

The audience gasped.

At first, when I saw this video, I thought this was a bit of unnecessary drama, as if the GASP light had gone off in the

studio audience. But as the camera lowered on to the row of

jerkostaters, pouring over each of their faces, I could see

that these people were slumped in their chairs, some of their

heads had fallen back, some had fallen to the side. And right

between the middle two chairs was a machine, a kind of pump,

with fluids in separate bags, and tubes ran between the machine

and each of these men and women sitting on stage.

The man with the headset moved rapidly and gracefully from

person to person, checking them. He touched the first two. "I

think they're dead," he said, in a Texas drawl. He went right

down the line, the third, the fourth. "Yep, they are." He had

checked them all and now he went to the machine, kneeling to

look at it, and craning ~~hee~~ his neck to see the back of it.

He stood up and turned to Oprah. "It has a light sensor on

it."

The food came.

"Oh good," Amanda said. "Now we can talk about The Happen-

ing."

I laughed, but then I said, "Oh, I seriously do still want

to talk about it." And she might have tuned me out at that

point and started cutting her sandwich (yes, that's right;

I remember now, it was an open-faced turkey sandwich; I do

remember it sitting there, because I could see the bread, it

was all mashed potatoes underneath and I said, "Where's your

sandwich?" And she said, "This is all of it." And she said,

"There's bread under there." And she lifted it up so I could

see, because I didn't believe her at first.)

"All I think is," I said, "if you take The Happening as

it's presented, and you simply believe what the characters

are telling you, then I agree that it's an awful film. The

trees are stupid and the people running through the grass

are stupid.