

CLAWS

"Tirana"

Written by

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INT. '96 LEXUS ES - LATE MORNING

A pink sky threatens rain, any minute. Palms dance along the highway like deranged strippers, thrashing against darkening clouds as--

--perfect nails (*WHITE AND GOLD FRENCH MANICURE*) tap on the steering wheel to the soothing sounds of "Dreams" by Gabrielle on the radio as we pull into a PARTY CITY parking lot.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! dominates the front window. It's a mob scene... wait, there's a space right in front--

EXT. PARTY CITY, PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

--the Lexus is about to pull in just as a PICKUP TRUCK takes the spot. A FLORIDA REDNECK lumbers out, casting a defiant look over at the driver of the Lexus--

INT. '96 LEXUS ES - CONTINUOUS

--whose nails still calmly tap the wheel. Her window ROLLS DOWN so she can get a good look at him...

The Redneck finds this all deeply amusing. He's PUMPING HIS THUMB in his open mouth while pushing his cheek out with his tongue, making a GROSS WET SOUND. He starts towards her--

Her window rolls up. She starts singing along with Gabrielle as--

(with radio)
...you know you gotta have hope
You know you gotta be strong...

--she finds a shitty spot at the back of the lot and parks. The door opens--

EXT. PARTY CITY, PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

--and DESNA steps out, curvy mid-40's realness in full effect, dark good looks, sexy and formidable as she strides to the entrance. By the time she gets there, the Redneck is walking out, carrying a Mango Mimosa Slushie Machine. He makes a big show of HOLDING THE DOOR for her, Mr. Chivalry all the sudden.

REDNECK
Happy new--

Desna barrels through, not looking back--

DESNA
Eat a dick.

EXT. PALMETTO PLAZA, PALMETTO, FLORIDA - LATE MORNING

That threat of rain wasn't idle. It's now POURING on a forlorn stripmall with a pain clinic on one end - Suncoast Rejuvenation, slogan in the window: "Feel Better Again!" At the opposite end of the mall is a salon--

NAIL ARTISANS OF MANATEE COUNTY - in flickering neon.

A now familiar WHITE LEXUS pulls up in front of the salon--

INT. SALON - SAME

Security gate ROLLS UP. Light floods into a run-down, but lovingly maintained nail salon. Desna unlocks the door and walks in, coffee in hand, 7-11 bag umbrella over her hair.

She stows her PARTY CITY bag in the back office, then turns on fluorescents, checking her eye makeup in a magnifier as--

DOOR CLANGS, in walks JENNIFER, late 30's, squinty eyes, tube top, lean, rough and ready, bearing of a fighting dog (*PURPLE AND SILVER ZEBRA ACRYLIC TIPS*), on the PHONE--

JENNIFER
(to Desna)
Baylor can't shit...

Desna sips her coffee, having heard it all before--

JENNIFER
...no no no that's too long baby girl, way too long. Tell Daddy Bryce or tell mommy next time, okay.. you're supposed to make a little brownie every day, couple brownies...

DESNA
(to herself)
At the very least...

Desna stocks her station with necessities - acetone, cotton squares, orangewood sticks--

DOOR CLANGS as QUIET ANN (*BUFF AND MATTE POLISH*) walks in. She's a solid, rather hulking Florida Seminole woman of middle age, in an oversized beige polo shirt and Carhartts, baseball bat hanging from the hammer loop.

Quiet Ann hands Desna and Jennifer a cruller from a greasy bag and checks her faint mustache in the mirror. Once satisfied, she carries a stool outside and takes a seat, lighting a cigarillo.

JENNIFER

(on phone)

Momma loves you baby... see you tonight.

Jennifer hangs up and gets her station together.

Quiet Ann KNOCKS HARD on the front window three times. Jennifer and Desna look up, suddenly giddy as children--

--then run and hide in the back office--

Moments later, POLLY, walks in, tentatively... warily. She's in her mid 50's, mild-mannered, a nice southern preppy white lady in a khaki skirt, with reading glasses perched on nose (*HIGH GLOSS BABY PINK.*)

POLLY

Hello...?

Polly deflates a little until Desna, Jennifer and Quiet Ann BURST OUT IN PARTY HATS, blowing noise-makers, throwing confetti! Polly brightens. They GROUP HUG. It's real--

DESNA

Oh but we missed you woman!

JENNIFER

Twasn't the same Polly-pol.

POLLY

So good to see you.

DESNA

You alright?

Polly nods too cheerfully, covering--

POLLY

Just glad to be out.

VIRGINIA, early 20's, half-Vietnamese, blonde, hot young trouble (*PINK AND WHITE FRENCH*) in an orange velour romper and gold wedge flip-flops, walks in. No one notices. Virginia clears her throat--

VIRGINIA
Looks like I missed the party.

JENNIFER
(under her breath)
Wouldn't have if you were on time
for once in your dirty life.

DESNA
Polly, this is Virginia. She's
been filling in while you were
away.

POLLY
Pleasure to meet you--

Jennifer puts a party hat on Polly--

JENNIFER
Where you livin'?

POLLY
Got a sweet little condo by the
Marina. Snug as a bug in a rug.

Quiet Ann begins to waltz her around the salon. Desna laughs. There's a lot of love here.

Virginia looks on sullenly, majorly left out--

INT. SALON - LATER THAT DAY

We're MAGNIFIER CLOSE on a manicure in progress - American flag decals with tiny gold dollar signs cascading from cuticle to tip, like meteors.

DESNA
What kind of pizza was it?

Desna's client is a ROUGH WOMAN of Caribbean descent, red-eyed, braless in an oversized pink tank top and white short-shorts. There's chunky red stuff along her hairline. She's dabbing her eyes with the hem of her shirt--

ROUGH WOMAN
Pepperoni. That's how come I got
all this grease in my eyes.

DESNA

Here.

Desna hands her a fresh tissue--

DESNA

Can you see?

ROUGH WOMAN

Everything's kinda pink.

Polly pipes in, not looking up from her work--

POLLY

Life through pepperoni colored
glasses...

The salon is packed with SPRAY-TANNED HOUSEWIVES, SLAVIC RETIREES, STRIPPERS. Virginia is sitting behind the register doing a WORD PUZZLE, radiating boredom and impatience, until - she finds a word she recognizes... at least part of it...

CLOSE ON her circling the word A-N-A-L but pausing when she gets to G-E-S-I-C, tapping her pencil on the page--

Rough Woman lunges towards Desna, holding open her eye--

ROUGH WOMAN

Is there a peppercorn up in there?

Desna examines--

DESNA

Virginia get me some presoaked aloe pads.

VIRGINIA

Which ones?

DESNA

The aloe. A-L-O-E.

Virginia takes her sweet time, returning with a container. Desna fishes out the peppercorn with a folded pad--

DESNA

Better?

ROUGH WOMAN

Very cooling.

DESNA

So what happened baby?

Desna shoots Polly a FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS look. The Spray-tanned housewives lean in so they can hear, pretending to read.

ROUGH WOMAN

Met a white bitch at Cost-co in Key Biscayne, waiting for pizza. Turns out she's a dancer. I told her I used to dance before my baby was born. She asked me did I ever lay a trap, back in the day?

POLLY

For.. what kind of animal?

DESNA

Male variety. Trappin' is hoin'.

ROUGH WOMAN

I said not since Carla was born. She goes well howya feel 'bout two thousand for an hour, at the Extended Stay across the highway, no sex. Real nice room.

DESNA

She really sold it.

ROUGH WOMAN

On the way up she goes - leave your pizza by reception... you'll understand later. I was like--

DESNA

Uh oh.

ROUGH WOMAN

We get up there. There's this medium-fat little white dude, early fifties, captain's hat, shorty bathrobe and not much else. Watching Hannah Montana.

POLLY

Regular James Bond.

ROUGH WOMAN

He looks over and goes, 'Oh good, a pizza party,' and starts clappin' like my lil' nephew does when we take him to Michael's.

DESNA

Some woman carried that dude in her stomach for nine months.

JENNIFER

It's not the stomach, Des.

ROUGH WOMAN

Captain Shorty starts opening up all the pizzas on the bed asking us how many pieces may he have if he does his homework real good--

JENNIFER

Ew.

ROUGH WOMAN

Meanwhile, white bitch is taking off her clothes like hey y'all, it's a pizza party, come on now.

VIRGINIA

He wanted you to wrestle on the pizza, didn't he?

Everyone LOOKS UP - no one noticed Virginia had wandered over. Rough Woman nods solemnly--

ROUGH WOMAN

I called my boo come collect my ass.

POLLY

Good.

ROUGH WOMAN

But bitch flipped out and rubbed pizza all in my scalp. Meanwhile Captain locked his ass in the bathroom, cryin'.

JENNIFER

What a useless turd.

ROUGH WOMAN

Then my man never showed. Found out he was with my sister at Winterjam. To be honest y'all, this whole year can severely go fuck itself.

POLLY

Amen to that.

Desna is lost in concentration for a long moment as she applies the final GOLD DOLLAR SIGN to the woman's PINKY NAIL. Then, from a deep place...

DESNA

There's nothing in this world quite so useless as a useless man.

ALL the WOMEN in the salon consider this for a quiet moment, then--

JENNIFER

Only in Florida.

ROUGH WOMAN

For real. I'm from Shreveport. I wasn't raised like this. You got some real idiots over here.

DESNA

Baby... it's what we do.

POLLY

Biggest export, after oranges.

BACK TO Desna finishing Rough Woman's last American flag--

ROUGH WOMAN

This your place?

DESNA

All mine, me and my girls...

DOOR CLANGS, in walks ROLLER, mid 30's, just a gross-hot, gangstered-out redneck with major hip-hop pretensions, gold chains, intricate facial hair, swaggering walk, in a pale green silk shantung suit, mesh shirt.

ROUGH WOMAN

(re: Roller)

Who's Eminem's brother?

DESNA

The boss.

ROUGH WOMAN

I thought you were the boss.

THIS LANDS on Desna, if only for a moment. Roller shoots her a look, cocking his head towards the back office door.

DESNA
 (to Virginia)
 Think you can handle a clear
 topcoat?

VIRGINIA
 I can handle a lot of stuff.

Virginia saunters over. Her attitude irritates Desna immensely. Polly picks up on it--

POLLY
 I'll do it Des, just as soon as I
 finish.

VIRGINIA
 I got it.

DESNA
 Clear topcoat.

Desna follows Roller into the back office. Quiet Ann plants herself in front of the closed office door, arms folded.

Virginia gets to work on Rough Woman's topcoat. After a few beats, a LOUD THUMP rattles the back wall. EVERYONE looks back, curious--

ROUGH WOMAN
 The hell was that?

Quiet Ann slowly shakes her head NO. Though nonverbal, this gesture clearly says - as you were madam.

INT. SALON BACK OFFICE - SAME

It's more of a closet really, lined with racks full of artificial nails, orangewood sticks, cotton balls, soak-off gel and a SAFE big enough to serve as a makeshift desk, way bigger than any low-rent salon could possibly need.

Perched on the edge of the safe is ROLLER, pants around his ankles. Astride him and, it must be said, pile-driving him, is DESNA, tits out, SPANX ONESIE (cutout crotch) yanked here and there for ACCESS--

ROLLER
 They need a run... over at the
 clinic.

DESNA
 Right now?

ROLLER

Soon as we finish. Dr. Ken having
containment issues.

DESNA

Will you look the fuck at me?

ROLLER

Damn, boo. Little touchy.

DESNA

We just did a run.

ROLLER

This how money comin' now. Get
used to it, girl.

DESNA

Any of this money for me?

ROLLER

Uncle Daddy real happy bonus-wise
is all I'm sayin'.

DESNA

How much?

ROLLER

Brought you up today, all by
hissself. Big changes comin', all
around.

DESNA

Twenty?

ROLLER

Prolly.

DESNA

That's a start.

ROLLER

Happy now?

DESNA

Be happier when I get the money.

ROLLER

One thing's for certain - this a
new era girl. Errything gotta be
just right.

DESNA

Um hm.

ROLLER
Can you feel it baby?

DESNA
Uh huh.

ROLLER
Baby baby, squeeze my neck.

Desna CHOKES him reluctantly... *this fucking routine again.*

ROLLER
(pinched)
Please baby... more so...

Desna chokes harder, Roller TURNS RED, starts bucking harder and moaning, culminating in a loud PERFORMATIVE orgasm.

Desna climbs off and rather UNCEREMONIOUSLY wipes down her crotch with a WET ONE. She tosses one to Roller.

INT. SALON - SAME

Jennifer and Polly wipe down the Pedi-Loungers, glaring at Virginia who is finishing Rough Woman's nails--

POLLY
What's her damage?

JENNIFER
Used to dance at the Zone until she bit a Mississippi State Legislator when he tried to put a cigar in her ass.

POLLY
Lit?

Jennifer laughs--

JENNIFER
Roller dumped her on us during your brief hiatus. She's settling right in...

Desna and Roller emerge from the office. Rough Woman is paying Quiet Ann at the register, she shows Desna her nails--

ROUGH WOMAN
Pretty baby can't do nails for shit.

There are THICK GLOBS of topcoat on Desna's beautiful flags. Rough Woman walks out, pissed, not her year. Desna shakes her head, then to Jennifer--

DESNA
We gotta do a run.

JENNIFER
Where in your pantyhose? We just--

DESNA
I know.

JENNIFER
On new year's eve? Is shit even open?

DESNA
'Til four. We gotta go.

Virginia sidles over--

VIRGINIA
What kind of run?

DESNA
Don't concern yourself, hon.

VIRGINIA
Just trying to be helpful.

DESNA
Oh is that what that is? Help me in back a minute.

INT. SALON - BACK OFFICE - SAME

Desna and Virginia perch on opposite sides of the safe.

DESNA
I'll let you know when we need extra help. Extra anything, okay?

VIRGINIA
Okay, I mean... I know what's going on here.

DESNA
The fuck do you know?

VIRGINIA
That there's a whole lot more to life than paintin' hooves.

DESNA

True as that may be, you really
want to follow my lead on this.

A tense beat--

DESNA

This doesn't have to be hard. But
it sure can be.

Desna walks out--

INT. SALON - CONTINUOUS

--and joins Jennifer as they gather purses, sunglasses.

A frustrated Virginia ambles over to Polly--

VIRGINIA

So where were you, all this time?

We follow Virginia's eyes down Polly's body, past her prim
khaki skirt, to her legs... BULGING beneath her nude hose is
an ANKLE MONITOR.

POLLY

Little vacay. Cap D'Antibe. Punto
Del Este.

VIRGINIA

Ohhhhh....

EXT. SALON - CONTINUOUS

Desna and Jennifer take a hard right, past their neighbor,
the MESSIANIC JEWISH CAFETERIA AND COMPUTER REPAIR CENTER
with a handwritten sign below it: we sell Chinese food!

Jennifer pauses to peer inside... people appear to be SQUARE-
DANCING--

JENNIFER

Jews for Christ are hoppin' today.

Jennifer waves. A few wave back--

DESNA

We gotta move booboo.

Jennifer catches up--

INT. SUNCOAST REJUVENATION - SAME

DR. KEN BRICKMAN, nondescript in a white coat, is in a consult with a NEW PATIENT, an agitated woman in a soiled Juicy Couture track suit. They're in the back, behind a wall of glass bricks. Ken's desk is covered with various new age tchotchkes - a tiny gurgling fountain with a Bonsai tree, a dreamcatcher, a laughing gold Buddha.

We can see reception - it's full of DESPERATE PEOPLE... an overpriced SNACK MACHINE, big BOX TV in the corner, tuned to MEDICAL INFOMERCIALS.

Dr. Ken's manner is warm, concerned, professional. The patient hands him back a clipboard. NOTHING is filled out.

DR. KEN
So what's goin on?

PATIENT
Titties.

DR. KEN
What?

PATIENT
My titties.

A beat. Ken clicks a strand of PALE PINK MALA BEADS on his wrist...

DR. KEN
Hurt?

PATIENT
Huh?

DR. KEN
They hurt?

PATIENT
That's what I said, my titties hurt. And my sister has sixteen cartons of Newports that legally belong to my person.

The patient starts to WEEP.

ANGLE ON Desna and Jennifer walking in the tinted front door, through reception and past the glass brick wall, waving quickly to Dr. Ken, who's already filling out a prescription, adding his signature with a RUBBER STAMP.

DR. KEN

I'd like to start you on 40 milligrams of Oxycontin every twelve hours. We dispense onsite if that works, cash only though.

The Patient removes a DIRTY FREEZER BAG full of cash from under her shirt.

PATIENT

Now I too can feel better again.

Dr. Ken walks her over to a CASHIER flanked by HUGE SECURITY GUARDS. The cashier separates SINGLES, throwing them into a GARBAGE BIN beside the register.

INT. SUNCOAST REJUVENATION - BACK OFFICE

--Desna and Jennifer enter a long code on a keypad. The door clicks open. Fluorescents illuminate a tiny room STACKED TO THE CEILING with 10 GALLON STORAGE BINS full of large bills and LAWN BAGS full of singles, packed tight.

Jennifer carries several bins to the BACK DOOR just as Quiet Ann backs the van up. Desna goes over some paperwork with Dr. Ken--

DR. KEN

We did 46K yesterday.

DESNA

Lotta hurtin' people in the sunshine state.

Ken seems EXTREMELY AGITATED--

DR. KEN

We're gonna have to start burning ones.

DESNA

We'll get you biweekly 'til it slows down in the summer. Done. What else?

DR. KEN

Get a load of these two--

Ken cocks his head towards the PACKED waiting room. Desna peers out--

DR. KEN

Be subtle.

DESNA
Not my thing Ken.

DR. KEN
The twins--

ANGLE ON TWO slight figures, each about 5'2", long hair, baggy jeans and sweatshirts. At first glance, they look like teenagers, heads in their phones, but on closer examination - they have the WORN FACES OF OLD MEN.

The combination is DEEPLY UNSETTLING--

DESNA
Little fuckers huh?

DR. KEN
They're in here every day, all day, just sitting there. They get up and walk out at five on the dot.

Desna peers at the twins--

DESNA
We'll get you some muscle. Couple bouncers from the Zone. Relax.
(off Ken's manner)
Y'ain't hittin' the product, are you Kenneth? You seem a little...

DR. KEN
That would be completely unethical.

Jennifer signals that the van is ready. Desna starts off--

DESNA
Gotta move. Happy new year.

He's still staring at the Twins--

DR. KEN
I think they're Russian...

INT. VAN - SAME

Jennifer's already running money through a COUNTER in the back of the van. Desna enters, starts distributing the money in NUMEROUS ZIPPERED BAGS and filling out deposit slips--

CLOSE ON a sequence of slips made out for different sums, all under \$10,000-

DESNA

Virginia's starting to ask too many questions.

JENNIFER

(sing-song)

Miss Desna, um, I was wondering, can you get pregnant off of blowjays because sometimes my tummy hurts--

Desna laughs. The van begins to move--

JENNIFER

Miss Desna, Miss Desna, um, how come I keep farting out condoms?

Now Desna really HOWLS--

JENNIFER

Polly's out, so it's back to the pole for honeybunny, right?

DESNA

I gotta talk to Roller.

JENNIFER

Nice of you to give her a go as long as you did. Personally, I don't trust the blonde bitch.

DESNA

Shifty little thing... kinda reminds me of me.

QUICK CUTS OF MONEY LAUNDERING ACTIVITIES:

- the van visits EIGHT BANK DRIVE-THROUGHS.

- Desna depositing with a teller, wearing COKE-BOTTLE EYEGLASSES, chatting with the BANK MANAGER.

- Desna, looking business casual in a LINEN BLAZER, filling out paperwork in a back office--

DESNA

When does that post to the account?

Clicking of keys...

BANKER (O.C.)

Bahamas looks like... end of day.

- Jennifer, face scrubbed of makeup, at a different bank wearing a PREGNANCY BELLY and a huge wooden crucifix around her neck, wrapping up with the TELLER--

JENNIFER
God bless unto Christ.

- Desna and Jennifer share a sub on the van's bumper in the Palmetto Plaza parking lot. They're watching Virginia through the front window with her feet up, reading IN TOUCH while Polly straightens up. Desna grabs her purse--

DESNA
Gotta go check on Dean.

JENNIFER
Later gator. Tell that cutie I
love me some him.

INT. DESNA AND DEAN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - TWILIGHT

Desna's mentally ill (undiagnosed) twin brother, DEAN, mid 40's, very fit, with the generic good looks of an 80's TV actor, sits at a tiny kitchen table in workout clothes.

He's painstakingly tracing the image of a LUXURY BEACHFRONT MANSION from a brochure onto onionskin paper with colored pencils. The table is littered with many such STRANGE, CAREFUL reproductions, mostly houses, but also Bed, Bath and Beyond circulars, TV Guide covers and a very sensitive copy of a KARDASHIAN CHRISTMAS PORTRAIT, meticulously traced from an old People Magazine.

KEYS in the door - it's Desna, looking EXHAUSTED. We see how VERY SHABBY their place is now - tiny rooms packed with too much stuff.

Dean runs to hug her in a traumatized way. Their resemblance is UNCANNY. He shows Desna his new drawings--

DEAN
I made more.

DESNA
Will you look at those? Wow Dean.

DEAN
You like them?

DESNA
Oh, so much Dean.

DEAN

Do they look realistic, I mean, as a taxpayer, do you feel like they look professionally done?

DESNA

Yes...?

DEAN

Really?

DESNA

Sure. Look at all the details. So crisp and clean. I think we better frame these. Come on, time for bed.

They walk down a narrow, drop-ceilinged hallway crammed with grocery bags full of UNOPENED MAIL, old soloflex machines.

DESNA

Did you eat?

DEAN

Veggie burger and rice balls.

DESNA

Mmmmmmmmm.

FRAMED PICTURES of young Desna and Dean, growing up with VARIOUS FOSTER FAMILIES, line the walls.

INT. DESNA AND DEAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Desna tucks him in, stroking his hair slowly, rhythmically. This feels like the NIGHTLY ROUTINE--

DESNA

You know I'm gonna take care of you, right?

DEAN

I know.

DESNA

And we'll always be together.

DEAN

I know.

Desna's getting lost in this HYPNOTIC ritual, a faraway look in her dark eyes--

DESNA

(dreamily)

And I'll get us a castle by the sea, where we can live forever and ever.

CLOSE ON the walls of Dean's tiny bedroom, which are covered with framed DRAWINGS OF MANSIONS like the one in the kitchen. All of them featuring tiny Deans and Desnas, grilling by the infinity pools, sunning themselves on grand balconies, frolicking in the sand--

DEAN

(sleepy)

With a state of the art gym?

DESNA

That's right.

DEAN

No more black mold.

DESNA

No more mold.

DEAN

Dual masters?

DESNA

You know it.

DEAN

Oceanfront...

DESNA

Yup.

DEAN

(barely awake)

Have fun at the party Dennie...

DESNA

I will. Happy new year.

DEAN

It's gonna be gooo..

And HE'S OUT. Desna turns on his SNOOPY NIGHTLIGHT and looks down at him... he's definitely her tender spot. She walks out, soft-footed--

INT. SALON - LATER THAT EVENING

The salon is closed, gate half down. Desna has squeezed into a tight MINIDRESS (bad knockoff Versace) bearing a SNARLING MEDUSA HEAD. She's in front of the mirror, doing her makeup and hair.

Polly's by the door, purse on arm. Desna looks over--

DESNA

That's what you're wearing?

POLLY

I'm not coming--

Toilet flushes, Jennifer emerges from the bathroom--

DESNA

She's not coming.

JENNIFER

I do not acknowledge that. I do not fucking respect that.

POLLY

I just have a lot--

JENNIFER

Come shake your ass a minute.

POLLY

This ass is all shook out.

DESNA

Will you listen to this from our very own lady of mystery? Sometimes you really disappoint me, Polly Pol.

EXT. PALMETTO PLAZA PARKING LOT - SAME

Desna, Jennifer and Polly walk towards the van as Quiet Ann locks the gate. Polly's dangling car keys--

JENNIFER

Where's your car?

POLLY

I parked far today.

DESNA

You okay?

POLLY
I'll be fine. Lot on my mind.

DESNA
Welcome back.

Polly hugs Desna--

POLLY
Happy new year. Tear it up
tonight, will you Des?

DESNA
Oh, rest assured baby...

Desna and Jennifer get in the van. Polly heads towards a cluster of parked cars, keys still jingling in her hand.

She looks back. When she sees Desna and crew pulling out of the lot, she puts the keys in her purse and leaves the mall, walking FAST along the highway.

EXT. FLORIDA INTERSTATE 75 - SAME

We follow Polly as cars whiz by. She loses footing every now and then. We come upon the BRADENTON ARMS, a crappy motel with a sad, kidney shaped pool. Polly unlocks a door on the second floor and walks in--

INT. BRADENTON ARMS - ROOM 201 - SAME

--closes the door, leaning against it for a moment in the near DARK. Fumbling, a light comes on illuminating a small room full of BOXES, LUGGAGE, shopping bags full of personal effects - evidence of a HASTY RELOCATION.

Polly opens a MILLER LIGHT, leaves it on the bedside table, then flips channels until she finds BOXING. She removes a tiny PURPLE RECHARGEABLE VIBRATOR from a drawer, plugs it in and walks in the bathroom. Shower comes on.

INT. THE GENTLEMEN'S ZONE - LATER THAT NIGHT

BOUNCERS open double doors marked PRIVATE PARTY. The crowd parts for Desna, Jennifer and Quiet Ann, and what a crowd. Everyone's SMOKING. It's dark and LOUD. A LOST LOOKING WOMAN of 60, topless, is selling FIREWORKS from a WHITE BUCKET hanging from her neck. She sees Desna--

FIREWORKS WOMAN
There she is... the mayor!

Desna smiles, not breaking her stride--

DESNA

Happy new year baby. This is the one, I can already tell.

They pass a COUPLE, OPENLY FUCKING right next to a table full of cheapo banquet food - foil trays of ribs, mac and cheese. MORE PARTIERS embrace Desna as she needles across a dancefloor full of SWEATY OLD PEOPLE bumping and grinding to AFROJACK. She is known and loved. QUICK ANGLE ON Quiet Ann who now has Fireworks Woman on her shoulders.

Jennifer spots a man getting a lapdance from a STRIPPER and walks over. This is BRYCE, late 30's, Jennifer's husband, handsome but out of his element here in a lame dress shirt and Today's Man slacks. From the look on Jennifer's face, he's in deep shit--

--but DISGUSTED is just Jennifer's resting face. She pulls the stripper off Bryce and starts making out with her. Bryce laughs--

BRYCE

I'd marry you all over again baby!

DESNA

(to Bryce)

Where's Roller?

He can't hear her over the music--

DESNA

(yelling)

Where's your brother?!

Bryce cocks his head at a CLOSED DOOR behind a velvet rope.

INT. THE GENTLEMEN'S ZONE - UNCLE DADDY'S OFFICE - SAME

Roller and UNCLE DADDY, early 50's, a barrel-chested bull of a Biloxi Mississippi homosexual in a white dinner jacket, are sucking down many OYSTERS, lined up like shots in crushed ice. The food is WAY BETTER here... lobster, caviar.

Uncle Daddy COUGHS as an oyster goes down wrong--

UNCLE DADDY

Fuckers always remind me of loogies but I still eat 'em, you know why? Because they're expensive, ain't it right baby boy?

Still coughing a little, he embraces Roller--

UNCLE DADDY

This is our time, right the fuck now, you hear me?! I am so proud of you. Your daddy'd be proud of you too. I mean it baby boy.

ROLLER

Thanks Uncle Daddy.

UNCLE DADDY

(nasty tone on a dime)

TOBY!

TOBY, 20's, girlish, nearly nude, curled up on a couch playing Candy Crush on his phone, jumps up quickly.

UNCLE DADDY

Go get Roller a michelada! You remember Toby don't you Roller?
(calling after Toby)
Toby's gonna get him a pair of big old hootenannies, ain't you Toby?

Toby saunters out, adjusting his thong--

UNCLE DADDY

If he's good he will...
(calling after Toby)
...don't you touch that wittle bittle dicky-doo though. I just love that little dick.
(back to Roller)
You did so good. So damn good with that clinic boy...

ROLLER

How good?

UNCLE DADDY

We talkin' three-five-zero-zero-- zero-zero-zero good. Pure profit.

ROLLER

Lotta zeroes uncle daddy.

UNCLE DADDY

Best year we ever had. Like the old days. Like Biloxi. With your daddy. Good enough to attract the interest of some powerful new friends.

ROLLER

Who?

Toby returns with Roller's drink, then curls up with his game. Uncle Daddy raises his glass to Roller's--

UNCLE DADDY

Georgians.

ROLLER

Atlanta?

UNCLE DADDY

Nope.

ROLLER

Macon?

UNCLE DADDY

Russia baby. Nasty bunch running a Medicare game up in Jersey. They finna break into pills and merge our business models...

ROLLER

Why we need them?

UNCLE DADDY

Time for us to spread out...

A confused beat. Roller glances over at the COUCH.

UNCLE DADDY

Bigger footprint...

Roller has no idea what he means.

UNCLE DADDY

How you feel about opening two more clinics?!

ROLLER

When?

UNCLE DADDY

Yesterday. Kinda made us sound bigger than we was...

ROLLER

How bigger?

UNCLE DADDY

Told 'em we had three clinics, up and running.

ROLLER

Damn uncle!

UNCLE DADDY

Slap up a couple two on the jiffy..
over by Wilton Manors and Lake
Worth, nothin' fancy, long as they
open. Delegate some sheeeiiit.

ROLLER

Sheeeiiiiiiiiit.

UNCLE DADDY

When the Commies get here I want
you to show those boys a good time,
hear? Show 'em how we do on the
Gulf Coast.

ROLLER

Aiiight.

UNCLE DADDY

'Nuff business. You know all this
good stuff is because of you baby
boy.

ROLLER

Really?

UNCLE DADDY

You and Jesus Christ.

ROLLER

Yes sir.

UNCLE DADDY

Happy new year baby boy--

Uncle Daddy tosses Roller a keyring, DIAMOND TRIDENT fob.

CLOSE ON fob: 1269 Gulf Drive

UNCLE DADDY

New Year, new era, new digs. You
deserve it baby boy!

Uncle Daddy howls, louder and louder. They're hugging,
spinning, swerving, almost falling over, busting through
double doors back out to the party--

INT. BRADENTON ARMS - ROOM 201 - SAME

Polly is splayed on the bed. The BOXING MATCH on TV just ended. Her purple vibrator rests on a tissue. She sighs, then looks at the beside alarm clock - 11:27.

She gets out of bed and walks the to closet where a dress hangs, fresh from the cleaners. She considers it for a moment--

INT. THE GENTLEMEN'S ZONE - SAME

Roller is onstage cavorting with the DEAD-EYED STRIPPERS. He grabs a mic--

ROLLER
(screaming)
THIS A NEW ERA Y'ALL!!! HAPPPPY
NEW YEARRRRR!!!

He starts stripping himself, starting with his rings, watch, then shirt - Roller's abundant chest hair has been manscaped to look like JESUS' FACE on the SHROUD OF TURIN. Also, he can FUCKING DANCE. He drags Desna onstage, grinds with her and for a flash, we see they had something once. Maybe not love but something...

ANGLE ON Polly walking in, looking out of place in a 50's PROM DRESS and WHITE GLOVES. She looks around for Desna and the rest--

--Desna spots her from the stage and SCREAMS. She drags Polly to a VIP table. Quiet Ann and Jennifer GO NUTS when they see Polly, spinning her around, group hugging, downing shots (except Jennifer.) Desna orders bottle after bottle of CRYSTAL, refilling glasses.

The crew gathers for a toast, raising glasses--

DESNA
To a better year! I love you all,
but not in a sexual way.

Quiet Ann plants a sloppy kiss on Desna, who laughs. CLOCK STRIKES MIDNIGHT. Dollar sign confetti falls. EVERYONE HUGS! Uncle Daddy joins Roller onstage with Bryce in tow. He grabs the mic from Roller--

UNCLE DADDY
Look at my baby boys y'all! Ain't
they beautiful?!!

They pose for many family pics. Bryce looks miserable. He disengages finally, finds Jennifer, pulls her away for a kiss--

JENNIFER

Looked like you were having fun earlier.

BRYCE

Only when you showed up.

JENNIFER

You sure you don't miss this life?

He looks around like he has to consider it, then--

BRYCE

This nest of syphilitic vipers?
Are you kidding?

JENNIFER

Just making sure...

BRYCE

I'm ready to go home right now!
Let's wake the girls up.. do a
Barbie runway show! I mean that!

They kiss again.. Jennifer pulls him on the dancefloor for some grinding. Uncle Daddy dances over to Desna by the bar--

UNCLE DADDY

Happy New year Miss Desna.

DESNA

You too.

He guides her around a corner for privacy--

UNCLE DADDY

Roller'll tell you everything, but these are major times baby and we need you, fuck, I need you, I do. I, Troy Beverley Husser, need that devious, sexual and felonious magic of yours more than ever--

He stuffs a SILVER MYLAR ENVELOPE in her hand--

UNCLE DADDY

--that's for all your hard work. I mean that--

He dances away as Desna opens the envelope - THREE GRAND. She holds it upside down, DISTINCTLY NOT THRILLED.

She walks over to Jennifer, who cocks her head towards Roller dirty dancing with Virginia. Desna takes in the show...

EXT. SHRIMP SHAK - WEE HOURS

Roller and Desna eat buckets of GARLIC POPCORN SHRIMP in his yellow Audi A5 convertible, parked in front of a filthy trailer bearing a home-made sign - "BIG SHRIMPS."

DESNA
Way out in Wilton Manors?

ROLLER
Lake Worth too.

DESNA
Who's gonna run two more clinics?

ROLLER
New blood proolly...

DESNA
What new blood?

ROLLER
Just sayin' we can't do errything
ourself.

DESNA
Oh *WE* can't huh? What did you do
today?

ROLLER
Legs and shoulders.

Desna CHOMPS her popcorn shrimp, staring straight ahead--

ROLLER
Baby, baby, this a happy night...
(then)
Want me lick that kitty?

She spits a shrimp tail out the window--

DESNA
Did he tell you how much he was
giving me?

ROLLER
Hell nahh. I woulda told him no
way is that enough. Problem is
cash flow tied up with the new
clinics. I got you.

DESNA
You said that last year.

ROLLER
What you want girl?

DESNA
I want to run shit. Get paid for
the shit I already run. I got a
mind for this Roller--

ROLLER
I see you baby. Time for you be
reconized for what you do...

He starts BITING her neck. She SMILES in spite of herself.

ROLLER
...I thank she ready stop painting
hooves now...

His hand snakes up her dress, between her legs--

ROLLER
...ain't that right kitty two-
shoes...

DESNA
I gotta check on Dean.

ROLLER
...damn, get over here baby...

Desna climbs on top of Roller, straddling him, her clawed
fingers wrapping tight around his neck--

INT. DESNA AND DEAN'S APARTMENT - MUCH LATER THAT NIGHT

Desna walks in, careful to be quiet. She pauses briefly to
look at a small unwrapped gift under the Christmas Tree -
Versace hand towels, lustrous and rich.

INT. DESNA AND DEAN'S APARTMENT - DESNA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Desna peels off her dress, KICKING it under the bed
DEJECTEDLY, then her Spanx, then crawls under the covers,
squinting at the early morning light for a EXHAUSTED MOMENT.
She turns her back to it.

Her gaze falls on her purse, hanging on the closet doorknob.
Peeking out is the SILVER MYLAR ENVELOPE.

She's STARING at it. She's NOT BLINKING.

INT. CVS - EARLY NEXT MORNING

Jennifer, exhausted, wearing last night's dress over SWEATPANTS, pushes a cart down the cosmetics aisle. One daughter, BRIENNE, biracial, rides side-saddle on Jennifer's hip. The other, BAYLOR, towhead, trails behind, eating something. Jennifer looks back--

JENNIFER

You keep eating that you won't be hungry for lunch...

ANGLE ON Baylor eating a TUBE OF LIPSTICK. Bryce walks up with two jugs of milk and a box of KIX. He takes the lipstick from Baylor and wipes her mouth. He's tender--

Brienne starts giggling--

BRIENNE

Mommy, mommy why is that old lady cryin' for?

Jennifer looks over. SOBBING against the refrigerator case, six-pack of MILLER TALLBOYS in hand, is Polly, still in the prom dress and gloves, looking FULL CRAZY now--

JENNIFER

Pol...?

Bryce grabs a girl under each arm and AIRPLANES THEM AWAY as Polly tries in vain to pull herself together, then gives up, crying harder and reaching for Jennifer, who rushes over. Polly weeps in her arms for a long time--

INT. EMPTY OFFICE SPACE - WILTON MANORS - THAT AFTERNOON

Desna and Jennifer are inspecting the space. A REALTOR hovers by the door--

DESNA

The fuck's wrong with Polly?

JENNIFER

Court ordered restitution to all those seniors in St. Pete's she fucked over with the ID theft. Wiped her out, poor old thing. Repossessed her car. Landlord kicked her ass out. She's living at the Bradenton Arms.

DESNA

Nuh uh.

JENNIFER

Life sure is tricky with that leg jewelry.

DESNA

Why didn't she tell me?

JENNIFER

Said she was embarrassed.

Desna flattens some loose carpet with her foot. The realtor walks over--

REALTOR

We can take care of that.

DESNA

I need one more like this.

REALTOR

For another clinic?

DESNA

We like helping people.

REALTOR

Well, we do Tampa to Cape Coral.

DESNA

Got anything in Lake Worth?

INT. BRADENTON-PALMETTO CITY HALL - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Desna and Jennifer are at the back of a long line waiting to hand in paperwork at a window labelled BUSINESS LICENSES.

JENNIFER

Russians like from Russia?

DESNA

Via New Jersey. They got some kinda Medicare game up there. Uncle daddy's helpin' 'em open down here.

JENNIFER

For what reason?

DESNA

He wants to expand.

JENNIFER
Gonna need more Dr. Kens.

DESNA
No shit.

JENNIFER
Want me to run another ad on
Craigslist?

DESNA
I'll do it.

Jennifer cranes her head--

JENNIFER
What's up with this line?!

--fanning herself--

JENNIFER
My maxi 'bout to roll up like a
taco in this bitch--

Desna's phone chirps - a CALENDER ALERT:

MANSCAPE ROLLER - CHEST AND TRUNK - NEW LOCATION - 1269 GULF
DRIVE, HOLMES BEACH

DESNA
Roller moved to Holmes Beach?

JENNIFER
He didn't tell you?

Desna shakes her head--

JENNIFER
Bryce said Uncle Daddy bought him a
new house... because he did so good
with the clinic.

DESNA
You mean because WE did so good
with the clinic?

Desna hands Jennifer a stack of PAPERWORK--

DESNA
Do me a favor - go look at the
place in Lake Worth. If there's no
gator's, take the dump.
(as she walks out)

DESNA (CONT'D)
I gotta go make that hairy mess
look like Jesus.

EXT. GULF DRIVE, HOLMES BEACH - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Desna's car crawls down a street lined with OSTENTATIOUS GATES. She pulls up to one made of fanning tridents, bearing the sign "POSEIDON'S FOLLY." She punches a code from her phone, the gate swings open.

She pulls in, headlights illuminating a grand fountain featuring a CRYING BRONZE MERMAID with puffy lips and porn star breasts. Her arms and tail are wrapped around a horny looking DOLPHIN.

The house looks like some kind of bubbling SEA CASTLE you'd see at the bottom of a fishtank, but life size. Pink granite columned portico, seashell-shaped balconies, bits of coral lodged in DIARRHEA-COLORED stucco. The front door is open--

INT. ROLLER'S MCMANSION - SAME

Desna, tacklebox in hand, walks in SILENT, wide-eyed, UNIRONICALLY BLOWN AWAY by what she sees - acres of white travertine, sunken living room the size of a tennis court with circular gold couches around a huge high gloss sculpture of a BUCKING WHITE BULL with a big swinging dick. There's a pair of soiled PANTIES hanging from a bull's horn.

She walks slowly through the place, lightly touching surfaces with fingertips, full of reverence, joy, HUNGER. This place is EVERYTHING she's ever wanted, everything she and Dean have ever dreamed of.

HIP-HOP BLARES from outside by the pool. Desna follows the noise--

EXT. ROLLER'S MCMANSION - POOL AREA - CONTINUOUS

Roller, oblivious to Desna's arrival, is working out with freeweights by the pool. Desna turns down the music. Roller looks over--

ROLLER
Whatcha thank girl?

DESNA
It's alright.

ROLLER

Jacuzzi in the poolhouse. Cashmere
drapes in the master.

Desna's eyes wander to the poolhouse. DRAPES PULL SHUT suddenly... someone's in there. Desna opens her tacklebox and begins to remove manscaping supplies.

ROLLER

Mines all mines. Can you feel it?

Roller peels off his ZEBRA SPEEDO and stands in front of Desna. Clippers BUZZ on and she begins to work, referring to an image of the SHROUD OF TURIN on her phone.

ROLLER

All this match me, y'aam sayin'?
Uncle Daddy says I'm the face of
the operation now, so errything
gotta be just right.

A breeze picks up, blowing a FLURRY OF FRESHLY SHORN BODY HAIR at Desna's face. It sticks to her lipstick. She spits--

ROLLER

You and Deanie come out whenever
you want.

Something is CRACKING behind Desna's eyes... *so I get \$3,000 and he gets a fucking castle.*

INT. SUNCOAST REJUVENATION - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Dr. Ken is wrapping up a consult. He keeps looking past the glass bricks at the Twins in the waiting room.

He walks his PATIENT to the cashier, then sheepishly makes his way over to the Twins. Two HUGE BOUNCERS are outside bullshitting, sharing a blunt.

The Twins are engaged in an animated conversation in Russian.

DR. KEN

Do you guys have an appointment?

They ignore Dr. Ken and continue to chatter away.

DR. KEN

Excuse me...

The absoluteness with which they ignore Ken is CHILLING. The cashier grabs him to assist with a DISTRAUGHT PILLHEAD who's determined to pay with a money order.

Ken looks back a few moments later and the TWINS ARE GONE--

INT. SALON - LATER

TWO CUBAN WOMEN wait by reception, annoyed. Polly's doing TWO WOMEN at once. One is a RUSSIAN GRANDMA, wearing a babushka and trenchcoat, chunky shades.

DOOR CLANGS, Desna walks in--

DESNA
Where's Virginia?

POLLY
Called in sick. Two hours into her
shift mind you.

Desna SEETHES as she takes her station and gets to work.

Russian Grandma's eyes follow Desna behind her shades. Desna feels it, smiles at her to be cordial, but Grandma is stone-faced.. it's a LITTLE SPOOKY.

ANGLE ON Desna's CUSTOMER, a joyless blonde in her early fifties, peach shell, big crucifix, freckled arms--

CUSTOMER
Do you use fresh each time?

DESNA
Fresh what?

CUSTOMER
Tools and tubs?

DESNA
I sterilize everything myself.

CUSTOMER
My cousin got MRSA from a pedi.

DESNA
Not over here she didn't.

CUSTOMER
No. It was Tampa. I just... it
was on the news. You have to be
very careful. You can get venereal
on your hand now. I don't know how
you do it.. touch so many people.

Desna dunks her hands brusquely in a bowl of sudsy water and begins to brush under nails.

DESNA

What kind of look you want today?

CUSTOMER

Give me purple exclamation points over an ocean of fire, rain of gold glitter over everything. Gel topcoat. I need a fill on my left ring, you'll see it. I was closing the dishwasher, stupid finger. My daughter Meredith is in from Clearwater. She just had another girl, can you imagine, five girls..

As the woman prattles ON AND ON, we watch Desna apply cuticle softener, then nippers, pushers, massaging forearms and hands, nail dehydrator, basecoat, color coat, decals, topcoat Desna looks tired... *still painting hooves.*

Desna keeps GLARING at Virginia's empty work station, her Denim vest with leather laces hanging on the chair, her dumb FLORAL HATBOX bedazzled with the words "PRETTY KIT!"

EXT. ROLLER'S MCMANSION - LANAI - LATER THAT NIGHT

SALT SHAKER by the Ying Yang Twins PULSES from from inside, where Roller and Virginia fuck astride the big white bull before a WALL OF GLASS looking out onto the lanai.

INT. ROLLER'S MCMANSION - CONTINUOUS

It's even LOUDER inside, and more humid--

ROLLER

I want this house to smell like your muff baby girl.

VIRGINIA

Awwwww! So romantic tonight baby.

ROLLER

For real girl. We baptizing...

Virginia starts bouncing. And moaning. He grabs her head--

ROLLER

Baby baby, squeeze my neck.

VIRGINIA

I don't like that baby.

ROLLER

Come on, pretend my neck a big dick
and squeeze that shit.

Virginia CHOKES him. Roller bucks harder and TURNS RED,
VEINS PULSING. We pull back out--

EXT. ROLLER'S MCMANSION - LANAI - CONTINUOUS

--onto the lanai, into the damp, insect-chirping Florida
night, stopping near a MANGROVE. From its shadows, the sound
of chewing... something crunchy... chomp, chomp, chomp...
then the ROUGH SOUND of something being SPIT at high velocity--

--CLOSE ON ground, a mound of battered shrimp tails.

Desna emerges from the INKY SHADOWS, Shrimp bucket in hand,
and walks right up the wall of glass, where she watches the
festivities indoors, like she's at the ZOO.

Her eyes are glinting OBSIDIAN, expressionless, haunted.

It's too bright inside for them to see Desna, and they're too
preoccupied anyway. Desna watches for a good long while,
then walks off, removing her phone from her bra, thumbing
through contacts, dialing Jennifer as she walks back to the
street--

JENNIFER (O.C.)

What's up?

DESNA

Virginia is for lovers.

JENNIFER (O.C.)

Won't do, Desiroo. Just will not
do.

INT. SALON - BACK OFFICE - THE NEXT MORNING

Desna's in front of an old ACER DESKTOP the size of a dorm
fridge, looking through emails - responses the Craigslist ad
for Doctors, some have included PICTURES.

ONSCREEN, the C.V. for a certain Dr. Benward Bola.

Desna dials his number--

DR. BOLA (O.C.)

Hello?

DESNA
Dr. Benward Bola?

DR. BOLA (O.C.)
This is he.

DESNA
I see you're a graduate of the
Cayman Island School of Cosmetic
Dentistry... we're looking for
someone who specializes in pain
management--

DR. BOLA (O.C.)
(coughing)
I do that.

DESNA
Are you currently practicing
medicine in Pasco, Hillsborough or
Manatee counties?

DR. BOLA (O.C.)
No sir, ma'am.

DESNA
Can you legally prescribe Schedule
II Narcotics in the State of
Florida?

DR. BOLA (O.C.)
Very much so.

DESNA
Have you ever been arrested--

Phone beeps - another call - Roller.

DESNA
I'm gonna have to call you back.

She switches to Roller--

DESNA
Virginia's a no show again.

ROLLER (O.C.)
She call in?

DESNA
Not yet.

ROLLER (O.C.)
She'll be there.

DESNA
Oh she will?

Desna starts absentmindedly scratching the SAFE with a cuticle pusher, removing the paint, cutting grooves--

ROLLER (O.C.)
I don't fuckin' know.

DESNA
What's on your mind?

ROLLER (O.C.)
Polly gotta go. Tell her get a cracker somewhere else.

DESNA
Why?

ROLLER (O.C.)
That fuckin' ankle jewelry, Des.

DESNA
Who told you about that?

ROLLER
Little bird.

Desna has an idea who....

DESNA
Um hmmm.

ROLLER
Can't have a bitch checkin' with the P.O. every week. Too risky. Especially now.

Desna's scratching has become more INTENSE, rhythmic, more like STABBING.

DESNA
Everyone's got something.

ROLLER (O.C.)
Yeeeahhhhhh, lose the bitch. Told you they'd be changes. I'll tell her if you don't want--

DESNA
I'll take care of it.

ROLLER (O.C.)
 May as well make peace with
 Virginia too. Bring her in a
 little more... she gonna be round
 for a while.

DESNA
 I will... poor kid deserves a
 chance.

ROLLER (O.C.)
 That's my baby girl. How'd it go
 in Wilton Manors?

DESNA
 Jennifer signed the lease. Think I
 may have a new doc if he checks
 out.

ROLLER (O.C.)
 Girl, you assassinatin' shit, you
 murderin' shit--

DESNA
 Okay Roller, I gotta go--

She hangs up and sits still, her back to us, BREATHING for a
 LONG BEAT. When she gets up, we see the CUTICLE PUSHER is
 rammed into the side of the safe, TIP BURIED a half-inch in.

INT. SALON - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

It's quiet - no customers. Jennifer's replacing bulbs in the
 UV dryers. Desna is picking through a LEAN CUISINE. Polly's
 applying false eyelashes.

Quiet Ann KNOCKS HARD three times on the front window.
 Everyone looks up - Virginia's crossing the parking lot,
 heading for the salon--

DESNA
 It's about respect.

No one disagrees. They busy themselves as Virginia strolls
 in just lalala no problem, even though she's fully three
 hours late--

VIRGINIA
 Hey y'all.

DESNA
 Feelin' better?

VIRGINIA
 Much! I just needed to sleep.

DESNA
 Who's hungry? Fuck this diet shit.

JENNIFER
 I could eat.

DESNA
 Polly you mind picking us up some
 fried gator tail? Over at Kirby's?

JENNIFER
 Don't forget the tartar.

POLLY
 Okay.
 (to Virginia)
 You want anything?

Virginia is sitting at her station doing a WORD PUZZLE.

VIRGINIA
 (not looking up)
 No thank you.

Polly WINKS at Desna, flips the sign CLOSED on her way out.

Desna catches Jennifer's eye and NODS subtly. Jennifer walks outside, says something to Quiet Ann, then returns, quietly LOCKING THE DOOR. Quiet Ann stands sentry in front.

Desna smiles to herself, then SLOWLY crosses to Virginia's station. Virginia still doesn't look up for a few beats. When she does and all she sees is--

--DESNA'S FIST landing a nasty punch. Virginia's knocked out of her chair, clutching her right eye, screaming, scrambling away CRAB-LIKE on the floor, but Desna's ON HER AGAIN, pulling her to her feet, KNEEING HER IN THE STOMACH, knocking over HUNDREDS OF BOTTLES OF POLISH. Bottles break and colors MERGE on the floor.

DESNA
 OUT! NOW, private dancer!

Virginia struggles to stand, hands GROPING for something to defend herself. She finds a squirt bottle full of ACETONE and squeezes liberally in Desna's direction, spraying an arc of the stuff all over Desna's face. Desna DOUBLES OVER, wiping her face on her shirt.

DESNA
You're done here!

VIRGINIA
I don't answer to you anymore!

For a terrible moment, you can her a pin drop - Desna gets a BAD LOOK as another JAGGED CRACK forms behind her eyes.

JENNIFER
Oh FUCK NO.

Jennifer grabs a tub of hot PARAFFIN and heaves the whole thing in Virginia's direction. She ducks as it hits a LONG MIRROR, leaving a HUGE streak of hardening wax.

Desna looks up RED-EYED and howling with rage. She lunges at Virginia, grabbing her by the throat and--

EXT. SALON - SAME

--dragging her out of the salon.

DESNA
Thought you were gonna skip a couple steps, huh?!

Desna can't hold on to Virginia's neck - she looks at her hands - PANCAKE MAKEUP - covering a collar of DARK BRUISES around Virginia's neck. Desna clucks her tongue, resumes throttling.

Virginia's DENIM MINISKIRT start to rip--

DESNA
Look at you... nothing but a tossed-out, pimpless, junior Okeechobee cocksucker of the month with your dirty shankroid ass hangin' out of your clothes. I gave you a chance, against my better judgement, out of the kindness of my heart, tried to teach you a trade for fuck's sake--

JENNIFER
This is how you thank her?!!

VIRGINIA
I could help y'all. I'm capable of all manner--

JENNIFER
We don't need your help.

MESSIANIC JEWS are starting to gather to watch. Desna notices and picks Virginia up gingerly, like she's helping her up from a fall--

DESNA
 (to the onlookers)
 Poor gal just had an abortion.

They clear away FAST. DESNA leans in CLOSE--

DESNA
 You done now bitch. You were a mistake. You were never gonna be in this crew. Never ever. Now take that cum-face as far away from me as you can. Understand me dummy?

Surprisingly, this LANDS HARD on Virginia, despite all that's been said, but she responds with BLUSTER--

VIRGINIA
 Fine with me! Fuck ya old bags!
 Wasting my god-given talents.

Jennifer tosses Virginia's FLORAL HATBOX at her HARD--

JENNIFER
 Talent? What, foreskin management?
 We don't need that here.

--Virginia catches it, stuffs it in her nearby KIA, already stuffed to the gills with boxes, BLUE IKEA BAGS, shoe bins, half-burned VANILLA CANDLES and dust.

VIRGINIA
 I'm out of this shit stain town anyway. I live at the beach now!

Desna and Jennifer start to go inside. Desna turns back--

DESNA
 I know you told Roller about Polly's ankle bracelet...

Virginia doesn't bother to defend herself. Desna tisk-tisks, shaking her head--

DESNA
 Going after a fifty-five year old woman.
 (then)
 Stay away from him.

Virginia's shaking, but trying to hide it. This comes out way weaker than she would have liked--

VIRGINIA

He loves me.

Desna and Jennifer share a HEARTY BELLY LAUGH over this and slam the door. Quiet Ann GLARES at Virginia, who gets in her car and SLAMS the door. As Virginia screeches off, Quiet Ann hawks a loogie in her direction, then shakes her head in disgust...

QUIET ANN

Faggot.

EXT. SALON - EARLY NEXT MORNING

Desna unlocks the gate and door. She crosses to the back office, emerging with CLEANING SUPPLIES.

She gets to work immediately, cleaning up the MESS from Virginia's exit interview. She SWEEPS UP all the broken bottles, SQUIRTS SOLVENT on the floor to get the polish off, SCRAPES WAX off the mirror with a razor. She works hard and fast, like she's EXORCIZING something.

Polly, Quiet Ann and Jennifer trail in eventually. They join in the work, silent and focused. The place is truly trashed.

INT. SUNCOAST REJUVENATION - LUNCHTIME

Dr. Ken sips MISO SOUP at his desk, watching a GUARDIAN ANGEL MEDITATION on Youtube, absently mouthing the words. He glances out at the waiting room--

The oddly menacing Twins are back. As before, they sit unmoving, except... Ken notices something this time--

One has a METALLIC TALLY COUNTER in his hand. Every time a customer comes in, his thumb depresses the button.

Ken jumps, knocking over his Bonsai fountain, then tries to conceal his panic--

He grabs the phone, speed-dials the wrong person, starts again--

INT. SALON - CONTINUOUS

A GAGGLE of RUSSIAN GRANDMOTHERS have descended on the salon, complete with babushkas, tan trench coats and wool skirts. Desna, Polly and Jennifer each have one at their stations.

CLOSE ON Desna's client's spectacular mani - grey on grey Cheetah spots with tiny, glinting rhinestones in the center of every spot. It's a work of art, and awfully wild for this Russian Grandma who watches Desna through CHANEL CATARACT GLASSES.

Desna's phone buzzes. She glances - Dr. Ken--

DESNA

What?

DR. KEN (O.S.)

The twins are back. They're counting customers...

DESNA

Where are the bouncers?

DR. KEN

Lunch--

She places granny's nails under a U.V. drier--

DESNA

Back in five.

EXT. SUNCOAST REJUVENATION - CONTINUOUS

Desna is tailed by Quiet Ann. The pace is brisk past an empty storefront with a hand-painted sign - BABY CONSIGNMENT. When they get to Suncoast, they peer in--

--two PILLBILLIES are in a fight. One's holding a WHIZZINATOR - a FAKE PENIS attached to a plastic BLADDER of synthetic urine, tubes dangling. Ken is trying to get a plastic bag around the Whizzinator so it doesn't drip on the carpet--

A NAKED HOMELESS man runs by them. Quiet Ann runs after him--

INT. SUNCOAST REJUVENATION - CONTINUOUS

Desna walks in. The usual madhouse atmosphere is AMPED UP by a thousand. PILLBILLIES crowd the hallway near the only BATHROOM. The door opens - an ANNOYED NURSE walks out holding a plunger--

NURSE

(to Ken)

Somebody tried to flush a bottle of
Mountain Dew.

Dr. Ken looks at Desna, cocks his head towards the Twins, who are chattering away. Desna walks up to them--

DESNA

You guys have an appointment?

NOTHING from them. One takes out a pack of gum, hands the other a piece, then puts the pack away, then changes his mind and takes out a piece for himself. They start chatting again, like they're at a picnic.

ANGLE on PHARMACEUTICAL POSTER on wall: Is your pain stabbing, gnawing, exhausting, shooting, burning, penetrating, miserable, or unbearable?

DESNA

If you guys don't have an
appointment you gotta go.

Still nothing.

Whizzinator Guy STORMS OUT, then returns with a CAVE PALE WOMAN carrying an EMPTY IGUANA CAGE. She gets right in Dr. Ken's face--

PALE WOMAN

Are you aware that my baby is a
veteran?

Desna glances outside - Quiet Ann is still chasing the Naked Guy through the parking lot. A PILL HEAD starts BANGING on the SNACK MACHINE. She takes a step closer to the Twins--

DESNA

Up and out guys.

Still, they ignore Desna and it's getting to her... along with everything else, which keeps RATCHETING IN INTENSITY around her. CLOSE on fine beads of sweat on her temple.

Dr. Ken beats a hasty retreat to the back office but Whizzinator and Pale Woman follow him--

PALE WOMAN

All the way from the K.Y. to sit
here half a day. I don't believe
so, mister.

Now the Pill Head is rocking the snack machine, BODY SLAMMING it while the Twins are still in their own world. Desna's starting to crack--

DESNA

Get to steppin' unless you have an appointment.

The Twins CHUCKLE HEARTILY not even looking at her.

Desna takes a deep breath, walks over to the BOX TV, rips it from the wall and HURLS IT across the room. The twins duck just in time as it SMASHES into the wall between their heads.

It seems like debris is falling for five minutes... plastic, circuitry, wires, fine glinting particles. Everyone SHUTS UP, amazed, staring at Desna.

PATRONS clear out. The Twins stand, dusting themselves off. No outrage plays on their faces, instead, WRY AMUSEMENT. They're impressed...

The Twins BOW BRIEFLY before Desna on their way out. Desna takes a moment to collect herself... *did I just do that?!*

Just then, TWO HULKING BOUNCER TYPES walk in with a pizza--

DESNA

You're fired.

Desna walks out--

EXT. SUNCOAST REJUVENATION - CONTINUOUS

--back towards the Salon. Her phone rings - Roller--

DESNA

What?

ROLLER

How your day?

DESNA

Kinda mild.

ROLLER

I told you bring Virginia in a little more, not toss her ass to the curb.

DESNA

She'll land okay. That type always does.

ROLLER

I told you get used to the bitch,
Des. Finna have her take on more
responsibilities.

DESNA

Like what?

ROLLER

Uncle Daddy setting up a mobile MRI
truck in the parking lot behind the
Zone. Make the clinics more legit.
She prolly run that.

DESNA

Get your lapdance and MRI at the
same place. Gotta give him credit--

Desna looks down at her *WHITE AND GOLD FRENCH* manicure.
Thumbnail's jacked--

DESNA

Shit.

ROLLER

You talk to Polly?

Desna's just outside the salon now, looking in the window at
Polly and Jennifer laughing like sisters. Quiet Ann is
miming Desna throwing the TV--

DESNA

I'm letting her finish out the
week.

ROLLER

Tell her today. And come by
tomorrow and do my eyebrows.
Ruskies here tomorrow night and I
need to look prettiest of all.

DESNA

Okay Roller.

INT. SALON - CONTINUOUS

Desna walks in looking glum and takes one more look at
Granny's nails - they look amazing. The other grannies look
happy with their manicures too. They cluck contentedly in
Russian, holding out hands.

They start to leave. Desna's client walk up to her and hands
her a folded bill--

GRANNY
 (pointing to her comrades)
 For all.

--and walks out, giving Desna a WARM LOOK. Desna unfolds the bill - a HUNDRED - someone has crossed out - IN GOD WE TRUST, and written under it in block letters - FORTUNE FAVORS THE BOLD. Desna smiles a wan smile, then pops the bill in the register--

EXT. SALON - CONTINUOUS

The grannies kiss cheeks and go their separate ways.

Desna's client takes a sharp left and walk towards a back parking lot. As she walks her posture STRAIGHTENS. Her careful gait becomes more robust, more youthful.

She approaches a parked SUV. When she gets close, a HULKING DRIVER jumps out and opens the door for her with GREAT deference, FEAR ALMOST. She gets in, removing her babushka. Both side doors are left open until--

--the Twins get in on either side. Doors slam.

The SUV drives off. A STORM BREWS in a dark magenta sky--

INT. DESNA AND DEAN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER THAN NIGHT

Desna is on the toilet, peeing, looking exhausted. Trade winds gust outside. Palms smack the tiny window--

DEAN (O.S.)
 Dennie?

Desna stops peeing--

DESNA
 Yes Dean.

DEAN (O.S.)
 Did you see I hung up your pretty towels?

Directly in front of her are a set of VERSACE HANDTOWELS bearing an embroidered MEDUSA HEAD.

DESNA
 I saw.

Desna resumes peeing--

DEAN (O.S.)
How come you haven't used them yet?

She stops peeing again--

DESNA
I don't know Dean.

DEAN (O.S.)
How much were they?

DESNA
A lot. The girls chipped in.

DEAN (O.S.)
How many dollars?

DESNA
Three hundred probably.

DEAN (O.S.)
Three comma zero--

DESNA
No comma Dean.

DEAN (O.S.)
You should use them Dennie. You
deserve nice things.

Desna starts to cry silent tears, staring at the TOWELS,
hanging from a RUSTY HOOK, so pristine against the stained
panelling, years of water damage creating a depressing, SHIT-
COLORED marbleization effect--

DESNA
Thanks Dean.

She resumes peeing. After a good beat, Dean CRIES OUT--

DESNA
What's wrong?!

She stops peeing--

DEAN (O.S.)
It's raining inside again.

DESNA
I'll take care of it in a second.

DEAN (O.S.)
Do you think we can move soon
Dennie?

DESNA

I hope so Dean. I really do.

Desna wipes her eyes and finishes peeing as she stares at the towel, drinking in Medusa's open malice, drawing strength from it, perhaps seeing herself perfectly reflected for the very first time.

Her phone chirps. She removes it from her bra - A CALENDAR ALERT

MANSCAPE ROLLER - EYEBROWS - TOMORROW AT 4PM

Desna stares at her phone for a long time, UNBLINKING, as THUNDER CRACKS outside. Something is happening behind those dark eyes again... something massive and IRREVERSIBLE, like the calving of a GLACIER.

INT. SALON - NEXT MORNING

Security gate ROLLS UP on a bright, clear morning. Desna walks in with a coffee. The invisible CINDERBLOCKS she's been carrying on her shoulders this whole time are gone. She's positively CHIPPER.

She turns on the radio - "La Tirana" by La Lupe.

She removes that SILVER MYLAR HAPPY NEW YEAR ENVELOPE from her purse and divides the money in three tip jars: Jennifer, Polly, Ann.

Then she hangs her VERSACE TOWELS next to her station, MEDUSA facing out. She flips the sign to OPEN, looking content.

DOOR CLANGS, Polly walks in--

POLLY

Morning Des.

--and immediately notices the money in her jar.

POLLY

What's this?

DESNA

New year's bonus.

Polly looks up, eyes WET. DOOR CLANGS, in walks Jennifer, then Quiet Ann.

JENNIFER

(re: Polly's tears)

What's she crying about now?

POLLY
We got bonuses!

Jennifer finds hers, then Quiet Ann.

JENNIFER
Really?

DESNA
You heard what Roller said, "this a
new era y'all."

Jennifer laughs--

JENNIFER
Now I can finally take the girls to
Islands of Adventure.
(beat)
Then drive away and never see those
dirty faces ever again. I didn't
mean that. I love my babies.

Polly notices Virginia's station, now completely STRIPPED--

POLLY
Good riddance! That girl was fast--

A TENTATIVE WOMAN peeks in--

WOMAN
Are you guys...?

POLLY
We sure are. I'll take you down
here.

INT. SALON - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

It's DEAD, no customers. Jennifer's working on Densa's
nails: a fill for the thumbnail, then a spectacular manicure,
with each nail narrowing to a point like SHARK TEETH,
complete with a glint of BLOOD at each tip.

Quiet Ann splayed out in a Pedi-lounger, getting her hair
styled in a POMPADOUR by Polly. It looks AMAZING.

POLLY
Now she's gonna get ALLLLLLLL the
pussy.

Desna and Jennifer smile warmly.

MAGNIFIER CLOSE on Desna's manicure's final touch - centered on each tooth is a tiny GOLD FOIL MEDUSA.

POLLY
Startin' to feel like old times
y'all.

Jennifer raises her diet coke--

JENNIFER
Just like my momma used to say...
(scary voice)
STOP FUCKING MY BOYFRIEND OR I'LL
SELL YOUR GODDAM MAKEUP!!!

A quiet beat, then LOUD CACKLES from all and clinking of cans. Desna fans her hands, pleased with the mani--

DESNA
That feels about right.

--then looks over at Polly for a long beat, like she's deciding something...

DESNA
Pol.

Desna cocks her head towards the back office. Polly follows her back--

INT. SALON - BACK OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Desna closes the door. Polly's mirth is quickly replaced by a worn look. Desna sits on the safe, breaths in deep, then exhales. Then--

DESNA
Next time you need money, you tell
me.

Polly nods, relieved.

DESNA
Next time you need shifts, you tell
me.

POLLY
I was embarrassed.

DESNA
Why?

POLLY
On account of what I did.

DESNA
Everybody did something, sometime.
I've seen a lot in my day.

POLLY
I know you have.

DESNA
We're a family, understand?

Polly nods, brimming with tears. Desna pulls her into a strong hug which makes Polly sob.

DESNA
You're gonna be just fine.

Once Polly has settled down, they walk out--

INT. SALON - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer sees Polly's red eyes--

JENNIFER
If she ain't the cryin'-est hoof
painter in Manatee County...

DESNA
Jen baby--

Desna tosses Jennifer a key ring--

DESNA
--I need you to close up tonight.
Dean said he caught the air
conditioner on fire.

JENNIFER
K boo.

Desna grabs her TACKLE BOX and a shoulder bag.

JENNIFER
Don't she have a spring in her
step?

Desna smiles big--

DESNA
Later gators.

POLLY

Tell Roller thanks for the bonus.

Desna smiles.

DESNA

Oh I sure will tell him.

EXT. GULF DRIVE, HOLMES BEACH - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Desna parks a few houses down from Roller's gate. She walks up, enters the code, walks in--

EXT. ROLLER'S MCMANSION - LANAI - CONTINUOUS

--sneaking around the side of the house, peeking in windows, listening carefully.

Desna makes her way to the lanai... still no sign of Roller. She sidles her way over to the poolhouse and peeks through a sliding glass door--

--what she sees isn't pretty. Roller's FUCKING Virginia on the floor near the jacuzzi, CHOKING her. She's red-faced and scared, fighting him off but he's STRONG. She's saying no and HE'S NOT STOPPING.

Desna takes quite a LONG BEAT here, not exactly savoring what's going but not intervening either. REVULSION plays on her face, and something else... like she's seen this before, lived this before.

Then, softly, almost wistfully to herself--

DESNA

Baby baby, squeeze my neck.

--then kicks over an ALUMINUM GRILL to announce herself, halting the proceedings. Virginia frees herself from Roller and pulls clothes on, shaking and crying. Desna tsk-tsks at Virginia, chuckles--

DESNA

Move it dumb-dumb. We full up on herpes over here.

Roller casts a concerned look at his dick for a moment, then wipes it on a ZEBRA PRINT TOWEL and gets in the hottub.

Virginia storms out, WIPING SNOT from her face.

DESNA

You ready for some thread baby?

Roller nods and settles back, regal and indolent, like a LION. Desna removes a spool of WHITE THREAD from her kit and cuts a piece. She knots the ends and loops it around her hands, creating a pinched triangle. She gets to work between his bushy EYEBROWS.

DESNA

This is the weekend huh?

ROLLER

Um hm.

DESNA

Meeting all those Russians.

ROLLER

Breaking bread.

DESNA

Was thinking it might be good if I met 'em too. Case they have any questions about the clinics.

ROLLER

Too soon.

Desna has an odd look on her face, like she's about to laugh again--

DESNA

You know best. Just thought I'd ask.

ROLLER

Time for that later.

DESNA

When though?

ROLLER

Later on, once errything final. It all comin' girl.

Desna's KEEN EYES land on a bunch of shopping bags, tucked behind a bar. Women's boutiques. Nice stuff--

DESNA

Looks like it's already come for some.

ROLLER
 (annoyed)
 You get yours when the new clinics
 be open and runnin'.

DESNA
 Thought it was time for me to be
 recognized.

ROLLER
 Girl...

Desna's eyes are changing again. Gone is the decades of
 disappointment look, the calving glacier look, even the
 Medusa look. Something FAR MORE GRAVE is taking place--

DESNA
 You never loved me. Never
 respected me--

ROLLER
 Des--

DESNA
 Any of us.

Roller is getting annoyed now. He shoots her an END OF
 DISCUSSION look--

ROLLER
 You get yours when I say.

Desna looks around the mansion as she THREADS--

DESNA
 Did you enjoy living in this big
 beautiful house Roller?

ROLLER
 Did I? Still enjoying the bitch.
 Tell you what else I'd enjoy...

Roller points to his ERECTION, bobbing in the suds.

ROLLER
 Wanna finish me off girl?

All those vast networks of cracks running through Desna's
 personality CONNECT now, like an OPI SHATTER TOPCOAT--

DESNA

(gently)

Oh I'll finish you baby... I'll
finish you--

DESNA YANKS HARD on the threads, catching a flap of Roller's skin, and tearing a RAGGED STRIPE OF IT off his nose. He's screaming in AGONY, looking suddenly like a terrified Scarecrow from Wizard of Oz.

Desna HANDS are around his THROAT, forcing him DOWN as he struggles to gain footing. His head HITS HARD against the side of the hottub. He goes limp but she continues to hold him under water--

DESNA

WANT ME TO SQUEEZE YOUR NECK, BABY?
HUH? YOU LIKE THAT BABY...?

Roller seems down for the count for a few beats, then SPRINGS BACK to kicking, thrashing life. Somehow, he gains footing and starts PUNCHING DESNA HARD, getting her good a few times, leaving her wobbly, dazed and bleeding from the nose. Roller winds back for another powerful punch and, suddenly--

A SHOT!

Desna looks across the room, bewildered. Virginia stands shaking, GUN still aimed at Roller, who's sinking slowly beneath PINK SUDS. Virginia drops the gun.

They share a LONG BEAT just looking at each other as they catch their breath, then--

--softly at first, Desna begins to LAUGH, from the BELLY, part merciful release of years of tension, part what did we just do?! Virginia can't help but laugh too, her laughter merging with Desna's, making evil music, until they're quiet again, left with their ragged breath and the terrible scene around them, then--

VIRGINIA

Now am I in your fucking crew?

ON Desna, her black eyes and the faintest beginnings of a smile...

THE END