

THE MANDATE



Episode 1 "Terminal"

by
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In a world where an ever-present government has a mandate to protect human life at all costs, an outsider adolescent finds herself torn between a father who investigates the rare murders that still occur and a boyfriend who might be evolution's counterbalance - a blood-thirsty mutation of the human race.

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man·date *noun*

1. *an authoritative command to act in a particular way on a public issue given by the electorate to its representative.*

TEASER

EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK - OUTSKIRTS OF D.C. - YEAR 2074 - DAY

LARKIN (17), a thin teen with a streak of rebellion through her hair, strides down the sidewalk. A cross-body handbag bounces on her side as wireless earbuds silence the surrounding foot traffic *with echoes of Joan Jett.*

Her path breaks toward a convenience store. As she reaches the entrance, the windows change to digital ads of models and mascara. *Who doesn't want more thick, voluminous lashes?*

INT. ENTRANCE - GROCERY STORE

She scans her phone while passing through the digital turnstile. After, a Siri-type voice greets her...

ENTRANCE VOICE (O.C.)
Welcome back, Larkin. Check out
aisle five for our limited time
sale on all make-up products.

She ignores it and reaches for a rolling hand basket.

ON THE WALLS around, cameras follow her progress.

INT. RANDOM GROCERY AISLE

Larkin, dragging the roller basket behind, grabs up some groceries off a shelf. Tosses them in the basket.

She passes an end-cap with an ad projection of a famous chef demo-ing how to cook *their latest shitty, sell-out product.*

A cartoonish candy ad projection on the next end-cap does catch her attention.

INT. CANDY AISLE

She stares down the candy aisle. Looks up at the sign.

The sign above the aisle says: **CANDY, COOKIES, SUGAR SNACKS**

She thinks briefly. *Fuck it.* Turns down the aisle.

Candy is locked up with digital signs under it. Scrolling...

MUST BE 18 AND OVER. LIMIT ONE PER CUSTOMER.

Larkin looks at the thumb scanner by the shelf sign.

She inconspicuously retrieves a FAKE THUMB MOLD from her purse. Slides it on her thumb. Places it on the scanner.

When the shelf unlocks, she grabs a box of chocolates and a pack of gum. Hides the fake thumbprint back in her bag.

It re-locks as she scoffs at a warning label on the candy.

Two chicly-dressed popular TEEN GIRLS walk down the aisle. Before they pass, Larkin glances at them. *You know the type.*

LARKIN
Farrah?...Kat?....hey.

She shyly grins and nods.

They shoot her an apathetic glare. One of them kicks Larkin's basket as they stroll passed her. Some groceries fall out.

As the girls keep walking, they giggle to each other.

Larkin kneels to pick up the items. Whispers to herself...

LARKIN (CONT'D)
Fucking bitch.

The girls round the corner. *Mean girls 1, Larkin 0.*

EXT. ENTRANCE - GROCERY STORE - DAY

Larkin, holding a grocery bag, waits in front of the store. She answers a call with a tap to her earbud.

LARKIN
On my way, dad.
(listens)
I-I know...I know...Ten minutes.

A futuristic UberX stops in front of her. *Looks like something out of The Jetson's.*

The car door automatically SLIDES UP. She tosses the bags in.

LARKIN (CONT'D)
My car's here...See you in a few.

She taps her earbud to end the call as she gets in.

INT. RIDESHARE VEHICLE

Larkin sits in the autonomous car. She sighs and leans back as the car drives. An automated voice greets her...

VEHICLE VOICE (O.C.)
Good afternoon, Larkin. ETA is
seventeen minutes. Would you like
to listen to music? Or watch DC-TV?

LARKIN
Classic rock...nineteen-seventies.

Lights lower and CLASSIC ROCK begins to play on the speakers.

INT/EXT. RIDESHARE VEHICLE - MOVING

A large flatscreen displays trip progress next to ads, a
stock ticker, weather, and scrolling headlines.

She hits a button on the door. The window rolls down halfway.

Out the window, she scans the traffic building up ahead.

ON TRAFFIC

Other autonomous vehicles stop and go in moderate traffic.

ON SCENE

Larkin pulls a vape pen out of her purse. She starts vaping.

VEHICLE VOICE
Larkin, there is no smoking in this
vehicle. Please terminate.

She exhales blue smoke as an ALARM starts to sound.

She retrieves the gum from the bag. Briefly chews it then
sticks it over the smoke detector vent. *Like a pro.*

She focuses her blue smoke out the window. The ALARM stops.

The car slows in traffic. Larkin continues to vape as she
glances out the window. Beat.

A police cruiser stops beside her car. The PATROL OFFICER
(20s) spots her vaping. He stares. *Busted.*

Larkin shuts it off. Hides it. Sighs. *FML.*

The police SIREN sounds as he gets behind her car.

Both cars stop. Larkin looks nervous. Beat.

The officer, in a gray uniform, appears at her window.

OFFICER

Thought I saw an illegal use of a--

He notices who's in the car. Larkin half-smiles.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

Larkin?

Larkin nods. The officer chuckles.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

If your dad knew about this--

LARKIN

Yep.

OFFICER

(sighs)

I know you've been through a lot
with your mom going terminal.

Larkin's mouth flattens. *She mentally rolls her eyes.*

OFFICER (CONT'D)

Give me the vape pen and I wont say
anything to him--or write you up.

He holds out his gloved hand. She sets the vape pen on it.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

Our secret.

Larkin flashes a fake grin and nods. The officer retreats.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

You take care, Larkin.

LARKIN

You too!--

(rolls window up)

--you fascist fuck.

As the car drives, she pulls out another vape pen. Leans
back. Puffs harder. *Red smoke this time.* She closes her eyes.

VEHICLE VOICE

Larkin, there is no smoking in this
vehicle. Please terminate.

The ALARM sounds again. *Gum fell off.* She sighs. Ignores it.

END TEASER

ACT ONEINT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - HOSPITAL - ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA - DAY

Overhead lights HUM as a 3-D x-ray hovers above a desk.

ON X-RAY

Projected from the desk below, a futuristic x-ray displays a male torso.

ON SCENE

In a clinically clean, white office, an oncologist, DR. JUNG, sits behind the 3-D x-ray at his desk. He swipes to turn the x-ray then points out a tumor.

DR. JUNG

You can see here the progression of malignant cells in your pancreas.

Seated in front of the desk, DETECTIVE ATLAS FOLEY (40s) stares at the x-ray. Badge on his belt, the investigator's stare exudes confidence. *Already formulating a battle-plan.*

His daughter, Larkin, sits beside him. Tears burgeoning. She squeezes her dad's hand as they observe the x-ray.

ATLAS

So, uh, what can we do? What does this mean?

Dr. Jung sighs.

DR. JUNG

Unfortunately, it's advanced...
Stage four.

Atlas nods. Larkin covers her face as she gently weeps.

ATLAS

How, uh, how long--

DR. JUNG

Probably eight weeks--possibly six.

Atlas sighs. Larkin wipes her tears.

DR. JUNG (CONT'D)

(to Atlas)

You must take care of this now if you want to get better and be...

(MORE)

DR. JUNG (CONT'D)

cancer-free.

(to Larkin)

It's gonna take six to eight weeks
until your dad's fully recovered.
He'll be bedridden--sleeping a lot--

ATLAS

I'm working a huge case--Couldn't I
start treatment in a couple weeks?

The doctor opens his drawer. Sets a white box on the desk.

DR. JUNG

You must start the treatment
immediately--

ATLAS

Doc, we-we've known each other a
long time, can't you--I don't know--

LARKIN

(turns to her dad)

Dad, your health is more important.

Dr. Jung shakes his head slowly.

DR. JUNG

Atlas, you know I can't--

He glances up at the wall. Atlas follows his eyes.

ON WALL

A large government seal of an eagle atop a medical staff is
on the wall. Above it, a camera observes their exchange.

DR. JUNG (O.C.) (CONT'D)

You're required to start treatment
today--It's your only option.

ON SCENE

ATLAS

What if I--

Dr. Jung shakes his head more vigorously. He swipes to
display a 3-D form. A line glows brightly at the bottom.

DR. JUNG

If you don't sign the form and
begin, I-I'm required to keep you
here in the compulsory wing.

Atlas sighs then nods. Larkin reassures her dad with a smile.

LARKIN
 (sniffs away tears)
 I'll take care of you--the whole
 time. Anything you need.

Atlas signs the 3-D form with his finger. Immediately, a NURSE enters the office and stands beside them.

DR. JUNG
 We'll start your injections today--

Dr. Jung opens the white box on the desk. He takes out a pill bottle and a small video camera.

He hands the pill bottle to Atlas.

ON ATLAS

The nurse attaches an electronic wrist bracelet to him.

She turns it on. A red light flashes and then pulsates.

DR. JUNG (CONT'D)
 This will transmit your vitals to
 us in real-time.

ON SCENE

The doctor shows Larkin the camera. Raises an antenna on it.

DR. JUNG (CONT'D)
 Set this up in his room so we can
 watch--monitor--his progress.

He hands her the camera. She nods.

DR. JUNG (CONT'D)
 Follow the nurse--she'll get your
 injections for today.
 (smiles)
 A couple months, this'll be over.
 You'll be fine...Back to normal.

Atlas shakes his hand. He and Larkin follow the nurse out.

INT. HALLWAY - HOSPITAL - LATER

Atlas and Larkin walk down the hospital corridor. As they walk, they pass hospital room doors and patients on gurneys.

As they turn and proceed down the corridor, they pass double doors with SOLDIERS, in federal uniforms, standing on either side of it. Above the doors, a sign says **COMP WING**.

From ahead of Atlas and Larkin, DOCTORS push a gurney toward the doors. An unconscious PATIENT is strapped to it and a crying WOMAN trails the gurney.

Atlas and Larkin step out of their way. Watch. *Uncomfortably.*

Doctors push the patient through the double doors.

ON WOMAN

The woman cries louder and reaches for the gurney as it goes through the doors. A soldier grabs her. Shoves her away.

ON SCENE

Atlas, with tired eyes, looks at Larkin. He exhales. *Empathy.*

He puts his arm around her. They continue down the hallway.

INT. KITCHEN - FOLEY HOME - ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA - DAY

In a small, but sleek, avant-garde kitchen, Larkin sits at the breakfast table grazing on healthy-looking oatmeal.

Her eyes are locked on her phone as she reads.

A flatscreen on the kitchen counter plays a news program. A FEMALE REPORTER speaks...

ON TV SCREEN

REPORTER

Last month had the lowest death total in the U.S. since the mandate took affect over fifty years ago. President of the United States, Dr. Eldon Markum, reported the record-breaking numbers this afternoon...

In a news clip, PRESIDENT ELDON R. MARKUM (60s), in a dark blue military uniform, stands at the presidential podium.

PRESIDENT MARKUM

Our mortality rate hit an all-time low for the month--hovering just above seven thousand.

REPORTER (O.S.)

He expects more optimism in the coming months with cutting edge advances being made between the government and partner company, Paeon Pharmaceutical.

ON SCENE

Her father shuts off the flatscreen. The pulsating light on Atlas's electronic wristband is now green. *Getting better.*

In a white tank top, he grabs a mug. *Groggy.* Sets it under a spout of a black coffee machine. It fills up automatically.

LARKIN

Eggs?

He sits next to Larkin. SIPS his coffee. Shakes his head.

ATLAS

No, no, sweetie. I won't be able to keep em' down--

LARKIN

Shit, dad--

ATLAS

(in dad-mode)

Language--

LARKIN

--Doc said you gotta eat. It'll help with your energy--

ATLAS

Eggs at the bottom of the toilet won't do my energy any good...I will later...I promise.

He lovingly pats her arm. She nods and smiles.

ATLAS (CONT'D)

Going to visit mom, today?

LARKIN

Yeah...Feel like goin'?

ATLAS

No, I-I'm gonna sleep...You go. You've been cooped up in here with me for over a month now.

LARKIN

Want anything while I'm out?

ATLAS

Chocolate.

Larkin squints and smiles at him.

LARKIN
For your energy?

ATLAS
That's my girl.

He grins as he drinks some more coffee.

INT. GOLDEN HORIZONS EXTENDED CARE - ALEXANDRIA - DAY

Larkin enters the nursing center and passes two uniformed SOLDIERS securing the entrance. She walks to the front desk.

A sign above the desk says:

GOLDEN HORIZONS EXTENDED CARE, a subsidiary of PAEAN PHARMA

A FEMALE ATTENDANT slides an electronic sign-in pad to her.

Larkin fills it out with her finger. Hands it back.

The attendant squints at it. *She doesn't like her job.*

ATTENDANT
Who are you here to see?

LARKIN
Foley...Rose Foley.

The attendant swipes through records. Types on her desktop.

LARKIN (CONT'D)
She--she's new. We just moved her here a couple weeks ago?
(beat)
She has multiple myeloma.

ATTENDANT
Oh, she's an end-stage suspension patient? She's in the ESS wing.
(snarky)
You should have told me that.

Larkin's mouth flattens as she shrugs. *Annoying bitch.*

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
Have a seat--You'll get a notification when she's ready.

LARKIN
What do you mean...ready?

ATTENDANT

She's in the beauty salon.

Larkin sighs to herself and takes a seat in the waiting area.

INT. WAITING ROOM - GOLDEN HORIZONS EXTENDED CARE - LATER

Eyes glued to her phone, Larkin sits in a waiting area.

ON PHONE

On the device screen, a camera feed of her dad's bedroom shows him asleep in bed. She pinches to zoom in on him.

ON SCENE

She puts her device away and sits back. *Bored.*

On the wall, an advertisement catches her attention.

ON WALL

An ad for the nursing center plays. Older adults walk on the beach as a voiceover speaks...

AD VOICE

Here at Golden Horizons we have an extensive offering of packages for the silver years of your loved one.

Now, facility images: a resort-style pool, tennis courts, fitness center, and beautifully manicured gardens.

AD VOICE (CONT'D)

Our silver cloud status provides access to all of the center's on-site amenities.

The ad changes to video of people getting their hair styled at beauty salon and then relaxing in a spa.

AD VOICE (CONT'D)

Along with a room upgrade, if you choose the golden horizon status, your loved one will receive monthly visits to the beauty salon, spa, and off-campus day trips.

Finally, the ad digitally dissolves back to the beach.

AD VOICE (CONT'D)

Our most luxurious package is our platinum partners plan.

(MORE)

AD VOICE (CONT'D)

It includes every amenity that we offer along with a compilation of the best memories for your beloved.

The ad changes to a virtual world. A mother plays with her children, a father plays ball with a son, and an older woman eats dinner with friends in front of a famous landmark.

AD VOICE (CONT'D)

Our experienced specialists will use your loved one's memory recall to create a virtual world that they can spend their time returning to the best days of their life.

The ad shows a marriage ceremony. Then, the birth of a child.

ON SCENE

Larkin is mesmerized by the ad. A voice gets her attention...

MALE VOICE

You should definitely go with the platinum package--

Larkin turns her attention to the voice. Confidently standing next to her in a Golden Horizon's uniform is ROYCE GRAY (18). He's lanky and disheveled but would be the Tiger Beat teen dream of any angst-filled adolescent girl.

Larkin stands. She swipes her hair behind her ear. *Nervously.*

ROYCE

Haven't seen you here before?

LARKIN

I'm--I'm new...er, my mom's new.

Holding a work tablet device, Royce nods. Silence. Beat.

ROYCE

Why are you waiting here?

LARKIN

They--they said she's in the salon?

ROYCE

I can take you to her.

Larkin follows Royce as he passes the front desk. The attendant stands and addresses Royce...

ATTENDANT

Where you going?...You're supposed
to start your rounds.

Royce ignores the attendant, but scratches his head with his
middle-finger prominently displayed to show her his opinion.

The attendant shakes her head and sits.

INT. BEAUTY SALON - GOLDEN HORIZONS EXTENDED CARE - DAY

Royce leads Larkin into the lavish beauty salon.

ROYCE

See her anywhere?

Larkin scans the salon.

ON SALON

PATIENTS, unconscious and hooked up to life support, recline
in salon chairs having their hair cut/styled and nails done.

ON SCENE

LARKIN

No...don't see her.

Royce nods his head toward the exit. Larkin follows.

ROYCE

They're probably taking her to her
room now. We can head that way.

Royce turns. Opens a service exit door.

ROYCE (CONT'D)

I know a shortcut--

Larkin freezes. Looks unsure. Royce sighs.

ROYCE (CONT'D)

Trust me?...It's fine.

He walks through the service exit. Larkin slowly follows.

EXT. POOL DECK - GOLDEN HORIZONS EXTENDED CARE - DAY

A door opens, Royce leads Larkin out and past the resort-
style pool, through a gate, and into a manicured green area.

LARKIN
This is the way?

ROYCE
Just a slight pause.

Royce pulls out a vape pen. Smokes. *Trying to look cool.*

Larkin goes silent as Royce exhales black smoke. Beat.

LARKIN
I really wanted to see my mom--

ROYCE
Where do you go to school?

LARKIN
Lincoln.

Royce stares at her as he vapes. He squints his eyes.

ROYCE
No fuckin' way. I go there. Haven't
seen you there.

LARKIN
Fuck you...I go there.

Silence. Beat.

ROYCE
You don't. I'd have seen you there.

Larkin rolls her eyes as she crosses her arms.

LARKIN
Can we please go see my mom now?

ROYCE
You smoke?

LARKIN
That's none of your business--

ROYCE
That's a no.

Larkin reaches in her pocket. Pulls out her vape pen. Smokes.

ROYCE (CONT'D)
Ah, ok, ok--No fuckin' way you go
to Lincoln though.

LARKIN

I don't know what to say to you--

ROYCE

I've been going there for two months now...never seen you--

LARKIN

Oh, well, that's why...My dad got sick...I've been home with him.

ROYCE

Shit...terminal mom...now your dad's sick? Fuck--

LARKIN

Didn't ask for your sympathy.

Silence as they smoke. Beat. *Uncomfortable silence.*

LARKIN (CONT'D)

He's fine though--going back to work next week actually.

Royce lightly chuckles as he nods. Beat.

He puts away his vape pen. Steps over to a nearby tree. It's tall, but he climbs it impressively fast.

LARKIN (CONT'D)

What the fuck are you doing?

Royce goes up higher and higher. Now, a couple stories up.

LARKIN (CONT'D)

You're fucking crazy.

Royce balance walks out on a large limb. It droops a bit.

Larkin scans as she smokes. *Trying to hide being nervous.*

LARKIN (CONT'D)

You...you should get down--

He shuts his eyes. Tiptoes out further. *Really fucking high.*

LARKIN (CONT'D)

Ok...you can stop showing off.

Looks too high for someone to jump. Royce dives. Head first.

As he lands, he rolls and hops up. Royce smirks as he stands. Takes out his vape pen. Smokes.

LARKIN (CONT'D)
 Ok...so that was impressive.
 Fucking crazy, but impressive.

Larkin tries to hide it, but her smile signals attraction.
 They lock eyes, but just briefly. Larkin looks away first.

LARKIN (CONT'D)
 Can--can we go see my mom now?

Royce nods. Puts away his vape pen and heads for the gate.
 Larkin briefly watches him before following. *She's hooked.*

INT. ROSE'S ROOM - GOLDEN HORIZONS EXTENDED CARE - DAY

Larkin follows Royce into her mother's room. *Looks like a 5-star hotel or well-decorated Manhattan apartment.*

Hair fixed and pretty make-up, her mother lies unconscious in a comfy-looking bed attached to life support tubes and wires.

Royce steps back as Larkin stands by her mother's bed. She grabs her mom's hand as Royce quietly sneaks out.

Larkin smiles at her mom, but glances back at Royce. *Gone.* She scans the room for him. *Slight disappointment.* She smiles as she turns her attention back to her mom.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA - NIGHT

In the distance, a warehouse with a few lit windows highlights the dark of night.

Atlas in a black VICE team vest, a tactical headset with glasses, and a badge on his belt crouches near two autonomous police cruisers. He grips a matte black taser rifle.

Female detective, JIN (30), in similar vest and headset, grips a taser handgun with a robotic prosthetic arm. Two others, WARD (30) and STEN (30), hold taser rifles as they lean up against their cruiser to listen.

ATLAS
 Quick recap--scan for barrels or
 crates...Jin, you have the warrant?

Jin taps the side of her headset and it projects a warrant document with a glowing blue signature at the bottom.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE

An entrance door flies open as detectives kick it in. Atlas leads as the others follow. *Tasers hot.*

ATLAS (CONT'D)

(yells)

Alexandria Vice. Everyone freeze--
hands on your head. We have a
warrant to search the premises.

The detectives take defensive positions inside the warehouse.

ATLAS (CONT'D)

This is Alexandria Vice. Everyone
freeze where you are and put your
hands on your head.

Nothing. It's quiet as they look at each other. *Confused.*

The detectives advance. Position on either side of a corner.

Atlas taps a button on his headset glasses. He glances around the corner to the warehouse floor. *Cool tech.*

ATLAS'S POV - AUGMENTED REALITY LENS

Various info's displayed along with the thermal image of five THUGS. They're positioned behind crates and interior walls.

ON SCENE

Atlas holds up five fingers to the detectives. Whispers...

ATLAS (CONT'D)

Guess they aren't gonna go
peacefully. Let's--

BOOM! BOOM!

Gunshots turn chunks of the wall to dust as the detectives duck and take cover.

JIN

Holy shit!

Atlas FIRES his taser rifle around the corner. An electric surge explodes out of it's barrel, hits a wall and dissolves.

WARD

Where'd they get fucking bullets?

From behind a corner wall, Atlas yells...

ATLAS
Alexandria Vice--Freeze where--

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

More GUNSHOTS. Pieces of the corner disintegrate. *Frenetic.*

JIN
We're gonna die!

STEN
We aren't prepared for this!

Atlas taps his headset earpiece. Speaks into it...

ATLAS
We need backup--

Atlas tries again. Speaks into the headset...

ATLAS (CONT'D)
We need backup.
(to detectives)
I got nothing--No signal in here.

Atlas motions for retreat. More GUNSHOTS ring out as the detectives head back for the entrance.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE

Atlas and the detectives sprint for their cruisers. Behind them, two thugs FIRE from the warehouse doorway.

Ward's hit in the back. He drops to the ground.

Atlas turns and fires his taser rifle at the warehouse.

ON WAREHOUSE DOOR

The thugs duck inside as Atlas's shot hits the doorway.

ON SCENE

Atlas grabs Ward by the vest and drags him away.

More SHOTS ring out from the warehouse door.

Jin and Sten provide COVER FIRE with their taser guns.

Atlas, arm around Ward now, heads for the cruisers.

Jin and Sten FIRE at the door as they backup to the cruisers.

EXT. PARKED POLICE CRUISERS

One of the cruiser doors slides up as Atlas shoves Ward inside the cruiser. Ward grimaces as he sits.

Atlas taps his headset. Calls for help again...

ATLAS (CONT'D)

Shots fired--This is Detective
Atlas Foley--We have an officer
down. Repeat, shots fired!

Jin and Sten arrive. No more shots from the warehouse.

JIN

They gotta send in lethal force--

ATLAS

(into headset)
Send lethal. Shots fired--Live
rounds. We need lethal on scene.

Ward groans in pain from the shot to the back.

STEN

Where the fuck did they get guns?

Atlas's headset radio responds...

HEADSET (O.S.)

Got your location--Units on the way.

Atlas taps his headset again to turn it off.

ATLAS

Must be more in that warehouse than
cigarettes and corn syrup--

STEN

I'm not risking my life for this--

Atlas nods and points to the cruisers.

Sten gets in the cruiser with Ward. Jin gets in the other.

As Sten's cruiser jets away, Atlas opens the trunk panel of the remaining cruiser. Jin yells from the cab...

JIN

Let's get the fuck out of here!

Atlas tosses his taser rifle over his shoulder. Like a magnet, CLICK, the rifle attaches at an angle to his back.

Atlas retrieves items from the cruiser trunk.

He hooks three small canisters to his vest. Connects a face-mask to his headset. It covers his nose and mouth.

ATLAS
(digitized voice)
Go...I'll wait here for lethal.

Jin pokes her head out the cruiser door. *Confused*.

JIN
What? Are you fucking crazy?

Atlas taps his wrist device to navigate the cruiser.

As Jin stares back, it TAKES OFF. She closes the side door.

Atlas stands alone watching the cruiser speed away.

As he turns, he retrieves his taser rifle from his back.

Crouched with his rifle, he sprints toward the warehouse.

INT. ROYCE'S ROOM - GRAY HOME - ALEXANDRIA - NIGHT

In a luxurious bedroom for a teen, a huge digital image of a sports game silently plays on the wall.

Royce sits on his bed. Not paying attention to it.

He swipes through images on his tablet. *Entranced*.

ON DEVICE

Security camera images of Larkin. He stops on one. *A really good picture of her.*

ON SCENE

Royce stares at his device. His skin has a bluish tint.

IZRA (60s), a motherly housekeeper, enters his room holding a dinner tray. *She's fond of him. Loves him like a son.*

Royce quickly hides his device. Izra shakes her head.

IZRA
(foreign accent)
I don't wanna know.

She sets his dinner tray beside his bed. Picks up an empty drink bottle and snack trash. *Of course, healthy snack trash.*

Royce smiles.

ROYCE
Not what you think.

She smiles wider than his. Waves her hand back and forth.

IZRA
I don't wanna know.

Royce picks off his plate. Eats.

ROYCE
Where's mom and dad tonight?

IZRA
A dinner-party in DC...They'll be
home late.

Royce nods and reaches for food on his plate.

Izra focuses on his skin's bluish tint and darkened veins.

IZRA (CONT'D)
Time for your meds, too.

Izra takes a needle-less injector out of her pocket.

Royce raises his t-shirt sleeve. She gives him the meds in his shoulder. Lovingly rubs it after.

Royce leans back. His eyes close. His skin's color returns.

IZRA (CONT'D)
You want me to make you something
else? Lemon cake?

Royce shakes his head.

ROYCE
No...I'm exhausted.

IZRA
You feel ok?

She lovingly feels his forehead, but he nods.

IZRA (CONT'D)
Ok...if you need anything--

Royce smiles his thank you before she closes the door.

He grabs up his device again. *Back to pics of Larkin.*

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA - CONTINUED

Atlas silently slinks along the outer warehouse wall.

He BASHES a window pane with the butt of his rifle.

He grabs a canister off his vest. Pulls a pin. Tosses it in.

As gas escapes the window, Atlas heads for the next one.

He BASHES another pane. Tosses a second canister inside.

More gas emanates from the windows as he approaches the closed entrance door.

The door flies open. Gas comes out the door. Atlas hides along the wall. He taps his headset glasses.

ATLAS POV - THERMAL VISION

With a gun raised, one of the thugs exits the warehouse.

ON SCENE

Atlas SHOOTS him with his taser rifle. The thug shakes and falls to the ground.

Atlas approaches the door as another thug exits. Atlas hits him in the face with the butt of his rifle. Drops him.

Atlas SHOOTS the grounded thug with his taser as he passes.

The thug shakes on the ground as Atlas enters the warehouse.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE

As gas fills the air and GUNSHOTS start to ring out, Atlas ducks for cover inside the warehouse.

Thugs inside COUGH, but Atlas is protected by his mask.

More GUNSHOTS ring out.

Back against a wall, Atlas pulls the pin on his last canister and tosses it around the corner, further inside.

Atlas waits. More COUGHING as the gas fills the air. Beat.

The gunshots stop. Atlas, rifle raised, heads further inside.

INT. WAREHOUSE FLOOR

As Atlas advances, he TASES another COUGHING thug.

As one falls to the ground, another SHOOTs at Atlas. Atlas dives behind some barrels. SHOOTs him and he drops.

Atlas stands. Scans the warehouse floor in front of him.

ATLAS POV - THERMAL VISION

Boxes, palettes, crates, and barrels, but no more gunmen.

ON SCENE

Police SIRENS ring in the distance as Atlas advances further.

Atlas continues to pivot and scan. Alone. Gas evaporating.

Rifle in one arm, he uses a hand to open a nearby crate. He peeks inside it. Picks up a carton of cigarettes from inside.

Atlas, out of breath, sits on a crate. Taps his headset...

ATLAS

Officer inside the warehouse--
Suspects down...Neutralized and
need to be taken into custody.

HEADSET (O.S.)

Hang tight--On our way.

Atlas nods to himself. Breathing almost normal now. Beat.

A FAINT NOISE can be heard in between the distant sirens.

Atlas notices. Listens. Sounds like SCREAMING.

Atlas pops back up. Raises his rifle and moves forward.

INT. STAIRCASE

He climbs the stairs. More CRYING. *Sounds like a child.*

He finds a closed door at the top of the staircase. *Freezes.*

Atlas quietly turns the doorknob. *Locked.*

He KICKS the door open. CRYING amplifies. *Multiple children.*

Aiming his rifle, he enters the office. Scans the room.

INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE

LOUDER CRYING. Atlas stops. Lowers his rifle. Stares.

ATLAS POV - THERMAL VISION

Four child-size heat signatures scattered in the office.

ON SCENE

Clean air, Atlas detaches his face-mask. Looks surprised.

Two baby cribs and two play pens stand in the corner of the office. A CRYING TODDLER stands in one of the play pens.

Atlas drops his mask. Tosses his rifle to his back. CLICK. Steps to the cribs. Infants wiggle as they gently CRY.

Jaw dropped and eyes darting back and forth, Atlas lovingly lays his hand on one of the infants chests.

Atlas steps over to the play pens. The SCREAMING toddler raises his arms to Atlas. The other softly cries.

Atlas kneels next to the play pens. *Shocked by all of this.*

ON TODDLER'S HEAD

Atlas sees a number tattoo behind the child's ear: **10128-K**

ON SCENE

Atlas stands. Taps his headset.

ATLAS

I'm up in the warehouse office--

Over his shoulder, one of the THUGS slowly enters.

ATLAS (CONT'D)

I've found, uh, children--

As the thug steps through the doorway, he raises a shotgun.

Atlas looks back down at the play pen.

ATLAS (CONT'D)

--four of them.

The thug takes a couple steps inside the room...Aims.

BOOM! The thug shoots Atlas in the back of the head.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. BALLROOM - 5-STAR HOTEL - WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT**

At a lavish black-tie dinner, PARTYGOERS drink champagne, mingle, and converse. WAITERS meander with trays of hors d'oeuvre and serve guests. *Kind of party you'd want to attend but you'd want to leave after five minutes.*

A banner above reads:

THE MANDATE, 50 YEARS OF HEALTH, LIFE, LONGEVITY!

American flags decorated a stage. *Crimson, white, and blue.*

On stage, a STRING TRIO plays beautiful MUSIC. A CONGRESSMAN (65) stands behind podium.

CONGRESSMAN
(into a mic)
Good evening...May I have your
attention?

The crowd quiets as they take their seats at dinner tables.

CONGRESSMAN (CONT'D)
We're honored to have a special
guest tonight. Please join me in
welcoming a true patriot, the
leader of the global community,
President of the United States,
Doctor Eldon Markum.

The crowd erupts in APPLAUSE and stands as President Markum enters from a backstage door that's flanked by uniformed SOLDIERS. *They almost look like German stormtroopers.*

In a black tux with an American flag pin on his lapel, the polished statesman shakes the congressman's hand then positions behind the podium.

PRESIDENT MARKUM
Thank you...Please take your seats.

The crowd sits at their tables. Waiters serve dinner.

PRESIDENT MARKUM (CONT'D)
Such a wonderful night. While this
is indeed a celebration, it's also
a night of remembrance.
(MORE)

PRESIDENT MARKUM (CONT'D)

Over fifty years ago, we had a global pandemic that shocked the world and took the lives of billions.

The crowd goes silent. Beat.

PRESIDENT MARKUM (CONT'D)

Those of us who survived--I was about five years old--remember the dark days and even darker nights. Through those trying times, we learned that humanity's greatest threat is not the external world but the tendency for us to indulge.

The President pauses as he scans the crowd.

PRESIDENT MARKUM (CONT'D)

The crucial lesson we learned from the past is that our survival is more under our own control than it is not. So, tonight, we celebrate the fifty year anniversary of our patriotic mandate endowed to us by our electorate. Since then, we've seen a population increase here in the United States--We're, once again, close to fifty million. With the extreme measures of our mandate, life expectancy has increased to over one hundred and twenty years.

The crowd applauds. The President nods. Beat.

PRESIDENT MARKUM (CONT'D)

We must continue this pursuit of the preservation of all human life. It has a high cost, financially, psychologically, and at times, ethically, but we've deemed it essential. As a doctor, I've sworn an oath to do not harm. As your President, I've sworn an oath to do what is moral--what is right.

The crowd APPLAUDS.

A VOICE IN THE CROWD cries out...

VOICE IN THE CROWD

Fuck you, fascist!

As the crowd quiets, multiple HOTEL STAFF start chanting.

STAFF

Release the real numbers!
Release the real numbers!

As President Markum stares, the chanting gets louder. The partygoers turn to observe as some of the staff hold up signs in protest.

President Markum grits his teeth. *Seething.*

He gives a look over to his soldiers, who have positioned close to the protestors.

As the chanting continues, security swarms the protesters.

President Markum briefly watches then angrily retreats to backstage.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Atlas's eyes slowly open. Bandage around his head.

ATLAS'S POV

The room is a blur with only various color of lights and the outline of a woman beside him.

ATLAS

Larkin?

ON SCENE

Atlas lays in the hospital bed. Jin sits beside him.

JIN

No...Jin. Larkin's on her way.

ATLAS

What happened?

JIN

You got shot...in the head.

Atlas grimaces.

JIN (CONT'D)

Non-lethal beanbag round--Thank god...It was close though--Cracked your skull.

ATLAS
Where's the kids?

JIN
Who?

Atlas tries to sit up.

ATLAS
The--the children.

Jin presses him back down.

JIN
You need to rest--

ATLAS
No...no, where are they?

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

ATLAS
At the warehouse...in the office--
there were four children.

Jin shakes her head. exhales.

JIN
Atlas, we only found you in the
office...No one else.

Atlas closes his eyes.

ATLAS
No, no...they were there.

JIN
What the fuck were you thinkin'?
Going in alone?

ATLAS
What'd we find?

JIN
Just like we thought--Cigarettes,
barrels of HFCS, cases of booze--

ATLAS
That's it?

Jin sighs. Pats Atlas's chest.

JIN

Just rest.

INT. BACKSTAGE - 5-STAR HOTEL - CONTINUED

The President storms in from the stage. He loosens his tie a bit as his deputy chief of staff, NATHAN GRAY (50), brings him a glass of scotch.

PRESIDENT MARKUM

What the fuck was that!?

The President downs the drink quickly. Enraged, he throws the glass against the wall. SMASH!

GRAY

Sorry, sir. We--we did background checks on the staff--

The President sighs. *The alcohol begins to soothe him a bit.*

PRESIDENT MARKUM

Take care of it. I'm tired--Wanna head back. Four of these fucking parties is too much--

GRAY

Sir, this was only the third? not the fourth--

PRESIDENT MARKUM

I know...I'm skipping the last one--

GRAY

But, sir, you need to--

PRESIDENT MARKUM

I'm not asking for permission.

Gray nods. On a nearby table, the President picks up a plate with a slice of cake. Using a golden fork, he eats.

PRESIDENT MARKUM (CONT'D)

What's the status on RD-44?

GRAY

It's final stages of FDA approval. Probably just a couple more weeks.

PRESIDENT MARKUM

Make some calls. Get it done tomorrow.

GRAY

Sir...reports say it's not working
as well as the initial test phases.

The President glares at Gray.

PRESIDENT MARKUM

Are you fucking kidding me?

(beat)

Change the goddamn reports.

GRAY

But, the real efficacy is more like
forty percent, not ninety like it
was in the first phase.

The President laughs as he eats his cake.

PRESIDENT MARKUM

What the hell do you think we did
to the first phase reports?

INT. ATLAS'S OFFICE - POLICE STATION - ALEXANDRIA - DAY

Black bandage around the top of his head, Atlas swipes
through digital reports at his desk.

On her phone, Larkin sits beside his desk. Atlas sighs.

ATLAS

Lark, I'm fine...really.

Larkin sets her phone on the desk.

LARKIN

Maybe. You seem fine...Doc said to
keep an eye on you for a few days.

ATLAS

You seem to be using this to
continue your absence at school--

LARKIN

Questioning my judgement, dad? I'm
not the one who just recovered from
being terminal then ran into a
warehouse of armed lethals all
alone and got my skull cracked--

Atlas freezes. Glares at her. *He recognizes that sharp wit.*

ATLAS

Ok...point taken...but I really am fine...Why are you avoiding school?

Larkin picks up her phone. Stares at it.

LARKIN

I'm not.

ATLAS

There something going on that I--

LARKIN

No, dad...no.

ATLAS

You know you can tell me anything?

LARKIN

Ooo, nice platitude, dad.

Atlas exhales.

ATLAS

I'm serious, Lark.

Larkin continues staring at her phone.

ATLAS (CONT'D)

Look at me...Put the phone down.

Larkin rolls her eyes as she sets it down. Half-smiles.

LARKIN

I know, dad. You never have to say those obvious things. I never doubt that I can tell you anything.

Atlas grabs her hand. Holds it as he nods in agreement.

LARKIN (CONT'D)

Did you really see children in the warehouse?

ATLAS

Yes...no doubt about it.

LARKIN

Why were they there?

ATLAS

My guess is, unfortunately...black market...probably being sold.

Larkin sits up. Shocked. Pushes her hair behind her ear.

LARKIN
Does that happen a lot?

ATLAS
The mandate's driven a lot of poor people to black market adoption.

LARKIN
That's horrible.

Atlas nods.

ATLAS
I think that's why the kids had a tattoo behind their ear--a number. Must have been some sort of tag.

Larkin shakes her head. Looks at the floor. *Empathetic.*

LARKIN
You gotta find them, dad.

ATLAS
That's the plan...
(joking)
If I can get my meddling daughter to let me get back to work?

They smile at each other. She nods as she stands to leave.

INT. WAITING ROOM - GOLDEN HORIZONS EXTENDED CARE - DAY

Larkin stands in the waiting room. Head bobbing around. Eyes scanning. *Anxious + nervous.* Beat.

Royce finally appears. She smirks and nods at him.

ROYCE
Back, huh?

LARKIN
Yeah...to see my mom.

Royce nods. *Doesn't fully believe her.*

He looks her in the eyes. Silence. She glances away first.

ROYCE
She in the beauty parlor again?

Larkin freezes. Stutters a bit.

LARKIN

No--no. She--she's not. I-I just
thought--

She grins. Flashes a pack of cigarettes from her pocket.

Royce quickly pushes her hand down. Looks around. Quietly...

ROYCE

We could get into a lot of trouble
for those. Let's go outside.

EXT. GARDEN AREA - POOL DECK - DAY

Larkin and Royce, safe in the comforts of seclusion, each
smoke a cigarette. *Looks new to them both.*

ROYCE

Where'd you get these?

LARKIN

I don't reveal my sources.

Royce COUGHS from the smoke. *Cigarettes are outlawed...Rare.*

ROYCE

Wow, strong shit.

LARKIN

I can feel the lung cancer slowly
taking form.

Royce laughs.

ROYCE

Isn't your dad a cop?

She confidently nods. *Now, she's trying to impress him.*

Royce coughs as he chuckles. He scans the area. Thinking.

ROYCE (CONT'D)

Cameras are down today for
maintenance--

Cigarette between her lips, Larkin slyly cuts him off.

LARKIN

That's the worst proposition--

Royce drops his cigarette. Steps on it. Motions for her to
follow him.

She gracefully puts her cigarette out. Picks up his flattened cigarette butt. Puts them in her pocket as she follows him.

EXT. STAIRCASE - GOLDEN HORIZONS EXTENDED CARE - DAY

Royce and Larkin descend a staircase to an underground doorway. Royce opens the door. It CREAKS as they enter.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY

As the door closes, darkness consumes the remaining light.

LARKIN

Where are you taking me?

ROYCE

Curious, huh?

As they proceed, dim lights start to illuminate the area. Royce opens another door. Peeks inside then motions for her.

INT. UNDERGROUND NURSING CENTER

As they enter the dimly lit room, rows and rows of beds barely a few feet apart as far as she can see. *Expansive.*

Emaciated bodies of the elderly lay on the beds hooked up to life support. Larkin slows her pace. Eyes get big. *Shocked.*

LARKIN

Jesus Christ...what is this?

ROYCE

It's where you go when you're old...and poor.

Larkin carefully steps next to one of the beds.

ON BED

An old lady lays unconscious. Shriveled to near inhuman size.

ON SCENE

Larkin covers her mouth as she tears up.

ROYCE (CONT'D)

They say silver cloud plan's the lowest level, but we call this the gray skies government plan.

LARKIN

I-I don't understand.

ROYCE
Gotta keep them alive somehow. The
government mandate--

LARKIN
This is...this isn't right--

Royce shrugs. *Not dismissively, but out of pure frustration.*

LARKIN (CONT'D)
They--they have that virtual
reality though, right?

ROYCE
What do you mean?

LARKIN
That virtual world where they're
shown memories of--of family--

ROYCE
No way...They can't afford that.

LARKIN
So, they just lay here? Barely
alive? Do they feed them?

ROYCE
Just enough to keep them alive.
Machines and meds do the rest.

Royce taps buttons on a digital monitor on one of the beds.

ROYCE (CONT'D)
These are who they test their life
extending drugs on--Some of them
have been here for decades. We have
a lot that are one-hundred-thirty
...a few over a hundred-forty.

Larkin weeps. Shakes her head. *She's an empathetic soul.*

LARKIN
It's not right...Why no security?

ROYCE
Cameras are being worked on today--

LARKIN
How's it so easy to get in here?

ROYCE
They aren't really hiding them.
Just...no one's looking I guess?

LARKIN
How many are there?

ROYCE
I-I don't know. We have dozens of
rooms like this and we're just one
facility--

A voice yells out...

VOICE
Royce!

An EMPLOYEE, holding a tablet device, quickly approaches.

EMPLOYEE
Why is she here?

ROYCE
Oh, uh, her--her mom's a resident--

EMPLOYEE
In here?

ROYCE
No, no...ESS.

The employee gives Larkin the once over. He sighs.

EMPLOYEE
Get her out of here. You and I'll
be in deep shit if--

ROYCE
I-I'm sorry--

Larkin shyly smiles. Still upset. Quickly heads for the door.

Royce nods to his co-worker. Jogs to Larkin to catch up.

LARKIN
It's fine...I wanna see my mom.

ROYCE
I-I didn't mean to--

Larkin shoves the door open and exits. Royce follows.

EXT. ENTRANCE - UNDERGROUND FACILITY

Larkin speeds away. Royce tries to keep up. Grabs her arm.

She turns to him. Pulls her arm away. *Angry. Upset.*

LARKIN
Why did you bring me here?

Royce shrugs. Stares a hole in the ground.

ROYCE
I don't know, Larkin...I-I--

LARKIN
My mom's terminal...My dad just got over a terminal illness and--

ROYCE
I-I'm sorry...really--

LARKIN
I can't get these images out of my head--it may be my grandparents one day--

ROYCE
I think I just wanted someone else to see it--I feel guilty every day when I do my rounds--

He shakes his head. *Being genuine...Knows she deserves that.*

ROYCE (CONT'D)
I swear--One day, I think this old woman opened her eyes and looked up ...right at me.

Larkin cries. She covers her face with her hands.

Royce steps in front of her. Close. He grabs one of her hands away from her face. Holds it tight with his hand.

With his other, he wipes a tear off her cheek with his thumb.

ROYCE (CONT'D)
Forgive me?...Please, Larkin?

She hesitates. Glances down at their clasped hands. Beat.

Nodding through her tears, she gives him a reassuring grin.

ROYCE (CONT'D)
Come on, I'll take you to your mom.

Still holding her hand, *tighter now*, he leads her away.

As they walk, she notices something. *Curiously...*

ON ROYCE'S HEAD

A small number tattoo behind his ear reads: **00133-A**

INT. HOLDING CELLS - POLICE STATION - DAY

Atlas ambles passed a UNIFORMED GUARD monitoring the cells.

He stops in front of a metal door. Scans his hand for entry.

The door automatically opens and Atlas enters.

Atlas continues in passed clear walled holding cells. He stops at one and types a code on a security panel.

The clear cell door UNLOCKS and he steps inside.

INT. CELL

Knox (40), with bruising under his eyes and a broken nose, sighs as he spots the man who broke it during the raid. He doesn't get up from laying on his cell slab.

ATLAS

Where are the kids?

Knox, back to Atlas, ignores him.

ATLAS (CONT'D)

Black market? You selling kids?

KNOX

Fuck off.

Atlas grabs Knox and pulls him off the slab. He drags him to the corner by his arm. Slams him against the wall. *Hard.*

ATLAS

More comfortable now?

Knox spits in Atlas's face. Atlas replies with a quick jab to the broken nose.

Knox screams and grabs his nose as blood spills out of it.

The uniformed guard runs in.

Atlas glares at the guard. Points...

ATLAS (CONT'D)

Back to your desk.

The guard briefly scans then slowly backs away.

Knox's mouth and chin are covered in the blood from his nose.

ATLAS (CONT'D)
Now that we're friends--

Knox spits blood on the floor. Sighs.

ATLAS (CONT'D)
--Where are they?

Atlas waits. Beat.

Knox shakes his head. Under his breath...

KNOX
Fucking corrupt cops.

ATLAS
Explain.

KNOX
I don't know who you are, but...

ATLAS
I don't give a shit--Where are they?

Knox wipes his nose. Stares at Atlas.

KNOX
They're safe--Safe from you fascist
motherfuckers.

Atlas's brow furrows. He observes Knox as his skin tints slightly blue. Veins darken. *Exactly like Royce.*

Atlas grabs a fistful of Knox's hair. Pulls his head to the side and looks behind his ear.

Knox has a number tattoo behind his ear. Atlas lets go.

ATLAS
What's the number represent?

KNOX
A fucked-up childhood.

As the guard enters, Atlas stands and steps back.

The guard kneels. Injects Knox in the neck with a syringe.

Knox's skin begins to lighten and veins retreat.

DR. SWAN
Detective?...Let's talk.

Atlas turns and in the corridor is DR. SINJON SWAN (60).

The suited, spectacled senior agent sits in an electric wheelchair. He gestures to the exit. Atlas exhales. Follows.

INT. KITCHEN - GRAY HOME - DAY

Izra, the house keeper, cooks in the chef-style kitchen. Royce sits at the countertop bar keeping her company.

ROYCE

She says she goes to Lincoln--Her
mom's in end-stage suspension--
Waiting on a cure I guess--

IZRA

Oh, my--

ROYCE

Yeah, her dad was sick too--

IZRA

That poor girl--

ROYCE

He's recovered though.

Izra continues to cook while chatting with Royce.

IZRA

So, you like this girl a lot?

Royce answers dismissively. *Maybe a bit shy.*

ROYCE

Yeah, I guess.

Izra squints at him. Wry grin. *Doesn't believe him.*

ROYCE (CONT'D)

I mean, she's cool...Pretty--

IZRA

I think you like her--

Royce's mother, DR. WYNN GRAY (45), rushes in.

WYNN

Who are we talking about? Royce
likes someone?

Izra turns back to her cooking. Wynn loses interest.

WYNN (CONT'D)
 (to Izra)
 Dinner almost ready?

IZRA
 Yes, ma'am. Five minutes.

Wynn sits beside Royce. Pats his back.

WYNN
 How did you do on your quiz today?

ROYCE
 (half-smile)
 A+.

Wynn smiles.

ROYCE (CONT'D)
 Can we go into DC this weekend?

WYNN
 I have to go into the lab...I guess
 we could when I'm done working?

Nathan Gray, deputy chief of staff and Royce's father,
 quickly enters the kitchen.

ROYCE
 Hey, dad--

GRAY
 Hey, kiddo.

He squeezes Royce's shoulder as he sits down.

GRAY (CONT'D)
 You had quiz today, right?

ROYCE
 Aced it--

GRAY
 (smiles)
 Not surprised.

Izra starts setting down plates and utensils.

GRAY (CONT'D)
 (to Wynn)
 Markum keeps asking about RD-44--

WYNN
I'm not surprised.

GRAY
He wants me to make some calls--

WYNN
It's not ready--

GRAY
He doesn't care.

Wynn shakes her head. Frowns.

WYNN
I swear. That man--

GRAY
Did you edit the phase one reports?

Wynn sighs.

WYNN
Let's talk about this later?

Izra starts serving up dinner.

IZRA
Royce, want me to take your plate
to your room?

Wynn interrupts her. Puts her hand on Royce's back.

WYNN
No, no...stay here with us...Who's
this person you like?

Royce glances up at Izra. She winks at him.

ROYCE
Um, her name's Larkin--

They continue eating and conversing.

INT. VIDEO ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY

Atlas and Dr. Swan are in front of a large video screen.

DR. SWAN
This is from an initial experiment.

ON SCREEN

A timestamp is displayed in the corner of the screen. Under
it says: **PATIENT 00133-A**

Royce, younger (8), sits, strapped in a chair. His mother, Dr. Wynn Gray, checks his vitals. Looks in his ears, eyes.

DR. SWAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
We identified they lack essential
vitamins and have mutated hormones.

ON SCENE

Dr. Swan swipes. The video forwards to another timestamp.

ON SCREEN

Royce still strapped down, but his skin has the blue tint. Veins are darkened. He acts less scared. Eyes dart around.

DR. SWAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
A mutated form of estrogen seems to
cause the skin change...Abnormal
levels of testosterone caused most
subjects to become very aggressive.

ON SCENE

Atlas's eyes are glued to the screen. Dr. Swan observes.

ON SCREEN

Royce becomes aggressive. Shakes the chair. Tugs restraints.

DR. SWAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
The most concerning mutation was
with their adrenaline.

The video jumps to a later timestamp. Royce, still strapped to the chair, has darker skin and more exposed veins. His muscles twitch as he struggles to break free.

DR. SWAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
At the right combination of hormone
levels, the subjects became calm.

Video jumps. Royce sits calm. Not afraid. Skin still dark.

ON SCENE

Atlas stands with arms crossed watching.

DR. SWAN (CONT'D)
Our observations are that they're
predatory with extreme speed,
strength, and keenly acute senses--
(MORE)

DR. SWAN (CONT'D)

Heightened sense of smell, ability to see in the dark, capability of hearing ten times more high/low frequencies than the average human.

ON VIDEO

Dr. Gray injects Royce with a needle-less syringe. Royce's skin slowly changes color back to normal. Veins lighten and his eyes return to their natural color.

DR. SWAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

With the right combination of normal vitamins and hormones the subject returns to normal.

Dr. Gray exits the room.

DR. SWAN (CONT'D)

The reverse was also true. If you removed the synthetics...

Dr. Gray re-enters and gives him another injection.

Royce's skin suddenly darkens and veins are exposed again. He becomes aggressive and shakes the chair.

ON SCENE

The video stops. Atlas turns to Dr. Swan.

ATLAS

There were children in that warehouse.

DR. SWAN

I believe you, but when the other officers arrived, they were gone.

ATLAS

How did they get like this?

DR. SWAN

At this point, we don't know.

Atlas lightly sighs looks at the paused video.

ON VIDEO

Young Royce's eyes stare at the camera. Black pupils.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE**INT. WAITING ROOM - GOLDEN HORIZONS EXTENDED CARE - DAY**

Larkin keeps checking the time on her device and looks at the front door. *Seems impatient.*

Atlas rushes in.

ATLAS
Sorry...work.

Larkin tilts her head and twists her mouth at him. *Annoyed.*

ATLAS (CONT'D)
What? It's not like she's going
anywhere--

LARKIN
(not amused)
That's not funny.

Atlas shrugs. *Seems a bit apprehensive as they walk.*

INT. HALLWAY

As the walk down the hallway, Royce greets them. He grins at Larkin. Larkin beams a grin back. *Atlas notices.*

LARKIN (CONT'D)
Dad, this is Royce. He works here.

Royce reaches out to shake. Atlas squints at him, but shakes.

ROYCE
Nice to meet you. You're a
detective right? Vice?

ATLAS
Yes, but...I'm in a different
division now...Homicide.

Royce looks impressed. Larkin questions...

LARKIN
Dad? You didn't tell me that--

ATLAS
I-I just found out.

LARKIN

Homicide? I thought there weren't very many--

ATLAS

There's not, but, uh, there's a few here and there--

ROYCE

That's gotta be exciting. That's a lethal force group right?

ATLAS

Uh--

LARKIN

(concerned)

Dad? Is it?

ATLAS

Well, yes, but--It'll be fine.

Larkin nods, but still looks a bit shocked.

ROYCE

It, uh, it was nice to meet you Detective Foley. Smells like the dinner's ready. I need to go help out in the cafeteria.

Atlas nods at him. Larkin gives Royce an approving smile.

LARKIN

Message later?

Royce nods with a grin. Leaves.

Atlas and Larkin continue to Rose's room. Beat.

ATLAS

So, that's why you've been checking your device so much lately.

LARKIN

(sarcastic)

Awesome detective work, dad.

Atlas's mouth flattens as he glares at her. *Ouch, burn.*

INT. ROSE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Atlas follows Larkin into her mother's, his wife's, room.

ATLAS

Ok...he seems like a nice boy. He better not try anything or--

Larkin rolls her eyes at him. He smartly shuts up.

Atlas hasn't looked at his wife yet. His back is to her.

LARKIN

He's great, dad. First day I met him, he climbed that tree out in the garden...

Reveling in the memory, she points out the window. Back still turned, Atlas doesn't really notice the window.

LARKIN (CONT'D)

All the way to the top, then just...jumped--I mean, dove.

She speaks with such infatuation. Atlas can't help but grin.

ATLAS

He sounds crazy. Climbing trees?

Larkin nods and giggles a bit. Atlas gets serious...

ATLAS (CONT'D)

Why don't you go hang out with Royce? Give us some alone time?

Larkin lovingly smiles. Nods to him then exits the room.

Atlas takes a deep breath then turns around. He freezes.

ON ROSE

She looks peaceful. Even with the BEEPING life support.

ON SCENE

He can barely look at her. Tears well up. He looks away. Wipes his eyes as he approaches her.

ATLAS (CONT'D)

Ah, that daughter of yours.

Atlas shakes his head as he sits by her bed. Holds her hand.

ATLAS (CONT'D)

I swear she's just like you.

He caresses her hand. Admires the details of her face. Beat.

ATLAS (CONT'D)

I miss you...so much.

His teary eyes dart away. The window catches his eye. He focuses out on the tree in the garden that Royce climbed.

He walks to window. Stares at that tall tree. *Curious. Looks way to high to jump.*

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Knox lies on a bed. Completely restrained. Face heavily bruised and swollen. His skin's a purple tint. One restrained arm has been surgically cut eight inches and the skin pulled back on either side. His other arm has an IV attached.

From a control panel, Dr. Swan tortures him using an electric probe to his exposed arm wound. Knox SCREAMS as he's SHOCKED.

DR. SWAN

This can all be over, son. Just tell us where your friends are hiding. The pain will cease.

Knox's body shakes as he tries to break free. *Futile.*

KNOX

(shakes head, screams)
No! No....no.

Dr. Swan swipes a dial just slightly to increase the voltage.

Knox CRIES in agony as the pain gets worse. Shakes his head.

INT. KITCHEN - FOLEY HOME - ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA - DAY

Atlas and Larkin enter the kitchen. He tosses his badge and keys on the counter-top. She sits at the table. Turns on TV.

LARKIN

Wanna watch some TV?

ATLAS

Nope...I'm exhausted.

Atlas kisses her on the top of the head. Exits to his room.

Larkin flips channels with the swipe her fingers.

She gets a message on her device. With a swipe, she transfers the message to the TV screen.

She smiles as she sends him a quick reply.

ON TV SCREEN

A video message of Royce. He's being goofy to her. He's cool though. *Like a young Johnny Depp.*

During the video, he turns and she can see his ear tattoo.

ON SCENE

Larkin stares at the video. *Thinking.*

She glances her dad's police tablet on the counter-top. *Hmmm.*

With her detective dad's instincts, she types on her device. Swipes the image onto the TV screen. It's a video.

ON TV SCREEN

Camera video of her dad in his room on his tablet. As he walks under the cam, the footage slows.

ON SCENE

She grabs up his tablet and watches the screen.

ON TV SCREEN

In slow motion, Atlas enters his password on his tablet.

ON SCENE

She mimics him. Enters his police tablet with his password.

She's in! Now on her device, she types again. Swipes again.

ON TV SCREEN

Returns to the video of Royce. As he turns, the video pauses. She zooms in on his tattoo.

ON TABLET

In a Police intra-net search engine, she enters Royce's tattoo. She types: **00133-A** then taps enter.

A few results come up. *One looks promising.* She taps it.

Another password screen pops up. She enters it again.

ON SCENE

Larkin swipes from the tablet toward the TV screen. On the screen, the experiment video of Royce as a boy plays.

Larkin intently stares. Steps closer and watches it.

INT. SITUATION ROOM - WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

President Markum enters the situation room. A few GENERALS, CABINET MEMBERS, and STAFF sit around a table. On the wall is a large screen with a 3-D projection in the table's center.

Dr. Swan rolls into the room as the President sits.

PRESIDENT MARKUM

This better not be a waste of time--

DR. SWAN

It won't be.

President sighs as he sits back. The video screen changes to a live feed from a body cam of a Lethal force team-member.

EXT. VIRGINIA FOREST - SAME TIME - INTERCUT BEGINS

The same area as the live feed. Twelve armed LETHAL FORCE SWAT OFFICERS slowly pace along a dirt path. Rifles raised.

TEAM LEAD

Yes, sir. We're approaching the entrance to the underground compound now.

INT. SITUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The President watches the live feed and 3-D projection.

PRESIDENT MARKUM

Why the hell didn't we search this compound?

MARINE GENERAL

Sir, this compound was searched a couple years ago. It was abandoned long ago during the pandemic and we have monitored it for life signs. This is going to be a waste--

DR. SWAN

He said they were here--

EXT. VIRGINIA FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The team opens a large hatch door on the ground. Two of the officers shine lights inside it. They scan, then descend in.

INT. UNDERGROUND MILITARY COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

The team strafes through a long tunnel.

TEAM LEAD

We're getting thermal signs inside.
Looks like somebody's home.

ON THERMAL IMAGE

The team opens a thick metal door. They scan inside. Heat signatures glow all around.

ON SCENE

The team lead tosses a flash grenade into the room.

BOOM! It goes off. The team enters.

INT. COMPOUND ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rifles hot, the team searches the huge, expansive room.

TEAM LEAD (CONT'D)

(loud)

Capital Police, Lethal Division. We
have a search warrant.

Silence. Beat.

As the team strategically moves further inside, shadows flash across the cavernous walls inside.

More silence.

INT. SITUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The President and staff watch as the team advances.

PRESIDENT MARKUM

(points)

What the fuck was that?

INT. COMPOUND ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Another shadow suddenly moves. The team takes position behind interior walls.

TEAM LEAD
This is Capital Police, Lethal
Division--Freeze where you are--

A voice calls out.

VOICE
We surrender!

Light bursts in as a door opens. The team aims at the door.

ON DOOR

TWENTY REBELS in tattered, guerilla-style military uniforms exit through the door into the entryway. Hands on heads.

The REBEL LEAD of the groups walks toward the officers.

REBEL LEAD
Don't shoot. We surrender!

INT. SITUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Marine General stands up. Shakes his head.

MARINE GENERAL
There's no way. We searched there--

PRESIDENT MARKUM
Obviously, not good enough.

MARINE GENERAL
No, I don't buy this.
(to Dr. Swan)
What kind of fucking trick are you
trying to pull?

Dr. Swan sits silent.

INT. COMPOUND ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

The unarmed rebels line up. Hands on their heads.

TEAM LEAD
Sir, what you want us to do here?

PRESIDENT MARKUM (O.S.)
Bring em' in. Let Swan interrogate
them...all of them.

TEAM LEAD
Yes, sir.

The team lead twirls his finger in the air. *Round them up.*

All the lights go out. Complete darkness. *Pitch black.*

TEAM LEAD (CONT'D)
What the fuck?

INT. SITUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PRESIDENT MARKUM
What the hell's going on? Swan?

DR. SWAN
I don't know, sir.

INT. COMPOUND ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Still darkness as the team panics.

TEAM MEMBER
I can't see? Fuck.

TEAM LEAD
Go thermal...Go thermal.

ON THERMAL IMAGE

The rebels move around. The team starts to shoot at them.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Shots ring out. No hits.

The rebels remove something from over their ears. When they do, their thermal images slowly dissolve to almost nothing.

ON SCENE

TEAM MEMBER
What the--

TEAM LEAD
Holy shit! What the fuck?

TEAM MEMBER
I've lost eyes. Can't see them.

TEAM LEAD
Go to lamps!

The team turns on lamps on their helmets. It doesn't help.

INT. SITUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Marine General pops up.

MARINE GENERAL
Get out of there. Retreat.

ON FEED

SCREAMING continues. Beams of lights from the team member's headlamps frantically strobe around. *Total confusion.*

ON SCENE

The President mutes the mic.

PRESIDENT MARKUM
Do we have air support?

MARINE GENERAL
(looks at President)
Yes, why.

GUNSHOTS and YELLING continue to emanate from the feed.

PRESIDENT MARKUM
Bury it.

MARINE GENERAL
What?

PRESIDENT MARKUM
Bury the fucking compound and
anyone inside.

The feed goes silent. It's black. No more lights. Beat.

The room goes quiet as everyone stares at the dark screen.

PRESIDENT MARKUM (CONT'D)
What happened?

President Markum unmutes the mic.

PRESIDENT MARKUM (CONT'D)
Hello? Still there solider?

ON SCREEN

The room lights come on. The rebels mill around the bodies of the SWAT team. *Looks like a war zone. It's a bloody mess.*

PRESIDENT MARKUM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Solider?

The rebel lead approaches the body cam of the dead team lead. Kneels down. BREATHES HEAVY into it. His black eyes stare into the camera.

REBEL LEAD

You made us this way. Now you want
to erase your mistakes.

PRESIDENT MARKUM (O.S.)

Who are you? Who is this?

REBEL LEAD

This is a declaration of war.

He rips the body cam off the dead team lead. The feed ends.

ON SCENE

President Markum turns to Dr. Swan.

PRESIDENT MARKUM

What the fuck is this?...Who the
fuck was that?

He turns to the Air force General. Points to the screen.

PRESIDENT MARKUM (CONT'D)

Bury it...Bury them all.

EXT. GRAY HOME - ALEXANDRIA - NIGHT

Evening in an upper-class neighborhood, a suburb area in
Alexandria, an UberX stops in front of the Gray's home.

Larkin gets out of it. Glances at her phone. *Right address?*

The neighborhood is quiet. Most lights are out.

The UberX speeds away. She scans. Approaches Royce's house.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - GRAY HOME

Larkin checks her device. *Like she's waiting for a text.*

Cautiously, she steps onto the porch. She reaches for the
doorbell, but stops. *Thinks twice about it.*

Nervous, she sighs. Turns to leave.

The front door OPENS and light glows from it. She spins back
around as Royce stands in the doorway.

ROYCE

(quiet)

Hey...come on.

She grins and follows him inside.

INT. ROYCE'S ROOM

Royce enters as she follows quietly. *Like they snuck in.*

Larkin looks all around his personalized domicile.

He closes the door. She puts her bag down. Beat.

Silence for a few beats.

LARKIN

Uh, can I ask you about something?

Royce steps closer to her. Nods.

LARKIN (CONT'D)

Might be kinda personal. About your tattoo?

She barely gets the words out as he makes his move. *He's nervous, but goes for it.*

He kisses her lips. Gently at first if not a bit awkwardly. Wraps his arms around her back. One hand on the back of her head as he pulls her close.

At first, she's surprised, but then joins. His skin turns a slight blue tint. *From a rush of adrenaline.*

They continue to kiss. *Furiously, passionately for teenagers.*

Larkin grabs his shirt with both hands as they kiss. She helps him take it off. She feels his toned torso then chest as they explore.

As he kisses her neck, she briefly notices the bluish color of his skin and some dark veins.

As his hands wander a bit, she grabs him, pulls him as she falls on her back onto his bed.

Multiple beats as they continue on the bed.

A KNOCK on the door is followed by a parental voice.

WYNN (O.S.)

Royce...dinner.

Royce pops up.

ROYCE

Sure, mom. Be right there.

He quickly puts his shirt back on. Larkin sits up on the bed.

ROYCE (CONT'D)
I'll bring my food up here. Hungry?

As he heads for the door, Larkin smirks. Jokes...

LARKIN
Not for dinner.

He comes back and gives her a quick kiss.

LARKIN (CONT'D)
Yeah, bring me something.

He exits. She lays on the bed. Bites her lip as she grabs up her device. Taps and swipes. *Occupying herself as she waits.*

Multiple beats.

She hears YELLING. *But, can't make out what they're saying.*

A woman SCREAMS. GLASS BREAKING. MUFFLED THUDS. *A fight?*

Larkin sits up. *Looks concerned.* She tosses her device and walks to the door.

As she cracks it open, everything goes silent.

She peeks out the door. Whispers...

LARKIN (CONT'D)
Royce?

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

After inspecting, she quietly exits. Closes the bedroom door.

From top of the staircase, she inspects the living room below.

She walks down the stairs a bit. Her eyes grow.

ON LIVING ROOM FLOOR

A table is flipped over. Things scattered on the floor.

ON SCENE

She gets to the bottom of the stairs. As she turns the corner, she spots bodies.

ON BODIES

Mr. Gray's body is on the floor near the entry to the kitchen. *Covered in blood. Dead.*

Dr. Gray, Royce's mother, is further in the kitchen. Also on the floor. *Bloodied and torn.*

ON SCENE

Larkin, covers her mouth, slowly approaches the kitchen.

LARKIN (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Royce?...Are you ok?

Her concern for Royce outweighs her fear of the moment.

A female voice calls out from the kitchen...

VOICE
Hello?...Please, help?

Larkin steps through the kitchen doorway. Scans...

ON KITCHEN FLOOR

Izra, barely alive, wounded, covered in blood, sits on the floor with her back to the open refrigerator.

Royce lays in her lap unconscious. Blood on his hands.

Izra's hand rests on his back, loosely holds a syringe.

IZRA
Miss?...please--please help him?

ON LARKIN

Larkin freezes. Nearly in shock. *Danger or dilemma?*

END OF EPISODE