

"DEAD AIR"
By Will Denis

ACT 1

Scene name: Domestic normalcy

Camera Action: FADE IN FROM BLACK, OPEN ON SHOT THROUGH WINDOW THEN ZOOM TO SHOW INSIDE THE HOME

1. Location: Ext. home, dusk, still

Time of the Season by The Zombies Plays quietly, muffled as though through a wall

Through the window, LAURA can be seen tidying up and doing miscellaneous chores. In the background, *Time of the Season* plays faint and muffled from an old radio. Inside the house, Laura pulls a tray out of the oven. She lives in domestic bliss.

2. Location: Int. home, dusk,

LAURA

[Quietly humming/singing along to the music playing]

Laura places the hot dish on a dining table, steam rising from it. She tidies up the place mats and silverware laid out before nodding her approval and moving on.

Camera Action: FOLLOW LAURA FROM BEHIND AS SHE WALKS AROUND THE HOUSE FROM A SLIGHT DISTANCE

Laura walks to another room, still humming, and grabs a broom laid against a wall. She sweeps a few times before pausing. The phone rings. Laura leans the broom against the wall gently, then springs back to the kitchen to pick up the phone. She picks up the phone. MARY can be heard, muffled, through the phone.

LAURA

Heyy

MARY

Hey! Whatcha up to?

LAURA

Just cleaning.

MARY

Do you ever do anything else?

LAURA

Uh... not really no.

MARY

[laughing]

LAURA

What time do you think you'll be here?

MARY

ETA isss... 10 minutes

LAURA

Got it.

MARY

[Joking] Or I could dial up the speed a bit, and get there in 5

LAURA

(laughs) You're gonna get yourself arrested one of these days

MARY

(laughs) They couldn't catch me if they tried!

LAURA

OK, well, whenever you end up getting here, the key's under the door

MARY

I know, I know.

LAURA

I know you know!

MARY

Why are you asking then?

LAURA

If you know, then why are you even calling? You should be focusing on the road!

MARY

I will, alright?

LAURA

Yeah, alright, I'll see you soon

MARY

Sounds good! I love you!

LAURA

Love you too.

Camera Action: PAN TO PHONE HANGING UP THEN TO LAURA CONTINUING TO CLEAN

Laura hangs up the phone and continues cleaning with the music on. Time of the Season fades out and the audio stutters a few times, before Laura walks to the kitchen, hits the radio twice, and Tobacco Road by Jefferson Airplane begins playing clearly.

Act 2

Scene Name: Entering the Unknown

Laura picks up a full trash bag from a trashcan in the kitchen and walks toward the front door. She puts on a set of slippers before unlocking the door, grabbing the bag, and walking outside.

1. Location: Ext. home, dusk, still

Camera Action: CUT TO CAMERA POSITIONED OUTSIDE THE HOUSE TOWARDS THE FRONT DOOR AS LAURA WALKS OUT

Laura places the trash bag next to her before pulling out her phone. Mary has sent her a picture of a Tupperware in the passenger seat of her car. Laura laughs to herself before sending back a thumbs up emoji. She picks up the bag again, and walks to the side of the house.

The song plays faintly in the background, growing more muffled as Laura walks further from the house.

Camera Action: SWITCHES TO SIDE VIEW TO FOLLOW ALONG WITH LAURA AS SHE WALKS

As Laura walks, the sound of crickets and typical night ambience in the background grows louder. When Laura approaches the trash bin with the bag, the background sounds fade out, eventually leaving only the sounds of Laura's footsteps, Laura quietly humming to herself with the song that had been playing on the radio, and unnatural silence.

Camera action: UPWARD VIEW FROM BIN AS LAURA PUTS THE TRASH BAG AWAY

Camera action: RETURN TO SIDE VIEW OF LAURA, WIDE SHOT TO SHOW SHE IS FULLY ALONE

Laura stands still for a minute, looking around

Camera action: ZOOM IN ON HANDS

Laura fidgets for a minute, rubbing her hands together from the cold

3. Clearing: ext., unlit, empty

Camera Action: PAN TO FIELD WIDE SHOT

A far off, static-y sound arises in the distance, it's coming from a field just beyond her house. The field is completely empty, and there are no other noises coming from it besides the clearly audible, unexplainable grainy static.

Camera Action: SPIN BACK AROUND TO SHOW LAURA

Laura stares at the field, confused. Her house looks far away from where she stands. There are no lights in the field.

Camera Action: TURN TO SHOW BOTH LAURA AND THE FIELD IN THE SAME SHOT FROM THE SIDE

Laura gazes at the field before turning to face her home. She looks back to the field. Her phone buzzes with a text from Mary, but she doesn't check it. The static noise continues to play, growing louder.

Camera Action: VIEW OF LAURA WALKING INTO FIELD FROM BEHIND

Everything feels still; the wind is silent, there are no bugs, and the music has long since faded out. Laura wants to go back inside,

but she decides to go look anyway. The static rises in volume, and Laura begins to feel irrationally nervous. She walks slowly deeper into the field, trying to find the source of the ominous noise

Camera Action: AS VOLUME RISES SHOW SLOW WALK WITH ZOOMED IN VIEW ON SHOES

The sound continues to rise in volume as Laura gets closer. She twists her head around, paranoid. The sound peaks as she steps all the way into the clearing, and Laura shuts her eyes tight.

Camera Action: FACE LAURA AND FOCUS ON THE DISCOMFORT ON HER FACE AS SOUND RISES.

Camera Action: CUT TO CLEARING.

Laura opens one eye at a time to finally looks into the clearing. There is nothing but grass. The sound of crickets returns.

Camera Action: TURN TO SHOW BOTH LAURA AND THE CLEARING

LAURA

[Laughs slightly to herself] [exhales, relieved]

Act 3

Scene name: The Replacement

Camera action: FOCUS SHOT MORE ON LAURA

Laura takes a few steps into the clearing before placing her head in her hands exasperatedly. She laughs to herself over having gotten so frightened over nothing. The sound of crickets disappears without her noticing. The sound of static takes its place. Laura slowly lifts her head, still smiling.

Camera action: FOCUS SHOT MORE ON LAURA'S FACE

Laura's smile drops into a look of horror. There is something in front of her that is indescribably terrifying. Her eyes get wide and she begins breathing frantically. Laura tenses up as if to run, but only stutters backwards as she is frozen in place. The static becomes overwhelmingly loud and aggressive.

2. Location: Int. home, dusk,

Camera Action: CUT TO VIEW OF KITCHEN, CENTERED ON THE PLATE OF FOOD LAURA HAD PUT ON THE TABLE

The radio plays Lookin' At Tomorrow (A Welfare Song) by The Beach Boys in the background while the food on the table is still steaming

3. Clearing: ext., unlit, empty

Camera Action: CUT TO VIEW OF LAURA FROM THE FRONT

Laura stumbles back, muttering worriedly, but it's barely audible over the static. The audio cuts in and out like the radio had earlier, and the edges of the grass in front of Laura flicker, becoming blurry, discolored and pixelated

Camera Action: CAMERA FOLLOWS LAURA AS SHE MOVES BACK

Laura trips while moving backwards.

Camera Action: CAMERA CUTS TO LAURA'S FACE, HORRIFIED. ZOOMS OUT TO SHOW FLINCH

Laura is on the ground frantically trying to back up so that she can stand up and run, she stumbles and flinches back

1. Home: ext., litup, dusk

Camera Action: FULL VIEW OF THE FRONT OF THE HOME

Lookin' At Tomorrow (A Welfare Song) is still playing, the music can be heard muffled from outside, the house looks just as normal as ever

3. Clearing: ext., unlit, empty

Camera Action: CUT CHOPPILY BACK TO CLEARING

The static noise continues playing, making it so that no other sound can be heard. Laura paws at her pocket hesitantly, trying not to make sudden movements

Camera Action: CLOSE UP OF LAURA, SHIFT TO FOCUS ON CELLPHONE

Laura is still looking above her in horror, she pulls her cellphone out of her pocket with shaky hands only to find there is absolutely

no service, she looks up again as the sound of crackling static becomes more rapid

2. Location: Int. home, dusk,

Camera Action: AIMED AT WALL WITH THE BROOM IN FOCUS

Lookin' At Tomorrow (A Welfare Song) is still playing, the broom slides down the wall before clattering to the ground.

3. Clearing: ext., unlit, empty

Camera Action: SHOT OF LAURA FROM FRONT, ALMOST AS THOUGH FROM THE CREATURES POV

The static noise continues playing, making it so that no other sound can be heard. Laura begins desperately throwing rocks and twigs littered around her at the creature, even pulling off her shoe to throw when she runs out of objects.

2. Location: Int. home, dusk,

Camera Action: SHOT OF DOOR FROM INSIDE, FOCUS IN ON KNOB AND THEN ZOOM OUT TO FOCUS ON FULL DOORWAY

Lookin' At Tomorrow (A Welfare Song) continues playing, the front door knob shakes before the sound of a key being inserted can be heard, and the door slowly swings open. Mary peeks around the doorway, trying not to drop her Tupperware.

MARY

Hello? Anyone home?

Silence

MARY

Laura I know you're here. I brought dessert! (she holds up a Tupperware)

3. Clearing: ext., unlit, empty

Camera Action: SIDE VIEW OF LAURA

The static noise continues playing, but it is somewhat muffled now.

Camera Action: THE FILM SEEMS TO GLITCH OUT, CUTTING HARSHLY TO THE CREATURES POV ABOVE LAURA

Laura is lying on the ground on her side with her phone clutched to her chest, completely frozen, the static blares as a glitchy looking, blurred shadowy hand reaches toward her, it hovers for a moment before prying her phone away, the static becomes more aggressive

2. Location: Int. home, dusk,

Camera Action: THE FOOTAGE SEEMS TO GLITCH OUT, CUTTING HARSHLY TO THE HOUSE

Lookin' At Tomorrow (A Welfare Song) is still playing. Mary stands in the living room another moment.

MARY

Laura this isnt funny. You promised we were gonna hang out tonight.

Mary begins to look nervous, she peers toward the kitchen where the music is coming from.

MARY

Laura?

Camera Action: FOLLOW MARY AS SHE WALKS TO KITCHEN

As Mary walks toward the kitchen, the music fluctuates in volume and begins cutting out, becoming static-y. Mary finally peeks her head around the kitchen door.

Laura is stood hunched over the sink, washing her hands. She only has one shoe on and her hands are scratched up. The static becomes quieter and muted, now playing in the background consistently.

Camera Action: PAN TO RADIO FROM BEHIND LAURA'S HEAD

LAURA

Oh! Hi Mary! I didnt hear you come in over the radio. This thing is so buggy, I'm honestly not sure why I havent tossed it. [Pause] Hey you look a little shaken up, are you ok?

MARY

[Laughing] don't worry about it. Just freaked myself out is all.

LAURA

Well, nothing a movie and some good food can't fix.

MARY

Can't argue with that. Wanna start the movie then?

LAURA

Yeah yeah of course just... Gimme a sec will you?

MARY

Sure thing.

Mary leaves the room

Camera Action: PAN TO LAURA FRONT VIEW.

Laura exhales deeply. She takes off her one slipper, which is covered in dirt and ragged and drops it in the trash. She picks up her phone from the counter and stares at the lock screen, which is a picture of Laura smiling, mimicking the expression on it before shutting it off.

Camera Action: CAMERA SWIVELS SO BOTH LAURA AND RADIO ARE IN VIEW, FOCUS IN ON RADIO AS LAURA WALKS FARTHER AWAY AND MOVES OUT OF FOCUS

Laura rests her arms on the counter and leans her head down for a moment. She peers out the window in front of her, closes the blinds, then leaves the kitchen. As she walks farther from the radio, I'm Only Sleeping by The Beatles begins playing clearly. The music is playing loudly and clearly when Laura next speaks, now out of the room.

LAURA

You better not have started the movie without me!

3. Clearing: ext., unlit, empty

Camera Action: PAN TO OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE FROM INSIDE THE KITCHEN, CONTINUE TO PAN OUT INTO THE CLEARING WHERE LAURA'S OTHER MISSING

SHOE RESTS IN THE GRASS. THE BACKGROUND IS HEAVILY BLURRED, BUT SLOWLY FOCUSES TO SHOW LAURA

The song continues playing. Laura's other shoe is centered in the frame on the grass, behind the shoe out of the camera focus is Laura's body. She is lying on her side, no shoes on, no phone, and a glitch-y indistinct effect covering her face.

Camera Action: SHIFT AND FOCUS TO SHOW THE HOUSE WINDOW BEHIND LAURA'S BODY

Through the window, Laura can be seen walking around, putting dishes in the sink. She looks out the window, paranoid, before pulling the curtains closed.

Camera Action: FADE TO BLACK

THE END