

EXT. CREEK, ANTENORA, TX - DAY

GRAINY HOME CAMCORDER FOOTAGE. A watermark at the bottom corner reads 7/26/83. Fingerprints on the lens and smudges in the corners. Someone is clumsily recording, shaking the frame.

WILLA (O.S.)

What are you up to, young lady?

Splashing around in the creek is JULIEN FARROW (8). She wears an oversized t-shirt reading ANTENORA HIGH ALTHETIC DEPT over her swimsuit. She dons latex gloves and rainboots to avoid being touched by the muck. She turns to the camera with a pageant ready smile and waves.

JULIEN

Hello, Miss Alden!

MISS ALDEN (O.S.)

Hello to you, too, Julien. You're-
quite bundled up, aren't you?

Julien gives a little twirl and another wave.

Creeping up behind her is AVERY ALDEN (8) lanky and sporting the beginnings of a sunburn on his shoulders. His red swim trunks sag down under the weight of pebbles in his pockets. He signals for his mother to be quiet. He scoops up a handful of mud.

With a whoop, Avery SMACKS THE MUD into Julien's face.

MISS ALDEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Avery!

Julien stands shock still, arms up in surprise. Her mouth is wide open and mud drips down her face and down her shirt. She lets out a disgusted shriek.

AVERY

Aw, don't cry. Hey, I made you
prettier.

MISS ALDEN (O.S.)

Young man, that is enough.

Julien waves her arms around, trying in vain to roughly wipe away the mud.

AVERY

Quit that, okay?

JULIEN
You got it- you got it all over me!

AVERY
It's just mud.

JULIEN
It won't come off!

Avery tries to grab at her arm.

AVERY
Okay, I'm sorry, I'm sorry-

SMACK! Julien hits him hard in the cheek.

WILLA (O.S.)
Julien, we do not hit!

Miss Alden sets down the camera- both children still in frame- and runs over to separate them. We finally see WILLA ALDEN (24) wading through the creek in rolled up mom jeans.

Julien continues to try and wipe away the mud, stuttering as she does. Willa is doing a poor job of calming her down.

Avery grabs both her arms, stopping her from moving.

AVERY
Quit- quit it, would'ja?

Julien continues to shake her head, hair flying and mud splattering off her cheeks. Avery starts to gently wipe off the mud. Julien finally stands still.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM - EVENING

GRAINY 90S TV FOOTAGE. The cheesy news title for the local news station plays.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
This is ARTV Broadcast News at six.

SUPERIMPOSED: BREAKING NEWS

CHRISTOPHER CARTMAN, a dolled up news reporter with a barely hidden Texas twang looks seriously into the camera.

CHRISTOPHER
Good evening, I'm Christopher
Cartman.

(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Breaking news tonight as we follow
the trial of Avery Alden, the
procession garnering national
attention.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Watermark in the corner: 9/28/93

Police footage of a SMATTERING OF DEAD BODIES strewn across
the room. Blood and chunks of hair still clinging to ripped
out scalps smear across the swelling wood. Someone's back is
broken over a pew. Police walk between the corpses, barely
holding back vomit.

The dead limbs are twisted at unnatural angles. Cockroaches
and flies crawl over them, the greying flesh sagging with the
wet heat of the Texas air. A junebug crawls across an open
eye. There are chunks of each body missing, like someone had
taken a bite from them.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
The eighteen year old from
Antenora, Texas took the stand for
the first time today in a Dallas
courthouse. He stands accused of
the mass murder of seventy five
community members as well as the
later assault-

The footage switches to a PHOTO OF JULIEN (18) in her cheer
uniform. She smiles sweetly at the camera, the kind of face
one can't help but fall in love with.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
-and murder of fellow student
Julien Farrow. Melinda Harrington
reports.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

GRAINY 90S TV FOOTAGE. Standing in front of the court house
with cheap highlights and a bob that says "I'd like to speak
to the manager" is MELINDA HARRINGTON. She holds a microphone
and looks into the camera.

MELINDA
Thank you, Christopher. Prosecutors
have brought forth evidence damning
evidence of Alden's guilt.

(MORE)

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Locals are speculating that the grizzly murders the boy stands accused of were part of a satanic ritual. In the past, Alden has been vocal in his hatred for the church and his desire for, quote, "these maggots get what they have coming."

CUT TO:

An interview outside the courthouse.

LOCAL 1

What're they even arguing? They found him on top of that girl all bloody. Always been somethin' wrong with that boy, I tell you. Very wrong.

CUT TO:

An interview on the street.

LOCAL 2

I'm just saying, prison's a nasty place. Plenty of freaks. Hope he packed a skirt, is all I'm saying.

CUT TO:

An interview at a local pharmacy.

LOCAL 3

They're in there talkin' 'bout- 'bout his right to a fair trial. What about the rights of the mothers, fathers and sons that he killed? What about the Farrow girl, huh? What about her rights?

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Footage of inside the court as a PROSECUTOR questions Avery (18), sitting on the stand. His eyes are COVERED BY SUNGLASSES, hair shorn short and RIGHT ARM IN A SLING. His secondhand suit hangs limp around his shoulders. There's something dead about him.

MELINDA (V.O.)

Prosecutors went down the list of victims names, to which Alden denied all wrongdoing.

The prosecutor saunters around the court, long arms wide and nose scrunched with a sneer.

PROSECUTOR
We can keep doing this all day,
kiddo.

Silence.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)
Did you mutilate and kill Mason
Walsh?

Avery's voice is quiet and rough.

AVERY
I did not.

PROSECUTOR
Did you mutilate and kill Quinn
Faulkner?

AVERY
You certainly think so.

A cry of hatred is heard from the gallery. *Liar! Killer! Spawn!* The gallery rises, shouting hatred at the young boy as if this were Salem. The JUDGE bangs his gavel.

JUDGE
Order! Order!

PROSECUTOR
Did you mutilate and kill Harlan
Farrow? William Harris? Bonnie
Moore?

AVERY
I did not.

PROSECUTOR
Did you murder Julien Farrow?

Avery is silent for an uncomfortable beat.

BLACK.

SUPER TITLE: "1. CURSED WHEN YOU GO IN, AND CURSED WHEN YOU
GO OUT"

CUT TO: