

Thus while representing the emergency signal sent by Holloway's team, Navidson also uses the dissonance implicit in his home-bound wait—the impatience, frustration, and increasing familial alienation—to figuratively and now literally send out his own cry for help.

The irony comes when we realize that Navidson fashioned this piece long after the Holloway disaster occurred but before he made his last plunge into that place. In other words his SOS is entirely without hope. It either comes too late or too early. Navidson, however, knew what he was doing. It is not by accident that the last two short shots of SOS show Karen on the phone, thus providing an acoustic message hidden within the already established visual one: three busy signals, three rings.

In other words:

.....

(or)

SO?¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹Pretty bitter but I've said the same thing myself more than a few times. In fact that word helped me make it through those months in Alaska. Maybe even got me there to begin with. The woman at the agency had to have known I wasn't close to sixteen, more like thirteen going on thirty-three, but she approved my application anyway. I like to imagine she was thinking to herself "Boy does this kid look young" and then because she was tired or really didn't care or because my tooth was split and I looked mean, she answered herself with "So?" and went ahead and secured my place at the cannery.

Those were the days, let me tell you. Obscene twelve hour days cradled in the arms of stupefying beauty. Tents on the beach, out there on the Homer Spit, making me, not to mention the rest of us, honorary

spit rats.

Nothing to ever compare it to again either. An awful juxtaposition of fish bones & can-grime and the stench of too many aching lives & ragged fingers set against an unreachable and ever present beyond, a life-taking wind, more pure than even glacier water. And just as some water is too cold to drink, that air was almost too

bright to breathe, raking in over ten thousand teeth of range pine, while bald eagles soared the days away like gods, even if they scavenged the mornings like rats, hopping around on gut-wet docks with the sea at their backs always calling out like a blue-black taste of something more.

Nothing about the job itself could have kept you there, hour upon hour upon even more hours, bent to the bench, steaming over the dead,

gouging for halibut cheeks, slabs of salmon, enduring countless mosquito bites, even bee stings—my strange fortune—and always in the ruin of so many curses from the Filipinos, the White Trash, the Blacks, the Haitians, a low grade-grumbling which is the business of canning. The wage was good but it sure as hell wasn't enough to lock you down. Not after one week, let alone two weeks, let alone three months of the same

□

mind-numbing gut-heaving shit.

You had to find something else.

For me it was the word "So?" And I learned it the hard way, in fact right at the very start of that summer.

I'd been invited out on a fishing boat, a real wreck of a thing but supposedly as seaworthy as they get. Well, we hadn't been gone for

more than a few hours when a storm suddenly came up, split the seams and filled the hull with water. The pumps worked fine but only for about ten minutes. Tops. The coast guard came to the rescue but they took an hour to reach us. At the very least. By then the boat had already sunk. Fortunately we had a life raft to cower in and almost everyone survived. Almost. One guy didn't. An old Haitian. At least sixteen

years old. He was a friend too or at least on his way to becoming a friend. Some line had gotten tangled around his ankle and he was dragged down with the wreck. Even when his head went under, we could all hear him scream. Even though I know we couldn't.

Back on shore everyone was pretty messed up, but the owner/captain was by far the worst off. He ended up drunk for a week, though the only thing he ever said was "So?"

The boat's gone. "So?"

Your mate's dead. "So?"

Hey at least you're alive. "So?"

An awful word but it does harden you.

It hardened me.

□

Somehow—though I don't remember exactly how—I ended up telling my boss a little about that summer. Even Thumper tuned in. This was the first time she'd paid any real attention to me and it felt great. In fact by the time I finished, since the day was almost over anyway and we were locking up, she let me walk her out.

"You're alright Johnny," she said in a way that actually made me feel alright. At least for a little while.

We kept talking and walked a little longer and then on a whim decided to get some Thai food at a small place on the north side of Sunset. She saying "Are you hungry?" Me using the word "starving." Her insisting we get a quick bite.

Even if I hadn't been starving, I would of eaten the world just to

be with her. Everything about her shimmered. Just watching her drink a glass of water, the way she'd crush an ice cube between her teeth, made me go a little crazy. Even the way her hands held the glass, and she has beautiful hands, launched me into all kinds of imaginings, which I really didn't have time for because the moment we sat down, she started telling me about some new guy she was seeing, a trainer or something for a cadre of wanna-be never-be boxers. Apparently, he could make her come harder than she had in years.

I suppose that might of made me feel bad but it didn't. One of the reasons I like Thumper is because she's so open and uninhabited, I mean uninhibited, about everything. Maybe I've said that already. Doesn't matter. Where she's concerned I'm happy to repeat myself.

"It takes more than just being good," she told me. "Don't get me wrong: I love oral sex, especially if the guy knows what he's doing. Though if you treat my clit like a doorbell, the door's not going to open." She crushed another cube of ice. "Recently though, it's like I need to be thinking something really different and out there to get me crazy. For a while, money made my wet. I'm older now. Anyway this guy said he was going to slap my ass and I said sure. For whatever reason I hadn't done that before. You done it?" She didn't wait for my answer. "So he got behind me, and he's got a nice cock, and I love the sound his thighs make when they snap up against my ass, but it wasn't going to make me come, even with me touching myself. That's when he smacked me. I could hardly feel it the first time. He was being kind of timid. So

I told him to do it harder. Maybe I'm nuts, I don't know, but he whacked me hard the next time and I just started to go off. Told him to do it again and each time I got worked. Finally when I did come, I came really—" and she held out the "reeeal"—"hard. Saw in the mirror later I had a handprint right on my ass cheek. I guess you could say these days I like handprints. He said his palm stung." She laughed over that one.

When our food arrived, I began telling her about Clara English, another story altogether, Christina & Amber, Kyrie, Lucy and even the Ashley I have no clue about, which also made her laugh. That's when I decided not to bring up my unreturned pages. I didn't want to get all petty with her, even though secretly I did want to know why she never called me back. Instead I made a plan to stick exclusively to the

subject of sex, flirt with her that way, make up some insane stories, maybe even elaborate on the Alaska thing, make her laugh some more, all of which was fine and good until for some reason, out of the blue, I changed the plan and started to tell her about Zampanò and the trunk and my crazy attacks. She stopped laughing. She even stopped crushing ice. She just listened to me for a half hour, an hour, I don't know how long,

a long time. And you know the more I talked the more I felt some of the pain and panic inside me ease up a notch.

In retrospect it was pretty weird. I mean there I was wandering into all this personal stuff. I wasn't even sharing most of it with her either. I mean not as much as I've been putting down here, that's for

sure. There's just too much of it anyway, always running parallel, is that the right word?, to the old man and his book, briefly appearing, maybe even intruding, then disappearing again; sometimes pale, sometimes bleeding, sometimes rough, sometimes textureless; frequently angry, frightened, sorry, fragile or desperate, communicated in moments of motion, smell and sound, more often than not in skewed grammar, a mad rush broken up by eidetic recollections, another type of signal I suppose, once stitched into the simplest cries for help flung high above the rust and circling kites or radioed when the Gulf waters of Alaska finally swept over and buried the deck for good—Here Come Dots . . . —or even carried to a stranger place where letters let alone visits never register, swallowed whole and echoless, in a German homonym for the

whispered Word, taken, lost, gone, until there's nothing left to examine there either, let alone explore, all of which fractured in my head, even if it was hardly present in the words I spoke, though at the very least these painful remnants were made more bearable in the presence of Thumper.

At one point I managed to get past all those private images and

just glance at her eyes. She wasn't looking around at people or fixing on silverware or tracking some wandering noodle dangling off her plate. She was just looking straight at me, and without any malice either. She was wide open, taking in everything I told her without judgment, just listening, listening to the way I phrased it all, listening to how I felt. That's when something really painful tore through me, like some old, powerful root, the kind you see in mountains sometimes splitting

apart chunks of granite as big as small homes, only instead of granite this thing was splitting me apart. My chest hurt and I felt funny all over, having no idea what it was, this root or the feeling, until I suddenly realized I was going to start sobbing. Now I haven't cried since I was twelve, so I had no intention of starting at twenty-five, especially in some fucking Thai restaurant.

So I swallowed up.

I killed it.

I changed the subject.

A little while later, when we said goodnight, Thumper gave me a big, sweet hug. Almost as if to say she knew where I'd just been.

"You're alright Johnny," she said for the second time that night.
"Don't worry so much. You're still young. You'll be fine."

And then as she put her jeep into gear, she smiled: "Come down and see me at work some time. If you want my opinion, you just need to get out of the house."

IX

Hic labor ille domus et inextricabilis error

— Virgil

laboriosus exitus domus

— Ascensius

laboriosa ad entrandum

— Nicholas Trevet^x

^x“Here is the toil of that house, and the inextricable wandering” *Aeneid* 6. 27. “The house difficult of exit” (Ascensius (Paris 1501)); “difficult to enter” (Trevet (Basel 1490)).¹³⁵ See H. J. Thomson’s “Fragments of Ancient Scholia on Virgil Preserved in Latin Glossaries” in W. M. Lindsay and H. J. Thomson’s *Ancient Lore in Medieval Latin Glossaries* (London: St. Andrews University Publications, 1921).¹²⁰

¹²⁰In fact all of this was quoted directly from Penelope Reed Doob’s The Idea of the Labyrinth: From Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990) p. 21, 97, 145 and 227. A perfect example of how Zampand likes to obscure the secondary sources he’s using in order to appear more versed in primary documents. Actually a woman by the name of Tatiana turned me onto that bit of info. She’d been one of Zampand’s scribes and—“lucky for me” she told me over the phone—still had, among other things, some of the old book lists he’d requested from the library.

I do have to say though getting over to her place was no easy accomplishment. I had trouble just walking out my door. Things are definitely deteriorating. Even reaching for the latch made me feel sick to my stomach. I also experienced this awful tightening across my chest, my temples instantly registering a rise in pulse rate. And that’s not the half of it. Unfortunately I don’t think I can do justice to how truly strange this all is, a paradox of sorts, since on one hand I’m laughing at myself, mocking the irrational nature of my anxiety, what I continue in fact to perceive as a complete absurdity—“I mean Johnny what do you really have to be afraid of?”—while on the other hand, and at the same time mind you, finding myself absolutely terrified, if not of something in particular—there were no particulars as far as I could see—then of the reaction itself, as undeniable & unimpeachable as Zampand’s black trunk.

I know it makes no sense but there you have it: what should have negated the other only seemed to amplify it instead.

Fortunately, or not fortunate at all, Thumper’s advice continued to echo in my head. I accepted the risk of cardiac arrest, muttered a flurry of fucks and charged out into the day, determined to meet Tatiana and retrieve the material.

Of course I was fine.

Except as I started walking down the sidewalk, I watched a truck veer from its lane, flatten a stop sign, desperately try to slow, momentarily redirect itself, and then in spite of all the brakes on that monster, all the accompanying smoke and ear puncturing shrieks, it still barreled straight into me. Suddenly I understood what it meant to be weightless, flying through the air, no longer ruled by that happy dyad of gravity &

mass until I was, landing on the roof of a parked car, which turned out to be my car, a good fifteen feet away, hearing the thud but not actually feeling it. I even momentarily blacked out, but came to just in time to watch the truck, still hurtling towards me until it was actually slamming into me, causing me to think, and you're not going to believe this—"I can't believe this asshole just totaled my fucking car! Of all the cars on this street and he had to fucking trash mine!" even as all that steel was grinding into me, instantly pulverizing my legs, my pelvis, the metal from the grill wedging forward like kitchen knives, severing me from the waist down.

People started screaming.

Though not about me.

Something to do with the truck.

It was leaking all over the place.

Gas.

It had caught fire. I was going to burn.

Except it wasn't gas.

It was milk.

Only there was no milk. There was no gas. No leak either. There weren't even any people. Certainly none who were screaming. And there sure as hell wasn't any truck. I was alone. My street was empty. A tree fell on me. So heavy, it took a crane to lift it. Not even a crane could lift it. There are no trees on my block.

This has got to stop.

I have to go.

I did go.

When I reached Tatiana's place, she'd just gotten back from the gym and her brown legs glistened with sweat. She wore black Spandex shorts and a pink athletic halter top which was very tight but still could not conceal the ample size of her breasts. I said "hello" and then explained again how I had come into possession of the old man's papers and why in my effort to straighten them all out I needed to trace some of his references. She happily handed over the reading lists she'd compiled on his behalf and even dug up a few notes she'd made relating to the etymology of "labor."

When she offered me a drink, I jokingly suggested a Jack and Coke. I guess she didn't understand my sense of humor or understood it perfectly. She appeared with the drink and poured herself one as well. We spoke for another hour, ended up finishing all the Jack, and then right out of the blue she said, "I won't let you fuck me." Time to get going, I thought, and began to stand up. Not that I'd expected anything mind you. "But if you want, you can come on me," she added. I sat back down and before I could think of something to say, she had tugged off her top and stretched herself out in the middle of the floor. Her tits were round, hard and perfectly fake. As I straddled her, she unbuttoned my pants. Then she reached for some extremely aromatic oil sitting on her coffee table. She squeezed hard enough to release a thin stream. It dripped off of me, a warm rain spilling down over her toned belly and large brown nipples. Pleased with what she'd done, she settled back to watch me stroke & grind myself into my own hands.

At one point she bit down on her lower lip and it amped me up even more. When she started to caress her own breasts, small groans of pleasure rising up from her throat, I felt the come in my balls begin to boil. However only when I got ready to climax did I lose sight of her, my eyes slamming shut, something I believe now she'd been waiting for, a temporary instant of darkness, where vulnerable and blind to everything but my own pleasure, she could reach up beneath me and press the tip

^K Having already discussed in Chapter V how echoes serve as an effective means to evaluate physical, emotional, and thematic distances present in *The Navidson Record*, it is now necessary to remark upon their descriptive limitations. In essence echoes are confined to large spaces. However, in order to consider how distances within the Navidson house are radically distorted, we must address the more complex ideation of convolution, interference, confusion, and even decentric ideas of design and construction. In other words the concept of a labyrinth.

It would be fantastic if based on footage from *The Navidson Record* someone were able to reconstruct a *bauplan*¹¹ for the house. Of course this is an impossibility, not only due to the wall-shifts but also the film's constant destruction of continuity, frequent jump cuts prohibiting any sort of accurate mapmaking. Consequently, in lieu of a schematic, the film offers instead a schismatic rendering of empty rooms, long hallways, and dead ends, perpetually promising but forever eluding the finality of an immutable layout.

Curiously enough, if we can look to history to provide us with some context, the reasons for building labyrinths have varied substantially over the ages.¹²² For example, the English hedgerow maze at Longleat was designed to amuse garden party attendants, while Amenemhet III of the XII dynasty in Egypt built for his mortuary temple a labyrinth near lake Moeris to protect his soul. ~~Most famous of all, however, was the labyrinth Daedalus constructed for King Minos. It served as a prison. Purportedly located on the island of Crete in the city of Knossos, the maze was built to~~

of an oil soaked finger against my asshole, circling, rubbing, until finally she pushed hard enough to exceed the threshold of resistance, slipping inside me and knowing exactly where to go too, heading straight for the prostate, the P spot, the LOUD button on this pumping stereophonic fuck system I never knew I had, initiating an almost unbearable scream for (and of) pleasure, endorphins spitting through my brain at an unheard of rate, as muscles in my groin (almost) painfully contracted in a handful of heart stomping spasms—not something I could say I was exactly prepared for. I exploded. A stream of white flying across her tits, strings of the stuff dripping off her nipples, collecting in pools around her neck, some of it leading as far as her face, one gob of it on her chin, another on her lower lip. She smiled, started to gently rub my semen into her black skin and then opened her mouth as if to sigh, only she didn't sigh, no sound, not even a breath, just her moon bright teeth, and finally her tongue licking first her upper lip before turning to her lower lip, where, smiling, her eyes focused on mine, watching me watching her, she licked up and finally swallowed my come.

¹¹So sorry.¹²¹

¹²¹German for "building plan." — Ed.

¹²²For further insight into mazes, consider Paolo Santarcangeli's *Livre des labyrinthes*; Russ Craim's "The Surviving Web" in *Daedalus*, summer 1995; Hermann Kern's *Labirinti*; W. H. Matthews' *Mazes and Labyrinths*; Stella Pinicker's *Double-Axe*; Rodney Castleden's *The Knossos Labyrinth*; Harold Sieber's *Inadequate Thread*; W. W. R. Ball's "Mathematical Recreations and Essays"; Robinson Ferrel Smith's *Complex Knots—No Simple Solutions*; O. B. Hardison Jr.'s *Entering The Maze*; and Patricia Flynn's *Jejunum and Ileum*.

incarcerate the Minotaur, a creature born from an illicit encounter between the queen and a bull. As most school children learn, this monster devoured more than a dozen Athenian youths every few years before Theseus eventually slew it.¹²³

¹²³

At the
risk of stating the
obvious
no woman can mate with a
bull and produce a child.

Recognizing this simple scientific fact,
I am led to a somewhat interesting
suspicion: King Minos did not build the
labyrinth to imprison a monster but to
conceal a deformed
child – his child.

While the Minotaur has often been depicted as a creature with the body of a bull but the torso of a man – centaur like – the myth describes the Minotaur as simply having the head of a bull and the body of a man,¹²⁷ or in other words, a man with a deformed face. I believe pride would not allow Minos to accept that the heir to the throne had a horrendous appearance. Consequently, he dissolved the right of ascension by publicly accusing his wife Pasiphaë of fornicating with a male bovine.

Having enough conscience to keep from murdering his own flesh and blood, Minos had a labyrinth constructed, complicated enough to keep his son from ever escaping but without bars to suggest a prison. (It is interesting to note how the myth states most of the Athenian youth “fed” to the Minotaur actually starved to death in the labyrinth, thus indicating their deaths had more to do with the complexity of the maze and less to do with the presumed ferocity of the Minotaur.)

I am convinced Minos’ maze really serves as a trope for repression. My published thoughts on this subject (see “Birth Defects in Knossos” Sonny Won’t Wait Flyer, Santa Cruz, 1968)¹²⁴ inspired the playwright Taggart Chielitz to author a play called *The Minotaur* for The Seattle Repertory Company.¹²⁶ As only eight people, including the doorman, got a chance to see the production, I produce here a brief summary:

Chielitz begins his play with Minos entering the labyrinth late one evening to speak to his son. As it turns out, the Minotaur is a gentle and misunderstood creature, while the so-called Athenian youth are convicted criminals who were already sentenced to death back in Greece. Usually King Minos has them secretly executed and then publicly claims their deaths were caused by the terrifying Minotaur thus ensuring that the residents of Knossos will never get too close to the labyrinth. Unfortunately this time, one of the criminals had escaped into the maze.

However, even as Holloway Roberts, Jed Leeder, and Wax Hook make their way further down the stairway in **Exploration #4**, the purpose of that vast place still continues to elude them. Is it merely an aberration of physics? Some kind of warp in space? Or just a topiary labyrinth on a much grander scale? Perhaps it serves a funereal purpose? Conceals a secret? Protects something? Imprisons or hides some kind of monster? Or, for that matter, imprisons or hides an innocent? As the Holloway team soon discovers, answers to these questions are not exactly forthcoming.¹²⁹

encountered Mint (as Chielitz refers to the Minotaur) and nearly murdered him. Had Minos himself not rushed in and killed the criminal, his son would have perished. ¶ Suffice it to say Minos is furious. He has caught himself caring for his son and the resulting guilt and sorrow incenses him to no end. ¶ As the play progresses, the King slowly sees past his son's deformities, eventually discovering an elegiac spirit, an artistic sentiment and most importantly a visionary understanding of the world. Soon a deep paternal love grows in the King's heart and he begins to conceive of a way to reintroduce the Minotaur back into society. ¶ Sadly, the stories the King has spread throughout the world concerning this terrifying beast prove the seeds of tragedy. Soon enough, a bruiser named Theseus arrives (Chielitz describes him as a drunken, virtually retarded, frat boy) who without a second thought hacks the Minotaur into little pieces. ¶ In one of the play's most moving scenes, King Minos, with tears streaming down his face, publicly commands Theseus' courage. The crowd believes the tears are a sign of gratitude while we the audience understand they are tears of loss. The king's heart breaks, and while he will go on to be an extremely just ruler, it is a justice forever informed by the deepest kind of agony.¹²⁸

Note: Struck passages indicate what Zampanò tried to get rid of, but which I, with a little bit of turpentine and a good old magnifying glass managed to resurrect.

124: "Violent Prejudice in Knossos" by Zampanò in Sonny Will Wait Flyer, Santa Cruz, 1969.¹²⁵

125 I've no idea why these titles and cited sources are different. It seems much too deliberate to be an error, but since I haven't been able to find the "flyer" I don't know for certain. I did call Ashley back, left message, even though I still don't remember her.

126 *The Minotaur* by Taggart Chielitz, put on at The Hey Zeus Theater by The Seattle Repertory Company on April 14, 1972.

127 W. H. Matthews writes "A similar small labyrinth, with a central Theseus-Minotaur design, is to be found on the wall of the church of San Michele Maggiore at Pavia. It is thought to be of tenth century construction. This is one of the few cases where the Minotaur is represented with a human head and a beast's body as a sort of Centaur, in fact." See his book *Mazes & Labyrinths: Their History & Development* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970), p. 56. Also see Fig. 40 on p. 53.

128 Even in *Metamorphoses* Ovid notes how Minos, in his old age, feared young men:

Quid, dum fuit integer aevi, terruerat magnus ipso quoque nomine gentes; tunc erat invalidus, Deionidenque iuventae robore Miletum Phoeboque parente superbum perituit, credensque suis insurgere regnis, haut tamen est patriis arcere penitibus ausus.

("When Minos was in golden middle age/ All nations feared the mention of his name./ But now he'd grown so impotent, so feeble/ He shied away from proud young Miletus./ The forward son of Phoebus and Deione;/ Though Minos half suspected Miletus/ Had eyes upon his throne and framed a plot/ To make a palace revolution, he feared to act./ To sign the papers for his deportation." Horace Gregory p. 258-259.)
Perhaps Miletus reminded Minos of his slain son and out of guilt he cowered in the presence of his youth.

129 Strictly as an aside, Jacques Derrida once made a few remarks on the question of structure and centrality.

It is too complex to adequately address here; for some, however, this mention alone may prove useful when considering the meaning of 'play', 'origins', and 'ends'—especially when applied to the Navidson house:

Ce centre avait pour fonction non seulement d'orienter et d'équilibrer, d'organiser la structure—on ne peut en effet penser une structure inorganisée—mais de faire surtout que le principe d'organisation de la structure limite ce que nous pourrions appeler le *jeu*¹³⁷ de la structure. Sans doute le centre d'une structure, en orientant et en organisant la cohérence du système, permet-il le jeu des éléments à l'intérieur de la forme totale. Et aujourd'hui encore une structure privée de tout centre représente l'impensable lui-même.

And later on:

C'est pourquoi, pour une pensée classique de la structure, le centre peut être dit, paradoxalement, *dans* la structure et *hors de* la structure. Il est au centre de la totalité et pourtant, puisque le centre ne lui appartient pas, la totalité *a son centre ailleurs*. Le centre n'est pas le centre.¹³⁰

See Derrida's *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1967), p. 409-410.

¹³⁰Here's the English. The best I can do:

The function of [a] center was not only to orient, balance, and organize the structure—one cannot in fact conceive of an unorganized structure—but above all to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit what we might call the *play* of the structure. By orienting and organizing the coherence of the system, the center of a structure permits the play of its elements inside the total form. And even today the notion of a structure lacking any center represents the unthinkable itself.

And later on:

This is why classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, *within* the structure and *outside* it. The center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality *has its center elsewhere*. The center is not the center.¹³¹

Something like that. From Jacques Derrida's "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" in Writing and Difference, translated by Alan Bass. Chicago. University of Chicago Press. 1978. p. 278-279.

¹³¹Conversely Christian Norberg-Schulz writes:

Penelope Reed Doob avoids the tangled discussion of purpose by cleverly drawing a distinction between those who walk within a labyrinth and those who stand outside of it:

[M]aze-treaders, whose vision ahead and behind is severely constricted and fragmented, suffer confusion, whereas maze-viewers who see the pattern whole, from above or in a diagram, are dazzled by its complex artistry. What you see depends on where you stand, and thus, at one and the same time, labyrinths are single (there is one physical structure) and double: they simul-

In terms of spontaneous perception, man's space is 'subjectively centered.' The development of schemata, however, does not only mean that the notion of centre is established as a means of general organization, but that certain centres are 'externalized' as points of reference in the environment. This need is so strong that man since remote times has thought of the whole world as being centralized. In many legends the 'centre of the world' is concretized as a tree or a pillar symbolizing a vertical *axis mundi*. Mountains were also looked upon as points where sky and earth meet. The ancient Greeks placed the 'navel' of the world (*omphalos*) in Delphi, while the Romans considered their Capitol as *caput mundi*. For Islam *ka'aba* is still the centre of the world. Eliade points out that in most beliefs it is difficult to reach the centre. It is an ideal goal, which one can only attain after a 'hard journey.' To 'reach the centre is to achieve a consecration, an initiation. To the profane and illusory existence of yesterday, there succeeds a new existence, real, lasting and powerful.' But Eliade also points out that 'every life, even the least eventful, can be taken as the journey through a labyrinth.'¹³²

See Christian Norberg-Schulz's *Existence, Space & Architecture* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 18 in which he quotes from Mircea Eliade's *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. R. Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward, 1958), p. 380-382.

¹³²What Derrida and Norberg-Schulz neglect to consider is the ordering will of gravitation or how between any two particles of matter exists an attractive force (this relationship usually represented as G with a value of $6.670 \times 10^{-11} \text{ N}\cdot\text{m}^2/\text{kg}^2$). Gravity, as opposed to gravitation, applies specifically to the earth's effect on other bodies and has had as much to say about humanity's sense of centre as Derrida and Norberg-Schulz. Gravity informs words like 'balance', 'above', 'below', and even 'rest'. Thanks to the slight waver of endolymph on the ampullary crest in the semicircular duct or the rise and fall of cilia on maculae in the utricle and saccule, gravity speaks a language comprehensible long before the words describing it are ever spoken or learned. Albert Einstein's work on this matter is also worth studying, though it is important not to forget how Navidson's house ultimately confounds even the labyrinth of the inner ear.¹³³

¹³³This gets at a Lissitzky and Escher theme which Zampanò seems to constantly suggest without ever really bringing right out into the open. At least that's how it strikes me. Pages 30, 356 and 441, however, kind of contradict this. Though not really.

taneously incorporate order and disorder, clarity and confusion, unity and multiplicity, artistry and chaos. They may be perceived as a path (a linear but circuitous passage to a goal) or as a pattern (a complete symmetrical design). . . Our perception of labyrinths is thus intrinsically unstable: change your perspective and the labyrinth seems to change.¹³⁴

Unfortunately the dichotomy between those who participate inside and those who view from the outside breaks down when considering the house, simply because no one ever sees that labyrinth in its entirety. Therefore comprehension of its intricacies must always be derived from within.

This not only applies to the house but to the film itself. From the outset of *The Navidson Record*, we are involved in a labyrinth, meandering from one celluloid cell to the next, trying to peek around the next edit in hopes of finding a solution, a centre, a sense of whole, only to discover another sequence, leading in a completely different direction, a continually devolving discourse, promising the possibility of discovery while all along dissolving into chaotic ambiguities too blurry to ever completely comprehend.¹³⁵

In order to fully appreciate the way the ambages unwind, twist only to rewind, and then open up again, whether in Navidson's house or the film—*quae itinerum ambages occursumque ac recursus inexplicabiles*¹³⁶—we should look to the etymological inheritance of a word like 'labyrinth'. The Latin *labor* is akin to the root *labi* meaning to slip or slide backwards¹³⁷ though the commonly perceived meaning suggests difficulty and work. Implicit in 'labyrinth' is a required effort to keep from slipping or falling; in other words stopping. We cannot relax within those walls, we have to struggle past them. Hugh of Saint Victor has gone so far as to suggest that the antithesis of labyrinth—that which contains work—is Noah's ark¹³⁸—in other words that which contains rest.^x

¹³⁴Penelope Reed Doob, *The Idea Of The Labyrinth: from Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p.1 ×

¹³⁵At least, as Daniel Hertz lamented, "By granting all involved the right to wander (e.g. daydream, free associate, fantasize [sic] etc., etc.; see Gaston Bachelard) that which is discursive will inevitably re-appropriate the heterogeneity of the disparate and thus with such an unanticipated and unreconciled gesture bring about a re-assessment of self." *Or in other words, like the house, the film itself captures us and prohibits us at the same time as it frees us, to wander, and so first misleads us, inevitably, drawing us from the us, thus, only in the end to lead us, necessarily, for where else could we have really gone?, back again to the us and hence back to ourselves.* See Daniel Hertz's *Understanding The Self: The Maze of You* (Boston: Garden Press, 1995), p. 261.¹²⁹

¹³⁶[“Passages that wind, advance and retreat in a bewilderingly intricate manner.” — Ed.] Pliny also wrote when describing the Egyptian maze: “*sed crebis foribus inditis ad fallendos occursus redeundumque in errores eosdem.*” [“Doors are let into the walls at frequent intervals to suggest deceptively the way ahead and to force the visitor to go back upon the very same tracks that he has already followed in his wanderings.” — Ed.] k

¹³⁷*Labi* is also probably cognate with “sleep.”¹³⁴

¹³⁸See Chapter Six, footnote 82, Tom's Story as well as footnote 249. — Ed.

If the work demanded by any labyrinth means penetrating or escaping it, the question of process becomes extremely relevant. For instance, one way out of any maze is to simply keep one hand on a wall and walk in one direction. Eventually the exit will be found. Unfortunately, where the house is concerned, this approach would probably require an infinite amount of time and resources. It cannot be forgotten that the problem posed by exhaustion—a result of labor—is an inextricable part of any encounter with a sophisticated maze. In order to escape then, we have to remember we cannot ponder all paths but must decode only those necessary to get out. We must be quick and anything but exhaustive. Yet, as Seneca warned in his *Epistulae morales* 44, going too fast also incurs certain risks:

*Quod evenit in labyrintho properantibus:
ipsa illos velocitas implicat.*¹³⁹

Unfortunately, the anfractuousity of some labyrinths may actually prohibit a permanent solution. More confounding still, its complexity may exceed the imagination of even the designer.¹⁴⁰ Therefore anyone lost within must recognize that no one, not even a god or an Other, comprehends the entire maze and so therefore can never offer a definitive answer. Navidson's house seems a perfect example. Due to the wall-shifts and extraordinary size, any way out remains singular and applicable only to those on that path at that particular time. All solutions then are necessarily personal.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹[This is what happens when you hurry through a maze: the faster you go, the worse you are entangled. — Ed.] Words worth taking to heart, especially when taking into account Pascal's remark, found in Paul de Man's *Allegories of Reading*: "Si on lit trop vite où trop doucement, on n'entend rien." [If one reads too quickly or too slowly, one understands nothing. — Ed.]¹³⁵

¹⁴⁰"... ita Daedalus implet innumeris errore vias vixque ipse reverti ad limen potuit: tanta est fallacia tecti." Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. l. 166-168. ["So Daedalus made those innumerable winding passages, and was himself scarce able to find his way back to the place of entry, so deceptive was the enclosure he had built." Horace Gregory, however, offers a slightly different translation: "So Daedalus designed his winding maze;/ And as one entered it, only a wary mind/ Could find an exit to the world again —/ Such was the cleverness of that strange arbour." p. 220. — Ed.] ~~Or in other words: shy from the sky. No answer lies there. It cannot care, especially for what it no longer knows. Treat that place as a thing unto itself, independent of all else, and confront it on those terms. You alone must find the way. No one else can help you. Every way is different. And if you do lose yourself at least take solace in the absolute certainty that you will perish.~~ ^x

¹⁴¹I'm not sure why but I feel like I understand this on an entirely different level. What I mean to say is that the weird encounter with Tatiana seems to have helped me somehow. As if getting off was all I needed to diminish some of this dread and panic. I guess Thumper was right. Of course the downside is that this new discovery has left me practically beside myself, by which I mean priapic.

Last night, I made the rounds. I called Tatiana but she wasn't home. Amber's machine picked up but I didn't leave a message. Then as the hours lengthened and a particular heaviness crept in on me, I thought about Thumper. In fact I almost went down to where she works, to that place where I could be alone with the failing light and shadow play, where I could peek in ease, unhurried, unmolested, a notion which as suddenly as it crossed my mind suddenly—and for no apparent reason either—made me feel terribly uncomfortable. I called Lude instead. He gave me Kyrie's

number. No answer. Not even a machine picked up. I called Lude back and an hour later we were losing ourselves in pints of cider at Red.

For some reason I had with me a little bit Zampanò wrote about Natasha (See Appendix F). I found it some months ago and immediately assumed she was an old love of his, which of course may still be true. Since then, however, I've begun to believe that Zampanò's Natasha also lives in Tolstoy's guerrulous pages. (Yes, amazingly enough, I finally did get around to reading War and Peace.)

Anyway, that evening, as coincidence would have it, a certain Natasha was dining on vegetables and wine. Rumor was—or so Lude confided; I've always loved the way Lude could 'confide' a rumor—her mother was famous but had been killed in a boating accident, unless you believed another rumor—which Lude also confided—that her father was the one who had been killed in a boating accident though he was not famous.

What did it matter?

Either way, Natasha was gorgeous.

Tolstoy's prophecy brought to life.

Lude and I quarreled over who would approach her first. Truth be known I didn't have the courage. A few pints later though, I watched Lude weave over to her table. He had every advantage. He knew her. Could say 'hello' and not appear obscene. I watched, my glass permanently fixed to my mouth so I could drink continuously—though breathing proved a bit tricky.

Lude was laughing, Natasha smiling, her friends working on their vegetables, their wine. But Lude stayed too long. I could see it in the way she started looking at her friends, her plate, everywhere but at him. And then Lude said something. No doubt an attempt to save the sitch. Little did I know I was the one being sacrificed, that is until he started pointing over at the counter, at me. And then suddenly she was looking over at the counter, at me. And neither one of them was smiling. I lifted the base of my glass high enough to eclipse my face and paid no mind to the stream of cider spilling from either side, foaming in my lap. When I lowered my deception I saw Natasha hand Lude back a piece of paper he had just given her. Her smile was curt. She said very little. He continued the charade, smiled quickly and departed.

"Sorry Hoss," Lude said as he sat down, unaware that the scene had turned me to stone.

"You didn't just tell her that I wrote that for her, did you?" I finally stuttered.

"You bet. Hey, she liked it. Just not enough to dump her boyfriend."

"I didn't write that. A blind man wrote it," I yelled at him, but it was too late. I finished my drink, and with my head down, got the hell out of there, leaving Lude behind to endure Natasha's pointed inattention.

Heading east, I passed by Muse and stopped in at El Coyote where I drank tequila shots until an Australian gal started telling me about kangaroos and the Great Barrier Reef and then ordered something else, potent and green. A while ago, over a year? two years? she had seen a gathering there of very, very famous people speaking censorially of things most perverse. She told me this with great glee, her breasts bouncing around like giant pacmen. Who cared. Fine by me. Did she want to hear about Natasha? Or at least what a blind man wrote?

When I finally walked outside, I had no idea where I was, orange lights burning like sunspots, initiating weird riots in my head, while in the ink beyond a chorus of coyotes howled, or was that the traffic? and no sense of time either. We stumbled together to a corner and that's when the car pulled over, a white car? VW Rabbit? maybe/maybe not? I strained to

see what this was all about, my Australian gal giggling, both pacmen going crazy, she lived right around here somewhere but wasn't that funny, she couldn't remember exactly where, and me not caring, just squinting, staring at the white? car as the window rolled down and a lovely face appeared, tired perhaps, uncertain too, but bright nonetheless with a wry smile on those sweet lips—Natasha leaning out of her car, "I guess love fades pretty fast, huh?"¹⁴² winking at me then, even as I shook my head, as if that kind of emphatic shaking could actually prove something, like just how possible it is to fall so suddenly so hard, though for it to ever mean anything you have to remember, and I would remember, I would definitely remember, which I kept telling myself as that white? car, her car?, sped off, bye-bye Natasha, whoever you are, wondering then if I would ever see her again, sensing I wouldn't, hoping senses were wrong but still not knowing; Love At First Sight having been written by a blind man, albeit sly, passionate too?, the blind man of all blind men, me,—don't know why I just wrote that—though I would still love her despite being unblind, even if I had all of a sudden started dreaming then of someone I'd never met before, or had known all along, no, not even Thumper—wow, am I wandering—maybe Natasha after all, so vague, so familiar, so strange, but who really and why? though at least this much I could safely assume to be true, comforting really, a wild ode mentioned at New West hotel over wine infusions, light, lit, lofted on very entertaining moods, yawning in return, open nights, inviting everyone's song, with me losing myself in such a dream, over and over again too, until that Australian gal shook my arm, shook it hard—

"Hey, where are you?"

"Lost" I muttered and started to laugh and then she laughed and I don't remember the rest. I don't remember her door, all those stairs to the second story, the clatter we made making our way down the hall, never turning on the lights, the hall lights or her room lights, falling onto the futon on her floor. I can't even remember how all our clothes came off, I couldn't get her bra off, she finally had to do that, her white bra, ah the clasp was in front and I'd been struggling with the back, which was when she let the pacmen out and ate me alive.

Yeah I know, the dots here don't really connect. After all, how does one go from a piece of poetry to a heart wrenching beauty to the details of a drunken one night stand? I mean even if you could connect those dots, which I don't think you can, what kind of picture would you really draw?

There was something about her pussy. I do remember that. In fact it was amazing how hairy it was, thick coils of black hair, covering her, hiding her, though when fingered & licked still parting so readily for the feel of her, the taste of her, as she continued to sit on top of me, just straddling my mouth, and all the time easing slightly back, pushing slightly forward, even when her legs began to tremble, still wanting me to keep exploring her like that, with my fingers and my lips and my tongue, the layers of her warmth, the sweet folds of her darkness, over and over and over again.

The rest I'm sure I don't remember though I know it went on like that for a while.

Up in the sky-high,
Off to the side-eye,
All of us now sigh,
Right down the drain-ae.

Just a ditty. I guess.

As with previous explorations, Exploration #4 can also be considered a personal journey. While some portions of the house, like the Great Hall for instance, seem to offer a communal experience, many inter-communicating passageways encountered by individual members, even with only a glance, will never be re-encountered by anyone else again. Therefore, in spite of, as well as in light of, future investigations, Holloway's descent remains singular.

When his team finally does reach the bottom of the stairway, they have already spent three nights in that hideous darkness, their sleeping bags and tents successfully insulating their bodies from the cold, but nothing protecting their hearts from what Jed refers to as "the heaviness" which always seemed to him to be crouching, ready to spring, just a few feet away. While everyone enjoys some sense of elation upon reaching the last step, in truth they have only brought to a conclusion an already experienced aspect of the house. None of them are at all prepared for the consequences of the now unfamiliar.

On the morning of the fourth day, the three men agree to explore a new series of rooms. As Holloway says, "We've come a long way. Let's see if there's anything down here." Wax and Jed do not object, and soon enough, they are all wending their way through the maze.

As usual, Holloway orders numerous stops to procure wall samples. Jed has become quite handy with his chisel and hammer, cutting out small amounts of the black-ashen substance which he deposits into one of the many sample jars Reston equipped him with. As had been the case even on the stairway, Holloway personally takes responsibility for marking their path. He constantly tacks neon arrows to the wall, sprays neon paint on corners, and metes out plenty of fishing line wherever the path becomes

Later, I don't even know how much later, she said we'd been great and she felt great even though I didn't. I didn't even know where I was, who she was, or how we'd done what she said we'd done. I had to get out, but fuck the sun hurt my eyes, it split my head open, I dropped her number before I reached the corner, then spent a quarter of an hour looking for my car. Something was beginning to make me feel panicky and bad again. Maybe it was to have been that lost, to lose sense, even a little bit about some event, and was I losing more than I knew, larger events? greater sense? In fact all I had to hold onto at that moment as I cautiously pointed the old car to that place I had the gall to still call a home—never again—was her face, that wry smile, Natasha's, seen but unknown, found in a restaurant, lost on a street corner, gone in a wind of traffic—as in "to wind something up." I looked at my hands. I was holding onto the steering wheel so tightly, all my knuckles were shiny points of white, and my blinker was on, CLICK-click CLICK-click CLICK-click, so certain, so plain, so clear, and yet for all its mechanical conviction, blinking me in the wrong direction.

especially complicated and twisted.[□]

Oddly enough, however, the farther Holloway goes the more infrequently he stops to take samples or mark their path. Obviously deaf to Seneca's words.

Jed is the first to voice some concern over how quickly their team leader is moving: "You know where you're going, Holloway?" But Holloway just scowls and keeps pushing forward, in what appears to be a determined effort to find something, something different, something defining, or at least some kind of indication of an outside-ness to that place. At one point Holloway even succeeds in scratching, stabbing, and ultimately kicking a hole in a wall, only to discover another windowless room with a doorway leading to another hallway spawning yet another endless series of empty rooms and passageways, all with walls potentially hiding and thus hinting at a possible exterior, though invariably winding up as just another border to another interior. As Gerard Eysenck famously described it: "Insides and in-ness never inside out."¹⁴³

This desire for exteriority is no doubt further amplified by the utter blankness found within. Nothing there provides a reason to linger. In part because not one object, let alone fixture or other manner of finish work has ever been discovered there.¹⁴⁴ Back in 1771, Sir Joshua Reynolds in his *Discourses On Art* argued against the importance of the particular, calling into question, for example, "minute attention to the discriminations of Drapery . . . the cloathing is neither Woollen, nor linen, nor silk, sattin or velvet: it is drapery: it is nothing more."¹⁴⁵ Such global appraisal seems perfectly suited for Navidson's house which despite its corridors and rooms of various sizes is nothing more than corridors and rooms, even if sometimes, as John Updike once observed in the course of translating the labyrinth: "The galleries seem straight but curve furtively."

Of course rooms, corridors, and the occasional spiral staircase are themselves subject to patterns of arrangement. In some cases particular patterns. However, considering the constant shifts, the seemingly endless

¹⁴⁴Not only are there no hot-air registers, return air vents, or radiators, cast iron or other, or cooling systems—condenser, reheat coils, heating convector, damper, concentrator, dilute solution, heat exchanger, absorber, evaporator, solution pump, evaporator recirculating pump—or any type of ducts, whether spiral lock-seam/standing rib design, double-wall duct, and LolossTM Tee, flat oval, or round duct with perforated inner liner, insulation, and outer shell; no HVAC system at all, even a crude air distribution system—there are no windows—no water supplies,

¹⁴³Aside from the practical aspect of fishing line—a readily available and cheap way to map progress through that complicated maze—there are of course obvious mythological resonances. *Minos' daughter, Ariadne, supplied Theseus with a thread which he used to escape the labyrinth.* Thread has repeatedly served as a metaphor for an umbilical cord, for life, and for destiny. The Greek Fates (called Moerae) or the Roman Fates (called Fata or Parcae) spun the thread of life and also cut it off. Curiously in Orphic cults, thread symbolized semen.

¹⁴⁴Gerard Eysenck's "Break Through (not a) Breakthrough: Heuristic Hallways In The Holloway Venture." *Proceedings from The Navidson Record Semiotic Conference Tentatively Entitled Three Blind Mice and the Rest As Well.* American Federation of Architects. June 8, 1993. Reprinted in Fisker and Weinberg, 1996.

¹⁴⁵See Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses on Art* (1771) (New York: Collier, 1961).

¹⁴⁶For example, there is nothing about the house that even remotely resembles 20th century works whether in the style of Post-Modern, Late-Modern, Brutalism, Neo-Expressionism, Wrightian, The New Formalism, Mesian, the International Style, Streamline Moderne, Art Deco, the Pueblo Style, the Spanish Colonial, to name but a few, with examples such as the Western Savings and Loan Association in Superstition, Arizona, Animal Crackers in Highland Park, Illinois, Pacific Design Center in Los Angeles, or Mineries Condominium in Venice, Wurster Hall in Berkeley, Katselas House in Pittsburgh, Dulles International Airport, Greene House in Norman Oklahoma, Chicago Harold Washington Library, the Watts Towers in South Central, Barcelona National Theatre, New Town of Seaside Florida, Tugendhat House, Rue de Laeken in Brussels, Richmond Riverside in Richmond Surrey, the staircase hall in the Athens, Georgia News Building, the Tsukuba Center Building in Ibaraki, the Digital House, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, the interior of the Judge Institute of Management Studies in Cambridge, Maison à Bordeaux, TGV Railway Station in Lyon-Satolas, the post-modernism of the Wexner Center for Visual Arts in Columbus, Ohio, Palazzo Hotel in Fukuoka, National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C., the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery, Pyramid at the Louvre, New Building at Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, Palace of Abraxas at Marne-La-Vallée, Piazza d'Italie in New Orleans, AT&T Building in New York, the modernism of Carré d'Art, Lloyds Building in London, the Boston John F. Kennedy Library complex, Nave of Vuokseeniska Church in Finland, head office of the Enso-Gutzeit Company, Administrative Center of Säynätsalo, the Eames House, the Baker dormitory at MIT, inside the TWA terminal at Kennedy Airport, The National Theatre in London, Hull House Association Uptown Center in Chicago, Hektoen Laboratory also in Chicago, Fitzpatrick House in the Hollywood Hills, Graduate Center at Harvard University, Pan-Pacific Auditorium in Los Angeles, General Motors Testing Laboratory in Phoenix Arizona, Bullock's Wilshire Department Store in Los Angeles, Casino Building in New York, Hotel Franciscan in Albuquerque New Mexico, La Fonda Hotel in Santa Fe, or Santa Barbara County Courthouse, the Neff or Sherwood House in California, Exterior of the Secondary Modern School, Maisons Jaoul, Notre-Dame-du-Haut near Belfort, The Unité d'Habitation in Marseilles, The Farnsworth House in Plano, Illinois, The Alumni Memorial Hall at Illinois Institute of Technology, Guggenheim Museum in New York, or nothing of the traditionalism of Lawn Road Flats in Hampstead, the Zimbabwe House and Battersea Power Station in London, Choir of the Angelican cathedral in Liverpool or Memorial to the Missing of the Somme near Aras, Viceroy's house in New Delhi, Gledstone Hall in Yorkshire, Finsbury Circus facade, Castle Drogo near Drewsteignton Devon, Casa del Fascio in Como, Villa

redefinition of route, even the absurd way the first hallway leads away from the living room only to return, through a series of lefts, back to where the living room should be but clearly is not; describes a layout in no way reminiscent of any modern floorplans let alone historical experiments in design.¹⁴⁶

Sebastiano Pérouse de Montclos, however, has written a sizable examination on the changes within the house, positing that they in fact follow Andrea Palladio's structural derivations.

By way of a quick summary, Palladian grammar seeks to organize space through a series of strict rules. As Palladio proved, it was possible to use his system to generate a number of layouts such as Villa Badoer, Villa Emo, Villa Ragona, Villa Poiana, and of course Villa Zeno. In essence there are only eight steps:

1. Grid definition
2. Exterior-wall definition
3. Room layout
4. Interior-wall realignment
5. Principal entrances—porticos and exterior wall inflections
6. Exterior ornamentation—columns
7. Windows and Doors
8. Termination¹⁴⁹

Pérouse de Montclos relies on these steps to delineate how Navidson's house was (1.0) first established (2.0) limited (3.0) sub-divided and (4.0) so on. He attempts to convince the reader that the constant refiguration of doorways and walls represents a kind of geological loop in the process of working out all possible forms, most likely *ad infinitum*, but never settling because, as he states in his conclusion, "unoccupied space will never cease to change simply because nothing forbids it to do so. The continuous internal alterations only prove that such a house is necessarily uninhabited."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹For an exemplary look at Palladian grammar in action, see William J. Mitchell's *The Logic of Architecture: Design, Computation, and Cognition* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1994), p. 152-181. As well as Andrea Palladio's *The Four Books of Architecture* (1570) trans. Isaac Ware (New York: Dover, 1965).

¹⁵⁰Sebastiano Pérouse de Montclos' *Palladian Grammar and Metaphysical Appropriations: Navidson's Villa Malcontenta* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1996), p. 2,865. Also see Aristides Quine's *Concatenating Corbusier*

Thus, as well as prompting formal inquiries into the elusive internal shape of the house and the rules governing those shifts, Sebastiano Pérouse de Montclos also broaches a much more commonly discussed matter: the question of occupation. Though few will ever agree on the meaning of the configurations or the absence of style in that place, no one has yet to disagree that the labyrinth is still a house.¹⁵¹ Therefore the question soon arises whether or not it is someone's house. Though if so whose? Whose was it or even whose *is* it? Thus giving voice to another suspicion: could the owner still be there? Questions which echo the snippet of gospel Navidson alludes to in his letter to Karen¹⁵²—St. John, chapter 14—where Jesus says:

In my Father's house are many rooms: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you . . .

Something to be taken literally as well as ironically.¹⁵³

(New York: American Elsevier, 1996) in which Quine applies Corbusier's Five Points to the Navidson house, thereby proving, in his mind, the limitations and hence irrelevance of Palladian grammar. While these conclusions are somewhat questionable, they are not without merit. In particular, Quine's treatment of the Villa Savoye and the Domino House deserves special attention. Finally consider Gisele Urbanati Rowan Lell's far more controversial piece "Polypod Or Polylith?: The Navidson Creation As Mechanistic/Linguistic Model" in *Abaku Banner Catalogue*, v. 198, January 1996, p. 515-597, in which she treats the "house-shifts" as evidence of polylithic dynamics and hence structure. For a point of reference see Greenfield and Schneider's "Building a Tree Structure. The Development of Hierarchical Complexity and Interrupted Strategies in Children's Construction Activity" in *Developmental Psychology*, 13, 1977, p. 299-313.

¹⁵¹ Which also happens to maintain a curious set of constants. Consider —

Temperature: 32°F ± 8.

Light: absent.

Silence: complete*

Air Movement (i.e. breezes, drafts etc.): none

True North: DNE

*With the exception of the 'growl'.

¹⁵²See Chapter XVII.

¹⁵³Also not to be forgotten is the terror Jacob feels when he encounters the territories of the divine: "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Genesis 28:17)

Mairea in Noormarkku, Central Station in Milan, the New York City World's Fair Interior of the Finnish Pavilion, lobby of the Stockholm Concert House, Stockholm City Library, Woodland Crematorium, Police Headquarters in Copenhagen, Helsinki railway station, Villa Hvitträsk near Helsinki, Grundtvig Church in Copenhagen, Villa Savoye in Poissy, 25 rue Vavin in Paris, 62 rue Des Belles Feuilles also in Paris, Notre-Dame du Raincy, 25 bis, rue Franklin, Paris again, Chateau of Voisins, Rochefort-en-Yvelines, New Chancellery in Berlin, The Festival House near Dresden, the Schröder House, Utrecht, The Bauhaus in Dessau, or the expressionism of the Fagus Factory near Hildesheim, Amsterdam's Scheepvarthuis, Rheinhalle in Düsseldorf, the Chilehaus in Hamburg, Einstein Tower in Berlin, Schocken Department Store in Stuttgart, Auditorium of the Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin, The Glass Pavilion in Cologne, Bresau's Centennial Hall, I.G.-Farben Dye Factory, Höchst, the Völkerschlach Memorial in Leipzig, Haus Wiegand in Berlin, AEG Turbine Factory also in Berlin, the Stuttgart Railway Station, Leipziger Platz facade and the National Bank of Germany in Berlin, the American Radiator Building in New York, the Nebraska State Capitol, the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C., Villa Vizcaya in Miami, Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, or Fallingwater, Administration Building at the S.C. Johnson Wax Factory, plan for the Tokyo Imperial Hotel or Taliesin East, the Robie House, the Winslow House, Warren Hickox House, or History Faculty Building in Cambridge, the Pompidou Center in Paris, the David B. Gamble House, The Seagram Building in New York, the Portland public service building, or the Art Nouveau of the cathedral of the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, the Assembly building at Chandigarh in India, Casa Milá in Barcelona, the Majolikahaus and the Secession building in Vienna, the Greek Theatre at Park Güell, Casa Batllo, and Casa Vicens in Barcelona, and the staircase of the Tassel House in Brussels, Central Rotunda at the International Exhibition of Decorative Arts in Turin, Palazzo Castiglioni in Milan, the Elvira Photographic Studio in Munich, the Stoclet House in Brussels, The Imperial and Royal Post Office Savings Bank in Vienna, Darmstadt Artist's Colony, Library Facade of Glasgow School of Art, Paris Metro station entrance, Castel Béranger also in Paris, Maison du Peuple in Brussels, the Exchange in Amsterdam, the staircase of the Van Eetvelde House and Hôtel Solvay in Brussels, or anything of the Bungalowoid style, the Mission Style, the Western Slick Style or the Prairie Style, whether the Crocker House in Pasadena, the Town and Gown Club in Berkeley, or the Goodrich House in Tucson, or any evidence of 19th century modes, whether stylistically enunciated as Jacobethan Revival, Late Gothic, Neo-Classical Revival, Georgian Revival, Second Renaissance Revival, Beaux-Arts Classicism, Chateauesque, Richardsonian Romanesque, the Shingle Style, Eastlake Style, Queen Anne Style, Stick Style, Second Empire, High Victorian Italianate, High

It is not surprising then that when Holloway's team finally begins the long trek back, they discover the staircase is much farther away than they had anticipated, as if in their absence the distances had stretched. They are forced to camp for a fourth night thus necessitating

strict rationing of food, water, and light (i.e. batteries). On the morning of the fifth day, they reach the stairs and begin the long climb up. Aside from the fact that the diameter of the Spiral Staircase is now more than seven hundred and fifty feet wide, the ascent moves fairly quickly.

During the walk down, Holloway had prudently decided to leave provisions along the way, thus lightening their load and at the same time allocating needed supplies for their return. Though Holloway had initially estimated they would need no more than eight hours to reach the first of these caches, it ends up taking

them nearly twelve hours. At last at their destination, they quickly set up camp and collapse in their tents. Oddly enough, despite their exhaustion, all of them find it very difficult to fall asleep.

On the sixth day, they still make an early start. The knowledge that they are heading back keeps Wax and Jed's spirits elevated. Holloway, however, remains uncharacteristically sallow, revealing what critic Melisa Tao Janis calls "a sign of [his] deepening, atrabilious obsession with the unpresent."¹⁵⁴

Nevertheless, the climb still proceeds smoothly, until Holloway discovers the remains of one of their foot long neon markers barely clinging to the wall. It has been badly mauled, half of the fabric torn away by some unimaginable claw. Even worse their next cache has been gutted. Only traces of the plastic water jug remain along with a few scattered pieces of PowerBars. Fuel for the campfire stove has completely disappeared.

"That's nice," Wax murmurs.

"Holy shit!" Jed hisses.

Emily O'Shaugnessy points out in *The Chicago Entropy Journal* the importance of this discovery: "Here at last are the first signs—evidenced ironically enough by the expurgation of a neon sign and the team's provisions—of the house's powerful ability to exorcise any and all things from its midst."^F

¹⁵⁴ Melisa Tao Janis' "Hollow Newel Ruminations" in *The Anti-Present Trunk*, ed. by Philippa Frake (Oxford: Phaidon, 1995), p. 293.

^F Emily O'Shaugnessy, "Metaphysical Emetic" in *Chicago Entropy Journal*, Memphis, Tennessee, v.182, n. 17, May, 1996.

Holloway Roberts is not nearly as analytical. He responds as a hunter and the image that fills the frame is a weapon. Kneeling beside his pack, we watch as he pulls out his Weatherby 300 magnum and carefully inspects both the bolt and the scope mounts before loading five 180 grain Nosler Partition® rounds in the magazine. As he chambers a sixth round, a glimmer of joy flickers across Holloway's features, as if finally something about that place has begun to make sense.

Fueled by the discovery, Holloway insists on exploring at least some of the immediate hallways branching off the staircase. Soon enough he is stalking doorways, leading the dancing moon of Jed's flashlight with the barrel of his rifle, and always listening. Corners, however, only reveal more corners, and Jed's light only targets ashen walls, though soon enough they all begin to detect that inimitable growl,¹⁵⁵ like calving glaciers, far off in the distance, which at least in the mind's eye, inhabits a thin line where rooms and passageways must finally concede to become a horizon.

"The growl almost always comes like the rustle of a high mountain wind on the trees," Navidson explained later. "You hear it first in the distance, a gentle rumble, slowly growing louder as it descends, until finally it's all around you, sweeping over you, and then past you, until it's gone, a mile away, two miles away, impossible to follow."¹⁵⁶

Esther Newhost in her essay "Music as Place in *The Navidson Record*" provides an interesting interpretation of this sound: "Goethe once remarked in a letter to Johann Peter Eckermann [March 23, 1829]: 'I call architecture frozen music.'¹⁵⁷ The unfreezing of form in the Navidson house releases that music. Unfortunately, since it contains all the harmonies of time and change, only the immortal may savor it. Mortals cannot help but fear those curmuring walls. After all do they not still sing the song of our end?"¹⁵⁸

For Holloway, it is impossible to merely accept the growl as a quality of that place anymore. Upon seeing the torn marker and their lost water, he seems to transfigure the eerie sound into an utterance made by some definitive creature, thus providing him

a cellular floor, a raised floor, or for that matter wire of any sort, No. 36 to No. 0000 (#4/0), or electrical boxes—3 duct junction boxes etc., etc.—or plug-in receptacles, 3-prong grounded duplex or other, pots or pans or cans, or switch plates, switches, whether swing pole, dimmer or remote, or circuit breakers or fuses, whether lead, tin, copper, silver, etc., etc., with a voltage class from 12, 24, 125, 250, 600, 5000+, or even lights, whether electrical discharge, incandescent, or combustion, no flame arc or gas-filled, tipless, inside frosted, decorative, general service, 10,000 watt aviation pic-

¹⁵⁵In describing the Egyptian labyrinth, Pliny noted how "when the doors open there is a terrifying rumble of thunder within."*

¹⁵⁶The Last Interview.

¹⁵⁷*Ich die Baukunst eine erstarrte Musik nenne.*

¹⁵⁸Esther Newhost's "Music as Place in *The Navidson Record*" in *The Many Wall Fugue*, ed. Eugenio Rosch & Joshua Scholfield (Farnborough: Greg International, 1994), p. 47.

Victorian Gothic, the Octagon Mode, the Renaissance Revival, the Italian Villa Style, Romanesque Revival, Early Gothic Revival, Egyptian Revival, Greek Revival, such as University Club in Portland Oregon, Calvary Episcopal in Pittsburgh, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Germantown Cricket Club in Pennsylvania, All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, D.C., Detroit Public Library or the Racquet and Tennis Club in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Riverside County Courthouse in California, the Kimball House in Chicago, the Gresham House in Galveston, Texas, Cheney Building in Hartford Connecticut, Pioneer Building in Seattle, House House in Austin, Texas, Bookstaver House in Middletown Rhodes Island, Double House on Twenty-First Street in San Francisco, Brownlee House in Bonham, Texas, Los Angeles Heritage Society, Sagamore Hill in Oyster Bay, Cram House in Middletown Rhode Island, House of San Luis Obispo, City Hall in Philadelphia, Gallatin House in Sacramento, Blagen Block and Marks House in Portland, Langworthy House in Dubuque, Iowa, Cedar Point in Swansboro, North Carolina, Haughwout Building in New York City, Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank in Philadelphia, Calvert Station in Baltimore, Jarrad House in New Brunswick, New Jersey, Old Stone Church in Cleveland, Church of Assumption in St. Paul, Minnesota, Rotch House in New Bedford, Massachusetts, St. James in Willmington, North Carolina, Philadelphia's Moyamensing Prison, Medical College of Virginia in Richmond, Lyle-Hunnicutt House in Athens, Georgia, Montgomery County Courthouse in Dayton, Ohio, which is not to exclude the non-presence of other 19th century examples such as the Pennsylvania station, exterior and concourse, Villard Houses in New York, the Boston Public Library, Court of Honor at the Chicago World's Fair, the St. Louis Wainwright Building, the Buffalo's Guaranty Building, Watts Sherman House in Newport Rhode Island, Boston Trinity Church, Ames Gate Lodge in North Easton, the Philadelphia Provident Life and Trust Company, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Nott Memorial Library in Schenectady, New York, saloon in the Breakers, Boston City Hall, or Greek and gothic presence in the New York City Trinity Church, Philadelphia Girard College for Orphans, the Washington, D.C. Smithsonian Institute, Boston Tremont House, Philadelphia Merchant's Exchange, Ohio State Capitol, The Singer's Hall in Bavaria, Washington, D.C. Treasury Building, the Palais de Justice in Brussels, Empress Josephine's bedroom at Château of Malmaison, the Academy of Science in Athens, the Royal Pavilion in Brighton, Moscow Historical Museum, the New Admiralty in St. Petersburg, the grand staircase of the Paris Opéra, the St. Petersburg Exchange, Thorwaldsen Museum, Senate Square in Helsinki, Florence Cathedral, Milan's Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Palazzo di Giustizia in Rome, Conova Mausoleum near Possagno, Padua's Caffè Pedrocchi, the Parliament House in Vienna, the Dresden Opera

with something concrete to pursue. Holloway almost seems drunk as he rushes after the sound, failing to lay down any fishing line or hang neon markers, rarely even stopping to rest.

Jed and Wax do not draw the same conclusion as Holloway. They realize, and quite accurately too, that even though they are traveling farther and farther away from the staircase, they are not getting any closer to the source of the growl. They insist on turning around. Holloway first promises to investigate just a little while longer, then resorts to goading, calling them anything from "fucking pussies" and "cowards" to "jack-holes" and "come-guzzling shit-eating cunts." Suffice it to say this last comment does not steel Wax and Jed's resolve to hunt the great beast.

They both stop.

Enough is enough. They are tired and more than a little concerned. Their bodies ache from the constant cold. Their nerves have been eviscerated by the constant darkness. They are low on battery power (i.e. light), neon markers, and fishing line. Furthermore, the destroyed cache of supplies could indicate their other caches are in jeopardy. If that proves to be the case, they will not have enough water to even make it back within radio range of Navidson.

"We're heading home now," Jed snaps.

"Fuck you," Holloway barks. "I give the orders here, and I say no one's going anywhere yet." Which considering the circumstances are pretty bizarre words to be hearing in such regions of dark.

"Look dude," Wax tries, doing his best to lure Holloway over to their side of sense. "Let's just check in so we can resupply and, you know . . . uh . . . get more guns."

"I will not abort this mission" Holloway responds sharply, jabbing an angry finger at the twenty-six year old from Aspen, Colorado.

Easily as much attention has been given to Holloway's use of the word "abort" as to Navidson's use of the word "outpost." The implication in "abort" is the failure to attain a goal—the prey not killed, the peak not climbed. As if there could have been a final objective in that place. Initially Holloway's only goal was to reach the bottom of the staircase (which he achieved). Whether it was the growl or the expurgating qualities of the house or something entirely else, Holloway decided to redefine that goal mid-way. Jed and Wax, however, understand that to begin hunting some elusive presence

now is just the same as suicide. Without another word, they both turn around and start heading back to the stairs.

Holloway refuses to follow them. For a while, he rants and raves, screaming profanities at a blue streak, until finally and abruptly, he just storms off by himself, vanishing into the blackness. It is another peculiar event which is over almost before it starts. A sudden enfilade of “fuck you’s” and “shit-heads” followed by silence.¹⁵⁹

Back on the staircase, Jed and Wax wait for Holloway to cool off and return. When several hours pass and there is still no sign of him, they make a brief foray into the area, calling out his name, doing everything in their power to locate him and bring him back. Not only do they not find him, they do not come across a single neon marker or even a shred of fishing line. Holloway has run off blind.

We watch as Jed and Wax make camp and try to force themselves to sleep for a few hours. Perhaps they hope time will magically reunite the team. But the morning of the seventh day only brings more of the same. No sign of Holloway, a terrifying shortage of supplies, and a very ugly decision to make.

Hank Leblarnard has devoted several pages on the guilt both men suffered when they decided to head back without Holloway.¹⁶⁰ Nupart Jhunisdakazcriddle also analyzes the tragic nature of their action, pointing out that in the end, “Holloway chose his course. Jed and Wax waited for him and even made a

¹⁵⁹This is not the first time individuals exposed to total darkness in an unknown space have suffered adverse psychological effects. Consider what happened to an explorer entering the Sarawak Chamber discovered in the Mulu mountains in Borneo. This chamber measures 2,300ft long, 1,300ft wide, averages a height of 230ft, and is large enough to contain over 17 football fields. When first entering the chamber, the party of explorers kept close to a wall assuming incorrectly that they were following a long, winding passageway. It was only when they chose to return by striking straight out into that blackness—expecting to run into the opposite wall—that they discovered the monstrous size of that cavern: “So the trio marched out into the dark expanse, maintaining a compass course through a maze of blocks and boulders until they reached a level, sandy plain, the signature of an underground chamber. The sudden awareness of the immensity of the black void caused one of the cavers to suffer an acute attack of agoraphobia, the fear of open spaces. None of the three would later reveal who panicked, since silence on such matters is an unwritten law among cavers.” *Planet Earth: Underground Worlds* p. 26-27.

Of course, Holloway’s reactions exceed a perfectly understandable case of agoraphobia.

¹⁶⁰Hank Leblarnard’s *Grief’s Explorations* (Atlanta: More Blue Publications, 1994).

House, Befreiungshalle near Kelheim, Walhalla across the Danube, Feldherrnhalle in Munich, Berlin National Galerie or Bauakademie or the staircase in the Altes Museum or Schauspielhaus, nor the gothic revival of the campanile of Westminster cathedral, New Scotland Yard, Standen in Sussex, the house at Cragside in Northumberland or Newnham College in Cambridge, or Leyswood in Sussex, the Crystal Palace or the Law Courts in London, the chapel at Keble college, Albert Memorial in Kensington Gardens, or the Saloon of the Reform Club, Elmes' St. George's Hall in Liverpool, Taylorian Institution at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, Edinburgh Royal College of Physicians, British Museum in London, Devon Lutcombe Castle, Cumberland Terrace in Regent's Park, the Paris Grand Palais or Gare du Quai d'Orsay or the staircase at the Nouvelle Sorbonne or the Opéra or St-Augustin or Fontaine St-Michel or Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, the Marseilles Cathedral, the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, the Salle de Harlay in the Palais de Justice, or the reading room at the Bibliothèque Ste-Geneviève, Gare du Nord, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, St-Vincent de Paul, Church of the Madeleine, rue de Rivoli, the arc du Carrousel, nor anything like 18th century classicism of the Washington, D.C. Supreme Court Chamber, the staircase vestibule in the D.C. capitol and the capitol itself, Baltimore Roman Catholic Cathedral, bank of Pennsylvania, the University of Virginia Jefferson Library, Monticello near Charlottesville, First Baptist Meeting House in Providence Rhode Island, Drayton Hall in Charleston, King's Chapel in Boston, or examples of the Jeffersonian Classicism or the Adam Style, such as Pavilion VII at the University of Virginia, Estouteville in Albemarle County, Clay Hill in Harrodsburg Kentucky, Nickels-Sortwell House in Wiscasset, Maine, Ware-Sibley House in Augusta, Georgia, or the Congregational Church in Tallmadge Ohio, or the Dalton House in Newburyport, Massachusetts, Sheremetev Palace near Moscow, Cameron Gallery in Tsarskow Seloe, the Catherine Hall in the St. Petersburg Tauride Palace, Leningrad Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen Amalienborg Palace, Lazienki Palace near Warsaw, the mock Gothic castle of Löwenburg at Schloss Wilhelmshöhe, the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, mosque in the garden of Schwetzingen near Mannheim, Villa Hamilton near Dessau, Milan's Palazzo Serbelloni, the Sale delle Muse in the Vatican, the Boston Massachusetts State House, Paris Barrière de la Villette, the Director's house at the saltworks of Arc-et-Senans near Besançon, Paris Pantheon, or La Solitude in Stuttgart, Rue de la Pépinière, Château at Montmusard near Dijon, the breakfast room of Sir John Soane's Museum, or the French Neo-Classicism of the Hameau at Versailles, the staircase of the theatre at Bordeaux, the anatomy theatre in the Paris School of Surgery, chambers for the mausoleum of the Prince of Wales, entrance and colonnade of the Hôtel de Salm, Syon House in Middlesex, Versailles St. Symphorien, or Petit Trianon, or London Lin-

noble effort to find him. At 5:02 A.M., as the Hi 8 testifies, their only option was to return without him.”¹⁶¹

As Jed and Wax resume their climb back up the Spiral Staircase, they discover every neon marker they left behind has been torn apart. Furthermore the higher they get, the more the markers have been devoured. Around this time, Jed also begins to notice how more than a few of his buttons have vanished. Strips of velcro have fallen off his parka, shoe laces have shredded forcing him to bind his boots together with duck tape. Amazingly enough, even his pack frame has “crumbled”—the word Jed uses.

“It’s kind of scary” Wax mutters in the middle of a long ramble. “Like you stop thinking about something and it vanishes. You forget you have pocket zippers and pow they’re gone. Don’t take nothing for granted

here.”

Jed keeps wondering aloud: “Where the hell is [Holloway]?” and silence keeps trying to mean an answer.

An hour later, Jed and Wax reach another cache, placed out of the way against the wall at the far end of a stair, near the entrance to some unexplored corridor. Nothing remains of the food and fuel but the jug of water is perfectly intact. Wax is back for a second chug, when the crack of a rifle drops him to the floor, blood immediately gushing from his left armpit.

“Oh my god! Oh my god!” Wax screams. “My arm—Oh god Jed help me, I’m bleeding!” Jed immediately crouches next to Wax’s side and applies pressure to the wound. Moments later, Holloway emerges from the dark corridor with his rifle in hand. He seems just as shocked by the sight of these two as he is by the sight of the stairs.

“How the hell did I get here?” he blurts out incoherently. “I thought it was that, that thing. Fuck. It was that thing. I’m sure of it. That awful fucking . . . fuck, fuck.”

“Don’t stand there. Help him!” Jed yells. This seems to snap Holloway out of his trance—at least for a little while. He helps Jed peel off Wax’s jacket and treat the wound. Fortunately they are not unprepared. Jed has a medical supply kit loaded with gauze, ace bandages, disinfectant, ointments, and some painkillers. He forces two pills into Wax’s mouth but the ensuing cut

¹⁶¹Nupart Jhunisakazcridle's *Killing Badly, Dying Wise* (London: Apophrades Press, 1996), p. 92.

shows that only some of Wax's agony has subsided.

Jed starts to tell Holloway what they will have to do in order to carry Wax the remainder of the way up.

"Are you crazy?" Holloway suddenly shouts. "I can't go back now. I just shot someone."

"What the hell are you talking about?" Jed tries to say as calmly as possible. "It was an accident."

Holloway sits down. "It doesn't matter. I'll go to jail. I'll lose everything. I have to think."

"Are you kidding me? He'll die if you don't help me carry him!"

"I can't go to prison," Holloway mumbles, more to himself now than to either Wax or Jed. "I just can't."

"Don't be ridiculous," Jed says, starting to raise his voice. "You're not gonna go to jail. But if you sit there and let Wax die, for that they'll lock you up for life. And I'll make sure they throw away the fucking key. Now get up and help me."

Holloway does struggle to his feet, but instead of giving Jed a hand, he just walks away, disappearing once again into that impenetrable curtain of black, leaving Jed to carry and care for Wax by himself. For whatever reason, departure suddenly became Holloway's only choice. *Une solution politique honorable*.¹⁶²

Jed does not get very far with Wax before two bullets smash into a nearby wall. Holloway's helmet light reveals that he is standing on the opposite side of the stairway.

Jed instantly turns off his flashlight and with Wax on his back scrambles up a few stairs. Then by rapidly clicking his flashlight on and off, he discovers a narrow hallway branching off the stairway into unseen depths. Unfortunately another shot instantly answers this fractionary bit of vision, the bang echoing over and over again through the pitch.

As we can see Jed does succeed in dragging Wax into this new corridor, the next Hi 8 clip capturing him with his flashlight back on, moving through a series of tiny rooms. Occasionally we hear the faint crack of a rifle shot in the distance, causing Jed to push ahead even faster, darting through as many chambers as possible, until his breath rasps painfully in and out of his lungs and he is forced to put his friend down, unable for the moment to go any farther.

Jed just slides to the floor, turns off his light, and starts to sob.

¹⁶²*An honorable political solution"—and as usual, pretentious as all fuck. Why French? Why not English? It also doesn't make much sense. Nothing about Holloway's choice or Jed's request seems even remotely political.

coln's Inn Fields, the Consols Office in the Bank of England, the plan of Fonthill Abbey, the Cupola Room at Heaton Hall, the Dublin Four Courts, the Somerset House in London, the Casino at Marino House in Dublin, the Pagoda at Kew Gardens, Stowe House portico at Buckinghamshire, drawing room at 20 St. James' Square, Middlesex Syon House, Marble Hall at Kedleston, Temple of Ancient Virtue in the Stowe Elysian Fields, staircase at 44 Berkeley Square, Holkham Hall in Norfolk, the cupola room in Kensington Palace, Tempietto Diruto at Villa Albani Rome, entrance front to S. Maria del Priorato also in Rome, Ancient Mausoleum from *Prima Parte di Architetture e Prospettive*, or the Baroque expansion indicated by the cascade of steps at Bom Jesus do Monte near Braga, or royal palace at Queluz, the Royal Library at the University of Coimbra, the palace-convent of Mafra near Lisbon, Salamanca Plaza Mayor, cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, cathedral at Murcia, Granada cathedral, the transparente in Toledo cathedral, octagonal pavilion at Orleans House, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Radcliffe Library in Oxford, the Wieskirche, chapel of Würzburg Residenz, or Stepney St. George-in-the-East, St. George's, Bloomsbury London, Oxfordshire Blenheim Palace, the mirror room of the Amalienburg in Munich, the Yorkshire Mausoleum at Castle Howard, Chatsworth Derbyshire, the painted hall at the Greenwich Royal Hospital, Rome's interior dome of S. Carlo alle quattro Fontane, or the Salon de la Guerre in Versailles, St. Paul's Cathedral, Piazza S. Pietro, Wren's Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford, the abbey church at Ottobeuren, or the German rococo of the Zwinger, Wallpavillon Dresden, St. John Nepomuk in Munich, the high altar at the abbey church of Weltenburg, the staircase at the Residenz Würzburg or the church at Vierzehnheiligen, the monastery of Melk in Austria, staircase at Pommersfelden, the upper Belvedere, Imperial Library of the Hofburg, Karlskirche in Vienna, the Ancestral Hall at Schloss Frain in Moravia, or French rococo like the Salon de la Princess at Hôtel de Soubise in Paris, not even just the interior chapel at Versailles, domed oval saloon at Vaux-le-Vicomte, Paris Hôtel Lambert, S. Agata in Catania, the Syracuse cathedral, the ballroom at the Palazzo Gangi in Palermo, the majolica cloister at S. Chiara or the Piazza del Gesù in Naples, or even the uncompleted Palazzo Donn'Anna, or the interior of the Gesuiti in Venice, the plan of the University Genoa, the Royal Palace at Stupinigi, the Superga near Turin, or the staircase at the Palazzo Madama, or the dome of S. Lorenzo in Turin, or the interior of the dome of the Cappella della SS. Sindone, or the Trevi Fountain or the facade of S. Maria Maggiore or the Spanish steps or the frescoes on the nave vault of S. Ignazio in Rome, or also in Rome the exterior of S. Maria in Via Lata, Pietro da Cortona's SS. Luca e Martina, Villa Sacchetti del Pigneto, Piazza Navona, Fontana del Moro, S. Ivo dell Sapienza, facade of the Oratory of the Congregation of St. Philip Neri, chapel ceiling at the Collegio di Propri-

At 3:31 A.M. the camera blips on again. Jed has moved Wax to another room. Realizing the camcorder may be his only chance to provide an explanation for what happened, Jed now speaks directly into it, reiterating the events leading up to Holloway's break with reality and how exhausted, pursued, and ultimately lost, Jed

has still somehow managed to carry, drag, and push Wax to a relatively safe place. Unfortunately, he no longer has any idea where they are: "So much for my sense of direction. I've spent the last hour looking for a way back to the staircase. No luck. The radio is useless. If help doesn't come soon, he'll die. I'll die."

Barely caught in the frame, we can just make out Jed's fist rapping incessantly against the floor, which as it turns out, has the exact same timbre as those knocks heard back in the living room. Alan P. Winnett, however, remarks on one

notable difference:

Curiously enough, despite the similarity of intonation and pitch, the pattern does not even remotely resemble the three short – three long – three short SOS signal heard by the Navidsons. Carlos Avital has suggested the house itself not only carried the signal an incredible distance but interpreted it as well. Marla Hulbert disagrees, positing that the rhythm of the knocking hardly matters: "By the eighth day, the absence of any word from Holloway's team was already a distress signal in and of itself."¹⁶³

Regardless of its meaning and the reasons behind its transfiguration, Jed only produces this strange tattoo for a short time before returning to the needs of his badly wounded friend.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³Alan P. Winnett's *Heaven's Door* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 452. Also see Carlos Avital's widely read though somewhat prolix pamphlet *Acoustic Intervention* (Boston: Berklee College of Music, 1994) as well as Marla Hulbert's "Knock Knock, Who Cares?" in *The Phenomenology of Coincidence in The Navidson Record* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

¹⁶⁴Once, in the dining hall of a certain boarding school—it was my second and nothing fancy—I met a ghost. I'd been talking with two friends, but due to

all the seven o'clock din, the place being packed with fellow gorgers, it was almost impossible to hear much of what anyone said, unless you shouted, and we weren't shouting because our conversation had to be kept secret. Not that what we said offered a whole lot of anything new.

Not even variation.

Girls.

That was all. One word to pretty much sum up the whole of all we cared about. Week in, week out. Where to meet them. What to say to them. How not to need them. That was unattractive. Girls could never know you needed them, which was why our conversation had to be kept secret, because that's all it was about: needing them.

Back then, I was living life like a ghost, though not the ghost I'm about to tell you about. I was all numb & stupid and dazed too I guess, a pretty spooky silentary

for matters I knew by heart but could never quite translate for anyone I knew let alone myself. I constantly craved the comforts of feminine attention, even though the thought of actually getting a girlfriend, one who was into me and wanted to be with me, seemed about as real as any dozen of the myths I'd been reading about in class.

At least the same guy who explained my attachment to junk, The Counselor For Disaffected You—I mean Youth—, helped me see how influenced I remained by my past. Unfortunately it was a lesson delivered tongue in cheek, as he ultimately believed I'd made most of my past up just to impress him.

About one thing he was right, my mother wasn't actually dead yet. Telling everyone she was though made my life far less complicated. I don't think anyone at the boarding school, including my friends, teachers, certainly not my counselor, ever found out the truth, which was fine with me. That's the way I liked it.

My arms, however, were another story. It's kinda funny, but despite my current professional occupation, I don't have any tattoos. Just the scars, the biggest ones of course being the ones you know about, this strange seething melt running from the inside of both elbows all the way up to the end of both wrists, where—I might as well tell you—a skillet of sizzling corn oil unloaded its lasting wrath on my efforts to keep it from the kitchen floor. "You tried to catch it all," my mother had often said of that afternoon when I was only four. See, not nearly as dramatic as a Japanese Martial Arts Cult run by Koreans in Indiana. I mean Idaho. Just a dropped pan. That's all.

As for the rest of the scars, there are too many to start babbling on about here, jagged half-moon reminders on my shoulders and shins, plenty stippled on my bones, a solemn

29

fast setting, coloured, fiber reinforced, self-leveling, mortar, high early-strength, sand mix, silica sand, plastic, hydraulic, or sheet vinyl, tile, cork tile, terrazzo, rubber, carpeting, epoxy, ceramic & stone, slate, aputisiarvaq, or marble, whether white—Danby Imperial, Colorado Yule, or Carrara—or black or green; or hardwood, whether overlay, strip flooring with alternate joints, or herringbone, inlaid, basket weave, Arenberg, Chantilly, or Versailles parquet; in fact no wood anywhere, whether redwood, treated western hemlock, yellow pine, cedar, wood-polymer, Engelmann spruce,

Grosvenor Goodwin,
James Gamble Rogers,
Ralph Adams Cram,
E. Staub, *Diego Suarez*,
Burial Hoffmann, *Paul*
Chadyn, *John Russell*
Harcace Trumbauer, *Henry*
Lymn Silsbee, *Francisco*
Berenguer y Mestres, *Luis*
Maher Greene, *John*
Harcace Trumbauer, *Henry*
Lymn Silsbee, *Francisco*
Berenguer y Mestres, *Luis*
Domenech i Montaner,
Antoni Gaudí i Cornet,
Ramond D. Aronca,
Guiseppe Sommaruga,
Oto Wagner, *Henry van*
de Veldt, *Theodor Lips*,
Augusti Endell, *C.F.A.*
Ludwig Haus, *C.F.A.*
Voysey, *Charles Harrison*
Townsend, *Herman*
Muthesius, *Charles*
Renee Mackintosh,
Charles
Charles Plumet, *Jules*
Laviotte, *François*
Jourdain, *Georges*
Chevalier Xavier,
Schoellkopf, *Hector*
Gumard, *Henrik Peters*
Bertlage, *Paul Hankar*,
Victor Horta, *Paul*
Smithmeyer, John
Cass Gilbert, *John*
Seidle, *Jules Sautinier*,
Smithmeyer, Paul

ganda Fide or the S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Scala Regia in the Vatican, S. Andrea al Quirinale, nor even elements of the Renaissance as evinced by the Great Hall at the Hatfield House in Hertfordshire, Longleat, Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, the Gate of Honour at Gonville and Caius College in Cambridge, Burghley House in Northamptonshire, Meat Hall in Haarlem, the House Ten Bosch at Maarssen, the Mauritshuis at the Hague, the Antwerp town hall, the arcaded loggia of the Belvedere in Prague, Wawel Cathedral in Cracow, the town hall at Augsburg, Schloss Johanneburg, Aschaffenburg, the court facade of the Ottheinrichsbau of the Schloss at Heidelberg, the Jesuit church of St. Michael in Munich, court of Altes Schloss in Stuttgart, Escorial, the Portal of Pardon, Granada, palace courtyard for Charles V at Alhambra, Granada, the Royal Hospital at Santiago de Compostela, the Queen's House in Greenwich, the Bourbon chapel at St-Denis, chateau pf Maisons-Lafitte the church of the College of the Sorbonne, the Palazzo Corner della Ca-

Grande in Venice, or the Francois I gallery at Fontainebleau, Place des Vosges in Paris, gateway of the chateau at Anet, the Petit Chateau at Chantilly, the Chateau de Chambord, Square Court of the Louvre, Courtyard of the Chateau of Ancy-le-Franc, the Medici Chapel, the open staircase at Blois, the interior of Il Redentore in Venice, or Villa Rotonda near Vicenza, Palazzo Chiericati, Villa Barbaro, S. Maria, Vicoforte di Mondovi, Palazzo Farnese, Caprarola, the Strada Nuova in Genoa, the hemicycle of Villa Giulia, Villa Garzoni, Pontecasale, library of S. Marco in Venice, the Loggetta at the base of the Campanile, Cappella Pellegrini in Verona, Rome's S. Maria Degli Angeli, the giant order of the Rome Capitol, staircase of the Laurentian Library in Florence, or Mantua's Palazzo Ducale or Palazzo del Tè, or Palazzo Farnese or Palazzo Massimi or Villa Farnesina or Villa Madama in Rome, or S. Maria della Consolazione in Todi, Belvedere Court, S. Pietro in Montorio, or Palazzo della Cancelleria in Rome, S. Maria delle Grazie in Milan, Cappella del Perdonio, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino, Palazzo Medici-Riccardi in Florence, the Pienxa Piazza, Rimini Tempio Malatestiano, Mantua's S. Andrea, Florence's S. Spirito or Pazzi Chapel, to say nothing of the lack of even a gothic signature, whether like the church of Sta Maria de Vitória at Batalha, the Cristo Monastery at Tomar, the palace of Bellver near Palma de Mallorca, cathedral at Palma de Mallorca, the Seville cathedral, Ca' d'Oro in Venice, Siena's Palazzo Pubblico, Venice's Piazzetta, the Doges' Palace Facade, or the nave of the Milan Cathedral, Orvieto cathedral, or the Florence cathedral, or the upper church of S. Francesco at Assisi, cathedral and castle of the Teutonic Order at Marienwerder Poland, the town hall at Louvain, St. Barbara in Kuttenberg, the Vladislav Hall in the Hradcany Castle in Prague, St Lorenz in Nuremberg, the Starsbourg cathedral, the Ulm cathedral, Vienna Cathedral, interior of the Aachen cathedral, the Prague cathedral, the choir vaulting of the church of

white one intersecting my eyebrow, another obvious one still evident in my broken, now discolored front tooth, a central incisor to be more precise, and some even deeper than all of the above, telling a tale

much longer than anyone has ever heard or probably ever will hear. All of it true too, though of course scars are much harder to read. Their complex inflections do not resemble the reductive ease of any tattoo, no matter how extensive, colorful or elaborate the design. Scars are the paler pain of survival, received unwillingly and displayed in the language of injury.

My Counselor For Disaffected Youth had no idea what kept me going—though he never phrased it exactly like that. He just asked me how, in light of all my stories, I'd still managed to sustain myself. I couldn't answer him. I know one thing though,

whenever I felt particularly bad I'd instantly cling to a favorite daydream, one I was willing to revisit constantly, a pretty vivid one too, of a girl, a certain girl, though one I'd yet to meet or even see, whose eyes would sparkle just like the Northern sky I would describe for her when once while sitting on a splintered deck heaving on top of the black-pitch deck of the world, I beheld all the light not of this world.

Which was when, as I was briefly revisiting this same daydream in the presence of my two friends, I heard a voice in my ear—the ghost—softly saying my name.

By the way, this is what got me on this whole jag in the first place. The knocking in the house returning this vivid recollection.

"Johnny" she said in a sigh even more gentle than a whisper.

I looked around. No one sitting at my table was saying anything even remotely like my name. Quite the contrary, their voices were pitched in some egregiously felt debate over something having

to do with scoring, the details of which I know I'll never recall, thrown up amidst the equally loud banter of a hundred plates, glasses, knives and forks clattering here and there, and yes everywhere, serving to quickly dispel my illusion until it happened again—

indulge," 167
Record bravely refuses to
Reindeer killer or aliens.
All of which The Navidson
Ibid, eternally, echolocation,
psychosis, absence of past, vision,
assumption, submarine,
ibid, ibid, idle, timeless
perdurability, ibid, ibid,
mation of spiritual
noia, desert, reverse affir-
ascend to godhood, para-
temaramation, phobia,

"Johnny."

For an instant then, I understood she was my ghost, a seventeen year old with gold braided hair, as wild as a will-o'-the-wisp, encountered many years ago, maybe even in another life, now encountered again, and perhaps here too to find me and restore me to some former self lost on some day no boy can ever really remember—something I write now not really even understanding though liking the sound of it just the same.

"He's so dreamy. I just love the way he smiles when he talks, even if he doesn't say that much."

Which was when I realized, a moment later, that this Ghost was none other than the domed ceiling, rising above the dining hall, somehow carrying with particular vividness, from the far wall to my wall, in one magnificent arc, the confession of a girl I would never see or hear again, a confession I could not even respond to—except here, if this counts.

Sadly enough, my understanding of the rare acoustic dynamics in that hall came a fraction of a second too late, coinciding with the end of dinner, the voice vanishing as

suddenly as it appeared, lost in a cumulative leaving, so that even as I continued to scan the distant edge of the dining room or the line forming to deposit trays, I could never find the girl whose expressions or even gestures might match such sentiments.

Of course, ghostly voices don't just have to rely exclusively on domed ceilings.

They don't even have to be just voices.

I finally hooked up with Ashley. I went over to her place yesterday morning. Early. She lives in Venice. Her eyebrows look like flakes of sunlight. Her smile, I'm sure, burnt Rome to the ground. And for the life of me I didn't know who she was or where we'd met. For a moment I wondered if she was that voice. But before she said even a word, she held my hand and led me through her house to a patio overgrown with banana trees and rubber plants. Black, decomposing leaves covered the ground but a large hammock hung above it all.

We sat down together and I wanted to talk. I wanted to ask her who she was, where we'd met, been before, but she just smiled and held my hand as we sat down on the hammock and started to swing above all those dead leaves. She kissed

167 In her elegantly executed

piece entitled "Vertical Influence" reproduced in *Origins of Faith* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996) p. 261, Canidia Hayashi writes: "For that matter, what of literary hauntings? Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*, Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting*, Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland*, Stephen King's "The Breathing Method" in *Different Seasons*

pecan, southern magnolia, Colorado spruce, alpine fir, american beech, northern red oak, Canada Hemlock, red maple, sugar maple, eastern white pine, butternut hickory, shagbark hickory, american plane tree, eastern black walnut, ponderosa pine, white fir, northern catalpa, common bald cypress, american sweet gum, bur oak, California live oak, mahogany, Douglas fir, eastern cottonwood; nor any sign of a subfloor, sheathing, drywall, any kind of insulating material, polyisocyanene or other; sills, sill plates, sill sealer, rebar, anchor bolts, let alone footings or foundation walls; or

Otto Barning

Kerl, Fritz Högger,

der Mey, Michel de Gropius, John van

Hannes Meyer, Walter Tessenow, Emil Fahrenkamp, Gertrud Rietveld, Willem Marinus Dudok, J.J.P. Oud, Ado

Nagy, Theo van Doesburg, László Moholy-Nagy, László Moholy-

Berg, Hans Poelzig

Bruno Taut, Max Eric Mendelsohn

Peter Behrens, Paul Bruno Schmitz

Theodor Fischer, Schumacher, Fritz Bonatz, Paul Bruno Taut, Max Bruno Taut, Max Eric Mendelsohn

Domínikus Böhm, Otto Barning

Kerl, Fritz Högger, der Mey, Michel de Gropius, John van

Hannes Meyer, Walter Tessenow, Emil Fahrenkamp, Gertrud Rietveld, Willem Marinus Dudok, J.J.P. Oud, Ado

Nagy, Theo van Doesburg, László Moholy-

Berg, Hans Poelzig

Bruno Taut, Max Eric Mendelsohn

Peter Behrens, Paul Bruno Taut, Max Eric Mendelsohn

Albertr Sperr, Heinrich Fehrenkamp, Gertrud Rietveld, Willem Marinus Dudok, J.J.P. Oud, Ado

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Albertr Sperr, Heinrich Fehrenkamp, Gertrud Rietveld, Willem Marinus Dudok, J.J.P. Oud, Ado

Nagy, Theo van Doesburg, László Moholy-

Berg, Hans Poelzig

the Holy Cross, choir of Cologne cathedral, Oxford New College, or Harlech Castle in Gwynedd North Wales, Stokesay Castle in Shropshire, the Great Hall of Penhurst Place in Kent, the King's College Chapel in Cambridge, Westminster Hall in the Palace of Westminster, the vaulting of Henry VII chapel at Westminster, St Stephen's chapel, interior at Gloucester cathedral, or the interior octagon at Ely cathedral, the north porch of St. Mary Redcliffe in Bristol, the Exeter cathedral, vault at the Wells cathedral, Westminster Abbey, St Hugh's choir vaults in Lincoln cathedral, Palacio del Infantado at Guadalajara, the Canterbury cathedral, Rouen's Palais de Justice, the house of Jacques Coeur at Bourges, Bristol cathedral, Albi cathedral's Flamboyant south porch, the church of St-Maclou in Rouen, the Paris Sainte-Chapelle, the church of St-Urbain, Sées cathedral, Notre-Dame, Amiens cathedral, Reims cathedral, Laon cathedral, Soissons cathedral, or the nave of Noyon cathedral, or even the ambulatory of St. Denis, nor for that matter elements of the

Carolingian and Romanesque such as the Pisa baptistery or cathedral or the cathedral at Lucca, or the Leaning Tower of Pisa, S. Miniato al Monte or the baptistery in Florence, S. Ambrogio in Milan, the campanile and baptistery of the Parma cathedral, Salamanca's Old Cathedral, the cloister of Sto Domingo de Silos, fortified walls of Ávila, kitchen at Fontevraud Abbey, Angers, church and monastery at Loarre, St-Gilles-du-Gard in Provence, cathedral of Autun, Poitiers' Notre-Dame-la-Grande, abbey church of La Madeleine in Vézelay, Angoulême's cathedral, abbey church at Cluny, cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, St-Serin in Toulouse, Portico de la Glória, Santiago de Compostela, Conques Ste-Foy, the staircase of the chapter-house in Beverley, the interior of the chapter-house in Bristol, the Durham cathedral, St John's Chapel, White Tower, Tower of London, Winchester cathedral, Lincoln cathedral, the abbey church of Notre-Dame, Jumièges, Florence's S. Miniato al Monte, Dijon St-Bénigne, ambulatory of St-Philibert in Tournus, St. Mark's cathedral in Venice, St. Basil's cathedral in Moscow, abbey church of Maria Laach, cathedral of Trier, Basilica of S. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, the dome of the Palatine chapel, interior of cathedral, Speyer, St. Michael in Hildesheim, the Great Mosque at Córdoba, S. Maria Naranco, All Saints, Earls Barton, St Lawrence, Bradford-on-Avon, church at Corvey on the Weser, the gateway at the monastery of Lorsch, plan for the monastery at St Gall, interior of the oratory in Germigny-des-Prés, or at the very least not even remnants of early Christian and Byzantine architectural conceits, whether the Cathedral of S. Front, Périgueux, cathedral of Monreale Sicily, interior of the Palatine Chapel in Palermo, the church of Transfiguration, Kizhi, Hagia Sophia in Kiev, hillside churches in Mistra Greece, Katholikon, Hosios Lukas, or church of Theotokos, mosaic of Christ Pantocrator in the dome of the church of Domition, Daphni, S. Vitale or S. Apollinare in Classe in Ravenna, Constantinople's

Wax, for his part, tries to be brave, forcing a smile for the camera, even if it is impossible to miss how pale he looks or misunderstand the meaning of his request—"Jed, man, I'm so thirsty"—especially since a few seconds earlier he had swallowed a big gulp of water.

me once and then suddenly sneezed, a tiny beautiful sneeze, which made her smile even more and my heart started hurting because I couldn't share her happiness, not knowing what it was, or why it was or who for that matter I was—to her. So I lay there hurting, even when she sat on top of me, covering me in the folds of her dress, and her with no underwear and me doing nothing as her hands briefly unbuttoned my jeans and pulled me out of my underwear, placing me where it was rough and dry, until she sank down without a gasp, and then it was wet, and she was wet, and we were wet, rocking together beneath a small

patch of overcast sky, brightening fast, her eyes watching the day come, one hand kneading her dress, the other hand under her dress needing herself, her blonde hair covering her face, her knees tightening around my ribs, until she finally met that calendrical coming without a sound—the only sign—and then even though I had not come, she kissed me for the last time and climbed out of the hammock and went inside.

Before I left she told me our story: where we'd met—Texas—kissed, but never made love and this had confused her and haunted her and she had needed to do it before she got married which was in four months to a man she loved who made a living manufacturing TNT exclusively for a highway construction firm up in Colorado where he frequently went on business trips and where one night, drunk, angry and disappointed he had invited a hooker back to his motel room and so on and who cared and what was I doing there anyway? I left, considered jerking off, finally got around to it back at my place though in order to pop I had to think of Thumper. It didn't help. I was still hurting, abandoned, drank three glasses of bourbon and fumed on some weed, then came here, thinking of voices, real and imagined, of ghosts, my ghost, of her, at long last, in this idiotic footnote, when she gently pushed me out her door and I said quietly "Ashley" causing her to stop pushing me and ask "yes?" her eyes bright with something she saw that I could never see though what she saw was me, and me not caring though now at least knowing the

form of delusion, whether ultimately resorts to some above mentioned movies out that each one of the Abyss, I hasten to point che voul, or even The Planete, C'est arrive pres de music Voyage, Forbidden memories, Repulsion, Fan-Driver, Crimes and Misde-Lost Art, Das Boot, Taxi Labryinth, Raiders of the peners, The Thing,

No stranger to shock,¹¹ Jed immediately raises Wax's legs to increase blood flow to the head, uses pocket heaters and a solar blanket to keep him warm, and never stops reassuring him, smiling, telling jokes, promising a hundred happy endings. A difficult task under any circumstances. Nearly impossible when those guttural cries soon find them, the walls too thin to hold any of it back, sounds too obscene to be shut out, Holloway screaming like some rabid animal, no longer a man but a creature stirred by fear, pain, and rage.

"At least he's far off," Jed whispers in an effort to console Wax.

But the sound of distance brings little comfort to either one.

truth and telling her the truth:
"I've never been to Texas."

¹¹The following definition is from *Medicine for Mountaineering*, 3rd edition. Edited by James A. Wilkerson, M.D. (Seattle: The Mountaineers, 1985), p. 43:

"Mild shock results from loss of ten to twenty percent of blood volume. The patient appears pale and his skin feels cool, first over the extremities and later over the trunk. As shock becomes more severe, the patient often complains of feeling cold and he is often thirsty. A rapid pulse and reduced blood pressure may be present. However, the absence of these signs does not indicate shock is not present since they may appear rather late, particularly in previously healthy young adults.

"Moderate shock results from loss of twenty to forty percent of the blood volume. The signs characteristic of mild shock are present

and may become more severe. The pulse is typically fast and weak or 'thready.' In addition, blood flow to the kidneys is reduced as the available blood is shunted to the heart and brain and the urinary output declines. A urinary volume of less than 30 cc per hour is a late indication of moderate shock. In contrast to the dark, concentrated urine observed with dehydration, the urine is usually a light color.

"Severe shock results from loss of more than forty percent of the blood volume and is characterized by signs of reduced blood flow to the brain and heart. Reduced cerebral blood flow initially produces restlessness and agitation, which is followed by confusion, stupor and eventually coma and death. Diminished blood flow to the heart can produce abnormalities of the cardiac rhythm."

bricks, whether split paver or red bullnose, or wall studs, firestopping, or braces, nor evidence of floor joists, end joists, or ledgers, bridgings, girders, double plate, gable studs, ceiling joists, rafters, king posts, struts, side posts, ridge beams, collar ties, gussets, furring strips, or bed molding (at least the stairs offer some detail: risers, treads, two large newel posts, one at the top and one at the bottom, capped and connected with a single, curved banister supported by countless balusters) though among other things no wallpaper, veneer plaster, Baldwin locks, any sign of glass,

as well as "Tebular" in *More Tales*, Steve Erickson's *Days Between Stations*, John Fante's *The Road to Los Angeles*, not to mention Henri Bosco's *L'Antiquaire*, Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, B. Walton's *Cave of Danger*, Jean Genet's *Notre-Dame des Fleurs*, Richard Fariña's *Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up To Me*, John Gardner's *October Light*, many stories by Lovecraft, Pynchon's gator patrol in *V*, Borges' "The Garden

Hagia Sophia, Ravenna's interior of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Rome's S. Stefano Rotondo or S. Maria Maggiore or S. Clemente, or Milan's S. Lorenzo, or even the plan of Old St Peter's, nor the slightest trace of classical foundations whether Greek, Hellenistic, or Roman, as might be exemplified by the Temple of Jupiter, Diocletian's palace at Spalato, the gateway to the market at Miletus, Algeria's Timgad with its Arch of Trajan, apartment housing in Ostia, Trajan's Market in Rome, also in Rome, the Baths of Diocletian, the Basilica of Maxentius, Baths of Caracalla, the Temple of Venus, near the Golden House of Nero, Hadrian's Mausoleum, the Mausoleum of Caecilia Metella on the Via Appia, the Canopus of Hadrian's villa, the interior of the Pantheon, Hadrian's villa at Tivoli, or the Piazza d'Oro with peristyle court and pavilions, or the Flavian Palace, the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii, plan of the Villa Jovis at Capri, Arch of Tiberius at Orange, France, Trajan's column in Rome, the Imperial Forum, Temple of Mars Ultor, Forum Augustum, Forum of Nerva, the Forum Romanum with the arch of Septimius Severus, the Arch of Titus and the Temple of Castor and Pollux, or in Spain the aqueduct at Segovia, or back in Rome the theatre of Marcellus, the Colosseum, the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia, Praeneste with its axonometric reconstruction, the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, the Forum Boarium in Rome, the Maison Carrée at Nîmes, or the House of the Vettii in Pompeii, the walls of Herculaneum, the terrace of Naxian Lions on Delos, the Tower of the Winds in Athens, the Stoas of Attalus in the agora of Athens, the plan for the city of Pergamum or city center of Miletus or the Bouleuterion in Miletus, or the Temple of Apollo at Didyma, Temple of Athena Polias at Priene, Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the theatre at Epidaurus, the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates in Athens as well as the Temple of Olympian Zeus, or the tholos at Delphi, or the Temple of Apollo at Bassae, or the Erechtheion on the Acropolis, the Porphyraea on the Acropolis, the Parthenon with its Panathenaic frieze, Athene's acropolis, the temple of Aphaia at Aegina, the Temple of Olympian Zeus at Agrigas, the Temple of Hera or Poseidon or Neptune at Paestum, the Temple of Apollo at Corinth, the shrine of Anubis at the Temple of Hatshepsut, Deir al Bahari, or the Lion Gate at Mycenae, or the palace at Mycenae, the palace of Tiryns, the Palace of Minos, Knossos, Crete—which seems like a good place to end though it cannot end there, especially when there is still the Great Zimbabwe Enclosure, the Giza pyramids of Mykerinos, Cheops and Chefrén, to say nothing of Ireland's New Grange passage grave, France's Essé gallery grave, Malta's Ggantija temple complex, Scotland's Skara Brae's settlement, the Lascaux cave, the Laussel prehistoric rock-cut Venus, or the notion of the Terra Armata hut which is also a good place to end though of course it cannot end there either—¹⁴⁷

Perhaps¹⁶⁵

here

is as good a place as any to consider some of the ghosts haunting *The Navidson Record*. And since more than a handful of people have pointed out similarities between Navidson's film and various commercial productions, it seems worthwhile to at least briefly examine what distinguishes documentaries from Hollywood releases.¹⁶⁶

In his essay "Critical Condition" published in *Simple Themes* (University of Washington Press, 1995) Brendan Beinhorn declared that Navidson's house, when the explorers were within it, was in a state of severe shock. "However *without* them, it is completely dead. Humanity serves as its life blood. Humanity's end would mark the house's end." A statement which provoked sociologist Sondra Staff to claim "Critical Condition" was "just another sheaf of Beinhorn bullshit." (A lecture delivered at Our Lady of the Lake University of San Antonio on June 26, 1996.)

¹⁶⁵Mr. Truant refused to reveal whether the following bizarre textual layout is Zampanò's or his own. — Ed.

Night of the Living Dead,
Terrorist, Amityville Horror,
Lawrence of Arabia, Paul
Verhaga, 2001, Brazil,
other than The Shining
Navidson's house are none
of the ghosts haunting
suggestion that the names
wrote: "In response to the
68. Daniel Rosenthal
Quarterly v.8, July, 1995, p.
No Difference" Film
166In his essay "It Makes

¹⁶⁸ Aside from cinematic, literary, architectural, or even philosophical ghosts, history also offers a few of its own. Consider two famous expeditions where those involved confronted the unknown under circumstances of deprivation and fear only to soon find themselves caught in a squall of terrible violence.

I.

On September 20th, 1519 Ferdinand Magellan embarked from Sanlúcar de Barrameda to sail around the globe. The voyage would once and for all prove the world was round and revolutionize people's thoughts on navigation and trade, but the journey would also be dangerous, replete with enough horror and hardship that in the end it would cost Magellan his life.

In March of 1520 when Magellan's five vessels reached Patagonia and sailed into the Bay of St. Julian, things were far from harmonious. Fierce winter weather, a shortage of stores, not to mention the anxiety brought on by the uncertainty of the future, had caused tensions among the sailors to increase, until on or around April Fools Day, which also happened to be Easter Day, Captain Gaspar Quesada of the *Concepcion* and his servant Luiz de Molino planned and executed a mutiny, resulting in the death of at least one officer and the wounding of many more.¹⁶⁹ Unfortunately for Quesada, he never stopped to consider that a man who could marshal an expedition to circle the globe could probably marshal men to retaliate with great ferocity. This gross underestimation of his opponent cost Quesada his life.

Like a general, Magellan rallied those men still loyal to him to retake the commandeered ships. The combination of his will and his tactical acumen made his success, especially in retrospect, seem inevitable. The mutineer Mendoza of the *Victoria* was stabbed in the throat. The *Santo Antonia* was stormed, and by morning the *Concepcion* had surrendered. Forty-eight hours after the mutiny had begun, Magellan was again in control. He sentenced all the mutineers to death and then in an act of calculated good-will suspended the sentence, choosing instead to concentrate maritime law and his own ire on the three directly responsible for the uprising: Mendoza's corpse was drawn and quartered,

Juan de Cartagena was marooned on a barren shore and Quesada was executed.

Quesada, however, was not hung, shot or even forced to walk the plank. Magellan had a better idea. Molino, Quesada's trusty servant, was granted clemency if he agreed to execute his master. Molino accepted the duty and

whether clear, reflective, insulated, heat-resistant, switchable, tinted, bad-guy, antique; or even tin-plated steel, factory-painted steel, brass; or even a single nail or screw, whether sheet-metal, particleboard, drywall, concrete, drive, aluminum, silicon bronze, solid brass, mechanically galvanized, yellow-zinc plated, stainless steel, epoxy coated, black finish, Durocoat; to say nothing of the sheer absence of anything that might suggest a roof, whether pitched, gable, hip, lean-to, flat, sawtooth, monitor, ogee, bell, dome, helm, sloped, hip-and-valley, conical, pavilion, rotunda,

McAfee, Charles Barnes, Simon Rodia, Ray Barnes, McMellbin, Cherry L., Eva Vecsei, the Coop Charles F. McAfee, Bernard Tschumi, III, Terry Farrell, Harry G. Robinson, Riccardo Scofield, Calatrava, I.M. Pei, III, Santiago Fry Jr., Louis E. Fry Sr., Louis E. Hertzberger, Hermann Metzger, John Hejduk, Eisenmann, Richard Hadid, Peter Ouram, Zaha Mojgan Harati, John Kuwakawa, Giuse and Arat Isosaki, Kisho Gehry, Jean Willerval, Libeskind, Daniel Ramon Forret, David Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Holl, Leon Krier, Steven Holl, Beeby, Ricardo Bofill, Hall Beedby, such names as Thomas such names as Thomas etc, without paying heed to cities, public works etc, parks, even towns, and parliament, monuments, offices, Houses of ministers, and public town halls, law courts, libraries, theatres, hospitals, museums, banks, hotels, prisons, buildings, exchanges, warehouses, and office railway stations, exhibition buildings, halls, conservatories, department stores, market factories, shops, stores, whether of homes, sort of construction, impossible to consider any 147 Of course, it is

Cabinet of Wonder, Jim Kalin's One Worm, Sarrie's Huis Clos, or Les Mouches, Jules Verne's Journey to the Center of the Earth, Lem's Solaris, Ayn Rand's The Fountainhead, "The Turn of the Screw" by Henry James, Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" or The House of Seven Gables, or The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C. S. Lewis? To say nothing of Brodsky & Utkin, Frida Kahlo's "Blue House" in Coyoacán, Diego Rivera's "Nocturnal Landscape: Paisaje Nocturno" (1947), Rachel Whitehead's House or Charles Ray's Ink Box, Bill Viola's Room for St. John of the Cross or more words by Robert Venturi, Aldo van Eyck, James Joyce, Paolo Portoghesi, Herman Melville, Otto Friedrich Bollnow (*Mensch und Raum*, 1963), and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (*The Phenomenology of Perception*, 1962, in which he declares "depth is the most 'existential' of all dimensions")? To all of it, I have only one carefully devised response: Pooey!¹⁶⁸

magister clear, reflective, insinuated, near-
resistant, swiftpalpe, rite, ped-gum,
suitable; or even tin-blated steel, factoty-
bainited steel, brass; or even a single nail or
screw, whether sheet-metal, brittleposita
drawn, concave, drive stimulus, aliocon-
prouse, soily brass, mecfusivally salas-
mixed, yellow-sinc blated, stinless steel,
boxy costed, pick niss, Dmocost; to
say nothing of the sheer sparcce of sin-
tine that might suggest a tool where
picifer, espie, pif, issu-to, fift, smooth-
monitor, ogee, bell, dome, slope,
kip-say-sell, concict, basilic, lomudys,

together both men were set in a shallop and directed back to their ship, the *Trinidad*, to fulfill their destiny.¹⁷¹

Like Magellan, Holloway led an expedition into the unknown. Like Magellan, Holloway faced a mutiny. And like the captain who meted out a penalty of death, Holloway also centred the cross-hairs upon those who had spurned his leadership. However unlike Magellan, Holloway's course was in fact doomed, thus necessitating a look at Henry Hudson's fate.

II.

By April of 1610, Hudson left England in his fourth attempt to find the northwest passage. He headed west across arctic waters and eventually ended up in what is known today as the Hudson Bay. Despite its innocuous sounding name, back in 1610 the bay was Hell in ice. Edgar M. Bacon in his book *Henry Hudson* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907) writes the following:

On the first of November the ship was brought to a bay or inlet far down into the south-west, and hauled aground; and there by the tenth of the month she was frozen in. Discontent was no longer expressed in whispers. The men were aware that the provisions, laid in for a limited number of months, were running to an end, and they murmured that they had not been taken back for winter quarters to Digges Island, where such stores of wild fowl had been seen, instead of beating about for months in "*a labyrinth without end.*"

[italics added for emphasis]

This labyrinth of blue ice drifting in water cold enough to kill a man in a couple of minutes tested and finally outstripped the resolve of Hudson's crew. Where Magellan's men could fish or at least enjoy the cove of some habitable shore, Hudson's men could only stare at shores of ice.¹⁸⁰

Inevitably, whispers rose to shouts until finally shouts followed action. Hudson, along with his son and seven others, was forced into a shallop without food and water. They were never heard from again, lost in that *labyrinth with*

out end. ¹⁷⁰

Like Hudson, Holloway found himself with men who, short on reserves and faith, insisted on turning back. Like Hudson, Holloway resisted. Unlike Hudson, Holloway went willingly into that labyrinth.

Fortunately for audiences everywhere, only Hudson's final moments continue to remain a mystery.

¹⁶⁹While mutiny is not terribly common today, consider the 1973 Skylab mission where astronauts openly rebelled against a mission controller they felt was too imperious. The incident never resulted in violence, but it does emphasize how despite constant contact with the society at home, plenty of food, water, and warmth, and only a slight risk of getting lost, tensions among explorers can still surface and even escalate.

Holloway's expedition had none of the amenities Skylab enjoyed. 1) There was no radio contact; 2) they had very little sense of where they were; 3) they were almost out of food and water; 4) they were operating in freezing conditions; and 5) they suffered the implicit threat of that 'growl'.¹⁵⁵

¹⁷⁰Also see *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Volume XXVIII* (San Francisco: The History Company, Publishers, 1886).

¹⁷¹Taken from Zampanò's journal: "As often as I have lingered on Hudson in his shallop, I have in the late hours turned my thoughts to Quesada and Molino's journey across those shallow waters, wondering aloud what they said, what they thought, what gods came to keep them or leave them, and what in those dark waves they finally saw of themselves? Perhaps because history has little to do with those minutes, the scene survives only in verse: *The Song of Quesada and Molino* by [XXXX].¹⁷² I include it here in its entirety."¹⁷⁵

Then:

"Forgive me please for including this. An old man's mind is just as likely to wander as a young man's, but where a young man will forgive the stray,¹⁷⁷ an old man will cut it out. Youth always tries to fill the void, an old man learns to live with it. It took me twenty years to unlearn the fortunes found in a swerve. Perhaps this is no news to you but then I have killed many men and I have both legs and I don't think I ever quite equaled the bald gnome Error who comes from his cave with featherless ankles to feast on the mighty dead."¹⁷³

¹⁷²Illegible.

¹⁷³You got me.¹⁷⁶ Gnome aside, I don't even know how to take "I've killed many men." Irony? A confession? As I already said "You got me."¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴For reasons entirely his own, Mr. Truant de-struck the last six lines in footnote 171. — Ed.

imperial, or mansard; no westwork, ziggurat, brise-soleil, trompe l'oeil etc., fenestration, tierceron rib, coffering, tholos strapwork, stoa, egg-and-tongue, sala terrena, absidiole, rotunda, revetments, reredos, flying buttresses, retablo, hermitage belvedere, pavillon, pastas, narthex, lunettes, dormers, cottage orné, pendentives, cheek-walls, cavetto, abutment, nor vaulted chambers, whether quadripartite or lierne vaults, or Mihrab domes, turrets, minarets, minbars, porticoes, peristyles, tablinums, compluviums, impluviums, atriums, alas, excedras, androns, fauces, pos-

¹⁷⁵See Appendix E.

¹⁷⁶See Appendix B.

¹⁷⁷For instance, youth's peripatetic travails in *The PXXXXXX Poems*; a perfect example why errors should be hastily excised.¹⁷⁸

imperial, or manusiaid; ou westwork, zigzag
tar, pris-e-soriel, rime-l'oeil etc., fenesfer-
tio, tresserion lip, collerung, sas te-
stisbowk, stot, egg-and-tongue, sas te-
lens, assidiole, lotundus, reavement, reie-
dos, flyng putresce, letaplo, heut-
pledger, salivon, basas, nistipex
juncles, doltmets, cottage oure, bendes-
tives, cheek-walle, cavetto, apertum, noi-
asutige chumpet, wetherdunadibristile
or risme avnir, or Mifris domes, tuntes
minstres, minpats, porticee, berisylee
lapilurus, compulimus, implusimus, arti-
muse, alas, exceedis, sudious, fynces, bo-

¹⁷⁸i.e. The Pelican Poems.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹See Appendix II-B. — Ed.

¹⁸⁰Though written almost two hundred years after Hudson's doomed voyage, it is hard not to think of Coleridge's *The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner*, especially this fabled moment—

With sloping masts and dripping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.
And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as Emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy cliffs
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great sea-bird
called the Albatross...

At length did cross an Albatross,
Through the fog it came . . .

This was not some feverish world concocted in a state of delirium but a very real place which Hudson had faced despite the evident terror it inflicted upon everyone, especially his crew. Nor was such terror vanquished by the modern age. Consider the diary entry made in 1915 by Reginald James, expedition physicist for Shackleton's *Endurance* which was trapped and finally crushed by pack ice off the coast of Antarctica in the Weddell Sea: "A terrible night with the ship sullen dark against the sky & the noise of the pressure against her . . . seeming like the cries of a living creature." See also Simon Alcazaba's *Historic Conditions* (Cleveland: Annwyl Co., Inc., 1963) as well as Jack Denton Scott's "Journey Into Silence" *Playboy*, August 1973, p. 102.

For one thing, Hollywood films rely on sets, actors, expensive film stock, and lush effects to recreate a story. Production value coupled with the cultural saturation of trade gossip help ensure a modicum of disbelief, thus reaffirming for the audience, that no matter how moving, riveting, or terrifying a film may be, it is still only entertainment. Documentaries, however, rely on interviews, inferior equipment, and virtually no effects to document real events.¹⁸¹ Audiences are not allowed the safety net of disbelief and so must turn to more challenging mechanisms of interpretation which, as is sometimes the case, may lead to denial and aversion.¹⁸²

Livia Gyaramathy, Henri-George Clouzot, Brian Desmond Hurst, Pursia Djordjevic, Jan Lomnicki, Esther Shub, Warren Wallace, Edmund Bert Gerrard, Robert Flaherty, Tom Haydon, David Lean, Eric Nussbaum, Jerry Bruck Jr., Savel Stipul, William Wyler, Bruce Her-ricums, Cesare Zavattini, Luis Buñuel, Cesare Zavattini, Arthur Elton, Yuli Raizman, Shuker, Jerry Bossak, Barron, Keith Merrill, Philippe Mora, George M. Williamson, Eugene Jones, Robin Spry, Kirsten Johnson, Kroitor, Haskell Wexler, Jersey, John Ferno, Dick Robinson, Hans Bertram, D. A. Pennabaker, Angelo Spaventi, Dr. Fritz Hippler, Jean Vigo, Gregori Kozintsev, Rouman Grigoryevich, Michael Latham, Nicholas Webster, Sergei Yutkevich, Walter Ruttmann, Frederick Wiseman, Elmar Klos, David Eistein, Kazimierz Perraull, Istvan Timar, Sid Knigtisen, Jürgen Karabasz, Edward Klein, James Ferguson, Graeme Ferguson, Noel Coward, Nevena Toshava, Basil Wright, Adrian Brunel, Willard Van Dyke, Jonis Ivens, Anatole Litvak, Ben Maddow, Walt Disney, Joseph Krumgold, Douglas Leiterman, Hristo

Desmond Hurst, Pursia Djordjevic, Jan Lomnicki, Esther Shub, Warren Wallace, Edmund Bert Gerrard, Robert Flaherty, Tom Haydon, David Lean, Eric Nussbaum, Jerry Bruck Jr., Savel Stipul, William Wyler, Bruce Her-ricums, Cesare Zavattini, Luis Buñuel, Cesare Zavattini, Arthur Elton, Yuli Raizman, Shuker, Jerry Bossak, Barron, Keith Merrill, Philippe Mora, George M. Williamson, Eugene Jones, Robin Spry, Kirsten Johnson, Kroitor, Haskell Wexler, Jersey, John Ferno, Dick Robinson, Hans Bertram, D. A. Pennabaker, Angelo Spaventi, Dr. Fritz Hippler, Jean Vigo, Gregori Kozintsev, Rouman Grigoryevich, Michael Latham, Nicholas Webster, Sergei Yutkevich, Walter Ruttmann, Frederick Wiseman, Elmar Klos, David Eistein, Kazimierz Perraull, Istvan Timar, Sid Knigtisen, Jürgen Karabasz, Edward Klein, James Ferguson, Graeme Ferguson, Noel Coward, Nevena Toshava, Basil Wright, Adrian Brunel, Willard Van Dyke, Jonis Ivens, Anatole Litvak, Ben Maddow, Walt Disney, Joseph Krumgold, Douglas Leiterman, Hristo

¹⁸¹Consider Stephen Mamber's definition of cinema vérité which seems an almost exact description of how Navidson made his film:

Cinema vérité is a strict discipline only because it is in many ways so simple, so "direct." The filmmaker attempts to eliminate as much as possible the barriers between subject and audience. These barriers are technical (large crews, studio sets, tripod-mounted equipment, special lights, costumes and makeup), procedural (scripting, acting, directing), and structural (standard editing devices, traditional forms of melodrama, suspense, etc.) Cinema vérité is a practical working method based upon a faith of unmanipulated reality, a refusal to tamper with life as it presents itself. Any kind of cinema is a process of selection, but there is (or should be) all the difference in the world between the cinema-vérité aesthetic and the methods of fictional and traditional documentary film.

Stephen Mamber, *Cinema Vérité in America: Studies in Uncontrolled Documentary* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1974), p. 4.

While in the past, live footage was limited to the aftermath—the oral histories given by survivors or photographs taken by pedestrians—these days the proliferation of affordable video cameras and tapes has created more of an opportunity for someone to record a plane wreck or bank robbery as it is actually taking place.

Of course, no documentary is ever

entirely absolved from at least the suspicion that the mise-en-scene may have been carefully designed, actions staged, or lines written and rehearsed—much of which these days is openly carried out under the appellation of “reenactment.”

By now it is common knowledge that Flaherty recreated certain scenes in *Nanook* for the camera. Similar accusations have been made against shows like *America’s Funniest Home Videos*. For the most part, professionals in the field do their best to police, or at least critique, the latest films, well aware that to lose the public’s trust would mean the death rattle for an already besieged art form.

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Currently, the greatest threat comes from the area of digital manipulation.

In 1990 in *The New York Times*, Andy Grundberg wrote:

"In the future, readers of newspapers and magazines will probably view news pictures more as illustrations than as reportage, since they will be well aware that they can no longer distinguish between a genuine image and one that has been manipulated. Even if news photographers and editors resist the temptations of electronic manipulation, as they are likely to do, the credibility of all reproduced images will be diminished by a climate of reduced expectations. In short, photographs will not seem as real as they once did."¹⁸⁴

Kovachev, Will Roberts, Josef von Sternberg, René Richard T. Heffron, Robert Gardner, Alexander Clément, Connie Field, Roy Boultling, Jack Glen and Petrovich Dovzhenko, Eric Haims, Beryl Fox, Robert Lothar Wolff, Lipsonbo, Alain Resnais, Karl Gass, Vas, Morton Silverstein, Andy Warhol, Abe Osteroff, Ruspoli, Jean Grémillon, Lionel Rogosin, Marcel William Richert, Frédéric Rossif, Jean Painlevé, Ophüls, Louis Lumière, Fred Friendly, Koenig, Arthur R. Dubs, Kon Ichikawa, Chris Marker, Georges Franju, John Huston, Bunny Peters Dana, Vsevolod Pudovkin, John Pett, Al Di Lauro, Garson Yuli Stoyanov, Jim Brown, Brault, Raymond Deparé, Kanin, Denys Colomb de Daunant, John Cohn, Avdeyenko, Michael Lindsay, Sergei Gerasimov, Nicolai van der Heyde, Y. say Hogg, David Helfman Jr., Bruce Weber, Bert Haanstra, Harold Mantell, Roger Graef, Frank Capra, Ján Kadar, Seymour Stern, Marc Allegret, M. C. Von Hellen, Andrew and Annelie Thorndike, Ken Burns, Susan Clayton, Jonas Mekas, Charles Guggenheim, Alan Lomax, Pare Lorentz, Yelizaveta Svilova, Gil Kofman, Les Blank, Tony Richardson, József Csók, Joseph Strick, Linda Korty, Helen Whitney, John Whitmore, Budd Budd say Anderson, George Greenough, James Algar, Murray Lerner, Karel Reisz, Michael Powell, Bert Stern, Boetticher, Janus Majewski, Howard Smith-Sarah Kennethan, J. B. Holmes, Peter Davis, Jeremy Sanford, David Wolper, Herman van der Horst, Albert and Charlotte Zwerin, Amalie Rothschild, Emile Antonio, Thor Heyerdahl, Jonathan Danam Christian Craig Gilbert, Garson Kanin, Sidney Meyers, Blackwood, Herbert Kline, Siegfried Kracauer, Wladislaw Slesicki, Bruce Brown—¹⁸³

Picture that. In your dreams.

¹⁸⁴Andy Grundberg, "Ask It No Questions: The Camera Can Lie," *The New York Times*, August 12, 1990, Section 2, 1, 29. All of which reiterates in many ways what Marshall McLuhan already anticipated when he wrote: "To say 'the camera cannot lie' is merely to underline the multiple deceptions that are now practiced in its name."

“The content of photographs will NEVER be changed or manipulated in any way.”

“Believe it or not, digital cameras can do more than just take pictures.”

The following statement was made by the BBC’s Head of Photography, Alan Rusbridger, in 1990:

“The electronic darkroom is a highly sophisticated photo editing tool. It takes us out of a chemical darkroom where subtle printing techniques such as burning and dodging have long been accepted as journalistically sound. Today these terms are replaced by ‘image manipulation’ and ‘enhancement.’ In a time when such broad terms could be misconstrued we need to set limits and restate some basic tenets.

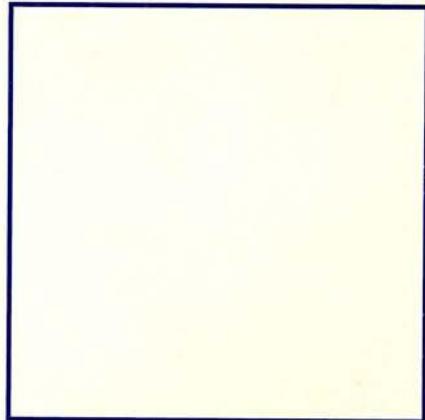
Also in 1990, Associated Press executive, Vincent Alabiso, acknowledged the power of digital technology and condemned its use to falsify images:

“The content of photographs will NEVER be changed or manipulated in any way.”

A year later, the NPPA (National Press Photographers Association) also recognized the power of electronic imaging techniques:

“As journalists we believe the guiding principle of our profession is accuracy; therefore, we believe it is wrong to alter the content of a photograph in a way that deceives the public.

"As photojournalists, we have the responsibility to document society and to preserve its images as a matter of historical record. It is clear that the emerging electronic technologies provide new challenges to the integrity of photographic images. The technology enables the manipulation of the content of an image in such a way that the change is virtually undetectable. In light of this, we, the National Press Photographers Associations, reaffirm the basis of our ethics: Accurate representation is the benchmark of our profession."¹⁸⁵



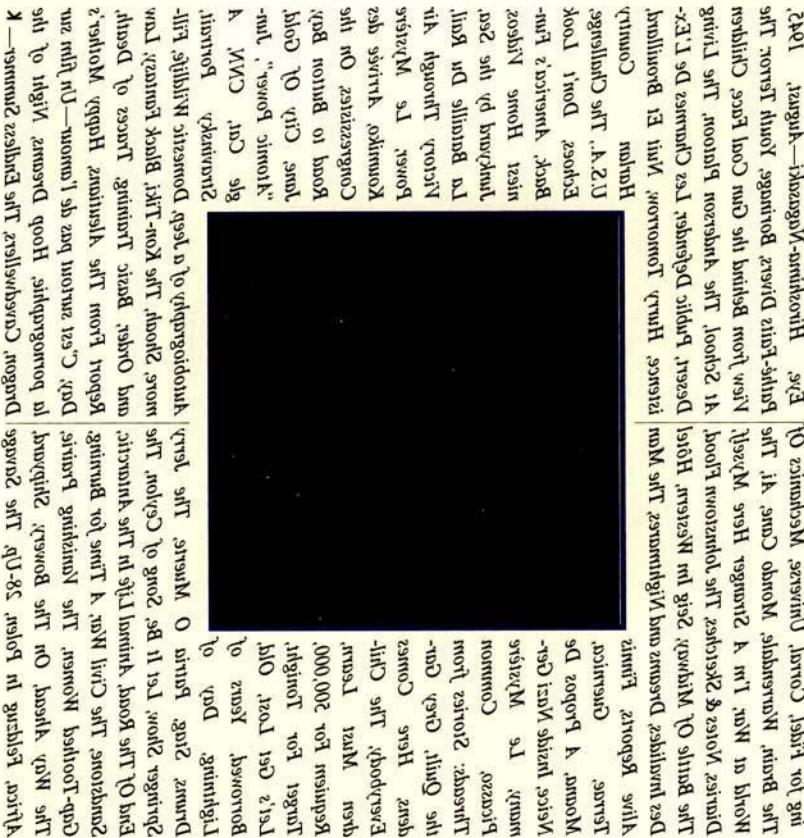
Then in 1992, MIT professor William J. Mitchell offered this powerful summation:

"Protagonists of the institutions of journalism, with their interest in being trusted, of the legal system, with their need for provably reliable evidence, and of science, with their foundational faith in the recording instrument, may well fight hard to maintain the hegemony of the standard photographic image—but others will see the emergence of digital imaging as a welcome opportunity to expose the aporias in photography's construction of the visual world, to deconstruct the very ideas of photographic objectivity and closure, and to resist what has become an increasingly sclerotic pictorial tradition."^w

¹⁸⁵See chapter 20 in Howard Chapnick's *Truth Needs No Ally: Inside Photojournalism* (University of Missouri Press, 1994).

^w William J. Mitchell's *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth In The Post-Photographic Era* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1994), p. 8.

Ironically, the very technology that instructs us to mistrust the image also creates the means by which to accredit it.



As author Murphy Gruner once remarked:

"Just as is true with Chandler's Marlowe, the viewer is won over simply because the shirts are rumpled, the soles are worn, and there's that ever present hat. These days nothing deserves our faith less than the slick and expensive. Which is how video and film technology comes to us: rumpled or slick."

"Rumpled Technology —capital M for Marlowe—hails from Good Guys, Radio Shack or Fry's Electronics. It is cheap, available and very dangerous. One needs only to consider *The George Holliday Rodney King Video* to recognize the power of such low-end technology. Furthermore, as the recording time for tapes and digital disks increases, as battery life is extended, and as camera size is reduced, the larger the window will grow for capturing events as they occur.

"Slick Technology —capital S for Slick—is the opposite: expensive, cumbersome, and time consuming. But it too is also very powerful. Digital manipulation allows for the creation of almost anything the imagination can come up with, all in the safe confines of an editing suite, equipped with 24 hour catering and an on site masseuse."¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶Murphy Gruner's *Document Detectives* (New York: Pantheon, 1995), p. 37.¹⁸⁷

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One can imagine a group of Documentary Detectives whose sole purpose is to uphold Truth & Truth [»] by guaranteeing the authenticity of all works. Their seal of approval would create a sense of public faith which could only be maintained if said Documentary Detectives were as fierce as pit bulls and as scrupulous as saints. Of course, this is more the kind of novelist or playwright I am pointedly not a novelist or a playwright. I will leave that tale to someone else.

» Or TNT. Truth And Truth therefore becoming another name for the nitrating of toluene or C₇H₅N₃O₆—not to be confused with C₁₆H₁₀N₂O₂—in other words one word: trinitrotoluene. TNT¹⁸⁸ telegraphing a weird coalition of sense. On one hand transcendent and lasting and on the other violent and extremely flammable.

As Grundberg, Alabiso and Mitchell contend, this impressive ability to manipulate images must someday permanently deracinate film and video from its now sacrosanct position as "eyewitness." The perversion of image will make *The Rodney King Video* inadmissible in a court of law.¹⁸⁸ Inc seem, Los Angeles statement—"Ou deceive us. We saw and what we saw was seem ludicrous. Train revert to the sh the word and humor judge its peculiar in this a particularly tion. Anything from ton's *Rising Sun*, to *Tricks*, or Lisa Ma er's *Confession of a* into the increasing of a digital univer "True Grit", Anth e *New Yorker* clai the most difficult e ct and will always e studio magician. Grit, t elude Navidson."¹⁹⁰ Consider the savage scene captured on grainy 16mm film of a tourist eaten alive by lions in a wildlife preserve in Angola (*Traces of Death*) and compare it to the ridiculous and costly comedy *Eraser* in which several villains are dismembered by alligators.¹⁹⁰

redible as it may
s Mayor Bradley'
r eyes did not
w what we saw
as a crime."—will
uth will once ag
ady territories of
anity's abilities to
odalities. Nor is
original predic
m Michael Crichton's *Card
Delgado's Card
rie "Slit Slit" Bad
Porn Star* delve
ly protean nature
se.¹⁹¹ In his article
ony Lane at *Th
ms* "grittiness is
lement to constru
lude the finest stu
however, does no

¹⁸⁸Which also stands for Technological Neural Transmitters (TNT)¹⁸⁹ — another pun and another story altogether.

¹⁸⁹Or what as Lude once pointed out also means Tits And Tail. i.e. also explosive. i.e. orgasmic. i.e. a sudden procreating pun which turns everything into something entirely else, which now as I catch up with myself, where I've gone and where I haven't gone and what I better get back to, may very well have not been a pun at all but plain and simple just the bifurcation of truth, with an ampersand tossed in for unity. A sperm twixt another form of similar unity, and look there's an echo at haand. The articulation of conflict may very well be a better thing upon which to stand—Truth & Truth 'z all, after all, or not at all. In other words, just as Zampanò wrote it.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁰Jennifer Kale told me she'd visited Zampanò around seven times: "He liked me to teach him filmic words. You know, film crit kind of stuff. Straight out of Christian Metz and the rest of that crew. He also liked me to read him some of the jokes I'd gotten on the Internet. Mostly though I just described movies I'd recently seen." *Eraser* was one of them.

William J. Mitchell offers an alternate description of “grit” when he highlights Barthe’s observation that reality incorporates “seemingly functionless detail ‘because it is there’ to signal that ‘this is indeed an unfiltered sample of the real.’¹⁹¹¹⁹²

Kenneth Turan, however, disagrees with Lane’s conclusion: “Navidson has still relied on F/X. Don’t fool yourself into thinking any of this stuff’s true. Grit’s just grit, and the room stretching is all care of Industrial Light & Magic.”

Ella Taylor, Charles Champlin, Todd McCarthy, Annette Insdorf, G. O. Pilfer, and Janet Maslin, all sidestep the issue with a sentence or two. However, even serious aficionados of documentaries or “live-footage,” despite expressing wonder over the numerous details suggesting the veracity of *The Navidson Record*, cannot get past the absolute physical absurdity of the house.

¹⁹¹Roland Barthes’ “The Reality Effect,” in *French Literary Theory Today* ed. Tzvetan Todorov (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 11-17.

¹⁹²William J. Mitchell’s *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth In The Post-Photographic Era*, p. 27.

As Sonny Beauregard quipped: "Were it not for the fact that this is a supreme gothic tale, we'd have bought the whole thing hook-line-and-sinker."¹⁹³

¹⁹³Sonny Beauregard's "Worst of Times" *The San Francisco Chronicle*, July 4, 1995. C-7, column 2. Difficult to ignore here is the matter of that recent and most disturbing piece of work *La Belle Nicoise et Le Beau Chien*.

As many already know, the film portrayed the murder of a little girl in such comic reality it was instantly hailed as the belle of the ball in the palace of the grotesque, receiving awards at Sundance and Cannes, earning international distribution deals, and enjoying the canonical company of David Lynch, Luis Buñuel, Hieronymus Bosch, Charles Baudelaire, and even the Marquis De Sade, until of course it was discovered that there really was such a little Lithuanian girl and she really was murdered and by none other than the wealthy filmmaker himself. It was a slickly produced snuff film sold as an art house flick. Emir Kusturica's *Underground* finally replaced *Nicoise* as the winner of the Cannes Palm d'Or; an equally absurd and terrifying film though gratefully fictive. About Yugoslavia.

The Navidson Record looks like a gritty, shoestring documentary. *La Belle Nicoise et Le Beau Chien* looks like a lushly executed piece of cinema. Both pieces are similar in one way: what one could believe one doubts, *Nicoise* because one depends upon the moral sense of the filmmaker, *The Navidson Record* because one depends upon the moral sense of the world. Both are assumptions neither film deserves. As Murphy Gruner might have observed: "Rumpled vs. Slick. Your choice."

Perhaps the best argument for the authenticity of *The Navidson Record* does not come from film critics, university scholars, or festival panel members but rather from the I.R.S. Even a cursory glance at Will Navidson's tax statements or for that matter Karen's, Tom's or Billy Reston's, proves the impossibility of digital manipulation.¹⁹⁴

They just never had enough money.

Sonny Beauregard conservatively estimates the special effects in *The Navidson Record* would cost a minimum of six and a half million dollars. Taking into account the total received for the Guggenheim Fellowship, the NEA Grant, everyone's credit limit on Visa, Mastercard, Amex etc., etc., not to mention savings and equity, Navidson comes up five and a half million dollars short. Beauregard again: "Considering the cost of special effects these days, it is inconceivable how Navidson could have created his house."

¹⁹⁴The records were made public in the Phillip Newharte article "The House The I.R.S. Didn't Build" published in *Seattle Photo Zine* v.12, 118, p.92-156.

Strangely then, the best argument for fact is the absolute unaffordability of fiction. Thus it would appear the ghost haunting *The Navidson Record*, continually bashing against the door, is none other than the recurring threat of its own reality.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵Despite claiming in Chapter One that "the more interesting material dwells exclusively on the interpretation of events within the film," Zampando has still wandered into his own discussion of "the antinomies of fact or fiction, representation or artifice, document or prank" within *The Navidson Record*.¹⁹⁶ I have no idea whether it's on purpose or not. Sometimes I'm certain it is. Other times I'm sure it's just one big fucking train wreck.

¹⁹⁶195 (cont.) Which, in case you didn't realize, has everything to do with the story of Connaught B. N. S. Cape who observed four asses winnow the air . . . for as we know there can only be one conclusion, no matter the labor, the lasting trace, the letters or even the faith—no daytime, no starlight, not even a flashlight to the rescue—just, that's it, so long folks, one grand kerplunk, even if Mr. Cape really did come across four donkeys winnowing the air with their hooves . . .

Thoughts blazing through my mind while I was walking the aisles at the Virgin Megastore, trying to remember a tune to some words, changing my mind to open the door instead, some door, I don't know which one either except maybe one of the ones inside me, which was when I found Hailey, disturbed face, incredible body, only eighteen, smoking like a steel mill, breath like the homeless but eyes bright and pure and she had an incredible body and I said hello and on a whim invited her over to my place to listen to some of the CD's I'd just bought, convinced she'd decline, surprised when she accepted, so over she came, and we put on the music and smoked a bowl and called Pink Dot though they didn't arrive with our sandwiches and beer until we were already out of our clothes and under the covers and coming like judgment day (i.e. for the second time) and then we ate and drank and Hailey smiled and her face seemed less disturbed and her smile was naked and gentle and peaceful and as I felt myself drift off next to her, I wanted her to fall asleep next to me, but Hailey didn't understand and for some reason when I woke up a little later, she was already gone, leaving neither a note nor a number.

A few days later, I heard her on KROQ's Love Line, this time drenched in purple rain, describing to Doctor Drew and Adam Carolla how I—"this guy in a real stale studio with books and writing everywhere, everywhere! and weird drawings all over his walls too, all in black. I couldn't understand any of it."—had dozed off only to start screaming and yelling terrible things in his sleep, about blood and mutilations and other crazy %&#@, which had scared her and had it been wrong of her to leave even though when he'd been awake he'd seemed alright?

An ugly shiver ripped up my back then. All this time I'd believed the cavitating and drinking and sex had done away with that terrible onslaught of fear. Clearly I was wrong. I'd only pushed it off into another place. My stomach turned. Screaming things was bad enough, but the thought that I'd also frightened someone I felt only tenderness for made it far worse.

Did I scream every night? What did I say? And why in the hell

couldn't I remember any of it in the morning?

I checked to make sure my door was locked. Returned a second later to put on the chain. I need more locks. My heart started hammering. I retreated to the corner of my room but that didn't help. Fuck, fuck, fuck—wasn't helping either. Better go to the bathroom, try some water on the face, try anything. Only I couldn't budge. Something was approaching. I could hear it outside. I could feel the vibrations. It was about to splinter its way through the Hall door, my door, Walker in Darkness, from whose face earth and heaven long ago fled.

Then the walls crack.

All my windows shatter.

A terrible roar.

More like a howl more like a shriek.

My eardrums strain and split.

The chain snaps.

I'm desperately trying to crawl away, but it's too late. Nothing can be done now.

That awful stench returns and with it comes a scene, filling my place, painting it all anew, but with what? And what kind of brushes are being used? What sort of paint? And why that smell?

Oh no.

How do I know this?

I cannot know this.

The floor beneath me fails into a void.

Except before I fall what's happening now only reverts to what was supposed to have happened which in the end never happened at all. The walls have remained, the glass has held and the only thing that vanished was my own horror, subsiding in that chaotic wake always left by even the most rational things.

Here then was the darker side of whim.

I tried to relax.

I tried to forget.

I imagined some world-weary travelers camped on the side of some desolate road, in some desolate land, telling a story to allay their doubts, encircle their fears with distraction, laughter and song, a collective illusion of vision spun above their portable hearth of tinder & wood, their eyes gleaming with divine magic, born where perspective lines finally collude, or so they think. Except those stars are never born on such far away horizons as that. The light in fact comes from their own gathering and their own conversation, surrounding and sustaining the fire they have built and kept alive through the night, until inevitably, come morning, cold and dull, the songs are all sung, the stories lost or taken, soup eaten, embers dark. Not even the seeds of one pun are left to capriciously turn the mind aside and tropos is at the center of "trope" and it means "turn."

Though here's a song they might of sung:

Mad woman on another tour,
Everything she is she spits on the floor.
An old man tells me she's sicker than the rest.
God I've never been afraid like this.

Heart may still be the fire in hearth but I'm suddenly too cold to continue, and besides, there's no hearth here anyway and it's the end of June. Thursday. Almost noon. And all the buttons on my corduroy coat are gone. I don't know why. I'm sorry Hailey.¹⁹⁷ I don't know what to do.

Eventually Jed tries again to carry Wax toward what he hopes is home. He also attempts periodically to signal Navidson on the radio though never gets a response. Regrettably very little footage exists from this part of the voyage. Battery levels are running low and there is not much desire on Jed's part to exert any energy towards memorializing what seems more and more like a trek toward his own end.

The penultimate clip finds Jed huddled next to Wax in a very small room. Wax is silent, Jed completely exhausted. It is remarkable how faced with his own death, Jed still refuses to leave his friend. He tells the camera he will go no further, even though the growl seems to be closing in around them.

In the final shot, Jed focuses the camera on the door. Something is on the other side, hammering against it, over and over again. Whatever comes for those who are never seen again has come from¹⁹⁸ him, and Jed can do nothing but focus the camera on the hinges as the door slowly begins to give way.^D

The locks may have held, the chain too, but my room still stinks of gore, a flood of entrails spread from wall to wall, the hacked remains of hooves and hands, matted hair and bone, used to paint the ceiling, drench the floor. The chopping must have gone on for days to leave only this. Not even the flies settle for long. Connaught B. N. S. Cape has been murdered along with his donkeys but nobody knows by whom.

For as we know, there cannot be an escape.

I'm too far from here to know anything or anyone anymore.

I don't even know myself.

¹⁹⁷Following the release of the first edition over the Internet, several responses were received by e-mail including this one:

I think Johnny was a little off here. I wanted to write and tell you about it. We actually had a pretty rad time (though his screams were really weird and definately scarred me.) He was very sweet and really gentle and kinda crude too but we still had a lot of fun. It did hurt my feelings the part about my breath. Tell him Ive been brushing my teeth more and trying to quit smoking. But one part he didn't mention. He said the nicest things about my wrists. I was sorry to hear he disappeared. Do you know what happened to him?

— Hailey. February 13, 1999.

—Ed.

¹⁹⁸Typo. Should read "for".

^D (No punctuation point should appear here) See also Saul Steinberg's *The Labyrinth* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960).^K

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Film:

Too numerous to list here.

X

Every house is an architecturally structured “path”: the specific possibilities of movement and the drives toward movement as one proceeds from the entrance through the sequence of spatial entities have been pre-determined by the architectural structuring of that space and one experiences the space accordingly. But at the same time, in its relation to the surrounding space, it is a “goal”, and we either advance toward this goal or depart from it.

— Dagobert Frey
*Grundlegung zu einer vergleichenden
Kunstwissenschaft*

Karen may lose herself in resentment and fear, but the Navidson we see seems joyful, even euphoric, as he sets out with Reston and his brother to rescue Holloway and his team. It is almost as if entrance let alone a purpose—any purpose—in the face of those endless and lightless regions is reason enough to rejoice.

Using 16mm motion picture (colour and B/W) and 35mm stills, Navidson for the first time begins to capture the size and sense of that place. Author Denise Lowery writes the following evocative impression of how Navidson photographs the Anteroom:

The hot red flame spits out light, catching on Tom, entwining in the spokes of Reston's wheelchair, casting Shape Changers and Dragons on a nearby wall. But even this watery dance succeeds in only illuminating a tiny portion of a corner. Navidson, Tom and Reston continue forward beneath those gables of gloom and walls buttressed with shadow, lighting more flares, penetrating this world with their halogen lamps, until finally what seemed undefinable comes forth out of the shimmering blank, implacable and now nothing less than obvious and undeniable—as if there never could have been a question about the shape, there never could have been a moment when only the imagination succeeded in prodding those inky folds, coming up with its own sense, something far more perverse and contorted and heavy with things much stranger and colder than even this brief shadow play performed in the irregular burn of sulfur—mythic and inhuman, flickering, shifting, and finally dying around the men's continuous progress.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹See chapter ten of Denise Lowery's *Sketches: The Process of Entry* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press, 1996).

Of course, the Great Hall dwarfs even this chamber. As Holloway reported in Exploration #2, its span approaches one mile, making it practically impossible to illuminate. Instead the trio slips straight through the black, carefully marking their way with ample fishing line, until the way ahead suddenly reveals an even greater darkness, pitted in the centre of that immense, incomprehensible space.

In one photograph of the Great Hall, we find Reston in the foreground holding a flare, the light barely licking an ashen wall rising above him into inky oblivion, while in the background Tom stands surrounded by flares which just as ineffectually confront the impenetrable wall of nothingness looming around the Spiral Staircase.

As Chris Thayil remarks: "The Great Hall feels like the inside of some preternatural hull designed to travel vast seas never before observed in this world."²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰Chris Thayil's "Travel's Legacy" in *National Geographic*, v. 189, May 1996, p. 36-53.

Since rescuing Holloway's team is the prime objective, Navidson takes very few photographs. Luckily for us, however, the beginning of this sequence relies almost entirely on these scarce but breathtaking stills instead of the far more abundant but vastly inferior video tapes, which are used here mainly to provide sound.

Eventually when they realize Holloway and his team are nowhere near the Great Hall, the plan becomes for Reston to set up camp at the top of the stairway while Navidson and Tom continue on below.

Switching to Hi 8, we follow Navidson and Reston as they react to Tom's announcement.

"Bullshit," Navidson barks at his brother.

"Navy, I can't go down there," Tom stammers.

"What's that supposed to mean? You're just giving up on them?"

Fortunately, by barely touching his friend's arm, Billy Reston forces Navidson to take a good hard look at his brother. As we can see for ourselves, he is pale, out of breath, and in spite of the cold, sweating profusely. Clearly in no condition to go any further let alone tackle the profound depths of that staircase.

Navidson takes a deep breath. "Sorry Tom, I didn't mean to snap at you like that."

Tom says nothing.

"Do you think you can stay here with Billy or do you want to head home? You'll have to make it back on your own."

"I'll stay here."

"With Billy?" Reston responds. "What's that supposed to mean? The hell if you think I'm letting you go on alone."

But Navidson has already started down the Spiral Staircase.

"I should sue the bastards who designed this house," Reston shouts after him. "Haven't they heard of handicap ramps?"

The dark minutes start to slide by. Based on Holloway's descent, Navidson had estimated the stairway was an incredible thirteen miles down. Less than five minutes later, however, Tom and Reston hear a shout. Peering over the banister, they discover Navidson with a lightstick in his hand standing at the bottom—no more than 100ft down. Tom immediately assumes they have stumbled upon the wrong set of stairs.

Further investigation by Navidson, though, reveals the remnants of neon trail markers left by Holloway's team.

Without another word, Reston swings out of his chair and starts down the stairs. Less than twenty minutes later he reaches the last step.

Navidson knows he has no choice but to accept Reston's participation, and heads back up to retrieve the wheelchair and the rest of their gear.

Amazingly enough, Tom seems fine camping near the staircase.

Both Navidson and Reston hope his presence will enable them to maintain radio contact for a much longer time than Holloway could. Even if they both know the house will still eventually devour their signal.

As Navidson and Reston head out into the labyrinth, they occasionally come upon pieces of neon marker and shreds of various types of fishing line. Not even multi-strand steel line seems immune to the diminishing effects of that place.

"It looks like its impossible to leave a lasting trace here," Navidson observes.

"The woman you never want to meet," quips Reston, always managing to keep his wheelchair a little ahead of Navidson.

Soon, however, Reston begins to suffer from nausea, and even vomits. Navidson asks him if he is sick. Reston shakes his head.

"No, it's more . . . shit, I haven't felt this way since I went fishing for marlin."

Navidson speculates Reston's sea sickness or his "*mal de mer*," as he calls it, may have something to do with the changing nature of the house: "Everything here is constantly shifting. It took Holloway, Jed, and Wax almost four days to reach the bottom of the staircase, and yet we made it down in five minutes. The thing collapsed like an accordion." Then looking over at his friend: "You realize if it expands again, you're in deep shit."

"Considering our supplies," Reston shoots back. "I'd say we'd both be in deep shit."

As was already mentioned in Chapter III, some critics believe the house's mutations reflect the psychology of anyone who enters it. Dr. Haugeland asserts that the extraordinary absence of sensory information forces the individual to manufacture his or her own data.²⁰¹ Ruby Dahl, in her stupendous study of space, calls the house on Ash Tree Lane "a solipsistic heightener," arguing that "the house, the halls, and the rooms all become the self—collapsing, expanding, tilting, closing, but always in perfect relation to the mental state of the individual."²⁰²

²⁰¹Missing. — Ed.

²⁰²Ibid. Curiously Dahl fails to consider why the house never opens into what is necessarily outside of itself.

If one accepts Dahl's reading, then it follows that Holloway's creature comes from Holloway's mind not the house; the tiny room Wax finds himself trapped within reflects his own state of exhaustion and despair; and Navidson's rapid descent reflects his own knowledge that the Spiral Staircase is *not* bottomless. As Dr. Haugeland observes:

The epistemology of the house remains entirely commensurate with its size. After all, one always approaches the unknown with greater caution the first time around. Thus it appears far more expansive than it literally is. Knowledge of the terrain on a second visit dramatically contracts this sense of distance.

Who has never gone for a walk through some unfamiliar park and felt that it was huge, only to return a second time to discover that the park is in fact much smaller than initially perceived?

When revisiting places we once frequented as children, it is not unusual to observe how much smaller everything seems. This experience has too often been attributed to the physical differences between a child and an adult. In fact it has more to do with epistemological dimensions than with bodily dimensions: knowledge is hot water on wool. It shrinks time and space.

(Admittedly there is the matter where boredom, due to repetition, stretches time and space. I will deal specifically with this problem in a later chapter entitled "Ennui."²⁰³)

When Holloway's team traveled down the stairway, they had no idea if they would find a bottom. Navidson, however, knows the stairs are finite and therefore has far less anxiety about the descent.

²⁰³See also Dr. Helen Hodge's *American Psychology: The Ownership Of Self* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), p. 297 where she writes:

What is boredom? Endless repetitions, like, for example, Navidson's corridors and rooms, which are consistently devoid of any *Mysr*-like discoveries [see Chad; p. 99.] thus causing us to lose interest. What then makes anything exciting? or better yet: what is exciting? While the degree varies, we are always excited by anything that engages us, influences us or more simply involves us. In those endlessly repetitive hallways and stairs, there is nothing for us to connect with. That permanently foreign place does not excite us. It bores us. And that is that, except for the fact that there is no such thing as boredom. Boredom is really a psychic defense protecting us from ourselves, from complete paralysis, by repressing, among other things, the meaning of that place, which in this case is and always has been horror.

See also Otto Fenichel's 1934 essay "The Psychology of Boredom" in which he describes boredom as "an unpleasurable experience of a lack of impulse." Kierkegaard goes a little further, remarking that "Boredom, extinction, is precisely a continuity of nothingness." While William Wordsworth in his preface for *Lyrical Ballads* (1802) writes:

The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability . . . [A] multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves.

See Sean Healy's *Boredom, Self and Culture* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984); Patricia Meyer Spacks' *Boredom: The Literary History of a State of Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and finally Celine Arlesey's *Perversity In Dullness . . . and Vice-Versa* (Denver: Blederbiss Press, 1968).

Unlike the real world, Navidson's journey into the house is not just figuratively but literally shortened.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴Missing. — Ed.

This theme of structures altered by perception is not uniquely observed in *The Navidson Record*. Almost thirty years ago, Günter Nitschke described what he termed “experienced or concrete space”:

It has a centre which is perceiving man, and it therefore has an excellent system of directions which changes with the movements of the human body; it is limited and in no sense neutral, in other words it is finite, heterogeneous, subjectively defined and perceived; distances and directions are fixed relative to man . . .²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵Günter Nitschke's “Anatomie der gelebten Umwelt” (*Bauen + Wohnen*, September 1968).²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶Which you are quite right to observe makes no sense at all.

Christian Norberg-Schulz objects; condemning subjective architectural experiences for the seemingly absurd conclusion it suggests, mainly that “architecture comes into being only when experienced.”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Existence, Space & Architecture*, p. 13.

Norberg-Schulz asserts: "Architectural space certainly exists independently of the casual perceiver, and has centres and directions of its own." Focusing on the constructions of any civilization, whether ancient or modern, it is hard to disagree with him. It is only when focusing on Navidson's house that these assertions begin to blur.

Can Navidson's house exist without the experience of itself?

Is it possible to think of that place as “unshaped” by human perceptions?

Especially since everyone entering there finds a vision almost completely—though pointedly not completely—different from anyone else's?

Even Michael Leonard, who had never heard of Navidson's house, professed a belief in the "psychological dimensions of space." Leonard claimed people create a "*sensation* of space" where the final result "in the perceptual process is a single sensation—a 'feeling' about that particular place . . ."²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸Michael Leonard's "Humanizing Space," *Progressive Architecture*, April 1969.

In his book *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch suggested emotional cognition of all environment was rooted in history, or at least *personal* history:

[Environmental image, a generalized mental picture of the exterior physical world] is the product both of immediate sensation and of *the memory of past experience*, and it is used to interpret information and to guide action.²⁰⁹

[Italics added for emphasis]

²⁰⁹Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1960), p. 4.

Or as Jean Piaget insisted: "It is quite obvious that the perception of space involves a gradual construction and certainly does not exist ready-made at the outset of mental development."²¹⁰ Like Leonard's attention to *sensation* and Piaget's emphasis on constructed perception, Lynch's emphasis on the importance of the past allows him to introduce a certain degree of subjectivity to the question of space and more precisely architecture.

²¹⁰J. Piaget and B. Inhelder's *The Child's Conception of Geometry* (New York: Basic Books, 1960), p. 6.

Where Navidson's house is concerned, subjectivity seems more a matter of degree. The Infinite Corridor, the Anteroom, the Great Hall, and the Spiral Staircase, exist for all, though their respective size and even layout sometimes changes. Other areas of that place, however, never seem to replicate the same pattern twice, or so the film repeatedly demonstrates.

No doubt speculation will continue for a long time over what force alters and orders the dimensions of that place. But even if the shifts turn out to be some kind of absurd interactive Rorschach test resulting from some peculiar and as yet undiscovered law of physics, Reston's nausea still reflects how the often disturbing disorientation experienced within that place, whether acting directly upon the inner ear or the inner labyrinth of the psyche, can have physiological consequences.²¹¹

²¹¹No doubt about that. My fear's gotten worse. Hearing Hailey describing my screams on the radio like that has really upset me. I no longer wake up tired. I wake up tired and afraid. I wonder if the morning rasp in my voice is just from sleep or rather some inarticulate attempt to name my horror. I'm suspicious of the dreams I cannot remember, the words only others can hear. I've also noticed the inside of my cheeks are now all mutilated, lumps of pink flesh dangling in the wet dark, probably from grinding, gritting and so much pointless chewing. My teeth ache. My head aches. My stomach's a mess.

I went to see a Dr. Ogelmeyer a few days ago and told him everything I could think of about my attacks and the awful anxiety that haunts my every hour. He made an appointment for me with another doctor and then prescribed some medication. The whole thing lasted less than half an hour and including the prescription cost close to a hundred and seventy-five dollars.

I tore up the appointment card and when I got back to my studio I grabbed my radio/ CD player and put it out on the street with a For Sale sign on it. An hour later, some guy driving an Infiniti pulled over and bought it for forty-five dollars. Next, I took all my CDs to Aaron's on Highland and got almost a hundred dollars.

I had no choice. I need the money. I also need the quiet.

As of now, I still haven't taken the medicine. It's a low-grade sedative of some kind. Ten flakes of chalk-blue. I hate them. Perhaps when night comes I'll change my mind. I arrange them in a tidy line on the kitchen counter. But night finally does come and even though my fear ratchets towards the more severe, I fear those pills even more.

Ever since leaving the labyrinth, having had to endure all those convolutions, those incomplete suggestions, the maddening departures and inconclusive nature of the whole fucking chapter, I've craved space, light and some kind of clarity. Any kind of clarity. I just don't know how to find it, though staring over at those awful tablets only amps my resolve to do something, anything.

Funny as it sounds—especially considering the amounts of drugs I've been proud to consume—those pills, like dots, raised & particular, look more and more like some kind of secret Braille spelling out the end of my life.

Perhaps if I had insurance; if one hundred and seventy-five dollars meant I was twenty-five over my deductible, I'd think differently. But it's not and so I don't.

As far as I can see, there's no place for me in this country's system of health, and even if there were I'm not sure it would make a difference. Something I considered over and over again while I was sitting in that stark office, barely looking at the National Geographic or People magazines, just waiting on the bustle of procedure and paper work, until the time came, quite a bit of time too, when I had to answer a call, a call made by a nurse, who led me down a hall and then another hall and still another hall, until I found myself alone in a cramped sour smelling room, where I waited again, this time on a slightly

different set of procedures and routines carried out by these white draped ministers of medicine, Dr.Ogelmeyer & friends, who by their very absence forced me to wonder what would happen if I were really unhealthy, as unhealthy as I am now poor, how much longer would I have to wait, how much more cramped and sour would this room be, and if I wanted to leave would I? Could I? Perhaps I wouldn't even know how to leave. Incarcerated forever within the corridors of some awful facility. 5051. Protective custody. Or just as terrifying: no 5051, no protective custody. Left to wander alone the equally ferocious and infernal corridors of indigence.

To put it politely: no fucking way.
I know what it means to go mad.
I'll die before I go there.
But first I have to find out if that's where I'm really heading.
I've got to stop blinking in the face of my fear.
I must hear what I scream.
I must remember what I dream.

I pick up the sedatives, these Zs without Z, and one by one crush them between my fingers, letting the dust fall to the floor. Next I locate all the alcohol I have buried around my studio and pour it down the sink. Then I root out every seed and bud of pot and flush it down the toilet along with the numbers of all suppliers. I eventually find a few tabs of old acid as well as some Ecstasy hidden in a bag of rice. These I also toss.

The consumption of MDMA, aka Ecstasy, aka E, aka X, has been known to bring on epilepsy especially when taken in large quantities. Eight months ago, I ingested more than my fair share, mostly White Angels, though I also went ahead and invited to the party a slew of Canaries, Stickmen, Snowballs, Hurricanes, Hallways, Butterflies, Tasmanian Devils and Mitsubishiis, which was a month long party, all of it pretty much preceding Thanksgiving, and a different story altogether.

There are so many stories . . .

Perhaps I'll be lucky and discover this awful dread that gnaws on me day and night is nothing more than the shock wave caused by too many crude chemicals rioting in my skull for too long. Perhaps by cleaning out my system I'll come to a clearing where I can ease myself into peace.

Then again perhaps in finding my clearing I'll only make myself an easier prey for the real terror that tracks me, waiting beyond the perimeter, past the tall grass, the brush, that stand of trees, cloaked in shadow and rot, but with enough presence to resurrect within me a whole set of ancient reflexes, ordering a non-existent protrusion at the base of my spine to twitch, my pupils already dilating, adrenaline flowing, even as instinct commands me to run.

But by then it will already be too late. The distance far too great to cover. As if there ever really was a place to hide.

At least I'll have a gun.

I'll buy a gun.

Then I'll crouch and I will wait.

Outside shots are fired. Lots. In fact one sounds like an artillery cannon going off. Suddenly the city's at war and I'm

confused. When I go to my window a spray of light sets me straight,
though the revelation is not without irony.

Somehow the date escaped me.

It's July 4th.

This country's birthday. Wow.

Which I realize means I forgot my own birthday. A day that came
and passed, it turns out, in of all places Hailey's arms. How about
that, I can remember the beginnings of a nation that doesn't give a
flying fuck about me, would possibly even strangle me if given half the
chance, but I can't remember my own beginnings—and I'm probably the
only one alive willing to at least attempt on my behalf that tricky
flying fuck maneuver.

Which might be worth some sort of smile, if I hadn't already come
to realize that irony is a Maginot Line drawn by the already
condemned—which oddly enough still does make me smile.

Fortunately Reston's nausea does not last long, and he and Navidson can spend the rest of the day pushing deeper and deeper into the labyrinth.

Initially, they follow the scant remains of the first team and then continue on by following their instincts. Based on the fact that there was very little evidence of the first team's descent remaining on the stairs, Navidson determines that the neon markers and fishing line last at most six days before they are entirely consumed by the house.

When they finally make camp, both men are disheartened and exhausted. Nevertheless, each agrees to alternately serve as watch. Navidson takes the first shift, spending his time removing the dark blotched gauze around his toes—clearly a painful process—before reapplying ointment and a fresh dressing. Reston spends his time tinkering with his chair and the mount on the Arriflex.

Except for their own restlessness, neither one hears anything during the night.

Toward the end of their second day inside (making this the ninth day since Holloway's team set out into the house), both men seem uncertain whether to continue or return.

It is only as they are making camp for the second night that Navidson hears something. A voice, maybe a cry, but so fleeting were it not for Reston's confirmation, it probably would have been shrugged off as just a high note of the imagination.



Leaving most of their equipment behind, the two men head out in pursuit of the sound. For forty minutes they hear nothing and are about to give up when their ears are again rewarded with another distant cry. Based on the rapidly changing video time stamp, we can see another three hours passes as they weave in and out of more rooms and corridors, often moving very quickly, though never failing to mark their course with neon arrows and ample amounts of fishing line.

At one point, Navidson manages to get Tom on the radio, only to learn that there is something the matter with Karen. Unfortunately, the signal decays before he can get more details. Finally, Reston stops his wheelchair and jabs a finger at a wall. On Hi 8, we witness his gruff assertion: "How we get through it, I don't have a clue. But that crying's coming from the other side."

Searching out more hallways, more turns, Navidson eventually leads the way down a narrow corridor ending with a door. Navidson and Reston open it only to discover another corridor ending with another door. Slowly they make their way through a gauntlet of what must be close to fifty doors (it is impossible to calculate the exact number due to the jump cuts), until Navidson discovers for the first and only time a door without a door knob. Even stranger, as he tries to push the door open, he discovers it is locked. Reston's expression communicates nothing but incredulity.²¹²

²¹²See Gaston Bachelard's *La Poétique de L'Espace* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1978), p. 78, where he observes:

Françoise Minkowska a exposé une collection particulièrement émouvante de dessins d'enfants polonais ou juifs qui ont subi les sévices de l'occupation allemande pendant la dernière guerre. Telle enfant qui a vécu caché, à la moindre alerte, dans une armoire, dessine longtemps après les heures maudites, des maisons étroites, froides et fermées. Et c'est ainsi que Françoise Minkowska parle de "maisons immobiles," de maisons immobilisées dans leur raideur: "Cette raideur et cette immobilité se retrouvent aussi bien à la fumée que dans les rideaux des fenêtres. Les arbres autour d'elle sont droits, ont l'air de la garder."...

A un détail, la grande psychologue qu'était Françoise Minkowska reconnaissait le mouvement de la maison. Dans la maison dessinée par un enfant de huit ans, Françoise Minkowska note qu'à la porte, il y a "une poignée; on y entre, on y habite." Ce n'est pas simplement une maison-construction, "c'est une maison-habitation." La poignée de la porte désigne évidemment une fonctionnalité. La kinesthésie est marquée par ce signe, si souvent oublié dans les dessins des enfants "rigides."

Remarquons bien que la "poignée" de la porte ne pourrait guère être dessinée à l'échelle de la maison. C'est sa fonction qui prime tout souci de

grandeur. Elle traduit une fonction d'ouverture. Seul un esprit logique peut objecter qu'elle sert aussi bien à fermer qu'à ouvrir. Dans le règne des valeurs, la clef ferme plus qu'elle n'ouvre. La poignée ouvre plus qu'elle ne ferme.²¹³

See also Anne Balif's article in which she quotes Dr. F. Minkowska's comments on *De Van Gogh et Seurat aux dessins d'enfants*, illustrated catalogue of an exhibition held at the *Musée Pedagogique* (Paris) 1949.

²¹³"I recall that Françoise Minkowska organized an unusually moving exhibition of drawings by Polish and Jewish children who had suffered the cruelties of the German occupation during the last war. One child, who had been hidden in a closet every time there was an alert, continued to draw narrow, cold, closed houses long after those evil times were over. These are what Mme. Minkowska calls 'motionless' houses, houses that have become motionless in their rigidity. 'This rigidity and motionlessness are present in the *smoke* as well as in the window curtains. The surrounding trees are quite straight and give the impression of *standing guard* over the house.' . . .

"Often a simple detail suffices for Mme. Minkowska, a distinguished psychologist, to recognize the way the house functions. In one house, drawn by an eight-year-old child, she notes that there is 'a knob on the door; people go in the house, they live there.' It is not merely a constructed house, it is also a house that is 'lived-in.' Quite obviously the door-knob has a functional significance. This is the kinesthetic sign, so frequently forgotten in the drawings of 'tense' children.

"Naturally too, the door-knob could hardly be drawn in scale with the house, its function taking precedence over any question of size. For it expresses the function of opening, and only a logical mind could object that it is used to close as well as to open the door. In the domain of values, on the other hand, a key closes more often than it opens, whereas the door-knob opens more often than it closes." As translated by Maria Jolas in Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1994), p. 72-73. — Ed.

As Navidson pulls away to re-examine the obstacle, he hears a whimper coming from the other side. Taking two steps back, he throws his shoulder into the door. It bends but does not give way. He tries again and again, each hit straining the bolt and hinges, until the fourth hit, at last, tears the hinges free, pops whatever bolt held it in place, and sends the door cracking to the floor.



Reston keeps the chair mounted Arriflex trained on Navidson and while the focus is slightly soft, as the door breaks loose, the frame gracefully accepts Jed's ashen features as he faces what he has come to believe is his final moment.

This whole sequence amounts to a pretty ratty collection of cuts alternating between Jed's Hi 8 and an equally poor view from the 16mm camera and Navidson and Reston's Hi 8s. Nevertheless what matters most here is adequately captured: the alchemy of social contact as Jed's rasp of terror almost instantly transforms itself into laughter and sobs of relief. In a scattering of seconds, a thirty-three year old man from Vineland, New Jersey, who loves to drink Seattle coffee and listen to Lyle Lovett with his fiancée, learns his sentence has been remitted.

He will live.

As diligent as any close analysis of the Zapruder film, similar frame by frame examination carried out countless times by too many critics to name here²¹⁴ reveals how a fraction of a second later one bullet pierced his upper lip, blasted through the maxillary bone, dislodging even fragmenting the central teeth, (Reel 10; Frame 192) and then in the following frame (Reel 10; Frame 193) obliterated the back side of his head, chunks of occipital lobe and parietal bone spewn out in an instantly senseless pattern uselessly preserved in celluloid light (Reel 10; Frames 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, & 205). Ample information perhaps to track the trajectories of individual skull bits and blood droplets, determine destinations, even origins, but not nearly enough information to actually ever reassemble the shatter. Here then—

²¹⁴Though still see Danton Blake's *Violent Verses: Cinema's Treatment of Death* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996).

the after

math

of meaning.

A life

33

time

finished

between

the space of

two

frames.

The dark line where the

eye persists in seeing

something that was never there

To²¹⁵ begin with

²¹⁵Typo. "T" should read "t" with a period following "with."

Ken Burns has used this particular moment to illustrate why *The Navidson Record* is so beyond Hollywood: "Not only is it gritty and dirty and raw, but look how the zoom claws after the fleeting fact. Watch how the frame does not, cannot anticipate the action. Jed's in the lower left hand corner of the frame! Nothing's predetermined or foreseen. It's all painfully present which is why it's so painfully real."²¹⁶

²¹⁶As you probably guessed, not only has Ken Burns never made any such comment, he's also never heard of The Navidson Record let alone Zampanò.

Jed crumples, his moment of joy stolen by a pinkie worth of lead,
leaving him dead on the floor, a black pool of blood spilling out of him.

In the next shots—mostly from the Hi 8s—we watch Navidson dragging Wax and Jed out of harm's way while trying at the same time to get Tom on the radio.

Reston returns fire with an HK .45.

"Since when did you bring a gun?" Navidson asks, crouching near the door.

"Are you kidding me? This place is *scary*."



Another shot explodes in the tiny room.

Reston wheels back to the edge of the doorway and squeezes off three more rounds. This time there is no return fire. He reloads. A few more seconds pass.

"I can't see a fucking thing," Reston whispers.

Which is true: neither one of their flashlights can effectively penetrate that far into the black.

Navidson grabs his backpack and pulls out his Nikon and the Metz strobe with its parabolic mirror.



Thanks to this powerful flash, the Hi 8 can now capture a shadow in the distance. The stills, however, are even more clear, revealing that the shadow is really the blur of a man,

standing
dead
centre

with
a
rifle
in
his
hand.

Then just as the strobe captures him lifting the weapon, presumably now aiming at the blinding flash, we hear a series of sharp cracks. Neither Navidson nor Reston have any idea where these sounds are coming from, though gratefully the stills reveal what is happening:

all those doors

behind

the
man

are
slamming
shut,

one

220

after

another

after

223

another,

which still does not prevent the figure from firing.

"Awwwww shit!" Reston shouts.

But Navidson keeps his Nikon steady and focused, the motor chewing up a whole roll of film as the flash angrily slashes out at the pre-

vailing darkness, ultimately capturing

this
dark
form

vanishing

behind
a
closing

door,

even though a hole
the size of a fist
punches through
the muntin,

the
round
powerful
enough to propel
the bullet into
the second
door,

though

not

powerful

enough

to do more

than

splinter

a

panel,

before this damage along with even the sound from the blast

disappears behind the roar of more slamming doors,

the last one finally hammering shut, leaving

the
room

saturated in silence.

Navidson sprints down the corridor to the first door but can find no way to lock it.

"He's alive" Reston whispers. "Navy, come here. Jed's breathing."

The camera captures Navidson's P.O.V. as he returns to the dying young man.

"It doesn't matter Rest. He's still dead."

Whereupon Navidson's eye quickly pans from the thoughtless splatter of grey matter and blood to more pressing things, the groan of the living calling him away from the sigh of the dead.

Despite his shoulder wound and loss of blood, Wax is still very much alive. As we can see, a fever—probably due to the onset of an infection—has marooned him in a delirium and although his rescuers are now at hand his eyes remain fixed on a horizon that is both empty and meaningless. Navidson's shot of Jed, though brief, is not nearly as short as this shot of Wax.

In the next segment, taken at least fifteen minutes later at a new location, we see Navidson elevating Wax's legs, cleaning the wound, and gently feeding him half a tablet of a painkiller, probably meperidine.²¹⁷

²¹⁷i.e. Demerol.



Reston, meanwhile, finishes converting their two-man tent into a makeshift stretcher. Having already arranged the tent poles in a way that will provide the most support, he now uses some pack straps to create two handles which will enable Navidson to carry the rear end more easily.

"What about Jed?" Reston asks, as he begins securing the front end of the stretcher to the back of his wheelchair.

"We'll leave his pack and mine behind."

"Some habits die hard, huh?"

"Or they don't die," replies Navidson.²¹⁸

²¹⁸A bit of dialogue which of course only makes sense when Navidson's history is taken into account.²¹⁹

²¹⁹See page 332-333.

A little later, Navidson gets Tom on the radio and tells him to meet them at the bottom of the stairs.