

The Mind Bomb

by
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Inspired by
The Cthulu Mythos
Of H.P. Lovecraft

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THE MIND BOMB

FADE IN:

INT. HOLLYWOOD, MOTEL ROOM -- DAY

Drapes are drawn. Beds are made. If it wasn't for the laptop computer and cell phone charging on the desk, we'd think the room was unoccupied. Then, KNOCKING on the door.

DETECTIVE CARTER (O.S.)
Roger? Are you in there? Roger
Plotnik? Police.

No response. Moments later -- the door is opened by the MOTEL MANAGER. DETECTIVE CARTER, a serious-looking man in his early 40s, steps into the room with EMILY CHOY, 23, a cute/eccentric girl. Although, now she looks distraught.

EMILY
Roger?

Carter moves to the SINK AND BATHROOM AREA. Expects to find something grisly... but no.

DETECTIVE CARTER
He's not here.

Emily sits on one of the beds, looks glum.

MOTEL MANAGER
I told you, 4 days -- no pay.

EMILY
He never goes anywhere without his precious laptop. This is bad.

MOTEL MANAGER
I take for rent, and cell phone.

DETECTIVE CARTER
You ain't taking shit. That's mine. He's a missing person. Those are my 2 best leads.

EMILY
I'll pay his bill.

Emily pulls out a credit card, hands it to the Motel Manager, who exits. Carter continues to look around, opening drawers, under the beds...

DETECTIVE CARTER
Any idea why he disappeared?

EMILY

He was acting weird. Paranoid.
It all started with that script.
Drove him right off a cliff...

DETECTIVE CARTER

What script?

EMILY

The Mind Bomb.

DETECTIVE CARTER

The Mind Bomb?

Emily hangs her head...

EMILY

Fucking blew Roger's mind to
shreds.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

Emily's interviewed by Carter and OTHER DETECTIVES.

EMILY

He's got mild OCD. At least, it
started mild. He obsesses on
ideas, plots, characters -- and
his compulsion's to constantly
write screenplays. I thought it
was cute, at first... he was so
driven. I figured all writers had
to have a touch of that obsession.
I've got it, too. I'm an actress.

The Detectives REACT -- they've heard that line a million
times. Emily doesn't notice.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Then it got worse. His memory got
all screwed up. He thought people
were chasing him, trying to murder
him... it was scary.

DETECTIVE CARTER

But... someone did murder his co-
worker at the studio. Horrible
scene. I worked it.

DETECTIVE BRYCE, 48, a quirky guy who always wears plaid
jackets, chimes in.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
 Maybe what you took for paranoia
 was fear at a genuine threat?

EMILY
 You think... Roger's in danger
 from that crazy killer?

DETECTIVE CARTER
 Emily, don't panic. We need you
 to stay calm so you can help us.

One Detective says what the Other Detectives are thinking...

OTHER DETECTIVE
 Or maybe Roger killed his friend,
 was feeling the heat -- ran away?

EMILY
 I just... don't believe that's
 possible. Jenkins? No...

DETECTIVE BRYCE
 How well did you know Roger?

EMILY
 We've been dating on and off, for
 like, a year and a half... he just
 became a different person.

DETECTIVE CARTER
 When's the last time you saw him?

EMILY
 The day he left his apartment for
 that motel. He wouldn't even tell
 me where he was going.

DETECTIVE CARTER
 (to the Other Detectives)
 I had his cell phone triangulated.

OTHER DETECTIVE #2
 So, this skip's a wannabe writer?

DETECTIVE CARTER
 I know. I'm all over that laptop.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, DETECTIVE CARTER'S CUBICLE -- DAY

Carter scrolls through Roger's laptop. He peruses the icons,
 then opens the Final Draft program and all the files.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN --

Lots of TITLES OF SCRIPTS, but no *The Mind Bomb*.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Mind Bomb, where for art thou?

But Carter finds one title that catches his eye:

DETECTIVE CARTER (CONT'D)
(reads)
*"Scribbles From My Hollywood
Nightmare"*

Carter opens the file... starts reading...

DETECTIVE CARTER (CONT'D)
Holy shit.

Carter turns to Bryce --

DETECTIVE CARTER (CONT'D)
I just found that runaway kid's
personal diary. He wrote it in
this screenplay format.

Bryce scoots over, looks at the SCREEN.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
*"Scribbles From My Hollywood
Nightmare"*? What the fuck?
Sounds like an Ed Wood movie.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Check out the first line.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
"My name is Roger Plotnik. This
is my journal, private notes about
urgent matters. If you're reading
this, I'm either..."

Bryce stops reading, spooked...

DETECTIVE CARTER
"-- missing or dead."

DETECTIVE BRYCE
Okay... that's ominous.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, DETECTIVE CARTER'S CUBICLE -- LATER

The script file prints from the laptop. It's an inch thick when it's complete. Carter takes the document, puts a binder clip on top and stuffs it in his briefcase.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, FORENSIC COMPUTER OFFICE -- NIGHT

Carter puts the laptop on the desk of a COMPUTER SPECIALIST, who's busy working on another computer...

DETECTIVE CARTER

I need to find a file on this for a screenplay called *The Mind Bomb*. It might be hidden or deleted. I looked. Can't find it.

COMPUTER SPECIALIST

Okay. Check with me tomorrow.

CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Carter, his WIFE, 38, and DAUGHTERS, 8 and 10, eat dinner together. ON TV -- a SHOW has everyone's attention except Carter. He's in his own world, thinking...

CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Carter takes a sip of Scotch, picks up the journal. Off the Detective's eyes, reading --

CUT TO:

BLACKNESS.

We HEAR Roger's voice, narrating, sounds very matter-of-fact.

ROGER (V.O.)

Over black: My name is Roger Plotnik. This is my journal, private notes about urgent matters. If you're reading this, I'm either missing or dead.

(beat)

Fade in:

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BLVD. -- DAY

ROGER PLOTNIK, 24, runs for his life. He dodges PEDESTRIANS, nearly trips over his own feet. Looks back at his pursuer (whom WE DON'T SEE). Keeps running.

[NOTE: Occasionally -- SCRIPT TEXT, such as SLUG LINES, DIALOGUE, TRANSITIONS, scrolls over the screen as if we were inside the Detective's head reading the script pages...]

After sprinting his guts out, Roger, desperate, turns into --

CUT TO:

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT -- CONTINUOUS

Roger bursts in the door. The LUNCH CROWD looks at this sweaty guy with a laptop bag, gasping for air.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT, BACK DOOR -- DAY

Roger flies out the rear entrance into an alley. Disappears. A moment later, a MAN WITH A SCAR ON HIS FACE steps out of the door. Looks around. There are lots of escape routes.

The Man smiles, a truly evil grin, gives up the chase.

ROGER (V.O.)
Someone wants to kill me. But I'm
getting ahead of myself.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBUCKS -- DAY

It's the busy morning rush, but Roger is oblivious to the ACTION around him. He sits by the window with a latte and stack of scripts, types into his laptop...

ROGER (V.O.)
My immanent danger is directly
related to my work, so I need to
tell you about it. I do coverage
on about 15 to 20 scripts a week
for a major movie studio.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- DAY

ROGER (V.O.)

"Coverage" is like a book report on a script studio executives commission so they don't have to read the writing themselves.

JIMMY "J.J." JOHNSON, 35, a Senior Vice President stands behind a mountain of scripts. Each has a copy of "coverage" stapled to the cover. He's on the phone, nodding to whatever the person's saying to him over his headset --

J.J.

What did I think of the script?

ROGER (V.O.)

I don't blame them for this. 98% of all scripts submitted to the studio suck donkey balls.

J.J. picks a script off his desk, looks at the coverage.

J.J.

It's a pass. Why?

J.J. flips to the second page of the coverage.

J.J. (CONT'D)

"The characters were pedestrian, the dialogue -- quotidian, and too many conundrums were resolved by coincidence". That's right --
(acts insulted)

No, I'm not reading coverage.

BACK TO:

INT. STARBUCKS -- DAY

We're CLOSE on Roger. Words from the computer reflect and dance in his eyes. Fingers click like mad at the keyboard.

ROGER (V.O.)

But that's just my day job. My ambition is to make a living as a screenwriter.

(beat)

Here's what I'm up against.

We CHANGE ANGLE -- 10 MORE SCREENWRITERS inhabit the coffee shop, looking intense, clicking away on their laptops, too...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO, MAIN GATE -- DAY

ROGER (V.O.)
Every day, the studio receives
tons of scripts, 2 or 300 a week.

A MAIL TRUCK waits in line behind a BUNCH OF MOTORCYCLE AND BICYCLE MESSENGERS. PEDESTRIANS walking into the studio are carrying scripts. A SECURITY GUARD puts a crate of freshly delivered scripts on a GOLF CART and it drives away.

ROGER (V.O.)
They arrive by hand, via snail
mail, messenger, but mostly --

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- DAY

ROGER (V.O.)
-- invade electronically.

J.J. looks at a page of e-mails on his COMPUTER -- every subject-line READS some variation of: "Hot New Script!!!"

J.J. forwards all of these e-mails to the STORY DEPARTMENT, types, "For coverage. PLOTNIK ONLY." Presses send.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO, BACK LOT -- DAY

Roger stands before a MOUNTAIN composed of 15,000 scripts. He talks directly to the AUDIENCE.

ROGER
Of the 15,000 scripts the average
major studio receives a year...

Roger walks forward to a folding chair, on which is stacked 2 neat piles of about 10 scripts each.

ROGER (CONT'D)
... the studio will produce 15 to
25 films a year.

Roger picks up the 2 short stacks of scripts and walks back to the Mountain of Scripts. Holds them up for comparison.

ROGER (CONT'D)
That's it. That's the ball game.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, STORY DEPARTMENT -- DAY

ROGER (V.O.)
I'd say the odds of any one script
submitted actually being made into
a movie's about 1,000 to 1.

Piles of scripts everywhere. READERS, smart-looking young
people in their 20s, pick up stacks to read, read scripts on
ancient desks and threadbare couches, mill around and chat...

Roger walks in --

ROGER (V.O.)
That's where I come in: the
Reader.

Roger pulls a large stack of scripts with coverage attached
from his backpack and hands them to a MAIL ROOM GUY --

ROGER (V.O.)
We tell the executives whether to
"pass" or "consider" the scripts.

Roger SPOTS -- JENKINS, 60s, a burn-out, ex-hippie janitor,
loading scripts from a pile marked "Terminal Red-lights" onto
the back of his garbage can trolley. They exchange nods.

ROGER
Hey, Jenkins.

JENKINS
Plotnik.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- DAY

J.J. reads coverage by Plotnik while biting his nails and
nervously scratching his goatee. He's antsy.

ROGER (V.O.)
And, in the rare circumstance we
think the exec should drop what
they're doing and read the script
immediately because it's just so
shit hot, it'll sell, immediately -
- we "recommend" the script.

J.J.
 (to his SECRETARY)
 Cancel my lunch. I gotta read
 this script.

BACK TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, STORY DEPARTMENT -- DAY

On the counter, Roger finds the script stack with his name on it. As he sorts through his new assignments...

ROGER (V.O.)
 In a year and a half, I've only
 recommended 6 scripts. All sold,
 4 to my studio. 2 of those
 became, honestly, crap movies but
 made tons of money, --

We SEE -- one-sheet AD POSTERS of the movies on the walls.

ROGER (V.O.)
The Gorilla Who Saved Christmas
and Dance Or Die!.

The Mail Room Guy regards Roger with awe...

MAIL ROOM GUY
 You get all the hot ones, Plotnik.
 I saw they gave you a Coen
 Brothers script in that stack.

ROGER
 Cool. I just hope it doesn't suck
 donkey balls.

As Roger turns and exits --

ROGER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 That's right --

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE PREMIERE -- NIGHT

J.J. struts down the red carpet with STARS. CAMERAS FLASH.

ROGER (V.O.)
 Twice in less than 2 years, I've
 "recommended" a script that beat
 those very long odds and turned
 into a movie for Jimmy Johnson,
 the executive who bought it.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBUCKS -- ANOTHER DAY

Roger's hunkered down with his scripts, typing on his laptop.

ROGER (V.O.)
 In return, he pays me a buttload
 of cash to read every script that
 comes across his desk. That
 leaves me no time to write my own
 stuff, which is driving me nuts.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBUCKS, COFFEE BAR -- ANOTHER DAY

Roger waits in line behind PEOPLE picking up their coffees
 with his empty cup in hand. He looks zonked.

ROGER (V.O.)
 I'm in this mode of trying to
 write and doing coverage all the
 time. It's like I'm 24/7 in my
 own head, --

ROGER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 -- talking to myself.

ROGER,
 (to himself)
 -- talking to myself.

ROGER (V.O.)
 It's destroyed my social life. My
 girlfriend is, well... annoyed.

At the front of the line, Roger's greeted by -- Emily.

EMILY
 Yo, you look undead.

ROGER
 Emily...

Roger holds up his cup. She snatches it, starts making him a
 fresh Latte, but Roger can tell she's pissed...

ROGER (CONT'D)
 Thanks. Are you okay?

EMILY
 You just fuck me for the free
 Lattes, don't you?

ROGER
 What?

EMILY
 Is that what our relationship's
 come to? Cause that's not cutting
 it for me anymore -- you fucking
 lame-ass Latte fucker.

ROGER
 You're still angry about Saturday?

EMILY
 You said there would be people at
 the party from the studio I should
 meet, for my career -- and then
 you blow me off.

ROGER
 Sorry, I told you, I was working --
 writing. I... had to write.

EMILY
 Whatever, psycho.

Emily hands Roger his Latte.

EMILY (CONT'D)
 I still love you.

She gives him a quick kiss.

EMILY (CONT'D)
 Call me, tonight.

CUT TO:

INT. ROGER'S STUDIO APARTMENT -- NIGHT

A messy bachelor pad. Emily's asleep in bed, while Roger's
 at his desk, clicking away at his laptop...

Roger's cell phone rings. The ID reads "J.J." He answers.

ROGER
 Hello.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRENDY NIGHT CLUB -- CONTINUOUS

J.J.'s on his headset while he takes the keys to his FERRARI from the busy VALET, gets in his car --

J.J.
Plotnik, listen -- I need you in my office, 10 am tomorrow to talk about a special project. Okay?

BACK TO:

INT. ROGER'S STUDIO APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

ROGER
A special project?

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- DAY

Roger's getting briefed by J.J. --

J.J.
It's been 3 months since I've gotten something into production and I got zilch on deck. Another month or two like this and I'll be out of a job. I need to find a script -- one rewrite away from Cornblatt giving a green-light.

ROGER
I only read them. I don't have relationships with agents --

J.J.
Duh. Obviously. That's why I'm sending you into the library.

ROGER
I don't do book coverage, J.J.

J.J.
Not the public library, smart-ass -
- our studio library.

ROGER
What's that?

J.J.
We have thousands of scripts in storage, that we own -- that are dead, going back 92 years.

ROGER

We do?

J.J.

Of course. They're our property.

ROGER

You want me to do coverage on... a library of thousands of scripts?

J.J.

I don't want any coverage at all.

ROGER

No?

J.J.

I just want you to go into that library and come out with the one script you recommend.

ROGER

What if there's 2 or 3?

J.J.

Pick one. I already got Cornblatt all lubbed up about your mission. He thinks your opinion is fucking gold. Just find me a winner.

ROGER

But... I get paid by the script.

J.J.

That's irrelevant. I'm going to advance you 10 grand.

ROGER

10 grand?

J.J.

Yes, against 100.

ROGER

Against... 100 -- grand?

J.J.

You heard right.

ROGER

One hundred thousand dollars?

J.J.

That's your producer fee.

ROGER
(shocked)
I'm a producer?

J.J. pulls a contract out of his desk, slides it to Roger.

J.J.
To incentivize you against just picking any old crap off the shelf to get back to your lucrative coverage -- I'm making you an Associate Producer, if the script you find turns into a movie.

ROGER
Really?

J.J.
I don't fuck around.

ROGER
(awe-struck)
I'm a producer.

J.J. rolls his eyes. There's a KNOCK on the door --

JENKINS
Mr. Johnson, you wanted to see me?

J.J.
Show Plotnik the studio library. Give him a key. He's going to be spending a lot of time down there.

JENKINS
A key... to the library?

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO, BACK LOT -- DAY

Roger strolls with Jenkins, who pushes his garbage trolley.

ROGER
I thought you threw those terminal red-light scripts away?

JENKINS
Not-a-one. Library used to be a department, just like Sound and Electrical. I ran it until '99, when everything went digital.
(MORE)

JENKINS (CONT'D)

Corporate was going to close it, but I convinced them to let me stay on as a janitor but keep the Library up and running, just in case all the computers crashed. Back then, everyone was shitting themselves about Y2K and they gave me the gig. Up until today, I thought they forgot about me and this department.

ROGER

Why would you do that?

JENKINS

What?

ROGER

Keep up a Library for a corporation that doesn't even care about it?

JENKINS

Humanity.

ROGER

Humanity?

JENKINS

Fuck yeah, man. These scripts are works of art. You don't throw art away. Burn it, like the Nazis. I couldn't live with myself.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO, BACK LOT -- DAY

Jenkins leads Roger to the venerable WRITERS BUILDING.

JENKINS

This place was built in 1927. One of the 3 original buildings on the lot. Douglas Fairbanks had a swimming pool in the basement which is, now -- the Library.

Roger follows Jenkins down an outside stairwell...

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT STAIRCASE -- DAY

It's like a secret passage leading under the building. They get to a door, Jenkins unlocks it --

JENKINS
Entrez vous.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- DAY

Jenkins flips on the lights --

Roger SEES -- neat rows of bookshelves that seem to stretch out into infinity. Thousands of scripts, organized, preserved. In the f.g., is a LOUNGE AREA, with groovy vintage furniture, a poker table and a well-stocked bar.

JENKINS
Plotnik, you're looking at hundreds of millions of dollars worth of the world's greatest unpublished literature.

ROGER
Holy shit.

CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Carter lifts his head from the script. Remembers...

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, LOUNGE AREA -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A DISTURBING CRIME SCENE. Jenkins lays on the floor in a pile of scripts and blood with an ice pick sticking out of his head. Carter examines the body. Looks up at all the thousands of scripts in the stacks.

BACK TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Carter snaps back. Takes a sip of scotch. Keeps reading.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- DAY

Roger continues to stare at the stacks, agog...

ROGER
Really, just... awesome.

JENKINS
I know. Kinda kicks the
articulate right out of your
skull. Don't it?

ROGER
So, where's the swimming pool?

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, IN THE STACKS -- MOMENTS LATER

Jenkins pulls a trap door open on the floor, REVEALING -- a wooden staircase down to a DARK BASEMENT.

ROGER
That's the pool?

JENKINS
Yep. We built the library over
it. Scripts written before 1949
live down here. Wanna take a dip?

ROGER
Down there? It's so dark.

JENKINS
What are you, fucking chicken?

ROGER
No, I was just... commenting on
the general lack of light.

Jenkins grabs a couple of flashlights, hands one to Roger. They turn them on, descend the staircase...

JENKINS
There's some crazy, amazing shit
down here. Blow your mind.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, UNDER THE STACKS -- CONTINUOUS

Roger pokes around with his flashlight, SEES -- a labyrinth. Cave-like walls of scripts lead off in all directions.

JENKINS
We're at the center, but these
halls have lots of turns and dead-
ends, like a maze.
(MORE)

JENKINS (CONT'D)
If your flashlight gets low on
power, start back, immediately.

ROGER
Anyone ever get lost down here?

JENKINS
Oh, yeah.

Jenkins shines his light on a -- ROTTING CORPSE SKELETON!
Roger JUMPS. Jenkins laughs. Roger's embarrassed...

JENKINS (CONT'D)
Gets 'em every time. That's a
prop from a Boris Karloff flick.
Found him in a dumpster.

SOUND UP: Carter LAUGHS.

WIFE (O.S.)
Honey, are you coming to bed?

CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

DETECTIVE CARTER
Not yet. I'm reading this script -
- diary thing for work. It's
getting interesting.

WIFE (O.S.)
More interesting than bed, with
me, Sugarplum?

Carter gets it, finishes his Scotch.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Coming.

CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Carter reads the script in bed while his Wife sleeps.

ROGER (V.O.)
I was balls to the wall.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, BAR -- NIGHT

Roger reads and eats a burrito. There's a tall stack of scripts in front of him. In the b.g., Jenkins and some BUDDIES, late-middle aged grips and gaffers, play poker.

ROGER (V.O.)
Jenkins' only rule for the Library
was no script leaves the building.
He didn't want anything lost,
destroyed or stolen.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- DAY

Roger tries to use an ancient copy machine that keeps jamming. He gets so frustrated, he kicks the thing.

ROGER (V.O.)
There was a 1991 model Xerox, so I
could take copies home, but it
broke down nearly every other
page. Total time waster. Time I
needed to read scripts.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, BAR -- ANOTHER NIGHT

Roger reads, eats pizza. We SEE -- words scroll in his eyes.

ROGER (V.O.)
So I pretty much lived down there.

Roger YAWNS. Looks around. He's alone.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, STACKS -- DAY

Roger pushes a cart down an aisle, searching for new scripts and replacing those he's already read. He looks haggard.

ROGER (V.O.)
After 21 days, I'd read over 100
scripts. Some sucked. Many were
brilliant. But none was the one.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- NIGHT

ROGER (V.O.)
Not like I was just picking
scripts up willy-nilly, either.

Roger reads in the LOUNGE AREA, surrounded by a FEW OTHER READERS. In the b.g., Jenkins has drinks with his BUDDIES.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- ANOTHER NIGHT

ROGER (V.O.)
Once the guys who frequented the
library found out I was from the
studio, they were all over me.

Roger's having drinks at the bar with SEVERAL READERS.

READER #1
Aldous Huxley.

ROGER
Brave New World and *The Doors of Perception* Aldous Huxley?

READER #1
Yeah -- around '51, the studio
commissioned him to write an
adaptation of the book *If Upon A Winter's Night, A Traveler* by
Italo Calvino. Amazing.

READER #2
No, bro -- the script you got to
get the studio to make is *The Galaxy War* by Louis Milestone.
It's like *Star Wars* but the dude
wrote it in 1927.

ROGER
1927? You mean, a silent film?

READER #2
Yeah. It needs... words.

READER #3
Those scripts are too heavy,
brainiacs. Brian Doyle-Murray is
who you gotta read. He wrote
Caddyshack and the early years of
SNL.

(MORE)

READER #3 (CONT'D)

In the 70s, the studio bought 4 of his scripts and never made a single one. They're all pee-your-pants funny.

ROGER

I'll add these to my list.

Roger opens up his laptop, starts typing --

READER #3

Also, Colin Higgins -- hilarious.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, STACKS -- DAY

Roger searches for scripts --

READER #1 (V.O.)

Ben Hecht. Ernest Lehman. Billy Wilder. Walter Hill. Any script by those guys is screen-worthy.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, LOUNGE AREA -- NIGHT

Roger reads a script, a big pile in front of him.

READER #3 (V.O.)

And Terry Southern. Rod Serling.

READER #2 (V.O.)

Waldo Salt. Sterling Siliphant.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, UNDER THE STACKS -- NIGHT

Roger hunts around the catacombs. His flashlight dims. Roger gets scared. Runs for safety.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- NIGHT

Roger sleeps on a couch. There's a KNOCK on the door. Groggy, Roger gets up. Opens the door. It's Emily.

EMILY

You smell.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- LATER

Roger chops ice with an ice pick, mixes gin and vermouth in a shaker, pours. Garnishes. Emily's impressed. Takes a sip.

EMILY
Wow, tight Martini.

ROGER
Yeah, Jenkins taught me.

EMILY
You need to get out of here.

ROGER
You don't understand. I'm a producer now. This is what producers do.

EMILY
Kill themselves to find a script?

ROGER
Yes.

Emily puts her hand on Roger's hand.

EMILY
I'm worried about you.

ROGER
Why?

EMILY
You're reminding me of Gollum.

ROGER
Emily, seriously, I'm Frodo.

EMILY
Yeah, when he's being a fucking dick about that stupid ring.

ROGER
That was low.

EMILY
I'm telling you, Roger -- if you don't leave with me right now, take a shower, get some sushi, I'm breaking up The Fellowship.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLYWOOD, SUSHI DAN -- NIGHT

A fast-food type sushi joint. Roger and Emily eat. Roger is starving. Chows down fast and talks with his mouth full.

ROGER

You wouldn't believe the quality of this literature. It's like totally, just -- buried treasure.

EMILY

So, they're going to make a movie out of any script you pick?

ROGER

It's more complicated than that, but, yes. That's J.J.'s plan.

EMILY

Will there be a role for me?

ROGER

Of course. I guess.

EMILY

You "guess"?

ROGER

I assume that sort of thing would be within my power as a producer.

Roger starts choking on sushi. Emily regards him, concerned.

ROGER, (V.O.)

Emily was right. I was killing myself.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- ANOTHER NIGHT

Roger is surrounded by scripts. Reads. Eyes bloodshot.

ROGER (V.O.)

But the promise of being promoted out of my going-nowhere position as a reader was worth dying for.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO -- DAY (ROGER'S IMAGINATION)

Roger drives his SWEET CONVERTIBLE onto the lot through an EXECUTIVE GATE. He parks in a spot with his name on it.

ROGER (V.O.)
 Maybe I wouldn't get my big break
 as a writer, but --

Roger steps out of his car wearing a sharp suit. His ASSISTANT brings him a cup of coffee and DEVELOPMENT GUY with an iPad BRIEFS Roger on the day's meetings as they all walk into an office with "Plotnik Pictures" on the door.

ROGER (V.O.)
 -- being a movie producer would
 suit me just fine. Hell, then I
 could be a writer/producer.

Roger turns to his Development Guy.

ROGER,
 Cancel my meetings. I'm writing
 today.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, STACKS -- DAY

Roger pushes his cart down the aisle. It's like he's in a canyon of scripts. He's got that undead-look -- bad.

ROGER (V.O.)
 But after a month combing the
 stacks, I still hadn't found the
 script that would change my life.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, CATACOMBS UNDER THE STACKS -- NIGHT

Roger stumbles down the dark, dusty aisle with a flashlight.

ROGER (V.O.)
 I felt... unhinged.

He trips over a footstool, falls into a bookcase and knocks the scripts on its shelves down. AVALANCHE.

Exhausted, Roger looks like he could cry.

But the TITLE of one script on the floor, illuminated by the light of his flashlight, catches Roger's eye --

"The Mind Bomb" by Boswell Sneed.

ROGER (V.O.)
 Then the clouds parted and God
 pointed a mysterious finger.
 (MORE)

ROGER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (beat)
The Mind Bomb.

Roger picks up the script. Opens it. Reads.

ROGER (V.O.)
 Shazam.

There's a LOUD CHURNING WIND SOUND. Roger looks up, SEES --

A VORTEX OF SWIRLING SPACE, like a wormhole, has opened in the catacombs in front of him. Roger tucks the script under his arm, walks into the vortex and his body gets distorted as he's sucked down the wormhole into BLACK NOTHINGNESS.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- NIGHT

ROGER (V.O.)
 I read it 3 times in 4 hours.

Roger flips to the last page. Looks up. He's blown away. The place is packed with READERS and GUYS PLAYING POKER.

ROGER
 (calls out)
 Hey, have any of you ever read *The Mind Bomb* by Boswell Sneed? 1936.

Everyone shrugs, AD LIB "no"s. Nobody's read it, or admits to having read it. Except Jenkins, who looks dead-serious.

JENKINS
 I have.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- LATER

Roger wrestles with the copy machine. It keeps jamming. Highball in hand, Jenkins pleads with him, boozy --

JENKINS
 You can't give that script to J.J.

ROGER
 Why not?

JENKINS
 It's... it'll... just don't.

ROGER
 It's brilliant.

JENKINS
I know. Just please, don't.

ROGER
Why?

JENKINS
That script fucked me up, man.

ROGER
How?

JENKINS
I couldn't stop thinking about it.

ROGER
Yeah. Me, neither. It's awesome.

JENKINS
Plotnik, I finally collapsed after
a week with a 105 degree fever.
It took nearly falling into a coma
for me to forget about it.

ROGER
You got a bad bug... because of
reading a script?

JENKINS
It wasn't a bug. I was possessed.
I tried to destroy the damned
thing, but I just couldn't do it.
I was too... weak.

Roger rolls his eyes. The copier jams again.

ROGER
Fucking idiot machine.

JENKINS
Listen to me, Plotnik...

ROGER (V.O.)
Jenkins begged me to drop it.
(beat)
I should've listened.

CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Carter looks up from the script to see the time. It's 2:42 a.m. He turns off the lamp. Goes to sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

It's 2:51. Carter turns the lamp back on. He can't sleep. Picks up the script. Reads.

CUT TO:

INT. 1936, SCIENCE LAB -- NIGHT (BLACK & WHITE)

This looks like footage from a German Expressionist film. SCIENTISTS in lab coats lower dark goggles over their eyes as a button is pushed and two intensely bright orbs are lifted out of lead containers by mechanical arms and brought together -- creating a massive ball of energy.

ROGER (V.O.)

The movie's about these genius scientists working on a super-weapon -- the atomic bomb.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- DAY

Roger pitches the script to J.J.

J.J.

That's ancient history.

ROGER

It's 1936. This guy Sneed wrote the script years before the atomic bomb was even a popular theory. But it's irrelevant. We set the movie present day and the scientists are splitting quarks.

J.J.

What the fuck's a quark?

ROGER

The smallest part of an atom.

J.J.

I know that, but Average Joe Six-pack who buys a ticket's gonna be like -- "what the fuck's a quark?"

ROGER
Doesn't matter. We make something
up, like Unobtainium in *Avatar*.

J.J.
Okay.

ROGER
And one of the scientists is this
hot Asian chick.

J.J.
What's that got to do with it?

ROGER
I'm just riffing. Point is --

CUT TO:

INT. 2036, SCIENCE LAB -- NIGHT

In crisp color and futuristic. SCIENTISTS (including Emily)
lower their hi-tech goggles. They watch two intensely bright
particles smash together inside a particle accelerator.

ROGER (V.O.)
When the scientists test this bomb
-- there's an explosion of pure
energy so incredibly massive --

There is an incredible massive explosion of pure energy. It
goes right through the Scientists and everything in the lab.

CUT TO:

CITIES -- NEW YORK, PARIS, MOSCOW, SHANGHAI -- SHIMMER

CUT TO:

OUTER SPACE -- EARTH SHIMMERS WITH THE MASSIVE ENERGY

BACK TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- DAY

ROGER
-- it fractures reality.

J.J.
How?

ROGER
Each person's different. Some get
their minds wiped clean, --

CUT TO:

INT. 2036, SCIENCE LAB -- NIGHT

The Scientists wander around the lab like goofballs on mushrooms. Walk into walls, giggle, look paranoid. Emily stares at the back of her hand like she's never seen it.

ROGER (V.O.)
-- others go insane, hallucinate.
They can't turn it off.

BACK TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- DAY

ROGER
They can't grip what used to be
reality. It's mayhem. Nobody can
function.

J.J.
Everyone on Earth?

ROGER
Everyone, even animals. Instant
total chaos. Except for a few
people, people with very powerful
minds, including our hero, --

CUT TO:

INT. 2036, SCIENCE LAB -- NIGHT

One Scientist (CAMEO: Bruce Willis) soberly regards his messed up colleagues.

ROGER (V.O.)
-- one of the scientists: Bob.

BACK TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- DAY

J.J.
Bob?

ROGER
We follow him as he tries to
reverse the damage.
(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

Save humanity. But one by one,
even the survivors become
fractured, too. Until there's
only one sane man left on the
planet: Bob.

J.J.

We gotta change his name.

ROGER

Then... our hero, starts hearing
voices in his head. At first, we
think he's talking to himself.
But no, his mind... is gone.

J.J.

The last man... loses it?

ROGER

Yes. It's like *2012* meets
Invasion of the Body Snatchers,
but it's mental and scary as shit.
(beat)
What do you think?

J.J.'s quiet. Roger's on pins and needles. J.J. abruptly
stands --

J.J.

Stay right there.

J.J. leaves the office. Roger has no idea what's going on.
Takes a sip of bottled water, scratches his 5-day-old beard.
MOMENTS LATER, J.J. returns with FRANK CORNBLATT, 65.

J.J. (CONT'D)

Plotnik, meet President Cornblatt.

Roger's totally surprised and obviously nervous as hell.

ROGER

Um -- hi. Hello.

Roger stands to shake Cornblatt's hand and drops his bottle
of water on the carpet. Bends to pick it up and knocks his
head on the desk. Stands up and falls over the chair.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO, STREET -- DAY

Roger strolls along. Suddenly, he pumps his fist in the air.

ROGER

Yeah!

ROGER, (V.O.)

Cornblatt bought it in the room.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLYWOOD, KATSU-YA -- NIGHT

Roger and Emily eat at the upscale sushi restaurant.

EMILY

In the room? He just -- what?
Pulled out a checkbook?

ROGER

He told J.J., "do it", then walked
out. Simple as that.

EMILY

So, they're making the movie?

ROGER

First, I need to clear it with
legal, then they need to hire a
director, then someone to update
the script, then cast it. But
other than that, yes.

(beat)

We're totally fucking golden.

EMILY

(skeptical)
That's awesome.
(beat)
Can I read it?

ROGER

Of course.

Roger pulls a script out of his laptop bag.

ROGER (CONT'D)

But beware, it's addictive.

Emily takes the script. As she opens it and flips through
the first few pages, something over Emily's shoulder catches
Roger's eye. His enthusiasm suddenly fades.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Hey, is that guy staring at us?

Emily looks around.

EMILY

What guy?

FROM ROGER'S POV -- The Man With A Scar stares at him, drags his thumb across his throat in the universal sign for "I'm going to kill you", then turns and walks out the door.

ROGER

With a scar on his face. Did you see him?

EMILY

No.

ROGER

He just left. Creepy.

EMILY

Hollywood's full of weirdos.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, STORAGE BUILDING -- DAY

A sliding door is lifted up REVEALING a cavern of dusty old legal files in boxes. Roger's there with a Studio Lawyer MARY, 28, a young woman clearly annoyed at this filthy job.

MARY

1936 is way, way in the back.
You'll have to find the contract yourself. I'm allergic to dust and manual labor.

Mary walks away. Roger takes a couple steps in -- sneezes.

CUT TO:

INT. STORAGE BUILDING -- HOURS LATER

Roger's sweaty and covered with dust. He has dozens of boxes open and sorts through the files. Finally, he gets to one labeled "The Mind Bomb". He pulls it out of the box.

The file is very thin. Looks empty. Roger's heart sinks.

He opens the file. INSIDE -- A single, hand-typed page. Yellow with age and so fragile it looks transparent. On the bottom, a signature: "Boswell Sneed". Roger sneezes.

The paper blows to bits.

ROGER

No!

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, LEGAL AFFAIRS OFFICE -- DAY

Mary examines the ancient page, which has been taped together and placed in a protective sheath. Roger looks over Mary's shoulder. His sweat, runny nose and dust, bugs her.

MARY

Never seen anything like this.

Roger wipes his nose on his sleeve.

ROGER

What is it?

MARY

An agreement to pay Mr. Sneed \$200, a lot of money back then, for the privilege of reading his script. There's no purchase.

(beat)

We don't own it.

ROGER

But... it was in the library?

MARY

Sorry.

Roger's gut-shot. He falls back into a chair. Can't help himself. Cries. After a while, Mary gets uncomfortable.

MARY (CONT'D)

Do you want a tissue?

ROGER

No... yes.

Mary passes him the box. Roger mops his face.

MARY

Look on the bright side.

ROGER

What bright side?

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, GYM -- NIGHT

J.J.
Public domain?

J.J. runs on a treadmill while Roger, who looks a complete mess, delivers the bad news.

ROGER
The script's so old, the owner's
copyright expired. Anyone can
make the movie. So, we're still
good... right?

J.J.
Plotnik, we're not going to spend
\$100 million making a movie based
on a property we don't own.

ROGER
But Cornblatt said, "do it".

J.J.
And he'll say it again.

ROGER
What do you mean?

J.J.
Go back into the library and find
me another script.

ROGER
There is no other script!

J.J.
Are you on coke?

ROGER
No. I'm high off words.

J.J.
Find some other words.
(beat)
By the way, that script you gave
me was missing 30 pages. There
were blank pages. Repeats. If my
secretary gave me a copy like
that, she'd be fired.

ROGER
You read some of it?

J.J.

Yeah. It was fucking great.

J.J.'s workout ends. He gets off the treadmill, walks away. Roger just stands there, looking lost.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO -- NIGHT

Roger shuffles toward the Writer's Building. Defeated.

ROGER (V.O.)

I felt like Sisyphus, doomed to
push the same boulder up the same
hill, repeatedly, forever.

When Roger's about 20 yards from the stairwell that leads down to the Library, he hears a door SLAM. FOOTSTEPS up the stairs. Roger stops. SEES --

The Man With Scar walks out of the stairwell.

ROGER (V.O.)

But my self-pity party was busted
up by the Man With a Scar.

Roger stands, frightened, as the menacing figure struts toward him. Roger NOTICES -- blood on the Man's hands.

That's it. Roger turns and runs.

He looks back, the Man is gone. Roger stops running. Confused, Roger looks around.

The Man is right behind him. Roger GASPS. The Man With a Scar grabs Roger by the throat. Shakes him.

MAN WITH SCAR

Let this be a lesson, boy!

Roger's thrown to the ground. When he looks up --

The Man With a Scar is gone. Roger massages his neck.

ROGER

What the fuck?

CUT TO:

INT. WRITER'S BUILDING, BASEMENT STAIRWELL -- NIGHT

Roger approaches the Library door with trepidation.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- NIGHT

Roger stands in the doorway as the door swings open. What he sees makes him gag. It's horrible.

Jenkins supine on the floor, in a pool of blood, body riddled with stab wounds and an ice pick sticking out of his head.

ROGER

Jenkins.

Roger pulls out his phone. He's about to call 911, when he hesitates. Puts his phone back.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, STACKS -- MOMENTS LATER

Roger grabs a flashlight, opens the trap door. Descends the stairs into the darkness.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, UNDER THE STACKS -- MOMENTS LATER

Roger looks for the original copy of *The Mind Bomb*. Can't find it. He starts pulling scripts off the shelf, frantic.

It's not there.

ROGER (V.O.)

The Mind Bomb was gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. WRITER'S BUILDING -- NIGHT

The place is now overrun with POLICE, DETECTIVES and STUDIO SECURITY. Roger gives testimony to a couple COPS.

ROGER

Aside from the scar? He had short black hair. He was wearing a 3-piece suit, you know, vest and tie. But it was old and worn out. Like he got it at Goodwill.

COP
Did you see which way he ran?

ROGER
No, he just disappeared.

Off the Cops, looking suspicious --

ROGER (CONT'D)
He was choking me. I didn't see.
(beat)
But I saw the guy at Katsu-ya.

COP
The sushi place?

ROGER
Yeah, I'm pretty sure. Last
Friday. Looked like him.

COP
Okay. Stay here. Will you?

The Cops walk to the SGT., talking with DETECTIVE CARTER
(who's reading himself in Roger's script!). Roger listens.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Someone took an ice pick out of
the bar down there and stabbed
this guy, Jenkins, 36 times.
That's why there's so much blood.

CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

DETECTIVE CARTER
Holy shit.

The Detective's Wife stirs awake.

WIFE
What is it, honey?

DETECTIVE CARTER
I remember saying that, exactly.

WIFE
Saying what?

DETECTIVE CARTER
This is freaky. I'm in this.

WIFE

You're in it? Like a character?

DETECTIVE CARTER

Like... me.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD, APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Roger rings the bell. An eyeball peers through the peephole.

EMILY (O.S.)

Roger?

Emily opens the door wearing PJs.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Dude, the way a booty call works
is you're supposed to call first,
so your booty has, like, brushed
teeth and sexy underwear.

Emily notices Roger looks like he's about to pass out.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

ROGER

No.

CUT TO:

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Roger sits on the couch as Emily makes tea.

EMILY

I can't even imagine. The guy
attacked you, too. You're lucky
he didn't have another ice pick.

Emily walks over with the tea. Hands Roger a cup. Sits.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Poor Jenkins. I mean -- why him?

ROGER

Why him?

EMILY

Yeah.

Suddenly, Roger gets up. Starts searching Emily's desk.

EMILY (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

ROGER
That copy of *The Mind Bomb* I gave
you, where is it?

EMILY
Top drawer.

Roger finds the script. Flips through it.

ROGER
J.J. was right. This copy's a
mess. It's half missing.
(as if proving a point)
And someone stole the original
from the Library.

EMILY
What's that got to do with
anything? We were talking about
Jenkins.

ROGER
It's the script!

EMILY
What's the script?

Roger REACTS to the question like he's been gut-shot. Sinks
into the chair. Puts his head in his hands.

ROGER
I don't know.

CUT TO:

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Roger's in bed. Emily snuggles up with him.

EMILY
You're hot.

ROGER
Thanks, I guess. But I'm not in
the mood.

EMILY
Not that, stupid. Your skin. You
feel like you've got a fever.

ROGER
I'm just frustrated... sad.

EMILY
Let yourself sleep.

Roger closes his eyes.

ROGER, (V.O.)
That night, I had an eerie dream.

CUT TO:

INT. MAUSOLEUM, GREAT HALL -- NIGHT (ROGER'S DREAM)

Roger wakes up. He's naked, tied to a marble altar. Around him MEN IN HOODED ROBES CHANT in a language that sounds inhuman. It's spooky as hell. Roger SCREAMS.

The chanting gets louder as the Men draw closer. Roger can't see their faces, just shadows. Then one Figure pulls out a ceremonial dagger. Holds it up. ON THE BLADE -- an image of a hideous monster with a squid-like head and piercing eyes.

Roger stops screaming, begs --

ROGER
Please, no... please!

Roger's throat is slit. Blood oozes from his neck, drains down the altar and mystically turns into fluttering pages of *The Mind Bomb* script.

BACK TO:

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Roger wakes with a start, gasps for air. When he recovers, Roger sneaks out of bed, careful not to wake Emily.

ROGER (V.O.)
I woke up with a mission in mind.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMILY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Roger leaves. He's got the script in hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO, MAIN GATE -- DAY

Roger's in his CAR, a 90s era BMW badly in need of a wash. Waits in a long line of NEWS VANS to get into the Studio.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- DAY

Roger knocks on J.J.'s open door. J.J. looks up. Points to a chair for Roger to sit while he finishes a phone call.

J.J.

(reads Plotnik's coverage)

It was like a cross between
Tootsie and *Flubber*. Just not for
us right now. Okay. Next time.

J.J. hangs up. Throws the script in the recycling bin.

J.J. (CONT'D)

What the fuck Plotnik? Jenkins?
Fucking shitloads of shit.

ROGER

I know.

J.J.

Heard you saw the guy who did it.

ROGER

Yeah. It was scary.

J.J.

Face to face with an ice pick
killer? I would've fucking shit
my pants.

ROGER

I did pee, a bit. He was choking
me. I couldn't help it.

J.J.

Well, the answer is "yes".

ROGER

What?

J.J.

Take all the time you need. This
job will be here for you. As long
as I'm still here.

ROGER
J.J., I had an idea.

J.J.
Shoot.

ROGER
Since *The Mind Bomb's* in the public domain, what if I just rewrite it for you, update it, with a new title... then we give that script to Cornblatt?

J.J. thinks a moment.

J.J.
That's a great idea.

ROGER
You like it?

J.J.
Yes. But you're not a writer Plotnik, you're my coverage guy. We should do a list.

ROGER
A list?

J.J.
Yeah, of writers who would be good for this. We'll audition them.

ROGER
A fucking list?

J.J.
What's wrong, Plotnik?

ROGER
I'm writing this script!

J.J. regards Roger, who looks insane.

J.J.
You can't just --

ROGER
Yes, I can!

Roger storms out. J.J. sighs, exasperated.

J.J.
Fucking talent.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO, PARKING LOT -- DAY

Roger huffs back to his car. J.J. follows him. Calls out --

J.J.
Hold up, Plotnik.

ROGER
What do you want, J.J.?

J.J.
What I was trying to say was -- I can't just let you write this thing on spec. The Writer's Guild would have my head on a platter and if it turns out good, you can fuck me and sell it to anyone.

ROGER
So?

J.J.
I'm going to pay you scale to write it.

ROGER
I'm... a writer/producer?
(beat)
Seriously?

J.J.
I don't fuck around.

Roger hugs J.J.

ROGER
Thank you. Thank you, so much.

J.J.
(totally uncomfortable)
Get off me.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBUCKS -- DAY

Emily works the espresso machine. Roger jumps behind the counter, surprising her --

EMILY

Where'd you go this morning?

ROGER

Sorry. I just had to make my
dreams come true.

Roger kisses Emily. A long embrace. Steam explodes from the espresso machine. CUSTOMERS are annoyed. They keep kissing.

ROGER, (V.O.)

I felt like Richard Gere at the
end of *An Officer and a Gentleman*,
strutting in and sweeping Debra
Winger off her feet.

CUT TO:

INT. ROGER'S STUDIO APARTMENT -- DAY

Roger writes on his laptop. He looks fresh and happy.

The doorbell RINGS. Roger gets up. Pulls out some cash.

ROGER,

Yay, pizza.

Roger opens the door. SEES -- the Man With a Scar, smiling.

ROGER (V.O.)

But my elation was short lived.

Roger slams the door. Backs up, into -- the Man With a Scar
who is now right behind him. Roger jumps.

MAN WITH SCAR

I told you to lay off, boy.

Roger takes a swing at the Man With a Scar, who ducks it,
throws Roger against the door. When Roger looks up -- the
Man With a Scar is gone. The doorbell RINGS.

Roger grabs a knife from the kitchen. Opens the door. The
PIZZA GUY SEES Roger wielding the knife, drops the pizza.
Runs. Roger comes to his senses --

ROGER

Hey, wait. Come back!

CUT TO:

INT. STARBUCKS -- DAY

Roger hangs out in his usual spot, writes. When he looks up, he SEES the Man With a Scar staring at him from behind the counter. Roger's frightened. But when he looks back --

It's just Emily. She's holding up a cup.

ROGER (V.O.)
I thought I was going crazy.

EMILY
Yo, latte fucker. Want this?

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLYWOOD, ANOTHER COFFEE SHOP -- DAY

Roger sits in a dark corner, tries to write but keeps looking around. Paranoid. A GUY IN A VINTAGE SUIT makes him jump. But Roger realizes he's not the Man.

CUT TO:

EXT. COFFEE SHOP -- ANOTHER DAY

Roger exits. Starts walking down the street when a 30's ERA FORD parks in front of him and the Man With a Scar leaps out.

MAN WITH SCAR
We need a talk, boy.

ROGER
Shit.

Roger turns and runs the other way.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BLVD. -- DAY

This is the scene that opened the Script. Roger runs for his life. He dodges PEDESTRIANS, nearly trips over his own feet. Looks back at the Man With a Scar chasing him. Runs.

After sprinting his guts out, Roger, desperate, turns into --

CUT TO:

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT -- CONTINUOUS

Roger bursts in the door. The LUNCH CROWD looks at this sweaty guy with a laptop bag, gasping for air.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT, BACK DOOR -- DAY

Roger flies out the rear entrance into an alley. Disappears. A moment later, the Man With a Scar steps out of the door. Looks around. There are lots of escape routes.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOUNTAIN AVE. -- DAY

Still sprinting, Roger gets to his car, fumbles with the keys, hops in, hits the bumper of the car behind him as he pulls away from the curb and drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD, STREET -- DAY

Roger speeds down the road.

CUT TO:

INT. ROGER'S CAR, TRAVELING -- DAY

Roger drives. He's on his cell with 911.

ROGER

Yes. He keeps appearing,
threatening me, then he just
vanishes. He looks like Ralph
Meeker, but with a scar on his
face. Ralph Meeker -- the actor.
Kiss Me Deadly. Paths of Glory.
He was one of the Dirty Dozen.
Don't you watch movies? No!

Roger throws down his phone.

ROGER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The cops were useless. I couldn't
go back to my apartment. The
killer knew where I lived.

Roger SEES -- the Man With a Scar on the side of the road.

He passes him. Then the Man With a Scar appears again.

He passes him. Then the Man With a Scar appears again.

He passes him. Then the Man With a Scar appears again.

Roger turns towards the Man. He's going to run him over.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD, STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Roger runs his car over the curb, airbags deploy as he demolishes a glass-covered bus stop and smashes into a lamp post, where the car stops. Roger gets out. Looks around.

The Man With a Scar is gone. As PEOPLE come over to check out the accident, Roger grabs his bag and phone and runs.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD MOTEL -- DAY

One of the ubiquitous motels that line the boulevard.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM -- DAY

Roger chains the door, closes the drapes. He looks around the empty room. He's alone. Breathes a sigh of relief.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Roger types on his laptop. He looks intense. Possessed.

Roger's cell phone RINGS. He looks at the ID. Emily. Roger ignores the call. Goes back to work.

ROGER (V.O.)

I took a break from writing *The Mind Bomb* to bang this out, these scribbles from my Hollywood nightmare. It took a few days.

(beat)

Now, I'm back to *The Bomb*.

Suddenly, the Man With a Scar appears on the screen of his laptop. Roger rears back but the Man REACHES THROUGH THE SCREEN and grabs him by the throat. Roger's eyes -- panic!

ROGER,

Who the hell are you?

MAN WITH SCAR
Boswell.

Roger strains against Boswell's strong grip, then --
Roger is YANKED into the computer screen.
We HOLD on the empty room a moment.

CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, BEDROOM -- DAY

Carter closes the script. He's finished. The ALARM CLOCK goes off. It's 6:45 a.m. His Wife wakes up.

WIFE
You've been reading all night?

Carter seems a little surprised himself.

DETECTIVE CARTER
I guess, I have.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBUCKS -- DAY

Emily buses tables. Carter walks up.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Can we talk?

CUT TO:

EXT. STARBUCKS -- DAY

Emily and Carter talk by the outdoor tables.

EMILY
I never read *The Mind Bomb*. Roger took back the copy he gave me.

DETECTIVE CARTER
I'd like to get my hands on it.

EMILY
So Roger's diary was...

DETECTIVE CARTER
Out there, yeah. I can't tell fact from fiction.

Carter pulls the script from his briefcase.

DETECTIVE CARTER (CONT'D)
 Emily, could you read it? See if
 it rings any bells as to where he
 might have gone?

Emily hesitates, then takes it.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, FORENSIC COMPUTER OFFICE -- DAY

The Computer Specialist has Roger's laptop dissected on a
 workbench. He looks excited. Carter listens.

COMPUTER SPECIALIST
 So, no *Mind Bomb* script on here.
 Plenty of references to it in that
 diary you found. But I bumped
 into this file that was deleted.

He presses some keys and a document pops up on screen. It's
 all computer language gibberish.

DETECTIVE CARTER
 What is it?

COMPUTER SPECIALIST
 A script called "*My MB*".

DETECTIVE CARTER
My Mind Bomb.

COMPUTER SPECIALIST
 That's what I thought. Now, watch
 what happens when I translate this
 into readable language.

He presses more keys. The document turns into a script.

DETECTIVE CARTER
 (reads)
 "Fade in. Int., Roger's
 Apartment, Night. Roger types in
 his laptop. Roger: I'm Bob. I'm
 bob. I'm Bob. I'm Bob. I'm Bob.
 I'm Bob." It goes on like that?

COMPUTER SPECIALIST
 It's 256 pages of "I'm Bob", then
 he deletes it. Weird, huh?

DETECTIVE CARTER
 Bob's the name of the main
 character in *The Mind Bomb*.

COMPUTER SPECIALIST
So, this kid's obsessed.

CUT TO:

SOMEONE WRITES THE NAME "BOSWELL SNEED" ON A SIGN-IN SHEET

WE ARE:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

BRODIE LYNCH, 31, a big-time writer wearing a typical big-time writer outfit: Che Guevara T-shirt, sport coat, baseball cap, signs in. The RECEPTIONIST looks at his name, calls --

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- DAY

J.J. sneaks a cigarette, blows smoke out an open window. He looks preoccupied. Over an intercom --

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)
J.J., Boswell Sneed is here.

J.J.
(to himself)
Fucking Brodie.
(to Receptionist)
Send him in.

J.J. drops the cigarette in a can of Diet Coke and pops an Altoid. Brodie walks in. J.J. shakes his hand.

J.J. (CONT'D)
Hey, Brodie, good to see you.
Glad you've got a take on this.
Have a seat.

Brodie sits. J.J. sits near him.

J.J. (CONT'D)
Anything to drink?

BRODIE
No.

J.J.
Crazy story. I was going to give this gig to my coverage guy who found the script in the Library. Give the kid a shot. Genius reader. Cornblatt thinks every word he writes is gold.

BRODIE

Really?

J.J.

Yeah, but... he disappeared. He's a missing person. Cops think he went nuts. Can you believe that?

BRODIE

Yes.

J.J.

And then we had that murder, also in the Library. Guy who ran it.

BRODIE

Peter Jenkins. I know.

J.J.

Sure you heard. It was all over the news.

BRODIE

I killed him. Damn drunk wouldn't keep his nose outta my business.

J.J. isn't sure what to make of the rude comment.

J.J.

Brodie, that's not funny.

BRODIE

I'm done with small talk.

J.J. sighs. He's having second thoughts about this writer.

J.J.

Okay. Kibbitz over. Pitch time. Honestly, I can't get this script out of my head. And I've only read 50 random pages.

BRODIE

Neither can I.

J.J.

What have you got for me, Brodie?

BRODIE

A .32 caliber.

J.J.

A .32 caliber what?

BRODIE

And I'm not Brodie, I'm Boswell.

J.J.

I get it. You're a "method" writer, channeling the guy who wrote this. Very creative.

Brodie leans in. From J.J.'s POV -- he suddenly looks like Boswell, with a scar on his face and a menacing grin...

J.J. tries to shake off the vision but it stays.

BRODIE

First, you rats steal my work. Then, you try to hire this hack to rewrite me? Shame on you, boy.

Brodie pulls out a pistol. J.J. doesn't believe his eyes.

J.J.

I need a Xanax. I think I'm having a stress attack.

BRODIE

No, you're having revenge.

Brodie shoots J.J. 5 times in the chest. Kills him. Then, he puts the gun to his own head. BLAM.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, CARTER'S CUBICLE -- DAY

Carter Google searches "Boswell Sneed". Comes up with a news article from *The Los Angeles Evening Express*.

Carter clicks and the headline shocks him.

DETECTIVE CARTER

Whoa.

ON SCREEN -- "Great War Veteran, Boswell Sneed, 47, Murdered in Strange Occult Ritual". There's a GRUESOME PHOTO of Boswell dead on a marble altar in a mausoleum with his throat slit. It looks exactly like the image Roger had of himself in his "strange dream" Carter read in Roger's diary.

DETECTIVE CARTER (CONT'D)

That's the dream scene.

Bryce walks up, peeks over his shoulder --

DETECTIVE BRYCE
 (jokes re: photo on
 screen)
 A World War One vet? That stiff's
 way too old to be your skip, bro.

DETECTIVE CARTER
 They're connected.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
 How are they connected?

The phone RINGS. Carter picks up.

DETECTIVE CARTER
 Carter.
 (listens)
 For real?

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- DAY

Carter and Bryce examine the bloody murder/suicide scene,
 along with CSI COPS.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
 So, this shooter, Brodie, signed
 in as Boswell Sneed, who was the
 stiff with the scar and his throat
 slit in that old photo who wrote
The Mind Bomb, who this Plotnik
 kid claimed was trying to kill him
 and also did Jenkins?

DETECTIVE CARTER
 Yeah.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
 It's haunted fucking Hollywood.

Carter spots *The Mind Bomb* script on J.J.'s desk. Picks it
 up. Flips through it. NOTICES -- missing pages.

DETECTIVE CARTER
 Just like the diary said.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
 What?

DETECTIVE CARTER
 This copy's crap.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, CONFERENCE ROOM -- LATER

The Detectives interview people of interest.

RECEPTIONIST

He just looked so... normal. Just signed in like a normal person.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, CONFERENCE ROOM -- LATER

J.J.'S SECRETARY

(sobbing)

Why would anyone do this? Why?

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, CONFERENCE ROOM -- LATER

MARY

I thought this might be important.

Mary slides a copy of the one-page *The Mind Bomb* deal memo across the table. The Detectives examine it.

MARY (CONT'D)

The only paperwork we have on *The Mind Bomb* and Boswell Sneed. Roger Plotnik dug it out of deep storage before he disappeared.

DETECTIVE BRYCE

(reading)

What's this mean, "dictated, but not read. B.S."?

MARY

B.S. is Betty Schwartz, who was Mr. Rosen's secretary and signed for him.

DETECTIVE CARTER

Either of them still alive?

MARY

I thought you would ask, so I looked it up. Mr. Rosen died a couple weeks after doing this deal. Drove his Packard off a bridge into the L.A. River.

DETECTIVE CARTER

Accident?

MARY

Or suicide. It's not clear.
 (beat)
 Miss Schwartz is still alive.
 She's now Mrs. Finkle and lives in
 a house on Sunset Boulevard.

DETECTIVE BRYCE

Like Gloria Swanson?

MARY

Who?

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, CONFERENCE ROOM -- LATER

CORNBLATT

... and if you do find Roger, tell
 him I still want his rewrite of
 that script.

DETECTIVE CARTER

So, you've read *The Mind Bomb*?

CORNBLATT

Just a few pages.

DETECTIVE CARTER

A few?

CORNBLATT

My copy was messed up, but Plotnik
 pitched it to me and he had such
 passion. I'll tell you, Plotnik
 was J.J.'s secret weapon. His
 opinion on scripts was very keen.
 I really want to read what he
 writes. Make a movie.

The Detectives regard each other, impressed.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO, MAIN STREET -- DAY

The Detectives walk past POLICE and NEWS CREWS.

DETECTIVE BRYCE

You know, about 5 years ago, I
 took a screenwriting class at the
 Learning Annex.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Really? You write about homicide?

DETECTIVE BRYCE
Nah, never wrote a thing. Didn't have the discipline. But once the teacher said, and it really stuck with me -- outa all the thousands of clowns and assholes running around this town pretending to be big shot producers, there's only 9 or 10 who can actually green-light a movie. Cornblatt's one of them.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Guess you're right.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
So, this kid who spent his whole life trying to make it as a writer, finally gets a deal with one of those guys, then skips...

DETECTIVE CARTER
He must've been scared shitless.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
Yeah.

The Detectives walk by the Writer's Building. There's still crime scene tape blocking the stairwell.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Hey, let's check the Library. Try to find *The Mind Bomb*.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, STACKS -- DAY

Carter grabs a flashlight. Yanks open the trap door.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, UNDER THE STACKS -- DAY

The Detectives descend the stairs, into the dark catacombs.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
What is this place?

DETECTIVE CARTER
They built the Library over Douglas Fairbanks' swimming pool.
(MORE)

DETECTIVE CARTER (CONT'D)
The really old scripts are down
here.

Carter shines his flashlight on the ROTTING CORPSE SKELETON.
Bryce shrieks!

DETECTIVE BRYCE
What the fuck!

DETECTIVE CARTER
(snickers)
Gets 'em every time.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, UNDER THE STACKS -- DAY

The Detectives search the area marked "1936". They're
sweaty. Looks like they've been at it a while.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Plotnik was right. No *Mind Bomb*.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
I'm parched. Let's hit that bar.

Just then, the flashlight flickers and dies. They're lost in
the dark. A moment of panic, then they turn on their cell
phones. Just enough light to see a few feet.

DETECTIVE BRYCE (CONT'D)
There better not be any Mummies
down here.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, BAR -- NIGHT

The Detectives open cans of soda. Drink. They're blase
about the giant mess of dried blood around them.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
So, we've got 2 murders, one perp
a suicide and a missing person,
all connected by this script.

Carter yawns. Looks at his watch.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Man, I've been up 38 hours.

Suddenly, Bryce punches him in the arm.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
 Jackpot, bro.

DETECTIVE CARTER
 What?

DETECTIVE BRYCE
 Look.

DETECTIVE CARTER
 Where?

DETECTIVE BRYCE
 The blood where Jenkins was belly-
 up. There's an outline like a
 script right under where his back
 would've been.

Carter examines the blood. Sure enough, there's a neat,
 rectangular outline the size of a script.

DETECTIVE CARTER
 Maybe --

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, BAR -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

*DETECTIVE CARTER (V.O.)
 -- Jenkins was reading The Mind
 Bomb when the killer came in?*

*Jenkins is engrossed reading the original The Mind Bomb
 script. Boswell appears, looking menacing.*

*JENKINS
 (startled)
 Boswell?*

*BOSWELL
 I warned you old sot, stay away.*

*Boswell grabs the ice pick and leaps over the bar, stabbing
 Jenkins. In the fracas, the script gets knocked to the floor
 and Jenkins falls on it. The savage attack continues...*

BACK TO:

INT. LIBRARY, BAR -- NIGHT

DETECTIVE BRYCE
That script wasn't stolen. It's
locked up in our evidence room.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, EVIDENCE LOCK-UP, GATE -- NIGHT

DETECTIVE BRYCE
(to DESK CLERK)
My partner's gonna kill me for
jumping the gun, but this lead is
just too juicy not to follow.

The Desk Clerk presses the BUZZER. Bryce walks through.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, EVIDENCE LOCK-UP -- NIGHT

Bryce pulls bags of blood-stained clothes out of an evidence box. He finds the ice pick. There's a bloody hula girl on the handle. He grimaces.

At the bottom of the box, Bryce finds the script. *The Mind Bomb* by Boswell Sneed.

DETECTIVE BRYCE
Jackpot.

He puts on latex gloves, opens the plastic bag and pulls out the bloody manuscript. It seems to shimmer in his hands.

Bryce sits, reads...

CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

It's 12:58. Carter is deep asleep. His cell phone RINGS. His Wife isn't pleased about the call.

WIFE
This job's going to give you a
heart attack.

Groggy, Carter picks it up.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Emily's at the desk, on the phone. Roger's diary in front of her. She's emotional, was just crying.

EMILY
Detective, it's Emily Choy. Hope
I'm not calling too late.

BACK TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

DETECTIVE CARTER
(exhausted)
Nah. What's up?

BACK TO:

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

EMILY
I just finished reading Roger's
diary. He left out a big scene.

CUT TO:

INT. MAUSOLEUM, GREAT HALL -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Roger runs his hands along the marble altar where Boswell was sacrificed. Emily looks around at the creepy place.

EMILY
Why are we here? I thought we
were going to Umami Burger. This
isn't cool. It's disrespectful to
the dead. Roger?

Roger doesn't respond. It's like he's in a trance.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Say something. You've barely said
5 words since we got in the car.

Roger starts to CHANT in a language that sounds inhuman. Just like the Men in Hooded Robes from his dream.

Emily's freaked out. Pushes Roger --

EMILY (CONT'D)
Stop it! What the -- how are you
even doing that?

Roger turns to Emily, keeps chanting. His eyes roll up into his head, so his eye sockets just show white.

Emily SCREAMS. Runs.

BACK TO:

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

EMILY

Freaked the shit out of me. I took a bus home. Later, Roger claimed he didn't remember any of it. Total amnesia.

(beat)

And now that I know about his dream, and it's all over the news how Roger's boss J.J. got murdered today, and I'm... I just...

CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

DETECTIVE CARTER

I know. It's all very bizarre.

There's a BEEP on the phone line.

DETECTIVE CARTER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Emily. Hang on. I've got another call.

(changes lines)

Yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, EVIDENCE LOCK-UP -- NIGHT

A SERGEANT DIAZ, 35, is on the phone.

SERGEANT DIAZ

Carter, we need you down here at the station, pinche pronto.

DETECTIVE CARTER (O.S., PHONE)

Why?

REVEAL -- Bryce is on the floor with *The Mind Bomb* script rolled up and crammed down his throat. Dead.

SERGEANT DIAZ
Just get down here.

CUT TO:

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE --

Bryce reads *The Mind Bomb* at a table in the Evidence Room. He's interrupted by an INVISIBLE FORCE that grabs him by the collar and yanks him out of his chair.

He pulls out his gun but the force slaps it out of his hand. Bryce fights the force but on the video, it looks like he's fighting with himself. A manic shadow boxer.

After a knockdown brawl Bryce is flat out on the floor. Then, amazingly, the script on the table rolls itself up, flies into Bryce's mouth and gets crammed down his throat.

WE ARE:

INT. POLICE STATION, VIDEO PLAYBACK AREA -- NIGHT

Carter and a couple COPS watch the video, horrified and speechless. Sergeant Diaz ejects the dvd and cracks it in half. Throws it away.

SERGEANT DIAZ
Don't want that madness ending up
on YouTube.

DETECTIVE CARTER
So, officially...

SERGEANT DIAZ
He's a suicide. Pobre hermano.

COP
I can't believe my own eyes.

COP #2
What the hell is that script?

DETECTIVE CARTER
Cursed.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE -- NIGHT

It takes both Cops and Carter to pry the script out of Bryce's throat. When they get it free, it's dripping in goo. Everyone's repulsed, except the CORONER.

CORONER

That's blood, vomit, teeth,
saliva, mucus and viscera.

DETECTIVE CARTER

Yeah, we didn't need to know that.

CUT TO:

EXT. MORGUE -- NIGHT

Carter throws the script into a trash can. Sergeant Diaz pours in some gasoline and a lit match. WHOOSH. The title page burns. *The Mind Bomb* incinerates.

DETECTIVE CARTER

3 days ago, I would've given my
left nut to read that script. I
was that curious about it. Now, I
feel like I've dodged a bullet.

CUT TO:

INT. DOWNTOWN, TENEMENT APARTMENT -- DAY (1936)

Roger sleeps on a dirty couch. He looks ill, stirs fitfully like he's having a nightmare. He wakes with a gasp.

Looks around. Where the hell is he?

A small room with soiled wallpaper, tattered furniture and manuscripts piled high everywhere.

Roger gets up. Looks at the titles. Every hand-typed script is "Written by Boswell Sneed". There must be hundreds.

On the wall, a single OIL PAINTING of the same hideous monster with a squid-like head and piercing eyes Roger saw in his dream. The painting is signed by "Betty Schwartz".

In a KITCHEN AREA, Roger finds roaches crawling over filthy dishes. A typewriter sits on a table with a near-empty bottle of whiskey and an ashtray full of cigar butts.

Roger opens a window shade and SEES -- a FRACTURED VIEW of 1936 Downtown L.A. It looks like a moving cubist painting.

ROGER

Ahh!

He covers his eyes and closes the shade. Realizes, he's thirsty. Turns on the sink. Brown water gurgles out.

Repulsed, Roger turns it off. He opens the refrigerator. We don't see what's inside, but whatever it is, Roger slams the door closed and for a moment, looks like he's going to puke.

Roger goes to the door. Tries to open it. It's locked from the outside. He shakes the knob. Pounds on the door.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Let me out of here! Boswell, let
me out! Boswell! Boswell!

Roger pounds until he's exhausted. Slumps to the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBUCKS -- DAY

It's the morning rush. In a SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS, Emily makes latte after latte. She calls people for pick up.

EMILY
Veronica latte. Greg latte. Mike
latte. Sue latte. Jim latte.

The stress builds.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Roger latte.

Emily starts crying. Under her breath --

EMILY (CONT'D)
Latte fucker. Latte fucker...

Emily breaks down. Walks off. Her fellow BARISTA takes over the latte load. She knows what's wrong.

BARISTA
Don't worry, Emily. He's okay.
He'll come back.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BLVD. -- DAY

Carter drives down a winding part of the boulevard with many big mansions. He turns into the long driveway of a SPOOKY OLD HOUSE that looks like a ruined castle.

CUT TO:

EXT. BETTY SCHWARTZ'S MANSION -- DAY

Carter approaches the front door with trepidation. This place is creepy. He rings the bell and the LOUD BONG makes him jump. He laughs at himself.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Keep it together, Carter.

A surprisingly beautiful elderly lady answers the door. She is BETTY SCHWARTZ, 97. Carter shows his badge.

DETECTIVE CARTER (CONT'D)
Good afternoon, ma'am. I'm
Detective Carter, LAPD. I'm
looking for Betty Schwartz.

BETTY
That was my name, 75 years ago. I
go by Finkle now. But, handsome
detectives can call me Betty.

Carter smiles. This lady's a character.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Okay, Betty. I'd like to ask you
some questions about Boswell
Sneed, if you remember him.

BETTY
Boswell Sneed was a lovely man.

CUT TO:

INT. BETTY SCHWARTZ'S MANSION -- DAY

Betty leads Carter through the FOYER into the DEN. They pass a SEXY GOTH GIRL in a French maid outfit painting her nails.

BETTY
He was a gifted writer. But, like
so many talented artists in
Tinseltown, he never got a break.
Pity for the world, really.

Carter looks around. The house is just as creepy inside as it is outside. It's like Vincent Price was the interior decorator. Carter HEARS a rat scurry across the floor.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Would you like a cup of tea?

DETECTIVE CARTER
No. Thanks.

Betty leads Carter to a small couch. He sits. Then, she takes a seat next to him. Close. Carter's uncomfortable.

DETECTIVE CARTER (CONT'D)
Where's Mr. Finkle?

BETTY
Dead. I killed him.

DETECTIVE CARTER
What?

BETTY
13 years ago, we were having sex
and I gave him a heart attack.

DETECTIVE CARTER
I see.

Betty smiles.

DETECTIVE CARTER (CONT'D)
What can you tell me about a
script of Sneed's called *The Mind
Bomb*?

BETTY
It's a masterpiece.

DETECTIVE CARTER
You read it?

BETTY
Many times. My late husband was
acquainted with Boswell through a
social club. He read it and
passed the script to me, so I
could show it to my boss at the
studio. Mr. Rosen was possessed
by it. He sent it down to the
typing pool to have copies made.
But, it disappeared. We thought
it was stolen. Boswell was irate.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- DAY (1936)

On the desk, there are many baskets with different labels. *The Mind Bomb* script is accidentally put in the basket labeled "Library", which is next to the basket labeled "Typing". A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT carries the script away.

BACK TO:

INT. BETTY SCHWARTZ'S MANSION -- DAY

BETTY

By the time I figured out what happened, both Boswell and Mr. Rosen were dead and I was let go from my job and had no access to the studio library.

DETECTIVE CARTER

When you say "social club", you're referring to the Satanic cult that murdered Boswell?

BETTY

He wasn't murdered, he sacrificed himself for a higher purpose.

DETECTIVE CARTER

What purpose?

BETTY

To serve Our Lord: Cthulu.

DETECTIVE CARTER

Kazooloo?

BETTY

Cthulu.

Betty points to one of her paintings of the now familiar hideous monster on the wall.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Him.

Carter laughs.

DETECTIVE CARTER

That's your Lord? Are you kidding? Looks like Godzilla's cousin.

Betty flashes Carter a stern expression.

BETTY

He controls the dreams of Man. Delusion, reality, sanity, all His domain. *The Mind Bomb* is a tribute to His Power and Glory.

DETECTIVE CARTER

I'd like to see Kazooloo fight King Kong.

BETTY

Detective.

Carter looks at Betty. Her eyes are now like SWIRLING WHIRLPOOLS. Carter stops laughing. He is hypnotized.

DETECTIVE CARTER

Yes.

BETTY

I'm going to make you believe.

We PUSH IN on Carter's pupils, reflecting Betty's whirlpools.

SPIN OUT TO:

INT. BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN -- NIGHT

Carter sinks into the dark depths. A dead man. Suddenly, his eyes open. He thrashes around, holding his breath. Terrified. How the hell did he get here?

He falls until he comes to a GIANT STONE TOMB that looks like an ancient Greek temple. Carter hovers, in awe.

The great doors open. CTHULU emerges. So massive, we never see his entire body. Carter's panic stricken.

He tries to swim away, but Cthulu grabs Carter with one of his many tentacles. Carter's almost out of air. Struggles.

Cthulu brings Carter near. They're face to face.

Carter loses it. Exhales. Starts gasping water. As Carter drowns, Cthulu emits an inhuman wail that sounds like SUPER-SONIC EVIL LAUGHTER. The veins in Carter's head pop out.

His face, a mask of pure primal FEAR.

A split-second before Carter dies, we --

CUT TO:

INT. BETTY SCHWARTZ'S MANSION, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Carter screams. He's naked, in bed, making love with Betty.

He comes to his senses just as he orgasms. Holy shit!

BETTY

My, my, Detective.

Carter jumps out of the bed. Realizes he's exposed. Grabs a pillow and covers his junk.

BETTY (CONT'D)
 You sure felt like a Believer to
 me.

DETECTIVE CARTER
 What the fuck? How did I -- we?

Carter winces, stumbles back against the wall. Reeling.

DETECTIVE CARTER (CONT'D)
 Damn, I can still hear that
 monster in my head -- laughing.

BETTY
 The Voice. Lovely, isn't it?

As Carter throws on his clothes, shoes, gun --

DETECTIVE CARTER
 What are you, a Witch?

BETTY
 I'm a Priestess. Tell me more
 about this Roger Plotnik.

DETECTIVE CARTER
 I told you about Plotnik?

BETTY
 You know, pillow talk, sweetie.

DETECTIVE CARTER
 I'm out of my mind.

BETTY
 Cthulu does that to people.

Carter runs out the door. Down a rickety staircase.

BETTY (CONT'D)
 Nice meeting you, Detective.

CUT TO:

EXT. BETTY SCHWARTZ'S MANSION -- NIGHT

Carter peels down the driveway, fishtails onto Sunset Blvd.

CUT TO:

INT. DOWNTOWN, TENEMENT APARTMENT -- DAY (1936)

Roger's reading one of the myriad manuscripts when the door
 opens. Boswell enters, carrying a paper bag from a deli.

BOSWELL
You're awake.

WE SEE -- Roger has his eye on a heavy glass ashtray on a table nearby. A weapon. When Boswell turns to flip on a light, Roger grabs the ashtray and rushes Boswell.

ROGER
HIYA --

Boswell turns and punches Roger in the chin, sends him falling back into the couch he just got off. Roger gets up, but he's so dizzy from being hit, he falls back again.

BOSWELL
(laughs)
9, 10 -- you're out.

ROGER
What is this place?

BOSWELL
It's like Limbo in my imagination.

ROGER
Why is it so... swirly, outside?

BOSWELL
Cubism. Surrealism. That's how I see the world. My reality.

Roger looks frightened as Boswell sits down, pulls a couple of sandwiches and Cokes from the deli bag.

BOSWELL (CONT'D)
Bet you're hungry.

Boswell opens one of the sandwiches. Takes a big bite.

BOSWELL (CONT'D)
Nothing like tongue on rye.
(off Roger, terrified)
Come on, eat, Plotnik. You don't want your body, wherever it is, to waste away.

We think Roger's going to be grossed out, but he is starving.

ROGER
That's beef tongue?

BOSWELL
Oh, yeah.

ROGER
My grandparents ate that.

Roger picks up the other sandwich. Takes a bite. Not bad.
He takes another bite. Boswell looks pleased.

BOSWELL
You're alright, boy.

ROGER
How did I get here?

BOSWELL
I dragged you, by your mind.

ROGER
Why?

BOSWELL
I got plans for you. Us.

ROGER
I thought you wanted to kill me.

Boswell cracks off the bottle caps on the Cokes. They're not
twist-off caps. He's just really strong. Hands one to
Roger. Changes the subject --

BOSWELL
(Re: the script on the
table)
You're reading *Paranoia Farm*. How
do you like it?

ROGER
You care about my opinion?

BOSWELL
Yes. You're the studio brain.

ROGER
It's interesting.

BOSWELL
Interesting? That sounds like an
insult.

ROGER
No. I also read *Wicked Heart* and
The Man From Dimension Seven. All
great. Twisted. Very original.

(beat)

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

And I'm not just saying that because you've got me scared shitless.

BOSWELL

Thank you.

ROGER

Ever sell one of these?

BOSWELL

I tried. Got a hill of rejection letters. Then I got *The Mind Bomb* ripped off. Hollywood fuckers.

ROGER

Ripped off?

BOSWELL

They kept my only copy.

ROGER

Guess there weren't any Xerox machines in the 30s.

BOSWELL

So, I cursed it with my soul.

ROGER

Your murder, by that cult...

BOSWELL

Wasn't a murder. It was a glorious passing of my essence into a guardian spirit. So, anyone who reads my script needs to answer to me.

ROGER

But, why... Jenkins?

BOSWELL

I don't suffer fools.

ROGER

Have there been others?

BOSWELL

Many.

ROGER

What's your plan for me?

Boswell leans in. Roger's fear is palpable.

BOSWELL

Word is President of the studio
thinks you're the bee's knees.

ROGER

He, um... respects my opinion.

BOSWELL

All these years, I've been
knocking off or driving loopy
anyone who dared read *The Mind
Bomb*, but given your talent, now
I'm seeing things differently.

(beat)

How'd you like to collaborate?

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT

Roger's comatose, hooked up to monitoring machines. His eyes
open. The machines BEEP like crazy. A NURSE rushes in.
Turns off the noise. Turns to Roger --

NURSE

How do you feel?

ROGER

Groggy.

NURSE

You came in a few days ago with a
107 degree fever. Delirious. We
tried to stabilize you, but you
slipped into a coma. Remember?

ROGER

No.

NURSE

What's your name?

ROGER

Huh?

NURSE

You didn't have an I.D. when you
were admitted.

ROGER

I don't understand...

NURSE

The police found you wandering around Hollywood in your underwear. Probably took your clothes off because you were burning up.

ROGER

My name is Roger.

The Nurse turns to a marker board and erases the name "John Doe #5498" and writes "Roger".

NURSE

Roger what, honey?

CUT TO:

INT. CARTER'S HOUSE, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Carter's Wife and Daughters eat dinner, engrossed in a TV SHOW. Carter sits, looks despondent. He keeps wincing, like he's got a nervous tick. His Wife notices.

WIFE

You okay, Mike?
(off his lack of response)
Mike? Mike?

DETECTIVE CARTER

What?

WIFE

Are you alright?

DETECTIVE CARTER

I still hear The Voice.

WIFE

What voice? Mike? Mike?

Carter's phone RINGS. After a few, he picks up --

DETECTIVE CARTER

Yeah. Plotnik? Where?

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT

Emily sits on the bed with Roger. She kisses him.

ROGER

I feel like Sleeping Beauty,
awoken by the kiss of a super-hot
Princess.

EMILY

I'm just glad you didn't... end up
like Jenkins and J.J.

ROGER

J.J.'s dead?

EMILY

He was murdered by a writer named
Brodie Max, who killed himself
after he shot J.J.

ROGER

Oh, my God. That's horrible.

EMILY

They were meeting about *The Mind
Bomb*, Roger.

Roger's quiet a moment, then --

ROGER

J.J. was going to give my fucking
movie to Brodie Max?

EMILY

He's dead, dude.

Roger realizes he's being insensitive, pulls back.

ROGER

Sorry, I think I'm in shock.

EMILY

And you didn't lose the job.
Cornblatt called me twice to see
if you were back yet. He still
wants you to write the script.

(beat)

He sounds obsessed.

ROGER

Really? That's... wow.

Emily's eyes well with tears.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Hey, what's wrong?

EMILY
All this *Mind Bomb* shit is
freaking me out.

Just then, Carter enters the room. He looks insane. Sweaty and twitching. Roger and Emily regard him, apprehensively.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Detective Carter?

ROGER
You know him?

EMILY
He's the Detective who was trying
to find you.

DETECTIVE CARTER
(to Roger, accusingly)
What do you know about Cthulu?

EMILY
Say what?

ROGER
Cthulu? Why?

Carter pulls out his gun, aims it at Roger. Emily shrieks.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Just answer the question!

EMILY
Jesus -- fuck!

ROGER
Okay. Cthulu is an evil mythical
God invented by H.P. Lovecraft in
a bunch of amazing short stories
he wrote in the 1920s.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Cthulu's no myth. And Boswell
Sneed worshipped him.

ROGER
That's... possible. He had a
painting of Cthulu on the wall of
his apartment.

EMILY
How do you know that?

ROGER
I saw it, in a dream.

DETECTIVE CARTER
You're not getting away with this,
Plotnik. I'm stopping you!

ROGER
Getting away with what?

DETECTIVE CARTER
The Mind Bomb is some kind of
incantation to usher in a new era
of Cthulu's power over humanity.

Carter grips his gun more tightly, making Roger nervous.

DETECTIVE CARTER (CONT'D)
Isn't it? Isn't it!?!

ROGER
No, man. It's just a script, just
a really, really good script.

Carter's twitching gets more intense, but he fights through
it, realizes --

DETECTIVE CARTER
You don't know. They're using
you. You're a God damn patsy.

SERGEANT DIAZ
Drop your weapon, pendejo.

They turn. SEE -- Diaz in the doorway, his gun on Carter.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Diaz, what are you doing here?

SERGEANT DIAZ
I brought the kid's laptop and
phone. Plus, I read his diary. I
wanted to talk about Bryce.

EMILY
What happened to Detective Bryce?

SERGEANT DIAZ
Pinche loco cosa. He got murdered
-- I mean, committed suicide,
while reading *The Mind Bomb*.

Emily turns to Roger --

EMILY
(scared)
More *Mind Bomb* death, dude.

DETECTIVE CARTER
It ends with you, Plotnik. His
Voice in my head -- SHUT UP!

Carter raises his gun. Roger instinctively covers Emily. Diaz SHOOTs Carter in the chest, which blasts him back against the wall. Carter SHOOTs Diaz in the head, killing him. Then, Carter slides to the floor.

A NURSE in the hallway, SCREAMS and runs --

NURSE (O.S.)
Call security!

Carter tries to lift his gun, but he's too weak.

DETECTIVE CARTER
Don't write that script, Plotnik.
You have no idea... the madness...

Carter fires a FEW SHOTS into the floor, then dies.

Roger and Emily hold each other, shaking. A couple of extremely nervous SECURITY GUARDS enter, guns drawn.

SECURITY GUARD
Nobody move!

Off Roger and Emily, petrified...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

ON A COMPUTER SCREEN --

We read the words as they're typed.

"FADE IN:

INT. STARBUCKS -- DAY

Roger stares at his laptop. Totally blocked. Unable to write."

WE ARE:

INT. STARBUCKS -- DAY

Roger stares at his laptop. Totally blocked. Unable to write. He sighs, frustrated. Looks around, SEES --

Emily making coffees. Ten other SCREENWRITERS clicking away at laptops. A few READERS reading scripts.

Roger closes his laptop. Sips his latte.

CUT TO:

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Roger and Emily are asleep. A strong hand clutches Roger's throat. He startles awake. It's Boswell.

BOSWELL

Been a week and you ain't written a word, boy.

ROGER

I'm having second thoughts about collaborating.

BOSWELL

Better get over them, or I'll snap your neck like a twig.

Roger summons all his courage. Responds, defiant --

ROGER

You know, I've been self-absorbed my entire life. For once, I'm going to do something, as Jenkins used to say, "for the good of humanity."

BOSWELL

What are you yapping about?

ROGER

That insane Detective -- Cthulu's plan -- it's you! If you can haunt the mind of anyone who reads your script, you could haunt the minds of the millions of people who see the movie made from it.

Boswell's busted. Plays it off.

BOSWELL

So what? I'm not that bad once you get to know me.

ROGER
 Fuck *The Mind Bomb*. I quit.

Boswell's eyes flash with anger. He reaches back to slap Roger, when Roger instinctively punches Boswell in the nose. It's a hard shot that draws blood. Roger's surprised.

ROGER (CONT'D)
 You bleed?

Boswell grins. He likes fighting.

BOSWELL
 If you can catch me. Now, I wanna see my name up on the silver screen, boy. No pansy excuses.

He crushes Roger's windpipe. Roger bolts up, clutching his throat -- SCREAMING! Emily shoots awake, comforts Roger.

EMILY
 It's just a nightmare. It's just a nightmare. You're okay.

Roger looks around. Boswell's gone. Roger's relieved.

CUT TO:

INT. BETTY SCHWARTZ'S MANSION, PARLOR -- NIGHT

A seance. Betty's at the head of the table, surrounded by half a dozen ghoulish-looking MEMBERS OF HER CTHULU CULT.

They CHANT. Making harmonic sounds with their inhuman language. Suddenly, silence. Betty smiles, SEES --

All of the Cult Members are now Boswell Sneeds.

BETTY
 Boswell, my dear. How are we?

The Boswells answer in unison.

BOSWELLS
 Rotten. The boy won't write.

BETTY
 You can't... persuade him?

BOSWELLS
 No use. He's spooked silly. That Detective put him over the edge.

BETTY

My fault. I tried to turn that Dick into a minion, but his mind was too strong. He broke. Pity.

BOSWELLS

Well, you also broke our Ace in the hole, so you fix him.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLYWOOD, KATSU-YA -- NIGHT

Roger and Emily eat sushi. They look out of it. A WAITRESS drops a new plate of fish on the table.

WAITRESS

Lobster dynamite.

EMILY

(repulsed)

This looks like the brains that came out of that Latino Detective's head.

Roger studies the lobster in creamy white sauce.

ROGER

(dead pan)

It does.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BLVD. -- NIGHT

Roger and Emily stroll, looking at the stars on the sidewalk.

ROGER

Flip Wilson, Wolfman Jack, Edgar Bergan -- I bet most people don't even know who these guys are.

EMILY

Yeah, fame is fleeting. Definitely not worth dying over.

ROGER

(gets serious)

You're right, Emily, we should leave LA. This town has just gotten way too ookie.

EMILY

Where should we go?

Roger stops, turns to Emily.

ROGER
Honestly, anywhere is fine with me
as long as I'm with you.

They kiss. A fashionably dressed elderly lady (Betty)
walking with a GHOULISH YOUNG MAN interrupts --

BETTY
Excuse me, do you know how to get
to Musso & Frank's restaurant?

EMILY
Yes.

ROGER
It's 3 blocks --

Roger and Emily stand there, frozen. They're hypnotized.

From Roger's POV -- the whirlpools in Betty's eyes grow huge,
until A VORTEX OF SWIRLING SPACE, like a wormhole, has opened
in front of him. LOUD CHURNING WIND. It's just like the
vortex Roger saw when he discovered *The Mind Bomb*.

BETTY
Roger Plotnik, step forward and
fulfill your destiny!

Betty and her Ghoulish Young Man CHANT. Roger drops Emily's
hand, walks into the vortex and his body gets distorted as
he's sucked down the wormhole into BLACK NOTHINGNESS.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

Roger's sitting in a chair with no life in his eyes.

RECEPTIONIST
Roger? Roger?

Suddenly, Roger snaps back to reality. He looks around. He
knows this place, but how did he get here?

The Receptionist smiles at him.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
Mr. Cornblatt is ready to see you.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, EXECUTIVE OFFICES, HALLWAY -- DAY

As Roger walks along, SECRETARIES and ASSISTANTS stare at him with the kind of awe normally reserved for celebrities. It makes Roger paranoid, on top of being bewildered.

When Roger gets to J.J.'s office, he notices it's the only door in the hall that's closed. Roger stops. Looks at the door. A Secretary nearby breaks down, sobs.

It's all very surreal. Roger bites his thumb. It hurts.

ROGER

Okay... I'm not dreaming.

Roger continues down the hall, past more GAWKERS, to the end, where CORNBLATT'S SECRETARY is waiting for him.

She opens the door to --

CUT TO:

INT. CORNBLATT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

CORNBLATT'S SECRETARY

Here he is.

Roger enters. All 5 VICE PRESIDENTS are with Cornblatt. They stand and applaud. Roger's dumbfounded.

CORNBLATT

You did it, Plotnik.

ROGER

I did?

Everyone laughs.

CORNBLATT

The Mind Bomb is the best script
I've read in years.

The Vice Presidents CHIME IN AGREEMENT.

ROGER

Really?

CORNBLATT

Absolutely. The way you
personalize the world's descent
into madness is truly horrifying.
By the end, I was questioning my
own sanity.

ROGER
That's... how I feel, right now.

Everyone laughs again. Cornblatt approaches Roger.

CORNBLATT
I've got Jim Cameron, Mike Bay and
Steve Soderbergh in a fist-fight
over who's going to direct this
picture. Fine work, son.

Cornblatt holds out his hand. Roger just looks at it.

CORNBLATT (CONT'D)
Green light.

ROGER
I don't believe this is happening.

CORNBLATT
Believe it. You're now an A-list
writer. You're going to be rich.

ROGER
You can't make this movie!

Now, nobody laughs. Roger sounds psychotic.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Please, Mr. Cornblatt. It's evil!

Cornblatt chuckles, nervously.

CORNBLATT
It's disturbing, but evil?

ROGER
Yes! I was hypnotized by a Witch
when I wrote it! 6 people died
because of it! Maybe more!

Cornblatt still tries to smile and humor this crazy kid.

CORNBLATT
I understand, you --

Roger grabs Cornblatt by the lapels, violently shakes him.

ROGER
You don't understand anything!

All the Vice Presidents, even the 2 women, jump in to pull
Roger off Cornblatt. Roger starts throwing wild punches.
One of them connects with Cornblatt's nose.

ROGER (CONT'D)
You fools! Listen to me!

CUT TO:

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM -- DAY

Emily wakes up, dazed. She's wearing the same clothes she was the night she was hypnotized. Her room is a mess. Empty beer and wine bottles. Half burnt candles. A bong.

There's a marker drawing of Cthulu and writing in an unknown language scrawled over an entire wall. What the fuck?

CUT TO:

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Emily stumbles in. The place is trashed like a month long party's been going on. But, on her desk is Roger's laptop, the remnants of a tongue on rye sandwich and dozens of printed script pages with handwritten notes on them.

Emily looks at the headers on the pages.

EMILY
(shocked)
The Mind Bomb?

When she sees the dates on the pages, Emily swoons. She falls back into a chair, remembers...

CUT TO:

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Emily sits in the same chair eating a slice of pizza like a robot. She SEES -- Roger typing on his laptop. Boswell's over his shoulder, looking at the screen.

Across, Betty's in a chair, naked, drinking rum from a bottle. Behind her, MINIONS are having an orgy.

BOSWELL
(happy with what he reads)
Boy's got chops. I ain't gotta do nothing, Betty.

Boswell slaps Roger on the back.

BOSWELL (CONT'D)
Doing great, Ace.

Roger doesn't react, just keeps typing. He's a robot, too.

BETTY
 (cackles like a Witch)
 Told you I'd fix him, you
 gibbering snit!

BACK TO:

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Emily snaps awake when the phone RINGS. She answers.

EMILY
 Hello.

ROGER (O.S., PHONE)
 Emily, it's me. Are you okay?

EMILY
 No. I've been out for a month.

ROGER (O.S., PHONE)
 I know. We were under some kind
 of spell. They forced me to write
The Mind Bomb.

EMILY
 I remember.

ROGER (O.S., PHONE)
 I can't remember anything. I just
 came to in Cornblatt's office.

EMILY
 Cornblatt's office?

ROGER (O.S., PHONE)
 Yeah, huge disaster. He loved the
 script. He's making the movie.

EMILY
 We need to stop him!

ROGER (O.S., PHONE)
 I tried. So... now --

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, MAIN FLOOR -- CONTINUOUS

Roger's handcuffed to a chair. Phone in his free hand.

ROGER
 -- I'm in jail. They're holding
 me for 72 hours. They think I'm
 crazy. Imagine that.

CUT TO:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, JAIL CELL -- DAY

Roger's lead into the cell by a GUARD who removes his
 handcuffs and locks him in. Roger looks around.

The small cell has a bed, toilet, desk with a pencil and
 legal pad, and shelf with some books and magazines.

ROGER (V.O.)
 I needed a plan.

CUT TO:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, JAIL CELL -- DAY

Roger writes what WE HEAR AS VOICE OVER on the note pad.

ROGER (V.O.)
 I realized if *The Mind Bomb* was
 made, Boswell would be able to
 scare, murder, rape -- demonize,
 anyone who saw the movie based on
 the script he haunted.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

Carter FIRES A FEW SHOTS into the floor before he dies.

ROGER (V.O.)
 That was the new era of Cthulu's
 power that Detective was raving
 about. I decided, I had to take
 out Boswell, to stop the madness.

CUT TO:

INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT -- DAY (1936)

Roger watches Boswell as he paces and TALKS.

ROGER (V.O.)
 But how? He was built like a
 boxer. He killed guys in the
 trenches of World War I.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Gleeful, Boswell stabs Jenkins to death with the ice pick.

ROGER (V.O.)
 He killed guys for fun.

CUT TO:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, JAIL CELL -- DAY

Roger sits on the toilet, anxiously pokes his leg with the pencil in frustration.

ROGER (V.O.)
 I was a nerd who almost flunked
 gym class. How could I fight a
 homicidal maniac like Boswell?

Roger drops a turd. PLUNK. He stops poking his leg. We see the light bulb go off in Roger's head.

ROGER (V.O.)
 Shazam.

CUT TO:

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Boswell hovers over Roger with a bloody nose and menacing grin.

BOSWELL
 Now, I wanna see my name up on the
 silver screen, boy. No pansy
 excuses.

ROGER (V.O.)
 I would appeal to his vanity.

BACK TO:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, JAIL CELL -- NIGHT

Roger writes. There's a magazine page wrapped tightly around the pencil in a narrow cone shape. Looks like a pencil grip.

ROGER (V.O.)
 Dear President Cornblatt, I'm
 writing to report an interesting
 fact I've learned about Boswell
 Sneed in my research. Boswell's
 name was a pseudonym for another
 writer name Chester Glubb.

CUT TO:

INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT -- NIGHT (1936)

Boswell smokes a cigar as he watches the kaleidoscopic world
 outside his window. Then, something gets his attention.

ROGER (V.O.)
 Chester was a convicted pedophile,
 Peeping Tom and shoplifter.

BACK TO:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, JAIL CELL -- NIGHT

ROGER (V.O.)
 In light of this, you should
 consider changing Boswell's name
 to Chester in the credits, or if
 too embarrassing, drop Chester
 from the credits altogether.

Boswell appears next to Roger, towers over him. Fumes --

BOSWELL
 You telling lies on me, boy?!
 Trying to steal my credit?!

ROGER
 Well, I --

Roger suddenly stabs Boswell in the gut with the pencil as
 hard as he can. Squeezes the paper tube. Boswell punches
 Roger in the face, knocking him to the floor.

Boswell looks at the crude shiv sticking out of his gut.

BOSWELL
 (laughs)
 A pencil?

Boswell picks Roger up and slams him against the wall.

BOSWELL (CONT'D)
 You shoul'da gone for my jugular,
 Ace. Now, I'm gonna kill you.

Roger tries to resist as Boswell strangles him.

They tussle around the cell until Boswell gets the advantage. He tightens his grip on Roger's neck.

Roger's about to die.

Then, Boswell screams in agony. He steps back, clutching his abdomen. Roger's still choking but smiles as Boswell pulls the pencil and paper tube out of his gut.

A glob of shit oozes from the wound which already looks infected. Boswell wipes it off, smells his fingers --

BOSWELL (CONT'D)
(repulsed)
Is that shit?

ROGER
About 2 tablespoons.

Boswell doubles over in pain.

BOSWELL
It burns like God damn fireworks.

ROGER
Oh, yeah. That's E-coli, salmonella and a bunch of other nasty bacteria mixing with your blood. You're septic, dude.

BOSWELL
What does that mean?

ROGER
You'll be dead in days. Maybe sooner.

BOSWELL
You rat-fucked me, boy.
(chuckles)
I knew you were an Ace.
(gets serious)
Just promise me one thing.

ROGER
What?

BOSWELL
Keep my name on that script.

ROGER
No problem.

Boswell grins through his pain, then disappears.

Roger falls to the floor. Breathes relief.

CUT TO:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, JAIL CELL -- DAY

Roger lays in bed as a ray of sunlight shines through the very narrow window and strikes his face. It's a new day. A food tray is pushed in through a slot in the door.

GUARD
Plotnik, breakfast.

Roger gets out of bed, walks to the door. Through the safety glass, the Guard sees the bruises on Roger's neck.

GUARD (CONT'D)
What happened to your neck?

ROGER
Oh, nothing. I did it to myself.

Suddenly, the Guard looks alarmed.

CUT TO:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, JAIL CELL -- LATER

The cell has been stripped of everything except a pillow. Roger sits with his back against the wall. Laughs a little.

CUT TO:

INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT -- NIGHT (1936)

Boswell lays on the couch. He looks green. Sweaty. Pus pours out of his wound like lava. He takes a swig of whiskey from a bottle, then drops the bottle.

With his eyes open, Boswell dies.

Just then, this Limbo reality SLAMS SHUT, leaving only stardust swirling in EMPTY OUTER SPACE.

CUT TO:

INT. DEEP BENEATH THE OCEAN -- NIGHT

Cthulu looks right at US. Emits a BRAIN-SPLITTING WAIL.

CUT TO:

INT. BETTY SCHWARTZ'S MANSION, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Betty's at the bottom of a huge orgy pile, when she bolts up, knocking MINIONS off of her, SCREAMING --

BETTY
Nooooooooo!!!!

CUT TO:

INT. THEATER -- NIGHT

Preoccupied, Emily works out on stage with her IMPROV CLASS. They look really silly doing what the TEACHER tells them.

IMPROV TEACHER
You're spaghetti. Spaghetti.
Spaghetti. Now, you're a clam.
Clam. Clam. Now, you're the
wind. Wind. Spaghetti. Nice!

The Teacher applauds.

IMPROV TEACHER (CONT'D)
See you next week, people.

CUT TO:

EXT. THEATER -- NIGHT

The Class breaks up. As Emily shuffles to her car, with her head down, looking sad, WE NOTICE -- SOMEONE is following her. Then another FOLLOWER. Then THREE.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Emily gets to her car, picks up her head -- stops, startled, because Betty's right there.

BETTY
Hi, Emily.

Emily turns to run but she's caught by Betty's Three Minions. Before Emily can scream, she's chloroformed. They take her keys, throw her in her car and drive off.

CUT TO:

INT. COURT ROOM -- DAY

Roger stands before a JUDGE, next to a LAWYER. Emily's in the gallery behind them.

ROGER (V.O.)
 Turns out, Cornblatt was cool. He offered to drop the Assault charge he had on me, if I took an Anger Management course. I agreed.

The Judge BANGS his gavel.

JUDGE
 Case dismissed.

Roger shakes his Lawyer's hand. Emily rushes up.

They hug.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURT HOUSE -- DAY

Roger and Emily walk to her CAR. Roger looks like he's been in a fight, which he has. Emily's surprisingly chipper.

EMILY
 How do you know he's dead?

ROGER
 Last night, I felt his grip on my mind release. I was free. He was gone. Permanently.

EMILY
 So, it's over? We're safe.

ROGER
 Except for that Witch.

EMILY
 What Witch?

ROGER
 (suspicious)
 The one that hypnotized us.

EMILY
 She's not a Witch.

Now at the Car, Emily turns to Roger.

EMILY (CONT'D)
 She's a Priestess.

ROGER
 A Priest -- ?

Roger makes the mistake of looking Emily in the eyes, which are SWIRLING LIKE WHIRLPOOLS. He's hypnotized.

EMILY
Don't you feel gullible?

ROGER
Yes.

EMILY
Get in. Let's go for a ride.

Roger gets in the Car. Emily drives away.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BLVD. -- DAY

Emily speeds down a winding part of the boulevard.

CUT TO:

EXT. BETTY SCHWARTZ'S MANSION -- DAY

Emily pulls up. Betty and her Minions are waiting, all wearing ceremonial robes and CHANTING.

They take Roger from the Car and carry him into the mansion.

ROGER (V.O.)
I could see them, hear them, smell them, but I was powerless to react. It was a nightmare --

CUT TO:

INT. BETTY SCHWARTZ'S MANSION, PARLOR -- DAY

ROGER (V.O.)
-- from which I couldn't wake up.

Roger's laid on a sacrificial altar. He's surrounded by Betty and her Minions. SEES -- Emily, now wearing a robe and CHANTING along with everyone. They close in on him.

Betty raises the dagger with Cthulu's image on the blade.

BETTY
You killed Boswell, so you will take his place, spirit of the script you wrote in praise of the power of Our Lord -- Cthulu!

Betty slits Roger's throat. As he bleeds to death --

ROGER (V.O.)
And that was that.

CUT TO:

INT. ROGER'S STUDIO APARTMENT -- DAY (LIMBO REALITY)

Roger's at his laptop, typing THIS VOICE OVER.

ROGER (V.O.)
Only my personal Limbo wasn't as
cool as Boswell's.

Roger looks out the window of his crummy, cramped apartment.

He SEES -- a flat, black and white world where everything is
composed of courier font type letters.

ROGER (V.O.)
Instead of colorful surrealistic
landscapes, I got a world of
joyless script type. Probably
because I obsessed way too much
about screenplays in my life.
Kinda majorly sucks I had to die
to realize that.

CUT TO:

INT. CORNBLATT'S OFFICE -- DAY

Cornblatt looks grim as he gets news from his VPs.

VP
They found his body dumped in an
alley off Hollywood Blvd.

CORNBLATT
Okay.

Cornblatt's hands tremble. He's a poker player about to fold
his cards in a game worth hundreds of millions.

CORNBLATT (CONT'D)
The kid isn't crazy. He's right.
I can't believe I'm saying this
but the script is cursed. I don't
want anymore death over this.
(beat)
I'm pulling the plug on *The Mind
Bomb*.

The VPs REACT, not happy about the decision. Then --

Cornblatt suddenly looks like he sees a ghost.

CORNBLATT (CONT'D)
Oh, my God.

The VPs turn to see what Cornblatt's looking at. GASP!

Roger stands in the middle of the room. He slowly raises his arm, like a ghost. Points his finger.

ROGER THE GHOST
You, Cornblatt, are a wise man!

ROGER (V.O.)
I decided to try out my new
haunting powers.

Cornblatt clutches his heart. Falls out of his chair.

ROGER (V.O.)
They worked.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO -- DAY

EMTs wisk Cornblatt on a gurney into an AMBULANCE.

ROGER (V.O.)
Cornblatt had a mild coronary
event and was released from the
hospital the next day.

CUT TO:

INT. ROGER'S STUDIO APARTMENT -- DAY (LIMBO REALITY)

Roger types --

ROGER (V.O.)
But I was banished, forever.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, VARIOUS OFFICES -- DAY

In a SERIES OF SHOTS, EXECS and ASSISTANTS recycle, shred and trash hard copies of *The Mind Bomb*. They delete electronic copies off their computers. It's a mass execution.

ROGER (V.O.)
 Plans of me being able to invade
 the minds of millions of movie-
 goers were dashed.

CUT TO:

INT. TATTOO PARLOR -- NIGHT

Emily gets a GIANT PORTRAIT OF CTHULU tattooed on her back.

ROGER (V.O.)
 I couldn't even visit my
 girlfriend because she never read
 the script.

Betty and some Minions watch. Drink beer. Eat Taco Bell.

MINION
 What about Plotnik? Should we do
 a seance? Try to talk with him?

BETTY
 Why? The movie's mothballed.
 He's no use to us now. Let him
 rot in hell.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO, STORY DEPARTMENT -- DAY

A NEW JANITOR enters the busy room filled with READERS. He
 takes several copies of *The Mind Bomb* from a stack labeled
 "Terminal Red Lights" and carries them away.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY -- DAY

The Janitor walks in with the scripts. There's a COUPLE GUYS
 at the bar and a COUPLE GUYS reading scripts in the lounge.

JANITOR
 Anyone want to read *The Mind Bomb*?

LIBRARY GUYS
 No. / It's cursed. / I got enough
 problems. / Fuck that shit.

The Janitor keeps walking, into the stacks.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, STACKS -- DAY

The Janitor grabs a flashlight, opens the trap door.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, CATACOMBS -- DAY

The Mind Bomb scripts are placed on the shelf with other scripts from 1936. The Boris Karloff Zombie prop is right there, looking at US. A SPIDER spins a web.

The Janitor exits. Light from between the floorboards above illuminates this spooky tableau.

ROGER (V.O.)

There I am -- laying in wait for the next fool to read me. I'm so angry about my situation, I'm sure I'll mess with whoever it is just to add some spice to my miserable, cursed, lonely existence.

CUT TO:

INT. ROGER'S STUDIO APARTMENT -- DAY (LIMBO REALITY)

ROGER (V.O.)

Don't think I'd kill anyone, but what's the harm in a little insanity?

Just then, Cthulu's head crashes into the room. It's so massive, only one evil eye and part of his dripping snout fit. Roger's stricken with trembling fear.

ROGER,

Cthulu, my Lord...

Cthulu SPEAKS. His infernal voice makes Roger's brain feel like it's going to explode. Roger drops, squirms in agony --

ROGER, (CONT'D)

Yes, yes -- I will! I promise!

Cthulu leaves. It's like he was never there, except for Roger curled in a fetal position, sobbing.

ROGER (V.O.)

Okay. Some poor suckers were gonna die.

CUT TO:

INT. ROGER'S STUDIO APARTMENT -- DAY (LIMBO REALITY)

Roger types, still shaken up --

 ROGER (V.O.)
 Long as I'm stuck here, *The Mind*
 Bomb will keep on blowing people's
 minds.

Roger leans back. Sighs.

He takes the last sip of coffee from a Starbucks cup.

WE NOTICE -- the famous Starbucks mermaid logo is made up of
courier font letters, not the usual drawing.

Out of coffee, Roger stands, heads for the door.

 ROGER,
 (mumbles to himself)
 Latte fucker.

Roger opens the door and enters the world of letters, numbers
and symbols. After walking awhile, ROGER BECOMES A COURIER
FONT TYPE MAN. It's like he's become a human script.

He doesn't react, just strolls out of FRAME.

And the door SLAMS SHUT!

FADE OUT.

THE END