

The Grave

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EXT. FULL PANORAMIC VISTA -- DAY

Gilded wheat waves in the wind as far as the eye can see.

Framed in the glow of a sunset, a white farm house sprouts from the plain at the end of a long dirt road.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - QUICK SHOTS OF -

A tire-swing spinning in a breeze.

A broken-down tractor in a field.

A bicycle in the yard and a mini-van in need of a wash before the front porch.

Just your typical Midwestern farm where Dad works sunup to sundown and Mom's in an apron all day. Only today, with not a person or animal in sight, there's something eerie about the place, an unsettling quiet that hangs in the air.

INT. FARM HOUSE -- DAY

The living room in a shambles: toppled chairs; farming magazines and a broken vase scattered on the floor; family photos a kilter on the wall.

One photo of Mom and Dad and their twelve-year-old son beside a beautiful lake.

INT. BEDROOM -

The boy's room where a homemade curtain flaps in the breeze. More happy photos here and sport posters hung on the walls. Small-town trophies crowd a bureau top.

Another on the floor before a closet. A partial view of the name plate reads:

"Plainfield Bobcats West Kansas Little League Champions"

Just beyond it an eye peers out a closet door and labored breathing issues from within.

INSIDE THE CLOSET

A terrified HOUSEWIFE huddles on the floor drawing deeply on an asthma nebulizer. Her hair in tangles, her clothing torn, she sits trembling in the dark, breathing in and out, in... and out.

HOUSEWIFE'S POV:

Of the quiet bedroom, motionless but for a curtain in the breeze. Suddenly a shutter slams against the window and

Housewife jumps in her skin, stops a scream with her hand. She breathes, calms herself, then suddenly bolts up and starts searching the closet.

Rifling through boxes and containers, tossing aside photos, clothing and toys, searching for something as if her life depended on it.

Frustrated, she stops and wipes away tears, noticing a box on the shelf above her head. Recognizes it, reaches, practically lunges for it and rips it open.

A Native American beaded necklace and stacks of baseball cards spill out onto the closet floor. She scoops up the necklace and clutches it to her chest -- found it!

She peeks out the door again, widens it, and quickly throws out the necklace and shuts the door.

HOUSEWIFE (CONT'D)

There! There it is! Take it. Now please...

She slumps to the floor and sobs.

HOUSEWIFE (CONT'D)

... leave me alone.

After a long still moment she ventures another peek.

The necklace is still there, lying in the dark, while beyond it through the flapping curtain the headlights of a vehicle approach the house. Housewife gasps.

EXT. FARM HOUSE -- NIGHT

A pick-up truck rolls to a dusty stop and a farmer and LITTLE LEAGUER hop out and saunter up to the house.

INT. BEDROOM CLOSET -- NIGHT

Housewife, still huddled on the floor, listens. Hears the front door close and indistinct voices coming from the living room. For a moment she looks suffused with hope, saved, then a terrible realization hits her and she bolts to her feet.

But as she does two powerful hands shoot out of the floor and seize her ankles -- ghoulis, necrotic hands, mottled purple, black and white.

Housewife tries to scream, but two more rotting hands slither out of the wall and around her face, covering her mouth. Housewife's eyes go wide as saucers as she's jerked violently out of frame.

LITTLE LEAGUER (O.S.)

(fading)

Mom?... Mom?

CLOSE IN

on the necklace on the floor, on a cluster of white beads... closer and closer until the entire frame fills with white.

A watery circle forms in the whiteness, like an aerial view of an alabaster swimming pool. Hazy blue dots appear in the water, expanding, linking up, coming into sharp relief as a thin vertical line.

ANGLE WIDENS

to reveal a positive pregnancy test in a young woman's hand.

JILL JACKSON stares at the result. The sky has fallen and the world has been swept away. She shakes the tester and stares, expecting, no, demanding a different result.

The telling blue line remains.

Jill bolts up and throws it into the toilet of an APARTMENT BATHROOM... The tester spins, sinks in the bowl.

Water pours from a spigot.

Jill, in white lingerie, comes up from washing her face and looks in a mirror.

A very scared, pretty young woman stares back at her. She gazes deep into her own eyes searching for an answer.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER -

Jill slips on a pair of jeans and a top.

Goes to a closet and puts on a "Detroit Pistons" jacket. Stops to look at one side of the closet that is conspicuously bare, just empty hangers.

IN THE BATHROOM

She puts on lipstick. Combs her hair. Half the sink is bare, as are two shelves in the medicine cabinet. Even one of the towel racks is empty. The whole impression is as if someone has vacated with all their belongings.

She returns to the BEDROOM, to a large professional make-up kit set on a table. Checks the contents. Locks it. And sets it by the door.

Grabs her purse from a nightstand, pausing to look at a photo of her and a handsome guy in happier times. She picks it up, studies it, then drops it in a waste basket.

CLOSE ON: PHOTO

Its glass broken. A crack running between the smiling couple.

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN DOCK - DAY - AERIAL SHOT -

That sweeps in over the blue water and ends at a dock where a photo shoot is underway. Lights. Reflectors. Models and crew.

The models pose. A photographer shoots - DAVID CHUN, a Chinese-American on the plus side of forty, but too fit and handsome for anyone to notice.

He clicks away. Ad libs directions to the models -- three gorgeous women in *haute couture* and a male model all in white -- deck hand pants and an open silk shirt.

Observing it all with a disapproving eye is TINA GREER, the producer of the shoot. Slender, sultry, easily pegged as a former model herself, she's a woman who exudes confidence and style and though nearing fifty she carries her age as lightly as a smile.

TINA

No, no, no. C'mon, Dino, for Christ's sake stop pouting this isn't for "Teen Beat".

DINO AKAU

22, is hapa (half white/half Polynesian) and gorgeous, with sun-streaked hair and GQ features. There is an air about him that says "the world and all its women are at my feet." He stares blankly at Tina, her criticism have all the effect of a pea shooter against a battleship.

TINA (CONT'D)

(to David)

Change the set up. Let's get some shots with the skyline in the background.

Immediately everyone on set springs into action. The models break up and head toward a craft table, director chairs.

Grips move lights, reflectors.

David comes to a table blanketed with cameras beside Jill's make-up stand. Changes a lens. Looks at Jill.

She sits bonelessly in a director's chair with her head against the backrest staring blankly into space.

DAVID

Hey, cheer up. Life goes on, you know.

JILL

My circle of friends is way too small. Does all Detroit know?

DAVID

No, just everyone you've ever met, and their relatives.

Jill sits up and shakes her head and sighs.

JILL

Oh, David.

He comes over and gives her an avuncular massage on her shoulders.

DAVID

Hey, c'mon, Jill. Where's my big girl?

She looks up at him.

JILL

Smashed. In tiny little pieces.

DAVID

(sincere)

He's not worth it. You know that. Never was. Never will be.

Jill smiles a thanks. David pats her fondly on the shoulder and walks off.

Jill sits there a moment, thinking.

A finch lands on the dock in front of her. Hops around in search of food.

Jill takes what's left of a sandwich off her make-up table and tosses the bird some crumbs.

The finch approaches warily, grabs a morsel and takes to the air. Jill watches him go. The hint of a smile coming to her face.

ACROSS THE SET

An assistant hands Tina two cups of coffee. She comes over to Jill and offers her one. Sits beside her.

TINA

Now it starts.

(off Jill's look)

All the condolences for being dumped.

That's the worst part. Isn't it?

Everyone knows, and they all want to make you feel better... the bastards. Have you talked with him?

JILL

No, he changed his number.

TINA

Be glad, at least now you can't go begging after him.

Jill shoots her a look.

TINA (CONT'D)

Sorry. It's what I did... do. Every time.

She looks at Jill with genuine concern.

TINA (CONT'D)

I told you not to get involved with a model. They'll sweep you off your feet and for a time you'll feel your walking on air.

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

But they're all butterflies, straight or gay, and they just love to fly from flower to flower, sucking them dry until nothing's left behind but a shriveled mess.

JILL

Gee, thanks, I hadn't quite thought of it like that.

TINA

What are friends for. Hey, do you need a pick-me-up?

She takes out a bottle of pills from her purse.

JILL

No, thanks.

TINA

You sure?

Jill nods "yes".

TINA (CONT'D)

I'll tell you what. I've got another shoot lined up for this weekend, at a lake up north. It's a small gig, out in the middle of nowhere, but it pays well and it'll get you out of town for a few days. Which, I'd say, is just what you need. You want in?

JILL

I'll think about it.

TINA

Take your time, it's not like I need an answer today or anything.

Tina grins. Stands and comes behind Jill where she speaks into her ear.

TINA (CONT'D)

I know it hurts, but try to move on, right away. Really, it's the best thing.

Jill turns and smiles.

JILL

Thanks.

TINA

You bet. Tasteless coffee and armchair psychology, what else is a best friend for.

Tina drops the coffee in a wastebasket and walks off, immediately back on the job.

TINA (CONT'D)

For Christ's sake, Carlos, would you leave Honey alone for a minute, and get that goddamn reflector out of the way, it's throwing a huge shadow into the shot.

CARLOS VEGA

a paunchy latino grip in his thirties, breaks away from an intimate conversation with HONEY CHUGANI, a stunning East Indian model, and strolls over to the reflector.

Jill watches Tina, thinking. A beautiful blonde model walks up and drops into the make-up chair, looks at expectantly at Jill. Who gets and goes back to work.

EXT. WOODS -- DAY - AERIAL SHOT OF A VAN -

Traveling a winding forest road.

INT. VAN -- DAY

Jill stares out at the scenery, lost in thought as the radio music, engine, and all sound fades then falls away altogether leaving her in a cocoon of silence.

MOS: Jill stares out at the forest, a green homogenous blur that after a few seconds turns abruptly blue as the van breaks out of the trees near a lake.

SOUND UP: Jill comes out of her reverie. Shifts in her seat and moves aside an unfastened safety-belt.

ROBIN BEZDEK

28, a beautiful blonde, statuesque Czech, sits beside Jill.

ROBIN
 (re: the belt, heavy
 accent)
 You know you reel-ly should put that
 on.

JILL
 Yes, Mom.

Robin turns contemptuously from Jill and looks out the window.

ANGLE WIDENS

To reveal Carlos, the grip, seated on the other side of Jill.
 Up front, David drives with Tina beside him.
 The two other models, Honey and Dino, in the third row seat.
 Carlos sifts through a bag of fast-food.

CARLOS
 What! No pepper? Those idiots,
 they gave me ten bags of salt and no
 pepper! What's with that?

He throws the bag on the floor.

ROBIN
 What for do you need pepper? It's a
 hahm-burger.

CARLOS
 (imitating her accent)
 Hahm-burger... Yes, I'm going to eat
 hahm-burger because I'm humm-gry.

He cracks up. Looks into Robin's annoyed face.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
 I need the pepper for the french
 fries. 'Cause I likes 'em hot, like
 you.

He smiles broadly then stuffs a bunch of fries in his mouth.

Honey leans forward in her seat and whispers in his ear.

HONEY
 Go head, keep flirting, and I'll
 throw up on your fuckin' back.

She flicks his ear hard with her finger and sits back in her seat. Robin ventures a cautious glance back at Honey who smiles falsely and stares daggers with her eyes.

DAVID

steers the van around a bend and comes to a fork in the road. Turns to Tina.

DAVID

Which way?

Tina checks a map.

TINA

Left. No, right. No... Wait a minute...

She turns the map right side up. Flashes David an "oops" look. Traces her finger along the map.

TINA (CONT'D)

That-a-way.
(points right)
The cabin rental office should be about a mile up.

David makes the turn.

CARLOS

Hey, Tina, don't get us lost again, Remember last time, we ended up surrounded by headhunters.

TINA

They weren't headhunters.

Jill gives Carlos a look.

CARLOS

Borneo. Bones in the nose, spears.
(makes a mean face)
... You don't wanna know.

He takes half his burger in one bite then takes out a bag of pot from his shirt pocket and tosses it back to Dino. Speaks with his mouth full.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Hey, Dino, roll us a fatty.

Dino checks the weed.

DINO
 Fuckin' hey, Carlos. Where'd you
 score this?
 (smells a bud)
 This shits' potent.

CARLOS
 I got it off this kid in my building
 who always has great weed.
 (to Jill)
 We call him "Bud". Get it?

The van hits a bump in the road and Dino bounces in his seat,
 steadying himself with a hand that lands on Honey's thigh.

Honey looks slyly at Dino, then gently removes his hand.

EXT. PARK TOURIST CENTER -- DAY

The van pulls in and parks before a quaint wooden building
 nestled among the trees.

Tina and David step out.

INT. VAN -

Jill stands.

CARLOS
 Where are you going?

JILL
 To the bathroom. Do you mind?

Carlos moves his legs aside and Jill stoops past him on her
 way out. Carlos's eyes follow her ass as it passes inches
 before his face. Honey slaps him on the back of his head.

HONEY
 Cut it out.

CARLOS
 Hey!

Jill turns and shuts the door on their ad-libbed bickering.

INT. PARK TOURIST CENTER -- DAY

Tina and David enter the foyer with Jill trailing them. They pass a wall map of the park and a display case where David stops and looks at the items on display: Indian beads and headdresses, dream-catchers, tomahawks, arrowheads, etc.

Jill turns into a bathroom and Tina moves on to a RECEPTIONIST behind a counter where a sign reads: "Cabin Rentals".

TINA

Hi.

RECEPTIONIST

Hi. May I help you?

TINA

Yes, we're here for a cabin. We have a reservation.

RECEPTIONIST

Let me see... Ms. Greer, right?

TINA

That's right.

The clerk smiles and opens a reservation book.

JILL -

comes out of the bathroom and goes toward the reception counter when she's diverted by a carousel with books, maps and brochures. She looks it over. Something catches her eye:

CLOSE ON: A BOOK -

The title reads - "True Algonquian Legends and Ghost Stories".

JILL -

flips through it, checks the price.

AT THE DISPLAY -

David reads small cards beside the items on display.

CLOSE ON: A CARD -

It reads - "Arrowhead returned from Phoenix, Arizona by the family of John Forman: A Morman missionary who died of a heart attack two days after returning home from...".

RESUME DAVID -

Staring at the display, a mix of curiosity and concern on his face. Tina and Jill walk up. Jill carries a plastic bag containing the book. Tina holds up a key.

TINA

Got it. You ready?

DAVID

No, wait a sec. Did you know about this?

TINA

About what?

DAVID

(re: the display)

All this, the whole park's cursed.

TINA

What?

DAVID

Says here you shouldn't take anything home you don't buy in a store.

Tina looks at the items and the heading for the display:

"Leave only footprints, take only memories."

ON JILL -

JILL

Or else?

DAVID

Or else you're toast.

David indicates the cards with a nod.

Jill reads a card.

"Algonquian necklace returned from Plainfield, Kansas by the family of Gayle Rogers who died of an asthma attack three days after returning home...".

She scans other cards...

"... A French Lawyer... killed in an auto accident...."

"... A Japanese train conductor... crushed..."

"... A Swedish Student... drowned...."

BACK TO JILL -

JILL

Great, just what I need on top of everything else, to be cursed.

TINA

Oh, would you guys grow up. This stuff's just for the tourists. I found us a great location, wait 'til you see it. And it's dirt cheap. So cheap that if the boogeyman gets you I've got enough left in the budget to give you a great funeral. A fricken' burial at sea if you want. Now, can we go? I've been traveling for six hours and I like to take a shower before the flies get wind of me. I hear the park has really big flies to go along with the nine other plagues.

She walks off.

David and Jill exchange looks then follow her out.

In the doorway they pass a PARK RANGER - tall, African-American, dangerously handsome. He smiles at Jill.

PARK RANGER

Hi.

JILL

Hi.

Jill flashes her sexiest smile and looks back after they pass.

JILL (CONT'D)
Sure I can't take him home.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

The van cruises along a highway beside a deep blue lake, music blaring from the windows.

Turns onto a side road...

EXT. CABIN -- DAY

And pulls to a stop before a shabby cabin at the edge of a woods.

Everyone unloads, gathering their bags. Dino and Carlos hefting a cooler. Jill looks at the rough accommodations.

JILL
(to David)
No wonder she has room in the budget.

DAVID
You know Tina, nothing but the best for her crew. Be glad if it has a bathroom.

TINA
I heard that.

Jill heads inside.

Robin picks up a blue travel bag.

DAVID
Hey, that's mine.

Robin checks the name tag -- David's right.

ROBIN
Sorry.

She picks up another blue bag and follows the others in.

Tina slings her bag over her shoulder and turns and looks at the cabin, a bit chagrined, apparently it's not what she expected either. She slams shut the van door.

INT. CABIN MAIN ROOM -- NIGHT

A fireplace roars to life. Carlos and a bare-chested Dino jump back from a gout of flame, laughing like ten-year-olds.

CARLOS
(holding a pint of
151 rum)
Whoa!

TINA
(on the couch)
Damn it, Carlos, stop playing around.
What do you want to do, burn the
place down?

An exasperated Tina looks at Jill and Robin sitting beside her. Jill lifts her eyes from her book of ghost stories and shrugs, numb to such antics.

TINA (CONT'D)
I swear every time I hire those two
I feel like I'm back in the tenth
grade.

David comes from the kitchen carrying a handful of beers.

DAVID
Dino!

Dino turns. David tosses him a beer. Offers Carlos, who declines by raising the rum.

He hands beers to Robin and Tina, offers Jill.

She just stares at it, deliberating whether to take it.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What's up? You want it or not?

Jill takes it... reads the alcohol content... pops it open. Each action like taking one step closer to a cliff. She drinks, a huge guzzle -- a headfirst dive over a troublesome decision.

Jill resumes reading. Turns a page.

CLOSE ON: the book, on a drawing of two Algonquian warriors: one stands and offers a tomahawk to another with snakes in his hair seated in a chair.

David drops into a chair beside Jill.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You brought a book?

JILL
I got it where we rented the cabin.
It's pretty good. Scary.

HONEY (O.S.)
What's scary?

Honey walks in wearing very short shorts, a loose tank top and no bra.

JILL
This book. You wouldn't believe
some of the stories.

Carlos lights a joint.

CARLOS
You're right, I wouldn't.

HONEY
Like what? Scare me.
(sharply at Carlos)
I need some kind of stimulation.

Honey takes the joint, sits and swings her legs sideways over the arm of her chair, a position that gives the guys a great view of an ass that would launch a thousand ships.

Dino and David check her out and exchange looks. Carlos takes it all in, and it hits him hard, like a knife in the chest. He conceals his pain behind another swig of the 151.

JILL
Well, the best one is about these
Australian hikers who pissed off a
shaman.

ROBIN
What's that?

JILL
Someone with supernatural powers who
can commune with the spirits.

DINO
You mean a witch doctor?

CARLOS

No, that would be Honey's
gynecologist?

Carlos laughs at his own joke.

HONEY

What are you laughing at, fizzle-
dick? At least they know how to
touch a girl.

Carlos's face drops. The others laugh.

ROBIN

Oh, Honey, that's disgusting.

Honey shrugs.

HONEY

Ever date one?

TINA

Hey, why don't you two just break up
already and put an end to it?

DINO

'Cause he's pussy-whipped and she
needs a slave.

HONEY AND CARLOS

Shut up, Dino.

Dino grins and toasts them with the beer.

DAVID

So what about the Australians?

JILL

Well, it's supposedly a true story.
These guys from Sydney were here on
vacation when one of them beat up a
teen-aged boy, pretty bad. A kid
who turned out to be the son of an
Algonquian medicine man, a shaman,
or shapeshifter who watches over the
land.

DINO

A what?

JILL
Shapeshifter. Someone who can change
shapes into different animals.

HONEY
Oh, please.

JILL
I didn't say I believed it -- but
it's kind of creepy.

DAVID
So what happened?

JILL
Well, that night, in a cabin like
this, this shaman came after them
and he brought along other Indian
spirits, manitous or ghosts, who
came right up through the floor.

Everyone looks at the floor. The fire cracks.

TINA
And...

JILL
And they died, all of them in a fire.
The cabin burned down while they
were fighting them off.

DAVID
Well if they all died in the fire
then how does anyone know what
happened?

JILL
'Cause one of the guys lived long
enough to say. He said after his
friends were killed he fought them
off with salt until he ran out.
Then fire, but that didn't work.

ROBIN
Salt?

JILL
Yeah, I guess ghosts don't like it.

TINA

Oh, get real. They were Aussies for Christ's sake -- they probably just freaked out on 'shrooms and burned the place down.

JILL

Yeah, probably.

Jill looks at David who seems to take the account a little more seriously than the others.

EXT. CABIN -- NIGHT

The sounds of the party carry into the surrounding woods.

INT. JILL, TINA AND ROBIN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Robin and Tina are sound asleep in their beds, but Jill lies awake staring out the window.

She gets up and leaves.

Goes into the HALL...

past Honey's and Carlos's room. Through the half-open door she sees

A dark figure standing over the bed.

Jill freezes. Creeps closer. Peers in.

HONEY'S AND CARLOS'S ROOM -

Dino stands over Honey carefully lifting her sheet, uncovering the beautiful model who lies there in a little white panty.

Dino stares, lust oozing from his pores.

JILL

(at the door,
whispering)

Dino.

Dino drops the sheet and comes over to her.

DINO

Hey, Jill.

JILL
(whispers)
What do you think you're doing?

DINO
(mocking her whisper)
I got lost. Can't... see... in the
dark.

Jill eyes him suspiciously.

JILL
You're a creep.

DINO
Yeah. So?

Jill turns to go. Dino puts his hand against the wall and
blocks her way.

DINO (CONT'D)
What's your hurry?

JILL
I'm hungry.

DINO
Yeah? Me too.

He scans Jill's lithe body, her breasts barely contained by
a wife-beater T-shirt, her toned brown legs to die for.

JILL
Forget it, Dino. Not on my last
day.

Dino grins, unperturbed. He drops his arm and Jill walks
away.

DINO
That why your boyfriend dumped you?

Jill turns.

DINO (CONT'D)
You didn't want to put out? Or was
there some other reason?

JILL
Screw you.

DINO
Yeah, sure, anytime.

He smiles. Jill turns and walks out.

Through the MAIN ROOM into the

KITCHEN -

where she goes straight to a cooler and gets a beer. She fumbles with the tab, grows more agitated, then finally pops it open and takes a long drink. Calms down and stares out the open window.

An eerie sound floats in on the breeze, a distant rising and falling of Indian chanting and drums.

In the distance a string of torches head toward the lake.

Jill walks outside to get a better view.

EXT. CABIN -- NIGHT

She looks in the direction of the torches.

Nothing there now, just an expanse of forest sloping away toward a calm moon-lit lake.

Jill turns and goes back inside.

INT. JILL, TINA AND ROBIN'S ROOM -- DAY

A ceiling fan spins.

Jill lies awake staring up at it through the dim morning light. She looks like shit and from the sick pallor of her face feels like it too. Suddenly she bolts up and runs from the room.

MAIN ROOM -

Straight for the front door, when she abruptly turns, darts into the KITCHEN and retches in the sink.

She washes up. Digs into a bag for a soda cracker. Takes a bite and chucks it in disgust. She heads outside.

EXT. CABIN -- DAY

Emerging on to a beautiful morning -- sunshine over the lake, a wet-breeze in the air, a rainbow arcing across cumulus-nimbus in the distance.

Jill savors the breeze then turns to the sound of Hip-Hop music drifting in from around the side of the cabin.

She follows it and finds a park ranger's jeep with it's radio playing. She looks around, sees no one and turns the music off.

Suddenly Park Ranger's head pops up out of the ground where the cabin yard meets the trees.

PARK RANGER

Hey! I was listening to that!

A surprised Jill reaches for the radio again.

PARK RANGER (CONT'D)

Forget it. I'm done here anyway.

Park Ranger tosses aside a shovel and climbs out of the hole. Shirt off, muscles glistening, he shakes dirt from his jeans and smiles at Jill.

She walks up to him doing her level best not to stare at his hot bod.

JILL

Good morning. I didn't think I'd see you again.

PARK RANGER

Oh? Well I knew I'd see you.

Park Ranger wipes his brow and glances at the gaping hole.

PARK RANGER (CONT'D)

One of my jobs is to do the upkeep on the cabins. You've got something blocking your main water valve.

Jill steps up and looks in the hole.

The dull eyes of a dead infant stare up at her from out of the mud.

She turns to Park Ranger, who's whole head is engulfed in slithering snakes.

Jill screams!...

Bolts up in bed... scared out of her wits and sweating.

She calms down then falls back on the pillow.

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- DAY

The van cruises through the forest. Stops beside a

ROADSIDE STAND -

Tina, Jill and Honey step out and approach the stand where a tourist couple purchases fruit from a powerfully built Algonquian Indian -- ASKUWHETEAU or "AK", (40). The couple leaves while the women select from among an assortment of fruit. Tina holds up a couple apples.

TINA

Are these ripe?

AK

Ripe and clean. I pick them fresh every morning and wash 'em before I set them out.

TINA

How much?

AK

Fifty cents. A piece.

Tina gives him a five. AK makes change. Looks at Honey who peels a plumb and eats.

AK (CONT'D)

Are you from around here? You look like a local girl.

HONEY

(smiles falsely)

Nope, just a horny tourist.

Jill peruses the fruit with little enthusiasm.

An Algonquian girl, late teens, approaches the stand carrying an infant in one arm and leading a three-year-old by the hand. She looks drained, worn for her years.

She smiles at Jill as she walks by.

Jill stares after her with an odd look on her face -- is it sympathy or dread? She picks up an apple and hands AK a bill. AK bags the fruit.

AK
You ladies going to Mirror Lake?

JILL
Yes, we are. Is it far?

AK
No, the turn off is just up the road.
There's a sign. You can't miss it.

AK smiles and hands her some change.

JILL
Are you Algonquian?

AK
Born and bred.

JILL
What's your name?

AK
Askwheteau.

JILL
I'm sorry?

AK
Call me "AK", it's a lot easier.

JILL
No, no, I want to know. As-ku...

AK
Askwheteau. It means "He who
watches".

TINA
Watches what?

HONEY
(cuts in under her
breath)
Hot girls, obviously.

AK flashes her a disapproving glare. Honey smiles falsely, bites the plumb and turns away half-cringing.

AK
 Watches over the land, the people.
 I'm not sure exactly. My Mom just
 liked the sound of it.

JILL
 Me too.

Jill holds up the apple.

JILL (CONT'D)
 ... Thanks.

The women walk off. AK stares after them.

AK
 You ladies be careful, now! Stay on
 the trail and don't leave a mess!
 (softer, to himself)
 The people around here don't like
 that.

EXT. MIRROR LAKE -- DAY

A small glassy lake surrounded by forest.

The photo shoot is underway... Shots include -

Jill putting the finishing touches on Honey's makeup.

Teasing Robin's hair.

Dino applying suntan oil.

David prepping his cameras.

Carlos setting up reflectors.

Tina pointing out to David where she wants the shots.

DAVID SHOOTS:

Honey...

Robin...

In various sexy swimsuits.

The women pose together.

With Dino.

The whole look and feel of the shoot is very Maxim or SI swimsuit issue.

David checks the light.

IN THE SKY -

A mantle of clouds rolls in.

ON DAVID -

He looks at Tina and waves a hand across his throat indicating it's time to stop shooting.

Tina turns to the models.

TINA

All right, you guys, we're losing the morning light. That's it for today. Great job, everyone.

The three models break a pose.

Walk along the lake edge. Suddenly Dino shoves Robin into the water. She falls and screams! Dino laughs until Honey grabs him from behind and drags him in too.

The models play in the lake shallows.

The others watch from the shore. Carlos peels off his shirt and joins them, running wildly into the water where he trips and falls flat on his face.

Jill strips down to a bikini. Turns to Tina.

JILL

You coming in?

TINA

No, you go ahead. No suit.

DAVID

So, what's the problem? We don't mind.

TINA

I'm sure you don't.

David smiles. Takes off his shirt and runs with Jill into the lake.

MOMENTS LATER -

Honey sits atop Carlos's shoulders chicken fighting with Jill atop David and Robin atop Dino. Everyone's in high spirits: falling, splashing into the water, adjusting bikinis that slip out of place.

Honey rises out of the water, a trailer money-shot. She scrambles to Dino and hops on his shoulders, practically drowning him in the process.

Carlos comes up from under the water, sees...

Honey mount Dino.

A wave of disappointment flashes across his face, then Robin hops onto his back and he carries on with the fun.

LATER -

David races off a ROCK and falls fifteen-feet into the lake. Jill steps up to the edge and looks down from atop the rock.

DAVID

Come on, Jill. Jump!

Jill stares at the water below, swallows hard, then turns to go back down. A soaking wet Robin climbs up beside her.

ROBIN

What are you worried about? It's not going to kill you.

Robin runs and jumps off the rock, screaming.

Jill looks back at the water, thinking, her hand unconsciously touching her belly.

She clenches her jaw. Runs. And leaps off the rock...

Falling in slow-motion into a poorly-executed belly-flop.

Robin cheers.

Tina, sitting in the shade, bursts out laughing.

TINA

Oh, my God, that looks painful!

Jill comes up from under the water then dolphin-dives back under.

UNDERWATER -

She presses on her belly and screams -- an explosive release of fear, frustration and anger.

Jill SURFACES. Swims to the lake edge near Tina.

ACROSS THE LAKE -

Honey floats on her back with Carlos side-stroking beside her.

HONEY

This water feels so good.

(closes her eyes)

This whole place is to die for.

Carlos puts an arm around her. Startling Honey, who flips over and shoves him away.

HONEY (CONT'D)

Don't!.. You jerk... Just leave me alone.

Honey swims across the lake and ducks into a

SMALL ALCOVE -

She climbs onto a slab of rock when she's suddenly yanked under the water. She pops up gasping for air. Dino surfaces, clinging to her, trying for a kiss.

HONEY (CONT'D)
 Stop it. Stop it, Dino!
 (slugging his shoulder)
 Let go of me!

He releases Honey and she climbs on the rock.

HONEY (CONT'D)
 What's the matter with you?! Carlos
 is right there.

DINO
 So?

HONEY
 So? I thought you were friends.

DINO
 We are.
 (kicks away on his
 back)
 What's that got to do with it?

CARLOS -

on the rocks, gets a glimpse of Dino and Honey in the alcove. By his look he can guess what's going on.

EXT. MIRROR LAKE - LATER -

A large brown spider crawls across a slab of rock, passing unobtrusively behind Jill's head while she sunbathes with Robin and Honey.

Nearby, Tina and David sit in the shade. Tina fills out a shooting report. David cleans a camera. Suddenly Carlos and Dino emerge from the trees.

CARLOS
 Hey, you guys, get up! C'mon, you
 gotta check this out!

EXT. GRAVEYARD -- DAY

An ancient rock wall, collapsed in places and nearly overgrown with vines and weeds.

Carlos and Dino lead the others through a break in the wall into the center of a great circle. All around them are strange piles of stones -- crude grave markers. Tina stumbles.

CARLOS
Watch out, Tina, I took a piss over there.

Tina comes quickly to her feet.

TINA
This better be good, Carlos.

CARLOS
It is. You'll see.

He leads them to the edge of a pit.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
Check it out.

At the bottom of the pit among branches, pine cones and leaves are bones half in and out of the mud.

DINO
Pretty cool, huh?

ROBIN
What is that?

CARLOS
(takes a spooky tone)
Bones, girly. Human bones.

JILL
Hey, let's get out of here.

DINO
What for? This place is awesome.

JILL
This place is a graveyard.

DINO
So?

Jill stares at the bones, at a baby's skull half in and out of the mud. She steps back, nearly swoons, then turns and tramps off through the grass.

DAVID
Where're you going?

JILL
(without turning)
Back to the lake.

TINA
C'mon, Jill, don't be like that.

Jill stops and turns.

JILL
What's wrong with you guys? Haven't
you got any respect?

Carlos lights a joint.

CARLOS
I got respect.

He offers it to Jill.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
Want some?

Jill rolls her eyes and walks off.

FOREST TRAIL - MINUTES LATER -

Jill walks down the dim trail. Everything quiet, eerily still. She slows her pace, stops and peers down the dark trail.

Ahead of her something moves in the bushes.

Jill freezes. Backs up a step. Suddenly a black, hairy thing bolts out of the brush and rushes toward her.

Jill screams! Turns and slips as a wild boar bears down on her, tusks flashing. She grabs a rock, rolls over, ready to strike when the boar turns on a dime and disappears into the brush.

Jill drops the rock, lays back and breathes a huge sigh of relief.

EXT. GRAVEYARD -- DAY

Everyone but Tina sits on the rock wall smoking a joint. Tina stands before them scanning the graveyard with a critical eye.

TINA

Hey, what do you guys think of taking some shots around here.

ROBIN

That's a great idea. It's really beautiful -- so green and ancient.

HONEY

Find by me, just not at night.

CARLOS

What? Are you afraid of ghosts.

HONEY

No, mosquitoes, you dipshit.

TINA

David?

DAVID

I don't know. It's not a bad location, but... it's still a graveyard.

Tina weighs his opinion.

Carlos takes the 151 rum from his backpack and passes it around. Honey drinks, spits it out.

HONEY

God, that's awful!

CARLOS

Hey! Don't waste it. This stuff's expensive.

Dino looks at the rum Honey has spit.

It seeps into a mound near their feet.

DINO

Now you've gone and done it.

Honey and the others look, unsure of his meaning. Dino points.

DINO (CONT'D)
You've spit on his grave.

He laughs, the others too, all except David.

HONEY
Yeah, right. As if I care. I bet the guy was a scalp-hunter... and a wife-beater.

David stares with a serious expression at the mound of dirt: an age-old grave. He takes a good look around the graveyard. Hops off the wall and slings his camera bag over his shoulder.

DAVID
I'm outta here.

TINA
What's the matter, David?

David takes another look around.

DAVID
Just doesn't feel right... I'll see you guys back at the lake.

David walks off.

CARLOS
You're just high, bro.

Tina looks after him.

TINA
Wait, David! I'll come with you.

David stops and waits. Tina joins him and together they tramp off through knee-high grass.

Dino hops off the wall and heads the other way.

CARLOS
Where're you going?

DINO
I'm just gonna take a look around.
Don't run off with the weed.

Dino walks off, casting an inviting look at Honey as he goes.
Honey climbs off the wall.

CARLOS
You too?

HONEY
(as she goes)
Hey, I gotta pee, alright. Do you
mind?

Carlos shrugs, takes another swig of rum and unloads a long
belch -- BUUURRRPPP! He smiles at Robin.

CARLOS
Alone at last.

EXT. MIRROR LAKE -- DAY

Jill comes out of the brush at a jog. Stops at the lake
edge, breathless and shaken. She looks around, focusing on
The rock where she made her jump.

She stares at it for a long moment, then suddenly sobs and
slips to the ground in tears.

EXT. GRAVEYARD -- DAY

Dino, out of sight of the others, leans against a grave marker
beside a large rock, waiting. After a moment, Honey appears
from around the other side.

FOREST TRAIL -

David and Tina walk along the trail. Tina trips and nearly
goes over the side. David catches her just in time.

TINA
Thanks.

They look down the steep, muddy slope that descends into the
brush. Turn and look at one another. There is a moment.
David smiles awkwardly and releases Tina. Walks on. Tina
stares after him, then follows.

GRAVEYARD - WALL -

Carlos lies on the wall with his eyes closed feeling the
effects of the heat and 151.

Robin, alone and bored, hops off the wall and returns to the pit. She looks into it, selectively, and notices

The tiny skull half in and out of the mud.

GRAVEYARD - ROCK -

Dino and Honey have PG-13 sex against the rock.

EXT. MIRROR LAKE -- DAY

Jill, all cried out, sits by the edge of the lake holding her knees, staring blankly at the water. A shadow crosses her face and she looks up at

Rain clouds scudding across the sky.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - WALL -- DAY

Robin zips up her backpack and places it carefully beside her. Wipes mud off her hands on Carlos's pants who lies zonked out on the wall with his mouth open.

GRAVEYARD - ROCK -

Dino buttons his shirt. Honey fixes her hair.

DINO
So how was that, huh?

HONEY
Too short, too rough and I still got bored. Other than that it was fine, stud.

Honey walks off. Dino staring after her, at a lost for words.

EXT. CABIN -- DAY

A mantle of brooding clouds. Drizzling rain.

INT. CABIN -- DAY - SHOTS OF -

- Jill alone on the couch listening to the rain.

- Tina and Robin napping.

- David sleeping while Carlos, now in David's room, pumps out push-ups between the beds.

Carlos hops up. Goes to the window and gazes out at the rain. Slams the wall with his fist.

- Dino lying with Honey, post-coital, crashed.

He comes awake, eases out of the bed. Throws on some sweats and leaves Honey sleeping.

INT. MAIN ROOM -- DAY

Dino walks in on Jill and takes a seat. Puts on running shoes.

DINO
I thought you were sleeping?

JILL
I'm not tired.

DINO
No, just worried.
(off Jill's look)
I heard you this morning. Does your
boyfriend know?

JILL
I don't know what you're talking
about.

DINO
Sure you do.

Dino cracks a devilish grin. Before Jill can answer Carlos enters the room and comes and stands over Dino.

JILL
Carlos, let it go.

CARLOS
(eyeing Dino)
Stay out of this, Jill. This is
between me and my friend.

DINO
Ah, come on, man, spare me the drama.

CARLOS
Just tell me one thing, Dino. How
could you do it?... You lousy prick,
you know I love her.

DINO
Can't we do this after my run?

Carlos looks on the brink of tears.

DINO (CONT'D)
Dude, she's a slut. If it wasn't
me, it'd be someone else.

CARLOS
But you're my friend! I introduced
you to Tina. And this is how you
repay me?

DINO
Yeah, whatever.

Dino stands and looks frankly at Carlos.

DINO (CONT'D)
Believe it or not, Carlos, I actually
did you a favor.

He takes a step. Carlos blocks his way. Jill bolts up and
grabs Carlos.

JILL
Carlos, don't.

DINO
Now you're in my way, friend.

Dino looks eye to eye with Carlos, ready for whatever he
brings. Carlos thinks better of it and allows Jill to pull
him aside.

CARLOS
I can't believe you did this.

DINO
Don't. It's just a dream, go back
to bed.

Dino gives Carlos a smug look then leaves.

Carlos stares after him. Jill takes Carlos gently by the
arm, but he brushes her off and storms back to his room.

EXT. CABIN -- DAY

Dino stands under the cabin eaves stretching his legs. He grins, smugly, like it's all a big joke to him, then takes off on his run.

EXT. SHOTS OF DINO RUNNING -- DAY

He jogs down the cabin road.

Along a forest road...

FARTHER ON -

He works up a sweat, turns where a sign reads:

"Mirror Lake Road."

ANOTHER ANGLE - MIRROR LAKE ROAD -- MINUTES LATER

Dino runs through a drizzle past an inviting TRAIL leading into the woods. He turns on to it, up a mild grade through the trees.

The rain intensifies, pours.

And he takes cover under a large tree. Through the patter of rain a strange noise comes from behind him -- soft weeping.

Dino goes around the tree in search of the source.

Among the deeper shadows of the tree he comes upon an Algonquian girl sitting on an upraised root.

DINO

Hey, what are you doing out here?

The girl looks up at the sound of his voice: a pretty dark-eyed girl just out of her teens in a soaked shift. She glances at Dino, briefly and unconcerned, as if he were just part of the scenery, then she puts her face back in her hands and weeps.

Dino goes to her.

DINO (CONT'D)

Are you all right?

She sobs and stands as if to leave. Dino holds her back.

DINO (CONT'D)

Hey, hold on. What's wrong?

She raises soft beseeching eyes and falls against him. Dino holds her, awkwardly at first, but as she wraps her arms around him he gains a comfort with it and embraces her as if he truly cares.

She stops crying and smiles up at him. Dino smiles back.

DINO (CONT'D)

There, that's better.

She slides her hands around his neck, draws him closer and kisses him, open mouthed, passionately.

And like any red-blooded American male, Dino responds, holding her close, sliding his hands around her waist, over her ass and up her back onto two fleshy mounds -- a pair of great tits.

Dino pulls back, dumbfounded at first, until he puts the picture together and realizes that she stands before him with her head turned completely around.

GIRL GHOST stares at him with a maniacal, evil expression. She opens her mouth and reveals rotten teeth and a black bulbous tongue that slithers out of her mouth like an eel.

Dino is horrified. He staggers back. Trips over a root.

She comes toward him and he screams, pops up and runs wildly

INTO THE WOODS -

blindly through the trees and into a

SMALL CLEARING

where he rounds a tree and comes upon Girl Ghost straddling a log, having mock sex with it with her head turned around.

Dino cries out, whirls and sprints off. Weaving through the trees until he enters a

CLUSTER OF DENSE BRUSH -

and loses all sense of direction, turning this way and that, unsure of where to go or what horror awaits him behind the next branch.

Finally he breaks out of the brush onto a

TRAIL -

breathless, nearly hyperventilating, his eyes flick from one direction to the next deciding which way to go. He goes left.

FARTHER DOWN THE TRAIL -

a muddy slope rushes with water. Its soft earth loosening under the flow.

DINO -

races down the trail -- splashing through puddles -- slipping on mud and back to his feet.

He rounds a bend in the trail and comes upon

Girl Ghost arched on the ground with her entire head buried in the mud, her hips thrusting up and down.

The macabre sight throws Dino into a complete panic. He screams, spins and stumbles off the other way.

THE MUDDY SLOPE -

drowned by the downpour, cracks and shifts slightly.

Dino flies past it down the trail. Rounding another bend where he comes upon...

Girl Ghost having PG-13 sex with an Algonquian Man with long coarse hair down his back. Hunched over the girl who lays on a rock, the man turns and looks at Dino with the face of a boar.

DINO -

runs back the other way. Past the muddy slope which breaks loose and sends a torrent of mud rushing toward him.

DINO (CONT'D)

NOOOOOO!

Mud fills the frame.

MOMENTS LATER -

Dino lies in mud up to his chin, half-conscious and stuck out here where no one will find him.

Here ends the free excerpt of my script. If you would like to read more, please go to my "MEMBERS" page to find the full version of "The Grave", and my other posted scripts in their entirety, any one of which can be read for less than the cost of a McDonald's burger. Please regard this small fee like a donation to a street musician or a painter with a cup on the ground, only in my case my art is storytelling.

Thank you very much for taking an interest in my work.

JOHN ROYAN