

Lila Yates

by
Rudi Anna
&
Phillip Montgomery

Rudi Anna
459 Willard St. #201
617-894-3056

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Black.

Title Card fades in:

The desert creatures will meet with the wolves, And the jackal too will cry to its kind; Yes, the night monster will settle there... And will find herself a resting place.

--(ISAIAH 34:14)

FADE TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

HOME VIDEO FOOTAGE

crackles and flickers on, revealing a WINDOW as the lens pulls into focus. Outside is a turbulent snowstorm whipping the night air... Camera pans the room, showing a simple, modest apartment. On a dining table sits a few pieces of video equipment. Then to:

LILA YATES(22)

A beautiful young woman of 22. Irish good looks. Enchanting green eyes. She prepares a bag with flashlights. Behind the camera, the VOICE of a young man, Lila's paramour, JAMES WINSTON(25)

JAMES (O.C.)

(playful)

Gonna finally find us a Casper tonight?

Lila does a playful dance. Gives a double thumbs up.

LILA

Yessir. I'ma get me a Casper, boy!

(then serious)

Now come on, Babe. Get ready.

JAMES (O.C.)

Packed and ready.

CAMERA CUTS - NEXT RECORDING

Lila stands over the table.

LILA

Rolling?

JAMES (O.C.)
Yes, m'am.

LILA
(vintage TV host)
Okay, hi...So, when ghost hunting,
it's essential to have a few tools
handy that can help detect the
presence of anything out of the
ordinary.

She grabs a recorder from the table.

LILA (cont'd)
Like this little fella. Here is a
standard, digital voice recorder
that helps detect noises we might
not normally hear..

JAMES (O.C.)
Oooh. Spooky.

LILA
Times a billion, actually... hold
on.

She walks away.

CAMERA CUTS - NEXT RECORDING

Lila flips through an old photo album.

LILA
Here it is.

She pulls a PHOTO. Eyes the camera.

LILA (cont'd)
So, you wanna know the truth behind
the obsession?

JAMES (O.C.)
Lila's obsession with all things
spooky-time... Do I ever.

LILA
Well... two reasons.

James zooms in on the Photo. The left third has been
scissored out.

PHOTO of an impromptu FAMILY PICTURE:

LILA, age 8, and a morose WOMAN, her mother. They stand in the great outdoors. A third person, MALE, has an ARM around Lila. The arm is it, the rest of him missing -- cut out of the picture.

LILA (cont'd)

First reason. See it?... There's me and Momma-bear. Now, take a look at the right edge... by the tree.

CLOSER ON PHOTO'S RIGHT CORNER:

A FAINT GRAY OUTLINE OF A FORM resembling a STANDING PERSON.

LILA (cont'd)

This picture was taken three days after my aunt died.

Focusing on the GHOSTLY FORM.

JAMES (O.C.)

That's her?

LILA

Yeah. That's even how she used to stand.

In the photo, the camera aims behind young Lila's head. Another MYSTERIOUS FORM. Black. Crouching. Stalking. Is it just a shadow?

JAMES

What's that? Shit. It looks like something's behind you.

Lila pulls the photo away. Examining it. Fascinated.

LILA

That's the second reason... I've had to know more ever since.

JAMES (O.C.)

Huh... Who didn't make the cut?

Looks to the camera.

LILA

(disconcerted)
Who do you think?

JAMES (O.C.)
Ah... Gotcha.

CAMERA CUTS - NEXT RECORDING

Lila puts on her coat, taking a moment before:

LILA
You think this is stupid, don't
you.

JAMES (O.C.)
No... You know, I love it.
Seriously. Creepin' through dark
rooms with my girl... a video
camera. We hit record, get a little
spook... a little booby-action.

LILA
Ghost hunters the porno. It could
have legs.

JAMES (O.C.)
I'm game, so long as my family
doesn't see it - not like they'd
recognize you anyway.

LILA
What's that mean?

JAMES (O.C.)
Nothin' much, but... How long you
gonna keep flaking on dinner
whenever they're in town?

Lila uncomfortable. Quiet. Focusing on her coat's STUCK
ZIPPER, without looking up.

LILA
...a little time for that one,
babe.

JAMES (O.C.)
Just giving you shit.

Over dialogue, James shoots himself in a MIRROR. He's tall.
Handsome. Scruffy hair. A winter coat on.

JAMES (O.C.) (cont'd)
Y'know , I'm thinkin' that being
the camera guy in this ghost
hunting crap might not be so bad.

Pans to Lila.

LILA
Yeah? Why's that?

JAMES (O.C.)
Cause it means, if this were a
movie, and we all end up dying, at
least I make it to see the end.
Camera guy always makes it to the
end.

LILA
Ha!

JAMES (O.C.)
That's right. But you?... I'm not
so sure.

Lila raises a mischievous smile. She tackles him, going in
for a kiss. The camera TIPS over, James loosely holding it.
Off-centered in the MIRROR, they EMBRACE. Dreamy eyes. Full
of love.

LILA
Li'l quicky before we bounce?

JAMES
Absolutely.

A kiss.

LILA
I promise, next time they're here,
I cook us all dinner.

A big smile. Another deep kiss.

LILA (cont'd)
I love you so much, baby.

CUT TO BLACK:

JAMES (V.O.)
(like a whisper)
I love you too.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY FOREST - DUSK

OVER TITLES:

The sun sets nearing nightfall, soaring high above a wintery forest of evergreens and snowy houses, descending finally upon a small, woodsy, rural town. This is RIVENS, MINNESOTA. -
 ...But something different is in the air as the heart of the city moves into view.

We pinpoint our descent on RIVENS COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT HOUSE. Surrounding the building is a MASSIVE, CARNIVAL-ESQUE CONGREGATION OF PEOPLE AND VEHICLES. On an entry street, an army of NEWS VANS, BROADCAST TOWERS, and CAMERA CREWS.

Today, Rivens is the center of the universe.

In the Courthouse parking lot, CARS, FOOD TRUCKS, CHARTER VANS, and makeshift CAMPSITES with tents. Some have CRUCIFIXES staked into the ground. It's packed.

Young EMO GIRLS stand in groups wearing T-shirts with, "The Church of Lila" and "Thas my Bitch!" printed in front. Hundreds of poorly REVELERS hold signs with: "Searcey Lives!" and "The Devil Never Dies".

Moving closer to the courthouse, NEWS CORRESPONDENTS report live to rolling cameras:

FEMALE REPORTER

...The legal team defending Lila Yates has pled temporary insanity, hoping to spare her life. Even with questionable journal entries and video footage that may indicate premeditation.

Pan to another REPORTER:

MALE REPORTER

...The family of James Winston is demanding Yates receive the full punishment of the law - the death penalty...

INT. COURTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

INSIDE the main doors, we follow a POLICE OFFICER clasping a newspaper down a hallway into a lobby area. A GROUP OF POLICE OFFICERS watch a TV hanging on the wall. On screen:

LOCAL NEWSCASTER

...the body, difficult to identify due to severe mutilation in the first shocking crime the community has seen since the notorious Searcy Massacre some thirty years ago. The two main witnesses and Yate's closest friends, took the stand earlier this week...

The news footage cuts between TWO BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMEN, testifying in the courtroom. Newspaper Cop looks around.

NEWSPAPER COP

I'd slap some butter on those little biscuits, no?

Chuckles, but everyone's locked in on the TV. The Newspaper is thrown in the trash with the front page visible. The headline reads: INSANITY: YATE'S ONLY CHANCE. Under the headline: a photo of LILA AND JAMES embracing. In love. This image is placed next to: a second photo of LILA sitting in court, devoid of emotion.

Pan to another COP leaving the group. We follow him down another hallway.

OVER IMAGE: The stern, even VOICE of JUDGE BRYAN.

JUDGE BRYAN (V.O.)

We've heard the closing remarks and now move on to the deliberation of our jury among Lila's peers. The twelve of you will remain sequestered with the burden of deciding a verdict on the state of Minnesota versus Lila Yates for the First Degree murder of James Winston.

We continue following the Cop down the corridor. Lots of people. Hectic. A CLERK approaches.

CLERK

(to Cop)

They're heading into the deliberation room now.

The Cop knows. He brushes her off. That's where he's going.

JUDGE BRYAN (V.O.)

To put it bluntly, the evidence presented was clear by both the prosecution and the defense. Lilakilled- James. Now where the competing parties differ, is your job to decide. Is she guilty of premeditation, first degree murder?... or is she innocent of first degree murder by way of diminished capacity?...

Deeper inside the building, the marble gets darker. The ceilings lower.

JUDGE BRYAN (cont'd)

Jurors, this case has been dragged out, overly publicized, and tirelessly examined over media panels and dinner tables. It has been a unique and trying experience, I know.

MAINTENANCE MEN working on a series of wire-boards. As the Cop passes, one of them CLIPS a cord-- ELECTRIC SPARKS fly out. Cop Jumps-- Surprised.

JUDGE BRYAN (CONT'D) (cont'd)

I do not envy your position, but now you must determine fact from fiction. A young man has been murdered. The life of a young woman is on the line.

The Cop turns a corner passing a GROUP of PRIESTS with grave faces huddled together having a serious discussion. The Cop looks them over... curious.

JUDGE BRYAN (cont'd)

If you have doubt of any kind, you cannot vote guilty. If you have zero doubt - then so it shall be ruled. Either way, you must agree unanimously. Good luck.

Turning another corner, Cop BUMPS into:

Juror 1 - CARRIE LARSON(40s), a large woman with a pinched, prissy face. Like dominos, she BUMPS into:

Juror 2 - RANDALL FENSTERMAKER(30s), a devilishly handsome man with a cynical eye. His COFFEE SPILLS on Carrie.

CARRIE
Damnit. Watch it!

RANDALL
...Did me a favor. This coffee's
shit.

Behind him waits the rest of the JURORS. A BAILIFF escorts them into:

INT. DELIBERATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dark brick walls. Bare and spacious. Gothic crown moldings decorate the ceiling. An analog clock hangs over the door. A LARGE MOTORIZED, RETRACTABLE 150 INCH PROJECTION SCREEN spans one entire wall. Scattering the room: a water bubbler, coffee maker, and bathroom. A U.S. and Minnesota state flag stand in a corner. A CONFERENCE TABLE anchors the room's center. Pens, paper and trial folders arranged on top.

A row of windows look out to:

The under-whelming downtown skyline. Dusk is settling into night. In the distance, lit windows intermingle with street lights through the dying sunset. Bare-knuckled trees line the road. Cold.

Two open windows blow in the freeze, flipping a few loose papers.

The SECURITY GUARD counts each Juror as they enter.

Some Jurors mull around. A few sit right away.

SECURITY GUARD
If you need anything just knock and
one of us will be right here.

Juror 3 - PAUL CASTEL(40s), a white, sturdy, thoughtful and straight-edged man in Khaki's and a Polo, looks the room over. A paper card labels his place and position at the table: Jury Foreman.

The Bailiff nods. All set. He closes the door.

Juror 4 - FAN-FEI LIN. A Female Chinese-American with straight black hair and steely glare shivers smugly. Annoyed.

FAN-FEI
It's cold. Can we shut the windows?

Paul steps to the window. He sees:

PROTESTORS AND REVELERS. Fires blazing and flashlights waving in the distance. Paul adjusts the handle. Shuts it.

Randall at the next window. Closes it. Looks out.

PAUL
(looking outside)
Nothing like a little tragedy to
bring everyone together.

RANDALL
Tragedy? More like spectacle...
It's cause she's hot. Hot and
deadly... That's hot.

Sitting down is Juror 5 - CHAUNCEY PEPPERS(30s), a poised African American. Mischievous grin. He chuckles to himself as he pulls an iPhone from his pocket. He shows it to the man next to him: Juror 6 - ANDRE ARNOLDS(40s), a Dominican with sleepy eyes and a beer gut. Andre's not impressed.

ANDRE
The hell? They'll throw out this
whole case, they find you with
that.

CHAUNCEY
...Still gotta run shit at work and
I'm not lettin' damn Lila Yates get
in the way of my commission. No
way.

Andre rolls his eyes. Looks the other way. Yawns.

At the coffee maker, Juror 7 - MICHELLE LIEBERMAN(30s), a red-headed, attractive, bookish young woman, grabs a foam cup and pours hot coffee. She's joined by: Juror 8 - RAMAN SURTI(50s). He's Arab with a pock-marked face and stoic, haunted eyes.

MICHELLE
One more reference to David Searcy,
I'm gonna have a conniption.

RAMAN
(pours his coffee)
Did you see the Al Jazeera truck?
All the police were hovering around
the A-J truck...as if they'd blow
the place up or something.

Michelle shakes her head, eyeing Raman.

MICHELLE

C'mon... as if that shoe doesn't
fit.

Michelle walks back to the table. Raman can't believe his ears. He fills his cup as another man steps up: Juror 9 - MARVIN BAPTISTA(60s), a thick man with a thicker mustache. He has a marine-like formality to his movements as he pours coffee for himself. He delivers a look of disdain, clearly pointed at Raman.

MARVIN

Don't worry. As soon as red-heads
start suicide bombing, we'll
profile the hell out of them.

Raman nods, stirring his coffee, reacting kindly.

RAMAN

So what do you call the IRA?

Marvin chuckles. Touche to Raman.

PAUL

Everyone take their seats, please.

Standing Jurors move to their chairs. Everyone settles.

PAUL (cont'd)

Alright.. well as foreman, I guess
it's my job to help keep the score
on guilty versus innocent.

ANDRE

Should be pretty obvious.

PAUL

Yeah, well... let's get to it.

He grabs a page from a folder and reads.

PAUL (cont'd)

We have a prosecution claiming
premeditation based on jealousy and
existing turmoil, and a defense who
claims she's innocent, suffering
from diminished capacity...
basically... temporary insanity.

CARRIE

- Yeah, right.

PAUL

Well anyways, I suppose we start
with a count and go from there.
So... all in the favor for guilty?

A hand shoots up. It's Carrie's. Then, down the table, one-by-one, the other Jurors raise their hands. Paul's hand is last.

PAUL (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Eight - nine - ten - and myself
makes eleven. Eleven guilty...
Huh...

All eyes slowly turn to the one person without their hand up. The outcast is Juror 10 - BREE LEDGESTONE(30s) Penetrating green eyes. On the surface, she has all the fixings of a beautiful soccer Mom. And yet...

PAUL (cont'd)

Bree, you find Lila not-guilty?

CARRIE

--You're joking, right?

Agreeing murmurs.

ANDRE

Come on, lady. Put ya hand up.

PAUL

Relax, everyone. This is all part
of the process.

(sigh)

Let's just go down, one-by-one, and
each of us, if they want, can
explain our vote.

(nods to Chauncey)

Why don't you start.

Chauncey doesn't need time to collect his thoughts.

CHAUNCEY

Defense had no case... Guilty.

Paul looks to Andre.

ANDRE

Open-n'-shut. Her mind was an evil,
twisted, tootsie pop. She wanted
to, maybe she had to kill her man.
Prosecution convinced me. Guilty...

Down the line. Paul looks to Carrie. She's ready, shooting a hostile glare at Bree.

CARRIE

You have all the evidence against her... The footage. Her two best friends think she did it on purpose. It's such a no brainer.
 (to Bree)
 -but I guess you know better.

BREE

I just don't think-

CARRIE

(hostile)
 -You don't think what?

PAUL

People, no one in this room is on trial.

RANDALL

Right. Let's be friends.

MICHELLE

Carrie's on the right track, though. I don't know how you can argue it any other way.

CARRIE

...and let's not forget, the crazy bitch actually SAID she was guilty.

Big LAUGH from Randall.

PAUL

Please, Carrie, try to flex the vocabulary. This is a court of law.

CARRIE

Whatever, guy.

RAMAN

Actually, that's not true. On the record, she never admitted guilt.

Raman opens the folder in front of him. Court transcripts.

RAMAN (cont'd)

See here?
 (pointing to the text)
 (MORE)

RAMAN (cont'd)

The transcription from her psych evaluation indicates that when she was asked if she killed James, she responded 'I have transgressed. Lila has not'... That's very interesting. She had referred to herself, curiously, in the third person? Why?

ANDRE

When they want to make it sound like they got problems. I think that response was tactical.

BREE

...but this girl is sick. She couldn't even take the stand.

CARRIE

(to Bree)

You are so naive, little woman.

ANDRE

Let's be nice, but I agree. How could testifying help her defense?

Juror 11 - JED HOLMGREN, the oldest of the jurors, sits hunched over, droopy-faced and balding with grey streaks in a comb-over.

JED

She, uh... You know, just from what I saw in that video footage of them running around the Searcey house... I mean what was borne from that home... I remember those headlines, and I'll admit... I almost-- I...

(finding the words)

Still. Murder is murder. No excuses. Crazy murderers deserve a cage just as much as every other murderer.

BREE

(to Jed)

You're right. The footage at her own home showed a total split in her personality-- not even a split. A meltdown-- A takeover... Maybe we should look at it again.

CARRIE

(growing hostile)

You're shitting me.

Paul rolls his eyes. Groans from the others. Anger mounting.

FAN-FEI

I'm not watching all that again.
That camera work's too shaky.

ANDRE

(Nods. Winks at Fan-Fei)
Shaky as hell, momma.

BREE

I understand the limitations, and I hate thinking about seeing any of it over again, but... This girl has a life. It's a life under our control at this point-- you have to respect that-- and I am scared to death at the possibility of taking that away from her, and I'm sorry to put everyone through it all again... but I can't help thinking there's a piece we might be missing.

More looks of discontent.

BREE (cont'd)

... I think it's only fair--

Interrupting is our final juror, Juror 12 - DENISE MICHAELS(20). She's darling, her face vibrant.

DENISE

Can we please not?

PAUL

Sorry. I am... but...

(decisive)

Listen. There is a lot at stake.
It's the reason we're here.

CHAUNCEY

He's right. I have a family. I'd rather be with them than y'all, but, shit, I'll bet they're just benched on the couch, watching CNN for updates because this case is the what's up in the world right now. It's the flavor of the month. Bet it's on Drudge. It's that fire right now. So, right now... We have to send the right message. 'Cause our decision will echo... It will.

(MORE)

CHAUNCEY (cont'd)

And one of us has a doubt. And I'm pretty sure she's not crazy. So maybe I'm wrong. Maybe we're all wrong about something... I support watching this-- I support doing whatever, so we make the only decision none of us has to regret making once we've made it. Well, most of us, maybe... And that's good enough for me... Shit man... Hit play.

ANDRE

(to Chauncey)

For real, bra? You need to see all the shit over again we seen before?

MARVIN

(glaring)

Yes he does, home-boy.

ANDRE

(grinning)

... Oh, I'm a homeboy?

MARVIN

Aren't you?

Andre shakes his head. Above responding.

Paul walks to the door and knocks. A middle-aged, thick SECURITY GUARD answers.

PAUL

Looks like we're going to have to dig into some of the footage from the trial. How do we do that?

SECURITY GUARD

Ya?

(as he leaves)

Be back in a sec.

Jurors wait. A BUZZ from Chauncey's pocket. He quietly pulls his iPhone to read a message. His face shifts from secretive to spooked.

Something on his phone shakes him with fear when: --THUMP. The phone drops to the ground. Denise notices first.

DENISE

(whispering)

Oh crap.

CHAUNCEY

What?

PAUL

What is that?

Chauncey's caught.

CHAUNCEY

Shit.

CARRIE

Is that your phone?

DENISE

You should google us. I looked good walking up the courthouse steps in the dusklight... How'd you get that in?

PAUL

Not how, but why? You know we can't have phones.

CHAUNCEY

Can I just -

MARVIN

- Idiot, this could mean a mistrial. You have to turn it in.

CARRIE

I'll box your ears in if you get caught for that.

CHAUNCEY

(while reading phone text)
Fuckin touch me and I'll put you in a damn box-- oh shit.

RANDALL

Come on everyone. No need to get all banged up about it.

(gesturing to Bree)

If this woman's gonna keep us here mulling over the evidence, then at the least let us have our 4G. Who knows the next time we get to talk to anyone on the outside.

RAMAN

It worries me. You better turn it off or they can track it.

DENISE
Can I just check one g-mail?

PAUL
No!

CHAUNCEY
GUYS!

The Jurors quiet.

CHAUNCEY (cont'd)
(fear)
I got news...

A beat. Chauncey searches for the words until, finally, he reads from the iPhone.

CHAUNCEY (cont'd)
It's serious. It's...

INT. COUNTY PRISON HALLWAY - NIGHT

Two MALE PRISON GUARDS run full speed down a corridor of holding cells. GUTTURAL, BLOOD-SOAKED CRIES ring across the cement walls.

CHAUNCEY (O.C.)
... Says here two female inmates
down at County just killed
themselves.

One guard stops at a cell. He looks in. Shocked. Grave. The other guard runs two cell blocks down. Pauses. The same reaction. They look inside, revealing:

WOMEN PRISONERS hunched over in their bunks. Upside down and crucified. Their necks jaggedly SLASHED. Their eyes wide-open. Dead. Blood everywhere. CRIES, YELLS, and CHAOS from women in other cells.

CHAUNCEY (O.C.) (cont'd)
They ripped their own necks open.
Within seconds of each other. Says
they bled to death.

INT. DELIBERATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Grave looks amongst Jurors.

MICHELLE
That's messed up -

RANDALL
-and random.

CHAUNCEY
Random? Funny you say that...

INT. COUNTY PRISON HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The guards look to each other. Aghast.

CHAUNCEY (O.C.)
Because this is sayin' both of 'em
were in cells blocks right next to--

And quietly sitting in the cell between the two slain inmates
-- placidly-- with no emotion:

BREE (O.C.)
--Lila Yates.

Lila Yates. In the flesh. She looks at the guards, as if
unaware of any surrounding atrocity.

INT. DELIBERATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A beat.

CHAUNCEY
(confirming)
... Lila Yates.

ANDRE
Fuck no. For real?

DENISE
Crap.

RANDALL
We have no idea what the whole
story is. Don't get carried away.

CHAUNCEY
(reading, distraught)
They used their fingernails. Both
of 'em... just, ripped their own
necks open.

FAN-FEI

How does someone even do that?

JED

Dear God.

MICHELLE

When?

CHAUNCEY

About an hour ago. Media's goin'
ape-shit. Lemme see what else...

Chauncey reads on. A long, silent beat. Eye contact minimal.

ANDRE

(shaking his head)

I just wanna' go home, man.

The door knob MOVES. Chauncey quickly drops the phone in his pocket. The jurors HUSH. The security guard enters with a REMOTE CONTROL.

SECURITY GUARD

Let's see here...

He points to the ceiling, pressing a button. A projector MOTORS DOWN on a mount. On the wall, a HUGE SCREEN unravels.

ANDRE

Damn.

CHAUNCEY

Courts threw down some change for
this.

The projector BEEPS ON. BLUE LIGHT covers the entire screen.

JED

Well, thank God. I couldn't see
anything on those small TV's in the
courtroom.

VIDEO SCREEN

A menu screen with a case number at the top flashes on. It reads: CASE_8738: LILA YATES

DELIBERATION ROOM

The Guard CLICKS on the title.

SECURITY GUARD

So, you'll see it's pretty easy.
You click on clips from the menu.
You have your fast forward, your
rewind - and there's a zoom
function as well, prob'ly some
other stuff.

He hands the remote to Paul.

PAUL

Thanks.

SECURITY GUARD

Knock if you need anything else.

Door shuts behind the guard. A beat.

CARRIE

If this woman wants to view the
evidence, then let's watch her kill
him.

BREE

That's not what I was referring to-

RANDALL

I agree. Let's start the creep show
at victim zero.

Marvin lowers the lights. Raman puts on eyeglasses. They hug
the tip of his nose. He takes a pen, ready for notes.

Paul clicks an ICON onscreen.

VIDEO FOOTAGE

A moment passes as the footage loads. Graphic over black:
CASE_8738: SEARCEY RESIDENCE - SUNDAY, Feb. 18, 2012 - 2:06
AM --Then--

Darkness...JAMES' voice. He's breathing heavily, irregular...
Frightened behind the camera. The lens rolls in and out of
focus against black. A feeble BEAM from the on-board light
illuminates a narrow, two foot throw.

FEMALE VOICE

(faint, distorted)
James?

JAMES (O.C.)

(scared, quiet)
Shit... Lila?

A deafening SCREECH echoes through the darkness. Something alive, moving through the room until - BANG - an unseen force HITS the camera.

JAMES (O.C.) (cont'd)
Shit! Oh my god!

James, runs to a door, opens it and SLAMS it behind him. He pans around a larger room. Completely dark. The camera light shines through soft, falling particles.

JAMES (O.C.) (cont'd)
(desperate whispers)
Jesus Christ - shit... Lila?

His breathing quiets. Listening. Moving forward. A LOUD, OMINOUS, SLOW BREATHING from a far corner.

JAMES (O.C.) (cont'd)
Jess... Lila, come on!

No response, just breathing.

JAMES (O.C.) (cont'd)
Who's there?!

He pans: -- Pairs of nondescript WHITE DOTS move across the screen. James' breathing turns desperate.

JAMES (cont'd)
(yelling)
Lil--

CRACK - the camera falls to the ground. A WEAK BEAM OF LIGHT thrown across a wood paneled floor. We see James' shoes standing a few feet away at the edge of the light. Behind James, the unfocused WHITE DOTS MOVE, phasing in and out through the black air.

LILA (O.C.)
(from a far corner)
I'm right here.

JAMES (O.C.)
Baby. Something's--

--SUDDENLY. James gets pulled into the darkness. HE SCREAMS. DEAFENING CRIES. A THUD on the ground. The sound of FLESH RIPPING. TORN OPEN. His voice contorted by the ripping of his throat.

BLOODIED WHITE HUSHPUPPY BOOTS intermittently cross frame. We hear TERRIBLE, VIOLENTLY ENDLESS SCREAMS, over a faint distinct sound - Lila WHIMPERING and SNIFFLING.

DENISE (O.C.)

Stop!

DELIBERATION ROOM

Paul pauses the footage.

DENISE (cont'd)

(gripping her stomach)

I'm gonna throw up.

CARRIE

(glaring at Bree)

We watched this again for those who want to hold the process up. We clearly hear her say, "I'm right here." She says it coldly, maliciously. It's as if she's there, because... Wait for it... she is. Obvious-fucking-ly.

BREE

Beyond a reasonable doubt? It's not that simple.

CARRIE

I've been sitting next to you for weeks now, and... Sweetie, I'm gonna give this about a half an hour more. Then, I'm pretty sure, I'll be beating the guilty out of you.

Paul points to Carrie, reprimanding - Stop.

Marvin examines the screen-- a curious glint in his eye.

MARVIN

(to Denise)

Sorry to do this to you, Miss...

(to Paul)

But can we go back to just after the camera fell down? Pause it right there?

PAUL

Sure... Why?

MARVIN

Saw something. Let's check it out.

CARRIE
 (upset)
 Here we go.

FOOTAGE REWINDS. Pauses on a DARK FRAME.

Marvin stands, moving closer to the screen, casting his shadow across a portion of the wall. He points.

MARVIN
 Zoom in. Right there.

ON SCREEN

Paul ZOOMS IN on the image, focusing on: A strange collection of WHITE DOTS. The image processes. The dots smooth out. All of them are PAIRED. The image processes again. The dots take on shape - like eyes. Beastly. Glowing cat's eyes. Seven sets in total.

DELIBERATION ROOM

Marvin looks closer.

MARVIN (cont'd)
 I may be out of my mind here, but those look like eyes. Seven sets of them.

ANDRE
 You need your eye's checked?... The hell you talkin' bout'?

RANDALL
 (to Andre)
 Careful. Marv here was a sniper in Afghanny... Jarhead , right?

MARVIN
 (nods)
 Three tours.

CHAUNCEY
 Damn. You bag any kills?

MARVIN
 Umm, Yeah...
 (gestures to screen)
 A lot more than her.

RANDALL
 Marv, you sure all those kills were enemy soldiers?

JED
 (looking at screen)
 Holy hell... They do.

Denise, Raman looking at the dots/eyes. They take Jed's comments seriously.

PAUL
 How long do they continue?

Bree looks to the others, knowing. Paul plays the footage.

MARVIN
 Wait. Can you go back? I want to take one more look.

PAUL
 Okay?

FOOTAGE REWINDS TO THE SAME FRAME... But - this time, the DOTS/EYES have moved . They're still paired and spaced apart like eyes, but they're in different locations now. Watching.

MARVIN
 Look. They're in different places... But still seven.

RAMAN
 I remember them differently too.

CHAUNCEY
 Look like a pack a Cujos , man.

MARVIN
 Fast forward and rewind again.

Paul obliges. Footage rolls forward, backwards-- The eyes are in different places again .

DENISE
 (clutching her stomach)
 Crap. Why do they move?

MARVIN
 Seven sets... You remember what the coroner said, that the mutilation from James body was so severe, he wasn't sure how it was done by just one person in such a short amount of time.

CARRIE

That was just a theory. Video Forensics proved she was the only person in the room. I'm looking at the video now, and it's pretty damn clear.

JED

With the exception of those... eyes... dots. Whatever they are.

RANDALL

Seriously, lets move on. It's probably some dippy, inbred technician who doesn't know how to calibrate video equipment.

CHAUNCEY

True. You transfer it wrong, you can get weird artifacts in your footage. It's a technical thing...
(spooked)
But, man...

Marvin shrugs. Sits back down. Denise clutches her stomach.

BREE

I don't think there's anything technically wrong with this video.

CARRIE

Jesus. Again - EXPERTS, went on-and-on about this footage and never mentioned anything. They're stupid-bullshit dots on shitty video. Stop it!

Bree shakes her head. Frustrated. Silence from the others. Carrie flips open the folder in front of her.

ON SCREEN: The EYES watch over everything, until -

CARRIE (cont'd)

The journal entries. They say it all.

Denise convulses. A vicious dry-heave.

DENISE

I need to... Oh, god -

She runs for the bathroom. Bree follows her inside.

CARRIE
-and she's running away.

Carrie pulls a piece of paper.

CARRIE (cont'd)
Okay. Here we go. Page One-twenty-
nine of the Journal.
(to bathroom)
I'll read loud enough so you can
hear me in there!

She reads loud enough to be heard in Times Square.

INT. RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Denise hanging over the open toilet. HEAVES. We hear CARRIE
READING outside.

BREE
You okay, dear?

Denise stands. She's okay. Wait, NO - she PUKES into the
toilet again.

INT. DELIBERATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carrie reads over VOMITING in the bathroom.

CARRIE
James. My love. My heart and soul.
My rising and setting sun. Why
don't you take me seriously? He
takes Jess seriously... She's so
beautiful. Is he just towing me
along to keep her close by? I will
never share him...

JED
What's the point when she's in the
bathroom?

INT. RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bree rubs Denise's back as she kneels in front of the toilet.
Carrie RAMBLES on outside.

DENISE
Uh, god... This hasn't happen to me
since I was younger.

BREE
Getting sick?

DENISE
Like this, ya. I'm just... creeped.

BREE
I know, it's a little scary.

Denise settles back, sitting on the floor against the wall, catching her breath. Bree sits next to her.

DENISE
I used to have night terrors.
These... Like a feeling of a ghost.
Hovering over me when I was
sleeping. Holding me down, pressing
my body down and it made me so
sick. I'd throw up in my bed. When
I got older it went away, but I
guess...
(ala Poltergeist)
... "they're baaack".

BREE
I understand that feeling a lot
actually... I do.

DENISE
Yeah?

BREE
You know my mother... was very
spiritual. Before bed, sometimes
she would make me and my sisters
pray. Ten Hail Mary's each... Then
when we were done, she would ask,
'Hey, did you girls hear the
angels?'...
(reflecting, a smile)
Later, I found out she was talking
about me and my sisters. We were
the angels she heard... praying.
But... on a few occasions,
sometimes, I did hear... I heard
something. Angels. Ghosts. Energy.
I don't know exactly what it was,
but... They were there...

We hear Carrie still READING LOUDLY.

CARRIE (O.S.)
 ...Revenge for his betrayal. He is
 mine! I'll die before I let him go!
 He'll die before he even tries!...

Bree looks to Denise.

BREE
 Look, I'm sorry... for not making
 this easy.

DENISE
 (struggling)
 I know. I just hope it doesn't go
 on too long.

BREE
 Me too.

DENISE (CONT'D)
 (deep sigh)
 Man, if I knew the trial was going
 to be like this, I would have told
 the lawyers I was a witch or
 something... Get off this case.

BREE
 Not me. I'm glad I'm here.

DENISE
 Really?

BREE
 I think it's - I see a little bit
 of Lila in myself.
 (distant, haunted)
 We share a lot, she and I. Our pain
 is very much the same.

DENISE
 I'm sorry. I didn't...

A beat. Snapping out of her daze, Bree dabs vomit debris off
 Denise's chin with toilet paper.

BREE
 It's okay. I'm sorry. I just
 remember when they were making the
 selections, asking us about sexual
 abuse in our own past... I... I
 kept my mouth shut. I guess I
 didn't want to be shooed out the
 door right then and there.

DENISE
You wanted to be on the jury?

Bree smiles.

BREE
I just want to make sure we do the
right thing.
(a beat)
Just please, dear... Don't let your
stomach or fear affect your
decision... Don't be afraid.

Denise looks at Bree. A look understanding.

DENISE
... I think I'm better.
(standing)
Ya... I'll manage.

Suddenly - EEEeeeEEEEeeeEEE - A DEAFENING, EERIE SCREECH cuts
through the air. --BOOM. The lights CUT OUT. Denise VOMITS.

INT. DELIBERATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The jurors shudder. A black room. Pale moonlight glows
through the window.

JED
Lord what happened.

ANDRE
That's Rivens for you.

PAUL
Relax! Everyone, just relax. It's a
power outage.

The jurors go quiet. A beat. Outside, the BUSTLING,
CHATTERING of the crowd PROTESTING. PRAYING IN UNISON.

INT. RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Complete black.

BREE
(quietly to Denise)
You alright, hun?

DENISE
 (quietly back)
 ... I thought it passed.

BREE
 You're okay.

INT. DELIBERATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

An uncomfortable silence. Finally: CLANK - The door opens. Someone enters with a FLASHLIGHT.

FAN-FEI (O.S.)
 (startled)
 Who is that?

The someone is an UNRECOGNIZABLE GUARD. His face darkened by the glare of the light. He says nothing. Looking.

PAUL
 (to Guard)
 Hey there. What's going on?

No response. The flashlight scanning each juror. He moves to the restroom door and opens it.

INT. RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bree consoles a scared Denise. He moves the light across and: --Stops on Bree. Probing her. The glare becomes too much.

BREE
 (shading her eyes)
 Ah, please lower the light.

A beat. The beam is lowered and CLICKED off.

INT. DELIBERATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Guard steps to the entrance door, speaking with a high-pitched, soothing voice.

UNRECOGNIZABLE GUARD
 Everyone's okay?

CARRIE
 We're fine. What's the deal?

CHAUNCEY
 What's goin' on, man?

No response as - Clank. Door closes. The Guard has left.

CHAUNCEY (cont'd)
... The hell?

A long moment of black before - BUZZ - SNAP. Lights flicker back on. Sighs of relief. Paul shakes off a slight chill. Bree and Denise return to their seats as Denise cleans the mess off her chin.

CARRIE
I turned up the volume in case
fleeing to the bathroom disrupted
your hearing.