

DARKNESS BEFORE DAWN

FADE IN:

EXT. AERIAL SHOT: DOWNTOWN OF A CITY -- LATE EVENING.

Lightning arcs flash in the horizon, the streets rumble after every lightning strike. All the main streets are barricaded with barrier rails and police cruisers as torrential rain splashes over them. Enforcing this perimeter are policemen who send any incoming civilians back.

TITLE CARD -- DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH

CLOSE ON a police Sergeant who sits inside a police cruiser. He is TRAVIS GREER, in his early 40s and in great shape. He sits, reclining in his seat, his eyes closed as soothing jazz music plays concurrent with the rain that ricochets hard on his vehicle. He seems disheartened, tired, alone.

POLICE OPERATOR (O.S. RADIO FILTER)
This is post from Precinct 2,
requesting status from unit 9.
"Over".

SERGEANT GREER
(monotone)
This is sergeant Greer from unit
9. We're still standing by in
zone 2, as requested. "Over".

EXT. DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH/SUBWAY STATION ENTRANCE -- NIGHT.

Emergency medical personnel pace through the scene, setting up all manner of equipment. They are all suited in the highest degree of chemical protection as they begin to make their way into the subway station.

FADE OUT:

EXT./INT. BEEKMAN'S DINER -- NIGHT.

The lights are dim as a sign at the door reads: "CLOSED". Through the diner's window, two women sit at the bar area, staring at a flashing TV screen.

INSERT OF A TV SCREEN

A news reporter delivers the 10 o'clock news to fellow Pittsburghers.

(CONTINUED)

NEWS REPORTER

Friday night in Pittsburgh has disintegrated into chaos. Reports of toxic fumes in a subway station began at approximately 8:45 pm. This situation has quickly escalated into a mass casualty incident. According to Pittsburgh police, as many as two-hundred people have been hospitalized. And as many as six-hundred people are believed to have been killed, but at this time no death toll has been confirmed.

WIDER ANGLE of two women who sit at the bar watching the TV with great concern. They are: A drop-dead gorgeous waitress, she is SHIRLEY ULRICH (23). And the proprietor of Beekman's Diner, MRS. CHRISTINE SANDS (54).

MRS. SANDS

God. . .this is just awful, this is too much. The world just keeps falling apart within each day.

SHIRLEY

I can't believe this is happening.

Mrs. Sands pulls out a pack of Marlboro Lights from her purse. She pulls out a cigarette and places it in her mouth. She begins to search in her purse for her Zippo lighter.

MRS. SANDS

(cigarette in her mouth)
How much longer 'till he gets here,
hon?

SHIRLEY

What?

Mrs. Sands takes a drag from her cigarette after she lights it up.

MRS. SANDS

I said, how much longer until your boyfriend gets here. I really need to get back home.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. SANDS (CONT'D)

The weather's not getting any better, it seems like it's getting worse by the second. And all this shit in the news is scaring the living hell out of me.

SHIRLEY

Sorry 'bout that, he should be here any second.

MRS. SANDS

Don't be. I don't mean to be a mean o' cunt. . . I guess you can say I'm nervous. You don't expect any of these things, no one does. I don't feel safe anymore with all these recent attacks. About two weeks ago a guy in California blows himself up in a supermarket, and now this. I don't get what they're trying to prove, killing all those people, so senselessly.

Shirley stares at Mrs. Sands who seems to be lost in her own mind. Shirley sighs, not knowing what to say. We see their concerned faces as they listen to the enveloping circumstances.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

The cause of this evening's disastrous incident continues to be one of mystery and intrigue, with a late-night statement that the incident was caused by "a random mass attack" perpetrated by an "unknown person or persons". Few other details were released a few minutes ago by official sources, except another statement that the FBI and Pittsburgh Police were treating the incident as a "multiple homicide investigation". But at this point no group has claimed responsibility for this heinous act.

Mrs. Sands checks her wristwatch. She moves to the counter by the kitchen where she pours herself a cup of coffee, no cream, no sugar.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. SANDS

Maybe I should sell this place and move to Canada. I've already got some money saved up.

SHIRLEY

Sell it? But you love this place. You've got enough people working the shifts, yet you're always in here --

MRS. SANDS

(jokingly)

-- That's because you're all a pair of fuck ups. Trust me honey, if I weren't around, I'd be out of business.

SHIRLEY

You're lucky to have me.

Mrs. Sands takes a small sip from her cup as she sits down, next to Shirley.

MRS. SANDS

Sure do. I can't entirely depend on all these new girls, they always use school as an excuse. I have a term paper due, giving me all that shit. They can never stay as late as I want them too, and they make far too many mistakes as well. Like that blond-haired skank, what's her name?

SHIRLEY

Uh, Cindy! She's the one who broke a whole stack of plates. I hate her, she thinks her shit smells sweeter than others.

MRS. SANDS

Don't even go there.

SHIRLEY

See, you still care. You're just a bit shaken up, a whole lotta people are. But in time things will get better.

MRS. SANDS

You're optimistic, but I'm pessimistic.

(CONTINUED)

Short silence, as the TV reporter continues.

NEWS REPORTER

The exact nature of the chemical involved has also remained a mystery until the time of this report. An ERRI analysis of the incident (to the time of this report), suggested that the symptoms reported by unofficial sources, thus far, are not consistent with any chemical or biological agents in any nation's stockpile. . .

The entire diner is suddenly illuminated by a flash of lightning.

KABOOM!

The entire diner goes dark as the power is momentarily down. Shirley and Mrs. Sands scream simultaneously.

MRS. SANDS (O.S.)

Oh, damn weather! I think I'm about to have a heart attack.

The power comes back on again. They both look startled, a bit on the edge.

MRS. SANDS

That young man of yours is sure taking a long time - -

BANG! BANG! BANG!

They both scream again.

They turn to see a man, standing outside by the glass door, who is being hammered by the cold rain. He is DAVID WELLEMEYER (25).

DAVID

(muffled)

Open up!

Mrs. Sands moves toward the door with her keys to open up. The entire News report plays out in the background as the action progresses.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

. . .firmly establish the chemical that was involved. . .

(CONTINUED)

SHIRLEY

It's David.

MRS. SANDS

What's he thinking pounding' my door like that!

David, who is completely drenched, starts inside, but is suddenly stopped by Mrs. Sands.

MRS. SANDS (cont'd)

What in god's name? Don't take another step, I just finished mopping my floor a few minutes ago. Don't you own a raincoat or something'.

DAVID

How are you tonight?

NEWS REPORTER

. . .Additionally, a chemical analysis of the scene should confirm the actual chemical used, after the proper tests have been run at a lab. Stay tuned as we now take you to one of our correspondents who is standing by , near the epicenter of this devastating attack. . .

MRS. SANDS

I don't recall being this terrified in my life, so I guess not so good.

Shirley gathers all her stuff as she begins to move toward the door.

DAVID

I'm sorry to hear that, you go ahead and take it easy for tonight.

SHIRLEY

Goodbye Mrs. Sands, thank you for waiting, I really appreciate that.

MRS. SANDS

Don't mention it. And stay out of trouble you crazy kids.

Shirley kisses Mrs. Sands on her cheek as she exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEEKMAN'S DINER PARKING LOT -- NIGHT.

They run as heavy rain pours over them until they reach a black Suburban, where they enter.

INT. BLACK SUBURBAN (PARKED) -- NIGHT.

In the back are a few briefcases and camping equipment. David reaches in the back and grabs a couple of towels, he hands one to Shirley, who begins to dry her hair.

SHIRLEY

Did you see what was on the news, so frightening.

David starts the engine.

DAVID

A lot of people were rushing out at work, I'm glad my parents live out of town.

SHIRLEY

Mrs. Sands was freaking out, I've never seen her like that. She was thinking about selling the place.

Shirley looks disturbed. David sees her, they embrace.

DAVID (cont'd)

I can't tell you that everything will be okay; but just know that things happen for a reason, good or bad, its life, we just have to deal with it in some way.

Shirley sobs quietly, trying not to burst out in tears.

SHIRLEY

Yeah. . .let's get out of here, spend the entire weekend at the cabin. I'm so tired, I just want to sleep. You can make the drive, right?

The vehicle begins to pull out of the parking lot and into the empty street.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

The rain's pissing down pretty
hard, but I can make the drive.

FADE OUT:

INT. SUBWAY STATION -- NIGHT.

CLOSE UP OF FLUORESCENT LIGHT FIXTURES

Lights blink on and off as muffled thunder rumbles every other second. Below are a unit of medical personnel who are suited in the highest degree of chemical protection. They use blankets to cover the myriad of corpses who lie on the floor.

Two men from the unit begin to approach the subway cars.

INT. SUBWAY CAR 1 -- CONTINUOUS.

From behind, an empty car. Only, a person who is seated in the front beside a gritty window. The body is stagnant.

Then. . .

BROOM!

The sound of lightning that has struck very near. The lights flash and go off. Darkness, until the dim emergency lights spring on. The body settled by the window appears again, now shrouded in mere darkness. Footsteps begin to clang on the subway's metal surface.

They begin to settle closer to the body settled by the window. A flashlight is turned on. The flashlight's beam is concentrated to a noise that emits from the body's hands, which firmly grip a cell phone, it vibrates.

INSERT -- CELL PHONE SCREEN: "MOM CALLING. . ."

Medical Personnel #1 swings the flashlight upwards as we slowly begin to discern the facial details of this person. The corpse's face is no longer distinguishable. Large patches of skin have melted off, which reveal muscle and ligaments. His eyes rolled back, white. Medical Personnel #1 looks away in repulse as he advances toward. . .

INT. SUBWAY CAR 2 -- CONTINUOUS.

POV OF MEDICAL PERSONNEL #1

Its dark. But the profiles of several corpses are discernible, some are slumped in their seats as others lie flat on the floor. There are at least fifteen bodies. He slowly begins to approach a corpse that is several inches from him.

CLOSE UP

We see the gaunt, skull-like face of an old man whose skin has also deteriorated. As the flashlight is focused, we see rivulets of a dark, shining liquid that seeps from the corpse's mouth. He produces a sample kit, where he extracts the dark liquid and places it in a container.

CLANK! The power to the subway station is restored. The lights come on.

He jolts as. . .

Fear begins to course through him as he sees faces, all of them dead.

Of a young girl, who is a bloody mess.

A small infant child.

There are countless more bodies, all of them mutilated, mere shadows of their former selves. Blood and the same dark liquid smeared on the floor, seats, and windows. He moves back, feeling like he's about to throw up. He retreats.

A hand reaches over his shoulder and grabs him, he lets out a faint scream, startled, only to find his partner behind him.

MEDICAL PERSONNEL #2

Sorry to sneak up on you like that, sir. The first two cars in the back are empty.

MEDICAL PERSONNEL #1

(annoyed)

Take this sample, have it run at a lab as soon as possible.

MEDICAL PERSONNEL #2

Right away, sir.

Medical Personnel #2 retreats as Medical Personnel #1 regains his composure. He begins to move out --

(CONTINUED)

TAP! TAP TAP!

There is banging in the next train. He stares back, his breathing labored, his mind racing.

TAP! TAP TAP!

The sound grows louder, until. . .

A bloodstained hand begins to slowly open the sliding door. He remains motionless, taken aback. It might be an injured civilian. The sliding door opens. . .

A few feet in front of him stands a woman. She has a white blood-stained dress, a missing arm, where the bone protrudes. Her body mutilated like the rest, she murmurs incoherently, a black liquid seeping from her mouth as she opens it. Her eyes begin to shift into a glowing white like a monster from "The Horror Express".

MEDICAL PERSONNEL #1
(terrified)
Oh -- god!

He runs out of the 2nd train and into the 1st, but then. In a LOW ANGLE, a hand reaches for him, grabbing his leg. He screams, where below he sees the elderly corpse, he's come back to life. Its hand squeezes harder, ripping off the protective suit and flesh, blood squirts. He falls down, in pain. The corpse begins to gnaw off more chunks of flesh.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY STATION -- NIGHT.

Medical personnel hear the muffled screams in the subway cars. They begin to rush towards it.

MEDICAL PERSONNEL #3
What was that?

LOW ANGLE as a few personnel rush in to the cars. Stay with a body that is covered with a blanket. Its hands begin to regain mobility. A finger moves, then another, and another. Until slowly, its upper body begins to lurch upwards. A few personnel see this, they are baffled.

MEDICAL PERSONNEL #4
Look!

(CONTINUED)

They stare baffled, scared. The blanket slides off, exposing the mutilated face and body. Patches of skin fall to the floor splashing, its eyes are glowing white. It stares at them almost with a grin. It rises, personnel stay back.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY CARS 1&2 -- CONTINUOUS.

CLOSE UP OF PERSONNEL

His helmet visor, it is shattered, his eyes gone from his sockets. A putrefied hand reaches, digging inside his mouth as he rips off chunks of brain.

WIDER to reveal a dead thing stuffing its mouth with brains. It seems to give it more strength. It rises, its glowing, white eyes focused to the subway car exit. Behind it, a cadre of the undead feast on the rest of the medical personnel, body parts are ripped off and stuffed in their mouths.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY STATION -- CONTINUOUS.

Bodies who were once dead begin to rise. We follow Medical personnel with a STEADY CAM TYPE OF SHOT as they begin to shift out of the subway station. Moans grow loudly, ominous, they reverberate through the quiet subway station.

EXT. SUBWAY ENTRANCE/STREETS OF DOWNTOWN -- CONTINUOUS.

Light rain and thunder continues. The scene is illuminated by the dim streetlights, the emergency vehicle flashers, and the occasional flashes of thunder. The meld of colors are enthralling, straight from a Bava picture. Medical personnel are met by more men who stand by with decontamination trucks and equipment as they emerge.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. POLICE CRUISER/DOWNTOWN STREETS -- NIGHT.

Travis inside his cruiser, dials a number on his cell phone. He gets a busy signal. He throws his phone in frustration. Then. . .

MEDICAL PERSONNEL (O.S. RADIO FILTER)
 (static)
 Help. . .all -- please respond!

Travis listens alarmed.

SERGEANT GREER
 (into radio)
 Come in again, you're braking
 up. "Over".

There's no response, only static. He waits a few seconds. But no one responds.

SERGEANT GREER (CONT'D)
 (into radio)
 Hello? Can you hear me. "Over".

Travis puts on his jacket and emerges from his vehicle. He approaches a large police officer, who stands by a barrier rail smoking a cigarette. He is OFFICER MORTIMER (31).

SERGEANT GREER
 Mortimer, what are you doing out
 here?

MORTIMER
 My legs were starting to fall
 asleep. Plus, Ramirez don't like
 it too much when I smoke. Are we
 gonna stay out here all night?

SERGEANT GREER
 I don't know, look someone just
 radioed in, there might be some
 trouble cooking up in the
 restricted sites, you haven't
 seen anything.

MORTIMER
 No. Everything looks good from
 here. Why don't we check it out?

SERGEANT GREER
 We're not suited up. We can't
 risk going up there unless we
 really need to. Keep your eyes
 open.

(CONTINUED)

MORTIMER (O.C.)

Sure will.

Travis approaches a police cruiser from his unit, he knocks on the side window. A fat officer with a bad mustache stuffs his mouth with pizza. He is OFFICER RAMIREZ (28).

SERGEANT GREER

Did you hear it? On the radio.

RAMIREZ

(mouthful of pizza)

Hear what?

SERGEANT GREER

It came from the restricted site, from the subway station, they were calling us for help, I couldn't hear anything myself, he kept breaking up.

(off Ramirez's baffled look)

Call in. See if they can hear you.

RAMIREZ

(in radio)

This is Officer Ramirez from Unit 9, can anyone hear me.

Static. no response

Mortimer begins to wander by the sidewalk, moving idly as he smokes his cigarette. He stares above at the sky, which flashes every now and then. Then paces further, he stares at the dimly lit, vacant streets. Mist has formulated, making it hard to see ahead. He checks his wristwatch. Then starts back to his vehicle.

SFX: Feet splashing on the wet asphalt.

Mortimer halts and turns. Sees only vacant streets. He elicits his flashlight, the beam cutting through the mist.

MORTIMER

Sarge!

Sergeant Greer begins to trot toward Mortimer, Ramirez emerges from his vehicle, lagging behind Sergeant Greer.

(CONTINUED)

SERGEANT GREER

What is it?

MORTIMER

Someone was behind me. I heard someone move.

SERGEANT GREER

Let's check it out.

Greer and Ramirez elicit their flashlights, all three men walk down the street. They sweep their flashlight beams across buildings, the dimly lit streets, searching.

Thunder flashes briefly illuminating the immediate area, ahead revealing the profile of a person.

MORTIMER

Straight ahead, did you see it!

SERGEANT GREER

I saw it.

Sergeant Greer unbuckles his holster, ready to draw his P226.

CLOSE UP - OF ALL THREE MEN.

As the silhouettes of more people begin to assemble, little by little they appear through the mist.

RAMIREZ

(nervously)

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

Greer, Mortimer, and Ramirez stop, as they try to discern the mysterious profiles of these people. Travis contacts other units from his walkie-talkie.

SERGEANT GREER

Any units available, please respond. "Over".

Gunshots begin to burst forth in the distance, it echoes big time through the silence. They all squirm practically at once as they draw their pistols.

SERGEANT GREER (cont'd)

Fuck!

RAMIREZ

What in god's name is happening?

(CONTINUED)

SERGEANT GREER
I dunno, c'mon, move back, to
your vehicles!

They begin to sprint until they reach their vehicles.

INT. GREER'S POLICE CRUISER (MOVING) -- CONTINUOUS.

Inside, the panicked voices of Police Officers begin to transmit through the radio. He attempts to desperately contact one of them, but his radio does not function. Travis starts the engine, he accelerates. The tires screeching in the wet asphalt as Ramirez and Mortimer follow behind him.

Ahead, he sees a woman.

He brakes, the tires screech.

PLUNK!

The windshield cobwebs. Blood and brain matter spatters.

The woman's head is busted wide open.

Travis, wide-eyed, remains stagnant.

His eyes trained to the woman he just killed.

Then. . .

She begins to slowly shift from her position, her face hidden behind her once beautiful long, blond hair. Which is now soddened with blood. Her eyes are glowing white, like the rest of the mutants. Her gaze meets Greer's befuddled look.

SFX: A portion of the windshield shattering.

She punches through. The putrefied arm of the mutant woman spans through the broken windshield, almost hitting Greer in the process. He ducks as low as he can, the woman's hand within inches from his face.

He steps hard on the accelerator.

And swerves, driving like a drunk teenager.

The mutant woman falls hard onto the asphalt.

Greer continues to drive, in complete shock.

FADE OUT:

EXT. ROAD IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF PITTSBURGH -- LATE NIGHT.

A lonely road cutting through a densely forested area. A suburban headlights cut through the mist and darkness, it moves at a steady yet fast pace.

OVER BLACK

"A few hours later"

INT. BLACK SUBURBAN (PARKED) -- LATE NIGHT.

David who drives the vehicle is agitated, sleepy. He switches through a few radio stations, not liking what he hears. The rain has eased as lightning still continues to flash in the horizon. The frigid wind howling, bushes and tree branches sway, it is the beginning of winter. He opens up the window, his hair moving, the air feels good as he sticks his head out.

SHIRLEY (O.C.)
(sleepily)
Close the window, it's god dang
freezing.

David turns to look at Shirley who is wrapped around a warm blanket, and already fast asleep. He pulls the window up. David continues to flip through radio stations.

David reaches for a thermos from the cup holder. He takes sips of warm coffee, then reaches down a brown bag for a jelly doughnut.

Ahead, two specs of light coming towards them. As he grabs the jelly doughnut, he sees the two specs of light closing in very fast.

He drops everything and swerves off road, a truck zooms past him. As he brakes, the vehicle screeches to a halt, a few feet from a broad tree branch.

They both jerk from their seats, Shirley screams, abruptly awoken and disoriented.

DAVID
(in shock)
Shit. . .god fucking dammit!
Fuck!

He looks over at Shirley, who is wide-eyed, breathing hard.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID (CONT'D)
Are you alright? That fucker
nearly crashed into us. Are you
okay?

SHIRLEY
No.

David mumbles curse words under his breath.

SHIRLEY (cont'd)
(angrily)
I'm driving.

CUT TO:

INT. BLACK SUBURBAN -- LATE NIGHT.

Shirley drives with a stern face as David looks at her.
They remain silent for a few seconds.

DAVID
Son of a bitch came outta'
nowhere, I didn't see him. The
fucker must be blind or drunk,
it's not my fault.

SHIRLEY
Are you composing a rap song,
could you cut down on the
swearing, it's annoying.

DAVID
Fine. Are you still angry?

SHIRLEY
No! Just shut up for a minute
will ya! We're okay its over
with, I want to get to the cabin
alive, now if you don't mind,
I'm trying to drive here.

David sulks, then wraps himself with a blanket. A song by
Evanescence plays on the radio, he moves to change the
station, Shirley slaps his hand away.

SHIRLEY (cont'd)
Sorry. Driver's privileges.

She turns the music up.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN -- ESTABLISHING -- DAWN.

The sky is overcast and still considerably dark. The suburban stops on a dirt road which is in front of a wooden cabin that is surrounded by lavishing forestry and a small lake. Beyond the mistiness of the lake, are an establishment of other cabins.

Shirley and David emerge from the vehicle. David stretches out, still very tired. Shirley moves to the vehicle's tailgate where she grabs a few of her bags, David joins in to help.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN -- CONTINUOUS.

The front door opens. Shirley and David stand in the door frame, as they give the place a quick glance. The interior is nicely furnished. They proceed inside where they rest their bags.

DAVID

Worth every penny.

Shirley moves to the fireplace, grabs a box of matches from the mantelpiece and gets a fire going. She stares at the combustion of flames. Her eyes transfixed at the fire's glow. Her golden necklace shimmers, she looks at the heart-shaped pendant attached to it, which opens. Inside is a grainy photo of Shirley, only 11 years old, she hugs a woman. They both look very happy.

David moves behind her. She shuts the heart-shaped pendant and turns to him.

DAVID (cont'd)

Are you alright?

SHIRLEY

Yeah, totally. Why wouldn't I be.

DAVID

You seem stressed out.

SHIRLEY

No I'm not stressed out, I'm just tired, that's all.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN BATHROOM/BEDROOM -- A FEW MINUTES LATER.

Shirley walks out of the bathroom, wearing a T-shirt and warmers. She walks into the bedroom as she dries her wet hair with a towel. David has fallen fast asleep, she slips into bed quietly next to him.

FADE OUT:

EXT. DESOLATE LANDSCAPE -- DAY -- (DREAM).

Silence plays out. Shirley in her school uniform, only 11 years old, runs through a rich verdant garden, the bright sun blazing. She glances behind her as she continues to run, and finds a tall, scrawny shadow chasing her.

In that instance, the once rich and verdant landscape becomes barren, the clear blue sky darkens. She falls to her knees in exhaustion.

CU ON HER EYES as an image of decayed arms superimposes over her irises, the decayed arms begin to spring from the ground.

She rises, moves her legs to run, but then glances down to find her legs being torn apart by these decayed hands. She screams, but no sound comes out.

Darkness begins to part, the bright sun shines on her face as the silhouette of a woman, moves closer to her. .

Shirley screams again as the complexion emerges.

A very tall woman with ghastly eyes and no skin. Its mouth opens, where worms seep out and begin to slither toward Shirley, she screams her lungs out, yet we don't hear it.

SMASH CUT:

INT. CABIN -- BEDROOM -- LATE MORNING.

Shirley wakes up in a snap. Her body lurches upright as she sweats profusely, she begins to shake. David who is next to her, wide awake looks at her. He holds her.

DAVID

You're cold. Are you still
having the same dream?

Shirley does not respond. She looks out the window.

(CONTINUED)

SHIRLEY

It looks nice out there, the storm finally cleared out.

DAVID

It's freezing out there.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST -- LATE MORNING.

Shirley and David in their winter's clothes stroll around, admiring nature and its elements. The floor CRUNCHES as they step through heaps of yellow foliage. The forest is wintry and dead. The wind picks up, Shirley hunches, trying to conceal her face from the frigid breeze.

DAVID

Can I ask you something, it's personal, so if you don't want to answer, you don't have to.

SHIRLEY

What did you have in mind?

DAVID

That necklace, you seem to be fond of it. Every time I ask you about it you change the subject.

SHIRLEY

It was a gift from my mother. I've had it for a very long time, since I was . . . 11 or 12, I forget. I like looking at it.

Shirley picks up a leaf, she begins to tear tiny pieces.

DAVID

How did she go?

SHIRLEY

(annoyed)

Why do you want to know all of these things all of a sudden?

DAVID

I don't understand why you have to conceal your past to me.

(CONTINUED)

SHIRLEY

I'm not concealing anything,
there are just some things
that I don't want to bring up,
my past being one of them.

DAVID

Fine, be that way.

He starts walking faster, Shirley lagging behind him.

SHIRLEY

David?! You're being absolutely
ridiculous. You're acting like
a pubescent teen.

He stops, looks back at her. Shirley moves toward him.

SHIRLEY (cont'd)

Can't we just enjoy ourselves? I
just want to be able to clear my
head, I've been a total mess for
the last few weeks. Why is it so
important to you?

David speaks reticently, not staring directly at Shirley.

DAVID

We've been together for quite
some time, and I really. . .I
like you, I like being with you.
This is gonna sound a bit corny,
but uh. . .if we want this to
work, we're gonna have to be
honest with ourselves, I know
something is bothering you.
I see it in your eyes. I know
your not particularly fond of
your father, but whatever
happened between you two, I'm
sure there's something that can
be done to resolve.

Shirley with a stricken look.

SHIRLEY

I seriously doubt that.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAKE SHORE -- NOON.