Matt Barber
"The Plea"
Production: Blink Pictures
Director: Benjamin Silverstein
Treatment: Dana Fabbro

The Atmosphere
"The Plea" has this great vibe that just keeps building, like a storm. There's these subtle riffs that gradually increase and before you know it, you're carried away by Matt and this emotional, musical current. I thought it'd be great to build this video like a storm, kind of layer by layer until it reaches its peak.

At the same time, I wanted to find some setting or location where I could frame Matt--a place which could underscore the emotional desolation Matt kind of hints at in the track, without making it too obvious. I thought the suggestion of a lighthouse just fit this need perfectly, great idea.

The Video
We open with a cool establishing shot—a slow, long shot of a lighthouse. We'll track towards the lighthouse slowly, setting up this kind of tranquil calm before the storm. As we open and track we'll use clean, balanced lighting—all the more to create this placid vibe that in about ten seconds is seriously going to shift. We can create this opening shot in post production and as we close in on the lighthouse, we can move around it, catch it from a few different angles.

Then all of a sudden, we track right in to the lighthouse, through one of the windows in the very top, in the crow's nest. And this is where we reveal Matt, jamming "The Plea". Inside, the lighting stays bright and balanced. A few flares from the lighthouse's actual light flare up and streak our lens. We pan around and see through the windows to the distant beyond. So, there's this great feeling of Matt and his band just being completely alone, cut off and just doing their thing.

Matt's front and center and we catch him immediately in a couple of close shots. The band is harder to make out clearly--they're more like silhouettes. We only catch a few glimpses of them, a couple of darting cuts from their instruments then back again which lets us know they're actually playing. But now the light begins to change and shift—from the outside, in.

Dark clouds gather outside the windows, and inside it takes on this moody, edgy vibe. Shadows flick back and forth as the lighting shifts and becomes less balanced and uneven, foreboding. And this storm just keeps on building, as the track ramps up, those guitar riffs whining. Inside the lighthouse, wind whips debris around.

The lighting changes quickly frame to frame, growing darker, more menacing--matching the storm. Giant flares of light bounce off the actual lighthouse light and strafe the camera lens. Then the storm just literally crashes right through one of the windows of the lighthouse, right in to the room. We can shoot this in slo-mo if we want to add a little extra tension.

The storm is in the lighthouse, wreaking havoc but Matt just keeps singing. We can add in some degradation FX like micro scratches, gate weave and focus pops as debris bounces off the lens, adding to the on-the-edgy frenzy as the energy of the clip builds more and more layers of dangerous, edgy recklessness.

The color palette will start and stay heavily desaturated, so the whole look is very toned down. But here and there in the shadows we can drop in bits of color for a little depth of field and keep the frames just this side of bleak. I want to also create some really cool "hero-moments" where Matt can go solo. At various points in the track, I'll frame him through any one of the lighthouse's window's--or maybe frame him through different windows at different points in the song.

So as the track builds and the storm escalates, we'll match this intensity to the solos of Matt--light flashes can streak and flare, framing Matt, while in the background the band just pounds out "The Plea". In terms of wardrobe and styling, we'll keep things pretty minimal—mainly, we want Matt and the band's look to stay consistent with the vibe of the video.

Meanwhile, inside the lighthouse it just continues to get more and more out of control. Water blows across the room, drips from the ceiling and sends chairs flying. A glass gets blown in to a wall and a thousand pieces. In the midst of this tempest, Matt, clothes almost blowing off, keeps playing as his storm-sprayed gear starts to spark and pop.

Through it all, we never lose track of Matt. He actually becomes this kind of anchor for a lot of our shots--his close ups and cameos are the constant we come back to--the eye of the storm as everything just blows apart around him. As the storm rages on, whatever light there is fragments in prisms through the lighthouse light until finally, everyone's instruments just short out in a blue arcs of light.

We'll keep the camera moving, catching everything from different angles. This varied perspective will create another layer of almost-frenzy to match the storm's intensity. And we'll keep framing Matt right to the end. We can create these haunting, cool silhouettes of him--we'll catch these un-manufactured shots of him through the windows where light shafts flicker over his face. Behind him we can just barely see the outline of band members—maybe the drummer's cymbal blows over, like this final punctuation to what's just gone down.

In terms of production, we can location scout or build a set. There's a number of great-looking lighthouses we can shoot exteriors on and once inside, we can build lighting to create the effects we need. If we decide to create a set, then we'll only need an interior—we can create enough exterior shots in post production to create our opening.

The Edit
Our edit will match and mirror the escalating energy of the track. Our opening long shot gives us this tranquil, almost idyllic tone to start. But as the song and the graphic images build, the edit moves more quickly. Once inside the lighthouse, fast almost harried cut-to's build us to Matt's perfect-storm moment when the storm crashes through the windows.

So I really think we're bringing some pretty cool things together here—the setting will create this unique showcase for Matt and the band and the storm gives us an additional narrative element to underscore the track. Combined with our tight edit, I'm really looking forward to working on this.