

Witch Road

By

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CREDITS OVER

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Our three teens, MYSTI, VANCE and JESSICA, make their way through low brush and branches to a clearing.

They stop, take in the scenery, the peacefulness. Jessica pulls out a water bottle, takes a swig, holds it out.

JESSICA

Vance?

Vance reaches into his backpack.

VANCE

Thanks babe, but I brought my own.

Vance pulls out a can of beer, cracks it, swills.

MYSTI

(to Jessica)

Class act you got there.

JESSICA

He serves a purpose. Sometimes.

VANCE

I serve no one!

JESSICA

In your dreams.

Mysti's attitude turns intense.

MYSTI

OK, guys. Before we do this, before we cast the circle, I need to be certain that your intentions are pure. Any wavering on your part could upset the balance and send the energy even further away. I'm feeling that we're really close... despite the last incident.

Mysti flashes Vance a look.

VANCE

Hey, I had the shits, what'd you want me to do?

(CONTINUED)

MYSTI

So speak now or forever remain
silent and ignorant to the truth.

Vance and Jessica exchange glances.

JESSICA

Come on, Mysti. Like we'd be out
here in the middle of east butt
blast if we weren't serious.

MYSTI

Well, as scout leader on this
outing, it's my job to ask. And for
your information, Jess, we're
actually in south butt blast.

(to Vance)

Bud Mud, you in?

VANCE

(sips beer)

Yeah, I'm down. Let's do this.

Mysti grabs the beer can from his hand.

MYSTI

We'll need both hands for this.

VANCE

Hey, I wasn't finished.

She chugs the rest, tosses the empty aside.

MYSTI

(belches)

Damn. How you can drink that piss
is beyond me.

Jessica SWATS a bug on her neck, waves her hands.

JESSICA

Any time now, folks, before we turn
into bug bait.

MYSTI

Oh, man-up, girl.

The CEREMONY begins...

Mysti unlocks a wooden case, roughly two feet wide, a foot
deep and six inches tall. She flips the lid exposing THREE
LENGTHS of round wood, each etched with filigree, designs
and symbols, each about 18-INCHES long.

(CONTINUED)

She gingerly removes two, CLICKS them together, base to top, then repeats with the final piece, creating a 4-FOOT LONG DECORATIVE POST, the base of which is tapered to a point.

Mysti wields the SPIRIT POST, drags the point along the soil, drawing the three inside a wide circle.

She finds the center, positions the tapered tip of the spirit post on the ground, and steadies the post upright.

MYSTI

Now, hold it, with both hands.

Vance and Jessica move to the spirit post and grip the post.

MYSTI

Good. Steady. Still...

Mysti steps outside the circle, retrieves a large stone, moves back to the post.

MYSTI

Once it's in the ground, we must stay inside the circle, no matter what happens. Understand?

Vance and Jessica nod.

MYSTI

Good. Here we go.

Mysti raises the stone high above her head.

MYSTI

Hear our call, oh spirits of beyond!!

Mysti SLAMS the top of the spirit post, thrusting it deep into the soft fertile soil.

A wind stirs the trees, their hair, touches their faces. Mysti tosses the stone aside.

MYSTI

Now... let go.

They release the post, stand up. Mysti extends her left hand, places it on top of the post, raises her right hand to the sky. She nods to Vance and Jessica who do the same.

MYSTI

(to Vance)

Just tell me you memorized it.

VANCE
Back of my hand.

MYSTI
Jess?

JESSICA
I'm good.

MYSTI
Then let's get it on. Ready?

The three inhale... and begin.

ALL THREE
Oh winds of time! Oh gods of
ancient power! May this relic act
as guide, beacon, and safe passage
for your weary, wandering soul! We
open our minds, our hearts, our
bodies, that you might speak to us,
breathe with us, live in us! How
will you make yourself known?

The wind becomes stronger, rumbling SOUNDS roll out from the trees around them, followed by hushed WHISPERING, clattering VOICES and SCREECHES surround them.

The spirit post begins to TILT back and forth, side to side, forcing their hands from the top. It RISES from the ground, floating higher, slightly spinning in mid air.

Mysti, Jessica and Vance stand motionless, stare up in awe, until the event crescendos, the wind dies, the sounds fade, the spirit post falls to the ground.

The three exchange glances in the vacuum of silence.

SLAM CUT to title: Witch Road

FENWICK HILLS - MONTAGE SERIES

The semi-empty streets and sidewalks of a west coast mountain town in Gold Rush country resonate a bleak, almost creepy quality. It could have been named "Ghost Town" or "The End of the Line", but for a few hundred residents, Fenwick Hills is called home. We settle on a sign

FENWICK HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

"Congratulations class of 2010! Good luck out there! We'll see the rest of you in the fall!"

EXT. FENWICK HILLS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Cars roar out of the parking lot, a handful of elated TEEN STUDENTS cheer and holler, some simply walk in silence.

Far from the rowdy noise of their peers, Vance and Jessica are grooving on each other, leaning against Vance's car.

VANCE

Where'd she go? Ride leaves in five.

JESSICA

I told her.

Jessica checks her cell phone.

VANCE

Don't get me wrong. I can do this all day... and night... and day.

Vance squeezes Jessica's ass, leans in for a kiss. Both are surprised by the voice of Misty.

MISTY

Take it in the back seat, kids.

JESSICA

Wondered where you went.

Vance and Jessica move from the hood, open the car doors.

MISTY

Last minute meeting with guidance, if you can call it that.

VANCE

Let me guess, they're worried about your withdrawn behavior, bad attitude and... hair color?

MISTY

Fucking retards.

JESSICA

We're thinking burgers Wortons.

MISTY

Read my mind.

EXT. WORTONS GROCERY - DAY

The three enjoy burgers at a picnic table overlooking an amazing vista of the heavily wooded hills.

VANCE

So... another summer in paradise.

MISTY

Hah. Purgatory is more like it.

JESSICA

(to misty)

Hey, at least you get the place to yourself. That helps.

VANCE

I know. Beats my digs over in Trailer Town, USA.

MISTY

This is true.

JESSICA

Where do your folks go, anyway?

MISTY

Some spiritual retreat even further out in the middle of nowhere if you can believe it.

VANCE

Well, since we're blowing off the keg party tonight...

Vance unzips and opens his backpack.

JESSICA

Yeah right.

MYSTI

Like we were invited.

VANCE

Was hoping we could check this out.

Vance presents a VHS case: Digging for God - Jasper Cromwell and the Search for Witch Road.

JESSICA

Not another cheesy ninja flick.

VANCE

There's nothing cheesy about being a ninja.

(CONTINUED)

Mysti holds the case, reads.

MYSTI
Digging for God, Jasper Cromwell
and the Search for Witch Road.

VANCE
Don't know anyone else with a VCR.

JESSICA
How long is it?

Mysti reads the spine of the case.

MYSTI
Says fourteen minutes.

Vance takes the tape, reads the back.

VANCE
*But... to spend one minute in those
woods is to forfeit a lifetime!*

MYSTI
I'm in. You supply the weed, I'll
take care of the rest.

VANCE
Done.

Hold on the VHS tape cover.

DISSOLVE TO:

DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE

Blotchy, over-sized pixels collide with scratched film grain
that starts out blurry, then slowly becomes clear:

tall trees lean... a stream trickles... a small pond...

The images give way to reveal

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM - DAY

The gnarled, haunted voice of JASPER CROMWELL, 85, creeps
in. His ashen face is deeply creased, his scarecrow of a
frame is limp on a hospital bed in a sparse room.

His cryptic words are interrupted by coughs and wheezes.

(CONTINUED)

CROMWELL

(labored)

Oh, it's still out there alright...
 somewhere... 'n she's still out
 there, too. I ain't no liar! The
 good Lord only let me speak the
 truth or he strike me down
 otherwise. Only wished he'd a
 steered me clear before I went down
 that road... that godforsaken road!
 Be sure to kiss your loved ones.
 It'll be the last time for such
 earthly pleasures. Oh! How it
 weren't so! To spend a minute in
 those woods is to forfeit a
 lifetime! Gone... all gone! She's
 real, I tell you. Real as my cold,
 wrinkled flesh! And you don't come
 back neither! Least not as you once
 were. You hear me?! You don't come
 back... but something else does.
 Something inside... not right, I
 tell you! Not right!!

Jasper's voice turns to a whisper and fades.

The documentary images return, accompanied by the more
 lucid, academic voice of TERRANCE (T.D.) PASTERNAK.

PASTERNAK

For all of his rants, ramblings and
 wild stories, it wasn't until
 Jasper Cromwell's final breath...
 chilling death throes that will
 haunt me for my remaining days...
 did I finally see the man for who
 he was and for where he had been. I
 hoped I was staring into the eyes
 of a lost soul who set out
 searching for the unknown and
 returning with so much more. Sadly,
 the skeptic as well as the believer
 in me, concluded this was not the
 case. Cromwell's journey into the
 thick woods for fabled treasure and
 buried secrets yielded scant proof
 of either's existence. Which begs
 the question: what inspires a man
 to swap sanity for secrets? To
 trade reality for a glimpse of
 eternity? Perchance to lift the
 veil of mystery so that he might
 gaze upon the splendors of The

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PASTERNAK (cont'd)
Beyond? Or to gain hidden knowledge
of such magnitude and depth as to
return a demi-god, towering among
his earthbound brethren? My limited
time with this dying and delusional
man hinted that such urges to
inquire are best snuffed out before
acted upon, lest the future of
mankind suffer the same, sorry fate
as Jasper Cromwell.

Music swells, credits roll...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The documentary flickers on a tube TV inside a neat living
room. Jessica, nestled between Vance's legs, puffs on a
bong. His back is pressed against a puffy couch.

Mysti lounges lengthwise on the couch.

MYSTI
Dude, that's off the hook!

VANCE
Told ya. It's a fucking trip.

JESSICA
(exhales)
Where the hell'd you get it?

VANCE
Thrift store for a buck.

MYSTI
I can't believe it was shot here in
Fenwick Hills. That's unreal.

VANCE
(in fake German accent)
Vay before our time, yah. Vhen vas
eet shot?

Mysti grabs the VHS case.

MYSTI
Copyright says... 1981, but some of
that footage was way older.

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA

The video was all crappy, like it's
a copy of a copy of a copy.

Vance grabs the bong, takes a hit.

MYSTI

It ain't HD, that's for sure, but
still, it's a killer find.

Vance gets the giggles.

VANCE

(riffing on Jessica)

The video was a copy. Like it's a
crappy of a crappy of a crappy.

The three bust out laughing.

JESSICA

So you think any of it is real?

MYSTI

Of course it's real. It's a
documentary. Besides, what do you
think we've been doing out there in
the woods for the past month, going
on nature hikes? Practicing our
bird calls? Think about it.

JESSICA

I know what you're saying. I meant
the booty, the witch, and the...
what was it called?

VANCE

(bombastic)

The Great Taloned Beast! A giant
flesh-ripping ghost owl!

MYSTI

Oh, come on, guys. Why would
someone--

(scans the box art)

-- why would T.D. Pasternak make
this shit up? Why I had no idea
about it is the real mystery.

Vance gets up, unzips and drops trou.

VANCE

You want booty? I'll give it up.
Check out da moon booty!

(CONTINUED)

Vance shakes his bare ass at his unamused audience.

MYSTI

Fucking gross, dude! Pull your pants up!

(to Jessica)

Would you tell your retard to pull his pants up.

Mysti throws pillows, and anything she can get a hold of, at Vance while Jessica laughs too hard to do anything.

EXT. MYSTI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The front door opens. Vance and Jessica exit, Mysti follows.

MYSTI

Sure you don't wanna crash here?

JESSICA

I gotta work in the morning.

VANCE

And I'm her ride.

MYSTI

Forgot. Time to make the donuts.

JESSICA

Time to make minimum wage is what.

VANCE

Good times, y'all.

Vance high-fives Mysti, Jessica leans in for a hug.

JESSICA

Let us know what you find online.

MYSTI

Oh, you'll definitely hear from me. No doubt about it. Drive safe, guys.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

Vance's beater of a car rumbles by.

INT. VANCE'S CAR - NIGHT

Jessica, lost in thought, stares out the window.

VANCE
What up, girl? You're all quiet.

JESSICA
Hmm?

VANCE
Where'd you go?

JESSICA
Just tired. I smoked too much.

VANCE
We can fix that.

Vance turns on the radio.

JESS
No. Don't. It's not that.

Jessica turns off the radio. There is a long silence.

VANCE
You're not still into her, are you?

Jessica flashes Vance a look.

VANCE
I'm just saying every time we hang
with Mysti you always get all
weird.

JESSICA
Always get all weird? Please.

Vance tries to shrug it off, but can't.

VANCE
You gotta admit, you two were
pretty... close.

JESSICA
We were close, Vance, and we're
still close and, yes, we are both
pretty, wouldn't you say?

VANCE
Funny. Very funny.

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA
(pointing)
Look out!

Vance turns his head, brakes the car, but doesn't stop.

VANCE
What?! What is it?

There's nothing ahead but an empty, dark road.

VANCE
What the hell? What'd you see?

JESSICA
I thought it was The Great Taloned
Beast.

Jessica cracks a smirk, then a smile. Vance keeps his cool and, eventually, finds the humor.

VANCE
That's it. No moon booty for you.

JESSICA
Trust me, no loss there.

INT. MYSTI'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mysti is in front a LAPTOP screen, clicking from page to page. GNARLS, the dog, is nearby. He starts to bark at something, downstairs.

MYSTI
Gnarls? What is it, boy? Hello?

Gnarls scampers downstairs. Mysti follows.

DOWNSTAIRS

From the Living Room, there is a FLICKERING on the TV and intermittent VOICES and SOUNDS.

MYSTI
Jessica? Vance? If you're messing
with me I'm so going to de-friend
you on Facebook. Guys?

Mysti rounds the corner into the

LIVING ROOM

(CONTINUED)

The TV flickers with random shots and clips of Jasper Cromwell ranting and raving. The walls of the room and Mysti's face are awash in strobe-like light.

Gnarls continues to bark at the TV while Mysti moves closer.

She presses the power button, but the TV remains ON. It's not until she reaches for the cord, yanks it from the outlet that the TV shuts off, but not before we hear Cromwell belt out: *"She'll hide your soul in the hills of hell!!"*

The TV now OFF, Mysti stands, shaken, in the eerie silence, Cromwell's voice almost echoing through the room.

She turns and spots the VHS case resting on the coffee table. She hesitates, leans over to pick it up. It's heavy. Sure enough, the TAPE IS INSIDE.

INT. VANCE'S CAR - BACK ROAD - NIGHT

Vance and Jessica are getting it on by the dashboard light when Jessica's cell phone rings.

VANCE

Don't pick it up.

JESSICA

I just want to see who it is.

She checks the caller ID: Mysti. Jessica answers.

JESSICA

Mysti?

VANCE

Fucking great.

INTERCUT LOCATIONS

MYSTI

(shaken)

Jess... where are you guys?

JESSICA

Mysti? What's wrong?

Vance reaches for Jessica's boobs. She swats him away and covers her breasts.

MYSTI

I don't know... it was that guy...
from the movie. He was on TV.

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA
What guy? The crazy dude?

MYSTI
But the tape... was in the case,
not the VCR. I'm kinda freaked out,
Jess. Can you guys come back? Just
for a bit?

Vance overhears bits of the conversation.

JESSICA
Of course. Yeah, we'll come back.
Just turn all the lights on and
make some coffee. We'll be there.

MYSTI
OK. Thanks, Jess.

JESS
See you in a few.

Jessica hangs up.

VANCE
You've got to be kidding.

JESSICA
Listen. She said that crazy guy was
on the TV.

VANCE
Yeah, I saw him, we all saw him.

JESSICA
You don't understand--

VANCE
No, I totally understand. You two
can't stop thinking about each
other is what--

JESSICA
The tape was in the fucking case!

VANCE
What?

JESSICA
It wasn't in the VCR.

Vance considers, but can't think of anything to say.

--BAM!-- Something slams the roof or hood of the car. Vance and Jessica freak out.

VANCE
What the fuck??

JESSICA
Oh my god!!

VANCE
What was that?

JESSICA
Something hit the roof.

VANCE
OK, quiet. Shhhhh... shhh....

The two calm their breathing and listen. Silence.

JESSICA
(hushed)
Do you have a flashlight?

VANCE
Yeah, in the trunk.

JESSICA
Maybe it's gone?

VANCE
Only one way to find out.

Vance pulls up his pants and adjusts his shirt.

JESSICA
No, Vance, don't go out there.

VANCE
I'm just gonna take a peek.
Besides, we gotta get over to
Mysti's. Can't sit here all night.

JESSICA
Wait. I forgot.

She pulls out her cell phone and clicks the side which turns it into a mini flashlight.

JESSICA
Here.

VANCE
Thanks.

EXT. VANCE'S CAR - NIGHT

The rear door pops open, the interior light kicks on, and Vance creeps out with the cell phone flashlight.

He steadies himself and points the light onto the roof of the car. Nothing.

He inches toward the front of the car, shines the light ahead of him, revealing a

MUDDY HAND PRINT on the hood.

He reaches inside the driver's door, CLICKS the headlights on, illuminating the woods, the forest.

Vance moves, rounds the car, stares at the hand print which appears to have only THREE fingers and a thumb.

VANCE

What the fuck...

There's a WHOOSH from above. He points the flashlight up, into the trees, and hears a rustling, clicking sound.

JESSICA

What is it?

VANCE

Just stay in the car.

Vance aims the phone at the hood, SNAPS a photo.

INT. MYSTI'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mysti, Vance and Jessica are around the kitchen table on which is the VHS case of Digging for God. Mysti studies the photo of the hand print.

MYSTI

Why only three fingers?

VANCE

Dunno, but feel free to step outside and get a closer look.

MYSTI

No thanks. Here.

Mysti hands the cell phone to Jessica.

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA

Wait a second. I know I smoked a lot of weed, but... wasn't there something about Jasper's hand in the film? Something about him chopping off his own finger, along with his wedding ring?

VANCE

Shit. You're right.

MYSTI

Is anyone else freaking out?

Vance grabs the VHS case, opens it.

VANCE

And you're positive the tape wasn't in the VCR?

MYSTI

Oh, and then it would all make sense that I had to unplug the friggin' TV to stop it playing?

JESSICA

Hold on. What did he say again?

MYSTI

When?

JESSICA

Before you yanked the cord.

MYSTI

I don't know. Something like, *she'll hide your soul in hell... or the hills*. I can't remember.

VANCE

Maybe it's for the best.

The three stand for a moment, in thought.

JESSICA

Wait. He never said that.

MYSTI

Jess, I'm telling you what I heard. You weren't here.

(CONTINUED)

JESSICA

No, no... I meant, I don't remember him saying that anywhere in the film. Do you?

VANCE

(scans the VHS case)

Then maybe it was this Pasternak dude. It could have been--

MYSTI

No, it was definitely Jasper. I'm positive it was his voice.

Vance opens the VHS case and pulls out the tape.

VANCE

There's one way to know for sure.

MISTY

You're kidding. After what just happened? No way, dude.

JESSICA

Come on. It's the only way to be certain. Mysti?

VANCE

I'll fast forward. It'll be fine.

MYSTI

Then you're both spending the night. No backing out now.

JESSICA

Deal.

INT. MYSTI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Vance slides the tape into the VCR and hits play. The TV flickers to life with WHITE NOISE.

JESSICA

Are you fast forwarding?

VANCE

No, just playing.

MYSTI

Then where's the movie?

(CONTINUED)

VANCE

I don't know!

JESSICA

Maybe the channel got changed.

MYSTI

I checked that. We should see it.
Give me the remote.

Vance hands the remote to Mysti, she fiddles with it.

VANCE

Seriously, guys, it's on play and
there's no image. What the fuck
happened?

JESSICA

OK. I'm now officially freaked.

MYSTI

Did you rewind it?

VANCE

Of course I did! You saw me.

MYSTI

Then why the hell can't we see
anything?!!

On cue, ALL POWER SHUTS OFF in the entire house. The three
are surrounded in complete darkness and silence.

VANCE

Not cool.

Instantly, the TV flickers to life again, this time BLASTING
frames of intense red, yellow, fire, and static into the
room. An EXCRUCIATINGLY HIGH-PITCHED TONE follows and seems
to work in concert with the quick-cut frames on screen.

Mysti, Jessica and Vance cover their ears, wince in pain,
their faces contorted, anguished.

Then, the rapid fire images and noise stops. Complete
silence. The three continue screaming, but their cries are
squelched in the vacuum. They cannot hear one another.

The TV begins to PULSE with a hypnotic and rhythmic RED GLOW
which is accompanied by a demonic unisex VOICE broadcasting
from a bottomless pit of nightmares; it is at once
disturbing and comforting.

(CONTINUED)

SPIRIT VOICE

What you seek is not hidden. What
you find will be within. What you
lose is lost forever. What you take
will be in vain.

All three are completely transfixed by the hypnotic pulsing
on TV and the foreboding voice and bizarre, swirling sounds.

SPIRIT VOICE

Mark this... should you falter on
your quest, your lives I take at my
behest. Now sleep, sleep, sleep.

Misty, Jessica and Vance close their eyes, still standing in
front of the pulsing TV screen.

FADE OUT

EXT. MYSTI'S HOUSE - DAY