

When The Street Lights Go On
Episode #1: "Cicadas"

Written by
Chris HUTTON & Eddie O'KEEFE

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MANAGER: Tariq MERHAB - Anonymous Content
AGENTS: Zach DRUKER/Simon FABER/Sarah SELF - WME

ACT ONE

EXT. TOWN OF COLFAX - VARIOUS - DAY

It is the summer of 1983. Colfax, Illinois. A suburban utopia. John Hughes's vision of America.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The summer of 1983 was the hottest summer in years.

The SOUNDS of July play over the following string of images:

I. A group of CHILDREN play on a SLIP-N-SLIDE.

II. Two TEENAGE GIRLS sunbathe on the hood of a newly washed TRANS AM. Journey BLASTS from the radio.

III. The high school FOOTBALL TEAM practices drills under the sweltering sun.

IV. A group of PRE-TEENS show-off skateboarding tricks in an ELEMENTARY SCHOOL parking lot.

V. A band of burnouts LOITER at a DRIVE-IN THEATER on the outskirts of town. The harsh summer sun scorches the blacktop.

INSERT - STOCK FOOTAGE

CLIPS of each of the Narrator's talking points flash across the SCREEN as they are mentioned.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The single of the season was "Every Breath You Take" by The Police and Eddie Murphy was the biggest star in Hollywood. Under manager Tony LaRussa, the Chicago White Sox appeared in their first postseason game since 1959. They would lose the ALCS to Baltimore.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A MAN exits his cozy ranch HOME to fetch the morning newspaper. CICADAS are everywhere.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

On top of the heat that summer, the cicadas had woken from their seventeen year hibernation and were covering everything -- mailboxes, parked cars, tree trunks and trampolines.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A group of junior high school BOYS charge through a public park. One of them swings a BASEBALL BAT at a tree trunk and a swarm of CICADAS emerge like black smoke from within the leaves.

The boys fall over in fits of LAUGHTER.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In June, the eighty year old Frank Lloyd Wright house by the library burned down.

EXT. FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT HOUSE - NIGHT

Violent FLAMES consume a beautiful, ANTIQUE HOME. It's the kind of house they don't make anymore. A relic of old American values and ingenuity.

In the distance, SIRENS blare.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It was built in 1908 and FDR was said to have stayed there once while on the campaign trail. And overnight it was destroyed.

FIRE FIGHTERS struggle to put out the blaze.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Foul play was suspected.

EXT. RESERVOIR - DAY

It's the Fourth of July. The entire TOWN vacations at the small lake in the center of the city. A MAN sets off a string of ROMAN CANDLES. The EXPLOSIONS are met with APPLAUSE.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The fire was immediately followed by yet another tragedy which occurred on the Fourth of July.

EXT. RESERVOIR - NIGHT

OWEN COOPER and six FRIENDS sit on a pier getting drunk late into the evening. Distant FIREWORKS can be seen in the night sky, far away.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Owen Cooper, a Catholic school sophomore, apparently got drunk on tequila shortly after midnight.

FEMALE FRIEND

Who wants to go skinny-dipping!?

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Went skinny-dipping --

LATER

Owen and his friends run NAKED down the PIER and cannonball into the ink-black lake.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

-- and never came up for air.

Owen's friends emerge from the water's dark depths, but not Owen.

FRIEND

Owen?

EXT. RESERVOIR - UNDERWATER - DAY

THREE SCUBA DIVERS search the murky reservoir with high-powered, underwater FLASHLIGHTS.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

He was found three days later by a fisherman and his beagle --

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

A FISHERMAN and his BEAGLE amble down the rocky shore of a bucolic STREAM. Suddenly, the dog ceases its stride and begins to GROWL at something just beyond the CAMERA.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

-- when what he hoped was a piece of ominously shaped driftwood --

We WHIP PAN 180 degrees to reveal an obscured, swollen HUMAN SHAPE caught between two large FALLEN TREES in the water.

We SNAP ZOOM into the shape's FACE. It's Owen Cooper, barely recognizable. His skin, distended and grotesque.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 -- turned out to be the body of a
 sixteen year old boy.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DUSK

CHARLIE CHAMBERS, the Narrator as a fifteen year old, rides his Raleigh BMX BIKE down the suburban streets.

Charlie looks like he just stepped out of an Amblin production. He wears an old white t-shirt, blue jeans, grass stained Chuck Taylors and a pair of Coke bottle eye-glasses. Thoughtful. Boyish, but cool. If it weren't for his mouth full of BRACES, you might even call him handsome.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 However none of these events quite prepared us for what was yet to come. The cicadas, the fire and the drowning were only preambles; opening acts to an event that would rob us of our youth and spread unshakable anxiety like cyanide in the minds of those who remember.

The STREET LIGHTS flicker on.

EXT. DOWNTOWN COLFAX - NIGHT

We CRANE down from a HIGH ANGLE shot overlooking the main thoroughfare of town. Charlie rides down the center of the street, whizzing past TRAFFIC.

Downtown Colfax looks like it was cut from some warm, pleasant dream of the past. Quaint in all the right ways.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 I observed it all from my bicycle.
 I was fifteen years old.

Charlie turns into a PARKING LOT and peddles toward CITY HALL.

TITLE CARD: A graphic and boldly-stylized TITLE slowly descends into frame. Its George Romero-esque, midnight movie font spells out the words "WHEN THE STREET LIGHTS GO ON."

INT. MONROE HOUSE - CHRISSY'S ROOM - NIGHT

CHRISSY MONROE (17), dances around her room, changing and making herself up in the vanity at the center of her teenage temple. She is the quintessential girlfriend; the babysitter you always had the hots for.

Joni Mitchell's "BIG YELLOW TAXI" plays from an off-screen TURNTABLE.

Chrissy applies pink LIPSTICK in her small, circular cosmetic MIRROR. When she's done dolling herself up, she retrieves a small baggie of COCAINE from within a drawer in her make-up kit. She lays out a line and SNORTS it.

CLOSE ON a PHOTOGRAPH of Chrissy and her boyfriend, BRAD KIRCHOFF (17), at junior prom.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BECKY'S ROOM - NIGHT

BECKY MONROE (15) -- Chrissy's elusive younger sister -- lays on her unmade bed listening to THE SMITHS on her STEREO and reading an issue of ROLLING STONE. She is beautiful but unknowable. A certain sadness surrounds her. She's the antithesis of her sister.

Chrissy barges into her bedroom, uninvited.

CHRISSY

Did you take my Shalimar again?

Without looking up, Becky points in the direction of her dresser.

Chrissy spots her PERFUME BOTTLE; a delicate stranger among Becky's eccentric clutter. She makes her way toward the bureau, applies the fragrance and turns down Becky's STEREO.

CHRISSY (CONT'D)

Just because a fragrance works for me, doesn't mean it'll work for you.

Becky glares at Chrissy.

BECKY

Don't turn down my music.

CHRISSY

I think your scent would be more like --

Becky couldn't care less. She goes back to her magazine.

CHRISSY (CONT'D)

-- I dunno, grungy bohemian weirdo.
Just don't take my things without
asking.

Chrissy makes for the exit.

BECKY

Hey, Chrissy.

Chrissy turns around and faces her sister. Becky looks up at her apologetically -- for a moment -- before smiling and flipping her off instead.

CHRISSY

(smiling)

Fuck you, freak.

Chrissy flips off the light SWITCH and closes the door, trapping Becky in DARKNESS.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

We follow Chrissy as she maneuvers from Becky's bedroom and heads toward the staircase. As she exits the frame, we conclude our PAN on a PORTRAIT of the MONROE FAMILY.

We ZOOM into the awkward snapshot. Beneath the airbrushed smiles and dated kitsch of the image, there exists an undercurrent of something inauspicious; slightly off; too perfect.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Chrissy flies down the stairs and into the foyer of her home. MR. and MRS. MONROE are in the midst of entertaining a half-dozen GUESTS in their stylish PARLOR. Cigar smoke and expensive perfume mingle in the room, creating a suffocating atmosphere.

*

CLOSE ON MEN talking POLITICS.

CLOSE ON WOMEN talking INTERIOR DESIGN.

MRS. MONROE

(noticing Chrissy)

Where are you going, sweetheart?

CHRISSY

I'm going to do homework at the library with Brad. I'll be home at eleven.

Chrissy grabs her PURSE and heads for the door.

CHRISSEY (CONT'D)

Love you!

MR. MONROE

Curfew's 10:45, young lady --

Chrissy exits the door with a declarative SLAM. The Monroe's guests CHUCKLE, knowingly.

Mr. Monroe shrugs. *"Kids, today."*

Those gathered resume their banal small talk, as if uninterrupted.

CLOSE ON Mrs. Monroe's LIPS polishing off the last few drops of her GIMLET.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - NIGHT

Chrissy makes her way through the blue front lawn, amid dozens of FIRE FLIES. The sound of the CRICKETS and CICADAS form a nighttime symphony around her.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Chrissy struts toward a parked SAAB, which idles across the street and down the block a few houses. She spins for the driver like a disco dancer. The driver WHISTLES at her.

INT. SAAB - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Chrissy smothers MR. CARPENTER (31), the driver of the Saab, with a string of kisses. He is definitely not the boy from the junior prom snapshot.

Mr. Carpenter wears a sharp tweed sport coat over a black turtleneck sweater and hides his handsome features beneath a beaten, old baseball cap.

CHRISSEY

Don't worry, they're drunk. It's Tuesday night.

Carpenter tosses his hat into the backseat.

CARPENTER

Oh right, the weekly Reagan rally.

CHRISSEY'S POV

*

Becky's silhouette gazes at them from her bedroom window.

BACK TO SCENE

Chrissy nervously hides her face from Becky's view as Carpenter starts the ignition.

INT. BECKY'S BEDROOM - MONROE HOUSE - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Becky watches the Saab as it pulls away from the curb. She knows what's going on; she can't look any longer. She abruptly closes the blinds and walks back to her bed.

EXT. DRIVE-IN THEATER - NIGHT

A graveyard of slanted INTERCOMS and a half-dozen AUTOMOBILES sit before a giant film SCREEN in an antique drive-in theater. A forgotten relic of yesteryear.

The lot is glaringly empty; stark and desolate. It wouldn't seem out of place for a tumbleweed to roll across the blacktop. *

INT. SAAB - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS] *

Chrissy and Carpenter make-out with reckless abandon as the movie quietly sounds from the SPEAKER BOX affixed to the Saab's driver's side window. Though they're still fully clothed, one gets the impression they won't be for long. *

We TRACK Carpenter's HAND as it slowly creeps up Chrissy's skirt. *

Then -- *

A sudden BEAM OF LIGHT illuminates them. *

TAP. TAP. *

A SECURITY GUARD appears at the passenger window, FLASHLIGHT in hand. *

SECURITY GUARD *

Get a room. *

Chrissy buries her face in Carpenter's chest, embarrassed. She LAUGHS to herself. *

CARPENTER *

Yeah, alright, alright . . . *

Carpenter STARTS the ignition. *

EXT. DRIVE-IN THEATER - NIGHT *

The Saab glides across the blacktop, toward the theater's exit. *

FADE TO: *

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT *

We SLOWLY PUSH IN on Carpenter's sedan, now parked in a secluded patch of woodland. Muffled MOANING can be heard from the front seat. *

INT. SAAB - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS] *

Carpenter grinds back and forth atop Chrissy's petite frame. She CRIES in ecstasy.

Their movements accelerate -- faster and faster, faster and faster, then --

RELEASE.

Breathless silence follows.

The windows of the Saab are densely FOGGED with the humid residue of desire.

Carpenter dismounts Chrissy and zips up his pants. He grabs a JOINT from the dashboard, lights up and takes a long, smooth drag.

Once he's through, he passes the spliff to Chrissy. She takes a long hit herself, before laying her head down on Carpenter's lap. *

A cheesy AM BALLAD gently lilts from the car's radio, scoring the scene. *

MR. CARPENTER
I graded your Crime and Punishment
essay.

CHRISSY
Oh, yeah? What'd I get?

MR. CARPENTER
F plus. *

Chrissy playfully slaps Carpenter's shoulder.

CHRISSEY

There's no such thing as an F plus.
What did I really get?

MR. CARPENTER

I dunno. I haven't looked at them
yet.

CHRISSEY

Summer school sucks.

*
*

Beat.

*

CHRISSEY (CONT'D)

You're just trying to flunk me so
that I have to stay on an extra
semester. I know how you operate,
mister.

Chrissy takes another hit of weed and looks up at the hazy
moonroof above her.

CHRISSEY'S POV

The night sky is but a nebulous gray mist, dimly perceived
through the muggy moonroof. The stars are obscured by fog.

Then --

-- from OFF SCREEN, Chrissy's nail-polished HAND emerges into
view. We watch as it seductively draws along the moist, glass
canvas, the LETTERS S + C, encircled by a flamboyant HEART.

BACK TO SCENE

Carpenter studies Chrissy's inscription.

MR. CARPENTER

I wish I would have met you ten
years ago.

Their eyes meet.

CHRISSEY

I would have been seven.

Carpenter smiles. "*Touché.*"

MR. CARPENTER

Well . . . then I wish I was born
ten years later.

Chrissy gazes back up at her fleeting love letter. She watches as the note slowly FADES from the glass.

CLOSE ON Chrissy and Mr. Carpenter's fingers as they furl and unfurl, moving slowly through the atmosphere.

Chrissy can feel the weed pleasantly stimulating her mind.

CHRISSY

I wish we were both born a hundred thousand years ago -- and we lived on an island -- and there was no one but us. Like in Blue Lagoon.

Mr. Carpenter takes a long toke of his joint. He lives in the fantasy for a moment -- before reality sets back in.

MR. CARPENTER

You'd get sick of me, eventually.

*

CHRISSY

Nuh-uh.

*

Once again, a BEAM OF LIGHT dances across the ceiling of the Saab. Chrissy takes note of it. She turns toward the source and notices a FIGURE rapidly approaching the driver's side window.

*

*

*

*

CHRISSY (CONT'D)

Oh my god, there's somebody watching us.

*

*

*

Carpenter swifty turns to face the Figure. He squints into the oncoming light.

*

*

CARPENTER

(to Chrissy)

Can't catch a break tonight, Jesus.

*

*

*

Carpenter rolls down the window -- just a touch.

*

CARPENTER (CONT'D)

Can I help you, man?

*

*

CHRISSY

What does he want? Is it a cop?

*

*

CARPENTER

Hey, can you point that somewhere else?

*

*

*

CHRISSY

(suddenly frightened)

Steve, what does he want?

*

*

*

CARPENTER *
I don't know. *

CHRISSEY *
Let's just go. *

CARPENTER *
Dude, that light -- *

Then -- *

BANG! *

CRASH. *

POOF. *

A BULLET obliterates Carpenter's skull. *

An explosion of flesh, BLOOD and bone saturates the Saab's upholstery. *

Chrissy SCREAMS bloody-murder. Her expression, a mixture of pure horror and sudden shock. *

She fumbles awkwardly for the door handle. *

Then -- *

BANG. *

Another BULLET enters the vehicle and pierces Chrissy's calf. She SHRIEKS in agony as she pushes the door open and scrambles out of the car. *

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS] *

We TRACK Chrissy as she crawls across the forest floor like a wounded animal. BLOOD pours from the gash in her leg and soaks the earth. *

Finally, she can't crawl anymore. Defenseless and in a state of pure panic, she steadies herself against the trunk of a nearby elm tree. *

Then -- *

CLICK. *

She is covered in the brutal white BEAM of the Figure's flashlight. *

She gazes up into its blinding vortex as she fights to catch
her breath. The Figure is obscured behind the source of
illumination; a silhouette against the night.

 CHRISSEY
 (crying)
 What do you want?

The Figure remains motionless.

The sound of his breathing can be faintly perceived under the
wash of CRICKET and CICADA noises (and the ever so quiet AM
radio jam, still playing from the car).

 CHRISSEY (CONT'D)
 Please don't hurt me. I'll do
 anything you --

BANG!

Chrissy writhes in the dirt. Her SCREAMS are muffled by the
BLOOD which is gathered in her lungs and being spit up all
over her chin and neck.

The Figure walks up to Chrissy. He stands above her, cocks
his gun and points it at her face. She thrashes about on the
ground helplessly trying to escape the barrel.

Although we don't see his face, Chrissy certainly does. A
glimmer of recognition registers in the pit of her eye.

Then --

BANG!

Again.

BANG!

Stillness. She is gone.

The Figure discharges the empty SHELLS, puts them in his
pocket and walks into the thick of the woods; disappearing
among the branches.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. CITY HALL - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a map of COLFAX projected onto an old BLACKBOARD. The main arteries of the city -- roads, creeks, highways and railroads -- intersect at infinite points along a strict black and white grid.

SPOKESMAN (O.S.)

This map is over thirty years old. Colfax has changed shape in small but significant ways since 1952. For instance, in the upper right hand corner, coordinates 14A --

CLOSE ON a SPOKESMAN holding forth at the lectern.

SPOKESMAN (CONT'D)

-- that land has been encroached upon by the Fox River -- after the flood of '75. Boundaries change with the march of time. Just like people do.

The Spokesman removes the original map from the projector and replaces it with a NEW MAP.

CLOSE ON NEW MAP

SPOKESMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

This is the proposed updated map. As you'll see in section twelve of the pamphlet . . .

BACK TO SCENE

We go WIDE to reveal the small congregation of CITIZENS seated in folding chairs in the large government space.

Charlie and BERLICE BEAMAN (15) observe the proceedings from the back row. They are the youngest citizens present by over forty years.

Berlice is a spunky tomboy -- the kind of girl who will be beautiful in college but who currently resides beneath a cushion of baby fat and less than flattering vintage rags.

BERLICE

(whispering; pointing to map)

It kinda looks like a penis.

There is definitely a phallic quality to the town's new shape.

CHARLIE
Yeah, kinda.

BERLICE
Like a huge, weird wiener.

Charlie tries to suppress his LAUGHTER, but it is useless. An OLD LADY sneers at the snickering youngsters.

OLD LADY
Shhhh.

BERLICE
I think I know what she needs.

CHARLIE
Huh?

BERLICE
Some of that Colfax county-line
cock.

This only makes Charlie and Berlice laugh louder. An adolescent fit of hysterics takes hold of the two friends.

EXT. DOWNTOWN COLFAX - NIGHT

Charlie and Berlice walk down Colfax's main drag. There isn't a soul in sight.

CHARLIE
Well, if that's any indication, it
should be fun covering city hall
meetings with you this year.

BERLICE
No kidding. I don't know how Mr.
Koch expects us to craft a story
out of that boring shit.

CHARLIE
He just enjoys torturing us.

BERLICE
Yeah, totally.

They arrive at an intersection and stop.

CHARLIE
Which way you headed?

Berlice points left.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
(nodding right)
I'm this way.

A long, awkward silence. They smile at one another. Their eyes meet -- then immediately look away.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Anyway, I was --

BERLICE
So, it was cool, uh --

CHARLIE
No, you go --

BERLICE
Oh, uh, I was just gonna say: I go to Indiana with my family tomorrow morning.

CHARLIE
Awesome.

BERLICE
Not really. But maybe when I get back, we can catch a movie or something.

CHARLIE
Cool. I think Eddie & The Cruisers opens next week.

BERLICE
Rad. See ya later, Charlie.

CHARLIE
Bye, Berlice.

Charlie watches Berlice walk away from him, down the street. In the distance, LIGHTNING strikes.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - ROOF - NIGHT

Becky sneaks out of her bedroom window and onto the roof. She lights a CIGARETTE and watches the tree tops of Colfax recede towards the horizon.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Charlie peddles his bike through the humid twilight. LIGHT DRIZZLE rains from the sky.

Charlie listens to the SOUNDS of the suburbs. A practiced CLARINET struggles to hit a note from a nearby bedroom window. A lonely dog BARKS in the distance. A man WHISTLES a haunting melody to himself from some unseen place.

Then --

ZOOOOOOOOOOM!

A shirtless teenage motorcyclist speeds down an adjacent street and motors past Charlie on his motorcycle. Charlie thinks nothing of it as he continues on.

We will later meet the driver in depth but right now we barely catch a glimpse. His name is CASPER TATUM (17). He looks scared; as though he's running from something.

Charlie rides onto a GRAVEL PATH into the forest -- the shortcut home.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Charlie rides a few yards into the thick of the woods and then he sees it --

First the idling, blood soaked Saab -- then Chrissy. Her lifeless body is illuminated by the car's faint, interior light. He's the first at the scene. *

Charlie stands in shock. He knows them both. His old babysitter and his English teacher. Only in matinees has he been this close to such sadism. *

NARRATOR (V.O.)

There were boys I knew who would have paid all the money in their piggy banks to catch a glimpse of Chrissy Monroe without her clothes on. *

Charlie takes small steps toward Chrissy's body. *

KA-BOOM. THUNDER strikes overhead. The rainfall intensifies.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But the spark of youth and vitality that Chrissy exhibited so loudly and proudly in life --

He looks deep into her open, lifeless eyes as rain drops bombard her doll-like face. *

NARRATOR (V.O.)

-- the indelible spark which made
horny sixteen-year-olds want to see
her naked in the first place -- was
gone. She was dead.

We look up at Charlie from the POV of Chrissy's body. Pure
terror is all that reads in his eyes.

Then --

Charlie's delayed instincts finally kick in. He peddles as
fast as he can away from the scene.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

CRASH!

LIGHTNING spiderwebs across the sky as we SLOWLY PUSH in on
an idling JEEP in an abandoned, dimly-lit suburban parking
lot. BASEBALL FIELDS and a WATER TOWER can be vaguely made
out in the background.

It is now DOWNPOURING. A full blown summer storm wreaks havoc
on Colfax.

As we near the vehicle, we can make out a collegiate NEW
WAVER in a DAYGLO WINDBRAKER. He is sobbing, uncontrollably
in the driver's seat.

Then --

Abruptly, he begins violently smashing his fists against the
STEERING WHEEL.

HONK. HONK. HONK. HONK.

EXT. SUBURBAN TOWN - DAY

A series of SHOTS introduce us to a halcyon suburban
community. WHITE PICKET FENCES, IMPOSSIBLY GREEN GRASS, RED
FIRE ENGINES and PICTURESQUE CHURCHES.

CLOSE ON WATER TOWER. "Welcome to Colfax" is etched in an old-
fashioned, cursive font.

CLOSE ON a FIGURE crossing a STREET.

But, something is off here.

Strange. Canted. Artificial.

Then --

A GIANT HAND emerges from the sky and carefully applies a dab of BLACK PAINT to the figure's HAT.

We go WIDE to reveal that --

INT. HOFFMAN'S BASEMENT - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

-- the setting of the above scene is actually an extensive MODEL TOWN erected in the unfinished basement of a suburban home. LIONEL TRAINS crisscross the landscape in every direction.

CHOO! CHOO!

HAL HOFFMAN (65), the architect of this small utopia, proudly looks down at his creation and smiles.

Hoffman is an older man whose maintained his cool. Uncensored; unabashed; old-school. A guy who could put a few back and wrestle a bear. In fact he's drinking a glass of SCOTCH right now.

Then --

RING. RING. RING.

Hoffman tries to ignore the telephone's invasive buzz, but --

RING. RING. RING.

-- it's not going to stop.

CLOSE ON a LIONEL TRAIN traversing a sharp corner and --

POW. POW.

-- derailing into a plaster RAVINE.

CRASH.

Hoffman trudges toward the TELEPHONE and picks up.

 HOFFMAN
 (into phone)
 Hoffman.

A look of horror washes over his face.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The CRIME SCENE is alive with POLICE OFFICERS taking photos, looking for evidence and piecing together clues.

The summer storm continues to rage. The ground is soaked. Nearby STORM DRAINS overflow with muddy water.

Hoffman arrives at the scene in his personal vehicle, a sixties MERCEDES. His headlights cut through the torrential downpour.

INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Hoffman gazes at the crime scene from the safety and solitude of the driver's seat. Rotating shades of blue and red POLICE LIGHTS reflect onto his weary face as the WIND SHIELD WIPERS rapidly oscillate.

Hoffman takes a deep breath. He doesn't want to get out of the car -- he can't get out of the car -- he knows this isn't going to end well.

We TRACK Hoffman's SHAKY HAND as it slowly reaches for the door handle -- hesitates a beat -- and opens up.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

As soon as Hoffman exits his vehicle, all vestiges of his hesitation and paranoia are subverted. He's a pro. He walks through the rain with a confident strut.

We follow him as he approaches TEDDY GREEN (33), a lean, African American police officer standing near the Saab. *

GREEN

I thought you said this job was
gonna be all cats in trees and lost
old ladies, chief?

HOFFMAN

You must be a jinx, Teddy.

A nearby DEPUTY pulls the sheets back to reveal Chrissy's rain-soaked body. Rigor mortis is beginning to set in; her expressions is grim and horrific -- like something out of a nightmare. *

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

Christ. *

GREEN

Chrissy Monroe, seventeen years
old. Enrolled to start at --

*
*

Hoffman abruptly cuts Green off.

HOFFMAN

I know who she is.

*
*

Hoffman looks down into Chrissy's lifeless eyes. He shakes
his head.

*
*

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

Seventeen years old. What a waste.

*
*

As they arrive at Carpenter's car, Hoffman crouches down near
the open passenger door. He struggles to process the
overwhelming carnage.

*
*
*

Green points to Carpenter's gory remains.

*

GREEN

Steve Carpenter. Monroe's English
teacher. Married. Expecting wife.

*
*
*

CLOSE ON Carpenter's WEDDING RING.

*

Hoffman gazes up at the moonroof, where the vague impression
of the S + C inscription can still be perceived.

*
*

Hoffman flips down the VISOR. Two TICKETS gently leaf onto
the passenger seat. Hoffman looks down at them for a moment
before handing them to Green.

*
*
*

GREEN (CONT'D)

I'll look into it.

A reflective moment takes hold of the Saab. Then --

HOFFMAN

Who found the bodies?

Green points to an AMBULANCE.

HOFFMAN'S POV of Charlie sitting in the rear compartment of
an idling ambulance. A PARAMEDIC and Charlie's parents, MR.
and MRS. CHAMBERS, are there to comfort him.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - ROOF - NIGHT

CLOSE ON the ashy remains of five CIGARETTE BUTTS laying
haphazardly on the roof.

We GO WIDE to reveal Becky, still sitting outside her window; still smoking. This time however, she is journaling in a small, leather DIARY.

She is protected from the rain via a narrow overhang in the roof above her.

At the periphery of the frame, out of focus POLICE LIGHTS can be seen advancing down the street, toward the Monroe house. Becky looks up from her diary and curiously watches as the SIRENS near. A nervous expression forms in her eyes.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As the Monroe's party wanes; we watch through the large PICTURE WINDOW as two SQUAD CARS pull up to the curb, outside.

POLICE LIGHTS penetrate the smoky parlor.

The Monroe's and their guests cease their bromidic small talk and turn their attentions outside.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - WIDE - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Three POLICE OFFICERS exit their squad cars and walk toward the front door with their hats in their hands.

They KNOCK. Mrs. Monroe answers almost instantly. There is brief CHATTER before Mrs. Monroe lets out a blood curdling SCREAM and collapses to her knees.

FADE TO:

CICADA MONTAGE

We are suddenly thrust into a SERIES of shots depicting dark, nondescript TREETOPS throughout the town. The BUZZ of the CICADAS grow louder and louder; overwhelming the soundtrack.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

*

Charlie longingly gazes out his bedroom window.

CHARLIE'S POV

Becky and Mr. and Mrs. Monroe, dressed in formal, mournful black, exit their home and head toward the STATION WAGON in their driveway.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Three days later was the funeral.

LATER

Charlie and his friends, MATT, JAMIE and SCOOTER -- all donning matching, ill-fitting suits -- adjust their ties and comb their hair in Charlie's bedroom MIRROR. They're the kind of friends you have only at fifteen and never again. Blood brothers.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

My friends and I hadn't worn dress clothes since our first communions and so the day before the wake we went to Sears and bought new suits. Jamie Fischer, the only one of us with a license, borrowed his mom's Buick. I remember an odd sense of morbid excitement hanging over it all. Like we were going to a party.

MATT

Was there blood?

CHARLIE

Yeah, there was blood.

JAMIE

Was she wearing any clothes?

CHARLIE

Only her underwear.

SCOOTER

Did you see her titties?

CHARLIE

C'mon, guys.

Charlie clearly isn't in the mood. His friends are oblivious to his discomfort.

MATT

I heard she had like two pounds of cocaine in her system. Cocaine and semen.

SCOOTER

Both were coked out for sure. That hot news lady on five said there was coke all over the car.

JAMIE

You guys don't know shit.

Suddenly, there's a KNOCK at Charlie's door.

CHARLIE

Come in.

Mrs. Chambers opens up. She is an unexpectedly hip, attractive presence.

MRS. CHAMBERS

You boys ready?

Charlie shrugs.

CHARLIE

(not really)

I guess.

As the boys file past Mrs. Chambers, she adjusts their hair and straightens their ties.

EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

*

The funeral home is teeming with HUNDREDS of CITIZENS. Seemingly all of Colfax has come out to show their support for the Monroe family.

Across the street, a large MEDIA CIRCUS mills about in the designated PRESS QUARTERS.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

*

Charlie and his friends wait in line with the entire TOWN at Chrissy's wake. The mood is black. Distant SOBBING and soft piano MUSIC flutter through the room, creating a suffocating sense of sadness.

Charlie and his friends look at a cardboard display of PHOTOS and POLAROIDs of Chrissy at various stages in her short life. Her at a POOL; a DANCE; a GRADUATION, etc.

INSERT - PHOTO

Chrissy stands among dozens of PEOPLE in the middle of a block party. A slightly younger version of Charlie can be seen just over her shoulder, motion blurred.

BACK TO SCENE

Mr. and Mrs. Chambers say their condolences to Mr. and Mrs. Monroe, near the CASKET.

CHARLIE'S POV of Becky, sulking in a parlor chair. She's been at the funeral for hours and is clearly drained.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Becky Monroe had always been the black sheep of the family; overshadowed by Chrissy's more traditional, American charm.

Charlie watches Becky from across the room. Their eyes meet. He waves. She waves back.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Many years prior, she and I shared each other's first kiss at one of her parents' legendary parties. We had never spoken of it, but it had forever left an implicit bond between us. We were more than mere neighbors.

Becky abruptly looks away.

NEAR CASKET

Charlie watches like a voyeur as Brad Kirchoff, Chrissy's ex-boyfriend, slowly approaches the casket. He looks beyond devastated; horrified by the sight of the body. Tears well in his eyes.

Brad kneels at the casket and looks down at Chrissy's eerie, breathless, make-up caked face.

EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR - NIGHT

Brad sits slouched at the curb outside the funeral parlor. Across the street, he gazes upon a sea of REPORTERS, FILM LIGHTS and NEWS VANS.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Brad Kirchoff, our school's
quarterback, had been Chrissy's on-
again, off-again boyfriend for the
last year and half.

Brad pulls a FLASK out of his coat pocket, unscrews the cap
and downs a healthy gulp.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

As a result, he was also a person
of interest.

BECKY (O.S.)

(whispering)

Psst. Brad.

Brad looks in the direction of the voice. He spots Becky in
the alleyway, adjacent to the funeral parlor -- hidden from
the press.

She waves him over. Brad drunkenly stumbles to his feet and
approaches her.

BECKY (CONT'D)

I'll trade you some Valium for a
few sips of whatever's in your
flask.

Surprised at the request, Brad happily hands Becky his flask.
She hesitates before taking a long pull. Brad is impressed.

BRAD

So it's true that when someone dies
they prescribe you with you happy
pills, huh?

CLOSE ON Becky wiping the warm whiskey residue from her
young, supple lips.

BECKY

I've been on these since I was
thirteen.

CLOSE ON Becky pouring a pair of VALIUM into Brad's open
palm.

Brad places one of the pills on his tongue and washes it down
with whiskey.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

CRASH!

We watch as the contents of a GARBAGE CAN cascade across the asphalt. CANS, LEFTOVERS and WRAPPERS tumble across the street.

Then --

We TRACK Brad as he drunkenly sprints toward a neighboring household's garbage cans and --

CRASH!

-- KICKS them down to the curb.

Again. CRASH!

Brad breathlessly CACKLES in intoxicated hysterics.

Becky watches, bemused and begrudgingly entertained from the sidewalk. She takes a long sip from the flask.

We GO EXTREMELY WIDE to reveal the extent of Brad's carnage. Behind him, an entire STREET full of GARBAGE stretches on as far as the eye can see.

Brad kicks over yet another garbage can.

BANG!

Becky watches as a number of curious HOMEOWNERS nervously gape from their darkened windows.

BECKY

You're an idiot. You're gonna get us arrested.

BRAD

These assholes don't scare me.

Brad rejoins Becky on the sidewalk. She hands him his flask and he takes another long pull.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Can you believe the police wanna question me? The nerve.

BECKY

I wouldn't take it personally. They talked to me too.

BRAD
You don't think I had anything to
do with it, do you?

BECKY
No.

Becky takes a long drag from her cigarette.

BRAD
Can I ask you something?

Becky nods.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Did you know anything about Chrissy
and Mr. Carpenter?

Becky debates her answer before settling on a lie.

BECKY
No.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Brad and Becky stop in front of Becky's house and stand awkwardly in each other's presence for a long, quiet moment. Brad catches her eyes. He looks at them long and hard.

BRAD
You're the only person I feel
comfortable talking to about any of
this.

Becky nods. She throws her cigarette to the curb and stomps it out. Brad watches her closely.

BECKY
(speaking to the ground)
Yeah. It all feels like a dream,
doesn't it?

For the first time in their brief dialogue, Becky says something she means. From the heart. Brad notices.

She looks up into Brad's eyes.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Looking into Becky's eyes, it
occurred to Brad for the first time
in his life, how much she looked
like Chrissy.

Brad stumbles toward her and they awkwardly hug.

BRAD
Thanks for letting me walk with
you.

BECKY
See you around.

Becky breaks from the embrace and walks across her lawn,
toward the front door.

BRAD
Hey, Becky --

Becky slows her stride and turns around to face Brad from the
center of her lawn. A long beat.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Nevermind.

Becky nods, politely.

BECKY
'Night, Brad.

Brad watches as Becky turns back toward her house and resumes
her walk to the door.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

We watch as Becky tiptoes up the stairs of her darkened home.
When she reaches the second floor landing, she flips on the
LIGHTS and gazes upon her sister's bedroom.

GLITTER STICKERS spell out CHRISSY along the closed door.

Becky meditates on the image for a moment, and then quickly
makes way toward her own bedroom.

FADE TO:

NEWS MONTAGE

A SERIES of shots showcase darkened HOMES throughout Colfax.
Except instead of the perfectly manicured front lawns we
expect to see, we're in the backyards instead. Rusted LAWN
CHAIRS, dirty aluminum SIDING and overgrown WEEDS fill the
frame.

Through the windows of these anonymous houses, we see
TELEVISIONS tuned into the NEWS. Chrissy Monroe's FACE is
plastered across each and every one of them.

*"A tragic double-homicide in Colfax leaves a community devastated." "The suburbs are a little less safe tonight."
"It's 10 O'clock, do you know where your children are?"*

These layered SOUND BITES continue to build on top of each other until they are nothing but a discordance of indistinguishable voices.

END ACT THREE

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ACT FOUR

EXT. PUBLIC POOL - DAY

*

Charlie and his FRIENDS sunbathe on the grass adjacent to the public swimming pool.

*

*

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The murders were on everyone's mind that Labor Day weekend. Since no arrests had been made, theories were abound.

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES - DAY

A group of TEACHERS gossip in the sterile confines of the HIGH SCHOOL's stuffy administrative wing.

CLOSE ON various MOUTHS cautiously whispering:

TEACHER 1

I can't believe Steve took advantage of a student like that.

TEACHER 2

His poor wife.

TEACHER 3

She's six months pregnant. Who's going to help her raise that child?

TEACHER 1

You know, they found tire tracks at the scene of the crime.

TEACHER 2

I heard.

TEACHER 3

He was in my history class last semester. He ditched nearly every period.

TEACHER 1

That kid is no good.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Of all the suspects in town, there was one who stood head and shoulders above the rest. His name was:

TEACHER 1
Casper Tatum.

TEACHER 2
Casper Tatum.

TEACHER 3
Casper Tatum.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK

We follow behind a FIGURE on a red HONDA HERO as he careens down a cracked, gray highway. His jean jacket flies in the wind behind him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Casper Tatum grew up on the wrong side of the tracks and was known by our mothers as 'plain white trash.' Somehow he and I were only a grade apart, although he easily had three years and sixty pounds on me.

*
*

EXT. GARAGE - DAY

A pair of strong, greasy HANDS tighten bolts on the engine of a motorcycle. We follow the hands down to the earth as they reach for a ZIPPO.

FLICK.

The FLAME ignites.

We follow the Zippo upward, watching as it lights the end of a Camel cigarette, which rests between the lips of Casper Tatum.

He is the River Phoenix-esque town rebel. A loner; a wanderer; an outcast; a misfit.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He was smoking cigarettes by the third grade and sleeping with women, I mean real, full grown women, by junior high.

Casper blows SMOKE out his nostrils as he continues to work on the engine.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

On top of all this, Casper had actually killed before. And this wasn't just a rumor.

SMASH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. SHOWERS - DAY

CLOSE ON BLOOD splattering against white, wet tiles.

OFF-SCREEN SCREAMING can be heard over the pervasive HISS of running WATER.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

"PRE-TEEN SLAYS IN SELF-DEFENSE;" "JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY HOMICIDE."

NARRATOR (V.O.)

At twelve-and-a-half, Casper had murdered a seventeen-year-old assailant in the showers in juvenile hall.

FLASHBACK - INT. PIZZA PARLOR - DAY

Charlie, Jamie, Matt and Scooter sit around a table eating pizza as MARIO (16) recounts a stirring piece of gossip.

MARIO

I mean, look, I wouldn't put it past him -- he's a confirmed killer, man.

SCOOTER

Yeah, but that thing in juvi was self-defense.

MARIO

I'm not so sure about that. My second cousin knew a guy in there with him and he claimed it was all a part of some gang initiation. That kid never attacked Casper like he said.

CHARLIE

Yeah, but what would be his motive for killing Chrissy and Carpenter?

MARIO

He's a sociopath, Chambers. Motives
don't mean shit. Manson, Bundy,
Berkowitz . . . Tatum.

INT. BAR - PUNK SHOW - NIGHT

An ear-bleedingly loud PUNK SHOW rages in the background as
PIERCED PUNK BABES, DANZIG LOOK-A-LIKES, AND ANDROGYNOUS NEW
WAVERS crowd around a violent PIT.

SLOW MOTION on Casper in the center of the mosh.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But in all actuality, Casper was a
loner.

Casper's limbs push and pull like barbaric, untamed
tentacles.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CASPER'S KITCHEN - DAY

Casper sits at the head of a quaint, cozy TABLE in a dated
mid-sixties style kitchen. His GRANDMOTHER and GRANDFATHER
sit on either side of him. They are a sweet, warm looking
elderly couple; their essence is totally at odds with that of
their GRANDSON'S.

We slowly ZOOM into Casper's face as he chows down on his
stale food.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

He never kept the same company for
long and he'd been labeled a freak,
fag, deviant, derelict and punk
since the second grade.

CASPER

You pass the salt, nana?

EXT. DRIVE-IN THEATER - DUSK

Casper sits alone atop the JUNGLE GYM at the drive-in
playground. He stares up at the screen as THE OUTSIDERS
plays. A PORTABLE RADIO sitting beside him is dialed into the
film's soundtrack.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It was also well known that his favorite haunt was the place where Chrissy and Carpenter were last seen alive.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Casper sits in the interrogation room, fidgeting with a Zippo lighter.

FLICK. CLIP. FLICK. CLIP. FLICK. CLIP.

CLOSE ON a set of CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHS depicting Chrissy and Carpenter's graphic and blood-soaked remains. They're strewn across the table before Casper, yet they evoke no response.

FLICK. CLIP. FLICK. CLIP. FLICK. CLIP.

HOFFMAN

I'm not gonna play your game, Tatum. You don't wanna answer our questions, you don't have to answer our questions. But just so you know: we found tire tracks matching those of your Honda's at the scene of the crime.

Casper is completely unfazed by this revelation.

CASPER

You think if I killed Chrissy Monroe and that piece of shit teacher, I'd be stupid enough to leave tire tracks?

Beat.

CASPER (CONT'D)

I drive through those woods everyday. The tracks were there before the bodies.

FLICK. CLIP. FLICK. CLIP. FLICK. CLIP.

Irritated, Hoffman curtly snatches the lighter from Casper's grip. He looks down at Casper's Zippo. An ENGRAVING along the side reads "Willie Tatum -- VIETNAM." Beneath it is a crude impression of a pin-up model.

HOFFMAN

You know, I knew your old man.

Beat.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)
He'd be disappointed.

Hoffman tosses Casper his lighter.

INT. POLICE STATION - LOBBY - NIGHT

Officer Green walks Casper to the police station's exit. As they strut through the lobby, Casper notices Brad, BRAD'S FATHER and a LAWYER sitting in the waiting area.

The two boys make long, loaded eye-contact.

GREEN
Mr. Kirchoff, we'll be right with you.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Once the door is open and Casper is heading toward his Triumph, he turns backward and addresses Green.

CASPER
You tell that asshole, next time he brings up my family, I'm gonna burn his house down.

Casper gets on his bike, starts the engine and takes off down the street, clearly over the speed limit.

CLOSE ON Brad watching through the police station window. Vengeance reads in the pit of his eyes.

INT. CASPER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Casper, wearing only tighty-whiteys, sits on the floor of his bedroom amid little league trophies, rock n roll paraphernalia and a pin-up of Farrah Fawcett. The conflicting decorations of a boy who went through a quick growth spurt.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Casper had been released from custody based on a lack of substantial evidence. Like the rest of the suspects, they couldn't place the smoking gun in his hand.

Casper lifts a PHOTOGRAPH out of a SHOEBOX and inspects the composition.

*
*

CASPER'S POV OF PHOTOGRAPH

Casper and Mr. Carpenter sit on a crummy couch in an unfinished basement. A sea of empty BEER BOTTLES litter the coffee table before them. They both wear expressions of drunken camaraderie.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

However, he was easily the town's favorite suspect. Everyone wanted him to be the killer.

Casper FLICKS his ZIPPO's flint wheel and IGNITES the celluloid.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Brad stands alone on the football field beneath the harsh STADIUM LIGHTS. He is wearing his football gear and looking directly into the CAMERA, as it rapidly PUSHES IN on him.

BRAD

Casper Tatum killed my girlfriend and he's going to pay.

END ACT FOUR

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ACT FIVE

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

CLOSE ON a FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH of Mr. Carpenter hanging on a WALL near the school's FRONT OFFICE. Above the photograph, large construction paper letters spell out "TEACHER OF THE YEAR."

Then --

A pair of calloused HANDS emerge from OFF SCREEN and grip the picture frame. We PULL BACK to reveal that the hands belong to a JANITOR.

We watch as he carefully unscrews the picture from the wall and gently places it in a trash bag.

INT. PHOTO STUDIO - DAY

A SERIES of STUDENTS sit before a soft BLUE BACKDROP in a makeshift photo studio.

STUDENT #1: Pimple faced computer nerd.

FLASH.

STUDENT #2: Cheerleader babe.

FLASH.

STUDENT #3: Perv-stache punker.

FLASH.

Then --

Charlie sits awkwardly on an APPLE BOX, staring right into the CAMERA. He isn't so hot on getting his photo taken.

PHOTOGRAPHER (O.S.)
Give us a smile, kid.

Charlie reluctantly grins. His mouth full of metal glistens under the hot lights.

FLASH.

FREEZE FRAME on the IMAGE.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The next Monday was school
registration.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Charlie waits in line along with a sea of other STUDENTS to collect this year's TEXTBOOKS. The reality of the encroaching school year can be seen on every miserable adolescent's face.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
One doesn't easily forget the smell
of their high school. A mixture of
industrial strength cleaning
products, chalk, deodorant,
chlorine, wet paint and hormones.

CHARLIE'S POV as he's handed a stack of heavy BOOKS.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Charlie approaches his trusty LOCKER and enters the combo: 43 - 9 - 14. He packs the locker with the semester's text books and hangs a photo of KURT VONNEGUT on the inside of the door.

When he slams the locker shut, Berlice is standing there waiting for him.

BERLICE
Hey Chuck.

CHARLIE
Oh, hey Berlice! How was Indiana?

BERLICE
Bugs. Lots of bugs. And Uno.

CHARLIE
Nice.

BERLICE
So my folks really picked a good
week for a family vacation, huh?
First murders to occur in this town
in forever and I'm stuck in the
crossroads of America watching Dick
Van Dyke reruns.

CHARLIE
Yeah, it's been pretty crazy around
here.

An awkward silence falls upon them. Berlice abruptly gives Charlie a long and compassionate hug.

BERLICE
You okay, Chuck?

Berlice's tone of voice suddenly changes; becomes softer, more maternal. Charlie closes his eyes. None of his friends have asked him if he's okay before.

CHARLIE
Yeah. I mean -- yeah.

They break from the hug.

BERLICE
You sure?

Charlie nods.

BERLICE (CONT'D)
Good.

A brief silence, then --

BERLICE (CONT'D)
Oh, before I forget -- I have something for you. Figured you might need some cheering up.

Berlice reaches into her pocket and retrieves a customized CASSETTE MIXTAPE. She tosses it to Charlie. He handles it curiously.

CHARLIE'S POV of TAPE

To say the cassette is artfully crafted would be an understatement. Colored pencils, stickers, glitter, glue sticks and plenty of love went into its creation.

"For Your Ears Only" is written in cursive along its spine.

BACK TO SCENE

BERLICE (CONT'D)
The King, Chuck Berry, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Sparkle Moore, Jan & Dean, The Chiffons -- all the hits.

CHARLIE
You know this is 1983, right, Berlice?

BERLICE

They don't make 'em like that
anymore, Chuck.

CHARLIE'S POV of TRACK LISTING.

Dozens of pencil-scrawled tracks written in a clean, girlish
font.

BACK TO SCENE

Charlie and Berlice stop in front of the newspaper room. They
turn to face each other.

CHARLIE

I'll listen to it when I get home.
Can't wait.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - NEWSPAPER ROOM - DAY

Charlie and Berlice sit at their typewriters in a classroom
full of STUDENT JOURNALISTS. MR. KOCH (35), a young Hemingway
of sorts, sits at his desk at the head of the classroom.

MR. KOCH

Alright scribes, as you all very
well know, the first day of the
semester is this Monday. That's in
five days. Our inaugural issue is
scheduled for that first Friday.

Koch passes out SYLLABI to the class.

MR. KOCH (CONT'D)

Who's got ideas? You had all summer
to find stories that won't bore the
shit out of me.

The class CHUCKLES. FRED KLEIN raises his hand.

FRED KLEIN

I'd like to write about the healthy
food options in the cafeteria.

SAMIR PATEL quickly follows.

SAMIR PATEL

And I think everyone should be
aware of the new Colfax map!

MR. KOCH

City planning is Chambers's
department.

CHARLIE
 (relieved)
 Take it!

SAMIR PATEL
 You sure, Charlie?

CHARLIE
 Yeah.

MR. KOCH
 Oh yeah, Chambers, what are you
 gonna do, just twiddle your thumbs
 this issue?

Charlie fires back.

CHARLIE
 I'd like to write about the
 murders, actually.

The room goes silent. Everyone anticipates Mr. Koch's
 response.

MR. KOCH
 What about it exactly?

CHARLIE
 Just um -- you know -- the night.
 What I saw. My experience.

Koch isn't too hot on the idea.

MR. KOCH
 It's a touchy sub --

Berlice comes to Charlie's aid.

BERLICE
 Koch, the newspaper needs to
 address it somehow. A student died.

Samir concurs.

SAMIR PATEL
 And a member of the faculty, too!

Koch considers the proposal.

MR. KOCH
 Let's put a pin in it for now,
 Chambers. Allow me to push the
 subject with the administration;
 (MORE)

MR. KOCH (CONT'D)
gauge their temperature on the
matter.

Beat.

MR. KOCH (CONT'D)
Until then, you're on --

Koch looks down at his clipboard.

MR. KOCH (CONT'D)
-- girl's badminton.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DUSK

Charlie inserts Berlice's MIXTAPE into his STEREO and hits
PLAY. ROCK N ROLL from a bygone era fills his room with
warmth and rhythm.

LATER

As the music continues in the background, Charlie readies his
typewriter with a fresh piece of paper. He thinks for a beat
before getting down to business.

INSERT - TYPEWRITTEN WORDS

"The girls badminton team is poised to go far this year..."

SHIFT. SHIFT.

*"The birdie, while perhaps not the sexiest of athletic
equipment, certainly has character..."*

SHIFT. SHIFT.

BACK TO SCENE

A long beat. Writer's block.

CHARLIE
(under his breath)
Stupid badminton.

Charlie looks out the window above his desk and down at the
Monroe house, across the street. Becky stands near the front
of the garage, smoking a cigarette.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie meanders from his house toward Becky. Wind chimes RATTLE in the distance.

CHARLIE

Hi.

BECKY

Hey Charlie.

CHARLIE

You think I could bum a, uh, cigarette?

Becky reaches into her pocket and retrieves a cigarette. She hands it to Charlie and gives him a light.

BECKY

I didn't know you smoked.

Charlie takes a puff. He tries his best to hide the fact that it's his first hit ever.

CHARLIE

Yeah, socially or whatever.

A long silence.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

So what classes are you taking this semester?

BECKY

I dunno, the ones everybody takes.

CHARLIE

Cool. Yeah, me too.

Charlie digs his Chuck Taylors into a broken chunk of pavement.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I didn't get a chance to tell you at the funeral but I'm really, really sorry about your sister.

BECKY

Thanks.

Becky's mind drifts toward some far away place.

BECKY (CONT'D)

You know it's funny. I didn't even like my sister when she was alive.

A long silence follows. Charlie racks his brain for a change of subject.

CHARLIE

Hey, you remember that one time when we were like nine and we stayed up all night drinking pop and watching Saturday Night Live? That was the best.

BECKY

No, not really.

More silence. Becky senses she's hurt Charlie's feelings.

BECKY (CONT'D)

But that sounds like fun.

Becky stands up, puts her cigarette out and walks toward Charlie. When they're standing face-to-face, she brushes his hair out of his eyes with her hands.

BECKY (CONT'D)

I gotta go, Charlie. Talk soon.

CHARLIE

Ok. Goodnight Becky.

BECKY

Goodnight.

Charlie watches Becky disappear into her home. When she is out of sight he walks back toward his house, throws his cigarette to the ground and coughs up a lung. *

INT. MONROE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT *

Becky sits in silence at the dinner table along with her mother and father; the dining dead. A glaring, EMPTY SEAT stares back at them. A symphony of CLANKING silverware soundtracks the scene. *

BECKY *

May I be excused? *

Mr. Monroe nods. *

INT. MONROE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Becky ascends to the second floor landing. Once again, she contemplates her sister's closed door. *

After a long, internal debate -- she decides to enter.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - CHRISSY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Becky tiptoes through Chrissy's room, careful not to disturb any sleeping ghosts.

CLOSE ON Chrissy's PORTABLE TURNTABLE as Becky hits PLAY.

We watch as the NEEDLE touches down and Joni Mitchell's "THE CIRCLE GAME" fills the bedroom with warmth and deep sadness.

"Yesterday, a child came out to wonder; caught a dragonfly inside a jar..."

Becky slowly sashays toward her sister's dresser. Unlike her own, it's quite beautifully thought out and organized. The Shalimar perfume sits center stage among all her pretty things.

Becky picks up the perfume bottle and sprays it into the air. The scent of her sister fills the room. She places the bottle back carefully and exactly where Chrissy had left it.

"Fearful, when the sky was full of thunder, and tearful at the falling of a star..."

As Joni Mitchell's emotive, nostalgic lyrics carry on in the background, we float through Chrissy's room with Becky. Like voyeurs, we focus on a number of small but significant totems throughout the space:

I. An acrylic SELF-PORTRAIT of Chrissy, painted with surprising skill.

II. A PRECIOUS MOMENTS STATUETTE of two young lovers, kissing.

III. A ROSARY hanging from a bedside lamp shade.

IV. A BRUSH, still tangled with thick strands of BLONDE HAIR.

V. A PHOTO of Chrissy and Becky as children in a pile of autumn leaves.

"And the seasons, they go round and round, and the painted ponies go up and down; we're captive on the carousel of time..."

Becky seems overwhelmed as she backs up and lays down on Chrissy's bed. She looks up at the swaying MOBILE of the stars, wondering if its mysterious movement is some sort of sign.

"We can't return, we can only look behind from where we came, and go round and round and round in the circle game..."

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - PARKING LOT - DAY

*

Officer Green exits his POLICE CRUISER and walks through a vast blacktop, toward a RECREATIONAL BUILDING situated amid an expansive park. LITTLE LEAGUERS and their PARENTS buzz around the grounds like flies.

INT. RECREATIONAL BUILDING - BACK ROOM - DAY

Green huddles around a small MONITOR as the PARK'S MANAGER quickly rewinds through hours of SECURITY FOOTAGE.

PARK'S MANAGER

We only review these tapes once a week or so, otherwise we would have called you much sooner.

After a few moments, the Park's Manager finds what he's looking for. He STOPS the video feed and hits play.

CLOSE ON SCREEN

HIGH ANGLE on the New Waver's Jeep as it idles in the rain. We've seen this before. It's the night of the murder.

Then --

The driver's side door opens and the New Waver beelines into the parking lot like an erratic, rabid animal. His movements are eerie and unnatural; he walks with a haunted gait.

We track the New Waver as he moves toward a DRINKING FOUNTAIN and crouches beneath it, like a ghoul. He makes strange, theatrical movements with his hands.

There is something uncanny and dream-like about the footage. Something forboding.

BACK TO SCENE

The Park's Manager hits PAUSE.

PARK'S MANAGER (CONT'D)

This goes on for about twenty minutes. Very peculiar to say the least. Just thought, in light of the murders, you should see it. Same night and all.

Green studies the screen as the Park's Manager fast-forwards through the footage.

PARK'S MANAGER (CONT'D)

At around nine-fifteen, he takes his clothes off --

CLOSE ON SCREEN

The footage resumes PLAYING. We watch as the New Waver, now completely nude, tiptoes from the drinking fountain, toward the edge of frame. He begins dancing, wildly.

PARK'S MANAGER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And then he abruptly gets in his car and leaves.

Sure enough, the New Waver sprints toward his Jeep and immediately peels off, into the darkness.

BACK TO SCENE

The Park's Manager looks up at Green.

GREEN

Can you rewind it back a minute?

The Park's Manager slowly rewinds the footage.

GREEN (CONT'D)

There.

CLOSE ON SCREEN

The Park's Manager hits play. We once again watch as the New Waver dances, frenziedly, near the edge of the frame.

EXTREME CLOSE ON the New Waver's pixilated RIGHT HAND as a small object is ejected from it, into the air.

GREEN (CONT'D)

You see that?

BACK TO SCENE

Green and the Park's Manager gaze toward one another, curiously.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - DAY

Green and the Park's Manager peruse the unkempt foliage at the fringe of the field. Green looks toward the parking lot -- measuring its distance from his current vantage point.

Then --

He spot something.

A reflection of SUNLIGHT dances off the shiny metallic surface of an object, resting in a nest of ivy. He moves toward it.

GREEN

I'll be damned.

GREEN'S POV of a blood-crusted PISTOL hidden in the overgrowth.

He reaches down and carefully removes the firearm, dangling it in front of himself as though it were contaminated by radiation.

The Park's Manager stares at the object, mouth-agape.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Only three weeks had passed since the murders, but already our memories of Chrissy Monroe and Mr. Carpenter were fading from us.

INT. HOFFMAN'S BASEMENT - DAY

Hoffman's diorama waits in darkness.

CLOSE ON a small, miniature graveyard. TINY MOURNERS gather around a FRESH PLOT.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

As their bodies decomposed beneath the soil of our town, above ground things were only just getting started.

INT. ORTHODONTIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Charlie squirms beneath a glaring dental-light as an ORTHODONTIST unfasten's his BRACES, one-by-one.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And before any of us had a chance
to put the pieces of our lives back
together --

LATER

Charlie smiles into a mirror. He runs his tongue over his
wet, shiny fangs.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

-- there was another fire.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

We follow behind a dented, shitbox OLDSMOBILE as it careens
down a suburban street at an ungodly speed. Cheap Trick's "I
WANT YOU TO WANT ME" blares from the stereo at a distorted
volume.

*"I want you to want me. I need you to need me. I'd love you
to love me."*

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

We run along with two HOODED SILHOUETTES as they sprint
through the darkening forest brandishing tanks of sloshing
GASOLINE.

*"I'll shine up the old brown shoes. Put on a brand new shirt.
I'll get home early from work. If you say that you love me."*

We watch as the Silhouettes douse the woodland with gas;
their movements in sync with Cheap Trick's driving beat.

*"Didn't I, didn't I, didn't I see you crying? Feeling all
alone without a friend, you know you feel like dying."*

Then -- one of the Silhouettes strikes a MATCH.

CUT TO:

Miles of woodland blaze in the night. The devastation is
brutal and vast. Flames engulf the towering elm trees.

"Oh, didn't I, didn't I, didn't I see you crying?"

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVE-IN THEATER - NIGHT

The Drive-In MARQUEE blazes in the Bible black night. The flames reach toward the heavens.

The image looks like something out of an old Ed Ruscha print.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END