

MASTERS OF HORROR

Episode #7 - "Dance of the Dead"

Screenplay by

Richard Christian Matheson

Based on the published short story by Richard Matheson

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. NOON SKY - DAY (NIGHTMARE FLASHBACK) 1

Clear. OVER we HEAR the laughter of three little girls and two mothers. CAMERA descends from the blue sky. Now everything is in dreamy, stylized fragments:

The five in the back yard of a simple house. Sisters PEGGY (7) and ANNA (10), their mother KATE. MARIEL (9) and her mother GERRI. Having fun.

The sky darkens a little. Black flakes begin to gently fall.

One lands softly on Mariel's face. Starts to burn the skin; bore into it. She SCREAMS. So do Peggy and Anna; terrified.

More black flakes silently falls. Mariel is being eaten, to the bone, by it. Shrieking; helpless. The mother's SCREAM. It is nightmarish. OVER we HEAR a woman's SUFFERING GROAN

CUT TO:

2 INT. KATE AND PEGGY'S DINER-DAY 2

KATE awakens from the nightmare. She has dozed-off at a table in her empty diner. She's 45, has suffered desperate times; a world shattered, her own loneliness and fear. Dark secrets.

Her lovely 16 year old daughter, PEGGY, is beside her. Smart eyes, wounded soul. She takes her mother's trembling hand with quiet concern.

PEGGY
...hey? You okay?

KATE
Must've dozed off.
(beat)
No ones come in?

PEGGY
Been quiet. I don't know how we make it.

KATE
...you know Daddy left us some money.
(remembering)
Oh, god, I...

(CONTINUED)

PEGGY

...I already took the pies out.
They were going to burn.

Kate stands. Straightens tablecloths on the few booths and tables. Peggy watches her.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Were you dreaming about Daddy?

KATE

(beat)
...I don't remember my dreams.

Peggy nods. Notices her mother glancing at a wedding photo on the wall, amid framed family photos. The largest is on the day of Kate's wedding to Michael; Peggy's father. Kate and Michael dance. HOLD.

CUT TO:

3 INT. "DOOM ROOM"- DAY

3

An illicit nightspot, in MUSKEET. This is a smoky, carnal place of blatant joys. A sordid crowd fills the nightclub's chairs, booths. Laughing maniacally. Arguing. Groping. Drugs and sadism seep from the crowd's pin-prick stares.

Live music peels the place alive. Dancers are shoehorned into the tiny square of open floor, bodies grinding.

THE BAND

An impatient beast. The trumpet hornets ugly; angry. The lead singer wails like he's been knifed.

LEAD SINGER

"Hurt me! Bruise me! Squeeze me
tight. Scorch my blood with hot
DELIGHT. Please abuse me every
NIGHT! Lover, sister, mother, be a
beast to me!"

The band is a frenzy. Sax snorting, drums athrob: Bangity Boom Crash Smash POW.

THE CROWD

Out of control; a sweating, gyrating thing. The song builds to a nervous breakdown climax. Finally ends. The crowd explodes; dissipated hyenas. Many look diseased; survivors of bad things, despite hip threads.

(CONTINUED)

STAGE

The curtains suddenly whip shut. A lurid M.C. appears. Wordy, decayed.

M.C.

Put your insincere hands together
for the house band, folks. Nice
job, guys. Incoherent and
pointless as always.

He sips a drink, grins vulgar effusion. The mood in the
place festers.

M.C. (CONT'D)

For those of you who just came-to,
welcome to the DOOM ROOM, boys and
girls...and whatever else is
sitting out there lying to itself.
Our next show is top notch, Kabuki
skin-crawl...but I hasten to add:
what you'll see here, though
shocking, is not just some jaded
exhibition. It is based in...
(grandly)
...science.

*

*

OVER we HEAR loud motorcycles...

CUT TO:

4

TWO BATTERED MOTORCYCLES-DAY

4

Roaring up a mostly deserted city street. Toward a couple in
their 70's who walk: STEVEN and QUINN. The motorcycles cut
them off, block their paths. The riders wear filthy
leathers, dark goggles. They are: BOXX and JAK. 20. 23.
They lift goggles. BOXX holds a gun on them. The couple is
scared.

STEVE

What do you want?

BOXX

Whattya got?

STEVE

Leave us alone.

(CONTINUED)

BOXX

Can't do that. We're the Youth of America endeavoring, against insurmountable odds, to eke out a living.

(pokes Steve sadistically)

Eke, eke, eke!

Boxx laughs. Jak hates it when he gets like this.

JAK

Lets get on with it, man.

(to them)

Which one of you is the oldest?

Jak reaches into his leather jacket, withdrawing something. They don't want to answer, fearing what comes next.

BOXX

(to her)

He asked you a fuckin question, "Wrinkles".

Now she knows what they want.

QUINN

I'm older.

BOXX

Really? Nasty.

(stares at her)

You're lying.

He's right: her lying eyes betray her. She was trying to protect Steve. Boxx grabs her. Holds a gun on Steve. Jak holds up the syringe withdrawn from his own leather jacket. Quinn dreads what comes next. Struggles. Boxx holds her tighter.

JAK

Stay. Still.

STEVE

What are you giving her?!

Jak sticks Quinn with the needle. She screams. Boxx sighs, annoyed by her.

BOXX

Hey, "Wrinks" we're working here, okay? These are our fuckin office hours. Wanna hold it down?

(CONTINUED)

Steve tries to get Boxx's gun. Boxx hits him with the butt. Steve collapses to the ground. Quinn watches; helpless. Jak's look stops Boxx from hurting Steve.

JAK
Just red. That's all we want

He's almost done withdrawing a syringe of it. Pulls the needle. Places Quinn's finger over the punctured vein.

JAK (CONT'D)
It'll heal.

She moves to help her husband.

QUINN
I hope you animals die.

Jak thinks that over. A serious answer:

JAK
...that'd be nice.

Quinn just looks at him. They get on their bikes, ROAR off. Steve embraces his shaken wife. HOLD. OVER we HEAR a radio broadcast

RADIO BROADCAST (V.O.)
"...the death toll in the U.S.
alone, from months of terrorist
BLIZZ attacks, is now officially
over nine million and seven
American cities, including New York
and Los Angeles, remain destroyed
by the war"

CUT TO:

5 INT. DINER-DAY

5

Peggy and Kate prepare food. The radio is on in the b.g. A few photos of Peggy with her pretty, older sister ANNA hang on the wall. Taken a couple years ago. On the radio, we HEAR:

RADIO BROADCAST (V.O.)
"...in local news, murder
statistics in MUSKEET have
officials more concerned than ever.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RADIO BROADCAST (V.O.) (cont'd)

This month alone, there have been a reported twenty-five murders and fifteen rapes, and Chief of Police Harris advises citizens to avoid the community at all times, saying despite law enforcement efforts, MUSKEET gets worse every day. And now to sports...

KATE

Should burn it to the ground.

PEGGY

People live there, Mother.

KATE

Not people. Monsters. Anyone stupid enough to go there is asking for it.

Peggy changes subject.

PEGGY

Tell me, again, how it was with Daddy.

Kate shoots her a look. Plays along; their ritual.

KATE

Again? You must be tired of it by now.

(off Peggy's look)

He was handsome. He adored you both.

PEGGY

I wasn't born yet when he went off to fight. Only Anna was.

KATE

He knew your soul. The sweet girl you'd be.

PEGGY

He sang to me when I was inside you.

KATE

Every day.

She softly sings Rock A Bye Baby...poignance in her sweet voice.

(CONTINUED)

KATE (CONT'D)

"Rock a bye baby on the tree top,
when the wind blows the cradle will
rock..."

Peggy always loves that. She and Kate exchange small,
melancholic smiles.

6 OMIT 6

7 DINER FRONT DOOR 7

Someone is about to enter: a 40-ish woman, GERRI, face
covered by a black shroud. Kate notices and moves toward
her.

KATE AND GERRI

Kate blocks her entry.

GERRI

...Kate. It's Gerri. Please. I'm
hungry.

Kate considers for a moment. Directs her out. Whispers
harshly so diners who have entered don't notice.

KATE

Customers don't want to see you.
Stay away.

Gerri looks at Kate, devastated.

PEGGY

Sees this.

8 EXT. DINER-DAY 8

Peggy walks to Gerri a half block from the diner. She has a
sandwich wrapped up in a napkin.

PEGGY

Gerri?
(as Gerri turns)
It's Peggy.

(CONTINUED)

Peggy offers her the wrapped-up sandwich. Gerri hesitantly takes it.

GERRI
(appreciatively)
You were always the good one.

PEGGY
I gotta go.

Peggy walks, quickly, back to the diner.

GERRI

Brings the sandwich up under the veil. As she chews, we see her jaw is exposed bone, her muscles like something from a medical-book. The sight of her eating is horrible.

9 INT. DINER

9

Kate looks up as Peggy re-joins her at the grill.

KATE
Where'd you go?

PEGGY
Get some air.

Kate doesn't question it. In b.g., Boxx and Jak enter with two streetwise girls, CELIA and MIA. 19. 20. All are hungry, loud, edgy. They slide into a booth. Celia grabs at Boxx sexually. Mia hangs all over Jak.

PEGGY

Approaches them, warily, menus in hand.

ALL

Boxx eyes her lustfully. She distributes menus.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
Bring you anything while you
decide?

BOXX
Yeeessss....how are
your...lubricants prepared?

The girls hiss lewdly. Jak glances up at her. Noticing her for the first time. He realizes how attractive and vulnerably sweet she is. How attracted he is to her.

Peggy can't escape his stare, instantly drawn to him. She tries to hide it.

(CONTINUED)

JAK
Coffee. Black. Four. We'll try
and hold it down.

Celia grabs Boxx's crotch.

CELIA
You can try and hold it down. But
it'll win.

She bursts into loud, obnoxious, lascivious laughter. Boxx cracks up. Jak still takes-in Peggy. She tries to not be distracted by him. Mia is sensing Jak's growing disinterest in her.

PEGGY
Special today is burgers. And the
pie is fresh.

BOXX
Pie? Does it come with a kitty and
a grandma we can tor-ture?

MIA
(quickly)
We don't eat pie. We fucking
despise pie. We want meat. Big,
nasty pieces of meat. Right Celia?

CELIA
(nasty)
Bigger the better.

PEGGY
Like I said the burgers...

JAK
(ordering for all)
...all around. The works.

PEGGY
I'll get your coffees, put in the
order.

Boxx stops her, grabbing her wrist. It scares her.

KATE

In the back, sees this.

RESUME ALL

Boxx grins up at her; lethal charm.

(CONTINUED)

BOXX

And we're gonna need a coupla
pounds of ice, angel.
(dead eyes)
Crushed.

PEGGY

(beat)
Sure.

She moves off. Celia and Boxx grope each other. Mia leans head on Jak who is losing more interest in her. He's watching Peggy.

BOXX

We gotta get there, Jak. They're
gonna be waiting. They'll buy from
someone else.

JAK

It'll hold. We get ice...it'll
hold.
(beat)
Gotta take a piss.

He gets out of the booth. Goes into the bathroom.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. BLACK VAN - DAY

10

Driving in Muskeet. It turns down a deserted, crapped-out alley. Parks beside a dumpster. The driver and another man get out. Both are large, wear dark coveralls, gloves. They go around to the back of the van. Place breathing masks (filters) over mouths. Unlock and open the door.

ANGLE- INSIDE VAN

They pull away a tarp to reveal a tangle of

FIVE DEAD BODIES

All young women. Pale, naked. Wearing lurid make-up. A ghastly weave of limbs and curves. Their lean bodies are faintly bruised, unmarred by obvious wounds. They might be murder victims but it's hard to discern how they died.

THE TWO MEN

Grab the slender corpses, pull them, one by one, from the van. Toss them into the dumpster.

(CONTINUED)

As they move them, one woman's pale fingers suddenly clutch onto the driver's arm. She seems to look at him with pleading eyes, mascara and lipstick smeared.

ONE MAN
(to the other)
...fuckin' believe this?

They both chuckle under their breathing masks. He prys her hand away, tosses her into the pile inside the dumpster with the others. Her fingers continue to work; clutching at nothing.

11 INT. DUMPSTER - PILE OF BODIES - UP ANGLE 11

The two men pour gasoline on the bodies. Light them. Shut the dumpster top; a huge, steel casket.

CORPSES - CLOSE

Writhe in the heat. Hair shrivelling, eyes cooked, facial skin melted to reveal ghoulish death grins. Their fingers curl. Their bodies bend, pushing up against the closed lid, pressing it open a little.

12 EXT. DUMPSTER LID 12

Oily smoke seeps at its seam. The driver goes to shut it. The lid opens a bit more, as the bodies inside contort, keep pressing it upward. The woman who clutched the driver's arm can be seen, staring from flames which gobble her.

The driver watches as her mouth widens and her face melts. Her mouth emits a hideous humming noise. Her lips melt away, further, to show teeth and the humming gets louder; more ghastly.

CUT TO:

13 INT. DINER -- MOMENTS LATER 13

Peggy inconspicuously tracks where Jak is. Afraid he might have left. She grabs coffee cups, coffee pot.

JAK

Exits the bathroom. Instead of going back to the booth, he moves to the pie display case. Looks inside. ADJUST to Peggy who pours the coffees. His intense, handsome presence slightly overwhelms her.

(CONTINUED)

JAK
Make these?
(off her look)
The pies.

PEGGY
My Mother made them. Pie isn't
very popular at your table.

JAK
My friends are malcontents.

PEGGY
Pain transforms the sensitive into
cynics.
(self-conscious)
I...read that somewhere.

JAK
What's your name?

She's afraid. Attracted.

PEGGY
Peggy.

JAK
You ever get outta here? You know,
you ever go anywhere? Is this
your... existential moat? Your
Ark?

PEGGY
No.

JAK
How old are you?

PEGGY
Almost sixteen.

JAK
Got a boyfriend?
(off no answer)
Don't you wanna see the world.

PEGGY
My mother says there isn't much
left of the world.

JAK
Plenty left if you know where to
go.

(CONTINUED)

Peggy can see Kate glaring.

JAK (CONT'D)

That her?

PEGGY

I don't think my mother likes you
and your friends in here.

JAK

(beat)

You're pretty. Everybody tell you
that?

She doesn't answer. Face reddening. He likes her reaction
to him.

JAK (CONT'D)

Y'know, I might be in the
neighborhood tonight. I don't
sleep a lot. My mind kinda has a
mind of it's own.

PEGGY

Yeah?

JAK

Yeah. I go out around midnight,
take-in the devastation.

(a look)

Maybe I'll run into you, Peggy.

She looks into his eyes. He seems for real; his half-smile
irresistible.

PEGGY

You have a girlfriend.

JAK

Her? She's just...something to
scribble on.

(touches her cheek)

You're something I haven't seen in
a long time.

He takes the tray of four coffees from her. Walks to the
booth. Peggy is floored. Jak is the most exciting thing
she's ever laid eyes on.

Kate is immediately beside her.

KATE

What did he want?

(CONTINUED)

PEGGY
Just wanted to talk.

KATE
About what?

PEGGY
Pie.

Kate sees Boxx and Celia groping. Her contempt for this group is obvious.

KATE
Look at them. No respect for anything.

PEGGY
They just want something to eat.
Like everybody else.
(beat)
He was nice.

Kate reacts to that. Goes into immediate protection of her daughter; walks to their booth.

KATE

Standing over them. Icy:

KATE
We're closing early. No charge for the coffee.

BOXX
We didn't get our burgers.

CELIA
We want our food.

KATE
Sorry.

BOXX
You're not sorry.

KATE
I want you all out of here.

BOXX
What's eating you?

MIA
She's a bitch.

(CONTINUED)

CELIA

Cunt.

JAK

Shut-up, Celia. We don't eat where we aren't welcome.

BOXX

Hey "Bitch-Cunt", that your daughter?

JAK

Shut-up, man.

BOXX

(off Kate's silence)

I feel sorry for her.

(gets in her face)

There's something ugly inside of you and it wants out. I wouldn't want to be in the way when it starts hissing.

He makes a fast, threatening HISS sound and Kate reacts. Boxx laughs malefic glee. The group leaves. Boxx and the girls kick chairs, slam the door. Jak leaves with a last glance to Peggy.

PEGGY

Approaches her mother.

KATE

They were from MUSKEET. I could smell it on them.

PEGGY

They weren't hurting anyone, Mother.

KATE

Don't defend them. They came to exploit us. To exploit you.

PEGGY

He was being friendly.

KATE

It's a trick. Everything people in MUSKEET do is a goddamned trick!

(beat)

I'm not going to lose another daughter.

(CONTINUED)

Peggy cleans-up their table; cups, ashtrays. Finally:

PEGGY

I have to grow-up sometime.

KATE

You have to make your father and sister proud... be what they couldn't since the world murdered them.

PEGGY

I can't be them, Mother. I'm just me.

KATE

No. You aren't. You're the future of our family. All we have left.

Peggy nods. But the burdens her mother has placed on her are heavy. She hears motorcycles kick-start outside the diner. Moves to the window of the diner and sees

14 JAK AND BOXX 14

Ready to go. Mia and Celia on the back of each bike. Jak takes a last look back at Peggy.

15 PEGGY 15

Reacts to him. Craving relief from the world that traps her. OVER we HEAR

M.C. (V.O.)

...is it obscenity or science?
Poetry or pornography

CUT TO:

16 INT. "DOOM ROOM" - M.C. - DAY 16

Brow raised; savoring the unsavory.

M.C.

You'll have to be the judge. Take a stand for once in your vacuous, insuf-ferable life.

The crowd chuckles, drinks, gropes, listens. Shifting like unstable molecules.

(CONTINUED)

M.C. (CONT'D)

The act you will see in a few moments is not an offering of mere sensation, but a bona-fide scientific demon-stration. Not for the faint of heart...nor the weak of will. Let me caution those of you whose nerves are not what they used to be...

(yells into mike)

GET THE FUCK OUT NOWWWWWWWWWWWW!

ANOTHER ANGLE

In b.g. we notice Boxx and Jak enter the seedy club. Waved in by TWO LARGE DOORMEN: the same men we saw dump the girl's corpses from the van. Boxx and Jak make eye-contact with the M.C. He manages a slight nod.

M.C.

(checks watch)

Tick, tick, tick. Buckle in, buckaroos. The show is so close it's crawling-up your you-know-what.

The M.C. leaves the stage. Gestures Boxx and Jak to follow him into the back room of the DOOM ROOM. OVER we HEAR a clock ticking...

CUT TO:

INSERT-CLOCK

11:45 P.M.

17

INT. KATE'S HOUSE-PEGGY-NIGHT

17

In her sad little room in the house she and Kate share. She sits at her desk. Doing homework. Watching the clock. She sighs. Trying to concentrate. In the other room, she can HEAR her Mother snoring.

Peggy finally closes the book. Tormented by the decision. Walks to her closet. Opens it. Stares unhappily at the few clothes she has; all dull. She glances, again, at the clock. There is not much time left. She sits at her desk, begins to write a note. Glances up at

WALL PHOTOS

Of her sister Anna and father Michael; both long gone. Her finger traces a frame.

(CONTINUED)

PEGGY

Guilt crosses her features.

CUT TO:

17A EXT. KATE'S HOUSE-NIGHT 17A

Peggy comes down the back stairs and exits.

18 EXT. NIGHT STREETS-NIGHT 18

Peggy is on foot. Fearful of the empty streets. Nearing the CLOSED diner. The streets are empty except for a few cars that pass. Streetlights flicker; unrepaired.

Rusted police cars roam, unnerving cop faces glaring from inside. They bleach her with their searchlight. Move on.

Septic winds rake night; streets.

Peggy hears a noise: in the diner. Something is inside. It scares her. She gets closer; confused. Didn't she lock it?

She sees a small orange light inside. It moves.

She gathers her courage. Uses her key, unlocks the diner. Cautiously enters.

19 INT. DINER 19

She scans the shadows, mouth dry.

JAK (V.O.)

...pie this good, you're just asking for trouble, angel.

A light goes on. Jak stands there, smoking. Gesturing to the refrigerator case of pies. She's a bit shocked.

PEGGY

...what are you doing in here?

JAK

...short-circuiting tragedy. World has big teeth, eats girls like you for kicks if somebody doesn't look out for em.

She doesn't understand.

(CONTINUED)

JAK (CONT'D)

Suppose that bathroom window didn't
lock like it should. Anyone could
bust in.

(CONTINUED)

PEGGY
(sarcastic)
And you came to fix it?

JAK
I came for the pie.

He makes her feel self-conscious and at ease, all at once.

PEGGY
You can't be in here. We're
closed.

He looks at her in the dim light from the street.

JAK
Maybe you just look that way.

She's dressed a way she hopes he'll like. A little more grown-up. But her awkwardness and insecurity shine through. She's obviously never done anything like this; virginal in all ways.

PEGGY
You never told me your name.

JAK
Jak. No "C".

She tries to be light; covering her nerves. He moves closer to her. She backs away, fighting her attraction.

PEGGY
Well...where did it go? You have
to have a "C". What'll you do if
you have to say "CAT" or
"CALIFORNIA"?

JAK
There is no more California.
Didn't you hear?

PEGGY
I heard.

There's chemistry to burn between them.

JAK
Come here.

She isn't sure. He's soft; hypnotic.

(CONTINUED)

JAK (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna hurt you. Come here.

She finally, slowly moves closer to him. Stands right in front of him. She has never been this close to a man in her life. Tries not to show it.

Jak looks into her sweet eyes. Slowly reaches a hand toward her face.

Her lipstick is a tiny bit off on lower lip. He makes it right with a gentle fingertip. Peggy can't believe he touched her; it felt deeply intimate.

PEGGY

It's my sister, Anna's. I don't usually wear lipstick.

He smiles a little. She tries to act comfortable.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

So...do you always come out after dark?

JAK

You gotta come after it. Or it'll come after you.

PEGGY

I like that.

(beat)

So...what do you do? There's nothing to do.

JAK

Your mother tell you that?

PEGGY

I've heard it around.

He studies her.

JAK

You don't even know what around is, do you?

He's scaring her a little.

PEGGY

Not exactly.

It's hard to read what he's thinking. She's afraid it's the worst.

(CONTINUED)

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Did you tell me you'd be around
tonight so I'd come and you could
hurt me?

JAK

Maybe I hoped you'd come to take
away my hurt.

She likes that.

PEGGY

They say everybody gets what they
deserve.

JAK

Let's hope they're right.

Suddenly, from outside, a car's headlights swerve wildly
toward the diner; toward them. LOUD MUSIC pouring from
speakers. Jak doesn't move; calmly lights a cigarette.
Peggy is scared.

20 THE HEADLIGHTS 20

Bore closer, headed right for the diner.

21 PEGGY AND JAK 21

She's ready to jump away. Jak grabs her hand. Holds it
tightly.

ADJUST as the headlights and attached MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE do
a brody, stop dead perfect in front of the diner, tires
smoking. Jak takes her hand. Leads her outside.

22 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE DINER-MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE 22

Boxx behind the wheel. Celia beside him, looking cheap;
succulent. Expendable. Boxx knobs-down the brain-melt
music. Smiles cobra charm at Jak and Peggy.

BOXX

Aren't you tots out a little late?

JAK

Not yet.

(CONTINUED)

CELIA
(studies her)
Mommy let you out? Doesn't your
Bible get lonely.

PEGGY
I should go home, Jak.

BOXX
Fuck her, man. We got places to
be, Jak. More things to sell...

Peggy turns. Re-locks the diner. Jak gets close; speaks
with calm; reassurance.

JAK
...hey, I won't let anything happen
to you. Except what you want.

PEGGY
I shouldn't even be out. My Mother
will be worried sick.

Peggy doesn't want to tell him everything. Has to:

PEGGY (CONT'D)
I'm all she has.

He looks at her. Understands. Breaks it to her:

JAK
Then, you're in a prison. And
you're never getting out. See ya.

He walks toward Boxx and Celia. Peggy finishes locking the
diner door. Walks away in the opposite direction.

Jak hops in back. Stares at stars.

BOXX
So. We good?

Jak is disappointed, a little pissed.

JAK
Not even close.

CELIA
She's a spoiled little fuck, Jak.
Too young for you.

(CONTINUED)

JAK

...maybe I'm too old for me.

BOXX

Deep. What's your fuckin' problem?

JAK

What isn't?

BOXX

Know what we need? WE NEED TO HAVE
SOME SHITKICKING FUN!!

An unamused smile from Jak.

23 MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE 23

Roars away. Screeches to a stop, half a block down. Peggy is suddenly in it's headlights. She stares at them. Jak reacts to her as she looks into his eyes.

SMASH CUT TO:

24 P.O.V.- MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE 24

Rocketing toward Muskeet. OVER we HEAR Boxx singing a song he seems to make-up and yell/sing.

BOXX (V.O.)

"I wanna RIDE! With my curvy,
twisted honey--by my SIDE! As we
whiz along the highway we will HUG
and SNUGGLE and have a little
STRUGGLE!"

25 INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE 25

Boxx drives, snapping around tilted curves. Pounding hands on steering wheel to the beat. Celia squeals, excitedly. Boxx grows instantly serious; talks like a stiff, informative, baritone academic:

BOXX

"STRUGGLE." Verb. Act of
promiscuous loveplay; usage evolved
during W.W. III."

(his voice)

Personally recommended.

He drives even faster. Headlights spread frantic, buttery yellow over highway. He shares a bottle of oddly-colored liquid with Celia. He swigs. She swigs.

(CONTINUED)

He turns up the percussive music; a pervasive throb.

BOXX (CONT'D)

You can have your walking under
MOONLIGHT BEAMS! At a hundred
miles an hour, let me DREAM my
fuckin DREAMS!

Celia SCREAMS giddily. The wind buffets their hair, whipping it into crazed, Medusa-mode.

Jak and Peggy are in the back seat. Boxx suddenly speeds around a tight corner. The turn makes Peggy slide closer to Jak. He drapes an arm around her. She is scared, thrilled to be with him.

CUT TO:

26 INT. "DOOM ROOM"-M.C. OFFICE-NIGHT 26

The M.C. is in his office, shirt open, shiny jacket draped over a chair. He leans in close to a naked young woman who lays on his couch. Her eyes are shut, her body beautiful.

He scans it with empty eyes; a sociopath's feast. Runs his hand over her breasts and nipples. Gently drifts fingers over her perfect belly. Feels between her legs. Almost smiles.

He grabs a syringe with needle. It's filled with something amber. He injects her and she stirs a bit. He talks softly, seductively.

M.C.

...yeahhh. Feels good, doesn't it?

He stokes her face as she trembles. She begins to make the HUMMING noise and he gently places his hand over her mouth.

M.C. (CONT'D)

...shhhhh.

He watches her as she writhes a bit. Touches her.

CUT TO:

27 HEADLIGHTS 27

Spurt ahead, yellow glowing, as the Mustang snarls through night; a bullet skimming earth.

28 INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE 28

They suddenly hit a dip. Their young bodies are jolted and all four laugh crazily. Boxx and Celia seem to be getting high. Boxx holds up a drug-intake device; like an asthma puffer.

BOXX
Snacks, anyone?

Box passes Jak and Peggy the drug device. Jak takes it. Peggy is unsure.

PEGGY
...what is it?

BOXX
It's what's inside your head,
angel. Lets it come out and play.

Jak takes a hit into his mouth. Leans in to kiss Peggy. Gently blows it into her soft mouth as their lips touch.

PEGGY

Breathes in the drug mist. Reacts to the kiss. And the mist. Slowly falls into a spell.

DISSOLVE TO:

29 PEGGY'S POV 29

Drugged; dizzied. The car careens insanely, Celia and Boxx are crazed distortions, cartoon-like; distended, crayon-colored. Peggy's hand seems to meld into Jak's. City lights splinter and prism; form words, shapes.

The highway, itself, seems half-alive, its charscape rising-up like a snarling boa.

30 PEGGY 30

Her eyes close, her heads leans. She's out. The drums of the car's music pound like headhunter be-bop. Gradually, improbably, the sounds are replaced by the innocent laughter of little children.

DISSOLVE TO:

31 EXT. A BACKYARD BIRTHDAY PARTY-DAY (FLASHBACK SEQUENCE) 31

This is Peggy's 7th birthday party, in Kate's backyard. The sequence is the full version of Kate's earlier nightmare.

Present beneath the bright balloons are Peggy, her little birthday friend Mariel and Mariel's mother, GERRI who hums and fusses with sandwiches for the girls. Kate is happy, young. Taking care of everything. Even the sun shines more brightly.

Also present is Peggy's older sister ANNA; a pretty girl of 10.

VARIOUS

The little girls are laughing, dancing, having an impromptu Silly String fight.

KATE (V.O.)
Girrrrlss! You're making a mess.
Ruining the backyard. I'd really
like to get a close-up!

KATE

Videotapes the party. Having lots of fun. Swings the camera over to Anna for a moment.

KATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Lets try it one more time, shall
we?

CAMERA POV OF ANNA

Through the lens. Placing candles on the cake and starting to light them. Anna tries to sneak a fingertip of frosting.

KATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Anna!

The way she said it was a little too firm. It hurts Anna's feelings.

ANNA
You would've let Peggy do it.

KATE (V.O.)
Sweetheart, it's Peggy's birthday.
You're 7 years old today, isn't
that right, Peg.

(CONTINUED)

PEGGY

Peggy. Not Peg.

ANNA

You wouldn't've let me do it even if it was my birthday. I wish Daddy was here. He'd be on my side.

KATE (V.O.)

Your sister is tired of all your complaining.

ANNA

It's you. What did I do to you?

KATE (V.O.)

(pleasantly)

You're just a little willful, honey. That's all.

Anna frowns. Looks upward.

ANNA

What's wrong with the sky?

Suddenly Mariel cries out in pain.

The VIDCAM POV swings over to her. Her cheek has an open blister.

Both mothers look up at the sky. It has gotten a bit darker, as if a cloud covers the sun. And thin, grey flakes are falling.

KATE

It's "BLIZZ"...everybody take cover. For Godsake!

The VIDCAM is dropped, it's POV tumbling.

VARIOUS

As individual flakes of BLIZZ lands on skin, they cause smoke, blistering and

INSERT-SKIN

The BLIZZ eats right through to the bone.

GERRI

(CONTINUED)

Is getting covered by the gently-falling BLIZZ as she tries to shield her screaming daughter, covering her eyes and face.

32 INT. HOUSE-KATE, ANNA, PEGGY 32

Kate runs inside with her two daughters. Locks the door and watches Gerri and Mariel through the window.

GERRI
(various)
KATE! LET US IN! PLEASE LET US
IN!!

PEGGY looks at her Mother with pleading eyes.

PEGGY
Let them in, Mommy!

Kate is fighting everything inside her.

KATE
I can't!

Anna tries to open the door.

ANNA
Let them in! It's going to kill
them, Mommy!

KATE
(wailing)
I can't! They have it on them!
It'll kill us if we get near it!

33 EXT. KATE'S HOUSE-BACK YARD 33

Gerri and Mariel are screaming, pleading to be let in. Being burned to the bone by BLIZZ. They SCREAM in helpless terror, faces melting from the BLIZZ. OVER we HEAR Boxx's HOWLING AND HOOTING laughter

CUT TO:

34 PEGGY-CLOSE 34

Coming out of the drug-induced nightmare/flashback. She's still woozy, her head on Jak's lap. Dead landscape blurs by like a process shot.

BOXX

(CONTINUED)

Drives fast, teeth gritted. Bops to straightjacket tunes.
Celia has her tongue in his ear.

BOXX

Ooooooh, I think I hear sumpin'
comin' up the stairs into mah
fuckin' ber-rain.
(eyes crossed)
...MMMMMMMM!

PEGGY

Manages to sit up. Her hair blows in chill air as the
Mustang Convertible races through night. Jak smiles at her.

PEGGY

...how long was I out?

JAK

Few minutes. Go anywhere good?

PEGGY

I saw bad things. BLIZZ. They
dropped some during my birthday
party when I was seven. I watched
my friends burn to death.

JAK

BLIZZ got a lot of people. My
folks. Brother and sister.

He says nothing more. Peggy sees his pain.

CELIA

Is taking the same stuff they snorted and putting it into a
syringe. Mixing it with spit she dribbles into the syringe.
She shakes it up. It turns amber-colored. To Peggy:

CELIA

...bet you're going to school,
aren't you?

PEGGY

Starting in September.

CELIA

(turns with cruel sarcasm)
Good for you

BOXX

Hey, Jak, gotta teach the debutante
how to mussel-tussle.

(CONTINUED)

Boxx waggles eyebrows at them in the rearview. Peggy is lost; uneasy. Boxx goes, again, into his official Academic voice: stiff, deep and informative.

BOXX (CONT'D)

"Mussel-Tussle. Noun. Slang for the result of injecting a drug into a muscle; usage evolved during W.W. III."

(regular voice)

That was one fucking busy war.

He rolls up sleeve. Celia moves the syringe to his forearm,

SYRINGE

The amber drug inside shimmers and quivers. OVER we HEAR

PEGGY (V.O.)

Jak where are we going?

ALL

Peggy is nervous. Boxx passes back the syringe. Jak quickly jabs himself. Boxx howls and beeps the horn. Swerves wildly, headlights zagging.

Jak offers the syringe to Peggy. She doesn't want any. Boxx laughs like a twisted banshee.

CELIA

Ever see the loopys dance, Bambi?

JAK

Shut up, Celia.

BOXX

Oh, she's got to see that. Got to give Bambi a thrill.

Peggy looks at a passing roadsign.

35 PASSING ROADSIGN 35

It reads "MUSKEET": 9 MILES. (**Production Note:** MUSKEET is 50 miles away. An hour's drive.)

36 INT. CONVERTIBLE 36

Peggy is scared. Realizes where they're headed.

(CONTINUED)

PEGGY

I want to go home, Jak.

CELIA

(turns bitterly)

We all do.

(serious beat)

There isn't one anymore.

JAK

Leans over to her as the drug hits him. Kisses her hard, his hands going up under her top. She doesn't want that right now. But his kisses take her away. She's quickly lost in him. ADJUST to see Boxx watching them in the rearview. He pants like a rabid dog, tongue out; howls with laughter.

BOXX

"Oh be a beast, beast, beast,
Beast, BEAST to me!"

37 MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE 37

Speeds toward MUSKEET; dark, sordid country. OVER we HEAR a woman's erratic breathing.

CUT TO:

38 INT. KATE'S HOUSE-NIGHT 38

Kate sits upright from a nightmare. She looks at the photo of Michael on the wall. Tries to recover from what the nightmare must have been.

Looks at the bedside clock.

INSERT-CLOCK

12:38 A.M.

KATE (V.O.)

...Peggy?

KATE

Searches Peggy's room. Then, their small apartment. Finally finds a note on the front door.

NOTE

Handwritten. It reads. "Couldn't sleep. Went for a walk. I'm fine. Don't worry."

(CONTINUED)

KATE

Betrayal tightens her features.

KATE (CONT'D)

Liar.
(betrayed)
They got to you.
(SCREAMS)
They got to you!!

She quickly puts on clothing, coat, boots. Grabs car keys and a knife. Heads out the front door, slamming it shut behind herself.

38A EXT. KATE'S HOUSE-NIGHT 38A

Kate goes to her car.

39 OMIT 39

40 INT. KATE'S BATTERED CAR 40

Kate is worried sick. She's nervous, flips on the radio. Watching the road. The dash clock reads: 12:47

RADIO BROADCAST

"...and the controversy over L.P.s, commonly referred to as LOOPYS, has now reached the Supreme Court which will decide the legal fate of the phenomenon which has horrified and fascinated..."

She turns it off. Oncoming headlights bleach her face.

SMASH CUT TO:

41 INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE-NIGHT 41

CLOSE-CIGARETTE LIGHTER

Glowing orange and round. It lights a cigarette.

As the convertible guzzles highway at 100 MPH, Boxx and Celia laugh, smoke, play with the windshield wipers. She tries to burn him with the cigarette lighter. He writhes around to avoid her and they both laugh uncontrollably.

(CONTINUED)

Peggy watches landscape turn to the wounded misery of MUSKEET outskirts.

BOXX

Almost to the border, kids. Hang
onto your broken dreams.

(CONTINUED)

Within seconds they pass a road sign

42 SIGN 42

It reads: ENTERING "MUSKEET"

43 EXT."MUSKEET"-NIGHT 43

The sick viscera of a half-devastated U.S. city; WWIII tore down most of the country and world in 2007.

Cities are re-building. But MUSKEET just gets worse; a bad place. Rabid gangs roam. Cars burn. Howls echo from abandoned buildings. Bleakness has overtaken everything.

Frightening looking, skeletal figures rim the roadsides; looking for a ride, a hand-out. Their fleshless faces watch the cars go by.

44 INT. CONVERTIBLE 44

They all realize they are somewhere awful; dangerous.

PEGGY
What's that smell?

JAK
Nothing.

But Boxx and Celia know better.

CUT TO:

44A EXT. ROAD-NIGHT 44A *

Kate races toward Muskeet. *

45 INT. KATE'S CAR 45

She drives, faster and faster. A road sign ahead shines in her headlights

46 ROAD SIGN 46

"MUSKEET" 33 MILES

CUT TO:

47 INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE-NIGHT

47

Boxx drives. Peggy is concerned about the time.

PEGGY

I've been gone too long. What will
I tell my mother?

(CONTINUED)

JAK

I don't know. That you had a great
time for once in your life.

His eyes lure her in, again. She slowly smiles unable to
resist him.

PEGGY

I like you.

JAK

What do you like?

PEGGY

Everything.
(beat)
So, where are we going?

JAK

DOOM ROOM. Do a little business,
have a little fun.

Boxx and Celia howl with approval.

48 OMIT 48

48A EXT. ROAD-NIGHT 48A *
Kate rockets to Muskeet. *

49 INT. KATE'S OLD CAR - NIGHT 49

She drives fast, a broken world awash in her headlights.
Other headlights shine in her face. Her fears for Peggy fill
her scared eyes. She grips the wheel tightly.

CUT TO:

50 EXT. "MUSKEET"-NIGHT 50

Downtown MUSKEET. Even more dangerous and brutal up close.
Lethal denizens drift. Businesses are illicit; faces that
run them pure predator.

51 MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE 51

Parks. A CREEP approaches. Checks out the MUSTANG.

BOXX

Like it?

(CONTINUED)

The shrieks of a wasted crowd. The door buckles out a bit as someone bumps against it hard from inside.

JAK
Here to see him.

GIANT DOOR GUY
Second time today. You guys are good, eh?

BOXX
Fuckin great.

Boxx shows him the package they've brought. One of the DOOR GUYS nods. The door is opened.

55 INT. "DOOM ROOM"

55

Bedlam. The house band in full tantrum; trumpets, drums and guitars electrocuting the room. The dancers jump and flip, expressions crazed, wasted on everything nasty. In the corner of the bar, the M.C. hits on a needle-whore.

The house band suddenly finishes their frenetic tune. The crowd SHRIEKS; in adrenal madness

ON STAGE

The red curtains close. Sliding out is the gloom-glitz M.C.

M.C.
That was our house band, folks.
Let 'em know you care by putting
your hands together...like you're
swatting something small and
helpless.
(toxic grin)
Tonight's main show is on the plate
and almost ready to be eaten kids.
Hungry?

The place erupts. He chuckles, laughs loudly; an ugly sight. Then, berates them; yelling accusatively:

M.C. (CONT'D)
SHUT UP!
(pointing)
YOU! YOU! YOU! YOU! YOU! ALL
OF YOU!

The place quiets down. He nods polite appreciation.

(CONTINUED)

M.C. (CONT'D)

Gracias, amigos.

(beat)

Now...because we run an upscale establishment: management requests no guns, meaningful conversation or self-surgery during the show.

(amid chuckles)

As to legal details? Well, since you asked, let's get through the small print quickly.

(talks incredibly fast)

In 2008 a clause in the postwar law allowed the L.U.P. performance if it was orally prefaced as an exposition of science. Hence my "oral preface"..

(suggestively)

...wanna see it, again?

BOXX, JAK, CELIA, PEGGY

Take a seat at a table near the stage. Boxx carries a package that drips. The M.C. notices them; acts like he doesn't know them:

M.C. (CONT'D)

And where are you folks from?

BOXX

Your ass.

The M.C. looks like he could kill Boxx beneath the slash of smile.

M.C.

You're funny.

(lethal smile)

It'll destroy your life, trust me.

Enjoy the show.

The M.C. leaves the stage. He nods Jak and Boxx toward his back room.

JAK

(to Peggy)

Me and Boxx gotta go talk to a guy for a minute. Be right back.

She notices Boxx carries a package that drips. Something inside is on ice.

(CONTINUED)

PEGGY AND CELIA

Sit. Waiting for the show. Nothing to say to each other.

CELIA
They say this is totally sick.

PEGGY
What is it?

CELIA
(considers)
What happens to people like me.

55A EXT. MUSKEET STREETS-NIGHT 55A *
Kate arrives. *

56 EXT. "MUSKEET STREET" - NIGHT 56
Kate parks her car. Gets out. She instantly has a knife to her throat. ADJUST to reveal the CREEP from earlier, spinning the keys to the car in his hand. She stares at him without fear.

CREEP
Whattya doin' in our cesspool lady?

KATE
I'm looking for someone.

CREEP
Oh, yeah?

KATE
A girl.

CREEP
What's her name?

KATE
Doesn't matter.

CREEP
...that's a fucked-up name.

He cups her breasts. Tears her blouse open. Starts to slide hand into her pants.

CREEP
Let's go for a ride in my new car.

(CONTINUED)

KATE

(CONTINUED)

M.C.

I would differ. It was one step up from water. How old were they? A hundred?

BOXX

This stuff we got is killer.

M.C.

You understand I do not covet an impossible standard. Only a quality level that will engender a performance that doesn't affront myself or my patrons.

(beat)

My club, my rules.

JAK

Hold on.

M.C.

Not done. As we all agree, fresh plasma assists the desired effect. It reinvigorates the drama of the show and my patrons appreciate that. Watery plasma does not advance said performance nor the cause of entertain-ment per se.

JAK

Look, sometimes it's hard to get the highest quality. Okay? We try. Nothing on the street is consistent.

M.C.

Change streets, honey.

BOXX

This stuff is good. Kept it on ice, whole number. It'll do the trick.

M.C.

Maybe yes, maybe no. I'll ascertain what does the trick. I will incorporate what you've procured into the first show. If the quality is sufficient, we'll arrive at an equitable fee.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

M.C. (cont'd)

If not, I'll pour the rest down
your throats like they were toilets
until you fuckin' drown.

(beat)

Enjoy the show.

Jak and Boxx say nothing. Boxx hands the M.C. the stuff.

60

TABLE

60

They return to where the girls are. Two POMADE CREEPS are hitting on the girls, cheap smoke curling over pocked faces. Scanning the girl's curves with unblinking, bloodshot eyes.

One creep touches Peggy, through she tries to push him away. His grimy fingers snake into her clothes; grabbing her breasts, jamming into her pants. His black teeth grin.

POMADE CREEP

You like that, don't you?

Suddenly, he's pulled from her, turned. His fingers are bent back, broken. ADJUST to see Jak.

JAK

Table only seats four.

POMADE CREEP

So leave, fuckhead.

Jak snaps his fingers. The guy yelps, whimpers away. His friend gets vindictive, throws a punch at Jak. Jak dodges it, breaks the guy's nose like a bony tomato. The Creep grabs it, covers it with a napkin. Pulls it away, looks at the blood.

BOXX

Reacts to the blood. Interested professionally. Decides better.

POMADE CREEP AND JAK

Snarls at Jak through blood.

CREEP (CONT'D)

You broke my nose!

JAK

You're blocking our view. Mind?

The Creep knows better than to mess with Jak. Slinks away into the crowd at the bar.

(CONTINUED)

Jak sits with the girls. So does Boxx.

JAK AND PEGGY

She looks at his hand.

PEGGY

You okay?

JAK

Fine.

PEGGY

I don't like it here. It scares me.

JAK

You're with me. Just watch. We gotta stay through the show.

CROWD

Is apprehensive.

A GAUNT WAITRESS

Moves with speedy annoyance to Jak, Boxx and the girls.

BOXX

Orange Swamps. Straight up. All around.

The waitress nods, vanishes into the smoky, swirling mania of the club.

CELIA

Watches with blase aplomb. Suddenly erupts with impatience:

CELIA

Been waiting long enough! When does this goddamned wound OPEN?!!

No one even notices.

61 EXT. "MUSKEET" STREET - NIGHT

61

Kate walks cautiously. Seems to know where she's going.

62 INT. "DOOM ROOM"-NIGHT

62

The crowd is beyond restless. Suddenly

THE M.C.

Is back on stage, slipping through the slash in the closed curtains. Sucking on a smoke. His shiny blue jacket does a trout shimmer. His eyes move over the crowd like flicks of doom.

M.C.

Well, well, well...all ghastly things come to those who wait. The time has come. Who's ready for the show?

The place explodes with SCREAMS, HOOTS, APPLAUSE.

M.C. (CONT'D)

Who wants to behold the miraculous and obscene phenomenon of our times? Hands?

The crowd goes nuts.

M.C. (CONT'D)

Who wants to see the L.U.P.?

The crowd is nearly out of control.

M.C. (CONT'D)

Say it with me! "We wanna see the L.U.P"!!!

The crowd says it back. A lunatic CHANT builds louder and louder, faster and faster.

CROWD

Chanting. Fingers stabbing with emphasis.

CROWD

"WE WANNA SEE THE L.U.P."

ALL

Riveted. The drinks have arrived at the table, via the waitresses arm: a disembodied THUD. Boxx gurgles his green drink thirstily. Jak takes a drink. Celia downs hers. Peggy sips. Boxx nudges her, excitedly.

(CONTINUED)

BOXX
CHUGGALUG!

PEGGY

Looks down at her drink.

ORANGE SWAMP

A murky, orange stew. Chipped ice bobs.

PEGGY

Forces herself to take a sip and chokes on the drink, spraying her top with orange swamp droplets. Flaming liquid trickles into her stomach. She blinks, dizzily. Heart racing.

M.C.
Ladies and gentlemen! Brace yourselves! The L.U.P. Phenomenon is here tonight, rigggghht now!

He gestures to the curtains. Yells it out:

M.C. (CONT'D)
The Loopys are in the HOUSE!

Suddenly, the lights come down. The band's music begins, raping the air with saxophone, a menace of trombone; a moaning brassiness. The club is sweat, smoke, darkness.

PEGGY

Grabs her drink. Swallows more. Numbing herself.

PEGGY
Please...can we leave? Jak?

JAK
After. Just watch.

She dare not lift her gaze to the purpled silence of the stage, three feet away.

ALL

Wait. A restless murmur fills the room; the nightclub a wordless crypt. Cobwebs of smoke drift in the purple light across the stage.

(CONTINUED)

SUDDENLY the red curtains open with such a rush, the crowd gasps. The band explodes shrapnel music. The stagelights blind. The CROWD react in shock to what they see.

PEGGY

Looks up in horror to where it stands.

THE LOOPY

It had been a woman. Her hair is black, a framing of snarled ebony for the tallow mask that was her face. Her shadow-rimmed eyes are closed behind lids as smooth and white as ivory.

Her mouth, a lipless and unmoving line, is like a clotted sword wound beneath her nose.

Her throat, shoulders and arms are white. Motionless. At her sides, protruding from sleeve ends of the green transparency she wears, hang alabaster hands.

ALL

React. Wordless.

PEGGY

Almost paralyzed with horror. The DRUMBEATS, in the air, seem to fill her body; alter her heartbeat.

M.C. (V.O.)

Ladies and Gentlemen this freak of physiological abnormality was discovered during the war when, following certain chemical attacks, many of the dead troops were found erect...performing the spasmodic gyrations which later became affection-ately known as the "Loopy's" dance. Some of them even continued fighting. That, my friends, is fuckin patriot-ism.

THE LOOPY

Still stands, motionless. The thing that was a nameless victim of the plague stands palely rigid, amid the dramatic cadence of the drum, while the distillation sluices through its veins.

(CONTINUED)

M.C. (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The particular chemical responsible was later distilled and is now used in carefully controlled experiments which are conducted under the strict-est of legal supervision.

(dark chuckle)

Well...almost. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you: The Dance of The Dead...

Now the drum throbs increase; a racing heartbeat. The Loopy's eyelid twitches.

CROWD

In sick thrall.

PEGGY

Rapt, gripped by the horror. Eyes wide, unblinking circles that suck, into her brain, the sight of the thing that had been a woman.

THE LOOPY

Its pale eyes flutter open. In b.g., the band releases brass-throated moaning from the darkness, like some deranged animal made of welded horns.

Without warning the right arm of the Loopy jerks at its side, the tendons suddenly contracted. The left arm twitches, snaps out, falls back against thigh.

Right arm out. Left arm. Right. Left-right-left-right...like marionette arms, twitching on dangling strings.

VARIOUS

Reactions are fixated, horrified.

DRUM BRUSHES

Scratch out a rhythm for the convulsions.

PEGGY

Presses back further in her chair, numbed and cold.

THE LOOPY

(CONTINUED)

Its right foot moves now, jerking up inflexibly. A second and third contraction cause the leg to twitch as the left leg flings-out in a violent spasm.

It also makes a horrible HUMMING sound (the air exiting the lungs).

Then, the woman's body lurched stiffly forward, filming the transparent silk to its light and shadow. ADJUST to

PEGGY

Reacting as the flailing Loopy heads straight for her. Peggy gasps dizzily, pressing back in horror, unable to take her eyes from its now agitated face.

She watches the mouth jerk to a gaping cavity, then a twisted scar that splits into a wound again.

She sees the Loopy's dark nostrils twitching, its flesh writhing beneath ivory cheeks.

THE LOOPY

One lifeless eye winks monstrously. OVER we HEAR the gasp of startled laughter in the room.

THE BAND

Grating noise. QUICK PAN to the Loopy's arms and legs jerking with convulsive cramps that throw her body around the lighted stage like a full-sized ragdoll given spastic life.

CROWD

Shocked by the twisting, leaping dance.

BOXX

Enjoying every second.

BOXX

(to Jak)

He'll pay. She's on fuckin fire!

THE LOOPY

Dancing, more and more erratically. Out of control. As she convulses and weaves off the stage, the curtain closes.

(CONTINUED)

M.C. (V.O.)

Well? Did you enjoy our first
dancer?! Did it make you want to
consider a career in...science?

THE CROWD

Voyeurs. Scum. Scattered chuckles.

THE M.C.

Smoking, drinking. Eyes scanning the ugly faces.

M.C. (CONT'D)

Just can't get enough of the
L.U.P.s can you? Nothing like a
little Lifeless Undeath Phenomenon
to liven up a dull fuckin' night in
nowhere.

(beat)

Well, there's more icky, spasmodic
surprises in store.

(beat)

Time to welcome our second dancer.
A girl who just loves the
limelight. Make her feel welcome
and maybe she'll return the empty
gesture by dancing her jellied
heart out...

THE CURTAINS

Open fast. A second Loopy stands with back to the crowd.
Her blonde hair hangs. Her outfit is suggestive. She wears
false nails on leprous hands. A single muscular tic slightly
trembles her exposed back.

THE BAND

Begins its slo-mo assault.

PEGGY

Trapped by the wailing, malignant beat.

THE LOOPY

Begins to jerk. The paroxysmal twitching and warping
convulsion make it turn toward the crowd.

PEGGY

(CONTINUED)

Studies the Loopy. Then comes dawning, traumatized recognition and Peggy SCREAMS. Points at the Loopy. Jak is beside Peggy.

JAK
...what is it?

PEGGY
...it's impossible!

She SCREAMS more. But her voice is buried in the crush of music.

THE LOOPY

Staggers forward, muscular seizures causing a fitful walk. It springs forward, lipsticked and false eye-lashed. It's dark mouth is clamped then gapes wide with spasm. The horrible HUMMING sound is emitted.

PEGGY

Shrieking out a name; Impossible to HEAR in the deafening club. Jak doesn't know what's wrong with Peggy.

In front of them, the Loopy spins, again, arms a blur of flailing white. Peggys eyes have filled with agonized tears.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
It's her! It's HER!

The lurid bleaching of the Loopy's face is now looking at the crowd, only three feet away from Peggy.

It lurches and bumps into the waist-high stage rail, bending over its top. It's mask of lavender-rained whiteness hangs above Peggy, its dark eyes twitching open into a hideous stare.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
...Anna?

The Loopy keeps jerking forward, driving itself against the rail as though it meant to scale it.

THE LOOPY

With every spastic lurch at the railing, the diaphanous silk flutters like a film about it's scarred, bruised body. It continues to collide with the railing, head bent down toward

PEGGY

(CONTINUED)

Who looks up at the rigid muteness of the Loopy.

Then it happens.

VARIOUS

The Loopy doubles-over the rail and with a flinging-up of its muscle-knotted legs, falls, twitching and flailing, onto Peggy's table! Drinks fly and it crashes down, its limbs a thrash of naked whiteness.

The band's music scatters; total dissonance.

Peggy SCREAMS as the Loopy flops and twists on the table, like a new caught fish, seeming to stare up at her with its lifeless eyes.

Peggy can barely speak, mind submerged in shock.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

...Anna?

The music finally stops, grinding into silence.

CROWD

A rush of agitated murmur. The horror-smoked room watches everything.

PEGGY

As the Loopy gyrates on their table, Peggy manages to form words for Jak.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

...we have to get her out! We have to get her out! NOW! She's my sister!

Boxx has heard, too.

BOXX

Really? Well, fuck her. I want my money.

Jak just looks at Boxx. It would've come to this. Jak decides to trust Peggy; help her.

JAK

(to Boxx)
Gimme the gun.

Boxx hesitates.

(CONTINUED)

BOXX

It's not her fuckin sister, Jak.
She's wasted. She's seeing shit.
You'll die. Nowhere to go.

JAK

The gun.

Boxx hands it to him.

JAK AND PEGGY

Grab the Loopy, the best way they can. They move her through the crowd. Anyone who tries to stop them gets the gun in their face.

JAK (CONT'D)

Outta the way! GET OUTTA THE
FUCKING WAY!

Jack and Peggy are having a hard time holding onto the Loopy but finally get through the back exit door.

63 ALLEYWAY

63

They move as quickly as possible, carrying/dragging the LOOPY.

PEGGY

Where do we go?!

JAK

I don't know! Keep moving.

They take a left, then a right. The alleys are a bit of a maze. As they move, struggling with the Loopy, they suddenly run into

KATE

In the alley, shocked to see them. ADJUST to Peggy, confused.

PEGGY

...what are you doing here?

KATE

...looking for you.

Peggy bursts into tears. Tries to hold onto the Loopy which twitches and writhes.

(CONTINUED)

PEGGY

I found her, Mom! I found Anna!

Kate says nothing. Footsteps near. (NOTE: throughout this scene, the LOOPY is still writhing and twitching but getting weaker...the chemical effect wearing off. But it continues to convulse, make horrible throat noises etc.)

THE M.C.

Moves to them quickly. Armed Door Man with him.

JAK

Points the gun. It doesn't stop the Door Man who moves to get the Loopy. Jak shoots him in the upper arm. He folds in pain.

ALL

The M.C. is sheer cool, cruel. Grabs the Door Man's dropped gun.

M.C.

...where are you going with my dancer, Jak?

PEGGY

Your dancer? She's my sister! How the hell did she get here?!! WHAT IS SHE DOING HERE?

M.C.

"Doing"? Not much. She's dead. In a freezer all day. Brrrrr. I take her out, I shoot her up, she dances, I sell some tickets, I pay the rent.

(holds gun on Peggy)

I'll take her, now. She's mine.

Jak points his cocked gun at him.

M.C. (CONT'D)

Stay out of it, Jak.

JAK

Too late.

Peggy holds the Loopy closely; protectively.

PEGGY

She's not your property!

(CONTINUED)

M.C.

Really? I paid for her. Ask your Mommy.

Kate says nothing. Peggy's eyes shoot to her mother's.

PEGGY

What's he talking about?!
(off Kate's silence)
WHAT IS HE TALKING ABOUT?!!

M.C.

Tell her. It's a heartwarming story.

Kate glares at him, hatefully.

KATE

(to Peggy)
...let's go before things get worse. She's not alive. Let him have her.

Peggy can't believe what her mother is saying.

PEGGY

What do you mean let him have her?!!

M.C.

...a story brimming with commitment and loyalty and a mother's undying love.

Kate tries to lunge for him with her knife. He overpowers her, tosses the knife. Hits her skull with the butt of his gun. Tosses her to the pavement. Her head hits the hard ground. She's bleeding, badly.

KATE

(to Jak, re: M.C.)
Shoot him!

Peggy doesn't move.

PEGGY

No. I wanna hear the story.

Kate is weak but glares at the M.C. She knows the M.C. is going to tell the story. *

KATE

...please. Don't.

(CONTINUED)

M.C.

(to Peggy)

Now, let's see...I think it went something like this: your mother got sick of coming to the Club every weekend to bring your sister home, when she was still alive...and fucked up.

KATE

...you sonofabitch!

M.C.

(to Kate)

The night she O.D.'d you decided to just leave her with me. No muss, no fuss.

("casually")

And...as I recall she was still alive.

KATE

STOP IT!

M.C.

What did I pay for her, again? I forget? I usually just pay by the pound. But she was a pretty girl.

KATE

SCREAMS pitifully with everything she has left in her.

ALL

Jak and Peggy hold the Loopy; weak in their grasp. It writhes, collapsing to the pavement beside Kate, face beside her's. Its eyes twitch. It weakly makes the hideous HUMMING noise. Kate is bleeding, badly. The Loopy's mouth opens and closes, slowly. Peggy kneels to her mother. Betrayed.

KATE

(weakly)

...after Daddy died...we had nothing. She was always in trouble. Half dead.

PEGGY

...you sold her.

KATE

...we had nothing.

(CONTINUED)

Kate looks at Anna; the daughter she sold out. No guilt. Just resentment. Peggy can see it.

THE M.C.

Looks at Peggy with soulless edict.

M.C.

Hey, this has been festive and touching. But I got a Club to run. Already got one show fucked. You owe me.

JAK

Fuck you.

PEGGY

Looks at her mother, getting weaker Her sister, moving in abrupt spasm. Both helpless. One dead. The other dying. Peggy's eyes go cold.

PEGGY

(to M.C.)

I'll make it right.

CUT TO:

64 EXT. LONELY HILLSIDE - PEGGY AND JAK- NIGHT 64

Stark cameos, on an ashen rise. Patting down the dirt on a fresh grave.

PEGGY

Lost in sadness; grief.

PEGGY

I'm alone now.

He watches her.

JAK

You don't have to be.

She looks at him. He's serious. She slowly decides to trust him. Nods. Takes his offered hand. HOLD.

CUT TO:

65 EXT. "DOOM ROOM" 65

The neon sign an open sore on night. OVER we HEAR

(CONTINUED)

M.C.

...for those of you who have never
had standards or a fucking heart,
the "DOOM ROOM" welcomes you.

66 INT. "DOOM ROOM"-M.C.

66

He's on stage; a sequined ghoul. He smokes, hair shining.
The house band, in b.g., idles with a carnal beat.

M.C.

Think of us as your home away from
home. And tonight, we have
something very, very special.
Cover the kid's ears and drug the
dog 'til he can't fight back, cuz
our next dancer has a whole lotta
shakin going on...and we don't want
anyone getting hurt. Proving that
death is just an ugly rumor...and I
do mean fuckin ugly...welcome our
next dancer!

The music carves-up the smoky place; primitive and dark.

THE CURTAINS

Open and the dancer faces away from the crowd. As the band's
hypno-throb intensifies, she begins to twitch and her head
convulses to one side. She starts to gyrate and finally
turns.

It's Kate, dressed like a vulgar clown; too much make-up,
fake freckles, see-thru negligee. Her eyes are dead and her
limbs shoot out in an uncontrollable dance of the dead.

CROWD

Laughing at this old, dead woman.

CROWD

TITS, GRANDMA! 2)ISN'T IT TIME FOR
YOUR NAP? 3)BRING OUT A YOUNG ONE!

KATE

Writhes under the lights, dead fingers clawing air, mouth
suddenly agape. Garish make-up a humiliation.

THE DRUMMER

Accents all her moves.

(CONTINUED)

KATE

Spasms and twists as the crowd insults her; throwing drinks, lit cigarettes.

THE BAND

Plays faster and louder.

STAGELIGHTS

Autopsy-bright.

KATE

Stares into them, unblinking; a punished marionette.

THE BAR

Peggy is with Jak. She watches her mother dance with amoral closure.

FADE OUT

THE END