

THE DEAD ZONE

"The Tipping Point, Parts One & Two"
Episodes #12-13 3012-3013

"Part One"

Outline

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April 5, 2004

TEASER

1. INT. SMITH HOUSE BEDROOM - DAY.

Johnny sleeping. He's woken up by Rebecca, revealing they've spent the night together. Not their first night either. She's going to make them some breakfast, a surprise, which Johnny spoils, using his ability to guess blueberry pancakes. It seems, for just a moment, that they've found some respite from the darkness outside. Watching her go, we see the happiness in Johnny's eyes.

Then he touches his cane, triggering:

2. VISION - FUTURE

Wey appears to Johnny. Wants to know who Reverend Purdy is. Tells Johnny Purdy can help him, but first he must confess. Confess to what? Wey doesn't know. He's just passing on information. From who? asks Johnny, but the vision ends without an answer.

3. RESUME SMITH HOUSE

Rebecca finds Johnny at the bottom of the stairs, unconscious.

4. INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Johnny is getting an MRI scan while Rebecca and Bruce talk to a concerned Dr. Gibson. This latest round of tests is showing that Johnny's "Dead Zone" is growing. She's asked Reverend Purdy to help get Dr. Mendak, one of the top neurologists in the world, to consult on Johnny's case.

As Johnny prepares to check himself out, Purdy arrives with Dr. Mendak who has gone over all of Johnny's records. He thinks Johnny's condition is going to worsen if he does nothing, the headaches, the memory loss, the depression -- he might even die. Mendak has a stunning proposal for Johnny. With a radical new

surgery, Mendak may be able to "cure" Johnny's Dead Zone.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

1. INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Johnny turns down Mendak's offer, but does agree to more tests at Rebecca and Gibson's urging.

Johnny gets Purdy alone, confronts him, gets a vision of Purdy forging Mike Kennedy's suicide note. Why did you do it? Purdy tells Johnny he forged the note to get Johnny out of prison, and reluctantly admits he also laid his financial misdeeds on Kennedy as well. Johnny wants to know who really did kill Kennedy. Purdy swears he doesn't know, but suspects Stillson had him killed because he was going to go to the police about all the financial irregularities at Faith Heritage, including a large amount of illegal campaign funds funneled through Faith Heritage to the Stillson campaign. Purdy couldn't let Stillson frame Johnny, he had to do something.

Johnny warns Purdy that the truth will out, and if he waits it will be too late to save himself. He's got to go to the police with what he knows about Stillson. Purdy reluctantly agrees, but first he needs to find a way to tell his flock.

2. INT. SMITH HOUSE

Johnny tells Rebecca Purdy is going to confess to writing the suicide note that set Johnny free. Purdy is going to implicate Stillson in Kennedy's murder. This is going to re-open Rachel's case. They discuss that Johnny might become a suspect again, possibly even get re-arrested. Rebecca states her faith in Johnny. If it wasn't Kennedy, then who? Johnny still believes his first instinct is correct, Stillson killed Rachel because of something she saw, or did, that threatened his campaign. Rebecca swears to bring Stillson to justice if he did this.

3. EXT. POLICE IMPOUND YARD

Johnny and Rebecca meet Walt at Rachel's impounded car. Johnny updates Walt about Purdy's confession. Walt is shocked, the note was authenticated by the FBI. Walt wonders if Purdy killed Kennedy, AND Rachel. Johnny knows Purdy is no killer, but Greg Stillson is. Walt needs proof, even if Purdy had direct knowledge of the killings, without corroboration, he will just seem like

he's trying to put the blame for the murders on someone else again.

Johnny wants Walt to let him have access to Rachel's car, maybe a vision will point them toward hard evidence. Johnny and Rebecca get into Rachel's car triggering:

4. VISION - SPLIT REALITY.

Intercutting: Johnny and Rebecca in the parked car in daylight / Johnny, driving, RACHEL riding shotgun, the night of Rachel's murder. The car is speeding along the road, heading toward the deer crossing sign. Rachel, having been kidnapped from her office and knocked out, suddenly awakens, terrified, and begins putting up a fight, trying to jump out of the moving car. Johnny meanwhile, is having a "first person" vision, seeing himself as the killer. Rachel begs, "Please, why are you doing this? I didn't tell him anything. We didn't talk about the election, I swear. Just let me go." The vision ends just as she runs off into the darkness, into the woods where Johnny found her camera in episode one.

Johnny comes out of the vision convinced more than ever that Greg Stillson is behind Rachel's murder.

He tells Rebecca what he's seen. Rebecca wants to know if he's sure it's Stillson. Johnny says yes, begs her forgiveness, he feels tremendous guilt for not saving Rachel. She wants to go after Stillson, get the evidence they need, start now, tonight. Johnny talks her down, tells her there's more going on than she knows. He can't tell her everything yet.

Walt rejoins them, tells Johnny he's going to bring Purdy in for questioning. Johnny tells him to wait, Purdy is going to confess on his broadcast and implicate Stillson, they should let that happen first, put Stillson into damage control mode.

5. INT. FAITH HERITAGE STUDIO

Purdy is getting his makeup, preparing for a live broadcast, when Greg Stillson unexpectedly shows up. Stillson's contacts have told him that Sheriff Bannerman has an arrest warrant sworn out for Purdy, and that he's planning to confess to writing the suicide note. Stillson tells Purdy he should be ashamed of himself for helping Smith get away with the murder of Rachel Caldwell. Stillson tells Purdy he didn't kill Kennedy or Rachel, and if he tries to implicate him in any way, he'll see to it that Purdy goes to prison as

an accessory to murder for helping Smith. Stillson tells Purdy he's a good man, with much to do yet in the world, the two of them together. Don't let Johnny Smith take you down with him. Stillson wants Purdy to go out there and tell his audience he helped Smith by forging the note because he thought Smith was innocent, but that he now believes Johnny is guilty of Rachel's murder.

6. PURDY GOES ON THE AIR

In a somber, soul searching confession that catches his staff and the studio audience by surprise, Purdy confesses to forging the note because he believed he was protecting Johnny Smith, who he considers to be a legitimate prophet of God. But he leaves it at that, giving neither Johnny, nor Stillson, everything they wanted.

7. AFTER THE BROADCAST

Walt arrests Purdy for interfering with a police investigation, while his supporters watch, crying, stunned.

Johnny, watching at home with Rebecca, is shocked, he never mentioned Stillson.

Stillson, watching, tells his Dad he *almost* feels sorry for Purdy.

8. INT. HOSPITAL

Johnny submits to another round of testing. A new state of the art scan that can actually map brain activity (all real technology). While Johnny is in the scanner, they hand him objects, triggering visions from episodes past. Each vision generates a fuzzy 3-D image of the area of the brain where Johnny's Dead Zone might be. Dr. Mendak is very excited, he's never "seen" the area of the brain that might be responsible for psychic abilities before. In an attempt to take the test to the next level, Mendak hands Johnny his cane, triggering:

9. VISION - THE FUTURE

Johnny finds himself in Wey's future. They're inside a locked room, Wey pacing like a trapped animal. Wey wants to know what happened? Did Johnny do what he said? Nothing has changed. Johnny has a few questions of his own. What does Rachel Caldwell's murder have to do with Armageddon? Wey only knows what he's been told.

Been told by who? asks Johnny. Before Wey can answer, an apocalypse hardened eighteen year old man enters the room, telling Wey to shut up. The man knows Johnny is there somewhere but can't see him. Johnny looks closely at the man, there's something about him Johnny can't put his finger on. Johnny asks Wey, "who is this, he looks familiar." Wey laughs and says, "he should look familiar he's..." but before Wey can finish, the young man hurriedly knocks the cane top out of Wey's hand, ending the vision.

10. RESUME HOSPITAL

Johnny is being yanked out of the MRI-like scanner, having lost consciousness during the last vision-test. While medical workers scramble to revive him, Dr. Mendak is distracted, then awe struck by what he sees on his computer monitor. There, in the center of Johnny's brain, is a sharply defined image of his Dead Zone.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

1. INT. INTEROGATION ROOM

Walt questions Purdy. Purdy asks his lawyer to step out, asks Walt to turn off the recorder. He admits to writing the letter, but he only did it for Johnny. Big things are coming Walt. We are on the verge of a new era.

Walt wonders if Purdy is crazy. Purdy's lawyer returns and posts bail.

2. INT. SMITH HOUSE

Johnny and Rebecca see a news report about Purdy confessing and Rachel's murder investigation being reopened. Rebecca asks Johnny what's going to happen. He doesn't know. She asks what he's going to do about the operation. He won't even think about it until they solve Rachel's murder. Rebecca tells him he should get the operation. He won't solve anything if he has an aneurysm and dies. She's lost too many people she loves already. They'll get Stillson, with or without Johnny's abilities.

3. EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

Walt supervising as the coroner exhumes Mike Kennedy's body.

4. STILLSON IN WASHINGTON

White guys, cigars, booze. Stillson is welcomed into an inner circle of powerbrokers. James Stillson seems uncomfortable, subtly snubbed. Greg and his voting fraud pals are talking strategy, looking for votes to pass a stalled crime bill, the "Justice for All Act". Stillson is a co-sponsor. If he can help deliver this bill, it will catapult him onto the national stage.

There's just one problem. The Rachel Caldwell case has resurfaced. Greg assures them he's got it under control. Privately, Daddy warns him he should leave it alone. Let Johnny Smith convict himself.

5. MIKE KENNEDY'S AUTOPSY

Johnny and Walt come in at the end of the autopsy. The pathologist explains that the bullet's path is not inconsistent with a suicide, but there's no way to be certain. She shows them the actual brain as she explains her conclusion. Johnny gets up his courage and touches the gruesome brain, triggering:

6. *A VISION - of the bullet screwing it's way backwards out of Mike Kennedy's skull to reveal, Kennedy alive, in his car, a gun to his head, but not his finger on the trigger. The vision widens to reveal whose finger is on the trigger: Sonny Elliman, sitting shotgun.*

Johnny comes out of the vision and tells Walt what he's seen. Walt and Johnny both wonder why Stillson's bodyguard is killing Faith Heritage's accountant. Purdy is openly backing Stillson's campaign, but there's trouble behind the scenes. Whatever the reason, Walt needs more than Johnny's visions to make an arrest, and right now he has no physical evidence tying Stillson or Elliman to anything.

Maybe now that they have Elliman identified as the suspect, they can match some of the hair and fibers they found in Kennedy's car to him.

7. INT. INTEROGATION ROOM

Walt questions Elliman. He's cold blooded. Too cold for Walt, like he knows he's getting away with it. Johnny and Rebecca are watching as Walt threatens Elliman, telling him they'll have the hair and fiber evidence back any moment, then they'll chat again. While Elliman waits inside, Walt comes out and gets the lab report, sharing the results with Johnny and Rebecca. No hair or fiber matches on Elliman. But they did get another

match -- somebody who was definitely in the car with Mike Kennedy -- Reverend Purdy.

Elliman is set free while Johnny, Rebecca and Walt regroup. Walt is going to re-arrest Purdy, this time for the murder of Mike Kennedy. Johnny asks him to hold off. Purdy didn't do it, Elliman did -- Walt gives him a few days to prove it. Purdy isn't going anywhere.

8. INT. PURDY'S OFFICE - NIGHT.

In a wide view of the office, we see Purdy at his desk, feeding papers into a shredder. From the looks of it, he's been at it all night, a huge pile of shreadings overflowing onto the floor. As the view moves closer, we see that Purdy is having some kind of breakdown, his eyes dull, his affect flat and emotionless, as he continues to shred. As the view moves closer still, we see just how far gone Purdy is when we reveal the last thing he's shredding -- his bible.

9. EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

Two young women, Rebecca and Rachel six years ago, stand graveside at a small funeral. Rachel cries as Rebecca comforts her, staring stoically at the TWO OPEN GRAVES in front of them. We see the dynamic of the two sisters in this one idealized image, then without warning, Rachel turns to dust in Rebecca's embrace, falling away to the ground and disappearing. As Rebecca begins to react...

10. SHE WAKES UP IN JOHNNY'S BED

Gasping awake from her nightmare. Hearing her, Johnny wakes up and asks her what happened. She tells him about her dream. How she and Rachel were at their parents' funeral again -- Johnny finds out Rebecca's parents were killed by a hit and run driver who got away -- and now Rachel is gone and she's all alone. She can't let her sister's killer get away. Johnny promises her that won't happen, Stillson will be brought to justice. But when they embrace, we see the doubt she doesn't show Johnny. Off her look...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

1. WASHINGTON

Stillson is pissed about Sonny being questioned. Purdy and Smith don't know who they're messing with. He's going to make sure Johnny Smith goes down for Rachel's murder. Dad tells him to be careful, he's in Washington now, don't get distracted...

2. INT. POLICE EVIDENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Walt nervously escorts Johnny and Rebecca through the stacks of evidence, eventually finding RACHEL'S CAMERA. Johnny touches the camera, triggering:

3. VISION MONTAGE

A shotgun blast of images, as if Johnny's touch discharged all the visions in the camera at once, and his mind instantly sorted out one of the images, expanding into...

4. A SUSTAINED VISION - LOADING DOCK - FROZEN ARRAY

Johnny finds himself on a loading dock, looking at the voting machine with Stillson and the others when Rachel interrupts them. He freezes the scene and walks around between Rachel and the men on the dock. He studies their frozen faces as they all look and react to Rachel, with a mix of lust and menace. In particular he studies Stillson, who looks at Rachel with a frozen air of sincerity that unnerves Johnny. He shakes it off and the vision ends.

5. RESUME EVIDENCE ROOM

Johnny comes out of the vision thinking he might have Stillson's motive for killing Rachel. Voting fraud. Stillson stole the election and Rachel found out.

Johnny wants Walt to investigate Stillson for tampering with the voting machines. Walt can't do anything about voter fraud, that's a federal jurisdiction. Rachel is impatient with pursuing voter fraud. She wants Stillson for killing her sister. She wants to take a more direct route, asking Johnny if touching Stillson would help. Johnny hesitates, doesn't think Stillson would let Johnny near him. Rebecca thinks there might be a way...

6. INT. FAITH HERITAGE STUDIOS - LIVE

Sitting on the edge of the stage, shirtsleeves rolled up, collar open, talking straight into the camera as he deconstructs for the viewing public every misdeed he ever committed in the name of God's work. As Purdy lets it all hang out, the view floats to the control room, where we hear two Faith Heritage staffers commenting

about how since he began confessing, the phones have been ringing off the hook. The more he confesses, the more they love him.

7. WASHINGTON - INT. STILLSON'S OFFICE

Stillson wanted to meet Rebecca to discuss her appearing at the signing of the bill after it passes, but he's disappointed to see she's with Johnny. He wants her support, but only if she parts ways with Smith. Johnny says he's there as her advisor, he'll only leave if she asks him too. She thanks Stillson, but declines helping him by appearing at the bill signing. On the way out the door, Johnny engineers a touch off Stillson, triggering:

8. VISION - ARMAGEDDON

Surrounds and envelops Stillson.

9. RESUME JOHNNY

As he comes out of the vision, collapsing to the ground in stages as he tries to hang tough in front of Stillson, but it's no good, he can't hold out, finally passing out in front of Stillson. Rebecca is horrified, worried for Johnny. Stillson appeals to her good sense, look at Johnny, look at the way his guilt is eating him alive. Can't you see, he's the one who killed your sister.

Off Rebecca's reaction...

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

1. INT HOSPITAL

Rebecca presses Johnny to tell her what he saw when he touched Stillson -- no more secrets, she can't be with Johnny if he's holding anything back. Johnny reluctantly tells her about his Armageddon vision. Before she can really respond, Johnny is whisked off for another round of testing.

2. OUT IN THE WAITING ROOM

Rebecca and Bruce talk about Johnny. Bruce can tell from the stunned look on her face and the questions she asks, that Johnny has told her about Armageddon. She asks Bruce if he believes Johnny. Bruce tells her yes, he believes, he doesn't want to, but he has no choice, he's seen too many of Johnny's visions come true.

Rebecca realizes that if Johnny sees Stillson in the future causing Armageddon, he must not go to jail for killing her sister.

We see that everything is weighing heavily on Rebecca's mind; Rachel's death, Johnny's condition, Stillson, Armageddon, the sickening realization that Stillson might not be punished for killing her sister -- all of these ideas start to coalesce into a plan. She asks Bruce, hypothetically, what if you crossed paths with Hitler in 1936, and had a chance to kill him and save millions from dying, would you do it? Bruce replies, "Johnny asked me that same question..." Rebecca asks Bruce another question, "What if something happens to Johnny, what if he dies without changing the future?" Bruce can't answer her.

A nurse appears, Johnny is asking for Rebecca.

3. INT. MEDICAL IMAGING LAB

They are about to create a detailed 3d map of Johnny's brain, requiring Johnny to remain motionless in a tiny uncomfortable space, rendering Johnny suddenly claustrophobic. He asks Rebecca to please try some of the relaxation techniques she has used before to help Johnny focus and relax.

In a very subtle, cleverly written scene, Rebecca relaxes Johnny, but takes her suggestion one beat further, and without Johnny realizing, gives him an odd hypnotic suggestion, hidden seamlessly in her relaxation patter, "If you see me in a vision of the future, I am only planning a surprise birthday party for you. You will only see visions of me planning this party". Johnny registers none of this and she wraps up the relaxation exercise as the doctor returns. Johnny submits himself to another test, this time unafraid of the tight quarters, but also unaware of the effect Rebecca's suggestion will have on his future.

5. INT. WALT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Purdy turns himself in to Walt, he wants to be punished for his sins. Walt tells Purdy they know where to find him, that the D.A. is looking into everything Purdy has been confessing to, but it's such a long list, it may be a while before they issue an arrest warrant for these kind of white collar crimes. Purdy won't be dissuaded however, and Walt reluctantly takes him into custody.

6. REBECCA DRIVES JOHNNY HOME

She's worried about him. Doctor Mendak thinks if Johnny doesn't have the operation, his next attack might be fatal, or even put him back into a coma. Johnny's worried too, but there's too much at stake right now for him to risk losing his Dead Zone. If he has the operation, Stillson might escape justice.

When they arrive home, Rebecca tells Johnny she's been called back to Washington on business, but she'll return as soon as she can. They kiss goodbye, triggering:

7. VISION INT. "BAKERY" - DAY

Johnny is sitting in an odd bakery, watching as Rebecca enters and orders a "cake" from the "baker" -- a rough looking character as bakers go. Her conversation with the Baker is odd as well. Does she want the silver or black icing? Has she ever eaten cake before? How many candles does she need? Six or the whole box? That's right, she can have the cake immediately...

8. THE VISION ENDS

Revealing Johnny and Rebecca, breaking the kiss that triggered the vision. Johnny smiles knowingly at Rebecca, wryly telling her he likes chocolate cake with white icing -- and if she's planning any kind of surprise party, don't bother, you can't keep secrets from a psychic. Rebecca smiles back as if she's been caught, but her reaction, which Johnny doesn't see, tells us she realizes Johnny has had a vision altered by her suggestion.

9. INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY SCHWEIGEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Stillson pressures Schweigel to re-arrest Johnny Smith, painting him as a brain damaged stalker obsessed with him, who killed Rachel Caldwell. Schweigel tells Stillson they will soon be ready to re-arrest Smith and promises to help get Stillson a restraining order to keep Johnny away from him. Stillson promises to take care of Schweigel, if he handles this case properly there may be a judgeship in it for him someday. Schweigel wishes Stillson luck with the crime bill he's trying to pass; law enforcement needs all the help they can get.

10. INT. SMITH HOUSE - NIGHT

Johnny is in the kitchen, downing a handful of aspirin to ease the constant pounding in his head. He grabs his cane, triggering:

11. VISION - FUTURE

Wey is back, this time being held captive. Wey's in bad shape, not happy to see Johnny. His captors can't see Johnny, but become very excited when they realize Wey is talking to him. "What's going on?" asks Johnny. Wey replies bitterly, "Why don't you ask yourself?"

Just then, Johnny's FUTURE SELF arrives, alerted by those holding Wey captive. Johnny is shocked to meet his future self -- He's blind, his eyes dull and pink, his face burned like Wey's, and above one eye, the scar of a bullet wound. Future Johnny's demeanor matches his appearance; angry, bitter, and possibly insane, driven over the edge by whatever is to come.

Future Johnny can't see our Johnny, but he knows he's there, communicating to him through Wey, who holds the cane top. He tells Johnny how he used Wey to bring Johnny here, because he needs him. His Dead Zone is dying. He's dying. His visions are weak. They have much to do if they are going to stop this future from happening.

Future Johnny takes the cane top from Wey, and can now see Johnny in their shared vision. He laughs at his naïve former self. Just then, the battle weary 18 year old from the previous vision enters with bad news, "We've got to leave, now!" A nearby explosion rocks the room. Future Johnny thanks the messenger, calling him "J.J." -- yes that J.J. -- apparently he survived the apocalypse with Johnny. Seeing his grown-up son, our Johnny is shocked, and proud, and terrified all at once.

Future Johnny would like to spend some quality time catching himself up, but they're kind of pressed. Right now he just has a message,

"When the time comes, do not save Rebecca"

Before Johnny can ask why, another explosion rocks the room, causing future Johnny to drop the cane top, ending the vision.

12. RESUME JOHNNY

Lying unconscious on his kitchen floor, alone.

13. INT. GUNSHOP - DAY

Rebecca enters the "bakery" now revealed to be a gunshop. The "baker" behind the counter full of guns

looks up and greets a frightened, but resolved,
Rebecca.

END ACT FOUR

END OF PART ONE