

EXT. HILLY COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

A large, black, powerful-looking motorcycle waits propped up on its center stand on the gravel shoulder of a deserted country road. The gold lettering on its tank and side covers identifies it as a Norton Commando 850.

Two white Bell full-coverage helmets sit on its saddle, like medieval jousting helmets.

Beyond the motorcycle, stretched out on a grassy rise, lie Hart Read, twenty-six, and his long-time girlfriend Rose, who is the kind of eighteen that often seems more like fifteen, and once in a while like twelve.

At the moment Rose is definitely eighteen and in control of things, producing tuna sandwiches with lettuce and mayonnaise out of a string bag and pouring coffee, pre-mixed with sugar and milk, from a small thermos flask. Read watches her play housewife with vast amusement. Rose holds out a sandwich.

READ

What've we got, Rose? Steak on a bun?

ROSE

Tuna with lettuce and mayo. You gonna make trouble?

READ

Yeah. Big trouble.

He grabs Rose's wrist and pulls her close. He looks her deep in the eyes.

READ

I want steak.

Read kisses her full on the mouth. Rose drops the sandwich into the grass.

READ

Steak.

They kiss passionately.

EXT. HILLY COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY -- ONE HOUR LATER

Read kicks the big Norton into life. Rose puts on her helmet,

does up the chin strap, and gets on the machine behind Read. Read waits for her to get settled, blips the throttle, then accelerates off the shoulder of the road, fishtailing slightly in the gravel.

EXT. HILLY COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

The Norton booms along the twisty two-lane road. The road is clear and Read feels good. He opens the throttle even more, almost becoming airborne over the crest of a steep rise, and leaning the bike over in the corners until he scrapes rubber off the footpegs.

Rose rides loose, completely at ease behind Read. She clasps her arms around him loosely, always going with the motion of the machine, closing her eyes in pleasure.

EXT. HILLY COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

Further up the road, a neat white VW pop-top camper trundles along in the opposite direction carrying a middle-aged man, his wife, and their twelve-year-old daughter. They are city slickers out for an autumn camping jaunt, and things are not going well for them.

WIFE

(scrutinizing crumpled
map)

We passed it.

MAN

We didn't pass it. I remember that farm.

WIFE

We passed it. That farm comes after concession road 12 and we were supposed to turn at concession road 11.

KID

I don't remember that farm, Dad.

MAN

We didn't pass it. I very distinctly remember that farm.

WIFE

If you would just stop this vehicle

long enough to take a look at the map I will prove to you beyond any shadow of a doubt that we...

MAN
(losing his temper)
All right!

The man swings the camper across both lanes in one furious motion and slams on the brakes just before they go over the edge of the road into a ditch bordering an open field.

MAN
You're both right and I'm all wrong.

He slams the camper into reverse and backs up as far as he can, then slams it into first and lurches forward, trying vainly to make a clean three-point turn on the narrow road.

MAN
We'll turn around and go all the way back.

When the camper is stretched completely across both lanes of the highway, it stalls. The man twists the key viciously but it won't restart.

MAN
Goddamn thing! Shoulda never sold the goddamn station wagon.

KID
The station wagon used to use too much gas, remember, Dad?

WIFE
You keep quiet when your dad's in a sweat, Valerie.

MAN
(still trying to start the camper)
Goddamn thing. Shoulda never sold the wagon.

Without warning, Read's bike suddenly appears over the crest of the hill just beyond the camper. The bike is nearing 100 miles an hour. The wife sees it first.

WIFE

Oh, Christ, Bob!

MAN

(looking up)

Huh? Oh, Christ!

There is no place for Read to go except off the road. The bike shoots over the drainage ditch beside the road two feet from the nose of the camper. The man and his wife sit with their mouths open, watching through their front windshield the bike fly through the air into an overgrown field, as though it were happening on TV.

EXT. FIELD -- DAY

When the bike finally lands in the field, it hits down front wheel first. The impact slams Read over the handlebars into the trunk of a small but solid tree. Rose stays with the machine for one complete cartwheel. The motorcycle ends up on top of her, the tank across her belly. Before she can move, the tank explodes into flames. The flames begin to melt the plastic visor of her helmet.

EXT. EDGE OF THE FIELD -- DAY

The camper driver turns around in his seat and starts to rummage around, looking for something to put out the fire. His wife gets hysterical. She can see Rose trying vainly to get out from under the bike.

WIFE

Oh, my God! She's gonna burn! She's gonna die!

MAN

Where's the kid's blanket? Where's the kid's goddamn blanket!?

EXT. TERRACE OF KELOID CLINIC -- DAY

Jackie, a cool blonde English woman in her early forties, has been bird-watching from the clinic's terrace. Something startling attracts her attention.

JACKIE

I don't believe it.

Lloyd Walsh, an actor in his late thirties in the Keloid

Clinic of Cosmetic Surgery for his second facial touch-up, pauses in the middle of a sit-up which he is performing on an exercise mat a few yards away. Walsh is wearing a blue jogging outfit whose top bears the words 'JOGGING KILLS.' His head is bandaged.

WALSH

What is it? You spot a rare tufted
tit-mouse or somethin'?

Jackie turns away from her binoculars. She has thin surgical wires attached to the upper and lower eyelids of both eyes.

JACKIE

There's a motorcycle burning in the
middle of a field. I think there's
somebody under it.

Walsh jumps to his feet with exaggerated athletic vigor.

WALSH

Yeah? Lemme have a look.

Jackie hands Walsh her binoculars and points him in the right general direction.

JACKIE

See that column of smoke? Just follow
it down to its source.

We look through the binoculars with him as he does so. Sure enough, there is a bike burning in a field with someone trapped beneath it.

WALSH

Wow. Lookit that!

He turns and begins to sprint for the stairway at the end of the terrace.

JACKIE

Where are you going?

WALSH

Gonna tell the boys downstairs. It's
right up their alley.

JACKIE

Oh.

(calling after the
disappearing Walsh)
Careful with my binoculars! They're
very expensive!

INT. CLINIC BOARDROOM -- DAY

The three partners who own and operate the Keloid Clinic are holding an informal meeting in the posh boardroom of the clinic, with cigars (Cypher), cigarettes, coffee, and full ashtrays much in evidence.

Involved are Dr. Daniel Keloid, a youthful forty-five, low-key but forceful, founder of the Keloid Clinic and extremely successful society plastic surgeon; Keloid's wife, Roxanne, who is herself an MD and who was once a student of Keloid's; and Murray Cypher, the clinic's accountant. Cypher is forty-eight, dapper, generally enthusiastic, and believes passionately in creative accounting.

It has apparently been a long and tiring session. Cypher in particular shows signs of strain. His end of the table is littered with pages of scratch pad covered with hastily scrawled notes and figures.

CYPHER

As far as I'm concerned these guys are completely legit. The bank is just as convinced as I am. They told me they're willing to go all the way with us. I'm telling you, Danny -- a franchise operation for plastic surgery resorts is one of those magnificent, inevitable ideas.

KELOID

Banks are always quick to say that when everything's rolling easy. But you can take it from me -- first sign of heat from the medical association, first cries of professional outrage, and the bank'll call back its note and leave us hanging by our thumbs.

ROXANNE

It's not the financing that's bothering you, Dan. Your voice has that edge to it.

KELOID

I've never denied it. I sure as hell don't want to become the Colonel Sanders of plastic surgery.

CYPHER

Why not? Sounds great to me.

KELOID

I'll tell you why not. Because it's unprofessional, unmedical, and unsavory.

CYPHER

You thought of it.

KELOID

I was only kidding.

CYPHER

You were not. Besides, you want me to go back and tell three of the largest investment groups in North America, 'Forget it. He was only kidding?'

KELOID

(in only partially
mock despair)

Oh, God. It's all gotten out of hand. I can see it now: fifty enfranchised Keloid's Cosmetic Surgery Clinics flung across the face of North America like Holiday Inns. Next thing you know, Do-It-Yourself Facelift Kits.

CYPHER

I like it. We could call it... we could call it Suture Self.

(starts to scribble
madly)

No, I'm serious. I like that. There's got to be a way.

ROXANNE

All right, boys. I think we're getting a bit silly...

The office intercom on the table chimes and the voice of Steve, an orderly, fills the room.

STEVE (V.O.)
Is Dr. Keloid there? It's urgent.

KELOID
Yeah, what is it, Steve?

STEVE (V.O.)
There's been a motorcycle accident a few minutes down the highway here. Looks like a couple of people have been hurt. Should I take the van and go get 'em?

KELOID
Yeah, sure.
(short pause)
Hey, wait a minute. Steve? You still there?

STEVE (V.O.)
Yeah.

KELOID
Hang on till I get there, OK? I'm coming with you. Meet you at the garage.

STEVE (V.O.)
Roger.

The intercom chimes off as Keloid stands up to leave. Cypher throws his pen on the table.

ROXANNE
(exasperated)
Oh, now, Dan. We've got a lot of decisions to make...

KELOID
(leaving)
You and Murray work it out, hon. Just make the pill easy for me to swallow, OK?

He closes the door behind him, leaving Cypher and Roxanne to their own devices.

CYPHER

Well, what do you think about facelift kits, Roxy? I mean, they've got abortion kits.

ROXANNE

(frustrated)

Let's just forget that anybody ever mentioned the idea, OK, Murray?

Cypher shrugs. It still sounds great to him.

EXT. CLINIC DRIVEWAY -- DAY

In the middle of a landscaped triangle of lawn stands a large light-box-style sign which reads KELOID CLINIC OF COSMETIC SURGERY. Along one side of the triangle runs a crushed-gravel driveway at the end of which is a long, low garage just behind the main building, which looks as though it might once have been a small stable.

One of the three doors of the garage slides up and a van peels rubber out of the garage, sliding a bit once it hits the gravel. The van is set up inside and out exactly like a standard big-city ambulance, but without any ambulance markings. Instead, sedate white lettering on the doors reads KELOID CLINIC, LTD.

EXT. FIELD -- DAY

Read lies crumpled at the base of the tree. The end of his right collarbone is sticking out at a bizarre angle and his right shoulder is hanging too low. Read has regained enough consciousness to feebly undo his helmet with his left hand.

Beyond him, clouds of oily black smoke curl skywards from the fallen Norton. Read can hardly focus his eyes on the figures running toward them from the camper at the edge of the field. He slips dreamily into unconsciousness.

INT. VAN -- DAY

The clinic van turns off a secondary road on to the two-lane highway and accelerates furiously, tossing its occupants around as it momentarily slews sideways.

In the back of the van are Steve, who is busily preparing stretchers and oxygen, and Dr. Keloid.

Keloid prepares several hypodermic syringes while expertly bracing himself against the motion of the van.

Steve finishes attaching a hose to a small cylinder of oxygen and turns the release valve to test the oxygen flow through the nose-piece.

STEVE

Well, we've got oxygen now, Dr.
Keloid.

Keloid watches the thin column of black smoke looming larger through the windshield of the van. He reaches for a small fire extinguisher affixed to the frame of the van and begins to undo the clamps holding it there.

KELOID

I think we're going to have to use
this before we get close enough for
the oxygen, Steve.

EXT. FIELD -- DAY

Rose has stopped moving under the flaming machine. The man from the camper, running and stumbling over the uneven ground, finally arrives, followed by his older son (who is about thirteen). The man tries vainly to smother the flames with his younger son's blanket, but the heat is too intense for him to get really close.

The man is almost in tears with horror and frustration. His son just stares wide-eyed.

EXT. EDGE OF FIELD -- DAY

The clinic van bounces to a halt by the edge of the field and the driver, the most junior of the clinic's four orderlies, jumps out and runs around to the back of the van.

The back doors swing open and Keloid jumps out with the fire extinguisher in one hand and a small leather bag in the other. He heads for the flames as the wife and her kid watch from the front seats of the camper. The wife sticks her head out of the window and points at the flames.

WIFE

(to Keloid)

They're over there, Doctor! They

were speeding!

Keloid is soon followed by the two orderlies carrying a large wheeled stretcher, which they have hauled from the back of the van.

EXT. FIELD -- DAY

The man who was driving the camper is still making sporadic attempts to beat out the flames with the blanket when Keloid arrives and opens up the valve of the fire extinguisher. The white powdery foam covers everything in a few seconds, killing the flames easily.

MAN

(to Keloid)

I tried to put it out. I couldn't get near it.

Keloid kneels beside Rose. He takes a pair of scissors from his bag and cuts the helmet strap under her chin. He slips the helmet off her head with great care. Her long blonde hair falls into a pool around her face, which seems remarkably at peace and untouched: only a rectangle of black soot where her helmet's visor melted away and admitted smoke gives any indication of what she's gone through.

When the orderlies arrive, the man points out Read for them.

MAN

There's another one over there. I saw him movin' around a minute ago.

KELOID

(to orderlies)

Might as well go get him. We won't be ready to move her for a few minutes.

The orderlies trot off toward Read with their stretcher. The man watches them leave, then turns back to look at Rose. He shakes his head as Keloid gives her an injection.

MAN

Christ. I didn't know it was a girl.
Is she dead?

KELOID

This isn't embalming fluid I'm

shooting into her. See if you can lift the machine off her. Use the blanket around your hands. It's hot.

The man wraps the blanket around his hands and begins to half-pull, half-slide the Norton off Rose by the handlebars. The orderlies go by on their way to the van with Read unconscious on the stretcher.

As the bike slides away to reveal Rose's abdomen, the man recoils in horror.

MAN
My God.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

The clinic van speeds along the road toward the clinic.

INT. VAN -- DAY

Rose is on the stretcher with intravenous tubes in her arms, bottles hanging over her head, an oxygen mask over her mouth and nose, and several layers of blood-soaked bandages and surgical gauze over her abdomen. The senior orderly monitors the oxygen flow, the IV levels, and Rose's pulse, while Keloid speaks to someone at the clinic over the van's CB radio, which has a telephone-style speaker/ receiver.

Read sits jammed into a small seat behind the driver, his head back against the van wall, completely dazed. He is conscious enough to wince in pain with every bump the van hits, but he obviously doesn't know where he is or why he's there.

KELOID
Roxanne? Yeah, listen. We're going to have to throw in everything we've got. I know, but let me tell you what we're looking at. The gas tank exploded over the girl's abdomen and I don't know what she's got left in there. The man's got a broken hand, separated shoulder, concussion, the usual. We can send him to the General. But it's definitely major surgery for her, and right now. I know we're not, but we've got no choice. I'd say she's got a half hour to live

and it's three hours to the nearest serious hospital. It's us or nobody. Yeah. I hope I can remember too. Well, they say it's like riding a bicycle.

EXT. CLINIC DRIVEWAY -- DAY

The van stops in front of the clinic and the orderlies jump out. Keloid holds the bottles and the oxygen as the orderlies unload the stretcher and roll it up the front walk of the clinic, which is a spectacularly renovated old farmhouse -- all sandblasted auburn brick, pine, and cedar planking, white paint and Vista Vision windows.

A group composed of patients and staff cluster around the main doors of the clinic to watch as the stretcher approaches. Nobody seems to notice Read, who has been left sitting in the van.

INT. CLINIC ENTRANCE -- DAY

Lloyd Walsh holds open one of the main glass doors while a nurse opens the other one. The secretary -- receptionist abandons her phones and her sleek plastic desk/filing cabinet module to work her way through the group at the doors in order to take a look.

Walsh makes room for the secretary -- Sheila -- beside him.

Rose is wheeled through the doors. Her condition is so obviously serious and so different from the usual 'touch-up' jobs done at the Keloid Clinic, which has a carefully calculated country resort atmosphere about it, that everyone becomes completely silent as she enters.

KELOID

(to nurse at door)

Get the guy in the van into observation and check him out. But take it easy -- concussion, separated shoulder, broken hand. OK, Louise? Maybe some Demerol when he becomes lucid.

LOUISE

OK, Dr. Keloid.

Louise leaves the door once the stretcher has gone by and

heads out to the van. Walsh lets go of his door and jogs after her.

Jackie, still wearing sunglasses, shakes her head as she watches the stretcher go off down the hall and turns to the middle-aged lady standing next to her.

JACKIE

What a waste. She doesn't even need a nose job.

INT. CLINIC HALLWAY -- DAY

The orderlies wheel the stretcher down a hallway which was patently never meant to be used as a hospital corridor: Rose is getting a very rough ride. As they move along they pass various patients who react with shock and horror when they see Rose. The Keloid Clinic is usually more discreet about blood than a normal hospital.

MAN

(as Rose passes)

Jesus wept! What's that all about?

WOMAN

Somebody said something about an accident.

MAN

(repulsed)

Couldn't they throw a sheet over it or something? I'm starting to feel like I'm in a hospital.

The fastidious man and his companion go through some doors which, according to an elegantly lettered sign on a wall, lead to a squash court.

The orderlies stop in front of another set of doors. Keloid hands one of them the bottles he has been holding as a second nurse, Rita, comes out to meet them. Rita is a very solid, square-bodied, fortyish lady.

KELOID

OK, boys. Take her into pre-op and tell Dr. Karl to set her up for the works.

INT. SURGICAL WASH-UP -- DAY

Keloid and Roxanne wash with disinfectant in preparation for Rose's operation, aided by a third orderly whom we have not seen before.

Roxanne is short, dark, intense, and ambitious beyond her present practice. She does not wear her thirty-seven years particularly well, so the age difference between her and her husband seems more theoretical than anything else. She is very particular about being called by her maiden name and is known as Dr. Rushton to all the clinic's patients. At the moment, Keloid and Roxanne are having a very controlled, low-key argument which Roxanne tries to keep the orderly from hearing.

ROXANNE

I don't buy it, Dan.

KELOID

You haven't seen her.

ROXANNE

I don't have to see her. Neutral field grafts have never been used internally. We could end up with a terminal cancer patient on our hands.

KELOID

Aw, c'mon. We can monitor, Roxy. She's got nothing to lose. Literally. She doesn't have enough small intestine left to absorb nutrient. If we just close her up she'll have to be fed intravenously for the rest of her life, which will be a short and a dismal one. But if we graft neutral field tissue cones into the abdominal cavity, there's a chance that they'll read her condition by post-embryonic induction and develop into a new set of intestines.

ROXANNE

Or run wild and make some very creative malignant tumors. Dan, the clinic doesn't need this. Let's play it safe.

Keloid doesn't respond. He finishes snapping on his surgical

gloves and turns to the scrub-nurse, who helps him on with his sterilized operating tunic.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- DAY

Read has regained full consciousness in the clinic's observation room and is watching Louise cut away his well-worn leather motorcycle jacket with a pair of snub-nosed surgical scissors. She cuts her way up the right sleeve to the shoulder, then across the shoulder to the collar. She is then able to slip the jacket easily away from Read's right shoulder, which is still very obviously not where it should be. She now starts in on his Norton T-shirt, which is all he was wearing underneath his jacket.

READ

Oh, no. Not the T-shirt. Rose gave me the T-shirt.

LOUISE

I think you'd find it pretty painful trying to take it off the standard way.

Read makes an attempt to slip his arm out of his T-shirt but immediately gives up, grimacing in pain.

READ

No, look. I think I can... Ow! Oh! You're right. Cut the thing off. I'll put it up on the wall of my garage.

Louise continues snipping off the T-shirt.

READ

So when do I get to see Rose?

LOUISE

Not for a while.

READ

Why not?

Louise doesn't answer.

Read pulls away from Louise and tries to stand up. He can't keep his balance and falls back against the wall, banging his wrecked shoulder.

READ

I want to see her right now! Ow! Oh,
God. I didn't kill her, did I?

Louise reaches for a syringe of Demerol.

LOUISE

She's not dead.

READ

What is that stuff? I don't want you
to put me out.

LOUISE

It's just Demerol. It'll ease the
pain. All right?

Read lets Louise take his good arm. She swabs him down and
sinks the needle in.

READ

(sarcastically)

Sure. Wonderful. Anything to ease
the pain.

INT. OPERATING ROOM -- DAY

Keloid and Roxanne are well into their operation on Rose,
assisted by a team of five which includes Dr. William Karl,
the clinic's anesthetist. Keloid and Roxanne are in the
process of cutting large squares of skin from Rose's thighs.

KELOID

Now, I know everyone here is familiar
with the standard techniques of skin
grafting, but what we're going to do
is a little out of the ordinary.
I'll explain it as we go. We're
removing full-thickness skin grafting
material from the patient's thighs
as per normal graft acquisition
procedure. However, before these
grafts are applied to the damaged
areas of the patient's breasts,
abdomen, and so on, they will be
treated so that they become
morphogenetically neutral. They are
then called neutral field grafts.

KARL

Can we treat the graft material here,
Dr. Keloid?

KELOID

No, Dr. Karl. The graft tissue will
be frozen and sent to the Sperling
Institute. We'll have to keep the
patient in an operation-ready state
until it comes back to us. That's
going to be a bit trying for all of
us, but it can't be helped.

As Keloid speaks, the sections of thigh skin are placed in
spun aluminum cylinders of the same general type as those
used in eye banks. The cylinders are then sealed and placed
in a medical freezer.

RITA

I don't understand the functional
difference between neutral field and
normal graft tissue, Doctor.

KELOID

Well, when the thigh skin tissue is
treated, Nurse Benedetto, it'll lose
its specificity as both thigh tissue
and skin tissue. For example, if it
were grafted to a burned cheek, it
wouldn't just be thigh skin with the
color and texture of thigh skin --
it would actually develop as facial
tissue. In other words, neutral field
tissue has the same ability to form
any part of the human body that the
tissue of a human embryo has.

KARL

Doctor, this patient has lost most
of her absorptive intestinal mucosa.
Could neutral field tissue reconstruct
an organ as complex as the small
intestine.

KELOID

Yes, Dr. Karl. I think that under
the right circumstances it could.
I've done it myself using lab animals

at the Sperling Institute.

Keloid and Roxanne exchange glances, then Keloid looks away.

KELOID

Let me add that there is always a possibility that carcinomas will form when neutral field grafts are used internally. In this case, we're using a radical plastic-surgery technique to compensate for our lack of heavy medical hardware. We're doing it to save a life. It's the only trick we've got.

EXT. KELOID CLINIC -- DAY

Wide shot of exterior front of the Keloid Clinic in late autumn.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KELOID CLINIC -- ONE MONTH LATER -- DAY

Same shot as previous scene, one month later. Snow is on the ground and the trees are bare.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ROSE'S ROOM AT THE KELOID CLINIC -- DAY

Read stands over Rose's bed, which is a very well-disguised hospital bed (everything possible is done to keep the clinic from feeling like a hospital). Read's left hand is encased in a wire cage which supports all his fingers. He is watching Rose intently, who is still in a coma and is attached to a battery of intravenous bottles connected to her by clear vinyl tubes and IV needles. Read is particularly fascinated by Rose's eyes, which he can see moving around wildly behind her eyelids.

He bends close, then kisses her gently on her pale, dry lips.

INT. CLINIC HALLWAY -- DAY

Nurse Louise walks briskly down a hall toward Rose's room. On her way she passes Judy Glasberg clutching a pocket edition of *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* and strolling thoughtfully in the opposite direction.

LOUISE

Hi, Judy Glasberg. You back again?

JUDY

Daddy didn't think the new nose was different enough, so I'm in for more alterations. I keep telling him it looks just like his, and he keeps saying, 'That's why I want you to change it.' I'm terrified to find out what it all means.

They both laugh.

The two women part and go their separate ways. We follow Louise as she opens the door to Rose's room, which bears a printed sign saying: INTENSIVE CARE, QUALIFIED PERSONNEL ONLY.

INT. ROSE'S ROOM -- DAY

Louise enters the room in time to surprise Read in the act of pulling back the sheet covering Rose.

LOUISE

Didn't you see the sign on the door, Mr Read? You're supposed to register with me before you come in here.

READ

I saw it. I guess I consider myself qualified.

Louise edges Read away from the bed and covers Rose up again. Her entire body is heavily bandaged, and almost every inch of exposed skin has an IV needle taped to it. Louise begins to moisten Rose's eyelids and lips with various gels.

LOUISE

What are you trying to do, give her pneumonia?

READ

I'm trying to ease my guilt feelings by telling myself that Rose is getting better.

LOUISE

(softening)
I see. Is it working?

READ
Is she getting better?

LOUISE
You've been here often enough in the past two months to know as much as I do.

READ
When do I get to see Dr. Keloid?

LOUISE
You never tell me in advance when you're coming. How can I make an appointment for you?

READ
I never know in advance when the next wave of guilt will hit me. I want to see him right now.

LOUISE
He's in a meeting.

READ
Tell him I forced you.

LOUISE
(leaving the room)
All right. But please... no touching until she's conscious.

READ
OK, Mom.

Louise makes a face and leaves.

INT. KELOID'S OFFICE -- DAY

Read sits across from Keloid's desk in Keloid's office, which seems more like a successful PR executive's office than a doctor's. While they talk, Keloid toys with Rose's file, not really ever looking at it: he is obviously very familiar with its contents, and also in a very distracted frame of mind.

KELOID

Well, as you've seen, Rose is still in some kind of coma, sort of half real coma, half normal deep sleep. Could be weeks before she's lucid.

READ

You don't know for sure?

KELOID

No. Her body is still in a state of total shock. She can't possibly be moved to a city hospital yet. Her grafts seem to be healing well. We've been monitoring the internal grafts electronically and there is definitely new tissue growth happening in the abdominal cavity. Whether this growth will mature into functioning intestinal mucosa we won't know for quite a while.

READ

You mean if your grafts or whatever they are don't work, she'll never eat like a normal human being again. She'll have to be fed intravenously.

KELOID

That's right. At the moment, she has only enough small intestine to digest the most basic nutrient material. See -- the longer the small intestine, the more complex the food that can be broken down and absorbed by the body as food. Cows have lots and lots of intestines so they can eat grass and other vegetable matter. We have medium-length intestines, so we can eat meat and a limited variety of vegetable matter. Vampire bats -- the real ones, I mean -- have short intestines, so they eat whole blood, which is very easy to break down and assimilate. Your girlfriend's in the same boat.

READ

What about her brain?

KELOID

Her helmet probably saved her from brain damage, but until she's fully conscious...

READ

You won't know that either.

KELOID

(throwing up his hands)

Hart, what can I tell you? There's no magic. Look, I've done my best. You're welcome to come here and keep your vigil by Rose's bedside any time the mood takes you, but please believe me, I will personally telephone you the instant Rose shows even the slightest signs of regaining consciousness.

Read sighs, then shrugs with his good shoulder.

EXT. CLINIC DRIVEWAY -- DAY

Lloyd Walsh and Read stand in the driveway watching as two orderlies load the burned and smashed hulk of Read's Norton into the back of Murray Cypher's Ford station wagon.

WALSH

Jeez, when I saw that thing burning, I never figured I'd be standing here talking to you a month later. How's your hand?

READ

They're taking the cage off this afternoon. That's when I'll find out. The pin stays in my shoulder for another month, though. Doesn't seem to bother me except when it gets damp.

Cypher comes hurriedly out of the front door, putting on a suit jacket and stuffing papers into his attaché case at the same time. He walks over to Read and Walsh and opens the door of his car.

CYPHER

(to Walsh)
Hi, Lloyd. How ya doin'?

WALSH
Great.

Cypher gets into his car, slams the door, and pops the passenger door open for Read.

CYPHER
C'mon, Hart. I got a pack of hungry investors waiting for me.

Read gets into the station wagon as the orderlies slam the rear door shut on the Norton. Walsh waves goodbye to Read, who smiles weakly.

CYPHER
I hope you've got some friends who'll help you unload that pile of junk. I've got a bad back. What're you going to do with it? Use it for an ashtray?

He turns the ignition key and starts the station wagon.

READ
Giving it to a friend for parts. I can hardly stand to look at it. Think I'll get back into go-karts.

Cypher laughs, waves to Walsh, and pulls away from the driveway. Walsh smiles at them and turns back to the clinic, patting himself absently under the chin as he goes.

EXT. CLINIC -- DAY

Wide-angle shot of the front of the clinic as Walsh goes back inside.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CLINIC -- NIGHT

Same shot as previous scene, but late at night. There are only one or two lights on inside.

INT. CLINIC HALL/NIGHT NURSE'S STATION -- NIGHT

The night nurse checks her watch at her station, which is little more than a desk, chair, and lamp placed at the end of a hall. It's time for her to make her rounds. She puts down her magazine -- People -- and walks down the hall. At the end of it, she disappears down a stairwell.

INT. ANOTHER HALL -- NIGHT

The night nurse walks past Rose's room, pausing only for a moment to glance in at Rose's sleeping form. She then continues on down the hall.

INT. ANOTHER HALL -- NIGHT

The night nurse walks past Lloyd Walsh's door. There is a PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB sign hanging from his doorknob. The nurse notices that Walsh's light is on and diffusing out through the crack under the door, but she continues on down the hall.

INT. WALSH'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Walsh is lying in bed reading The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, which he has borrowed from Judy Glasberg. His room, like all the private rooms at the clinic, is furnished in the style of the plushiest, most modern jet-set ski lodges. It's easy to understand why patients extend their stays beyond what is medically necessary, and just as obvious that the Keloid Clinic management makes no attempt to discourage this 'home away from home' attitude toward the place.

Walsh can't get comfortable with the book, which he has just started to read. He checks his watch. It's 1.13 a.m. He's a little nervous about his operation tomorrow morning. He puts down his book, gets out of bed, puts on his bathrobe, slips into his slippers, and leaves his room to go for a stroll through the deserted clinic.

INT. CLINIC HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Hands in pockets, Walsh strolls through the clinic, past the lounge, the ping-pong table, the breakfast nook.

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Walsh rounds a corner that leads him past Rose's door, which still bears its INTENSIVE CARE sign. As he passes by her door, he hears a muffled scream followed by a series of moans and indistinct, angry shouts. Walsh opens her door without

hesitation.

INT. ROSE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

By the light of the full moon and the hallway, Walsh can see Rose thrashing around violently in her bed, getting twisted up in her sheets and ripping out her IV needles. As he watches, one of her IV bottles, pulled off its stand by its feed tube, falls to the floor and smashes to pieces, spilling blood plasma everywhere.

Walsh now sees that the floor is littered with shredded bits and pieces of surgical gauze and bandages, which Rose has torn from her various wounds and grafts. The plasma begins to soak into the debris surrounding the bed. Her torso is still covered only by bandages, making her look like a mummy jerking to life in the half-light of her tomb.

Walsh rushes over to the bed and quickly lowers the safety railing. He then tries to hold Rose down by the shoulders to keep her from pulling out the last of her IV tubes. When he grabs her by the wrists, he notices that she is oozing blood from where the IV needles have been pulled out.

WALSH

Rosie, Rosie, sweetie, take it easy!
You need that juice, sweetie. It's
keeping you alive. Hey, easy, there.
Easy. That's it. That's a girl.

Under the pressure of Walsh's body, Rose begins to calm down. Her eyes, which have been open but staring and unseeing, now begin to fill with consciousness.

ROSE

Hart? What are you... what are you
doing, Hart? Are we all right? Are
we...

WALSH

I'm not Hart, Rosie. Hart's back in
Montreal waiting for you. I'm Lloyd.
I'm a friend of yours.

ROSE

Hart?

WALSH

Back in Montreal. Waiting for you.

He's fine. He's OK. I was just talking to him this afternoon.

ROSE

Oh. I... I guess I was dreaming.

Walsh lets go of Rose's wrists.

WALSH

I don't think you were just dreaming. You and Hart were in a really spectacular motorcycle crash.

ROSE

A crash? Was there fire? Was there... blood?

WALSH

Yeah. Plenty of both. You're bleeding right now.

(getting up)

I'd better get Dr. Keloid.

Rose grabs Walsh by the arm and pulls him back down on the bed.

ROSE

No! Not yet. I'm all right. But I'm freezing cold, and you're so warm. Hold me.

WALSH

Look, I think I'd better...

ROSE

Please hold me. I'm dying of the cold.

Rose puts her arms around Walsh, who hesitates for a moment, then puts his arms around her and hugs her for a moment.

ROSE

Oh, God, that feels so good.

Behind Walsh's back, Rose pulls the last remaining IV needle out of her left wrist.

WALSH

(a bit nervous)

Ah, look... you don't even know where
you are, do you?

Rose pulls Walsh's face down to hers, then slips her arms
under his and locks her hands behind his back.

ROSE
Sure I do. I'm here with you.

WALSH
Look, this is really weird. Are you
sure you know what you're... Ow!

Feeling a sudden sharp pain, Walsh tries to pull away. Rose
won't let him get up.

WALSH
Hey, I think I... I think I cut myself
or something. You got something sharp
in there with you? Ow! Oh, that hurts!

He makes a huge effort to lift himself off the bed, but Rose
hangs on to him and comes up with him. Blood is soaking
through Walsh's bathrobe around the right armpit, like dark
red sweat.

He is moaning and sobbing as he strains to get away.

Finally, Walsh collapses on top of Rose, quivering and
whimpering. Rose sighs deeply and begins to stroke his head
affectionately.

INT. MISS OWEN'S ROOM AT THE CLINIC -- EARLY MORNING

Miss Beatrice Owen, a tough-looking maiden lady in her
fifties, sits on the edge of her bed pulling on a pair of
white gloves. She is wearing an immaculate morning outfit
which looks vaguely '40s and probably is. One of her hands
has been twisted by arthritis and puts up quite a struggle
before allowing itself to be encased in its glove. She then
begins to use her teeth to pull on the other glove.

The second glove is only half-way on when Miss Owen hears a
desperate scratching and bumping at her door. She stops what
she's doing.

MISS OWEN
Yes?
(pause)

Who is it?

After a pause comes more scratching, followed by the sound of a hand feebly slapping on the door. With her second glove still only half on, Miss Owen gets up, goes to the door, and opens it.

The instant the door is opened, a ghastly pale Lloyd Walsh slumps heavily across Miss Owen's shoulders. The force drives her back several steps and she screams with fear.

MISS OWEN

Oh, God save us!

WALSH

I'm sick. I'm sick. Help me.

When she realizes she's not being attacked, Miss Owen steps back from Walsh, but, unsupported, he starts to fall to the floor. Miss Owen slips her hands up under his arms and guides him unsteadily to the bed.

MISS OWEN

Mr Walsh! What on earth has happened to you?

Miss Owen sits Walsh on the bed, where he crumples into an awkward lying position. When she withdraws her hands from under his arms, Miss Owen finds that her right glove is soaking through with very watery blood.

WALSH

I don't know. I can't remember a thing.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM -- MORNING

Keloid and Louise examine Walsh, who lies half-naked on his left side, his right arm stretched out over his head to expose a deep, round, and still-bleeding puncture in his right armpit.

Like everything else at the clinic, the examination room has been designed and furnished with luxury and style in mind as much as pure function. Even the cantilevered examination light which Keloid is playing on Walsh's wound is color-coordinated with the drapes, the chairs, the coat-rack, and the enamel finish of the examination table itself.

KELOID

Were you sleepwalking? Could you have fallen against something outside and then come back in without waking up?

WALSH

(voice still shaky)

I doubt it. Never done anything like that before.

KELOID

(to Louise)

Get me some stuffing, maybe a sponge or two as well. This wound isn't clotting at all. I think we're going to have to shoot in some coagulants to get a scab to form.

LOUISE

Right away.

She leaves, closing the door behind her. Keloid takes a closer look at the wound through a large, illuminated magnifying glass.

KELOID

From what I can see, it's a very, very clean and precise wound. You haven't leaned on any picket fences, have you? Kind with those little spearheads?

WALSH

(unable to respond to
Keloid's attempt at
humor)

No.

Keloid grunts, takes out a tongue depressor, and begins to probe Walsh's wound with it.

KELOID

Does this hurt?

WALSH

Can't feel a thing.

KELOID

(surprised)
You can't?

WALSH
My whole right side has no feeling
in it. Just this aching kind of
tingling.

KELOID
Hm.

Louise comes in carrying wads of surgical gauze, sponges,
etc. She puts them down and takes Keloid aside.

LOUISE
Dr Keloid? Kenny Kwong would like to
see you.

KELOID
Right now?

LOUISE
He says it's very important. He's
waiting in the hall.

KELOID
(confidentially)
OK. Listen... our friend here may
have had a stroke. I think the
General's the best place for him.
But before you plug him up I want 10
cc of blood drawn directly from that
wound for tests. Then get Steve to
drive him into the city in the
ambulance. Tell him to take lots of
plasma with him. We're going to have
to forget about the coagulants until
the General has a chance to do an
ECG on him.

LOUISE
Will do, Doctor.

Keloid leaves.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Keloid steps out into the hall and joins Kenny Kwong, the
clinic's senior orderly, a concerned-looking, graying Chinese

man of about fifty-five.

KWONG

Can you come with me, please, Dr.
Keloid?

KELOID

Sure, Kenny. What's up?

They begin to walk briskly down the hall, Kenny leading.

KWONG

You told me to check around the
grounds to see if I could find out
how Mr. Walsh got hurt?

Keloid nods.

KWONG

I couldn't find nothing outside. No
blood, nothing. Then Nurse Rita call
me. She find something. She tell me
go get Dr. Keloid. You see it, then
you tell us what happened.

They round the corner taking them into the hallway that goes
past Rose's room. Kenny walks up to Rose's door and knocks
sharply.

KWONG

Nurse Rita waiting for you in here.

After a short pause, Rita opens the door and ushers them
inside, closing the door behind them.

INT. ROSE'S ROOM -- DAY

Once inside the door, Keloid is shocked at the state of Rose's
room. It is basically as we last saw it, except that Rita
has reattached Rose, who seems to be in a coma once again,
to her IV bottles.

The area of the wall next to the doorhandle side of the door
is smeared with bloody handprints -- Walsh apparently used
the doorknob to pull himself to his feet, then supported
himself by holding on to the wall and door moulding.

Rita leads Keloid over to the bed, while Kwong hangs back to
watch that nobody enters inadvertently.

RITA

Watch your feet, Doctor. The police will probably want every little piece of glass and strip of gauze exactly the way we found it.

Keloid finds a place to stand next to the bed, checks Rose's eyes, then her pulse.

KELOID

Why do you think the police would be interested in this, Rita?

RITA

Why, it's perfectly obvious that that Walsh fellow attempted to molest the poor girl while she was still in a coma. I've seen things like that happen before. Maybe he was drunk.

KELOID

(drawing back the sheet)

Hm. Her grafts have taken amazing well. Probably won't even have to rebandage. Hm. I can't even see any scar tissue.

He lifts Rose's left arm and presses around her armpit.

KELOID

Wow. I'll have to have a closer look at that.

RITA

Rejection problems?

Keloid lowers her arm and covers her with the sheet again.

KELOID

(standing up)

Don't think so. Seems to be an extreme swelling of the lymph nodes under the arm. Could just be a local infection that's under attack, but it's quite a bump. And there's some kind of lesion there. Doesn't seem to be gangrenous, but...

He walks thoughtfully toward the door. Kwong stands waiting.

KWONG

Want me to clean up the mess now,
Doctor?

KELOID

(snapping out of his
train of thought)

What? Oh, yes. But save all the pieces
and scrape some of the dried blood
on to a slide. Maybe we'll find
something out.

RITA

But Dr. Keloid... Mr. Walsh, he may
well be...

KELOID

(turning to Rita)

Rita, Lloyd Walsh wouldn't do
something like that. He just wouldn't.
And none of this explains how he got
his wound. I think a quiet, thorough,
and very private investigation is in
order. Don't you?

Rita lowers her eyes.

EXT. CLINIC DRIVEWAY -- NIGHT

Wide-angle shot of the clinic in the dead of night. The moon
is full.

INT. ROSE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

In the darkness of her room, Rose's eyes are open and staring.
She begins to pull the IV needles out of her wrists and
ankles.

INT. WHIRLPOOL ROOM -- NIGHT

In the whirlpool room, which contains three full-size
whirlpool baths, a bar, and a lounge, Judy Glasberg is taking
a midnight whirlpool bath to calm herself down. The room is
deserted except for Judy, but she seems to have no trouble
adjusting the controls of the bath to get it just right.

As Judy plays with the temperature controls, the door behind her opens and someone enters, closing the door behind her. Judy looks up, startled. Rose stands at the door in her fresh clinic gown. For some reason, Judy suddenly feels vulnerable in her skimpy bikini.

JUDY

Rose? Is that you? I thought everyone was asleep. They told me you were still in a coma.

ROSE

(approaching the edge
of the bath)

Oh, no. I'm doing much better now, thank you.

She seems to be completely normal, and as childlike as ever save for the hollows under her eyes. Judy positions her body so that her nakedness is hidden by the swirling bubbles of the whirlpool.

JUDY

It... it's really weird to meet you this way. I mean, I've never really talked to you before. But I sort of feel I know you, you've been around here for so long. And I saw them bring you in right after the accident.

ROSE

Do you mind if I get in with you? I've been lying in bed for such a long time, my body aches all over.

JUDY

Ah, well, I... does anybody know you're here? I mean, does Dr. Keloid know you... you've regained consciousness?

Rose climbs into the bath with Judy, gown and all.

ROSE

I don't think so. Everybody seemed to be asleep. It was a bit spooky waking up and finding myself all alone. I'm so glad I ran into you.
(with surprise)

Hey, know what? I think I can feel the warmth of your body radiating out to me through the water. I've never felt anything like that before.

Judy starts to grope for her towel by the side of the pool.

JUDY

I think I'd better get out now. I'm getting all wrinkly.

Rose floats over to Judy and takes her by the arm, interfering with Judy's attempt to get her towel.

ROSE

Oh, no. Not yet. You haven't even told me your name.

JUDY

Judy Glasberg. Nice to meet you.

Rose slips her arms up under Judy's arms and hugs her tightly.

ROSE

Mm. It's nice to meet you too.

Judy tries to gently disengage herself from Rose's embrace.

JUDY

Oh, now, c'mon. You're embarrassing me. Let me put some clothes on and we'll have a few drinks or something, OK?

When she realizes that Rose isn't going to let her go, Judy starts to struggle more seriously.

JUDY

Let me go, please! I want to get dressed. Listen, to tell you the truth, I think there's still something wrong with you. I think you ought to let... Ow! Oh! Something's cutting me! Oh! It hurts!

She starts to thrash about madly in the water, still locked in Rose's embrace. They dip under the water, then come up again, Judy gasping for air. Rose lets her move wherever she wants, but keeps her arms locked about Judy, her hands now

digging into Judy's shoulders from behind.

In tight close-up we see something joining the two bodies under the arms, from Rose's left to Judy's right. Even closer, we see something fleshy slipping in and out of some kind of sheath, barbs cutting through flesh, blood beginning to draw along a fleshy translucent tube. From small glands at the base of the tube, dark green fluid, almost black, begins to flow into the blood drawn up the tube. The mixture of blood and green fluid pumps back and forth in the tube.

Judy is now moaning in spasms, her head arched back as far away from Rose as possible, her hair floating in the water behind her and forming spirals in the whirlpool.

Rose holds on to Judy for dear life, her eyes closed in ecstasy, her cheeks unnaturally flushed. She doesn't notice that Judy's head is beginning to slip beneath the surface of the water. Judy's body is wracked by one final spasm, then she relaxes completely, her head going under completely. The last bubbles of air from her lungs mix with the bubbles spewed out by the whirlpool oxygenator. After a few moments, Rose releases Judy. We see a close-up of the translucent fleshy tube, now empty of blood, sliding back into its sheath.

It is only after she has backed away and taken several soul-deep breaths that Rose notices Judy's face is two inches below the surface of the water, the tip of her nose almost breaking through to the air but not quite. Rose frantically grabs Judy by the hair and pulls her out of the water. Judy isn't breathing.

Rose manages to drag Judy to the edge of the pool, clambers out on to the side, then pulls Judy out on to the pool siding with her, Judy trailing a thin trickle of blood in the water behind her.

Rose holds Judy's mouth open and tries to revive her using mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, but it's no good. Judy is dead. Rose shakes her head and starts to cry.

ROSE
Oh, no! No!

Rose shakes Judy's corpse hysterically, then collapses across it, sobbing. After a moment, she gets up, visibly fighting for control. She sets her jaw and begins to drag Judy's body out of the whirlpool room.

INT. READ'S GARAGE IN MONTREAL -- NIGHT

In the ramshackle garage behind the small house he has rented in Montreal, Hart Read has finally gotten around to trying to put his demolished Norton back together again. The engine has been removed from its frame and sits before him on a metal-topped work table, and Read is in the process of completely dismantling it. Small cardboard cartons of various sizes sit on the table, waiting to receive individual pieces of the engine.

The radio hung above the table is tuned to an FM rock station which is on full blast, even though it is about 1 a.m.

INT. READ'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

In Read's kitchen, the telephone is ringing, but Read has no chance of hearing it. Next to the phone, pinned to a cork message board with colored plastic drafting pins, are several photos of Read and Rose enjoying happier times.

INT. CLINIC LOUNGE -- NIGHT

Rose listens to the phone ring at Read's from the telephone in the deserted main lounge. Her hair is wet and matted and she is shivering uncontrollably. She lets it ring, huddling in her chair.

INT. OBSERVATION WARD AT GENERAL -- NIGHT

Lloyd Walsh is in the process of pulling on his pants in the observation ward of the General, which he shares with a thirtyish traffic-accident victim. Walsh's Lufthansa flight bag is already packed and ready to go, sitting on his bed in the shadow of an IV blood plasma bottle.

VICTIM

Hey, you can't leave yet, Lloyd.
They haven't figured out how come
you're bleeding all over the place.

WALSH

Aw, it's slowed down to a trickle.
No problem.

VICTIM

How's your arm?

WALSH

It's fine.

He picks up his bag and opens the door without hesitation.

VICTIM

If the night nurse comes around,
I'll tell her you're in the can,
how's that?

WALSH

Terrific. Take care of yourself.

He leaves, closing the door behind him.

INT. CORRIDOR AT GENERAL -- NIGHT

Walsh walks briskly down a corridor which leads to the main entrance of the Montreal General Hospital, flight bag in hand. Nobody stops him.

EXT. GENERAL ENTRANCE -- NIGHT

Walsh leaves the General and walks around the circular driveway to the street, where he is just in time to pick up a cab being paid off by a night orderly arriving for work.

Walsh gets in the cab and it pulls away from the curb.

INT. CAB -- NIGHT

Walsh leans his head back against the back seat as the cab pulls away. He rolls his head from side to side, as though trying to shake off a headache.

EXT. MONTREAL STREETS -- NIGHT

The cab moves through the streets of Montreal and enters a ramp leading eventually to the Decarie Expressway. The cab accelerates to the speed limit.

INT. CAB -- NIGHT

The nasal, wailing voice of a popular singer blares from all four speakers in the cab. Walsh is now sitting quite still in the back seat, head resting against the seat back.

CAB DRIVER

Hey, Mister, you wanna sleep? I can
turn the radio off. It's a long way

to Camelford.

Walsh doesn't answer. The driver looks in his rear-view mirror. Walsh is slumped in the shadows of the back-seat area.

CAB DRIVER

Hey, Mister. You want me to turn the radio off? Or maybe if you want I can turn off the back speakers and just leave on the front ones...

He turns around in his seat to look at Walsh. His words die on his lips. Walsh is staring at him with eyes that have completely clouded over so that the whites of his eyes are indistinguishable from the irises and pupils. Dark green foam is drooling from the corners of Walsh's mouth.

The cab driver doesn't have a chance to react any further before Walsh attacks him viciously, grabbing him by the shoulders and biting the cab driver on the cheek.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY -- NIGHT

The cab carrying Walsh veers crazily across three lanes of the nearly deserted expressway.

INT. CAB -- NIGHT

The cab driver tries madly to pull himself around in his seat so that he can see where he's going, screaming in pain all the while. With one tremendous jerk he frees his face from Walsh's locked jaws.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY -- NIGHT

The cab finally slews completely out of control, smashes into the low concrete railing lining the expressway, cartwheels over the railing, and falls on to the expressway ramp some twenty feet below, where it is rammed by an immense diesel truck delivering furniture to a sub-urban warehouse.

The cab is pushed fifty yards along the rampway, shedding pieces of bodywork and glass all the way, before the truck manages to stop.

INT. THE KELOIDS' BEDROOM AT THE CLINIC -- NIGHT

The telephone on the night table beside the Keloids' double

bed starts to ring. Dan Keloid rolls over, fumbles for the receiver, and finally gets it off the hook and up to his ear. Roxanne stirs beside him in bed.

KELOID

Yeah. Yeah. No. No, you're kidding.
Dead? Yeah. No, I would have
absolutely no objections to an
autopsy. It's definitely indicated.
No, I've got nothing to add to my
telephoned report. We never came up
with anything else. Yeah. Right. OK.
'Bye.

He hangs up the phone in a state of drowsy excitement. Roxanne rolls over and puts her arm around him. Keloid picks up his wrist-watch to check the time. It's 3.07 a. m.

ROXANNE

What is it, Dan?

KELOID

Lloyd Walsh is dead.

Roxanne starts to snap out of her sleep.

ROXANNE

He's what?

KELOID

He left the General about an hour
ago. Told another patient he felt
all right. He took a cab and the cab
crashed on a highway. Both occupants
dead.

ROXANNE

Oh, God. Poor Lloyd. But you said
something about an autopsy? Was the
cab driver drinking?

KELOID

No, it's Walsh. They're not happy
with his corpse.

(baffled)

Something about the eyes... I'm going
to have to go over Walsh's file again.
It just doesn't add up.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT (APPROX. 4 A.M.)

By the light of a full moon, Rose walks purposefully down a dirt country road, a borrowed windbreaker pulled tightly around her over her clinic gown and hospital slippers starting to come apart on her feet. She is determined to get as far away from the clinic as she can by morning light.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT (APPROX. 4 A.M.)

Rose finds herself walking beside a moonlit field with a ramshackle barn at one end. She pauses beside the barn for a moment, then slips under the fence surrounding the field and makes her way gingerly across the muddy barnyard toward the door of the barn. The house nearest the barn is dark. Rose gently edges open the door of the barn.

INT. BARN -- NIGHT

Once inside the barn, Rose feels around for a light switch. She finds it without much trouble and flicks it on. The barn is low and full of cobwebs, and houses only two solemn cows and a scraggly chicken.

Rose heads for the nest of straw that the two cows have made, and gradually snuggles her way in between them.

She starts to stroke the side of one of the cows, getting the animal accustomed to her touch, at the same time carefully slipping out of her windbreaker. She then raises her left arm and presses her left armpit flat against the cow's side. After a pause, she gives a short, sharp push with her left side, as though she's pushing something into the cow with her body. The cow responds by lifting up its head and turning to look at her. Satisfied that nothing too threatening is happening, it turns back and lowers its head again.

Rose stretches out over the cow in ecstasy. Her eyes are closed. Blood begins to flow in a rapid, one-way stream from the cow into Rose.

She is breathing rapidly and heavily. Suddenly, she pulls away from the cow, giving us a chance to see a flash of some kind of elongated, tube-like organ retracting under her left arm, dripping blood from its tip. As Rose lurches to her feet, we can see a small, deep wound leaking blood and green, bile-like fluid in the cow's side where Rose's armpit had

been pressed. The cows stir in reaction to Rose's violent movement.

She staggers away from the cows, dizzy and nauseous. She manages to reach the stalls, which she leans on for support, before she begins to vomit.

Suddenly, the door bangs open and a drunken old farmer stumbles into the barn, a whisky bottle in his hand.

FARMER

All right, you! Hold it right there!

(spotting Rose)

Oh. Whatta we got here? Hello, sweet honey pie. What're ya drinkin'? You come in to get outta the cold?

He waves the bottle at Rose as he approaches her, then puts his arm around her so that the bottle rests on her chest.

FARMER

I got something ya can take a drink off of, an'it ain't no whisky, neither.

He laughs coarsely and kisses Rose on the neck. When she fails to resist him, he drops his nearly empty whisky bottle and starts to nuzzle her collarbone. Rose wearily slips her hand up behind the farmer's head and pulls it down toward her left armpit.

FARMER

(surprised)

Hey, that's real nice, honey pie. You like me, don't ya? I kin tell ya do.

The farmer is slobbering happily around Rose's shoulder when she suddenly grabs his head by the hair with both her hands and pulls him viciously down on the cutting points of her bloodsucking organ.

The farmer screams in agony. Rose holds the farmer's head down until he stops screaming and starts breathing heavily, spasmodically. Then she lets him go.

The farmer straightens up. He is holding his hand over his right eye. Rose is terrified at what she's done. With a horrified sob, she backs away, then turns and runs, stumbling,

out the door, leaving the farmer to stand swaying in a semi-anesthetized stupor in the middle of the barn.

INT. READ'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT (5.14 A.M.)

Read has fallen asleep at his kitchen table while working on the engine of his Norton. The partially dismantled engine sits on a section of newspaper on the kitchen table next to a half-empty cup of coffee and an open, grease-smearred Norton Owner's Manual.

He is awakened out of his deep sleep by the sound of the kitchen phone ringing. Read jumps up, still half asleep, almost knocking over his chair in the process. It takes him a second or two to realize that he is in fact at home.

Read grabs for the phone, somehow terrified that the person on the other end will hang up before he answers.

READ

Hello?

(suddenly very excited)

Rose? Is it really you? How come you're... I mean, the last time I saw you... Oh, God. Rose, are you all right?

INT. CLINIC LOUNGE -- NIGHT

In the main lounge of the clinic, Rose kneels beside the table on which the lounge phone rests, cradling the receiver in her hands. She is covered with blood, her gown has been ripped, and she is close to hysteria. Her feet are covered with dirt and she's tracked mud inside, marking her trail from the clinic's back door clearly.

ROSE

Hart? Oh, Hart.

(sobbing)

No, no, I'm not all right. I'm in terrible trouble. I want you to help me.

READ (V.O.)

What are you talking about? Rosie, calm down, I can hardly understand what you're saying.

ROSE

Hart, can you hear me?

READ (V.O.)
I can hear you, Rosie.

ROSE
Hart, you've got to come and get me.
You've got to come and get me as
fast as you can.

She suddenly becomes aware of someone else's presence in the lounge. She turns with a start. Rita, who is acting as night nurse, is standing right behind her, a shocked and unbelieving look on her face.

INT. READ'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

READ
Rose, don't panic. Whatever's wrong
I'll be able to help you, understand?
Now, I can be at the clinic first
thing in the morning, OK? I'll get a
lift from somebody, I'll take a cab
if I have to. Rose? You still there?

ROSE (V.O.)
(strangely subdued)
I'm still here.

READ
Rose, tell me what's wrong. Please.
I'm going crazy here.

ROSE (V.O.)
I can't talk now. See you soon.

Read is suddenly left holding a receiver humming a dial tone. He waits only a second or two before he starts to look frantically for the phone number of the Keloid Clinic in the small book hanging from a nail by the phone.

READ
(thumbing through the
book)
Christ! What was the number of that
place?

INT. KELOID'S OFFICE -- NIGHT (5.30 A.M.)

Keloid is sitting at his desk in his bath-robe and slippers, looking into a microscope holding a dry slide of Walsh's blood. There is a knock at his door. Keloid looks up as Rita enters, closing the door behind her.

KELOID

Hi, Rita. I couldn't sleep. I've been trying to figure out what there could possibly be in Walsh's blood that would cause...

RITA

(interrupting with
quiet urgency)

Doctor, I think you'd better come with me.

INT. CYPHER'S LIVING ROOM IN DORVAL -- NIGHT

A groggy Murray Cypher sits on a sofa in front of the TV set in his living room, trying to get his four-month-old son to drink his 6 a.m. bottle. The images of the early morning show -- the sound has been turned off -- seem to attract the baby more than the bottle does.

To Cypher's complete surprise, the telephone starts to ring.

CYPHER

Oh, no. I just don't believe it. OK, Jeffrey -- you're on your own for a second.

Cypher tries to prop the kid up between two cushions, but he starts to cry the instant Cypher lets go of him. Cypher picks him up and takes him over to the phone, which is on a shelf at the other end of the room.

CYPHER

No? You want in on the action? OK, let's go.

Cypher picks up the phone.

CYPHER

(annoyed)

What could you possibly want at this hour of the morning?

INT. READ'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

READ

Murray, it's Hart Read. I hate like hell having to bother you like this, but I'm going out of my skull. It has to do with the clinic.

CYPHER (V.O.)

Yeah, OK. I was up anyway with the baby. So what gives?

READ

I got this phone call from the clinic. From Rose.

CYPHER (V.O.)

From who?

READ

From Rose. She's supposed to be in a coma. Keloid promised me he'd tell me the second she showed signs of consciousness and here I am getting a call from her at five in the morning.

INT. CYPHER'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Cypher is having trouble juggling the phone, the bottle, and his baby, who is gumming the receiver and drooling into the little holes at the speaking end.

CYPHER

That is pretty weird. But maybe she came to in the middle of the night and didn't know where she was. Those things can happen. Jeffrey, don't eat the phone. You'll get indigestion.

INT. READ'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

READ

But she said she was in trouble, Murray. She wants me to come and get her right now.

CYPHER (V.O.)

Look, Hart -- she's confused and she's scared. Did you phone the clinic

back and try to talk to Danny?

READ

I did. I got to talk to a tape recorder. I left a message.

INT. CYPHER'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

CYPHER

OK. I'll phone Danny right now at his private number, and I'll make sure that he knows that your Rosie is making phone calls in the middle of the night. Then I'll pick you up at your place in an hour and we'll go up to the clinic together. How's that grab ya?

READ (V.O.)

Great. Phone me right back if there's a problem.

CYPHER

Absolutely.

INT. READ'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

READ

OK, Murray. Thanks a hell of a lot.

Read hangs up the phone. He takes a close look at one of the pictures of himself and Rose on the Norton.

INT. ROSE'S ROOM AT THE CLINIC -- NIGHT

Rose sits quietly on the edge of her bed, her feet dangling over the side not quite touching the floor. She keeps her head down and does not look at Keloid, who is conferring with Rita at the door. Rita has given Rose a new gown and cleaned her up a bit for Keloid.

Rita leaves and Keloid closes the door behind her. He turns to Rose and approaches the bed, tapping his stethoscope against the palm of one hand. He doesn't say anything until he sits down on the bed beside her.

KELOID

Rose... I'm Dr. Keloid. Dan Keloid. I'm here to help you, sweetheart.

Rose lifts her head to look at Keloid for the first time. Tears are streaming down her cheeks. She throws her arms around Keloid and begins to sob on his shoulder. Keloid hugs her gently and pets her on the head as though she were a child.

After one or two moments, Keloid detaches himself from Rose and lies her back down on her bed.

KELOID

Rose, we won't talk about anything right now except how you're feeling, OK?

Rose nods, still snuffling slightly.

KELOID

Good. First thing I want to do is to check out some of the skin grafts we did for you. Now, could you please just slip your arm out of your left shoulder strap and raise your arm over your head?

Instead of doing as Keloid asks, Rose puts her hands over her face and shakes her head. Keloid is baffled.

KELOID

What's the matter, Rose? Are you in pain? Talk to me, Rose. It's the only way I can understand what's bothering you.

ROSE

(from behind her hands)

I'm hideous, Doctor. I'm crazy and I'm a monster.

KELOID

C'mon, Rose. There's just about nothing we can't fix if we know what's wrong. Now, I don't want any more games. Do what I tell you.

Rose reluctantly takes her hands away from her face and slips her left arm out of its shoulder strap. A pause, and then she raises her left arm above her head on the pillow.

Keloid can barely suppress his surprise at what he sees. Nestled in Rose's left armpit is a fleshy, tubular lump with an opening at the upper end of it. Keloid reaches over and presses it gently with his fingertips.

KELOID

Does that hurt?

ROSE

No. It doesn't hurt.

Keloid takes a closer look at the fleshy pouch. The opening at the upper end seems to be surrounded by sphincter muscles. Keloid gently spreads the opening with his thumb. Deep within the pouch, something an angry pink color, something glistening, seems to be pulsating. When he removes his thumb, the muscles pull the opening closed again the way a drawstring closes a bag.

Keloid sits up on the side of the bed again, trying to regain his composure.

KELOID

(after a pause)

As far as I can tell now, it'll take just a very minor operation to remove that growth from under your arm. It may be some kind of external intestinal tissue. The neutral field tissue graft we did has been trying to find a way to get food that you can digest into your body. I was hoping it would do that by providing you with a regular set of small intestines but it seems to have had something different in mind.

Rose shakes her head. A baffled expression comes over Keloid's face.

KELOID

How long have you been conscious, Rose? Do you know?

ROSE

Couple of days.

KELOID

Do you feel weak?

ROSE

I feel strong. I feel very strong.

KELOID

Rita tells me you refused to let her
attach you to your intravenous
nutrient bottles. Why?

ROSE

I don't need them. They make me feel
sick.

KELOID

I don't understand. They've got to
be your only source of food.

ROSE

They're not. They haven't been for a
couple of days. Not since that man...

KELOID

Man? What are you talking about?

ROSE

I'll show you.

Rose puts her right hand behind Keloid's head and draws it slowly down toward her left armpit. When Keloid's head is about a foot and a half away from the organ, Rose grabs Keloid by the hair with both hands and strains upwards with her body.

Keloid emits a low, gurgling scream which soon cuts off with the suddenness of a thrown switch. Exhausted of energy, Keloid collapses across Rose, who begins to rock him gently from side to side as she pumps the blood from his body.

EXT. KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN DEPOT -- MORNING (6.45 A.M.)

A battered old Ford pick-up truck pulls into the parking lot of a Colonel Sanders Kentucky Fried Chicken depot beside the two-lane highway leading to the Keloid Clinic. The door of the truck opens and a vaguely familiar mangy dog jumps out: it belongs to the farmer who was Rose's third victim.

INT. FRIED CHICKEN DEPOT -- MORNING

The farmer enters the take-out depot, which is deserted except

for staff and one lone trucker. The farmer is wearing a pair of crooked and cracked sunglasses. He is not very steady on his feet. His dog watches with concern through the glass door.

FARMER
(to counter girl)
One bucket of your best for me and
my dog there.

COUNTER GIRL
Yes, sir.

The counter girl conveys the order through the window into the kitchen, then turns back to write up the farmer's bill.

COUNTER GIRL
Yes, and will that be... Oh!

The girl's words trail off as she notices a tear of blood running down the farmer's cheek from under the right lens of his sunglasses.

COUNTER GIRL
Hey, Mister. Did you know you're
bleeding?

The farmer dabs at his cheek with a tobacco-stained finger, smearing the blood.

FARMER
It's nothin'.

TRUCKER
Musta had a rough night, Buddy.

FARMER
Think I got in a fight or somethin'.
Can't remember too good.

The man in the kitchen slaps a bucket of chicken down on the kitchen-window counter.

KITCHEN MAN
One bucket ready to go.

The counter girl picks up the bucket and carries it over to the trucker. She has just barely put it down when the farmer grabs it and starts tearing the lid from it.

TRUCKER

Hey, Buddy. I think that one's mine.

The farmer grabs a piece of fried chicken from the bucket and starts wolfing it down. The trucker puts his hand on the farmer's shoulder and turns him around so that they face each other, a piece of chicken skin hanging from the farmer's lips.

TRUCKER

I said... I think that one's mine,
Buddy.

The farmer starts shaking uncontrollably.

FARMER

I gotta eat. I gotta eat. I gotta
eat...

TRUCKER

Take those glasses off so I can see
who I'm talkin' to.

The trucker reaches out and takes off the farmer's sunglasses. To his disgust, he is confronted with one closed, swollen, and bleeding eye, and one eye which has almost completely clouded over from white of eye to pupil.

TRUCKER

What the hell...

Bits of chicken drool from the farmer's mouth, followed by a froth of dark green foam. Without warning, the farmer lunges at the trucker and tries to bite his face. The trucker dodges out of the way, catches the farmer by his jacket and swings him over the counter, where he crashes into the counter girl.

As the kitchen man comes out of the kitchen with a pot of boiling oil in his hand, the farmer grabs the girl and manages to bite her on the arm before she can pull away. Green foam dribbles into the girl's wound.

Once the girl has pulled loose and backs away, screaming hysterically, the kitchen man throws the potful of oil on the farmer as he struggles to his feet. The farmer screams.

As the dog barks madly at the door, the trucker and the kitchen man jump on the farmer and pound him senseless behind

the counter.

INT. SURGICAL WASH-UP AT THE KELOID CLINIC -- MORNING

Keloid and Roxanne are preparing to perform an early morning facelift. They wash their hands and forearms and put on surgical gloves as the scrub-nurse prepares their masks and gowns. Keloid has a thick band-aid on his neck.

ROXANNE

You're sure you want to do this one,
Dan? Louise and I could handle it
with no trouble.

KELOID

I'll be fine.

ROXANNE

You were pretty groggy this morning.
(noticing band-aid)
Cut yourself shaving?

KELOID

I'll be fine.

Keloid turns away from Roxanne to avoid further discussion. The orderly begins to help him on with his surgical gown. Keloid allows a pained, confused expression to take over his face for a moment, then suppresses it.

EXT. SIX-LANE HIGHWAY -- MORNING

On a six-lane highway leading out of Montreal, Cypher's station wagon starts out on its journey to the Keloid Clinic.

INT. STATION WAGON -- MORNING

Inside, Cypher and Read sit bleary-eyed, both drinking coffee from styrofoam cups with slits in their covers and listening to the car radio in silence. The 8 a.m. news is in progress.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

...but there can be little doubt
that the issue of police brutality
will still be with us for some time
to come. And speaking of brutality --
an incident of violence that took
place over a Highway 11 fried chicken
take-out counter ended in the death

of one man and the wounding of an eighteen-year-old girl. We'll give you further details on that story as they become available.

Read and Cypher drive on to the sounds of a Radio Shack commercial.

INT. CLINIC OPERATING ROOM -- MORNING

Keloid, Roxanne, Karl, Louise, and the scrub-nurse are in the process of performing a routine facelift on a middle-aged woman.

Roxanne watches Keloid closely for signs of fatigue as he makes the first cut under the woman's chin with a scalpel. Keloid's hand is rock steady. He makes two more cuts and rolls back a flap of skin. Everything seems to be under control.

INT. STATION WAGON -- MORNING

Cypher and Read drive on, listening to the rest of the news story.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

The man, later identified as forty-three-year-old Fred Atkins of Camelford, went berserk this morning during an argument over who was to be served his bucket of chicken first and bit the counter girl on the arm. The man was subdued by an unidentified truck driver and the chicken place's cook, but died of unknown causes before police arrived. Local health authorities suspect that rabies might be involved and have vaccinated everyone concerned. The dead man's dog was destroyed on the spot. And now, a brief pause for station identification, after which we'll talk to a scientist who says that earthquakes may one day become a thing of the past...

While they listen to a variation of the Radio Shack commercial, Cypher notices that they're passing by the Kentucky Fried Chicken depot. There are still two police

cars parked in the parking lot.

CYPHER
Hey, we're right there.

READ
(drowsy)
Huh?

CYPHER
The place they were talking about on
the radio.
(joking)
Wanna stop off for some fried chicken?

READ
(not reacting to the
joke)
Not hungry, thanks.

Cypher is about to say something further, but realizes that Read is too preoccupied with Rose to banter with. He decides to let it drop. They drive off to the sounds of easy-listening radio.

INT. CLINIC OPERATING ROOM -- MORNING

Keloid is now stitching up the flap of skin under his patient's chin. Roxanne notices that his hand is no longer as steady as it was earlier on in the operation. He is having trouble placing his stitches properly. His mask is soaking through at the mouth.

ROXANNE
Do you want me to complete the
stitching, Dr. Keloid?

KELOID
I need... I need something to cut
with, Dr. Rushton.

ROXANNE
You want the scissors now, Doctor?

KELOID
Yes. The scissors now.

Roxanne's brow is furrowed as she reaches for the scissors on her instrument tray and hands them to Keloid.

ROXANNE

Scissors.

Instead of simply allowing the scissors to be placed in his hand, Keloid grabs Roxanne by the wrist with one hand and takes the scissors with the other. He turns to look at her. She is shocked to see that his eyes have completely clouded over. Looking into them is like looking down two dark holes.

ROXANNE

Dan...!

Without hesitation, Keloid takes the scissors and cuts the tip of Roxanne's index finger off. Roxanne stares down at her bleeding finger, an unvoiced scream rising in her throat. Keloid lets the scissors drop to the floor and pulls down his mask. Dark green fluid foams from his mouth. He falls to his knees and puts Roxanne's index finger in his mouth, sucking on it like a straw. Roxanne screams.

Louise, who turned to look at Keloid at the sound of the falling scissors, screams in unison, backing away in terror and disbelief. The operating room explodes in confusion and panic as Keloid and Roxanne start to thrash about, knocking instruments and various surgical appliances to the floor. The patient slumbers on, oblivious.

Dr. Karl, the anesthetist, leaves his post behind the patient's head and tries to pull Keloid off Roxanne.

KARL

Dan, don't be stupid! What's the matter with you? Are you crazy or something? Stop it! Stop it!

Keloid lets go of Roxanne and sinks his teeth into Karl's shoulder. Karl screams in pain but doesn't let go. Louise finally regains enough presence of mind to run out of the operating room. Roxanne writhes in pain and shock on the floor.

LOUISE

I'm getting the police! I'm going to call the police!

INT. PATIENTS' LOUNGE -- MORNING

Rose is sitting in the patients' lounge with one or two other

patients, watching TV. Next to Rose is a mobile intravenous cart, to whose three bottles she is attached by several IV tubes. A young nurse we have not seen previously sits beside her, obviously instructed to keep a close watch on Rose, who wears a clinic dressing-gown over her nightgown.

Suddenly Louise comes flying past the lounge in hysterics, half crying, half screaming.

LOUISE

(hysterical)

He's gone crazy, he's gone crazy!
He's killing everybody! There's blood
everywhere! We've got to do something!
We've got to get the police!

She picks up a stream of staff members and patients who trail after her trying to get some sense out of the completely distracted woman. The nurse watching Rose immediately gets up and runs after Louise, as does one of the two patients watching TV in the lounge. The other patient, terrified by the panic in Louise's voice, shrinks into a corner and tries to look inconspicuous.

The instant everyone rounds the corner at the end of the lounge, Rose stands up and pushes her IV cart down a hall that goes in the opposite direction.

INT. SIDE HALLWAY -- MORNING

Once she is out of sight, Rose quickly begins to detach herself from her IV tubes. Shouts and sounds of struggle rise and fall in the distance as she pulls the needles out of her wrists.

INT. JUDY GLASBERG'S ROOM -- MORNING

Rose enters Judy Glasberg's room and closes the door behind her. She pauses only for a moment to glance at the photos of Judy tacked up on the wall showing her before and after her proposed nose job, then opens Judy's closet and starts rummaging through the clothes hanging there.

INT. CYPHER'S STATION WAGON -- LATE MORNING

Cypher and Read are on the last stretch of highway before the curve which reveals the driveway of the Keloid Clinic. Read has not warmed up too much, his anxiety increasing as they've gotten closer to the clinic.

READ

(looking through the
windshield)

Hey, look. What's going on there?
The place is crawling with police.

CYPHER

What? Hey, you're right.

READ

Oh, Christ, no! It's Rose. It's got
to be. Something's happened to Rose!

CYPHER

Take it easy, Hart. They wouldn't
need three cruisers for that. It's
something else for sure.

EXT. CLINIC DRIVEWAY -- LATE MORNING

Cypher's car pulls up the driveway, with Read hanging half-
way out of the passenger door. Read jumps out before the car
has come to a full stop.

There are indeed three Quebec Provincial Police cruisers
parked at various strategic spots around the front of the
clinic. There is also a paddy wagon parked right next to a
Quebec Bureau of Health van. Cypher and Read walk up to the
front doors and enter the clinic.

INT. CLINIC -- LATE MORNING

Several police officers and a police photographer are moving
through the building with Dr. Karl, who is describing what
happened to the officer in charge. Karl looks harried,
confused, and very unhappy.

Read and Cypher meet Karl and the head officer as they talk
in the reception area. Karl's operating tunic is bloodstained
at the shoulder.

CYPHER

(to Karl)

Where's Dr. Keloid? What's happening?

COP

Who are you?

KARL

Murray, thank God you're here. It's been a nightmare.

(to cop)

This is Murray Cypher. He's one of the owners of the clinic.

CYPHER

What's the story, Bill?

KARL

It's Danny. He went berserk in the middle of an operation. I was there. He tried to kill Roxanne. He cut her. They had to take her away.

He chokes up.

CYPHER

(in disbelief)

Danny? You've got to be kidding.

READ

(to Karl)

Oh, God. Have you seen Rose? Has anything happened to her? Is she all right?

KARL

Rose? You mean... no, no, this has nothing to do with her. She should be around somewhere.

COP

(to Karl)

OK, let's see if I've got this straight. You were in the middle of an operation, a routine facelift, did you say?

KARL

That's right. That's what we do here. The operation was just about over... it was Dr. Keloid who was performing it, you see... This is so bizarre...

Read turns away from the main doors and walks through the reception area looking anxiously for Rose. There he encounters two patients, Miss Owen and a slightly younger woman, sitting

in lawn chairs discussing the events of the morning.

MISS OWEN

(to woman patient)

...certainly they took her away. She was bleeding and she was completely hysterical. Couldn't make out a word she was saying.

READ

Have you seen Rose? The young girl who was in the motorcycle accident?

MISS OWEN

(confused)

Do you mean the girl who was in here to have her nose fixed two times in a row...?

INT. CLINIC ENTRANCE -- LATE MORNING

The chief cop, Cypher, and Karl are still talking.

COP

(to Cypher)

So you are in fact Dr. Keloid's business partner?

CYPHER

I am.

COP

Come with me, please.

The cop walks toward the main doors. Cypher turns to see if Karl is going to follow. Karl shakes his head and looks down at his shoes.

KARL

I can't, Murray. You go. I've seen it.

Baffled, Cypher follows the cop out the front door.

EXT. CLINIC -- LATE MORNING

Cypher and the head cop leave the clinic and walk out to the parking lot. As they pass the Bureau of Health van and the Keloid Clinic ambulance, Cypher sees a man in a medical

uniform giving a police officer an injection straight into his stomach muscles in the ambulance. The officer's hand is bandaged.

COP

(to Cypher)

Couple of my men got bitten. Those rabies shots are killers. Think I'd rather take my chances on getting sick instead.

CYPHER

Bitten? By what?

They arrive at the back of the paddy wagon. The cop points to the mesh windows in the wagon's rear doors.

COP

By that.

Cypher looks through the mesh. Without warning, Keloid throws himself against the mesh from the inside, frothing green at the mouth, smeared with blood and moaning like a creature from hell. He tries savagely to bite Cypher through the wire, which cuts his lips and scrapes the enamel from his teeth. Cypher jumps back.

COP

Can you confirm the identification of this man as Dr. Daniel Keloid?

CYPHER

(totally dismayed)

Oh, my God. My God.

INT. ENTRANCE OF CLINIC -- LATE MORNING

Read approaches one of two police officers who stand talking to the police photographer.

READ

Look... I'm trying to find my girlfriend. She's a patient here. She was here last night but nobody seems to have seen her.

SECOND COP

We got a young girl downstairs. You wanna take a look at her?

READ

Is her name Rose?

The two cops look at each other, then turn back to Read.

SECOND COP

We don't know. We didn't ask her.

C'mon.

(to third cop)

Tell the chief I'm downstairs gettin'
an ID. Be back in a flash.

The third cop nods. Read follows the second cop down a hallway.

INT. CLINIC BASEMENT -- LATE MORNING

Read follows the second cop down the stairs leading to the clinic's basement, which still shows traces of the clinic's origins as an old farmhouse.

The second cop walks over to a bank of three huge upright freezers used to store the frozen food supplies for the clinic's staff and patients. Read hangs back and glances around the immense basement. The cop walks over to the farthest freezer and swings open the door.

SECOND COP

C'mere. Can't see anything from there.

Read approaches slowly, certain his worst fears are going to be realized.

SECOND COP

(gesturing toward the
interior of the
freezer)

Is that Rose?

Read forces himself to look. There, frozen into a block of ice that takes up the entire bottom of the freezer, is the hunched-over, naked body of Judy Glasberg, her eyes staring, her lashes frosted, her mouth twisted horribly.

Read exhales sharply, almost sobbing with a combination of horror and relief.

READ

No. No, that's not Rose.

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY -- DAY

Rose is in the process of hitch-hiking her way into Montreal. She doesn't have to wait too long before an immense diesel truck snorts and squeals to a stop on the gravel shoulder of the road. Rose is wearing Judy Glasberg's jeans, boots, flannel shirt, and jacket.

As Rose runs toward the truck, the passenger door swings open for her.

INT. TRUCK CAB -- DAY

Rose sits in the passenger seat, her bare feet up on the dash tapping in time to the country-and-western music coming from a tiny transistor radio hanging by a leather thong from the rear-view mirror. Rose is flushed and excited, almost delirious to find herself alive, healthy, and free.

Beside her, the trucker eats a steak on a bun with great enthusiasm. He's in his forties, graying at the temples, gentlemanly. He's just about to start in on the second half of his sandwich when he pauses and glances over at Rose, who is happily watching the countryside rush by. The trucker holds out the second half of his sandwich to Rose, taking care to hold it in its tinfoil wrapper and not to touch it with his fingers.

TRUCKER

Want this, Rose? Steak on a bun.
Real good.

ROSE

Um... wouldn't mind just one bite.

She takes the sandwich, carefully peels back the tinfoil from one end, and bites into it. She chews and swallows.

ROSE

You're right. It's fabulous.

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY -- DAY

The diesel truck pulls on to the dirt shoulder of the road and comes to a halt. The passenger door swings open and Rose jumps down, stumbling as she hits the ground. She starts to vomit before she even has a chance to get off her knees.

The trucker comes around from the other side of the cab and squats down beside her. He puts his arms around her and holds her while she finishes being sick.

TRUCKER

Last time I ever patronize that greasy spoon, I can promise you that. C'mon sweetheart. There's a girl. Get it all out.

Rose wipes her mouth with the sleeve of her shirt and tries to stand up. She's still wobbly.

TRUCKER

You just put your arms around me and I'll lift you back in. We'll get you some coffee or some soup or something at the next stop, OK?

Rose nods weakly and puts her arms around the trucker. As he lifts her up she holds him close and closes her eyes. A tear runs down each cheek.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY -- DAY

Rose walks along the side of the road, hitch-hiking once again. After two cars pass her without stopping, an American sedan pulls off the road slightly ahead of her and then backs up to meet her. Rose gets in and the car pulls back on to the highway. She is flushed and invigorated.

INT. SEDAN -- DAY

Rose finds herself sitting next to a plump, pleasant-looking lady in her late thirties who smokes a cigarette furiously as she drives.

LADY

Hi. Where are you going?

ROSE

Montreal. Where are you going?

LADY

Same place.

Rose settles back in her seat and allows herself a smile.
Her cheeks are flushed and glowing.

ROSE

That's wonderful. Thanks. I was
beginning to think I'd never get
back home again.

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY -- DAY

A Camelford police cruiser is on its way down the highway
going in the direction opposite to Rose.

We follow the cruiser down the road a few hundred yards until
the diesel truck that stopped to pick up Rose comes into
view, still stopped by the side of the road, its passenger
door open.

The cruiser pulls over and parks behind the truck. One of
the QPP officers gets out and walks over to the cab of the
truck. When he gets close to the cab, the officer finds the
driver of the truck sitting sideways on the passenger seat,
his legs out of the cab, feet resting on the running board.
The driver seems to be in some kind of daze and he is very
pale.

OFFICER

Something wrong?

TRUCKER

Huh? Uh, no... nothing really wrong.
I... I guess I musta dozed off. Yeah.
That's it, I guess. Pulled over to
have a nap.

OFFICER

Well, that's good. We find too many
of you boys taking pills to keep
yourselves going all day and all
night. Next time, though, try to
pick a better spot to pull over.
This road's kind of narrow.

TRUCKER

Oh, yeah. Right. Will do, Officer.

OFFICER

OK. Have a nice day.

TRUCKER

Yeah. Thanks.

As the trucker turns to watch the cop leave, we see blood trickling from a wound at the back of his neck which the trucker is obviously unaware of himself. The officer walks back to his car and waits until the truck pulls off the shoulder and heads back down the road toward the city.

EXT. CAMELFORD STATION OFF TWO-LANE HIGHWAY -- DAY

The cruiser pulls into the parking lot of the local station, which is just off the two-lane highway between the clinic and the spot where the diesel truck stopped by the side of the road.

In the parking lot, mixed in with various police vehicles, are several familiar vehicles, including Cypher's station wagon and the clinic van.

As the two officers get out of their car, they're met by a Health Bureau official dressed in white who shows them his ID card.

HEALTH OFFICIAL

Claude Lapointe, Quebec Bureau of Health, official business. Sorry, boys. You can't go in unless you're willing to stay. The whole station's under quarantine. We think we've got an epidemic.

INT. CAMELFORD POLICE STATION -- DAY

Inside the station, Cypher sits on one side of a desk explaining things to the head cop, who's trying to keep up with him on an old typewriter. Phones are ringing everywhere, typewriters are clacking away.

In one corner we find Read glued to the receiver of a payphone, a finger in his free ear, trying desperately to hear what's being said at the other end of the line.

READ

Hey, Mindy? You still there? Yeah, it's crazy here. I can hardly hear a thing. Yeah. Listen, I thought that Rose might try to get in touch with you. Yeah. She what? She called you?

Oh, that's great. She's on her way over? That's incredible. You wouldn't believe what's been happening. It's crazy time. Yeah. Totally. Well, listen. When she gets there, tell her I'll be stuck in the Camelford cop shop for at least forty-eight hours. Camelford. It's a town you go through on the way to the clinic. That's right. The whole clinic was hit with rabies or something, they're not sure exactly. Yeah, the whole clinic. She might have to come in for tests or something. I'll find out. Yeah. You keep her there for me. As soon as I get out I'll come and get her. Yeah. OK, Mindy. Ciao.

Read hangs up. He discovers that he's actually smiling.

EXT. MONTREAL TRUCK DEPOT -- NIGHT

At a Montreal truck depot, crates are being unloaded from a warehouse and on to a series of trucks. A dispatcher works his way through the crowd of loaders looking for a missing driver.

DISPATCHER

Hey, anybody here seen Eddy? He's got the lead truck and I can't find the son of a bitch. Hey, you seen Smooth Eddy?

LOADER

I seen him climb into the box of his truck half an hour ago. He didn't look too good.

DISPATCHER

Whaddya mean he didn't look too good? Smooth Eddy always looks good.

LOADER

Naw, I mean he looked sick. Like, nauseous.

DISPATCHER

What the fuck we runnin' here, a nursery?

The dispatcher, a short, dark, mustachioed man, works his way up to the lead truck.

DISPATCHER
Eddy... Hey, Eddy, you in there?

EXT. DEPOT -- NIGHT

The dispatcher shoves his way to the sliding side door of Eddy's trailer and grabs the handle.

DISPATCHER
You in there, Eddy? We gotta get this rig movin'.

The dispatcher slides the door open. Eddy screams the second the light hits him and jumps out at the dispatcher, eyes clouded over, foaming mouth wide open. The dispatcher is bowled over by the force of the impact and he falls backwards to the concrete, Eddy all over him, screaming and biting the dispatcher's face and arms.

In an instant five loaders are trying to pull Eddy away. Eddy immediately turns on them, managing to inflict several bites before he disappears beneath the ever-increasing mass of loaders and truckers trying to get at him.

INT. MINDY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Mindy is watching TV in her cramped one-bedroom downtown high-rise apartment. Mindy is twenty-one, has lived on her own for years, is on the plump side of voluptuous, and works for IBM selling office equipment.

As she watches her color portable, Mindy idly turns the pages of Vogue magazine, smokes a cigarette, and alternately sips a cognac and a black coffee. There is a special newscast concerning the alleged rabies outbreak in the clinic region, complete with documentary footage shot outside the quarantined QPP station.

NEWSCASTER
...and health officials have said they consider the outbreak of the new strain of rabies as being potentially 'the worst of this century.' At the police station in Camelford, Kathy Draper talked to

Quebec Bureau of Health official
Claude Lapointe.

The news camera pans across the front of 52 station and ends up in a close-up of Mr Lapointe, standing in front of his van.

LAPOINTE

Certainly this is serious. This is not just a question of swine flu or something like that. We have already several deaths on our hands in this one small area alone, and the main problem is... we don't know what we're up against.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)

Are you saying that this is not an outbreak of rabies?

LAPOINTE

I'm not saying that. I'm not saying that, exactly. But it must be a new strain of rabies, because there are symptoms involved which we and even the world health community do not seem to be familiar with.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)

What are these symptoms?

LAPOINTE

Well, the period of incubation of this disease is very brief, maybe six to eight hours at the most. Now, that's quick, much quicker than normal rabies. Then the victim begins to sweat, to shake, to foam at the mouth. That's not so rare. What is rare is that the victim always with this new disease becomes violent and wants to bite somebody new. And this crazy phase is followed by a coma and then, in every case we know, by death. It's very strange.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)

What advice would you give to our viewers?

LAPOINTE

The disease spreads through the saliva of the victim... the saliva is very contagious. It dribbles into open wounds and cuts and causes immediate infection.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)

So?

LAPOINTE

(shrugging)

So... don't let anybody bite you. And if somebody does, find a doctor who can give you rabies shots immediately. We are already setting up vaccination centers beginning right here and spreading out toward Montreal. If we don't keep the disease localized and out of large centers of population, well... I wouldn't like to say what it could be like.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)

I heard you mention the Black Plague of London just before we went on the air. Is that what you mean by...?

LAPOINTE

(laughing)

We sometimes like to be dramatic about these things. It's more interesting than the usual paperwork and we get... you know... we get excited. It's a real challenge...

There is a knock at the door. Mindy gets up and opens it. Standing in the corridor is Rose.

ROSE

Surprise. I'm amongst the living.

Mindy throws her arms around Rose, hugs her, and pulls her inside the door. They separate, then hug again, both of them on the verge of tears.

INT. CAMELFORD STATION CELL -- NIGHT

Cypher and Read are sharing an open cell at the QPP station, which has been made as homely as possibly by the addition of two chairs and a small table, which Cypher is using as a desk. Read lies back on the lower half of one of the cell's three double bunk beds, arms behind his head, watching Cypher sift through a maze of papers of all sizes and shapes.

READ

Got anything in there I might want to read? I'm starting to go stir crazy already.

CYPHER

It's actually pretty exciting stuff if you know how to interpret it.

Cypher throws down his Audit Point pen, leans back, and puts his feet up on the table.

READ

I guess I'm just going on automatic pilot right now.

CYPHER

(shakes his head)

I can't connect that creature I saw in the paddy wagon with Danny. I just can't believe they're all dead...

Read is on the verge of saying something when they are both startled by the sound of a sudden chase in the main office at the end of the row of cells. Screams and yells are punctuated by the crash of overturned furniture and smashing glass.

Read and Cypher barely have time to get to their feet when they see the head cop backing slowly through the door leading to the main office, his service revolver drawn.

COP

George, for God's sake! Can't you understand what I'm saying? Stay back! Sit on the floor and put your hands on your head.

When the cop is about a third of the way down the aisle between the rows of cells, Read steps out behind him. The cop doesn't take his eyes away from the doorway.

READ

What's going on?

COP

Get into the cell and be ready to
lock yourselves in. Do what I tell
you!

Before Read has a chance to move, a second cop appears, sweating, staggering, drooling green foam, eyes expressionless black holes. The infected cop is stalking the head cop. Somebody shouts from somewhere back in the main office.

VOICE

Get out of the line of fire, Ted.
We'll take him from here with the
scatterguns.

COP

(shouting back)

Gimme a count of three, Joe! I'll be
outta your way by three!

VOICE

One...!

The head cop draws even with the door of Read and Cypher's cell. Cypher has already backed into it and flattened himself against the wall opposite the aisle. The infected cop comes closer. Cypher notices the bandage on his hand, then recognizes him as the cop at the clinic entrance who was bitten by Keloid and got rabies shots immediately afterwards.

VOICE

Two...!

COP

(to Read and Cypher)

Gimme room. I'm coming in quick.

VOICE

Three...!

The head cop dives sideways into the cell. The infected cop lunges forwards after him and is half-way through the cell door when Read, hanging on to the bars of the cell for leverage, puts his foot in the cop's stomach and kicks him back out into the line of fire. Before the infected cop can regain his balance, he is punched to the floor by several

shotgun blasts.

By the time the guns stop firing, the infected cop's body has been pushed almost to the end of the aisle. The head cop steps out to meet the three cops from the main office, who approach warily through the acrid smoke drifting up from the barrels of their guns.

COP

(to nobody in particular)

They gave him rabies shots. He got bitten up at that facelift place and they gave him his shots right away.

The head cop turns away from the body and looks up at the three men from the main office.

COP

They didn't do him any damn good, did they?

Read and Cypher exchange glances. It's been a lousy day.

INT. MINDY'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Mindy and Rose are sitting in Mindy's living room, Rose in front of the TV on the sofa, Mindy at a small desk in the corner with papers and some sort of training manual spread out in front of her. Rose is watching TV with a long ear plug trailing from the silent TV set across three feet of rug, up the sofa, and into her left ear.

Rose is watching Shivers, starring Paul Hampton, Joe Silver, and Barbara Steele, and is getting very restless. She can't help glancing over at Mindy, who is eating a ham sandwich while she works. Mindy has her hair pulled back and the pulse in her neck is somehow very prominent. Rose pulls the plug out of her ear, turns off the TV set, stands up, and goes to the closet next to the front door. Mindy looks up from her work for the first time.

MINDY

What are you doing, Rose?

ROSE

(putting on her jacket)

I think I have to go out for a while.

Mindy gets up and joins Rose at the door.

MINDY

Rosie, I feel so stupid. I haven't been much of a hostess. Why don't you stay here? There must be something in the fridge I can tempt you with.

ROSE

(opening the door)

Thanks, Mindy, but it's not that. I just have to get out into the fresh air again. It's a real experience for me just to walk down a street.

MINDY

I'll come with you.

ROSE

No. You stay here and work. I won't be gone too long.

MINDY

OK, Rosie. If you get dizzy or anything, call me.

Rose laughs, pats Mindy on the cheek, and leaves.

EXT. ST. CATHERINE'S STREET -- NIGHT

Rose walks down the most crowded part of St. Catherine's Street she can find. She has a new sensitivity to the heat radiating from the bodies of those close to her, and the presence of so much warm, jostling flesh full of blood whose coursing she can almost hear soon makes her eyes shine, her nostrils flare, her steps quick and precise.

Rose soon finds herself standing in front of an Eve Cinema, which is showing two soft-core skin flicks, as usual. On an impulse, Rose digs around in the pockets of Judy Glasberg's jeans. In the back pocket she finds a five-dollar bill. She hesitates for only a moment, then buys a ticket and enters the cinema.

INT. EVE CINEMA -- NIGHT

Rose walks down the center aisle and sits alone in the middle of an empty row of seats not far from the screen and its murky orgiastics.

It is not long before a thirtyish, balding man leaves his seat at the back of the cinema and sits directly behind Rose. As he removes his jacket, he brushes against Rose's hair with his hand as though by accident. Rose turns around to look at him.

BALDING MAN

'Scuse me. I didn't mean to touch you.

Rose gives him a hard look, then turns around to face the screen again.

BALDING MAN

Well, pardon me for existing.

Rose turns around again.

ROSE

I thought you did it on purpose.

BALDING MAN

No. Really. I was taking my jacket off and it brushed against you.

ROSE

Oh, well, I'm sorry. I like seeing these movies but men are always bothering me. I guess I'm a little paranoid.

BALDING MAN

Well, look. If I come and sit beside you everybody will think we're together and you'll be able to watch in peace. All I ask is a couple handfuls of popcorn.

ROSE

(laughing)

OK. C'mon.

The balding man gets up, moves to the end of his aisle, then makes his way toward Rose, trying not to blow it by betraying his excitement. He sits down beside Rose. She offers him some popcorn.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EVE CINEMA EXIT -- NIGHT

Rose slips out of the side exit of the cinema into an alley, her cheeks flushed, her breathing heavy. Crowds of people still throng past the opening at the end of the alley, the night just beginning. Rose watches them move past as though still watching a movie, feeling the full weight of her separation from the ordinary. After a pause, she moves out to join it.

INT. EVE CINEMA -- NIGHT

Back in the theater, the balding man is still sitting in his seat three rows from the screen, slumped down, his head on his chest, one arm thrown out around the edge of the seat beside him. Blood streams from a small hole in the palm of the outstretched hand, which is still curved as though embracing someone's shoulder.

The images reflecting from the screen flicker across his face, but he sees nothing.

INT. MINDY'S LIVING ROOM -- MORNING

Mindy is preparing and eating her breakfast of bran muffins, coffee, and orange juice on the run. While she shuffles her coffee cup and her notebooks, she listens to the radio.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

...decide that each municipality should take on the responsibility for setting up vaccination centers in community halls and health clinics. Police have criticized the City Hall decision, saying that evidence has come to light which indicates that normal rabies vaccine is completely ineffective against the new strain of the disease. They are asking instead for the organization of a series of militia-and army-controlled quarantine centers until such time as an effective vaccine is developed. Said one police spokesman: 'We are having trouble containing the known outbreaks of violence induced by the disease as it is. Imagine what will happen if it spreads through the

city like a normal wave of the flu.'

Mindy has finally gotten herself ready to go to work. Just before she leaves, she knocks on the bathroom door.

MINDY

I'm going, Rosie. I've left you some coffee on the stove. Turn it off if you go out, OK?

ROSE (O.S.)

OK. 'Bye.

MINDY

(slightly worried
pause)

Aren't you going to wish me luck?

(pause)

Are you OK?

ROSE (O.S.)

(oddly muffled)

Brushing my teeth. Good luck.

MINDY

(relaxing)

Thanks. See you later.

Mindy turns to the front door, opens it, and leaves.

INT. MINDY'S BATHROOM -- MORNING

In the bathroom, Rose is doubled over on the floor clutching her stomach. Two seconds after she hears the front door slam closed, she lets out a low, strangled moan and begins to roll around on the floor.

A sudden spasm forces her to curl into a ball again, her fingernails sinking into the palms of her hands. After the spasm passes, she props herself up against the bathroom door. A thread of blood curls down her wrist. She opens her right hand. She stares at the four tiny crescents of blood that her nails have cut into her palm. With slow, trancelike motions, she licks the blood off her wrist and her palm.

INT. SUBWAY STATION -- MORNING

Mindy stands in a crowded subway station waiting for her train to come. Every once in a while she glances down at a

marked page in a blue corporation manual she's carrying, checking her memory against the printed specifications of various pieces of office equipment.

The train finally comes and Mindy gets crammed in with the rest of the rush-hour crowd.

INT. SUBWAY CAR -- MORNING

As the subway car pulls out of the station, Mindy leans against the door and continues to consult her manual. As she looks up and off into space, trying to grasp the next set of machine specifications, her eye is caught by the face of a woman with her back against the opposite door. The woman seems to be blind -- her eyes are completely black from edge to edge.

Then Mindy notices with horror that the woman is trembling and drooling and foaming green at the mouth. The sea of faces between them seems indifferent to the woman until she screams at the top of her lungs and plunges forward with her mouth wide open, apparently trying to get at Mindy.

The people closest to the woman suddenly start to panic, and the panic moves out through the car in waves. Everyone starts to push and shove, and people try to climb over one another. The infected woman manages to lock her teeth on to the ear of a man who begins to punch her in the chest and stomach, himself completely terrified.

The subway car pulls into the next station and its doors open. Mindy is almost knocked to the platform and trampled but she manages to stay on her feet and flow with the stampede.

The people waiting to get on to the train are greeted with the spectacle of three men subduing an insane, shrieking woman on the floor of the car.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CONSTRUCTION SITE -- DAY

Mr. Lapointe, Quebec Health Bureau official, is riding in the back of a city limousine with an official from the mayor's office. The limousine is working its way through the rubble of a deserted construction site.

LAPOINTE
(exasperated)

You'll pardon me, Mr. Stasiuk, but I

think the mayor should be taking this epidemic more seriously than he is.

OFFICIAL

A city is a complex machine, Mr. Lapointe. Every part needs constant attention. The mayor will listen to you, but you're not the only one. It takes time...

The limousine has worked its way into a relatively deserted section of the site, and now slows to a stop.

OFFICIAL

(to uniformed driver)

Why have we stopped, Clark?

The driver points through the front windshield at the mannequin of a construction worker waving a flag that has been placed directly in the middle of the narrow dirt road they're travelling on.

OFFICIAL

Well, isn't there anyone around? Do we have to turn around?

Before anyone can make a move, two construction workers suddenly emerge from the surrounding rubble and advance on the car, one of them carrying a pneumatic jackhammer.

OFFICIAL

Clark... roll down your window and ask them why the road is blocked. It may be strike trouble. Be careful.

Clark is in the process of rolling down his window when the man with the jackhammer turns on the hammer and applies the chisel to the driver's door. As the chisel point of the hammer chews up the door, Lapointe can see that the eyes of the two workers are clouded over and that they are all slavering green foam from their mouths.

OFFICIAL

Oh, Christ! Clark, let's get out quick! Quick, man!

LAPOINTE

They've got the disease! Look at

their eyes! Report that to your mayor!

Before the driver can slam the limousine into reverse, the second infected worker has reached through the window and grabbed him by the hair. The hammer has completely penetrated the door. The driver screams. They'll kill us!

The two workers begin to drag the screaming driver out of the car. The official scrambles over the front seatbacks into the driver's seat, kicks the legs of the driver away from the foot controls, and slams the gearshift into reverse. The limousine fishtails backwards madly as the official floors the accelerator, the crumpled, bloodied driver's door flapping like a broken wing as the car backs down the road.

In the rapidly receding distance, Lapointe can see the infected workers hunching over Clark's body.

INT. SHOPPING MALL -- DAY

Rose sits in the middle of a shopping mall full of early Christmas shoppers. Her hair is matted and straggly and she watches the people in the mall hungrily. In the background, children line up to sit on the knee of a huge, enthroned Santa Claus surrounded by elaborately wrapped presents and Christmas trees attached to a huge backdrop of crimson and tinsel.

Two cops, a nervous young cop carrying a submachine-gun, and an older cop, watch the proceedings tensely. Large crowds always mean trouble. The two cops patrol the mall separately, keeping in touch by radio. A pleasant young man stops in front of Rose's bench, looks her over, then decides to get acquainted.

YOUNG MAN

(to Rose)

Mind if I sit down?

ROSE

No. I don't mind.

The young man sits down.

YOUNG MAN

Nothing like Christmas, huh?

Rose doesn't answer. The young man is running out of opening lines.

YOUNG MAN

Ah... you smoke? You know...
cigarettes? You smoke?

ROSE

Yeah. Sure.

YOUNG MAN

Great. Have one of mine.

The young man fumbles in his jacket pocket for his pack of cigarettes, then awkwardly shakes one out of the pack for Rose. She takes it. The young man puts one in his mouth, then starts to feel around in his pockets for matches. He can't find any.

YOUNG MAN

No matches. You got a light?

Rose shakes her head. The young man looks around. He spots a man with a cigarette in his hand at the end of the adjacent bench. He gets up.

YOUNG MAN

Just a sec. I'll ask that guy over
there for a light. OK? Be right back.

He walks over to the man on the bench. As he approaches, he notices that the man's cigarette has burned right down to the flesh of his fingers.

YOUNG MAN

'Scuse me, Mac. Gotta light?

Without warning, the man on the bench leaps up at the young man and grabs him by the hair. The man, a powerful, bearded man of about sixty, has eyes like black holes and is drooling green foam. He pulls the young man's head back and begins to tear at his throat with nicotine-stained teeth. The young man screams.

The two cops break into a run the instant they locate the source of the screams. When they arrive at the bench, the bearded man looks up, his beard and mouth stained with blood. The young man is quite obviously on the verge of death. The young cop levels his submachine-gun at the man.

YOUNG COP

Stand up! Stand up and put your hands
behind your head!

The bearded man jumps up and tears off through the crowd of incredulous onlookers. The young cop follows him. The bearded man heads for the Santa Claus display.

YOUNG COP

Outta the way! Get outta the way.
He'll kill you! That man'll kill
you!

The children around the Santa Claus display scatter as the bearded man heads for them. The Santa Claus stands up and grabs at the bearded man just as the young cop opens fire with his submachine-gun. His bullets rip through both men and the entire display, scattering bits of Christmas wrapping and plastic fir trees everywhere.

The older cop arrives on the scene, revolver drawn, just as post-action shock hits the young cop.

YOUNG COP

Oh, Christ... I didn't mean to hit
the Santa Claus.

Deep in the gathering crowd, a traumatized Rose pushes her way through to an exit.

INT. CAMELFORD STATION -- DAY

We are close on a TV set sitting on the admitting sergeant's desk just inside the station's main entrance. A detailed analysis of the disease crisis is in the process of being broadcast, complete with news footage of army and militiamen jumping off trucks in Place Ville Marie, citizens being vaccinated at community health centers and at emergency depots set up in subway stations, etc.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

...and the crisis has now been
officially granted epidemic status
by officials of the World Health
Organization. The Prime Minister was
reluctant to officially declare a
state of emergency, but as any citizen
in the streets can tell you, martial
law has come to Montreal. At an
emergency vaccination center set up

in the Atwater Metro Station, we spoke with a director of the World Health Organization who had just arrived from England to take charge of liaison with Health Bureaus in Western European countries.

The face of an aristocratic and very tweedy Englishman appears on the screen with the name Dr. Royce Gentry, Director, WHO, flashing beneath his face on the screen for a moment or two.

GENTRY

I don't think there's any question that martial law is needed in the city of Montreal at this point in time. It's a necessity. It has already been established that victims of the disease -- and it is not rabies, though it may be related to the rabies virus -- victims of the disease are beyond medical help once it has established itself to the degree of inducing violent behavior.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)

What you're saying, then, Dr. Gentry, is that...

GENTRY

What I'm saying is very simple. It may not be very palatable for your viewers. Shooting down victims of the disease is as good a way of handling them as we've got. If we lock them up, they immediately go into a coma and die shortly afterwards. We've now got a vaccine that we think will work in a preventative way, but for those who are already incubating the disease... as far as we know, there's no hope for them.

The face of Dr. Gentry is replaced by a close-up of a needle sinking into an arm.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

All those receiving shots of the new vaccine are being issued plastic ID

cards with a photo of the card holder. Viewers are urged not to leave their homes unless absolutely necessary, and are reminded that if they do they must carry their vaccine cards with them. Police, army, and militia officers may demand to see them. Here is a list of vaccination centers in your area and the toll-free telephone number of our special emergency information center.

Read and Cypher, ruffled and haggard, are signing forms at the main desk of the station prior to being released. Both are wearing plastic vaccination plates on their jackets, Read toying impatiently with his.

CYPHER

(to desk sergeant)

Goodbye, Sergeant. You've been a wonderful host.

SERGEANT

OK, Murray. Take it easy. You sure you don't want to stay out here with us? The city doesn't sound like a very appetizing place to be.

CYPHER

I would, but my wife and kid... you know how it is.

READ

(very twitchy)

C'mon, Murray. Rose is waitin' for me.

CYPHER

OK, kid. Let's go.

EXT. CAMELFORD STATION -- DAY

Cypher and Read get into Cypher's station wagon, a QPP officer handing Cypher the car keys as he gets in.

OFFICER

Remember to keep your windows up and your doors locked once you get into the city. Maybe the bug can't get

you now, but that...
 (tapping Cypher's
 plate)
...that won't protect you from the
crazies. Take care now.

Cypher nods and starts his car. They pull out of the parking lot and on to the highway.

INT. MINDY'S BEDROOM -- LATE DAY

Rose lies curled up in Mindy's double bed, the blankets twisted up around her, sweating, her shoes still on, her muscles contracting with waves of spasms that roll over her.

Rose hardly notices the sound of keys jingling, the latch turning, the front door opening. Mindy's home.

 MINDY (O.S.)
 (closing the door and
 locking it)
Rose? Are you home?

We hear the sound of Mindy walking through her living room, then approaching the bedroom.

 MINDY
Rose? Are you asleep?

Mindy enters the bedroom, a bag of groceries in her arms. She stops at the door, shocked at Rose's appearance, then puts the bag down on her night table and sits on the bed beside Rose.

 MINDY
Have you been out? Have you gotten
your shot?

Rose rolls over to face Mindy. Her lips are pale and parched, her nose is running, her voice shakes as she speaks.

 ROSE
 (feebly)
I... I've been afraid to go out.
And, Mindy, I... I'm starving. I'm
starving to death. And I don't want
to eat. I don't want any more to
eat.

She bursts into tears and rolls away from Mindy, who slides across the bed after her and begins to stroke Rose's forehead.

MINDY

Rosie, what's been going on? What's the matter with you? Poor kid. Well, don't worry any more. We're two tough ladies, you and me. We can handle anything we have to.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY RAMP -- DUSK

Read and Cypher descend into the city on a long expressway ramp which affords them a clear view of other sections of highway and a large suburban plaza dominated by a huge supermarket.

Both their ramp and the other sections of highway are strewn with wrecked and burned-out cars and even the occasional body.

As the station wagon descends, they can see the line-up of people moving in and out of the supermarket guarded by soldiers with light machine-guns. Before anyone is allowed into the supermarket, he has to present his vaccine card at a registration desk set up at the entrance.

Cypher and Read plunge on, deeper into the city.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET AT FOOT OF EXIT RAMP -- NIGHT

The station wagon swings off the exit ramp and on to a city street, narrowly missing a few piles of garbage, which seems to be everywhere.

The street seems to be deserted, the stores on both sides closed and dark.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET -- NIGHT

The station wagon turns on to a long, broad, practically deserted street. The only human activity is centered around a convoy of heavy white city garbage trucks manned by white-uniformed, hooded figures. The convoy of twelve is led by a military jeep whose rider, an army sergeant, orders them to peel off one by one down specific routes deemed primary for decontamination.

Armed soldiers ride on the tops of the trucks carrying rifles with telescopic sights.

INT. STATION WAGON -- NIGHT

READ

I can't believe it. It's like we were at war.

CYPHER

Listen, Hart. We're going to my house first. I'm not going to relax until I know that everything there's OK. Once we're there, I'll give you the keys to the car and you can go get your girl.

READ

(tense)

OK. Thanks.

EXT. LEAFY SUBURBAN STREET -- NIGHT

The station wagon pulls up into the driveway of Cypher's small but pleasant suburban house. Except for a bit of garbage strewn about, there are no signs of unrest in the neighborhood. The odd rifle shot in the distance is fairly easy to ignore in these surroundings.

INT. STATION WAGON -- NIGHT

Cypher gets out of the car and Read slides over into the driver's seat.

CYPHER

Phone me when you get there, will you? Maybe you should bring Rose back here with you until this thing blows over.

READ

Yeah. Listen, thanks for the car, Murray. I'll call you.

Cypher smiles and heads up the driveway toward his front door. Read waits until Cypher has safely let himself into his house, then pulls out of the driveway and on to the street.

INT. CYPHER'S HOUSE, FIRST FLOOR -- NIGHT

Cypher enters his house and closes the door behind him. He puts his briefcase down on top of the hall radiator and walks toward the foot of the stairs.

CYPHER

Cecile? It's Murray, honey. I'm home.

Nobody answers. Cypher resists the temptation to panic and walks through the downstairs rooms. Everything seems reasonably neat but there is no one there. Cypher returns to the foot of the stairs and starts the climb to the second floor.

INT. CYPHER'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR -- NIGHT

Cypher gets to the top of the stairs and begins to move along the narrow hall taking him to the front of the house.

CYPHER

Cecile? I'm home, honey. Where are you?

Cypher stops at the doorway of the baby's room and looks in.

INT. CYPHER'S HOUSE, BABY'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Cypher scans the baby's room, which from its cartoon wallpaper to its brightly colored broadloom and toy-filled shelves speaks volumes about the fastidious preparation which preceded baby's arrival.

He is about to continue on down the hall to the master bedroom when he notices that the broadloom beneath the baby's bathinette is wet. On an impulse he enters the room and lifts open the top covering the bathinette. The bathinette is half-filled with bloody bath water, which has been leaking on to the carpeting, drop by drop, for hours.

Cypher lets the lid drop down with a mixture of fear and horror suddenly stabbing him in the pit of the stomach. An insane kind of moaning giggle drifts over to him from the corner of the room.

He whirls to face the sound. It seems to be coming from the closet. Drawn inexorably toward the sound, he approaches the closet, which is not completely closed. He raises his hand

to grasp the doorknob.

Without warning, the closet door explodes open, smashing Cypher in the face and knocking him to the floor. A crazed, drooling Cecile lands heavily on top of him and begins to bite him savagely on the face, her clouded eyes devoid of all mercy or recognition.

INT. MINDY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Mindy has tucked Rose into bed and is now applying a cold compress to her feverish forehead. Rose seems to be half asleep.

MINDY

That's it, Rosie. You just get as much sleep as you need. Don't think about anything. Let your mind drift.

Mindy gets up and goes into her kitchen, leaving Rose's door open just a crack.

INT. MINDY'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

In her kitchen, Mindy continues preparing an elaborate vegetable stew, somehow convinced that her weeks in the hospital have induced in Rose an aversion to meat.

The TV set, Mindy's constant companion, has been turned around so that Mindy can just see it from where she's working, although the sound has been turned off in deference to Rose. At the moment there seems to be a detailed analysis of the difference between rabies and the new strain of disease holding the city in thrall, complete with microphotography, in progress.

INT. MINDY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Rose takes the compress from her forehead and places it carefully on the night table. She slips out of bed and begins to rummage around in the closet for her clothes.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET -- NIGHT

Read drives Cypher's station wagon along a downtown street on his way to Mindy's. There are more people on this particular street than the ones he and Cypher first encountered. In fact, were it not for the heavily armed soldiers placed at several strategic points and the single

guarded garbage truck making its rounds, all would seem normal. The sound of sporadic gunfire in the distance seems to have been accepted as everyday fare by everybody.

But Read's focus of attention is on the car radio. He has been listening to an analysis of the possible origins of the disease and the information he's getting is disturbing him. The voice on the radio is that of Dr. Royce Gentry.

GENTRY (V.O.)

And so after using some rather elaborate tracking procedures and applying them to a map, we find that the disease does in fact seem to have a very specific place of origin.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Which is...?

GENTRY (V.O.)

Which is the Keloid Clinic of Cosmetic Surgery, a few miles outside the town of Camelford. You can see with your own eyes how everything has spread out from there in geometrically increasing proportions. Now this pattern, in conjunction with some of our other statistics, indicates that there is a strong possibility that there is a special factor at work in the spread of the disease.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

You mean a carrier.

GENTRY (V.O.)

Well, at the risk of setting off a futile witch hunt... Yes. Someone like the infamous Typhoid Mary who incubates the disease and transmits it, but is herself immune to it.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

What were they doing at the Keloid Clinic, Dr. Gentry?

GENTRY (V.O.)

We've run into a certain amount of difficulty ascertaining what exactly

was going on there. We know what it wasn't. It had nothing to do with germ warfare or the like... no secret government contracts...

Read's concentration is suddenly shattered by a movement he catches in the corner of his rear-view mirror as he waits for a light to change. A crazy -- a man in his forties wearing a scarf and gloves but no coat -- breaks out from between two buildings just behind Read's car and heads for the clusters of people crossing at the light.

Read watches the man brush by the car as though watching the scene on television. The people in the crosswalk scatter at the crazy's approach. The sniper on top of the garbage truck has him safely in his crosshairs and squeezes off a shot. The crazy hurtles against the hood of the station wagon as though falling from a building and bounces off and on to the road.

Before Read can drive off, two garbage men run toward him from the garbage truck. One of them holds up his hand for Read to wait. He produces a spray bottle from under his white jumpsuit and sprays the crazy's blood that has spattered the car's hood. Then he waves Read on. Read puts his windshield wipers on.

INT. MINDY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Rose is dressed and trying to steal out the front door when Mindy hears her from the kitchen.

MINDY (O.S.)
Rose? Are you awake?

Rose yanks open the door and has one foot out the door when Mindy appears around the corner with a dish of sauce in her hand.

MINDY
Oh, no. Rose! You can't! It's dangerous out there!

Mindy bangs the plate down on top of a stereo speaker and runs after Rose. She catches her a few steps out the door and hauls her back inside, swinging the door shut again with her foot. The door doesn't lock.

Rose is whimpering and weak. She starts to sink to the floor,

and Mindy, not strong enough to hold her up, goes with her.

ROSE

Mindy, Mindy. I don't want it to be you.

Mindy hugs Rose tightly, rocking her back and forth.

MINDY

Of course it should be me. Who else but your best friend, Rose? I'll take care of you.

ROSE

(pause)

Oh, Mindy, I ache all over. I'm hurting from the inside out.

MINDY

Well then, what you need is a nice, deep, hot bath. It'll seep in and relax you from the outside in.

She starts to unbutton Rose's shirt. Rose doesn't resist.

EXT. MINDY'S APARTMENT BUILDING -- NIGHT

Read parks the station wagon in front of Mindy's building and gets out. He sprints up the front steps.

INT. APARTMENT CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

Read emerges from the elevator at the end of the corridor and walks purposefully past the row of doors until he reaches Mindy's.

He reaches for the door. He notices that it's ajar and pulls back his hand at the last minute. He takes a deep breath, then kicks open the door.

INT. MINDY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

As the front door of Mindy's apartment slams open, Read is confronted by the bizarre spectacle of Rose hunched over Mindy's prostrate form, sucking blood from the large vein in one of Mindy's arms.

The instant the door slams open, Rose pulls her blood-sucking organ out of Mindy's arm and tries to hide it with her right

hand. The organ, still dripping blood, slides back up under her arm into its sheath. The half-conscious Mindy puts her hand over the hole in her arm and mumbles incoherently.

As Read approaches, Rose backs away, slipping her left arm back into her shirt and fumbling with the buttons. Rose now looks flushed and healthy, excited and alive.

ROSE
(quietly)
It's not my fault. It's not my fault.

READ
It's you. You're the one. It's been
you all along.

ROSE
What are you talking about?

READ
You carry the plague. You've killed
hundreds of people.

ROSE
No... no... you don't know what you're
talking about. I'm still me. I'm
still Rose.

READ
What did they do to you at the clinic?
What did they turn you into?

ROSE
(suddenly angry)
I have to have blood. It's all I can
eat. And it's your fault, not mine.
It's your fault!

Read takes three quick steps and grabs Rose by the shoulders. She shrinks away from him as though he were the monster.

READ
There must be some way to fix this...
We'll go to the police... we'll go
to the hospital...

Rose twists out of Read's grasp and runs for the front door. Read turns and runs after her, almost tripping over Mindy. Rose makes it out the door before Read can catch her.

INT. APARTMENT CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

Read chases Rose down the corridor.

READ

Rose, I'm sorry... wait! Wait!

INT. STAIRWELL -- NIGHT

Read finally manages to catch Rose at the top of the stairwell. They struggle.

READ

Rose, listen to me. You're right.
We're in it together. We'll figure
it all out together...

As they struggle, Rose somehow smashes Read in the face with her elbow and he goes crashing backwards down the flight of stairs, hitting his head several times on the metal steps as he goes.

She watches in horror as Read falls, then stands frozen for several heartbeats after he has landed in a crumpled heap at the bottom of the stairs. She runs down after him and kneels beside him.

He has a few large bruises on his forehead and temples but is still breathing. Rose touches his lips with her fingers briefly, then gets up and continues down the stairs.

EXT. ENTRANCE OF MINDY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Rose opens the front door of the apartment building and steps out on to the front steps, bewildered. There she sees a man with a mustache sifting through a handful of letters on the bottom step. He looks up at the sound of the door opening.

MUSTACHIOED MAN

Can I help you? I've seen you around before, haven't I? I just moved out of this building. They keep sending my mail here.

ROSE

I... yes, I'm a friend of Mindy Kent. I was supposed to meet her here, but she must have gone out.

MUSTACHIOED MAN

Well, it's not safe to walk the streets these days, not for a while, anyway. Can I escort you somewhere? Have you been vaccinated? No? Me neither. My brother told me he had to line up for three hours. Who's got time?

ROSE

Listen... I need a place to stay tonight. At least until Mindy shows up. Could I stay with you? For a little while?

MUSTACHIOED MAN

(slightly flustered)

I, ah... guess you could. I'm a single guy, you know. We'd be alone.

(pause)

That doesn't bother you?

Rose shakes her head, wide-eyed and innocent.

MUSTACHIOED MAN

I'm a nice guy, too. C'mon. My car's just down the street.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Night has fallen over Mindy's apartment and the streets are dark and completely deserted.

INT. STAIRWELL -- NIGHT

Read is only now regaining consciousness in the damp apartment stairwell. He rubs his neck and gradually manages to get to his feet. The top of the stairs looks as though it's a mile away. Read begins to climb the stairs, one painful step at a time.

INT. CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

As Read staggers down the corridor, he hears a telephone begin to ring in the distance. The ringing gets louder and, somehow, more persistent as he gets closer to Mindy's door.

INT. MINDY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

The telephone is patiently ringing in Mindy's apartment, as though waiting for Read to answer it. He enters the apartment and takes a quick look around for signs of Mindy. The place is empty. He swings the door shut and locks it. Only then does he turn to the phone.

Read answers the telephone.

READ

Hello?

INT. MUSTACHE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Rose has locked herself into the single man's apartment and slid a heavy table across the door. The single man sits slumped in an old wingback chair, his cheek bloody, his eyes closed.

Rose has turned out all the lights in the apartment except for a small mood light near the telephone, which sits on an end table by a Victorian velvet sofa. She speaks quietly into the receiver, as though not wanting to wake the mustachioed man.

ROSE

It's me, Hart. I'm glad I managed to get you. Are you all right? Did I hurt you?

READ (V.O.)

Rose, where are you? We should be together. Please, tell me where you are.

ROSE

Well, what you said to me hurt me. It scared me. It scared me because I suddenly knew you might be right. And if you were right, about my being a carrier, I mean... then I... I murdered Mindy. I murdered a lot of people.

READ (V.O.)

Rose, listen to me... No court of law would convict you...

ROSE

So I decided to try a little experiment to prove that you were wrong about all that. You see? I'm being very positive, aren't I?

READ (V.O.)

There's no reason for you to put yourself through anything like this...

ROSE

So I found myself a partner for my experiment, a single guy, real normal and real healthy, and I took a little of his blood... just a bit... and I've locked myself in with him. And I'm going to stay here with him until I'm sure he's not going to get sick. And then I'll know that I'm not the one who started it all.

INT. MINDY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

READ

Rose, you've got to tell me where you are. You're committing suicide.

ROSE (V.O.)

Hart, I just want you to be with me over the phone... just until I find out one way or the other. We can live together over the phone for a while. We can do that, can't we?

READ

Oh, God. Rose, how long ago did you... take blood from the man you're with? How long ago?

ROSE (V.O.)

Six hours. Maybe seven.

READ

Rose, you've got to get out of there.

INT. MUSTACHE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

As Read talks, Rose hears a sound behind her. She turns to

see a shadow rising out of the chair behind her. The shadow seems immense.

READ (V.O.)

Please, Rose, just drop the phone and walk over to the door and run outta that place as fast as you can. You're not giving either of us a chance to think. We don't need this pressure... everything's so confused... We've got to just clear a space where we can be alone and sit down and talk about everything and figure out what to do... Rose? Get out of there, get out right now!

The shadow approaches Rose, who lies as still as death on the sofa. The single man is finally caught by the edge of the mood light's glow, and Rose can see the dead black eyes, the drooling green saliva, the slack, hungry lips.

ROSE

Hart... I'm afraid!

The single man lunges for Rose's throat.

INT. MINDY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Read screams into the phone.

READ

Rose! Rose!

He is in agony as he hears the sounds of Rose being torn apart at the other end of the line, but he is unable to take the receiver away from his ear, unable to desert Rose in her final moments. He screams insanely into the phone, this time incoherently, trying to make it stop, trying to cover it up. But it doesn't stop.

EXT. DOWNTOWN INTERSECTION -- DAWN

In the chill of early morning, an armed garbage truck moves through the city collecting bodies left in the aftermath of the night's anonymous violence.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MINDY'S STREET -- DAWN

On Mindy's street, just a few blocks away from Mindy's apartment, a garbage truck stops to collect a body covered with dried blood that has been dragged out on to the front steps of an apartment building. Before the garbage men can get the body, the sniper on the roof has to shoot a dog who is sniffing at the body.

The garbage men are then able to get to the body, spray it with disinfectant, spray the dog's body, and drag them back to the truck's compressor. As the body is dumped into the back of the truck, we see that it is possibly Rose's.

THE END