

"Chance"

by

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EXT. ROAD - SUNSET

Orange light edges a darkening sky. TILT DOWN to FIND a DELIVERY TRUCK skewed in the middle of the road. This has just happened. As beneath the pop and hiss of tortured metal -

WOMAN (O.S.)

Daddy! Daddy! I want my Daddy!

We MOVE toward the delivery truck - then around it -

EXT. ROAD - SUNSET

- to FIND the remains of a SEDAN, driver's side obliterated. What's left is a cage of crumpled metal. As we APPROACH -

CHANCE (V.O.)

At the time of my evaluation,
Mariella Franko was 34 months post
a head-on motor vehicle accident.

- SEE glimpses of a woman, MARIELLA FRANKO, alive and struggling, trapped in the passenger side of the car -

MARIELLA

Daddy! Oh God please! Daddy please!

CHANCE (V.O.)

An initial psychiatric assessment
done one month post accident found
Ms. Franko to be suffering from
chronic post-traumatic stress
disorder and major depression.

- and CLOSER still - enough to see there is someone else in the wreckage with her, behind the wheel...

MARIELLA

No, no, Daddy! Daddy, please!

CHANCE (V.O.)

... It is unfortunate that a second
psychiatric consultation was not
obtained until more than 2 years
after the first.

PUSH IN ON MARIELLA, the driver's lifeless hand clutched in hers - his severed HEAD WEDGED awkwardly in what is left of the sedan's backseat. Off the wail of approaching sirens, we TILT BACK UP into the sky. Until the sound of HEELS ON PAVEMENT TILTS us BACK DOWN TO -

EXT. MISSION DISTRICT STREET - DAY

- where an attractive 40ish African-American WOMAN in a skirt and sweater walks along, engrossed in a paperback book. A tall solid MAN approaches from the opposite direction.

CHANCE (V.O.)

M.J. is 42 years old, right-handed, with several years of college education. She has only partial recollections of the assault.

As he nears the woman, the man LUNGES, PUNCHING her in the FACE, sending her to one knee as the paperback goes flying -

CHANCE (V.O.)

She stated that over the next year she was extremely depressed and spent her time either watching television or staying drunk.

She struggles to her feet, screaming, attempts to run, only to be caught from behind and flung down near a FIRE HYDRANT -

CHANCE (V.O.)

She also acquired a handgun and would occasionally discharge it in frustration and rage.

Stunned and bleeding, M.J. tries once more to rise. The man SEIZES her by the hair and SMASHES her head against the hydrant - again and again - until abruptly we CUT AWAY -

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

- to a 30ish white MAN, alone, unloading a dishwasher.

CHANCE (V.O.)

The patient is a 30-year old right handed male now four years status post a pedestrian versus truck incident at the Port of Oakland with resulting head injury.

Mugs and glasses go in rows in an over-counter cupboard.

CHANCE (V.O.)

While he is unaware of changes in his personality, others including his wife say his personality has changed completely.

Except for the last mug, which D.K. now carries to the table before returning to the sink where he squats to open the cupboard beneath it.

CHANCE (V.O.)

His wife further states the patient believes he will someday play a major role in a battle between Satan, Yahweh and Jesus.

D.K. stands. We SEE he is holding several bottles and jugs, which he carries to the table.

CHANCE (V.O.)

Recently, believing it would cleanse his body for the coming conflict, the patient ingested a range of household cleaners. Including Hexol and Clorox.

As D.K. pulls out a chair, sits down and PICKS UP his mug -

INT. CHANCE'S OFFICE - DAY

FIND a quiet, 35ish WOMAN sitting in an armchair. Under different circumstances we might find her attractive, striking even - as opposed to broken. The shapeless sweater over an almost matronly dress doesn't help.

CHANCE (V.O.)

Jaclyn Blackstone is an ambidextrous 36-year-old woman living in Berkeley.

She looks up as a glass of WATER comes into frame and takes it from the hand that proffers it.

CHANCE (V.O.)

She is referred from the Stanford Neurology Clinic for complaints of intermittent memory loss and poor concentration.

JACLYN

Thank you.

REVERSE to REVEAL DR. ELDON CHANCE, the man we've been hearing, a man in imminent danger of some terrible mid-life flame-out. If only he knew. At the moment he's just feeling a little tired, a little over it.

We read it in his eyes as he reaches for a pad on which to begin what, to his mind, is only the latest in a seemingly endless series of reports from the land of the lost. His manner is detached but not unkind. It has never been unkind -

CHANCE

Of course. You were saying.

JACLYN

UC San Diego. Applied mathematics.

CHANCE

Are your parents still living?

JACLYN

No.

CHANCE

And you're married.

JACLYN

Yes. Ray, Raymond. Three years. But
- We're estranged, right now.

(suddenly)

I'm sorry, I don't mean to be rude,
but, just - I went over all this at
Stanford already, my background, my
- Why did they send me here?

CHANCE

(smiles a bit)

I often find it helpful to work
through some familiar territory
before moving ahead.

JACLYN

Moving ahead to what?

CHANCE

Appropriate therapy.

JACLYN

With you?

CHANCE

Well, I'm a consulting forensic
neuropsychiatrist. As opposed to a
treating therapist.

(off her look)

I see people with both neurologic
and psychiatric issues. It can
sometimes be difficult to know
which is which.

(MORE)

CHANCE (CONT'D)

I try to help with that. To suggest appropriate treatments.

JACLYN

And why forensic?

CHANCE

Well, I'm often in court. On behalf of patients with medicolegal issues, such as personal injury.

(a beat)

The doctors at Stanford were unable to locate an organic basis for your symptoms. They asked me to review their findings and, if I agree - Which I do by the way - that there is no detectable organic basis -

JACLYN

They think I'm crazy, then.

CHANCE

(a brief smile)

Saying there's no evidence of an organic basis is not saying your symptoms are not real. You're here so you and I can determine how best to move forward. Does that clarify things a bit?

JACLYN

(a beat)

Yes.

CHANCE

(returning to his notes)

So, then - The inability to concentrate, the losing of time... How long would you say that's been going on.

JACLYN

I don't know, exactly. A while.

CHANCE

Months?

JACLYN

No. Longer.

(then)

I sleepwalked, when I was a kid til almost high school?

(MORE)

JACLYN (CONT'D)

I'd wake up in strange places, I wouldn't know how I even got there. When this happens, it feels like that felt.

CHANCE

Okay. There are a couple of things I would like to know more about.

As Chance speaks, INTERCUT -

INT. CHANCE'S OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

- as we FIND Chance now alone, at his desk, his notebook open before him. He speaks into a digital RECORDER.

CHANCE

The development of secondary or multiple personalities occurs most frequently in the context of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse.

As Chance checks his notes, CUT BACK TO -

INT. CHANCE'S OFFICE - DAY

- as he picks up a medical report.

CHANCE

It says here that you separated from your husband after he -
(reading)
- struck you in the face with a tire iron. In the wake of which you were unconscious for a period of at least twenty minutes, and that shortly thereafter, you became aware of a second personality -

JACLYN

(quietly)
- Jackie Black.

CHANCE

You told the folks at Stanford you became aware of Jackie after the incident with your husband. Is it possible she was there before, when you were younger -

JACLYN
No. She wasn't.

Jaclyn fidgets, looking down at her hands. Then -

JACLYN (CONT'D)
She does things I don't want to do.

CHANCE
Such as?

JACLYN
My husband... Raymond... He's a
homicide detective. The Oakland
Police Department. And he's very...
he, he's not...
(small)
I had to get away.

CHANCE
Okay.

JACLYN
But ever since - there's these
periods where I can't remember.
Blank spaces, over and over. And
then after, Ray is always there,
and I know - I've been with him.
Even though I don't want to be.

CHANCE
Been with him sexually, you mean?

JACLYN
Yes. And I never know when it's
going to happen. And I don't know
how to make it stop.

CHANCE
But when it does happen, that's
Jackie taking over.

JACLYN
(nods, then)
I bought a gun. In case it got so
bad I needed... a way out. But -
then I pawned it. It didn't help.
Made everything worse actually.
(looks Chance in the eye)
I hate the name Jackie. The only
person who calls me that is him.

INT. CHANCE'S OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

Chance alone with the digital recorder.

CHANCE

Mrs. Blackstone's memory problems are clearly subordinate to psychiatric distress... Engendered most directly from her continuing to see the abusive husband from whom she is ostensibly seeking a divorce. I recommend she consider psychotherapy.

(then)

I also recommend she work with a female therapist.

INT. CHANCE'S OFFICE - DAY

Chance at his desk, WRITING on a note pad. He TEARS OFF the sheet before STANDING and approaching Jaclyn at the window -

CHANCE

I noticed in one of the reports that you have worked with a therapist in the past.

JACLYN

Myra. Dr. Cohen.

CHANCE

Do you mind if I ask why you stopped?

JACLYN

She died.

CHANCE

Ah. I'm sorry to hear that.
(passes her the paper)
This is Suzanne Silver in Berkeley.
I think she's particularly good.
And a good fit for you.

Jaclyn takes the paper, looks at it, looks at him - and for the briefest moment there is only her suddenly beautiful FACE - the play of light on cheekbones, the line of her jaw, the arch of her brow - The sudden flash of something caged or a trick in time? It's gone with a -

JACLYN

Thank you.

- as is she. And no looking back. Chance is left to contemplate the empty space between himself and the door.

INT. CHANCE'S OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

Chance stands at a window - the day dark and dingy. We HEAR the distant sound of SIRENS. Chance notes a pile of ash on the outside sill as he speaks into his recorder -

CHANCE

I think it's important for this warded-off aspect of Mrs. Blackstone's personality to be addressed and, ideally, integrated into her basic persona.

His intercom BUZZES. He checks his watch -

CHANCE (CONT'D)

However, as long as she continues to have a relationship with a person whom she both despises and fears, there is little reason to believe her underlying anxiety can be successfully treated with pharmacologic approaches.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE SUITE - RECEPTION AREA - CONTINUOUS

Chance's 24 year old receptionist, LUCY is behind the desk, all five feet of her, retro-druggie-sexy-stylish with red hair, horn-rimmed glasses and a full-sleeve tattoo. Chance emerges from his office to find her glaring at him.

CHANCE

I know, I'm going.

LUCY

Why should I care if you're late?
(pointing)
It's that.

Chance follows her finger to a large BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPH mounted on a nearby wall. It shows an elderly WOMAN, naked except for what might be taken as the elaborate headgear of an American Indian. As Chance studies the photo -

LUCY (CONT'D)

Did you say he could put that up?

CHANCE

I didn't exactly say he couldn't.

LUCY

Think maybe you could say so now? I
am the one who has to look at it.

Chance turns away from the disturbing but riveting photo.

CHANCE

You're an artist -

LUCY

Not any more, not with my
courseload -

CHANCE

- maybe you should ask him sometime
why he takes the pictures. What
they mean to him.

LUCY

Uh-huh. Or you should.

As Chance is about to answer, they are interrupted by the arrival of LEONARD HAIG, a pompous 59-year-old neurologist who now occupies the doorway to Chance's office -

HAIG

(re the photograph)

My God, another one. He's taken
this Diane Arbus thing to new
heights, or lows. We'll have
patients going out the windows.

(to Lucy)

And poor you.

Haig smiles. Lucy ignores him. He looks to Chance -

HAIG (CONT'D)

I looked into getting him fired,
but the little fucker's protected
from on high. Some connection to
the landlord I am unable to fathom.
You should talk to him.

CHANCE

To who?

HAIG

Oh, come now. You gotta have some
pull - He keeps putting that wreck
of yours in all the best spots.

He notes Chance taking his jacket off the coat rack.

HAIG (CONT'D)

You're leaving. Perfect - You can talk to him now.

CHANCE

That may be difficult.

(off Haig's look)

It's my understanding he's taken a vow of silence. Some kind of - spirit quest.

Haig stares, understands that Chance is fucking with him. As Chance heads for the door -

DR. HAIG

Hope you left yourself enough travel time. Fire department's closed more roads since this morning - Can't help your patient if you don't show up.

INT. MEDICAL BUILDING - PARKING GARAGE - SHORTLY

Chance emerges from the lobby door and crosses to the attendant booth. Inside it is a short MAN with a long grey-streaked black ponytail, sitting in the path of an oscillating FAN. Impossible to guess his age but he's not the picture of health. This is JEAN-BAPTISTE, chief parking attendant, purveyor of disturbing photographs and expert in subjects not yet identified. He gets off his stool as -

CHANCE

Jean-Baptiste.

- and NODS in response as he begins sorting through the clumps of car keys.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

I like the new picture. So does Dr. Haig, by the way. He specifically asked me to convey his enthusiasm. The lady with the, uh -
(gestures with his hands)
- headdress.

Jean-Baptiste regards Chance like a man who both knows bullshit when he hears it - and really is sworn to silence.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

She's got a real look in her eye.

Jean-Baptiste exhibits a set of keys for Chance to see before heading to a nearby row of PARKED CARS, all Range Rovers, Porsches, Mercedes - except for one, given pride of place in the middle of the row - a 1989 OLDS CUTLASS, found by Chance on Craigslist after his wife took possession of their Lexus.

While Jean-Baptiste fires up the Olds, two other DOCTORS arrive and cross to the booth. They regard the old car with a mixture of pity and horror as Jean-Baptiste swings it in a wide arc to stop in front of Chance, then makes a small show of opening Chance's door and ushering him in.

Chance sits at the wheel, looks to the day beyond the garage door - glimpse of the city, cars churning clouds of ash in the gloomy light. He inclines toward the street, speaks to Jean-Baptiste, but loudly enough for the others to hear -

CHANCE (CONT'D)

History is coming for the empire.

As Jean-Baptiste breaks into a broad smile and gives Chance a THUMBS-UP as he pulls away...

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A judge on the bench. A lawyer at a lectern. Another sits at the plaintiff's table - with Mariella Franko, the woman who held her headless father's hand. Chance is on the stand.

CHANCE

... anxiety, startle reactions, spells of tachycardia, tachypnea, and perspiration combined with intrusive thoughts of her father. Ms. Franko's social life had become very constricted, with severe withdrawal and isolation. Her general manner when questioned was pleasant but marked by a total absence of spontaneity. She described a predominant state of hopelessness, and her only distraction as 'trying to watch television'.

DEFENSE LAWYER

Dr. Chance - You conducted this IME of Ms. Franko eight months ago, on January 23rd, correct?

CHANCE

Yes, that is correct.

DEFENSE LAWYER

Are you aware the Plan subsequently asked Ms. Franko to attend another IME? And that she refused?

CHANCE

(was not aware)

... Given the severity of post-traumatic stress, her avoidance of mental health care professionals is understandable - But it is exactly that avoidance to which health care professionals must respond -

DEFENSE LAWYER

Are you aware that the Plan conditions continued eligibility for benefits on cooperation during requested evaluations?

Off Chance as he looks over at Mariella Franko, her eyes distant, her hands limp in her lap...

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY (LATER)

... to Chance as he stands facing Haig, who has groomed himself even more expensively for court.

HAIG

The fuck, Eldon. You did your best. Ms. Franko was lucky to have you.

CHANCE

And might've been even luckier, the deck hadn't been stacked. By you and the Plan.

Haig is delighted to have struck a nerve. He shrugs happily.

DR. HAIG

She fell out of compliance with recommended treatment.

CHANCE

In what sense? You yourself testified she ultimately did attend the second IME -

DR. HAIG

At which she put forth inadequate effort, and exaggerated her symptoms to the point of malingering -

CHANCE

She watched her father be
decapitated! Have you even looked
at the on-scene photographs? -

Haig's CELL is BUZZING.

DR. HAIG

- Wellllll, anyway. Just wanted to
say. You'll get 'em next time.

He walks off with his phone. Off Chance, grinding teeth...

INT. CAR - DAY

... to Chance, still dejected about court. The day matches
his mood - all soot and ash. He squints through a dirty
windshield at uniformed STUDENTS waiting after-school pick-
up, many in SURGICAL MASKS.

As Chance tries the wipers - the passenger door OPENS to a
TEENAGE GIRL who dumps herself into the seat next to him.
Meet Chance's daughter, NICOLE, pretty at 15, trendily
dressed, her eyes rimmed in red, to which -

CHANCE

Where's your mask?

NICOLE

Where's yours?
(before he can answer)
Mom told me. About school.

She yanks her door SHUT hard, avoiding eye contact.

CHANCE

I'm sorry, Nicky. I know how much
you like Havenwood. If there had
been any other way -

NICOLE

How about you just stay with her.

Chance tries to keep his sigh to himself. He twists to face
Nicole, now biting her lip and staring out her window.

CHANCE

It's complicated. You may not know
all the details... But you do know
it's complicated.

(off her silence)

There are other good schools -

NICOLE
Marina South blows.

CHANCE
It does, yes. I was going to say
though, there are good schools
across the bay. In Berkeley -

NICOLE
We don't live in Berkeley.

CHANCE
We don't live in Berkeley now. But
I've been looking into it. If I got
an apartment over there -

NICOLE
You just got one here.

CHANCE
Nicole -

NICOLE
- Berkeley is on fire, Dad.

CHANCE
It's actually mostly Richmond. Some
of the hills.

This sounds lame, even to him. Nicole rolls her eyes.

CHANCE (CONT'D)
(even lamer)
I'm sure they will put it out.

Nicole looks at him for the first time since getting in the
car. Chance builds on it, reaches for her hand -

CHANCE (CONT'D)
This is difficult. For all of us.
What I want you to know is that I'm
doing the best I can for you and
always will. I love you very much -

NICOLE
I know.

CHANCE
(lamest)
It will all work out, all of this.
You - will see.

Nicole stares off into the smoky air.

NICOLE

Life sucks.

Off Chance as he lets go of her hand, gives the glass another fruitless swipe with the wipers and pulls out -

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

- to Chance seated at the kitchen island, as CHRISTINA, his ex-wife busies herself at the sink. Christina is 40ish and attractive - might still pass for the yoga instructor she was in one of her earlier incarnations. She is also a bit hyper and more than a bit pissed off -

CHRISTINA

He keeps bringing up how I pay less than the consignment shop does, and for a bigger space. He's at least going to raise the rent on me.

CHANCE

Well, we needed to talk about that anyway, so -

CHRISTINA

You're so sympathetic. Thanks -

CHANCE

It's not as if you have to give up photography just because you won't have the studio -

CHRISTINA

Except if I was better at it, I'd sell more work and be able to afford the rent myself. Right?

CHANCE

No. But is that relevant, as I'd still be paying for both our lawyers, and we'd still have to sell this place, in the worst market, and Nicole would still have to leave school - Which I guess, you told her?

CHRISTINA

Well, I'm sorry - But if she's not going to Marina South -

CHANCE

- She's not -

CHRISTINA

- You think I want her to? But so we have to figure something out, like, yesterday.

Christina SIGHS in frustration and turns to face Chance.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

And I didn't want to tell her about Havenwood, either. But I knew if I waited for you to decide when to tell her, I'd be waiting forever. Plus I don't have to wait for you to make up your mind about that or anything else any more. Thank God.

As this lands, a MAN ten years Christina's junior enters, toned and tanned in T-shirt and track pants. This is the boyfriend, NEIL. Chance studies a leaking faucet as Neil kisses Christina before greeting him with an affable smile -

NEIL

Hey, Eldon.

CHANCE

Neil. How's it going. How's work.

NEIL

Good, man. Got a line on something full time at Bay Fitness. Should know in another week or two.

Off Chance as Neil circles Christina's waist -

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

- to Chance as he heads to his car, past the forlorn FLAPPING of a REALTOR'S PLACARD in the late wind.

INT. ONE-BEDROOM APARTMENT - NIGHT

FIND a SUITE of palm wood '30s French Art Deco furniture with oxidized brass metalwork - a desk, bookshelf and two chairs, jammed into a tiny living room. The set not only takes up most of the space, it slows access to the room's lone window. Grand in Chance's former house, the suite is here absurd, one more reminder of a life in decline...

... a sentiment reflected in Chance's expression as we REVERSE to find him staring at it with a mixture of sadness and resentment as he talks on the apartment's corded phone.

CHANCE

Either one, the paint or the carpet. Because it's not feasible financially. We can't get new anything. I know... I'm sorry. But - This can't be the first time you've had clients who had to sell as is.

(listens, then)

Well, if you think the photos need to be retaken you need to talk to Christina. Because she took them.

He hangs up with more force than would seem necessary as we PULL BACK for a more complete view -

- CHANCE in the tiny room, in the single piece of furniture not one with the suite, a winged-back chair with worn arms. There's a Trader Joe's bottle of Two-Buck Chuck on an unopened U-Haul box at his knee and a glass in his hand that he now refills, finding as he does his reflection in the darkened glass of his window - a middle-aged man, in no way remarkable. He addresses himself. He's only a little drunk -

CHANCE (CONT'D)

Life does suck.

EXT. ALLEY OFF MARKET STREET - DAY

Narrow, well-kept. Halfway down, an old brick WAREHOUSE with the sign ALLAN'S ANTIQUES. FIND Chance as he approaches.

The front door of the warehouse is ajar. As Chance nears it, he can hear an older MAN'S VOICE from inside, high and angry.

OLDER MAN (O.S.)

Are you his bitch then? Is that how it's going to be?

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

A BELL JANGLES as Chance enters, spots amid a retail space crowded with furniture, the MAN speaking - African-American, 75ish, in ascot and sport coat, rings on his fingers. Facing him is a young Latino MAN, in bodycon black clothes and boots. The older man meets Chance's eyes and immediately TURNS toward him.

OLDER MAN

Young man! What news of the Printz collection?

(as Chance reacts)

(MORE)

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)
 Bookshelf, a desk and two chairs.
 But something missing...

CHANCE
 Whoa, good memory. And yes, some
 bits of the metalwork.

As Chance speaks, the young Latino drifts into some dim
 recess of the building. The older man seems not to notice -

OLDER MAN
 You're a doctor, as I recall.

CHANCE
 A neuropsychiatrist. Eldon Chance.

OLDER MAN
 (smiling)
 Of course, Doctor Chance. How does
 one forget a name like that? Carl.
 (as the men shake)
 I have recently acquired a cabinet.
 Might go with that set of yours -

CHANCE
 I wish. I'm thinking about selling
 what I have.
 (off Carl's eyebrow)
 I'm in the middle of a divorce.
 House is up for sale...

CARL
 Say no more. I am sorry.

Chance NODS, then takes out his laptop.

CHANCE
 I have pictures.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE on the laptop screen - a PHOTO of the Art Deco desk. A
 CLICK shows another angle. PULL BACK to Carl and Chance.

CARL
 Without the metalwork... Fifty,
 sixty thousand maybe.

CHANCE
 What about with the metalwork? Just
 to make me feel bad.

CARL
Twice that.

CHANCE
Christ. Just for some brass?

CARL
It's the difference between selling to someone in the market for a nice grouping or a serious collector.

As Carl CLICKS to a picture of the bookshelf -

CARL (CONT'D)
Original strips were substantial, etched with acid - You have one piece of it left here. Lovely.

CHANCE
I suppose if the set had been complete I would have never gotten it for what I paid... Still.

Carl doesn't answer. Instead he picks up Chance's laptop and gestures for Chance to follow him -

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

- as the retail space gives way to a WORKROOM area delineated by a partition WALL. Before which stands a beautiful palm wood CABINET with complete BRASS TRIMMINGS.

CARL
Brass work's not exactly like yours. But not so dissimilar.

CHANCE
Yes, well, given what you just told me, this'd be out of my price range even if I was buying and not -

CARL
Oh, it's not original. Didn't have any brass when I found it. I just saw there were - possibilities.

Chance steps closer and touches the metalwork, impressed.

CHANCE
I looked into having mine replaced. The samples I was shown were nothing like this.

CARL

I'm not surprised. They used natural sponges to get those patterns. Other materials as well - acids, dyes... A process lost to time. Hence its value.

As Chance studies the furniture, Carl CALLS OUT cheerfully.

CARL (CONT'D)

D, come on out here a minute.

In another moment A MAN in his early thirties built roughly along the lines of a refrigerator - which is to say somewhere south of 6 feet and north of 300 pounds - steps from behind the partition. His appearance, inherently unusual, is given an ominous twist by the large black widow spider tattooed dead center on a shaved but otherwise unmarked skull. He wears military-style pants and boots covered in paints and stains, a jacket with an ARMY RANGERS patch on the sleeve. He regards his visitors with a flat, dark stare, before which Carl maintains his cheerful demeanor, as if to suggest some delicate balance it would not be wise to upset -

CARL (CONT'D)

This is D. D, meet Doctor Chance.

D NODS at Chance, turns to the photos on Chance's laptop that Carl is holding for him to see -

CARL (CONT'D)

Look familiar?
(D eyes it, NODS)
What do you think?

D

Sure.

D looks once more at Chance before returning to his place behind the wall. As Chance watches him go -

CARL

Man of few words.

CHANCE

(re Carl's furniture)
D did this?

CARL

Yours too, that's what you want.

CHANCE

... and then what? You would put it on sale? As - an original?

(MORE)

CHANCE (CONT'D)
 (Carl just LOOKS at him)
 There wouldn't be ways... Of
 checking...?

Carl SHRUGS. As Chance tries to think, his mind racing -

CARL
 Your furniture is signed, as I
 recall. That's generally enough.
 Did you buy from a dealer, or a
 private party?

CHANCE
 Estate sale. Some guy selling off
 his mother's stuff.

CARL
 Perfect. If it had been a dealer,
 and if the set were to show up at
 some later point and the dealer
 were to recognize it...
 (spreads his hands)
 Private parties are good.

CHANCE
 Okay, but still.

CARL
 Yes, well. There's always a chance.

He's clearly happy with the play on Chance's name.

CHANCE
 (a weak smile)
 Perhaps I should sleep on it.

CARL
 Oh, as many nights as you like.

As Carl winks at Chance...

INT. ART & ARCHITECTURE BOOKSTORE - DAY (TWO MONTHS LATER)

CLOSE ON a glossy PHOTOGRAPH of French Art Deco furniture.
 HEAR the turning of pages. A second photograph appears, and
 now a third, as we PULL BACK to FIND -

- Chance occupying a leather armchair, a book on French Art
 Deco furniture open on his lap. Mission lamps burn against
 the gray haze beyond the windows. Chance is scrutinizing the
 metalwork on a bookcase similar to his own when something in
 the middle distance catches his eye. REVERSE to REVEAL -

- a pretty woman among the aisles - trendy and sexy in jeans and leather. When she turns more fully in his direction, he recognizes her as Jaclyn Blackstone, the woman he'd seen for a single consultation some weeks earlier.

She's been reading but looks up to find Chance watching - a potentially awkward moment saved by her with what might only be described as a guileless smile followed by a little wave. Chance rises, tries to hide his shock and awe with what he hopes will pass as a friendly professionalism -

CHANCE
Mrs. Blackstone.

- but Jaclyn's not having any of it. She taps his forearm briefly with the tips of her fingers -

JACLYN
Don't you just love this store?

Chance smiles, caves to her informality.

CHANCE
I do. What'd you find?

JACLYN
Oh, hunting ideas. I like to strip old pieces of furniture and redo them. Just junk, but...

She digs for a phone with her free hand, scrolls through photos before showing him some shots of straight-back wooden chairs repainted with the likenesses of old movie stars.

JACLYN (CONT'D)
(as Chance looks)
I call them my icon chairs.

CHANCE
Nice.

JACLYN
You think?

CHANCE
I do. Quite good. I mean that.

They have, without saying anything about it, begun a slow stroll toward the cash registers at the front of the store.

JACLYN
(scrolling once more)
Or, I do dogs sometimes, too. Are you a dog lover?

CHANCE

I am. Do you have one?

The question seems to dampen her spirits -

JACLYN

(softly)

I did. But I lost him.

CHANCE

I'm sorry to hear that. It's not easy... losing a pet.

She nods, forces a smile as she points to Chance's book -

JACLYN

And what do you have?

He shows her the book on French furniture.

JACLYN (CONT'D)

Yours is fancier than mine. But then you are the doctor.

CHANCE

Yes, well... I have some furniture kind of like this that I've been thinking of selling.

JACLYN

Hard to decide?

CHANCE

(laughs)

You have no idea.

JACLYN

Well, don't think too long.

CHANCE

(laughs once more)

Now why would you say that?

JACLYN

(shrugs)

I don't know. Seemed like good, all-purpose advice... You could say it about so many things.

Is she flirting? Chance realizes they've reached the registers. She nods for him to go first. He was merely looking at the expensive book but now feels obliged to buy, if only to preserve the moment - a welcome departure from what has become the dreary norm.

EXT. ART & ARCHITECTURE BOOKSTORE - MOMENTS LATER

Chance and Jaclyn emerge with their carrier bags. As Chance steps behind Jaclyn to let someone pass, his eyes fall on an upscale COFFEE SHOP down the block. But before Chance can open his mouth and ask something crazy like does this former patient of his with two personalities and a psychopathic estranged spouse want to grab a cup of coffee -

Jaclyn stops and turns to face him.

JACLYN

I just want you to know, that I've been seeing that therapist. The one you recommended - Suzanne. And maybe this is stupid, after only like six weeks... But - It's changed everything.

Chance returns to himself.

CHANCE

I'm so glad to hear that. And you're feeling better?

JACLYN

Better than I have in a long time.

They stand with this. Then -

CHANCE

Well, you -

JACLYN

- Sometimes I use numbers.
(as Chance blinks)
On the furniture. When I paint it. Formulas, sometimes, or geometric shapes. But sometimes just numbers.

CHANCE

That makes sense, right? You love numbers. You teach math.

JACLYN

Tutor. Mainly. I've started again, since the separation...

Her voice trails off. Chance suddenly indulges his earlier impulse, maybe so he can see a smile back on her face -

CHANCE

You're looking very well.

- and it works.

JACLYN

Am I?

CHANCE

You are. I almost didn't recognize you there in the store.

JACLYN

Well. I'm glad we ran into each other just now.

Jaclyn offers Chance her hand. He takes it.

CHANCE

So am I. And I wish you the best.

They hold hands for a long beat, then let go. As her hand leaves his, Chance experiences a pang of remorse. Jaclyn walks backwards for a few steps.

JACLYN

Enjoy your book, about your furniture. And good luck... With whatever you decide.

Off Chance as Jaclyn walks away, for good as far as he knows -

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - VESTIBULE - LATER

Chance arrives with the large expensive book, pulls MAIL from his box, idly scans it. The return address on one envelope causes him to FREEZE. He TEARS it OPEN, begins to READ -

EXT. MARKET STREET - DAY (LATER)

- and a shaken CHANCE once again approaches Allan's Antiques, a recent conversation still ringing in his ears -

CHANCE (O.S.)

But when did they even do this audit, Dan? - And what does it have to do with me?!

MAN'S VOICE (DAN) (O.S.)

Apparently you put money into her photography studio? -

CHANCE (O.S.)

To help her get it off the ground - But that was two years ago! More!

DAN (O.S.)
Well, whenever, it wasn't properly
accounted for. On your end it's
unsubstantiated expenses, on hers
unreported income.

Chance arrives at the front door, pulls it open and steps in -

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

- to FIND the showroom apparently DESERTED.

CHANCE (O.S.)
I don't have anything to do with
Christina's business, or how she
accounts for anything - Or doesn't -

DAN (O.S.)
You filed jointly, Eldon. And now
with back taxes for the unreported
years, plus penalties -

Chance moves from the showroom to the darker recesses of the
old warehouse, past piles of furniture collecting dust.

CHANCE (O.S.)
A quarter of a million dollars.

DAN (O.S.)
Yep. And between you and her, they
know who's got the money.

Chance in the present cringes again at this thought.

CHANCE
(muttering to himself)
Fuck you, Dan.

As Chance speaks, he spots a flickering blue light emanating
from D's work area and approaches -

INT. ALLAN'S ANTIQUES - BACK WORK AREA - CONTINUOUS

- where D stands at a table, in gloves and safety glasses, at
work over a shining piece of metal with a handheld TORCH.

Chance enters and waits for an opening. D continues, notes
Chance's presence without lifting his eyes from his work -

D
(without enthusiasm)
Doc Chance.

CHANCE

(trying to sound upbeat)
Hello D. Sorry to interrupt. Is
Carl around?

D

At home. Little under the weather.

CHANCE

Ah. Well... I guess maybe you're
the guy I'd need to talk to anyway.
At least to begin.

(off D's silence)

You remember the furniture we
looked at, couple months or so ago?
French Art Deco stuff?

D places the metal on a workbench, uses a gloved hand to push
the safety glasses to his forehead and turns to Chance.

D

I do. You decide you want to make
it right?

CHANCE

(smiles)

That'd be one way of putting it.
But I feel like I'd have to know
what it would cost. If I'd have to -
pay up front, for the work, or if
there'd be a way of settling when
the stuff was sold.

D

Payment you'd have to talk to Carl.

CHANCE

Of course. But let's say I'm ready -
get it down here, talk payment when
Carl is back. I'd need help -

D

- Right now work?

CHANCE

Really?

(D just looks at him)

Yes, well, okay... I guess we'll
need a truck.

D

U-Haul's about three blocks down
and one up, Market and 4th.

CHANCE
 (a long beat)
 All right then. You're on.

D nods, goes back to the metal, starts in on it with a small hammer - tapping the edges. Chance watches, phone in hand -

CHANCE (CONT'D)
 Do you mind if I ask what that is?

D
 You can ask.

Chance smiles, can't tell if D's joking. D lifts the piece.

CHANCE
 Is it a hatchet?

D
 Tomahawk.

CHANCE
 There's a difference?

D
 Hatchet's a tool. Tomahawk's a
 weapon. Buddy of mine keeps going
 back to Afghanistan.
 (re: the tomahawk)
 This is what he likes.

CHANCE
 That where you were?

D
 (NODS, then)
 I use the torch to temper the
 blade. You want it thin enough to
 cut, hard but not brittle. My buddy
 reports back. We discuss ways to
 make it more effective. Man does
 like his scalps.

CHANCE
 (beat, then)
 I'll see about the truck.

INT. CHANCE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRWELL - LATER

Chance climbs the narrow stairs. D follows, red-faced, breathing hard.

INT. ONE-BEDROOM APARTMENT - SHORTLY

- as the men enter. D moves to study the furniture. Chance studies D, still short of breath, tries to remember the last time he was called upon to administer CPR.

CHANCE

Would you like a glass of water?

D ignores him, looks to one of the chairs -

D

You get that.

Without waiting a reply, D advances upon the desk, finds his grip, brings the entire piece flat to his chest as if it were nothing more than a fold-up card table, talks to Chance as he heads for the door -

D (CONT'D)

We take this shit down, you wrap and strap, I'll bring the rest.

Off Chance as he reacts, then follows with the chair -

EXT. STREET/INT. TRUCK - LATER

The desk is now WRAPPED in a moving blanket and lashed to one of the truck's interior walls with a canvas strap, along with one of the chairs. As Chance works on strapping down the wrapped bookcase, a car HONK comes from outside the truck. Then a FEW MORE. Chance moves to investigate.

EXT. STREET/INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

As Chance appears at the rear of the truck, we SEE how it's been parked. Too high and wide for the basement garage, Chance nosed it as far as possible into the driveway and set the hazards. As a result, the two-way, two-lane street has been reduced to one, forcing motorists to take turns passing the rear corner of the truck.

One guy in a big gunmetal gray BMW, 3 car lengths back, seems intent on making an issue of the slowdown. He's the one HONKING. Chance catches his eye and HOLDS UP his hands, palms out in apology. The driver FLIPS HIM OFF.

Chance retreats into the van, renews his strapping as the car horn goes wild. At which point -

- D RETURNS with the last chair in time for a particularly long and obnoxious blast.

It comes as the BMW is about to pull even with the truck's tailgate. D shows no immediate reaction but places the chair gently inside truck and -

- just as the honking driver is about to take his long-awaited turn and move past the U-Haul, steps quite matter-of-factly into the street, in front of the BMW, effectively blocking its path. The car BRAKES.

BMW DRIVER

What the fuck - What the fuck are you doing, man? Move!

He HONKS again. D STANDS and STARES. The driver HONKS several more times. A number of cars in the opposing lane go by, drivers turning for a look at this confusing standoff.

The BMW driver, his face shiny with rage, now tries something else. He REVERSES as far back as the 15 cars at a standstill behind him will allow and cranks his wheels wide in preparation to swing around D -

- who simply STEPS CLOSER to the BMW's front bumper, then a little to his right, blocking the BMW's forward progress yet again. The driver STARES at D, his position now wonderfully honest. He can run D over; he can get out and start something. Or - he can sit there, shut up and let D emasculate him until this is over. He chooses Option 3.

After several more cars have gone by in the opposing lane, D deems the lesson learned. He moves out of the path of the BMW, which drives quietly past, the driver's hands atop the wheel, eyes dead ahead.

INT. TRUCK/EXT. TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Chance opens the driver's door and gets in behind the wheel. On the passenger side, D is resting his head on the metal grate behind his seat and looking out his window.

Chance starts the truck. They drive for a good block in silence. At which point, no longer able to contain his glee -

CHANCE

That was pretty good. Back there.

D nods, closes his eyes -

D

Shit like that makes my day.

Off Chance, best he's felt in weeks -

INT. CHANCE'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - NEXT DAY

- to Chance as he enters, still upbeat. Lucy is studying some PAPERS. She holds them up as he passes for him to squint at.

LUCY

Hey - How accurate is this thing?

CHANCE

You're taking the Beck Depression Inventory? Don't do that.

LUCY

(over this)

Because I seriously have like no interest in other people. And I definitely feel more discouraged about my future than I used to.

CHANCE

You know what, when I administer that test it's in conjunction with other tests, it's cumulative - It's not a stand-alone diagnostic -

Chance is opening the door to his office -

LUCY

Friend of yours is in there.

CHANCE

(startled)

In - ? Maybe next time lead with that.

INT. CHANCE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Chance enters to find a middle-aged woman with short dark hair near the window. This is SUZANNE SILVER, Chance's friend since their teaching days at UCSF. Suzanne is gay and direct, qualities reflected in both manner and dress.

CHANCE

Suzanne! How nice -

SUZANNE

It won't be in a minute - You remember the last patient you sent to me? Jaclyn Blackstone?

Chance's eyes tick to the coffee table art book purchased in Jaclyn's company, now on a small table near Suzanne's chair. Yet he makes a show of searching his memory -

CHANCE
Memory problems, an abusive -

SUZANNE
She's been beaten up. She's at
Mercy General.

CHANCE
... The ex?

SUZANNE
I can't believe it isn't. Will you
please go look in on her?

CHANCE
(beat)
She's not my patient.

SUZANNE
No, but you saw her as one. And
you're a neurologist, they'll talk
to you. Just check on her - She
doesn't have insurance and that
place can be a shitshow.

Chance already knows he's going.

CHANCE
What's Jaclyn saying happened?

As Chance speaks, CUT TO -

INT. MERCY GENERAL HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - DAY

... as Chance walks the shining linoleum, in his white
doctor's coat complete with name tag, passing doors and
checking room numbers.

SUZANNE (V.O.)
She's saying she surprised an
intruder on the patio at her condo.

CHANCE (V.O.)
I suppose that's possible.

SUZANNE (V.O.)
Oh, absolutely. And let's not rule
out alien abduction.

As Chance notes room 141 just ahead, the door ajar...

SUZANNE (V.O.)
 (giving in to frustration)
 She'd been doing so well. The
 bastard kept coming - but she was
 saying no. After what - Seven
 sessions. It had to be him.

INT. MERCY GENERAL HOSPITAL - ROOM 141 - DAY

... Chance steps inside the room - then stops, a catch in his
 breath. REVERSE TO REVEAL -

- a MAN in a chair at Jaclyn's bedside, his back to the door.
 Holding her hand, leaning in, his voice low, words muffled,
 only one that counts -

MAN
 ... Jackie.

Off Chance as he backs out of the room, quietly -

INT. MERCY GENERAL HOSPITAL - NURSE'S STATION - MOMENTS LATER

- to Chance as he talks to a pleasant but harried nurse.

NURSE
 Orbital blowout fracture on the
 right side. No structural damage or
 bleeding in the brain, but there is
 an entrapped muscle. They'll have
 to go in, relieve the pressure.

CHANCE
 And when do they plan to operate?

NURSE
 This afternoon, with Jellicoe.
 She's lucky - He's good.

A CALL BUTTON CHIMES. The nurse smiles to excuse herself. As
 Chance watches her go, behind him we SEE -

- the man from room 141 emerge. Now that he's upright and
 moving toward us, we get a better impression of how broad and
 lean he is. And of how cold his eyes are. His jacket bulges
 over a sidearm. He is RAYMOND BLACKSTONE. He is already
 behind Chance. As Chance turns and reacts -

BLACKSTONE
 You one of her doctors?

CHANCE

... I'm a neuropsychiatrist.
 (off Blackstone's face)
 I was asked to look in on her. By
 her therapist. Suzanne Silver.

BLACKSTONE

You were in her room just now. Why
 didn't you 'look in'?

CHANCE

I saw she had a visitor. There was
 no rush -

BLACKSTONE

Really? Not like any doctor I know.

Unable to settle on an appropriate response, Chance says
 nothing. Neither does Blackstone. He just stares.

Twenty-four hours ago, Chance was made witness to another
 staring contest - between D and the BMW driver. This is the
 flip side - and Chance wilts. Blackstone fixes him a moment
 longer before casually moving away, toward the elevators. Off
 Chance, feeling unmanned, watching him go...

INT. MERCY GENERAL HOSPITAL - ROOM

... to Jaclyn curled under the blankets, her back to the
 door. She turns a bit as Chance enters. Her face is swollen
 and bruised. Chance moves to the side of the bed, notes the
 chair where Blackstone sat -

CHANCE

Jaclyn. I'm so sorry.

She turns back to the window, its gloomy view of scorched
 hills beneath sky the color of concrete. Chance stares at her
 back, moved and helpless. Tries to lighten the mood -

CHANCE (CONT'D)

You'll feel better after the
 surgery. When they free up that
 muscle and you can stop seeing two
 of everything -

JACLYN

You should go.

CHANCE

... I'm told the surgeon is first
 rate. I'll see him on my way out -

JACLYN

Please.

At a loss, Chance gives her arm a gentle pat. As he clocks her upper hand, clenching convulsively at the blanket...

EXT. HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - DAY

- Chance walks, past chuckling nurses, a tired-looking family, as he heads for his beater car. He gets in, starts the engine and starts to pull out -

- only to SLAM on the spongy brakes as a black on black MERCEDES ROADSTER SLIDES DISMISSIVELY PAST. An expensive car for most people, let alone on a DT's salary. Behind the wheel, Blackstone is having a heated one-handed cell-phone conversation. It's as if Chance doesn't exist.

Off Chance as the roadster revs away...

EXT. ALLAN'S ANTIQUES - BACK ALLEY WORK AREA - DAY

... to D, sitting on an overturned crate, eating fries from a bag while reading an old paperback. A colossal soda sits next to his feet. He looks up to see Chance in the doorway.

D

Sup, Big Dog. You got more furniture to move?

CHANCE

Not yet. How's the brass coming?

D

Still waiting for what I need. Couple of weeks, once I start.

CARL (O.S.)

Is there a doctor in the house?

Chance turns toward Carl - and REACTS. Carl's nose is swollen, his eyes blackened. A straw hat is set at a jaunty angle on his head to accommodate bandaging. He's leaning heavily on a silver-headed cane, trying to smile.

CARL (CONT'D)

Thought I heard your voice -

CHANCE

My God, what happened?

CARL
 (waves him off)
 Minor mishap. Happy to see you
 brought your pieces in. I already
 have some people may be interested.

CHANCE
 Buyers?

CARL
Beautiful buyers. Find me when you
 boys are done. We'll want to
 document the pieces, get your
 signature on some papers.

CHANCE - spooked by the word signature, is further startled
 by a loud GURGLING - D and his soda, working the straw, hard.
 The old man waits a response. Chance musters a weak grin -

CHANCE
 Yes. Righto.

Carl winks, wobbles back inside. Chance turns to D.

CHANCE (CONT'D)
 What the hell happened?

D
 Kid took him off.

CHANCE
Kid? What kid -

D
 Flavor-of-the-fucking month kid.

CHANCE
 ... Leather pants, pointed boots?

D
 (nods)
 He wanted money, Carl said no. Came
 back with two of his pals, beat
 Carl up and stole some shit. Couple
 antique chairs, some cash was in
 that highboy by the register.

D STANDS, slurping from the bottom of the huge cup.

D (CONT'D)
 What pisses me off, I wasn't here
 when they came around but I guess
 that's how they planned it. You got
 to watch it with that shit.

CHANCE

What shit?

D

Having a routine. Same place same time, every day? Like walking around with a fucking target on your back.

Eschewing the more obvious diagnosis of delusional paranoia, Chance opts for a knowing nod, as if to confirm the position's fundamental soundness -

D (CONT'D)

But I got it all back, so.

CHANCE

... The stuff that was stolen?

D

That and then some.
(off Chance's look)
I needed to make it worth my while.

CHANCE

And - they just let you? Didn't want to - fight you for it?

As D takes the lid off his soda cup and looks inside as if to be sure there are no hidden reservoirs -

D

Kid knows me. One of his pals did try his luck with a baseball bat.

CHANCE

Not a good idea, you're saying.

D

Should've stuck to baseballs.

CHANCE

Ah. So then what?

D

(matter-of-fact)
Then he went away.

Chance is left to imagine.

CHANCE

Huh. Well... Well, I can think of a few more assholes you might give that treatment to.

He's joking, more or less. D isn't.

D

Like who?

The man's tone is enough to elicit in Chance a momentary flight of fancy, the urge to confide. He comes this close - before caving to reason, making light -

CHANCE

Half the city.

D just looks at him. When Chance has nothing more to add, D crumples his trash, removing it to a nearby dumpster where, having tossed it in, he begins what would seem a careful examination of the dumpster's contents. Off Chance, forgotten at D's back, rising slowly to reenter the old warehouse...

CHANCE (V.O.)

L.S. is a 46-year-old woman raised by an abusive mother. She states that as a child she seemed to learn everything "backward".

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A middle-aged ASIAN WOMAN exits a battered SUV, opens the rear door and with some effort removes a heavy lumpy sack.

CHANCE (V.O.)

She read not only individual words backward, but entire pages. If she is forced to read a book from the beginning, she has little sense of the story until she is able to read it again from the end.

The woman makes for a nearby BUILDING where, with even greater effort, she starts up a long flight of stairs -

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Chance waits outside a closed courtroom, reviewing pages. A BAILIFF opens the door, gives him a look. Chance sighs, follows him in.

CHANCE (V.O.)

L.S. says that for as long as she can remember she has felt unsure as to who she is. Her great passions are reading about mental illness and learning disabilities...

INT. HALLWAY/APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

... as the woman unlocks an apartment door and KICKS IT OPEN.
As she carries the bag inside, we FOLLOW to SEE -

- the entire space filled with BIRDCAGES, old newspapers
covered in bird droppings carpeting the floor -

CHANCE (V.O.)
... and caring for her 205 exotic
birds.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A white WOMAN in her 30s, wearing two hospital gowns and
fuzzy socks, shuffles down a deserted hallway, away from us.

INT. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Attorneys and Chance. Chance consults a report -

CHANCE (V.O.)
The product of an attempted
abortion, the patient was born
prematurely at 7 months, suffering
oxygen deprivation at the time of
the botched procedure...

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

... and we find the woman again, standing in front of an
interior WINDOW.

CHANCE (V.O.)
She admits to a long-standing
incestuous relationship with her
father. And after 7 miscarriages
gave birth to a son with numerous
congenital anomalies.

We can't see what the woman sees. But we can see the wall
around the window is decorated with DECALS of PINK and BLUE
BALLOONS and TEDDY BEARS, as over this -

CHANCE (V.O.)
The patient is one year status post
rupture of posterior communicating
artery aneurysm with sub-arachnoid
hemorrhage.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darkness. The outlines of a man and woman making love -

CHANCE (V.O.)

On May 6, 2012, while engaging in
sexual intercourse with his wife -

- and as the woman begins to SCREAM -

INT. ONE BEDROOM APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

- FIND CHANCE in the room, empty with the ornate furniture gone. T-shirt and boxers, bedhead, in the winged-back chair, laptop on his lap. Distant expression on his face.

CHANCE (V.O.)

At the time of my evaluation, Ms.
Franko was 34 months post a head-on
motor vehicle accident in which her
68-year-old father was killed....

As the voice-over continues, we FIND the laptop screen, where an email is displayed. The subject line reads MARIELLA FRANKO. Beneath it the words are blurred to us - but not to Chance, who abruptly stands, abandoning the laptop -

EXT. STREET - DAY - LATER

- then walks, showered and shaved and dressed for work but with the same expression. As PEDESTRIANS FLOOD toward him, tousled hair and rumpled clothing, a sea of mannerisms and ticks, we MOVE from face to face with Chance's faraway eyes -

CHANCE (V.O.)

(off an approaching FACE)

The patient is a single, right-
handed Catholic woman with
complaints of delusional
ideation...

(and the next FACE)

He reports 1-2 seizures per day,
each preceded by the scent of
"imaginary beings"...

(the next)

... Believes the teddy bear belongs
to a nonexistent child...

(next)

Status post viral encephalitis...

(next)

Psychosocial stressors: Severe.

- faster and faster until suddenly - DING! -

INT. MEDICAL BUILDING - ELEVATOR/HALLWAY - DAY

- the elevator discharges an almost startled Chance. He is confronted at once by A) a black-and-white photograph of a deranged elderly woman, seated in a windowless room bare but for a string of paper dollies somehow suspended above her head, and B) Dr. Leonard Haig, who now turns from the photograph to Chance -

HAIG

I have just directed a patient to
your waiting room.

Chance merely lifts his eyebrows in response. Haig persists -

HAIG (CONT'D)

She was in mine by mistake. I
thought of keeping her but she
wanted you.

CHANCE

... I guess I should thank you
then.

HAIG

Or at least return the favor.
(re the portrait)
I thought you were going to talk to
him.

Chance considers Haig's tone, then the picture.

CHANCE

I don't know, I kind of like this
one. Something about those dollies.

Chance walks. Haig calls after him -

HAIG

Fuck you then. She shows up here
again, I'm keeping her.

Chance stops at his office door, turns back, out of patience -

CHANCE

You recall Ms. Franko? I was her
witness in court not too long ago?

HAIG
 (mulling)
 Franko... Car accident. She lost
 her father. Right?

Chance almost smiles at the understatement.

CHANCE
 It has come to my attention that
 she recently hung herself.

HAIG
 (a long beat, then)
 Well, I'm very sorry to hear that.

Off Chance, as he now heads for his office for real -

CHANCE
 (low)
 Well, you should meet Big D. Oh -
 and bring your bat.

INT. CHANCE'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

- to Chance as he enters and STOPS - at the sight of Jaclyn
 Blackstone, dressed as she was that day in the bookstore,
 STANDING before the photograph of the woman in headdress.

Jaclyn turns as he enters, bruises fading but still visible.
 Chance starts for her but is intercepted by an annoyed Lucy -

LUCY (O.S.)
 I told Mrs. Blackstone she will
 have to make an appointment -

CHANCE
 It's all right, Lucy.

LUCY
 The Jenkinses have been waiting -

CHANCE
 Please tell them, that I will be
 with them momentarily.

He turns from Lucy's look, crosses to Jaclyn -

JACLYN
 I should go -

CHANCE

I may be awhile, is all. If you are able to wait - There's a cafe downstairs. You could have coffee, I could join in - an hour or so? We should have some time to talk.

JACLYN

Thank you. I don't know...
(reining herself in)
I'm sorry. Really. But thank you.

She's gone. Chance looks to Lucy -

CHANCE

... You don't know what she's been through.

LUCY

No, but she strikes me as someone who knows how to get her way. You should've seen her little-girl-lost routine with that asshole Haig. I mean... She's been here before.

CHANCE

And sustained a pretty good concussion since then. How come you're so tough, all of a sudden.

LUCY

(ignores this)
Meeting in the cafe. Is that like a freebie, then?

CHANCE

It's the least I can do. Trust me.

INT. CAFE - LATER

Nearly empty at this time of day. A CABLE CAR rattles past in the street. Jaclyn has chosen a table deep in the room. FIND Chance as he joins her, holding a cup of coffee.

JACLYN

How was your patient?

CHANCE

... Guy's 39 years old. Married. One child. Two years post a second craniotomy for a malignant brain tumor. He has about six months.

(MORE)

CHANCE (CONT'D)

(beat)

His wife was with him today.

JACLYN

My God. What do you say to them?

CHANCE

The truth. I suggest counseling, support groups... It's not always as grim as you might think. What you see, sometimes, with some people, is the bullshit falling away. What's important, what's not.

Jaclyn looks into her cup. Chance looks at her. Then he nods toward one of the cafe's street level windows -

CHANCE (CONT'D)

There's a blast outside that window. The white light of some nuclear holocaust. You've got about three seconds. What do you do?

Now Jaclyn looks to the window, its muted light the color of ash, one more cable car rattling by.

JACLYN

I don't know. Do you?

Chance reaches to take her hand. She lets him. Their eyes meet for a beat.

CHANCE

This. Maybe this is all there is. They find people like this, you know. Everywhere from Pompeii to the World Trade Center.

Chance lets go of Jaclyn's hand. Her eyes FILL WITH TEARS.

JACLYN

You're a good doctor.

CHANCE

People want miracles. Sometimes the only miracle is, I take your hand. That's the miracle - The striking through. The freeing of the caged heart.

(tries to smile)

And without it life is all just... half-lived. Isn't it? Everything dreamed, but nothing ever done.

Jaclyn takes this in, regaining her composure. Then -

JACLYN

He'd kill me. He's said he would
and I believe him.

CHANCE

This is your husband, now. Not some
intruder. Just to be clear. It was
your husband who beat you.

JACLYN

(almost smiles)
He wouldn't be the one getting his
hands dirty.

CHANCE

He had it done? Is that what you're
telling me?

(Jaclyn SHRUGS a yes)
Have you ever talked to an
attorney? Another cop?

JACLYN

You think he's stupid? He knows the
law. And he's crazy. He would get
me in the end. He could be in jail
and still have it done.

(almost whispering)
He could make Jaclyn disappear.

CHANCE

... You just referred to yourself
in the third person. Is this Jackie
I'm speaking to now?

JACLYN

No. I don't know. I don't care
about Jackie.

(then)
I have a daughter.

This news stops Chance in his tracks, confusing him.

CHANCE

I don't - You said you'd had a
miscarriage. I -

JACLYN

I was seventeen. I wasn't married.
I gave her up. We reconnected two
years ago - she's at Chico State.
Raymond pays her tuition -

CHANCE

Why didn't you bring this up in our session?

JACLYN

I don't know. I guess I was more afraid at that point that my symptoms were neurological.

CHANCE

Do you think she's at risk?

JACLYN

He's said as much.

CHANCE

... Can you continue with Suzanne?

JACLYN

He won't let me. This was big even coming here. This is dangerous for me. It could be for you too, I could be putting us both in danger. I had to think about that.

Jaclyn searches the room with her eyes. Chance watches her, tries very hard not to share in her paranoia -

CHANCE

There's quite often a difference, in what people threaten and what they will actually do.

JACLYN

You don't know Raymond.

CHANCE

(beat)

I do know this is difficult. Still, a discreet talk, with someone more versed in the law... I'm often called to testify in court, as an expert witness. These are rarely criminal cases... But I could make inquiries -

JACLYN

It's okay. There's nothing you can do. There's nothing anyone can do.

Jaclyn reaches suddenly across and takes Chance's hand, clasping it in both of hers. Her wedding ring catches light -

JACLYN (CONT'D)

Maybe it's like you said. Maybe there's just this. Maybe this was why I came.

Jaclyn leans forward to PRESS HER CHEEK against Chance's hand - and then she's gone, just like that. Chance is alone, left to STARE at the trace of LIPSTICK on her cup. Off his face -

INT. CHANCE'S OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER

- to Lucy's, as she stares from behind her counter in either extreme curiosity or mild alarm. REVERSE to REVEAL -

- CHANCE, his gaze fixed, as Jaclyn's was earlier, on the photograph of the naked woman.

LUCY

Are you all right? You seem weird.

Chance turns. He takes her in.

CHANCE

You've done something. To your hair. It's darker. More...

LUCY

Red? Three weeks now. But thanks.

CHANCE

Well, I like it. You brighten the room.

(off her look)

What's the rest of my day?

LUCY

Conference call at four, attorneys from State Farm -

CHANCE

- Let's push that. And take the afternoon if you like.

LUCY

Okay. You are weird.

CHANCE

But one thing before you do. Myra Cohen. A therapist, somewhere in the Bay Area. Now deceased. See what you can find on her.

LUCY

Like what do you want to know?

CHANCE

Anything at all. Was she a partner?
Are the offices still there? I'd
like to know if her records are
still with us.

Lucy NODS with an eyeroll. Chance starts to leave. As he passes the photograph he again STOPS. Off his face...

INT. MEDICAL BUILDING - PARKING GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

... to his face as he approaches Jean-Baptiste in his booth. The attendant is sitting near his fan, its wind rustling the pages of a substantial hardcover book. Chance points at him -

CHANCE

I'm on to you, my man.
(as Jean-Baptiste LOOKS UP)
It's the light in their eyes, isn't
it? The people in the photographs.
The thing they share - That fierce
light. Unyielding to despair.

Jean-Baptiste puts aside his book. He SMILES pleasantly.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

But so tell me though, if you can -
how you differentiate unyielding
from purely mad?

Jean-Baptiste gazes back. Then he finds a scrap of paper, SCRIBBLES something, passes it to Chance, who smiles -

CHANCE (CONT'D)

"I love him whose soul is deep even
in being wounded." Nietzsche, yes?
(from memory, as he POCKETS
the paper)
"They herald the coming of
lightening and as heralds they
perish."

Jean-Baptiste bows his head in agreement. Then holds something else out to Chance - His car keys...

EXT. CITY PARK - LATER

FIND Chance as he passes a trio of Asian school girls in SURGICAL MASKS.

REVEAL Suzanne Silver perched on a bench beneath a tree. Chance moves to join, brushing ash from the wooden slats before he sits. He gestures -

CHANCE

Was this stupid, meeting outside?

SUZANNE

(wearily)

These fires... Every time you think they're done a new one starts.

(then)

So this plan of yours. You were way too mysterious on the phone.

CHANCE

She's not gonna make it, Suzanne. Not with that man in her life.

SUZANNE

Yet here she stays. In his city.

CHANCE

She says if she left he'd find her. We've seen what he's capable of. And - Why should she have to run? Her life is here. Did you know she has a daughter nearby?

SUZANNE

Yes, she told me.

Suzanne's tone makes Chance turn to look at her.

CHANCE

We are on the same side, right?

SUZANNE

(sighs, then)

Do I think Jaclyn's hooked up with a monster? Yes. Does she deserve a chance to work through her shit? Absolutely. But you're making me think there's more to it.

(before Chance can speak)

Let me rephrase. You're making me afraid there's more to it. Assuage my fears, why don't you.

CHANCE

I intend to call the Oakland DA. Offer some pro bono psych evals. If I can make a friend, maybe I can put that friend onto this guy.

(MORE)

CHANCE (CONT'D)

Nail him for something, if he's as dirty as she says -

SUZANNE

- If he's even close to what she says - How is he not going to get hip to you poking around?

CHANCE

It's a big department. I'd be dealing directly with the DA's office. Blackstone can't have his finger on everything that goes on over there. It's perfect -

SUZANNE

What's concerning to me is the degree to which you are involving yourself, in her affairs.

CHANCE

Yes, involving is such a dirty word. Implying as it does the getting off of one's ass.

SUZANNE

Not what I mean and you know it -

CHANCE

We do something or we don't, Suzanne, it's that simple. We act or surrender to despair.

Suzanne reads his vexation. She takes him in for a beat.

SUZANNE

Walk me to my train.

EXT. CITY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Chance and Suzanne walk. As we track them, the background occasionally intrudes. Cars and buses jam the thoroughfare. Young people crowd the entrances to bars, pressing to get in. Other people scurry past on the sidewalk, some carrying umbrellas though it isn't raining. Horns sound. Expletives are exchanged in the street. Chance carries on, oblivious -

CHANCE

She tutors kids in math. Kids Nicole's age. She could come to my apartment, say it's for that, you could meet her there -

SUZANNE

Did Jaclyn tell you how she found her daughter? It was a closed adoption. The husband found her. Excuse me, the cop found her. Do you know how she met the cop?
(off Chance's face)
She was being stalked, by some guy she'd gone out with. She called the police. Guess who showed up?

CHANCE

She wouldn't be the first to trade one abusive man for another.

SUZANNE

Or... it's more about finding one man to save her from another. Maybe that's what she does, consciously or unconsciously -

CHANCE

Maybe that's where Jackie Black comes in.

SUZANNE

Have you met her? Jackie Black?

CHANCE

You sound like a nonbeliever.

SUZANNE

Late in life for development of a secondary personality, if that's what this is. Then again, if we're going down that rabbit hole, it's possible there are others Jaclyn's not even aware of. Earlier patterns of abuse not yet brought to light.

CHANCE

Well, however many of her there are or aren't... I can't imagine any would want to keep getting beaten.

SUZANNE

That depends on how sick she is.

As Chance reacts to this, the quickening pace of the crowd and its increasing size signals the approach to the -

EXT. BART STATION - CONTINUOUS

- where as Chance and Suzanne now step to one side in hopes of a quieter place to end their talk, they inadvertently crowd a LEGLESS MAN in a rickety wheelchair, a Bible in his lap. There is a cardboard sign around his neck with the words *YOU ARE PERFECT* scrawled in what may be feces.

Disturbed at this violation of his space, the man fixes them with a terrible eye, lifts the sign and begins thrusting it in their direction. The sign buckles. Letters crack. The man begins to weep. As Chance and Suzanne try to give him space, Suzanne shakes her head in frustrated empathy -

SUZANNE

My God. I mean, sometimes you wonder how rational discourse is even possible -

CHANCE

I met the husband.

SUZANNE

... And what was that like?

CHANCE

Creepy is what it was like. It would be hard, leaving her to him.

SUZANNE

True. It might also be true that that's what she's counting on.

They stare at each other unhappily as people push by, as the legless man begins to CHANT in a low, unintelligible voice...

CHANCE

So - back where we started. Do something, or hope for the best. I think we know how that ends.

SUZANNE

(frustrated)

Eldon... You were right in sending her to a therapist. And you were right to choose a woman. But this - what you're suggesting now - is not you. And it's not okay. And it's not okay for you.

Chance struggles with his resolve in the city's mad swirl.

CHANCE

She wouldn't be seeing me, she'd be seeing you -

SUZANNE

- In your apartment.

CHANCE

Yes, well... Hearing you say it... the fuck knows? You could be right. It's probably a bad idea.

(re: the legless man)

Maybe despair is all we get.

SUZANNE

(softening)

I'm on her side. She has a difficult past, and she's developed what I'd call a dangerous strategy by way of coping. But I felt we were making progress. I think she's a bright, likeable woman who may someday be whole... Or not.

(beat)

But I shouldn't have vented to you. I shouldn't have asked you to look in on her. I shouldn't have involved - your word again - anyone. But especially, not you.

The legless man's chanting is cut short by violent coughing. Suzanne pats Chance on the arm, offers a mock prayer -

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Dear Lord, we beseech thee - Please bring us rain.

She makes a wry face and descends into the BART station. Chance turns away. As street lights begin to come on and he begins to WALK, his cell RINGS --

CHANCE

Hey -

LUCY (O.S.)

I found Myra Cohen. You ready?

CHANCE

That's dramatic. But yes -

LUCY (O.S.)

She had a practice with two other doctors in north Berkeley.

(MORE)

LUCY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Until she was raped and murdered.
 By some intruder they never found.

Chance has stopped at the top of a long street running down through Union Square - looking toward the East Bay where it all went down, whatever *it all* was, the sky shaded in red.

LUCY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 The offices were burned to the ground. Any records she had were lost in the fire.
 (a beat)
 Does the plot thicken?

Off Chance starting to walk again, not answering...

INT. CHANCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

... to Chance with his laptop. SEE it open. SEE a photograph, a headline, a story, a name - MYRA COHEN.

Chance reaches for a nearby wine bottle with which to refill a nearby glass, finds it empty. He checks the time on his computer - 12 AM. PRELAP the SOUND of hard-soled SHOES striking pavement, taking us to -

EXT. ALLEY OFF MARKET STREET - NIGHT

- CHANCE, arriving at Allan's Antiques, clocking the sliver of light issuing from within. He knocks - to FOOTSTEPS, the sound of LOCKS. The door OPENS to D - dressed as always. He greets Chance as if his being there, sweaty and disheveled, in the middle of the night is no way extraordinary -

D
 'Sup buddy?

CHANCE
 I was in the neighborhood.

INT. ALLAN'S ANTIQUES - WORK AREA - CONTINUOUS

The part where D lives. Cot in a far corner. A makeshift bookshelf. A black Eames chair. D brings Chance in, sits on the cot, offers the chair. Chance remains standing -

CHANCE
 The French have a phrase - *mutilés de guerre* - those mutilated by war.
 Do you know it?
 (off D's face)
 (MORE)

CHANCE (CONT'D)

I spend my days in the company of those mutilated by life. Most beyond repair. But I've always held to the belief there are times - Moments really - when the right word or motion, a single touch, might heal. I have held to this though I am aware... the workings of the world will not permit these words or motions. There will be no grand gestures, no interventions. They are all - images in a glass darkly, in the midst of my own decline.

(then)

Did I mention that I have been drinking?

D

You should take a load off, Doc.

D NODS at the chair. Chance SITS.

CHANCE

I was trying to help someone. And it seems the last person who tried to help them was murdered, in hideous fashion. Does that make helping an even worse idea, or a moral imperative?

D

... Murdered by who? Do we know?

CHANCE

In all likelihood the husband. An Oakland homicide detective.

(beat)

Or at least he was behind it. Never gets his hands dirty, she says, but gets things done -

D

He's smart then.

(off Chance's look)

Guy like that can be a problem.

CHANCE

Homicidal homicide detective? Yeah, I would say. He knows how to game the system.

D

He is the system.

Some plywood is propped near D's bed, cut to the outline of a human torso with numbered circles on it, a throwing blade sunk in each. Chance stares at it -

CHANCE

And yet... I am not willing to accept this as a problem that cannot be solved. I can't.

- then at D. Who is looking back at him. And now STANDS.

D

Let's walk.

Not the turn Chance was expecting. D doesn't say where and Chance doesn't ask. He just follows D out into the alley...

EXT. TENDERLOIN - NIGHT - A LITTLE LATER

The flare of tawdry neon. Figures rustling among the shadows. D is setting a good enough pace that Chance has to work to keep up. Breaking a hairline sweat, he pulls close to D.

CHANCE

Not the best part of town.

D GRUNTS and keeps walking. As he does, something strange happens. D starts to LIMP, DRAGGING one duct-taped boot. Also to HOLD his right arm UP at the elbow, and his left arm BUNCHED at his side in the manner of a stroke victim.

Chance eyes D doubtfully. D continues to move down the sidewalk, possibly refining his limp as he goes. Finally -

CHANCE (CONT'D)

Are you all right?

D just NODS. And then abruptly turns and STEPS INTO -

INT. LIQUOR STORE - CONTINUOUS

Brightly lit. Bulletproof glass encases the aging gangbanger proprietor. An ATM machine chained to the floor between a rack of porn and a fridge. Locals MILL in the aisles. Chance is aware of their eyes on him and D, who now ADDRESSES him.

D

Got a money card?

CHANCE

... Excuse me?

D
ATM card.

Is D slurring his words? It sounds like it. Chance tries to keep his own voice down, still aware of being watched.

CHANCE
You know, if you - need something,
in here, I've got cash -

D
Just use the machine, brother.

D limps toward the machine. Chance has no choice but to follow. The eyes of the crowd follow them both.

CHANCE
(almost a croak)
Any particular amount?

D
Go big or go home.

Chance hesitates, then PUNCHES IN \$300.00. As the machine whirs and clicks, preparing to dispense the bills...

EXT. TENDERLOIN - MOMENTS LATER

... FIND D and Chance back on the street. D PULLS a nearly empty half-pint of Jim Beam from his jacket to replace it with a just purchased short dog of Silver Satin - but DROPS the bourbon, which BREAKS on the pavement. As Chance reacts, he NOTICES - a lanky leather-jacketed KID in his 20s has followed them from the store and is a half block behind.

CHANCE
There's a guy back there -

But as Chance speaks, he SEES the kid DUCK into a strip joint. His relief is huge and lasts for about a block -

- at which point he sees the lanky kid is BACK. With REINFORCEMENTS. Two black, one white, all intent on prey.

His stomach flip-flopping, Chance moves close to D, who is trying to rip open a box of Camel filters with his teeth.

CHANCE (CONT'D)
Do you see that? The guy's got a
friend now.

D
Three friends.

CHANCE

Jesus Christ, D - I don't like
this. This is not good.

They've reached an ALLEY. Rank and narrow, angling off to the right. D STARTS down it. As Chance hesitates -

D

Stay here if you want to, but I
wouldn't recommend it.

D is no longer slurring. The limp is gone. He heads toward the place where the alley turns. Chance goes with him...

EXT. ALLEY - A MOMENT LATER

... to where the alley ends in a turnaround lined with Dumpsters and the backs of warehouses. As they enter the space, D STOPS and STEERS Chance by the shoulders between two Dumpsters to stand with his back to a wall.

D

Anybody starts shooting, duck.
Other than that - Don't fucking
move.

D gives Chance a last look, then STEPS into the alley -

- as the four men ARRIVE. The lanky kid is HOLDING a KNIFE. The plan was obviously to encircle D with superior numbers. But it's clear that the muggers are put off by D moving so quickly to face them - as if this is what he intended all along, which it obviously was. This was his call, and here they now are. Their body language conveys hesitation. Even the kid with the knife seems tentative as he steps forward -

LANKY KID

We need to borrow some money.

D doesn't move. The kid TURNS his hand to display the knife, as though D hasn't seen it already, as if this show of weaponry will prove the final arbiter of the action -

- and it DOES. Because now D CLOSES the distance between himself and the kid with stunning immediacy. He TURNS the kid's knife hand with his own and DRIVES it back, burying it in the vicinity of the kid's abdominal aorta. As the kid LURCHES backward, D GOES STRAIGHT at the others -

- MOVING to the outside shoulder of the man on his far left, STRIKING open-handed at his throat, CUTTING OFF his breath, FORCING him into the path of the next man. And as this goes on, and on, D proving impossible to flank -

CHANCE (V.O.)

Eldon Chance is a 50-year-old right-handed forensic neuropsychiatrist.

- FIND Chance between the Dumpsters. Made witness at close quarters to the sheer volume of the big man's violence. A thing unlike any he has ever seen.

CHANCE (V.O.)

The majority of his time is spent evaluating the nature and severity of psychological trauma, mostly for state institutions or insurance companies.

The stabbed man is LIMPING from the alley, SPRAYING blood... One mugger is lurching, GASPING... D is already at the outside shoulder of the next, STRIKING at his eyes...

CHANCE (V.O.)

Of late, however, he is increasingly aware of a mental state he finds to be muddied and unstable. He feels that he is losing the ability to judge what he is or is not capable of.

And then there was one. D DRAGS the last one to the Dumpster closest to Chance - DRIVING his face into the Dumpster's corner edge. Reducing it to a thing both bloody and skeletal.

CHANCE (V.O.)

And worries that he may in some way bring harm to himself or others...

OFF Chance, watching, transfixed, CUT TO BLACK.