

BLACKNESS

LOUIS (V.O.)

The problem's not feeding them.
The problem's putting them
someplace where no one can hear
them scream--

FLASH: EVE -- NIGHT

Blonde-- blue eyes-- filthy-- chained-- SCREAMING

FLASH: ANGELA -- NIGHT

Black-- angry-- chained to a wall-- SCREAMING

FLASH: INEZ -- NIGHT

Hispanic-- huddled-- shivering-- weeping-- SCREAMING

FLASH: OPHELIA -- NIGHT

White-- blonde-- hysterical-- bloody-- SCREAMING

FLASH: URSULA -- NIGHT

Claustrophobic-- trapped-- tight-- confined-- beating
on the lid-- SCREAMING--

INT. ETHNIC SUPERMARKET -- NIGHT

LOUIS shops for his family. Fresh produce. Fresh fruit.
A big pack of toilet paper. Soap. A large box of feminine
napkins. A six pack of beer.

Louis is all business. 27-28, part of the new culture.
Tatts and piercing. MP3 player rapping loudly into his
ears. Lithe, trim, angry. Alert but not paranoid.

EXT. LOUIS'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Louis wheels his van into the drive and stops. Gets
out. Grabs up his goods from the passenger seat next to
him.

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CONTINUED:

Eight stuffed plastic shopping bags with stretched handles. He juggles the beer, tosses one empty to the grass.

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE; FRONT DOOR -- NIGHT

Louis pushes in. Locks down. The front room is cluttered with folding tables and racks. Seven large box computers, monitors, keyboards. One chair that slides back and forth and has wheeled access to all stations.

Wires hang and drape and snake everywhere.

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE; KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Louis drops the bags on a counter. He sings to his mindless MP3 player as he empties those bags.

All except one bag, he leaves it alone.

With fast, practiced moves, he--

Chops vegetables. Boils water. Tears open a box of crackers. Gets a bottle of chilled water from the fridge.

Cooks soup. Flavors it. Tastes it. Now, as it cooks, he moves back to the front room.

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE; FRONT ROOM -- NIGHT

Louis drops into his office chair. Taps keyboards and all his flat panel monitors snap to life. Each reveals a different web site.

RAPE-A-BITCH.COM and RAPE-A-SLUT.COM and TEACH HER A LESSON.COM. Different names-- but the pictures and designs all seem to be the same.

Brutality sites. Bondage and abuse and incest and pain. He checks the stats of each, rocking to the beat of his MP3.

In the kitchen, the soup boils.

He moves back to the stove, ladles out a bowl of the frothing soup. Arranges crackers on a plastic plate. Gets a tray. Balances the water bottle on it.

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CONTINUED:

As he finishes:

A cell phone rings. Behind him. Louis stretches back, looks down, grins-- reaches into the shopping bag he didn't empty. Comes out with a cell phone. Looks at the screen. Grins.

Drops the phone to the counter. Where it keeps ringing.

Louis balances the tray and pulls the earbuds, drops his MP3 player to the counter.

He walks to the basement door. Digs out a key ring-- fingers the right key-- unlocks the door.

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE; STAIRS DOWN -- NIGHT

Louis turns on a light. Closes the door to the kitchen, Moves down the stairs. Stops at a second door at the bottom. Balances the tray. Uses the same keys to unlock this one.

Walks in.

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE; PLASTIC HALLWAY -- NIGHT

He steps through and closes the door.

Turns on a small light. A naked bulb glares from the socket. He moves down the hallway to the far, dark end.

His feet crackle on the sheets of black builders plastic spread out on the floor. To catch spattering blood--

Louis at the door. With the keys again. In the lock.

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE; CAPTIVE ROOM -- NIGHT

Dark and filthy-- two mattresses lay spread on the floor--

A half naked woman-- call her EVE-- lays hunkered into a tight ball against the wall. T-shirt. Panties. Threadbare blanket. Her back is to the door. Her head hidden in the darkness of the corner she lays in.

Eve-- 20+-- thin, wasted, dirty, beaten, abused.

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CONTINUED:

A chain runs from her festering ankle to a heavy ring on the floor near the bed.

Louis opens the door. Flips a switch. Lights buzz and hum in the darkness. Bright lights.

The kind of taking pictures and making movies--

LOUIS

Hey babe, dinner time-- I made
it special for you.

Eve doesn't move.

Louis hovers a second in the doorway. Moves to a small table close by the mattresses. He grabs the tray laying there. A dried out empty bowl crawling with frightened cockroaches. He sets down the new tray. Steps on some bugs.

LOUIS

(sing songy)

Eve? Sweet cheeks? It's hot soup--
Smell the flavors-- um, um, good.

Eve doesn't move.

Louis moves back to the door-- a table she can't reach-- and sets down the tray of dirty dishes. Slaps away a few more roaches.

LOUIS

It's time again, kill some of
these bugs.

He walks to the dump bucket.

LOUIS

Don't be like this, sweetie.
I've cooked you up a full pot
with plenty of fresh veggies.

He fingers the toilet paper hanging from a thin piece of twine.

LOUIS

You got the night off tonight,
so you can eat all you want.

She still doesn't move. Louis walks to the mattresses.

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CONTINUED:

LOUIS

You bitched about not getting
anything decent to eat. I mean,
look at this-- I bought the
vegetables fresh, I cut them
just for you--
(still she ignores
him)
I cooked this for you, Evie!
Jesus, you're such a little cunt!

Louis steps closer, petulant.

LOUIS

(a different tack)
If I leave, I'm taking it with
me, so help me God!

Her once blonde hair, thick with dirt and grease, lays
in thick cords about her head. Her face lays hidden in
the crook of her arm.

Is she even breathing?

Louis kicks the mattress.

LOUIS

This is starting to piss me off.
I'm not kidding here!

He steps in closer, toes her shoe into her butt cheek.

LOUIS

Dammit, Evie!

Kicks her again. *Jesus-- is she dead?*

He leans forward, curious now, maybe he even cares a
little about this girl.

LOUIS

(bends down)
You didn't die on me, did you?

He touches her shoulder-- seeing if the flesh is
repellent. It's not. He grabs her shoulder.

Eve springs-- arm arcs-- something clenched in her fist--

Ka-whack!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EVE

Where are your keys, you fucking
piece a shit-- you--

She struggles-- rolls him over-- slaps his back pockets--
a chunk-- metal-- digs for keys-- fumbles them-- so
many.

She hunkers back. Louis groans, moves. She kicks him
with her unchained foot-- in the head-- hitting, missing--
repeatedly.

She stabs keys at the lock. One after the other after
the other. Fumbles, misses, weeps in pain-- frustration.

Snap-- the lock opens. The chain clatters free. As simple
as that.

She turns-- looks at Louis-- when will he take it away?
When will he jump up and tell her what a bad girl she's
been?

Freedom and terror are the same for her-- she hunkers
back away from him-- frozen and distant and half crazed.

He lays in his own blood. Still moving, still half
conscious. Any minute now-- any minute she'll be
punished.

She looks at the door. Who will come through it? Who
will help her? Anyone-- ?

FLASH: LOUIS'S HOUSE; CAPTIVE ROOM -- EVENING

Louis brings in THREE MEN-- all dark and shadowy--
drinking beer-- one hands over money--

LOUIS

There she is--

BALL CAP GUY

We can do anything we want, right?

LOUIS

Except kill her--

They laugh-- funny guys-- Louis pockets cash-- the men
move in--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHORTMAN

I go first--

EDGY DUDE

Yer dick's too small--

Edgy Dude lifts up a video camera. Folds open the viewer. A small light is attached. He snaps it on-- blinding white light--

BALL CAP GUY

(looms closer)

I GO FIRST--

Eve screams as the men move at her--

BACK: LOUIS'S HOUSE; CAPTIVE ROOM -- NIGHT

Eve stares at the door-- the memory hard and flinty in her eyes. But there's no one there. The door stands open and wide and empty. Above her, the house is silent.

And in that silence-- Louis groans. She chokes back her panic--

She stands-- wobbly-- skirts as far around Louis as she can-- this disease on the floor-- this steaming pile-- and she moves to the door. She stops. Looks down the hallway.

POV: LOUIS'S HOUSE; PLASTIC HALLWAY

From her side. Single bulb. Harsh. Empty. Very- very-quiet.

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE; CAPTIVE ROOM -- NIGHT

Eve hesitates. Louis moans. She turns.

In a rush of panic, she lunges to the mattresses. Grabs his arm. Jerks him closer-- a resurgence of life building in her with blocks of white rage.

She locks the chain down around his wrist. Tighter. Places the padlock. Harder. CLICK.

Grabs the keys. Kicks back from the bed. *That'll hold yer sorry ass.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She turns. Clenches the keys to keep them quiet. Moves to the door again. Peeks out, almost afraid-- *shit, very afraid.*

She looks around the room. An old broom. She picks it up-- screws off the sweep head, leaving her with a stick. *It ain't much, but--*

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE; PLASTIC HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Eve steps out onto the plastic. It makes ugly, horrible sounds under her bare feet. She recoils-- waits.

Upstairs, she hears the roaring sound of silence. But she has to get to the stairs...

She moves down the hallway. Can't help the noise. The door to the stairs. Hesitates. Fear. Okay.

Now I have to open the damn thing...

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE; STAIRS DOWN -- NIGHT

Eve jerks the door open. Stares up from the bottom. Listens. Nothing.

She wields the stick like a spear. Starts up the stairs. Has no choice. Choices here are long gone.

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE; KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Eve pushes open the door. Terror almost overwhelms her.

Extra careful-- she eases into the kitchen-- looks around-- no one she can see anyway.

Panic threatens her again. She swings the stick. She listens. Holds her breath. Nothing-- something? Where? House noises?

She moves down the counter-- searching for-- there-- a butcher knife-- small-- picks it up anyway-- rummages through the drawers.

Finds another knife-- oh, yeah-- *a lot bigger*-- cool-- she takes it, drops the first one--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The stove-- food-- *now* she's hungry-- now she moves to the pot-- she digs in with a spoon-- hungrily eats a few--

Stops-- sees the wall phone-- *Jesus!*

There-- picks up the receiver on a tangled cord-- what? Snaps the switch-- no dial tone-- dead as she should be-- hangs it up.

Something! There-- noise-- there!

You heard it, didn't you? She freezes-- moves to the hallway leading into the house.

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE; LIVING AREA -- NIGHT

Computers. Monitors. LED lights that flicker and trickle out into the ether.

Eve stands-- leading with the knife point-- trembling with fear-- house noises creak and crack somewhere in the distance.

She turns on a light switch. Nothing happens.

Slowly she approaches the bank of computers and monitors. She taps a keyboard. A screen wakes up.

RAPE-A-SLUT.COM-- still shots of girls held down and abused.

Eve stares at the screen-- revulsion-- curiosity-- slowly building fury. She moves down the line. Tapping keyboards. Screens awaken-- snap on-- six of them.

Rage BOILS in her-- pure hatred! She looks around. The chair! She grabs it, tries to lift it. It crashes to the floor.

She throws the knife on the table, wields the broom handle now with both hands. AND TRASHES THE COMPUTERS AND MONITORS! WEARS HERSELF OUT IN ANGER AND HORROR! Sparks fly as the boxes and frames topple and go dark.

SUDDENLY-- THE WHOLE HOUSE POPS A BREAKER and GOES DARK!

Eve-- startled-- jumps back-- back to the wall-- stands inside a room gone totally black. She rushes to a light switch. Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Panic grips her-- she turns-- moves to the front door--
grabs it-- finds it locked-- she undoes the lock and
jerks it open-- and--

For the first time in eight months, clean fresh air.

Night and the darkness of the street lay just beyond.
Terror beckons. Her mind races ahead of itself--

FLASH: NEXT DOOR -- NIGHT

Eve running next door-- Eve in shirt and panties--
beating on the neighbors door-- hysterical-- crazed--

EVE
HELP ME! HELP ME! PLEASE!

Shadows-- lights-- the door opens-- Ball Cap Man stands
there, in darkness-- sweating-- grinning--

BALL CAP GUY
Hello, darling!

Eve screams as he GRABS HER and DRAGS HER INTO THE HOUSE.
CAACKLING AS HE SLAMS THE DOOR!

BACK: LOUIS'S HOUSE; LIVING AREA -- NIGHT

Eve slams the front door. Second thought-- she locks
the front door. Third thought-- she moves back to the
kitchen.

Three seconds later, wedges a dining room chair under
the knob of the front door.

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE; KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Eve moves back into the dark kitchen. She rummages
through the drawers-- one-- two-- three-- four-- and
finds a flashlight. She turns it on.

LIGHT! Safety in light, right? She sees the food. Spoons
out what's there-- gulps down some more.

Suddenly-- a CELL PHONE RINGS--

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CONTINUED:

PANICKED-- she wheels the light around. Sees the cell phone. On the counter, next to a full plastic shopping bag.

She lunges for it-- looks at the screen. It rings again-- she answers:

EVE

HELLO? HELLO? Don't hang up-- I need the--

(listens)

Do what? No-- I--

It blinks off-- she looks at it-- then:

EVE

Hello? God damn it!

She turns. Holding the phone and the flashlight, she tries the kitchen light. It's out. She flashes the walls. Sees the KITCHEN CLOSET--

And moves to it. Opens the door wider. Finds the breaker box. Jerks open the small metal door and flashes the black switches. Sees several that are off.

She resets them. On the sixth one-- THE LIGHTS IN THE KITCHEN AND CLOSET come on. She jump back and smiles in satisfaction-- more light means more safety, right?

And then, she sees it. On the wall. And what she sees pulls the whole rug of safety out from under her.

Her eyes hold and stare and suddenly, she understands.

The cork board nailed to the closet wall-- and the picture-- *of her!*

Taken those many months back-- chained to the floor-- the first time-- when she was clean and fresh and newly snatched from the streets--

FLASH: LOUIS'S HOUSE; CAPTIVE ROOM -- NIGHT

Eve-- casual dress-- terrified-- pulling on the chain-- SCREAMING at the man standing over her-- with a DIGITAL CAMERA-- and he flashes the picture-- freezing that square of her life--

BACK: LOUIS'S HOUSE; KITCHEN -- NIGHT

And now Eve looks at that same picture-- marked in a bold black scrawl-- **Eve**-- and she chokes back the memory.

And as she reaches for the picture-- *Oh-- shit--*

Sickness wracks her-- *as she sees more pictures--* the one next to hers--

A BLACK GIRL-- struggling with a locked chain around her neck-- clothes torn-- a bloody face-- marked **ANGELA**--

The next-- a Mexican girl-- beaten-- bloody-- torn blouse-- panicked-- hand up to protect from the assault of the flash-- marked **INEZ**--

The next-- a white woman-- blonde-- older-- weeping in terror-- someone holding her-- turning her face to the camera-- **OPHELIA**--

The next-- a dark girl-- half hidden by the light-- bound and gagged-- laying on her side-- in a tight, confide space-- eyes pleading for salvation-- **URSULA**--

Are they real? Is any of this real?

Eve backs off-- stunned-- stifles a scream-- jabs at the cell phone-- stares at it-- looks at the girls-- her mind leaps ahead of itself again--

A sudden, icy thought crystallizing before her--

FLASH: POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM -- NIGHT

Louis, caught-- a shit-eating grin on his face. His FANCY LAWYER sits next to him. PLAIN CLOTHES COPS mill around-- frustrated cops-- angry cops--

FANCY LAWYER

My client is willing to
acknowledge the whereabouts of
the other *alleged* victims--

He puts a paper on the table--

FANCY LAWYER

He gets full immunity.

Louis grins wide--

(CONTINUED)

