



"FILM NOIR"

An Original Audio Drama

By
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ARCANE PRODUCTIONS
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"FILM NOIR"

CHARACTERS

TIME PERIOD: 1948 / CHICAGO, IL

Manny Ferguson: A well-known Film Critic for the Chicago

Tribune.

Johnathan P. Anger: An Auteur of the Cinema. (deceased)

Ethyl Bradbury: Anger's secretary and closest confidant.

Kenneth Todd: Anger's personal assistant and driver.

Carl Machowitz: Owner and Manager of The Broadmore Movie

House

Kimberly Fields: An enthusiastic theater usher and movie

aficionado.

PAPER BOY / NEWS REPORTER / WOMAN 1 / WOMAN 2 / MAN / RADIO MAN

NOTES:

The time period of this piece is the late 1940's so the sense of language and notions of stature and propriety differ greatly from those of today's modern age. Formality and propriety of speech, especially in public, was paramount.

Aναίρεση / "Anairesi" (an-AIR-ee-see) is Greek for "Your Undoing"

FRIGHTMARE THEATRE

PODCAST

"Film Noir"

	FRIGHTMARE THEATRE INTRO
MUSIC 1	"Film Noir Theme" (a smooth dark jazz) (FADE IN - under)
FTP SCRIPT #2.5	SCENE 1
*ALT MUSIC 1	"Film Noir Theme" (smooth dark jazz) (FADE DOWN UNDER SCENE cont)
SOUND 1	RAIN BEATING DOWN IN THE CITY STREETS (cont. under)
SOUND 2	CAR PULLS UP TO THE CURB
*ALT-SOUND 1	RAIN BEATING DOWN IN THE CITY STREETS (from outside car)
FERGUSON:	Jesus Christ. What's she doing here?
KENNETH:	(from driver's seat) Hmh? Oh. Miss Bradbury insisted on being present for your arrival.
FERGUSON:	hmph. I'm sure she did.
KENNETH:	Mr. Ferguson, do be kind to her. Ethyl's been through quite a lot these past few weeks. We all have. You may not have been too keen on Mr. Anger, but your cynicism isn't shared by as many as you might think.
FERGUSON:	Alright, Alright, Kenny
KENNETH:	Mr. Todd.
FERGUSON:	MISTER TODD. Don't get your shorts in a knot. I'm not gonna ruffle the lady's feathers, I promise. Unless of course, the lady wants to get her feathers ruffled. (chuckle)
KENNETH:	(flabbergasted) Mr. Ferguson! I will not have you besmirch that fine woman's reputation b-
FERGUSON:	(laughing) Cool down, Kenny, ol' pal. I'm only raggin' ya a little.

KENNETH:

Miss Bradbury is a fine woman, Mr. Ferguson. She served Mr. Anger faithfully on every one of his pictures over the past twenty years. She was by his side through all of it... when you... when that review of yours put the final nail in the coffin of his career and broke that man into a thousand tiny pieces. She... WE were the only ones left to try and pick up those pieces. Words have consequences, Mr. Ferguson.

FERGUSON:

Well, I dunno what to tell ya, Kenny. The picture was a bomb. A stinker. The worst in a long line of stinkers. Jackie P. Anger may have been an artistic genius when he was churnin' out the likes of The Darkest Hour and Night Bird... but that spark fizzled out a long time ago. I don't care what his fans say. I just call 'em like I see 'em, pally. And I get paid a hell of a lot to do it too. Besides, who's gonna arque with the Tribune?

KENNETH:

I never could understand how you critics sleep at

night.

FERGUSON:

It's nineteen forty-eight, pally. A man's gotta earn

a buck somehow.

KENNETH:

You're vultures; every last one. And you, Manny

Ferguson, are the worst of them all.

FERGUSON:

KENNETH:

Aw, Kenny, you're gonna make me blush.

SOUND 3 Grabbing satchel / moving in leather seat

FERGUSON: (CONTINUED) Well, we better get on with it.

you.

FERGUSON: What?

KENNETH: The last will and testament of Mr. Anger was very

specific, sir. You are to sit for a special private screening of Mr. Anger's final masterpiece, "Anaíresi" (an-AIR-ee-see), and stay until the film's conclusion.

Oh, Mr. Ferguson, my apologies. This is where I leave

Then and only then, will you be awarded your

renumeration.

FERGUSON: A hundred grand. That's what the lawyer said. One

hundred thousand cash for sitting through Anger's last

hoorah.

KENNETH: Correct, Mr. Ferguson.

FERGUSON: Well, Kenny ol' pal, let's just hope havin' to sit

through another self-indulgent "masterpiece" of the

great Jackie Anger is worth it, huh? (chuckles)

SOUND 4 Slap on shoulder/Car opens/he gets out/shuts

*ALT-SOUND 1 RAIN BEATING DOWN IN THE CITY STREETS (FADE UP) (cont.)

*ALT MUSIC 1 "Film Noir Theme" (smooth dark jazz) (FADE UP UNDER SCENE cont....)

SOUND 5 Car drives off/ sloshy footsteps running under awning

*ALT-SOUND 1 RAIN BEATING DOWN (FADE Down/from under awning) (cont.)

*ALT MUSIC 1 "Film Noir Theme" (smooth dark jazz) (FADE DOWN UNDER SCENE cont...)

ETHYL: Mr. Ferguson.

FERGUSON: Miss Bradbury.

ETHYL: Kenneth didn't think he'd be able to drag you here.

But I knew you were just the kind of greedy

sonuvabitch who couldn't pass up that kind of money. Even if it meant swallowing his pride and reneging on his vow to, what was it again, "never waste another moment on the pathetic overaggrandized work of the

once-great, Jonathan P. Anger."

FERGUSON: You know, my words sound a little sweeter than I

intended when they come outta those lips of yours.

ETHYL: You really are a bastard, Manny.

FERGUSON: Yeah, well, that's what my mother tells me.

SOUND 6 striking match / lighting cigarette

ETHYL: Here is your ticket. With personal complements of the

"once great" Jonathan P. Anger.

FERGUSON: A ticket? *(chuckles)* Why so formal?

ETHYL: Jackie always had an eye for detail. One of the

reasons his films were admired by so many. He loved the movies. Not just making them, Mr. Ferguson... but watching them... in grand old cinema palaces like the

Broadmore, here.

ETHYL: (cont.) He said that movies held their own special magic; that

a good story could cast a spell over an audience. Jackie would have Kenneth drive him here every Saturday for a double feature... That is, until your scathing review of Mercy to the Fallen forced him into

reclusion abroad.

FERGUSON: Yeah, I heard a little somethin' about that.

ETHYL: You disgust me.

FERGUSON: Europe, was it? A decade spent reconnecting with his

roots, soul searching, or something else terribly

overdramatic?

ETHYL: (darkly) Something like that.

SOUND 7 Throwing cigarette to ground / stomping out

FERGUSON: Well, we could stand out here in the rain all night,

flappin' our lips, Ethyl, but there's money to be made. And we got ourselves, what is sure-to-be, quite the doozy to sit through. So, if you'll allow me, my

lady...

SOUND 8 OPENING Theatre Lobby Door

ETHYL: (briskly) NO.

FERGUSON: Wha- Oh, you're not tellin' me you're gonna make me

sit through this thing all by myself?

ETHYL: Jackie's final film was made for your eyes only.

FERGUSON: What the hell does that mean?

ETHYL: "Anaîresi" (an-AIR-ee-see) is Jonathan P. Anger's most

personal project. His last days were spent perfecting every frame of this final cinematic masterpiece... just

for you, Mr. Ferguson. It's all for you.

FERGUSON: Look, why you bustin' my chops, lady. His career was

dying long before my review of that last picture. This overly dramatic publicity stunt is designed for what? To prove I gave the man a bum rap in a column I wrote

ten years ago?

ETHYL: No. To show you the true power of cinema, Mr.

Ferguson. To highlight that the creation of something

is more than the money paid for it. To prove artists

have a great responsibility to uphold, and that what

we put out into the world has consequences...

FERGUSON: So, you haven't even seen the old man's "final

masterpiece" yet, I take it?

ETHYL: This is "Anairesi" (an-AIR-ee-see). This creation is

for you to behold, Mr. Ferguson. Only you.

FERGUSON: Look, whatever, lady. If I gotta watch this stinker

by myself, so be it. As long as I get what I'm owed.

SOUND 9 PUSHING Lobby Door open / closes behind him

*ALT SOUND 1 RAIN BEATING DOWN (SWELLS before Fading DOWN at scene break)

ETHYL: Oh, don't worry, Mr. Ferguson. You will get

everything that you are owed.

SOUND 10 THUNDER RUMBLES in the distance

*ALT MUSIC 1 "Film Noir Theme" (smooth dark jazz) (FADE UP UNDER SCENE cont...)

FTP SCRIPT #2.5

"FILM NOIR"

SCENE 2

*ALT SOUND 1 RAIN BEATING DOWN (OFF / OUSTIDE)

*END MUSIC 1 "Film Noir Theme" (smooth dark jazz) (FADE Down & Out...)

SOUND 11 SOGGY FOOTSTEPS IN LOBBY / LIGHTS flickering (coming closer)

FERGUSON: Hiya, kid.

KIMBERLY: Manny Ferguson! Wow! Gosh, I read your column every

week. When Mr. Machowitz informed me we'd be staying open late for a special guest, I didn't think in a million years it would be THE Manny Ferguson of the

Chicago Tribune. Holy Cow!

FERGUSON: (dismissively) Yeah, always great to meet a fan.

Listen, kiddo, I normally do these things downtown at The Oriental. We got a whole system worked out. So, here's the skinny. I want a bag of corn and a coke-a -cola brought to me before the feature. No ice. And

how's about a box of Junior's as well.

KIMBERLY:

Absolutely, Mr. Ferguson, sir. Mr. Machowitz already informed me that this was a special private showing, and that we were not to view the film under any circumstances. The film print even came preassembled. Teddy didn't have to do a build-up or anything. It's all very peculiar, if you ask me.

FERGUSON:

Is that so? Huh. That is peculiar.

KIMBERLY:

You don't know the half of it, Mr. Ferguson. (CLOSE) If you ask me, this whole thing was funny from the get go. Yesterday there was nothing on the schedule for a special late showing this weekend. Then out of the blue, Mr. Machowitz asks if I could get permission to stay late for a special showing... only there's no press, no stars, and no other staff be on hand. Kinda gave me the heebie jeebies, if I'm being honest.

FERGUSON:

(go on...) uh-huh.

KIMBERLY:

Then the strangest thing, if you ask me, was last night when this black car rolled up into the alley with its headlights off. I was out taking the garbage to the dumpster, and I saw Mr. Machowitz and this weird guy hauling the print up the back staircase. They were all jittery, like Lucie Mannheim in The 39 Steps; like they were spooked or somethin'. You know twitchy like Peter Lorre in Arsenic and Old Lace or... well gosh, in everything he's in... Like—

FERGUSON:

Ease up there, Kid. I get the picture.

KIMBERLY:

The whole thing was bonkers, if you ask me.

FERGUSON:

So, no one here has seen this little gem, then? Not even your projectionist?

KIMBERLY:

No, sir. Ronny was given strict instructions to thread it and go home. Mr. Machowitz is going to fire her up for you and leave the booth. If you ask me, it's all—

FERGUSON:

Very peculiar.

KIMBERLY:

If you ask me.

FERGUSON:

Well. Once more unto the breach... Here's my ticket,

kiddo.

KIMBERLY:

Huh. Now, that's peculiar.

FERGUSON: What isn't tonight, kid?

KIMBERLY: This isn't one of our tickets.

FERGUSON: Well, I was given that ticket and instructed to give

it to you. So, I don't know what to tell ya.

KIMBERLY: I can't even read it. There're weird scribbles on it.

It looks like maybe a... a foreign language?

FERGUSON: Let me see that.

SOUND 12 SNATCHING TICKET/strange hum (snap out on Ferguson's next line)

KIMBERLY: It isn't any language I've ever seen. And that funny

symbol on the back there... Awful pe-

FERGUSON: Peculiar. Yeah, I got it.

KIMBERLY: Gosh. Wait a minute. I saw that symbol. It was on

the print can when Mr. Machowitz and that guy were

carrying it up the back steps!

FERGUSON: I've never seen it before.

KIMBERLY: And the title, "Anairesi" (an-AIR-ee-see)... That's

definitely not something that would typically play The Broadmore. I mean we got a print of that French Beauty and the Beast film last Christmas, but it didn't stick around long. I thought it was swell

though, and-

FERGUSON: KID.

KIMBERLY: (without skipping a beat) Well, if you ask me, ever

since last night, when that print was brought in,

there have been all manner of strange-

MACHOWITZ: That's quite enough, Miss Fields. Thank you. Mr.

Ferguson here has more important things to attend to,

than chatting it up with the staff.

KIMBERLY: Of course, Mr. Machowitz, sir. I'll just run along

and get Mr. Ferguson his concessions.

MACHOWITZ: You do just that, thank you.

SOUND 13 TAKING TICKET

FERGUSON: Mr. Machowitz.

MACHOWITZ: Carl. Please. Welcome to The Broadmore, Mr. Ferguson.

FERGUSON: Nice digs, ya got here, Carl. Though, I can't say as

I'm too pleased to be here under the circumstances.

MACHOWITZ: Yes, sir. Mr. Anger was a great patron of The

Broadmore and a personal friend. Every one of his films have played here; from The Darkest Hour to Mercy to the Fallen... (awkward pause) (clears throat) We all

mourn his passing.

FERGUSON: I was actually referring to the fact that I have to

sit through yet another of your great patron's

meandering cinematic travesties to earn a buck. But...

hey, it's a living. (chuckles)

MACHOWITZ: Indeed, sir.

SOUND 14 TEARING TICKET / strange spark/ringing/whisper

FERGUSON: Did you hear that?

MACHOWITZ: (swallows) Put your stub in your pocket, and enjoy

your film this evening, sir. We at The Broadmore take

great pains to ensure our guests have the most

fulfilling of cinematic experiences.

SOUND 15 PUSHING PAST & WALKING AWAY

FERGUSON: Yeah, Carl. (off) I'm sure it'll be a real scream.

MACHOWITZ: (solemnly) Without a doubt, sir. Without a doubt.

SOUND 16 FOOTSTEPS WALKING UP/fizzing soda/crinkling bag

KIMBERLY: I'll just go and take these in for Mr. Ferguson-

MACHOWITZ: NO. erm... No, Kimberly. Do not go into the house for

any reason. I shall take Mr. Ferguson his

concessions. In fact, you may clean up and run along home. The storm should be letting up soon.

KIMBERLY: um. Sure thing, Mr. Machowitz. Is... is everything

alright.

MACHOWITZ: It will be soon, Kimberly. Run along now.

FTP SCRIPT #	#2.5 <u>"FILM NOIR"</u>	SCENE 3
SOUND 17	Squeeky theatre seat folded down/ sit	ting
SOUND 18	Footsteps approach / fizzy soda/ crin	kling bag
MACHOWITZ:	(jittery) Will you require anything else k	
FERGUSON:	Not unless you got somethin' a little strocke-a-cola in that stand out there, Carl.	-
MACHOWITZ:	(nervous laughter) Well, if that is everyt I'll just get the picture started and leav	
FERGUSON:	Don't you want to watch whatever our dear has come up with? I mean, it's the man's picture in almost a decade and his last of	first
MACHOWITZ:	(gulps) no no, sir. This film is for yo only.	our eyes
FERGUSON:	Again with that hogwash. Jesus, Machowitz is dead. It's just you, me, and the googlout there. Who's gonna know the difference load off. C'mon. Misery loves company.	e-eyed girl
MACHOWITZ:	(gulps) (fighting to stay calm) The featurin a few minutes, Mr. Ferguson. There will intermission. My instructions have been maclear.	.l be no
SOUND 19	footsteps walking away/ stops/ turns	
MACHOWITZ:	(sincerely) I am so sorry.	
SOUND 20	turn/walk away/house doors open & clo	se/locks
FERGUSON:	This whole place is a loony bin. No wonder his marbles, surrounding himself with these sycophantic nut jobs.	•
SOUND 21	SLURP OF SODA / grabbing popcorn & cr	unching
SOUND 22 LIGHTS SNAPPING OUT / PROJECTOR STARTED (off)		
FERGUSON: (c	continued) Alright, Anger. Thrill me.	· -
SOUND 23	POPPING IN SPEAKERS as film runs in projector	(continuous)

ANGER: (on screen) Good evening, Mr. Ferguson.

SOUND 24

low distortion of the 19Hz Infrasound (fades up slowly)

FERGUSON: (mouth full of popcorn) Jesus. A personalized intro?

Even in death, the man has a flair for the dramatic.

(chuckles)

ANGER: (on screen) I am so very pleased you've chosen to

honor me with your presence here tonight...

FERGUSON: (under breath) Honor nothing, ol' man. I'm getting'

paid top dollar for this.

ANGER: (on screen) ... You are nothing if not predictable, Mr.

Ferguson. And tonight, in this very theater, your adherence to your unscrupulous nature shall finally be

rewarded in kind...

FERGUSON: (mouth full of popcorn) (chuckles)

ANGER: (on screen) ...For you see, Mr. Ferguson, after your

review of Mercy to the Fallen, I was finished. Broken. A shell of my former self. No studio would take a meeting with me. Men whose careers I helped build over a lifetime in this industry. ...But men who, like you, are only concerned with the bottom dollar. I had no desire to be a part of a world where art's only value was the money made from its prostitution. While in seclusion, I aimlessly traveled the old world,

devoid of purpose or ambition... until, quite

unexpectedly... I found myself again... in a way. There. Outside of a tiny forgotten village near Athens, I came upon an afigitis (Ah-fee-GHEE-tees); a story teller, and his cabal... Practitioners of ancient arts far older than mankind's memory. They showed me my path back. The magicks that I thought had drained from my veins were renewed and made vital again as I

set to work on this one final glorious path... Revenge.

*ALT-S 23/24 Projector/19Hz Infrasound begin to distort (fades up)

ANGER: (continued)

(on screen) Our ability for creation today pales in comparison to what mankind was once capable of achieving... long ago... when the darkness still held sway over our hearts and minds. Somewhere we lost the ability to, not only conjure the expression, but to breathe it into existence... to make it REAL. (growing in intensity) Fear, Mr. Ferguson. The power of fear is absolute. (CONTINUED)

ANGER: (continued) It can undo even the strongest will of man, hurling

him screaming into the black abyss of madness and

despair.

FERGUSON: So it's a horror picture, then. Great. No amount of

money is worth this.

SOUND 25 rustling in squeaky theater chair

FERGUSON: What the hell are you playin' at here? How did you...

(struggling) I can't... I can't move.

ANGER: (on screen) (voice begins to intermittently distort)

(wickedly giddy) Oh, Mr. Ferguson. Whatever is the

matter?

SOUND 26 Violent thrashing in squeaky theater chair

FERGUSON: (frightened thrashing) Argh. Jesus... What's happening?

SOUND 27 static/flickering/wind/distant howls/cries circling (building)

ANGER: (laughs wildly) Your about to view your last picture,

Mr. Ferguson. Your ticket, already paid in full.

SOUND 28 Popcorn knocking over/ Wild thrashin in theatre chair

*ALT-SOUND 27 static/flickering/wind/ howls/cries circling (LOUDER-Almost deafening)

FERGUSON: (Overlapping the screen) LET ME OUT! I DON'T CARE

ABOUT THE MONEY! YOU HEAR ME, MACHOWITZ!? I WANT OUT!

SOUND 29 (on screen) Glitching/ Warping of sound/ Popping

ANGER: (on screen) (Voice distorting) (laughing) There is no

escape, Mr. Ferguson! Even in death, I shall live on. (building with great intensity) But, you... No one will utter the name, Manny Ferguson again! YOU SHALL BE LOST TO THE PAGES OF TIME. BLOTTED OUT!!! THE DEAD TRAVEL FAST, MY OLD FRIEND, AND THEY ARE COMING TO

DRAG YOU DOWN TO THE HELL OF ANONYMITY, WHERE YOU

BELONG! CAN YOU HEAR THEM????

SOUND 30 GROWLS/MOANS/LAUGHTER/CHAINS/TERRIFYING AMBIENCE (circle room)

FERGUSON: I... I didn't mean it! It's only business, Anger! That's

all! I'm sorry! I didn't mean it! (sobbing) I... I just came to get what I was owed! IT WAS NEVER

PERSONAL!!!

ANGER: (on screen) (Voice distorting) IT WAS PERSONAL TO MEEEEEEEE!!!!! WORDS HAVE CONSEQUINCES, FERGUSON! And TONIGHT, YOU WILL GET WHAT'S OWED TO YOU!

*END-SOUND 27/30 GROWLS/MOANS/LAUGHTER/CHAINS/TERRIFYING AMBIENCE (circle room)

(All sounds end with a rush of air except for the chanting,

the projector, and Ferguson panting)

SOUND 31 (on screen) Ominous BEEPING COUNTDOWN TO FILM /ending in "pop"

MUSIC 2 (ON SCREEN) Creeping disjointed Atonal melody skipping (building in intensity)

SOUND 32 Scratchy disjointed audio (ala The Ring) / loud projection

SOUND 33 (ON SCREEN) Various Creepy sounds: children/screams/ etc...

FERGUSON:

No... I... It's... (giggles) It's beautiful. (crying & laughing simultaneously) It's... It's perfect. (insane laughter) It's a... a masterpiece...

*ALT-SOUND 33 (ON SCREEN) Various Creepy sounds: children/screams/etc... (building)

*END-ALL SOUND/MUSIC 2 IN WOOSH, ALL SOUNDS END - SAVE FOR PROJECTOR

(SILENCE. THEN ...)

FERGUSON: (SUDDEN BLOOD CURDLING SCREAM OF TERROR)

(ECHOES, BLEEDING INTO...)

*END-SOUND 23 PROJECTOR FLICKERING (fade out slowly)

MUSIC 3 "Film Noir Theme" (a smooth dark jazz) (FADE IN - under/build)

SOUND 35 NEWSPAPER Bundle thrown on ground/Twine Cut (building)

(The following dialogue overlaps, coming from right to left, then left to right; blending into each other as a seemingly endless cacophony of information.)

PAPER BOY: Extra! Renowned Tribune Critic found dead in

Uptown Theater! Read all about it ...

NEWS REPORTER: (on radio) Chicago mourns tonight as news of

Ferguson's mysterious death has swept the headlines...

*ALT- MUSIC 3 "Film Noir Theme" (FADE UP MORE as ending builds)

WOMAN 1:

They're saying it was a heart attack.

WOMAN 2:

Died screaming of fright, that's what I heard. His hair had gone stark white and...

MAN:

Apparently, he broke in so he could catch a peek at an early print of Jackie Anger's last film, made just before the old man kicked... and it was a doozy! The most horrifying picture ever made, apparently...

NEWS REPORTER:

Details surrounding the whereabouts of a supposed mysterious final film of the late great Jonathan P. Anger are sketchy at best...

MACHOWITZ:

As I told the authorities when they arrived, we have no idea how that poor man found his way into the theater after closing down for the evening. Nor are we aware of anyone else on the premises that night. When our man opened the next morning, he found him still sitting in a chair; that look of terror frozen on his face. It was horrible. Horrible.

RADIO MAN:

All of Hollywood is abuzz trying to get their mits on a now-infamous elusive film, rumored to have been the terrifying posthumous masterpiece of the late Johnathan P. Anger. Tales of this alleged "lost" horror picture began circulating after an unidentified transient apparently died of fright after viewing an early preview of the film in Chicago early last year...

KENNETH:

...No sir, I can't confirm or deny if the rumors of a lost horror film are true or not. (laughs) Mr. Anger's projects were sometimes a mystery even to those of us close to him. But if such a sensational film were to have been created, something tells me we would have heard about it. Either way, it's quite a story, and I'm sure glad to see such a renewed public interest in his films...

NEWS REPORTER:

The late Johnathan P. Anger is all anyone is talking about these days. Tonight, The Egyptian is proud to present the auteur's final film, Mercy to the Fallen, with special guest in attendance, Ethyl Bradbury. Tickets have been sold out for months, as...

ETHYL:

(on amplified mic) Well, what more can I say, really? Jackie's work always had a powerful effect on audiences. He always said movies held a special kind of magic; (getting lost in the power of these words and building in gravity) that there was true power in the creation of something... (CONTINUED)

ETHYL: (continued)

...and that what we put out into this world has... consequences. (pause) (snapping back) And with that, ladies and gentleman... give you the great Johnathan P. Anger's final cinematic gift to the world, "Mercy to the Fallen."

SOUND 36

THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE (swells and takes us out into...)

*ALT-MUSIC 3

"Film Noir Theme"

(SWELLS/taking us into...)

FRIGHTMARE THEATRE CLOSER

END