

"DRAGON STAR"

by JSR

FADE IN:

EXT. RICHFORD, VIRGINIA NEIGHBORHOOD - TWILIGHT

Windy October day. BRIGHTEST STARS begin to appear over Richford, a southern Virginia town.

BLACK SUV drives slowly through the working class neighborhood. "O MIO BABBINO CARO" plays on the SUV's speakers. The SUV rolls to a stop.

RED LEAF SWIRLS in front of the SUV. A breeze lifts it high in the air. It floats back down on the lawn of corner house, tumbles to the sidewalk and comes to a rest in the gutter.

RICHFORD SCHOOL BUS #42 SCREECHES to a stop, CRUSHING the leaf.

PATRICIA SNYDER, 18, a Southern belle and SCOTT ROADS, 18, a "Yankee" transplant and Richford High newspaper photographer, step off the bus and stroll towards the house.

Scott circles around Patricia, taking her photo from different angles.

SCOTT

Come on, let me shoot some interiors for the school paper. What are you afraid of?

PATRICIA

Said the spider to the fly.

SCOTT

Let me come inside and as God is my witness I'll show you the real me.

PATRICIA

That's quite a revelation. But I have to practice the Puccini aria for the school play. Besides, my mother would burn me in oil if she found you inside.

Scott summons up his "Rhett Butler" impression -

SCOTT

Why, Miss Snyder, I do declare my intentions are purely innocent.

Patricia counters with her "Scarlett O'Hara" -

PATRICIA

I can see your intentions, Mr. Roads. You're just a Yankee looking to take advantage of a helpless Southern girl.

SCOTT

Heaven help the fool who would try to harm you.

Patricia notices BRIGHT OBJECT in the northern sky.

PATRICIA

The moon usually rises in the East, doesn't it?

SCOTT'S P.O.V. THROUGH TELEPHOTO LENS - COMET HOLMES

SCOTT

That's Comet Holmes. The Hopi Indians call it Blue Star.

Patricia looks through the camera lens.

PATRICIA

It looks like a falling star.

SCOTT

That's its dragon's tail. Didn't you listen to my report in astronomy class?

PATRICIA

Will you ever forgive me?

SCOTT

If you come with me to the Stafford game tonight. I promise I won't get lost again.

PATRICIA

I find it hard to believe someone who got perfect SATs got lost.

Scott puts his arm around her waist.

SCOTT

This Roads leads only to your home.

Patricia pushes him away.

PATRICIA

If you're not careful it may lead
to a dead end.

(considering)

Pick me up at seven, and you better
not get lost again.

Scott kisses her hand - a perfect Southern gentleman.

Scott crosses the street and jogs up the hill.

SHORT TIME LATER

Coming down the other side, Scott passes TWO TEENAGE PUNKS
WITH "HELL ON WHEELS" SHIRTS sitting on the hood of a car.

PUNK #1

Spare some change, pal?

Scott keeps on jogging. The punks follow.

PUNK #1

Hey, pal, I'm talkin' to you.

Scott looks back dismissively.

SCOTT

I'm not looking for trouble, boys.

PUNK #2

Well, it found you.

PUNK #1

I think he wants to fight you.

SCOTT

Some other time.

The punk grabs Scott's arm.

PUNK #1

Now is a good time.

Scott pulls away. Moving faster.

The punks are in hot pursuit.

Scott looks back. The punks are gaining. Scott makes a quick
turn down an alley.

HORN BLARES. SCHOOL BUS #42 is headed straight for Scott. He
jumps out of the way.

The driver YELLS at Scott.

BUS DRIVER
Watch where you're going!

Scott keeps running.

The driver turns around - too late - to see the punks standing in the way. The SOUND of the screeching brakes drowns out the punks' SCREAMS.

EXT. THE SNYDER HOUSE - SHORT TIME LATER

P.O.V. THROUGH OPEN KITCHEN WINDOW

FIGURE IN SKI MASK climbs through the kitchen window.

INT. THE SNYDER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

SOUND of Patricia in her bedroom practicing "O MIO BABBINO CARO."

Figure opens a kitchen drawer and removes a large knife.

Moves down the hall to Patricia's bedroom. Lingers for a moment next to record player. Conducts the orchestra with the knife.

SOUND of the front door opening.

LINDA SNYDER (O.S.)
Patti, help me with these bags.

Figure moves back down the hall.

LINDA SNYDER, Patricia's mother, places the grocery bags on the floor.

LINDA SNYDER
Where is that girl?

Figure moves behind her.

Sensing a presence, Linda spins around. She covers her mouth, too frightened to utter a sound.

EXT. SCOTT'S CAR - NIGHT

TWO HEADLIGHTS appear in the darkness, backlighting the fog that has descended on the neighborhood.

INT. SCOTT'S CAR - SAME

Scott drives with one hand on the wheel and the other wiping condensation off the windshield. Checks his watch - DIGITAL WATCH READS: 7:06.

Scott looks up. BLUR OF ROAD SIGN "MURRAY AVENUE"

HITS the brakes hard. Puts the car in reverse and backs into the intersection. Just misses a SPEEDING POLICE CAR.

SCOTT

Geez, buddy, what's your problem?

The police car lights fade in the thick fog.

Scott drives slowly. The view ahead is ablaze with FLASHING BLUE AND RED LIGHTS.

CLOSER. The road is blocked by police and emergency vehicles.

Standing by the side of the road is a ELDERLY WOMAN. Scott pulls off to the side of the road. Scott walks over to her.

They talk for a moment. Scott shakes his head - NO! - as if he is trying to wake from a nightmare.

EXT. THE SNYDER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Scott jogs toward the surreal scene. The SHAPE of the Snyder house appears out of the fog.

ALL SOUND CEASES BUT SCOTT'S LABORED BREATHING.

EMTs carry two bodies out of the house to an ambulance.

Disconsolate - Scott falls to his knees next to INTERSECTING STREET SIGNS "MURRAY AVE. and TUDOR ROAD."

FLASHING BLUE AND RED LIGHTS create a strobe effect. From an angle the street signs appear to spell "MUR-DOR."

ALL SOUND RESUMES. SIRENS BLARING.

"O MIO BABBINO CARO" OVER SERIES OF NEWS HEADLINES:

A). "SECOND RICHFORD HIGH STUDENT MURDERED"

B). "RICHFORD KILLER CLAIMS FOURTH FEMALE VICTIM"

C). "RICHFORD POLICE: NO SUSPECTS IN KILLINGS"

D). "WHERE IS THE RIPPER?"

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COLLEGE AUDITORIUM - COLUMBIA SPRINGS, PA - NIGHT

Twenty people scattered about the auditorium watching a screen.

SUPER: SEVEN YEARS LATER

Door opens in the back of the room. MAN IN AN EXPENSIVE SUIT enters and sits in the back row next to a MAN WITH A FU MANCHU.

TWO SEXY CO-EDS sit in the front row in rapt attention.

Sitting behind them, CINDY PAUL, mid-twenties, attractive in an understated way, is not amused at their attention.

ON SCREEN: SLIDE OF COMET HOLMES

At the podium, the object of their attention: SCOTT ROADS, handsome but with an intensity that is not healthy looking.

SCOTT

For three and a half months Comet Holmes was the largest comet recorded in modern history.

ON SCREEN: SLIDE OF STAR OF BETHLEHEM

SCOTT

Some have theorized the comet underwent a similar event in ancient history, the night of the birth of Christ, and was mistakenly perceived as a star, the Star of Bethlehem.

That draws a few laughs from the audience.

Scott advances a SERIES OF SLIDES of the comet.

SCOTT

In time-lapse photography the comet appears as a flying dragon. The Hopi Indians believe it is a sign of the coming of the Dragon, the Anti-Christ, and World War III.

The laughter subsides.

Scott is distracted by a co-ed as she bends over to pick up her pen. He's forgotten what he was going to say. The words finally stumble out:

SCOTT

If there is balance in the cosmic universe, perhaps the Hopi are right. It is my thesis Comet Holmes is correlated with many turning points in mankind's history. Thank you.

MODERATOR approaches the lectern.

MODERATOR

Thank you, Scott Roads. The Columbia Springs College panel will consider your thesis proposal and advise you of its decision.

Two committee members shake their heads - "no."

PROFESSOR DAVID CHRISTIAN, 50, smiles at their reaction.

Scott picks up his camera gear and steps down from the stage. He is stopped by the co-eds, who appear interested in more than his autograph.

Scott poses the co-eds for a picture.

SCOTT'S P.O.V. THROUGH CAMERA LENS - COEDS SMILING

Scott notices a familiar face standing in the background of the picture - his brother, FBI Agent MARK ROADS, 35.

MARK

That conspiracy BS gets 'em every time.

SCOTT

Mark, when did you get in?

MARK

Late. Just stopped by to see what Columbia Springs finest had to offer.

SCOTT

Joann and Marilyn, my brother Mark, the rising star of the FBI.

(to Mark)

We were just going out for drinks. Want to come along?

MARK

Don't let me interfere. You three
make a great couple.

SCOTT

Are you free tomorrow?

MARK

You know me, kid, I'm never
free. I'm on the 11 o'clock
shuttle back to the Big Apple.
Catch you next time.

Mark eyes the coeds.

MARK

Don't keep Valentino up too late.

Mark departs.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - RICHFORD, VA - MORNING

Police cars and emergency vehicles block the street in front
of apartment building at "Murray Ave. + Oder Street."

Detective CHRIS LARSON parks his old Fiat and strides
through a crowd of curious onlookers. He's fiftyish, short,
solid, a chain smoker working on his second heart attack.

INT. THE MARSH APARTMENT - SHORT TIME LATER

Larson kneels next to the BODY OF PATRICIA MARSH, 18.

ARTHUR LINDBERGH, late 40's, a giant of a man, enters.

LINDBERGH

You want the short version, Stan?

Larson gives him a scornful look.

LINDBERGH

O-kaaay then. Patricia Marsh,
senior Richford High. Doc says
probable time of death 3 am.
Landlady found the door open. Her
mother is in the next room.

Larson glances inside the next room.

BODY OF LINDA MARSH face down on the bed.

Lindbergh watches a young patrolman with a pale complexion leave in desperate need of some fresh air.

LINDBERGH

If you're going out for coffee,
make mine an Espresso.

(with disdain)

Rookies.

Lindbergh checks his notes.

LINDBERGH

Where was I? Oh yeah, hands bound
behind her back, stabbed five times
in the abdomen, circle pattern.

(pause)

If I didn't know better--

LARSON

Can't be. It's been seven years.
He's either dead or in jail.

Lindbergh hands Larson an object in a small plastic bag.

LINDBERGH

Then explain this.

Larson lights a cigarette as he strains to read the ID card.
He is stunned.

LARSON

You gotta be kidding.

CLOSE ON ID - "RICHFORD HIGH SCHOOL - PATRICIA SNYDER."

EXT. COLUMBIA SPRINGS BRIDGE, PA - DAY

Gray, misty day. Scott rides his Vespa across the Columbia Springs bridge. Stops at a red light.

TWO HELLS ANGELS ON HARLEY CYCLES stop beside him. They're amused at Scott's Vespa.

Hells Angels ROAR off. FLAMES burst out of their tailpipes.

BLACK HOMELESS MAN steps in front of Scott.

HOMELESS MAN

Mister, can you spare some change?

Scott reaches into his pocket and hands him a quarter.

HOMELESS MAN

Be careful crossing. These streets
ain't safe.

Scott moves forward. TAXI runs red light. It almost hits
Scott.

Scott looks back. The Homeless Man is gone.

EXT. COLUMBIA SPRINGS POLICE STATION - DAY

Scott enters the police station parking garage.

INT. CINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

Cindy's asleep on the couch.

Scott opens the blinds.

SCOTT

That help?

CINDY

(awakening)

Thanks.

Cindy - hungover - pulls her jacket over her head.

SCOTT

What do ya think, Cindy?

CINDY

Why are you bothering me?

SCOTT

I thought I made some converts last
night.

No reaction. Scott pulls her jacket.

SCOTT

Rise and shine.

Cindy gives up trying to sleep.

Scott sees a mark on her neck.

SCOTT

What's that? Spider bite?

Cindy gives Scott a withering look.

Scott eyes her as she walks to the bathroom. Cindy reaches for the shower faucet and sends a stream of hot water pounding against the shower stall. She begins to undress, but realizes Scott is watching. She closes the door.

INT. SCOTT'S CUBICLE - DAY

Scott gropes for his glasses on his desk. Knocks a wine bottle over.

ADJACENT OFFICE

The noise distracts Scott's supervisor, FRANK FURLEY, bug-eyed weasel, grooming his mustache.

INT. CINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

Cindy exits the bathroom - her hair dripping wet. Slowly closes the door behind her. Stops.

Scott flashes a nasty smile. Shows her the WINE BOTTLE.

CINDY

Do you mind?

SCOTT

Did you let him breathe?

Scott senses someone is standing behind him. Hides the bottle behind him.

Furley holds an empty file. He's not happy.

FURLEY

Where is it?

SCOTT

I...was working on my thesis last night.

FURLEY

I want your report on my desk before you leave for Washington.

SCOTT

You'll get it.

FURLEY

I don't need to remind you that any chance for advancement requires you to have your degree. You will get it, won't you, Roads?

SCOTT
Absolutely, Frank.

Furley moves on.

CINDY
Why don't you go do something worthwhile?

SCOTT
Playing games with Frank, that's not worthwhile? You've got to admit it's funny. It makes me laugh.

CINDY
Four years at Princeton wasted. Why did you take this job?

SCOTT
You got a Masters in Religious Studies at MIT. Don't you believe in destiny? We were meant to be together. Want to take a spin?

CINDY
You're incorrigible!

Scott gestures "naughty, naughty" and SPINS the bottle.

INT. SCOTT'S CUBICLE - DAY

Walls of Scott's cubicle are covered with ARTICLES OF COMET HOLMES AND HOPI PROPHECY.

Scott works at his computer without much enthusiasm.

Cindy drops TWO SIMILAR-LOOKING DRIVER LICENSE PHOTOS on Scott's desk.

SCOTT
Can't decide who the lucky guy is this weekend?

CINDY
Mr. Lucky aka Ricky Spillia got caught with a roll of cocaine in his shorts.

SCOTT
So size does matter? That's interesting.

Cindy pushes Scott aside. Accesses "NATIONAL DATABASE DRIVER LICENSE" on his computer. Enters: "Ricky Spillia."

ON SCREEN: PHOTO OF LICENSE

CINDY

What's interesting is there's no record for the other license.

Scott examines the photos.

Cindy turns the TV on.

ON SCREEN: "BREAKING NEWS BULLETIN"

SCOTT

Because he's an impostor.

CINDY

What?

SCOTT

He had plastic surgery around the eyes and chin to match the real -

ON TV: Reporter MICHELE RIVERA, 25, big dark brown eyes, is covering a news conference at a police station in Richford, Virginia.

RIVERA (TV)

Seven years ago the citizens of Richford, Virginia, were shocked to learn a serial killer, the Richford Ripper, was in its midst when Patricia Snyder and her mother were brutally stabbed inside their home.

CINDY

Hey, Richford, isn't that -?

SCOTT

Listen!

Scott turns up the volume of the TV.

RIVERA (TV)

For three and a half months the Ripper terrorized the Richford community and taunted the police with a series of letters.

ON SCREEN: PHOTOS OF CHERIE BOTERO AND MARIA MORENO

RIVERA (TV)

Cherie Botero and Maria Moreno were killed 30 and 60 days after the Snyders. Then just as mysteriously the killings and the letters stopped. Police speculated the Ripper was either in jail or died.

ON SCREEN: PHOTOS OF PATRICIA AND SUSAN MARSH

RIVERA (TV)

That was until this week when the bodies of Patricia Marsh and her mother, Susan, were found in her apartment. Chief Detective Chris Larson made a brief statement to the media.

LARSON (TV)

Today we are releasing photos and biographic information about the victims in the hope it could help lead to the arrest of the perpetrator.

REPORTER (TV)

The Marsh murders were just two blocks from the Snyder murders. Is there any pattern to the killings?

LARSON (TV)

None that we feel could direct our investigation.

RIVERA (TV)

Have you asked the FBI for help?

LARSON (TV)

Federal and state investigative resources have been used in the investigation. We are making progress in this case.

RIVERA (TV)

Then why are there still no suspects?

That comment was not appreciated by Larson. Larson ends the press conference.

On cue, Rivera turns to face the camera.

RIVERA (TV)
 So many questions and so few
 answers on a case that has
 stumped authorities. This is
 Michele Rivera, Eyewitness News
 reporting.

Cindy is alarmed by Scott's pale complexion.

CINDY
 What's wrong?

EXT. COLUMBIA SPRINGS BRIDGE - TWILIGHT

Misty rain. In the distance FIGURE IN GREY SWEATS is jogging
 past the heavy traffic on the bridge.

COMING CLOSER. It's Scott.

Scott stops in the middle of the bridge and takes hold of
 the rail. It appears he is about to jump.

Eyes shut --

- and he's shaking.

- and this incredible SHRIEK OF RAGE EXPLODES! But then the
 sound is drowned out by the NOISE of the traffic.

- Scott takes out a pill container, tosses a couple down and
 walks slowly the rest of the way.

EXT. COLUMBIA SPRINGS NEIGHBORHOOD - SHORT TIME LATER

As Scott passes a church alcove he see FIGURE IN BLACK
 SWEATS singing Lou Christie's "I'm Gonna Make You Mine."

RICHARD MORA, late 40s, impressive Fu Manchu mustache, turns
 around for the 'big finish.'

MORA
 "I'll try to get to your soul, I'll
 try to get to your mind, I'm gonna
 make you mine."

SCOTT
 Lou Christie would be proud.

MORA
 Aw shucks, the acoustics are good
 here.

SCOTT

What do you do for an encore?

MORA

I was going to ask you that, Mr. Roads.

SCOTT

(surprised)

Have we met?

MORA

Let's say your reputation proceeds you. I caught your presentation last night on Comet Holmes. Received the Turing Cryptology Award for solving the Kryptos Code. Impressive.

SCOTT

That Fu Manchu's impressive.

MORA

Oh this? It's my pride and joy. Richard Sixto Mora. You can call me Rich. National reporter for "America Today," two million circulation and shrinking.

Scott waves him off.

SCOTT

If this is about my subscription...

MORA

Relax. I'm working on the Ripper story. My spy in the Richford PD says you knew the first victim and that you wrote a college paper on the killer's profile.

SCOTT

How -?

MORA

Google. Plus you're a creature of habit. Leave your apartment at 6 and run past here at 6:25. I like to think of myself a profiler too.

SCOTT

I'm just an assistant investigator.

MORA

Too modest. Your theory the Ripper wasn't the typical serial killer, that he planned all of the killings before he began his spree, that was brilliant. But of course the police disregarded it. No self-respecting detective likes being embarrassed by an amateur.

SCOTT

Like a prophet ignored in his own land.

MORA

There was something I found curious - all of the victims lived near street intersections. The first Ripper murder was at the corner of Murray and Tudor and the last one was at Murray and Oder. What's that tell you?

SCOTT

Depending on your point of view, "mur-dor."

MORA

Wow, you are a star.

SCOTT

Why don't you go to the police and tell them your theory? I'm sure they'll listen to a big-time reporter like you.

MORA

They won't return my calls.

(beat)

I have a business proposition for you. I want you to do some research.

SCOTT

What do you think I can do for you?

MORA

It's what I can do for you. I have to head back to New York to finish an article on the FBI screw-ups in the anthrax investigation. Then I'm going back to Richford to do a series to bring John Q Public

(MORE)

MORA (cont'd)
 up-to-speed on the history of the
 Ripper case. This could be big.
 There could be a book deal in it
 for you...unless you want to be
 stuck in a deadend government job.

TRIO OF NUNS enter the alcove.

MORA
 I'm sorry, ladies, but the bingo
 game has been canceled tonight.

The nuns shrink back a little.

MORA
 Unless you had something else in
 mind...

The nuns leave in disgust.

MORA
 So what do you say? You know this
 case better than the cops.

SCOTT
 You think I can just walk down
 there and open a door?

MORA
 There may be a key. My spy says
 there's a rumor a murder wasn't
 credited to the Ripper. A girl cut
 her wrists after Maria Moreno's
 murder.

Mora hands Scott a newspaper article. HEADLINE READS:
 "RICHFORD HIGH STUDENT SUICIDE."

MORA
 Judy Ash lived at Murray and Elder.
 I'm thinking, if it was the Ripper,
 he changed his MO because he was
 hiding something. You could check -

SCOTT
 Whoa! I'm sorry. I can't. I'm
 swamped at work. Besides, I've got
 an A-hole for a boss.

MORA
 If you change your mind, here's my
 cellphone number and e-mail. I

(MORE)

MORA (cont'd)
would appreciate if you keep this
our little secret.

SCOTT
Well-

MORA
Great. I'll be in touch. Ciao!

Mora jogs around the corner.

INT. LARSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Larson sits at his desk paging through thick pile of files.

Lindbergh, Louisville Slugger in hand, stares at a Richford map with pins marking the locations of the Ripper murders.

LINDBERGH
Maybe it's a copycat. These cases
bring the crazies out of the
woodwork.

LARSON
That's some coincidence another
psycho stumbled onto the Ripper's
trophy stash.

LINDBERGH
Maybe he willed it to him. Maybe
they met on the Psycho-Ripper chat
room.

LARSON
The guy's an egomaniac. He wouldn't
share the credit.

Larson motions to Lindbergh's bat.

LARSON
What's with the wood?

Lindbergh takes his batting stance.

LINDBERGH
Helps me think outside the batter's
box...

Takes a big swing.

LINDBERGH
 ...like the Big Bambino. Tally ho!

LARSON
 Speaking of thinking outside the
 box...

Larson tosses a file on the desk to Lindbergh.

LARSON
 ...this college kid wrote a
 paper that the Ripper was making a
 statement. Thinks he planned the
 locations of each of the murders
 before committing the first one.

LINDBERGH
 I thought the feds asked for
 everything.

LARSON
 They didn't say "please."

Larson stares at the map. He's looking for something -
 anything.

LARSON
 Murray and Tudor, Sunrise + 13th,
 Furnace + 13th, Murray + Oder...
 (pause)
 Who was it said, "you can't see the
 wood for the trees?"

LINDBERGH
 Luke Skywalker, "Star Wars, Revenge
 of the Ewoks."

Larson shakes his head. Silent.

Lindbergh looks concerned; he didn't get Larson's usual
 scornful reaction.

LINDBERGH
 You okay, Stan?

LARSON
 People just stumble through life
 bumping into one tree after
 another. After awhile they're just
 a bunch of bruises.

LINDBERGH

So you're saying we're lost in the woods?

LARSON

I'm saying it's time to think outside the box.

INT. DAVID CHRISTIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Scott admires PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE COLUMBIA SPRINGS BRIDGE from the office of Professor Christian, Chairman of the History Department.

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)

The new bridge is nice but the old bridge was beautiful.

Scott snaps to attention as the tall, intimidating professor enters the room.

CHRISTIAN

It was destroyed to save US.

SCOTT

Sir?

CHRISTIAN

The Confederate Army was headed for Philadelphia to split the Union forces. It could have changed the war. Nothing was in its way. It is ironic that a freed slave set the fire to the bridge and forced the army to head north to Gettysburg. The rest, they say, is history.

CHRISTIAN

Now about the subject of your dissertation.

SCOTT

Is there a problem?

CHRISTIAN

Where is it going?

SCOTT

I'm focusing on Comet Holmes and significant events of the 20th century.

CHRISTIAN

Such as?

SCOTT

The Normandy Invasion on June 6,
the turning point of World War II.

CHRISTIAN

Something more contemporary?

SCOTT

I was considering the Richford
serial killings.

CHRISTIAN

Why?

SCOTT

I was there. I know more about the
case than the authorities. I could
add a unique perspective.

CHRISTIAN

What's unique about a madman
killing young women with a knife?

SCOTT

There may be greater things at
work.

CHRISTIAN

So you're suggesting the killer's
involved in some astrological cult?
I see. Yes, interesting. Well, if
you were writing a segment for
"Dateline" or "20/20." You won't
impress my colleagues with such
hysterical nonsense.

SCOTT

But -

CHRISTIAN

Sit down.

Scott takes a seat.

CHRISTIAN

There was another of you. Played
varsity football.

SCOTT

My brother. Set a school record for scoring. He's the Armani king of the FBI now.

CHRISTIAN

Yes, a real ladies man. Following his legacy?

SCOTT

Armani's a little out of my league.

CHRISTIAN

If you would dig below the surface, you might discover something that will leave a more lasting legacy.

(pause)

There is something that I am concerned about.

Scott was expecting this.

CHRISTIAN

I read your personal file. You had to take a semester off at Princeton for nervous exhaustion.

SCOTT

Everybody gets nervous at finals.

CHRISTIAN

The school psychologist cited obsessive tendencies related to the trauma of a close friend's death. Is there something I should be concerned about?

SCOTT

That's ancient history. Time heals all wounds, right?

CHRISTIAN

Let's keep to mainstream history, if you want your thesis to be accepted by the committee.

SCOTT

I don't know -

CHRISTIAN

You don't know? What would Socrates say? How am I to know your abilities when you don't know

(MORE)

CHRISTIAN (cont'd)
yourself? I may have to agree with
my colleagues. Do we understand
each other?

SCOTT
Yes.

CHRISTIAN
The Richford case won't appear as
the keystone of your dissertation,
yes?

SCOTT
Yes - I mean, no.

CHRISTIAN
All right then.

INT. CINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

Cindy stands close to a projection screen inspecting two
similar-looking photos.

Scott watches in the doorway.

SCOTT
Maybe you should try a dating
service.

CINDY
Frank was looking for you.

SCOTT
Who are your friends?

CINDY
Another look-alike drug smuggler.

SCOTT
Oooo, did they find coke in his
crack?

CINDY
Liquid coke in a bottle of olive
oil.

SCOTT
(feigns shock)
Not extra virgin!

CINDY
Was there something else?

SCOTT
I may have to take a couple days of
personal leave.

CINDY
Family problems?

SCOTT
Nothing like that.
(pause)
I knew one of the Richford victims.

CINDY
I'm sorry.

SCOTT
There's something I have to check.

CINDY
What? You're investigating?

SCOTT
No.
(considering)
Yeah.

CINDY
Are you going to tell Frank?

SCOTT
He would say stay out of it.
(beat)
The conference... want to take my
place? Three days of fun.

CINDY
And just be a witness?

SCOTT
No, you're a star. You have the
look. That leaves a few minor
details. Come up with a 45-minute
speech -

CINDY
Those minor details.

Furley stands at the door.

FURLEY

Is this your idea of working?

Scott ignores Furley's latest attempt at managing.

SCOTT

You'll get it.

FURLEY

And stay out of the Richford case.

SCOTT

Absolutely.

FURLEY

By the way, that trip, I decided to go instead.

Furley smiles gleefully. Scott hangs his head.

FURLEY

Roads, are you happy working here?

SCOTT

When I am allowed to.

FURLEY

What's that mean?

SCOTT

You rarely tell me what to do, Frank. You usually tell me what not to do.

FURLEY

Can't you accept that?

SCOTT

One of us knows what he's doing. You can't accept that.

Scott storms out of the room.

FURLEY

I'm leaving for the airport. See that Roads finishes his report.

INT. SCOTT'S CUBICLE - DAY

ON MONITOR: "INTERNET NEWS ALERT" FLASHES.

Scott sits down, pops a couple of pills and CLICKS on the link.

ON MONITOR: "AMERICA TODAY \$100K REWARD FOR RIPPER'S ARREST"

Cindy dumps a pile of reports onto Scott's desk.

SCOTT

Thanks?

CINDY

Detective Larson, Richford PD called. He wants to talk with you.

SCOTT

Larson called...?

Cindy's phone rings. She answers.

CINDY

Yes, Frank...

(whispers to Scott)

He's at the airport. Do you want to talk to him?

Scott gestures back, "no, I'm not in"

CINDY

I'm sorry, he's not in. May I take a mess...Yes, I'll let him know.

Scott smiles.

SCOTT

Furley will be out of town.

Scott hurries out the door.

Cindy has to shout.

CINDY

What does that mean? What about your report?

INT. SCOTT'S CAR - DAY

Scott drives down a scenic country road on a golden autumn afternoon.

EXT. RICHFORD COUNTRY ROAD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

GOLDEN LEAVES materialize overhead. Beautiful blue sky can be seen through the branches. TWO FIGURES on a Vespa exit the woods. Patricia Snyder is holding desperately onto Scott, laughing. Trees and branches blur and speed by overhead. They race out of a wooded road. The Vespa rolls over in a clearing.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. SCOTT'S CAR - DAY

Scott drives past a sign: "Richford seven miles."

INT. RICHFORD POLICE STATION - DAY

Scott opens a door marked "OFFICERS ONLY" in the bustling police station.

Police officer approaches Scott. Officer gestures to Larson and a guy in a slick suit talking in the back.

Larson shakes the hand of FBI agent PAUL BAUER, 40.

LARSON

Agent Bauer, we'll certainly keep
the FBI informed.

Bauer glares at Scott as he passes.

LARSON

Mr. Roads, thanks for coming
down. Do you mind if we go outside
to smoke?

SCOTT

No, not at all.

EXT. POLICE PARKING LOT - DAY

Larson offers Scott a cigarette. Scott declines.

LARSON

How long can you stay?

SCOTT

I have to be back in three days.

(beat)

How can I help?

LARSON

We're reviewing old evidence, tips,
everything...anything. Read your
college report on the Ripper's
profile. Interesting.

(beat)

Patricia Snyder, damn shame,
mutilating her like that.

Scott is visibly shaken.

SCOTT

(deep sigh)

Yeah.

Larson is taken aback by Scott's reaction.

LARSON

My ex- always said I got a big
mouth.

SCOTT

That's alright.

LARSON

Did you know the other victims,
Cherie Botero and Maria Moreno?

SCOTT

(surprised)

Personally? No.

LARSON

I must say, your report had some
intriguing insights - that the
killer planned all of the murders
before he committed the first. Do
you still think that?

SCOTT

It's possible.

(pause)

There may be something. I may be reading too much into it...it may sound crazy -

LARSON

At this point I'm open to crazy.

SCOTT

The victims all lived near street intersections. From a certain angle the intersecting street signs Murray and Tudor could be seen as Mur-dor. And now this murder at Murray and Oder...

LARSON

So what's he trying to say...other than the obvious?

SCOTT

I was hoping I could see the sites. Might find some more signs.

LARSON

What the hell. I'll make some calls and give you the grand tour.

EXT. THE SNYDER HOUSE - DAY

Larson walks up the steps of the Snyder house. Scott stares at the house.

LARSON

Don't quit on me now.

SCOTT

Anyone live here?

LARSON

There were a few renters. It's a realtor's nightmare now.

Larson notices the front door is open. He draws his gun.

INT. THE SNYDER HOUSE - DAY

Dark. Scott removes a HUGE FLASHLIGHT from his backpack.

LARSON
What is that?

SCOTT
A Starlight Beast 2000. Careful, it
can burn your retinas.

Scott hands the flashlight to Larson.

Larson tracks the light around the room. BLINDING LIGHT
reflects off a mirror. ENVELOPE taped in the center.

Larson takes a closer look. ENVELOPE READS: "CHRIS LARSON, 6
PIPERS MAINOR"

LARSON
He was here this morning.

SCOTT
How can you be so certain?

LARSON
The agent left the key. She would
have noticed the door was open.

SCOTT
(alarmed)
He knows where you live.

LARSON
That's not my address.

SCOTT
How would he know you were coming?

LARSON
He's either a mind reader or he's
getting inside information. You
didn't tell anyone, did you?

SCOTT
No one.

Scott deliberates for a moment. He removes a notebook from
his backpack.

He writes variations of the letters, scratches out some,
circles others.

SCOTT
It's an anagram.

He hands the notebook to Larson.

LARSON
"6 in a Rippers MO?" So he can
count.

Larson removes a piece of paper from inside the envelope.

READS: "I'LL LET YOU GUESS WHO WAS MY LUCKY 7"

LARSON
So maybe he can't count.

SCOTT
Or maybe one wasn't his MO.
(considering)
If he's revisiting the scene of his
crime, what about the others?
Should you tell the people living
there?

LARSON
First thing, we are going to calmly
walk out of here. He may be
watching.

SCOTT
What about the media?

LARSON
There's enough panic. That's what
he wants.

EXT. THE SNYDER HOUSE - DAY

Scott and Larson walk to the car. White panel truck drives
by slowly. Larson glances at the driver, a teenage girl.

SCOTT
You think he's close?

LARSON
I think he's always been close.

SCOTT
What about asking the FBI for
help? They could send one of their
profilers.

LARSON

One came down here a couple of years ago. He spent two days writing his report. He concluded the killer was a loner, white male who hated his mother. I asked him, so you think it's the DC sniper?

They drive away. Black SUV turns the corner and follows, keeping a safe distance.

EXT. THE BOTERO HOUSE - DAY

Scott takes a photo of intersecting street signs - "13TH STREET + SUNRISE DRIVE."

LARSON

If you have an idea, I'd like to hear it.

Scott shrugs.

They walk up the steps of the Botero house, a modest home on the corner of a quiet, tree-lined street.

SCOTT

Cherie Botero was killed when she came home after cheer practice.

LARSON

(impressed)
That's right.

Larson takes a key out of the mailbox and opens the door.

INT. THE BOTERO HOUSE - DAY

Scott notices the wind blowing the curtains through an open window. Looks outside.

Up the sidewalk is a series of cedar trees lining the street. There, partially hidden in the shadows of a tree, is the SHAPE OF A LARGE MAN, watching them. He is barely visible, almost blending in with the dark foliage.

SCOTT

Look.

LARSON

Look where?

SCOTT
Behind that tree there.

Larson looks. It's Lindbergh.

Larson signals to Lindbergh "everything is okay."

Lindbergh looks annoyed he was spotted.

Larson notices writing on the wall: "CHERIE AMOUR, DISTANT
AS THE MILKY WAY."

LARSON
Now we're getting somewhere. He's a
fan of Stevie Wonder.

Larson moves towards the kitchen. Searches for the wall
light. He flips it and nothing happens. He stops to let his
eyes get accustomed to the darkness.

As he moves towards the back door he kicks over a trash can
and sends it CRASHING across the floor.

SOUND of footsteps upstairs.

Larson draws his gun and runs to the stairway.

Scott follows, training his flashlight on the stairs.

LARSON
Richford Police. Come down now.

Silence.

LARSON
Then we're coming up.

Larson reaches the top of the staircase. Moves cautiously
down the hallway.

Scott tracks his flashlight back and forth across the
darkened hallway.

Larson opens the door of the bedroom. The room is a dump,
littered with beer cans and McDonald's wrappers. A sleeping
bag and dirty pillows are scattered on the floor. Curtains
blow back and forth in the open window.

LARSON
Damn it!

Larson barrels past Scott and makes a mad dash down the
staircase.

EXT. THE BOTERO HOUSE - DAY

Larson slips on the wet leaves.

Scott rushes to help Larson to his feet.

SCOTT

Did you see which way -?

GROAN comes from the side of the house. They run towards it.

SIDE OF HOUSE

Lindbergh leans on his baseball bat on the back of FIGURE wrapped in yellow police tape.

LINDBERGH

Spidee's caught his-self a fly.

LARSON

You two haven't been formally introduced. Scott Roads, Arthur Lindbergh. Arthur's a big fan of the Spider-Man.

LINDBERGH

Deeeee-lighted, Stan.

MARK GORLICK, a Homer Simpson look-alike, struggles to get free.

GORLICK

Let me go. I'm going to sue.

LARSON

Why sue-serious, Tiberius?

GORLICK

Who? You've got the wrong guy.

LINDBERGH

Just another case of mistaken identity?

GORLICK

You're killing me.

LINDBERGH

Here, let me fix that. I learned this one in Bangkok.

Lindbergh moves his bat down Gorlick's back and adds pressure.

GORLICK

OUCH!

LINDBERGH

Identify yourself, Peter Parker.

GORLICK

Name's Gorlick.

Larson signals to Lindbergh to let him up.

Gorlick pulls the yellow tape and rips his coat.

GORLICK

Great. You tore my good coat.

LINDBERGH

Have your people send me the bill.

LARSON

Got some ID?

GORLICK

Just my county benefits. I left my American Express at home.

Gorlick digs in his pocket. Hands his ID card to Larson

LARSON

What were you doing up there...Mark Gorlick?

GORLICK

It's not safe sleeping in the shelter with those addicts.

LINDBERGH

How long you been squatting here?

GORLICK

Couple weeks. I'm moving to a quieter neighborhood.

LINDBERGH

Geez, beggars can be choosers. Seems like a quiet neighborhood to me.

GORLICK

It was until this guy showed up this morning. Gave me the creeps.

LINDBERGH
Gave you a fright did he?

LARSON
Tell me about him.

GORLICK
I thought he was just some
crack-head looking for a place to
light up. He walked around like he
owned the place, humming to
himself. Then he left.

LINDBERGH
What did Mr. Creepy look like?

GORLICK
I couldn't see. Can I go now?

LARSON
(to Scott)
Our tour has taken a slight detour.
We're going to give our friend a
ride downtown. Need a lift?

SCOTT
That's okay. I thought I might look
up some friends in the area. I'll
catch you later.

EXT. THE ASH HOUSE - DAY

Scott knocks on the door of a corner townhouse.

RICHARD ASH, 35, rail thin, looks like the living dead,
opens the door. Scot shows his badge.

SCOTT
Mr. Ash, I'm with the police
department. I'd like to speak to
you about your sister.

RICHARD ASH
Just a moment. Come in.

INT. THE ASH HOUSE - DAY

Richard leads Scott into a dark, filthy, sparsely decorated
living room. Cigarette butts strewn about.

RICHARD ASH
Sit down, please.

Scott looks around. A worn Lazy Boy recliner is the only thing that looks safe to sit on.

RICHARD ASH
Sorry about the mess. Wasn't expecting visitors.
(fidgeting)
You want to know about Judy?

Richard lights a cigarette.

SCOTT
You found her. Was there anything you can recall?

RICHARD ASH
Like what?

SCOTT
Like where did you find her?

RICHARD ASH
She was laying right behind you. She was face down. At first I thought she fainted. Her uniform covered her wrists.

SCOTT
Her uniform?

RICHARD ASH
Her cheer uniform. She was on the Richford Stars.

SCOTT
Do you recall anything else?

RICHARD ASH
I freaked and ran out of the house. I must have blacked out. The neighbors called the police. I don't remember much after that.

Scott can't hide his disappointment. He sees PHOTO ON THE WALL: Judy Ash and Cherie Botero in their cheerleader sweats posing with the German Shepherd team mascot.

SCOTT
I took that. The German Shepherd tried to bite me.

Scott looks closer. In the background he sees a BLURRED IMAGE OF A MAN WITH A FU MANCHU.

RICHARD ASH

The Lord is her shepherd now.
(deep sigh)

Judy was such a good soul.
(a beat)

Hey, you got any money...for food?

Scott looks at him. Checks his wallet.

SCOTT

Twenty bucks?

Scott hands him the cash. Gets up to leave.

RICHARD ASH

Thanks.

Richard walks Scott to the door.

EXT. THE ASH HOUSE - DAY

It is colder, windy.

RICHARD ASH

Looks like it's going to storm.

SCOTT

I think you're right.

Scott turns up the collar of his jacket and jogs down the street.

Black SUV follows Scott down the street.

EXT. THE TROY MANSION - NIGHT

Raining. Mansion surrounded by 12-foot black iron gate. Dark with the exception of a light on the second floor bedroom.

SUV comes rolling INTO VIEW. The motor of the car has been turned off. The lights of the car have been turned off.

INT. SUV - NIGHT

FIGURE IN SKI MASK holds a DEVICE.

Types: "LOGON - PATRIOT HOME SECURITY SERVICE."

System prompts: "PASSWORD?"

Figure types: "DOWNLOAD SUB66 PROGRAM."

Now the face of the tiny computer is alive with numbers -- they fly by much too fast to make them out clearly as it locks onto "30-41-52-63-74-85-96-107."

System prompts: "ACCOUNT?"

Figure types: "118 NEW JERSEY AVENUE, RICHFORD, VIRGINIA."

SYSTEM PROMPTS: "ACTION REQUESTED?"

Figure types: "DISABLE SECURITY SYSTEM."

Figure heads for the front gate.

EXT. THE TROY MANSION - NIGHT

Figure pushes the front gate forcefully. Figure strides quickly to the front door.

Looks inside the glass partition: FLASHING SECURITY KEYPAD: "SYSTEM DISABLED."

Figure turns the heavy door handle. CLICK. It opens easily.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM - PATRIOT SECURITY - NIGHT

SECURITY OFFICER notices a flashing red light on one of his ten monitors. Reads: "SYSTEM DISABLED - TROY - 118 NEW JERSEY AVENUE."

Security Officer CLICKS the intercom.

OFFICER

Patriot Unit 5, we're reading
"system disabled" at Troy
residence, 118 New Jersey Avenue.
Residence check requested.

INT. THE TROY MANSION - NIGHT

Figure moves across the foyer to security keypad. Punches numbers into it.

The lights of the security detector go from FLASHING RED TO GLOWING GREEN.

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM - PATRIOT SECURITY - NIGHT

ON MONITOR: "TROY ALARM SYSTEM ENABLED."

Officer CLICKS the intercom.

OFFICER

Patriot Unit 5, cancel that
residence check at Troy residence.

INT. THE TROY MANSION - NIGHT

Figure ascends the staircase.

TROY FAMILY PORTRAIT is at the head of the stairs. Figure stops and studies the portrait admiringly. Removes a large knife from the backpack, cuts the painting from its ornate frame. Rolls the painting expertly and places it into the backpack.

Figure tapes an ENVELOPE in the middle of the empty ornate frame.

Figure moves towards a light at the end of the hallway. Passes PHOTOS OF CINDY TROY - a high school graduation shot. Prom queen coronation. Richford cheerleader.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Figure enters the bedroom and closes the door firmly. A huge room, a gigantic canopied bed. Girl asleep in the bed, her back to the door.

Figure sits down on her bed. Stares at the curve of her body. Reaches out and traces the line of her back. Removes a large knife from the backpack.

EXT. THE JOHNS HOUSE - DAY

Larson watches Scott take a photo of street signs "13th street and Furnace Road."

Scott stares at a man raking leaves across the street.

LARSON
Someone you know?

SCOTT
That's Dr. Johns!

DR. PAUL JOHNS, 55, tall, white beard, picks up his rake and wipes his brow. He sees Scott and Larson approach.

JOHNS
Can I help you?

SCOTT
Scott Roads. I was a student in your astronomy class.

JOHNS
Yes, of course. You wrote a paper suggesting Comet Holmes could have been the Bethlehem Star. Did you make astronomy your career?

SCOTT
I work for the Columbia Springs PD. Guess it wasn't in the stars.

Larson shows his badge.

LARSON
Chris Larson, homicide.

JOHNS
What is this about, detective?

LARSON
The murder of Maria Moreno.

JOHNS
Maria...a terrible thing.

LARSON
Do you remember that day?

JOHNS
I remember it rained. Maria was upset I had to cancel our Astronomy Club that night.

LARSON

We're looking for any possible connections to the victims. Perhaps someone they knew.

JOHNS

So it wasn't a stranger like the newspapers said?

LARSON

(watches John's expression)
Possibly a neighbor.

JOHNS

I could never do such a thing.

Johns walks away in disgust.

Larson motions to Scott to follow Johns.

SCOTT

Dr. Johns, if you knew someone who may have had a grudge against the victims, perhaps a student of astrology -

JOHNS

I'm certain the person who did this was not a student of astrology.

SCOTT

How can you be certain?

JOHNS

On that day Mars and Saturn were in conjunction. One would never had made an important decision that day. It would be bad luck.

LARSON

Isn't it bad luck to be superstitious?

Johns did not appreciate that remark.

SCOTT

Then what does it tell you?

JOHNS

From what you told me, the person who did this was not a believer of the stars but -

SCOTT
- Seeks to defy them.

JOHNS
(glares at Larson)
Ah, there is hope for one of you.

LARSON
I'm sorry but it's my job to
consider every possibility.

JOHNS
I'll be certain to write a letter
of appreciation to your boss.

LARSON
So you don't know anyone who could
have done this?

JOHNS
I'll tell you who I think did this.

LARSON
Who?

JOHNS
The devil.

LARSON
Oh? And where can I find him? In
the stars?

JOHNS
You should know, detective. The
devil is not in our stars but in
ourselves.

Johns smiles and goes back to work.

INT. RICHFORD POLICE STATION - DAY

Lindbergh and several police officers are watching a news
conference on TV. Larson enters.

LINDBERGH
Chris, where the hell ya been? I've
been trying to call you.

Lindbergh motions to Larson, "come look at this."

MICHELE RIVERA (ON TV)
Eyewitness News has learned another murder has been attributed to the Richford Ripper. Cindy Troy, the teenage daughter of wealthy banker Winston Troy. Reportedly a note was left by the Ripper. Her parents discovered her body when they returned from a visit to New York. There was no sign of a break-in. Police say the house security system was operational. Mayor Williams has just arrived for a press conference.

MAYOR WILLIAMS (TV)
The Richford Ripper has terrorized our community. Enough is enough. I have requested the FBI to lead a Task Force to stop this madman. Damon Douglass has been assigned as the Task Force Director.

Overweight FBI Forensics Director DAMON DOUGLASS, 60, struggles to reach the podium.

DOUGLASS (TV)
It is important to remember this is just a man, a very dangerous man but a man nonetheless. I will make this promise to the Richford community, the FBI will track this man back to the black hole he crawled out of.

LARSON
Unbelievable!

EXT. RICHFORD POLICE STATION - DAY

Black SUV stops in front of the Richford police station. Bauer and two FBI agents run inside.

INT. LARSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Bauer pushes Larson's door open.

LARSON
By whose authority - ?

BAUER

The Richford Police Department is ordered by Task Force Director Damon Douglass to surrender all evidence related to the Ripper investigation. Effective immediately this criminal investigation is under the authority of the FBI.

Unnoticed by the agents, Larson pushes a box under his desk with his foot.

Bauer departs. Lindbergh peers out the window.

LINDBERGH

Look on the bright side. The FBI's in charge. It can't get any worse.

EXT. RICHFORD POLICE STATION - DAY

Scott sits on the front steps of the police station watching the FBI agents carry boxes to their SUVs.

Larson sits next to Scott and lights a cigarette.

Scott gestures for a cigarette. Scott inhales deep and blows a PERFECT SMOKE RING.

LARSON

You're a real fire breather. I didn't think you smoked.

SCOTT

Consider it a parting gesture.

LARSON

You're leaving?

SCOTT

I don't think the FBI will appreciate me tagging along.

LARSON

Screw Bauer.

SCOTT

But the FBI -

LARSON

What can they do, not invite you to their annual convention?

Larson checks his watch.

LARSON
Say, do you like football?

SCOTT
I played the bench in high school.

LARSON
Yeah? My boy plays that position
too. Come, you'll be my guest.

EXT. RICHFORD HIGH STADIUM - DAY

The Richford-Stafford football game is in progress. The
stands are almost empty.

SCOTT
What happened to school spirit?

LARSON
It's been like this since the
Ripper returned.

Larson waves at disconsolate NUMBER 36 sitting alone on the
bench.

LARSON
I tell him to keep his chin up.

SCOTT
And to look out for splinters.

LARSON
You don't strike me to be
the investigative type.

SCOTT
Why not?

LARSON
You have to work on your
condescension skills.

SCOTT
I'm paying off my student loans.

LARSON
So what are your dreams?

SCOTT

Nothing too exciting. Maybe write the Great American novel. I think I'm a good judge of character.

LARSON

You can learn a lot about character out there. Take, for example, the Stafford coach. Very smart. But he thinks too much.

SCOTT

That's bad?

LARSON

Too much deception. After awhile the defense just ignores it.

Stafford QB fakes a hand-off and falls hard under a pile of Richford players.

Lindbergh, wearing a Spider-Man jacket, makes his way over to Larson and Scott.

LINDBERGH

Look out for the ol' Hail Mary!

Lindbergh tosses Scott and Larson two bags of popcorn.

LARSON

Arthur's son plays the line...

Arthur waves to NUMBER 77. He waves back. He's a chip off the ol' blocker - the biggest player on the field.

LARSON

...the whole line.

LINDBERGH

That's my boy.

Scott admires Lindbergh's jacket.

SCOTT

Those things aren't cheap. You are a big Spider-Man fan.

LINDBERGH

The biggest, Stan.

SCOTT

Stan?

LARSON

He calls everyone Stan. Stan Lee -
the creator of Spider-Man.

LINDBERGH

He's a god.

LARSON

Arthur, Scott has an interesting
theory for our - er - the FBI's
investigation. Thinks there's a
connection to the names of the
streets where the victims lived.

LINDBERGH

There may be something. I know this
guy who manages Jelena's who heard-

LARSON

You're hanging out at strip clubs?

LINDBERGH

- some guy talking about the
murders. He said there's a pattern.

LARSON

Does he know this Holmes?

LINDBERGH

Never saw him before.

Number 77 gets a penalty for flinging a player off his
quarterback.

LINDBERGH

Come on, ref, let'em play.

(pause)

Where was I? Oh yeah, the guy said
the Ripper's repeating the cycle.

LARSON

Got a description of this prophet?

LINDBERGH

Medium build, 30s, sunglasses. Wore
a hoodie. Who knew the Unabomber
had a twin?

The Richford defense blitzes -

LARSON

The Richford defense is very
aggressive...

Stafford QB counters with a screen pass. Stafford scores.

LARSON
 ...but it leaves you vulnerable to
 counterattack.

Number 77 flings a player to the ground. Referee tosses '77
 out of the game.

The fans boo and throw trash onto the field. A fight breaks
 out on the field.

LARSON
 Football is getting to be like the
 Roman gladiators...without the
 lions.

Players rush onto the field. Several fights start.

LARSON
 (worried)
 Violence is taking over this town
 like a disease.

EXT. ROADSIDE MOTEL - DAY

Larson drops Scott off at the motel parking lot.

LARSON
 You perdiems usually stay at the
 Hilton.

SCOTT
 I'm on the budget plan.

Larson considers his old Fiat.

LARSON
 Aren't we all.
 (beat)
 There's a task force meeting
 tomorrow. Why don't you come?

SCOTT
 Wouldn't the FBI mind?

LARSON
 I'll tell them you're a profile
 expert assisting the department.

SCOTT

Well -

LARSON

Good. I'll meet you there.

Larson departs.

EXT. ROADSIDE MOTEL - LATER

Scott returns from a long run. Mora is seated on a red Corvette watching.

When Scott stops panting, Mora moves toward him. Tosses Scott a copy of "America Today."

MORA

My assignment was canceled. Ripper is front page news.

HEADLINE READS: "RIPPER RESPONDS TO \$100K REWARD."

SCOTT

Since when does a murderer make the front page of "America Today"?

MORA

Since he killed a wealthy banker's daughter and sent a letter to my editor that he's going to keep killing just to show us he can't be bought. You really don't read much.

SCOTT

I'll be sure to renew my subscription when I get home.

Scott walks towards his car. Pops the trunk and tosses his shoes inside.

MORA

You're leaving so soon?

SCOTT

I'm not the one with the fancy expense account.

MORA

You know a detective Chris Larson?

SCOTT
I've met him.

Scott heads towards his motel room.

MORA
You've met him. You know why the
FBI took over the Ripper case?

Scott stops.

SCOTT
Oh, wait, I know this one.
Publicity hounds?

MORA
The FBI thinks Larson's damaged
goods.
(pause)
Tell me, what do you know about
satanic ritual?

SCOTT
The dance with the devil? I wrote a
paper on it from the criminal
profile aspect.

MORA
Do you think there could be a
satanic aspect to the Ripper case?

SCOTT
The Ripper's a psychopath, so I
guess anything is possible.

MORA
And Larson, you know about his
divorce?

SCOTT
I know it's a professional hazard.

MORA
The word is the good detective
was obsessed investigating satanic
ritual in the Ripper case. His wife
got a protective order for herself
and her daughter.

SCOTT
Or maybe they got just got tired of
each other.

MORA

On one hand we've got a psychopath who is always one step ahead of the cops and on the other a cop who can't be trusted by his wife.

SCOTT

You really think Larson has anything to do with this?

MORA

Who knows? Maybe he has gone over to the Dead Zone. This guy has a serious spite against the police and some serious hatred for women. You tell me, what we are dealing with here?

SCOTT

Crazy cop...is that it?

MORA

If you want to succeed in this business, you have to think outside the box.

SCOTT

I found that will only get you trouble in this life.

MORA

Not to bother you with trivia, but the paper is raising the Ripper reward to \$200,000. If you need an advance on your expense account--

SCOTT

An advance?

MORA

Consider it part of our book deal.

SCOTT

And risk my amateur status? No thanks.

Scott turns to leave. Mora makes a last attempt.

MORA

You like steak?

SCOTT

Very much.

MORA

I'm an expert on steakhouses. I've been to the best in New York, Ruth Chris.

SCOTT

Good for you.

MORA

I found a place in Richford that offers a decent rib-eye. I hate to go alone. You know, we could talk about book deals I've done, discuss the process if your interested. Do you wanna go?

SCOTT

(doubtful)

A "good" steakhouse in Richford?

MORA

Alright, the Richford Diner. You happy?

SCOTT

A fly wouldn't be caught dead there.

MORA

One last time, are you going to stay?

SCOTT

You're looking in the wrong place.

MORA

The wrong place?

SCOTT

Anybody who knows about steakhouses in New York knows The Palm is the best place in town.

MORA

I could cut your expense account so you find McDonald's a bit pricey, you know that?

Scott gestures to the FIVE POINTS DINER, a greasy spoon across the street.

SCOTT

I hear the Five Points has a good buffet.

MORA

(laughs)

Enjoy your fake crab cakes. Ciao!

Mora hops into his 'Vet and roars off.

INT. RICHFORD POLICE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Scott, Larson, and ten members of the task force sit around a conference table. Scott looks around. He's the only one without a copy of a report.

Director Douglass enters.

DOUGLASS

Gentlemen, in front of each of you is a report summarizing the FBI's forensic analysis of the letter found at the house of Winston Troy.

Douglass takes notice that Scott doesn't have a copy.

DOUGLASS

Detective Larson, is there someone you would like to introduce to the other members of the task force?

LARSON

Scott Roads is a profiler with the Columbia Springs, PA Police Department. I've requested him to assist us.

DOUGLASS

Welcome, Yankee.

Mark enters. Scott slumps down in his chair, trying to stay out of sight.

DOUGLASS

Most of you know Agent Mark Roads. The Director requested that Mark sit in today's meeting.

MARK

I'll try to stay in the background.

Mark is surprised to see Scott.

Douglass motions to assistant, "lights off."

ON SCREEN: "Cindy of Troy, wherefore I wail alike for thee and for my hapless self with grief at heart; for no longer have I anyone beside this Troy that is gentle to me or kind; but all men shudder at me."

DOUGLASS

The FBI lab has analyzed the letter found at the Troy murder scene. It is our opinion the letter is from an impostor. The handwriting is fundamentally different from the Ripper letters mailed to the Richford Police Department. Also, the killer had sophisticated knowledge about the Troy's security system. We are investigating the possible complicity of an employee in the Troy's security company.

Larson looks uncomfortable with that assertion.

LARSON

You're saying this is an impostor? The Ripper could change his handwriting style. The taunting in the letter seems to match the Ripper's behavioral profile.

DOUGLASS

Behavioral analysis has failed in this case, detective. If we are to finally solve this case, let the forensic evidence drive the investigation. I will be sharing our findings with the media.

SCOTT

Calling the Ripper an impostor, couldn't that antagonize him to kill again?

DOUGLASS

So you're a prophet too, Mr. Roads?

LARSON

If you're wrong, I'll be the one
who will have to tell the victim's
parents.

DOUGLASS

You do have the experience.

Bauer motions to Douglass, "you got a phone call."

DOUGLASS

Gentleman, let's take a short
break.

Mark motions to Scott, "meet me outside now."

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Crowded. FBI guys moving into the room next door. Scott
takes a quick look inside - DOZENS OF IDENTICAL WORK
STATIONS.

SCOTT

Can you believe these guys? I've
never seen anything like it.

Mark grabs Scott's arm.

MARK

I don't suppose you have. Let's
keep moving, shall we?

Mark pulls him inside a vacant room.

INT. SIDE ROOM - SAME

MARK

Do you have any idea the shit you
are getting involved in here?

SCOTT

I was invited. Besides, I am
involved.

Mark's easy, ironic demeanor changes into fierce
determination.

MARK

Exactly.

SCOTT

It's him.

MARK

Tell me - if you can take a moment from your personal vendetta - how do you suppose this backstabber disabled the Troy's security system?

Scott murmurs to himself.

MARK

What's that?

SCOTT

A back door.

MARK

You're saying he jumped a 12-foot fence?

SCOTT

Cindy of Troy ...the letter. It could be a reference to Helen of Troy. Maybe he used a Trojan Horse to backdoor the security system.

MARK

So he's a tech genius now? You're saying he re-set it and just like Spider-Man flew away?

Agent motions to Mark "time to go back."

SCOTT

He may have left a window open. Maybe you can catch him in his own web. Check with Troy's security service. I bet you'll find a spider hole.

Mark thinks that over.

MARK

Keep your mouth shut in there.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

The task force members begin to leave. Scott looks around for Larson. He's not there.

EXT. RICHFORD POLICE STATION - DAY

Scott emerges from the station. Police car pulls up. Larson rolls down the window.

LARSON

Get in.

INT. LARSON'S CAR - SHORT TIME LATER

Scott gives a sidelong glance to Larson, a little concerned he's done something wrong.

SCOTT

Where are we headed?

LARSON

Our tour isn't over.

SCOTT

What about the FBI?

LARSON

What about them?

Larson driving in silence. Scott stealing glances at him.

SCOTT

Where we going?

Larson makes a sharp turn at the next corner and floors it.

SCOTT

Hey!

One eye on the road and another on the rear view mirror, Larson speeds down the road.

EXT. THE TROY MANSION - DAY

Larson shows his badge to guard at the front gate.

Scott takes a photo of intersecting street signs: "Redlands Road and New Jersey Ave."

SCOTT
Lands and sea....

Scott approaches the gate but the guard stops him.

GUARD
You're not permitted to enter the
crime scene, sir.

SCOTT
(shows his badge)
That's okay. I'm with--

Larson walks back.

Scott smiles at the guard, expecting Larson to allow him to enter.

Larson stares at Scott, dark, baleful.

LARSON
You had a nice conversation with
your brother back there. You aren't
holding anything back, are you?

SCOTT
Nothing!

LARSON
Planning to join his famous
fraternity?

Scott is speechless. Tries to make sense of Larson's paranoia but succeeds only in sputtering "WTF?"

Larson walks inside the mansion.

WHOOOP! WHOOOP! WHOOOP! An alarm goes off in the mansion.
LIGHTS pop on all around the building.

Patriot security car pulls up to the front gate. Mark gets out of the passenger side. Signals to the security guard holding a laptop to turn the alarm off.

Mark sees Scott.

MARK
You must be a mind reader.

SCOTT
I'm working on my psychic's
license.

MARK

I'm thinking of going pro too.

Mark notices Larson exiting the mansion.

MARK

(shouts)

Sorry 'bout that, detective.

SCOTT

What did you find?

MARK

Intrusion recorded at the time of the murder. Back-door hacker program. Very exotic.

SCOTT

It's him. I can feel it.

MARK

(doubtful)

You can "feel" it.

But it's better than anything else he has.

MARK

What do you suggest we do, Holmes? Post an all-points for a recent escapee cyber-genius from a mental ward?

SCOTT

Don't waste your time.

MARK

Got a better idea?

SCOTT

Anticipate his next move.

MARK

Then what?

SCOTT

Catch him in the act.

MARK

In case it slipped your mind, this guy may be the slickest SK in the world. And he's never been caught.

SCOTT
I've never tried.

Mark thinks about that for a moment. Is his brother ready for primetime?

Mark turns to leave. Scott grabs Mark's sleeve.

MARK
Careful, that's Armani.

SCOTT
It's his personality.

MARK
His personality?

SCOTT
Yes. I can help the FBI.

Larson glares at Scott. Betrayal. He gets in his car and leaves.

MARK
What do I need another profiler for? I've got a bunch of them sitting in Quantico with nothing to do.

Mark gets in the security car and leaves.

Scott is alone.

EXT. THE ROADS HOME - DAY

Older professional part of Richford. The houses ornate and well tended.

Scott stands in front of a brick Colonial with a "For Sale" sign.

A familiar ROAR coming closer. The red 'Vet turns the corner and stops in front of Scott.

MORA
I've been looking all over town for you. I'll give you a little tip. The Ripper didn't work this neighborhood.

SCOTT
It was my mother's house.

MORA
I know. If you can pull yourself
back to the present, I have
something for you.

SCOTT
Another "great" steakhouse?

MORA
The Ripper left a letter at the
Troy house.

SCOTT
If it's about the Trojan Horse, you
should ask for your money back.

Mora is impressed.

MORA
So you know about the coded
message...

Scott pauses, not certain he has heard correctly.

Mora hands Scott a paper. The message reads:

"NAYLPRSARCODMXPPBYWLIPPHTHAUIB
ANHUWEOEVAPRUHISJPASEVOWTTCTQXPRGA"

MORA
Figured the genius who cracked the
Kryptos code could figure it out.

Scott studies it for a few moments.

SCOTT
It looks like an Autokey cipher...
maybe a Variable Caesar.

MORA
So he's a hacker and a cracker?
Make a nice book title.

SCOTT
Well, then I'll get cracking on it.

MORA
Need a lift back to the crackhouse?

SCOTT
I think I'll walk.

MORA
You should be careful. This guy
knows his way around a steak knife.
(pause)
Carry a gun?

SCOTT
Never needed one.

Mora tosses Scott a large knife. Scott catches it and tosses it back.

SCOTT
You need it more than me. Reporters
are notorious back stabbers.

MORA
I'm just protecting my investment.
I'll never find anyone who works as
cheap as you.

Mora floors it and passes an idling black SUV a block away.

INT. CINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

Cindy is busy answering phones, taking messages.
Furley enters, suitcase in hand. He's not happy.

FURLEY
The Director never got Roads'
report. Where is he?

CINDY
Richford. He said he had to take a
couple days for a family issue.

FURLEY
He's got another issue. He's AWOL.

INT. SCOTT'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

WHITE BOARD. On one side is coded message:

"NAYLPRSARCODMXPPBYWLIPPTHAUIBANHUWO
EVAPRUHISJPASEVOWTTCTQXPRGA"

On the other side: "KEYWORD: RIPPER"

On the opposite side of the room Scott transcribes from a notebook to another WHITE BOARD:

"EGREVNOCTSUMSESSENTIWSESIRNUSTHGINDIM

EHTNEHWYARRUMDNAYESREJWEN"

He stands back, stares at the message. Glances at the PHOTOS of the intersecting street signs aligned on the wall.

His focus goes to a MAP OF RICHFORD. Pins mark the locations of the murders. Scott is puzzled. There's something not right about the pattern.

Scott lifts the pin from "MURRAY and ODER."

SCOTT

Oder...
(smiles)
...or.

Places the pin on "MURRAY and ELDER." The locations now form a circle. Scott traces a circle counterclockwise on the map.

SCOTT

In reverse.

Scott holds the white board up to a wall mirror.

"MIDNIGHTSUNRISESWITNESSESMUSTCONVERGE

"NEWJERSEYANDMURRAYWHENTHE"

SCOTT

"New Jersey and Murray When the
Midnight Sun Rises Witnesses Must
Converge."

Scott puts his finger on "NEW JERSEY + MURRAY." It's in the center of the circle. Scott stares at it. Thinking.

SCOTT

The Midnight Star...

He slowly draws a PENTAGRAM connecting the six murder locations.

CLOSE ON SCOTT'S ALARMED EXPRESSION

PHONE RINGS.

Scott jumps as if the phone's ring was a gunshot. He reaches for the phone but cannot touch it. Every normal sound seems grotesquely AMPLIFIED - the traffic outside, his breathing.

KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

Scott pulls himself up. Opens the door cautiously. It's Dr. Johns.

SCOTT
(apprehensive)
Dr. Johns?

Johns senses Scott is upset.

JOHNS
I can come back -

SCOTT
No, please, come in.

Johns enters and sees the room is a mess. Notices the PENTAGRAM on the Richford map.

JOHNS
Taking up witchcraft?

Scott takes down the map.

JOHNS
Your horoscope says you're destined for greatness if you don't lose your way. Do you believe that, Mr. Roads?

SCOTT
I don't know what to believe.

JOHNS
For your safety I hope not.

SCOTT
What is this about?

JOHNS
You come seeking enlightenment. It was in your stars.

SCOTT
My stars?

JOHNS

Your horoscope. I did one before I came here.

(pause)

You don't have much time.

SCOTT

Why do you say that?

JOHNS

Do you know what brought you here?

SCOTT

(doubtful)

The stars?

JOHNS

(silence, then an outburst)

This is not just about some psychopath with a knife. There are greater things at work.

SCOTT

(surprised to hear that)

What is this all about?

JOHNS

(rising anger)

Your report on Comet Holmes. The Astrological Society of Rome wouldn't consider it without my recommendation.

SCOTT

What's that have to do -?

Johns hands Scott a CHART of Comet Holmes' path in the celestial sky.

JOHNS

The last time the comet appeared the Ripper killed your girlfriend and those other girls. And now it has returned. I believe that is what has brought you and the Ripper back to Richford.

SCOTT

Are you suggesting I'm involved?

JOHNS

I'm not suggesting anything. The truth is in the stars.

SCOTT
 (doubtful)
 Well, that's quite a story -

JOHNS
 You're a witness. The Hopi prophesy
 - Comet Holmes - signals the
 coming of the Dragon. The Dragon
 will use his power to prevent you
 from your mission.

SCOTT
 My mission...? Well, that's very
 enlightening.
 (pause)
 I'm sorry but I have a dinner
 reservation.

Scott opens the door for Johns to leave.

Johns looks toward the sky.

JOHNS
 The comet has entered the eye of
 Algol. It is known as the most evil
 star in the sky. As above, so
 below. You would be wise to stay
 out of its light.

EXT. RICHFORD STREET - NIGHT

CLOSE ON STREET SIGNS "NEW JERSEY AVE. + MURRAY AVE."

LINDSEY WALLACE, pretty fourteen-year-old, crosses the
 street. A young man gets out of a station wagon and walks
 behind her.

Scott steps from behind a tree.

The door of the corner house opens. CLARISSA WALLACE calls
 out to her daughter.

CLARISSA
 Come inside, Lindsey!

The young man gives her a book and gets back in the station
 wagon.

Lindsey runs to her house.

The station wagon passes Scott. Soccer mom is driving.

SHORT TIME LATER

Scott sees Lindsey lift a curtain in her bedroom window and turns on a NEON LIGHT in her bedroom window. It's a RED STAR.

BLACK SUV drives by slowly.

INT. SCOTT'S CAR - LATER

Scott is awakened by BRIGHT LIGHTS of a police car pulling into a driveway across the street.

EXT. MARY WOODS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lindbergh and Larson walk quickly to the front door. The house is dark.

Lindbergh knocks on the door. No response.

LINDBERGH

Nobody home.

Checks the mailbox.

LARSON

This is the address. Mary Woods.

LARGE SPIDER crawls up the door. Lindbergh jumps back.

LARSON

You all right there, Spider-Man?

LINDBERGH

I don't want this getting out.

LARSON

Your secret is safe with me.

LINDBERGH

Maybe it's just some clown playing pranks, trick or treating.

LARSON

The caller knew about the Troy letter. Exactly what more do you need?

They walk around the side of the house.

LINDBERGH

I thought my days of hiding in the bushes were over.

Larson shines the Starlight Beast 2000 on the side of the house. Wind ruffles curtains in the open kitchen window.

LARSON
Cover the front.

LINDBERGH
Watch your back.

INT. MARY WOODS HOUSE - NIGHT

Larson trains his flashlight on a small object in the corner of the room.

LARSON
What is it?

Lindbergh steps closer.

LINDBERGH
A dog.

Lindbergh bends down. Feels it.

LINDBERGH
Still warm.

Lindbergh points to the stairway.

LINDBERGH
Blood trail...upstairs.

Larson moves to the top of the staircase. Tracks his flashlight back and forth across the darkened hallway.

Pushes the bedroom door open.

Motionless woman on the bed with a knife in her back.

EXT. MARY WOODS HOUSE - NIGHT

Unmarked police car arrives. Bauer gets out and hands his radio to another agent. He sees Scott standing under a tree in front of the Wood's house.

BAUER
Can't sleep, Mr. Roads?

SCOTT
I thought I would do some stargazing.

BAUER
Through the trees?

SCOTT
(conceding)
I had a tip about the Ripper.

BAUER
Oh, from your brother?

SCOTT
Some guy I met in church.

Larson exits the house. He's not happy to see Scott or Bauer.

BAUER
Who's the victim, detective?

LARSON
Why do you say that?

BAUER
If this is a burglary, what's
homicide doing here?

LARSON
Mary Woods. Lived with her dog.
(pause)
Ripper's getting sloppy. Left a
knife.

BAUER
Establish time of death?

LARSON
Two, maybe three hours ago.

BAUER
That's an inconvenient truth, isn't
it, Mr. Roads?

Scott is puzzled by that remark.

BAUER
That's how long you've been here,
isn't it?

SCOTT
What? You think I had something to
do with this?

BAUER

Our Richmond office received a letter a month ago with some interesting insights into the Ripper's profile. Named you as a suspect.

SCOTT

This is crazy talk.

BAUER

Yes, yes, crazy talk. I just came from your motel room. You want to tell the detective what we found?

LARSON

What are you talking about?

BAUER

The proverbial writing on the wall. Ramblings, pentagrams and this address - New Jersey and Murray - ground central.

SCOTT

There's an explanation.

BAUER

We're going to have lots to talk about that. You're coming with us ...voluntarily or otherwise.

Bauer escorts Scott to his car.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Scott sits alone in the small, dark lit interrogation room.

Bauer enters with Larson and Lindbergh, followed by a police stenographer.

BAUER

You've been advised of your rights against self-incrimination. Do you want a lawyer?

Scott shakes his head "no."

SCOTT

I don't understand why -

BAUER

For the record, Mr. Roads has
waived his right to an attorney.

Larson stares at Bauer.

BAUER

Is there something I missed?

LARSON

Tell him the charges for the
record.

BAUER

Mr. Roads is a suspect in the death
of Mary Woods.

LARSON

Why have you waived your right to
an attorney, Scott?

SCOTT

I have nothing to do with any of
this. Do you think I need one?

BAUER

If you have nothing to hide -

SCOTT

How could you think I do something
like this?

BAUER

Let's start with opportunity.
Beginning with your girlfriend, you
had the opportunity to commit each
murder. After all, Columbia
Spring's only a three-hour drive.

SCOTT

This is insane.

Larson and Lindbergh exchange worried looks.

BAUER

Tell us about your relationship
with Patricia Snyder.

SCOTT

We were friends.

BAUER
Did you ever hit her?

Bauer reads from a report.

BAUER
A month before she was killed her
friends said she was bruised on a
date with you.

A beat, as they watch Scott.

SCOTT
(conceding)
We went for a ride in the woods on
my Vespa. I turned it on its side.

BAUER
Did you force her to have sex?

SCOTT
No.

BAUER
Ever tied a woman's hands behind
her back?

That stirs a memory. He hesitates.

SCOTT
(finally)
I have an alibi.

BAUER
Of course you do.

SCOTT
The night Patricia Marsh was
murdered I was with two girls in
DC. Ask my brother.

Bauer stares at him.

BAUER
You and your brother spent the
night with them?

SCOTT
(shamed)
No.

BAUER
(impressed)
Do they have names?

Scott removes a photo of the girls from his wallet.

SCOTT
Joann and Marilyn. I don't know
their last names. They're students
at the college.

Bauer hands the photo to an agent. Agent leaves the room.

LATER

LARSON
Tell me again about this reporter.

SCOTT
Rich Mora. He's with "America
Today." There was a reward for
information on the Ripper by the
paper.

LARSON
Where does he live?

SCOTT
New York.

Lindbergh takes notes.

LINDBERGH
Describe him, Scott.

SCOTT
Six feet, Fu Manchu, runner's
physique. Check with "America
Today." Talk to his editor.

BAUER
That's the problem. They never
heard of him and there never was a
reward offered by the paper. This
is all your fantasy world.

Bauer smiles.

Scott is stunned.

LATER

BAUER
Did you kill Mary Woods?

SCOTT
I'd have to be pretty stupid to be
the first to show up at the crime
scene. I'm not stupid.

Bauer glares at him.

BAUER
We know you're not stupid.

LARSON
Scott, why were you at the Woods
house?

SCOTT
The coded message left at the Troy
house - the intersecting street
signs. The coded message indicated
the Ripper's next murder would be
at New Jersey and Murray under the
midnight sun...Comet Holmes. The
Woods address was at the center of
the star pattern. No one could see
the pattern because no one
connected the Ash murder to the
Ripper.

Bauer is losing patience.

BAUER
There was no coded message left at
the Troy house.

SCOTT
I swear it's real.

BAUER
Yeah? Let's talk about real
evidence - the knife you left in
Ms. Woods. Tell me how it has your
fingerprints. Then there's the Troy
family portrait in the trunk of
your car...

Scott looks hard at Larson.

SCOTT
Am I being set-up?

Larson looks away.

SCOTT
I think I need a lawyer.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - LATER

Douglass, Bauer and Larson watch Scott talking to his lawyer.

DOUGLASS
Any record of drug use?

BAUER
He passed a piss test last year.

DOUGLASS
What about this mysterious reporter?

BAUER
Probably his childhood invisible friend.

Douglass looks directly at Larson. Larson is troubled.

DOUGLASS
Detective, he had us all fooled.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

Criminal defense lawyer BARRY WISE sits next to Scott.

BAUER
You like playing mind games, don't you?

SCOTT
This is not a game. Games are fun.

Bauer glares at Scott.

BAUER
How's this for a mind game? Jilted by Patricia Snyder, you kill her and her mother in a fit of rage. Then you get lost in some astrology fantasy, kill these other girls and then write about it as proof of your analytical genius. But that's not enough. You return and kill Patricia Marsh, her mother and Cindy Troy to remind us all how

(MORE)

BAUER (cont'd)
smart you are. That's some game. I
hope it was fun for you.

Bauer and Scott don't take their eyes off each other.

WISE
That's some wild conjecture.

SCOTT
What about the girls?

BAUER
We contacted the college. They
checked the yearbooks and the
Registrars office. Nothing.

WISE
That's not proof.

BAUER
His fingerprints on the murder
weapon is enough to send your
client away for life.

SCOTT
Anyone who knows me knows I could
never do this.

BAUER
Really? How long have you been
taking anti-depressants?

SCOTT
I have a prescription for those.

BAUER
Yes, I know. I read your college
personal file. Even psychopaths can
have a nervous breakdown.

WISE
That's enough, Agent Bauer!

BAUER
How did you feel when you killed
your girlfriend?

SCOTT
I didn't kill her. I loved her. I
still feel the pain.

Their eyes are still on each other.

BAUER
Remember that pain.

INT. HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Scott lays in his cot staring at the ceiling.

OLD MAN delivering books to the prisoners stops at Scott's cell.

OLD MAN
When you're crossing over, you
better get right with the Lord. Be
strong like an olive tree and a
lamp stand before God of the earth.

He tosses Scott a small bible.

OLD MAN
If anyone would harm them, fire
flows from his mouth and devours
his enemies. Truth is a revelation.

He moves on.

Scott opens the bible to a RED BOOK MARKER - "LOVE YOUR
NEIGHBOR" - in the Book of Revelations.

Cigarette smoke drifts into Scott's cell. Scott glances over
the bible. It's Larson.

SCOTT
Come to read me my last rights?

Larson offers Scott a cigarette. Scott takes it.

LARSON
I talked with your brother.

SCOTT
What's he think of his homicidal
little brother?

LARSON
He's flying down tomorrow. You can
ask him yourself.

SCOTT
Why are you here?

LARSON
I want to hear the truth.

Scott's tone changes.

SCOTT
You think I could do this?

Larson hands Scott a photo of him with Patricia, Cherie and Maria standing next to a telescope.

LARSON
Bauer says it's the connection.
Says you were obsessed.

SCOTT
I'm obsessed? The FBI thought you
were obsessed...damaged goods.
That's why they took the case away
from you. That's why your wife left
you.

Larson struggles to control his rising anger.

LARSON
You should check your sources. My
wife left me for an FBI agent in
Richmond.
(gestures to the book marker)
You know the eighth commandment?

SCOTT
Something to do with talking to
strangers?

LARSON
You should read the bible more
often. It's about bearing false
witness against your neighbor. The
seventh is not coveting your
neighbor's wife.

SCOTT
What's the one about not committing
murder?

LARSON
The sixth.

SCOTT
I should have pleaded the fifth.

Lindbergh enters the room. Signals to Larson they have to leave.

LARSON

When they trot you out there
tomorrow there are going to be some
irate citizens wanting to burn you
at the stake.

Scott waves the book marker like a magic wand.

SCOTT

Then I will fear no evil. Says so
right here in this book.

LINDBERGH

Psalms 23. The Lord is my shepherd.

Scott looks hard at Lindbergh. That triggered a memory.

Lindbergh takes a swing with his Louisville Slugger.

LINDBERGH

Don't worry, kid. My rod and my
staff will comfort thee.

SCOTT

You want the truth? Look in Judy
Ash's house. Murray and Elder. Her
brother still lives there. Find the
photo of Judy and Cherie.

(pause)

Larson?

LARSON

Yeah?

SCOTT

The truth is in the star.

Bauer enters.

BAUER

The truth is most people never have
to face the fact that at the right
time and right place, they're
capable of anything.

EXT. RICHFORD COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

Lindbergh watches the mob scene of media and onlookers at
the Richford courthouse. Sees Bauer talking with a county
prison guard with sunglasses and a Fu Manchu mustache.

Reporter Michele Rivera approaches news anchor FRANK MOSS
and turns to the camera:

RIVERA

Frank, I just came out of the courtroom where the arraignment is set to get under way momentarily here. We do know that Scott Roads is in the courthouse. We're expecting the arraignment to get under way at 9:00 a.m. And we expect that an attempt to set bail will take place. And then we will also hear the formal arraignment of seven counts of first-degree murder. There will be a question-

FRANK

His mental condition?

RIVERA

... of mental status here.

FRANK

And, of course, under our system, innocent until proven guilty. But when it's a case like this, when somebody has been found at the scene and the reported disturbed writings found at his hotel room-

RIVERA

Right.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The Courtroom is jammed. Scott sits next to his lawyer. BAILIFF stands behind them.

JUDGE EDWARD ROBERTS presides.

ROBERTS

Mr. Roads, do you fully understand that you have the right to maintain your plea of not guilty and the right to go to trial on all counts of this information?

SCOTT

Yes, your Honor.

ROBERTS

Now that I have told you your rights, do you still want to plead not guilty?

SCOTT
Yes, your Honor.

ROBERT
If I accept your plea, and you are found guilty, the potential penalty in the state of Virginia is death. Has your attorney explained to you that the sentencing guidelines apply to this case?

SCOTT
Yes, your Honor.

ROBERTS
Finally, as to bail, the court accepts the states recommendation that no bail will be granted, noting the potential threat posed by the defendant to the community. The defendant will be remanded to the custody of the Richford County Detention Center pending a court date.

Scott is escorted out of the courtroom by the bailiff.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Door opens. Bailiff motions to a prison guard with the sunglasses and the Fu Manchu.

BAILIFF
Prisoner to be transported to County.

In one quick motion the prison guard disarms the Bailiff. He holds the gun to the Bailiffs head.

MORA
Your keys and your jacket, please.

Prison guard removes his sunglasses. It's Mora.

Scott is stunned.

Mora unlocks Scott's handcuffs.

MORA
You're gonna need these.

Mora tosses sunglasses and jacket to Scott.

SCOTT
You? Why are you doing this?

MORA
I know a frame job when I see one.

SCOTT
The FBI said you don't work for
"America Today."

MORA
Who are you going to believe? I'm
the one that is getting you out of
this jam. They're the ones that are
gonna let you hang.

SCOTT
If that's true, then tell them.

MORA
The truth is the FBI only wants
this case closed, and you're
the scapegoat, pal. Go on, get out
of here. I'll hold him until you
get away.

SCOTT
But -

MORA
Move, just go!

Scott cautiously opens the door: nobody around.

Scott discreetly walks downstairs. Floor after floor without
problems.

He reaches the exit to the parking lot. Opens it.

EXT. POLICE PARKING LOT - DAY

Cops, reporters, cameramen, everywhere. No way out.

BOOM. GUNSHOT from inside the courthouse startles the crowd.
The cops rush inside.

Scott pushes his way into the crowd. He's gone.

EXT. RICHFORD STREET - LATER

Scott stays to the side streets. He doesn't know which way to turn.

DOUGLASS VOICE (V.O.)
Kills a Deputy Sheriff and walks calmly away in the confusion. Just an investigator assistant who wanted to be a criminal profiler.

Scott chances crossing a busy street to a coke machine.

DOUGLASS VOICE (V.O.)
All the time he was hiding in plain sight. Laughing through his teeth.

LATER

Scott opens a "America Today" coin rack. Checks the headlines. Nothing in it about the Ripper.

INT. POLICE RECORD ROOM - DAY

Larson searches dusty CASE FILING CABINETS with alphabets A-C. Finds file headed "JUDY ASH." Larson sorts through it.

SOUND of footsteps coming closer. Larson looks up.

Mark is there.

MARK
What the hell is this?

LARSON
I wish I knew.

MARK
Is this some kind of attempt to get back at me? You want to close the case that badly?

Larson straightens up.

LARSON
I don't think your brother had anything to do with this.

Larson hands Mark the photo of Judy and Cherie.

Mark stares intently at the photo. Slams his fist on the table.

MARK

Damn it. What's this mean?

Lindbergh comes running into the room.

Larson signals to Lindbergh, "it's okay."

Larson hands Mark a magnifying lens.

LARSON

In the background.

Mark places a magnifying lens over the photo.

PHOTO: BLURRED IMAGE OF MAN WITH FU MANCHU MUSTACHE.

LARSON

That guy could fit Scott's description of the phantom reporter, Rich Mora. Judy Ash's death was recorded as a suicide but I'm thinking she may have been a Ripper victim. This photo may be the key.

Larson hands Mark a photo of SCOTT WITH THE CO-EDS.

LARSON

Scott said he was with them the night the Marsh girl was murdered. Said you took the photo.

MARK

Yeah.

LARSON

FBI checked the college records, yearbooks. There's no record of either one.

Lindbergh studies the Fu Manchu photo.

LINDBERGH

I've seen this guy. Prison guard was talking with Bauer outside the courthouse.

LARSON

Bauer? Are you sure?

LINDBERGH

Swear on my Spider-Man oath.

MARK

That doesn't mean Bauer knew him.

Larson ponders this for a moment.

LARSON

The morning we visited the Snyder and Botero houses someone got there before us. Since Scott and the real estate agent were the only ones that I told, I had my doubts. I may be a little paranoid but I'm thinking my phone was tapped.

MARK

The same guy who hacked the Troy's security system?

LARSON

There's something else been bugging me - Bauer showing up at the Woods house. How did he know? I didn't call it in.

MARK

You're suggesting Bauer's somehow involved?

LINDBERGH

Geez, how far up does this go?

Larson pulls out the map of Richford with the murder locations marked.

LARSON

The stars.

Larson crosses out the Marsh address and circles the Ash address. Draws a PENTAGRAM connecting the Ripper murders.

LARSON

Couldn't see the Woods for the Ts.

MARK

This is all some set-up? Why help him escape?

LARSON

I don't know. I'm guessing something went wrong. Maybe they couldn't let the case go to trial.

(beat)

Where would Scott go? Who could he trust?

No reaction from Mark.

LARSON

Come on, superstar, show us your
brilliance.

MARK

There may be someone.

LARSON

Someone you know?

MARK

A friend lives in Columbia Springs.
She works with Scott. That's where
I would look. That's where the FBI
would look.

LINDBERGH

Then we better get moving. Bauer
and his flying monkeys just took
off.

They just stare at each other a beat as it sinks in.

LINDBERGH

Bauer...Fu Manchu. I'd like to do a
Spidee on both their asses.

Lindbergh takes a big swing with his Louisville Slugger.

LARSON

That's getting ahead of
ourselves. We have to build a case
by the rules.

LINDBERGH

Rules? Hell, then it's not a fair
fight.

(to Mark)

What do you say, Mr. Armani? Want
to do an extreme makeover on the
guys framing your brother?

MARK

Does Spider-Man like swinging for
the fences?

Lindbergh smiles. For a second he likes Mark.

EXT. CINDY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

DOORBELL RINGS.

Cindy looks through the peephole. It's Scott. Cindy opens the door a crack. Cindy is alarmed at Scott's disheveled appearance.

CINDY
My God, Scott, what've you gotten
into?

He shrugs. He doesn't know.

Scott hears the SOUND of a police scanner inside.

CINDY
You think I would turn you in?

Scott doesn't know. It shames him.

She motions "come inside."

INT. CINDY'S HOUSE - LATER

Cindy sits at the table, wine glass in her hand. The door to the bathroom, closed. Cindy sighs and puts the glass down.

Scott exits the bathroom. He walks over to the fireplace. Warms his hands. Sees a PHOTO OF CINDY AND MARK. Scott stares dumbly at it.

SCOTT
It's not a look-alike, is it?

CINDY
What can I tell you, Scott? You're
right. When you're right, you're
right, and you're right.

Cindy smells something burning.

CINDY
Oh damn, the veal!

Cindy opens the oven.

SCOTT
I didn't know you can cook.

CINDY
I like to cook.

Cindy lifts the veal. Oil FLASHES in the pan.

CINDY
OUCH!

Cindy burns her hand.

SCOTT
Let me see that.

Scott checks the burn.

Scott leads Cindy to the kitchen cabinet. Finds a bottle of olive oil and pours it on her hand. He leads her to the refrigerator. Removes ice tray from the freezer. Deftly cracks the ice tray with one hand, wraps her hand in a towel with ice cubes.

Cindy feels better.

CINDY
What do I owe you?

SCOTT
Let me have olive oil on some bread
and we'll call it even.

Cindy hands him the olive oil bottle.

CINDY
For the next time.

SCOTT
There's something I want you to
have.

Scott takes the small bible out of his jacket pocket. Leafs through it to the RED BOOK MARKER. Hands them to her.

CINDY
"Love thy neighbor?"

SCOTT
(ironic laugh)
Like my brother.

CINDY
That's in the past.

Cindy looks worried.

CINDY

What are you going to do? You're not Superman, you know.

SCOTT

Find the truth. The guy who gave me this said truth's a revelation. But it's in the star. The murders, they're points of a star. They started when Comet Holmes appeared. And now it's happening again. This Mora - whoever, whatever he is - he's behind all this. He killed the guard. It wasn't me.

CINDY

Then tell Mark.

SCOTT

Tell him what? Mora's a ghost.

CINDY

You mean he's dead?

SCOTT

Like he's a ghost...
(pause)
...a doppelganger.

Scott deliberates for a moment.

SCOTT

Where's your laptop?

SHORT TIME LATER

ON SCREEN: "SEARCH NATIONAL DATABASE MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE RECORDS"

Scott enters: "Richard Sixto Mora"

ON SCREEN: TWO DIFFERENT PHOTOS - one issued in 1977 is a clean shaven, balding guy and the other in 2004 has a Fu Manchu.

Scott accesses "SOCIAL SECURITY DEATH RECORDS."

Scott enters: "Richard Sixto Mora"

ON SCREEN: "DOD: 07/03/1985"

CINDY
Then who is he?

SCOTT
The question is, what is he?
(pause)
You're the religious expert here.

CINDY
What are you talking about?

SCOTT
Johns said I was a witness. Said
the Dragon would use his power to
stop my mission.

Cindy pages through the small bible. She stops.

CINDY
Maybe he means the witnesses in
Revelations 11. The Witnesses
are Olive Trees which stand before
the Lord of the earth. For three
and a half years God grants them
power to torment the evil on the
earth. No one can harm them during
this time.

SCOTT
Then what happens to them?

CINDY
The Beast rises and kills them.

SCOTT
Great.

CINDY
What is this? Some obsession?

Scott doubts himself.

SCOTT
Do you think I'm wrong?

CINDY
You do what you have to do. Knock
your head against a brick wall if
it makes you feel better.

SCOTT
You think I'm wrong.

CINDY
You want sympathy, you've come to
the wrong place.

SCOTT
What makes you so tough?

CINDY
Maybe I'll tell you later.

SCOTT
Is there going to be a 'later'?

He feels the answer is "no." It shames him.

CINDY
Honest to god, Scott, you jump from
one conspiracy to another.

Cindy shakes her head, "NO".

CINDY
What am I doing? This is useless.
NO MORE!

She can't catch her breath.

SCOTT
Why are you doing this?

CINDY
Leave me ALONE!

Cindy is still trying to catch her breath.

PHONE RINGS. She moves to it.

Scott grabs Cindy's hand and presses her against the wall.

SCOTT
Don't answer it.

Scott opens the door. The street is deserted.

They face each other for a moment.

SCOTT
If I live much longer, maybe you
can make me lunch or something.

Scott runs to his Vespa. Kick-starts it and rides away.

EXT. COLUMBIA SPRINGS DINER - NIGHT

Scott parks his Vespa in front of an all-night diner.

INT. COLUMBIA SPRINGS DINER - LATER

Scott - wearing sunglasses and a hoodie - twists a last piece of bread on a plate of olive oil. Puts the olive oil bottle in his pocket.

Scott looks out the window. Spots a familiar face - the HOMELESS MAN - making his bed in a cardboard box.

FIGURE enters. Sits with his back to Scott. Shrugging himself out of his overcoat, he starts to speak but he is stopped by the WAITRESS'S approach.

WAITRESS
Late night, sugar?

MORA
Coffee...black...no sugar.

Waitress nervously walks back to the counter.

Scott recognizes a familiar voice. Turns around. It's Mora.

Scott gets up to leave.

MORA
Stay. We need to talk.

SCOTT
You're a dead man.

MORA
You deny me? I'll be scarred for life. And to think I saved your life.

SCOTT
You didn't have to kill the guard.

MORA
Couldn't leave another witness, now could we?

SCOTT
That wasn't my decision.

MORA
Just a poor victim of circumstance?

SCOTT
I didn't want any of this.

MORA
You never wanted a normal life.

SCOTT
What kind of life is normal these days?

MORA
That's a paranoid way of looking at it. There's no life for you here. Why not join us and put an end to your so-called life?

Scott notices two men guarding the front door.

SCOTT
I'd rather burn in hell.

MORA
What are you...a saint?

SCOTT
Just a loyal civil servant.

MORA
When you see them gunning for you, how loyal will you be?

SCOTT
You killed those girls just to catch me in your web. Why don't you just kill me and get it over with?

MORA
You disappoint me. That's not how the game is played. You have to do it willingly. Now if you were to take a leap of faith...

Scott nods slowly. It dawns on him.

SCOTT
You can't do it yourself.

MORA
Ah, you know more than you know.

Mora tosses PHOTO OF CINDY AND MARK on the table.

MORA

Your life is not the only one up in the air. Be at the Columbia Springs bridge at dawn. If you want to save your pretty friend, when I say jump, you JUMP! It would be a pity to waste a perfectly good steak knife.

Scott closes his eyes, wishing the nightmare would end.

He turns around. Mora is gone.

EXT. CINDY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mark carefully works his way around the side of the house.

The patio door is smashed open. Mark enters.

INT. CINDY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is trashed. Mark walks up the stairway.

A GUNSHOT. Then ANOTHER.

There is the SOUND of a man scurrying through the brush, coming near him, then retreating.

Mark waits. But there is another SOUND now -- a sickening CRACK of wood and bones colliding. It puzzles Mark. He starts to lift his head to catch the direction.

The front door opens slowly. Through the doorway comes Lindbergh dragging a lifeless body.

Larson enters from the backdoor. Tosses the dead man's FBI ID CARD to Mark.

LARSON

Friend of yours?

Mark studies it.

MARK

If it's a forgery, it's damn good.

Larson sees a RED BOOK MARKER on the floor.

LARSON

Scott was here.

MARK
How do you know?

Larson hands him the book marker.

LARSON
He had it with him in his cell.

LINDBERGH
Playing devil's advocate here, if
they kill her, that could prove
Scott had the opportunity.

LARSON
Where do we look now?

MARK
Find Bauer.

EXT. DATA SECURITY HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Establishing. A massive black building surrounded by razor
wire and surveillance cameras.

INT. DATA SECURITY BUILDING - SHORT TIME LATER

ON MONITOR: Figure enters "CHRIS LARSON." SERIES OF IMAGES
FLASH showing the harvesting of Larson's electrical
identity. His phone records scroll by, names, addresses,
people called.

PULL BACK to MORA watching the monitor. Enters Larson's cell
phone number. The computer DIALS.

ON SCREEN: "COM-TEL TESTING BOARD." The screen fills with
choices. Mora highlights - "LINE-VERIFICATION REQUEST,
LOG-IN ACCESS CODE."

Enters another command. A new prompt reads: "ENTER LINE
REQUEST NUMBER'

Eyeing Larson's file, enters the phone number and commands
"ENTER". "RECORD".

A VOICE GRAPH appears in-sync with CONVERSATION now coming
over the speakers.

LARSON (SPEAKER)
(mid-conversation)
10-25 on FBI agent Paul Bauer.

Enters another command: "VOICE GRAPHIC MODULATOR."

Mora speaks into microphone:

MORA

We have to get Roads out of sight.

Enters new command: "CONVERT"

LARSON'S VOICE ON SPEAKER

We have to get Roads out of sight.

Mora smiles.

INT. POLICE CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Bauer stands at conference table facing representatives from the Task Force.

Douglass enters.

BAUER

Our team has spotted Roads in the Columbia Springs area. Preliminary reports indicate Richford Detective Chris Larson assisted in Roads' escape and may be with him. These are merciless killings. Show them the same considerations.

As they shuffle out, Bauer notices Douglass' concerned look.

BAUER

You can be trusted to be of service, can't you?

DOUGLASS

I don't work for him.

BAUER

He is the real power in this government. You would be wise to understand that and the benefits to your career. This country is undergoing a great advance. You can be part of it. For now we need your assurances of loyalty. Can we count on your loyalty?

DOUGLASS

Of course. I'm a patriot, damn it.

EXT. COLUMBIA SPRINGS BRIDGE - NIGHT

Scott rides his Vespa across the bridge. Sees BLACK SUV following.

Scott makes a turn down a dark side street. He hides the Vespa in the bushes and runs under the bridge.

LATER

Scott returns to his Vespa.

FIGURE steps out of the shadows. Scott turns around defensively. It's the Black Homeless Man.

SCOTT

Who are you?

HOMELESS MAN

My name's not important. Let's just say until a month ago I worked for the American taxpayer. By the way, those FBI guys you just ditched were instructed to shoot you.

Homeless Man walks over to Scott's Vespa. Opens the saddlebag and pulls out GPS TRACKER.

HOMELESS MAN

This thing could save your life.

SCOTT

It's going to be a short story.

HOMELESS MAN

It may be a never-ending story. You've been keeping him guessing.

SCOTT

Mora?

HOMELESS MAN

That's one of his names.

SCOTT

Why?

HOMELESS MAN

(deep sigh)

I told Johns to be more explicit. He's part of a very powerful, very dangerous entity. They've been

(MORE)

HOMELESS MAN (cont'd)
watching you and we've been
watching them.

SCOTT
Who the hell is he?

HOMELESS MAN
Ah, you're getting warm.

SCOTT
(doubtful)
I didn't see any horns.

HOMELESS MAN
What did you expect, some guy with
a bad sunburn and a tail?

HELICOPTER flies overhead. SEARCHLIGHT passes near them.

HOMELESS MAN
Get down.

Homeless Man pulls his gun out of the ankle holster. He holds the gun ready and looks around.

SCOTT
Do you believe any of this?

HOMELESS MAN
He sent those punks to catch you,
but they caught the bus instead.
(shakes his head)
Who knows? He's a confederate.
We're at the bridge. Maybe history
is repeating.

SCOTT
If he's the dragon, what can I do?

HOMELESS MAN
The Hopi say the dragon's power is
at its peak when the Blue Star
appears.

Homeless Man looks up at Comet Holmes. It is fainter.

HOMELESS MAN
The dragon's power may be running
out this time.

SCOTT
When will it end?

HOMELESS MAN
My guess is it never will.

SCOTT
No one can stop him?

HOMELESS MAN
You may not stop him but you may be
able to save your girlfriend.

SCOTT
How can I by myself?

HOMELESS MAN
You've never been alone.

INT. LARSON'S CAR - NIGHT

GPS on Larson's dashboard signals he is getting closer to
target.

Larson pulls around traffic. Bauer's SUV is dead ahead.

LARSON
Don't you FBI guys ever change -?

MARK
(insulted)
Change...?

LARSON
- lanes. To see if you have a tail.

Larson looks in his rear view mirror.

Black SUV tags close behind him. He pulls out. So does the
SUV.

LARSON
Take a look behind us. Do you think
that car's followin' us?

MARK
(turns to look)
That SUV back there?

LARSON
Pull the mirror down on the sun
visor. Just watch 'em.

They stop at a traffic light.

LINDBERGH
Let me out here.

LARSON
What's going on, Arthur?

LINDBERGH
Just taking some batting practice.

Lindbergh gets out - Louisville Slugger in hand - walks back to the SUV.

The driver sees Lindbergh approach. He tries desperately to put the car into reverse but he's stuck in traffic.

Lindbergh takes a big swing.

SUV'S WINDSHIELD EXPLODES.

Larson and Mark stare as Lindbergh calmly gets back inside.

EXT. COLUMBIA SPRINGS BRIDGE - NIGHT

Bauer turns onto the bridge.

Larson makes a turn before the bridge exit. It's a dead end.

They get out and head for a ridge overlooking the bridge.

Lindbergh takes out a small pair of binoculars from his jacket. Scans the bridge.

A guard sprays lighter fluid on a fire in a trash can.

Lindbergh leans across to Mark.

LINDBERGH
If you have any doubt
Bauer's involved...

Lindbergh hands Mark the binoculars.

POV BINOCULAR - Bauer talks to three FBI agents. One of them walks over to a white van and opens the side panel. Pulls Cindy out of the van.

MARK
Cindy.

LINDBERGH

Geez, is the whole damn bureau involved in this? And don't tell me I'm paranoid because they're your friends that got your girl.

Mark cannot contain his anger. He jumps up.

Larson follows him with his eyes but does not go after him.

Mark stares out at the bridge for a moment.

MARK

I'm going down there.

LARSON

Watch your back.

MARK

Why?

LARSON

Because they're watching you!

FBI agent with binoculars signals to Bauer.

SOUND of footsteps getting closer.

TWO POLICEMEN - guns drawn - shine their flashlights on them.

LARSON

It's okay, boys, it's okay. I'm Detective Larson, Richford PD.

POLICEMAN #1

We know.

Cops disarm Larson and Lindbergh. They move towards Mark.

MARK

You don't have to do anything.

POLICEMAN #1

What do you mean?

MARK

I'm FBI.

POLICEMAN #2

What's that to us?

MARK

Those men down there are holding a woman against her will.

POLICEMAN #1

Who told you that? Your brother?

Larson and Lindbergh are forced in the back of a police car.

Mark is forced into another police car.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Lindbergh stares silently at the heavily armed guards as they approach the entrance to the bridge.

Larson leans back, his mind racing.

LARSON

Don't trust anyone.

LINDBERGH

I trust you, Chris. You trust me?

LARSON

With my life.

Lindbergh smiles.

LINDBERGH

After this is over, how about we get the hell out of here.

EXT. COLUMBIA SPRINGS BRIDGE - DAWN

Guards place barricades and stop traffic at the entrance of the Bridge.

FBI agents struggle to hold Lindbergh down while Bauer gives him an injection. The drug begins to take affect. Lindbergh begins to relax.

LARSON

What did you do to him?

BAUER

I gave him something so he can finally get his chance to fly.

Bauer checks Lindbergh's glazed eyes.

BAUER
How do feel there, Spider-Man?

LINDBERGH
"The Itsy Bitsy spider climbed up
the water spout. Down came the
firefly and took the spider out."

Bauer notices activity on the far side of the bridge.

BRIDGE - WEST SIDE

Scott walks down the hill to the barricade - cigarette in his mouth and a Coke in his hand.

Guard stops Scott. Pats him down. Finds the bottle of olive oil in his pocket. Motions for Scott to trash the Coke can and olive oil bottle.

Scott takes a sip of the olive oil and a big mouthful of the Coke can. Tosses the can on the ground.

Guard handcuffs Scott and escorts him to the middle of the bridge.

In the distance Scott sees a FIGURE escorted by two guards coming towards him.

CLOSER. It's Lindbergh in handcuffs and leg chains.

Lindbergh looks back towards Larson.

Larson is restrained by two DC policemen.

LINDBERGH
I'll be back in a jiff, Chris.

Lindbergh sees Scott.

LINDBERGH
Hey, Scott, great day in the morning.

Black SUV speeds across the bridge. It stops next to Scott.

Mora steps out singing to the tune of Lou Christie's "Two Faces Have I."

MORA
"Two Faces Have I, yiyiyiyi, I pretend that I'm happy but I'm living a lie."

Mora takes Lindbergh by the arm.

MORA

You're probably wondering why I
called you all here today.

Mora walks Lindbergh to the side of the bridge.

MORA

I need your friend here to test the
waters. Spent too much time to get
here to have to do it over.

Mora stares into Lindbergh's eyes and whispers to him.

Lindbergh appears to be in a trance. He walks hesitantly
closer to the edge of the bridge. He turns to Scott.

LINDBERGH

For you, the choice to lead an
ordinary life is no longer an
option.

(winks at Scott)

Spider-Man.

Lindbergh struggles to step over the barrier, almost
fighting himself to go on. He takes one last look at Scott.

LINDBERGH

Remember, with great power comes
great responsibility. Tally ho!

Lindbergh leaps off the bridge.

Mora looks over the edge. He's satisfied with the test.

MORA

Now that was fun. FUN!

Mora glances at Scott. He is surprised Scott doesn't
protest.

Mora signals to a panel truck on the Georgetown side of the
bridge.

The panel truck heads towards them. It stops next to Mora.

The door opens. Bauer pulls Cindy and Mark out.

MORA

Now this is how it works. You take
the fall and your brother and his
little lady go free. Promise.

MARK

He's a lying son of a bitch.

Bauer knocks Mark off his feet.

MORA

Now is that anyway to treat fine Italian craftsmanship, Mr. Bauer?

(beat)

Where was I? Ah yes. You see, it's very simple. If I let you live, I suspect one day you will prove to be a great pain to me.

(points to his head)

Lord knows I've tried to put an end to you, but it just blew up in my face. In a way, you forced me to kill your girlfriend and those starlets to get the great State of Virginia to do the dirty deed for us. But then your damn friends got in the way.

MARK

How are you going to explain killing Lindbergh?

MORA

A crazy cop who thinks he's Spider-Man jumps to his death to avoid justice, of course.

Mora motions to Scott - "it's time."

MORA

So do we have a deal?

MARK

Don't listen to him.

Scott doesn't move.

MORA

I was afraid of this.

Mora motions to the guards. They pull Mark to the edge of the bridge.

CINDY

NO!

Still no reaction from Scott.

Mora signals. The guards pull Cindy to the edge.

MORA
A lover's leap perhaps?

Scott motions to Mora, "don't."

MORA
I thought that would seal it.

The guard places handcuffs on Scott. He steps onto the ledge. Looks down at the frigid water.

Scott appears to whisper something to Cindy.

Mora strains to hear.

MORA
(gleeful)
What's that?

Mora steps closer to Scott.

MORA
Famous last words?

Scott slowly lifts his cigarette to his lips. He turns face-to-face with his nemesis.

MORA
Last drag on the cancer stick?

Mora's gleeful expression turns to dread as it dawns on him what Scott is about to do.

Scott SPITS a fine mist of lamp oil on the cigarette.

Mora's face is engulfed in a BRIGHT RED FLAME. He screams in agony. He has only one desperate thought. He stumbles blindly over the barrier.

Scott flicks the cigarette at Mora.

SCOTT
Dragon, burn in hell.

Mora leaps off the bridge.

Below, a passing boater watches as the BRIGHT FLAME SMACKS the water and disappears beneath the surface.

The guards are stunned. They look to Bauer.

Bauer turns to see Mark coming at him with a round off kick to the head. Bauer hits the road face first.

Bauer recovers and aims his gun at Mark. His furious expression turns to agony as a large hole EXPLODES in his chest.

A guard's head is SHATTERED by another large caliber round.

The other guards scatter in confusion as the WINDOWS OF THE VAN AND SUV SHATTER.

Mark scans the buildings on the western side for the sniper.

There - on a rooftop - GLINT OF SUNLIGHT REFLECTS OFF A SNIPER SCOPE.

EXT. ROOFTOP - SAME

Homeless Man packs up his sniper rifle and heads for the rooftop exit.

EXT. COLUMBIA SPRINGS BRIDGE - SAME

Larson's guard runs for it. Larson heads for the western side.

Scott and Mark help Cindy cross to the western side.

EXT. COLUMBIA SPRINGS BRIDGE - TWILIGHT

Scott, Larson, Mark and Cindy watch boats searching the water under the bridge.

MARK

The current is strong this time of year. The bodies could be miles downstream by now.

SCOTT

Who was he?

MARK

No confirmation of his true identity. We're questioning his organization at Data Security.

LARSON

It's not important who the hell he was. It's important to remember the good people like Arthur...people who lived decent lives. Bastard's dead. That's the end of it.

Scott and Cindy exchange worried looks.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COLUMBIA SPRINGS BRIDGE - TWILIGHT

SUPER: SEVEN YEARS LATER

SIGN: "COLUMBIA BRIDGE FEST"

Thousands of people line the Columbia Springs Bridge at the annual Bridge Fest.

A long line of fans wait next to LARGE POSTER, "Catch a Fallen Star" by Scott Roads, to have their books signed.

Scott looks up from signing a book. He's surprised to see Cindy standing next in line. She has a big smile. Cindy pulls a bottle of olive oil out of her coat pocket and motions to Scott "look over there."

Scott sees the Homeless Man setting up his cardboard bed beneath a BIG SIGN: "TIME MAGAZINE." CAPTION READS: "NEW ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER ELECTED." The Italian Prime Minister looks as if he's had some serious plastic surgery. Looks vaguely similar to "Mora" but no Fu Manchu.

RED LEAF SWIRLS in front of the sign. A strong breeze lifts it high in the air.

ANGLE UP TO COMET HOLMES

FADE OUT:

THE END