

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I remember the first time I saw the image of this planet as photographed by man. The blue, life-giving glow of earth held like an only child in the black eternal void. That God-like perspective defines us as a species which is transcending its physical limitations. In that image both our power and our fragility come into sharp focus.

It is a very alluring vision. As I began to imagine this story, I pictured an alien seeing this. I imagined that even if it knew nothing of the earth's rich bounty, it would still be drawn here.

What if this traveller through timeless distance could look upon this jewel of a planet and see nothing of its beauty or its wonder but rather an equation? Perhaps in the same way the conquistadors went in search of new worlds, driven by the unfettered arrogance of commercial opportunity. Looking down at us the way a lion looks at a lamb. A being that was somehow the opposite of us or an extrapolation of what we might become. Thinking from inside this alien perspective I am struck by the horror of that absence. The sheer emptiness of an existence without the central tenets of humanity.

In Faber's book, the story is one in which the two aliens are immersed into human form. Concealed to appear and act exactly like us. Then transported to earth to hunt us. We being an equivalent perhaps to chocolate or tobacco.

For the purposes of this statement I'm going to concentrate on one of these. An alien disguised as an alluring woman.

I wondered what would happen to such a creature during its work here, if it were put in the way of subtle, fragile, tenuous, human events. What might that immersion into our consciousness lead to? What if the alien against its will became human? What if it turned to face its own blind spot? Came to recognize its own horror? Witnessing that transformation is central to the heart of our story. The unwitting discovery of human self as 'it' becomes 'she'.

A great monster is one we recognize ourselves within. The quintessential moment in Frankenstein is when Boris Karloff picks flowers with the little girl by the lake. The proximity of those two sat beside each other is where horror resides. The corruption of many bodies to make an incomplete whole, yet a fragile heart somehow retained within its monstrosity.

With these aliens we're creating a new Frankenstein. A new Dracula. A new monster for our times.

The aims of our film are to seduce the audience, frighten them, disrupt them, provoke them, enthrall them. To show them something they've never seen.

Jonathan Glazer

1 EXT. SCOTLAND. HIGHLANDS. NIGHT. 1

We open on fire raging.

We're looking at a wild bonfire on the edge of a gully.

The flames are so high they swirl into the black sky above the trees.

Through the flames and against them we see the thrashing movements of a NAKED FEMALE FIGURE, mid 20's, which gyrates, writhes and flexes.

Her eyes roll in a strange, deadened ecstasy as she dances to some unheard music and the tongue protrudes tasting the smoking air.

The scene is elemental, rapturous, primitive.

The smoke pours off the blaze as her body shakes like a rattlesnakes tail.

She shows no pain or pleasure as she cavorts, and flings her sweat and stomps in abandonment with arms outstretched. The body oozes vulgar insanity.

It's like watching sin.

2 EXT. SCOTLAND. LOWLAND ROAD. NIGHT. 2

A light advances towards us along a rain-swept road.

It is moving fast and its distant drone gets ever louder.

Rain bounces off the tarmac as a motorbike lashes through frame.

3 EXT. SCOTLAND. HIGHLANDS. NIGHT. 3

The Fire Woman is spinning out of control against the flames, then down she goes into the mud, collapsing under the force of abandonment. She is fading away as the fire rages higher than ever.

Now she is on her knees, her head is folding down, the flames lick at her, steam shimmering off her body.

4 EXT. SCOTLAND. HIGHLAND ROAD. NIGHT. 4

The bike climbs up banking turns.

It grinds hard against the pull of the incline, thundering on up the twisting rock-strewn curves towards the summit.

Advancing through swirls of smoke, the rider slows into a gully where the smoke hangs thicker and billows in the intense heat and gusting chill.

The wet road gleams with the reflection of flames swirling above.

Then he sees the pale figure lying there in the glistening mud at the base of the roaring fire.

He dismounts and removes his helmet. The BAD MAN.

He hurries to her and lifts her up out of the mud.

He looks into the body, not the face but the centre of the limp doll he is holding.

He shakes it. Shakes it again until the eyes seem to open.

He helps her to her feet, helps her to recover, then steadies her as they walk out of frame.

5

INT. A BLACK VOID.

5

A black screen.

Thick 'hubble bubble toil and trouble' cauldron black liquid.

The black of nightmares, which curdles and boils, and spits with toxic malice.

It convulses, then folds in on itself, as if suppressing some instinct to surge.

Then a flux, and intricate structures begin to grow from this black mass, conjured like some abominable spell.

Something is articulating itself into form.

A surface bulge develops a protrusion and from it emerges a long weaving BLACK LIMB. Like a living tentacle.

The limb unfurls with an unpleasant manner, snaking forward with a meandering reach.

It is soon free from the body of the black mass and moving across a white, flaring surface.

We feel other movement within it as it slips toward us.

Here and there, a sudden gleam reveals a spike.

They thicken and waver, then become solid with intent.

Plumes of spikes flourish, then fold into a triangular form, shocking in its geometric perfection.

Then a slither of flat, rectangular black.

Then a cube.

Then an octahedron.

The sides multiply exponentially until it becomes a sphere.

It's as if it's expressing that it can become anything.

It hovers in an expanse of white, flaring, beautiful light.

Now a colorless circle, like the skin of a drum, appears and aligns with the black sphere.

It folds itself over, covering it.

We recognize its detail as the parts of a human eye.

We see the pupil that sits within the iris is not a black lens as we expect, but a perfect cylindrical cavity reaching back through the sphere.

Now a black tendril aligns itself with the cavity.

It slides through the back to the other end through the space where the pupil should be.

The form that was a sphere is now an EYE, indecipherable from the real thing.

A TONGUE is in the space, flanked by TWO EYES just above.

The formation drifts into position alongside a motionless, human, FEMALE FACE, like humming birds hovering at a flower.

The MOUTH and EYE SOCKETS open perversely wide.

The tongue enters.

And docks.

The cavernous mouth closes.

The spheres enter their two cavities as if drawn on threads.

The eyelids close.

The lids open again.

EYES shimmer in the gloom, brand new and clear.

We close into the bright twin forms until rays pour in and the eyehole shapes fill with light.

The two ellipses blend into one viewpoint.

And through them, through 'her' eyes, we see the perfect sphere of EARTH as seen from space.

A black HAND-SHAPE slips inside the flaccid synthetic glove of a HUMAN HAND.

The fingers stiffen then splay, the internal hand stretching into command of the puppet around it.

The fingers wriggle provocatively then clench into a fist.

A photorealistic masquerade of bone, knuckle, vein and musculature hardening into this little boulder of attitude.

Now we cut to her actual POV. The camera as an eye.

Which looks down at the two hands in front of us.

We lift them closer to study them.

The fist points towards us, knuckle on, full of portent.

Then it is lowered.

Beyond them, still looking down, we see our feet standing on this flaring white light which is everywhere.

Then they begin to walk and of course we walk with them, all the time looking down on them as if they were our own.

Left foot then right then left and so on.

We look over the top of our breasts and dip further over them as if we could crane our neck at an impossible angle to see our navel and our pubis.

Then, still looking down at our own walking body our viewpoint arcs to the left so we are now looking down at the top of our own shoulder.

Then our viewpoint rotates across the shoulder so we are now looking at our back and the top of our buttocks and again crane further out to watch the backs of our calves as this craft, this body, continues its slow walk forwards.

It's as though we've rotated our whole head 180 degrees to view this impossible angle of ourself.

Then our body stops, and as it does so, our viewpoint comes back round over our shoulder, still looking down, and back round to the front.

Now our viewpoint lifts and we cut to an image of the whole of her.

A serene, assured YOUNG WOMAN - black hair, beautiful skin.

All is wonderfully charged yet also dormant.

A picture of indomitable femininity.

We are studying the anatomy in some detail.

Shoulder, knee, abdomen, nipple.

But non-sexually. Non fetishistic. Factual. Anatomical.

Like a technician might inspect a car fresh off a production line.

6 INT. A WHITE VOID.

6

The Fire Woman is lying on a pure white block like an art exhibit.

White flesh on ice white stone.

Her bedraggled, muddied body lies motionless, like a cadaver.

Her eyes stare unblinking at the endless white haze above her.

An elegant figure moves toward the body, the Young Woman.

She stops in front of the white block and regards her.

She looks at her the way she might look at a blank wall she may be thinking of painting or pulling down.

Her eyes travel over the flesh.

Then they halt their detached flow across this pale landscape as something piques their interest.

A small dot scurrying along the undulations of the stomach.

She moves closer to the body and extends her fingertip to the woman's shoulder, intercepting the path of the dot, AN ANT, which stops in front of the huge obstacle.

Its antennae feel it with curiosity and caution, then it walks up onto the fingertip.

The Young Woman brings the finger up to her face so she can watch the earthly stowaway more closely.

It remains suddenly dead still except for its slowly wavering antennae.

7 EXT. SCOTLAND. THE SEA. PRE-DAWN.

7

Something is happening in the sky above the sea.

Inexplicable, effortless, beyond logic.

A thin, rectangular LINE OF PURE WHITE LIGHT about two miles long is held in perfect parallel with the horizon.

It sits motionless a hundred and fifty feet above the surface, and three miles off shore.

It is beautiful - as harmonious as it is worrying. Complete omnipotence.

The sea beneath it is millpond calm. A gentle tide sweeping into the shore is all that can be heard.

Far out, something is moving slowly towards us. A refractory imperfection of the light on the water's surface.

It is an object moving on the water towards us.

As we watch its approach, we eventually see what it is.

A BOAT.

A fifteen-foot long, black, wooden skiff gliding towards us. Seemingly under its own steam as if a giant finger had propelled it.

Soon it is in the shallows and the hull glides into a grind against the pebbles.

From behind camera, the Bad Man enters frame.

What tells us he's not human is that he's not looking at that thing in the sky. His attention is totally on the boat instead.

As he reaches the bow, he drags it up onto the stones.

The Bad Man now throws back a cover to reveal the Young Woman, vacuum-packed in transparent material.

The Bad Man steadies the boat in the swell. He takes out a knife, makes a few deft cuts in the packaging.

There is no sudden gasping for air or dramatic coming to life. The naked female simply steps out of its plastic sheathing, and then from the boat onto the shore.

The Bad Man throws a blanket round her.

She waits there silently in the half-light with a look of abstraction.

The Bad Man pushes the boat adrift again.

The two figures turn and walk shoulder to shoulder up the beach.

It's here, as we pan away from the sea to follow their walk, that we see where we are.

The wild landscape of Northern Scotland.

Not a word has been spoken, not a gesture imparted.

The epic light in the sky remains.

The figures emerge through a bluff of sand to find a white transit van parked with its back to the sea.

8 INT. WHITE VAN. MOVING. ROAD. CONTINUOUS.

8

The Young Woman steps into the back of the van.

She folds herself daintily past the heavy motorbike held in place with industrial straps and between the hanging clothes that make a crumpling sound above her.

She clears a space between bags, empty shoeboxes and discarded undergarments.

The Bad Man shuts the doors and we hear his footsteps move around to the side of the van and get in.

She pulls her angular limbs into some pants and a bra.

The van trundles off as she gathers clothes from the collection that hangs about her.

The things of the world are dressed onto her. Shirt, skirt, shoes, coat...

She opens a box in front of her revealing documents and credit cards all bearing her photograph and the name "MS. LAURA FLYNN".

She begins to put them into a small handbag.

DISSOLVE TO:

9 EXT. URBAN SHOPPING CENTRE. CAR PARK. DAY.

9

The van glides into the rows of parked cars eventually turning into a vacant space.

It is Laura who gets out.

She locks the van and we pull away from her as she walks towards a bustling shopping centre.

10 INT. URBAN SHOPPING CENTRE. CONCOURSE. CONTINUOUS.

10

Laura steps out of a lift into the concourse and the echoing hubbub floods in from all directions.

She walks purposefully along the bright marble walkways.

As she moves into the throng, we see heads turn. Men and women stop in their tracks.

Here comes life; lusty, bold, outrageous life, dripping with vitality.

She moves on through the melee of people - women with swish shopping bags, mothers with buggies, invalids in motorized chairs, candyfloss-haired pensioners, teenagers.

She walks into the cosmetics area of a busy department store.

11 INT. URBAN SHOPPING CENTRE. COSMETICS DEPARTMENT. CONTINUOUS

Everywhere is colorful, flamboyant bling and blaze.

Fluorescent lights, a myriad of counters, mirrors, heavily made-up sales assistants pampering customers.

Lipsticks, mascaras, brushes, hair products, skin products, towers of hair extensions. A palace in the service of beauty.

[Much of this sequence will be shot with hidden cameras in order to observe her within real situations. This technique will allow us intimate access to the wonderful raw experience of human life. Human beings seen through alien eyes.]

Laura's fingers sweep over trays of nail polish and pick out one or two.

Then the selecting fingertips drift on to mascaras and lipsticks.

We drift towards her head, and then to her ear almost as if we were about to fall into it.

She listens to the myriad of words and blasting noises.

The absorption of it all is palpable.

We hear snatches of conversation about boyfriends or jobs or life in general.

Laura is at the counter having paid and is putting all these things into her bag.

She becomes aware of TWO SECURITY MEN who have positioned themselves to enjoy her exit.

One is on his walkie-talkie most likely alerting others.

12 INT. URBAN SHOPPING CENTRE. CONCOURSE. CONTINUOUS.

12

Laura steps back out into the throng of the concourse and immediately we see ANOTHER SECURITY MAN notice her from across the atrium.

He furtively brings his walkie-talkie a little closer to his chin.

His eyes track with her as she moves. She looks up at the mezzanine balcony.

On all four levels of the atrium we see SECURITY MEN lean over balustrades, peering down at the beautiful shopper.

She is almost back at the lifts, but as she leaves, we see her looking intently at a man with a large rucksack, a vagrant fishing a discarded burger from a bin before moving on.

Her attention is completely on him.

She is watching which way he exits the building.

He moves onto the road through the glass frontage.

The doors of the elevator shut as Laura gets out her parking ticket and her keys.

13 EXT. URBAN SHOPPING CENTRE. SERVICE STATION. DAY. 13

Laura replaces the nozzle in the petrol pump and crosses the forecourt to pay.

She passes a SALESMAN. His head is bowed as he pumps, but he's staring up though his eyebrows at every tilt of her body.

Behind her, a roadster at a pump. Inside, THREE YOUNG LADS. The driver revs the engine lustfully.

The roadster drives off, tyres smoking.

Laura keeps moving.

She focuses on a HITCHHIKER walking backwards on the main road.

He holds up a cardboard sign with one word on it. "MERCY".

He smiles at a thundering truck. It rumbles on unaware of the smile. He stops smiling.

He's the same vagrant she saw in the shopping centre. Pure coincidence.

Laura moves more urgently now into the shop. ANOTHER LAD, who's paid and leaving, stares transfixed as they pass.

14 INT. URBAN SHOPPING CENTRE. SERVICE STATION SHOP. DAY. 14

She approaches the counter brandishing a card. Gives it to the CASHIER GIRL.

LAURA

Number three.

The roadster peels back down the road to the station, hits the brakes and spins.

Smoke pours from wheel arches as it doughnuts aggressively.

The transfixed lad is right by the shop window now, staring in at Laura like a zombie.

The cashier girl looks at her curiously.

CASHIER GIRL

You've set them off.

(Shouts over her shoulder
into the back room)

Stuart, can you call the police!

The girl hands Laura her card and receipt.

LAURA

Thank you.

Laura turns to leave.

15 EXT. URBAN SHOPPING CENTRE. SERVICE STATION. CONTINUOUS. 15

The driver's door of the roadster opens and a GANGLY TEENAGER, gets out. He moves toward Laura.

GANGLY TEENAGER

We're going for a wee drink down
the road. Do you fancy it?

She keeps walking but he steps into her path.

GANGLY TEENAGER (CONT'D)

Just fucking stand still a minute.

Laura stops. Then the Salesman pipes up.

SALESMAN

Can you no leave her be?

GANGLY TEENAGER

(zero tolerance)

What the fuck do you think you're
doing!

The teenager shifts the focus of his adrenalin and walks up to the Salesman. The three other lads pile out of the car.

Laura resumes her walk to the van.

What happens now is of no consequence to her. It's peripheral noise. Her focus is on the hitchhiker on the main road beyond.

GANGLY TEENAGER (CONT'D)
What else?!

SALESMAN
(pleading for calm)
Alright, alright...

The teenager looks at him hard. Then turns to his mates.

GANGLY TEENAGER
I think he knows what's coming!

The lads laugh like drains.

Suddenly the teenager swivels and lashes one into the Salesman's face. Down goes the Salesman.

Laura gets in her van. The teenager stamps down on his back.

GANGLY TEENAGER (CONT'D)
(like a diagnosis)
Wheelchair.

The Salesman folds up in agony. Laura starts the engine.

GANGLY TEENAGER (CONT'D)
(manic laugh)
Oh, he's done him! He's done him!
He does NOT look happy!

Laura pulls away, leaving this turbulent testosterone wake.

16 INT. LAURA'S VAN. MOVING. CONTINUOUS. 16

Her eyes scan for that hitchhiker as she accelerates onto the main road.

Then she sees him up ahead, he's walking backwards with his sign held out.

She slows to compose herself.

Everything is in order.

She refocuses on him.

But then a car pulls out of the junction ahead of her. The hitchhiker's thumb shoots out.

Laura speeds up.

But too late. The car ahead pulls in.

She rolls past as he gets in.

The rearview mirror shows an old man driving the car. He's laughing and offering a cigarette to the hitchhiker.

She refocuses on the distant highway. Unmoved.

17 INT. LAURA'S VAN - MOVING. SHORT WHILE LATER. 17

Laura comes to a roundabout. She rolls round it twice, assessing the best route to take.

Finally, she chooses one, indicates and heads off along it.

18 INT. WHITE VAN. TRUNK ROAD. NIGHT. 18

A sign is held in the headlights of Laura's van. STRANRAER 14 MILES.

She plows on through the miserable rain.

Movement up ahead, and she eases off.

The beam finds A FIGURE. It half turns.

A bomber jacket with a green football shirt underneath and a green scarf wrapped around the head. A bag over its shoulder. She slows more.

He tugs the scarf down to show his face in the beam.

He's a beefy farm boy. She pulls up.

The window opens to a gusting howl. His eyes widen as he sees who's driving.

LAURA

Are you going to Stranraer?

FOOTBALL FAN

I'm catching the boat. I've got to get to a match.

LAURA

I'm going that way. But I'm just wary who I pick up.

FOOTBALL FAN

Fair enough.

LAURA

Haven't you got any friends or family who'll take you?

FOOTBALL FAN
No. Nobody likes me.

LAURA
No wife?

FOOTBALL FAN
(perishing the thought)
Nah.

LAURA
Or girlfriend?

FOOTBALL FAN
Nah, I'm totally available at the
minute.

LAURA
(playing dumb)
Are you a football player?

FOOTBALL FAN
Don't be daft, I'm too fuckin' fat!
Hibs are playing Glentorren in
Belfast. I don't play football. I
watch football. And I watch fucking
Hibs. Am I getting any closer to
getting in?

LAURA
When do you have to be back at
work?

FOOTBALL FAN
I sign on again at the end of the
month.

A thunderous shake as a truck booms past.

FOOTBALL FAN (CONT'D)
Listen love, are you going to give
me a lift? Cos if not, I'll crack
on.

LAURA
What's in the bag?

He hefts the bag up to the window and unzips it to reveal
balled up clothes. He looks at her.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Put it in the back.

He gets in. Laura pulls out.

He wipes the rain off his face with the end of his scarf.

FOOTBALL FAN
So what's your story?

LAURA
What do you mean?

FOOTBALL FAN
What are you heading over for?

Laura turns to look at him.

There is something wanton, almost pornographic, in her pretty face.

LAURA
Oh, I'm not. I'm just driving up that way. I was just feeling restless, you know, couldn't sleep. So I came out for a drive.

FOOTBALL FAN
You're a right good look'n girl to be riding around all alone at this time of night.

Laura smiles.

LAURA
Do you think I ought to be more careful?

FOOTBALL FAN
Aye, I do.

He looks at her and a glimmer of caution flickers in his eyes.

He looks to the space about her - to the little compartment in the door and to the glove box.

FOOTBALL FAN (CONT'D)
You should have some of that stuff you can spray... it's like tear gas. Or a gun. If you were an American you'd have a gun.

Laura seems not to be attending to his warning and her causality reassures him.

He smiles a little at what he perceives to be her innocence.

FOOTBALL FAN (CONT'D)
They're not all as nice as me you know.

LAURA
What time's the ferry at?

FOOTBALL FAN

There's one at three and one at six.

Laura swivels her torso a little in his direction. Gives him a piggy eyeful of the goods.

LAURA

Do you really never miss a match?

He smiles.

FOOTBALL FAN

You're a right wee chancer.

He takes a long look at her. The good fortune sinks in.

LAURA

I have a place about an hour in the other direction.

FOOTBALL FAN

And who else has to give this idea the nod?

LAURA

Just us.

FOOTBALL FAN

(with profundity)
All my life I've been a Hibs fan
and I've never missed a match.

LAURA

Well..

19

EXT. ROAD. SAME.

19

The van slows. Signals to pull over.

Stops. It idles in the rain signalling.

Then the signal flips to the other side.

The van swings into a U-turn.

We see Laura serious, staring into the night. He leans back smiling and unfurls his Hibs scarf out of the window in victory.

Everything is heightened, the silence, the air, his heart rate, the suppressed desire, the overt come-on.

The straight road races as the undulating headlights play over black tarmac.

Up ahead we see a bend coming, and beyond the road the woods seem darker and more cavernous than ever.

The headlights point right into them without finding detail, just a black void, and the beams reaching into it.

As the van reaches the bend, we expect Laura to turn the wheels into it... *but instead the van plunges straight ahead.*

He gasps (as we do) expecting the jolt and thud of some violent impact, but it doesn't come.

The anticipated crash doesn't happen.

The van rolls on smoother than ever.

There must have been a road there. One that she saw but we didn't.

He half-squints down the beam of the headlights, confused that he cannot see any detail out there. Just impenetrable blackness.

The road underneath the wheels sounds very different too.

Smooth. Too smooth. Like driving on ice, no rumble.

She slows and gradually, without a word, the van comes to rest.

He looks at her, she seems happy, so everything must be fine then.

LAURA

Come on Colin.

She opens the door and steps out.

Her heels click and echo on the infinite black marble floor which has appeared here - where there should be a forest.

She beckons him.

He steps out, aware only of her and what his mind is telling him might be about to happen.

He pulls his Hibs scarf from the window, and ties it round his neck as he gets out.

We follow close on his back now, her just ahead turning and undressing, leading him into this black world illuminated by the reach of the van's headlights.

Colin grins, removing his jacket.

COLIN

(lusty)

There is a God.

She backs away sensuously.

He steps eagerly towards her.

He removes his football shirt, grimy vest, belt, boot, another boot, jeans, pants.

She removes more of her clothes as she walks seductively ahead of him, deeper into the blackness.

He's naked now, except for his scarf. His big fingers slip the knot of his thick green scarf with all the erotic crescendo of an LA stripper.

Suddenly, the shiny black floor starts to give way beneath him, softening like molasses.

His feet descend into the ooze but undaunted, he strides on.

Deeper and deeper into the thick black liquid he sinks, and as he does we recognize this pit as that same evil soup from which Laura was formed.

But as if blind to this madness, he strides deeper and deeper with each step.

His eyes and his mind are locked on her alone.

Oblivious to the bizarre falling away of the world as we know it.

He's wading waist-deep now, eyes still locked trance-like, driving forward feverishly, straining against the pull of this abominable black quicksand.

Down and down he goes until completely submerged in the syrupy black darkness.

Gone.

The floor reforms.

20

INT. LAURA'S VAN. DAY.

20

Laura sits behind the wheel.

Her hands move at her side then draw up her circular compact mirror.

It clicks open and with only a functional interest, she sets herself to rights.

She reapplies lipstick, re-varnishing to a perfect gloss.

She dabs ultra black to the tips of her eyelashes, enhancing them to their ultimate, alluring potential.

The face trapped in the circular glass is perfectly still and unattached to the proceeding throughout.

The eyes check the handiwork.

The mirror snaps flat and is set aside.

The wrist turns the key, the gears engage and the game is on.

21 INT. LAURA'S VAN. DAY. 21

A rather WIRED, BALD MAN is staring at Laura, his shiny face glowing hot with sexual arousal. He smiles a hesitant, unpleasant smile.

She glances at him from moment to moment as she weaves along these winding roads.

He licks his lips nervously. Then edges a little closer towards her.

His hand slides slowly across the seat.

His fingertips furtively reach and probe at the edge of her thigh, half-frightened they might arouse rebuttal.

He looks at her lasciviously, his tongue swelling in his hot head.

He looks down at her smooth flesh, and gulps at the idea of it.

He eases the hem of her skirt a little higher.

Laura looks down at her exposed thigh then up at him and his eyes fixed on her flesh.

LAURA

Don't get ahead of yourself.

He retracts his fingertips, folds his arms admonished and smiles out of the window instead.

LAURA (CONT'D)

We're going to do this my way.

They drive on now in the twisting backwaters of rolling hills, on and on through dark, bleak fields on either side. The wind howls round the van.

Soon Laura is turning into a worn track.

22 EXT. DERELICT HOUSE. SHORT WHILE LATER. 22

They arrive between half collapsed sheds drawing into a sodden yard.

She pulls up and looks at the man, her eyes breaking loose with wild provocation.

She backs out of her seat, lithe and supple, opens the door and eases out.

The Bald Man eases out too, but he's less assured in every way.

As he drops down from the van, his thin shoes designed for a night out in whatever silly, little bar she found him in, land straight into a puddle.

The water fills his shoes in a split second somehow snapping him out of his sexual stupor.

She dangles her keys seductively as she moves towards the ruin of a house.

He looks surprised by the place she's brought him to. It's a million miles from the love nest he imagined. The house is a crumbling wreck about ready for the bulldozer.

He suddenly stops.

BALD MAN

There's someone in there!

As he speaks the sound of his own words resonate in him bringing a sudden alarm.

LAURA

What?

BALD MAN

(pointing up)

I saw that curtain move.

She turns blank-faced to look up at the house.

We focus hard on the window and it is still as the crypt.

A tiny slit of black runs up one side of it where the curtain is badly hung but there is nothing there.

She finishes looking up at the window and looks back at him smiling. He is still pointing at the window.

LAURA

There's nothing there.

She turns back towards the house.

BALD MAN

I saw something...

LAURA

Come on.

BALD MAN

No.

LAURA

Why? Are you serious?... There's nothing there.

BALD MAN

No... I'm not going in there.

The spell is really broken now, and she knows it.

LAURA

You're seeing things. There's no one in there.

BALD MAN

There fucking well is. I saw it right... Do you know who's in there?

LAURA

Don't be silly.

BALD MAN

Why is it silly? I'm telling you there's someone in there.

Laura flashes her most alluring smile.

LAURA

Well, I know there isn't.

BALD MAN

(not having any of it)
Nah. Nah, nah, nah. I know what this is. You've got a bloke in there with a fucking bat! You were going to fucking mug me! What a fucking idiot... bird like you wanting to fuck a bloke like me, do me a favor, this is a fucking set-up.

She opens the door and steps inside.

Beyond her he can just see the dank interior of the building.

The dilapidation around the door frame is obvious even in this light, but beyond the threshold, just the vortex of darkness blacker than everything else.

She turns in the doorway leaning forward, eyes wide saying "What's the problem!?"

Exasperated and still keyed up with suspicion, he looks into the darkness, peering past her and into it for a moment, silent, considering his options.

From the darkness her voice softly speaks.

LAURA

There's no one in here. Just me.
Come on...

He has to move forward to hear what she's saying.

Furious and still completely sure he's seen something, he stops in the puddle just before the stoop.

He gathers his thin jacket close to him.

BALD MAN

I know what I saw and that's that.

LAURA

It was the wind. So what!?

He doesn't really know where his is. He starts to doubt himself.

He looks up at the front of the house. He looks back at the van longing to get in it and leave.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Come on.

He fishes a lighter out of his pocket and strikes it, sheltering it from the rain.

The faint light illuminates Laura's smiling face.

He ventures in.

BALD MAN

If someone jumps me in here...

Laura laughs a coquettish laugh.

He shuts the door.

23

INT. GLASGOW HOUSING ESTATE. DAY.

23

Laura's eyes are set on a YOUNG MAN who is cutting down from the main road across a bit of communal grass. He jumps a railing.

He is pale and so thin a light breeze could blow him over. His eyes are tired the way a man of eighteen shouldn't be. Dark and sunken with broken veins about the temples.

She is trying to anticipate his next turn when, as if suddenly aware of himself, he turns back on himself a few steps and slips into a doorway.

She stops and watches.

Another figure comes and they speak through the glass, the Lean Man leaning close to hear.

Laura pulls into the curb and stops.

The Lean Man is talking fast, his eyes suddenly earnest.

The figure inside moves hesitantly behind the frosted ripple glass.

A little figure appears on the street. A SMALL HOODED PERSON walking towards the van, a cigarette held by its side and smoke peeling off it.

He seems set to walk straight past the van but stops abruptly right by the window and looks in at Laura.

The top half of the Hood is all that is visible from inside the van.

Laura looks down at it unmoved, and it stares back equally unflinching.

Then a little voice comes, muffled as if not really trying to be heard.

HOOD
Are you lost?

Silence.

HOOD (CONT'D)
You there... are you lost?

Silence.

HOOD (CONT'D)
Are you lost?

Laura turns away to look back at the Lean Man. The door he is speaking at opens a touch.

HOOD (CONT'D)
Can you not hear me? Open the window a bit.

The Hood taps the window gently and waves a little hand in the international sign for 'lower the window'. Laura lowers the window a little crack.

HOOD (CONT'D)
You in there... Good looking! Are you lost is it?

LAURA
No.

HOOD
You waiting for somebody?

LAURA
Yes.

Another LAD is slipping through the railing the Lean Man jumped a few moments ago.

He's shaven headed and expressionless except for eyes that dart to the little figure next to the window from time to time.

Laura looks towards the Lean Man and the door that he's in front of, which opens to let him slip inside.

HOOD
Who's that then?

LAURA
A friend.

HOOD
Aye but who is it... you know what I mean... I'm wanting a name or two see.

We see another LAD come out of one of the blocks and stroll over.

HOOD (CONT'D)
I know everybody from about here you see... so I could go and hurry them along a bit so you'd not have tee be sitting about like a cunt.

The boy nearest allows himself a smirk at the remark but then his face returns to nothingness.

HOOD (CONT'D)
You dinna want tee be hanging about these streets like a cunt.

LAURA
I'm fine don't worry.

HOOD
I'm not worrying. Who was it you're waiting on then?

Another SMALL FIGURE crosses towards the van so as to block its route down the road.

A glance in the rear view mirror reveals ONE MORE strolling toward the van also in the road.

She starts the engine but the kid in the road is right in front of the van now.

HOOD (CONT'D)

Why didn't you open the window when
I was talking to you?

LAURA

I thought you'd...

HOOD

You're talking out of your arse...
You're an owl whore aren't yee,
waiting about tee suck our cocks.

Someone somewhere thumps the side of the van. It booms a metallic thud.

The Hood flicks his ciggy butt into the tiny gap that the window is open.

Sparks burst inside the van as the butt pings off the dashboard.

Then another thud. The Hood batters the window.

The lad at the front of the van spits on the windscreen. Spit flies out of the Hood too, fouling the side window.

Swearing starts in earnest now with venomous little sharp blows and kicks punctuating the verbal attack.

The sides of the van are being pummelled now.

The van is shaking, as others arrive to intimidate and drive off the intruder.

This is their patch.

They say what goes on here.

One of the feral lads has climbed up onto the van and is jumping on the roof.

The thudding menace is deafening now, and swearing of an extraordinary volatile nature ricochets around the van.

We cut to a wide shot.

Suddenly the kids are scattered by two gun shots being fired from out of the crack of Laura's open window.

A moment later, the street is empty again and silent, as if none of it had happened.

The metal echo of the shots seems to hang in the air.

Laura starts the van and moves away without any fuss.

Half a minute later, and with no great effort, we hear the low hazy growl of a motorbike and suddenly the Bad Man sweeps through the shot. Straight down the middle of the road.

The growls hum away into the distance.

24 EXT. LOWLANDS. DAY. 24

We are high up, looking down at the undulating hills, sprawling woodland and long ribbon of grey road below.

We see the van as little more than a moving white dot from this vantage point.

In its wake, we see the dot of black that is the Bad Man on his motorbike.

We watch them travel always just out of sight of each other.

25 INT. A LITTLE VILLAGE. DAY. 25

Sunshine. Laura's van rolls down the main drag of a village. The streets are strangely empty. Laura slows.

We take in her point of view as she looks into an open door of the village store where a woman reads the paper behind the counter.

She rolls past a bakery. An old dear wipes off her display case.

We travel on, and past the open door of a pub.

Inside, the space is crammed with men silently watching the national football team. Engrossed by a penalty being taken.

As we reach the apex of our passing of the doorway, we hear a voice announce for a beat "tonight could see this young man become..." the voice is lost, all the faces remain locked.

Laura refocuses on the road and lets the van gather speed along the empty streets and out of the village into the country lanes.

26 EXT. LONG ROAD. DAY. 26

Laura's van drives through the lowland.

27 EXT. COAST ROAD. DAY. 27

Laura is driving along the coast road near the Sound of Arisaig. The sun is strong.

She sees a half visible sign through a bush, 'BEACH', and turns.

28 EXT. BEACH CAR PARK. DAY.

28

A sprinkle of vehicles. Laura drives in, scanning out the window she suddenly focuses on something and stops.

She parks, then steps out.

Leading over the dunes towards the beach is the splatter of many footprints.

She moves along the path led by the footprints, then suddenly breaks off it, drifting away to the right, following one distinct set.

The footprints weave off along the dunes eager to find a spot far away from all the others.

She is drawn with them. Far off she can see the main beach and its holiday-makers.

'There', are families and a stretch of sand, laughter and dogs barking.

'Here', is rocky and quiet.

Her eyes scan about and find those significant footprints re-emerge by the shoreline.

A LONE MAN in cut-off jeans walks in the breakers.

Off to the west, a YOUNG COUPLE sit on a rock.

They watch their YOUNG CHILD splash in a shallow pool, their dog leaps in the surf.

The low sun sparkles off the water around them.

The couple lean closer and become one shape against the ocean.

The space between them flashes like a message.

Kiss - Sparkle - Kiss

Laura focuses on the lone man again.

He is pulling his shirt off. He's about thirty, toned.

He runs towards the sea. In he goes like a dart.

Laura looks at the muscular swimmer as she walks to the beach.

The sun plays around her perfect flesh and hair.

He swims through the glitter like he's on rails.

Laura sits on the sand near his rucksack and boots.

He comes back into the shallows. Distant laughter beckons his attention along the beach towards the family.

Laura follows his gaze.

The toddler splashes the dog as it bounds between his rock pool and the tide.

The father watches as the dog thrashes into the foam.

Giggles and yelps mingle with the waves.

The young mother walks into the breakers. She laughs as the undertow shifts her gently.

Now the swimmer is walking back towards his things.

As he approaches, Laura smiles.

He almost stops dead in his tracks but makes it to the rucksack.

He pulls out a towel and rolls it around on his head.

LAURA

You're a good swimmer.

SWIMMER

Am I?

LAURA

You seem good to me... I never learned.

SWIMMER

Well, you could still have a paddle.

LAURA

Is it cold?

SWIMMER

Not too bad.

LAURA

You're not from here.

SWIMMER

No, I'm from the Lake District.

LAURA

On holiday?

SWIMMER

No, I'm not on holiday. I'm living up here.

LAURA

All alone?

SWIMMER

Yes.

LAURA

Do you live near here?

He points to a small orange triangle in the distant dunes.

SWIMMER

I live there, in that tent.

The distant tent flutters against the wind.

A shout cuts across everything.

The young mother's.

The swimmer turns his attention from Laura and looks across to the neighboring bay.

Laura follows his gaze.

The woman is walking waist deep towards her dog, which is swimming out after its stick.

The shout again from the woman to the animal but the drift of the stick is enticing it farther out.

The swimmer moves away from Laura and back towards the waters edge.

Now the dog is in the heavy water. The father calls out to it.

The child is still splashing in his rock pool.

The mother decides to swim out. It doesn't seem that far to the animal.

She strokes out, then looks up.

She is feeling the deep tug of the powerful undertow and becoming unnerved.

The husband edges deeper into the breakers expecting his wife to turn back.

She sets to again but her stroke is erratic.

The dog is gone from his thoughts now although yelps signals it's in serious trouble.

Sweat breaks on the husband and his eyes fill with alarm as his wife goes under for the first time.

He plunges in.

The mother's face is frozen in realization as the waves seem to push at her from all sides.

Her open mouth gasps for oxygen and help.

No sound. Gulls scream above.

The swimmer is now running away from Laura and down the beach.

The husband ploughs through the water towards his wife.

In another dozen strokes he'll be in with her and in the grip of the rip tide too.

The swimmer is running hard and hits the water like a torpedo.

He is moving rapidly towards them.

The tide draws her harder and the distance between her and her husband opens up.

She goes down for the second time.

The husband is pushing after her, his fear drawing his energy at every stroke.

The wife flails then goes under.

Gone.

The husband gasps with dread, and feeling the tide pulling around him tries to hasten his stroke.

Suddenly the swimmer is at his shoulder.

The husband kicks away from him, but his energy is almost spent.

The swimmer tries to wrestle for control. Him against the pull, the husband writhing to free himself.

The swimmer forces the fight out of him with a clench then flips back, dragging the husband against the current.

The swimmer throws exhausted strokes, digging clear of the turbulent water.

Stroke clear, kick clear, clear.

As his feet touch down, the swimmer drags the man away from the draw of the tide.

He battles hard for every step until his legs start to buckle with fatigue.

With the last of his strength he pushes the man out then collapses into the sand, chest heaving, eyes swimming with fainting delirium.

The exhausted husband stands... *and walks back out to sea.*

The swimmer tries to raise himself. Tries to follow. But he's spent.

The husband claws his way deeper out into the swell, manic, fuelled by adrenalin.

He's carried away by it, flailing like a rag-doll...

Then he's gone.

Laura is looking.

Nothing.

No response.

29

EXT. BEACH. SHORT WHILE LATER.

29

The toddler is standing a few feet from the waves, his little face wet with tears but no sobbing.

The swimmer's body is half out the water.

Laura enters frame without urgency and leans over the swimmer. She studies his face as he passes out.

She takes hold of him at the belt buckle and heaves him away from the tide.

The child, numb with fear, starts to utter half-formed words manically, over and over.

CHILD

Daddy go!? Mummy go!?

As if unaware of the child's presence, she passes it as she hauls her prize towards the dunes, stopping from time to time to get a better grip.

The bemused child stays put, watching the jolt of every wave with despair and hope.

It points out to the horizon, imploring Laura to do something.

CHILD (CONT'D)

Daddy go! Mummy go!'

Laura spots the swimmer's abandoned rucksack a short distance away.

She releases her white-knuckle grip on the body, letting it slump, then goes to retrieve the bag.

She puts it over her shoulders and tightens the strap across her body, so as not to interfere with the job at hand.

As she takes her bearings again, she sees his body move. His elbow is pushing into the sand in an effort to raise his groggy head up.

Dead-eyed, she sets off towards him urgently, plucking a large stone from the sand as she goes.

She arrives, delivering a single, sharp blow to the back of his head.

He slumps flat out at her feet.

She casually looks about. Finding a path, she is off again.

Clearing the dunes she stops, cautious, as the car park looms.

DISSOLVE TO:

She half-stands, and watches the last vehicles pull away in the dusk light. Only her car and a camper van remain.

30 EXT. BEACH CAR PARK. DUSK. 30

She opens the passenger door and leans him against the opening.

She hauls the body up onto the seat, dragging the legs into place, then fastening him in with the seat-belt.

His head flops about.

She steadies it with her spare hand as she drives out across the bumpy car park to the road.

31 INT. VAN. ROAD. DUSK. 31

Laura drives. The swimmer wakes suddenly. He looks at her.

His eyes reach out the window and weave, trying to understand where he is.

He presses his head in various places as if trying to push his awareness back into place. We see him wince under the effort.

LAURA
We're nearly there.

SWIMMER
Nearly where?

LAURA
My place.

He is wet. His bag is on the floor by his feet. These are his only certainties.

SWIMMER
What's going on?

LAURA
(mock confused)
I'm Laura.

SWIMMER
(bewildered)
Where is he? Where's the kid?

LAURA
He's fine. I knew they should have taken you to hospital. You came to, you said you were alright and you were happy to have me take you.

SWIMMER
Is the dad OK? I thought the dad was going to go back in.

LAURA
No he didn't go back in. You saved him. I've never seen anything like that. So brave. You said I'm going to stop this and you did. You saved that child's father.

She looks at him with overt adoration. Like he could have anything he wants.

LAURA (CONT'D)
You're a hero.

SWIMMER
I couldn't get the mother.

LAURA
What you did was a miracle.

SWIMMER
What was his name?

LAURA
 (Touching the swimmer's
 leg reassuringly)
 Do you mean the little boy's name?

The hand lingers.

DISSOLVE TO:

32

EXT. SAND DUNES. NIGHT.

32

The Bad Man walks along the dunes. He is making for the little orange tent the swimmer had pointed out from a distance.

On arrival at the bedraggled tent he dips inside, folds away the worn blanket and pillow, and without breaking rhythm, starts to dismantle the tent poles, pegs and cords.

He moves inside and out expertly.

Bit by bit it rolls away, creating a tiny bundle that fits under his arm.

He stands and looks at the spot.

All that is left is a flattened rectangle in the sand.

The winds are already blurring the edges of the shape into obscurity.

His task complete, he turns back towards the ridge of the dune and the car park it leads to.

Thirty feet along the ridge, the Bad Man sees the boy has made his way to the path.

The child is standing there in silent desperation, devoured by fear.

He shivers a little under the Bad Man's gaze and his eyes roam about as he ponders what crying out actually achieves in a situation like this.

The Bad Man looks at the child without so much as a blink. He is covered with a dusting of sand especially around his nose and mouth where his tears and slobbers have become caked with grit.

We can see he's tried to eat the grass or dirt.

His knees and hands are scratched from falling down and his face is weathered from exposure.

His clothes are damp from the night in the open air.

His reddened eyes are already lost in shock.

The Bad Man moves on.

The toddler tries to follow as he passes by.

A dry whimper murmurs at his back as he rouses himself.

The Bad Man turns to look at 'it' with the sharp focus of a scientific instrument.

The way a microscope looks at a new germ or a jaded doctor studies an X-ray.

There is no meaning in his gaze, he is simply measuring equations, examining the possibilities for the most expedient action.

Satisfied, or rather having understood the probabilities fully, he simply turns away.

After a dozen steps, the toddler realizes the Bad Man's leaving.

At first it is like a groan or a deep hum but as the distance between them opens, the power of the sound increases in an astounding way.

He now experiences a squeal that reverberates on a cosmic level, a noise of such pitch as to stop the gulls in the sky, to silence the waves.

He hears it all the way to the motorbike and even as he kick-starts the engine the sound still cuts through.

Does he drive away in haste? It's hard to say. Perhaps it's just us wishing him to flee. Perhaps it would just be more acceptable if he would, to escape this nerve-jangling howl.

33

INT. VAN. ROAD. NIGHT.

33

Laura waits for the traffic lights to turn green.

A FAMILY SALOON pulls up alongside. Her attention is suddenly disrupted by an incredible noise.

She turns as if commanded to look at its cause.

There in the back seat is a tiny TODDLER bawling. Its little cheeks are wet with hot tears and snot.

It is obliterating the air with a scream so desperate, as to suggest it might at any moment burst.

The mother in the car seems calm, not unsympathetic but almost oblivious.

Now there is a rasping drawing of breath, a beat, then incredibly the noise goes up a notch.

The sound echoes the desperation of the child on the beach.

Laura's eyes are locked on it.

The lights change and the saloon pulls away, taking the urgent cries off into the distance.

Laura is transfixed for a moment, then she moves to put the van in gear and pulls away, but the lights change to red again before she can.

She sits there, her eyes wandering, then drawn to the distant saloon still just visible far along the winding road.

An unexpected beat of contemplative stillness ensues.

We're seeing a burgeoning. A residue of memory.

And the meaning of the event she witnessed connecting with her.

Another CAR comes alongside.

Laura sees that the driver, a LAD with a trendy haircut, is leaning out the window trying to talk to her. Mates and girlfriends fill the car.

Laura winds her window down and thudding music comes into focus.

TRENDY LAD

I thought you was going to ignore me for a minute.

LAURA

No.

TRENDY LAD

Out dancing tonight?

LAURA

Not tonight.

With that, he jumps the red light, the car bleeding away into the night in its version of a burn-off.

34 EXT. ROAD. NIGHT.

34

Laura drives.

A man and woman emerge from bushes.

She drives on.

Two lads appear in the road. They smile and reach for the van's wing mirror as she passes.

She drives on.

A swaying bloke walks half in the road. His girlfriend is laughing. He raises his hands jubilantly as Laura passes.

She drives on.

35

EXT. ROAD. INDUSTRIAL ESTATE. NIGHT.

35

Laura sees a FIGURE on the opposite side of the road thumbing a lift. He is alone except for a kebab which he attends to with gusto.

Laura keeps a bead on him as he turns away from the road towards a supermarket car-park.

She drifts down the road, scanning, trying to spot him.

She stops and gets out. She walks at his pace then slows.

She can see headlights and other people moving.

A deep beat thuds. Too public, she turns to walk back to the van.

A white stretch limo has pulled up. A HORDE OF WOMEN pour out.

Unsteady on their heels, some stumble with drunken abandon.

They are giggling at anything - a dropped hat is hilarious, an exposed breast is gut-aching comedy.

Laura is reaching her key into the van door when one of the passing girls approaches her.

DRUNK GIRL

Hello love, yee alright there?

Laura nods quickly. The girl leans into her.

DRUNK GIRL (CONT'D)

Yee are gorgeous yee... what yee doing out here all in the dark alone love? Has some cunt upset yee?

Laura intimates that she is about to leave.

DRUNK GIRL (CONT'D)

It's only one o'clock hen, I'm not letting yeh go home yet. I'm not letting yeh. Girls come here, this lass is saying she's away home. Have yee see her? Here love, show the girls...

She steers Laura towards the crowd of girls.

They gather round peering in at her, then they start to chant.

FOURTEEN DRUNK SCOTTISH WOMEN
'Come on out tee night... come on
out tee night... looking right
tonight... come on out tee night'.

SKINNY DRUNK GIRL
Look at her... she looks like a
film star.

She waves the girls away but they start to hug her with over-familiar zest. It's all good humoured, but there's a volatile energy to it.

SKINNY DRUNK GIRL (CONT'D)
Has someone upset yee?

LAURA
No.

FAT GIRL
We are taking you intee the party
and we are gonna find out who's
upset yee.

Laura is swallowed into the happy throng. Gathered up in their flow towards the club entrance.

She's almost invisible in this moment, part of the party machine.

BIG MEN in black jackets and other figures gather at the doorway of the 'Deer Park Nightclub'.

Lads being drawn out by the high pitched energy of drunk girls on a hen night.

36 INT. DEER PARK NIGHTCLUB. SHORT WHILE LATER.

36

One of the girls, a drunk, SLOPPY BLONDE five years past her prime, leans in to Laura to be heard above the din of music.

SLOPPY BLONDE
You've got nice ear lobes.

LAURA
Really?

SLOPPY BLONDE
Very pretty. Nice to nibble.

She is close now, her breath hot on Laura's neck.

Laura allows her hand to come up and touch her ear lobe.

LAURA

I've never liked ear nibbling it gives me the jitters.

She takes hold of Laura's hand in a strange affectionate yet controlling grip.

SLOPPY BLONDE

You've got nice lips too.

LAURA

I'm not the kind of woman who cares to be touched by other women.

SLOPPY BLONDE

Why not?

LAURA

I'm not really interested in women.

SLOPPY BLONDE

Why not?

LAURA

I prefer men. They're predictable. I like to be in control.

SLOPPY BLONDE

Well you can control me.

LAURA

I find it easier to control men.

She puts the squeeze on, gripping Laura's hand like she's hanging on for dear life.

SLOPPY BLONDE

You think you're better than me?

The atmosphere is made tense by her sudden dislike.

Laura deals with it by looking into her eyes, and meeting her tense grip with a smile.

SLOPPY BLONDE (CONT'D)

I'm a smart woman you know. I'm not being funny but there aren't many smart women about. I'm a smart one, yeah, I'm not here to be mugged off.

(Beat)

Where you from?

LAURA

Do you know London?

SLOPPY BLONDE

Yes, I know London. Who are you?

LAURA

I'm Laura. We met a minute ago.

SLOPPY BLONDE

(drunk certain)

You're not from London. Something off about you. You're a wrong'un.

She throws down Laura's hand. Laura is swallowed up by the sudden, collective mass of dancing bodies.

Party people shoulder to shoulder.

The drunken girls are going wild.

Lights strobe, music booms.

Laura is at the centre of the action.

A lean LITTLE MAN is dancing close to get her attention. His moves come thick and fast.

The girls notice. The fat girl leans in between the little man and Laura.

FAT DRUNK GIRL

Throw him back, he's a tiddler!

The little man looks offended, but he styles it out trying to show his worth with an uncertain smile.

There is a building energy as she turns away and looks into the crowd.

The embarrassed little man moonwalks away.

Men are staring at her from all directions. Some openly, some furtive.

ANOTHER BLOKE starts to dance in front of her. He smiles hard into her the whole time.

Other men hover, their eyes locked on her.

People are talking to her.

Lads laugh at nothing, hoping she'll join in.

She does.

A COUPLE starts snogging nearby. The man overtly looking at Laura as he forces his tongue hard into his girl's head.

The dancing and music build.

The girls are all going wild, spinning like dervishes and braying like donkeys.

A spotlight finds them.

DJ
(over the P.A.)
Holy Moly!!

The girls laugh, flattered by the attention. Laura ducks instantly and flees.

From above, we see her squeeze away through the endless frenzy of bodies.

She tries another direction. We shift with her.

She turns again, looking for a different path.

Then a strobe light kicks in. A disorienting pulse of light and dark. Flash frames of outline, then form, outline-form.

She looks about her, gauging a route off the dance floor.

Sudden, hissing blasts from smoke machines belch clouds of white fog.

Everything is engulfed now - no warning - distance and intimacy are as one.

Hands loom touching her, turning her.

Faces leer inches from hers, bodies bump and grind in whiteout.

The lights flutter fusing the whirl of limbs and sound into a psycho-fairground ride.

Everything is flipped and twisted and she's lost in it.

Consternation. Overload.

Her head is swirling like something's going to fuse.

Her warning lights are flashing red.

Out! She needs to get out!

37

INT. DEER PARK NIGHTCLUB. RED CORRIDOR. MOMENTS LATER.

37

Laura moves anxiously along a curved red corridor.

Looks back to check the wild girls aren't following.

Walking wounded litter the long corridor.

A girl overcome with booze, legs splayed out. An underage lad gagging air into the floor.

On the curving red wall, she sees an 'EXIT' sign. She quickens in its direction.

Things quieten as she walks deeper into its long red plushness.

She stops. Another 'EXIT' sign points back in the direction she came from.

She turns back on herself.

She sees a door open up ahead. A girl emerges. Laura heads for that door.

38 INT. DEER PARK NIGHTCLUB. BATHROOM. CONTINUOUS. 38

Entering, she is confronted by a line of ten identical doors.

She turns to see a mirror wall reflecting the same line of doors.

She freezes. She's lost her bearings.

Then the door flings open and a YOUNG MAN walks in. It's the bloke she followed into the car park.

He looks at her, then smiles nervously.

LADIES MAN

I don't usually walk into the ladies. But there's a line of blokes out there waiting chat you up.

(Shrugs his shoulders)

No alternative.

(Beat)

My name's Andrew.

And in that moment everything shifts back into alignment for her.

She's in control again. Of where she is. And how she got here.

39 INT. DANCE FLOOR. SHORT WHILE LATER. 39

Laura is on the dance floor, moving, tempting.

Andrew is dancing next to her, smiling his head off.

She smiles back.

He sees his moment and moves even closer. She turns spinning, on the shining floor. He leans into her ear.

ANDREW

I was on my way home.

(Beat)

I'm pleased I came back.

Laura leans into his ear.

LAURA

I can't be seen leaving with you.

ANDREW

No problem.

He kisses her neck. Laura gives him a cautious smile.

He smiles back and winks as he boogies on.

40 INT. BLACK VOID. SHORT WHILE LATER.

40

Laura is on the black floor. Still dancing.

No music now. Just the sound of her and Andrew's dancing feet.

She turns, showing flesh.

Andrew's slipping deeper into the floor with each movement.

He's unaware of anything but her as he sinks into the blackness. She smiles.

He is just a head looking up at her, adoringly.

She turns away as he slips under.

The floor becomes solid again.

She walks back over the spot he went through. Picks up her skirt and walks away.

41 INT. BLACK VOID. UNDER THE FLOOR. CONTINUOUS.

41

Andrew is looking up at the spot where Laura would be if he could see through the blackness around him. His eyes adjust.

He realizes he's looking at the other side of the floor. That he's beneath it.

Laura's footsteps click... click overhead, diminishing.

He looks behind him to see the steps ascending into the underside of the floor.

He feels for the spot he came in through, but it's gone.

He looks down at his feet.

His toes slow slide along the lip of the step.

He tries to shift his weight, but his feet can't make contact.

He is weightless, as though underwater.

As he desperately tries to regain a footing, he drifts further away. Or the stairs drift. He can't tell which.

Everywhere is blackness. Only the stairs hold any affirmation of reality.

But there they go. Moving gently away into the dimming void, until the last suggestion of them is gone.

He hangs in this amniotic space deserted by everything he understands.

Suddenly the far-off darkness shifts.

Something is out there. Indistinct. But big and heavy.

A barely recognizable FORM drifting in the abyss.

A mass of deformed flesh.

Bellies balloon around it like a ghoulish Marilyn Monroe skirt.

Andrew drifts closer and sees a face, a distended bulk with tiny eyes.

They are alive these hopeless eyes, and they are looking at Andrew.

We realize this is, was, Colin.

His healthy frame mutated into this horrific form.

Andrew tries to speak but can't. He stares terrified.

Colin's eyes jolt with pain; swallowing and breathing at the same time.

Andrew is close now.

Suddenly Colin's giant arm reaches up. Swollen, gnarled fingers plead for grasp.

Andrew looks at the hand and takes it. This monstrous claw is somehow tender.

Andrew looks into Colin's face. It is submitting to some ambient decay, which has weakened the surface so that flakes of detritus drift from it.

The left side of the head is breaking apart like wet bread.

The mouth is puffed-up, the lips split, burst like sausages.

Then, gliding like a car on black ice, Colin's massive bulk is carried away on some current.

His eyes longing for rescue remain locked on Andrew until he disappears.

Andrew is alone again. Held by the black silence and terror.

We find Colin contained now inside a black box, a helpless mound of flesh, elbows, toes, panic, back and bum.

The box tips dramatically toward us, pouring him out like a child tilted from a basin.

He's no longer floating in liquid but carried on it instead, round corner after corner by the flush of blackness which swirls about his bulk.

Then, a settling as the blackness calms.

Below him, TWO LONG CYLINDERS are turning inwards on themselves like a mangle, crushing relentlessly.

Now this new surface tilts, making him slide in the oily residue that drains off his body.

His addled flesh shivers and the flaccid bulk looks like putrefied waste being shed into a bin.

The grind and judder of splitting flesh and shattering bone as his legs go in.

Stupefaction!

His eyes quiver, his lips tremble for some way to squeal out, but the body is purged of its filling by this abominable machine in less than a breath.

The emptying of a life, the discarding of its power, its hunger, its dreams.

All sapped away, wrung out.

This is a compelling display of destruction.

A dark harvesting.

An obliteration.

An unsettling realization of ignominious, absolute ending.

The flow of blood and flesh is quelled through sluices, taken away down long trickling gutters into another darkness.

The PURGED SKIN is seen now, spewing paper-thin from the mangle.

Unrecognizable as human skin.

Expelled like an empty disheveled bag, no longer needed.

The rollers release their grip and it falls away.

Almost weightless, it drifts in the dead airless void like a vast, broken, burst-shaped feather.

42 EXT. STREET. DOORWAY. DAY.

42

Hard, crisp sunlight blasts the front of a sandstone building.

This reflected light frames a recessed doorway, which holds no detail, it is a simple black void.

We recognise what this darkness signifies.

We look into it and, rather than gradually being able to discern some detail, the darkness persists in giving nothing away.

Then we hear a door latch turn and the heave of a door being pushed wide.

We hear the familiar click-click and swish of Laura's shoes and dress, and she emerges into the light.

We close on her face as she reacts to the glare of hard midday sun.

She identifies her path away from the scene of the crime and starts walking.

We track with her, close on her face the whole time.

As she walks into the perfect day, we hear the sounds of the world all around her.

The birds sing, the wind gathers, traffic hums in the distance, she passes people talking, somewhere nearby someone is drilling into the road.

Everything is completely ordinary.

43 EXT. TRAFFIC JAM. DAY.

43

Laura is in a long traffic jam approaching a busy junction. On the hunt again.

The traffic slips forward at a snail's pace. The rain hammers down.

Up ahead, a small, SODDEN MAN carrying plumes of individually wrapped red roses walks on the meridian strip between the traffic.

He is trying hard to sell them to the motorists.

As she approaches the junction, a curious thing happens. There is a tap on her window.

It's another VENDOR, rain streaming down his face. He's waving a rose at her.

Her right hand slips down to the little storage panel in the door where the bag we saw the gun delivered in sits.

Its ragged paper opening is just waiting there.

Her fingertips touch the lip of the bag as if checking its availability.

The Vendor points over his shoulder. She winds down the window.

VENDOR
(in a foreign voice)
The man, he pays you a flower.

He points to the traffic which is at a standstill going in the other direction, and to a particular car.

A large, plush four wheel drive with a SUITED DRIVER who beams a smile eagerly out across the concrete to her open window.

VENDOR (CONT'D)
He saw you, the man saw you.

She takes the rose. Easier than not to. Her window drifts up against the squall.

The Vendor steps away and the traffic shunts on.

She tosses the flower on the seat. A tragic 'toot toot!' from the flash car draws her eye.

The idiot in the 4x4 is waving his fingers out a slit he's opened in the window.

She returns her focus to the car in front which is just stealing forward another few feet.

As she engages the accelerator, she looks at her hand on the steering wheel.

There is a bright, red droplet on the index finger of her right hand. The one she grabbed the rose with.

She stops moving forward.

She brings the finger up to the space about three inches in front of her nose.

It's blood!

Her blood?

That's not possible, she has no blood.

Her hand rotates in some weird horror as she searches for the prick. She can't find one.

With her other hand she tentatively picks up the single stem.

She examines it - rotating it, careful to avoid any part of it that might contain a thorn.

And then, there it is - piercing the cellophane sheath like an exotic dagger.

She studies it - blood coats the spike and a red droplet or two sit among the many rain drops.

She looks out the window to the Vendor crossing through the standstill traffic.

He's winding a tissue paper bandage around his hand. Mystery solved.

She squashes the blood between her thumb and index finger as a horn sounds.

The space of about a car's length has opened up in front of her and this of course is intolerable for the traffic that lie directly behind her.

44

INT. VAN. EDINBURGH BACKSTREETS. NIGHT.

44

A LONE MAN walks.

Laura is watching as she creeps the van along at a snails pace, waiting to seize her moment, but the backstreet she's in is too narrow to pull up alongside him.

He suddenly turns down an alleyway. Laura pulls up opposite the alley.

She slips out of the cab and follows after him.

45

EXT. EDINBURGH BACKSTREETS. CONTINUOUS.

45

She hurries and takes the corner he did hoping to catch a glimpse of him, or better still that he catches a glimpse of her.

But he's not to be seen, just the sound of footsteps, fainter and fainter.

She hurries along after them.

She comes to a turning but she can't make out which way the sound is coming from.

She chooses straight ahead and, after hard walking for another few seconds, realizes he's not going to be found.

She turns back on herself again and, with a sharpness in her step, soon finds her way back to the street where she left the van.

But the van is gone.

She looks up and down the street as if someone might step out and with a shrug admit to the silly practical joke. But no one comes forth.

The streets seem narrower than before when she was in the van.

The houses are taller on each side of the road.

A dog barks somewhere.

A light goes on in a window high above her.

She walks on.

A shadow moves up ahead and A FIGURE walks out of the dark, across the street and into a house.

On she goes.

A sudden racket as loud unwholesome laughter grates against the night breeze.

Laura halts and seems for a moment almost about to turn round. She calculates her options before hurrying on.

She is scanning everywhere now, watching for the scum and the slime that she knows is out there.

She's seen it in action, she knows its dark hungers.

Noises seem to ooze from all sides.

A bottle shatters somewhere round the corner. Distant shouting and doors slamming.

She slides suddenly down a grassy bank and jumps into the ditch at the bottom.

She crawls under a door, which has been fly-tipped along with a load of filth, and hides.

Under there, she stops fretting and maybe even stops breathing.

This is the way to lay low. This is the way to survive for now.

46 EXT. POLICE CAR-POUND. DAWN.

46

Laura is on the opposite side of the street to the car pound.

She is looking through its gates at the Bad Man saying something to a car pound EMPLOYEE which makes him laugh a hearty, sordid sort of laugh.

Soon we see Laura's van approaching.

And as the man delivering it gets out, the chit is stamped and the Bad Man shakes the employees hand.

The Bad Man then gets into the van and drives it out onto the road.

He pulls up a short way from the pound and gets out.

He hands Laura the keys as she approaches and moves off towards his motorbike without a word.

The charming grin and ebullient demeanor he showed to the car-pound employee is gone without a trace.

Laura gets in and drives away.

47 EXT. DESERTED ROADS. NIGHT.

47

A distant FIGURE in a trench coat is walking by the side of the road, bent over against the rain.

The van draws along side him but he doesn't even look at it. Just moves on.

The van persists there at walking pace.

Finally he stops. The van stops.

His head is still bowed into the rain, then slowly he lifts it and half turns to face the van.

48

INT. VAN. ROAD. SHORT WHILE LATER.

48

Laura's driving. The man in the trench-coat sits in the passenger seat half turned towards the window. Rain thunders down on the van.

LAURA

You should get that coat off.

He fumbles awkwardly at the sodden coat to remove it.

His head is shrouded by the hood of his sweat top.

He pushes into the seat so as to obscure himself from Laura's vision.

His hand comes up to draw the hood back, and as he does so, there is a moment... a moment of halting sorrow.

The first note of disquiet is to see the paleness of his skin.

Alarm heightens as deformed lumps reveal themselves to be lips, eyelids and ears.

There is no balance to the congenitally deformed landscape of this face. It is a mish-mash of monstrous features colliding.

He leans down to the coat and transfers a glinting DOG WHISTLE from its pocket.

He taps the rain out, sucks it dry, then tucks it safe into his shirt pocket.

Now he turns in her direction, revealing it all, and she is already there, waiting for his eyes to meet hers.

And once they do, he sees her face is entirely untroubled by his.

His mother wouldn't have been able to look at him as she does now.

When people look at him they feel genetic shame. But she looks at him like he has a normal face.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Do people scream?

UGLY MAN

What!?

LAURA

When you come out from under that hood?

UGLY MAN

Oh.

The man sits in the corner of the cab unnerved and uncomfortable.

Then Laura looks over at him with a totally carefree smile, an irresistible smile, and then back at the road.

LAURA

Well do they?

UGLY MAN

Children scream.

LAURA

Do you get used to it?

He shakes his head.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Are you annoyed because I kept you standing in that rain? I just suddenly thought, 'Who am I picking up?' Because of your hood and everything... and then I thought, I can't leave anyone to walk in this.

He tries to distract himself from her beauty by looking out of his window.

LAURA (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

UGLY MAN

Nothing.

LAURA

Do you mind me mentioning it?

UGLY MAN

Mentioning what?

LAURA

You know...you're face.

It's obvious his thoughts are jumbled. His eyes look to the floor.

He tries to get his feelings out but they're confused.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Have I upset you?

UGLY MAN

No. I don't care. Well, no If you want to know... I just don't need it.

LAURA

Sorry I just thought it's better to be straight.

She gives the impression of someone trying to think of something to say.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Do you go in to Doach often then?

UGLY MAN

Every few days.

LAURA

Have you got friends there?

UGLY MAN

I go in to find work, once or twice a month. Down near the docks, they come along and pick you out the line.

LAURA

What sort of work?

UGLY MAN

Cleaning, laboring. Cash in hand. I got a night watchman job once but I couldn't hold on to it because of George.

LAURA

(delicately focusing on the new information)
Who's George? You didn't mention George.

UGLY MAN

My dog.

LAURA

Your doggy, Oh! Who's looking after him tonight?

UGLY MAN

He can look after himself.

LAURA

Where is he?

UGLY MAN

He'll be under the willows. Waiting for me.

LAURA

What willows?

UGLY MAN

I have a wee camp in Grancha Park.

LAURA

Is that the one with the big wall round it? That's about five miles back.

UGLY

Yeah.

LAURA

Why couldn't you keep that job then?

UGLY MAN

Well he's alright if I'm gone for a night but if it's too regular or more than a night he goes loony, howling and barking... someone's been murdered when they hear him.

LAURA

He misses you.

UGLY MAN

Aye.

LAURA

So why are you traveling at this time of night?

UGLY MAN

Because it takes a couple of hours to walk there.

LAURA

You're quite a tough little man aren't you!

She gives a longer more overtly admiring look.

UGLY MAN

(bemused)

What's going on?

(to himself)

What's happening?

He finds his mouth working again almost without warning. It's all suddenly too much for him.

UGLY MAN (CONT'D)

What's happening? Is it a joke or something?

LAURA

What are you talking about?

UGLY MAN
You looking at me like you want it.
Like it's on a plate.

LAURA
I'm being nice to you that's all.

The little man is almost trembling with nervousness. So far out of his comfort zone.

UGLY MAN
Why?

LAURA
Well... I don't know. I like you.

UGLY MAN
I don't want pity.

LAURA
And you have a nice mouth... a kind mouth.

UGLY MAN
My mouth!?

LAURA
Yes, it's cute! Some people have nice eyes or hair...or big muscles. You have a nice mouth. What's wrong with that?

The little man sits with all this revelation churning around in his little head.

UGLY MAN
I've got a nice mouth??

LAURA
Yeah...

She looks at him from time to time glancing away from the road, gradually making him more and more comfortable with her warm smiles and that specific kind of eye-contact.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Everybody's got something. I have really nice legs...they're my best part.

The Ugly Man's little eyes look down at those long legs.

We can see him afraid to look at this kind of woman in this context.

She is opening doors he nailed shut a long time ago.

LAURA (CONT'D)
What do you think?

UGLY MAN
What?

LAURA
About me? What's my best feature?

He looks at her.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Don't be afraid.

UGLY MAN
I don't know. Everything?

LAURA
Oh, that's very nice... I think
that's the best compliment I've
ever had.

They drive now, the rain hammering against the window and
Laura smiling so he can see her smile.

The Ugly Man is trembling with an intense, alarming
excitement.

More and more his eyes wander to her, each time she meets his
gaze with effortless sincerity.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I've got an idea, why don't you
come and work for me today instead?

UGLY MAN
Doing what?

LAURA
Odd jobs. Nothing too difficult. A
few rooms that need sorting out.

UGLY MAN
How far away is it?

LAURA
An hour's drive from here.

UGLY MAN
That's too far, I won't get back in
time.

LAURA
Don't worry about George. I'll
drive you back, how's that? I'd
like to meet George and see your
camp.

We see his hands move furtively as he takes a nip of skin between his thumb and finger... and pinches himself to make sure he's not dreaming.

He looks back at her almost expecting her to disappear.

UGLY MAN

I can't understand how a bird like you doesn't have a man about. I feel strange.. I don't know what you want me to do.

LAURA

Oh, don't be nervous. I won't bite.

UGLY MAN

(suspiciously)

I mean what are you doing up here all alone? Driving around all alone?

LAURA

(smiles)

I get asked that question a lot.

UGLY MAN

Do you ever answer it?

She laughs and gives him a little nudge.

He smiles, maybe for the first time in years, and in that moment we know he is lost.

49 EXT. DERELICT HOUSE. NIGHT.

49

A remote derelict house set some way back from the main road.

Laura is walking toward the door, her key aimed at the lock.

Behind her the Ugly Man edging along the path with uncertain footsteps.

The key turns and the interior beckons.

50 INT. DERELICT HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

50

At the end of the hall a staircase winds its way up into infinite blackness.

Bits of the ceiling are on the floor and the ancient wallpaper is peeling off the walls.

Laura coaxes him in with a smile and swings the door shut behind him. They climb the stairs.

51

INT. BLACK VOID. SHORT WHILE LATER.

51

As before, the blackness is everywhere. The sounds of their footsteps echo on the black marble floor.

As Laura walks, she looks over her shoulder as she lets her top drop through her fingers.

The Ugly Man moves as if on a chain. Eyes locked on her.

He pulls his shirt up over his torso.

The steel dog-whistle pops out of his pocket and falls through the darkness like a slither of sunlight.

It lands with a sharp *tinkle-tinkle*.

The noise brings on a silence like that after a gun crack.

Stirred, he looks at her, the other-worldliness is gone. The spell is broken. He opens his mouth weakly.

UGLY MAN

Ha... Cha Hel Hello...

LAURA

Hello.

UGLY MAN

This is... I am. This is... I am asleep?

LAURA

Yes.

UGLY MAN

You're asleep too?

LAURA

Yes I am.

UGLY MAN

This is great isn't it... I love this.

LAURA

Yes.

UGLY MAN

Cold.

LAURA

We won't let that stop us.

UGLY MAN

I feel cold? I'm asleep aren't I?

LAURA
Of course you are.

Suddenly afraid, his eyes come off her and he turns the other way.

His eyes search the darkness. They don't need to search far.

There, frozen in different moments of creeping stalk, are FOUR BLACK ALIENS.

At first they're just shapes, dream images, unthreatening.

Yet in a moment, as the idea of them becomes clearer, they become totally menacing.

He steps backwards, away from them and towards Laura.

UGLY MAN
I don't like it...

Suddenly she is there on his shoulder.

UGLY MAN (CONT'D)
Where's George?

LAURA
Under the willows.

UGLY MAN
My mouth's dry. Everything's going at a hundred miles an hour.

LAURA
Come to me.

The Ugly Man is frozen in some weird mind space.

His eyes take in the horror of the place around him and the information freezes him dead so that he can turn neither right or left.

His eyes simply dart about trying to find a place to rest that is not crazy and not inhuman and they find her.

He steps forward in the direction of that only thing that has any hope in it.

UGLY MAN
I'm dreaming... dreaming.

LAURA
Yes, yes we are.

UGLY MAN
Good.

As the man takes another step to her, she reaches out to him while taking a step backwards and he, like a dumb animal, is summoned forward again.

Another shape emerges from the darkness... the Bad Man.

He steps over to where the little silver dog-whistle fell.

He crouches now and picks it up carefully.

He looks at the object for a moment, then, having understood it, slips it into his pocket.

He steps silently back into the depths of the darkness again and it is as if he had never been there.

LAURA

You don't want to wake up do you?

UGLY MAN

No, never.

LAURA

They're gone.

UGLY MAN

They better be. Gave me-self a
right fright there.
(reproaching himself)
Fucking shitter.

LAURA

Come closer. It's warmer here.

The Ugly Man comes on reluctantly, like a man stepping onto the gallows. He tries a smile, coaxing himself.

UGLY MAN

(reassuring himself)
Okay.

Laura is working to keep him in line. He steps on and looks to the floor as it takes him in.

He double takes. Laura beckons.

He breathes hard, eyes questioning.

His limbs edge into action.

The shadow figures withdraw.

At each step he persuades himself to take the next.

The frailty of his progress compels her. Her body falls into a new rhythm, more insistent.

Her gyrations become a sensual dance.

Her fingers click-click to provoke him.

His eyes widen.

Her arms, hips and neck scintillate.

His mouth hangs open. Soon he is in it up to his chin.

He takes a long, terrified look at Laura. She smiles at him like nothing's happening.

He takes a deep, terrified breath, holds his nose and puts his head under.

Laura stops, turns and moves back out of the blackness towards the stairs, collecting her clothes as she goes.

We read the echo of fragility in the movement of her eyes and body.

She seems less exact, less vigorous, less disconnected.

52

INT. DERELICT HOUSE. DAWN.

52

Movement through darkness as Laura emerges back into the soft grey gloom of the house.

She is dressing as she walks, unfolding her shirt out from under her arm and reaching into it.

She is on the stairs now as she buttons up, descending quickly to the entrance hall.

At the bottom of the stairs she stops to fasten her shoes.

And as she stands again to approach the front door, she catches sight of something looming next to the door, a shape completely shocking to her.

Her own reflection.

Still and wary in a large jaded mirror.

She is completely startled by it.

Alarmed by herself, she backs away.

Eyes still locked on her image, which diminishes in size as she retreats from it.

She stands stock still and looks away.

Then the slowest head turn ever back to the mirror until she locks eyes with herself.

Then she approaches her reflection with trepidation.

Now she's close up to it.

The eyes lock, reflection and reflectee. Mesmerized.

She raises her hand to touch her reflected hand.

A standing chill.

She looks at her face from different angles.

Slowly and deliberately shifting her pose, like an animal coming to terms with its own existence. Like light comprehending glass.

53 EXT. GRANCHA PARKLAND. NIGHT.

53

The Bad Man steps off his motorbike and moves to the wrought iron gates of Grancha Parkland.

They are locked.

He steps back, scanning the area. He throws his leg over metal spikes.

He walks up the pasture. Three weeping willows rustle in the wind.

He gets to about twenty feet away and stops.

BAD MAN
(calls)
George!... George!

Nothing. He looks about. Moves closer to the hulking trees. Listening. The trees groan in the wind.

BAD MAN (CONT'D)
George.

Suddenly there is a scramble in the leaves near him.

He turns to face the sound. The wind whistles.

Then aggressive barking... but in the other direction.

He turns.

Suddenly he reaches for his leg and spins. His hands tear at whatever is grasping his thigh. In the half light he can see.

A MASSIVE ALSATIAN. George.

Eyes rolling in anger, teeth locked into his leg.

George twists trying to tear the leg off.

He raises a fist but as he brings it down, the beast is gone.

The Bad man moves towards a fallen tree and gathers up a long stick.

Armed, he turns, but at that moment, George is in the air leaping at his throat. The man gets his arm up.

George knocks him to the ground and is on him, teeth locked on his forearm. H

He reaches to tear it away. George snaps viciously at the hand, then bounds off.

The Bad Man gets unsteadily to his feet.

The beast is moving at the edge of the willows. The Bad Man looks at it. It looks at him.

The Bad Man turns seeking higher ground or some other advantage.

George bounds out into the clearing. Then checks and returns into cover.

The Bad Man is struggling to keep the animal in his sights. The trees hiss and groan in the winds.

The Bad Man suddenly turns to and strides for the gate. He clambers over it. We see George weave amidst the trees.

There, ominous for a moment, then gone.

The Bad Man clutches at his forearm, trying to stem a high pitch wheeze of escaping gas from the wound.

An insistent hiss like decompression is visible through the flapping edges of the ripped sleeve.

He takes A GUN from his inside pocket and loads the clip.

He reaches into his pocket. Takes out the Ugly Man's dog-whistle, holds it to his lips and blows.

We hear nothing.

54

INT. DERELICT HOUSE. DAWN.

54

Laura is still looking at herself in the mirror.

From somewhere nearby, a strange buzzing seeps into the space.

It drones and persists, becoming frantic.

The space falls silent for a brief moment then the buzz starts up again.

Relentless and adamant.

The noise is such that we see Laura slip out from her confrontation with her own reflection.

She turns and there in a little window above the mirror is the source of the noise.

A BEE throwing itself in skittish pulses at the glass desperate to escape to the brightening dawn light outside.

Laura's eyes, weary and bewildered, just watch it.

Its wings beat against the glass, the sound intensifying until it seems the insect might almost burst into flame such is its desire.

And in that moment we can see that something within Laura is slain and something born.

Slowly, she reaches towards it.

Her hand moves along the glass then scoops it up lightly and, without haste, closes her fingers around it.

The bee is inside her fist now and the buzzing is wild.

We focus on Laura's hand as she walks slowly through the hall.

We hear the sound of the desperate insect thrashing against her closed palm.

She reaches the door and her other hand twists the handle open.

55 EXT. DERELICT HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

55

We cut outside to see her fist open and the bee fly out from it.

She draws the door shut again without haste and we remain with the bee as it weaves lazily towards the ragged flowers in this forgotten garden.

We watch it arrive at a blossom and alight on it.

It steps over the bright yellow petals to gently find its way to the pollen rich core inside.

The buzzing is different now - soothing, and the skittishness replaced with a swaying, humming dance.

The bee is blushed with pollen as it emerges like some drunk lover crawling out of an orgy.

It rises into the air again, drifting with the wind to its next beautiful rendezvous.

We hear a metallic rasp.

The front door is being pushed open again.

TWO FIGURES, just silhouettes in the gloom of the interior at first stumble out of the house.

They seem to shy from the light for a moment but it is simply balance they are struggling with.

Laura and something heaving for breath.

They're holding each other.

They draw closer.

She is holding it up. Supporting it, walking it.

It's standing now, sucking in air through its tiny misshapen mouth.

It has legs, massive, bloated, and arms that hang flaccid.

Yet somewhere inside this bulbous mass, the folds of fat, the taut skin about to burst.. is a man.

The Ugly Man.

They glint now as they step out of the building's shadow... they're wet.

Laura's hair trails over the Ugly Man as she struggles, holding him.

Sodden and weak they move slowly. They step uneasily with each other.

He manages to hold onto a tree, but now he straightens, seems to find his feet.

She lets him step... then step again.

He's walking, she moves away from him, willing him to keep moving. He steadies himself, then presses on.

She hurries to the van and starts it urgently. The gears grind as it roars out of the drive.

56

INT. LAURA'S VAN. CONTINUOUS.

56

Laura is driving hard away from the house. Fleeing.

We see her over-take the struggling figure of the Ugly Man and out onto an A road.

57 EXT. A FIELD. DAY.

57

A small, suburban cul-de-sac on the very edge of a field.

The Ugly Man is crawling, dragging himself through the muddy ground towards it.

His bloated bulk is sweating and breathless from the effort, his flesh torn and bruised from his journey.

The rooftops of the houses loom above the hedges, he seems feet away from rescue, as if he could almost reach out for a doorbell and everything would be alright.

The Bad Man enters the scene with sudden, alarming resolve.

His bike revs at the entrance to the field. He looks into it intensely and sees the long grass move from something crawling through it.

He shifts the bike into gear and we see him make a b-line for the cul-de-sac.

58 EXT. CUL-DE-SAC. CONTINUOUS.

58

Birds are flitting in a bird table. The PAPER BOY is cycling down the hill to the shops. Steam is coming from the vents outside bathroom windows. The small close is waking up.

The Bad Man pulls up at the mouth of the street, stops the bike and dismounts.

He can see the bulk of the Ugly Man just appearing through the ragged hedges that scrub onto the pavement.

Facing him are the garden gates and beyond the waking houses and certain rescue.

The Bad Man is now running. He heads for a car parked in a driveway. He arrives at the drivers window and ploughs his fist through it.

He reaches inside and opens the door with deft continuous movement and gets in.

A moment later the engine starts and the car is eased into reverse, suddenly everything is controlled urgency again.

He turns and takes off.

He stops just ahead of the Ugly Man who is now half on the path, gets out, opens the back door then walks over to him and drags him back towards the car, glancing about at windows and doors with the full awareness that they might open at any moment.

The Ugly Man is bundled in head first.

UGLY MAN
 (muffled)
 SOMEONE SAVVVVE MMEEEEEEEEEE!

The Bad Man unleashes vicious blows to his mouth and temple, then hurries around the car, opens the other back door, leans in and drags him inside by the armpits.

The Bad Man now walks back to the opposite side, folds an errant leg in then slams the door shut.

Then he gets in.

59 INT. STOLEN CAR. SAME. 59

The handbrake is released, the wheels turn, dust and flecks rise in the air.

A net curtain is swept wide to see the car drive casually away and out of the street.

We are close on the Bad Man's face.

We/he hears the sound of a woman's shocked voice, intimate, as if she was in the car with us.

WOMAN'S VOICE
 Oh my God...

The Bad Man turns his head very suddenly and looks out of the passenger window, crouching to see the upper floor of one of the little houses.

He looks directly to where the voice is coming from.

There standing at the bedroom window is an OLD WOMAN.

She is looking straight at the Bad Man as he drives out of the street.

As he slows, she lets the curtain close.

And through the nets he sees her silhouette as she shakily raises a phone to her ear.

He almost stops but instead guns the engine into life and advances in a cloud of exhaust fumes.

60 INT. HIGHLAND ROADS. DAY. 60

Laura storms through the countryside.

Green flashes on either side, the road is a gleaming slate cord that stretches out away from her, drawing her in and along.

Then without warning everything slows.

The engine dies, the steering stiffens.

She looks at her dials. The petrol gauge tells its tale. E for the end.

She brings the van onto the verge by a lake and lets it roll to a standstill.

Puts on the hand brake and gets out. Without missing a beat she sets off at a march.

The camera sweeps fast along the road - it is travelling just fifteen feet above the tarmac.

We soar over a blind summit and there just on the bend is Laura's van. It's empty.

We slow to see inside, no sign of life, other than her gun and phone buzzing on the passenger seat.

We resume our plunge through the landscape. Faster and faster.

Another two miles down the road and we see a figure up ahead, walking fast along the highway. It's Laura.

She slows as if sensing that there is something pursuing her.

Soon we are right behind her. We can almost see the hairs on the back of her neck rising.

She turns suddenly as if ready to confront whatever or whoever is there.

But there is nothing there.

Just her standing on the road, alone, in the middle of nowhere.

We see trembling fear freeze in her face, uncertainty in her eyes.

Doubt, suspicion, the expectation of doom is locked in her gaze as it searches out to the horizon for the thing that must come.

But it doesn't.

She looks at this wild world around her.

The bleak moors, the mountains beyond.

And the sounds of the wind rushing through this valley seem to harmonize in some rhapsody as if finding clarity within her hearing for the first time.

We can see that somehow, in facing her fear, she has found something else instead. A strange sense of acceptance.

She stands letting these feelings take root.

The wind blusters through her hair and clothes, and we watch, as she lifts and stretches her arms and fingers wide and open to feel it.

And standing still, it's as if the world falls into her.

She closes those beautiful eyes with abandon as if she feels the sensual possibilities of this body for the first time. The wind embraces her.

61 INT. ROADSIDE CAFE. SHORT WHILE LATER.

61

We are in a tiny roadside cafe with views out over hills of heather.

The place is busy with tourists, back packs at their feet, sipping tea and munching scones.

Laura sits on her own at a little tartan-covered table.

There is a plate in front of her and on it, a piece of cake.

She regards it with trepidation.

It's a beautiful object, sculptural and garish. White and fluffy, with cream falling from its centre and a varnished cherry on top.

She lifts her fork and cuts into it delicately.

Up and up it comes, the distance between the plate and her mouth seems extraordinarily long.

It arrives at her lips, which open tentatively as she slowly eases the magical parcel of nectar inside.

Then she lowers the fork back to the plate.

Now she sits as if her every thought was with this intruder inside her.

Her mouth is still as she contemplates her next move.

Suddenly her jaw moves and she begins to chew. But so cautiously, like she were defusing a bomb.

A moment later she is still again. She decides to swallow.

And then shock, at not being able to.

She coughs into her hand violently. Laura fumbles for a napkin to catch the mouthful of food and wipes her mouth.

Heads have turned to see what the commotion is.

Through faint breath, Laura waves the attention away as if to say 'I'm fine.'

LAURA
(recomposing)
It just went down the wrong way.

62 INT. COUNTRY INN. HIGHLANDS. SHORT WHILE LATER. 62

Cut to a roaring fire. A pair of hands enter frame and warm themselves at the glow.

Cut wide to see Laura in front of a large open fire in a pleasant country inn.

There is an atmosphere of convivial early evening chat and sheltering welcome.

She warms herself and listens to the sounds of humanity chime its soothing tones in the warmth.

63 EXT. REMOTE JUNCTION. DAY. 63

Laura is walking - walking - walking.

She is approaching a junction where A MAN waits at a bus stop.

He notices her coming, her long legs striding, her shoes not made for walking clattering.

We see him avert his gaze like a gentleman as she draws near. He's a drawn pale being, full of thoughts.

She marches past without noticing or slowing.

When she's about fifteen feet beyond the stop, he turns and calls after her.

QUIET MAN
The bus'll be along in a minute.

Laura looks round surprised by the outburst.

She looks at him blankly for a moment.

He looks away with a demeanor that says 'well that's the information, do with it as you will'.

Laura considers for a beat longer, then makes her way back towards the bus stop.

64 INT. BUS. ROAD TO CAWDOR. SHORT WHILE LATER.

64

Laura and the Quiet Man on an empty bus.

Laura is sitting right behind the driver staring straight into that black panel that separates him from the passengers.

The Quiet Man sits a little further back.

He is looking at her, or rather at her face reflected in the dark panel.

He can tell she is not absentmindedly staring into mid space but unflinchingly at her own reflection.

He feels his breath stop as that face stares at itself, completely absorbed, suspicious and lost.

BUS DRIVER

Have you no jacket with you?

Nothing from Laura.

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)

Up here you need a jacket with you -
even when there's not a cloud in
the sky, rain's always a
possibility.

Laura looks out the window now. We see her soften into the hum of the bus as it climbs. The mountains closing in around them.

The Quiet Man notices Laura's open purse on the seat beside her.

Her change is slipping out of it, along the worn fabric and onto the floor with every change of gear. She seems oblivious to it.

The Quiet Man steps across the aisle, gathers the coins without any fuss then lets them stream through his fingers into the purse. He snaps it shut.

It's all done in a moment and he places the purse beside her as he turns away.

As he sits, Laura speaks.

LAURA

Where am I?

QUIET MAN

On the road to Cawdor.

LAURA

Is it a busy place?

QUIET MAN

No, it's a quiet place.

(Beat)

Is that where you're headed?

LAURA

No.

QUIET MAN

Where are you headed?

LAURA

I don't know.

QUIET MAN

Are you okay? Has something happened?

LAURA

Yes, I'm alright. I think. Where would you go?

QUIET MAN

How's that?

LAURA

If you could go anywhere... where would you go?

QUIET MAN

Sight seeing do you mean?

LAURA

Yes, that's it. Sight seeing.

The beautiful landscape rolls by outside the rain swept window and we see this man begin to think.

QUIET MAN

Well there are a million places.

That's no use to her, so she leans slightly forward and repeats the question for the driver, seeking a serious answer.

LAURA

If you could go anywhere... where would you go?

We glimpse her desperation.

As the driver ponders, we see the Quiet Man looking at the back of Laura's head.

She's unaware of him now, every fibre of her being listening for an answer from the lump at the wheel.

QUIET MAN
I'd start with Cawdor Castle.

She ignores that answer, so as to conceal its importance to her.

LAURA
(to driver with a casual
but precise tone)
Then I'd like to go to Cawdor
Castle please.

She returns to staring into the weird black space that hovers in front of her in which everything seems to shudder and sway, everything except her.

65 EXT. CAWDOR. SHORT WHILE LATER. 65

The bus is pulling away from the town bus stop.

The Quiet Man and Laura are walking up the high street. Laura has his big coat draped over her shoulders.

They could as easily be with each other as not. The distance between them is the distance maintained by strangers and he holds it.

66 INT. CAWDOR. SUPERMARKET. SHORT WHILE LATER. 66

We are in a vast, white supermarket.

Laura shadows the Quiet Man as he navigates his trolley through the aisles.

He considers a pre-packed casserole, checking the price twice before replacing it.

Laura's face, almost cocooned in his big heavy coat, is bleached out under the glare of the kilowatts, which blast everything with a cleansing intensity.

67 EXT. ROAD TO THE QUIET MAN'S HOUSE. SHORT WHILE LATER. 67

Two figures walking.

The Quiet Man carries plastic bags. Laura follows in his long strides.

He trudges up the little path to the door of a concrete council house and finds the keyhole.

She follows him inside without ceremony.

68 INT. THE QUIET MAN'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. SHORT WHILE LATER.68

A little room bathed in half-light from the dense curtains. Laura sits on a low, brown couch under the window; the Quiet Man in an armchair.

They are watching a show on television together, dinner on their laps.

Laura leans over her food, her hand moves here and there, selecting but unsure.

The Quiet Man wipes his plate clean with a piece of bread.

Laura brings a forkful of meat up to her mouth and inserts it like a child who has just mastered the art of cutlery.

Her lips close tight around the delivery.

She tries to swallow.

Same result as when she tried to eat the cake, sudden tension gripping her face and throat.

She sets the fork aside with a rattle and brings her hand to her mouth to suppress a violent choke.

The Quiet Man is on his feet and reaching his big hand around to pat her back.

She gets up and shuffles towards what must be the bathroom.

We see the Quiet Man return to his seat and sit listening.

The sounds coming up the hall seem controlled. He sips from a large mug. His eyes return to the television.

DISSOLVE TO:

A record revolves on a plastic turntable.

We see the Quiet Man on his knees slipping a black disc back into its paper sleeve then stand and return to his armchair.

Music fills the room. 'Wild is The Wind' by David Bowie.

Laura sits back into the sofa, her eyes gazing into the ceiling.

The music builds and the space slips incrementally into a different attitude.

We follow Laura's eyes around the room.

To see the old framed photos and ephemera accumulated by an ordinary life.

Then to the television still on - alive with the image of a tiger prowling through long grass.

Her gaze comes to rest on the Quiet Man, his eyes shut, his hand pats the arm of his chair gently in time with the music. He looks happy and tired.

Laura joins the moment by mimicking his, her hand now also tap tap-taping on the arm of her chair in time with the rhythm.

He stirs, looks at her for a moment and there is nothing strange to be seen, everything is completely normal, Laura listening to the music with him.

Without a word he stands, picks up the tray and leaves the room.

The moment he's out of the room, Laura's hand stops moving.

We watch Laura now so still and void with the music swirling around her and we feel the vast distance between her and humanity.

We hear the sounds of the kitchen things being put away and a tap running.

Laura remains still. The music builds the energy in it stepping relentlessly to crescendo.

Laura now looks down at her hand in that disassociated way she does.

She seems somehow to be trying to find a connection to the action.

Her fingers tap in and around the beat rather than on it now... She is no longer mimicking... There is something happening there at the extremity of her craft... something is seeping in.

She looks down at the moving limb as if it's a curiosity to her.

69 INT. THE QUIET MAN'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. SHORT WHILE LATER. 69

Laura lies in the Quiet Man's bed. Her eyes are set in some mid-point.

The Quiet Man sets a dainty cup of tea and saucer on a cardboard box near the bed as if it were the finest delicacy. Laura's eyes read it, then seem to return to the ceiling and a kind of meditative state.

LAURA
(sense-checking)
You don't feel with your brain.

QUIET MAN

No you don't.

He angles a bar fire towards her with the toe of his boot, then takes his leave.

We slowly drift from Laura's face to the open door, which leads to the front room.

The Quiet Man is sitting back in his armchair.

He puts a leg up on a stool in a vain attempt to find comfort.

His head slumps slowly to the side as he falls asleep in the chair like a kind of giant guarding a princess.

Slowly the ambience of safety overrides the small house.

Nothing moves.

70

EXT. STREAM. MORNING.

70

Undulating hills reaching trees and peaty bog.

She is guided by him - led up rocky paths and down slippery banks.

They reach a fast flowing stream with stepping-stones dotted across its width.

A little waterfall a hundred yards away roars. Trees rustle in accord and the sky seems open to the attendant energies.

She looks down at the water, judging it, and he in that same moment instinctively without a word gathers her up into his arms.

She does not waver as he steps out onto the semi-submerged stones.

He finds his balance and moves with that focused certainty that a man finds when he's in charge of something he cares about.

She is motionless in his arms. He senses her trust and is emboldened by it.

They are almost over to the other side. He stops to look along the river and nods to her to look too.

She follows his gesture and can see figures, edging towards the ledge of the waterfall.

Screams of exhilaration as a figure rushes over the ledge and plunges.

Another figure throws itself into space, giving itself over to the affects of gravity and water.

Laughter explodes with splashes as more bodies launch into space.

The Quiet Man moves on without haste or fatigue.

At the other side he sees the path is muddy and the long grass wet, so he doesn't set her down but keeps walking with her in his arms.

71 EXT. CAWDOR CASTLE. SHORT WHILE LATER.

71

We are high in a blustering turret.

Laura is braced between two granite blocks in the space where once arrows would have been aimed at invaders. Her shirt is open.

The Quiet Man is nestled beside her. They are kissing.

His face is latched onto hers like his life depended on it.

This is no longer a set piece.

She's risking, exploring.

She wants something to happen to her, uncertain what that something is.

They break out from the kiss slowly.

As he breathes her in we see her hand rising slowly up from her side.

The hand is open and dramatic like that of a gunslinger about to draw.

Up it comes and suddenly it is there beside his head and then she clutches his head to her.

They kiss again.

Her fingers move in his hair. Her tongue appears furtively between her lips.

The Quiet Man is drawing on her mouth like it's the source of life.

Then the Quiet Man comes up for air and freezes.

He can hear footsteps ascending the stone staircase.

He gathers Laura's garments into place as best he can before TWO ELDERLY HIKERS appear in yellow anoraks.

They shuffle off the turret and into the stairwell with an embarrassed nod to the tourists.

72 EXT. MOUNTAIN. HIGHLANDS. DAY. 72

The wind gathers as the Bad Man walks up a steep incline to the rocky summit of a mountain.

He arrives at the highest vantage point and stops.

His eyes reach out purposefully over the landscape.

He looks intently to the west over the rolling hills that disappear into mists.

Then he looks out to the north and broken fields and pockets of water giving way to the ocean and the sky.

He turns again to scan the east with its dense woodlands and climbing peaks.

Somehow we almost get a sense he is lost.

73 INT. BROKEN DOWN BARN. NIGHT. 73

Laura moves with grace through a derelict barn on farmland.

Not leading, as before, but led.

She looks into the Quiet Man's face and he into hers.

Then he lays her down in the hay.

His body, flushed with life and lust moves over her, finding her form under the clothes.

She responds to his hands.

He draws her skirt up around her waist. His fingertips move inside the top of her knickers.

Then he sweeps the index finger round the rim of the cotton stretching them over her.

She wiggles up off her ass allowing them to be drawn, slowly and with calmness and poise, down her long thighs, over her knees, along her calves and around her heels and toes.

She is still, except for the rise and fall of her breathing.

He looks at her magnificent beauty exposed and offering itself.

His hands move along her calves and knees and hips and then ascend to her face.

He holds her head and kisses her with fervor.

He moves over her, finding his position to enter.

She reaches her hand along his back drawing him close.

He bears down, then withdraws shifting his shoulders, realigning.

He pushes down again, hesitantly, seeking entry.

Again, he shifts and adjusts until slowly he realizes...

There is no orifice!

She cannot be penetrated.

We see him lost in his thoughts as he tries to grapple with the finality of this.

He moves lower and eases into a more relaxed embrace, his head now on her shoulder.

He nestles there quietly, his eyes full of disturbance but focusing instead on her beauty and the pleasure of her touch.

QUIET MAN

I can't hear your heart.

He moves his hand to her wrist to feel her pulse. Then shakes his head.

QUIET MAN (CONT'D)

It's like you're dead.

He moves his ear to her chest again.

QUIET MAN (CONT'D)

That's so weird.

He sits up, looks at her and then goes to check her pulse again.

She gently recoils.

She embraces him, deeply and with equal disquiet.

She reaches between his legs delicately.

We see him respond to her touch. His back tightens and he moves with her gentleness to and fro.

She kisses him on his neck.

Then he kisses her face.

Their tempo gently builds, becoming committed again. Hands sweeping over bodies, mouths locking together.

74

INT. BROKEN DOWN BARN. MORNING.

74

The Quiet Man lies fast asleep in the makeshift bed.

Laura is standing and dressing a few feet away.

Her manner is flat, unemotional.

She looks for all the world like someone dressing to go to work.

She is distracted now as the man shifts.

He murmurs and fidgets, something is disturbing his slumber.

She turns to watch him.

His face is taugth, his eyelids flicker with dreaming.

She stands there like a scientist, observing.

Now his lips mouth soft words, barely audible, distant.

QUIET MAN

LLaaauurrraa....

Laura doesn't start or even lean closer but remains still, simply watching and listening.

The man is now trembling and with sweat beaded on his brow.

His chest rises and falls with unseen exertions in dreamland. And he is mumbling again.

QUIET MAN (CONT'D)

Laaauurraaa... Laaauurrrraaaaaa..

His voice although muffled, is anxious, calling out to her urgently from the other side of sleep.

Laura leans slowly forwards and touches his shoulder.

Suddenly he jolts.

His eyes open and he gasps a breath as if coming up from icy depths.

He sees her standing there looking at him.

QUIET MAN (CONT'D)

(matter of fact)

My God, what a crazy dream. That was so weird and real... frightening. I was lying here next to you really worried that those doors were going to open. Couldn't let my eyes close for fear they would.

(MORE)

QUIET MAN (CONT'D)

I was watching them for ages and ages, getting really worried like I knew something was going to come for me. Then it did. ...Those doors opened and I could see a shadow outside, it was moving closer and closer, coming towards me, sort of floating, and it stood here by the bed looking down at me. Snarling at me. And I was paralysed by it. So I called out to you knowing you were lying next to me, to wake me. To rescue me.

He looks up at her through squinting eyes.

She waits, letting him gather his senses.

Then he smiles a little at his own silliness.

QUIET MAN (CONT'D)

I thought something terrible was going to happen.

Laura looks down at him then turns away and finishes getting dressed.

He looks at her realizing. He sits up on an elbow.

QUIET MAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

LAURA

I'm wondering where to go now.
Where would you go now? If you could go anywhere...

We see him focus and his expression changes as he takes in what she is saying.

He draws breath about to speak.

75

EXT. ISLAND FERRY. HIGHLANDS. MORNING.

75

The early morning sun shimmers in the dappled water of a loch.

A small ferry is making its way steadily across.

On the deck, the Bad Man sits on a little bench, a different motorbike parked nearby.

It's just as dark and powerful as the old one.

The Bad Man is reading a local newspaper.

His expression remains blank as he reads the headline:

"TERROR CRIME STRIKES HIGHLAND IDYLL. LOCAL GRANDMOTHER SHAKEN BUT DEFIANT."

We see his eyes fall down the page to a photograph of the little cul-de-sac now cordoned off by police tape.

"Man beaten then kidnapped by ruthless assailant."

Below it is a picture of the motorbike he abandoned. The caption underneath says:

"Driven by the kidnapper."

And inset, a picture of the number plate.

Now we are looking up in a tight CU of the Bad Man's face.

His eyes scan to the next image of police standing at the edge of a ravine.

The report here asserts:

"Kidnappers body found in the seat of stolen car after death plunge. His victim has not been found."

And then, at the end of a police statement about how:

"Gang related violence is on the increase."

We read the words:

"No leads."

The Bad Man folds the paper under his arm and looks out over the ice cold water and into the wild Scottish landscape.

At the concrete slip on the far shore, people and cars wait for the ferry.

A bell clangs its imminent arrival.

76 EXT. SPEEDING TRAIN. SCOTTISH LANDSCAPE. DAY. 76

A passenger train speeds through the highlands.

77 INT. SPEEDING TRAIN. CONTINUOUS. 77

Laura is sitting in a window seat on a busy train full of commuters, locals, and holiday-makers.

She is looking at human beings.

People-watching.

A BLACK MAN wearing headphones sitting to her right. His substantial body fits awkwardly in the seat. He is fixed on the portable DVD player in front of him.

A YOUNG WOMAN across the aisle reading a fraying book. She rocks her head a little, the effort of reading bothering her.

And then opposite, is an OLD MAN sleeping. His chest rising and falling, a blissful smile plays about his lips.

Laura catches her own faint reflection in the window, flickering against the speeding landscape outside.

Laura is in amongst it.

Suddenly not apart from it anymore.

78

EXT. LOCH. HIGHLANDS. SHORT WHILE LATER.

78

We are at the edge of a wide shimmering loch, in a forest and landscape as beautiful as Eden.

Laura is looking down at a perfect reflection of herself. It looks back at her.

We see the water busy with ticks, and below the surface, parasites teem in the billions.

She reaches her foot down to the reflection.

The toes enter the water.

The image tremors, then disrupts.

The foot swings, swirling the water.

Goose-bumps rise as it enters.

Light glistens on the skin like liquid silver.

DISSOLVE TO:

Laura swimming in the ink black water.

She strokes forward breathless and rigid against the icy embrace of the loch.

We cut to her now sitting naked amidst the rocks.

Pale as a cadaver she gathers her knees up into her for heat.

The wind sings in the trees and around Laura's ears and somewhere high above a plane hums.

Her eyes search for it and see it slip into cloud on its way to foreign shores.

She shivers, her teeth chattering uncontrollably beneath blue lips.

79

EXT. LOCH. HIGHLANDS. DAY.

79

We descend towards the sleeping, now dressed, figure of Laura.

Fetal, swathed in gently blowing reeds, like a newborn in the bosom of this wilderness.

We drift down until we are close to her.

Her eyes are shut now, in a way we have never seen them shut before.

Her face is still, in true repose.

She is fast asleep. Or switched off. It's impossible to know which.

Five or six little ANTS are moving on her face.

The busy creatures hurry in their searching rhythms over her cheeks and across her forehead and neck.

She doesn't stir.

The water laps on the shore, the wind eases through the high leaves. Tranquillity rules.

Then her expression begins to change.

She appears troubled. Like she's wrestling with thoughts, maybe a bad dream?

Now she's trying to rouse herself, to force her eyes open.

Then she wakes, and in a feverish split second looks about herself confusedly.

She looks down at the hem of her dress, and sees a dirty, green, male forearm extending in.

She starts bolt upright.

The arm remains.

She stares at the owner of the arm.

It is A MAN in a green boiler suit looking at her impassive and possessed.

She kicks out wildly, jolts to her feet, turns and flees.

She moves as fast as she can on the soft sands of the loch.

Suddenly a trudging sound accelerates behind her but she is off the sandy ground now. Her feet carrying her more swiftly into cover.

Now abruptly she wheels round expecting the thing clasping at her to be this man but she is snagged on a thorn bush.

As she fumbles to free herself, she hears the muddied footfalls of the man advancing through bracken in pursuit.

She gets more entangled.

It's as if the thorn bush were pecking at her.

She twists to get free then ducks down into cover.

She is still.

Off in the undergrowth, more uncertain sounds.

Then a precise stepping sound nearby.

The crushing of twig, the swish of briars pushed aside.

He is close now.

She stares through the dense bushes.

A broken form amidst the camouflage of a million leaves.

The shape of him gathers and is almost complete, then vanishes.

Footsteps off to the left.

Suddenly the leaves there shudder.

A thrash of a heavy body pushes through, footsteps quickening.

Laura edges out from her hiding place onto open ground. She starts running again out onto a path.

Suddenly up ahead at the turn in the lane - a shape.

A truck! Someone is working here!

She makes a b-line for it, deciphering the logging truck's long angular crane and claw full of logs swaying in the air above it.

This is her lifeline - she charges towards it.

She arrives and goes towards the cab door, trying the handle. It opens.

She steps up onto its running board and looks in. No keys.

She clambers up into the interior scrabbling for keys, for a phone, for something.

Nothing, nothing. Panic takes her.

She leans on the horn, looking off into the woods for the workmen who operate the huge claw and who must be nearby.

The horn drones with urgency, she puts all her weight on it.

She knows the sound will bring salvation and drive the beast away.

Her eyes scan the woods on either side longing for signs of life - a sudden friendly face to appear in alarm but instead up ahead a figure slowly steps out onto the road.

Suddenly she crouches down behind the wheel.

The figure is walking down the lane towards here without haste, like someone who has nothing particular to do.

It's him.

And of course this is his truck. He's the Woodsman.

She throws herself from the cab and runs. Behind her, heavy footsteps pound just out of sight.

Then, just over her shoulder, two arms flail through branches just a few feet away. She leans into her run searching for space to burst into.

The forest re-absorbs them. But then the big grabbing hand looms into view again.

Suddenly there it is on her shoulder. He throws her to the ground.

They tumble through mud. She tries to get away but he pulls her back. Gets on top of her, pins her down.

Above her on all fours, he tears at her dress and bra. A flurry of grabbing. He reaches down into his pants. She lashes into his eye.

He returns with a vicious swipe. Hard sweeping movement from his elbows contain her struggling. His crazed eyes force down into his prey.

The sound of more clothes being torn. The tone of the fraying changes. Long intrusive reaching.

WOODSMAN

(desperate)

I need a hole, I need a hole...

He pulls hard on giving fabric. A low sound like a sealed vacuum wrenched open. Then a gasping like escaping gas.

Suddenly he stops.

LAURA
(blank, emotionless)
Am I still dreaming?

We hear him stand. Jiggle his trousers up.

He turns, like a drunk half-snapping out of a stupor.

Then he reappears staring, open-mouthed.

His trousers still at half-mast, his obscene cock shameless in the chilly mountain air.

He's staring right through us, scared at whatever's behind us.

We spin around to find Laura standing up facing us/him.

It's the BLACK SHADOW FIGURE inside Laura exposed through "her" torn flesh.

The alien.

Which clutches Laura's skin as if protecting its modesty.

It struggles, like it's carrying too much washing.

Tight on the alien "eye".

The Woodsman is reflected, frozen, in its lens.

Tight on the Woodsman's wide, horrified eye.

The alien is reflected in his lens.

He turns and runs.

Laura hobbles off gathering herself to herself.

She reels from the effort of moving this disconnected body, which slips from her with every step.

She rests on a fallen tree, looking at her human skin.

She is holding her torn neck and much of her face between her hands.

The beautiful, gentle face looks up at the black alien head looking down.

Hunched over her "self", in an extraordinary separation.

The inside looking at the outside, the outside looking at the inside.

Bewildered footsteps, and the Woodsman staggers back into the scene.

In one hand he shakily points his phone at her - videoing her! In the other, a jerry can.

She tries to gather her exhausted selves together, suddenly realizing his intent.

She juggles the elements of the once perfect body as best she can, and tries to flee, but it's too late.

He puts his phone in his pocket and with both hands clatters a tin above her head and pours as she staggers, trying to move away from the petrol flowing over her.

He wrestles his lighter to strike.

We race with flames as they leap through grass. Then speed away from them, to find Laura's stumbling heels.

They slip as the flame gains on them, flaring around her ankles.

Then in a beat, the blaze flares up onto her body.

It swarms all about. She's engulfed. Unable to run, the wet soil slipping under her.

In a moment Laura seems to blast and flare and burst in an inferno of exploding gas and toxic, blazing phosphorous.

The mass of flames crumple to the ground, then turn rolling down into a ditch until it rests by the base of a tree.

We move fast over blurring tarmac.

The Bad Man powers ruthlessly forwards on his motorbike.

Just as we saw him at the start of the film as he raced to recover her predecessor, the Fire Woman.

The bike roars as he pushes his wrists hard over the accelerators and the road dips under him.

He lashes through gears and the bike feels the road again.

We are tight on the back-end now as a corner looms. He begins leaning into it.

Tendrils of hedgerow whip over his helmet.

The edge of the tire plumes with a little smoke as the weight adjusts on the apex of the bend.

Then more speed and vibration.

Mechanical adrenalin.

We are up ahead of the machine now looking back.

See the undulating road and how the vehicle clings to it perfectly.

81 EXT. MOUNTAIN ROADS. SHORT WHILE LATER. 81

The Bad Man powers on up the gradient, the pulse throwing the bike across frame and sucking the air out of the space behind.

As the visibility becomes less, he slows.

He takes stock, then pulls off the road, stops and dismounts.

In the distance, on the next mountain, he can see the faint halo of a fire.

He looks at it pondering.

82 EXT. LOCH CROMLECH. SHORT WHILE LATER. 82

The Bad Man walks through the dense heather.

A short distance away smoke rises from a tree, blackened and still burning.

He stops to study footprints, her footprints that weave in the mud.

Tracing them backwards, he sees that they set off from the lake-side, so he walks towards them.

He sees the footprints meander aimlessly at the waters edge.

He finds the place where she slept in the reeds.

He crouches to see her form impressed in that swaddling nest.

He moves on, following the prints.

Longer strides now, and there joining them, heavy prints in their wake.

He follows them until the ground is churned and the little footprints disappear into shrub.

He looks towards the burnt tree, spitting with red embers, and walks over to it.

He focuses on a large dark patch at its base, and notices tangible signs.

A heel from Laura's shoe.

The delicate mound that could be an elbow or ankle.

He sees her charred belt buckle.

And a melted button.

He exhumes them and puts them in his pocket.

He moves to a section of her charcoal hand.

Finds the smoke-coated wedding ring on the brittle finger and snaps it off.

Conceals it in the same pocket.

He surveys the Pompeii-ish remains.

At the edge of the blackened circle lies the husk of her petrified face, fractured by the fury of fire.

He applies his heel to it matter-of-factly.

The black crust snaps underfoot throwing grey powder into the air.

He grinds the evidence into nothingness with his boot, nonchalantly.

Like he's putting out a cigarette.

All that's left is a black, formless blot on the earth and a ghostly plume of dust.

He turns now towards the muddy oily sludge at the edge of the black ash, focusing on the woodsman's vehicle tracks.

His gaze traces them to the lane and on towards heavy tire tracks that churn off into the distance.

His dead gaze reaches out after them.

We are approaching the front of the logging truck at pace.

We are on the door looking up at the handle.

With ominous and unhurried deliberateness a hand reaches up to open the door.

Shockingly, the hand holds a large and distinctive KNIFE and the hand rests on the handle there as if timing its entrance.

Then we see pressure applied by the fingertips and the handle clicks, the door swings wide and we cut wide to see the Bad Man rising up and into the cab.

DISSOLVE TO:

84

EXT. DESERTED COUNTRY ROAD. DUSK.

84

The Bad Man is arriving at Laura's van.

It's exactly on the verge next to where she left it.

He stops the bike at the van's back doors and steps off.

He opens them, then he lowers a small ramp from inside before steering the bike into it.

He fastens the straps then he closes the doors.

Then he reaches into a pocket and fishes out a phone.

We see immediately it's the Woodsman's phone.

On it of course, the only remaining image of 'Laura'.

Arriving close to the edge of the water he draws back and launches it into a long arching throw that ends in a splosh!

The phone disappears into the darkness of the waters.

And as we hear him climb into his van, start it up and drive off, our focus remains on the ripples melting away, until in time, the water is completely still again.

And it's as if nothing at all had happened.

END

