

THE DEAD ZONE

"Still Life"

Outline

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When an enigmatic artist asks Johnny to find his missing daughter, Johnny enters a Dead Zone noir where nothing is what it seems. Even to a psychic.

TEASER

ART AUCTION - Johnny is here with Bruce. They've been coming for a few weeks now. The goal: Replenish some of the art in Johnny's house. Mom used to have a lot more. Johnny figures Purdy sold it off while he was in a coma... Also, less people tend to recognize Johnny at functions like this.

Lo and behold, Johnny is approached by a MR. GRAYDON, 45, art dealer and confident of ANDREW LYNE, a legendary Wyeth-like painter. Lyne is known for his images of captivating women in rustic Maine settings. Johnny knows - Mom used to own a Lyne.

Graydon tells Johnny that Lyne has a problem of "an intense personal nature." Johnny is intrigued - and yes, he's a fan - but he has to decline. Forcing the "gift" always leads to unintended consequences. He doesn't work that way. Graydon leaves a business card in case Johnny changes his mind.

When Johnny touches it - *PSYCHIC FLASHES of a disheveled artist - Andrew Lyne - in a darkened space. He screams, "It's my fault!" and there's a GUNSHOT! BLOOD splatters on a painting. The gun hits the floor.*

Andrew Lyne is going to commit suicide. WHOOSH. Johnny is back. He stops Graydon. He'll take the job.

ACT I

LYNE'S COTTAGE - As Graydon leads Johnny inside, he tells him that in three days, a local gallery will host a Lyne showing. Critics, celebrities - and most important, buyers - are coming from around the world. Lyne is in no shape to attend..

Johnny finds ANDREW LYNE (65, Sean Connery-handsome, Jackson Pollock-intense) spiraling toward depression. His daughter CHLOE is gone. She's 19, she's of age - but she skipped her father's birthday two days back, which is very unlike her. Lyne

believes Chloe has fallen in with "unseemly friends." Lyne confesses it's not a perfect relationship. Chloe is from a second marriage that didn't end well (after her mother passed away, she kept her Mom's last name). Lyne hasn't gone to the authorities because they'll bring a media spotlight.

Lyne has a few photos of Chloe, but Johnny is more intrigued when the artist motions to a painting of his daughter - a Lyne masterwork. It shows Chloe in a classic Lyne setting, in front of a coastal mansion. When Johnny touches the painting, a VISION - *Johnny in an artist's studio, in front of a blank canvas... and he begins. He's Lyne. Possessed, driven (again, think Pollock), working to capture something... The image begins to take shape. A woman. Chloe... WHOOSH. Fascinating, but not much help. Does Lyne have a more personal item?*

CHLOE'S ROOM - Johnny looks for a new clue. When he touches the closet door, a VISION - *Chloe and Lyne in a heated argument. She packs a bag. Lyne begs her to stay. Johnny STOPS the vision, backs it up, and sees Chloe was about to make a cell call before Dad came in. The contact entry is for "Amy."* Johnny asks if "Amy" is one of the "unseemly friends" he thought Chloe might hook up with. Lyne doesn't know. But Chloe takes classes at a nearby college - art major, of course - and used to work part-time at a Coffee House with Amy.

COFFEE HOUSE - Johnny tracks down fellow art major AMY (she's a barista, getting off work). Amy is evasive, rushing for her Vespa. But Johnny knows that Chloe was going to call her. Amy tells Johnny he should stay away. Chloe's not a happy girl, and her father's an ugly guy - no matter how much "beauty" people think he has given the world. On that thought, CUT TO:

LYNE'S STUDIO - A wall of Lyne's work. The canvases are being packed by NORA COLLINS (45), Lyne's apprentice, who is readying them for the upcoming show. Nora also mixes paints for an UNFINISHED WORK in the corner. A new portrait of Chloe.

At first, Nora doesn't want Johnny disturbing Lyne's things. But when she learns he's trying to find Chloe, she relents. Chloe is Lyne's inspiration, Nora says. Johnny knows - he felt Lyne's passion (in a vision). Nora is amazed how he intimately knows the studio. Johnny touches the stool where Chloe poses...

Suddenly, *Johnny stands over Chloe, dead on the floor of the studio, rivulets of her blood mixing with rivulets of paint.*

And it's another FIRST-PERSON VISION. Is Lyne going to kill his own daughter?

ACT II

STATION - Johnny wants Walt to check crime databases for any domestic disturbance reports ever filed from Lyne's house. Walt wonders what exactly Johnny expects to do on this case. Chloe is of age, she ran off. There's no crime here. Not yet, Johnny says. But the VISION of Chloe's body was pretty gruesome. And there was the initial vision of Lyne's suicide. Think about it, Johnny says. Chloe left after a fight with him. This could end in a murder-suicide. Kill his daughter, kill himself.

JOHNNY'S HOUSE - RIP! Chloe's image is revealed when Bruce tears away some wrapping paper. Art dealer Graydon had the painting sent to Johnny's house at Lyne's request. Maybe it's a thank-you, maybe just a plea for Johnny to keep up his search.

When Johnny touches it, he gets PSYCHIC FLASHES of his painting session as Lyne. Frantically drawing Chloe. When Johnny comes out of it, Bruce sees he has penciled a similar image on a throwaway piece of paper. "Becoming" Lyne is eerily spilling into the real world..

But something else about the Chloe painting is familiar. It hits him. The coast. He's been fishing there with J.J. Johnny focuses on the mansion on the edge of the painting. CUT TO:

THE SAME EXACT MANSION - In real life - with a real estate sign in front of it. FIND Johnny and Bruce, posing as buyers, meeting with a REALTOR. As they near the house, a VISION - *Johnny sees the house with Chloe here, in the style Lyne would visualize it. It's as if Johnny is IN that painting, (but he's actually there on the day it was inspired). NIGHT SUDDENLY FALLS. The house is lit. And there's a party going on inside.*

After the vision passes, Johnny learns from the Realtor that the house gets rented out for parties. Usually for denizens of the local art community. In fact, there's one tonight, in anticipation of the upcoming Lyne show. Johnny cleverly gets himself and Bruce invited..

PARTY - THAT NIGHT - Johnny and Bruce are in. There's humor to be had, as Johnny brushes past people and has (unseen) visions of private trysts and semi-decadent stuff in back rooms. But when Johnny brushes a middle-aged man, he sees *him hooking up in a room with Amy (Chloe's college friend)*. Johnny follows.

It leads to a back room - and Amy. When Johnny intervenes, the Man takes off. Johnny stops Amy - he wants answers this time.

Chloe's father painted her outside this house. Why? There have been other parties here. What are these parties really about? Amy only says that Johnny is wasting his time. Chloe will never go back to her father. After Johnny leaves, Bruce hangs back. Amy calls her apartment - to warn Chloe.

AMY'S APARTMENT - Johnny and Bruce outside (they got the address with Walt's help). It's a first-floor apartment with a bay window. They spot Chloe passing that window (on the phone with Amy). Seconds later, as Chloe tries to rush out, Johnny and Bruce are at the door. Chloe backs into the apartment, refusing to go with Johnny.

He's not here to force her to come with him. It's not like he can. *But Johnny has seen that the situation between her and her father is going to escalate. It is not going to end well for either of them* (murder for her, suicide for him). Chloe wonders how he knows that... then realizes he's Johnny Smith. "Then you must know the real truth," Chloe says. Johnny isn't sure what she means. She's about to tell him, when -

SHOTS RING OUT. Shattering the bay window. Johnny jumps on Chloe. Bruce hits the deck. Bruce glimpses a CAR SCREECH away.

As Johnny helps Chloe to her feet... a VISION - *Johnny, as Lyne, in the studio. He is just meeting a young woman... Chloe. They strike up a conversation. She's a fan, and he's a little... obsessed. Lyne wonders if she wants to model for him. Maybe stay at the house for a while...*

WHOOSH. Back to reality - and Johnny's realization. Chloe is not Lyne's daughter. That's the "real" truth.

ACT III

SCENE OF SHOOTING - Walt's team finds a slug. Johnny touches it. *FLASH!* Lyne yells "It's my fault!" *Gunshot. Blood splatters painting.* Suicide VISION. Johnny says these bullets came from a gun Lyne owns.

SAFE HOUSE - Walt leads Johnny and Chloe to a safe house, used by Penobscot County Sheriffs to shelter informants. A deputy will be parked outside. They will lay low while Walt keeps working crime scene.

Chloe can't believe Lyne could be behind this. He hired someone to find her, just to have her killed? Walt spoke with Lyne's art dealer, Graydon. He says Lyne was home all night. But Walt can't help but wonder - maybe Lyne didn't want the truth about

the Chloe relationship getting out before the big showing. Johnny's not so sure the eccentric Lyne would care if people knew. Then again, nothing would surprise Johnny now...

LATER THAT NIGHT - Johnny comes to understand Chloe's plight. A year ago, she was a young art student, living off financial aid, wallowing in obscurity. Then Amy told her about an undercurrent of art-world parties, where she might meet a legend. Amy got herself paid for "services" at those parties, which is why she was evasive with Johnny earlier. Chloe couldn't go as far as her friend. She only attended one party. Graydon, the art dealer, found her there. Invited her to Lyne's cottage.

People always told Chloe she looked like "a girl from a Lyne painting..." And now, Lyne was fascinated by her. It happened so fast, it was a like a waking dream.

What about the fact that Lyne called her his daughter? Chloe says he didn't want anyone around him to think anything was going on between them because he never touched Chloe. It wasn't about sex, it was about painting her. Chloe says the relationship was mutually beneficial. He gave her more than room and board. Her own art improved the more she posed for Lyne. It was like the ultimate master course.

But here's the thing: As the year wore on, things got... weird. Lyne became possessive, as if he was afraid he would lose her. Chloe started to feel sick. Literally. They used to share green tea every morning before painting sessions. She started to think he was putting something in it. Slow poison... She had to get out of there.

SAFE HOUSE - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT - Chloe sleeps. Johnny can't. We find him... watching Chloe sleep. Johnny begins to draw on a pad of paper. Chloe. And Johnny can really do it. Over an INTENSE MONTAGE, he has scrawled the same thing, over and over... Is Lyne's obsession effecting Johnny in the real world?

CUT TO the Chloe painting. Now in the Safe House. Brought by Bruce. Johnny touches it. WHOOSH! *Johnny is Lyne again, and this time he finishes the portrait of Chloe. But something's wrong. The woman in the painting looks like Chloe, but it's not quite her. Then Johnny looks up at his model, who has been shrouded in shadow until now. REVEAL... It's not Chloe.*

Johnny calls her "Julia." After they're done, she comes over and kisses Johnny (Lyne) on the cheek...

"Looks great, Daddy," she says.

WHOOSH. Back in the real world, Johnny tells Chloe - Lyne had a daughter - a real daughter. She was his original inspiration... and his constant obsession. Johnny now understands what the man is going through, why he's obsessed with having Chloe back. He's been trying to fill an empty space inside him.

But what happened to Julia? Johnny thinks he knows: He recalls the bloody VISION from Act I. *Himself, as Lyne, standing over a woman's body in the studio... That was Julia.*

Chloe doesn't want to believe this. But Johnny wonders if the pain of murdering his daughter is forcing Lyne to somehow repeat a sick history.

DRIVING TO LYNE'S - Using Johnny's revelation, Walt has dug up some background. Lyne did have a daughter, Julia. She was of age when she went "missing" some twenty years ago. Back then, her father told authorities that they had a fight and Julia ran off (her mother died giving birth to her). There was no evidence of foul play, so as time passed, it was assumed father and daughter were just estranged.

LYNE COTTAGE - Walt, with a search warrant for Lyne's gun, arrives with Johnny and Deputies. Art dealer Graydon tries to roadblock them to no avail.

But Lyne allows them in, telling Walt he hasn't owned a gun in decades. Lyne tells him he can look wherever he wants. Johnny notes the artist has fallen deeper into depression. Johnny is conflicted about this man. The artist is clearly unstable, but it's almost sad. Johnny asks about Julia. When Lyne hears the name, he takes pause. Johnny asks what happened to her. "She left," Lyne says. "She just left."

The gun search turns up nothing.

STUDIO - Johnny passes the studio, spotting apprentice Nora. She says she worries that Lyne and his daughter, Chloe, won't be able to see each other again. Johnny realizes Nora knows nothing of the truth. Was she working with Lyne when Julia was here? Yes, the early days, Nora says. Mr. Lyne was deeply saddened when she left. Johnny sees that Nora is priming a canvas, getting it ready for a new work. But there's a previous painting under the primer. Why is that? "Call it a first draft," Nora says. OFF Johnny, his gears churning...

SAFE HOUSE - Johnny and Chloe at the painting. Why does he get VISIONS of Julia from it? Johnny touches...

VISION - *It's DaVinci Code, Dead Zone style... The top painting bleeds away, revealing a coat of primer and then... an UNDER PAINTING. Of Julia. Lyne painted over it!*

THE VISION DEEPENS: *Johnny is back in the studio, continuing our ongoing VISION: Except now Johnny watches it THIRD-PERSON. Lyne just finished painting his daughter. Julia comes over and kisses her Daddy. Julia smiles and exits.*

Johnny follows Julia. And he catches her outside. She meets up with a young art dealer... Graydon. He's been waiting in his car. They sneak off together, clearly a couple.

WHOOSH. Johnny realizes that yes, someone's got a murderous obsession here. But it was never Lyne.

ACT IV

STATION - Graydon waits to be interrogated. Walt talks to Johnny. Graydon is the one who "recruited" Chloe and brought her to Lyne. If he and Julia were together in the past, then it fits he would have a fixation on Chloe. They're dead ringers.

TIME CUT: Graydon is questioned by Walt as Johnny observes. Yes, he and Julia were an item, but nothing ever came of it, and then she took off. That's not what Johnny has seen. Graydon says Johnny can touch him right now - *he did not kill Julia*. They had a fling that never worked out. Johnny touches Graydon. He gets nothing.

Just then, Walt gets a call from his deputy. The safe house is empty. Empty? Chloe is gone.

SAFE HOUSE - Johnny and Walt arrive. When Johnny touches the phone... WHOOSH. *He gets BRIEF FLASHES of Chloe talking to Lyne*. Walt says they should go to Lyne's house. No, Johnny says. "If I were Lyne - and I've been Lyne a few times in the last couple of days - I'd want to finish my painting."

GALLERY - Middle of the night, before the show. Johnny and Walt descend on the gallery. Walt expects to find a desperate, distraught Lyne with Chloe. But Lyne is just... finishing his last painting of her. Chloe agreed to model because she doesn't believe he's capable of murder. She was also afraid - from what she heard Johnny say - that he might kill himself.

Thankfully, Lyne doesn't have a gun. But as they approach, Johnny touches the new painting... VISION - *Lyne, in the studio, starting this very painting on a primed canvas, given to him by*

Nora. Lyne tells Nora he has a new muse in his life... A grown daughter from a previous marriage named Chloe. Nora says she never knew. Is Chloe... really his daughter? Lyne betrays nothing...

Nora plays along... but we can tell the news crushes her.

And when he comes out of the vision, Johnny realizes. It has been Nora all along. Her rage is fueling this. And just then...

Nora enters. In true noir style, she has a gun (Lyne's gun, taken from his house). Nora believes only she deserves Lyne. She has always idolized him. Protected him. Johnny now knows she fired on him and Chloe. And she tried to slow-poison Chloe.

Lyne understands the depth of Nora's pathology - and what's worse, that she probably killed Julia. Johnny doesn't need a psychic gift to see that. It was nearly twenty years ago, when Nora first became his apprentice. She couldn't stand the hold Julia had over her father.

Lyne blames himself for not seeing it. "It's my fault," he says. But Nora FIRES at Chloe. GUNSHOT. Lyne jumps in the way and gets hit in the shoulder. Blood SPLATTERS a painting. Johnny stops Nora. The gun hits the floor. It plays like the SUICIDE VISION we saw all along... but not suicide.

LATER - Lyne's showing opens. Lyne does not attend. Ironically, the controversy of the last three days will probably raise prices. Out of Johnny's range.

Johnny sees Chloe off. She is now free to live a life she dreamed. But didn't she once dream of it with Lyne?

BACK AT JOHNNY'S: J.J. has a school project and needs Johnny to draw something for him. Johnny has that gift he picked up living through Lyne in those VISIONS. Or does he? All that comes out are stick figures.