lead him towards the stairwell. He frantically turns the handle and it opens.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

He closes the door and leans against it to catch his breath. He looks up at the rain falling on the ATRIUM WINDOW and then out at the THREE WATER TANKS.

He slowly starts to work his way down the stairs but the further down he gets from the atrium window the darker the stairwell becomes.

A DOOR OPENS and slams from a few flights below and from the heaviness of the boots, John can sense danger and stands flat against the wall so whoever is coming up will pass him by undetected.

John waits in anticipation and fear as the boot steps get closer.

LIGHTENING STRIKES and THE FACE OF THE PIERCED TATTOOED MAN is inches from his face.

A beat.

PIERCED FACE MAN

Boo.

This sends John falling down the flight of stairs.

CUT TO BLACK:

A few moments of silence in the darkness where only the sound from the rain hitting the atrium window can be heard.

His eyes slowly flicker open and when they do--

THE POWER HAS BEEN RESTORED IN THE STAIRWELL.

John runs his hands over his face and adjusts his eyes to the bright fluorescent light.

He's terrified and races down the stairs.

EXT. SKID ROW - NIGHT

John races through the rain towards the LAMP HOMELESS SHELTER.

The storm has made the already horrifying Skid Row feel like the Walking Dead. The homeless and the mentally insane shiver on the street.

There's a long line of people trying to get into LAMP and John stops when he notices the P is burned out of it's sign, illuminating the word:

LAM

John enters the crowded shelter.

INT. LAMP HOMELESS SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

People desperately plead for a space in the shelter.

WOMAN

I'm sorry, but all the beds have been taken!

The other woman and some security fight to keep the desperate crowd contained.

HOMELESS

Please! Please!

WOMAN

All we can do is offer you some food and temporary shelter from the storm.

John looks over. The line is around the cafeteria to get food. John enters and races over when he spots JAMES RONDOMAN. James has a wooden cross around his neck.

Despite the chaos, Rondo interacts with everyone with a cool kindness and a sense of humor.

RONDO

(to person he's serving)
Don't worry ya'll. Storm'll pass.
It always does. Good news is, my gumbo's on the menu tonight and I know how ya'll love my gumbo.

He serves them. People grumble as John fights his way towards the front of the line. One of the people in line is the young girl who had warned John to leave earlier.

JOHN

James.

Rondo looks up at John drenched from the rain.

RONDO

Hey, man. You gotta' wait in line just like everyone else.

JOHN

I need to talk to you now.

Rondo sees that he's not just a homeless man and that whatever it is it's urgent.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It's about Elisa Lam.

Rondo's expression changes.

RONDO

I already told ya'll, you wanna talk to me, you gotta' go through my lawyers or arrest me.

JOHN

No, I'm not a cop. I'm working with the family. Please, I need to know why she came to you to pray?

The young girl hears this and gets scared and walks out of the shelter.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Please. I'm staying at the Cecil.

Rondo stops when he hears this. He's concerned. He turns to another worker.

RONDO

Take over for a minute.

The worker nods.

RONDO (CONT'D)

Meet me around the side.

John nods and walks around the cafeteria line and meets Rondo who leads him towards his back office.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

They enter. Rondo motions for him to sit down.

JOHN

(frantic)

Why did she come here to pray?

RONDO

Slow down, Jack.

(serious)

How long have you been at the hotel?

JOHN

Only a day.

RONDO

Well then you need to leave while you still can. And get as far away as possible.

JOHN

What is it? Do you know why Elisa was there?

RONDO

I don't know why anybody goes there. People end up there without any understanding of why -- It's as if they're brought there.

JOHN

I don't understand.

Rondo thinks.

RONDO

That place... It'll suck you in if you let it.

John shakes his head in confusion.

Rondo thinks for a moment. He reaches over and takes a disk and puts it into the monitor.

RONDO (CONT'D)

Take a look at this.

SECURITY FROM THE DORMITORY OF THE SHELTER COMES UP.

RONDO (CONT'D)

See her right there... gettin' into bed. That's Elisa.

JOHN

She stayed here?

Rondo nods.

RONDO

Tried to.

John watches as Rondo forwards the tape as Elisa turns in bed and then stops it at 2:58 AM... They watch and as the timer turns to 3:00 AM, Elisa jolts up in bed. She slowly gets up and walks backwards unnaturally as if possessed.

RONDO (CONT'D)

She came back again three times.

He types on the computer to another night. 2:59 turns to 3:00 and again Elisa gets up and walks backwards out of the dormitory.

RONDO (CONT'D)

Each time she woke up in the Cecil and came back crying, pleading with me to pray with her. To just pray. Too scared to talk about what was keeping her there.

He motions to the monitor again. 2:59 turns to 3:00.

RONDO (CONT'D)

Three AM. You know what that is?

John doesn't.

RONDO (CONT'D)

Well people versed in the dark arts
call it the witching hour. It's how
the Devil mocks Christ who was
crucified at 3PM.

Rondo turns again to the monitor.

RONDO (CONT'D)

I expected her back the next night,
(shakes head)
But she never came.
(shrugs)
Few days later, I'm watching the
news and well... I don't have to
tell you.

John tries to understand.

JOHN

Did you show this to the police?

Rondo nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)

And what did they say?

RONDO

They didn't know what to say. Why
do you think they want nothing to
do with this case?

Rondo can see John trying to make sense of it all.

RONDO (CONT'D)

Look, believe what you want, but
there's places in this world that
nobody wants to talk about. Call it
a gateway to the under world or
just call it bad fuckin news.

(a beat)

I've seen a lot of shit in my day,
but this Skid Row down here... this
is as close to Hell on Earth as
I've ever seen and if there's an
epicenter, that hotel's it.

(a beat)

From the day that bitch opened it's
front doors there's been nothing
but evil coming in and out of
there.

John nods.

RONDO (CONT'D)

And I know you wanna' help that
girl's family, but I'm tellin' you,
Jack. From where I'm standing,
(he examines John's
terrified condition)
The best thing you can do is get
the Hell out of that hotel.

From outside there's a crash of dishes.

WORKER (O.S.)

Yo Rondo, we need you back here!

Rondo gets up.

RONDO

Sorry, man. But that's the best I
can give you.

John nods. Rondo exits.

CUT TO:

COLE'S BAR - DOWNTOWN, LA - NIGHT

Cole's is one of the oldest bars in the city. It's dark. Classic. The bartenders know your drink and can feel your pain.

John has clearly had a few as he mumbles to himself staring into his whiskey and looking down at an old PHOTO of his son CHRISTOPHER that he keeps deep in his wallet.

There's a deep sadness in his face. He looks at his CALL LOG on his phone, but that last number that came in was from GALE.

He hears children laughing from the adjacent dining room and looks over as a father lifts his son up and walks out with him. He puts his wallet back into his pocket and finishes his whiskey.

BARTENDER

You alright, man?

John looks up and thinks. He shakes his head.

JOHN

No. No, I'm not.

The bartender pours him another whiskey.

BARTENDER

Well this might cheer you up. This next one's from the lady at the end of the bar.

John turns and sees DOREEN, the voluptuous woman from the stairwell. She raises her glass. He shakes his head, grabs his drink, and walks over to her with drunken determination.

JOHN

Who the fuck are you and how do you know who I am?

DOREEN

Is that anyway to talk to a lady who just bought you a drink?

JOHN

I'm done with manners. How did you know my name?

DOREEN

Whoa, easy, killer.

John slams his fist on the bar.

JOHN

How did you know my name?

She shakes her head in confusion and the bartender looks over at the commotion.

JOHN (CONT'D)

John. You called me John in the stairwell.

She laughs.

DOREEN

That's what this is about? So your name actually is John?

(shrugs)

What are the odds? I was just teasing you because you thought I was a hooker. - Hookers - Johns.

John shakes his head and cools down a bit. He shoots his whiskey.

JOHN

In my defense, you weren't exactly subtle.

DOREEN

(direct, sexy)

Well can't a girl wanna' just a
fuck a guy these days without
expecting money in return?

John's eyebrows raise. Wow.

JOHN

You've got a way with words I'll
give you that.

He motions to the bartender.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Can I get another one of these?

She looks John over very seductively.

DOREEN

There aren't too many eligible
bachelors around these parts, so I
see a nice guy like yourself...
forgive me for getting a little hot
in the seat.

She suggestively shifts her pelvis forward in her stool and turns now facing John head on with her incredible breasts.

JOHN

Oh, I don't know. I took a walk
upstairs and saw all kinds of
potential suitors.

DOREEN

What are you talking about?

JOHN

The fourteenth floor.

DOREEN

(she onto him, playful)

So you're the little vandal that
smashed the window up there? You
must really have wanted to see me.

John can't make sense of anything now and each time his eyes pass over her he's pulled in deeper to her.

JOHN

What's going on up there?

(rubs fingers over his
eyes and drinks his
whiskey)

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

And how are you able to keep your room?

As if it's the most obvious answer.

DOREEN

Because I'm a resident. I've been there for over eight years. They can't kick me out. I'm doctored in.

(a beat)

We had a little-- accident you might say a few weeks back, and they just assumed everyone would want to leave.

(shrugs)

They were wrong.

JOHN

Accident? So you think what happened to that girl was an accident?

DOREEN

What girl?

JOHN

Elisa Lam.

DOREEN

Oh no... I was talking about what she did to my water by choosing to make those tanks her final resting place.

JOHN

So you're saying she killed herself?

She shrugs.

DOREEN

I've read the papers. What else could it have been? What's it to you?

John doesn't answer, but Doreen's onto him now.

DOREEN (CONT'D)

Oh, I see now. You must be one of these ghost hunters that we get around the Cecil.

JOHN

And what if I were?

She considers.

DOREEN

Well, I can understand the appeal of the hotel - but I can assure you that girl was bat shit crazy when she was staying there.

JOHN

What did you see?

DOREEN

A lot of talking to herself... screaming... I didn't think much of it, considering it's par for the course at my little humble abode, (shrugs) But what happened to that girl, she did to herself. So far as I could see.

John thinks.

JOHN

Well let's just say I've seen some things up there that you don't usually see in most hotels.

DOREEN

Can you be a little more specific?

JOHN

When the power went out... I saw...

DOREEN

Lemme guess. *Ghosts*?

JOHN

I don't know, you tell me. You live up there.

She looks John over. His drunk, confused state.

DOREEN

I'd say you strike me as a guy carrying a pretty dark fucking passenger.

John nods. He looks at her. The first person in a while that's understood him.

JOHN

That obvious?

DOREEN

Don't get me wrong, I find damaged men incredibly sexy.

(shrugs)

But maybe you're seeing things you think you're supposed to see in there. And letting mysteries and ghost stories get the best of you.

John looks at his whiskey. He chuckles to himself.

DOREEN (CONT'D)

What?

JOHN

That's the most logical thing I've heard since I got here.

She considers.

DOREEN

Well maybe you should stop trying to solve other people's problems in hopes of getting closure for your own.

John looks at her. It's like she can see right into him and he's incredibly taken in by it. He's powerless. He looks down and watches as her hand runs slowly up his thigh and towards his crotch.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S ROOM - HOTEL CECIL

The door opens and John and Doreen enter kissing heavily. It's such a release and John ravages her like a wile animal. Doreen is overwhelmed by his savagery.

They land on the bed and he rips her dress of and beings kissing and sexually biting every inch of her body.

DOREEN

Fuck me. Fuck me now!

He pulls her panties off and begins at her feet, his tongue moving up her long legs over her thighs before resting between her legs.

She tilts her head back and moans in animalistic pleasure.

DOREEN (CONT'D)

I had such a feeling about you...
this is...

...and her eyes shut as she's overpowered by John's prowess.

DOREEN (CONT'D)

So incredible, John. You're so
amazing. You're so fucking amazing.

With each word she speaks he handles her more aggressively,
flipping her over and eating her from behind.

Doreen speaks, but it's a different woman's voice.

DOREEN (CONT'D)

*My God, John. How come you never
kissed me like this when I was
alive?*

John looks up and sees that the woman he's with is a DEAD BODY, and when her head turns, it's HIS WIFE, the side of her head completely crushed in.

John steps back and screams.

JOHN'S WIFE

Why are you stopping?

JOHN

No...

John blinks his eyes and double takes. His dead wife transitions back to Doreen.

DOREEN

What are you stopping? What's wrong?

John shakes his head.

JOHN

Who the fuck are you?

DOREEN

What are you talking about?

He steps backwards... shakes his head.

JOHN

No... this is all wrong...

He puts his pants on quickly and retrieves his shirt.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I don't know who the fuck you are
or what the fuck I'm doing here but
I don't belong here.

She shakes her head.

DOREEN

But you're wrong. This is exactly
where you belong.

JOHN

You don't know anything about me.
Stay the fuck away from me.

He grabs his phone, keys and wallet, and without taking
anything else he opens the door and races out.

EXT. HOTEL CECIL - NIGHT

John exits the hotel and looks down the empty street.

He hails a taxi. He gets in.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

The driver turns.

JOHN

Take me as far away as possible
from here.

The driver's confused.

DRIVER

Come on, man. I need a little more
than--

JOHN

Just drive. The beach, I don't
care... the first hotel we get to.

The driver nods and shrugs. He drives and John looks back at
the Cecil as the red lights of the sign flood the cab with
the same red glow as when he got there.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Faster please. Just drive!

The driver accelerates and John turns and looks forward.

FADE TO BLACK:

A FEW BEATS IN THE DARKNESS... WE HEAR THE SOUNDS OF WAVES CRASHING AND THE PLEASANT SOUNDS OF BEACHGOERS AS WE--

FADE IN:

INT. BEACH HOTEL - MID DAY

John wakes up in bed... his eyes open and he sees the clock: 1PM. He's relieved and in peace as he gets up and looks out at the beach. It's an incredible day and the best vibe he's felt since he arrived in Los Angeles.

He walks over to put some coffee on and he notices his phone. A red light blinks. He opens it: **FIVE MISSED CALLS**. All from GALE.

He hesitates, but calls her. She answers.

JOHN

It's John.

(she's frantic)

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Slow down.

INTERCUT TO GALE.

GALE

No, we got a call this morning from a young girl. She said she had information.

JOHN

I don't know if there's anything more I can do here.

GALE

Please, you have to listen. The hot line we'd set up... it's gotten mostly crank callers, but this one sounded real.

JOHN

What makes you think that?

GALE

Because she knows about you.

JOHN

What?

GALE

She said you're in some sort of danger.

(a beat)

(MORE)

GALE (CONT'D)

What's going on down there? Are you still at the Cecil?

JOHN

No... and I'm not going back there.

GALE

Well she doesn't want to meet you there either. Her name is Caroline. She gave me a number... please, if you don't want to meet her, at least just call her and found out what she knows.

John's not so sure. He's frustrated, but Gale continues to plead. John writes down the number and name: **CAROLINE**.

CUT TO:

EXT. THIRD STREET PROMENADE - DAY

John sits at a bench at the busy promenade. There's several people around. He looks at each face wondering who could be this Caroline. He notices someone and perks up with slight recognition. We turn onto the young girl he'd seen at Lamp Shelter who warned him to leave.

She walks up. She has dark sunglasses on and looks around paranoid. She slowly walks over to the bench.

JOHN

It's you.

She nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Who are you?

CAROLINE

Does anybody know you're down here?

JOHN

No, I don't think so.

She nods and looks around.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Is somebody after you?

CAROLINE

I'm not sure, but you never know with these people.

JOHN

What people?

CAROLINE

Come on. Let's walk.

John gets up and they walk through the busy promenade.

JOHN

Why did you run that day I saw you?

CAROLINE

Because I was worried that they
might have seen me talking to you.

JOHN

Who? Who are they?

CAROLINE

The people at the hotel.

JOHN

Which people?

CAROLINE

There's a group... some old, some
young, some I think are even
working there. That entire place is-

-

JOHN

Alright, I'm gonna' need just a
little more than a portal to Hell.

CAROLINE

Who told you that?

JOHN

Let's just say it's been said.

CAROLINE

Well there's people that believe
that and I'm telling you this whole
thing with Elisa... it goes deeper
than you could ever imagine.

JOHN

How do you know this?

CAROLINE

Because they were...

(a beat)

Look, I'm not bullshit you. I'm a
hooker.

(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

I get down with all kinds of people
so nothing really shocks me,
especially down there.

(a beat, she looks around)

At first when they hired me, I
thought it was just trippy.

JOHN

What?

CAROLINE

All these like, ritual sex games
they wanted me for.

INT. HOTEL CECIL ROOM - **FLASHBACK** - NIGHT

Hooded figures stand in a circle engaged in Satanic chanting
as one of the figures violently has sex with Caroline who is
bound down to a wooden table.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

Candles and crazy ass drawings and
music and shit. I didn't mind
because they were paying me...
Whatever the client wants, right?

RETURN TO JOHN AND CAROLINE--

John thinks.

JOHN

Can you describe them?

CAROLINE

You might have seen them... they
kinda' look like goth or death
metal types.

JOHN

Black hooded sweatshirts?

She nods.

CAROLINE

One has a lot of piercing and
freaky ass tattoos and shit kind of
looks like a demon.

JOHN

I've seen him.

CAROLINE

Well a few months back, after we were done, I stayed and we all shot up and got high.

RETURN TO FLASHBACK--

Caroline is leaned back in a high strung out state. The blinds are now open and the ritual gear is put away. It's just a normal Cecil Hotel room.

CAROLINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I nodded out and kind of came to, but I think they thought I was passed and I heard them talking... about this Asian girl that they were expecting from Canada. And that she was the "Lam".

Caroline looks over at the hooded men casually talking.

RETURN TO JOHN AND CAROLINE--

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

It was before she even got there and they were saying that she was coming.

JOHN

How did they know that?

CAROLINE

They said they'd just spoken to her mother.

John shakes his head.

JOHN

That doesn't make sense. Elisa's mother's been dead for two years.

CAROLINE

Well they knew her. And it was as if they had just talked to her. Saying creepy ass shit like that girl Elisa was finally ready to offer herself to Him.

JOHN

Him. Him who?

CAROLINE

They didn't say. I just remember hearing "Him".

(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Like he was their leader and that he was going away soon and they needed to sacrifice the Lam before he leaves this world.

John thinks.

FLASHBACK TO--

John reading about Aleister Crawley and contacting "The Lam" at the Hotel Cecil in London.

RETURN TO JOHN AND CAROLINE--

JOHN

Did they mention the name, Aleister? Crawley? Anything like that?

She shakes her head.

CAROLINE

No, just... Him.

(a beat)

One of the guys I think saw that I was coming to and they then starting talking in this language that I'd never heard before.

FLASHBACK TO THE CECIL THAT NIGHT--

Caroline shuts her eyes and pretends to be passed out as the hooded men speak in Aramaic.

RETURN TO JOHN AND CAROLINE--

Caroline trembles.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

About a month later, I was at Lamp House and I saw her.

JOHN

Elisa?

Caroline nods.

CAROLINE

I've never seen anybody this scared before and I told her that she needed to go, but she said she couldn't... no matter how hard she tried...

(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
but I knew it was the girl they
were talking about because Elisa
said...

(trembles)
Her mother wouldn't let her leave.

John tries to make sense of all this.

JOHN
So how do you know who I am?

She thinks and then looks at John and explains.

CAROLINE
They hired me again one night...

INT. HOTEL CECIL ROOM - **FLASHBACK** - NIGHT

Three hooded figures remove a hood revealing Caroline. They tie her again to the WOODEN TABLE and one of the men mount her and the rest begin chanting.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
This was before I saw Elisa and
knew they were really bad news.
(a beat)
But when I looked over at their
alter...

Caroline turns and surrounded by candles.

JOHN (O.S.)
What?

CAROLINE (O.S.)
There was a photo.

We slowly move onto the alter and surrounded by candles is
THE PHOTO OF JOHN WITH HIS FAMILY THAT DAY.

RETURN TO JOHN AND CAROLINE--

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
It was you... with a woman and
kid...
(a beat)
In front of a sailboat.

This hits John like a ton of bricks. His face turns white.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
That's why when I saw you that day
outside Lamp House...
(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
after knowing what they did to
Elisa, I knew you had to leave.
(shakes head)
But then I saw you there again
asking Rondo about Elisa and that
you were working with the family.
(shakes head)
But I got scared and left. And
that's when I called the hot line
because I've been having trouble
living with myself not having done
more for Elisa with what I knew.

John nods.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
I'm telling you, these people at
the hotel. They're very dangerous
and whatever they want with you. It
can't be good.

JOHN
Why didn't you go to the police?

CAROLINE
Because look at me.
(she tears a bit)
Nobody cares what I have to say.

JOHN
Will you come with me now?

Caroline looks around paranoid... A kid walks by in a black
hooded sweatshirt... She turns and sees another... She shakes
her head scared.

CAROLINE
No, I'm sorry... You just need to
go. Please. Just go.

She turns and runs down the promenade... John looks and sees
the hooded figure walking off and runs after.

JOHN
Hey. Hey! Stop!

He catches up and grabs one, but when he turns, it's just a
harmless nerdy skater kid.

KID
What the fuck, man? Get off me.

John sees that it's just a kid no more than thirteen.

JOHN

I'm sorry.

He looks around and Caroline's nowhere to be seen.

KID

Fuckin' weirdo.

The kid gets on his skateboard and skates off.

John runs his hands over his face and we pull up as he looks around the crowded promenade in hopeless desperation.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

It's chaotic as usual as John tries desperately to plead with Detective Holtzman.

JOHN

I'm telling you, I think Elisa's death was part of some kind of ritualistic murder. A sacrifice of some kind.

HOLTZMAN

A sacrifice?

JOHN

Look, I've got the number of this witness, I think if I can convince to come forward if I can guarantee her safety.

HOLTZMAN

Safety?

JOHN

She was... look, she's a prostitute and this group had hired her for some kind of ritual sex game, but she knew about Elisa before she'd even gotten to the hotel.

HOLTZMAN

Alright, alright, slow down. So let me get this straight. The cult hired a hooker, shot her up with dope, talked about how Elisa was on her way and they'd talked to her dead mother? This is what you're coming to me with?

JOHN

I know it sounds crazy, but I think-

HOLTZMAN

Crazy? It's fucking bonkers.

JOHN

Look, I'll wear a wire.

HOLTZMAN

A wire? Into what?

JOHN

Whatever they have planned for me.

Holtzman looks at John and steps back a bit at John's condition. He drops the act. He's concerned.

HOLTZMAN

Buddy, I think it's time you pack it up and get back to Seattle.

(a bit nervous)

And please don't come back here.

Holtzman walks out, but John steps back in shock at something on the station's television. It's the news.

NEWS CASTER

A woman's body, badly dismembered, with multiple stab wounds was just discovered in a dumpster in downtown Santa Monica. The ID of a Caroline Waters was found on her person and police are encouraging anyone who may have known this girl to come forward with any information.

John steps back in shock as an ID PHOTO of CAROLINE flashes across the screen.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

John walks out of the station in shock... The world spins around him and he has nowhere left to turn.

INT. BEACH HOTEL ROOM - DAY

John paces around his room talking on the phone.

JOHN

(into phone)

What about any of the other
airports. Ontario, Burbank,
anything?

(he nods)

Nothing until tomorrow morning?

(he listens)

Fine. I'll take it.

He nods and hangs up. Loud tribal drumming can be heard outside his window and John walks out onto the balcony and looks out over the hazy beach.

The drum circle that gathers on the crowded Venice beach seems to get louder and more sinister. John looks out at the violent tribal drumming and leans over the edge staring down five stories down onto the hard pavement as if to contemplate his own death.

But he releases his hands and steps back inhaling and exhaling. He's terrified.

CUT TO:

INT. BEACH HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The waves can be heard crashing outside as a warm breeze enters John's room and eerily flutters the thin white curtain.

John, despite it all, sleeps peacefully in bed.

We push slowly on the alarm clock on the bedside table.

As it turns from 2:59 to 3:00 AM--

THE BATHROOM FAUCET TURNS ON BY ITSELF.

John remains asleep and unaware, only turning slightly on his pillow.

We move into the bathroom where the water begins to overflow from the sink and pour down onto the bathroom floor. It quickly floods out of the bathroom and into the bedroom where it rises at an unnatural rate.

The water rises up to the bed. When it touches John's body he only moves slightly and it isn't until the water rises up to his face and flows into his nose that he GASPS AWAKE--

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN WATER - **FLASHBACK** - NIGHT

John's body rises to the surface of the stormy turbulent waters, gasping and choking up sea water. He's shivering and struggling to stay afloat.

JOHN

(screams)

Theresa! Christopher!

THERESA

John! Over here!

He turns and his wife stands atop the sailboat that's on the verge of capsizing.

JOHN

I'm coming! Just hold on! Where's Christopher?

CHRISTOPHER

Dad! Help! Help!

John turns and sees his son struggling to stay afloat.

JOHN

I'm coming!

He swims over and retrieves him. When he turns back, the SAIL'S MAIN swings violently from the storm and just as the boat's about to capsize, the sail's main drills THERESA in the head, crushing her skull and sending her into the water.

JOHN (CONT'D)

No!

The boat tips over causing a violent wave that sends her under and releases Christopher from John's grip. John's flustered. He cries looking at Theresa's lifeless body and then around for Christopher.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Christopher! Where are you?

Christopher emerges choking on water.

CHRISTOPHER

Dad! Help! Help!

He swims over and grabs Christopher. They're both weak and shivering from the freezing water. He swims towards the capsized boat until a giant wife travels over and--

CRASHES ATOP THEM.

CUT TO:

INT. CECIL HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

John awakens in the darkness screaming.

JOHN

I've got you, Christopher!

He breaths heavily and turns his head slowly towards the TV that's on.

ON TV

Located in the heart of Downtown Los Angeles, the historic Cecil Hotel will whisk you back in time...

John looks around the room in a panic.

JOHN

No... No... this isn't right. I don't belong here.

He stands up and throws the TV across the room. It smashes.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I don't belong here!!!

A GIRL'S SCREAM is heard from the outside hallway. John turns and walks towards the door. When he looks through the peephole--

ELISA LAM paces across in her red sweatshirt.

ELISA (O.S.)

Mother, no!

John shuts his eyes and tries to gain sanity.

He opens the door and is nearly blinded by the bright fluorescent lights of the hallway.

He walks slowly towards the open elevator door. He can hear breathing from the elevator.

A beat.

Elisa's head darts out the door sending John back in shock.

John trembles in fear trying to shake himself out of this vision. Elisa screams and darts back into the elevator.

John turns in shock as a ghostly apparition of MRS LAM walks slowly down the hallway laughing.

MRS. LAM

Stop fighting it, Elisa. It's only going to make it worse. The time has come.

Mrs. Lam walks directly through John's body.

JOHN

What is this? Why are you doing this?

DOREEN (O.S.)

Is this what you were hoping to see?

John turns. Doreen is standing casually against the wall smoking a joint. John is at a complete loss. He looks at her room: 1400.

JOHN

What is this? Why am I here?

Doreen shrugs.

DOREEN

Because, John. You belong here.

JOHN

I don't belong here. Why is this happening?

DOREEN

Because she's not accepting her fate. And neither are you.

(a beat)

Oh, wait. Her comes my favorite part.

John turns as Mrs. Lam rips Elisa from the elevator and twists her fingers backwards causing Elisa to scream. Elisa tries to fight and her arms twist in the strange contortions from the video.

John's watching as Mrs. Lam walks down the hall with Elisa.

DOREEN (CONT'D)

Go on... Go see what happens to disobedient souls.

Doreen can see that John is terrified.

DOREEN (CONT'D)

Aw, don't be such a sour puss.
You'll learn to love it here... Go
on.

Doreen walks back into her room.

John watches as Mrs. Lam takes Elisa into a room. He follows
after and stands in the doorway of room 1403.

But when he looks in we're transported to--

INT. LAM HOME - VANCOUVER - **FLASHBACK** - DAY

John stands in the sparsely furnished living room as a scared
young Elisa watches from the window as her father leaves for
work. He turns and smiles at her. She waves.

But as the car exits the driveway, Elisa turns in terror as
her mother walks out of the kitchen.

MRS. LAM

Come on now, Elisa. It's time for
your studies.

ELISA

Can't I please go out and play with
the other kids?

MRS. LAM

When are you going to learn that
your purpose is greater than
playing with silly children?

John tries to fight her.

JOHN

What are you doing with her?

He tries to stop her, but his arm merely travels through Mrs
Lam's ghostly body.

Mrs. Lam opens the basement door and walks down with Elisa.
John follows after. He's desperate to understand.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

They reach the end of the stairs and Mrs. Lam reaches under
the washing machine for a key.

She then walks over to a storage shelf which opens. It's merely a decoy for a WOODEN DOOR hidden behind it. Elisa is terrified.

ELISA

No, mother. I don't want to go in there.

MRS. LAM

You need to accept that what's in here is nothing to be afraid of.

She unlocks the wooden door and leads Elisa into the darkness... Slowly, it becomes illuminated from each candle that Mrs. Lam lights. A SATANIC ALTER with a book propped atop it and a large RED PENTAGRAM written on the wall.

Mrs. Lam forces Elisa to kneel before the alter.

JOHN

Stop this! Why are you doing this?

Mrs. Lam begins reading passages in Aramaic and Elisa slowly joins her. Elisa cries but her cries dissolve the deeper she begins to chant with her mother.

MRS. LAM

You see, there's nothing to be afraid of. And when the time comes, you'll be offered as a sacrifice to Him as a gift.

(she turns)

You're the Lam, Elisa. You were chosen by Him.

Elisa doesn't understand she just weeps.

JOHN

Why are you doing this to her! Why?

John steps backwards out of the room but when he steps into the Lam's basement he's--

BACK IN THE HALLWAY OF THE CECIL.

The stairwell door swings open and heavy gust of wind blows in. John turns and sees that it's coming from the open roof doorway.

John walks up and looks out the window where Elisa is standing atop the water tank surrounded by her mother, hooded figures and Doreen.

DOREEN

It's time Elisa. This is everything
you're mother has prepared you for.
It's time for you to sacrifice
yourself for Him.

Doreen raises her hand and the door atop the water tank opens by itself.

John looks over. Elisa turns. Her eyes are black like that of a possessed soul.

She steps inside the tank. Doreen lowers her hand and the door slams shut.

The group begins chanting and they all turn towards John.

DOREEN (CONT'D)

She's done her service for Him. And
soon the time will come for you to
do yours.

JOHN

No... You won't get me.

Doreen laughs mockingly at John.

DOREEN

Go ahead... try and run.

They all turn and laugh.

John turns and enters the stairwell. With everything he has he runs down the winding flights of stairs.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

John races past the front desk. Bill is there.

BILL

Uh, Mr. Brooks. I wouldn't go out
there if I were you. There's been
an outbreak of tuberculosis.

John turns and looks at the hotel entrance that leads into a LARGE PLASTIC QUARANTINE TUBE.

Two men in WHITE HAZMAT SUITS emerge from the white tube.
Their masks are tinted BLACK.

They grab John.

HAZMAT SUIT

Sir you have to come with us to be tested immediately.

They forcefully walk him through the tube where he passes various quarantine rooms. He looks in as the DEFORMED BLACK WOMAN is injected with a needle. Another HAZMAT SUIT takes the needle and places into a BOX labeled **LAM - ELISA**.

JOHN

What is this?

HAZMAT SUIT

It appears that the Lam has finally accepted her fate and there's been a bit of a backlash. Come with us.

They carry him past another room where RONDO is held down as two SCIENTISTS examine his results in the LAM ELISA kit.

SCIENTIST

He's positive. Put him with the others.

JOHN

No, where are you taking him?

They carry him forcefully past John.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Let him go!

Rondo weeps as they carry him off.

A door opens and there's deathly screams of terror as they throw Rondo's body into a large white TENT filled with endless squirming bodies. Rondo tries to break out, but the scientists slam the door shut.

They pull John into another room. They sit him in a chair. The HAZMAT SUITED MAN removes a needle from the LAM ELISA kit and walks towards him.

The tint on the scientist's mask clears revealing the face of the ANDROGENOUS WOMAN.

ANDROGENOUS WOMAN

You had your chance to confess your sins to God. What happens now is out of your control.

She takes the needle and pushes it towards John's arm, but he kicks her back and punches the scientist who's holding him down. He reaches over and grabs a scalpel from the table and cuts a hole through the quarantine tent.

HAZMAT SUIT

He's getting away! Stop him!

John exits the quarantine and sprints down the street away from the large WHITE TENT.

John races around a block and hails a cab. It stops. John gets in.

INT. CAB - DAY

John catches his breath. The driver can see that he's in distress.

DRIVER

Is everything ok?

JOHN

LAX. As fast as possible.
(he looks back at the
quarantine in the
distance)

Now!

The driver drives. John watches as it fades in the distance and looks up one last time at The Cecil Hotel until they turn a corner.

He slouches down in his seat and shuts his eyes in relief.

CUT TO:

INT. LAX BAR - DAY

John sits at the bar drinking a beer as the other traveling patrons look up at the news on the TV. Johns in a total daze.

The news covers the tuberculosis outbreak and shows the tent with multiple men in HAZMAT SUITS walking around.

NEWS CASTER

The Skid Row area of Downtown Los Angeles remains under guarded quarantine in attempts to contain what is now confirmed as the largest tuberculosis outbreak in decades.

John looks up and watches. From the TV it's all very organized and official.

A PARAMEDIC addresses a press conference on the TV.

PARAMEDIC

We believe we have the bulk of the situation contained, but Lam Elisa test will continue to be administered throughout the night. We advise anyone in the downtown area to remain indoors for at least the next twenty four hours.

The bartender looks at the news strange.

BARTENDER

(to waitress)

Wait, what was the name of that girl they found in that water tank downtown?

WAITRESS

Elisa Lam, I think.

Bartender nods.

BARTENDER

That's the name of the kit they use for TB.

(holds up phone)

I just looked it up.

(shakes head)

Spooky.

When we turn onto where John was sitting, he's gone. Only a five dollar bill under his empty beer bottle.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAM HOME - VANCOUVER - DAY

There's a slight rain as John's Range Rover pulls up to the Lam home. He parks and gets out. He walks up to the front door.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

John sits at the table and talks with Gale and Mr. Lam. Gale translates to Mr. Lam in Chinese. John is cleaned up, but he's been through Hell and they can see this.

JOHN

I know you hadn't wanted the investigation to get into matters of the Occult, but I'm afraid there may have been a lot going on with Elisa and her mother than you had been aware of.

John thinks. He sees that Mr. Lam is very confused.

JOHN (CONT'D)

But I believe Elisa did commit suicide and it was because she was carrying with her a great burden that was placed upon her by her mother.

Gale translates and Mr Lam appears to be getting agitated.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. But I have to show you something.

(he stands)
Come with me.

He walks and they follow him reluctantly towards the basement.

GALE

John, what is this?

JOHN

Follow me. Please.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

They reach the end of the stairs and John looks around. It's exactly how it looked in the vision he saw at the hotel.

He looks over and sees the storage shelf and reaches under the washing machine to retrieve a key.

GALE

John?

John simply nods. *Bear with me.*

He walks over and opens the decoy shelf exposing the WOODEN DOOR. Mr. Lam gasps in disbelief.

MR. LAM

What - What is?

John unlocks the wooden door and opens it. They follow him into the darkness. He reaches around and finds a light switch that illuminates the shocked expressions of Gale and Mr Lam.

We turn onto the room.

It's even more elaborate than we had seen. The Alter, endless Satanic imagery along the walls, and a FRAMED PHOTO OF THE CECIL HOTEL which even surprises John.

There's several dismembered animals gathered into ritualistic formations. There's an OPEN BOOK, a Satanic bible of sorts that rest upon an alter where an ancient drawing is open on PAGAN BEASTS dancing around a fire with a young girl on a stake. **THE SACRIFICE OF THE LAM.**

John turns to Gale.

JOHN

I know this doesn't make it any easier, but at least now you know what Elisa was battling. I believe that her mother had been conditioning her perhaps from a very young age to offer her life as a sacrifice. And that she was somehow this... *Lam* that's written about in these texts.

There's a look of frustration on Mr. Lam's face. He starts to break down in tears.

He looks up at John. He's devastated but he nods. *Thank you.*

John nods. He rests his hand upon Mr Lam's shoulder.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm very sorry.

He walks out of the room leaving Gale and Mr. Lam alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - SEATTLE - DAY

Rain falls gently as John stands before two HEAD STONES: **THERESA BROOKS** and **CHRISTOPHER BROOKS**.

Today there are no flashbacks of the accident, only John places flowers in front of each grave.

JOHN

I'm so sorry there wasn't more I could do. I love you both so much.

He nods and turns and walks towards his car.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S FLOATING HOME - DAY

John enters his home. He's returned from a jog. It's a rare sunny Seattle day and John seems to have put the past behind him and seems refreshed.

He retrieves some water from the refrigerator, turns the TV on, and hits the SPEAKER button on his cell phone as he looks out at the sailboats going past on Lake Union.

MESSAGE

(a woman)

Mister Brooks, my name is Jennifer Henries. I was hoping to talk with you about some investigative work I need done--

(John hits next, another message plays)

John, it's Patricia. I ran into Steve Sullivan who said you were back from Los Angeles? I hadn't realized you'd left, but anyway... give me a call. Maybe we can catch up soon.

John considers and forwards to the next message, but it's only static. He forwards to the next message, but the next message is only more static. He deletes the messages and turns when something strikes him as peculiar on the news.

ON TV it's a photo of RICHARD RAMIREZ.

NEWS CASTER

And from California, serial killer, Richard Ramirez who terrorized Los Angeles in the 1980s, died in prison today of liver failure.

A MONTAGE of photos of Ramirez appear on the TV.

NEWS CASTER (CONT'D)

Often the subject of fascination and obsession, Ramirez had several fans and female suitors who would visit him in prison.

(a beat)

He's survived by his wife, Doreen, whom he'd married while incarcerated.

We SLOW PUSH on John's shocked expression. He drops his glass of water onto the floor and it shatters on the ground.

ON TV: A PHOTO of Richard Ramirez and Doreen on their wedding day.

THUD THUD THUD

John turns startled towards the front door. He walks slowly towards it, grabbing a baseball bat.

When he opens the door, nobody is there. He looks down the dock at the mailman who's now walking towards the parking area.

He puts the bat down, retrieves his mail and fishes through it and in the background inside the houseboat--

A FIGURE stands behind him. As he slowly comes into focus we see that it's the PIERCED FACED MAN from the Cecil.

John turns and gasps and when he does he's knocked over the head with the bat and a HYPODERMIC NEEDLE is injected into his neck.

FADE TO BLACK:

WE HEAR THE SOUNDS OF A STORM AND WAVES CRASHING.

EXT. OPEN WATER - **FLASHBACK** - NIGHT

John emerges from the turbulent water holding his son. They're both weak and shivering as John swims towards the capsized boat.

JOHN

I've got you, Christopher. Just hold on.

John reaches the boat and puts his arm onto it. As he tries to climb aboard the underside of the boat, he slides back into the water pulled by the weight of his son.

CHRISTOPHER
Dad, don't leave me!

JOHN
(teeth chattering)
Christopher, when I get up there,
I'll be able to pull you up. But
you have to let me get up there
first.

John again tries to get up onto the boat, but is pulled back into the water by Christopher who holds onto him tightly.

CHRISTOPHER
Dad, no! You can't leave me!

JOHN
You have to let me get onto the
boat first!

He releases Christopher and again tries to get up onto the boat, but Christopher's arms remain tightly wrapped around John pulling him back down, sliding down the underside of the boat and this time--

THEY'RE BOTH PULLED UNDER.

John tries to swim up with everything he has but his son won't let go... John sees something and screams under water.

Theresa's dead body floats in front of him... blood pouring out of her head.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(underwater scream)
Noooooooooooooo!!!!

He tries to swim back up but Christopher won't let go. Christopher continues to pull him down and John can't swim to the surface.

John shuts his eyes and puts his hand over Christopher's nose and mouth holding it there until his son's body releases and floats to the bottom of the ocean.

John looks up and as he swims to the surface he sees what look like a circle of flames, or perhaps flares from a rescue, but when he swims up and emerges--

CUT TO:

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

We're on John's face as he gasps for air, but as we pull up we see that he's tied to a WOODEN TABLE atop a large RED SATANIC PENTAGRAM drawn on the floor. He's surrounded by lit candles.

He looks around and is surrounded by HOODED FIGURES. They are the PIERCED FACED MAN... THE JUNKY COUPLE with eyes and mouths sewn shut... BILL from the front desk... REGGIE... and other familiar faces that he's passed throughout his journey into the Cecil.

JOHN

No... No... please...

The group turns as another HOODED FIGURE enters the circle and removes her hood.

It's DOREEN.

DOREEN

Welcome back, John. Did you miss me?

JOHN

No... this can't be happening.

She motions over to a PHOTO of Richard Ramirez on an alter.

DOREEN

But it is happening. Your time has come.

JOHN

(screams)

Please, God, I'm sorry!

They all laugh.

DOREEN

It's far too late for that. You had your chance to confess your sins, but as we'd all expected, you were too weak.

JOHN

No. I didn't kill my son. You don't understand, I didn't have a choice. We couldn't both survive.

They all start laughing. Doreen shakes her head.

DOREEN

It's ok, John. There's a darkness inside of you and you don't need to fight it anymore.

She removes her robe revealing her naked body.

DOREEN (CONT'D)

It's time for you to offer yourself to a greater Power.

She gets atop the table and puts her head atop his naked lap and moves it up and down in order to get John ready. John tilts his head back and tries to fight with what little he has left.

JOHN

Please... please...

She gets atop him and begins to move her body up and down tilting her head back and moaning with pleasure as she looks over at the alter at Richard Ramirez.

The group begins their ritualistic chanting.

Doreen looks down at John. Her eyes roll back into her head and this time speaks in an Aramaic tongue in the voice of the ANDROGENOUS WOMAN.

DOREEN

(with subtitles)

Take this body, oh Dark One, to continue your work here on Earth.

The chanting gets louder and more powerful as Doreen rides atop Johns body more violently. She screams in great pleasure. When she looks down at John, something changes in his expression and when he opens his eyes--

THEY'RE RED.

John looks down at the palm of his right hand and as if cut from within the lines of a PENTAGRAM form. John begins laughing and moaning in pleasure as well.

We pan over onto where the photo of Ramirez was on the alter, but he's left the photo. It's blank.

John now has the strength to break free from the ropes, but rather than fight, he rubs the blood from his hand over Doreen's naked breasts and we pull up over the ritual and--

TRANSPOSE through the ceiling and into the lobby of The Cecil Hotel above.

We move out the front door, up over the red neon sign, rising higher until we're atop looking down at the THREE WATER TANKS on the roof and the lights of Los Angeles in the distance.

CUT TO BLACK.

SILENCE IN THE DARKNESS.

EXT. CECIL HOTEL - FADE IN - DAY

FROM THE POV of a handheld VIDEO CAMERA, three girls step out of a taxi.

GIRL HOLDING CAMERA (O.S.)
(pointing up at the Cecil)
And here we are at The Cecil Hotel.
As you can see the Cecil Hotel
signs are gone and it's called Stay
on Main. Still the same building
though.

The camera points at the new sign atop the entrance STAY ON MAIN. NEW MANAGEMENT.

She turns the camera at her friend who is not so enthusiastic.

GIRL 2
I cannot believe we're actually
doing this.

GIRL HOLDING CAMERA (O.S.)
Oh, come on, it's gonna' be awesome
and just think how many people are
gonna' watch this movie we're
making if we pick up any trippy
shit.

They enter the hotel.

INT. CECIL HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

The girl's camera passes by some young travelers playing ping pong and the entire lobby has more of a fun hostel type feel.

She turns the camera on her friend.

GIRL HOLDING CAMERA
What do you think, Denise?
(mock scary voice)
Can you feel the spirit of Elisa
Lam?

GIRL 2

(laughs)

Get that off me. And just-- stop recording until we get upstairs.

They laugh as they walk through the hotel and approach BILL at the check in desk.

BILL

(smiles)

Welcome to Stay On Main.

When they arrive at the desk, she sets the camcorder down. It's now turned sideways on the front desk and pointed towards a JANITOR mopping the floor next to the elevator.

The girls finish their exchange with Bill.

GIRL HOLDING CAMERA

Ok, thanks, Bill.

She takes the camera and they walk.

GIRL 2

That guy was kinda' cute.

As they pass the janitor, she videotapes the back of his brown scraggly hair.

GIRL HOLDING CAMERA

(under breath)

Think he's a ghost?

They chuckle and they walk towards the elevator.

The door opens and the girls get in. When she turns--

THE CAMERA IS DIRECTLY ON THE JANITOR'S FACE.

IT'S THE FACE OF JOHN BROOKS.

But something has changed. His gaze is psychotic and powerful ala Richard Ramirez.

The girl gasps.

GIRL HOLDING CAMERA (CONT'D)

Oh, my, close the door, that guy is creeping me out.

She puts the camera onto her friend pressing the button.

GIRL HOLDING CAMERA (CONT'D)

Come on, shut the door.

She moves the camera back onto John.

But he's gone.

The elevator door closes.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.

(CONT'D)