

# PERIPHERAL VISION

Screenplay  
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FADE IN:

EXT. SOUTH ENGLISH COAST. NIGHT

The windswept cliffs of Dover are lashed during an ugly black storm - the kind of weather that elicits a shudder from the primal part of our souls.

Angry waves kick up and smash a WRECKED WOOD SCHOONER, wedged between the rocks, against the side of the cliff.

The broken and jagged mast sways violently from side to side in a perpetual struggle to be set free.

The view moves up the side of the cliff, breathtakingly swift, to a twisted narrow country road -

To the window of a small ancient COTTAGE, isolated on a dead end lane.

EXT. COTTAGE. NIGHT

A black sedan breaks through the fog and drives up to the cottage.

The car parks, and two men exit.

The fog masks their faces, but the body language suggests they're not here for a vacation.

As one of them opens the back door, the interior light reveals the face of JACOB BORDEL, 42.

Jacob removes a duffle bag, a small canvas knapsack, and a 3x4' wood crate. He opens the trunk and takes out a folded easel.

The other man, CLAUDE, 48, doesn't move to ease Jacob's load. He takes a set of keys, tucks it in Jacob's jacket pocket and tips his head toward the rusty Citroen parked next to the cottage.

CLAUDE

Yours.

He turns the key in the lock of the cottage, then SHOVES his shoulder against the warped wood door. It slams open.

INT. COTTAGE. NIGHT

Claude flips on the light to reveal a bare bones turn of the last century cottage: one room with a stone fireplace, sink, stove, small icebox against one wall and a single bed against the other.

He pulls back a worn cloth curtain to reveal a toilet, sink and tub in a tiny, dingy, bathroom.

CLAUDE  
Takes your breath away.

Jacob sets down his load and immediately inspects the fireplace.

As he bends down his dark hair falls into eyes that are perpetually weary. An American lost on the other side of familiar shores, he's handsomely broken and put back together too many times.

JACOB  
Christ, I'm cold.

CLAUDE  
Get used to it.

A long scar creases Claude's angular face and despite hunched shoulders on a thin body, his edginess fills more than his physical space. His British accent speaks of London by way of Manchester.

He throws Jacob an old newspaper.

CLAUDE  
Matches on the mantle.

Jacob finds the box of matches and lights a fire while Claude rummages through the cupboards and finds a bottle of Scotch and two glasses.

He pours a couple of shots and halfheartedly offers one to Jacob.

CLAUDE  
Antifreeze?

JACOB  
Thanks. Don't suppose you were thoughtful enough to supply me with some real food.

CLAUDE  
(sniffs)  
Mother's milk.

He downs his shot and pours another. Jacob takes a sip, then places his glass on the mantle.

The fire catches. Jacob sips his Scotch as he gets a better look at his surroundings.

JACOB  
So... this is it.

CLAUDE  
Spec perfect. In line with the target. Triangulated to your ever so special needs -

JACOB  
Yeah, I'm a fussy bastard.

CLAUDE  
(grins)  
You can hear the waves. Close enough to take a dip, eh?

Claude's barb hits Jacob.

JACOB  
Funny.

CLAUDE  
Heard they had to sedate you to get you over the pond.

Jacob feigns disinterest, setting up his easel, removing an oil painting from the wood crate.

CLAUDE  
Hey, your Lordship, we all have our things. Me? I get rattled by a woman with lopsided breasts. You never know, do you, until they release them from bondage what horrors await -

Jacob sits in front of the painting. He aims a flattened palm towards the window, looking out across the ocean to somewhere beyond.

JACOB  
It feels alright. As the crow... or mind flies.

CLAUDE  
Yeah...whatever works.

Claude snickers, tired of faking interest in this guy. He lights a cigarette, takes a closer look at the dingy, partially restored painting.

CLAUDE  
Why waste your time with this?  
Don't they pay you enough?

JACOB  
It calms me. Helps me focus...  
Besides I enjoy scraping away the  
ugliness. Reminds me that we're not  
all beasts of that color.

CLAUDE  
Blots out the static does it?

JACOB  
Something like that.

CLAUDE  
Huh. I'm a fan of erotic art  
myself.

Jacob ignores the comment, positioning a sketch book, pencil, and a map on a small side table. He is METICULOUS in how these items are arranged.

Claude shakes his head, amused.

CLAUDE  
Other notable bits - good fish at  
the local, overcooked just right.  
Oak and Hammer pub serves a  
palatable meat pie -

JACOB  
You seem to know this area well.

CLAUDE  
I used to spend the summers of my  
tender youth here. Come back now n'  
again. Since Bosnia...

He rubs the jagged scar that twists one side of his face.

CLAUDE

...no one recognizes me. But you came out of that mess with your pretty face still intact. Oh, yeah... you watched it from a cozy distance.

Jacob squints, absorbing but not reacting to his statement. Claude takes a few brown envelopes out of his breast pocket and throws them on the table.

CLAUDE

We need something tomorrow.

JACOB

If something is there, I'll get it for you. This isn't e-mail.

Claude rolls his head, weary.

CLAUDE

Too bad you can't use that radar to see into the future. I'd like to know my ass is going to be on a Jamaican beach while I still have the lungs to suck up the ganja. Yeah, or maybe you can tell me who's dicking me girlfriend right now.

Jacob closes his eyes.

JACOB

Can't quite make out the name on the team's jersey.

CLAUDE

Yeah, that'd be her.

Claude opens the door to leave, but turns back.

CLAUDE

I won't come here again. Don't want to be seen on this road.

Jacob salutes a quick goodbye before the door closes. Jacob turns his back and pokes at the fire.

EXT. COTTAGE. NIGHT

Claude walks to the car.

CLAUDE  
(under his breath)  
Fuckin' freak.

INT. COTTAGE. NIGHT

Jacob hears the car start up and drive away. The sound of the engine gives way to the rain and the distant boom of brutal ocean waves. An almost imperceptible shiver runs through his body.

He closes his eyes and presses the heel of his hand against his forehead. A groan acknowledges a headache that's been building for hours.

He opens his eyes and everything in the cottage stands out crystal clear and distinct.

Jacob's eyes track details like a radar beam: the distance between the chair and fireplace, between the painting and chair, mental steps to the doorway.

He moves the easel a few centimeters back and moves a candle on the fireplace to the far right, next to a small ceramic pot.

Hurried, as if under a stop watch, he moves to the open pantry shelves and arranges the cans in order of size and with the labels facing out in precise alignment.

He stands back to take in the entirety of the room for the first time. With the fire in the fireplace and his possessions in place, it actually looks livable.

Jacob finally allows himself to relax - for a moment.

He pours himself another drink and downs it in one gulp. Pours another, takes off his jacket, then settles in his chair in front of the painting.

He opens the small canvas knapsack at his feet and removes: a small can of linseed oil, a can of turpentine, a small metal bowl and a box of cotton swabs.

His face calms as his eyes scan the canvas while his fingertips brush over the frame.

The oil painting is in the early stages of a restoration - covered in dusty grime that still hides most details.

IN THE PAINTING:

CLOSE on figures gathered around a long wood table in a cavernous Edwardian mansion kitchen.

The room is dominated by a multi-paned WINDOW that looks out to the central court of the exterior that can be seen at a sharp angle.

A MAN DRESSED IN BLACK sits at the head of the table with his back to the observer. He holds a CARVING KNIFE in his hand - readied for the roast a MAID places before him.

EXTREME CLOSE on the hidden face of a GRANDFATHER CLOCK in the corner of the painting.

Jacob opens the tin of oil, pours a bit into the metal bowl followed by a hit of turpentine. He mixes it with a cotton swab, then leans forward and gently dabs at the face of the clock.

The hour hand is exposed ...

then the minute hand ...

11:55.

Jacob leans back in his chair and looks at his watch.

11:55.

He smiles, amused but not surprised by the coincidence.

He looks over at the envelopes Claude threw on the table. His expression foretells a reluctance to begin his work.

EXT. CLIFF. NIGHT

The insistent sound of brute waves and the flickering light of the cottage in the murky distance.

Like the pull of tides, the distance between the cottage and the cliff shrinks.

INT. COTTAGE. NIGHT

Jacob sits in front of the painting. A LONG SIGH escapes his lips as he gently ROCKS BACK AND FORTH in the chair.

The fingers on his left hand TAP ON HIS KNEE IN RAPID BEATS.

Beads of sweat break out on his face as his breath becomes DEEP AND RASPY.

His right hand SHAKES as it GROPEs blindly over to the small table beside him.

He finds the sketchbook and pencil, but knocks the map to the floor.

The pencil in his hand moves erratically in the air over the paper.

His eyes roll back and close and as we SLOWLY push in, images flash from inside his psychic journey.

REMOTE PSYCHIC VIEW

Images inside the cottage - the painting, something on the mantle.

Then outside sweeping away from the house, gathering speed over the cliff and across the water.

Images blur.

EXT. ALLEY. NIGHT

Dead silence is broken by Jacob's deep breaths as his POV travels down this dank, creepy lane.

FLASHES OF FRENCH STREET SIGNS: the words "Rue de Lille" come into sharp focus.

Then the view is PULLED BACK swiftly and turns down an empty, cobblestoned street.

The CLANG OF CHURCH BELLS shocks.

Painted store windows swipe by with the view ending abruptly in front of a RED DOOR.

Jacob's psychic POV TURNS and sweeps up the side of the building and through the window of an apartment a couple of floors up from the street.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

The remote view travels from the window into the kitchen: FLASHES OF A TABLE: BLUEPRINT DRAWINGS - CHUNNEL SCHEMATICS.

TWO PAIR OF HANDS work with timing devices.

The view is withdrawn from this, back through the window, and down to the street.

The sign over the red door comes into sharp focus - "LA POULE NOIRE" - with a depiction of a black hen.

INT. COTTAGE. NIGHT

A SHARP CRACK. FLUTTERING at the window. Jacob jolts out of his trance. His eyes snap open.

He staggers to the window, shaken by his sudden return.

He holds his hand up to the glass. A FLASH OF LIGHTENING illuminates a smear of BLOOD across the window pane.

LIGHTENING CRACKS AGAIN.

Jacob sees the BODY OF A BLACK BIRD in the window box. He jerks his hand away from the glass.

He turns, grabs a sheet of newspaper from the counter. At that moment there is another flash of lightening.

For a split second a FEATURELESS FACE appears in the window. But Jacob, halfway out the door, isn't there to see it.

EXT. COTTAGE. NIGHT

Rain pummels Jacob as he wraps the dead bird in newspaper.

He finds a piece of broken pottery, drops to his knees and digs in the muddy ground beside the cottage.

He places the bird in the hole and covers it. Then leans back on his heels, turns, and VOMITS.

INT. JACOB'S CAR - MOVING. DAY

Jacob maneuvers the beat up Citroen around muddy potholes created by the ravages of the previous night's storm. Dark circles ring his eyes - evidence of a night bereft of sleep.

EXT. JACOB'S CAR - MOVING

The car passes a sign: "LITTLESTONE .5KM"

INT. JACOB'S CAR - MOVING

As Jacob slows to avoid another pothole, he sees a RECTORY GARDEN in front of an old church - SAINT AGNES.

REVEREND LOWELL, mid 40's, tall, ruggedly handsome, clears away tree branches felled by the previous night's storm. He wears a cleric's collar with a white T-shirt over jeans.

MRS. VIOLET GANT, mid 50's, exits the church ground's gate. She carries a cloth shopping bag. She has the plain hard looks of the Kent working class.

Jacob nods and waves a greeting but she pins him with a cold cursory stare as she sidesteps closer to the ditch to avoid a splash from his vehicle.

JACOB  
(to himself)  
A pleasure to meet you too.

EXT. LITTLESTONE. DAY

Jacob's car drives through the village. Winter has already claimed a place in this drab grey town. The inhabitants wear seasonal depression on their pale faces like a badge of survival.

He pulls the car up in front of the Chemists/Post Office.

INT. CHEMISTS/POST OFFICE

The shop is cramped and triples as a tea shop with the addition of two tables set by the front window.

Jacob rings the bell on the counter.

LISA comes from the back room. She's 19, a pretty fresh-faced blonde dressed like her idea of big city sexy.

LISA  
Hello?

JACOB  
Hi. Cotton swabs?

LISA  
Right beside the -

Jacob finds the box.

JACOB

Got it.

Lisa smiles as he approaches the counter.

JACOB

Have any coffee made up?

LISA

Not a tea drinker?

He scrunches up his face.

LISA

Right...American?

JACOB

'Fraid so.

LISA

I have Sanka.

JACOB

Great. A mug of that - take out cup  
if you have it.

He sits down at one of the tables by the window. The view is  
of the town square and park across the street.

Lisa comes to his table with the coffee in a paper cup.

LISA

Cream and sugar?

JACOB

No thanks.

He takes a sip and notices Lisa doesn't move.

JACOB

It's good.

LISA

Are you on your way somewhere?

JACOB

Not really. I'm renting a cottage  
up the bluff road.

LISA

With your family?

JACOB

Just myself...

LISA  
It's a cold month for a holiday.

JACOB  
The quiet suits my work.

LISA  
Oh?

The question hangs in the air.

JACOB  
I restore art.

She doesn't get it.

JACOB  
Old dusty paintings. I clean them  
up.

LISA  
Oh...

JACOB  
You sound disappointed.

LISA  
No! It's just that you don't look -

JACOB  
That boring? I'm flattered.

Lisa leans on the table.

LISA  
You're going to get lonely up  
there.

JACOB  
Well...

LISA  
This whole area is dead, dead,  
dead. I'm leaving for London the  
second I can afford a flat.

JACOB  
At your age the outside world  
always looks more tantalizing.

LISA  
It's not?

Jacob smiles.

His cell phone rings. He looks at the caller ID number, hesitates, then answers.

JACOB

Hi. Yeah, iffy reception - no - no -  
I'm not sure.

His voice dulls.

JACOB

I don't know how long...

The bell over the door rings as Mrs. Gant enters. Lisa returns to the counter.

Mrs. Gant hands her a prescription to fill.

LISA

(to Mrs. Gant)

Mum and Dad are at Gran's. She's  
under the weather. You'll have to  
wait until they get back, or fill  
it in Bamsbridge.

Mrs. Gant SNAPS the prescription out of Lisa's hands - miffed. She turns her attention to Jacob's phone conversation.

The call isn't going well. He looks out the window to the park across the street.

JACOB

(into phone)

If that's ...I'm... I'm sorry...

MRS. GANT

Those ghastly things should be  
outlawed in public.

She whips her head back to Lisa.

MRS. GANT

And you're not appropriately  
dressed for business. I'm sure your  
parents wouldn't approve.

She turns to the shelves, picking over items, ranting purposely loud enough for Jacob to hear.

MRS. GANT

Propriety. Entirely missing today.  
Whether it be privacy or dress, our  
world is crumbling like the Roman  
Empire.

Jacob half listens to this tirade - shrugs and transmits an understanding smile to Lisa.

With Gant's back turned Lisa mouths back in Jacob's direction.

LISA  
Old cow...

Jacob vamps, listening to the woman on the phone.

WOMAN ON PHONE  
(filtered)  
Jacob, I can't do this anymore.

The line goes dead.

A beat, before Jacob pushes the END button on his phone. He toys with it, like he is considering dialing again, but pushes it aside.

He takes a piece of paper out of his pocket. PENCIL SKETCHES: a church steeple, the words "rue de lille", and the sign with the black hen. In block letters, retraced over and over again - the word "CHUNNEL".

Jacob skims a finger tip over the drawings, folds the paper, slips it into one of the Claude's envelopes, and seals it.

Lisa approaches his table.

LISA  
Need a stamp for that?

Jacob quickly shoves the envelope into his coat pocket.

JACOB  
No. I'm fine.

LISA  
Can I get you another Sanka?

He shakes his head.

JACOB  
I'm good.

He hands her a few coins.

JACOB  
Hit the spot. Thank you.

She smiles as he gets up and heads for the door. Lisa grabs his arm.

LISA  
You forgot these.

She hands him the swabs. He gives her more money, then looks up and notices Mrs. Gant is still boring a hole through him.

Jacob flips opens his cell phone and shows it to her.

JACOB  
Sorry for disturbing you. No  
reception at my place. Next time  
I'll take myself to the lavatory  
for a conversation.

Mrs. Gant narrows her eyes and doesn't give in to his wide grin and charm. He exits.

EXT. CHEMISTS/POST OFFICE

Jacob crosses the street toward the park.

INT. CHEMISTS/POST OFFICE

Lisa and Mrs. Gant watch Jacob cross the street, each with their own expression of interest.

The door opens and Claude enters the store.

Mrs. Gant brushes past him to exit - but not before she rakes him up and down as if he was just another nasty stranger.

Claude tips a non-existent hat to her and grins when she shrinks back. He senses her discomfort and takes great delight in exploiting it.

Once Mrs. Gant exits Claude turns his full attention on Lisa.

CLAUDE  
You remember my brand.

Lisa doesn't raise her eyes to his face. She turns and reaches up for the package of cigarettes.

Claude savors the view of the back of her bare knees. Sensing this, Lisa spins around and tosses the package on the counter and grabs his money.

Claude slowly and deliberately unwraps the cellophane, never taking his eyes off of her.

CLAUDE  
No smile for me today, luv?

LISA  
(barely audible)  
Is that all?

He narrows his eyes, smirks, turns and walks out of the store.

EXT. PARK. DAY

Jacob sits on a park bench and watches CHILDREN push paper boats across a shallow cement pond. One LITTLE BOY, 6, catches his eye.

The boy cries and holds a soggy mess of his paper boat that fell apart in the water.

As Jacob's concentration on this scene intensifies his auditory cues and visual sense moves in SLOW MOTION.

He closes in on the little boy's sneakers - one of the laces is untied and the end of the lace dangles in the water as he balances on the edge of the pond.

Jacob looks over at a a SMALL GROUP OF WOMEN, some with strollers, chatting a few dozen feet away.

The boy cries and calls out to his mother.

One of the women raises her hand, as if to say "Just a minute..." then continues her conversation with the group.

Jacob gets up.

His cup falls to the ground.

He walks toward the boy as if his feet are weighed down with cement.

Voices of young boys echo in his memory: Taunts and yells of "Jacob wanna bath?" "C'mon baby. Suck it up baby!"

The boy teeters back and forth on the ledge, but the pond is shallow - only a few inches deep - certainly not a danger. Despite this, Jacob reaches out to the boy as if the child was on the edge of an abyss.

He grabs the boy's arm and pulls him off the ledge. Startled by this stranger's actions, he hollers.

YOUNG BOY  
Mommmy!

The boy's mother whips her head toward the sound. She sees Jacob holding her son and sprints toward them.

The boy breaks loose from Jacob's grip and runs into his mother's arms.

The sound of the mother's voice blasts Jacob back to reality.

MOTHER

What do you think you're doing!?

JACOB

He was falling...

He points to the pond that now looks so benign he is embarrassed at his actions.

JACOB

I'm sorry...

The mother pulls her son away, looking back at Jacob with a warning glare.

EXT. STREET. DAY

Claude smokes a cigarette, watching this unfold from across the street. He has a clear view of Jacob and the mother as she hustles her son away.

EXT. PARK. DAY

Jacob takes his seat back on the bench. He waits as Claude casually approaches. He sits at the opposite end of the bench and looks away as he speaks.

CLAUDE

Making friends?

JACOB

The chunnel is the target.

Claude glances at Jacob to confirm. Jacob lays the envelope on the bench between them.

Claude picks up the envelope and tucks it in his pocket.

CLAUDE

Bloody buggers got some balls.

(stands to leave)

Somebody's party is going to be spoiled.

JACOB  
I'll be watching.

CLAUDE  
I'm sure you will.

INT. JACOB'S CAR - MOVING. DAY

Jacob drives back to the cottage. He cranks down his window and sucks in the damp air.

The faint tinny sound of a BICYCLE BELL sounds from somewhere.

Jacob slows down and glances in his rear view mirror, but there is nothing behind him.

The bell rings again.

When he looks ahead, he catches a brief glimpse of a YOUNG WOMAN on a bicycle passing his car - appearing out of nowhere.

Her long, dark hair falls over the side of her face. She wears a thin cotton dress and sandals - in odd contrast to the inclement weather.

Jacob's eyes move to her MUD SPATTERED BARE LEG, then to the RUSTED WHITE BACK FENDER as she turns into a lane.

A beat, then Jacob slows the car to a stop. He reverses to the lane entrance, looking down only seconds after she enters.

The girl has vanished.

INT. FRENCH APARTMENT BUILDING. HALLWAY STAIRS. NIGHT

DISJOINTED CUTS OF:

A squad of MILITARY BOOTS pound up the stairs.

Flashes of ASSAULT WEAPONS - FLACK VESTS - HELMETS

Eyes of MILIARY PERSONNEL, hidden behind balaclavas. One points aggressively to an apartment door -- #8.

A battering ram rushes the door.

INT. FRENCH APARTMENT #8. NIGHT

The door splinters off its hinges startling the FOUR YOUNG MEN at the table. They grab their packs and try to flee out the back.

A military unit charge up the FIRE ESCAPE and block the escape.

MILITARY  
(in French)  
Police! Get down! Down!

One of the men frantically reaches for the DEVICE inside his pack and is knocked to the floor by the lead military man.

CHAOS as the room is secured.

Furniture is thrown aside to get to the men. Their packs are grabbed as they're slammed, shoulders down, onto the table covered with CHUNNEL SCHEMATICS and MAPS.

The men's hands are tied behind their backs with plastic restraints.

THEN THE SCENE SHIFTS to -

Jacob's REMOTE POV

The shouting is muted and all we hear is Jacob's laboured breathing.

His psychic POV scours the room looking past the mayhem to an air vent... a PAIR OF EYES look in through the grate... then are gone.

His POV travels through the grate into a tight crawl space...following the dark, cramped, shaft...

... outside into a neighboring courtyard.

EXT. COURTYARD. NIGHT

Jacob's vision catches a glimpse of a MAN as he slips between the buildings. He wears A WHITE BUTCHER'S APRON OVER RIPPED JEANS.

INT. COTTAGE. NIGHT

CLOSE on Jacob's face. His eyes are closed. His right hand scratches out drawings at a rapid pace.

EXT. ALLEY. NIGHT

JACOB'S REMOTE VIEW follows on the heels of the man. A SNAPSHOT GLIMPSE of the back of the man's forearm - a TATOO OF A BLACK BIRD is revealed.

Steam blocks the view as he passes a kitchen door.

He is assaulted by the NOISE OF A RESTAURANT KITCHEN - FRENCH CURSES.

A HEAVY SET MAN IN A APRON lifts a crate of LIVE CHICKENS. He's not the same man who escaped the apartment.

Behind him A NASTY LOOKING COOK WIELDS A BLOODY CLEAVER over a freshly beheaded chicken.

Jacob's target slips through the door and disappears into the crowded kitchen.

Jacob takes a breath and stops... then hears the SOFT WHISPER of a female's voice that seems to come from further down the alley.

GIRL'S VOICE

Jacob?

His POV turns quickly looking for the source. Nothing. He hears her again, calling quietly, desperately. A distinct English accent.

GIRL'S VOICE

Please...please...Jacob.

Jacob's POV becomes scattered, turning, searching the alley, in a panic now. His remote view SWEEPS THROUGH the darkness, pulled by the need to find the source of this desperate cry.

IN A FLASH a young woman's face focuses in view right in front of him. Long black hair, her pale face ghost-like.

GLASS SMASHES.

INT. COTTAGE. NIGHT

Jacob bolts to standing, knocks his chair, sketch pad and pencil to the floor.

His eyes dart across the room to the window.

One of the panes is shattered.