

THE DEAD ZONE

"SAINT JOAN"

Written by

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An Original Series Episode
based on the television series "The Dead Zone"

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THE DEAD ZONE

"SAINT JOAN"

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. BANNERMAN HOUSE/DRIVEWAY - DAY

SARA BANNERMAN pulls her car into the driveway and parks. J.J., her son, is shooting hoops with a few of the NEIGHBORHOOD BOYS. She gets out and bundles up a few bags of groceries as J.J. comes up to meet her.

SARA

J.J.? Can you grab the soda and the rest of the bags, honey? They're on the back seat.

J.J.

Yeah, Mom. Sure.

J.J. uses the distraction to make a basket - much to the dismay of his opponents, the neighborhood boys.

EXT. BANNERMAN HOUSE/FRONT DOORWAY - DAY

Sara approaches the front entrance of the house with several bags of groceries. A note is taped to the door. She puts down her bags, pulls the note from its place and opens it.

INT. JOHNNY'S JEEP - DAY

JOHNNY travels up a rather rural looking road in his Jeep. He struggles with a map during the following -

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(reading)

Dear Sarah,

(beat)

I know this may seem sudden to you, but I just need to get my head clear of things for awhile.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/ENTRANCE - DAY

Johnny pulls the Jeep into the long driveway of what appears to be a state park, past a large sign that reads:

INSERT - "WELCOME TO BEAR CREEK STATE PARK - MOOSEHEAD, MAINE"

BACK TO SCENE

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(reading)

By the time you read this I should be a few hours away - I'm heading upstate for a couple days of "roughing it" at Bear Creek up in Moosehead. Sound rustic enough?

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/ACCESS ROAD - DAY

As he travels along the winding access road, Johnny looks to his left, where his eye catches the beautiful view.

JOHNNY'S P.O.V. - THE SKY AND HORIZON

Nothing but wide open spaces, blue skies and rolling hills.

BACK TO SCENE

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(reading)

Nothing special, other than a well deserved break. Hopefully, it's "Zone free".

(beat)

Anyway, until I'm back, give J.J. a hug for me and tell him I'll see him this weekend.

Love, Johnny.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/OBSERVATION AREA - DAY

Johnny parks the Jeep, gets out and walks to the edge of the parking lot, stops and takes in the scenery.

JOHNNY'S P.O.V. - THE SKY AND HORIZON

Majestic. Serene. He takes a deep breath - Ah... fresh air!

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/OBSERVATION AREA - DAY

A sheriff's cruiser bounds in from the main road. The occupant, DEPUTY HARLAN MATTHEWS, a grizzled, mustached middle-aged man, gives Johnny a squinty-eyed look of disapproval as he passes, then drives on up to the main lodge.

Johnny waits as the cruiser disappears out of sight. Then, after looking around to make sure no one is watching - like a gleeful kid - he jumps off the embankment and rolls down the hill.

Laughing to himself, he settles into the cool, green grass.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/HILLSIDE - DAY

Johnny stares up at the sky -

JOHNNY'S P.O.V. - THE SKY

- which is picture perfect.

BACK TO SCENE

He reaches down and grabs a piece of grass and sticks it in his mouth ala Huck Finn.

Ah, this is the life.

As he takes in the view, he notices a few feet away, a small piece of material caught on one of the many plants dotting the hillside. Slowly, as if compelled by some unknown reason, he reaches over and touches the dangling fabric...

FLASH:

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/WOODS - NIGHT

ATTACKER'S P.O.V. - TEENAGE GIRL RUNNING

We see a brunette haired TEENAGE GIRL, 16, running from CAMERA, SCREAMING and looking back at something that is obviously chasing her. Suddenly we are upon her. She turns, SCREAMS again, and throws up her hands and begins to fall backwards into darkness.

BLACKOUT.

RESUME: JOHNNY

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/HILLSIDE - DAY

Johnny lets go of the fabric and lies back down in the grass. He looks up...

JOHNNY'S P.O.V. - THE SKY

... to see nothing but blue sky and fluffy white clouds. A morning dove COOS in the distance.

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/HILLSIDE - DAY

CLOSE UP - JOHNNY'S FACE

Johnny covers his face with the back of his arm.

JOHNNY

Damn...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/LOBBY - DAY

Johnny crosses through the lobby, which is overly decorated with a Western theme, and approaches FRANK COOPER, an odd looking man in Western garb, standing behind the front desk.

Johnny bellies up to the counter as lodge guests meander about.

JOHNNY

Hi. Can I get a room, please?

FRANK

(Western drawl)

You can get a room, get a tan, swim, hike, play volley ball, eat some really good grub now and then, take a nap if you wanna...

JOHNNY

(interrupting)

I just want a room.

FRANK

Certainly. And how long you be a stayin'?

He hands Johnny a reservation card.

JOHNNY

Until Friday, I guess.

FRANK

(checking the register)

Sorry, I only have singles until Wednesday. We could get a cancellation though. Do you want me to put you on the list?

JOHNNY

Are there any other hotels around?

FRANK

Nope - this is it until the Canadian border. That's 40 miles due West.

JOHNNY

Hmmm. You say you have a single?

Johnny looks around and is temporarily distracted by a couple passing by in square dance outfits.

FRANK

Until Wednesday, for certain. You wanna be on the list?

JOHNNY

What? Oh, "the list"... Yeah sure, whatever.

He hands Frank the reservation card he has just filled out.

FRANK

(reading)

"Mr. Smith".

(reacts)

All righty, Mr. "Smith".

He hands Johnny a card key.

FRANK (cont'd)

Room 317. Straight up the stairs to the third floor and down the hall to your left. Have a nice stay, sir, and welcome to the Bear Creek Lodge.

Johnny picks up his bags and heads towards the stairs, taking in the "rustic" atmosphere and eyeballing the weird looking regulars in the lobby.

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/HALLWAY - OUTSIDE ROOM 317 - DAY

Johnny opens the door with the card key and stands in the doorway looking into the room.

JOHNNY'S P.O.V. - INTERIOR OF ROOM 317

It is a sparse, overly decorated hotel room done in flawless "Western Lodge" motif, complete with a bearskin rug on the floor. Stuffed animals and birds adorn the walls and a fireplace sits opposite the bed. It's like every log cabin you've ever seen in any period western, but loaded from floor to ceiling with stuffed animals and much more hunting lodge "kitsch".

BACK TO SCENE

Johnny registers complete shock.

JOHNNY
 (mouthing)
 Oh, my God...!

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/HALLWAY - DAY

JOHNNY

- from outside the room looking in, watching him shutting the door behind him.

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/ROOM 317 - DAY (SUNSET)

It a few hours later and Johnny is on the phone to Bruce.

JOHNNY
 (into phone)
 You wouldn't believe this place,
 man. It's like something out of
 "Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom".

INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT - DAY (SUNSET)

Bruce is in his kitchen, munching on a bag of corn chips.

BRUCE
 (into phone)
 Oh, come on, it can't be that bad!

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/ROOM 317 - DAY (SUNSET)

JOHNNY
 (into phone)
 Let me put it to you this way...

Johnny turns to his left and looks square into the face of a stuffed beaver with a lamp coming out of its head - sitting on the bedside table.

JOHNNY (cont'd)
 (into phone)
 I am looking into the face of a
 stuffed beaver as we speak.

INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT - DAY (SUNSET)

BRUCE
 (into phone, laughing)
 Oh man! I'm not even touching that
 one! So, when are you coming back?

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/ROOM 317 - DAY (SUNSET)

JOHNNY
 (into phone)
 I dunno - we'll see how long I can
 stand it. I mean...
 (looking around the room)
 ... you gotta see this place to
 believe it!

INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT - DAY (SUNSET)

BRUCE
 (into phone)
 No, thanks. I have enough problems
 already. I'll see you when you get
 back here -
 (beat)
 "buckaroo".

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/ROOM 317 - DAY (SUNSET)

JOHNNY
 (into phone)
 Ha ha - Very funny.
 (beat)
 I'll talk to you later, man.

Johnny turns off his cell phone and rolls over onto his back and looks up - into the face of a stuffed hawk leering ominously over him. He reacts - rolls over onto his side and soon falls asleep.

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/ROOM 317 - NIGHT

Johnny is in bed, having a fitful nightmare. As we MOVE IN we suddenly FLASH into...

FLASH:

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/WOODS - NIGHT

Johnny deep in the woods, surrounded by SOUNDS of HOOTING owls and other woodland creatures. Suddenly, we hear the sound of hundreds of VOICES all WHISPERING at once - like rushing water. Johnny slowly makes his way around the brush to a small clearing.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/CLEARING - NIGHT

On her knees in the clearing is the Teenage Girl. Johnny approaches her from behind, but as he is upon her, she turns with a start:

TEENAGE GIRL
(screaming)
Ahhhhh!

RESUME: JOHNNY

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/ROOM 317 - DAY (DAWN)

Suddenly the room phone rings. Johnny is startled from his sleep, rolls over and answers it.

JOHNNY
(into phone, sleepily)
Hello...?

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT DESK - DAY (DAWN)

FRANK
(into phone)
Good mornin', Mr. Smith. I am pleased to inform you that we did have a few cancellations yesterday afternoon, so if you want to enjoy the rest of your week here at the Bear Creek Lodge, that would just fine by us.

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/ROOM 317 - DAY (DAWN)

JOHNNY
(into phone)
Uh, thank you, uh, Frank, is it?
Yes, I think I, uh...

Johnny looks at the clock. It reads 6:13 AM. He rolls his eyes.

JOHNNY (cont'd)
(into phone)
... I think I will take you up on
your offer.

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT DESK - DAY (DAWN)

FRANK
(into phone)
I kinda thought you might.

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/ROOM 317 - DAY (DAWN)

JOHNNY
(into phone)
Thank you, Frank. You are "a
gentleman and a scholar".

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT DESK - DAY (DAWN)

FRANK
(into phone)
As are you, sir.

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/ROOM 317 - DAY (DAWN)

JOHNNY
(into phone)
Ok, we can stop this now...

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT DESK - DAY (DAWN)

FRANK
(into phone)
Yes we can. Goodbye.

Johnny hangs up. He gives a look to the phone. What a nut...

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL - DAY

It is the lodge's dining room, decorated in the same Western theme.

Dominating the center of the room is a breakfast bar/steam table. A bar is off to one side. Various hotel GUESTS are seated at tables, or standing at the steam table.

Johnny ENTERS. Standing behind the bar is BETTY COOPER, Frank's wife and a career waitress in her mid-forties. She is reading a newspaper and smoking a cigarette.

Harlan Matthews is seated - eating an omelet - at the other end of the bar.

BETTY

(Western drawl)

You look like you could use some coffee...

JOHNNY

Coffee would be great. For some reason I didn't sleep very well last night.

BETTY

Nobody sleeps well here their first night, honey.

JOHNNY

(looking at the kitsch covered walls)

I can see why. You got any orange juice?

BETTY

You sure you don't want the buffet? It comes with juice.

JOHNNY

Ok, I'll have the buffet.

BETTY

(writing)

All righty, that's one buffet. You'll find the plates and the silver ware up on the breakfast bar. Have a good mornin'.

Betty goes back to reading her paper - Johnny goes to the buffet line. As he stands in line in front of a rather grizzled looking OLD TIMER, he notices a framed picture on the wall that intrigues him.

CLOSE UP - GROUP PHOTO IN FRONT OF BEAR CREEK LODGE

It is a large blow-up of a group of LODGE GUESTS. In the midst of the group, standing next to Betty the waitress, is the Teenage Girl of Johnny's vision.

Johnny reaches up to touch the framed photograph...

FLASH:

EXT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT LAWN - DAY

We are now in the picture as we hear Frank o.s. organizing the photo shoot.

FRANK (O.S.)
Ok, a little closer
everybody. That's it.

Standing around the Teenage Girl are Betty and other Bear Creek Lodge guests. They clown around a bit until Frank says:

FRANK (O.S.)
Say "cheese"!

The camera flashes...

OFF CAMERA FLASH

RESUME: JOHNNY

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL - DAY

The Old Timer peers over Johnny's shoulder.

OLD TIMER
You gonna stare or eat, young
feller?

Johnny reacts and moves on down the chow line.

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL - DAY (LATER)

Johnny has finished his breakfast. Betty approaches with a coffee pot.

BETTY
How's everything?

She pours Johnny more coffee.

JOHNNY
Fine. Listen - you've been
working here for a while, right?

BETTY
Goin' on fourteen years.

JOHNNY
Do you know any of the people in
these pictures?

BETTY
Hell, mister. I'm in half these
pictures...

JOHNNY
Yeah, I know, but I'm talking
about this one.

Johnny points to the group shot he saw earlier.

BETTY
(sadly)
Oh, yeah. That was Jo Ann and the
gang.

JOHNNY
"Jo Ann"...?

BETTY
Jo Ann Peterson. You're not from
around these parts, are you, honey?

JOHNNY
No, not really.

BETTY
(bellowing)
Hey, Frank!

She smiles at Johnny who reacts to her quaint way of summoning
Frank.

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL - DAY (LATER)

The picture from the wall is now with them on the table.

JOHNNY
So she just "disappeared"?

FRANK

Right off the face of God's green earth. No one's ever heard a thing from her since. They arrested this Thompkins feller, and charged him with her murder, but we all know he didn't do it.

JOHNNY

Why makes you say that?

FRANK

'Cause he used hang around here every once and awhile. Did odd jobs, slept in the back, that sort of thing. But they found her backpack with him, so they said he did it.

(beat)

Can't see how, 'cause that boy twern't right, anyway.

JOHNNY

"Twern't right"?

FRANK

(tapping his forehead)

Twern't right in the head! Guess he was a retard or somethin', cause he just twern't right.

BETTY

If you ask me, he was loonier than a jay bird.

FRANK

You know...

(beat)

Jo Ann's disappearin' affected a lot of people around here...

BETTY

Some more than others.

They glance over to Matthews, who is still at the counter, sipping his coffee.

FRANK

So I'd watch my back, if I was you.

JOHNNY

"Watch my back"?

FRANK

(leaning in)

It's been goin' on eight years since all this went down. Jo Ann stirred up some mighty strong feelings among folks around here - her disappearin' was a hard thing for some people to take...

(indicating Matthews)

... especially him.

(beat)

You know, I never did get your first name...

JOHNNY

It's Johnny.

FRANK

Well I'll be damned! You ain't that Johnny Smith feller that's been in all the papers, are ya?

JOHNNY

I'm afraid so.

FRANK

Well, will you lookie here, Betty! We got ourselves an honest to goodness, real live psychic!

Frank reaches out and begins to shake Johnny's hand.

FLASH:

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL/STORE ROOM - NIGHT

We are at the door of a side room used for storage at the Bear Creek Bar and Grill. Frank opens the door to reveal a drunken Harlan Matthews putting the moves on Betty. Frank ENTERS.

FRANK

Hey! What the hell do you think you're doin', Harlan!?

Frank gives Matthews a roundhouse to the jaw and the two begin to tussle.

BETTY

Frank! No! Frank, stop it!

EXT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT PORCH - DAY

Betty is sitting and crying - The Teenage Girl from the visions is comforting her.

BETTY

(weeping)

But I didn't do anything! It was just... Oh, God!

Betty breaks down in tears. The Teenage Girl, JO ANN PETERSON, puts her arm around her.

TEENAGE GIRL (JO ANN)

Shhh. It'll be Ok, Miss Betty.
Don't worry - He's going to forgive you, I know it.

EXT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT PORCH - DAY

Jo Ann is now with Frank. Frank is pacing and furious. Jo Ann is sitting on a porch chair.

JO ANN

But you can't just leave her, Mr. Cooper!

FRANK

(angrily)

Oh yeah? Why the hell not?!

Jo Ann stands and puts her hands on Frank's shoulders and looks him square in the eye.

JO ANN

(tenderly)

Because you love her...

Frank collapses in a chair and is visibly moved.

JO ANN

Mr. Cooper, it's Ok. You have to trust me.

(beat)

"This too shall pass".

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/SIDE ROOM - DAY

We are now with Frank, Betty and Jo Ann. Jo Ann brings the two of them together by the hand. They look at each other, and then, after a beat, they embrace. Jo Ann begins to clap and giggle.

JO ANN

Yay!

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - NIGHT

It is a gathering of FRIENDS and FAMILY at Jo Ann's closed casket funeral. Frank and Betty are seen consoling Jo Ann's parents - JAMES and EMILY PETERSON. As Betty MOVES IN to hug Mrs. Peterson:

RESUME: JOHNNY, FRANK AND BETTY

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL - DAY

FRANK

Mr. Johnny Smith! Well, I'll be damned!

Deputy Matthews looks over from the counter, none too pleased at this revelation. Frank notices they are being watched...

FRANK (cont'd)

Well... Sure wish I could set awhile, but I got to get back to cookin'. Them flapjacks don't make themselves. Good talkin' with you, Mr. Smith.

(leans in, sotto voce)

Your coffee's on me.

Frank winks at Johnny and EXITS. Betty gets up to leave with him. A beat as she waits until he is gone, then...

BETTY

I knew I had a good feelin' about you. Coffee, hell...

She looks to make sure Frank isn't watching, then picks up the check.

BETTY

On the house.

(MORE)

BETTY (cont'd)

You know, Jo Ann's parents nearly went plum crazy trying to find out what really happened to her. Sure would be nice of someone to put an end to all that doubt and misery...

(leaning in close)

Help us, Mr. Smith. Find out what happened to Jo Ann.

She smiles, pockets the check and EXITS. Johnny looks over to the counter - and is met with the stern look of Deputy Matthews.

Off Johnny's reaction as we -

EXT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT PORCH - DAY

Johnny EXITS through the main doors and on to the porch of the building. He is chewing on a toothpick, watching the patrons pass by him from the restaurant.

He looks out on the wooded splendor before him -

JOHNNY'S P.O.V. - BEAR CREEK LODGE FRONT LAWN

- the blue sky, the green grass.

BACK TO SCENE

He turns - only to meet Deputy Matthews, staring him squarely in the face.

MATTHEWS

Nice morning, isn't it?

A few LODGE PATRONS EXIT the front door. Matthews waits for them to leave.

MATTHEWS (cont'd)

You know...

(lighting a cigarette)

... I don't know just what the hell you think your going to accomplish here, Mr. Smith. But I'll tell you one thing...

He turns and looks Johnny right in the eye.

MATTHEWS (cont'd)

You try any of that psychic mumbo-jumbo crap of yours and go poking your nose into my business - *police* business - and I will see that you rot in jail for the rest of your natural born life - you got that, son?

Matthews pokes his cigarette finger into Johnny's chest as Johnny naturally reacts to the poking. He reaches up and takes a hold of Matthews' wrist.

FLASH:

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - NIGHT

A girl's LAUGHTER, followed by the sound of several people WEEPING around Jo Ann's closed casket. Frank and Betty can be seen consoling Jo Ann's parent's as before, but now we see that Matthews is there, in the b.g., too.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/WOODS - NIGHT

A darkened and blurry vision of Deputy Matthews, wandering the woods in the dark, lost and panic-stricken.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Matthews, now much older, is sitting on the bed, drinking from a bottle of scotch, obviously drunk. We watch as he reaches for the bottle, which shatters on the floor as he knocks it over with his shaky hand.

Matthews clutches his chest, staggers to his feet, and then collapses.

RESUME: JOHNNY

EXT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT PORCH - DAY

... as Matthews pulls his hand away, reacting to Johnny's grip.

MATTHEWS

Don't make me tell you twice.

Matthews puts his hat squarely on his head and with a final stern look to Johnny, EXITS.

CLOSE UP - JOHNNY'S FACE

... watching Matthews leave as we -

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. BANGOR LIBRARY - DAY

Bruce is seated at the screen of a microfiche machine, talking on the phone to Johnny.

BRUCE

(into phone, reading)

"Jo Ann Peterson". Disappeared without a trace eight years ago from the Bear Creek State Park in Moosehead.

INT. JOHNNY'S JEEP - DAY

Johnny is driving up an access road in Bear Creek State Park, talking on the phone to Bruce.

JOHNNY

(into phone, to himself)

... right off of the face of God's green earth...

INT. BANGOR LIBRARY - DAY

BRUCE

(into phone)

Yeah, sort of... Says a full investigation was conducted by the Piscataquis County Sheriff's office.

(beat)

There was one arrest in the case, a local vagrant named William, alias "Billie", that's with an "i" "e", Thompkins. However, he was found incompetent to stand trial, so he was he committed to the Maine State Facility for the Criminally Insane in Greenville.

INT. JOHNNY'S JEEP - DAY

JOHNNY
(into phone)
Hmmm, that's only ten miles from
here...

INT. BANGOR LIBRARY - DAY

BRUCE
(into phone)
And get this - your Deputy Matthews
was lead on the original
investigation. You think he
screwed up?

INT. JOHNNY'S JEEP - DAY

JOHNNY
(into phone)
I don't know yet. Hey, do me a
favor. See if you can find out
anything else about Jo Ann and this
Matthews guy. I wanna know who and
what I'm dealing with here.

INT. BANGOR LIBRARY - DAY

BRUCE
(into phone)
Ok, man, will do. Say, where are
you? Your signal is getting really
scratchy...

INT. JOHNNY'S JEEP - DAY

JOHNNY
(into phone)
I'm heading into the mountains to
do a little "soul searching".

INT. BANGOR LIBRARY - DAY

BRUCE
(into phone)
Uhuh... Well, don't go hunting down
(MORE)

BRUCE (cont'd)
no cold case, bro. Get some rest.
Take in some fishing, or something,
you know?

INT. JOHNNY'S JEEP - DAY

JOHNNY
(into phone, smiling)
Yeah, Ok.

INT. BANGOR LIBRARY - DAY

BRUCE
(into phone)
In the meantime, I'll see what else
I can find on this Peterson chick -
and, uh, the other dude.

INT. JOHNNY'S JEEP - DAY

JOHNNY
(into phone)
"Girl", Bruce. Peterson "girl".
And "the dude's" name is Matthews -
Deputy Harlan Matthews of the
Piscataquis County Sheriff's
Department. Call me.

INT. BANGOR LIBRARY - DAY

BRUCE
(into phone)
Yeah man, later.

Johnny hangs up.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/ACCESS ROAD - DAY (SUNSET)

Johnny swings the Jeep into low gear and heads up the Park road to an observation area, where he parks and dismounts. Taking his backpack in one hand and a thermos of coffee in the other, he heads up the path towards the peak.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/MOUNTAIN PATH - DAY (SUNSET)

Johnny marches up the sloping pathway. Suddenly he comes to a break in the trees, and emerges at an opening that gives full view of "Lookout Point".

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/PATH CLEARING - DAY (SUNSET)

Johnny stops and looks around at the incredible vista.

JOHNNY'S P.O.V. - "LOOKOUT POINT"

The green foliage of trees stretch into the distance, blue clouds float by - an idyllic scene. The breathtaking view of the 100 foot cliff face of "Lookout Point" is seen for the first time.

BACK TO SCENE

Johnny takes it in - and is almost lost in his thoughts when suddenly he hears:

A SCREAM.

As Johnny focuses in on the source of the sound -

FLASH:

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/PATH CLEARING - NIGHT

JOHNNY'S P.O.V. - "LOOKOUT POINT"

It is the same P.O.V. as before, but now it is night. We can see the distant moving figure of Jo Ann, moving around in the light of a campfire at the top of the cliff, when she suddenly turns and is startled by something. She SCREAMS - it is the same scream Johnny heard first in the TEASER.

RESUME: JOHNNY

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/LOOKOUT POINT PATHWAY - DAY (SUNSET)

Johnny now bolts to the top of the pathway - he has found the abduction site!

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/LOOKOUT POINT CLEARING - DAY (SUNSET)

Johnny emerges into a clearing, which breaks off into two pathways - one continues on the Mountain Path, the other heads to

"Lookout Point". Johnny moves to the entrance of the "Lookout Point" path, stops, and peers in.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/LOOKOUT POINT PATHWAY - DAY (SUNSET)

It is a wooded pathway that leads to a natural rock formation which creates the cliff-face to "Lookout Point".

Johnny takes stock of himself - then enters the path. He slowly makes his way to "Lookout Point", keeping a careful eye out for - whatever may be lurking.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/LOOKOUT POINT - DAY (SUNSET)

He is now at a small clearing at the top of the cliff area itself - a chain with a SIGN attached crosses the end of the path:

INSERT - Chain with sign reading: "DO NOT CROSS BEYOND THIS POINT! PISCATAQUIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE"

With trepidation, Johnny approaches the chain.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/LOOKOUT POINT - DAY (SUNSET)

JOHNNY'S P.O.V. - "LOOKOUT POINT" CLIFF VIEW

"Lookout Point" drops off at a sheer cliff some 100 feet below to the riverbed, which slowly winds its way through the mountainous terrain.

BACK TO SCENE

Johnny backs off. He looks around, as if missing something, and then turns to head back the way he came. He looks for a sign, anything, to give him a clue as to what might have happened to Jo Ann. At an impasse, he suddenly remembers the cloth, neatly tucked into its plastic bag. Slowly, he pulls the bag from his pocket.

CLOSE UP - BAG WITH CLOTH REMINANT

BACK TO SCENE

Johnny looks down at the bag - a small swatch of red and blue striped material neatly folded and protected in the shining plastic - then around the "Lookout Point" clearing, making sure no one is looking.

Johnny opens the bag, and with a deep breath, reaches in and touches the cloth:

FLASH:

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/LOOKOUT POINT - WOODS - NIGHT

The *SOUNDS of woodland creatures* fill the air. Johnny finds himself in the woods off to the side of his current position, several dozen yards from where he was just standing. A campfire is burning up ahead and Johnny focuses in on the light.

We MOVE IN to see -

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/LOOKOUT POINT - CLEARING - NIGHT

Jo Ann is on her knees in front of the campfire. Her eyes are closed and her arms are out, in what appears to be some sort of trance. As her mouth moves, we hear the *SOUNDS* of many voices, all *WHISPERING* at once - it is almost deafening. And we are *MOVING* through this scene almost effortlessly, as if viewing slowly from a very steady flight path.

None of the whispering is intelligible.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/LOOKOUT POINT - WOODS - NIGHT

Johnny now moves towards Jo Ann - the source of the sound - but slowly, as if not to disturb her "trance".

JOHNNY'S P.O.V. - JO ANN

We now are moving slowly with Johnny through the trees about a dozen yards to Jo Ann's left, fixed on the figure of the teenager, whose eyes are closed. She appears to shake noticeably a times - as if in a fitful conversation with the voices - all of it is a bit weird, yet somehow spiritual.

BACK TO SCENE

Johnny is watching her from the tree line - crouching like a tiger ready to spring - when suddenly she stops. She *MOVES* over to pull a canteen from her backpack and dowses the fire.

Then in SLOW MOTION, Johnny rushes her.

JOHNNY'S P.O.V. - JO ANN

We MOVE quickly in on Jo Ann as she turns and screams.

She moves away, dropping the flashlight, and backs away towards the warning chain of "Lookout Point".

JO ANN

No, No! Back!

She terrified - and is backed up against the chain overlooking the cliff, as she screams again.

JO ANN

No! No!

A continuous shot of a lunge at Jo Ann, which knocks her off her feet as she screams. The CAMERA follows her as she falls backwards over the chain and off the cliff - a repeat of earlier images from Johnny's previous vision.

BLACKOUT.

RESUME: JOHNNY

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/LOOKOUT POINT - NIGHT

... with Johnny on the cliff face, looking over the edge - nothing but blackness over the cliff. He backs off again due to the height and turns back down the path.

Johnny takes stock of himself - pulls out his flashlight - then quickly moves back down the path back towards his Jeep, tucking the cloth into its baggie, pocketing it as he goes.

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

A bunch of LOCALS are gathered around the bar. A game of darts is ensuing. Guys are playing pool. A jukebox is playing and a few people are dancing. Everyone is loud, a little drunk, and having a good time. Seated at the end of the bar is Deputy Harlan Matthews. Next to him, talking up a local, is DEPUTY EDGAR MEADOWS, Matthews' fellow officer.

ENTER Johnny. He moves through the throng and up to the bar. Behind it are Frank and Betty.

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL/BAR - NIGHT

JOHNNY

You guys run the bar, too?

Frank hands a customer his change...

FRANK

We do it all, my friend.

... and quickly moves on to the next.

BETTY

What'll ya have?

JOHNNY

Moosehead?

She nods and pulls one from the cooler.

BETTY

Three fifty.

Johnny gets his change and moves to wallflower position.

He spies Matthews across the room, glaring at him. Their eyes meet, and after a beat, Matthews goes back to his scotch. Johnny takes a swig of his beer - then his cell phone RINGS. He looks at the display and then quickly answers.

JOHNNY

(into phone)

Yeah...?

BRUCE (V.O., filtered)

Alright, what have you gotten
me into this time?

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL/BAR - NIGHT

JOHNNY

(into phone)

Ah, perfect timing... You have
any luck?

INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BRUCE

(into phone)

Look, you know that I've had to
stick my neck out for you more than
once in the past, so you owe me big
time for this one.

He hears the music and talk in the background.

BRUCE (cont'd)
(into phone)
Are you alone?

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

JOHNNY
(into phone)
No, actually I'm staring into the
face of Johnny Law as we speak.

Johnny keeps his eye on Matthews, who seems unaware that he is being watched.

INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BRUCE
(into phone)
Well, stay away from him! I called
the sheriff's office in Piscataquis
County. They said its officially a
closed investigation and were very
tight-mouthed and rather nasty
about it, actually. I hope you
haven't done anything...

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

JOHNNY
(into phone)
Anything, what... ?

INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BRUCE
(into phone)
Well, I was going to say "stupid",
but I thought against it. You
think you know what happened to the
Peterson girl?

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

JOHNNY
(into phone)
"Jo Ann". Her name was Jo Ann,
Bruce.

Matthews' ears perk up. He slowly puts down his scotch and reaches for his hat.

INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BRUCE
(into phone)
Whatever. So what'd you find out?

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

Matthews reaches into his pocket and throws a twenty on the bar.

JOHNNY
(into phone)
Her abduction site.

Matthews moves towards Johnny -

INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BRUCE
(into phone, impressed)
Really?

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

- and as Matthews gets close -

JOHNNY
(into phone)
Yeah, I'm pretty sure on "where",
but I'm still not sure about...

- he is suddenly in Johnny's face. A beat - then Matthews savagely grabs Johnny cell phone and snaps it shut. He stares Johnny in the face for a second. Then, with one swift move, he throws the cell phone violently across the room. It hits a picture on the wall and the glass shatters into a million shards, crashing to the floor. The room STOPS, and all eyes are on Matthews and Johnny.

MATTHEWS
End of conversation, mister.

Matthews pulls out his cuffs.

MATTHEWS (cont'd)

Stand up.

JOHNNY

Excuse me?

MATTHEWS

I said "stand up". I'm placing you
under arresh-sh-tt.

He is obviously drunk. He grabs at Johnny and pulls him to his feet.

JOHNNY

Hey! Let go of me!

He begins to cuff Johnny's hands in front of him, but as they start to struggle, Edgar MOVES over to the two of them.

EDGAR

Harlan, what are you doin'?

MATTHEWS

I'm 'reshting him.

(into Edgar's ear)

For resisting arresht... Ha! ha!
ha! Get it?!

JOHNNY

You know, if you don't stop
drinking, you're going to end up
dying alone in some hotel room.
I'm serious.

Matthews has had enough and he slams Johnny face forward against the wall. Frank moves from behind the bar assist Edgar.

MATTHEWS

What did you say to me?!

FRANK

Everything Ok here?

EDGAR

(to Frank)

Yeah, he's had a few...

(to Matthews)

Harlan, don't you think you
better let this nice fella go?

Edgar puts his hand on Matthews shoulder. Frank starts to assist.

MATTHEWS

Get off me! Let go of me! Get off me!

He shakes the two men off and goes for his holster.

EDGAR

Harlan, don't pull that gun! I don't want to have to shoot you!

Matthews' eyes go wide as he realizes what he is doing - Edgar's hand already on his own gun.

EDGAR (cont'd)

Don't pull that gun...!

Matthews freezes, as he sees every eye in the bar is fixed on him.

EDGAR (cont'd)

Harlan, I'm gonna have to ask you for that holster, now...

MATTHEWS

Ok, ok...

He is crumbling into a drunken stupor now, so he just waves them off and clumsily removes the belt -

MATTHEWS (cont'd)

Ok...

- and tosses it down on a nearby table in defiance.

MATTHEWS (cont'd)

(shouting)

Ok!

The room is SILENT.

MATTHEWS (cont'd)

Thass it. Do what you want.
If thass the way you want it,
then - Thass it - Thass it -
thass - it...

He staggers to the door, falls down, and passes out.

Everyone stares for a second, then the jukebox kicks back in and the crowd goes back to business as usual.

Johnny, still in cuffs, moves over to Matthews. He is out cold.

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

MATTHEWS P.O.V. - FRANK AND JOHNNY

Frank and Johnny MOVE in and stare down at CAMERA.

FRANK
 (looking down)
 Damn idiot.
 (to Johnny)
 Help me get him up...

JOHNNY
 (still in cuffs)
 Does he do this alot?

FRANK
 Every damn Saturday night.

They both reach down and into CAMERA as we -

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL/SIDE ROOM - NIGHT

Frank is holding court and is hopping mad. Matthews is seated across from him on a cot. Johnny and Edgar watch from the sidelines as Matthews takes the "chewing out."

FRANK
 I moved ya in here cause I didn't
 want you barfin' on my damn
 linoleum floor!

MATTHEWS
 For God's sake, Frank. Calm down!

FRANK
 No, damn it! I'm tired of this,
 Harlan! I'm tired of it! Now,
 I'll give a man a occasional drunk
 when he's entitled to it, but
 dammit, Harlan, it's been every
 damn weekend!

MATTHEWS
 It has not...

EDGAR
Yes, it has...

A moment of silence as Matthews reacts.

FRANK

You have got a problem, my friend, and it ain't me! You are hereby barred from this bar.

EDGAR

Now there's no need for that, Frank...

FRANK

Hereby barred! I'm serious, Edgar. I'll call the damn Commissioner on him and get them on your ass, don't think I won't!
 (to Matthews, pointing)
 I have put up with enough of your crap! You are hereby barred from this bar... !

He starts to exit, then turns.

FRANK

... Indefinitely!

Frank EXITS. A beat as Johnny and Edgar sit in silence with Matthews.

EDGAR

Harlan... I...

MATTHEWS

Don't say it, Edgar. Just do what you have to do.

Edgar manages an uncomfortable smile as he nods to Johnny, puts on his hat, and leaves.

Johnny and Matthews sit in silence. Then -

MATTHEWS

What do you want?

JOHNNY

Why won't you let me help you?

MATTHEWS

I don't need your help.

JOHNNY

Oh yeah? Why's that?

MATTHEWS

(shouting)

Because I looked everywhere!

Matthews explodes in a fit of rage and then breaks down, sobbing.

MATTHEWS

I combed every leaf and twig and rock in that damn park! We had an all points out in five states! I looked everywhere for that little girl! Everywhere!

(beat)

I loved that little girl...

Johnny reacts.

JOHNNY

Are you saying that you and she... ?

Matthews is repulsed by this.

MATTHEWS

What are you, sick!? It wasn't like that!

(beat, then)

Haven't you ever met someone that you knew was - "special"?

(beat, as he collects himself)

She was a beautiful soul, that girl. She had a way of talking to you that in five minutes made you feel like... I can't describe it, really.

JOHNNY

It's Ok, Harlan. You don't have to.

Johnny reaches out and touches Matthews' arm.

FLASH:

EXT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/PARK BENCH - DAY

We are now somewhere on the Bear Creek Lodge property. Matthews and Jo Ann are talking. Matthews is obviously distraught.

JO ANN

Don't worry, Mr. Matthews, I know in my heart you will conquer this. You must have confidence in yourself that you can do this, and I'll pray that you have strength to endure it. Have faith... Oh, you are so doubtful of yourself! I see that in you... Look at me, Mr. Matthews. Don't worry... You can do this... !

SERIES OF SHOTS - HARLAN MATTHEWS

- A) Deputy Harlan Matthews being interviewed on various TV news programs*
- B) sitting and laughing with Betty and Frank*
- C) footage of him getting an award*
- D) being honored by the GOVERNOR at Dover-Foxcroft City Hall.*

RESUME: JOHNNY AND MATTHEWS

INT. BEAR CLAW BAR AND GRILL/SIDE ROOM - NIGHT

JOHNNY

Harlan...

Johnny hands Matthews his hat.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

You better saddle up, partner.
'Cause we're gonna go make a call
on Billie Thompkins.

FADE OUT.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. MAINE STATE FACILITY FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

It is the sparse conference room of a medical facility. At table is BILLIE THOMPkins, a young man in his mid 20's and mentally challenged since birth, sitting quietly. A muscular ORDERLY with a baton and cuffs stands nearby.

ENTER DR. DUVALL, a middle-aged doctor who also serves as the facility's "warden", carrying a clipboard. Behind him are Johnny and Matthews.

DUVALL

Billie... How are we today?
These men are from the Sheriff's
Department. You remember Deputy
Matthews, don't you Billie?

BILLIE

Yeah...
(beat)
Can I have some juice?

DUVALL

(checking clipboard)
Sure, Billie. You can have all
the "Juicy Juice" you want.

Duvall motions to the orderly, who moves over to a small refrigerator and pulls out a juice box. Duvall turns to Matthews and Johnny.

DUVALL

You got ten minutes.

Duvall nods to the orderly, who hands Billie the juice. Duvall EXITS - the orderly remains. Billie sits quietly before Johnny and Matthews, slurping his straw from the juice box. After an awkward silence, Matthews moves to sit down.

MATTHEWS

(sitting)
Hi, Billie. You remember me?

BILLIE

You're the "police" (poe-leese) man.

MATTHEWS

That's right. I'm the "police"
man. This is Mr. Smith. Can you
say "hello" to Mr. Smith?

Billie stares at Johnny with the frightened eyes of a deer in the
headlights. Then, timidly...

BILLIE

Hello...

JOHNNY

(sitting)
Well actually, Billie, my name is
Johnny. Call me Johnny.

BILLIE

Ok, ... "Johnny".

JOHNNY

Billie, do you know where you
are?

BILLIE

I'm in the nut house.

JOHNNY

You're in the Maine State Facility
for the Criminally Insane.

BILLIE

Same thing...

Johnny looks at Matthews, who shrugs.

JOHNNY

Do you know what day this is?

Billie freezes again. Then, after a beat...

BILLIE

Wednesday?

Johnny looks at Matthews again.

JOHNNY

Close enough. Billie...
Do you remember Bear Creek Park?

BILLIE

Yeah. I was in the Bear Creek.

JOHNNY

Yeah, and do you remember a girl
- a girl named "Jo Ann"?

Billie starts to cry.

BILLIE

I didn't do that! They keep saying
I did! But, I didn't do that!

JOHNNY

Calm down, Billie. We know...
(pointedly)
We just want to find out what
really happened.

Billie stops crying - wipes his nose on his shirt sleeve.

BILLIE

What do you want me to do?

JOHNNY

Nothing. Don't be afraid. This
won't hurt.

Johnny slowly reaches over as Billie cowers and closes his eyes tight. Johnny's hand touches the back of Billie's clenched fists:

FLASH:

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/WOODS - DAY (SUNRISE)

We are again in the woods at Bear Creek State Park - same as the scenes with Johnny before, only we are now with Billie. We see him make his way along the path, heading to the summit. Billie approaches the clearing at the top of the path. At the place of Jo Ann's disappearance - which is now illuminated by the approaching sun - we see Billie kneeling down to examine the backpack Jo Ann has left behind. He picks it up, looks inside and, with a quick glance around to insure no one is looking, he clutches the backpack and steals away with it back down the path.

RESUME: JOHNNY AND BILLIE

JOHNNY

Thanks, Billie.

BILLIE

Whatta you gonna do now?

JOHNNY

We're going to try and get you released.

Matthews eyes go wide as he realizes what Johnny is saying.

BILLIE

Oh, Ok...

(beat, then)

Can I have my tuna sammich first?

INT. PISCATAQUIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SHERIFF WALLACE'S OFFICE - DAY

It is a typical police station office. Sheriff Charles Wallace, a tall, stern man with thinning hair who is Matthews superior, is seated behind his desk. Matthews and Johnny are standing before him. Edgar is sitting in a chair next to the wall behind them.

WALLACE

And I said "no"! How many times do I have to tell you, Harlan? I'm not reopening an eight year old murder case just so you can go running around acting like Rambo!

MATTHEWS

But, Boss...

WALLACE

I said "no", damn it!

JOHNNY

Listen to me, Sheriff - You're making a huge mistake.

WALLACE

Who the hell is this?

MATTHEWS

This is Johnny Smith, and he has some extremely important information concerning the Peterson case, Boss.

JOHNNY

Sir, we have reason to believe that Billie Thompkins is innocent.

WALLACE

The boy was caught with the girl's backpack. He's the only one that night that didn't have an alibi. As far as I'm concerned, and the State of Maine, he's guilty.

JOHNNY

I'm telling you - he didn't do it.

WALLACE

Really? And how, pray tell, did you come to that conclusion?

JOHNNY

Because I saw him.

Wallace leans in.

WALLACE

Wait a minute. Are you saying you were with him at the crime scene?

JOHNNY

No, not exactly.

MATTHEWS

(interrupting)

Mr. Smith is a psychic, Boss. And a damn good one, if you ask me...

WALLACE

Oh, whoa, whoa! Hold on here... You want me to re-open an eight year old case on the word of some two-bit psychic?

Wallace stands.

WALLACE

Congratulations, Harlan. You've finally lost your mind.

(to Johnny)

You - Get out!

MATTHEWS

But Boss, if you'll just listen to him for a second...

WALLACE

(to Edgar, indicating Johnny)
Get him out of here!

Edgar escorts Johnny towards the door, with Matthews following.

WALLACE (cont'd)

Hold on, Harlan. Take a seat.
I'm not done with you.

This stops Matthews dead in his tracks.

He looks around to Edgar, who looks away. There is a moment of silence, then Edgar opens the door and leads Johnny out.

INT. PISCATAQUIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE/HALLWAY - DAY

We can hear a heated argument ensuing inside the office between Matthews and Wallace - but the closed door muffles the SOUND.

Johnny is pacing the hallway. Edgar is leaning up against the wall.

JOHNNY

Your Boss is making a mistake.

EDGAR

Maybe. Maybe not.

He sees that Johnny is worried.

EDGAR (cont'd)

Look, whatever happens, I'll make sure the Sheriff knows it's not your fault.

JOHNNY

Yeah? Tell that to Billie Thompkins.

The door opens and out walks a dejected Harlan Matthews. Edgar looks at Matthews but can only muster -

EDGAR

I'm sorry, Harlan.

Edgar EXITS, leaving Johnny and Matthews in the hallway.

JOHNNY

Now what... ?

MATTHEWS

What do you mean, "Now what?"! You just cost me my job, you stupid son of a bitch! Don't ever talk to me again!

Johnny stands alone in the hallway of the sheriff's office, watching Matthews walk away as we -

EXT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Frank and Betty are out on the front porch, taking in the night air. Frank is doodling on a harmonica.

ENTER Johnny from the walkway.

FRANK

(stops playing)

So... What's the verdict?

JOHNNY

(sitting)

Well, Billie Thompkins is still locked up - and it seems I succeeded in getting Harlan Matthews fired.

FRANK

Well, don't fret yourself none - that was a long time comin'.

Frank continues his doodling.

JOHNNY

(to Betty)

I just don't get this - even with the evidence, can't they see that Billie Thompkins is incapable of murder? The kid can barely tie his own shoelaces.

Betty and Johnny just sit, listening to Frank. Then -

JOHNNY (cont'd)

Do you two mind if I ask you a question?

Frank puts down his harmonica.

FRANK

Shoot...

JOHNNY

What is the deal with all the
Western stuff?

BETTY

(amused)

Oh... Well, Frank and I are from
Oklahoma, originally. When my
Momma remarried, she moved out here
to Maine with my step-daddy, and
then we moved out here to take care
of her before she passed away.

(beat)

We bought this place with what we
inherited after she died. It just
reminds us of home.

JOHNNY

And you really get a lot of people
up here?

FRANK

You would be surprised, my friend.
All kinds of Cowboy Clubs and
Conventions - hell, Roy Rogers Fan
Club of Bangor booked us last week.

JOHNNY

Huh...

FRANK

Well, I could jabber-jaw all night,
but them flapjacks don't make
themselves. See you in the
mornin'.

(to Betty)

You comin'?

BETTY

In a minute.

FRANK

Suit yourself.

Frank EXITS into the lodge.

BETTY

So, you figured it out yet?

JOHNNY

Hardly...

BETTY

You will.

JOHNNY

I had this vision of Jo Ann in a clearing - babbling, like she was in some sort of trance. And there was this sound - like the wind blowing.

BETTY

Like "the sound of many waters" or a thousand voices all whispering at once?

JOHNNY

(startled that she knows)
Yes... !

Betty starts to chuckle.

BETTY

She wasn't babblin', you silly goof! - she was praying.

JOHNNY

What... ?

BETTY

Jo Ann was going to become a nun - it's all she ever talked about. She probably went up on that mountain to pray, and then that's when "the Lord took her." Anyway, that's my take on it.

JOHNNY

You really believe that?

BETTY

I don't know. Maybe... "The Lord works in mysterious ways."
Either way, I know you'll figure it out.

She stands and butts out her cigarette in the public ashtray.

BETTY

You see, I have faith, too - in
you. See you at breakfast.

Betty EXITS into the lodge, leaving Johnny to wrestle with the
night as we...

FADE OUT.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/ROOM 317 - NIGHT

Johnny is sitting upright in bed, deeply engrossed in a "Zane Grey" novel he pulled off the shelf.

Suddenly there is a FLUTTERING NOISE from the window. He looks - but, seeing nothing, goes back to his book.

The fluttering noise returns, and this time Johnny is aware of a definite "something" outside his window. He gets out of bed, and move towards the SOUND.

He approaches the open window slowly, and is almost there, when a burst of grey darts past him and into the room. It is a MORNING DOVE, which flutters about, then lands on the floor.

Johnny squats down and looks down at the bewildered dove, which stares back at him with curiosity.

JOHNNY

Hey there, little guy...

He reaches over to touch it, but suddenly the dove takes to the air again, only to fly headlong into the full length mirror attached to the closet door. It lands in a heap in the floor.

Johnny rushes to the bathroom where he grabs a towel and with a few sidesteps, corrals the dove into a corner where he gently wraps it in the towel.

JOHNNY

Ok, Ok, calm down... it's Ok...

Johnny moves to the bed and sits, holding the injured dove like a mother with her child. He calms the frightened creature for a bit, then lifts the towel so he is looking into the dove's eyes.

JOHNNY

Hey, are you Ok? Huh... ?

Then, slowly, as if compelled, he reaches up and touches the dove's head...

FLASH:

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/ROOM 317 - DAY

DOVE'S P.O.V. - JO ANN AT THE WINDOW

We are at the window again, looking out through the dove's eyes, as Jo Ann feeds the dove some seed from the window ledge.

JO ANN

Here you go, my "little angel" -
Here you go...

RESUME: JOHNNY

... as he takes his hand away.

JOHNNY

Why you little...

He looks around - and then once more he touches the dove...

FLASH:

EXT. BEAR CREEK PARK/RIVERBED - NIGHT

We are now with Johnny, standing in a river bed with foliage all around, the dove (sans towel) still in his arms. His attention is diverted to movement towards his left, and as he turns, he sees another morning dove - the mate to the one he is holding - nestled in a bush.

He moves towards the foliage and looks - there is a nest, with the mother dove nestled within it. He pulls back the brush to get a better look - and notices the nest is interwoven with strands of the cloth he found in the TEASER.

Still holding the injured dove, he reaches over to touch the nest, but is immediately interrupted by...

A SCREAM.

Johnny starts in the direction of the scream - above him - a shear cliff hundreds of feet away. It is "Lookout Point", only now seen from the riverbed below, and Johnny can make out the lone figure of Jo Ann Peterson backing away from something - dangerously close to the edge.

Johnny now can see the attacker - it is a COUGAR, which SNARLS and paws at Jo Ann, her cries:

JO ANNN

"No, no!" "Back!"

... clearly heard above the WAILS of the cat.

Suddenly, the cougar leaps at the girl and both the animal and Jo Ann tumble over the restraining chain.

Johnny watches, frozen in place, as the pair plummet in SLOW MOTION 100 feet or so to the river's surface below.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/RIVER - NIGHT

Jo Ann enters the water head first, the cougar follows and both disappear beneath the surface.

Moments later the cougar appears, and makes its way to the shore line.

Jo Ann's lifeless body surfaces, and begins to float down the river, carried away by the current.

The cougar, now recovered, makes a bead on her body and begins to follow it down river, tracking as it goes.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/RIVERBED - NIGHT

As Johnny watches, Jo Ann's body comes to a small turn in the river, and becomes entangled in the roots from a tree growing from the embankment.

The cougar jumps into the water and with concerted effort, drags Jo Ann's lifeless body to the shoreline under the tree.

We can clearly see now that the body is wearing a shirt made of the same material as Johnny's swatch and that bits of it are being torn off as the animal begins to feed.

Johnny watches in horror as the big cat begins to chow down on the body, tearing pieces of meat from the carcass.

Johnny, still with the dove in hand, moves in close to the animal.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/RIVERBED - NIGHT

Suddenly, his attention is interrupted by the SOUND of SPLASHING WATER. Johnny turns towards the sound - and then his jaw drops.

Slowly, as if simply walking out of a pool, comes Jo Ann Peterson.

She is naked, and her body seems to materialize from invisible to solid as she walks to the river's edge.

As she makes the bank, she shakes her head as if to dry her hair - her hair immediately becomes dry.

She hunkers down on the bank and looks over to the cougar, who is now well into his meal. She smiles - we see her serene acceptance of what has happened.

It begins to rain - and Jo Ann closes her eyes and revels in the "baptism." Johnny, amazed at the sight of her, moves in to get a better look.

Suddenly, as he approaches her, Jo Ann turns and opens her eyes - and looks directly at Johnny and the dove - smiles, and says:

JO ANN
Are you my "little angel"?

The words "Are you my little angel?" begin to ECHO and REVERBERATE in Johnny head as the vision begins to speed up - first to Jo Ann's dead body lying entangled in the roots and leaves washed by the river - then in TIME LAPSE as the body is covered by silt and debris until it is buried and out of site.

A small piece of material from Jo Ann's shirt is the only thing left visible - and that too, disappears as the wind carries it away. The dove in Johnny arms breaks free and in SLOW MOTION, flies away...

RESUME: JOHNNY

INT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/ROOM 317 - NIGHT

Johnny is alone... back in his lodge room. The window is open and the dove is gone. An owl HOOTS in the distance as crickets CHIRP.

EXT. HARLAN MATTHEW'S HOUSE/DOORWAY - NIGHT

Johnny is at Matthew's door - pounding. A light eventually flicks on and a groggy, grumpy Harlan Matthews appears at the door. Before he can open his mouth...

JOHNNY
I know where she is...

Matthew's eyes go wide as we...

EXT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT LAWN - DAY

A large CROWD is gathered on the lawn in front of the lodge as we MOVE - from a television monitor mounted in a news truck - to a newscaster, REPORTER #1, at the scene. Sheriff Wallace, Matthews and other officers can be seen conferring in the background.

REPORTER #1

... a tragic resolution to an eight year old mystery here today as the body of sixteen year old Jo Ann Peterson, once thought to have been abducted and murdered, now found instead to have been the victim of a vicious animal attack. Sheriff Charles Wallace of the Piscataquis County Sheriff's Department is about to make a statement, so let's listen in -

EXT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT LAWN - DAY

Sheriff Wallace approaches a microphone festooned podium.

WALLACE

Early this morning, a body was discovered buried in a riverbed just outside Bear Creek Park. Dental records and other forensic evidence have confirmed that these are indeed, the remains of Jo Ann Peterson.

An audible reaction is heard from the crowd.

WALLACE

It appears that she had been the victim of what was probably a cougar attack.

(a beat)

This has been a very difficult case for many of us. But it would not have been resolved if it weren't for the ceaseless dedication of one officer in particular - and that person is Deputy Harlan Matthews.

Frank's voice breaks out from the crowd.

FRANK (O.S.)

Way to go, Harlan!

Matthews blushes as the crowd CHEERS and breaks into APPLAUSE.

WALLACE

Now, I know a lot of you have questions, so I will turn it over to Deputy Matthews.

(to Matthews)

Harlan...

MATTHEWS

(pointing to REPORTER #2)

Yes...

REPORTER #2

You say she was attacked by a cougar?

MATTHEWS

Yes, that's right. We surmise that this was a lone male, which somehow got separated from the rest of the pride.

REPORTER #3

What about the Thompkins boy?

MATTHEWS

He's been released...

EXT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT LAWN - DAY

During the above, Johnny moves to circumnavigate the crowd - finally standing next to Betty and Frank - then turns to watch the action.

BETTY

That was a good thing you done - givin' Harlan the credit and all.

JOHNNY

Eh, he deserved it.

FRANK

Maybe now he'll finally stop drinkin'.

JOHNNY

I think you can count on it.

BETTY

So, now what you gonna do?

JOHNNY

I don't know... a little fishing maybe. I still haven't finished that Zane Grey novel...

FRANK

(checking his watch)

Well, I gotta get back to my kitchen - them flapjacks don't make themselves, you know.

(to Johnny)

Thank you, Mr. Smith, for everything you done.

(to Betty)

You comin'?

BETTY

In a minute.

FRANK

Suit yourself.

Frank EXITS, leaving Betty and Johnny alone. After a beat, Betty reaches around with her arm and gives Johnny a "hug", as if to say "thank you".

EXT. BEAR CREEK LODGE/FRONT LAWN - DAY

The interview is now over. Matthews makes his way through the crowd and approaches Betty and Johnny.

MATTHEWS

(to Betty, nodding)

Betty...

BETTY

Harlan...

Matthews moves to Johnny and puts on his trooper hat.

MATTHEWS

(to Johnny)

You ready?

Johnny nods. Together they move past Betty o.s. as we -

EXT. PETERSON HOME/DRIVEWAY - DAY

Matthews leans against his cruiser, smoking a cigarette as we see him watching through a paned glass window, looking into the living room of the Peterson home.

EXT. PETERSON HOME/FRONT WINDOW - DAY

MATTHEW'S P.O.V. - THE PETERSONS AND JOHNNY

As viewed through the window - Seated inside on the couch are James and Emily Peterson, the parents of Jo Ann Peterson.

Across from them, in a chair, is Johnny.

EXT. PETERSON HOME/DRIVEWAY - DAY

Matthews watches Johnny through the glass as he speaks animatedly with Jo Anne's parents, obviously relaying to them the things he's seen in his "Dead Zone" experiences, who take it all in as if mesmerized.

We can not hear what is being said.

Matthews takes a puff on his cigarette and then stamps it out. He looks back at the house and then moves away down the drive, as if allowing for the momentary hallowing of this private conversation.

INT. PETERSON HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

JOHNNY

And then she said something to me
that I still don't understand -
Who, or what, is "my little angel"?

Emily Peterson breaks into tears, and James Peterson, holding back the tears himself, comforts her, his arm around her.

EMILY

When she was a little girl, I'd
tuck her in at night and I'd say,
"Who's my little angel?" And she
would say "Is it me, mommy? Is it
me?!" And I would say, "Yes! You
are! You're my little angel"...
and we would laugh so hard...

She can't hold it in anymore.

EMILY (cont'd)

Excuse me...

EXIT Mrs. Peterson. We hear her sobbing all the way down the hall to the back bedroom, the door loudly SLAMMING shut. The SILENCE is awkward as we hear a clock TICKING in the background. Then...

JAMES

She'll be alright - she just needs a little time.

(beat)

Come on, son. There's something I want to show you.

Mr. Peterson moves off the couch as we -

INT. PETERSON HOME/DINING ROOM - DAY

- move to the dining room. There, on the table, is a bouquet of white roses.

JAMES

This was Jo Ann's favorite flower. We bought a whole dozen for her sixteenth birthday. She always did love roses.

(a beat)

Beautiful, aren't they?

Mr. Peterson chokes up, and is lost in thought for a moment.

JAMES (cont'd)

Do mind if I ask you a question?

JOHNNY

No, sir.

JAMES

Do you believe in an "afterlife"?

JOHNNY

(amused)

I believe in a "higher power"*, I guess, but I'm still trying to figure that one out.

* i.e. his "Dead Zone".

JAMES

Well, you certainly have a gift,
son. It's from the Almighty - use
it wisely.

(beat)

So, how'd she look?

JOHNNY

... Sir?

JAMES

Jo Ann. When she came out of the
water. How'd my little girl look?

JOHNNY

Well sir, to be honest, I don't
know if I should...

JAMES

She was naked, wasn't she?

JOHNNY

Uh... yes! But how did... ?

JAMES

"Naked we come into this world,
and naked we leave", son.

(pointedly)

So - How'd she look?

Johnny takes his time as he chooses just the right word -

JOHNNY

Radiant.

Mr. Peterson smiles.

JAMES

Listen, before Emily comes back, is
there anything we can do for you?

He reaches for his wallet.

JOHNNY

No. I'm fine. Really, sir, thank
you.

(beat)

However...

Johnny looks at the table of roses.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

... I think there's something I can do for your daughter.

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/JO ANN'S GRAVESITE - DAY

We are with Johnny as he makes his way through the woods - to the spot where Jo Ann's body was found. In his hand is a single, white rose.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

Dear Sara,

Some say we that we live for faith - or is it faith that makes us live?

He looks around, hoping to see her, but of course, he does not. He moves to her grave, the gnarled mangle of tree roots, sticks and leaves that held her body, and stoops down.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

Either way, all I really know is that life is good - and that we have precious little time here on this earth. Guess we all should make the best of it while we're here...

He looks at the rose. So perfect, so beautiful, so pure.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

You probably won't get this before I get back - if so, then give everyone a hug for me. Look for me sometime Sunday.

Yours always, Johnny.

He slowly moves the rose up to his nose, closes his eyes and smells. We see him in face-to-face view as his eyes suddenly open as we...

FLASH:

EXT. PETERSON HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

We are now in face-to-face view with Jo Ann, wearing a white dress at her Sweet 16th birthday party, surrounded by all her

GUESTS, as she smells the sweet sent of a bouquet of roses she has just "received".

Johnny and Jo Ann's eyes seem to meet...

And there is a sudden moment of connection between the Jo Ann of the vision and Johnny, so we now understand that she understands that the rose is for her.

RESUME: JOHNNY

EXT. BEAR CREEK STATE PARK/JO ANN'S GRAVESITE - DAY

Johnny breaks from the vision. He smiles to himself - wondering at it all.

And then slowly, reverently, he places the rose on the patch of dirt, leaves and brush that was Jo Ann's gravesite.

A morning dove COOS in the distance as we CLOSE IN on the rose.

FADE OUT.

END ACT FOUR

THE END