

TWILIGHT

By Ron Koslow & Trevor Munson

TWILIGHT

TEASER--1947

FADE IN:

OVER BLACK-- WE HEAR a smoke-shredded VOICE in the dark...

MICK (VO)

Things with Coraline started with a
match...

MACRO SHOT-- SLOW-MO A MATCH LIGHTS in darkness and a WOMAN'S
FACE IS ILLUMINATED...

CLOSE ON: CORALINE -- She's lovely. With her Midnight black
hair worn in a 40's style, blue eyes like welder's torches
and red licorice-whip lips, she looks like she might have
walked off the set of an old Bogart movie.

INT. WESTERN AVENUE JAZZ CLUB (1947) - NIGHT

We pull back to find we are in a quintessential smoky,
forties jazz dive.

SUPER: Los Angeles. Western Avenue. 1947.

ON STAGE-- A JAZZ BAND PLAYS. THE TRUMPET PLAYER-- darkly
handsome with a wise-guy grin-- plays a soulful SOLO, eyes
closed. Meet MICK ST. JOHN, late 20's. A musician, now,
Mick grew up hard on the rough and tumble streets of L.A.
where he learned everything from kicking ass to picking
locks.

Sensing something, Mick's eyes open, and immediately LOCK
with CORALINE'S. They stare for a long moment and then
Coraline smiles as if sharing a secret. Mick smiles right
back.

CUT TO:

INT. JAZZ CLUB - A LITTLE LATER

Alone at a table, Coraline prepares to light another
cigarette. Mick is Johnny-on-the-spot with a WOODEN MATCH.

MICK

Who does everyone tell you you look like?

MICK (V.O.)

It was my standard line. Every girl's been told she looks like someone famous. Even the ugly ones...

CORALINE

I hear Ava Gardner sometimes, but I don't really think I look like her.

MICK

You don't. You're prettier.

She smiles. He smiles. They smile... Coraline laughs and tilts forward, accepting the light...

MICK

You expecting anyone?

CORALINE

What if I am? What if I'm expecting my great big jealous Marine of a fiance?

MICK

Then maybe I'd have to club him over the head with my trumpet when he gets here...

CORALINE

Maybe you would...

EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER (1947) - NIGHT

Arm-in-arm, her head on his shoulder, Coraline and Mick walk along the boardwalk past a PENNY ARCADE.

MICK (VO)

Before Coraline, I thought I'd been in love, but I was wrong... The passion I'd felt for other women was a ghost emotion compared to what I felt for her...

Against the twinkling lights of the Ferris-wheel he tries to kiss her, but she coyly turns so that his lips only brush her cheek. Giggling, she pulls away and moves down the pier to the railing. Smiling, Mick pursues her... catches her...

CORALINE

(daring him)

You sure this is what you want?

MICK

I'm sure.

Mick kisses her...

INT. WEDDING CHAPEL (1947) - TWILIGHT

A PRIEST MARRIES Mick and Coraline at a candlelit altar. She wears a veiled white wedding dress.

PRIEST

Do you, Michael St. John, take this woman to be your holy wedded wife? To honor and cherish from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do you part?

Mick looks into Coraline's eyes.

MICK

I do.

INT. HOTEL ROOM (1947) - NIGHT

The door opens and Mick carries his bride, still in her white dress, across the threshold. He lays her down on the bed.

MICK (VO)

A love like that can make you blind. Make you miss things you maybe shoulda seen...

IN A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS WE SEE--

- Coraline, tearing at his clothes.

- They make violent, passionate love

- Mick opens his eyes to see her straddling him. She smiles down at him and he smiles back.

- As Coraline begins to climax, her lovely lips part. Mick's smile fades as her FANGS DISTEND, and she MOVES IN A RUSH for his throat... He struggles, but she is too fast, too strong--

CORALINE

(whispers in his ear)

Till death do us part...

As her TEETH SINK HOME we... SMASH CUT TO BLACK SCREEN.

END OF TEASER.

ACT ONE--1985

TIME CAPSULE - 1985

RAPID CUTS OF IMAGES and VIDEO of the times. WE SEE--

Reagan... Gorbachev... "Miami Vice" main titles... Pete Rose breaks Ty Cobb's record... L.A. Times Headline: ANOTHER CHILD ABDUCTED...

Over a panoramic shot of L.A. at night --

SUPER: Los Angeles. 1985.

EXT. TWO-STORY SHERMAN OAKS HOUSE (1985) - NIGHT

A modest, two-story traditional home on a quiet Sherman Oaks street...

ANONYMOUS POV: MOVING CLOSER, along the side of the house, we watch through a KITCHEN WINDOW as a MAN grabs a can of soda from the fridge.

The Man moves from the kitchen into the LIVING ROOM and CAMERA WHIPS around the corner of the house TRACKING him.

As he settles in to watch TV, the CAMERA ABRUPTLY LEAPS to a SECOND STORY WINDOW.

We are now peering into a FIVE-YEAR OLD GIRL'S BEDROOM. The adorable, little blond girl lies under a pink Barbie comforter as her MOTHER reads her a bedtime story. The child's eyes begin to droop and soon she is asleep. Her Mother kisses her tenderly, turns off the light, and exits.

INT. LITTLE GIRL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

We MOVE IN on the little girl, fast asleep CREEPING CLOSER... closer... Sleepy-eyed, the child sits up in bed. She peers into the darkness and sees a FEMALE FIGURE backlit against the window.

LITTLE GIRL

Mommy?

We RUSH at the child with supernatural speed. A GNARLED HAND CLAMPS DOWN over the Little Girl's mouth as she is lifted out of her bed and pulled from the room.

EXT. A BLOOD-RED SUN SINKS over Hollywood and the Hollywood Freeway...

INT. MICK ST. JOHN'S HOLLYWOOD APARTMENT/OFFICE (1985) - TWILIGHT

A PAIR OF EYES OPEN in darkness. Pulling back we see the lid of a DEEP-FREEZE OPEN. Frost-bitten air escapes. Mick, looking no different than he did in 1947, climbs out and brushes at the film of frost that covers him.

MICK (V.O.)

The freezer preserves me; slows the constant decay that gnaws me from the inside out. The decay-- that's one thing they don't tell you about when you become a vampire.

As he crosses the room we see that he has FANGS. He goes to the refrigerator and takes out a vial of BLOOD. At his DESK he fills a hypodermic needle.

MICK (V.O.)

You don't have to like what you are just because it's what you are, but you do have to come to terms with it... That's why I take my blood with a needle and why I have rules about who I kill...

As he injects himself WE SEE his FANGS RECEDE. His EYES fill with blood the color of midnight. In THEM WE SEE IMAGES OF HIS LAST VICTIM--

FLASHBACK --

TWO HELL'S ANGELS in black leather attempt to rape a GIRL in a DARK ALLEY. A HAND REACHES into frame and taps one of the bikers on the shoulder. He turns to find Mick standing there and before the biker can react, his THROAT HAS BEEN RIPPED OUT.

MICK (V.O.)

No women. No children. No innocents. I'm no hero, but if I have to kill, I figure it might as well be someone who deserves killing...

Scared shitless, the OTHER BIKER runs. With extraordinary speed, Mick catches him and kills him too.

MICK (V.O.)

Because of what I am, I have abilities that others don't-- abilities that give me an edge in my present occupation...

A KNOCK at the door brings Mick out of his reverie. His eyes return to normal and he hides the needle before answering the door. As Mick opens THE DOOR we see the BLACK LETTERING ON THE FROSTED GLASS-- MICK ST. JOHN. PRIVATE INVESTIGATIONS.

MICK (V.O.)

I can't change what I am, but, at least, I can use it to do some good...

The distraught MOTHER of the abducted child we met earlier stands there looking as if she hasn't slept in days.

MOTHER

Mr. St. John?

Mick nods warily and is startled when the woman falls into his arms and begins to weep. Ill-at-ease, Mick stands there allowing the woman to cry.

CUT TO:

INT. MICK'S OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER

Mick hands the teary-eyed Mother a mug of tea as she tells her story.

MOTHER

The police don't seem to have any clues. I don't know what they're doing. They won't tell me anything. I'm her mother...

She shakes her head and takes a sip of tea.

MOTHER

I want my daughter back, Mr. St. John. I've heard you do whatever it takes.

(MORE)

MOTHER (cont'd)
 That's what I want-- whatever it
 takes. Please... Will you help me?

Off Mick's world-weary expression we...

CUT TO:

INT. FIVE-YEAR OLD GIRL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mick enters and his acute vampire senses are immediately assaulted by a flood of sensations. He SEES a picture of the beautiful child. He SEES her toys littering the floor.

He closes his eyes and INHALES.

MICK (V.O.)
 Innocence... The room is filled
 with the scent of innocence. But
 underneath it, something awful. The
 smell of Orchids and death.

In a RUSH OF IMAGES WE SEE--

- Coraline's sensuous RED LIPS as they draw on a cigarette.
- Her long slender neck.
- Midnight black hair spilling over a pillow.
- Mick and Coraline make violent love in a tangle of sheets.

MICK (V.O.)
 I'd know that scent anywhere... Her
 scent... Coraline...

CLOSE ON: Mick's HAUNTED EYES as he snaps out of his reverie.

EXT. TUDOR-STYLE MANSION - PASADENA - (1985) - NIGHT

Mick's CLASSIC MERCEDES pulls into the circular drive.

A MAID is waiting at the front door. She ushers him in...

INT. TUDOR-STYLE MANSION - PASADENA - (1985) - NIGHT

SELENE-- an attractive woman "of a certain age" ENTERS. As she moves into the soft glow of the candlelight we see that she is not as young as we first thought, but her aristocratic beauty is undeniable.

She goes to Mick and they embrace like old friends.

SELENE

How are you, darling? It's been too long.

MICK

You look lovely, Selene.

SELENE

You're lying, but thank you.

Selene directs him to an antique wing-back chair. He sits.

SELENE

So tell me, are you here on business or...

(playfully)

have you finally come to take me away from all this?

MICK

Business, I'm afraid.

SELENE

Always business with you... How may I help?

MICK

I've been hired to look into a child abduction.

SELENE

Mortal or vampire-related?

MICK

Vampire. That's why I'm here. Have you heard anything?

SELENE

(shrugs vaguely)

Perhaps...

Knowing the drill, Mick rolls up his sleeve and offers the palm of his hand to her. Selene smiles. Her FANGS GROW. Without taking her eyes off him, she bites lustfully into the heel of his palm and drinks with growing fervor until Mick finally pulls his hand away.

MICK

All right, enough.

SELENE
(dabs at her mouth)
Delicious as always, darling.

Though the color appears to have drained from Mick's face, the blood seems to have a salutary effect on Selene-- she looks ten years younger.

MICK
Okay, tell me.

SELENE
There's a group on the Westside who've been involved in unspeakable things for some time. Lately, I've heard they're taking children.

MICK
For what?

SELENE
You know as well as I do-- the younger the blood the more rejuvenating the effect.

CLOSE ON: MICK as he absorbs this.

MICK
Is she running things?

SELENE
(feigning innocence)
Who?

MICK
You know who.

SELENE
(smiles)
Doesn't she always?

MICK
How do I find her?

SELENE
I hear she's been spending time in the company of a certain undead plastic surgeon.

A pained look in his eyes, Mick turns to go.

SELENE

You still love her.

MICK

I'm working a case.

SELENE

(to his back)

Really, darling, don't you think it's time you got over her? How long's it been? You don't want to end up alone like me.

MICK

Thanks, Selene.

Mick exits.

INT. COSMETIC SURGERY INSTITUTE - BEVERLY HILLS (1985) - LATE AFTERNOON

SIGNAGE on the building reads: Chase Cosmetic Surgery Institute.

WINDSHIELD POV: As the AFTERNOON SHADOWS grow long, we see a slick-looking, DOCTOR with a fake tan exit the institute. With gloved hands, he pulls a hat down over his eyes and turns up his collar as he hurries across the parking lot and climbs into his Aston-Martin.

ON MICK: Behind the wheel of his Mercedes. Dark sunglasses shielding his eyes, fedora pulled low, he too is bundled up against the waning light of day.

MICK (V.O.)

That myth about daylight and vampires isn't entirely true. It can hurt and weaken and slowly poison a vampire, but if he's careful and keeps himself covered, it won't kill him...

As the car pulls out of the lot, Mick follows.

IN A SERIES OF RAPID CUTS--

The SUN slowly sinks into the west as Mick tails the Aston-Martin through Beverly Hills and up into Bel Air...

EXT. THE SIDE OF A BEL AIR ROAD - TWILIGHT

The Aston-Martin enters an automatic gate at a walled Bel Air estate and disappears up a long driveway. Mick parks on the shoulder and goes to the TRUNK of his car.

FROM INSIDE THE TRUNK WE WATCH as Mick loads silver bullets into a chrome .357 and screws on a SILENCER. This done, he grabs several wooden stakes and a can of lighter fluid and slams the trunk SHUT on us.

EXT. BEL AIR MANSION - NIGHT

Mick scales an IVY COVERED wall and cautiously makes his way up the densely wooded hillside. Ahead, we see a HUGE, UNIFORMED GUARD with a ROTWEILLER on a leash.

MICK (V.O.)

Dealing with vampires isn't easy.
First, you have to know one when
you see one...

MICK'S POV: The DOG GLOWS BRIGHT RED, but the VAMPIRE GUARD is a dead spot because of his near complete lack of body heat.

MICK (V.O.)

Infrared vision is good for that,
because vampires don't give off
body heat.

Hearing something, the Vampire Guard turns and sees Mick.

VAMPIRE GUARD

Sic him, boy!

As the DOG CHARGES, Mick looks deep into the snarling animal's eyes and employs one of the most devastating weapons in his arsenal-- HIS HYPNOTIC GAZE.

MICK

Sit.

Giving a meek whimper, the dog halts and sits obediently.

MICK (V.O.)

The hypnotic gaze comes in handy too. But it only works on the living.

Pissed off, the Vampire Guard now TRANSFORMS into full VAMPIRE FORM... The Guard's FANGS GROW. His JAW UNHINGES. His EYES FILL WITH BLOOD...

VAMPIRE GUARD

(growls...)

All right, asshole. Let's dance.

MICK (V.O.)

The real trick comes in knowing how to destroy a vampire.

With a homicidal yell, the Vampire Guard LUNGES FOR MICK. One step ahead, Mick pulls his silenced gun and shoots him repeatedly with SILVER BULLETS.

MICK (V.O.)

All undead creatures are allergic to silver. Silver bullets'll hurt a vampire, but they won't destroy him.

Badly hurt, the Vampire Guard flails about as Mick yanks a stake from his belt and jams it deep into the guy's chest. Gasping and choking, the Guard slumps to the ground immobile.

MICK (V.O.)

Wooden stakes are effective too-- Put one through the heart and it'll paralyze a vampire. But that won't destroy him either-- it takes fire to do that.

The helpless Vampire Guard can only watch as Mick douses him with LIGHTER FLUID and scratches a match.

MICK

I don't dance.

Mick tosses the match and... WHOOSH!

With the Vampire burning behind him, Mick continues on to the house without looking back.

EXT. BEL AIR MANSION - NIGHT

The Mediterranean villa is aglow with candlelight.

LOOKING THROUGH a set of tall, arched WINDOWS WE SEE what appears to be an intimate cocktail party taking place. Affluent, attractive people in designer clothes mingle around an antique punch fountain that oozes blood. We see no sign of the Doctor or Coraline.

In the b.g. we see Mick dart across the entry hall and up a staircase.

INT. BEL AIR MANSION (UPSTAIRS HALL) - NIGHT

At the top of the STAIRCASE Mick stops and listens. Light flickers under a door at the end of the hall. As he starts toward the door, a gun enters frame and presses up against his temple. At the other end of the gun, we find the man Mick followed, DR. TOM CHASE, a prominent Beverly Hills Plastic Surgeon.

DR. CHASE

I don't think you're on the guest list.

With his free hand, the Doctor relieves Mick of his gun.

MICK

Where's Coraline?

DR. CHASE

Occupied, but she sends her regards. Now turn around and head back downstairs.

Mick hesitates.

DR. CHASE

Unless you're interested in finding out what a silver bullet can do to your inner cranium, I suggest you move.

Mick reluctantly does as he's told.

INT. BEL AIR MANSION (LIVING ROOM) - NIGHT

The other PARTY GUESTS turn to watch as Mick is prodded into the room at gunpoint.

DR. CHASE

We've got an unexpected guest.
Let's make him feel at home.

MICK

Don't go to any trouble...

Mick looks around as the guests slowly converge on him.

DR. CHASE

No trouble. No trouble at all.

One-by-one, THE GUESTS TRANSFORM into vampires around Mick.

In a lightning-fast move Mick disarms the Doctor. Both GUNS BLAZING, Mick SPINS, SPRAYING BULLETS, taking out the other vampires two at a time-- until only the Doctor remains standing.

Mick wipes his brow and turns to face him with the gun. The Doctor puts his hands up and backs away.

DR. CHASE

(scared now)

What do you want??

MICK

I want to find out what a silver bullet does to the inner cranium.

Mick fires, but the GUN CLICKS. Empty, he FIRES the other one. Click.

DR. CHASE

(laughs)

Looks like you're out of bullets.

His amusement is short-lived as Mick drops the doctor's gun, grabs a stake from his belt, and drives it into the man's chest.

MICK

Then it's a good thing I brought stakes...

Impaled, the Doctor falls from the frame.

INT. BEL AIR MANSION (UPSTAIRS HALL) - NIGHT

Reloading his gun as he goes, Mick moves down the hall toward the closed door at the end. He reaches out, grabs hold of the knob and pushes it open--

INT. BEL AIR MANSION (UPSTAIRS BEDROOM) - NIGHT

Inside he finds CORALINE clutching the LITTLE GIRL he has been searching for.

In MICK'S EYES we see that Selene was right-- he still loves Coraline and hates himself for it.

Coraline gives Mick a sweet, knowing smile that hints at all that has passed between them...

CORALINE

Just in time for dinner, lover.

HER FANGS DISTEND and she BENDS OVER THE CHILD TO FEED...

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO--PRESENT DAY

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE (2006) - TWILIGHT

The SETTING SUN, ignites a FIERY SKY over present day NEW YORK CITY.

MICK (VO)

Nightfall comes with an ache. I
feel the sinking sun deep in my
bones the way old people sense a
coming storm...

SUPER: NEW YORK CITY. PRESENT DAY.

NEW YORK STREETS - MEAT-PACKING DISTRICT - TWILIGHT

The camera MOVES through the fashionable downtown meat-packing district to a FIVE-STORY LOFT BUILDING. We move over a BALCONY and through a wall of windows...

As we roam around the loft, the NIGHTLY NEWS DRONES on the TV. Through an ajar WALK-IN FREEZER DOOR we see an UNMADE BED. We see-- a familiar-looking REVOLVER and a BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOGRAPH of Mick and his band on a beat-up desk.

We FIND Mick seated in an antique leather club chair, eyes half-closed, as he compulsively flicks open and fires up a ZIPPO LIGHTER. He looks rough. He has been a vampire now for sixty years. It has taken its toll. Having lived for so long out of the light, without the touch of another, he is sliding ever closer to the abyss. Although he is doomed to live forever he sees little reason to continue on. He is in a bad place.

MICK (V.O.)

What do you do when both living and
dying mean nothing? When each new
night only serves to make you ever
more aware of the emptiness-- the
futility-- of your unending
existence...

CLOSE ON: THE FLAME-- Mick runs his FINGERS through it as if testing the water.

Mick snaps the lighter closed, leans forward, and turns the volume UP as an attractive blond female reporter, BETH TURNER, fills the TV SCREEN--

BETH (ON TV SCREEN)

...The body was found late this afternoon by sanitation workers in a dumpster in an alley off Eighteenth Street. Forensics are still on the scene-- police have yet to identify the young woman. This is Beth Turner in Chelsea...

Leaving the TV on, Mick gets up from his chair and abruptly leaves.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - CHELSEA - NIGHT

We go to the scene of Beth Turner's remote broadcast. Police and press swarm the area.

Beth and her two-person crew are packing up. Beth is a stringer-- a freelance TV field reporter-- for City News Service. She travels around the city in a remote van in constant communication with her dispatcher, searching for breaking stories-- crime, politics, human interest. Her stories are then sold to local TV stations.

As Beth and her crew prepare to call it a day, she listens in amusement as her cameraman, STEVE, and her tech specialist, MAUREEN "MO", tease each other. Steve is a likeable asshole with an acid tongue-- especially when it comes to Mo, a quick-witted, attractive gay woman who gives as good as she gets.

STEVE

I'm telling you, Mo, we should hook up. I'd be willing to do that.

MO

I'm sure you would-- but why would I want to?

STEVE

So you'd know what it's like to be with a man.

MO

If I hook up with you I still won't know...

Beth laughs.

STEVE

Ooh, so much anger... Freud would
have a lot to say about that...

MO

Freud was an asshole, too.

BETH

C'mon, you guys, enough.

Behind the POLICE TAPE WE SEE Mick join the crowd of on-lookers.

As Beth climbs into the remote van, she notices the darkly handsome guy. Sensing her eyes on him, Mick turns away and fades back into the crowd.

INT. CITY HALL - MAYOR'S OFFICES - NIGHT

Beth comes down the hall. She approaches an office with a NAME PLAQUE that reads: Ted Barton, Counsel to the Mayor.

BETH

(entering)

Did you see it?

She pulls up short, seeing her boyfriend, TED BARTON, in conversation with BOB MCKEAN, the affable MAYOR of New York. Ted is a tall, good-looking, Princeton grad for whom most things in life have come easily.

BETH

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to
interrupt. Mr. Mayor, Hi...

MAYOR

How are you, Beth?

BETH

Good.

TED

Did I see what?

BETH

I was on, tonight. I got a tip from Carl and we got there in time to scoop everyone. I called and left you a message.

TED

I'm sorry, hon. I haven't had a chance to check my messages...

MAYOR

My fault, I'm afraid. The sanitation workers are on the warpath again.

BETH

That's okay. No big deal... Uh, should I go get a cup of coffee?

Feeling a little awkward, Ted moves around his desk and leads her toward the office door.

TED

Actually, I don't think I'm going to be able to make dinner tonight.

BETH

Oh. Really?

Trying to hide her disappointment, Beth moves back into the hall. Ted takes her hand.

TED

You go back to your place, take a nice warm bath. I'll come by later with a ridiculously expensive bottle of wine. How's that sound?

BETH

(resigned)
Sounds... good.

TED

Shouldn't be too late. Ten at the latest...

Ted gives her a quick kiss and then closes the office door on her.

BETH
(to the closed door)
Great.

INT. CITY MORGUE - NIGHT

It's late. There is an antiseptic stillness about the place. An overweight ATTENDANT is mopping the floor. Making sure no one is watching, he sets the mop against a wall and goes to a refrigerated compartment. He opens it and we see he has a BLOOD-FILLED COFFEE MUG stashed beside a CORPSE. He takes a big drink.

MICK (O.S.)
Drinking on the job, Guillermo?

GUILLERMO JUMPS and turns to find Mick standing behind him.

GUILLERMO
(Puerto-Rican accent)
You scared me, amigo. You shouldn't sneak up on people like that.

MICK
Sorry.

GUILLERMO
Hey, I got some extra O-positive if you want...
(holds mug up)
Good stuff. Fresh.

MICK
No thanks, but I would like to see the body of that girl they found in the dumpster.

GUILLERMO
Well, I don't know, man-- I always like to help out a friend, but that's against the rules. I could get in real trouble for that sort of thing--

Mick looks pointedly at the mug in Guillermo's hand.

MICK

Yeah, I can see you're a real stickler for the rules.

Guillermo smiles and shrugs. Shaking his head, Mick peels a couple twenties off a fat roll and holds them out to Guillermo who makes them disappear.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: A REFRIGERATED BED as it is rolled out of a wall unit. On it lies the naked body of the MURDERED YOUNG WOMAN.

Guillermo looks on as Mick closely inspects the body. From the abraded strap marks on the victim's wrists and ankles, and the DEEP, INTRICATE CUTS and bruises that cover the body, it is clear that the victim was horribly abused.

MICK

She was tortured.

GUILLERMO

(nods)

Too bad. She was kinda cute.

Mick ignores the guy as he leans over the body and inhales deeply, searching for signs of vampire involvement.

MICK

No bite marks, no smell of vampire decay on her--

GUILLERMO

No, man, no. Vampires didn't do this. She still had most of her blood when she came in.

MICK

Let me guess-- O-positive?

Guillermo smiles sheepishly and shrugs-- a guy's gotta eat.

GUILLERMO

Tell you something else-- she ain't the first one, either. Had another one come in just like this last week.

Off Mick's troubled look we...

CUT TO:

EXT. UPPER EASTSIDE TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

The street is quiet at this time of night. Warm light filters from the windows of the elegant TOWNHOUSE.

INT. UPPER EASTSIDE TOWNHOUSE (LIBRARY) - NIGHT

WE HEAR MICK'S VOICE as we PAN AROUND an opulent LIBRARY-- The room is filled with Picassos and Matisses and Moroccan bound first editions.

MICK (O.S.)

Josef, you're tapped into everything in this town. Would you mind making a few calls?

Seated by a fire, Mick is having cognac and a cigar with JOSEF KONSTANTIN, one of his few confidants. A mysterious figure, Josef is an ancient vampire of European descent. For many years he has been the patriarch of one of the wealthiest and most powerful vampire sects in New York.

JOSEF

(slight European accent)
Of course, my friend, but these murders-- they are the affairs of mortals. I don't know why you concern yourself with them.

MICK

(gazing into the fire)
I'm not sure why I do it anymore, myself...

For a moment Mick seems lost in the flames.

MICK

I'm not exactly sure why I do anything anymore.

JOSEF

(follows his gaze)
Let me guess-- life seems pointless, existence bleak...
(MORE)

JOSEF (cont'd)
 Immortality isn't what you
 expected... Perhaps you've even
 entertained thoughts of ending it
 all...

Mick looks up in surprise and we see the truth of Joseph's
 words in MICK'S EYES. Josef smiles knowingly.

JOSEF
 Yes, I know. These thoughts, they
 are not uncommon for vampires
 approaching the century mark...
 I went through something similar
 myself.

Josef leans forward and looks at Mick intently.

JOSEF
 It will pass-- as all things do
 with time, trust me.

From Mick's expression we can see that Josef's insights have
 hit a nerve. Josef gives his friend an encouraging pat on
 the arm and rises to refill Mick's cognac.

JOSEF
 The challenge for our kind is to
 continually find new reasons to
 live.

MICK
 And what are you living for after
 all this time?

JOSEF
 The best reason of all, my friend.
 (raises his snifter)
 Love...

Josef reaches out and warmly clinks snifters with Mick.

INT. A BURNING HOUSE

In her nightgown, Beth flees down a BLAZING HALLWAY.
 Everywhere she turns she finds herself stopped by a wall of
 fire.

Suddenly, a FLAMING FIGURE EMERGES from the fire moaning and
 contorting as it lurches towards her. Beth turns and runs
 but her way is blocked by the flames. She SCREAMS!

INT. BETH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BETH STARTS AWAKE in bed. Ted lies fast asleep beside her. She reaches out and tries to awaken him.

BETH

Ted, are you awake?

(Ted grunts)

Ted?

Dead to the world, Ted doesn't respond.

Wide-awake now, haunted by this recurring dream, Beth climbs out of bed and goes out onto her

BALCONY

Upset, she stands staring out into the night at a heavy YELLOW MOON that peers down from above.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - NIGHT

Watched by the same MOON-- Mick stalks the night streets, head down, jacket collar up, hands in pockets, as he considers what Josef has said.

INT. A BASEMENT CORRIDOR - NIGHT

A HOODED, NUDE GIRL, her hands bound with leather straps, is led down a dimly lit basement corridor by an UNSEEN CAPTOR. She CRIES OUT as she is thrust into a makeshift AMPHITHEATER and into a circle of light. Behind her, TORCHES SURROUND a WOODEN PLANK TABLE with leather straps at its four corners.

Her hood is removed. We can see she is gagged. Blinking in the glare of a spotlight, she looks up to see SEVERAL MEN staring down at her. All of them are wearing MASKS.

Now, TWO LARGE MEN in SHAMAN MASKS approach her from either side. They GRAB HOLD of her ARMS and despite her MUFFLED SCREAMS lift her onto the table and strap her down.

END ACT TWO.

ACT THREE--PRESENT DAY

INT. MICK'S LOFT - NIGHT

ON THE TV SCREEN: We see Beth ON CAMERA, reporting in front of a Bronx tenement. In the b.g. SEVERAL ANIMAL CONTROL WORKERS wrangle a seventeen foot alligator down the front steps and into a van.

BETH (ON TV SCREEN)
When they arrived to investigate,
animal control workers discovered
the man had been keeping the
alligator, named Wally, as a pet
for the past four years...

THE TV IMAGE FREEZES. Pulling back, we see Mick alone in his chair with the remote. The ZIPPO LIGHTER sits forgotten on the armrest beside him. He FAST FORWARDS the TAPE and now we see BETH speaking to a LOCAL POLITICIAN on the eve of an election...

BETH (ON TV SCREEN)
Councilman Crowley-- one of your
major campaign contributors has
just been indicted. With the
election a week away, care to
comment?

He watches for a few beats and then FAST FORWARDS again-- and now we SEE BETH interviewing a GROUP OF KIDS in CENTRAL PARK.

BETH (ON TV SCREEN)
I'm here in the Ramble of Central
Park with the P.S. 32 Bird
Watcher's Club. Today the kids
tell me they're on the lookout for
a--

As Mick watches her, his face softens. We can tell by his eyes that something about this woman reminds him of what it once was to be alive...

INT. NOBU - NIGHT

Beth and Ted eat sushi at a quiet table under the copper leaf ceiling of the restaurant's fairy-tale forest setting.

TED

The Mayor's going to Tokyo at the end of next week for a trade conference. I thought maybe we could go up to my place in Connecticut-- take a long weekend...

BETH

(absently)

Yeah, that might be nice...

TED

Are you okay?

BETH

I didn't get much sleep last night. I had a nightmare.

TED

A nightmare? What about?

BETH

The fire. The one I was in when I was a kid...

TED

It must've been traumatic. How much do you remember?

BETH

Not much. I was too young-- we never really talked about it...

(shakes her head)

I used to get that damn dream whenever I was feeling stressed about something. Funny thing is, I haven't had it in years.

TED

Okay, so what are you stressed about?

BETH

I'm not sure.

TED

Something at work?

BETH

No.

TED

What then?

BETH

I don't know...

(carefully)

Maybe... Maybe it's us.

TED

(guarded)

You're having doubts?

BETH

Maybe that's what the dream's
trying to tell me.

TED

I don't think that dream's about
stress or doubts. I think it's
about your fear of getting close.

BETH

I don't know about that...

TED

Beth, you've told me yourself it's
a pattern. When things start
getting serious you get nervous and
start looking for the door.

BETH

Yeah, maybe...

TED

(takes her hand)

Look, I think we could have
something really great together,
but you have to decide to let me
in. It's up to you...

(beat)

Maybe it won't work out. Maybe it
isn't right, but how are we ever
going to know unless you give us a
real chance?

A BUZZING comes from her purse. She digs out her cell phone and answers it.

BETH

Hello?

(listening)

Okay... I'm on my way.

She hangs up and looks at Ted apologetically.

BETH

They've found another body. I've got to go. Let's continue this later, okay?

Disappointed, Ted nods as Beth grabs her things and hurries out.

INT. REMOTE VIDEO VAN (MOVING) - NIGHT

Steve drives. Beth rides shotgun. Mo rides in back in a chair by the sound equipment.

STEVE

This sucks. I was about to close the deal on a sure thing... This damn call ruined it.

BETH

Is getting laid the only thing you ever think about?

STEVE

Yeah... Oh except for the five minutes right after getting laid when I think about world peace.

(beat)

Look all I'm saying is it's different for you two. You both have someone. You can go home and get your sweet lovin' anytime you want... How am I supposed to get mine if I have to bail in the middle of a date?

MO

Same way you usually do. Pay for it.

STEVE

Hey, don't knock it-- those are
some of my most honest and
fulfilling relationships.

CUT TO:

EXT. A DOWNTOWN CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

WIDE ON-- a large construction site in lower Manhattan...
Beneath FLOODLIGHTS, FORENSIC TECHNICIANS, and a CORONER'S
TEAM work around a WOMAN'S BODY which lies sprawled at the
bottom of an excavation. MOVING CLOSER we DISCOVER she is
the same Young Woman we saw being terrorized at the end of
Act Two.

Up top, a number of NEWS CREWS-- Steve and Mo included--
jockey for position. A CROWD has formed behind police lines.

At the edge of the excavation WE FIND Beth talking to her
Detective friend, LIEUTENANT CARL DAVIS. Carl is a grizzled
African-American man in an off-the-rack suit. Normally easy-
going, Carl looks to be under a lot of pressure at present.

BETH

I just want to know if you think
they're related, Carl.

CARL

I'm not ready to make that
determination. I shouldn't even be
talking to you with all these
cameras around.

BETH

I don't mean officially, I just
want to know what you think.

CARL

Until we finish processing this
thing, that's all I can tell you.

Carl moves off as Steve signals to Beth.

STEVE

We're all set up. You ready?

As she heads toward Steve and Mo, Beth NOTICES MICK standing
in the crowd.

BETH
(to Steve)
Hold on.

Recognizing Mick from the previous crime scene, Beth approaches him.

BETH
Do I know you?

Mick shakes his head and begins to move off, fading back into the crowd...

BETH
Hey, wait a minute. You were at the other crime scene...

MICK
(hesitating...)
Yeah.

Mick seems more than a little uncomfortable talking with her.

BETH
Do you have some connection with the case-- or are you just a crime scene junkie?

MICK
I'm looking into it.

BETH
On what basis?

MICK
I'm a private investigator.

BETH
Who are you working for?

MICK
That's confidential.

BETH
Well, do you have a card, or is that confidential too?

Mick reaches into his pocket and takes a business card from a leather card-case, hands it to her.

Beth looks down and reads...

BETH
 (reading)
 Mick St. John...

When she looks up, Mick is GONE.

Camera on his shoulder, Steve moves up behind her.

STEVE
 We doing this, or what?

Beth nods and scans the crowd for Mick. He is nowhere to be found.

INT. CITY NEWS SERVICE - DAY

We move through the cavernous warehouse which has been sectioned into a warren of cubicles and editing bays. Amid the flurry of activity in the freelance news organization, we find Beth at work at her computer as she talks on the phone.

CLOSE ON: COMPUTER SCREEN where we see she has googled "Mick St. John" and managed to pull up a copy of his NYC private investigator's license. Below his name we see his address.

BETH
 (on phone)
 You're sure no one else in the family might have hired him?
 (listening)
 Okay, Mrs. Talley, thank you for your time. Once again, I'm really sorry for your loss. Bye.

Beth hangs up. She picks Mick's card up from her desk and absently plays with it as she thinks. She grabs the phone and makes another call.

BETH
 Carl, it's Beth. Listen, I just wanted to apologize if I was out of line with my questions yesterday.
 (listening)
 I know, I know, but cut me some slack, it's my job...
 (listening)
 Well let me make it up to you.
 (MORE)

BETH (cont'd)
How's lunch tomorrow sound?
(listening)
Great. I'll swing by... Hey, you
don't happen to know anything about
one of the victim's families hiring
a private investigator do you? Guy
named Mick St. John?
(listening)
Just curious. No big deal. Okay,
I'll see you tomorrow...

CUT TO:

INT. CITY NEWS SERVICE (EDITING BAY) - DAY

Beth sits next to Mo as they go through some footage of last
night's crime scene.

MO
You looking for a "what" or a
"who"?

BETH
A who.

MO
Let me guess... Great looking guy
in a dark suit?

Beth is surprised.

MO
Yeah, I saw you talking to him.
You interested?

BETH
I'm in a relationship.

MO
(grins)
That doesn't mean you're not
interested.

BETH
I'm not.

MO
So you and Ted are good?

BETH

Yeah. We're really trying to make it work.

MO

All that trying makes it sound like work...

BETH

I can't cut and run every time things start to get serious.

MO

Sure you can. Besides, when you find the right person, you won't want to.

ON THE SCREEN we see footage of the crime scene.

MO

(scanning the Avid)

Let's see, it should be somewhere right around here... So who is this guy?

BETH

Mick St. John. He's a private investigator. Says he's working the case.

ON THE SCREEN-- CAMERA PANS the crowd... As CAMERA APPROACHES the point where Beth and Mick stand in conversation, the screen suddenly becomes strangely DISTORTED. Once CAMERA HAS PASSED them, normal reception resumes.

BETH

Wait. There. Go back.

Mo rewinds and FREEZES the tape on the WARPED IMAGE of Beth and Mick.

MO

Must have picked up some interference. Weird.

Beth nods. Weird.

OFF THE CREEPY FOOTAGE OF MICK we...

CUT TO:

INT. MICK'S LOFT - NIGHT

Mick goes to the refrigerator and retrieves a vial of blood and a hypodermic. He carries them to his desk, fills the needle, and jams it home.

As he depresses the PLUNGER and his EYES FILL WITH BLOOD WE--

FLASHBACK-1947

INT. HOTEL ROOM (1947) - NIGHT

Pale rays of early morning sunlight slip past the blinds. ON THE BLOOD-STAINED BED, MICK JOLTS TO LIFE like a patient brought back with a defibrillator. Still in her bloody dress, Coraline leans over him on the bed.

CORALINE

Welcome back.

Mick PUSHES Coraline away. Her MOUTH AND CHIN are still coated with his DRIED BLOOD. Hand clamped to his neck, Mick jumps off the wedding bed and moves into the small

BATHROOM

where he flicks on the light.

What Mick sees in the mirror horrifies him. His neck and chest are smeared with blood. As he inspects the TWO DEEP PUNCTURE MARKS in his neck, Coraline appears in the doorway behind him.

MICK

(shell-shocked)

What have you done?

Coraline wipes the blood from her mouth with the white sleeve of her wedding gown. Losing it, Mick turns to her.

MICK

What have you done to me?

CORALINE

We made a vow that we'd be together forever. Now we can be...

Mick stands speechless as he struggles to comprehend...

CORALINE

Don't be afraid. You're the top of
the food chain. There aren't any
rules for us, anymore.

MICK

No... No...

CORALINE

You're something greater, now...

MICK

(terrified)

What?? Goddamnit, tell me! WHAT?!

Coraline moves up behind Mick. Side by side, they stare into
the mirror.

CORALINE

You're immortal... I made you
immortal.

CLOSE ON THE MIRROR where WE SEE what Mick SEES for the first
time-- the REFLECTIONS of both he and Coraline are
frighteningly warped and distorted.

Enraged, Mick turns and pins her up against the bathroom
wall.

MICK

No! You made me a monster!

Devastated, Mick pushes her away and moves back into the

BEDROOM

Coraline follows him and watches as he begins to pull his
clothes on.

CORALINE

What are you doing?

MICK

Leaving.

CORALINE

You can't--

MICK

Watch me.

Shirt unbuttoned, Mick grabs his jacket and goes to the door. Desperate, Coraline grabs him by the wrist.

CORALINE

No... Wait. You don't understand,
I did it out of love-- I did this
for us. ...

Mick looks at her with disgust and throws open the door. The first RAYS OF EARLY MORNING SUNLIGHT STREAM IN. When they fall on Coraline's exposed hand, she shrinks back. Separated by light and shadow, they stare at each other for a moment before Mick steps outside.

CORALINE

No... Come back. The morning sun's
too strong... Mick..!

Ignoring her, Mick throws his jacket over his head to shield himself. Unable to pursue him, Coraline watches, bereft, as he walks away into the twilight of his final dawn.

SMASH CUT: TO PRESENT DAY

BACK IN HIS LOFT

Mick is JARRED out of the past by the SOUND of the INTERCOM BUZZER.

Shaking off the after-effects of the bad memory, Mick checks the security camera MONITOR and sees Beth standing at the front door of the building. He appears conflicted as to whether to let her in. For a moment it looks as if he won't, but then he reaches out and buzzes her up.

INT. MICK'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Mick RUSHES AROUND-- He hides the needle and the vial of blood, shuts the door to his deep-freeze bedroom, and stashes a pile of VHS tapes that bear BETH'S NAME.

The DOORBELL RINGS. He answers, but says nothing.

BETH

You're not an easy man to find.
Your business card doesn't even
list an address.

MICK

There's a reason for that.

BETH

Why, you have something to hide?

MICK

Doesn't everyone?

BETH

I'd like to talk to you. Can I
come in?

Mick reluctantly steps aside and allows her to enter. She
looks around as he shuts the door.

BETH

Great place. How'd you find it?

MICK

What can I do for you, Ms. Turner?

Despite the surface tension, there is a palpable attraction
between them that they both pretend to ignore.

BETH

I made some calls. No one hired
you to work this case.

MICK

I never said they did.

BETH

I asked who you were working for
and you said--

MICK

I said it was confidential.

BETH

(realizing he's right)
Well if you're not working for
anyone, what's your connection?

MICK

Maybe I'm the killer? Ever think of that?

BETH

I did, and if you are, I figured the story'd be worth the risk.

An unexpected moment of mutual respect-- they both smile.

MICK

I'm working the case on my own.

BETH

How come?

MICK

I don't like seeing people get away with this sort of thing.

BETH

You don't think the police will catch whoever's behind this?

MICK

Maybe. In time. But they're hamstrung by rules and regulations. I'm not.

BETH

You work outside the law, is that what you're saying?

MICK

Let's just say I work parallel to it.

BETH

I want to do a story on you. A human interest piece.

MICK

Out of the question.

BETH

Something like this could be great for you-- raise your exposure.

MICK

I said no.

Sensing her disappointment, Mick softens...

MICK

Look, I'm able to function the way I do because people don't know who I am. So I'd appreciate it if you kept all of this to yourself.

BETH

If you won't be a subject will you at least be a source...?

MICK

(considers)

It would have to be a two-way street.

BETH

I can do that. Deal?

Mick nods. Beth hesitates for a moment not quite ready to leave...

MICK

(uneasy)

Well, okay...

Mick leans across her to open the door. In that moment of proximity, time seems to stop. The air CRACKLES with electricity-- and both of them find themselves powerfully drawn to each other... Stunned by the intensity of the moment, they simply stare.

BETH

(gestures to the hall)

I should be--

MICK

Yeah...

Using all of his will-power, Mick opens the door. Speechless, Beth exits. As he closes the door behind her, we can see the turmoil in Mick's normally impassive eyes.

INT. BETH'S APARTMENT (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

Beth wakes up in bed alone. Moonlight streams in through a window. She looks around, not sure what has awakened her. Looking down, she sees that the entire floor is covered with thick, black smoke. She jumps out of bed and rushes out of the bedroom and into...

THE BURNING HALLWAY

we saw in her first dream. Through a curtain of FLAMES the FIERY FIGURE SCREAMS in rage and agony as it comes toward her. Beth turns to flee, but her way is blocked by a dark, FACELESS FIGURE who reaches out for her...

INT. BETH'S APARTMENT (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

ALONE IN HER BED, Beth STARTS AWAKE with a GASP. WE CAN HEAR HER HEART POUNDING as she sits up covered in a COLD SWEAT. Off her look of DISTRESS we...

END ACT THREE.

ACT FOUR--PRESENT DAY

EXT. CHELSEA STREET - HOT DOG CART - DAY

Beth pays for two dogs and hands one to her cop friend Carl.

CARL

This is how you make it up to me?
Lunch at a hotdog cart?

BETH

I'm on a budget, whaddya want from
me?

CARL

I want you to say, 'I'm sorry,
Carl, for putting you in an awkward
position the other day and I'll
never do it again'.

BETH

I'm sorry, Carl, for putting you in
an awkward position the other
day...

Carl looks at her expectantly, but Beth doesn't go on.

BETH

C'mon, we both know I'll probably
do it again.

Carl shakes his head in mock exasperation and bites into his
dog.

CARL

(mouth full)
Not bad...

BETH

Okay, now that that's behind us,
what can you tell me?
(Carl gives her a look)
What? Asking questions is my job,
Carl. Off the record.

CARL

This goes nowhere-- I mean
nowhere.

Beth crosses her heart.

CARL

We haven't said anything publicly,
but the coroner tells us that all
three victims were drugged with the
same high-grade surgical
anesthetic.

BETH

Why surgical anesthetic?

CARL

It kills the pain without actually
knocking them out.

BETH

My God, they wanted to keep them
awake?

CARL

(nods)

That's the theory. With that stuff
in them, those girls could have
watched themselves get dismembered
and not complained.

Having lost her appetite, Beth dumps her own hotdog in a
nearby trash can.

INT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM - TEMPLE OF DENDUR WING - NIGHT

An exclusive reception for high-end patrons of the museum.
The ancient reconstructed temple is dramatically lit. A
STRING-QUARTET PLAYS. We find Josef Konstantin contemplating
a large stone sarcophagus. Mick joins him.

MICK

(re: the sarcophagus)

Old acquaintance?

JOSEF

(laughs)

I'm afraid that was before even my
time, my friend.

Josef flags down a LOVELY COCKTAIL SERVER and snags two
flutes of champagne from her tray. He hands one to Mick and
eyes him critically.

JOSEF

How are you doing? You had me worried after our talk the other night...

MICK

I shouldn't have said anything.

JOSEF

Of course you should have. This is what friends do. They talk.

Mick nods.

JOSEF

So, you are doing better?

MICK

(terse)

Still here.

JOSEF

(letting it go)

I made some inquiries into that matter, like you asked.

MICK

And?

JOSEF

Nothing specific, but there have been rumors circulating for some time about underground performance art pieces, ritual sacrifices--

MICK

People are paying to watch these girls get slaughtered?

JOSEF

Paying good money, I hear.

Mick shakes his head in disgust.

MICK

Who? Do you know?

Josef shakes his head "no" and gives Mick a sardonic smile.

JOSEF

And they call us monsters...

MICK

All right... I better go.

JOSEF

You just got here. The night's young. Stay. Enjoy.

MICK

Thanks, but there's somewhere I need to be.

Mick and Josef clasp hands. Josef holds on as Mick begins to pull away...

JOSEF

(gravely)

Be careful, my friend, these are dangerous times. Even for us...

MICK

(nods)

Yeah...

ON JOSEF as he watches Mick move off through the crowd.

EXT. BUSTLING CHELSEA STREET SCENE - NIGHT

The sidewalks stream with hipsters moving in and out of trendy restaurants, night clubs, and boutiques.

INT. HIGH-END CHELSEA TATOO PARLOR - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: ALEXA-- a gorgeous, heavily pierced, tattoo artist, with Kool-aid red hair in a Betty Page cut. She expertly inks the finishing touches on a detail from Michelangelo's Sistine chapel to a tough-looking BIKER CHICK'S lower back. Alexa looks up to find Mick inside the door looking on.

ALEXA

What d'ya think?

MICK

You can never go wrong with the classics...

BIKER CHICK
Damn straight.

CUT TO:

INT. CHELSEA TATTOO PARLOR (BACK ROOM) - NIGHT

IN BACK, Alexa cleans up and sterilizes her equipment as Mick watches.

ALEXA
My brother's out of rehab and back
in school. He might even make the
dean's list this semester.

MICK
Glad to hear it.

ALEXA
You know, until you got involved we
thought we'd lost him for good...
I don't know how to thank you.

MICK
You just did...

ALEXA
(teasing)
So did you come by for a piercing?
Maybe something in a nipple ring?
On the house, of course.

MICK
(smiles)
Maybe another time... Actually I
was wondering if you'd heard
anything about these girls who have
been turning up dead in the
neighborhood.

ALEXA
Just that all three were seen in
the clubs over on Twenty-seventh
and Twenty-eighth the night they
disappeared.
(beat)
You going to catch whoever's doing
it?

MICK
I'm gonna try.

ALEXA
(smiles)
You will. And I almost feel sorry
for them when you do. Almost.

MICK
Yeah, well... Thanks, Alexa.

Mick turns and moves toward the door.

ALEXA
(to his back)
Any time you want that nipple ring,
offer stands...

Mick gives her a wave without looking back and exits.

EXT. BETH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

We track with Beth, a bag of groceries in her arms, as she moves through the entrance of her building and is greeted by the DOORMAN.

BETH
Hi, Mike.

MIKE
You want some help with that?

BETH
No, I've got it, thanks...

Mike nods, waves...

INT. BETH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Beth steps off the ELEVATOR and walks down the hallway to her apartment. Behind her we catch a glimpse of a shadow at the end of the hall...

At the door of her apartment, she fumbles for her keys and they fall to the floor. She bends to pick them up and SEES A PAIR OF SHOE-CLAD FEET BESIDE HER!

She jumps back startled, to find Mick standing there.

MICK
Sorry. Didn't mean to scare you.

BETH
How did you get past Mike?

MICK
Hypnosis.

Beth thinks he's joking. He lets her keep thinking it.

BETH
I'll bet.

She opens the door. They stand there a moment... Beth finds herself torn between her attraction to Mick and the unmistakable sense of danger that surrounds him.

BETH
...Would you like to come in?

MICK
I wasn't planning on staying...

BETH
It's silly for us to stand out here. Come in.

Mick nods and steps inside.

INT. BETH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mick stands in the living room soaking the place in. In many ways it is a classic New York career woman's apartment-- a blend of Pottery Barn and funky thrift store pieces.

We see Beth moving about through the nearby kitchen doorway as she puts the groceries away.

BETH
Red or white?

MICK
Red.

Beth pours and enters carrying two glasses of red. She hands one to Mick, who drinks.

BETH
You like?

MICK

It's good.

BETH

So, I tracked down the last victim's boyfriend. I have an appointment to talk to him tomorrow.

Mick just nods.

BETH

How 'bout you? What've you got?

MICK

Nothing.

BETH

You didn't find out anything?

MICK

That's not why I came.

BETH

Oh? Then why?

She gives him a puzzled look and now WE HEAR...

MICK (V.O.)

I came to erase her memory. To make her forget she ever met me... Forget I exist...

Mick looks deeply into Beth's lovely blue eyes and uses his gaze on her.

MICK

Beth, listen to me--

A glazed, dreamy look comes into her eyes. Glass of wine in hand, she stands there... Waiting...

MICK (V.O.)

This is no good. None of it. It can't go anywhere...

Unable to resist, Mick reaches out and gently, lovingly touches her face...

MICK
Are you listening?

BETH
(far, faraway)
Yes...

CLOSE ON: Mick's tortured expression... His jaw clenches as he wages an internal war between what he wants and what he fears... He can't do it. He withdraws his hand.

ON BETH-- the glazed look still in her eyes.

MICK (V.O.)
I know it's what I ought to do.
Need to do. But somehow I can't
bring myself to do it...

THE DOOR SLAMS. A stunned look on her face, Beth BLINKS as if coming out of a trance. She looks around to find--

MICK IS GONE-- the GLASS OF WINE on the coffee table the only sign he was ever there.

BETH
Mick...?

INT. NYU DORMITORY - STUDENT LOUNGE - DAY

CLOSE ON: JUSTIN, a twenty-one year old college student, as he talks ON CAMERA. As he speaks he grows increasingly emotional.

JUSTIN (ON CAMERA)
She wanted to go out. She wanted
to go to Griffin's so she could
dance. She loved to dance.
(shakes head sadly)
But then, she didn't want to leave.
I had a test the next day. I had
to study. I had to get back...
(eyes welling)
I shouldn't have left her there.
Oh God...

As he begins to sob, we pull back to reveal Beth, holding a microphone, seated next to him in a corner of the DORM LOUNGE.

JUSTIN

I'm sorry...

BETH

It's okay, Justin. You don't have
to-- we have enough.

Beth pats his arm sympathetically and signals Steve to cut.

CUT TO:

EXT. NYU DORM - STREET - DAY

AT THE VAN Beth winds the mic cord up. Steve puts the camera
away as Mo climbs out to greet them.

MO

Good job.

STEVE

Yeah, did you see her make the kid
cry? She's better than Barbara
Walters.

BETH

I didn't do it on purpose.

STEVE

Yeah that's what Barbara says, too.

MO

(laughs)

All right, where next?

BETH

You guys go on. I'll meet you back
at the office.

STEVE

Where are you going?

BETH

I want to do some background
research-- see if there's anyone
worth talking to at that club.

Beth grabs her purse and note pad and heads off.

INT. MICK'S LOFT - AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON: MICK'S ANSWERING MACHINE-- We hear Beth's VOICE OVER as the CAMERA ROAMS around the darkened apartment.

BETH (ON ANSWERING MACHINE)

Hey, it's Beth-- What happened last night? I turned around and you were gone... Anyway, I'm going to be doing some research in your neighborhood and I was thinking about grabbing some dinner, after. There's this great Italian place-- Divino, on Seventeenth Street... I, uh, I'm gonna be there around seven-thirty-- if you want-- you know-- to discuss the case...

CAMERA ENDS ON MICK in deep slumber in his WALK-IN FREEZER.

BETH (ON ANSWERING MACHINE)

Okay... Maybe I'll see ya there...

Beth hangs up.

EXT. GRIFFIN'S CLUB - CHELSEA- LATE AFTERNOON

The club is closed. Beth walks up and knocks on the WOODEN DOOR. After a long beat the door opens and a muscular, tattooed BOUNCER stands framed there.

BETH

Hi, I'm Beth Turner, I'm--

BOUNCER

(smiles in recognition)

I know who you are-- You're that reporter...

BETH

(nods)

I'm doing a story on the girls who were murdered in the area. I was told one of them was here the night she was killed, and I was hoping maybe I could talk to someone who might've seen her.

BOUNCER

Well, I'm the only one here right now, but you can talk to me...

BETH

You were here that night?

BOUNCER

I'm always here...
(sticks his hand out)
I'm Victor.

Beth shakes it and he steps aside to let her enter.

INT. GRIFFIN'S CLUB - LATE AFTERNOON

The empty club appears dingy and depressing in the light of day. Beth sits at the bar, nursing a soda. Victor stands on the other side, putting bottles away as they talk.

BETH

You saw her and her boyfriend...?

VICTOR

(nods)

I think so. There were a lot of people here so it's hard to be sure, but I think I saw the two of them. Looked like they were getting into it--

BETH

They were arguing?

VICTOR

Seemed to be... We keep an eye on that sort of thing-- that's usually when trouble starts.

BETH

Did they leave together?

VICTOR

Nah, he took off.

BETH

Did you see her leave?

VICTOR

(shakes his head)

I pretty much forgot about it after that.

BETH

Do you have any idea what might've happened to her?

VICTOR

Only from what I saw on the news. She looked like a nice girl. Real tragedy. I mean, what kind of world is this where some sicko can grab a girl off the street, drug her up, and do something like that...?

Though she tries to cover it, Beth stiffens at his slip up, his mention of the drugs. Victor notices...

VICTOR

What's wrong?

BETH

(shakes her head)

Nothing.

A horribly tense moment-- Victor shakes his head and smiles regretfully, knowing he's revealed too much.

VICTOR

The drugs... They didn't report nothin' about the drugs, did they?

BETH

I don't know what you're talking about...

Beth gets up and starts to edge toward the door. His friendly demeanor gone, Victor comes out from behind the bar and moves toward her.

VICTOR

Where are you going? I thought you wanted to know what happened to her...

BETH

No, I think I'd better be--

Backing away, Beth now turns and makes a break for the door, but RUNS DIRECTLY INTO THE heavily muscled ARMS of a SECOND MAN who locks her in his vice-like grip... Before she can scream, a HAND IS CLAMPED over her face and the screen goes BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR.

ACT FIVE--PRESENT DAY

INT. MICK'S LOFT - WALK-IN FREEZER - TWILIGHT

CLOSE ON: MICK, frost condensing on his body, as he stands naked by his answering machine. His EYES betray an uneasy feeling as he listens to Beth's message.

BETH (ON ANSWERING MACHINE)

...Divino, on Seventeenth Street...
I, uh, I'm gonna be there around
seven-thirty-- if you want-- you
know-- to discuss the case...

Mick checks his watch, he realizes he is going to be late.

INT. DIVINO ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The intimate, Italian country-style restaurant is packed at this time of night. The door opens and Mick enters, looking for Beth. Not finding her, he goes to the HOSTESS.

MICK

Is Beth Turner here? I think she
has a reservation.

The Hostess checks, shakes her head.

HOSTESS

She never showed. Didn't even call
to cancel.

Off Mick's worried look we...

INT. CITY NEWS SERVICE (EDITING BAY) - NIGHT

Mo is working on the footage of Justin at the NYU dorm. The phone rings. She picks up.

MO

Editing bay.

INTERCUT: MICK ON THE STREET outside Divino restaurant.

MICK

Is Beth Turner there?

MO

Not right now, can I take a message?

MICK

This is Mick St. John. We were supposed to meet for dinner at a restaurant tonight but she never showed up.

MO

(suddenly intrigued)

Really? Dinner?

MICK

Do you know where she is?

MO

Last I heard she was going to a club in Chelsea to do some background work.

MICK

What club?

MO

Place called Griffin's--

As soon as he has what he needs, Mick is gone.

MO

Hello?

EXT. GRIFFIN'S CLUB - NIGHT

WE TRACK with Mick as he moves down a LONG LINE of wannabes and hopefuls who wait outside the club. Mick walks up to the DOORMAN and attempts to enter. The Doorman puts a hand on Mick's chest.

DOORMAN

Where you think you're going?

MICK

Inside.

DOORMAN

Lookit that line. Buddy, you ain't
on the list, you ain't getting in
tonight.

Mick fixes the guy with his HYPNOTIC GAZE.

MICK

I'm on the list.

DOORMAN

(eyes glazed)

You're on the list...

Mick pushes past the Doorman and moves inside to the envious
GROANS from the losers behind the velvet rope.

INT. GRIFFIN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Mick enters the trendy downtown club, TECHNO MUSIC blasts.
He looks around at the CROWD-- the affluent, the beautiful,
and the damned.

He closes his eyes and INHALES DEEPLY-- and is overwhelmed by
a RUSH OF IMAGES provoked by all the SCENTS in the club.

WE SEE:

- A DRUNK GIRL SPILLS a Tequila shot on a GUY AT THE BAR.
- A SWEATY COUPLE GRIND on the dance floor.
- AT A BACK BANQUETTE, a GROUP surreptitiously passes a JOINT
under the table.

WE MOVE IN ON: MICK eyes still closed--

MICK (V.O.)

I smell Beth-- her fear. It hangs
in the air like stale smoke. It
permeates everything...

MICK'S EYES snap open. There is a danger in them we haven't
seen before.

MICK (V.O.)

And it makes me angry...

MICK looks around and ZEROS IN ON VICTOR who stands just off the dance floor surveying the crowd. Pinning him with his eyes, Mick stalks toward him.

VICTOR
I help ya, buddy?

MICK
Where is she?

VICTOR
Who--?

MICK
Beth Turner. Where is she?

VICTOR
Man, I don't know what the hell
you're--

In no mood for bullshit, Mick slips behind the bigger man and wrenches his arm to the breaking point. Stunned, Victor YELPS helplessly.

Mick leans over and whispers fiercely in the bouncer's ear.

MICK
I know she's here. I can smell her
on you.

With a vicious JERK Mick BREAKS Victor's arm at the shoulder. Victor SQUEALS.

MICK
Move.

Gripping Victor's broken arm, Mick shoves the bouncer ahead of him through the crowd.

The TECHNO MUSIC PUMPS as they move around the perimeter of the club. Desperate, Victor makes EYE-CONTACT with the SECOND BOUNCER we saw earlier.

Mick KICKS Victor ahead of him through a set of SWINGING DOORS, into the

KITCHEN

where KITCHEN WORKERS are taking orders from the CLUB MANAGER.

As Mick and Victor come through, the Second Bouncer strides up from behind and claps a hand down hard on Mick's shoulder.

SECOND BOUNCER

This asshole giving you trouble,
Vic?

VICTOR

(in pain)
He's looking for the girl.

Before the Second Bouncer can respond, Mick DRIVES HIS ELBOW BACK into the guy's NOSE, breaking it-- the big man falls to his knees, clutching his bloody face. IN THE SAME MOVEMENT, Mick now DRIVES HIS FIST FORWARD into Victor's JAW, shattering it. Teeth fly as Victor drops to the floor.

It's chaos, everyone in the kitchen SCATTERS except for the CLUB MANAGER who stands frozen for a moment. Seeing Mick coming toward him he DARTS down a STAIRWAY to the basement. Mick goes after him.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

A FRENETIC CHASE as Mick pursues The Manager down into the dark bowels of the old building. They rush through a passageway that has been cut through the wall into the basement of the adjoining building.

The Manager attempts to block Mick's pursuit by SHUTTING AND LOCKING a series of doors behind him. Mick blasts through them one-by-one...

Mick finds himself in the now empty

AMPHITHEATER ROOM

Across the room, the Manager pauses just long enough to grab a long, RITUAL BLADE from a rack of vicious-looking implements.

Glancing over his shoulder, he moves through a final door and SLAMS it shut.

Mick races past the wooden plank table. He SMASHES through the door and into a

HOLDING CELL

Where WE SEE a frightened BETH gagged and handcuffed to a ceiling pipe. Behind her, the Manager holds the blade to Beth's jugular.

MANAGER

I'll do it. I swear to God, I'll do it.

A terrible, frozen moment, and then... Mick takes a step forward...

MANAGER

Stay back!

MICK

Let her go.

CLOSE ON: BETH'S EYES as she hears the words "LET HER GO". They ECHO in her consciousness...

Almost a blur, Mick LUNGES at the Manager. Reacting, the Manager PLUNGES the knife hilt-deep into Mick's CHEST.

Mick shakes his head. He casually removes the dagger and drops it. In panic, the Manager attempts to run. Mick grabs him-- and after a brief struggle, SNAPS HIS NECK. In the scuffle, Beth's HEAD STRIKES the PIPE.

As she is KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS, BETH'S EYES CLOSE...

CUT TO BLACK.

FLASHBACK- 1985

CLOSE ON: FIVE-YEAR OLD BETH TURNER'S EYES as they OPEN to SEE MICK standing in the bedroom doorway....

MICK

Let her go.

INT. BEL AIR MANSION (BEDROOM) - LOS ANGELES - (1985) - NIGHT

We are back in the BEL AIR MANSION... Coraline cradles Young Beth, fangs distended ready to feed. With a mischievous smile, Coraline slowly dips her head toward the little girl's neck.

MICK

(raises his gun)
Coraline, let her go.

CORALINE

(shakes her head in
regret)

We could've been so good together,
and you ruined it with all your
silly rules.

(beat)

When are you going to realize
they're just food to us...?

MICK

I'm not gonna let you hurt that
child.

CORALINE

You sure this is what you want?

MICK

(cocks gun)

I'm sure.

Coraline tosses Beth aside, and with blinding speed, moves
for Mick.

YOUNG BETH'S POV: Coraline ATTACKS Mick. Before the child's
eyes, both Mick and Coraline TRANSFORM into FULL-BLOWN
VAMPIRES-- Their JAWS UNHINGE. Their EYES fill with blood.
It is truly terrifying. (This is the first time we see Mick
in full vampire form.)

Coraline knocks the gun from Mick's hand-- IT FIRES. They
lock in a nightmarish death struggle, and drop to the FLOOR--
each trying to get their FANGS into the other.

Coraline is able to SINK HER TEETH into Mick's neck and
begins to drain him.

As he WEAKENS, Mick grows pale and returns to HUMAN FORM.
Realizing he has been defeated, he turns to give Young Beth
an apologetic look, and--

HE SEES THE LITTLE GIRL NUDGING THE PISTOL INTO HIS REACH.

IN RAPID CUTS --

- Mick GRABS THE GUN and PUMPS six silver bullets into
Coraline. She HOWLS in pain.

- Mick pushes Coraline's writhing form off of him.

- Mick dumps Coraline's body into the fireplace and DOUSES her with lighter fluid.

IN A SLO-MO SHOT REMINISCENT OF THE OPENING SHOT-- A MATCH FLARES.

The FLICKERING LIGHT illuminates the FEAR in CORALINE'S EYES and the RESOLVE IN MICK'S...

THE MATCH FALLS and CORALINE'S BODY BURSTS INTO FLAMES.

Exhausted, Mick scoops Young Beth into his arms and carries her from the room...

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

As they move down the darkened hall, Young Beth looks back over Mick's shoulder to see--

YOUNG BETH'S POV: A BURNING, SCREAMING, CONTORTING CORALINE emerges from the room and pursues them. The hallway EXPLODES in FLAMES around Coraline as she comes toward them. Just as Coraline is about to reach them, Mick turns and JAMS HIS LAST STAKE into her. Immobilized, she collapses and is consumed.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

With the HOUSE ABLAZE behind them, Mick carries the Little Girl down the LONG DRIVEWAY to safety.

Off the RAGING FLAMES reflected in YOUNG BETH'S EYES, we...

SMASH CUT TO THE PRESENT --

INT. MICK'S LOFT - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: The very SAME EYES as BETH JOLTS AWAKE to find herself on a day bed in Mick's LOFT. Mick stands beside a nearby window watching her from the SHADOWS...

She is confused and disoriented...

BETH
Wh-- where...?

MICK
It's okay--

Keeping his distance, Mick comes into the LIGHT, and Beth stares at him wide-eyed...

BETH
You... It was you...

He nods and takes a step toward her, but he pulls up short as Beth shrinks back in terror...

BETH
My God, what are you...?

MICK
(softly)
...A monster.

Seeing she has wounded him, Beth reins in her fear.

BETH
...You saved me.

MICK
We saved each other.

BETH
(grappling with it)
And all this time... All these
years you-- you've been...?

MICK
...With you... I've been with you.

Beth reels as she tries to absorb all this. No one ever told her what really happened when she was five years old-- Now it makes sense... IT WAS HIM-- MICK-- He saved her life then, and he's been watching over her ever since. She knows what he is now...

AND MICK, who hasn't been truly touched by anyone in 60 years-- who is not afraid of anything-- suddenly finds himself terrified. Terrified that this girl who saved his life, who helped him eradicate the greatest evil in his life, who has been his touchstone-- his beacon-- his only link to humanity and goodness... will be repulsed by him.

MICK (V.O.)
Sixty years is a long time to live
in darkness... A long time to deny
yourself the touch of another...
But you do it.
(MORE)

MICK (V.O.) (cont'd)
You do it because you just can't
bear the thought of seeing yourself
as a monster in someone else's
eyes...

Fearful, utterly exposed now, Mick smiles sadly...

MICK
This was a mistake...

As he turns away, Beth stands... She comes up behind him and
takes his HAND...

BETH
No.

SHE DRAWS MICK TO HER in an embrace of gratitude and
acceptance...

Uncertain, he stands stiffly for a moment, and then... He
puts his arms around her... Holding her close, Mick St. John
has the look of a man who has been saved.

WE STAY WITH THEM a moment, and then begin to PULL AWAY...
THROUGH THE WINDOW-- PAST THE BALCONY-- INTO THE NIGHT... And
on the

ROOFTOP OF A NEIGHBORING BUILDING

We SPOT A FIGURE IN BLACK-- her dress fluttering in the
breeze-- MOVING CLOSER-- We can see BEHIND HER VEIL, and we
recognize the exquisite profile of CORALINE--

As she turns into the LIGHT-- her EYES are full of
bitterness. A portion of her FACE is HORRIBLY BURN-SCARRED
and DISFIGURED...

A HAND REACHES into frame. Coraline takes it. We now REVEAL
JOSEF KONSTANTIN standing behind her...

JOSEF
Come, my dear. Time enough for all
of this, later...

Josef puts a comforting arm around her, and guides her away
into the surrounding night...

AND SO IT BEGINS...

FADE OUT.