

Hunted

(a dark suspense thriller)

by
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OPENING CREDITS

We see news clippings from the LA Times and other papers.

"Couple found slashed in parking lot, woman survives".
"California Mangler wounds business man in knife attack".

As we read each clip, a brush sweeps over it streaking the newspaper with brightly-colored paint.

"Survivor of murdered family stabbed to death in hospital".
"Homeless man terrorized a second time by same attacker".

The mixture of print and paint grows into a work of art.

"People tracked like animals". "Killer stalks the night".
"Mangler massacres Armenian church group, teenage girl still lives, but for how long".

CUT TO:

INT. GALLERY 21 - EVENING

INSERT: Killer's POV of the finished painting, hanging, a collage of headlines and colors. At the center of the painting is the photo of an teenage Armenian girl, VONYA, before and after she was attacked.

The information card reads "Artist: Charles Vincent Polk, 2005, Title: "HUNTED", Price: \$8,000.00.

People from L.A.'s hip, gallery crowd move about.

It is opening night for Charles Vincent Polk, an artist with a following.

The walls are covered with many large mixed media works: Painted clippings of pop stars, titled: "IDOL": Smearred over magazine recipes titled: "FOOD". But the largest CROWD by far is in front of "HUNTED".

The CROWD moves on, leaving a young black woman, LATISHA JOHNSON by herself in front of the canvas. Her face is scarred from old knife wounds.

LORI HIMMEL, a wide eyed 20 something with an artistic flare steps up to see the painting also.

LATISHA
He didn't put my picture up.

LORI
Excuse me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LATISHA

I was attacked last June. Almost died, same as these folk. Now I can't even leave the house without shakin'. I know what's comin' for me. That's what he does. But tonight I tried real hard and I came down here to see myself in one of these paintings, and this artist, this Polk guy, he doesn't even have my news clip up there. It's like I'm going to die for nothing.

There is a flash. A CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER takes a picture of them. His face is shadowed by a brimmed hat, but what can be seen of it is disturbing and scarred. Latisha steps away leaving Lori alone. The Creepy Photographer is gone. Lori opens her journal and writes in it.

"Art gives empty people a reason to live...and to die"

CHARLES

(flirting)

Stealing the secrets of my success?

The painter, CHARLES VINCENT POLK is there. He is a handsome eccentric, in his late twenties. He is also a little drunk.

Lori stares at him. She is obviously a big fan.

LORI

I'd love to.

CHARLES

Looking at this piece, one could say that I'm pointing out how the media packages human suffering into neat little headlines for us to brood over.

LORI

Your soul is revealed.

CHARLES

Of course, that could be just a bunch of crap I say to impress beautiful young ladies. Charles Polk.

LORI

Lori Himmel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHARLES
Are you a critic?

LORI
No, not really.

Enter JANE SELLERS, an elegant, middle-aged blond, smart and "hot", a powerful artists' manager and she represents Charles.

JANE
Why, there you are, Charles. Buzz Magazine is clamoring for an interview.

CHARLES
Off with their heads.

JANE
Oh Charles. Excuse us for a moment.

Jane pulls Charles aside.

JANE (CONT'D)
I think that we have had a little too much champagne.

CHARLES
You maybe, but not me.

Charles grabs a champagne bottle from a passing tray & swigs.

JANE
You are very drunk.

CHARLES
Ummmm-Hmmmm. Update please?

JANE
Well, darling, I've sold less than I'd hoped. Maybe you should have made these a little larger, for lobbies.

CHARLES
Fuck lobbies.

JANE
I'm going to get you a nice hot cup of coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Jane wanders off. Charles scans the gallery. Lori Himmel is standing by a painting. Charles goes to her.

CHARLES
Hello again.

LORI
Hi.

CHARLES
Do you want to buy this one?

LORI
Oh, God no.

CHARLES
Wow. Least you're honest.

LORI
Sorry. I meant that I couldn't afford any of these. I love your work, I always have, especially the early stuff.

CHARLES
Ah. Hey, would you like to take a walk with me? I have a bottle of Tattinger?

LORI
Why Mr. Polk, are you trying to get a strange girl drunk?

Charles flirts with Lori as they walk to the back door.

INSERT: Killer's POV of Charles and Lori moving through the CROWD.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND GALLERY 21 - CONTINUOUS

Charles and Lori exit the gallery through the back door. A few PEOPLE are smoking and chatting on the steps. The Creepy Photographer steps out behind them. Charles pulls Lori round the corner into a more private spot.

CHARLES
Over here.

LORI
Won't they miss you inside?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES

So.

He passes the champagne to Lori. They look hard at each other.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You a painter?

LORI

I'm in art school.

She pulls a card from her cleavage. It shows her posing in an exotic costume. The name is simply "Lori: Performance Artist". He takes it.

CHARLES

Well Lori, performance artist, I'll be happy to teach you a few tricks of the trade.

They lean in to kiss.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER

Can I have a sip from that bottle?

There's a silhouette of a SHADOWY FIGURE in a long coat and brimmed hat.

CHARLES

Hey man, gi'me a break. I'm trying to do something here.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER

Me too.

LORI

Let's go back in.

CHARLES

All right guy, take the whole thing. Just leave us alone.

The Shadowy Figure reaches out a mangled hand and takes the bottle. There is an ugly, swallowing sound.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER

Ummmm. That's fresh. Now I want something else.

Just then Jane steps over to their private spot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JANE

There you are. I've been looking
for you everywhere.

The Shadowy Figure drops the bottle and a large knife
flashes. With lightning speed, he slashes Jane's face and
then turns on Charles and Lori. They run, screaming.

The Shadowy Figure chases them.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY WITH ALCOVE - CONTINUOUS

Charles leads Lori around a bend. They duck into a dark
doorway. Charles peers out. Everything looks clear.

LORI

Is he coming?

CHARLES

Shhhh.

Suddenly from behind them, a WINO emerges.

WINO

Can you spare a dollar, buddy?

Charles and Lori leap from the doorway. The Shadowy Figure
is waiting. Charles is slashed. Still, he slams the figure
aside, grabs Lori and escapes.

The Shadowy Figure turns to the Wino and hacks.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY WITH SCAFFOLD - CONTINUOUS

Charles and Lori make their way to the dead end of the Alley.
There is a scaffold and a waste shoot above them.

LORI

HELP!

CHARLES

HELP! ANYBODY!

Down the Alley, in silhouette, is The Shadowy Figure.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER

I have a present for you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Shadowy Figure flings the knife at Charles and Lori. It lands. Charles picks it up and grips it for battle.

CHARLES

Come on you sick fuck! C'MON!

Suddenly Lori is grabbed from behind.

Charles lunges. The Shadowy Figure moves Lori into the knife thrust and she is stabbed. Charles lunges at another opening. Again The shadowy figure shifts and Lori receives the wound. It is a bullfight.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER

This must be wearing thin on your girlfriend.

Mustering strength, Lori slams her head backwards into the Shadowy Figure knocking him into the scaffold. The scaffold shudders as a small pile of debris sprinkles down on him.

Lori falls and Charles stabs The Shadowy Figure over and over until he stumbles back.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER (CONT'D)

Oh, you're better at this than I thought.

SFX: Police sirens sound in the distance.

The Shadowy Figure grabs a large pipe and hits Charles. Then he beats Lori into a coma.

In a desperate show of strength Charles throws himself at the Shadowy Figure, thrusting his blade deep.

SFX: The sirens get louder.

Bloody and exhausted, Charles faces the mangled killer, waiting for him to drop. Instead, the killer pulls the knife out and slowly approaches.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER (CONT'D)

My turn.

The Shadowy Figure leaps at Charles, crashing into the scaffold. Bits of rubble trickle down as it teeters.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND GALLERY 21 - MOMENTS LATER

The flashing blue lights of squad cars and bright white headlights illuminate the area. Police hold back a crowd of people from the gallery as the wounded Jane is being tended to by PARAMEDICS.

DETECTIVE LIEBOWITZ, a sturdy woman in her mid-30s, and DETECTIVE LORENZO, her senior partner, are heading up the investigation.

Suddenly there is the blood-curdling shriek of a man.

LIEBOWITZ

This way!

She charges up the Alley followed by Lorenzo and some POLICE.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY WITH ALCOVE - CONTINUOUS

The Police run past the body of the Wino.

LORENZO (INTO A RADIO)

We have a civilian down. Get the
E.M.T. over here pronto.

SFX: There is a huge rumble and a crashing sound.

LIEBOWITZ

You, take that way! The rest of
you, to my right!

Liebowitz leads her group in formation, around the corner.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY WITH SCAFFOLD - CONTINUOUS

Liebowitz and the Police reach the crime scene. The scaffold and garbage chute has collapsed. Amidst the piles of rubble, are the battered bodies of Lori, Charles and the shadowy figure of the California Mangler.

Lori has been stabbed and beaten unconscious.

Charles has been torn apart and his face is gone, but he lives.

The Mangler lays, crushed to death under the heaviest load of rubble.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COP #1

Oh my God!

LIEBOWITZ

See if the victims are alive.

COP #1

Are you kidding?

LIEBOWITZ

Just do it!

Liebowitz checks out The Mangler's body. Using a tweezers, she pulls out a piece of paper from his coat pocket. It's a gallery brochure. Charles Polk's picture and name are circled. Her foot taps the Mangler's body to test it.

LIEBOWITZ (CONT'D)

Good riddance, you piece of shit.

There is a flash of light as Detective Liebowitz's picture is taken. The Creepy photographer hunches in the shadows.

LIEBOWITZ (CONT'D)

This is an active crime scene! No press! I WANT A PERIMETER HERE PEOPLE! Hey, don't I know you?

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER

Of course you do.

The Creepy Photographer takes another blinding shot and limps away into the shadows.

LIEBOWITZ

Hey, you! Stop!

COP #1

(by Lori)

She's alive.

LIEBOWITZ

Stay with her. Keep her conscious.

COP #2

(by Charles)

So is this guy, but barely.

Liebowitz goes to Charles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LIEBOWITZ

Can you hear me, Mr. Polk? Help is
on the way.

INSERT: Charles's POV of Liebowitz.

LIEBOWITZ (CONT'D)

Help is on the way.

The Paramedics arrive. Liebowitz grabs COP #2.

LIEBOWITZ (CONT'D)

Find all of Mr. Polk's missing
pieces and bag 'em up. In Ice.

The Paramedics begin putting Charles on a stretcher. Charles
revives for a moment and reaches out his bloody finger
stumps.

INSERT: Charles's POV of the Paramedics over him.

CHARLES

(gurgling)
Am I going to die?

PARAMEDIC 1

No, sir. But you gotta hang in
there.

INSERT: POV: Charles's vision blurs to black.

CUT TO:

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY OFFICE - DAY - ONE YEAR LATER

DR. KIM, a handsome Korean woman in her late 30's holds a
clipboard. She takes notes while observing her patient.

DR. KIM

Again, please.

A man's left hand is squeezing a rubber ball. Circling his
entire wrist is a scar-line from stitches.

Dr. Kim flips to a diagram. It shows the medical outline of
her patient's body, with his surgeries noted: his face,
hands, liver, throat and more. The chart is titled Charles
Vincent Polk: reattachment & reconstruction. Dr. Kim jots a
note.

DR. KIM (CONT'D)

Does it hurt when you squeeze?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Charles looks up. He is stripped to his undershorts. His face is slightly unnatural from so many surgeries. His body shows far more scars than the chart implies.

CHARLES

It tickles.

His voice is still weird from the larynx operation. He clears his throat.

DR. KIM

Last week you said that your hands itched a lot.

CHARLES

I don't remember.

DR. KIM

Let me see.

She checks his left hand touching each finger with a pointy tool. Charles smiles dumbly. He seems almost like a child.

DR. KIM (CONT'D)

Can you feel that?

CHARLES

Yes.

DR. KIM

How about there?

CHARLES

Ugh huh.

The pink tips twitch as Dr. Kim touches them with the sharp point.

DR. KIM

This?

CHARLES

There, that's a tickley one.

DR. KIM

Well, it's normal. It's your severed nerves coming together again. Soon you'll have all your feeling back. Other hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Charles switches. The fingers on Charles's right hand all have white scar lines from where they had been sliced off and sewn back on. She begins tapping with the point.

DR. KIM (CONT'D)

So, you've started painting again?

CHARLES

No. I don't think so.

DR. KIM

Well, your hands don't lie.

CHARLES

Let me see.

He looks closely at his hand. Red and black paint are smeared on it.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Look at that.

DR. KIM

Memory still a problem?

CHARLES

I guess. Sometimes it's there and sometimes it's not.

DR. KIM

Anything from before, you know, before the attack?

CHARLES

No.

DR. KIM

Well, everything takes time. You've got your hands back. That's a miracle. Even your face looks great. All things considered, you are a lucky man.

CHARLES

Oh, good.

DR. KIM

So, I'll see you next week.

CHARLES

Next week?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DR. KIM

Yes, Thursday, four o'clock. You have it in your pod.

She motions to a digital device with a screen that is hanging from a strap around his neck. Charles pushes the arrow button and dozens of photos and notes flash on the screen. He stops at a photo of "Dr. Lucy Kim." The note tagged on it says "Be at her office, Cedar Sinai Hospital, room 316, every Thursday 4 PM. 'Alarm 'ON'."

CHARLES

Doctor Kim. Okay, hello.

DR. KIM

Hello, Charles. So, I'll see you Thursday?

CHARLES

Yes. Absolutely.

DR. KIM

And listen Charles, doing things that were part of your life before the trauma will help your memory to return. So keep painting.

CHARLES

Painting?

She writes the words "KEEP PAINTING" on a piece of paper and hands it to him. He smiles.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Okay. I will.

He begins to walk towards the door.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Thank you, Doctor Kim. See you next week.

DR. KIM

Clothes, Charles.

He notices that he is in his underpants. She holds up his other clothes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CHARLES

Right.
(grabs them)
How do I get home again?

CUT TO:

EXT. TAXI -- DAY

A taxi is soaring down Santa Monica Blvd.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLK'S FRONT DOOR -- DAY

Charles stands, lost in thought. He is staring at a pile of mail in his hands. On top of the pile of bills and junk mail is a post card with the words "I'M WATCHING YOU" on it. Charles looks around.

Charles tries to remember, to focus on what he is supposed to do. He rings the doorbell and waits.

He waits. A horn honks.

A taxi cab is double parked behind him. The TAXI DRIVER honks. A stocky Russian Taxi Driver gets out.

TAXI DRIVER

Hey fella! Hey you! Where's my money?

Charles flips to a picture of a front door. The address is clearly tagged along the top with a note: "My house. Show this to the cab Driver."

CHARLES

Are you the cab driver?

TAXI DRIVER

Sure. That's me.

Charles holds up the picture for the Driver to see.

TAXI DRIVER (CONT'D)

Yeah, so, you already showed that to me in the taxi. Now give me my thirty seven bucks or I'm callin' the cops.

Charles flips through the pictures.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES
Just... just a Second...

TAXI DRIVER
Try the pockets.

Charles does. He pulls out a note: "Keep painting", and a wallet. The Taxi Driver grabs a fifty.

TAXI DRIVER (CONT'D)
Yeah, this is fine for me.

CHARLES
Thank you.

The Taxi Driver leaves. Charles takes out a Sharpie and writes on the door frame: "Money, Wallet, right pocket."

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Money and...

He reaches into his pocket and finds his keys. He writes on the frame "...and keys".

Charles unlocks the door and goes in.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HOUSE FRONT ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Charles steps into his beautiful apartment. He sees it as if for the first time.

CHARLES
Wow!

The large front room is decorated with paintings and posters from a variety of artists. Against the wall is a large salt water fish tank. It is tasteful, eclectic and young.

This was the home of Charles Vincent Polk before his memory loss. Now it is a ghost from the past. The new, brain damaged Charles Polk has redesigned the space with photos, alarm clocks and note-cards taped, tacked and piled all around the previous decor.

His walls are an external memory bank, the surface of his missing brain.

And there, in the dining room is an empty easel. Next to it are a number of blank white canvasses and a box of Acrylic Paints with brushes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The door shuts behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. JANE SELLER'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

Jane sits on a comfortable chair at her desk in front of a large window overlooking the city. She is on the phone. At first we see only her lips.

JANE

Hello darling it's me Jane at Gallery 21 in Beverly Hills. Tre Magnifique, and you? Wunderbar. Look, darling, I have some very interesting news about one of my painters. Charles Vincent Polk. Of course I still see him, I drove him to the hospital this morning. Well, I'm sure he doesn't remember, he still has amnesia you know. Well I spoke with his doctor today and she is certain that he has started painting again. That's right. So, I wanted to call you pronto. Interested? Good. Yes, you will be my very first, I promise. I look forward to it. Ciao Bella, darling.

Jane hangs up and focuses on one of Charles Polk's paintings, "Hunted" hanging on the wall. In the center is the pictures of the Armenian girl before and after the attack.

Jane flips the card on her rolladeck to the next contact. She punches in the number on her phone.

JANE (CONT'D)

Buon giorno, Antonio, it's me Jane at Gallery 21 in Beverly Hills. Good, good. Look precious, I have some very interesting news about one of my painters...

We move out of her window and over the city and...

MOVE TO:

INT. DOCTOR SCHNEIDER'S OFFICE -- LATE AFTERNOON

DR. SCHNEIDER is examining VONYA GASSAMIAN, the 16 year old Armenian girl from the painting. She has a mangled ear and a knife scar down her face.

DR. SCHNEIDER

Your ear has healed up very nicely.
You should start going back to
school.

VONYA

I like to stay home.

DR. SCHNEIDER

A pretty young girl like you locked
up in the house all day. It's not
good.

VONYA

I feel safer with my mom.

DR. SCHNEIDER

Of course. Just remember that the
man who hurt you is dead. He's
gone.

VONYA

I know.

DR. SCHNEIDER

So. Make friends. Go on a date.
Doctor's orders. Now, let's take a
look at your missing fingers.

We zoom out the window and...

MOVE TO:

INT. LORI'S APARTMENT - SMALL KITCHEN -- EARLY EVENING

Lori Himmel, the girl that was attacked with Charles one year earlier is sitting at the kitchen table sipping tea. Her boisterous retro-hippy roommate, TISH is pacing and lecturing her. Lori's neck and brow have embarrassing scars.

LORI

I just don't feel like going out.

TISH

But you never do, Lori.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORI
I have my reasons.

TISH
What, your face? I know people who
would pay money for those scars.
Bill will be there.

LORI
I don't even like Bill. Look Tish,
I was attacked by a psycho killer,
okay. A guy who hunts and kills
the people that survive. See
that...
(she shows a scar)
I survived.

TISH
The creep who did that is long
gone.

LORI
Every time I hear a noise or see a
stranger coming up to me I freak.

TISH
Jesus, Lor.

The phone rings. TISH picks it up.

TISH (CONT'D)
Hello?

There is a click and dial tone.

LORI
I'm not going out to the club
tonight, no way.

We zoom out the window and...

MOVE TO:

INT. HIP BAR -- NIGHT

The young black woman from the gallery, Latisha Johnson is on
a bar stool with a half finished drink just sitting there.
Other couples are flirting and pairing off but she is alone.
She looks depressed. A LADIES MAN comes up from behind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LADIES MAN

Well hello there. Can I offer you
a fresh one?

LATISHA

(not looking)

Sure, a Metropolitan please.

LADIES MAN

(to bartender)

A metropolitan for the lady.

(to Latisha)

I'm Jake. I haven't seen you
around here. You new in town?

LATISHA

I don't get out much.

She turns around to face him. Her scars are disfiguring.
The Ladies Man holds in his shock.

LATISHA (CONT'D)

My name's Latisha.

LADIES MAN

Wow! Great. Hey, do you have the
time?

LATISHA

It's 11:15.

LADIES MAN

Wow. I'm so late. I've got
a...thing.

The drink comes as the Ladies Man leaves.

LADIES MAN (CONT'D)

Put it on my tab. I have to get
going.

LATISHA

Don't bother. I'll pay for it.

BARTENDER

Sorry about that miss. Some guys
can be real jerks.

The BARTENDER sees her face and turns away in shock. Latisha
is so heartbroken that she throws her cash down and leaves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

INSERT: Killer's POV of her walking out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Latisha storms out of the bar, past a few smokers and up the dark street. Someone is behind her. She looks. Nothing.

Latisha walks faster pulling out her keys and beeping her car. She gets in and pulls the door shut...It won't close.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER

What do you want to leave for, the party's just starting.

LATISHA

NO!

The Mangler pulls her back at knife point. He is now in the Driver's seat. The door closes.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER

Let's go on a little drive. For old times sake.

LATISHA

(screams)

Nothing of the scream can be heard from the outside. The car starts up and pulls into traffic.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S FRONT ROOM -- NEXT DAY - MORNING

Charles is sitting, staring at the fish tank.

CHARLES

Hey fishy fishy fishy.

Charles notices a note above the tank: "Don't forget to feed the fish". Charles feeds the fish.

He looks around the room. In the far corner is an open box of art supplies and a note, "KEEP PAINTING".

He hears a noise in the other room.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Hello? Is anybody there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's nothing.

Ding Ding comes from the digital wall clock. Next to it is a note: "One Ding: Red Pills. Two Dings: Blue Pills. Charles swallows a pile of pills from a blue container.

Charles follows a trail of notes, photos and post-its into the distance until a newspaper clipping catches his eye.

"Two torn apart by California Mangler. Attacker is DOA".

It shows a photo of a handsome young Charles posing in front of a painting and one of the crime scene. Charles carefully removes the thumb tacks and unfolds the clip revealing a picture of a girl with the caption...

"Polk's unlucky date, Lori-Anne Himmel stabbed six times."

A business card falls from the fold. It shows the same girl in a costume. The name on the card is simply "Lori, performance artist". Charles seems to recognize her.

He hears a door closing in the other room.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Hello?

Charles puts the clipping and card in his pocket.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Anybody there?

There's another noise.

Charles turns round the bend.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S DINING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Charles enters to face the easel with a fresh painting on it. By his expression the painting must be dark and terrible.

He reaches for a big tube of yellow.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HOUSE BEDROOM NICHE -- LATER

Charles is sitting on the bed staring into space. He holds the phone receiver. There is yellow paint on his hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POLICE CAPTAIN

Hello. Mr. Polk, are you still there?

CHARLES

(snaps out of it)

Hello? Who am I speaking with please?

OFFICER

This is Captain LaGuardia, LAPD.

He looks at the phone. There is a speed-dial button for "police". It has fresh paint on it.

POLICE CAPTAIN

You called us with a complaint? It says here, breaking and entering?

CHARLES

Oh. Okay.

POLICE CAPTAIN

You probably don't remember but we've been out to your house on false alarms oh five, six times already this month.

CHARLES

I'm sorry.

POLICE CAPTAIN

So let's work together on figuring out a way to solve this, all right.

CHARLES

All right.

POLICE CAPTAIN

Write yourself a nice big note that says "Don't Call the Police..." Are you writing it?

CHARLES

No.

POLICE CAPTAIN

Well write it. "Don't call the police..."

Charles finds a full sheet of paper already in his other hand. He has to search for a marker. He writes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHARLES

"Do not call the police,..."

POLICE CAPTAIN

"...call someone else".

CHARLES

"...call someone else".

POLICE CAPTAIN

Now tape that up over the phone and you have yourself a nice day. Okay Mr. Polk.

CHARLES

Okay.

They hang up. Charles stares at the note.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Do not call the police.

He flips the paper over. On the other side is written...

"HE IS IN THE HOUSE"

He looks up. On the edge of the room is a STOCKY WOMAN around 46.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Who are you!

She disappears. He runs after her. Glass breaks and footsteps thud ahead of him.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

The back door swings open and there's the sound of somebody running down the steps.

Charles grabs a butcher knife from the wooden block and leaps outside in hot pursuit.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLK'S YARD -- CONTINUOUS

Charles runs into the yard. No sign. Up the street: No one suspicious.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INSERT: We see across the yard. His NOSEY NEIGHBOR is watching.

No sure why he is there, Charles returns to his house.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HOUSE BEDROOM NICHE -- NIGHT

Charles is laying on the bed staring at the news clipping and Lori's card.

His eye wanders to the easel with the painting on it. Whatever is underneath, the painting is now covered in a thick coat of yellow paint.

He puts the news-clip in his dresser drawer.

There is blood on his arm. He is still gripping the butcher knife. He has cut himself. Blood is smeared all over.

CHARLES

Shit.

Bloody, muddy footprints are tracked across the floor.

A dog starts barking outside. Charles goes to the window.

INSERT: Across the street, under a lamp post is the shadowy figure of the Creepy Photographer watching Charles.

Charles knocks on the window.

INSERT: The Creepy Photographer points to Charles and then drags his finger across his throat like a knife. There is already a scar on his neck. He turns.

Charles runs for the front door.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

No! No wait! Who are you? What do you want?

He opens the front door. A car speeds off.

A sign on the door stops Charles from following.

"DO NOT LEAVE WITHOUT HOUSE KEYS". Charles feels for keys but his pockets are empty.

He scans everywhere for them. Photos, notes, news clips. No keys. He is lost.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hears a noise from inside the house.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Who's there?

Charles turns back into the house. He steps delicately over the muddy and blood footprints on the ground, heading for the dining room.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S DINING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

He turns the corner.

There, leaning against the table is another painting. By the look on his face it is as horrific as the first one.

After a moment of thought he reaches for the paints.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S FRONT ROOM -- LATER

Charles is in front of his salt water fish tank. He is covered in paint and old blood.

CHARLES
Hey fishy fishies.

There is a sign "Don't forget to feed fish". Charles feeds them.

His eyes scan the wall. There is an empty space.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S BATHROOM -- LATER

Charles is in front of the mirror with his shirt off. He is covered with old scars. He also has blood and paint on him.

The shower is going.

There is a digital camera. He scans through the pictures. They are all of him in the mirror. The oldest ones look like Frankenstein's monster, swollen, grafted, bright red and sickly purple.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He takes a shot of himself and tosses the camera down.
Charles gets in the shower as steam covers the mirror.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HALL -- MORNING

Charles steps out of the bathroom drying his hair and whistling. Up the hall is bright. Down the hall is dark and it ends with a door.

He hears a loud noise coming from the front of the house.

CHARLES walks towards the hall door to the front room.

He presses himself against the wall and sneaks a peak around the corner. He sees the shadow of a person but he can't see more.

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Charles opens the door all the way. He creeps out enough to see through the front window.

INSERT: There is a Buick double parked with an OLD MAN in it.

There is also someone at his dining table. His childish paintings are all stacked neatly against the wall.

Charles is tense and ready to pounce. The person at the table is going through his mail. It is his Mother, MRS POLK.

MRS. POLK
Finished with your shower,
sweetheart?

Charles looks puzzled for a second.

MRS. POLK (CONT'D)
I put the groceries away. Honestly,
I had to throw so much rotted old
stuff into the trash it's a wonder
I still bother to buy you any fresh
vegetables at all.

CHARLES
Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. POLK

I also did the dishes. Did you cut yourself or something?

CHARLES

Maybe.

MRS. POLK

Well, there was a big mess. All over the house. I cleaned it with bleach. You have to use bleach to get blood out, you know. It doesn't work on paint though. You should really lay down some plastic or something when you work. But I suppose you have a cleaning lady for all that. It must be nice.

Charles forces himself to think. He looks around desperately for pictures on the walls or a clue anywhere. He sees his pod on the table with the screen showing a picture of the woman in his house.

CHARLES

Mom?

MRS. POLK

Yes dear. My goodness you spend a lot of money on things. I've paid your the bills. All you need to do is sign the checks.

She holds out a pen. Charles starts signing. He uses a sample signature to guide him.

MRS. POLK (CONT'D)

You got some fan mail and an envelope full of pictures. I left them for you to look at. Do you know who gave you this?

She holds up the post card with the words "I'M WATCHING YOU".

CHARLES

No.

MRS. POLK

Well, there are quite a few of them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She motions to a number of postcards all with similar messages. They all have the same handwriting as the piece of paper from the other night.

MRS. POLK (CONT'D)

It looks like a stalker or an angry fan. I think that you should call the police.

CHARLES

Okay, I will.

MRS. POLK

Good, now quick, get ready to go or we'll be late.

CHARLES

Late for what?

MRS. POLK

Honestly Charlie, sometimes I think that you're making this whole problem up just to avoid me. It's Saturday. We're supposed to go shopping with your father. He's waiting in the car. We made plans. Remember? Now hurry up. You know how he hates to wait.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONTAGE OF MALLS -- DAY

A blur of lights and sounds and malls and lunch. We see what Charles remembers: A garble.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HOUSE BEDROOM NICHE -- LATER

Charles is crying, weeping on the edge of his bed. He is surrounded by bags from Neiman-Marcus and Bloomingdale's.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HOUSE BEDROOM NICHE -- LATER

Charles is standing in front of a wall full of notes, reading them out-loud.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES

"My name is Charles Vincent Polk. I am five feet eleven inches tall. My favorite color is blue. My blood type is O-positive".

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S FRONT ROOM -- LATER

He is slopping yellow paint on his already painted over canvases. The note "KEEP PAINTING" is taped to the easel.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S BATHROOM -- LATER

Charles is smeared with paint in front of the mirror. There is an envelope of photos. He thumbs through them. They are All taken from outside of his house through the window of Charles doing things.

He shrugs it off and takes another snapshot in the mirror.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HOUSE BEDROOM NICHE - NIGHT

Charles is on the bed laughing at the television. A commercial is on. He gets it. It's short. Then a show comes back on and he doesn't get it. He grabs the remote and switches channels. He finds another commercial. He laughs.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HOUSE BEDROOM NICHE -- LATER

Charles is sleeping fitfully.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE -- NIGHT

We are in the living room of a suburban family. As we pan the walls we see photographs of mom, dad and the kids. We hear people on the TV talking in the background.

WOMAN ON TV

How did you get in here? The door is locked?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN ON TV

You think your weak little locks
can keep me out?

WOMAN ON TV

What... what do you want from me?

MAN ON TV

I want to suck your blood.

WOMAN ON TV

No! No! AAAAAAAA!!!

Dramatic TV music soars. The blue light of a television
flickers on a DEAD MAN sitting in an easy chair.

The rest of the house is the site of a gruesome murder scene.

A WOMAN SURVIVOR drags herself to the phone.

WOMAN SURVIVOR

Please Jesus, Please Jesus save
us...

She pushes the buttons for emergency.

OPERATOR

9-1-1.

WOMAN SURVIVOR

He took my little girl.

The phone falls from her mouth as she passes out.

CUT TO:

INT. SECRET BASEMENT -- NIGHT

The cold stone walls of a damp basement are illuminated by a
series of bare bulbs. Edges of the upper wall give way to a
crawl-space with pipes and duct-work. There is a furnace and
a water heater. We are under a building.

Buckets of oily liquids sit in corners and tools and bedding
are cluttered along the sides. Paper plates with half eaten
food sit on the edges of used furniture. A boom box blasts
unsettling music. Amidst the sounds are high pitched
shrieks.

A SHADOWY FIGURE is painting feverishly. Dark oil paints
splatter like blood. Turpentine is splashed onto brushes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wedged into a nearby niche is a cage. In it is a seven year old girl, NAOMI. She is soiled with blood and body fluids.

NAOMI
(shrieks continuously)
Help! Mommy! Mommy!

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S FRONT ROOM -- MORNING

The doorbell rings. CHARLES is sitting like a mannequin in a chair in front of his fish. He snaps out of it. The bell rings again.

CHARLES
Huh?

He gets up and scurries to the door. He looks through the peephole.

INSERT: It is a large blonde woman in her late 30's, JANE. She has a scar down the middle of her face.

JANE
Let me in sweetheart or I'll use my key.

CHARLES steps back and looks at the door frame. It is covered with picture print-outs and notes. "People who visit." He scans them. His mother, the mailman, the Jehovah's Witness, his neighbor, his agent... It is his Agent, Jane. He opens the door.

CHARLES
Jane.

JANE
Bon Jour my darling. I brought you coffee and a scone.

She steps in and Kisses him on both cheeks.

CHARLES
I recognized you. See, I'm getting better.

JANE
Of course you are, Charles.

She puts the coffee down. CHARLES sees a note "offer guests a drink".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES

Can I get you a drink, Jane?

JANE

A drink, how sweet. No darling, I'm here on business. Strictly business.

CHARLES sees a note "Invite Your Friends for Lunch".

CHARLES

Would you like some lunch?

JANE

Lunch? Stop reading the walls Charles, it's pitiful. Honestly, when are you going to wake up and join me in the real world? There's plenty of room.

CHARLES

I...well...I...

JANE

Don't try to answer, darling. Look at you, you're covered in paint. That's actually a very good sign.

CHARLES looks at his hands. He is indeed covered.

CHARLES

Sure. I'm a painter, right?

JANE

Yes you are. An artist. And I have lots and lots of people who are asking about that art. So, as your agent, I'm here to see your progress.

CHARLES

Oh, I don't know. I...

JANE

Don't get all flustered darling, I got your message.

CHARLES

My message?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JANE

Yes, Charles, your phone message. You called me in the middle of the night on my office line: said you had just finished a number of "very special works". You sounded extremely tired on the recording. Would you like to hear it?

CHARLES

No thank you.

JANE

Oh, don't be despondent Charles. Just figure out where the new paintings are and show them to me. What about your old studio? Have you unlocked that mummy's tomb yet and put it to good use?

CHARLES

What studio?

JANE

Dig deep into that black hole that you call a memory and figure it out.

CHARLES

(suddenly happy)

I have paintings.

He shows her his wall.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Fish.

She checks out the fish and the stick figures.

JANE

You can't be serious darling. These are doodles. And doodles don't pay the bills my dear unless you're Picasso or someone like that.

She pulls them from the wall and hands CHARLES the stack of doodles

JANE (CONT'D)

Here, sign these anyway darling, just in case.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JANE continues searching until she finds the paint splattered carpet and the "KEEP PAINTING" note.

JANE (CONT'D)

This looks promising. Let's see what's in the closet.

She opens the nearby closet.

JANE (CONT'D)

Ah ha! The message machine does not lie.

CHARLES

What is it?

JANE

Art darling. It's art.

JANE pulls out two canvasses coated in layer after layer of acrylic paint. She leans them against the wall. The yellow, white and pink backgrounds have childish stick figures and simple outlines of things.

CHARLES

Did I paint those?

JANE

Yes, Charles, I'm afraid you did.

CHARLES

Are they good?

JANE

What does it matter, darling. You're painting again. That's what's most important. Now, as soon as you write your name on these they're official, the post traumatic portfolio of Charles Vincent Polk. The first simple works of a recovering mind. I'm sure that I can sell them for something.

She shoves them at CHARLES.

JANE (CONT'D)

Sign them both and eat your scone. I have phone calls to make and I'm not looking forward to it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CHARLES signs them as JANE watches. She sees a smear of dark paint under the thick coat of acrylic.

JANE (CONT'D)

Did you paint over something else
darling?

She touches the dark paint and smells her finger.

JANE (CONT'D)

That's linseed oil under there
Charles. You covered up another
painting. An oil painting. May I?

JANE finds an edge of rubbery acrylic paint and begins to peel it off. A thick strip pulls away revealing the work underneath.

JANE (CONT'D)

Charles, be a dear and get me a
butter knife and glass of warm
water from the kitchen.

CHARLES goes. JANE continues to peel off chip after chip. What she can see of the work underneath is dark and horrible. Demons, death and torture. Like a mix of Gigor, Francis Bacon and Jehronemus Bosh. Like a murder scene in hell.

CHARLES enters with the knife and water.

CHARLES

How's this?

JANE

Fine.

CHARLES

Did I do that one too?

JANE

So we might assume.

CHARLES

I don't like it.

JANE moves on to the other canvas and uses the warm wet knife. It peels faster. Another horrific work is partially revealed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

JANE

Art doesn't have to make you feel good Charles, it just has to make you feel. Where did you paint these? Certainly not in this room.

CHARLES

I don't know.

JANE gets up and walks off.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

JANE

To your old studio darling. I'm on a hunt.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HALL -- CONTINUOUS

They move on towards the dark part, towards the door at the end of the hall.

CHARLES

What are we looking for again?

JANE

Paintings, brushes, the scene of the crime. Just follow me.

They get to the door. It's locked.

JANE (CONT'D)

Do you have a key for this?

CHARLES

I don't know.

JANE checks places nearby to hide a key. She finds it.

JANE

Let's try it.

The door opens.

JANE (CONT'D)

Viola!

CUT TO:

INT. OLD STUDIO -- CONTINUOUS

They step in. It's dark and loaded with things. Once it was a bright painter's studio but not anymore.

CHARLES
I've never been in here.

JANE sees many footprints and scrape marks on the dusty floor.

JANE
I beg to differ. This is where you used to work.

There is a bare bulb dangling from the ceiling. JANE pulls the string. For a split second there's light. A dark figure is standing behind her. JANE jumps. The the bulb blows, POP!

JANE (CONT'D)
Charles?

CHARLES
I'm here. I found a flashlight.

He turns it on. The figure behind JANE was just CHARLES reflected in a mirror.

JANE
Jesus, darling, being your agent is no vacation.

They move through the room with the flashlight. Eventually the light lands on a freshly painted canvas leaning up against the wall.

It shows a family murdered and surrounded by demons. Body parts are hanging on hooks as the devil stands in the shadows devouring his own flesh. It is horrible and beautiful.

JANE (CONT'D)
My God Charles.

JANE touches it. Paint gets on her fingers. It's still wet.

CHARLES
Who did that?

JANE
You did. Less than a few hours ago by the looks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES

It's awful.

JANE

Awful? It's fantastic. From the mind of an artist who has escaped... who has narrowly escaped... murder, horrible murder.

CHARLES

Don't talk like that.

JANE

This is the best thing you have ever done. Sign it.

CUT TO:

EXT. IN FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

JANE'S convertible has the three canvases in the back.

JANE

Okay, darling, now you have to keep painting.

CHARLES

I will.

JANE

And don't cover them up with that awful yellow. I'll stop by again soon for the next batch.

CHARLES

Okay. What's your name again?

JANE

Jane darling, I'm the girl of your dreams. I make you money, I put out when you need it and as long as the paintings keep rolling in, I'll be your ally even if you're as dumb as a can of soup.

CHARLES

Okay, thanks.

JANE drives away. CHARLES finishes his long note. "...as dumb as a can of soup."

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, HOMICIDE -- DAY

Detectives and police are working. Detective Liebowitz is at her desk. Lorenzo approaches with a box of doughnuts.

LORENZO
Krispy Kremes?

She pulls out two donuts and puts them on her desk.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
What ya looking at?

LIEBOWITZ
Oh, nothing much. Just a couple of cases up in the valley. Not ours.

LORENZO
Good call. I love doing work that's not ours.

LIEBOWITZ
I know, I know. But it's interesting.

LORENZO
Interesting or interesting?

LIEBOWITZ
Interesting.

LORENZO
That's a relief.

LIEBOWITZ
Anyway, one's a family. Mother in law gutted, dad all chopped up. And the wife, who is now DOA, is none other than... Constance Fillmore. The teacher from Woodland Hills. The one that almost died in the schoolroom attack last year.

LORENZO
What? That mangler job?

LIEBOWITZ
Exactly.

LORENZO
So, he's dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIEBOWITZ

Hey, Einstein. Do you know the mathematical probability of a person being attacked by two different murderers twice in sixteen months.

LORENZO

Oodles and oodles to one?

LIEBOWITZ

Oodles and oodles to one, yes. To top it off, her 6 year old daughter, Naomi is missing.

LORENZO

Tough break.

LIEBOWITZ

Aren't you Mr. Sensitivity. Now, remember Latisha Johnson? The Mangler left her moaning in a trash can about a year and a half back.

LORENZO

She dead too?

LIEBOWITZ

They found her body in a dumpster two nights ago. Her heart was missing.

LORENZO

All right. What do you want? In on the case? It's the valley, we're out.

LIEBOWITZ

The Mangler was ours.

LORENZO

The Mangler? But he's dead. I mean seriously.

LIEBOWITZ

I have a hunch.

LORENZO

A hunch?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LIEBOWITZ

I want in. You know someone up there.

LORENZO

What, that guy?

LIEBOWITZ

No, his friend.

LORENZO

The guy's friend. You gotta be shittin' me.

LIEBOWITZ

No bull. I want the goods. Intel, everything. I need to compare these new ones with what we got last year. There's a little girl out there and she's going to die if we don't step up to the plate.

LORENZO

Okay. Okay. The case is unofficially reopened.

LIEBOWITZ

Thank you.

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER

It's not a bad idea to reopen it, under the circumstances.

They look up to see a shadowy figure in a trench coat and wide brimmed hat: it's the CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER. His face is marked and he has neck scars.

LIEBOWITZ

Who the hell are you?

LORENZO

Calm down. He's an independent. He's working for us.

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER

That's right. I'm on your side. And I have something special for you.

He tosses down a pile of pictures of a murder scene.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LIEBOWITZ

What's this? The Fillmore job?

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER

Bingo. I thought you might want to take a peek. The way you were talking.

LORENZO

Jesus, look at that mess.

LIEBOWITZ

How did you get these?

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER

I took 'em myself. I have an inside lead. Sorry if they're a little graphic. I'm a bit of an artist when it come to pictures.

LORENZO

What'd you want for 'em?

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER

Two hundred dollars. What's a little extra expense when it comes to catching the crook.

LORENZO gives him a wad of cash.

LORENZO

You keep 'em comin' straight to us.

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER

Oh don't worry. I'm your man.

The CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER exits.

LIEBOWITZ

Let's exhume the body while we're at it...

LORENZO

Exhume the... what? Are you loco! I'm tellin' you, the guy's dead.

LIEBOWITZ

I just want to make sure. Humor me.

CUT TO:

INT. GASSAMIAN HOME - DUSK

The GASSAMIANS, an Armenian family, are about ready to have dinner. It is a lively home.

The girl from the painting, Vonya (16) and her mother SILVA (41) are in the kitchen. They spoon large pieces of meat onto a big plate of rice pilaf.

Little ARTY (9) is in the den with his GRANDMA (71). He glances at the changer while Grandma watches Armenian television.

ARTHUR GASSAMIAN (56) calls up to his oldest son from the bottom of the steps. A faint sound of Hip-Hop music seeps down from upstairs.

ARTHUR
Dinner's on the table.

MASI
I'll be down in a minute.

ARTY
(about the TV)
Can I change it?

ARTHUR
Tatik's watching her show. Let it be.

SILVA
We're going to be sitting down now anyway. Mama Jan, Ari Tchosh Outelau Djaanakn E'.
("Come, time to eat")

GRANDMA
Hents Ammenalav Mase, Teche.
("Right at the good part")

Grandma gets up. Arty grabs the changer & switches channels.

ARTHUR
Masi!

MASI
Coming, Pop.

Silva and Vonya place the food.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SILVA

Put the Lahmajun by your father.

Vonya places the large stew on the table. As she tosses back her hair we see a terrible scar and a mangled ear.

ARTHUR

Masi! God-damn it, show some respect.

SILVA

Mind your language.

GRANDMA

Meng Erpeq Aydpes Cheinq Xosum Hayastanum.

("We never spoke like that in Armenia")

ARTHUR

Sorry. Nereghutyun, Mama Jan.

The Hip-Hop music goes off.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Masi!

MASI (19) comes down the steps.

MASI

Smells good, Mama. Hi Pop.

Masi goes right to his spot at the opposite head of the table, ready to be served.

ARTHUR

(to Arty)

Arty. Change it back.

ARTY

Papa, please. It's Sponge Bob Square Pants.

ARTHUR

No Sponges at dinner. Put Tatik's show back on.

SILVA

Or better, turn it off altogether.

Arty switches back to the Armenian channel. It's playing an Armenian music video.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SILVA (CONT'D)
Everybody, sit. Arty!

ARTHUR
Arty! Now!

SILVA
I've got him. Sit sit.

Everyone sits.

MASI
Looks delicious, Mom.

SILVA
Thank you, Mushki.

GRANDMA
Where da salt?

SILVA
Taste it first! Hamin Nayi Araj.

GRANDMA
You' food always need da salt.

Silva slams the salt down. Arthur motions for a prayer.

ARTHUR
God, Hayr Mer, Vor Yerkins Se,
Soaurb Erizi Anun Qo. And bless
our family back at home.

SILVA
And a special blessing for our
Vonya who was approved by her
insurance today for a special
plastic surgery which will make her
beautiful again.

ARTHUR
Amen.

ALL
Amen.

Everyone digs in.

ARTHUR
Good. Then you can start going out
again. Meet people. Make friends.
Maybe a nice boy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SILVA

Let her be. Pass the Kyofte.

Vonya passes a bowl of meatballs. We see that her left hand is scarred and some fingers cut off. Everyone stares. Embarrassed, she drops the bowl and hides her hand.

VONYA

Sorry Papa.

ARTHUR

It's all right.

ARTY

Look on the bright side "V", the guy who stabbed you is dead, and you're alive.

SILVA

And that's a blessing.

She lifts her glass. They all lift their glasses.

ARTHUR

Kenatsed.

ALL

Kenatsed.

SHIFT FOCUS TO:

MANGLER POV: (This is one continuous shot through the Scene)

POV: We view the scene through the window from out in the yard. The family is eating and talking. We can hear the heavy breathing of the POV.

POV: travels from one window to another. We FOCUS on the family from different angles, through different windows. At one window there are a couple of cats. When they see the POV camera, they growl.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER

Kitty. Pretty kitty.

POV: The cats scurry off. A gloved hand reaches out to open one window, but it's locked.

POV: We move on down the house to a trellis. We go up the trellis to the roof, across the roof to a dormer window. Through the window into Masi's room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

The TV is on, a music channel on mute. A gloved hand picks up the remote and presses the volume. Hip-Hop plays.

POV: We move out the room into the hall, down the hall to the master bedroom where there is a light and a crib, over to the crib where there is a sleeping baby.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER (CONT'D)

Cute.

...out of the bedroom and down the hall to the stairs.

POV: The television is blasting.

POV: It goes down the stairs carefully, hiding, peaking at the family...

ARTHUR

...well, go turn it off.

MASI

I did turn it off.

ARTHUR

Then why can I hear it...Boom Boom
Boom...I can't eat.

SILVA

Listen to your father.

MASI

Why do you always side with Dad?

POV: Masi gets up and heads towards the stairs. The POV backs off, back up the steps.

MOVE TO:

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

POV: Hiding in the bathroom. Masi passes and goes to his room. The music goes off. Masi heads towards the bathroom. The POV moves into the shower and pulls the curtain. Masi stands in front of the toilet. He takes a piss. The POV breathes heavily, heart pounding.

POV: A hand pulls out a big knife. He slowly pulls the curtain aside. Gingerly the POV steps from the tub.

POV: The knife attacks.

POV: For a brief second we can see the Mangler reflected in the mirror, black beanie, white ski mask, black outfit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POV: Masi turns around and yells as he is stabbed. There are screams downstairs. The POV jumps from the bathroom and hides around the corner, leaving Masi gasping and ghostly.

MASI

He's in...he's in the hall.

POV: Arthur is up the stairs first.

ARTHUR

My God, oh my God, my son.

POV: Silva is up second. She clutches her mouth in horror to see her boy stabbed, but her mother's instincts take over.

SILVA

The little Balik!

POV: She runs into the master bedroom where the baby starts crying. Silva emerges with the baby as Arty and Vonya appear at the top of the stairs.

The POV charges the mother and baby as Vonya sees her brother's body and gasps.

WHAM. The POV hits the mother with body and blade sending them flying, into the bathroom to land on Arthur and Masi.

The POV turns to Arty and Vonya at the top of the stairs. A foot kicks Arty hard, smashing him into his sister so they tumble down the steps.

The POV turns back to the bathroom where Arthur is trying to help his wounded wife who is still clutching the screaming baby. Arthur gets up in a macho rage and charges the POV just in time to receive a well-aimed knife into his gut. He freezes and looks down in shock and falls.

The POV turns and runs down the stairs to where VONYA's trying to pull her dazed brother Arty from the floor. She looks up and meets the POV's gaze.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER

Remember me?

Vonya shrieks in horror and crawls backwards as the POV grabs Arty.

ARTY

Get out of here! Leave us alone!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POV: The gloved hand drags ARTY into the kitchen. Grandma is cowering at the table, mumbling prayers.

GRANDMA

Xndroum Em Astuats Jan, Xndroum Em
Astuats Jan...

ARTY

Let go! Help! Mama Jan! Mama
Jan!

The POV opens the oven.

ARTY (CONT'D)

NO! No! No please! NO!!!

The POV jams Arty into the oven, shuts the door and jams a heavy cooking spoon through the handles to lock it. The hand turns the oven on to broil as Arty shrieks.

The POV turns to see Vonya, stumbling over to help her brother. She is held off at knife point.

ARTY (CONT'D)

Okay. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.
Please.

Arty begs as Vonya weeps where she stands. He begs. He screams. He whimpers. He falls silent.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER

See you again soon.

The knife whips out of the POV.

End Of POV:

Vonya looks around and the front door is swinging open. The killer is gone. She runs to the oven. Arty is curled up inside, unconscious, red as a lobster and his clothes are charred. Vonya pulls him out into her arms. Grandma weeps, helpless at her seat.

The baby cries from upstairs in the distance.

CUT TO:

INT. SECRET BASEMENT -- MORNING

A shadowy figure is brushing paint wildly onto a canvas; dark images spill into dark images. It's the torments of the damned, the torture of the flesh, the horrors of the mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Vivid, painful, hopeless and violent. But the work is also deep and rich and moving.

NAOMI lays, half dead in her cage.

NAOMI
I wanna go home.

A phone rings in the distance. It is muffled by many walls.

The painting stops.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S FRONT ROOM -- MORNING

Charles is standing, staring blankly at the notes on the wall. He snaps out of it with a start.

The phone is ringing.

Charles follows the arrows to the phone and answers it.

CHARLES
Hello?

LORI
Hello, I'm calling for Charles Polk.

CHARLES
This is Mr. Polk.

LORI
Oh, hello. You sound different.

CHARLES
Different? From what?

LORI
You know...from before.

CHARLES
I had an operation. Who is this please?

LORI
It's me. I was with you that night at the gallery. I was hurt too. It's Lori.

CHARLES
Lori?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks at his bedside list of "People Who Call". He does not see her.

LORI
Do you remember me at all?

CHARLES
Of course. Sure I do. Hi.

He thumbs desperately through his ring of pictures.

LORI
It's okay if you don't. I understand.

CHARLES
I...I'm sorry.

LORI
It's okay. It's okay.

CHARLES
See, I got hit in the head.

LORI
I heard about that. I'm sorry.

CHARLES
What was your name again?

LORI
Lori. Lori Himmel.

CHARLES
Lori.

LORI
Listen, Charles, can I see you,
maybe meet you somewhere?

Charles grabs a pen.

CHARLES
Sure. Why?

LORI
Well, has someone been, I don't
know, following you or going into
your house or anything like that?

Garbled images of intrusions flash in his mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHARLES

No.

LORI

Because I think I'm being watched. You know, he did that, the man who attacked us. He found the people he didn't kill the first time and he hunted them.

CHARLES

It'll be okay.

LORI

I've had nightmares every night for a year. Then yesterday that family got attacked and the girl said it was him. She was attacked before just like us and she said it was him. He's supposed to be dead! And he hunted her down, he hunted her down!

She breaks down weeping on the phone.

CHARLES

(weeping with her)

You should call the police.

LORI

I did. They said that the girl from last night is wrong. That it wasn't him 'cause he's dead. So what now! So I'm the crazy one and I should just be quiet and get killed too. It's all so fucked up.

(strengthening)

Can we meet? I'd really like to see you?

CHARLES

Okay. Do you know where I live?

LORI

Yes. I actually drove by your house the other day. But I'd rather you come here.

CHARLES

What's your address? I'll take a cab over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LORI
I live with my roommate in Studio
City. It's 222 E. Palmdale Drive,
Apartment #6.

Charles writes it All down.

CHARLES
Got it. And it's Lori, right?
Lori Himmel.

LORI
Yes. That's right.

CHARLES
See, I remembered. I like talking
with you, Lori.

LORI
I like talking with you too,
Charles.

CHARLES
I'll see you soon. Okay.

LORI
Okay. 'Bye.

CHARLES
'Bye.

He hangs up. He is happy.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Lori. Lori. Lori Himmel. Lori
Himmel.

He practices remembering her name as he gets dressed.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S BATHROOM -- MORNING

Charles is brushing his teeth and hair.

CHARLES
Lori, Lori, Lori, Lori.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HOUSE BEDROOM NICHE -- MORNING

Charles sitting on the bed putting on his shoes. He recites more slowly.

CHARLES
Lori, Lori, Lori.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S KITCHEN -- MORNING

Charles getting a drink of water. He is no longer excited.

CHARLES
Lori.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S FRONT ROOM -- MORNING

Charles at the fish tank.

CHARLES
Here fishy fishy fishy fish.

He sees the note. He feeds them.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD -- MORNING

Cop cars, digging equipment and people are huddled around an open pit in the middle of a poor looking grave yard.

Detectives Lorenzo and Liebowitz along with a couple of COPS and a number of DIGGERS, All stand next to a pile of dirt near the open grave. They watch as the crane pulls a casket from the dark hole. They are exhuming the body of the Mangler.

A cheap casket is pulled up and laid flat. It's opened. It's empty.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HOUSE BEDROOM NICHE -- DAY

Charles watching a commercial and laughing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is a knock at the door. Charles gets up.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HOUSE FRONT ROOM -- DAY

Charles goes to the door and looks through the peep hole. There is a stocky woman around 46 on the doorstep. Her name is MERCY but he doesn't know it. She is the same woman who he caught in his house but he does not remember.

Charles looks up at the pictures around the door. This woman is missing from the list. He looks through the peephole again.

MERCY

Mr. Polk? I know you're there. I won't hurt you, Mr. Polk. I'm here to help.

CHARLES

Who are you?

MERCY

I'm a friend. I can help you. We've met before, but you don't remember. I was even at the hospital when you were hurt. I came to visit.

Scattered memories and images flash in Charles's mind.

INSERT: FLASH BACK: Charles's POV - MERCY, is bending over his hospital bed. MERCY is placing a pillow over his face. A NURSE interrupts.

NURSE

Can I help you?

INSERT: FLASH BACK: Charles's POV - MERCY is gone. The NURSE is bending over Charles.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Who was that Charles? Charles?

Charles snaps out of it. We are back with Charles at the door and Mercy on the other side.

CHARLES

You want to hurt me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MERCY

That was a mistake. I won't do it again. You should let me in. I am the only one who knows the truth. Are you looking for the truth, Charles?

CHARLES

I don't know what you're talking about. Leave me alone. Or I'll call the police.

MERCY

The police. They can't do a thing. They never have. He's too smart for them. No, the only ones who can stop him are me and you.

CHARLES

Stop who?

MERCY

My brother. The California Mangler.

CHARLES opens the door.

MERCY (CONT'D)

He's alive, Charles, and he's killing again.

CHARLES

So, what's that have to do with me?

MERCY

Because he's a hunter, and he's using you, your house like camouflage. He's done something to your mind so you don't know it, hypnosis or whatever but he comes in and out whenever he pleases. I leave him postcards. Have you seen them? I'm sure he has.

CHARLES

So you're telling me he's in here, now?

MERCY

No. Not now. But I'll bet he's watching us. He sees everything. Even those pictures on your wall.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MERCY (CONT'D)

They're leading him to all of the people in the world that you care about.

CHARLES looks at the dozens of photos on the walls: Cousins, parents, friends.

MERCY (CONT'D)

My brother's a happy fellow right now. Everyone thinks he's dead. He eats your food. He kills. He paints. Oh yes, you didn't know. You thought it was you. Sorry.

CHARLES

Well, what do you want from me? I'm sick. I have a brain problem.

MERCY

If you find him, confront him, it will give you back your memories, I promise. And then you have to kill him.

CHARLES

You want me to kill your brother?

MERCY

I'm going to hell, Mr. Polk. I watched my momma drown my two baby sisters in the bathtub and I didn't stop her. When my brother started killing, I knew it, and I never told anyone. That was twenty years ago. It's time for my brother to stop.

(pause)

Here. This is for you. It's the only set.

She hands Charles some keys with a message tag on them.

MERCY (CONT'D)

You'll find everything you need there.

Charles reads the tag. It says: "My Apartment: 4812 Virginia".

MERCY (CONT'D)

You put that someplace safe, and when you're ready to solve your problem, you go there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CHARLES

Let's go there now, together.

MERCY

Oh no. He won't let me do that.
No, I don't think I'll be going
there again. It's up to you now.
You can do it. I believe in you,
Mr. Polk, I really do.

CHARLES

What's your brother's name?

MERCY

His name? When he was a boy we
called him Eugene. Sweet kid too.
Loved to draw. Just loved it.

Mercy tears up and steps outside. Charles puts the keys into his breast pocket and shuts the door. He has a second thought and opens it again.

Mercy is still standing on the stoop.

MERCY (CONT'D)

Hello again. Did you forget
something?

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S FRONT ROOM -- LATER

Charles is standing there staring at his fish tank. He snaps out of it.

Charles begins tearing down the pictures and notes...all of his external memories. He empties Drawers and stuffs the contents into pillowcases one after another.

Charles opens his bedside drawer and finds Lori's card and the news paper clipping. He stares at her picture.

CHARLES

Lori.

Suddenly he remembers. Charles opens the bedside message tablet and finds the page with Lori's address.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He runs to the front door. A Shadowy Figure is watching from a distant hiding place.

Charles sneaks out the back.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLK'S STREET -- MOMENTS LATER

The Creepy Photographer is watching Polk's house from a hiding place.

 CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER
 (to himself)
 I know where you're going.

CUT TO:

EXT. LORI'S STREET -- AFTERNOON

Charles arrives by Taxi.

Charles stands in front of Lori's apartment building. He finds her buzzer and buzzes it. Nothing. He buzzes again.

 CHARLES
 Answer. Answer.

Charles rings a random couple of other buzzers. He does it again and again until...

 LADY NEIGHBOR VOICE
 Hello?

 CHARLES
 Hello. It's Charles Polk to see
 Lori Himmel in apartment six. Her
 bell isn't working.

 LADY NEIGHBOR VOICE
 I'll buzz you in.

She does.

CUT TO:

INT. LORI'S APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY -- AFTERNOON

Charles is in the hallway looking for apartment six. He finds it and knocks. Nothing. He knocks again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES

Lori, it's me, Charles. Charles Polk. I think that we spoke on the phone. Hello.

He looks at the knob. It is broken so that the keyhole is gouged out. He opens the door and goes in.

CUT TO:

INT. LORI'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

CHARLES checks the place out. It is a typical girl roommate's place with fun candles and lots of cute knickknacks. It's neat and well-furnished with a vintage shop, retro 70's feel.

CHARLES

Lori? Hello?

CHARLES looks around. He glances at the various rooms.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Lori?

She is obviously not home. He continues looking.

CUT TO:

INT. LORI'S APARTMENT - SMALL KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Charles enters the small eat in kitchen. Something stinks. It is an open jug of bleach. He puts the cap on it. He pours himself a cup of water and takes a sip, but it's warm. He opens the freezer to get ice.

There a severed head in it.

The head belongs to a woman and it is facing the back. He can only see blond hair. Charles reels back.

CHARLES

Oh no, oh Lori!

He tries to catch his breath. He looks around the kitchen. Now he sees. All of the shelves and food are out of the fridge to make space.

Slowly Charles opens the refrigerator.

The naked, headless body of a young lady is stuffed in the fridge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Charles reaches into the freezer and skittishly adjusts the head so he can see the face. The hair is dyed red in the front and there is a nose ring. Charles checks the photo in the paper and on the card. It is not Lori. But she may be someplace else.

His eye catches the oven. He slowly opens it. Empty.

Charles sees a piece of paper by the phone. It rings. He hides his face and lifts it to his ear.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Hello.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER

How do you like my surprise?

CHARLES

Where's Lori?

VOICE OF THE MANGLER

Oh, your little girlfriend. Didn't you read the note? I'll be sure to tell her that you say "hi".

"Click," the person hangs up. Dial tone.

CHARLES has the note in his hand. He reads it.

CHARLES

"Dear Tish. I decided not to wait any longer. I went to Charles Polk's house. I'll call you later. Dinner's in the fridge. Love Lori."

CUT TO:

INT. LORI'S APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Charles running out of Lori's door into the hall. An ELDERLY WOMAN with groceries is opening her apartment door. He slams into her and the bag falls.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Hey!

CHARLES

Sorry.

CUT TO:

EXT. LORI'S STREET -- LATE AFTERNOON

Charles runs out to the street. There are no cabs.

CHARLES
Taxi, taxi.

He leaps out into the street and tries to stop a car. It swerves and honks.

Charles targets another car. It swerves. He targets a beater full of gang bangers and waves them down.

BANGER #1
Hey ese. What the fuck.

BANGER #2
Dude wants to get killed or something.

Charles races to the car window.

BANGER #1
Back off, man!

CHARLES
I'll give you one hundred dollars if you take me to my house in West L.A.

BANGER #2
Dude's freakin', man. Let's cruise.

CHARLES
Two hundred.

BANGER #2
It's a setup, bro.

BANGER #3
He's a cop.

BANGER #1
We don't want no trouble, dude.

CHARLES
(pulling out his wallet
and all his cash)
I'll give you everything I have.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLK'S STREET -- EARLY EVENING

Lori is pulling up in a yellow Volkswagon Bug. As she passes, the shadowy figure of the Creepy Photographer, he ducks out of sight. LORI parks.

Lori gets out of the car and goes to Polk's front door and rings the bell. She waits, rings again and then knocks.

LORI
Mr. Polk? Charles, are you there.
It's me, Lori. Lori Himmel. We
spoke on the phone.

Lori walks over to the picture window. She sees the reflection of a man in the glass: the Creepy Photographer sneaking up behind her. He snaps a photo of her.

LORI (CONT'D)
(yelps)

She dives out of the way to safety. The man is gone. She turns to go back to her car.

He's behind her.

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER
What do you think you're doing
here?

LORI
(screams and runs)

She gets to her car and fumbles with the keys. She is panicking and desperate. The Creepy Photographer is not behind her anymore but she know's he somewhere. LORI is just about to get into her car when she is grabbed from behind.

LORI (CONT'D)
(turns in horror)

It's Charles.

CHARLES
Are you Lori? Are you this girl?
(shows the news clip)

LORI
Oh God! Charles!
(She hugs him)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES
(He holds her)

LORI
I'm so glad to see you.

CHARLES
Me too.

LORI
You really scared me.

CHARLES
Sorry.

LORI
Some creep is hanging around the bushes out here.

CHARLES
What creep?

LORI
Some guy, some creep. He took a picture of me. Can we go in your house please?

CHARLES
A reporter?

LORI
Maybe. Just...lets get off the street.

CHARLES
Sure. Okay, sure.

They go to the door.

LORI
I'm really sorry. I got so scared.

CHARLES
C'mon in. You're safe here.

Charles sees the writing on the door frame: "Money, wallet, right pocket... And keys". He pulls out his keys and goes to open the door. It's already ajar.

He opens the door and they enter.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S FRONT ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

They enter.

LORI

I thought that you were coming over to my place this morning. When you didn't show up, I got worried.

Charles sees a few tattered notes on the wall and tries to piece together a conversation.

CHARLES

Can I get you some lunch.

LORI

No, I'm not hungry. Are you all right?

CHARLES

I'm okay.

LORI

Do you remember talking to me this morning?

Charles can't answer.

LORI (CONT'D)

We spoke on the phone. Do you know who I am?

CHARLES

You're Lori: the performance artist. You're this girl.

He pulls out Lori's card.

LORI

Yes. That was me. I gave this to you. I wanted to impress you so bad. Then...

CHARLES

Then...right.

LORI

Right.

(She takes the article)

It's amazing. We don't even look the same anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES

You do. You're just like your card.

LORI

Sure with scars all over my face.

CHARLES

They make you beautiful and strong.

LORI

Only artists talk like that. Everything is probably beautiful to you.

(she sniffs)

What's that?

CHARLES

What?

LORI

It's bleach. It's on your clothes.

CHARLES

I don't smell it.

LORI

You have a little bit of blood on you too.

CHARLES

Where?

LORI

There. And there's another spot. Did you fall?

CHARLES

I must have.

LORI

Where were you today?

CHARLES

I don't remember.

Lori stares him down to find the truth but he really doesn't remember.

LORI

I'll go get a washcloth. Is the bathroom this way?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHARLES

I think so.

LORI follows the sign. Charles is alone. He begins checking for wounds and then he get's distracted.

Ding Ding. The digital wall clock dings. It's time for him to take his medications. But the sign has been ripped from the wall. Even though the blue and red pill box is sitting right there, Charles can't piece it together.

There is a noise in the other room.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Hello. Is anybody there?

He looks around.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Hello?

His eye catches the muddy footprints on the ground. He sees the pillowcases full of notes and pictures. He is surprised by a purse just sitting there. Things are not right.

Another noise. Charles peers into the other room. His eyes get wide. Charles panics. He runs to the phone.

He almost presses the speed dial for "Police", but then he sees the note above the phone "do not call the police, call someone else".

He moves his finger down to the next button titled "emergency". There is another noise. He pushes it. It rings.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Hurry up. Hurry up.

JANE

Gallery 21.

CHARLES

There's someone in my house.

JANE

Charles, is that you?

CHARLES

I need help, quick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JANE

It is you, darling. I'm so glad you called back. I got your message. Everyone at the gallery is so excited.

CHARLES

Didn't you hear me. Someone is in my house.

JANE

Don't panic Charles. There's always someone in your house. Your mother, the maid. In fact, I'm going to be in your house soon to pick up the new painting.

CHARLES

What new painting? Who are you?

JANE

The painting that you asked me to come over and look at. I'm your agent darling, it's my job.

CHARLES

I don't have any paintings here.

JANE

Yes you do. You called it "Lori's Corpse" and you said it would be somewhere in your house later this evening.

There's a noise. Someone's coming. Lori turns the corner. Charles looks up at her and freezes.

LORI

What is it? What's wrong?

JANE

What is it Charles? What's wrong?

CHARLES

Lori?

Suddenly Charles's face changes, like a tiger ready to pounce. Lori ducks out of the way as Charles leaps past her. He rips open the curtain.

Just outside the window is the shadowy figure of the Creepy photographer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LORI
(yelps)

CHARLES
Get out of here! Leave us alone!

From the receiver on the floor we hear Jane's voice.

JANE
Charles! Charles! What's going
on?

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER
I know you. You're not getting
away from me this time. Do you
understand!

CHARLES
I'm calling the police!

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER
Ha! I work for the police. They
won't do shit. Remember this?

The Creepy Photographer presses a photograph up against the window. It shows Charles in Lori's kitchen staring at the decapitated body in the fridge.

Lori picks up the phone. Dial tone.

The Creepy photographer dives for the front door. Charles races towards it on his side. He slams into the door as the knob turns and bolts it. The door is pounded over and over.

LORI
Who is that? What did he show you?

CHARLES
I don't know.

LORI
He said that he worked for the
police! Why!

CHARLES
I don't know!

A rock smashes through the window.

Lori and Charles run. Suddenly all of the lights go out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Lori!

LORI

Take my hand.

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER

I hear you.

There is the blinding flash of a camera aimed at Lori and Charles. Then Smashing and crashing.

Steel flashes as the Creepy Photographer pulls a knife.

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

Die you piece of shit!

Lori grabs Charles and they run to the open hall door.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Charles and Lori slam the door and lock it. Lori uses whatever she can find to help secure it.

LORI

Help me!

Charles helps. The knob is turned but does not open.

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER

You have to die! You have to die!

Suddenly a knife slams through the wood panel of the door. Charles and Lori flee down the hall.

The knife slams through the wood panel a second time.

They get to the farthest door and enter.

CUT TO:

INT. OLD STUDIO -- CONTINUOUS

Lori and Charles enter the dark room. Lori grabs the flashlight and scans with it to reveal a huge cabinet.

LORI

We've got to move this in front of the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SLAM. The door up the hall is pounded again.

Lori and Charles drag the cabinet to block the way they came in. Behind where the cabinet was is another battered door. They open it. A dark passage leads down into a rough basement.

BAM!!! The distant door is smashed again.

LORI (CONT'D)

Come on!

CHARLES

(petrified)

No. No!

Lori pulls Charles down into the basement.

CUT TO:

INT. THE SECRET PAINTING BASEMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Lori pulls the door shut behind them and locks it. Charles is confused and afraid.

LORI

I'll get us out. I promise you.

Lori and Charles tip toe down the dark stairs.

Lori scans with the flashlight. We see the secret basement. It is filled with paint and horrific, but excellent paintings.

LORI (CONT'D)

My God.

CHARLES

My God.

They go down the steps. They walk into the midst of an artists studio. There are dozens of canvases piled up and leaning everywhere. There are paints, easels, brushes, cans of turpentine and stacks of rags.

Lori and Charles look in awe. They watch the ceiling. Footsteps creak against the floorboards causing dust.

LORI

He's looking for us.

They watch. Step. Step. Step.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORI (CONT'D)

Is there an door to the yard?

CHARLES

I don't...I can't remember. I don't remember ever being in this place.

LORI

Well, this is your studio isn't it. You painted all these, didn't you?

CHARLES

I don't know.

She scans the flashlight across the floor and walls. It looks like a homeless person is squatting in the basement.

LORI

There has to be a crawl space under the house...for plumbing.

CHARLES

Maybe over here.

They shimmy through the junk seeing painting after painting, all gory, of horrific crimes.

The light flashes on a particularly gruesome fantasy. Charles moves closer. It shows an African American woman being tortured. It's Latisha. Wedged in the thick paint are chunks of hair and other things.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I want to go now, Lori. I want to go.

LORI

We're going, sweetie. We're getting out of here right now.

They shimmy to the edge of the wall. Above them is an 18-inch opening the entire length of the basement.

CHARLES

Let me go first.

Charles takes the flashlight and they climb into the crawl space. Lori's foot knocks a rag off something as she climbs. She doesn't look back to see the wire cage that is unveiled.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

In the cage is Naomi, bound, gagged and near death. She shudders weakly, silently, as Charles and Lori disappear.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDER POLK'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

CHARLES
C'mon, just a little further.

They climb up into the crawl space and start dragging themselves over dirt on their bellies. They see light ahead.

LORI
Head for the vent.

They crawl faster. The flashlight gets jostled and goes out.

CHARLES
Shit.

LORI
Turn it on, please. I hate the dark. Are there rats down here?

Charles tries to fix the flashlight.

LORI (CONT'D)
I'll meet you up there.

She crawls further. In a moment we hear her as she crawls onto what sounds like plastic.

CHARLES
Got it.

The flashlight comes on. Lori is laying on top of a milky body bag with a rotted, crushed cadaver in it.

Lori screams but she's grabbed from behind and her mouth is covered.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Shhhhhh. It's okay. It's just me.
Shhh.

SFX: The sounds of the secret basement door being slammed is heard.

Lori peels Charles's hand from her mouth. Then she buries her face in his shoulder for a second to compose herself. He holds her close for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Over her head he can see the crushed face and mangled body in the bag. He stares at it. It stares back.

They break and scurry quickly away from the body bag, to the vent. They peel open the vent grate quietly.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S YARD -- CONTINUOUS

Charles and Lori climb out of the vent in the neighbor's yard. They leap disappear into the distance.

INSERT: Shot of the Nosey Neighbor, at her window. She has seen it all.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF POLK HOUSE - DUSK

From inside Jane Sellers car we see over her shoulder as she drives towards polk's house. She is on her cell.

JANE

Well, Charles isn't answering his phone darling. I called the police, they're not interested. No, darling, persistence always pays: I phoned that lovely detective who handled the case last year. She was very concerned and she's going to meet me at his house in a few minutes. Of course I'm going to get the painting, I'm his agent.

The car rolls up to the house and parks. Jane slowly walks towards the door. She notices the window. She pulls out her key but the door is ajar.

JANE (CONT'D)

Charles? Are you decent?

She enters.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S FRONT ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jane enters. It's dark.

JANE

Charles?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She flicks the switch but no lights. She pulls out a lighter and flicks it on.

JANE (CONT'D)
Charles darling, it's me, Jane.

She searches the empty house. It is eerie. The flickering light illuminates tattered papers on the walls, torn out phone cords and the signs of a struggle.

Examining a hidden corner the light falls on a large, brown paper wrapped canvas. On it is written in large letters -

"to my beautiful agent and art dealer: Happy Birthday".

Jane moves in for a closer look. Her thumb gets too close to the hot lighter.

JANE (CONT'D)
Ouch!

It goes out. Darkness. Flick: spark. Flick: spark: flame.

Behind her, in the flickering light is the Creepy Photographer, staring at her. Jane is oblivious.

JANE (CONT'D)
Ouch!

It goes out again. Jane grabs the large, wrapped canvas and begins to haul it towards the front door.

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER
(whispering)
Jane.

Jane whips around but sees no one.

JANE
Charles?

The doorbell rings as the door opens.

LIEBOWITZ
Hello? Mr. Polk?

JANE
I'm in here! It's me!

Flashlights scan the room as Detective Liebowitz and Detective Lorenzo enter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LIEBOWITZ

You the one who called? Mr. Polk's agent?

JANE

Yes. Jane Sellers. We met at the police station about a year ago.

LIEBOWITZ

Thirteen and a half months, but who's counting.

LORENZO

Big mess you got here. Looks like somebody broke in pretty good. Blew out the breakers an' everything.

There's a fork jammed into an outlet.

LIEBOWITZ

Is Charles Polk around?

JANE

I haven't seen him. I only just arrived myself.

LORENZO

What's that thing?

JANE

It's a painting. Charles asked me to pick it up.

LIEBOWITZ

When was that?

JANE

This afternoon, on the phone. And then again right before I called you. Charles, he's been doing so well lately. His work I mean. It has value. Do you think he was... kidnapped, for a ransom?

LORENZO

No. I don't think so. I just think somebody's playing a trick on us.

JANE

What type of trick?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LIEBOWITZ
Let's just have a look around
first.

They explore.

JANE
(to Lorenzo)
What trick?

LORENZO
(to Jane)
We exhumed the body of the Mangler
yesterday. The casket was empty.

JANE
Empty? Someone stole the body?
Why?

LORENZO
A prank. Maybe more. There are
mucho loco cholos in this town.

LIEBOWITZ
What is this? A closet?

JANE
I believe so, yes.

LIEBOWITZ
Got a key?

JANE
Charles keeps it above the mantle.

Liebowitz reaches up, gets the key and unlocks the door.

A blue corpse flops out. It's Mercy.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHTTIME STREETS -- DUSK

Charles and Lori are walking briskly and staying as much out
of sight as possible.

LORI
I can't keep this pace up much
longer.

CHARLES
Just a little further.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORI

Wait. Charles. We're tired and we're cold and we need a place to go. A real place.

(pause)

There was a body under your house Charles. Do you understand?

CHARLES

A body?

LORI

Yes. Somebody attacked us. He might be following us right now. We need to get out of sight.

CHARLES

Okay. Let's go someplace. Someplace with a phone so we can call the police.

LORI

The police? He said he worked for the police.

(pause)

I'm so cold.

She slumps into his arms. He wraps his arms around her. He holds her tight. She wraps her arms around him. Charles is in heaven. Their grip loosens. Charles removes his shirt and puts it on her. She gives him a sweet kiss on the cheek. They look into each other's eyes. They almost kiss. She feels something in his breast pocket.

LORI (CONT'D)

Ouch. What the heck do you have in here?

She pulls out a set of keys with the note and address written on the tag.

LORI (CONT'D)

What's this?

CHARLES

Keys.

LORI

To what?

CHARLES

I don't remember.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LORI
Do you remember anything?

CHARLES
Some things. I remember you.

They stare. He kisses her. She kisses him back.

LORI
Not here. We need to get off the
street. Figure things out. Do you
have money for a cab?

Charles feels his pockets and pulls out his hand. Empty.

CHARLES
Sorry.

LORI
I do.

She pulls some cash from her bra. They cuddle as they look
for a taxi.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S FRONT ROOM -- NIGHT

Squad cars are parked in front of the house, their blue
lights flashing through the windows. Inside the house, only
flashlights illuminate the scene as cops stumble to and fro
dusting for prints and trying to collect evidence.

Detectives Lorenzo and Liebowitz are in command. Jane is
watching.

LORENZO
Can we get some real light in here!

JANE
Please be careful. There's no
reason to wreck his whole house.

LORENZO
(into a walkie talkie)
How are those circuit breakers
coming along?

RADIO COP
We're fixing it right now sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIEBOWITZ
Look, Ms. Sellers. Maybe you
should leave.

JANE
I don't think so.

LIEBOWITZ
This is a crime scene!

JANE
I am Mr. Polk's legal guardian and
executor of his estate. I stay.

The lights come on. Everybody cheers for a second. Then they are cut short. The room is filled with paintings. Gory horrible paintings that lead from the living room into the hall, and down the hall to the steps of the secret basement.

LORENZO
Madre Dios.

JANE
I'd like to remind you that these
paintings are the property of
Gallery 21.

LIEBOWITZ
(disgusted by them)
You can have 'em.

Liebowitz follows the trail of paintings followed by Lorenzo and Jane. They enter the hall.

COP
I found a purse. It belongs to a
Lori Himmel.

LORENZO
Himmel? Somebody call her house.

LIEBOWITZ
And send a car over to her
apartment.

CUT TO:

INT. POLK'S HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Liebowitz, Lorenzo move down the hall following the row of paintings as they check out the damaged door and the toppled phone. Jane follows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORENZO

Your client painted all this crap?
How long did it take him?

JANE

Supposedly he just started again
but I think that he's been working
on these for months.

They turn into the storage room door.

CUT TO:

INT. OLD STUDIO -- CONTINUOUS

Liebowitz, Lorenzo and Jane follow the row of paintings into the old studio and right up to the basement door. They look down the dark stairs. Liebowitz slowly reaches for the light switch and flicks it on.

CUT TO:

EXT. MERCY'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Lori and Charles are in a ratty part of town. Looming before them is a nasty looking apartment building. It's small and grungy.

CUT TO:

INT. MERCY'S BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lori and Charles inside the building walking down the hall. As they go, creepy tenants pass them, or glance out their doors and stare.

LORI

What number is the apartment?

CHARLES

(looks at the paper)
Fifteen.

They watch the apartment numbers. 13, 14, 15. Charles puts the key in and turns. It opens easily.

They enter.

CUT TO:

INT. MERCY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Charles and Lori enter a rather large studio with a small kitchen. There are a number books, folders and files. A child's sketches, yellowed and aged, are taped to the wall. There is a distinct element of a woman in the place.

LORI

Well, this certainly doesn't look like your home away from home.

CHARLES

No. I guess it belongs to a friend or something.

LORI

Good. Then no one will figure out that we're here.

They settle in. They explore a little.

CHARLES

(from the kitchen)

There's some old pizza in the fridge.

LORI

No thanks.

She sees a small canvas leaned up, facing the wall. The title is penned across the back. She turns it over.

The painting is dense and colorful showing a human baby in a cradle surrounded by demons.

LORI (CONT'D)

Well, whoever this place belongs to likes your work! Look at this one. It's pretty freaky.

CHARLES

Did I do that?

LORI

You must have. It's like the ones in your basement. Sure is different. Your old style was always so...

CHARLES

"Predictable"?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORI

No.

CHARLES

That's what they said in the paper.

He pulls out the article.

LORI

I was going to say cautious. Do you know that I followed you since you had that first show in San Francisco, your graduate show. I was 16.

CHARLES

Did we talk?

LORI

No, God no. You were busy hitting on all of the college girls. I was with my mom. But I wrote to you later. I wrote you about a dozen fan letters.

CHARLES

I wish I could remember.

LORI

Yeah. I was cute. I really liked you. I went to art school because of you. I always wanted to be alone with you. Abracadabra, my dream's come true.

He grabs her. They kiss. At first it seems strange, but the near death experience drives them to a deep connection. And collapse into the shelves, then the chair, then onto the bed. They begin to peel each other's clothes off. Their passion is a fire. They are make love tenderly and passionately. Both have terrible scars. They incorporate the scars into lust for one another. They are kindred bodies and kindred spirits.

CUT TO:

INT. THE SECRET PAINTING BASEMENT -- NIGHT

There is a flurry of activity. The detectives and the cops are all rummaging through the remaining paintings and art supplies in the basement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cops with flashlights are in the crawl space and the corners.

LIEBOWITZ

Careful with the paintings or that bitch is gonna sue our ass.

LORENZO

(to Liebowitz)

Look, that whole corner is set up like a hideout. Mattress to sleep on, bottles of water, cans of food, blankets.

LIEBOWITZ

Maybe Polk likes to sleep where he paints.

LORENZO

Yeah. Or somebody else.

COP #3

We've got another body in the crawl space. It looks like the one missing from the coffin.

LORENZO

Call Morimoto in forensics. I want a DNA match up right away.

COP

Detectives! Two more. They're fresh.

They race to the corner where an older woman and an elderly man are stuffed under the stair case. It is Mr. and Mrs. Polk, Charles Polk's father and mother. They are dressed well and surrounded by shopping bags.

LORENZO

Jesus! Who are they?

LIEBOWITZ

His mom and dad. I want this Polk character found. Got me. Put out an APB.

COP

Yes ma'am.

COP #2

Here's another. She's still alive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They go to the other side of the room where Naomi, the little girl is twitching in the cage.

LIEBOWITZ

My God.

LORENZO

Get the E.M.T. down here, muy rapido! And bring me a wire cutter.

LIEBOWITZ

It's all right sweet heart. We're going to get you to a hospital.

She reaches through the bars and pulls down the gag. The girls mouth is stitched shut.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF POLK HOUSE - NIGHT

Jane is sneaking to her car with a load of paintings including the one in the brown wrapper. She puts it in the back seat and drives off.

CUT TO:

INT. MERCY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lori is sleeping after having made love.

She stirs. She wakes. She feels for Charles but he is not there. Then she feels a presence staring at her.

Lori is anxious as she turns to the shadowy figure on the other side of the light. Who is he?

LORI

Hello.

CHARLES

Hi.

LORI

Charles?

CHARLES

Yes.

LORI

What are you doing, baby?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES

Just looking at you. How pretty you are. How happy I am that I found you.

He looks around.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Where are we?

LORI

Ugh...I don't know. Some apartment that you had the keys to. You brought us here a few hours ago.

CHARLES

Okay. You sure are beautiful.

LORI

Thank you. You were great a little while ago. Really great.

CHARLES

That's good. Is there anything that you need? Anything that I can get for you? I found some beer in the refrigerator. There's bread but it's cheap. I can make toast. I saw instant coffee and sugar in a box, but no milk. There are cups, saucers, plates, spoons...

He is reading from a small piece of paper: his reconnaissance list.

LORI

Charles, are you okay?

CHARLES

Of course. Do you want me to get you any of these things?

LORI

Do you know who I am?

CHARLES

Sure. You're the girl in the picture.

He holds up the news photo and her old card that he's been clutching.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You're her. Lori. Performance
Artist, PO Box 821, 7095 Hollywood
Bul...

LORI

Stop! Stop for a second. Do you
remember me?

CHARLES

Yes.

LORI

Do you remember last night?

CHARLES

Yes. We were here.

LORI

I called you. I came to your
house, someone broke in and we
escaped to here.

Charles is trying to remember, flashes and images pepper his
mind as he struggles.

LORI (CONT'D)

We made love. Just a little while
ago. Don't you remember any of it?

Charles sees pictures of her scars, of kissing them, flashes
of lovemaking. But he can't hold onto them.

CHARLES

I...I can't...

LORI

Try Charles! The memories are in
there. You can see them. I know
it.

CHARLES

(flashes)

I...can't.

LORI

Yes you can. You can remember that
we made love.

Flashes.

Charles breaks down crying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CHARLES

I can't.

Lori holds his head as he weeps.

LORI

It's okay. It's okay, baby. I've got you.

CHARLES

(weeping into her body)
I'm so sorry.

LORI

Don't be sorry. You have a problem, that's all, and problems can be solved with time.

CHARLES

Don't leave me, okay.

LORI

I won't, baby.

CHARLES

Don't leave me alone.

LORI

I won't leave you, I promise.

Charles wipes his tears.

CHARLES

You know, it's usually not this bad. I mean that I usually can figure out things better when I have stuff like this...

He shows the news paper clipping and her card.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

It really helps a lot. But I don't have anything to look at.

LORI

You have me. You can look at me.

She kisses him.

LORI (CONT'D)

Remember that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CHARLES
I don't know.

LORI
(kisses again)
How about that?

CHARLES
(getting the game)
Almost.

LORI
(kiss again)
That?

CHARLES
(playfully)
Oh yeah. Now I remember.

They kiss and touch and he crawls into bed with her for another round.

There is a shadow by the door. It is lurking and stalking. Lori and Charles freeze.

LORI
Shhhh.

GRACE
(on other side of door)
Hello? Mercy? Is that you?

SFX: Knock knock knock.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Mercy? Are you in there, girl?
It's me, Grace. I've been worried
about you. Mercy?
(pause)

CUT TO:

INT. MERCY'S BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

A heavy set, middle aged black woman in a long pink night gown and fluffy slippers is standing at the door.

GRACE
Is this her brother? She's told me
about you. You leave her alone.
You hear me. Let that girl be.
She's had enough of you.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE (CONT'D)

Now maybe she'll just sit around
and let you do your thing but that
ain't my game mister. No sir.
I'll call the cops. That's right.
I'll go straight to the police and
then you won't bother nobody no
more.

CUT TO:

INT. MERCY'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

GRACE

Now you get outta here.

Grace goes away from the door.

Charles leaps up and throws some clothes on.

LORI

Who's Mercy?

CHARLES

Well, I'm going to find out right
now. I love you.

LORI

(tickled)

You do?

Charles jogs out the door leaving it slightly ajar.

SFX: From the hall comes a distant sound of talking.

Lori clicks on the reading light and thumbs through the
magazines by the bed. They do not hold her interest.

She finds a small stack of photos and looks at them.

There is a faded shot of a 9-year-old girl in front of a
trailer home holding a baby dearly. On the back is written
"St. Louis 1971".

Next is a shot of the same girl now 16 with a little boy of 7
in front of a small house. She has her arms around him
dearly. Two girls of about 5 are next to them. On the back
is written "Me and Eugene with the twins, 1978".

Lori thumbs through more. She sees shots of the same girl
and her brother as they get older. Then the photos change,
becoming candid shots of him. One is of him with a gang of
punks. "Chicago 1988". There are a few shots of him waiting
on a street corner or soliciting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A scrap book is also near the bed. She opens it. On top are some child's sketches, maybe from a kindergartner. Some are happy pictures of families. Others are of people drowning and covered in blood.

Lori moves on to a newspaper article that is cracked and brown. The St. Louis Gazette, 1979.

"WOMAN DROWNS TWIN GIRLS IN BATHTUB. SON SURVIVES".

There is a picture of the woman being hauled away by the police and a separate school shot of Eugene at about age 8.

There are a lot of postcards from various places all addressed to Mercy Blake. They all say the same thing. "I'm okay," or "I'm alive." They are not signed.

There are lots of newspaper clippings. Some are original, others copied. They are each about different murders.

"Punk kids killed in Chicago".

"Society man found dead in New Orleans: Homosexual prostitute suspected".

Clippings from Mexico about "El Finito" are everywhere.

"Murdered family. Son lives. The Finisher strikes again...His pattern is to hunt the survivors down and kill them later."

Lori combs through a few clips from Texas and then finally a stack of articles from Los Angeles. For the first time we see the name "The California Mangler".

We see clips that show pictures of survivors like Vonya Gassamian and Latisha Johnson. She gets to the "Attack at Gallery 21."

In one picture we see Charles Polk. He is circled in red. There is a note with his next to it address and the words "tell him about Eugene".

SFX: There is the creak of a door.

Lori looks up. The door is swinging a little. The light in the hall flickers and buzzes on and off for a moment.

LORI (CONT'D)

Charles?

She puts the folder down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LORI (CONT'D)
(louder)
Charles?

There is a shadow in the room.

SFX: Heavy breathing.

LORI (CONT'D)
What did the lady say?
(pause)
Did she tell you anything?
(pause)
It's okay, baby. It's me, Lori.
Just look at your little picture of
me. It should be in your pocket.
Charles? Don't be embarrassed.
It's okay if you don't remember me.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER
(sick)
Oh, I remember you.

Lori leaps up to run. The figure jumps and tears the light
out of the wall, pushing Lori back onto the bed.

He looms over her as she cowers.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER (CONT'D)
You think your little boyfriend can
do anything to help you, humping
you in my sister's bed like a pig.
You think those paintings that you
saw in the basement are his? He
couldn't draw a comic strip. He is
a mindless, no-talent, a lifeless
nothing. I live in his house and
he doesn't even know it. And I
can't let you mess things up any
more than they already are.

As he manages to get closer and closer, Lori quietly reaches
for a weapon. She puts her hand around a heavy gym shoe.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER (CONT'D)
Oh, I forgot to tell you, sorry
about your roommate. I thought it
was you in the house. At least I
didn't make the same mistake this
time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LORI
Fuck off, Eugene!

Lori swings the heavy shoe hard into the side of The Mangler's jaw and neck. Shocked, he falls back.

Lori shrieks a piercing scream.

The Mangler leaps up and flees out the door. He disappears down the hall. Stunned, Lori can hardly move. She hears The Mangler running into someone.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER
Out of my way!

CHARLES
Hey watch it!

VOICE OF THE MANGLER
I'll be back for you later. And her.

CHARLES
I know you.

Lori pulls herself from the bed.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER
You should. You see me everyday. Now move!

CHARLES
Not until you undo whatever it is you did and give me back my life!

Lori drags herself towards the door.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER
You have no life. Now get out of my way!

There is a thud and a crash.

VOICE OF THE MANGLER (CONT'D)
And don't you ever try to stop me again!

Lori gets to the door and looks out.

CUT TO:

INT. MERCY'S BUILDING - HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Charles is pulling himself off the floor. The front-hall door is open.

CHARLES
Jesus, what just happened?

Lori runs to Charles.

LORI
Are you okay?

Charles has a bloody nose.

CHARLES
I just got slammed against the wall or something.

LORI
You just had a fight with...you know. He was in the room. You saved me.

CHARLES
I did?

Nosey tenants begin poking their heads out of the doors.

MR. GOMEZ
Do you two know what time it is?

LORI
Thanks for all of your help everyone. Thanks a lot.

She helps Charles up.

CHARLES
Let's get out of here.

LORI
I think this place is his sister's apartment. The Mangler's name is Eugene. Eugene Blake.

CHARLES
Eugene. Not a very scary name.

CONTINUED:

LORI

We have to get dressed now. We have to go. It's not safe here anymore. Okay?

CHARLES

Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. MERCY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

VARIOUS SHOTS

They are racing to put their clothes on.

Lori puts the scrap book and photos in a bag.

CUT TO:

EXT. MERCY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

They scurry from the building across the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - JUST BEFORE DAWN

They are walking down a ratty street.

LORI

Thank you for saving me Charles. I could have been killed in there.

CHARLES

Are you all right?

LORI

Nothing, huh? Don't worry about it. Let's go to a coffee shop or someplace public for a while. Then if we can get to the airport we can fly somewhere. I think we'll be safe in another city. We'll call the police from there.

CHARLES

Mmmm. That sounds good. I love trips. Can we go to someplace warm like Hawaii please?

He puts his arm around her as if nothing had happened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORI
Sure baby, what ever you want.

CHARLES
It sure is a beautiful morning,
huh?

They walk.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS - EARLY DAWN

They are walking.

Bars are closing. The coffee shop is closed. They walk.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - EARLY DAWN

Lori and Charles cross the street to a Park. There are beautiful fountains and swan ponds.

They sit on a bench to watch the sun rise.

Lori folds up into Charles's arms and they fall asleep. It is peaceful and lovely.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JANE SELLER'S OFFICE - DAWN

Jane Sellers is finishing logging in the many paintings into her book.

"PAINTING #7 - RED SATAN WITH ALL SEEING EYE"

"Painting #8 - Hell with blue corpse"

"Painting #9 - Mean man with dog's head!!"

There is an open bottle of wine and an ashtray full of cigarette butts next to her.

As the blue light of morning begins to peep through her window the large, wrapped canvas against her wall becomes illuminated. Jane gets up slowly and goes to it.

On the wrapping is written in large letters - "to my beautiful agent and art dealer: Happy Birthday".

She begins to tear it open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The painting is a brilliant, huge canvas showing Jane herself as a beautiful mythical woman being impaled and tortured. Smears across the top in gold leaf and blood red are the words "I will never do this to you if you make me famous". It is macabre and violent but also very sexy.

Jane sits back in her big red velvet easy chair in front of the painting and stares at it, seduced. The rising sunlight caresses her and the picture.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, HOMICIDE - DAWN

Liebowitz is at her desk at the station. Lorenzo is asleep on a couch. Liebowitz is filling out paperwork and drinking coffee.

Liebowitz swivels her chair around to look at the sun coming through the window. She's holding the photos of Charles standing in front of the fridge with the body of Tish in it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK - DAWN

An officer passing the sleeping Charles and Lori. He looks at them suspiciously.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF POLK HOUSE - DAWN

There is police tape everywhere. There is a police car parked in front.

A cop in the front seat is nodding off to sleep. The light coming through the windshield wakes him. He rubs his eyes, checks his watch and tries to stay awake.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LORI'S APARTMENT - DAWN

The freezer at Lori's apartment. It is open, as is the fridge. The body of Tish is missing, but the white tape of the police outlines shows where she was inside the appliance.

The sun rises in the window. It would have been a beautiful apartment.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JANE SELLER'S OFFICE - DAWN

Jane continues to stare at the painting. She moves her leg over the velvet arm rest and begins touching herself.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK - DAWN

Charles and Lori are still sleeping. The first police officer is joined by a second. They look at a sheet of paper and then at Charles. One of them pulls out a walkie-talkie.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORENSIC MORGUE - DAWN

The decayed body in the bag is being autopsied by MORIMOTO, a Japanese Forensics Technician. Tissue is picked off with a tweezers and placed in a tube. The tube is handed to a technician from another lab who takes it away. The mortician wipes his head, takes a breath and goes back to work.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MERCY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALL - GRACE'S APT- DAWN

Cops are pulling evidence from Mercy's apartment.

Mr. Gomez knocks on Grace's door. He opens it.

Grace's feet are sticking out of the bathroom, her fuzzy slippers are knocked off and covered in blood. She's dead.

Mr. Gomez has a solemn face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JANE SELLER'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Jane stares at the painting while she rubs herself over and over until she orgasms.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK -- MORNING

The two cops are now joined by more. A squad car is there with lights flashing. A few cops have their weapons drawn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Charles and Lori are awakened.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM -- DAY

Charles and Lori are at the table. Detectives Liebowitz and Lorenzo are with them. Lorenzo is falling asleep.

Liebowitz is thumbing through the scrap book and photographs of Eugene Blake. She dismisses them and looks at Lori.

LIEBOWITZ

And have you been with Mr. Polk every minute for the last twenty-four hours?

LORI

From the moment Charles and I met at his house yesterday. We have been together every second.

LIEBOWITZ

In your sight?

LORI

I can say with confidence that Charles did not have a moment without me.

LIEBOWITZ

Well, Mr. Polk, what do you have to say?

CHARLES

About what?

LIEBOWITZ

About what? Is this thing you do all just an act?

LORI

It's called Anterograde Amnesia. You can look it up on the web.

Liebowitz elbows Lorenzo.

LIEBOWITZ

Wake up.

LORENZO

My turn?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIEBOWITZ

So, that covers about 24 hours. What about yesterday, the day before? What about that Armenian family, the Gassamians two days ago? Can you answer for any of those time periods Mr. Polk?

CHARLES

I... I don't know.

LORI

I can.

LIEBOWITZ

How's that?

LORI

Because Charles and I are lovers. He's been my lover now for about two months. I've seen him almost every minute of every day during that time.

LIEBOWITZ

Then why did Mr. Polk bother to go to your house yesterday to look for you?

LORI

Because he forgot that I was in his house. I was taking a shower and he forgot all about it. He missed me and he went looking for me.

LIEBOWITZ

The shower wasn't wet when we got there.

LORI

I like to dry it off. I'm very clean.

LIEBOWITZ

There were no towels on the floor or in the hamper.

LORI

I folded them and put them back on the shelf.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LIEBOWITZ

For a clean freak, you sure didn't have any extra clothes with you.

LORI

Given the nature of our relationship, I didn't need any clothes.

LORENZO

Sounds convincing to me.

Liebowitz looks at him harshly.

LIEBOWITZ

I think that you are lying, Miss Himmel. That you are lying and you are protecting this man, and in so doing you are endangering yourself and others.

LORI

Well, I don't see it that way. Where's his lawyer? Where's his mother? Where is his doctor? This man has no one else. He has lost everything. You failed to protect him and now you have the gall to accuse this man of hiding something. Even with his problems, he has done nothing for the past twenty-four hours, but try to save my life. That's more than the police have ever tried to do. So, since his only concern has been me, I'm just returning the favor. Now, if you want to ask him anything else, he will require an attorney. I'm sure his agent would be happy to hire the best.

LORENZO

Not her again.

LIEBOWITZ

Well, first thing: his mother is dead.

CHARLES

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LIEBOWITZ

Oh don't act so surprised.

CHARLES

I don't understand?

LIEBOWITZ

Your mother and father. Both dead
in your basement.

She tosses a gruesome photo. Charles is dumfounded.

LORI

Oh baby, I'm so sorry.

Charles touches the photos lovingly with his mouth wide open
and his eyes red. Lori flips the picture over.

LORI (CONT'D)

You are one cruel cop.

Charles is crying.

LORI (CONT'D)

It's okay, baby. It's okay. It
will be over in a minute. Just
hold on.

Charles cries in her arms.

LORENZO

Somebody get this poor guy a
tissue.

(to Liebowitz)

Lighten up. Please.

Detective Lorenzo gets a tissue and hands it to Charles.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Charles.

CHARLES

Thank you.

Charles wipes his eyes and blows his nose. He smiles. He has
forgotten.

LORI

Leave him alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LORENZO

Okay. Thank you very much for coming in.

LIEBOWITZ

Aren't we going to book them?

LORENZO

For what?

LIEBOWITZ

I don't know. Breaking and entering, aiding and abetting.

LORENZO

No. Thank you very much. I'm sorry for everything that's happened to you both. Those photos and the scrapbook will be invaluable tools in the capture of the copycat killer. I recommend that you go to a safe place, somewhere very unexpected.

LORI

My cousin lives in Santa Barbara.

LORENZO

Perfect. If you need anything, here's my card.

Charles and Lori get up to go. Liebowitz is disgusted.

LIEBOWITZ

Man, you are going to be in the weeds for this.

LORENZO

I'm saving your ass from a lawsuit, Chica. Now, cool off. Tomorrow's another day.

Lorenzo walks Lori and Charles out.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - HALL -- CONTINUOUS

Detective Lorenzo walks Lori and Charles down the hall towards the front door. The cops that they pass are shocked. Lorenzo holds them back with a wave of his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Liebowitz stands at the office door shaking her head.

LORI
Just keep walking, baby.

Lorenzo's cell phone rings. He answers as he walks.

LORENZO
Oh, hey, ya. Thanks for the last-minute rush. Do you have the results?

MORIMOTO (ON PHONE)
We sure do. The DNA match on the corpse is negative for the California Mangler.

LORENZO
(slows down)
Go on.

MORIMOTO (ON PHONE)
It sounds crazy, but I ran a DNA sample from Charles Vincent Polk, from one of his old paintings a few years back. It matched the corpse.

Lorenzo motions slowly for the cop to block the door.

MORIMOTO (CONT'D)
Unless somebody switched my samples, whoever that is that you have at the station, it's not Polk.

LORENZO
Thanks.

Dumfounded, he hangs up his phone.

LORI
So where do I pick up my car?

Lorenzo pulls his gun on them.

LORENZO
FREEZE!

All the other cops pull their guns. Liebowitz approaches.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
Get down on the ground, hands on your heads! Do it now!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LORI
What the hell are you doing?

LORENZO
Get away from him, Miss Himmel!

CHARLES
What's going on? What did I do?

LORI
What is this about?

LIEBOWITZ
Yeah, what is this about?

LORENZO
DNA. The body we buried last year
was Charles Polk. This man is
someone else.

CHARLES
What?

LORI
That's crazy. It's a mistake.
It's a trick.

LIEBOWITZ
We'll have plenty of time to sort
that out later.

Watching them from the shadows behind the police is the
Creepy Photographer.

LORI
THERE HE IS! THAT'S HIM!

LORENZO
Step away from him Miss Himmel, I'm
warning you.

LORI
Are you crazy! That's the Mangler!
Behind you! That's him!

The Creepy Photographer steps into the stairwell on the other
side of the hall.

LORI (CONT'D)
YOU'RE LETTING HIM GET AWAY!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LIEBOWITZ

Sir! Put your hands behind your head and turn around! One...

LORI

(to Charles)

Do you trust me, baby?

LIEBOWITZ

...two...

LORI

...then take me as a hostage and go into that stairwell.

LIEBOWITZ

...three...

LORI

...do it, Charles. DO IT!

Charles grabs Lori by the hair and throat, incredibly rough.

CHARLES

(in a strange voice)

Stay the hell back or I snap this bitch's neck.

Most of the cops freeze. One faces off with him, swinging his club at Charles. But Charles quickly moves Lori into the way like a matador. The cop hits her in the head instead. She is knocked hard.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Oh, that's got to hurt.

LORENZO

Okay, stop, back off.

Charles drags Lori through the stairwell door.

CUT TO:

INT. LOWER STAIRWELL -- CONTINUOUS

Charles hauls Lori's dazed body onto the steps. There are some pipes and tools in a crate. He takes a pipe and wedges it across the push bar to lock it.

CHARLES

Lori. Lori. Are you okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The door is shaken and yanked from the other side, but the pipe holds firm.

LORI
Don't let them catch you, Charles.

Charles thinks for a moment. Then he lifts Lori and lumbers up the steps with her.

CUT TO:

INT. MIDDLE STAIRWELL -- CONTINUOUS

Charles hauls Lori up the steps. He sees a door with light a few flights up.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

The cops are trying to pry open the door with a crowbar.

LORENZO
(on radio)
I need officers at every exit off
the emergency stairwell.

CUT TO:

INT. UPPER STAIRWELL -- CONTINUOUS

Charles carries Lori all the way to the roof door. He leans Lori against the walls.

CHARLES
Can you walk?

LORI
I feel like I'm going to throw up.

Charles opens the door. Light streams in.

CHARLES
Put your arm around me.

She does. They exit onto the roof.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE ROOF TOP -- CONTINUOUS

They limp out shading their eyes. Charles sits Lori down on a ledge and uses what he can find to secure the door.

LORI
You didn't do it, Charles, did you?

CHARLES
Do what?

LORI
Be honest with me.

CHARLES
Honest. I don't remember.

LORI
So you may have...you may have.

CHARLES
Not me. Not me, Lori. I'm not the killer. I want him dead and gone more than anything in the world. I want to be with you. I only remember you. I want you to be safe so bad. I don't want to hurt you. I want to love you. I want to save you.

Charles's face is beet red and his hands are infected and he is scratching.

LORI
Charles, something's going on with your skin.

CHARLES
I'm all itchy. Yeah, my face and hands are burning up. I need to take my medicine.

LORI
All right, listen. We are going to your doctor's office. Were going to find a fire escape and get you taken care of. Okay?

CHARLES
Okay. Whatever you want.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORI
I want you to be... well again.

CHARLES
Okay.

LORI
C'mon.

They get up, and leaning on Charles, Lori leads them across the roof.

There is another stairwell door. They head towards it. As they approach it opens. The Creepy Photographer steps out.

LORI (CONT'D)
The police are right downstairs.
They'll be here any minute.

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER
Oh, the police won't hurt me. I'm
on staff. It's time.

He pulls out a knife. Lori and Charles run. The Creepy Photographer gives chase.

Lori and Charles get to the edge of the roof, but instead of a fire escape they look down into a construction site. They are trapped.

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
Stand clear. All I want is him.

LORI
Help! Help!

Her screams are drown out by the construction sounds.

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER
You don't understand He has to
die! He has to!

The Creepy Photographer attacks. He and Charles struggle. Lori grabs the Creepy Photographer from behind and Charles wrestles the knife from his hand.

LORI
You're never going to kill anybody
again you sick fuck!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER

No! You've got it wrong! I'm on
your side!

The Creepy Photographer pulls something from his pocket.
Lori bites his hand and it falls.

CREEPY PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

Aaaaaaaaaa!

Lori sees the screaming man's bare neck for just a moment.
It has a horrible scar across the throat. Then Charles
covers it up with his hands as he begins to strangle the man.

Lori looks at what dropped on the ground. It is a news clip
with the headline "Police Photographer's throat cut by
California Mangler: victim swears revenge".

LORI

Don't kill him, Charles! Don't do
it!

Charles chokes the Creepy Photographer harder and harder
until he is dead.

LORI (CONT'D)

Oh baby, oh no.

CHARLES

Is he dead?

LORI

Oh god!

CHARLES

I had to do it. He would have
killed us both.

Charles is scratching.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I am so itchy. I need my anti-
rejection drugs.

LORI

Is that what you take, anti-
rejection drugs?

CHARLES

For the transplants. Ow, they
burn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Lori sees. The scar line sewn around Charles's face and the seams on his wrist and fingers are all swollen and infected. The skin that is sewn on is a different color than the rest of his skin, and it has more hair.

As she looks in amazement, she sees on his neck the indentation of her gym shoe.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

What's wrong, Lori? You're really looking at me strange.

LORI

I...I'm just worried about you...I was just hoping you were okay.

CHARLES

(his voice is changing)

I like your plan to go to my doctors office. Maybe even Santa Barbara. Just you and me. That's smart.

LORI

Thanks. I'm pretty smart when it comes to figuring things out.

CHARLES

(with Mangler's Voice)

You must be, to get this far... in life...smart...girl.

Charles sees into his own mind, his own real memory.

MEMORY: Mercy is at his door...

He pulls her into the room and kills her.

MEMORY: Lori's apartment building...

He pries open the door knob on apartment six. Tish is surprised. He grabs her and enters.

MEMORY: Mercy's apartment Building...

He chokes the big black woman, Grace and pushes her into the bathroom.

We emerge from Charles's memory. He and Lori are near the roofs edge. Charles has become who he really is, The Mangler.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

He begins to approach her.

LORI
You don't have to do this, you know.

MANGLER
Do what?

LORI
You don't have to let him take over.

MANGLER
Sure he does. This body is mine.

LORI
Charles, I know that you're in there, baby. I know that you can stop this.

MANGLER
Why should he want to? He's been dead for over a year. He can't remember anything because his brain is in the morgue. My brain is the one he's been using and frankly I'm getting a little tired of it. The only thing he's going to remember if he comes back is that he...is really me.

He lunges at Lori. She dodges. They fight. She's good. She almost gets him. But he is stronger. He flips her over and gets on top of her.

He begins to strangle her.

The Mangler's face twists with inner struggle. Suddenly Charles begins to emerge. His hands loosen on Lori's neck.

CHARLES
NOOOOOOO!

LORI
Charles. Charles, listen to me. Fight him. Fight him.

Charles throws himself off of her and writhes on the ground.

CHARLES
Leave her alone! Leave her alone!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Lori gets up. She fights the urge to run and goes to Charles.

LORI
Charles. Listen to me. It's you.
This is you, not him. He's the one
that died. Who cares if it's his
stupid body. It's your life. It's
your life. You can make him go
away forever, Charles. And we can
make our own memories. And you can
paint and we can live, and we can
be in love.

Charles weeps. He is struggling to win.

LORI (CONT'D)
I love you. I love you, Charles.
Just you. I always have. And now
I love you more than ever before.
Come back. Come back to me, baby.
Charles?

Charles has won. They hold each other.

SFX: A gunshot shot is fired into the air.

SWAT #1
Hold it.

SWAT #2
Don't move.

LORI
Run, Charles.

CHARLES
Lori, he'll come back if I run.

Charles remains calm. The SWAT police approach ready with cuffs.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
I'm not going to put up any
struggle.

The SWAT Police are almost on him. Charles's face changes.

MANGLER
But I will!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

The Mangler/Charles kicks down SWAT #1 and grabs SWAT #2, throwing him over the ledge. SWAT #2 falls screaming down to the construction site below. He falls into the rock-crushing machine.

Charles grabs SWAT #1 and starts to throw him over the side.

LORI

No, Charles, don't!

Charles stands at the ledge battling the forces within himself. For a moment the Mangler takes over and tosses SWAT #1 from the roof.

A split second later the good Charles takes over and grabs the SWAT cop's hand. The wounded officer shrieks but does not fall. He hangs from the tightly gripped fist of Charles Polk.

CHARLES

I've got you. I won't let you fall. I will not let you fall.

The rock crusher pounds relentlessly below them.

Charles hauls the broken SWAT cop up to safety. Charles is exhausted.

LORI

See, you can do it, Charles. You can reclaim your life. You can end all this.

CHARLES

Yes, I can. I know. And I will.

He goes to her.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I love you Lori. Tell everyone that the real me, Charles Vincent Polk, killed the California Mangler.

Charles leaps from the ledge and plummets silently into the rock crusher.

His body is consumed by the machine.

LORI

Noooo. Noooo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

She weeps at the ledge.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE -- DAY

There are a few cop cars and an ambulance. The rock crusher is off. OFFICERS are removing what is left of the bodies from the rubble inside. Detectives Lorenzo and Liebowitz are there with the cops.

Lori is wrapped in a blanket with some hot tea.

LIEBOWITZ

Okay, let's tag 'em and bag 'em.

LORENZO

(to Lori)

You okay, chica?

LORI

Um-hm.

LORENZO

For what it's worth, you were a brave girl.

The body of the Creepy Photographer is dead on a stretcher.

SHOT of Charles's dead body being taken out of the crusher. He is torn up and covered in rock dust and rubble. He is crushed almost beyond recognition.

LIEBOWITZ

Okay, get that scum-bag to the morgue. The sooner he's in the ground the better.

LORENZO

(to Lori)

So, which one was he? The Mangler, or the other guy?

LORI

Oh, he was Charles Polk. Definitely Charles in the end.

Lorenzo rubs her shoulder to comfort her and walks away.

LORENZO

Okay, let's get the wounded into the ambulance. C'mon people.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The PARAMEDICS wheel a stretcher from the sight to the ambulance. The WOUNDED SWAT COP that fell into the rock crusher is on it. His face has been scraped away and his hands are crushed, but the rest of him is alive.

INSERT: Wounded SWAT Cop's POV of Paramedic over him.

WOUNDED SWAT COP
Am I going to die?

PARAMEDIC 2
You're going to live, Officer.
You're going to be all right.

The SWAT cop's vision blurs to black.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUCTION HOUSE - WEEKS LATER

It is a high-end art auction. It is crowded with rich people. The paintings for sale are the ones from Charles's basement.

AUCTIONEER
And now we offer a selection from some of the finest work of the late Charles Vincent Polk from his California Mangler period. The first one is titled, "Celebrating my victories from Hell". Let's start the bidding at two Hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Do I have two seventy-five? Two seventy five. How about three? We have three hundred thousand dollars from the Guggenheim. Wonderful. Three hundred twenty five do I hear four...

CUT TO:

END CREDIT