Autumn's Blood

An Honors Project

by

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EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - NIGHT

A party is just finishing. People are stumbling out of the house and disappearing into the surrounding neighborhood.

CINDY HAMMERSMITH, a very attractive coed, exits the house and stumbles around. She is obviously drunk.

VOICE FROM THE HOUSE
(off screen)
Where'd Cindy go?!

CINDY
I said I was going home! (to herself) Nobody ever listens.

She stumbles off.

Behind her, a shadowy figure moves.

EXT. BEHIND A DORMITORY - NIGHT

Cindy is walking at a slow, even pace. The walk has sobered her up some.

She stops and looks around behind her.

CINDY
Hello. Is that you Bob? I thought I told you to leave me alone.

When no one emerges, she returns to walking.

Suddenly, a hand reaches around from behind and clamps down over her mouth. A shiny blade comes up and slices her throat twice, from left to right. She struggles for a moment then collapses. The shadowy figure eases her to the ground and begins to cut into her abdomen.

FADE OUT:
FADE IN:

INT. JEFF'S ROOM—MORNING

This is a standard sized dorm room. Half of the room is very neat and orderly. The other half is a mess and covered in alternative paraphernalia.

JEFF CARLSON, a conservative looking college senior, is asleep at a desk on the neat side of the room. In front of him, is a typewriter with a paper in it. Next to the typewriter is a framed picture of Bob Woodward and Carl Berstein, and a very worn copy of ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN. On the other side of the desk is a framed picture of Jeff hugging RACHEL ROUILLER, an attractive college student.

Across the room, on the messy side, KEITH BRETT, an alternative college student, is asleep on a bed. Next to him, an ALARM CLOCK GOES OFF. Keith jumps up and turns it off. He grabs his head and moans. Jeff sits up and looks at his watch.

JEFF

Oh shit!

Jeff jumps up and starts to gather his school things.

Keith shotguns a Coke, then lets out a tremendous belch. He smiles.

KEITH

You finish?

JEFF

No, I fell asleep sometime after three o'clock.

KEITH

You're much too dedicated to your studies.

Jeff grabs his backpack and heads out the door.

JEFF

See you tonight.

Keith thinks for a moment the leaps to the door.

KEITH

(yelling after Jeff)

Don't forget your lunch with Rachel!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF
(off screen)
Thanks!

KEITH
(to himself)
That boy would forget his ass
if it wasn't screwed on.

EXT. SIDEWALK ON CAMPUS—DAY

Jeff is jogging down the sidewalk. He occasionally has to
jump around other PEDESTRIANS.

EXT. BEHIND A DORMITORY—DAY

A large CROWD has gathered around the body of Cindy
Hammersmith. A few POLICEMEN are trying to move the crowd
aside so that an ambulance can get through.

Jeff runs up and stops to see what all the commotion is.
When he sees the body he stares in awe. He reaches into his
backpack and pulls out a camera. He starts taking pictures
of the body and the PARAMEDICS that are cleaning up. A
Policeman crosses to him.

POLICEMAN
Is that really necessary?

Jeff doesn't look up from his work.

JEFF
I'm with the school newspaper.

The Policeman turns around disgusted and tries to break up
the crowd.

The Paramedics are putting the body in the ambulance. The
crowd begins to disperse except for Jeff. He is staring at a
pool of blood that remains. He notices his watch and
reluctantly takes off at a run.

EXT. JOURNALISM BUILDING—DAY

Jeff runs by in such a hurry that he passes by the door. He
realizes his mistake, turns around and enters.
INT. JOURNALISM BUILDING—DAY

Jeff runs down a hall and enters a door marked NEWSPAPER OFFICE.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE—DAY

STUDENTS are running everywhere with papers in their hands. Out of the chaos, GEORGE RAMERIZ, a pimply student, notices Jeff enter.

   GEORGE
   You're late!

Jeff looks at his watch.

   JEFF
   I've still got thirty-five seconds.

   GEORGE
   I can't edit in thirty-five seconds.

Jeff reaches into his bag and hands George a stack of papers.

   JEFF
   You don't need to edit. It's perfect.

   GEORGE
   How do I know that?

Jeff smiles and walks away. George glares after him.

Jeff crosses to his desk and starts to unpack his bag. When he gets to the camera, he pauses.

   JEFF
   (yelling to anyone in the room)
   Who has the keys to the darkroom?

   VOICE FROM THE CROWD
   Hoffman.

Jeff takes his camera and crosses the room to a door marked ADVISOR.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He KNOCKS.

HOFFMAN
(off screen)

Come in.

Jeff enters.

INT. HOFFMAN'S OFFICE—DAY

This is a very small office decorated in Victorian style. The only thing that is not Victorian is the computer terminal sitting on the desk. To one side of the room is a very elaborate chess board with a game in progress. On the other side is a bookshelf full of books.

Behind the desk, CORNELIUS HOFFMAN, a middle-aged British professor, sits and studies his computer screen. He looks up and sees Jeff standing in the doorway.

HOFFMAN

Jeffery! Come in, come in.

Hoffman motions to the chess board.

HOFFMAN (continuing)

I believe it's your move.

Jeff goes over to examine the chess game.

HOFFMAN

I was just reading your piece on the speech team. Very, very impressive.

Jeff makes his move.

JEFF

Check.

Hoffman jumps up and examines the chess board.

HOFFMAN

Damn, I didn't see that. I hope you will give me some time to think about my next move.

JEFF

Actually, I came in to get the darkroom keys.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Hoffman gets a ring of keys out of his desk and gives them to Jeff.

HOFFMAN
Were you told that the staff meeting had been moved to eleven o'clock?

Jeff looks at his watch.

JEFF
No. But I think I can just make it.

Jeff heads towards the door.

HOFFMAN
What have you got?

JEFF
Real news.

Hoffman goes back to his desk and Jeff exits.

INT. DARKROOM—DAY

Jeff is standing impatiently over a tray of chemicals. A small TIMER goes off with a DING. Jeff turns on the light and pulls a strip of negatives out of the wash. He holds them up to the light and smiles. He exits.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE—DAY

There is a staff meeting in progress. A large number of students are sitting around listening to George. Hoffman is sitting in the back observing.

GEORGE
...okay who wants to interview the new second assistant defensive football coach?

Jeff enters.

GEORGE
I'm glad you could make it, Mr. Carlson.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF
Sorry, your girlfriend wouldn't let me go.

A small chuckle goes through the room. George ignores it.

GEORGE
Terri, why don't you take the football interview.

One of the reporters nods her head and makes a note of it.

GEORGE
Now for the big story. There was a murder last night behind Shales dormitory.

Everyone in the room perks up.

GEORGE
I just got the info from the police. There's not much to go on yet. Who want's it?

Every student in the room volunteers. They are all trying to get George's attention. Out of the commotion, Jeff stands up.

JEFF
I want it.

The room goes silent.

GEORGE
Everyone wants it.

JEFF
Not everyone has pictures.

Everyone looks at Jeff. George becomes frustrated and glances at Hoffman. Hoffman smiles and nods back.

GEORGE
(disgusted)
Okay, you've got it. (a beat)
Okay people, we're finished.

The students begin to leave. A few, including George, glare at the Jeff. Hoffman goes over to Jeff.
CONTINUED:

HOFFMAN
A very nice power play. You
may be wasting your time as
a journalist. You would have
been a very good business major.

JEFF
This is the big story I've been
waiting for.

HOFFMAN
I've got a friend in the Police
Department. I'll try to set up
an interview for you.

JEFF
I'd appreciate that.

Jeff looks at his watch.

JEFF
I'm late again.

HOFFMAN
Rachel?

JEFF
I was supposed to meet her
seven minutes ago.

HOFFMAN
I suggest you hurry.

JEFF
Right. I'll call you after
lunch.

HOFFMAN
Very good.

Jeff hurriedly gathers his things and exits.

EXT. A PIZZA RESTAURANT-DAY

Rachel Rouiller is pacing. Every few seconds she glances at
her watch.
EXT. SIDEWALK LEADING TO PIZZA RESTAURANT—DAY

Jeff is hurrying along. Next to him is a row of flower beds. He sees Rachel up ahead waiting. Before she sees him coming, he stops to regain his composure. He picks a flower out of one of the beds and walks over to her.

Rachel sees him and instantly perks up.

    RACHEL
    I didn't think you were going to make it.

She gives him a big hug.

    JEFF
    I can't seem to catch up today. Here.

Jeff hands her the flower. She gives Jeff a very passionate kiss.

    JEFF
    You're welcome. Let's eat.

They both enter the restaurant.

INT. PIZZA RESTAURANT—DAY

Jeff and Rachel are sitting. There is a half-eaten pizza and two empty Cokes between them.

    RACHEL
    We've set the bonfire dance for November eighth.

    JEFF
    I think I can make that.

    RACHEL
    That's good. I already bought the tickets.

    JEFF
    I didn't know I had a psychic girlfriend.

    RACHEL
    You don't. But it would look bad to all of my sorority sisters if the vice president didn't buy any tickets.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF

Good point.

RACHEL

It would set an even worse example
if the vice president's boyfriend
forgot to show up.

JEFF

How many times do you want me
to say I'm sorry? You know I got
too involved with my story.

RACHEL

You always get too involved.

JEFF

I promise I won't forget.

RACHEL

Okay.

She motions to the pizza.

RACHEL (continuing)

Do you want to get a box for
the rest of this?

JEFF

I got the big one today.

RACHEL

That's good. I'm free for the
rest of the day.

Jeff smiles.

JEFF

That's not what I mean. I
got the big story today.

RACHEL

About what?

JEFF

The murder last night.

RACHEL

I thought that was just a
rumor. Who was killed?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF
The police haven't released the name. (a beat) This is the big story I've been waiting for. This is real news, not some typical interview with a jock who can't even count to three. I feel good about this one.

RACHEL
Do you think this will help with your dad?

Jeff thinks.

JEFF
I'm sure he'll just give me the usual encouragement, "All journalists do is live..."

RACHEL
...off the pain of others." I'm sure you'll show him.

JEFF
I hope so. I hope so.

INT. HOMICIDE DETECTIVE'S OFFICE-DAY
This is a very small and cramped office. On the desk are a large number of phone messages.

DETECTIVE RIGBY, a tired, young police officer, leads Jeff into the room. Rigby looks at the pile of messages.

RIGBY
Just when I thought that the damn phone would stop ringing... Have a seat.

Jeff and Rigby sit down.

RIGBY (continuing)
Sergeant Talbot over in traffic said you wanted to talk about the murder.

JEFF
Yes.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Jeff pulls out a note pad and a miniature tape recorder.

RIGBY
How well do you know Sergeant Talbot?

JEFF
Actually I don't. My faculty advisor, Dr. Hoffman, is from England and ahh...Let's just say he hasn't quite gotten the hang of our traffic laws yet.

Rigby smiles.

RIGBY
I see. So you haven't talked to Sergeant Talbot at all?

JEFF
No.

Rigby thinks.

RIGBY
Sergeant Talbot should have told your friend that we don't have much information and saved you the trip down here.

JEFF
Don't have much you can tell me, or don't have much at all?

RIGBY
Don't have much at all. We've only had a day to investigate. To be perfectly frank, the murderer didn't leave much in the way of clues.

JEFF
Do you have a motive?

RIGBY
We're working on a few things but I can't talk about those yet. I can say that it was not robbery. There was twenty-five dollars left on the body.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF
What can you tell me about
the mutilations?

RIGBY
Nothing yet.

Rigby checks his watch. He's surprised.

RIGBY (continuing)
I'm supposed to be at the morgue
in ten minutes.

JEFF
Care if I tag along?

RIGBY
You can come, but you can't
attend the briefing.

JEFF
Why?

RIGBY
Standard operating procedure.
In cases like this, we always
keep some facts secret so
that we can weed out any nuts
that might confess to get their
fifteen minutes in the sun.

JEFF
I see. Will you be able to
tell me anything at all?

RIGBY
You'll get the same facts that
every other reporter gets.

JEFF
Only I'll get them first.

RIGBY
I guess you could say that.

JEFF
Good. Let's go.

Jeff and Rigby exit.
INT. HALLWAY IN MORGUE—DAY

This is a very sterile hallway with several doors. Next to one of these doors, Jeff sits in a chair. Through the door next to Jeff WE HEAR MUZZLED VOICES.

Jeff is doing his best to keep himself occupied.

After several moments of fidgeting, Jeff turns his attention to the door. He tries to hear what is being said, but has no luck.

Finally, he looks around suspiciously. After making sure no one is in sight, Jeff cracks open the door. The Muffled Voices become clear. One of the voices is Rigby and the other is a DEEP SCHOLARLY VOICE.

SCHOLARLY VOICE
(off screen)
... the neck has been cut twice, all the way back to the spinal column. The murderer then moved down the body and cut the abdomen open from the rib cage, along the right side then under the pelvis.

Jeff pulls out a notebook and starts to furiously take notes.

RIGBY
(off screen)
Would you say that this was the act of a angry person?

SCHOLARLY VOICE
(off screen)
No this was very slow, methodical work. Also, we found two small stab wounds to the vagina.

RIGBY
(off screen)
Was she raped?

SCHOLARLY VOICE
(off screen)
I don't believe so.

RIGBY
(off screen)
What about the murder weapon?
SCHOLARLY VOICE
(off screen)
It was a thin knife somewhere between six and eight inches long. I have some sketches if you'd like to see them.

RIGBY
(off screen)
Yes, please.

Jeff quickly sits up and puts his notebook away.

Rigby and the CORONER, an elderly doctor, walk out of the door.

RIGBY
(to Jeff)
You doing okay?

JEFF
Fine, great.

RIGBY
I need to go look at some pictures then we can go.

JEFF
Okay.

Rigby and the Coroner walk down the hallway.

When they are out of sight, Jeff pulls out his notebook and goes back to writing.

WE HEAR A TYPEWRITER CLACKING.

INT. JEFF'S ROOM-NIGHT

Jeff is sitting at his desk typing the last line of his story. On the desk next to him, are several of the pictures he took at the murder scene.

Jeff tries to type but keeps getting distracted by the pictures. Finally, he gives up typing to study the pictures.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE-DAY

The office is buzzing with activity. George is giving everyone orders.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Jeff enters with his backpack. George walks over.

GEORGE
Did you finish it?

JEFF
Yes. Here.

Jeff reaches into his backpack and pulls out his story.

GEORGE
Is this one perfect?

JEFF
Of course. Is Hoffman in?

GEORGE
He's in his office.

INT. HOFFMAN'S OFFICE-DAY

Hoffman is sitting behind his desk working on his computer.
There is a KNOCK at the door.

HOFFMAN
Come in.

Jeff enters.

HOFFMAN
Good morning Jeffery. I trust things went well at the police station.

JEFF
Things went fine. I brought you a copy of my story. I thought you'd like to see it.

HOFFMAN
Yes.

Jeff pulls another copy of his story out of his bag and gives it to Hoffman. Hoffman begins to read.

HOFFMAN
It's your move again.

(CONTINUED)
Jeff goes over to the chess game. He tries to think about his next move, but keeps glancing at Hoffman to see his reaction. Hoffman shows nothing.

Hoffman finishes the story.

    JEFF
    Well?

    HOFFMAN
    I think you should move your rook to queen's three.

    JEFF
    No, I mean the story.

    HOFFMAN
    It was very good. I assume you will write a follow-up as more details become available.

Jeff is stunned.

    JEFF
    Oh, yeah sure.

    HOFFMAN
    Now, I hope you'll excuse me. I've got a lot of work to do.

    JEFF
    Yeah sure. I'll see you later.

Jeff exits. Hoffman watches him leave. After a moment, he goes over to his bookshelf and pulls out a large book titled, THE HISTORY OF LONDON. He starts to flip through it.

INT. JEFF'S ROOM—DAY

Jeff and Keith are sitting around studying.

    KEITH
    What'd you expect him to do?

    JEFF
    I don't know. Something more than, "This is very good."
CONTINUED:

KEITH
Maybe he was just having a bad day or something.

JEFF
But this was the biggest story to hit this campus in ten years. I wrote one hell of a good story. I thought he would be impressed.

KEITH
I thought it was a piece of art.

JEFF
You haven't read it.

KEITH
I know, but I was trying to cheer you up. (a beat) Look, you're a hell of a good writer. That in itself is enough to get you laid anytime you want.

JEFF
Your mind is in your pants.

KEITH
Can you tell me a better place for it?

INT. CLASSROOM-DAY

Jeff and Rachel are sitting in a very large classroom. Other STUDENTS are milling around waiting for the instructor. Jeff seems preoccupied.

RACHEL
Hey, are you still alive over there?

JEFF
What? Oh yeah. Sorry. I didn't get much sleep last night. I kept thinking about Cindy Hammersmith.

RACHEL
(sarcastically)
It hurts that you would rather think about a dead girl than me. (CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF
Come on. That's not funny.

Rachel becomes serious.

RACHEL
It's been eight days. You've got to stop thinking about this. It's not healthy.

JEFF
You're probably right.

Jeff and Rachel fall into silence for a moment.

JEFF
The police couldn't even find a motive. I don't understand...

Rachel's stare cuts him off.

JEFF
Sorry. (a beat) How are things with your housemates?

RACHEL
If you're going to change the subject, at least make it something you care about. Maybe you should think about getting some help.

JEFF
You're the only help I need, baby.

Rachel smiles.

RACHEL
That's more like it, dear.

An INSTRUCTOR walks in. The students settle down and start pulling out notebooks.

INT. JEFF'S ROOM-NIGHT

Jeff and Keith are asleep. The PHONE RINGS. Both are startled. Jeff picks it up.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF
Yeah?

Jeff looks at a clock. It shows 4:08 a.m..

HOFFMAN
(filtered)
Jeffery? I need to see you.

JEFF
Dr. Hoffman?

HOFFMAN
(filtered)
Yes. I need to see you. There's been another murder.

JEFF
Where do you want to meet?

After listening for a moment, Jeff hangs up.

JEFF
Keith! Wake up!

KEITH
What!?

JEFF
I need your keys.

Jeff starts to get dressed.

JEFF
Keith!

A set of keys fly out of the darkness and hit Jeff.

JEFF
Thanks.

INT. ALL NIGHT DINER-NIGHT

Hoffman is sitting in a back booth. Jeff enters in a state of disarray. He sees Hoffman and walks over.

JEFF
Sorry I'm late.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HOFFMAN
That's quite alright. Have a seat.

Jeff sits and a WAITRESS comes over.

WAITRESS
What will you two have?

HOFFMAN
Tea please.

JEFF
Same.

The waitress leaves with the order.

JEFF
How'd you find out about the second murder?

HOFFMAN
Are you familiar with English history?

JEFF
A little I suppose.

HOFFMAN
Specifically the history of London?

JEFF
I suppose, but so what.

HOFFMAN
In 1888, there were a series of murders in the Whitechapel district of London.

Jeff thinks for a moment.

JEFF
Wait. (a beat) Jack the Ripper?

Yes.

HOFFMAN

So?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HOFFMAN
When I read your piece about the first murder, I was struck by the brutality of it. It reminded me of a story I once did when I was just starting out in London. It was on unsolved murders.

JEFF
Are you trying to suggest that these two murders are being done by a Jack the Ripper copycat or something?

HOFFMAN
Your description of the wounds on the first victim are very similar to the wounds inflicted on Jack the Ripper's first victim.

JEFF
That could be coincidence.

HOFFMAN
The dates also matched up. He killed his first victim on August thirty-first.

JEFF
And our first murder was on August thirty-first.

HOFFMAN
Yes. Now that too could have been a coincidence. I didn't want to jump to conclusions so I remained silent.

JEFF
When was the second Ripper murder?

HOFFMAN
September eighth.

JEFF
Oh God. Tonight.

HOFFMAN
I was hoping I'd be wrong.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HOFFMAN (cont'd)
I stayed up all night
listening to a police scanner.
I called you after I heard
the call go out. The police
found a mutilated female body
at three fifty-three a.m. I
don't want to...

Hoffman shuts up as the waitress brings them their orders.
After she leaves:

HOFFMAN (continuing)
I don't want to jump to
conclusions. It still could
be nothing more than a series
of coincidences.

JEFF
That still doesn't change the
fact that there have been two murders.
Maybe we should go to the police
with this.

HOFFMAN
This does sound rather far-
fetched. So far we have
nothing more than a set
of coincidences. We can't be
sure of this theory until
September thirtieth.

JEFF
That was when he killed his
next victim?

HOFFMAN
His next two victims. (a beat)
Even though this sounds very
far-fetched, it still needs to
be investigated. And the Ripper
angle is all we've got.

JEFF
What should we do?

HOFFMAN
Not we, you. It might look
suspicious if a college
professor started snooping around.
You could use the newspaper as
your cover.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Jeff is starting to become excited.

JEFF
You mean say that I was just following up on the story?

HOFFMAN
Yes. I can't emphasis how important it is for you to keep this quiet until we get some more facts. The campus will be in an uproar over the second murder. A theory like this could throw it into mass chaos.

JEFF
I understand.

Jeff smiles.

INT. LIBRARY-DAY

Jeff is typing at a computer terminal.

ANGLE ON COMPUTER SCREEN

Jeff types JACK THE RIPPER. A list of books appears.

Jeff begins to take notes.

INT. BOOKSHELF IN LIBRARY-DAY

Jeff is standing in front of a bookshelf examining the call numbers. He moves along a row a books. Suddenly he comes across a large gap in the sequence.

INT. CIRCULATION DESK IN LIBRARY-DAY

Jeff walks up to the circulation desk. The LIBRARIAN, an evil looking woman, is standing behind the desk. Next to her is a computer terminal.

JEFF
Excuse me. I'm looking for some books that have been checked out. Could you give me the name...

(continues)
CONTINUED:

LIBRARIAN
I'm sorry, but we're not allowed to give out that kind of information.

JEFF
Not even for a reporter from the newspaper?

LIBRARIAN
No.

JEFF
I'm doing a story and I need those books to do some research. I just want to contact whoever has them to see if I can borrow them for a day.

LIBRARIAN
I don't care who you are, we don't give out that kind of information.

Jeff thinks for a moment.

JEFF
Thanks anyway. Do you have a student phone?

LIBRARIAN
Yes, there's a campus phone over there.

The Librarian motions across the room to a phone.

JEFF
Thank you.

Jeff walks over to the phone.

INT. LIBRARY-DAY
Keith walks in carrying a drink. He stops and looks around. Jeff is trying to be inconspicuous across the room. Keith walks over.

KEITH
So where is this person?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Jeff motions to the Librarian.

JEFF

Don't cripple her or anything.

KEITH

Right.

Keith walks over to the Librarian.

KEITH

Excuse me, can you tell me where I might find the books on...

He suddenly spills his drink on the circulation desk. Some of the liquid splashes on the librarian. She is furious.

KEITH

Look out...

LIBRARIAN

Oh, you clumsy fool!

KEITH

I'm sorry. Let me help you with that.

LIBRARIAN

I think you've helped quite enough.

Keith is trying to suppress a smile. The Librarian walks out from behind the desk and across the room. Keith stays with her.

KEITH

A little cold water should get that right out.

They pass Jeff who has been watching the entire episode. Keith flashes Jeff a thumbs up. Jeff quickly walks over to the circulation desk. He leans over and types on the computer terminal. After a moment, he starts taking notes.

He finishes just as the Librarian and Keith re-enter. Neither notices Jeff. Jeff gathers his things and heads towards the exit.

LIBRARIAN

Would you please leave me alone before I call the campus police!

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

KEITH

All I tried to do was show a little human kindness and this is the treatment I get. Good day madam.

Keith turns and exits.

INT. DORM HALLWAY—DAY

Jeff is standing in front of a door. He KNOCKS. Several moments pass. He KNOCKS again. The door opens a crack and a deep voice answers.

VOICE

Who is it?

JEFF

My name is Jeff Carlson.

VOICE.

I don't know any Jeff.

JEFF

I'm from the newspaper.

VOICE

What do you want?

JEFF

I was hoping you'd let me look at some books you checked out from the library.

VOICE

What books?

JEFF

The ones on Jack the Ripper.

A pause.

VOICE

Why?

JEFF

I'm doing some research on Jack the Ripper and you have all of the books.

Another pause.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VOICE
How long did you want them?

JEFF
Not long. If you let me come in, I could be done in ten minutes.

Another pause.

VOICE
You promise to leave in ten minutes?

JEFF
Yes.

The door opens. Jeff enters.

INT. MICK KALAVAN'S ROOM-DAY

This is a small dorm room shrouded in darkness. Nothing is where it belongs. There are piles of clothes here and there. Books are scattered left and right. The walls are covered with heavy metal posters and satanic symbols.

Jeff enters. He is awe-struck by what he sees.

The deep voice belongs to MICK KALAVAN, an unkempt college student in his early twenties. He steps out from behind the door. He digs through one of the piles of books. After a moment he comes up with a stack of library books.

MICK
Here.

He hands them to Jeff.

MICK
You've got ten minutes.

Mick sits across the room and stares at Jeff. Jeff sits down and starts to look through the books. Every few seconds he glances up at Mick, who is still staring at him.

Jeff finishes the first book and sets it on the floor. As he lays the book down, his hand bumps into a Nazi SS dagger that is partially sticking out of one of the piles. Jeff tries to examine it without Mick noticing. Jeff quickly stands up.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF
I just remembered that I have
to meet someone.

MICK
You finished?

JEFF
Yes.

He hands the books to Mick and hurries out.

JEFF
Thanks.

MICK
Don't come back.

INT. JEFF'S ROOM—NIGHT

Jeff is talking to Keith.

KEITH
Are you sure it wasn't just
a letter opener?

JEFF
I'm sure it was a knife.

KEITH
That still doesn't prove
anything.

JEFF
Look at the facts, he is very
knowledgeable about the Ripper
murders and he owns a knife that
would be the perfect murder weapon.

KEITH
How do you know he's knowledgeable
about Jack the Ripper?

JEFF
Come on, he's got all the books.

KEITH
Maybe he likes the pictures. Come
on, I've got a lot of
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

KEITH (cont'd)
school books but you'll never see me reading them. What else have you got?

Jeff hesitates.

JEFF
I have a feeling.

KEITH
A feeling.

JEFF
Yes, I have a feeling about him.

KEITH
What, you're attracted to him?

JEFF
No. I think he is the murderer.

KEITH
So what. I don't think that's enough to convict him.

JEFF
You're right. That's why we need to get more.

KEITH
We?

JEFF
Yes I think we should follow him.

KEITH
We?

JEFF
You're the one with the car.

KEITH
You've got a license.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF
Yes, but he's seen me and if we have to follow him on foot...

KEITH
This isn't the Rockford Files.

JEFF
I promise, this will be the last favor I ever ask you for.

KEITH
You've been saying that for three years.

JEFF
Yes, but this time I think 'I mean it.

Keith has a pained look on his face.

KEITH
Sometimes friends are more trouble than they're worth.

Jeff has a pitiful look on his face.

KEITH
You pay for gas.

Jeff smiles.

INT. KEITH'S CAR-NIGHT

Jeff and Keith are sitting in Keith's car watching a dormitory. Jeff is behind the wheel.

KEITH
I can't believe I'm sitting here.

JEFF
Did you have anything better to do?

KEITH
Yes.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF

Like what?

KEITH

Let me put it this way, there are approximately eleven thousand two hundred and eighty-seven girls I don't know on this campus.

JEFF

Eleven thousand, two hundred and eighty-seven girls?

KEITH

I said it was approximate.

Jeff is hit with a realization.

JEFF

Oh shit.

KEITH

Let me guess. You had a date with Rachel.

Jeff nods.

KEITH

That's two times this month. What am I going to do with you?

A moment of silence.

KEITH

I know I should've asked this before we left, but how do you know that this guy is even going out tonight?

JEFF

I have a feeling.

KEITH

I was afraid you'd say that.

JEFF

It's Friday night. Who stays home on a Friday night?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

KEITH
Rachel.

Jeff goes back to staring out the window.

Mick walks out of the building and down the sidewalk.

JEFF
There!

KEITH
That's the guy?

JEFF
Yes.

Jeff starts the car and slowly follows Mick.

KEITH
He looks like a perfectly nice serial killer.

EXT. SIDEWALK-NIGHT

Mick is walking down a sidewalk lined with buildings. In the distance, Jeff and Keith are following in the car. The headlights are off.

INT. KEITH'S CAR-NIGHT

KEITH
You don't think this looks too conspicuous?

JEFF
I don't think so.

KEITH
You're probably right. This campus is full of walkers being followed by cars with no lights on.

Jeff turns to Keith.

JEFF
What else should I do?
CONTINUED:

Jeff turns back towards the road. Mick has disappeared.

KEITH
Well, we lost him. Let's go back.

JEFF
Hang on. He must have disappeared between two buildings or something. Go have a look around.

KEITH
What?

JEFF
Go have a look around.

KEITH
Why?

JEFF
To find out where he went.

KEITH
If I don't find him, can we go home?

JEFF
Yes.

Keith gets out of the car and walks up ahead.

EXT. SIDEWALK-NIGHT

Keith is looking around. He wanders out of sight of the car.

A hand grabs him and throws him to the ground. A knife appears at his throat. It's Mick.

MICK
Why the hell are you two following me?

KEITH
What!?

MICK
Don't fuck with me!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

KEITH
Hey man, I just came back here to take a leak.

Mick pauses and thinks. He lets Keith up.

MICK
Go.

KEITH
I don't have to anymore.

MICK
I meant leave.

KEITH
Sure.

Keith hurries back towards the car. Mick disappears into the shadows.

INT. KEITH'S CAR-NIGHT

Jeff watches Keith hurry back and jump in the car.

KEITH
Okay, he tried to kill me. Take me home. This was a dumb idea. I don't believe I let you talk me into this.

Jeff starts the car moving.

JEFF
Are you serious?

KEITH
No I always piss my pants when I go out at night!

JEFF
Sorry.

KEITH
That guy is some kind of nut. He probably did do it.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF
I'm glad you agree. We'll come back tomorrow.

Keith glares.

EXT. RACHEL'S HOUSE-DAY

Jeff is at the front door holding a flower. He RINGS the BELL.

Rachel answers the door.

JEFF
Hi.

She says nothing. Jeff hands her the flower. She reluctantly takes it.

After a moment, she steps aside and Jeff enters.

INT. RACHEL'S LIVING ROOM-DAY

LEE, an average college coed, is studying while watching television.

Rachel and Jeff enter.

RACHEL
Lee, could we have a few minutes?

LEE
Sure.

She gathers her things and leaves. Jeff and Rachel sit down.

JEFF
I'm not sure where to begin.

RACHEL
You'd better think of someplace.

JEFF
I guess sorry's not going to cover it.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RACHEL
Either will a flower. Please
don't tell me that I was stood
up because of your story.

JEFF
I wish I could explain how
much this story means to me.

RACHEL
More than me I guess.

JEFF
I know I was wrong, but you're
not making this any easier.
(a beat) I thought I had a sure
thing. I got so wrapped up in the
chase. I thought that we had
him.

RACHEL
We?

JEFF
Keith was with me.

RACHEL
What did he think?

JEFF
He thinks I'm crazy. He almost
got killed.

Rachel cracks a small smile.

JEFF
He said the guy put a knife
to his throat.

Rachel's smile gets bigger.

JEFF
What's so funny?

RACHEL
I'm just trying to picture
Keith.

Jeff smiles.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF
I guess it is pretty funny
now that I think about it.

Rachel becomes serious.

RACHEL
Hey, don't change the subject.
You still stood me up.

JEFF
I know I was wrong. I promise
it won't happen again.

Rachel looks into his eyes.

RACHEL
If it does, I will leave you.

Jeff nods in agreement.

INT. LIBRARY-DAY

Jeff is using a computer terminal.

Mick walks in carrying a stack of books. Jeff looks up.

Mick walks over to the return desk and puts the books down. He exits. Jeff crosses over to the return desk and looks at the books. They are all about Jack the Ripper. A STUDENT LIBRARIAN, comes over and starts to put them away.

JEFF
Is there anyway you can tell
me when these books were
checked out?

STUDENT LIBRARIAN
I'm not supposed...

JEFF
I know you can't give out names.
All I want is a date.

STUDENT LIBRARIAN
I guess that would be okay.
Just don't tell anyone I did this.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF
My lips are sealed.

The Student Librarian looks through a file.

STUDENT LIBRARIAN
September third.

JEFF
Thanks.

Jeff exits.

INT. HOFFMAN'S OFFICE-DAY

Jeff and Hoffman are talking.

JEFF
So he checked out the books after the first murder. That makes me doubt that he had anything to do with it.

HOFFMAN
I would concur. I would also doubt he had anything to do with the second one. Have you got any other suspects?

JEFF
That's where I've run into a problem.

HOFFMAN
I see. Have you interviewed any of the victims' friends?

JEFF
No.

HOFFMAN
That would be the next logical step.

JEFF
I should have thought of that.

HOFFMAN
We're all entitled to make a few mistakes. Don't be so hard on yourself.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF
Yes. I just don't want to screw this story up. Today's the twenty-seventh, that only leaves me three days until the next two murders.

HOFFMAN
That's not guaranteed. Remember, there may not be a story yet. Just take this one step at a time.

JEFF
Okay, one step at a time.

INT. GIRL'S DORM ROOM-DAY

Jeff is let in the door by SUSAN HARRISON, a bookish coed.

JEFF
I appreciate you seeing me on such short notice.

SUSAN
It's no problem.

JEFF
I just want to ask you a few questions.

Jeff pulls out a note pad and a miniature tape recorder. Susan stares at the tape recorder.

SUSAN
Oh.

JEFF
I hope you don't mind if I record this. I'm a very slow writer.

SUSAN
I suppose not.

JEFF
Thanks. Now you said on the phone that you knew both of the victims.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Susan starts to become emotional.

SUSAN
I'm sorry. I'm just not used to them being referred to in that way. (a beat) Cindy, the first victim, was in my sorority and Ann, the second victim, was my next door neighbor.

JEFF
She was your neighbor this year?

SUSAN
Yes.

JEFF
How well did you know both girls?

SUSAN
Cindy and I weren't the closest sorority sisters. We talked once in a while. I was much closer to Ann. We used to borrow things from each other all the time.

JEFF
Did the two girls know each other?

SUSAN
The met once at a sorority party. I brought Ann as a guest.

JEFF
Did they like each other?

SUSAN
As far as I know they only talked once. And no, they didn't like each other.

JEFF
Why?

SUSAN
Well Ann kind of took Cindy's boyfriend.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF

Really?

SUSAN
Cindy brought her boyfriend to the same party and I guess Ann caught his eye or something.

JEFF
What was the boyfriend's name?

SUSAN
Richard Collins.

Jeff searches his memory

JEFF
The defensive tackle on the football team?

SUSAN
Yes.

JEFF
Did he ever get violent with either of them?

SUSAN
I wouldn't know about Cindy...

JEFF
What about Ann?

Susan hesitates.

SUSAN
Well I guess I can tell you as long as it's off the record.

Jeff turns off the tape recorder and puts away his pad.

JEFF
Off the record.

SUSAN
On their second date, after dinner, they...became rather passionate.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF
I see.

SUSAN
Anyway, he really wanted to
sleep with her...

JEFF
And she didn't want to?

SUSAN
She didn't know him well
enough at the time. He really
didn't appreciate that and
he kind of pushed her.

JEFF
Did her hurt her?

SUSAN
No, it was a very light push.
(a beat) He really didn't mean it.
He felt so bad that he sent her
gifts for a week.

Jeff thinks for a moment.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT-NIGHT

Jeff and Rachel are halfway through dinner.

RACHEL
I really shouldn't be here.

JEFF
And why not?

RACHEL
I've got a paper due on the
thirtieth.

JEFF
You've still got two days.

RACHEL
I know.

JEFF
I just wanted to make up for
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFF (cont'd)
the ass I've been lately. I
can take you home now if you'd
like.

RACHEL
I didn't say that.

JEFF
Good.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RACHEL'S LIVING ROOM—NIGHT

Jeff and Rachel are laying on the couch kissing
passionately. Jeff stops.

JEFF
Are you trying to tell me that
you liked dinner?

RACHEL
Don't be stupid.

JEFF
Sorry, it's genetic...

Rachel interrupts him with a kiss.

JEFF
I'd better get out of here.

RACHEL
Why?

JEFF
Your housemates'll back soon.

RACHEL
They've made other arrangements
for tonight.

Jeff smiles.

JEFF
Well I need a break anyway.
I need time to make some more
spit.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Jeff sits up.

RACHEL
I'll get something to drink.

Rachel exits.

Jeff turns on the television. He flips around the dial. Jeff comes to a talk show that has Lt. Rigby on it. The INTERVIEWER is a college student. The Interviewer is agitated.

RIGBY
We are continuing to investigate several theories.

INTERVIEWER
But do you have any suspects?

RIGBY
We have some, but I'm unable to comment on that.

INTERVIEWER
Why? Don't you think the students of this campus have a right to know?

RIGBY
I'm not going to release the names because I don't want people to go off half-cocked and lynch an innocent person.

INTERVIEWER
Have you heard about the formation of the various vigilante committees, like the Protection Council?

RIGBY
Yes and I would advise them leave this matter to the police. They shouldn't take the the law into their own hands.

Rachel enters with two glasses of iced tea.

RACHEL
I hope tea is okay. It's all we've got.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Jeff doesn't hear her. She thrusts one of the glasses at him. He takes it.

JEFF
Oh, thanks.

RACHEL
What's this?

JEFF
Campus Report Card. They're talking about the murders.

Rachel takes a drink and puts her glass down. She turns off the television and puts her arms around Jeff.

RACHEL
Where were we?

JEFF
Hey, I wanted to watch that!

He turns the television back on.

Rachel turns it off.

RACHEL
No!

Jeff turns it back on.

JEFF
Yes!

She turns it off.

RACHEL
No! Not tonight!

What?

RACHEL
I'm not going to lose you tonight.

JEFF
I want to watch this.

He starts to turn the television on.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RACHEL

Jeffery!

He stops.

RACHEL (continuing)

I mean it.

JEFF

Mean what?

RACHEL

I am not going to lose your attention tonight.

JEFF

What are you talking about?

RACHEL

For the past month, you have cared more about this story and those dead girls than you have about me.

JEFF

Come on, don't be unreasonable.

Jeff starts to turn on the television again.

RACHEL

If you turn that television on, you'll have to find somewhere else to spend the night.

Jeff stops again.

JEFF

I think you're being very unreasonable. It's just a television show.

Rachel glares at him. Jeff stares back.

JEFF

Fine.

Jeff gets up and leaves.

A tear falls down Rachel's cheek. She looks at his glass and screams. She throws it against the wall.
INT. JEFF'S ROOM—NIGHT

Jeff's desk is covered with papers.

Jeff picks up his backpack and starts to head out the door. The PHONE RINGS. Jeff hurriedly picks it up.

JEFF
Rachel?

GEORGE
(filtered)
Guess again.

JEFF
What do you want, George?

GEORGE
(filtered)
You haven't turned in the story on the civil rights protesters.

JEFF
I know.

GEORGE
(filtered)
You said you'd have it done by the twenty-eighth. It's now the thirtieth.

JEFF
I know. You'll get it.

GEORGE
(filtered)
I gave it to someone else.

JEFF
What! You had no right...

GEORGE
I had every right. If you're not writing, I don't want you.

JEFF
Fine.

Jeff slams the phone down.

Keith enters.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Hey.

What?!

Nothing, just hey.

Jeff starts to head out of the door.

Where are you going?

Out.

Jeff exits.

EXT. DOOR TO LOCKEROOM-NIGHT

Jeff is sitting in the shadows. He is looking at a newspaper. In the middle of this newspaper is a picture of RICHARD COLLINS, a very husky young man, posing on a football field.

The door to the lockeroom opens and out step several FOOTBALL PLAYERS. They are laughing. Jeff compares them to the photo. No one matches.

Collins and another FOOTBALL PLAYER step out.

God, that practice sucked.

You offensive guys are such pussies.

Right here, defensive lineman.

The Football Player grabs himself.

Only in your wet dreams.

Hey, I'll see you later.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Collins

Right.

They both head off in different directions.

Jeff follows Collins.

EXT. BUSY SIDEWALK—NIGHT

Collins is weaving his way through a CROWD. Some greet him or wish him good luck.

Jeff continues to follow at a discrete distance.

EXT. PIZZA PARLOR—NIGHT

The Pizza Parlor is packed. Several PEOPLE are waiting outside. Some of these people have a TAPE PLAYER TURNED UP VERY LOUD.

Collins walks up. He stops to jam to the tape player.

Jeff stands across the street. He pulls a camera out of his backpack and takes a few pictures.

Collins goes in. Jeff settles across the street and waits.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PIZZA PARLOR—NIGHT

The crowd has dispersed. Jeff is still across the street.

Collins walks out of the door. He looks around for a moment, then moves off. Jeff follows.

EXT. BUS STOP—NIGHT

There are two GIRLS waiting on a bench. Across the street from them is a phone booth.

Collins stumbles over to the Girls. Jeff is hiding in the shadows across the street.

Collins

How are you doing ladies?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

GIRL #1

Fine.

Jeff steps in to the phone booth. He puts some change in and dials. The phone rings a few times.

JEFF
Come on, come on.

There is a CLICK and a long moment of silence.

KEITH
(filtered)
What?!

JEFF
Keith! I think I've got him!

KEITH
(filtered)
Jeff? Got who? It's late.

JEFF
I think I've got the killer!

KEITH
(filtered)
Not again.

JEFF
He's supposed to kill two girls tonight and he's with two girls right now!

KEITH
(filtered)
So call the police.

JEFF
I can't until I have proof.

KEITH
(filtered)
Then why are you calling me?

JEFF
I want you to come down here.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

KEITH
(filtered)
What! We already did this once.

JEFF
You need to hurry. I don't know how much longer he's going to be here.

Keith SCREAMS out of frustration.

KEITH
(filtered)
Okay, where are you?

JEFF
McKinley and Jackson.

KEITH
(filtered)
One question.

JEFF
What? Hurry.

KEITH
Why do you want me?

JEFF
This guy's big.

KEITH
Wait...

Jeff hangs up.

EXT. BUS STOP—NIGHT

Keith's car comes to a screeching halt by the phone booth. Jeff comes out of the shadows and jumps in. He lands on a baseball bat. Keith is wearing a bath robe.

JEFF
What's this.

KEITH
Peace of mind.

(Continued)