

Linger

FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTY PARK - NIGHT 1

Bright moonlight covers a thick dark forest. Stars fill the rest of the dark sky. Fireflies dot the landscape. Only the sounds of crickets can be heard.

EXT. COUNTY PARK - HIKING TRAIL - NIGHT 2

PAULA JAMES, 16, dressed in blue jeans and a T-shirt, walks aggressively along a hiking trail surrounded by large trees. Noticeably annoyed, she punches a thigh with a clenched fist and angrily mutters to herself.

INT. CAR - PARKING LOT - STATIONARY - NIGHT 3

DETECTIVE MIKE TOBIN, 40s, sits in the driver's seat dressed in neat, casual clothes and a jacket. He holds a photograph of a teenage girl. Tears well in his eyes. He taps his badge anxiously against a knee. The driver's side window is rolled down. A flashlight and a disheveled newspaper are in the passenger seat beside him.

TOBIN

Honey, how many times can I say I'm sorry? How many times before you'll forgive me?

He sobs and throws his badge angrily to the floor.

EXT. COUNTY PARK - HIKING TRAIL - NIGHT 4

Paula hears LEAVES CRACKLE. She stops. She looks around.

PAULA

Andre?

Paula looks around some more. She doesn't see anything.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Andre, are you here? Please, you're scaring me. Please don't do this again.

Another NOISE frightens her more. She turns and sees ANDRE HERNANDEZ, 17, approaching her with a knife held above his head. Her eyes widen with fear.

INT. TOBIN'S CAR 5

Tobin's voice cracks.

TOBIN

Please, sweetie, please tell me it's okay. Oh God, honey, please

Tobin slams a fist against the steering wheel.

 TOBIN (CONT'D)
 (screaming)
 Damn it! Damn it! Damn it!

EXT. COUNTY PARK - HIKING TRAIL - NIGHT

6

Paula stares wide-eyed at Andre approaching her.

 PAULA
 She made me so angry again tonight. You know how
 she is. Please Andre ...

Paula steps backward slowly as Andre approaches.

INT. TOBIN'S CAR

7

Tobin reaches into his jacket and pulls his gun from a holster. Tears stream down his cheeks.

 TOBIN
 (sadly)
 Oh, God, I didn't know.

He rests his head on the barrel of the gun and cries.

A HORRIFIC FEMALE SCREAM emerges from the dark forest.

Tobin's head jumps off the gun. His eyes dart around the dark forest before him.

 FEMALE (O.S.)
 No! No!

Tobin grabs the flashlight from the seat beside him and charges out of the car. He holds the gun with one hand at his side. The flashlight is in his other hand. He rushes toward the park entrance.

EXT. COUNTY PARK - HIKING PATH

8

Tobin rushes up a small hill along a thin dirt path. He hears light rustling deeper into the trees. He shines the flashlight and follows it. He hears a FEMALE CRYING.

He stops suddenly. He sees Paula laying on the ground, fully dressed. Her hands, covered with blood, are pressed against her stomach.

Tobin kneels beside her. He sees tears streaming from the corners of her eyes.

 TOBIN
 Hey honey, honey, talk to me. I'm a cop.

Tobin reaches for his badge on his belt but it isn't there.

TOBIN (CONT'D)
Who did this to you?

PAULA
(barely a whisper)
I think it was Andre.

TOBIN
Andre?

With one hand she points toward the trees behind her. Tobin stands and shines the flashlight through the tress but sees no one. He takes some steps but sees or hears no one. He returns to Paula.

TOBIN (CONT'D)
Was there more than one?

Paula shakes her head "no." Tobin checks her body parts for broken bones and other injured areas.

TOBIN (CONT'D)
What's your name?

PAULA
Paula.

TOBIN
Okay, Paula, I don't have my phone with me, so I'm gonna just go back to my car and call for help. Okay?

Paula nods "yes." She notices what looks to be tears in his eyes and tear tracks down his cheeks. Tobin rushes back to his car.

EXT. COUNTY PARK - PARKING LOT - MORNING

9

Early morning sun brightens the area. Tobin stands by his car. UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS scurry in the background. DETECTIVE PHIL BARCIA, 40s, enters holding a notepad.

PHIL
Mike, it couldn't have been this Andre kid.

TOBIN
Why?

PHIL
He's dead. He committed suicide a year ago.

TOBIN
The same kid?

PHIL
Andre Hernandez. From Harrison. An ex-boyfriend. He was suspected of attacking her here in the park last year.

TOBIN

Maybe it was someone who looked like him. How is she?

PHIL

Doctor says she lost some blood, but she'll be okay. Thanks to you. What were you doing here so late last night anyway?

TOBIN

Just getting some air. Clearing my head. Why don't you get me more info on this Andre kid. Parents' contact info ... like that. I'll see 'ya later.

Tobin quickly gets into his car and drives off. Phil watches suspiciously.

INT. PAULA'S RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

10

Small apartment. Plainly decorated. Paula sits on a couch. An expression of pain crosses her face at the slightest move. She looks very depressed. MARLA JAMES, 40s, Paula's mother, stands over her shaking her head, looking angry. Tobin stands over Paula.

TOBIN

Did you know Andre was dead?

MARLA

Of course she knew.

Paula rolls her eyes. Tobin sees this.

MARLA (CONT'D)

That kid's ruined her life since he showed up. And now even after he's dead it's getting worse.

PAULA

Mom!

TOBIN

Andre was your boyfriend?

Paula nods "yes."

MARLA

This is the second time she's been attacked in that park. I tell her to stay the hell out've there but she doesn't listen.

TOBIN

Andre was a suspect in the previous attack?

MARLA

Yes!

PAULA
(angrily)
Will you please!

TOBIN
Why would he attack you?

PAULA
We don't know for sure it was him.

MARLA
You don't but everyone else knows he was guilty
as sin.

PAULA
Ma!

MARLA
That's why he killed himself.

TOBIN
Mrs. James, may I speak to Paula alone for a
just a minute? Please?

MARLA
Sure. She barely speaks to me. I'll be folding
laundry.

Marla retreats to a bedroom and closes the door.

TOBIN
Paula, you're telling me that a dead person
physically attacked you.

PAULA
Don't believe me? Fine. You're just like her.
So then let it go!

TOBIN
I can't let it go because if there is someone
out there attacking people, I have to stop them.
Was it someone who looked like Andre?

Paula sighs deeply.

PAULA
Could be. I don't know. I didn't get a good
look at him. It was dark.

TOBIN
Why'd you think it was Andre?

PAULA
Because he was there.

TOBIN

In the park?

PAULA

I walk in that park a lot. That was kinda like our place, 'ya know? We'd hang out there ... Since like last month, whenever I'd walk there, I see his ghost. He's holding up a knife. That's how he killed himself. But now he looks like he wants to attack me.

TOBIN

Why would he want to do that?

Paula starts to cry.

PAULA

Because I didn't believe him.

EXT. CITY PARK - HIKING TRAIL - DAY

11

Tobin and Paula walk along the dirt path.

PAULA

My mother's always right! That's rule number one. I don't drive yet, so this is where I come to get away from her. I've been coming here since I was a kid. It was always so beautiful and peaceful.

TOBIN

Until you were attacked?

PAULA

Until my mom made me stop seeing him.

They arrive at the spot where Tobin found Paula the night before. A small, crumbling building stands before them. They go inside what remains of the four walls.

PAULA (CONT'D)

This is where Andre killed himself.

TOBIN

This is the same spot where I found you.

PAULA

And where I was attacked. That's why I think Andre chooses this spot.

EXT. PAULA'S RESIDENCE - DAY - FLASHBACK - AFTERNOON

12

Paula and Andre are seen arguing.

PAULA (O.S.)

He came over the day I was attacked. Mom didn't like him and harassed me about it like you wouldn't believe, so I told him to let's cool it. Just 'til she gets off my case.

Andre angrily walks away. Paula is seen shouting to him but he doesn't turn back to her.

PAULA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

But he thought I was just giving in to her. He got all pissed off and left. That night I was in the park, alone, because I was pissed off at her. That's when I got attacked.

RETURN TO SCENE

TOBIN

So Andre definitely had motive.

Paula sheepishly nods "yes." Paula kneels at the spot.

PAULA

My mother brainwashed me into thinking he was the guy who attacked me. And remember, she's always right. It hurt him so much. And imagine how it made me feel to think he'd do something like this to me.

TOBIN

Did Andre belong to any kind of gang or anything? Anyone else who could've attacked you?

PAULA

No.

TOBIN

What about someone who looks like him? Your current boyfriend?

PAULA

I don't have one. I haven't had one since Andre.

TOBIN

The park closes at sunset. You shouldn't have been here that late.

PAULA

Why were you here?

TOBIN

I ask the questions.

PAULA

I thought he really truly loved me. I know, I know, that sounds corny, right?
(mimicking an adult's voice)
You're just kids. What do you know about love?

TOBIN

I see lots of teenage crimes of passion.

PAULA

Thank you.

TOBIN

Did you love him?

PAULA

Oh yeah. My first love.

TOBIN

Is that why you don't believe he could've been involved?

PAULA

Blinded by love? I guess. He said he was home when I was attacked. But nobody was there with him.

TOBIN

Look, until we find out who attacked you the other night, you should find someplace else to walk.

PAULA

No, I need to come here. Andre will be here.

TOBIN

Ready to attack you, according to you.

Paula looks at Tobin pleadingly.

PAULA

But that's exactly what I need to know? Would he really do something like that to me? I hurt him by believing he did. And it hurts me to think he would.

INT. POLICE STATION - TOBIN'S OFFICE - DAY

13

The office door is open. Tobin sits at his desk eating lunch. Phil eats his lunch across from him. An open notepad lays beside Phil's food. He looks at the notepad.

PHIL

No weapon found yet but we're still lookin.' We did have a serial attacker in that park right around the time the girl got attacked last year.

LAURA

The Internet, actually. I'd like to offer my services and help you.

Tobin and Phil look at her questioningly.

PHIL

(flippant)

And what exactly are your services?

TOBIN

This is my partner, Detective Phil Barcia.

LAURA

I can help determine if there really is a spirit haunting her.

PHIL

A spirit haunting her.

TOBIN

I'm sorry, look Miss ...

LAURA

Franks.

TOBIN

There's no ghost. She's just a kid who ...

LAURA

You don't believe in ghosts?

TOBIN

No, I don't.

PHIL

And neither do I.

Phil gathers his sandwich together, getting ready to exit.

PHIL (CONT'D)

So I'll let you two break out the Ouiji board, tarot cards, light a candle, whatever.

(to Laura)

Very nice meeting you.

Phil exits.

LAURA

Did the victim say if ...

TOBIN

I'm sorry, but I can't discuss the case ...

LAURA

How about we just say you're helping me with my research?

TOBIN

Your research? Look, I've got someone slicing up young girls in the park. And as far as I'm concerned, it ain't a ghost. This one's flesh and blood.

LAURA

Fine. But maybe I can help with that.

Laura sits, removes her coat, and pulls a notepad out of her briefcase. Tobin is taken aback by her aggressiveness.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Did she say this was the first time she saw the ghost?

TOBIN

No. He's been appearing to her at the same spot for some time now. I don't know how you ...

LAURA

Why that spot? Is that where he died?

TOBIN

Yes.

Laura jots notes in the pad.

LAURA

Sounds like a residual haunting.

TOBIN

A what?

LAURA

A residual haunting. It's a psychic imprint left behind on a particular spot. This happens when excess energy from a significant event becomes trapped within a site or building. And since he died there that's certainly a significant event in his life.

TOBIN

To say the least.

LAURA

But residual hauntings aren't dangerous. The spirits aren't known to intentionally scare or attack the living. So I don't believe the ghost did it.

TOBIN
(sarcastically)
Wow, you're good.

LAURA
And she keeps returning to that spot. Why?

TOBIN
Probably because she's saddled with a lot of
guilt. When he was alive, she was attacked there
and her mother accused the boyfriend.

LAURA
Was he involved?

TOBIN
Don't know. But the girlfriend claims she keeps
running into him -- or his ghost or something.

LAURA
What about a present boyfriend? A stalker?

TOBIN
Nope. Tried that.

LAURA
Could she have inflicted the injuries herself?
You did say she's dealing with a lot of guilt.

TOBIN
I thought about it.

LAURA
And if she did and her boyfriend's ghost
continues appearing, it could push her over the
edge.

TOBIN
Possibly. But she only had superficial wounds
...

LAURA
She didn't really want to take her life. She
acting out. It's a cry for help.

Tobin freezes at her statement. Laura notices his reaction.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I'd like to tag along with your investigation.
If you don't mind. I know how you can prevent
her from going over the edge.

TOBIN
Oh really? How?

LAURA

You're a detective, investigate the attack first. The one he's accused of. You clear the kid, you might clear the haunting.

INT. PAULA'S RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

14

Tobin scans the room, its decor and photos that pepper the room. Marla sits on a couch.

TOBIN

Is there a Mister James?

MARLA

There was. He took off when Paula was five. His girlfriend wasn't much older.

TOBIN

You raised Paula alone?

MARLA

You bet. But it wasn't easy. Especially when she brings home boys like Andre.

TOBIN

What didn't you like about him?

MARLA

Didn't trust him. Didn't like his look.

TOBIN

Because he was Hispanic?

MARLA

(lying)

No. Just didn't think he was right for my daughter.

TOBIN

Why?

MARLA

She was too young. Too naive. And look what happened. He ended up attacking her.

TOBIN

You know that for sure?

MARLA

Ninety-nine percent. No one can account for his alibi. He pressured her into having sex. He was her first.

Tobin is aloof. Marla sees this.

MARLA (CONT'D)

Do you have kids, detective? Any young girls to watch over like I do?

Tobin hesitates. Marla gets up from the couch.

TOBIN

No.

MARLA

(her tone grows loud)

So you don't know a God damn thing about it. That kid was gonna end up in jail just like his father. I don't want my daughter ending up alone like me.

TOBIN

Look, Mrs...

MARLA

That kid attacked Paula. I know it. It's a parent's instinct. Something you don't have.

Tobin loses his patience and his voice rises.

TOBIN

You also don't have hard evidence. And that's the law.

MARLA

(infuriated)

And while you're doing God knows what to enforce the law, my daughter has to live with the nightmare of that horrible attack and that kid, who still has such a hold on her that it's choking the life out've her! She can't even go for a walk without seeing his face. Or maybe having his friends get revenge on her because they think it was her fault he killed himself. When does it stop, detective? Huh? What the hell does he want?

TOBIN

A second chance?

MARLA

Some people don't deserve a second chance.

TOBIN

You're right. But maybe this kid does.

EXT. COUNTY PARK - HIKING TRAIL - DAY

15

Laura and Paula, both dressed casually in jeans, stroll along the path. Paula winces occasionally from the pain. Laura carries a backpack over one shoulder.

LAURA

So what's Andre doing when you see him?

PAULA

He's coming at me with a knife. He's holding it up, like he's gonna kill me.

LAURA

Oh, I don't think he's trying to kill you.

Paula stops and lifts the front of her shirt, exposing a large white bandage.

PAULA

Then what about this?!

LAURA

Didn't Andre stab himself with a knife?

Paula puts her shirt back down and points.

PAULA

Yeah. Right over there.

They approach the site. Laura takes the backpack off her shoulder and sets it down. She unzips one pocket and pulls out a device that looks like a geiger counter.

LAURA

As I explained to Detective Tobin, a residual haunting is a moment of time -- a very important one in the life of the spirit. Residual hauntings aren't dangerous. They can't harm you. So the action you might be seeing
(she mimics someone stabbing themselves)
Is not Andre coming after you, but reliving the way he died. Understand?

Laura goes closer to the area and clicks on the device. She holds the device over the area and stares at a display on it.

PAULA

What's that do?

LAURA

It measures the energy level. If it's high, then it could mean the presence of a spirit.

Laura looks at the display.

LAURA (CONT'D)

It's picking up something.

PAULA

What's that mean? Andre's here?

LAURA

Not necessarily. Did Detective Tobin see Andre's ghost?

PAULA

I don't know. I don't even know why he was here.

LAURA

He was on duty, I guess.

PAULA

Without his phone? Or his badge?

LAURA

He didn't have them on him?

PAULA

No. And he had tears running down his cheeks and his eyes were watery. Like he'd been crying.

LAURA

Oh?

PAULA

He seems like a good guy. Sure cares about me a lot more than my father ever did. Are you gonna work with him for a while?

LAURA

Well, the more I learn, the more interesting it does get.

Laura looks again at the display on the geiger counter. Her expression shows something's there.

INT. ANDRE'S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - DAY

16

A bed sits in the middle of a room. At both sides of its headboard are end tables. On one is a small, aged television. A bookshelf cluttered with books, compact discs, and other stuff is to one side. Across it is a desk with a computer and monitor. Beside the desk is a small camcorder on an inexpensive tripod.

Tobin strolls around Andre's bedroom and scans its contents. Andre's mother, AMELIA HERNANDEZ, in a worn housedress and looking forlorn, stands near the doorway.

TOBIN

Where were you the day Paula was attacked, Mrs. Hernandez?

MRS. HERNANDEZ

At work. I take as many hours as I can get. Andre worked to help me. He always wanted to

work since his father was sent to jail when Andre was a little boy. Andre considered himself the man of the house.

TOBIN

You have no other children? No one else in the household?

MRS. HERNANDEZ

No. Andre was all I had.

Tobin sees a framed photograph of Andre with his arms lovingly around Paula. He picks it up and looks at it.

MRS. HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

He loved that girl so much. I liked her, too. Because she made him so happy. But now I don't know what to feel about her.

TOBIN

You think she somehow caused Andre's death?

Mrs. Hernandez shrugs.

MRS. HERNANDEZ

I don't want to say. God will judge.

TOBIN

Tell me about Andre's last day.

MRS. HERNANDEZ

Oh, what a terrible day.

INT. ANDRE'S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

17

Andre sits on his bed, his knees curled up to his chest. He holds his head in his hands, looking anxious.

MRS. HERNANDEZ (O.S.)

They were making such strong accusations about him attacking that girl. It was making him sick. And the police came that day.

Andre's eyes jump and look to the door.

MRS. HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

They were not nice. They pushed their way through and knocked hard on his bedroom door. It was locked. He wouldn't open it.

Andre jumps off his bed and stares at the door, not knowing what to do.

MRS. HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

He once said to me, mama, I don't want to end up like daddy. He meant that he didn't to end up in jail. So when the police came ...

Andre's eyes dart around the room. He sees a large souvenir knife hanging on the wall. He pulls it out of its sheath. He starts for the door and raises it.

MRS. HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

The police pounded harder on the door when he wouldn't open it. I pleaded with them to let me get him out, but they just pushed me aside.

Andre then turns and heads for the window. He opens it, looks back once, then climbs out the window with the knife.

RETURN TO SCENE

MRS. HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

Then they broke the door down and Andre wasn't there. They accused me of hiding him.

(looking around)

Where am I going to hide him in this little apartment? A military knife his grandfather had given him from his days in the army was missing.

Tobin turns to the computer and video camera.

TOBIN

Did Andre use his computer and camera much?

MRS. HERNANDEZ

Sometimes. He kept his door closed most of the time, so I don't know what he did in here.

TOBIN

May I take these to my office? There might be something on them that could help with our investigation.

MRS. HERNANDEZ

Please, take them. Anything that would help my Andre rest in peace.

INT. LOCAL TAVERN - NIGHT

18

Small pub. Few patrons inhabit it. Tobin and Laura sit across from each other at a small table, each with a drink.

LAURA

I tested the site where Paula claims to be seeing Andre's ghost. There was some higher level energies than I would've expected.

TOBIN

So what does that mean? There really is a ghost?

LAURA

One reading doesn't confirm yes or no. The energy could be coming from various sources.

TOBIN

Such as?

LAURA

Recent lightening strikes. The types of minerals in that particular area. Or -- it's a ghost.

TOBIN

So how does the Institute for Paranormal Studies determine for sure? Ask the ghost for I-D?

LAURA

No. Seeing it. And for your information, we've become a very sought-after organization thanks to the X-Files. I get called to lecture all over the world. France, Germany, Italy ...

TOBIN

Okay, Okay. I'm just not sure how to tell my boss that the reason you're tagging along is that I'm dealing with a ghost.

LAURA

Oh, that's the problem. You're afraid of what the boys might say about this war story.

TOBIN

Just because a kid sees a ghost is that enough? I mean, don't you need to see it, too?

LAURA

Or you. You were there that night. Did you see a ghost?

TOBIN

No.

LAURA

What were you doing in the park that night?

TOBIN

I was on duty.

LAURA

Without your phone or your badge?

Tobin freezes. Laura notices this.

LAURA (CONT'D)

You weren't on duty, were you?

TOBIN

I was looking for aliens. The Paula thing was just a show.

LAURA

Were the tears just a show, too?

Tobin freezes again.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Paula noticed.

Tobin knows he's trapped. He takes a deep breath.

TOBIN

I wasn't on duty that night. It was my daughter's birthday.

LAURA

I didn't know you have a daughter.

TOBIN

I don't. She died when she was 16. Mixing alcohol and drugs at a party. We were supposed to be together that night, but I went to work. It wasn't the first time I'd done that to her. My ex-wife blames me. And she's right. I was replaced by a quart of Tequila and a handful of pills.

LAURA

No, no, you shouldn't ...

TOBIN

No, she's right. Even after a wife and a kid my job was my first priority. So I lost the best things that ever happened to me. And there's no second chance to get them back.

LAURA

So it is important that you help clear Andre. Give him a second chance because he deserves it.

TOBIN

Helluva lot more than I do.

LAURA

Did you have your gun with you?

TOBIN

Yeah. I always have my gun with me.

LAURA

And did you think about using it?

TOBIN

Of course, I had it drawn while I was chasing the ...

LAURA

I mean before you heard Paula scream. When you thought you were alone.

Tobin hesitantly nods "yes."

LAURA (CONT'D)

But being the dutiful cop you are, you ran to help someone instead. A teenage girl. Like your daughter.

Tobin nods slowly, realizing the coincidence.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Then it sounds to me like you did get a second chance. Only it didn't come from exactly where you expected it. Second chances can be like that.

Tobin looks at her, considering her thought.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - DAY

19

Tobin walks swiftly. From behind he hears Phil calling.

PHIL (O.S.)

Mike!

Tobin turns to see Phil rushing toward him holding a clear plastic bag. Phil approaches him and holds up the bag. In it is a large kitchen knife with dried blood stains.

PHIL (CONT'D)

We found this in the park near where Paula was attacked.

TOBIN

Blood type? Prints?

PHIL

All her's.

Tobin is stunned.

PHIL (CONT'D)

She did it herself.

TOBIN

Follow me. Carl's got something on the first attack.

INT. POLICE STATION - COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

20

Small room with numerous computers and monitors sitting atop long tables. CARL NUNNO, 30s, sits in front of Andre's computer. Andre's video camera is beside the computer.

Tobin and Phil enter and close the door behind them.

TOBIN
What'ya got, Carl?

CARL
Something pretty interesting. I found this
video file on the kid's computer. Check it out.

Carl hits a key and a video box opens up on the computer screen. They watch as a video plays showing Andre sitting on his bed facing the camera. A television plays in the background.

ANDRE
Paula baby, I know your momma's been saying a
lot of things about me to you, but she don't
know me baby the way you do. I love you with my
whole heart. Until I met you I never knew I
could love someone as much as I do you. You're
the greatest thing that ever happened to me
baby.

Tobin knows he heard that line before. Andre starts to cry.

CARL
The kid just pours his heart out to her for
about five minutes. It was on his hard drive.
He recorded it on the day she was attacked.

TOBIN
What time?

Carl hits a key and a menu pops up on the screen. With a finger he points to the file.

CARL
Nine-twenty-three p.m. What time was she
attacked?

TOBIN
The report said nine-thirty. But would that
have been enough to prove Andre was home like
he'd said?

CARL
No, but here's something to try. Look in the
background. See the television? I don't see a
VCR hooked up to it, so it must be an actual
broadcast. The station's logo is right there in
the corner.

TOBIN
So if I can get the programming log from them
and see what time this show aired and the
commercials ...

CARL

You'll have a good idea when the video was made.

TOBIN

And that would prove Andre was nowhere near the crime scene.

CARL

Correct.

PHIL

Or it could be good acting. A love note to cover his ass and yet he had somebody else do the dirty work.

TOBIN

(to Carl)

Did he send it to Paula?

CARL

No. I contacted the ISP and they have no record of it in his e-mail account.

TOBIN

So if it was just a performance, he would've made sure to send it to her. No?

CARL

I would think so.

TOBIN

Phil, get the programming log.

Phil rushes out. Tobin stares at the video.

ANDRE

I never thought a guy like me could ever have someone as beautiful as you in his arms baby.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - TOBIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

21

Tobin sits back in his chair, watching Andre's video.

ANDRE

And the first time I held you, I couldn't believe it. It was like a dream. A wonderful, incredible dream.

Phil enters holding a piece of paper. He places it on Tobin's desk.

PHIL

I think we got it, Mike. The programming log confirms that the show on the video --

especially that one commercial -- was aired during the time of the attack.

TOBIN

So there's no way Andre could've gotten from his apartment to the park.

PHIL

No way.

Tobin's cell phone RINGS. He answers it.

TOBIN

Tobin.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION - PAULA'S MOTHER AT HOUSE

MARLA

Detective Tobin, you gotta help me. Paula's missing. And she left a suicide note.

TOBIN

Okay. I know where she might be. Call me immediately if you hear from her.

Tobin hangs up.

TOBIN (CONT'D)

(to Phil)

Paula's missing and she left a suicide note. I'm going to the park. Call Laura and tell her to meet me there.

PHIL

(teasing)

As backup?

Tobin smiles slightly, then exits in a rush.

EXT. COUNTY PARK - HIKING TRAIL - NIGHT

22

Paula runs along the hiking trail.

PAULA

(shouting)

Andre?! Andre, are you here?

She looks through the trees for a sign.

EXT. COUNTY PARK - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

23

Tobin drives up and is met by Laura, whose car is already parked. Tobin gets out of his car and goes to Laura.

TOBIN

Any sign of her? She must be here.

LAURA
I haven't ventured out there. It's very dark.

TOBIN
(sarcastically)
Afraid of a ghost?

Tobin heads for the woods. Laura rolls her eyes and follows him.

EXT. COUNTY PARK - HIKING TRAIL 24

Paula stops as she sees something. Andre's ghost appears.

PAULA
I can't take this anymore, Andre. I want it to
end.

Andre comes closer.

EXT. COUNTY PARK - HIKING TRAIL 25

In a different section, Tobin and Laura hurry along the trail,
frantically shouting ...

TOBIN
Paula!

LAURA
Paula!

EXT. COUNTY PARK - HIKING TRAIL - NIGHT 26

Paula freezes as she watches Andre's ghost raise a knife high over his
head. She, in turn, pulls a large kitchen knife held under the back of
her shirt and pants.

She raises the knife over herself.

EXT. COUNTY PARK - HIKING TRAIL 27

Tobin and Laura run along the trail, looking for any signs. Then they
hear a FEMALE CRYING.

TOBIN
(shouting)
Paula!

They hurry to the area where Andre killed himself and see Paula,
kneeling and holding the knife high above her chest. Her eyes are
closed. Tears stream down her cheeks.

LAURA
Oh my God.

Tobin and Laura look to where Paula is facing, but they see nothing.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Paula, don't!

TOBIN

Paula, Andre's innocent. We have evidence.

LAURA

It's true, Paula.

Paula turns to them. Tobin holds up a videotape.

TOBIN

We can prove he wasn't here in the park that day. He made a video for you. But you never saw it.

Paula turns to where Andre's ghost had been. It isn't there any more. Paula breathes heavily. She lowers the knife. Tobin runs over and grabs the knife from her. Laura throws her arms around Paula. Paula bursts into tears.

PAULA

He loved me?

TOBIN

Like you wouldn't believe.

INT. PAULA'S RESIDENCE - PAULA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

28

Paula sits in front of her computer, mesmerized by the image of Andre, looking at her and speaking to her. Tobin and Laura stand around her, watching, too.

ANDRE

Paula, I hope you see this and know how real my feelings are for you. You gotta know baby. I hope you see this and believe me. It's so important for you to believe me.

Marla enters the room. She watches the video.

TOBIN

He made it around the same time you were attacked. There's no way he could've been there.

MARLA

Honey, it's all lies. He says things that any man can say. He could've had his friends do it.

TOBIN

There was someone attacking women in the park since last year. We caught him a few months ago.

MARLA

Then who attacked my daughter the other night?

Tobin looks at Paula, who stares back at him.

MARLA (CONT'D)

She did it? To herself?

TOBIN

(to Paula)

We found the knife. Your fingerprints and blood were all over it.

MARLA

I don't believe it. Tell them, honey, tell them you didn't do it. I'm right, right honey?

Paula looks back at the monitor and continues watching Andre profess his love for her. Then she gets up from her chair and goes over to her mother.

PAULA

(yelling)

Shut up! Just shut up!

Paula rears back and SLAPS her mother hard across the face. Marla is stunned. So are Tobin and Laura.

PAULA (CONT'D)

You're so wrong.

Marla looks to Paula, then to Tobin and Laura for some escape. Tobin and Laura just stare back.

Paula looks back to the monitor where Andre continues pledging his love for her.

INT. POLICE STATION - TOBIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

29

Caption: Weeks later

Tobin sits at his desk doing paperwork. Phil knocks and pokes his head in through the open door.

PHIL

I'm takin' off. See you in the mornin'. Don't work too late.

TOBIN

You got it. Have a good night.

Phil exits. Tobin's cell phone RINGS. He answers it.

TOBIN (CONT'D)

Tobin.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION - PAULA IN PARK

PAULA

Hi. It's Paula. I'm in the park.

Tobin moves up nervously in his chair.

TOBIN

What's going on? Are you all right?

PAULA

Yes. I'm fine. I just wanted to make sure it's really over, 'ya know? And I guess it is.

TOBIN

No sign of Andre?

PAULA

No. Not at all.

TOBIN

And you're not scared or nervous being there?

PAULA

No.

TOBIN

How are the sessions with Doctor Gold going?

PAULA

Really great. She's really cool. Thanks for her name.

TOBIN

Anytime.

PAULA

And listen, I never really got to thank you for saving my life. So thank you.

TOBIN

It's my job. How're you and mom doing?

PAULA

Okay. She's my mom, what can I do? We'll get through it.

Tobin is startled by someone at the door. He looks and sees Laura standing in the doorway. She smiles and waves a note.

PAULA (CONT'D)

I don't hate her. That's the way she is.

TOBIN

So you'll give her a second chance.

Laura goes to Tobin and hands him the note. He reads it.

INTERCUT - CLOSE-UP OF NOTE

Text of note: "Want to go looking for aliens? LF"

Tobin smiles big. Laura smiles back at him.

PAULA

I guess everyone deserves a second chance. At least once. Right?

TOBIN

At least once.

(turns in his chair to look out the window)

I'll bet it's a great night to be in the park, huh?

The moon shines bright overhead and glistens off the water from a stream that runs through the park.

PAULA

It's absolutely beautiful.

FADE OUT.