

SCREATURES

by

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## SCREATURES

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD (KANSAS) - DAY

JOAN (31) drives the country roads. She's beautiful, simple, no make-up. The narrative voice of Dr. Hazard (whom we meet shortly) speaks hypnotically.

HAZARD (V.O)

Joan comes home.

She pulls her station wagon, full of boxes, off an abandoned Kansas highway onto a long dirt driveway. A barbed-wire fence and "KEEP OUT" sign stop her.

She gets out with a "FOR SALE BY OWNER" sign. Her torn jeans and thin T-shirt show off her body as she props the sign and opens the fence.

She drives up the dirt road. S, squinting against the setting sun, .

JOAN'S POV - FROM CAR

She sees a white mummified house with boarded windows. Behind the old house is a rusty windmill, stubbly fields, a distant ridge with dark leafless woods.

EXT. HOUSE/FRONT PORCH - SAME

Joan carries a laundry basket of junk and a bedroll, sets them down on the porch. A crowbar hangs over her arm. She pulls a skeleton key out of her pocket, opens the front door. The door SLAMS inside.

HAZARD (V.O)

The house sucks in a huge gasp of air.

Joan cautiously steps in.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Joan inspects the dark living room. Everything is falling apart. Black walnut floors with furniture wrapped in tarp.

HAZARD (V.O.)

She explores.

She takes her junk up a staircase just inside the front door, down a hallway and into the MASTER BEDROOM. She pitches the bedroll into the middle of the room.

HAZARD (V.O.)

Joan goes to work.

With the crowbar, Joan knocks boards off the bedroom window. Sunset streams in.

INT./EXT. SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

A board SLIDES off the roof, falls and BANGS on double cellar doors at the back of the house. Joan sweeps the master bedroom free of dust, cobwebs, curling paint.

EXT. HOUSE/PORCH - DUSK

Joan rests on the front porch stairs with the crowbar on her lap. She looks at her dirty hands. She , gets up slowly and ENTERS the house.

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

Joan sets a lit candle on the blue kitchen counter. Leaves chase each other on the checkered floor. WIND MOANS. She WRENCHES the sink faucet on and holds her hands under it. Nothing but the GROAN OF PIPES.

JOAN

Hell.

She opens the basement door, leans in with the candle. Rickety stairs fade into black below. She steps onto the first stair. It CREAKS. She stops, yells at the darkness.

JOAN

Hey! Turn the water on, will you?

HAZARD (V.O.)

She's messing in territory where she shouldn't

One drop of water PLOPS into the kitchen sink.

FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE BASEMENT STAIRS: PUSH UPWARDS towards Joan's leg. Joan She retreats, closes the door. BLACKNESS.

Joan latches LATCHES the basement door. She forces open the house's back door. EXITS.

EXT. FIELD BEHIND THE HOUSE - DUSK

Joan walks to a metal water basin below the windmill  
SQUEAKING in a faint breeze.

Reflected in the basin, Joan strips off her shirt, soaks her  
hands in the cold water, then tenderly SPLASHES it on her  
face, her arms, her body. She slips on a nightshirt.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

Joan walks towards the line of woods a hundred yards from the  
house.

MUSIC: A music box plays a childish lullaby.

Joan enters thorny hemlock trees. A soup of leaves steams in  
ravines reinforced with rusting old auto-bodies. She climbs  
a muddy ridge.

EXT. ASYLUM - DAY

Joan is blocked by a rusty chain link fence with sagging  
barbed wire and a "KEEP OUT" sign. Behind it is a corroding  
limestone asylum.

HAZARD (V.O.)  
Melder's Institute of Mental  
Hygiene.

Joan hears FRANTIC BABBLING, scans the dark barred windows.  
She creeps in closer, and clutches the fence. RUST CRUMBLES  
in her grip.

QUICK DISSOLVE  
TO:

EXT. ASYLUM - DAY 1970 (FLASHBACK)

A tiny hand clutches the fence. Joan is a little girl now  
(age 6). Mental patients in stark white pajamas mull in the  
mushy courtyard behind the fence.

SERIES OF SHOTS -  
THE CRAZIES:

A) BRACE-BOY (23) wears an elaborate wire and leather  
muzzle encasing a gnashing grimace. His red hair towers. He  
prods the muzzle with his hands missing several fingers.

- B) Wiry attendant, MR. DARLING (22), greasy black hair, smokes a cigarette. His goitered Adam's apple bobs as he sucks. A sawed-off broom handle hangs from his polyester pants.
- C) A patient, REBARB (33), scours the ground for bugs, smashing them, mumbling word salad to himself.
- D) LONER (45) is covered with spotty boils and zits, peers at his reflection in a dirty basement window. He POPS a zit on his forehead, searches the pus, then probes for more.
- E) HEARTLEACH (65), a frail, white-haired old man clutches his walker. A BEEPING pace-maker is rigged to his heart.
- F) Fat GASSER (55) holds his nose and struggles for air. His face and neck are covered with shiny burn scars.
- G) RUBBER-NECK (44) is strapped stiff in an upright gurney, with a bulky halo-like neck brace bolted to his head and shoulders.
- H) LITTLE JOAN looks innocently on.
- I) YOUNG TRICKLER (45), a bald, emaciated man in a wheel chair, stares right at little Joan. He emerges from the confusion, rolls carefully towards her.
- J) Trickler smiles, leans to get a better look at her, revealing a large bubbly pink square scar cut into the left side of his head.

END FLASHBACK

Adult Joan jerks her hand off the fence. Dazed, she retreats into the woods.

INT. ASYLUM/Common SLEEPING ROOM - DUSK

FROM INSIDE THE ASYLUM - OLD TRICKLER'S bald pasty-white head watches Joan's white T-shirt disappear into the trees. He is now 70 years old.

TRICKLER

She's home. She's home. She's home

Trickler pulls a Popeye scratcher board from his pajama bottoms, the kind kids draw on, made of a layer of cellophane on black tar gook.

INSERT POPEYE  
BOARD:

Trickler scratches "DR." with a little red plastic stick.

INT. ASYLUM/ENTRY HALL - SAME

NURSE MABLE (Age 60), a prunish old secretary mans the isolated front desk in the asylum entry hall.

She BUZZES a bulky gray intercom on her desk, thumb stroking the button like a nipple. A MECHANICAL whisper answers, a distant burp frying in heavy breathing.

HEAD (O.S.)  
Head Doc speaking.

NURSE MABLE  
Head, it's time for Trickler to talk.

INT. ASYLUM/HEAD'S OFFICE - SAME

HEAD DOC'S FACE IS ALWAYS IN SHADOWS, (early seventies). He holds a black CB-like device against his neck near a wheezing tracheotomy hole. It amplifies the grunts and turns them into the belching voice.

HEAD  
Send him down to Dr. Hazard.

The brown- spotted hand pulls the voice-box away, leaving pink grid marks on skin.

INT. HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joan's bedroll lies on the dusty floor of the upper room, lit by a half dozen candles as if someone were lying in state.

Joan closes the closet and the door leading to the black hallway. She blows out the candles except one. She slides into the sleeping bag, shivering.

A centipede dashes out from under her. She looks around the barren room.

Something in the corner seems to move. It resembles a naked crouching man. She holds the her candle up. It's only her junk. She sets it back down.

Biting her pinkie cuticle, she Joan eyes the heating vent gaping black near the head of her bed.

She opens a box of matches next to her and practices reaching for them. Satisfied, she blows the candle out. Something--a rat maybe--SKITTERS. Joan sits up.

Joan SQUEAKS open the grate covering the heat vent. She slides a huge rat trap with peanut butter into the black duct, drops the grate.

JOAN  
Deal with it.

INT./EXT. (VARIOUS LOCATIONS) - NIGHT - SERIES OF SHOTS:

As Joan's voice dies away:

- A) The halls
- B) Empty living room
- C) Outside cellar doors
- D) The woods
- E) The asylum windows
- F) Joan sleeps and dreams.

EXT. ASYLUM - DAY 1970 (DREAM/FLASHBACK)

LITTLE JOAN slides her hand through the fence and strokes Trickler's dent. It is soft and mushy. Trickler closes his eyes, enjoys. Joan giggles.

BACK BY ASYLUM Brace-Boy (redhead) notices their interaction.

TRICKLER opens his eyes, cups Joan's little hand in his trembling claws. He strokes his crusty lips with her tiny fingers. Trickler opens his mouth and SUCKS her entire hand into it.

BOOM. Darling's broom handle crushes CRUSHES down on the nape of Trickler's neck.

Darling glowers at Joan. Brace-Boy dances gleefully in B.G.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY - NEXT MORNING

DOCTOR HAZARD (Age 33), blue eyes, unshaven, button-down, jeans, drives an old green pick-up. The wind tosses his hair. The morning sunshine dapples his face.

HAZARD (V.O.)  
That's where I come in. I'm Doctor Hazard.

He passes abandoned houses, ancient graveyards. A small tape recorder hangs from the rear-view mirror.

SUPER: "DAY ONE - THERAPY"

SFX: TAPE RECORDER: DOCTOR HAZARD INTERVIEWS A PATIENT.

PATIENT (V.O.)  
Everyone I tell it to loses it,  
Doc. Think back on your history.

HAZARD (V.O.)  
What history?

PATIENT (V.O.)  
You can only think of one memory at  
any given time right?

HAZARD (V.O.)  
I guess so.

Hazard notices Joan's "FOR SALE" sign, squints into the morning sun. Flashes of Joan's house and station wagon through trees. Smoke drifts from a large bonfire.

PATIENT (V.O.)  
They're feeding them to you. They  
create your memories. Get out  
ahead of their implants and you  
don't exist. Who am I talking to?

His green truck jallopies across a little bridge, rounds the bend and dead-ends at the asylum sign:

"MELDER'S INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HYGIENE"

INT. ASYLUM/ENTRY HALL - DAY

Light sputters in a keyhole. TUMBLERS POUND, ECHO like kettle drums. Hazard ENTERS the metal door. A BUZZER sounds until he opens a cage door. Doc Hazard greets NURSE MABLE at the front desk.

HAZARD  
(smiling flirtatiously)  
Morning Nurse Mable. You look more beautiful every day.

Nurse Mable hands him manila folders.

MABLE  
(curt)  
Dr. Hazard, you're visiting with Mr. Bracer today.

HAZARD  
Wonderful! Thanks.

MABLE  
And, it's time to deal with Mr. Trickler. It'll be traumatic.

HAZARD  
I'll go easy on him.

Hazard walks to the elevator. He pushes the button, looks up at Nurse Mable in a fish-eye mirror. The elevator DINGS open.

INT./EXT. HOUSE (VARIOUS LOCATIONS) - DAY - SERIES OF SHOTS:

Joan fixes up the house.:

A) LIVING ROOM - beams of light stream into the dusty house as Joan uses her crowbar to remove boards covering windows. NAILS CROAK.

B) She CLICKS on a radio with tape holding in batteries, tunes to a RADIO PREACHER.

C) She unwraps a rotten sofa and throws the canvas out a window. Her butt pocket bulges with a screwdriver and newspaper.

D) She sweeps.

E) UPSTAIRS - Joan opens the bedroom closet door, finds a small 8mm projector and film.

F) OUTSIDE - Joan throws a board on her bonfire.

G) AT THE BACK OF THE HOUSE Joan OPENS the double cellar doors. She steps down the crumbling stairs, goes inside.

INT. ASYLUM/BASEMENT - DAY

Darling quickly carts Trickler out of the elevator, through a basement corridor lined with asbestos and pipes. Darling KNOCKS on a door.

HAZARD (O.S.)

Come in.

INT. - HAZARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Hazard sits at his desk, puts down a large letter opener. He looks up from behind mounds of paperwork lit by a crooning reading lamp, fake smiles. There is one barred basement window behind him. DARLING pushes Trickler in.

HAZARD

(to Trickler)

Hello! You need to talk. Is that right?

Trickler shakes. Darling leans on the back of the wheelchair, bored.

DARLING

He don't talk. He uses his scratcher board.

HAZARD

Thank you Mr. Darling. Close the door on your way out.

DARLING EXITS.

HAZARD

I'm Doc Hazard. I'd like to make friends. What's your name?

INSERT: POPEYE PAD. Trickler pulls out his drawing board. It's covered with hundreds of "DR." scratches. He ZIPS up the cellophane then scratches:

"T-R-I-C-K-L..."  
 Spittle strings to his spastic  
 hand. He quits, erases it,  
 devastated. Doctor Hazard looks in  
 Trickler's manila file.

HAZARD  
 That's good enough. Yes.... Mr.  
 Trickler. Not much in your file.  
 One of the other patients heard you  
 whispering in your sleep once. I  
 sure would like to hear that  
 handsome voice of yours.

No response. Hazard lurches over his desk and snatches the  
 scratch board from Trickler's , hands leaving them shaking in  
 the air. Hazard speaks hypnotically until the HISSING  
 radiator pipes resonate.

HAZARD  
 Let me keep that over here for a  
 minute. Now I'm ready to help you  
 work through your anxiety. I want  
 to make you very..... very  
 comfortable. Relax and breathe  
 deeply.

Trickler's head lulls, eyes close.

HAZARD  
 We all like to speak freely, to  
 feel our tongues loose. You don't  
 even need to listen to my voice,  
 but it will sound clear anyway.  
 Drifting through the doors of your  
 mind.

INSERT: FANTASY BASEMENT DOORS OPENING

With each word, a crusty basement door opens, one after  
 another. Trickler is hallucinating.

HAZARD (O.S.)  
 With... every... word... I...  
 speak... another... door...  
 opens...

BACK TO SCENE

Trickler's hands stop shaking.

HAZARD (O.S.)  
 Now there is one more door. Can  
 you see it?

Doc Hazard closes his eyes.

INT. SUB-BASEMENTS/HALLUCINATION

A metal door, giant rivets, swings open into a cement room,  
 cracks lacing the walls. A flesh-colored veined box hangs  
 from the ceiling by a dusty cobweb. It BREATHES and swells.

HAZARD (O.S.)  
 There's power in words.

Trickler's pale head moves up towards the small box.

HAZARD (CONT. O.S.)  
 In our fantasies we are gods.  
 Whatever you desire, we will do it.  
 Our imaginations merge here. We  
 solve problems TOGETHER. That's a  
 voice box.

Hazard is in another corner of the cement room. He watches,  
 indicates the flesh box. Trickler croons up underneath the  
 soft box. Hazard explains in voice over:

HAZARD (V.O.)  
 When I'm hypnotizing someone, I get  
 into my own altered state as deep  
 as the patient's. Whatever he  
 sees, I see vividly.

The box BREATHES faster as Trickler curls his chaffed lips  
 around it, SUCKING it into his gullet.

BACK TO SCENE  
 (HAZARD'S  
 OFFICE)

Hazard's eyes are closed.

HAZARD  
 Do you dream, Mr. Trickler?

Trickler answers with a wavering, whiny country accent.

TRICKLER (O.S.)  
 Yes.

Hazard opens his eyes, groggy, peeks at Trickler in the shadows. He quietly picks up a pencil and note pad.

TRICKLER (O.S.)  
There will be no records of this  
conversation!

Trickler's eyes are still closed. Perplexed, Hazard sets the pencil down, closes his eyes again.

HAZARD  
Let's dream together.

TRICKLER  
THEY'LL find out.

HAZARD  
Who?

TRICKLER  
The nebulous they. You have no  
concept. Unplug the intercom!

HAZARD  
That'll pull us out of our trance.

Trickler is silent. Hazard feels for the intercom on his desk. He pulls out a plug, lets it dangle.

QUICK INSERT: Joan through the fence, retreating into the woods.

TRICKLER  
I saw her. Lovely in the dusk.  
She likes playing at the edge.

HAZARD  
Your mother?

TRICKLER  
Don't rush to conclusions! She's  
all grown up. She lives through  
the woods.

HAZARD  
Oh. A new neighbor.

TRICKLER  
She's frightened.

FROM INSIDE THE HEAT VENT: Joan sleeps.

HAZARD  
What do you do with her?

TRICKLER  
Come and see

BACK TO SCENE

Hazard lifts his head, half opens his eyes. Trickler stands up from his wheelchair, hunched spine straightening. A wobbling silhouette, he EXITS through the gently opening door.

Hazard, confused, stares a moment then follows.

INT. ASYLUM BASEMENT/HALL - DAY

Hazard walks down the hall. Trickler holds the elevator door open. It tries to BANG shut on his bony arm. Hazard reluctantly steps inside. The door CLOSES.

TRICKLER  
Face that corner.

Hazard puts his nose in a corner of the elevator.

TRICKLER  
(menacingly)  
Be one with me.

HAZARD  
Hey now, wait a second here

Hazard turns back around. The elevator lights "B, 1, 2, 3" pulse on and off. Trickler smiles.

TRICKLER  
It's only a riddle.

HISS OF STEAM, WHIR of giant machine cogs. Hazard looks through the wire-mesh elevator window. The elevator drops. Hazard panics and pries at the door.

HAZARD  
What's going on?

They ride down forever.

TRICKLER  
It's risky venturing into someone's  
mind, confronting their  
subconscious fears.

HAZARD

I trust you. You trust me. Try anything and I buzz the intercom, that's all.

INSERT: CLOSE on the unplugged intercom cord.

The elevator lurches to a stop, OPENS. Trickler peeks out.

TRICKLER

(scared)

Here we go.

INT. SUB-BASEMENTS - DAY

SURREAL SERIES OF SHOTS: MUSIC like rumbling bowels.

A) They step down an ECHOING concrete stairway. They open an immense door. ALARMS SOUND, MACHINERY CLANGS, PIPES HISS from depths of unknown chambers.

B) A tunnel of mud and glistening limestone. Naked light bulbs BUZZ and smoke in DRIPPING water.

TRICKLER

We're under the woods now.

C) Tunnels and water mains. Giant roots grow through the sludgy ceiling.

D) Trickler nods toward a faded radiation sign..

TRICKLER

Missile silo.

HAZARD

Down there?

TRICKLER

Only twenty feet below the cornstalks. The warhead's been removed.

E) Hazard covers his nose as they SLOSH around a large rotten carcass in water.

TRICKLER

Rats drug it down from a farm somewhere. Radiation changes things.

F) They arrive at a round metal door. Trickler swings a corroded bar off. They strain to lift the door. Water SURGES in. Trickler crawls in.

INT. EFFIGY CHAMBER/SUB-BASEMENTS - DAY

Hazard follows. They stand on a rickety see-through metal catwalk. Hazard walks, looks left.

They stand at a dizzying height near the ceiling of a huge concrete chamber. There are rows of empty metal book shelves stretching back into infinity.

HAZARD (O.S.)

Good Lord. What is this place?

TRICKLER

Effigy chamber. Here, Screamers are created. THEY stored secrets here until other, more reliable means of storage were discovered.

Trickler points to a BOILING cesspool far below. Reddish light glows. Foaming gobs of hair and meat churn to the surface.

TRICKLER (O.S.)

The Effigy comes up from the bottoms. One of your patients designed the robotics. It's roaming in here somewhere.

The railing ends, rusted through. Chamber lights strobe.

BLACKNESS

The lights CRACKLE back on, Hazard teeters at the catwalk edge. Effigy lake is a fomenting frenzy below. HAZARD barely grabs the railing in time.

As he continues walking Hazard hears strange robotic HYDRAULICS WHEEZING below. He sees a long rolling shadow deep in the endless chamber.

Trickler points up at a black hole in the concrete ceiling.

TRICKLER (CONT.)

They threw the patients through that hole. Leads to HER basement.

Trickler turns a flood lock, and opens another door, EXITS. Hazard stares up at the black hole.

PUSH INTO THE BLACK HOLE

INT. OLD HOUSE/BASEMENT - DAY

Joan continues her earlier cleaning spree.

THE RADIO PREACHER'S VOICE echoes faintly down through the vents. Ducts, crawl spaces, and pipes lead to God-knows-where.

JOAN SCANS the rusty tools, jars, soggy mattresses, and one monolithic chalk-white deep-freeze. Cryptic writing scratched on the wall reads: "WATER SHUT OFF". An arrow points down a tunnel.

Joan CLICKS on her lighter on, enters the tunnel, and follows along the heat vents deeper into the basement. Spider webs break across her face. She blows them off like wisps of hair.

She trips and falls with a HOLLOW THUD. She drops the lighter. BLACKNESS

JOAN

Damn!

Wood GROANS. Joan finds the lighter, CLICKS it on. She is kneeling on the huge barn door in the dirt floor. She peers down through a glowing red keyhole.

JOAN

Lordy! Potato cellar maybe.

The Wood CRACKS. The door lurches downward. A board BUSTS off the underside. It RICOCHETS off walls falls far below.

Joan drops the lighter, flattens herself on the collapsing door. Her lighter goes out again.

BLACKNESS

INT. EFFIGY CHAMBER/SUB-BASEMENTS -  
DAY

Hazard sees a board falling from the black hole above. He jumps into Trickler's flood lock, EXITING just as the board bounces off on the catwalk and SPLASHES into the glowing cesspool below.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT/EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Hazard and Trickler ENTER a rough concrete room with an examination bed resembling a mortuary table. There is a hole where the head would lay. Below that, there is a drain set in the floor. On the sides of the bed there are drawers inset.

Trickler rolls six feet of stained butcher paper through a roller covering the bed.

TRICKLER

Rest here a moment.

Trickler puts on a white lab coat he finds on a hook. Hazard lays back on the concrete bed.

HAZARD

It's cold.

TRICKLER

It warms up with body heat.

Dr. Hazard stares up at the examination light.

Trickler moves to a clock mounted on the wall. It wobbles on a thick metal spring. Trickler SQUEAKS open the glass covering the clock face, coated with aged brown Vaseline jelly. Hazard peeks.

HAZARD

What's that?

Trickler removes the hour and minute hands. Holds them up for Hazard.

TRICKLER

In the fifties, they built clocks that could withstand the shock waves of a direct nuclear attack. In such desperate situations, it's important to find anchors; a way to hold on to reality, to sanity. Time is such an anchor.

HAZARD (O.S.)

Interesting.

Trickler opens a drawer on the side of the bed. It is filled with bizarre, abstract surgical instruments.

TRICKLER (O.S.)

Whenever the Soviets caught one of our spies they'd lobotomize them. Then dump them on some back-country road to wander, a screaming zombie.

Hazard is on his back, eyes closed, breathing deeply.

INSERT: EXTREME LONG SHOT - QUICK, NIGHTMARISH FLASH

In the distance, a naked man runs aimlessly down a tree-lined back-country road.

RETURN TO SCENE

Hazard squirms a bit. Trickler lifts a grungy vial into the harsh lamp light. He slides the rusty red minute hand into the bottle, preparing an injection.

TRICKLER (O.S.)

THEY would pick them up and drop them through the hole for me to work on them.

Hazard, opens his eyes wide, rolls and looks into the drawer full of syringes, jagged-edged scalpels, surgical scissors, probes, saws, jumper cables, rubber tubing.

He bolts violently from the bed, bumping the hanging lamp. CRASHING over olive colored civil defense canisters, he cowers in a dark corner.

HAZARD

What the hell's going on!

Trickler sets the minute hand on the butcher paper. Annoyed, he stops the lamp from swinging.

TRICKLER

Don't you trust me Doctor Hazard?  
If I wanted you I'd have had you.

He reaches into the drawer and pulls a switch. Restraint clamps CRASH shut where Hazard's arms and legs were. Pulls it again, they SLAM OPEN.

TRICKLER

Now strip and sit.

Trickler preps the other clock hand for injection.

HAZARD

What?

TRICKLER

You want to see my dreams?

HAZARD

I'm not so sure where all this is going.

Trickler sets the hour next to the minute hand.

TRICKLER

You should make some concessions too. Get vulnerable! Before I take you any deeper, I need to secure you.

HAZARD (O.S.)

I don't know about this.

With that, Hazard undresses. He stands back in the shadows and drops his pants.

TRICKLER

Remember Doctor Hazard, it's all just a fantasy, isn't it?

With that, Hazard undresses. He stands back in the shadows and drops his pants.

Naked, his hand a fig leaf, Hazard lies down again. He stares into the harsh lamp.

Trickler begins a careful search over every inch of Hazard's body, prying, gently probing, and massaging him. He starts with Hazard's back and spine.

EXT. FARM - DAY 1954 (FLASHBACK)

GRAINY IMAGES of normal MR. GASSER (53), walking around his chicken coop, wiping sweat from his brow. He reaches inside and twirls a knob.

TRICKLER (V.O.)

Once there was a chicken farmer. Mr. Gasser Iinvented a corn-based chemical compound that killed his chickens for him, painlessly. Didn't have the heart to slaughter them.

CHICKENS buck and flounder against the chicken wire.

TRICKLER (V.O.)  
He fed the chickens to his family.  
His children changed.

EXT. BARN - DAY 1954 (FLASHBACK)

A sweating, crying Gasser screams at his home from a nearby field. Seeing something terrifying, he runs into his barn.

TRICKLER (V.O.)  
Had appetites! Found one of the  
kids chewing on her mom's thigh  
bone.

INT. BARN - DAY 1954 (FLASHBACK)

A little girl gnaws a long meaty bone. TWO CHILDREN stalk the barn with pitchforks and sickles. One of the children pounces on cowering Gasser.

He tosses the freak off. Hair covering his bald spot unfurls in a greasy string. He thrusts down with a pitchfork.

TRICKLER (V.O.)  
Gasser killed all of them except  
one. He was so gentle too.

Gasser's LITTLE BOY is tied spread-eagle between the posts of a barn stall, wrapped in a gunny sack. He foams at the mouth, thrashes violently.

TRICKLER (V.O.)  
The old country doctor had never  
seen anything like it. He didn't  
know if it was Gasser or the boy  
that was crazy. So the government  
finds out. They always find out  
about such projects. It could make  
a whole nation devour itself in a  
feeding frenzy.

(MORE)