



Brittany Kahan Ward
Trent Hubbard
Echo Lake Entertainment
(310) 789-4790

We open on **BLACK**.

The SOUNDS of the early 1960's cut in and out of a staticky LIVE RADIO SIGNAL with talk of atomic bombs and nuclear annihilation, racism and segregation - a world divided, falling apart - being eroded by fear and hate.

The radio signal finally lands on Linda Scott's saccharine but eerie pop love song, "I've Told Every Little Star".

Light begins to dot the darkness and we realize we are in SPACE... Speeding through the universe... Stars growing brighter and brighter, more and more luminous, until we find:

The Planet Earth.

We glide down through the atmosphere, descending through the clear NIGHT SKY... We see mountains and treetops, lights from distant cities... Until we finally spot the only sign of life for miles:

A lonely 1957 Chevy Bel Air cruising along the dark, rural roads - a *JUST MARRIED* SIGN taped to the rear window.

The love song dreamily wafts from the car as it heads towards the White Mountains looming ahead in the distance...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. 1957 CHEVY BEL AIR - WHITE MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

A debonair black man in his early 30's, BARNEY HILL, drives his new bride, BETTY HILL (30's), vibrant, charmingly self-assured, and white, down a dark, narrow mountain road.

She sings along to the love song playing on the radio.

BETTY
(playfully, to Barney)
Friends ask me, "Am I in love?"

Her voice is awful - loud, and out-of-tune - but she sings with pure, unfettered joy.

Barney chuckles to himself. Loving her. She comes in close.

BETTY (CONT'D)
I always answer, "Yes".

BARNEY
(laughs)
Okay, stop!

Betty turns down the radio, laughing.

BETTY
I'm not that bad!

BARNEY
(grins)
It's pretty bad.

BETTY
Why are you so mean?! I was
serenading you!

Betty spots a lonely MOTEL up ahead on the side of the road.
One light on.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Should we get a room? It's getting
late.

Barney notices TWO WHITE MEN standing outside the motel
staring at them... Glaring at the black man with a white
woman.

One of them - a red-headed man - grins at Barney eerily with
hate in his eyes. *They're not welcome here.*

Barney looks off, unsettled.

BARNEY
Let's just keep going, we'll make
it home by 3am.

BETTY
(playfully)
I just thought we wanted to enjoy
the trip home, that's all. But if
you're in a hurry to get it over
with...

Barney laughs back, looks into her eyes for a moment.

BARNEY
(smiles)
I want this to last forever.

BETTY
(smiles back)
Me too.

Barney wraps his arm around Betty as she leans her head on
his shoulder, gazing up at the BRILLIANT NIGHT SKY.

They pass a rock formation, INDIAN HEAD – that looks like a man's face chiseled in the stone, staring down at them.

Suddenly, Betty sees A *BRIGHT LIGHT SPARKLE ACROSS THE SKY*. She grabs Barney's arm.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Look, a shooting star!

Barney swerves slightly, grips the wheel tighter. He finally glances over, but quickly gets his eyes back on the road.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Oh, would you relax. Just look at it!

Betty watches as the star shoots past the face of the moon then – STOPS – like it's frozen, staring back at them.

Betty crinkles her eyes, confused and fascinated by it – **it's strangely Tic-Tac shaped.**

BETTY (CONT'D)
What is that?

Barney side-eyes it again.

BARNEY
Probably just a satellite.

The radio frequency starts to go in and out. Barney fiddles with it, but we are now just in the silence of the night.

He takes in the darkness of the place. They are in the middle of nowhere. All alone.

Suddenly, Betty watches as the satellite – or star, or whatever it is – starts bouncing around, like a ball on a string bouncing wildly on a paddle. No rhyme or reason, not human in logic or technology.

BETTY
That is not a satellite, Barney.
Look at it! What does that?

Barney finally peers out the window as the object bounces strangely across the night sky.

BETTY (CONT'D)
It's a flying saucer, isn't it?

BARNEY

Probably just a piper cub, it's a seaplane the hunters use on the lakes out here.

Barney eyes it again, curiously, as it appears in one spot and then reappears somewhere else in the blink of an eye. It's unreal.

Suddenly, a CAR'S HIGH BEAMS illuminate them harshly from behind. Barney winces through his rearview mirror.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

(unsettled)

What's this guy doing?

He adjusts his jaw, nervously, then puts his hand out the window, motioning for them to "go around".

The car stays on them for a tense beat, then finally starts to pass – but instead of *passing by them*, it PASSES OVER THEM.

-- *It's not a car, it's the aircraft!*

Barney recoils as the MOST INTENSE, BRIGHT LIGHT IMAGINABLE blasts through their windshield. He slams on the brakes, BLINDED BY THE LIGHT, as the aircraft now HOVERS in front of them. **Watching them.**

Barney shrinks back, keeping his eyes **TIGHTLY CLOSED** as Betty stares into the radiance of the bright light, awestruck.

MULTI-COLORED LIGHTS begin to FLASH across Betty's face. She gazes up, hypnotized and lost in them.

But suddenly, the LIGHTS GO OUT.

A long, eerie beat of **PURE DARKNESS – AS THE SCREEN GOES BLACK...**

Suddenly, the car pops back up – Barney and Betty drive towards us, both looking a bit off and disheveled:

- Betty's BAUBLE EARRINGS are gone.
- Barney's hair and shirt are ruffled.

And they're both strangely gazing our way. Somnambulistic.

BETTY

(smiles, dreamily)

Well, Barney, now do you believe in flying saucers?

BARNEY
(chuckles, dazed)
Oh, don't be ridiculous, Betty.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - BARNEY AND BETTY'S HOME - AFTERNOON

Betty gasps awake from a nightmare. She peers over to find that Barney's still asleep.

We notice BARNEY'S TEETH IN A GLASS OF WATER on the nightstand. She nudges him.

BETTY
Barney, you're gonna be late for work.

Barney slowly pushes himself out of bed.

KITCHEN

Barney, now in a Postal Uniform, makes his way in to find breakfast on the table and Betty making coffee.

BARNEY
(heads to the table)
Man, I'm exhausted... How the hell did we get in so late last night?

No answer from Betty. He turns to find her staring eerily out the window, skyward. Barney watches her curiously.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
Betty?

She snaps out of it, passes him a cup of coffee as she sits next to him at the breakfast table.

BETTY
What do you think that was last night, Barn?

Barney sits there silently for a beat. Digs into his breakfast.

BARNEY
(perplexed)
I don't know...
(MORE)

BARNEY (CONT'D)

We live right next to Pease Air Force Base, they were probably testing out a new military plane... Must have been some cocky pilot messing with us.

BETTY

It was just so strange. I can't get it out of my head... You really don't think it could have been a flying saucer?

BARNEY

(chuckles)

No, I don't think it was a flying saucer.

Betty stares out the window.

BETTY

Maybe we should report it?

BARNEY

Report it? To whom?

BETTY

I don't know, the Air Force Base?

BARNEY

(laughs)

Oh, Betty, please.

BETTY

What if it was the Russians? Or an enemy spy plane? Or yes, something out of this world? We don't know. We have to report it, Barney. Don't you want to know what in the hell that thing was?

Barney smiles at her. Not taking any of this seriously.

Betty picks up the phone, ignoring him. Dials the Operator.

BETTY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Pease Air Force Base, please.

Barney shakes his head, finding this whole thing amusing.

BETTY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Yes, we wanted to report something we saw... Um, yes, Betty Hill...

(MORE)

BETTY (CONT'D)
 953 State St, Portsmouth... Well,
 yes, we saw something in the air.
 Something strange...
 (reluctant to say)
 Like a flying saucer.

We hear laughter from the other line. Betty's face drops.

Barney smiles broadly at her. *Told you so.*

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN ROOM - SOUTH BOSTON POSTAL ANNEX - NIGHT SHIFT

Barney leads a bustling assembly-line. A rotating conveyor belt sorts thousands of pieces of US mail as BLACK POSTAL WORKERS buzz about the floor in perfect synchronicity.

Barney talks with his buddy, CLARENCE (30s), black, pudgy and affable, as he organizes an overflowing bin.

CLARENCE
 I'm telling you, this Cassius guy
 has a chance.

BARNEY
 Over Sonny Liston? The kid's lucky
 to even be in the ring with him.

CLARENCE
 He's gonna be the heavyweight
 champion, man, I'm telling you. I
 gotta feeling. I'm putting
 everything I got on him.

BARNEY
 (laughs)
 Well, then you're crazy. It's 7-to-
 1 odds for a reason.

CLARENCE
 Mark my words: Heavy. Weight.
Champion.

BARNEY
 (laughs)
 I'll believe it when I see it.

Barney heads off to the Copy Room, looks over his shoulder to make sure no one's coming. Clarence keeps watch.

MAIN PRINT/COPY ROOM

Barney prints out FLYERS on the industrial copy machine:

EVERY AMERICAN HAS A RIGHT TO FAIR HOUSING

NAACP, New Hampshire Chapter.

Meetings Every Wednesday, 5 p.m.

Rockingham Hotel, Portsmouth

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. NAACP MEETING - ROCKINGHAM HOTEL - PORTSMOUTH - DAY

Barney stands at a podium speaking passionately to a room of NAACP MEMBERS as stacks of the NAACP FOR FAIR HOUSING FLYERS are passed out.

Clarence stands behind him, holding a MAP OF PORTSMOUTH WITH PINNED LOCATIONS.

Betty, the Secretary of the NAACP, sits at a typewriter and records the minutes of the meeting.

BARNEY

(to crowd, mid-speech)

Any one of color should be able to rent or buy, in any neighborhood, just like any other American!

The crowd nods.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

No longer will we put up with being second class citizens in a country that purports every man to be free!

The crowd erupts into applause, enamored by him.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

(points to the map)

Now, there are twenty-two apartment buildings within the city of Portsmouth, we'll need to document everything ourselves until we can get the news stations out there. Let's build a case they can't ignore!

As Betty types, we notice something catch her eye out the window: **a strange blinking light in the distance**, hovering far off in the sky.

She stares at it, transfixed, but then snaps out of it.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

We'll get these racists on the television, let the public's conscious tell them if this is right or wrong!

The crowd stands and applauds. Ebullient.

EXT. STREETS - PORTSMOUTH - DAY

Barney and Clarence sit in a parked car listening to the RADIO. They keep glancing over at an APARTMENT BUILDING across the street, waiting for something.

We catch the end of the RADIO PROGRAM, then a PSA:

RADIO ANNOUNCER
(overly charming)
Always try to remember what to do
if an atomic bomb explodes.

Barney looks on, disturbed.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
(saccharine)
Sundays, holidays, vacation times,
we must be ready everyday, all the
time, to do the right thing if the
atomic bomb explodes.

We hear a BOMB EXPLODE. Barney winces. *Like it's affected him on another level.*

RADIO ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
(dramatically)
"It's a bomb! Duck and Cover!"

THREE WOMEN sweetly sing the chorus "Duck and Cover" - it sounds like a commercial jingle.

Suddenly, Clarence nudges Barney, waking him up to Betty across the street - walking arm in arm with a WHITE MAN - as a REALTOR leads them out of the building.

CLARENCE
Here we go.

Barney and Clarence exit the car, heading in opposite directions.

Barney waves at Betty as he trots her way.

BARNEY
Betty! Michael!

Betty squints, trying to figure out who's calling to her.

BETTY
(“surprised”)
Barney? Hi, how are you?!

They hug like they are acquaintances. The Realtor looks around, uncomfortable with this whole display.

BARNEY
(smiles to Betty)
What are you doing here?

BETTY
We're looking for an apartment.

BARNEY
Oh, really? My wife and I are actually looking for an apartment ourselves. How is it?

BETTY
Well, it's beautiful but we need something bigger with the kids and all. But you should look at it since you're already here?

BARNEY
(smiles)
Oh, what a good idea-

REALTOR
(ruffled)
It was actually just rented – as we were leaving. I'm sorry.

Betty turns, “confused”.

BETTY
But, we just saw it?

REALTOR
They called while you were looking at it.

BETTY
You never took a phone call?

The Realtor stands there awkwardly, trying to figure out how to best handle this situation. Finally, the Realtor explains:

REALTOR
This is a *white* neighborhood. I'm sorry, but we just don't rent to Negroes.

We notice CLARENCE SURREPTITIOUSLY FILMING THEM WITH AN 8MM CAMERA from across the street.

CUT TO:

INT. 1957 CHEVY BEL AIR - PORTSMOUTH STREETS - EVENING

Barney and Betty drive home. Betty sits in the passenger seat making a shopping list.

BETTY
Milk, eggs, butter... Anything you want?

BARNEY
Yeah, get a few jars of Vienna Sausages.

Betty cringes, laughs.

BETTY
Barney, that's disgusting. I'm not buying you Vienna Sausages.

BARNEY
(laughs)
What? They're delicious, and cheap. That's all I used to eat. Just a couple jars of them bad boys, some saltines and a cold coke. That was breakfast, lunch and dinner.

BETTY
(laughs back)
Well, you're not a bachelor anymore, Barney. We can do better than that.

They pull up to find a strange car in their driveway. TWO MEN IN BLUE MILITARY SUITS walk towards them.

PROJECT BLUE BOOK AGENT #1
Mr. and Mrs. Hill?

Barney nods. Curious.

PROJECT BLUE BOOK AGENT #1 (CONT'D)
We're with the Air Force with a
special unit called Project Blue
Book - we handle unidentified
crafts... You filed a report?

Betty turns to Barney, elated.

INT. LIVING ROOM - BARNEY AND BETTY'S HOME - DAY

The two Agents sit across from Barney and Betty, taking in their report. We notice a pillow with *HOME SWEET HOME* stitched across it sitting on a chair.

BETTY
(mid-conversation)
Jumping in erratic patterns, and it
was completely silent, like it
wasn't manmade.

Barney can tell they are taking none of this seriously.

PROJECT BLUE BOOK AGENT #1
And where exactly would you say you
saw this? How far north?

BETTY
I'd say about a little over an hour
north, by Indian Head.

They jot that down.

BETTY (CONT'D)
(remembering)
Oh, and, I just noticed my bauble
earrings have been missing ever
since.

PROJECT BLUE BOOK AGENT #1
Your earrings?

Betty nods, he writes it down in his pad.

PROJECT BLUE BOOK AGENT #1 (CONT'D)
Anything else? After the craft
disappeared, did you see it again?

BETTY
(sits there)

Well, I don't remember... I mean, that's what's so strange, we don't remember anything after that. All we can recall is coming inside our house-

BARNEY
I think we were just exhausted.

PROJECT BLUE BOOK AGENT #1
(turns to Barney)
And you saw all this too, Mr. Hill?
What are your thoughts?

BARNEY
(gets uncomfortable)
Well, yes, it was something strange, possibly some new military craft, I don't know. But I know there's some kind of rational explanation.

PROJECT BLUE BOOK AGENT #2
(smiles)
It was swamp gas.

BETTY
Swamp gas?

PROJECT BLUE BOOK AGENT #2
The swamp emits gas into the air and it can obstruct peripheral vision. What you saw was a craft, a military craft, like you said, but the gas was obstructing your view of it and gave it that jumping effect. We get these calls all the time, especially out there in the mountains.

BETTY
But then why did it chase us? It was like it was watching us.

The Agents smile at her, patronizingly. Like she's crazy.

BETTY (CONT'D)
(exasperated)
I'm telling you something happened out there- It was right in front of us, hovering, shining lights on us.
(MORE)

BETTY (CONT'D)
It wasn't "swamp gas"- I'm not some
nut-

The Agents stare back. Barney gets uncomfortable, tries to
kill the tension in the air:

BARNEY
(laughs)
I think my wife's just watched one
too many episodes of *The Twilight
Zone*.

The Agents laugh. Betty stares at Barney, not amused.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry to waste your time,
Officers.

As they exit, Agent #1 pats Betty on the shoulder.

PROJECT BLUE BOOK AGENT #1
Just a bit of swamp gas, Ma'am. I
assure you, you're safe from any
"little green men".

Everyone laughs. Betty does not. Barney closes the door then
turns to Betty.

BARNEY
Now, are we done with this
nonsense? I'd like to get back to
our lives now.

Betty sighs. Defeated.

CUT TO:

INT. BARNEY AND BETTY'S HOME - MORNING

We hear the front door close, Betty looks out the window to
see Barney in his Postal Uniform heading to his truck.

As soon as he drives off, Betty walks out the door - on a
mission.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - PORTSMOUTH - MORNING

Betty makes her way through the streets of Portsmouth,
passing brightly colored clapboard homes, old lobster shacks,
and cobblestone streets - a charming, historic New England
town.

Suddenly, Betty looks around, **feeling watched**. A strange **humming sound** begins to pulse in her brain.

She starts feeling disoriented. Notices something **UP IN THE SKY, FLASHING MULTI-COLORED LIGHTS** down at her.

Betty stares off at it, trance-like. Like she's hypnotized. -- But suddenly, she snaps out of it, disoriented.

She looks around at other Pedestrians passing by. *Why doesn't anyone else see this?*

She spots the Portsmouth Public Library across the street, heads that way.

INT. PORTSMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY - AFTERNOON

Betty is led over to the Science section. She scans the titles until she comes across a book that will change her life forever: *THE FLYING SAUCER CONSPIRACY*.

She hurriedly flips through the book – totally mesmerized – until she stops on a chapter:

The Project Blue Book Cover Up

Betty stares at the page – mind blown.

CUT TO:

Betty sits at a desk, deeply engrossed, reading reports from pilots who have witnessed strange, unexplained crafts.

She finally comes to:

A DRAWING OF A TIC-TAC SHAPED CRAFT

– That eerily looks just like what she saw.

She stares at it, astonished. *It's real...*

She finally turns to the last page:

IF YOU OR ANYONE YOU KNOW HAS SIGHTED A FLYING SAUCER, PLEASE REPORT TO:

NICAP - National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena
962 Monticello Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Betty stares at the address. She rifles through her purse, finds a piece of paper and an envelope.

Starts writing, feverishly.

EXT. MAILBOX - DOWNTOWN PORTSMOUTH - DAY

As Betty slips the letter into a MAILBOX she spots a GROUP OF FIREMEN, all uniformed in their YELLOW JACKETS.

Her face drops at one of the OLDER FIREMEN.

BETTY

Dad?!

He turns to her, a flash of warmth and longing in his eyes. *He's missed her.* But then he remembers...

He glances around at the other Firemen then quickly looks the other way, pretending he doesn't know her.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Dad!

He hurries the other direction, away from her.

BETTY (CONT'D)

DAD!

Betty gapes back, desperately... But he's GONE.

Off her devastated face, we:

CUT TO:

INT. THE BALLET - STAGE - NIGHT

A MALE AND FEMALE BALLERINA daintily dance the Pas-de-Deux.

A formal, elegant crowd stands, staring on. Betty, in a gown, rushes in, late. She tries her best to elbow her way through the thick crowd, but it's grueling - almost impossible.

She spots Barney watching the show. She tries her best to quietly get to him, but the farther along she gets, the farther away he is.

People smugly turn their backs to her. Blocking her, shushing her. Finally, the ballet dancers **stop the show and stare at her.** An eerie silence.

BETTY

I'm sorry, I must have lost track
of time.

The ballet dancers **stare at her coldly**. Inspecting her.
Judging her.

Betty's skin begins to crawl as she notices the ballerina's faces: They look human, but not. **Their noses are longer, eyes wider, mouths twisted in a strange grimace.**

It's terrifying.

Betty puts her hand over her mouth. She turns to the crowd, who have now all turned her way - silently **staring at her** with uncanny, distorted faces.

BETTY (CONT'D)

What do you want from me? *What is happening??*

She turns to Barney, who stares at her icily. Like he hates her. *Detests her. Loathes her.*

BARNEY

(eerily)

Deliver the message.

BETTY

What? What message?

Blood begins to seep from his eyes.

BARNEY

You will know when you need to
know.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - BARNEY AND BETTY'S HOME - EARLY MORNING

Betty lurches from the intense nightmare. Dripping sweat.

She looks for Barney in bed, but he's gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAILER PARK - OUTSIDE PEASE AIR FORCE BASE - DAY

Clarence films Barney taking a report from a BLACK PILOT, a MOBILE HOME in the background. We notice an AIR FIELD WITH PLANES in the distance behind the Trailer Park.

BLACK PILOT

I called them, booked the trailer,
but then when I pulled up, he told
me to leave. He said he didn't
realize I was a Negro over the
phone... He rents to everyone in
the Air Force, where am I supposed
to go?

A WHITE LANDLORD stares at them from a trailer, annoyed at
the black people gathered on his property.

LANDLORD

Can I help you?

Barney smiles his way.

BARNEY

We're here from the NAACP, just
taking a report.

The Landlord laughs.

LANDLORD

Oh no, is he reporting me to the
NAACP? Am I gonna go to NAACP jail?

BARNEY

Is it true he asked to rent from
you and you refused because he was
a Negro?

LANDLORD

(eyes him)

Yes, I did. And that's my right as
an American.

Barney eyes him silently. The Landlord pats him.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)

Look, I have nothing against you
people. You mix coloreds and whites
in the same neighborhood, it just
leads to problems. It goes both
ways - you don't want intermarrying
between races either. Just leads to
problems down the line, am I right?

Clarence waits for Barney to tell him off, but Barney stays
quiet.

CUT TO:

INT. BARNEY AND BETTY'S HOME - DAY

Betty hears a KNOCK AT THE DOOR, straightens herself and answers the door to find ROBERT E. HOHMANN (50s) - portly and nervous - and C.D. JACKSON (late 30's) - rail thin and overly-serious.

ROBERT HOHMANN (O.S.)
Hello, Mrs. Betty Hill?

BETTY
Yes?

ROBERT HOHMANN (O.S.)
I'm Robert Hohmann, with NICAP: The National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena.

A beat as Betty realizes.

ROBERT HOHMANN (CONT'D)
We received your letter last week - about your sighting?

BETTY
(hesitant)
Yes?

ROBERT HOHMANN (O.S.)
Well, it intrigued us. Very much. We receive letters all the time, but your letter was different. We discussed it at our last meeting and we all agreed there was something to your experience... Something worth investigating.

BETTY
... Oh?

ROBERT HOHMANN (O.S.)
Would it be possible for us to talk to you for a few moments?

Betty looks down the block, apprehensively.

CUT TO:

INT. CLARENCE'S CAR - EVENING

Clarence drives Barney home listening to the *Cassius Clay vs. Sonny Liston* fight on the radio. Engrossed.

BRITISH BOXING ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 And now the signs come for the
 beginning of the 7th round.

We hear the staticky crowd in the background, then a BELL-
 Suddenly: THE CROWD ERUPTS INTO PANDEMONIUM!

BRITISH BOXING ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (awestruck)
 AND WHAT'S HAPPENED??!... CLAY HAS
 WON! CLAY HAS WON!!

Barney looks over at Clarence, dumbfounded.

BRITISH BOXING ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED IN LISTON'S
 CORNER, THEY'RE NOT GOING ON - AND
 CASSIUS CLAY HAS WON AFTER SIX
 ROUNDS!

Barney cheers. Unbelievable! Clarence stares on, stunned.

BRITISH BOXING ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 CASSIUS CLAY IS THE CHAMPION OF THE
 WORLD!

Clarence turns off the radio.

BARNEY
 My man! Congratulations! How much
 you win?

Clarence stares straight ahead. Sick to his stomach.

CLARENCE
 (quietly)
 Nothing... I didn't bet on him.

BARNEY
 What? Why? -

CLARENCE
 (breaks)
 Because you told me not to!

They pull up to Barney's house. Barney looks over at Clarence, holding back tears. Barney stifles a laugh.

BARNEY
 I'm sorry.

CLARENCE
 Man, get outta my car.

Barney chuckles and exits, but as he does he notices a strange car parked in front of his house.

INT. BETTY AND BARNEY'S HOME - EVENING

Barney enters to find two odd looking men in wrinkled suits sitting on their couch.

BETTY (O.S.)
(animated, mid-
conversation)

Who knows, one day we could be
beaming up invisible signals to
space to communicate and there
won't even be phone lines.

Robert smiles back broadly. Shakes his head.

ROBERT HOHMANN
(respectfully)
We seem to be on the same page with
all our views, Betty.

Betty notices Barney enter. She jumps up. *Caught.*

BETTY
Barney!

Barney makes his way in, rattled, takes in the strange men
Betty has brought into their home.

Both of the men stand up.

BETTY (CONT'D)
(introduces)
This is my husband, Barney Hill.

They shake his hand.

BETTY (CONT'D)
These gentlemen just stopped by.
They're from NICAP - a committee
that studies unexplained aerial
phenomena.

He narrows his eyes at Betty. *What?*

BETTY (CONT'D)
It's based in Washington, DC.

Barney stares off at Betty. Disturbed.

ROBERT HOHMANN

We are an organization made up of some of the finest minds in the country that all have a shared interest in these unidentified crafts finally being taken seriously – strictly from a scientific perspective.

No reaction from Barney. The men smile back, feeling the awkwardness in the room.

BETTY

(excited)

Robert and C.D. both work for IBM, on the supercomputers.

Robert smiles humbly.

Barney eyes the disheveled men. There's a goofiness about them. They're either brilliant – or complete crackpots.

BARNEY

Well, I'm sorry to interrupt your meeting, but I came home early to get ready-

BETTY

Oh, yes!

(proudly, to NICAP Members)

Barney is being celebrated tonight by the Civil Rights Commission – they're throwing a viewing party for him, he's gonna be on the television this evening.

C.D. JACKSON

That's amazing.

ROBERT HOHMANN

Congratulations.

Barney smiles back graciously, but ready to be rid of them.

ROBERT HOHMANN (CONT'D)

That's one of the main reasons we're here. Not only does the sighting you experienced have a truly scientific plausibility, but you are both upstanding citizens of society. You should see some of the people we get reports from.

(quips)

Kooks and crackpots.

Barney just smiles, he's not going to participate in this conversation. Robert gets the hint.

ROBERT HOHMANN (CONT'D)

Well, we won't keep you any longer.
We would love to interview you,
Barney... At a later time, of
course-

BARNEY

Oh yes, I will be sure to contact
you when things aren't so busy.

ROBERT HOHMANN

Yes, of course.

The Men make their way out, but Robert turns.

ROBERT HOHMANN (CONT'D)

Just one thing, Mr. Hill. When we
were talking with Betty, she
mentioned that on the night of the
sighting, you both arrived home
from Montreal at 5am.

Barney stands there. So?

ROBERT HOHMANN (CONT'D)

Well, if you left Montreal at
8pm, you should have arrived back
in Portsmouth around 3am, at the
latest. That leaves at least two
hours unaccounted for. Do you
recall why it took you so long to
get home that night?

BARNEY

(a bit flustered)

Well, we were going slow, down the
mountain.

ROBERT HOHMANN

Yes, we accounted for that. We
mapped the trip at 15mph, to be
safe, and that would still put you
two hours behind... That's a period
of two hours during your trip home
that neither one of you can recall.
Any other reason you can think of?

Barney stands there at a loss, trying to make sense out of
it. Betty notices...

CUT TO:

INT. CIVIL RIGHTS SUPPORTER'S GRAND HOME - NIGHT

A party is in full swing. Betty, Barney and Clarence stand in front of the TELEVISION, watching, as WELL-DRESSED PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS crowd around wearing BUTTONS: *VOTE LBJ.*

ON TELEVISION:

Barney is being interviewed by a TELEVISION REPORTER. Betty and Clarence stand behind him. A Chyron reads: *Barney Hill, NAACP Legal Redress Chairman.*

BARNEY
(speaking to Reporter)
There are no federal enforcement provisions and we are here to show this is still a major issue that needs support from the US federal government. We need a Fair Housing Civil Rights Act – immediately.

Barney and MEMBERS OF THE NAACP walk a picket line, holding signs: *NAACP FOR FAIR HOUSING.*

BARNEY (CONT'D)
(on television)
We have tried to meet with Mr. Arthur Wilcox, President of the National Association of Realtors, to discuss this issue but he refuses to talk to us. This is why it is of great importance that we vote LBJ this coming election, as we still have a great amount of work to do in this country when it comes to human rights.

The program CUTS to the Television Reporter standing in front of an APARTMENT BUILDING.

TELEVISION REPORTER
Mr. Barney Hill led a coalition that shed light on rampant housing discrimination against the Negro community at twenty-two apartment buildings within the city limits of Portsmouth. Their report went all the way to the Governor of New Hampshire.

The party cheers and congratulates Barney. Betty squeezes his arm, so proud of him.

TELEVISION REPORTER (CONT'D)

Proving how pervasive racism and discrimination still are in the North - this is not just a Southern issue.

As the program ends, some SILVER-HAIRED DEMOCRATS shake Barney's hand. Clarence introduces Barney to SENATOR HUTCHISON (late 40's), sharp and congenial.

CLARENCE

Barney, this is Senator Hutchison, who I volunteered for? I thought it would be good if you two met.

Barney nods, shakes his hand.

SENATOR HUTCHISON

(privately)

You're doing some great work, Mr. Hill.

BARNEY

Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR HUTCHISON

The Governor's been paying close attention to the progress you've been making down here... He has something in mind for you, if you're interested?

Barney eyes him. Intrigued.

SENATOR HUTCHISON (CONT'D)

How would you and your team like to take the lead on Fair Housing with the Civil Rights Commission for the state of New Hampshire?

Barney beams.

BARNEY

(smiles)

We would be honored, Sir. Thank you.

He pats Barney on the back.

SENATOR HUTCHISON

We'll be in touch.

As he strides off, Barney overhears:

BETTY (O.S.)
 I'd say bigger than a commercial
 aircraft, I'd say double the size.

Barney turns to find Betty, drink in hand, still buzzing from her meeting with NICAP, talking with GENERAL MACDONALD – ramrod posture, Air Force regalia flanking his collar.

A GROUP OF PARTYGOERS listen on, incredulous, but amused.

BETTY (CONT'D)
 You've never heard of a pilot
 seeing anything strange like this
 before?

Barney's face drops. Dumbfounded. *Is she really talking about this here?*

He quickly heads to the group, smiling, and gently grabs Betty's elbow, trying to get control of the situation.

PARTY-GOER
 (quips)
 Hey Barney, seen any aliens
 lately?!

Barney laughs back, trying to take it in stride.

BARNEY
 (laughs)
 I think Betty's been watching one
 too many episodes of *The Twilight
 Zone*.

They all laugh.

BETTY
 Why do you keep saying that?- I've
 never seen that show in my life-

BARNEY
 Well, we've gotta be up early
 tomorrow-

MALE PARTY-GOER
 (playfully)
 Oh, come on, we want to hear more
 about the spaceship, Betty!

BETTY
 Well, the strangest part is, my
 earrings have been missing ever
 since-

The crowd's loving it.

FEMALE PARTY-GOER

(jokes)

So, you're saying this alien met you in the middle of nowhere, stole your stuff and left you in the dust? Sounds like my last date!

Everyone roars laughing. Barney watches all this embarrassed.

We go into QUICK CUTS OF CLOSE UPS from Barney's POV:

- The crowd LAUGHING.
- Betty as she goes on and on.
- Barney, tense, sweating.

Until finally, Barney, can't take anymore:

BARNEY

Stop it! They're laughing at you!

Everyone gets quiet. Some Party-Goers snake away from the awkward moment as Betty looks over at everyone, embarrassed.

BETTY

Excuse me.

Betty rushes off. Barney watches on, feeling for her.

FEMALE PARTY-GOER

Aww, Barney. We were just having some fun. Why'd you have to do that?

Barney stares on, feeling terrible.

INT. BATHROOM - CIVIL RIGHTS SUPPORTER'S GRAND HOME - NIGHT

Betty stands in the dimly-lit bathroom, humiliated. She splashes water on her face, trying to calm down.

All of a sudden, through the window, she notices that **LIGHT EERILY FLASHING** again. She stares at it, blinking off in the night sky. Hovering, like **it's watching her**.

The **strange humming sound** begins **pulsating** in her brain as she stares off oddly at the light, falling into a trance.

Suddenly, she looks down at her hands, notices her **skin is crawling**.

Like there's something alive inside of her, *rushing through her veins*. She starts to hyperventilate - clawing at her arms. *What is happening??!*

She watches in terror as it moves faster and faster up her arms, neck, face... until she realizes it's rushing towards her **eyes**.

Terrified, she SCREAMS.

CUT TO:

The PARTY BURSTS INTO THE BATHROOM to find Betty on the floor in shock. Barney, dumbfounded, runs to her, helping her up with some of the Party-Goers.

FEMALE PARTY-GOER

Oh, dear, let's get you on the couch. Get you a nice cold drink and a cigarette.

Betty, out of it, shakes her head.

BETTY

No, I just want to go home.

Barney helps her out of the room with the girls, feeling the eyes of the Politicians on him.

EXT. CIVIL RIGHTS SUPPORTER'S GRAND HOME - NIGHT

Barney guides Betty to the car. Worried for her. The Party Guests follow to see them off. Clarence pats Barney on the back.

CLARENCE

I'm here if you need anything. Call me.

Barney nods, opens the car door for Betty.

BARNEY

(privately)

You okay?

BETTY

Yeah, I just got dizzy is all.

Barney eyes her.

BARNEY

(gently)

You sure?

She nods, and he closes her door. He makes his way around the car, waves bye to everyone as he gets in, trying to end this incredibly awkward night.

But just then General Macdonald flags him down. Barney rolls down his window.

GENERAL MACDONALD
(quietly, feeling for them)
There's a psychiatrist in Boston,
Dr. Ben Simon.

Barney gets uneasy.

GENERAL MACDONALD (CONT'D)
He worked with some of my shell-shocked soldiers coming home from the war. Some of these boys couldn't talk, some hadn't even walked in years, they were so traumatized... He uses hypnosis to uncover traumatic repressed memories. I saw these damaged soldiers, with my own eyes, leave his office walking and talking, back to normal, like they never had any issues. He's the head of Psychiatry at Boston Medical, he's a good man. I would give him a call. Betty's obviously dealing with something.

Barney nods and smiles at the General, embarrassed to be discussing his private life out in the open.

BARNEY
She's just tired, she'll be fine.
But thank you.

INT. BARNEY AND BETTY'S CAR - NIGHT

Barney drives, looks over at Betty, waiting for her to say something.

BARNEY
Are you okay, Betty? What happened in there?

Betty looks off, knows he'll never believe her.

BETTY
Nothing, it's like you said, I'm just tired...

BARNEY

You can talk to me, Betty. What was that? *Please.*

BETTY

I'm okay, I said. Everything's fine.

BARNEY

It didn't seem like everything was fine when you were screaming in the bathroom...

Betty shifts. Then:

BETTY

(timidly)

... It felt like there was something... watching me, out the window... in the sky.

Barney turns to her, dumbfounded. *What?*

BETTY (CONT'D)

Then, it was like, like it was under my skin, crawling...

Barney looks over at Betty, disturbed.

BETTY (CONT'D)

(ashamed)

I'm sorry, I know I sound crazy-

He reaches for her hand.

BARNEY

(supportive)

No, no, you don't. You're just tired, we've had a lot going on. You're fine.

He looks over at her, sees her eyes welling.

BETTY

I don't know what's happening to me. Ever since that night I haven't been the same, I feel strange... I want to know what happened during those missing two hours but I just can't remember. Can you?

Barney adjusts his jaw.

BARNEY

Nothing happened. Those crackpots you brought over to the house just got that into your head. Just don't think about it, it's nonsense.

Betty looks off, distraught. Barney notices, feeling for her. He wraps his arm around her, brings her in close, kissing her on the forehead.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

I love you. You're okay.

Betty looks up at the stars, hoping that's the truth.

INT. KITCHEN - BARNEY AND BETTY'S HOME - NIGHT

Barney and Betty enter silently... But stop when they notice a **LARGE PILE OF LEAVES** at the center of the breakfast table.

They stare at it, curiously.

BARNEY

What's that?

BETTY

I don't know.

They eerily take in the spectacle:

Dead leaves piled up high in a perfect pyramid.

Betty starts to wipe them from the table but as she does, she discovers her **MISSING BAUBLE EARRINGS** at the bottom of the pile. Betty turns to Barney.

BETTY (CONT'D)

My earrings?... From that night.

Barney stares back, trying to comprehend.

BETTY (CONT'D)

(realizing)

They want us to know they're here,
Barney. That they're watching us.

Barney blinks - terrified and saddened for his wife. *She's losing her mind.*

BARNEY

Please don't start, Betty.

It's obviously some kids playing a prank.

BETTY

What kids? How would they know my
earrings went missing?

BARNEY

(confused and frustrated)
I don't know, maybe because you
told everyone.

Barney goes and checks the windows to see if they're
unlocked.

BETTY

And they found them? How did they
find my earrings, Barney?

Barney stares back, at a loss. Then realizes:

BARNEY

Do you think maybe you put them
there?

There's a shift in tone. Betty realizing what Barney is
saying.

BETTY

And why would I do that, Barney?

BARNEY

I don't know. I don't know why
you're doing a lot of things
lately.

Her eyes narrow at Barney. Had enough.

BETTY

Something happened to us out there,
Barney, and you can't keep ignoring
it!-

BARNEY

(can't take this anymore)
I'm going to bed.

Barney's bedroom door closes, leaving Betty there alone,
taking in her earrings eerily sitting on the table.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. SIMON'S OFFICE - BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

Betty and Barney sit across from DR. BENJAMIN SIMON - pudgy, bald, and owlish - small glasses magnifying his big eyes, taking in Betty's report.

We notice a DIPLOMA: JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY FOR PSYCHIATRY then a PLAQUE - HEAD OF PSYCHIATRY, BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER.

BETTY

I've had persistent nightmares. I constantly have this feeling of impending doom, like a dread that something terrible is going to happen, only I don't know what?

Barney eyes Betty, feeling disturbed.

BETTY (CONT'D)

And we both can't remember a portion of the night. No matter how much we rack our brains, the times of the events don't match up-

DR. SIMON

You mentioned you feel watched? By white people? Can you speak more on that, please.

BETTY

Well, wherever we go, people stare at us- Obviously, because we're not something you see everyday. I mean, our marriage is still illegal in 38 states - it's not something everyone agrees with.

Dr. Simon studies Barney, who sits there silently. A timidity about him. A tension.

DR. SIMON

Now, can you tell me about how the two of you met?

BARNEY

I came up here from Philadelphia for a vacation by myself to relax, and I rented Betty's duplex. She was the only landlord in the city who would rent to a Negro-

BETTY

And my neighbors just went crazy. They did not want a black man in the neighborhood. The whole episode was just shocking and appalling to me- I mean, I knew racism existed, but I didn't believe it did in my own neighborhood. After that I got involved with the NAACP, and Barney and I kept in touch and we just, sorta... fell in love.

Barney and Betty share a warm glance.

DR. SIMON

(to Barney)

How did your families feel about your marriage?

Barney and Betty fidget, uncomfortable.

BETTY

Well, they didn't like it. They didn't come to our wedding.

(hurt)

... And, they haven't spoken to us since.

Dr. Simon writes that down, goes over her file.

DR. SIMON

I see. And do you have any children?

BETTY

No, I can't have children.

DR. SIMON

I see, I see... All right, that's fine.

(gets down to it)

Now, as General MacDonald mentioned to you, I work primarily using hypnosis to uncover traumatic repressed memories... I would like to hypnotize the both of you, separately, to see what happened during those missing two hours.

Barney looks up, baffled. "The both of you"?

BARNEY
 (to Dr. Simon)
 I'm confused, I thought we were
 here for Betty?

DR. SIMON
 It will help Betty if we're able to
 compare your memories of that
 night.

Barney looks over at Betty. Wants nothing more than to help her and fix this.

BARNEY
 ... Okay, let's try it.

CUT TO:

Barney now sits alone with Dr. Simon, who clicks a TAPE RECORDER on.

We PAN OVER to the CLOCK: It's **9:35 a.m.**

DR. SIMON
 I will be recording the sessions
 for my analysis... Okay, so I want
 you to relax, close your eyes. Just
 relax.

Barney closes his eyes.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)
 You're getting more and more tired.
 So tired. Your eyes are heavy.
 Going deeper... and deeper, deeper
 asleep... far asleep. When I touch
 your head your right arm will
 become rigid, like a bar of steel -
 rigid. It cannot bend or relax.
 Very rigid.

He touches Barney's head, pulls on his arm - cannot move it.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)
 Okay, very good, now drop your arm
 and relax. Your memory is now
 sharp, very sharp. You will
 remember everything, everything
 that has occurred. All of your
 experiences, thoughts and feelings.
 Now, I want you to go back to your
 drive through the White Mountains.
 All right then, now... TRANCE.

Barney's head **DROPS**. -- But suddenly Barney opens his eyes and smiles.

BARNEY
(laughs)
Oh, I'm sorry. I opened my eyes.

Barney looks at Dr. Simon who is now looking at him differently, like he's concerned for him.

DR. SIMON
You were supposed to. We finished the procedure.

Barney looks around, disoriented. Sees the clock: **11:46 a.m.**

BARNEY
It worked?

DR. SIMON
(nods)
Yes, it worked.

BARNEY
Can we listen to the tape?

DR. SIMON
That's much later in the treatment.

Dr. Simon stands up, gently guides Barney out.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)
I'll see Betty now. Thank you,
Barney.

Barney stares back in wonder.

BARNEY
(quips)
I feel like you know much more about me now than I know about you.

Dr. Simon forces a smile. Barney notices.

INT. BARNEY AND BETTY'S CAR - DAY - LATER

Barney and Betty drive home in a daze. Smiling strangely.

BETTY
(turns to Barney)
Do you remember anything?

BARNEY
 (smiles)
 Not a damn thing.

CUT TO:

INT. BARNEY AND BETTY HILL'S HOME - DAY

Barney and Betty sit in the kitchen, drinking coffee, reading the paper. We notice Barney **DOODLING AN EYE BALL** on the corner of his paper.

BETTY
 (mid-conversation)
 And this woman starts yelling at me that if I were a real American I wouldn't be campaigning for LBJ-

BARNEY
 (laughs)
 She's doing this outside her church?

BETTY
 Yes! I told her that if she was a real Christian then she would care about all people being treated decently- LBJ's helped pass three Civil Rights Acts alone! What other candidate can say that?-

The PHONE suddenly RINGS. Barney picks up.

INTERCUT - PHONE LINES:

CLARENCE
 (intones)
 I've got good news.

BARNEY
 (smiles)
 Yeah, what's that?

CLARENCE
 (reads off a letter)
 "The National Association of Realtors has agreed to meet with Mr. Barney Hill of the Civil Rights Commission."

Barney smiles broadly.

BARNEY

No shit.

CLARENCE

Yep.

BARNEY

Well, he had to now, didn't he?

CLARENCE

(laughs)

Yes, he did. We're in the US Civil Rights Commission now. Can't ignore us anymore. Good work, Brother.

BARNEY

You too.

They hang up. Betty waits.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

(beams to Betty)

The NAR's meeting with us.

She laughs, happy. Hugs Barney.

EXT. BARNEY AND BETTY'S HOME - DAY

Barney strolls out, file under his arm, looking skyward. He notices a **BLINKING LIGHT** far off in the distance.

CLARENCE'S CAR pulls up, the backseat packed with Members of the Fair Housing Team.

Barney hops in the front and they drive off.

CUT TO:

INT. CLARENCE'S CAR - DAY

As they drive, Barney peers out the window strangely, staring off at the **blinking light**. A HUMMING starts in his brain. Everyone talks to him, but he's not really paying attention.

They come to a STOPLIGHT. Barney notices a BILLBOARD - an advertisement for *PUSS' N BOOTS CAT FOOD*.

He stares at the CAT'S EYES. Something about them is terrifying.

CLARENCE (O.S.)

You okay, man?

Barney snaps out of it, rubs his eyes.

BARNEY

Oh yeah, just tired is all. These night shifts are starting to wear on me.

INT. ARTHUR WILCOX'S OFFICE - NAR HEADQUARTERS - DAY

We see a PLAQUE that states: **ARTHUR WILCOX, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS.**

Barney, flanked by his Fair Housing Team, sits across from ARTHUR WILCOX - bald, thin, overly-confident - staring back through horn-rimmed glasses.

Wilcox sits at his desk in front of a LARGE WINDOW WITH PEOPLE PASSING BY BEHIND HIM as Clarence presents him with photographs.

BARNEY

As you can see, in each case the apartment was suddenly unavailable once they saw the color of the prospective tenant's skin-

ARTHUR WILCOX

(short)

Yes, I caught this dog and pony show on the television.

Arthur smiles back. Barney gets uneasy.

ARTHUR WILCOX (CONT'D)

I saw how you put the cameras in the landlord's faces, how you ridiculed them for their beliefs, twisting everything they said so you can gain sympathy from the public.

(leans in)

I see what you're doing, Mr. Hill. You're using the cameras to make yourself some type of political career.

Barney stares back into his eyes, this man detests him.

ARTHUR WILCOX (CONT'D)

There's no law against what they're doing. It's private property. You have no constitutional right.

(MORE)

ARTHUR WILCOX (CONT'D)

If they don't want to rent to someone who's Black, or Yellow, or even Green for that matter, then that's their right as a landlord. This is a free country. You can't force someone to rent to a person they're not comfortable with.

BARNEY

(calmly, gently)

How are people of color ever supposed to get ahead if no one lets them live in middle class neighborhoods? Where there are good schools and good jobs? If we are not allowed to live in good areas then we are being systemically kept from ever advancing in this society-

ARTHUR WILCOX

Landlords are in a tough spot too. If Negroes move in, their property value goes down, people start leaving the neighborhood. It's a problem for everyone. I'm sorry, but this is just how the world works.

Barney eyes him, disturbed, as Wilcox keeps ranting at him. Talking down to him. -- Everything in Barney wants to speak up, but he just sits there, shutting down. Can't speak.

Clarence looks his way, waiting for him to say something, to fight back.

ARTHUR WILCOX (CONT'D)

I bet I could find some stuff on you that you don't want out there. Ruin your little political career, real quick.

Arthur's eyes glimmer, sensing Barney's unease to this.

ARTHUR WILCOX (CONT'D)

That's right. We could find something on you too, Mr. Hill. Edit it and skew it any way we choose. Not hard to do.

Out of the corner of Barney's eye, he notices a **STRANGE RED-HEADED MAN** walk by the window – over Wilcox's shoulder – and slowly stop and turn Barney's way.

The Strange Man grins ominously at Barney with hatred in his eyes.

Barney tries to shift his attention back to Arthur, still talking at him, but he peers back at the Strange Man, drawn to him.

He notices he looks unusual – like he's human, but not. There's something off about his features – different parts elongated and truncated. Like he's a reflection in a fun house mirror. It's uncanny.

Barney stares back, trembling – eyes wide in terror. **Why isn't anyone else seeing this?**

He starts to get unsettled, feeling like he's losing his mind. Terrified he's going to lose control.

He peers deeper and deeper into the eyes of the strange humanoid – falling into a **trance** – until suddenly he notices the eyelids blink. But not horizontally. **VERTICALLY**.

Barney jumps up and rushes out of the room.

Clarence and the Civil Rights Activists side-eye each other. *What the hell?*

INT. BARNEY AND BETTY HILL'S HOME - DAY

Betty folds some clothes then heads to the Closet/Barney's Private Office with a laundry basket tucked under her arm.

We notice a SMALL DESK – Barney's LITTLE PRIVATE NOOK in the house – with a PHOTOGRAPH displayed:

– Barney, in his Army Service Uniform, standing in front of THE EIFFEL TOWER. An HONORABLY DISCHARGED PIN next to it.

She puts the clothes away but suddenly something catches her eye behind the hanging coats.

She pushes them aside... Curiously discovers a CRUDE DRAWING ON THE WALL in the darkness. She slowly pulls the light string revealing a horrifying image of:

A CREATURE STARING BACK WITH BIG EYES.

She frantically slides the rest of the coats out of the way to reveal **HUNDREDS OF DRAWINGS OF GROTESQUE CREATURES**. All seething with hatred, staring wide-eyed. **BIG EYES EVERYWHERE.**

Betty stares on – horrified.

She starts to feel something behind her, like there's a predator... silently watching her. She turns slowly to find...

Barney looking back at her.

BETTY
(terrified)
What is this?

Barney stays silent.

BETTY (CONT'D)
What is this!?!... Talk to me!

Barney slumps down to the floor.

BARNEY
Ever since we got hypnotized I
can't get these images out of my
head.

BETTY
(indignant)
Why didn't you tell me??

BARNEY
(desperate)
... I want to listen to those
tapes.

INT. DR. SIMON'S OFFICE - BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

A distraught Barney and Betty sit in front of Dr. Simon.

BARNEY
(mid-conversation)
I'm having vivid nightmares... of
eyes. Intense eyes. I can't get
them out of my head- I'm
hallucinating in public- I can't
work, I can't think... We want to
hear the tapes.

Dr. Simon thinks this over.

DR. SIMON
From the symptoms you're having, it
might not be best for that right
now... I think we should wait.

Barney gets timid, but then:

BARNEY
I want to hear them.

DR. SIMON
(gently)
... I understand that, Barney, but
I'm sorry, I don't feel that this
is the right time-

BARNEY
(eyes wide, desperate)
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S ON THOSE
FUCKING TAPES! NOW, GIVE ME THE
TAPES.

Dr. Simon gets quiet. Betty looks back, frightened.

DR. SIMON
I am not going to give you the
tapes, Barney...
(feels for him)
We can listen to them together,
with my supervision... Agreed?

Barney nods.

CUT TO:

Dr. Simon flips the switch on a TAPE RECORDER.

BARNEY - ON AUDIOTAPE (O.S.)
(monotone, under hypnosis)
And, I am blinded by this light...
(scared)
It's the brightest light I've ever
seen... and I close my eyes. I am
scared...
(choked up)
I just want it to go away... **Why
doesn't it go away?**

He breathes heavily on the tape. Sounding weak and terrified.

Barney gives Betty a creeped out look. *Is that really him on
the tape?*

BARNEY - ON AUDIOTAPE (CONT'D)
(slow and strange)
But suddenly it is dark.

We transition into PURE DARKNESS as we...

FADE IN:

INT. THE HILL'S CAR - WHITE MOUNTAINS - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Barney and Betty sit in their car in stunned silence. We just hear the sound of them breathing.

BARNEY - ON AUDIOTAPE
(somnambulistic)
And I try to start the car...

Barney turns the key, but the car is dead. He looks up, scared, trying to process. But then he notices Betty looking ahead in shock. Awestruck by something we cannot see.

BETTY
(softly, scared)
What is that?

Barney slowly follows her gaze to find:

A SLEEK, TIC TAC-SHAPED AERIAL CRAFT hovering above, tilted unnaturally towards them, spinning silently.

His eyes crinkle in astonishment. Then open wide in terror.

BARNEY - ON AUDIOTAPE
(abruptly)
I want to wake up.

DR. SIMON - ON AUDIOTAPE
You're not going to wake up. You're
in a deep sleep, comfortable,
relaxed. Now go on.

BARNEY - ON AUDIOTAPE
(traumatized, in shock)
God, what is it?... I try to
maintain control so Betty cannot
tell I am scared.
(shrieks)
God, I am scared!

Barney breathes heavily on the tape. Suddenly, he gets quiet... Realizing...

BARNEY - ON AUDIOTAPE (CONT'D)
(astonished)
I can't hear any sound.

DR. SIMON - ON AUDIOTAPE
No sound whatsoever?

BARNEY - ON AUDIOTAPE

I want to hear a jet. *Oh I want to hear a jet so badly.* I want to hear a hum. I want to hear a motor.

Suddenly, he sees a *ROW OF WINDOWS* with **SHADY FIGURES** staring out.

Barney's eyes go wide.

BARNEY - ON AUDIOTAPE (CONT'D)

And I thought, how fascinating. I can see someone...

(getting frightened)

Or something... Looking at me...

(trembles)

And there are several others behind him... *Watching me.*

Suddenly, the spinning STOPS - *LIGHTS COME ON WITHIN THE CRAFT*, and Barney sees:

A STRANGE HUMANOID CREATURE STARING BACK.

We only see GLIMPSES of the elusive figure - the EYES ARE ALWAYS THE FOCUS OF WHAT WE SEE. Like we're being pulled into them. Hypnotized by them.

Barney's EYES BULGE IN TERROR as it stares back, grimly.

BARNEY - ON AUDIOTAPE (CONT'D)

(softly)

They are not human... They are Creatures.

Barney breathes heavily on the tape.

Suddenly, Barney notices:

DARK FIGURES STANDING IN THE ROAD.

Barney freezes. His mind trying to grapple with this. He desperately tries to start the engine - *BUT IT WON'T TURN OVER!*

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE

They're coming for us!

His eyes turn helpless as the Creatures begin to **trudge towards them...**

BARNEY - ON AUDIOTAPE (O.S.)
 (hysterical)
*Oh, what do they want!? WHAT DO
 THEY WANT!!!*

A **bright orange light** from the craft begins to SHINE DEEPLY INTO BARNEY AND BETTY'S EYES.

Barney and Betty suddenly **drop their heads, simultaneously.**

Falling deeper into a trance.

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE (O.S.)
 (weeping, desperately)
I keep thinking I have to run...

The Creatures surround the car as Barney and Betty sit there helpless, slumped over, still deep in a trance.

The Creatures open the doors, **pull Betty out of the car.**

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE (CONT'D)
I'VE GOTTA RUN!

Betty fights to stay awake, her eyes flutter open to see:

Barney - eyes closed - being guided by the Creatures towards the **landed craft** in the distance...

A gangplank descends.

Barney's feet drag as he's led to the craft - **the tops of his nice leather shoes scraping against the rocks.**

Betty screams for Barney to wake up, but she's forced up the ramp to...

INT. THE CRAFT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Betty enters the CRAFT, but jarringly finds that they are in:

HER LIVING ROOM?!

Betty's eyes go wide in shock.

She notices a cozy fire crackling in the fireplace, a pot of coffee brewing in the kitchen, Linda Scott's love song wafting from the record player, and snow gently falling outside her window. It's all so cozy and familiar.

She notices the NEEDLE POINT PILLOW on the couch oddly reads: **YOU ARE ALWAYS HOME.**

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE
 I don't understand, we're in our
 home.

Barney is led past her towards the bedroom.

DR. SIMON - ON AUDIOTAPE
 You're in your home?

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE
 Yes, I look around and it looks
 just like my home, but not... Some
 things are off... They tell me to
 sit down, to relax.

TWO CREATURES stand directly in front of her.

Note: we see QUICK FLASHES OF THE CREATURES:

Their eyes, their grey skin. Black hair. -- But we can never
 get a good look at them... It's like a dream.

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE (CONT'D)
 And I ask them what is going on,
 and they tell me that they brought
 me home so I'll be more
 comfortable, but I know it's not my
 home.

Suddenly, Betty and the Creatures are sitting across from
 each other.

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE (CONT'D)
 And they say they can bring me
 anything to make me more
 comfortable, and I see the coffee
 on the pot, and I say, "Well,
 coffee would be nice".

Betty looks down, notices a cup of coffee in her hand, like
 it's always been there. Betty smiles, looks at it curiously -
 it's strangely not black, but **grey**.

BARNEY AND BETTY'S BEDROOM

Barney is led in, suddenly more awake. He looks around the
 room, sees the closet door open - his private nook.

He notices the PHOTOGRAPH ON HIS DESK OF HIM IN HIS ARMY
 UNIFORM - STANDING IN FRONT OF THE PYRAMIDS. Barney looks
 disoriented by it.

He peers at the Creatures in the shadows, who stare back silently.

Suddenly, the Creatures begin taking follicles of his hair, scraping his skin, examining him... Moving quickly, an eeriness about their movements - we can never quite get a clear look at them.

They finally reach into Barney's mouth and pull out his teeth (his dentures).

THE LIVING ROOM

The Creatures sit with Betty. She smiles at them, now more comfortable.

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE
 And for some reason, we start
 discussing my favorite vegetable:
 squash. And they ask me to describe
 it, and I say, "Well, it's yellow."
 And they ask me what is "yellow"?
 So I try to find the color yellow
 around the house.

She looks around, smiling to herself, looking for it. But then her face turns, disoriented.

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE (CONT'D)
 But I can't find it... Anywhere.

She looks down at her arm, a Creature is oddly scraping her skin, another snipping her hair. They remove her earrings as they examine her ears. -- All in strangely quick movements.

Betty stares on curiously. It's all so surreal.

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE (CONT'D)
 And I ask them what they are doing?
 And they tell me everything is fine
 and to just relax and enjoy my
 coffee by the fire.

They pull at her teeth.

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE (CONT'D)
 (disoriented)
 They think our teeth can be removed
 because they saw Barney's teeth are
 missing, from his accident in the
 army.

DR. SIMON - ON AUDIOTAPE
His accident in the army?

Suddenly, Betty's laid down on the couch.

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE
(choked up, terrified)
And I ask again, "What are you
doing?" And they say they're just
doing some tests... A pregnancy
test.

Her dress is ripped off, exposing her naval.

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE (CONT'D)
And I tell them that it's
unnecessary, I can't have children-

Suddenly, a **GUN-LIKE OBJECT WITH A CLUSTER OF SHARP NEEDLES**
comes her way.

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE (CONT'D)
(cries)
But they don't listen.

A SHARP NEEDLE begins to emerge from the cluster, Betty's
eyes follow the needle as it gets closer and closer:

BETTY - ON AUDIOTAPE (CONT'D)
(weeps)
*I keep telling them I can't have
children, but they won't listen!*

The needle pierces her, deep in her naval. Betty SCREAMS.

She looks down at her belly in shock - **something's moving
under her skin, up her chest, towards her neck**. She claws at
her skin, trying to stop it. -- *But it's rapidly shooting
towards her eyes!*

She keels over in pain. Closes her eyes tightly. *SCREAMS!*

Suddenly, Betty realizes all she hears is the love song
playing dreamily on the record player, the fire crackling. A
calm but disturbing silence...

She opens her eyes, peers around the room. The Creatures are
GONE.

BARNEY AND BETTY'S BEDROOM

Barney – naked – wires probing him from every orifice of his body, watches terrified as the strange Creatures surround him. Eying him coldly, judging him with horrific eyes.

Wide and black. **Cat-like.**

Suddenly, Barney **sinks into the bed**, like he's being strapped down by some invisible force. His **eyelids begin to peel back**, as if they're being clamped wide open by something we cannot see. Then, suddenly:

A RAINBOW OF LIGHT FLASHES ACROSS HIS FACE – FROM ABOVE.

Barney watches in horror, unable to shield his eyes... Until, finally, he lets out A PRIMAL, GUTTURAL SCREAM!!!

LIVING ROOM

Betty hears Barney, gets to her feet... Limps towards him. She peers down the hallway. Nothing. Coast is clear. But suddenly, she spots **Barney in the kitchen**, peering eerily out the window, skyward – his back to her.

BETTY
Barney!

Barney keeps staring out the window, oddly. -- *He seems different... like a shell of himself.*

She creeps over to him, steadily, careful not to make a sound.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Barney, are you okay? What did they do to you?

His back shakes, like something inside him has broken.

Suddenly, Barney turns to face her but – **it's NOT BARNEY – IT'S A CREATURE.** Standing there eerily in the shadows.

Betty GASPS IN HORROR, races off. Hears Barney's screams from the bedroom, and runs towards them...

BARNEY AND BETTY'S BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

She rushes over to Barney (clothes back on, teeth back in – no wires), holding his eyes, screaming in torment in the corner of the room. Trying to get something he's seen out of his head.

A STRANGE HUMMING SOUND begins to BLARE (*reminiscent of the sounds we heard in their heads earlier*).

Betty grabs ahold of Barney, doing her best to lift him up.

Suddenly, we notice the walls become translucent, and we see the Creatures watching Betty from inside the walls... But whenever Betty turns, they disappear.

HALLWAY

Betty shoulders a traumatized Barney as fast as she can towards the front door until, finally, Betty kicks the door open and they are free!

WOODS - WHITE MOUNTAINS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Betty rushes Barney down the gangplank, towards the car, but they suddenly feel a LIGHT growing brighter behind them. They whip around and watch in awe as the craft transforms into a BRIGHT ORANGE BALL!

Suddenly, it begins to roll **towards them**, faster and faster... Until, out-of-nowhere, it dips - like it's gone underground...

And then BURSTS SKYWARD!

They watch in wonder as it streaks past the face of the moon, finally disappearing into the darkness of the universe.

INT. DR. SIMON'S OFFICE - BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

Dr. Simon CLICKS the STOP button. We slowly pan over to Barney and Betty's shocked, disturbed, awestruck faces.

They all sit there in the silence for a moment. Taking it in.

DR. SIMON
How do you feel?

Betty starts to weep.

BETTY
I knew something happened out there. I knew it.

Barney sits, silently. Like his mind has broken. Can't believe all this. Betty dabs her eyes with a tissue.

BETTY (CONT'D)

I wished it wasn't real. Just a
terrifying nightmare... but it's
real.

(turns to Barney, shocked)
It's real, Barney.

DR. SIMON

So, it feels like a nightmare, you
say?

(pointedly to Barney)
It feels like it could have been a
dream?

BARNEY

(gently, vulnerably)
... No, I would say it feels like
it's something that happened.

Betty turns to Barney.

DR. SIMON

Betty had nightmares she said?

BARNEY

Yes.

DR. SIMON

So, you could have heard her
talking in her sleep and then you
could have dreamt what you heard,
correct?

Barney shrugs. No feeling to him. A numbness.

BARNEY

(quietly... knowing he
will be judged)
All I can say is, I feel like it
wasn't a dream. It is something
that happened.

This silences Dr. Simon.

DR. SIMON

Do you want to know what I believe?

Barney nods quietly.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)

I believe Betty had some sort of
acute schizophrenic break.

That word takes the air out of the room.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)

The hallucinations, the feeling of things crawling under her skin, the paranoia of being watched – all telltale signs of schizophrenia – which I believe was brought on by the stress of having an interracial marriage... Think about how "the Creatures" were scraping your skin – how their skin was grey – a mixture of black and white.

A flash of worry comes across Barney's face.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)

At the same time, Betty has been struggling with not being able to have children. These intensely stressful events took their toll. Finally inducing her dormant schizophrenia.

Barney just stares back as Betty sits there in shock.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)

You too, Barney, have had an immense amount of stress put on you – moving away from your home, marrying a white women... Not to mention, being black in this country. It also took it's toll on you. Your fears mounted to a breaking point, it was too much for your psyche to bear. You were vulnerable and took in Betty's new reality as you slept.

Barney sits there, disoriented, as this psychiatrist explains he went insane.

BETTY

(indignant)

But we both saw something flying in the sky, Doctor. I know we did-

DR. SIMON

Yes, I believe you both saw something out there- Maybe a satellite, maybe a military plane, something you didn't understand. But then after, you had vivid, imaginative dreams – during psychosis – that were then relayed to Barney.

(MORE)

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)

They eventually manifested themselves into this hallucination that you two shared due to a deep fear of being cast out by society... You both decided to hold onto this story, to hold onto each other. If you can't be a part of this world, at least you have your own world together. You have a home, even if it's imaginary.

Barney and Betty look at each other. That's not the truth. It can't be.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)

It is my medical opinion that this is a classic case of Folie-a-Deux. You have shared hallucinations... Shared psychosis.

BETTY

(confused)

Folie-a-Deux? What is that French? What does it mean?

Dr. Simon gets awkward, doesn't answer.

DR. SIMON

Betty, I'm going to prescribe an antipsychotic medication, and I'd like for you to continue to come in and see me for treatment.

A quiet beat as they take that in.

Dr. Simon gathers himself, preparing to tell them something difficult.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)

... I'm also recommending that the two of you separate.

Barney and Betty stare back. *What?*

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)

Barney's gone through some traumatic events that have made him extremely vulnerable to your schizophrenia. It's very rare but it can be contagious.

Betty takes that in.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)
As long as Barney can get some
distance from you, disconnect from
your reality, he can still be saved-

BARNEY
(indignant)
What? You want us to separate? You
don't think we should be together
anymore?

DR. SIMON
... I'm sorry. That's the only way.

Betty looks off, shocked. Grappling with what this means.

BARNEY
Well, we're not doing that. But
thank you for your
"recommendation", Doctor.

Barney stands to leave. Dr. Simon looks on worried, he's lost
him.

DR. SIMON
Just a moment, Barney. Betty
mentioned on the tape that you had
an accident in the army? Do you
mind telling me about that?

Barney looks off, sullen.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)
(sincerely)
I want to help you, Barney-

BARNEY
(short)
There was an accident on the base,
I was injured. That's it.
(eyes Betty, "time to go")
Thank you for your help, Dr. Simon,
we appreciate everything.

Betty looks off at Dr. Simon.

BETTY
(quietly)
You never answered my question.
What does Folie-a-Deux mean?

Dr. Simon averts his eyes. Hesitant to say.

BARNEY
 (quietly)
 It means "madness-for-two".

CUT TO:

INT. BARNEY AND BETTY'S CAR - DAY

Barney and Betty drive home, stunned. Betty feeling disturbed and guilty, looks out the window up at the empty sky.

Barney eyes a SIGN that reads: "TO BOMB SHELTER" - AN ARROW POINTING DOWN BELOW A FURNITURE STORE.

He stares off disturbed by it, how it's just mixed between stores and pedestrians walking downtown. Like it's all normal.

BETTY
 ... Maybe I should take the medication...

Barney grips the wheel, doesn't want to hear this.

BETTY (CONT'D)
 ... And maybe we should-

BARNEY
 What? Separate? Get a divorce?
 (exasperated)
 No one wants us to be married,
 Betty. Don't you see that?

Betty processes what he's saying.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
 And now we're "crazy" if we're together? "It's too much stress for us", or whatever the hell he's saying.

Betty gets quiet.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
 No, we're not separating, and there's nothing wrong with you, Betty. I know something happened out there. You're not crazy. And neither am I.

BETTY

Barney, if he's right, this isn't fair to you. I don't want to hurt you.

Barney adjusts his jaw.

BARNEY

I'm fine. You are too...

A silent beat.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

We're gonna be okay.

Betty looks out the window, hoping that's the truth.

CUT TO:

EXT. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Barney and the rest of his Fair Housing Committee protest outside the building. PICKET SIGNS read: *HUMAN RIGHTS ARE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS. WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS, WE HAVE RIGHTS. BE HUMAN.*

Barney walks the line, looking distant, next to Senator Hutchison - the silver-haired Democrat from the Civil Rights Party.

Arthur Wilcox, the President of the NAR, arrives, and coolly tries to make his way through the crowd and cameras without commenting.

REPORTER

Mr. Wilcox, can you explain why you voted against Fair Housing!

Arthur finally fights his way through the crowd. As he enters the building, he turns back and eyes Barney...

CUT TO:

INT. BARNEY AND BETTY'S HOME - DAY

The Phone rings. Betty picks up.

BETTY

Hello?

ROBERT HOHMANN

Betty? This is Robert Hohmann, from NICAP- My partner and I stopped by your home to talk about your experience?

Betty shifts.

BETTY

(hesitant)

Yes... I remember, Mr. Hohmann-

ROBERT HOHMANN

Well, I'm calling because we're actually in the midst of an international conference right now. I've shared your story with some very important figures in the field - they want to meet with you.

Betty looks out the window, sees Barney staring up at the sky strangely. She looks off at him, worried for him.

BETTY

(uncomfortable)

Well, I appreciate that, Mr. Hohmann, but we're not interested in moving forward at this time. We've kind of moved passed all that craziness. We're just trying to get back to normal over here.

ROBERT HOHMANN

I understand that completely, Mrs. Hill, but there is serious interest in conducting an in-depth investigation of your account - to prove that the experience you had was real.

Betty listens on, hesitantly. Then looks back out to Barney, staring skyward. She follows his gaze up to a BLINKING LIGHT. -- Seeing what he sees.

She finally sits down, listens to what Hohmann has to say.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BARNEY AND BETTY'S HOME - AFTERNOON

A PARTY is well under way at The Hill's home. We see the Election Results coming in LIVE on the television, it's still early though, as they wait for the last voting booths to close in California.

Betty's passing out drinks, playing hostess, joking around, keeping everything light as the NEWSCASTERS go on about "the fight for the soul of the country".

Barney notices a COUPLE OF WOMEN whisper about Betty as she passes by. Barney gets a disturbed look on his face. *Are they gossiping about her?*

The live program cuts to CLIPS of the Republican National Convention:

- We see Republican Governor Nelson Rockefeller being boo'd as he denounces the fresh right-wing extremism taking over the country. He begrudgingly introduces the Republican Nominee: Barry Goldwater.

- WHITE-HODED KKK MEMBERS fervently wave *GOLDWATER - THE AMERICAN WAY* SIGNS in the crowd. More moderately dressed conservatives hold *SEPARATE BUT EQUAL SIGNS*.

Barney drinks with Clarence, watching the television.

CLARENCE
(to Barney)
This guy wins, he's gonna put us
back a few years.

Clarence turns to Barney, notices he's staring off strangely, not paying attention.

He watches him for a beat. Worried about him.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
Hey man, you okay?

BARNEY
(off guard)
Yeah, I'm fine... Why?

Clarence looks around to make sure no one's listening. Carefully chooses his words:

CLARENCE
People were talking about you two
after you left the Civil Rights
party.
(MORE)

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Saying Betty was talking about aliens and flying saucers and shit... You doing okay?

BARNEY

(firm)

I'm fine... They don't know what they're talking about.

CLARENCE

Hey, they're just worried, is all.

Barney eyes the party. Paranoid.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

And, I'm worried about you too. What happened at the NAR office the other day? You weren't acting like yourself. You just took off like that?

BARNEY

(gets sullen, tries to placate him)

I'm going through some things, private things- I'm going to be fine. Just been a hard time, okay? I'm sorry.

CLARENCE

I get it. I'm just saying, we have a lot of good work to do, and I just need to know you're okay leading all this right now because this is our time, man. We can't mess it up.

Barney turns to him, tensely.

BARNEY

I know that. I'm taking care of it.

Barney takes a swig from his beer, done talking about this. Clarence nods, backing off. Barney goes back to watching the television.

LBJ'S NEW CAMPAIGN AD known as THE DAISY AD comes on. A LITTLE GIRL plucks the petals from a daisy, a NARRATOR quickly counts down from ten as the camera strangely ZOOMS deeply into the girl's eye.

Barney stiffens, unsettled by the image as it zooms closer into her **pixilated eye**.

NARRATOR (O.S.)
 3... 2... 1... 0.

An **atomic bomb explodes**, destroying everything in sight.

LBJ (O.S.)
 These are the stakes to make a
 world in which all of God's
 children can live, or to go into
 the dark. We must either love each
 other... or we must die.

ON THE SCREEN: **VOTE FOR PRESIDENT JOHNSON ON NOVEMBER 3RD.**

CLARENCE
 (chuckles)
 Woah, that was fucked up, but
 effective, I guess...

Barney sits there, stunned. A bead of sweat dripping down his forehead. Like something inside him is cracking. He rushes off through the party.

Clarence watches on, bewildered.

BARNEY AND BETTY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Barney locks the door and falls to his knees, distraught. Can't take the evil and stress of the world anymore. He's breaking.

He weeps on the ground, pleading to something bigger than himself to save him.

But as he does, he notices his shoes on the floor beside him – **the black leather loafers he wore the night of the abduction**, scuffed on the tops.

Barney grabs them, stares at them, feels them. *Is this real? Or is he hallucinating this?*

He takes a breath. Feels the scuffs again.

They're real.

LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Barney and Betty walk the last guests out, all hysterical with excitement: *LBJ Won!* A drunken Clarence is shouldered out by his DATE and a COUPLE OF FRIENDS.

We hear the television in the background going on about the biggest landslide win in history. Excitement in the air.

CLARENCE
(drunk, to Barney)
We did it, didn't we? Fuck,
tonight's a good night.

Barney smiles, pats him on the back, elated. Clarence's Date holds the car keys.

BARNEY
(playfully, to his Date)
You take good care of him now.

She grabs Clarence by the tie, leading him out.

CLARENCE'S DATE
(flirty)
Oh, I will.

Clarence smiles back big to Barney and Betty as he's led out, Betty closes the door, giggling to herself.

She turns to Barney and they hug. Elated. Relieved. Joyous.

All their hard work is finally paying off.

Barney kisses her.

BARNEY
(excited)
Stay right there. I've got
something to show you.

Barney books it to his room, comes back brandishing his shoes from the abduction night.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
Look at this... They're scuffed.
Just like I remembered under
hypnosis. When they were taking me
up the ramp, my feet were dragging
across the rocks. Remember?

Betty stares at the scuff marks. Trying to follow.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
It's physical evidence that
something happened out there,
Betty. We didn't make it up. We're
not crazy.

Betty's eyes soften.

BETTY

... Barney, if you told Dr. Simon that he'd say they're just scuffed shoes. It doesn't prove anything.

Barney sits down on the ground, lost.

BARNEY

(vulnerable)

I know something happened to us out there, but I just need proof... Something real...

(desperate, looks into her eyes)

I just need to know that we're not crazy.

Betty sits next to him. Hesitant.

BETTY

... Barney, the men from NICAP called and I told them about our hypnosis experience, about our abduction, and they got very excited... They mentioned the prospect of making second contact.

Barney looks up. Trying to understand.

BETTY (CONT'D)

They think these beings want to communicate with us again. They want to go out to the abduction site together and document everything.

A beat as Barney stares back.

BETTY (CONT'D)

They're saying it's the only way we can prove what happened to us out there was real.

Barney looks off, mind working.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ABDUCTION SITE - WHITE MOUNTAINS - DUSK

The sun's setting and there's an excitement in the air as Scientists buzz around, setting up camp.

SCIENTIST

(to Betty)

So, you would say you were
approximately here, correct?

BETTY

Yes, I remember those trees beyond
the clearing.

The Scientist jots it down in his notebook.

SCIENTIST

(to Barney)

And, Mr. Hill where would you say
you first saw the craft once it
landed?

Barney leads the Scientist off into the woods.

We notice a PHOTOGRAPHER snap a picture of Barney as he
points out to a clearing.

WHITE MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

A full moon bathes light on the abduction site, revealing
chairs huddled around a campfire.

In the background, we notice tents, generators, a portable
stove, and an enormous telescope pointing up at the night
sky.

ROBERT HOHMANN

(addressing the crowd)

Thank you all for taking time out
of your busy schedules to be here
with us for this special night.

Most importantly, thank you to Mr.
and Mrs. Barney and Betty Hill who
have graciously agreed to be here
tonight to help us with this
investigation.

Barney and Betty smile back and nod to the polite applause.

ROBERT HOHMANN (CONT'D)

I am proud to say we have some of
the finest minds in science here
this evening. Most important of our
notable figures is Jacques Valle-

JACQUES VALLE, a French Astronomer and Ufologist (Francois
Truffaut's character in *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND*
was based on him) stands and nods to the crowd.

JACQUES VALLEE
 (French accent)
 Hello, yes, thank you. It's a
 pleasure to be here.

ROBERT HOHMANN
 Now, time is of the essence, as we
 only have one night for our
 investigation. So, if I may, I
 would like to direct your attention
 to the white circle.

A WHITE CIRCLE is outlined in the middle of the field. In the center of the circle sits a WHITE TABLE with a CLOCK, a COMPASS, CAMERAS, a THERMOMETER, and a massive IBM COMPUTER.

ROBERT HOHMANN (CONT'D)
 If anyone sees any life form at all, it is imperative that all participants immediately make their way to the circle. This will insure that all data is collected without any contamination by outside influence.

(in wonder)
 Now, I am sure we're all in for a remarkable night. Thank you.

CAMPFIRE

The group sits in a circle gazing into space as STRANGE BEEPING SOUNDS float off into the sky from the IBM computer.

Jacques sits with Barney and Betty, having a private moment with the two.

JACQUES VALLEE
 (mid-conversation)
 I had my own experience as a teenager, seeing a craft, much like what you described. It changed my life. I became obsessed. I needed to know what they were doing here, what did they want with us? After years of research I believe that these beings are here because they desperately want to communicate, to have a conversation, and with this abduction you described, we believe you are who they have chosen-

BARNEY

(confused)

But why would they choose us? Why not someone more important, with power?

JACQUES VALLEE

Because you both have a gift most people do not have.

Barney looks back, puzzled.

JACQUES VALLEE (CONT'D)

(explains)

You are both very compassionate people, you work in the Civil Rights Movement on a quest to advance society. You are a sensitive couple, who obviously love each other deeply. We think the beings sensed that – your love. Our work in extraterrestrial life has proven that they see this as a form of higher intelligence.

Barney and Betty share a look.

JACQUES VALLEE (CONT'D)

You see, most of us are five sensory human beings, but some of us are more sensitive. Look how they were communicating to you – through your feelings, through your thoughts, through visions – that's a depth of sensitivity and sensory intelligence not everyone has.

Jacques gestures up to the starry sky.

JACQUES VALLEE (CONT'D)

I have studied extraterrestrial intelligence throughout the history of mankind – how it has used ordinary people to try to advance our civilization. At different periods these chosen people have been called shamans, or saints, or prophets – “ordinary people” who can see things that others cannot – on another dimension.

(off Barney and Betty's look)

(MORE)

JACQUES VALLEE (CONT'D)

Sadly, at first, no one listens to these chosen people, they are always ridiculed by their society, written off as mad.

This hits Barney and Betty.

JACQUES VALLEE (CONT'D)

We believe that you were chosen for a reason, that they are trying to communicate something to you. They want to use you as a portal to deliver some kind of message to humanity.

Betty gets scared, remembering.

BETTY

I had a dream about a message...
But they said it wasn't time for me to know what it was.

Jacques smiles.

JACQUES VALLEE

You two are very lucky. This has been my dream since I was a child.

CAMPFIRE - LATER

It's late and nothing's happened. Scientists and Investigators look downcast, losing heart.

Betty notices, gets anxious.

She turns to find Barney staring desperately up at the stars.

Barney gives her a reassuring smile. *They're going to be okay.* He can feel it.

Betty smiles back. Then looks off into the universe. *Where are they already?*

CAMPFIRE - EVEN LATER

The campfire is dying down. Everyone's asleep except for Barney and Robert Hohmann, staring up at the sky, waiting.

BARNEY

(mid-conversation)

Now I'm in charge of distribution,
making sure the mail gets to the
right carriers. Easier on the feet,
but you don't get any sleep.

Robert nods.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

How about yourself? Must be
exciting being an engineer over at
IBM? Working with NASA on those
supercomputers? What do you have
cooking over there right now?
Anything new? Or can you not say?

Robert gets awkward at this. Barney notices.

ROBERT HOHMANN

Oh no, I'm not an engineer. I'm in
another department.

Barney turns to him, confused.

BARNEY

Oh?... What department?

ROBERT HOHMANN

Copy department.

BARNEY

Copy department? What is that,
advertising? -

ROBERT HOHMANN

No, I write up the instruction
manuals.

Barney looks up. Confused.

BARNEY

I'm sorry, I was under the
impression that you were a computer
scientist?

ROBERT HOHMANN

I do work in a scientific
environment on a daily basis, but
no, I'm not a scientist...
technically.

Barney's head starts spinning. Trying to understand.

BARNEY

So, are there any scientists in NICAP?

ROBERT HOHMANN

We are a group that all have a shared interest in looking at extraterrestrial life from a strictly scientific perspective- (off Barney's look)

We bring distinguished luminaries like Mr. Vallee out to speak and help us with investigations-

BARNEY

(short)

So, it's basically a club.

Robert gets quiet.

ROBERT HOHMANN

(shifts)

You could say that, but we prefer to call it a research group.

Barney looks off. *What has he gotten himself into?*

THE CAMP - NEXT MORNING

Downtrodden NICAP members pack up. Barney looks off, lost, feeling foolish - nothing happened...

Barney scans the camp, starts seeing everyone clearer in the morning light. -- They're all frumpy and disheveled.

Barney looks off, disturbed, then overhears Betty chatting with Hohmann:

BETTY

(embarrassed)

Well, I'm so sorry all these people came all the way out here-

ROBERT HOHMANN

No, no, there's always a risk in scientific investigations. We tested a hypothesis. And I'm sure this expedition will illuminate some things later down the road that will bring us closer to the truth. I don't think Galileo figured everything out on his first try, now did he?

Betty smiles back.

ROBERT HOHMANN (CONT'D)
 The biggest thing is that we took a
 step to try to make active second
 contact. Hopefully, they heard us.

Barney watches this idiotic back and forth, irritated. His face darkens. He notices Betty laugh – sees a FLASH OF MADNESS IN HER EYES.

Barney gets a disturbed look on his face. Feels sick. He turns, makes his way to the...

WOODS

Barney relieves himself, looks off at the White Mountains peaking up ahead. Suddenly, he sees **the blinking light hovering in the distance...** But much closer this time.

Barney's eyes go wide, terrified.

The HUMMING IN HIS BRAIN BEGINS, but LOUDER, more INTENSE THAN EVER BEFORE. Barney closes his eyes, trying to get his bearings.

Suddenly, he hears leaves crackling behind him. Barney looks back, but sees nothing. A silent beat.

But then:

-- *The leaves begin to rustle again, right behind him.*

He slowly turns back again, and finally sees:

THE CREATURE

It's tall and spindly with an enlarged cranium, black hair. It's face looks human, but distorted: giant eyes, a long nose, small ears. And grey skin.

Barney stares back in stunned terror as the Creature grins back at him with eerie derision. With hate.

Barney takes in the Creature, nakedly standing there in all it's horror.

Suddenly, *it SLASHES BARNEY'S EYES!*

Barney grabs his eyes in abject terror, SCREAMING IN AGONY. Can't see anything but **BLACKNESS.**

TERRIFYING BLACKNESS.

He stares into it. HORRIFIED. SCREAMING. -- We hear the CAMP RUNNING TO HIS AID IN THE BACKGROUND.

BETTY (O.S.)
Barney!!!

FADE TO:

BLACKNESS

We hear Dr. Simon quietly consoling Betty and the others at the camp. Barney's coming to, but still blinded.

BARNEY (O.S.)
Where am I?

BETTY (O.S.)
Barney! You're okay- We called Dr. Simon.

BARNEY (O.S.)
Dr. Simon? -

DR. SIMON (O.S.)
Yes, Barney, I'm here. Can you tell me what happened?

Barney breathes hard, panicking.

BARNEY (O.S.)
I was attacked by... by the Creature...
(terrified)
It came back.

DR. SIMON (O.S.)
By the "Creature"? And how do you feel? -

BARNEY (O.S.)
How do I feel? I can't see. *It ripped my eyes out!!*

DR. SIMON (O.S.)
You can't see anything at all? Do you see my fingers?

BARNEY (O.S.)
No, I can't see- *I can't see anything!*

DR. SIMON

Okay, calm down. Now explain to me what happened, every moment-

BARNEY

(somnambulistic)

I heard something behind me... I could feel it watching me... Hunting me.

We're back IN THE WOODS, the Creature watches Barney.

DR. SIMON

It was watching you?

BARNEY

(trance-like)

Like it wanted to kill me-

DR. SIMON

Do you remember the night of the abduction? There was a man outside the motel watching you, with "hate in his eyes"?

BARNEY

Yes.

DR. SIMON

Is that what it feels like?

BARNEY

(quietly)

... Yes.

CUT TO:

MOTEL - WHITE MOUNTAINS (FLASHBACK)

We see the Red-Headed Man grinning with those HATEFUL EYES.

Barney stares back in horror.

DR. SIMON

Now look into those eyes.

We go DEEPER AND DEEPER into the EYES. His BLACK EYES.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)

Have you seen those eyes before?
Where have you seen those eyes? As a child?

Barney SHUTS HIS EYES, OPENS THEM BACK UP, and we are now:

PHILADELPHIA CITY POOL (1933)

We see 11 YEAR OLD BARNEY enter the pool, feeling watched.

His eyes dart back and forth, the WHITE FAMILIES glare at him as he steps into the pool. -- Suddenly, White People begin to exit the pool.

Barney, vulnerable and humiliated, looks around, too young to completely understand this much hate.

DR. SIMON

Where did you feel those eyes the most intensely, Barney? As a child?

Barney CLOSES HIS EYES.

BARNEY

No.

DR. SIMON

Then where?

Barney OPENS HIS EYES:

ARMY - FRANCE (1943)

We find Barney now, 25 years old, Army Uniform, in France - in charge of a mixed race ARMY UNIT.

Barney leads the men as they do drills, throwing GRENADES.

One of the men, MORRIS, white, red-headed crew cut, Southern punk, laughs maniacally in a corner, messing around with a COUPLE OF WHITE DEGENERATE SOLDIERS.

BARNEY

(barks)

Morris! Get in line! NOW!

Morris looks up, embarrassed. One of his friends mutters something to him. We notice Morris's face drop, looking humiliated. He glares back at Barney.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

(firm, to Morris)

I said get in line.

Morris begrudgingly follows orders. His friends chide him, laughing.

The drills carry on. Grenades go off, Barney watches on, until suddenly he sees a **GRENADE DROP RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM.**

-- *The pin out!*

He looks around at his unit in SLOW MOTION.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
RUN!!!

Barney deftly tries to jump on the grenade, but before he can it-

EXPLODES!

A shocked Barney looks around at the devastation in SLOW MOTION. -- *Then sees his teeth fall to the ground.*

He gapes back in shock, and we notice - **HIS JAW HANGING OFF!**

Barney's EYES OPEN WIDE IN STUNNED TERROR...

He sees Morris and his Buddies staring on, calmly - **HATE IN THEIR EYES.** Grinning.

BARNEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I could never prove they did it...
but I could see it in their eyes.

Barney's EYES CLOSE AND OPEN BACK UP TO IMAGES OF:

- Eyes at the Pool.
- Eyes in the Army.
- Eyes at the Motel.
- Eyes in the Spaceship.

Barney gapes back in horror - THEY ARE ALL THE SAME EYES.

Suddenly, Barney hears a SNAP and he WAKES UP:

He looks around, they are in the White Mountains - the Camp surrounding him, Betty, Dr. Simon, the trees, the birds, Betty smiling back, relieved.

Barney starts to cry, feels his eyes. He's okay.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
I can see.

DR. SIMON

Yes, you can see, Barney. It was a stressed induced hallucination, there was no creature.

Betty hugs Barney. Barney holds her tight. -- Dr. Simon watches on, disturbed.

PARKING AREA - WHITE MOUNTAINS

Barney walks Dr. Simon to his car.

BARNEY

Thank you so much, Dr. Simon. I can't tell you... I feel like, like a person again.

Dr. Simon nods, still worried.

DR. SIMON

What are you doing out here, Barney? Out here in the White Mountains?

Barney looks up.

BARNEY

Hmm?

DR. SIMON

They said you're trying to make second contact? With the aliens?

BARNEY

(smiles, embarrassed)

It's silly, I know. I don't know what I was thinking.

Dr. Simon comes in close.

DR. SIMON

(concerned)

Barney, these hallucinations are going to get worse if you don't listen to me.

Barney turns to Dr. Simon.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)

Betty needs to come in and see me on a longterm basis. She needs to get on medication...

Barney looks back into Dr. Simon's genuinely concerned eyes.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)

But the first thing you need to do is get away from each other. Do you understand? You still have a chance, Barney. But if you stay with her, you could go so deep into psychosis that you won't be able to come back.

He lets that sink in.

DR. SIMON (CONT'D)

This isn't just hurting you Barney, it's hurting Betty too. You're only encouraging her delusions. She needs help.

Barney looks off at Betty, sickened. Then nods back to Dr. Simon, processing.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CIVIL RIGHTS MEETING - ROCKINGHAM HOTEL - DAY

Barney, beaten, but trying his best to stay strong for the movement, stands at a podium speaking to the Civil Rights Members. Betty sits at a typewriter, recording the minutes.

He brandishes a REPORT. We notice COPIES of it being passed around the room.

BARNEY

(to the crowd, indignant)

This report proves the politicians have been pretending to be on our side - building projects for us to live in, "helping us." But in reality they were just moving us away from them... Alienating us even more.

Clarence scans the documents, the zoning maps. Mind blown.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

They moved us away from good jobs, from good schools, from good employment... **They zoned us out of society.**

Barney lets that sink in...

BARNEY (CONT'D)

And I hear President Johnson was given this report and he ignored it! He has our votes, he must feel like he doesn't need us anymore. Well, that's not going to work. We need a new Civil Rights Act, one where there is Fair Housing for all. The projects they have built for us will not suffice. We need and will have access to Fair Housing, just like any other American. Mr. Johnson may have been elected, but he still has a duty to our community for getting him elected!

We notice the crowd is not as inspired by the speech as they should be. *Something is up.*

Finally, a Civil Rights Member stands up with a NEWSPAPER ARTICLE in hand.

CIVIL RIGHTS MEMBER

Mr. Hill, I'm sorry to interrupt, but we received an anonymous letter that brought something concerning to our attention.

Barney looks up, curiously. The Civil Rights Member hands the Newspaper to Barney.

CIVIL RIGHTS MEMBER (CONT'D)

It seems there was an article in *The Boston Traveler* about you and your wife...
(hesitates)
Being abducted by aliens?

Barney's stomach drops. Betty looks up, stunned.

CIVIL RIGHTS MEMBER (CONT'D)

The article went on to mention that you were one of the heads of the Civil Rights Movement here in New Hampshire...

Clarence closes his eyes, feeling for him.

CIVIL RIGHTS MEMBER (CONT'D)

The anonymous letter we received was from someone who is concerned that you are representing our chapter.

(MORE)

CIVIL RIGHTS MEMBER (CONT'D)

They asked if you were the best person to be representing us with all this bizarre, uh, press... And, we discussed it and we feel that it might be best if you take a step back at this time.

Barney looks on, devastated and humiliated.

CIVIL RIGHTS MEMBER (CONT'D)

(softly, feeling for him)

It's just too important of a moment right now, Sir. I'm sorry.

INT. HALLWAY - ROCKINGHAM HOTEL - DAY

Barney and Betty rush out, disgraced, desperate to get the hell out of there, but:

CLARENCE (O.S.)

Barney! BARNEY!

Barney won't turn back.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

I did not know about all this!

Finally, Clarence catches up with Barney.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

I had no idea this was going to happen. No idea. I'm sorry, okay?

Barney nods to Betty to go ahead without him.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

I'm gonna go back in there and talk to them. Okay?

BARNEY

There's no talking to them. They're right, I shouldn't be representing the Civil Rights Movement. I'm a joke-

CLARENCE

No, no you're not. I think Wilcox sent the anonymous letter... You set him off once you sent the TV cameras to his office. It was Wilcox. *Had to be*.

This silences Barney.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

When they realize they are being played by a racist, fucked up bigot who's trying to get you back for making some serious headway with our movement, they'll wake up. I promise.

Barney looks up at him, processing.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Look, I know this alien stuff isn't you - it's Betty. And I love her, man. Betty's a wonderful person... But she's always been kinda kooky-

Barney looks slighted by that judgement.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Not "kooky", I mean "quirky". Right? But that's not you. We just need people to know that Betty's having some problems, you're just trying to help her through this... Whatever *this* is.

Barney listens on.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

You are the face of this thing. We need you in DC, we need a Fair Housing Act - and we need someone like you involved, Barney.

Barney stares on, moved by how much his friend believes in him. Clarence starts to trot off:

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

I'm gonna fix this! I promise!

CUT TO:

INT. BARNEY AND BETTY'S CAR - DAY

Barney and Betty sit at a STOP LIGHT, staring off, silently.

Suddenly, Barney notices a MAD MAN ON THE STREET screaming maniacally that the end of the world is coming.

He holds a sign that says **THIS IS THE END.**

Pedestrians hurry past him, avoiding eye contact.

As they drive off, the Mad Man and Barney make eye contact — there's a moment between the two, like there's something deeper connecting them.

Barney gets a disturbed look on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BARNEY AND BETTY'S HOME - DAY

Barney and Betty enter their home, solemnly.

Betty checks the mail, as Barney immediately sits down to *The Boston Traveler* article, sickened with himself.

He stares at: **A PHOTOGRAPH OF HIMSELF POINTING UP AT THE SKY.**

BARNEY

You know, that means that
photographer out there was a
reporter and your "scientist"
friends never thought to tell us.

Betty, beaten, mindlessly sifts through the mail.

BETTY

I know, Barney, I'm sorry.

Betty comes across TWO LARGE, EMBOSSED ENVELOPES *from the White House*. She rips one open — it's an **INVITATION TO LBJ'S INAUGURATION.**

Betty rushes to Barney with the invitation.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Barney, we've been invited to LBJ's
inauguration! —

BARNEY

(bitter)

Great. I'm sure they'll be honored
to meet the flying saucer nuts.

Suddenly, Betty stops herself. Shocked. Realizing...

BETTY

Barney, this is who we're supposed
to deliver the message to — The
President of the United States.

Barney eyes her, like she's crazy.

BETTY (CONT'D)
He's our leader, Barney!-

BARNEY
Alright, calm down. Don't start
with this nonsense.

BETTY
But Barney, this is it, we didn't
know what was going on, but the
aliens did- This is who we're
supposed to deliver the message to!

Barney looks like he's going to break.

BARNEY
There is no *message*, there are no
aliens, just stop! I can't do this
anymore.

Betty stares back. Stung.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
(resigned)
We have Folie-a-Deux. We have to
admit it now and move on.

Betty tries to comprehend what he's saying.

BETTY
(defiant)
Why were the earrings on the table
then? Why were your shoes scuffed-

BARNEY
We made it up! It was a shared
hallucination, like Dr. Simon said!
It never happened.

BETTY
(still strong)
What about when we made second
contact? Something happened to you
out there in the woods. The aliens
came to you-

BARNEY
YOU ARE CRAZY!

Betty looks off, hurt. *Knows he really believes that.*

BARNEY (CONT'D)
And you drove me crazy with you...

Barney gets silent, feeling guilty. A resolved look on his face.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
I think we need to take what Dr. Simon is saying seriously now.

BETTY
And what? "Separate"?...

Barney looks down, guilt-ridden.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Barney, I can't pretend that nothing happened out there. Something extraordinary happened. You asked the scientists at the abduction site, "Why us? Why not someone more powerful?". And now look who we're invited to meet? *The Leader of the Free World!* It's happening, Barney!

Barney stares back. *Fighting himself not to get sucked back into her world.* He storms off to their bedroom.

Betty chases after him.

BETTY (CONT'D)
It didn't make sense at the time why they chose us, but now it makes total sense!

Barney packs his bags.

BARNEY
(sarcastically)
Uh huh. And what's the message?

BETTY
We won't know until we get there.
We'll be used as a portal! Like Vallee told us at the abduction site.

Barney zips his suitcase and rushes out of the bedroom. Betty chases after Barney as he books it to the front door.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Barney, please, just wait! I had a dream about this and it kept saying: "You will know when you need to know."-

Barney turns to Betty, broken up. Trying to stay strong.

BARNEY
Just please go see Dr. Simon.

Barney exits, leaving Betty alone.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

- Barney knocks on Clarence's door, bags in hand.
- Betty has dinner alone.
- Barney, back at the Civil Rights office, sits with other NAACP Members poring over the Report on Fair Housing. But Barney seems like he's not really there. Spiritless.
- Betty alone, watches television. Suddenly, she notices **A BLINKING LIGHT IN THE DISTANCE**, out the window. She can't take it anymore. She makes a call.
- Barney drives by their home, wants to go in - misses her terribly - but he keeps driving.
- Betty sits across from Dr. Simon in his office. He hands her a **prescription**.
- A lonely Betty shops for groceries. She seems out of it, tranquilized. We notice RED, WHITE AND BLUE everywhere. The RADIO in the background chatters on about the afternoon's coming inauguration.
- Betty lugs her groceries home. There's a sense of euphoria in the air, but Betty's not a part of it.
- Betty finishes putting away her groceries. She flips on the television to watch the inauguration, sits down, alone.
- Barney fixes his tie, getting ready for the inauguration.
- Betty watches the inauguration parade on the television, looks over at **Barney's empty chair**, longingly.
- Betty sees the invitation for the inauguration on the fridge. Realizing what she must do. She jumps up.
- Barney and Clarence board the train for Washington, DC.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Barney stares off in a daze out the window. He's strangely quiet. Miserable without Betty. Clarence watches him, worried.

CLARENCE

I hear LBJ's gonna be shifting his focus from Civil Rights to Vietnam now... I guess he got what he wanted.

Barney nods, snapping out of it.

BARNEY

We'll get everything back on track.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON, DC - DAY

We descend upon the steps of Washington, DC - a whirlwind of excitement and hopefulness for a new chapter in America. The hope of The Great Society.

Barney enters the city to find it bustling. Helicopters hover above them. SECRET SERVICE MEN dutifully watch over the event.

Barney stares at the **helicopter's propellers eerily spinning**, but wakes to Senator Hutchison and his family walking up to greet them. Senator Hutchison takes Barney aside.

SENATOR HUTCHISON

I heard about your wife, and I'm very sorry about her troubles.

Barney eyes Clarence, then smiles back, tensely. Doesn't want to discuss this.

SENATOR HUTCHISON (CONT'D)

I want you to know I'm still behind you. I'm recommending you for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. I want to introduce you to the President today.

Barney stares back. Stunned.

BARNEY

Thank you, Senator.

EXT. PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION - WASHINGTON, DC - DAY

Barney and Clarence watch on as LBJ makes his inauguration speech, expressing his dream of The Great Society.

LBJ

(mid-speech)

We are one nation and one people,
our faith as a nation and our
future as a people rests on us
being united.

Barney stares on. Despondent.

LBJ (CONT'D)

Even now a rocket moves towards
Mars, it reminds us the world will
not be the same for our children...

EXT. PARKING LOT - WASHINGTON, DC - DAY

Betty, dressed in a gown, parks her car.

EXT. PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION - WASHINGTON, DC - DAY

The inauguration has just ended, Clarence and Barney follow the crowd to the inaugural ball.

We CUT TO Betty fighting her way through the mob, trying her best to get through - just like in her nightmare. Faces turn. But she's stuck behind people's backs. It's uncanny. Like it's all happened before.

Finally, she sees the towering building of...

INT. THE NATIONAL GUARD - INAUGURATION BALL - EVENING

Betty rushes in to find the INAUGURATION BALL in full swing - a vibrant, elegant crowd of tuxedos and gowns.

A sea of shiny streamers sparkle above like stars in the night sky. Bouquets of golden flowers hang like planets among them.

The gay crowd dances below as they sneak peeks at the newly inaugurated President, standing with his First Lady in a private section marked with the Presidential Seal.

Betty finally spots Barney.

He turns to find her looking his way. They share a moment.

Clarence notices.

CLARENCE

We got too much on the line right now. You gotta distance yourself from her. Eyes on the prize.

But Barney and Betty stare at each other, mesmerized. There's something connecting them that is too powerful and ineffable to be understood.

Clarence grabs Barney, trying to get through.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

This is the moment. You go back to her and get sucked back into her world – there might not be any coming back. Okay?

Barney shifts, realizes he's right.

But then he sees Betty's eyes – wants nothing more than to be with her. *Nothing else matters.* He pushes past Clarence, and rushes to her. Clarence drops his head.

Barney finally makes it to Betty.

BARNEY

(smiles to Betty)

You look beautiful.

BETTY

(smiles, fragile)

You too.

BARNEY

How have you been?

She looks around, uncomfortable.

BETTY

(smirks)

Not good.

BARNEY

(smiles)

Yeah. Me neither.

BETTY

(vulnerable)

I wanted to come here and tell you I'm sorry, Barney, I'm sorry for everything...

(MORE)

BETTY (CONT'D)
 I want you to know I'm on
 medication, I'm seeing Dr. Simon.

Barney notices a change in Betty, in her eyes, like a part of her is disappearing. And it breaks his heart.

BETTY (CONT'D)
 I'll do whatever it takes to have
 you back in my life. You're
 everything to me.

Barney stares back. *Taken by her.*

Just then, a graceful MC enters the stage.

THE MC
 (to the crowd)
 And now, presenting prima
 ballerina, Dame Margot Fonteyn, who
 is joined by one of the most
 exciting dancers of the decade,
 Rudolf Nuyerev, performing the
 stunning Pas-de-Deux from the
 exotic ballet, *La Corsaire*.

Suddenly, Barney notices Betty's eyes look up in shock behind him. He turns to find:

The CURTAINS OPENING TO TALL GREEK COLUMNS ON THE STAGE. -- A strange bunting hangs from either side of them, giving the appearance of **CATS' EYES** staring down at the crowd.

Barney takes it in. Awestruck. *Is this real? The EYES?*

TWO BALLET DANCERS enter the stage and begin a graceful ballet.

BETTY
 (softly, terrified)
 I dreamt this, Barney.

Barney sees Betty's eyes dart behind him. Then a look of terror wash across her face.

Barney follows her gaze to:

A strange light pulsating through the windows.

Barney's eyes go wide. *Stunned. Astonished. Terrified.* -- He sees it too.

He grabs Betty.

BARNEY

The message... It *is* tonight, isn't it?

Betty nods in dread.

BETTY

What are we going to do?

Barney and Betty share a frightened look as an **eerie hum begins to vibrate in their brains**, the light blinking in time in the distance.

Barney's breath quickens. He looks at Betty who stares at him with dread. *Something is about to happen.* -- It's out of their control.

Barney feels like he's being watched, turns to find **the NAR President, Arthur Wilcox, watching him.** Barney takes in his eyes, black and enlarged, glaring at him.

Suddenly, a slow build of eerie images begin to rush before Barney's eyes:

- The spinning dancers.
- The eyes watching them.
- The pulsating light in the distance.
- The eyes of Clarence and Arthur – all glaring at them.

Faster and faster, more and more intense.

The eyes all around Barney start to press on his brain. *He's going to lose control in front of all these people!*

But suddenly the ballet comes to it's end as Rudolph falls to the ground, reaching for his partner. The stage goes **BLACK**.

The LIGHTS BURST back on. An orchestra begins to play "Hail to the Chief" as LBJ descends the stairs.

An excitement wafts through the air as LBJ gets closer and closer to them. Clarence grabs Barney.

CLARENCE

(just to Barney)

Senator Hutchison wants us to say hello to the President, he wants to introduce you.

Barney turns to find Senator Hutchison looking their way, waiting. As Clarence leads him through the thick crowd, he eyes Barney to get rid of Betty.

But Barney won't let go of her hand. Clarence notices, frustrated and disappointed, worried that she is going to embarrass them.

But suddenly LBJ is there, in front of them, joking back and forth with Senator Hutchison, catching up on old times.

Clarence anxiously shoots Barney a look to get rid of Betty!

But it's too late:

SENATOR HUTCHISON
And, this is Mr. Barney Hill, a Civil Rights Leader in New Hampshire. He's doing a lot of great work on Fair Housing right now. He'd be a great candidate for the HUD... Once that's passed, of course.

LBJ nods.

LBJ
Yes, I've heard – using the television cameras to put the issues up North into the light. It's a great tactic. Hits at the soul of the country. Good work.

We notice **Arthur Wilcox** watching their back-and-forth with a strange grin.

BARNEY
Well, Sir, we felt that anyone watching their fellow Americans be denied their basic right to a decent home would be appalled... A right that was given to all Negroes by the 13th amendment.

LBJ nods.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
But the problem is that there are no consequences if someone does not follow that amendment. Time and time again, we are kept back with these technicalities.
(MORE)

BARNEY (CONT'D)

For instance - as you are well-aware by a recent report, Mr. President - we have been systematically zoned out of civilization in this country. There must be a new Civil Rights Act, one in which Fair Housing is the focus.

LBJ takes a swig from his Scotch.

LBJ

We've gone through a lot of changes the past few years, it's a lot to swallow for some, but we're making progress. We can't do everything at once, just need to be patient. But we'll get there.

Clarence watches Barney get timid. A clear boundary has been set. LBJ looks off, waves someone's way. *Time to go.*

BARNEY

(stops him)

The slaves were freed in 1863, we've been patiently waiting for over a 100 years now. How much longer would you like us to wait, Mr. President?

LBJ eyes Barney. Betty smiles to herself, proud of Barney.

But just then, Arthur Wilcox pops in. Shakes Barney's hand.

ARTHUR WILCOX

I thought that was you.

He greets the President.

ARTHUR WILCOX (CONT'D)

(to Barney)

This must be your wife, Betty, caught your little story in *The Boston Traveler* the other day.

Barney, Betty, Clarence - go pale.

ARTHUR WILCOX (CONT'D)

(patronizing)

Would love to hear your story in person - about your flying saucer experience?

LBJ chuckles.

LBJ
Flying saucer?

ARTHUR WILCOX

Oh yeah, The Hills here say they
were on a flying saucer, made
friends with the aliens and
everything.

(to Betty)

Tell us about it? Were they nice,
the aliens?

Barney watches all their eyes, judging them. Their smug
faces, laughing. Barney looks off, sees the **bright light**
pulsating in the distance. Trying his best to fight it.

ARTHUR WILCOX (CONT'D)

Barney, you were on the spacecraft
too, right? Probed and everything,
up in outer space. What a story.

Barney starts to sweat. Notices their eyes – judging them,
ridiculing them. Mocking them.

He feels like he's going mad, into some sort of trance.
Suddenly, *Barney's EYES GO WIDE*.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. SPACESHIP - WHITE MOUNTAINS - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Barney's eyes wide in terror – pinned to his bed, staring up
at something above him – terrified – as MULTI-COLORED LIGHTS
FLASH across his face.

We SLOWLY TILT UP to the ceiling of the craft to find the
source of the flashing lights:

IMAGES OF THE DESTRUCTION OF EARTH PLAY ON THE CEILING.

The consequences of all of our collective greed, judgement
and hate -- images that cannot be communicated with normal
words, images that can only be felt and seen to be believed:

- The ocean at night, forming a massive storm.
- The clouds exploding into thunder and light.
- The bombs of a new World War.
- The poor suffering.

- The ghettos rising and burning.

CUT TO:

INT. INAUGURAL BALL - WASHINGTON, DC - NIGHT

The **humming grows more and more INTENSE** in Barney's brain as the Politicians laugh. HIS EYES WIDE.

- STILL FROZEN IN THAT MOMENT.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SPACESHIP - WHITE MOUNTAINS - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Barney stares on in terror, mouth agape, as these images are burned into his brain. Tears stream.

A flash of images:

- Pollution destroying the earth.
- Famine.
- Genocide.
- Pandemics, disease.
- All Out Nuclear War.

Barney **screams in terror** as he stares up at the horrifying images:

- People starving, screaming - dying in the streets.
- Tsunamis, Hurricanes, Wildfires -- all at once on different parts of the planet as we SLOWLY PULL BACK until we're LOOKING DOWN ON EARTH FROM SPACE.
- Finally, an ERUPTION OF NUCLEAR REACTORS AND BOMBS - as the whole world is annihilated and the earth becomes just an:

OCEAN OF BLOOD.

We PULL BACK, even deeper into space, to REVEAL the BLOOD RED PLANET crumbling apart... Breaking up into a billion pieces... Floating off into space, lost among the stars... *As if it never existed.*

Barney stares back in horror.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. INAUGURAL BALL - WASHINGTON, DC - NIGHT

Barney's eyes go clear. He's back in that same moment. The Politicians laughing.

BARNEY
(quietly, realizing)
They're watching us.

Everyone stops, slowly turns to Barney.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
(terrified)
They're **watching everything we do...** And if we keep destroying each other like this,
(eyes well)
It's over...

Everyone gawks at Barney.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
There is no more time left for war, and pandering to hate. Generations to come will pay for our decisions. This is the beginning of the end – if we don't do something right now.

LBJ eyes Barney. Barney eyes him back. Peering deeper and deeper into LBJ's terrifying eyes.

We SLOWLY ZOOM INTO LBJ'S BLACK PUPILS – AND WE SEE THE TERRIFYING BLACK EYES OF THE CREATURE STARING BACK!

We continue to ZOOM DEEPER AND DEEPER into the blackness, until we are in:

TOTAL DARKNESS.

Suddenly, Barney realizes we are speeding through:

THE UNIVERSE.

Barney stares back, mouth agape, awestruck by the exquisite beauty of the cosmos... The stars, the galaxies, how breathtaking and stunning it all is...

And as he stares into the infinite depths of those eyes, Barney realizes:

There was never anything to fear.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. INAUGURAL BALL - WASHINGTON, DC - NIGHT

LBJ and Barney eye each other.

BARNEY
(with complete faith)
Love and Unity and Peace must be
abided by, not just in words - *in
action* - and immediately. This is
our last chance.

A TENSE BEAT as everyone stares at Barney. Dumbstruck.

Finally, the tension is broken by:

ARTHUR WILCOX
(laughs)
Or, what? The aliens are coming?!

Everyone, including LBJ, bursts into laughter.

ARTHUR WILCOX (CONT'D)
(turns to the President)
So, peace and love? Got that, Mr.
President?
(pats Barney)
Thanks, my man, really mind blowing
stuff! I think you just changed the
world.
(back to the Politicians)
And on that note, let's go grab a
drink.

Wilcox pats LBJ on the back as he leads him away. Senator Hutchison follows but turns back to Barney with a baffled look on his face.

ARTHUR WILCOX (CONT'D)
(to LBJ)
What a nut job.

LBJ laughs with him, but something about Barney has shaken him, he glances back.

Clarence stares at Barney, mortified. Shakes his head, walks off. *Done with him.*

Barney and Betty now stand alone. Betty grabs Barney, embraces him.

We SLOWLY PULL BACK on Barney and Betty holding each other — like there's no one else in the world but them.

CUT TO:

INT. BARNEY AND BETTY'S CAR - WASHINGTON, DC - NIGHT

Barney and Betty drive home in a serene silence — nothing will ever be the same.

Linda Scott's "I've Told Every Little Star" begins to dreamily waft from the car radio. Betty leans her head on Barney's shoulder. Barney puts his arm around her.

We feel their love. They are connected. They are one again.

Out of nowhere, a **BRILLIANT LAVENDER BEAM OF LIGHT** passes over their faces. Barney and Betty's eyes crinkle in astonishment. Taken by something above them.

BARNEY
(wondrously)
Do you see that, Betty?

BETTY
(smiles)
Yes, I do, Barney.

Suddenly, we see **HUNDREDS OF FLYING SAUCERS** reflected in the glass of the windshield, hovering above them, beaming their lights down on them. Filling the sky... It's an awesome sight.

The Hills stare back, wondrously. Holding each other, in love.

And, as we CRANE over their car — **AND OUT OF THEIR POV** — we see THERE'S NOTHING THERE but the infinite starry sky...

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END

SUPERIMPOSED ON SCREEN:

Barney Hill died of a cerebral hemorrhage on February 25, 1969, shortly after the passing of Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (The Fair Housing Act).

Betty Hill lived until 2004, having multiple UFO sightings and experiences throughout her life.

Because of their claims of an alien abduction, Barney and Betty were never acknowledged for their work in the Civil Rights Movement.

