

INTRAPLAY

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. JOGGING TRAIL - DAY

Alone at a secluded trail head a JOGGER, 20, voluptuous and sprite, changes out of her form fitted suit. Spandex shorts ride high, tattooed cleavage pops from a sports bra.

A gasp echoes. She scans the forest. A distant hawk's cry gives her comfort no one is around.

Concealed by shrubs, a GLOVED MAN zeroes on her bosom. His twitching hands bend a thick branch.

GLOVED MAN (O.S.)
 (An angry mumbled whisper)
 ... at ya.

SNAP!

She alerts... and sees nothing. A Classic iPod spills lively electronic music. She slips on the earbuds, locks her BMW, and sets a quick pace as she runs down the windy trail.

He emerges from cover and pursues with a mumbled chant, words matched to each step.

GLOVED MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Throw some...

Far ahead and oblivious, she leaps and barely clears a creek.

Seconds behind, he stumbles and careens into shrubs.

She glances back. Her pace quickens. She nimbly squeezes around a fallen tree.

A gap between the trunk and ground. He accelerates.

GLOVED MAN (CONT'D)
 Cock!

He plows through sending dirt airborne. His mumbled chant resumes.

The base of a steep gravel slope. She ascends and accelerates with each step. At hilltop, she champions the forest.

A home stretch ahead, the distant BMW is the finish line. She cranks the music, crouches... and sprints.

A gloved hand reaches the hilltop. Fleeing prey in view. His lumbering steps accelerate. His chant grows clearer.

GLOVED MAN (CONT'D)
Throw some.... Throw some co... at
ya. Throw some cock at ya!

He closes in... fast... a step behind her.

GLOVED MAN (CONT'D)
THROW SOME COCK AT YA!

Two gloved hands reach for her neck... contact.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Under cover of dusk, the BMW rolls into the lake.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A gloved hand drops BMW keys into the trash receptacle.

INT./EXT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

A quiet residential neighborhood. Classical music blares from a fiery Porsche. Behind the wheel, KENDRA BIGGS, 35, athletic and professionally dressed, tailgates a responsible driver.

Antsy with racing thoughts, she contemplates passing. A plush World Wildlife Fund Bonobo in the passenger seat.

KENDRA
Don't they know I have patients?
We can't! It's a no passing zone.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A modern luxury hillside estate with stylish water features. The Porsche pulls past a gray Tesla into the garage.

INT. KENDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

An idyllic home office for a psychologist to see patients adorned with a few Area's Top Psychologist awards.

JEFF STRAUB, 40, slack-jawed and frail, smacks his lips as he chews gum. Eyes fixed upon Kendra's shapely legs as she gathers some items and settles in.

JEFF

That's okay, doc. I'm usually the one who is late. I was thinking, maybe if I could see her face to --

KENDRA

Jeff, no.

KENDRA (V.O.)

This again. Please no. He chews like a giraffe.

JEFF

Just to hold her hand.

KENDRA

No.

JEFF

Smell her hair. Lick her feet.

KENDRA (V.O.)

Ugg.

JEFF

She'd understand. I'm...

KENDRA

Not within 500 yards.

JEFF

But --

KENDRA

She wouldn't. And you're not. You need to move on... to a new life beyond her.

It's 10:07. She twirls a pen faster.

JEFF

When she's around, I'm not myself.

KENDRA (V.O.)

Tell that to the ER.

JEFF

You called it, doc. Annihilation Psychosis. That order thing too.

KENDRA (V.O.)

Kendra, settle down. You're here to help. I can help.

(MORE)

KENDRA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I'm trying to help. I just can't
 listen to him. To this....

Jeff sobs. She glances at the tissue box and scoffs.

JEFF
 Remember?

Last week's notes are a crude sketch of a Porsche.

KENDRA (V.O.)
 My baby.

JEFF
 Doc?

KENDRA
 No.

JEFF
 Yeah....

KENDRA (V.O.)
 Is it me? No, it's him. Is he
 better? Worse? Definitely worse. I
 could refer him.... I don't need
 the money. Kick this case down the
 road... give up? No. Never.

JEFF
 You could supervise... like
 chaperone? We had --

The pen sails skyward. Jeff's distant head between her thumb
 and forefinger. She pinches and Jeff suddenly gasps.

KENDRA (V.O.)
 Whoa. Cool.

JEFF
 I hate to talk about her --

Kendra pinches and Jeff gasps.

KENDRA (V.O.)
 She thrives on your misery, idiot.

JEFF
 I can give her things her new guy
 can't.

Kendra repeatedly pinches.

KENDRA (V.O.)

An uppercut right cross combo.
You're crazy and dangerous and
she's just crazy. You're both
irreparable.

JEFF

The police came out. Again.

KENDRA (V.O.)

Yet you made bail. Again. The
miracle of criminal justice.

JEFF

Still, you're wrong.

KENDRA

What!

JEFF

In my dreams, we're together....

Kendra daydreams to calming jungle noises.

A soft ringing mixes with Jeff's distant voice.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

Pitiful Jeff loiters along a busy intersection. Inquisitive
jungle noises as the irritating ringing rises.

JEFF

Still, doc, I got this feeling.

KENDRA

Come closer.

Cars flash past. The sounds of a jungle in fervor. The
ringing in Kendra's ears crests.

She smiles. Their eyes meet and he calms.

JEFF

Like I'm trapped in a nightmare.

KENDRA

I'm here to help. One tiny step.

The sound of a monkey's screech. The blast of a truck's horn.

In an epic moment, limbs fly as a dump truck strikes Jeff.

Blissful silence.

CUT BACK:

JEFF

Doc. Doc?

Kendra snaps back and sees Bonobo's stare. A strange smile. She shakes the feeling off. The strange smile returns.

KENDRA

What? Sorry.

JEFF

It's tearing my insides apart.

KENDRA

Deciphering dreams is hinged upon the subtext of trauma, both innate and experienced. Everyone's desire is to ultimately... be....

The World Wildlife Foundation Free Rivers logo on her pen.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

Free. The singular goal of every living creature... including you. Well, that's it for today. Let's push your next appointment.

JEFF

What! Doc, I'm not feeling very stable. I need her... and at the same time those horrible thoughts --

KENDRA

Don't! I'd have to report you. Impulsive thoughts are acceptable. Acting on them, well....

She nudges him out the door.

A framed photo of Kendra in a Porsche atop a discarded photo of a disheveled man with a creepy grin waving at the camera.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

We should run away. The two of us.

Bonobo chirps.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

Three of us.

An open drawer filled with patient folders. Stack of folders everywhere. A soft ringing fills her ears.

KENDRA (V.O.)
Who am I helping? Them? No. This
wouldn't fly in the animal kingdom.
Who am I to have to put up with....

Sounds in her head. A cacophony of patient pleas. The ringing crests. The cries of agitated animals join the melee.

She's about to scream.

The sound of a horn blast. A flash of Jeff's limbs sailing.

The ringing stops. Bonobo whoops. Her strange smile returns.

KENDRA
I'm their doctor.

A moment of peace.

The doorbell rings. She recognizes her next appointment as a jittery PATIENT, 30, paces outside the front door.

The sound of a troop of monkeys as they go berserk.

KENDRA (CONT'D)
Fuck!

INT. HOUSE - DAY

An Express Delivery. VICTOR SMALLS, 30, indecisive and unshaven, the familiar man from the bent photograph, hums a elated rock tune and unwraps fancy white loafers.

He poses in front a full length mirror. Pastel V-neck shirt. Blue sports coat. He lowers his Ray-Ban wayfarer sunglasses and slips on the loafers.

He strikes a pose. Two thumbs up.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Worn rugged footwear tossed into the Tesla's trunk.

The Tesla accelerates past an aged Sentra with a hastily hand-written "For Sale" sign on the curb.

INT. HALLMARK STORE - DAY

A Valentine's Day banner above greeting card display racks. Desperate CUSTOMERS scavenge the sparse selection.

Victor squats and studies a Romantic Card.

VICTOR

My love, compassionate and caring,
your warmth fills me. Hmm....

A SLY OLD MAN, 70, a dapper relic, swipes the Romantic Card.

SLY OLD MAN

Hang tough, son. Remember a happy
wife makes a --

VICTOR

Happy life.

SLY OLD MAN

Not that. A husband's job is to
absorb conflict.

VICTOR

You mean communicate?

SLY OLD MAN

No. Always play defense! Slim
pickings when you wait until last
minute. I'll keep the card.

VICTOR

That's okay. Wasn't really her.

SLY OLD MAN

Oh, the well's run dry? No more of
that sex stuff? You're in the The
Disillusionment Stage. Chin up! The
Power Struggle is next. Keep your
wits. I've been married 30 years.

VICTOR

What's the secret?

SLY OLD MAN

Dementia.

The Sly Old Man secretes the card. Victor flashes his badge.

VICTOR

C'mon, put it back.

SLY OLD MAN
Where am I? I'm so confused.

Victor spots another card and brightens up.

EXT. STRIP CLUB - DAY

The Tesla parks and the door opens.

A loafer is about to step into a puddle. Victor's sigh of relief. He parks in a different spot.

Victor skips around dirt, leaps over sidewalk gum and dances around a spill. He checks the loafers... spotless!

INT. STRIP CLUB - DAY

A tacky venue with trendy music. Victor joins two men at a stage side table.

VICTOR
Sorry, I'm late. I almost forgot
Kendra's Valentine's Day gift.

DETECTIVE 1
You get her flowers?

FLOWERS, a stripper, saunters past.

FLOWERS
Hi, Vic.

VICTOR
Hi, uh, Flowers.

FLOWERS
Call me.

DETECTIVE 2
You gonna say it? Come on... say
it! He does it the best.

VICTOR
No, sorry. I'm not saying it
anymore. That was long ago.

DETECTIVE 1
Wasn't that long ago, Vic. So
what'd you get the wife?

VICTOR
She likes animals.

A humorous cartoon greeting card -- a squirrel offers a grizzly a handful of honey. Angry bees swarm in the distance. The caption "Bee-Mine Honey."

DETECTIVE 1

That's it?

HOT WAITRESS

Anything else I can show you, officer?

VICTOR

It's detective and no.

HOT WAITRESS

I'll be your Valentine... any time.

The Hot Waitress wanders away.

DETECTIVE 2

You got to say it, now. You're not going to say it, are you?

VICTOR

No.

DETECTIVE 2

I don't get it. The bear can get --

DETECTIVE 1

So the bear don't eat the squirrel.

DETECTIVE 2

Bears don't eat squirrels. Do they?

DETECTIVE 1

Fucking bear can eat anything it damn well pleases. Right, Vic? You wouldn't catch a bear in a strip club. He'd just take what he wants. Not sit around here forking out money for a glimpse of what he can't have. Vic knows. He's getting some. Lucky bastard... she's a doctor too. Big bucks. Why not quit and go be a house-husband? I would.

VICTOR

Cuz you're a quitter! Kendra ain't running no welfare program. I gotta keep this gravy train rolling! She has expectations... high ones.

DETECTIVE 1
You scared of her? Vic?

VICTOR
Am not.

DETECTIVE 2
He's so afraid, he won't even say
it anymore.

VICTOR
Maybe a little.

DETECTIVE 1
She's a cold hard bitch. Like the
rest of them.

VICTOR
Hey! Well, she wasn't warm and
fuzzy to start with. Still, I gotta
be smart. Cover my bases. Patrol
was work. This detective stuff is
fun! Just gotta clear probation....

DETECTIVE 1
When you do, Robyn will issue your
9. Shorter, more compact, easier to
conceal. Douche, stop waving that
around!

DETECTIVE 2
Probie....

VICTOR
I ain't no probie!

DETECTIVE 2
You barely beat out what's-his-
name? Man, that detective test was
tough. Vic aced it.

DETECTIVE 1
You gotta solve cases to get off
probation. At this rate, you'll be
slinging that .40 right back to
patrol. The mayor is up Robyn's ass
for results. If someone gets cut,
it'll be you. Easy come, easy go.

DETECTIVE 2
Probie, be sad to see you back in
uniform without your cute jacket...
the soft blue makes your eyes pop.

VICTOR

Kendra will kill me. She thinks the promotion is a done deal.

DETECTIVE 1

Told you, he's afraid of her!

DETECTIVE 2 knocks over a drink and Victor reacts.

DETECTIVE 2

Ha! Relax, it's Sprite! It gets stains out of shoes.

VICTOR

Loafers.

DETECTIVE 1

No dumb ass, Coke does.

VICTOR

Gotta keep these babies clean!
Getting them was a long time coming. Kendra laid out some coin. Speaking of cases, what's our schmo look like?

DETECTIVE 1

A skinny rat looking fuck wanted for a string of snatch and dash!

Victor eyes crumbled bills tucked into a Flowers' G-string. The THIEF walks past.

DETECTIVE 2

I bet that guy would say it right.

DETECTIVE 1

Hey, that's him!

The Thief dashes with a fistful of cash and a G-string.

FLOWERS

Help!

The detectives give chase.

Victor slips in the puddle. Arms flail as he seeks traction. Legs airborne. SPLAT! Flat on his back.

EXT. STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK

A motorcycle cop stops a late model BMW. A kick from rugged footwear deploys the kickstand.

Kendra adjusts her cleavage and projects dominance.

KENDRA
Patient emergency.

VICTOR
You're a surgeon?

KENDRA
A psychologist.

VICTOR
Your patients can wait.

KENDRA
You'll assume liability for a
potentially suicidal citizen?

VICTOR
I asked for your registration. This
is a donation slip for the World
Wild Life fund.

KENDRA
Oops, here. And a warning will
suffice.

VICTOR
Not up to me, Ma'am. I paid to hold
speeders accountable.

KENDRA
It is up to you! This is your
kingdom after all.

VICTOR
My beat, Miss, and that clever
mouth is gonna get you in trouble.
You're the type used to getting
everything you want, learn nothing
from a ticket while I end up --

Kendra locks eyes and measures each word for impact.

KENDRA
A mountain of paper work, court
appearances, a searing compliant
from an upstanding citizen. Right?
Learn quick and adapt, if you plan
to survive. Got it, detective?

VICTOR
Officer. I gotta pass a test for
detective.

KENDRA

Then pass it! It's an all-around waste having you out here in that sexy uniform handing out tickets.

INT. HOTEL - DAY - FLASHBACK

Kendra and Victor engage in aggressive foreplay. His head beneath the sheets. The gun on the night stand. She's intrigued and reaches for it....

VICTOR

No! That's official police property... and it's loaded.

He clumsily fumbles the weapon to make it safe.

KENDRA

Jesus! You need to learn how to handle that like a pro, not whip it around like amateur hour!

VICTOR

You're talking about my gun? Here. Unloaded it's no more dangerous than a stapler.

KENDRA

How about these?

He overpowers and cuffs her.

VICTOR

Stop resisting.

KENDRA

Officer, you're not going to club me with that....

INT. L'ENFANT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

An upscale bistro with iron tables on cobblestone pavers. Classical music plays as affluent couples dine.

SPUNKY WAITRESS, 20s, lean, tattooed, and trying, makes her way over and fidgets with a tribal bracelet.

VICTOR

Hey, sweet shoes! Great support. I bet I got more miles on mine.

SPUNKY WAITRESS

I got more vertical. I scramble.

VICTOR

Cool. And they look so good, you can wear them anywhere.

KENDRA

A-hem.

SPUNKY WAITRESS

Sorry. My name is --

KENDRA

Irrelevant. Two Vesper Martini - light on the Lillet.

VICTOR

Just one. I'll take whatever's on draft. Thank you.

KENDRA

Be decisive, Vic, and don't thank them. Laces are so primitive.

Later, Kendra twirls the last sip of her martini as Victor slices a NY Strip. He's about to wipe his hands on his jeans.

VICTOR

Sorry... napkin, right. Been a long time since anyone... cared.

KENDRA

You forget, I'll remind you. You have potential. I see it. An eager blank canvas. Vic, save that bite.

VICTOR

I thought you didn't eat meat. You know... red meat.

Victor snickers alone.

KENDRA

Pull lint from your pocket.

VICTOR

How do you know I have lint in my pocket? Wait, a trick to get me to pay? I told you I'm living hand --

KENDRA

Don't think, Vic. Act! Now drop it on your plate. Quick.

SPUNKY WAITRESS

Madam. We hoped you enjoy your --

KENDRA

Jesus Christ sakes, my husband did not! This is not what guests expect in a 4.5 star restaurant.

SPUNKY WAITRESS

I can assure you that --

KENDRA

Do you want to lose that half star? Next step is a 3. KFC got 2.5. Get your manager!

Victor squirms as the Spunky Waitress storms off.

VICTOR

What are you doing? I'll pay.

KENDRA

It helped when I said husband.... Boyfriend, doesn't carry the same ring. Relax. I'm just having a little fun. Can't be all boring and straight laced all the time.

VICTOR

You've done this before?

KENDRA

Someone took me under their wing and showed me how things really work. Changed my life. Now I have a thriving practice, looking at a new sports car.

VICTOR

Whoa!

KENDRA

A Porsche. And there's this hillside lot I may build my dream house on.

VICTOR

That's amazing. Man, your lucky.

KENDRA

Luck has nothing to do with it. Rules are for the weak, Vic.

VICTOR

These people make a living working here. Desperate people --

KENDRA

Should make better life choices! Want to join them? There's a wash rag in the kitchen. No? So talk me through this detective thingy.

VICTOR

I need time to study for the test but I gotta make quota. My lieutenant wants us to stop out-of-towners, so no one appears at trial... or complain.

KENDRA

Interesting. You stopped me....

VICTOR

There's a hot chick exception.... Anyway my beat is furthest from the highway so it's mostly local folks. Quota takes my entire shift. If I don't write enough tickets, I may get sent back to traffic --

KENDRA

That won't fly! Never go backwards. Period. You're cute, all indecisive and doe-eyed. The answer is right in front of you. Ticket every out-of-towner that comes your way until you hit quota. Study the rest of the day.

VICTOR

But what if they're not speeding?

KENDRA

Swerving.

VICTOR

What if they weren't swerving?

KENDRA

Too fast, too slow, too... straight. You're a smart guy, articulate something.

VICTOR

Art...

KENDRA

You must have a rule book with a whole bunch of things you shouldn't, or couldn't be doing. Like I have the Ethic Principals Code of Conduct.

VICTOR

Our municipal code.

KENDRA

You know it better than any driver?

VICTOR

Inside and out. We spent a month in academy.

KENDRA

Take any little thing the driver did and squeeze it into a ticket. There's always the Sir, were you aware you tail light was out. Whack!

VICTOR

No way! That's overboard.

KENDRA

Is it really? Vic, move forward at all costs. Us or them. It's like the animal kingdom, but here you choose. Be a prairie dog or a lion.

VICTOR

I don't think you're a lion.

KENDRA

I was talking about you.

EXT. L'ENFANT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Victor trails Kendra as they walk towards his Sentra.

VICTOR

I had fun. Today and tonight. More today. Wait, something is wrong.

A MASKED WOMAN punches Victor and grabs Kendra's purse.

KENDRA

Let go you mother fucker!

Victor shakes off the haze. A jab and fast upper-cut and the Masked Woman flops unconscious.

VICTOR
Yeah! Just had to throw some cock
at ya!

KENDRA
What?

He removes the mask and exposes the Spunky Waitress.

VICTOR
Nothing. Just a little saying.
Never mind. She was gonna get her
tip one way or another. I told you
that clever mouth was gonna get us
in trouble.

KENDRA
I'd better keep you around for when
it does, detective! We've got to
find your power animal.

VICTOR
Power --

KENDRA
Your place in the kingdom. The
beast you strive to be. Does the
lion have to tear everyone apart to
make his point?

VICTOR
Uh... no.

KENDRA
No one is afraid of a hippo. Wander
over, toss it some lettuce... maybe
pet it.

VICTOR
I don't think you'd pet a --

KENDRA
That's not my point.

VICTOR
Well, what's yours?

KENDRA
I'm still searching. But close.

VICTOR
Why an animal?

KENDRA
Emulate a person then!

VICTOR
Em..?

KENDRA
Who do you admire? Dress like him.
Act like him. Be him! I don't care
if you wear spandex and a cape.
I'll make a hero out of you yet!
Now arrest that skank.

VICTOR
Uh... naw. Let's call it even.

KENDRA
What happened to, blah, blah, blah,
I like law and order, that's why I
became a cop....

VICTOR
This is different. I mean....

The sound of a metal chair dragged across pavers.

RETURN TO PRESENT

INT. L'ENFANT - DAY

Tastefully decorated for Valentine's day. Somber music plays.
Victor sits across from an empty chair. He struggles to find
humor in the Bee-Mine card and returns it to his pocket.

VICTOR
What is the point?

SLY OLD MAN (O.S.)
Better luck next time, chump.

The Sly Old Man rubs his wrists as he slips past Victor. He
presents the Romantic Card to the ELDERLY WOMAN.

ELDERLY WOMAN
You remembered! I love you so much.

As Victor looks away, the Sly Old Man caresses the Spunky
Waitress' butt as she passes.

A sliver of space between tables. Kendra blindly advances.

KENDRA

Excuse me. A-hem. Slide... in!

A PATRON'S drink spills. Glares left in her wake.

VICTOR

Making friends?

KENDRA

Always, Vic. Napkin. Biggest pagan holiday ever. They should all stay home. Vic, I'm bored. So very bored. No more conquests. No more challenges. No more... each day seems the same. You agree. I want excitement. More... I don't know.

VICTOR

That's life. Each day is different.

KENDRA

That's not what I meant. I mean every day feels the same.

VICTOR

I do understand. Perhaps some small changes to how you do things, to make them a little different.

KENDRA

You're not listening. Do you comprehend anything I say?

VICTOR

You said "You're not listening to me. Do you even hear a word I say?" And before that, you said "I mean every day is the same."

KENDRA

Feels the same. Thank goodness you got out of the stupid traffic cop gig. I don't know what I'd have done if you didn't get promoted. I nearly given up hope.

VICTOR

What?

KENDRA

I was sure we'd be the dynamic duo, the stylish detective who collars the villains, and the brilliant psychologist championing their restoration to contributing members of society. Where did that all go wrong? At least you're getting the crooks off the streets... How many arrests did you make today?

VICTOR

You know. Always so busy. I just can't keep count.

KENDRA

Numbers are tangible reflection of progress. How else can you measure accomplishments?

VICTOR

Is this where you lay the cognitive dissonance rap on me like I'm your patient? It's old. Notice, how I didn't say... getting old. For starters, you could figure out a new way to say the same old things. Huh? Perhaps? Sorry, I'll play.

KENDRA

Shoot.

VICTOR

Sometimes, when the guys are bored... we got an arrest warrant for some schmo. We find him but don't arrest him. We surveil him for an afternoon, perhaps a day or two... for fun.

KENDRA

Surveil?

VICTOR

Toy with him. We trail him here and there. Take pictures. Bump into him, make small talk, pretend to be lost tourists or searching for a missing cat. For kicks. It's fun. The feeling of getting close --

KENDRA

Wow! You do this with everyone?

VICTOR
Sometimes, to mix things up.

KENDRA
And then you let him go free?

VICTOR
No. God no! They're never free.
When we had our fun, we stop him
for something stupid, like
jaywalking, and arrest him, so it
seems like bad luck caught up.
Karma. Fate. Whatever. We already
knew how this was gonna end.

KENDRA
Set them free. That is the smartest
thing you've ever said.

VICTOR
No. Never free. Never. Listen,
Kendra. I just want you to be
happy. More than anything. Happy
Valentine's Day... hun.

From somewhere far away, she calmly offers.

KENDRA
Thanks Vic.

The Spunky Waitress paces and the Patron snickers.

VICTOR
This is senseless. How do you keep
playing on people's emotions?

KENDRA
I'm tired of trying to push you
from the nest, Vic. Have you
learned nothing? Take what someone
wants and apply pressure. Take what
little they have left, and squeeze.
Don't wiggle away. Stay here and
watch the kill.

VICTOR
Just pay the bill.

KENDRA
Does Superman ever walk?

The Spunky Waitress exalts the bill wallet. A zero balance.

KENDRA (CONT'D)
Your gratuity is apportioned to my
dissatisfaction.

Victor slyly hands the Spunky Waitress some money.

INT. KENDRA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

INSERT - ON TV - NAT GEO documentary On the SERENGETI

Animals crowd an oasis at dusk.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Seasonal drought complicates
contentious relations. A baboon
troop atop a barren fig tree has
secured access to the last of the
region's water. The jaguar and her
cubs seek refuge among nearby
boulders. A hippo wallows in the
murky water, outnumbered but taking
little interest in the crocodiles.
Wildebeest venture near. Though
quite dim, the bull senses danger
and guides the mangy horde past.
Shrinking banks draw all to closer
quarters. Peace for the moment, a
balance of communal peril, an
intraplay of sorts. At stake...
survival. A crocodile drifts too
close. An explosion as the hippo
thrashes. The jaguar sips. A baboon
snatches her cub and takes the
prize to perch. The cub is a source
of entertainment, a toy of sorts.
Surely, that won't last....

The fiery orange sun disappears beneath the horizon.

Kendra turns off the TV and settles in. A faint ringing
begins. Bonobo's convincing stare. Kendra makes a call.

KENDRA
Let's get you back in here. Next
week? No, tomorrow.

A truck's horn and a blast. Her strange smile surfaces.

KENDRA (CONT'D)
My purposed life.

INT. JEFF'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sobs and squalor. A mattress on the floor. Soiled clothes as linen. Dressed in bed, Jeff writhes. His boots kick up dust.

Pent up frustration and pain. He staggers to his feet and crawls the wall.

CLICK.

A smudged mirror under a fuzzy light.

Jeff contorts his pained face in an effort to appear happy. He gives up.

JEFF

To be free.

A warning label on a vial: Two Drops Daily. He gulps the clear liquid and chokes an imaginary neck.

JEFF (CONT'D)

I have to.

He embraces a framed photo and falls back upon the mattress.

JEFF (CONT'D)

I miss you. We'll be together again. Always. Free.

BANG.

Beet-colored eyes open. Slathered in red vomit, Jeff wipes his face as he awakes. Pink pee splatters the toilet.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Not much time.

He scribbles on the photo and carefully writes on the mirror.

He grabs a gun and storms off.

EXT. SANDY'S COTTAGE - DAY

Sprinklers pelt a vibrant green lawn. A walkway leads to a Yoga-statue adorned entrance.

Jeff jabs the buzzer. Antsy, he knocks.

SANDY, 30, Botoxed and bothered, peels the door open and brushes her long black hair.

SANDY

Namaste... You can't just show up
Jeffrey! I'm calling the police!

INT. SANDY'S COTTAGE - DAY

Hands reach for Sandy's scrawny neck. Her scream cut short.

JEFF

We need this.

An abode filled with evidence of a carefree and irresponsible lifestyle.

The struggle moves past a wall adorned with provocative photos of wild outings.

They stumble. He's on top. Two hands around her throat.

She struggles to defend. A dildo in a corner space. She grabs it and strikes him in the face. Again and again. Each time... a little slower.

The hand painted flower on her toenail stops twitching.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Together. Always. Free.

He sulks in a chair. A moment as he examines the fabric.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Must be that micro-fiber stuff. I
heard great things.

He readies himself. Muzzle to chin. Slightly cantered.

A shot and the gun falls.

Jeff gurgles. He crawls to recover the gun.

Blood slick hands struggle to squeeze the trigger.

INT. SANDY'S COTTAGE - DAY

The uniformed SNAKY COP stands guard. Victor quickly gives up trying to read the name on the badge.

SNAKY COP

Hiya, Vic.

VICTOR

That's detective. What we got?

SNAKY COP

Er... right, detective. Looks
personal. I hope you already ate.

Victor snaps photos and considers what happened.

 VICTOR

What? Shoot. Damn. Jesus. I'm....

 SNAKY COP

One word. Committed. This guy. You
know him, detective?

 VICTOR

He looks familiar.

 SNAKY COP

Either you know him or you don't.

 VICTOR

Maybe.

A chair smothered with blood. Victor retraces the scene as
his fingers follow a blood trail to the corpse.

 SNAKY COP

Watch where you --

Victor steps in some brain matter.

 VICTOR

Ugh! Damn. She's gonna kill me.

 SNAKY COP

Nice shoes.

Victor recalls something.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Victor strolls in as Kendra escorts Jeff to the door. The two
men bump shoulders as Jeff sadly eyes the ground.

 JEFF

Nice shoes.

 VICTOR

Loafers. From Christian Louboutin,
the fall Dandelion collection....

Jeff doesn't care.

CUT BACK:

 SNAKY COP
This ain't Miami Vice.

 VICTOR
Never heard of it. Back to it, you.

 SNAKY COP
Neighbor heard two shots. You see,
he muffed the first one. Crawled
over and that one counted. You want
to write any of this down?

 VICTOR
I got it. Was there a note?

 SNAKY COP
You mean like a written narrative
that would explain what happened,
solve the case... do all your work?

 VICTOR
Yeah.

 SNAKY COP
Nope. Glad to assist... detective.

INT. JEFF'S APARTMENT - DAY

Victor and a couple cops fan out and search. In the photo,
the woman's face is scarred with black marker streaks.

 VICTOR
The FBI calls this a clue. A slob,
a drunk. No problem there. But
something drove him over the edge.

The Snaky Cop waves an evidence bag and gestures to a puddle.

 SNAKY COP
Some prescription! GHB, issued
yesterday and empty. This is an
anti-psychotic.

 VICTOR
Georgia... something.

 SNAKY COP
Gamma-hydroxybutyrate.

VICTOR

Uh... yeah.

SNAKY COP

The mandatory training. You were there. Came in late, left early.

VICTOR

Yeah, yeah. Detective work. So....

SNAKY COP

GHP is like heroine, used to treat addiction. Wicked side effects. Vodka and GHB ate him from the inside. Doctors don't prescribe this to alcoholics. But hey, I'm just a cop. You detectives decide who the bad guy is.

Dr. Biggs printed on the label. Victor struggles to conceal his shock. As the Snaky Cop wanders away, Victor slips the evidence into his jacket.

Victor closes the cabinet. The word FREE rests on his forehead.

The Snaky Cop notices the evidence is missing.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Uplifting classical music plays as Kendra slices a turnip into a culinary marvel.

A final touch for exquisitely garnished white fish.

KENDRA

And that's that!

She remembers something and bursts in laughter.

Kendra smiles at the Panda in a World Wildlife Fund renewal flyer. She skims past lesser options and scribbles in \$1,000.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

You guys are the best! Bonobo could use a friend but the Wall Calendar will brighten up the office!

The door work and footsteps approach.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

Hun, dinners ready. How was your --

VICTOR
A stellar one. I brought you a
little something.

KENDRA
A surprise!

Victor stamps the prescription bottle.

VICTOR
Maybe not this.

KENDRA
Ah... Mr. Straub!

VICTOR
You remember Jeffrey, the abusive
drunk. Was your problem. Now he's
mine. Suicide... this morning.

KENDRA
Now... technically, he's no one's
problem. I didn't think he had the
balls.

VICTOR
Pardon?

Kendra gracefully twirls the pill bottle.

KENDRA
Happens to the best of us. He was
tilted that way.... At least now
he's finally free.

VICTOR
He's free?

KENDRA
Free from all of life's pain and
suffering. He may be better off.

VICTOR
He may be... but he took his ex
with him. Murder suicide.

KENDRA
Oh.

VICTOR
I snagged these pill bottles. May
have kept you out of an orange
jumper. You can't combine --

KENDRA

Alcohol with psychedelics. I know that... what do you take me for? Anyway, the jackal delivers!

VICTOR

I thought you'd be upset. You seem ...happy.

KENDRA

Everyone copes different. Even the area's top-rated psychologist, three years running... loses a patient once in a while. Have some sympathy!

VICTOR

You are supposed to prevent this!

KENDRA

And only you can prevent forest fires. Fortunately, it's not a results driven business. Put the prosciutto back, too much sodium.

Victor grabs a beer and stomps away.

Kendra skims the WWF brochure under Bonobo's watch. A giraffe feeds. She recalls Jeff's lips smack. Subtle ringing begins. She rips the flyer. The scattered panoply of animal faces.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

You're right. They shouldn't all suffer because of him. Them.

She reassembles the flyer and the ringing returns. Patients replace the animal faces. A chorus complaints. She discards the envelope and the sounds disappear.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

If that's what it's gonna take!

INT. KENDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

MYRA FORTIN, 35, a scorn skeleton, sobs as she lifts her face from her palms. Words elude her. Her face drops.

KENDRA

Breathe, Myra.

A faint ringing begins.

MYRA

What kind of life do they have? I don't want them to suffer. I'm not a failure, am I? Being a single mom is difficult.

The ringing persists.

KENDRA (V.O.)

You ditched them to shack up a Vegas drug dealer and expect the Mother of the Year Award.

MYRA

I needed... what's it called?

KENDRA

Self-care.

MYRA

I deserve that!

KENDRA (V.O.)

Three meals, clean clothes and six hours sleep. Beyond that... is entitlement.

MYRA

Now the court wants a fitness letter.

KENDRA (V.O.)

Sure, right. I'll help you get them back. These kids are already ruined. You did this to them.

MYRA

I just can't do this anymore. Is this wrong to feel this way?

KENDRA (V.O.)

What? Responsible....

Kendra senses opportunity and the ringing subsides.

KENDRA

Well... no. His holiness the Dalai Lama, who, is frankly considered to be the most widely identified spiritual leader, a key figure with the utmost respect and reverence, shared an anecdote that applies to you and your situation.

MYRA

What? What did he say?

KENDRA

I wouldn't share this. But we've seen each other for some time. It pains me. To know your kids. Like this. It's just not fair. And I know it pains you continuously. Around the clock. Never ending. Unbearable. Each day a little worse. Like a nightmare you just can't wake from.

MYRA

Oh, my god. Please tell me.

Kendra flashes a sly smile as Myra looks away.

KENDRA

His Holiness spoke of a man whose family was plagued by misfortune. Around every corner, things worsened. His family besieged by sickness, hunger, a dispassionate community, endless pain and suffering. The kids suffered the worst.

MYRA

What? What did he say?

KENDRA

It was time to take them to a better place. Eternal happiness is everything. If not in this life, most certainly in the next. But that's one man's opinion. I mean, there's always light at the end of the tunnel.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Cans of Coke and Sprite and a stained loafer.

Victor wields a toothbrush as he contemplates. He decides and gets to work scrubbing.

He slips on the loafers and studies himself in the mirror. The color seems off.

Victor blends in with the coat rack as Myra shuffles near. His sudden movement startles her.

KENDRA
Myra, my lesser half... Victor.

MYRA
You are so very blessed to be married to such a wonderful woman. She's changed my life.

Myra's frail disposition and smeared makeup.

VICTOR
You must have been a real prize before.

KENDRA
Vic! Excuse him, his other ball finally dropped. Myra, feel better. Go... be with your kids. Free.

The door closes. She awaits Victor's comment.

VICTOR
What sage advice did you offer today O Great Oracle?

KENDRA
You know I can't talk about it. Patient/doctor confidentiality. Rest assured, I told her what she needed to hear.

VICTOR
Yeah. Just as long as she doesn't leave here and shoot up a mall.

KENDRA
She wouldn't do that....

VICTOR
Just stop it with this Free stuff. These people trust you, hinge on every little thing you say. It's not right.

KENDRA
I'm just helping them get to where they were going to end up anyway.

Victor recognizes his own words.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Detectives engaged in childish shenanigans. The Snaky Cop exits the Lieutenant's office and averts gaze.

Victor strolls in with his tie worn like the pope's stole.

VICTOR
G'morning, gents!

DETECTIVE 1
Hero! The man who irons his socks.

DETECTIVE 2
Nice you could join us, Vic. Late for coffee. Tad early for lunch.

Victor sees something in his desk drawer and his eyes settle on his loafers. Doubt surfaces. He slams the drawer shut.

DETECTIVE 1
Too bad, so sad. Cop work don't count in Robyn's book. Maybe if you ID that greeting card stealing geezer as the suspect in those other robberies?

VICTOR
You mean lie?

DETECTIVE 1
Embellish.

VICTOR
Naw. You're the last clown at the circus I'd take advice from.

A phone's ring is met with an army of glares.

DETECTIVE 1
Please, wrong number, wrong number. Hello? Got it. Ugg. Fire pulled a car from the lake. Body inside.

ROBYN COBY, 50, a groomed baby-sitter, slick dressed with a weaved carbon fiber belt, pops from the Lieutenant's office.

ROBYN
Male?

DETECTIVE 1
Naw, a woman, Lt.

ROBYN

Damn.

DETECTIVE 1

And two kids from a sedan.

ROBYN

Uh... alright then! Let's do it!

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Victor enjoys the picturesque lake under a beautiful sky.

A tow truck driver unclasps a winch from a waterlogged sedan. Swerving tire tracks. A car-shaped path through the willows.

A sopping figure lifted to a gurney. Lifeless eyes behind a dripping mop of hair. A kid-sized mortuary bag.

Victor's focus changes. His gut hurts.

VICTOR

Got an ID?

COP

M. Fortin. Presumably her kids.
No signs of braking. In some rush
to get to where she got.

VICTOR

Jesus!

Victor kicks grass and slips.

KENDRA (O.S.)

O.M.G. Someone needs to learn to
park!

VICTOR

I'm sorry hun. Uh... Myra is dead.
Her and her kids. Maybe now you'll
take your job more serious.

The Snaky Cop wanders near and Kendra's face twists.

KENDRA

Myra! My dear Myra!

VICTOR

I'm sorry. I didn't mean it, I....

The Snaky Cop wanders away.

She peeks and giggles.

KENDRA

Whew, that was close. I'll leave you to it, detective. Clean up that... evidence stuff.

VICTOR

Clean up?

KENDRA

Yeah, even the lazy leopard has gotta help out, unless he wants to live in a filthy den, wear mangy clothes... drive a Sentra.

Kendra skips away. She drags her feet as she crosses paths with a cop. The cop gone, her bouncy step returns.

INT. MEDICAL CLAIMS REVIEW OFFICE - DAY

The orange hue of a world beyond closed eyelids. Sounds of war. Gun fire. Explosions. Men scream in agony.

Cries morph into hoots of troops toasting.

Upbeat sounds of a happy bar.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Sarge, mind giving up the seat?
Excuse me. Hello? Anyone in there?
Wait... I don't want any problems.

A fight breaks out. Furniture smashes.

JASON (V.O.)

Hero!

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Help!

A woman shrieks.

Her yelps dissolve into soft music in a quiet romantic interlude. The woman giggles.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

It's just... so small. No, wait. I didn't mean... no!

A primal scream about to turn audible.

JASON, 40, a trapped bear, snaps awake. A hammer fist hovers. Toy cars and plastic soldiers in battle formation atop piles of folders and office supplies.

The fist slams. The stapler careens and takes out a squad.

JASON
Muther fucker!

Tidy workers occupy a field of desks in a quiet office.

Several workers Shush!

Heels on fire approach and Jason rolls his eyes.

REBEKA, 25, overqualified and under-dressed, stops a safe distance away. Her soft intelligent voice pains him.

REBEKA
So, how's it going?

JASON
I'm sorry mom. Uh... I mean --

REBEKA
That's great. I'm gonna need you to attend a stapler etiquette course. Joking, no such thing! I guess workplace behavior wasn't part of your Navy training.

JASON
Army --

REBEKA
By the way, work the older files first. FIFO. Just say it, FIFO.

Jason watches her stick legs set off towards an employee on a prohibited cell phone.

JASON
Arctic plane crash. She's dead. Hero, make the leg call. Lives are at stake. Some of the women are hot. Eating or clubbing? Stabbing.

A mangled staple embedded in a thick stack of papers.

Jason tugs and pricks his finger. Blood stains the document.

JASON (CONT'D)
Shit. Muther --

Claim Review, File: JEFF STRAUB, Disposition: Benefits DENIED due to death/other. His familiar block letter signature.

He pecks STRAUB on his computer. A distant printer works.

Jason drags his feet and hopes to engage in conflict as he makes his way to the printer.

A Worker lowers his head.

JASON (CONT'D)

That's what I thought. Loser.

Jason flexes. His shirt tail lifts and a strained button pops. He whoops. Rebeka's glance silences him.

NICOLE, 25, wispy and eager, works the copier like a pro. She greets Jason with a grin and presents his page like a gift.

NICOLE

You have a DDO too! I just had one.
Why combine Death and Dismemberment
with Other, right?

Jason's eye twitches. She's clueless.

JASON

I just. Yeah. Is that it?

NICOLE

The risk investigators love these!

JASON

Investigators? Do they have guns?

NICOLE

Uh... no.

JASON

Could they? Have guns?

The chair winces as Jason sits at his desk. He marvels as no one dares to look.

He searches a few folders and gives up.

JASON (CONT'D)

Damn! Fucker. Lost it.

He grabs another stack of folders and skims the Disposition and finds: Benefits DENIED due to death/other.

JASON (CONT'D)

Gotcha, bitch!

The cover page: Dr. Kendra Biggs. He notices the difference
File: STRAUB and File: FORTIN and skims the folder.

JASON (CONT'D)

Fortin... She has mom's name. She's
so pretty. Wait. What the fuck?

Brave workers shush.

INT. MICHAEL'S OFFICE - DAY

MICHAEL, 25, ego-driven smugness, listens to a voice on the
phone and studies his Nine Iron. Jason lumbers in, squares up
pushes two folders near his face.

MICHAEL

I'll let you go. Someone just
barged in. Tee-off, 9 sharp. Bye.
And what are these?

A moment of tug-of-war. Jason releases and scoffs.

JASON

I want to investigate. Some weird
shit. This Myra lady and some other
guy are dead. My mom's name was --

MICHAEL

Well, that happens to people.

Michael jokes and sees Jason doesn't get it.

JASON

A doctor has two patients die. What
are the chances?

MICHAEL

Here, we know the odds. The life
expectancy table, males live to 82
and women, 84. Factor population
density, proximity to care, we
calculate the precise --

A wall-mounted decorative fraternal paddle.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You like that? A gift from my Sig
Ep brothers when I graduated from
Syracuse University. Ivy --

Jason rips the paddle from the wall. Thunderous impact. Teeth
and blood splatter the wall.

Jason's eye twitches.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Jason. Jason? Jason! Did you belong to a fraternity in your military Army-Air Force group?

JASON

No. So. I was told to show you. Now I can investigate.

MICHAEL

Uh, no. There's no need. If we suspect something amiss, we may notify the authorities.

JASON

When can I be an investigator?

MICHAEL

You? Perhaps someday. In the future. Distant....

Jason shuffles out.

A hoot beyond the closed door.

INT. MEDICAL CLAIMS REVIEW OFFICE - DAY

Michael hands Jason a Panera gift card.

MICHAEL

We realized a cost savings from your discovery. A small token.

JASON

Panera. Bread?

MICHAEL

You're welcome.

JASON

Did you let the police know?

MICHAEL

Did a cop sign your last check?

Jason realizes the back of the card reads the same thing.

JASON

Fuck.

Jason searches patient records until he finds Myra's photo. He runs his fingers across her hair. The Status: Deceased.

JASON (CONT'D)

This just ain't right. Someone's gotta do something.

INT. KENDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Kendra marvels at the world beyond her window as she nibbles on a cracker. A blank note pad rests upon her lap.

ERIC BLOATS, 40, a pain afflicted man-child, blubbers and sobs, clueless to her deaf ears.

Kendra enjoys Bonobo's coos. A faint ringing begins as Eric blows his nose.

VICTOR (V.O.)

You are supposed to help --

A horn blast. She raises her hand and Eric stops talking.

She whispers some indiscernible words.

His lips stop trembling.

She decides for him and rests a hand on his shoulder.

KENDRA

You have to. You'll never be free.
Not for anyone to judge what you've
been through. No one understands
your pain. Not the family. Not the
courts. Not even Jesus.

Eric glances, her smile disappears. He shuffles out the door.

Kendra laughs aloud and triumphantly raises her arms.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

Not even Jesus! Wow, gold! Where do
I come up with this?

She scribbles "Deep concerns, may harm self or others, must follow up, consider notifying law enforcement." She flings the folder.

A crazed laugh as she dances with Bonobo.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Victor cleans his gun as detectives joke and sip coffee.

DETECTIVE 2

Vic, watch this. Go for it Jimbo!

Encouraging chants as Glum JIMBO, 45, grips a two liter soda bottle and squeezes. His eyes bulge and his face reddens. The bottle contorts... and the cap pops off and spray erupts.

Hoots and laughter.

Jimbo pats his pockets for something to dry his hands. Crumpled pink panties. He quickly puts them away.

Robyn discards an inbound fax of a missing skinny teen girl.

ROBYN

Damn. These things just keep coming.... Gents! Case reviews!

Without looking, Victor expertly reassembles the gun.

A Folgers Coffee can labeled Caution. Victor hand-picks a few rounds and loads.

DETECTIVE 1

I still can't tell the difference between a 9 and 40 ammo.

ROBYN

Be smart, or learn the hard way! The wrong bullet jams, or blows your hand clean off! Either way, you don't want that coming back. Nice tie, Vic! Way to work the angles.

Robyn nods and smiles.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

You gonna say it? No, not saying it anymore....

VICTOR

It was kind of silly. I'm a detective now. That was long ago.

ROBYN

Not that long ago....

DETECTIVE 2

Are the donuts for us?

ROBYN

For community safety and service professionals. Yes... for you!

JIMBO

I'll pass. I'd like to lose a few.

ROBYN

C'mon Jimbo, we know you have no self-control. Tuck in your shirt and start us off!

A photo of a post-mortem naked female cadaver. Jimbo slaps the folder shut.

JIMBO

Sure. Uh... well... I'm making progress on all my cases.

ROBYN

Tell us how it really is, Jimbo. Candor is paramount. Without it, there's no trust. Trust is the foundation of everything we do.

JIMBO

Sorry Lt. I got nothing. No breaks.

ROBYN

Nada. I should have held off on donuts. The missing cat?

JIMBO

About that... I've got a feeling it's these kids next door. Last year, another cat went missing. I'm going to tell the owner --

ROBYN

Nothing! You say nothing, unless it's... Here's your cat, ma'am, our department worked long and hard for you. Or... a well thought out, comprehensive narrative that absolves us of any blame. You got either of those? And, bestiality isn't really a crime, more of a life choice. Jimbo, move on. Our goal is to bring people closure, nothing else! Refer that Jamaican scam to the Feds, unless they're local. They're not, right? On to that triple-homicide.

VICTOR

Uh... Lt. It was an accident.
That's open and shut?

ROBYN

I'd like where your going, Vic, but
the lake is county property. City
fire responded and towing billed
us! Our budget is razor tight.
Let's find out how fire caused this
debacle... quick too!

VICTOR

If it's okay Lt., I'll take lead.

ROBYN

Someone wants a 9! Get that bill to
land elsewhere. If it's not a
crime, we don't pay a dime!

Robyn slides the folder and exposes a series of red scrapes
on his forearm. An array of crime scene photos face Victor.

DETECTIVE 1

Nasty scrapes Lt. What's her name?

ROBYN

Ha, ha... Tree branch. Yard work.
Lemon tree... I just planted. I
have the receipt --

JIMBO

That was on the detective's exam.
Scrapes on the forearms. Defensive
wounds or signs of the attacker?
I'm always so confused....

ROBYN

Vic, you aced it, which is it?

VICTOR

Uh... Defensive wounds are found on
the hands and forearms, like those
Lt., where the victim raised his or
her hands to protect themselves.

DETECTIVE 2

Man, I'm confused. What if she
liked, reached out, and he was on
top of her. Wouldn't the marks be
on her arms? Or he's got his hands
on her face to stop her screaming?

DETECTIVE 1
Wouldn't the guy's face be
scratched? Wait, what if she was
the rapist?

Chuckles and laughter.

DETECTIVE 2
Female rapist! I'd hit that.

JIMBO
Well, Vic? Which is it?

All eyes on Victor as he raises an eyebrow.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Kendra pops a few colorful pills and gulps some wine. She runs her fingers across a framed photo of exuberant Victor being thrown from a mechanical bull.

KENDRA
Some bull.

She alerts to her phone.

INT./EXT. JASON'S CAR - DAY MOVING

A tiny cheap phone lost between Jason's giant shoulder and messy hair. The car swerves as he thinks.

INTERCUT between Jason and Kendra.

A poor connection.

JASON
Hello?

KENDRA
Hi.

JASON
Is this Dr. ...uh?

KENDRA
Biggs. Yes. Who is this?

The phone cuts out. Kendra decides nothing was lost.

Jason veers into traffic, swerves to avoid a wreck.

He dials and gets Kendra's voice mailbox.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Victor zombie watches muted ESPN and taps along as the stereo plays his favorite Tom Petty tune.

Kendra strolls in and postures between Victor and the TV.

KENDRA

I see your busy. You mind listening
to this?

Victor can't see through her. He flaps his hands.

VICTOR

Sure. Whatchoo got?

Kendra lowers the radio and plays the voice-mail.

JASON (V.O.)

Uh. Hi. Doctor. Braggs. Err. Biggs.
We got cut off. I'm an agent,
investigating some claims you had
for patients. Deceased. I wanted to
talk to you about. Call me at 555-
1212. That's my office but I'm
calling you from my cell. Don't
call my office cuz I'm not there.

A horn blast.

JASON (V.O.)

Fuck you! You muther --

VICTOR

That's grade-A entertainment there!

KENDRA

The sheriff? Is it the Feds? Am I
in trouble? Did you say --

VICTOR

Do you have a guilty conscience?

KENDRA

Uh... no.

VICTOR

You should.

KENDRA

We are in this together.

VICTOR

Like rats on a log. It's a claims agent, not a federal agent. Besides what would I say?

KENDRA

I don't know.

VICTOR

Are you billing for services not rendered?

KENDRA

You mean billing insurance for a treatment I didn't provide?

VICTOR

Yes, that.

KENDRA

Not exactly. Well, sort of. Technically... yes. If patients no-show or cancel within 24 hours, I reserve the right to bill, whether they are alive --

VICTOR

If they're dead, don't charge!

KENDRA

Don't blame me, I never lost a patient before. I guess I better get that process down.

VICTOR

What?

KENDRA

I mean, of course, for future reference.

Victor taps his hand to an unheard beat.

VICTOR

Nice chat. Turn that up. Running Down a Dream. Best track ever. Helps me remember good times.

KENDRA

Speaking of which. We have an anniversary coming up. In case you want to plan something special.

He turns up the volume.

VICTOR
Uh... What? Sorry.

EXT. RANCHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Victor gestures goodbye with two packs of Ho-Hos in hand. A parting gift from a cute citizen.

VICTOR
No, thanks, I'm uh, married... and
it's detective.

JIMBO
I'd throw some cock at ya.

VICTOR
You're saying it wrong.

JIMBO
How do you say it then?

VICTOR
Uh... never mind.

JIMBO
Robyn loves that story. How you
"helped" those poor, desperate
women, "get off" that parking
citation. Tells it all the time.

VICTOR
Robyn? How's he know?

JIMBO
Bro! He saved your ass! Kept IA in
the dark on that one. Those women
wanted your ass fired! If it
weren't for Lt., you'd be in
street, heck, maybe even in a cell.

VICTOR
I didn't know. I've changed alot
since then. I'm lucky that didn't
keep me from getting promoted.

JIMBO
Heck, it might have helped. Give
those here.

An errant Ho-Ho toss. Jimbo jumps a branch, spins and makes
a one-handed catch.

VICTOR
Whoa! Never seen you move so fast.

JIMBO
Uh... when foods at stake. Here,
kitty, kitty.

VICTOR
The goose wins again.

JIMBO
It's a cat.

VICTOR
A wild goose... never mind.

JIMBO
Would you fuck a cat?

VICTOR
What?

JIMBO
I mean... like, how would anyone
have sex with an animal?

VICTOR
I don't know Jimbo. Some real
sickos out there. I don't know
anymore. I just don't know
anything. I mean... I know, I want
my old life back.

JIMBO
What?

VICTOR
Back when things were fun. I kept
thinking things were getting
better, if I just did this, and
just did that. I finally had
everything I thought I wanted. Now
it seems... it's coming to an end.

JIMBO
Get a grip. Eat your Ho-Ho, you'll
feel better. With every bite, your
troubles just melt away.

VICTOR
No, they won't! For the first time,
someone... she really cares...
cared about me.

JIMBO

Mommy issues... I had those. You were just a project. A pitiful furry critter, all starving... she's going to nurse it to health. Then... whammo! No one wants a rat for a pet. No tears little probie.

VICTOR

I ain't no probie!

JIMBO

Geez, I was having a little fun.

VICTOR

I'm not out yet.

JIMBO

The Tesla is in your name, right? Joint assets. Too bad so sad. The judge will sell everything, split down the middle. My ex dragged me across the pavement on the way out the door. I guess I should have... thrown a little more cock at ya.

VICTOR

That's not really how it's used.

JIMBO

I should have gotten a... what's the word? Prenup. Man, I don't know what's fair anymore. First my manhood, then the bitch took everything else. But I'm rebuilding, Vic. Don't sign one of those. No matter what she says. How much you love her. When the end comes, she'll screw you. Balls to the fucking wall.

VICTOR

Uh... She made me sign one. Everything's in her name. If I get the boot, I'd have nothing. She'd get these too.

JIMBO

Your shoes?

VICTOR

Loafers.

JIMBO

No worries, little probie! We all go back to Go! Don't collect your \$200 bucks! When you look for a new pad, crash on my couch! We can hang, watch football, order pizza, be buds....

Jimbo's ragged appearance and stained clothing.

VICTOR

I can't go back.

JIMBO

Look at the bright side. Be happy --

VICTOR

Overweight and off-brands pants... you couldn't buy a date! You call that happy?

JIMBO

I was... until now.

VICTOR

Sorry, Jimbo. Bring it here. C'mon... big hug. Sorry, I got a lot on my mind. You alright?

JIMBO

I'm sorry too. Robyn was there for me and lifted me up in tough times. I'll be there for you.

VICTOR

Well it ain't over yet.

JIMBO

That's the spirit! Maybe you'll get lucky, she'll like... transition.

VICTOR

What?

JIMBO

Nothing. I mean... never mind. I say the stupidest things. I've had enough, let's roll to the lake.

VICTOR

Why?

JIMBO

Look around. We can call the auto shop. Maybe someone cut the --

VICTOR

There's no evidence to the contrary. The narrative is clear cut. No witnesses. Case closed.

JIMBO

Man, you sound like Lt. with his gray narrative thing. I didn't get it at first. That word, obfus... something.... Lt. promoted me because of my quick wit and can-do attitude. People rely on us, Vic. Maybe the cases are connected?

Victor looks for a distraction and spots circling hawks.

VICTOR

I doubt it.

JIMBO

What? God told you? Yeah! To the deep fryer you cat eating buzzards! Case closed! Yeah... I'm safe!

VICTOR

Safe?

JIMBO

I was worried I'd be the one sent back to patrol. That leaves... you.

INT. KENDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Pulling herself together, KATIE, 35, a hot mess, wipes her make-up smeared face. She stomps and a boob pops out.

KATIE

I'll do it! I will not be a victim.
I will take control. I will!

Kendra proudly watches her creation march out. Her fingers fly across the keyboard. To: Invoicing. Stop billing for patient 3675 COB Today.

KENDRA

That's that! Exhilarating. Little things make a difference. I can't wait. So much for Area's Best a record 4th time!

Kendra shuts a book, Hannibal Rising. She considers something squeamish and selects a patient folders.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

Yep, you'll do. Tough. But I'm on a roll and up for a challenge!

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Jason stands at the threshold and wields a folder stuffed with papers.

JASON

Uh... I'm looking for Doctor Biggs.

KENDRA

I'm --

JASON

I was looking for a building but the address was here. Do you know a building with the same address?

KENDRA

I'm Kendra Biggs. Doctor. I see patients in my home. Agent Jason?

JASON

Uh... yes, ma'am. You are sure awfully pretty for a doctor.

KENDRA

Well, I most certainly am... a doctor. Come in. Please. Of course I want to clear this thing up.

She contemplates an advantage as Jason lays out feathered invoices.

JASON

Ms. Fortin, Myra was your patient. And this Mr. Straub, another --

KENDRA

Patient.

JASON

Myra was my mom's name.

KENDRA

How sweet.

JASON

Yeah. How two patient deaths, Myra and, the other guy, so close to each other, and you submit bills for them, after their --

KENDRA

Demise. Straub was, I believe, ruled a suicide. Myra was an unfortunate car accident. As for billing, my bookkeeper invoices from my virtual calendar.

JASON

Not you?

KENDRA

I am... technically responsible. Do you think it's fair if a patient no-shows, I don't get paid?

JASON

Not really.

KENDRA

I can't just grow another patient.

JASON

What can you tell me about Myra? What was she like?

Kendra recognizes Jason is enamored with Myra.

KENDRA

Myra... she was a beautiful caring woman. She loved her children so very much. Her passing... an avoidable tragedy.

JASON

Avoidable? She was being treated.

KENDRA

Yes. But more than treatment, she needed someone to be there for her. She had every reason to live. I'm sure their lives would have been different. If it wasn't for her husband. Ex-husband.

Jason's face registers anguish of a man too late to help.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

What's the process to revert submitted claims? Do I give write you a check, call someone?

JASON

You can call the office.

KENDRA

Would it be alright if I call you?

INT. JASON'S CAR - DAY

Jason sings along with his Death-Metal ring tone as papers fly out the window. He snaps back and answers.

JASON

Hello?

INT. MEDICAL CLAIMS REVIEW OFFICE - DAY

Rebeka tugs slack from the twisted phone cord.

INTERCUT between Jason and Rebeka.

REBEKA

Jason, hi. It's Rebeka. Remember me? Us. Your job.

JASON

Hi Rebeka. Yeah... I'm working.

REBEKA

No. You're not because I'm here, at your desk. If you were here, at work, working, our matter would occupy the same space and the universe as we know it would come to an end. Which brings me to my next problems which is, now, there's no one at my desk. Therein is Michael's issue. Jason? Jason! Where are you?

JASON

I'm out. Tell Michael --

REBEKA

Out sick? VA sick?

JASON

No. I was just --

REBEKA

Listen, do you see the caller ID? Looks familiar, doesn't it? It's yours. When your desk number calls you, it's a problem.

JASON

I'm heading in now. I just needed to check something. Tell Michael --

REBEKA

I like you Jason. Of the veterans hired in our last initiative, you're the only guy to not choke someone, or fire the CEO. We are going to look the other way on this. Last time.

JASON

But --

REBEKA (V.O.)

No buts! When your admiral or general or whomever, told you to do something. What did you do? Jason?

Cardboard cut-out Michael in a general's uniform affront an American flag. Michael bubbles and the flag smolders. Flames dance.

Jason's eyes twitch, a distant glare.

JASON

The thing he said to do.

REBEKA

Right! Just like that. Think of Michael like those men. Jason. I'm not explaining it correctly or you're not receiving. Forget whatever you are doing. Like your job depends on it. Report to Michael when you get here.

White-knuckles grip the steering wheel.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Beeps from a digital keypad. Victor stroll in. He notices light underneath Kendra's office door.

Victor grabs a beer and powers on a laptop. He searches for "Boobs Asian" and trove of small breasted Asian women appear.

VICTOR
Go big or go home.

He types in "D" and a slew of Divorce Attorney names appears.

He swallows a bad taste.

An oddly placed add for Life Insurance. He clicks on it.

A doors work. Some nearby voices. He closes the laptop.

Kendra shows a patient out. The sad dark-haired woman clutches Bonobo.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Everything okay?

KENDRA
Real well. She's making progress.

VICTOR
Progress implies forward motion.
Towards, perhaps a goal?

KENDRA
Inner peace.

VICTOR
How do you measure that?

KENDRA
I can tell. She lucid. Her thoughts structured, less visceral. I may reduce her meds next month. Like in football, it's a game of inches!

VICTOR
How soon before she's better?

KENDRA
She'll always be a broken soul.
Like gluing Humpty Dumpty
together... those cracks will
always be seen. Exploited.

VICTOR
You tell her that?

KENDRA
God no! You never tell them how
close they are to the edge. She may
give up. You know what that means?

VICTOR
Lake front parking, strangling --

KENDRA
I want her to get better! Think
billable hours. Someone's gotta
keep this place afloat.

He notices the cabinet filled with patient files.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Familiar music spills from a Classic iPod.

ROBYN
This is awful.

VICTOR
Why listen to it?

ROBYN
It was a gift. I was branching out.
Let's walk. Grab coffee. Torres?

Robyn puts the iPod in a drawer packed with random trinkets.

VICTOR
No thanks, I'm on a budget.

ROBYN
Since when?

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A fashionable coffee kiosk. Victor and Robyn await their
order.

VICTOR
Thanks Lt., I thought I needed
someone to talk to --

ROBYN
Good for you! Keep that deep down
inside, whatever it is!

A worried COLLEGE STUDENT, hangs a Missing Person poster.

VICTOR
Isn't she from L'Enfant?

COLLEGE STUDENT

My roommate. She hasn't been home in a week. I'm worried. I called the police, but since she's an adult, there's nothing they can do.

ROBYN

Yeah... there really isn't. Ah... hey, is that your number?

COLLEGE STUDENT

Yeah.

The College Student mopes away. Drinks served, as Victor turns, Robyn slyly puts the poster in his pocket.

INT. LISA'S BEDROOM - DAY

LISA, 25, dark hair and erratic, pushes her face in a pillow and wails. She lifts her head and sees Bonobo's cold stare. She buries her face in the pillow and screams.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

The TV blares ESPN Red Zone. Victor searches for a video How-To-Guide to troubleshoot a garbage disposal. The sparse results are a handful of tacky homemade videos.

A distant phone rings. A whispered conversation.

Heels clack and some keys jingle.

KENDRA (O.S.)

Need anything from the store?

VICTOR

I'm good. Love you.

No reply as the door slams. A car drives away.

Victor pauses the video. He types in Divorce Attorneys. Pages of high quality videos which beckon Call Now!

A car pulls in. Victor deletes his search.

Odd knocks at the door.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Forgot your broom?

Another knock.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
 Alright. Be right there! Karma.
 Even the bio-lock thinks you --

Lisa's twisted face at the threshold.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
 Uh... hi. The doctor's out. Was she
 expecting you? Ms.?

Her pained gasps.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
 She'll be right back if you want to
 wait... outside. Or leave your
 number... on the mat is fine.
 She'll call you. I'm sure.

Her eyes rise. A primal scream. She claws his neck.

LISA
 Aaaah!

VICTOR
 Whoa lady! Settle down! Stop
 resisting!

He wrenches her arm and drops her.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A dreary day in a quiet office.

The squeaky voice on the phone rambles about a fruit tree.

A HOT ASSISTANT, 20s, with stiletto heels, flaunts and
 postures.

HOT ASSISTANT
 Hi Vic... you have a visitor.
 Speaking of which, I could use --

VICTOR
 Ok, sir. Got it. I'll call if we
 need additional details about
 your... fruit dispute.

A pleading voice interrupted by the phone hanging up. Victor
 heads to the lobby.

A disorganized doofus stands in the doorway and wags a thick
 folder.

JASON
Over here. Me, I'm next. Hiya,
officer.

VICTOR
Detective.

JASON
Yeah, detective. I'm investigating
some suspicious claims, by dead
people. Uh... Myra Fortin, and some
other guy.

VICTOR
Which force are you with?

JASON
I'm not a cop. I'm a claims
investigator.

VICTOR
Sorry but we don't comment on
investigations.

JASON
So there's an investigation?

VICTOR
No. But what do you want to know?

JASON
If you found anything suspicious?

VICTOR
Besides the dead bodies? No.

JASON
Did you know they shared a doctor?

VICTOR
No....

JASON
Dr. Kendra Biggs. Do you know her?

VICTOR
I'm... uh, yeah. She's a local
psychologist. Reputable. For mental
patients, erratic behaviors are not
uncommon.

JASON
I get files when treatments are
completed after death.

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)

Cuz, that's uncommon. I interviewed her. She mentioned Myra's ex could be responsible.

VICTOR

Far as I'm concerned, the cause of death was a vehicle accident. Do you have evidence to the contrary? I didn't think so.

Jason's nostrils flare. His breath stretches his coat to the brink. On the brink of conceding, he notices the scratches on Victor's neck.

JASON

What's that on your neck? Woman's scratch marks.

VICTOR

What?

JASON

Like someone forced you off of them....

VICTOR

No, there defensive wounds!

JASON

Wouldn't the marks be on your arms?

VICTOR

No! The suspect. Woman. She... uh. Wait! I'm not explaining myself to an insurance hack. There defensive and that's that! I'm the detective here, not you. I decide what we investigate. This investigation is closed!

The Snaky Cop observes two uneasy men.

INT. L'ENFANT - DAY

Seated at the bar, the Elderly Woman sadly sobs as the Sly Old Man fidgets with a steak knife and scans for cleavage.

Robyn wanders near. He abruptly turns as he sees Victor interview the Manager.

MANAGER

Turnover is the nature of the business.

VICTOR
Did she give notice?

MANAGER
No.

VICTOR
She up and vanished? No nothing.
Did you try her parents, family?

MANAGER
The wait staff is... not
necessarily on the books.

VICTOR
Fix it. You don't want that coming
back at you. What's so funny?

MANAGER
Must be some kind of cop saying...
sorry, I mean detective.

VICTOR
Nothing out of the ordinary? No
enemies? Ex-boyfriends. Upset
customers.

MANAGER
Just your... uh, no. There's that
creepy old man hanging around the
bar. He checked out. Sad story.
Dementia. That's him over there.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Kendra waves a glass of wine as Victor paces.

VICTOR
What are you telling these people?
For years, none of this. Now,
patients are killing themselves,
coming to the house to attack me?

KENDRA
You mean... attack me.

VICTOR
That insurance idiot. Yeah. Your
special friend Jason stopped by the
department. You suspect Myra's ex
was responsible?

KENDRA

He could be. Albeit, indirectly.

VICTOR

This is too much for me. And now that waitress is missing. The girl... from L'enfant.

KENDRA

That rabid meerkat. Ooh, the case of the Missing Tip. Smart. When confronted with trouble, run.

VICTOR

Wait. When were you there last?

KENDRA

Lunch last week. She was there... all decked out in skank.

VICTOR

Did you say something to her? What did you tell her? She wasn't one of your patients, was she?

KENDRA

If she was I couldn't tell you.

VICTOR

You are supposed to help people.

KENDRA

Me? Help. For Christ sakes I'm practically doing your job. I only offer advice.

VICTOR

You. You are responsible for their... welfare.

He stomps away. She twirls the wine glass and contemplates.

INT. BOB'S KITCHEN - DAY

Raw chicken breasts on a cutting board.

BOB, 40, sloth-like and drab, stabs a dull fork and a breast careens to the floor.

Fat fingers dust off some errant hair. A toss into a pan and oil splatters his arm.

BOB

Ouch. That's gonna leave a mark.
Better ice it. Shoot! In the car.

He returns with a soggy grocery bag and sadly discards a leaky container of ice cream.

BOB (CONT'D)

She's gonna be even sadder.

He cleans up as the forgotten chicken burns.

BOB (CONT'D)

Hun, dinner's ready!

A floorboard squeaks.

Bonobo's severed head on the floor.

BOB (CONT'D)

Where'd you --

The smoke detector blares.

BOB (CONT'D)

No! Quiet! I got it Hun.

Bob waves a towel until the alarm stops.

BOB (CONT'D)

Shoot. I ruined it. I got time to
make another. Please don't be sad.

A tranquil second.

Lisa's primal scream.

Bob dodges a silvery flash.

Lisa's crazy eyes and a knife.

BOB (CONT'D)

Lisa! I'll buy more ice cream!

He weaves as the knife slices his shoulder.

Bob defends with the towel. The blade arcs past his chest.

LISA

You ruined me!

BOB

What? Lisa no! Please.

LISA

My existence... rotted from the
inside. Drained. I deserve to be --

She slices his forearm.

The knife raised overhead.

She moves in fast and slips.

The frying pan wielded like a bat. He has reservations.

BOB

Lisa, stop!

LISA

Free!

She prepares to lunge.

He swings.

The pan strikes her skull. Scalding grease splatters her
face. She writhes and passes out.

BOB

What did I do? I'm so sorry. Please
be okay.

He puffs an inhaler as he dials.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

911. What's your emergency?

BOB

I need an ambulance. My wife, she's
hurt. Tried to kill me. I hit her
with a pan... chicken.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Robyn is well-dressed as he prowls a crowd of college
students. Hot girls everywhere. A table of BIG-BONED WOMEN in
short skirts and tube tops.

He has a panic attack and leaves.

EXT. SLY OLD MAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Victor conducts surveillance. He watches the Elderly Woman
tend to her soul mate. She wipes pea soup from his lip.
Dressed for bed, he gestures he'll be a while.

She blows him a kiss. The bedroom lights turn off.

VICTOR
Only crime here is eternal love.

In a flash, the Sly Old Man throws off his bathrobe and exposes sleek pants and a Hawaiian shirt. He slips out the back door.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
What?

Victor's phone rings.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Uh... yeah. I'll be right there.

INT. BOB'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The sound of an ambulance departing. An EMT bandages Bob and distracted cops mill about.

Victor notices her purse. Better judgement loses. He removes Kendra's business card and deletes "Dr. K" from her phone call log. He gathers Bonobo's parts.

The Snaky Cop appears from nowhere.

SNAKY COP
What you got there?

VICTOR
None of your business, officer. Why are you here?

SNAKY COP
It's my shift.

VICTOR
Well... get to work!

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Victor ends a phone call as Kendra caresses Bonobo's head.

VICTOR
Another notch on the ole' belt.

KENDRA
With you, makes two. Moved on, huh, greener pastures. Not feeling so smart now, are we?

VICTOR
Are you happy yet?

KENDRA
Tell me all about it.

VICTOR
You know.

KENDRA
I'd like to hear you say it. Did she squeeze poor Bonobo to death?

VICTOR
If you didn't know what a close call looks like, you do now.

KENDRA
Mere perception.

VICTOR
Lisa's in ICU. When she gets out, she'll get some real help.

KENDRA
She'll be back. They can't stay away. Like Meth.

VICTOR
I take it you've never seen the inside of a prison?

KENDRA
Feisty. I guess your little friend at L'Enfant hasn't turned up. Just want to blame everything on me?

Victor stomps away.

She decides something devious and Bonobo screeches in agreement.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Meal preparation underway. Kendra hums she slyly pours liquid from a white bottle into a saucepan.

Victor creeps in. A sliver of a white bottle as she hurriedly closes the cabinet.

VICTOR
Hey, what's that?

KENDRA

Ah... I'm preparing soup. French Onion with 12U shrimp, water cress and fried pork belly. Almost done.

VICTOR

Wanna dine at the table? We could... uh, talk.

KENDRA

Oh... no. Go sit in the living room. Watch TV. I ate earlier.

VICTOR

Uh... ok.

Kendra shakes her head as Victor wanders away.

KENDRA

I could have flashed a shiny coin.

Kendra carries in a soup bowl and a beer.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

Another beer?

VICTOR

Have I ever said no?

He studies the soup and eats the substance.

Torn between the broth and the beer.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Only room on board for one of you.

He cracks open the beer.

Later, a toilet splattered with vomit.

Naked and kneeling, Victor clutches his stomach.

Kendra lingers and disregards Bonobo's screech.

KENDRA

Hun. You okay?

Victor spins and sits on the vomit splattered seat. Red-faced and drooling, diarrhea streams out.

VICTOR

I'll be... fine.

KENDRA
Maybe it's a bug?

VICTOR
Or... something I ate. God! Can I
have one of those towels?

Victor spins and dry heaves.

KENDRA
You should really flush first. What
did you have for lunch?

Kendra places a hand towel just beyond reach.

VICTOR
Turkey sandwich. Probably the soup.

KENDRA (O.S.)
Blame the gourmet! Though the
mushrooms felt soft....

He's swipes a curdled clump and a slather of drool from his
lip. He's about to yell... she's gone.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Victor searches the fridge for the soup. The sauce pan has
been cleaned. Two white bottles, "Oxy-Clean" and "Truffle
Oil." He finds mushroom remnants in the garbage.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

The Hot Assistant shuffles into the darkness. Something makes
her uneasy and she scans.

HOT ASSISTANT
Hello?

INT. ROBYN'S OFFICE - DAY

Robyn sniffs a stiletto heel. He hides it as Victor eases in.

VICTOR
Lt. You want to see --

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)
I can't thank your men enough for
finding Mr. Fishy.

ROBYN

Our pleasure, and I'll write that letter to the mayor on your behalf... sign your name. Bye now.

Robyn pecks the End Call button and sizes up Victor.

VICTOR

Jimbo found her cat?

ROBYN

Naw, different cat. Fucking missing cats everywhere. Fire found this one, but we'll take credit.

VICTOR

You lied?

ROBYN

Harsh words, Vic. My integrity isn't relatable here. Not always black or white, usually... some shade of gray. Let me explain. You were a straight shooting patrol officer. Someone speeds, you give 'em a ticket. Right? Right. Acing the exam... I get that. Being a detective is more obfuscated.

VICTOR

Ob...?

ROBYN

Not crystal clear. Sometimes a friend is an enemy, who is really just a friend, until, well.... Let's say it's all perception. This is where you struggle.

VICTOR

I've made arrests!

ROBYN

The greeting card geezer.

VICTOR

He broke the law. Besides I think he may be --

ROBYN

What?

VICTOR

Uh... had something to do with that missing waitress. From L'Enfant....

ROBYN

That's a serious accusation. Can you back it up? Do you have evidence? Something physical, tangible, in your possession, to support such an allegation?

VICTOR

I... uh.

ROBYN

And he breaks. Vic, when you're dealt a losing hand, run... and fast. Ain't no crime with your waitress. Technically, until she's declared missing.

VICTOR

Don't you make the declaration?

ROBYN

I could. If, you know, there was evidence. Besides, the old man's harmless. Senile. Let it go.

VICTOR

He's faking!

ROBYN

No jury appeal! I need credibility to play the good guy so I can drive a narrative that benefits you-know-who, when I need to. Those no-good hose wielding bastards are gonna pay! Circling us back to the gray.

VICTOR

I don't see how this gray thing has to do with....

Robyn slides a plastic container across the desk.

ROBYN

Maybe this will shed some darkness.

VICTOR

Uh. Oh. Shit.

ROBYN

Yep. This, and why send it to the lab for a full spectrum analysis? Pricey. Logged under a case. Dispute over a fruit tree. That's a mushroom. Not tree borne, last I checked.

VICTOR

Yeah.

ROBYN

I'm fine spending money when I understand why. I could guess, but that would take the fun out of this whole thing there boy scout. So?

Victor peeks between his fingers.

VICTOR

I didn't know what else to do. I think... my wife... may have poisoned me. Tried to... with soup. I wanted to know.

ROBYN

Poison? Doubt it. Women now-a-days don't know spatula from spackle.

VICTOR

Cooking is her thing. She has all the books, watches all the shows.

ROBYN

There must be something else then? Think she'd be thrilled with your formal promotion around the corner. Assuming of course, you clear probation....

Victor squirms and averts gaze.

VICTOR

Uh.

ROBYN

Oh... You didn't tell her. The plot thickens. Just glossed past that caveat, huh? Might lose that Integrity Badge there scout. No biggie. Still, there's got to me more to this, Vic. Takes a bit more to drive someone to the edge.

(MORE)

ROBYN (CONT'D)

Willingness to kill. To murder.
Vic? What aren't you telling me?

VICTOR

A couple of her patients... died.
The lake lady... is one of them. I
think she may have uh... convinced
them... controlled them... she may
be responsible for their deaths.

ROBYN

Damn it man! Keep details like that
to yourself! Know what motive is?

VICTOR

You asked.

ROBYN

You don't have to always tell the
damn truth! Think of something...
remember that gray thing?

VICTOR

Uh... what about candor. The
foundation....

ROBYN

Do you have any evidence? About any
of it?

VICTOR

No.

ROBYN

Well, if you have to pick a side,
Vic. I always pick the side with
vagina. At least start there. You
know what the upside is.

Robyn decidedly pecks the phone.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

Hun, come in, please.

A SEXY ASSISTANT, 25, sexy, slips in and ogles Victor. She
flaunts cleavage contained by a slinky red bra.

SEXY ASSISTANT

Hi Vic.

ROBYN

Get this to the lab, sweetie. Put a
rush on it. That's the red ticket.

SEXY ASSISTANT

Sure. Bye Vic.

VICTOR

There's like a new girl in here every month.

ROBYN

Think there's a matching thong? I'd like to throw some cock at ya. I didn't say it right, did I?

VICTOR

Before anyone even knows their name, they disapp --

ROBYN

Transition. Besides, names are over-rated. When I realized my first wife wanted me dead I didn't know what to think. Something I said?

VICTOR

She's the one with the --

ROBYN

Persistent thing. God rest her soul. I cried at her funeral. Least my eyes watered, or I remember it that way. Home invasion. I was here, at work. I wish they could find the man or men responsible. That'd be something....

VICTOR

Sorry, I didn't know.

ROBYN

Don't be! Ages ago. I've moved on. Happily married. Fourth times a charm! I still wonder. You never know what goes through that messy mind full of crimped and crossed wires. What do you think she used?

VICTOR

Oxy-Clean.

ROBYN

If that does half what it does to stains on socks. Some foundation of trust you built your marriage on.

VICTOR
Weren't always this way.

ROBYN
Not mocking, just an observation.
Before you go, I got a gripe about
some wandering evidence. Don't be
surprised by a random drug test!
That's all.

The Bee-Mine card on a shelf.

VICTOR
Where'd you get this from?

ROBYN
In the trash. Hilarious! Vic,
remember. Embrace the gray... a
great detective does. For those who
can't, there's a traffic light on
5th, and it won't be that clever
squirrel. Detective, leave that old
man alone.

VICTOR
But --

A phone ring tone -- a violent pulse of a woman's piercing
scream.

ROBYN
I gotta get this. It's my wife.
Vic, If you feel so strongly about
it, I'll have my best man take a
look at that geezer. Rest assured,
everyone gets theirs in the end.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Bob notices Victor's badge as he holds the front door.

BOB
Hi. Sir. You're a cop, right?

VICTOR
Detect... yeah.

BOB
My wife had an incident. I wanted
to drop the charges.

VICTOR

You'll need to speak with the DA.
Didn't your wife try to kill you?
You clubbed her with a pan.

BOB

In self-defense.

VICTOR

It's none of my business. But why?

BOB

She's sick... and I love her. You
can't give up on that.

VICTOR

She'd get professional help.

BOB

The trust you put in some people.
That's another day.

INT. BOB'S APARTMENT - DAY

A college photo of Bob and Lisa in a lovely park. He looks sharp in a baseball uniform with a bat slung over his shoulder. She smiles at his side.

The bat hangs on display.

A recent photo, heavy-set Bob frowns near miserable Lisa.

Bob fills out insurance forms. A column charges from: Dr. Biggs. The hospital form lists: Dr. Milhouse. Other treatment: Dr. K Biggs.

Lisa's phone calendar, on the day of the incident, in all capital letters "FREEDOM."

"Dr. K" appointments listed every week.

A saved Haiku about "Being Free."

An article about an Abused Woman Claiming Self-Defense in the Killing of her Husband. The tag-line "I needed to be free."

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

An ugly sprawl of tubes and wires keep Lisa alive.

Bob puffs and sets the inhaler among a field of get-well cards. A card from Milhouse but not one from Biggs.

Dr. Biggs' phone number on an invoice.

INT. KENDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Kendra is drawn into a video of Baboon behavior.

INSERT -- VIDEO -- Villagers flee as baboons plunder.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The most intelligent animal in the valley, the baboon is surprisingly fierce and territorial.....

She absently answers the phone.

INTERCUT between Bob and Kendra

BOB

Hi, this is Robert, Lisa's husband.

KENDRA

Bob. So sorry. My condolences.

BOB

I didn't see your card. She's stable but still in the ICU. At least I get to visit her --

KENDRA

Good for you. I'd love to chat --

Kendra watches baboons viscosly fight.

BOB

They drilled to reduce the cranial pressure.

KENDRA

Oh so sad. There's no quality of life in that. She wanted nothing more than to be free.

BOB

What?

KENDRA

I meant... I sincerely hope she improves. Many patients recover from short periods of brain inactivity. But consult your doctor.

BOB
You're her doctor!

KENDRA
A medical doctor. Her physician
knows best and can temper
expectations. Ugh.

Kendra sets the germ-infested phone down and cranks the volume as the baboons grunt and mate. The strange smile returns.

KENDRA (CONT'D)
Next time I call someone a baboon,
it'll be a compliment.

END INTERCUT

Lisa's machine induced breath.

BOB
I'm so sorry.

Bob picks a book from Lisa's tote, a gift from Dr. Biggs. The Blue Abyss. The synopsis is a woman's savior was vengeance upon her abusive husband.

A creased page marked with the scribbled word FREEDOM. He sees the same lighter word on every preceding page.

His muted outrage.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Kendra mimics Victor's spot on the couch as the TV plays ESPN baseball highlights of the Padres game.

VICTOR
Hey, Doc. What's the rundown?

KENDRA
The Padres took an early lead.
Tatis hit a home run.

INSERT - ON TV - Headline - Padres take early lead. Tatis hits a towering home run.

Victor gets it. A single and Machado sprints home.

KENDRA (CONT'D)
Machado hit a home run.

VICTOR
He scored a run! A home run is when
the ball --

KENDRA
Goes over the fence! I know!

VICTOR
Uh... I'm sorry.

KENDRA
What? What is it now?

VICTOR
I got a call. Lisa passed away.
Some kind of hemorrhage. Cereal.

KENDRA
Cerebral. Idiot. Ok, then.

Kendra puts on C-SPAN, his cue to leave.

INT. KENDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Kendra listens to Jason's disjointed anecdote.

JASON
I guess you're right. My power
animal is a sloth. I never realized
they were so intelligent...
protective. Since then I preferred
to make decisions and be the take-
charge guy, or sloth.

KENDRA
The real you is a sliver of your
experience. Subtle undercurrents
that drive behavior. You said your
mom was a caring, wonderful woman.

JASON
She is. Was.

KENDRA
And your dad loved you very much.

JASON
He did. Why?

KENDRA
I'm reluctant to say anything.

JASON

What?

KENDRA

Consider this. There's a strong possibility she hid something from you. Something dark. You smartly sensed something you for so terribly long suppressed because you loved her so much. Something you always knew.

JASON

What?

KENDRA

Your dad worked long hours, drank.

JASON

But never too much. I mean. He provided. Did what he had to --

KENDRA

But you weren't always there. Abuse takes place often behind closed doors. Hidden. The signs are all here. Trust me I know.

JASON

God. I never knew. Dad.

A hook set, she feigns teary eyes.

KENDRA

Sorry... this is unprofessional. It's just, my husband. He --

JASON

Does he... hurt you?

Jason scrambles for a tissue. He doesn't notice her simple words don't match her pained face.

KENDRA

He doesn't mean to. He tells me after that he loves me.

JASON

My dad said that! It's just like what my parents went through. You said it yourself.

Jason kneels at her feet, eager to serve.

KENDRA

This session is supposed to be about you. Not my impossible situation. I'm helpless to escape --

JASON

No. If you need help. I can help.

KENDRA

I don't want to involve you.

JASON

Please. Anything you need.

She slyly studies him for what to do next. She runs her fingers down his shoulder as his face registers total submission. She wails to seal the deal.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Victor watches Sports Talk and finishes fast-food takeout. A discarded folder with the Sly Old Man's profile.

VICTOR

Not gourmet... but it won't kill.

A distant phone rings. He decides to ignore it.

The phone on the coffee table rings. He hopes it stops. It doesn't. Bothered, he sits up and answers.

INT. MEDICAL CLAIMS REVIEW OFFICE - DAY

Rebeka holds Myra's photo as she searches Jason's desk.

INTERCUT between Victor and Rebeka

REBEKA

I was trying to reach Dr. Biggs.

VICTOR

This is her residence.

REBEKA

I left a few messages. No one returned the call. Who is this?

VICTOR

Her husband. And I have nothing to do with her --

REBEKA

I'm legally required to notify care providers when we terminate an employee, thereby ending coverage. As a courtesy HR forwarded Dr. Biggs' invoice to the VA.

VICTOR

Got it. Bill forwarded.

REBEKA

But... listen. This guy is off. Some weird fixation with a former enrollee.

VICTOR

I'm sorry to hear about it.

Victor rolls his eyes.

REBEKA

A woman he never met. She's dead.

Victor rushes to end the calls as ESPN beckons.

VICTOR

Now, I'm really sorry --

REBEKA

We found some fatal attraction like stuff in his desk. I wouldn't call him crazy --

Myra's photo with a cut and paste image of Jason taped to it. A bizarre homage to eternal love.

VICTOR

That's my wife's specialty.

REBEKA

I wanted her to know who she's dealing with.

VICTOR

That, my friend, works both ways!

END INTERCUT

Rebeka studies a notebook filled with crude sketches.

People flee as a sloth drives a tank through a flaming office. The building resembles their office.

A plane crash site. Jason stabs Michael with Rebeka's leg.

Jason triumphantly stands atop a mountain with a beautiful woman clung to his leg. Nearby lay a dead cop.

REBEKA

You're someone else's problem! Now,
where's Michael?

EXT. ALLEY DUMPSTER - DAY

A janitor casually tosses a couple of trash bags. One settles on Michael's blue-face corpse.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Kendra tidies the pantry as Victor saunters in.

VICTOR

Hey.

KENDRA

Hey yourself.

VICTOR

I got one of your calls earlier. I
took a message.

KENDRA

Congrats, you're hired! No
benefits. You'll be my best
secretary yet.

VICTOR

Listen, this is important. Your
special snowflake. His former
employer called. He was —

KENDRA

Let go. I know.

VICTOR

Fired for cause. His insurance
won't cover treatment. The invoices
are going to VA.

KENDRA

Deep pockets! They have money!

She makes a money-grabbing gesture.

VICTOR

Wait! Serious. He may have stalker
tendencies.

KENDRA

He's confused, misguided, a rudderless dingy awaiting a breeze for direction. Consider the possibilities. This is getting fun.

The way she says it freezes Victor in his tracks.

VICTOR

If you're playing a game. It's gotta stop.

KENDRA

It's only dangerous if you don't know the rules.

VICTOR

What rules?

KENDRA

I'm writing them as we play.

Victor wonders if he could breath fire.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Victor reclines and stares as staff walk past and chirp. His ignorance is powerful. His stained loafers atop the Spunky Waitress Photo. Rugged footwear in an open desk drawer.

The Sexy Assistant rubs a sealed folder across Victor's lap.

SEXY ASSISTANT

You okay there? Not sleeping well. Maybe get some rest at my place? Or something --

Victor pounces. He flips to the final page.

VICTOR

No. Uh... busy.

Robyn appears over Victor's shoulder.

ROBYN

Trace: Hydrogen peroxide. Chemistry wasn't her strong suit.

VICTOR

Bad, right?

ROBYN
Diarrhea, headaches, discomfort but
not death. You know this much.

VICTOR
What?

ROBYN
It ain't gourmet. Watch your back
detective. Front too. You better
have a plan to take this bull by
the horns.

VICTOR
You mean build a case against her?

ROBYN
Ha! Funny guy. You really crack me
up, Vic. You need to know what
you're up against and pronto! This
may be her warning shot, but could
very well be the first wave in a
battle to the finish. Before you
know it, someone's pulled out every
stop, and it better be you! Can't
go back after that.

VICTOR
Go back?

ROBYN
Best defense is great offense. Man,
I know.

VICTOR
Offense?

ROBYN
Find evidence! Think gray. And get
those shoes off the desk.

VICTOR
Loafers.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Kendra finds the toxicology report in Victor's sports coat.
She puzzles at an empty box for a digital recorder in the
trash.

KENDRA
You're one Wile E Coyote. Case
number and all.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Victor inserts a digital recorder into the back of a new plush toy. The suited orangutang resembles Victor. He crudely stitches the seam shut.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Cupped hands and a shadowy forehead press against the front door's privacy window.

A plate of Melba crackers, assorted cheese, and a knife. As Kendra nears her office, the figure retreats.

INT. KENDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Kendra skims patient folders and sips the last of her water. The orangutang sits high upon the credenza.

INSERT - ON TV - Clips of real-life shark attacks dubbed with the Jaws alternating E and F notes.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Instinctive creatures and born natural predators, sharks spend their entire lives hunting, targeting weaker prey.

KENDRA

Nothing wrong there!

She hums along as the sea erupts with blood and a fin.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The female gestation period lasts 11 months --

KENDRA

Fuck that!

Eyes drawn to the orangutang.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

I love all my animals. But you with that stupid expression. The blank stare. Doe eyes. That suit...

Startled by the crude stitches, she chokes on a cracker. She struggles to remain calm and scampers out.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Slippery hands can't twist a water bottle open. Last resort, Kendra gulps tap water, gags and spits.

KENDRA

Ugh! I'd rather choke!

INT. KENDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Kendra settles down and begins to examine the orangutang.

The wooden floor creaks behind her. She turns...

A bat whooshes past her face.

A MASKED MAN raises the bat and axe-swings. She scoots under the desk as the bat strikes the desktop.

He grabs her ankle. She kicks free.

He overturns the desk. He swings and clips the her thigh.

Gasps for breath. A labored swing.

Kendra grabs the knife.

Big raspy breaths. He hunches and pulls off the mask.

Kendra sees Bob. A weak man pretending. She recognizes prey.

BOB

You... did this. You... ruined her.
She trusted... you. Everyone....

Bob musters his strength for a final assault.

Kendra lunges and drives the knife deep into his thigh. She leaps upon him and stabs him again... and again.

Blood fountains and splatters.

He gurgles his final words.

BOB (CONT'D)

The... cops... know.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Kendra ices her thigh as Victor escorts the last of the police outside.

VICTOR
The doors and windows are locked.
The alarm is set. I'm... so sorry.
I can't believe he did this.

KENDRA
You knew him? Don't you dare lie.

VICTOR
I met him... once at the station.

KENDRA
You didn't warn me about this
lunatic!

VICTOR
I didn't think --

Kendra's eyes shift to Victor's holster.

KENDRA
Give me that.

VICTOR
Whoa! My gun? No.

KENDRA
Yes, your gun. I'd need to learn
how to protect myself since
apparently I'm on my own.

VICTOR
Here? Now? It's --

KENDRA
Don't give me that official police
property bull shit after your
friend nearly killed me.

VICTOR
He wasn't my friend. He --

KENDRA
Apparently I need to be able to
protect myself. Hand it over.

VICTOR
Ok, ok, but let me unload it first.

He drops the magazine. He racks the final round and catches
it mid-air. The casing reads S&W .40.

KENDRA

No more dangerous than a stapler.... You're no fun. Blah, blah, blah. Mr. Safety Squirrel with a mauled wife here.

She waves the gun around.

VICTOR

Careful! It's still not a toy. Each year more people are killed by their own guns than by --

Kendra releases the slide and aims at a bowl of fruit.

KENDRA

I'm gonna get me one of these! Bam! Right where it hurts, Mr. Apple.

VICTOR

Done?

She pulls away as Victor reaches for the gun.

KENDRA

What kind of gun is this?

VICTOR

Glock. 5th Generation.

KENDRA

Like Star Trek?

VICTOR

Yeah, just like Star Trek.

KENDRA

What kind of bullets?

Something registers. He pauses. It pains him, but he lies.

VICTOR

Uh... hollow point 147 grain. 9 millimeter. Standard issue for all the detectives.

KENDRA

Same color as your old gun. Same handle thingy.

VICTOR

Grip. There's not a big fashion selection for gun wear. You wouldn't notice...

(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)
it's a bit lighter, shorter...
better for concealment.

KENDRA
There's a chip, just like --

VICTOR
Enough! They're different!

Victor snatches the gun. Pairing steps to action, he expertly loads the gun to holster and struts away.

Kendra contemplates something sinister. She puts some weight on her sore leg. An exaggerated yelp.

KENDRA
Ouch! Look who thinks they're the
king of the jungle.

No reaction from Victor as he rounds a corner.

INT. KENDRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Victor rips down the yellow police tape and slips inside. The office is a mess. He hovers over the orangutang for a moment. Red stars on select folders. He reaches for one.

KENDRA
I'll need to see your warrant.

VICTOR
I wasn't --

KENDRA
Infringing on my constitutional
rights protected under the 4th
amendment. Unlawful search... or
something. Anyway, you can snoop
later. Maybe transcribe my notes?
That could make you an accessory
after the fact? Though, I could a
hand packing a few things. I'm
going to lease a suite in old town
until this gets cleaned up.

VICTOR
How about taking some time off?

KENDRA
I don't need a break.

VICTOR
Maybe your patients could use one?

KENDRA

I can't abandon them, Vic. Never give up. Never. You'll be in the office in case I need you?

The strange query hangs. An uneasy moment.

VICTOR

Unless there's crime. Which there is, like every day. I'll be in and out. Around. If you need anything... important, just call.

An awkward moment. She leans away as he hugs her. She notices the orangutang seam is torn open.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Empty and silent. Victor gives up searching for Robyn.

VICTOR

Anyone seen Robyn?

Silence.

He rummages his desk for the Waitress Photo and gives up.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

I'm gonna grab a coffee.

Robyn suddenly appears.

ROBYN

Torrefazione?

VICTOR

Uh, no. Just the cart. Did you see the photo of the waitress?

ROBYN

Yeah, don't worry about that thingy, our best man is on top of her. It. Gonna take a look.... Any luck with that evidence thing?

Victor looks accomplished as he takes out the digital recorder.

VICTOR

Yeah, yeah. Listen to this!

Sketchy audio plays from Kendra's counseling session.

KENDRA (V.O.)

A sedentary life. Balanced. Good schools. Great friends. No one wants that.

ROBYN

Remember the whole Gray Thing? This ain't it. You unlawfully recorded a privileged conversation between a doctor and a patient? That's illegal. All hell illegal. Play the rest.

KENDRA (V.O.)

You need excitement. You need to feel fiery blood racing through your veins. Hot. Pulsing. Pumping. From all directions. Incendiary life with a bang.

Robyn is turned on.

VICTOR

See? She wants her to blow something up. A school...

ROBYN

I like where she's going. She's recruiting for a gang bang.

VICTOR

What? No!

ROBYN

I have my doubts too. Vic, you gotta know your stakes. When in doubt, there is no doubt.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

An accidental horn blast. The ridged driver tethered to binoculars. Victor forgot his sunglasses. He squints but doesn't get a good look.

A tattered flyer for the Missing Waitress posted to the wall. A fresh poster of the Missing College Student goes unnoticed.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Kendra paces while on the phone.

KENDRA
He nearly killed me! A sloth
wouldn't let this happen.

Mumbles from the phone. Kendra studies her nails. She waits for a cue... and Action!

KENDRA (CONT'D)
End this! Don't watch another woman
in your life suffer. No fear. No
doubt. Just commit!

Kendra puts weight on her sore leg and mouths "ouch." Her cut-throat call to action.

KENDRA (CONT'D)
Remember your mother!

Kendra ends the call and hobbles to the fridge.

KENDRA (CONT'D)
That should do it. Now, lunch!

INT. JASON'S CAR - DAY

Jason lowers the phone and decides.

JASON
This time... I'll be the hero!

INT. MORGUE - DAY

The lights flicker on revealing a row of white sheeted bodies on gurneys.

Victor readies himself and peels back the first sheet.

Relief washes over him. A thin female cadaver with distinct thin purple belt marks on her neck and wrists. He covers her and moves to the next.

He lifts the sheet. An obese female cadaver with thick purple hands-shaped marks around her throat. He covers her and moves on.

He peeks under the sheet and sees Eric with a bullet hole in his temple. He gives the cadaver a second look and grows angry. He regains focus and moves on.

He lifts the fourth sheet and freezes. Some sadness sets in. The Spunky Waitress with distinct purple belt marks on the neck. Something registers. His eyes drift to the first cadaver....

Frustrated, he screams.

Robyn suddenly appears.

ROBYN

You want to really let it all out, try the walk-in refer... down the hall on the left. You can yell, scream... kick. Won't bother anyone. You can go after hours, use the fire door... no cameras.

VICTOR

Didn't some chick die in there a few years ago?

ROBYN

Suicide. The places people wander.

VICTOR

Her eyebrows were ripped off. The lab found sticky residue. Did you?

ROBYN

Did I what?

VICTOR

You know.

ROBYN

People freeze to death every day. Some without eyebrows.

VICTOR

Yeah, in Siberia.

ROBYN

Jimbo cleared it.

VICTOR

I'm sure he did. Why are you here?

ROBYN

Looking for you. Figured I'd start here. Besides, it's always good to know how much space left. You know me, gotta keep my deck stacked.

VICTOR

Let me guess... suicide. All of them. No reason to open an investigation. The morgue bills social services and if it's not a crime --

ROBYN

We don't pay a dime.

Victor notices Robyn's weaved carbon fiber belt pattern matches the cadaver's neck marks.

VICTOR

It's just not right.

ROBYN

Right as rain, Vic. You're either a predator or prey. And you my friend, better comprende pronto.

VICTOR

Kendra... she's not... I mean.

ROBYN

She is and you better get it. I know some part of you clings to this Love Eternal thing. Those dumb words are gonna get you laid out on a silver platter like these amigos.

VICTOR

My head hurts.

ROBYN

Round two... dioxin poisoning.

VICTOR

I need to make a stop on the way back to the office.

ROBYN

A plan? You'll need witnesses!

VICTOR

What are you talking about?

ROBYN

Nice reaction! Yet it lacks some credibility. Winter's coming. Tough digging in the desert. Unexplained accidents happen everyday. People go missing.

VICTOR
Transition.

ROBYN
Yes, that! A shallow grave and a spouse with a weak alibi... no bueno. I'd never let God-fearing morals impair my odds of survival! Remember the movie Highlander?

VICTOR
Sean Connery. The sword movie. Your second wife, wasn't she beheaded?

ROBYN
No, not quite. Not that part. The ending. There can be only one!

Robyn stretches a finger triumphantly high as he exits.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Victor rubs his blood-shot eyes and scans for someone to confide in. Robyn's closed door and a field of vacant desks. His phone rings.

VICTOR
A hello?

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Kendra taps her fingers as she scans the urban decay.

INTERCUT between Kendra and Victor.

KENDRA
I need a ride, Vic. Pick me up.

VICTOR
Now? I'm kind of swamped.

KENDRA
Yes, now. I'm at the coffee shop on 5th in Maywood.

VICTOR
Ghetto. Why?

KENDRA
Your coworkers live here, don't they? An office is available for a short term lease.

VICTOR
Where's your car?

KENDRA
The agent drove. I lost track.

VICTOR
Uber?

KENDRA
Those guys are creeps. You know
what they do to passengers.
Besides, we should talk. Unless --

VICTOR
No! I can break away.

Victor ends the call. He shakes off some concern and marches past Robyn's door.

Compelled by an unknown force, Robyn opens his door and scans the empty room. He shuffles alongside a partition.

ROBYN
Psst. You can keep a secret, right?

Robyn whispers to a plant.

INT./EXT. VICTOR'S TESLA - DAY

Victor drives past a familiar cheap car with someone inside.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

An empty shopping cart. A CLERK snatches a list from Jason.

CLERK
Sir, let's get you shopped! It
helps if the list is right-side up.
Plastic tarp, that's household,
aisle 14, duct tape, electric, over
there. Shovel, trash bags, also
gardening. Sounds like a cool
project! Lime....

Final instructions "PAY CASH, DON'T BUY IN THE SAME STORE."

Jason grabs the list and the Clerk's fingers. He torques and shoves the Clerk into a display.

JASON
I'm! All! Set!

INT./EXT. VICTOR'S TESLA - DAY MOVING

Victor struggles to relax as the phone rings.

INT. ROBYN'S OFFICE - DAY

Robyn hurries. He throws on his jacket and skims a memo. There's a blank space for a name.

INTERCUT

ROBYN

Detective. Head over to the home improvement store. Gotta assault. Should be an easy one for you.

VICTOR

Can someone else can take the call?

ROBYN

The someone is you. You should know, I have a memo from the mayor, looking for someone's head.

VICTOR

Uh... okay.

ROBYN

That's what I thought.

END INTERCUT

Victor ends the call and dials.

VICTOR

Something came up. You'll have to find your own way.

KENDRA (V.O.)

I need you now! If I can't rely on my husband --

VICTOR

Lt. called. I need to --

KENDRA (V.O.)

Priorities! Who is in charge?

VICTOR

Technically, him.

KENDRA (V.O.)

If you can't do this one simple thing for me Vic, I just don't know. Maybe our marriage is past saving. Maybe, I have to --

VICTOR

No! No! I'll be there.

Victor ends the call. He squirms as he dials.

ROBYN (V.O.)

Vic, we all have places we want to be. Everyone is tied up but you. You're making this easy. I can hold my breath longer than the best of them, but --

VICTOR

Please. Just this time. It's personal....

ROBYN (V.O.)

You do personal stuff after hours.

VICTOR

Uh... remember... gray.

ROBYN

Yeah? Yeah! Good on you. Don't forget... drive your narrative.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Kendra slyly sends a text as Victor parks out front.

She meets him at the doorway.

KENDRA

I got you a coffee.

VICTOR

Why the urgency?

KENDRA

I... uh, just needed you. Try the coffee, its the way you like it.

VICTOR

You suddenly know how I like it?

KENDRA

I know enough.

White power along the lid.

VICTOR
I'll pass. I've had enough caffeine
today. Besides, I have a headache.

KENDRA
If you love me you'll try it.

VICTOR
No.

A mistrusting glare shared as Kendra hobbles past.

Victor scans the crowd. Excitable music. Calamity and
clenched jaws.

ELDERLY WOMAN
The man at the station pays
attention to me. I've had it! I'm
leaving you at the home.

The Elderly Woman dumps pea soup on him. The Sly Old Man
overturms the table and backhands her.

SLY OLD MAN
Soups cold, dumb bitch!

Jimbo leaps from cover and restrains the Sly Old Man.

VICTOR
What are you doing here?

JIMBO
Lt. had me keep tabs on this guy.

VICTOR
What? Need help booking him?

JIMBO
Uh... no. I got it. All set, Vic.

The Tesla's horn blares. Kendra crosses her arms.

VICTOR
I... uh. Gotta go.

INT./EXT. VICTOR'S CAR - DAY - MOVING

Victor flicks the Tesla's indicator left and then quickly to
the right.

KENDRA
Wait, you don't turn here!

VICTOR
Let's grab lunch at the Bistro. We need to sit and talk. Just after a quick stop at the station.

Kendra senses a trap.

KENDRA
No! Take me to my car!

VICTOR
Okay, I want to explain. I had nothing to do with that guy. Nothing. Okay? Dare I say... you've had more than a hand in this.

KENDRA
Vic, I've always told you it's a jungle out there. You're the one who made it no fun.

VICTOR
I just want things back to --

A bulletin board advertisement for a divorce lawyer. A wedding cake. Figures atop. A knife-wielding bride stabs a fleeing groom.

He glances at the white powder on the coffee cup and his stomach aches.

Kendra slyly sends a text. A clink as she slips the phone into her purse. She rubs her bruised thigh and recognizes Victor is self-absorbed. She notices the stained loafers.

KENDRA
Such a shame.

VICTOR
What?

KENDRA
Never mind. Last turn.

The landscape deteriorates. Trash in the streets. Vacant buildings with broken windows. Overturned shopping carts.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Weeds pushed through cracked pavement. An industrial parking lot enclosed with wire fence. A decade of debris.

The Tesla circles near the Porsche.

VICTOR
No one around for miles.

KENDRA
It's peaceful.

VICTOR
Your patients will make the drive?

KENDRA
What?

VICTOR
Your patients.... This is a haul.

KENDRA
Sorry, Vic. Yeah, they're good,
they'll do as they're told.

VICTOR
You mean they know their place.

KENDRA
That's one way to put it. Since
there is no one around, mind if I
get in a little trigger time? You
know... your gun.

VICTOR
No. What are you, cr.... I mean you
can't shoot in public!

KENDRA
Don't be ridiculous. I just want to
touch it. Like a security blanket.
Unloaded it's no more dangerous
than a stapler, right?

VICTOR
Uh... okay, sure. Let me unload it.

KENDRA
There's our moral equilibrium.

A clutched purse as she strides to the rear of the Tesla.

VICTOR
Where are you going? Hey!

Victor looks in the rear view mirror.

A familiar metal sound of a magazine inserted. He panics. A gun's slide strikes home. Instinctively, he ducks.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
What the? No! Kendra!

BANG!

The windshield spiderwebs. A hole in the head rest.

Kendra struggles with the gun's slide.

KENDRA
Fuck! What the fuck? Damn Austrian
engineering!

Victor puts the car in reverse.

Kendra's illuminated face in the back-up camera.

VICTOR
I'll tell you what's wrong.

Tires tear blacktop. A Tesla in hyper-speed launches.

Her knees buckle and heels drag. The Tesla collides with the Porsche.

Dark smoke plumes.

The Tesla's sensors calmly beep. The Porsche's alarm blares.

Blood drips from Kendra's mouth. Her eyes glued to Victor as he creeps near.

KENDRA
I'm... so sorry, Vic. I was wrong.
I broke everything right with you.

VICTOR
No, it was my fault. I'm --

He's close. She lifts the gun and jerks the trigger.

Victor dives for safety.

Click. Click. Click.

She drops the gun. Her final breath.

KENDRA
Some bull.

VICTOR
Damn right.

A car door closes.

Jason gather an arm-full of items from a familiar cheap car.

He peers over the Tesla's roof and sees Kendra. He notices the pool of blood and her lifeless face.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
You got a couple of shovels too?
Probably one. She ain't one for
getting her hands dirty.

Jason's eye twitches. A primal scream.

JASON
You? You. You!

VICTOR
No! Wait!

A wild backhand upends Victor. His head spiderwebs the Tesla's window. He pirouettes and scampers to his feet.

JASON
You killed her! After everything
she did for you. Sloths rule!

Victor senses a losing battle. He reaches for his holster and realizes it's empty.

VICTOR
Sloth? Shit!

Victor jutes but slips in his loafers. Jason bear-hugs him.

JASON
You killed her! I can't be the hero
if I can't save her!

VICTOR
She used you!

Elbows bounce of Jason's head. A thumb digs deep. Victor twists and pulls an eyeball out.

Jason squeezes tighter and head-butts him.

JASON
I'll make this right. For Myra!

Victor swoons and collapses. Blood obscures his vision. He scans for the gun.

VICTOR
Where is it?

Jason sticks tape over the empty socket. He vainly tries to reinsert his eyeball, fumes and squishes it. Furious, he spots Victor and charges. A grunt for each step.

JASON
Damn it to hell! Hero!

Flashes of dead Kendra, happy Kendra, the gun. Victor snatches the gun, closes his eyes, clears and loads. For final measure, he kicks off his loafer.

VICTOR
Ah... what the hell.

He blindly squeezes off several shots.

A bullet glances Jason's shoulder. Another strikes his thigh. He stumbles closer and winds a hammer fist.

A serene moment. Victor pinpoints the noise and squeezes.

CLICK.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Shit!

The hammer fist accelerates down.

BAM!

Jason's head jolts as a nasty exit wound on his forehead spills blood and brain matter. The hammer fist dents the car.

Victor shoves the heavy body aside.

Footsteps approach. The Snaky Cop holsters a smoking gun.

SNAKY COP
Vic! You okay?

VICTOR
It's detective... yeah, I'm okay.
Why in tarnation are you here? You following me, you little snake!

SNAKY COP

I wasn't. I was following him. He's the suspect in a double murder. Smashed his boss's skull in with a stapler, jammed a Panera gift card up his you-know-what. I picked up his trail at a home improvement store. Waiting on the calvary when I heard shots fired. I saved your ass. Looks like I'll make detective after all.

 VICTOR

You'll need a heck more than that before Robyn promotes you.

 SNAKY COP

Oh. So... what were you doing here?

 VICTOR

Uh... I.

 SNAKY COP

I've seen him before... with you. He works for that pharmaceutical company. Lots of money in trafficking stolen meds, ain't there, Vic?

The Snaky Cop glances at Victor's luxury watch and Tesla.

 VICTOR

Uh....

Police sirens grow near. Tires screech to a halt.

 SNAKY COP

So what were you two doing? What happened? Deal gone wrong? Who is that woman?

The Snaky Cop's hand drifts toward his holster.

Footsteps grow near.

Victor commits to a performance of a lifetime.

 VICTOR

My wife! My wife, Kendra! She's dead! Dear God! We were looking for office space. He was her patient!

 SNAKY COP

She was his doctor. Why here?

VICTOR

We're broke! Her practice was failing. All those bills piled up from this lifestyle. It's all my fault. I told her to open an office here to cut expenses. To take on more patients. She warned me but I didn't listen. Now she's dead! My life is ruined.

Victor realizes he's establishing credibility.

SNAKY COP

I didn't know. I'm... sorry.

VICTOR

I'm gonna get fired. Kendra. Oh my God! My Kendra.

SNAKY COP

I... need to go... somewhere.

The Snaky Cop absconds.

A moment of relief.

Robyn's golf clap.

ROBYN

Bravo, bravo! If you were an actor, you'd win some award. Probably even get to bang someone famous?

No one overheard. Victor stands and dusts off.

Cops string crime scene tape and take photos. Robyn hands Victor his loafers.

VICTOR

Damn it!

Victor throws his loafers and Robyn ducks.

ROBYN

Time you got some real shoes. You dress like you're the star in some kind of cop show. NYPD Blue?

VICTOR

Sonny Crockett? The sports coat and pastel shirt. The race car. Jesus!

Robyn's clueless.

ROBYN

Close one.

Victor eyes a floating fist bump. Reluctant, he reciprocates.

VICTOR

Sure was.

ROBYN

Murder.

VICTOR

But --

ROBYN

Self-defense can be impossible to prove.

VICTOR

But I --

ROBYN

Two people aim guns at one another.

VICTOR

There was only --

ROBYN

Past that cold dark barrel, beyond those iron sights, warm and loving eyes you promised to love and cherish, now dark and soulless... glare back at you.

Victor relaxes as he realizes Robyn is reminiscing.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

One hesitates. The other lives. I've wondered what separates us from the animals? Maybe nothing but some fancy shoes.

VICTOR

Loaf....

ROBYN

You okay?

VICTOR

Of course I'm not fucking okay!

ROBYN

She got the jump and gave me this look... like she may still love me.

(MORE)

ROBYN (CONT'D)

Was it my fate she hesitated or her
fate I didn't?

VICTOR

Maybe she realized either way she
was doomed?

ROBYN

Big fake boobs wedged at the fork
in the road. If you know you're
going, get there! Did everything
right but pull the trigger.

VICTOR

Your 3rd wife?

ROBYN

The end. El Finito. You knew it too
when you gave her the wrong ammo.

VICTOR

What?

ROBYN

Didn't know you were on probation?
Always the little lies. How it all
starts.... I say Go Big or Go Home!
Love the classics. Lime and shovel.

VICTOR

Was she gonna run away with him?

ROBYN

Dropped with the last shovel of
dirt! Gotta have a patsy. Curious,
off record of course, was it some
bizarre bisexual love triangle that
grew a forth leg?

VICTOR

No, I --

ROBYN

IA may not buy this mess as self-
defense... heck, things could get
real ugly for you. Like flight risk
ugly. Others slightly more attune
will suspect the truth... you
brought this woman out here to die.
Freakin' amateur hour.

VICTOR

You've got to believe me! It was
self-defense. Really!

ROBYN

You don't sound so sure. But alright, if it's on the up and up, like you say, I'll let IA take lead. Okay? Ok then.

VICTOR

Uh... Jimbo.

ROBYN

Que? I couldn't quite hear.

VICTOR

Jimbo. Assign Jimbo. Please.

ROBYN

Well... of course! Good buddy. Detective Carnucci! Get over here.

Jimbo tucks in his shirt as he waddles over.

JIMBO

Lt., what's up? I got that thing....

ROBYN

Vic's in.

JIMBO

Vic's in?

ROBYN

Yes. In. We need to make this go away and quick.

JIMBO

Uh... got it!

Robyn postures as if he's taking the podium.

ROBYN (O.S.)

A senseless and unprovoked attack tragically claimed the life of a loving wife and respected professional. If not for the heroism --

Jimbo stands upright. His eyes sharpen. With crisp flow Jimbo arranges the crime scene.

He puts Jason's shoe near the Tesla's gas pedal and wipes the steering wheel for prints. He claws Jason's neck and slips the tribal bracelet into his pocket.

VICTOR

Ahh... geez. Really?

He slogs the Sly Old Man's corpse from the truck of his police car and arranges the body in the Tesla's passenger seat. He peels duct tape from the Sly Old Man's eyes.

ROBYN

Thanks for the lead, Vic. Can't have some wildcard out there stirring the pot. Gotta have --

VICTOR

Yeah, yeah... a patsy. In front of everyone. Does no one see this?

ROBYN

What?

JIMBO

Nothing like a blood trail of bread crumbs.

ROBYN

My boy. Man's an artist. Like Caravaggio. Great work, Jimbo. Back to character.

JIMBO

Welcome to the team, Vic. We on for this weekend? Big game Sunday. Bet!

Jimbo's face droops. He slogs away and stumbles on his own feet. Some cops laugh as he trips.

ROBYN

Man, that guy. None of us started off like this. We were once kind of like... you. Uh....

VICTOR

What? What? What is it?

Robyn steps near. His mouth an inch from Victor's ear.

ROBYN

I killed them. I fucking killed them!

VICTOR

All three wives?

ROBYN

Them too.... Whoa! Man, that felt great! Been locked up tight, like forever! You think one confidant is enough.... As we're cleaning house, guess I'll back the truck up.

Robyn takes out red thong and tucks it into Jason's pocket.

VICTOR

I... uh.

ROBYN

No loose ends! Yeah! Man, I'm glad that's over, good buddy. I bet she has a hefty life insurance policy.

VICTOR

I --

ROBYN

Don't answer! Wouldn't want something silly as money coming between best friends. Now you can bankroll the hunt for your next wife!

VICTOR

Next wife? I'm done. Done!

ROBYN

I felt that way many times. Start small. Try someone less complex. A simple Mexican girl... from a trailer park, with a kid. You'll know from day uno what she wants. No one any wiser when she... transitions. Of course, ensure papi is dead, or locked-up for a stint. You don't want that coming back at you! End on your terms. Animals know all about it, Vic. They're the experts. Kill or be killed, none of this amigo, gray shit in their lives. We invented it. We kid ourselves thinking we are any different.

VICTOR

Imagine I'll report to uniform?

ROBYN

God no, detective... you're in the club!

(MORE)

ROBYN (CONT'D)

Got a 9 in my drawer with your name on it. First gotta swap the barrel. Ballistics stuff.

VICTOR

Off topic, Lt. Do you happen to have a power animal?

ROBYN

Of course, I'm the hippo! Never see them coming until it's too late. Whoosh! Drag you right from your canoe, tear your arm clean off!

The woman's scream ring tone startles Robyn.

VICTOR

Your wife... she started that solo hike in the Appalachians?

Jimbo wags a phone and slips it into his pocket.

ROBYN

Lots up in the air, Vic! Shoot, almost forgot. You and I were together in the office last night, until 10. Case reviews, something.

VICTOR

Sure, why not.

ROBYN

I got a man to see about a hole.

Robyn marches away and governs a squad of cops.

Victor wiggles a big toe through his tatter sock.

VICTOR

There can be only one.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

With the monsoon's return, the balance of nature restored, the cycle of life resumes. Having emerged victorious, the hippo sets off. Wildebeest smartly give room.

Victor takes the rugged footwear from the Tesla's trunk. He feels a bit better, more natural, as he slips the shoes on. His troubles melt away.

A CUTE EMT, 25, wanders nearby and looms. She takes interest in Victor and the luxury car.

There's a comfortable twang and panache in his voice. A heavily emphasized drag on a certain word, perfected from years of practice.

VICTOR

Just gotta throw some cock at ya.

A swagger returns. He grooms himself and shakes his head and makes his way over to her.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Uh... hi. Sweet shoes.

INSERT - ON VIDEO: A wildebeest shakes his scruffy face. The resemblance is uncanny.