



Scripts.com

Lord of Illusions

By Clive Barker

TITLE SEQUENCE:

As the credits run, we INTERCUT the following two sequences:

EXT. NEVADA DESERT - IDOLS - DAY

A SLOW DRIFT through a collection of crudely constructed, surreal, six-foot tall "IDOLS." Like modern demons.

Grotesque. Disturbing. WE LAP DISSOLVE between details of their twisted anatomies: headlamp eyes, bright metal claws, broken glass teeth.

EXT. NEVADA ROADS - DESERT - DAY

Two vehicles, one a Volkswagen "bus" decorated with stylized flames, the other a '66 Thunderbird, speeding along a series of eerily empty desert roads, somewhere in a wilderness of sand and heat.

END CREDITS.

CUT WIDE TO;

EXT. NEVADA DESERT - DAY

A violent WIND HOWLS around, but through the sand we-can just make out a large, ominous building: the HOUSE of William Nix. Its walls are white-washed and scrawled with GRAFFITI. The "family" of IDOLS surrounds the doorway, guarding it. ON SCREEN, the words: "Nevada - Thirteen Years Ago"

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - DAY

We're at the front door now, which stands open. Leaning against the door-frame is a scrawny, wild-eyed YOUTH, about sixteen. His name is BUTTERFIELD. He's got a brooding, almost sultry look on his face. One of his eyes is black, the other milky blue. He's whittling something with a scalpel. Distantly, the sound of CAR ENGINES. Butterfield narrows his eyes.

BUTTERFIELD'S P.O.V.

The Volkswagen "bus" and Thunderbird are approaching the house.

BUTTERFIELD:

(softly)

Swann...?

He turns from the door. In his haste he drops the WOOD he's whittling. He's been carving a DEATH'S HEAD.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - ROOMS AND CORRIDORS - DAY

The house no longer serves any domestic function. It has become the temple and dormitory of Nix's small apocalyptic cult. As we go through the house with Butterfield we glimpse a little of what life here is like.

The rooms are murky, and chaotic. The walls, PAINTED with scenes of cities and landscapes BURNING, and creatures from some unspeakable nightmare ATTACKING, RAPING, and DEVOURING helpless humanity. The atmosphere is joyless, and oppressive.

The passages become progressively darker as the boy makes his way to the heart of the house. Only OIL LAMPS, set on the floor, light these claustrophobic corridors.

BUTTERFIELD:

Master?

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - DAY

A dozen CULTISTS sit cross-legged on the floor in front of their leader, WILLIAM NIX. His black hair grows to his shoulders. His eyes are deep and glittering, his voice seductive. A terrifying yet charismatic presence.

All the Cultists - who are a cross-section of obsessives - wear the same simple T-shirts, painted with the cult's SIGIL. They watch Nix in adoration.

As Nix speaks, he juggles a FLAME, passing it from hand to hand with casual ease...

NIX:

And the fire said to me: Nix, Nix,
you're my instrument. From now on,
you'll be called the Puritan...

CULTISTS:

(murmuring)

Puritan...

NIX You will find a few good men and women, and together,
together you will cleanse the world.

CULTISTS:

Yes...

Butterfield enters.

BUTTERFIELD:

Master?

Nix looks up.

BUTTERFIELD:

Swann's here.

Nix rises, smiling.

NIX:

(to Cultists)

We'll come back to this. Get about your business.

As the Cultists disperse, Nix and Butterfield exit into INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

A place of nightmares. Hanging from the middle of the ceiling is another grotesque SCULPTURE, three times the bulk of a large man, and made of metal, fly-blown animal parts and knotted rope. It is vaguely cruciform, but its swaying, creaking bulk is not even faintly Christian. It is a perverse, sickening image, evoking insanity and agony. From the shadows in the corner, we hear a young girl's soft SOBBING.

NIX:

Hush...

Nix goes to the GIRL. She is twelve; beautiful, blonde, and presently in a state of mortal fear. She sits, bound, in a fetal position, her face soaked with SWEAT and TEARS, her mouth BLOODIED, her cheek BRUISED.

NIX:

I said hush.

GIRL:

Please. Let me go.

From the opposite corner the SCREECH of Nix's pet BABOON. Nix goes to it. The animal is large and lethal.

NIX:

(to Baboon)

What is it?

The Baboon pulls on its chain, staring at the Girl and baring its teeth as it screeches.

NIX:

(to Girl)

I think he's in love.

He unshackles the Baboon. The animal pads toward the Girl, trailing its chain.

GIRL:

Keep it away from me.

Nix catches hold of its chain. Holds it back. The Baboon starts screeching again, scrabbling at the Girl, its NAILS catching her arms and legs, drawing BLOOD.

GIRL:

Please... please...

Nix watches her terror dispassionately.

BUTTERFIELD:

(also watching, wide-eyed)

Want me to shoot Swann?

NIX:

You don't like him, do you?

BUTTERFIELD:

He wants your magic.

NIX:

Maybe. Go fetch him.

Butterfield exits. Nix advances on the Girl.

GIRL:

What are you going to do?

CUT TO:

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - DESERT - DAY

The two vehicles come to a halt outside Nix's house.

From the Thunderbird steps PHILIP SWANN, a nineteen-year-old with shoulder-length hair and brilliant blue eyes. He's not conventionally handsome, but he's certainly striking.

From the passenger seat steps CASPAR QUAID, a black man, studious and intense. From the bus emerges MURRAY PIMM, skinny and jittery, and JENNIFER DESIDERIO, a woman with a steely gaze.

SWANN:

(to all three)

Are we ready?

JENNIFER:

(cool)

Say the word.

PIMM:

(very nervous)

Look, maybe we should think this over.

On Swann, as he brings from his car three very bizarre pieces of METALWORK. We get only a tantalizing glimpse of them, as he slips them into his pocket.

SWANN:

No. He's gone too far.

PIMM:

So he took a child.

JENNIFER:

He'll kill her.

PIMM:

No he won't.

SWANN:

(determined)

He's not going to get the chance.

Quaid checks a gun, then slips it into his belt.

QUAID:

If he gets in our fucking heads he'll drive us crazy.

SWANN:

So stay out here.

Swann starts towards the House. Jennifer is the first to follow, with the other two on her heels.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Butterfield comes to the door, as Swann steps inside.

BUTTERFIELD:

He's expecting you.

Behind Swann, Quaid and Pimm exchange nervous looks.

SWANN:

(to others)

Look around. If you find 'the child, yell. She's got blonde hair, that's all I know.

Butterfield turns away, smiling to himself. Swann follows him.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - "MEDITATION" ROOM - DAY

Quaid looks into a large circular room where FIVE CULTISTS (three men and two women) still sit. One of the women is breast-feeding a baby.

1ST MAN

Hey, Quaid. I thought you said you weren't coming back.

QUAID:

I changed my mind.

1ST WOMAN

Come and join us.

She smiles a crazy smile. Reaches out for Quaid. A SNAKE appears from around the back of her neck. Quaid recoils. And now we see that there are snakes everywhere. In the Cultists' clothes and hair. Even on the baby. Quaid turns away. And - shock! - there's a SNAKE on the door frame, winding around his hand. He strikes it to the ground, and drives his heel down on its head.

SNAKE-HANDLER CULTIST

(angry)

Don't do that!

The Snake-Handler gets up. Quaid retreats from the door. Snake-Handler picks up the dead snake and, lifting it above his head, dribbles its BLOOD onto his face.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - "BEDROOM" - DAY

Jennifer enters a gloomy room. She goes to a mattress where a BLONDE GIRL lies with her bare back to us.

JENNIFER:

Don't be afraid.

The Blonde Girl, BARBARA, turns over. She has a dirty cloth pressed to a wound between her breasts. It is not the Girl, of course. She stares up at Jennifer, clearly drugged.

BARBARA:

I'm not... want to see?

She pulls the cloth away. She has carved the cult SIGIL into her FLESH. The BLOODY KNIFE lies beside her. Jennifer retreats to the door, and exits back out into --

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - DAY

Pimm is standing against the wall, clutching a CRUCIFIX. He

is ashen with terror. Jennifer snatches the crucifix from his white-knuckled fingers.

PIMM:

He's going to kill us all...

JENNIFER:

Where did Swann go?

Pimm points down the passageway towards Nix's room.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY OUTSIDE NIX'S SANCTUM - DAY
Swann wipes sweat from his upper lip, then reaches down to his belt, to check the GUN tucked out of sight at his side. He turns the door handle.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

Swann steps inside. Nix's chair has its back to him. The folds of Nix's robe are visible, however. Swann hears a muffled SOBBING from the far side of the room.

On the Girl, now gagged and lying amongst bones and filth. Swann starts towards her, his footsteps barely audible. As he approaches the chair - the Baboon leaps at him screeching! He reaches for his gun. The chair topples. The Baboon, half dressed in Nix's robes, bounds towards Swann.

Swann FIRES at it. The bullet blasts off half its head.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - DAY

On Quaid, who draws his GUN as three CULTISTS appear in the passageway that leads to Nix's Sanctum.

QUAID:

Stay the fuck away!

(yells)

Pimm! Get over here!

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

PAN UP from the twitching Baboon corpse to Swann as he struggles with the Girl's gag. He has laid his gun on the ground beside her.

SWANN:

You're going to be okay.

Out of focus, behind him, the cruciform sculpture swings round. Nix is hanging on it, like an idol on a grotesque altarpiece.

The Girl sees Nix over Swann's shoulder. Terror crosses her face. Swann turns.

NIX:

I knew you'd come.

He reaches down to Swann.

NIX:

I've got so much power to give you, Swann. All you have to do is...beg.

SWANN:

Fuck you.

NIX:

You don't think I've got it to give?

SWANN:

No!

Suddenly. Nix swoops down on Swann. apparently defying gravity.

NIX:

You're wrong.

He catches hold of Swann with one hand and drives him back against the wall.

NIX:

I could eat your fucking soul, Swann.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - DAY

Jennifer, reaches the door of the Sanctum. Butterfield steps from the shadows. His KNIFE flashes as it strikes Jennifer's hand. BLOOD SPURTS.

JENNIFER:

Fuck!

She retreats, staunching her bleeding hand.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

Nix has Swann trapped against the wall and is working his fingers against Swann's temples. Working, working, like a psychic surgeon plying against the belly of a patient.

NIX:

You want to know what the world

really looks like?

Swann struggles, but he can't get free of Nix's hold.

And now -- horribly -- Nix's fingers slide beneath the skin of Swann's temples, without a drop of blood being spilt.

NIX:

Want to see flesh with a god's eyes?

Swann SCREAMS as Nix's mind-hold seizes him.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - DAY

Quaid levels his gun at Butterfield, who is guarding the Sanctum door. Jennifer is at Quaid's side.

SWANN (V.O.)

Aah!

QUAID:

Get away from the door!

Butterfield shakes his head. Quaid FIRES. The bullet strikes the wall beside Butterfield's head. He retreats, growling like a rabid animal. Quaid kicks the Sanctum door open, and enters.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

QUAID:

Swann?

NIX:

(to Quaid)

Here he is.

Swann stumbles into the middle of the room, the whites of his eyes blood-red.

NIX:

Take a look, Swann! These are your friends.

On Swann, reeling like a drunkard as he looks up at Quaid and Jennifer.

JENNIFER (V.O.)

What have you done to him?

SWANN'S P.O.V.

of Quaid and Jennifer. To Swann's eyes, their faces seem to be MORPHING. Their humanity is MELTING AWAY. What's left is like a jellyfish with black, soulless eyes: PRIMEVAL MUCK.

QUAID (V.O.)

Swann. It's okay.

Quaid reaches for Swann, who retreats in horror, shaking his head violently.

SWANN:

Don't touch me. He's got... got into my head.

NIX:

You want to be like that, Swann?

Mud and shit?

Swann turns away from Quaid and Jennifer in disgust.

SWANN'S P.O.V.

of Nix, his arms outstretched in welcome. His face has an aura of pulsing light.

NIX:

Come here. Share the power.

ON a GUN, leveled. .We don't see by whom. The trigger is pulled.

The bullet strikes Nix's back and explodes out of his chest.

ON SWANN, staring at Nix.

SWANN'S P.O.V. of Nix, as the aura of light dies.

Just for a moment - a terrible moment - Swann glimpses something else. MORPHING out of Nix's features. A NIGHTMARE FACE with waves of DARKNESS emanating from the middle of its forehead.

Swann covers his eyes.

NIX:

(raging, terrifying)

Swann! Swann!

Nix staggers, letting out an ungodly HOWL, and drops to his knees, clutching the WOUND. As he falls, he reveals the ashen Girl, who is still holding Swann's smoking GUN.

NIX:

(a roar)

Help me!

Swann shakes his head, ridding himself of Nix's mind-control.

SWANN:

Jesus-

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY OUTSIDE SANCTUM - DAY

Pinon stands guard, his gun pointed on several cultists.

1ST CULTIST

(with distressing
confidence)

You can't kill him.

2ND CULTIST

He'll just rise up again!

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

On Nix, doing just that: rising up. Right hand clamped to his bloody chest, left hand reaching for Swann.

NIX:

Help me!

Quaid FIRES at him again. Strikes his shoulder. And again. Strikes his leg. Nix collapses to the ground,

JENNIFER:

Quickly!

They have come prepared for this. Swann now takes from his jacket the three strange pieces of METALWORK. There are SCREWS in them all.

NIX:

(seeing)

Swann? What are you doing?

SWANN:

Binding you.

He clamps one of the pieces over Nix's EYES. It fits like an eyeless mask. Nix thrashes and SCREAMS. Swann lays his

makes the screws tighten of their own accord, grinding into Nix's flesh and bone with a gut- wrenching SOUND. BLOOD runs from the screw-holes.

NIX:

Fuck you, Swann! Fuck you!

Now the second piece, over his MOUTH.

NIX:

He's silenced. The piece screws itself into-his head, like the first. And now comes the third and final piece: over

the nose and into the ears. Again, it screws itself into place.

Swann has done all he can. He retreats from Nix's body, as it continues to convulse. We go from face to ashen face, as each man and woman watches and waits. Why won't he die? And now, at last the violence of Nix's death-throes diminishes. Nix's body bends like a bow, arching off the ground, and with one last, terrible spasm, he dies.

GIRL:

(quietly)

Is it finished?

SWANN:

It's finished.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - DAY

The Cultists' faces slacken, as though some mental hold Nix had upon them has disappeared. Then they start to retreat, their confidence and courage gone.

Pimm steps into the Sanctum.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - DAY

The five assassins, including the Girl, stand around Nix's body. Swann has his arm around the Girl.

PIMM:

Dead?

QUAID:

Dead.

PIMM:

What now?

SWANN:

We bury him so deep no one will ever find him.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - WIDE SHOT - DUSK

The wind has died away. It's eerily calm. Butterfield dashes towards camera, then halts.

HE LOOKS BACK, as Nix's killers load his huge, limp CORPSE into the back of Murray Pimm's bus.

ON Butterfield. He watches, with a feral look on his face.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. LOS ANGELES - MONTAGE - DAY

The city looks magical in the spring light, its palms and gleaming towers, its rivers of sun-baked traffic, evoking some fantastical metropolis. This, for all its smog and congestion, is a city of exoticism and enchantments.

ON SCREEN, the words: "LOS ANGELES - THIRTEEN YEARS LATER"

EXT. STARDUST HOTEL - DAY

The facade of this small HOTEL off Hollywood Boulevard needs a lick of paint, and the neon sign is blinking fitfully, but it has a certain charm.

INT. STARDUST HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

A large deteriorating mural of Hollywoodland, depicting a host of 50's movie stars, dominates the lobby.

At the front desk - with his back to us at present - stands HARRY D'AMOUR. He is having difficulty getting the pretty but vacant BLONDE at the reception desk to comprehend his name.

BLONDE GIRL:

How'd you spell that again?

HARRY:

D.A.M.O.U.R. D'Amour. Harry
D'Amour.

BLONDE GIRL:

D'Amour.

HARRY:

Right.

BLONDE GIRL:

Isn't that French for something?

ON THE BELLBOY, approaching Harry from the front door.

BELLBOY:

Mister D'Amour?

HARRY:

(to Blonde)

Yeah. It's French.

BLONDE GIRL:

For love, right?

BELLBOY:

Mister D'Amour?

HARRY:

(to Blonde)

Right.

BLONDE GIRL:

(grinning)

That's so cool.

BELLBOY:

Mister D'Amour?

Harry turns. He's wearing a washed-out Grateful Dead t-shirt, an Italian cut linen suit, and glasses. He's handsome, unshaven, 35-ish, with an open easy smile.

HARRY:

Yeah?

BELLBOY:

You haven't paid the cab. He won't give us your bags 'til you pay him.

HARRY:

How much?

BELLBOY:

Thirty-five bucks.

HARRY:

Tell him he can keep them. The Bellboy looks puzzled.

HARRY:

Just kidding.

Harry gets out his wallet and hands over four ten-dollar bills.

HARRY:

I've got my life in there.

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

On the suit-case, which is now on the bed. Harry flings it open. Inside, mingled with the clothes, a bizarre collection of items, which he tosses out onto the coverlet. A GUN. A CRUCIFIX. A STATUE of Shiva, the Hindu Lord of creation and destruction.

ON HARRY, as he heads into the bathroom. Turns on the shower. Starts to undress.

EXT. STARDUST HOTEL - DUSK

Harry, his hair still wet from his shower, steps out into the sun. Squints. Puts on sunglasses.

HARRY:

Hello, L.A.

BELLBOY:

Have a nice evening, Mr. D'Amour.

HARRY:

You bet.

EXT. MELROSE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Harry stands, in a shabby doorway across the street from a classy restaurant. It's RAINING.

ON TAPERT, a middle-aged, balding man with a very pretty WOMAN opposite him, sitting at a table close to the window. Tapert makes a joke (unheard). The woman laughs.

ON HARRY, chewing on a hamburger, as he speaks into his tape recorder.

HARRY:

Nine-eighteen p.m. Tapert's either got a great sense of humour or he's paying her to laugh.

(looks at hamburger in disgust)

Jesus.

On Tapert, as he rises from the table.

HARRY:

(into tape recorder)

He's finished.

Tapert exits the restaurant, and crosses the street. Harry

tosses his half-eaten hamburger away, and goes to his car.

EXT. HARRY'S CAR - MELROSE - NIGHT

Harry pulls the parking ticket off the windshield, screws it up and gets in.

INT. HARRY'S CAR - MELROSE - NIGHT

HARRY:

(into tape)

Nine twenty-six p.m. He's off again.

He turns the key in the ignition.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUAID'S OFFICES - SILVERLAKE - NIGHT

In neon blue and purple, a sign blazes in a store window. It

reads:

ON TAPERT, as he hurries across the street, and through the door beside the store window.

WE PAN OFF the door as Harry's car comes to a halt on the far side of the street.

Harry gets out of the car. Stares at the sign in the window, puzzled.

HARRY:

Superstitious?

He starts across the street. Suddenly:

TAPERT (V.O.)

Oh my God!

Tapert emerges, his face white with terror. He stumbles to his car, and he's away. Harry freezes, caught between the need to follow Tapert and sheer curiosity. He gives in to the latter, and steps inside.

INT. QUAID'S OFFICES - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

An illuminated ARROW points up the stairs. Harry ascends, past faded PHOTOGRAPHS of Caspar Quaid with famous faces.

At the landing, the passageway turns ninety degrees. Harry halts, and takes out his GUN.

There's a strange RUMBLING SOUND approaching from round the corner. Harry chances a look. There's a short length of passageway, leading to an open door. From the threshold a CRYSTAL BALL rolls towards Harry, BLOOD-SMEARED. This is the source of the rumbling. Harry stops the ball before it falls down the stairs.

Dead silence. After a beat, Harry creeps towards the open door. He pushes it open. Inside, chaos. The fake antique FURNITURE is splintered, the ASTRAL CHARTS slashed.

INT. QUAID'S OFFICES - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

There are two offices. In the front, a Waiting Room, into which Harry now steps. Beyond it, through a door that stands narrowly ajar, the Fortune Telling Room.

From out of the Fortune Telling Room, a MOAN.

QUAID (V.O.)

Ahh. . .

Harry crosses the Waiting Room, reaching into his jacket for his gun. Suddenly, a nightmarish FIGURE leaps from the shadows.

His name is RAY MILLER. He's as crazy as a rabid dog, teeth sharpened, eyes wild. Nix's SIGIL is tattooed on the middle of his forehead. He STRIKES the GUN from Harry's hand and goes for his throat.

Harry reaches out behind him, picks up a phrenologist's BUST and SMASHES it on Miller's skull.

Miller reels back. Harry makes a dash for the door to the Fortune Telling Room.

MILLER:

Fuckhead.

INT. QUAID'S OFFICES - FORTUNE-TELLING ROOM - NIGHT

A mysterious, candle-lit space. In the middle of the room, a table. At it sits Quaid, thirteen years older. He has been tortured close to death. Several small SCALPELS protrude from his chest and neck. His life is ebbing away. On the table in front of him, a fan of TAROT CARDS, BLOOD-SPATTERED. Harry races in through the open door from the Waiting Room.

HARRY:

What the fuck!?

Harry picks up the PHONE. It's dead. Miller charges at the door.

HARRY:

Shit!

Harry SLAMS the door in Miller's face, and locks it.

As he does so, the candles FLICKER. Harry looks up. A FIGURE looms from the darkness behind Quaid. He's in his

late twenties:

hair is drawn back into a pony-tail. His mismatched eyes - one black, one milky blue, tell us that he is Butterfield. His hands are BLOODY, and he carries one last SCALPEL.

HARRY:

(to Butterfield)

Don't touch him."

Butterfield strokes the wounds on Quaid's cheek. Quaid sobs in pain.

BUTTERFIELD:

What are you going to do about it?

Miller's hand tears at the wood around the lock from the other side. His fingers appear, scrabbling to tear the lock out. Harry doesn't move, or Miller will be through.

BUTTERFIELD:

(to Harry)

Ever watched a man die? If you watch very closely, you can sometimes see the soul escaping. And if you're very quick, you can catch it.

QUAID:

Please... Butterfield... I wasn't there. Ask Pimm.

BUTTERFIELD:

Pimm's dead. Jennifer Desiderio's disappeared. They knew the Puritan was coming home.

As this exchange goes on, Miller pulls the lock out of the door and starts to THROW HIMSELF against it from the other side. It's all Harry can do to keep himself from being pitched across the room. He looks around for some means of defense. There's a crack in the drapes to the left of the table. Behind it a WINDOW.

BUTTERFIELD:

So do you. You've seen the future. Haven't you?

QUAID:

Yes.

BUTTERFIELD:

And are you afraid?

QUAID:

Yes.

Suddenly, Harry steps aside. The door's flung open. Miller CHARGES in. Harry catches hold of his arm, and THROWS him against the drape. The window CRACKS; the drape comes down around Miller. Amber STREETLIGHT floods in.

Butterfield is momentarily distracted. Harry STRIKES the scalpel from his hands.

Miller, meanwhile, is struggling to free himself from the folds of the drapes. Harry lands a solid KICK to the man's belly. Miller is THROWN back against the cracked window, which SHATTERS. Still wrapped in the drape, he FALLS OUT. Harry turns back to arrest Butterfield, but he's already making his escape. Harry starts after him.

QUAID:

(to Harry)

Don't leave me.

He turns back. TEARS are pouring down the man's face. Harry goes back to comfort Quaid, as Butterfield escapes down the stairs.

HARRY:

You need an ambulance.

QUAID:

(in pain)

Too late. Why are you here? Did you come... up here for a reading?

Quaid takes hold of Harry's hand.

HARRY:

NO ... I...

Quaid stares at Harry's HAND. Fascinated, he momentarily forgets his pain. He traces the lines with bloody fingers.

QUAID:

(quietly)

My God.

HARRY:

What?

QUAID:

You've taken some strange
journeys in your life.

HARRY:

Yeah. You could say that.

QUAID:

You're drawn to the dark side, over
and over. And it's drawn to you.

(looks at Harry)

You don't like that.

HARRY:

Not much.

QUAID:

You can't change it. You have to
walk...

(coughs)

...walk the line between Heaven and
Hell. It's your destiny. Accept
it.

Harry takes his hand from Quaid's grip. Quaid winces in
pain.

HARRY:

Hold on.

QUAID:

I'm not afraid to die. There's
something terrible... coming
home...

HARRY:

The Puritan?

QUAID:

Yes...

HARRY:

Who is he?

Quaid shudders, and dies.

HARRY:

(softly; sadly)

Shit.

He looks away, down at the CARDS. All have been turned over but ONE. He turns it. The card is the Ten of Swords which pictures a prostrate man against a thunderous sky, pierced by all ten swords. An image of death and desolation.

EXT. QUAID'S OFFICES - ALLEY BEHIND BUILDING - NIGHT

The flashing LIGHTS of two patrol cars illuminate the scene. DETECTIVE EDDISON, a surfer-turned-policeman with buzz-cut blond hair, heads along the alley with Harry. He's midway through taking Harry's statement. There are already two OFFICERS examining the drapes. We can't yet see the body.

EDDISON:

(to Harry)

What were you doing up there?

HARRY:

I'm a private detective. I was hired to follow somebody for a few days. A guy called Tapert. Insurance fraud.

EDDISON:

(writing)

Tapert. So, now I've got Tapert, Butterfield.

HARRY:

Tapert's got nothing to do with this. He came here to get his palm read.

EDDISON:

What makes you so sure?

HARRY:

(shrugs)

I got a file on him two inches

thick. He's a petty fraudster.
This is something else. Ever heard
of someone called the Puritan?

EDDISON:

New one on me.
(to Officer)

Okay. Let's see him.

OFFICER #1 shakes his head, and opens up the drape. Broken
GLASS drops from the folds, but that's all. Miller has gone.

EDDISON:

Where the fuck is he?

HARRY:

He got up and walked.

EDDISON:

(looking up at window)

After that fall?. He must have
broken half his bones.

WE MOVE IN ON HARRY, as he stares down at the drape.

HARRY:

I don't think he'd have given a
shit.

CUT TO:

INT. BUTTERFIELD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The rooms are spartan. Nothing on the walls. Nothing on the
floors. Very little furniture.

Butterfield sits beside the window, obsessively combing his
long hair. There is something feminine about him now: his
voice a whisper, his stare distracted. If we didn't guess it
already, we're in the presence of a madman.

Miller is squatting against the wall, picking shards of GLASS
out of his torso. It hurts, but he's enjoying himself.

BUTTERFIELD:

D'Amour... D'Amour... Why do I know
that name?

MILLER:

I know him. I saw him.

He stops to pull out a particularly large piece of glass, sighing with pleasure.

MILLER:

I saw him on T.V. Some kid got possessed and he saved the little bastard's life.

BUTTERFIELD:

He's a priest?

MILLER:

No. He's just a guy who's got a nose for this shit.

(a beat. A smirk)

Like you.

A long beat of silence. Butterfield combs. Miller digs for glass.

BUTTERFIELD:

I don't want him getting in the way.

MILLER:

He won't.

Another silence.

BUTTERFIELD:

(dreamily)

We've all of us waited too long to have the homecoming spoiled.

MILLER:

What do you mean, "all of us?"

BUTTERFIELD:

You didn't think it was just going to be you and me? A lot of people believed in Nix. They haven't forgotten his promise.

MILLER:

About?

BUTTERFIELD:

Death.

MILLER:

What about death?

BUTTERFIELD:

(a beat)

It's an illusion.

CUT TO:

EXT. PHILADELPHIA STREET - MORNING

On screen:

A suburban street. Early morning light.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - PHILADELPHIA - MORNING

CLOSE-UP of a PHOTOGRAPH of the Cultist with the Painted Face, from the opening scene, standing outside Nix's house in Nevada. His name is Norman Sanders.

ON NORMAN, thirteen years older, looking down at the photograph. He lays it down, beside a letter, on which two words are written: "Homecoming Time."

Norman smiles to himself. Goes to the wardrobe. Gets out a small suitcase. His WIFE'S BODY is slumped in the wardrobe, glassy-eyed.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN IN MIAMI HOUSE - DAY

different domestic circumstance.

On the screen:

BARBARA - the blonde girl who carved the cult's sigil into her chest - is washing her hands. She casually dries them, and picks up the letter, walking past her HUSBAND and SON, both DEAD at the breakfast table, BLOOD spreading around their heads. When she gets to the door she steps over the body of her DAUGHTER, who has also been shot trying to escape her mother's murder spree.

ON THE RADIO, George Harrison sings "My Sweet Lord."

RADIO:

"I really want to see you, Lord,

And it won't take long, my Lord, My
sweet Lord..."

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN ANTONIO 200 - REPTILE HOUSE - DAY

On screen:

A ZOO-KEEPER wanders into the darkened interior of the
Reptile House.

INT. REPTILE HOUSE - DAY

The Zoo-keeper's benign expression changes at the sight of
the chaos inside. The glass cases have been SMASHED. Another
KEEPER lies on the ground, his face pulped. A few SNAKES
slither around his body, but most of them have gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. SNAKE-HANDLER CULTIST'S CAR - DAY

The Snake-Handler Cultist drives at speed.

INT. SNAKE-HANDLER CULTIST'S CAR - DAY

PAN UP from another letter'- with the same message - on the
dashboard, to the crazed face of the Snake-Handler. PAN TO
the back of the car. IT SEETHES WITH HUNDREDS OF SNAKES.

EXT. SWANN'S MANSION - DAY

It's early morning in Bel-Air. The sun shines down on a
millionaire's paradise: a huge house surrounded by a jungle
of trees and blossoms.

EXT. SWANN'S MANSION - POOLSIDE - DAY

The blue water glitters in the noon-day sun. And a WOMAN --
her body perfectly proportioned -- glides under the surface,
emerging at the shallow end, where the housekeeper CLEMENZIA
is setting a tray on a table.

CLEMENZIA:

Coffee, Mrs. Swann?

Mrs. Swann's name is DOROTHEA. She is a beautiful and
sensual woman.

DOROTHEA:

Thank you.

She dries off.

DOROTHEA:

Where's Mr. Swann?

CLEMENZIA:

In his study.

(a beat)

He got something on his mind?

DOROTHEA:

Why?

CLEMENZIA:

Bad mood today.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - STUDY - DAY

Venetian blinds shut out most of the sunlight, but a lamp burns on the desk (huge), showing us the furniture (leather), the books (innumerable), and the figure of SWANN, sitting behind the desk smoking a CIGAR. He's lost some hair and some colour over the years, but he still has the same hypnotic eyes.

He studies the L.A. TIMES in front of him.

ON THE OPEN PAGE

"Fortune Teller Brutally Murdered," the headline announces. Underneath, a PHOTOGRAPH of Quaid's wrecked room. WE CLOSE IN on the photograph, and catch a glimpse of Harry, standing looking at the chaos. CAMERA. MOVES DOWN to the text beneath, and on to the name "Harry D'Amour."

ON SWANN, pensive as he studies the paper.

DOROTHEA (V.O.)

(softly)

Hey...

He looks up, startled.

DOROTHEA The sun's shining out there. Dorothea is dressed in a white robe now. She literally brings light into this gloomy room. On the shelves behind Swann are a number of art brut figurines, vaguely recalling the idols outside Nix's "temple."

DOROTHEA:

Bad show last night?

SWANN:

(wearily)

The usual. Full house. Standing ovation. I tell them it's magic...

DOROTHEA:

(distastefully)
... they believe you.

SWANN:

Yeah.

(a beat)

Remember Quaid?

DOROTHEA:

Sure.

SWANN:

Somebody killed him.

DOROTHEA:

Oh God.

SWANN:

(disturbed)

I just saw him.

A difficult silence. Then Swann crosses to the door.

SWANN:

I'm putting in a new illusion
tonight. Will you be there?

DOROTHEA:

Sure. You want me to find out
about Quaid? I mean, the funeral?

SWANN:

No.

(superstitiously)

I'm not going near him.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - LOBBY - DAY

VALENTIN is overseeing the hanging of a new piece in Swann's

collection:

century magic spectacular. Valentin is fifty or so, his gray
hair combed back close to his scalp. Immaculately dressed in
a distinctively European fashion. Precise. Cautious.
Elegant.

He orders the TWO PICTURE-HANGERS in a clipped fashion.

VALENTIN:

Higher. Another inch. The left hand side's too low.

Dorothea descends the stairs, dressed for the day.

DOROTHEA:

Valentin?

VALENTIN:

(to Hangers)

Good. There.

(to Dorothea)

Yes?

DOROTHEA:

(gives him the newspaper)

You saw this?

Valentin nods. They walk back through the house together, while the picture-hanging goes on behind them.

DOROTHEA:

I want you to find this man D'Amour for me.

She passes the newspaper to Valentin. He looks down at it.
ON NEWSPAPER.

C.U. of Harry's blurred PICTURE.

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Harry is sprawled on the bed, in his under shorts. A shaft of sun darts between the drapes, missing his face by inches. Somebody is knocking on the door, hard.

HARRY:

(waking)

What...?

He rolls over. The sun strikes his eyes. He winces.

HARRY:

Shit.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

Mr. D'Amour?

HARRY:

Go away.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

It's one in the afternoon.

HARRY:

What are you, my mother?

VALENTIN (V.O.)

I need to speak to you, Mr.

D'Amour. About last night.

Harry gets up and stumbles to the door. He opens it a little. The face of VALENTIN is visible through the crack.

HARRY:

Whatever I said, I didn't mean it, okay? I get a few drinks inside me --

VALENTIN:

We've never met.

HARRY:

Then what do you want?

VALENTIN:

I'm here to offer you a job.

HARRY:

I'm going back to New York in--

(consults his watch)

Shit! I'm outta here.

VALENTIN:

Have you got a job that'll pay you five thousand a day?

A beat. Then Harry takes the chain off the door.

HARRY:

Do I get lunch?

CUT TO:

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD. - DAY

A white SEDAN glides along the boulevard. At the wheel, Valentin. Beside him, Harry.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Harry is eating a burrito and sipping coffee.

HARRY:

Whose is the car?

VALENTIN:

Mine.

HARRY:

Nah. You're driving it too carefully.

VALENTIN:

(sparring)

Maybe I just bought it.

HARRY:

Somebody's been smoking in here for months.

He pulls open the ashtray. Pulls out a cigar-butt.

HARRY:

Havanas. You're not the smoker. So who is?

VALENTIN:

(laughs)

You could almost pass for a detective, D'Amour.

(a beat)

I work for the best illusionist in the world.

HARRY:

Philip Swann?

VALENTIN:

You know of him?

HARRY:

I saw him in Vegas once.

VALENTIN:

Are you a gambling man?

HARRY:

When I can afford to lose. Swann's

quite a magician.

VALENTIN:

Never call him that. He's strictly an illusionist.

HARRY:

What's the difference?

VALENTIN:

Illusions are trickery. Magicians do it for real.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY - GATES - DAY

The sedan turns into a driveway.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY - DAY

The sun beats down on a pristine panorama of palms and white marble tombs. Harry and Valentin walk towards a large mausoleum.

HARRY:

Any movie stars buried here?

VALENTIN:

Probably.

HARRY:

It's not a bad place. Warm. Great view.

VALENTIN:

I don't think the dead much care.

HARRY:

Are you sure?

VALENTIN:

Are you a believer, then?

Valentin gives him an inquisitive look.

HARRY:

I've signed on for them all in my time. Hindu. Catholic. You can't have too many saviours.

Harry's gaze is on the mausoleum now; or rather on the woman

in white standing in its cool shadows: Dorothea Swann. She wears a wide-brimmed hat.

HARRY:

Who is she?

VALENTIN:

Swann's wife.

CUT TO:

VALENTIN sitting on the mausoleum steps reading a book. He glances up.

Harry and Dorothea are wandering between the graves, deep in conversation.

DOROTHEA:

I want you to help me help my husband. I know he's in some kind of trouble. And it's something to do with the man you saw murdered.

HARRY:

Did your husband know Quaid?

DOROTHEA:

Yes. They weren't close, but they saw each other once in a while. I think Philip believes all that stuff with the tarot cards.

HARRY:

You don't?

DOROTHEA:

I think we make our own futures. Harry makes an approving MURMUR.

HARRY:

What's the connection?

DOROTHEA:

(covering now, but well)

I don't exactly know.

Philip doesn't like to talk about

the past.

HARRY:

Why not?

Dorothea stops talking. Takes off her sunglasses. Her gaze is troubled, but direct. There is an attraction between the two of them that simmers beneath the dialogue.

DOROTHEA:

He's a secretive man.

HARRY:

And you don't ask questions?

DOROTHEA:

We don't share our lives the way a lot of people do.

HARRY:

Does that mean...?

DOROTHEA:

We haven't slept in the same bed for years.

HARRY:

But obviously you still care what happens to him.

DOROTHEA:

We wouldn't be having this conversation if I didn't. Swann's one of the most remarkable men alive.

Harry, frowns.

DOROTHEA:

You don't believe me.

HARRY:

He's an illusionist. It's not exactly brain surgery. Dorothea stares at him.

HARRY:

Sorry. You asked.

DOROTHEA:

No. You're right. He could have been something more. Maybe a lot more. But people get lost. Even good people. Too much fame. Too much money,

HARRY:

Where do I sign?

Dorothea LAUGHS lightly.

DOROTHEA:

Will you take the job, Mr. D'Amour?

HARRY:

Harry.

DOROTHEA:

Harry.

HARRY:

I'm no bodyguard.

DOROTHEA:

That's not what I'm asking for. I want somebody who can find out what Philip saw in those damn cards. And stop it from happening.

HARRY:

When do you want me to start?

DOROTHEA:

Come to the show with me. Tonight I want you to see him with an audience. They love him.

HARRY:

Do you?

The question catches Dorothea off guard.

DOROTHEA:

I didn't marry him for love, Mr.
D'Amour. Tonight?

HARRY:

Sure.

Dorothea makes a little smile, and walks away. Harry watches her go, exhaling an appreciative breath at the sight of her departing figure.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - DUSK

Harry's talking on the phone while he dresses for the theatre.

HARRY:

You're not listening to me, Loomis.

CUT TO:

INT. LOOMIS' OFFICE - MEW YORK - NIGHT

LOOMIS, a slob of a man, is in his office, eating pizza.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

LOOMIS:

The case is closed. Harry. Tapert's given us a full confession. Get your ass back to Mew York.

HARRY:

No. I'm taking a couple of weeks' vacation.

LOOMIS:

You never took a fucking vacation in your life, Harry. What's going on?

HARRY:

I got to go. I'm late.

LOOMIS:

Call me tomorrow.

HARRY:

There's other guys as good as me,
Loomis.

LOOMIS:

Yeah. But not as cheap. Call me.

HARRY:

A couple of weeks.

LOOMIS:

One question.

HARRY:

What?

LOOMIS:

Who is she?

Harry can't help but smile to himself.

LOOMIS:

I thought so. 'Night, Harry.

Click. Harry puts down the phone. Glances at himself in the mirror. Raises a rueful eyebrow.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILTERN THEATRE - NIGHT

CRANE DOWN from a looming STANDEE of Swann, perched above the theatre marquee. SPOTLIGHTS rake the skies. The sidewalk below is jammed with AUDIENCE MEMBERS, STAR-SPOTTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS. This is a flashy, prestigious event. LIMOS are disgorging scantily-dressed STARLETS and smiling MONEY MEN; a NEWS TEAM is interviewing audience members as they file in.

The atmosphere is noisy and excited. Amid the throng, Harry. He makes his way inside.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The atmosphere, is closer to a rock concert than a conventional stage show. Security people with walkie-talkies roam the aisles; the audience buzzes with barely controlled hysteria.

Harry heads down the aisle, eyes on the stage. A star-lit CURTAIN covers it. Six rows from the stage is Dorothea, already in her seat. She smiles lavishly, happy to see him.

DOROTHEA:

I'm glad you could make it.
Harry takes a seat beside her.

HARRY:

Hey, this is a big deal for me. You
know what seats like this cost in
New York?

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - STAGE - NIGHT

Center-stage, behind the closed curtains, Swann is ready for
the opening of the show. TECHNICIANS buzz around him like
flies.

SWANN:

Valentin!
Valentin emerges from the wings, patting the PANTHER that is
waiting there.

SWANN:

(irritated)
Valentin!

VALENTIN:

I'm here.

SWANN:

The guy with Dorothea. Is that who
I think it is?
Valentin nods.
ON SWANN, his expression unreadable.

SWANN:

He's young.
MUSIC strikes up. A dramatic, Wagnerian chord. Valentin
hurries away. Swann's expression becomes very focused.
1ST TECHNICIAN
(to Swann)
Ready?

SWANN:

Ready.
Swann rises up into the flies.
1ST TECHNICIAN
How the fuck does he do that?

2ND TECHNICIAN

It's wires, man.

1ST TECHNICIAN

I never seen no wires.

2ND TECHNICIAN

(sarcastic)

So what is it? Magic?

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - AUDITORIUM AND STAGE - NIGHT

The LIGHTS are DIMMING. Harry glances across at Dorothea, whose gaze is intent.

The LIGHTS go OUT. The MUSIC SWELLS, and the CURTAINS fly apart. A spectacle worthy of Seigfried and Roy is about to blast our senses! Magic for the 90's: a wild, erotic ride into mystery.

SWANN (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen. You are standing on the threshold of a miracle...

A vortex of SMOKE and LIGHT swirls in the middle of the stage.

The vortex BLAZES --

And suddenly Swann SWEEPS DOWN out of the flies, as the floor of the stage opens and the head of a glittering, razor toothed DRAGON emerges in a cloud of CRIMSON SMOKE.

Swann raises his hands above his head and a SPEAR miraculously appears in his grasp. He descends on the dragon. It's a classic image: St. Michael smiting the Devil. Swann drives the spear down the throat of the dragon. The theatre SHAKES at its dying ROARS. Then the head cracks open, and out of the dragon's mouth emerge a dozen scantily dressed DANCERS, male and female. Swann throws down the spear, and where it strikes the stage his PANTHER appears. A ROAR of APPLAUSE from the audience. Swann's plain white tunic falls away from him as he descends. By the time his feet touch the stage he is dressed in a star-shot TUXEDO. The PANTHER licks his hand in welcome. The MUSIC comes to a crescendo. The DANCERS freeze in their erotic dance. In the sudden hush, Swann speaks in a whisper.

SWANN:

My friends ... come with me...into the Great Beyond.

A barrage of LIGHTS and MUSIC erupt. The AUDIENCE APPLAUDS wildly.

ON HARRY and Dorothea.

HARRY:

He's good.

DOROTHEA:

You haven't seen anything yet.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - LOBBY - NIGHT

The doors SQUEAK as a gust of WIND blows through them. Butterfield stands in the lobby, listening to the muted SOUNDS of MUSIC and APPLAUSE. Then he offers his ticket to the TICKET-COLLECTOR and steps inside.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - AUDITORIUM AND STAGE - NIGHT

A new musical motif hangs in the air: MUSIC announcing danger.

The AUDIENCE watches intently, nervously.

ON HARRY and DOROTHEA.

DOROTHEA:

(a whisper)

This is the new illusion.

ON STAGE, Swann is bound to a spinning WHEEL, while the DANCERS, dressed like Boschian DEMONS, cavort around him, somersaulting and leaping over eruptions of yellow FLAME. It's a scene from Daniels Inferno. Above him, a dozen glittering SWORDS - six feet long - are descending. He struggles to free himself. The MUSIC gets more exciting as the wheel spins faster and faster.

Suddenly, a sword DROPS. It falls between Swann's outstretched legs, skewering the wheel. Then ANOTHER, close to his head.

ON HARRY. He's tense. Excited.

BACK TO STAGE. Swann is free. He throws off the last shackle and uses it to thrust into the mechanism of the wheel. There's a theatrical BLAZE of white-hot SPARKS. The wheel slows. He starts to step off it, as another of the swords DROPS.

The AUDIENCE GASPS. Swann smiles, and TRIPS.

As he FALLS, the sword runs through the middle of his back, carrying him down to the still-spinning wheel, and pinning him there. Some of the DANCERS continue to cavort. Some stop.

More GASPS from the audience.

ON HARRY, having a --

FLASHBACK:

The scene on the stage is that image coming to life.

HARRY:

There's something wrong...

ON Swann, as a second sword FALLS, skewering his thigh, and a third, running through his buttock, and a fourth and fifth, until TEN SWORDS have entered his body.

ON THE AUDIENCE, not certain whether this is a trick or not. The MUSIC has stopped. In the silence, somebody GIGGLES nervously. A couple of PEOPLE break into APPLAUSE, but it dies away in a matter of moments.

ON DOROTHEA AND HARRY

DOROTHEA:

No. . .

ON THE STAGE, Swann raises his head and looks out at his wife, his eyes already glassy with imminent death. He reaches out towards her, and then sags on the wheel, dead. There are GASPS now from the audience. Murmurs of disgust; sobs of horror.

1ST AUDIENCE MEMBER

What happened?

2ND AUDIENCE MEMBER

It's a trick.

3RD AUDIENCE MEMBER

Somebody help him.

The curtains start to close.

ON Dorothea, tears of shock filling her eyes.

DOROTHEA:

(to Harry)

I've got to get to him!

The AUDIENCE is rising now, as the horror of what they've seen sinks in. There is panic. A few people have fainted. One or two are even praying.

Harry carves out a path down to the stage for Dorothea against the flood of the exiting crowd.

HARRY:

Out of the way! Out of the way!

He helps Dorothea onto the stage, and lifts the curtain so she can duck beneath it.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - STAGE - NIGHT

Chaos. PEOPLE running, sobbing, puking; some simply standing watching. Valentin is already at the body, with the STAGE MANAGER at his side.

VALENTIN:

(to Stage Manager)

Get then out of here, for God's sake --

STAGE MANAGER:

You heard him! It's not a fucking show!

He starts to physically push the crowd back. Harry grabs his arm.

STAGE MANAGER:

Who are you?

Harry uses his grip to gently but efficiently move the STAGE MANAGER out of Dorothea's way. She goes to Swann's body, which has been removed from the wheel.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The audience is clearing now. But Butterfield is coming towards the stage, with an ambiguous look on his face. Is he enraged? Or puzzled? Or both?

MILLER:

Psst!

Miller stands at an open door, leading below the stage. Butterfield enters.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - STAGE - NIGHT

Dorothea kneels at Swann's side. A few yards from her, Harry examines the mechanism of the wheel.

DOROTHEA:

(softly)

Swann...

A DOCTOR appears.

DOCTOR:

I'm a doctor. Let me through.

The Doctor checks Swann's body.

DOCTOR:

(to Dorothea)

I'm sorry...

Harry has discovered a CABLE snaking down beside the device. He's suspicious. He slips round to the back of the mechanism, and climbs down beneath the stage, tracing the cable as he goes.

WILTERN THEATRE - BELOW STAGE - NIGHT

It's an eerie, shadowy space, filled with the PROPS that are used in the show, including the DRAGON we saw at the beginning. From above we hear FOOTSTEPS and VOICES, muted and echoing.

The cable ends in bare wires. Whatever was here has been taken.

A NOISE, behind Harry. He swings round. Sees a shadowy FIGURE ducking away.

HARRY:

Hey!

He gives chase. Loses the man in the shadows. Stops and listens for movement.

Suddenly, Miller steps out of the shadows with a plank of wood and smashes it into Harry's face!

Harry reels back. Falls to his knees, BLOOD running from his nose. Miller pulls Harry's GUN out of his jacket.

MILLER:

Got you, fucker!

Harry is facing the dragon's head, dazed. And now, out of the dragon's mouth, comes Butterfield.

BUTTERFIELD:

Who did this, D'Amour? Who killed Swann?

Harry is barely holding on to consciousness.

HARRY:

You did.

(a beat)

Didn't you?

BUTTERFIELD:

Why would I do that?

HARRY:

Beats me.

Butterfield is a foot from Harry now.

BUTTERFIELD:

You don't have a clue what you're into, do you?

HARRY:

Deep shit?

Butterfield hits him.

BUTTERFIELD:

Who did this?

HARRY:

I told you --

Butterfield hits him again.

BUTTERFIELD:

Who did this?

HARRY:

(raises his hand)

All right. It was...

Butterfield comes a little closer.

HARRY:

(feigning a near collapse)

... it was...

Butterfield leans in. And Harry grabs him by the balls -- literally -- rising as he does so.

BUTTERFIELD:

Aah!

Harry THROWS Butterfield aside. Butterfield hits the ground in agony, and Harry swings round to protect himself from Miller, who's leveling Harry's gun.

He FIRES once, missing Harry by inches. Harry catches hold of a ROPE underfoot and pulls it, tripping Miller, who TOPPLES backwards into the mouth of the dragon. The GUN GOES OFF again, the bullet BLOWING APART the dragon's JAW MECHANISM.

Miller starts to sit up, his body splayed between the dragon's steel teeth. He has Harry in his sights.

-- something CREAKS. He looks up. The dragon's jaw is closing, FAST. He starts to scramble to his feet. Too late! The teeth SLAM CLOSED on his body. Sudden death. Harry looks round to see Butterfield retreating into the shadows. Then he's gone. Harry looks down at Miller's BLOOD, which is pooling around his feet.

HARRY:

Deep shit...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. POLICE STATION - EDDISON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Harry sits at Eddison's desk, looking exhausted and bruised. Eddison has just finished taking his statement.

EDDISON:

And this Butterfield guy--

HARRY:

--vanished.

EDDISON:

(frustrated sigh)

Another fucking magician. Jesus.

Harry looks past Eddison and sees an ashen, tearful Dorothea being taken into another office.

HARRY:

Are you finished with me?

EDDISON:

For now. Are you planning to go back to New York?

HARRY:

(watching Dorothea)

No. Not yet...

INT. POLICE STATION - OTHER OFFICE - NIGHT

Dorothea sits alone, staring at the wall. Harry enters.

HARRY:

Are they treating you okay?

DOROTHEA:

(nods)

I heard what happened. It looks like somebody murdered him.

HARRY:

I'm sorry I got into this too late. But if you want me to stick around, maybe dig where the cops don't look...

DOROTHEA:

I don't know where you'd start.

HARRY:

Well... how about some of the other illusionists?

DOROTHEA:

They won't tell you anything.

HARRY:

I can be very persuasive.

DOROTHEA:

(a beat)

Yes. I think you probably can.

(another beat)

We'd need to talk about your fee.

HARRY:

Forget the fee. If I find Butterfield, maybe we'll talk about money. If I don't...

(he shrugs)

...my gamble. Either way... I get to spend some time... here.

The way he says this, it's plain "here" doesn't mean L.A., it means near -Dorothea. And by the tiny smile on her face, it's also plain she knows it.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGIC SHOP - HOLLYWOOD BLVD. - DAY

Noon. Bright sun. Busy street. Harry, now wearing a bandage on his cut face, enters.

INT. MAGIC SHOP - DAY

A wonderland for illusionists. Books, props, masks, tricks, etc. Two or three CUSTOMERS browse. Harry glances at them all, then targets a MAN in late middle age, who is browsing through books, one-handed. His other hand constantly manipulates a card, concealing and revealing it in a dozen ways. He doesn't even look at his hand. His name is WALTER WILDER.

Harry stands beside him. Scans the shelf.

HARRY:

Where'd you learn that?

WILDER:

What?

HARRY:

(points)

That.

WILDER:

At birth. I don't know you --

HARRY:

Harry D'Amour.

WILDER:

I know all the kids coming up. Got to stay ahead of the game. But I don't know you.

HARRY:

I'm in from New York. I came to see Swann.

WILDER:

What a tragedy. It was just a matter of time, of course, but it's not good for the business.

HARRY:

Was he taking a lot of risks?

WILDER:

You don't know the half of it. I'm
Walter Wilder, by the way.

HARRY:

Not the Walter Wilder?
Walter beams.

WILDER:

The one and only.
He hands Harry a card.

WILDER:

Want to try?
Harry tries to emulate Wilder's card manipulation through the
rest of this conversation.

WILDER:

You know Vinovich?

HARRY:

(not a clue)
Sure. Vivovich.

WILDER:

He knew Swann way back. He says
there were a lot of drugs, a lot of
crazy shit.

HARRY:

I'd love to... you know... hang
with some of you guys.

WILDER:

People are pretty cagey. Who do
you know?

HARRY:

For what?

WILDER:

For an introduction.

HARRY:

Well... nobody.

Wilder takes a moment to assess Harry, who is attempting to manipulate the card he's been given with charming ineptitude.

WILDER:

(magnanimously)

You do now.

EXT. MAGIC CASTLE - DUSK

The castle is faux, of course, but it has a Gothic charm. Harry and Walter wander towards the front door. Harry is knotting a newly-bought tie.

HARRY:

I only wear ties for funerals.

WILDER:

You don't get in without one. It's like a gentlemen's club for illusionists. Except most of us aren't gentlemen.

INT. MAGIC CASTLE - CORRIDORS - NIGHT

The interior is murky and atmospheric, the walls covered with illusionists' posters.

Walter leads the way through the long corridors, past rooms where illusionists are performing close-up magic for audiences of well-heeled patrons. Walter nods and waves to half a dozen people on their way through the house, up the stairs and towards the bar.

HARRY:

Are they all in the business?

WILDER:

It's not a business. Harry. It's a vocation.

Wilder points to a locked door.

WILDER:

That's what they call the Repository. Every magic secret known to man's locked up in that room.

HARRY:

Have you been in?

WILDER:

No. There's only three keys.

Vinovich has got one, of course.

(beat)

He's a little crazy, by the way.

And he's a mean drunk. Otherwise, he's a real charmer.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGIC CASTLE - BAR - NIGHT

Later. A drunken VINOVIKH is holding court. He's in his

40's:

fake) middle-European accent. At the table - besides Harry and Walter - are: Vinovich's starlet/nymphet girlfriend LAURA; an Asian-American illusionist called BILLY WHO; and two of Vinovich's adoring courtiers, an overblown, overdressed female illusionist - DEBRA DEVINE - and a thin, waspish fellow in a spangly suit: the AMAZING QUENTIN.

In the conversation that follows we go back to Harry repeatedly as he studies this extraordinary group.

VINOVIKH:

It's more than entertainment. We're opening people's heads up. Putting miracles back into their boring little lives.

BILLY:

But they're fake miracles.

VINOVIKH:

Houdini believed he had spirit guides.

HARRY:

You believe that?

VINOVIKH:

I think we walk a narrow path,

between... between...

HARRY:

Heaven and Hell?

Vinovich stares hard at Harry, trying to figure out whether he's being sarcastic or not.

VINOVICH:

Trickery and divinity.

HARRY:

Are you saying that sometimes the miracles are real?

VINOVICH:

No. I'm saying they were always fake. The saints, the messiahs, they were just illusionists.

HARRY:

So could you walk on water?

VINOVICH:

(deadly serious)

I could reproduce any miracle that's ever been performed, with a little preparation.

HARRY:

What about Swann's miracles?

The smug smile on Vinovich's face dies. Furtive glances are exchanged around the table. Only Billy Who makes a tiny smile.

VINOVICH:

They weren't worth a damn.

HARRY:

(goading)

I heard he was the best.

VINOVICH:

If he was so good why's he so dead?
Vinovich begins to look suspicious.

HARRY:

You tell me. No? I thought you'd maybe have a theory.

VINOVICH:

Oh, I've got plenty.

HARRY:

I'd like to hear them.
Vinovich rises.

VINOVICH:

I'm not saying another word.
(to Wilder)
You damn fool. He's a
journalist.

HARRY:

Just tell me about Swann. Or are
you too scared?

VINOVICH:

He was a freak. Everything he did
was tainted.
Harry rises. Looks straight at Vinovich, unintimidated.

HARRY:

With what?

VINOVICH:

Evil. He was evil.
(to Laura)
Come on.
She rises.

VINOVICH:

(to the rest)
Say nothing to this man if you wish
to keep my company.
He stalks away. Harry calls after him, across a now-
silenced bar.

HARRY:

Great accent, by the way. Is it
Brooklyn?

VINOVICH:

(pure Brooklyn)

Fuck you.

EXT. MAGIC CASTLE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Harry heads to the car.

BILLY (V.O.)

Harry!

Harry turns. Billy approaches, glancing behind him to see
that he's not being watched.

BILLY:

I gotta be careful. If Vinovich
sees me talking to you. He's an
asshole, but he's a powerful
asshole.

HARRY:

They go together.

BILLY:

(lowered voice)

I've heard a name. Someone they
talk about in whispers.

HARRY:

Who?

BILLY:

Nix.

HARRY:

Nix?

BILLY:

Like in nothing. Nobody. Nix.

HARRY:

Who is he?

BILLY:

I think maybe he taught Swann.

(hands Harry a card)
This is me. See ya around.
Billy hurries away.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT
Harry lies on his bed, dozing. The CAMERA CREEPS IN on him.
DOROTHEA (V.O.)
... I want somebody who can find
out what Philip saw in those damn
cards...
Harry frowns in his semi-doze.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK - QUAID'S ROOM

BUTTERFIELD:

Ever watched a man die?
The image darkens, and fades up a beat later on Quaid.

QUAID:

Please... I wasn't there... Ask
Pimm.

BUTTERFIELD:

Pimm's dead. Jennifer Desiderio's
disappeared...

BACK TO:

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT
Harry is still asleep.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - QUAID'S ROOM

QUAID:

I'm not afraid to die. There's
something terrible... coming
home...
A long silence.
SUDDENLY, a telephone RINGS.

BACK TO:

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

HARRY sits up, shocked awake.

HARRY:

Shit!

He picks up the receiver.

HARRY:

This is D'Amour.

CUT TO:

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - DOROTHEA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She sits up on her bed, dressed in a silk robe, and nothing else, drinking a SCOTCH, talking on the phone. The primary source of illumination is the massive T.V. set in the wall opposite the bed.

DOROTHEA:

Harry... I know it's late.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

There should be a subtle eroticism pervading this exchange. Both of them on beds, in different bedrooms. Each aroused by the other's voice, and frustrated not to be able to see and touch them.

HARRY:

That's okay.

As he speaks, Harry scrawls Jennifer Desiderio on the title page of the Gideon's Bible beside the bed.

DOROTHEA:

How did it go today?

HARRY:

I went up to the Magic Castle. You were right. He didn't have a lot of fans up there.

CUT TO:

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Valentin, on the kitchen PHONE, is listening in.

DOROTHEA (V.O.)

They were jealous of him.

HARRY (V.O.)

Why? Because he had you?

BACK TO:

INTERCUTTING:

DOROTHEA:

He... didn't have me.. I told you-

HARRY:

You didn't marry him for love.

DOROTHEA'S BEDROOM

She's a little uncomfortable now.

HARRY:

So why did you marry him?

DOROTHEA:

That's my business. Harry.

HARRY:

Just curious.

(a beat)

Back to business. Ever heard of a man called Nix?

(silence)

Dorothea?

DOROTHEA:

Yes... I'm here. And no. I don't know the name.

HARRY:

What about Jennifer Desiderio?

DOROTHEA:

It doesn't ring a bell. I have to go.

HARRY:

Okay. I'll keep digging.

DOROTHEA:

(uneasy)

Yes. You do that.

She puts down the phone, and swallows a mouthful of scotch. She's shaking. She gets up. Paces the room. Then she picks up the phone again.

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

On the pad beside the bed, Jennifer's name, surrounded by Harry's doodles. The phone RINGS.

CUT WIDE:

EXT./INT. QUAID'S OFFICES - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

The Tarot Card and Crystal Readings sign is dark now. Harry heads up the stairs, past the PHOTOGRAPHS, to the door of Quaid's Waiting Room.

It has been locked and taped by the police. Harry has come prepared. He takes out a small crowbar and levers off the locks.

INT. QUAID'S OFFICES - WAITING/FORTUNE TELLING ROOMS - NIGHT

Harry enters, FLASHLIGHT on. He crosses the Waiting Room and enters the Fortune-Telling Room where Quaid died. On the TRACK -- a remote, eerie presence -- we hear Quaid's SOBS, Miller's SHOUTS, and, as Harry's flashlight illuminates the blood-spattered table:

BUTTERFIELD (V.O.)

If you watch very closely, you can sometimes see the soul escaping.

Harry is spooked. He starts to search the room, opening cabinets and drawers. Quaid's hordes of mystical bric-a-brac are stashed everywhere. Boxes of crystals, religious statues, elaborate cards, incense, etc.

He pulls open a drawer, and notices that a rosary is wedged in a niche at the base of the drawer. He pulls the drawer out, empties its contents on the table, and examines it. Using the crowbar, he forces the drawer apart. It has a false bottom.

HARRY:

(smiles)

Yes...

In the secret compartment, some papers and an address book. He flicks to "D."

HARRY (CONT'D)

Desiderio...

There it is. Jennifer Desiderio, and an address. He pockets the book. Then, sensing a presence behind him, he pulls out his gun and whirls around, his flashlight beam revealing --

-- Valentin!

HARRY (CONT'D)

What the fuck are you doing here?

VALENTIN:

Looking for you. I tried the hotel.

HARRY:

Why'd you come here?

VALENTIN:

You're a detective, with no clues.
Where else are you going to look?
I'm going to keep this brief.
(he takes out an envelope)
Here's thirty thousand dollars.

HARRY:

What for?

VALENTIN:

A ticket home,

HARRY:

You didn't hire me. She did.
If she wants me off the job, I
want to hear it from her.

VALENTIN:

She doesn't want to see you. She's
had enough pain. Enough churning
over the past. She wants it all
left alone.

HARRY:

Left alone? Somebody's been
murdered.

VALENTIN:

Yes. It's regrettable

HARRY:

Fuck regrettable! I want to know

why.

VALENTIN:

What for? You need to stay busy?

HARRY:

(a confession)

I like to know why things happen.

VALENTIN:

Why people die?

(shakes his head)

Give it up, D'Amour. Go home.

HARRY:

No.

Harry crosses to the door, brushing past Valentin.

VALENTIN:

Don't try and see her, D'Amour.

Just leave her alone. Let her
heal.

He glances back at Valentin.

HARRY:

Lock up, will you?

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. LUKE'S SANITORIUM, PASADENA - DAY

ON THE ADDRESS BOOK, in Harry's hands.

Harry looks up - with some surprise - not at a house but at a
building, the sign on which reads, "St. Luke's Sanitorium".

INT. ST. LUKE'S SANITORIUM - DAY

The place is bland and functional throughout, the walls
decorated with sun-faded reproductions of great paintings.

Nothing disturbing. Harry is talking to D.A. TOFFLER -
black, fortyish, softly spoken - and a Nurse.

TOFFLER:

Jennifer's only ever had one
visitor.

HARRY:

A Mister Quaid?

TOFFLER:

Right. And he's dead, isn't he? I saw it on the news. Jennifer doesn't know. And frankly, this isn't the best time for her to be told.

HARRY:

I won't say anything.

INT. ST. LUKE'S SANITORIUM - CORRIDORS AND WARD - DAY
Toffler escorts Harry through -the place. There are distressing scenes on every side. Nothing melodramatic no screaming, no fits. Just a subtle, pervasive air of despair. Blank, empty FACES in blank, empty rooms.

TOFFLER:

Jennifer's been with us four years. She was coming on nicely. But just the last month or so, she's worse than ever.

HARRY:

What's her problem?

TOFFLER:

She has no real grip on reality.

HARRY:

(a joke)
Does anybody?

TOFFLER:

(deadly serious)
Oh yes. We have to agree what's real and what's not. That's what holds us together.

HARRY:

And what does Jennifer think's real?
They've come to french windows, which are wide open. Sitting outside in the sun is Jennifer, with her back to us.

TOFFLER:

(quietly)

Jennifer thinks the Devil's coming
for her.

(louder)

Jennifer?

Jennifer turns. She looks terrible.

EXT. ST. LUKE'S SANITORIUM - GROUNDS - CITY STREET - DAY
Harry and Jennifer walk amongst the flower-beds, with the
Nurse keeping a watch from a discreet distance. Throughout
the scene we HEAR the SOUND of earth being dug, which
steadily gets louder as they walk.

JENNIFER:

Have we met before?

HARRY:

No.

JENNIFER:

Only I forget. They give me pills,
you know, to keep me... even...
and... I forget things,

HARRY:

Well, you didn't forget me. I just
came because I wanted to know if
you knew a man called Butterfield.

JENNIFER:

Maybe... I... don't...

HARRY:

What about Philip Swann?

JENNIFER:

I knew Swann.

(sudden vehemence)

He's a fucking liar.

A WORKMAN saunters past, carrying pipes.

HARRY:

Why's that?

JENNIFER:

He said he knew how to protect us.
But he didn't know anything. He
made us think it was over and done
with.

HARRY:

What is?

JENNIFER:

(tears nearing)
I don't want to think about it. If
I think about it he'll hear me.
He'll find me.

HARRY:

Swann?
Ahead now, the site where the workmen are digging a hole,
laying pipes. The CAMERA doesn't focus on this action, but
we're aware of it.

JENNIFER:

I told you. I don't --
She stops. Looks ahead of her. Her face is suddenly ashen
and clammy. Harry follows her gaze to:
The hole. Somebody is in it, digging. Earth emerges in
shovelfuls, piling up beside the hole.
JENNIFER (CONT'D)
(screaming)
God no! Oh God no!
She backs away from the hole. The Nurse grabs hold of her.

NURSE:

Calm down!
She delivers the Nurse a backhand SWIPE. The Nurse is flung
back.

JENNIFER:

He's not going to get me!
She races down towards the street. Harry goes after her.
JENNIFER (CONT'D)
He's not! He's not!

HARRY:

Who's not?

He catches up with her.

JENNIFER:

Nix! Nix!

HARRY:

Is he the Puritan?

JENNIFER:

Yes! Yes!

HARRY:

And he's dead?

JENNIFER:

No. He's coming back. He's
digging his way out!
The Nurse appears behind Harry.

NURSE:

I'll take care of her now.
Jennifer struggles in Harry's grip.

NURSE:

Let go of her, Mr. D'Amour!
The Nurse breaks Harry's hold on Jennifer, who slips away
instantly, racing towards the street.

HARRY:

Jennifer!
She scrambles up over a wall, and flings herself from the
top. There's a SCREECH of brakes, then the smashing of
metalwork and glass. Harry gets to the wall before the
Nurse. Hoists himself up onto it. Looks down.

HARRY'S P.O.V. OF STREET

Jennifer is dead in the middle of the street, beneath the
wheels of a car. The DRIVER is out, and yelling
incoherently.

HARRY:

Jesus.
He slips back down the wall, and leans against it.
He looks towards the hole. The Workman has stopped digging.

His mud-encrusted hands emerge, and for a moment, before his head appears, the image is eerily like somebody climbing from a grave. Harry closes his eyes.

HARRY:

(very quietly)

Jesus.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DUSK

The sun is setting, the city giving way to night.

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - DUSK

Harry's on the phone.

HARRY:

I want to speak to Dorothea.

VALENTIN (V.O.)

I'm afraid she's not in.

HARRY:

When will she be in?

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - STUDY - NIGHT

Valentin on the phone in the study.

DOROTHEA:

Who is it?

Valentin puts the phone down.

VALENTIN:

Crank call. I'll get the number changed.

DOROTHEA:

No word from D'Amour?

Valentin shakes his head.

VALENTIN:

It's better he's gone. He would have done more harm than good.

DOROTHEA:

Harm to whom? Me? I don't think, so. Try him again at the hotel.

VALENTIN:

I left three messages already.

Dorothea nods, plainly sad at Harry's desertion. She turns and leaves the room.

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT
ON BILLY WHO'S CARD, in Harry's hand.

HARRY:

(on phone)

Billy? It's Harry. Suppose I wanted to get into the repository at the Magic Castle?

CUT TO:

INT. MAGIC CASTLE - SKYLIGHT ROOM - NIGHT
THE PLACE IS EERIE BY NIGHT: ALL MASKS AND SHADOWS.
PAN UP TO THE SKYLIGHT. HARRY IS CUTTING AWAY A PANE OF GLASS. BILLY'S BEHIND HIM. THE PANE STARTS TO FALL. WITH LIGHTNING REFLEXES, BILLY REACHES THROUGH AND CATCHES IT.

HARRY:

You've done this before.

BILLY:

I've had my moments.

INT. MAGIC CASTLE - HALLWAY OUTSIDE REPOSITORY - NIGHT
Harry's manipulating the lock.

BILLY:

I'm sure they'll have this place rigged.

HARRY:

How?

BILLY:

It'll be something hokey.
CLICK! The door opens.

BILLY:

Houdini'd been proud of you.

INT. MAGIC CASTLE - REPOSITORY - NIGHT
Undusted shelves piled high with manuscripts, old books, and posters in every direction.

BILLY:

(impressed)

Whoa...

On the wall, plaster LIFE-MASKS. In glass cases, the tools of the great magicians: KNIVES, KEYS, GUNS, WANDS, even an IRON MAIDEN. Billy is in awe. He wanders around wide-eyed while Harry scans the shelves. The dialogue runs as they investigate.

BILLY:

I hear Mrs. Swann's quite a babe.

HARRY:

You heard right.

BILLY:

You ever been married?

HARRY:

Yeah. She was killed in a car crash. Her lawyer was driving. She was filing for divorce.

BILLY:

Why?

HARRY:

My life was too weird for her.

BILLY:

(grinning)

I love weird.

Harry has seen a small SIGIL carved onto one of the shelves.

HARRY:

Billy? This was on Miller's forehead. Any idea what it is?

BILLY:

Nope.

Harry presses it. The entire bookcase opens up, CREAKING.

BILLY:

What did I tell you? So fucking hokey.

Inside, there is a small shelf. On it, FILES and PAPERS.

HARRY:

What have we got here?

Ever-eager, Billy steps into the recess. And --
two spiked, latticed gates close on his arm!

Harry grabs the gates before they snap closed, inches from skewering Billy's flesh and bone! He keeps them open, his sinews straining.

HARRY:

Grab the files!

Billy reaches in and pulls out a handful of the files. As he steps out of range. Harry lets go and the gates close with a CLANG!

BILLY:

Jesus!

He slams the files down. He's trembling.

BILLY:

I could have lost my fucking hands.

HARRY:

That would have kept you out of the Magic Circle.

(he studies the files)

Which was presumably the idea.

(a beat)

These are about Nix.

Harry takes a sheaf of papers, and hands them to Billy.

HARRY:

You go through these. Go on!

Reluctantly, Billy does so. Harry picks up a faded PHOTOGRAPH of the doorway to Nix's HOUSE (with the sigil painted on it) and BUTTERFIELD the child standing in the sun. There are other CULTISTS standing around. And in the DOORWAY -- a barely visible figure (and all the more intimidating for that) - is NIX.

HARRY:

Wait a minute...

He stares at the boy's face. The eyes are clearly different

colours.

HARRY:

That's Butterfield...

BILLY:

(points to man in)
doorway)

And who's that?

ON HARRY, staring at the ambiguous presence.

ON THE PHOTOGRAPH of the shadowy figure.

HARRY:

At a guess? The Puritan. Nix.

Billy picks up an ETCHING, water-stained and dirty. It shows a horror we recognize: a man's HAND pressed into the FLESH of another man's HEAD.

BILLY:

Take a look at this.

HARRY:

(looking at it)

A Nix specialty?

Billy is getting subtly spooked now. He puts the etching down and starts to go through others in the series. We glimpse them as he does so. In one, a MAN regurgitates a serpentine form made of FLAME. In another, a MAN stares at his own HAND which is STRIPPED OF FLESH. There is no bone beneath. Only a form of solid blackness. In a third, we see a HEAD with a slit in the middle of the brow, emanating DARKNESS.

BILLY:

I don't know any of these tricks...

Harry studies the etchings.

HARRY:

(a slow burn)

Maybe they're not tricks.

BILLY:

(mystified)

I mean, there's no instructions--

(realizes what Harry said)
What do you mean, they're not
tricks?

HARRY:

What did Vinovich say? Something
about walking a path between --

BILLY:

Trickery and divinity. Yeah, he
says that all the time.

HARRY:

That's because he knew. He'd seen
these files and knew.

BILLY:

Knew what?

Out of the corner of his eye. Harry sees a motion between the
book-stacks. Billy frowns. Harry puts his fingers to his
lips. Gestures for Billy to take cover. Billy backs away.
Harry slowly turns in the direction of the motion.

Something eerily sepulchral is gliding between the stacks. A
figure in a straight-jacket with his head bowed.

Harry takes out his gun.

Billy disappears around the back of one of the stacks. Harry
goes after the apparition.

The TRACK is completely silent.

Suddenly, the creature appears behind Billy! It looks up,
its face that of a psychotic: burning eyes, manic smile.

It tears open its straight-jacket and reaches for Billy, who
backs away.

BILLY:

Harry!

Books tumble on top of Billy as he stumbles against the
shelves.

BILLY:

Where the fuck are you?

Harry appears, and puts his gun to the PSYCHO'S head.

HARRY:

Okay. Hold it right there.

The gun goes through the Psycho's skull, as though it's made of smoke.

Harry waves his hands through it. It's completely ethereal. But it's still terrorizing Billy.

BILLY:

(in mortal terror)

Get it off me!

Harry glances around. Sees a LIGHT flickering between some books. FIRES at it. The light goes out. The "Psycho" vanishes. Billy is left hyper-ventilating on the ground.

HARRY:

Hokey enough for you?

BILLY:

I'm out of here, man! Are you coming?

Harry picks up a handful of papers from the Nix file.

HARRY:

I'm coming.

Billy is already out of the room. For a moment. Harry pauses to look back at the other files, sealed behind the spiked gates.

As he does so --

-- the projector sparks into life one last time, and the "Psycho" appears --ROARING - at Harry's shoulder.

HARRY:

Ah, shaddup!

He FIRES at the projector a second time.

On the GUN SHOT --

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGIC CASTLE - NIGHT

Billy and Harry are parting.

HARRY:

Thanks, Billy.

BILLY:

Hey, anytime.

(a beat)

Actually, no. This was enough.

They shake, and part.

EXT. SWANN'S MANSION - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Harry waits on the doorstep. Valentin opens the door.

VALENTIN:

(quietly)

I can't let you in.

HARRY:

(stepping in)

Yeah, I know.

VALENTIN:

You want more money, is that it?

Harry pushes him aside.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - VARIOUS - NIGHT

Harry starts to go through the house, opening doors.

HARRY:

Dorothea?

He sees candle-light through a partially open door. Starts towards it.

VALENTIN:

Leave her alone --

HARRY:

Shut up!

He pushes open the door.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - CASKET ROOM - NIGHT

The room is a museum of Swann's career. Posters, and memorabilia everywhere. And in the middle of the room, Swann's sealed CASKET, surrounded by flowers and candles. Dorothea is standing beside it, head bowed.

DOROTHEA:

This is the way he wanted it... no autopsy, no embalming. Nobody meddling with his body... Harry approaches, slowly.

DOROTHEA:

Flesh is a trap. That's what he

used to say. Flesh is a trap and
magic sets us free.

(a beat)

Why did you come back?

HARRY:

I didn't leave. I was just digging
around.

Dorothea looks up at him.

DOROTHEA:

(uneasy)

What did you find?

HARRY:

Jennifer Desiderio, for one.

(he watches her for a
response)

She threw herself in front of a car
this afternoon.

Dorothea can't disguise her distress.

DOROTHEA:

Oh Christ.

HARRY:

(a beat)

Why don't you tell me the truth?

INT. SWANN'S MANSION- STUDY-- NIGHT-

Dorothea pours herself a drink, while Harry spreads the
PHOTOS and the PAPERS from the repository on the table.

HARRY:

Nix ran some kind of cult, right?

Some kind of Charlie Manson deal?

DOROTHEA:

It was more than that, I think.

HARRY:

He was the real thing, right?

DOROTHEA:

Swann said he could do stuff, yes.

HARRY:

Stuff?

DOROTHEA:

He could get into people's heads.
Make them see things. Terrible
things. And he could levitate.
Juggle fire.

HARRY:

He taught all this to Swann?

DOROTHEA:

Some or it.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - HALLWAY OUTSIDE STUDY - NIGHT

Valentin is listening at the door.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION- STUDY-- NIGHT-

HARRY:

So Swann was performing magic. not
illusions?

(Dorothea nods)

And what? You thought he should be
using it to cure cancer, not making
millions.

DOROTHEA:

I told you --

HARRY:

Too much fame. Yeah, I guess
that'd turn anybody's head.
Including yours.

DOROTHEA:

No.

HARRY:

You said you weren't with him for
love.

DOROTHEA:

I wasn't.

HARRY:

What then?

DOROTHEA:

I was grateful to him. I owed him my life. And he loved me. He couldn't always show it, but he felt it.

HARRY:

He thought Nix was coming back, didn't he?

Dorothea is pouring herself another drink. The glass slips from her hand. It SHATTERS. Harry goes to help her. They stoop together, very close. The sexual attraction is almost palpable. Dorothea cuts herself on a shard of glass.

DOROTHEA:

Shit!

They are very close to each other.

HARRY:

(reassuring)

It's okay.

DOROTHEA:

No it isn't. You can't help me.

HARRY:

(tenderly)

I'm here, aren't I?

He kisses her. She kisses him back, hard.

HARRY:

Nothing's going to happen to you.

DOROTHEA:

(seductive)

Nothing?

HARRY:

(smiles)

Nothing you don't want.

They kiss again, passionately.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - LOBBY - NIGHT

Valentin breaks into the shadows, as Harry and Dorothea cross the darkened lobby and head upstairs. Then Valentin crosses to the phone and dials.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - DOROTHEA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A room of illusions. Walls lined with mirrors, and warm, flattering lighting, bathing the naked forms of Dorothea and Harry as they make love, sitting on the floor.

It is a deeply passionate, but slow, sensual coupling.

INT./EXT. SWANN'S MANSION - LOBBY - NIGHT

Valentin opens the front door. There's a wind blowing. The palms churn against the night sky...

INTERCUT:

Roiling, wind-filled pains with the glistening, urgent bodies of Harry and Dorothea.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - DOROTHEA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Harry cradles Dorothea in post-coital languor.

DOROTHEA:

(whispers)

I was so afraid.

HARRY:

Don't be. Nix can't hurt you now.

DOROTHEA:

Are you sure?

HARRY:

I'm sure.

(kisses her)

He's dead.

DOROTHEA:

I know. I'm the one who shot him.

ON HARRY. He's startled, to say the least.

DOROTHEA:

I was twelve. Nix took me hostage, to get Swann to come to him.

HARRY:

(realizing)

And they all came...

DOROTHEA:

Yes.

HARRY:

Quaid and Jennifer--

DOROTHEA:

And Pimm and Swann. Only Nix was ready for them.

There's a NOISE downstairs.

DOROTHEA:

(nervous)

What was that?

HARRY:

It's okay.

Harry slips out of bed.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - STAIRS - LOBBY - NIGHT

Harry descends the stairs, buttoning up his trousers (which is all he wears). He has his gun.

HARRY:

Valentin?

Dorothea appears behind him.

DOROTHEA:

Harry? Wait!

Harry's at the bottom of the stairs now. Across the hall, in a passageway, an eerie SILHOUETTE. We can make out no detail of clothing or face.

HARRY:

What the hell-?

Suddenly, the shadowy FIGURE comes at Harry. A BLAST of ENERGY bursts against Harry's face. As it breaks against his skin, we see (for three frames or so) a glimpse of Harry's skull.

HARRY:

(in pain)

Aah!

Harry FIRES at the figure. The shadows fold up around the Stranger like an origami puzzle. He's gone.

DOROTHEA:

It's him! It's Nix!

Harry goes out into the passageway.

HARRY:

Valentin! Get some lights on!

As if in reply to the command, a burst of vivid white FIRE erupts behind Harry. He swings round to see the Stranger "unfolding" out of the shadows again, defying physics and physiology to do so. The FIRE is at his feet, like a serpent writhing on the ground. It comes at Harry. Harry FIRES at it, but it comes at him faster still, rising to burn Harry's leg. He retreats, the FIRE racing after him. He makes for a door, and flings it open. He's in --

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - CASKET ROOM - NIGHT

The FIRE follows him across the ground and STRIKES his hand. Harry drops the GUN. Looks up to see the Stranger in the doorway, arm raised to will the fire-serpent on. But then, he hesitates. Harry glances round, and sees that the Stranger - whose face is still a dark smear - is staring at the CASKET.

HARRY:

Somebody you know?

Dorothea appears behind the Stranger. Sees Harry, burned and sweating, cornered against the casket.

DOROTHEA:

Oh my God!

The Stranger looks round. Harry snatches up the GUN, supporting his burned hand with -his good hand. Levels the gun at the Stranger. The FIRE raises its head, like a cobra.

HARRY:

Which goes first? My face or your heart?

The Stranger draws a deep breath. The Fire-Serpent withers and dies.

DOROTHEA:

Who in God's name are you?

She reaches for the Stranger, who simply folds up again; gone into darkness. The WIND blows through the house, masking his exit.

DOROTHEA:

Are you all right?

HARRY:

Find Valentin! Find him! Get him
in here!

Dorothea disappears. Harry takes one of the candle-holders and jams it under the casket lid. Wood splinters. He starts to force off the lid.

Valentin and Dorothea enter.

VALENTIN:

What are you doing? This is
sacrilege.

He starts towards Harry. Dorothea goes after him and catches hold of his arm. Her expression is a mingling of fascination and dread, as Harry gets his fingers under the casket lid and pulls.

Inside, Swann's corpse.

VALENTIN:

Are you satisfied now?

HARRY:

No.

Harry holds Valentin back with one hand, and puts his finger into the corpse's mouth.

DOROTHEA:

Harry?

HARRY:

It's all right. It's not
hurting...

He now has four fingers in Swann's mouth and seizes hold of his lower jaw. It cracks --

-- and comes away in a little rain of plaster and latex.

HARRY:

...plaster doesn't bleed.
He tosses the jaw to Valentin.

HARRY:

(to Dorothea)
It looks like you're not a widow
after all.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - STUDY - NIGHT

Harry interrogates Valentin in a white fury, while Dorothea
binds Harry's hand.

HARRY:

You rigged the illusion to fail,
right?

VALENTIN:

Yes.

HARRY:

You paid off the doctor. You set
up the fake body. Yes?

VALENTIN:

Yes.

HARRY:

And then... because I was
getting too close to something --
(at Dorothea)
--or someone, you called Swann

VALENTIN:

I tried to pay you off.

HARRY:

Was that Swann's idea?

VALENTIN:

No. It was mine. I didn't want
any more bloodshed. That's why we
went to all this trouble, so
there'd be no one for Nix to come
after.

HARRY:

Nix is dead and buried, for
fuck's sake.

VALENTIN:

Haven't you seen enough to know
that doesn't matter?

ON HARRY. He looks as though he's beginning to think maybe
Nix's resurrection is plausible.

HARRY:

I want to see Swann face to face.

VALENTIN:

Why don't you leave this alone? Let
everybody think it's over?

DOROTHEA:

What about me?

VALENTIN:

Nix was never interested in you.
It was always Swann.
A beat.

HARRY:

(to Dorothea)
Maybe Valentin's right. We should
let it alone.
A BELL starts to TOLL-

HARRY:

(con't.)
He went to all that trouble to be
dead. Maybe we should let him stay
that way.

The TOLLING carries over into
EXT. HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY - DAY

WE CRANE DOWN from a high angle on a GRAVE, surrounded by
MOURNERS. The graveside service has just ended, and the
Mourners are beginning to disperse. Dorothea is there
amongst them, of course. So are several faces we recognize:
Vinovich, Wilder, Billy Who, Swann's Stage Manager, his

Dancers, his Technicians. There are also several members of the PRESS, and thirty or forty other Mourners, some of whom, to judge by their dress and manner, are also illusionists. Harry stands some distance from the crowd, watching (hidden) from the doorway of a mausoleum. His eyes are on Dorothea as she goes amongst the Mourners, receiving unheard words of condolence.

EXT. WILTERN THEATRE - DAY

The standee of Swann is being demolished by two WORKERS. They are taking hammers to it, smashing it to pieces.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

The stage is starkly lit with working lights, the auditorium in darkness. Swann's equipment - including the partially dismantled Dragon's head - is heaped on the stage.

Valentin wanders through the boxes to the place where Swann "died." He stares down at the BLOOD on the stage.

EXT. WILTERN THEATRE - DAY

THE 1st WORKER throws the cut-out head of Swann's standee down into the street.

1ST WORKER

Watch out!

On the HEAD, as it strikes the sidewalk at somebody's feet. We don't see who.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY - DAY

Harry catches sight of somebody close to the gates of the cemetery. Dark glasses, a beard, an anonymous black suit. Harry smiles slightly, and slips off between the mausoleums.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY - PARKING LOT - DAY

The BLACK-COATED MOURNER gets into his car.

On Harry, as he gets into his.

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - STAGE - DAY

Valentin hears something in the auditorium. Looks up.

VALENTIN:

Who's there?

He reaches into his jacket to draw a GUN. There's a NOISE.

He swings round. Too late.

Butterfield has a scalpel at his throat. He kicks Valentin to the ground.

BUTTERFIELD:

(conversationally)

I've sometimes thought, if I'd had another profession, I would have

been a surgeon.

On Valentin, staring up in terror.

Valentin's P.O.V.- of Butterfield, upside down, above him,
the scalpel glittering.

BUTTERFIELD:

To be able to heal with one little
cut.

On Valentin again, as Butterfield's blade touches his cheek,
just beneath his eye.

VALENTIN:

No. . .

BUTTERFIELD:

Let's say those eyes of yours were
giving you trouble.

VALENTIN:

Please.

BUTTERFIELD:

I could scoop them out.

VALENTIN:

Don't.

BUTTERFIELD:

So tell me where Nix is buried.

VALENTIN:

I don't know.

Butterfield pushes the blade into Valentin's skin.

CUT WIDE, as Valentin thrashes, his face obscured by
Butterfield's body.

VALENTIN:

Wait!

On Valentin again. There is a small cut beneath his eye, but
that's all.

VALENTIN:

I'll tell you.

BUTTERFIELD:

You'll do more than that.

EXT. L.A. STREET - SEMI-DERELICT BUILDING - DAY

A bad neighborhood, to judge by the state of the streets.

Harry gets out of his car and crosses to a gate, topped with barbed wire. He peers through the bars.

Harry's P.O.V. of the STRANGER from the funeral disappearing into the building. He glances back towards the street. We get a glimpse of a bearded face beneath the brim of his hat. Harry slides out of sight. Waits until the Stranger has gone inside. Then he's up, over the gate, braving the barbed wire.

INT. -SEMI-DERELICT BUILDING - DAY

It's been a hospital. Now the echoing corridors and wards are deserted, littered with reminders of old suffering.

Rotting mattresses; spilled boxes of surgical supplies.

Harry explores this tiled labyrinth, looking for some sign of the Stranger.

He enters a shadowy room. Birds fly UP into his face!

As he retreats, another SOUND, a little distance from him.

GUN in hand, he heads towards it, and steps into

INT. SEMI-DERELICT BUILDING - OPERATING THEATRE - DAY

Narrow shafts of light through the circular viewing window fall on an operating table, and looming pieces of discarded equipment. Eerie. Disturbing.

Harry scans the shadows as he advances into the room.

HARRY:

I knew you wouldn't be able to stay away.

Silence. Harry notices the beard and glasses on the operating table.

HARRY:

You had to see who wept for you the most.

Silence.

HARRY:

A lot of people are going to be really pissed off when they discover you're still alive.

SWANN (V.O.)

They'll never find out.

Harry looks up.

Svanrt is hovering in the air above him. The veins in his temples bulge and throb. This trick requires a lot of concentration.

HARRY:

Look, Ma, no wires.

SWANN:

You shouldn't have followed me,
D'Amour.

HARRY:

How the fuck do you do that?

SWANN:

Now I'm going to have to kill you.

HARRY:

I don't think so. You need me
alive.

SWANN:

Why? So you can fuck my wife?
Swann swoops down towards Harry, who levels his gun.

HARRY:

Be careful. Funerals make me
trigger-happy.
Swann stops, inches from the ground.

HARRY:

You know, it's such a fucking
waste. You can do shit most of us
can only dream about, and you go
around pretending it's some trick.

SWANN:

Illusionists get. Las Vegas
contracts, D'Amour. Magicians get
burned.

HARRY:

Or murdered, like Nix.

SWANN:

He deserved it.

HARRY:

Maybe he doesn't see it that way.
Maybe he's digging his
way out of the hole you put him
right now. That's what you're
hiding away from, isn't it?

SWANN:

I did it for Dorothea.

HARRY:

Oh yeah?

SWANN:

Now that I'm dead, the spotlight's
off her.
Harry grabs Swann, literally pulling him down to earth. Now
they're face to face. Eye to eye. Swann, for all his
posturing, is afraid.

HARRY:

So Nix won't come looking for her?

SWANN:

It's me betrayed him.

HARRY:

And she shot him I I think that'd
piss me off if I were Nix.

SWANN:

(despairing)
I don't know what else to do.

HARRY:

Help me.
On Swann, his face a churning mass of rage and fear.

HARRY:

Listen. If he's back from the

dead, then he is some kind of god.

And he'll find you, wherever the
fuck you are.

And if he's just another phony
Messiah, then you can stage the
greatest come-back in history.

ON Swann. This doesn't sound like such a terrible idea.

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

A car comes to a halt outside the house, where six vehicles
are already gathered. The SNAKE-HANDLING Cultist gets out.
SNAKES seethe out of the open car door.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - VARIOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

We MOVE THROUGH the shadowy interior, catching sight of
several CULTISTS as we go. They all have looks of barely
suppressed ecstasy on their faces.

We are moving towards the Sanctum, and it's getting darker.

A MATCH is struck, and an OIL-FLAME sputters into life. We
see NORMAN'S gleaming face. On the wall is a PICTURE of Nix,
floating over a scene of apocalyptic destruction.

Norman brushes away thirteen years' accrual of DIRT. Beneath,
Nix's expression is as rabid and terrifying as ever. Norman
grins.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

A small, garishly-lit liquor store. Harry's car pulls into
the lot. Swann gets out, his disguise back on. Heads into
the store. Harry, agitated and impatient, follows him.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

Swann is at the cashier's desk, with a bottle of cheap
brandy.

SWANN:

Is this the best brandy you've
got?

CASHIER:

If that's what's on the shelves.

Swann produces a thousand dollar bill out of thin air.

SWANN:

Can you change a thousand for me?

CASHIER:

(amazed)
You're shittin' me.

HARRY:

Can we go?
Swann starts to COUGH. A QUARTER falls from his mouth.

HARRY:

Oh Jeez.

SWANN:

Will that do? No?
Swann coughs again. Puts his hand to his mouth. A DELUGE of
QUARTERS runs between his fingers.

SWANN:

That better?
The Cashier gapes.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWANN'S MANSION - POOLSIDE - GROUNDS - DUSK
The house could not look more reassuringly calm. A SWAN
struts beside the pool. A long, HUSHED MOMENT...

SHOCK CUT TO:

DOROTHEA'S DREAM
A BABOON SHRIEKS, its mouth filling the frame.
CUT WIDE, to reveal the Baboon, racing around Nix's Sanctum,
crazed.
Hanging on the sculpture that swings from the roof is a
shadowy figure. Is it Nix? We can't quite see. Black BLOOD
runs from the figure and splashes on the ground.
NOW WE SEE DOROTHEA, being pulled by the Cultists towards the
falling gouts of dark fluid --
-- she struggles, SOBBING --

CUT TO:

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - DOROTHEA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT
She tosses around on the bed

BACK TO:

DOROTHEA'S DREAM
-- Dorothea has a GUN in her hand. The Cultists shake it
from her grip, and pull her directly under the BLOOD -- as it

SPLASHES on her upturned face --

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - DOROTHEA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A SOUND. Dorothea wakes, distressed by the dream. She gets up and goes out onto --

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - LANDING - DUSK

Looks down the stairs.

DOROTHEA:

Who's there?

Silence. Then, Valentin speaks behind her. She jumps.

VALENTIN:

I'm sorry.

BLOOD runs from his cut face.

DOROTHEA:

Jesus. Valentin. What did you do to your face?

BUTTERFIELD (V.O.)

It was me.

She turns. He's on her in a heartbeat, pressing her back against the wail.

BUTTERFIELD:

Guess who we're going to see?

INT. HARRY'S CAR - DUSK

Harry drives. Swann takes a throatful of brandy. Then he stares at Harry.

SWANN:

You think I'm an asshole.

HARRY:

Didn't know you read minds.

SWANN:

(a warning)

I can do a lot of shit, D'Amour.

But you know that.

(an apology)

So I like playing games with people. Gives them something to wonder about...

HARRY:

Is that all?

SWANN:

I distract them from their banality for a few minutes. It's like a public service. It doesn't mean much in the end. They're all going to die.

HARRY:

And you're not?

Silence for a moment.

SWANN:

Oh, I was going to discover the secret of the universe. That's why I liked Nix. He promised me all these explanations.

HARRY:

And he didn't have them?

SWANN:

He had something. He showed me how to bend the rules. A little levitation. A few fireworks.

HARRY:

Is that all?

SWANN:

No.

(a beat)

At the end... when we had him cornered, he got into my head. He showed me what we really look like, when the veneer's gone. Jelly. Shit...

HARRY:

And you believed him?

SWANN:

I saw it with my own fucking eyes!
See, that's his best trick. No
illusions. Just the truth.
(he looks at Harry)
Are you ready for that?
Harry grabs the brandy bottle from Swann.

SWANN:

Hey!
Harry drinks.

SWANN:

Thought not.

EXT. SWANN'S MANSION - NIGHT

PAN DOWN from the palms to Harry's car, outside the front
door.

INT. SWANN'S MANSION - VARIOUS - NIGHT

Harry puts his head in the study, the library, the bedroom.

HARRY:

Dorothea?
Now he's on the landing. Swann's below.

SWANN:

She's not here.
Harry spots Valentin's BLOOD on the carpet.

HARRY:

Did she know where Nix was buried?

SWANN:

No.

HARRY:

Who else did? Did Valentin?

SWANN:

Yes.

HARRY:

Jesus!

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Butterfield's SEDAN crosses the desert, under a sky full of
stars.

INT. BUTTERFIELD'S SEDAN - NIGHT

Valentin drives. Butterfield and Dorothea are in the back. Dorothea is handcuffed. He has a bag open at his feet. One by one he takes out a series of extraordinary instruments. Dorothea looks on, confounded.

BUTTERFIELD:

Like the look of these? I made them myself, to set him free.

DOROTHEA:

Why did you wait so long?

BUTTERFIELD:

I didn't have the skill to resurrect him. I had to teach myself. And that took time.

DOROTHEA:

And you think he'll be in a fit state to resurrect, after thirteen years?

BUTTERFIELD:

If he was just a man like me, then no. But he's not.

DOROTHEA:

What is he?

BUTTERFIELD:

Maybe he'll show you.

ON DOROTHEA, terror in her eyes.

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Now there are a dozen vehicles parked around the house. Through the windows, the flickering of oil-lamp FLAMES. There is a low, ominous CHANT floating from the house. It has no words, but it is steadily BUILDING in intensity. We DRIFT towards the front door.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

Now we move down the passageway to the Meditation Room. Inside, SEVENTEEN CULTISTS kneel in a circle. They are all CUTTING OFF THEIR HAIR, and throwing it into the FIRE that

blazes in the centre of the circle. They hack indiscriminately, with KNIVES, SCISSORS and RAZORS, their eyes wild. BLOOD runs down their faces and necks from nicked ears and scalps. And still the CHANT BUILDS, and BUILDS...

NORMAN:

He will come! He will come! He will come!

EXT. DESERT - NIX'S GRAVE - NIGHT

Wide. A few rocks, and emptiness.

The headlamps of Butterfield's sedan burn in the darkness, illuminating the dig. Valentin is in the grave, digging.

ON Butterfield, as he stands at the edge of the hole, watching the work. Dorothea stands a yard or two behind him.

BUTTERFIELD:

Anything?

VALENTIN (V.O.)

Not yet.

Butterfield squats at the edge of the hole and suddenly reaches out for Valentin, hauling him close.

BUTTERFIELD:

If you've lied to me to me --

VALENTIN:

I swear... this is the place Swann told me about. The rocks...

On Dorothea, who uses Butterfield's distraction to take a few steps back towards the open car door.

Dorothea's P.O.V. of Butterfield, back to her, interrogating Valentin.

BUTTERFIELD:

Five more minutes. Hear me? And you'd better not --

A SOUND behind him. Butterfield wheels round. On the ground beside the open car door, the instruments.

BUTTERFIELD:

What the fuck are you playing at?

He goes to pick them up. Dorothea steps from behind the door, with the sharpest in her hand. She slashes at him.

Opens a WOUND across his arm.

BUTTERFIELD:

Aah!

He comes at her suddenly, striking the instrument from her hand, and slamming her against the car. He hits her. Once. Twice. Then --

VALENTIN (V.O.)

Butterfield!

Butterfield goes to the edge of the grave, picks up the flashlight and trains the beam on Valentin.

VALENTIN:

(blinded)

In the corner...

The beam goes to the corner of the grave.

A mummified HAND is sticking out of one of the walls.

BUTTERFIELD:

(to Valentin)

Keep away from it.

Butterfield jumps down into the grave, and goes to the hand.

The TRACK is silent, but for Butterfield's shallow breath.

He reaches out to touch Nix's fingers...

Closer...

Closer...

He touches the hand - and the wall of sand comes down with a ROAR!

He jumps back as Nix's corpse, his head still sealed by the mask rolls into view.

VALENTIN:

Oh Christ! Oh Christ!

BUTTERFIELD:

(reverentially)

It's him... it's him.

On Dorothea, sliding down the car in despair.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRY'S CAR - NIGHT

The car is static; the engine still running.

HARRY:

They got here before us.

SWANN:

Looks that way.

EXT. NIX'S GRAVE - NIGHT

Harry gets out of the car and starts towards the open grave.

HARRY'S MOVING P.O.V. OF THE GRAVE

Harry reaches the grave's-edge. It's totally dark. He peers in. On his heel, as the ground CRUMBLES beneath his weight. Harry slides into the grave.

HARRY:

Shit!

He's in darkness now. He gets to his feet, and starts to try and scramble out.

HARRY:

Swann? Swann!

Silence.

Suddenly, a hand is laid on his shoulder! Harry swings round. It's Valentin. He has been badly cut up.

VALENTIN:

D'Amour --

HARRY:

Shit...

VALENTIN:

Help me.

He collapses into Harry's arms.

HARRY:

Swann!

INT. HARRY'S CAR - NIGHT

Indecision is written all over Swann's face: to help or not to help?

HARRY (V.O.)

Swann!

He decides. Gets out.

EXT. NIX'S GRAVE - NIGHT

Swann goes to the graveside, terrified.

HARRY:

Give me a hand. I got Valentin.
Together, Harry and Swann lift Valentin out of the grave and
lay him in the blaze of the headlamps.

VALENTIN:

He's got Dorothea.

SWANN:

And Nix?

VALENTIN:

Him too.

HARRY:

We've got to get you to a hospital.

VALENTIN:

Don't bother.

HARRY:

Shut up. We've lost enough lives
already.

VALENTIN:

I'm sorry, D'Amour...

HARRY:

What about?

VALENTIN:

... Looks like you're going...
to lose... one more.
Valentin dies.

HARRY:

(despairing)
... no...

SWANN:

He's better off this way.

HARRY:

(furious)
Nobody's better off this way!

SWANN:

You don't get it, do you? We're
shit. D'Amour.

He puts his foot beneath Valentin's body. It rolls back into
Nix's grave.

SWANN:

That's where we're all going.

HARRY:

In my time, and nobody else's.

ON THE EMPTY GRAVE, as we HEAR the SOUND of Harry and Swann
getting into the car. The doors SLAM. The CAR LIGHTS
retreat. The grave is left to DARKNESS.

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is silent now.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAYS - NIGHT

We TRACK through the house. The CULTISTS, all Seventeen of
them, stand in the passageways, looking toward Nix's sanctum.
ON THE SANCTUM DOOR. Butterfield emerges. He is wearing
WHITE now.

BUTTERFIELD:

Do you wish him to be amongst us?

CULTISTS:

Yes...

BUTTERFIELD:

Will you come to him on your
knees?

CULTISTS:

Yes...

BUTTERFIELD:

Be ready.

Now we see that the Cultists have BOTTLES in their hands.
With looks of ecstatic fervour on their faces, they SMASH the
bottles to the ground at their bare feet. Then they pick up
MORE BOTTLES, and SMASH them, littering the ground with razor
sharp pieces of GLASS.

ON Butterfield, smiling. He steps back into the Sanctum.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - NIGHT

HIGH, WIDE SHOT of the room, as Butterfield approaches the BODY of Nix. It lies on a table, surrounded by bowls of OIL. Bandages, soaked in oil, are laid over its limbs. Beside its head, Butterfield's INSTRUMENTS are laid out.

ON Dorothea, crouched in the corner of the room, terrified as she watches Butterfield remove the multi-part MASK screwed into Nix's face. He works with surgical precision.

DOROTHEA:

Listen. You've got everything you want. You don't need me. ..

A piece of the mask comes away from the cheek. A subtle POWER plucks at dust around the room, disturbing it minutely. We CUT CLOSE to Dorothea's face throughout this sequence (on occasion her eyeball fills the screen) as she sees these signs of disturbance in the ether, growing in magnitude.

BUTTERFIELD:

No, but he will. After what you did to him.

He pulls a piece of the mask from Nix's mouth.

BUTTERFIELD:

He'll want vengeance. Simple PS that.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAYS - NIGHT

The bottle-breaking has ceased. The Cultists stand, breathless with anticipation.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - NIGHT

On Nix's emaciated mouth. The lips TWITCH.

On Dorothea. The DUST moves around her.

And Nix DRAWS BREATH.

On Butterfield, TEARS in his eyes.

BUTTERFIELD:

Oh my Lord. He's coming home...

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

The whisper runs through the congregation:

CULTISTS:

He's coming home... he/s coming home...

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - NIGHT

ON Dorothea, eyes wide.

DOROTHEA:

Christ in Heaven.

ON Nix, as his body starts to thirstily soak up the oils. His withered flesh starts to REHYDRATE; his veins start to THROB.

Butterfield is watching the process in amazement. Nix's HANDS move up to his face, where the last portion of the mask is still screwed over his eyes.

BUTTERFIELD:

He's with us...

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

CULTISTS:

He's with us... He's with us...

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - NIGHT

Unnoticed by Butterfield, who has his eyes on Nix, Dorothea gets to her feet and creeps away to the door. Very quiet TRACK.

Suddenly, the snake-handling Cultist steps into view, snakes coiled around his face and fingers!

DOROTHEA:

Oh God!

Butterfield looks up.

BUTTERFIELD:

Hold her!

On Nix, as he starts to pull at the mask on his face. It comes away with a moist, WRENCHING SOUND. At last, we see his eyes.

NIX'S P.O.V.

The candle-lights blaze, BLINDING his sensitive eyes.

NIX:

(fury to agony)

Aaarrrrgh!

He gets up and flings himself around the room, knocking over all the lights but two. Then he strikes Butterfield to the ground, and slams his foot on Butterfield's neck, knocking him unconscious. It's a terrifying, almost demoniacal display of instant physical superiority. Throughout, he

literally ROARS in rage.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

The Cultists SCREAM in sympathy, letting out years of repressed frustration. Many of them are dancing on the shards of glass now, crazed.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT NEAR NIX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Harry's car is parked a quarter mile from Nix's house. He is getting out. Swann stays put.

The SOUND of SCREAMING is carried towards them on the wind.

HARRY:

(spooked)

Jesus... what the hell's going on in there?

SWANN:

At a guess... they just resurrected him.

HARRY:

Fuck.

Harry starts towards the house. After a beat, Swann gets out of the car and follows.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM- - NIGHT

On Butterfield, as Nix removes his foot. Butterfield is out for the count.

On Nix, as he stops screaming. His face is grotesquely disfigured by the mask, the flesh stained and corrupted. The SCREAMING of the Cultists is dying away.

NIX:

Children...

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

The Cultists all face the Sanctum door, awaiting instruction.

NIX:

Will you suffer to come unto me?

One by one, the Cultists fall to their knees. We never see flesh pierced by broken glass. But we HEAR IT, and see the agony on the Cultist's faces. They start to sob.

Then, Nix appears in the doorway, mostly hidden by shadow.

NIX:

I've come back to share the wisdom
of the grave. Will you hear it?

CULTISTS:

Yes... yes...

NIX:

Follow me then.

He steps out of the doorway. The Cultists let out sobs of
adoration. Nix locks at Dorothea.

NIX:

Do I know you, child?

He reaches for her. Pulls her close to his body. Dorothea
keeps her self-possession; but only just.

NIX:

Oh yes... I do, don't I? No gun
this time, child?

(a beat)

Where's Swann?

DOROTHEA:

I don't know where he is.

Nix picks her up, so that her feet are inches off the ground.

NIX:

He'll come. We've got unfinished
business, he and I.

Then he carries her down the passageway to the Meditation
Room, walking on the glass, apparently indifferent to the
wounds he's receiving.

The Cultists follow.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

Nix strides into the middle of the room.

NIX:

(whispered to Dorothea)

Something terrible's going to
happen. But if you hold on to me,
very tight, you may live a little
longer.

The Cultists enter the room, knees and hands BLOODY.

NIX:

(to Cultists)

Are you ready for my wisdom?

CULTISTS:

Tell us... tell us...

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - NIGHT

Harry pushes open the window, and climbs in. Swann follows. He is frozen by the memory of what happened here.

ON SWANN, as the TRACK fills with eerie ECHOES of that terrible event. Nix's SCREAMS. The GUN-SHOTS. The sound of the SCREWS GRINDING into Nix's flesh.

SWANN:

(in terrified awe)

This is where we killed him.

HARRY:

(looking at table)

You didn't try hard enough.

SWANN:

I can't... I can't go any further...

Harry nods, and gently detaches his arm from Swann's panicked grip. He crosses to the door.

Suddenly, Butterfield reaches out of the darkness, and catches hold of Harry's leg, throwing him to the ground.

He has one of the INSTRUMENTS in his hand. He STABS at Harry, striking the ground between Harry's legs.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

NIX:

Here is my wisdom.

He stamps on the ground. CRACKS spread from his foot in all directions. ON THE CULTISTS, amazed by this manifestation of power.

BARBARA:

Show us. Puritan.

NORMAN:

Yes, show us!

ALL:

Show us! Show us!

With a ROAR, a PIT four or five feet across opens up beneath Nix and Dorothea. Nix HOVERS over it. It's utterly dark; perhaps bottomless.

Dorothea SCREAMS!

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM- - NIGHT

Hearing Dorothea's CRY, Harry looks back towards the passageway. Butterfield pulls the instrument out of the ground and stabs at Harry a second time. But Swann catches hold of his arm.

SWANN:

(to Harry)

Whatever he's doing to her, stop him!

And Harry's up and away --

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

-- he dashes over the glass --

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

On Nix, Dorothea clasped close to him. He REVOLVES as he floats over the chasm below then.

NIX:

(to unseen Cultists)

You see, I escaped the grave. So I have to give something to the grave in return.

On the Cultists, listening to their lord with love in their eyes.

A SLIT OPENS in the middle of Nix's forehead, above the bridge of his nose (this is an image we saw in the prints in the library), and from it comes a WAVE OF DARKNESS. As Nix REVOLVES, the darkness STRIKES the GROUND around the Cultists.

At first they don't realize what's going on. They think this is some kind of bizarre blessing.

Then the ground starts to LIQUIFY beneath them.

NORMAN:

What's happening?

NIX:

I have to give something back. So

I'm giving you.

They're starting to SCREAM now as they sink into the ground.

They struggle, of course, but the earth seems to be hungry for them. They are dragged down, THRASHING as they SINK.

BARBARA:

(sobbing)

Why? Why?

NIX:

You're not worthy. None of you.

Only Swann was worthy. You just waited like lambs.

Harry appears in the doorway. Nix, still swinging round, has his back to Harry.

NIX:

Well I'm not your shepherd.

Harry surveys the horrific scene in front of him. The ground is now re-solidifying around the Cultists, some of whom have disappeared from view completely, some of whom still reach up out of the dirt. The scene has a surreal beauty to it despite its horror. SCREAMING FACES locked in the solid ground. TWITCHING HANDS the same. Harry starts towards Nix and Dorothea, GUN levelled. So far, he has avoided Nix's gaze.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - SANCTUM - NIGHT

Butterfield and Swann are locked in a life-or-death struggle. They tumble back against the table upon which Nix was resurrected. It collapses under them, and for a moment Swann is stunned. Butterfield snatches up one of the instruments and STABS at Swann, who rolls out of the way in the nick of time.

The BLADE catches him in the arm, however.

SWANN:

Aah!

BUTTERFIELD:

Go on, bleed.

(he slashes at Swann again)

Go on! Go on!

Butterfield comes after him, and Swann backs off against a wall. He SPITS out a serpentine FLAME, which races across the floor and leaps at Butterfield's face!

BUTTERFIELD:

(screaming)

No!

He falls backwards, his face ON FIRE. Swann doesn't wait to watch him die, but races out into the passageway, BLOOD running from his wound.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

Harry is staring up at Dorothea as he very gingerly crosses the still-sticky ground. He's a yard from the edge of the pit now.

Nix swings round.

NIX:

You're not Swann. Who are you?

(a beat))

Oh... I know what you want. He lets Dorothea slip from his arms.

Harry flings himself towards the hole and CATCHES HOLD of Dorothea's arm before she falls away into the abyss. His GUN goes spinning across the ground, back towards the door leading to the passageway.

DOROTHEA:

Oh God!

HARRY:

Hang on!

Nix reaches down to torment Harry. But before he can make contact

SWANN (V.O.)

Nix!

Nix looks up.

NIX:

There you are.

Suddenly, Nix isn't interested in Harry and Dorothea. He steps onto solid ground, and walks towards Swann, his tone suddenly conversational.

NIX:

I've had a lot of time to think
about you. Where I went wrong...
With Nix's back turned, Harry pulls Dorothea back out of the
chasm.

SWANN:

And?

NIX:

I should have been honest with you,
right from the start. I wasn't
born to show people the error of
their ways. I was born to murder
the world.

ON HARRY, as he leads Dorothea to the door. Harry glances
back into the room.

NIX:

You could still help me do that.

SWANN:

Why would I want to?

NIX:

Because you've got nothing else to
live for.

SWANN:

Not true.

NIX:

The woman has a new love in her
life. Your friends are dead.
Nobody's left to save you, but me
He lays his hands on Swann. Draws him into an embrace.
ON HARRY and Dorothea.

HARRY:

(to Dorothea)
I've got to help him.

DOROTHEA:

You can't.

HARRY:

Nix has got to have a weak spot.
Everybody's got a fucking weak
spot.

A NOISE. He turns, and suddenly --

Butterfield is there! His face is horribly burned, but he's
still very much alive.

BUTTERFIELD:

Bastard!

He launches himself at Harry, driving them both back into the
BROKEN GLASS. A FIGHT ensues, carrying them out into the
Passageway.

Nix has Swann in a bear-hug.

NIX:

Will you help me?

A beat. Then Swann nods.

SWANN:

Yes.

Nix lets him go.

NIX:

You know I'll kill you when we're
done. I have to.

SWANN:

Yes.

NIX:

But until then... it's you and
me... the way it always was.

SWANN:

Yes.

Dorothea, at the doorway, watches this bizarre exchange.
Swann's eyes flicker towards her. Nix turns.

NIX:

Wait... you still feel something
for that bitch?

SWANN:

No!

NIX:

Liar!

Nix makes a gesture, and Swann is flung against the wall, pinned there like a fly, legs off the ground.

NIX:

Will! You! Never! Learn!?

With each word, Nix almost casually throws a gesture in Swann's direction, and though there is six feet between them, they have the force of terrible blows. One to the ribs. They CRACK. One to the face. It BLEEDS. One to the legs, one to the arms. They all BREAK. Then Nix turns towards Dorothea.

NIX:

She's just flesh, Swannnie-boy.

I'll show you!

He moves towards Dorothea. Swann falls to the ground, broken.

SWANN:

Harry!

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

The fight between Butterfield and Harry continues.

SWANN (V.O.)

Harry! Stop him!

Harry looks up. Sees Dorothea retreating from the door, and running off into the darkness.

Butterfield comes at Harry again. Harry's got no more time for this creep. He delivers Butterfield a backhand swipe, and Butterfield lands face down in the glass. We don't see the impact. HEARING it's enough.

Harry looks down at the body. Then --

NIX (V.O.)

Where is she?

Harry turns.

Nix is on him like a luaonaut. treading on Butterfield's body as he comes at Harry!

NIX:

Where did she go?

Nix GRABS hold of Harry's head with one hand and PRESSES the

fingers of -the other hand against Harry's TEMPLES. He struggles to get free, but Nix is simply too powerful. Nix's fingers slowly SLIDE BENEATH the skin of Harry's temples. As before, there's no blood.

NIX:

You've got Swann's disease. You think a little courage, a little love, and it'll all be all right. Wrong!
His fingers slide all the way in!

HARRY:

Oh God!
Harry wrests himself free of Nix, and stumbles away. His eyes are BLOOD-RED. Nix is a few yards behind him.

NIX:

Tell me where she is... and I'll make it go away...
Harry is reeling around in the grip of a nightmare.
HARRY'S P.O.V.
The apocalyptic images on the walls seem to move! A face SCREAMS! FIRE blossoms!
ON HARRY, verging on insanity.

HARRY:

Oh God... oh God...
HARRY'S P.O.V.
Harry sees a WOMAN, wrapped in the sickly-sensual embrace of some glistening, barely visible OBSCENITY. We can't see her face. Only her mouth is visible in the coils of her devourer.

ON HARRY:

as he approaches the wall, on which this woman is painted. Reaching out for the image.
HARRY'S P.O.V.
The Woman reaches for Harry.

WOMAN:

Help me.

ON HARRY:

as he touches the wall.

HARRY:

Dorothea!

He starts to SCRATCH out the plaster on which the image is painted.

HARRY:

Dorothea! Dorothea!

HARRY'S P.O.V.

Darkness swallows the image of the woman. She is still screaming when she disappears.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

ON SWANN, dragging his broken body to the door.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

ON HARRY:

literally beating his head against the wall!

HARRY:

No! No! No!

DOROTHEA (V.O.)

Harry...

Harry stops. Dare he believe this is truly her voice?

DOROTHEA:

It's not real, Harry-

Harry turns around. Dorothea is there.

HARRY'S P.O.V.

For a moment, he sees Dorothea as she is.

ON HARRY, relief flooding his face. Then --

HARRY'S P.O.V.

-- the image MORPHS. Dorothea's beauty is replaced by primeval muck.

ON HARRY, appalled. Dorothea grabs hold of him.

DOROTHEA:

Harry. Listen to me. Whatever's good between us, believe it.

Harry's face is deathly white, and pouring SWEAT. He's fighting the delirium. Or doing his best.

HARRY:

... oh... God...

DOROTHEA:

I'm here, Harry.

HARRY:

...yes?

DOROTHEA:

Yes.

Nix steps from the shadows of the doorway behind Harry.

NIX:

(to Dorothea)

There you are, child.

Harry starts to look round.

DOROTHEA:

Don't look.

HARRY:

I... have... to.

NIX:

Come on, child. I want Swann to see you die.

Harry turns and looks at Nix.

HARRY'S P.O.V.

Nix's face darkens as it MORPHS. And the flesh in the middle of his brow UNFOLDS, revealing a dark, pulsating THIRD EYE.

NIX:

(to Harry)

What are you looking at?

ON DOROTHEA, who has gone to the door of the Meditation Room and now slips inside.

ON HARRY, staring up at Nix.

ON DOROTHEA, re-emerging from the Meditation Room. In her hand, Harry's GUN. Harry looks round at her.

HARRY:

(points to his brow)

There... there!

ON NIX, as he looks up at Dorothea.

ON DOROTHEA, as she raises the GUN. She FIRES.

The bullet STRIKES Nix's FOREHEAD. He sinks to his knees, BLOOD pouring down his face from the hole where his third EYE used to be.

ON HARRY, as Nix's mind-hold falters. He leans against the wall, shaking.

DOROTHEA:

Harry?

HARRY:

I'm okay. I'm okay.

Harry opens his eyes. Looks up at her.

HARRY'S P.O.V.

The last of the MORPHING fades. He sees Dorothea as she actually is. Dorothea goes down to comfort him, and they embrace.

Suddenly, a ROAR from Nix. They look towards him --
-- it isn't over.

One last, terrifying transformation is overtaking Nix as he kneels in the GLASS. His sallow flesh is running in STREAMS up his body towards the DARK HOLE in the middle of his forehead --

NIX:

One... last... illusion...

-- his humanity is disappearing, vanishing into the vortex of the bullet wound.

DOROTHEA:

Oh my God.

Harry and Dorothea start to get up...

Nix is no longer human. He is a shape of gleaming DARKNESS, stripped of features. He opens his mouth, the only visible element on his body is his toothed maw, which looses an utterly inhuman SHRIEK!

SWANN (V.O.)

... D'Amour...

Harry glances through the door into the Meditation Room.

Swann is on the threshold.

Nix RISES now. He is a terrifying spectacle, his bulk somehow more intimidating than ever in this simplified form. He comes at Dorothea, who has no choice but to back away into the Meditation Room.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

The pit still yawns in the middle of the floor. Dorothea is backed towards it by Nix.

When Nix SPEAKS, his voice is not remotely human. It is DEMONIACAL.

NIX:

I am the purest of the pure. I am the darkest of the dark...

Harry is at the door now, starting towards Nix.

SWANN:

Harry. You can't kill him.

Harry crouches beside Swann.

HARRY:

(whispers)

He did something with the ground.

SWANN:

Yes?

HARRY:

Can you do it?

SWANN:

I don't know.

HARRY:

Try.

ON DOROTHEA. She's a couple of yards from the pit now.

NIX (V.O.)

I'm beyond Heaven. I'm beyond Hell.

Suddenly, Harry lunges at Nix, grabbing hold of his legs.

Nix topples.

ON SWANN, who puts his hands on the ground. Closes his eyes.

A wave of LIQUIFICATION runs through the ground from Swann's broken fingers --

-- the Cultists' bodies MOVE in the softening ground, like corpses in surf, and ROLL towards the pit, their dead faces resurfacing --

Barbara's body floats past Nix, and disappears over the edge of the pit.

HARRY:

(to Dorothea)

Get out of here!

The ground is very liquid now, and the corpses are lodging around Nix as they're all carried towards the pit. So's Harry, of course.

Nix tries to get up, but he's too late. The corpses weigh him down, the ground is too fluid for him to get a proper hold, and Harry still clings to his legs.

NIX:

No! No! No!

He's at the edge of the pit.

DOROTHEA (V.O.)

Harry!

Harry looks round. Dorothea's behind him, risking the flowing ground to offer him a hand.

Nix starts to fall into the pit. At the last minute, he reaches for Harry, as --

-- Harry is pulled out of reach by Dorothea.

Together they stumble to THE DOOR, where Swann still lies.

They look back to see

NIX, as he goes over the edge of the pit and FALLS SCREAMING.

At the door, Dorothea lifts up Swann's head. He's dead. She closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PIT

What we are about to witness is the longest fall-to-his-death by any villain in the history of cinema...

Nix is falling through rock. Still SCREAMING. He CRASHES against a layer of stone, which his body smashes to smithereens. And as he falls --

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

DOROTHEA:

Is it finished?

HARRY:

I think so.

No it's not. Nix keeps falling, breaking through another layer of rock as he descends deeper and deeper into the earth.

And now... there's a hint of FIERY LIGHT below. He's

approaching MAGMA.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

DOROTHEA:

Come on...

She puts her arms around him. Kisses him, sobbing with relief.

INT. THE PIT

Nix hits a layer of molten rock, and, SCREAMING, he disappears. A BURST of dark, roiling ENERGY erupts from the spot where he sank, and starts up the pit --

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

The room TREMBLES. There's a ROAR in the earth.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

HARRY:

What the fuck?

DOROTHEA:

Harry-?

HARRY:

Out! Out!

They race for the front door --

INT. THE PIT

-- the wave of ENERGY, like a howling, dark WIND, ascends at a breath-taking rate

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

Harry and Dorothea race for the open air, as

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - NIGHT

The ENERGY ERUPTS from the pit.

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Harry and Dorothea stumble out, into the night --

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - VARIOUS - NIGHT

The ENERGY howls from room to room, ERODING the images off the walls, BLOWING out the doors, DESTROYING all the resurrection equipment in the Sanctum --

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - DESERT - DAWN

Harry and Dorothea stumble to the car. They look back at the house, as the cacophony of destruction dies down.

ON THE RIM OF THE SUN, as it peeps over the desert horizon.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - VARIOUS - DAWN

The SUNLIGHT creeps through the rooms as the DUST settles.

INT. NIX'S HOUSE - MEDITATION ROOM - DAWN

The hole in the floor CLOSES UP, and is SEALED... SILENCE reigns.

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - DESERT - DAWN

Harry and Dorothea get into the car. Harry glances back at the house. Nothing.

HARRY:

(quietly)

It's finished.

EXT. NIX'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - IDOLS - DAWN

ON THE IDOLS and the FRONT DOOR, virtually destroyed by time.

WE DRIFT THROUGH THEM, INTERCUTTING WITH:

EXT. HARRY'S CAR - DESERT ROAD - DAWN

Harry's car speeds away, leaving a plume of dust as

THE CREDITS ROLL