

The Devil's Brush

A screenplay by Jack DW Ballard, Jr.

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Inspired by a story by George MacDonald (P.D.)

SETTING

Present day downtown NYC, small Navajo Rez town in the SW US, and personal retreat center near the town.

CAST

TERRY HAYNES - A wealthy, world-famous painter, anywhere from 40-60 years of age. Technically a realist in some ways, his paintings nonetheless tend toward the macabre, sometimes in subtle twists, sometimes more explicitly, not unlike the art version of Stephen King or Tim Burton. Very much into his art: so much that he will sacrifice others and himself for its sake. Has a twisted and subtle sense of humor: as long as others are the butt.

LILITH - Terry's beautiful daughter, 20-something. She is a successful supermodel, discovered through the faithful representations in Terry's painting for whom she models. Withdrawn from society to the point of aloofness, she nonetheless attracts just about anybody of the male persuasion. Her beauty contains some pathos which her father exploits. Her love for Carl grows through the film.

CARL - An athletic, lean 20-something aspiring artist. Sort of known in the art circles, but this might come from being "born well." Such breeding has little effect on him and he could be Mr. Anybody USA. Honest to a fault and with a subtle sense of humor: one of those good-looking guys that we can't help liking in spite of his looks. Is madly in love with Lilith.

MARY - Terry's Navajo housekeeper/caretaker. Likable personality, she's emotional, ready to laugh and cry. She'll believe anything she's told.

JEN - Another local Navajo who is totally modern and works as housekeeper for the Haynes. Hangs around Mary and laughs at her propensity to spooky things.

RICH - A 30-ish German national who has hung out in the states so long that he knows the patois. Large nose, generally ugly, but with a big sense of humor that cannot take offense. His field is anthropology and is pretty well known as an expert.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

JEFF - Another 20-something friend of Carl's. Tends to rise to (lower to?) the level of humor that the camaraderie of Rich and Carl bring out.

MICK - A 20-something modern Navajo who's a friend of Terry's. Deals drugs "for fun and profit." In spite of his side-job, he's a decent guy, lean, good looking, profane, and an ex-army redneck to boot. Cynical about everything from both red and white cultures.

PETERS - A late-40's Navajo Nation police officer. He's been there, done that, and nothing fazes him after years of military and police work. After growing up and policing "the Rez," he's got that hard-won, eternal patience of the small-town cop.

CHARLIE - A chunky 40-something Navajo woman. Superstitious in the worst way and grabs onto anything - native, white, Middle Eastern: it doesn't matter. Is it superstition or does she just like to push buttons?

BARTENDER - 50-something male. Redneck who's spent "too many" years on the Rez and has seen everything.

NAVAJO WAITER - Bartender's employee. Navajo, mid-20's, traditional Navajo worldview.

SARAH - Wife of Terry, mother of Lilith. Of an age with Terry, is a city-bred woman, uncomfortable in any town of less than six figures

MELINDA - Female art patron; 50-ish

TOM - Writer for the "New York Press" society and arts pages. 40-ish, successful.

JON - A late teens/early 20's man infatuated with Lilith.

JOE - A falconer.

PATRON #1 - Female art patron

PATRON #2 - Male art patron

PATRON #3 - Male art patron

PATRON #4 - Male art patron

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CARL'S MOM - matronly 50-something woman; wealthy

CARL'S DAD - authoritative 50-something man; confident,
upper-class

DANNY - Haynes' Diné estate gardener. Seen, never heard. He never takes any direct action or interacts with the other characters. Somewhat mysterious background color, but almost a God/conscience presence.

BLACK SCREEN

EXT: NIGHT, SOUTHWEST DESERT HIGHWAY

SFX: HIGH DESERT AMBIANCE; CAR DRIVING. We see a SUV approaching us from a distance. As it passes we CUT TO

INT: SUV

TERRY is driving. He is a 50-something man, good looking with a happy-go-lucky kind of humor about him. Beside him are his wife, SARAH, and daughter, LILITH. Lilith is seventeen, beautiful, but not near what she will be with a few years of maturity. Sarah is similar, but she is just reaching that age where inner wisdom enhances beauty beyond that of a younger person.

SARAH

We are out there, aren't we?

TERRY

What do you mean?

SARAH

I'm not used to this, this . . . space.

LILITH

I know what you mean. After three hours of driving, we should have hit *something*.

TERRY
(lightly)

I'm not sure "hitting something" is necessarily the best way to put it when you're driving.

LILITH

Oh Dad, you know what I mean. We would have been in a decent size town by now instead of these bumps-in-the-road.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

SARAH

Why here, anyway? We could've bought something in Maine, or Florida or something. We've got the money.

TERRY

(some stubbornness showing through: they've been through this before)

No. Here is right. I like the high desert. Besides, it's too crowded back east. . .

LILITH

(pouting)

We could've been in Aspen if you wanted *space*.

TERRY

(infinite patience)

I wanted a retreat, not a social ski club. I wanted a place away from people, away from the social crap that I deal with all the time. I've made enough money commercially: it's time I figure out a style that says a bit more about *me* and I can't do that in the middle of Manhattan. (BEAT) Besides, it's a really great place, with a gardener and a full-time caretaker. You'll love it in time.

LILITH

(under her breath)

Like I'd love chewing razor blades if I did it long enough.

CUT TO

EXT: DESERT HIGHWAY. *Coyote trotting along the road. It stops, sniffs and continues on. Pretty soon it comes to one of the inevitable piles of roadkill. It's so far gone we only see a pile of flesh and fur. Coyote doesn't mind and starts chowing down.*

CUT TO SHOT OF SUV SPEEDING BY.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

TERRY'S POV. The headlights illuminate a limited amount of road ahead. Suddenly, as they come out of a curve, the coyote looms in the headlights. It lifts its head.

TERRY

Shoot!

He swerves, the women gasp, the coyote takes off: in the direction of Terry's swerve. There is a THUMP and Terry takes control and brakes.

FOCUS ON FRONT OF SUV. SFX: SUV DOOR OPENING. Terry gets out and approaches the front. CLOSEUP OF BUMPER where Terry's HAND reaches out to pull off a tuft of COYOTE HAIR. FAVOR TERRY. He looks around, walks to the back of the vehicle and stares back down the road. He grunts and walks back to the car.

INT: SUV

TERRY

(as he begins rolling)

I guess it wasn't hurt too badly.

SUV continues on down road. DRIVER'S POV. Another turn and suddenly a human figure looms up in the middle of the road. It is a Navajo, DANNY. At the last second Terry slams on the brakes and the figure lifts his head and throws up his hand in a defensive manner. The car hits him, who is thrown up on the hood. There is a sudden glimpse - very clear - of Danny's face: very much alive. He rolls off to the right as the vehicle goes to the left. FAVOR SUV. The SUV swerves as Terry is losing control. The vehicle goes off to its right, into a drainage ditch, rocks up the other side. ANGLE ON SUV. It slams down into an arroyo, hits the bottom, springs up in the air and slams down on a boulder in the middle of the wash, crushing the passenger side. The SUV's flat, wide build allows it to bounce miraculously onto its wheels. The SUV doesn't seem to be too much damaged otherwise, but what about the inhabitants?

Dead silence, except for the night sounds. INTERIOR OF SUV. Sarah is badly hurt, can't move and is just coming to. Terry is shaking badly from adrenaline rush. Lilith is unconscious. Sarah stirs.

TERRY
(wiggled out)

I...I, hit someone.

SARAH

I . . . can't . . . move.

Terry turns to her. The passenger side has buckled in and Sarah is pinched between it and the center well, crushed in where the legs should normally go: she wasn't wearing a seat belt. We can only see her upper body. Terry is shocked, but masters himself over concern for his wife.

TERRY

What hurts?

SARAH

Something's broken. Inside.

TERRY
(semi-panicked)

I gotta go get help.

He fumbles for his cell phone and checks the signal.

TERRY

Nothing.

(He looks around and sees Lilith in the back seat. He checks her pulse.

(To Sarah)

I gotta go get someone. I think Lilith's okay: she's breathing okay, and, look, I don't know what to do. You're hurt and I don't know what to do. I gotta go get someone.

SARAH

(a twinge of pain makes her gasp)

No. Go.

Terry gets out of the car and stumbling in the dark, runs toward the road. When he gets to it he looks one way or the

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

other and decides to head back the way they came, hoping beyond hope to get someone. He runs a short distance until his wind gets the better of him, then walks. Finally, in the distance come a pair of headlights. MICK'S POV INSIDE TRUCK. Terry shows up in the headlights. He's in the middle of the road, unknowingly mimicking the man he ran into and waves his arms.

MICK

Goddam!

He slams on his brakes with the experience of someone who lives there, ready for whatever may show up on the road. As he comes to a stop, Terry's already there.

TERRY

(out of breath)

We need some help. My, my wife is hurt, I don't know how badly. And I hit someone, some guy standing in the road and I don't know where he is, but he's gotta be hurtin' and.. .

MICK

Hold on, hold on. Where? Did you call 911?

TERRY

Just a little ways down there. (*pointing down the road.*) No. No signal on my carrier.

MICK

Get in the car. I'll call the cops.

CUT TO:

INT: SUV

Lilith is coming to. She's got a bump on her forehead but is otherwise alright. Her mother moans in a semi-conscious state. Lilith is immediately concerned.

LILITH

Mom, mom, what's wrong?

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

Sarah moans. Lilith crawls into the front seat, but is afraid to touch her. She tentatively touches her and Sarah stirs.

SARAH

I'm thirsty.

Lilith looks and sees the situation for the first time.. LILITH'S POV. Blood is starting to seep in around the bottom of Sarah's blouse. Lilith GASPS.

LILITH

(reaching into the back luggage area)

Mom, don't move. I'll try to get you some water.

CUT TO MICK'S TRUCK.

The truck stops and FAVOR TERRY getting out of passenger's side. Mick gets out from the other side. He's fumbling with his cell phone and looking around.

MICK

You said you hit someone?

TERRY

(running off the road toward the accident site)

Yeah, right here, but I don't see him. Hurry, my wife's in a bad way!

Mick gives a cursory scan around the area, but the barren sand and vegetation reveals no one. It is so bare that anyone would have shown up if they were still there. He shakes his head and runs after Terry. Danny is nowhere in sight.

CUT TO:

INT: SUV

Sarah's sipping water from an Evian bottle Lilith is holding for her. Lilith grabs a t-shirt from the back and begins to get out.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

SARAH

No. Wait. Stay here. Your father's gone to get help.

LILITH

Mom, don't worry, I'm just getting up front.

Lilith gets out. NO MUSIC. WIND SFX. The desert is deathly quiet and foreboding. She shudders, and gets in through the driver's side. Sarah's blouse is sodden, but there is no way anyone can get in far enough to administer to a pressure point. Lilith is sort of freaked out, but "you do what you gotta do" and tries to stuff the t-shirt somehow on the bleeding. The t-shirt is quickly soaked with blood. It is obvious to us that Sarah is not long for this world. Lilith cradles her mother's head in her arms as best she can. Sarah winces as another bit of pain starts up, then sighs.

SARAH

If something happens. . .

LILITH
(interrupting)

No, don't talk like that.

SARAH

Hush. Listen. If anything happens to me, stay with your Dad. *(in a rush)* He's starting to get into some . . . weird stuff, and he needs someone to, to anchor him. This could upset him, set him off. Stay with him, promise me. . .

LILITH
(saying anything to calm her)

Okay, okay, Mom, I will.

CUT TO SHOT OF MICK AND TERRY running toward the wreck. It's taking a bit of time as they stumble down the embankment. Mick's got his cell and he's alternately shouting into it and grunting as they slip and slide down the hill.

MICK
(shouting)

Yes, goddammit, now! (BEAT) I don't know! I haven't seen it (BEAT) Wait, here we are. Shit! What a mess! Yeah, fast! About mile marker 230, yes, right the hell now! Move it!

They get to the vehicle and throw open the driver's door. CUT TO INT: SUV. Lilith is cradling her mom's head and sobbing: Sarah is dead.

CUT TO:

EXT: LONG ISLAND, SUNSET ON AN APRIL DAY

SUPER: "FIVE YEARS LATER"

CUT TO:

INT - NEW YORK GALLERY

SEVERAL ANGLES of the scenes with appropriate high-society (STRING QUARTET) MUSIC in the background. WALK through the scene. It is the opening of a new exhibit at the museum, which displays the artwork of Teufelsbürst (TERRY) in all its glory.

People recognize the artwork as disturbing, but culture-shattering in its daring and implications. The art has a wonderful sense of realism and the skill of the painter is impeccable. Each painting seems to begin with the normal, yet has an element in it, which very subtly changes the painting into the macabre. There is no question that it is dark.

FAVOR PATRONS #1 AND #2.

OVER THE SHOULDER AT PAINTING

They are looking at a painting of surgery, with the patient awake. In spite of this, the surgeon is just beginning to cut and Lilith looks in from the background, innocent of what's happening.

PATRON #1
(with a superior attitude)

Odd. You don't see the patient is awake at first.

PATRON #2

I'm not sure that it would appeal otherwise.

PATRON #1

Appeal? I'm not sure it does that.

PATRON #2
(backpedaling)

Perhaps not the right word. It's those little things that keep one interested in the painting long after the initial aesthetic is gone.

PATRON #1 (chuckling)

No, it's not boring, that's for sure.

PATRON #2

Do you see his signature? "Teufelsbürst."

PATRON #1

What's that mean?

PATRON #2

The "Devil's Brush." Some quack hosting a radio show in Berlin referred to him that way and he's taken to it as some sort of shtick.

PATRON #1

Well, it certainly is appropriate: no "angel" would ever paint something *this* twisted.

PATRON #2

Yeah, well, he didn't used to be like this. He did pretty commercial stuff before his wife died - you know that logo by Steamers Brewing Company? His company was the artist behind that whole campaign. Then he did the artsy thing and his whole style went into this twisted occult stuff.

They wander off, still talking. To PATRONS #3 AND #4. This is a still life, but underneath the vase of flowers is strewn over the table a selection of dental tools, as we see at first. Then we notice there are more medieval tools of torture mingled among them. There is a very creatively and subtly done portrait of Lilith in the working of the flowers.)

PATRON #3

There's his daughter, again.

PATRON #4
(looking more closely)

Where?

PATRON #3
(pointing with his drink)

The flowers.

PATRON #4
(straightening)

I'll be damned. The famous Lilith Haynes.

PATRON #3

You know, that's where she got her start.

PATRON #4

Sorry, I haven't been up on them. Just figured him for another "pop" artist. Can't stand that stuff. You know, all hype and not much

substance. This stuff is interesting though.
So she modeled for the paintings?

PATRON #3
(pointing)

Evidence is right there. Her image in the
paintings caught someone's attention at
Designs Agency and they gave Haynes a call.
(*pompously, well aware he's quoting a cliché*)
The rest, as they say . . . is history.

WALK

*Through the gallery and we see more representations of
Lilith's form. In fact, she is somehow presented in every
one in varying degrees of subtlety. She herself is not
twisted, but her beauty in each picture accents the
macabre. FAVOR LILITH who is ad libbing small talk with
MELINDA and TOM. She is fully as beautiful as we've been
led to believe and light-years beyond what she was five
years ago. Her maturity has enhanced her innate beauty. As
Danny offers a tray of hors d'oeuvres to the trio as JON
approaches.*

MELINDA
(continuing conversation)

Yes, I've thought of that.

TOM

I don't think you would be modeling
professionally if you were downright ugly (polite
laughter). Does it bother you that . . .

LILITH
(interrupting, with a disarming smile)

"No comment," I believe is what reporters
should hear!

JON
(totally enamored of Lilith)

Hi.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

(BEAT) The others look at him with that veiled contempt for another puppy lover, but are forced to hide it under social rules.

JON

(breaking the awkward silence)

I, uh, I'm Jon Edwards.

(BEAT as things cool down noticeably)

Of the Connecticut family, Edwards.

TOM

(into his glass, with sympathy)

That was a mistake, young man.

LILITH

(coldly)

This is Melinda Johnson . . . of the Art Magazine Johnsons and TOM Harold of the New York Press Harolds.

Melinda and TOM smile, appreciating the joke. There is an awkward silence as the three let him squirm on the spike he has set himself upon.

TOM

(to offstage)

Evening, Mr. Haynes.

TERRY enters. He nods to his guests, then indicates with his expression that he and Lilith are to leave.

LILITH

(suddenly and condescendingly gracious)

Will you excuse me? I need to see to a couple of things.

Lilith leaves with her father, ignoring Jon. The three look at each other, PATRON and WRITER with knowing glances, YOUNG MAN looks after them, totally confused.)

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

JON

That was . . . cold.

MELINDA
(mocking)

That was . . . foolish. It was just about the worst pickup line you could have used (*with contempt*) if that's what you were trying to do.

TOM

As if she was the sort who could be "picked up."

JON
(naively and defensively)

What do you mean? I just introduced myself.

MELINDA

First of all, she doesn't give a rat's behind for "names." (snort) You might have had a chance at a normal conversation if you just walked in and said, "Hi, I'm Jon." The moment you tried to pretend you were somebody, you lost her.

TOM

Melinda, you missed the most important point. She's not available. Not for anyone. And she's not gay. Her father keeps her under lock and key, and anyway, she herself is not the type for a romp in the hay, much less any kind of relationship. Take my advice, *youngster*. Don't bother trying.

WALK through studio.

FAVOR PAINTING, which shows a beautiful representation of Lilith. Her expression is one of suffering and sorrow mixed with innocence, like a child whose puppy has just died. It is very captivating.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

ZOOM OUT. It is admired by CARL, a lean athletic 20-something artist whom we don't notice at first. He is good looking, but in an honest way rather than resembling a "model."

ANGLE ON CARL'S PROFILE. JEFF (20-ish athletic man) and RICH (German national in his late-20's, big sense of humor, ugly) approach from the left.

JEFF

That is *pathetic*. Man, will you look at him?

RICH
(mock sympathetically)

The man's smitten. Look at the drool.

CARL
(mock elite)

I'm an admirer of the true arts.

RICH

Oh ho! No question you're an *admirer!*

JEFF
(hick voice)

It ain't the picture he's admiring.

CARL

Au contraire, mon ami. . .

RICH
(interrupting)

Oh, he's admiring the painting, alright. He hasn't budged from that position for the last twenty minutes. Carl, mein Freund, why admire the picture when the real thing is floating about this cesspool of art critics?

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

CARL
(got through at last)

She's here? Really? Where?

JEFF
(pretend sotto voce, to RICH)

Told you it wasn't the picture.

RICH
(to CARL)

Somewhere about, I suppose.

Carl leaves. Jeff and Rich follow him, naturally intending to give him a real bad time. The camera follows them, but it becomes clear that Lilith "has left the building." Carl finally stops when he sees Terry surrounded by admirers but not Lilith.

PATRON #5

Well, yes, sir, but I was hoping to get some autographs.

TERRY
(gesturing with his hand and smiling)

Well, sir, there's an easy way to get at least one.

(Admirers laugh. Patron #5 laughs as well).

PATRON #5
(laughing)

With all due respect, I have plenty of *your* autographs: they're all over my house! No, my twelve-year-old daughter is a fan of Lilith's and would kill to get her signature.

TERRY
(politely apologetic)

I'm sorry. I sent her home. She wasn't feeling well.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

Carl, joking with his friends, slumps, gives an exaggerated sigh. Jeff and Rich are suppressing laughter behind him. They clap their hands on his shoulders and, ad libbing, head out the door and onto the street.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - BAR-AND-GRILL IN NY, THAT NIGHT

Carl, Rich and Jeff are in a booth. WAITER is bringing beers/soft drinks. He leaves.

JEFF

Guess who Ol' Heinrich here (*gesturing to Rich*) says he saw by the park last night? Lilith.

CARL

(pretending indifference, but blushing)

Adam's first wife?

JEFF

(smiling)

None of that! Your face is more honest than your tongue is! You would sell your soul just for a real peep at her, wouldn't you?

CARL

Yeah, well half of New York saw her at the gallery.

RICH

Under the eternal gaze and surveillance of her guard dog, I mean her father. No, I mean *the Lilith*, all by herself, all alone, out on the public streets. I saw her with my own two eyes.

JEFF

(bantering)

Considering how wide apart your eyes have to be to see past that nose . . .

RICH
(ignoring Jeff)

Seriously, she was close enough so even I could see her clearly.

CARL

Where? How?

RICH

In the cemetery up near St. Paul's. It was about dusk, just before the gala began.

JEFF

What was she doing there, of all places? She's never seen outside her father's studio.

RICH

She was sitting by a grave. I asked the caretaker about it and he said she was the daughter of a woman who was buried there a few years ago. But I knew it was Lilith. She apparently visits the gravesite often when she's in town.

CARL

And how did you know that? Paparazzi would've picked that up, big time.

RICH

Oh, there's no mistaking her, I don't care how much air brush they use. It was her, alright. She must have hushed the whole thing up. Her dad would have killed her if he knew: he doesn't like any kind of publicity.

JEFF

It must have killed *him* to do the gallery.

CARL

I didn't even get to see her *there*. . .

JEFF

(mock sympathy)

Now, now . . .

CUT TO:

EXT — METRO PARK/CEMETARY, DUSK

Carl is doing his evening run. The place is beautiful and peaceful and there are trails cut throughout the place. There are a few people walking around. Danny is one of them and he turns and looks at Carl as we move to FOLLOW Carl through the trees. REVERSE ANGLE ON CARL just as he emerges from the forest. Suddenly, he stops, his face a mixture of confusion, delight and apprehension. WIDE ANGLE to include Lilith crouched in front of an elaborate monument. She is touching its face, her head bowed.

OVER CARL'S SHOULDER. Carl is unsure as to what to say. He stands undecided for a few moments. Dusk.

ANGLE ON LILITH

SFX CHURCH BELLS striking the hour - SEVEN. She lifts her head and realizes how late it is. There are tears on her face, making her look particularly beautiful. She gasps.

CARL

(impulsively)

Excuse me?

LILITH turns to look at him. There is nothing meaningful in her glance.

CARL

I'm sorry, I . . . just wondered if you were okay.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

She stands facing him. There is slight recognition in her face as she sees him as an artist/patron from the gallery's gala.

LILITH

(still wrapped in her own thoughts)

I'm . . . fine, thank you.

MOVING SHOT

Without another word, Lilith walks away, as if embarrassed. She obviously does not want to make any conversation.

ANGLE ON CARL AND LILITH

CARL

(starts to follow)

Wait! (BEAT) I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt. . . (lamely) Do you need some help?

LILITH

I'm not sure I know you.

CARL

My name's Carl, Peterson. I'm an artist. I was at your father's reception last night. . . Are you sure you want to walk through the park by yourself? It's dangerous. (BEAT) I could walk you home.

She looks up nervously at the darkening sky.

LILITH

(on her guard, but having no other choice)

Very well.

They walk along the path together, in silence: he because he is shy, she because she is still grieving. They make it to the parking lot.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

LILITH
(dismissive and a bit cold)

My car is right there. . . thank you.

CARL

No problem.

EXT - THE CAR

Lilith starts the car and leaves. Carl continues looking at her long after she is gone.

CUT TO:

INT - CARL'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Carl and Rich are watching a baseball game.

RICH

So you saw her too, eh?

CARL

Closer than you, bud. I walked her out to her car.

RICH

'Hell, you say!

CARL

It's true, I swear.

RICH

So, now what are you up to, my lovesick pal?

CARL

I have an idea. I'm going to ask Haynes himself for a position.

RICH

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

(mouth agape, then laughing)

That's rich! How do you expect to work *that* out?!!

CARL

I was hoping for your help, not your comments.

(They watch the game for a bit.)

I was thinking about the research you're doing in Arizona. It's pretty near the Haynes Retreat, isn't it?

RICH

Yes. The ASU Anthropology department has found another Anasazi settlement, maybe another Chaco Canyon, and I was asked to help supervise some of the dig. The town where Haynes lives is fifteen miles away.

CARL (brightening)

Great! Can I stay with you awhile, then? At least until I find something else?

RICH

(hesitantly, wondering what Carl is up to)

Well . . . I'll be in my trailer and it is not big. But, I suppose so.

CARL

Okay, then. Here's the deal. I'm going to offer myself as a model and student. I'll prepare his canvas, make purchases, you know, all that kind of stuff. I'll at least be in the house, then who knows?

RICH

(doubting)

Who knows?

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

CARL

I'll write a letter first as an introduction.
I know the gallery manager, Robert. He'll
recommend me.

RICH

Man, you've got it *bad*. (BEAT) It'll never
work. Others have tried. . .

CARL
(ignoring him)

He's heard of me, maybe, through society, at
least I hope so . . . my paintings are sort of
"known." I may actually have a chance.

RICH
(in cartoon character voice)

"It'll never woookk."

CARL
(leaning back on the couch and staring at the TV)

It's got to. It must.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN TO:

EXT — SOUTHWEST DESERT, NEAR THE NAVAJO RESERVATION

Two weeks later. Deserted desert highway from an aerial perspective. AERIAL on two wildly disparate vehicles driving. They are incongruous: one a spoofed-up SUV, with racks, a kayak and a bicycle. The second is a '77 Chevy pickup towing a 1970's vintage travel trailer. They pass our view.

FOLLOW VEHICLES

AERIAL OF VILLAGE

Vehicles approach from a distance.

WIDE ANGLE OF GAS STATION

The vehicles stop at a gas station and the drivers get out. Danny is pumping gas into an old 70s farm utility truck. They are Carl in the SUV and Rich from the pickup. Carl looks around as if he expects to see the Haynes hacienda right away.

WIDE ANGLE ON CARL AND RICH

CARL

Where do you suppose it is?

(Rich ignores him. He hands a piece of paper to Carl)

RICH

Here's a number. Can you call it and get directions?

CARL

(looking at the number)

Who is it?

RICH

A rancher who has agreed to let me park on his property for the duration of the dig.

CARL

Why not at the dig itself?

RICH

Nobody's just too sure how far the site extends so even diggers are asked to stay several miles away. Only a handful of PhD's get to stay on-site.(shrugs) No big deal. It's closer to the village, anyway.

(pointing)

About five miles that way is all I know.

WIDE ANGLE

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

Carl stretches and dials his cell. He talks briefly, while Rich gasses up. Carl approaches the pumps. FOCUS on the convenience store: Danny exits and walks across to his truck. He starts it up and before leaving, glances at Carl, who hangs up and turns to Rich.

CARL

He says it's on the river. South on the highway about five miles, like you said, then look for a sandstone pillar on the right.

RICH

It's all sandstone pillar. . .

CARL

. . . and you can park anywhere on the river, if you wish.

RICH

Great.

CARL

So where do you suppose their house is?

RICH

Carl, mein Freund, this goes beyond love: it's an OBSESSION.

Carl smiles enigmatically.

RICH

But, if you need to know. . . (Carl brightens up)
. . . it's the last property next to the river as you head out of town, at the mouth of a canyon. Can't miss it.

CARL

How did you know that?

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

RICH

Everyone knows. I was here to scout out the dig
for a couple days.

*Carl virtually runs to the SUV and Rich sighs and follows
to his truck. MUSIC up. AERIAL on the vehicles leaving.*

INT - Carl's SUV.

*It has AC, but the window's down and Carl is enjoying his
first taste of the American Southwest. He looks around.*

OVER THE SHOULDER

*Past Carl, through passenger window and onto a gated canyon
with a large (5000+ sq ft) mansion/hacienda located at the
mouth of it.*

EXT - THE SUV

*Carl perceptively slows down as he stares at it. A startled
Rich, in the pickup behind him, slams on his brakes and
honks violently.*

ANGLE ON CARL

*He comes to himself, grins and guns it. AERIAL on vehicles
as they roll down the highway and ASCENDS ABOVE the
vehicles: the hacienda is very noticeable down and right of
the picture.)*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - MORNING, THE HAYNES RESIDENCE

*Carl's SUV drives to the gate. Bike and kayak are gone. It
is a beautiful estate, done in the classic SW adobe style.
Danny is weeding. He looks at Carl who rolls down his
window to access the code box.*

ANGLE ON CARL

He presses the intercom buzzer. MARY's VOICE comes on.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

MARY

(droning and rattling off almost too fast to be
comprehensible)

If you're here with deliveries go out the
drive to the road on the left and I'll meet
you there. If you're here to get a donation,
we ain't got none. If you're with the press,
call New York, 'cause no one's home. If you're
anybody else . . .go away.

CARL

(pressing the button)

Uh . . .I'm Carl Peterson. I have an interview
with Mr. Haynes.

MARY

Oh, the victim?

JEN

(cutting in, in the background)

You mean the student.

CARL

Huh? Oh . . .yeah, I guess.

MARY

Wait a sec.

ANGLE ON GATE

The gate opens and Carl drives up the asphalt drive.

CARL'S POV, FROM INSIDE THE SUV

*It looks like a classic hacienda belonging to a "Nuevo
Mexicano" don. Very well landscaped. Although it is walled,
a large river runs through it and the main house is set
very near the banks, overlooking a lush garden. SUV stops
and Carl gets out.*

ANGLE ON CARL

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

Carl walks up to a modest porch. MARY (a 50-something Navajo, with a dry sense of humor) and JEN (30's, cynical but good for banter) are there to check him out.

MARY
(with a wry smile)

I don't know, don't look like any student I've ever seen.

JEN
Too good looking. (BEAT) Follow me.

FOLLOW CARL AND MARY

Carl follows her into the house, down the hallway into a glass-covered porch. It is the studio.

INT - STUDIO

There are several easels with paintings, some partially done. Against the glass looking into the garden is a short platform with props, still life models, etc. On one side is a mannequin lying down and partially covered with a black linen cloth. TERRY is painting. Carl looks, but Lilith is nowhere to be seen. Mary clears her throat. Terry continues to paint.

TERRY

Yes?

JEN
(pointedly)

Your (ahem) *student* is here?

TERRY
(still painting, not looking)

Sit down, young man. (*Carl sits*)

Robert said some nice things about you. He is the only reason I accepted your portfolio.
(*paints*)

Shows some nice work . . . Boring, but nice.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

CARL

(not sure if that was a compliment)

I, um . . .

TERRY

(toying with him)

Don't interrupt me, please. (*paints*)

What do you want of me?

CARL

I would like to learn from you, sir.

TERRY

Hmm?

CARL

(by rote, as if previously written)

You are a master of presentation. I need to expand my technique. And my perspective. As you said, sir, my material is bo . . . ordinary. I need to understand how to make more of an impact, conceptually and practically.

Terry turns from the easel and gives Carl a searching look. The silence becomes insufferable. There is the feeling that Terry is assessing Carl, almost hungrily. Terry turns back to his easel.

TERRY

There will be a fee, of course. Tuition and all that. Would that be a problem?

CARL

No sir, my folks are well off and encourage my painting.

TERRY

Fine. We'll discuss the amount later, if it's not an issue. It will be reasonable. (*paints*)

They say you're an athlete. In what?

CARL

Crew, mostly, although I've done a couple ten-K's. I have enjoyed mountaineering to some degree, although I haven't had the chance to get into the technical aspects.

TERRY

(stands, assessing Carl again)

Hmm. Take off your shirt.

CLOSE ON CARL'S MUSCLES

Carl complies, somewhat awkwardly. Terry examines him. It is very analytical, almost medical. Carl is well muscled and lean, so there is excellent definition and conformity: in fact, Terry's analysis seems to be that of a horse buyer.

TERRY

Good endurance, I take it . . . Let me see your teeth. (BEAT) Just kidding. (*Sits down*) Very well, I'll take you on as a student. Do you have any objections to modeling?

CARL

Nossir. I don't like nudes, though.

TERRY

(smiling)

Oh? A prude, or just shy? (*chuckles, not very nicely*) Gym shorts only, I assure you. (BEAT. *Calling.*) Mary? I'm finished for now. (*to Carl*) She will enjoy your help if nothing else. Possibly the artist mentality, but I'm way past cleaning up my own mess. Except for this.

Terry leans forward and removes some plastic wrap from a large industrial roll. He places it over the wet colors.

TERRY
(standing)

Nobody messes with my colors once I am satisfied with them.

CARL

Yessir.

TERRY

Another thing. Are you staying anywhere?

CARL

I have a friend some miles out of town.

TERRY
(turning to look at the distant river)

In this godforsaken area? Let me tell you, Carl, I am a typical artist. I usually work during the day, but sometimes, my . . . *inspiration* comes in the night.

(Carl nods with understanding).

I may need you on call.

CARL

It's only about ten minutes drive, fifteen at the most.

TERRY
(turning to Carl)

You misunderstand me. This is a large house and we have plenty of room. I would need you on immediate call. It would make for a more profitable apprenticeship, as well.

(with narrowed eyes: he knows why Carl wishes to be his apprentice)

You wouldn't *mind* that?... *Would you?*

CARL

*(pretends to hesitate, then smiles:
his words do not fool Terry)*

I would have to make arrangements, but I think that could work.

TERRY

Very well. This afternoon, then?

CARL

(pretending to think)

Yessir, I think that'll work.

TERRY

(smiles knowingly)

Talk to Mary. She'll give you the code for the gate and show you to your room. You have access to all the house and grounds: within reason, of course. You may have one day off each week, of your choice; just let me know 48 hours in advance. I suppose I can live with that.

Carl stands.

TERRY

(turning, hands behind his back.)

We'll see you this afternoon, then.

CARL

Uh. Bye. Nice to finally meet you, sir. And thank you.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

TERRY

(blandly, as he turns again toward the river)

Nice to meet you, too.

Terry does not offer to shake hands and Carl is too intimidated to pursue it. He is obviously dismissed.

MARY

This way . . . Carl, right?

Carl turns.

CARL

Yes, that's correct.

He follows her out. Terry still stands looking at the river. Lilith's voice is heard.

LILITH

(off-stage)

Who was that, dad? He looked familiar.

She moves into the camera's view, toward her father.

TERRY

(turning to her)

That was my new *(with contempt)* student.

LILITH

You've never taken on students.

TERRY

Yes . . .I know. I'm trying something; a little experiment. It should be interesting.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT — GROCERY STORE, SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

The grocery store is a typical small town store, but also sells its material in bulk. Mary is standing in front of one of the bins, methodically checking a list she has brought. CHARLIE enters the aisle. She is a 40-something Navajo with a rather biting sense of humor. Mary doesn't see her at first. They have almost a love/hate relationship.

CHARLIE

There's the Yazzie woman I haven't seen for a while. Still working for that *belaguna* artist?

MARY

(straightening from the bin.)

Hi Charlie. And, yes, I am.

CHARLIE

Heard he actually took a student a few weeks ago, eh?

MARY

Yes. I thought that was a bit strange for him. But then, he's a strange man.

CHARLIE

Like working for them, still?

MARY

(shrugs)

Sure. I like it. I like Lilith and Mr. Haynes is not so bad once you get used to him. I'm sort of an institution by now and probably won't leave there until one of us dies.

CHARLIE

Could be soon, eh? Your gardener said he was having some *animal* problems.

MARY

(interested)

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

Oh really? Something you heard I don't know about? Plague around again or something?

CHARLIE

(the gossip really coming out. Milking it.)

Oh yeah. You haven't been around, have you?

It's a *coyote* hanging out at your place.

(BEAT) You know the old man, the guy who did the maintenance on the gas wells? (*she nods, hinting: traditional Navajos don't speak the name of the dead*)

MARY

(*with bravado*)

Frank Begay?

CHARLIE

(rolling her eyes)

Yeah, him. Your artist was pretty good friends with him, eh? He blew himself up yesterday, smoking too close to a leaky well or something, I don't know, but the coroner collected his pieces - it was nothing but pieces, *I'll bet* - and put it in the morgue. He was going to send it off to Flagstaff for an autopsy. Check for drugs or something, I guess. So somebody says, he was a witch . . .

MARY

(snorts)

You know I don't believe all that.

(*She continues filling the plastic bags from the bins.*)

CHARLIE

Oh yeah, I know, you follow the "Jesus" Way, don't you and you're not supposed to believe in all that stuff. But here's the *best* part.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

MARY
(in spite of herself)

Yeah?

CHARLIE

Yeah. There wasn't no autopsy done. (*stage whisper*) They couldn't find the body this morning!

Mary turns a bit pale. Charlie is ecstatic over the effect her story has and nods for emphasis. She'll really play it up, now. Mary straightens again.

MARY

There's some good reason for it. They're always losing bodies over there. If he was Navajo Way, likely some family member was determined to do a Sing and took him on their own idea . . . wouldn't be the first time. . .

CHARLIE
(interrupting)

They *checked*. And there's a coyote snooping around the gas well where he died, huh? *Huh?*

MARY
(lamely)

Yeah, well, I'm sure there's some good reason for it. If it was that big a mess, you can bet some bloodthirsty animal'd be snooping around. Coyotes are thicker than flies around here this year. Besides, I don't know that it has anything to do with me, or the family. (BEAT) Um, look, I gotta go, I gotta get dinner started.

CHARLIE

Yeah, sure. Creepy, eh? It was a coyote out at *your* place, too, you know.

MOVING ON MARY

Mary gets up. Her chin is higher than normal but her bravado doesn't deceive Charlie, or us. At the counter, she pays but fumbles the change.

CUT TO

INT - STUDIO

Carl and Terry are painting. Lilith is nowhere to be seen. Terry stops, stretches and stands.

TERRY

Want something to drink, Carl, my boy?

(Carl looks up. Terry shrugs.)

Jen put a casserole in the oven and went for a walk. Mary's in town. I don't know if she's back.

CARL

(starts to get up)

Well, yes, thanks. I can get it . . .

TERRY

No, my boy, I'm already up.

FOLLOW TERRY to the kitchen. He looks out into the studio. CLOSE on Carl who is back studiously drawing. Terry turns back to the counter. He gets two glasses, which he fills with pop. He pulls out a tiny plastic bag. It is full of a white substance. Terry meticulously pours some of it into one of the glasses.

TERRY

(sotto voce, measuring)

Not . . .too . . .much.

ANGLE ON ENTRANCE TO KITCHEN

Terry walks out with the two glasses and sets one next to Carl. We don't know which it is: is he drugging Carl or is

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

he merely one of those rich addicts himself? Carl continues to work. CLOSE on Terry. He glances at Carl once or twice as he alternates working and drinking. Carl finishes the glass soon. He acts normally while Terry continues to look at him. Danny passes in the background with a wheelbarrow. There is sudden KITCHEN ACTIVITY. After a few seconds, LILITH appears at the kitchen entrance.

LILITH

Mary just got back. She says dinner's in about fifteen minutes.

TERRY

(a bit startled)

Oh. Yes. Carl, my boy, we're done. I'll look at your work after dinner . . . Can you sit tonight? I have an idea for a project and I need your (chuckles rather evilly) *muscles* so to speak. We can talk about this work then.

CARL

Sure.

FOLLOW TERRY, CARL AND LILITH into the kitchen. Mary is setting the table. A kitchen buzzer goes off and Mary leaves as the others set themselves at the table. FAVOR Terry, leaning on his elbows, resting his chin on his folded hands. He looks at Carl.

TERRY

Carl, my boy . . .

CARL

(a bit tired of the phrase)

. . .just "Carl" will do . . .

TERRY

(annoyingly impervious, smiling)

My boy, I know I work you hard. How have you been doing? Not quite what you imagined, I suppose. *(BEAT. Sighs)* Well, I've never been

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

much of a teacher. I hope . . .I hope that
I've not been too hard on you.

CLOSE ON CARL inadvertently looking at Lilith. She looks at him, but doesn't smile, afraid of her father. He lowers his eyes to his plate, rather shy of her. He smiles, still into his plate. Terry smiles knowingly.)

CARL

Um, no, it's been fine. *(with the shift in focus, lifts his eyes to meet Terry's)*
Actually I'm learning quite a bit. A lot more than I expected, if you'll pardon me.

TERRY

I'll just bet . . . (BEAT. Recovers.) I mean, of course. I'm impressed with the work you've put in. I just hope it'll be a positive experience for you.

Mary enters with food. It is typical Southwest fare and Jen's good at it. Terry starts serving. Following dialogue is during dinner. Mary continues to serve, hanging out rather than just doing her job. Jen appears at the kitchen door, wiping her hands.

TERRY
(annoyed)

Something on your mind, Mary?

MARY

The old man who used to work on the gas wells got himself blown up on a gas rig somewhere.

TERRY
(annoyed)

So? Old man, what old man? Who?

MARY

Ummm.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

TERRY
(really annoyed now)

Come on, Mare, it's not going to kill you.
Really!

MARY

You know . . . (*finally squirming into it*). Um,
you know.

JEN
(also annoyed)

Begay!

TERRY

Frank? You mean that old Indian - excuse me,
Native American (Mary rolls her eyes) - that
used to hang out at that outdoor pub every
afternoon? Damn, he was a nice guy. What
happened?

MARY

The coroner says he was smoking where he
shouldn'ta been. Dené say he was a, a witch.

JEN
(snorting)

A witch? Ha!

TERRY
(grinning, ready to give her a bad time)

Dené, what Dené?

MARY
(looking at Jen)

Umm, Charlie Tso . . .

*(Jen can't take it any more and bursts into laughter. She
exits with Mary looking nastily after her.)*

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

TERRY
(interrupting, snorts)

Charlie? That old gossip? (*sarcastically*)
Well, hell, look at the source. Of course, if *she* said it, he *must* have been a witch.

MARY

You know I don't believe in that.

TERRY
(with an obnoxious grin)

Yeah, sure. I *know* Jen doesn't.

CARL

I don't get it. A witch? And he's dead? What difference would it make then?

TERRY
(the "expert")

Dené – that's what the Navajo call themselves – believe that when you die your *chindi*, a ghost, is the part of left of you that stays. The problem is, a *chindi* is all the *evil* part of you. It hangs around, frustrated, confused and jealously bent on revenge upon all of the living. Not just on the living, but on loved ones. Certain precautions must be taken. Kind of a morbid superstition, huh?

CARL

Revenge? What do you mean?

LILITH
(with infinite patience: she's heard this before)

What Dad means is that bad things seem to happen. Self-fulfilling prophecy, I think.

CARL

Like what?

TERRY

Mostly sickness and death type stuff. Freak accidents. Stock dying for no reason, machinery breaking down, that kind of stuff (BEAT) Here's an example. One of the first cases of hanta virus was a couple out on the Rez; it's a hemorrhagic fever related to bubonic plague and Ebola and appears every once in a while out West. The Navajo were convinced that a skinwalker had witched them and even more so when the doctors didn't know what it was and couldn't cure it. So they died in spite of all the sings - chants or rites - done over them. When they were dead, there were elaborate rites for the funeral. It is important that things are done correctly, lest the *chindi* get trapped around the relatives.

What makes this case *really* weird is that it's a skinwalker who died. Isn't that right, Mare?

(He grins at her malevolently. Lilith, Carl and Mary look at each other, a little edgy.)

MARY
(with bravado)

That's what she said, but, I don't believe it.

CARL

What's a skinwalker? Isn't that like one of Tony Hillerman's books?

(MUSIC. Terry's "ghost" story is starting to have some effect.)

TERRY

He did some serious research. A skinwalker is like a cross between a European witch and a werewolf, only he, or she, can take on the

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

shape of many different animals: a coyote, wolf, owl, mountain lion, etc. So, if I've got this right, a skinwalker's *chindi* might be the worst type of all ghosts. (*same phrase, obnoxiously*) Isn't that right, Mare?

MARY
(reluctantly)

I suppose you could take it that way.

TERRY
(building intensity; milking it.)

So, who knows what a skinwalker's *chindi* can do or what its manifestation can be? A coyote may follow you around: it's really a skinwalker bent on mischief. You hear an owl hoot: stay away. It's a spy for the evil spirits. Don't leave your fingernail clippings or hair around: like a voodoo doll, it can give a witch a means of *witching* you. Fix a broken window: otherwise, spirits can get in.

(BEAT, as he finishes his wine. He reaches for the carafe and pours. Mary grabs the water jug and Carl's glass and starts to pour. When she's done, she just stands there absent mindedly holding both jug and glass, fascinated, in spite of herself.)

Skinwalkers cause your own body to injure itself, like amputating your own leg while cutting wood, or something. You can get the ghost sickness, whatever that might mean. Your sheep die. Maybe you'll see an animal drained of its blood, but otherwise untouched: obviously it's not an ordinary coyote that did it. Mix our European legends of werewolves, vampires and ghosts and maybe that's what the traditional Navajo deals with . . .

(He trails off and resumes eating silently seemingly ignoring the others. It is silent. Suddenly, a bird hits the large picture window in the studio with a loud CRACK. MUSIC HIT. All but Terry jump. Mary stifles a shriek and drops the jug and glass. SFX: SHATTERING GLASS. They stir. Carl lets out pent up air.)

TERRY
(without stirring)

Damn mourning doves.

(He looks up at Mary.)

Mary, didn't I ask you to put up the wind chimes to keep them from doing that?

MARY
(stirring)

Uh, yes, I'll do that after I clean up. *(She exits.)*

TERRY
(apologetically to Carl but with the same wry grin)

Birds keep trying to fly through that big picture window. They don't know the difference and every year it seems they get dumber.

(He eats a couple of bites, then looks at Carl. With the same annoying mantra:)

Carl, my boy, aren't you hungry?

We see that Carl has been only picking at his food: the plate is virtually full.

CARL

I'm not feeling too good.

TERRY
(concerned, yet inwardly pleased)

Are you going to be able to sit tonight?

CARL

Um, yes, I think so.

TERRY
Well, let's try to start in, say, twenty minutes? *(Carl nods.)* We'll quit early.

Terry gets up and exits into the studio. A GLOW from the sunset permeates the room. Carl looks at Lilith. She ate little, but her reasons are not his reasons. She smiles and shyly looks down at her food, and he smiles in response: the love is not one-sided anymore.

DISSOLVE TO

INT - THE STUDIO, THAT EVENING

It is dark, with the exception of low lights cunningly manipulated to show Carl as a model. He is hurting pretty well as we can see by his expression and posture, but he is putting a brave face on it. Lightning flickers in the background, but there is no thunder: it is the typical monsoon afternoon storm of the Southwest. The directional light Terry has put on Carl accents his very lean muscles. ZOOM OUT and Terry's easel comes into view, lit by a single desk lamp. It is an excellent rendering in charcoal, but Terry's skill has accented the leanness of the muscles and the pain on Carl's face, in somewhat the same macabre style as the painting "Scream" or Ignorance and Want in Dickens' Carol.

FADE TO BLACK

INT STUDIO, EARLY AFTERNOON

PAN STUDIO - VIEW EXTERIOR

Thunderheads are building outside. Terry and Carl are both working. Lilith is modeling. She holds a single flower and she faces the painters. She is smiling. Carl is pale and thin. Carl is doing less work than he should and his glances at her are not just artistic. She, too, smiles beyond that of a model as their eyes meet. A watch alarm goes off.

TERRY

Time. (to Lilith) Take a break, my dear.

Lilith moves to the kitchen. SFX WATER RUNNING into a glass.

MOVING ON TERRY

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

He stands and walks over to Carl. Carl leans back in his chair, stretches, and critically shakes his head.

CARL
(Muttering)

I know, I know.

TERRY
(examining sketch work)

No, really, this isn't too bad.

(straightens)

If you really want a stark image, exaggerate the shading: if you wish we can scan it and play with it on the computer. More contrast tends to pull the image out of that softness that's inherent in any human, or animal, form. (BEAT) My goal and your problem is developing imagination beyond that which you see. What is it that comes from your head? Lilith is pretty and is inspiring as a form, but what of that? That is merely an interpretation of what you see. Go beyond that. Lilith's form is - I'm being objective here, she is my own child, after all - her form is mud, clay, as the Bible says; her body is merely the "dust of the earth." Now go beyond that form that you saw and examine what it will be. Age creeps up, sickness, maybe, injury. The smooth skin wrinkles, the muscles lose their tone and bones get brittle, then *death*. But it does not stop there. What happens then? That lovely form continues to break down as the bacteria activate and creatures begin to use it for merely food, a means of continuing their own lives, until finally that beautiful form is merely a slimy. .

.

CARL
(Hurriedly. His condition and Terry's words are making him literally sick.)

Yes, yes, I understand, I get it.

MOVING ON CARL

He stands and hurries to the bathroom. Terry watches him go, with a crooked smile of self-satisfaction and contempt.

INT - KITCHEN

Lilith smiles as Carl enters. He looks pale and worried. If we ever doubted it, he is getting downright emaciated. Lilith's smile disappears. Ignoring her, he pours himself a glass of ice tea. He drinks with eyes closed and takes a deep breath. As he opens his eyes, there is Lilith, who looks a bit concerned. He relaxes and smiles as if her presence makes everything alright and worth it. Terry enters.

TERRY

Carl, my boy, are you alright?

CARL

Yes, yes, I'm fine. I just haven't felt too well for a couple of days, that's all.

TERRY

(concerned)

Are you getting enough sleep? The food's okay? Maybe it's altitude . . . no, you've been fine and it's been months, it wouldn't be that.

CARL

(dismissively)

No, no, it's not stomach or anything.

TERRY

(to Lilith)

Are you okay, my dear? Not sick or anything?

LILITH

No, Dad, I'm fine.

TERRY

I was thinking it might have been food poisoning or something, but, (he shrugs)
(BEAT) Carl, take the rest of the day off, go

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

into town or something, if you feel up to it. I'm thinking you maybe should stop by the medical clinic, eh? Danny will be picking up some supplies later if you want a ride in. I'm not sure if you should drive.

CARL

Yes . . . yes, I think I'll do that.

TERRY

Don't worry about cleanup: I'll get Mary to do it.

They exit. FOLLOW Carl to his room.

INT - CARL'S ROOM

Carl sits down and stretches, trying to shake off whatever's bothering him. He pulls out his cell phone. He dials Rich.

CARL

Yeah, Rich? What are you up to? Ready for an update? (BEAT) Yeah, I'll be in town in an hour. Terry wants me to go to the clinic, but I'm okay, just a bit under the weather. (BEAT) Not 'til six? I'll buy you dinner. I owe you one.(BEAT) Tres Muchachos? Fine, I'll meet you in the bar. Say, I might need a ride back, Terry's taking me in.

CUT TO:

EXT - VILLAGE, AN HOUR LATER

ANGLE ON THE RANCH TRUCK, PASSENGER SIDE

FAVOR CARL

Carl gets out.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

CARL
(to Danny in truck)

No, Rich'll take me back, but thanks. He wanted to do dinner.

MOVING ON CARL

As the truck leaves, Carl walks up the wooden steps. He notices something on the floor, suddenly.

CLOSEUP ON PILE OF BLOODY FEATHERS.

Carl moves it with the toe of his boot. To him it's something merely nasty, nothing more. He straightens and enters the restaurant.

CUT TO:

FOLLOW SUV rolling down Hwy 666. It is Terry. It exits the village and there is a sudden burst of speed as it drives down the highway for a bit. IN THE DISTANCE it turns right and a plume of dust rise with the wind as it accelerates down an obviously dirt road. There is nothing within our view that indicates a destination.

EXT - A CLUTTERED YARD WITH A HOGAN

It might be a hippie's yard, a redneck's place, an artist's disreputable hideaway. As a matter of fact it's all three and Dené, to boot. MICK'S legs and feet stick out from underneath the engine of a '75 Dodge pickup. He's lying in the dirt, but it doesn't seem to bother him.

MICK
(grumbling, ad lib.)

FAVOR SUV in the distance, which stops short. Terry gets out. Mick ignores him. Suddenly SFX of a WRENCH SLIPPING)

MICK

SHIT! Stupid thing! Damn!

Terry walks over and kicks the legs, hard.

TERRY

Get up.

MICK

GodDAMNIt!

(He wriggles out from under the truck. His face is more black from spent oil than anything else, but he is obviously Navajo, mid-20's. He wears "cami" pants and an old filthy "Eagles-Hell Freezes Over Tour" t-shirt.)

MICK

Oh. It's you.

TERRY

Whatcha doing under there? Had no idea you were into your own car repair.

MICK

I'm not, just changing the oil, dammit, 'til you screwed things up.

TERRY

(maliciously)

Didn't have to do much. You think a screwdriver's served in a tavern.

Mick scratches his head significantly with his middle finger. Obviously there's a relationship between the two, but friendly or hostile, we can't tell: probably both.)

MICK

Waddya want?

TERRY

Waddya think?

(Mick smiles.)

MICK

How's your little experiment going?

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

TERRY

Well, I think. The good news is he's off his food . . .

MICK
(interrupting)

You make him sound like a mare in heat.

TERRY

He's in love, if that's what you mean. I think he's dropped about twenty pounds. Good thing he's an athlete. I'm afraid he's building up tolerance, though.

MICK

Need something new? How about some mescaline?

TERRY

That's hallucinogenic, isn't it?

MICK

Peyote, plant from the gods. Yeah. It might be fun to see what your student does with his paintings while he's on *this* stuff.

TERRY

Side effects? I don't want things too obvious. Right now, I can do anything to that love-smitten student of mine and he'll eat it up with a smile just to stay near Lilith. But I don't want her to find out.

MICK

Side effects are slight, usually. Some people barf their guts out, but that's usually just with peyote. I've added an antacid that helps mitigate that and mescaline isn't as bad. Besides, it'll make your boy eat even less.

TERRY

And people let you *do this*? Where do you find guinea pigs?

MICK
(grinning)

From people like you. And there are one or two Navajo around here who don't take peyote for religious purposes, if you get my meaning.

TERRY

Do you have some made up?

MICK

You bet. Wanna beer?

(He wanders off toward the hogan, Terry following.)

TERRY

Yeah. Sounds good.

MICK

Heavy monsoon this year. There'll be some big boomers, I figure.

TERRY

No big deal if you stay out of the canyons.

MICK

I know. I don't hike the canyons. Lost a couple of army buddies of mine in a flash flood eight years ago.

TERRY

Army? *You?*

MICK

Screw you, too. Waddya think? I got these pants at Nordstrom's?

CUT TO:

INT - "TRES MUCHACHOS," SAME TIME

OVER CARL'S SHOULDER AT RICH who enters and sits with Carl. A Navajo waiter walks to the table and slaps down a couple of napkins.

WAITER
(stoically)

Whaddya want to drink?

RICH

Dos Equis, no question.

CARL

Water, please.

RICH

Water? You? You like a beer as much as anyone.

CARL

Yeah, I know. I've taken to drinking only water though. I've been getting dehydrated pretty easily. Or something.

(The waiter begins to move off.)

RICH
(to waiter)

Hey, wait a sec.

(The waiter turns. RICH CONT.)

Thought you'd like to know there's a mess out on the porch.

WAITER

Oh yeah? What kind of mess?

RICH
(with some humor)

Some cat apparently caught a bird and ate it on your porch. Looks like a barn owl or something. Nasty.

WAITER
(nervously)

An owl?

RICH

I guess. I'm no ornithologist. Still, keeps customers away, eh?

NAVAJO WAITER

Yeah. Okay. Thanks.

(Waiter exits the front door as Danny walks in and sits at the bar. WAITER'S POV on feathers. He starts and hurries off to the bar. He whispers to the BARTENDER, a white man in his later 50's. Waiter exits out the back of the bar through a door marked "Employees only." Carl and Rich look after him as if he's nuts.)

RICH
(snorts)

Locals.

CUT TO:

INT- THE HOGAN

FAVOR DOOR, HIGH CONTRAST. The hogan is surprisingly clean and orderly, considering the exterior. There are paintings all over, mostly of The Long Walk and other Navajo/US Government clashes. CLOSEUP OF MICK ENTERING, TERRY BEHIND HIM. Mick goes to a desk. On top are various bottles of powder.

TERRY

I can't believe you leave that stuff out.

MICK
(Shrugs.)

Hell, no one comes out here. *(Looks at Terry.)*
No reason to, unless there's a tip-off.

TERRY
(backing off)

From me? Right, so we can share a cell.

(He looks at the paintings while Mick finds an empty bottle and transfers the right powder.)

Still doing the evil white man thing, eh?

MICK

Yeah, whatever. Enough jerks on both sides
contributed to the problem . . .

TERRY
(maliciously)

Ooh, *that's* not PC, even for a redskin.

(Mick looks at him for a minute, completely disgusted at his passive-aggressive racism, then straightens.)

MICK

Okay. Start out with a couple of grams, about
that much. *(demonstrating)* Then increase it
incrementally. Watch him closely. If he gets
psychotic or even clearly high, back off. And
don't give it to him every day. Too much, too
quickly and he'll be sick enough to go see a
doctor and we *don't* want that, do we?

TERRY
(realizing he might be getting in over his head)

No. We don't.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - BAR.

Carl and Rich are sitting at a high table near the bar. Bad "RANCHERO" MUSIC is in the background. The late afternoon sun accents the rising dust from the floor. Carl is nibbling at the pile of complementary chips in front of him. Rich is well into his second "Dos Equis."

RICH

Interesting stuff this Mexican beer. Doesn't come near home brew from the ol' country, but it'll do.

CARL

Go south of the border, they say there's enough alcohol to knock you on your butt and feel like crap the next day.

RICH

Nah. No tequila for me. I'll stick with the beer.

NAVAJO WAITER brings a huge pile of nachos and sets it in the middle. He looks at them both and leaves quickly. Carl winces, looking really sick and he pushes it toward Rich.

RICH

What's wrong with you? You pigged out on this stuff last time we were here.

CARL

I don't know. I've not been feeling so hot and looking at that stuff almost makes me want to puke.

RICH

Really? Altitude, maybe?

CARL

That's what Terry said, but it shouldn't have lasted more than a week after I got here, and it's going on nine. (BEAT) Go ahead. Your eating it isn't going to kill me and I promised you dinner. I just won't watch.

(Rich eats)

How's the dig going?

RICH

Fine, fine. Found a new kiva yesterday morning. Shows an interesting new perspective on geographic organization . . .(grinning) say, how's *your* "dig" going?

CARL
(smiling back)

Fine, fine . . .seriously, except for this flu or whatever it is, it's great. Rich, I think she likes me.

RICH
(grin is wider)

You'd say that if she wanted to murder you in your sleep.

CARL

No, I'm serious. When she looks at me it goes beyond just *looking*, you know what I mean?

RICH
(mock naively)

No. I don't.

CARL

Shuttup. You sure as hell do.

RICH

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

(seriously)

How's the tutoring stuff going?

CARL

Weird. This guy is either the most brilliant man in the world or the most twisted. Probably both. Just look at his pictures. That's how he thinks. A couple days ago he was making a big deal about some guy who died here in town and was some sort of vampire.

RICH

A chindi. Ja, I heard about that one.

CARL

Yes, but it was the way he did it. It was like he got off on just telling about it. It's like he's into dead things for themselves (BEAT) Here's an analogy: if he was a doctor, he'd do an autopsy just because he enjoyed digging into a dead body. Not because he'd learn anything. That would be secondary to the autopsy . . . does that make sense?

RICH

No, and you're making me lose my appetite.

CARL

Oh. Sorry.

(Rich continues eating. Carl's mind wanders.)

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT-HOGAN, SAME TIME

(Clouds are really building and the background is very dark. Mick and Terry are wandering around the back of his hogan. Terry's gripping a medium-sized bottle full of white powder.)

TERRY

Why are you dragging me back here?

MICK

I want to show you something.

(They continue to a small corral. Mick enters through the gate and continues to the other side. There is the sound of buzzing flies. It is hidden by a poorly made shelter. THUNDER begins and the wind picks up.)

MICK

Check this out.

(We just see a mass of dirty, bloody fleece on the ground.)

TERRY

Yeah . . .so?

MICK

Coyote attack, maybe?

TERRY

(a bit nervous, but still unconvinced)

You'd know if anybody did. (BEAT) Yeah? So?

MICK

Coyote don't kill in daylight. And they sure as hell don't leave whatever they killed. They're the hungriest animal alive. (BEAT) I've lost three ewes this way in the last week.

TERRY

(wanting to believe it himself)

Dogs. I know you've got wild dogs around. I've heard of this. They band together and they're more vicious than any coyote pack. They like to kill for the fun of it, or so I've heard. And they're not afraid of man.

MICK

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

(doubtful)

Yeah. I suppose.

TERRY
(licking his lips)

Why bug me about it? I don't know anything about sheep, much less yours.

MICK
(turning on him)

Because you're the only one who's been around here for days and my damn truck's busted and can't get into town and so I haven't been able to talk to anyone about it who *gives* a shit!

TERRY
(hands up)

Sorry (BEAT) Man, you're really freaked out about this, aren't you?

MICK
(leaning toward Terry)

You hear about that guy who died a few days ago?

TERRY
(leaning away)

Yeah. So?

MICK

Someone said he was a skinwalker who didn't get sung over when he died.

(Terry licks his lips.)

TERRY

Yeah, I heard. So? I don't believe in that stuff. I didn't think the modern Navajo did, either.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

MICK

I don't. It's just . . .weird.

(The wind is really picking up now and the thunder's closer. A dustdevil sweeps across the flats between Mick's hogan and the distant mountains. It is big. MUSIC.)

MICK
(mysteriously)

You know, they say a dustdevil is a spirit.
You know. A *chindi*.

TERRY
(looking at the sky)

Look. I gotta go. I don't want to be stuck on
this side of the arroyo if the floods hit.

MICK
(spacey)

Yeah

MICK (cont.)
(BEAT. Suddenly normal, but haltingly)
Yeah . . .I don't blame you . . .thanks for
the business. And let me know what happens
with that kid. I'm really curious. *(BEAT.)* And
be careful with that shit. It's got stuff
mixed in with it that even I'm not sure of.

TERRY

Yeah. Okay.

OVER THE SHOULDER AT TERRY

who walks back to his SUV, leaving Mick staring at the sky. He works his mouth against the dryness. He's really nervous, even though he's not traditional Dené.

CUT TO:

INT- "TRES MUCHACHOS," SAME TIME

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

It has gotten pretty dark outside and the thunder is pretty prevalent even in town. It is quiet inside the restaurant: Carl and Rick are the only ones there. Rick's finishing the nachos and Carl is nursing his water, his thoughts far away. Waiter is watching them as he cleans the bar. SFX NAVAJO VOICES outside the door. The bartender listens for a second. MOVE ON BARTENDER to the door. SFX VOICES outside.

BARTENDER

(shouting outside the door)

Go on! Get out of here!

(entering)

Dammit!

(Carl and Rich look at him. He comes to the table and gathers up the dishes. Big sigh)

BARTENDER

(to Rich)

Another one?

RICH

Nein. Thanks.

CARL

(gesturing at the door)

What was all that about?

BARTENDER

Damn Navajo medicine man.

(sighs. Jerks his head toward the back.)

John here, your waiter, he's a pretty good guy. But superstitious as hell. Says that cat barf out there was a bunch of owl feathers. Won't clean it up. Says a witch put it there. So he gets a medicine man to counteract it or something. Hell, I thought he was going to do a sing right on my porch!

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

RICH

Sing?

BARTENDER

Yeah. A ceremony. Chants and spells and all that crap. Supposed to make nice all the curses the skinwalker put on this place or someone. They wouldn't do one there, but still. . .

RICH

Pretty scared, eh?

BARTENDER

Like you wouldn't believe. Not just him. Everyone in this hole. Some guy died a while back and now, of course, everything's his fault. Some kid gets sick, it's his chindi's fault. A dog barks in the graveyard: the chindi. Next person dies, it's cuz the chindi cursed him. Scared all to hell. Can't get normal around here.

CARL

C'mon, I heard that story. Nobody believes in that anymore. It's the 21st century for godsake.

BARTENDER

Yeah, you'd think so. I've lived here for fifteen years and every time I think the people are modernized, something happens and then even the "whitest" red man gets wiggled.

RICH

You like it here?

BARTENDER

Yeah, I do. Most of 'em are really good people and I like them a lot. Got a lot of great

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

friends around here and on the Rez. I just hate it when they get worked up about something, 'cuz nothin' gets done. Give it a bit and it'll settle down. (BEAT) Anything more I can get you?

CARL

Tab.

BARTENDER

\$12.35 for the food and drink. \$20.00 for the folklore.

(Carl and Rich look at him in patient disbelief.)

Just kidding.

(Carl pays him some bills.)

CARL

Thanks. (grinning) Keep the change. For the folklore.

BARTENDER

No prob. Have a good one.

(Carl and Rich exit.)

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - THE HIGHWAY OUTSIDE HAYNES' RETREAT, NEXT DAWN.

Carl is jogging down the highway. No one is out here this time of the morning and it's peaceful. There are a few clouds about and everything is wet and revitalized. A coyote trots across the road toward the river. Carl slows to a walk and stops. The animal stops and stares at him. Time stops for both of them. Then the coyote breaks the stare and disappears among the bushes next to the river. Carl stirs, turns and heads back.

CUT TO

INT - HOUSE, SAME TIME

Danny is in the kitchen with Mary, who's puttering about. He pours himself a cup of coffee and exits. Terry pours a couple of cups and goes out to the porch where the table is laid out for three. FOLLOW Mary to porch.

MARY

What are you doing?

TERRY

I've got it. I'm going to sit out here for a while before breakfast and wanted some extra coffee . . . (testily) is that okay?

MARY

Um. Yeah. You don't usually do that, that's all.

TERRY

(sweetly)

I'm . . . working on an idea. Just changing my routine a bit.

MARY

(Suspicious and curious.)

Okay.

(She returns to the kitchen. Terry looks closely to make sure she's gone, then pours a little white powder into the cup. Putting the packet away, he stirs it. This cup looks different. Mary enters with a bowl of muffins and returns to the kitchen. Carl enters. His hair is wet and he plops down in a chair.)

TERRY

Have some coffee.

(He pushes the drugged cup toward him.)

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

CARL
(absent-mindedly)

Sure.

(He puts some milk and sugar in the coffee and sips slowly. Terry watches him closely. Carl looks up at Mary who has just entered.)

Mare, is the milk off or something? The coffee tastes funny.

MARY

Uh. Shouldn't be; I bought it yesterday.

CARL

Just me, I guess. *(to Terry)* I saw the coolest thing today while I was running . . .

TERRY

Feeling better, eh?

CARL

Yeah. It's weird: this thing seems to come and go.

TERRY

Funny.

(Mary enters with two glasses of juice.)

CARL

I was running along the river, on the highway and right in front of me a coyote stops in the middle of the road. Right in front of me.

(A frightened Mary suddenly drops a glass. Terry and Carl both turn and look at her, puzzled. Mary regains composure and suddenly stoops to clean it up.)

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

MARY

I am such a klutz. I'm sorry.

CARL

Anyway, it wasn't afraid of me at all. It just looked at me and I stopped to watch. Then it ran into the bushes down the riverbank and disappeared. Pretty cool. I've never seen one in the wild.

(Lilith appears in the door. She is dressed simply and is not wearing makeup: this enhances her beauty, rather than otherwise. Carl stares. She smiles at him.)

TERRY

Good morning, my girl.

LILITH

Morning, Dad.

(She kisses him on the forehead and sits. She looks at Carl who does not notice: he is dishing up breakfast. He passes her the plate of eggs and their eyes meet for a minute. Terry doesn't notice this time: he's thinking of Carl's morning experience.)

TERRY

So, a coyote, you say?

CARL

Yes. No farther than from here to that cottonwood.

LILITH

Did you see one?

CARL

I was out running and one stopped and stared at me. Right in the middle of the road.

LILITH
(smiling)

Aren't you afraid of the skinwalker's chindi?

CARL

Oh yeah. I'd forgotten about that. What was that again?

TERRY
(absently)

A coyote or a strange dog following you could be a skinwalker. They say if you let it follow you, you could die or become a werewolf.

LILITH

Not *you too*, Dad.

TERRY
(stirring)

Not me, no. Some strange things are happening in town. As far as I'm concerned, if the locals believe it, it affects everyone else.

CARL

Yeah, well yesterday a bunch of them were all bothered about a bird some cat got. They said it was owl feathers and left by a skinwalker. Well, *they* didn't say it: some white man told me about it.

TERRY

Yes. Well, they wouldn't. They don't like to talk about the dark side of their culture.

LILITH

I didn't think many of them believed in that anymore.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

TERRY

Well, anyone under 50 doesn't normally. But every culture has some sort of spooky baggage. Look at Halloween. Belief in the pagan Celtic traditions tend to pop a bit more at the end of October and people believe in it a lot more than you'd think.

CARL

Herd mentality, eh?

LILITH

What do you mean?

CARL

I mean, people who normally wouldn't believe in the paranormal tend to get sucked into it as the culture does. Like Halloween.

TERRY

(somewhat hopefully: we know why)

Yes. I suppose.

(BEAT. Changing the subject)

Carl, I'd like you see you work on a new project this morning. From scratch.

CARL

Those figures aren't quite done yet.

TERRY

I realize that. I want you to take a break from them and return later, maybe. Lilith, I'd like you to sit for us, okay?

LILITH

Yes, Dad. What do you want me to do?

TERRY

I'd like to see you put on that white linen dress, the full-length one that your mother had. I'll work with the pose later. I would like to work with Carl on his rendering human and fabric curves within context of each other.

LILITH
(not pleased)

Okay.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - LILITH IN HER ROOM, LATER

Lilith is holding up the said linen dress. She bites her lip. It was her mother's, after all, and we see how much she misses her. She holds it up to her as she looks in a full-length mirror. A tear slips down her cheek. This is another moment where her beauty comes out immensely, the sorrow only enhancing it.

MORPH TO:

INT - STUDIO, MOMENTS LATER

CLOSEUP OF LILITH IN PAINTING. It has exactly the same expression. ZOOM OUT and we see the whole painting, which is a bloody, nightmarish apocalypse. Lilith's face is that of an angel sorrowing above the destruction below. We see how her dad twists even his daughter to get the right effect. ZOOM OUT and the painting is one of the dozens leaning against the wall: it is a pile of trash, as far as the artist is concerned. FOCUS ON CARL in the distance who is setting up his tools. Lilith enters the room behind him, with a glass of water in her hand.

FAVOR LILITH.

The dress in its simplicity really makes her pretty. She walks in front of Carl's easel. He looks up and audibly gasps. Then he leans over and starts gagging. Lilith turns with a look.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

LILITH

(measured, not in the best of moods as it is)

Thanks...a...lot.

CARL

(still in pain)

No . . .not . . .you.

He seems ready to run to the bathroom, but takes a deep breath with an effort. The nausea seems to pass. Terry enters.

TERRY

Well, shall we get started?

(Carl straightens up with an effort, his arms across his belly. He regains composure and picks up a pencil.)

TERRY

Let's do a pastel instead, Carl, my boy, okay?
Timed. Two minutes, no more.

CARL

Sure.

(He pulls out the tray of pastels and sets it up. Terry pulls out a stopwatch. In the meanwhile, Lilith follows the instructions by her father.)

TERRY

Lilith, my dear, will you sit on the platform?
Okay, legs tucked underneath you. Look down .
. .

(takes her chin in his hands and maneuvers her head accordingly)

Like . . .so. Okay, brush your hair to the
side, over your shoulder - don't worry about
the brush, just your hands . . .okay . .

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

.fine. Hands in the lap. Okay, let's splay the skirt a bit more. Okay. There. Smile, but no teeth.

(He steps back, examines critically, then moves to Carl.)

TERRY
Okay. GO!

(He clicks the stopwatch; Carl picks up a grey pastel and starts outlining. There is something wrong. Carl is squinting. CARL'S POV: the image of Lilith is distorting slightly. CLOSEUP OF CANVAS. Carl is sketching wildly, but this is odd: her hips are too big, and no chest, just a bulging mass of linen. Terry moves in front of us, to look at the canvas. ANOTHER ANGLE ON CARL. We can see the intense concentration on his face. ZOOM BACK AND ANGLE ON TERRY. He has a slight smirk on his face: "This is really interesting." MUSIC UP. DISSOLVE INTO VARIOUS ANGLES TO INDICATE PASSAGE OF TIME. MUSIC DOWN.

ANGLE ON CANVAS/EASEL WITH CARL BEHIND IT.

Carl leans back.

CARL
(slightly hyper)

That was cool. Best I've done, I think.

TERRY

Interesting. Interesting.

LILITH

May I see?

TERRY
(absently)

Hmm? Oh. Yes, of course.

Lilith moves in front of our view.

MOVE ON LILITH

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

Lilith looks. Her eyes narrow and her lips tighten. CAMERA MOVES AROUND UNTIL WE SEE THE PICTURE. It's like a cross between Picasso and Dali, but doesn't even do those styles well: it makes them look like realists. We can understand her revulsion. It is a sick rendering of her, even insulting. She takes a shaky sip of water, trying to control herself, then loses it.

LILITH
(furiously)

SERIOUSLY?!

(She finally throws the half empty glass to the floor and stalks out. Carl and Terry look after her.)

CARL
(clueless)

What the hell's the matter with her?

TERRY

Um. You know women. PMS or something.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE OF STUDIO SESSIONS AND VILLAGE SCENES. UP MUSIC.

INT - EVENING, Carl modeling

INT - STUDIO, DAY Lilith modeling, CAMERA PANS around studio to show Terry and Carl at easels

EXT - VILLAGE, DAY, CLOSEUP OF LEATHER POUCH WITH WHITE DUST, discovered by a Navajo police/sheriff's deputy.

INT - STUDIO, DAY Terry instructing

EXT - DAY, RANCH, rancher looking at mutilated horse, conferring with Danny

INT - STUDIO, DAY Carl sips a cup of coffee with Terry in the background, looking on. He returns to painting.

INT - EVENING, Lilith painting

EXT - NIGHT, ZOOM IN ON DISTANT FIRE. A shadow flies across the glow.

CLOSEUP ON OWL IN THE FIRELIGHT

INT - EVENING, Terry painting Carl. Danny is in the background looking on.

INT - KITCHEN, Terry drugging Carl's coffee

INT - STUDIO, DAY Carl painting

EXT - NIGHT, LIGHTNING

EXT - NIGHT, A SHADOW OF A COYOTE walking through

desert

INT - HOGAN, SANDPAINTING, ZOOM OUT on *ya'ataheli* [shamans]
EXT - LIGHTNING SHOWING TERRY'S FACE. He licks his lips,
very nervous as CAMERA ZOOMS OUT AND RIGHT TO SHOW HIM
LOOKING OUT FROM THE HOUSE PORCH. Danny is in the distance,
nursing a beer and looking out over the same vista.

EXT - THE WOODS NEAR THE HOUSE, NIGHT

*MUSIC IS STILL UP, as if this is still part of the montage.
Lilith is walking in the evening. It is far from the house,
but she likes the solitude. A branch crackles. She turns,
holding her breath. Nothing. She resumes walking. CLOSEUP
on a dog-like shadow. SFX GROWLING. Lilith turns. SFX
running coyote. She runs. MUSIC INCREASES IN INTENSITY,
THEN SUDDENLY STOPS AS WE CUT TO:*

INT - LILITH'S BEDROOM, LATE

*Heavy rain hits the window. Lilith is tossing in bed, in
the midst of a dream. CLOSE ON LILITH. Her eyes open, she's
breathing heavily. MOVE ON LILITH. She gets up, grabs a
robe and exits.*

INT - KITCHEN

She gets water. There is a light on in the studio.

INT - STUDIO

Lilith enters. Carl and Terry are working. They both look
at her questioningly. FAVOR LILITH, who shows a mix of fear
and relief on her face.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE HOUSE, DAY

Terry and Carl walk along the river. It is another nice
morning.

TERRY

You look like you're feeling better.

CARL

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

I think I'm going to give up the coffee. It must be the acid or caffeine or something. I feel okay until I drink it.

TERRY

That's too bad.

CARL

More than you know. I grew up drinking the stuff . . . Mary makes it well.

TERRY

Try decaf for a bit. I've heard it's easier on the stomach.

CARL

If Mary doesn't mind making an extra pot, I'll try it.

(They pass under the trees and it gets dark. Suddenly, without warning, an owl drops out of the trees and "buzzes" Terry. He reacts far more violently than a rational man should.)

TERRY

(screaming, flinging his arms about)

Ah, ah, get him off me, get him off me! I didn't do anything, I didn't!

CARL

Mr. Haynes! Stop! Stop it!

(Terry settles down. Carl looks closely at him.)

Are you okay?

(Terry is still breathing heavily, but he gets under control.)

TERRY

Yes. Yes. I'm okay. I'm okay!

(Terry giggles a bit. He's shaky and starting to lose it.)

What was it? Some sort of bird?

CARL

Only an owl. We probably just startled him.

TERRY
(worried)

An owl?

(regains himself again)

Oh. Yes. Only an owl. Now that you mention it, Mary said there was one that liked to hunt here.

CARL

First one I've ever seen out here. That was cool.

(They resume walking.)

CARL
(cont.)

Breakfast? I'm hungry this morning.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - STUDIO, AFTER DINNER

Lighting is low and reddish. Carl is seated on the platform. He is really emaciated now and in pain. Terry is painting him. It is the picture of a soul in hell, with Carl's face. Demons surround him torturing. Lilith ENTERS, and picks up a tray of coffee mugs. She looks at Carl, and love and concern mingle in her expression. She looks on the verge of saying something, then turns quickly and exits.

FAVOR CARL, who is swaying slightly. Terry is oblivious. CLOSEUP ON CARL. His eyes roll up in his head and he falls forward, sprawling down the platform steps. Terry jumps up in alarm.

TERRY

Oh, shit!

He rushes to Carl's side. Carl is dead to all appearances. He listens for his breathing. Nothing. He listens for his heart. Nothing. He puts his finger on the carotid. Nothing. Terry does everything he can to revive him, but he is comically inept in anything resembling proper CPR or first aid. He starts to panic. SFX SOMEONE IN THE KITCHEN. Terry jerks his head toward the kitchen. He looks around quickly and sees the mannequin with its cover. He drags Carl toward the mannequin and collects him best he can. He takes the linen sheet on the mannequin and throws it over Carl's "body." In the nick of time, he grabs the mannequin and tosses it toward the pile of rejected paintings.

ANGLE ON LILITH

Lilith enters. Terry is standing, watching her. She looks for Carl, who is nowhere to be seen.

LILITH

Where's your student, Dad?

TERRY

(with a convulsive, lopsided grin)

Went to visit Rich.

LILITH'S POV on the bared mannequin and on the couch where it used to be. Obviously something is under the linen draped on the stage. A closer looks shows the merest hint of a finger at one edge of the sheet. She looks at her father, but is too intimidated by him to say anything. She turns and sits down at her easel and begins to work on a drawing in progress. Terry looks at her. She is pale, but well-composed: too well-composed. She is stiff and obviously upset. Terry sits down and pretends to work, occasionally looking over at her daughter. SFX THUNDER IN THE DISTANCE. Suddenly, she puts down the pencil.

LILITH

I'm going to bed.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

TERRY

I'm not holding you here.

She gives him The Look and stalks out of the room. Terry follows.

FOLLOW TERRY

He locks the door immediately after she exits, then turns back to the room.

INT - KITCHEN

Lilith is at the kitchen counter. She leans on it, biting her lips. She lost her mother and now, even though there was nothing overt about it, she's apparently lost the only man whoever really cared for her. She breaks down and weeps.

CUT TO:

INT - THE STUDIO, SAME TIME

Terry is at Carl's body. He pulls off the linen and Carl lies there, pale and dead. He looks up and around. He examines Carl again, making sure he is dead. There is no doubt of it. He walks around it admiring the form.

TERRY

Shame to let it go to waste. A good form, excellent contours, lean. (As he considers, an option presents itself.)

CUT TO LILITH IN KITCHEN

She is aware that Terry has somehow caused Carl's death, but doesn't know how.

LILITH

Dad, Dad, what have you done?

She wipes her eyes and moves to the locked door with a determined look on her face. She is going to talk to Terry.

CUT TO TERRY

SFX LOCKED DOOR RATTLING. Terry throws the linen on top again and goes to the door. Lilith is gone. He shuts the door hastily and locks it again. He exits out the porch door.

EXT - STUDIO DOOR

Terry exits the door and we FOLLOW him to the gardener's shed. He pulls out a sack of plaster of paris and a bucket. He leaves. CAMERA FOCUSES ON DANNY in the shadows, watching.

INT - STUDIO

Terry enters. Setting the material down, he goes to the kitchen door. He checks that no one is around and fills the bucket with water. He places plastic on the floor of the studio and drags Carl's body onto it. He proceeds to mix the plaster and starts smearing it over the body. Lightning flashes distantly. SFX THUNDER.

VARIOUS ANGLES OF TERRY and the process of plastering the body. Terry is increasingly nervous as the macabre thing he's doing starts to get to him. Carl is entirely encased by now, head to foot. Suddenly, there is a huge bolt of LIGHTNING and a simultaneous long blast of THUNDER. Terry, frightened, starts up from his job. The cast is a hideous figure, rather like one of those from Pompeii. Terry throws the linen over the figure, misses, and flees in his fear before he can fix it.

INT - DEN

Terry is at the bar trying to get a whisky down with trembling hands. He is terrified of what he's done. He sits in the chair, trembling.

INT - CARETAKER COTTAGE

Mary is awakened by a particularly loud peal of thunder. She groans, tosses a bit, then gets up.

FOLLOW MARY

To kitchen where she puts tea on. She goes to the window and opens the curtains, looking out at the storm. She sits

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

in a convenient chair to watch as she waits for the tea to boil.

INT - STUDIO

CLOSEUP OF CAST

ZOOM OUT

The cast moves slightly. In a convulsive move, it cracks at the arms, rippling up to the neck as Carl stretches. He panics suddenly and emerges, cocoon-like from the cast. He finally gets his hands free enough to grab at his face and pull the remains from his nose and mouth. He takes a deep breath and in another panicked move, quickly peels off the remaining cast from his torso, legs, etc. He stands and falls again: the drug is still affecting him.

INT- THE DEN

Except for the rumbling thunder outside, it is quiet. Terry is still trembling. He downs the drink in his hand. And starts on the bottle: he's definitely feeling the booze. There is a NOISE from upstairs. Suddenly, he starts.

TERRY

Lilith! Damn it! I left the door unlocked.

He groggily gets up and exits.

INT - HALL, ON TERRY

INT - STUDIO

ANGLE ON CARL

Carl stands wobbly. He is white from the powdery residue, which makes him look horribly like a voodoo zombie with his gaunt frame and inhuman staggering. He approaches camera.

INT - KITCHEN, HALLWAY ENTRANCE

Terry walks into kitchen.

ANGLE ON THE STUDIO DOOR

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

which is opening to show a shadow of CARL. There is LIGHTNING FLASH and Carl is revealed in all his terror, reaching for him. Terry shrieks and collapses in a dead faint. A still-high Carl ignores him and exits.

INT - KITCHEN

Carl continues through the house. He groans, but it is not the moaning of a ghost: it is the pain of a really sick man. He shakes his head trying to get hold of himself.

INT - STAIRS

ANGLE ON CARL COMING UP THE STAIRS

Carl approaches a door. It is Lilith's room. It is partially open for cross-draft and he pushes through. There is MOONLIGHT coming in through the door.

CARL

(groaning, on his knees, now)

Help.

ANGLE ON LILITH IN BED

She stirs. Another flash of LIGHTNING AND THUNDER wakes her completely. She starts and opens her eyes. She is still lying down but looking toward the door. Carl staggers to his feet looking very creepy.

LILITH'S POV

The WHITE, MOONLIT FACE of Carl rises out of the shadow.

ANGLE ON LILITH

Lilith's eyes go wide and she sits up, shrinking back in the covers. She is terrified speechless. She "knows" Carl is dead and now the "chindi" has come to kill her.

LILITH

(whispering)

No . . .no. I loved you, I'm so sorry (ad lib.)

CLOSEUP OF CARL

Carl shakes his head.

CARL'S POV AT LILITH. It shows his eyes' perspective and things are seriously distorted.

FAVOR CARL

He stands, staggering, and moves around the bed haphazardly. Suddenly, he approaches the bed and Lilith shrinks back even farther. There is a moment of still tension, then

CUT TO:

EXT - CARETAKER PORCH

Mary is on the porch, sipping tea, watching the dry lightning show. A BLOODCURDLING SCREAM is heard and Mary sits up, her eyes wide.

INT - LILITH'S ROOM

ANGLE ON LILITH

She is looking toward the open window. The wind blows the curtains. Carl is gone and is out on the roof.

EXT - HOUSE ROOF

CLOSEUP OF CARL

He is gripping the roof tiles desperately, trying not to fall off. He is starting to sober up.

CARL
(looking around)

How the hell did I get out here?

DISTANT ANGLE ON ROOF

The moon is out, very strong, but fading and waxing as thunderheads move across it. We see, spider-like, a white figure creep its way across the tiled roof top. He slips once and continues, approaching the skylights.

CUT TO

INT - THE KITCHEN

ANGLE ON TERRY who is stirring on the floor. He groans, rolls on to his back.

TERRY'S POV, THE SKYLIGHT

In the classic horror movie shtick, Carl's white figure - especially his face - is suddenly illuminated by a FLASH OF LIGHTNING. Terry screams from the floor and faints again. Rain begins to hit the skylight.

CARL'S POV THROUGH THE SKYLIGHT, at Terry, unconscious on the floor.

EXT - ROOF, ANGLE ON CARL

Carl lifts his head and stares past us. He is obviously back to his normal self and understanding dawns. A mischievous smile appears.

CUT TO:

MARY'S PORCH

Mary stares out at the house, the cup in her hand forgotten.

MARY'S POV, THE ROOF

Over the arête of the roof comes a moonlit figure. She backs up, unable to tear her eyes from the house, drops the cup (SFX, BREAKING POTTERY) and flees into the house.

INT - CARL'S ROOM

ANGLE ON THE WINDOW

A hand slides through the narrow opening and gropes for the handle. It turns and the window opens. Carl jumps through the opening and lands on the floor. It is raining harder. The rain has washed most of the plaster off his body and he's starting to look normal again. He shivers as he goes to his dresser and hurriedly begins to put on his clothes.

CUT TO:

INT - STAIRS

Carl creeps down. He hesitates outside Lilith's room, but the door is shut and he continues down the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT - KITCHEN, FAVOR HALLWAY

Terry is out like a light. Carl sneaks into the room from the hall and tiptoes past Terry. He bends down closely and puts his finger on Terry's carotid. Terry is breathing and Carl is relieved. A thought strikes him and he goes through the pockets of Terry's house sweater, finding the zip-lock bag of mescaline mix. He puts his finger in the mix and tastes it: it's obviously not sugar. His face turns grim, then he smiles, replacing the packet. He pats Terry gently and condescendingly and straightens up.

FOLLOW CARL, who exits into the studio. SFX a lock being turned.

CUT TO:

INT - THE STUDIO

Carl looks at the mess left by Terry's work and his escape. He grunts. There is still plenty of plaster left.

INT - THE GARDEN SHED

Carl enters and begins to pick through things. He finds pieces of wood, assorted junk: all small enough to fit inside the cast. He exits.

EXT - GARDEN

Carl, his arms loaded with junk, head back to the studio exterior door.

INT - THE STUDIO

Carl enters.

ANGLE ON CARL AND HIS WORK

VARIOUS ANGLES AND CLOSEUPS

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

He works quickly - Terry could wake up at any moment -- stuffing the cavity with plaster and junk. The artist makes a workable replica of Terry's cast. He stands and exits.

EXT - GARDEN

Carl to the GARDEN SHED.

INT - GARDEN SHED

Carl pulls out his cell phone.

CARL

Rich? Yeah, I'm kind of in trouble. (BEAT) No, no, not like that, but I need your help. Can you pick me up at . . .no, let's see, pick me up a mile south of the house. (BEAT) yeah, right where the mesa cliff ends. 'Kay. Bye.

CUT TO:

EXT - THE HIGHWAY, 12:30 AM

It is raining hard but the thunder has diminished into fitful rumbles. Carl jogs into the distance.

OVER CARL'S SHOULDER DOWN THE HIGHWAY

A car approaches, headlights on bright. It is Rich's beat up pickup. SFX CAR ON WET PAVEMENT. In the distance, we see it stop. A shadowy Carl runs across the headlight beams and opens the passenger door.

ANGLE ON CARL

He gets in.

OVER RICH'S FRONT, THROUGH DRIVER'S WINDOW AT CARL

Carl gets into the seat. Rich drives on past our view.

FOLLOW PICKUP

Which turns around and heads down the road in the opposite direction.

INT - KITCHEN

Terry awakens. He turns over, to his hands and knees and slowly gets up. He looks pretty sick and he is trembling. He staggers to his feet and goes to the studio door, which, of course, is still locked.

EXT - BREAKFAST PORCH

Terry enters the porch area and out the garden door. He goes to the exterior studio door and enters the studio.

INT - STUDIO

ANGLE ON TERRY ENTERING

He approaches the platform. FAVOR CAST. It appears the same as he left it. He approaches it, looking like an old man. He reaches down and comically touches it. It does not react, of course, and he moves it more. It's exactly the same. He's really scared now and mulls over the problem. In spite of his fear, he hits on some sort of plan and exits the studio.

CUT TO EXT - MARY'S COTTAGE

Terry approaches the cottage. FOLLOW TERRY INTO COTTAGE.

TERRY

Mary? Mare?

(He searches, then stops suddenly. A MOANING is heard in the back room.)

Mary?

The bedroom door is open and he peeks in. ANGLE ON MARY who is kneeling at the bed.

MARY

Oh God, please, Oh God (ad lib.)

TERRY

Mary? Are you okay?

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

She looks up as if for the first time hearing him. She is pretty scared. She turns back to the bed.

TERRY

Mary, you've gotta help me.

MARY

The ghosts, the ghosts . . .

TERRY

I know.

(she looks up again, questioning)

It's about Carl.

(she turns back again)

Look. I've . . . I've been drugging him.

MARY
(looking up)

You've been *what*?

TERRY
(lamely)

I know, I know. I wanted to try something, to get a special kind of model, I wanted like an Auschwitz survivor, or . . . something, I don't know. But I misjudged it. Tonight, we were working and he collapsed on me, fell down! Dead!

MARY

Dead? Are you nuts? Oh God.

TERRY

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

Yes, and I . . .I don't know what I was
thinking . . . I made a plaster cast of his
body . . . I left and . . .

(with horror at the memory)

then I saw him, walking . . .

(Mary's eyes go wide at the thought.)

. . .but when I went back to the cast, it was
still there, the body was *still there!* (BEAT)
I need your help, I've got to get it out of
there, before Lilith wakes up and finds it.

CUT TO

EXT - THE GARDEN

Terry and Mary pick their way across the garden.

TERRY
(rambling)

It'd be awkward if somebody asks about him
anyway, much more if there's a body around.
Can't throw it in the river: it'll be found,
and there's no time to bury it.

MARY

Stick it in the wine cellar . . .

TERRY
(almost interrupting)

You really want a chindi's body in *my*
basement?

MARY

You have a better idea?

TERRY
Fine. We can leave it there for a few days
until we figure out what to do with it. I
don't have to be happy about it though.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

(They enter the studio and gingerly - Mary very comically, not lifting a thing - pick up the very heavy cast. They can't manage it and have to drag it across the floor, leaving a WHITE LINE trailing from the platform to the cellar door.)

CUT TO:

INT - RICH'S TRAILER

Carl is soaked from the rain. Rich hands him a towel.

CARL

Got anything to drink? Even a *chindi* gets thirsty, you know.

RICH
(startled)

A *chindi*?

CARL
(grinning)

C'mon, don't be a dork. If I was a *chindi*, do you think I'd need a car ride to get here? I'd turn into an owl or something.

RICH
(grinning back)

What an idiot I am! But we've been hearing such stories from town, you ought to forgive me when someone walks up out of the dark and says he is a Navajo ghost. And thirsty.

CARL

And *that's* the point. You wondered why Terry was so willing to have me as his student, eh? Well, here it is. He's been drugging me, subtly, this whole time. Except for a couple of times, where I should have had a clue, all I felt was sick. You may have noticed I've lost some weight. I swear the old guy has enjoyed himself. Well, tonight he overdid it

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

and I collapsed. The old devil thinks I'm dead and thought to make a cast of my body.

RICH

No shit. You feel okay now, though?

CARL

Getting there. I came out of it soon enough, thank God, or I *would* have suffocated in that thing. I literally broke the mold and suddenly came upon the old man as he was coming back to the studio.

(laughs)

You should have seen him freak out! I would have given any money for a camera, I was so out of it. He actually passed out, *twice!*

RICH

You've got to do something.

CARL

Oh, I've got some ideas. For one thing, I filled up the cast. It still looks like there's a body in it!

RICH

(the light dawning)

Ahhh. That wasn't quite what I meant, but I get your point.

CARL

. . .so he's more convinced than ever that what he saw was a *chindi*, and one that's out to get him. Bwah-ha-ha!!

Now, it seems we ought to be able to do something with that, huh?

RICH

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

Suppose he had a heart attack?

CARL

I think he's okay: he just passed out. His pulse was strong enough.

RICH

Good. You can stay here for a while.

CARL

Great, I can run up to the house pretty quickly from here if I have to.

RICH

What do you have in mind?

FADE TO BLACK

INT - DINING ROOM, SUNSET THE NEXT DAY

(Lilith and Terry are poking at the food. It is very quiet. The weather is partly cloudy and even serene: nothing like the conditions of the night before.)

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - THE LIVING ROOM

There is a nice view of the river from here. Terry, sitting in an easy chair, has a drink in his hand. It is untouched. Lilith enters and sits on the couch. She stares off into space. She is thinking of Carl and looks as if she could cry at any time. Mary enters.

MARY

Jen's gone home. Need anything?

Both Terry and Lilith look up. Lilith says nothing, but looks away toward the river again.

TERRY

(some life's gone out of him)

Need? No. Nothing.

(And he continues musing. Mary stays at the door, unwilling to leave. After a bit a slightly annoyed Terry looks up again.)

Yes? What are you still hanging about for?

MARY
(biting her lip)

Umm . . .the . . .heat . . .is out in the
cottage . . .and can I stay on the couch until
. . .umm . . .it is fixed?

TERRY

Oh for. . . it's July of all things. . .

(Terry relaxes as realization dawns: it is the first crack in the obnoxious, self-centered painter that we've seen. He knows she is just scared and doesn't want to be by herself.)

TERRY
(calm smile)

Sure. Make yourself at home.

MARY

Thanks.

She seats herself in another chair. The silence is oppressive, yet none make a move to break it. DISSOLVE THROUGH PASSAGES OF TIME: Lilith lies on the couch down to sleep. Terry's head nods and he starts, then sets his untouched drink on the end table. Mary is snoring.

DISSOLVE TO

INT - LIVING ROOM, DAWN.

Lilith awakens. She looks about her and exits, heading upstairs to her room. Terry awakens and exits. He looks awful, an old, old man.

CUT TO:

INT - KITCHEN, THE NEXT MORNING

Terry starts coffee himself. When it is going, he exits into the studio.

CUT TO:

INT - STUDIO

He sits at the easel with a project and, still not awake, begins to set pencil to the canvas. ZOOM IN on canvas. It is the picture of a soul in hell, but the demon has the face of Terry himself. Terry starts. He jumps up, knocking the chair over and dropping the palette and hastily exits, stumbling in his haste.

DISSOLVE TO

INT - THE LIVING ROOM, LATE THAT NIGHT

PAN AROUND TERRY. He has poured another untouched drink, but his time, he is not reflecting: he is terrified and starts at the creaking of the house. The other women are sleeping, in the same places as the night before.

CUT TO

EXT - THE GATE OF THE COMPOUND

A dark figure with a daypack walks up to the gate. CLOSEUP OF CARL at the keypad. He starts to press the combination, then...

CARL

Dang, that was almost stupid.

He goes to the gate itself and climbs over.

CUT TO:

INT - STUDIO

Carl enters and sits at another of the paintings. He pulls a set of colors out of his pack and begins to work. We see a decent representation of Terry's face appear on the head

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

of one of the figures in the painting. Then he paints out the figure of Lilith. He moves to another painting and begins again.

CUT TO:

INT - THE STUDIO, DAY

ANGLE ON DOOR

Terry enters. Lilith is behind him.

TERRY'S POV

The paintings are set up so that each is facing the door with Terry's face staring out of each evil character in the canvas. Lilith gasps. Terry turns white and exits, leaving Lilith staring.

CUT TO:

INT - RICH'S TRAILER, THAT NIGHT

Rich is washing dishes; Carl is watching with a cup of coffee in his hand.

CARL

. . .and I wish I could've been there when that twisted artist walked into the studio.

RICH

I'll bet. Did you hear the news in the village?

CARL

Like I've been there.

RICH

You might want to know this. Some rancher killed a pack of dogs out on the Rez.

CARL

Yeah, so?

RICH

They've been killing sheep around the area. The Indians thought it was a ghost's work and some medicine man's been playing it up.

CARL

Probably that guy the bartender was so P.O.'ed at.

RICH

Probably. He got quite a load of cash from Sings he's been setting up but not doing, and Rez police are thinking of charging him with fraud.

CARL

Really? We may have to step this up. As soon Terry hears that, he won't be quite so ready to believe my *chindi's* been around.

RICH

That's what I was thinking. (BEAT) Say, can I come with you tonight? What are you doing to do?

CARL

I don't know. I'll think of something. But, yeah, come on, it should be fun.

RICH

Let me get some stuff together: it'd be a bad thing to have a party without food, eh?

He pulls sandwich meat, grabs a bottle of red wine, etc. and puts them into a plastic bag.)

CARL

(laughs)

A party? I doubt if that old sinner would look on it that way.

RICH

Nonetheless, *I'm* planning on having fun.
(BEAT) So, when do they hit the sack?

CARL

I looked last night and there was one light on, in the living room. I snuck up and there they all three were sitting, Mary, Lilith and Terry all asleep in the chairs. They must really be wiggled out if they won't even go to their rooms. But that was at about ten, so twelve should be pretty safe.

RICH

Well, it's eleven, now. Shall we head over there, anyway? We'll just have to be quiet, eh?

CARL
(giving in)

Well. Okay. Just be careful. Grab your dark sweatshirt and a black balaclava if you've got one . . .umm, I guess your jeans are dark enough.

RICH

Sure.

(He disappears into the bedroom for a second. When he returns, he has just the shirt.)

Sorry, no baklava, or whatever.

CARL

Balaclava. Okay, let's go.

They exit through the door of the trailer.

CUT TO:

EXT - THE GARDEN, LOOKING AT THE GATE.

This time, two figures climb over the gate.

CLOSE ON RICH AND CARL. Carl has a balaclava over his face and in his fleece sweats looks like a fraternity pledge playing ninja.

CARL
(whispering)

Okay, shhh.

(he looks)

Let me get up to the window and sneak a peak.
If we're lucky, they're already out.

(He does so and returns.)

Like babies. Let's go.

MUSIC UP. FOLLOW CARL AND RICH as they go through the garden.

CUT TO INT – STUDIO

Carl and Rich enter. Rich looks at the artwork approvingly.

RICH

Not bad, not bad. For a *chindi*, you paint pretty good.

CARL

I'm hungry again: how 'bout we break out the grub while we think of something really annoying to do?

RICH
(doing so)

Hmmm, a ghost who eats. Not too convincing if you ask me.

CARL

Yeah, whatever.

RICH

How about this?

(He goes to the mannequin and seats it at Terry's "working" easel.)

CARL
(trying not to laugh)

That's a bit much, you think?

RICH

You ain't seen n-n-nothin' yet, as the song goes. Let me have your sweatshirt.

CARL
(removing it)

Yeah, okay.

RICH
(dressing the mannequin)

And your sweatpants, if you've got something under them. Unless you want to go "nekkeed."

CARL

Yeah, my gym shorts.

(Removes sweats. Rich dresses the mannequin. He grabs a hat from the pile of props in the corner and plops that on top.)

RICH

There. There's your *chindi*. Not bad, eh?

CARL
(assessing)

Too bald. I have more hair than that. *(starts to laugh)* No, that's too much. . .

RICH
(interrupting)

Say, what's the old bastard done with your corpse?

CARL

It's in the wine cellar. When I came in the first night there was a faint trail of chalk from the platform to the cellar door. I went down and sure enough it's there. I figured he would have buried it or tossed it into the river or something, but I guess he didn't have enough time or help or something.

RICH
(heading toward the door with his wine)

Let's go down there. I want to see it.

(They exit.)

FOLLOW RICH AND CARL TO CELLAR DOOR

(Carl opens the door, mock-politely offering Rich to go first. Rich obliges and Carl follows.)

OVER THE SHOULDER

Into the cellar as Carl flicks on the light switch. There's the cast below us, lying on the floor.

RICH

Well, that looks gruesome enough, but I think I can help it a bit.

(He splashes the red wine over it, which looks remarkably like blood.)

CARL
(stifling laughter)

Oh, yeah, right.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

(There's a sudden noise up stairs. One of our sleepers decides to go to bed.)

CARL

Oh shoot, turn off the light, quick.

(Carl does so and we are left in total DARK. SFX, FLOOR AND STAIRS CREAKING. Then SILENCE.)

RICH

(a bit nervous, now)

C'mon, let's go.

(Without the light, they head up the stairs. The door opens and we see their shadows as they look to see the coast is clear. FOLLOW RICH AND CARL as they pass through the kitchen and into the studio. They exit the studio, passing the mannequin. We linger and FAVOR MANNEQUIN. Oops.)

DISSOLVE TO

INT — STUDIO, DAY

The same shot of the mannequin, only it is the next day. SFX DOOR BEHIND US OPENING. Terry is behind us.

TERRY

(screaming)

The *chindi, chindi*, Oh my God, it's painting!

CUT TO:

INT — KITCHEN

Lilith is standing there as Terry rushes by her. She looks after him wonderingly. She turns to the door of the studio and enters.

INT — STUDIO

ANGLE ON LILITH AT THE DOOR. In the foreground is the mannequin, looking especially silly from our perspective.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

Lilith looks at it as understanding dawns, cocks her head, and smiles.

CLOSER ANGLE ON LILITH

LILITH

Well. (BEAT) Well, well, well.

(She approaches the mannequin and removes the clothing, hiding them among the props. She puts the mannequin in the corner where it originally was. As she heads toward the kitchen door, she stops at a sudden thought and leans down toward one of the paintings.)

CLOSEUP OF PAINTING

She leans over, puts a finger her mouth and, compulsively, rubs at the picture of Terry. It is only water-based and comes off easily. The original painting is underneath.

ANGLE ON LILITH

She straightens, hand on her hip and looks at the removed paint, which stains her fingers as she rubs them.

LILITH

Well, Carl Peterson, let's see if I can't match you at this game.

CUT TO:

INT - THE KITCHEN, THAT NIGHT

Lilith is dressed in her pajamas. She sets flour on the counter. She goes to the fridge and pulls out a frozen bowl of blueberries. What is she up to? She nukes the blueberries until they are thawed, then reaches into the FLOUR bin and rubs flour lightly, but thoroughly, into her skin, turning it deathly pale. Then she rubs blueberry juice on her lips and a touch under her eyes. She examines herself in a facial mirror and nods, satisfied. She looks pretty gruesome. She picks up a length of ROPE lying on the counter and exits into the studio.

CUT TO:

INT — NIGHT, THE STUDIO, LIGHTING IS LOW

ANGLE ON OUTSIDE DOOR.

It opens and shadow creeps through. Carl walks over to one of the paintings, walking next to, but somehow missing platform. He turns on the dimmer to a low light and turns. There on the platform is Lilith, apparently strangled, hanging from a rope tied to the rafters. Her legs are dragging on the floor. She looks pretty hideous and he thinks so, too.

CARL
(really startled)

Ah! (BEAT) Oh my God, I've killed her!

He sinks to his knees. Lilith opens her eyes and stands. He starts.

LILITH

If you are a *chindi*, and I am a corpse, then we really should maybe go out sometime. . . You dork, you really thought I was dead, didn't you?

(She takes off the rope, reaches down and grabs his head, kissing him passionately.)

Now. Was that the kiss of a corpse?

ANOTHER ANGLE ON CARL who smiles slowly.

CARL

No. No, it is not.

(He pulls her to him and they kiss again.)

CARL

Now what are we going to do about your dad?

LILITH
(smiling)

How like a man . . . gets practical after
kissing me like that.

CARL
(really worried)

No, I'm serious. How are we going to tell him?
And what about Mary?

LILITH

I think we can come up with something . . .

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: COUNTY ROAD NEAR RICH'S TRAILER, THAT NIGHT

ANGLE ON CARL, who is gingerly and comically poking at roadkill with a shovel. Rich looks on. Carl scrapes as much of the mess on to the shovel as he can. They both have latex surgical gloves on. It is a warm night and THUNDER rumbles in the distance.

RICH

So, how about some hamburger for a midnight snack?

CARL

God, this stuff reeks!

RICH

Meatloaf sounds good about now.

CARL

Or stew. With lots of RED tomato juice floating about. . .

Rich holds open a large garbage bag and Carl dumps the roadkill in.

RICH
(wincing at the smell)

Man, you weren't kidding. Come on, hurry up, there's not much time left.

CUT TO:

INT: BASEMENT, THAT SAME EARLY MORNING

The cast is in the background. Rich has the garbage bag and is looking for a place to dump it.

CARL

Make sure it's hidden well. We don't want to spoil it, no pun intended.

RICH

I'm not stupid.

CARL

If we do this right, he'll be so panicked he won't even think of looking for anything else. (BEAT) Wait. Grab some of that and smear it on the cast.

RICH

(infinite disgust)

You've got to be kidding.. . .

CARL

No, seriously. They have to think that the smell is coming from the cast itself.

Rich does so gingerly and comically. They put the roadkill in an out-of-the-way corner and push some odds and ends over it.

RICH

I guess we'll see, won't we. (BEAT) What's Lilith think about this?

CARL

(grinning)

Heck, it was *her* idea. We have not yet begun the *fun* stuff.

RICH
(shaking his head)

And you're *in love* with this woman?

They beat a quiet, but hasty retreat up the stairs.

INT: KITCHEN, MORNING

Terry is working with coffee. He puts too much in it, not having had to do it for years. Suddenly he stops and turns his head. He sniffs and wrinkles his nose. The coffee begins dripping and he hesitates as he heads toward the dreaded door of the studio. He opens the door, MUSIC UP, and . . . nothing. Everything is as normal. Terry heaves a sigh and straightens. The security BUZZER RINGS. Terry goes to the intercom in the kitchen.

TERRY

Yes?

PETERS
(V.O. on buzzer)

Mr. Haynes?

TERRY

This is he. What do you want?

PETERS

This is Officer Peters, Navajo Police. Can I speak with you for a moment?

TERRY
(a bit nervous)

Uh. Yeah. Sure. Come in.

He presses a second buzzer.

EXT: HAYNE'S ESTATE

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

AERIAL VIEW of the Navajo Nation police car driving through the open gate. It goes up the short road and parks. ANGLE ON PETERS, a late-40's Diné officer. He is uniformed with mirror sunglasses and looks very intimidating and businesslike. He gets out, settles his gear and walks up to the door. Before he rings the doorbell, the door is opened by Terry.

TERRY

Come in, come in.

Peters enters and stands, looking around.

TERRY

(somewhat ingratiating)

What can I do for you?

PETERS

We're looking into a disappearance. Young man, late 20's, by the name of Carl Peterson. I was told he works for you.

TERRY

(concerned)

Carl? Yes. A disappearance? What do you mean?

PETERS

A friend of his reported him missing yesterday afternoon. When was the last time you saw him?

TERRY

(making a show of thinking back)

Well, it was several days ago. He said something about taking off a couple days, going camping up in Monument area or something. He'd been working his tail off for me for the last few months, so I told him to go have some fun. Do you think something happened to him?

PETERS

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

Could be. We're looking at the possibilities.
(*Hands him a card*) Call the station and leave
me a message if you hear anything from him.

TERRY

Yeah. Yeah, sure I will.

*Peters turns and begins to exit. He lifts his head and
sniffs the air.*

TERRY
(*anticipating*)

Umm. Coffee! I just made it. Uh, would you like
a cup?

PETERS
(*looking at him a bit funny*)

No, no thanks. (BEAT) No, it's not the coffee I
smell. Or, if it is, you really need to change
the brand. It smells like something else.
Rotten.

TERRY
(*still under composure*)

Oh. That. Yeah, we've had a problem with ground
squirrels getting in behind the chimney. Old
house, you know. Probably . . . died. I was
just about to check it. I can't work here with
that. I may have to move to my place in New
York for a few days until Danny can get it
cleaned.

PETERS
(*looking at him closely*)

Don't you want to be here if your student comes
back?

TERRY
(*"oops"*)

Uh, yeah, of course. Yeah, well, the staff
would let us know. Of course.

PETERS

Yeah. Of course. Well, give me a call if you hear from the Peterson kid.

TERRY

(pushing him out and rambling)

Yeah. Yeah, sure. Hey, and thanks for letting me know. I'm really concerned about him. He told me he was experienced in the backcountry, but even so, maybe he broke an ankle. Or something.

Terry closes the door. SFX CAR DOOR, ENGINE AND LEAVING as Terry puts his back to the door, breathing heavily.

TERRY

Damn. (BEAT) DAMN! Damn Damn DAMN DAMN!

He heads for the living room.

INT: LIVING ROOM

Terry shakes Mary. She is groggy and not coming awake too quickly.

TERRY

Mary! Mary! Wake up!

MARY

Wh-whut?

TERRY

The body! The basement! Give me a hand!

FOLLOW TERRY AND MARY to basement door. Terry gingerly opens it and an obvious whiff of rotten odor comes up.

TERRY

Whew! We gotta do something with that.

MARY

We had a hard time getting it down there. How we going to get it up?

TERRY

We could cut it up.

MARY

Are you *nuts*?! No way I'm cutting up a body. C'mon, Mr Haynes, why don't you go to the police, please? They couldn't prove anything. For all they knew, Carl was doing drugs on his own the whole time.

TERRY

Mary, the police were already *here*. They *suspect something*!! I . . .

MARY

Please, Mr. Haynes, please, it can't be any worse than it is!

TERRY

Forget that now. Let's get the body out.

They make it down to the cast. The wine has soaked a bit into the cast and it looks pretty nasty: the plaster de-solidified around the wine and they think the worst. Mary reacts as expected: shock and a little squeal.

MARY

I th-think I'm going to be sick...

TERRY

(frightened himself)

Oh God. (BEAT) Well. . .get it. (*As Mary hesitates*). Go on, grab the. . . the. . . the arms. (*She gingerly does so. He joins her.*). C'mon, how are you going to lift like that? (*Gets a better grip*). Now, 1, 2, 3, heave.

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

*They try, but although they can get it off the ground,
there's no way they'll be able to hoist it up the stairs.*

MARY

I . . . can't. We need help.

TERRY

Yeah. I'll call Mick. It was *his* stuff caused
this, anyway.

MARY

Mick?

TERRY
(impatiently)

The guy who got me the drugs. He lives out County
Road G.

MARY

That Mick?

TERRY

Yeah, *that* Mick. He has a cell. Get me mine, will
you? The number's on it. And call Jen and tell her
to stay home or something. She knows nothing about
this and we'd better keep it that way.

Mary exits.

FTB

INT: BASEMENT ENTRANCE, AN HOUR LATER

Terry and Mick open the door and peer at CAMERA LOOKING UP.

MICK

God, it stinks down there. (*Terry flips the light
on. Mick catches sight of the cast*) What the hell?

TERRY

Don't ask.

MICK

Man, I knew you were into some weird shit, but. .

.

TERRY

Yeah, yeah, I know. Look, if it's any help to you, I wish I hadn't started any of it, but right now this. . . thing. . . is lying here and I've got to get rid of it. (BEAT) One word is all you need to know: "accessory."

MICK
(cowed)

Yeah. Sure.

TERRY
(yells to the living room).

Mary! C'mon, we need your help!

FAVOR TERRY AND MICK FROM KITCHEN. Mary enters from living room. She is very reluctant.

MICK
(suddenly resolved)

C'mon, let's get it over with.

They go into the basement. SFX GRUNTING, SLIDING AND BUMPING. They appear at the entrance pulling and pushing the cast.

MICK

Where to?

TERRY

The woods. By the river.

The cast slips and they almost drop it.

TERRY

Dammit, be careful.

MICK

(saying the obvious)

We don't want an arm breaking off, now, do we?

Terry and Mary look at him.

TERRY

Boy, are you sick.

CUT TO:

INT: STUDIO, NIGHT

Carl and Lilith are in the studio, they are dressed again in black. Carl is painting Lilith's face onto the demon bodies in a painting of Hell. Lilith sits next to him, making faces every time he doesn't look at her. He catches her at it.

CARL

(trying not to laugh)

Hey, knock it off! You're going to make me goof.

He grabs her by the chin to hold her still and, as if on second thought, kisses her while his brush is still on the painting.

LILITH

(smiling)

Now who's going to goof?

CARL

Actually, I'm almost done. (Does a melodramatic swipe with the brush and it is done) Ready for part deux?

LILITH

You bet.

They get up, hide the paints and exit the studio

EXT: HOUSE

Carl and Lilith make their way to the caretaker's cottage. Mary is making her inevitable pot of tea in the kitchen when they knock.

MARY
(still jumpy)

OH!

LILITH
(Offstage)

Mare! Mary!

Mary breathes a visible sigh of relief.

MARY
(still pottering about the kitchen)

Come in.

Lilith comes in first, with Carl right behind her. Mary grabs a couple mugs from the mug tree on the counter.

MARY
(not looking at them)

Want some tea? I can't sleep, but I can't stand being around your dad either, no disrespect intended, but it's better out here than in the house, 'cause he gives me the willies and I . . .

CARL

Make me one too?

She looks up and sees Carl, shrieks and – this is getting silly – drops the mugs onto the tile. SFX, SHATTERING PORCELAIN.

CARL

It's okay, Mare, I'm fine, I'm not a ghost.

Mary sinks onto a chair.

MARY
(*giving up*)

What . . . is . . . going . . . on?

LILITH

Look, Mary, we need your help. There's no body in the cast. Dad's been drugging Carl. (*Mary nods*). Carl's been faking his death and doing all the chindi stuff around the place. I just found out this morning.

MARY

But. . . why?

CARL

It started in plain fun: after all he did to me, I was perfectly willing to get a little revenge. But now? I'm more worried about Lilith than anything else. (*to Lilith*) Your mom must have gone through hell before she died. (BEAT) I'm sorry, I guess I shouldn't have said that.

LILITH
(*sad, but with a bit of anger at Terry*)

No. You're right. But he wasn't like this once upon a time. I just want him back.

CARL
(*to Mary*)

We've decided to give him a bit of his own medicine, so to speak. Make him look at it and, who knows? Maybe it'll mean something.

LILITH

So along with the *chindi* stuff, we called Peters to help us out a bit.

MARY

My brother-in-law? That was the "police" Mr Haynes told me about?

CARL
(nodding)

And now we need *your* help. Something's got to be done. For his sake, if not for Lilith's . . . and mine. Things can't go on this way.

Mary nods. She's seen the quirkiness and although hasn't been directly affected, she loves Lilith too much not to be worried for her.

MARY

Alright. One thing. We need to call Jen and Mick and tell them what's going on.

LILITH

Mick? Who's Mick?

MARY

Um. Your dad's. . . supplier. He knows about the cast.

CARL
(annoyed)

I wouldn't mind him getting a little dose of this himself.

LILITH

That's not the point right now. Dad's the issue.

CARL

I know that.

MARY

How do I help?

LILITH

We need you to be a "chindi."

DISSOLVE TO

INT: STUDIO

EXT: COTTAGE, MORNING

Terry's at the cottage, hammering on the door, calling Mary's name. When there is no answer, he opens the unlocked door and rushes in. It is dead quiet and he doesn't like it. He goes through the tiny building. No one is around. Finally, he enters the bedroom. It is dark. He turns on the light. Perched on the bedpost, is an owl. It is nervous and as Terry stands shocked, flies past him. He gives a shriek and collapses. CAMERA FOLLOWS OWL out of the cottage, out of the grounds and into a tree on the edge of the property. Standing in a field by the highway are. . . CARL, LILITH, MICK, DANNY, PETERS and JOE, a falconer. Joe calls to the owl and the bird flies to his fist.

PETERS

Thanks, Joe, we owe you one.

JOE

No problem. I guess you know what you're doing. (*nods to owl*). I hope she's okay. She doesn't like morning on the best of days, and she sure as heck doesn't like people freaking out in front of her.

PETERS

Trust me. It's for a good cause.

CUT TO:

INT: COTTAGE, SAME TIME

Terry is huddled on the floor, trying to get his breath and composure back. He staggers to his feet and exits.

EXT: GROUNDS

FOLLOW TERRY

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

TERRY
(calling, occasionally)

Danny! Lilith! Where is everyone? Jen!

INT: HOUSE

FOLLOW TERRY into studio. He turns and looks at the painting, which shows demons with the face of Lilith. He responds, shocked and horrified, and backs up toward the kitchen door. He exits. FOLLOW TERRY through kitchen.

TERRY
(calling)

Lilith! Lilly, my dear!

There is no answer. The house is eerily silent. (NO MUSIC) He sees himself in a full-length mirror on the wall and starts. TERRY'S POV. We see a grey-faced, wan, old man, bent and emaciated, pain and sorrow in his face. The artist has succeeded in producing his cadaverous model: in himself! He gives a low cry and stumbles up the stairs.

TERRY
(weaker)

Lilith!

Terry opens her door and stands in shock. TERRY'S POV. The wind is blowing through the open window. It is silent. What horrifies us is Lilith's bed. There is blood on the sheets and a few strands of the long, flowing tresses of Lilith, making it look nastier. The bedclothes are in disarray and there is mud on the very torn down pillow. ZOOM IN ON SHEETS. The scary thing is a clear coyote print in mud on the bottom sheet. SFX COYOTE SCREAMS, WITH LOTS OF ECHO, AS IF RECALLING A DREAM IN TERRY'S OWN MIND. Terry FALLS to his knees and lets out a HOWL.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: STUDIO, THAT AFTERNOON

Terry has a bottle of tequila. It is three-quarters empty. He takes a full swallow and doesn't even blink. He is drunk as a skunk and sways in his seat, staring at the apocalyptic painting with Lilith as an angel.

TERRY

(rambling, ad lib.)

An angel. My baby. You killed her, didn't you, you bastard. You killed him, then you killed her. You played with the demons and now they're coming for you. Coming for you. You gotta keep your monsters on a leash or they'll eat you alive. Chew you up. Then spit you out. Monster demons. My baby. (*fades to mumbling, then crying*)

He staggers to the prop chest and pulls out rope. FOCUS ON EXPOSED ROOF RAFTERS. Terry throws the rope over a convenient rafter and places a chair underneath. He stands on the chair and fashions a knot.

TERRY

Hang 'em high. Ain't pretty but'll do.

He slips the noose over his neck and tries to stand on the back of the chair. Drunk, he slips and the chair goes skittering away. He hangs by his neck and starts choking. TERRY'S POV. SFX and dialog from this point are distant and hazy. The room darkens from the sides, like someone losing consciousness to tunnel vision. Suddenly there are voices.

CARL

Get him, get him quick.

TERRY'S POV, CONT. We see Lilith's beautiful face faintly in front of us, wrung with concern.

MICK

Carl, grab his waist and push him up while I get this chair. (*SFX CHAIR SCRAPING NOISES*)

CARL

Yeah, got him. Are we in time?

PETERS

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

Yeah, I think so, I don't know. Anybody got a knife? Lilith, get a knife from the kitchen.
(Lilith disappears, SFX, DOOR OPENING, RUNNING FOOTSTEPS, DISTANT CLATTERING)

CARL
(grunting)

Man, he's heavier than he looks . . .

RICH

His color's coming back. Carl, hang on, here she is. *(SFX FOOTSTEPS. Begin FADE TO BLACK)*

MICK
(grunting)

Okay. Got him.

(SFX: SOUND OF TERRY BEING LOWERED).

DISSOLVE TO INT: STUDIO, SAME TIME

Carl, Rich, Peters, Lilith and Mary are standing around Terry. He is out cold. Peters has his finger on the carotid. He looks up and smiles.

PETERS

Good thing we got here when we did. Pulse is strong and slow.

RICH

Huh?

CARL
(aside to Rich)

He's asleep.

PETERS

He'll be fine. Tomorrow morning, he'll hurt worse from the tequila than he would from hanging for a few seconds!

RICH

(with the feeling left of experience)

Ain't that the truth.

CARL

(taking charge)

Okay, let's up him to bed. He won't wake up. In the morning? Everything as planned, okay? *(to Peters)* And thanks, thanks for everything.

PETERS

Te nada. Spirit of the Law if not the letter.

Others nod assent and begin carrying Terry to his room.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT — TERRY'S ROOM, MORNING

Terry awakens. He looks awful, hung over in the worst way. SFX MOWER in the distance. He groans sits up, looks at the horribly bright sunlight outside, and the horribly noisy birds singing. He heads to the bathroom, closes the door and uses the toilet. SFX FLUSHING. Door opens, and he enters bedroom. He begins to dress, out of habit only, without bothering to shave.

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN/BREAKFAST NOOK

Jen's cooking breakfast. Mary sets the table. Terry enters. He looks at her, shocked and bewildered. Through the glass Danny is mowing the lawn. Lilith is at the table.

LILITH

(totally unconcerned)

Morning, Dad.

Terry sinks to floor, sitting comically. Mary's looks over at him and clucking, shakes her head. Terry's head slowly swivels to look at Lilith. He has the innocent, bewildered look of a child.

MARY

Mr. Haynes, are you okay? I not so sure you should be out of bed, yet. Still, I'm glad to see you're feeling better. Those last few days have just been tough, lemme tell you, that bug going around. Boy, you looked just awful and (*Lilith clears her throat*) and boy, I wasn't just sure if you . . .

Lilith REALLY clears her throat and glares at Mary. Terry doesn't notice a thing but just keeps staring at the two of them.

MARY

(with a glance at Lilith)

Uh, let us make a batch of coffee extra strong this morning and you'll feel right as rain.

TERRY

(looking at Lilith)

You . . .you . . .you're . . .

LILITH

(with patience)

I, I'm *what*, Dad?

TERRY

You . . .you . . .you're . . .

LILITH

(innocently)

What?

TERRY

(bewildered, not sure if he's going nuts)

Oh. Nothing. I guess.

CUT TO:

INT: STUDIO, MORNING

ANGLE ON CARL

Carl is painting in his same old place, looking normal. He hears the door open and turns. Terry enters, stops, and drops the coffee cup, which, of course, shatters.

CARL

Good morning, Mr. Haynes. Feeling better?

TERRY

You . . .you . . .you're . . .

CARL

I wasn't feeling too well, so I spent the last few days at Rich's trailer. I'm fine now.

TERRY

You . . .You're . . .

CARL

(turning back to the easel)

I hope I didn't inconvenience you. I figured as bad as you were, you weren't really up for painting anyway. I'll make up for lost time.

TERRY

You . . .you're . . .

(He finally shakes his head: not in dismissal, but in confusion. He makes his way to his easel and sits. He doesn't do anything but keeps looking at Carl.)

INT — KITCHEN

Lilith and Mary are in there, both looking at the open doorway.

MARY

Think it'll work?

LILITH

I hope so.

INT — STUDIO

CLOSEUP OF TERRY

This has had a profound impact on Terry's life. He sits, dazed. He's had a revelation and is considering his past deeds. Every once in a while he looks at Carl, who paints normally, and then at Lilith who takes her place at her easel. He still doesn't touch his paints.

CUT TO:

INT — KITCHEN, A WEEK LATER

MARY
(to Carl and Lilith)

He's been like that for days.

LILITH

I know. I'm worried.

CARL

Give it time.

MARY

It's been a week.

CARL

I'm as anxious as you are, but maybe for a different reason.

MARY

And what would that be?

CARL
(smiling)

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

Technically, it's really none of your business
. . . but, let's just say it involves Lilith
and me.

MARY
(understanding and smiles)

Ohhh..

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - STUDIO

Carl is painting as usual. Terry is still sitting at his easel. Mary brings a cup of coffee to his table. He doesn't respond, and the cup stays untouched. Suddenly, he stirs.

TERRY

Carl?

CARL
(slightly startled)

Yessir!

For the first time, Terry's "my boy" sounds honest and not annoyingly affected:

TERRY

Carl, my boy? I'd like to paint you.

CARL
(Jumping up)

Yessir, how?

TERRY

Just as you are. Get a chair and sit in it.

CARL

Sure!

BALLARD: THE DEVIL'S BRUSH

Carl does so and Terry begins to work on a portrait of him. MUSIC UP. We see different ANGLES and PANS showing the process of his painting. Then suddenly, just as it is finished, the painting morphs into a similar one of Lilith just beginning. In the background, Lilith is modeling. Both paintings are beautiful, without pain or sorrow and we see that our "devil's brush" is even more adept at being "angel's brush."

DISSOLVE TO:

ANGLE ON CARL AND LILITH, who are looking at these paintings. Terry is not present. They look at each other, smile and kiss.

FADE TO BLACK

INT — STUDIO, NIGHT

Lights are low. Terry is working hard. There is no model and the clock shows incidentally that it is 4:15 AM. PAN AROUND TERRY, although we cannot see the subject of the painting. Terry cracks his neck, and stretches. Terry signs his autograph to the finished work. He puts down the brush and gets up without bothering to clean up. CLOSEUP OF LOWER RIGHT CORNER OF PAINTING. He exits in the background.

The signature says "Terry Haynes." No "Teufelsbürst." As we ZOOM OUT most of the painting comes into view, filling the picture. It is Carl and Lilith talking in a spring garden, hands together. Very well done, technically, but also has the originality and sense of hope that Thomas Kinkaide's paintings elicit.

CAMERA ZOOMS OUT and we find ourselves looking at the picture in. . .

INT — THE PETERSONS' MANSION IN NEW YORK, CHRISTMAS SEVERAL YEARS LATER

FAVOR TERRY. He is on the floor beneath us in a very undignified position. He looks strange, panting, sweating, mouth open. Is he having an attack of some kind? Suddenly, three children all under five years old "dogpile" him. He laughs and throws them off in a mock wrestling match.

TERRY

(gets up to his knees, gasping)

Oh, oh . . . you're too much for an old grandpa.

The children back off for a second, then start a chase among themselves.

FAVOR CARL *who is standing watching, with Lilith by his side. As she holds a cup of tea, a big fat wedding set is clearly seen on her hand.*

CARL

Um. Terry?

TERRY

Yes, Carl, my boy?

CARL

Do you remember that time at the retreat just before I asked Lilith to marry me? The chindi story? I've something I need to tell you.

TERRY
(shuddering)

Oh, Carl, my boy, that is an episode I'd just as soon forget.

CARL

But. . .

TERRY

No, really. I've never been so sick in my life.

The children bump into him inadvertently and he turns and grabs one of them, continuing the mock wrestling match. Carl and Lilith look at each other. Carl shrugs and smiles.
MUSIC UP.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END