



Subtextual Analysis for Film Directors





SCRIPT ANALYSIS VS SUBTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Script analysis is the process of identifying the dramatic and emotional structure of the screenplay so that creative decisions can be made about the visual structure that will convey the “Director’s Intent”. The “Director’s Intent” is what the director intends for the audience to feel about the different scenes and ultimately about the film. This is the very basis of “Intentional Filmmaking”.

Script Analysis is the beginning of the conceptualization of the actual film. Just as scriptwriting is a writing and rewriting process, visual storytelling is a structuring and restructuring process. You structure and restructure the scene until it “works”. “Works” means that the film has the effect on the audience that the director intends it to have.

What is the purpose of script analysis? The purpose of script analysis is to understand HOW the story works and identify all the different plot points and dramatic moments in the story and the significance of those plot points and moments that are important to the audience’s understanding and experiencing of the story. It is also for the director to make notes about his or her intentions on how the director wants the audience to feel about the story and the characters and to react emotionally to the story events and the protagonist’s journey.

Understanding HOW the story works means knowing the structure of the story and what the different “dramatic moments” are (such as the “inciting incident”) and where all of the plot points are. Can you identify the “inciting incident? Or the plot points of Act I, Act II and Act III?

Subtextual analysis is a subset of the overall script analysis. The purpose of subtextual analysis to uncover the subtext and meaning of the story so that this subtext and meaning can be translated into visual subtext. Subtext goes well beyond just the unspoken intentions of the characters. Story subtext includes thematic and plot elements and is more about the director’s intentions. It is important to understand that subtextual analysis is subjective. No two directors will interpret the same script the same way. And there is no right or wrong way to interpret a script.

2

STORY SUBTEXT VS CHARACTER SUBTEXT

Story subtext and character subtext can be easily confused. There is character subtext that can be expressed aurally through dialogue or visually through the actor's performance in terms of body language and in the blocking. Character subtext is more about what the character dialogue and actions really mean. And that is a good place to start encoding the subtext into the visuals.

Then there is story subtext. Story subtext is more about what the writer really means and intends with the telling of the story. When the screenplay is made into a film, the story subtext is the director's interpretation of the meaning of the story. If the director is also the writer, then the story subtext is one and the same as the film's subtext. If the director is not the writer, then the director will come up with his or her own interpretation of what the story means and it will usually be different from the writer's interpretation.

SUBTEXTUAL ELEMENTS

There are two broad categories of story subtext: thematic subtext and plot subtext:

Thematic subtext pertains to the theme of the story. The theme is what the story is really about. Ideally, a film is a 90 minute dramatization of the theme. Visual elements and components can be used symbolically to represent the thematic elements of the story and convey the theme to the audience.

Plot Subtext are the different plot points and dramatic moments in the film. These plot points and dramatic moments are usually emphasized using cinematic technique such as a slow push-in or sweeping crane.

3

These are the steps in the subtextual analysis process:

1. Read the Script
2. Identify the Theme
3. What is the Experience?
4. Beat Indexing
5. Emotional Reactions
6. Decode the Subtext
7. Precode the Subtext

4

Step 1 - Reading the Script

At this point, you have already decided that you are going to direct this screenplay. You have already connected to the material and something about this story has resonated with you on an emotional level. You believe that this is a good story that you want to share with an audience. You are now ready to prepare the script for production.

On your initial reading of the screenplay, you should have made some notations of your emotional reaction to the story. You should have made some notes about why this story is important to you, why you want to tell this story, how you were affected by this story.

I am using my teaser screenplay “Communion” as an example for subtextual analysis. The entire screenplay and subtextual analysis using Scriptation* is available in the Appendix.

A NOTE ABOUT TAKING NOTES

I use an app called Scriptation for making script notes. It is by far the best app for this purpose and has made my life so much easier. I highly recommend Scriptation for making script notes.



**You will need to add Facing Pages in Scriptation.*

5

Step 2 - Identifying the Theme

After the initial reading of the screenplay, the next step in subtextual analysis is in identifying the story's theme. A good, well-structured film spends the next 90 minutes expressing its theme. The theme is what the film is really about. Determining the theme is purely subjective. The director has to determine the theme for his or herself, what the story means to them, what the ultimate point of the story is. What does the director want to say with this particular film? This is the next step in intentional filmmaking and will inform all of the subsequent choices that the director will make.

After reading "Communion" and thinking about it, I decided that the script is about "not giving up". To me, the story was about when you are faced with adversity that you never give up. So, that is the first thing that I wrote down on the script. Using Scriptation, on the title page, on the first layer, I wrote down the theme of the script. In separate director notes, I wrote in detail what this theme means to me. The more detail that you write about the meaning, the better you will understand the story that you are telling.

When your cast and crew have questions about the story, no one on the set should know the story better than the director. And no one should understand what story the director wants to tell better than the director. Your cast and crew will be looking to the director for answers and guidance for their contribution to the film. Knowing the theme is an important step in providing those answers. This is called "doing your homework". A director who knows what film he or she intends to make shows up to the set fully prepared to make that film.

6

Step 3 - What is the Experience?

As a director, you are creating a film experience for the audience. I outlined the experience that I want to create for the audience. “Communion” centers around a home invasion. That is the overall experience that I want to create for the audience. A home invasion horror experience. I wrote this on the title page as well. This overall experience will inform the subsequent artistic choices that will be made.

Location and lighting are prime considerations and are critical in a horror film for creating a horror experience. Everything from the artistic choice of color palette, locations, production design, set design, set dressing, wardrobe, props, lighting, camera angles, composition, color grading, editing, sound design and music score will all contribute to conveying the horror experience to the audience. Each of these visual/aural elements will be addressed in the script analysis.

Step 4 - Beat Indexing

Once the theme is identified and the director knows what kind of film experience he or she wants to create, the next step is to divide the script into story beats and assign an intensity level 1 to 10 for each beat. I create a new layer in Scriptation and name it “Beat Index”.

Each new beat should represent a change in the story and thus a change in the intensity of the drama, either an increase or decrease in dramatic intensity. If there is no change in dramatic intensity (conflict), then your story is stagnant. Using Scriptation and its line tool, I draw a red line between each beat. Based on the intensity of the drama, I designate an intensity level to the



beat, 1 through 10. This is purely subjective and is relative. It is important that you get a sense of the rising and falling dramatic intensity. There should be a corresponding change in the visual intensity. (For more on visual intensity I suggest reading “Visual Story” by Bruce Block). I also number each beat.

Step 5 - Emotional Reactions

After dividing the script into beats, I create a new layer in Scriptation and name it: Emotional Reactions. I then use the marking pen tool and write down the emotional reaction that I want the audience to have to each beat. Because each beat represents a change in the story, the emotional reactions should change as well. Story is not about what happens. It is about how the characters react to what is happening and how what is happening changes the characters. As such, I use the highlighter tool to highlight the emotional reactions of the characters. It is these emotional reactions that will be visually punctuated with push-ins or close ups or other cinematic technique.

Step 6 - Decode the Subtext

The next step in subtextual analysis involves decoding or uncovering the subtext. This is where you start digging into the meaning of the text, beat by beat. This is a subjective process as no two people will interpret the meaning of any one script the same, just as no two directors will direct any one script the same. This is where the director really begins to understand what the story is REALLY about. To prepare for decoding, I create a new layer and name it “Decode”. On the facing pages, I make a list of analysis questions that I ask and answer for each beat. These questions are prompts that help to focus the subtextual analysis. These are the questions that I usually ask and try to



answer for each beat:

Decoding Questions

What is the Point of Change?

What is the Mood?

What is the Beat About?

Beat Dynamics:

What does it mean?

For the situation?

For the Character Arc?

For the relationships?

For the audience?

Narrative Question?

Step 7 - Precode the Visual Subtext

Once I have decoded the subtext for each beat, I create a new layer in Scriptation and name it “Precode”. This is where I begin to think about and plan what it will take to make the subtext visual, to create the perceptual and emotional effects that will make up the audience experience. On the facing pages, I make a list of visual and aural components.

These are the visual and aural components that make up the visual story and I determine how I will use each one to express the subtext of each beat. I start by asking the question: How will I express the subtext of each beat using the following visual and aural components:

9

An iceberg floating in a blue ocean under a light blue sky with soft white clouds. The iceberg's tip is above the water, while its much larger, jagged base is submerged. A semi-transparent white rectangle is centered over the submerged part of the iceberg, containing a list of film production elements.

Setting
Composition
Lens
Frame
Position
Angle
Imagery
Blocking & Actor Movement
Lighting:
Image Control
Camera Motion
Editing Motion
Sound Design
Music Cues

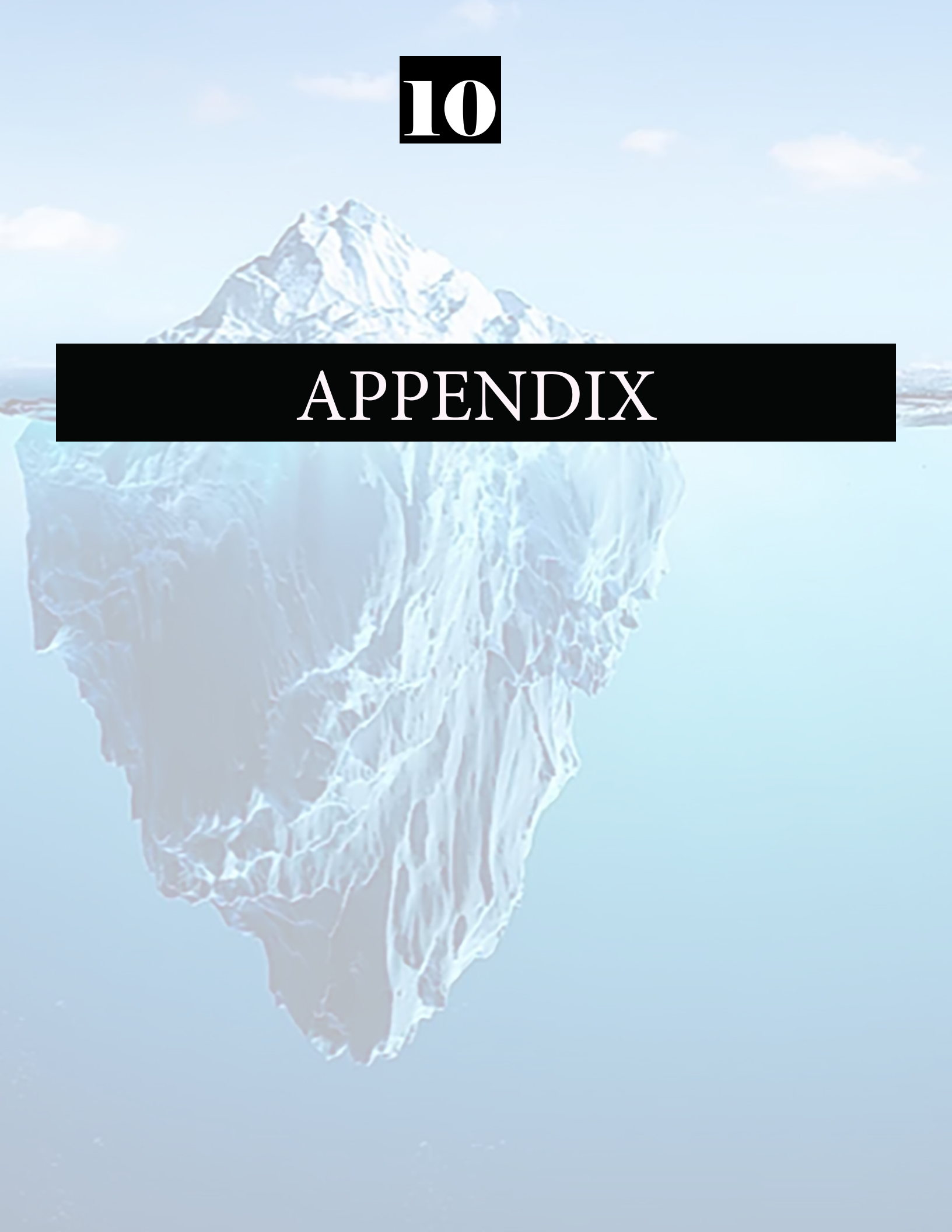
Review my screenplay and subtextual analysis in the Appendix for how I chose to use these visual components to express the story subtext.

My online course “Cinematic Filmmaking Secrets” details the complete process of Script Analysis for Film Directors.

Visit www.cinematicfilmmakingsecrets.com for more info.

10

APPENDIX



Theme: Never Give Up!

Home Invasion Experience

Communion
an original screenplay by
Brian H. Brooks

Final Draft
12/9/2021

DECODE

Beat 1 - 911 Calls

Point of Change:

Mood: Horror

What is the Beat About?

Beat Dynamics: A series of home invasions

What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?

For the situation: There's something going on

For the Character Arc:

For the relationships:

For the audience: This could happen to you

As If:

Narrative Question: Is this what the film is about?

DECODE

Beat 2 - The Dark One

Point of Change:

Mood: Horror

What is the Beat About?

Beat Dynamics: Introducing the Dark One and his followers

What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?

For the situation: A cult of killers is loose in the streets

For the Character Arc: N/A

For the relationships: N/A

For the audience: Scary stuff

As If:

Narrative Question: Who are these people?

DECODE

Beat 3 - She's Gone

Point of Change: Rolling Thunder

Mood: Anxious/Sad

What is the Beat About?

Beat Dynamics: Introducing Ashley

What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?

For the situation: Ashley is mourning the loss of her child

For the Character Arc: She is down and vulnerable

For the relationships: Ashley is alone even though married

For the audience: Sympathizes with Ashley

As If:

Narrative Question: What happened to her baby?

PRECODE B2

How will we externalize Eerie?

Music Cue: Eerie

Quality of Motion: Steadicam

Camera Motion: Fluid Shots

Editing Motion: Long Cuts

Lens: Wide

Frame:

Position:

Angle:

Setting:

Composition:

Imagery:

Movement/Blocking:

Lighting: Night Exteriors

Image Control:

Symbolic Motion:

Sound Design: Ominous Wind

PRECODE B3

How will we externalize unease?

Music Cue: Unease

Quality of Motion: Tripod

Camera Motion: Fluid Pans

Editing Motion: Long Cuts

Lens: 50mm

Frame:

Position:

Angle:

Setting:

Symbolic Motion:

Sound Design: Ominous Wind

"Communion"

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock" Revelation 3:20

MONTAGE - Ring Video of Home Invasions - ends with Helter Skelter description from caller.

1 EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT 1

IL7 SLOW MOTION - THE DARK ONE, wearing a black hoodie, walks down the street holding a blood-covered handsaw in his left hand. (Walks out of house leaving bloody footprints?) B2

Three other DARK STRANGERS, wearing hoodies, are revealed walking behind the Dark One, one carrying a pry bar and another carrying a bludgeon and another carrying a black plastic bag with round objects in it. They are covered in blood.

Camera tilts up to reveal a very strange sky filled with ominous clouds. Rolling thunder is heard.

DISSOLVE TO:

2 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 2

IL2 We see tree branches swaying in the brisk wind outside the bedroom window with the ominous clouds overhead. There are strange flashes of light seen in the sky and a low buzzing sound is heard. B3

We TILT DOWN to reveal a YOUNG COUPLE, lying in the bed. MIKE, the husband wearing 30 years old, is asleep. ASHLEY, his young 20-something wife, is awake, looking at something on the nightstand. There are tears in her eyes.

We then PAN OVER to reveal a DIGITAL PHOTO FRAME showing a slide show memorial tribute to an infant. There is an empty crib by the bed. There is a book titled "Strangers Beside Us" lying in the nightstand. There is also a prescription bottles of Prozac and sleeping pills on the nightstand along with a bottle of water.

FLASHBACK: Ashley is in the NICU holding her baby who has many life-support tubes in her.

ASHLEY
(whispers)
Be strong.

IL3 Ashley closes her eyes and quietly weeps. B4

Ashley opens her eyes, looking at her prescriptions.

She sits up, reaching for the sleeping pills.

DECODE
Beat 4 - Not Coping Well
Point of Change: Rolling Thunder
Mood: Anxious/Sad
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics: Introducing Ashley
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: Ashley is mourning the loss of her child
For the Character Arc: She is down and vulnerable
For the relationships: Ashley is alone even though married
For the audience: Sympathizes with Ashley
As If:
Narrative Question: What happened to her?

PRECODE B4
How will we externalize Sadness?
Music Cue: Sadness
Quality of Motion: Tripod
Camera Motion: Fluid Shots
Editing Motion: Long Cuts
Lens: Medium
Frame: Full
Position: Center
Angle: Low
Setting:
Composition: Isolated
Imagery:
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion: Sinking
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE
Beat 5 - Ring Alert
Point of Change: Cell phone ring alert sounds
Mood: Tense
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics: Dark One arrives at their door step.
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: There is a stranger at their door at 3am
For the Character Arc: Ashley recognizes the threat
For the relationships: Ashley is still alone
For the audience: Audience fears the worst
As If:
Narrative Question: What will happen next?

PRECODE B5
How will we externalize Tension?
Music Cue: Tension
Quality of Motion: Handheld
Camera Motion: Pans/Tilts
Editing Motion: Medium Cuts
Lens: Telephoto
Frame:
Position:
Angle: Low
Setting:
Composition: Isolated
Imagery:
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion:
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE
Beat 6 - Don't wake Mike
Point of Change: the Dark One on the porch
Mood: Tense
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics: Dark One arrives at their door step.
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: There is a stranger at their door at 3am
For the Character Arc: Ashley recognizes the threat.
For the relationships: Ashley is still alone.
For the audience: Audience fears the worst
As If:
Narrative Question: What will happen next?

PRECODE B6
How will we externalize Low Tension?
Music Cue: Low Tension
Quality of Motion: Handheld
Camera Motion: Pans/Tilts
Editing Motion: Medium Cuts
Lens: Telephoto
Frame:
Position:
Angle: Eye Level
Setting:
Composition: Isolated
Imagery:
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion:
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE
Beat 7 - what do you want?
Point of Change: Ashley wakes Mike
Mood: Tense
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics: Mike asks what does the DO want.
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: The DO won't leave.
For the Character Arc: Ashley recognizes the threat.
For the relationships: Ashley is still alone.
For the audience: Audience knows that the DO is a threat.
As If:
Narrative Question: What will Mike do?

PRECODE B7
How will we externalize Tension?
Music Cue: Tension
Quality of Motion: Handheld
Camera Motion: Pans/Tilts
Editing Motion: Medium/Short Cuts
Lens: Telephoto
Frame:
Position:
Angle: Low
Setting:
Composition: Isolated
Imagery:
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion:
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

2.

She opens the bottle, tapping out two pills into her hand.

She looks at the pills, thinking.

She closes her eyes, breathing deep.

She opens her eyes and taps several more pills into her hand.

She closes her eyes once again, trying to muster the nerve.

She relents and puts the pills back in the bottle and then puts the bottle back on the nightstand.

She lays back down, closing her eyes and weeping quietly.

IL4 There is a CELL PHONE also on the nightstand. The Ring Alert comes on indicating there is motion at the front door at 3:07am.

B5 Ashley looks over at her cell phone. She then reaches over to the nightstand and picks the cell phone up, looking at the Ring Alert.

The Dark One is standing on the porch of the home holding an object in his left hand.

Ashley gasps and immediately sits up in the bed. She looks at her husband, MIKE. She hesitates at first, contemplating her next move.

Timidly, she leans over to MIKE, her husband.

IL3 ASHLEY (CONT'D)
(weakly)
Mike.

Mike remains a sleep. Ashley calls out to him again.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Mike!

Mike slowly awakens.

MIKE
Hmmm?

ASHLEY
Sorry to wake you, but someone's at the door.

Mike is still half-asleep, not fully comprehending what Ashley said.

3.

MIKE
(disturbed)
What?

ASHLEY
Someone's at the door.

MIKE
At the door?

ASHLEY
Yes.

Mike looks at Ashley.

MIKE
Were you lying?

Ashley wipes her eyes.

ASHLEY
Uh...no...

MIKE
What time is it?

ASHLEY
It's almost 3.

Mike sits up, disturbed.

MIKE
Almost 3? Fuck! Are you kidding me? I've got a 14 hour day ahead of me. I need my sleep!

IL4 Mike looks at Ashley, who is looking at her cell phone. She shows Mike the Ring alert.

MIKE (CONT'D)
What does he want?

Ashley is slightly confused.

ASHLEY
I-I don't know.

Mike frowns.

MIKE
Well ask him.

Ashley uses the Ring app to speak to the stranger.

PRECODE B8
How will we externalize Rising Tension?
Music Cue: Rising Tension
Quality of Motion: Handheld
Camera Motion: Pans/Tilts
Editing Motion: Medium/Short Cuts
Lens: Telephoto
Frame:
Position:
Angle: EL
Setting:
Composition: Isolated
Imagery:
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion:
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE
Beat 8 - Stay Here
Point of Change: Mike gets up to answer door
Mood: Rising Tension
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics: Mike goes to find out what the DO wants.
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: Mike is going to his doom
For the Character Arc: Ashley's fears grow.
For the relationships: Ashley is still alone.
For the audience: Audience knows that the DO is a threat.
As If:
Narrative Question: What will happen to Mike?

ASHLEY
(timid)
Can I help you?

The Dark One does not respond. She looks at Mike, perplexed as to the next move.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
He's not saying anything.

Mike takes her cell phone.

MIKE
What do you want

Again, no response. The dark stranger uses his hands to form a triangle. And there is a strange buzzing sound.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Fuckin' weirdo.

Mike hands Ashley back her phone.

ASHLEY
What's that in his hand?

MIKE
I don't know.

ASHLEY
Should I call the police?

MIKE
No.

Mike starts to get up. Ashley instinctively reaches out to stop him.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Stay here.

ASHLEY
No, Mike!

Mike pulls away and walks toward the bedroom door. Ashley jumps up (he is wearing a COTA t-shirt).

MIKE
Bar the door if you're afraid.

Mike walks out of the bedroom.

Ashley stops at the door, looking at a security door bar by the door. She hears something and turns and looks.

B8

IL5

PRECODE B9
How will we externalize Rising Tension?
Music Cue: Rising Tension
Quality of Motion: Handheld
Camera Motion: Follow-Leading
Editing Motion: Medium/Short Cuts
Lens: Telephoto
Frame:
Position:
Angle: EL
Setting:
Composition: Isolated
Imagery:
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion:
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE
Beat 9 - Did You Hear That?
Point of Change: Mike walks out of bedroom.
Mood: Rising Tension
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics: Mike walks down hallway. Ashley follows.
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: Mike is going to his doom.
For the Character Arc: Ashley's fears grow.
For the relationships: Ashley is still alone.
For the audience: Audience knows that the DO is a threat.
As If: Something is in the hallway waiting to jump out.
Narrative Question: Is the Threat inside the house?

Frightened, she steps out of the bedroom.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mike walks down the hallway.

Ashley is outside the bedroom, still holding her cell phone.

ASHLEY
(afraid)
Did you hear that???

Mike stops at the end of the hallway and looks at her.

MIKE
Hear what?

ASHLEY
Shhh! Sister!

Mike listens for a moment. All he hears is the ominous wind.

MIKE
It's the wind, Ashley.

ASHLEY
No-

Mike is dismissive, ignores her, turns on the hallway light and walks around the corner down the stairs.

Ashley waits a moment, watching, listening, hearing only the ominous wind. She then walks forward.

3

3

B9

IL4

PRECODE B10
How will we externalize Tension?
Music Cue: Tension
Quality of Motion: Handheld
Camera Motion: Follow-POV
Editing Motion: Medium/Short Cuts
Lens: Medium Telephoto
Frame:
Position:
Angle: EL
Setting:
Composition: Isolated
Imagery:
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion:
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE
Beat 10 - Should I Call the Police?
Point of Change: Mike walks down the stairs
Mood: Rising Tension
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics: Mike walks down the stairs.
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: Mike is close to his doom.
For the Character Arc: Ashley is nervous, afraid
For the relationships: Ashley is still alone.
For the audience: Audience knows that the DO is a threat.
As If: Something is in the entryway.
Narrative Question: Is the Threat inside the entry way?

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE/ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Ashley's POV as she slowly walks down the stairs. We see Mike at the door, looking through the peephole.

Ashley stops while still on the stairs.

ASHLEY
I think we should call the police.

Mike turns to her.

MIKE
And tell them what? There's some weird guy on our porch? Not exactly a crime.

Ashley reaches near the bottom of the stairwell and watches, holding her cell phone, still afraid.

4

IL3

B10

DECODE
Beat 11 - Join Us!
Point of Change: Mike walks to the door.
Mood: Rising Tension
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics: Mike unnerved by the Dark One.
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: Mike realizes they are in trouble.
For the Character Arc: Ashley is nervous, afraid
For the relationships: Ashley and Mike together.
For the audience: Audience knows that the DO is a threat.
Narrative Question: What will happen next? What does the Dark One mean?

PRECODE B11
How will we externalize Rising Tension?
Music Cue: Rising Tension
Quality of Motion: Handheld
Camera Motion: Steady
Editing Motion: Short Cuts
Lens: Telephoto
Frame:
Position:
Angle: High Angle
Setting:
Composition: Isolated
Imagery:
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion:
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE
Beat 12 - Call the Police!
Point of Change: Dark One tries to force way into home.
Mood: High Tension
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics: The cultists are trying to break into the house.
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: Mike doesn't know what to do.
For the Character Arc: Ashley takes action, calling 911.
For the relationships: Ashley and Mike trapped together.
For the audience: Audience afraid for Ashley & Mike.
Narrative Question: Will the cultists get into the home? What will they do? How will Ashley and Mike escape?

PRECODE B12
How will we externalize High Tension?
Music Cue: High Tension
Quality of Motion: Handheld
Camera Motion: Quick Pans/Tilts
Editing Motion: Short Cuts
Lens: Telephoto
Frame:
Position:
Angle: High Angle
Setting:
Composition: Isolated
Imagery:
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion:
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

6.

Ashley hears another noise, she turns and looks in the direction of the noise, growing more nervous, more fearful.

Mike starts to reach for the deadbolt lock.

ASHLEY
You're not going to open the door, are you?

Disturbed, Mike looks at Ashley. He relents, and stops reaching for the lock. He looks out the peephole on the door.

He sees the Dark One still standing there.

MIKE
Hey buddy! What do you want?

The Dark One does not immediately respond.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(louder)
Hey!

DARK ONE
(demonic whisper)
Join us.

Mike is taken aback.

Ashley frowns.

IL5

ASHLEY
What did he say?

MIKE
(angry)
Tell me what you want or get off my porch!

DARK ONE
Join us!

Mike looks at Ashley

MIKE
This guy is out of his mind!

He looks back through the peephole.

DARK ONE
JOIN US...OR DIE!!!

The door rattles. The Dark One starts violently banging and kicking on the door.

B11

7.

Mike is shocked by what he just heard. He looks at Ashley.

MIKE
Call the police.

Ashley immediately and nervously dials 911 on her cell phone.

Ashley can hear someone at the patio trying to open the door.

5 INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE/DEN-KITCHEN - NIGHT 5

Two silhouettes are at the patio door as one person tries to force open the door. The other silhouette walks over to the kitchen window trying to force it open.

6 INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT 6

A silhouette is at the living room window.

7 INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE/ENTRYWAY - NIGHT 7

Ashley is on the phone with the 911 operator.

Ashley instinctively steps closer to Mike.

OPERATOR
What is your emergency?

ASHLEY
(terrified)
There are people trying to break into our home.

OPERATOR
What is your address?

Ashley looks around terrified as she hears the people still trying to force their way inside.

Mike is bracing himself against the front door as the forceful banging outside continues.

ASHLEY
118 Peak Road.

OPERATOR
Can you see the people trying to break in?

ASHLEY
No...

We can still hear the other intruders trying to force their way inside.

PRECODE B13

How will we externalize Tension?

Music Cue:Tension

Quality of Motion: Handheld

Camera Motion: Steady

Editing Motion: Med Cuts

Lens:50mm/Telephoto

Frame:

Position:

Setting:

Composition: Isolated

Imagery:

Movement/Blocking:

Lighting: Night Interior

Image Control:

Symbolic Motion:

Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE

Beat 13 - Lights Out!

Point of Change: Cultists stop trying to get in

Mood: Tension

What is the Beat About?

Beat Dynamics: The cultists suddenly stop trying to force their way in,

What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?

For the situation: Something isn't right.

For the Character Arc: Ashley sees that something has changed in Mike.

For the relationships: Ashley is alone.

For the audience: Audience afraid for Ashley

Narrative Question: What's happened to Mike?

Ashley continues to

OPERATOR

Can you tell how many?

ASHLEY

No. A bunch.

OPERATOR

Are you alone?

ASHLEY

No. I'm here with my husband.

Suddenly, the lights go out.

The kicking and suddenly banging stops.

IL5

Mike looks at Ashley and then back at the door.

Mike slowly looks back through the peephole.

911 OPERATOR

What is happening now?

ASHLEY

The lights just went out!

Mike stands, stupefied.

Ashley can tell that something has happened to him.

B13

PRECODE B14

How will we externalize Fear?

Music Cue: Fear

Quality of Motion: Handheld

Camera Motion: Steady

Editing Motion: Med Cuts

Lens:50mm/Telephoto

Frame:

Position:

Angle: FI

Setting:

Composition: Isolated

Imagery:

Movement/Blocking:

Lighting: Night Interior

Image Control:

Symbolic Motion:

Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE

Beat 14 - Mike?

Point of Change: Mike doesn't respond.

Mood: Growing Fear.

What is the Beat About?

Beat Dynamics: Ashley realizes that something is wrong with Mike.

What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?

For the situation: Ashley is in real danger.

For the Character Arc: Ashley worst fears are realized.

For the relationships: Mike is now a threat.

For the audience: Audience fear for Ashley grows.

Narrative Question: What will Mike do?

IL6

He does not respond.

Mike slowly unlocks the door.

Ashley is growing more afraid.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Mike?

Mike slowly turns toward Ashley, looking demonically at her.

Ashley starts to slowly back away from him. Ashley is almost in tears.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Mike?

The 911 Operator can be heard in the background.

B14

PRECODE B15

How will we externalize Sheer Terror?

Music Cue: Sheer Terror

Quality of Motion: Handheld

Camera Motion: Unsteady Follow

Editing Motion: Short-Fast Cuts

Lens:Telephoto

Frame:

Position:

Angle: Low/High

Setting:

Composition: Isolated

Imagery:

Movement/Blocking:

Lighting: Night Interior

Image Control:

Symbolic Motion:

Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE

Beat 15 - Run!!!

Point of Change: Mike growls and lunges at Ashley

Mood: Sheer Terror

What is the Beat About?

Beat Dynamics: Mike attacks Ashley.

What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?

For the situation: Ashley runs for her life.

For the Character Arc: Ashley is terrified.

For the relationships: Mike is now the enemy.

For the audience: Audience terrified.

Narrative Question: Will Mike get Ashley. How will she escape?

911 OPERATOR

What is happening? Mam? Mam?

Ashley continues to cautiously back away.

Mike starts to growl and then lunges insanely at Ashley.

Ashley bolts and runs up the stairs, screaming as she runs.

IL8

Mike chases after her, howling insanely, trying to grab at her ankles but stumbling as she runs up the stairs.

B15

8

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

8

Ashley is chased down the hallway by the howling, demonic Mike.

9

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

9

She runs into the master bedroom and slams the door shut.

Mike pushes against the door. He gets his hand between the door and the door frame.

Ashley puts all her weight against the door and her foot down to keep the door from opening.

10

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

10

Mike demonically howls as he forcefully pushes back.

11

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

11

Ashley quickly grabs the security bar puts it underneath the door knob, preventing Mike from pushing the door open. His hand is still between the door and the frame.

Ashley violently pushes the ratchet down on the security bar, forcing the door tighter, crushing Mike's fingers that are still in the between the door and the frame.

12

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

12

Mike lets out an angry, demonic howl. He uses all of his strength to keep the door open long enough to get his finger out of the way.

13

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

13

Ashley quickly slams the door shut and ratchets the security bar tight.

14

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

14

IL9

Mike is livid. He angrily slams his fist against the door.

B16

PRECODE B16
How will we externalize Fear?
Music Cue: Fear
Quality of Motion: Handheld
Camera Motion: Unsteady Follow
Editing Motion: Short-Fast Cuts
Lens Telephoto
Frame
Position
Angle: High
Setting
Composition: Isolated
Imagery
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion:
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE
Beat 16 - You're Dead!!!
Point of Change: Ashley gets door closed.
Mood: Fear
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics: Ashley is safe for now.
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: Ashley is trapped alone in her bedroom.
For the Character Arc: Ashley apologizes to her attacker.
For the relationships: Mike is angered and threatening.
For the audience: Audience fears for Ashley.
Narrative Question: What will Ashley do now? Will Mike get in?

PRECODE B17
How will we externalize Rising Tension?
Music Cue: Rising Tension
Quality of Motion: Handheld
Camera Motion: Unsteady Follow
Editing Motion: Short-Fast Cuts
Lens Telephoto
Frame
Position
Angle: High
Setting
Composition: Isolated
Imagery
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion:
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE
Beat 17 - Alone & Trapped!
Point of Change: Cultists enter the home.
Mood: Rising Tension
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics:
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: Ashley is trapped alone in her bedroom.
For the Character Arc: Ashley apologizes to her attacker.
For the relationships: Mike is angered and threatening.
For the audience: Audience fears for Ashley.
Narrative Question: What will Ashley do now? Will Mike get in?

MIKE
(growls)
YOU'RE DEAD! YOU'RE DEAD! YOU'RE DEAD!!!

15 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 15
Ashley presses her body against the door. She is crying, devastated, confused. She puts her hand on the door as if trying to reach out to Mike.

ASHLEY
I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

Ashley looks behind her. She is alone in the room. Her worst fears have been realized.

16 INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE/ENTRYWAY - NIGHT 16
A hooded stranger pushes the front door open. He walks in carrying a crowbar. Behind him are 3 other hooded strangers who follow him inside, one of them is carrying a plastic bag filled with round objects.

17 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 17
Ashley is by the door.

OPERATOR
Mam, what's happening?

ASHLEY
I don't know...my husband, he...!

Ashley sobs.

OPERATOR
Are you ok?

ASHLEY
Yes.

OPERATOR
The police are on their way. They'll be there soon. Just stay on the phone with me.

Ashley looks at the photo frame of Kendra.

ASHLEY
(tearing up)
I don't know what's happening.
(MORE)

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
(beat)
I just want to be with my daughter.

OPERATOR
Where is she?

Ashley does not immediately respond.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)
Mam, is your daughter in the house?

ASHLEY
No...she passed away a month ago.

OPERATOR
Oh...I'm so sorry.

There is silence for a moment.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)
You can't give up.

ASHLEY
I feel so alone...

OPERATOR
You're not alone. I know it feels that way. But don't give up.
(beat)
What's your daughter's name?

Ashley responds weakly.

ASHLEY
Kendra.

OPERATOR
What would you tell Kendra if she were in your situation?

Ashley pauses, thinks.

ASHLEY
(weakly)
To be strong.

OPERATOR
That's right. Be strong. The police are on their way.

18 INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT 18
Mike is standing outside the master bedroom door.

DECODE
Beat 18 - Prove Yourself!
Point of Change: Cultists join Mike outside bedroom
Mood: Tension
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics: The threat to Ashley grows in number
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: Cultists gather outside of bedroom with Mike.
For the Character Arc: Mike willing to "prove himself".
For the relationships: Mike is an enemy.
For the audience: Audience angry at Mike
Narrative Question: Will Mike get into the bedroom?

PRECODE B18
How will we externalize Tension?
Music Cue: Tension
Quality of Motion: Handheld
Camera Motion: Unsteady
Editing Motion: Med Cuts
Lens: 50mm
Frame:
Position:
Angle: High
Setting:
Composition: Isolated
Imagery:
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion:
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE
Beat 19 - I'm Not Sure.
Point of Change: Mike stops trying to enter home.
Mood: Low Tension
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics: Something is wrong again.
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: Ashley no longer hears Mike trying to force his way in. .
For the Character Arc: Ashley is confused.
For the relationships: Ashley still alone.
For the audience: Audience confused
Narrative Question: What's happening?

PRECODE B19
How will we externalize Low Tension?
Music Cue: Low Tension
Quality of Motion: Handheld
Camera Motion: Steady
Editing Motion: Long Cuts
Lens: Wide-50mm
Frame:
Position:
Angle: High
Setting:
Composition: Isolated
Imagery:
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion:
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

DECODE
Beat 20 - Join Us or Die!
Point of Change: Ashley sees the Dark One.
Mood: Shock/Horror
What is the Beat About?
Beat Dynamics: The Dark One is in the room,
What does it mean? What is the reality of the situation?
For the situation: The Threat is in the room with Ashley.
For the Character Arc: Ashley must choose: join or die.
For the relationships: Ashley together with Dark One. No longer alone and isolated.
For the audience: Audience shocked.
Narrative Question: What will Ashley do? Join or die?

PRECODE B20
How will we externalize Shock-Fear?
Music Cue: Shock-Fear
Quality of Motion: Steadicam
Camera Motion: Fluid Arc
Editing Motion: Med Cuts
Lens: 50mm
Frame:
Position:
Angle: Fl
Setting:
Composition: Isolated
Imagery:
Movement/Blocking:
Lighting: Night Interior
Image Control:
Symbolic Motion:
Sound Design: Ominous Wind

12.

19 INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT 19

The hooded strangers walk down the hallway toward Mike.

The hooded stranger holds the crowbar out to Mike.

HOODED STRANGER
You have to prove yourself.

MIKE
I already proved myself once, but I'll do it again, gladly.

Mike takes the crowbar, still angry.

Mike starts to wedge the crowbar into the doorframe but he hesitates.

20 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 20

Ashley is still pressed against the door. She turns around and looks toward the bedroom door.

IL6

She is still speaking with the 911 Operator on her cell phone.

OPERATOR
Mam, what's happening now?

ASHLEY
I'm not sure. I don't hear anything.

Ashley puts her ear to the door, listening.

Camera slowly pulls back from Ashley.

We see someone standing behind her.

Terrified, Ashley turns and sees the Dark One behind her.

21 INT. 911 CALL CENTER - NIGHT 21

The 911 operator is listening.

IL10

ASHLEY
Oh God!!!

OPERATOR
Hello? Hello? Mam, are you alright?
Hello?

She can hear a voice through the phone.

13.

DARK ONE
Join us...or die!!!

:FADE TO BLACK