

OLTRE IL VELO DEGLI ECHI
(BEYOND THE VEIL OF ECHOES)

Written by

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With

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FADE IN:

1 INT. ASTOR HOME NURSE'S STATION JUST OFF KITCHEN - MORNING 1

Music up. Intense, suspenseful, yearning something reminiscent of Goblin's "Quiet Drops," or "L'alba Dei Morti Viventi."

TIGHT SHOT ON SOMEONE'S HAND WEARING A BLACK NITRILE GLOVE LOADING A SYRINGE WITH A MEDICINE FROM A BROWN GLASS VIAL.

TIGHT SHOT OF BARE ARM RECOILING AWAY FROM THE PROCESS OF THE INJECTION.

TIGHT SHOT OF NEEDLE PIERCING THE SKIN AND THE BRACKISH LOOKING FLUID PUSHED OUT OF THE SYRINGE AS THE PLUNGER GOES DOWN.

TIGHT SHOT OF ARM GOING SLACK.

NEEDLE REMOVED, COTTON SWAB PLACED ON THE INJECTION SITE.

TIGHT SHOT OF URINE COLLECTION BAG (FULL) DISCONNECTED AND A CLEAN, EMPTY BAG ATTACHED.

TIGHT SHOT OF WHEEL CHAIR BRAKES RELEASED.

TIGHT SHOT OF BLACK GLOVED HANDS GRASPING THE REAR CONTROL HANDLES OF THE WHEELCHAIR.

WIDE SHOT FROM REAR AS A FEMALE FIGURE PUSHES SOMEONE IN A WHEELCHAIR. THE FIGURES ARE SILHOUETTED BY THE SUNLIGHT STREAMING THROUGH A WINDOW IN FRONT OF THEM AS THEY MOVE OUT OF THE SCENE TOWARD THE FRONT ROOM AND THE FRONT DOOR BEYOND.

*In *Giallo*, la scena iniziale mostra un atto di violenza indicibile per mano di un assassino dai guanti neri. Ma altrettanto violento può essere l'atto di guarire...*

In Giallo, the opening scene depicts an act of unspeakable violence at the hands of a black gloved killer. But equally violent can be the act of healing...

2 EXT. ASTOR HOME FRONT YARD - MORNING

2

WIDE DRONE/CRANE SHOT OF A TALL WOMAN, DRESSED IN BLACK, PUSHING A YOUNG MAN IN A WHEEL CHAIR OUT THE FRONT DOOR AND ACROSS THE FRONT YARD TO THE EDGE OF A RETAINING WALL THAT BORDERS A SIDEWALK THAT LINES THE STREET.

MCU TWO SHOT OF WOMAN AND BOY IN WHEELCHAIR ENJOYING THE SPACE, THE AIR, THE SUNSHINE. THEY BOTH BREATHE IN THE HONEYSUCKLE INFUSED AIR. THE WOMAN SMILES FOR A MOMENT AS SHE BRUSHES HER HAND AGAINST THE BOY'S CHEEK. THE BOY LOOKS UP AT HER, SMILES, THEN BACK AT THE SIDEWALKS THAT LINE THE STREET.

WIDE SHOT OF STREET VIEW (BOY'S POV). A RUNNER IN THE DISTANCE GROWS CLOSER.

MCU Doug McKinley - 16 (in two months), 6'1", light brown hair, hypnotic blue eyes, empathic, kind, genuine, track star, short stop, and all around perfect son. Adored by every teacher and admired by every coach, is on his morning run before catching a ride from his mom for school.

TIGHT SHOT ON THE SMALL HARRISVILLE TIGERS LOGO ON THE CHEST OF DOUG'S TANK TOP.

WIDER SHOT, FROM BEHIND AS DOUG RUNS AWAY FROM US AND TOWARD THE ASTER HOUSE. WE CLEARLY SEE THE MUCH LARGER TIGER LOGO ON THE BACK OF HIS TANK TOP AS THE SHOT WIDENS AND CRANES UP.

CUT TO:

3

EXT. ASTOR HOME FRONT YARD - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

3

Ellis Macready, 15, 5'11", jet black hair, handsome with the face of a young man recently recovered from a life threatening injury, was worse once but slightly less hollow now. Life is choosing to stay a bit longer. Ellis needs a wheelchair now (a note about the wheelchair - it is the finest money can buy, sleek, electric assist, and all black). The diagnosis is Hysterical Paralysis and dissociative amnesia.

Tight shot on one of Ellis' EarPods. The shot pushes in slowly as we hear "Way of the World," by Cheap Trick. The song is powerful and glorious with just the right amount of menace for this morning's "airing out."

*

MUSIC - CHEAP TRICK

Remember, you were in school and I followed you home, I remember you didn't think I existed, but we're comin' together right now...

CUT TO:

4 WIDE SHOT ON DOUG MOVING SWIFTLY TOWARD ELLIS IN THE DISTANCE
(WHICH IS CLOSING RAPIDLY) 4

MUSIC - CHEAP TRICK
I've been running', I've been
hiding, it's the way of the world.
You say it's over, but the world
keeps turning around...

CUT TO:

5 WIDE SHOT ON DOUG SLOWING A BIT, TURNING HIS HEAD TO LOOK AT
ELLIS AS HE PASSES, STOPS WHILE CONTINUING TO JOG IN PLACE 5
FOR A BEAT BEFORE RELAXING, TURNS AROUND, BENDS HIS BACK DOWN
IN TEMPORARY EXHAUSTION, STRAIGHTENS BACK UP AND WALKS OVER
TO ELLIS.

TWO SHOT AS DOUG TURNS AND FLOPS DOWN RIGHT NEXT TO ELLIS, *
HIS LONG LEGS, BENT AT THE KNEE HANGING OVER THE EDGE OF THE
RETAINING WALL.

CUT TO:

6 TIGHT SHOT ON ELLIS WHO LOOKS DOWN AT DOUG, MILDLY AMUSED. 6
What the hell is happening here? Why did he just flop down
there?

CUT TO:

7 TIGHT SHOT ON DOUG, STILL LYING FLAT ON THE GRASS, AS HE 7
TURNS HIS HEAD TO LOOK AT ELLIS. A GENTLE BREEZE KISSES HIS
PERFECT HAIR.

DOUG
Morning. What gentle and relaxing
sounds are we listening to so
early?

CUT TO:

8 TIGHT SHOT ON ELLIS REMOVING AN EAR POD. HE TURNS TO LOOK 8
DOWN AT DOUG...

ELLIS
Cheap Trick. Dream Police. Way of
the World.

Ellis carefully tosses the earpod in his hand down to Doug, who catches it effortlessly. Doug puts the pod in his ear...

MUSIC - CHEAP TRICK

...But the world keeps turnin'
around, Remember, I knew I'd be
good for you, no one better,
remember really meant what I said,
wanna be your lover right now. I've
been running', I've been hidin',
it's the way of the world...

Doug is loving the song. He immediately begins playing air drums, picks up the vibe of the lyrics and begins singing along. His voice is as beautiful and controlled as the lead singer's on the song. Better, actually...

DOUG

I've been running', I've been
hidin', it's the way of the world,
you say it's over, but the world
keeps turning around..

CUT TO:

9

REVERSE ANGLE. ELLIS, ENTERTAINED AS HE IS, REACHES DOWN FOR THE AIR POD...

ELLIS

(unable to hold back a smile) I
love this band. They're like a
hundred now, but they still rock a
stadium.

DOUG

A hundred? Do they come out on
stage in wheelchairs... Oh dang,
sorry man...

ELLIS

No, Rick Nielsen is still mobile.
Robin Zander looks like he starts
bar fights and leaves.

DOUG

Well, they kick ass. I love that.
I'm going to load 'em into a play
list later. The name's Doug, by the
way.

ELLIS

Nice to know you Doug. Ellis.
You're usually faster when you run
by.

DOUG

(pretending to be confused) Well,
I'm laying down here. Doesn't get
any slower than that...

ELLIS

I mean your time. Usually there's a
crack of thunder as you break the
sound barrier by the Willam's house
down there.

DOUG

That reminds me, I have to break a
wall. I'm going up against Terry
Graaff at Relays Saturday. I can't
let that pork smoker beat me again.

CUT TO:

10

MCU ON ELLIS RUBBING HIS NON FUNCTIONAL LEGS...

10

Ellis leans over a little, almost facing Doug, who has not
gotten up yet.

ELLIS

I could beat him. This thing does
about 40 miles an hour. Of course,
acceleration is an issue, and it
takes about 20 minutes to reach max
velocity, and it helps if
everything is down a really steep
hill.

DOUG

Unfair advantage. However, you
could run him over if he does beat
me. He'd cry like a little girl!

ELLIS

Deal. Who do I run over if you win?

DOUG

Well, you could run him down
anyway. Actually you could strap me
to a hitch on the back and drag me
back to the concession stand for a
slush.

(MORE)

DOUG (CONT'D)

The last time I ran against him my life meter, you know the one that floats over us that we can't see...

ELLIS

I can see mine.

DOUG

Me too. Anyway, mine was at like four percent. Sheesh!

Doug looks at his watch. Rises to a sitting position.

DOUG (CONT'D)

I need to get on to the house. My mom is taking me to school today. She's got some kind of a thing to go to and my car is in the shop. (beat) Okay, my car is locked down because I stayed out late at church. Okay, I was at a party. But I didn't have a very good time because I don't drink. So, Mom's taking me to school.

Ellis grins at Doug...

ELLIS

I've got a van. It's a Mercedes. Okay, it's not mine, it's my Aunt's and Elena (points over shoulder) drives it.

CUT TO:

11 HIGH ANGLE WIDE SHOT OF THE TWO BOYS AND ELENA STANDING IN THE FRONT DOORWAY WATCHING THEM...

CUT TO:

12 MCU ON THE TWO BOYS SLOWLY TURNING TO LOOK AT THE HOUSE AND THE NURSE IN THE DISTANCE.

DOUG

The hot lady in black that's staring at us?

ELLIS

(grins) Hot, huh? (looks closer at Elena) Yeah, she is that.

(MORE)

ELLIS (CONT'D)

(looks at Doug) I'm not saying she would off me with a pillow in my sleep, but I can guarantee you she would know what to do with a body if she had to get rid of one.
(beat) which is also pretty hot, now that I think about it...

DOUG

Good to know! She's like some hot Amish survivor of the Pentecostal wars of 2016...

ELLIS

Oh man! The one where the non-denominational Baptists poisoned all the country's water sources?

DOUG

(mock solemn) So many innocent people died...

Both boys laugh uncontrollably at their stupid nonsense...

DOUG (CONT'D)

Hey, my lunch hour is at eleven. When's yours?

ELLIS

Eleven. I usually eat in my math class with Ms. Edwards.

DOUG

(kind of horrified) No. (pulls out phone) give me your number, man. I keep a table in the back of the cafeteria. You join me. You bring your lunch?

ELLIS

It's Friday. Pizza day. (breathes in imaginary, heavenly, aroma)
Brother, I'd donate a pint of blood for two of those rectangles of paradise!

DOUG

Friday Pizza is kind of the best. I'll bring a batch of my custom black cherry Kool Aid.

ELLIS

Hold the cyanide.

DOUG

(thinks) I don't think they used cyanide. It was like tranquilizers and industrial toxic stuff. I don't use any of that. I make it with a splash of vanilla extract and I cut the sugar with agave syrup. You'll like it. It's perfect to pair with Friday Pizza!

CUT TO:

13

EXT. ASTOR HOME FRONT YARD - MORNING -CONTINUOUS

13

High angle wide on the boys and Elena who is moving toward them to bring Ellis back inside.

Doug jogs away.

Elena wheels Ellis back to the front door.

CUT TO:

*

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY 33 - CONTINUOUS

*

Lab 33 is a study in sharp contrasts. Sterile white walls, floor and ceiling tiles and stainless steel lab tables with a myriad of instruments. Shiny, black ringed, white microscopes and high tech electronic and digital scanning equipment nestled in amongst elaborate glass apparatus, coils and miles of milky white plastic tubing.

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Dr. Harriet Mallory, 5'5", 53, red hair, wolf blue eyes, lots of pretty but fake jewelry, white lab coat is studying something on a computer screen. Although the back of the screen is facing us, we see the front reflected in Harriet's large, oval framed glasses. We are aware of the color red flashing from the screen. Dr. Mallory is intensely focused leaning into concerned.

*
*
*
*
*
*

Her cell phone rings.

*

She answers...

*

DR. HARRIET MALLORY

*

County Morgue, Harriet speaking.

*

KASEY MALLORY
(V.O.) Funny, Mom.

*
*
*

CUT TO:

*

EXT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS)
GRASSY KNOLL IN FRONT OF STEPS TO ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

*
*

Kasey is getting ready to start a day of high school
education. She has forgotten something at home and needs to
tell her mom...

*
*
*

KASEY MALLORY
Really. I totally left the house
and didn't lock the garage. I hate
this.

*
*
*
*

DR. HARRIET MALLORY
No worries, Pooks. I'll just lock
it when I leave at noon for lunch.
Hey Pooks...

*
*
*
*

CUT TO:

*

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY 33 - CONTINUOUS

*

Tighter shot on Dr. Mallory...

*

DR. HARRIET MALLORY
I had the worst dream last night. I
just have this weird feeling that I
can't shake. Sweetheart, can you be
a little more vigilant than usual
today?

*
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*
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*

CUT TO:

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EXT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS)
FRONT COURTYARD AND ENTRANCE TO THE SCHOOL

*
*

MCU Tracey...

*

KASEY MALLORY
Couldn't love myself any more than
I already do now, Mom.

*
*
*

CUT TO:

*

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY 33

DR. HARRIET MALLORY
More on that conversation when I
get home young lady, just promise
you'll not step on any cracks
today, Pooks?

CUT TO:

EXT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS)
FRONT COURTYARD AND ENTRANCE TO THE SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Wide on Kasey. She looks down at the cobblestone pavement
that leads up to the school.

KASEY MALLORY
I think you're safe here, Mom.
Cobblestones. Schrodinger's cracks,
Mom. It's all the possible
cracks,...

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY 33 - CONTINUOUS

DR. HARRIET MALLORY
...or none of them. In that case,
then, my dear, you have my
permission to cease observing. Have
a great day, sweetheart! Oh!
Congratulations on that Science
Fellowship Award! The school gets
to archive your Quantum Physics
paper! That is so awesome!

CUT TO:

EXT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS)
FRONT COURTYARD AND ENTRANCE TO THE SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Wide on Kasey as she proceeds to the front doors.

KASEY MALLORY
It's just a high school, Mom...

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY 33 - CONTINUOUS

Wide. Dr. Mallory at desk/table/workstation...

DR. HARRIET MALLORY
No, sweetheart. It isn't...

Dr. Mallory hangs up her smartphone and starts to place it on the table. It rings again.

She picks the phone back up and answers.

DR. HARRIET MALLORY (CONT'D)
Mallory. How can I help you Dr.
Holloway?

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY 108 MAIN PATHOLOGY - CONTINUOUS

Wide shot - Dr. Fable Holloway, 36, gorgeous, with an almost otherworldly physical stature, is gazing into one of her computer monitors.

She smiles when she is concerned...

DR. FABLE HOLLOWAY
Hey Mallory, what do you do with a
sick Chemist?

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY 33 - CONTINUOUS

DR. HARRIET MALLORY
No idea, love. (thinks) If you
can't helium and you can't curiem,
you can't barium?

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY 108 MAIN PATHOLOGY - *
CONTINUOUS *

DR. FABLE HOLLOWAY *
You can't barium. (smiles broader) *
Your latest test batch of robo bugs *
all died. Short circuited. Stopped *
functioning. Every bin. *

CUT TO: *

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY 33 *

DR. HARRIET MALLORY *
Mine too. The AI agents controlling *
them hallucinated again. The *
replacement code has nearly passed *
all of its QC runs. *

DR. FABLE HOLLOWAY *
Madeline isn't going to be very *
happy with this. *

CUT TO: *

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY 108 MAIN PATHOLOGY - *
CONTINUOUS *

DR. FABLE HOLLOWAY *
You reported, just last week, a 100 *
percent binding and recharge rate. *
The little buggers didn't bind and *
they didn't recharge. I'll repeat, *
Madeline is going to be pissed. If *
you can't helium and you can't *
curium... *

Dr. Holloway hangs up with an angry finger punch. *

CUT TO: *

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY 33 - CONTINUOUS *

Dr. Mallory stares at her phone for a moment. *

DR. HARRIET MALLORY *
You can barium... *

FADE OUT. *

14

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY 33 - MORNING - 14
CONTINUOUS

Lab 33 is a study in sharp contrasts. Sterile white walls, floor and ceiling tiles and stainless steel lab tables with a myriad of instruments. Shiny, black ringed, white microscopes and high tech electronic and digital scanning equipment nestled in amongst elaborate glass apparatus, coils and miles of milky white plastic tubing.

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THE POWER GOES OUT, SUDDENLY REPLACED BY BRIGHT RED EMERGENCY LIGHTS IN THE MAIN PART OF THE ROOM AND PAINFULLY BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT BY THE EXIT NEAR THE FAR END OF THE LAB. THE BRIGHT WHITE EMERGENCY LIGHT GOES OUT.

THE SOUND OF SOMETHING MOVING IN THE SHADOWS AT THE FAR END OF THE LAB STARTLES DR. MALLORY.

HANDS WEARING BLACK GLOVES WITH BRASS ZIPPERS THAT RUNS ALONG THE BACKS, GRIP THE HANDLE OF A SMALL ALUMINUM BAT TIGHTLY.

THE FIGURE IS MOVING INEVITABLY TOWARD DR. MALLORY.

TIGHT SHOT ON HANDS SQUEEZING THE METAL HANDLE OF THE BAT, THE LEATHER MAKING AN ANEMIC SQUEEZING SOUND AS THE FIGURE GRIPS HARD AND RELEASES SLIGHTLY...

TIGHT SHOT ON DR. MALLORY'S TERRIFIED EYES AS THEY TRY TO SCAN THE DARKENED ROOM...

MCU ON FIGURE WITH BAT. WE SEE IT FROM BEHIND. IT IS DRESSED ALL IN BLACK WITH BLACK BALL CAP AND BLACK FACE MASK. IT'S MOVEMENTS ARE ATHLETIC AND PRECISE. IN FRONT OF THE FIGURE, A STAINLESS STEEL LAB TABLE HOSTS A MASSIVELY COMPLEX GLASS APPARATUS WITH GLASS COILS, TUBES, DIFFERENT SHAPED FLASKS, ALL PROCESSING SEVERAL DIFFERENT NEON COLORED LIQUIDS. DIGITAL AND ANALOG SCANNING EQUIPMENT IS SUSPENDED BY THIN STAINLESS STEEL CLAMPS AND STANDS. A HEATING ELEMENT GLOWS AT THE BASE OF ONE END OF THE GLASS AND CERAMIC STRUCTURE HEATING A SMOKING WHITE GAS IN THE ORB OF A STRANGE FLASK. DR. MALLORY SITS AT THE TABLE JUST BEYOND THAT.

THE POWER COMES BACK ON.

THE FIGURE SWINGS THE BAT WITH TERRIFYING FORCE INTO THE GLASS APPARATUS, SMASHING IT IN THE DIRECTION OF DR. MALLORY. SHARDS OF BROKEN GLASS GLIDE THROUGH THE AIR IN SLOW MOTION, PENETRATING DR. MALLORY'S EYES AND FACE. WE SEE THE GLASS TRAVEL ALL THE WAY INTO SKULL. CRIMSON GORE ARCS AWAY FROM HER AS SHE FALLS TO THE GROUND FROM HER TALL CHAIR. NOT JUST GLASS, BUT BROKEN CERAMIC AND SMALLER, RECTANGULAR PIECES OF SCANNING EQUIPMENT ARE FLYING INTO HER AS WELL.

Debris continues to rain down on her as she writhes on the floor trying to touch her eyes. She screams. And screams.

...and screams.

THE FIGURE LEAPS OVER THE SMASHED TABLE AND LANDS RIGHT BY DR. MALLORY. IT SWINGS THE BAT INTO HER HEAD REPEATEDLY, CRUSHING THE LIFE OUT OF HER.

THE FIGURE KNEELS DOWN BY THE BODY AND TAKES HER HEAD IN ITS HANDS. IT MANIPULATES HARRIET'S HEAD TO THE LEFT AND RIGHT, CHECKING TO MAKE SURE LIFE WAS NO LONGER HERE. SATISFIED, IT DROPS HER HEAD TO THE GROUND AS A DEEP CRIMSON STAIN SPREADS OUT FROM BENEATH HER SHOULDERS.

THE FIGURE STANDS, PRODUCES A MAGNETIC PUCK, AND WAVES THE PUCK ALONG DR. MALLORY'S COMPUTER CPU, BURNING OUT THE HARD DRIVES.

START ON TIGHT SHOT OF DR. MALLORY'S BROKEN FACE THEN PULL OUT TO REVEAL HIGH ANGLE WIDE OF THE LABORATORY. IT IS WRECKED, BLOODY WITH A SMALL FIRE STARTING NEAR THE SMASHED TABLE. WE HEAR THE FIGURE EXITING THE SCENE BEFORE THE SHOT GOES WIDE AT END OF MOVE.

We never see the figure, just hear it leave.

CUT TO:

15

INT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS) 15
CAFETERIA - LATER

Doug sits alone at a table at the very back of the cafeteria. He guards a tray of Friday Pizza (two slices), corn, a square of something brown with nuts on top, and an unopened carton of milk. Yes, there is a missing kid on the back of the carton. Next to everything, a VERY LARGE metal "jug" of Custom Black Cherry Kool Aid.

CUT TO:

16

INT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS) 16
CAFETERIA - FRONT BY THE REGISTERS - CONTINUOUS

Ellis rolls into the cafeteria. He looks for Doug and spots him at the back of the room. He rolls past five girls standing and talking by the registers. Ellis pays them no attention and rolls past toward Doug.

The girls, Kelly Anne Hardcastle, 16, blonde hair, blue eyes, pretty, athletic, a cheerleader, Tracey Stiles, 15, blonde hair, smoldering, chocolate brown eyes, drill team captain, Amara Danvers, 15, Deep black hair, drill team co-captain, Billie Kennedy, 16, page boy hair, cheerleader and Kasey Mallory, 16, long blonde hair, cheerleader, are ogling Doug in the distance.

KELLY ANNE

He sure is pretty. I want one. what
do you think his shoulders taste
like?

KASEY MALLORY

Like anyone else's in here, I'm
sure.

BILLIE

Well, actually no one tastes the
same as anyone else. David
Sixkiller is nothing like Cheryl
Watson.

AMARA

(to Billie) Two people are not a
reliable data sample.

BILLIE

(to Amara, rolling eyes) Well,
there may be a few additional input
points on my sample set...

TRACEY

Hey! It's that Macready boy...

Without excusing herself, Tracey moves as if driven by
stronger forces away from the girls toward the two most
interesting boys on the planet...

As the girls talk, a boy and a girl pass by, carrying empty
lunch trays. They're talking about something...

STEVIE

I'm not sure. Dad said there was
some kind of explosion in one of
the labs there.

★

HEATHER

Oh my God! Was anyone hurt?

*

STEVIE

Dad didn't say. He just said I need to see if I can get a ride from mom after school...

*

CUT TO:

17

INT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS) 17
CAFETERIA - TOWARD THE BACK - CONTINUOUS

Doug and Ellis are getting ready to enjoy a great lunch. Doug is proudly holding up a couple of red plastic Solo cups.

DOUG

Was Ms. Edwards okay with you scooting out on her today?

ELLIS

Heartbroken. She was fashioning her blue scarf into a noose when I told her. (chuckles) She was pretty excited to see me actually come back to the cafeteria.

DOUG

(aggressively handing a cup to Ellis) Doug's Custom Black Cherry Kool Aid! You must try...

ELLIS

Sure. Let's see what you've dared to pair Dei proprium pizza with...

DOUG

(friendly but mockingly) Bro! Latin? Really?! You've got to be one terebravisse puerum to learn Latin! You're a nerd, man! What else you got under that hood there?

ELLIS

(slightly shocked) I can beat your ass at darts.

DOUG

I love darts! I can put the pointy ends on any square you call.

ELLIS

I kind of prefer knocking them out of the bullseye. (thinks) I guess I can put 'em in any square, too.

Doug has poured a cup of his Kool Aid while they were talking and offers it to Ellis.

Ellis takes the cup and takes a sip.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Whoa... That IS nice! (takes a bite of pizza followed by sip) Really nice! El Likes.

DOUG

El?

ELLIS

Oh! That's what Elena and I call each other. El. Short for either name. It's stupid, I know...

DOUG

I think it's awesome! You are from here out, El! You know that's a Hebrew name for God, I think...

As the boys are talking Tracey Stiles approaches their table.

TRACEY

Hi! (sits down across from them)
Tracey. Tracey Stiles. You mind if I join you? What are you drinking?

Tracey is clearly fascinated by Ellis. He is a rare sighting outside of a classroom. Doug is equally interesting. He is usually running, throwing, jumping, studying or accepting an award for something. Ellis however is a rolling mystery...

DOUG

(awestruck) Uh, yeah. Join us!

ELLIS

(crazy awestruck) Por favor y gracias! (pointing to jug) It was Black Cherry Kool Aid, but Doug customized it. It's awesome.

TRACEY

Customized? Rum? THC? Russian Jet Fuel?

DOUG

I've only got two cups. Maybe I can
get another one from the lunch
ladies...

ELLIS

Or, we could empty that milk carton
and rinse it...

As the boys problem solve, Tracey takes the metal jug in both hands and drinks straight from the container, leaving a dark red circle of Kool Aid around her mouth. She wipes this off with her sleeve. And sticks her red stained tongue out at them. Followed up by a smile that could dim the sun...

CUT TO:

18 INT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS) 18
CAFETERIA - FRONT BY THE REGISTERS - CONTINUOUS

School principal, Persephone Barrett, 53, 5' 9", auburn hair, large, red, oval framed glasses and school counselor Rhonda Liu, 26, 5' 6", dark hair, are talking to Kasey Mallory.

PRINCIPAL BARRETT

Kasey? Can you come with us to the
office?

KASEY MALLORY

(concerned) Sure. What's going on?

RHONDA

(calming) We should talk
in Ms. Barrett's office

PRINCIPAL BARRETT

There's been an accident. Please
(beat) come with us Kasey.

19 INT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS) 19
CAFETERIA - TOWARD THE BACK - CONTINUOUS

Ellis, Doug and Tracey are joking around about Doug's weird Kool Aid when the world is interrupted by a loud, heart broken scream from somewhere near the front of the cafeteria.

TRACEY

Oh! That sounds bad...

ELLIS

Looks like Kasey Mallory.

DOUG

Ms. Barrett and Ms. Liu must have
told her something awful...

Tracey stands, dismisses herself and moves quickly back to
the front of the cafeteria where the other girls are sitting
to find out more.

DOUG (CONT'D)

I hope she's okay...

ELLIS

I made that sound once. She is most
definitely NOT okay.

Doug looks at Ellis, seeing the boy's soul for the first
time, then he turns his gaze to the front of the cafeteria
where Kasey is being helped out of the room by the principal
and counselor.

The cafeteria is silent for a moment.

CUT TO:

20

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - MADELINE ASTOR'S OFFICE - 20
CONTINUOUS

Madeline Astor, 48, 5'7", blonde hair, blue eyes, Strangely
youthful, beautiful, distinguished, focused with an intensity
behind her eyes that frightens the world itself, is talking
with someone over a speakerphone... *

MADELINE ASTOR

The protein inhibitors work just
fine! The data is solid. We have
run the trials again and there is
no need for a recall. You're
reading too much into this...

VOICE ON PHONE

It's just that the "glitch" report
was screen captured by that
journalist and she's blasted the
image all over the internet! We're
more than a little concerned...

MADELINE ASTOR

Look, "concern" is for people who
don't work for this company.
There's always a strategy.

(MORE)

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

(beat) We launch a full on marketing blitz and get our physician network to shoot this crap into every human arm in the country before any reports with any gravity slip out, which it won't...

VOICE ON PHONE

That would work. For peace of mind go ahead and run the sales up before the media gets wind of anything.

MADELINE ASTOR

We own the media. They'll say anything we tell them to say, but yes, marketing is polishing up the ads for streaming, print and broadcast now.

VOICE ON PHONE

That's not what Wallis told us.

MADELINE ASTOR

Like the media, I own Wallis, too. Look, just don't get too bent out of shape on this thing. I was out in front of this before Wallis ever found out about the "glitch" report. Relax, man.

Madeline disconnects from the call. She sits back in her chair and stares into the shadows that hug the corners of her large, dimly lit office.

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

Zhenya darling, aren't you supposed to be in Phoenix right now?

Evgeny (Zhenya) Sokolov, 6'6", bald, dark eyes of a killer steps out of the shadows and moves toward Madeline's desk, taking a seat in one of the two plush chairs that face her.

EVGENY SOKOLOV

Flight delayed. Maintenance.

MADELINE ASTOR

We have a jet.

EVGENY SOKOLOV

Yes. Jet delayed for maintenance. Wheels up at four.

(MORE)

EVGENY SOKOLOV (CONT'D)

I kill time with espresso and old Clive Barker novel. I then grow bored and choose to see you in office.

MADELINE ASTOR

What is that cologne you're wearing?

EVGENY SOKOLOV

Armani. Aqua di Gio. You gave it to me last year.

MADELINE ASTOR

Use less.

EVGENY SOKOLOV

Noted.

MADELINE ASTOR

(leans back in chair) Are the investigators finished?

EVGENY SOKOLOV

For now. We are cooperating fully, of course. Terrible mess. Next of kin have been notified. Along with the CDC and insurance team.

Evgeny stands and moves to the space behind Madeline and places his massive hands on her delicate shoulders. He begins to massage her shoulders, slowly. Madeline's eyes roll back as pleasure washes down her back. Suspenseful music telegraphs darker intentions than a casual back rub. His hands are frighteningly close to her neck...

EVGENY SOKOLOV (CONT'D)

You tell person on phone to relax. Now, I tell you to relax. (squeezes harder) That's better. (looking at her neck) You've reversed the age lines on neck? You look younger today. You've been adjusting compound and nano-programming again. Very nice...

He increases the pressure on her shoulders a little more.

MADELINE ASTOR

Oooh... Wheels up at four, you say.

EVGENY SOKOLOV

Maintenance.

MADELINE ASTOR

Maintenance is important. Hate for
an engine to fall off at 30,000
feet...

DISSOLVE TO:

21

INT. KASEY MALLORY'S BEDROOM - EVENING - MUCH LATER

21

Kasey and her school counselor Rhonda Liu sit across from each other, cross legged on the floor of Kasey's bedroom, in the space between her bed and a chest of drawers. Between them, a box of Kleenex and two bottles of water. The composition reflects the physical layout of some kind of white magic spell - a special spell to ease the agony of losing a mother, losing that connection to the eternal past, losing the origin point, and ease a soul torn apart by grief.

Kasey's father, Michael Mallory, 54, 6', close cropped blonde hair, electric blue eyes, divorced from Kasey's mother the last 12 years, haunts the hallway just outside Kasey's bedroom door. He wears a crisp, white, button down collar, dress shirt, the sleeves rolled up to just above his elbows. He holds a scotch, neat in his hands. He is tired. He just flew in from fifteen hundred miles away. He watches Kasey and her school counselor from just outside the doorway. He is a phantom from her distant past, invoked into her tangible reality by Death's own incantation. He. Does. Not. Want. To. Be. Here. Men don't cry. He wonders what exactly his daughter and this woman from school are doing in there. If they're praying, it sure is strange. *

Rhonda and Kasey face each other, looking deeply into each other's eyes. They almost look like still life photos. They begin emotionally cold, then descend the emotional depths slowly in phases. A tear forms in Rhonda's eye and trails down her left cheek.

Matching shot, reverse angle, an identical tear drop creates a matching trail down Kasey's right cheek.

Matching shot, reverse angle, both of Rhonda's tightly closed eyes stream now...

Matching shot, reverse angle, both of Kasey's eyes stream, in harmony to Ms. Liu's...

Wide shot, high angle looking down on both women as they lean in to each other, Kasey wailing and shaking as Rhonda holds her tighter and tighter, absorbing the cosmic waves of grief exploding from this young soul...

MCU Michael, watching through the door, suddenly understands what's happening and lowers his head a bit. This drink could use some ice...

MCU Kasey, eyes still closed, but not as tightly as before, slowly opens them to look directly into us...

KASEY MALLORY

(wiping away a tear) Mom said that lab was basically shut down. She was only working on it's quantum workstation terminal. There's one in every lab. Her office was being updated to the new fiber system. All the glass stuff and burners and, you know crap in a drug lab, would have been turned off and empty. I can't quite get it stuffed into my skull. How did this happen?!

RHONDA LIU

Is it remotely possible that your mom was running some tests, something not on the books yet, something she needed an immediate answer to?

KASEY MALLORY

Yeah, she may have needed to verify something...

RHONDA LIU

You are such a smart one. I'm assuming that your mom confided in you frequently after she came home from the company.

KASEY MALLORY

Yes and no. She would share the broad strokes, but never any "eyes off" details.

RHONDA LIU

(a slight, sly, smile forming) You and your mother were very close. That spiritual connection just can't be cut, at least not completely anyway. Lean into all of those precious, precious memories. Death isn't strong enough to move the gravity of those memories alone and always leaves a thread or seven behind.

(MORE)

*

RHONDA LIU (CONT'D)

Make space in your heart for that
though, please, if only for a
moment. This is that part of the
script where we rise up and grab
some courage out of the air.

The two fall apart and collapse into each other, sobbing.

Michael turns from his station at the doorway and disappears
down the hall.

DISSOLVE TO:

22

INT. ELLIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT CONTINUOUS

22

Ellis and Doug are playing darts. They are two gods of equal
strength transcending skill and aggressively knocking each
other's dart from the board. It's supernatural. Ellis throws
to a "called" square (never missing) and Doug throws into
Ellis' dart knocking it loose.

The boys are amazed at each other's skill.

They talk as they throw.

*

ELLIS

Man! You are good!

DOUG

(mock Asian) You can be defeated.
Ultimate victory will be mine Yang
Lo!

ELLIS

I'm Yang Lo, now?

DOUG

Yes. I am Kim Song. (moves his lips
out of sync with his words) Master
of darts. You will soon experience
defeat at my hands.

ELLIS

Yeah? (bad lip sync) We are evenly
matched. You must accept defeat or
draw and declare me your equal.

DOUG

(thinking) yeah... I could see
calling a draw.

Doug stops and sits on the bed. Ellis, in his wheelchair, continues his throw. The dart knocks Doug's dart out of the board and onto the floor.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Hey man, I don't mean anything offensive, and I totally understand if you tell me to drop it, but...

ELLIS

Yeah?

DOUG

(gesturing to wheelchair) What happened?

Ellis slides into the deepest, darkest, shadows of his mind at the vibration of Doug's words.

He turns his head slightly to look Doug square in the eyes.

ELLIS

I don't know. It's all... I don't know, black and gray and red and more red and my head starts to hurt like an ice pick behind my eye. I can walk Doug, it's like something happened so bad that my body forgot how to do it. Almost two years. And I can't remember, the thing that happened. I can't remember anything. No kidding. It's like one day, I had a mom and dad and then a big, black spot and... (a beat, a tear) Nothing.

DOUG

(looking strangely relieved) Sounds like a therapy kind of thing. Something that could be fixed...

ELLIS

(motioning toward the hall with his head) I have a therapist. El.

DOUG

El! Oh, wow. I thought she was just like your, I don't know, nanny or caretaker or something. A therapist that lives with you. How's that working out for us?

ELLIS

(shaking head) I'm pretty sure she's an actual doctor, a psychiatrist, I think. (beat) Woof! You've met her! Yikes, all I can think about is what her neck might taste like. Therapy is tough, man. However, I can honestly say that reality always trumps fantasy in the end and I can sort of hear her message. I'm on to her game and confirmed, she's using a strategy of allowing me space to experience the emotion until it's quantum wavelength collapses and I'm ready to hold the concept of healing in my soul, or something like that. I still wouldn't put snuffing me with a pillow in my sleep, past her. She's a puzzle that I enjoy looking at, that's for sure. I don't know, though.

*

CUT TO:

23

EXT. ASTOR HOME FRONT DRIVEWAY LEADING TO ENTRANCE - NIGHT 23
CONTINUOUS

Extreme wide high angle looking down on the front entry way of the Astor House. The entry is lined by two, doric columns, that terminate in orbs on thin, hexagonal platforms, taking up about four feet of space before touching the ceiling of the white porch. The floor is covered in black and white alternating tiles twelve inches by twelve inches. The illumination appears to be coming from the white walls themselves, describing the sconces, outlets and trim. The doorframe is wide and deep black, framing a metal door with arched windows cut at the very top.

It is raining. Not exactly furious in it's assault on the earth, but definitely hard enough to drown any thoughts of being leisurely.

Tracey is running toward the entry. She has what appears to be a large briefcase tucked tightly under her left arm. She clenches her large, rimmed glasses in her teeth by one of the ear pieces. The angle of the lenses allow for rain to collect in them like shallow bowls, spilling over like fountains.

Tight on Tracey's foot and ankle as she steps hard into a mud filled divot right before she reaches the steps up to the door. Her red sneaker and frilled white ankle sock are destroyed by the gross mud.

MCU on Tracey as she angrily starts hopping toward the stairs, removing the muddy shoe and sock and shaking the filth from her foot as she progresses. She is in a hurry and not because of the rain. She will have to deal with a stupid shoe later.

Reverse angle on door from inside the house looking out onto the porch. Over the shoulder on Elena from behind as she opens the door...

Reverse wide reveal of Tracey shaking the water off, wearing only one shoe, holding a large, black briefcase under her arm. She looks like a soaked street puppy with an urgent look in her eyes.

Reverse on Elena looking at the the adorable, soaked urchin.

Back at Tracey...

TRACEY

Is Ellis home? I know it's kind of late, but I really need to see him. I promise to not stay long.

ELENA

You're not their dealer are you?

MCU on Elena. Stern guardian of the entry to an ancient house, fighting and losing a battle to suppress a smile at this unexpected visitor.

TRACEY

(confused) No! I mean, no. No drugs. Honest. I just want to talk to Ellis for a second.

ELENA

(wisdom leaking through her eyes)
There are many kinds of "dealers," and there are many kinds of things that can be "dealt." Who is asking to enter our house?

TRACEY

Tracey. Stiles. I go to school with Ellis.

ELENA

(pointing to briefcase) Seriously Tracey. What is inside the case?

TRACEY

My investigation files! I
contribute research and stuff to a
podcast!

ELENA

That seems to me to be infinitely
worse than alcohol or drugs.
(softens, smiles) Come in. Respect
El's space. It's important.
(sarcastic) He does respond well to
violence.

Tracey, shocked, looks up at Elena, unsure of what to do with
what she just heard.

ELENA (CONT'D)

I was joking.

TRACEY

Whew! I'd hate to have to smack a
boy down...

ELENA

(straight faced) I find custom
pharmaceutical compounds also work
well.

TRACEY

(nodding in pretend agreement) Yes.
I suppose that would. I'm afraid I
don't have any of those on me.

ELENA

(Winks at the girl) I do.

24

INT. ASTOR HOME FRONT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

24

Elena motions for Tracey to proceed along the hallway. The
hallway is also floored in black and white, marble tiles
giving Tracey the mental image of a very expensive chess
board. Tracey makes her way to the end of the ground floor
hall, finds Ellis' room and sticks her head in the door.
First time visitor's should always show caution when
approaching wildlife in its natural habitat.

TRACEY

Hi, Ellis? It's Tracey Stiles.
Elena showed me in. Your not naked
or anything, are you?

CUT TO:

25

INT. ELLIS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

25

Angle on Ellis and Doug in the middle of their strange dart game. They freeze, each holding a dart in their hands. They look at each other in joyful shock. There is an actual, real life, albeit soaking wet and missing a left shoe, girl in the doorway.

DOUG

He better not be, cause that just wouldn't be cool at all!

ELLIS

(grinning) All fairly decent in here, Tracey! Doug just finished. Come on in...

Doug pretend smacks Ellis on the shoulder in mock disgust.

TRACEY

Well, all righty then. (beat) I just came from the public library. Do you guys know about the PsychoApocalypse podcast? The true crime show?

ELLIS

I don't know that one. Is it anything like Investigator Slater's Psychopedia podcast?

TRACEY

Well, Slater is the top sorceress in the crime podcast game, but the PsychoApocalypse Podcast is more regional to us. They cover some of the stuff that has happened around here.

The boys move in closer to each other, as if competing for Tracey's eye line, suddenly and intensely interested in every syllable of every word from her mouth.

As Tracey talks, she finds herself fascinated by the floor to ceiling book shelves and wall hugging sideboards adorned with captivating artifacts, tin, toy robots, and snow globes of bizarre and gruesome design. Model kits of airplanes, flying saucers, and monsters, like The Creature From The Black Lagoon, The Phantom of the Opera, and The Frankenstein Monster, populate the entire surface of a table in the far corner of the spacious room. Tracey circles the room three times during the course of the scene.

She never breaks her train of thought as she clearly marvels over some of Ellis' things. She settles at a tall, wood and cloth director's chair. She removes her other shoe as she catches her breath.

TRACEY (CONT'D)

Cool room! What was it before it turned into your first floor bedroom?

ELLIS

Not sure. I sort of woke up one day and here it was. I sort of get a billiards room vibe.

DOUG

(looking around) Or maybe a personal library or smoking room?

TRACEY

(breathes deeply, closes eyes)
Nooo... Not even a trace of nicotine. Not a smoking room. Definitely a personal library. I'm jealous.

DOUG

(singing) She glanced this way, I thought I saw...

ELLIS

(catching on fast and singing) And when we touched she didn't shudder at my paw...

Tracey stares in shock at the two clowns, with perfect pitch, beautiful tone and control, clear and intimate knowledge of Beauty and the Beast, and processes a possible pass phrase...

TRACEY

(sings reply) New and a bit alarming, who had ever thought that this could be?

Silence. The boys shake their heads and snort. None of this is possible. May it never end...

ELLIS

(pointing at briefcase) Show us what you've got there...

Tracey leans in close to Ellis and kisses him on the cheek.

TRACEY

And I just wanted to get that out
of the way.

DOUG

(gesturing to himself) What? The
fast guy gets left out in the cold?

Tracey stands, moves in close to Doug, positions her hand along his jaw, preventing him from turning his head, and kisses him on the cheek. We notice this took a bit longer than Ellis' moment. A bit more calculated. One should exercise caution when feeding a tiger a snack...

Tracey returns her attention to the matter at hand.

TRACEY

I've been researching Crestview.
(producing photocopies) I can show
a pattern of accidents against a
pattern of drug trial failures and
adverse events reporting
failures...

Ellis and Doug lean in close. Ellis touches a phrase etched in the leather shell of the briefcase. It reads, "Quo Vadis." This is groovy...

TRACEY (CONT'D)

(takes a deep breath, exhales
slowly, shifts gears) I guess I
should start back about a year and
a half ago. I got this part time,
paid internship thing at my mom's
law firm. Well, she's a partner
there but IS a decision maker and
debate settler. My mom. I love her!
(shines brighter for a moment)
Anyway, I take my break about ten
o'clock every day, I mean every day
that I work there (holds up two
fingers) and I notice there's
always this monster like guy, like,
I don't know, like if Slenderman
developed a dad bod, you know?

The boys nod in imaginary agreement, a mental contract bound by the image of Slenderman with a depressing, dad bod...

TRACEY (CONT'D)

Anyway, I notice this guy there and I had just gotten this camera for my birthday and I thought Slenderman might be an interesting "hidden camera" subject.

ELLIS

You stalked a guy?

TRACEY

No! I only ever rolled camera during my break at ten. I never like followed him anywhere.

DOUG

At least not until...

TRACEY

Well, like my fourth week in. A couple and their kid came out of the Crestview building laughing about something. Valet drops off their gorgeous SUV and they pull away. Then SlenderDadMan or whatever we're calling him, runs out of the building, hops into a black, Mercedes SEL and flies off after them. I remembered the couples' faces. I remember their kid's face.

*

DOUG

How long ago?

TRACEY

(pointing to Ellis) About a year and a half ago...

DOUG

And you got this on camera?

ELLIS

(gesturing for device) Let me see.

Tracey hands the camera with its LCD screen extended to Ellis. He watches in horror as:

Recorder POV of John and January Macready, with Ellis orbiting close, step out of the Crestview Building interacting in a silly way as they wait for the valet with their ride. Their beautiful, black SUV arrives and they get in and drive away.

Immediately "SlenderDadMan," moves quickly from the building and gets into the black Mercedes that almost seems to appear from nowhere...

Ellis drops the recorder onto the bed. He is in a kind of shock.

Tracey Leans in...

TRACEY

I swear I didn't recognize the boy in the video until the cafeteria today! I mean something about you seemed familiar at school, but you hardly ever went to any assemblies or games, or the lunchroom, until today. When I sat down across from you today, I knew. I knew and so I pulled all my stuff together and, well, here we are.

CUT TO:

26 INT. ASTOR HOME - HALLWAY IN FRONT OF ELLIS' BEDROOM - 26
CONTINUOUS

Elena has been listening from the hallway, just outside Ellis' door. She leans in, just a bit closer. Hand flat against the door...

CUT TO:

27 INT. ELLIS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 27

MCU on Ellis...

ELLIS

...this is wild. We were on the way to Martha's Vineyard, before we travelled back home to Maine. We stopped off at Aunt Madeline's office at Crestview. Mom had some kind of reports for her, or something. (beat) Anyway, we didn't get anywhere and I got here.

Tracey places a hand on Ellis' shoulder. Looks into him for a moment. Then she turns to both.

TRACEY

Okay, flash forward to now. Did you hear what happened to Kasey Mallory's mom?

DOUG

My brother said there was an accident over there. (wincing) I got all the brains when we were born and he wasn't real helpful with the fine details.

TRACEY

(snorts) Yes! It was reported as an accidental explosion. The police report may record a different story. (to Doug) Sorry about your brother...

DOUG

Crestview.

ELLIS

Crestview.

TRACEY

Crestview. That's right!

ELLIS

My Aunt Madeline owns part of it (gestures to the opulent room with his hands), or used to. She wouldn't ever sweat a utility bill.

DOUG

Or touch a utility bill! With all due respect man. I'm just saying she does have a reputation.

ELLIS

A reputation for what, exactly?

DOUG

Well, there is kind of a list of deaths attached to her name in some way that goes back to 1968.

ELLIS

Big deal. Hillary's is bigger.

TRACEY

And now Dr. Mallory! Guys, I heard
it was horrible!

The boys snap back to serious mode. They turn their attention
toward Tracey.

TRACEY (CONT'D)

Huge shards of broken glass smashed
into her face and skull crushed by
debris in the "explosion."

ELLIS

(suddenly making the connection
between Kasey Mallory and the Dr.
Mallory from the lab) Oh, man.
Kasey Mallory. I'm embarrassed. Dr.
Mallory is Kasey's mom. Are you
about to drop an anvil on my head?

TRACEY

Yes.

ELLIS

You want to tell me that Crestview
had something to do with my
"accident, attack, or whatever..."

DOUG

...and Kasey might be in a lot more
trouble than we thought?!

TRACEY

Yes. Kasey is in it deep. I mean
her mom and her were super close.
Kasey was always telling me about
what they were cooking up in this
lab or that. What drugs to stay
away from. Even who to pressure my
mom and dad to vote for. Kasey gets
the biggest kick out of being the
smartest brain in the room. She
definitely knows a lot of things.

DOUG

If someone were inclined to think
in terms of "loose ends..."

ELLIS

(looks at Doug) I wonder if Kasey
is home right now?

Both boys turn to look at Tracey.

TRACEY

I wouldn't know. I do know that sometimes Dr. Liu comes by when something really bad has happened.

ELLIS

I remember her really holding me together after I... woke up. She came in like every day. I would be inclined to defend her before the gates of Heaven.

TRACEY

I'm just saying. She's most likely with Kasey now. But if you think about it very hard, it's a good amount of connections. A lot of parallel data points. The math is crazy! (beat - looks at both boys) Look, I'm not crazy. Maybe a little on the spectrum somewhere, but totally sane...

ELLIS

No! I'm sorry. I didn't mean...

TRACEY

I know you didn't. I'm just saying I know how crazy I could sound.

DOUG

Like to a sane person? (grins affectionately)

TRACEY

(to Ellis) Can you remember anything from the night...

Tracey places both of her hands on each of Ellis' legs, just above the knee. She looks into his soul.

ELLIS

I try. I really do. Seriously, it's like this, do you guys know about these things called "Pressure Cookers?" Well, they're these big, thick walled, pots with these heavy lids that bolt on with big screws. That's a perfect description of my skull. Sometimes thoughts just start forming in there, raising the pressure. The more I try to remember, the more thoughts build up.

(MORE)

ELLIS (CONT'D)

There's no pressure valve control.
Just a gauge that everyone can see.
Waiting for the pressure to just
drop with the temperature dropping
is exhausting by itself! I do try
to remember though. I'm saying that
this is all really painful in ways
that are too hard to really
describe. I. Have. No. Memory. I
dream that my brain was cut with a
knife and something removed.

TRACEY

Ellis, I really think Kasey is in
some kind of trouble. SlenderManDad
doesn't look like a gentleman. If
you knew anything that might help
us to, I don't know, help her if
she were in trouble, now might be a
good time...

DOUG

Wait, I hope you mean something
that a grown up might need to know
and we stand back and wait for the
outcome?

ELLIS

Collect evidence and report only?

TRACEY

No. We dive a little deeper. (to
Ellis) You may have seen the face
of the attacker, if it was an
attack, if you could only remember.

ELLIS

I just told you...

TRACEY

...and I'm not buying it
completely.

DOUG

We could try hypnosis.

TRACEY

That's an idea!

ELLIS

I can't be hypnotized. My IQ is too
high. You can't hypnotize a smart
person.

TRACEY

Or the humble. Look, David Lynch practiced Transcendental Meditation and even taught it in all of his film classes. I think he was pretty intelligent...

ELLIS

(considers) Well he would have been doing something that might work. I promise it's a lot different than that magic hypnosis stage act.

CUT TO:

28 INT. ASTOR HOME - HALLWAY IN FRONT OF ELLIS' BEDROOM - 28
CONTINUOUS

Elena leans in closer to the door. She turns her head to position her ear as close as she dares...

CUT TO:

29 INT. ASTOR HOME - ELLIS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 29

Ellis, Doug and Tracey sit, arranged within a circle at the center of the bedroom, shot from the ceiling, camera lens straight down. The scene resembles a diagram drawn on paper.

TRACEY

All righty, then. Let's try a couple of TM techniques I've been looking at online...

ELLIS

Now?!

TRACEY

Yes. Now. (pats the mattress) Hop up. We're gonna almost take a nap. And we're probably gonna get scared and regret all of this. But most importantly, and I can't emphasize strongly enough, might fix you.

Ellis hesitates a moment then maneuvers his wheelchair to the edge of his bed. He hops up onto the mattress and rocks himself to the middle. He leans up on his elbows.

ELLIS

You know, I'm not very comfortable with this...

TRACEY

You're not supposed to be. Your comfort is of no importance right now. The truth is all that matters. I want you to think of the sound of (pantomimes with hands) metal bending. Metal violently, suddenly bending until it shatters.

Ellis winces at the word shatters...

TRACEY (CONT'D)

(noticing the wince) There it is. (whispers) Shatters. Shatters. Glass. Thousands of little, square, pieces of glass raining down. Tiny cuts appearing so fast it takes a second to feel them. (a bit louder) The blood appearing and growing out of each cut is much faster. Grab that feeling and squeeze it into your pressure cooker skull. Reach beyond the valley of echoes, Ellis. Lie still. Doug and I will stand guard right here. Just lie still and remember... (whispers) Glass everywhere...

DISSOLVE TO:

30 EXT. HIGHWAY 66 TEN MILES WEST OF HARRISVILLE - THE PAST 30

We see glimpses of something. A luxury SUV, casually gliding down the highway, carrying a happy family. They are singing something from the musical Beauty and the Beast.

Tight on car audio controls. The volume goes up.

A sleek, black, Mercedes SEL glides closer, rapidly from behind.

The family really loves their music...

The black Mercedes glides in closer to the SUV...

John Macready 53, 6'1", dark brown hair, blue eyes, laughs and jokes with his wife, January Macready, 50, 5'6", blonde hair, deep blue eyes, a beautiful woman who looks much younger than she actually is, as he drives the SUV to a private air strip just outside of the next town.

CUT TO:

31 INT. ELLIS' BEDROOM - OUTSIDE OF THE DREAM - CONTINUOUS 31

Ellis twitches a little and makes a few larger, involuntary muscle spasms in his arms and hands. His legs remain "dead."

CUT TO:

32 EXT. HIGHWAY 66 EIGHT MILES WEST OF HARRISVILLE - THE DREAM 32
CONTINUOUS

The Macready SUV is speeding down the highway, eager to reach its destination. The Mercedes closes in and sideswipes the SUV.

Wide shot of interior of SUV as it loses control and rolls 7 times, collapsing in a heap of twisted metal on one side by the side of the empty stretch of highway.

MCU Ellis is trapped by his seatbelt. Blood is pouring from several deep wounds in his head and face. He is trapped by something. His dad speaks to him from the front driver's seat.

JOHN MACREADY

Your seatbelt is caught. Try to release it again.

ELLIS

(belt clicks loose) Thanks.

Ellis crawls out from the wreckage. His dad is moving in the driver's seat, trying to get loose. He raises his tone of voice as he speaks to Ellis.

JOHN MACREADY

I can't see, son. Is your mother all right?!

Ellis tries to move to the other side of the car to check on his mother. This is difficult and bloody.

Inside the car, John struggles with his seat belt.

The Driver's side window suddenly shatters. A tire iron has been thrust through. Tiny cubes of glass explode from the window.

A black gloved hand tears the door open and slices the seatbelt away with a huge KA-BAR style knife. The black gloved figure then pulls John from the car, gore spilling from his eyes. The figure then throws him to the ground, hard, causing the pavement to "sand off" part of John's face.

The Figure then raises the tire iron and proceeds to destroy John's skull with it.

ELLIS

No!!! What?! STOP!!!!

Ellis turns to find his mom, broken and curled along the floor of the passenger seat. He wrenches the door open.

January Macready summons the strength to reach out to Ellis.

The gloved killer's hand crush into Ellis's shoulders. The figure lifts and throws him away from the car. It holds something in its hand. Ellis hears something like a Black Cat firecracker going off. Something moves through his shoulder with such speed that he is propelled several inches back. The pain is indescribable. Darkness threatens. Wait... There's someone else... Someone is kneeling at the passenger door... another shot, followed by another shot...

Darkness

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

33 INT. ASTOR HOME - HALLWAY IN FRONT OF ELLIS' BEDROOM - 33
CONTINUOUS

Elena, listening at the door, recoils from what she is hearing. She knocks on the door, pushes the door open. She pauses at the threshold...

ELENA

Children, I think it's last call.
Ellis has doctors appointments
tomorrow.

Reverse angle inside room. Startled, Doug and Tracey both jump up, guilty and trying not to act it.

DOUG

(to Tracey) He said there were two
of them...

TRACEY

He remembered something!

Ellis lies curled into a tight fetal position at the far left, top corner of his bed. He shivers uncontrollably as if he is freezing to death.

Or returning from being frozen...

Elena enters the room.

ELENA

(to Tracey) I believe I warned you to respect his space. This is not that. I can see you're a permanent fixture. I need to know if we're going to have a problem, you and I?

TRACEY

No ma'am. No problem. We just thought...

ELENA

You thought you might regress him into his head through guided visualization and self hypnosis.

TRACEY

Something like that.

DOUG

He was pretty tired. I'll try not to wear him out next time?

ELENA

Sounds like a good idea. I'm holding you to that. In Rome, that is a contract.

Tracey and Doug turn to leave. Elena grasps Tracey's shoulder, stopping her suddenly.

ELENA (CONT'D)

You didn't have any drugs in that case?

TRACEY

(pointing to the desk with the case open) It's right there. No drugs. He just sort of had this seizure.

ELENA

I can see that. Go. (stares at Doug and Tracey) It's late and your parents will worry.

Ellis has pulled himself together enough to address the room.

ELLIS

(weakly at start) Guys, hey, I'm sorry about all that. I don't know what that was. I'm okay.

(MORE)

ELLIS (CONT'D)

(pulling comforter up around his shoulders) Covers! Somebody turn the heat up, please?

Elena, Tracey, and Doug turn and converge on the bed.

Shot from above, we conceive the points of triangle contracting toward a central point...

Tracey, first, leans in and hugs Ellis tightly.

TRACEY

(into Ellis' shoulder) I am so sorry that hurt that bad...

Elena, hovering over Tracey, places a hand on the girl's shoulder.

She has Tracey's undivided attention.

ELENA

Your apology has been accepted.
Your repentance has redeemed you.
(lifting) Now it is time to retire
to your own homes and engage in a
little (beat) self reflection.

Everyone, except Ellis of course, moves out of the room and into the hallway.

ELLIS

El, I want to see them tomorrow if they want to come over!!

ELENA

You have appointments tomorrow, El!

ELLIS

(louder) That's in the morning!!!
We'll be back by 1:30!!!

Elena stops and informs Doug and Tracey,

ELENA

You are both invited to see El tomorrow after two. If you wish. You are not allowed to traumatize him in any way. (to Tracey) A person needs time to recover from any neurological trauma, self induced or external. Answers don't always care if there is pain involved in revelation...

TRACEY

I noticed you guys are into darts.
I'll just beat him at a game...

DOUG

(snorts) Good luck with that!

Doug stops and turns to face Elena.

DOUG (CONT'D)

After two. Copy that El.

He turns around and exits. Tracey follows quickly from behind. Tracey is carrying her one dry shoe and sock in her hand.

Doug, noticing the muddy shoe and sock on the porch near the door, picks them up. They are gross now, but soon will be spiffed up good as new.

CUT TO:

34

INT. ASTOR HOME KITCHEN HALL JUST OUTSIDE NURSE'S STATION -34
SHORT TIME LATER

Ellis, on his way to the refrigerator for one more glass of Black Cherry Kool Aid before attempting in earnest to sleep, overhears something strange and stops and leans in to listen from the shadows...

ELENA

Si è decisamente ricordato
qualcosa. (beat) Sì. Qualcosa di
molto importante. Ralph, the damn
is breaking. It might be the last
reel. The boy is starting to ask
himself for answers.

*
*
*
*

CUT TO:

*

INT. SAFE HOUSE - OLD VETERINARY CLINIC ON HIGHWAY 7 -
CONTINUOUS

*
*

Ralph Knight, 67, retired DEA agent, on loan to INTERPOL for the last 9 years, gray hair, tough as nails but kind in heart and spirit sits shrouded in heavy shadows.

*
*
*

He rubs his temples as he speaks.

*

RALPH KNIGHT

I understand. We thought we had a
month. Turns out we don't.

*
*
*

(MORE)

RALPH KNIGHT (CONT'D)

I've reached out to Harrisville PD
for help on this. Lt. Elizabeth
Fay. They're my people. Fear not.
I'm pulling together a few things.
It's not 8:15 yet...

*
*
*
*
*
*

Tight shot on Elena as she pushes urgency into her cell
phone...

ELENA

Sì, la consulente scolastica è con
lei in questo momento. Si chiama
Rhonda Liu... It's closer to 7:30.
We have passengers on this journey,
too, I'm afraid. Two friendly,
nosey kids. Questioni in sospeso.

*
*
*
*

Tight shot on Ellis, criss crossed by shadows through kitchen
windows at night. He speaks enough Italian to pick up some of
the conversation. He is sweating a little...

ELLIS

(whispering to himself) I'm never
sleeping again. It's just not my
thing anymore, sleep...

CUT TO:

34A INT. SHUTTERED, VETERINARY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

34A

The shadowed outline of man, sitting at an old office desk,
disconnects from his phone. He rubs his temples...

CUT TO:

35 EXT. THIRD STREET - SEVERAL BLOCKS FROM THE ASTOR HOUSE - 35
CONTINUOUS

High angle drone shot wide closing slowly to tighter shot of
Doug and Tracey walking home. She lives two streets over from
Doug's house. Doug is walking her home. They laugh as they
talk.

MCU Doug to Tracey. Does not stop walking...

DOUG

That was weird. Caused a seizure!
He's okay right? Therapy stuff?

TRACEY

Therapy stuff?

DOUG

You know, fixable, or at least described well enough to feel better about things? Light at the end of the rainbow, or whatever...

TRACEY

(smiles) End of the rainbow? You are the smartest boy. Thank you for seeing me home. And for finding my muddy shoe!

DOUG

(makes disgusted face at the muddy shoe he's holding) And for carrying them?

TRACEY

And that.

DOUG

I don't have to be home at any time on Fridays.

TRACEY

Really? My mom wants me home by eleven.

DOUG

It's only nine.

TRACEY

It's only nine.

DOUG

Do you know where Kasey lives? I do have a car. It's back from the shop. I just can't drive it to Ellis' house. (pointing to Ellis' house) It's like right there! (low) I mean it would be stupid...

Doug stops at a driveway and puts his hand on a white Jeep Gladiator. He produces a set of keys from his pocket.

DOUG (CONT'D)

(mock tempting key shake) Yeah?

TRACEY

No, I need to look into some things from my place. I just need to get home. That and I don't want to have that conversation with my mother, just yet.

DOUG

The one about boys with cars and not knowing where you are and all that...

TRACEY

That one.

DOUG

I think those talks are numbered somewhere. (beat) Well, I'm still walking you the rest of the way.

TRACEY

In case there's a wolf-man on the way?

DOUG

(kind of legitimately shocked) Yes. That way we both get to be wolf-men... (corrects) wolf-whatevers, from the cursed bites! Probably hurts like crazy and I'd never let you go through that alone. No way you get to have all the fun!

TRACEY

(laughing) Being a werewolf would be the best! Live forever, never get sick or old, get to live in the great outdoors. Never have to do anything your told, really. Just aim yourself at some "bad guys," during each full moon and you get to eat AND you get to wolf out forever... Guilt free. (thinking) The trick, I bet is to somehow survive that initial attack.

DOUG

(directly into her eyes) You kind of make me wish they were a thing...

TRACEY

(winks) They aren't?

Doug starts to howl like a horror movie wolf as the two walk together toward the safety of Tracey's house. Lights come on in a couple of the neighborhood houses in response to the sound.

Tracey looks at Doug as if he needs therapy then joins in with a crazy werewolf howl of her own.

They laugh as they grow smaller in the frame, walking away from us. More lights come on. We catch a glimpse of perfectly choreographed, Michael Jackson "Thriller" dance moves and desperately wish for more as the scene fades...

Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers live in an entirely different universe. Their spirits however, are quite comfortable in this one...

DISSOLVE TO:

36 INT. MALLORY HOME - KASEY'S KITCHEN - MORNING - NEXT DAY 36

Kasey goes downstairs for a cup of coffee and some kind of idea of what fresh hell the day holds.

We notice a funny, analog, cat clock (with the swinging tail) on the wall by the door. It reads 8:12.

The atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima detonated at 8:15 am...

Kasey stops at the kitchen entrance. She watches quietly as her father searches the cabinets for something. He is growing more and more agitated as each search yields nothing.

Tight on Kasey's face as she watches this stranger fall apart in her dead mother's kitchen.

She thinks...

She speaks.

KASEY MALLORY

What are we looking for Dad?

MICHAEL MALLORY

A way out! Some Air! A cigarette!
The rest of that Macallen over
there. (holds a jug of grape juice
from the refrigerator) This looks
good?

KASEY MALLORY

(quick) In order... You found that
like a hundred years ago. (beat)
It's all around you. Just accept it
and breathe a little slower. It's
all just a crappy simulation.
(beat) I'll get you a glass, or do
we just chug from the bottle like
Hemingway? (beat) The grape juice
is off limits. It's mine.

(MORE)

KASEY MALLORY (CONT'D)

It tastes like church and I only drink it on Sundays, but I drink the whole bottle when I do. May I recommend the apple juice in its place? It's quite good. At least if you can ever remember what apple juice actually tastes like, on account of it going down so fast there's no way anyone could sip it slow enough to catch up with the neurological processing speed to really "taste" it. But I recall it as pleasant. There. (wink) There's a science experiment for you to pass the time. (quiet sarcasm) Try and truly, truly experience and remember the taste of apple juice...

Michael takes the apple juice and reaches for a glass that Kasey produces from a cabinet by her head.

MICHAEL MALLORY

I wasn't kidding about wanting a way out. Something was tearing at me last night, but I just thought it was some kind of delayed emotional state or some such nonsense, when I noticed the plane ticket I received to come here.

KASEY MALLORY

I knew you were too cheap to spring for a trip out here yourself!

MICHAEL MALLORY

And you'd be right about that sweetheart, but I got this and an Uber voucher for the ride to the airport. (moves toward Kasey with ticket) Judgement Day attitude aside sweetheart, take a look at this.

Kasey takes the ticket and looks closely at the details.

MICHAEL MALLORY (CONT'D)

It's from your mom. That's her name on the ticket. You know I have a problem with obvious things... (touches the ticket) Your mom apparently bought the ticket from her card...

KASEY MALLORY

(staring into the ticket) A day after she died. Or maybe the night of...

MICHAEL MALLORY

Your mom was always telling me to stay low. She even sent me the text like last week saying I should enjoy life a little and it's always a good idea to keep a low profile.

KASEY MALLORY

(disgusted) Mom never texted you! Maybe "where's the child support payments," but not friendly advice! And absolutely not those kind of messages. She didn't like you. She said you could lie better than any politician.

MICHAEL MALLORY

(offers his phone) Unlocked. See for yourself. There aren't any raunchy shots. Sorry. That wasn't funny. There's the texts. She is right about the lying. I do have a pattern of behavior that would support her argument. (exhausted) I am ashamed. Enjoy your revelation. (holding up apple juice) I have an experiment to perform.

Kasey studies the entire chat in her Dad's text messages. It was her mom all right.

We see the text messages superimposed to left side of screen.

Something about the comments. Something about the timing of her replies. Something about the number of times she says, "lay low."

KASEY MALLORY

(entering kitchen, looking at phone) Dad, I don't think she was being friendly. I think she was trying to warn you about something? Or someone pretending to be her was trying to get you to come here?

MICHAEL MALLORY

You know, you're right about the apple juice taste. It chugs faster than sweet tea.

(MORE)

MICHAEL MALLORY (CONT'D)

No one has any idea what this stuff
really tastes like...

The weird cat clock on the wall behind Michael now reads 8:15. A thick streaming arc of blood appears suddenly across the clock, across the wall.

Michael still standing and holding the small glass of juice is silent as the top of his head (separated suddenly by something sharp and fast) slides slowly away and to the floor. His lifeless body falls a beat after the top of his head.

Kasey shocked, processes what has just happened really fast and screams to the top of her lungs.

Something sharp and heavy blurs past her and sticks into the wall just behind her, slicing the cat clock into two parts. It is forever 8:15...

Kasey screams again and runs from the kitchen, screaming uncontrollably as she makes her way to the living room.

A figure in black, wearing black gloves, with a large KA-BAR type knife rushes her and tackles her to the ground. The figure pulls out a long cord with one hand, spinning it around Kasey's neck. The figure pulls back on the cord with force. Kasey struggles and then stops moving.

Tight on Kasey's seemingly lifeless face. She has blacked out.

The gloved hand produces a rather large syringe with a heavy gauge hypodermic needle loaded with a clear liquid. The needle penetrates Kasey's neck, the contents of the syringe gliding into her.

The figure quickly restrains her wrists, ankles and mouth with duct tape and rolls Kasey's body onto a small, thin framed, metal cart with wheels used for moving furniture. The figure moves Kasey's form toward the front door and out to the driveway.

The figure moves in an odd, almost mechanical sort of way. There are virtually no identifying gender typical movements in their actions.

No age identifying movements either.

The figure is a relentless and unidentifiable shape. Fast. Committed. Accurate. Ruthless.

We take one last look at Micheal's body, seated against the wall, half of his head missing, the lifeless corpse slowly succumbs to gravity and falls over, leaving a gory smudge arcing along the wall behind it.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS) 37
FRONT COURTYARD AND ENTRANCE TO THE SCHOOL - LATER

Wide, possible drone or crane shot moving down and in to a closer shot of Ellis, Doug and Tracey converging in the front courtyard of the school. It's Saturday, and for some strange reason, Tracey insisted on meeting at the high school courtyard.

Ellis' black, Mercedes sprinter van pulls away, slides around the corner of the school and parks in one of the lots, just out of sight.

Elena steps out from the driver's side and looks in the direction of the lot where she dropped Ellis off. She opens the side door and removes a leather medical bag and walks toward the building.

CUT TO:

37A EXT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS) 37A
SMALL PARKING AREA BEHIND THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

Tracey leads them to an interesting place around the corner toward the back of the building, near the library and admin offices. They talk as they walk (and wheel) together...

ELLIS

This place is weird on a Sunday.

DOUG

No. It's actually pretty weird on Tuesdays. Mr. Willis and the whole quiz paper thing...

ELLIS

It's an honest to goodness "Ditto" machine! I've made copies with it for Mr. Willis! They keep the Ditto machine by the other copiers in the office. If they could bottle that smell, I'd wear it. Actually, it does come in a bottle...

TRACEY

You should see it on alternate
Thursdays! Nothing weird at all.

DOUG

(no warning) I caught the Spielberg
West Side Story last night!

TRACEY

I'm afraid to look at it. I love
Rita Moreno. How was it?

DOUG

I enjoyed it. Very slick...

ELLIS

Possibly a problem if telling a
gritty story. Hey, if we fell into
that alternate reality, would we be
Sharks, or Jets?

Tracey and Doug answer at the same time.

TRACEY

Jets.

DOUG

Jets.

ELLIS

Yeah. Jets. Sharks are chumps.

TRACEY

Allrighty, then. So, the reason I
suggested the school, is the other
weird thing I saw here on the way
to church this morning. We go over
there...

DOUG

Grace Lutheran!

The three move, with fierce intention, steadily toward what
appears to be a little parking area, almost hidden behind two
dumpsters.

TRACEY

Yes. Dad always drives this
shortcut over there that loops
behind this building over here.

The boys follow Tracey as she leads them to a small, parking
area tucked away behind the back of the library.

Tracey stops and produces a couple of photos from her backpack. The photos all have the same subject, a black, Mercedes SEL with custom wheels.

She hands the photos to the boys, then gestures (like Vanna White) to the three cars parked in the little lot.

TRACEY (CONT'D)

The pictures are of the car I always see SlenderDadMan get into. The plate kind of looks like it matches.

DOUG

It's been here all morning? Church let out two hours ago...

ELLIS

Company car. Crestview has a big fleet of vehicles. That red Explorer is Ms. Liu's car. I'm pretty sure the blue sedan is Ms. Barrett's. Hey Doug, could you help me wheel back to the sidewalk there? I'd feel less obvious with those dumpsters between us and the windows.

DOUG

(broad smile) at least we're not meeting in a gosh darn basement...

Ellis and Tracey immediately keying in on the reference to Inglorious Basterds, turn to Doug with finger guns. Doug returns the gesture with air rifles.

CUT TO:

37B INT. HARRISVILLE COUNTY MORGUE EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY - 37B
CONTINUOUS

It's quiet, no soundtrack score, only the hum of refrigeration and the tick of a fluorescent tube dying by degrees.

The room is all stainless steel, plastic, and drain slopes.

A single sheeted form on the center table. The overhead surgical lamp throws a hard, shadowless white on the broken subject below.

No shadows, no lies...

Detective Elizabeth Fay, 31, 5'7", her dark, curly hair pulled back tightly, wearing a dark, navy blue, off the rack blazer and black slacks, clutches a case file folder, clearly read too many times, to her chest. Her lanyard bearing an ID Card with law enforcement logos, peaks out from the bottom of the case file folder. She is wearing white, nitrile exam gloves. For her nearly perfect, law enforcement composure, we realize she is carefully, chewing a piece of gum. A simple gesture to offend the spirit of Death in it's own cathedral of disrespect.

She is precise, jurisdiction bound, and running on the fumes of a cover story she simply does not believe.

Across the table from her, Ralph Knight, 62, 6', sturdy build, short cropped grey hair, Kentucky in his vowels altered by seven years in Rome and Lyon, wears the patience of a man who has been right, too early, too often.

Ralph is cautious in how he touches the body, his white nitrile gloves an added layer of protection for the truths yet to be revealed in the body of Dr. Mallory. He is gentle, respectful and precise.

They both speak softly...

ELIZABETH FAY

The M.E. signed it. Blunt and penetrating trauma consistent with an industrial explosion. Glass, ceramic, casing fragments from the scanning equipment. Case kind of wants to close itself.

*

RALPH KNIGHT

Cases that want to close themselves are the ones I get on a plane for.

Tight on the file as Elizabeth opens it to the autopsy diagram - the skull mapped flat, injuries marked in a coroner's neat shorthand.

ELIZABETH FAY

Then walk me somewhere the M.E. didn't, because right now, I've got a lab that blew up and a victim who was standing in it. That's a Tuesday. (holds papers forward a bit) ...paperwork.

Ralph adjusts his glove with an audible "snap."

RALPH KNIGHT

Shall we?

Elizabeth nods.

Ralph folds back the sheet covering the body's head, only to the collarbone.

McU on Ralph looking down, into the head of Dr. Mallory. He is not interested in showing Elizabeth horror, he is interested in showing her a fact.

RALPH KNIGHT (CONT'D)

An explosion is a democracy. It doesn't aim. Force radiates out from a center and the body catches it the way wall catches buckshot - everywhere the wall was facing. Peppered. random. No grammar to it.

He indicates, without touching, a constellation of small wounds across the cheek and brow.

RALPH KNIGHT (CONT'D)

There she is. (looks up to Elizabeth) Could you ask the Uniform in the hall to bring us a night stick if he has one?

Elizabeth turns and goes to the door...

ELIZABETH FAY

Hey! Sara, you got a baton on you?

*

There is the sound of compliance just outside the door. Elizabeth returns bearing an SAP baton.

A man's voice from the hall outside the closing door...

OFFICER SARA MARS

If you get stuff on it, wipe it off! Use sanitizer!

*

Elizabeth smiles as she closes the door mid sentence. She hands the baton to Ralph.

Ralph holds the baton in both hands like a baseball bat. He even gives it a little swing.

RALPH KNIGHT

Circumference isn't quite right, but the shape is on point.

Ralph points to the little constellation of wounds.

RALPH KNIGHT (CONT'D)
 That's the explosion, right there.
 The glass, the ceramic, those
 little bits of plastic and
 aluminum. That part of the M.E.'s
 report is honest. That's what a
 blast does to a face...

ELIZABETH FAY
 ...but...

RALPH KNIGHT
 ...but, an explosion doesn't repeat
 itself. It happens once. It doesn't
 have an opinion.

He moves to the crown of the skull. Hovers a gloved finger an
 inch above a depression in the bone (he is careful not to
 actually make contact with the body).

Tight insert - the indentation.

Even to the untrained eye, something about it is wrong. It's
 too regular. Too... intended.

RALPH KNIGHT (CONT'D)
 This... This has an opinion.

ELIZABETH FAY
 (leans in a little) Depressed
 fracture. Could be debris.
 Something heavy came off a shelf in
 the blast?

RALPH KNIGHT
 Could be. That's what it's supposed
 to read as. But imagine an aluminum
 baseball bat...

holds up baton - holds thumb and forefinger to demonstrate a
 larger diameter...

RALPH KNIGHT (CONT'D)
 This is smaller than a good ole
 Louisville Slugger, but it's the
 length here...

Ralph holds the baton, careful not to touch the actual head,
 in a line that perfectly follows the indentation.

RALPH KNIGHT (CONT'D)
 Debris that falls, or flies, and
 hits you once - it strikes at
 whatever angle physics hands it.
 (MORE)

RALPH KNIGHT (CONT'D)

One event. One margin. The edges of the wound tell you the shape of the thing that made it... and the shape of the story.

Matching insert. We see the geometry of the wound - a long curved margin, and beside it, a faint second curve that shadows the first.

RALPH KNIGHT (CONT'D)

Curved contact face. Consistent width the length of the impact. And here, the story stops being an accident.

ELIZABETH FAY

There are two of them.

RALPH KNIGHT

There are two of them. Overlapping. Same width, same curve, delivered along nearly the same line, but not quite. You don't get "not quite" from an explosion. "Not quite" is a human being winding up and doing it again. And doing it again means somebody stood over her and made a choice, twice.

Elizabeth straightens. The room's clinical cold has found a way into her spine.

She looks at the wound now the way you look at a word and suddenly realize you've been mispronouncing it your whole life.

ELIZABETH FAY

A cylinder. Consistent width. Curved face. Your describing a club, baton or bat. That size makes me lean toward your Louisville slugger. Metal. No wood pieces.

Ralph holds up the baton again and hands it to Elizabeth.

RALPH KNIGHT

It's a bat, Detective. Aluminum. Small one. The taper's too tight for a regulation adult barrel. And whoever swung it had done it before. There's no hesitation in the second strike. An amateur will hesitate.

(MORE)

RALPH KNIGHT (CONT'D)

It shows up in the geometry. This
swinger didn't hesitate.

A long silence. Only the hum of the refrigeration equipment
and dying ticks of the fluorescent bulb in the corner of the
room.

ELIZABETH FAY

(low voice) The M.E. had all of
this.

RALPH KNIGHT

The M.E, Had a lab that exploded
and a company that owns the
newspaper that told him it
exploded. He wasn't lying to you.
He just read the loud part and
stopped. (beat) Explosions are loud
on purpose. That's what they're
for. You set one so nobody goes
looking for the quiet thing that
happened first.

Elizabeth closes the file. When she speaks again, she has
crossed some interior line, and we can see it cost her
something.

ELIZABETH FAY

If I write "homicide staged as an
industrial accident," I am writing
it against Crestview
Pharmaceutical. In THIS county. In
MY name.

RALPH KNIGHT

I know exactly what you'd be
writing it against. I've been
writing it for four years in three
countries and in languages that
aren't mine. (softens, smiles) I
didn't fly back here to leave a
detective I've just met a rope and
watch her climb out on it alone.
Whatever you write, you're not the
only signature under it anymore.

Ralph peels his gloves off and drops them in a biohazard bin
on the floor at the head of the examination table. He removes
an envelope from a chest pocket of his jacket. He
contemplates it for a moment.

ELIZABETH FAY

What's that?

RALPH KNIGHT
 (puts it back in pocket) The quiet
 thing. (beat) Cover her back up
 Detective. She's told us all she's
 going to tell us.

Elizabeth draws the sheet up gently - more gently than a
 stranger needs to.

RALPH KNIGHT (CONT'D)
 (almost to himself at the door)
 Whoever is doing this has a lot of
 angry spiders in their soul...

CUT TO:

38

INT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING
 TIGERS) PRINCIPAL'S (MS. BARRETT'S) OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

38

Wide on office. It is an elegant affair, tastefully decorated
 and tech savvy with cutting edge, state of the art computer
 hardware, and large, high- resolution, interactive monitors
 lining the walls.

Madeline Astor, Principal Barrett and Rhonda Liu sit facing
 each other on a sectional sofa.

*The actor's body language should reflect each's emotional state. Madeline is
 always confident, unshakeable as a glacier. Barrett is on the defensive in this
 scene and positions herself in full cobra posture and movement. Her power and
 agency may be more of an illusion than reality, but the venom is dangerous all
 the same. Rhonda Liu is just plain concerned bordering on worried and her
 posture and speech patterns should telegraph her fate...*

MADELINE ASTOR
 ...and I think, with the girls' lab
 results being totally within
 normals, which struck me
 interesting because, statistically,
 one of them had to have had a high
 likelihood of coronary thrombosis,
 (beat) but everyone's better than
 fine. I don't see any reason for
 the train of thought you both seem
 to be riding, to go any farther.

PRINCIPAL BARRETT
 (gesturing with both hands) Just
 pull on in to the station and park
 it for the night, eh?
 (MORE)

PRINCIPAL BARRETT (CONT'D)

(pulls imaginary train horn cord)
End of the line...

RHONDA LIU

(tears) The grief radiating from
the girl. So painful...

PRINCIPAL BARRETT

Yes. Painful. I'm sharing that with
my unnecessary hysterectomy and
follow up hernia repair. Do your
job. Learn to shield your empathic
self. You can suffer the pain of
others, but put a timer on it,
okay?

MADELINE ASTOR

Did her mother share anything about
her work with Kasey? You got a real
good look into that girl's soul.
Who is she, Pandora, or Helen
Keller?

RHONDA LIU

(offended) I can't... (composes
self) She knew that her mother used
the new quantum computing terminal
system. She mentioned that
specifically, whatever that means,
but nothing else. She has a strong
dislike for her father. He is a
strange piece of work. Her verbal
hostility toward him was as harsh
as it was earned. The guy just
rolled with it. Took it.

PRINCIPAL BARRETT

So, Pandora marries Helen Keller
and has a baby. (to Madeline) Kasey
is one of our favorite and beloved
students. We kept her out of the
trials. We have archived some of
her work on genetics and chemistry
in our research library. This is a
light that will lead someday,
Madeline. I would suggest adoption,
that is if your hands weren't full
already...

MADELINE ASTOR

(in a southern accent) Persephone
Barrett! We don't have to draw
swords, love!

(MORE)

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

I do hope you're not implying my dear nephew is in some way a burden to me. (drops the accent) If you are however, in some way, pointing out loose ends in the rug, then thank you for the spin. I will bear this in mind. (beat) I'm sure Kasey is a lovely and clever girl. My heart is broken by what happened to her mother.

PRINCIPAL BARRETT

Like Cynthia Woodall, Patrick Wynn and Sage Withers? Of course those accidents broke your heart as well? Kelly Anne and Amara and Billie got a hit of your updated and as yet uncleared for human trials, cervical cancer vaccine instead of the immunization schedule they thought they were getting. The informed consent on the paperwork kind of bends reality a bit.

RHONDA LIU

More than a bit...

MADELINE ASTOR

(angry for a moment) You both signed on to all of this! Your anticipation with full disclosure on the scope of this project and its required elements, is recorded and filed. Persephone, stop with the veiled threats and Rhonda, thank you for the intelligence. We're moving on to the next phase. We have to expand our sample set. I need your phase two list of girls that meet the same data set requirements as phase one. We'll be introducing an updated adjutant and live viral loads. I said earlier, the girls' labs were fine. They are. Right now. In about four weeks however, one of them, predictive models lean toward Billie, is going to go patient zero in a novel outbreak that will infect 73 percent of your student population. I would suggest you two stock up on vitamin B-12, a few cans of chicken soup might be nice, too...

(MORE)

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

A warm fleece throw and some of
that powder stuff with vitamin c
and zinc (stirs imaginary glass
with finger) you mix in water...

Ms. Barrett and Rhonda are in a strange sort of shock...

RHONDA LIU

Seventy three percent? From a
computer model?

MADELINE ASTOR

As Kasey so casually informed you,
Crestview uses cutting edge quantum
computing technology. We can see
into near infinite quantum
realities and pull together an
outcome percentage based on
average, observable outcomes. We're
pretty sure seventy three percent
infection rate is highly likely.
Pretty sure. Mostly sure.

PRINCIPAL BARRETT

(slowly pulling out of shock) and I
suppose you have a vaccine to test
that might be "safe and effective?"

Rhonda snorts at Ms. Barrett's comment.

MADELINE ASTOR

Oh no! Absolutely not. We're barely
escaped the gallows at Nuremberg
helping the commies take the last
election! Pffft! No vaccine. No,
the outbreak will provide a
credible demand to acquire lab
work. Compliance will be mandatory.
The data will be extensive and
deep. Connected. CBC, Comprehensive
Genomic Profiling - Plasma
Complete, MRD Tracking, complete
analysis of the little angels'
blood chemistry and mandatory
biopsies in cases of advanced
issues and events. We know it
sucks, but we need that data on a
weekly basis to build out an
accurate model of the latest
advancement in diagnostic models
and solutions.

(MORE)

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

Projected profits on the raw data and orbital industries catering to the packaging of that raw data into executable strategies is estimated at three trillion dollars. Stop looking at me like that. I don't know about you but I have every intention of dancing barefoot in some of that money. I need this next list of "volunteers" immediately though and it needs to be around a hundred and fifty if possible and seventy five at the least.

PRINCIPAL BARRETT

To guarantee the infection numbers you need...

RHONDA LIU

To acquire near realtime lab data on all of it.

MADELINE ASTOR

To prompt quantum AI to build accurate and real time solution engines! This is such a GREAT TIME to be alive ladies!

RHONDA LIU

...and Kasey is a part of that happy ending?

MADELINE ASTOR

Oh! Absolutely! That girl is mine from here out. I NEED to have a conversation with her and soon.
(gestures balance with hands)
Mother Theresa? Elizabeth Borden?
Are we looking at asset management, or marketing? I'm sure the young lady has quite a bit to offer Crestview. We dry our tears and face our fears, ladies.

PRINCIPAL BARRETT

My daughter does love the Maldives...

MADELINE ASTOR

So, a few people get a really nasty head cold for a few days? Seriously ladies, what's the big deal?

(MORE)

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

If this were a musical, the big,
page fifty eight, hit song would
swell up about right now...

Madeline cocks her head mockingly as if listening for the
soundtrack to swell up. Nothing.

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

Oh well. I didn't plan that far
ahead to hire an orchestra. Don't
sue me. Let's elevate those
attitudes ladies. Get back in the
boat! The world needs a win!
Crestview needs a win. We're tired
of being number 12 in the
pharmaceutical game. This is a
weird path to get there, I KNOW,
but it DOES get there. Hard work
lies ahead, but trust me, it's
going to be beautiful and worth
everything!

RHONDA LIU

(soaked in irony) Beautiful and
worth everything...

*

CUT TO:

38A INT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS) 38A
HALLWAY JUST OUTSIDE THE DOOR TO THE PRINCIPAL'S (MS.
BARRETT'S) OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Doug has somehow gotten into the building and is
eavesdropping through Principal Barrett's office door. He
disengages and hastily leaves the scene...

CUT TO:

38B INT. FILTHY CARGO VAN WITH QUESTIONABLE SHOCK ABSORBERS - 38B
CONTINUOUS

Kasey comes to for a moment to discover she is restrained and
in the back of a vehicle of some kind.

Every bump in the road, every pothole, every speed bump,
feels like a hard kick to the ribs.

It's hard to breathe through the stupid tape over her mouth.

Her wrists are aching so bad. Her legs are asleep and won't
move.

Fear washes over her.

She is doomed.

Best to go to sleep and just disconnect.

Or...

She begins to shake her head, pull herself together. She looks around, starts to pass out again, pulls through it and works on losing the tape over her mouth. Breathing is awesome. It would be nice to do that again for a minute...

She spits into the tape, gags into the tape and contorts her face until the tape comes off. She breathes deep, a prayer of gratitude to the goddess of air.

CUT TO:

38C EXT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS) 38C
SMALL PARKING AREA BEHIND THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ellis and Tracey are waiting nervously for Doug to return from his journey to the roof via trellis and a possible maintenance entry that Doug once heard a janitor say was up there.

He has been gone for a while.

ELLIS

I kind of wish we hadn't listened to him. There's no maintenance door up there...

TRACEY

He has been gone a minute.

ELLIS

I'm ready for him to get back.

Doug, somewhat out of breath, trying to be quiet, climbs down from the roof and drops to the ground. He pops up and joins the others.

DOUG

Guys! You would not believe the kind of trouble we're in! I got in and listened in on Ms. Barrett's office. Ms. Liu and some other lady were talking crazy! It kind of sounded like they're conducting illegal drug trials and some other weird stuff! Crazy!

(MORE)

DOUG (CONT'D)

We need to get back to Ellis' place
and think this all through.
Whatever those ladies in there are
up to, it's extremely not cool...

ELLIS

(sarcasm) Maybe they were
rehearsing a play or something...

DOUG

I don't think so...

Tracey, watching Doug's every move for some reason, silently
mouths "I don't think so..."

She almost breaks the fourth wall...

TRACEY

(to no one in particular) This is
the way they talk, the way they
breathe. The way we laugh. The vows
we take...

CUT TO:

38D EXT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS) 38D
SMALL PARKING AREA BEHIND THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE A SHORT
DISTANCE PAST THE DUMPSTER AND SHRUBS - CONTINUOUS

Elena approaches Ellis, Doug and Tracey from the sidewalk
beyond. Her expression is intense. She walks up to Ellis...

ELENA

Ciao pischelli. We're running out
of time, you need to come with me.
All of you...

TRACEY

I'm good with that.

DOUG

We totally need to get away from
here...

ELENA

(to Doug) Why were you in there?

DOUG

(to Elena) Intel. We wanted to know
why there's a Crestview car here...

Elena is curious about that, too...

The four move quickly toward the sprinter van.

Ellis is helped in, and chair secured. The rest climb in and the van drives away

CUT TO:

38E EXT. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE THE HARRISVILLE COUNTY HOSPITAL 38E
CONTINUOUS

Detective Fay and Agent Ralph are moving to their respective vehicles in the lot.

Dark clouds are gathering overhead. Lightning strikes in the far distance...

ELIZABETH FAY

I'm going to get this report
filed...

Ralph's cell phone rings. He gestures for Elizabeth to hold tight a second.

RALPH KNIGHT

(looking at caller ID) I need to
take this. (answering) Ciao,
Elena... Sì. La sede è pronta. La
vecchia clinica sulla Highway 7.
Sì, ti mando l'indirizzo adesso. Do
you need me to meet you there?

CUT TO:

38F INT. ELLIS TRANSPORT VAN, DRIVER'S SIDE - CONTINUOUS 38F

Elena has gathered the kids and is pulling away from the high school. She is speaking into the air, the phone on speaker...

ELENA

Things have gotten weird. I'm going
to jog Ellis' memory in a bit. Time
seems to have run out. I have the
children with me. We are headed to
the safe house. The kids have
discovered possible issues with
Crestview.

*
*
*

*
*
*

CUT TO:

RALPH KNIGHT

Really!? (to Elizabeth) How quick
can we get a search warrant going?

*

Ralph hangs up and places his phone in his pocket.

ELIZABETH FAY

Depends on who we're searching...

*

As she speaks, a beautiful, stray cat saunters by and stops. She leans down to attract the kitty, but the cat hisses and arches up at her.

*

*

*

She kicks at the cat to go away.

*

RALPH KNIGHT

Crestview Pharmaceutical home offices. We have a witness. I'm going to collect more details.

*

*

Elizabeth rubs her temples...

ELIZABETH FAY

That may take me a minute. It's not quite getting a warrant to search the White House, but I've got to figure out the magic words...

RALPH KNIGHT

I've got a feeling that the truth is catching up to everyone quicker than we'd like.

Elizabeth's cell rings. She answers. Her expression is intense.

ELIZABETH FAY

(hanging up) Well, It's going to take me longer now. There's been another homicide. The father of the Mallory girl.

RALPH KNIGHT

The Mallory girl? The daughter of the woman we just examined?

ELIZABETH FAY

Same. The girl is missing, too.

*

RALPH KNIGHT

Go. I have a feeling we'll be meeting up at Crestview later. Get us that warrant, Detective.

ELIZABETH FAY

An emergency call from the location works, too...

RALPH KNIGHT

I hope it doesn't come to that. If you do get a 911 hit, it's going to be pretty bad. Suit up and dust off your war face...

CUT TO:

38G INT. CARL'S GROCERY - CONTINUOUS

38G

Rhonda Liu has stopped by the store to pick up a diet cola and a bag of cat food on her way home. She talks on the phone while she shops.

RHONDA LIU

(phone) No. You can't talk me out of it, Persephone. None of this is right. I don't care what you do, I'm out. Don't give me that. I'm going to take my vacation time and PTO's. I'm going to my sister's condo in Destin.

CUT TO:

38H INT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS) 38H
PRINCIPAL'S (MS. BARRETT'S) OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ms. Barrett is on speaker phone with Rhonda. She is doing something on her computer as she speaks.

PRINCIPAL BARRETT

I really, really want you to change your mind, Rhonda. I need you. Take some time off, but don't leave me with this. If you go, I can't assure your safety.

CUT TO:

38I BACK TO RHONDA

38I

We are at the cashier's check out now...

RHONDA LIU

(to cashier) Yes, here. (hands over her debit card) Persephone, I'm seriously out. And I don't appreciate the threat.

Rhonda hangs up her phone, collects her bags and proceeds to exit the store.

CUT TO:

38J INT. HARRISVILLE HIGH SCHOOL (HOME OF THE FIGHTING TIGERS) 38J
PRINCIPAL'S (MS. BARRETT'S) OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

After hanging up from Rhonda, Ms. Barrett calls another number.

PRINCIPAL BARRETT
Madeline?

CUT TO:

38K INT. MADELINE ASTOR'S MERCEDES SEL - DRIVER'S SIDE 38K

MADELINE ASTOR
Persephone. What's the story
morning glory? (listens for a
moment) Oh. That's not groovy at
all. (beat) Listen, with everything
else going on, let's just focus on
the list, okay? I'm thinking if
anyone deserves a long vacation,
it's Rhonda. Give her a night to
think about her decision. Tomorrow
is a brand new opportunity for
success.

41 INT. CARGO VAN - CARGO AREA - LATER 41

Kasey is lying still bound but no longer gagged. She looks around. She looks at the back door handle. It's older. Not complicated looking at all. She looks toward the driver's section. No details on the driver.

She looks at the door again.

She begins wiggling against her restraints to snake her way to the back door of the van.

She lifts the lock and opens the door.

The speed is terrifying.

The driver is more terrifying.

She jumps and lands in the grassy part of the center median.

The van screeches to a halt.

It backs up to where she jumped.

Kasey stands spitting out bits of tape as she pulls the restraints from her wrists. She rubs the dents in her skin left behind. She notices the van is coming back. Her breath is visible in the chilling air.

Lightning strikes in the distance behind her.

Reverse wide shot. Kasey from behind as she runs into the median toward the other lane.

The van is on the median, closing in.

Kasey suddenly drops to the ground by a tall cluster of grass, disappearing.

The van slams on the brakes, barely missing her. The van has lost her. It slowly pulls away and disappears into the night.

Kasey looks into the distance and sees the Crestview Pharmaceutical towers. She walks toward them...

CUT TO:

41A INT. CARGO VAN - DRIVER'S SIDE OF VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS 41A

The driver of the cargo van that Kasey has escaped from, pulls off his hood. It's Evgeny.

We pretty much figured.

Let's stop with the misdirection now. We suspected our villains, now let's see what they can do...

Evgeny dials a phone.

EVGENY SOKOLOV

I am sad to report, passenger escape.

CUT TO:

41B INT. MADELINE ASTOR'S MERCEDES SEL - DRIVER'S SIDE - 41B
CONTINUOUS

Madeline is driving back to her office...

MADELINE ASTOR

I'm confident she'll turn up. You thought you were playing tic tac toe with a toddler, but you're playing 3D Chess with a genius.

EVGENY SOKOLOV

3D Chess is a Star Trek thing. Not real game.

MADELINE ASTOR

You are incorrect my love. It was invented by Ferdinand Maack in 1907. I'm quite good at it.

EVGENY SOKOLOV

I stand corrected. Every day, I discover something new about you. I shall have to play this "real" game with you sometime.

MADELINE ASTOR

Evgeny, dear?

EVGENY SOKOLOV

Da?

MADELINE ASTOR

You already are. (beat) Oh, and your next move is Ms. Liu's house. Loose end and all that. Leave the girl to me. She's playing, too. I have a hunch I might know her next move.

Evgeny disconnects his phone and executes a violent U-Turn to fly back the other direction, towards town.

Death drives like a maniac...

CUT TO:

41C INT. SAFE HOUSE - OLD VETERINARY CLINIC ON HIGHWAY 7 - 41C
CONTINUOUS

Elena, Tracey, Ellis and Doug enter the safe house. They navigate quickly through the maze of dusty desks, shelves and stainless steel exam tables to the medical room in the back.

There is a meeting space with a table.

Elena opens her bag and removes a glass syringe kit, needle, cloth and velcro tourniquet and vial of injectable medicine.

She immediately assembles the syringe and kneels by Ellis' wheelchair.

ELENA

This is my own cocktail. It's sodium pentathol, scopolamine, and cannabinoids. It's a real hit at parties...

DOUG

Hosted by the KGB and Mossad?

ELENA

MI6, and a couple of private groups, actually. I've never consulted with those other guys. I mean, you meet people...

ELLIS

Could you have picked a bigger needle?

TRACEY

It's the size of our bathroom plunger! That's got to hurt...

ELENA

(ignoring them) You're going to feel light, like you're falling out of your own body. Concentrate on my voice El. (to Doug and Tracey) The other two are going to be very still. (back to Ellis) Can you feel it?

ELLIS

(super high) Wow! Yeah... Feels... feels... woof. This... feels... pretty groovy.

ELENA

I want you to go back to the attack. You saw two different people, two killers. We need to know if you can pull up a face. Can you see them? Can you see a face?

ELLIS

(drifting) This is hard El... I don't want to...

ELENA

(soft as snow and just as cold) Listen to the echoes.

(MORE)

ELENA (CONT'D)

Follow the sound. Watch the darkness fall away. Like layers of smoke. Opaque here, transparent there... Neurons feel good when they spark back to life... Do you feel that warm spark glowing as all the millions of little fireflies in your memory flicker back to life... Kind of like a kiss from a pretty girl...

ELLIS

(dreamy, drifting, smiling) ...a Pretty girl... A girl I can't... have... legs... (begins to sing) I'm a creep, I'm a weirdo...

CUT TO:

INT. THE "LAND AT THE EDGE ECHOES" -ELLIS' DREAM/HALLUCINATION/REVELATION - CONTINUOUS

*

Ellis stands in an unfamiliar place, a place of dreams and nightmares, where the environment flickers cinema styles and recording formats around him.

Tracey stiles, glowing with the purest power of intention and friendship, an energy that rivals light for the glue that holds reality together, welcomes him with a warmth only known by Ellis from one other...

January Macready, his mother and the most exquisitely beautiful light a being can experience, appears behind Tracey and places her all powerful hands on the girl's shoulders.

Doug stands, healthy, strong, no chair in sight. The ground, land and sky pulse in weird waves around everyone.

JANUARY MACREADY

Quantum superimposition...

DREAM TRACEY

Spooky action at a distance...

ELLIS

Multi Dimensional connection everywhere, overlapping reality points... a bunch of places at the same time... and you. Where did you come from, you beautiful... Fairy!

CUT TO:

INT. SAFE HOUSE - OLD VETERINARY CLINIC ON HIGHWAY 7 -
CONTINUOUS

The wheel chair reclines and lies back a bit. Ellis' head droops, seemingly lifelessly along a shoulder. He looks like Stephen Hawking on a three day bender.

His eyes appear frozen in time, the sparkle that charms the Cosmic Data Stream itself to flow in your direction has been turned off. Lifeless or not, these eyes are aimed squarely at Tracey. A faint smile forms...

ELLIS
...where did you come from, you
beautiful fairy?

Doug looks at Tracey.

Tracey looks back at Doug.

They both look back at Ellis and Elena.

TRACEY
(deeply concerned) Who was he
talking to?

Doug grins uncontrollably. His boy might not have legs, but the wings sure are impressive! He looks again at Tracey.

DOUG
He was looking at you.

Elena leans in closer to Ellis' ear. She pushes the words, quietly, with intention, directly into his brain.

CU on the side of Ellis' face as he receives the words. The scopolamine has rendered him helpless to resist the instructions...

ELENA
Describe the figures at the crash.
The ones who hurt you. The ones who
took your life and world from you?
What do they look like, El?

DISSOLVE TO:

41D EXT. HIGHWAY 66 EIGHT MILES WEST OF HARRISVILLE - THE MEMORY -
CONTINUOUS

Ellis is watching a figure, dressed in black, with a hood, kill his father.

The sound effects are almost impossible to take...

Ellis looks at his arms and down at his legs. There is no wheelchair.

His mother slides in next to him and places her arm around him. She leans her head onto his, relaxing into him.

She directs his attention toward the killer ending his father. She removes her arm from his shoulder and moves to his side.

He walks over to the killer and pulls the hood off.

The killer's face is distorted and blurry.

Ellis stares hard, focus rolls in sharper. He still can't recognize the face. He turns his head suddenly. A familiar voice in the distance. It is his Aunt Madeline...

Ellis looks toward the passenger side of the wreck. His mother is trying to climb out. She can barely see anything with all the blood in her eyes. Someone else, dressed in black but in full, clear, sharp focus kneels at the door speaking to his mother.

It is his Aunt Madeline.

MADELINE ASTOR

Oh! Look at you. Poor little January. Poor little January, who always, always, always gets her way. Always gets her wishes made real. Married to that beautiful, considerate, faithful man over there... (turns head to look through cabin at the murder scene on the other side of the wreck) well, shame his head is in lots of icky little pieces right now, but wow! A real catch. I never got one of those, so I really don't know what I'm talking about there. Oh, look! (pointing at dream Ellis body on the ground) A perfect son! Perfect! Hilarious, happy and, what is with the Beauty and The Beast music? It's cute and annoying at the same time. What am I saying? I'm such a moron. I've never had that in my life, so once again, Madeline really doesn't know what she's talking about. You know what I do know about?

(MORE)

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

The echo of empty houses that cost a fortune. Have you ever dropped a large glass vase filled with water and flowers on to a marble floor? (leans in, whispers) It is a sound that never completely fades away. It continues to vibrate in the memory, just beyond the veil of echoes...

"Powerful Ellis" walks toward his mother and her sister...

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

...but I really have nothing to complain about. Compared to your life now, I guess I have it pretty sweet. I do need to thank you for those gorgeous lipid analysis reports that you filed in the general archive and not the QRM encrypted database server. The SEARCHABLE PUBLIC database. Fortunately, I've had eyes on you in case you pulled a stunt like this. Packaged data frames, January? Proprietary data valued at millions of dollars, just gift wrapped and handed over to anyone who wants to look at it. Thank you January. You've given me permission to open my soul's back door to the spirit of Clint Eastwood. I do LOVE his early westerns. Sometimes, that guy takes over, January. You remember when we were kids and I would just do what I wanted, and get away with it. I got away with that stuff because I wanted to. I willed it. That's the Eastwood coming out. He's taken over again, my precious. I would have trouble with what's about to happen to you, but Eastwood has no problem at all with it.

Madeline presents a Smith & Wesson model 642 .38 Calibre revolver and presses the barrel of the gun directly against January's temple.

Wide shot of gun flash lighting the cabin as Madeline pulls the trigger.

MCU on Madeline's blood sprayed face.

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)
Good night sis.

CUT TO:

41E INT. SAFE HOUSE - OLD VETERINARY CLINIC ON HIGHWAY 7 - 41E
CONTINUOUS

Ellis is suddenly alert...

Or, a puppet to shock.

He lurches forward in his chair. He fights the urge to throw up.

ELLIS
Caro Dio nei cieli...

ELENA
Descrivi il volto, El. Who else was there? We must know...

ELLIS
Aunt Madeline! Aunt Madeline killed my mom! She was helpless and Madeline shot her! Oh no! We live in one of her houses!

TRACEY
(to Elena) ...and she's your boss.
(to Ellis) El, what level of hell did we just dance into?

Doug takes Tracey by the arm and maneuvers toward Ellis, slowly, attempting to place themselves between Elena and their friend.

ELENA
(removes gloves) Oh! I get it. This looks real bad. Real bad, I suppose. (to Ellis) I knew your mother in Rome, a millennia ago, when we both went to medical school. We already had our doctorates and we attended the genetics and related technologies groups. I'm going to be honest with you El. We were a bit closer than friends. Until we met your father at a neurochemistry symposium. He was working as a patent attorney for a big biotech company.
(MORE)

ELENA (CONT'D)

The three of us went to see a new cartoon called "Beauty and The Beast." It was a beautiful night, (wistful/hint of regret) and our last night as "more than friends." (beat) But here's a thing El, There is nothing more than "friends." In the scriptures, Moses was a servant of El and suffered the whole way. David was a friend of El's and enjoyed some honey with his suffering. Friendship is love turned all the way up to eleven.

TRACEY

I love that movie!

DOUG

It does indeed go up to eleven.
Spinal Tap...

Back to Elena...

ELENA

January and I had reconnected over a project she was working on for Crestview. Her sister has a reputation for being a reptile and I was concerned for her safety, for some reason. Dreams. Odd feelings. We spoke the week before your wreck. She was unhappy with the secrecy around her research. She wanted to present it to the medical community at large. Madeline would never allow it. I was working with her to find a different avenue to release the data. I was blurry on the next set of events. My dearest friend was dead along with her husband... and her little boy was in Death's arms. I put myself in Madeline's litter box and offered my services as your caretaker and therapist. Madeline needs to know everything about everything and I agreed to help her find out what you know. She wanted to know if you were an asset, or a liability. I lied to her on that requirement for employment, and now boil in the same pot as the rest of you troublemakers. (shakes head) La vita è così stupida...

Doug nudges Tracey, big brother style, and looks to Elena.

DOUG

What's the play, grown up in charge?

ELENA

(winces) I suppose I am that. We certainly can't go back to Madeline's place. She might not know that we know what we do, but, we do know what we do. (checks statement in her mind) We're safe here for now, it being a "safe house," but I don't know what the next move is... I do know we have observed the quantum waveform of the conditions and changed the outcome. We have to observe all possible outcomes now that they're right in front of us, and move in the direction of the one where we all live to see the credits.

TRACEY

So, that's how it works...

DOUG

I think I brought my dog here once, like when I was seven.

Elena looks at Doug and smiles.

41F INT. RALPH'S RENTAL CAR SUV - CONTINUOUS

41F

Ralph drives and speaks hands free to phone.

RALPH KNIGHT

The clinic is working for us, I hope? There's an extra present for you in the black plastic box under the big exam table. I would appreciate if you considered using it.

CUT TO:

41G INT. SAFE HOUSE - OLD VETERINARY CLINIC ON HIGHWAY 7 - 41G
CONTINUOUS

Elena, holding phone in one hand, looks under the exam table, removes a small, black case, opens it and removes an intimidating looking Glock G21 V .45 with loaded ammo magazine.

ELENA
(to phone) Chi di spada ferisce, di
spada perisce. (looking closely at
gun) However, I do hate to reject a
gift...

39 INT. CARGO VAN - DRIVER'S SIDE OF VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS 39

Evgeny slowly maneuvers into the small parking area across the street from Rhonda's driveway. He watches as her red, Ford Explorer glides in to park...

CUT TO:

40 INT. RHONDA LIU'S RED FORD EXPLORER - NIGHT CONTINUOUS 40

Rhonda pulls into her driveway. She fumbles around with her purse, looking for her house keys. She is slightly less of a wreck than she was earlier, but not by much.

A figure moves from the shadows just beyond the driveway near the front porch. It's dark.

Rhonda pulls a small remote from her purse and pushes a button on it.

A bright light comes on mounted above the door at the end of the drive.

Shadow of the figure darts out of frame.

The light flickers and goes out.

Rhonda checks the remote.

The light will not come on.

Rhonda rolls her eyes, opens the car door and steps out.

She walks toward the back door.

The figure darts past Rhonda, grabbing her by the throat. It throws her hard to the pavement.

The figure lifts its boot and brings down fast into Rhonda's neck, causing her to gasp and thrash from suffocation. Blood paints the pavement like a Jackson Pollack canvas.

The figure produces a sawed off shotgun and moves it into Rhonda's forehead.

Rhonda turns her head, recoiling in horror from the hard, steel barrel of the shotgun...

Black leather gloved hand pulls the trigger.

Blood and gore splatter across the wall by the back door.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - PARKING GARAGE EXECUTIVE 41
RESERVED SPACES - CONTINUOUS

Madeline pulls into her space and moves toward the elevator. She spies Kasey moving through the garage toward the executive elevators.

The poor girl looks like she has been beaten up and thrown from the back of a van.

MADELINE ASTOR

(very low, suppressing a smile)
Queen to Queen's level three...
(louder to Kasey) Oh my god!
Sweetheart! Come here! What has
happened to you?!

Kasey, hesitates a moment, then moves cautiously toward her mother's boss...

KASEY MALLORY

Ms. Astor! My dad was killed and I
was attacked and... I got away! I
saw the offices here and thought
I'd get the security guard to call
911. I think I might be brain
scrambled or something... Could you
help me? I can wait here until the
police come if you could just call
them? I think I might need an
ambulance... Kind of dizzy... I
don't know... I had this dream I
fell out of the back of a moving
van or something.

Madeline moves quickly to Kasey, puts her arm around her and escorts her to the elevators.

MADELINE ASTOR

Let's get you up to my office,
dear. We can figure all of this out
up there. We'll get you some water
and call the authorities...

CUT TO:

42 INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - MADELINE ASTOR'S OFFICE - 42
CONTINUOUS

Madeline and Kasey enter the office. Madeline is helping. She guides Tracey to one of the couches that lines one of the walls of the large office.

Madeline hurriedly inspects some of the injuries the girl has sustained. She then moves to her desk.

From behind her desk, Madeline calls the police as she talks to Kasey.

MADELINE ASTOR

A couple of your injuries might
require an ER, love. We'll get you
an ambulance here. (pause) However,
If you could trust me, I can fix
all of it right here.

KASEY MALLORY

Fix all of it?

MADELINE ASTOR

Fix it. I have a compound here that
will heal all of the injuries
almost as fast as it took to get
them. Your mom helped to develop
it.

Madeline gestures to phone as if to indicate time is running out.

KASEY MALLORY

(wiping blood from her mouth on to
her sleeve) Hang it up. I'm
listening...

A voice answers before Madeline can comply. She smiles and answers.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

...what is the nature of your
emergency?

MADELINE ASTOR

Hi. Yes, this is Madeline Astor calling from Crestview Pharmaceutical. Crestview Towers. I have a young lady here who has been attacked. She is safe and locked down at my office, so most likely we have a non emergency here, but would love to have a couple of officers stop by. She's had a pretty rough time of it. Yes. Thank you. We'll stay right here. No. We won't be needing an ambulance.

Madeline hangs up and moves quickly toward a mirrored door at the end of her office.

She disappears into the space behind the door.

CUT TO:

43

INT. MADELINE'S PRIVATE MEDICINE LOCKER - CONTINUOUS

43

She enters her private medical locker, compounding laboratory. The room is bright, clinical with lots of stainless steel shelving and work spaces. The walls are composed of countless shelves lined with products, medicine bottles, high tech containers and metal bottles.

She moves immediately to a particular shelf with a set of matching red and black bottles with white lids. She selects two of the bottles and moves quickly back into the office proper.

MADELINE ASTOR

Did you know I'm almost forty
Eight?

*
*

KASEY MALLORY

(shocked) No way! Not even close!

MADELINE ASTOR

(presenting pills and water) Take this. Drink all of the water. All of it. (produces hypodermic syringe) I think I was thirty something when you mother first discovered the compound.

*
*
*

(MORE)

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

(preps Kasey's arm and injects)
I've enhanced the basic matrix a great deal since then, but, and this is a big thing, your mother made a huge breakthrough, just huge, in reducing some of the more toxic chemistry, just a month ago. Followed by the report last week pointing out a potentially fatal error in the recipe.

*

Madeline kneels at Kasey's feet. She traces the line of a cut and deep bruise on her right ankle.

The bruise fades.

The cut seals from inside.

Magic?

Well, really high tech medicine actually.

Madeline rises up, takes Kasey's arms and helps her to stand. Madeline moves her fingers, delicately, across a nasty bruise along Kasey's left side. The bruises fade away completely.

The strangulation ligature marks scarring Kasey's neck also fade away.

Madeline lightly brushes her finger tips along the delicate architecture of Kasey's now flawless neck. The effects of the drug always shock her.

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

I adore this stuff. It's a mixture of nanotech and a real witch's brew of biologicals. The Pentagon rejected it based on its most endearing side effect. It stops aging from the moment you take it. You'll always look 16, love. One baddish side effect, I'm afraid, is, well, a real lack of moral judgement. I mean, I never had a problem going "Clint Eastwood" on someone, but since the meds here, (beat) I don't know. I kind of dig getting my hands dirty, you know? What's a little violent psychosis now and then among friends? I know violence should never be the answer, but it's just so much fun sometimes!

KASEY MALLORY

This stuff feels... Magical.

MADELINE ASTOR

It's totally magical!

*

Kasey, still standing, takes a long, long look at Madeline.

KASEY MALLORY

(tears) So, what do I tell the cops when they get here? Also, how do we address the unresolved issue of my recently deceased parents? Wouldn't it just be cheaper and easier to erase me right now? What does my therapy plan look like? Am I on the payroll now? Do the benefits cover psychiatric care?

MADELINE ASTOR

(smiling) Well, we could tell the police any number of things. We could tell them how your father was killed and you were abducted and escaped. That one's quite visual, or, and this one is just a little more believable, we tell them how you killed your father and ran for it, and somehow made your way here to extort me or my company in some way.

KASEY MALLORY

(thundering heartbeat) That's interesting. If someone found themselves in a position of Zero Agency like that, they'd really have no choice but to sit quietly in the back and go along for the ride. See where it takes you...

MADELINE ASTOR

You my dear, are an absolute asset. (taking Kasey's hands) I'm so happy to have you on board, our youngest director of development. I hope you like Harvard, because that's where you're going. You'll come to New York with me for a while, and then Argentina for a couple of years. I'm going to leave the whole "never getting any older," thing up to you to solve. Just adding a few gray hairs from time to time might help.

(MORE)

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

Staying the hell away from social media will definitely work.
(thinks) Dear, would you like a bit of useful information? You can say no.

KASEY MALLORY

I'll never turn down any useful information.

MADELINE ASTOR

I can't kill you. At least I don't think so. I've had quite a few, "incidents" over the years and I'm still going. Of course there are a few more procedures we need to run on you over the next couple of weeks, but nothing too painful. The little machines we set loose inside you will just keep patching up every little thing that needs patching up. You will have some strange cravings once in a while. The other day I sprinkled finely ground magnetite over my cinnamon toast. A couple of weeks ago it was a whole bottle of milk of magnesia.

*
*
*
*
*
*

KASEY MALLORY

Really? You shot me up with Nanotech. That is some useful information.(beat) Ms. Astor?

*
*

MADELINE ASTOR

Yes dear?

KASEY MALLORY

What do I call you? Ms. Astor doesn't seem right anymore.

MADELINE ASTOR

My name is Madeline. (stares into her a moment) Just imagine it! A working situation where deception is never part of the workflow! If you can't be honest, be quiet. At least that rule works for me. You feel me, Kasey?

KASEY MALLORY

I do, Madeline.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. RHONDA LIU'S DRIVEWAY - MURDER SCENE - CONTINUOUS 44

Detective Elizabeth Faye and a standard crime scene crew are marking the ballistics and taking photographs and video of the area. Fay is interrupted by a phone call from dispatch.

ELIZABETH FAY
Crestview Towers... and a black and
white is on the way? Thanks Maxine.
You're good people.

Elizabeth disconnects then dials Ralph...

ELIZABETH FAY (CONT'D)
Remember when you asked me to let
you know if Crestview came up
directly? Something about the
threat level...

CUT TO:

INT. RALPH'S RENTAL CAR - SUV - CONTINUOUS

RALPH KNIGHT
I was just thinking about paying
Ms. Astor a visit.

CUT TO:

EXT. RHONDA LIU'S DRIVEWAY - MURDER SCENE - CONTINUOUS

ELIZABETH FAY
Well, now that might be obstructing
an ongoing investigation. Ms. Astor
called and requested the police
stop by the Towers. A Black and
white should be there about now.

CUT TO:

INT. RALPH'S RENTAL CAR - SUV - CONTINUOUS

RALPH KNIGHT
Any details as to why?

CUT TO:

EXT. RHONDA LIU'S DRIVEWAY - MURDER SCENE - CONTINUOUS

ELIZABETH FAY
Dispatch recorded Ms. Astor
reporting having the missing
Mallory girl.

CUT TO:

INT. RALPH'S RENTAL CAR - SUV - CONTINUOUS

RALPH KNIGHT
That girl is in incredible danger,
Detective.

CUT TO:

EXT. RHONDA LIU'S DRIVEWAY - MURDER SCENE - CONTINUOUS

ELIZABETH FAY
Copy that. Suit up and dust off my
war face?

CUT TO:

INT. RALPH'S RENTAL CAR - SUV - CONTINUOUS

RALPH KNIGHT
That is the dress code for this
party, lieutenant. There's a
convenience store just before the
Tower entrances. Meet me there in
thirty minutes? I need to make a
quick stop at my vet's office.

CUT TO:

EXT. RHONDA LIU'S DRIVEWAY - MURDER SCENE - CONTINUOUS

ELIZABETH FAY
(watching a couple of uniformed
officers pack out cases) Only if I
can bring a Plus Two.

Fay calls out to Officer Sara Mars.

*

ELIZABETH FAY (CONT'D)
Hey Sara! When you're done there I
need you for something.

*
*
*

OFFICER SARA MARS
You want Donleavy, too?

*
*

ELIZABETH FAY
(sadistic smile) Especially
Donleavy!

*
*
*

CUT TO:

INT. RALPH'S RENTAL CAR - SUV - CONTINUOUS

RALPH KNIGHT
The more the merrier...

CUT TO:

INT. CARGO VAN - DRIVER'S SIDE OF VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

Evgeny watches the police working the crime scene across the street. He watches the plainclothes woman with intense scrutiny.

He watches as Detective Fay calls over two of the officers, talk for a moment, then all get in their vehicles and drive off.

Evgeny follows her...

CUT TO:

INT. SAFE HOUSE - OLD VETERINARY CLINIC ON HIGHWAY 7 -
CONTINUOUS

Ralph has dropped by to talk with Elena, bring everyone up to speed and map out getting these kids to the Federal Building downtown before the world catches fire.

Ellis is still trying to climb back from the drugs to reality. He sits in his wheelchair staring through the veil of echoes, into realities both familiar and strange...

Doug is hanging out with the adults, listening, standing by for any action the coaches call.

RALPH KNIGHT
...I've got some people on standby
at the Federal building downtown.
You'll want to go in the parking
garage. Don't mess with street
parking. That van of yours is one
huge rolling target.
(MORE)

RALPH KNIGHT (CONT'D)

Move quick, move certain, stay as invisible as you can.

ELENA

(lifts gun) And this?

RALPH KNIGHT

Just keep it close. Announce it to the officers when you get to the garage. You're good to go.

DOUG

Cool! Can I see that?

Ralph smiles as he takes the Glock, drops the clip and checks the chamber. Satisfied the gun is not loaded, he hands it to Doug.

DOUG (CONT'D)

(holding gun with both hands like a badass) I could totally handle this. Oh! Gangstas hold it on its side like this. Can I shoot it like that?

RALPH KNIGHT

No. That's a Forty-Five. you might put an eye out holding it like that. Break a wrist. Shatter a shin. Make yourself into a little girl. Hold it right if you're gonna hold it.

ELENA

They kick harder than you think. Give it here. You need some time on a gun range before you go and get shot with it.

Tracey watches Ellis from a chair by a window. She is deeply fascinated by this boy, convinced by darker forces that he can no longer walk. She wonders if there is a god hidden away in there somewhere...

A woman comes to Ellis and kneels beside his chair. She looks a bit like Tracey, only older, radiating a beauty that transcends all logic. Her dark, black hair is the color of deep space, minus any stars.

Ellis can see galaxies in her eyes. Her complexion is porcelain pale, punctuated by deep black lips and nails. A white, thick, embossed, cut for seduction, business jacket, covers a black, lace top that sparkles as if covered in tiny diamonds. Everything about her is as deadly as it is sexy.

Buttons that look like tiny little human skulls carved from black obsidian holds the whole look together.

His soul recognizes her, but there is no fear to be found. This is after all, only the whisper of a bunch of drugs leaving his system...

She stares into him with a knowing, kind smile.

DEATH

Her armies are small. (grins) They barely fit in her little sleeves...

ELLIS

(chuckles at joke) Good one...

DEATH

Seriously, though. She's kind of beyond my reach right now, but the other one, well, that's a different story. His fatal flaw is that he is in love with her. As deeply in love with someone as any human or spirit can fall.

Death produces a strange, snow globe out of the air.

DEATH (CONT'D)

I already have his soul. You could bring me his body. Look, she has interfered with my job. The balances are tipped wrong. I might have trouble with her, but not her soldier. He is her broom stick. Bring me that, Ellis. I'll take care of the wicked witch.

ELLIS

I can't even walk. I don't think I can help you. I'm not your guy.

DEATH

(smiling broadly) Oh! Everyone says that. (mocking) Why me? I'm not the one. Swipe left. I can't do this. Ninevites are scary and smell bad. (stares into him) You ARE my guy. I've invested a lot into you and I can assure you, you are the ONLY one.

ELLIS

My friends and El will die if I don't do something.

DEATH

That is correct.

ELLIS

I'll probably die if I do act.

DEATH

Maybe not. Step into your power, El. You are dangerous. We made you that way. Your sheath is kind and capable, but the sword inside is radioactive, serrated and sharp. You'll know what to do with that blade when the time comes. Do not argue with a God.

ELLIS

Can I compliment one?

DEATH

Oh! Always!

ELLIS

You are smoking hot. Your eyes contain universes. What's it like to hold reality itself in your hands?

DEATH

You tell me, Ellis...

Darkness slow blinks its way into Ellis' consciousness. When he opens his eyes again, Tracey is sitting next to him.

TRACEY

Who were you talking to?

ELLIS

(coming down) Oh, hey! I must've been dreaming... or hallucinating.
(relaxes) I'm glad it's you sitting there.

TRACEY

(playful jealousy) Was she hot?

ELLIS

You know in stories where it's obvious who a character is, but no one has the guts to say their name?

TRACEY

Yeah, or a situation that is ridiculous but inevitable, so no one talks about it until their up to their necks in something impossible?

ELLIS

Yeah, that! She was Death and I hate to say this, but I think she kind of likes me.

TRACEY

(strangely envious of a dream)
"Like" likes you, or just kind of likes you?

ELLIS

She said I was dangerous and to own it.

TRACEY

(leans in) Step in to your power?

ELLIS

Yes. I appear to have some kind of power to step into. (squeezes legs)
I haven't "stepped" into anything in a while.

TRACEY

So, are you and her a "thing" now, or are you still a free agent?

ELLIS

Tracey, it was just a weird dream.

TRACEY

(looks through him) I don't think so. (playful) I think someone really interesting has a thing for you...

ELLIS

I sure hope not! She's the destroyer of worlds, reality's Governor! She probably plays crazy rough! The buttons on her jacket were little black skulls, probably made out of antimatter...

TRACEY

(taps wheelchair) Well, if you're gonna play with angels, you better grow some wings. Watching them from a chair doesn't sound very safe.

Ellis leans over and places his head on Tracey's. He breathes in her soul and closes his eyes. A plan is forming in his mind...

...unfortunately, a plan formed in desire for vengeance.

Tracey smiles and closes her eyes in order to see the world's truth. She's happy with the moment, the space, the boy...

Ellis stares out the window at the Mercedes van. He looks over at Doug who is listening intently to Ralph and Elena.

ELLIS

(to Tracey) Doug can drive...

CUT TO:

EXT. FROG-EE'S TRUCK STOP AND TRAVEL CENTER ON HIGHWAY 10 - TWO MILES FROM THE CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL TOWERS - LATER

Detective Fay is standing next to the rear side of her SUV, reading a book as she waits for Agent Knight. *

Sgt. Donleavy and Officer Mars are pulling out tactical vests and checking weapons. *

Officer Mars has a large bandage on her forearm. Donleavy notices. *

SERGEANT DONLEAVY *

Big cut, or you couldn't find any scissors? *

OFFICER SARA MARS *

My stupid cat climbs into the washing machine if the lid is open. She was dug in like a tick. When I finally got ahold of her, well, she got ahold of me *

One of the officers approaches her, eating a candy bar.

ELIZABETH FAY

(not looking away from her book)
Sergeant, what's for dinner, there?

SERGEANT DONLEAVY

Zero Bar. (jokingly offers bar with
bite taken out of it) Bite?

Fay stares at the officer for a moment, then takes the
offered bar and chomps away half of it.

ELIZABETH FAY

(discreetly chewing) Knight was
supposed to be here fifteen minutes
ago.

SERGEANT DONLEAVY

(getting a look at her book) What
on earth are you reading
Lieutenant?

Fay looks at cover of book then back at Donleavy.

ELIZABETH FAY

"The Sophia Chronicles." This
Goddess creates a reality and
births a blind god that thinks it's
in control of everything. Angels
get buried beneath the earth and
the poor Sophia has to figure out
how to make everything right.
(turning book to look at back) at
least that's where it seems to be
headed. It's told through this
eternal guardian's point of view.
Her name is Elara Constance. It's
pretty groovy. I have a ways to
go...

SERGEANT DONLEAVY

I really like Lous L'Amour books.
You ever read him?

Fay looks at Donleavy like a doctor looks at a parasite under
a microscope, but just for a moment before she "friendlies"
back up with a slight, tolerant smile.

ELIZABETH FAY

Hmm, let me finish this one and
I'll take a look. (swallows again)
What's your favorite of his books?
And Don't say "all of them" because
that'll tell me you haven't read
any of them.

Officer Mars approaches the group...

*

SERGEANT DONLEAVY
"Ride the Dark Trail" and "The
Quick and The Dead!" You've got to
read "The Quick and The Dead."

Fay is honestly surprised. Mars is patient. *

ELIZABETH FAY
Groovy title. Now I have to read
"The Quick and The Dead." (thinks)
Wasn't that made into a movie with
Sharon Stone?

SERGEANT DONLEAVY
No, but the earlier flick from 1987
was based on L'amour's book. The
Sharon Stone one is fun, but not
based on his book.

OFFICER SARA MARS *
I just heard from dispatch. That *
black and white at Crestview Tower *
called for back up. *

Fay is now concerned. She notices Mars isn't wearing a vest. *

ELIZABETH FAY *
Good to know. (pointing) You *
getting that vest on now, right? *

OFFICER SARA MARS *
What's your thinking? Active *
shooter kind of thing? *

ELIZABETH FAY *
Yes. (beat) An active shooter kind *
of thing. Probably not, though. Put *
the vest on. *

Ralph Knight pulls into the truck stop next to Detective
Fay's SUV. Elena sits in the passenger seat. Ralph joins Fay
and her army of two. Elena, as angry as she is distraught,
remains in the vehicle.

Ralph is wearing a black tactical vest and readying his
shotgun as he approaches.

Fay adjusts her tactical vest a little as she turns to move
to meet Ralph. Deputy Jarretts approaches the others from his
squad car in the distance.

Ralph notices the book in Fay's hand.

RALPH KNIGHT

Things have gotten weirder. The three musketeers got a wild hair up their butts and took the Mercedes while the grownups were finalizing the Federal Building drop off. (pointing at book) Oh! I loved that one! I've been told it's a pretty solid translation of the original text. Italians move at a different pace. Stakeouts can be astonishingly boring. I read a lot...

SERGEANT DONLEAVY

Hey, have you read any Louis L'amour? I love his stuff.

ELIZABETH FAY

(grins) He does. (points with her thumb) He loves L'Amour.

RALPH KNIGHT

"The Quick and The Dead" got me through two cases. Has to be my favorite. (to Donleavy) Have you read "Last Of The Breed?" Wow.

Sergeant Donleavy solemnly nods.

SERGEANT DONLEAVY

I do love that one...

ELIZABETH FAY

Where did the precious angels go, Agent? We're suited up and I think our war faces are in the center consoles somewhere. What's the plan, Agent Knight?

Ralph has turned to head back to his vehicle.

RALPH KNIGHT

The troublemakers are headed to the same place as us, I reckon, Lieutenant.

Fay gestures to Donleavy to give her the rest of his candy bar. He looks at her and reluctantly hands it over. She finishes it as she heads to her driver's side door.

SERGEANT DONLEAVY

Cold, Lieutenant. Taking a guy's possible last meal.

Fay turns to Donleavy, places a hand on his shoulder, finishes eating the bit of candy...

ELIZABETH FAY

A Zero Bar is the opposite of a last meal, Sergeant. We don't need last meals on this one. Understand? Apparently, I have some Louis L'amour to catch up on. And thanks for the bites. I owe you a Zero. We are in charge of writing our realities, sergeant. Watch the words that come out of your mouth...

SERGEANT DONLEAVY

A Payday will work if they're out of Zeroes, lieutenant.

ELIZABETH FAY

Good boy.

Wide shot as Camera tilts up with our heroes in the foreground and the towers in the near distance. Dark storm clouds boil as lightning telegraphs the danger that dwells within those buildings.

CUT TO:

EXT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - JUST OUTSIDE FRONT ENTRANCE - FIRE LANE PARKING SPACES - CONTINUOUS

The Mercedes pulls into the emergency parking area and screeches to a halt just in front of the building, nearly colliding with one of the two black and white units already at the scene.

The kids linger just a moment... a final huddle before moving to the next level...

ELLIS

I am sorry to talk you into this, guys.

DOUG

You didn't talk me into anything. Dude, I would totally wear a blue ascot all the time if it meant I could figure this out!

TRACEY

I would totally tolerate a talking dog with bad grammar to see the final scene.

Ellis holds up Elena's gun.

ELLIS

I took this.

DOUG

Give me that! I know how to use it.

TRACEY

Yeah, I don't think so, gangsta grip.

ELLIS

I can figure it out...

Ellis looks out the window at the lobby area. It's late evening now and the lights from within the lobby illuminate everything behind it's transparent front.

His Aunt Madeline is there, facing two uniformed police officers. There is someone else just behind Madeline, but we can't quite make them out.

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - FRONT LOBBY AREA - CHECK IN TO ELEVATORS - CONTINUOUS

Madeline is talking with the officers.

MADELINE ASTOR

...and that's how our wires got crossed, officers. Honest, Injun.

Madeline leans in a bit to get a closer look at one of the officers badges.

She pretends embarrassment...

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

(softly) oh! So sorry, officer.
How!

His lanyard ID displays his name:

EVERETT SIXKILLER

(repulsed) So, a medical event and the young lady is stabilized now?

MADELINE ASTOR

That would just about sum it up.
(to Kasey) Wouldn't you say that
about sums it all up, dear?

KASEY MALLORY

Oh yes, Madeline. I'm much better
now. (offering bare arm) take a
look officer. No bruises or
anything here. (glances at
Madeline, winks) Ever since I got
this HPV shot a few weeks ago, my
brain kind of shorts out sometimes.
It's pretty sad... Madeline here
has been helping me out with some
of the repair work.

EVERETT SIXKILLER

(keying radio) Thank you. That does
sound bad, ma'am. (into radio) Yeah
I'm thinking a couple of more units
backup might be a good idea. No, no
immediate threat, but something
doesn't feel quite right. Invite
them to run some red lights...

Everett looks deeply into Madeline's eyes. It's a gift, his
ability to see "bad" in someone's eyes.

He doesn't see anything good in there.

EVERETT SIXKILLER (CONT'D)

Ma'am, I think I've asked you like
six times since we arrived for some
identification. A driver's license,
passport, auto registration. One
more ask...

MADELINE ASTOR

Yes! You probably have. My mind is
so wacky lately. Did you know I
forgot one of my cat's names the
other day? I'll just pop up to my
office and get my purse, officer.
(pointing to Officer Hurst) You can
send the Lone Ranger there to watch
me. (pretending to be embarrassed
again) Oh, ouch! Sorry officer.
Let's go get that identification.
(to Kasey) Dear, we need to call
your father to come and collect
you.

EVERETT SIXKILLER
(into mic) I need to patch a call
through to... (looks at Kasey)

KASEY MALLORY
(heart thumping in her mouth) Uh,
(mouths number to her house)...

EVERETT SIXKILLER
(into mic) Mouths the number to
dispatch...

We can't hear the last two lines of dialog over the stressed
out heart beat that grows louder and louder.

Her sweat, liberated, runs for it...

CUT TO:

INT. MALLORY HOME - KASEY'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A crime scene team is wrapping up routine coverage of the
Michael Mallory killing. Outline of body on floor. Tape
outline on wall where the cat clock was sliced in half,
forever frozen at 8:15.

The phone on the wall rings. A plainclothes officer in a tan
jacket answers the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - FRONT LOBBY AREA - CHECK IN
TO ELEVATORS - CONTINUOUS

Officer Sixkiller, hearing what the officer on the other end
of the call has revealed, immediately draws his Glock Forty
Five and aims it square at Kasey.

CUT TO:

INT. CARGO VAN - DRIVER'S SIDE OF VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

Evgeny has pulled in moments ago and is watching the scene
unfold in his lobby. He starts pulling different weapons,
rifles, military looking arms and pistols, lashing it all to
his shoulders. He gets out of the vehicle and makes his way
stealthily, but quickly to a glass exit door just off the
main entrance.

Evgeny speaks into a radio as he moves.

EVGENY SOKOLOV

You must hear me. It's my move now.
Queen must go to different level
and different square. I've got a
helicopter touching the roof in
twelve minutes. Tenth floor lobby
to pad! Go now! I'm about to make a
nasty mess of things, love...

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - MADELINE ASTOR'S OFFICE -
CONTINUOUS

Madeline and Officer Hurst enter her office. Madeline moves quickly to her desk and in a series of quick, rehearsed moves, removes a Glock 9mm from her desk and fires without hesitation into Officer Hurst's head.

His body makes a terrible thud as it falls to the ground.

Madeline punches a key on her multi-line phone. She has heard the last few words of Evgeny's message. She responds.

MADELINE ASTOR

(ecstatic) Howdy Lover! There were
so many nasty things I was planning
to do to your body tonight. I'm so
sorry Eastwood took over the
script...

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - FRONT LOBBY AREA - CHECK IN
SIDE NEAR ELEVATORS AND STAIRWELLS - CONTINUOUS

Evgeny is in the lobby now. He moves with purpose. He is ready to do some terrible harm.

MADELINE ASTOR

(over radio) Don't bother with the
girl. Don't worry about her either.
I sort of did a thing...

EVGENY SOKOLOV

(face palm) Not again, love. What
are we going to do with you? You
can't keep creating enemies that
can't be killed.

MADELINE ASTOR

I'm sure you can shave my legs when we get to Argentina. And spank me like the bad girl I am.

EVGENY SOKOLOV

(brightens) you're serious?! I promise to leave "landing strip."

MADELINE ASTOR

I'm afraid my dear nephew has proven to be a liability. Add that to your list, please? Along with Elena and that pesky cop.

EVGENY SOKOLOV

Won't have to look far. All contracted parties appear to be currently on site...

MADELINE ASTOR

Well! Imagine that. Leave the girl be, but do make sure everyone else feels welcome!

EVGENY SOKOLOV

(cocking shotgun - singing) If I'd a known they was comin' I'd a baked 'em a cake... actually, I have "cake" for them. Chopper should be near roof now. I know how tough you are, but please, I ask nice, get lost...

As Madeline talks, she works moving several heavy duffle bags of something heavy on to a large, rolling office chair. She straps the bags to the seat and back of the chair.

She takes Officer Hurst's gun and rolls the chair into the hallway, toward the elevators. She tucks the gun into the back, waist line of her skirt as she walks down the hall.

CUT TO:

EXT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - JUST OUTSIDE FRONT ENTRANCE
TO BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Doug is pushing Ellis up the handicap ramp to the front door. Tracey runs point, ready to hit the automatic door button. They are excited to see the cops. Doug and Tracey can warn them while Ellis hunts down his Aunt...

Ellis checks over the action on the Glock Forty Five he's taken from the Safe House. He stashes the gun in one of the saddle bags that line each side of his chair.

CUT TO:

INT. RALPH'S RENTAL CAR SUV - CONTINUOUS

Elena is beyond worried.

Ralph is focused.

The SUV pulls into the front, emergency parking area in front of Crestview Pharmaceutical Tower.

RALPH KNIGHT

(looking at police arriving) That has to be the world record for uncoordinated forces with no idea who or what the hell is going on...

ELENA

He can't get hurt again, Ralph. He can't. Give me a gun. I'm going in there.

RALPH KNIGHT

Not dies horas mi... not this time. I'll get him out of there if he was crazy enough to go in...

ELENA

Someone killed your parents in front of you. They're in there. What would you do?

RALPH KNIGHT

(Clipping shotgun to vest) What I'm actually doing now, I suppose. (winks)

ELENA

Ralph, give me a gun.

RALPH KNIGHT

I already gave you a nice one.

ELENA

The kids took it! Give me one of yours. You have whole armory in here.

Ralph opens his door and climbs out of the SUV. He stops. He faces Elena...

RALPH KNIGHT

I told you to stay here and connect
with the ambulances when they
arrive. I mean it, El!

Elena has managed to slide a gun from the back seat. She slips it under the back of her leg.

RALPH KNIGHT (CONT'D)

Chi di spada ferisce, di spada
perisce. I'll get them out of
there.

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - FRONT LOBBY AREA - CHECK IN
SIDE NEAR ELEVATORS AND STAIRWELLS

Officer Sixkiller, still holding gun on Kasey, tells her to drop to the ground...

Kasey starts to comply, when Evgeny, fires a shot into Sixkiller's knee, followed by a second shot stopped by his vest as he drops to the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - ELEVATOR LOBBY TO MADELINE
ASTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Madeline punches something into a keypad next to the elevator door. The door, no car, opens.

MADELINE ASTOR

Nobody puts baby in the corner.
Nobody.

Madeline pours a scary, smoking liquid into a port on the top of one of the duffle bags.

She quickly maneuvers the chair into and down the elevator shaft.

The chair jams for a moment.

Madeline struggles with the chair...

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)
(as she pushes at chair) Bruce
Willis made this look... so easy!

With the final, frustrated shove, the chair clears the obstacle and tumbles down the shaft.

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)
(brushing her hands) There. That
should clear a few things up.
(grinning) I've been wanting to do
that for, forever!

Madeline sneaks a quick peak down the shaft...

CUT TO:

Kasey now on the ground begins to crawl toward Sixkiller. He needs help...

Something explodes violently behind the elevator doors on the ground floor, sending the two doors and massive debris scattering into the lobby toward Evgeny.

One of the elevator doors and huge chunks of marble and wall land on top of Kasey's bottom half. Blood exploding out from her mid section in impossible waves of agony.

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - FRONT LOBBY AREA - CHECK IN
SIDE NEAR ELEVATORS AND STAIRWELLS

Ralph, Fay and the team of officers have entered the building.

The second Evgeny opens fire on Sixkiller, Fay and her team drop and scramble for cover.

Fay opens fire on Evgeny's position. A bullet whizzes past her chest, taking a tiny chunk of velcro with it. She moves quickly to the cover of a sign-in kiosk, listens and locates the shooter's position. She moves quickly into position and fires.

Elena, told to stay in the vehicle, runs into the building anyway.

Elena sees the kids making their way into the kill box from the entry at the opposite end of the huge atrium.

She pulls the gun, checks ammo one last time and moves with power and intention toward the kids on the other side of the reception desk.

Ralph has made his way to Kasey's position. The girl is in an impossible situation. He knows that when they pull that door and all that weight off of her, there will be no bottom half of the girl and she will die within a horrifying couple of minutes.

Elena seeing Ralph and Kasey, runs toward them.

Musical vibe: Fall For You by Secondhand Serenade, custom, similar with same sentiment. All female persons under the age of 23 will cry uncontrollably at the mixture of sound and imagery. Ashleigh Rainey cover would be incredibly heart rending...

*
*
*
*
*

Evgeny fires a shot that hits a marble column just behind Ralph. A second shot goes through Ralph's waistline, just below the protection of the vest. Blood explodes out from the wound. Ralph falls to the ground and scrambles as best he can to a large piece of stone artwork for cover.

Elena makes her way to Ellis and kneels beside his chair.

ELENA

You have no idea how angry I am
with you!

ELLIS

(waves hand) angrier than all of
this?

ELENA

You're all that I have left of
January! Please let me get you out
of here...

A bullet sings past Elena. She realizes the shooter has Ellis. She pushes Ellis, chair and all, over and into a water element carved in to the lobby floor.

A second bullet sings again, this one hitting Elena in the temple.

Elena's body drops to the ground.

Ellis struggles with the chair. It has landed, and him with it, on its side. Ellis contorts himself violently as he tries to extricate himself from this tangle...

*

ELLIS
(screams) El! NO!! EL!!! Get up
El!!!

Evgeny picks a different position. Movement by the receptionist station. He fires.

Tracey bolts past Ellis' chair and moves toward the motionless Officer Sixkiller.

A shot slices through the air and grazes Tracey's head.

Tracey spins into and settles on her bottom with her back against the wall. She sits motionless, bleeding.

Another shot explodes into Ellis' chair. He crawls with his arms toward Tracey.

CUT TO:

EXT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - HELICOPTER PAD LOUNGE ON THE ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Madeline is moving toward the helicopter on the pad.

She thinks for a moment.

She calls the attendant over.

She yells over the noise of the helicopter engine...

MADELINE ASTOR
You stay right here. No matter
what. You do not leave without me.
Do you understand. You stay right
here until I get back!!

Madeline motions to a second attendant closing a hatch on the the bottom of the helicopter.

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)
You!! You come with me! Bring a med
kit!

Madeline and the attendant run back to the lounge and back into the building.

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - FRONT LOBBY AREA - CHECK IN
SIDE NEAR ELEVATORS AND STAIRWELLS - CONTINUOUS

Tracey lies, slumped against the wall, blood flowing from her scalp and down her face.

Doug grabs a gun from Sixkiller and fires the entire clip in the direction of the shooter.

Evgeny gets a shot with a Kalashnikov rifle off toward Ralph, but exploding through a planter covering Lieutenant Fay.

Fay winces, assesses she's okay and returns fire.

A bullet flies across Ellis' head, taking a bit of his scalp with it. *

AUDIO: He can hear the sound made by the bullet scraping his skull. He can barely see with the blood flowing into his eyes now. *

He realizes he's still alive and hopes Tracey's head wound is the same as his.

Another bullet smashes into the wall inches from Tracey's head. The debris released from the wall by the bullet does not wake her up.

Sergeant Donleavy and Officer Mars make ground, guns firing, to get to Fay. *

Mars is shot in the neck and shin. She falls to the ground. *

Donleavy starts to help her, chooses instead to get closer to the shooter. Take the guy out. *

Doug sees Evgeny

Evgeny aims at Ralph. He's got a kill shot.

Doug dives toward Ralph, landing short but taking a bullet through his shoulder. He crawls to Ralph and climbs over the man's body to cover his exposed head.

A shot splats through Doug's back.

Doug's back and stomach has taken the brunt of the shot, stopping the bullet meant for Ralph's head.

Madeline and the attendant enter the lobby from a stairwell entrance to the side of the elevators.

Madeline sees Kasey's body under the elevator doors. They rush to her side...

Evgeny has seen Tracey and moves toward her, on his belly, with a knife in one hand. He has taken a bullet or two to his leg.

Ellis stands up, wipes some of the blood from his eyes and begins to make his way, legs shaking badly, toward Evgeny.

Madeline and the attendant have pulled the most important parts of Kasey from the wreckage and are moving her to the stairwell door. Blood oozes down Kasey's arms and legs. *

Is that a slip of intestine below that blanket? *

Her hand flops over the make shift gurney they've put together to carry her out of here. Blood is flowing freely in small rivulets, then slows and stops. *

The girl no longer moves.

Ellis pulls out the Glock Forty Five the gang stole from Elena, aims at Evgeny and fires.

The bullet misses. *

Evgeny grins. He pulls what looks like a Desert Eagle hand cannon from a holster strapped against his back. His eyes are flooded with blood and dust. He aims at Ellis and fires. *

The bullet sings past Ellis' ear taking a tiny piece of it stringing in its wake, a thin crimson thread. *

Ellis, wiping blood from his eyes and staggering like a drunken toddler, aims and fires back at Evgeny. *

The bullet smashes through reality itself, just past Evgeny's eyeball. His pupils delayed in their tracking of the bullet... *

Ellis has been making his way, like a Frankenstein Monster with unreliable legs, shaking and twisting closer to Evgeny. *

Evgeny steadies his ridiculous gun and fires at the advancing boy. His gait is so wobbly and unpredictable, getting a good target is difficult... *

The bullet sings through Ellis' jacket and into the wall behind. *

Ellis is unfazed. *

Evgeny fires, but the gun, empty, only clicks. *

Ellis is now on top of Evgeny. Ellis, unsteady, gets his foot directly on top of and across Evgeny's neck. He aims his .45 squarely at Evgeny's head, starts to fire, hesitates... *

Ellis lifts his foot, slowly, from Evgeny's neck, then stomps it hard back down into the Russian's neck, breaking it. The body convulses horribly before going deathly still. *

Ellis aims the gun at his head and pulls the trigger. *

He then collapses. *

The world grows quiet.

CUT TO:

EXT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - HELICOPTER PAD ON ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Madeline and the second attendant, met by the first attendant, bundle Kasey into the helicopter.

The Helicopter takes off...

CUT TO:

INT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - FRONT LOBBY AREA - CHECK IN SIDE NEAR ELEVATORS AND STAIRWELLS - CONTINUOUS

LIEUTENANT FAY STANDS AND CALLS OUT FOR RALPH. *

ELIZABETH FAY
Agent Knight?!

DOUG
(groaning in horrible pain) I don't
think he can come to the phone
right...

Doug, still draped over Ralph passes out from the pain. Blood is spreading out like a pond across the floor beneath them.

FAY AND SERGEANT DONLEAVY RUSH TO THEM. *

ELIZABETH FAY
(into radio) I need those
ambulances at Crestview towers.
I've got multiple casualties.
Multiple injuries. (looks down at
hand, releases mic) ...and a broken
nail. I just had these done.

FAY MOVES QUICKLY BACK TO RALPH.

*

RALPH KNIGHT
(stirring) You get him?

FAY POINTS TO ELLIS WHO HAS BEEN RETURNED TO HIS WHEELCHAIR
UNTIL THE PARAMEDICS CAN COLLECT HIM.

*

*

ELIZABETH FAY
The kid over there did. Stood up
and curb stomped the guy. Then he
shot him. Just had enough of all of
it, I guess.

FAY TURNS TOWARD SERGEANT DONLEAVY.

*

ELIZABETH FAY (CONT'D)
Hey Sergeant! You still alive?
Sound off!

SERGEANT DONLEAVY
Yeah. Hey! I'm really craving a
Zero Bar over here. Don't you owe
me one?

ELIZABETH FAY
(grinning) ...and a Payday will
work if they're out of Zeroes?

CUT TO:

EXT. CRESTVIEW PHARMACEUTICAL - JUST OUTSIDE FRONT ENTRANCE -
FIRE LANE PARKING SPACES - SOMETIME LATER

ELLIS IS WALKING (POORLY) ALONG SIDE THE GURNEY THE
PARAMEDICS ARE USING TO TRANSPORT TRACEY TO THE HOSPITAL.

*

*

She stirs...

TRACEY
(whisper) You step into your power?

TRACEY FALLS BACK INTO THE GURNEY UNCONSCIOUS...

*

ELLIS
I guess I did. I stepped on
something, anyway. Stomped.
Stepped...

*

*

*

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HARRISVILLE SAMARITAN GENERAL HOSPITAL - ROOM 309 - TWO WEEKS LATER

Overlay: Two Weeks Later

DOUG AND RALPH SHARE A ROOM AS THEY RECOVER FROM THEIR VARIOUS INJURIES.

THEY ARE WATCHING THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY ON THE TV MOUNTED ON THE WALL.

They are both excited, each for their own reasons at what they are watching.

They are recovering nicely the drugs are the best and their spirits are high...

DOUG

See! See! Right there! They were holding revolvers Gangsta Grip! Look! He did it again!

RALPH KNIGHT

(humorously frustrated) No! They probably did that for the composition of the scene. For the photographer. From that angle, if they held the gun "the right way" it might block those ugly faces!

DOUG

Okay, but what about Holly Hunter in Copycat.

RALPH KNIGHT

She gets killed.

DOUG

Yeah, after she holds the gun right!

RALPH KNIGHT

Speaking of which, I need to call Lieutenant Fay. I need a Merciful Maria from Taco Diablo. (thinks) Extra queso. You want her to bring you anything? I bet you could handle a Flan?

DOUG

I'll take a Flan. I can smell it even if I can't eat it.

RALPH KNIGHT

(picking up phone) As soon as we get out of here, we're going to the range and you can try out all the weird grips you want to, except for any of them that point the gun at either me or you. You'll see why the "right way" is (beat) the right way.

DOUG

(happy about the prospect) Yeah! We have to do that as soon as we hit the pavement! Hey, Agent Knight?

RALPH KNIGHT

(wincing at name) Yeah?

DOUG

I'm sorry I didn't quite get to you back there. I mean, I should've jumped harder, sooner.

RALPH KNIGHT

(shocked) You stopped two bullets aimed at my head! Intestinal resection! You didn't even think about it. (beat) You (respectful) still shouldn't hold a gun that way...

RALPH TURNS TO LOOK OUT THE WINDOW.

*

HE SEES ELLIS, WALKING THE GROUNDS, PUSHING TRACEY WHO NOW SITS IN A WHEELCHAIR.

*

*

CUT TO:

EXT. HARRISVILLE SAMARITAN GENERAL HOSPITAL - BACK OUTDOOR COURTYARD AND GARDENS - CONTINUOUS

Tracey sits in a standard hospital wheelchair as Ellis pushes her through the gardens. They are recovering and they are at peace.

ELLIS

I was reading Raymond Ruyer last night, his bit about kittens.

TRACEY

Ruyer? There's one of your problems right there. What about kittens?

ELLIS

Well, any other baby animal faced with a threat will cower and try to escape, or cry. The kitten, even a baby, will rear up and attack with everything it has.

TRACEY

Hmm... I'd like to read that when you're done. Hey El?

ELLIS

Yes?

TRACEY

I'm glad we're cats.

Tracey begins laughing and making cat claws with her hands and hissing quietly as Ellis wheels her out of frame.

ELLIS

We are cats, aren't we?

End

FADE TO BLACK.

CREDITS

FADE IN:

Post credit scene...

INT. HOSPITAL EVA PERÓN, JUST OUTSIDE VILLA GENERAL BELGRANO (CÓRDOBA) ARGENTINA - UNLISTED, PRIVATE WING - SOMETIME LATER

The private hospital room is opulent, the walls lined in priceless artworks, the state of the art hospital equipment and the high end furnishings telegraphing wealth in the extreme. This has to be the only hospital room in existence with an elaborate dart board set up at one end of the room...

MADELINE STANDS NEXT TO KASEY'S HOSPITAL BED AS SHE AIMS A DART TOWARD THE BOARD.

*
*

SHE THROWS A BULLSEYE.

*

KASEY TWIRLS HER DART BACK AND FORTH RAPIDLY ALONG THE BACK AND PALM OF HER LEFT HAND AS SHE WAITS HER TURN. HER RIGHT ARM IS RIGGED UP TO AN I.V. SYSTEM. STRANGE MACHINES ATTACHED TO HER MIDSECTION ARE REBUILDING DAMAGED ORGANS, BONE AND TISSUES.

*
*
*
*
*

KASEY, NO LONGER CAPABLE OF FEELING PHYSICAL PAIN IS ENJOYING
THIS GAME WITH MADELINE. KASEY THROWS HER DART INTO
MADELINE'S, KNOCKING IT OUT OF THE BOARD. IT BOUNCES INTO A
STAINLESS STEEL TRAY FULL OF SMALL SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS,
CREATING A CHAOTIC CLATTER.

*
*
*
*
*

KASEY MALLORY

I honestly don't know to this day
how you got out of there. Got US
out of there.

MADELINE ASTOR

You wouldn't dear. You were on fire
with an elevator door
on top of you. How are your German
lessons going?

*
*

MADELINE FIRES A DART DIRECTLY INTO KASEY'S, KNOCKING IT OUT
AND INTO A DEVICE OVER ON A NEARBY TABLE.

*
*

KASEY MALLORY

Sehr Gut, danke. Your story has
changed a couple of times. I think
You're leaving something out.

*
*

KASEY THROWS, KNOCKS MADELINE'S DART OUT OF THE BULLSEYE.

*

MADELINE ASTOR

This is like the millionth time
you've brought this up, Kasey.
(pause) Tell me you love me and
I'll fill you in on all the details
your pretty little heart desires.

Kasey stares in shock and confusion at Madeline's words. The
woman is a certifiable, textbook psychotic. Kasey softens...

KASEY MALLORY

(difficult, calculated) I... Love
you Madeline.

MADELINE THROWS DART, VERY HARD, INTO KASEY'S, NOT ONLY
KNOCKING IT OFF THE BOARD, BUT BREAKING IT TOO.

*
*

MADELINE ASTOR

Nope. I'm not quite buying it. Work
on it. Keep trying. I'm confident
you'll get it.

KASEY MALLORY

Do you love me?

MADELINE ASTOR

~~You're lying in a state of the art,
luxury medical suite with a billion
dollars worth of medical gear
rebuilding your entire middle. I
drug you out of a burning building.
I gave you a hit of your mother's
nano-tech compound. I'm giving you
a multi billion, soon to be
trillion dollar company. You're
going to look 16 years old forever.
Ask me that stupid question again.
I dare you...~~

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

~~(thinking) Love is a difficult
thing to put under a microscope. I
want to quantize, define and
contain the data. Love doesn't
quite lend itself to scientific
scrutiny. So, with that in mind,
let's just lean into music here.
You either dig a song or you don't.
You, my dear Kasey, are rapidly
growing into my favorite new album.
I think you're going to be a big
hit. I definitely spilled some
blood to create you, no doubt. I'm
glad none of it was mine,
(thoughtful) incredibly expensive
all the same. Wow... really? (beat)
I did not see that one coming. You
actually think flipping it over on
me will help you somehow?~~

Madeline studies Kasey, almost amused.

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

~~What particular species of
ignorance are you trying to
demonstrate to me, Kasey? After
everything I've done. All these
moments I've shared with you, you
have the audacity to ask me that
question? (beat) No, baby. Don't
test me.~~

Madeline throws her dart, sinking it hard into the board.

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

~~I risked more than you will ever
know to create you.~~

(MORE)

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

Let's just say blood was shed to
keep you around long enough to
become what you're becoming.
(thinks) Fortunately, none of it
was mine. (small smile) Incredibly
expensive all the same.

KASEY THINKS AND THEN THROWS HER DART, INSANELY HARD, INTO
MADELINE'S, BREAKING IT INTO PIECES AND KNOCKING IT OFF THE
BOARD.

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

So work on what you need to work
on. I'll work on what I need to
work on and we'll play this record
again sometime.

Madeline holds Kaseys gaze...

MADELINE ASTOR (CONT'D)

Dig it?

THE PIECES FALL TO THE GROUND AS THE CAMERA LINGERS ON
THEM...

FADE TO BLACK.

ADDITIONAL CREDITS, LOGOS.