

Immortalized Persephone

By Mark Lumpkin, Ph.D.

“It’s eight millimeters wide – it runs at 16 frames per second” (Walker). And contains images so devastating they inexorably alter the lives of all who know its very existence. This elusive mythic legend is buried underneath grainy shadows and divisions of embattled psyche and soul. Passion and violence comingle, one leading into another – no beginning or end. Hidden and veiled within illusory layers of darkened mystery the violent human heart is revealed through the periphery of perceptions and persona as the movie’s characters journey and tumble through a perilous and mysterious underworld. Private detective, Tom Wells is hired to investigate if these forbidden celluloid images are indeed real or a stunning illusion of ephemeral darkness. Eventually and desperately, he finds both are the case. His pilgrimage and descent directly into hell are part of his desensitization from illusory everyday life and the fairytale he believes to be real. Through unyielding darkness and encroaching violence he becomes subtly entrapped and subdued, lost in his own mysteries and relentless search for deeper meaning within his Soul.

Just like individual frames of the film, each character and archetype are brought into entwined contact through an unraveling of their deceitful lies. Their lives are thin veils and mere surface textures floating over an undulating sea of unbridled desires of the unspeakable. Darkness hidden in plain sight – evil masquerading with the invisible cloak of acceptable commerce. As the plot deepens, pace quickens and characters are accelerated into a fluid abyss of external violence that mirrors their internal psychic wars. Here, darkness prevails and infuses the *character* of every archetype. Body and Soul are trafficked and separated – innocence is the ultimate product when found, filmed, and used. Truth is another commodity partitioned for the highest bidder – only if one can afford the price. What is truly priceless is the divine joy snuffed out for pleasure and profit.

The small metal reel that accompanies this film winds the characters around its tight axis as a fiery centripetal tempest. Tom’s journey unravels the heinous mysteries of pain and pleasure through a web of internal and external duplicity. Each person here embodies an aspect of the other’s hidden psyche, previously unknown – unbearable. In this drama darkness ebbs and flows through each brutal scene and act of pornography washing over every character and through their emotional landscape. In order to reach the final truth within this crucible, Tom Wells must be willing to pay the ultimate price – his life and the illusion of morality. Has Tom slowly become the very monster he set out to entrap and expose? Who is predator and prey in this base landscape? Violence and power is more pornographic than sexual content or imagery within this underworld. Can he use violence as his ally or has violence seduced and deceived him? His life has forever changed just as his descent into the moral wastelands has tormented and tempered his transformation. He dances with the Devil – only he is changed. His passionate quest for the hidden truths pushes him to the very

limits of forbearance and tolerance. In the end his quest for truth cost him the ultimate price – his innocence and salvation.

The Archetypes embodied within this film:

Nicholas Cage as Tom Wells –	<i>Hermes</i>
Katherine Keener as Amy Wells –	<i>Aphrodite</i>
Baby Cindy as Cinderella / Innocence –	<i>Kore (Virgin)</i>
Anthony Heald as Mr. Daniel Longdale –	<i>Achilles</i>
Myra Carter as Mrs. Christian –	<i>Hera</i>
Mr. Christian as Dead Husband –	<i>Zeus</i>
Jenny Powell as Mary Ann Matthews –	<i>Persephone</i>
Amy Norton as Janet Matthews –	<i>Demeter</i>
James Gandolfini as Eddie Poole –	<i>Cupid</i>
Joaquin Phoenix as Max California –	<i>Pan</i>
Peter Stormare as Dino Velvet –	<i>Hades</i>
Chris Bauer as George Anthony Higgins: “Machine” –	<i>Cyclopes</i>

Beginning of Decay: 00:05 – 00:08

After returning home from a previous job in colorful Miami, Tom is greeted by his loving wife, Amy and their infant daughter Cindy who he affectionately calls “Cinderella”. This allegorical allusion brings in an undercurrent of Tom as the rescuing father to his innocent Kore. This pull of psychic devotion underplays the entire film and creates eddies and currents of light and dark. Amy represents Aphrodite and is deeply concerned for her handsome husband, who she obviously adores. Her eyes cherish him as she watches her husband hold their beautiful daughter; a sight she longs for. Amy smells cigarette smoke on Tom and questions him about his own smoking. He immediately and without hesitation lies. Hermes, now in the front lawn of what appears to be an idyllic setting, raking fall leaves is drawn inside for a phone call. The setting is clearly suburban and the landscape near the beginning stages of bleak winter. Leaves and decay are all around as the coloration is muted and subdued. The visual elements help set the tone and timber of the emotional decay and discoloration of the psychological landscape Tom will soon enter.

Tom has now been summoned to the Christian Estate by Mr. Longdale, the executor of Mr. Christian’s will. In a previous scene the headlines of The Patriot News read “Industrial Czar Dead at 81”. Tom graciously accepts this invitation, hangs up the phone and puts out his newly lit cigarette spraying air freshener to conceal his tracks.

Introduction to the Crime: 00:08 – 00:11

Driving toward the Christian Estate along an isolated private road, Tom is surrounded by vast amounts of fall leaves and ominous trees looming winters death and decay. This scene is a brief foreshadowing of the long and silent road he will travel as others have gone before him. He passes a lone man in the distance collecting leaves just as he had previously done, however in this setting there is only the cold chill of loneliness and isolation. An external landscape is shown in the same cool colors of death and rebirth that existed on his own lawn. The vista of leaves here is of a daunting magnitude and scope similar to the world Tom is entering. He is now passing into a world of the ultra wealthy where rules and obligations are made and broken with little care for consequence. Within this hidden world the only currency is that of money and privilege which bear limited responsibility. He is somewhat blinded by what he initially sees as he slowly pulls into the drive – viewing Olympus for the first time. The sprawling palatial home is well attended and manicured by a full staff of servants and groundskeepers. It has a reverence about the façade with subtle references to “Christian” architecture and meanings.

Entering the estate he is greeted by Mr. Longdale, the Christian’s attorney and Mrs. Christian, who is in a wheelchair. They receive him in one of the large drawing rooms covered in rich wood paneling and dimly lit by a fire. The scale is opulent and grand mirroring the tone of Zeus’s world and Olympus. This setting also reflects the interior psychic landscape of the Christian’s in vast desolation and vacuous space. Mrs. Christian greets Tom and tells him “You are praised for your discretion and your strict adherence to confidentiality.” These traits are usually not associated with Hermes although they are indeed within his realm. She has been left with an extreme dilemma within the contents of her husband’s private safe, located behind an enormous portrait suspended in a thick and ornately gilded frame. With her husband gone she is in apparent control of his estate and personal matters.

A small black film canister is laid out on the corner of a large wooden desk. “It’s a film – where a girl appears to be murdered” she shyly reports out of decorum and perceived reverence. Both Mr. Longdale and Tom offer several possible explanations, which do not appease Mrs. Christian. She asks Mr. Wells to look at the film and give his opinion. She desperately wants to know, “that this atrocity is false – I want the proof.”

Initial Screening: 00:11 – 00:13

Filling the screen is the sound of an old projector located in a blackened room. There are dark grainy images of a young girl barely dressed that fill the screen; her sorrow fills the room for merely a brief moment yet lingers eternally. The camera pans to the left and we now see Tom Wells in the dim background a place where he usually feels comfortable. Dark blues and blacks engulf the room as the only light available emanates from the projector casting haunting images and hues of the human Soul. The silence of these sexualized images screams volumes in contrast to the constant drone of the film slipping through the

projector. The audience was initially viewing the film from the backside of the screen in the recessed shadows. Now it appears we see the same images, as Tom watches in visible agitation, as the view on the screen becomes even darker.

The films masked assailant carefully chooses a knife, Tom's disgust increases; he is deeply affected by what he sees. Persephone is painfully threatened as the camera angle slips again to the backside of the room exposing Tom as he watches in palpable horror. Glimpses of the violence are quickly interspersed with the sounds of Tom's visceral reactions. It appears as if this young girl is brutally murdered right before our eyes. The camera swings completely around the room exposing the back of Tom's head as we now watch over his shoulder, as a third voyeur, for a very brief moment to see the exact same scene he is witnessing. Relief from this excruciating dilemma comes as the sound of the projector signals the end of this film as it quickly runs out – just like the life it portrayed. The life and direction one chooses can be wound with grace and ease or through a spiraling descent. The Soul chooses to bear witness of these choices both in mythic beauty and bitter fruit. This process is explained by Maureen Mercury: “The ego takes an active part in this transitional process, making decisions along the way that cause suffering, conflict, and feelings of dismemberment: all in the service of psychic growth” (85).

Resources: 00:17 – 00:18

Tom / Hermes goes into the U.S. Resource Center for Missing Persons and again in order to gain access to information, he lies. Hermes claims to be hired by a Doctor and his wife who are attempting to help a run away girl. Hermes is beginning to twist the information ever so subtly as to serve his apparent needs. The Office Director informs Tom that “between 850,000 and 1,000,000 missing every year.” Tom moves freely looking through thousands of photographs and statistics for several days. As he looks and reads through these stories he begins to understand the lies and horrific lives some of these children must live through. Hermes is beginning to slip in more and more as parts of Tom begin to seamlessly vanish – just as the lives of these missing children blur the lines of consensus reality. The statistics and stories are emotionally numbing and mind boggling in breadth and depth which slowly allows Hermes to slip in methodically replacing Tom's identity.

Persephone's Gifts: 00:23 – 00:28

Posing as a Licensed Investigator, hired by the U.S Resource Center, Tom / Hermes introduces himself to the mother of a missing girl. He has taken on the role of his previous surroundings, like a chameleon changing among the borders of perception. Telling the mother that he has already spoken with her FBI contact and should have been expecting him. Easily manipulating the situation he gains access to her life and is invited into the family home. This home is an empty shell of a former vibrant life. In contrast with Tom's environment this setting is a transition into the wastelands of human depravity and isolation. Speaking with

Janet Matthews about her missing daughter Mary Ann, they look through old photographs and memories. Tom, Hermes tells her that he is not there to “create any false hope.” Here Hermes speaks using the language of deceit for the family as well as himself.

The starkly lit room mirrors the mood of their conversation while light seeps in through covered windows. Rich shades of dark lapis and smokey gray cover the interior competing against minimal warm tones. Janet as Demeter speaks of how her daughter “didn’t like rules” and now she, Demeter, is the only one here – alone. Moving into Mary Ann’s bedroom, Janet shows Tom the brightly wrapped birthday gifts awaiting her daughters return. Mixed with grief and hope she says, “those are for her birthday – one for every year she’s missed, they’ll be waiting for her when she comes back”.

Away from prying eyes in the bathroom, Tom finds Mary Ann’s diary hidden in the water tank of her toilet. Sealed in a plastic bag her dreams are contained from another pool of deceit, a vortex of destruction hidden in fantasy. The location of her hopes and dreams reveals the telling structure mirroring her life. The visual setting is of poverty and economic hardship a far cry from the lavish Christian Estate. Although there is austerity there is a completely different sense of home and love within these small walls. He quietly slips the diary into the back of his pants covered by his long coat before he leaves. Concealing information, Tom / Hermes, utilizes the trust he has gained to further his investigation and agenda. Little does he know he is recreating Mary Ann’s / Persephanie’s disappearance. He is beginning to step into her shoes and walk through her life never to come back.

If you could – ? 00:32 – 00:34

On Tom’s second visit he asks “Mrs. Matthew’s, do you ever consider – do you realize that Mary may never come back?” Tom poses the hardest question to Janet as he begins to see the darker reality of this tragic situation. He asks in quiet somber tones “if you were forced to choose – between imagining her out there somewhere living a good life, being happy, but you don’t know, you never find out – or the worse being true, her being gone, but you know what happened?” Mrs. Matthews clearly and succinctly replies “I would choose to know – I need to know”. She answers honestly and openly which is the language Hermes cannot master.

Excusing himself to the restroom he instead goes into Mary Ann’s bedroom and quietly steals a beautiful color photograph of her. In this portrayal she is smiling and appears to be content as a beautiful young woman which is the diametric opposite of her film life. Here we see an image of the filmic version Persephone is the height of her beauty and clarity before her final descent. Hermes / Tom then places her diary on the dresser under the empty picture frame and slips away. He has exchanged one truth for another in the hopes Mrs. Matthews will find the diary and the truth of Mary Ann’s disappearance will be enlightened. He has hidden her diary in plain sight just as the picture he has stolen hides the heinous truth below the surface of Mary Ann’s secret life. Hermes is trading truths dealing in one version while exploiting another for his personal gain. He tenderly places a hand on Mrs. Matthews shoulder as if connecting with her sorrow and

remorse while stealing from her. Leaving he says, “I’ll call you if I find anything out”. We view him walking away from the house into a pitch-black night. Silently he moves down a flight of stairs covered in shiny wet leaves as Janet briefly appears as a small silhouette in the distance. The camera speed has been slowed to capture a beautiful, haunting fluid scene of Hermes descending into another realm of encircling darkness and mystery. Like Mary Ann, Tom is leaving the loving warmth of authentic home and beginning his descent into the vortex of Hades realm. The audience is blinded by the magnitude of shadows mirroring as his search for Persephone / Mary Ann continues to unfold and inundate him. Tom is equally overwhelmed with the faces and stories of all the other “Persephone’s” lost in the shadows or hidden in the eternal darkness.

Blending into the Environment: 00:38 – 40:00

Continuing his search for Mary Ann, Tom has gathered numerous magazines, papers, notes, and videotapes from the local red light districts of West Hollywood. He continues his unconscious descent while looking through all this material searching for any contact or information relating to the missing Persephone, making notes and smoking. He sits on the hotel bed in his underwear. The hotel room is strewn with pornographic material including the 8MM film, which is running in the background along with high-tech digital processing equipment searching for clues.

His loving wife Amy /Aphrodite calls him on the cellular phone wondering how he has been? He is still remotely connected to his other life through the distant loving thoughts of his child and wife. He is only connected through a remote digital signal not even a landline could keep him bound although he is clearly lying. He tells her that “I’m think’n of packing my bags and coming home”, continuing to lie while he searches for what is missing, possibly in his own life? Distracted by an image briefly glimpsed in the film, he tells his wife, “that I’ll call you right back”, which he does not do for several days. His bonds with external realities are beginning to further strain and separate. His lies are spreading and reaching farther than they have before because he now believes them. Hermes is descending in Persephone’s footsteps losing contact with the outside world as he willingly follows her into the mysterious and dark underworld.

Walking through Hell’s Alley: 00:43 – 00:44

Tom begins to openly ask question about “underground pornography, stuff that’s sold under the counter – illegally” to the clerk working at the adult bookstore played by Joaquin Phoenix as Max California. Max / Pan tells him that “you name the vice, I name the price”. Tom hires Max to become his personal guide around town into the darker regions of the forbidden. Late at night the pair is walking down a dark and deserted alley as Max / Pan begins to guide Tom deeper into the underworld of pornography. Max warns Tom, “There are things that you’re gonna see that, that ya can’t unsee – they get in your head and they stay there” Tom replies, “how do you know what I’ve seen?” Max counters, “ok, fine – but everybody’s got their limit [...] before you know it you’re in it, deep in it.”

The camera angle here is from a vantage point well above the actors. They are both sinking into the next level of Hell while consciously choosing to enter. Blindly walking into the layer of Hades following in Dante's footsteps with their eyes wide open. There is no natural light here, only hazy electric streetlight to guide their uncertain and perilous way. Darkness and silence surrounds them; even shadows have disappeared in this realm as darkness has become all consuming. The scene closes with Max telling Tom "You dance with the Devil, the Devil don't change – the Devil changes you."

Hardcore: 00:45 – 00:47

Max leads Tom down another flight of stairs into a basement sale. A secret location, dark with hazy blue florescent lighting and "Porn zombies, junkies for the hard stuff, but these basement sales wont last much longer, one: it's too risky and two: it's all on the net"(Max). There is barely enough light to look at the merchandise or see the faces of who is selling the items. Tom now ventures off on his own and for the first time sees pornographic photos of "Kids" for sale. He picks up the packet of photos briefly, sealed in clear plastic, just like Mary Ann's diary. As if in utter disbelief he puts it back running his hand along his jacket lapel to remove the psychic stains, images he cannot forget. He continues to slowly walk around and begins to see the unimaginable at every turn. "Our willingness to spend such great sums of money betrays a ravenous hunger for something that actual pornography only approximates" (Moore114).

The Great Question: 00:51-00:52

"What about you Tom Wells? You got a ring on your finger, ya got kids?" "Yeah, a daughter" (Tom). With sarcasm Max returns "So you got a wife and a daughter and a nice little yellow house and a dog named Shep – What the hell are you doin' here?" "That's a good question" (Tom). "The Devils changin' you already" (Max). On some level Tom is questioning the nature of descent. He feels his life slipping away and is powerless to stop this momentum towards the epicenter of Hell.

The Merchandise: 00:55 – 00:56

Tom walks into Celebrity Films passing several young ladies provocatively dressed awaiting their audition. He asks Eddie Poole if he has "seen this girl" while holding out the color photo of Mary Ann. Hermes now claims to be a member of her family. Hermes has completely connected with the lost Persephone and continues to lie to gain more information. Eddie rummages through a desk drawer never looking up and reply's "you have any idea how much pussy comes through here?" Tom stands his ground, unmoving and unflinching in his request. Eventually, Eddie looks up with indifference and tiny beads of perspiration on his forehead at the photo. Responding in Hermes own language Eddie says "never seen her". Hermes coldly

queries again by asking “ya sure?” Eddied curtly and quickly answers through his ice green eyes “yeah I’m sure, I just looked at the fuckin picture didn’t I?”

Surveillance: 00:56 – 00:59

Tom sets up surveillance in a similar run down building across from Eddie’s office. In this industrial district services are easy to come by for the right price – even silence. Over the course of several days Tom observes Eddie, as Cupid, the wanton sexual child, indulging his continual desires with a stream of women who traverse through his office. Eddie is seen as a purveyor of women, a commodity and service to be used. As the darker side of Cupid he clearly objectifies women and only sees them as a means to his own pleasure or profit.

The Money Trail: 1:04 – 1:05

Mrs. Christian telephones Tom and tells him that over the course of a year her husband had written a series of checks from five different accounts. “Together those checks for cash totaled one million dollars in cash.” (Mrs.Christian / Hera) Here is the price for Persephone and her innocence revealed through back channel accounts and secret money transfers.

Trust: 1:11 – 1:13

Finally Tom and Max meet the director of commissioned adult movies, Dino Velvet. His office is covered with macabre and bizarre items, black velvet walls, dolls in bondage, broken glass, chains and a few lights giving an unearthly glow. Velvet tells Tom “You have a very special – a very beautiful face, the way light hits it” as he blocks his outstretched hands. He continues by saying, “I’d like to shoot you” while picking up a small handheld camera. Hermes quickly places his hand over the camera drawing it away from his face as he says that he is “camera shy.” Hades mummurs “you trust me to take your money, but not your picture?” Hermes quietly says, “those are two different kinds of trust.” Here we can see the two faces of Hades as well as the faces between Tom and Hermes. The two are almost inseparable now as their descent unifies in reciprocal deceit.

Satan Arrives: 1:14 – 1:22

Arriving at a deserted and abandoned industrial warehouse Tom is ambushed on the set of the movie he has deceptively commissioned. Dino shoots yellow arrows into a life-size crucifix with a modern crossbow in the center of a dark red room. In the background alongside a sidewall is a life-size blackened figure slumped in the hidden weight of remorse as if removed from the crucifix.

The crossbow is then pointed at Tom / Hermes as he is asked to remove his gun. Machine, wearing his black leather mask, looms over Tom with a knife tight against his throat. Eddie shows up and exposes Tom as

the one who has been snooping around. Eddie handcuffs Tom to a rusty metal bed on the set while Hades continues his direction of questions. Dino tells Hermes that “low and behold from right out of the blue came a long lost business acquaintance of ours to explain everything – *Satan Exmagenia*. You remember Mr. Longdale, don’t you?” Tom / Hermes looks up and figures out how he has been deceived. Finally, all the pieces fit and Hermes knows the deeper truth that has entrapped him within this band of thieves.

As Eddie is kneeling over a restrained Tom we can see a faded floral pattern on the old dirty stained mattress. There is a faint memory, a fleeting reminder of Persephanie’s presence hiding in the background. She is still present as a psychic whisper, although removed. Dino directs Tom, “you’re gonna listen to me, your gonna go and get that film, you’re gonna bring it back here give it to me; just make this as efficient as possible – and there is an incentive.” Machine returns with Max / Pan covered in blood from an obvious and cruel beating, his mouth tapped shut, and breathing heavily from pure terror. Here the innocence of Nature has been coerced again just as Persephonie was silenced. Unable to communicate in a Hermetic manner Pan is only able to convey the direct embodiment of fear. Hermes is also trapped, only the possibility of freedom can release him toward another level of truth. Dino explicitly tells Tom “If you don’t bring me that film – we’re gonna kill him, fuck him, and film it – and if that’s not enough for you – we’re gonna go after your family.” The Devil coldly stares at Tom while placing a photo of his family in his mouth as if consuming them for another seductive meal of violence and delight. Machine forcefully raises a whimpering Max / Pan upon the standing crucifix and ties him in place securing their next victim. Hades completely dominates this dark red set making it crystal clear to Hermes, no games and no lies this time. Hermes is now trapped in his own lie.

Mr. Longdale accompanies Tom out to his car to retrieve the film while pointing a gun at his back. Each man peppers the other with comments and questions as they walk toward Tom’s car. Tom asks Longdale if “he watched it with him?” Longdale’s indifference agitates Tom as he now begins to yell questions: “Did it get him off? – Watching them cut her up like that” Now completely enraged he screams at Longdale “What the fuck did he want with a snuff film? – Why did he want a film of a little girl being butchered?” Longdale calmly answers with a tone of indifferent curiosity, “Because he could, he did it because – he could – what other reason were you looking for?” Enraged and completely confounded Tom lurches at Longdale in a frantic moment of blinding rage. Longdale moves back cocking the gun and tells him slowly “now.” Hermes removes the film from the car’s trunk and also secretly takes out a single thin metal pick concealed in his right hand. Hermes now lies, in order to save his own life, since he can no longer save Persephanie.

Final Exposure: 1:22 – 1:28

Hermes brings the film to Dino and tells him he can have the film if Max is let go. Dino tells Machine to “set him free.” As Machine reaches up to cut Max down he instead slits his throat simultaneously tearing off the tape covering his mouth silencing Max’s muffled scream as he now slumps on the crucifix. The blackened figure in the corner has been replaced with a human sacrifice of suffering and fear. Here is where

historically Christianity killed nature, Gia was restrained and crucified in the name of progress, profit and religion. Yet in this realm it is the darkest sides of these archetypes that kill each other. Hades is the one who directs his mechanistic evil to sacrifice the innocence of Pan's sensuality / sexuality. Hermes lies no longer serve to protect or shield him yet Longdale is hiding behind a wall of betrayal.

Tom runs over and is intercepted by Machine who easily throws him to the ground. Eddie joins Machine as they kick and punch Tom mercilessly. The camera briefly pans to show Longdale's complete panic and frozen terror. He is rigid and pale within his dark suite and completely out of his element because the violence is real and happening within his personal sphere; it is no longer a celluloid image. He is now within the framework of deception and physical power unlike his imposed trail of paper lies and perceived power. These thugs are alive within the violence and easily access the physicality and power of Eros that he desperately lacks. His stance is another still frame similar when he was frozen in the shadows while Persephone was murdered.

"So it ends as if she never existed," Dino says as he unreels the film and burns it in front of Tom. Pouring an accelerant of lighter fluid on the exposed film, it quickly goes up in ablaze. Persephone's celluloid image, her immortal life and ephemeral soul has now been destroyed again. Her memories are gone in a mythopoetic flash of light; her short life bright and clear for a moment – then turned to a black twisted plastic ash.

Hermes arises in bloody anger handcuffed to the bed, as his only evidence and truth has been destroyed. He enflames the scene and calls them "small time mother fuckers" asking why they are all still small time "with a million dollars to spread around." Longdale looks panicked and calmly says Hermes is lying attempting to utilize the language that has been used against him. Now Longdale is pointing his gun toward them instead of aiming at Hermes. They immediately figure out Hermes is telling the truth this time. Longdale has been operating in the corners of the shadows; he cheated and lied to them as he initially lied to Hermes. Now Longdale's lies are no longer affective because he has been exposed to the light of truth. He appropriated the gifts of Hermetic speech without the Gods legal consent. Like the eternal ouroboros the circle of thieves begins to consume itself.

Dino, Machine, and Eddie move toward Longdale as he is backed up against his black car. Hades, while holding his crossbow, claims "if there is no honor among perverts and pornographers the whole fuckin business would fall apart. Because there's no records, there's no contracts, no legal recourse – so if someone cheats us that person can't be trusted, that person could turn us in, have us killed – so we don't have a choice – Mr. Longdale." Achilles tells Cupid to take out his gun and kick it over here – hard, another overt sexual reference cast in Cupids direction. Eddie removes his gun, and kicks it so it lands under the car, useless. Achilles now tells Hades to "drop the crossbow." Dino drops the crossbow in a smooth parabolic arch quickly drawing it around the underside of the ouroboric circle and shooting Longdale in the heart, pinning him to the car. He crossed the double-crosser in the similar way he was treated. Achilles exposed his vulnerable heel,

which was an unending greed, comprised of a cold heart with no compassion or remorse. The very place where no life or love existed is the exact place where he was shot – an arrow through the heart. Hades has utilized and usurped Cupid's arrow since Eddie was completely powerless to act in the face of violence. Each archetype adopted and stole the others' mythic tools manipulating and obfuscating the situation for their selfish desires.

In his shock Longdale shoots Dino in the neck. Hades falls to the ground bleeding to death claiming, "This is wrong - Oh God not like this, I'm supposed to have something more cinematic – Kill them Machine, kill them all." Even in the throws of death Hades is continuing to direct others' actions within his Kingdom. Tom attacks Eddie knocking him to the ground when Machine reaches for a knife; Hermes quickly pulls out his pick and stabs Machine in the stomach dropping him to the ground. Tom continues to protect himself by grabbing the dropped knife and fending off Eddie. Now Tom is able to return one bullet to his clip, using it to skillfully retrieve his gun on the floor. Hermes has only a single bullet – one shot at freeing himself from all these horrific lies and bloody dishonor. His aim and shot must be true for there will never be a second chance. He fires the gun breaking the handcuffs holding him and runs for his life. "Pain grows in proportion to the magnitude of fear" (Golomb 251).

Heartbreak 1:29 – 1:30

While speeding away from the crime Tom calls Mrs. Christian. He breaks the news to her that the film is indeed authentic. She asks if he knows the poor girl's name? Mary – Mary Ann Matthews was her name Tom replies. After hanging up, we see the only scene where Mrs. Christian is walking; Hera goes into her husband's office staring at his portrait. She is filled with grief and confusion over what she cannot possibly comprehend within the palatial vacuum of Olympus now that Zeus has gone. "Jung considered the shadow an aspect of the collective unconscious, since everyone's ego cast a corresponding shadow within the psyche" (Hopcke 84).

Lost: 1:32 – 1:33

Tom reaches safety and begins to tend his physical wounds. Hermes looks in the mirror at his bloody reflection and continues to lie to himself repeating "it's going to be ok, it's going to be ok". Still he continues to lie as he descends further into hell. "This wounding 'grounds' the man by slowing his incessant movement, deepening his connection with the earth and enhancing his capacity for feeling" (Rushing and Frenz 172).

Remembrance & Revenge: 1:36 – 1:37

Back in Hollywood, Tom quietly sneaks up on Eddie who is attempting to clean up and then sneak away. Here everything transpires in daylight and clear visibility; shadows have now been meticulously internalized. Tom strikes Cupid in the back and then punches him in the face; telling him to "put your hands

on your head and get down on your knees.” Hermes now directing Cupid as if he was demanding a sexual favor, the same services Cupid easily enjoyed while directing women. He reluctantly complies after Tom kicks him again. Hermes, clearly inflamed kicks Eddie several times until he submits to his questions about Machine. When Eddie does not know the answers Tom tells him “I will never get tired of hurting you Eddie.” Here we can see Hermes is finally telling the truth dark within his own heart for the very first time. Eddie knows it as well as he feels it from the timber in Tom’s voice and sees it in his piercing eyes. We can see Cupid completely terrified and uncertain of what will happen since he is no longer in charge. Cupid has been violently placed in a submissive role, which he clearly disdains and fears. He has now become Mary Ann literally and figuratively and will have to walk in her steps.

I want to know: 1:38 – 1:39

During the middle of the night Eddie and Tom drive far into the hills and come upon a deserted, burned out building filled with graffiti and broken walls. There is no light here literally or metaphorically. In small patches, faint moonlight gently streams twilight through holes in the roof capturing the liminal space for this scene to unfold. The interior of this space is layered with dark cryptic images marring the internal shadows staged here. Within this small humble building, incredible and unspoken events have taken place unseen, away from external realities or the consensus of public life. Here resides the grand Olympus of dark Souls, a Pantheon of depravity gleaming in starlight within the underworld at the blurred edges of dusk.

Eddie asks “What the fuck you want from me?” Tom quietly replies, “I want to know.” After a pause in which Eddie recalls the events he replies, “She was nothin, she’s a little piece of pussy off the street. A girl like that disappears and nobody gives a shit.”

Your Gun?: 1:39 – 1:43

Tom strikes Eddie again hard – knocking him to the floor. Cupid tells Hermes that “Without the film you got nothin, so all you can do is cut me loose, cause without the film you got nothin.” Caught in an eternal circle of deceit, just like the 8MM film, Hermes feels trapped with no evidence as Cupid honestly reveals Tom’s deceitful dilemma. In rage, Hermes rips some electrical wire out of the wall and wraps it around Cupid’s neck, then around his back tying his hands. Eddie is now seated on the floor tied to an exposed ‘stud’ in the broken and exposed wall. He is now restrained to the very thing he so desperately wishes to be. He is held in place, restrained by his vulnerability exposed against his will and being choked in a metaphorical and literal position of autoeroticexphyxica.

Tom leans over and tells him “I’m gonna kill you Eddie – I’m gonna kill you and leave you here, just like you left her” through a blood stained mouth Eddie says “You’re not gonna kill me, you don’t have it in ya.” Tom moves close standing over him in a position of assumed authority physically and sexually then cocks his gun pointing it right in Eddie’s face. Eddie smugly says “What are ya gonna do, shoot me with your

own gun – huh? Registered in your name – huh?” As he smugly laughs and continues – “You really fuckn thought this through genius.” The black and white electrical wires entwined around Eddie’s neck are actually choking Tom’s resolve. Hermes is utterly distraught, wrestling internally with this quandary for justice and truth neither to be found nor resolved. We see the delicate shiny feminine gold chain around Cupid’s neck in contrast to the black and white wires confining him as a faint reminder of the feminine Persephone at play within the imaginal spaces of Hell.

Tom is gritting his teeth as his face contorts and his piercing eyes narrow their focus. On the verge of insanity, Hermes has now placed the gun directly against Cupid’s forehead, possibly to blind his Cycloptic vision. Next Hermes moves the gun from his head to Eddie’s right eye hoping to blind some aspect of masculine vision and what he so clearly sees hidden within himself. The clarity of truth is blinding Hermes and he cannot tolerate what he has been so desperately seeking. Cupid continues to taunt Tom, “Pull the fuckin trigger – well go ahead, what are ya waiting for, go ahead – do it, you faggot [...] Go ahead put me outa my fuckin’ misery, pull the fuckin’ trigger come-on (as he sticks his tongue out and begins to lick the tip of Tom’s gun, simulating fellatio) Come on! – (as he now screams) do it! – Do It!”

In this darkest guise, Cupid is merely concerned with his own carnal pleasures no matter the price or outcome. As the insatiable and petulant child, he only cares for his erotic desires even as he fates death with a tantrum. He derides Hermes for lack of heroism, insulting and taunting him – emasculating him with the strongest taboo of male on male sexuality and power. Cupid just performed fellatio with Tom’s loaded and cocked gun in his face with no climax. This is a place Eddie has never been before on the performing side of the power differential as the giver. His position now represents where Persephone has been and the ultimate cost she paid. These two archetypes have faced off in the eternal battle of sexuality and desire – stealing the others words and lies. Truth is another embarrassment of this war for souls and sensual desires.

Tom is in contorted turmoil like the black and white wires, wrapped around each other. What he clearly planned has turned into something else like Mary Ann’s dream and Persephone’s nightmares. In lying to himself he has found that truth is merely relative and always comes with a price. His resolve is being choked, cut off from his actions and desires for justice or for revenge. His mental process cannot fully grasp what is happening and the psychic space needed to formulate alternate options is being torn and pulled. Tom and Hermes are locked with one another agonizing for truth and clarity. Hermes begins to lower the gun from Eddie’s head while Cupid’s gaze is transfixed on the broken Hermes. Relieved and delighted for the climax of violence Cupid says: “Awww, oh ho hoo, you can’t do it – you little pansy bitch. Look at you, big fuckn hero man, you can’t fuckn do it.” Cupid again taunts Hermes through a brutal and subtle reference to Tom as a “pansy bitch”, a broken metaphorical allusion to the defiled and lost Persephanie. Tom’s only driving mission was to find and hopefully rescue Persephone and Cupid continues to rob him of the one thing that drives him – his desire for the truth.

Smiling with red lips covered in his own blood he begins to laugh at Hermes, “Look at him, big fuckn hero – huh? Go on home to your wifey – you pussy” Tom turns away in disgust and walks out, completely eviscerated and bewildered to the relentless Cupid’s taunts and insults. Both Hermes and Tom are confounded as their plans defeated, they are racked with pain and confusion. The truth that has been revealed is unbearable and the psychic tension is untenable for Hermes. “Metaphorically, pain creates an embodied ‘absence’ and makes way for a new greater ‘presence.’ [...] As emptying ourselves of the ‘false divinity with which we were born’” (Glücklich 207).

Permission: 1:44 – 1:45

In the dark background we can still hear Cupid screaming taunts to the brokenhearted Hermes as if he were throwing yet another temper tantrum. Walking away in confusion Tom goes outside, lights a cigarette, and uses his cell phone to call Janet Matthews. He answers her, “Hello, this is Thomas – Thomas Heart.” Even now his name betrays his shattered internal landscape. In visible anguish within the shadows of the night, Tom finally reveals the brutal truth to himself and to Ms. Matthews: “Some men, they took her and killed her and buried her. I’m sorry, I’m sorry – I want to punish them for what they did.” Hermes is completely torn apart and seeks permission to enact what is just. “I can hurt them, give me your permission to hurt them please – just tell me how much she meant to you”.

Throughout Tom’s explanation Janet is muttering “no, no, no, no, no...” Each layer of their anguish and rage are mixed through blood and tears thousands of miles apart as simultaneously they both are enmeshed in their own version of hell. Hermes desperately needs to receive absolution for what he knows and for his own deceitful knowledge. He needs her blessing for what he must do to correct and right the lost ship of his Soul. Demeter who is immediately overcome by grief continues to repeat over and over again “I love her so much – I love her so much” through distraught tears and confusion as the scene quickly turns to the black abyss.

Be careful when killing monsters that you don’t become one yourself: 1:45 – 1:47

Tom walks in and turns to Eddie as we briefly see the terror in his eyes – he knows. Hermes has also descended into the dark abyss and is now free to release his rage and fear for justice. We hear Tom scream as we also hear repeated strikes overlaid with the soundtrack. Moments later, appearing in a doorway, Tom is dressed in all black, as he stands utterly still, beautifully framed by the shadows surrounding him. We briefly see the right side of his face and arm is covered with splattered blood. The camera pans down to reveal his right hand, trembling – holding his reversed gun, inundated in dark red blood. Hermes had lied to himself, and eventually found a way to beat these men at their own game, literally. It’s now obvious to the audience he beat Eddie, he pistol-whipped him to death. The ‘cocked’ and loaded gun now becomes the most violent weapon as pornographic and phallic in nature, use and reference. The view from Tom’s eyes mirrors

his psyche which is distant and cold – he is in shock and rage navigating the abyss and his place within a new expanded psychic landscape. His actions betray his original intent of finding innocent Mary Ann, what he found was the horrible truth – something so banal he could have never been prepared for its revelation. And he looked into the depths of hell including his own Soul in order to find that truth. “Terror may intensify to the point where consciousness disintegrates” (Terrant 66).

Hermes goes and retrieves boxes and boxes of pornographic material from the trunk of Eddie’s car. He is mythically repeating the actions staged from previous pornographic scenes, bringing the substance and content directly to the abuser. Hermes empties out these boxes as the camera has sped up to reveal thousands and thousands of photos, videotapes, and magazines. Images of women, men, and children – every possible sexual act filmed and recorded in the pantheon of Cupid’s endless desire. Everything is poured over Eddie’s bloody and slouched body, he is surrounded by the spoils of his perverse riches and the multiplicity of images representing an endless imaginal sexual realm. An old red can of gasoline is splashed over this pile of images reminiscent of the accelerant Hades used to burn the solitary snuff film in front of Tom.

Hermes steps back lighting a single nameless photo and calmly tossing it – igniting the pile of evidence and burning everything, as if none of these images along with Eddie ever existed. All records of Cupid’s desires and the images of the Soul’s he trapped for his amusement along his path were finally released. These flames also represent the continued rage burning in Tom’s heart as he is still consumed with the quest of justice for Persephone and all the other nameless Persephone’s and children that he now knows exist. Hermes has now stepped into the role of Hades, casting flames to violently erupt, as the entire set is ignited with flames dancing across the screen as Tom is shown in the background. In these moments Hermes is completely entangled in the depth of the Shadow, only the flames in front of him, his burning rage, bring him direction or warmth. Veiled images of Hermes are now removed while the screen fades to black. Hermes has murdered Cupid, cremated in a pile of lust and excess from the spoils and riches of a life lived in unbridled excess. The theme as distorted and repeated before; only the characters are different. He has again danced with the Devil – and the music continues to play.

The Predator: 1:47 – 1:48

Tom has traveled back to New York in search of “Machine”. Using his cell phone to call local hospitals Hermes represents himself as a police officer from the 13th Precinct. He is looking for a “stabbing victim with an abdominal wound.” A duty nurse reveals that he registered under the name “George Anthony Higgins.” Now the monster has a name and a home. Tom drives to the address and begins surveillance. Again, dressed in all black he moves closer to his target. Like an animal stalking its prey he methodically searches for Machine. Moving slowly, sneaking around the property for a glimpse before he attacks. Tom has now been removed; Hermes has taken over and moves in to locate the masked truth, as he lies in waiting.

Understanding and acceptance: 1:48 – 1:52

George lives with his elderly mother. Through a side window we see a veiled image of her kissing her son on the forehead. This monster appears to live a regular life blending in with the neighborhood. Apparently George has feelings and emotions as others who appear to be regular citizens.

The Monster Unmasked: 1:52 – 1:58

On this cold and rainy evening Hermes decides to enter the Monsters layer. This small house is flanked by a cemetery reflecting death and Machine's alliance with the subject. Hermes sneaks in through a basement window and quietly removes his gun. The darkened house is filled with the muffled sounds of heavy metal music as Hermes comes up the stairs. Suddenly the music stops and all we hear is the repeated and methodical sound of the record stuck at the end of its track.

Machine appears from around a corner attacking Hermes. Wearing his black leather mask and wielding a knife he pins Hermes against a wall. As they struggle in the hallway, Machine forces the gun out of Hermes' hand. Hermes then knees Machine in the stomach dropping the injured man to his knees. Hermes goes to retrieve his gun when Machine comes at him knocking him through a second story window. Another fall from grace onto hardened ground below, Hermes gun has fallen just outside the cemetery fence. Machine steps from the window onto wet leaf covered roof, which gives way as he loses his balance sending him crashing to the ground below.

As rain pours down Hermes reaches through the fence for his gun when Machine pulls him away forcing him into the cemetery and onto his back. He is on top of Hermes pinning him to the ground with a knife against his throat. Machine straddles him in a provocative position and says; "You know the best part of killing someone? The look on their face, its that look – not when they are threatened, not when you hurt them, not even when they see the knife. It's when they feel the knife go in – that's it. It's surprise; they just can't believe its really happening. She had that look, the girl, when she knew it wasn't just porno – can ya feel how hard I am." Using the sound of the rain as cover, Hermes has managed to reach over with his left hand and grab a metal cone used to hold flowers. Here is another faded reference to Persephanie and the wildflowers she once held, her haunting presence remains throughout the film as a distant memory. Hermes uses the cone as a weapon, stabbing Machine in the arm, rolling him over to his back.

Hermes runs and gets his gun quickly pointing it at Machine as he tells him to "take off the mask." Machine takes off the black leather hood and puts on a pair of glasses from his pocket while in the rain. He stares at this man for a moment as he sees the unbelievable. This ordinary looking man replies "what did you expect a monster?" Tom appears confounded at the normalcy of this young man staring at the end of his gun. This image is in dire opposition to Cupid's crude and crass countenance. "My name is George, you probably knew that already." This soft-spoken man continues: "Can't get your mind around it huh? I don't have any

answers to give – nothing that will make you sleep easier at night. I wasn't beaten, I wasn't molested, mommy didn't abuse me and daddy never raped me.” This monster seems so real and human in this simple moment of confession. Again, Hermes is blinded by the truth of the situation and cannot believe what he is seeing – the truth being revealed is darker than his imagination of what this ‘monster’ could have been.

“I only am what I am – that's all there is to it” are George's last words as he quickly throws his knife striking Hermes in the stomach. Machine was lying in wait, preying up Hermes with another lie, and drawing him into a web of death. The archetypes living in the shadows are blinded and deceived with their own tools as they reverse roles. Here they are able to walk through illusions and take over one another more easily than in the light of day. Mortal personalities are another costume to be utilized at will as long as their purposes and lies are served. Machine runs toward the stabbed Hermes, grabbing him by the throat, they are embraced in death. “There's no mystery, the things I do, I do them because I like them – because I want to” Machine says. “They morally violate society's laws and affront personal notions of propriety and civilized conduct. They threaten intellectual chaos through sheer inaccessibility of motive” (Simpson 11).

In the darkest essence, Machine is a shadowed representation of Cyclopes. His monstrous vision for killing in a sexualized and brutal manner is the one sight he longs for the most. As these two Giants struggle, Hermes painfully removes the knife embedded in his gut and thrusts it deep into Cyclopes stomach. Once more returning the deadly gift to its sender, Hermes pushes away Machine as, he falls to the ground dying. The single point and vision of the monster's knife kills him once and for all ending his cycloptic mission and violent vision.

Salvation: 1:59 – 1:59

At night in the safety of the shadows, Tom returns home with Hermes as they make their way up stairs. Deeply wounded and psychically lost from the journey he staggers into the nursery looking for his daughter Cindy. The room is infused with soft blue moonlight as we see him looking into the crib. His daughter, Kore, sensing his presence pulls back her soft yellow blanket, gently and lovingly looking up at her father. The pure innocence of this vision weighs heavy on his Soul and deeply affects him. A fatality of this foreign journey was his discernment, lost within the shadows of desire and corruption. Upon seeing this beautiful mystery Tom whimpers and quickly covers his mouth to hush his own cries of torment and wonder.

The inside of Cindy's crib rests a subtle pattern of white lace, dotted with small rose-colored satin flowers where the lines cross. Is it possible the innocent Persephone is embodied here before his eyes? Her presence of love and purity drawing him home throughout his entire journey? All the true colors of spring are represented within this little bundle of joy and love before Hermes. The cycle of spring and winter of death and rebirth that are the hallmarks of Persephone's descent and return are laden through the film in subtle messages of light and love indicating the journey is always filled with love and forgiveness. The question now

before the audience is who exactly was lost along this path? Which character was taken astray and which character was taken home?

Tom turns to make his way down the blackened hall toward his bedroom. Continuing to limp as he begins to cry louder in anguish, he hears Amy call out “Tom, is that you?” He reaches the bedroom and falls into Amy’s arms as they rest on the edge of the bed. He begins to weep and moan in grief and desperation while his wife holds him ever so gently rocking him side to side – as a baby. Through tears and susurrant cries he begs his wife “Save – me, save – me.”

Final Truths Revealed 1:59 – End

“Both soul and story are revealed incarnately, in and through the body. It is as if the parts of the body have corresponding poetic appendages in ones’ life story; our stories are located in our bodies, and perhaps the genesis of this story rests deeply nestled in our wounds”(Slattery 38). Returning full circle we see Tom standing in his front yard raking leaves, gathering the debris of fallen winter. Here he collects the remnants of his tattered life trying to pick up the pieces and move forward. Sounds of the old projector running in the background enforce that this internal movie is not over as the maddening sound slowly diminishes into an eerie winter quiet. Pictures and images are obviously running on the internal screen of Tom’s mind and emotions.

Tom goes over to the mailbox retrieving the day’s mail. His movements are slightly disjointed as if a soldier had returned from battle and is not yet accustomed to the regular world. Somehow he seems removed and distant although at home where his journey started. Although physical time has passed he is very deeply traumatized; body and Soul are healing very slowly. He opens a letter sent by Janet Matthews. She tells him that she appreciated him “writing and telling me your real name, who you really are, and what really happened.” In the end Hermes was able to speak the truth and account for his actions, but not the darker recesses of his Soul. “I hated you for telling me the truth, but now I realize that you and I are probably the only people that ever really cared about Mary Ann. Yours Truly, Janet Matthews.”

In the final moments of this closing scene Tom looks up to see his wife and child standing inside the house. They are safe and warm held within the bounds of comfort and security while he is outside in the elements of nature. Amy is tenderly holding their daughter in her arms as she looks lovingly at her husband through a glass window. His face begins to show a worn and broken smile, as he knows that he is finally home. The descent is finally over and now he must return to the ‘Persephone’ directly in front of him. She begins to cry as she glimpses this man who she does not truly know yet and possibly never will as his secrets must remain hidden. She understands he has been through war with many scars to be healed and their unspoken gaze speaks volumes between them held in the silence of a winter day. These stories of Hermes Persephonic journey are locked away in the shadows of his heart. The love and support of authentic family can eventually unlock their meaning and help Tom unreel the truth.

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