

EMBEDDED

by

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A pale CRESCENT MOON shines faintly through clouds, a dim ember in a starless sky.

We are peering out through a third-story WINDOW of an APARTMENT BUILDING, looking down on a DRIVEWAY.

A MINIVAN putters down the lane, coming to a stop in front of the building.

The door pops open and a **MAN (ANDREW), 54**, exits. He's schlubby and balding, struggling to carry an overflowing paper bag of GROCERIES.

As the man moves out of frame, a DARK SHAPE rises up and passes through our line of sight. Someone was watching.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING- VESTIBULE/STAIRWAY- NIGHT.

Andrew huffs his way up a set of dusty STAIRS, goes to round the corner when--

The doddering **MR. VALENTI (70s)** suddenly BURSTS out in front of him. Andrew jolts back, startled.

ANDREW

Mr. Valenti. Scared the shit outta me.

MR. VALENTI

Just goin' for a little midnight stroll.

Mr. Valenti continues past Andrew, who then proceeds up to the next LANDING, stopping at his door. He grabs his keys, only to notice that the door is AJAR.

ANDREW

What the...

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT- NIGHT.

Pitch black. Andrew enters, sets his bag down. He hits the light switch, illuminating the room to reveal:

Everything is open. The drawers, cabinets, fridge; all swung wide open, contents strewn all over the floor.

Andrew glances around, panicked. He notices a HAMMER among the miscellaneous items on the ground, picks it up and makes a bee-line over to

THE CLOSET-- it's cracked open. He grabs the knob, readying the HAMMER as he FLINGS the door wide to find--

NOTHING. Rows of moth-ridden suits and jackets. He kneels to the ground, reaching past a row of old SHOES in the back of the closet, pulling forth a BLACK BRIEFCASE.

Andrew POPS open the briefcase to reveal rows of crisp 100 DOLLAR BILLS. He SMILES, breathing a sigh of RELIEF.

Andrew closes the Briefcase, once again bringing the row of SHOES into view. Suddenly, one of the shoes TWITCHES. We realize that there are

A PAIR OF LEGS attached to them. Horrified, Andrew glances up as the DARK FIGURE emerges from his hiding spot, camouflaged among the row of coats!

He wears a PAINTBALL MASK with a SKULL DESIGN.

ANDREW

Holy--

The Figure withdraws a massive COMBAT KNIFE from his jacket, goes to LUNGE--

Andrew twists out of the way, grabbing his HAMMER. He swings at the figure, knocking the knife from his grip. Andrew swipes the BRIEFCASE from the closet, rushes into

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT- ANDREW'S BEDROOM- NIGHT- CONT'D.

Quickly LOCKING the door behind him. His gaze flits to his WINDOW-- it leads to a FIRE ESCAPE right outside.

Just then, The Figure SLAMS against the bedroom door. Andrew runs over to the window, attempts to pull it open only to discover that it's STUCK.

WHAM! Splinters fly as The Figure bashes the door again. Andrew's fumbling with the window, but it just won't seem to budge. The Figure is right about to enter when--

CLICK...Andrew gets the fire escape latch to open. He glances back to the door, noticing the noises have STOPPED. Suspiciously quiet. Uneasy, he climbs out onto

EXT. APARTMENT- FIRE ESCAPE PLATFORM- NIGHT- CONT'D.

The coast seems clear. Andrew starts down the rickety METAL STEPS leading to the RETRACTABLE LADDER.

He looks below, realizing the ladder needs to be extended in order to reach the street. He searches for a RELEASE MECHANISM, spots a STEEL LATCH.

As he goes to pull it, the latch SNAPS into place on it's own, releasing the ladder above.

Andrew looks up to see the DARK FIGURE, riding the rapidly descending ladder down towards him!

Hurtling down, the Figure YANKS Andrew by the collar, pulling him over the guardrail--

EXT. APARTMENT- DRIVEWAY- NIGHT- CONT'D.

TUMBLING to the pavement below with a CRACK. Andrew groans in pain, his right leg TWISTED out of shape.

The Figure deftly steps off the fully extended ladder, slowly striding over to Andrew, looming above him.

ANDREW

What is this? Who...*who* are you!?

A beat. The Figure grabs his mask. As he pulls it off we

MORPH INTO THE KILLER'S P.O.V.:

The darkness of the mask yanked past our vision as we now stare down at a stunned Andrew.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

You...*it's* you...*why?*

(looking to the briefcase)

Look, if this is about the money--

We open up the briefcase, DUMPING the bills listlessly into the snow. Our KNIFE rises into frame.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Please...you're gonna do this after everything we've seen together!?

We PLUNGE the Knife into Andrew's ABDOMEN as he SCREAMS. Blood, viscera, organs exposed as we tear him apart.

We stop. Andrew's ravaged corpse lies motionless. Then, something catches our eye: a strange SILVER GLINT peeks out from Andrew's tattered STOMACH.

It looks like the reflection of a precious METAL or JEWEL. Curious, we lean in, extending our hand to reach for it. As we go peel open the gnarled flaps--

A SPINDLY, GREY CLAW erupts from within Andrew's body, YANKING us down with shocking speed. Into his flesh. Into his *being*.

BLACK.

WALSH (O.S.)

Dylan? Dylan?!

FADE IN:

RYAN WALSH (55) stands over us. Well-built for his age, with slicked back hair and intense, piercing eyes. He wears an immaculately tailored designer suit.

WALSH (CONT'D)

There you are.

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT- DAY- CONTINUOUS.

Bolting upright in a sweat-drenched bed is **DYLAN BOYLAND (32)**, lean and wiry, with an unkempt mop of curly hair and a poorly trimmed goatee. He's shirtless.

DYLAN

What are you doing in my apartment?

WALSH

Your apartment? Last time I checked the lease was in my name.

Dylan rolls out of bed, grabbing a pack of CIGARETTES.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Landlord called me at 5 AM, sayin' he was getting complaints someone was up here screaming and thrashing around.

Dylan sticks a cig in his mouth. Walsh pulls out a LIGHTER, lights it.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Figured you might have paid for some pussy. But I know you better than that.

DYLAN

Just a nightmare. A nasty one.

WALSH

Landlord said this was the fifth time this month. Wanna talk about it?

DYLAN

(shaking his head)
We all got our shit.

WALSH

Shit to do. Now get your ass outta bed! And throw some fuckin' pants on. No wonder you're shouting in your sleep with that morning wood you're rockin'.

Dylan chuckles, sarcastically grabbing his junk.

DYLAN
You know you love it.

EXT. STREETS- ESTABLISHING- DAY.

Walsh drives Dylan through the grimy side of **PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND.** Scenes of urban blight-- dissatisfied blue collar denizens walk dilapidated streets.

INT. GRAB N' GO DELI- DAY.

Walsh and Dylan strut into a sparsely populated deli, sidling up to the COUNTER, where **IVAN (43)**, a stout Eastern-European fellow mans the register.

IVAN
Mr. Walsh! Let me guess-- coffee, black.
And for young Dylan...a chocolate donut
with the rainbow sprinkles.

DYLAN
I'm not 12 anymore, Ivan. I'll have one
without sprinkles.

Ivan laughs, heads over to the pastry rack.

WALSH
Hey, Ivan. While you're over there why
don't you grab me one of them Blinis.

IVAN
Oh, we don't sell no Blinis boss.

WALSH
Huh. That's funny, 'cause word is the
Russians have been comin' in here lately.
(darkening)
Figured you might have changed your menu.

Walsh suddenly GRABS Ivan by the collar, SLAMMING him into the deli counter. The other PATRONS look up. Knowing the drill, they all silently stand and walk out.

WALSH (CONT'D)
Ivan, I know I don't have to tell you
that this is my territory, do I?

IVAN
(choking)
No...

WALSH

Then I'm gonna ask you a question, and if you tell me the truth, I'll forget all about this. But if you lie to me, Dylan here is gonna break one of your fingers.

Dylan briefly hesitates before grabbing hold of Ivan's HAND, singling out his INDEX FINGER.

WALSH (CONT'D)

So here goes: where are the Russians holding their product?

IVAN

I...I don't know. I don't know!

Walsh nods to Dylan. Dylan waffles for a beat, before swallowing his concern. With a quick gesture, he SNAPS Ivan's FINGER backwards, prompting the man to HOWL.

WALSH

That feel nice? You up for another one?!

IVAN

No! They say they kill me if I talk!

WALSH

And you think I won't? Only difference is, I'll make it last longer.

Walsh signals to Dylan, who grabs Ivan's MIDDLE FINGER. A longer beat. Dylan can't bring himself to do it.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Dylan...

Dylan closes his eyes as he SNAPS another finger. Ivan is so wracked with pain that he can barely make a sound.

IVAN

(sputtering out)
The bodies! The bodies!

Walsh raises an eyebrow.

IVAN (CONT'D)

They moving it through the mortuary. In the dead peoples.

WALSH

Much obliged. I'll send Carl around to make sure the Reds don't try anything. After all, if I lose you, where am I gonna get my coffee?

Walsh taps a clearly shaken Dylan, leading him outside.

EXT. GRAB N' GO DELI- DAY.

Walsh and Dylan hurry out onto the bustling STREET.

WALSH
You hesitated back there.

DYLAN
I know. It's just...he's this a nice,
little, old guy...

WALSH
Russians probably thought the same thing.
See how quick he ratted them out?

Dylan looks down as Walsh smacks his shoulder.

WALSH (CONT'D)
I'll give you a ride back to the spot.

DYLAN
Can't. Got to take care of some shit.

Walsh stares at Dylan probingly.

WALSH
Don't forget to take care of *yourself*.

With that, Walsh climbs into his car and takes off.

EXT. PROVIDENCE POLICE PRECINCT- DAY.

A black hoodie pulled low over his eyes, Dylan furtively approaches an imposing administrative building. POLICE CRUISERS line the parking the lot.

Dylan looks around to make sure no one is watching.

INT. POLICE STATION- DAY.

Dylan walks into the entrance bay of the station. Various COPS wait alongside OFFENDERS as they're processed.

Again, Dylan checks his surroundings cautiously before heading past the reception desk towards a door marked "PERSONNEL ONLY". A chubby **PATROLMAN** takes notice:

PATROLMAN
Hey! You can't go back there, sir.

DYLAN
What? Listen man, I...

The Patrolman's hand drifts towards his holster.

PATROLMEN

Step away from that door.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

Stand down, DeMarco.

They turn to find **CAPTAIN TAYLOR VAN ORDEN (33)**, a no-nonsense woman with an air of purpose. Hair in a bun, clad in a pantsuit.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

He's one of ours.

The Patrolman nods apologetically. Dylan follows Taylor as she walks through the personnel door into

INT. HALLWAY- DAY- CONTINUOUS.

They walk-and-talk down a hallway, swerving past various PLAIN-CLOTHES OFFICERS, hard at work.

DYLAN

Do I have to start calling ahead or what?

TAYLOR

To be fair, it's been a long time since anyone's seen you in uniform.

Taylor leads Dylan into

INT. TAYLOR'S OFFICE- DAY- CONTINUOUS.

Where we find **CORPORAL ALEX CARLYLE (29)**, short and musclebound with a military grade buzz-cut. He's sitting behind the desk, playing with a RUBBER BAND STRESS BALL.

TAYLOR

None of the other chairs in my office were good enough for you?

ALEX

(shrugging)

Got strong lumbar support.

Alex bounces to his feet. Then, he suddenly HURLS the Rubber-Band ball directly at Dylan's HEAD--

In a split second, Dylan turns and CATCHES IT.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Nice reflexes. Guess guys like you always gotta look over both shoulders, huh?

DYLAN
 (ignoring him, to Taylor)
 What's this about?

TAYLOR
 This man here was reported missing a
 couple days back.

Taylor swivels her monitor around to reveal a picture of
ANDREW, the man who was murdered in Dylan's dream.

FLASH-- Andrew SCREAMS as the KNIFE plunges into him.

In the present, Dylan struggles to conceal his shock.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
 Ring any bells?

DYLAN
 I...that's Andrew Polowski.

ALEX
Surprise, surprise...

TAYLOR
 Relax. He worked at our church growing
 up.

Taylor and Dylan share a look.

ALEX
 Well, he couldn't have been that
 religious. Turns out dude was a regular
 at one of Walsh's poker rooms. Maybe he
 got in over his head...

Dylan gets in Alex's face.

DYLAN
 I've been out there every day doing real
 investigative work so we can get Walsh on
 something *big*. If we bring some bedtime
 fairy tale case to the D.A., Walsh's
 lawyers will eat it for breakfast and
 this whole thing goes up in flames!

ALEX
 You've been in with Walsh's guys for 3
 years now. You know how many bodies we
 fished out of the Pawtuxet since then?
 From the evidence we've got off your
 intel, a jury would think he was fucking
 librarian--

TAYLOR

Alex.

(to Dylan)

We know undercover work takes time, but brass is starting to get impatient. If we don't nail Walsh soon, Eichner's gonna take this out of our hands...

DYLAN

O.K., you want info?! How's this-- Russians are running heroin through the County morgue. Walsh and co. are going there tomorrow night to knock it over.

Taylor processes this information, surprised.

TAYLOR

We'll get you bugged, have a squad on standby. If the drugs are there, give us the signal. We'll do the rest.

Dylan looks to Alex condescendingly.

DYLAN

Any more questions?

ALEX

Yeah. How the fuck do you sleep at night?

Stung, Dylan walks past Alex, leaving without a word. Taylor watches him go with muted concern.

INT. HOSPITAL- FATHER LEARY'S ROOM- NIGHT.

Dylan sits in a chair beside **FATHER LEARY (70s)**, a gaunt, withered man, lying prone in a hydraulic bed.

He's hooked up to a tangled mass of wires and tubes, IV and artificial respirators. A life supported by machines.

Dylan stares at Father Leary somberly. A beat. Then--

ANNETTE (O.S.)

Next shift's about to come on.

His reverie broken, Dylan turns to find **ANNETTE (40s)**, a pleasantly plump NURSE in loose-fitting scrubs.

DYLAN

Ever heard of knocking?

ANNETTE

Ever heard of "I could get fired for this bullshit"?

DYLAN

I'm sorry. It's...I still have a hard time seeing him like this. Even now.

ANNETTE

Honey, everyone who comes to this wing is having a hard time one way or another. Only difference is, they're *family*. You're just trespassing.

DYLAN

Father Leary took an oath. The kind that takes wives and children out of the equation. Should that mean he has to lay here alone for the rest of his life?

Annette sighs, acquiescing.

ANNETTE

Three minutes.

Annette shuffles back out. Dylan turns to Father Leary.

DYLAN

(sotto)

Bless me father, for I have sinned. I've lied to people who trust me with their lives. And I hurt a man...an innocent man who didn't deserve to be hurt.

Dylan tightens his grip on Father Leary's hand.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

But it's not what I've done. It's what I'm afraid I might do. *Might become...*

Then, Dylan looks up. Father Leary's eyes are closed. His mouth agape in a grotesque, permanent yawn. Dylan SCOFFS bitterly. He TAPS Father Leary's shoulder.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

I don't...there's no one home, is there?

Dylan abruptly starts forcefully SHAKING Father Leary.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Is there!?

Before he knows it, Dylan's hands are around Father Leary's NECK-- CHOKING HIM. Suddenly, we

FLASH TO:

INT. FROZEN REALM- CHURCH- ?

A refracted view of the inside of a CHURCH. Religious icons and furniture FLOAT through the air in slow-motion, almost like the whole scene is UNDERWATER.

We glide through the gloom, coming upon FATHER LEARY-- younger here, clad in his full clerical garb. He holds an ornate CRUCIFIX out towards us, shouting in Latin:

FATHER LEARY
Crux sacra sit mihi lux! Nunquam Satana!

REVERSE: Opposite Father Leary stands a pale **YOUNG BOY (8)**. His body is surrounded by a wavering plume of SULPHUROUS SMOKE. His eyes are closed.

FATHER LEARY (CONT'D)
Release this child! In the name of the
father, the son, and the holy spirit!

The Boy's eyelids pop open, revealing GREY MARBLES in the place of eyes.

YOUNG BOY
(strangely deep)
Never.

INT. HOSPITAL- FATHER LEARY'S ROOM- NIGHT- CONTINUOUS.

Dylan GASPS. Looks down to see his hands at Father Leary's neck. Horrified, he loosens his grip. Then--

Father Leary BOLTS upright, GRABBING Dylan by the throat!
His spindly fingers threaten to CRUSH Dylan's windpipe!

DYLAN
(choking)
Father Leary! No! I didn't mean to--

ANNETTE (O.S.)
The hell!?

Annette rushes in. She flicks on the LIGHTS to find--

Everything's normal. Dylan's still sitting in his chair. Father Leary is still very much comatose.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
You lost your mind hollering like that?

DYLAN
I...I don't know. He was...I have to go.

Dylan rushes past her, practically running out the door.

INT. SUV- NIGHT.

A visibly troubled Dylan sits in the backseat of a sleek Range Rover. He stares dead ahead, paying no mind to--

CARL (40s), a hulking refrigerator with neck tattoos, as he loudly berates **STEVIE (20s)**, the fresh-faced wannabe at the wheel.

CARL

Kid, are you autistic or something?

STEVIE

I told you, this guy won't let me merge.

CARL

Grow a pair and cut him off! How pussified are these millennials, huh?

Carl looks expectantly to Dylan, sitting in the passenger seat beside Stevie. Dylan doesn't even look up.

DYLAN

We get it Carl. He's green.

CARL

Oh, stop bein' so self-righteous. Know who you remind me of? You remind--

WALSH (O.S.)

Your wife.

Eyes turn to the back of the SUV, where we find WALSH, lying across the seat, blackout SLEEP MASK over his eyes.

WALSH (CONT'D)

(pulling down the mask)

The past dozen jobs we've pulled you've done nothing but bitch and moan about *Martika* and how she nags you and how she spoils the kid and you think she might be cheating with the--

CARL

(sotto)

The guy from the gym.

WALSH

The guy from the gym. And every time you tell the story I tell you to shut the ever-loving fuck up before I put a bullet through your skull. Ringing any *bells*?

Carl nods, cowed. Walsh hangs an arm over Dylan's seat.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Hey, champ. You been sleeping O.K.?

DYLAN

(turning)

I told you, I'm good. Just...y'know, want to get all this over with.

WALSH

Don't sweat it. In and out job.

Dylan doesn't respond. Walsh recedes into the backseat.

EXT. BABIKOV MORTUARY- NIGHT.

The SUV pulls into the parking lot of an Russian FUNERAL PARLOR, its facade written in both English and Cyrillic.

The gang piles out, all clad in tactical BLACK BODYSUITS, rolled up BAKLAVAS over their heads.

WALSH

Alright-- Dylan. What's our plan?

DYLAN

Go in. Grab the dope. Boogie.

Walsh withdraws his GLOCK. Dylan and Carl follow suit.

WALSH

(checking his watch)

1 sharp. That means they'll be unpacking a new shipment by the freight entrance.

STEVIE

Do I uh, do I get a gun, or...

CARL

Not until you grow taint hairs.

Stevie shrugs, saunters back into the car as the trio cagily sneak around back of the building.

EXT. BABIKOV MORTUARY- FREIGHT ENTRANCE- NIGHT.

Walsh, Dylan, and Carl look on from the wings as a trio of **RUSSIAN GOONS** unload empty COFFINS from a TRUCK.

Walsh counts down from three on leather-gloved fingers. Then, he leaps up, GUN bared--

BANG! Walsh FIRES, hitting one of the goons in the THROAT, killing him instantly as he BARRELS headlong through the open freight entrance and into the mortuary

The Goons draw bead, readying to shoot Walsh down when Dylan and Carl BURST forth from their hiding spot, weapons drawn. So commences a FIREFIGHT.

Carl and Dylan race towards the goons. Carl gets the drop on one of them, BLASTING him through the chest.

Dylan exchanges fire with the other goon, but his aim is faulty-- like he's *not trying* to hit his combatant.

Picking up the slack, Carl manages to lick off a shot, grazing the Second Goon in the shoulder-- but not before catching a stray round to the CALF.

As Carl BELLOWS in pain, the Second Goon sprints into the building, chasing after WALSH.

CARL
(to Dylan)
Go get him!

INT. BABIKOV MORTUARY- FOYER- NIGHT.

Dylan races into a floral-carpeted SITTING AREA, spotting a tail-glimpse of the RUSSIAN GOON as he races towards--

The open door to the EMBALMING ROOM. From within which harsh fluorescent lights cast a long shadow of WALSH, seemingly digging around for loot.

The Russian goon raises his gun as he nears the precipice of the room, ready to kill Walsh.

Without a moment to spare, Dylan ups his own pistol and FIRES, hitting the goon in the THIGH.

The Goon stumbles and falls to the floor, dropping his weapon. Dylan draws bead.

DYLAN
Don't move!

WALSH (O.S.)
Dylan! What's going out there!?

DYLAN
Nothing! I'm good! I got him...
(to the Goon)
Do not move or I'll shoot!

Ignoring his threats, the Goon scrambles for his gun. Dylan's finger wavers on the trigger.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
C'mon, don't. We can all go home--

Just as the Goon goes to GRAB the gun-- *BANG!* A bullet RIPS through his skull!

Dylan whips around to find CARL limping in, his pistol still leaking gunsmoke.

CARL

What the fuck was that? You were just gonna let him pop you?

Dylan struggles for a response. WALSH sticks his head out of the other room:

WALSH

Dylan, I need your help! Carl, go take down those security cameras out back!

CARL

Why do I gotta--

WALSH

Just fucking do it!

Carl goes huffing off as Dylan heads into--

INT. BABIKOV MORTUARY- EMBALMING ROOM- NIGHT- CONT'D.

Only to find himself facing ANDREW's naked corpse. He's propped up on an embalming table, innards visible through a SLICE in his CHEST.

Dylan's blanches in disgust as Walsh plunges his surgical-gloved HAND into the man's gaping wound, TUGGING inside Andrew's body, as though trying to PRY something loose.

After a beat, Walsh RECOILS, clenching his hand in PAIN.

WALSH

Fuckin' thing burned me!

DYLAN

What thing? That the H in there?

WALSH

Look, I lied. There are no drugs here. I'm after somethin' else...

DYLAN

Not followin' you, man.

WALSH

You will, I promise. But I need your help. Maybe you can get it out.

Walsh removes his bloody GLOVE, hands it over to Dylan.

DYLAN
Are you serious right now?

Walsh's WALKIE TALKIE blares:

STEVIE (O.S.)
Picked up something on the scanner! 5-0's
on their way!

WALSH
Dylan, what's in that fucker's stomach is
priceless, O.K.? I'm gonna cut you in...

DYLAN
It's not about the money. It's about
having to stick my hand into a fat dude's
fucking guts!

WALSH
Then do it for *me*! Alright? Do it for me?

Walsh's eyes brim with pleading sincerity. Dylan accepts
the glove, slaps it on as he trods over to the corpse.

DYLAN
Goddamn it! What am I even looking for?

WALSH
You'll know.

As Dylan draws nearer, he notices a faint, ethereal GLOW
emanating from within Andrew's wound. He grabs the loose
FLAP of the chest cavity, PEELING it back to find:

Nestled in between bloody cartilage and gristle sits a
small **GREY ORB**. It's smooth and rounded, with a glossy
finish-- like a sanded chunk of obsidian.

Dylan stares transfixed for a moment. Then, remembering
his task, he delicately reaches into the viscera.

WALSH (CONT'D)
Careful, now...

Dylan's fingers shakily snake around the ORB. He expects
a jolt of pain, but it never comes. Instead, he is easily
able to remove the orb from Andrew's body.

WALSH (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Yes! Fuckin' A, right! Now hold on to
that, put it in your pocket!

DYLAN
Wait, what *is it*? Why should--

STEVIE (O.S.)
 (on the Walkie)
 We got sirens boss! A couple blocks away!

WALSH
 No time, *take it!*

Dylan complies, pocketing the orb.

WALSH (CONT'D)
 And don't tell a *soul* about this.

CARL
 (bursting in)
 Sirens! Sirens, we gotta roll!

Carl clocks the strange scene, tilts his head.

CARL (CONT'D)
 We get the stash?

WALSH
 Not a fuckin' thing. They must have known
 we were coming. Let's go!

Walsh exchanges a subtle look with Dylan before they both
 SPRINT back out the door. Carl registers it.

INT. POLICE STATION- TAYLOR'S OFFICE- DAY.

The following afternoon. A worn-down Dylan sits opposite
 an empty desk. Cupped in his hands sits the GREY ORB.

He gazes at it with an obsessive quality. Then, the door
 OPENS and TAYLOR comes filing in with ALEX in tow. Dylan
 pockets the orb before they can see.

ALEX
 The prodigal son returns with his usual
 well done Nothing Burger.

Dylan says nothing. Taylor rounds the desk, sits down.

TAYLOR
 Dylan, you and I both know Lieutenant
 Carlyle is an asshole. So why do you keep
 proving him right?

DYLAN
 How was I supposed to know those drugs
 weren't gonna be there!?

ALEX

Again with the "who, me?" routine. You're lucky they wiped those security cameras...

TAYLOR

Save it!

(to Dylan)

We can't keep sweeping bodies under the rug, even if they are gangster scum. I put my ass on the line for this sting!

DYLAN

And I put my *life* on the line every fucking day! You tell me to get in deep with these assholes, then you turn around and say I'm in *too* deep. I mean--

TAYLOR

--I never said that--

DYLAN

But you thought it! I know you have.

ALEX

Well, you'd have to be an idiot *not* to after all these little "near-misses". Tell me, just how much off the top is your buddy Walsh giving you--

Dylan BOLTS out of his chair, gets up in Alex's face.

DYLAN

Run that shit by me again, cocksucker!

TAYLOR

Officer Boylan!

ALEX

(smiling)

There's Mr. Public Enemy. Right on time.

With a sneer, Alex walks out, leaving Dylan to simmer.

DYLAN

I'm sorry. That was...that was unprofessional. No excuses.

Taylor stands, approaches Dylan.

TAYLOR

Dylan, I'm worried about you.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Have you ever thought about
maybe...*talking* to someone?

DYLAN

I *do not* need a psych eval...the Chief's
already looking for a reason as it is.

TAYLOR

Hey. This is *me* talking, not your
superior. Tay from down the block.
Lambert Street and Legion Way.

Taylor gingerly touches Dylan's wrist.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I know what you went through. But even I
can't imagine what it must be like--

DYLAN

Then don't try.

Dylan turns and heads out the door. Taylor sighs.

EXT. ALLEYWAY- NIGHT.

Dylan stomps down a deserted alley on his way back home.
As he passes a row of DUMPSTERS, we glimpse of a DARK
FIGURE tracking him from the shadows.

For a moment, we make it out as something resembling
FATHER LEARY. But before we can tell for sure, it
disappears behind the next dumpster.

DYLAN

Who's there?

Nothing. Not even the ambience of traffic. He turns--

As none other than CARL suddenly LEAPS out in front of
him. Startled, Dylan instinctively jumps back.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Chist, don't sneak up on me like that!

CARL

Better check your drawers, hoss.

(chuckling)

Didn't know you hung out downtown
much...where you comin' from?

DYLAN

Corner of "none of" avenue and "your
fuckin' business" boulevard.

Dylan goes to walk, but Carl BLOCKS his path.

CARL

What did Walsh give you last night at the mortuary?

DYLAN

Huh? What are you--

Carl SHOVES Dylan hard against the wall, grabbing him by the collar. Dylan squirms against his iron grasp.

CARL

Guess you got so far up Walsh's ass that you ended up getting in his ear, huh? Told him that he'd be better off cutting the rest of us out? That it?

WHAM! Carl PUNCHES Dylan in the face, drawing blood.

CARL (CONT'D)

You got it on you now? I'll bet you do...

Carl begins roughly PATTING down Dylan's pants.

DYLAN

Get the fuck off me!

Carl GRINS as he removes the ORB from Dylan's pocket.

CARL

Pretty snazzy? This some kinda jewel or--

Suddenly imbued with UNNATURAL STRENGTH, Dylan HURLS Carl off of him, sending him FLYING across the alleyway like a rag-doll, SMASHING into one of the dumpsters.

Before Carl can even look up, Dylan's PINNING him down. Dylan speaks in a GRAVELY VOICE, far deeper than his own.

DYLAN

Poor Carl. What a pussy whipped little cuck you are. Don't take it out on me that your wife has you by the balls. Why don't you take it out on her...

Suddenly, Dylan's EYES flash SLATE-GREY for a beat-- the same color as the Orb. Carl meets his gaze blankly, seemingly under some HYPNOTIC SPELL.

After a beat, it breaks. Carl scampers away. Dylan seems dazed, as if returning from an out of body experience.

He looks at his hands. Then, his gaze lolls to discarded old MIRROR, laying disposed of in the gutter. A CRACK runs through it, bisecting his fraught reflection.

INT. MOTHER OF MERCY HOSPITAL- HALLWAY- NIGHT.

James trods up to the receptionist desk, manned by ANNETTE-- at moment engaged in an Instagram video.

DYLAN

What are you watching?

ANNETTE

This crazy bitch beating the shit out of some old lady at an IHOP.

(looking up)

I'll give you two minutes. In and out.

DYLAN

Two minutes? I really was hoping to spend some time with him tonight.

ANNETTE

Patients complained about you the other night. Had to give extra pudding cups to half the floor to keep 'em from snitching, so, yeah-- two minutes.

James nods, walks down the corridor, coming to a stop outside Father Leary's room. He takes a deep breath, then opens the door. But as he steps through the precipice--

The fabric of Dylan's BACK PANTS POCKET (the one containing the ORB) stretches out as if tethered to an unseen hook, before RIPPING open--

Dylan looks back to find the ORB FLOATING IN MIDAIR behind him, FROZEN just outside of Leary's room-- as if unable to enter.

DYLAN

No fucking way.

Dylan approaches the Orb in wonder. He gently plucks it out of the air. But when he turns back--

FATHER LEARY IS STANDING UP, INCHES AWAY FROM HIM.

His eyes grey, his mouth open, just like before. This time he SPEAKS-- in a thin, twisted voice:

FATHER LEARY

Deceiver of men!

DYLAN

No...no, this isn't real!

FATHER LEARY

He is you. You are he. Dylan. Dylan...

Father O'Leary GLIDES towards him like a marionette on strings. Terribly slowly. Dylan SHUTS his EYES.

ANNETTE (O.S.)

Dylan!

Dylan OPENS his eyes to find the scene has RESET. Leary still lies comatose. The orb is still in his pocket. Annette looks at Dylan like he's sprouted a third eye.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

You on bath salts or something?

Dylan steadies himself against the wall. A beat.

DYLAN

Annette, do you believe in...*ghosts*?
Spirits, demons, that kinda shit?

ANNETTE

I don't think ghosts are real...

(beat)

But that don't mean people can't be
haunted. You know what I'm saying?

Dylan takes this in.

DYLAN

I think I do. Thank you...

With a curt nod, Dylan walks past Annette and back down the hallway. She watches him go, shaking her head.

INT. CARL'S APARTMENT- KITCHEN- NIGHT.

A cramped walk-up. CARL leans against the kitchen counter, sipping a bottle of Corona. His eyes betray nothing-- a void, absent all emotion as they BORE into

His wife, **MARTIKA (40s)**, prattling on as she puts a pot of water to BOIL. Beside her, a whole CHICKEN sits on a cutting board, wrapped in parchment.

MARTIKA

Marco's teacher said he's been using the
"f-word" in class. Where do you think he
might have picked that one up?

Carl says nothing, glances across the room at **MARCO (4)**, their curly-haired son, as he absently taps at a Gameboy.

MARTIKA (CONT'D)

Carl?! Are you even listening to me?

Shaking her head, the wife unwraps the CHICKEN.

MARTIKA (CONT'D)

I need to debone this thing. Can you at
make yourself useful for a change and
hand me those scissors over there?

The wife gestures to a gnarly pair of POULTRY SHEARS in a wooden block. Carl unsheathes them by the handle.

Slowly, he approaches his wife with the shears. Blade end-out. He draws closer. Closer--

MARTIKA (CONT'D)

(looking up, casual)

You're gonna hand them to me like that?
Christ, even Marco knows better.

The Wife clucks disapprovingly as Carl casually flips the shears over, giving them to her by the handle. The tension dissipates as she prepares the chicken.

MARTIKA (CONT'D)

And I guess you haven't sent in the
electric bill yet either, right? What,
one late notice wasn't enough--

Abruptly, Carl POUNCES, grabbing his wife by the hair and

DUNKING her HEAD into the BOILING POT OF WATER!

As the SCREAMS bubble forth, MARCO looks up in abject HORROR, scarred permanently in a fraction of a second--

MARCO

Mommy!? MOMMY!!!

CUT TO:

A grisly crime scene photo of what used to be a CARL's WIFE's HEAD-- now a clumpy mass of striated FLESH PULP.

INT. POLICE STATION- OBSERVATION ROOM- DAY- CONTINUOUS.

ALEX displays the grotesque picture to DYLAN as they stand in a cramped, dimly-lit cube, facing a

TWO WAY MIRROR. Behind it lies a spare INTERROGATION ROOM. Therein we see CARL, handcuffed to a steel table.

DYLAN

And the kid?

Alex shakes his head grimly, goes to withdraw another PHOTO from his stack.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

No. I don't want to see it.

TAYLOR enters, a few other plain-clothes OFFICERS trailing in behind her.

TAYLOR

Any change?

ALEX

Sick fuck hasn't said a word since we brought him in.

TAYLOR

(to Dylan)

And you're still 100 percent on this being out of character?

DYLAN

Guy's a knuckle-dragger, for sure. I'd buy beating his wife. But *this*? There's something off here.

Alex opens the partition door, entering the INTERROGATION ROOM. We watch the scene from behind the two-way mirror.

He smacks down the CRIME SCENE PHOTOS on the table in front of Carl, expecting a reaction. But none comes.

ALEX

Guess I don't need to tell you just how *fucked* you are.

Alex SLAPS Carl across the back of his head.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Cause buddy, your life is capital F-U-C-K-E-and a the "D" stands for black dick turning your ass into a Red Velvet cupcake up at Souza Supermax.

Dylan grinds his teeth anxiously. Carl plays it cool.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Out of my own morbid curiosity, I gotta ask...why? Why did you do it? *Huh?*

A silent beat. Carl slowly raises his head as if about to speak. Then, all of a sudden--

Carl YANKS his arm sideways with such force that it TEARS LOOSE the bolted-on LEG of the TABLE he's cuffed to!

Then, Carl HURLS the table across the room with one hand, SMASHING it into Alex before he can grab for his sidearm.

TAYLOR
 (to the Officers)
 Get in there! Now!

The other Officers go to rush the Interrogation Room, only to find the door LOCKED from inside.

Dylan leaps into action, grabbing his GUN and going to SHOOT out the lock for the door. But before he can--

CARL
 (unnaturally deep)
*Do you truly want to know why I spilled
 their blood?*

All eyes turn to Carl. His face contorts into a hideous grin as he POINTS directly at DYLAN.

CARL (CONT'D)
I did it because he told me to.

Dylan's mouth drops as Taylor's eyes burn into him. Before he can react, Carl lifts aloft the TABLE LEG--

SLASHING the snapped end clean through his own THROAT. A TORRENT of BLOOD sprays out, COATING the two-way mirror!

CHAOS erupts. Officers finally BASH through the interrogation room door, pouring inside, guns drawn. Taylor SCREAMS into her walkie:

TAYLOR
We need medical to interrogation! Now!

In a daze, Dylan stumbles towards the EXIT.

ALEX (O.S.)
 Hands up!

Dylan turns to find ALEX standing behind him, GUN drawn.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 You know we can't let you leave now.

A beat. Then, Dylan nods, raising his hands. Harried, Taylor re-enters the room, noticing:

TAYLOR
 (sotto, to Alex)
 Not here.

INT. POLICE STATION- ALEX'S OFFICE- NIGHT.

Alex herds Dylan into a cramped cubicle in the bowels of the building as Taylor brings up the rear.

TAYLOR

What part of this story have you been leaving out?

DYLAN

Listen, If I could tell you, I would--

TAYLOR

(blowing up)

When Flaherty hears this incident report, he'll get Internal Affairs on us like *that*, so there is no *could* in this equation. You will tell us what the fuck you know!

Alex nods-- *about time*. Dylan glances away, stung by Taylor's harsh rebuke. Then, he summons courage.

DYLAN

After the mortuary job, Walsh takes me aside. He tells me--

Just as Dylan is about to spill the beans, his PHONE RINGS. It's WALSH.

Dylan, Taylor and Alex exchange fraught glances.

TAYLOR

(to Alex)

Get the tap running.

Sighing, Alex rushes over to his COMPUTER. He turns it on and quickly initializes mobile SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM. Via BlueTooth, it quickly connects to Dylan's PHONE.

Taylor gives Dylan a meaningful nod. He picks up.

WALSH (O.S.)

Where are you right now?

Dylan pauses, trying not to miss a step.

DYLAN

I'm...at the pizza spot on Wilburn.

A loaded beat. *Did Walsh buy it?*

WALSH (O.S.)

I need you at *home*. ASAP.

DYLAN

Like, *right* now?

Click. Walsh hangs up. Dylan glances up expectantly.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

You heard him. If I don't show he'll know something's up.

Taylor chews her lip, weighs it. Alex balks:

ALEX

You're can't really be considering letting him go, are you!? You gotta be--

TAYLOR

I am your superior officer. I can and will do what I think is right.

(to Dylan)

If you can't get Walsh in a room with product this time, we're taking him in with what we got and hoping it sticks.

DYLAN

Meaning you're tagging me there?

Taylor nods. Dylan knows it's his only option.

EXT. HARRIS AVENUE MILL- NIGHT.

A vacant textile mill, moored in a sea of overgrown weeds. It's brick facade COVERED in graffiti murals.

DYLAN cuts a lone figure as he walks up the path to the building. After a beat, he glances anxiously at a looming patch of hickory trees adjacent to the property.

Through the gloom, a green BEAM of light flickers twice.

REVEAL: The source of the light is the LASER SIGHT on the assault rifle. One of a dozen present, all worn by a SWAT TEAM, staked out amidst the trees.

SWAT TEAM MEMBER

(sotto)

Eyes on Canarie.

Dylan nods, glancing subtly down his shirt, where a thin SURVEILLANCE WIRE sits taped to his chest.

ALEX (O.S.)

(via radio)

Ears are up and running.

With a deep, steeling breath, Dylan heads up and enters--

INT. HARRIS AVENUE MILL- NIGHT.

Where he finds himself immediately face-to-face with WALSH, sitting atop a rusted old piece of machinery.

Surrounding him are a handful (6-7) of **GOONS**-- gangbangers, tweakers, and everything in between.

The lone familiar face is STEVIE, the green youngster from the mortuary. He looks more than a bit on edge.

Walsh hops off the machine, striding over to Dylan.

WALSH

How was the pizza?

Before Dylan can respond, a loud CLANG sounds from behind him. He looks back to see one of the goons slamming shut the main ENTRANCE to the mill. Walsh waits for an answer.

DYLAN

Eh, you know Sal's. Sauce to cheese ratio was all wrong.

WALSH

Sal's? Jeez, I heard that place was filthy. Heard they had rats.
(smiling)
I know the feeling.

Everyone clams up. A black cloud of tension swirls. Dylan's poker face wavers as Walsh turns to the mob.

WALSH (CONT'D)

See I knew Carl. Well enough to know that even though he had the motive, he would never do what they're pinning him for.

Walsh reaches into his back holster, removing a big .45 REVOLVER. Dylan's breathing picks up speed.

WALSH (CONT'D)

That means someone had Carl set up. Someone who had a vested interest in seeing...all *this* put under a microscope. I know, because when I know someone, I know them front to back and side to goddamn side.

Despite Dylan's prayers, Walsh now turns to face *him*.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Take *Dylan* here, for instance.

Walsh reaches out a HAND, inching it towards Dylan's chest-- towards the wire. This is it. Dylan's every muscle tenses. Ready to face the end.

WALSH (CONT'D)

He's got *heart*.

Walsh places his hand on Dylan's LEFT breastplate. Missing the wire by *inches*.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Don't you, Dyl?

DYLAN

I...try.

WALSH

That's right. We all have to try. There's no excuse.

Walsh whips around, training his gun on young STEVIE.

WALSH (CONT'D)

No excuse for *weakness*.

He FIRES--

And the bullet BOUNCES off Stevie's chest like it's made of titanium ore!

Walsh blinks incredulously along with the rest of the room, unable to process what's just happened. Everyone, that is, except for Dylan.

Stevie looks up to reveal those familiar SLATE GREY EYES. In an instant, he seems TALLER, more SINEWY. He SNARLS like a cornered animal, crouching on his haunches...

DYLAN

Walsh, *run!*

Too late. Stevie POUNCES, imbued with supernatural strength and agility, just as Dylan was!

Walsh lifts his gun, but Stevie easily WRENCHES it from his hand, SNAPPING it in two.

Stevie GRABS walsh by the leg, HURLING him into the side of a large STEAM PIPE with such force that it blows a BOLT, filling the room with pluming STEAM.

ALEX (O.S.)

(through Dylan's EARPIECE)

Dylan, what the fuck is going on in there!? We can't get a visual!?

Dylan draws his GUN. Around him, the various GOONS fan out in pursuit of Stevie. But, one by one, they are--

TAKEN OUT, their SCREAMS truncated in a flash of gristle as Stevie appears and re-appears like a demonic Batman, picking off Goons to the left and right of Dylan.

ALEX (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Fuck this, we're moving in!

DYLAN
(sotto)
Wait! Not yet!

Nothing but STATIC comes through. Then, from the fog:

WALSH (O.S.)
Dylan!? That you! I think he's comin'--

A CRY of pain echoes through the steam just ahead, silencing Walsh. But we can't make out what's there.

DYLAN
Walsh? *Walsh!*?

A quiet beat. Then, suddenly, The SHREDDED CORPSE of a GOON plummets from the CEILING in front of Dylan!

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Holy fucking shit!

Dylan SHOOTS in the direction of the corpse, instead hitting an overhead WINDOW. The FOG filters out into the night air, revealing a scene of CARNAGE:

The lucky goons lie on the floor, incapacitated by surface wounds. The others are FLAYED to pieces, BODY PARTS strewn about the mill like Christmas ornaments.

In the center of it all, we find POSSESSED STEVIE, standing tall, CRADLING a prone Walsh in his arms. He RAISES him up in sacrificial gesture, then lifts his KNEE. He's going to break Walsh's BACK in HALF.

Dylan aims his GUN at Stevie.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Stevie! Don't do this! This isn't you!

Suddenly, Stevie seems to SOFTEN. The grey tone disappears from his eyes. He looks around in confusion, limply placing Walsh down on the ground.

STEVIE
Where am I? I don't understand...

Dylan loosens his grip on the gun. As Stevie talks, the ORB begins to again LEVITATE from Dylan's back pocket.

STEVIE (CONT'D)

Oh my God, what happened to the guys? Are they gonna be--

Stevie TRAILS OFF as he notices the floating ORB. In an instant, the GREY returns to his eyes as he--

MORPHS into a HIDEOUS, HORNED CREATURE WITH A SHARK LIKE JAW. It LEAPS towards Dylan. And he FIRES--

As the bullet exits the chamber, the floating ORB swoops down, DIRECTLY into the line of fire.

CLOSE ON: The BULLET is *SUBSUMED* by the orb, turning it into a PROJECTILE, which then--

BLASTS into the creature, LIQUEFYING it on contact! A shimmery SILVER-GREY pool of formless SLUDGE.

Dylan and Walsh look on in amazement as this pool roils in on itself, REFORMING into a thin, silver ROD-- six inches across, with a rounded SPIRAL pattern on one end.

WALSH

I knew it. I just *knew it...*

Dylan turns back to find STEVIE, lying dead on the floor in front of him. A bullet through the heart. He looks as *NORMAL* as can be. Dylan can't believe his eyes.

BANG! The Mill's door is BLOWN OPEN as the full SWAT TEAM comes pouring in.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Motherfuckers!

The remaining two goons groggily rise, reaching for their weapons. Walsh cracks open a nearby briefcase, removing an M-16 automatic rifle.

In SLOW MOTION: Walsh SCREAMS a war cry, his finger about to pull the trigger. Before Dylan can react--

His legs GIVE WAY from under him. He COLLAPSES to the ground as a wave of GUNFIRE rattles forth.

BLACK.

INT. POLICE STATION- DRUNK TANK- DAY.

Dylan groggily comes to. He attempts to move only to find that he's HANDCUFFED to a mattress. In a CELL.

CHIEF EICHNER (O.S.)

I don't know what these degenerates are complaining about. This is comfortable.

Dylan glances over, where **CHIEF EICHNER (60s)**, a tall, imposing figure with a neatly trimmed mustache and a shock-grey buzz-cut, sits on the COT opposite him.

CHIEF EICHNER (CONT'D)

Guess times have changed. Now it's all about "restraint". Shoot a spook robbing a liquor store and you've got marches in the streets.

DYLAN

(dazed, looking around)

Taylor?

CHIEF EICHNER

The lieutenant is upstairs recovering from the ass kicking I just handed her.

DYLAN

Chief...Chief, wait. Did you see? Tell me you saw what happened back there!?

CHIEF EICHNER

Negative. We lost comms from that steampipe. But I saw enough to know that a sting just blew up in our face! Now I'm looking at a massacre in downtown Providence plastered on every front page in the city. An undercover officer on *my* force shooting an unarmed kid dead!

DYLAN

No, no...Stevie...he *wasn't*...

Dylan can't find the right words to explain.

CHIEF EICHNER

Now, I have gone out on a limb for you. I put a hold on processing the ballistics on your gun, lost some paperwork to throw the press for a loop. But that dam will not hold forever.

DYLAN

What do you want?

CHIEF EICHNER

I don't want. I *need* a W on this. I can buy you one week's worth of red tape. One week to go crawling back to Walsh and get me the evidence I need to bring him down.

DYLAN

After *this*? Walsh isn't braindead. What if he's made me by now? You ever see what a corpse looks like when they dredge it out of the river? It--

CHIEF EICHNER

Looks like a bar of soap. Skin comes off in sheets.

(scoffing)

If you *don't* get me Walsh, so help me God I will let Internal Affairs tear you to pieces. For every line you've crossed *and* every line *we've* crossed to save your ass. Could be 30 years. We clear?

Dylan says nothing, grimly processing this news.

DYLAN

They find anything at the scene? Anything...weird?

CHIEF EICHNER

Not unless you consider brain matter weird.

(checking his watch)

Your week starts now.

Chief Eichner tosses Dylan a HANDCUFF KEY, walks off.

Dylan glares at him spitefully as he leaves. Beat. He goes to open the cuffs when he pauses. Hearing something like a faint WHISPER from within the cell.

DYLAN

Hello? Is that--

Suddenly, Dylan's words are CUT SHORT. He begins HACKING as though there's something STUCK in his throat. CHOKING.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Help...help...

With a POP, Dylan's JAW DISTENDS, opening wider than it ever should. Dylan's eyes bulge, as he looks down to see--

THE SILVER ROD-- squirming it's way up his WINDPIPE and crowning out of his snapped open MOUTH.

Dylan watches in rapt terror as the Rod PLOPS into his hands, slithering with grey VISCERA.

His angst is slowly replaced with an odd CALM as he stares into the placid sheen of the rod's exterior.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

Oh, thank God!

TAYLOR comes running in. Dylan quickly tosses the Rod under his cot as she throws her arms around him. After a beat, Taylor realizes she's overstepped, backs off.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Dylan, you gotta tell me what happened back there. I know something was wrong. More wrong than the report says.

DYLAN

You wouldn't believe me if I did.

TAYLOR

That's not fair.

Dylan stands, goes to walk past Taylor. She stops him.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Eichner put me on paid leave. He took me off the case.

DYLAN

What? Are you serious?

TAYLOR

Deadly. Feds are involved.

This gets Dylan's attention.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Apparently they found some kind of chemical material at the mill. They think Walsh might be involved.

DYLAN

What, like, selling it?

TAYLOR

No one knows.

DYLAN

(troubled)

I've...I've gotta go.

Dylan brushes past Taylor, heading out the door. A beat. Then he comes speed-walking back.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

And Tay? I'm real sorry. For everything.

Dylan reaches out and HUGS Taylor, then rushes back out.

EXT. TANNER'S STEAK & CHOPS- NIGHT.

Dylan approaches a decrepit GREASY SPOON behind a strip mall. He untacks the "CLOSED" sign on the front door, finding nestled behind it a small KEY.

Using the key, he unlocks the door and creeps inside.

INT. TANNER'S STEAK & CHOPS- NIGHT.

The banal locale takes on an air of menace in the moonlight. Dylan goes to hit the light switch, but it doesn't work.

He fumbles for his phone in the blackness, eventually turning on the FLASHLIGHT--

Illuminating a PALE, **THIN MAN** IN A BLACK CLOAK standing just FEET AWAY!

But before Dylan notices him, an old ROTARY PHONE rings behind the counter. Startled, Dylan DROPS his cell, again drowning the room in blackness.

DYLAN

Shit!

Dylan fumbles for his cell as the ringing phone suddenly STOPS mid-ring. Dylan looks up, jarred. Then, a very SOFT and very DELICATE VOICE sounds from JUST BEHIND HIM.

VOICE (THIN MAN)
(answering the phone)

Hello.

Dylan WHIPS around, drawing his PISTOL. The JUKEBOX suddenly slams ON, playing a low, warbling version of Pat Boone's "MOODY RIVER."

DYLAN

Who's there!?

No response. Dylan gradually walks forward. Then, in a flash, the Jukebox is UPTURNED, smashing to the floor as the THIN MAN leaps out from behind it--

TACKLING Dylan to the ground, sending his gun sprawling.

Dylan sees the man is bald and ghostly pale, with a strange OCCULT SYMBOL TATTOO running up his NECK-- it resembles a thin LINE with two SPIRALS on either end and a small TRIANGLE in the middle.

From his robes he withdraws a thin GARROT WIRE.

THIN MAN

The Order must prevail, Unifier! The four pieces can never coalesce.

The Thin Man begins brutally CHOKING Dylan with the wire. Just as all hope seems lost--

BAM! A GUNSHOT rings out. The Thin Man seizes with pain before COLLAPSING right on top of Dylan. Dead.

Dylan glances up to find WALSH standing opposite him. He's flanked by his two remaining GOONS, **CARTI (20s)**, an obese black guy and **WEASEL (30s)**, a strung out junkie.

WALSH

Who's this *Da Vinci Code* reject and how'd he get in here?

DYLAN

I dunno. Maybe the Russians sent him?
(standing)
No hello?

WALSH

I was waiting for a "thank you for saving my life".

DYLAN

Guess that makes us even.

Dylan extends a hand, testing the waters. Walsh gives him a once over, then shakes it. Walsh then removes a FLASK from his pocket, takes a deep pull.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Fuck me. Last night...the whole thing feels like a dream.

DYLAN

More like a nightmare. You left me to *die*.

WALSH

Excuse me? It's not my responsibility to keep you alive, Dylan! Fuck knows I've acted like it is over the years, but when ...whatever in the high holy *fuck* happened last night happens? It's every man for himself.

DYLAN

(shrugging)
Well, here I am.

Walsh grips a bit tighter on his pistol.

WALSH

You seemed down for the count when those cops came in. How exactly *did* you manage to get out of there?

DYLAN

They noticed that grey shit. Got panicky-- heard 'em throw around "chemical weapons" a few times. Gave me a window.

WALSH

Chemical weapons?

Cartier pipes up:

CARTIER

I dunno, bro, I think it was a government experiment, though, for real. Illuminati, *Stranger Things* type shit.

WEASEL

Man shut up. That was *fa sho-fa sho* some extraterrestrial contact. They prolly been living among us all along!

DYLAN

Got anything to add about 9/11 while you're at it?

(to Walsh)

This isn't a conspiracy theory. You and me both saw the same thing.

WALSH

(nodding, distracted)

You two get this weirdo out of here.

Cartier and Weasel pick up the dead Thin Man and drag him out the back door. Dylan stares intensely at Walsh.

WALSH (CONT'D)

They're gone. Now, level with me: what the *hell* was that guy after you for?

DYLAN

You know *exactly* what he was after.

Dylan aggressively pulls out the ROD, holds it out right in front of Walsh's FACE.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

This...*thing* is pure evil. It's caused all of this. *You* caused all of this. The least you can give me is an explanation.

Walsh just stares. A beat. He goes to touch the Orb, but it SINGES his fingertips on contact, BURNING the skin.

WALSH

You're right.

As the Orb PULSATES, we

ENTER FLASHBACK:

QUICK CUTS:

1) Walsh, in his OFFICE. Plowing away at an attractive young Latina doggy-style. The phone rings, he picks up.

WALSH (V.O.)

Got a call from one of my tenants at the walk-up on Eastbay. Old guinea pensioner named Valenti.

2) MR VALENTI, the old man we briefly glimpsed in the dream-murder earlier, rambles heatedly into his phone.

WALSH

He was having problems with his next door neighbor. Said he was chanting in Latin at all hours. This smell like a dead animal was coming through the wall.

We GLIDE THROUGH the WALL--

Into the apartment NEXT DOOR, where we find **ANDREW**, the man who was murdered in the opening scene.

However, here, he's kneeling over a bloody GOAT'S HEAD, waving a burning bundle of HERBS as he SHOUTS an incantation in some long-dead tongue.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Now, I went by this Polowski's unit but he wouldn't answer. The guy's bad for business, so I send Carl over there.

A KNOCK at the door. Andrew simply LOOKS in it's direction and it opens, seemingly of it's own accord. There, in the doorway, stands CARL.

WALSH (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

One and done, right?

3) Back at Walsh's office, CARL comes trudging in, WHITE as a sheet, a GLAZED OVER look in his eye.

WALSH (CONT'D)

But when he came back, Carl looked like he'd just seen a ghost. *Of a ghost.*

Walsh gets up, waving his hand in front of Carl's face.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Now, I'm not gonna say that's what made him do what he did to his wife. But I *will* say that after Carl came back, I sent *Stevie* over to Polowski next.

4) Polowski's apartment. The door practically FLIES open to show a cowering Stevie on the precipice.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Needless to say that didn't go well.

5) Back at Walsh's office, Stevie lies on the COUCH in a cold sweat, SHIVERING. He THROWS UP into the trash-can.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Now I'm thinking, you want something done you do it yourself, right? This guy wants to get spooky, we'll go there.

Walsh walks over to the CLOSET, opening it up.

WALSH (CONT'D)

So I grab this old mask I had for paintball. With a--

DYLAN

With a skull on it.

As Walsh withdraws the familiar SKULL MASK that the killer wore in the opening sequence, we--

END FLASHBACK

INT. TANNER'S STEAK & CHOPS- NIGHT.

Dylan can't believe what he's hearing.

WALSH

How the hell'd you know?

DYLAN

I *dreamt* it. I dreamt the whole thing.
(standing, pacing)
You tailed him. Waited until he left to go to the supermarket. Then you snuck in through the back window and hid in the closet. There was a struggle, then you chased him out onto the fire escape and pushed him onto the driveway--

WALSH

Woah, woah. You got it all wrong. Actually...no, you got it *scary right*. I don't know how but...

(MORE)

WALSH (CONT'D)

(beat)

You got one part wrong. I was just trying to scare him. It was Polowski came after me, not the other way around.

FLASH BACK:

EXT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT- NIGHT.

Out on the driveway, just like the ending of Andrew's dream. But this time, it's ANDREW who's on top of the mask-clad Walsh, inches away from contact.

The Black BRIEFCASE sprawled open on the ground next to him is filled here with PARCHMENTS and MANIC SCRAWLINGS, rather than 100 dollar bills.

They wrestle for the knife, and Walsh manages at the last minute to overpower Andrew, forcing the knife back around and STABBING him in the abdomen.

WALSH (V.O.)

Self defense. But then all of a sudden--

DYLAN (V.O.)

The *hand*.

Then, just as in Dylan's dream, the GREY, SPINDLY CLAW just forth from Andrew's WOUND, grabbing Walsh's ARM!

WALSH

Jesus. I guess that is what it was.

As Walsh SHOUTS in alarm, the hand releases him from its grasp. It's spindly FINGERS unfurl, revealing in its palm--

THE ORB, as we first saw it. Walsh regards it carefully, uncertainty tinged with allure.

ANDREW, barely clinging to life, moans in desperation.

ANDREW

No...not for you...for Dylan. *For Dylan!*

The Orb SHIMMERS in the light, as though calling to Walsh. He reaches out tentatively to grab it, when--

SIRENS echo from down the block. A POLICE CRUISER barrels around the corner, heading towards the complex.

Spooked, Walsh DROPS the orb back into Andrew's chest cavity, before taking off RUNNING.

FLASH OUT:

INT. TANNER'S STEAK & CHOPS- NIGHT.

Dylan absorbs this information as Walsh lights a cigarette, exhales a plume of smoke.

DYLAN

That's it? I just told you I saw this whole thing happen in my fucking *dream* and you're sitting there smoking like I said I had heartburn or something!

WALSH

I've given up trying to understand. Soon as I took one look at that thing I knew it was *big*. Bigger than everything.

DYLAN

And so you brought it into my life without telling me? Without letting me know that it was *after me*?!

WALSH

I made a fuckin' mistake! I see that now. Dylan, I've always known you were special. Ever since you were a kid and everything that happened...I know you've been looking for something. A sign. And somehow, I thought this might be it. You gotta believe me.

Enraged, Dylan pushes up into Walsh's face:

DYLAN

I don't "gotta" do anything for you! Not now, not ever again after this *fuckin'--*

CLICK. Dylan glances over his shoulder, where CARTIER and WEASEL stand with guns drawn.

WALSH

You don't wanna hear it from me? Fine. I get it. How about let's go to the source?

Walsh waves down Cartier and Weasel. He pushes past Dylan, treading out of the restaurant. Shaking his head, Dylan follows after him..

MR. VALENTI (PRE-LAP)

Any a' you fellas want some Joe?

INT. MR. VALENTI'S APARTMENT- NIGHT.

MR. VALENTI, clad in his PJs, pours a cup of coffee and takes a seat at the table. Opposite him sits WALSH and DYLAN. Cartier and Weasel perch by the windowsill.

WALSH

No thanks. Just answers.

MR. VALENTI

Right, what was the question again? Sorry my brains like a goddamn sieve these days. Hope it's not that Alzheimers.

WALSH

Just tell my friend here how it went with Polowski. Did it go like I said or not?

MR. VALENTI

Sure it did. He was down there day and night shouting that creepy mumbo jumbo.

DYLAN

What sort of thing was Polowski saying?

MR. VALENTI

When I could make out any English, sounded like he was rambling on about "the four pieces" and "the unifier". "The four pieces must be kept apart. The unifier must be destroyed". Wack-a-doo...

Dylan takes this in.

DYLAN

"The unifier". That's what that guy with the robe called me back at Tanner's mentioned these "four pieces" too...

Just then, the DOORBELL rings.

WALSH

You expecting someone?

Mr. Valenti shakes his head. Walsh nods to Cartier and Weasel. They approach the door, open it to reveal--

A kindly, hunched **OLD LADY (70s)**. She smiles innocently.

WALSH (CONT'D)

(to Mr. Valenti)

Hot date?

MR. VALENTI

Not that I know of.

Walsh waves off Cartier and Weasel.

WALSH

Can I help you ma'am?

OLD LADY

Yes, someone called me up and said I'd won me a cash prize. Said I had to come down to this address to claim it.

WALSH

I see. Ms., I think you've been had.

OLD LADY

(ignoring him, dreamlike)

May I come in? My feet are awful sore.

Though the Old Lady is replying to Walsh, she stares directly at Dylan, not breaking eye contact for a second.

DYLAN

(sotto)

Walsh, don't.

WALSH

Sure, lady, you can come in for a--

Before Walsh can spit it out, the Old Lady MORPHS into a hideous DEMONIC CREATURE, much like the one Stevie turned into before!

Cartier goes for his gun, only to have the creature GRAB his FACE with a gnarled claw, TEARING the flesh clean off to expose the screaming SKULL beneath!

Panicking, Weasel FIRES a shot at the Creature, but the bullet has little effect.

The creature TEARS the DOOR clean off it's frame, using it as a cudgel-- SMASHING Weasel into the opposite wall, crushing him to death instantly.

Mr. Valenti CLUTCHES his chest in shock before KEELING OVER from an apparent HEART ATTACK.

As the Creature rears up, Walsh panics, grabbing for his gun. Dylan puts up a hand to stop him--

DYLAN

I got this!

Walsh steps back. The Creature growls low and slow, circling Dylan like a shark.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

It's me you want. Here I am...

Dylan removes the SILVER ROD from his pocket, gripping it tight in his balled fist. As he does so, a subtle GLOWING SHEEN envelops his body. Like a halo at half-gradient.

The Creature POUNCES, hideously gnarled CLAWS bared. We anticipate deadly impact, but instead--

WHAM! Dylan lands a HAYMAKER to the Beast's head, sending it sprawling back. Walsh looks up in surprise.

Relishing his new-found strength, Dylan SMASHES off a block of the Marble KITCHEN COUNTER like it's play-do, HURLING it down onto the stunned Creature's abdomen.

But, from therein, a *third HAND* springs forth, just like the one within ANDREW! It CATCHES the Marble block in mid-air, knocking Dylan him onto his back.

Dylan loses his grip on the ROD, letting it clang across the room. With it, disappears his glowing AURA.

The Creature bears down upon him, DROOL plopping from it's thin gums as it opens its MAW, long, serpentine TONGUE lolling out.

WALSH

Heads up!

Walsh grabs a BROOM, using it to whack the ROD back across the room into Dylan's grip! Upon grabbing it, the aura returns, as does the POWER--

He reaches up and GRABS the Creature's TONGUE, YANKING it clear out of it's MOUTH, ripping open the beast's MUCUS MEMBRANE and tearing it's entire HEAD in twain.

As with Stevie before it, this Creature ERUPTS into another swirling MASS of Greyish LIQUID.

Dylan backs away as the amorphous blob REFORMS into *another* SILVER ROD-- identical to the one he now holds.

Like magnets, the two rods instantly SNAP TOGETHER, forming an ornate CROSS-BAR.

Dylan stares at the strange object, realizing that, with the upward CURLS at either end, it's shape now resembles exactly the TATTOO on his HOODED ATTACKER's NECK.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Holy high motherfucking hell.

Walsh rushes over, still seemingly in a state of shock.

DYLAN

(re: the crossbar)

The tattoo on the hooded guy earlier. It looked just like this...all this shit has gotta be connected. Just like you said.

WALSH

Yeah, well, I wish I was wrong.

Walsh surveys the bloody carnage of the apartment.

WALSH (CONT'D)

You get outta here. I'll have one of my guys clean this place up...Dylan?

Walsh looks over, spotting Dylan standing over the dead Mr. Valenti, saying something under his breath.

WALSH (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

DYLAN

Praying for him. He was an innocent.

WALSH

(re: Cartier and Weasel)

Unlike them, huh?

DYLAN

Unlike any of us. I'll call you later.

With that Dylan, walks past Walsh out the door.

INT. POLICE STATION- RECEPTION AREA

Dylan enters, head down, cleaned up in his nicest kakhis and a dress shirt. He walks up to the receptionist, quickly flashes an ID Badge.

DYLAN

I'd like to check into Records and Identification for a bit.

RECEPTIONIST

I'll just need to log you in.

DYLAN

Ah, see the thing is I forgot my password a while back and so they accidentally froze me out of my account--

ALEX (O.S.)

What do you think you're doing?

Dylan turns to find Alex striding in.

DYLAN

I got eyes on a perp I think might tie in with Walsh. No name, but the guy had a weird tattoo so I wanted to see if I could find it in the database.

ALEX
 (to the Receptionist, sotto)
 Take five.

The Receptionist slips away, uncomfortable.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 The Chief's normally a pretty direct guy, so I figured you'd get the message, but in case you missed it: you are *not* a police officer anymore. You are a canary in a coal mine that's about to collapse.

DYLAN
 For a total fucking blockhead you can turn a phrase sometimes.

ALEX
 Well, this *blockhead's* in charge of the O.C. task force as of today. Which means when I tell you to get the fuck out of this building, you'd better listen.

DYLAN
 Oh yeah? And where would that leave us on the chemical weapons?

ALEX
 How do you know about that?

DYLAN
 Doesn't matter. You're looking for a link between that shit and Walsh? Well, guess what? I might be on to one.

Alex cocks his head back and LAUGHS.

ALEX
 We already *know* there's a link between Walsh and the weapon.

Alex pulls up something on his PHONE, flashes it to Dylan. On the screen we see--

A CRIME SCENE PHOTO: The OLD LADY who went demonic in the previous scene.

Her BLOATED CORPSE lies washed up on the banks of some RIVER. Clinging to her body is a greasy sheen of the now-familiar familiar SILVER LIQUID.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 This lady floated up this morning off Burgess Cove. A.K.A., Walsh's "alleged" favorite dump site. And wouldn't you just *look* what she's covered in.

Dylan stands silenced.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You're a religious guy, right? If a chemical attack turns downtown into a contagion zone because you let it happen-- just where do you think your little soul is gonna end up?

DYLAN

I don't know. But what I know is that you care more about your title and the size of your office than you do about the people of this city.

Dylan whips around, storming out of the station.

INT. TAYLOR'S APARTMENT- NIGHT.

Taylor relaxes in front of the television, watching an old GIALLO HORROR MOVIE on Cinemax. Just then, a knock sounds at the door in a triplet RHYTHM PATTERN.

Taylor tentatively gets up and opens the door.

DYLAN

You still remember the knock, huh?

Taylor repeats the unique knock, revealing that it is in fact an interpolation of DMX's "Ruff Ryder's Anthem":

TAYLOR

(knocking along)
Stop. Drop.

DYLAN

(finishing the knock)
Shut 'em down open up shop. I used to drive your mom nuts with that.

They share a half hearted laugh.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Listen, if you don't want to let me in, I totally get it. But I figured I'd ask.

TAYLOR

You'd ask...what?

DYLAN

If I could use your computer. To log onto the evidence database.

TAYLOR
 (subtly disappointed)
 Oh. Yeah. For sure.

TIME CUT:

Moments later, Dylan sits at Taylor's desk, typing away at her computer. We see keywords flash by: "tattoo", "7-8 inches", "spiral".

A cavalcade of MUG-SHOTS flash by, all sporting TATS of a similar-- but not identical-- design to the one worn by the hooded THIN MAN who attacked Dylan.

DYLAN
 There!

Then, Dylan stops on a particular image of a **HAGGARD WOMAN/GRISELDA (50s)**. Running up the woman's neck is the **PRECISE TATTOO** Dylan's looking for.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
 That's it. That's the tattoo. She must be one of them...

TAYLOR
Them? Who's them, Dylan?

Beat. Dylan shakes his head wearily.

DYLAN
 I'm sorry. I shouldn't have come here.

Dylan goes about putting on his coat.

TAYLOR
 Dylan, *stop!*
 (off his look)
 You don't work under me anymore, O.K.? So, please, let me in. You don't have to tell me everything. Just enough to help me understand what you're going through.

DYLAN
 (softening)
 Something *happened* to me after Polowski died. I don't know how to explain it but...there's something, like, *inside* me and I think whatever it is wants me to see this...*pattern* in everything! Connect all these *dots*, but I don't know *why*.

TAYLOR
 And so...
 (reading the woman's file)
 Lydia Corcoran, Age 65, is a dot?

Taylor begins looking through the woman's file. Dylan deflates, running a hand through his hair.

DYLAN

I don't know. Maybe there is no pattern, there are no dots. Maybe I'm cracking up--

TAYLOR

(still reading, surprised)
Mercury iodide...

DYLAN

What?

TAYLOR

This woman...Corcoran. She was arrested two years ago. Distributing non-FDA approved supplements. One of the main items she got pinned for was a compound called Mercury iodide... Which is one of the only known substances forensics was able to identify from that *silver material*.

DYLAN

The chemical weapon.

Dylan perks up, refining the search to "Mercury iodide". It comes up with two REDACTED police reports of the WAREHOUSE and the discovery of the OLD WOMAN's body.

The *only* other mention of it is in Lydia Corcoran's file.

TAYLOR

have no idea how...but this *is* a dot. And that means that you're not crazy.

DYLAN

Who says you can't be crazy and right at the same time?

TAYLOR

I know it's easy to forget you're a cop. But that's called having a *hunch*.

DYLAN

I'm not here as a cop. And I didn't come here to talk to one.

Dylan shifts closer to Taylor.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

I came here for you.

With that, Dylan goes in for a KISS. Taylor gives in for a moment, only to pull away before their lips touch.

TAYLOR

Sorry. I'm sorry. We shouldn't...

DYLAN

(embarrassed)

No. No, of course...I'll go.

Red-faced, Dylan stands up, haltingly heads for the door.

TAYLOR

Dylan, let's talk about this! Let me--

The door CLOSES. Taylor shuts her laptop in frustration.

INT. WALSH'S CAR- DUSK.

Incognito in a huge pair of sunglasses, WALSH drives through the city. Dylan sits in the passenger seat.

WALSH

And where exactly did you get this *tip*?

DYLAN

(ignoring him)

This is it up here.

Dylan points to a small, ramshackle storefront. The awning reads: "MADAME LYDIA'S HOLISTIC HEALING."

WALSH

What are you gonna get your chakras realigned or something?

DYLAN

I took *your* word at face value, didn't I?

Dylan shakes his head huffily, gets out of the car.

INT. MADAME LYDIA'S HEALING- DUSK.

Eccentric, but not quite creepy. The Eastern tchotchkis lining the walls clash with sterile IKEA furniture.

Dylan looks around pensively as he pulls himself through a tacky BEADED CURTAIN.

MADAME LYDIA (O.S.)

Let me guess-- Aries?

Dylan whips around to find **MADAME LYDIA (50s)**, a maternal aging hippy, plopped opposite him on an arched DIVAN.

DYLAN

How'd you know?

MADAME LYDIA

Because you're early.

(chuckling)

And because I saw your birthday on the registration form you filled out online.

Madame Lydia stands, offers a hand.

MADAME LYDIA (CONT'D)

Lydia Corcoran, D.O.

DYLAN

Carter Lynch.

MADAME LYDIA

Doesn't strike me as a particularly realistic name.

DYLAN

You don't strike me as a realistic doctor.

Madame Lydia offers a crooked smile.

MADAME LYDIA

You another shill from the Medical board come to rap me on the fingers?

DYLAN

No. I'm someone with a problem that no doctor could ever fix.

MADAME LYDIA

Ah. A *spiritual* problem, you mean?

TIME CUT:

Dylan's laid out a DRAWING of the CROSSBAR on a small coffee table in front of Madame Lydia. She puffs frenetically from a VAPE PEN.

DYLAN

You know it?

Madame Lydia nods, clunks down a heavy, weathered TOME, titled "The Dark Arts Of Babylon".

MADAME LYDIA

It's only a part of a larger whole. During the Third Crusade, Christian Knights pillaging the Mesopotamian hillsides were besieged by an ancient evil. A curse placed upon them by a Sumerian high priest-- a curse in the form of a alchemical demon named NEEBO.

Madame Lydia opens the book to a page displaying a CLOUD of PESTILENCE, marked by two narrowed EYES of fire.

MADAME LYDIA (CONT'D)

The curse drove men to madness, murder, and death, until a group of holy men successfully exorcised the beast, containing its darkness within a blessed object...The Sword of Paul The Apostle.

Madame Lydia flips the page, now displaying an ornate, ancient SWORD. He realizes that the CROSSBAR of the Sword is an exact match for the one he holds.

MADAME LYDIA (CONT'D)

Let me see it. I know you have it on you.

Dylan begrudgingly reaches into his bag and removes the CROSSBAR. Madame Lydia can't take her eyes off it.

MADAME LYDIA (CONT'D)

Incredible. In its whole form, the sword would have prevented Neebo from ever taking root in a human spirit. But like this, it could have marked a weaker soul.

A cold chill passes through Dylan.

MADAME LYDIA (CONT'D)

Did you ever have an experience when you were a *child*? One you couldn't explain?

FLASH: A quick image of the FROZEN CHURCH REALM Dylan first glimpsed at the hospital.

FATHER LEARY screams his incantation as the **YOUNG BOY (DYLAN)**, writhes unnaturally, his eyes fully GREY.

Young Dylan SCREECHES like a wild animal as he RIPS free of Father Leary's grip, FLOATING UP towards the ceiling.

SMASH BACK:

DYLAN

No. I don't...I don't *remember!*

MADAME LYDIA

Then you don't remember *me?*

Stricken, Dylan looks up to find Madame Lydia TREMBLING rapidly, a manic GRIN plastered on her face.

Suddenly, ALL OF MADAME LYDIA'S FLESH GOES LIMP, HER ENTIRE PERSONAGE FLIMSILY DROPPING TO THE FLOOR LIKE AN OLD LINEN SHEET. It's hollow. Empty.

Dylan stares in abject terror at the vacant SKIN SUIT coiled on the ground. Then, slowly, from within it, a writhing, squirming mass of--

GREY BEETLES pour forth, balling up into each other like clay into a sculpture, rapidly forming themselves into a hulking HUMANOID FORM before POUNCING at Dylan!

INT. WALSH'S CAR- DUSK- CONTINUOUS.

Walsh sits with the window rolled down, smoking a cigarette while bopping along to Bruce Springsteen's "Dancing In The Dark".

Just then, he hears a frantic SLAM on the passenger side. He turns to spot DYLAN, pounding at the window.

DYLAN

Let me in! Let me in *now!*

WALSH

(unlocking the door)

Alright! What's going--

Walsh turns back to find the HIDEOUS BUG FORM pop up at the driver's side window, INCHES away from him.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Jesus fuck!

Dylan LEAPS into the SUV as Walsh pulls a U-TURN off the curb, smashing the back end of the car into the Bug Form.

Upon impact, the form BURSTS into its composite INSECTS, swarming over the CAR like a HAILSTORM--

Practically blacking out the WINDSHIELD as they form a HIDEOUS FACE, laughing hysterically.

Walsh is FROZEN in terror. Thinking quick, Dylan hits the WINDSHIELD WIPER, brushing loose the stray bugs.

DYLAN

Hold on!

Dylan grabs the wheel and SLAMS on the gas, sending the car CAREENING into a LIGHTPOST.

With the impact, the slurry of insects FLIES backwards off the roof, landing in a pile BEHIND the vehicle.

Dylan throws the car in REVERSE and GUNS it backwards, CRUSHING the insects with a sickening SPLATTER.

Insidiously, the insect goop begins to REFORM, as with all the others.

Before long, it's molded itself into the shape of a dazzling JEWEL, which FLIES through the open window of the vehicle, SNAPPING into the center of the CROSS-BAR.

Dylan looks up in amazement. Walsh groggily comes to:

WALSH

Woah...that's a new one...

Before they can catch their breath, SIRENS ring out from down the block.

Walsh TAKES off into the night. But as Dylan glances in his rearview mirror, what he sees SHAKES him to the core.

SMASH TO:

INT. POLICE STATION- INTERROGATION ROOM

CLOSE ON: A CRIME SCENE PHOTO shows MADAME LYDIA (looking every bit a *flesh-and-blood human*) lying DEAD on the street outside her shop, violently CRUSHED by a car.

Dylan sits on the wrong side of that two way mirror, his hands in CUFFS. Opposite him glowers ALEX, alongside **AGENT YEN**, a barrel-chested FED.

DYLAN

Look, I turned myself in, didn't I?

ALEX

After making sure Walsh had a chance to make his getaway.

DYLAN

But I'm telling you-- he didn't run her down.

(looking up)

I did. She was insane. Attacked us. Trying to kill me.

Alex can't help but LAUGH, nodding to Agent Yen.

ALEX

Un-fucking-real. You are so, so lucky this guy is here right now.

DYLAN

Oh yeah? And does this guy have a name?

Agent Yen flips Dylan his BADGE, imprinted with the imposing stamp of the FBI.

AGENT YEN

I'm going to completely frank with you, Mr. Walsh. I do not care about you, or this department, or the city of Providence. What I care about is *this*:

Agent Yen presents a TABLET PC.

ONSCREEN: We seen old VHS FOOTAGE from what appears to some grim GOVERNMENT FACILITY circa the mid-'80s.

Grave SCIENTISTS in WHITE LAB COATS speak in RUSSIAN, all gazing in wonder at the familiar SILVER LIQUID, contained in a BASIN stamped with the sign for HAZARDOUS MATERIAL.

AGENT YEN (CONT'D)

We know believe our mystery substance to be a distilled form of an incredibly rare compound known as mercury antimony oxide.

ONSCREEN: We're now inside a PADDED CELL. In the corner cowers a **BEARDED PRISONER**.

AGENT YEN (CONT'D)

Soviet scientists conducted tests using antimony as a possible chemical weapon. You're watching footage of that test.

ONSCREEN: Men in baggy HAZ-MAT SUITS enter the room, placing down the sealed BASIN. They snap it OPEN before rushing out of the room.

As the Bearded Prisoner cautiously approaches the basin, a strange CALM comes over him. He reaches inside and GRABS at the blob, letting it run between his fingers.

AGENT YEN (CONT'D)

We believe the compound is a dangerous neurotoxin, which affects humans upon physical contact. Within 24-48 hours, the symptoms begin to appear...

ONSCREEN: Alone in his cell, the Bearded Prisoner YELLS at thin air as though there's someone else there.

AGENT YEN (CONT'D)

Visceral hallucinations...

ONSCREEN: The Bearded Prisoner violently PUNCHES and KICKS against the padded walls, ranting and raving.

AGENT YEN (CONT'D)

Increased agitation...

ONSCREEN: A pair of Haz-Mat Suited GUARDS run into the cell-- which now is apparently EMPTY. Suddenly--

The prisoner LAUNCHES DOWN at them from the CEILING, pulsing with SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH.

He grabs one of the guards, SNAPPING his neck before FLINGING his lifeless corpse at the second guard.

AGENT YEN (CONT'D)

And finally, an unnatural boost in strength and agility, paired with an insatiable urge to kill...

The Prisoner STRADDLES the downed guard and begins BITING at his throat, TEARING away flesh as blood GURGLES forth in a babbling brook. Dylan looks away from the screen.

DYLAN

And you're...you're *sure* that's the same stuff from the crime scenes.

AGENT YEN

Can't say it's 100 percent, but also can't afford to take a risk. Imagine if this went widespread-- people turning paranoid and violent, en masse. Killing their neighbors because they think they're *demons* or something...

Dylan blinks, rattled by this revelation.

AGENT YEN (CONT'D)

Listen to me, Officer Boyland. There's been some chatter from our intel sources regarding a possible attack this Sunday.

DYLAN

An attack...on Easter?

AGENT YEN

No one has the the inside connection with Walsh like you do. If you're able to find the source of this and tip us off in time. I will see to it that any case against you is *dismissed*. We clear?

Dylan nods unsteadily. Alex SCOFFS, shaking his head.

ALEX

Our tax dollars at work. I think it's time we shortened that leash of yours...

Off Alex's glare--

EXT. POLICE STATION- STREET- DUSK.

Dylan exits the station, radiating nervous energy. He proceeds over to a nearby TRAFFIC LIGHT on the corner.

He surreptitiously bends down and unhooks the latch of the ELECTRICAL UNIT at the base of the pole. He reaches inside expectantly, FROWNING as he finds it EMPTY.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

Looking for this?

Dylan whips around to spot Taylor standing behind him, holding the BEJEWELED CROSSBAR in her hands!

DYLAN

How did you--

TAYLOR

I've been following you all afternoon.
First, to make sure you were alright.

(leaning in)

Then, after what I saw...Dylan, I need to understand--

DYLAN

Not here.

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT- NIGHT.

Dylan stands at the kitchen counter, pours himself a stiff double shot of CHEAP VODKA and slugging it down. Leaning against the windowsill, Taylor pipes up:

TAYLOR

You didn't offer me one.

DYLAN

You didn't ask.

TAYLOR

When tell someone they're holding the remains of three dead people, they shouldn't have to ask.

Dylan fakes a smile, pours up a second drink, hands it to Taylor. She gulps it hungrily, brushing her finger against the dazzling JEWEL at the center of the CROSSBAR.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

So this one...this one is Madam Corcoran?

DYLAN

You did see it, didn't you?

TAYLOR
 (nodding, rattled)
 It was beyond...I mean, that...creature.

DYLAN
 Good. That's good. Just like Walsh. That means I'm not crazy.

TAYLOR
 What do you mean?

DYLAN
 The security footage. The witnesses. Alex. They saw that...*thing* as though it was just normal old Madam Corcoran.

TAYLOR
 All of them? But...*how*?

DYLAN
 How. How, how, how. I've given up on fucking *why*, but the *how*'s are piling up just as bad. Like, for instance, how are you even holding that right now?!
 (nodding to the crossbar)
 Walsh was never able to hold it like that. It *burned* his hands.

TAYLOR
 You said this thing sought you out...

Taylor regards the crossbar perceptively for beat.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
 Then maybe it sees how we're alike. Two of a kind, y'know? Couple of latchkey gutter kids from East Prov made good.

DYLAN
 You did. But where I'm sitting doesn't feel much like "good" right now.

TAYLOR
 Lets see what we can do about that.

Abruptly, Taylor moves in to KISS Dylan. Within instants, they're whirled about in a storm of passion as they tearing off one another's clothing.

Dylan enters Taylor, thrusting away with raw, passionate urgency. In the heat of the moment, Taylor grabs Dylan's arm, placing his HAND over her THROAT.

Dylan takes the hint, beginning to gently CHOKE Taylor.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Harder.

Dylan complies, squeezing tighter as their hips buckle in harmony. Then, Dylan's hand brushes up against the--

CROSSGUARD, placed there moments earlier by Taylor. Suddenly, Dylan's EXPRESSION changes. A GREY GLINT flashing almost imperceptibly in his eyes.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)

(echoed, distant)

Idimmu, ganzer zul!!!

Dylan's hand CLAMPS down on Taylor's throat. Her eyes BULGE as she gasps for air against his weight.

TAYLOR

Dylan! Stop!

Dylan PICKS UP Taylor by the throat, SLAMS her up against the wall, SHATTERING a picture frame behind her head.

Just as the life seems ready to fade out of her, Taylor's flailing arm manages to grab hold of a loose shard of GLASS from the broken frame. She--

SWINGS it at Dylan's face, SLASHING him across the cheek. He drops her to the ground, reeling in pain. When he looks up, normalcy has regained its footing within.

DYLAN

Taylor...what did I...

TAYLOR

Don't come near me!

Terrified, Taylor scampers to collect her clothing and BOLTS out the front door.

DYLAN

No! That wasn't me! That was...

But she's already gone. Dylan hangs his head. He regards the cross-bar with great tumult.

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING- HALLWAY- DUSK.

Dylan stalks over to the GARBAGE DISPOSAL CHUTE at the far end of the hallway. Furious, he holds up the Cross-Bar, DUMPING it unceremoniously down the shaft.

WALSH (O.S.)

I was about to say I wanted to see that thing...

Dylan turns to find WALSH standing by the fire exit.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Guess it doesn't matter now. By the way, I saw Taylor McAllister on the way up. She coming to visit you?

DYLAN

No. What? Are you kidding? She was probably dropping off cookies for Mrs. Von Hencken down the hall.

Walsh smiles cagily, lights a cigarette.

WALSH

Remember Friar Jameson? That fat little assistant priest? He was there...when everything went down. I tracked him to this monastery out by Portsmouth. If we go see him, maybe he can help us.

DYLAN

No.

WALSH

What do you mean "no"?

DYLAN

You heard me. I threw that thing away and I intend to leave it gone and buried--

With that, a loud SLAM sounds from somewhere within the garbage disposal. Dylan and Walsh both turn to face it. More BUMPING noises sound from within, drawing nearer.

Dylan wordlessly approaches the disposal. He cautiously opens up the chute, staring down at the BLACKNESS therein. Nothing visible. He looks up at Walsh:

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Rats. They're probably--

Dylan looks back to find a thin, bony ARM extending from infinity, rushing towards him in the darkness. Attached to it, a CLAW holds the CROSS-BAR. It TOSSES it into his grip before RETRACTING just as suddenly.

Dylan stands silently, taking this in. He looks to a shell-shocked Walsh. A beat.

EXT. PORTSMOUTH MONESTARY- NIGHT.

Dylan and Walsh exit Walsh's SUV at the base of a FOOTPATH leading up to an assemblage of CLOISTERS.

As they start walking, Dylan notices what appears to be a TALL FIGURE standing in the WINDOW of the main RECTORY.

WALSH

Hello...Earth to Boyland?

DYLAN

(turning)

My bad, I just...

Dylan turns to look back, but the figure is GONE.

WALSH

What's up with you, man? I mean, aside from the obvious. I get the feeling you've got something to say to me.

DYLAN

Very intuitive

(stopping in place)

Why didn't you tell me you owned a stake in that psychic joint. That you *knew* that woman who...*turned*?

Walsh sighs, appraising the situation.

WALSH

Honestly? I didn't tell you because I didn't know who else might hear about it.

DYLAN

What's that supposed to mean?

WALSH

It means I couldn't figure how you got the lead on Madame Corcoran to begin with. It *means* I left something out on purpose to see if you'd pick up on it.

Dylan bristles, concern mounting.

WALSH (CONT'D)

So, are you still gonna tell me that the former captain of the organized crime task force was in your apartment building dropping off *ladyfingers*--

DING! The CHURCH BELL loudly strikes, jolting Walsh and Dylan to attention.

WALSH (CONT'D)

We'll finish this later.

Shaking off butterflies, Dylan approaches the large WOODEN DOOR of the rectory. He KNOCKS loudly. Nothing.

DYLAN
He said nine, right?

Walsh nods. Dylan goes back to knock again. As he moves to RAP on the door--

A thin SLAT rapidly slides open right beneath his hand, revealing a pair of BEADY EYES, GLISTENING in the night!

VOICE (FRIAR JAMESON)
Tell me that's not Dylan Boyland.

DYLAN
...The very same.

FRIAR JAMESON
I'm even older than I thought.

The door CLUNKS open. Behind it stands **FRIAR JAMESON (70s)**, a portly, ruddy-cheeked man clad in brown robes.

INT. RECTORY- PRIVATE CHAMBER- NIGHT.

The Friar leads Walsh and Dylan into his sparse quarters.

FRIAR JAMESON
I'd offer you both a seat, but, well...
ascetics don't much go in for chairs.

Friar Jameson appraises Walsh and Dylan for a beat.

WALSH
Problem?

FRIAR JAMESON
I just can't help but think of what
Father Leary might say if he saw you two
here together. After all, as his dying
wish, he asked me to make sure young
Boyland continued in the service of God.
(eyeing Walsh)
I think he would have had a sharp word
for me.

DYLAN
Actually, I think he'd be more concerned
that you never came to visit him in the
hospital after all these years.

Friar Jameson LAUGHS. He walks over to a small mini-fridge and removes a small BLOOD SAUSAGE. Cuts himself off a piece and chews.

FRIAR JAMESON

No, my son. For that, he'd be grateful.
It's best we all keep *apart*, after all.

With this remark, Friar Jameson looks pointedly to Walsh.

WALSH

Friar, it's late and I'm sure you've
got...Maries to Hail. Let's just come to
the point--

DYLAN

Have you ever seen this object before?

Dylan cautiously removes the CROSSBAR from his saddle
bag. Walsh's hand slips subtly into his jacket pocket--
clenching a HANDGUN therein.

Friar Jameson's face goes eerily BLANK for a moment as he
regards the Cross-Bar. His hand suddenly SLIPS on the
blood sausage, letting it DROP to the floor. Tense beat.

Walsh stands poised. Dylan readies himself. Then, as if
recovering from a sneeze, Friar Jameson rolls his eyes.

FRIAR JAMESON

A right butterfingers, I am.

He bends down and picks up the sausage, places it on the
counter. He reaches into his pocket.

WALSH

Hold it! What are you doing!?

FRIAR JAMESON

I was just going to get my glasses. You
wanted me to take a look at that--

Walsh abruptly REMOVES the GUN from his pocket.

DYLAN

What are you doing? He's not one of them--

WALSH

It's a trick.
(to Friar Jameson)
I said *do not move!*

Indignant, Friar Jameson marches right towards Walsh.

FRIAR JAMESON

Now look here! You can't just barge in
here and *threaten me--*

BANG! Walsh SHOTS Friar Jameson him in the chest! The
Friar COLLAPSES to the ground.

DYLAN
God fucking *damn it*, Walsh!

WALSH
I had to...I had to do it...

Dylan shakes his head. Eyes welling with emotion.

DYLAN
And now I have to do this.
(into his shirt)
Alpha down.

All at once, a red LAZER SIGHT appears on Walsh's HEAD. He looks out the window to find a CAVALCADE of POLICE VEHICLES SURROUNDING the Rectory.

SWAT CAPTAIN (O.S.)
(via loudspeaker)
Mr. Walsh, you are surrounded! Do not
make any sudden moves!

Walsh's eyes go misty as he looks to Dylan.

WALSH
About time.

Walsh sticks out his hands. Ready to be cuffed.

WALSH (CONT'D)
Just promise you'll have someone else
read me my Miranda. I can't bear to hear
it from you...

Dylan looks away, unable to meet Walsh's gaze. As the door to the chamber is KICKED DOWN by SWAT--

INT. PROVIDENCE POLICE PRECINCT- EICHNER'S OFFICE- DAY.

CHIEF EICHNER extends a hand across his imposing, mahogany desk-- outstretched towards a wan DYLAN, slumped in his chair like a wounded animal.

CHIEF EICHNER
If you knew how much I hated the word
"wrong", you'd know just how big of a
deal this is. But kid, I was dead wrong
about you. All of us were.

Alex stands in the wings, his entire aura shrugging.

CHIEF EICHNER (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna pretend I've had my finger on the pulse of the Walsh case, but the talk I heard fingered you as wishy-washy at best-- *turned* at worst.

DYLAN

My objective was to catch Walsh dead to rights. Now you have. I just did my job.

CHIEF EICHNER

You *certainly* did. Attempted murder on a *friar*. In a *god-damned* monestary no less--

DYLAN

Attempted murder?

ALEX

Unfortunately for us the bullet missed all his vitals. A murder case would have really put this thing in the bag...

Chief Eichner's grin disappears.

CHIEF EICHNER

Unfortunately?

(off Alex's shirk)

Alive or not, our Friar is a paragon of virtue and any Mick-Wop Prov jury worth their salt would throw a library full of books at the man who shot him.

Chief Eichner reaches into his desk, removing a BADGE and a standard issue HANDGUN. He slides them over to Dylan.

CHIEF EICHNER (CONT'D)

My compliments, officer Boyland.

Alex rolls his eyes. Dylan looks at the badge and the gun like they're contaminated with small pox.

DYLAN

(distracted)

Can I speak with him? Friar Jameson?

Alex cocks his neck. Chief Eichner just stares. A beat.

ALEX

Why do you want to--

CHIEF EICHNER

(cutting him off)

Whatever floats your boat. Fuck me, I thought you were gonna ask for a raise!

INT. POLICE STATION- INTERROGATION ROOM- DAY.

Dylan enters to find Friar Jameson on the FLOOR, legs crossed as if MEDITATING in the Buddhist tradition.

DYLAN
Crisis of faith?

FRIAR JAMESON
(not looking up)
Any creed can practice basic mindfulness.

Friar Jameson WINCES, touching his hand to his BREAST, which we now see is wrapped in thick BANDAGES.

FRIAR JAMESON (CONT'D)
Plus, it distracts from the pain.

DYLAN
I thought suffering brought us closer to the divination of Christ.

FRIAR JAMESON
I'm a friar. Not a saint.
(standing)
Plus, I'm being held against my will.

He nods to a small MIRRORED PATCH in the wall adjacent.

FRIAR JAMESON (CONT'D)
And I'm on candid camera, to boot?

DYLAN
Dated reference. But yeah.

Dylan nods, holds up the TABLET he's holding. Onscreen, we see the VIDEO-FEED monitor of the interrogation room.

FRIAR JAMESON
I suppose it must be because I've been lying to them. Changing my story around every time I tell it.

DYLAN
And why might you be doing that?

FRIAR JAMESON
So they'd send you in here. So we could be *alone*.

The tone of this remark strikes Dylan wrong. Friar Jameson reaches out to touch him and he subtly recoils.

FRIAR JAMESON (CONT'D)
Oh, I've said the wrong thing. I'm so sorry. Poor, poor boy...

DYLAN

I don't know what you're talking about.

FRIAR JAMESON

Of course you do. You wish you didn't. We all do. You wish you could just...erase the images from your mind...

Friar Jameson turns to the SECURITY CAMERA. Suddenly, his eyes FLASH GREY. Dylan instinctively BACKS UP.

DYLAN

You're one of *them*...

FRIAR JAMESON

Yes. One of the four. But we're not what you think we are.

Friar Jameson points to the TABLET. Dylan looks at the screen, to find that the footage is FROZEN in place.

In addition, it now appears that Dylan has DISAPPEARED from the footage-- to all viewing it would look as though the monk is ALONE.

FRIAR JAMESON (CONT'D)

Some of us have found a way to *hinge* our curse. Even use it to our own will.

Beat. Against all odds, Dylan SHRUGS.

DYLAN

O.K. See, I've spent the last week and a half dealing with floating objects and ancient prophecies and blue-skinned Ghoulies with fucking super-strength trying to *kill* me, so I guess I've gotten a bit harder to impress on the "magical bullshit" front--

FRIAR JAMESON

Kill you?!

Dylan instinctively withdraws his SIDEARM, training it on Friar Jameson.

DYLAN

I'd rather you didn't.

FRIAR JAMESON

No. I meant...the ones you referred to as *Ghoulies*. The other of the four. You oughtn't call them such things.

DYLAN

What do they prefer nowadays-- the infernally impaired?

FRIAR JAMESON

They are human *beings!* Men and women who, by way of sheer misfortune, found themselves *marked...*

Friar James unbuttons his COLLAR, revealing an angry, jagged SCAR running down the length of his abdomen.

FRIAR JAMESON (CONT'D)

But unlike me, they cannot control the beast within.

DYLAN

The only thing I'm more sick of than tricks is people talking in fucking riddles.

FRIAR JAMESON

Sin eaters. If you need words to describe us, I suppose those would have to do. But the sin they were forced to hold was so great that no one human could contain it. So it was divided in four. Four that were never to come together, meant to live in the shadows, far away from their *trigger...* that is, until their trigger came to *them*.

DYLAN

Friar, I respect the cloth. That's why I ignore the whispers and every concerned little glance I've gotten since whatever happened happened. Because I *want* to believe the Word...

Dylan abruptly BUCKS, TILTING back Friar Jameson's CHAIR, shoving his GUN right into the Friar's face.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

But right now the man that taught me how to survive in this world is sitting in a jail cell because I chose to believe *your* word over his. And here you are, babbling about eating sin and triggers--

(cocking his gun)

I got a trigger right here. And thanks to your little dittie with that security camera, I have time make the whole thing look like suicide before anyone gets--

Friar Jameson's HANDCUFFS suddenly SLIP OFF his wrists seemingly of their own accord.

With bracing speed, he reaches out his hand and GRABS Dylan by the ARM-- firmly, but without malice.

FRIAR JAMESON

The trigger is *you*, my son. It is contact with *you* that brings on our...seasons.

Friar Jameson's VOICE drops a number of octaves. His FINGERS extend out into a spindly CLAW-- not unlike the one Dylan saw coming up the garbage disposal.

FRIAR JAMESON (CONT'D)

I can manage the worst of my affliction. But I needed you here to bring it on.

Dylan is frozen in place, unable to break free.

FRIAR JAMESON (CONT'D)

So I could do *this*--

Friar Jameson abruptly digs his other CLAW into his CHEST, grotesquely TEARING OPEN the gnarled scar tissue, revealing the bloody gristle and BONE beneath.

As Dylan looks on in horror, Friar Jameson PRIES loose something SHINY from his abdomen-- a glistening, bejeweled HILT.

With that, the CROSSGUARD floats forth from Dylan's saddle-bag, CONJOINING with the hilt to form a--

ORNATE CROSS. With a single glimpse, Dylan places it-- identical to the one we saw FATHER LEARY wielding against the possessed child in the FLASHBACKS earlier.

FRIAR JAMESON (CONT'D)

At the hour of our lord's resurrection the unification shall occur.

DYLAN

This...this is Father Leary's.

FRIAR JAMESON

Not anymore. This befoulment began with you. Now you must be the one to end it.

Friar Jameson hands the cross to Dylan. He hesitates, then reaches out, wrapping his fingers around the hilt--

Wumph. All affect is drained from the scene. Dylan stands over the mutilated corpse of a very *human* Friar Jameson. But the cross in his hands remains all too real.

Dylan looks aimlessly at the TWO WAY MIRROR. *How to possibly explain this one away.*

ALEX (O.S.)
 (firm)
 Dylan. Come on out.

Too tired to squirm, Dylan slides the cross into his saddle bag and saunters back into--

INT. POLICE STATION- OBSERVATION ROOM- DAY.

Where Alex sits in the corner, flanked by a few other officers. His expression indeterminate.

DYLAN
 Alex, listen, I have *no idea* what happened in there--

ALEX
 I do. The old fuck's totally senile. Barely responded to a word you said.

Bewildered, Dylan glances over to the two-way mirror. His mouth DROPS.

Through the mirror, all appears NORMAL in the room. A very-much ALIVE Friar Jameson sits contentedly in his seat as though nothing happened.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Guess he's a dead end.

DYLAN
 (shaken)
 Guess so...

ALEX
 Maybe we should send in someone else to play hardball with him? You know, jog--

DYLAN
 No!
 (quieter)
 I think he'll crack if we let him stew for a while alone.

Alex mulls it over, then nods.

ALEX
 That makes sense. A Boyland first.

Dylan smiles anemically his teeth.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Or maybe I'm just agreeing with you so I can get a spare moment for dinner. Who wants Chipotle?

A few COPS mumble their agreement.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You say we let the guy stew, then maybe
you can stay and watch the pot, huh?

Dylan nods haltingly. With that, Alex and the other
detectives file out, leaving Dylan alone.

After a beat, he looks to one of the officers' open
COMPUTER-- on it, the arrest booking file for WALSH.

INT. PROVIDENCE POLICE PRECINCT- LOCKUP- NIGHT.

Dylan walks plaintively down a row of CELLS, filled up
DRUNKS, HOMELESS DRUG ADDICTS, and PETTY THUGS. As he
passes by, they pelt him with half-coherent INSULTS.

He ignores their taunts, focused on a small red YO-YO
rolling rhythmically in and out through the BARS of the
last cell on the block.

Before Dylan can say a word, the Yo-Yo STOPS. A beat.

WALSH (O.S.)

Dylan?

Dylan gingerly approaches the cell, where he finds WALSH,
reclining against the bottom bunk.

DYLAN

How'd you know?

WALSH

When you're around someone long enough
you start to get a feel for when they're
nearby. Mind you this is only when you
really know somebody...

Walsh abruptly FLICKS the Yo-Yo right at Dylan's HEAD,
missing it by centimeters. Dylan barely flinches.

DYLAN

Look, Walsh, I... I tried to hold it off
as long as I could, but this Chemical
Weapon thing is a bridge too far. You
gotta tell me--

Walsh abruptly begins LAUGHING. He slaps his knee.

WALSH

I can't believe they really bought that
one. Even the lab tech I got to plant the
idea thought it was too screwy.

DYLAN

You *fed* that information to the department...

WALSH

And they fed it to the Federal Fucking Bureau of Incompetence.

(shaking his head)

Chemical Weapon. I needed something big enough to keep the attention on me and off of you. Not that it matters now.

Dylan processes this, flummoxed. A lengthy beat.

DYLAN

How'd you get that yo-yo in here?

WALSH

Grunt cop who pat me down let me keep it in exchange for my John Hancock.

DYLAN

The perks of being an Urban folk hero.

WALSH

(scoffing)

I guess so, yeah. Funny thing is I used to hate that. People always glad-handing for a hand out.

DYLAN

People like my mother, you mean?

WALSH

I never begrudged your ma for asking me to look after you. That's why I always tried to do right by ya...

Walsh stands. Dylan holds firm.

WALSH (CONT'D)

And that's *also* why I don't expect an apology. I knew what I was getting into with you and I stuck around anyway.

DYLAN

What the fuck is that supposed to mean?

WALSH

I *saw* it in you. Before all this...

FLASH BACK:

INT. DYLAN'S FAMILY HOME- DAY- THE PAST.

A YOUNGER WALSH steps into the foyer of a run-down town-home circa the mid-'90s. He carries a GIFT-WRAPPED BOX under his arm.

He spots **DIANE (30s)**, Dylan's waifish MOTHER, lying on the couch in a dazed stupor.

DIANE

Ryan...you made it.

WALSH

'Course I did, Diane. You didn't think I'd forget Christmas, did you?

Walsh walks over and plucks a still-smoldering CIGARETTE from Diane's fingers, putting it out in the ashtray.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Where is he?

DYLAN'S MOTHER

I dunno. Try his room.

Dylan's mother lapses back into unconsciousness.

INT. DYLAN'S FAMILY HOME- FOYER/DYLAN'S ROOM- CONTINUOUS.

Walsh walks over, KNOCKS gently on the door. No response.

WALSH

Dyl? You in there, bud?

DYLAN (O.S.)

(faint)

*Dies irae, dies illia
Solvat Saeclum in favilla...*

Walsh can barely make out what Dylan's saying. He slowly CREAKS open the door to the room, to find--

DYLAN, his back to the door, standing in the shadows, his nose practically pressed right up against the WALL.

PRESENT-DAY WALSH (V.O.)

The first thing that hit me was the smell. *Sulfur*.

Walsh SNIFFS the air, makes a face.

WALSH

Dylan?

DYLAN
 (louder)
Cuncta stricte discussurus.
Dies irae, dies ilia!

Worried, Walsh reaches out to touch Dylan's shoulder, prompting him to WHIP AROUND. At which point Walsh notices that the boy's--

EYES are completely *GREY*. He recoils in fear for a moment, only to see the eyes revert back to normal in a flash. Dylan comes to, like waking from a nightmare.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
 What...I...

WALSH
 Dylan, it's me! Ryan. Are you alright?

DYLAN
 I'm fine. Thanks.

Walsh rubs his eyes, shaking off a feeling.

WALSH
 Guess the weather must be getting to me.
 Well...merry Christmas, kid.
 (reaching for his present)
 They ran out of Furbies, but I got--

DYLAN
 I have to go. Father Leary needs me.

Walsh turns in stung confusion as Dylan gets up and begins putting on his winter coat.

WALSH
 Don't you wanna open your present?

DYLAN
 I'll do it later. Thank you, though.

As if sleepwalking, Dylan ambles blankly out the door.

WALSH (V.O.)
 Chalk it up to my beef with authority.
 But I'd never been to keen on the Father
 to begin with. And after the stories I'd
 heard about Priests and young kids...I
 couldn't let it go.

EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH- DUSK- THE PAST.

Later that day, Walsh watches surreptitiously from his parked CAR as Dylan walks up to the cathedral. From within, FATHER LEARY emerges, embracing his young charge.

Walsh steps out of his car, approaching.

WALSH

Father!

Leary turns to face Walsh.

FATHER LEARY

Mr. Walsh.

WALSH

Dylan told me you needed his help today.

FATHER LEARY

That's right.

WALSH

Just him? What about the other alter boys?

FATHER LEARY

Dylan is the most competent of the lot.

WALSH

Yeah. He's a great kid. That's why I want the best for him...

(leaning in)

That what you want Padre?

FATHER LEARY

It is. And it's my opinion that the best place for this boy to be is far, far away from influences such as yours.

Father Leary brusquely takes Dylan by the HAND, quickly leading him away into the church.

As he does, Dylan's SLEEVE raises up, revealing a series of CUTS and BRUISES lining his ARM. Walsh goes to say something, but before he can, they're gone.

DYLAN (V.O.)

Stop!

INTERCUT:

INT. PROVIDENCE POLICE PRECINCT- LOCKUP- NIGHT.

Dylan holds up his hand. His face is flushed. SWEAT around his brow.

DYLAN

I don't want to hear anymore.

WALSH

None of us wanna hear the truth. But it's always better to know.

DYLAN

I already *do know!*

(softer)

Everyone thinks I don't remember. But I see it clear as day on other people. Printed on their faces. And I *know* that to them, I'm just another victim of the church. Another broken little boy who can never really be a man, because--

WALSH

It's not what you think, Dylan!

(beat)

Believe me. That's what *all* of us started to think when you were gettin' worse. Spending days in that church with Leary. And then, on Easter Sunday, when you didn't come all night after the evening service. That's when your ma gave me the O.K. to do what needed to be done.

FLASH BACK:

EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH- DAWN- THE PAST.

The snow has disappeared from the sidewalk, replaced by the bloom of Spring.

But you wouldn't know it from the grim determination in Walsh's step. Or, for that matter, the compact PISTOL he's sliding into his coat pocket.

As he approaches, an elderly HOMELESS WOMAN, face concealed by a wrapped up SHAWL, holds up a CHANGE CUP:

HOMELESS WOMAN

Spare some change sir?

Walsh ignores her as he marches up to the door of the Church, BANGS on it hard. Nothing. He goes to knock again, but the door slowly CREAKS open of its own accord.

The Homeless Woman WATCHES intently, following in after Walsh without him noticing.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH- DUSK- THE PAST.

Walsh slips into the house of God-- at moment EMPTY. Without light and life, it's taken on an eerie quality.

Suddenly, FRIAR JAMESON emerges from one of the pews. Walsh almost goes for his weapon, holds back.

WALSH

Excuse me, I'm looking for a Dylan Boyland. He's an altar boy here and he didn't come home last night.

FRIAR JAMESON

I see. Well, I believe all the altar boys went home after the evening service.

Walsh nods, suspicious. He glances around, noticing a CHILD'S WINTER COAT hanging on the RACK-- it's DYLAN'S

WALSH

(suddenly grave)

I need to speak with Father O'Leary.

Walsh brushes past the Friar, heading for the RECTORY.

FRIAR JAMESON

Sir! Sir, excuse me, you can't be...

(calling out)

Sister! Can you please...

With that, a NUN in full habit comes clapping down an adjoining stairway, blocking Walsh's path.

We get a closer look at the nun, realizing she is none other than a young **MADAME LYDIA**.

DYLAN (V.O.)

Lydia?

SISTER LYDIA

I'm sorry sir, but the Father is very busy right now. He can't be disturbed--

Suddenly, Lydia is cut off by an UNEARTHLY HOWL emanating from within the Father's CHAMBERS. A cold, shimmering LIGHT beams out from beneath the door.

Walsh pushes past Sister Lydia, heading towards it.

SISTER LYDIA (CONT'D)

No! You can't go in there!

Friar Jameson and Sister Lydia move to stop him. Walsh thinks quick, spotting a nearby **JANITOR (50s)**, mopping up one of the pews, his face obscured.

Walsh grabs the Janitor's MOP BUCKET and shoves it into Lydia and the Friar's path, cutting them off. He races up to the rectory door and tries yanking it open but it won't give. Inside, the HOWLS intensify.

WALSH

Dylan!

Walsh takes out his PISTOL, FIRING it into the bolt and blasting it to pieces. He KICKS down the door, revealing--

INT. RECTORY- CATHOLIC CHURCH- DAY- CONTINUOUS.

YOUNG DYLAN lays sprawled on the floor in the middle of a sprawling PENTAGRAM, drawn in what appears to be BLOOD.

Over him, stands FATHER LEARY. In one hand, he holds an ancient PARCHMENT SCROLL. In the other, he holds the ornate CROSS-- *upside down*. Out of it's tip shoots--

GHOSTLY, ECTOPLASMIC ENERGY, beaming directly into young Dylan's FACE, inhabiting him through his eyes and mouth.

FATHER LEARY

(chanting)

*Inhabit this mortal vessel, oh Neebo! I
offer you this coil with which to--*

WALSH

Jesus Christ!

Father Leary WHIPS around to face Walsh. A look of primal HATRED coming over him as he--

WHIRLS around his cross, hitting Walsh with an invisible BURST of energy, sending him FLYING backwards, slamming into the opposite wall.

Father Leary turns his attention back to the prone Dylan as the energy beam turns from white to an INFERNAL RED.

FATHER LEARY

*With this, White Worm, I compel you--
enter your next domain!*

From within the red energy, a strange FORM begins to become visible. A gnarled TAIL and CLOVEN HOOFS. A thorn-coated HEAD topped with spiraling RAMS HORNS.

Walsh doesn't need to know a word of occult theology to be aware that he's facing the form of the BEAST.

Walsh raises his GUN and FIRES-- HITTING Father Leary in the ABDOMEN. The Father staggers back, nearly dropping the CROSS, but somehow manages to hold it steady.

As the creature is about to LURCH forwards out of the unholy mist, Walsh draws careful aim.

BANG! The bullet EXPLODES forth from the barrel, winding through the air and *SMASHING* clean through the center of Father Leary's CROSS!

The Father SCREAMS in fury. The beaming energy field COLLAPSES on itself, taking the BEAST along with it as the CROSS shatters into--

FOUR PIECES, each glowing red-hot with supernatural energy, *QUAVERING* like destabilized ISOTOPES.

The resulting SHOCKWAVE knocks Father Leary clean across the room-- he's down for the count.

Walsh FREEZES in place, takes a quick glance around the room to find that its more POPULATED then he thought--

Behind him stands FRIAR JAMESON and SISTER CORCORAN. And behind them, we see the JANITOR, and the HOMELESS LADY from outside. But in this light, we now recognize them:

The HOMELESS LADY is **OLD LADY** who attacked Dylan at Valenti's apartment. And the JANITOR is none other than **ANDREW KOWALSKI!**

DYLAN (V.O.)

The four...they were all there.

The Four Pieces BLAST forth like shrapnel, each one SHOOTING into a corresponding individual in the room--

The Friar gets the hilt, Corcoran the jewel, Andrew and the old Lady a half-crossguard each.

WALSH (V.O.)

And they've all got a piece.

Walsh look around in shock and sheer TERROR at the surreal scene. The Four lie motionless on the ground, wracked with GAPING WOUNDS.

Father Leary too lies on the ground, BLEEDING OUT, his eyes blank.

DYLAN (V.O.)

So...that's what caused Leary's coma?

WALSH (V.O.)

If you ask me, he got off easy.

Walsh rushes over to Young Dylan, racing to untie his bindings as he gently attempts to rouse him.

DYLAN

Walsh? Where am I?

WALSH

Nowhere you oughta be.

Walsh scoops up Dylan in his arms, goes to head for the exit only to find--

THE FOUR all standing UPRIGHT, their wounds magically HEALED within moments.

Their eyes all gleam in uniform SLATE-GREY, their throats emitting a low, primal GROWL in unison.

WALSH (CONT'D)

You gotta be shittin' me.

Walsh points his gun up, FIRING at the ceiling SPIRE, topped by a large pane of STAINED GLASS. In an instant, the glass SHATTERS--

RAINING multicolored SHARDS down on the Four. Given an opening, Walsh RACES to the back-door with Dylan in tow. As he opens it, the blinding light from outside lets us--

END FLASHBACK

Back to the present. Dylan absorbs this tidal wave of knowledge with an ashen resignation.

WALSH (CONT'D)

That was twenty years ago today.

DYLAN

And...and you just let me live with it?
Let me live with the uncertainty of never knowing what was real for twenty fucking years?!

WALSH

Better than the *certainty* that something entirely beyond our understanding was after you, lurking in the shadows...

Walsh begins UNSCREWING the plastic YO-YO.

WALSH (CONT'D)

See, I tried to keep tabs on the four. I knew what they were deep down, but after that day it was like they all just went back to normal. So I figured the best I could do was keep my enemies close.

(MORE)

WALSH (CONT'D)

I'd give money to the old broad whenever I saw her. I put up the money to help Corcoran open her little shop. I even let Andrew Kowalski move into one of my buildings to make sure nothing funny cropped up--

DYLAN

Until the chanting.

WALSH

When Valenti told me that my blood ran cold. I admit...I was afraid. That's why I sent Stevie and Carl to handle it. I was still hoping that what I saw was just a bad dream, but when they came back like that, I knew our time was up.

DYLAN

You mean *my* time--

WALSH

No, I mean our time! You think I didn't know you were *playing* me, Dyl? I knew you were walking into this building before you did.

Walsh goes right up to the bars.

WALSH (CONT'D)

And did I think about killing you every time you lied to my face? Sure. Every time you looked me in the eyes and said I was like a father to you, it--

Walsh trails off, TEARS welling in his eyes.

WALSH (CONT'D)

You think you've got guilt. Christ, kid. I've sold my friends down the river. Killed members of my own family...and your partners here in this station might think that's what gets me off or something but...I dream about them every night. The wrong I've done by 'em.

DYLAN

That's not true. You've done good by people. Helped them...

WALSH

I help them so they'll trust me while I stab them in the back. The truth is, I've only done right by one person in my entire life...

Walsh sticks a finger through the bar, puts it up to Dylan's chest. An emotional beat.

DYLAN

Use it.

WALSH

Use what?

Dylan subtly glances at an adjacent SECURITY CAMERA.

DYLAN

Whatever's in that Yo-Yo.

Dylan nods to Walsh's hand. We now realize the Yo-Yo he smuggled in contained a STRAIGHT RAZOR.

DYLAN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Go ahead. I'm close enough to the bars--

Walsh reaches his hands through, GRABBING Dylan in a choke hold, putting the RAZOR up to his throat. Dylan pretends to STRUGGLE, playing it up for the CAMERA.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

In my left pants pocket there's an access key. You can use that to unlock the cell.

Walsh follows Dylan's instructions. He places the card up to a KEYPAD and the Cell Door bolts OPEN.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Now knock me out.

WALSH

You serious?

DYLAN

We can't stage a footchase through the station. Do it. I'll meet you there.

WALSH

How do you know where "there" is!?

DYLAN

I think I've always known. Now--

WHAM! Walsh SLUGS Dylan in the face, knocking him unconscious. With that, we--

BLACK OUT.

INT. PROV. POLICE PRECINCT- INTERROGATION ROOM- NIGHT.

Dylan GASPS awake, finding himself sitting alone in the darkened INTERROGATION ROOM.

Realizing he's not handcuffed, Dylan gets up and goes to try the door, only to find it locked.

DYLAN

Hello!?

Somewhere in the room, a SMALL and QUIET voice responds--

VOICE (O.S.)

Hello.

The voice seems to emanate from the SHADOWS. Dylan gets up, slowly approaches. As he does, a low BREATHING sound becomes audible. Then--

A DEAFENING BLARE of FEEDBACK rings over the PA SYSTEM:

ALEX (O.S.)

Hello!

DYLAN

(glancing up)

Alex? What the hell is this? Walsh escaped from lockup. I know where he's headed! If you'll let me out of here--

The lights in the room abruptly FLICKER on and off.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

C'mon man. I thought we moved past this. Now is not the time for fucking games!

ALEX (O.S.)

Oh no? But I brought your toy.

Just then, the TWO WAY MIRROR flips up, revealing the transparent partition underneath.

There, sitting alone in the dark viewing room, we see the shadowy outline of ALEX. But, more noticeably, Gleaming in his hand is the CROSS.

DYLAN

Where...where did you get that?

ALEX

Found it on you when you were out cold. I always knew you were a Jesus-freak so I didn't think much of it. But then...

Alex LAUGHS, slapping his knee exaggeratedly.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Whooo, boy it all started to make sense to me. Before, I couldn't see the draw in working for a greaseball wannabe like Walsh. I figured he was just taking advantage of a mixed-up orphan...

DYLAN

Alex, listen to me. You shouldn't be handling that, O.K.?! Put it down!

Alex STANDS UP, begins walking towards the two-way mirror. With that, the mirror flips BACK to its original reflective state.

Now, Dylan's looking at his own reflection, and yet--
ALEX IS RIGHT BEHIND HIM, IN THE ROOM!

ALEX

I don't think I want to.

Alex's EYES are SLATE GREY. In a flash, he DISAPPEARS. Now, his voice BOOMS throughout the room-- *without* the use of any PA system.

ALEX (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Now I see the high you were chasing. See, I knew you were living on both sides of the fence but I didn't know *which* fence.

DYLAN

Alex, this isn't you!

ALEX (O.S.)

Oh no? I think it fits me like a glove. You were right about what you said the other day. I did only pick up this badge because a badge means *power*. But a badge ain't *shit* compared to this...

A silent beat. Then, insidiously, the two way mirror begins to RIPPLE, like a tidepool. Gradually, the surface BENDS and BILLOWS outwards as--

ALEX MORPHS THROUGH the mirror like a Satanic Silver Surfer. Under the reflective VEIL, we see his body shift into something BEASTLY-- spindly appendages clacking into place as they reach for Dylan.

DYLAN

(holding back terror)

That thing doesn't want you. You're just a means to an end so it can get to *me*. You're a parasite, Alex!

ALEX
 (supernaturally deep)
 Quiet...hush now...

Alex reaches out his claw, inches away from Dylan, when--

BANG! A GUNSHOT rings out, SHATTERING the mirrored beast into a thousand PIECES. Alex turns to find TAYLOR standing in the entryway, pistol smoking.

TAYLOR
 (stunned)
 Is that...

Dylan reaches out to grab the CROSS from off the floor, but as he does the SHARDS of mirror animate, STABBING into his hand as they coalesce into BEASTLY FORM again.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
 (recovering)
 Dylan! Here!

Taylor tosses a small PERFUME BOTTLE over to Dylan.

DYLAN
 What am I supposed to do with this!?

TAYLOR
 Throw it at him!

No time to argue, Dylan uncaps the bottle and HURLS the liquid at the reforming Beast/Alex. Upon contact, it SIZZLES as though BURNING through the mirrored surface.

Alex's BLISTERING SKIN begins popping through the cracked pieces of glass. He SCREAMS in pain as the glass shards SLICE his flesh.

ALEX
 Kill me! *Kill me!*

Alex nods to the bottle.

DYLAN
 We have to save some.
 (to Alex)
 Sorry.

Dylan and Taylor run out of the interrogation room, leaving the writhing abomination that is Alex alone. His cries are totally MUFFLED the instant the door closes.

INT. PROVIDENCE POLICE PRECINCT- HALLWAY- DAY.

Dylan and Taylor race down the hallway. The lights overhead ominously FLICKER on and off.

DYLAN

What are you doing here?

TAYLOR

Saving your ass, apparently!

DYLAN

After the way I acted earlier?

TAYLOR

That wasn't you. I see that now. It was whatever got into Alex. Whatever did...

(pointing)

This.

Dylan looks up, finding that the hallway is STREWN with the broken, bloodied CORPSES of the four-odd **COPS** on guard-duty in the station. It's a horrific scene.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Sanders...Nowitsky...

DYLAN

(looking over the bodies)

Del Graza and Monahan. All good officers.

Good people. This has to end...

Taylor nods gesturing to the BOTTLE in Dylan's hand.

TAYLOR

Now we have a way to make that happen.

DYLAN

Holy water?

TAYLOR

Not just any holy water-- it's Father Leary's. I got it out of the evidence room. It was collected at the scene all those years back when...all this started.

DYLAN

No...that doesn't make sense. Father Leary was never *trying* to protect me...

(looking up)

How'd you get here?

TAYLOR

I took the bus--

Dylan instantly kneels down and begins patting down the CORPSE of a Police Officer pinned behind an upturned Table. He reaches down to find that the man's--

TORSO has been severed from his body, a few feet away. He rushes over to the man's bottom half, reaches into his pants pocket and removes his SQUAD CAR KEYS.

INT. POLICE CRUISER- NIGHT.

Taylor digs her nails into the armrest of the cop car as Dylan SPEEDS down surface streets, SIRENS WAILING.

Eventually, the car screeches to a stop outside TAYLOR'S APARTMENT BUILDING.

TAYLOR

You turned on the red-and-blues just to take me *home*?

DYLAN

You're not a cop anymore, Taylor. I am.

Dylan opens the driver's side door and steps out onto

EXT. STREET- TAYLOR'S APARTMENT- CONTINUOUS.

He pointedly leaves his door OPEN as he trods towards the vestibule of Taylor's apartment. She gets out of the car and follows after him.

TAYLOR

What the fuck is that supposed to mean?
(before he can reply)
And don't tell me you're going after Walsh because I know good and well that you sprung him yourself.

DYLAN

It *means* I have a professional obligation to risk my ass chasing bad guys and that you have a *personal* obligation to stay safe and alive.

TAYLOR

An obligation to who? You? Dylan, for Christ's sakes, I saved your life!

Dylan stares at Taylor, emotion welling inside him.

DYLAN

And now I'm saving yours.

Without warning, Dylan suddenly SPRINTS back to his squad car, leaping into the open driver's side door and TAKING OFF down the street!

TAYLOR

Wait! You *don't understand!*

EXT. HOSPITAL- NIGHT.

Dylan's cruiser car creeps into the hospital parking lot. Through the darkness, a CIGARETTE EMBER illuminates--

WALSH, standing at the lip of an freight access area around back of the hospital.

WALSH

You're late.

(checking his watch)

We've only got an hour. Where's Taylor?

DYLAN

Taylor? Why would...she be here?

WALSH

I saw her sneaking into the precinct while I was on the way out. Got the feeling she was along for the ride.

DYLAN

Not as far as I know.

Dylan walks over to Walsh, who nods to the ACCESS DOOR, conveniently propped open with a cinder-block.

WALSH

I got a guy works as an orderly.

DYLAN

You've got a guy for everything, huh?

WALSH

Wish I had one for killing demons.

This manages to elicit a grim chuckle from Dylan.

INT. HOSPITAL- HALLWAY- DAY.

Service elevator doors open and Walsh and Dylan pad out into the ICU. Immediately, Walsh is stricken by the sounds of BEEPING MACHINES emanating from the rooms.

WALSH

What the fuck are we supposed to do about all these people up here?

DYLAN

Nothing. It's the *coma ward*. There's only one person we have to get out of here.

INT. HOSPITAL- RECEPTION AREA- DAY.

Moments later. ANNETTE stares dead at us, arms folded and lips pursed.

ANNETTE

Are you fuckin' kidding me right now!?

REVERSE: Dylan holds up Walsh's pistol halfheartedly. Behind him, Walsh looks on, shaking his head.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

You want me to leave a wing full of patients *alone* so you can go into Leary's room with a *gun*!? I'm callin' the cops!

Dylan takes out his BADGE.

DYLAN

I *am* a cop!

ANNETTE

(re: Walsh)

And what about this shady lookin' motherfucker right here?

DYLAN

He's...my partner.

Annette sucks her teeth, pulls out her PHONE and turns around the screen. There, we see a NEWS ALERT showing a picture of WALSH.

"Manhunt In Providence As Ryan Walsh Escapes Custody".

Walsh perks up, stunned.

WALSH

Christ. How'd they find out so soon?

DYLAN

Taylor. She must have told them.

WALSH

We don't have time for this shit. It's almost midnight!

Dylan turns back to Annette, forcing his resolve.

ANNETTE

My man, you know I respect you. But I can't leave my patients alone. So either you're gonna have to kill me or--

Whooooosh! Suddenly, a tremendous GUST OF WIND flows through the ICU. Several WINDOWS crack and SPLIT apart.

Dark, GREY SHADOWS begin insidiously creeping in from outside, like floating plumes of translucent SMOG.

Annette's eyes go wide as one of the plumes narrowly misses her head. We see within the clouds a miniature STORM SYSTEM, replete with CRACKLING LIGHTENING.

Distant, HELLISH SCREAMS echo from within each blob, growing louder in intensity as they approach--

FATHER LEARY'S ROOM, where they gather outside into a churning, ashen CUMULUS CLOUD. Annette looks from the terrifying sight back to Dylan.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

Baby, he's all yours.

She quickly gathers up her purse and JOGS towards the stairway as fast as her legs will carry her. Dylan and Walsh exchange a steely look, then head for Leary's room

As they approach the BILLOWING CLOUD, it begins swirling and shifting rapidly. Then, abruptly, goes *still*.

Walsh gently reaches out to TOUCH the smog. Suddenly, it REFORMS into the shape of a HIDEOUS, GOAT-LIKE FACE, snapping at Walsh's hand with smoke-hewn TEETH.

Walsh SHOUTS out as the smog creature threatens to overtake him. Then--

DYLAN

No!

The Creature RECOILS, shirking back. Walsh turns to find DYLAN, holding out the glowing CROSS.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Let us past!

The Smoke Creature GRIMACES, then DISSIPATES into thin air, filtering out through the AIR CONDITIONING DUCTS.

A quiet beat. Dylan and Walsh peer into the room, where, as always, FATHER LEARY lies still as a board in bed.

WALSH

Time to end this, right?

Dylan hesitates. Pangs of guilt cropping up as he watches his old mentor. Then:

DYLAN

Damn right.

The advance into the room. Walsh looks over to a CHAIR in the corner. He strides over and removes a PILLOW from atop it.

WALSH

I'll take care of the padre. You get ready with that cross for when he goes...*you know.*

Walsh slowly approaches Father Leary, lifting aloft the pillow, readying to place it over the prone man's head. But as he goes to bring it down--

BWEW! A FIELD of LIGHT ENERGY blasts into existence, surrounding Father Leary's bed. When Walsh makes contact with it, the pillow BURNS to ASH in his hands.

Walsh GASPS in pain, staggering back.

WALSH (CONT'D)

It won't let me through! But maybe...

Walsh looks leadingly to Dylan. He absorbs this. Dylan closes his eyes, a look of absolute CALM passing over him as he gradually approaches the Light Field.

As he does, it FLICKERS and SHIMMERS into nothingness. Walsh looks on eagerly as Dylan stands over Father Leary.

DYLAN

(to Leary)

Here we are again. The poor victim and the loyal follower. I probably spent days here. Hoping you'd wake up. Ignoring everything I'd heard. Everything I feared. All out of faith. Out of love.

Dylan reaches out to touch Leary's CROSS NECKLACE.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

All for this "man of God". But you have nothing to do with Him, do you?

Dylan's hands begin shifting towards Leary's THROAT. His grip tightening.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

God cast your type out. The wicked. The impure. The *deceivers!*

Dylan's fingers CLAMP DOWN, now CHOKING the life out of Father Leary. Walsh tenses up with anticipation as he watches, balling up his fists. Just then--

TAYLOR (O.S.)

WAIT!!!

All eyes turn to find a panting TAYLOR standing in the doorway. In her arms, she clutches a MANILA FOLDER.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Don't do it! This isn't what you want!

DYLAN

Of course it isn't what I *want!* But it's the only thing that will stop all this!

TAYLOR

And what *started* all this?

DYLAN

Finding that...piece.

TAYLOR

(nodding to Walsh)

Finding it for *him*.

WALSH

We've been over this already. I said my sorries. Now, if you'll excuse us, we have bigger fish to fry!

TAYLOR

Oh, "The Four"?

(to Dylan)

This conspiracy of Satanists trying to stop you from forming that cross. That story must have been a bit hard to swallow at first. You probably needed some convincing...

WALSH

Listen sweetheart, what is this about?

Taylor tosses the Manila FOLDER over to Dylan.

TAYLOR

Found it at the station. When they brought you in, they had techs scour all your computers, go through your e-mails. They found a spreadsheet of all the people you'd paid off over the last year.

WALSH

I'm a criminal. We get it. Killers, pushers, hookers, the whole nine.

TAYLOR

Yeah, but one name stood out-- Marcus Annenberg. He's an *actor* in local community theater.

ANGLE ON: Dylan looks through the documents. There, we see images of this MARCUS ANNENBERG (30s) performing on stage. We gradually realize this man, is, in fact the--

HOODED ATTACKER who went after Dylan in the diner!

DYLAN

(holding up the picture)
What is this?

TAYLOR

Walsh needed you to believe his story. To think that this ancient order would *kill* you if you didn't kill them first. And every time you did...

DYLAN

(staring at the cross)
Another piece fell into place.
(looking to Walsh)
You weren't trying to stop the unification. You were trying to *cause* it--

Suddenly, Walsh pulls up his pants leg, revealing an ANKLE HOLSTER. He grabs PISTOL within and LUNGES at Taylor, restraining her as he puts the gun to her temple.

WALSH

You are one smart cookie, doll.

DYLAN

Let her go!

WALSH

Can't do that. Like she said, I went through a *lot* of trouble to set this moment up and I plan on seeing it through. Or rather, *you do*.

Walsh GRINDS the tip of the gun into Taylor's head.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Kill Leary. I lied about semantics, but everything I told you about that man is still as true as the day it happened.

DYLAN

I can't believe a word you say!

Walsh SHOTS Taylor in the SHOULDER. She SCREAMS in pain.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

No!!

WALSH

Kill the priest or I kill her!

Out of options, Dylan gradually walks back over to Leary's bed, again placing his hands around his neck.

DYLAN

(sotto)

I'm sorry.

Suddenly, Dylan **SHOVES** the wheeled hospital bed towards Walsh! As it makes contact, the **ENERGY FIELD** again reforms, **BURNING** Walsh's body!

Walsh **BELLOWS**, staggering backwards, giving Taylor a chance to escape his grip. Walsh fumbles for his **GUN--**

BANG! Dylan gets the drop on him, **SHOOTING** Walsh in the chest. He clutches the blooming wound. A beat. Then, a strangely serene **SMILE** forms on Walsh's lips.

WALSH

About time.

With that, Walsh **COLLAPSES**. Dylan rushes over to him.

WALSH (CONT'D)

I did wrong, kid. I've had this coming to me for longer than I care to admit. But all that really matters...

(patting his chest)

Is in here.

With that, Walsh **DIES**. Dylan takes it in, deeply affected. Then, after a beat, the **BULLET WOUND** in Walsh's chest **SPLITS OPEN**.

From inside, something **METALLIC** raises up out of his chest, seemingly of it's own accord-- it's a two-foot long, stainless steel **BLADE**.

The Blade hovers towards Dylan's **CROSS**, conjoining onto the top of it. This is no cross. It's a medieval **SWORD**.

DYLAN

The final piece...it was in him all along.

As Dylan goes to grab the hilt of the sword, we suddenly--

FLASH TO:

INT. FROZEN REALM- CHURCH- ?

The abstract, in-between view of that fateful day. Dylan walks cautiously through the expressionist landscape.

Some distance in front of him, he hears the soft voice of a CHILD, singing:

CHILD (O.S.)
*Joy to the world, He has risen,
 hallelujah...*

The noise seems to be coming from behind a 3/4 scale STATUE of CHRIST on the cross. Dylan slowly peeks his head around the statue to find--

Nothing. Then...

CHILD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (louder, coming from above)
 Hear the bells ringing! They're singing
 Christ is risen from the *dead!*

Dylan looks up to find the statue of Christ has been replaced by the ghostly form of his **YOUNGER SELF!**

The boy LEAPS down from the cross, stigmata of the hands and feet trickling grey SMOKE. Dylan recoils in fear.

YOUNG DYLAN
 Don't be afraid. I'm only you.

As Young Dylan speaks, his more supernatural affects wear off, replaced by a more normal looking young boy.

Then, FATHER LEARY abruptly races out from behind a pillar, grabbing hold of Young Dylan.

FATHER LEARY
 It is time, my son.

Father Leary points to the floor under the altar, which we now see is adorned with the ornate PENTAGRAM.

DYLAN
 No! You son of a bitch!

Father Leary doesn't react at all, looking straight THROUGH (older) Dylan like he's not there.

Young Dylan narrates his own fate as Father Leary tears off the boys clothes and binds his hands and feet.

YOUNG DYLAN

Father Leary said he was going to make me special. That I would live forever and the whole world would know my name.

Father Leary goes behind his podium, removing a live **BABY GOAT**. He produces the SWORD and SLICES the animal's THROAT, allowing the blood to pour over Young Dylan.

YOUNG DYLAN (CONT'D)

We believed Father. Just like always. And no one raised a finger to stop him.

A quick glance around reveals the presence of the **FOUR-- FRIAR JAMESON, the OLD WOMAN, MADAME LYDIA, and ANDREW.**

Current Dylan can't look away. Shaking with anguish and fury as he watches Father Leary read his **INCANTATIONS.**

DYLAN

Don't! Don't!

Unable to control himself, Dylan leaps forward to tackle Father Leary. But just as he reaches him--

The form of the infernal **BEAST** swirls in through the ether, more fully rendered than before. An eight-foot tall **CHIMERA** hewn of sheer pulsing **ENERGY.**

The Beast **SCREECHES** right in Dylan's face before proceeding right **THROUGH** his body like a **HOLOGRAM.** He turns, realizing it's headed for **YOUNG DYLAN.**

YOUNG DYLAN

It was about to happen. I could feel the hatred. The coldness. And then--

WHOOM! The Door bursts open in **SLOW MOTION** as--

YOUNGER WALSH enters, gun drawn!

YOUNGER WALSH

Let the kid go, Leary!

Everything **SLOWS** to a crawl except for Young Dylan. He sits up, looking directly at Dylan.

YOUNG DYLAN

Walsh came back for us.

The scene abruptly **FLASHES** into **FAST FORWARD** then **FREEZES** again to show Father Leary firing his **ENERGY BEAM** at Walsh as Walsh shoots his **GUN** right back.

The frozen **BULLET** ever-so-slowly winds past Dylan on its way to **STRIKING** Leary in the **STOMACH.**

YOUNG DYLAN (CONT'D)

Father Leary couldn't put the demon in me, so he put it into them instead.

The scene FAST FORWARDS to a blur before coming to a HALT on the striking image of the FOUR, each crying out as the pieces of the sword BORE into their bodies.

The splatters and streaks of BLOOD linger stiffly in the air like icicles. Gobsnacked, Dylan goes to touch them--

Only for the scene to again BURST into real-time as the Four transform into their *MONSTROUS FORMS*, bounding after Walsh as he picks up Young Dylan and dashes for the exit.

YOUNG DYLAN (CONT'D)

Walsh *saved* our lives. But he couldn't save his own.

One of the Monsters picks up the discarded BLADE of the sword and HURLS it--

Dylan DUCKS out of the way as the sword flies past him, finding its mark in Walsh's BACK, embedding in his body. As he does, Walsh and the rest of the players--

DISAPPEAR, leaving Dylan alone with his younger self.

YOUNG DYLAN (CONT'D)

But he knew we would never be able to do what was necessary on our own. That is why he brought us into his world. Because he knew we would need to embrace the darkness in order to one day be strong enough to snuff it out...

The entire church goes BLACK, save only for a kind of halo-like SPOTLIGHT on--

FATHER LEARY, propped up in a pew, bleeding from his gunshot wound. His hands covered in BLOOD.

DYLAN

His hands...

Young Dylan nods. They speak in strange unison, as though in some way tethered.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

There's blood on his hands.

YOUNG DYLAN

There's blood on his hands.

Dylan firms up his grip on the SWORD. As he walks towards Father Leary, Young Dylan morphs back into his SPECTRAL STATE, even more skeletal and wraithlike than before.

YOUNG DYLAN (CONT'D)

Think of all he took from us. Joy. Hope.
Love. He took it all and left us empty.

Dylan's anger rises as he looms over Father Leary, who now turns as though NOTICING him for the first time.

FATHER LEARY

Help...

YOUNG DYLAN

(whispering)

After all this he still asks for more.
It's never enough. He'll keep on taking
until we make him *stop*--

As Dylan unleashes a PRIMAL SCREAM of rage, we--

INTERCUT:

INT. HOSPITAL- FATHER LEARY'S ROOM- NIGHT- CONTINUOUS.

Lying on the floor, Taylor comes gasping into consciousness as though she's heard the scream.

TAYLOR

Dylan?!

She gets to her feet to find Dylan, standing over Father Leary, the sword raised high just as it is in his vision.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Dylan, no!

Taylor races forward to block Dylan's arm, but he SMACKS her away, sending her flying into the opposite wall.

Dylan turns around and we see his eyes are GREY-- he's again being *possessed!*

DYLAN

(deep voice)

Do not interfere.

Gnarled CLAWS spout from Dylan's FINGERS as he moves towards Taylor.

TAYLOR

I'm just trying to help you!

DYLAN

(deep voice)

You're just trying to use me! Just like
you used me on the force.

(MORE)

DYLAN (CONT'D)

You knew I was split down the middle,
torn between light and dark and you *used*
it to your advantage to bring down Walsh.
You didn't care about what happened to me
then any more than you do *now!*

Dylan GRABS Taylor by the THROAT, plops her down onto the bed beside Father Leary.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

You're a self righteous liar just like
him. Fitting for you to *die* together.

Dylan lifts up the sword, revealing the bottle of HOLY WATER, still sticking out of his pocket.

Thinking fast, Taylor grabs hold of the bottle and SPLASHES it onto Dylan--

And it BURNS away at the dark sheen covering his body. As he stumbles backwards, Taylor is bucked, accidentally splashing some of the holy water onto--

FATHER LEARY'S FACE. Some of it dribbles into his open MOUTH...

Dylan comes REARING back, the possession fighting against its antidote.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

(deeper)

You *whore!* I'll tear you--

Suddenly, Father Leary COUGHS. Dylan and Taylor both freeze in shock as he *STIRS*--

FLASH BACK:

INT. FROZEN REALM- CHURCH- ?

As Father Leary ROARS back into consciousness! He rolls out of the way right as Dylan strikes with the sword, embedding it into the pew.

YOUNG DYLAN

No!!!

Young Dylan races over, tearing the sword loose.

YOUNG DYLAN (CONT'D)

(handing it to Dylan)

Kill him NOW--

FATHER LEARY

Te rogamus, audi nos!

A fully revived Father Leary holds the SWORD upside down like an oversized CROSS. As he completes the incantation, Young Dylan FREEZES, unable to move.

DYLAN

Father...How...

FATHER LEARY

Because that is not Dylan Boyland. Never was.

Father Leary gently takes Dylan's head in his hands. Tears of happiness well as he sees the man he's become.

FATHER LEARY (CONT'D)

You are Dylan Boyland. The best voice in the choir. The first at mass and the last to leave. The kindest and strongest boy I ever had the privilege of knowing. You're still in there somewhere.

As Father Leary stares into Dylan's eyes, the surroundings of the church become a formless, amorphous blur, as we find ourselves back in--

INT. DYLAN'S FAMILY HOME- DAY- THE PAST.

A YOUNGER WALSH steps into the foyer of a run-down townhome circa the mid-'90s. He carries a GIFT-WRAPPED BOX under his arm.

FATHER LEARY (V.O.)

I believe Mr. Walsh had pulled some heist at a shop dealing in rare antiques-- only a few days before Christmas.

He speaks with **DYLAN'S MOTHER (30s)**, as we saw before.

WALSH

...A'course I did, Diane. You didn't think I'd forget Christmas, did you?

Walsh smiles, but as he passes by, we see his EYES flash SLATE-GREY.

INT. DYLAN'S FAMILY HOME- FOYER/DYLAN'S ROOM- CONTINUOUS.

Walsh KNOCKS gently. No response.

WALSH

Dyl? You in there, bud?

Unlike in Walsh's telling of the story, Dylan comes eagerly to the door, HUGGING Walsh.

DYLAN

Ryan!

WALSH

Good to see ya little man. Hey, look-- I got you a little something here.

Walsh hands over the box.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Go on, open it. It's pretty cool.

Dylan tears open the wrapping paper, opening up the box to reveal the-- SWORD inside.

DYLAN

Wow! Is this...real?

WALSH

Damn skippy. Don't tell your mom.

Dylan laughs, nodding as he admires the sword.

WALSH (CONT'D)

It's not just any sword either. This is a sword that *talks*.

DYLAN

Really?

WALSH

Oh yeah. It'll tell you all kinds of nutty things. But you should try listening. You might learn something...

As Dylan smiles, the surroundings again RE-ARRANGE themselves, contorting back into--

INT. FROZEN REALM- CHURCH- ?

Dylan listens on in awe.

FATHER LEARY

Walsh was little more than an emissary of Neebo. Once it had its claws in him, he would only follow its bidding.

Father Leary nods sadly to the frozen Young Dylan.

FATHER LEARY (CONT'D)

It was on that day that...*this* was first conceived. The possession took hold, intensifying daily. By Easter, it was clear that action needed to be taken.

In an instant, the PAUSE is lifted and we rapidly REWIND through time, reversing the fast-forward of the previous flashback to show--

An EXORCISM in process. Father Leary stands over Young Dylan, but there's *no pentagram*.

FATHER LEARY (CONT'D)

I rebuke you foul thing! Leave this boy!

Father Leary PULLS on the sword like a fishing rod, *EXTRACTING* malignant energy from within Dylan rather than forcing it in.

Again, the hideous DEMON forms out of the aether, but this time, father O'Leary struggles to push it BACK, chanting his holy incantations.

FATHER LEARY (CONT'D)

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy spirit, I bid you--

BANG! Father Leary is SHOT again. We turn to find WALSH storming in, his eyes GREY MARBLES.

WALSH

Take the boy, master!

The Demon opens its MAW wide, hovering over Young Dylan.

FATHER LEARY (V.O.)

I could extract the demon from you, but was too weak to defeat it wholesale. So I was left with only one option...

Father O'Leary leaps in the path of the demon, holding the sword above his head like a lightening rod.

FATHER LEARY

Neebo entratum!

With a blast of energy, the Demon ABSORBS into Father Leary's body.

FATHER LEARY (CONT'D)

To take him on myself.

As the demon is absorbed, the Sword EXPLODES outwards--piercing into the members of the FOUR!

FATHER LEARY (CONT'D)

And, in doing so, take myself away.

Father Leary COLLAPSES, the strain of the energy causing his body to SHUT DOWN.

FATHER LEARY (CONT'D)

If I had only died, all of this would have been avoided. But as I lingered between worlds, Neebo was able to claw his way back into ours. And Walsh was given time to mold you...to corrupt you.

DYLAN

Corrupt me? No, don't blame this on me!

FATHER LEARY

I heard your confessions, my son. I heard the things you did for Walsh. Every time you compromised your values, the seed of evil grew stronger.

Dylan looks up, tears flowing down his face.

FATHER LEARY (CONT'D)

I chose to sacrifice myself so that an innocent boy full of hope could have a second chance at life.

DYLAN

Some life it's been.

FATHER LEARY

That's because you too made a choice. To treat my sacrifice and your loss as an excuse rather than a *gift*. You felt guilt where you should have felt gratitude and anger when you should have felt joy and then...finally, you saw grey where there exists only black and white.

Father Leary presses his hand up to Dylan's heart.

FATHER LEARY (CONT'D)

Good and evil are real.

DYLAN

Evil is. I see that now. But good? The pious do good and they are *rewarded* with the promise of paradise for doing them. That's not selfless, either.

Father Leary listens in silence, touching his rosaries for a beat. Then, he tilts his head back and LAUGHS.

FATHER LEARY

You're altogether right. I do hope to get something out of this: a noble death.

He goes to hand Dylan back the SWORD.

FATHER LEARY (CONT'D)

Not out of spite or obligation. This you must do with Mercy.

DYLAN

Murder is a mortal sin. I send you to heaven so I can go to hell?

FATHER LEARY

Maybe. I lived a life of transactions, as you say. Doing good deeds for just reward and eschewing bad ones to avoid punishment. Those were merely hedges.

Dylan accepts the sword. He knows what must be done.

DYLAN

...but this is a choice.

FATHER LEARY

(smiling)

May God's light shine within you, my son.

Dylan unsheathes the sword and PLUNGES it into Father Leary. He slumps over, DEAD.

A still and silent beat. Then, shattering the quiet--

YOUNG DYLAN BURSTS out of suspended animation, BOUNDING through the air towards Current Dylan.

YOUNG DYLAN/NEEBO

You are *mine!*

Young Dylan hideously CONTORTS into the eight-foot **BAPHOMET**. Now more than just a vision-- a flesh and blood MONSTER, bearing down upon Dylan.

A series of VINE-LIKE TENTACLES erupt from every ORIFICE in its face, snatching Dylan into its a vice-like grasp.

With a hideous SHRIEK, a horrifying, vaguely anthropomorphic BLOB emerges from within the Baphomet, revealing its body to be a hollow exoskeleton.

The creature within is pale grey and slick with oil-- it resembles an ancient sculpture crossed with some perversion of a human INFANT, covered in pus-dripping SCAPS and OPEN SORES.

It opens its mouth and lolls out a BONE DRY RATTLING sound like a SNAKE, and then--

LUNGES onto Dylan's FACE, splattering into SLIME upon impact and worming into his EYES and MOUTH.

His body CONVULSES as the creature inhabits him. The CHURCH seems to SHAKE with the force of the internal struggle. Then--

Stillness. Dylan looks down to find his entire body is ALIVE with SQUIRMING tendons, working their way through his muscles and organs.

Dylan's eyes begin rapidly FLIPPING between normal and GREY. As he speaks, his voice alternates between its regular tone and the deeper one of POSSESSION:

DYLAN

I'm...I...

Dylan looks up at the beautiful stained glass PORTICO, taking in the church for one last time. Resisting every conceivable biological impulse, he goes slack.

And as he does, the black gloom of the Frozen Place is pierced by a lone ray of SUNLIGHT, beaming in through the windows onto Dylan's face. He smiles.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

(sotto)

I forgive you.

With that, the glow of the sunshine seems to ENVELOP Dylan's body. As the brilliant light spreads, the dark SQUIRMING within subsides until eventually it--

STOPS. The dark shroud is EXPELLED through Dylan's every pore, wafting into nothingness. Dylan's eyes return to normal as we--

FLASH OUT:

INT. HOSPITAL- FATHER LEARY'S ROOM.

Dylan FALLS backwards. The Sword CLANGS to the floor.

Father Leary's heart monitor FLATLINE as Taylor RUSHES over to Dylan, coddling him in her arms.

INT. PROVIDENCE POLICE PRECINCT- OFFICE- DAY.

Dylan, sporting a host of bruises and bandaged cuts, sits opposite CHIEF EICHNER as he reads a REPORT.

CHIEF EICHNER

...And you say you tracked Walsh to the hospital to stop him from killing this Father Leary?

(glancing up)

(MORE)

CHIEF EICHNER (CONT'D)

And why exactly would a crime boss break out of jail to kill a comatose priest?

DYLAN

Desperate people do strange things sometimes, sir.

CHIEF EICHNER

It still just doesn't add up to me. Alex Carlyle was--

TAYLOR (O.S.)

Alex Carlyle was a sociopath who tried to murder a fellow officer.

Chief Eichner turns, where we now see Taylor, dressed in her best pants suit, staring out the window.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I saw it with my own two eyes, Chief.

CHIEF EICHNER

After you broke into the precinct and illegally accessed our evidence database.

(to Dylan)

And then you went in alone without even reporting Walsh's break-out.

Chief Eichner drums his fingers on the table.

CHIEF EICHNER (CONT'D)

The head of the Vice Squad would normally be calling in IA over breaches of protocol like this...can't imagine why she's taking so long.

With a wry smile Chief Eichner stands out of his chair, allowing TAYLOR to sit down.

TAYLOR

I think she's too busy trying to find a replacement for her best detective.

Chief Eichner looks to Dylan, incredulous.

CHIEF EICHNER

I hope that's a joke.

DYLAN

No joke, Chief. You won't have to put up with me any more.

CHIEF EICHNER

Kid, the press is calling you a *hero!*

Dylan removes his badge, placing it on the desk.

DYLAN
I'm no hero. I'm just me.

Dylan walks around the desk over to Taylor.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Plus, I hear the higher ups frown on
inter office relationships.

They share a KISS. Chief Eichner looks on, bemused.

CHIEF EICHNER
What's the next step then?

DYLAN
I'm thinking of going to seminary. Taking
up the cloth.
(beat)
Just shittin' you. I got a cousin who's a
contractor up in Brawford. Said he could
get me a job.

Chief Eichner grins, shaking his head.

CHIEF EICHNER
Best of luck. But I still expect that
evidence report on my desk by the end of
the day. We still don't have eyes on
that...sword or whatever it was.

Dylan shares a look with Taylor, masking concern.

TAYLOR
We're on it, chief.

With a nod, Chief Eichner saddles out the door. Taylor
opens up her desk drawer and removes a tube of LIPSTICK.
She begins applying it, looking into a pocket mirror.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
So, that's it?

DYLAN
Yep. The mediocre law enforcement career
of Dylan Boyland comes to an end.

TAYLOR
Well, then, for the eight thousand four
hundred and thirty second time-- "why"?

DYLAN
Because, now that I know what might be
waiting for me on the other side, I want
to stay alive. For as long as possible.

TAYLOR
That's depressing.

DYLAN
Depending on how you look at it.

Taylor leans in.

TAYLOR
I'll miss you.

DYLAN
You only have to wait until dinner.

Taylor smiles, gives Dylan a parting peck on the lips, smearing them red. She giggles as he wipes it away.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
By the way...what *did* happen to that sword?

TAYLOR
No clue. I was just focused on getting you to the hospital. Maybe it *disappeared* into thin air.

DYLAN
Nothing would surprise me at this point.

With a tender smile, Dylan walks back out the door. Taylor watches him go, visibly smitten.

TAYLOR
(to herself, sweetly)
He's mine now.

Taylor opens a drawer in her desk and places the lipstick inside. As she does, we notice a SHARD of the SWORD BLADE hidden therein.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
(voice deepening)
All mine.

SLAM TO BLACK.