

## THE DEAD ZONE

"One Psychic and a Baby" (working title)  
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*After saving a baby from the crash of a van filled with illegal migrants, Johnny sets out to find the boy's father, unearthing a dangerous ring of human traffickers. Realizing he holds the fate of one small life in his hands, Johnny discovers how broken "the system" really is, for the illegals as well as their so-called "protectors". Along this harrowing journey, Johnny gets a brief and emotional glance into his own possible future and a chance at the fatherhood he might never know.*

*This episode explores those things that Johnny sees but doesn't reveal, and puts to test the idea that Johnny needs to trust in whatever power is communicating through him, even if it doesn't match what his mind is telling him.*

### TEASER

JOHNNY'S HOUSE - Bruce finds Johnny has stumbled upon his beloved childhood toy train set in the attic. He's in the middle of setting it up - pieces of track and junk everywhere. Bruce says drop it. They're late for a movie.

ON THE ROAD - NIGHT - Johnny and Bruce are driving. Torrential rain. Suddenly two figures appear the headlights. They seem injured, dazed and terrified. Bruce brakes quickly, but to Johnny's surprise the people scatter. Then a few more figures dart through the woods. They hear the muffled screaming and pounding of someone down a muddy slope.

Bruce and Johnny hurry down and find a badly damaged van on its side in a river. There's a YOUNG WOMAN trapped inside and it's filling with water FAST. They struggle, but can't get the door open and even if they could the woman's leg is stuck tight. She seems desperate for Johnny to understand as he sees what she's holding - is a BABY. She pleads, "Mi niño, mi niño." As the van sinks further, she manages to hand the baby off to Johnny. It's a harrowing scene that ends in the mother's tragic drowning. With her final breath she looks in Johnny's eyes and tells him to take care of her baby (Bruce has to translate).

Johnny, shaken, the baby boy in his arms, goes to call Walt and gets a series of cryptic, seemingly disconnected FLASH VISIONS (he might actually have to make contact with Walt for the following Visions to be connected to him): *the baby,*

*quickly getting older and involved in a series of tragic episodes and a crowd of Latin American looking people crammed into and suffocating in a tiny, dark space.* Out of the VISION, Johnny quickly hangs up the phone. He can't piece it together, but he's seen enough to understand that he can't give the baby to anyone -- not yet. He hands the phone to Bruce. "Call 911. Make it anonymous. And don't mention the baby." Bruce is aghast. "We can't leave the scene of an accident. And we damn sure can't take that baby." Johnny tells Bruce that he's seen the future, and it's bad to let this baby go. "It's not Walt's fault, it's the system." Johnny eyes the submerged van, haunted by the mother's death. "It was her dying plea for me to save this baby and that's what I plan to do."

## ACT I

JOHNNY'S HOUSE - A warm fire. Bruce has to go. Johnny discovers that the gentle clack-clack-clack of his toy train seems to quiet the baby. Sarah shows up unexpectedly. He can't hide a baby, so he explains what he has seen and why he can't give the baby to the authorities.

As he says this, Johnny gets a VISION - *Himself as a father with the now two-year-old Latino boy. Simple oval train track around him. The kid loves it. This is the current future for the baby and Johnny doesn't seem to mind it.*

Sarah's reminded of when JJ was this age, but catches herself, remembering that Johnny wasn't there. It's a moment of emotional connection for them. Johnny gets a call from Walt. Johnny and Sarah lock eyes as he tells Walt he'll be right there. He has to leave the baby with Sarah. The baby takes a dump.

VAN CRASH SITE - Walt informs him they got an anonymous phone call about the accident. Can Johnny do his Dead Zone thing and see what really happened? Johnny feels bad about leaving the scene of the crash, but he has one drive: to fulfill a promise he made to a dying mother.

Walt tells Johnny that the van was stolen. A woman was killed in the accident and the driver fled. These are some pretty serious crimes to be dealt with. To make it worse, it seems the van was carrying illegal migrants.

Johnny picks up a broken mirror and gets a VISION: *the VAN reassembles itself onto the now, pre-accident van, its back door open as a crowd of illegal immigrants, including the mother, holding her baby, are herded like human cattle. The illegals are pouring out of some sort of cramped, darkened space—the same type of space Johnny saw in the teaser vision. The driver slams the back door, turns to another*

*Coyote and says (in Spanish) he'll be back for the rest - lock 'em up.*

Out of the vision, Johnny turns to Walt: "There were nine, maybe ten people." Walt tells him some nightmare stories these illegals endure - dehydration, starvation - those are the ones who make it. "Amazing what price people will pay to get into this country." As Johnny watches the coroner cover the mother's dead body.

Johnny wonders aloud: Migrant workers? In Maine? Walt tells him that factory owners can save big by employing illegals. No health benefits, taxes, etc. These poor people pay ten grand a head to coyotes to be smuggled across the border, transported all over the country.

Johnny looks down and sees a photo half-covered in mud. He shifts his foot to hide it. As Walt moves off, Johnny pockets the photo - the mother, the baby, and a man whom Johnny assumes must be the father.

Johnny touches the driver's seat of the van, gets a (first person) VISION: *Johnny drives the van, speaking SPANISH with a COYOTE (Smuggler). They're pulling out of a parking lot of a seedy bar, its neon sign reflected in the windshield.*

CUT TO: the NEON BAR SIGN--same one from Johnny's vision. Johnny and Bruce are about to go into the bar. Johnny has brought Bruce along because he "speaks" Spanish - two years of high school. Johnny takes the photo out of his pocket. He stares at it, then he tears the photo in two, putting the half with the mother and baby back in his pocket.

BAR - It's a Latino bar, a hangout for underclass Workers in the Portland/Bangor area. *Ranchera* music and women who dance with the men for money.

One of the DANCING WOMEN, EVA, speaks some English. Johnny shows her the photo. As he hands it to her, he gets A VISION WE DON'T SEE. Eva says she doesn't know the man. She wants Johnny to pay for a dance. He does, and when they dance, he gets another VISION (which this time we do see) that he subtly reacts to it - the girl even notices, but he says it's nothing: Then he has a second vision -- *Nighttime, a little girl grasping tightly onto her mother's hand with all her might runs for her life. As she and her mother flee, trying to avoid blinding bright lights chasing them, we quickly understand this is the scene of an illegal border crossing.*

Out of vision, over Eva's shoulder, Johnny sees THE COYOTE from his crash site vision leaving the bar.

BAR PARKING LOT - Bruce and Johnny follow the coyote outside and quickly find themselves surrounded by the Coyote and several other tough-looking men. One of them has a steel pipe; Bruce and Johnny don't need to know Spanglish to figure out they're about to get their asses kicked. Johnny's trying to get Bruce's translation as one of the guys jams the pipe against Johnny's throat, and, as it touches him, Johnny gets a VISION - *two hours earlier, the same guys used the same pipe to beat up the man we recognize from the photo Johnny found at the crash site. The man's name is Miguel and he's asking the Coyotes about his wife and baby boy. He loses it when he hears his wife and child were killed in the van accident. The Coyotes beat him up, then leave Miguel with a warning: tell anyone and you die.*

Out of vision, Johnny now realizes the baby's father is indeed alive. And by asking about him, Johnny has unknowingly placed the man in even greater danger.

## ACT II

BAR PARKING LOT - Johnny and Bruce are about to get beaten to a pulp when the dancer, Eva, comes out. She launches into a Spanish/English peppered tirade about how Johnny cheated her out of her dance money. The coyotes move off, laughing, thinking they've intimidated Johnny enough and how dangerous could this gringo be if he's getting his ass kicked by a chicita in red high heels.

When the coyotes are gone, Johnny thanks Eva for getting them out of a pinch, he gets a VISION off her: *The same little girl crossing the desert with her mother. The sweltering sun beats down on them. They are exhausted, weak, dehydrated. Suddenly the mother collapses. The little girl tries to revive her, tugs on her skirt, but we see in the mother's eyes that she can go no further. The mother cups her daughter's face in her hands, tells the little girl to be strong.*

Out of vision, Johnny and Bruce get in the car, Eva watching as they drive off, her eyes on Johnny's license plate.

Johnny tells Bruce what he now knows about the baby's father: his name is Miguel and he dealt with some really scary people to get his wife and baby here. They have to find him. Johnny gets a call from Sarah - she's got to get home before Walt starts wondering where she is.

JOHNNY'S HOUSE - Sarah hands the baby back to Johnny and is out of there. As Johnny cradles him, his VISION of the baby's future (with Johnny) deepens. *Now the baby has grown to age six, and he's curious, asking his "father" (Johnny) how he picked out the name Mike for him. Johnny says, "Your real name is Miguel. After your biological father."* During

*the scene, we reveal Johnny and son have together created a more elaborate train set.*

JOHNNY'S HOUSE, NEXT MORNING - A sleep-deprived Johnny, up all night with the baby, answers the door to Bruce who arrives with supplies. Johnny tells Bruce about the visions of himself raising this kid. That could mean they might never find the FATHER - or something bad will happen to him. "Then we have to change the future," Bruce says. We can see Johnny is becoming emotionally conflicted about this baby.

Johnny discovers a water-damaged letter tucked deep into a pocket of the babies clothes. When he unfolds it, he has a VISION - *the paper reshapes and the washed-away ink reappears. Miguel's writing it. It's an emotional, heartfelt letter to his wife and baby about the new life they'll have once they're all together in America.*

Johnny gets a clue as to where Miguel's living. Bruce wants to go with him, keep an eye on Johnny, these guys are scary, but someone has to stay with the baby. Johnny leaves a reluctant Bruce with "little Mike," who, as soon as Johnny splits, takes a dump.

MIGRANT TRAILER PARK (Portland) - Johnny finds the place is full of illegals. He finds the trailer where (he knows from his vision) Miguel wrote the letter. The trailer is crammed with frightened people. But no Miguel. A kid grabs Johnny and asks for money as he gets a VISION - *it's night, as lifted pick-up trucks with bright searchlights whip into the trailer park. The Coyotes are looking for Miguel. Some gringo came into their bar and started asking questions about him. They grab an old man (to make an example of him) as the other illegals look on helplessly.*

Out of the vision, Johnny notices the very same old man, his arm in a homemade sling. He assures the people in the trailer that he only wants to help Miguel. They're stony but an old woman slips something into Johnny's hand. A Saint Christopher medal.

Johnny walks back to his car, and is surprised to see Eva. She asks him why he's looking for a penniless, homeless illegal? He says he "made a promise to somebody." He gets another VISION off Eva: *Little girl again, she stands over her mother's body in the desert, keeping the flies off her. It's clear that the mother is dead, and that the little girl is close herself. She's suddenly lit by a flashlight beam, as a large, kind looking border patrolman picks her up - and she MORPHS into a grown-up agent in uniform.*

Out of vision, Johnny knows she's USCIS. She knows who he is, too. She tracked his plates. Turns out she's also looking for Miguel - to help the authorities catch the van

driver and testify against him in the death of a young illegal woman (the baby's mother). Johnny wonders how a seemingly bright young woman like Eva would end up with an assignment in Maine? She admits she's broken a few rules, rubbed a few people the wrong way, "You can't always play by the rules if you want to protect the people in danger." Johnny realizes she has resources he could never have access to and they agree to help each other if they can. She also knows about the psychic thing, although she's not much of a believer. He doesn't tell her about the baby. Johnny gets a call from Walt: "I think we have a problem here, John." SHOT PULLS WIDE to Reveal Walt, standing in Johnny's living room, staring at Bruce holding the baby.

### ACT III

OUTSIDE JOHNNY'S HOUSE - Johnny keeps Eva in the car while he runs inside (or they agree to meet up later TBD).

JOHNNY'S HOUSE - Walt is pissed. He can't believe Johnny lied to him. Not to mention a little act of kidnapping and a few other felony offenses. Johnny tells Walt about the FATHER and the promise he made to a dying mother. "It's nothing to do with you, Walt, it's the system. It's broken." Walt has a hard time denying that. Johnny reaches for the crying baby. As he takes him, he has a VISION - *it's powerfully emotional, Johnny and the baby, now age 10. Little Mike has broken one of his train cars, is crying. Johnny comforts him. But the boy won't be comforted, hands it to Johnny and says, "fix it." Johnny says it can't be fixed, he'll get him a new one. But Mike wants this one, says he bets his real father could fix it. Asks what happened to him.*

Out of the vision, Johnny realizes these private visions of himself and the baby are beginning to fall apart, even in his subconscious mind. He looks at Walt, who wonders about the woman waiting in the car? Johnny considers the situation carefully, then says: "There's one more thing I need to tell you..." (We don't hear it yet.)

CUT TO: Eva waiting in the car, getting ancy.

BACK TO: Johnny asking Walt: "Are you in?" Walt considers their unseen agreement and nods. Johnny dangles the Saint Christopher medal over the baby. As the baby's tiny fingers close around the medal, it makes a powerful connection between the baby, the medal and Johnny, sending him into a VISION: *Miguel is being given the medal in a church by a priest that says it's for "mi niño."*

Out of vision, there's a knock at Johnny's front door. It's Eva. Before Walt can protest, Johnny co-opts him into

staying with the baby and slips out to join Eva. Walt is left holding a baby as, on cue, he - takes a dump.

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH - Johnny and Eva realize it's a mass for the dead woman. Miguel's wife. They are trying to find Miguel in the crowd when they hear a man angrily talking to the priest in Spanish in a side chapel: "Where is my baby?" It's Miguel, and he's terribly upset: his wife's body was found at the crash site, but where is his baby son? The priest says he doesn't know, he's just telling Miguel what he's heard. He suggests that he and Miguel go talk to the authorities, but Miguel sees Eva and Johnny coming towards him, and takes off running out of the church. Johnny tells Eva to go one way, then he goes the other, eventually running into Miguel at the street corner. He grabs him and tries to talk to him, and gets a VISION: the same one he got before—the dark space cramped with people, but this time when that door opens it's Miguel's LIFELESS body that's thrown in.

Coming out of the vision, Johnny hears Eva coming and does the unthinkable, he let's Miguel go. He tells him to run! Eva arrives just in time to see him get away.

#### ACT IV

Eva, pissed, rails at Johnny: "How could you have let him get away?" Johnny wonders why this man seemed so terrified when he saw them? Johnny has never even met the guy. Eva seems cornered, then suggests they take a drive - she has one last idea.

JOHNNY'S CAR - Eva and Johnny are driving. Johnny is telling her about the vision he's been having of the people in the cramped, dark space. Walt told him that migrants often are smuggled in shipping containers, and he assumed he was seeing the container of people who were in the crash. But now he realizes it's not. It's people who are in danger now. And Miguel is somehow going to die with them. He just doesn't know where. He pulls the car over. "But I think you might."

WOODED AREA - Eva looks upset, anxious. What the hell does he mean? Johnny explains, "I can only do so much. My visions give me hints, clues, pieces of the puzzle. That's why I needed you." Eva stares at him, her expression goes from anxious to hard.

Johnny tells her he knows she became an immigration officer to help her own people. But the system is broken. Doing her job by the book meant doing things she couldn't live with, breaking up families, sending people back to certain death.

So she started making deals, bending the rules (it's how she ended up in Maine!). And even good people find themselves making deals with the devil. But once you open that door, it's hard to close. She's not looking Miguel to bring him in, she wants to turn him over to the coyotes. Johnny says he's seen the truth in his visions, or at least parts of it. He tells her it's not too late to do the right thing.

What was the deal? Eva looks at him, "It's a numbers game. The people in the container in exchange for the father."

She pulls her gun on him. "You don't understand. You don't see what's happening out here. The bodies that get stepped over like grains of sand in the desert." She's shaking. "When did you know?" she asks. Johnny locks eyes with her. "I had a pretty good idea after we danced."

Eva tells him that he should never have stuck his nose in. Everything would have been fine, no one would have gotten hurt.

"What about them?" Johnny says, pulling out the torn family photo and holding the pieces together. Johnny reveals that Miguel's son is indeed alive. And that Johnny is trying to reunite them. That's why he got involved. She's visibly moved by this revelation. Then he realized there were others in danger (that container full of innocent people). He couldn't figure out where they were and he knew Eva wasn't completely right. He let Miguel go after he realized that holding him would have changed things in a very bad way. So he rolled the dice and let fate play it's hand. He realized Miguel would eventually get caught by the coyotes and, then, if Johnny stuck close to Eva, he might have a chance to save them all.

She thinks Johnny's a little too full of himself. Besides, she made a new deal with the coyotes.

Johnny warns her that the coyotes are not going to keep their end of any bargain. They are going to throw Miguel and Johnny into the container, put a padlock on it and walk away. The only reason they might let her live is she's useful to them and they have too much dirt on her. He needs her to do the right thing.

She doesn't believe him. "Trust me, I've seen it, just the way I saw that little girl trying to cross the border with her mother. A little girl who sat for two days and brushed the flies away, praying that someone would save them." Johnny says. "How many grains of sand is it going to take to make a difference?"



Tense beat. Then, coyotes pull up in their pick-up trucks. Just like Johnny figured it, they have Miguel. They start walking towards them.

"I'm not that little girl anymore," says Eva, as we're left to figure what she's going to do.

Eva cuffs Johnny and the coyotes take him and Miguel down the road to where a container is hidden in the brush. It's the container from his VISION. They start to throw Johnny inside with the other terrified, starving people, HIS VISION IS PLAYING OUT, but then the cuffs fall away from Johnny's hands - Eva made the right decision after all. He manages to get a weapon away from one of the coyotes. Miguel bolts. But the other coyote grabs Eva and holds her hostage.

THIS WHOLE SEQUENCE NEEDS TO BE WORKED OUT IN GREATER DETAIL)

A coyote goes to shoot the fleeing Miguel. A gunshot rings out. REVEAL Walt and Roscoe and other deputies have the place surrounded. The two wounded coyotes are cuffed by Roscoe and Walt. "You really took a chance. What if you hadn't been able to convince her?" Walt asks Johnny. We realize that, back at the house, Johnny told Walt everything. "I get my visions for a reason, I knew they were guiding me," Johnny explains. "Besides, I knew you'd eventually show up."

WE COULD EVEN REPLAY THE VISIONS AND OFF-SCREEN CONVERSATIONS TO LET IT ALL MAKE PERFECT SENSE... OR JUST IMPERFECT SENSE.

JOHNNY'S HOUSE, DAY - Johnny holds the baby, walks him around the track of the toy train set. Final VISION - *Baby Mike is now 10. Proud as punch at a school Science Fair. Mike accepts his trophy for his elaborate train set-up, which runs on solar power, then turns towards Johnny. "I just want to thank the most important person in my life, my father," he says as he walks towards him, arms outstretched. But he walks right past Johnny to the open arms of Miguel, his very proud, very real father. As Johnny disappears from the scene...*

Johnny walks DOWNSTAIRS, baby in his arms. Walt, Bruce and Sarah are there. All the babysitters. Walt tells Johnny that Eva will get a reprimand and a demotion [TOMMY, IS THIS REALISTIC?-NOT SURE], but that, thanks to Johnny, she didn't ruin her career and her life. USCIS has given Miguel special visa consideration. Johnny turns a corner into the living room and there's Miguel. His face lights up with happy tears. As he hands the baby over, father and son are reunited. Johnny gives Miguel a train from Johnny's train

set that had such special meaning for Johnny and the baby boy.

Bittersweet.

FINAL BEAT - Present-day. Johnny shows JJ the beginnings of the train set. JJ would rather play *Halo 2*. A wistful moment. JJ doesn't know the "life" Johnny just lived through visions, but Johnny's also a little wiser for it. Smart enough to see the great life he's got right here, right now, with his own son. Off Johnny and JJ, battling on X-Box...