

THE RINGMASTER

Written by

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EST. SHOT OF LARGE CIRCUS TENT - NIGHT

Families line up at the box office. Vendors sell cotton candy, popcorn and soda.

SUPERIMPOSE: Las Vegas, 1992

INT. LARGE CIRCUS TENT - NIGHT

An OLDER RINGMASTER, 40's, in moustache and top hat, addresses the crowd.

IN THE STANDS

A five-year-old boy, YOUNG RODNEY MARKS, mouths the words along with the ringmaster.

OLDER RINGMASTER

Ladies and gentlemen, the next act might make your eyes pop out of your heads. He is the extraordinary knife thrower, Mr. Sharp. And the pretty little lady on the wheel of death is his assistant, Catherine.

KNIFE THROWER, 40's, takes a bow. CATHERINE MARKS, 30's, smiles as she clings to the wheel.

YOUNG RODNEY MARKS

Yeah Mommy.

THE WHEEL OF DEATH

A knife, flying through the air, lands on the large, spinning wheel beside Catherine's grinning face. The audience stands and applauds. The knife thrower takes a bow. SMILES THE CLOWN (AKA Arnold Marks), 30's, urges the audience on. A MAN ON STILTS, breathing FIRE, crosses the stage.

Young Rodney observes Smiles, juggling colored balls. Smiles grabs a bowling pin from a trunk. He flings it into the air. He pulls a bouquet of flowers out of his sleeve. Smiles hands a flower to a pretty lady in the stands and lollipops to some four-year old boys. Smiles winks at young Rodney. Rodney grimaces.

INT. SMALL TENT - NIGHT

Smiles, sits in a chair surrounded by the same young boys from the stands, kneeling.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Now, there's more candy after you do something for me. Ready for some fun and games?

The impressionable boys innocently nod. Smiles unhooks his belt. SLICE, a dwarf, early 30s, pops his head in.

SLICE

Arnold, what are you doing?

SMILES THE CLOWN

It's Smiles. And I'm just showing the boys some tricks for treats.

A shadowy figure halts beside Slice outside the tent. Slice stops the person from getting closer. He gestures for Smiles to buckle up his pants. Smiles does.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Sorry boys. It must be too late for tricks.

The boys run out of the tent.

SLICE

You're sick.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Don't ever interrupt me again!

MOMENTS LATER

SMALL TENT

Catherine shares a book with Rodney. Smiles enters.

CATHERINE MARKS

Arnold, what were you doing with those boys after the show?

SMILES THE CLOWN

You and your intuition. You always think something's wrong.

Smiles sits by a sink. He notices a mini-carousel on the edge of the mirror. He picks it up, studies it and sets it down. He washes his clown make-up off.

CATHERINE MARKS

If I ever catch you doing anything weird with our Rodney I'll...

Smiles, face smeared, lunges at her.

SMILES THE CLOWN

What? You'll what, Catherine? What are you going to do?

Catherine cries. The mini-carousel turns on its own. Smiles places it in front of young Rodney and briskly walks out. Rodney, crying, watches the little carousel spin and make music. A RED LIGHT turns on. Rodney covers his ears then pushes the carousel away.

INT. SMALL TENT - NIGHT

Smiles applies clown make-up. Rodney plays with the mimi-carousel. Catherine sits in front of her own mirror, applying make-up. Shadows appear outside the tent. Catherine responds to the lingering people outside.

Slice, the Ringmaster and a large, bald, shirtless, STRONG MAN, 6'9 enter, yelling. Smiles approaches them. Slice points at him. Strong Man grabs Smiles. Catherine and Smiles exchange words. She runs to Rodney and holds him tightly.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) The Ringmaster locks Smiles inside a large cage.
- B) Catherine cuddles with Rodney in bed.
- C) Smiles pulls a pick from behind his ear. He picks the lock and escapes.
- D) Catherine runs her hand by an empty area of the bed. She bolts up.

CATHERINE MARKS

RODNEY!

- E) Smiles shuts the passenger door of a car. He hops into the driver seat. A tear rolls down Rodney's cheek.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Buckle up, Rodney. It's going to be a bumpy ride.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Smiles, AKA Arnold Marks, in regular non-clown clothes, without make-up, approaches the entrance, holding young Rodney's hands, now 7, carrying a comic book.

SUPERIMPOSE: 2 YEARS LATER

INT. CHURCH - LOBBY - DAY

Smiles enters and looks at Rodney.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Rodney, would you sit here on this bench while I go talk to the pastor? You can read your comic books.

Rodney nods and sits on the bench.

SMILES THE CLOWN

I'll just be a few minutes.

Smiles walks towards the pews. He eyes Jesus standing on a cross, sadly looking down on him.

SMILES THE CLOWN

I've come for a sign from you, God.
I've come to confess. I'm a bad clown.

Smiles looks around.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Hello? Anyone here?

Smiles looks around. Rodney, in the distance, waves to him. Smiles waves back and continues towards the side of the stage. He listens in and moves toward a back room.

EXT. PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

Smiles leans his ear against the door. There's MOANING.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

That's very good. You're doing so well.

Smiles looks down at the door knob, turns it and bursts into the room.

INT. PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

With his pants at his ankles, receiving a blow job from a young boy, PASTOR WILLIAM WARD, 30's, JUMPS. He pushes the five-year old boy away, raising his pants.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Oh, doing the Lord's work, I see.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Danny, thank you. You are excused.

The young boy hurries away.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
It's not what you think.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Really? A boy is at your crotch
with your pants around your ankles.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
What are you doing back here? Who
are you? How can I be of service?

Smiles clears his throat and hands him a business card with a
picture of himself as a clown.

SMILES THE CLOWN
I'm just a clown seeking leads for
work. I do birthday parties.

The Pastor looks over the card.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
I'll see what I can do.

Smiles lunges at him, poking the Pastor in the eye. The
pastor cuffs his eye.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Yes, you will SEE what you can do
or I'll put the word out about your
extra curricular activities.

INT. CHURCH - LOBBY - DAY

Young Rodney plays with the spinning mini-carousel. Smiles
approaches.

SMILES THE CLOWN
You really like that carousel,
don't you?

Rodney nods his head.

SMILES THE CLOWN
It's not like any other carousel.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SPORTS ARENA - CONCERT - NIGHT

A huge CAROUSEL with wooden horses turns around on a stage. BLUE AND RED LASERS shoot out from a black curtain covered stage. EDGY CIRCUS MUSIC BLARES. The curtain parts. Sitting on the edge is FIX, AKA Rodney Marks, 27, in white make-up, thick black eye shadow, black lips, dark trench coat and top hat. The crowd jumps to its feet, CHEERING.

SUPERIMPOSE: PRESENT DAY - Chicago, Illinois

FIX
Welcome Chicago. I am the
ringmaster of this dark, dark
circus. My name is Rodney Marks,
but my friends call me Fix.

LOUD ERRATIC INDUSTRIAL DRUMS wail. Fix rises, crosses the stage and picks up his guitar. Fix studies the stage floor, holding the mic. His band mates POUND OUT heavy, alternative industrial rock music. Fans go wild.

MATCH, a bearded man on stilts, breathes FIRE as he crosses the stage. Letters in lights flash above stage: DARK CIRCUS. Fix belts out a chorus.

FIX
*I'll find it. I'll find it. First I
need it. Then I'll seek it. I won't
stop until I have it. Gimmie me the
Fix! Gimmie the Fix!*

Fix's band, all wearing black, jam the solo.

SMILES THE CLOWN (V.O.)
You really like that carousel,
don't you, Rodney?

Fix kneels down and stares at the stage floor. Shakes his head, violently.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. RESIDENTIAL HOME - DAY

TEENAGE RODNEY (Fix), 17, black tee-shirt and jeans, waits in the driver seat of a beat-up van, playing guitar. He pauses and studies the large bounce house in the front yard.

Kids run around aimlessly. Rodney looks at his watch and shakes his head. He HONKS the horn. Rodney spies a red clown nose on the passenger seat. HONKS again.

TEENAGE RODNEY
Fucking clown.

Rodney gets out of the van and heads towards the front lawn. He passes parents and kids. He beelines for the front door.

INT. RESIDENTIAL HOME - CONTINUOUS

Rodney enters. Pastor Ward pauses from his conversation with parents.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Can I help you?

TEENAGE RODNEY
Looking for my father.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Who?

TEENAGE RODNEY
The clown.

CUT TO:

Rodney STORMS upstairs. At the top, he heads for a bedroom door. Rodney leans in to the door. MOANING can be heard inside.

SMILES THE CLOWN (V.O.)
You're a natural, Johnny. Nice and easy. There you go. Fun and games, Johnny Ward. That's all we do. Happy Birthday to you. Happy Birthday to me.

Rodney bursts open the door. He sees the boy, YOUNG JOHNNY WARD, 5, at Smiles' crotch while he sits on a chair. Rodney glances at the boy.

TEENAGE RODNEY
That's the Pastor's boy, isn't it?
You're such a sick asshole!

LIVING ROOM

Pastor Ward, listening, lowers his eye brows.

JOHNNY WARD'S BEDROOM

Smiles stands and raises his pants. Johnny Ward backs away.

SMILES THE CLOWN
I'm not touching you anymore.

TEENAGE RODNEY
I don't want you touching anybody!

SMILES THE CLOWN
Calm down.

TEENAGE RODNEY
Johnny, go downstairs to your
father.

Johnny bolts.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Rodney, I swear I'm getting better.

Smiles touches Rodney's shoulder.

TEENAGE RODNEY
Get the fuck off me!

Rodney pushes Smiles. Smiles falls over the chair and topples
onto the floor.

DOWNSTAIRS

The pastor holds Johnny in his arms, looking him over,
concerned.

TEENAGE RODNEY (O.S.)
I'm done with this shit! I'm
getting out of here and leaving
your filthy ass!

Pastor turns to MRS. WARD, 30's.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
(quietly)
Call the police.

Mrs. Ward nods. Various parents collect their kids. A door
SLAMS upstairs. Rodney races downstairs.

TEENAGE RODNEY
The show is over!

Rodney pauses by Pastor Ward and stares at young Johnny for a moment then storms out.

CUT TO:

JOHNNY'S BEDROOM

The Pastor bursts open the door.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Were you touching my kid?

Smiles gets in his face.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Out me and I'll out you. Who's got
more to lose, pastor?

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) Rodney, driving, throws the clown nose out the window.
- B) Rodney, riding on the 215 freeway, throws a red clown wig out the window. The van exits the 215 and passes a sign with an arrow reading: LOS ANGELES and enters the 15 freeway.
- C) Rodney walks the Sunset Strip at night in LA with a guitar on his back.
- D) Catherine Marks, 40's, applies make-up in a mirror in her small circus tent. She clutches her chest. She grabs a photo of young Rodney from the corner of the mirror.

CATHERINE MARKS
You're close, Rodney. I can feel
you, my son.

- E) Pastor lines up suitcases in the driveway.

YOUNG JOHNNY WARD
Daddy, where are we going?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Far away from here.

BACK TO CONCERT - PRESENT DAY

Fix continues staring at the stage floor. The crowd grows impatient.

MALE DARK CIRCUS FAN
Finish the song, asshole!

FEMALE DARK CIRCUS FAN
Come on, Fix.

Female Dark Circus fan FLASHES her breasts. Fix holds his head.

SMILES THE CLOWN (V.O.)
Ready for some fun and games,
Rodney?

Fix looks up, stands and paces. A flash of Smiles in costume and make-up, goes by in the crowd and disappears.

FIX
Show yourself! Where are you?

Band members shake their heads. Fix grabs a bottle of Jack Daniels, gulps and confronts the audience.

FIX
Fucking clown! Fuck you, man. Fuck everybody!

Fix flips 'the bird' at the audience. He stumbles off stage, hitting a random switch. Hundreds of various colored balloons fall from the ceiling. The band continues playing.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Stumbling, Fix JAMS his fingers into a little plastic baggy. SHOVES cocaine up his nose. COLLAPSES. Blood OOZES from his nostril. Eyes close. A bright BLUE LIGHT FILLS the alley. The BASS PLAYER enters, shielding the light with his arm.

Fix's BODY RISES UP off the pavement into a GIANT BLUE SPHERE with Tesla coil-like electric bolts shooting everywhere. The sphere vanishes as does Fix. Bass Player shakes his head.

BASS PLAYER
Fuck me.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - LOCKERS - DAY

JOHNNY WARD, now 15, walks through a sea of teens, playing a hand-held game device. CLIFF JOHNSON, 15, glides alongside him on a skateboard. Football player types, BILLY, MIKE and Billy's girlfriend, FAITH, notice Ward approaching. Billy sticks his leg out. Suddenly, Ward launches and falls to the floor. Ward's game device SLIDES a few feet away.

SUPERIMPOSE: LAS VEGAS, NV

BILLY
Have a nice fall?

Ward winces. His head bleeds a little bit.

JOHNNY WARD
What the fuck, asshole?

BILLY
Look where you're going, loser.

Mike snatches Ward's device.

JOHNNY WARD
Hey, give it back.

Ward jumps and reaches for it. Mike teases him. Faith laughs.

BILLY
Stay down faggot punk bitch!

Cliff dives at Mike, knocking him over. Billy pushes Cliff. Billy throws the game player at Ward.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE -DAY

PRINCIPAL ADAMS, 40's, chubby, shakes his head at Cliff and Ward.

CLIFF JOHNSON
But they started it.

JOHNNY WARD
Billy, Mike and Greg are never in trouble. Are they different? Special?

PRINCIPAL ADAMS
Be concerned with yourselves.

JOHNNY WARD
How do you expect me to do that with targets on my backs?

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - SUBURBAN TOWN - NIGHT

A pick-up truck parks behind a long line of cars.

INT. TRUCK - RESIDENTIAL STREET

Cliff and Ward pop a pill.

JOHNNY WARD

Lauren's texting me after going out to dinner with her parents.

CLIFF JOHNSON

These jocks should let us hang out after business.

RADIO DJ (ALICE COOPER-TYPE)

Hey all you Dark Circus fans.

Ward turns up the radio dial.

RADIO DJ (V.O.)

Lead singer, Rodney Marks, known as Fix is still missing after leaving the middle of a gig in Chicago this week. I really dug this cat. I just hope it wasn't the drugs, man. I hope Fix returns with Dark Circus for more of that dark heavy rock music.

Ward and Cliff are SHOCKED.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Holy shit!

JOHNNY WARD

Missing? How'd we miss that? I don't believe it. Fuck. Man, I hope Fix is alright. I wanna see Dark Circus so badly.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Yeah, I hope he didn't join the 27 club. He is 27, isn't he?

JOHNNY WARD

Shit.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Cliff rings the doorbell. After a moment, the door swings open. AMY, 16, blonde, drunk, BURPS, wipes her mouth.

AMY

Excuse me. Just did a keg stand.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Awesome. Hey Amy, is Greg around?

AMY
Greg?

CLIFF JOHNSON
Greg Michaels. He lives here.

AMY
(Laughs) Oh. Of course he lives here. Hold on.

She leaves the door open a crack. The boys see and hear girls laughing, holding beer cups. Amy returns and waves them in.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Cliff and Ward enter. Music BLARES. Muscle-head jocks and football types wander and dance with cute preppy girls. Two large males, in jerseys, hold another young man, upside down, doing a keg stand. Amy points to the stairs.

CUT TO:

STAIRS

GREG, stocky, kisses ALLISON, 16. Cliff clears his throat and pulls out a zip-lock bag. Ward looks on.

GREG
Pink pills for steroids?

CLIFF JOHNSON
Yep.

Cliff smiles. Cliff pulls out a smaller zip-lock full of weed and hands it to Greg.

GREG
Nice.

CLIFF JOHNSON
You just owe me for the pills. You said Ward and I could hang if everything was cool.

Greg hands five twenty dollar bills to Cliff.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

FOOTBALL PLAYERS #1 and #2 toss Cliff and Ward out the front door, CRASHING to the ground. The front door shuts.

CLIFF JOHNSON
 Mother fuckers! I can sell them
 drugs, but we can't hang.

Ward's phone CHIMES. He retrieves it.

TEXT - Johnny, come over. Let's party!

Ward smiles and shares it with Cliff. Cliff gestures with fist and mouth, 'blow job.'

CLIFF JOHNSON
 I'll drop you off, bro. At least
 one of us is getting some.

INT. LAUREN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

LAUREN, 15, half-naked, places her hand on Ward's bare-chest.

JOHNNY WARD
 I didn't know you did spoken word.

LAUREN
 I'm sick of all those prima donna
 bitches running their lip. It
 motivated me.

JOHNNY WARD
 Let's hear it again.

LAUREN
 Does that turn you on?

Ward nods his head.

LAUREN
*Bullies.(beat) So all-knowing and
 tough. So cruel and unforgiving.
 You put me down to build yourself
 up. Act out to make yourself look
 cool. Look down on me like I'm the
 fool. Don't push your home schooled
 baggage on me. We're all in this
 together, can't you see?*

Ward squirms with excitement.

LAUREN

Bad boys, mean girls. Survival of the fittest. Don't strike me down. What the hell is with this? Don't like the way I walk, Don't like the way I talk. Who made you the boss? Get lost. Get it? Keep your hands off of my shit. What the hell did I do to you? What the hell did I do to you? What the hell did I do to you? Bullies.

Lauren moves closer. Ward looks around nervously.

LAUREN

Breathe, Ward. Your heart is racing.

Ward breathes in.

LAUREN

Let it out.

Ward exhales.

LAUREN

Good. Now take off your jeans.

Ward gawks at Lauren taking off her bra.

MOMENTS LATER

A sheet covers their naked bodies as they passionately kiss.

LAUREN

Wow, you're hard. You ready for some fun and games?

Ward lowers his eye brows.

SMILES THE CLOWN (V.O.)

Ready for some fun and games?

Lauren uncovers the sheet. Ward quickly grabs a stuffed unicorn and places it over his crotch.

LAUREN

That's not the pointy thing I had in mind. I know you're nervous. It's okay.

JOHNNY WARD

It's just that I'm a little weirded out right now, Lauren.

LAUREN
You don't want to do it?

JOHNNY WARD
I'm sorry.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. PARK - BOUNCE HOUSE - DAY

Young Ward, 5, crying, holds his palms up against the wall. His father, Pastor Ward, 30's, approaches him from the outside.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Don't cry, Johnny. All your friends are arriving. You're going to have the best birthday ever. Look, Smiles the Clown is here.

Ward shakes his head. Young Smiles the Clown, early 40s, hands Ward a red balloon. Ward winces from the clown's breath.

SMILES THE CLOWN
What are you crying about? Come on. Ready for some fun and games?

MOMENTS LATER

Ward wipes away his tears and joins them. His sister, JENNY, age 8, runs around with a bunch of colored balloons. Ward joins other 5 year old boys and girls, jumping in the bounce house.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

MATCH-CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE BAR AND BILLIARDS ROCK CLUB - NIGHT

Teenagers sporting dark, flannel dress shirts, BOUNCE feverishly to BLARING heavy rock music. A sign on a post reads: ALL AGES SHOW. Ward roams away from the mosh pit. Cliff approaches, carrying two glasses of punch.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Saw you come in and grabbed some drinks. Get lucky?

JOHNNY WARD
Not exactly.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Oh, man. That sucks. This punch
needs a little kick.

Cliff drops a few pills in Ward's drink.

JOHNNY WARD
I need something. Thanks for
meeting me.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Women, what are you gonna' do,
right? Bottoms up.

They clink glasses and drink up.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Listen, we need to hit the jocks
good. They can't keep fucking with
us.

JOHNNY WARD
Any ideas?

Cliff gazes into his drink as he swirls it around.

CLIFF JOHNSON
I got somethin' cookin.'

A song interrupts their thoughts. Their faces LIGHT UP.

JOHNNY WARD AND CLIFF JOHNSON
Dark Circus!
(singing)
*I'll find it. I'll find it. First I
need it. Then I'll seek it. I won't
stop until I have it. Gimmie me the
Fix! Gimmie the Fix!*

The boys play pretend guitar.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - MEN'S GYM LOCKER ROOM - DAY

A large plate of brownies lays on a bench with a note. Billy,
Mike and Greg swarm the plate. Mike picks up the sticky-note.

MIKE
A little sugar for our big, strong
boys. Go team! Love, the Girls.

GREG
 Maybe we should wait until after
 practice.

MIKE
 They won't be fresh.

Mike bites into a brownie. Greg and Billy grab brownies.

BILLY
 Dig in, boys.

More teammates feast on the brownies.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

At the far end, a quarterback practices offensive drills with an offensive line and an assistant coach, wearing baseball cap. COACH BINDS, 40's, broad-shouldered, has defensive players lined up, running in place.

COACH BINDS
 Knees bent. Keep chin in line with
 knees. Lower hips. Turn left.
 Right.

A fart escapes from the group. Chuckles follow.

COACH BINDS
 Left. Right.

Another fart.

COACH BINDS
 You guys are looking sluggish. Now,
 drop and give me 20 squat thrusts.

Players drop. Coach Binds blows a whistle. The players do a squat thrust. He blows the whistle again. A player from the offensive group runs to Coach, holding his ass cheeks tightly.

RECEIVER
 Coach, permission to go take a
 dump?

Coach nods.

COACH BINDS
 From now on take care of business
 before practice.

More offensive players approach Coach.

RECEIVER #2

Coach, permission to go to the
bathroom?

Coach shrugs. The defensive players stop squatting.

MIKE

Coach, I think we had some bad
brownies.

COACH BINDS

Go! Go! Go!

All the players run to the locker room, clenching their
butts.

GREG

It's a fucking prank!

BILLY

I'm going to kill somebody!

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - NEAR FIELD - DAY

Cliff and Ward, wearing sunglasses, laugh hysterically by
Cliff's truck. Billy, Greg, Mike spy Cliff and Ward.

BILLY

Hey! You little pricks. I'm going
to rip you apart!

Cliff and Ward hop into Cliff's truck. Cliff starts the
engine. Tires spin. Cliff speeds out of the parking lot.
Billy and his teammates run after them.

EXT. CLIFF'S FATHER'S HOME - DAY

Billy slows the SUV down, approaching the old creepy unkept
home. Tall grass and weeds cover the front lawn. Billy rolls
down the window.

BILLY

Hey, Cliff! You in there?

A tall man with unkept hair, MR. JOHNSON, Cliff's father,
walks out briskly, brandishing a shotgun. He points it at
Billy. He spits tobacco out the side of his mouth. Billy's
eyes pop out. MR. JOHNSON, 40's, tall, unkept hair, shoots a
warning shot.

MR. JOHNSON

Get the fuck out of here!

Billy floors it.

MOMENTS LATER

Cliff pulls into the driveway, parks and exits the truck. Mr. Johnson approaches, flicking a lit cigarette at him. Cliff winces.

MR. JOHNSON

What did you do this time you stupid son of a bitch?

CLIFF JOHNSON

Nothing.

Mr. Johnson smacks Cliff's face.

MR. JOHNSON

Get the fuck inside!

INT. WARD RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Pastor stares at Johnny Ward across the dining table. Jenny and MRS. WARD take their seats. Johnny Ward's head rests over his bowl of soup. They hold hands.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Take my hand, Johnny.

The Pastor, Mrs. Ward and Jenny close their eyes. Johnny Ward reluctantly takes his father's hand and stares at him.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

We come to thee again thanking thee for this day and the many blessings thou hast bestowed upon us. We thank you for this food and ask that you bless it to the use of our bodies and forgive us for when we have failed thee. In Jesus' name, Amen.

MRS. WARD AND JENNY WARD

Amen.

Ward retrieves a carrot out of his soup and places it in Jenny's soup bowl.

MRS. WARD

Johnny, don't use your fingers.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Why are you not eating your
carrots?

Johnny Ward's head rests above his soup.

JENNY WARD
He hates carrots.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Why can't Johnny answer me? You've
got a voice don't you? Answer me!

The Pastor pounds his fist onto the table. Spoons jingle.
Soup spills from everyone's bowls.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
You made your voice loud and clear
earlier today. What in Jesus' name
were you thinking?

Johnny Ward stands.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Where do you think you're going?

JOHNNY WARD
To my fucking room.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Language, Johnny.

INT. WARD RESIDENCE - WARD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ward sits up on his bed, holding his guitar. Mrs. Ward sits
by his side.

MRS. WARD
Johnny, this has got to stop. I
know the kids can be harsh. Look
the other way.

JOHNNY WARD
I know.

MRS. WARD
Your father and I agree that you
need to stay away from Cliff.

JOHNNY WARD
He's my only friend.

MRS. WARD

Friends come and go. Cliff is trouble. I think he's bipolar. Look at me.

Ward makes eye contact. Mrs. Ward studies his eyes. Then moves her fingers back and forth.

MRS. WARD

Follow my fingers. Do it.

Ward's eyes follow his mother's fingers.

MRS. WARD

Whatever crap you kids are on is messing you up. Don't you let me catch you high.

EXT. PRISON - NIGHT

A van pulls up to the entrance. The DRIVER parks. A FEMALE GUARD receives a package from the driver.

SUPERIMPOSE: Illinois State Prison

INT. PRISON - PRISON CELL - CONTINUOUS

Female Guard brings package to Smiles' cell.

FEMALE GUARD

Hey sugar, I got you that special package. I hope you appreciate what I did for you.

Smiles, 50, heavier, prison uniform, without make-up, approaches the bars.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Thank you, my sweetie.

She unlocks and opens the door with a key and slides the package inside the cell.

MOMENTS LATER

Smiles the Clown, now in CLOWN COSTUME and MAKE-UP, sits in his cell. There's a bleeding slash on his arm. Blood drips from his finger, holding a razor blade. Beside the opened package is a GLOWING RED miniature carousel. CIRCUS MUSIC fills the air.

SMILES THE CLOWN

The harm I did on the outside
 doesn't compare to the harm done to
 me inside these walls. It's time to
 shed this mortal skin and enter the
 dark world, my master. I want to
 bring you the soul of a Pastor. But
 first I seek immediate revenge to
 the ones that had their way with
 me.

A GIANT RED SPHERE OF ELECTRICITY rises from below the cell
 floor like a Tesla coil. Smiles steps inside the electrifying
 sphere and raises his arms, brandishing a cord.

SMILES THE CLOWN

You chose me by placing this
 carousel in my circus tent all
 those years ago.

Flames of hell dance inside his beady eyes.

SMILES THE CLOWN

I'm ready now to take souls for
 you, master Satan. Give me the
 power.

His lips utter his final mortal words.

SMILES THE CLOWN

I'm coming for you, Pastor Ward.
 I'm coming for all of you. Ready
 for some fun and games?

Smiles stands on the chair. Wraps a cord around a pipe and
 his head. He kicks the chair, chokes and dangles.

MOMENTS LATER

The red electrifying sphere is gone. All that remains is the
 creaking sound of the rope with a dead Smiles dangling from
 it. A red dog balloon animal with its leg up hunches by a
 wall. It appears as if the balloon dog peed there. A bloody
 inscription on the wall reads: Ready for fun and games?

INT. PRISON - SHOWERS - NIGHT

TRADITIONAL CIRCUS MUSIC BLARES. Men, showering, wildly look
 around. Loud laughter resonates everywhere. Smiles suddenly
 appears, brandishing a cane. A large BLACK MALE INMATE lowers
 his brow.

SMILES THE CLOWN
 Hey boys. It's just me and my
 little cane.

BLACK MALE INMATE
 Smiles? What's with the fuckin'
 clown suit?

A LARGE, muscular HISPANIC MALE INMATE moves forward.

HISPANIC MALE INMATE
 I'll give you something to smile
 about.

Large Black Male Inmate lunges. Smiles lifts his cane. A gadget at the end opens up into a sharp blade. Smiles cuts the black man's throat. Large Hispanic Man charges. Smiles slices open his chest. Stabs him in the eye. Other prisoners run away.

SMILES THE CLOWN
 Love this power! Ready for more fun
 and games, my pretties?

INT. PRISON HALL

Prison guards run around frantically searching.

OUTSIDE SMILES' CELL

PRISON GUARD #1 grabs PRISON GUARD #2.

PRISON GUARD #1
 What do you know?

PRISON GUARD #2
 Arnold Marks. Child molester.
 Escaped and slaughtered eight
 prisoners in the showers dressed as
 a clown.

PRISON GUARD #1
 Yeah. Smiles the Clown.

PRISON GUARD #2
 But the best part is he's hanging
 right here.

He moves out of the way to show Smiles hanging. Blood dribbles out of Prison Guard #1's mouth. He falls to the ground. Smiles pulls his cane out of the man's back. Prison Guard #2 nervously glances at the hanging clown.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Always have an extra clown suit.
Clowning can be a messy business.

Prison Guard #2 raises his gun. Smiles lunges at him. Guard #2 FIRES at Smiles' chest. BAM! BAM! BAM! Smiles yawns.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Let's play pin the tail on the
prison guard.

Smiles throws his cane like a spear. The blade stabs the guard in the throat.

EXT. PRISON - NIGHT

Smiles and the Female Guard approach a prison transport van.

FEMALE GUARD

Hey Arnold. It looks like blood on
your suit. You okay?

SMILES THE CLOWN

Never mind that. Kiss me.

She smiles. He smiles. Their lips touch. Smiles presses her against the van and the cane against her neck. Her eyes BULGE. She falls to the ground. Smiles blows her motionless body a kiss.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Cliff, sporting a black eye, and Ward sit facing Principle Adams. Cliff places his skateboard in his lap.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

Why isn't that skateboard in your
locker?

Cliff displays his middle finger.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS

Cliff, I'm sick of your behavior.

CLIFF JOHNSON

I'm sick of your bullshit.

Cliff rises.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS
Sit down! I know you boys were
involved with that prank on the
football team.

CLIFF JOHNSON
What prank?

PRINCIPAL ADAMS
You know damn well what prank.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Show me the proof.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS
You know what? You're officially
expelled!

CLIFF JOHNSON
What?

JOHNNY WARD
You can't do that.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS
I know you're selling drugs on
school grounds. I'm sick of your
antics. I don't wanna see your face
at this school ever again.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Fuck you, prick!

Cliff displays his middle finger, hops on his skateboard and
glides out of the office.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS
And, Johnny Ward, you're suspended
the rest of the week!

INT. WARD RESIDENCE - WARD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ward tosses and turns in bed.

DREAM SEQUENCE

Quick flashes race by:

IN COURTROOM

Pastor Ward, sitting on the bench answers questions posed by
a PROSECUTOR.

ON TV SET

A NEWS BROADCASTER reports as an image of Pastor William Ward appears on-screen.

NEWS BROADCASTER

In Chicago today Pastor William Ward was found not guilty of child molestation in all 4 claims. New claims point to Smiles the Clown AKA Arnold Marks as the guilty party. Dressed as a clown, Marks took advantage of kids at birthday parties.

EXT. COURT ROOM - DAY

Pastor Ward walks beside his wife. Protestors shout at him.

SUPERIMPOSE: Chicago, Illinois

PROTESTOR #1

Child molester!

CUT TO:

EXT. WARD RESIDENCE - FRONT LAWN

Smiles JUMPS in view!

SMILES THE CLOWN

Who's a child molester?

Smiles laughs LOUDLY.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

BACK TO WARD'S BEDROOM

Ward BOLTS up and lets out a large breath.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Catherine Marks, now 50, weak, sits behind a table covered with tarot reading cards. She receives money from a customer. The customer leaves, shutting the door. Catherine closes her eyes.

Superimpose: Los Angeles, CA

CATHERINE MARKS

Rodney, I know you're out there.
You've passed to the other side,
but you still have a calling.

Fix materializes and stands before her.

FIX

Mother, how do you know such
things? How do you know what's
happening to me?

She points to her mind.

CATHERINE MARKS

Dodging knives wasn't the only gift
I had. I could read other people,
but I could not foresee my own
future. Your father...

FIX

I know. He's escaped.

CATHERINE MARKS

He's different. Evil. He's going
after Pastor Ward and his family.
Stop him. Save the boy.

FIX

You look tired, mother.

CATHERINE MARKS

My son. I wish I could have saved
you.

FIX

I wish I spent more time with you.

CATHERINE MARKS

You were full of rage.

FIX

I will stop him. Rest mother.

INT. CHURCH - CONFESSIONAL BOOTH - DAY

Pastor Ward waits as a churchgoer enters.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Is someone there?

SMILES THE CLOWN
Ready for some fun and games,
pastor?

The pastor makes the sign of the cross.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Arnold?

SMILES THE CLOWN
I prefer Smiles. Miss me?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Is this some kind of sick joke?
Arnold Marks is in prison.

SMILES THE CLOWN
No prison can hold me.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
You escaped?

SMILES THE CLOWN
You left me in Vegas. Moved and
took my sweet Johnny with you to
Chicago. I followed you there. Now
that I'm out, I'm coming for you
again.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
I'm always trying to get away from
you. What do you want?

SMILES THE CLOWN
I want your soul, Pastor.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
What?

SMILES THE CLOWN
I've done both my time and yours in
prison. You'll pay by giving me
your soul.

Smiles pulls a white handkerchief with handwriting on it and
hands it through the bars.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Some of the best contracts have
been written on handkerchiefs.

The Pastor pulls the handkerchief closer. It's attached to
another handkerchief...and another. He keeps pulling.

SMILES THE CLOWN

And the souls of your family. You
co-sign for Anne, Jenny and Johnny.
How is my sweet Johnny?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Get out of here!

SMILES THE CLOWN

Sign away your soul or I'll take
your life. I'll give you a little
time to think on it. I had plenty
of thinking time in prison.

Smiles pushes a glowing sheet of paper through a small
crevice in the window. The Pastor unfolds and looks at it.

KNOCK! KNOCK! The pastor bolts from the booth and draws back
the red curtain. It's empty except for a red balloon. A YOUNG
CHURCH BOY, 8, looks up at him.

YOUNG CHURCH BOY

Are you okay, Pastor Ward?

Pastor Ward shoves the contract into his shirt pocket.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

God have mercy on me.

EXT. CHURCH - SUBURBAN TOWN - CONTINUOUS

Darkness engulfs the skies as the fog closes in around the
church. Churchgoers gather by the entrance. The Pastor chats
with Coach Binds and his eleven year-old son.

COACH BINDS

Looks like we have a quick change
in the weather. Perhaps a storm is
coming.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

A storm.

COACH BINDS

My boy, Michael, is going to be the
best linebacker.

The Pastor smiles, palms Michael's shoulder and moves closer.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Well, I'm sure Michael will grow up
to be big and strong. He's already
got broad shoulders.

The Pastor gazes at Michael.

SMILES THE CLOWN (O.S.)
 (mimicking)
 He's already got broad shoulders.

The pastor whips his head around.

COACH BINDS
 Are you okay, Pastor Ward?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
 Yes, I'm fine.

Billy shows up and greets Faith and Coach. Billy drops his zip lock bag of pink pills. He bends down, picks them up and puts them away. Coach notices, but dismisses it.

INT. CHURCH - SUBURBAN TOWN - CONTINUOUS

The Pastor addresses churchgoers from behind a podium. His eyes meet Mrs. Ward's eyes in the front row.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
 Why is it a sin to misuse the Lord's name? You are not only sinning, but you're not a Good Catholic if you're using the good Lord's name in vain.

Smiles, in clown costume and make-up, appears out of view from the side of the stage behind a curtain.

SMILES THE CLOWN
 Fuck all that, man. Ha ha ha ha.

The Pastor, startled, sees Smiles and shakes his head. Smiles gyrates wildly.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
 The Lord who watches over you, protects you and molds the goodness in you. You can't bite the hand that feeds you.

SMILES THE CLOWN (O.S.)
 (Louder)
 Goodness? HA! That's a laugh.

INT. TRUCK (MOVING) - BACK - DAY

A two-headed striped Siamese cat sitting inside a cage chomps down on a large hand. The large hand smacks the strange creature. TRASH, an ugly, fat, boyish looking guy, 30s, sporting a red baseball cap and white and brown striped shirt, waves his hand at the cat.

TRASH

Bad kitty.

Trash feeds a live mouse to the other head of the cat. Trash then reaches into a glass tank and grabs the last mouse. He raises it into the air and drops it into his own mouth.

INT. TRUCK (MOVING) - FRONT - CONTINUOUS

Slice, the dwarf from earlier, in the passenger seat, peels an apple with his hand made of sharp knives. Behind the wheel is Fix, wearing a black top hat and trench coat. The sun ducks behind a dark cloud. A fog rolls in. A black painted truck, branded by the words 'Dark Circus' and an angry roaring lion, cruises along the route.

INT. CHURCH - SUBURBAN TOWN - CONTINUOUS

The Pastor glances to the side of the stage. Smiles has vanished. Pastor Ward tightly grips the sides of the podium.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

I want to talk about another word.
A word so powerful it changes
lives. It can change your lives.
Redemption.

The Pastor's face turns white. He gives the sign of the cross. Smiles strolls down the center isle, pausing to gaze at churchgoers, casually swinging his cane.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Liar, liar. Pants on fire. Oh,
don't worry. They can't see or hear
me unless I want them to.
Redemption? Really, Bill?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

No, get out of my church.

Churchgoers gasp. Ward's sister, Jenny, turns to her mother.

MRS. WARD

Something's wrong.

SMILES THE CLOWN
 You're lying to these fine
 churchgoing people.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
 Please leave my church.

SMILES THE CLOWN
 Like my cane? I used to need it
 after the prisoners had their way
 with me.

Smiles leans into an elderly couple.

SMILES THE CLOWN
 They don't take kindly to sex
 offenders. But I don't need the
 cane. I just hold onto it as a
 reminder.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Blue lightening STRIKES in the distance. Fix's Dark Circus
 truck stops in front of the church. A much larger truck pulls
 up behind it.

INT. CHURCH - SUBURBAN TOWN - DAY

The Pastor snaps out of it.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
 Please folks. I'm not well.

The Pastor looks towards the entrance of the church. Loud
 CREEPY CIRCUS MUSIC BLARES outside.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
 What the devil is all that racket?

Bright colors FLASH outside the window. Churchgoers stand and
 head for the exit, passing Smiles.

SMILES THE CLOWN
 Who's stealing my thunder?

MOMENTS LATER - CONTINUOUS

Church doors swing open. Parents' and children's eyes light
 up. Freaks roam around. Match, a man in a long beard on
 stilts, blows fire from a stick he places to his lips. He
 walks by cages where strange animals roar and hiss. Fireworks
 light up the cloudy sky.

Trash and other freaks hand out flyers. Flyers are stuck to a metal spike off one of Slice's finger knives as he approaches children. Faith's friends, ALLISON and Amy, look on. Alison reluctantly snatches a flyer.

ALLISON
Oh, cool. A circus.

AMY
That's Dark Circus! Oh, my God! Are they playing in town?

Teenage Boy #1 reaches out for a flyer.

TEENAGE BOY #1
Sweet fingers, Scissorhands.

The music stops. Mrs. Ward exits the church with Jenny.

MRS. WARD
What in the world?

The Pastor follows. Smiles stands beside him. All the churchgoers gather by the door in awe of the spectacle.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
What's the meaning of this? Who are you people?

Fix strolls around the truck's corner with a BULL HORN. Fix stares down his father, Smiles. Smiles blows him a kiss.

SMILES THE CLOWN
What are you doing here, Rodney?
What's your game?

Fix returns to his audience.

FIX
Gather 'round folks.

Places bull horn down.

FIX
Let me introduce myself. I am the ringmaster of this dark, dark circus. You may call me Fix.

There's a small number of cheers.

FIX

I just want to let you all know I'm giving a free concert next Sunday night in the park where there will also be a circus.

JOHNNY WARD

Yeah!

Cliff spies Ward from across the street and waves.

FIX

So, if you don't like my music you can take the younger kids to the circus for games, cotton candy, my beautiful animals and pony rides. Get a glimpse at my parade of freaks. The circus starts at noon. The concert starts at 8.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Take your freak show and your loud music away from my church!

FIX

Pastor Ward. You want to bring folks to the light. Are fireworks not full of light? Is fire not full of light? Just because we look different and play different music doesn't mean we don't celebrate the light. See you all next Sunday. I promise a killer show.

Fix transforms into a sphere of blue light and disappears into a shroud of smoke. The large crowd cheers.

JOHNNY WARD

I gotta get some of those flyers.

Cliff and Ward approach Trash. Ward and Cliff take flyers from Trash. They high five each other.

JOHNNY WARD

WOW! I can't believe it.

Ward, smiling, looks over at his family. His warm, glimmering eyes meet his father's cold disgusted eyes. Billy walks up to Slice.

BILLY

Give me some flyers, midget.

Slice grimaces and swipes at him.

BILLY

Ouch! Hey, you little fuck!

Billy looks down at the flyers in his bleeding hand. Slice laughs. A HORN SOUNDS and all the freaks disperse into their vehicles.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Something's off. Fuck this! I should just kill him now!

Smiles beelines for the pastor. Churchgoers now see Smiles and point at him. Ward's eyes BULGE.

JOHNNY WARD

Smiles.

Surrounded by Mrs. Ward, Jenny and other churchgoers, the Pastor throws his arms up to protect them from the charging Smiles. Mrs. Ward and Jenny brace themselves. A FLASH of FIRE singes Smiles' hair. Smiles steps back. Churchgoers GASP. Match confronts him.

MATCH

It's time for you to leave too.

The pastor leads his family away. Slice and other freaks approach.

JENNY WARD

The clown! He's escaped prison.

MRS. WARD

We need to call the police.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

We can call from the car.

Smiles lowers his eye brows.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Get out of my way.

Fix approaches Smiles.

FIX

The show's over folks. Sorry to interrupt your day.

Churchgoers rush away from the scene.

FIX

You see, father. Your effort is useless on the dead.

SMILES THE CLOWN
You're dead? A posse of dead
freaks. I recognize some of you.
Slice.

Smiles nods towards Slice. Slice displays his hand of knives.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

Younger Smiles leans over on a table, holding down Slice's
hand. Slice agonizes in pain.

SMILES THE CLOWN
I'm slicing off one finger for
every time you've stopped me from
being with my boys.

SLICE
Fuck you, clown!

Smiles cuts off a finger.

SLICE
AHHHHHHHH!

END FLASHBACK

CHURCH

Slice flexes his hand like Freddy Kruger.

FIX
You see, God has given me a new
lease on life and a new set of
friends from my circus days.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Your mother's friends.

FIX
I met her and her friends in Los
Angeles years before I became a
rock star.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Freaks. Why are you here, Rodney?

FIX
Stopping you from harming people.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Oh, that simply won't do. I plan on harming lots and lots of people starting with the pastor.

Smiles points his cane. Fix unleashes the whip from his belt. He strikes outward. His whip wraps the cane tightly.

SMILES THE CLOWN

You're more than just dead, aren't you?

Fix tips his top hat. Smiles shakes the whip from his cane and sprints off towards his van.

SLICE

He's not running that fast.

FIX

It's okay. There's too many people around. We'll get him in time.

INT. WARD RESIDENCE - WARD'S ROOM - CLIFF'S HOME - DAY

Ward, Dark Circus rock shirt and jeans, sits on his bed, strumming a guitar. He watches a TV show on his tablet. It CHIMES. Ward opens up a Google+ Hangout.

INTERCUT - WARD'S ROOM / CLIFF'S BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Cliff's head appears on Ward's tablet.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Ward!

JOHNNY WARD

Hey Cliff.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Wasn't that a crazy scene with Dark Circus and that clown?

JOHNNY WARD

Yeah, I guess so.

CLIFF JOHNSON

I guess Fix is okay. Pretty sick about the free show, right?

JOHNNY WARD

Yeah. Should be awesome.

CLIFF JOHNSON
You alright?

JOHNNY WARD
Yeah. A little freaked out.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Crazy clown on the loose. You
should be here playing video games.

JOHNNY WARD
I can't. My father's watching me.

CLIFF JOHNSON
I'm going shootin' tomorrow. Sneak
out and go with me.

JOHNNY WARD
The fields. My father won't let me
out of his sight.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD (O.S.)
Johnny, are you talking to someone?

Johnny hits MUTE on computer.

JOHNNY WARD
Just playing a game, Dad.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD (O.S.)
Why don't you do some school work?
I want you studying while you're
suspended. Not playing games or
your guitar.

JOHNNY WARD
(whispering)
I gotta go.

INT. BEDROOM HALLWAY - NIGHT

Pastor stands still for a moment and reluctantly heads into
his bedroom.

EXT. WARD RESIDENCE - DAY

Smiles stands at the end of the driveway, staring at the home
and grinning.

INT. PASTOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Ward sits up in bed, reading. Pastor enters and gets into bed.

MRS. WARD
How's Johnny?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Can't get him to open a textbook.

MRS. WARD
He's probably scared. I'm scared.
What are we going to do about that clown? The police can't do anything.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
The police will probably find him.
I won't let him or that rock star harm this family.

EXT. WARD RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Smiles approaches the front door. Suddenly, Slice steps in front of him.

SLICE
Going somewhere?

Smiles readies his cane.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Step aside, shorty.

Smiles LUNGES, swings cane and misses. Slice SWIPES his hand of knives at Smiles' abdomen. Smiles backs away, clutching his stomach. Match, stilts, approaches and stands tall beside Slice.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Damn it! I'll be back you little fuck.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Billy and Faith make out in his Mustang.

BILLY
That's a hickey on your neck.

FAITH

And I'm telling you it's a scratch.
No one's giving me hickeys. Not
even you. You're all worked up.

Faith unzips Billy's zipper and moves her head toward his crotch. Billy stares at the mark on her neck.

BILLY

I can still see the mark.

He pounds the side of the car door. Faith raises her head.

FAITH

Billy.

Faith looks out the window. Trash watches, smiling. Faith screams and braces herself.

BILLY

What's your fucking problem, you
fat fuck?

Trash places a GLOWING FLYER on his window. The flyer reads 'Special Invitation to the Fun house.'

EXT. COACH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Coach pulls up in his SUV. Slice waits, standing in the middle of the driveway.

COACH BINDS

What the hell? Get out of my
driveway!

Coach floors his SUV towards Slice. Slice disappears underneath it. There's a large bump. Coach exists and surveys underneath his truck. Nothing there.

SLICE(O.S.)

Ahhhhhhhhhh!

Coach pops his head up. From the end of the driveway, charging with his knife-like hand in the air, Slice screams.

COACH BINDS

That's cute little man.

Slice leaps into the air. His metal hand of knives extend. He reaches out. Coach's jaw drops. A gadget releases an invitation flyer from Slice's arm. Slice smacks Coach in the face with it, cutting his face.

Coach swings his fist, but Slice kicks him in the gut. Slice places the GLOWING FLYER into Coach's hand.

COACH BINDS

Special invitation to the fun house. What the hell is this?

EXT. WARD RESIDENCE - NIGHT

A doorbell rings. A hissing is heard. The Pastor and Mrs. Ward open the front door slowly. Mrs. Ward gasps. The two-headed cat sits on their doormat with a GLOWING FLYER in each mouth. The Pastor signs the cross, looks at his wife and reluctantly grabs the flyers.

TWO HEADED SIAMESE CAT

Meow. Meow.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

It's the work of the devil.

EXT. WARD RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Inside the kitchen, through a window, Mrs. Ward prepares dinner.

INT. WARD RESIDENCE - NIGHT

The Fun House invitation rests in a trash basket. Pastor Ward sits at the dinner table looking over a newspaper.

MRS. WARD

Did that two-headed thing go away?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Yeah.

Pastor remains focused on the newspaper.

EXT. WARD RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Smiles' shadow crosses passed the window where Mrs. Ward cooks.

INT. WARD RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Pastor Ward flips a page of the newspaper.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Why is it that people have the need to mutilate their bodies? What causes someone to have a ring on their nose or lip? It's that sickness that's invading our lives, our blood, the air we breathe.

Mrs. Ward places a bowl of salad on the table.

MRS. WARD

Kids are looking to escape or gain acceptance. God knows what you do to escape on that computer at night.

Mrs. Ward throws a mean stare in his direction.

EXT. WARD RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Smiles approaches the window. He looks to the side of the house. Fix appears with Trash.

FIX

This house is off limits.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Why are you protecting this child molester?

FIX

He doesn't deserve to die.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Yes, he does.

FIX

Go.

Fix points towards the end of the driveway.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Damn you!

Smiles points his cane and leaves.

INT. WARD RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The Pastor looks away from Mrs. Ward and puts down the newspaper. He stares into the living room.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
I'll get the kids.

The doorbell rings. Jenny enters the living room.

JENNY WARD
I'll get it.

The Pastor heads upstairs. Jenny looks through the peephole and opens the door. Standing tall, dressed in black and carrying a flower basket, is Fix.

JENNY WARD
Awesome. Hi, uh, Mr. Fix.

FIX
Hello, Jenny.

JENNY WARD
You know my name?

FIX
I know a lot of things. This is for your family.

Fix hands Jenny the basket.

JENNY WARD
How sweet. Come in.

FIX
Thank you.

Mrs. Ward enters the living room.

MRS. WARD
Who's here, Jenny? Oh, hello.

Fix removes his black top hat.

FIX
Hello, Mrs. Ward. How are you this evening?

MRS. WARD
Good. Thank you. We're just about to sit down for dinner. Can you come back another time?

JENNY WARD
Look at this gorgeous flower basket he gave us. He's just a musician, Mom. I don't think he's here to harm anyone.

MRS. WARD

I do love orchids! What can we do for you?

FIX

I just wanted to tell you a bit about the show I'm putting on this weekend. I want to put your husband at ease.

JENNY WARD

Why don't you join us for dinner?

Mrs. Ward shoots Jenny a disgusted look.

FIX

I won't be imposing?

MRS. WARD

Not at all. Please take a seat.

FIX

Thank you.

Jenny secretly pumps her fist.

DINING ROOM

The Pastor and Ward drop their jaws.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

What is this filth doing in my house?

MRS. WARD

Mr. Fix is our guest, dear. I would expect you treat him like one.

JOHNNY WARD

Awesome!

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

I don't believe this.

The Pastor and Ward take seats. Jenny and Ward exchange smiles and gawk at their reluctant father.

JENNY WARD

Daddy, are you going to say grace?

Johnny Ward, wide-eyed, grabs Fix's hand.

JOHNNY WARD

Wow.

They all hold hands. The Pastor fixates on Fix's nose ring and closes his eyes.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Dear father who art in heaven.
Thank you for the meal you have
given us today.

EVERYONE
Amen.

FIX
Pastor, You can call me Fix.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Is that some sort of drug
reference?

FIX
That depends on the drug. Are we
talking about hormones in our meat
or pesticides in our potatoes?

Ward laughs. Jenny giggles.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Kids, this is not a funny matter.
This man is bringing sin into our
town, our home.

FIX
Actually, my circus and I are here
to take your people away from your
sins.

Pastor laughs.

FIX
To escape the temptations you
encounter everyday. Kids in schools
have all kinds of stress and
pressure. Who's supposed to guide
their young impressionable selves?

Pastor's laughter turns to a scowl.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
What authority do you have to know
what high school kids deal with?

FIX

I've been there. I had problems in high school just like anyone. I had more problems after high school in the real world.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Rock and roll is not the real world.

MRS. WARD

Gentlemen, your food is getting cold.

FIX

I apologize, Mrs. Ward. It was not my intention to argue at the dinner table.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

There is something very familiar about you.

Pastor stands up abruptly.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

What are your intentions?

FIX

I wanted to make sure your family got invitations to my Fun House. That's all.

Fix hands out invitations.

MRS. WARD

What's your involvement with the clown?

FIX

He's my father.

The pastor stares at Fix. A spark of recognition overcomes him.

MRS. WARD

What does he want with our family?

FIX

He seeks revenge. He feels the pastor should have been in prison.

The Pastor stands and points to the front entrance.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
I want you to leave this house now.

EXT. WARD RESIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER

Ward follows Fix out the front door. Fix's truck sits parked curbside. In the background, Pastor yells at Mrs. Ward on his way upstairs.

JOHNNY WARD
Ahh...what happened to you? You're from Vegas, aren't you?

FIX
My father moved us here. I stopped him from harming you years ago when you were a young boy. I left Vegas to escape my father. Now that he's escaped prison, I'm protecting you and your family.

JOHNNY WARD
Um, are you...

FIX
You're wondering if I'm alive or dead.

Ward nods.

FIX
Drugs fucked me over. My father did a number on me growing up. He killed me years ago. I was dead inside. But recently I was given a purpose. A mission.

JOHNNY WARD
So, you're like an angel.

FIX
You could say that.

JOHNNY WARD
And your circus freaks?

FIX

I met them all through my mother in a traveling circus. That circus had a lot of bad people in it. I saw people and animals mistreated. I've now created my own circus. Those freaks lost their purpose. I'm giving them a new purpose. We are all freaks. Embrace your inner freak, Johnny.

A sparkle appears from Fix's eye.

JOHNNY WARD

Could you sign some? One for me and my friend, Cliff?

FIX

It would be my pleasure.

Fix removes some flyers from his coat. He takes out a pen light and writes a message.

EXT. WARD RESIDENCE - DAY

Mrs. Ward and the Pastor stand together outside in the driveway.

MRS. WARD

I'm sorry. We can't let Cliff drive you to school anymore. Are you sure you don't want Jenny or I to drive you?

JOHNNY WARD

I'm fine with the bus.

MRS. WARD

Johnny, it's your first day back from suspension. If any students tease you just look the other way.

JOHNNY WARD

Yes, Mom.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Johnny. If you see that clown character again, don't hesitate to call us.

Ward, wearing earphones, nods and walks away.

MRS. WARD
I'm worried about him.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
So am I.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS STOP - DAY

Ward follows students boarding the bus. Billy and Mike stand up and approach a boy sitting directly behind Ward. They shoot him a mean look. The boy scurries to the back of the bus. Billy and Mike sit behind Ward, by himself. The bus drives away. Smiles appears beside Ward, unnoticed to all except Ward.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Oh dreaded school bus. What awful memories. Let's create more, shall we, Johnny?

Ward jumps in his seat.

JOHNNY WARD
Smiles!

A heavy book crashes on his Ward's head from behind.

JOHNNY WARD
UGH!

SMILES THE CLOWN
Oh, did that hurt? Ready for more fun and games?

Smiles sprinkles some red dust in his hand and blows it towards the Billy.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Hey big boy. You can do better than that.

BILLY
You know, I forgot how much I miss taking the bus.

Billy and Mike laugh. Billy pushes Ward's face into the seat ahead of him over and over again.

BILLY
You like head-banger music. Bang your head, Johnny.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Oh, nicely done. Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

A student pushes Ward. Ward approaches and opens his locker.
A note inside reads: YOU'RE DEAD!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Ward, Billy, Lauren and other classmates, along with MRS.
APPLEBEE, 30's, watch Faith speak at the front. Ward, earbuds
in, listens to his iPod, doodles DARK CIRCUS on a note-pad.

FAITH
While the icecaps melt, the polar
bears have less places to rest
during their swim, searching for
food. Things of this nature will
harm the food chain.

Faith spots a spider on the floor. She squeals and crushes it
with her shoe.

FAITH
Sorry. The attitude of humans until
now has been to advance technology
and improve ourselves financially.
That's all good, but at what cost
are we to succeed?

Classmates clap.

MRS. APPLEBEE
Okay. Very good, Faith. A great
improvement. And only one spider
was harmed.

Mrs. Applebee surveys the room. She spots Ward, not paying
attention in the back row.

MRS. APPLEBEE
Johnny, are you prepared to give
your speech today?

Ward takes his earbuds out. He rises, fumbles through his
pockets and pulls out a crumpled piece of paper. Hesitantly,
Ward approaches the front of the class.

MRS. APPLEBEE
What is the topic you chose to
speak about, Johnny?

Ward rubs his nose.

JOHNNY WARD

Suicide.

Billy chuckles. Mrs. Ward shushes the students.

JOHNNY WARD

Last year my friend, Gerold
Dramhouse shot himself in front of
the school.

Ward pauses. Students pay closer attention.

JOHNNY WARD

The suicide rate in America has
highly increased during the first
few years of the recession.

Ward sneezes. A small piece of tissue peeks out of Ward's nostril. A few students chuckle.

MRS. APPLEBEE

Johnny.

Mrs. Applebee points to her own nose. Ward sneezes again. The piece of bloody tissue pops out and lands by Faith's feet.

FAITH

Eww. Gross.

Blood from Ward's nose streams down his face. Mrs. Applebee quickly retrieves a tissue and hands it to Ward. The bell RINGS.

MRS. APPLEBEE

We'll continue the summaries
tomorrow. Johnny, you should go see
the nurse.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Ward takes two pills and leans against the wall. Billy, Greg and Mike turn the corner.

BILLY

Well, looky here. Boo hoo. My
friend killed himself last year.

JOHNNY WARD

Fuck off.

BILLY
What did you say?

JOHNNY WARD
I said FUCK OFF!

Billy pushes Ward and looks him over.

BILLY
Little punk.

Billy pushes Ward to the ground. Mike and Greg hold him down. Cliff appears and wallops Greg's face with a baseball bat. Cliff swings and smacks Mike in the stomach. Billy charges Cliff and knocks him to the ground. Billy pounds Cliff's face into the dirt.

BILLY
We're not getting drugs from you anymore. Hear that Greg? Mike? We'll buy from that metal head on DI.

Mike and Greg shake off their wounds.

MIKE
DI?

BILLY
Desert Inn Road, you idiot! Come on. Let's leave these pussies.

CLIFF JOHNSON
You're dead.

BILLY
What's that?

CLIFF JOHNSON
You're dead. You're all dead.

BILLY
You're delusional.

The bullies leave.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Ward, I'll pick you up after school.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Ward approaches the front entrance. Many students roam including Lauren.

LAUREN

Hey. Can we take a walk?

JOHNNY WARD

Sure. I'm sorry about that night. I had a lot on my mind.

LAUREN

I think you have a lot of potential.

JOHNNY WARD

Huh?

LAUREN

Your guitar playing. It's your passion. I remember you and Dram playing "Black Hole Sun" in the variety show. (beat) Then Dram, well. So much has changed the last few years.

JOHNNY WARD

Oh, the good old days.

LAUREN

It's terrible how you and your friend are treated. But I think a lot of times Cliff asks for it. That shit he's selling isn't cool either.

JOHNNY WARD

You think you know everything.

LAUREN

Cliff is a delinquent. Is he really your friend, Johnny?

JOHNNY WARD

Cliff is all I have.

Ward stands up abruptly and walks away.

INT. SCHOOL HALL - LOCKERS - DAY

Ward looks around as he collects his books.

SMILES THE CLOWN (V.O.)
Ready for some fun and games?

Ward jumps, nervously. A MALE STUDENT #1 gives him an awkward shrug and passes him.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Duct tape crosses over Ward's mouth. Greg and Mike toss him into their SUV and hop inside. Billy, driving, peels out. Smiles looks on, grinning.

INT. ABANDONED BAR - DAY

Ward, still duct taped, stands naked and tied to a pole. Billy, Greg, Mike, Faith, Amy and Allison laugh at Ward. Smiles sits on the floor, unnoticed by all except for Ward. Smiles eats popcorn and laughs out loud. Billy passes around beers from a 6-pack. One beer passes by Smiles.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Hey, just because I'm dead doesn't
mean my drinking days are over. Am
I right, Johnny?

Ward lowers his eye brows and struggles to move around. Billy claps. Faith writes a sign and sticks it to Ward's chest. It reads: Small penises are funny.

BILLY
Small penises are funny.

All crack up. Smiles rolls around, laughing hysterically.

SMILES THE CLOWN
I love small penises! Always funny
and often very chewy.

Smiles squeezes a horn. HONK! HONK!

FAITH
Weren't you and Lauren Ambrose
dating recently? What happened?

Faith displays her thumb and forefinger close together.

FAITH
All you'll ever be is small.

GREG
Worthless stump.

The guys laugh harder. Billy goes over to Ward.

BILLY

What do you have to say for yourself?

Billy rips off the tape violently.

JOHNNY WARD

OUCH!

They all laugh at him.

JOHNNY WARD

You're all going to pay for this.

FAITH

Girls, we're giving this little boy away. Any takers?

Faith kisses Ward on the cheek.

FAITH

Wait. Johnny tastes like a virgin. Are you a virgin, Johnny Ward?

Faith licks his cheek.

FAITH

Wow. Anyone want to turn this boy into a man?

The girls all shake their heads. Smiles rockets up.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Oh, I do! I do! Pretty please.

FAITH

Well, maybe we can smack him into manhood.

Faith smacks Ward across the face.

FAITH

Oh, oh, oh. I think he likes that.

Faith smacks him again. Amy sets her phone to take a 'selfie' with Ward. Faith, Billy, Mike, Greg and Allison photo-bomb.

FAITH

Come on. Smile, Johnny.

Amy SNAPS the photo.

BILLY
Let's leave him here. Later loser.

MOMENTS LATER

Ward remains tied to the chair. The bar is empty now.

JOHNNY WARD
Help! Can anyone hear me?

Ward furiously rubs the rope with a guitar pick. Smiles laughs. Ward tries to turn his head.

JOHNNY WARD
Go away!

SMILES THE CLOWN
You're just screaming for
companionship.

Johnny rubs the rope harder.

SMILES THE CLOWN
What a party, Johnny Ward. Your
pals left you all alone and tied
up. Oh, my. They didn't think very
highly of you, did they?

JOHNNY WARD
Go away.

Smiles hops in front of Ward.

SMILES THE CLOWN
You don't like me, do you, Johnny?
Don't you remember the times we
shared at your birthday parties?

Smiles places the butt of the cane against Ward's neck.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Do you like my cane?

Smiles rubs Ward's chin.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Go ahead. Lick it Johnny.

Ward spits in Smiles' face.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Oh, you bad boy, Johnny Ward.
Playing dirty. Your father likes
playing dirty too. He moved you
away from me. He was afraid of what
I would do to you.

JOHNNY WARD

You're sick!

SMILES THE CLOWN

I followed your family and made
your father go back to our little
game. He wouldn't let me touch you.
That was the deal. But he kept our
pact until some boys came forward.
Only I was found guilty.

Ward vigorously rubs the rope.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Your father was free while I went
to prison to rot. It's your
father's turn to rot after I'm done
with you, Johnny.

Fix casually folding his arms, walks towards them.

FIX

You're not going to lay a finger on
Johnny.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Well, well, well. It's that special
son of mine. What do you call
yourself, the Ringmaster. What's
that about, Rodney?

FIX

That night you were locked up at
the circus. There was Slice, the
Strong Man and the Ringmaster. I
didn't like how the ringmaster
treated animals, but he saved me
from you that night.

SMILES THE CLOWN

So, you think you can save Johnny
from me now?

FIX

Johnny has his own strength, his
own voice. He's going save himself,
aren't you, Johnny?

With that Johnny busts out of the ropes and races to Fix's side. Johnny displays the guitar pick.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Clever, my boy.

Smiles creeps forward.

FIX
Step back or I'll tame you like the
beast you are.

Smiles lunges. Fix grabs a whip from his belt, winds it up and SNAPS it on Smiles' face. It leaves a MARK. Smiles covers up.

FIX
Stings, doesn't it even if you're
dead. Stay away from Johnny, his
father and his family.

SMILES THE CLOWN
We'll see about that.

Smiles throws down a RED SMOKE bomb and vanishes.

INT. CLIFF'S MOTHER'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Cliff, bedside, opens a prescription bottle, spills out two pills and places them in front of his mother.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Mom, do you hear me?

Cliff's mother has a blank stare.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Mom!

She nods her head.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Mom, take your pills.

She opens her mouth. Cliff places two pills in her mouth. He then puts a cup of water near her mouth.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Open up, Mom.

She opens her mouth. He pours water in her mouth.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Swallow the pills.

She swallows and places a weak hand on top of his and closes her eyes. A tear rolls down his cheek.

CLIFF JOHNSON
I visited Matt in prison. He asked for you. I miss talking with you, Mom.

Cliff lifts a hand gun from the floor.

CLIFF JOHNSON
I can't pay the bills anymore. I don't know what to do anymore.

Fix appears suddenly.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Fix?

FIX
Hey Cliff.

CLIFF JOHNSON
You know my name. Hey, how'd you get in here?

FIX
The door was open.

Cliff lowers the gun and places it on the floor.

CLIFF JOHNSON
So is there a secret new album you're dropping? I'm thinking your disappearance was a publicity stunt.

FIX
What's with the gun?

CLIFF JOHNSON
Um, I like target shooting in the fields sometimes.

FIX
You have to be very careful. You don't want to hurt yourself or anyone else.

CLIFF JOHNSON
No. Of course not.

FIX

You're in a tough spot, Cliff. I see how you care for your sick mother by yourself. Your father's out of the picture. Your brother's in jail. You love your mother, right?

Cliff nods.

FIX

And she loves you. You have someone who loves you. Sometimes that's everything.

Fix places his hand on Cliff's shoulder and hands him a GLOWING INVITATION.

FIX

Please accept an invitation to my Fun House.

EXT. WARD RESIDENCE - PASTOR'S STUDY - NIGHT

Pastor types an instant message on a computer. A window pops up. It's Smiles!

SMILES THE CLOWN

Knock! Knock!

Pastor gasps.

SMILES THE CLOWN

You're supposed to say who's there?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Go away!

SMILES THE CLOWN

You look awful. What's the matter? Can't sleep? Got your eye on any young boys lately?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Leave me alone!

SMILES THE CLOWN

I'm going to terrorize you, your family, this town. I'll be visiting again and again. Give up your soul. Come on, give it up. Sign the contract!

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

No.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Give it up, William. Give it up!

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

No!

Smiles sniffs the air.

SMILES THE CLOWN

I sense something young and innocent.

Pastor slams his laptop shut. Jenny pops her head in. Pastor jumps in his chair.

JENNY

Dad, You okay?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Yes, Jenny. I'm fine.

Pastor places his head down on the laptop.

EXT. WARD RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Slice and Trash guard the front entrance. Smiles tip toes in plain sight.

SLICE

Stop! Where do you think you're going?

SMILES THE CLOWN

Oh, just out for a stroll.

PASTOR'S STUDY

Jenny walks two steps. A hand in a clown glove covers her mouth. It's Smiles!

SMILES THE CLOWN

Shhh. What's that? Let's go back to your room for more privacy. How inviting, Jenny.

Smiles leads Jenny to her bedroom.

JENNY'S BEDROOM

Smiles swings open the door. Standing with his arms crossed, Fix shakes his head.

FIX
A hologram. Clever.

EXT. WARD RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Slice pokes at the hologram of Smiles laughing. Trash pokes it too. They turn and look up at the bedroom windows.

JENNY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Smiles presses a button on the cane that releases a blade. He places it against Jenny's neck. She wines.

SMILES THE CLOWN
This family belongs to me.

Smiles steps on a tennis ball can and slips. Jenny steps on his foot. Fix reaches for his whip and STRIKES at Smiles' cane knocking it to the floor. Smiles lunges at Fix. They vanish in thin air. The Pastor opens Jenny's door. Jenny runs to hug him. Mrs. Ward and Johnny look on.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Jenny, are you alright?

JENNY WARD
No, Daddy.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Fix and Smiles appear wrestling on the lawn. They stand up.

FIX
Keep trying. You'll fail.

SMILES THE CLOWN
I need to kill.

FIX
Isn't it enough you're a child molester. Now you must murder. Why?

SMILES THE CLOWN
It strengthens my powers.

Smiles disappears.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Fix roams down the halls, illuminated by blue light, passing photos on the wall.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Mrs. Ward supervises a classroom full of kids.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

A classroom full of five-year-old kids draw on paper at their desks. Mrs. Ward supervises.

MRS. WARD

I see some very creative drawings.
Nice work.

TIMMY, drawing a bunch of multi-colored balloons, looks up and sees an identical bunch fly upwards outside the window.

TIMMY

Coooool!

LITTLE GIRL draws a clown resembling Smiles. She looks up and suddenly Smiles pops up, waves and disappears. HONK! HONK! Smiles' obnoxious horn BLARES.

MRS. WARD

What's that honking?

HONK! HONK! HONK!

LITTLE GIRL

It's the clown.

MRS. WARD

Clown? Everyone keep drawing. No one leave this room. I'll be right back.

Immediately after Mrs. Ward exists, Smiles appears in the far corner of the room.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Hi kids.

The children JOLT in their seats.

TIMMY

Who are you?

SMILES THE CLOWN

I'm a clown. I know some tricks and even some magic. Wanna see?

CHILDREN

Yeah.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Ready for some fun and games?

Peeking at her classroom from outside, Mrs. Ward's eyes BULGE.

INSIDE CLASSROOM

Smiles juggles two bowling pins and a black hat. Places pins down. He shows the kids the black hat's empty. He flips the hat around and pulls out a motionless, dead rabbit.

LITTLE GIRL

Ewww.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Oops. That one's my dinner.

TIMMY

You eat rabbits?

SMILES THE CLOWN

I eat rabbits. It's OK. Tastes like chicken. What's your name, boy?

TIMMY

Timmy.

SMILES THE CLOWN

That's a nice name. You know what else I eat, Timmy?

TIMMY

No, what?

Leans in.

SMILES THE CLOWN

LITTLE CHILDREN! Ha Ha ha ha haa!

Smiles flashes his bloody teeth. Children SCREAM. Fix appears at the front door. Children jolt in their seats again.

FIX

Let's go, clown. Time to leave.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Still afraid of the dark, Rodney?

Smiles snaps his fingers. LIGHTS OUT. Lights turn on again.
Fix surveys the room. Smiles is gone.

GIRL #1
Timmy's missing!

Children SCREAM.

FIX
Stay here!

Fix runs down the hall after Smiles, carrying Timmy. Fix shakes his hand. Blue sparks of electricity shoot out. A blue electric bowling ball appears. He lines up and rolls the ball down the hall. The ball SMACKS into Smiles' leg, knocking them both down. Fix grabs Timmy.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Always ruining the fun.

Smiles disappears. Fix looks at a frightened Timmy. He offers Timmy a lollipop.

FIX
Lollipop?

TIMMY
I'm not supposed to take candy from strangers.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Mrs. Ward runs toward the entrance. Smiles appears.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Surprise!

Mrs. Ward GASPS. Places hand to chest.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Hello, Anne. How are you? How is everything? I had a memorable time in prison. Doing some of my time. Doing some of your husband's time.

Mrs. Ward's face turns white.

SMILES THE CLOWN

I almost had your daughter last night. Would have been a nice appetizer. I like your family especially your son, Johnny. Please say hello to the Pastor. He's not returning my calls.

Mrs. Ward, speechless, faints.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Oh, not feeling well. Here, have a balloon. It'll remind you of all the fond memories at your son's birthday parties. So many good times there...with Johnny.

Smiles ties a red balloon around her wrist. A school bus pulls up. A female BUS DRIVER opens the door and waits. Smiles cocks his head and approaches. He waves to the bus driver. She makes a funny face. He hops on and sits behind her.

BUS DRIVER

Hello. Was there a party today?

The blade on Smiles' cane EJECTS. He cuffs her mouth and SLITS her throat.

SMILES THE CLOWN

This is the party. Surprise!

Smiles sits back. A RED GLOW overcomes his body. His eyes GLOW RED. He laughs.

EXT. REMOTE FIELD IN WOODS - DAY

Ward lines up a rifle at watermelons propped up on a table about twenty yards away.

JOHNNY WARD

My father will kill me if he finds me here.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Come on. Let's see what kind of man you are.

Ward looks concerned.

CLIFF JOHNSON

What?

JOHNNY WARD

There's so much going on right now.

Lurking behind trees, Smiles, hidden behind a tree, watches.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Dude, what those fucking assholes did to you yesterday is messed up.

SMILES THE CLOWN

(to himself)

This boy was meant for bigger things.

Smiles blows some red dust in their direction.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Something needs to be done. They need to be put in their place. In fact.

Cliff eyes FLARE UP RED. He grabs the gun back from Ward.

CLIFF JOHNSON

I know just what to do.

Cliff lines up his shot. He shoots and EXPLODES a water melon. He lines up a second shot and EXPLODES another water melon. Smiles laughs.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

All seems calm. A slight breeze blows through the trees.

SUPERIMPOSE: SUNDAY

INT. CHURCH - SUBURBAN TOWN - DAY

The Pastor looks over Mrs. Ward, Jenny and all the churchgoers.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Some of you will be tempted by the entertainment in the park today. If you take your children there please keep a safe watch over them. Evil lurks and will do everything it can to disrupt the goodness in all of us. Amen.

CHURCH-GOERS

Amen.

EXT. PARK - CIRCUS - DAY

Match, passing by, breathes FIRE into the air. Children happily run in every direction. Lauren, chewing cotton candy, cruises through the vendors selling food and hosting circus games. She spots Jenny and they walk together.

A disabled dog engulfed in a metal brace contraption with a wheel is lead on a leash by Trash. Lauren and Jenny glance at a two headed Siamese cat. Trash holds up a pair of mice.

TRASH

Wanna watch me feed the cats?

LAUREN

EWW!

JENNY

Gross!

EXT. PARK - BUCCANEER SHIP - DAY

Cliff, chewing a bar of taffy, hops onto the ship with Ward. They find seats.

CLIFF

(talks like a pirate)

Ahoy!

JOHNNY WARD

RRRRRRR! It tis.' I see Billy's boarding the ship.

CLIFF

Pay him back for fucking you up, Ward. Make him walk the plank.

JOHNNY WARD

Yeah. Fuck him up!

CLIFF AND WARD

RRRRRRRR!

Billy sits a few rows ahead of the boys. Billy sees them and gestures as if he's slitting his throat. Slice, dressed as a pirate, looks around.

SLICE

Take your seats ladies and gents or
the Buccaneer will take your heads.
We'll then shrink your heads and
sell them off on the black market.
The choice is yours. I guarantee a
wild ride to last.

Slice starts up the ship.

SLICE

Keep hands to your sides or we'll
feed your fingers to the lion.

Cliff looks down at his taffy bar and chucks it at Billy. It
smacks Billy's head, but slides off. The ship starts to sway.
Billy grabs the taffy and accidentally pins it to his own
head.

CLIFF

Oh, wait! Yes!

Billy turns around and eyes Cliff.

SLICE

All heads forward please.

BILLY

Cliff, you're a dead man! Dead!

Cliff and Ward laugh. The ship sways back and forth. The
boys' laughter gets louder. Billy tries to pull the candy bar
out of his hair.

INT. WARD RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenny and Mrs. Ward sit around the dinner table. The Pastor
glances at his watch. He takes a deep breath and lets it out.
Ward walks in through the front door.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

We were worried about you.

Ward, sporting a black eye, hesitates by the stairs.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Johnny, sit down for dinner.

Ward, standing, facing the stairs, rubs his black eye.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Staying out of trouble?

JOHNNY WARD

What would you do with yourself if I was a straight-nosed geek? You'd have no one to preach about. You need someone to make an example of.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Johnny!

JOHNNY WARD

Actually, you need someone to make an example of YOU!

The pastor stands. Ward steps closer to him.

JOHNNY WARD

Did you really molest those children?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

What? No.

JOHNNY WARD

Are you a child molester like Smiles the Clown?

MRS. WARD

Johnny, stop! That's enough!

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

What did you say? I resent that.

JOHNNY WARD

I resent you!

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Johnny, I forbid you to go to that concert tonight!

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Crowds of families inhabit the circus. Hundreds of teenagers flock to the stage in a large open field. Fix's associates, Slice, Trash, Match and others roam the crowd of fans.

An enormous black curtain covers the stage. Large bright lights turn off. Green and red lasers start moving rapidly throughout the crowd. LOUD POUNDING OF INDUSTRIAL DRUMS VIBRATE the ground throughout the park. The sound of WAILING GUITAR ECHOES LOUDLY from the black curtain. Teenagers run from the circus towards the concert. Fans CHEER and SCREAM.

MOMENTS LATER

The audience has grown. A small chant begins.

FANS

Dark Circus! Dark Circus!

The chant gets louder. The DRUMS POUND HARDER, ERRATIC. The black curtain opens. White smoke EXPLODES from the stage. It dissipates. Musicians appear. The crowd CHEERS. Cliff and Ward survey the stage. Ward looks up and spots Fix high above on a crane. The drummer keeps a steady beat.

FIX

Hello all you circus freaks down there, Sin City, Las Vegas.

Crowd ROARS.

JOHNNY WARD

Fix!

FIX

Circus freaks! Addicts! Deviants! Junkies! I'm talking to you good church going folks. Before I begin tonight's sermon, I want you to know I'm not preaching to you from a pulpit. I'm not God. I am not the Messiah. I am not a rock star. What's that?

The crane starts to lower.

FIX

That's right, people. I am not a rock star. Tonight I'm one of you. So let me come down and speak to you on your level.

The crane lands onto the stage. Fix steps off the crane.

FIX

Tonight I am your friend. I want to talk to you face to face. Man to man and woman. Soul to soul. I'm so glad you all showed up here tonight. It's a special occasion. I've been through so much pain. Can you hear me out there?

More CHEERS. FLAMES ERUPT sky high on the sides of the stage.

FIX

What? I said, "Can you hear me out there?"

The crowd cheers LOUDER. Flames erupt HIGHER.

FIX

Do you have any pain?

The crowd cheers.

FIX

It sucks, doesn't it?

Ward and Cliff cheer. Jenny, in the crowd, looks all over. The drummer keeps pounding the drums. An electric guitarist wails his guitar.

FIX

I think I got the cure for that. Tonight I'm gonna put you all in your place. That place that takes you away from your lows, your worries. To a place that lifts you up. This song is called "Gimme the Fix."

Crowd CHEERS. Ward and Cliff share a 'this is our song' look.

EXT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

Faith wanders around, crying. She dials her phone. Circus music amplifies from the lit up, rotating Ferris Wheel.

FAITH

Billy, answer your phone!

Faith takes a GLOWING INVITATION out of her back pocket.

PARK - FUNHOUSE

Faith approaches the entrance lit up with tinsel covering the bushes. A STATUE of Fix stands in front, holding a guitar and pointing his finger. A large sign hanging above the doorway reads: FUNHOUSE. The large orange door opens by itself. Circus music faintly plays from inside.

FAITH

Hello? Anyone there?

Faith ventures in.

EXT. PARK - FUN HOUSE - NIGHT

Slice leads Billy towards the house.

BILLY

Where's Faith? I thought you were bringing me to her.

SLICE

Don't you remember getting an invite to the Fun House?

Billy reaches into his pocket and pulls out a GLOWING invite.

BILLY

Oh, yeah.

Billy looks over the decorative entrance. He sees a guitar pick on the ground and picks it up.

BILLY

Awesome. Is Faith here?

Slice nods yes.

INSIDE FUNHOUSE

Faith comes across some mirrors. She smiles and re-applies her lipstick. She blows her reflection a kiss. Some mirrors make her look distorted. She sways back and forth, amused by them. Suddenly, the mirror shows her carrying a crying baby. The cries get LOUDER. Faith freaks out. She runs into a white room and the door shuts behind her. She tries to turn the knob. It won't budge.

EXT. PARK - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The Pastor steers his car into the parking lot and parks.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Damn rock music.

EXT. PARK - STAGE AREA - NEAR STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The Pastor looks above and around the screaming crowd.

BACKSTAGE AREA

Jenny walks around the perimeter. Lauren greets her.

LAUREN

Jenny! Have you seen Johnny?

JENNY WARD

No. We're worried about him.

Jenny's phone rings. She picks up.

JENNY WARD

Mom...They're at the show....I
don't know....Where are
you?...You're here? Dad's here?

Smiles abruptly covers his hand over Lauren's mouth and drags her away. Jenny turns around. A few figures move far away into the darkness.

JENNY WARD

Where? The parking lot. I'll be
right there.

Hangs up.

JENNY WARD

Lauren? Where the hell did you go?

ON STAGE

Fix leads the crowd with a chant. The band plays. Fix looks directly at Ward and speaks to him without moving his lips.

FIX (V.O.)

Johnny.

JOHNNY WARD

Fix?

Cliff looks at Ward.

FIX (V.O.)

Your friend, Lauren is in trouble.
Smiles grabbed her.

Fix points out to side of the stage.

FIX (V.O.)

She's out there. Stop Smiles. Then
go to the Fun House.

Ward turns his head to the side.

JOHNNY WARD

Okay.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Who are you talking to?

EXT. PARK - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Lauren's scream is muffled by duct tape. Smiles hurries Lauren towards a white van. Ward and Cliff run towards Smiles.

JOHNNY WARD
Let her go!

SMILES THE CLOWN
I'm just trying to have some fun,
damn it!

Smiles throws Lauren violently against the car. She falls to the pavement slowly and can't move.

JOHNNY WARD
NO!

SMILES THE CLOWN
Johnny boy. I see you brought your
friend along.

JOHNNY WARD
Let her go!

CLIFF JOHNSON
Let go or we'll fuck you up.

Smiles raises his cane.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Where's your rock star to save you
now?

JOHNNY WARD
I've got Cliff to back me up.

CLIFF JOHNSON
I'm like a bull in a china store
and I don't give a fuck.

Cliff charges. Smiles lifts his cane and smacks Cliff in the forehead. Cliff bends and holds his head.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Ready for some fun and games? Ha Ha
Ha Ha Haaaa!

Ward charges. Smiles WACKS him in the gut.

SMILES THE CLOWN

It's worthless, Johnny. You're worthless. Your father's worthless. Your whole family is worthless, Johnny Ward!

Cliff recovers and charges again. Smiles SMACKS Cliff in the back. Cliff wraps himself around him and tackles him to the ground. Smiles retrieves a sharp knife from his pocket. He stabs Cliff in the leg. Cliff screams out in pain.

Ward stands up and faces Smiles. Lauren, wincing, listens intently.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Johnny, I molested you. And your father let me do it. Ha ha ha hahaaaaa. He let me do it.

JOHNNY WARD

What? My father didn't let you touch me. Fuck you clown!

Smiles holds his cane in one hand and the bloody knife in the other.

SMILES THE CLOWN

And why, Johnny did he let me touch you? Because he couldn't touch you himself. He couldn't physically do it. He did it to other children. Oh, yeah, but not you. He took your family away from Vegas to escape me.

Cliff jumps Smiles from behind. They wrestle. Smiles drops his cane. Cliff kicks it over to Ward. Smiles STABS Cliff in the arm. The knife remains stuck in his arm. Ward picks up the cane and charges at Smiles as he stands up. Ward CRACKS him in the chin. Blood spits out the side of Smiles' mouth. Smiles shakes it off.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Nice swing, Johnny. So big and strong.

Cliff slowly gets up. He reaches for the knife.

LAUREN

No. Don't pull it out. You're losing a lot of blood. You need a tourniquet.

FIX (V.O.)
Johnny, tell Cliff to go with
Lauren to the hospital.

JOHNNY WARD
Cliff, go with Lauren to the
hospital. You both need to see a
doctor.

CLIFF JOHNSON
No, I'm staying with you.

Ward confidently tosses the cane from one hand to the other.

JOHNNY WARD
I'm feeling pretty good right now.

Cliff nods.

JOHNNY WARD
Go.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Take him down, Ward.

LAUREN
Johnny, I understand now. This
fucking clown messed you up as a
boy, right?

Ward nods.

LAUREN
I'm sorry. I didn't know. Finish
this asshole.

Cliff and Lauren lean on each other, walking away. Smiles
sidesteps and readies for a battle.

SMILES THE CLOWN
So, my pretty boy. We're alone at
last.

JOHNNY WARD
I can take you!

SMILES THE CLOWN
How brave you've become.

Johnny moves around, nervously. Smiles charges at Ward. A go-
cart arrives. Trash, driving, SUCKER-PUNCHES Smiles. Smiles
falls down.

CUT TO:

FUN HOUSE

Trash pulls up in the go-cart. He places some smelling salt under Smiles' red nose. Smiles awakes.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Oooh. What's this? A fun house. How lovely.

EXT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - NIGHT

Cliff, arm bandaged up, sits at Lauren's bedside.

LAUREN

Hey, thanks for taking me to the hospital.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Well, I needed to be here too.

LAUREN

Yeah, but you could have left. Thank you for staying.

Cliff's phone receives a TEXT.

Cliff, If everything is okay, your presence is needed at the Fun House at the park. Fix.

LAUREN

What is it?

CLIFF JOHNSON

I need to go.

EXT. PARK - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Fix emerges out of smoke onto center stage and sings.

FIX

*The itsy-bitsy spider climbed up
the water spout.*

EXT. PARK - FUN HOUSE - NIGHT

Cliff, arm in sling, approaches the entrance. Slice appears.

SLICE

You are reaching a cross roads.

CLIFF JOHNSON
What is this place?

SLICE
Welcome to the Fun House.

INSIDE FUN HOUSE

FAITH'S ROOM

Faith, alone, is strapped to a chair in an all white room.

FIX (O.S.)
*Down came the rain and washed the
spider out.*

She struggles to break free. A large spider crawls down her arm.

FAITH
AHHHHH!

It slips off and lands on the floor.

FIX (O.S.)
*Out came the sun and dried up all
the rain.*

Another spider crawls down her arm. Then giant spiders crawl on the walls, projected on screens.

FIX (O.S.)
*And the itsy-bitsy spider climbed
up the spout again.*

FAITH
Let me out of here!

MAD MONTAGE OF END OF SHOW

A) Pastor Ward looks over the Fun House, grimacing. Johnny Ward as a little boy, age 5, glances at the Pastor, giggles and enters.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Johnny?

Pastor follows him.

B) Fix addresses his crowd.

FIX

Hello slaves. Yes, we are all
slaves. No one speaks their minds
anymore.

- C) Coach Binds wanders around in a daze near the concert.
Trash grabs his arm and leads him toward the Fun House.
- D) Mrs. Ward stumbles upon the Fun House entrance. She looks
down at the GLOWING invitation. The door opens. She
reluctantly enters.
- E) Jenny looks over the entrance.
- F) Cliff, inside the Fun House, sees himself in a reflection,
talking to his brother Matt in jail.

ON STAGE

Fix approaches the edge of the stage.

FIX

We're afraid of where they're going
to put us. What are they going to
do to us? But if you don't speak
up, nothing changes. Wake up. Face
your fears! Don't give in to
temptation. Be strong! Take
responsibility for your actions.

Fix disappears into the smoke filling up the stage. Fire
shoots high into the sky from both sides of the stage.

INT. FUN HOUSE - PARK - CONTINUOUS

Billy wakes up, strapped to a pole. He looks at Slice.

SLICE

Welcome, Billy.

BILLY

Get me out of here!

SLICE

What's it like to be bullied,
Billy? Let's find out! It's up to
you. Remain a bully or change your
ways.

BILLY

Fuck you!

SLICE

Okay. And now we begin asking the question.

Teenagers APPEAR in a long line. MALE TEENAGER #1 approaches Billy.

MALE TEENAGER #1

How does it feel?

Male Teenager #1 slaps Billy. BAM! MALE TEENAGER #2 walks up to Billy.

MALE TEENAGER #2

How does it feel?

Male #2 slaps Billy.

COACH'S ROOM AT FUN HOUSE

Coach Binds squirms around, tied to a chair.

COACH BINDS

I didn't do anything!

Mirrors show scenes of Coach making sexual advances to Faith and other female students under 17.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) Faith freaks out in the white room.
- B) A student slaps Billy's face.
- C) Mrs. Ward stares at the Fun House mirrors. In the reflection, she sees Smiles in a bedroom with young Johnny, 5. Mrs. Ward closes the bedroom door. The mirror changes to present Day, Mrs. Ward pounds on a door in the Fun House hallway. The reflection is now hers. She pounds on the mirror, crying.

MRS. WARD

Johnny! Johnny!

Fix is projected on the walls in all the subjects' rooms.

FIX

Welcome to the Fun House. You have reached a fork in the road. Do you go left or do you go right? Is it worth throwing your life away?

Smiles appears on a projection beside Fix on the walls in all the rooms holding Faith, Billy, Coach, Pastor Ward, Mrs. Ward, Cliff, etc.

FIX

You have a choice to take the lighter path or the darker one. What good can come from manipulating others? You can gain so much more by giving rather than taking.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Give, give, give. Isn't he annoying? Nobody tells you what to do. Be free. Do what you want. Take what you want. I can give you whatever your heart desires. Power beyond your wildest dreams. Just give me your soul. I have contracts. I'm my own lawyer.

Smiles looks around at all the subjects in the rooms presented on-screen.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Bullies, whores, sexual predators. Oh, good. The Pastor is in the house. Where are my precious boys, Johnny and Cliff?

Smiles disappears into the hallway.

INT. FUN HOUSE - NIGHT

It's a dark, empty room. Cliff sits on one of the chairs. Smiles appears.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Oh, this won't do at all. We need to make you feel more at home.

The room transforms into the garage inside Cliff's mother's home. Fix observes Smiles from the wall projection, encouraging Cliff.

INT. CLIFF'S HOME - GARAGE - DAY

Cliff takes a deep breath. Smiles leans in.

SMILES THE CLOWN
 I know your deepest desire, Cliff.
 I know what you want to do.
 Revenge. We're alike that way.

SMILES THE CLOWN
 Repeat after me.

Cliff's eyes LIGHT UP RED.

SMILES THE CLOWN
 I am committed.

CLIFF JOHNSON
 I am committed.

SMILES THE CLOWN
 No matter what.

CLIFF JOHNSON
 No matter what.

Smiles places his hands on Cliff's shoulders. Cliff holds Smiles' shoulders.

SMILES THE CLOWN
 DIE! DIE!

SMILES AND CLIFF
 DIE! DIE! DIE! DIE!

Fix interrupts, speaking from the projection that pops up on the wall.

FIX
 Cliff, is this what you really
 want? To end people's lives.

CLIFF JOHNSON
 I want fucking chaos!

EXT. PARK - FUN HOUSE - DAY

Fix glides through a wall into a room where Faith, strapped to a chair, looks around, scared out of her mind. Fix passes through the opposite wall. He passes Billy, screaming. Fix passes Coach Binds, shouting. Fix floats through one last wall to find Pastor Ward, standing behind a podium.

FIX
 Pastor Ward. Pastor Ward?

Fix lifts the Pastor's chin.

FIX

Can you hear me, Pastor Ward?

Pastor Ward glances around.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

What is this place?

FIX

You know this place. It's a pit
stop in between two worlds.

Smiles smashes through a fake window.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Guess which world I represent?

FIX

I've been expecting you.

SMILES THE CLOWN

I have some old business with
Pastor Ward.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

What do you want, clown?

SMILES THE CLOWN

Time is a thing I treasure most. I
did YOUR time, Bill. I want you to
do my time IN HELL. Sign the
contract or lose your life and your
family now!

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

I've built my own prison.

FIX

He'll do time, but not your way.

Smiles raises his hand, picks Fix up and thrusts him against
the wall. Smiles disappears into red smoke.

INT. FUN HOUSE - NIGHT

Ward sits in another dark, empty room with his eyes closed.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

At the far end of the parking lot, Cliff parks his truck.
Ward marches intensely from a separate direction. He looks
around. He notices he's holding a shotgun while on the move.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - METAL DETECTORS - DAY

A SECURITY GUARD gestures for Cliff to stop. Ward appears and points his shotgun.

JOHNNY WARD
Cliff! Stop! Don't shoot him!

Cliff points his gun at the guard.

CLIFF JOHNSON
What do you mean? We're killing everyone. Come on, Ward.

JOHNNY WARD
No. Not this way. I'm not killing anyone.

CLIFF JOHNSON
What? Why? Fuck you, man!

Cliff BLASTS the guard in the chest. Blood splatters. Ward FIRES at Cliff and hits the school wall. Cliff shoots at Ward, grazing his shoulder. Ward holds his shoulder. Cliff shakes his head.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Fuck you, Ward! Everyone dies!

Cliff enters the school.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Cliff's hand pulls down fire alarm.

INT. FUN HOUSE - JENNY'S ROOM

Jenny, alone, sits in a classroom with her head down.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

A FIRE ALARM BLASTS. Jenny looks up from her phone and eyes the speaker by the door in Mr. Hoover's class.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS(V.O.)
There is no need to be alarmed.
Teachers, please guide the students
to exit the classrooms
appropriately.

Students stand up.

MR. HOOVER
Single file.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Principal Adams continues his speech.

PRINCIPAL ADAMS
It will all be over in 15 minutes.

The door BURSTS open. Cliff's RED GLARING EYES and crazy grin accompany a shotgun. BOOM! Blood SPRAYS the wall behind the principal. His head falls slowly to the desk. Blood gushes all over paperwork. The fire alarm continues RINGING.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Jenny turns her head towards the blast. Students stir.

STUDENT #1
Did you guys hear that?

JENNY'S ROOM IN THE FUN HOUSE

Jenny now sits on the floor in the dark, empty room with her eyes closed, crying and reacting to a horrible dream.

HIGH SCHOOL

Cliff exits the principal's office wielding his shotgun. Jenny's face turns to horror. Students by the front entrance SCREAM and run outside. Cliff raises his shotgun. Jenny bolts down the hall from the doors.

BOOM! A stocky football player falls to the floor. Blood squirts from his leg. More SCREAMING. Cliff turns the corner and walks down the hall. Students hide where they can. A few students help drag the football player outside.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Students hide under desks. The fire alarm RATTLES nerves further. A girl tears up and closes her eyes. A male nerd reaches out and holds her hand. Another girl furiously texts.

SCHOOL HALLWAY

A girl wearing glasses crawls across the floor, looks up and SCREAMS. BOOM! Cliff places a shell in the chamber and turns a corner. His eyes RAZOR SHARP. FOCUSED. Bright red.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cliff points his shotgun around. Students pose in a fetal position on the floor. Female Student, scrunched under her desk, texts people.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Come on. Let's party!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Applebee, tears streaming down her face, holds her hands up above her head.

MRS. APPLEBEE
Cliff. Stop. Don't do this.

CLIFF JOHNSON
You're going down.

MRS. APPLEBEE
You're feeling hurt, alone. You need help. You need someone to talk to.

The door BURSTS open, lifting off its hinges. The door FLIES at Mrs. Applebee, BLIND-SIGHTING her and knocking her out. Blood oozes from her brow. Smiles pops his head in.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Knock! Knock!

CLIFF JOHNSON
Who's there?

SMILES THE CLOWN
Howie.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Howie who?

SMILES THE CLOWN
Howie gonna rid of this dead teacher?

Smiles chuckles. Cliff smirks.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Okay, kid. Finish today's lesson.

Smiles disappears into a cloud of red smoke.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Knock! Knock!

Cliff UNLOADS bullets around the room. A student is nailed in the shoulder. Everyone ducks. Mrs. Ward, hiding under the desk, closes her eyes tightly. Cliff waves shotgun around.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Now you know, I mean business.

Mrs. Ward slowly moves away from under the desk. She slowly rises with her hands up. Cliff, startled, points his gun at her. She notices Mrs. Applebee lying dead on the floor.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Mrs. Ward. What are you doing here?

MRS. WARD

I'm trying to save you and my son.
What have you done? Where's Johnny?

All students focus on Mrs. Ward. Johnny Ward steps in.

JOHNNY WARD

I'm right here.

Cliff raises his gun at Ward.

MRS. WARD

Johnny, are you okay?

JOHNNY WARD

Mother, please tell me you didn't
know about my abuse.

MRS. WARD

What?

CLIFF JOHNSON

Oh, I like this. I might hear this
out before killing both of you.

JOHNNY WARD

You knew Smiles was abusing me. You
knew Dad was abusing children. Why
didn't you say anything?

Mrs. Ward cries.

INT. FUN HOUSE - NIGHT

Mrs. Ward sits in a dark, empty room with her eyes closed, weeping.

HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Mrs. Ward places her hands to her cheeks.

MRS. WARD

I'm sorry. I'm going to have to live with that decision for the rest of my life. Cliff, you're going to have to live with this decision the rest of your life. Let the students go!

CLIFF JOHNSON

No!

MRS. WARD

Take me instead. I'm a sinner.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Oh, take her out anyway. I'm sick of her whining.

Cliff points shotgun around wildly. One of the jocks, Greg, looks over the scared students.

GREG

Who's the big man now?

Cliff FIRES his shotgun. Greg falls backwards, holding his stomach. Blood spills everywhere. Mrs. Ward faints. Ward shoots Cliff in the leg. Cliff falls. Cliff shoots back at Ward. Ward falls to the floor.

Police Officer #1 enters and shoots Cliff in the arm. Cliff FIRES at the officer hitting him in the shoulder. Officer falls to the floor.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Police Officer #1 struggles on the floor. Cliff rises. He FIRES randomly at the window. Glass shatters everywhere. Cliff steps over the wounded police officer and enters the hallway.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Shouting echoes throughout the school. A girl SCREAMS in the distance. Jenny sees a girl on the floor and goes to her. Checks pulse. Places girl's head down. Jenny lifts her head up again. Cliff turns the corner. Jenny stands and faces him.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Jenny, what's happening girl?

JENNY WARD
What the fuck are you doing?

CLIFF JOHNSON
I created a new school holiday. Do you like it?

JENNY WARD
Where's Johnny?

Cliff turns his head to the side.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Ward flaked out.

Cliff raises and points the shotgun at her face.

CLIFF JOHNSON
It was nice knowing you, Jenny.

She looks past Cliff at Ward, brandishing a shotgun.

JOHNNY WARD
I'll take it from here.

SMILES THE CLOWN
(mimicing)
I'll take it from here.

Ward shoots at Smiles. His bullet goes through him and into the wall. Smiles laughs LOUDLY. Cliff sideswipes Jenny's head with the shotgun. She falls and hits her head.

CLIFF JOHNSON
What the fuck, Ward?

JOHNNY WARD
I made my choice.

Mike turns a corner. Cliff points at him.

JOHNNY WARD
Let him go!

CLIFF JOHNSON

No way!

JOHNNY WARD

Cops surrounded the school. There's no way out, Cliff. What's your choice?

Johnny inches closer.

JOHNNY WARD

It's over. No more fun and games.

CLIFF JOHNSON

We had a pact. You and me.

JOHNNY WARD

I don't want to die. I don't want anyone else to die. End this.

Cliff and Ward point their shotguns at each other. Cliff FIRES at Ward, hitting the wall. Ward falls. Cliff shoots at Mike. The wall behind him shatters. Cliff dashes down the hall. Ward waves for Mike to leave.

JOHNNY WARD

Get out of here!

Mike sprints outside. Ward struggles to run after Cliff. Some police officers run to Jenny. Cliff turns a corner. Ward follows. Cliff clocks him with the butt of the gun. Ward struggles to stay on his feet.

CLIFF JOHNSON

You ruined it!

JOHNNY WARD

I'm gonna get through school and be something, maybe a musician.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Well, I don't have anyone or anything. All I had was you, Ward. And now you're bailing on me.

Raises shotgun at Ward.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Stupid mother fucker.

JOHNNY WARD

Don't Cliff!

CLIFF JOHNSON
This is my moment.

Cliff turns and dashes down the hallway towards the entrance.

JOHNNY WARD
NOOOOOOO!!!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

S.W.A.T. Team members move in to separate hallways. Cliff turns a corner, yelling and holding his rifle up.

CLIFF JOHNSON
Come on, mother fuckers!!!

S.W.A.T. Members FIRE at Cliff. Bullets sink into his chest, getting the better of him. He falls to his knees in the doorway, with the sun shining on his face. Police and students outside gasp. Ward runs down the hall.

JOHNNY WARD
CLIFF!

Ward reaches Cliff, kneels down and faces him. Cliff has a glimmer in his eye as he falls into Ward's arms.

JOHNNY WARD
Nooooo!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - NIGHT / FUN HOUSE

Ward and Cliff, sitting at school desks, raise their heads abruptly. Cliff catches his breath. A LARGE RED GLOWING BALL floats in the air behind and above him.

JOHNNY WARD
Cliff?

CLIFF JOHNSON
Is this a bad dream?

Fix enters.

FIX
It's the Fun House. You were in a battle for your soul, Cliff. Smiles won.

CLIFF JOHNSON

But if this was a dream then I
didn't really kill all those
people.

FIX

Sorry, Cliff. The Fun House is a
measure of what you will do. You
failed the test.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Ah, fuck!

Cliff wildly looks around.

CLIFF JOHNSON

What's happening to me?

Fix observes the red ball.

FIX

I can't save you.

JOHNNY WARD

Is he going to hell?

FIX

Sorry, Cliff. You made your choice.

JOHNNY WARD

I thought you were looking out for
us.

FIX

I'm not in control of everything.
You make choices in life. You made
yours. Cliff made his.

Ward runs to Cliff.

FIX

Don't!

Ward moves closer. The ball LIGHTS UP. Flames shoot out.

CLIFF JOHNSON

Goodbye, Ward. Goodbye, Fix.

Ward faints. Cliff waves. Fix waves. The red ball slowly
spins around. It gains momentum and DROPS transparently
through the floor.

INT. FUN HOUSE / CHURCH - DAY

The walls shape-shift. The room transforms into the Pastor's church. The Pastor stands behind the podium. He tries to let go of the podium, but can't remove his hands. Smiles points and LIGHTS candles around the room.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Feel more at home?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
Release me!

SMILES THE CLOWN
You owe me your pain. You owe the devil your soul. Tell me. How would it feel if a video surfaced on social media of you taking advantage of a young boy?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
What?

SMILES THE CLOWN
Gaze upon the phone on the podium.

Pastor Ward looks down at a smart-phone on the podium. A video begins playing. It shows Pastor Ward fondling a young boy by the confessional.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Maybe you need to see it bigger.

Smiles snaps his fingers. The projection replays the scene on the wall.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD
No! Don't!

SMILES THE CLOWN
It'll go viral.

Tears flood from the Pastor's eyes.

SMILES THE CLOWN
Oh, are you crying? Let's see if I can cheer you up.

Smiles pulls out a red balloon and stretches it.

SMILES THE CLOWN
No? We always handed balloon animals out to the boys. Remember?

Smiles blows up and ties a balloon to the Pastor' arm.

SMILES THE CLOWN

I invited some guests. But you know what, I'm not feeling at home. This church needs a little touch of carnival.

SUDDENLY there's a large, bright yellow stage, shaped like a giant Wack-A-Mole game in front of the Pastor. Mrs. Ward is tied to a pole hovering over one of nine large holes.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Anne.

MRS. WARD

William.

SMILES THE CLOWN

It's a bit cold in here. Let's turn up the heat.

Flames RISE under all the holes. Mrs. Ward SCREAMS.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Let her go!

SMILES THE CLOWN

Oh, how I love the circus. Let's add a spinning wheel.

Jenny suddenly finds herself locked to a large colorful spinning wheel. Smiles grins, holding up a sharp, THROWING KNIFE.

JENNY WARD

Let us go, clown!

SMILES THE CLOWN

Not until we 'spin' some time together, Jenny.

Fix and Ward arrive.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Hey, welcome back to the show! In celebration for winning Cliff's soul we're moving on to the bonus round.

Smiles flicks his fingers at Fix and Ward. Two SMILES CLONES, laughing, hold on tight to Ward and Fix, covering their mouths.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Now that all the contestants are here we can start the game. But first, what fun would a game show be without an audience?

Smiles HONKS a horn. SUDDENLY, the church has rows of pews filled with all sorts of churchgoers and circus freaks. A scoreboard POPS UP. Subjects on the Family Feud-like board are Music, Family, School, Circus Freaks, Truth.

SMILES THE CLOWN

The rules are...no rules. Pastor Ward, your first subject is truth. Did you or did you not molest children in Las Vegas and Chicago?

Jenny squirms around.

JENNY WARD

Daddy, just tell him you didn't do it.

Smiles turns and THROWS a knife. It lands inches from Jenny's face. She SCREAMS!

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

No!

MRS. WARD

Leave her alone, you monster!

SMILES THE CLOWN

Monster? You sound like my ex. Mrs. Ward, on how many occasions did you witness your son being molested by me and said nothing?

Mrs. Ward winces.

SMILES THE CLOWN

No answer is still an answer.

The pole Mrs. Ward's attached to immediately drops. She POPS up above another hole. Smiles swipes at her head with the large mallet and just misses her. She SCREAMS! Fire SHOOTs UP where she popped up from.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

NOOO!

Mrs. Ward's eyes bulge. She goes under again and again. The pole moves her in front of a mirror.

IN MIRROR

Smiles leads a 5 year old Johnny Ward into his bedroom. Mrs. Ward slowly shuts the door.

BACK TO FUNHOUSE

Mrs. Ward cries.

MRS. WARD

Stop it!

Fix looks down at the whip on his belt. The whip rises by itself. It wraps around Smiles' clone and chokes him. The clone disappears. Fix pokes the other Smiles clone in the eyes with his fingers. The clone falls to the ground. Ward pushes the clone over. Fix chokes the clone with his bare hands.

Smiles throws his mallet at Fix. Ward leaps in front to save Fix. Ward blocks the mallet. Fix picks it up and swings it back at Smiles. The mallet SMASHES Smiles in the face. He falls on his ass. His red nose falls to the floor. A miniature carousel rolls out of Smiles' pocket. Smiles' mouth drops. He tries to reach the mallet. Ward grabs it.

JOHNNY WARD

Looking for this?

FIX

Johnny, toss me that mallet.

Ward tosses the mallet. The miniature carousel GLOWS RED. Fix studies it.

FIX

I know this little carousel. You gave it to me when I was a kid.

SMILES THE CLOWN

It's just a toy.

FIX

At first I didn't like it. It told me to do bad things. Do you know why I started playing with it again?

Fix places his hand over the carousel. It GLOWS BLUE.

FIX

It has a lighter side. A good side. Johnny, tell Smiles what he did to you. Do it now.

Fix gives him a supportive nod. Ward faces Smiles.

JOHNNY WARD

You played evil games with me when
I was a young boy.

SMILES THE CLOWN

Boys like games.

JOHNNY WARD

I've been afraid all these years of
speaking out. If I get out of here
alive, I'm going to tell the world
what you did to me and what you did
to more children than what you went
to prison for.

The blue light in the carousel grows BRIGHTER AND STRONGER. Smiles raises his cane. Light from the carousel SHOOTs out at the cane. Smiles fights the light, but weakens. He falls to the floor.

FIX

Release the Pastor and leave this
place forever.

Smiles grimaces. He steadies his cane and chucks it at Fix. Fix SNAPS his whip and tosses the cane away. The contract flies out from behind the Pastor's back pocket and into Smiles' chest.

SMILES THE CLOWN

(weak)

Oh, it was a fun ride.

Smiles disappears into red smoke. The miniature carousel lifts up, flies into the smoke and also disappears.

FIX

Game over.

INT. FUN HOUSE - DAY

Fix waves his arm and the church-like visuals transform back to the fun house. Pastor Ward falls to the ground. Ward holds his shoulder.

JOHNNY WARD

Dad!

Fix helps the Pastor up. Pastor Ward hangs his head, crying. Fix holds it up.

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Please. I want to make things right. I'll do whatever is expected.

JOHNNY WARD

Dad, are you okay?

PASTOR WILLIAM WARD

Yes, my son. I'm so sorry what I let happen to you. I let that monster manipulate me. And I let my own monster take control. I'm sick.

Mrs. Ward and Jenny hug Johnny and Pastor Ward.

MRS. WARD

Johnny, I'm sorry too.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The park is empty except for debris. Maintenance workers pick up remaining litter. Police cars arrive. A young female high school student talks to an officer. She points to the area where the Fun House was located. Coach Binds sits on the ground in the park, thinking peacefully. Officers handcuff him. Another officer discovers Cliff's lifeless body. Mike and Greg find Billy, puking into a garbage can.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - DAY

Mrs. Ward, Jenny and Lauren, in a sling, console Ward also in a sling, laying in a hospital bed. Lauren and Ward compare slings. Mrs. Ward looks up at the TV on the wall. A photo of Pastor William Ward appears. Mrs. Ward grabs the remote and raises the VOLUME.

NEWS BROADCASTER

We take you now to Bob Murphy reporting from Las Vegas, Nevada. In a stunning discovery, Pastor William Ward, found not guilty in molestation cases years ago in Chicago, Illinois, is now connected to new claims of child molestation right here in Las Vegas.

Mrs. Ward, Jenny, Lauren and Johnny watch intensely.

NEWS BROADCASTER

An eleven year old boy just came forward with a claim against Pastor William Ward. And Coach Binds of Clark County High school was arrested today for sexual encounters with minors. What a day, folks.

They all share a look. Ward grabs the remote. Turns it off.

EXT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

Officers find Pastor Ward praying on his knees. Mike consoles Billy as he leans on the garbage can. Faith approaches them.

Montage

AT HOSPITAL

A) Officer talks to Mrs. Ward, sitting in a chair, trembling.

B) Lauren kisses Johnny's forehead and heads toward the door. Jenny kisses his cheek and roughs up his hair.

Mrs. Ward, wiping away tears, looks into Johnny's eyes.

MRS. WARD

Johnny, we're going to get some counseling. It's going to be okay.

She hugs him tightly.

C) Police Officer #1 sits outside Ward's room. Fix walks by unseen and transparently enters through the wall and the room.

FIX

How's my little rock star?

WARD

Oh! You scared me. So, what happens now?

Fix bends down and retrieves two guitars from under the bed.

WARD

Sweet!

FIX

Now, let's hear what you got.

Fix looks around and waves his hand around.

FIX

Let me just soundproof the walls.

Light blue lights seal the lines along the walls. Johnny starts jamming and Fix joins in.

THE END