



# THE SICKENING

A film by Keith Adams



## Director's Statement

Three years ago my brother and I isolated ourselves in a remote upstate house to work on a screenplay. Late one night we had a particularly ferocious argument. A foot of snow had just fallen. I stepped outside for some air and thought, "I could really strangle him right now". He was inside thinking the same thing. And *The Sickening* was born.

I want to make a movie that is as terrifying and disturbing as it is pulpy, bloody fun. It's the personal story of two brothers set against classic horror elements - a lurid mystery, a spooky old house, a creepy town, a set of grisly Satanic murders, and a teased-out descent into the supernatural. But at its core, *The Sickening* is a relationship movie where the relationship becomes so dysfunctional, so toxic, that it will culminate in a vicious battle to the death.

The sensibility will be in line with horror films of the 70's but with identifiable, contemporary characters. There will be a relentless undercurrent of danger, and yet, through all of the mounting dread, a macabre sense of humor will creep in. The story will be told from the brothers' perspectives and we will not be able to rely on either of them for an objective view of what is happening. They can't trust their own minds...or each other. Once they uncover the mystery, the terror will come from the characters themselves. In the end they will become the horror.

The style will be decidedly retro and will pay homage to visual masters like John Carpenter and Brian DePalma with widescreen compositions and smooth, precise camera movement. My visual choices will correspond to the brothers psychology. For example, their deteriorating relationship will be represented through their physical places in the frame. In the beginning they will be closer together. As they separate from each other emotionally, they will drift apart spatially.

There will be a pronounced visual shift in the film. It will begin with simpler composition, longer shots and a more subdued, almost muted color palette. As the paranoia and madness intensify, this look of reality will slowly melt into a visible nightmare. When they finally discover their true history, the floodgates will open up visually. The camerawork will become more frenetic, the lighting more stylized and the colors more saturated.

What you hear can horrify you more than what you see. Chanting, whispers, giggles, a mysterious nursery rhyme--there is much to explore in this movie. And I want a score so frightening that it sticks with you, perhaps longer than you'll want it to. A few sparse, memorable notes will conjure up an atmosphere thick with the pall of evil. This haunting theme will be weaved and layered through the film to portentous affect.

The final act of *The Sickening* is the heart of the original concept. When the end comes, hopefully it will work not only because it's a surprise, but because it was horrifyingly inevitable. Some movies send you running from the theater in terror and some come back to haunt you later. I want to make one that does both.

Kita Al





Long ago, in these woods...something happened.









25 years later...it's starting again.

EXT. ABRAMS HOUSE - NIGHT

A SILHOUETTE moves by the window.

Suddenly: A GUNSHOT rings out, shattering the stillness of the night.



Two brothers have come home...





Scott



Keith





To memories they want to forget.





To a town where secrets are buried.







MEGAN  
Do you trust your brother?



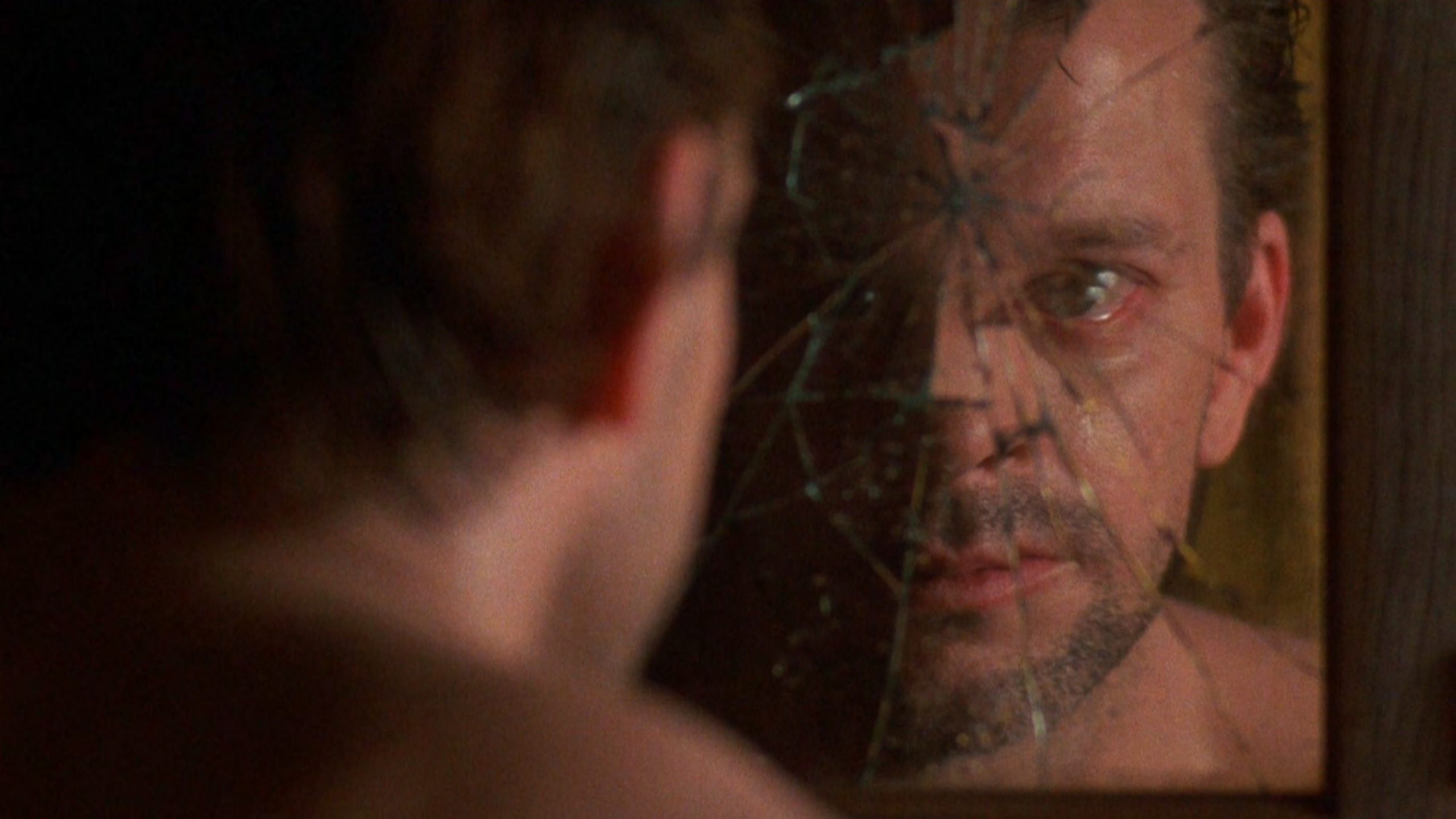
TARA  
It's so cool that girl was killed  
in your woods. Me and my  
friends party there  
sometimes...just to hang out where  
something witchy happened.



They have come home...to find the truth.









CONFIDENTIAL

## PATIENT ADMISSION FORM

STEPHANIE ABRAMS DATE OF ADMISSION 07.17.88

09.01.55 SEX Female MARITAL STATUS Married CHILDREN Two Boys

PULSE BLOOD PRESSURE 115/75

MENTAL STATE ON ADMISSION

SEVERE PARANOIA — Patient believe  
Needed to be PHYSICALLY RESTRAINED

schizophrenic tendencies and trance-like rugue states  
symptoms of psychogenic amnesia. Her mind is protecting

PSYCHOSURGICAL PROCEDURE NECESSARY

AS TO THE PREFRONTAL LOBS

the behavior of a (paranoid

DIAGNOSIS UNKNOWN



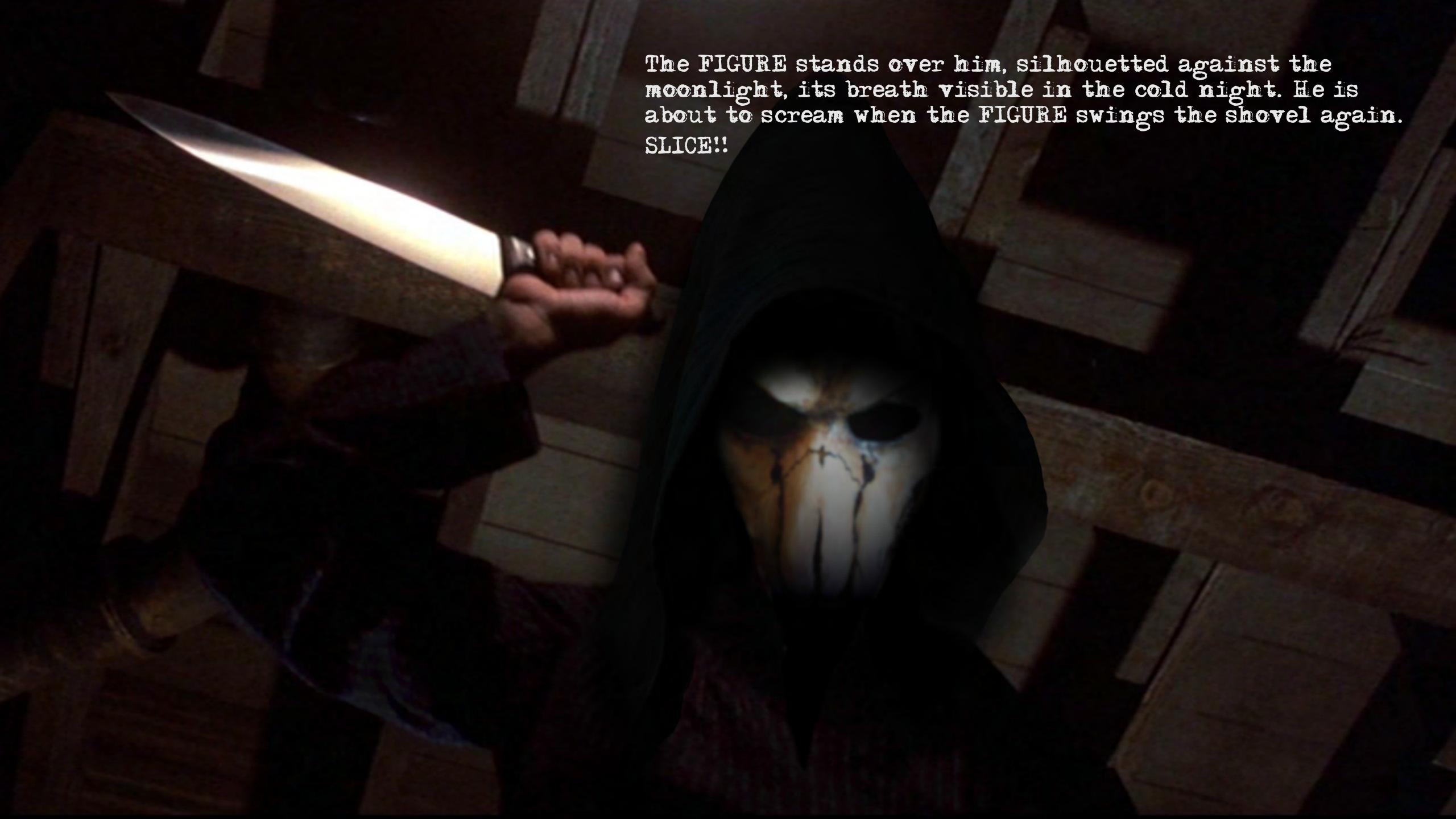


She senses a presence but it's too late. The FIGURE pulls the bag over her head. She opens her mouth, but there is no air to scream.





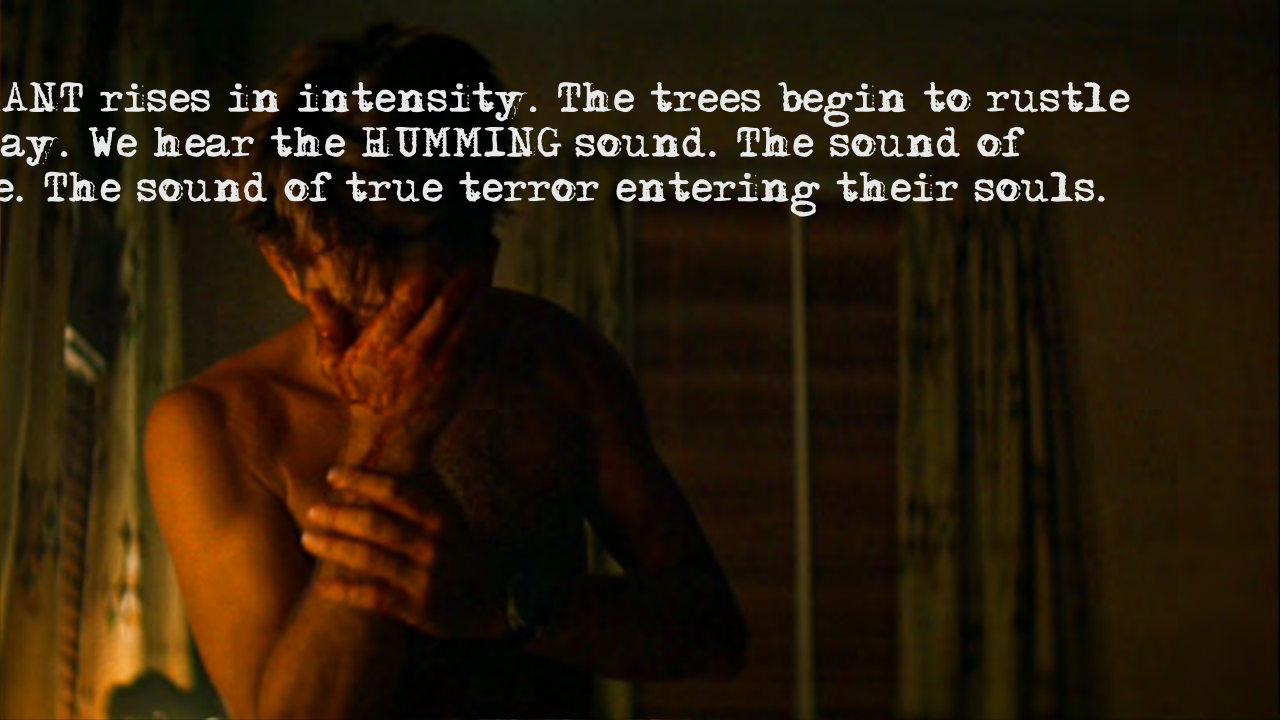
The FIGURE stands over him, silhouetted against the moonlight, its breath visible in the cold night. He is about to scream when the FIGURE swings the shovel again. SLICE!!







The CHANT rises in intensity. The trees begin to rustle and sway. We hear the HUMMING sound. The sound of disease. The sound of true terror entering their souls.











# THE SICKENING

You can't go home again...  
And sometimes you shouldn't!



## Keith Adams Co-Writer / Director

Keith Adams has been working professionally in the film industry since 1994. As a location scout he contributed to such iconic projects as *The Sopranos*, *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and *The Devil Wears Prada*. As a DGA location manager he worked closely with Oscar winning producer Scott Rudin and director M. Night Shyamalan. He has been a part of the hit films *Get Him to The Greek* and *Wanted*. Keith has directed behind the scenes featurettes, narrative shorts, and music videos as well as the 2nd unit of the Kate Hudson romantic comedy *Something Borrowed*. Keith is currently the supervising location manager on the Fox show *Gotham*. Keith's passion for all facets of filmmaking coupled with his many years on sets have shaped a writer-director with a unique voice and the professional experience to know how to realize his vision. Keith's brother D. Scott Adams is his screenwriting partner as well as a writer of essays, prose and film reviews.

## John N. Hart Jr. Producer

John Hart has managed three private equity funds with an aggregate capital commitment of \$30 million. He has produced over 16 critically acclaimed feature films including *Boys Dont Cry*, *You Can Count on Me*, *A Home at the End of the World*, *Proof*, and *Revolutionary Road*. His films have received 7 Academy Award nominations, 10 Golden Globe nominations, and 16 Independent Spirit Award nominations. John began his entertainment career in New York City as a theater producer and has produced over 15 Broadway and Off-Broadway shows. His productions have won over 30 Tony Awards and personally garnered him 4 Tony Awards for Best Production. John is the lead producer of the smash hit *ONCE* on Broadway, the West End and on a national tour currently traveling around the country. In 2014 John was the lead producer for the critically acclaimed Broadway revival of *The Glass Menagerie* starring Cherry Jones and Zachary Quinto.

## Jamie Zelermyer – Producer

Jamie Zelermyer is a New York-based independent Producer. Most recently she produced *Ratter* starring Ashley Benson. She was the VP, Physical Production, and a Consultant, at Focus Features / Rogue Pictures for six years ending in November 2012. At Focus she oversaw such movies as *Admission* (Tina Fey, Paul Rudd), *One Day* (Anne Hathaway), *Jane Eyre* (Mia Wasikowska, Michael Fassbender), *Miss Pettigrew Lives For A Day* (Frances McDormand, Amy Adams, Lee Pace) and *The Unborn* (Odette Yustman, Gary Oldman, Cam Gigante). Prior to working at Focus, she served as the Co-Producer on *Delirious* (Steve Buscemi). She has served as Line Producer on a number of films including *The Night Listener* (Robin Williams, Toni Collette) and *The Thing About My Folks* (Paul Reiser, Peter Falk). Jamie has been Production Manager on *Boys Dont Cry* and *Empire* and Production Supervisor on *Igby Goes Down* and *You Can Count On Me*. Over the years, Jamie has had the privilege to work with a number of notable directors including Steve McQueen, Kenneth Lonergan, Cary Fukunaga, Tom DiCillo, Terry George, Kimberly Pierce, David Goyer and Dito Montiel. Jamie lives in NYC is a graduate of Bard College.

## David Bausch – Producer

David Bausch is a New York-based producer with nearly 20 years experience in film production. Currently he is the Producer on the new MTV / Blumhouse television series *Eye Candy* starring Victoria Justice. Recently he served as Producer on the feature *Ratter* starring Ashley Benson. He has been a Co-Producer or Executive Producer on *The Inevitable Defeat of Mister and Pete*, *Nature Calls*, *Game 6*, and has been Line Producer on the Comedy Central pilot, *Bad Advice From My Brother* and on various NY Units for other features. In addition, David has been a Production Manager or Production Supervisor on *Fair Game* (directed by Doug Liman, starring Naomi Watts and Sean Penn), *Something Borrowed* (starring Kate Hudson), *Away We Go* (directed by Sam Mendes), *The Sitter* (directed by David Gordon Green, starring Jonah Hill), *Baby Mama* (starring Tina Fey and Amy Poehler), *Margot at the Wedding* (directed by Noah Baumbach, starring Nicole Kidman), *Margaret* (directed by Kenneth Lonergan, starring Anna Paquin), and several other notable pictures. David is a graduate of Dartmouth College and currently resides in Brooklyn, NY.