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DONNA CAMERON

A screenplay for video by

"CONFIDENTIAL DO NOT DUPLICATE"

SOUND BRIDGE: FISH
TANK PUMP HUMMING

FADE OUT TEXT.

THE FOLLOWING IS A PERSONAL
STATEMENT OF GRIEF. IT IS A
STATEMENT MADE USING THE HOME
VIDEO MEDIUM AND IT EXPRESSES THE
VIEWPOINT OF THE FILMMAKER, NOT
NECESSARILY THOSE PERSONS
APPEARING IN THE TAPE.

FADE IN TEXT:

FADE OUT TITLE.

A VIDEO BY DONNA CAMERON

CONFIDENTIAL DO NOT DUPLICATE

FADE IN TITLE:

FADE OUT TITLE.

Produced by Phil Sloan and Donna
Cameron

FADE IN TITLE:

FADE OUT TITLE.

TO BELT

FADE IN TITLE:

SOUND: DOG BARKING AND CRICKETS CHIRPING IN A SUBURBAN
FOREST. FARAWAY SOUND OF RAIN DRIPPING IN A METAL BUCKET.

BEGIN TITLES.

BLACK

"CONFIDENTIAL DO NOT DUPLICATE"

(V.O./FILMMAKER)
For two weeks I sat in this black
chair. I was convinced that they
were coming to get me, too.
Whomever it was - we weren't quite
sure who it was!
But then - nobody was sure.
Nobody knew what happened to
her - at least, that's what they
told us.

It is a dark room, typical Brooklyn Brownstone light. HAND-HELD shaky
shots are shaky but sure. They confirm the authority of the
storyteller, in the voice of the first-person. They reflect my GRIEF
and confused state of mind.

SOUND: MY FOOTSTEPS.

HIGH ANGLE ON BLACK CHAIR--ARC LEFT TO RIGHT AROUND CHAIR

INT. MY HOUSE - DAY

CUT TO:

My mother called. She said,
"I have bad news, Donna."
"Beth is dead."

CAMERA ADJUSTS FOCUS

(V.O./FILMMAKER)
I remember the day that I found
out that my sister was dead.

Two red goldfish float in a tank with blue and red pebbles
and a green plastic plant. Reflection of video lens cap and
camera in the tank glass.

SOUND: WHINING WHIR OF CAMERA MOTOR AND FISH TANK PUMP MIX

EXTREME CLOSEUP/SOFT FOCUS

INT/EXT. FISH TANK - FLUORESCENT TANK LIGHT

CUT IN:

died.
sister without knowing how she
I was having to bury my young
(V.O./FILMMAKER)

WE HEAR: FOOTSTEPS, SINGING IN A BROKEN VOICE
SUPER-SHADOW OF MY HAND MOVING TOWARD CAMERA LENS
INT/EXT. WHITE FIELD OVER LENS - DAY

CUT TO:

cripple. AND, I had no answers.
proofreader. I was a social
longer. treelance as an editor or a
transpose numbers. I could no
or misspell words and sentences,
I had a new problem. I would skip
were dislexic!"
would say, "Gee, I didn't know you
my own telephone number. People
At times I couldn't even remember
I began to forget everything else.
trying to forget my sister. And so
trying to forget things. I was
I began to forget things. **I was**
(V.O. FILMMAKER)

EXTREME CLOSEUP-CAMERA SCROLL DOWN, JUMP-CUT/SCROLL DOWN

SOUND: SAME

INT. NECROPSY REPORT - SAME

CUT TO:

I couldn't distinguish myself from
my sister. It was a shocking death.
(V.O./FILMMAKER)

CLOSE SHOT: HOLD STEADY; SHARPER FOCUS

INT/EXT. FISH TANK - SAME

CUT TO:

The camera, fixed on the choppy waves, swings up and right and then left across the landscape of harbor, passengers and sky. It sways for an instant as the Statue of Liberty comes into view. It pans into blackness, a shadowy place (to later become the loc. EXT. BLACK SHADOW FIELD - DAY) on the boat, too dark for the camera's footcandle capacity. This disruptive gesture reflects my confusion and inner turmoil.

SOUND: LOCATION. WIND RUSHING THE CAMERA MICROPHONE.

CLOSE ON: WAVES IN HARBOR AGAINST SIDE OF FERRY

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR/ CIRCLE FERRY RIDE - DAY

PAN UP&ACROSS TO:

*She disappeared in Charleston,
South Carolina December 16, 1987.*

Knowledge is comfort. Is control.
Is a manner of healing. Is self-
reconciliation. Without knowledge,
all is lost.

I was having to bury my young
sister without knowing how she
died. This is a difficult (if not
impossible) thing to do.
(V.O./FILMMAKER)

SOUND: LOCATION. WIND RUSHING THE CAMERA MIKE.

MEDIUM SHOT- ANGLE DOWN, OVER THE SHOULDER EFFECT--CAMERA
FINDS MISCELLANEOUS WAVES, NOTHING.

The water is choppy. Waves are tossing to and from the side of the boat. It is an overcast day in late summer, similar to the day of our last visit. We took the same boat ride, saw the same sites.

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR FROM CIRCLE LINE - DAY

CUT TO:

CUT TO:

M.O.S.

SUPER-PASSENGERS ON FERRY

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR/ CIRCLE LINE/ GRAPHIC POSTER OF NEW YORK ON SITE - DAY

SIAM CUT TO:

CAMERA ZOOMS OUT

After she disappeared her
cigarettes and her half-finished
drink were found in an off base
apartment behind an open screen
door. Her military ID was found on
the road to the base. Her keys
were found in the women's locker
room. Her motorcycle was stolen
from the base parking lot. And her
much loved collection of Beatles'
tapes just disappeared. On New
Year's Day, a stranger walking his
dog in the woods behind his house
found a decomposed human body on a
pile of garbage. It had no face.
It had no flesh.

(V.O./FILMMAKER)

M.O.S./SOUND: Location. Wind rushing the camera microphone.
The camera finds the statue, then allows other sites and
vessel to pass horizontally through the field. I feel the
flow of time in the flow of the river. Familiar tourist
pleasures of sea and sky become sinister omens.

LONG SHOT

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR/ CIRCLE LINE, PASSING VIEW OF STATUE OF LIBERTY, ELTIS ISLAND, OTHER VESSELS PASSING- DAY

The last time I saw her, we went
to the statue of Liberty. We took
the train and the ferry and we got
stuck there for two hours.

(V.O./FILMMAKER)

There is the sound of a cigarette lighter clicking, tape recorder being turned on, microphone being picked up.

SOUND: LOCATION. INSIDE FERRY CABIN.

EXT. BLACK SHADOW FIELD - DAY

(V.O./FILMMAKER)
She loved New York. She always
wanted to identify with it.
When people asked her where she
was from she would tell them she
was from New York.

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR/ CIRCLE LINE/ GRAPHIC POSTER OF NEW
YORK ON SITE - DAY

SUPER-PASSENGERS ON FERRY

SOUND: SAME LOCATION/M.O.S.

FADE IN:

(V.O./FILMMAKER)
Mysteriously enough the body had
hands. The hands were shipped to
the FBI for fingerprint
identification...

We could never figure that out.

CUT TO:

EXT. BLACK SHADOW FRAME - DAY

SOUND: SAME LOCATION

(V.O./FILMMAKER)
I did see the Coroner's Report.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR/ CIRCLE LINE/ GRAPHIC POSTER OF NEW YORK ON SITE - DAY

SUPER- PASSENGERS ON FERRY

SOUND: SAME LOCATION/M.O.S.

(V.O./FILMMAKER)

And the coroner's report reports finding a body that when reconstructed was at least five-feet-four-inches in height.

FADE OUT.

CUT TO:

EXT. BLACK SHADOW FRAME - DAY

FREEZE FRAME.

SOUND: SAME LOCATION

(V.O./FILMMAKER)

My sister was just five feet tall. She was stationed aboard the USS Holland at the time that she disappeared.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR/ CIRCLE LINE - DAY

CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON PASSING VIEW OF THE INTREPID, HOLDS, ZOOMS OUT, HOLDS, ZOOMS IN, PANS RIGHT ACROSS SKYLINE.

SOUND: M.O.S.

(V.O./FILMMAKER)

One can reconstruct dinosaur skeletons from millions of years ago. How is this height discrepancy, on record, believable?

SOUND: LOCATION.

PAN DOWN, ZIG-ZAG ACROSS R--L, ZOOM OUT, PAN LEFT BECOMING
INCREASINGLY MORE STEADY

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR/ CIRCLE LINE - DAY

CUT TO:

(V.O. FILMMAKER)
Everywhere I go, every image
reminds me of the person who was
suddenly taken away from me.

SOUND: SAME LOCATION

ANGLE ON: ORNAMENTS IN BRANCHES, FESTIVE TREE LIGHTS

INT. CHRISTMAS TREE - NIGHT

CUT TO:

(V.O./FILMMAKER)
It was Christmas. people were
trying to contact her. Then they
found the body. none of us have
been the same since. You never
forget. There is no stopping the
pain...

SOUND: M.O.S.

MEDIUM SHOT: STEADY ON

EXT. BW CAROUSEL TENT TOP TURNING - DAY

CUT TO:

And what of the multitude of other
dead/missing young women whose
floating identities all vied for
that one found body? I wonder.
What happened? I wonder where she
is...

(V.O./FILMMAKER)
Even the Chaplain lied...

SOUND: SAME

EXT. BLACK SHADOW FRAME - DAY

CUT TO:

My parents were supposed to have
seen her for Christmas. For two
weeks they called. People said
that she couldn't come to the
phone.
Their calls became more frantic
and frequent.

SOUND: LOCATION. WIND INTO CAMERA MIKE.

CAMERA ADJUSTS

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR/ CIRCLE LINE WATER FOAM- DAY

SLAM CUT TO:

FOLLOW WATER PATTERN FROM BOAT

I guess I'm not my sister.

PAN DOWN TO WATER

Detectives seem to think that it
was a serial killer. Really? Why
were her cigarettes and half-
finished drink in an open off-base
apartment. Why were her keys on
the ship. Why was her military ID
on the road to the base. And where
is her music?
My sister was just twenty-four
years old when she died. She was
proud to serve in the armed
forces. She put her faith in the
Navy way of life.

Later we were told that she was
 lying this way was Navy policy. I
 don't know...

is it? The civilian detective on
 the case discreetly told us that:

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR/ CIRCLE LINE - DAY

LONG SHOT

SOUND: SAME

(V.O./FILMMAKER)
 "Beth, you know - went out with
 them there coloreds". And that
 there were a lot of KKK in the
 area. The navy detective told us
 that he was fat-young and new on
 the job and just trying to make a
 name for himself...

(CAMERA ZOOMS IN)
 That explains it, I guess:

(M.O.S)
 Fat detective competing with the
 FBI and the Navy. The whole case
 was botched!

(CAMERA ZOOMS OUT)
 (pause; END M.O.S)
 The priest at her funeral service
 said,
 "No matter what happened, Beth
 never gave up on herself."
 (PAN DOWN TO WATER)
 I won't give up on Beth either.
 You know,
 this is a true story:

(PAN UP TO VIEW OF TOURIST
SITE, FERRY PASSENGERS,

(V.O./FILMMAKER)
wonder where she is...

SOUND: LOCATION. WIND IN CAMERA MIKE.

PAN DOWN USING SPEEDING CLOSE SHOT OF WATER

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR/ CIRCLE LINE - DAY

CUT TO:

There were still no answers. The
Navy did it's investigation. We
were given numerous apologies, no
facts. Somebody knows something.
The fact that somebody knows
something and is not communicating
that something to my family is
very difficult to live with.
What happened. Where is she? I

(V.O./FILMMAKER)
As a member of the media I
protest!...

SOUND: LOCATION. M.O.S.

EXT. BLACK SHADOW FRAME - DAY

CUT TO:

My young son has never met his
aunt. Beth is a victim. The kind
of victim that the media exploits
with a cold and calculating rigor.

SOUND: LOCATION.

TWO SHOT: ANGLE UP, CLOSE ON MY HUSBAND AND SON ON THE FERRY

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR/ CIRCLE LINE - DAY

CUT TO:

We were told that the Navy has
evidence of trauma to the skull.
All teeth are present. There is no
(V.O./FILMMAKER)

SOUND: SAME

PICK UP IMPROVE CAMERA WORK, CROSS CUT IN-CAMERA W/ BLACK
EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR/ CIRCLE LINE - DAY

CUT TO:

She was found by a man at
approximately 10:30am as he was
taking a walk through the woods.
At the scene the body was that of
a young female lying in a clump of
dried leaves. The skull was
detached from the body.
Approximation of the skull gives a
body length of 64 inches.

SOUND: SAME

EXT. BLACK SHADOW FRAME - DAY

CUT TO:

IMPROVISE CAMERA AT THIS
POINT)
Confidential Do Not Duplicate-
final necropsy diagnosis. Young,
decomposing white female.
Reason for autopsy: found in
wooded area.
Probable cause of death:
undetermined.
This white female was found at the
crossroads in North Charleston on
the morning of January 1, 1988.

(NOTE: I WROTE THIS PART OF THIS SCRIPT AS I SHOT IT, IN THE CAR. I (WILL) USE IT TO MAINTAIN TOUCH WITH SOME KIND OF OBJECTIVE REALITY. MY CAMERA THUS BECOMES "THE" CAMERA. IN A WAY, IT'S TRANSCRIPT/SCRIPT IN THIS THIRD OF THE FILM TRULY FULFILL THE DOCUMENTARY REQUIREMENT OF THIS WORK. THE ACTION

FADE IN:

CUT TO: BLACK

What happened. Where is she?

We the people. The victim...

We are the victim.

The victim has a family.

no stopping the pain.

You never forget. There is

I wonder where she is?

I protest...

of **violence** in the movies.

The glamorizing and glorification

Violence on the TV News.

and capitalize.

Violence with intent to exploit

Violence against women.

What is this violence?

Where is she?

I wonder where she is...

What happened? Where is she?

child."

so painful as my burying my

buried a father. There is nothing

"Well, I buried a mother and I've

said,

On the way to the burial my father

Found again, we think.

For several weeks. But they were

disappeared on the way to the FBI

RECORD'S A RECORD. The records

very good dental records. BUT A

NOTES ARE QUOTES FROM MY FIELD OBSERVATIONS/DIARY ON THIS DAY. THE VO'S AND SOUND EDT ARE SCRIPTED, LIKE THE OTHER TWO THIRDS OF THE FILM.--DC, 1990)

INT/EXT. INSIDE MY CAR/APPROACHING ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY/A TIME THAT HAPPENED BEFORE THE FIRST SCENES. IT IS A DISPLACEMENT, NOT A FLASHBACK.

ECU/MLS-NONDESCRIP-T-INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE MOVING CAR
"the camera adjusts; finds focus on miscellaneous objects both in the interior and on the exterior of the car. The hand-held again is representing my inability to direct attention to the matter at hand. I am about to see my sister's tombstone for the first time.

SOUND: CAR RADIO. MY SON AND HUSBAND'S VOICES. LOCATION.

(V.O./FILMMAKER)

You can't help it. That's just the way it is...

CUT TO:

EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

LONG SHOT-

Focus is on the approach to the cemetery. The gates, the sign, the granite edifice. The uniformed guards are directing traffic in, and, in the road, there are the tourists.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. INSIDE CAR, VIEW OUTSIDE THROUGH WINDSHIELD - DAY

CAMERA ZOOMS IN TO GRANITE ARCH

SOUND: MY SON AND HUSBAND'S VOICES. LOCATION.

My husband and son are visible in the front seat. My son is so small that his feet stick out straight in front of him in the chair. His fricht is apparent in the manner in which he clutches a little present in a plastic bag. I am numb with terror. It is Springtime, the cherry blossoms are in bloom. My son doesn't see them, instead, he's convinced that it's Halloween. He insists upon holding a conversation about