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Pilot

Written by

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FADE IN:

1 INT. ELEVATOR - DAY 1

MUZAK fills the air.

LARRY and MARCUS, EXECUTIVES in their 30s, sharply dressed and carrying briefcases, stand next to each other. They watch the elevator counter go down, bleary-eyed: 10, 9, 8...

LARRY sighs. Come on...

MARCUS

Did you get Karen's memo?

LARRY

Ugh, yes. She expects the sales projections by Monday? We just got the numbers yesterday.

MARCUS

I hear you, man. My weekend is now officially fu--

PING! The elevator has reached...

2 INT. GROUND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS 2

When the doors open, they reveal: FOUR ARMED GUARDS, wearing kevlar vests, toting automatic weapons. More Blackwater than rent-a-cops. They look tense, on high alert, their weapons drawn.

Between them, there's a MAN IN A SUIT, HANDS in PLASTIC CUFFS behind his back, his head covered with a HOOD. He struggles, trying to protest, but all we hear are MUFFLED GRUNTS and MOANS-- his mouth must be taped shut under the hood.

WTF? After an awkward beat...

MARCUS

Excuse us.

The two execs exit the elevator, sidestepping the Guards and continuing on their way, as if this is nothing unusual.

Meanwhile, two Guards push their Prisoner into the elevator and one of them places a thumb on a FINGERPRINT READER.

The doors shut, and the ELEVATOR keeps going down while the muzak continues.

3 INT. UNDERGROUND LEVEL - DAY 3

The Prisoner is dragged kicking and screaming down a hallway. We're somewhere deep in the belly of the building.

4 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY 4

The Guards drag the Prisoner into a windowless WHITE-TILED ROOM. There's a one-way mirror on a wall, and a drain on the floor.

They strap him to a chair in the middle of the room. The Prisoner sits there. He can't see anything, but he can HEAR:

The METAL DOOR OPENING and CLOSING. And then: STEPS, CALM, DELIBERATE, APPROACHING...

A HAND SNAPPING ON A SURGICAL GLOVE. We see a NASTY SCAR in the shape of a SNAKE on the back of the hand.

Then the HAND grabs a SCALPEL-LIKE BLADE from a medical tray.

The PRISONER's panicking now, hyperventilating. Breathing so hard we see the shape of his mouth as he sucks in the hood.

And now we hear the VOICE of the man with the scar:

VOICE

I want you to know, I take no
pleasure in what I'm about to do.

We PUSH IN ON THE HOOD as the SCALPEL APPROACHES... then a hand reaches out and YANKS OFF THE HOOD, as we --

CUT TO BLACK

I N C O R P O R A T E D

FADE TO:

WHITENESS fills the screen, as if we were surrounded by fog.

A TITLE CARD reads: **"THREE DAYS EARLIER"**

Then a man emerges from the whiteness in SLO-MO, his features slowly becoming clear to us. This is BEN LARSON (29). Is he the man in the hood? We don't know yet. He closes his eyes and water pours all over him. He's taking a hot SHOWER.

5 INT. LARSON HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY [D1] 5

Ben steps out of the shower, wrapping a towel around his waist. Now we can appreciate that he's a handsome, fit man.

As he spreads shaving cream over his face, different POP-UP WINDOWS appear on the MIRROR, surrounding his reflection. One of them shows a 24h NEWS CHANNEL, while a news ticker under Ben's face gives him the STOCK MARKET information.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

...meanwhile, Hurricane Zoe has finally made landfall on the coast of Rhode Island. It is yet unclear if the Providence levees will be able to sustain a category 5 storm. The material damages could be in the billions of dollars.

Another window shows the POLLUTION REPORT of the day and the WEATHER. If we look closely, we'll realize that today it's 75 degrees even though we are in Milwaukee on November 7th.

The year reads 2062.

6 INT. LARSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS [D1] 6

As Ben enters the bedroom, a PICTURE ON THE WALL becomes a screen. The NEWS CHANNEL has "followed" him into the bedroom.

There's a suit carefully laid out on the bed. He dresses up as the newscaster drones in the background.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

In other news, Gasko Oil unveiled today its third offshore platform on the former Arctic ice cap. The rig is expected to produce an encouraging 50,000 barrels per day.

Ben delicately ties his necktie and checks himself in the mirror. He looks sharp. Impeccable.

7 INT. LARSON HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER [D1] 7

Ben walks briskly down the stairs towards the dining room, where LAURA LARSON (27), his beautiful wife, waits for him at the table.

LAURA

Good morning, handsome.

(CONTINUED)

As he walks into the room, more pictures on the wall turn into screens, blaring the news channel.

BEN
(eyes on the news)
Good morning...

LAURA
Ben, honey...

BEN
Mute.
(the sound's turned off)
Sorry.

Laura rolls her eyes at him, jokingly. When Ben KISSES her on the neck, she giggles delighted. And then he notices the SUMPTUOUS BREAKFAST displayed on the table: coffee, eggs, bacon, fresh fruit...

BEN (CONT'D)
What is this?

He grabs a crispy STRIP OF BACON and takes a bite as he sits. His eyes brighten.

BEN (CONT'D)
Mmmh... The real deal?

LAURA
(smiling, pleased)
Uh-huh... I thought a special breakfast was in order.

BEN
And what's the occasion?

Laura glares at him.

BEN (CONT'D)
Oh, was it today? Kidding, kidding! I made a reservation for tonight. Don't worry, we won't be having take-out on our anniversary.

LAURA
(teasing)
Like last year, you mean?

BEN
Hey! You told me it was the best General Tso's you ever had.

CONTINUED: (2)

Laura chuckles as RACHEL, their maid, a Midwestern woman in her 40s, pours Ben some coffee. We notice an ELECTRONIC BRACELET around her wrist. What is that?

LAURA

Thank you, Rachel.

Ben takes another bite of the bacon and closes his eyes in delight.

BEN

I don't think I can go back to that "petri-shit".

LAURA

I don't think we can afford not to.

And suddenly, Laura GASPS. Ben, puzzled, follows her gaze and sees what she's seeing:

The news channel shows images of a high-tech, glass and steel SKYSCRAPER with a BLACK COLUMN OF SMOKE emerging from a top floor. The caption reads: **BREAKING NEWS: BOMBING IN JAKARTA.**

BEN

Shit. Unmute.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

--suspected terrorist attack. Local authorities blame "The Sons of Tomorrow," but the radical Micronesian nationalist group hasn't claimed responsibility yet. The device detonated in an R&D lab of the biochemical giant Spiga, causing at least a dozen fatalities and an immediate 8% drop in the company's stock. Meanwhile, shares of Inazagi Biodesigns climbed to a record high...

On Ben, as the disturbing news sinks in.

EXT. STANFORD MILLS - DAY [D1]

Ben and Laura step out to a beautiful upper middle class SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD. Shiny new two story houses and manicured lawns. The American dream incarnated. We notice that each roof is covered in gleaming SOLAR PANELS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

--had to happen today of all days.
Ugh... Security at the office's
gonna be a shit show.

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly, a SHRIEK!

They turn to find a neighbor, MARSHA (53), in robe and PJs, by her MAILBOXES (instead of the regular USPS one, there's three different ones for three different private delivery companies). She holds a delivery envelope, stares at its contents, horrified.

Ben and Laura rush to her.

LAURA
Marsha! Are you OK?

Marsha can't speak. With a trembling hand, she shows them the envelope. Inside, there's a SEVERED HUMAN EAR. Fuck! Laura GASPS, horrified.

MARSHA
(teary-eyed)
That... son-of-a-bitch. That
piece-of-shit son-of-a-bitch...

LAURA
Marsha...

MARSHA
The bastard's been slumming again.
Screwing that slut he has out
there.
(she sneers)
And he got himself kidnapped.
Idiot. Serves him right...

BEN
(unsure how to ask this)
What... are you planning to do?

MARSHA
Oh, I'll pay, don't worry. But not
right away. Let him sweat it out a
bit longer.

LAURA
I'm sorry.

Ben checks his watch. Is that the time?

BEN
I should really get going.

LAURA
If there's anything you need...

MARSHA

Thank you, darling.

Marsha walks back inside, ranting under her breath. Ben and Laura walk towards their slick and shiny ELECTRIC CARS waiting on the driveway.

BEN

(jokingly)

You should've given her your card.

Laura FLICKS him.

LAURA

Ben!

BEN

What?! Frank's gonna need a new ear as soon as he's back home.

LAURA

You know I'm classier than that.

And they both KISS by the cars. The picture of the perfect marriage, completely in sync.

Ben takes the driver's seat.

BEN

Work.

With this command, the car starts itself with a low hum and drives into the street in AUTOPILOT.

BEN (CONT'D)

News.

A window pops up on the windshield. Again, the news channel.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

--Canadian Prime Minister announced the construction of a new high security fence after 2061 became a record year in illegal immigration. It is estimated that already 12 million US citizens live in Canadian territory illegally...

Ben watches the news as the vehicle drives itself through the suburban neighborhood. Men and women leave their houses, ready for another day of work.

(CONTINUED)

9

CONTINUED:

9

When the car approaches the edge of the neighborhood, we notice A BUS parked in a PROCESSING AREA in a PARKING LOT.

DAY LABORERS step out of the bus: maids, gardeners, cooks... Heavily ARMED GUARDS subject them through processing: they SCAN the laborers with PORTABLE DEVICES and they attach a TRACKING DEVICE to their wrists.

Ben's car approaches the GATE, as the BARRIERS lower to let him out.

A SIGN outside reads **"Welcome to Stanford Mills, a Spiga community"**

And, when he drives off, we see STANFORD MILLS IS SURROUNDED BY AN ELECTRIFIED WALL, with ARMED GUARDS POSTED.

10

EXT. TOLL FREEWAY - DAY [D1]

10

Ben's car drives along the FREEWAY.

The traffic is light, just a handful of self-driving cars, since this is a private road for company men and women. On the horizon, the SKYLINE OF DOWNTOWN MILWAUKEE beckons: a cluster of high tech office skyscrapers, gleaming in the sun.

On either side of the freeway, we see a BUCOLIC LANDSCAPE of luscious green meadows, rolling hills and trees. Gorgeous.

But then the CAMERA rises, to reveal... all this natural beauty is nothing but a mirage, a 3D DIGITAL LANDSCAPE projected on the walls protecting the private road.

From this vantage point, we see: on both sides of the road, hidden by the digital landscape, an endless sprawl of SLUMS AND SHANTY TOWNS. Makeshift houses and derelict buildings as far as the eye can see. The contrast is staggering.

The image is more reminiscent of Sao Paulo or New Delhi than of any American city as we know them today.

11

EXT. SPIGA BUILDING - DAY [D1]

11

The SPIGA US HEADQUARTERS, a massive and intimidating monolith of glass and steel. A stream of COMPANY MEN AND WOMEN is swallowed by the revolving doors, Ben among them.

An UNMANNED DRONE flies over the entrance, circling the skyscraper protectively. On it, the Spiga logo.

12

INT. SPIGA BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS [D1]

12

Ben walks across the marble lobby, past a massive SCREEN WALL showing a CORPORATE VIDEO:

A radiant sunrise, cattle roaming a prairie, a farmer proudly watching his golden fields of wheat and corn... A caption under the images of the farm reads **Anchorage, Alaska.**

VIDEO NARRATOR (O.S.)

For the past 40 years, Spiga Biotech has been at the forefront of the genetic engineering revolution: Pest and drought resistant crops, accelerated growth cattle, the latest developments in SynthFood... Spiga, committed to feeding our ever-growing world.

Ben sighs when he sees the long lines of executives waiting their turn for the stringent SECURITY SCREENINGS, and joins one. The checkpoints are also guarded by armed security.

A FEMALE EXECUTIVE steps into a BODY SCANNER, hands raised and feet apart, holding her briefcase.

A SCREEN produces a detailed 3D image of the subject and detects the SMART-PHONE in her pocket, her SMART-WATCH and the TABLET inside her briefcase, scanning the files in all the devices.

A GREEN LIGHT signals the woman that she's been cleared.

GUARD 1

Next.

A hand falls on Ben's shoulder. He turns to find ROGER CAPLAN (32), an ambitious and charming junior executive.

ROGER

Full cavity search for my friend!

BEN

Hey, Roger.

ROGER

(re: the Guards)

Those guys seem in an especially pissy mood today.

SUSAN (38) and Marcus, drones also in line, chime in.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN

Don't you watch the news?
Micronesian nationalists killed a
dozen of our guys today.

MARCUS

(scoffs)

How can you be a nationalist when
your nation's underwater?

SUSAN

It's like calling yourself a New
Yorker.

ROGER

Nationalists my ass. Word is it
was Inazagi agents.

SUSAN

Inazagi? You think they'd dare to?

ROGER

I'm telling you guys, this was no
terrorist attack. This was
sabotage.

BEN

I've heard we were working on some
new prototype in Jakarta.

MARCUS

What kind of prototype?

BEN

The "we-don't-have-the-clearance"
kind.

Suddenly, a deafening ALARM GOES OFF. The crowd falls into a
tense silence as they all turn towards the security check.
Some gasp, others crouch. Are they under attack?

A chubby middle-aged sad sack, GARY (47), stands inside a
body scanner, RED LIGHTS FLASHING. The source of the alarm.
He's frozen in place, sweaty and terrified, as he sees...

HALF A DOZEN GUARDS gather around him, carefully unholstering
their handguns, fingers off the trigger.

The SCREEN yells in bright red: **"WARNING! UNAUTHORIZED FILE"**,
highlighting the TABLET inside his briefcase.

(CONTINUED)

GUARD 1

Step out of the scanner, sir, and
place the briefcase on the slab.
Slowly.

CONTINUED: (3)

Gary complies, trying not to make any sudden movements, placing his briefcase on the SLAB, a console with a digital surface.

GUARD 1 (CONT'D)
(into his radio)
We got a code 6 down here. Yeah,
some kind of malware.

GUARD 2 carefully approaches GARY'S BRIEFCASE as the SLAB analyzes its contents, until...

Ding! Lights on the slab turn GREEN.

GUARD 2
Doesn't seem to be booby-trapped.
I'm gonna open it.

Click. Click. He releases both lashes, carefully opens the briefcase and... NOTHING HAPPENS. Phew...

GUARD 2 (CONT'D)
I'm turning it on now.

He presses a button on the TABLET inside and it powers up. He taps on the highlighted files and suddenly... SCREAMS!

Moans of pleasure actually! A VIDEO has popped up on the tablet's screen. An amateurish looking video of a MORBIDLY OBESE COUPLE screwing in a dingy room.

After a second of confusion, GUARD 2 shakes his head.

GUARD 2 (CONT'D)
(into the radio)
False alarm. It's just "fat porn."

Guard 1 hushes to a third guard.

GUARD 1
Can't they erase this shit before
coming to work?

The whole room fills with whispers and giggles from the company men and women.

ROGER
Loser...

INT. SPIGA BUILDING - LAB - DAY [D1]

A TEST SUBJECT sits in a small, nondescript room, his scalp connected to a futuristic EEG. He watches a SCREEN WALL that

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

shows crystal-clear IMAGES of people of different ages, races and gender: A YOUNG WOMAN, A MIDDLE-AGED ASIAN MAN, AN ELDERLY AFRICAN AMERICAN...

WE PULL BACK to reveal that we're watching this through...

A ONE-WAY MIRROR--

Behind it, Ben watches the experiment along with CHAD (40s), his boss, a gray bureaucrat, and JULIAN (50s), an inscrutable man that stands behind them. A screen shows the same headshots, but here the IMAGES ARE BLURRY, UNSTABLE. People's features are in constant flow, shifting, mutating...

CHAD

(to Julian)

The Everclear software scans the subject's brainwaves and translates them into images. Literally shows you what they're thinking-- most importantly, what they're dreaming. Traitors can't lie in their sleep, right?

JULIAN

What's the accuracy?

Chad looks at Ben: you're the engineer, you take this one.

BEN

We're at sixty-five percent... For now.

JULIAN

And that's going to hold when the subject's asleep?

BEN

(admits, reluctant)

No. We expect to lose about ten points during REM.

Julian processes this, rubbing his knuckles. We notice a SCAR peeking from under his cuff and we realize: he's the man with the scalpel from the opening scene.

Chad awaits his reaction, nervously. When Julian speaks, he does so deliberately.

JULIAN

What happened yesterday in Jakarta... someone's going to end up in the Quiet Room for that. Do you understand what that means?

(CONTINUED)

CHAD

We've all heard stories.

JULIAN

If you really knew, you wouldn't send someone my way on a fifty-five percent chance he's guilty.

BEN

We--

CHAD

(cutting him off)

I'm as disappointed as you are, sir. Fifty-five percent is unacceptable. But we'll pick up the pace. That's a guarantee.

A tense beat. Then Julian nods: alright. And he exits the room. Ben is left feeling he's been thrown under the bus.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Is there a problem?

BEN

No problem. Everclear's learning. It'll hit seventy-five percent in six months.

CHAD

Good.

BEN

But not before.

CHAD

What are you trying to say, Ben?

BEN

Just that maybe you should be careful with the promises you make. Especially to him. I mean, "we've all heard stories," right?

Ben exits the room, his point made. Left alone, we can see a sense of dread invading Chad.

A spotless reception area. A NURSE sits behind a desk, while a WALLSCREEN behind her shows A WOMAN WALKING ACROSS A WATERFALL. HER FACE FLAWLESS AS IT EMERGES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WATER. A SOOTHING VOICE announces:

(CONTINUED)

FEMALE VOICE (TV)

Bring out your inner beauty...
Bring out a more perfect you...

15 INT. PLASTIC SURGERY CLINIC - CONSULTATION ROOM - DAY [D1] 15

A SERIES OF PHOTOS displayed on the surface of a desk: they show a HANDSOME MAN in his 20s. Laura swipes through them.

LAURA

(re: the photos)

And this is...?

CAROL GRANGER, late 50s, oozing money but not necessarily class, stands by Laura, watching the photographs.

CAROL

Bruce. The late Mr. Granger, on our honeymoon. So is it possible?

Laura grabs a TRANSLUCENT TABLET and places it on the desk: the PHOTO TRANSFERS to the tablet.

Laura turns to the examining table. RAUL, early 20s, good-looking, more a boy than a man, sits on the table, wearing a robe and a confused smile on his face. He's the patient.

Laura raises the tablet to Raul's face. The TABLET analyzes Raul's face and compares it with Bruce's photo.

LAURA

They've got similar bone structure. Sure it's possible... if that's what you and your husband want.

CAROL

It is.

LAURA

Mister Salgado, are you aware of what the procedure would involve?

RAUL

(with an accent and a nod)

Yes.

But does he? Laura decides to talk slowly and deliberately.

LAURA

Do you understand that you will look exactly like this man?

She shows him a photo of Bruce. Raul nods again.

(CONTINUED)

15

CONTINUED:

15

RAUL

Yes.

CAROL

Of course he understands.

LAURA

(to Raul, ignoring her)

Then can you repeat back to me what you think will happen?

Raul turns to Carol, confused, looking for guidance. He doesn't really understand English.

Carol takes Laura aside.

CAROL

Look, he wants the life that I can give him. And he doesn't want to go back to the Red Zones. He understands that much.

On Laura, conflicted...

16

INT. PLASTIC SURGERY CLINIC - RECEPTION - DAY [D1]

16

Laura walks Carol and Raul out of the consultation room. As they head for the exit, Laura hears a FAINT DING...

Her BRACELET projects a SMALL SCREEN on the palm of her hand, where she can read: "NEW MESSAGE"

LAURA

Open.

We can't read the message, but whatever it is, it must be good news, because Laura can barely suppress a laugh.

17

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DUSK [D1]

17

The SUN IS SETTING behind the towering skyscrapers of the downtown area.

18

INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 37TH FLOOR - BEN'S OFFICE - DUSK [D1] 18

Ben's office is a simple, yet sleek affair: A GLASS CUBICLE with a view of an inner atrium.

He stands by the glass wall, watching Roger in his cubicle getting ready to leave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ben slides his index finger down the glass. As he does this, THE GLASS BECOMES OPAQUE. Once he's done this, Ben moves quickly and precisely. It's clear he's done this before:

He sits behind his desk and pulls out his briefcase. He opens it, his fingers tracing the lining until they find a slight opening. And from that opening, he pulls out...

A PHOTOGRAPH. Faded and wrinkled. Old. It shows a BEAUTIFUL GIRL, no older than 18, smiling at us. Who is she?

Ben places the photo on a SCANNING SURFACE embedded on the desk itself. He's about to start it, when he stops himself.

He produces a SMALL DEVICE and plugs it into the computer. On screen, a message appears:

"SECURITY BYPASS: PHANTOM MODE ACTIVATED"

Ben hits a key and the surface of the desk GLOWS for a second as the PHOTOGRAPH IS SCANNED and appears on the screen.

The computer fast-forwards through what appears to be HOURS OF SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE. Images from security cameras in all sorts of places run at high speed in front of our eyes.

The program "grabs" the FACES of every individual in the footage and compares it to the girl in the photo, discarding them if they don't match. It's a FACIAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM.

But Ben is barely watching. He produces his TABLET, starts reading an article about the Jakarta bombing. He's clearly done this search before and it's become routine... until...

Suddenly, a BEEP BEEP BEEP makes him pay attention. He drops the tablet and turns to the screen, where a message flashes:

"PARTIAL MATCH. 73% PROBABILITY"

Beneath the message, a surveillance footage clip plays in a loop. It's grainy and blurry, but it shows a GROUP OF GIRLS being escorted out of a van by tough-looking BODYGUARDS.

The face of one of the girls has been enlarged and compared to the girl in the photograph, both faces side by side. Ben's heart skips a beat as he watches the blurry face onscreen. 73% probability.

On BEN, watching the girl in the photograph with an intensity we haven't seen before. Could it really be her?

CUT TO:

18A

EXT. REDZONE ROOFTOP - DAY (FLASHBACK)

18A

The SCENE in the photograph, come to life. The GIRL tucks a strand of hair behind her ear, looks directly at the LENS, at us, and whispers...

GIRL

Aaron...

She gives us a FLIRTY SMILE and... CLICK! The picture gets taken.

Who is this girl? And who the hell is Aaron?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

19 EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT [N1]

19

Ben rushes through the outdoor terrace of a fancy restaurant. This is a man who's not only very late to his anniversary dinner-- he's also deeply unsettled.

He dodges waiters and diners, when he stops: seeing Laura at a table, nursing a COCKTAIL. She hasn't seen him yet. She looks radiant, innocent, and Ben feels a wave of tenderness wash over him.

Laura looks up from the menu as Ben takes a seat.

BEN

Sorry, sorry...

LAURA

It's OK.

BEN

I just lost track-- This Jakarta thing, everyone's--

LAURA

Hey. It's fine. Really. You're here. We're here.

She smiles, as a WAITER approaches -- we notice he also wears a TRACKING BRACELET.

BEN

Champagne- your best Norwegian.

The waiter recedes into the background with a slight nod.

LAURA

(re: her drink)

Better enjoy this while I can.

BEN

What do you mean?

A beat. A sly smile appears on Laura's face.

LAURA

The permit. It came through today.

BEN

The permit?

(CONTINUED)

LAURA

From Spiga. I'm gonna make an appointment with their OB-GYN. He'll remove the IUD next week.

Laura takes Ben's hands across the table.

LAURA (CONT'D)

We're pulling the goalies.

BEN

(caught off guard)

Wow, that's...

She's surprised to see her enthusiasm not being reciprocated.

LAURA

What? What's wrong?

BEN

Nothing. It's great. I just -- I thought we'd have to wait much longer-- at least till I made it to the fortieth floor.

LAURA

Well then this is good news, right? It means they like you. That's not so hard to believe.

BEN

Hey, I'm still trying to wrap my head around the fact that you like me.

LAURA

Come on, Ben, if you've got a charm switch, I've never seen it off.

BEN

(chuckling)

What does that mean?

LAURA

Nothing. Just that you're always so... sunny.

BEN

And that's bad?

LAURA

No, no, sorry. I... I just wish it were that easy for me, you know.

19

CONTINUED: (2)

19

BEN
(jokingly)
Trust me, it's harder than it
seems.

Laura laughs as Ben reaches for her hand, wishing that he could be more honest with her.

19A INT. LARSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT [N1]

19A

Ben and Laura make love passionately. Ben's intensity feeds not only on passion, but also on his inner turmoil, and it's explosive.

20 OMITTED

20

21 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - ELEVATOR - DAY [D2]

21

A glass elevator rises up, offering an impressive view of the city of Milwaukee below them.

Inside, Ben watches the COUNTER as it shoots past the 30th floor, the 40th floor... all the way to the top.

22 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - ELIZABETH'S OFFICE - DAY [D2]

22

A sharply dressed ASSISTANT opens the door to a ridiculously large office, letting Ben in. Glass walls everywhere offer an even more breathtaking panorama of the city below.

Ben enters reluctantly, because at the other end of the room, sitting at her desk, ELIZABETH KRAUSS, mid 50s, is engaged in a VIDEOCONFERENCE with an ELDERLY MAN.

But Elizabeth waves for him to come in. Ben, uncomfortable, lingers at the entrance of the office, making himself busy by admiring the ARTWORK hanging from the walls: Old Masters and Pop Art, a Renoir rubbing elbows with a De Kooning... a melange that's as incoherent as it is impressive.

ELDERLY MAN
I'm just asking you to call off
your troops, that's all. This is
just a case of cross-pollination.

ELIZABETH
So they claim, Senator. From where
I'm sitting, it looks like
copyright infringement. Theft.

(CONTINUED)

SENATOR BRADLEY

You can't control the wind,
Elizabeth!

ELIZABETH

They should've used wider buffer
strips, then.

SENATOR BRADLEY

And that warrants having their
fields torched?

ELIZABETH

You could convince them to pay
their royalties. After all, our
designs are giving these farmers
the biggest harvest of their lives.

SENATOR BRADLEY

Sure, of sterile seeds that won't
sprout come next season.

ELIZABETH

We have to protect our intellectual
property somehow.

SENATOR BRADLEY

I'm just trying to give you a
little friendly advice, Elizabeth.
My constituents--

ELIZABETH

Your constituents burnt down three
of our silos.

SENATOR BRADLEY

Exactly. You're sitting on a
powder keg here, and you don't seem
to realize it.

ELIZABETH

Answer me this, Senator: What was
the turnout, in this state, last
November?

SENATOR BRADLEY

I don't know. Twenty-five percent?

ELIZABETH

Twenty-two. So just ask yourself,
when the midterms come... who are
your constituents, really?

Senator Bradley sighs, and finally nods, defeated.

(CONTINUED)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Do yourself a favor, will you?
Talk some sense into them.

Elizabeth taps her finger on the desk's interactive surface and the Senator vanishes from the screen.

BEN

Problem?

Elizabeth stands up and walks to Ben.

ELIZABETH

No problem. Bradley's a fool, not
an idiot. Sometimes he just
forgets it's not the thirties
anymore.

When Elizabeth reaches Ben, she sees that he's admiring a painting that hangs apart from the rest. This one's special.

It's one of VAN GOGH'S HAUNTING SELF-PORTRAITS. Elizabeth indicates the brushstrokes on the canvas. It's clear she has a genuine appreciation of the work.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Those brushstrokes. Look at them.
Furious, desperate. In a mad rush
to pour himself onto the canvas.
As if he were running out of time.

BEN

He was. He shot himself within a
year.

Elizabeth looks at Ben. Impressive.

ELIZABETH

Poverty, suffering... Do you think you can create great art without them?

BEN

They're powerful motivators.

We still don't know it, but Ben's talking from experience.

ELIZABETH

I guess they are. Maybe if he'd sold a painting, he would've been a lesser artist, but a happier man. I wonder if he would've made that bargain.

Elizabeth returns to her desk. Ben follows.

BEN

(re: the painting)

So, the Smithsonian caved?

ELIZABETH

Just last week. They fought and fought, and ended up getting half of what we offered them last year. Like you said, poverty's a powerful motivator.

She shows Ben a chair. He sits. But she doesn't. She leans on the desk, looming over him. He waits for her to tell him what she wants. And finally...

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

So... Laura, how is she?

Ben considers what he should tell her...

BEN

You know, you could ask her.

ELIZABETH

I'm asking you. Maybe if you convinced her to talk to me, I wouldn't have to.

Ben chuckles. So that's what this was about.

23 EXT. MILWAUKEE - DAY [D2] 23

The CAMERA flies over the majestic skyscrapers of downtown to reveal the maze-like narrow streets of the RED ZONES:

A CHAOS OF NOISE AND POLLUTION that would not look out of place in the slums of Sao Paulo.

24 EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY [D2] 24

The gleaming CORPORATE SKYSCRAPERS shine in the background, when suddenly THEO (a 17 year old STREET KID) is dragged into frame by TWO THUGS, SAMOAN and CREW CUT, and towards a door...

25 INT. RUN-DOWN BUILDING - BACK ROOM - DAY [D2] 25

THE DOOR BLASTS OPEN!

The THUGS drag THEO into a room lined up with PLANTERS and UV LIGHTS. But it's not marijuana they're growing in here, but VEGETABLES: tomatoes, peppers, zucchinis, etc.

At the end of the room, a MAN sits at a desk. He's eating, carefully slicing a luscious-looking tomato and savoring it.

He wears a PERFECTLY TAILORED SUIT and an EXPENSIVE HAIRCUT. If it weren't for the TATTOOS crawling up his neck, we'd think he just came out of the green zones.

Meet TERRENCE HURT (40s), ruthless crime boss and self-styled businessman. He doesn't need to do much to be intimidating.

Crew Cut throws Theo on the floor. Theo watches Terrence, terrified, dreading what's coming.

Terrence takes off the cloth napkin and stands up.

He walks up to Theo. Samoan hands Terrence a CARDBOARD BOX.

TERRENCE

What's your name?

THEO

Theo.

Terrence opens the box: we realize it's full of loose cigarettes. Terrence grabs one and tears it apart. He smells the tobacco strands, appreciative.

(CONTINUED)

TERRENCE

This is real tobacco, Theo. No sawdust. Where did a little shit like you get something like this?

THEO

I've got my ways.

Terrence crouches so he's face to face with him.

A beat. Then Terrence smiles.

TERRENCE

I like you, boy. You can't make a buck in this world without a bit of entrepreneurial spirit and a big pair of balls.

Terrence stands.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)

But if I let any punk with balls and a pack of cigarettes sell in my backyard, then pretty soon supply is going to exceed demand.

Terrence makes a gesture. Immediately, Samoan grabs Theo by the wrist, HOLDING HIS HAND STILL.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)

That creates what's called a zero-profit condition. Which isn't good for anybody. Especially me.

Terrence approaches one of the planters and grabs a PAIR OF SHEARS. Shit.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)

(re: the shears)

So this... this is what I like to call my strategic entry deterrent.

Theo starts hyperventilating. Shit-shit-shit-shit. Terrence takes the shears to Theo's thumb, ready to cut it off when...

He notices Crew Cut's NOSE is bloody and bruised.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)

What the hell happened to you?

Crew Cut's too embarrassed to reply. But the answer dawns on Terrence anyway. He looks at Theo, surprised, amused even.

(CONTINUED)

TERRENCE (CONT'D)

You did that?

Theo stares back at Terrence. Scared, but defiant, too.

THEO

Yeah. Yeah, I did.

Terrence mulls this over for a beat. Then:

TERRENCE

Show me.

Theo gets pushed back out onto the rooftop.

Terrence watches, curious and amused, as Theo gets into a fighting stance, while Crew Cut and Samoan circle him.

Suddenly, Samoan throws a SUCKER PUNCH!

But, with lightning-fast reflexes, Theo DODGES the punch and Samoan finds himself swinging at air.

Samoan takes another swing, charging towards the boy...

But Theo easily SIDESTEPS him, swapping positions with him.

Now Crew Cut grabs Theo from behind -- but Theo uses this chance to DOUBLE KICK Samoan in the face!

Theo finishes the move by dropping to the ground and SLIPPING OUT OF HIS JACKET. Crew Cut finds himself holding the empty jacket as...

Theo rolls away. He takes a couple of parkour-like steps along the wall and tries to kick Samoan in the face...

But Samoan manages to grab him by the ankle mid-air and slams him against the floor.

Theo LANDS with a thud. Ouch. He's done.

Then, he sees Terrence tower over him. Is Theo a dead man?

Unexpectedly, a smirk appears on Terrence's face.

TERRENCE

Not bad, kid. How would you like to make some money?

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

27 INT. LARSON HOUSE - DAY [D2] 27

Laura is walking in the door, when her BRACELET buzzes. She watches the screen on the palm of her hand and answers.

LAURA
Hey, babe.

INTERCUT WITH:

28 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 37TH FLOOR - BEN'S OFFICE - DAY [D2] 28

Ben's on the phone.

BEN
She summoned me today.

When she hears this, she stops.

LAURA
She did? What did she want?

BEN
Just to talk. About art... about you.
(beat)
She wants to take you out for lunch.

LAURA
So now you're her errand boy.

BEN
I'm your husband. And her son-in-law.

LAURA
Sorry.

BEN
Look, Laura, just meet her. If she's going to be a grandmother, she has a right to know.

LAURA
Right, cause she has "grandmother" written all over her.

BEN
Laura...

(CONTINUED)

LAURA

I'll think about it. OK?

(beat)

What time are you coming home tonight?

BEN

I'm... we were thinking about going out after work. Roger, a few of the guys... You're welcome to join us.

A slight feeling of dread creeps up on Laura as she asks...

LAURA

Where's the fun going to be?

BEN

They're thinking Southgate.

Ben's answer sounds casual, but it isn't. The name reaches inside of Laura and pushes a painful button. Ben waits for an answer, hoping that it will be...

LAURA

You guys have fun. Just come back with both your ears.

Ben exhales, relieved, but he's not happy. He feels like a scumbag for having to manipulate her.

BEN

(guilty)

I'll do my best. Love you.

LAURA

Me too. But seriously, though...

BEN

Yeah?

LAURA

Be careful out there.

Laura hangs up. The conversation's left a bitter aftertaste in her mouth when...

RACHEL (O.S.)

Madam?

Rachel is at the kitchen door, waiting. Laura barely registers her. She's still in her own world.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I wouldn't ask if it wasn't important, but--

LAURA

What is it?

RACHEL

I was hoping I could leave early today.

LAURA

I don't think that's going to work today.

RACHEL

I mean it's just--

LAURA

(snaps)

I said not today.

Beat.

RACHEL

Very well.

She nods and backs away. Laura immediately regrets it, kicking herself for snapping at Rachel, but by the time she turns to the kitchen door, Rachel's gone.

LAURA

Shit.

Ben and Roger enter the parking garage and head towards Ben's CAR, where a small congregation is waiting for them.

ROGER

Gentlemen! ARE YOU READY FOR SOME GOOD OLD-FASHIONED DEBAUCHERY?!

They all respond with cheers and howls: MARCUS, SUSAN and... CHAD, who waves sheepishly.

Roger's surprised to see Chad. He leans into Ben.

ROGER (CONT'D)

What is he...? Did you invite him?

BEN

Sure.

29

CONTINUED:

29

ROGER

Kissing up to the boss. You're working him, right?

BEN

Just burying the hatchet.

ROGER

(skeptical)

Right.

30

EXT. TOLL FREEWAY - NIGHT [N2]

30

The CAR drives down the TOLL FREEWAY, music blaring from the sound system. Roger produces a FLASK, takes a long swig and passes it to Ben. *

BEN

But they *can't* be real. *

ROGER

Oh they're real. Maybe not by birth, but surgically conjoined. *

Ben drinks and turns to give the flask to Chad. Chad takes it with a reluctant smile, staring at the wet bottle neck as... *

MARCUS

But what do they do exactly? *

ROGER

Depends on how much you're willing to pay! Trust me, if you can't find it in the red zones, it doesn't exist. *

Finally, Chad surreptitiously wipes it with his tie before taking a timid sip, as they approach an EXIT: **"SOUTHGATE"**. *

An ELECTRONIC MESSAGE FLASHES on the car's windshield:

"ATTENTION, YOU'RE EXITING A GREEN ZONE. USE CAUTION"

31

EXT. SOUTHGATE - NIGHT [N2]

31

The CAMERA flies over the poorly-lit streets of the RED ZONE, past the NEONS of BARS and STRIP CLUBS, as we approach...

32

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT [N2]

32

We see the RED LIGHT DISTRICT in the BACKGROUND, as...

BEN'S CAR approaches A HUGE DILAPIDATED WAREHOUSE. Music pounds loudly from within, while a crowd slowly streams inside.

The vehicle pulls up into the improvised parking lot in front of the Warehouse.

A TWITCHY GUY named VICTOR limps towards them as they step out of the car.

VICTOR

Hey, Rog.

Roger slips a bill into the guy's hand.

ROGER

Keep an eye on my boy's car?

VICTOR

You got it.

(CONTINUED)

They're all heading towards the warehouse, when Roger spots a GROUP gathered on the far end of the lot. He squeezes Ben's shoulder.

ROGER

You go ahead. I'll catch up inside.

BEN

Sure thing, you degenerate.

ROGER

Hey, you're partaking too!

And he heads towards the group.

Ben leads Chad, Susan and Marcus past TWO BOUNCERS that scan people with HANDHELD METAL DETECTORS under a sign that reads: "NO FIREARMS BEYOND THIS POINT"

Inside, they find a huge, cavernous space, air thick with smoke and sweat.

The centerpiece of the space is a CAGE, where two fighters are applying as much hurt to each other as is (in)humanly possible. No gloves, no rules, no ref.

The crowd is a mix of genuine lowlifes, gangster wannabes, partying college kids and other execs. They bet on the fight, cheering every blow. When a punch sends a gob of blood and teeth flying, the crowd goes wild.

Ben watches, but he doesn't cheer. Instead, he flinches at a particularly brutal punch that sends a fighter spinning against the mat. He's not enjoying this. Meanwhile...

AT THE BAR

Chad has pushed his way through the crowd and is trying to get the attention of a TATTOOED BARTENDER.

CHAD

Hey. Hey!

Chad waves his ELECTRONIC WATCH, but the Bartender takes orders from other customers.

CHAD (CONT'D)

What am I, invisible?

Marcus pulls down Chad's watch.

MARCUS

Cash only out here.
(to the bartender)
Hey, asshole!

The Bartender turns. He gives Marcus a stone-cold "what-did-you-just-call-me?" look. This guy is tough and Marcus... well, he isn't. He can barely mumble an apology.

Then, a FEMALE SERVER plops FIVE BEERS in front of them.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

What--?

SERVER

Your friends sent them over.

She points at a GROUP OF SUITS at the other end of the bar. Guys in their thirties who grin and wave at them.

Chad grabs a beer. It's...

CHAD

Jangkar. Indonesian.

MARCUS

Those Inazagi assholes...

The INAZAGI EXECS crack up. One of them yells over the din:

INAZAGI EXEC

After what happened, we figured you guys could use a drink! CHEERS!

SUSAN

Hey, suck my dick!

Susan notices Marcus has grabbed one and is taking a gulp.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Well don't drink it!

Marcus almost chokes pulling it out of his mouth.

MARCUS

Sorry.

That's when Roger joins them.

ROGER

Guys... don't ever say I never did anything for you.

(CONTINUED)

He pulls out a Ziplock bag and shakes it: inside jangle what looks like half a dozen modified asthma INHALERS.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Here's some primo, triple A, thank-God-it's-Friday Blur.

They each grab one. Marcus puts it in his mouth and presses a button. Chad is more hesitant but follows his example.

When Ben takes one, we notice that he blocks the inhaler's exit with his thumb. He presses the button, but doesn't really inhale. He's staying sober.

The same cannot be said about the rest of the group. Roger's the last one to take a hit. The moment he does, we see the world through his eyes and...

THE WORLD SLOOOOOOWS DOWN. Every movement, every laughter, every sound elongated... almost to a standstill.

This is your brain on Blur.

In the cage, the two fighters are involved in a confrontation so slow that it's almost balletic. Every punch lands with breathtaking clarity. Blood and sweat droplets seem suspended in the air.

Ben, pretending to be high, hands Chad a shot.

CHAD

No, no...

BEN

Come on!

Chad takes the drink and downs it. Before he knows it, Ben is pouring him another one and the rest of the group encourages him with a chant...

GROUP

Go, go, go!

Chad downs it again, this time even faster. They all CHEER! But immediately, Chad bends over and retches. They all jump back: not on my shoes! But it's a dry retch. For now.

SUSAN

Someone's blurred out.

BEN

I got him. C'mon, let's go.

Ben helps Chad stand up. Or at least not fall down. As...

34 OMITTED 34

35 INT. WAREHOUSE - RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER [N2] 35

Ben drags Chad inside. This is one filthy place. Two college kids lay out lines of coke on the sink. In one stall, a Suit appears to be getting a blowjob. Couldn't they at least shut the door? Nevermind, the door fell off the hinges a long time ago.

CHAD

Hey, Ben?

BEN

Yeah?

CHAD

I'm not an asshole. It's just... the pressure... they got your balls in a vise and they just... never let go.

BEN

I know. Come on.

Ben finds a stall with the door still intact and helps Chad inside. He holds his forehead as Chad throws up.

While Ben holds him, he uses his free hand to pull out something from his pocket: it's a small plastic VIAL with a tiny needle attached.

BEN (CONT'D)

One more...

Chad retches again, but nothing comes out. Ben is about to pinch him in the back of his neck with the needle, when one of Chad's convulsions knocks the vial out of his hand.

Ben looks down: the vial has landed in a puddle of... what, exactly? Better not to ask.

Ben leans down to pick it up, disgusted, when... someone KNOCKS AT THE DOOR OF THE STALL.

MAN'S VOICE

Come on!

Ben struggles to pick up the vial.

BEN

Just a minute!

(CONTINUED)

CHAD

I think I'm done.

BEN

One more.

THE KNOCKING CONTINUES, NOW LOUDER.

CHAD

I don't think I--

BEN

One more. Let it out.

Ben grabs the vial and sticks it in the back of Chad's neck. Chad GRIMACES as the vial instantly fills up with a sample of CHAD'S BLOOD.

CHAD

What was that?

BEN

What was what? Come on, let's go.

...and opens the door, only to find that the person knocking is the INAZAGI EXEC.

He smirks when he sees Ben and Chad inside the stall.

INAZAGI EXEC

Let me guess.

(points at Ben, then Chad)

Pitcher. Catcher.

BEN

Funny.

Ben tries to walk past him, but the Inazagi Exec blocks the way with an arm against the stall.

INAZAGI EXEC

Where are you going? There are so many more puns where that came from. I'm not even close to--

The Exec notices the TINY VIAL, still in Ben's hand. Ben quickly hides it away, but too late:

INAZAGI EXEC (CONT'D)

What the hell were you guys doing in the--?

BLAM! Suddenly, with no warning, the Inazagi Exec doubles over as Ben sinks a knee into the guy's groin.

(CONTINUED)

35

CONTINUED: (2)

35

Before the guy can even grunt, Ben spins him around and rams his head against a sink, which disintegrates in an explosion of porcelain and cocaine. The college kids jump aside.

Chad, still in a daze, looks at the Inazagi Exec, unconscious on the floor, then at Ben, who's disturbed about what he's just done.

CHAD

Wow... Who are you?

BEN

I'm Ben. Come on.

Fortunately, by tomorrow Chad won't remember any of this.

36

INT. WAREHOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT [N2]

36

Ben's walking Chad back to the big room, when he stops.

BEN

Shoot, I... You think you can make it back?

CHAD

I... Yeah... Why?

BEN

I forgot something. Be right back.

CHAD

Ok...

And Chad stumbles towards the din of the cage fight while Ben recedes into the hallway.

37

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT [N2]

37

Ben walks out of the building, looking back to make sure nobody sees him leave. He crosses the vacant lot and starts walking down the street towards...

A TALL BUILDING IN THE DISTANCE, LOOMING FROM THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT SKY.

No one's seen him. No one, except...

VICTOR, THE TWITCHY GUY keeping an eye on Ben's car. He emerges from between the parked vehicles and watches Ben walk away.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

38 EXT. DERELICT HIGH RISE - NIGHT [N2] 38

Ben crosses the street towards the entrance of a DERELICT HIGH RISE, a decrepit and dirty building that has seen better days.

The way is blocked by a GROUP OF YOUNG PUNKS, guarding the STOOP.

The LEADER is a 16 year old with peach fuzz facial hair. Harmless? Not really: these guys are armed. The Leader smirks when he sees Ben...

LEADER
Hey, Suit.

Ben stops. The Leader blocks the way and won't let him in.

BEN
You're new.

LEADER
You're old.

Ben pulls out a wad of cash, peels out a twenty and offers it to him.

The Leader eyes the twenty, but his eyes wander greedily to the rest of the cash. There's a lot more there. But Ben knows what he's thinking.

BEN
See this?

Ben nods at the BLOOD STAINS on the cuff of his shirt.

BEN (CONT'D)
Not my blood.

The Leader holds Ben's stare for a beat. A decision to be made... until he grabs the twenty and nods to Ben to go in.

Ben pockets the wad and walks past him.

38A INT. DERELICT HIGH RISE - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS [N2] 38A

The lobby makes the outside of the building look good. Concrete floors, the guts of the building out for everyone to see. The ELEVATOR SHAFTS are just two black, gaping holes.

(CONTINUED)

38A

CONTINUED:

38A

Inside, a PUNK sits on a DIRT BIKE. The bike starts with a VROOOM and Ben sits behind the driver.

BEN

Eighteenth.

The Driver nods and guns the bike, driving up the stairs...

39

INT. DERELICT HIGH RISE - UPPER FLOOR - NIGHT [N2]

39

Ben walks down a dark hallway, the only light source being the moon that seeps in through the holes in the walls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He approaches an UNMARKED DOOR and knocks... then waits, until...

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Yeah?

BEN

It's me.

The sound of numerous locks. Then, the door opens, revealing... THEO. Very much alive.

He turns back, leaves the door open, trying not to face Ben.

THEO

Hey, Aaron.

Wait, who's Aaron?

BEN

Theo.

Ben enters and closes the door behind him.

INT. DERELICT HIGH RISE - THEO'S APARTMENT - CONT. [N2] 40

The inside of the apartment is modest, but someone's done his best to make it livable.

THEO

(brusque)

What are you doing here?

BEN

Getting the usual warm and fuzzy welcome, I gue-- What's that?

Ben's noticed something on Theo's face: is that a bruise?

BEN (CONT'D)

What happened?

THEO

Nothing.

Ben grabs Theo's shoulder and spins him around: there's definitely a bruise on his cheek, and a cut on his lip.

BEN

What do you mean "nothing"?

(CONTINUED)

THEO

It's just the training. I've...
started training.

BEN

You mean for the cage.
(off Theo's shrug)
That's insane.

THEO

That's not what Terrence says.

BEN

Terrence?

Suddenly, the LIGHTS in the apartment DIM AND FLICKER.
Without missing a beat, Theo reaches for a LAMP hanging from
the ceiling.

THEO

Terrence, he's... "the guy" around
here. He says we'll make a
shitload of money together.

The lamp has a handle, and Theo starts cranking it...

BEN

He'll make a shitload of money.
You'll end up soiling your
underwear on some street corner.

THEO

What do you want me to do? Join
one of the corporate armies? Get
blown to pieces in some gas field
in Siberia?

By the time the lights die out in a full-blown BLACK-OUT, the
HAND-CRANKED LAMP has enough power to light up the room,
however faintly.

THEO (CONT'D)

(re: the black-out)

I bet you miss these.

Ben ignores the comment. He's still concerned about Theo.

BEN

I bring you cigarettes, Theo. Real
ones. There's good money there.

THEO

And what do you think got me in
trouble with Terrence in the first
place, Aaron?

(CONTINUED)

BEN

It's Ben.

THEO

Sure. I'll call you Ben. As long as you don't forget Aaron.

BEN

I don't.

Ben produces a folded piece of paper. He hands it out to Theo: It's a PRINT-OUT from the FACE-RECOGNITION SOFTWARE. It shows the GIRL being escorted out of the minivan.

Theo's mouth suddenly goes dry. He finds it hard to speak when he says...

THEO

Is that... is that her?

BEN

Seventy-three percent chance. Never even got close to forty before.

THEO

So you found her?

BEN

I may have.

THEO

Where is she?

BEN

If it is Elena--

THEO

My sister. Where is she?

Ben points at the print-out.

BEN

That's a group of girls being escorted to Arcadia. New girls.

THEO

That's a--

BEN

It's an Executive Club.

THEO

Sure, keep telling yourself that.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Theo--

THEO

Can you get in there?

BEN

Not at my level, I-- not till I get a promotion...

THEO

You goddamn Suits--

BEN

...not till I get to the fortieth floor. Access is restricted to senior execs.

Theo sits on a BENCH PRESS, deflated.

THEO

It's been six years...

BEN

I know...

THEO

(looks up)

Then tell me you got a plan.

Ben produces the SMALL VIAL WITH CHAD'S BLOOD.

THEO (CONT'D)

What's that?

BEN

Opportunity. A position is about to open up on the fortieth.

Theo stands up and faces Ben.

THEO

You got her in there. You better get her out. For your sake and the sake of that dumb piece of ass you marri--

BEN

(shutting him up)

Careful.

Theo smiles.

THEO

See, Ben? You're already forgetting.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (5)

39A.
40

Theo was testing him and Ben took the bait.

41-43 OMITTED

41-43

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

44 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - LAB - DAY [D3]

44

ALAN (46), a chubby, tired-looking engineer, enters the lab, where Ben is waiting for him. Alan carries a SLICK CARRYING CASE with a HIGH-TECH ELECTRONIC LOCK ON IT.

He places it on a table, in front of Ben.

ALAN

I thought you were on the Everclear team.

BEN

I am. But after Jakarta, bosses are scrambling. They're fast-tracking any anti-riot tech in development.

ALAN

Natives are getting restless, huh?

BEN

Looks like it.

Alan produces a TABLET and offers it to Ben.

ALAN

Sign here.

BEN

They're keeping it exclusively non-lethal, though.

ALAN

Yeah, for now.

Ben presses his PALM on the touch screen and it gets scanned. That prompts the ELECTRONIC LOCK to bleep and OPEN.

Ben lifts the case's cover, revealing...

...a TRIGGER-SHAPED DEVICE, and two electronic EARPLUGS.

ALAN (CONT'D)

The Whistle.

Alan heads towards the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALAN (CONT'D)

See if you can stabilize the
inhibitors. The pitch always ends
up frying the circuits.

BEN

I'll see what I can do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

As Alan exits the room, Ben considers the device, nervous, unsure, until...

He finally squeezes one of the earplugs and both come to life with a very low hum and a tiny blue light: they're on.

CUT TO:

A TABLET falls into a glass of water, DISSOLVING WITH A SIZZLE.

INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 40TH FLOOR - CHAD'S OFFICE - DAY [D3]45

On one of the top floors, Chad's massive office displays a breathtaking view of the financial district of Milwaukee.

Severely hung over, Chad squints at the GLARE of the sun on the glass of a neighboring skyscraper. He slides a finger over his desk and the WINDOWS DARKEN, dimming the sunlight.

Chad takes a sip of his medicine when suddenly, BEEEEEP! The intercom makes him flinch. His head is killing him.

CHAD (OVER THE INTERCOM)

What now?

ASSISTANT (O.S.)

Mr. Larson is here to see you.

Chad lets go a tired sigh.

CHAD

Send him in.

The Assistant, CANDACE (25) opens the door and Ben walks in.

Chad leans back on his chair and points at the one in front of his desk. An invitation to sit.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Ben...

As he takes a seat, Ben notices his boss's bloodshot eyes, the medicine on the table...

BEN

Crazy night, huh? I woke up myself to this horrible splitting he--

CHAD

(curt)

How can I help you?

(CONTINUED)

Chad is not only back to his "boss mode", he's also in a shitty mood. He'll have none of last night's familiarity.

As Ben talks, the CAMERA closes in on his EAR, revealing a faint blue hue and a barely audible hum: the EARPLUGS.

BEN

I've been thinking. About Everclear. How to speed things up.

Still talking, Ben slips a hand inside his pocket and wraps his fingers around the TRIGGER.

BEN (CONT'D)

The learning process is just a matter of man-power, and putting in more hours.

And CLICK! Ben squeezes the trigger. The WHISTLE emits the faintest high-pitched frequency. Chad doesn't seem to notice.

CHAD

Tell me something I don't know.

Or maybe he does notice. Chad starts to fidget uncomfortably in his chair as the faint high-pitched noise floats in the background. He's not feeling well.

BEN

What I'm suggesting here is double shifts. I'm happy to do overtime, come in on weekends, get more test subjects...

CHAD

Sure, and go over budg--

A WAVE ON NAUSEA interrupts Chad mid-sentence. He immediately covers his mouth. Ben pretends not to notice.

BEN

We could bring volunteers from the Red Zones. Shouldn't be too expensive.

CHAD

But the security clearance process would be a nightmare. Look, Ben--

Suddenly, a second wave of nausea, intensified by a cramp. Chad flinches, in pain.

BEN

Are you OK?

CHAD

I'm fine, I'm fine. It's just--
(another cramp)
Excuse me a second, will you?

Chad jumps out of the chair and storms out of the office.

CANDACE (O.S.)

Sir, are you alright?

As soon as the door closes, Ben rushes to the other side of the desk. He doesn't have much time.

A swipe on the desk's surface and a section of it rises and tilts, turning into a TOUCH SCREEN. Ben navigates the interface as fast as he can, until he finds the FOLDER he was looking for.

When he clicks on it, a WARNING appears: "**CLEARANCE LEVEL 5. DNA IDENTIFICATION REQUIRED**". And a small section of the table opens, revealing...

...a TINY NEEDLE.

Ben produces the vial with Chad's sample and carefully places a DROP OF BLOOD on the needle.

The computer starts analyzing the sample, a DOUBLE HELIX being formed on screen.

Finally, "**ACCESS GRANTED. WELCOME CHAD PETERSON**"

46 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - BATHROOM STALL - SAME TIME [D3] 46

The door swings open and Chad storms into the stall. He immediately drops on his knees and hugs the porcelain toilet.

47 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 40TH - CHAD'S OFFICE - SAME TIME [D3] 47

Ben places a SMALL SPHERE on top of the table. When it touches the surface, the SPHERE lights up: a PORTABLE DRIVE.

Ben drags the folder to a corner of the screen and another message appears: "**COPYING FILES: 0%, 1%, 2%**"

INT. SPIGA BUILDING - MEN'S ROOM - SAME TIME [D3]

Chad splashes water on his face. Far from the Whistle's range, he seems to be feeling better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks at himself in the mirror for a beat, takes a deep breath and exits the bathroom.

49 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 40TH - CHAD'S OFFICE - SAME TIME [D3] 49

Meanwhile, the files are copying at an excruciatingly slow pace: %45, %46, %47...

Ben's eyes dart from the door to the screen. Come-on-come-on-come-on...

50 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 40TH FLOOR - SAME TIME [D3] 50

Chad's Assistant, Candace, watches her boss walk briskly across the floor to his office. She would say something, but Chad's sour face tells her he's not in the mood.

Shit. He's coming back and Ben is far from being done.

Chad wraps his fist around the knob, ready to walk back in...

51 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 40TH - CHAD'S OFFICE - SAME TIME [D3] 51

Ben sees Chad's silhouette through the frosted glass and his heart skips a beat.

52 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 40TH FLOOR - SAME TIME [D3] 52

But, suddenly, Chad FREEZES. A drop of cold sweat drips down his brow. He slowly rests his forehead against the door.

CANDACE

Mr. Peterson?

Then we hear it. Very faint. The high-pitched drone. Back in the Whistle's range, his stomach is churning again.

Before we know it, Chad is rushing back to the men's room.

CANDACE (CONT'D)

Mr. Peterson!

INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 40TH - CHAD'S OFFICE - SAME TIME [D3]

Ben lets out a sigh of relief.

%62, %63, %64... The CAMERA closes in on Ben's ears, towards the blue hue and the low hum, when...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly, the blue light starts to flicker. Once, twice, three times... and it's out. The hum also stops. Unbeknown to him, the EARPLUGS have stopped working.

Slowly, without him noticing, the high-pitched frequency starts to flood his brain, growing and growing in intensity.

%75, %76, %77... A drop of cold sweat runs down Ben's temple. He starts to feel dizzy, sick.

54 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - MEN'S ROOM - SAME TIME [D3] 54

Chad wipes his mouth with a paper towel, takes one last look at his paled face in the mirror, and exits the men's room.

55 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 40TH - CHAD'S OFFICE - SAME TIME [D3] 55

%83, %84, %85...

A cramp and a wave of nausea make Ben double over.

He realizes that the earplugs are fried. They're not working. Doing his best to contain the nausea, Ben has no choice but to press the trigger again, TURNING OFF THE WHISTLE.

After a beat, he heaves a sigh of relief. But...

56 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 40TH FLOOR - SAME TIME [D3] 56

Chad, enraged and humiliated, walks briskly across the office.

Candace immediately stands up as she sees him approach.

CANDACE

How are you feeling, Mr. Peterson?

CHAD

(brusque)

I'm fine!

INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 40TH - CHAD'S OFFICE - SAME TIME [D3]

Ben freezes when he hears the muffled conversation between Chad and his Assistant beyond the frosted glass.

No protection now. Nothing he can do to keep Chad out.

%90, %91, %92... Jesus Christ! Finish already!

58 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 40TH FLOOR - SAME TIME [D3] 58

Finally, Chad puts his hand on the doorknob and PUSHES IT OPEN, revealing...

59 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - 40TH - CHAD'S OFFICE - SAME TIME [D3] 59

...Ben BACK IN HIS CHAIR, like nothing had happened. Phew...

BEN

You OK?

Chad mumbles a grumpy response and drops on his chair.

CHAD

Where were we?

60 INT/EXT. LAURA'S CAR/STANFORD MILLS CHECKPOINT - DAY [D3] 60

Laura sits in her car, returning from work.

The vehicle crosses the CHECKPOINT into STANFORD MILLS, where the DAY LABORERS are being searched and screened before they get back on the BUS.

Suddenly, something catches her attention. There's a commotion by the bus: Two ARMED GUARDS grab a WOMAN and forcefully shove her against the side of the bus.

The woman screams and protests as she's searched, but one of the guards barks at her...

ARMED GUARD 1

Shut up!

...as the other one grabs her arms and closes a pair of PLASTIC HANDCUFFS around her wrists.

None of the other laborers dares to glance at the scene.

From inside the car, Laura catches a glimpse of the woman being arrested. It's none other than RACHEL, Laura's maid.

Laura hesitates for a beat, but finally...

LAURA

Stop. Stop!

The car automatically pulls over to the curb and Laura rushes out of the car and towards the checkpoint.

(CONTINUED)

LAURA (CONT'D)

Hey! HEY! What's going on here?

ARMED GUARD 1 turns to Laura while ARMED GUARD 2 keeps Rachel pinned against the bus.

ARMED GUARD 2

This woman works for you, ma'am?

LAURA

She does. Why?

ARMED GUARD 1

I'm very sorry, Ms...

LAURA

Larson.

ARMED GUARD 1

...but I'm afraid we've caught her leaving with stolen goods.

LAURA

Stolen goods?

She directs a betrayed glance at Rachel, who lowers her gaze, ashamed.

ARMED GUARD 1

Do you recognize this?

Armed Guard 1 shows Laura A THICK SLAB OF BACON wrapped in wax paper. The guard takes a quick SNIFF at it.

ARMED GUARD 1 (CONT'D)

Real meat. I'd say \$400 worth.

LAURA

Yes... That's mine...

Rachel shoots a terrified glance at her boss. She silently begs her for mercy.

Laura considers it for a beat, and finally adds...

LAURA (CONT'D)

It was a... present. For her.

ARMED GUARD 1

(skeptical)

A present.

LAURA

Yes. For her years of service.
She's been quite good to us.

ARMED GUARD 1

It's a very expensive present,
ma'am.

ARMED GUARD 2

You have to provide your maid with
a signed authorization for things
like this.

LAURA

Look, I-- I really don't have time
for this. You know what? Why
don't you just keep it. So you
know we appreciate your service
too.

The two guards look at each other, silently conferring.
Should they take the bribe? Finally...

ARMED GUARD 1

Much appreciated, ma'am. Have a
good day.

Rachel can't believe her luck. Armed Guard 2 produces a box
cutter and CHACK, cuts the plastic handcuffs off her wrists.

LAURA

You too.

Rachel sends her a NOD, a silent "thank you." Laura responds
with ANOTHER NOD ("You're welcome") and walks away.

The office drones gather in lines, waiting for their turn to
be screened on their way out of work. It's check out time.

We move along one of the lines, past men and women, some
chatting cheerfully, some annoyed at the slow speed of the
line, others plugged to their portable devices, watching
videos or listening to music...

Finally, we reach Ben, waiting in silence for his turn. He
seems a little nervous, fidgety. He observes the body
scanners as people come in, they're cleared and then leave...

GUARD 1

Next.

As he gets closer, Ben seems to grow more nervous, more insecure, his eyes darting across the room, watching the other lines. Does he have something to hide?

GUARD 1 (CONT'D)

Step up, sir.

It's his turn. Here we go...

Ben places his briefcase on the belt and steps into the scanner. He spreads his legs and raises his arms. The machine buzzes as the sensors spin around him, constructing a detailed 3D image of Ben on the screen.

Blink, blink, blink... All the devices in his pockets are highlighted one by one, their contents analyzed: A list of files rapidly cascades on the screen when, suddenly...

AN ALARM GOES OFF. Hysterical. Deafening.

Ben stays still, legs spread, arms in the air, as the crowd gasps and the guards spring into action.

Behind him, we can see a SQUAD OF GUARDS running across the lobby, making their way past the drones, approaching him...

...and then, surprisingly, RUSHING PAST HIM towards...

...the NEXT BODY SCANNER.

And then we see it. It's actually the next scanner that has set off the alarm, all its LIGHTS FLASHING RED.

The Guards surround the scanner, weapons drawn, barking a cacophony of orders to...

...CHAD, who stands terrified, covered in cold sweat, inside the machine.

GUARD 1 (CONT'D)

(to Ben)

Sir. Sir? You can go now.

Ben snaps out of it, and steps out of the scanner.

BEN

Thank you.

Ben calmly picks up his briefcase and walks away, doing his best not to look back as Chad is dragged out of the scanner.

(CONTINUED)

CHAD

Wait. Wait! There has to be a mistake!

As he's roughly frisked, Chad sees the WARNING flashing on the screen: "**WARNING: UNAUTHORIZED EXTRACTION. CLASSIFIED FILES**". What the hell?

And then, Guard 2 reaches into Chad's pocket and produces something familiar:

A SMALL SPHERE, the portable drive Ben used to copy the classified files. He planted it in his pocket.

Chad's eyes widen in disbelief.

CHAD (CONT'D)

That's not-- that's not mine!

But the guards ignore him. They pull his arms behind his back and slide a pair of PLASTIC HANDCUFFS around his wrists.

CHAD (CONT'D)

THAT'S NOT MINE! IT'S NOT M--

Suddenly, a BLACK CAPTURE HOOD falls over Chad's head. Two guards grab him by the arms and drag him, kicking and screaming, out of the room. And now we realize: Chad was the man in the hood we saw at the beginning of the episode!

Immediately, the lobby goes back to normal. The chatter resumes as if nothing had happened.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

62 INT. LARSON HOUSE - NIGHT [N3]

62

CLOSE ON A TUMBLER. An AMBER LIQUID POURS INTO IT.

Ben downs the whiskey in one gulp. It burns as it goes down his throat, but the pain feels good.

He stays there in silence, with his eyes closed, until...

LAURA (O.S.)

Honey?

Laura appears at the door, behind him.

LAURA (CONT'D)

You're home.

Ben doesn't reply. He doesn't turn.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Is... everything OK?

BEN

Chad got fired today.

Laura immediately understands the gravity of the situation.

LAURA

My God...

BEN

Must be in the Quiet Room by now.

Laura embraces him from behind.

LAURA

What will happen to his family now?

Ben shakes his head, wrecked by the guilt of what he's done.

BEN

I'll talk to Elizabeth.

LAURA

She won't help. You don't know her like I do.

BEN

She's family.

(CONTINUED)

62

CONTINUED:

62

LAURA

No. You and me, right here. This is family.

And she holds Ben tighter, so close and yet incapable of seeing his face.

63

INT. SPIGA BUILDING - ELIZABETH'S OFFICE - DAY [D4]

63

Elizabeth walks towards her desk, where a precisely centered GLASS OF COOL WATER waits for her.

She sits, takes a sip, and after a beat, she starts talking.

ELIZABETH

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

Looks like she's talking to no one, but then we notice a tiny CAMERA embedded in the desk, recording her speech.

64

INT. SPIGA BUILDING - INNER ATRIUM - DAY [D4] (MONTAGE)

64

Men and women stand in the atrium, watching ELIZABETH'S FACE on the GIANT SCREEN.

ELIZABETH

Two days ago we buried fourteen loyal men and women. Yesterday, we captured a rat. Hell of a week.

65

INT. PLASTIC SURGERY CLINIC - DAY [D4] (MONTAGE)

65

Laura holds the door of the consultation room open for Carol Granger, who steps out followed by a man wearing a TRANSLUCENT POST-OP MASK:

This must be RAUL, after his complete makeover.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

It's heartbreaking to watch someone bite the hand that feeds them. Spiga is a generous mother. It will feed you, dress you, protect you...

As Laura uncomfortably shakes hands with Carol, she notices someone over her shoulder, in the waiting room: Marsha, her neighbor, sitting next to an EMBARRASSED-LOOKING MAN in his 50s with a bandage over his LEFT EAR.

This is FRANK, Marsha's husband. Looks like his wife finally paid the ransom.

66 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - CHAD'S OFFICE - DAY [D4] (MONTAGE) 66

Candace is clearing Chad's desk, teary-eyed, while ELIZABETH speaks from a SCREEN WALL.

ELIZABETH (ON SCREEN WALL)
In exchange it only asks for hard
work and loyalty.

67 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - INTERROGATION ROOM (MONTAGE) 67

The BLACK HOOD is yanked off Chad's head.

Pale, sweaty, terrified... Chad finds himself chained to a chair in the middle of a windowless WHITE-TILED ROOM.

This is the scene we saw at the beginning of the episode.
This is the Quiet Room.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
The alternative... well, you all
know Mr. Peterson's fate.

JULIAN leans in and whispers in his ear.

JULIAN
I'm afraid the stories you heard
were true.

68 INT. SPIGA BUILDING - INNER ATRIUM - DAY [D4] (MONTAGE) 68

Ben and Roger watch Elizabeth on a screen wall from their offices.

ELIZABETH (ON SCREEN WALL)
The good news, for all you
ambitious young men and women, is
that now we have an opening on the
40th floor.

Ben notices that Roger is watching him. They're now rivals
for this coveted promotion.

69 INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT [N4] (MONTAGE) 69

Theo splashes cold water on his face and looks up at his own reflection on a stained and rusty mirror. He looks unsure, doubtful, scared even, when KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!!!

CREW CUT (O.S.)
You ready?!

(CONTINUED)

THEO
Gimme a second!

Theo slaps his own face a couple of times, hard, trying to pump himself up. Suddenly, he SCREAMS at his own reflection. Primal, ferocious. Now, he's ready.

Theo opens the door to find SAMOAN and CREW CUT waiting.

CREW CUT
Showtime.

EXT. EXECUTIVE CLUB - EVENING [D4] (MONTAGE)

A slick sports car stops in front of an ELEGANT VILLA surrounded by luscious gardens. One of the BELLBOYS by the entrance rushes to the vehicle, and opens the door.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
This opening is an opportunity not
only to serve this family...

A PLAQUE reads: "**ARCADIA, a Spiga Executive Club**".

INT. EXECUTIVE CLUB - EVENING [D4] (MONTAGE)

ELIZABETH enters the elegant and vintage club. Picture a luxury hotel cocktail bar or a Soho House kind of club, except there are NAKED WOMEN AND MEN tied up in elaborate SHIBARI positions as if they were exhibits.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
...but to enjoy all the perks and
privileges that come with a senior
executive position.

WAITERS in white uniforms and gloves serve drinks to the executives at their tables or booths, while they discuss business or flirt with the GIRLS who work there.

Elizabeth eyes a BEAUTIFUL GIRL in a cocktail dress and gestures her to follow her to...

...the bar, where an AFRICAN HEAD OF STATE (50s) in military uniform drinks Scotch, neat.

ELIZABETH
Your excellency, there's someone
I'd like to introduce you to.
(to the girl)
Amelia, please meet his excellency
General Dimbisi.

71

CONTINUED:

71

AMELIA

Enchanteé, mon général.

GENERAL DIMBISI

Parlez-vous français?

AMELIA

Mais bien sur!

Elizabeth smiles as Amelia takes the General's arm and they walk towards a booth.

72

INT. SPIGA BUILDING - ELIZABETH'S OFFICE - DAY [D4]
(MONTAGE)

72

ELIZABETH

We'll soon start evaluating the candidates. We live in troubled, uncertain times, so the vetting process will be extremely thorough and rigorous.

73

INT. LARSON HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

73

Ben sits on the edge of the tub.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

Those who have nothing to hide have nothing to fear.

Ben stares at ELENA'S PHOTOGRAPH. A secret that can cost him his life.

74

INT. SPIGA BUILDING - BEN'S OFFICE - DAY [D4] (END OF MONTAGE)

74

Ben watches ELIZABETH talk on the SCREEN WALL.

ELIZABETH (ON SCREEN WALL)

But those who do should know that we won't let another traitor slip through. Not again.

And the way she talks, the way she looks straight at the camera, it's as if she's making eye contact with Ben.

It's as if she's talking specifically about him.

END OF SHOW