

# WHAT AILS YOU

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A FEATURE FILM BY DEMARCO JENKINS

LOOKBOOK

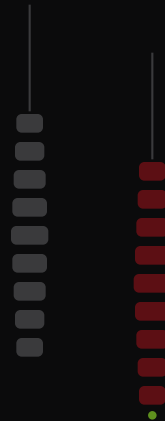
# THE FEELING

**A familiar neighborhood that slowly reveals itself to be a haunted ecosystem.**

What Ails You is urban gothic horror rooted in grief: a community so afraid of losing its children that it learns how to keep them — and keeping becomes the horror.

The film moves between two worlds that share one block: the warm, sun-struck world of porches, choirs, and gas-station small talk, and the acid-green underworld beneath it, where love is measured in chains.

**Every image in this book serves that collision. Warmth is never safe. Darkness is never empty.**



# TONE REFERENCES

*Seven films. One per page. This is how the film should feel.*

CANDYMAN (1992)

GET OUT

THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER

HIS HOUSE

SAINT MAUD

PRISONERS

THE WAILING

*Stills on the following pages are labeled placeholders — swap in the exact frames indicated.*

# CANDYMAN

1992 · DIR. BERNARD ROSE

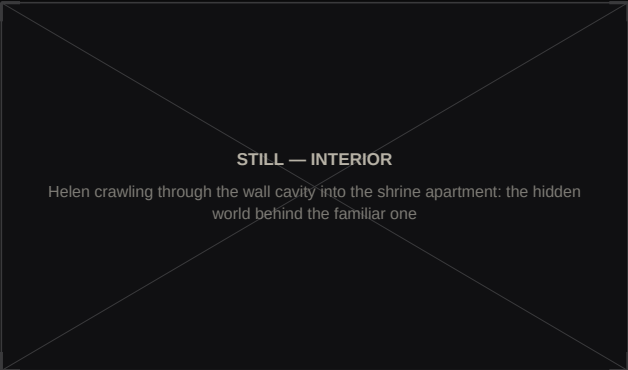
WHAT WE'RE BORROWING

Urban mythology — horror born from a neighborhood's own history of harm, spoken aloud until it becomes real. The camera treats the hood with grandeur, not pity.



STILL — AERIAL

God's-eye helicopter shots gliding over Cabrini-Green towers: geography as mythology



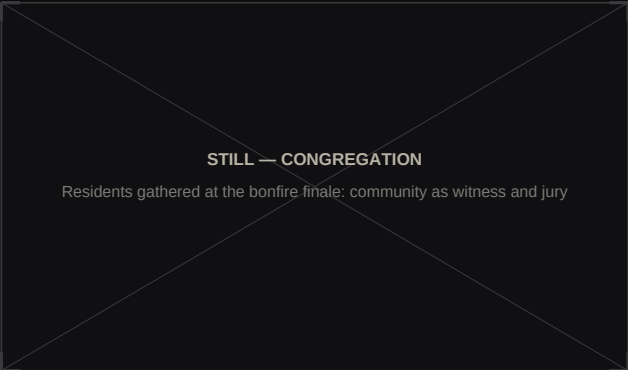
STILL — INTERIOR

Helen crawling through the wall cavity into the shrine apartment: the hidden world behind the familiar one



STILL — GRAFFITI MAW

The painted mouth doorway: a threshold that looks like being swallowed



STILL — CONGREGATION

Residents gathered at the bonfire finale: community as witness and jury

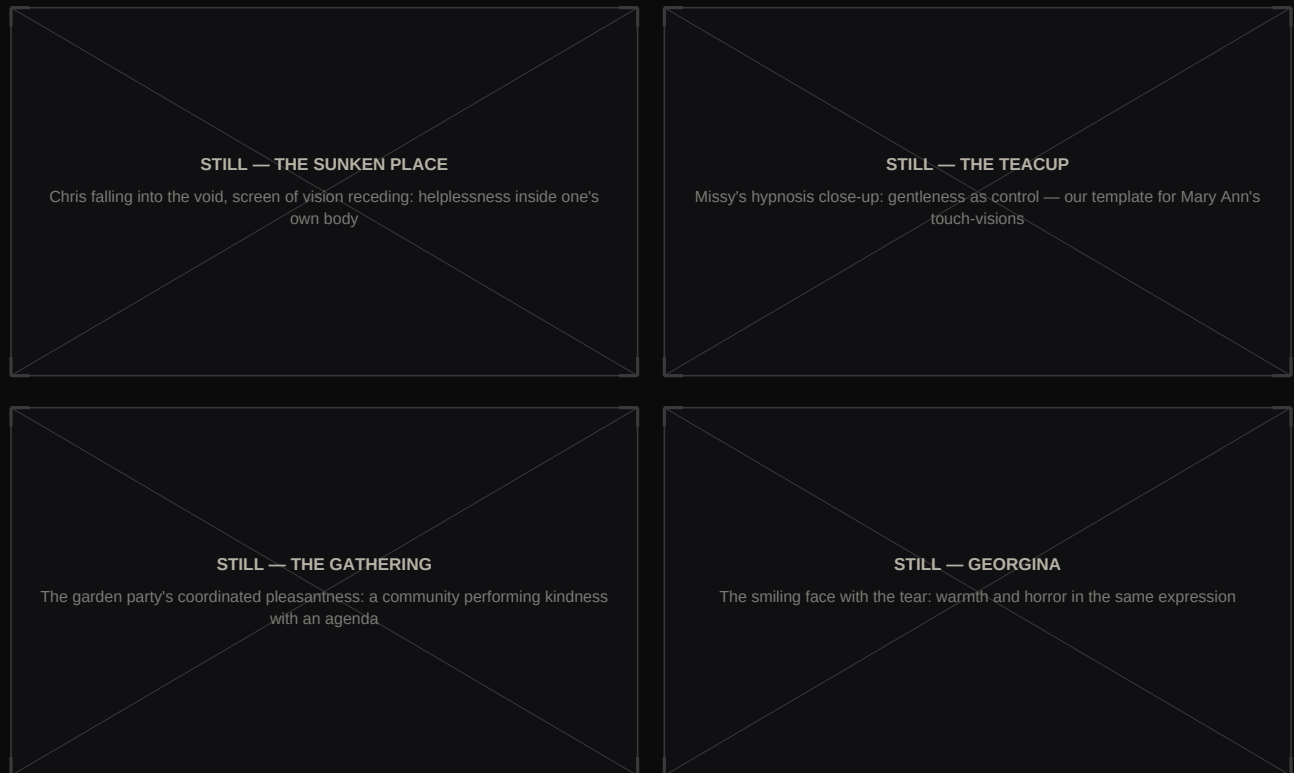
*Our equivalent: the neighborhood shot wide and reverent by day; Mary Ann's house as the shrine hiding inside it.*

# GET OUT

2017 · DIR. JORDAN PEELE

## WHAT WE'RE BORROWING

Social horror where warmth is the trap. Smiles as menace, hospitality as harvest — and the Sunken Place as the visual grammar of stolen agency.



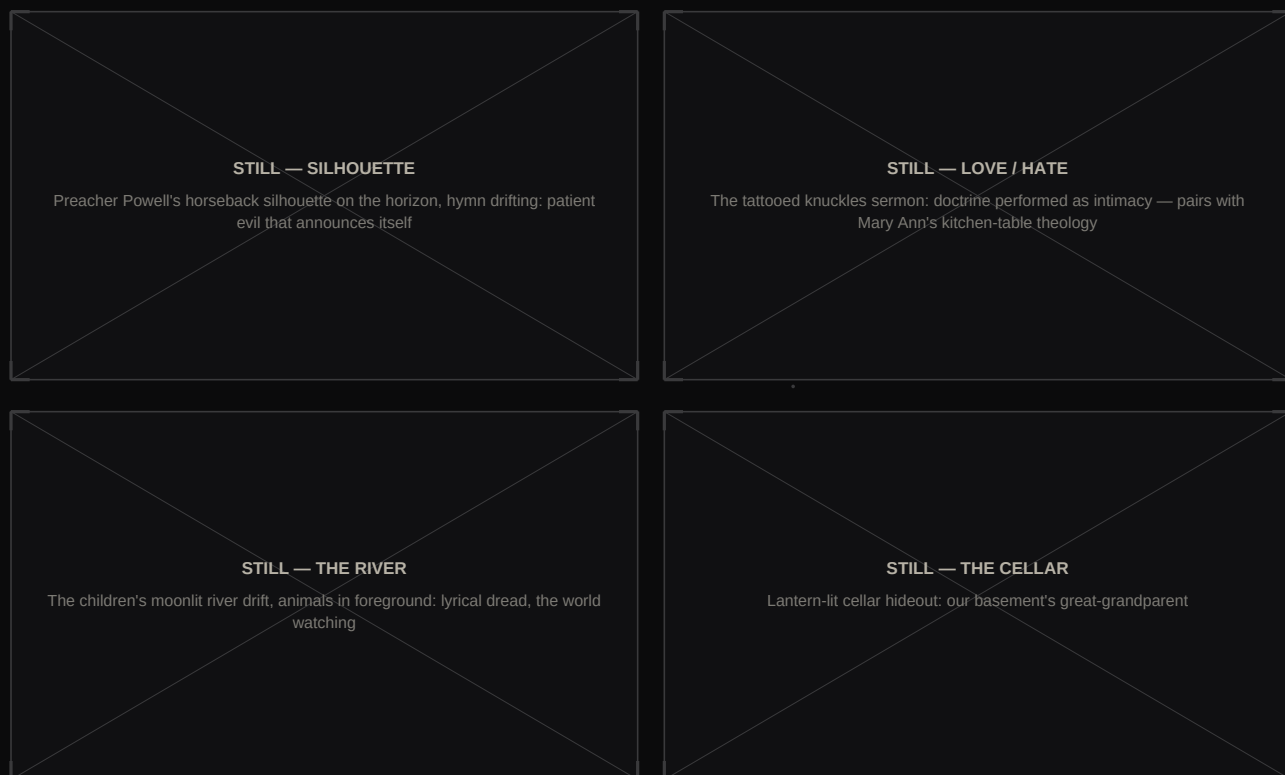
*Our equivalent: Mary Ann's warmth is never a mask — which is worse.*

# THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER

1955 · DIR. CHARLES LAUGHTON

## WHAT WE'RE BORROWING

Expressionist Americana — faith weaponized, a predator who quotes scripture, children fleeing through a fable-dark landscape. Shadow as theology.



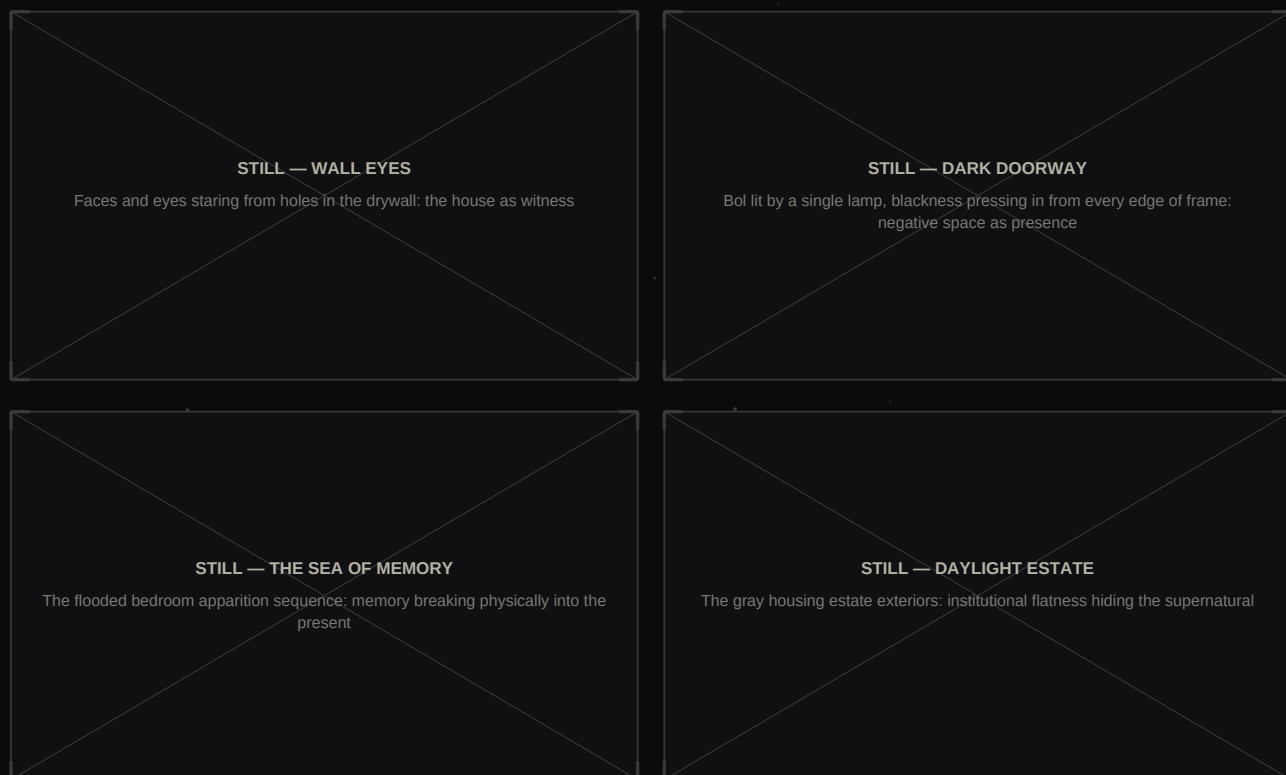
*Our equivalent: hymns scoring menace; the fluorescent basement as expressionist stage.*

# HIS HOUSE

2020 · DIR. REMI WEEKES

## WHAT WE'RE BORROWING

Grief horror inside domestic walls — the haunting as unpaid debt, apparitions living in the dark negative space of an ordinary home.



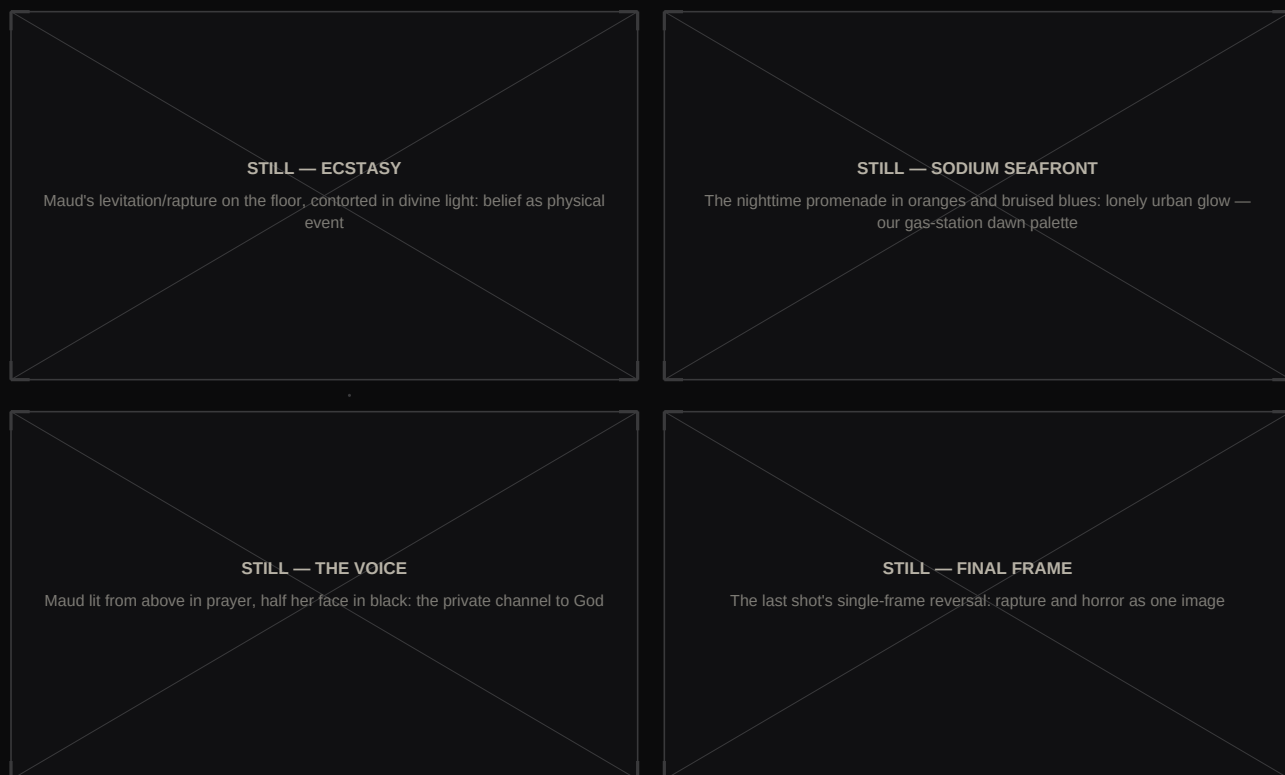
*Our equivalent: Jacob's multiplying reflections; the Sons' heads over the fence — the ordinary frame with too many eyes in it.*

# SAINT MAUD

2019 · DIR. ROSE GLASS

## WHAT WE'RE BORROWING

Faith as body horror — devotion filmed like possession, ecstasy and damage indistinguishable. Intimate, subjective, sickly beautiful.



*Our equivalent: Mary Ann's rituals shot with the sincerity of worship — because to her, they are..*

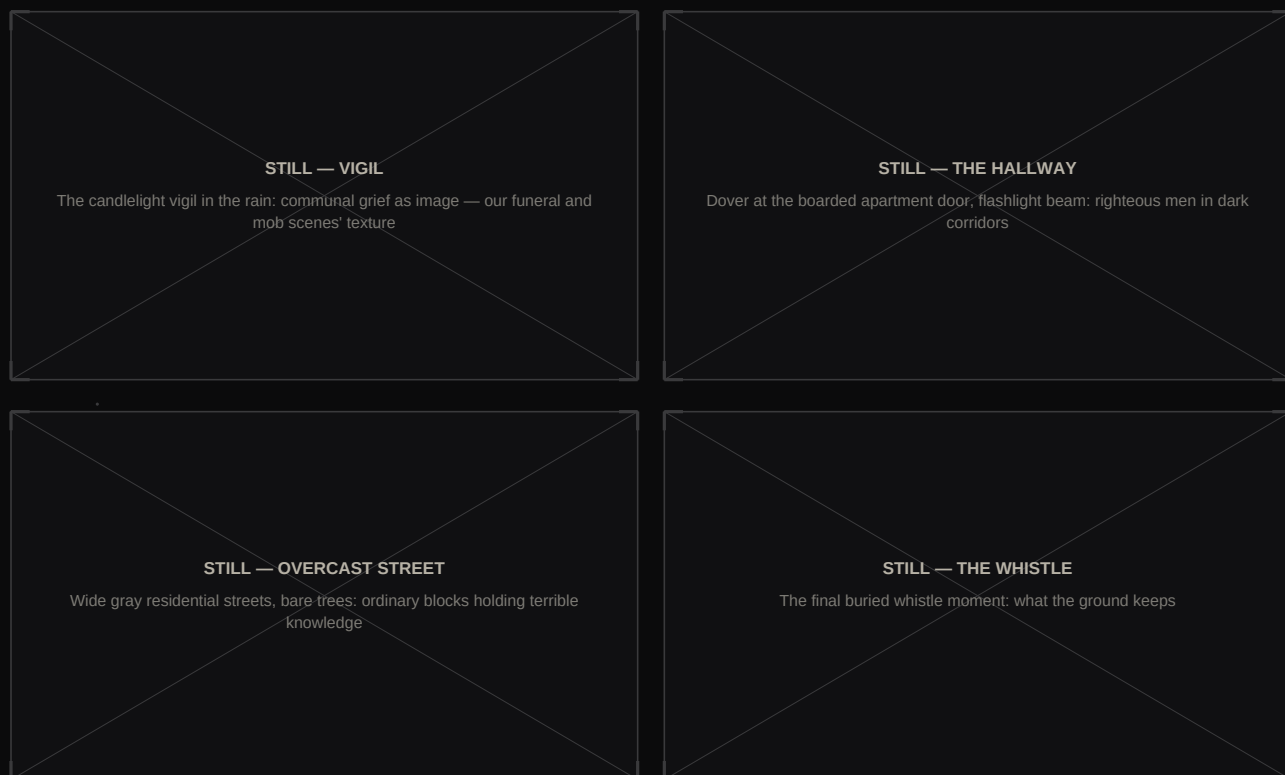


# PRISONERS

2013 · DIR. DENIS VILLENEUVE

## WHAT WE'RE BORROWING

Moral-weight thriller — rain-gray suburbia, vigilante grief, the cost of doing the unforgivable for love. Deakins' overcast realism grounds our daylight scenes.



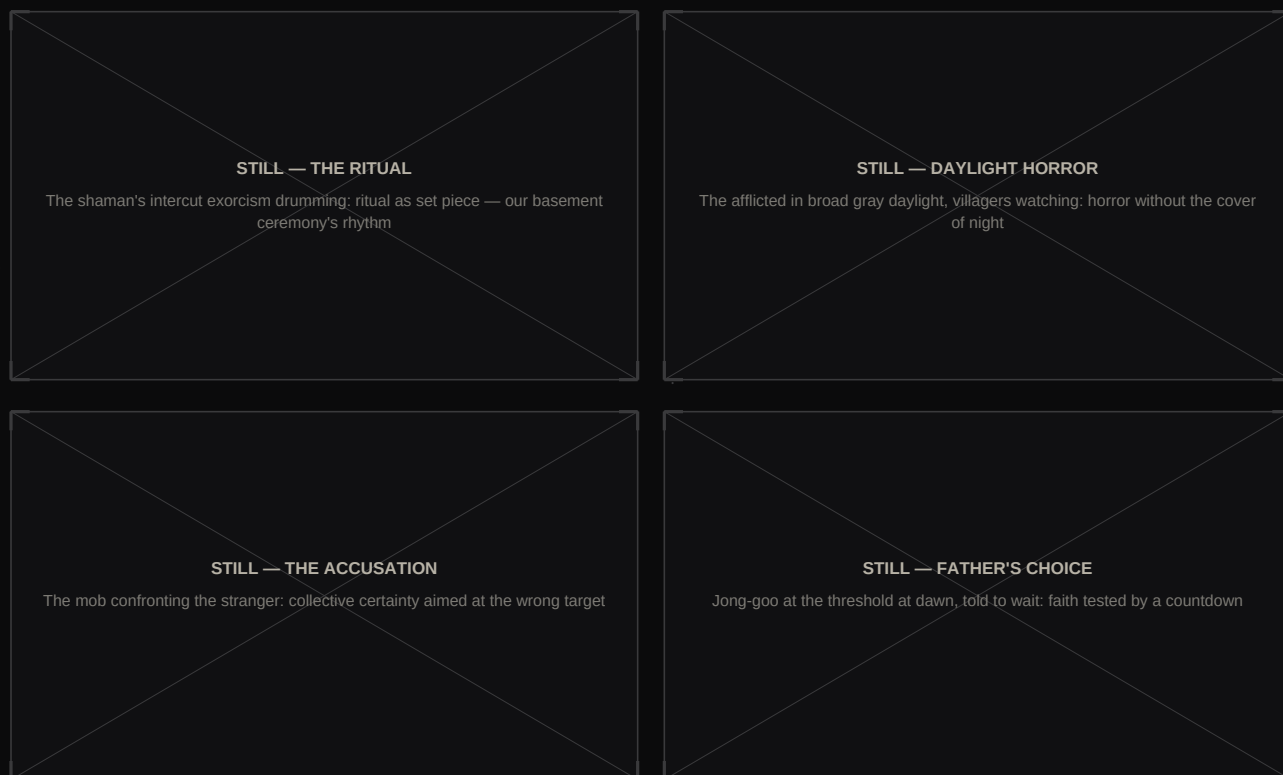
*Our equivalent: Mariah is our Keller Dover — grief that picks up a weapon and calls it justice.*

# THE WAILING

2016 · DIR. NA HONG-JIN

## WHAT WE'RE BORROWING

Village-scale dread — a whole community infected by suspicion, ritual sequences shot like combat, and the agony of not knowing who to trust until it's too late.



*Our equivalent: Daniel on his knees before the crowd — the wrong man, convincingly accused.*

# VISUAL LANGUAGE

**ACID GREEN**

the field · visions · basement

**DEEP CRIMSON**

cloth · blood · devotion

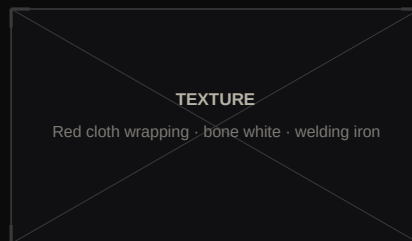
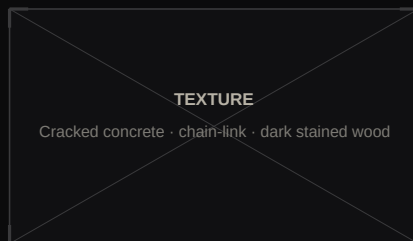
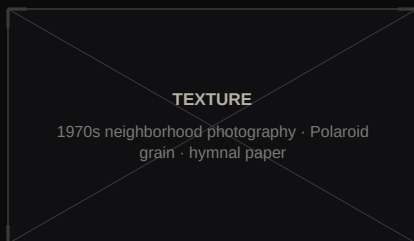
**BONE**

spines · hymnals · chalk

**GOLD HOUR**

porches · memory · choir

Lighting philosophy: the film owns exactly two light sources emotionally — the warm, honest light of daytime community (sun on porches, church windows, gold-hour funerals) and the sickly artificial light of the hidden world (gas-station fluorescents, the basement's acid green). Every scene declares its allegiance. When green leaks into a warm scene, something is wrong.



# SIGNATURE FRAMES

*Twelve images the film is built around — storyboard / concept-art slots.*

# ACT ONE — THE WARM WORLD

## FRAME 01 — THE FROZEN NOTE

Bobby mid-song on the funeral projector — joy paused above his own casket, mourners silhouetted below

## FRAME 02 — GOLD-HOUR GRIEF

The graveyard: a black wave of mourners crossing sunlit grass, tears catching the light

## FRAME 03 — HEADS OVER THE FENCE

Jacob's backyard at sunrise — three capped silhouettes watching, faces swallowed by shadow

## FRAME 04 — GAS STATION DAWN

Sterile white fluorescence carving out of blue-sepia dawn; a motionless capped man at the door

## ACT TWO — THE TURN

### FRAME 05 — THE TREELINE

The Sons standing at the graveyard's edge, perfectly still, as gunfire scatters the crowd

### FRAME 06 — THE VISION

Touch-triggered flash: a hulking chained figure seated against a wall of acid green light

### FRAME 07 — THE REFLECTIONS

Jacob's face multiplying in a living-room window — screaming versions of himself converging into an iron mask

### FRAME 08 — THE MOB

Daniel on his knees in the street: Molotov firelight, phone flashlights as spotlights, Mariah's bat raised

## ACT THREE — THE GREEN WORLD

### FRAME 09 — THE CHIMES

The basement ceiling: dozens of spines half-wrapped in red cloth, knocking together like hollow wind chimes

### FRAME 10 — THOMAS UNMASKED

Lamplight on the scarred face — one empty socket, one light-brown eye reflecting his mother

### FRAME 11 — THE RITUAL

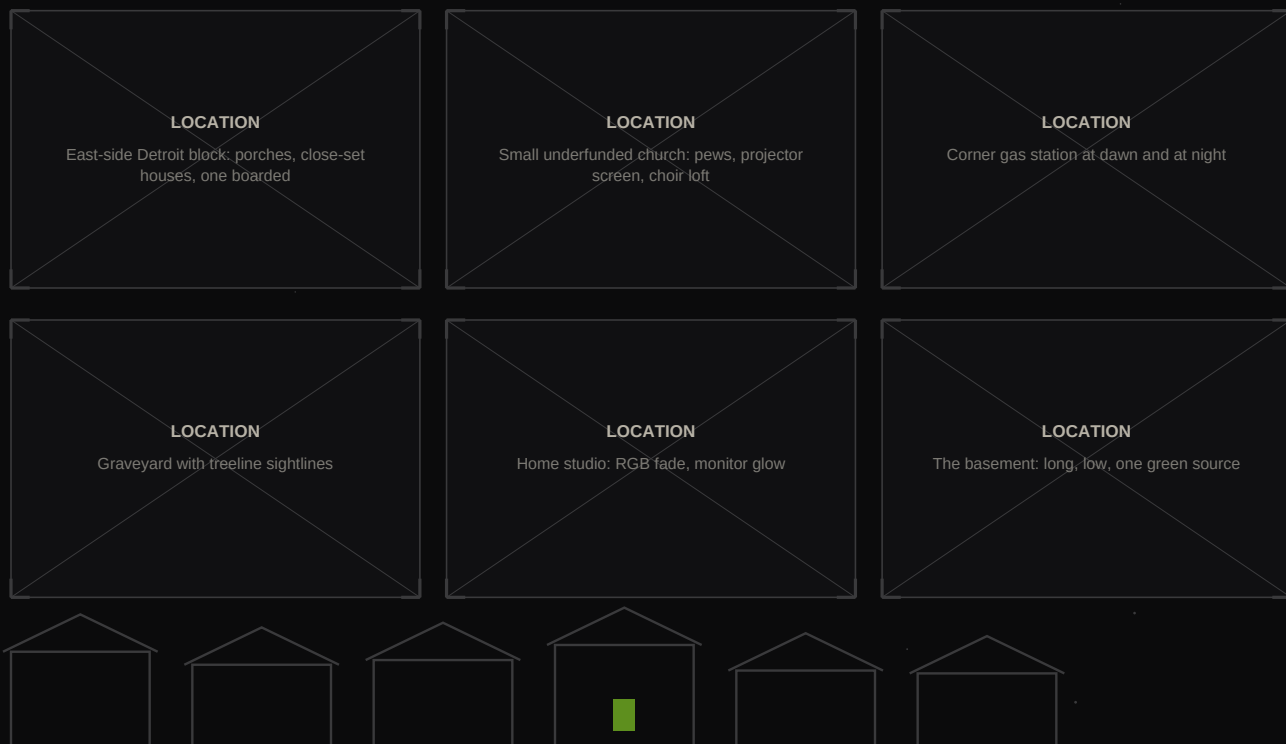
Ruth restrained on the table, dirt falling from Mary Ann's spread hands, green light behind

### FRAME 12 — THE WALK OUT

Daniel and Ruth exiting the broken door at night as the neighborhood gathers — survivors as spectacle

# WORLD & ATMOSPHERE

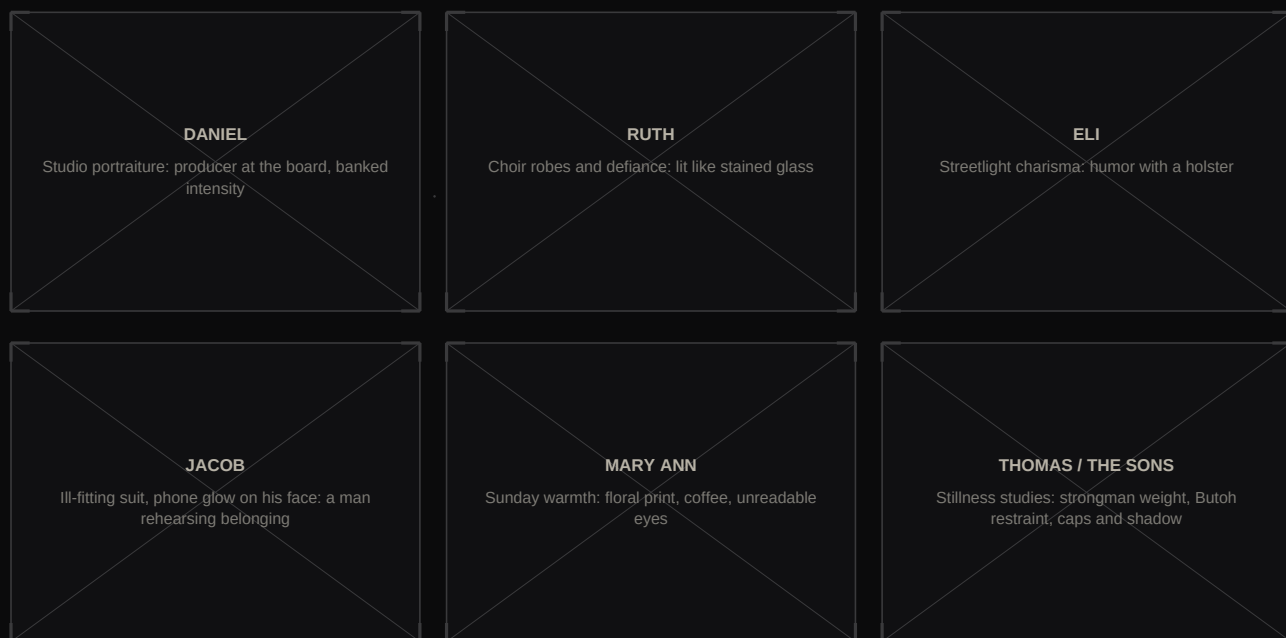
Location photography slots — shoot these as scouting Polaroids and lay them in as a grid. The world pages should feel like evidence, not real estate.



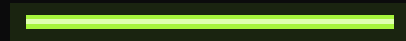


# CHARACTER MOODS

*Archetype imagery — not casting suggestions.*



# SOUND & MUSIC



- Gospel is the film's conscience. 808s are its pulse. The score lives in the argument between them.
- Choir hums open and close the film; hymns bleed under scenes of menace (Night of the Hunter's trick).
- Daniel's studio sessions let diegetic hip-hop narrate the plot — gunshot sound-design inside the beat triggers his flashbacks.
- The basement has its own instrument: chain percussion and the hollow knock of bone chimes, tuned and scored.
- Silence is reserved for two moments only. Protect them.

