

1408

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FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A dull highway. A crappy sedan roars by.

INT. CRAPPY CAR - DAY

At the wheel, driving this piece of shit, is MIKE ENSLIN, 35, a grizzled, weary soul. He stares glassily at the road, a cigarette behind his ear, a styrofoam cup of Exxon coffee at his mouth.

A sign drifts by: "Woodfin, Rte 251 N - Asheville, Interstate 240 E, Hwy 40, Next Right, Thru Traffic Merge"

Heh? Mike frowns.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK

RAIN pours down on an unpaved country intersection.

Mike stands outside his car, soaked, checking a wet map. He's confused and annoyed. There are no road markings at all. He checks his watch.

EXT. COUNTRY INN - NIGHT

A quaint rural inn, dark of night. The ambiance is picturesque, but off-putting. Porch lanterns glow. Shadows are deep. An ancient elm tree frames the banging weathered sign: "The Camden Inn"

Then, finally -- headlights. Mike's car pulls up in the mud.

INT. INN - NIGHT

Mike trudges into the homey, worn lobby.

MIKE

Hi. Mike Enslin, checking in --

The gregarious INNKEEPERS jump up, excited. They're country folk, beaming.

MR. INNKEEPER

Oh, Mr. Enslin! We were so worried you weren't gonna show!

MRS. INNKEEPER

It's such an honor to have you here.

MIKE
(disinterested)
Yeah. Great. Uh, if I could just
get my key --

They ignore his exhaustion.

MR. INNKEEPER
You probably want to hear all about
our haunted history! Well, that rear
staircase is where the maid reputedly
hung herself in 1870.

MRS. INNKEEPER
There's a picture --

MIKE
Can we do this in the morning?

MRS. INNKEEPER
(rummaging through drawers)
Wait! It's printed in our brochure!

INSERT - BROCHURE

She thrusts out a brochure that says "HAUNTED!" There's a
PHOTO of the lobby, and a faint white shape in a window.

MRS. INNKEEPER
Do you SEE her?

MIKE
Uh --

MRS. INNKEEPER
A guest took that photo in 1986. You
can sort of see Sylvia's "ethereal
apparation" reflected in the window.

Mike stares, unimpressed.

MR. INNKEEPER
At least, Sylvia is what we call her.

MIKE
Terrifying.
(pause)
I'm ready to hit the sack. In your
letter, you mentioned the scariest
rooms were in the old attic?

MRS. INNKEEPER
That's right. The third floor is the
former servant's quarters. People
say all Sylvia's children died up
there of tuberculosis.

(MORE)

MRS. INNKEEPER (CONT'D)

(spooky)

Right up there. Right above where
you and I are standing, right now...

MR. INNKEEPER

Guests have reported strange sounds.
At the stroke of midnight, there's
been weird noises. Creaks. Moans.

(mysterioso)

Our best advice... is to lock your
door from the inside.

CUT TO:

INT. INN - MIKE'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Mike lies on the antique bed, on a quilt, drinking mini-bar
BOOZE. He has an army of tiny Scotches, Gins, Vodkas. He's
bored out of his mind.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

The boozes are empty. Somewhere, a grandfather clock CHIMES
midnight. DONG, DONG, DONG! Mike groggily glances at a
bedside clock. Waiting. Listening. Alert to anything...

Suddenly -- a loud CRASH! Mike jerks, startled.

He jumps up, concerned... then realizes it's only THUNDER. Oh.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

Mike is snoring, drooling, passed out.

CUT TO:

INT. CRAPPY CAR - DRIVING - DAY

Mike is back in the car, driving another endless interstate.

He speaks flatly into a pocket MINI-RECORDER.

MIKE

People spoke of the spectral presence
of Sylvia... though I personally
never encountered her.

(beat)

But in any case, the Eggs Benedict
were delicious, and Mrs. Clark says
if you have a party of four, she'll
make her famous flourless chocolate
cake.

(beat)

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

On a Shiver Scale of 1 to 10, I award
the Camden Inn seven skulls.

Mike clicks the recorder OFF. He puts it down -- then has a
thought and turns it back ON.

MIKE

Fuck 'em. Six skulls.

CUT TO:

EXT. BARNES & NOBLE - NIGHT

A mall bookstore. The marquee shouts "GHOST SURVIVAL GUIDE
Author M. Enslin Tonight! 7 P.M."

INT. BARNES & NOBLE - NIGHT

Mike enters, disheveled. The store is sad and generic -- an
air of listlessness hanging over the shelves. Mike tiredly
approaches the busy CASHIER.

MIKE

Excuse me. I'm Mike Enslin.

CASHIER

Sorry?

MIKE

I'm, uh... the "star" of your
booksigning tonight.

CASHIER

(a dawning awareness)

Oh, right. Right! Okay then!

The Cashier finishes his order, then flicks on a small P.A.
SYSTEM. He grabs a MICROPHONE and reads off a xeroxed FLYER:

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Attention, book lovers! In the
Author's Corner tonight, we have
noted occult writer Mike Enslin!
He's the author of the bestselling
Ghost Survival Guides, with such
titles as "Ten Haunted Hotels," "Ten
Haunted Graveyards," and "Ten Haunted
Lighthouses"!

Around the store, people look up. Mike leans into the guy.

MIKE

You got a bathroom I can clean up in,
first?

CUT TO:

INT. BARNES & NOBLE - LATER

The event. It's depressing -- the sad reality of booksignings. The back of the store has 30 or 40 folding chairs, but there's only FIVE SPECTATORS. Mike sits alongside a pile of his paperbacks, discoursing.

MIKE

Sure, these places have colorful histories. That's the hook: The wedding night murder. The caretaker who leaped to his death. The runaway horse that trampled the old lady. The war widow who went crazy and threw the baby down the well...

The people go wide-eyed. Mike lets this hang... then deflates it.

MIKE

But there's never any documentation! If you do one iota of research, the tragic event never happened! It's just a marketing hook invented by desperate hotels when the interstate gets built too far away.

The crowd doesn't get it. One EMPHATIC MAN raises his hand.

EMPHATIC MAN

Have you ever seen a poltergeist?

MIKE

(he reacts)

See? That's exactly what I'm talking about. You didn't hear one word I just said. I can type myself sick debunking these places, shooting arrows in the legends, and it only makes people want to stay there more.

LADY

(she raises her hand)

Well, my family's planning a trip this summer. Would you say there's a higher concentration of ghosts in New England or in the South?

Mike wipes his face.

MIKE

I would say nowhere, but no one's listening. You'll probably want to pick-up my "Ten Haunted Antebellum Mansions."

CUT TO:

LATER

Mike is signing paperbacks, rote, the same autograph over and over: "Stay Scared! Mike Enslin" "Stay Scared! Mike Enslin"

MIKE

Of course, I try to be scientific. I travel with an EMF meter, an infrared camera... a full-range spectrometer. But I've never had to use them, because there's nothing to record!

Then -- a HARDBACK enters frame. He looks up, surprised.

A NERVOUS WOMAN holds the book. It's a dusty, faded copy of Mike's early novel, "The Road Back Nowhere." The artwork is heartfelt: A watercolor of a boy holding a surfboard.

MIKE

Jesus. What rock did you find that under?

NERVOUS WOMAN

Ebay.

MIKE

Wow. Haven't seen one of these in years.

(awkward)

How much did it... go for?

The woman bites her lip, preferring not to say.

NERVOUS WOMAN

Well, there weren't many bidders.

(she smiles)

But it's a lovely book. Are you going to write another one like this?

He glances at the back cover: A decade-old PHOTO of himself -- young and optimistic.

Mike's face falls.

MIKE

Nope. That was a different guy.

CUT TO:

EXT. FLORIDA BEACH - DAWN

The sun is peeking over the horizon. The pink sky is lovely, breaking over a rocky inlet.

Mike drives into a beach parking lot. He glances over -- spotting a cluster of parked cars. Across the sand, a GROUP of dedicated SURFERS in wetsuits ride the early morning waves.

Mike stares -- then keeps driving. A surfboard sticks out of his car. He goes to the far end of the parking lot, off by himself, then pulls over.

EXT. OCEAN - LATER

Mike rides a wave. It's exquisite. For him, this experience isn't about adrenaline, but tranquility. The weariness that usually hangs over him is gone. He's alone and perfectly serene. Happy.

Mike enjoys the spray in his face. Until -- he hears a strange BUZZING. He looks around, then UP.

ABOVE

A small AIRPLANE flies over, towing a BANNER.

Mike squints, trying to read it.

The sky is too bright. The banner is silhouetted...

Mike focuses harder... distracted... when --

BAM!

A monstrous WAVE suddenly POUNDS him!

Crash! Mike gets slammed underwater.

UNDERNEATH

Mike gets pulled down.

He screams out, but only bubbles emerge.

The water BATTERS him. Everything swirls. He spins, losing track of which way is up.

Mike struggles, desperate... trying to reach for sky... getting sucked deeper toward the darkness...

When --

ANGLE - HIS SURFBOARD

suddenly appears from above. Like a godsend.

Startled, Mike grabs for it -- when -- it unexpectedly pitches and HAMMERS him in the head.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - LATER

ECU - MIKE'S FACE

Mike lies mutely on his back, on the sand. Hyperventilating.

Winded. Eyes glassy.

But alive.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAILBOXES, ETC. - DAY

An overlit, bleached-white fluorescent hellhole. An anonymous storefront of mailboxes, packing supplies, and key-cutting.

Mike enters and goes over to his mailbox. He unlocks it, removing a STARTLING AMOUNT of MAIL.

The friendly MAILBOX GUY nods.

MAILBOX GUY
You've been gone awhile.

MIKE
(disinterested)
Yeah.

INT. PALM COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Mike sits in a corner booth, alone. His breakfast sits abandoned, runny egg yolks congealed. He sips his eighth cup of coffee.

The table is spread with months of opened mail. Dozens of BROCHURES for HOTELS, INNS, B & B's. Mike flips through them. Some have macabre marketing -- "Spirits! Strange?" A few have even Photoshopped transparent phantoms into their antique-laden lobbies. Mike glances at a Post-it: "Dear Mr. Enslin, please consider our Motel for your next Ghost Guide."

He stares -- then tosses it. He rummages through more mail: A bill from a nursing home. Skeptical Enquirer magazine. The Weekly World News. He slashes an envelope with his fancy LETTER OPENER. Inside is a childish greeting card -- a cartoon tiger says "You're Terrrrrrrr-ific! Happy Birthday!"

Mike frowns, then throws it in the trash pile. He reaches for a POSTCARD.

INSERT - POSTCARD

The back has but three scribbled words: "DON'T ENTER 1408"

ON MIKE

Hm. He gazes, then flips over the card. It's a generic giveaway HOTEL POSTCARD. A montage of photos: Elegant 1920s exterior. Classy rooms. An overstuffed lounge filled with smiling, attractive rich people. A scrolling font says: "When in New York City, visit the Dolphin Hotel!"

Mike fixates on the word "New York." His face darkens, and he tosses the card in the junk pile.

He starts to move on -- when something catches his eye. He peers back at the card...

TIGHT - POSTCARD

Again, "DON'T ENTER 1408." We PUSH IN on the numbers, until they fill the screen. 1408... 1408...

Mike thinks. He clicks a pen, then scribbles the digits as a math column: $1 + 4 + 0 + 8 = \dots\dots\dots 13.$

A smile flickers across his face.

MIKE

Cute.

Mike is amused. He considers the card, then suddenly OPENS HIS LAPTOP COMPUTER.

ANGLE - COMPUTER

Mike spins the mouse, clicking "Internet." He waits patiently, while the green WI-FI icon scrolls. Searching... searching... until -- "NO SIGNAL AVAILABLE"

Mike groans.

MIKE

Goddamn corner booth.

WIDE

Irrked, Mike grabs the computer. He JUMPS from his booth and starts meandering around the coffee shop, eyeballing the computer screen like a hungry hawk.

A few steps -- Ah! A glimmer of green, then red.

He marches toward the door -- eyes glued to the screen. The DINERS shoot him looks, but he is indifferent to other people. He lifts the laptop over his head, trying different positions.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - SAME TIME

Mike exits the building. Suddenly, he finds a signal.

Ah-HA! The Internet opens. The WEB PAGE speaks:

INTERNET LADY VOICE
Good morning, Mike.

MIKE
(he smiles)
Good morning, Fake Voice Lady!

He quickly sits on a cinderblock wall and starts EXPERTLY TYPING.

INSERT - COMPUTER

Mike goes to "GOOGLE." He types in "DOLPHIN HOTEL NEW YORK"

Beat. A page of text appears. Mike clicks on a link to the Dolphin. A millisecond pause -- then the DOLPHIN HOTEL'S stylish HOMEPAGE APPEARS. It is exactly what one would expect: Chandeliers. Clinking champagne flutes. Links to "SPA" "DINING" "BANQUET FACILITIES" "RESERVATIONS"...

Mike knows this is a dead end. He clicks back to "GOOGLE," then tries "DOLPHIN HOTEL GHOSTS"

The computer responds, "NO RESULTS"

Mike backspaces and tries again: "DOLPHIN HOTEL SUPERNATURAL"

The computer responds, "NO RESULTS"

Mike backspaces and tries yet again: "DOLPHIN HOTEL HAUNTING"

The computer responds, "NO RESULTS"

Mike stares. Unbowed, his face darkens. He tries a different approach: "DOLPHIN HOTEL DEATH"

THE COMPUTER

pauses -- then the SCREEN FILLS WITH ENTRIES.

MIKE

suddenly gasps, horrified.

MIKE
Jesus Christ...

CUT TO:

INT. RESEARCH LIBRARY - DAY

Mike sits in a musty library basement, scrolling through MICROFICHE rolls. On the amber screen is an ancient New York Herald-Tribune: The headline screams "FACTORY OWNER LEAPS FROM HOTEL." There is a portrait of a stuffy-looking rich man, then underneath a gory WEEGEE-LIKE PHOTO of a bloody mess on a New York sidewalk, the cops dourly cleaning up.

For the first time, Mike seems affected. Truly bothered.

Shaken, he scribbles notes on a LEGAL PAD. Under the word "DOLPHIN," we see the pad is filled with items...

A spooky pause... when suddenly -- RING!! It's his CELLPHONE.

Mike jumps, startled. Embarrassed by the noise, he quickly answers it.

MIKE
Hello?

But, nothing. Mike frowns.

MIKE
Hello! This is Mike Enslin. Is
anybody there?

No response. Just -- a faint crackling STATIC.

Mike struggles to hear -- when CLICK. The line goes dead.

Weird. Mike looks back at his list of deaths...

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

CU on a jumble of old NEWSPAPER ARTICLES. A blizzard of words and headlines: "SUICIDE"... "DROWNING"... "ELECTROCUTION"... "HEART ATTACK." We slowly PULL OUT, revealing dozens of Dolphin articles, tacked on a corkboard. A blur of photos, nasty death images and old-fashioned formal portraits. The victims look like solid early 20th-century citizens: A walrus-moustached man in a bowler. A prim woman in round spectacles.

We CONTINUE PULLING OUT, finding Mike on a ratty couch. Surrounded by these horrors. He holds the Dolphin POSTCARD, staring. Agitated. Suddenly he downs a shot of bourbon, then dials the phone number. He waits. RING. RING --

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Good evening, Dolphin Hotel. How may
I direct your call?

MIKE
Hi. I'm calling about Room 1408.

A strange pause.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
I don't believe we have such a room.

MIKE
(long beat)
Don't you...?

Another pause.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Er, one moment, please.

Mike gets put on HOLD. Sprightly MUSIC kicks in, and a
RECORDED ANNOUNCEMENT.

SMOOTH RECORDING
"When staying at the Dolphin, be
certain to enjoy New York's finest
dining, at the fabled Blue Marlin
Restaurant on our Mezzanine lev--"

HOTEL VOICE
(cutting in)
May I help you?

MIKE
Yes, I'd like to stay in Room 1408.

HOTEL VOICE
That room is unavailable.

Mike raises an eyebrow.

MIKE
I didn't tell you which date.

No response.

MIKE
How 'bout Saturday?

HOTEL VOICE
It's unavailable.

MIKE
Tuesday?

HOTEL VOICE
Unavailable.

MIKE
(ticked off)
Next month?

HOTEL VOICE
Unavailable.

MIKE
Next summer!

HOTEL VOICE
(beat)
Thank you for calling.

CLICK. The man HANGS UP.

Mike is stupefied.

CUT TO:

INT. MANHATTAN LITERARY AGENCY - DAY

A busy New York agency with million-dollar views. SAM FARRELL, a gregarious old-school gentleman agent, yells out.

SAM
Hey! Where's good Chinese, near
48th? I gotta have lunch with that
idiot from Random House.

SECRETARY
(on the phone, gesturing)
It's Mike Enslin, calling from
Florida again.

Sam winces. He looks around, then hails a bookish LAWYER.

SAM
Clay! You got a sec' for Mike
Enslin?

LAWYER
Uh -- sure --

SAM
Great.

Sam PULLS him into his leather-bound office.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE

Sam slams the door and lowers his voice.

RM

SAM
Now look, this guy tends to get a little morose, so try to keep the energy up. Otherwise, he stewes in his own funk.

Sam PUNCHES his speakerphone.

SAM
Mike!!!

MIKE (V.O.)
Sam --

SAM
Read the first five chapters last night. Spooky shit. Couldn't sleep a wink. It's gonna make a bundle --

MIKE (V.O.)
So did you --

SAM
You better believe I did! And I got our top lawyer here right now!
(he winks)
Mike, Clay. Clay, Mike. Mike, talk fast. This guy's \$400 an hour.

MIKE (V.O.)
So, about the Dolphin --

SAM
Yes, the Dolphin! That stick-up-its-ass relic on 61st. Too posh for a free plug! Well, you're gonna LOVE what Clay cooked up: He dug around and found you a Federal Civil Rights law! Ain't that a hoot?
(he chuckles)
Like somebody would discriminate against you: A well-to-do white man!
(amused)
But the law's the law: If the room's not occupied, they have to give it to you.

MIKE (V.O.)
Good.

CLAY
So we'll book it, and if they refuse, we'll rattle our saber and file suit.

A pause. Sam turns quiet, leaning into the speakerphone.

SAM

But Mike... on a more personal note:
Are you really sure you want to come
here?

MIKE (V.O.)

(tentative)

S-sure. It'll make a solid closing
chapter for the --

SAM

Yeah yeah. I know the routine.

(sincere)

But seriously... buddy. It's New
York. All that happened...

(pause)

Do you really want to put yourself
through that...?

INTERCUT:

CLOSEUP - MIKE

His face clouds. He considers his past, then whispers.

MIKE

I'll be quick. And it's a different
part of town...

SAM

Are you gonna call Lily?

MIKE

N-no. It's a job.
(his voice cracks)
I'll be in, and out.

We hold on Mike, brimming with uncertainty...

Then -- a loud SHRIEEEEEEK!

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - DAY

An AIRPLANE descends into New York.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Mike looks out the window. The grid of New York is below,
neatly geometric. Until -- the plane suddenly banks, swooping
in. The whole view spins.

Mike recoils, nauseated.

EXT. NEW YORK - DAY

Blackness. Then -- a TAXI emerges into the light. We've been looking into the Holland Tunnel.

INT. CAB - DRIVING

A carved crucifix swings from the mirror.

Mike rides in back. Face wan. New York's a jumble. He peers about -- everything seems discordant. Canal Street is a collection of unsettling images:

Smoke curls from a grate. It clears, revealing a MAN lying motionless on the sidewalk.

Sparks arc inside an open factory door.

A snarling DOG barks behind bars.

Seafood decomposes in a fish market.

The CABBIE HONKS furiously at the congestion.

CABBIE
This traffic's a fuckin' nightmare.
I'm gonna cut up Eighth.

MIKE
(woozy)
N-no. Please. Don't go that way...
Canal's fine...

CABBIE
Just lemme drive.

The Cabbie hooks left.

Mike blanches in back. The cab drives uptown, and the sense of DREAD grows. Crumbling buildings block out the sun. Mike grimaces, anxious. Knowing something is approaching...

OUT THE WINDOW

An old brick school comes into view. On the PLAYGROUND,
CHILDREN RUN AROUND.

Mike shudders. Distraught, he averts his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOLPHIN HOTEL - NIGHT

A sumptuous refugee from the Jazz Age. A STATUE OF A SMILING DOLPHIN dominates the portal. It leers a happy greeting.

Mike's cab arrives. He gets out, carrying a duffel.

INT. DOLPHIN LOBBY - NIGHT

Swanky and archaic, but beautifully maintained. The last time it was hip, Dorothy Parker got drunk in the coatroom.

The DOORMAN opens the door for Mike. Mike's sweating, his usual insouciance rattled. He glances around the small lobby: On the mezzanine, a PIANIST plays Gershwin. Chic GUESTS in evening wear cavort. A RICH OLD COUPLE walks a poodle. A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN in a gown casually breastfeeds a baby.

Mike goes up to Reception. The DESK CLERK smiles formally.

DESK CLERK

Welcome to the Dolphin, sir. Are you checking in?

MIKE

Yes. Mike Enslin, staying for one night.

Hmhhh? The Desk Clerk suddenly tightens up, awkward.

DESK CLERK

Uh... could you excuse me one moment?

She hurries off. Mike raises an eyebrow.

We follow the Clerk as she scurries down the counter. She reaches a rigid ASSISTANT MANAGER and whispers. He listens, giving Mike a discreet glance. The Assistant Manager whispers something back, then rushes out a rear door.

Beat.

Mike waits. Biding his time...

Pause -- then the rear door opens, and out glides the Manager, MR. OLIN. Olin, 60, is a precise man of European air, his tailored suit, carefully-parted hair and manicured nails only made bearable by his clipped dry wit.

TIGHT - OLIN

He nods professionally and extends his hand.

OLIN

Mr. Enslin, I'm Gerald Olin, the manager of the Dolphin. If there's any way I can be of assistance while you're here -- dinner reservations, theater, anything at all -- please know that I'm delighted to be at your service.

MIKE
Uh, that's great.
(chirpy)
If I can just get my key to 1408,
I'll stay out of your hair.

Beat. Olin's eyes narrow.

OLIN
You wouldn't prefer an upgrade? An
executive suite with complimentary
breakfast?

MIKE
(hostile)
1408, please.

OLIN
So insistent.
(his voice lowers)
Mr. Enslin, could you humor me with a
more... private conversation?

INT. OLIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

An impeccable Edwardian study. Oak paneling. Fine books. An
antique desk with a lozenge-shaped green lamp.

Olin opens a humidor.

OLIN
Cigar?

MIKE
No, thank you. I don't smoke.

Olin's eyes shift to the cigarette behind Mike's ear. Mike
sees this.

MIKE
I quit years ago.
(he starts to explain)
The cigarette behind the ear is... I
dunno. Habit. Part affectation,
part superstition. A writer thing.

OLIN
Well, then, do you drink?

MIKE
Of course! I just said I'm a writer.

Olin smiles thinly. He opens a liquor cabinet and removes a
fine BOTTLE OF COGNAC.

OLIN
Remy 1939. Exquisite. Runs about
\$800 a bottle, when you can find it --

MIKE
(he raises his hand)
I appreciate the bribe, but I intend
to stay in that room.

OLIN
(put off)
How long?

MIKE
How long? Er, my usual is overnight.

OLIN
Oh. I see.
(he purses his lips)
Nobody has ever lasted more than an
hour.

Mike takes this in, then cracks up, PARODYING Olin with a
silly Transylvania accent.

MIKE
Oooo! Bleh! "Nobody has ever lasted
more than an hour. When the clouds
pass over the moon, the spirits rise
from the family graveyard to haunt
the ballroom."

Olin stares, unamused.

OLIN
I don't know why you're mocking me.
I am genuinely, to the best of my
ability, trying to help you.

MIKE
No, you're just playing a little
game, which frankly I find tiresome.
You're "selling the mystique." But
eventually, we both know you'll give
me the key, I'll write my story, and
your bookings will go up 50%.

Olin is repelled. Mike smirks and pulls out his mini-recorder.

MIKE
Do you mind if I record our
conversation?
(he waits; beat)
Good. I'll take that as a yes.

Mike hits "RECORD." The LED glows red, like an eye, and the little wheels start spinning...

Olin glares, his politeness fading.

OLIN

Sir, you completely misunderstand the situation. The Dolphin may not have the cachet of the Plaza or the Carlyle... but we run 90% occupancy.

(emphatic)

This isn't about my concern for the hotel, OR about my concern for you. Frankly -- selfishly -- I don't want you to enter 1408, because I don't want to have to clean up the mess.

Olin lets this chilling thought hang.

Mike's eyes widen.

OLIN

Hotels are all about presentation and creature comforts... though behind the scenes, we witness quite the bit of nastiness.

(heavy)

But my training is as a manager, not a coroner! Under my watch there have been four deaths. Four! After the last one, I said enough. I forbade any guests from ever entering again.

MIKE

And that last suicide was... Randolph Hyde? 1996? An orthodontist who slit his wrists and cut off his genitals?

OLIN

Yes. You've done your homework. Grievously, since the hotel opened 95 years ago, there have been seven jumpers, four overdoses, five hangings, three m --

MIKE

Three mutilations. Two stranglings:
(into the MINIRECORDER)
"Manager Gerald Olin is well-versed in the hotel's tragic history, dryly reciting the docket of carnage like a bookkeeper discussing his ledger."

OLIN

(he frowns)

You think you're clever?!

(MORE)

OLIN (CONT'D)
Well in your investigation, did you
discover the twenty-two natural
deaths?

Mike leans forward, interest piqued.

MIKE
"Natural"? Uh, no. What --

OLIN
You didn't find them, because they're
not reported in newspapers. But all
told, 56 people have died up there.

Mike is momentarily speechless.

Olin pulls out a small key and opens his desk bottom drawer.
He removes a BULGING FILE and brings it around to Mike. Olin
stares a moment -- then sits next to him.

OLIN
You know nothing. 1408's guests have
died of heart attacks, strokes,
drownings --

MIKE
"Drownings"?

OLIN
Yes. Mr. Grady Miller died drowning
in a bowl of chicken soup.

MIKE
(taken aback)
H-how?

OLIN
How indeed? Isn't that interesting?
Well, it's all in the file:
(he PATS the folder)
And you're welcome to read all of it.
Every word! I'll even give you my
office! You can peruse the materials
to your heart's content. You can
take notes. Put it all in your book!
(pause; he turns somber)
In return, my only condition... is
that you don't stay in the room.

Mike eyeballs the file.

Considering. Then --

MIKE
I never got that drink.

Olin smiles a flicker, then gets up for the Cognac. He takes out a crystal snifter, wipes it clean, carefully pours...

Mike notices a silver DESK FRAME. He furtively cranes around... to check out who's in it. And -- it's a calendar.

Olin hands Mike the drink. Mike gratefully snorts it, enjoying the flavor, the spreading warmth. Then, he looks up.

MIKE

No.

OLIN

Dammit to HELL!

Olin BLOWS UP and angrily THROWS the file at Mike.

OLIN

Fine! READ the blasted file! Read it anyway!

(livid)

Once you see it, you won't WANT to go in the room!

Mike is stunned at this outburst. Hesitant, he opens the TOP FOLDER. Inside is a pile of wrinkled yellow newsprint. Olin testily narrates from memory.

OLIN

The first victim! Kevin O'Malley. A sewing machine salesman who checked into the hotel opening week, October 1912!

MIKE

(he winces at the photo)
He... cut his own throat?

OLIN

Yes. But that's not the horrific part. Afterward, in a fit of insanity, he tried to stitch himself back up with a sewing needle before he bled to death.

Mike makes a face.

MIKE

Jesus...

OLIN

Mr. Enslin! No one needs to know you didn't go in. I'll give you a fake receipt! You can take photographs in 1404: The layouts are identical, nobody will know the difference --

MIKE

Hey, my readers expect the truth --

OLIN

No, your readers don't expect much of anything -- except grotesquerie and cheap thrills:

(snide, from memory)

"The headless ghost of Eugene Rilsby, forever walking his deserted farmhouse. The Barking Phantom of Mount Hope Cemetery --"

MIKE

(surprised)

How do you know that?!

OLIN

I've done my own research! Your books are easy to find -- in the cheap paperback section.

(beat)

And they are completely cynical. The work of a talented, intelligent man who doesn't believe in anything but himself.

Mike reacts, pissed.

MIKE

Where the fuck do you get off --!

(hurt)

This meeting's over --

OLIN

Oh please. Quit acting like a sore schoolgirl.

(calming)

I said you were talented. There was that first book... I -- I rather enjoyed that. It was popular. Hardback. Er... what was it called? "The Road To Nowhere" --?

MIKE

(uneasy)

"The Road Back Nowhere."

OLIN

That was sort of... a gilded memoir? Travels of a young man --

MIKE

(defensive)

Only parts of it were true --

OLIN

The father seemed like a real s.o.b. --

Mike seethes. He hits "STOP" on the recorder. He jumps up.

MIKE

Give me my key.

OLIN

Mr. Enslin --

MIKE

Give me my key! Do you know why I
can walk into any spooky old room?
Because I know that ghoulies and
ghosties don't exist.

(dark)

And that's good, because I also know
there's no God to protect us from
them, if they did.

CUT TO:

INT. DOLPHIN LOBBY - NIGHT

Behind Reception, a wall of old-fashioned mail slots. Olin
carries over a little stool. He steps up to 1408's mailbox,
reaching his hand far... far back into the shadowy recess.

He fiddles around, then pulls out a TARNISHED KEY on a long
brass paddle. Embossed are the numbers 1408.

Mike reacts, surprised.

MIKE

You still use actual keys? That's a
nice touch. Antiquey.

(beat)

Most hotels use magnetic cards.

OLIN

So do we. 1408 is the exception.

(beat)

Electronic devices don't work
properly in there. Computers...
cellphones... wristwatches...

(pause)

You don't happen to have a pacemaker,
do you, Mr. Enslin?

Mike shoots him a look. He speaks into his mini-recorder.

MIKE

"Manager claims phantom in room
interferes with --"

OLIN
I didn't say "phantom."

MIKE
Uh, "spirit." "Specter."

OLIN
You misunderstand. What's in 1408
isn't that kind of presence.

MIKE
Then what is it?

WIDE

Olin pads away. He crosses the rococo lobby, guiding Mike to the ELEVATOR. He presses "UP," then turns and whispers.

OLIN
It's an evil fucking room.

Mike's eyebrows raise.

DING! The elevator arrives. The shimmery doors open.

Olin gestures: After you. Mike enters. Olin starts to follow -- when a MAITRE'D in a tux comes running over. He interrupts Olin and quickly MUTTERS something in French. Olin nods and MUTTERS back. He scribbles his signature on a form. The Maitre'd bows and runs off.

INT. ELEVATOR - SAME TIME

Olin enters. It's an old-fashioned cage. Olin hits "14," and the doors rattle closed. They stand in silence.

OLIN
Do you enjoy traveling alone?

Mike ignores this. He stares at the panel: Rows of BUTTONS, with the customary lie: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12... 14 15 16

MIKE
Why do hotels think they can just
make the number 13 disappear?

Olin chuckles. They lurch upward, lights ticking: 5...6...7...

MIKE
How filthy's the room? The sheets
haven't been changed in a decade.

OLIN
No, no, no. This is a professional
establishment. Our maids give 1408 a
light turn once a month.

(MORE)

OLIN (CONT'D)

(beat)

But I supervise, and they work in pairs. We treat the room as a chamber filled with poison gas. We stay only ten minutes, and I insist the door be kept open.

Olin's face tightens, regretful.

OLIN

Even then... last year, a young maid from El Salvador found herself locked in the bathroom. Just for a moment. When we pulled her out, she was --

MIKE

Dead?

Olin stares.

OLIN

No. Blind. She had taken a pair of scissors and carved out her eyes.

DING! The elevator hits 14. The doors open.

INT. 14TH FLOOR - SAME TIME

Mike peers out. It's a perfectly uneventful corridor -- red-and-gold carpet, drab end tables, old-tyme light fixtures.

OLIN

Your floor.

Mike waits for Olin to take a step -- but the man is immobile.

OLIN

I'm afraid this is as far as I go.
The room is at the end of the hall to the right.

Mike nods, a tad apprehensive. He exits -- on legs that seem heavier. Mike takes a few steps, then turns.

AT THE END

Olin stands framed in the elevator, an ordinary man in a plain suit. Hands clasped, face withdrawn, he sighs.

OLIN

Good luck.

Olin pulls out the bottle of Cognac and tosses it. Startled, Mike catches it. He starts to respond -- but the doors SHUT.

Olin is gone.

MIKE

is now alone. He hoists his duffel, then walks slowly down the hushed hallway. Past 1401... 1402...

Mike examines Olin's file.

INSERT - FILE

A grisly PHOTOGRAPH marked "KEVIN O'MALLEY." He lies dead in the bathtub. His eyes are wide, his throat gashed open, a sewing needle protruding from raw flesh.

MIKE

grimaces. He walks past 1404... past a moldering room service tray. On the plate are remains of a beef burger soaked in red ketchup. A fly buzzes...

INSERT - FILE

Back to the photos. Mike flips to a nasty half-covered BODY in bed. The sheets are soaked.

IN THE HALL

Mike is getting rattled. He makes a turn. 1406 goes by... 1407... wood-paneled doors and elegant wallpaper...

Mike finds a scratched NOTE on hotel stationery.

INSERT - FILE

Frantic writing: "My brother was eaten by wolves on the Connecticut Turnpike"

IN THE HALL

Mike stops, considering this oddity.

He looks up -- and realizes he's in front of 1401.

Huh?

Mike looks around, confused. Somehow, he's back at the elevator.

MIKE

What the fuck?

Mike slowly shakes his head. Then, he packs up the file and marches away. Pay attention!

WIDE

Mike watches the numbers go by. Get to that room! 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. He swings around a corner. And there, unassuming and anonymous, is 1408.

Finally.

Mike pulls out his brass KEY. He starts to insert it -- when, he's startled by WHIMPERING.

AT THE NEXT ROOM

is a YOUNG MOTHER turned away from us. She holds a sobbing BABY. She fumbles with her mag card, then disappears inside.

BACK ON MIKE AT THE DOOR

Okay. He takes a breath, then inserts the key in the lock.

MICRO-CLOSEUP - INSIDE THE LOCK

The vintage mechanism looks like a GIGANTIC DARK CHAMBER, filled with crazy angles of cold steel.

The key enters like a medieval battering ram. It slowly turns. The tumblers RUMBLE with echoing CLINKS and CRICKS. The sound rises ominously LOUD...

BACK TO MIKE - NORMAL PERSPECTIVE

And, the sound becomes a teeny CLICK.

The door unlocks.

Inside the next room, the Young Mother's VOICE leaks out:

YOUNG MOTHER (O.S.)
(singing softly)
"Mama loves her baby, baby, baby..."

The knot in Mike's stomach grows.

He grips the doorknob. He lifts up his recorder.

MIKE
"It's 7:52 p.m., and I'm about to enter Room 1408 of the Dolphin Hotel. If something happens to me, I, Michael Enslin, being of sound mind, do hereby leave all my earthly belongings and whatnot to my ex-wife Lily."

He hits STOP.

Then, he slowly turns the knob --

The tension builds --

The wooden door opens --

And...

INT. 1408 - SAME TIME

It's -- just a hotel room.

A two-room suite, pleasant and banal. Pastel sitting area, beige carpet, forgettable furniture.

Mike sees this -- and gasps, relieved. He starts LAUGHING.

MIKE

That's it?

(he LAUGHS harder)

That's friggin' IT?!

Astonished, he enters and throws his stuff down. He defiantly SLAMS the door shut and SHOUTS.

MIKE

All right, Olin!! You win Round One!

(annoyed with himself)

You had me goin'! Where's the spiderwebs, the lightning, the river of blood?! This is just... a room!

Mike gives himself a tour.

There's a couch. A coffee table. A desk with various items: A fax machine. A glass ashtray. An old-fashioned rotary telephone. A book of matches, with a Norman Rockwellish sketch of a smiling Doorman at the hotel.

On the wall are three framed paintings. In the carpet below is a water stain.

The wall THERMOSTAT says 80. Mike clicks the "down" arrow.

INT. BEDROOM

There's a queen-size bed with fluffy pillows. A TV. A nightstand Bible. Mike picks it up... then tosses it aside.

INT. BATHROOM

Mike flicks on the bathroom lights. It's bright and sparkling -- a pleasing glow of luxury.

There's a tub. A bidet. Baskets of soap.

The toilet paper roll is folded in a fancy little triangle.
Mike tears off a sheet and wipes his nose.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Mike opens an armoire and finds the MINI-BAR. He peruses the sodas, booze and chips. He glances at the price sheet.

MIKE
Eight dollars for Corn-Nuts? This is
an evil fucking room.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Mike lies on the made bed, eating Corn-Nuts and swigging Olin's Cognac. He narrates into his recorder, from memory:

MIKE
"The living room has two chairs, a sofa, a writing desk, and a faux-antique armoire. The carpet is beige and unremarkable, except for a stain beneath a thrift-store painting of a sailing ship."

TIGHT - THE PAINTING

We FOCUS ON the painting, as Mike describes it from memory.

MIKE (O.S.)
"The work is executed in the always dull Currier & Ives fashion -- sailors on a white schooner."

We MOVE TO the SECOND PAINTING -- an old lady in a rocking chair.

MIKE (O.S.)
"The second painting is an old woman, a la Whistler's mother, smiling down as small children play at her feet."

We MOVE TO the THIRD PAINTING -- a British hunting scene.

MIKE (O.S.)
"The third and final, painfully-dull painting is the ever popular "The Hunt" -- horses, hounds, and constipated British lords.

(beat)
"These paintings have been here a long time. If I lifted them, I'm sure I'd see light patches.

(MORE)

MIKE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Or squirming bugs, like when you turn
over a rock."

BACK ON MIKE

MIKE
"The bedroom has a queen-size bed,
two nightstands, and butterfly
wallpaper.
(beat)
"Some smartass spoke of the banality
of evil. If that's so, then we've
entered the seventh ring of Hell."

Mike gets up and walks to the window. He opens the drapes.

OUTSIDE, another building completely fills the view. Below
are cars and a huge lit-up BANK CLOCK. Mike opens the paned
window. TRAFFIC NOISE rises in.

MIKE
"The panorama is a typical cramped
New York view of nothing: A gray
building, and honking traffic below."

The clock outside clicks from 7:59 to 8:00 PM.

Suddenly, LOUD MUSIC.

Mike jumps, startled.

BEHIND HIM

The clock RADIO has gone off. The CARPENTERS sing:

THE CARPENTERS (O.S.)
(singing)
"We've only just begun..."

Mike laughs. He turns it OFF, flicking the alarm switch.

MIKE
Silly...

Mike turns -- then suddenly freezes.

THE BED

is turned down. The sheet is folded, and there are little
mint chocolates on the pillows.

MIKE

gapes, stupefied.

MIKE
Holy shiit.

Mike blinks, as if this will make the mints disappear.

But they don't.

He strolls over and picks up a mint. He peers...

MIKE

Bravo, Olin. That is VERY unsettling.

Mike opens the candy, then EATS it. He thinks, his wheels spinning. Until -- he suddenly stops, mid-chew.

MIKE

That means someone's in the room..!

Mike whirls.

WIDE

Emboldened, Mike RUNS to the CLOSET. He slams open the door -- and -- it's empty.

Hm. Mike looks around. Ah! Suddenly he drops to his knees and peers under the BED. But... there's nothing.

Hm! Mike thinks. He bolts into the bathroom. He grabs the shower curtain, takes a breath, then YANKS it aside.

And -- nobody. Huh?!

Mike wracks his mind. Tantalized.

MIKE

Come out, come out...

Detective-like, he starts RAPPING on the drywall.

RAP! RAP RAP!

He RAPS his way toward the door... when... something catches his eye.

TIGHT - TOILET PAPER

The toilet paper roll has returned to its original state. Once again, it has a folded triangle.

ANGLE - MIKE

His eyes bulge.

MIKE

Whoa. Bizarre.

(beat)

A ghost that offers turndown service.

He gawks at it. Then, he pulls out his recorder. CLICK!

MIKE

"Okay, let's Encyclopedia Brown this fucker. I was facing the window. Then I saw the mints, ran to the closet, which would leave time for Houdini to get in the bathroom, do the paper trick --

(he stops)

"No, I would've seen him --

(beat)

"No. Unless he started in the bathroom, so when I turned my back, he did the mints and escaped into... the living room!"

Mike barrels into the

INT. LIVING ROOM

He lopes around -- searching... searching. Until, he spots -- the AIR VENT up in the ceiling.

Ah! Mike runs up -- and thinks he sees movement inside. Or, does he?

He stands on his tiptoes and SHOUTS up into it.

MIKE

Hellooo! Hello, asshole! You're gonna have to try harder!

(he smirks)

Nice and HOT up there??

Mike wipes his brow. He realizes he's sweating.

Mike runs to the THERMOSTAT and checks it. It's now 84.

MIKE

Oh, for God's sake.

Mike pushes the "down" arrow again. Nothing. He BANGS it. Irked, he grabs the clunky telephone, peers at the archaic dial, then sticks his finger in the hole and dials "0."

It spins. Click-click-click-click-click. Then --

MIKE

Hello! This is Mr. Enslin in Room 1408.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Good evening. Are you ready to check out?

MIKE

"Check out"?!

(he chuckles mordantly)

Why would I do that, when there's such wonderful maid service?

(beat)

And so discreet!

(beat)

No, I just need someone to fix my thermostat. This room's on fire.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Of course, sir. We'll send an engineer right up.

MIKE

Thanks.

Mike hangs up.

Beat. Through the wall, the baby CRIES. Waaah! Waaah...!

Mike considers it all. He sits on the sofa, then starts his recorder.

MIKE

"Hotel rooms are naturally creepy. I mean, how many people have slept in that bed before you? How many were sick? How many lost their minds?

(beat)

"How many died?"

Mike thinks. He unzips his duffel, slides over his LAPTOP, and carefully removes a small EQUIPMENT CASE. Inside is assorted gear: An EMF meter, microphones, a UV black light.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Mike dims the room. Then, he turns on the UV light. It HUMS, emitting a weird blue glow. He holds the tube over the carpet stain, and it GLOWS, vivid and brackish.

Hm. Mike waves the UV light around the room. Things are revealed, the past becoming otherworldly and phosphorescent:

Spatters on the drapes.

Multicolored blotches on the couch.

Drips across the walls.

Soiled puddles in the bed.

MIKE

is repelled. Ugh. He feels sick.

Unable to bear any more, he FLICKS ON the lights.

Normalcy is restored. Mike rubs his eyes, then returns to the living room. He glances at

THE THREE PAINTINGS

Which are... askew. Just slightly... tilted.

The ship's crooked horizon is unpleasantly vivid...

CU - MIKE

A strange, sealike sensation. He staggers, a bit nauseous.

A SOUND of pounding waves. The painted water seems real...

Mike is losing his equilibrium.

MIKE

God, I feel like I smoked some cheap
dope.

He straightens the three paintings, then turns away.

Mike takes a step -- then -- suddenly gets a look.

He spins!

The paintings are still straight.

Hm. Mike queasily sits, putting his head between his legs. Overheated, he fumbles for his recorder.

MIKE

What did Olin say?

(dizzy)

Something about poison gas...?

A woozy, unclear contemplation.... when -- BZZZZ!

WIDE

Mike jerks. BZZZZ! It's the door. He pops from his trance.

MIKE

W-who is it??

GRUFF VOICE

Engineering. You got a problem with
your heat?

Mike scurries to the door. He peers through the EYEHOLE.

DISTORTED POV

Through the glass, a hairy New York ENGINEER in overalls.

BACK ON MIKE

Good enough. He goes to open the door. He pulls -- and it's stuck. It won't budge.

Mike struggles with the handle.

MIKE

The door's stuck! Can you give it a shove?

GRUFF VOICE

(beat)

I ain't touching it.

Mike reacts, irritated. He tugs harder, wrenching with all his might -- when, it suddenly releases and SLAMS open. BAM!

Mike tumbles, off-balance.

THE DOOR

opens wide. Revealed is the ENGINEER, a huge, heavysset man. He carries a steel toolbox.

ENGINEER

Is it too hot or too cold?

MIKE

Oh, it's definitely too hot. C'mon in. The box is right here --

Mike strides over to the thermostat. He starts to gesture to the panel -- when he realizes -- he's... alone.

Confused, Mike turns.

The guy is still standing in the doorway.

Mike gestures again, for emphasis.

MIKE

I said... the box is here.

ENGINEER

I know where the fuck it is. But I ain't going in that room.

What! Mike glowers, put-out.

MIKE

You just have to walk seven or eight feet --

ENGINEER

I said I'm not goin' in! You know what happened in there?

MIKE

Yes, I'm quite aware --

ENGINEER

Look, I'll talk you through it. Any jackass can fix that thing.

(beat)

Just remove the panel.

The Engineer waits, feet planted.

Mike stares in disbelief. Then, beaten, he pulls off the thermostat PANEL. Inside are springs and levers.

ENGINEER

Okay. Now -- inside, you see a coil?

MIKE

Yes.

ENGINEER

Good. Now above that coil is a little tube filled with mercury. That's supposed to activate the contact switch, but this hotel's so old, half the shit don't work.

(beat)

Just give the tube a little tap.

Mike glares, unsure.

ENGINEER

Just tap the thing!

Mike relents. He FLICKS the tube. The mercury suddenly emits a blue SPARK, then rolls downward.

The system CHURNS, then the air-conditioning BLOWS on. Mike smiles, relieved.

MIKE

You're a genius. Let me get you a tip --

Mike turns to thank the man -- and he's GONE.

Huh? Bewildered, Mike runs to the door. He peers out.

HIS POV - DOWN THE CORRIDOR

The hall is empty. The elevator doors glide closed.

MIKE

frowns. Odd...

A discombobulated beat, then he pulls his head back in. Haltingly, he shuts the door.

INT. ROOM

Mike's alone. He paces about, convincing himself he's okay...

When -- sudden jarring MUSIC.

THE CARPENTERS (O.S.)
"We've only just begun..."

Mike whirls! The CLOCK RADIO has turned back on.

THE CARPENTERS (O.S.)
"To live..."

MIKE
Christ, you again!?

AT THE RADIO

Mike marches over. He once again CLICKS OFF the radio.

The digital clock flickers, then switches to "60:00." Suddenly, it starts counting backward: "59:59... 59:58..."

Mike leans closer, mesmerized. "59:55... 59:54..."

CLOSEUP - MIKE

A dawning awareness. Slowly, he gulps.

In his mind, he remembers Olin's warning from before...

OLIN'S VOICE
"Nobody has ever lasted longer than
an hour..."

Hm. Mike glances worriedly at the clock ticking down.

Silence.

He realizes something odd. The SILENCE is ABSOLUTE. The traffic noise is gone.

Perplexed, Mike walks to the window. He sticks his head out.

OUTSIDE

It looks exactly as before. The New York street is filled with a crush of traffic, buses, people. Except, disconcertingly, there is literally no sound.

Mike can't hear anything. It's as if we're watching a TV show with the volume turned off.

A fire engine races by, lights flashing. Dead silent.

MIKE

is confounded. The lack of noise is highly disturbing. He stares, then pulls his head in...

When CRASH! The WINDOW VIOLENTLY SLAMS DOWN on MIKE'S HAND!

MIKE

AAAGGHHHHH!

Mike SCREAMS, agonized. An animal caught in a trap.

MIKE

GODDAMN!! FUCK!!!

Mike struggles, fighting to use his good hand to crack the window open. Finally he tears his broken hand out.

TIGHT - HAND

It's a mess. The skin is ripped, bleeding.

Panicked, Mike runs into

INT. BATHROOM

He turns on the sink. Water streams out, as he puts his wounded hand under the flow.

But then -- the faucet SPUTTERS and dies.

Mike angrily turns the handles. Nothing. Livid, he punches the sink.

MIKE

You son-of-a...

FWOOOOOOSH! Suddenly SCALDING HOT WATER spews out!

Yeow!!!! It BURNS Mike's hand.

Mike CRIES OUT. He yanks away his hand, now bloody AND burnt.

The radio goes off.

THE CARPENTERS
"We've only just begun..."

Mike SHRIEKS.

MIKE
Fuck YOU, radio!!

INT. BEDROOM

Incensed, Mike lunges in, grabs the electrical cord, and PULLS it from the wall!

And -- nothing changes. The song keeps playing. The timer keeps clicking down: "56:24... 56:23..."

Mike gasps in disbelief. Flummoxed, he staggers back to

INT. BATHROOM

He grabs a towel and wraps it around his bleeding hand.

INT. BEDROOM

A gust of wind blows in, ruffling the curtains. We follow the breeze across the room... to the BIBLE on the nightstand.

The wind flutters the pages. They flip by... then stop.

CLOSEUP - BIBLE

The page is covered with SCRAWLED, MANIC WORDS:

"DON'T LET ME DIE HERE"

WIDE

Suddenly, RINGGGGG!!!

Mike jumps. Surprised, he runs to the phone. He grabs it.

MIKE
YES??!!

HOTEL VOICE
Sir, I'm sorry, but there was a miscommunication in the kitchen. There's going to be a ten-minute delay on your sandwich.

Mike's eyes bug out.

MIKE
What sandwich?! I didn't order a sandwich!!

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

(crazed)

But as long as we're on the phone,
let's talk about the window that just
broke my hand, and the water that
burned me alive!!

A long pause. Then --

HOTEL VOICE

I'm sorry. You're welcome to
substitute a side dish for your
french fries. We have cottage
cheese, macaroni salad --

MIKE

Are you goddam LISTENING to me?! My
hand needs STITCHES --

HOTEL VOICE

I understand. If you leave your dry
cleaning out by 10 a.m., we'll have
it pressed and returned by 5 the same
day.

Mike gapes.

MIKE

FUCK! Fuck YOU! I want you to call
me a cab to the nearest hospital!

The Hotel Voice turns sour, ruffled.

HOTEL VOICE

Sir, I will not tolerate you speaking
to me in that tone of voice --

MIKE

You're a fuckin' IDIOT!

HOTEL VOICE

If you wish, I can connect you to our
manager, Mr. Olin.

MIKE

GOOD! Olin it is! Put him on!!

Pause -- then the line goes on HOLD. Sprightly MUSIC kicks
in. The RECORDED ANNOUNCEMENT we heard before repeats:

SMOOTH RECORDING

"When staying at the Dolphin, be
certain to enjoy New York's finest
dining, at the fabled Blue Marlin
Restaurant on our Mezzanine level."

Mike waits, stewing.

He watches his blood dripping out of his hand. The red droplets hitting the carpet...

SMOOTH RECORDING

"Muscles tense? Then make an appointment to visit our deluxe spa, on the Coral level. With full massage, facial, and aromatherapy facilities, it'll leave you feeling relaxed and revitalized."

Mike's hand keeps bleeding.

His temper is growing.

SMOOTH RECORDING

"Your call is important to us. Please stay on the line--"

CLICK -- BEEEEEEEEEP!

It's a DIALTONE.

Mike has been disconnected.

He stares in amazement.

MIKE

You are kidding.

Furious, Mike throws the phone.

He grips his wounded hand and stomps into the

INT. LIVING ROOM

Mike's fed up. He rushes to the door, going to open it --

And... the deadbolt's locked.

Huh? Uncertain, Mike fumbles in his pocket for the big ROOM KEY. He angrily jams it into the lock, thrusting it through the oversize hole.

And -- PLIP! The key slips from Mike's fingers -- plunging into the door! It disappears, gone.

MIKE

Wha--?!

Mike fiddles with the keyhole, trying to find the key. Frustrated, he slams his EYE up against the hole.

HIS POV

Blackness. Hollow. A gentle whisper inside...

MIKE'S EYEBALL

bulges, peering up... down...

WIDE - MIKE

He scowls. He spins and looks around... thinking. Mike runs to his bag, unzips a pocket, and pulls out his LETTER OPENER.

Mike jams the metal blade into the keyhole. He wiggles it... trying... desperately... to engage the mechanics...

MIKE

C'mon...

He struggles to pick the lock. Forcing it around... when -- CLUNK! The DEADBOLT UNLOCKS!

MIKE

Yeah!

Mike smiles victoriously. He triumphantly turns the handle --

And --

CRACK! The DOOR HANDLE BREAKS OFF IN HIS HAND.

CLOSEUP - MIKE

His face goes ashen. This is unconceivable.

The door is now unopenable from the inside.

WIDE

Mike goes rabid, furiously KICKING the door! He PUNCHES it with his bruised hand. He claws crazily at the handle stump.

He's TRAPPED.

Losing it, Mike whirls and careens across the room. Passing

THE THERMOSTAT

which now reads 75 degrees. 74...

AT THE WINDOW

Mike runs to the pane and throws it open. He SCREAMS.

MIKE

HELLO?!!

OUTSIDE

It's utterly silent, like before. Not a sound from the busy traffic.

Mike screams louder.

MIKE
Up here! HELP!!!

Mike's VOICE ECHOES, the only noise in the world.

ECHO
HELP... HELP... HELP...!

This is very disturbing.

Mike peers around -- then spots a lit window across the street. There is a SILHOUETTED MAN.

Mike gasps, a ray of hope.

MIKE
Hey! Sir!!

No reaction. He SCREAMS louder.

MIKE
CAN YOU SEE ME?! OVER HERE, IN THE
DOLPHIN??

Mike waves his right arm.

ACROSS THE STREET

The Man waves his right arm.

MIKE

MIKE
YES, HERE! I NEED YOU TO CALL THE
POLICE!!

Mike jumps, excited.

ACROSS THE STREET

The Man jumps, too. An exact rhyming movement.

MIKE

suddenly halts, horrified.

THE MAN

freezes.

MIKE

slowly... worriedly... shifts from side to side.

THE MAN

mirror-like, shifts from side to side.

MIKE

trembles. Fearful, shaking, he leans toward the lamp.

THE MAN

leans toward a lamp. Revealing... he... is... Mike.

MIKE

freezes, stunned. He is watching himself.

CLOSER VIEW - THE MAN

is Mike, standing in a parallel version of the hotel room.
Staring blank-eyed at us.

A chilling beat -- and then an INSANE MANIAC with a clawhammer comes rushing into view. He swings the hammer straight at the doppelganger's head.

ANGLE - MIKE

He SCREAMS and spins in fear.

WIDE

And -- the Maniac isn't there. Mike is alone.

Mike's chest heaves, overcome. Panicked, whirling about. Off-balance, he spins back to the view outside.

ACROSS THE WAY

The man is gone. The lit window is gone. It's just darkness.

Mike is befuddled.

MIKE

What the f--?

He stares, shaking and impotent. Then, he notices the PEOPLE below on the street. Silent, but -- real.

Desperate, Mike suddenly goes deranged. He picks up a LAMP --

MIKE

HELP ME!!!

WIDE - THE WINDOW

Mike unplugs the lamp and THROWS it! It flies out the window and soars outward!

Mike lurches out, to watch what happens--

The LAMP drops. Down... down...

MIKE

waits eagerly, wild-eyed.

THE LAMP

drops closer to the street... then...

Dissipates.

Like mist, it just... disappears. The lamp is gone.

MIKE'S EYES

bug out.

MIKE

Jesus, I'm losing my mind. I'm
hallucinating.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Unsteady, Mike collapses. He feels helpless, like the walls are closing in...

Then -- an ethereal LITTLE GIRL'S VOICE. Wispy, faint...

GIRL'S VOICE

Daddy... Daddy.....

We suddenly PUSH IN TO MIKE. He CLUTCHES for breath.

All color bleeds from his face. He holds his head, gasping.

MIKE

Stop it. Get ahold of yourself.
You're letting your mind run to
places that aren't real.
(he works to calm himself)
It's just a classic haunted house
power of suggestion: Gaslit fixtures.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)
Faded rugs. Like that motel in
Kansas. There's a reason for
everything...

The radio continues its ominous countdown: 46:25... 46:24.

Mike peers around, scoping -- then sees something. Maddened,
he hobbles up to the AIRVENT.

ANGLE - VENT

There is... something inside the vent. A tiny black TUBE?

MIKE
Is that a camera? A spycam?
(accusatory)
Hello?! Who are you, the perverted
owner of the hotel? Some rich
sadist, enjoying my terror?
(beat)
Or perhaps it's just punctilious Mr.
Olin, whacking-off in his leather
chair.

ANGLE - MIKE

He is cracking. Paranoid.

MIKE
Wait a second...! He gave me booze.
(trying to focus)
Was it laced? Did Olin take a
sip...? Can't remember...

Mike eyes are glazed. He spots the Cognac bottle. He runs
over and uncorks it, taking a sniff...

Hm. Something else catches his eye.

ON THE NIGHTSTAND

are the mint wrappers. Mike gasps, remorseful.

MIKE
Agh! The mystery chocolate. Shit!
Never take candy from a stranger.

Mike's mind ratchets into overdrive, freaking. Until --

GIRL'S VOICE
Daddy, pay attention!

Mike whirls.

ANGLE - TV

The TV is ON. Onscreen is a flickering old HOME VIDEO: Mike's daughter GRACIE, 5, sits on the carpet playing dolls. She laughs and motions urgently.

GRACIE (ON VIDEO)
Daddy, sit down!

BACK TO - MIKE

He gapes in disbelief.

MIKE
Gracie...?

IN THE HOME VIDEO

A YOUNGER MIKE enters frame. Cheerful and buoyant. He sits on the floor with Gracie. She hands him a rotund little doll.

GRACIE (ON VIDEO)
Okay, you be the daddy, and I'm going to be the mommy.

YOUNG MIKE (ON VIDEO)
But I don't want to be the daddy. I want to be -- the dog.

GRACIE (ON VIDEO)
(outraged)
That's silly! You can't be the dog! You have to be a person!

BACK TO - MIKE

He shudders, disturbed.

MIKE
W-where'd this come from...?

IN THE HOME VIDEO

Mike's former wife LILY, 30, enters. She's pretty, aloof.

LILY (ON VIDEO)
Hey, what are you scoundrels up to?

GRACIE (ON VIDEO)
We're busy. Daddy and I got married.

LILY (ON VIDEO)
(feigning shock)
What?!

They all giggle.

YOUNG MIKE (ON VIDEO)
I'm very popular around here!

ANGLE - MIKE

His face falls. Sad and traumatized.

Wanting to hang onto this memory, he slowly reaches out to the screen... wishing... in some way... he could touch it --

ZAPPP!! It violently SHOCKS him.

OW! Mike tumbles back. The screen blazes, then goes to STATIC. Gracie is gone.

WIDE - THE ROOM

Mike is alone, hurt. Not understanding. He senses something, then turns...

ANGLE - NIGHTSTAND

Sitting there are the two little DOLLS from the video.

MIKE'S

eyes widen with fear.

The figures are a tiny man and woman. Here in the room.

Mike gulps, then picks them up. Yes, they are real. Mike is overcome with feelings. He tenderly cradles the dolls. Staring into their painted faces...

Until -- he glimpses movement in the room. He turns.

AT THE WINDOW

A quick FLASH of the rich FACTORY OWNER who killed himself: He steps to the ledge and jumps.

MIKE

is stunned.

AT THE WINDOW

Another apparition. A PORTLY LADY in a 1950's flowered dress. She sobs, then pulls a chair to the window. She lashes out at the air, then leaps.

MIKE

cries out, shocked.

Mike cradles the dolls closer. Wanting to cling to something good...

When -- a FAINT SOUND. Soft and muffled.

Mike freezes.

From the next room over is the SOUND again. A BABY CRYING. Then, the gentle murmur of the Mother.

What?!

WIDE

Mike JUMPS to attention. He drops the dolls and frantically runs to the wall. He KNOCKS on it.

MIKE

Ma'am? Ma'am! Can you hear me??

The baby CRIES louder. Drowning him out.

MIKE

Quiet, kid.

(he BANGS harder)

Ma'am?! Please! I need your help!!

The baby CRIES harder. Mike realizes she can't possibly hear him.

Frenzied, he grabs a nearby CHAIR.

Mike swings the chair, then SMASHES it into the wall!

Bam! BAM!!

The baby SCREAMS louder.

Mike swings harder, brutally.

CRASH! The chair splits apart.

MIKE

HELLO?!

Suddenly -- SHRRRRRIIIIEEEEEKK! The baby SCREAMS like it's being BURNED ALIVE.

Agh! Mike pulls back, holding his ears.

The SCREAM GETS MAGNIFIED, LOUDER, like the volume on a stereo being cranked.

Mike winces, shutting his eyes, trying to block it out --

When, it suddenly STOPS.

TIGHT - MIKE

opens his eyes quizzically. It's all quiet.

He sits there. Forlorn.

MIKE

...Isn't there anyone?

Slowly, a SHADOW crosses his face.

ABOVE

A quick FLASH: A natty MAN in Jazz Age suspenders hangs himself from a noose on the chandelier.

MIKE

grimaces. He yelps and backs away. Frightened, he makes his way to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

Mike enters -- then shudders.

The bathroom is TRANSFORMED. It's no longer the lush, comforting boudoir of luxury -- but a STERILE, FLUORESCENT-LIT NURSING HOME BATHROOM.

Sitting in a wheelchair is a decrepit OLD MAN. He peers up, eyes rheumy and lost, then shouts:

OLD MAN

I wish I was dead!

Mike freezes. An endless pause.

Then, he whispers.

MIKE

Dad?

FATHER

Where's my garden?

(foggy)

I can't smell anything!

Mike is shaking.

MIKE

Dad, it's me -- Michael.

FATHER
Who?

MIKE
(trembling)
Your... son.

FATHER
(suddenly LOUD)
I HATE this place!
(enraged, confused)
How'd I get here?

Mike starts crying.

MIKE
I'm sorry...!

Mike drops to his knees and hugs him. Holding the old man tight, his face against his Father's scratchy, unshaven cheek.

WIDE OVERHEAD

We look down on weeping Mike.

MIKE
I'm so sorry...

We slowly PULL OUT... revealing that Mike is back in the hotel bathroom. He's on his knees, hugging the toilet.

There's no Father.

Mike moans, shaken. He looks around in bewilderment.

MIKE
He was so real.
(upset)
As real as me.

Wobbly, Mike stands. He looks in the mirror, examining his haggard face.

Then -- he peeks back at the imagined camera in the vent. Hm.

MIKE
This is more than special effects.

Mike takes out his MINI-RECORDER. He speaks into it:

MIKE
"Maybe I'm not real. Maybe I'm...
just having a dream. An incredibly
vivid, lucid dream."

He paces around, thinking.

MIKE
 "When's the last time I remember
 going to bed?"

Beat.

MIKE
 "Today I flew in. Or... was that
 yesterday?
 (unsure)
 "God, what happened yesterday? Can't
 remember anything. Was I on a train?
 (wracking his brain)
 "I must've woken up and had
 breakfast. Somewhere. But... where
 was I? Where did I eat...?"

Mike is getting nervous.

He glances at the wall he bashed, then does a take.

THE WALL'S CRACK

has grown. The crack has spiderwebbed larger. Clear, viscous
 FLUID seeps out...

Mike grimaces, afraid. He shivers and backs away.

MIKE
 "People say you can't die in your
 sleep. Is that true??"

THE THERMOSTAT

now reads 60 DEGREES. 58. 55.

MIKE

rubs himself. Panic grows across his face.

MIKE
 "They say the shock wakes you up. If
 your mind thinks you're about to die --"

Freaking, Mike makes his way to the WINDOW. He clicks off the
 recorder, then starts to climb out --

OUTSIDE

The wind BLOWS. Mike shudders and prepares to jump. He looks
 down --

MIKE'S POV

A dizzying, spinning view of the STREET.

MIKE

Suddenly, a SLAP of reality. He GASPS and tumbles inside.

MIKE

What the fuck am I doing?

(dawning)

This is what the room wants!

Mike's eyes shift about, wary.

A shadow. He spins.

Behind a chair, a MAN peeks over the pillow.

Mike GASPS and crawls away.

MIKE

There's gotta be a way out!!!

WIDE

Mike looks for options -- then notices the FLOOR MAP on the inside of the door.

Ah! He darts over and scrutinizes it.

TIGHT - MAP

It indicates the building layout. Rooms, halls, exits...

MIKE

Okay, okay! Look at our options..!

Guest rooms on both sides...

emergency exits... stairwell...

Mike's eyes gleam manically. Suddenly --

MIKE

The next window!

He looks back fearfully, then heedlessly calculates.

MIKE

This room's fifteen feet across, so
the next window... is just... five
feet past that wall!

Mike dashes across the room. He paces toe-to-heel, measuring.

Yes! Hope returns to his face.

He runs back to his window, then climbs back up. Invigorated,
he CLICKS ON the recorder.

MIKE

"If I slip and fall, and this tape gets found among my splattered remains on 61st Street, let it be known that it was an accident.

(beat)

"The room did not win. It did not possess me to leap! I was just an arrogant self-hating bastard who --"

Suddenly, he STOPS. Puzzled by these words.

MIKE

Why did I just say that?

A strange dislocation. Then, he pockets the recorder.

MIKE

This fuckin' room. It's polluted my mind!

Defiant, he STEPS OUT.

MIKE

But I can do this!

EXT. BUILDING LEDGE - SAME TIME

Mike gingerly climbs outside, the wind blowing his clothes.

He peeks downward, then -- stifling his fear, tentatively lowers one foot onto the ledge.

His fingers claw the brick, then find a decorative cornice to grab onto.

He takes a breath... then gingerly swings out his other leg.

Both feet are out. He gulps, then glances down.

HIS POV

Busy traffic, thirteen stories down.

MIKE

tries to stay calm.

MIKE

Just ignore it. Don't worry...

He presses his face to the wall, then... carefully, starts to inch along the ledge.

He slides his left foot. Beat. He slides his right...

He doesn't dare lean back. He blindly reaches out, gripping the next section of cornice.

Okay. He slides his left foot. Then his right.

His face is sweating. He reaches... fingers slipping... then, his hand finds the next cornice.

Good. He slides again. He reaches -- and still no window.

CU - MIKE

Cheek pressed to the dusty brick, he is confused.

MIKE

Where the hell is it?

Mike slides his left leg over. His right leg over.

Starting to jitter, he reaches again. And -- no window.

MIKE

(getting worried)

Where is it?!

He reaches further... straining... then slides again.

Nothing.

MIKE

WHERE IS IT??!

Daring gravity, he leans back, to get a look --

SUPERWIDE - THE BUILDING

And, THERE ARE NO OTHER WINDOWS. THE ENTIRE BUILDING IS ONE CONTINUOUS SURFACE OF BRICK, EXCEPT FOR MIKE AND 1408.

Mike SCREAMS, horrified.

MIKE

NooOOO!!!

He flounders, stunned. Mike slips.

MIKE

Agghh!

Mike falls, BANGING his face on the wall.

He DROPS, about to plummet, desperately clambering, scratching his fingers into the old brick, when --

BAM! One hand snags the ledge as it passes by.

Chest heaving, hysterical, Mike catches his breath.

The wind pelts him.

Mike whimpers.

Then, he resignedly starts shimmying back to 1408. Slowly, then, faster... his expression despondent...

TIGHT - MIKE'S HANDS

pull him along. Struggling to return to the hell he was escaping.

AT THE WINDOW

Mike finally reaches his room. Quivering, sucking in all his strength, he LIFTS HIMSELF UP onto the ledge. A shaky beat -- then, he looks back inside.

FAST ZOOM

across the room, RIGHT UP TO THE MAP on the door.

ZOOMING TIGHTER, until the MAP FILLS THE FRAME. And -- it's alive, the black lines slithering around like worms. The map rearranges itself, doors and walls moving about.

MIKE

goes pale.

Suddenly -- the Portly Lady steps out into the window. She is sobbing.

PORTLY LADY
May Jesus forgive me...
(beat; she scowls
hatefully)
And FUCK YOU, HENRY SMITH!

She starts to jump -- when she suddenly sees Mike. A bizarre discombobulation, then she lashes out at him, punching at him like the movements we saw earlier.

Freaked out, she leaps.

PORTLY LADY
Ahhhhh!

She hurtles past.

Mike gasps and jerks away. Scared, he tumbles back inside.

INT. 1408 - SAME TIME

Mike lands on the room floor, covered in sweat, terrified. Shaking, huddled in a fetal position.

He rocks back and forth... then hears a strange CLINKING sound. Click-clack click-clack click-clack...

The room darkens...

Wearied, he looks up -- and FREEZES.

THE WINDOW

has been BRICKED-UP. Completely solid.

MIKE

moans, unnerved. He peers in disbelief, then runs and pounds on the brick.

It's old. Like it's been there forever.

Despairing, Mike tears into the

INT. BEDROOM

And -- the BEDROOM WINDOW IS GONE. The WALL IS SOLID DRYWALL. No trace there ever was a window.

Mike starts hyperventilating.

MIKE

No -- that's impossible --

He starts feeling the wall. Searching for anything...

MIKE

It can't... I know...

Mike is losing it. On the edge of sanity. He grapples for his minirecorder and hits REWIND.

We HEAR Mike's voice speed by, chipmunk-like. He hits PLAY:

MIKE'S RECORDED VOICE

*"What did Olin say, something about
poison gas --"*

No. Mike speeds further. PLAY.

MIKE'S RECORDED VOICE

"Hotel rooms are naturally creepy --"

No. He speeds further. Then:

MIKE'S RECORDED VOICE
*"The bedroom has a queen-size bed,
 two nightstands, and butterfly
 wallpaper.
 (beat)
 "The room has no window."*

HUH?

A chilling beat.

MIKE
 No...

Shaking, he hits rewind. Play.

MIKE'S RECORDED VOICE
"The room has no window."

Mike CRIES out, scared. He hits rewind. Play.

WOMAN'S RECORDED VOICE
 (whisper)
*"Your daughter was eaten by wolves on
 the Connecticut turnpike."*

MIKE
 AHH!

Mike DROPS the recorder, like he's been electrocuted.

He trembles, pained.

CLOSEUP - CLOCK

The unplugged clock continues ticking down: 32:14... 32:13...

MIKE

shuts his eyes. Until -- a TORMENTED SOBBING.

What now? He opens his eyes. The SOBBING is in the next room. It sounds like two people...

Afraid of what he'll find -- he peeks into the next room.

INT. LIVING ROOM

There is a VISION. A FLASHBACK FROM THE PAST:

A MAN and WOMAN are locked in a tight embrace, in a doctor's office. We can't see their faces. They both cry, the man hugging and comforting the woman.

MIKE

stares, anguished. All color drains from his face.

FLASHBACK VISION:

The couple looks up -- and they're Young Mike and Lily. Both have tear-streaked faces.

LILY
I can't accept it...

YOUNG MIKE
(bereaved)
But he said --

LILY
Maybe he's wrong! Doctors don't know
everything!
(beat)
There are experimental treatments...

Young Mike shakes his head.

YOUNG MIKE
She's doomed.

LILY
Don't say that!

We REVEAL Gracie in a hospital bed, listening behind a curtain. She's nine, pallid and thin.

LILY (O.S.)
She'll only get through this if she
believes. We need to give her hope!

YOUNG MIKE (O.S.)
Why? So she can spend the end of her
life being LIED to?!

Gracie's eyes widen.

ANGLE - MIKE

He recoils, shocked she heard this. He's crushed.

MIKE
Gracie...

Mike feebly extends his arm --

When --

BLACKNESS!

The room goes COMPLETELY DARK.

Mike gasps, confused.

MIKE (V.O.)

H-hey --

He stumbles. CRASH! A lamp FALLS and breaks.

MIKE (V.O.)

Ow!

We hear Mike's breathing accelerate, getting heavy.

Suddenly, a TERRIFYING VOICE. The VOICE OF THE ROOM, rasping, non-human, coming from everywhere:

VOICE OF THE ROOM
ARE YOU A MEAT EATER, MR. ENSLIN??!

MIKE (V.O.)

(furious)

W-what? Who are you?!! How the fuck
do you know about my daughter??

We HEAR Mike trip around. He reaches for the LIGHT SWITCH.
He frantically FLICKS it -- up down, up down --

INT. LIVING ROOM - NORMAL

BLINK! The lights go on.

The room is back to normal. Mike is gasping, heaving.
Looking about. Okay. Okay. Everything seems alright...

He turns -- and, AGHH!

HIS POV

A terrifying SKINNY LADY lunges at him! Grabbing his throat!

MIKE

screams, startled. Fighting her off.

THE SKINNY LADY

grips harder, snarling.

MIKE

staggers back, trying to push her bony hands away --

When he glances sideways into a MIRROR. In the reflection, he is alone. Staggering back, choking himself.

What?!

Mike yelps and releases his own grip. He coughs, struggling for breath. He peers around. He is alone.

MIKE

Jesus...

He shivers, stupefied. Suddenly --

VOICE OF THE ROOM
READY TO LEAVE?!!!

MIKE

(he jumps, startled)
Not your way!!

Dazed, Mike rubs himself for warmth.

THE THERMOSTAT

clicks to 50.

MIKE

runs to his duffel. He rummages for a COAT and quickly puts it on. Underneath is his CELLPHONE.

Desperate, he flips it open -- but it flashes: "BATTERY LOW"

What?! Mike growls, livid. Suddenly he glimpses something else -- his LAPTOP.

Hmm..! His eyes light up. He nervously glances back, then quickly covers the computer. Mike grabs a shirt.

AT THE VENT

Mike runs to the vent, cool air blowing down.

Suddenly, he pushes the desk over. WHUMP! Everything on it CRASHES down. Mike drags the desk to the wall, then climbs up. He glances suspiciously at the little black tube inside the vent... then hooks the shirt over the grate, blocking it.

Mike jumps down. He runs to his

COMPUTER

Mike grabs it and snaps it open. The SCREEN lights up.

MIKE

Good, good...

Mike spins the mouse, clicking "Internet."

MIKE

C'mon, this crappy old hotel must've
popped for wireless --

He waits patiently. The WI-FI icon scrolls. Searching...
searching... then --

"NO SIGNAL AVAILABLE"

Mike groans.

WIDE

Irrked, he grabs the laptop and starts stalking around the
room. Holding it over his head. Hunting for a sweet spot.
The icon flashes red... green... red. Mike glances at the
bricked-over window.

MIKE

Maybe there's a signal outside...

Mike stands on a chair, holding the laptop up against the
brick. And... with a little jiggling -- the icon turns GREEN.

MIKE

AH!!!

The screen flashes. An INTERNET WINDOW OPENS.

INTERNET LADY VOICE

Good evening, Mike.

MIKE

YEAH! Good evening, Fake Voice
Lady!!

Mike gleefully dances about. He FLIPS the Bird.

MIKE

And FUCK YOU, Mr. Scary Room Voice
Guy! I'm connected!!

INSERT - COMPUTER

Mike goes to his contacts. He quickly clicks on "BUDDY LIST."

And -- one name is there: "LILY_ENSLIN"

MIKE

Ah, shit.

Mike winces -- he has no choice. He steels himself, then types into the Instant Message Box: "LILY, I NEED HELP"

No response.

Mike types again: "EMERGENCY!"

Long beat. Then, a WINDOW OPENS UP as a REAL-TIME WEBCAM LINK. A woman's face stares back at us: Mike's ex.

WEBCAM CU - LILY

She's more weary than pretty these days. Just hanging on. She looks dryly at Mike.

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)
Look what the internet dragged in.

MIKE
Lily! Thank God --

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)
How about "hello."

MIKE
I don't have time --

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)
Yeah, well neither do I.

She goes to sign off.

MIKE
Wait! Wait! Please --!

She stops.

MIKE
I need you call the cops, send 'em to West 61st and --

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)
You're in the City?

MIKE
Er... yeah. 61st and --

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)
You're in the City, and you didn't tell me?!

MIKE
I... uh, I was only supposed to be here a few hours --

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)
Jesus! Since the divorce, you've
been like a phantom! Now suddenly
you show up, you need a favor --

MIKE
Lily, shut up!! I'm in danger.

Lily freezes, shocked.

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)
What?!

MIKE
I'm locked in a hotel room! There's
someone... something... trying to
kill me.

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)
Mike, back up! Who?!

MIKE
I can't explain. Just call the cops!
Tell 'em Dolphin Hotel...

Suddenly, an unexpected HISSING. Mike looks up.

ABOVE

The EMERGENCY SPRINKLERS go off! Water RAINS DOWN upon Mike
and the computer!

MIKE
No -- NO!

Mike tries to cover the laptop, but it's too late. Water
falls through the keys and into the electronics.

Lily's IMAGE over the screen begins to BREAK UP.

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)
Mike... I... can't hear...

MIKE
Oh Christ! Lily, Dolphin Hotel!
1408! Bust down the door!

PSSSTTTT! The computer screen goes BLACK.

MIKE
FUCK! FUCK FUCK FUCK!!!

Raining droplets are everywhere, falling into the electric
LAMPS.

The LIGHTS begin to flicker, creating a slow strobe effect.

FLASHES OF LIGHT

illuminate the painting of grandma in the rocking chair.

Darkness. Then FLASH!

The painting changes: Grandma is now standing, staring out.

FLASH!

The old lady turns into THE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN from the lobby. Her breast is bare. BLOOD drips from her nipple, down into her baby's open mouth. The baby's face is blue, dead.

FLASH!

THE PAINTING OF THE SAILORS

turns into a ROTTING GHOST SHIP. They sail into a roiling sea, covered in black clouds. The seamen's faces are pale, starving, staring hopelessly.

Mike turns, shaky. FLASH!

THE PAINTING OF THE HUNT

The British men in red coats and hats get pulled off their horses by the dogs. The dogs RIP the men apart, tearing their flesh.

MIKE

whimpers. Around him, rain pours harder. WHOOOSH! A TORNADO-LIKE SOUND roars. A liquid churning, growing louder...

Mike covers his ears and careens through the sopping mess, shivering, looking for a way out. His feet smoosh in the soaking carpet.

Mike passes the Thermostat. It's dropped to 48 DEGREES.

He pounds on the closed-up windows.

He tugs on the door.

Wind BLOWS fiercer. A BLAST OF COLD gushes from the AIR VENT, blowing the shirt down.

Mike's eyes narrow, thinking. Intrigued, he takes a step closer to the VENT...

MIKE

Ho ho. That goes somewhere. Maybe I can just pull a Bruce Willis.

Mike CLAMBERS UP onto the desk. He's right beneath the grate. He takes out his PENLIGHT and shines it up through the opening.

INSIDE THE VENT

It's dark, foreboding. In the shadows is the black tube. Mike puts his face up to it.

ANGLE - MIKE

MIKE

Hello, perv. I'm coming to get you.

He tugs the grate -- it's fastened with four bolts. Fine. He hurriedly pulls out his trusty LETTER OPENER and starts to use it as a screwdriver...

MIKE

Okay. Here goes nothin'.

Mike unscrews the first bolt. It falls to the ground.

An anxious pause -- then he quickly unscrews the second bolt.

The third.

The fourth.

Wary, Mike reaches and slowly pulls the grate off the ceiling. He drops it, watching it hit the floor with a CLANG.

Beat -- then he slowly turns back to the now-open vent. Suddenly, he LUNGES at the tiny black tube and GRABS it.

MIKE

HA!!!

Mike squeezes it in his fist -- then reacts, surprised.

CLOSEUP - MIKE'S HAND

He's holding a roll of DUCT TAPE. That's all.

ANGLE - MIKE

A bewildered silence.

MIKE

There's... nobody watching me??!
(long pause; confused)
Why am I disappointed?

A halting moment. He gathers his wits, then stares into the open VENT.

INSIDE THE VENT

It's metal DARKNESS. Air WHOOSHES sinisterly.

Mike gulps, then waves his pathetic letter opener. He SHOUTS.

MIKE

I've got a knife!

No response.

Mike steels himself, then painfully lifts his body up into...

INT. AIR-CONDITIONING VENT - SAME TIME

Mike clangs onto the hard cold surface. He pulls his legs up.

Inside, it's black. We can't see a foot ahead.

Mike aims his penlight, but it's just a dull glow. Shadows and rat droppings.

Mike takes a breath, then squirms forward.

It's murky and unsettling. The air BLASTS. Mike slithers along... unsure, creeped-out. Until, his penlight reveals

A JUNCTION AHEAD

A "T" split. Shafts go left and right.

Mike stops -- not sure where to go. He shines the tiny light both ways... but the beam disappears into dimness.

Then -- faint VOICES.

Mike's eyes bulge.

The VOICES are from the right.

Mike gets excited. Other people! He scrambles down the vent.

MIKE

Hey! Hey!!

Not far, he sees LIGHT. It's coming from a GRATE in the floor of the shaft!

Mike hustles faster. He reaches the grate -- then looks down.

BELOW - HOTEL ROOM

It's the next Hotel Room. From above, we see the Young Mother holding her CRYING baby.

YOUNG MOTHER
Shh, shh. Mama loves her baby...

The Baby WAILS harder.

The Mother turns -- REVEALING SHE'S LILY. Young Lily, from the PAST.

LILY
C'mon, Gracie. Stop crying.
(frazzled)
No, I don't know where your daddy is.
Probably boozing it up...

MIKE

goes ashen.

MIKE
N-n-no...! Honey, I'm here...

YOUNG LILY

can't hear him. She carries Baby Gracie into the next room.

MIKE

is tormented. He scurries to follow her. He rushes along the vent. Banging himself on the sharp metal --

MIKE
Ow! Wait --

He spots the next GRATE. Braced, he rushes over to it -- then GASPS.

BELOW

is a PARK. Trees, a path.

Then two men walk by. Young Mike from the PAST, arguing with his Father. Father is younger, healthy.

FATHER
Mike, don't do this! She needs you.
(reticent)
She lost a child, too.

YOUNG MIKE
(enraged)
Why do you always lecture me?

FATHER
I'm not --

YOUNG MIKE
I'm an adult! I can make my own
decisions!

Mike storms away.

MIKE IN THE VENT

His face collapses. Pained by the memory.

He stares mutely, then feels something strange. Icky. He
turns the penlight on his hand...

And crawling across his fingers is a COCKROACH.

MIKE
Ugh...!

Mike brushes away the bug. The penlight's beam swings --
revealing HUNDREDS OF ROACHES. The VENT IS FESTERING.

MIKE
YEOGGH!

Grossed-out, Mike hurriedly BACKS UP. Rushing backwards
through the vent.

Hurry!

The beam rolls, grazing across skittering bugs.

Mike rushes faster. His breathing echoes through the
claustrophobic metal.

Suddenly, he reaches a junction -- and DROPS.

Aggh!! He's plunged down a

VERTICAL SHAFT

Mike plummets into blackness, falling backwards!

He flails, then SLAMS his hand, just catching the edge.
Hanging on for dear life.

Mike glances down. It's ABSOLUTELY BLACK below.

With a rush of adrenaline, Mike struggles to pull himself out.
Straining, muscles clenching... he lifts himself up.

Okay. Mike sucks in air. Resolved, he whirls about to race
forward --

And -- BANG!!!

CLOSEUP

Pasty KEVIN O'MALLEY is face-to-face with him! Kevin's eyes are wild, his skin bloated and blue.

Mike SCREAMS, startled.

Kevin gazes crazily, his mouth a pinched grimace.

MIKE

Kevin...?
(trembling)
Kevin O'Malley??

Kevin stares, unspeaking. His breathing a HORRIBLE WHEEZE.

Then... he slowly lifts his head. Revealing his THROAT IS SLICED OPEN, ear to ear.

His bloody windpipe is visible, raspy. Kevin's mouth opens and shuts, puppetlike, but only a moist gurgle comes out.

Mike recoils, terrified.

ON THE MEN

Kevin O'Malley raises a 6-INCH NEEDLE AND THREAD. He points and gurgles a barely intelligible phrase.

Then, again: "Fix it."

Yikes! Mike pulls back in disgust and fear.

Kevin O'Malley suddenly lunges forward.

HELP! Mike spins away. Kevin CHASES. Freakily gurgling, "Fix it! Fix it!"

MIKE

barrels through the tiny space. Rushing for his life.

Kevin O'Malley SKITTERS after him. Mike races, reaching

THE T-JUNCTION

He squirms down the RIGHT VENT.

He makes it a few feet, when --

CRUNCH! THE VENT COLLAPSES RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM!! As if a giant hand has squeezed it like a Coke can.

Mike yelps and jolts back.

The Vent continues CRUSHING IN, moving closer! He turns --
DOWN THE LEFT VENT

comes Kevin, his face a horrible rictus, waving the needle.

MIKE

crawls like hell! Faster, towards the

MAIN VENT

Where in the distance he can see the OPENING to 1408! A slim
square of light --

THE OTHER VENT

keeps CRUSHING! Metal SMASHING closer --

MIKE'S FEET

scurry as fast as they can.

SLAM! Kevin O'Malley STABS his needle into Mike's leg.

Mike SCREAMS, pained.

He KICKS backward. His foot SMUSHES through Kevin's head,
like a sponge. Kevin O'Malley collapses, the CRUSHING VENT
SQUEEZING him out of view.

Mike speeds faster. Room 1408 visible --

The CRUSHING, TWISTING METAL is now inches away --

As Mike HURLS himself forward...

INT. 1408 - SAME TIME

...and falls through the vent into the room.

SLAM!! He bounces off the desk, hitting the ground --

as the sheet metal Vent BUCKLES CLOSED. BAM!!

TIGHT - MIKE

He lies there, overwhelmed. Breathing in fits, face drenched
in sweat, absolutely dumbstruck.

He looks up at the ceiling... then around the room. Beat.

MIKE
I need a drink.

Mike staggers over to the Mini-Bar. He whips open the little refrigerator door -- then gasps.

INSIDE THE MINI-BAR

is a MINIATURE SET of OLIN'S OFFICE. A TINY LITTLE OLIN SITS IN HIS WING-CHAIR, sipping Cognac.

Mike grimaces, flabbergasted.

MIKE

What are you doing in there??

(vexed)

Where's my BOOZE?!

Olin smiles, unruffled.

OLIN

I was just checking, sir. Are your accomodations exceeding your expectations?

MIKE

You know GODDAMN WELL they are! What do you want from me?!

OLIN

No no no. What do you want? What do YOU want, Mr. Enslin? You sought this room.

MIKE

I was doing my job!

OLIN

(like he misheard)

Sorry?

MIKE

My job! I'm a writer! I tell people the truth.

Hm. Olin swirls his Cognac.

OLIN

That's right, you don't believe in anything. You like shattering people's hopes.

MIKE

That's bullshit!

OLIN

Why do people believe in ghosts? For fun? No. They want the promise of something after death...

A COLLAGE of tearful VOICES...

SORROWFUL VOICE #1
She's in a better place, Mike...

SORROWFUL VOICE #2
She was in so much pain...

SORROWFUL VOICE #3
*I'm sure she's smiling down at us
 right now...*

Mike winces, agonized.

OLIN
 How many spirits have you broken?

MIKE
 AAAAAAH!

Enraged, Mike SLAMS shut the Mini-Bar.

MIKE
 I WANT MY DRINK!!

WIDE

Mike spins. He looks around, then spots the Cognac in the bedroom. Ah! He beelines for the bottle, then snatches it up. He uncorks it and thirstily chugs the drink.

Pause -- then he calms. He glances down at the hotel Bible. Curious, Mike picks it up, then flips through.

INSERT - BIBLE

The PAGES are all now blank.

Weird.

MIKE

frowns. Then, a faraway voice...

GRACIE (V.O.)
 Why is our bible purple?

Mike looks up. There is a spectral

FLASHBACK VISION:

The Enslin family's old apartment, set-up as a grim hospice. Gracie lies in bed, in a pink butterfly nightgown, in the final, terrible stages of cancer. She's skeletal. Waxen.

Lily sits by her, gripping a purple BIBLE. She laughs awkwardly.

LILY
I -- I dunno. It was a wedding
present.
(she caresses it)
But it's nice. The cover is real
leather...

GRACIE
Are there people where I'm going?

LILY
You're not going anywhere.

GRACIE
That isn't what Daddy said.

We reveal Young Mike sitting in the window, smoking a
cigarette. He stubs out the smoke.

YOUNG MIKE
Daddy says a lot of stupid things.
(he comes over to the bed)
You're too young to understand, but
when you grow up and become an
adult...
(he forces a smile)
you'll realize I'm crazy.

Gracie giggles. Mike gently brushes her cheek.

GRACIE
Daddy, everyone dies.

A tense pause.

Lily glances at Mike. He struggles to be consoling.

YOUNG MIKE
Y-you're right. Everyone dies...

LILY
(she jumps in)
And then you'll go to a better place.
And lots of people will be there...
(her voice cracks)
All your friends.... And you'll be
able to run around again... play...

Gracie looks up at Mike.

GRACIE
Do you believe that, Daddy...?

A profound silence. He stammers, stuck.

YOUNG MIKE

I... I...

Gracie stares pleadingly.

Waiting. Then --

YOUNG MIKE

Yes. I do.

GRACIE

(she breaks into a smile)

Good. Then I do too.

We hold on her heartfelt face.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER VISION

Flames RAGE. It's a cremation.

A tiny coffin enters the burning fire.

PRESENT - MIKE

He sobs, pained. Wincing at this memory.

FLASHBACK VISION

The crematorium glows white, then blazes piercingly hot. The casket disappears into the heat.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER FLASHBACK

Young Mike sits on Gracie's bed, weeping. He's unshaven, distraught, clinging to her old pink nightgown.

Gracie is gone.

Lily can't even look at him.

YOUNG MIKE

She could have hung on. But we had to fill her head! With all those fucking stories about the glorious afterlife...

LILY

(crying)

Why do you have to blame anyone?!

Mike throws down the nightie.

YOUNG MIKE

I gotta get out.

He jumps up and charges out of the apartment. SLAM!

CUT TO:

INT. 1408 - PRESENT

Mike breaks down, devastated.

He slumps back against the wall, whispering to himself.

MIKE

Gracie... Gracie...

He holds his gut, a terrible ache that will never leave.

A sorrowful silence... an emptiness... until --

CLICK.

Mike turns, startled. His MINI-RECORDER has clicked into PLAY. Its wheels spin...

MIKE'S RECORDED VOICE

"Hey, there's nothing to feel guilty about. When a couple loses a child, 80% of the time, they end up divorced --"

MIKE

No... I should've stayed --

MIKE'S RECORDED VOICE

"And those bad doctors weren't your fault. You worked freelance. You couldn't help if you were stuck with a crappy HMO..."

MIKE

Stop --

MIKE'S RECORDED VOICE

"And that b.s. about second-hand smoke? C'mon! It's not like puffing a couple cigarettes gives your daughter cancer..."

MIKE

Jesus! Shut up!

Mike grabs the recorder and hits STOP.

INSERT - RECORDER

A pause -- then the wheels suddenly lurch into motion, by themselves.

The grating, scary Voice of the Room SCREECHES out.

VOICE OF THE ROOM
(over tape recorder)
SHUT UP YOURSELF, ASSHOLE! YOU
WALKED OUT, LIKE A SNIVELING LITTLE
PUSSY! WALKED OUT ON YOUR WIFE, YOUR
FATHER, YOUR FRIENDS...

MIKE
(bitter)
I was sparing them --

VOICE OF THE ROOM
YOU'RE A MISERABLE LIAR!

Mike stares desolately.

MIKE
I -- I was searching...

VOICE OF THE ROOM
SEARCHING FOR WHAT? FOR SOMETHING
THAT COULD PROVE YOU WRONG?

MIKE

Mike sighs. Beaten.

MIKE
Yes.

Suddenly -- RIIIIIIINNGG!

He spins.

THE FAX MACHINE

starts whirring. It's LCD screen says, "Receiving"

PAPER begins feeding.

Mike peers, confused.

TIGHT - FAX MACHINE

Something begins coming into the output tray.

Not a piece of paper.

But his daughter's PINK BUTTERFLY NIGHTGOWN. Stained with mucus, blood, all the liquids of her dying.

SHOOM! It's ejected from the machine, into Mike's hands.

MIKE

AHHHHH!!!

Mike tries to push it off, freaked, but the mucus on the nightgown clings to his hands.

Mike shakes it, revulsed. He desperately races away --

INT. BATHROOM

Into the bathroom. Mike throws the nightie in the sink, violently turning on the water.

FWOOSH! Water pours out, everywhere.

Mike shudders to tear the nightgown away. It comes loose, discolored fluids floating in the sink...

Frightened, Mike backs out, SLAMMING the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Mike bolts back in, shivering. He can SEE HIS BREATH.

The Thermostat has dropped to 32 degrees.

Water droplets are FROZEN AROUND THE ROOM. A weird, almost Christmas-like atmosphere.

Mike blinks. He stares up.

THE WALL'S CRACK

has grown. The fissures cover the walls, ceiling and floor. Like a spiderweb.

THE CLOCK

keeps ticking down. 16:41... 16:40... 16:39...

MIKE

seems lost. Eyes blank. Surrendered, he lies on the floor, spreading his arms in the frost like a child making an ice angel...

Then, a distant voice, like a dream...

LILY (O.S.)

Can you hear me...?

Mike bolts up, dazed. He wheels around.

ANGLE - HIS COMPUTER

is working again! Lily's glitchy IMAGE is on the SCREEN!

MIKE

Lily?!

Mike rushes over, astonished. She smiles to see him.

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)

Mike! Jesus! I've been trying you
to get through...

MIKE

Did you call the police?

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)

They're at the hotel.

MIKE

They're... w-why aren't they here?

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)

Didn't you say the Dolphin --

MIKE

Right! Yes --

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)

You're sure?

MIKE

Of course I'm sure! Please! Send
them to 1408!

Lily bites her lip, scared.

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)

Mike, they're in 1408. The room's
empty.

We PUSH IN TO MIKE. His blood freezes, terrified.

MIKE

Th -- that's impossible.

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)

Mike, where the hell are you?!

Mike looks all around.

Suddenly everything in the room looks more menacing. Jagged.

Mike's face collapses to a whisper.

MIKE
I... don't know.

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)
Don't panic! We can figure this out.

Mike blanches. Hands shaking, he picks up the room FILE.
Vintage PHOTOS of grisly 1408 DEATH SCENES: A MILITARY MAN. A
YOUNG EXECUTIVE IN A DERBY. A CUTE WOMAN.

All bloodied and gone.

MIKE
No, we can't.
(morose)
I'm going to die.

ON THE COMPUTER

Lily goes frantic.

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)
You're freaking! Look, don't move!
I can get there in fifteen minutes --

Mike glances at the CLOCK. 14:51... 14:50...

He shudders.

MIKE
That'll be too late.

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)
No it WON'T! I'll check every room!
M-maybe you got the numbers mixed-up.
You're in 1480, or 1804...

MIKE
(emphatic)
Lily, please stay away! I don't want
anything to happen to you --

This admission catches them both by surprise.

Beat -- then she flashes a tender smile.

LILY (OVER VIDEOLINK)
Well... I feel the same way. See you
soon.

CLICK! She signs off.

MIKE
Lily? Lily!!!

He shakes the computer...

When suddenly -- WHUMP!! The ENTIRE ROOM SHAKES, as if by a huge EARTHQUAKE.

WIDE

PLASTER falls from the ceiling. Furniture and lamps CRASH.

The entire FLOOR begins to buckle and crack.

Mike loses his footing and stumbles to the ground. His head strikes the floor with a sickening CRACK!

CLOSEUP - MIKE

THUD.

His eyes shut -- then reopen, dazed. He looks up, disoriented and childlike.

ABOVE

A light frost is falling. ICE CRYSTALS form on his hair.

Then, the ARMOIRE swivels into view... and comes DOWN.

Yikes!! Mike LURCHES out of the way, as -- SMASH! -- the massive cabinet crashes to the floor, splintering.

Mike groggily leaps to his feet. He gazes around.

THE SUITE

is a complete wreck. Broken furniture, collapsed ceiling and walls.

The floor has BOWED around the bed, which lies at a slant.

Mike's feet are in liquid. A sludgy half-frozen muck. His eyes follow the source of the water. Puddled in the corner... then up... trickling down the wall... leading to

THE PAINTING OF THE GHOST SHIP

Which is now PHOTO-REALISTIC and ALIVE. Tossing in the waves!

The jaundiced, starved faces of the sailors are MOVING. They SCREAM, frenzied. They're all now the VICTIMS FROM 1408: The Natty Man in suspenders. The Factory Owner. And most prominently, Kevin O'Malley, hands on the tiller, his eyes boring straight at us.

Chilled, Mike turns --

THE PAINTING OF THE HUNT

The dogs are ravenous, BARKING! Tearing their masters to pieces. The men moan. The horses run off.

THE PAINTING OF MOTHER AND CHILD

The blue baby's mouth is twisted, teeth filed to RAZOR SHARP POINTS. The mother weeps with despair, as the baby HISSES and attacks her.

Mike covers his eyes, unable to take it.

ON THE PAINTINGS

The CRIES grow louder, more insistent. The ship rocks harder. The ocean pounds.

The SHRIEKING grows.

MIKE

Stop! STOP!!

Unhinged, Mike SLAMS his fist at the painting, trying to stop it. His knuckles BREAK the glass, ripping the canvas.

Suddenly -- FLOOOOOOSH! SEA WATER BLASTS FROM THE PAINTING! LIKE THE FORCE OF A HUNDRED FIRE HOSES.

MIKE

gets SLAMMED against the wall.

The ROOM FILLS with water, at an incredible speed. Higher, higher --

WIDE

Mike struggles to float above. Furniture bangs around --

Mike fights the current. Debris swallows him up. Fatigued, delirious, he starts muttering the Act of Contrition:

MIKE

"O my God, I am heartily sorry for
having offended Thee, and I detest
all my sins..."

Mike's will gives out. He gets pulled under.

INT. 1408 - UNDERWATER

All is grim, like slow-motion. Murky and green.

Underwater, Mike turns, and sees the back wall has vanished.

In its place is the GHOST SHIP. Sinking downward toward a black abyss.

Mike gapes, his eyes bulging from lack of air.

Everything swirls. He spins, getting sucked deeper...

His arms tire. Bubbles pop from his mouth, as he begins to breathe in water. Mike's body goes limp. He's pulled into the ocean's darkness...

All seems lost... the end imminent, when --

A strange object unexpectedly appears.

Foggy, Mike looks up.

Then -- he gasps.

IT'S MIKE'S SURFBOARD

Hovering above him, like a godsend.

Mike is startled, confused -- but grateful. He lurches and grabs it -- hanging on -- his last chance for life. When, it unexpectedly pitches and HAMMERS him in the head.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

ECU - MIKE'S FACE

Mike lies mutely on his back, on the sand. Hyperventilating.

Winded. Eyes glassy.

But, alive.

He's back in the beach scene from the beginning.

Then... a faint BUZZING. Mike looks up.

IN THE SKY

The small AIRPLANE flies overhead, towing the BANNER. It passes through the brightness, in sharp silhouette.

Mike squints, trying to read it.

The plane crosses a cloud, and the banner becomes readable:
"CHEAP AUTO INSURANCE CALL 1-800-222-1408"

MIKE'S

eyes widen.

TIGHT - THE BANNER

The four numbers: "1408"

MIKE

trembles, everything spinning, his memories collapsing.
Nothing making any sense...

His chest tightens. His brain feels like it's going to
explode. Then --

A wet LIFEGUARD thrusts his head into view.

LIFEGUARD

Sir! Can you breathe? Is there any
water in your lungs?

(beat)

Can you focus??

Mike's jaw quivers, but forms no words. Utterly drained, he
passes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

ECU - MIKE

His head is bandaged and his face drawn, but his breathing is
even.

Slowly, he opens his eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Mike is lying in a hospital bed, hooked up to an IV. A tree
is outside the window.

LILY (O.S.)

He's alive...!

Mike turns. Sitting in a chair, watching him, is Lily. She
stands, relieved. Smiling anxiously.

MIKE

W-w-where am I?

LILY

You're in a hospital.

Mike wipes his eyes, confused.

MIKE
In New York?

LILY
New York??
(puzzled)
No -- Miami. You got hit in the head
with your board. You've been out for
a day.

Mike tries to takes this in, uncomprehending. She comes over.

LILY
They called me, so I flew down.
(awkward shrug)
Guess I'm still listed as your next
of kin...

MIKE
So I'm not in New York?

LILY
No! Why do you keep saying that?!

MIKE
Because I thought... God, it was so
vivid. I must've gotten banged in
the brains so hard, all my circuits
fried.
(trying to focus)
I was trapped... I was dying... in
this weird hotel. The Dolphin --

LILY
The what?

MIKE
The Dolphin. The one on the
southeast corner of 61st and 8th.

LILY
(beat)
Mike, that's a Banana Republic.

His expression falls.

She trembles, then starts weeping.

MIKE
Hey. Why are you crying?

LILY
Because -- I haven't seen you for so
long. And then -- we're here, like
this:

(MORE)

LILY (CONT'D)

(soft)

In another hospital.

His eyes get watery. She gets emotional, then suddenly hurries into the bathroom.

IN THE BATHROOM

Lily grabs a tissue and wipes her face. She stares in the mirror. A final sniffle, then she tentatively returns.

BACK AT THE BED

LILY

Do you know it's been three years?

MIKE

Since --

LILY

Since...

They both trail off. She peers at him, still terribly hurt. Her voice drops to a hush.

LILY

Mike, why'd you leave?

MIKE

(somber, he whispers)

Because... every time I looked at you, I saw her face.

Lily shudders, silent.

Mike reaches out... straining... and takes her hand.

MIKE

I'm sorry. Sorry I blew it... sorry for everything...

LILY

Everything?

MIKE

For -- Gracie...

LILY

You had nothing to do with Gracie.

He looks in her eyes, seeing the truth of his life.

MIKE

Then -- I'm sorry for running away. For making mistakes. For abandoning everyone...

CLOSEUP - LILY

She nods, acceptingly.

LILY
You should get some rest.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - LATER

Lily huddles by herself, talking on a CELLPHONE.

LILY
(on cellphone)
I think I'm gonna stay a couple extra days.
(beat; embarrassed)
No, nothing's going on. But Mike had a concussion and he's talking kind of strange. Almost hallucinatory...
(beat)
He might need a little help.

CUT TO:

INT. RENTAL CAR - DRIVING - DAY

Lily drives a white rental car. Mike sits in the passenger seat staring, a large bandage across his temple.

The boulevard is quite uninspiring: Overgrown palm trees, graffitied Cuban markets, faded pink motels.

LILY
Remind me again. Why do you live here?

MIKE
I can be anonymous.

She laughs.

EXT. BEACH PARKING LOT - DAY

Lily drops Mike off at his car. It has two parking tickets.

He peers out at the turquoise water. In the distance, a dolphin jumps in the waves.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAILBOXES, ETC. - DAY

The same fluorescent caphole we saw before. The scene plays just like last time: Mike enters and goes to his mailbox. He unlocks it, removing a startling amount of MAIL.

The MAILBOX GUY nods.

MAILBOX GUY
You've been gone awhile.

MIKE
Yeah.

A disinterested beat -- then Mike reacts, offput.

INT. PALM COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Mike sits in his corner booth, alone. He's going through months of OPENED MAIL. The table is spread with brochures from haunted hotels and inns... a bill from Saint Joseph's Nursing Home... the Weekly World News...

Mike slashes an envelope with his letter opener, removing a childish GREETING CARD. It has a cartoon monkey saying "No Monkeying Around! Happy Birthday!"

Mike reacts, strangely. The oddest sensation...

He frowns -- then suddenly wades through all the hotel mail. Frantically digging through photos, flyers... searching... searching...

INT. MAILBOXES, ETC. - DAY

The door SLAMS open. Mike barges back in, a bit frenzied.

MIKE
Did I drop a postcard??

The Mailbox Guy stares.

MAILBOX GUY
Uh... nope.

Perturbed, Mike scans the floor. Then his eyes drift... up, up... to the CEILING. Up there is an AIR VENT.

Mike is bothered.

EXT. MAILBOXES, ETC. - SECONDS LATER

Mike runs out, punching "411" into his CELLPHONE. He paces the sidewalk, bristling with nervous energy.

MIKE

Yes! In New York City, can I have
the number for the Dolphin Hotel??

Long beat. Then:

OPERATOR (V.O.)

I have no such listing.

Mike can't accept this.

MIKE

Are you sure?

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Sir, I have no such listing.

CUT TO:

INT. RESEARCH LIBRARY - DAY

Mike RUNS up to the research desk. He flags down a LIBRARIAN.

INT. LIBRARY MICROFICHE ROOM

Mike frantically scrolls through MICROFICHE, pages blurring by. Suddenly, he finds the ancient New York Herald-Tribune front page. He leans in -- but the headline has changed.

Now it says "FACTORY OWNER LEAPS OFF BRIDGE." Underneath is a PHOTO of some cops at a riverbank.

Mike gasps, disturbed.

MIKE

No way --

A moment of dislocation... when he remembers something. Mike whips out his LEGAL PAD. But -- now the pages are all EMPTY.

A spooky pause... when suddenly -- RING!! It's his CELLPHONE. Mike jumps, startled. Quickly, he answers. The screen says "LILY."

MIKE

H-Hey.

LILY (V.O.)

I'm just checking up. How are you?

MIKE

Uh... tell you the truth, I'm
questionable...

RM

LILY (V.O.)
(concerned)
Let's grab a bite.

CUT TO:

INT. BEACH RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Mike and Lily have dinner at a nice beachfront cafe. Waves crash in the b.g.

MIKE
It's fuckin' weird. This hotel thing feels so real...

LILY
Maybe I should drive you back to the hospital --

MIKE
No, no -- I'm not ill. It's just... this powerful sense of deja vu. The feeling of something so immediate -- yet you know it didn't happen.

He stares, entranced.

MIKE
I can't believe I'm sitting here with you.

She slowly smiles.

A WOMAN in a flowered dress passes by. Mike glances -- and for a FLASH she's the Portly Lady from 1408.

Huh?

Mike turns -- and now she's a CUBAN LADY.

He wipes his eyes, on edge. Questioning himself. He leans in to Lily, his voice tremulous. We MOVE IN on the couple.

MIKE
Did I tell you that Gracie was there?

LILY
(off-guard)
No...

MIKE
Yeah. Can you imagine how strange that is... the sensation that I saw her just a few hours ago?

Lily blinks back tears. She grabs for her wine.

LILY
S-sounds like one of your books.

MIKE
I know. Except usually, I have to pretend the haunted house is scary.
(beat)
This time, my trip was imaginary... and it's the most terrifying place I've ever been.

AT THE NEXT TABLE

Two GUYS get up and leave. Left on a plate are the remains of a beef burger soaked in red ketchup. A fly buzzes...

Mike doesn't notice.

LILY
You should write about it.

MIKE
What? The dream?

LILY
(she slowly nods)
If it means something to you. Maybe, you've been given a second chance.

Mike thinks.

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

TIGHT on Mike, rapidly TYPING AWAY at his computer.

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

The computer screen FILLS WITH WORDS. Mike is on fire, ideas pouring out. His face ablaze...

MIKE'S VOICE
"I grabbed my overnight case. 'Mr. Olin, I've never seen a ghost, and I don't believe I ever will.'
(beat)
"Olin smirked. "I'm afraid you don't believe in anything. But in 1408, your unbelief will only render you more vulnerable."

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

It's dark outside. The desk is littered with potato chip bags.

MIKE'S VOICE

"The man wore a 1920's brown wool suit. Suspenders. He pulled the noose round his neck -- then jumped..."

Mike types faster.

MIKE'S VOICE

"The window vanished. All evidence of its existence erased..."

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

MIKE'S VOICE

"Kevin O'Malley's throat gushed a sickly rich red..."

Mike slurps a coffee.

MIKE'S VOICE

"My narration on the tape recorder became fragmentary, a loop of unease. No longer the voice of a man at work... but of a perplexed individual losing his hold on reality."

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Sam grins at his speakerphone. He shouts.

SAM

Mikey! You sound happy.

MIKE (V.O.)

(giddy, on phone)

I can't believe it! The work's just pouring out of me! I think I've invented some new literary form: The fiction memoir. Autobiography of a nightmare. It's sort of like Capote meets Whitley Strieber.

SAM

I love it! "In Cold Blood" with aliens!

(gleeful)

I wanna put it out to auction -- start a bidding war! When can I read it?

MIKE (V.O.)
Any day. I'll send it to you the
second it's done.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIAMI AIRPORT - DAY

Mike is dropping off Lily. She has her bags. A tender smile between them.

MIKE
I'll see you soon.

An awkward pause -- and then they kiss.

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

The laser printer is WHIRRING. Pages come speeding out, crisp and clean.

Mike reads them proudly.

LATER

Mike neatly stacks the sheets. He slides them into a fat manila ENVELOPE.

INT. CRAPPY CAR - DAY

Mike jauntily climbs in his car, clutching the package. He sweeps a pile of junk off the seat, onto the floor. A shred of paper catches his eye -- the nursing home bill.

Hmm. He thinks...

INT. SAINT JOSEPH'S NURSING HOME - DAY

An airless lobby. VERY OLD PEOPLE sit unmoving, some in wheelchairs. ORDERLIES silently clean. A TV plays unwatched.

Mike bursts through the doors. He looks around, lost. All the WOMEN look alike -- wrinkled emaciated figures with big glasses and white hair. All the MEN are huddled in bathrobes, faces unshaven, eyes vacant.

Mike studies the men, trying to decide if one is his father. But then... he notices his dad in a wheelchair, rolled over by a window. A shell of a man, gazing out...

Mike's face falls. Then, he girds himself and hurries over.

MIKE
Dad?

FATHER

doesn't react. Mike gently approaches.

MIKE

I haven't... seen you in awhile...

No response.

Mike pulls up a chair. He takes his father's veined hand.

MIKE

Are you doing okay?

Nothing. No reaction at all. Mike whispers.

MIKE

Well... I'm actually pretty good.
I'm speaking to Lily again...

The old guy keeps staring out the glass.

MIKE

And... I've written a new book.
(a careful beat)
I think you'd like it.

A beat. Then -- a brief flicker crosses Father's face. His eyes widen.

FATHER

Michael...??

CU - MIKE

He trembles, touched. A pang of emotion, this briefest of connections meaning so much to him.

CUT TO:

INT. MAILBOXES, ETC. - DAY

Mike strides back into the mailbox store. The place is cluttered, WORKMEN busy on ladders. The clock says 4:55. Mike slams the big envelope down on the counter.

MIKE

Hi! I've got a package I need to overnight.

The Mailbox Guy is turned away from us. He doesn't move. Mike glances nervously at the clock.

MIKE

Um -- where are the forms I've got to fill out? I really need this in New York tomorrow.

MAILBOX GUY'S VOICE

I'm sorry, we're closed.

MIKE

Huh? No! That's wrong.
(he points at the clock)
It's only five of. I -- still have five more minutes!

The Mailbox Guy turns... revealing HE IS ACTUALLY MR. OLIN.

OLIN SMIRKS, OMNISCIENT and ALL-POWERFUL. He takes the package.

OLIN

I'm sorry, Mr. Enslin. Your time is up.

Mike GASPS, stupefied.

MIKE

Wha...?!!

A WORKMAN

scrapes away some drywall, revealing BUTTERFLY PAPER UNDERNEATH.

MIKE

spins, bewildered.

MIKE

Noooo...!

OLIN

Oh come, Mr. Enslin. You didn't really think it was just a dream?!

WIDE

Another WORKMAN turns, revealing he's the ENGINEER from the hotel. He slams the floor, unveiling BEIGE CARPET underneath.

ON MIKE'S FACE

All color drains.

His expression goes from fear... to realization... to madness.

The room starts SPINNING.

AROUND HIM, the SOUND of CONSTRUCTION BUILDS. Louder, LOUDER, a CRUSH of activity.

THE ROOM

spins faster. Every revolution transforms us back to 1408.

The WALLS all become wallpapered.

A WORKMAN leers, in a blur becoming Kevin O'Malley.

Mike staggers, terrified.

The room spins faster. The Mailbox Store is vanishing.

The CEILING tile crashes down, revealing 1408's VENT.

The FURNITURE appears around us.

The WHIR builds to a high-pitched, painful SHRIEK --

And THEN --

INT. 1408 - SAME TIME

The howl suddenly STOPS.

And Mike is left, collapsed onto the carpet of 1408. Curled in a fetal position, whimpering, confused.

He slowly lifts his head... and a horrible guttural MOAN passes from his lips.

He's back.

THE ROOM IS JUST AS HE LEFT IT. RAVAGED. DRENCHED. LIKE A HURRICANE BLEW THROUGH.

The unplugged clock keeps ticking down: 4:55... 4:54...

Mike unsteadily rises. He shouts plaintively.

MIKE

No. NO! I was OUT --

VOICE OF THE ROOM

WRONG! YOU NEVER LEFT!

Mike jerks, startled.

The voice is behind him. Unnerved, Mike slowly turns. And back there... is...

A DOOR

Standing all by itself in the middle of the room.

MIKE

gulps.

Tentative, shaky, he crosses closer...

The door waits. Mike forces himself. Sweating. Heart pounding crazy.

Valiantly, hands trembling... he reaches to the handle. Grimacing with dread, he starts to turn it --

When -- his courage lets out. He lets go.

The VOICE snickers.

VOICE OF THE ROOM
MICHAEL...! YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR
SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN. FOR A LIFE
AFTER DEATH! WELL, HERE I AM.

THE DOOR HANDLE

starts turning by itself.

Mike shudders.

THE DOOR

slowly opens. Through the crack, we SEE a DEEP, BLACK SPACE of a place that exists somewhere other than 1408.

MIKE

seizes up, aghast.

A DARK SHADOW falls over him...

We DON'T SEE what is revealed behind the door. But Mike does. His FACE beholds a horror no sane person can endure.

His eyes widen. His mouth opens in a silent scream.

His legs buckle under him.

MIKE
GODDDDDDDDDDDDD!!!!

Beat.

VOICE OF THE ROOM
YOU SAID GOD DOESN'T EXIST!

Mike crumples in on himself, finished. He's cowering, beaten.

He covers his head, preparing for a fatal blow. We MOVE CLOSER... CLOSER... until his FACE IS IN TIGHT CLOSE-UP. Readying himself for an unimaginable fate.

The tension of the moment builds to a climax. The end imminent. And then --

A melancholy MUSIC.

KAREN CARPENTER'S VOICE
(singing)
"We've only just begun..."

Huh? Mike looks up.

IN FRONT OF HIM

The door has DISAPPEARED.

In its place is

GRACIE

Dressed in her dirty pink nightgown. She's pale, skeletally thin, her hair falling out.

She looks at Mike and smiles. A smile that makes her face look even more skull-like.

GRACIE
Daddy...?

MIKE
(anguished)
You're not real!!

He backs away. Hurt, she weakly reaches to touch him...

GRACIE
I need help.

MIKE
You're not Gracie!!

GRACIE
(soft)
I wet myself.

Tears spring to Mike's eyes. Fighting this, he steps back.

GRACIE
Please. I'm cold.

Mike can't stand this.

She shivers, her little body wispy...

GRACIE
So cold...

Mike's face caves. Suddenly overpowered by feelings, he
RUSHES FORWARD and GRABS her tightly.

MIKE
Oh Gracie, Gracie, Gracie...

TIGHT - MIKE AND GRACIE

His eyes are shut, clinging to her tiny body. The most
electric thing he's ever felt.

She speaks, barely a whisper.

GRACIE
It won't let me stay.

He looks up, as she convulses violently. Her face damp with
sweat. He touches her forehead -- it's burning up.

MIKE
No! Honey, no one's gonna take you.

Her eyes brim with tears of pain.

GRACIE
Do you love me, Daddy?

MIKE
You know I do!

GRACIE
I wish we could stay together. You,
me, Mommy --

MIKE
We can! I promise we CAN!

Happy, she brushes her hand to his cheek.

CLOSE ON - MIKE'S CHEEK

As she withdraws her hand, it leaves a TRAIL OF ASH.

GRACIE

unexpectedly collapses, like a balloon that's lost all air.

MIKE

Gracie?

She falls back, eyes frozen. She's stopped breathing.

MIKE

GRACIE?!

Mike shakes her, but she is still.

MIKE

NO!!!

Mike immediately begins CPR. He puts his mouth over hers, breathing air into her lost lungs.

MIKE

Not again! Goddammit, NOT AGAIN!

He furiously begins CPR. He begs, between breaths.

MIKE

Stay... stay...

MIKE

keeps pressing on her chest. Through his face, we see vain hope. Despair. And finally... loss.

Shaken, he pulls his hands away. They are COVERED IN ASH.

ABOVE

Gracie's body has TURNED TO DUST. She is gone.

Mike is immobile. Hands gray with the remains of his child.

His heart is empty. Absolute sorrow. Grieving, eyes sunken, he looks up. Just wanting it to end.

THE CLOCK

ticks down. 00:10... 00:09... 00:08...

MIKE

slowly reacts, sobbing.

THE CLOCK

reaches the finish: 00:03... 00:02... 00:01... 00:00.

And --

MIKE'S EYES

go wide. And??

THE CLOCK

starts FLICKERING. The LED numbers flash randomly...

MIKE

waits despondently. Around him, the ash disappears. The gray dust dissipates, like a dream, into nothingness.

Mike stares, uncomprehending. Until he peers up -- and GASPS.

WIDE VIEW OF THE ROOM

1408 has RETURNED TO ITS OPENING STATE. No water damage. Windows back. Everything restored to when we first entered.

The clock radio RESETS TO 60:00. It begins counting down again: 59:59... 59:58... 59:57...

MIKE

goes into shock. Dumbstruck. His voice cracking.

MIKE

Why don't... you just kill me?

VOICE OF THE ROOM

BECAUSE ALL THINGS COME DOWN TO CHOICE.

Mike trembles, utterly desolate.

VOICE OF THE ROOM

YOU GET TO RELIVE THE SAME HOUR.
AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN.

The THERMOSTAT starts rising: 85... 90... 95...

Mike's skin gets clammy. He staggers, lightheaded.

VOICE OF THE ROOM

UNLESS, YOU CHOOSE TO END IT.

Something FALLS right behind him. Mike turns --

A ROPE NOOSE

hangs, attached to the ceiling. Below it is a chair.

MIKE

nods, acquiescing.

The TEMPERATURE is getting hellish: 115... 120... 125...

Mike is weeping. Confused. Unable to think clearly, he steps onto the chair. He slowly draws the rope around his neck.

Mike stands there, eyes glassy. Pondering his fate.

But -- not jumping. Emotions and regrets pound through his body.

He grips the rope tight... then suddenly pulls it off, crying.

MIKE

I... can't.

(distraught)

I'm sorry! I just... can't do it.

The VOICE booms, furious.

VOICE OF THE ROOM

THEN YOU LEAVE ME NO OPTION!

The TV suddenly turns on.

ON THE TV SCREEN

We see Lily, guilelessly entering the Dolphin lobby.

MIKE'S FACE

face falls, horrified.

MIKE

Lily...?

VOICE OF THE ROOM

(mocking)

YES, "LILY"! I'LL TAKE HER IN TRADE.

MIKE

N-NO!

ON THE TV

Lily's cellphone sharply RINGS. She answers.

LILY

Hello?

We hear MIKE'S SIMULATED VOICE.

MIKE'S VOICE
(over cellphone)
Lily, it's me.

LILY
Mike?

MIKE'S VOICE
Hurry! Come up to my room.

THE REAL MIKE
gapes in horror.

MIKE
Leave her out of this!!

ON THE TV
Lily enters the elevator. The doors shutting...

MIKE
starts freaking out. He spins, then notices his CELLPHONE on the floor. Its screen flickers.

Ah! Mike looks around, paranoid, then grabs the phone. Its power blinks. Frantic, he hurriedly DIALS Lily. He bites his nails. RING! RING...!

ON LILY
She rides up the elevator, oblivious.

ON MIKE

MIKE
C'mon, c'mon...

More RINGING. Then -- a MAN answers, through garbled STATIC.

MAN (V.O.)
Hello?

A discombobulated beat. It's a wrong number, but... strangely familiar.

MIKE
Hello?! Who -- who is this???

INTERCUT:

INT. RESEARCH LIBRARY - THE PAST

It's Mike back in the microfiche room, in the past, receiving the call. All he hears is STATIC.

MIKE
Hello! This is Mike Enslin. Is
anybody there?

CUT BACK TO:

INT. 1408 - PRESENT

Mike blanches, realizing. He shouts deliriously.

MIKE
My God! Don't come to the Dolphin!
Stay out of 140--

His phone suddenly SPARKS, shorting. It FLAMES, burning him. He cries out and drops it. Mike turns worriedly to

THE TV

Lily is still in the elevator, rising. Floors go by: 8... 9...

MIKE

gets a galvanized look.

MIKE
I won't let you have her.

Incensed, he runs toward the door.

CRAZY ANGLE

Suddenly -- the ROOM PIVOTS, slanting to 45 DEGREES!

Mike trips, falling. SLAM!

The floor is crazy. Mike tries to get up, attempting to climb. His naked hands fall on hot carpet, singeing him.

Mike SCREAMS in pain. But he keeps going.

VOICE OF THE ROOM
YOU CAN'T SAVE HER. SHE'S DOOMED!

ON THE TV

The elevator opens on the 14th floor. Lily steps out...

WIDE - THE ROOM

Mike crawls upward, his equilibrium reeling.

The SLANT is now INSANE. The floor is practically vertical.

Mike hangs onto the furniture, like a rock climber. Using all his might, he hoists himself.

The thermostat keeps rising. 140. 145...

Mike struggles to move. He can barely breathe through the sweltering heat. He looks up -- and the living room has LENGTHENED. The DOOR now seems a football field away. Just a speck.

MIKE

moans. His feet STICK to the hot melting carpet. He wants to move, but collapses. The fabric burns into his hands.

The door is hopelessly far away. In anguish, unable to crawl, he weakly glances at the TV.

ON THE TV

Lily walks down the hall. Approaching...

CLOSEUP - MIKE

In a final gasp at salvation, Mike whispers.

MIKE
Lily. Go...

ON THE TV

Lily takes a step, then suddenly stops.

Like she heard him.

She contemplates this sensation, her face a mix of strange emotions. Then -- she suddenly turns and LEAVES.

MIKE

sobs, relieved.

LILY

runs. Fast, faster.

THE ROOM

THUNDERS, furious.

Mike is overwrought. Volatile, rapturous. He slowly looks up... and then his expression darkens.

MIKE
I know I've lived the life of a
selfish man...
(pause)
But I don't have to die that way.

Mike reaches for the fallen BOOK OF MATCHES.

He stares -- then rips out a match and STRIKES it against the cover, with its funny little doorman.

An instant, TINY FLAME.

MIKE
Maybe this room isn't real. Maybe
I'm not even real.
(wheezing, desperate)
But this fire... is real.

Mike crawls across the floor. Holding the match out, straining to touch it to a CURTAIN...

When -- WHOOSH! A HUSH OF WIND from the air conditioning vent blows it out.

VOICE OF THE ROOM
YOU'D JUST BE KILLING YOURSELF.

Mike considers this... then nods.

MIKE
As long as I kill you too, I can rest
in peace.

Suddenly, Mike grabs Olin's

COGNAC BOTTLE

Mike pops the cork, then lights the ENTIRE BOOK OF MATCHES.

The FLAME BLAZES bright, a crazy glow under his face. Mike shoves it in the bottle, lighting the flammable liquid. Mike spins and HURLS the MOLOTOV COCKTAIL.

BLAMMMM!! The entire ROOM explodes in flames.

WIDE

The FIRE instantly spreads, igniting the carpet and furniture.

FSSST! The SPRINKLERS COME ON -- the room's desperate attempt to save itself. Mike laughs manically.

MIKE
Too LATE! You'll never hurt anyone
again.

The CURTAINS flare up, blindingly orange. The blaze SEARS,
the walls erupt.

Mike stands inside the inferno, seething. In a final act, he
clicks on his recorder:

MIKE
"The decor is tattered and the staff
surly... but on a Shiver Scale, I
award the Dolphin Hotel ten skulls."

The flames congeal, then DETONATE.

EXT. HOTEL WINDOW - SAME TIME

KABOOM! A thundering FIREBALL blasts out the window.

INT. 1408 - SAME TIME

Mike is obliterated from view.

The raging flames scorch the ceiling, then get sucked into the
AIR VENT.

INT. VENT

Pulsing FIRE courses through the vents. Splitting in all
directions.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

Fire ALARMS go off.

Hotel doors start SLAMMING open. Frantic GUESTS rush toward
the exits, SCREAMING, pushing each other.

EXT. DOLPHIN HOTEL - UPPER STORIES - SAME TIME

Flames POUR OUT of the top stories. Smoke fills the sky.

EXT. DOLPHIN HOTEL - AT THE STREET - SAME TIME

Sirens WAIL. GUESTS come flying out the doors, many in
pajamas, furiously racing for the street.

INT. 1408 - SAME TIME

Flames ripple. In the broiling heat, the room begins to MELT.

The walls sag, sinking into strange, unpleasant curves.

The paintings begin to bend. Moans cry out.

The chandelier droops like a glob of spit.

The clock radio melts into the floor.

The yellow-orange LIGHT brightens almost painfully hot -- and then, for a final second -- we glimpse Mike.

GRACIE'S VOICE

Daddy, everyone dies.

Mike's eyes glisten. A brief, satisfied smile... and then he's swallowed by the fire.

INT. DOLPHIN LOBBY - SAME TIME

The ceiling COLLAPSES, burning. SHOUTS and SCREAMS, as the last GUESTS shove their way out. We MOVE THROUGH the blazing debris. Past the ash, through the charred furniture, toward the Reception counter...

INT. OLIN'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

The beautiful oak paneling is ablaze. Shelves fall, rare books crumbling into dust.

Sitting amid the devastation, perfectly calm at his desk, is Olin. Like the captain of the Titanic, he is unruffled. He leans back in his chair, at peace, enjoying a cigar. An amber brandy in his hand.

OLIN

Well done, Mr. Enslin. Well done!

He swirls the brandy in its snifter, then takes a slow sip. Ahh...

Until, oddly -- RING! It's an interrupting PHONECALL. Olin stares quizzically, then begrudgingly puts down his brandy.

INSERT - THE SNIFTER

It gets placed on the desk upon a PILE OF POSTCARDS. The same Dolphin Hotel postcard that Mike received.

ANGLE - OLIN

He answers his phone, crisp and professional.

OLIN

Good evening. Dolphin Hotel.

Olin listens, then shrugs.

OLIN
No, I'm so sorry. We're not
accepting reservations at this time.

Olin gently hangs up the phone. Then he takes a puff of his cigar.

Behind him, the walls CAVE IN.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOLPHIN HOTEL - LATER

The FIRE DEPARTMENT is in front, spraying the building down. Hook-and-ladders fill the street.

POLICEMEN hold back the shivering guests. We TRACK PAST their bewildered faces -- cold, frightened, tired -- until we land on one woman, off to herself.

Lily. She gazes up at the Hotel. Then, she sadly speaks.

LILY
Goodbye, Mike.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A small funeral, under gray skies.

A DOZEN people are huddled around a fresh grave, watching the coffin get lowered into the ground.

Lily's face is withdrawn. Not overwrought... but utterly drained. She stares, then drops a flower on the casket.

Sam gives her a supportive hug.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

The grubby office is filled with boxes. Sam and Lily are silently packing up Mike's belongings.

There are hundreds of books. Cameras. A sound meter. A chipped Edgar Allen Poe award. Lily sighs.

LILY
You live a life, and all that's left
behind are boxes of junk.

Sam closes a box.

SAM
At least he went out in a blaze.

LILY
That's not funny.

SAM
No, I'm sorry. I -- I wasn't trying
to be funny.
(genuine)
What I meant was -- he went out like
one of his characters.
(he sighs)
It's just a shame he won't be around
to write about it.

On the desk is a cute framed PHOTO of Lily, Mike and Gracie in
happier times. Lily stares, then takes it for herself.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN - DAY

A bustling New York street. Sam shuffles up, looking a bit
weathered. He enters a gleaming office building.

INT. LITERARY AGENCY - SAME TIME

Sam enters his office, in a haze. His Secretary looks up.

SECRETARY
How was the trip?

SAM
(he shoots her a look)
It was a funeral.

Sam goes to an overflowing INBOX on her desk, piled with mail.
He grabs the mail and drifts aimlessly away.

He flips through the papers. Publishers Weekly... catalogs...
New York Review of Books. Sam goes into his office --

INT. SAM'S OFFICE

and wades to the end of the mail. Suddenly he reaches a big
manila envelope -- and freezes.

INSERT - ENVELOPE

The return address is "ENSLIN"

ANGLE - SAM

He gapes in disbelief. A moment of dislocation... struggling
to process what this means... then he kicks the door shut.

Shaking, Sam sits at his desk. He stares at the package, then slowly, with utmost care, unseals the flap. He tremblingly reaches inside... and pulls out Mike's completed pages.

Sam gasps, overcome, and drops them. We SLOWLY PUSH IN TO the pile of laser-printed pages, crisp and elegant. The cover page is simple:

"1408"

by Mike Enslin

FADE OUT.

THE END