

The Dead Zone

"COLLISION"

(Re-Break: February 3, 2004)

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TEASER

1. EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE (1996) - NIGHT. Sheets of rain punctuated by lightning express the preternatural power of the love between John Smith, an everyman schoolteacher (he has not yet encountered the call destiny has for him), and Sarah Bracknell, his first love. Johnny bids his love adieu and gets into his classic Cadillac Eldorado.
2. INT. / EXT. WINDING ROAD (1996) - NIGHT. Intercut between Johnny's car, and the cab of a truck, as they hurtle inexorably toward each other on the slick, narrow winding roads of the Pine Tree State. Moments before Johnny's car is to smash into the truck we cut away to -
3. INT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT. SUPERTITLE: **EIGHT YEARS LATER**. Johnny Smith, present day, is helping Rebecca pack up her dead sister Rachel's belongings when there's a knock at the door. It's Roscoe; he tells Johnny there's a girl missing, gives him some basic details, and hands him an earring belonging to missing Brianna Lyons, 11. Thrusting Johnny into --

VISION. Johnny is engulfed in fire.

RESUME INT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT. Johnny collapses. When revived, he cannot explain what happened to him; furthermore, he cannot help them figure out where Brianna is; all he knows is that she will die horrifically - burned alive.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

1. (VISION) EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY *Strange, stylized, vision outside of a farmhouse. JANET LYONS (pretty, 30's, a mother) argues with her husband WAYNE (30's, working class). We see, but do not hear, what Janet says. Nearby BRIANNA - a pretty, playful eleven-year-old girl, plays on a swing, warily watching her parents. Wayne gets in a late-model sedan and leaves. Vision-Johnny walks the scene. He turns around, and Brianna is gone; on the ground below the swing is a Hello Kitty clothbound diary. The daytime world melts away. Day becomes night as --*
2. EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT. Johnny grips Janet's hand (she is source of the vision). He tells her that the argument she had with her husband is relevant and she must tell the police; then he asks her where the diary is. She reluctantly agrees to produce it. While she is retrieving the diary, Walt fills in Johnny on the progress of the search so far: Brianna's been gone several hours; they contacted all of her friends and her father, to no avail. Searchers are combing the woods and fields nearby.
3. RESUME EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY. Johnny persuades Janet to let strangers read her daughter's diary, in spite of the fact that it might contain embarrassing information, because it's important to their search.
4. INT. FARMHOUSE / DEN - NIGHT. Johnny, Rebecca and Walt discuss the contents of the diary. Based on the diary, Walt believes the girl is a runaway, but has questions about the relationship between father, mother and daughter. Rebecca invites Janet into the den, and using her professional skills as a therapist - and good listener - draws out details of their relationship. Janet and her husband are separating; there are custody issues. Rebecca asks directly if Janet thinks her husband may have abducted Brianna. Janet is certain that did not happen: she saw him drive away, and no one else was in his sedan. Then, they hand the diary to Johnny, triggering -
5. VISION: INT. HOSPITAL E.R. - NIGHT (1996 - but Johnny doesn't know that.) *Vision-Johnny sees himself wheeled into the E.R., bruised and battered and bloody.*

Leaning against the counter is an eleven-year-old girl -- BRIANNA - and all sound drops away except for strange, loud bells ringing in a fixed pattern - DING DING, DONG, DING DING, DONG, DING DING, DONG.

6. RESUME: INT. FARMHOUSE / DEN - NIGHT. Johnny is stricken by a violent headache and steadies himself; Rebecca checks him; she's worried about his health. Walt asks what's happening. Johnny says he wants to go to the emergency room: not because he's sick, but because that's where he saw Brianna in his vision. He tells about the sound he heard: ding-ding, dong, ding-ding, dong, ding-ding, dong. Walt says that there's a volunteer fire department in South County, and that's the signal for volunteers to report to a fire. Johnny says, Brianna's going to burn in South County. Walt says he's going narrow his search to that area.
7. INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT. Johnny gets a physical examination; seems back to normal. He and Rebecca look around the hospital, searching for the girl. As they enter the Waiting Room -
8. INT. WAITING ROOM - NIGHT (SPLIT REALITY VISION). *Rebecca, in reality, sees Johnny overcome with emotion; in the vision-half of his split-reality, he sees his own mother, Vera, very much alive, and being consoled by Reverend Purdy; and next to them, Sarah, trying not to cry, in her mid-nineties clothes and haircut. Johnny, in the reality half of the vision, shares with Rebecca a strange epiphany: this is all related to June 6, 1996, the night of his crash. As soon as he has parsed this information he sees Brianna walk through the waiting room; for the first dozen steps, her footprints leave impressions in the linoleum floor, as if it is made of mud; after that they leave watery impressions, as if made underwater.*
9. RESUME INT. WAITING ROOM - NIGHT. Johnny says he saw his mother in this waiting room - and Brianna was there, too. Somehow, Johnny's 1996 car wreck, and Brianna's disappearance, are linked by destiny; but why?

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

1. INT. WAITING ROOM - NIGHT. Johnny describes his vision to Walt and Rebecca. Johnny believes that the wet footprints mean that Brianna is near a body of water. Walt takes off to search for her. Rebecca tries to puzzle out the rest of the vision with Johnny, but it remains enigmatic; until a man rushes past Johnny and Rebecca with an accident patient on a gurney. Johnny turns to Rebecca - I saw that man in my vision!
2. INT. HALLWAY - OUTSIDE E.R. Johnny runs after the gurney; as soon as the EMT's hand off the patient to the E.R. doctors, Johnny stops the man he recognized from his vision. His name is KEVIN GROVER; Johnny introduces himself but Kevin already knows who he is - Johnny is a Cleaves Mills celebrity, and Kevin is proud of the fact that he was the first responder in 1996, and has followed Johnny's life in the papers and on TV ever since. They shake hands, triggering -
3. VISION: INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT. *The corridor changes from present day to 1996 -- mostly a matter of different signage and different furniture arrangement. Rebecca disappears; Kevin's hair reverts to its shaggier, nineties style and he rushes past, carrying Johnny. The corridor now is empty except for Johnny, and at the far end, Brianna, who ducks into another room. Johnny follows.*
4. INT. PRE-OP ROOM - NIGHT (1996). *As doctors scrub up and nurses move into the operating room, 96-Kevin waits with bloody-post-crash-1996-Johnny. 1996-Sarah enters the room; holds Johnny's broken hand. He awakens; tells Sarah, "thank the man." "What man?" "The man who pulled me out of the car." Sarah doesn't understand, but whispers in his ear that she loves him and she'll always love him. Johnny says he'll always love her. Then the doctors rush Johnny into surgery. A doctor asks what Smith's level of sedation is, and 1996-Johnny utters his last words before going under: "I can't die. I have so much to do." The doctors are slightly spooked by this pronouncement, but put Johnny under and get to work on him immediately: they have little faith he will survive.*

5. RESUME: INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT. Johnny asks Kevin about the man who pulled him out of the car. Kevin says, no one pulled you out; you were out of the car when I got there, lying on the ground. Johnny insists someone was at the crash before Kevin; Kevin's positive he was the first one there.
6. EXT. LAKESIDE PARKING LOT - NIGHT. Walt breaks up his searchers into several teams, dividing up the bodies of water in South Penobscott County. He tells what they know: there's going to be a fire - or already is a fire - it's going to be near the water. Slim pickings, admittedly, but Walt is able to buck them up with a few well-chosen words of inspiration. A helicopter flies overhead; then they break up to search.
7. INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT. Johnny and Rebecca find a quiet place where they can puzzle out what has happened. This is a new situation for Johnny: visions of Brianna always throw him back into visions of the night in 1996 he suffered his car accident and brain injury that put him in a coma. Rebecca talks about something called DISPLACEMENT, wherein one experience evokes or "displaces" another. Something about Brianna's disappearance ties in to Johnny's accident. Johnny says, I know everything about that crash already, except one thing: who was it who talked to me? I don't know why, but I'm sure I need to find that man, or we'll never find Brianna in time.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

1. INT. VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT. DING DING DONG. We hear the bells from Johnny's vision; then see that Walt mans an ad hoc command post at the volunteer fire department; he's giving search instructions to the last group to arrive when someone gives him a phone; intercut with --
2. INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT. Johnny tells Walt about the man in his vision; Walt says they're already running the lists of all Registered Sex Offenders and convicted felons in the county, on the

- possibility that Brianna was kidnapped by a stranger. When Johnny hangs up, he turns around and Sarah has just arrived. Johnny asks Sarah what happened in 1996 after she left Johnny in the operating room. He touches her, triggering -
3. SPLIT REALITY VISION - INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT. As Sarah-2004 walks the same steps she took that fateful night, on the vision side of the split reality we see her, in raincoat, distraught in 1996, as the surgeon, DR. McDOUGALL, 40's, explains to Sarah, Purdy and Vera that the operation was not a success; Johnny Smith is not expected to live; at best, he'll be in a coma. Johnny-2004 turns and sees Brianna, silently standing at the empty end of the corridor as a high-tension power line drops from the ceiling, sparking, dancing around Brianna like a snake. The vision ends --
 4. RESUME: INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT. Johnny looks dazed, almost as if he's going to black out; Rebecca reaches out to comfort him, and helps him into a chair. Sarah notices the gesture; she realizes that there may be more between Rebecca and Johnny than even they know. Johnny yells to EMT Kevin to radio Walt and tell him that Brianna will be found near a downed power line, which will start the fire. While Kevin radios Walt, Johnny grills Sarah about the mystery man at the accident site: she says there was, in fact, an intensive search for him on the belief he may have been a transient or motorist who stopped but didn't come forward, but no one ever was found. Sarah asks if they're done with her; a neighbor is waiting up with J.J. Johnny excuses her, then tells Rebecca this: that there is only one person who knows what happened - Johnny himself. And in order to find Brianna, Johnny must use his visions to relive that night, the worst night of his entire life. He asks Kevin to take him to the scene of his crash.
 5. INT. RESCUE VEHICLE - NIGHT. Kevin drives; Rebecca and Johnny sit in back. When they hit a bump Johnny steadies himself by grabbing a stretcher, triggering -
 6. VISION: INT. RESCUE VEHICLE - 1996 - NIGHT. Johnny-2004 sees Johnny-1996 as he's hauled away from the wreck; he's mumbling cryptic things about a man who

told him about his destiny and purpose in the world, things that the medics in 1996 discount as gibberish but that Johnny-2004 knows have meaning. One of the EMT's opens a cabinet to get medical supplies and Johnny-2004 sees Brianna, crammed into that tight space. End vision -

7. RESUME: INT. RESCUE VEHICLE - NIGHT. Johnny's stunned; a bit shocked; Rebecca recognizes that each vision is taking a progressively worse toll on Johnny's health. Johnny understands this but must press on nonetheless. They radio Walt and tell him that Brianna will be found in some kind of confined space.

8. EXT. ROAD - NIGHT. Walt hangs up, then relays to his search team all that they know at that juncture:
 - Brianna is in South County
 - She's near a body of water
 - She may be burned in a fire
 - She's in a confined space
 - She's near a powerline
 - Either that line is down already, or will be.Walt's strategy: investigate every downed power line, right now; be on standby to rush to any future powerline; and in the meantime, search every powerline in South County that's near a body of water.

8. EXT. JOHNNY'S CRASH SITE - 2004 - NIGHT. With Kevin's ambulance parked nearby, he walks Johnny and Rebecca through the highlights of the crash site - where the truck was, where Johnny's car was, etc. This is a spooky and tense scene. Johnny's powers can't overcome his fear and terror of this place - to express Johnny's emotional state, as Kevin describes each detail, flashes of that rainy night build in intensity, until Johnny, standing on the exact spot of the accident, collapses. Rebecca leans over him: he's not breathing.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

1. EXT. JOHNNY'S CRASH SITE - 2004 - NIGHT. While Kevin runs to the rescue vehicle to get medical equipment, Rebecca gives Johnny mouth-to-mouth resuscitation; it's tense, and intimate, and we see how much Rebecca

has come to care for Johnny. Before Kevin returns, Johnny abruptly comes to. Johnny tells Rebecca that he can't see what he must see; he shuts down before that happens. She tells him he almost died. He says that he has to see what happened that night; he has to get past the block; or Brianna will die. Rebecca suggests she help him see, using a technique she uses to help traumatized children comprehend terrible things that have happened to them. He says, let's try it, now.

They sit face-to-face; holding hands; Rebecca calmly guides Johnny into seeing that night, without suffering the physical effects that have been debilitating him during his quest to find Brianna. Then, he jabs his cane into the ground again, and -

2. VISION - EXT. CRASH SITE - 1996 - NIGHT. Johnny-2004, in a vision, is present moments after the car wreck. He walks over to his own car, sees that his 1996-self is about to black out. And die. He yells words of encouragement; wants to open the door but can't; then yells the very words he thought he heard from "the mystery man" on the night of his wreck.

1996-Johnny gathers the strength to overcome the terrible injuries to his own body, and crawl away from the Cadillac moments before it bursts into flames. Johnny-2004 walks over to Johnny-1996, who talks about how all he wants is a home, and a classroom, and a quiet life with Sarah, and if they're lucky, kids. Johnny-2004 tells him he's destined for bigger things. It's a memorable and moving speech in which Johnny-2004 convinces Johnny-1996 to make it through the pain because he has an important role to play in history. Then sirens approach -- he looks over at the car -

Johnny's Cadillac morphs into Brianna's father's car - and in his vision, Johnny is no longer at his 1996 crash scene, but rather, under a powerline, near a boathouse, on Lake Millimagasset. He sees that gasoline is dripping out of the car; the car sits below a powerline; the wind is blowing heavily. He can hear Brianna's cries in the trunk of the car. His vision ends -

3. EXT. JOHNNY'S CRASH SITE - NIGHT. Johnny tells Rebecca he knows where Brianna is; they jump in Kevin's truck,

radioing Walt. Kevin says he can get there faster than Walt. They speed off.

4. EXT. BRIANNA'S CRASHED CAR - NIGHT. A powerline blows down while Johnny races to Brianna's car; in seconds, the gasoline will meet it. Johnny pounds open the trunk of the car and with Rebecca's help rescues Brianna while Kevin pulls Brianna's unconscious father Wayne out of the driver's seat. They are just barely able to pull them to safety when the thing goes up in flames as Walt and the others show up to help.
5. EXT. BRIANNA'S CRASH SITE - LATER. As emergency personnel clean up the aftermath, Johnny and Rebecca listen to Brianna explain what happened: she stowed away in her father's trunk, hoping to run off with him; he never knew she was in there, when he crashed his car.

Johnny and Rebecca split off for a moment together; he tells her that the mystery man was himself - he talked himself through the worst crisis of his life. Johnny thanks Rebecca for saving his life - twice. Once with mouth-to-mouth, but then, more importantly, by allowing him to get back to himself in 1996. She tells him he's welcome, then says goodbye. For now.

END ACT FOUR