

THE COTTONWOODS

Pilot
"Symptoms"

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FADE IN:

EXT. OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA

Remnants of the antebellum south. A rickety old tractor drives down the highway that cuts through town. A donkey stands tied-up outside the liquor store. Third world poverty is interspersed with affluence; doctors, ambulance-chasers and oil people who profit greatly from this system.

EXT. FONTENOT NEUROLOGY GROUP - CONTINUOUS

The one-story medical center sits in the middle of a well-manicured former *cotton field*, with a parking lot larger than a Texas Walmart. Two expensive and well-appointed Ford Raptors and a Mercedes S class (the doctors' cars) are parked out front of the upscale medical clinic.

Slowly, a brand-new convertible Bentley -- top down -- cruises into the parking lot. Not a car you see everyday in the bayou. We can hear the muffled sounds of Elton John's "Tiny Dancer" blasting from inside the car.

INT. BENTLEY - CONTINUOUS

POV DRIVER as he turns the volume up even louder for the final chorus.

We hear the mournful and out of tune voice of COL. FRANK MORE (60s,) a silver-tongued, silver-haired and richly-tanned war vet billionaire, currently on the down-slope of a very personal mental health catastrophe.

The Bentley slides into the handicapped spot out front as Frank sings along with the song's infamous crescendo like a drunken bachelorette.

COL FRANK MORE
...count the headlights on the
highway...

INT. FONTENOT NEUROLOGY GROUP - CONTINUOUS

The waiting room's handful of PATIENTS sit quietly as Col. Frank's "Tiny Dancer" overtakes the volume of the office muzak. Through the office window we can see Frank's face for the first time. He is singing. And he is sobbing.

FRANK
*Blah, blah blah blah, sheets of
 linen... You've had a busy day
 today....*

Frank begins a half-hearted and half-cathartic air-drum solo into the big finish.

EXT. FONTENOT NEUROLOGY GROUP - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

He cuts the engine and everything goes quiet. All we can hear is his shortness of breath as he swallows his tears and gets himself together.

A tweeky SEX WORKER lifts her head into frame and wipes her mouth. Frank looks at her with a faint hint of disgust, which he doesn't hide. He pulls out a wad of \$100s. The Sex Worker opens her door.

SEX WORKER
 Let's go kids.

Frank peels off a few hundred dollars and hands it to her.

FRANK
 Hire a babysitter next time.

SEX WORKER
 I thought there wasn't gonna be a
 next time, Colonel.

FRANK
 I meant next time you go to work.

A BOY (5) and a GIRL (3) crawl out of the back seat of the Bentley.

BOY
 Bye, Mister Colonel Frank.

INT. FONTENOT NEUROLOGY GROUP - DR. MOREAU'S OFFICE

The room is dark and filled with mahogany. A mallard is taxidermied on the wall. There's even a fucking wet bar.

Behind an 80's Wall Street raider-style desk sits DR. CRAIG MOREAU (50s), heartily tan from all those mornings in the duck blind. He sits opposite Frank, listening with concern on his face.

Frank is near panic but relieved to be talking to his old friend and confidant.

FRANK

I can't go to that place in Mississippi.

DR. CRAIG

It did Tiger some good. At least on the P.R. front. Shit, it's probably a decent vacation. I bet they'll even let you fish some.

FRANK

No way. Checking into a sex clinic is not an option. And it's not just the optics...

Dr. Craig looks at Frank, pointedly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Okay, it's mostly the optics.

DR. CRAIG

When's the last time?

Frank grins at Dr. Craig innocently.

DR. CRAIG (CONT'D)

Christ, is she still in the parking lot!? You can't do that shit outside of my practice, Frank.

FRANK

I can't help it! It's like the moment I get some relief, I'm already hungry for more. It doesn't matter where, I gotta feed the monster...

Frank trails off. Dr. Craig fixes himself a drink from the wet bar. Frank grabs a bottle of Crown Royal, pours a shot in his hands, rubs them together and sticks them down his pants. He lets out a SIGH of relief.

DR. CRAIG

Well, then you're really gonna hate my next suggestion.

FRANK

Don't even say it. I've been thinking about it for weeks now.

DR. CRAIG

You have?

FRANK

This obsession is eating me alive.

(beat)

But, no, I can't. It wouldn't change anything. Doesn't take your mind off of the sex of it all. It just makes your, uh, plumbing cease to function. Sexually, I mean...

DR. CRAIG

Stop right there. Are you talking about castration?

FRANK

Of course. What did you think I was talking about?

DR. CRAIG

...I was going to suggest calling your ex-wife?

FRANK

I'd rather cut my dick off.

Dr. Craig laughs for a moment before realizing Frank truly isn't joking.

DR. CRAIG

Holy shit, you're fucking serious. It's really that bad?

Frank looks at him with genuine despair.

FRANK

Please. I need help. I'm having dark thoughts...

Dr. Craig takes a thoughtful sip of his bourbon.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm not calling my ex-wife.

DR. CRAIG

You clearly need help, Frank. And we're at a point where someone like me just isn't qualified.

Frank fights back tears.

FRANK

I know... It's hell and it's killing me.

DR. CRAIG
(beat)
You still have her number?

Frank gestures negative.

DR. CRAIG (CONT'D)
I'll text it to you. And then you
better call her, Frank. Or I will.

Frank nods.

DR. CRAIG (CONT'D)
I'm serious, motherfucker. Do it
today.

EXT. FONTENOT NEUROLOGY GROUP - CONTINUOUS

Frank walks out into the parking lot and looks around. His fucking Bentley is GONE. He closes his eyes, looks up towards the thick Louisiana sky and SCREAMS as we--

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. FONTENOT NEUROLOGY GROUP - DUSK

State troopers are taking statements from witnesses. Frank is sitting on the curb. Dr. Craig walks out with his gym bag - surveys the scene and approaches Frank.

FRANK
I left my keys and the whore in the
car. Together. At the same time.
You can figure out the rest.

DR. CRAIG
Jesus.
(long beat)
I know we go way back, and you know
I'm here for you, ride or die...
but my partners don't want you
coming around anymore, Frank. At
all. Ever. You see what kind of a
pickle that puts me in?
(beat)
Did you call the ex-wife? What'd
she say?

FRANK
I haven't talked to her yet. I've
been busy with the car thing. I was
just about to call, I swear.

DR. CRAIG
Do it now, Frank.

Frank nods.

FRANK
Just let me go to the bathroom
first. It's startin' to itch.

INT. FONTENOT NEUROLOGY - CONTINUOUS

We follow Frank as he navigates his way to Dr. Craig's office. The MUZAK version of "Tiny Dancer" starts playing over the speakers again. Frank starts to hum the melody. A fainter voice grows louder inside his skull. NOTE: WE WILL HEAR THIS VOICE THROUGHOUT THE SERIES.

FRANK'S INNER VOICE
You fucking piece of shit. Who leaves a 19-year-old crack whore alone in his Bentley? With his keys? And his wallet? This shit has gotten OUT OF HAND, Frank.

He sees a surgical cart in the hallway, stops and picks up a SCALPEL. He examines it for a moment and then sets it down. He then picks up a pair of SURGICAL SCISSORS and considers them before heading into--

INT. FONTENOT NEUROLOGY - PRIVATE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

FRANK'S INNER-VOICE
Just think of what you could do if you didn't spend your whole waking existence following your degenerate dick around... You're a loser. A pathetic loser... A fucking washed up loser...

Frank smiles at himself in the mirror, a new determination in his eyes. He air-drums the big finish of "Tiny Dancer" again, this time with the surgical scissors in his hand.

FRANK
Blah, blah blah blah, sheets of linen... You've had a busy day today....

We hold on Frank's unhinged, frantic face as he raises the blade out of frame and takes a deep breath.

He SCREAMS a savage WAR CRY, then stops abruptly and stares at himself in the mirror. Suddenly, in one swift, violent motion we see the SCISSORS pass through the frame and hear a decisive chop.

Frank HOWLS in pain and falls to the floor.

SUPER OVER BLACK: THE COTTONWOODS

EXT. THE COTTONWOODS - LATE MORNING

Aerial footage of a sprawling, ranch-style complex. The camera floats through the compound, following an electric golf cart. From behind, we can see the golf cart's two inhabitants. They are MIKE (30s, driving) and his passenger, ELORA (40s). We can hear Mike debrief Elora as they traverse the complex, but do not see their faces.

MIKE

We had an incident at Equine Therapy this morning. One of the internet addicts, Michael, took his jacket off and handed it to José, the alcoholic from Phoenix? I guess he thought Jose worked here as like a butler or something?

ELORA

Some of these people are so fucking entitled. I swear. Jose shoulda just punched the old asshole.

Mike clumsily puts his arm around Elora.

MIKE

You know it makes me horny when you talk like that.

Elora removes his arm.

ELORA

You sound like a creep. That ain't gonna happen again until you can string together six months of sobriety.

We continue to float behind the golf cart as it zips up a path alongside a pasture filled with horses.

A sign reads "Equine Therapy". A handful of PATIENTS -- mostly displaced city folk -- awkwardly attempt to groom the horses. We hear an INSTRUCTOR as the golf cart whizzes past.

EQUINE INSTRUCTOR (O.S.)
 Never approach from the rear of the horse. Always keep a hand on her haunch and stay within the horses's eye-line. Would anyone like to guess as to why...?

In the background we see a DRUGGED PATIENT get kicked by the horse.

The golf cart takes a hard right and ascends a path up a small hill, underneath a gateway sign in which is carved: ***The Cottonwoods Trauma Recovery Center.***

Sandwiched on either side of the path are adobe dormitories with mesquite-carved signs bearing the culturally appropriated names of several tribes: Navajo, Hopi, Tesuque, and Zuni.

MIKE
 I don't get it. I didn't have six months when we started hooking up.

The golf cart is now barreling past a steaming swimming pool and down the far side of the small hill towards an even larger mesa.

ELORA
 New Rules. Now drop it and tell me about last night's admits.

Atop the mesa is a complex of adobe administrative buildings next to a log cabin-themed dining hall that looks like the great lodge of a middle-sized ski resort.

MIKE
 We got two guys. One's an actor from LA. I can't say who he is but his dad is Forrest fuckin' Gump. He's been on a 6 week bender and is in for a tune-up.

ELORA
 And the other one?

MIKE
 An ER doctor from New Orleans. Racial trauma. He showed up chock full of drugs, too. Propofol, Ketamine, and cocaine....

The golf cart comes to a stop in front of the administrative complex. A gaggle of PATIENTS are scattered around, writing in notebooks, playing guitar, reading recovery literature.

ELORA
Who's today's morning lecturer?

MIKE
Dr. Kim. She's giving the Trauma
Neurology talk. Then it's yoga and
tai-chi until lunch.

As ELORA exits the golf cart she spins towards the camera,
revealing her face. She looks like a road worn, Latina Reese
Witherspoon.

FREEZE ON ELORA as her face squints at the sound of a JET
landing in the near distance.

Title: ELORA T. Director/The Cottonwoods Trauma Recovery
Center.

UNFREEZE to reveal a small airfield adjacent to The
Cottonwoods. There are a few small, banged-up Cessnas
littering the place. Suddenly, a glittering G800 GULFSTREAM
JET enters the frame, landing on the otherwise deserted
airstrip.

ELORA
And who the fuck is this?

MIKE
I dunno. We're not expecting
anyone.

The two share a look... Elora jumps out of the golf cart and
heads to her office. Over her shoulder she commands Mike.

ELORA
Go check it out, will ya?

Mike turns away from Elora and towards the camera -- he wears
glasses and a cardigan and looks like a beatnik writer from
the 1950's. He repeats her command in a mocking whisper.

MIKE
(under his breath)
Go check it out, will ya?

FREEZE ON MIKE

Title: Mike M. Assistant Director/The Cottonwoods Trauma
Recovery Center.

We UNFREEZE as Mike whips out his walkie.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(into walkie)
Hey boneheads, meet me at the
tarmac *stat*. Looks like we've got
an unannounced arrival.

EXT. AIRFIELD - CONTINUOUS

The G800 pulls to a stop on the tarmac. The door slowly opens to reveal:

FREEZE ON COL. FRANK MORE, now wheelchair bound.

Title: Col. Frank M. (ret.) - Patient. Day 1. Sex addiction.
Porn addiction. Self mutilation.

UNFREEZE as the stairs to the jet start to descend. Frank slowly and painfully gets out of the wheelchair and gingerly leads groin-first down the stairs.

Mike rushes up in the golf cart, followed by two BURLY TECHS in a separate cart. They are SAM (30s) and CHRISTIAN (20s) - sleeve tattoos and man-jewelry on both.

They park their carts and stare at Frank as he hobbles down the stairs. A PILOT follows him with a wheelchair.

FRANK
Colonel Frank More. I'm checking
in.

MIKE
I'm afraid we don't have you on our
schedule, sir.

FRANK
I'm sure my doctor called.

MIKE
Detox?

Frank looks at Mike, confused.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Not to worry, we'll get you into
intake and sort it all out.

Frank gets in the golf cart as Mike motions to Sam and Christian. They quickly fold up Frank's wheelchair and toss it in the back of Mike's cart as he takes Frank towards the main lodge.

Christian and Sam stare at the cart as it drives off into the distance, then look to the pile of luggage on the ground.

SAM

That's a lotta luggage for rehab.
Where's this guy think he's going,
on a fuckin' cruise?

Christian smiles at Sam and tosses him a bag.

CHRISTIAN

Dig in.

They expertly start to rummage through Frank's bags.

SAM

Last Thursday I was searching this
housewife's luggage and found 15
Fentys.

CHRISTIAN

Boo-ya! How many did you turn in?

SAM

Um, none? I sold 'em all to that
guy in Albuquerque.

CHRISTIAN

That was a trick question, bro.
Always turn in *some* so that when
they say somebody stole their shit
you have a defense.

SAM

(impressed)
Damn, bro.

Christian removes several expensive sweaters and adds them to a pile of clothes-to-keep.

SAM (CONT'D)

(re: sweaters)
Won't he know they're missing?

CHRISTIAN

The guy's a billionaire in rehab.
He probably didn't even pack his
own bag. We'll take this, too.

He pulls an alligator belt out of the suitcase and winks at Sam.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
'Gator is worth a fortune... I'll flip this stuff in town this weekend and give you your cut on our next shift.

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - ELORA'S OFFICE

Elora sits at her desk, talking on the phone.

ELORA
Yes, he just landed. And he's staying how long?
(beat, then starting to panic)
Shit! But I've never done this and -
- this is my first time, I'm just --

Elora is just listening now. Whomever is on the other line is calming her down and centering her. She closes her eyes and takes a long, deep breath. Then another. And another. The conversation resumes.

ELORA (CONT'D)
Internal locus of control. Yes. I can feel it working, thank you.

Another beat as Elora listens.

ELORA (CONT'D)
You'll be here *today*? Oh, okay --
Yes... Everyone will be so excited, Martha--

CLICK. Whoever was on the other end has already hung up. She gets up and moves to the private bathroom that is adjacent to her office.

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - ELORA'S OFFICE - BATHROOM

A few neatly pressed shirts hang tightly on a rack in front of a mirror. She pulls one down and stares at herself.

Slowly, she takes off her shirt, revealing three long bandages running down her side. She pushes at them lightly at first, then with increasing intensity. Dark blood fans out underneath the bandage. She winces, then quickly pulls on a fresh collared shirt and stares at herself in the mirror.

ELORA
This is getting outta control, lady...

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - EXAM ROOM - LATER

Frank sits in his wheelchair across from NURSE SHEILA (40s), a buxom, no nonsense nurse. She flanks him with a blood pressure machine. Frank raises his sleeve to his shoulder, revealing a 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain division tattoo on his left forearm.

NURSE SHIELA
(re: tattoo)
Special Forces?

FRANK
10th Mountain Division.

NURSE SHIELA
Climb to Glory.
(off Frank's look)
My Dad was 10th Mountain.

Frank just nods. Nurse Sheila rips the blood pressure cuff off, records the data in a chart, and hands Frank a piss cup.

NURSE SHIELA (CONT'D)
The bathroom's behind that door.

FRANK
I can't do that.

Sheila stares him down with an institutional toughness that suggests she will not relent.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I still have a catheter.

She quickly fumbles through his file. Awkward silence. Then, suddenly, Shiela GASPS and involuntarily covers her mouth in shock. She re-composes herself and looks at him with a hint of compassion.

NURSE SHIELA
Your chart says your incision is
two weeks old. Your catheter
should've come out on Monday.

She hands Frank a hospital gown. He reluctantly goes to the bathroom to change. After a moment, Sheila calls after him.

NURSE SHIELA (CONT'D)
I know you're in pain... On many
levels.

FRANK (O.S.)

This ain't pain. I've been in pain.
This is something much, much worse.
It's spiritual squalor. I can't
even trust the voices in my head
anymore.

He steps out from behind the door wearing the gown. A bag of urine is attached to his calf. A tube to the catheter. Sheila hands Frank some pills and a glass of water.

NURSE SHIELA

Take these.

FRANK

What are they?

NURSE SHIELA

*I walked through the wildwood, and
what did I see? But a unicorn with
his horn stuck in a tree...*

Just then, a calmer version of "Ride of the Valkyries" starts to play over a sound system. Sam and Christian enter quickly and whisper something into Nurse Sheila's ear. She looks at Frank's catheter.

NURSE SHIELA (CONT'D)

Like a bandaid...

Confused, Frank swallows the pills as Nurse Sheila RIPS the catheter out and exits--

INT. MAIN LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

"Ride of the Valkyries" lite continues to play over the speakers. Elora and Mike speed-walk down the hallway.

ELORA

It's only 8:30 in the morning and
we already have the strings
playing?!?

MIKE

Turns out that doctor from New
Orleans smuggled in some mushrooms.
It's gonna be a long day.

ELORA

What's this patient's name?

They round the corner to find DR. VERNON W., (African-American, 40s) violently throwing up in the main lobby.

FREEZE ON DR. VERNON W., mid-vomit.

Title: Dr. Vernon W. - Patient. Day 1. Racial Trauma, Propofol, Cocaine, Ketamine, Alcohol... and Mushrooms.

UNFREEZE as other PATIENTS watch with a mixture of disgust and absolute joy. Sam and Christian stand nearby looking helpless.

SAM

Gross!

ELORA

Jesus Christ, get a mop!

Elora approaches Dr. Vernon cautiously.

ELORA (CONT'D)

Dr. Vernon, I'm Elora T., Director of Development here at Cottonwoods. We're going to get you to your quarters, where we think you'll be much more comfortable.

Vernon looks at Elora like she's an alien, but also like she might be his mother.

ELORA (CONT'D)

(to Mike)

Can he hear me?

CHRISTIAN

(giggling)

Loud and clear, bro.

Elora stares daggers at Christian.

ELORA

Get him out of here quietly before the others get jealous. The last thing we need is a mass exodus to happy hour before the bars even open.

Christian helps Vernon to his feet as Mike addresses the other patients.

MIKE

Looks like it's going to be another perfect morning in paradise! For those of you out of detox and finished with your breakfast, you're welcome to join us by the pool at 9 for Tai Chi.

Vernon does an attempt at an elaborate karate move (exactly what you think someone on mushrooms would do).

VERNON
Karate... CHOP!

Mike cautiously embraces him.

MIKE
Take it easy, pal.

Vernon stops abruptly and looks deeply into Elora's eyes.

VERNON
*I see you. And I know what you're
doing... You have to stop.*

Elora stares at Vernon for a minute, startled, then quickly passes him back off to Mike and Christian.

ELORA
(to Mike)
Meet me in my office after he's
secured. And be sure to bill him
for the cleanup.

Vernon CACKLES maniacally.

EXT. WOMEN'S SMOKE PIT - MOMENTS LATER

Several FEMALE PATIENTS of varying ages sit around an industrial-sized ash can, chain smoking cigarettes.

A haggard young woman approaches in expensive sweats; pale skin, dark circles under her eyes. This is VIOLET (20s). She sits across from HELEN (40s), maternal and the least-intimidating of her fellow patients. Violet gestures towards Helen's cigarette.

VIOLET
Ohmygod. Can I have one of those?

Helen hands her a Newport.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
(sarcastic)
Oh, perf. Menthol.

HELEN
Then give it back, you ingrate.

VIOLET

No! I'm so sorry, I'm just a little on edge. Thank you. I just can't believe we can't vape in here. What the fuck? They'd rather us smoke actual cigarettes? I mean. What the actual fucking fuck?

Helen lights Violet's cigarette.

HELEN

They've got a lot of rules that don't make much sense. Better get used to it.

VIOLET

Low-key, one of their rules should be not yakking all over the hallways. There's some guy in there that just threw up all over the place. The whole staff just stood there watching while this maniac projectile vomited everywhere.

STELLA (30s), a stylish urbanite with a severe haircut and wearing all black, sits across from Helen and Violet.

STELLA

I heard he's a doctor -- the vomiter. "The Vominator." Good nickname, right?

Helen and Violet shrug as they smoke their cigarettes.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Anywho, he smuggled some serious psychoactives in.

VIOLET

Smuggling drugs into rehab. How cliché.

STELLA

It's not technically a rehab. It's a "Behavioral Health Facility." The doctor-slash-patient that was throwing up all over the place? He's here for racial trauma.

VIOLET

Racial trauma? His race isn't what made him tape dope to his legs and puke all over the hallway, is it?

STELLA

(curt)

Actually, it's all a trauma response -- there's no way a black man in America can't claim trauma. And I suggest you don't tell other people how to feel if you wanna fit in here.

Quiet. The women all finish their cigarettes and toss them in the ashcan, preparing to leave.

HELEN

Group therapy in five, girls.

VIOLET

Do I have to go? I don't think I have a group yet cuz I just got out of detox.

Helen gestures to the colored name tag on Violet's sweat shirt.

HELEN

You're yellow group. You go with Stella. She'll show you the ropes.

VIOLET

Can I have another cigarette first?

As if on cue, Sam and Christian come sprinting out of the administrative building and head towards the men's dormitory (Navajo Building) across campus.

STELLA

Ooh -- the rapid response team. Took them long enough...

HELEN

Trouble in the boy's dorm.

VIOLET

What are you talking about?

"Ride of the Valkyries" starts playing again. Two more BURLY TECHS sprint out of administration and head towards the Navajo Building.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Oh, I get it... That stupid song sounds like a soothing soundtrack to all this madness, but it's really just an alarm.

STELLA
Bingo-bango, Django.

VIOLET
Clever...ish.

HELEN
(rises)
We'd better get going. Gonna be late.

All the ladies start to walk towards the group therapy building, except for Violet.

VIOLET
I'm just gonna play the dumb new girl and skip the trip. See you ladies later. Thanks for the smokes.

HELEN
Suit yourself. But if you get a demerit you won't be allowed back in the smoke pit for 24 hours.

VIOLET
I'll take my chances.
(sotto)
I hate this place already.

EXT. NAVAJO BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

We hear the sound of a TAKEDOWN as BURLY TECH #1 is slammed to the ground by an unknown PATIENT. BURLY TECH #2's body comes flying out of nowhere and tackles the patient. It's as if an unseen gorilla whacked out on angel dust is tossing the staff around for sport. Within moments, the Techs subdue the Patient, hogtie him, and carry him away, never to be seen or mentioned again.

EXT. WOMEN'S SMOKE PIT - CONTINUOUS

Violet witnesses the mayhem with a mixture of worry and intrigue. She extinguishes her cigarette and heads toward the medical clinic.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Violet walks up the hallway towards the nurse's station. She stops at one of the few single-stall bathrooms on campus and walks in without knocking to see--

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Col. Frank, spread-eagle in his wheelchair. No pants, just a mess of bandages that should've been changed a few days ago. He GROANS as he removes the dressings from his wound, slowly revealing his mutilated genitals. Violet GASPS in shock, then begins to RETCH as we--

FREEZE ON VIOLET

Title: Violet G. - Patient. Day 4. Opioids, Anxiety, and Childhood Sexual Trauma.

UNFREEZE

VIOLET
What the fuck!?

FRANK
A little help here?

She SCREAMS and races out of the bathroom.

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - ELORA'S OFFICE

"Ride of the Valkries" continues playing over the loud speakers as Mike follows Elora into her office.

ELORA
Shut the door, that music is driving me nuts.

Elora opens her desk drawer and pulls out a handful of Advil.

ELORA (CONT'D)
We have a guy holed up at the La Quinta in Gallup--

MIKE
Christ. Again? Nothing good ever comes out of that place.

ELORA
He's already put down a deposit. See if Christian can get out there today. Maybe he can take Pej with him.

MIKE
Pej, the patient?

ELORA
No, Pej the gardener.

Off Mike's look--

ELORA (CONT'D)

He's close to getting out.
Christian respects him -- all the
techs do. Sometimes it's best to go
in there with someone who still has
a needle in their arm,
metaphorically speaking.

Mike stares at Elora for a moment.

MIKE

I feel like I owe you an amends for
earlier--

ELORA

--Shut. The fuck. Up. We have real
problems... Dr. Kim had to cancel
lecture today.

MIKE

Are you kidding me? Again? Why?

ELORA

Hungover.

MIKE

Goddammit. Did she actually say
that?

ELORA

Not in so many words. I'll take the
women's group...

(beat)

And you're going to run men's
today.

MIKE

What!? They all know I just
relapsed--

ELORA

Right now you have centuries
compared to Dr. Kim.

MIKE

But I'm not ready--

ELORA

You're ready. And you're taking
men's group. Period... Oh, and your
mom gets here tonight.

MIKE
Tonight? Fuck!

Elora looks up and touches Mike's arm gently.

ELORA
I'm proud of you. You can do this.

Mike smiles sheepishly.

ELORA (CONT'D)
Now get to group.

We HEAR the sound of yet another JET LANDING overhead as we--

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRFIELD - CONTINUOUS

A private, commercial-airliner-sized jet (DC-10) lands on the tarmac and taxis towards the camera.

ECU Jet Tail: "The Cottonwoods" logo is embossed.

The Jet comes to a stop. The stairs descend and a royal blue carpet with "The Cottonwoods" logo is unfurled.

ELAINE (O.S.)
Excuse me, Martha. Could we get the cameras down first? It'd be great to have a shot of you descending the plane.

MARTHA MIA (O.S)
Yes, of course!

An ENG FILM CREW of three rushes out of the plane and down the stairs. The CAMERAMAN sets up a shot while the BOOM OPERATOR and SOUND MIXER position themselves. ELAINE (Producer, 40s) checks a handheld monitor and then calls out to the empty doorway.

ELAINE
And... Action!

MARTHA MIA (50's) appears in the doorway. She is the Bill Wilson of trauma therapy, and she is home. Martha surveys the landscape in much the same way Frank did previously.

FREEZE on MARTHA

SUPER: Martha Mia. Author, Therapist, Creator of Trauma Healing Modality®, Self Soothing Success™, and the Delta Wave Brain System (patent-pending).

UNFREEZE as Martha closes her eyes, breathes in the desert air, and begins her Queen's Walk down the stairs.

EXT. NAVAJO BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Sam and Christian wheel Frank into the building.

FRANK
My crotch is on fire.

SAM
Well, you've got a fresh dressing now, pops.

CHRISTIAN
We're gonna get you nice and tucked into your bunk before your meds kick in.

FRANK
Bunk?

They enter the NAVAJO BUILDING.

INT. NAVAJO BUILDING - COMMON ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The building is comprised of shared bunk areas as well as a large common area dedicated to group therapy. It looks like it smells like a men's locker room.

FRANK
You gotta be fucking kidding me.
This is a mistake.

A few other PATIENTS wander around. The vibe is cliquey. Two OLD MEN in a corner are doing a puzzle. A tough, UFC-fighter-looking Latino (VICTOR, 30s) sits sobbing on the couch. He's holding a STUFFED BUNNY the size of a toddler.

VOICE (O.S.)
I'd let things settle down if I were you...

A MAN walks into frame, eating gummy bears. He wears a tank top and a pink swimsuit. This is PEJ (30s, British-Iranian).

PEJ
Don't want a bunch of demerits on
your first day.

Sam and Christian fist bump Pej.

SAM CHRISTIAN
What up, bro. Pej in the hizzie.

FREEZE ON PEJ.

TITLE: Pej K. Patient. Day 86. Opioids, Gambling addiction.

UNFREEZE

PEJ
Gentle dwellers of the American
desert.

Christian hands Frank off to Pej.

CHRISTIAN
Put him in Suicide Sal's suite.
(sotto)
And keep an eye on him, Nurse just
gave him some fun bars.

Christian and Sam walk off. Pej sizes up Frank.

PEJ
Lemme guess: sex addict with
entitlement issues and too much
money?

Frank doesn't answer. He looks completely out of his element.

PEJ (CONT'D)
They dropped your bags off a few
minutes ago -- first thing I'd do
is check and see if anything's
missing.

FRANK
You Indian?

PEJ
(smiling)
Iranian.

Frank looks confused as Pej leads him into their bunk area.

INT. NAVAJO BUILDING - BUNK ROOM A - CONTINUOUS

PEJ

They put you on the bottom on account of your wheelchair. What happened by the way?

FRANK

(ignores question)

Bunk beds? What is this, the boy scouts? I was promised a goddamned casita.

Pej offers Frank some gummy bears. He reluctantly takes them.

PEJ

You've been hooked, sucker. They don't even *have* private rooms here.

Frank starts to root through his bag.

PEJ (CONT'D)

They'll tell you anything to get you on a plane to this place.

FRANK

The fuck do we do around here all day long?

PEJ

Assuming you're not in detox, they'll likely throw you into the mix right away. How long are you here?

Frank shrugs.

FRANK

Just a week or two.

PEJ

So, a few months then.

Pej points to the RED TAG attached to Frank's belt.

PEJ (CONT'D)

That's the group you've been assigned to. Red. I'm in the same one.

FRANK

What does it mean?

PEJ
That we're angry, entitled men.

FRANK
Are you fucking serious?!

A BEAT while the angry entitlement of Frank's response sinks in.

PEJ
Trust me, you get real comfortable
once they start to crack you
open... and the massages don't
hurt.

Frank continues rummaging through his bag.

FRANK
The fuck is my belt!?

PEJ
Listen, I was about to go take a
dip, you want to join or is it too
much for you to handle?

FRANK
In the pool? Yeah, that sounds
alright.

Frank pulls out a pair of trunks.

FRANK (CONT'D)
A little privacy please!?

Pej turns around. Frank attempts to put his shorts on, but between the drugs, the wheelchair, and the wound care, he's all thumbs. After a painfully long beat, Pej very kindly steps towards Frank.

PEJ
Here, let me help you.

Frank relents as Pej begins helping him silently change into his bathing suit.

FRANK
Okay, just don't look...

INT. LECTURE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Stella, Helen, and a group of other WOMEN (various ages and races) assemble chairs into a semi-circle. Violet quickly slips in next to them and slumps down into a beanbag.

HELEN

I thought you were too good for group?

VIOLET

Seemed fucking safer than what was out there.

Elora walks in and writes the word "TRIGGERS" on a white board.

ELORA

Dr. Kim couldn't be here this morning--

STELLA

(sotto)

Hungover.

Violet giggles.

ELORA

--So, you're stuck with me today.

Elora looks at Violet, pointedly.

ELORA (CONT'D)

Violet, you're just joining us from detox. How are you feeling?

VIOLET

Umm... fine.

ELORA

Really? 'Cause on my first day out of detox, I was far from fine.

(beat)

So, why are you here?

EXT. AIRFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Martha stands on the tarmac.

MARTHA MIA

I'm here to help others recover from trauma... To give them a chance at a second life.

Martha looks out across the landscape.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)
"Tselani," or *"many rocks,"* is the
 foundation on which *The Cottonwoods*
 was birthed--

ELAINE
 CUT! Your assistant just stepped
 into frame--

MARTHA MIA
 --Oh, we don't use the word
"assistant" here at The
 Cottonwoods. Keep filming, please.

Elaine gestures to the crew to keep rolling. Martha pulls
 BRIANNA (African-American, late 20s), into frame.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)
Brianna is my friend. My companion.
 And my Chief of Staff.
 (beat)
Brianna is also a survivor. Like
 many of us, she spent years of her
 life... treading water--

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - CONTINUOUS

Pej dives into the pool. Frank sits nearby in his wheelchair.
 In the background, two female techs, IZZY (20s) and ALEX
 (30s), sit watching them. Both are simultaneously checking
 their phones.

Pej floats over to Frank.

FRANK
 Help me in.

PEJ
 You sure you're ready for that?

FRANK
 I can handle it...

Pej shrugs and helps Frank out of his wheelchair. The techs
 barely notice.

PEJ
 So, why're you here, Frank?

Frank ignores him and changes the subject.

FRANK

Lemme see if I'm gettin' this right
-- those two lesbians over there
are supposed to be lifeguarding us
or some such shit?

PEJ

I think it's more a lesson in
humility than an actual water
safety issue. And only one of them
is a lesbian.

FRANK

They wanna humiliate us?

PEJ

They want to *teach* us *humility*.
We're all equal, no one is better
than or less than the other in
God's eyes, etc, etc, etc.

FRANK

Those two don't look like they
could change a tire.

Frank lowers himself into the pool, slowly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

So what happens if I suddenly start
to fake drown?

PEJ

(laughing)

I guess we'll get to see those two
try to fish you out of the pool.

FRANK

(yawns)

I don't think the skinny one is
wearing a bra.

Pej starts to swim around the pool casually.

PEJ

We can't be trusted to be on our
own. Look where we ended up.

FRANK

Speak for yourself. I'm just here
for the optics. Doin' my time.

Pej looks at Frank with compassion.

PEJ

You really have no idea where you are, or what you've gotten yourself into, do you, Colonel?

Frank rolls his eyes, holds his breath and flips over, as if he's drowned.

Pej exits the pool and begins to dry off. In the background, Izzy and Alex look up from their phones to see Frank floating upside down. Pej clocks the concern on their faces.

PEJ (CONT'D)

It's all good! He's totally faking it. You can get back to your Snaps!

Izzy and Alex go back to their phones. Pej looks back at Frank, floating.

PEJ (CONT'D)

Yo, Frank! Let's go, man. We're gonna miss mid-morning snack.

Frank doesn't move. Pej grows exasperated.

PEJ (CONT'D)

Frank! You're gonna have to find another way to grope Izzy's tits.

Pej picks up a volleyball and beans it at Frank. He still doesn't move. Izzy and Alex are paying attention now.

IZZY

Pej! Get the old man out of the pool, please.

PEJ

Working on it!

Pej grabs the pool net and pokes at Frank's floating body. Nothing. After several attempts, he hooks the net around Frank's head and drags him toward the edge of the pool. He pulls Frank's head up by the hair. Frank is indeed unconscious. Pej SCREAMS in horror -- *almost as if this drowning triggers something deep and old inside of him*. Izzy and Alex come running.

PEJ (CONT'D)

He was joking! He was just joking!

Alex jumps in the pool in her scrubs and hoists Frank out. Izzy gets on her knees and begins CPR on an unconscious Frank. Finally, Frank bolts upright and vomits profusely all over Izzy and Alex.

PEJ (CONT'D)
Oh, shit. The pain pills!

Frank's eyes roll back in his head and he passes out again in Alex's puke-y arms as we--

CUT TO:

INT. LECTURE HALL - CONTINUOUS

VIOLET
...I like drugs.

A few women snicker. Elora plays along.

ELORA
Love 'em. I also love vodka,
anything you can put in your nose,
and being choked during sex.

STELLA
(sotto)
Show off.

ELORA
But that's not why I'm here. I'm
here because of childhood trauma.
The behaviors that got us here are
just *symptoms*.

She writes "The Presence Process" on the board.

ELORA (CONT'D)
We're going to start by taking a
moment to be present. I want you
all to close your eyes.

Elora closes her eyes first.

ELORA (CONT'D)
Let's take eight breaths, in and
out. I... am... here... now...

MINI MONTAGE: ECU each of the following faces:

- 1) HELEN, eyes closed. We witness her nervous-but-hopeful desperation during her breath.
- 2) STELLA, eyes open and darting. We sense her insecurity/concern for what others think of her.
- 3) LAYLA (20s), her black-and-bruised eyes remain open. She uses this opportunity to pick her nose.

4) GLADYS (70s), eyes closed. Mouth open... Asleep.

5) VIOLET, eyes open. She watches the others, anxious.

ELORA (CONT'D)

Again. I... am... here... now...

Elora pauses for a long moment, then opens her eyes.

ELORA (CONT'D)

Good. Nice work. Violet, why are you here?

Long beat.

VIOLET

I don't know. I mean, my fucking parents? I guess...?

She trails off.

ELORA

Oxy, right?

VIOLET

Yeah.

ELORA

What else?

Violet looks down.

ELORA (CONT'D)

Do you know what a trigger is?

VIOLET

Like... something that pisses you the fuck off?

Elora nods.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I mean, I sometimes get really fucking pissed when Postmates takes too long with my açai bowl?

A few of the older women laugh.

ELORA

(to the older women)

Let's try not to judge.

(back on Violet)

(MORE)

ELORA (CONT'D)

Anything can be a trigger --
thoughts, people, places, things,
an emotional state, your sex life,
your parents, your asshole
boyfriend, your perfectly lovely
husband. Anything can be a trigger.
It's how we react to them that got
us here... Stella, can you tell us
what some of your triggers are?

STELLA

Men. That whore who lives in the
apartment downstairs. Running out
of cigarettes. Men. Couches with
that squishy plastic on top.
Episodes of "Housewives." Not
watching episodes of "Housewives."
(thinking)
And running out of booze during the
day.

ELORA

Good. Those are all very, very
good. Thank you.

VIOLET

My boyfriend likes to beat the shit
out of me when he fucks me... Is
that considered a trigger?

That stops the room.

ELORA

If it's not consensual, then that's
abuse... So yes, that's a trigger.

Helen gently puts her hand on Violet's back.

VIOLET

Yeah... I definitely don't like it.

ELORA

I wouldn't either. We're going to
create a new strategy to deal with
your triggers head on. Together.
And that's why you're here, to
start the healing process.

Violet smiles at Elora.

EXT. AIRFIELD - CONTINUOUS

The film crew stands around Martha Mia and Brianna as they continue their interview.

MARTHA MIA

To start the healing process for Brianna, we had to get to the root of the cause -- which on paper seemed to be sexual assaults that she suffered as a child. And I want to be very clear with that word: assaults. But through my Trauma Healing Modality Program, in conjunction with the Delta Wave System, we uncovered much, much more.

Brianna walks off camera. Elaine continues her interview with Martha.

ELAINE

Martha... What are your claims?

Off Martha, smiling, we--

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL GROUP - CONTINUOUS

A lamp-lit, comfortable room. Chairs form a circle. It could just as easily be a preschool classroom but for the darker lighting and the recovery posters on the wall, one of which reads: "Traumatic Emotions: Anger, Resentment, Hate" and bears the following copyright: "© Martha Mia 2012".

POST-LAP AUDIO:

MARTHA MIA (V.O.)

I claim all of it; alcoholism, co-dependency, anxiety, depression, childhood sexual trauma -- just about every damned thing you can imagine.

Seven MEN sit in the circle. The mood is exhausted anticipation.

TINO (30s), a long-haired Italian with jailhouse tattoos, sits left of Victor*, who sits front and center. He's still holding the stuffed bunny, which now wears an N95 mask.

**Note: We last saw Victor in the background of the Navajo building, sobbing uncontrollably.*

Mike enters and all of the men GROAN in displeasure.

VICTOR
What the hell? Where's Kim?

MIKE
It's Dr. Kim, Victor.

VICTOR
Whatever. She was gonna do me today, man. I was really looking forward to it.

MIKE
I'm very sorry, but you're stuck with me this morning. Dr. Kim is out on a personal matter.

TINO
Man, this is bullshit. We NEED consistency! We got a therapist who doesn't show up. When she does I swear she's hungover. It's like, why do we even bother with this shit?

The patients grumble in agreement.

VICTOR
Who the fuck do you think you are to be telling us how to feel?

Mike takes a deep breath.

MIKE
Look, I know it seems like you're getting a raw deal. I remember feeling the same way. I'm here today for my own recovery, too.

TINO
And there's the truth!

MIKE
Helping others and the importance of group is what keeps me sober on a day-to-day basis.
(beat)
I have forty-two days. *Forty-two*. I know it's not a ton of time, but it's more than a day.

Long beat as the guys take this in.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I don't pretend to know how it's done, or even how to do it perfectly, but I do know that there's a solution. And trust me, I'm not trying to take Dr. Kim's place -- I'm not going to work with you on a therapeutic level. What I thought we'd do is use this time to learn a little bit more about how this process works, and why our recidivism rate is so much higher than any other institution in the world.

VICTOR

Speak English, motherfucker!

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRFIELD TARMAC - CONTINUOUS

MARTHA MIA

...Our *success* rate is the highest in the world, and I'd like to break down the how and the why of it for you.

The brutal desert sun is beating down and everyone is beginning to sweat uncomfortably. Particularly Martha Mia.

ELAINE

Cut!

(to Brianna)

Can we powder her real quick?

Brianna steps in with an umbrella and pats down Martha's face.

MARTHA MIA

(sotto, to Brianna)

Where are the Suburbans?

BRIANNA

I'm so sorry. They'll be here shortly.

Brianna steps out of the frame. Elaine signals for the Cameraman to start rolling again. Martha takes a breath to recompose herself as we--

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL GROUP - CONTINUOUS

MIKE

Take a deep breath, Victor.

VICTOR

I told you, Kim was gonna do me today, man! It's my fucking turn.

TINO

Stop whining, bro. You sound like a baby. Give the guy a chance!

Victor rises to challenge Tino, who cowers behind Mike.

MIKE

Okay! Okay! Everybody settle down. Take your seats, please. Let's not overreact and get bounced outta here.

This quiets some of the guys.

MIKE (CONT'D)

This is the end of the line for some of you. Let's all just relax. Please, just take a deep breath, Victor.

It takes everything in Victor's power to restrain himself. After several tense seconds, he returns to his seat and inhales dramatically for show.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Excellent. Thank you. Very nice work. Now, Victor, let's start with you. What are your claims?

VICTOR

I'm Victor, alcoholico, and I claim combat trauma, alcoholism, childhood sexual abuse, and suicidal and homicidal ideation.

Mike takes an empathetic exhale.

MIKE

And your affirmation today?

VICTOR

Today, I will not kill Tino.

MIKE

(chuckling)

Good, good. I'll take it.

(beat)

Tell me, Victor, was there a particular incident that brought you here?

EXT. AIRFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Martha Mia's interview continues --

MARTHA MIA

...I found myself at my bottom. And I know that sounds like a tired out cliché in this day and age, what with celebrity rehab shows and youtube. But I truly was at my bottom, without a penny to my name and about to lose custody of my son.

(beat)

A moment, please.

Martha takes off her sunglasses and turns away from the camera. Brianna rushes in thoughtfully with a tissue.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)

(to Brianna)

Thank you, love.

She dabs her eyes and then hands the used tissue back to Brianna.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)

(addressing the camera)

I'm sorry, where were we, Elaine?

ELAINE

You were talking about your bottom... and losing custody of Michael.

MARTHA MIA

Almost losing custody.

ELAINE

Right. And was there an inciting incident that led to these... *epiphanies*... that launched your empire?

MARTHA MIA

You know, there was...

INT. SMALL GROUP - CONTINUOUS

VICTOR

You know there was! I beat the shit outta my ex-C.O. and now he breathes outta a tube in his neck. It was either come here or go back to prison.

MIKE

Let's go back to that incident for just a moment. Slowly. I don't want to re-traumatize you, rather I'd like for you to connect with the moment when you no longer had a choice. The moment when violence became your only option.

Victor closes his eyes and takes a long, slow breath.

VICTOR

I never had a choice, man. I knew I was gonna hurt him when he walked into the bar.

MIKE

So there's my point. Just now, you were angry. Tino challenged you, and rage built up inside you. Yet somehow, you were able to keep it together. To restrain yourself. Why do you think that is?

TINO

'Cuz he was afraid of the Italian Stallion beatin' his ass!

Everyone laughs, including Victor.

VICTOR

That's funny. I dunno why.

(beat)

I guess it just wasn't worth it for some reason.

MIKE

That's right. It wasn't worth it. But the reason that you're able to access that thought now, and not back in the bar with your C.O., has a lot to do with neuroplasticity -- and that's something you've been conditioned with right here at The Cottonwoods.

VICTOR

I thought I told you to speak English.

MIKE

(chuckling)

Right, I'm sorry. So, neuroplasticity is best explained like this...

EXT. AIRFIELD - CONTINUOUS

MARTHA MIA

...The brain can change. We can change it. By doing something differently, we begin to open up new neuropathways and change our reactive behaviors. And by changing our reactive behaviors, we begin to... get our lives back. At The Cottonwoods, we believe that everyone can be *de-traumatized*.

ELAINE

Wow. That's beautiful. We'll cut there, guys! That's all we need at this setup.

Martha joins Briana, who holds up a mirror for her. She adjusts her makeup.

MARTHA MIA

(sotto)

Where are they?

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - CONTINUOUS

Alex and Izzy continue to perform CPR on an unconscious Frank. He abruptly sits up again and tries to grope Izzy's breast. She slaps his hand away.

IZZY

Really, pervert? That's how you come out of unconsciousness? All grope-y and shit?

INT. SMALL GROUP - CONTINUOUS

Mike walks over to the whiteboard. He begins to draw something resembling a human brain as he speaks.

MIKE

Tell me about the events leading up to you assaulting your C.O. that day.

VICTOR

Ex-C.O. He'd been out for a month, which is why it wasn't a military matter -- I've told you this shit, man! That's the only reason I didn't end up at Leavenworth, *por vida*.

MIKE

Ex-C.O., I'm sorry. Tell me about the day leading up to the assault. Was there pressure building up in you all day, or was it a sudden explosion of rage?

Victor takes another deep breath, genuinely attempting to connect to the moment.

VICTOR

Both, I guess. When I saw him walk in, I had a flood of all of the bullshit he put us through. The mind games, the fucking war crimes we committed for him, all of it.

Mike stops drawing, turns and gives his full empathic attention to Victor.

MIKE

Right. But walk me through the day leading up to the assault. From the moment you woke up until the moment he walked into the bar... And remember to breathe.

Victor takes another deep breath and closes his eyes.

INT. SUBURBAN - CONTINUOUS

Martha sits in the front seat of a Suburban with her eyes closed. She takes a deep breath as they approach the entrance to The Cottonwoods.

Way back in the third row, the SOUNDMIXER is telling a story to the rest of the crew.

SOUNDMIXER

Bro, I woke up at noon, hungover as fuck!

Elaine spins around in her seat and eye-fucks the Soundmixer as we--

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL GROUP - CONTINUOUS

VICTOR

I woke up at noon, hung over as fuck. No coffee in the apartment, so I had to walk over to 7-eleven in the San Bernardino heat. I got fuckin' cottonmouth and the sun is brutal. I finally get there, pour the coffee, take a sip but I forgot my money at home, and the Haji behind the register wouldn't spot me the buck-ninety, even though I go in there every fucking day and get coffee. So I had to walk all the way back across the highway to get two fucking dollars, then walk all the way back to pay for the fucking coffee.

TINO

Damn. That does suck!

MIKE

This is good, keep going...

VICTOR

I get back to the apartment -- it's my brother's pad and he's letting me crash since I just got on the outs. I'm broke as shit and he's nowhere to be found, so I take one of his guitars down to the pawn shop. The guy's a dick.

(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)

He doesn't care that I'm a vet or that the guitar is worth like a thousand bucks. He offers me \$150 cuz he can see I'm desperate. I take the money and I'm extra pissed because I feel like shit for boosting my brother's gear. I wanna kill the fucking guy, but I don't. Instead, I slash a tire on what I assume to be his Camry on my way out and start walking towards town.

EXT. ADMIN BUILDING - MARTHA MIA'S PARKING SPOT - CONTINUOUS

The Suburban turns the corner to pull into Martha's parking spot but stops abruptly.

INT. SUBURBAN - CONTINUOUS

After lurching forward, Martha side-eyes the driver then swivels her head to notice Dr. Vernon W's Tesla parked where it shouldn't be. **NOTE: WE WON'T KNOW THIS TO BE HIS CAR UNTIL EPISODE TWO.**

ECU personalized Louisiana license plate which reads "LUCID".

MARTHA MIA

(smiling)

Who on earth could be parked in my spot?

The Suburban grows uncomfortably quiet.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)

Brianna, find out whose car that is and please have it towed to hell.

Brianna jumps out of the Suburban.

BRIANNA

I got it.

INT. SMALL GROUP - CONTINUOUS

MIKE

I got it. So, suffice it to say you were a walking time bomb by the time you got to the bar, right?

VICTOR

Man, you don't know the half of it.
There's still a run in with the
cops and a full-on brawl with a
homeless maniac before I even get
there.

MIKE

My point is, the fuse had already
been lit long before you went
berserk at the bar, right?

VICTOR

(thinks)

Man, the fuse was lit back in
Kabul.

EXT. ADMIN BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Everyone follows Martha towards the main building as she
clocks activity by the swimming pool: A small crowd surrounds
Frank, who is being lifted onto a gurney and rushed towards
the medical clinic. Martha expertly steers the film crew's
attention in the opposite direction.

MARTHA MIA

Elaine, how about we shoot a quick
introduction here? The light on the
mountains is absolutely beautiful.

Elaine gestures for the crew to get ready. In the reversal
shot, we see Frank's gurney pass out of the frame. Further in
the background, we can see the Women's Smoke Pit, where a
large gaggle of looky-loos stand chain smoking. The scenes
couldn't be more polarizing.

EXT. WOMEN'S SMOKE PIT - CONTINUOUS

Helen, Stella, Violet, and several others stand facing the
swimming pool area.

HELEN

Poor guy. You think he drowned?

VIOLET

Poor guy? That's the old man who
exposed himself to me in the
bathroom earlier. I hope he fucking
drowned.

Stella averts her eyes to the scene further in the background
-- Martha Mia being interviewed by Elaine and the crew.

STELLA

Well, well, well. Who have we here?
Could it be The Queen herself?

HELEN

Oh, shit. You're right! It is!

STELLA

How'd we get so lucky? I thought
she was too busy selling books to
come around here anymore.

HELEN

Right?

INT. SMALL GROUP - CONTINUOUS

MIKE

Right. So let me ask you, what
about today? Can you walk me
through your day here -- everything
leading up to this session?

VICTOR

Sure. I woke up. Had breakfast, did
Tai chi, some homework -- my
assignment for Dr. Kim, actually.
Then I read that book she's making
me read and I started sobbing on
the couch in the common room.
Cried for like ten full minutes.
Then I took a nap. Woke up, grabbed
Bob the Bunny and came to group,
expecting to have Kim work on my
trauma. Then you showed up, which
pissed me the fuck off...

INT. ADMIN BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Martha, Elaine, and the crew approach the reception area.
Elora greets everyone with spa water.

ELORA

Martha! Welcome.

MARTHA MIA

Elora, you're absolutely glowing!

Martha and Elora air-kiss.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)

(to Elaine)

You all must be starving. Our chef is truly amazing here at The Cottonwoods -- anything you like, 24-7.

Elaine extends her hand to Elora.

ELAINE

Hi, Elora. My name's Elaine Cooper. I work for Oprah and will be following Martha around with cameras for a few days.

ELORA

Welcome to The Cottonwoods. I'm here to help with anything you need.

ELAINE

Who should I talk to about waivers?

MARTHA MIA

Let's get you and your crew settled in first, then we can talk shop.

ELORA

The new guest bungalows are ready and waiting.

MARTHA MIA

Oh, you're just going to love our casitas. The bathrooms have heated floors! Brianna will show you the way.

Before Elaine can protest, Brianna shuffles Elaine and her crew to their casitas. Martha and Elora smile and wave as they walk off.

BEAT. Martha looks at Elora, calmly.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)

In an effort not to hold in my resentments for a later time: What. The fuck. Is going on?

ELORA

We've had a few minor issues this morning--

MARTHA MIA

--Did he arrive yet?

ELORA
 Yes... One of our issues is
 actually with Frank. There was an
 incident...

Martha's face darkens for the first time.

MARTHA MIA
 Show me where.

INT. SMALL GROUP - CONTINUOUS

Victor points to Bob the Bunny's tummy.

MIKE
 That's where the anger lives?

VICTOR
 "Homicidal ideation."

MIKE
 (sotto)
 I wish Dr. Kim hadn't given it that
 name.
 (back to Victor)
 Anywhere else?

Victor points to Bob the Bunny's head.

VICTOR
 The anxiety is in his head.

Out of nowhere, Tino starts to CACKLE with a high pitched
 intensity (à-la David Thewlis in "The Big Lebowski"). Victor
 jumps out of his chair and lunges towards him.

INT. ADMIN BUILDING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Martha speed-walks down the hallway with Elora at her side.

MARTHA MIA
 ...How did he get in the pool!?
 He's in a wheelchair!

ELORA
 It's been an abnormal morning, to
 say the least.

MARTHA MIA
 Radio Michael again.

Beat.

ELORA

He doesn't have his walkie on...

Martha abruptly stops and looks at Elora. She then slowly closes her eyes for a long beat, centering herself.

MARTHA MIA

And why doesn't he have his walkie on?

ELORA

He's running group.

Martha's eyes snap open.

MARTHA MIA

Michael is running group!? Son of a bitch--

INT. SMALL GROUP - CONTINUOUS

VICTOR

--*Hijo de puta!*

Victor is on Tino like a rabid dog, his massive tattooed arms wrapping around Tino's tiny head. Mike tries his best to get in between them without getting hurt himself.

MIKE

Stop! This isn't going to end well for anyone!

Other patients cheer on their preferred team as chairs go flying.

INT. ADMIN BUILDING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Martha approaches the door to group, hearing the screams and howls of the patients as Mike increasingly loses control.

MIKE (O.S.)

Okay, that's enough! Please, stop right now!

Martha bursts through the doors into--

INT. SMALL GROUP - CONTINUOUS

Victor is on the floor, slow-choking Tino, rage pulsing through his veins. Mike is also laying on the floor, attempting to separate them.

Out of nowhere we hear an extremely loud WHISTLE come from the doorway. Martha Mia stands at the entrance, blowing a HYPERWHISTLE attached to a discreet chain around her neck. Victor immediately releases his grip from Tino. Everyone puts their hands over their ears. Martha continues blowing for a long beat until--

SILENCE.

Mike looks up first -- all too familiar with that whistle -- and makes eye contact with his mother.

MARTHA MIA
Have we healed?

The patients grumble and move chairs back to their original positions.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)
Please. Leave the chairs. This is where we are right now and I want us to embrace it--

Mike starts to get up. His glasses are broken and he has a large scratch above his eye.

MIKE
--Martha, I have this handled.

Martha addresses the group.

MARTHA MIA
(calm)
Do you all think that Michael has this handled?

The patients look at each other. Tino giggles, holds his throat, and then coughs. Mike approaches Martha, desperately trying to diffuse the situation.

MIKE
(quietly)
Mom, please don't do this here...
I'm just starting my work with these intakes--

Ignoring Mike, Martha walks straight up to Victor, puts a chair behind him and gestures for him to sit. He complies.

MARTHA MIA
Now, what's your name?

VICTOR
Me? Um, Victor. Alcoholico.

MARTHA MIA

It's nice to meet you, Victor. I'm Martha. I'm also an alcoholico, among other things.

Martha walks across the room and picks up Bob the Bunny. She then slowly sets a chair down in front of Victor and sits across from him, knee-to-knee. He looks nervous but tries to maintain a hard demeanor.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)

(re: Bob the Bunny)

How's Bob today?

VICTOR

Bob's had a tough day, *señora*.

MARTHA MIA

You can call me Martha.

VICTOR

Sí. Martha.

MARTHA MIA

How long have you been taking care of Bob the Bunny?

VICTOR

I dunno, like ten days?

MARTHA MIA

I see. And do you know why you were asked to take care of him?

VICTOR

I just figured he needed a strong man to keep him safe.

Victor scans the room for laughter that doesn't come.

MARTHA MIA

I found him on the floor in the aftermath of a physical altercation. Is that what you call taking care of him?

VICTOR

I *was* taking care of him, until these assholes provoked me.

MARTHA MIA

One of our core commandments here at The Cottonwoods is: no physical violence.

Martha is squeezing and kneading the stuffed bunny.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)

Every week the staff gathers to discuss and assess the progress of our patients. The extreme cases -- those that are struggling the most or are in need of extra attention -- are given a stuffed animal to care for that week. That you and Bob the Bunny have been together ten days tells me you've been struggling for several weeks now.

VICTOR

I dunno. I think I been doing pretty good until today. Mike really rattled my fucking cage earlier, man -- I mean, Martha. And I gotta say I thought the bunny thing was weird at first, but I've really come to grow attached to Bob.

MARTHA MIA

I'll bet you have. But what we're trying to do here is break our patterns, not each other.

She gets very close to Victor, almost smiling.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)

We're learning to soothe ourselves, Victor. We have to change our ingrained response to triggers. Do you understand?

VICTOR

I guess so.

MARTHA MIA

So, what will our response be to new triggers?

Victor silently stares at Martha.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)

(calmly)

What will our response be to new triggers?

Victor looks like he's about to cry. Tino grins ear-to-ear.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)
*What will our response be to new
 triggers?*

Martha abruptly and violently tears off Bob the Bunny's head!
 Victor looks dumbfounded... He stares daggers at Martha,
 trying to process a range of emotions.

Suddenly, tears start running down his cheeks and he
 collapses into her arms, embracing her and sobbing
 uncontrollably. The patients stare in awe.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)
 (whispering)
 Very nice work, Victor. Very nice
 work.

Martha stands up and addresses the entire group.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)
 I think that fuse just got a little
 bit longer! That's all the time we
 have for group today.

Martha turns around and looks calmly at Mike and Elora.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)
 I'm proud of you, Michael. Now,
 please clean up this mess.

She exits with both Bob The Bunny's torso and head in her
 hands. Mike looks at Elora, exhausted. Victor looks at Tino.

VICTOR
 Oh my god, she smells SO good.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - MOMENTS LATER

Frank sits in a gurney, a heart rate monitor strapped to his
 chest. He's eating ice cream.

Martha Mia enters and gently closes the door behind her.

LONG BEAT.

MARTHA MIA
 That's made in-house, you know.

FRANK
 I thought it tasted a tad... cheap.

She smiles.

MARTHA MIA
You're overweight, Francis.

FRANK
I want that casita that I paid for,
Minnie.

MARTHA MIA
You know I hate that name.

Frank luxuriates in his ice cream.

FRANK
You could have quite the lawsuit on
your hands. I'm not sure I was even
cleared to be in that pool yet, on
account of those *really* strong meds
and all... I'm still feeling a bit
lightheaded.

Martha stares at Frank, giving nothing away.

MARTHA MIA
I knew it was a bad idea to bring
you here... What do you want?

FRANK
I want to be cured, Minnie.

MARTHA MIA
Bullshit. What do you want?

FRANK
Initially, I wanted help with what
I guess you'd call my "sex
problem."

MARTHA MIA
Addiction. Your sex addiction,
Francis.

FRANK
Call it what you will. But having
spent just a day in this place,
what I want has changed.
(beat)
You're missing some major
opportunities to vacuum up very
large sums of money.

MARTHA MIA
All business as usual with you.
Perhaps we should table this topic
while we focus on healing.

FRANK

Yeah, yeah. Just hear me out,
unless you want me to sue you for
the pool incident.

MARTHA MIA

You have an unusual way of asking
for help.

He smiles. His charm has a history...

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)

You've got time for a two minute
elevator pitch. Starting now.

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Mike sits at Elora's desk as she cleans the cut above his
eye. He slowly moves his hand to the bandages on her back.
They share a long and tender moment.

FRANK (V.O.)

This is a large state with cheap,
undeveloped land... In a nation
full of people who are suffering.

INT. WOMEN'S SMOKE PIT - CONTINUOUS

Violet smokes a Marlboro 100 as the surrounding women laugh
and gossip. She stares at her cigarette, a whole other life
breathing beneath her heavy eyes.

FRANK (V.O.)

I see a lot of potential here.
Untapped and unused potential.

INT. NAVAJO BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Pej lays in the top bunk, eating gummy bears and reading a
financial book.

FRANK (V.O.)

I mean, \$70,000 for this fucking
ice cream? C'mon! The margins must
be off the charts! This could be a
good thing for both of us. Possibly
even a permanent thing. The combat
trauma unit alone is an expansion
that I can help with -- and we can
almost certainly get a military
contract to treat all that PTSD.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - EXAM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Martha studies Frank for a beat.

MARTHA MIA
What do you want?

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - EXAM ROOM 2 - CONTINUOUS

ECU on Dr. Vernon W.'s face as he lays in a gurney, sleeping off his Mushroom trip.

FRANK (V.O.)
I want in.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - EXAM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Martha laughs incredulously in Frank's face.

MARTHA MIA
You tried to cut off your own dick, Francis. I think we need to deal with the underlying issues before we start to venture into business together... Plus you have a public reputation to uphold, it would be a shame if any of this leaked.

Frank's face darkens.

FRANK
There she is...

Martha tries to look away from him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
So, what do you want from *me*?

MARTHA MIA
I think I had a momentary lapse in judgment inviting you back into my life.
(beat)
If you make it here long enough, you'll soon discover that for all of our faults, The Cottonwoods has a magical effect on many of the severely damaged people who come to us for help.
(MORE)

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)

I've seen thousands upon thousands of miracles happen here, and whether you believe in them or not, you're going to witness broken people getting better during your stay. I want you to be honest and open and willing to admit that you ended up here *for a reason*.

FRANK

I'm not gonna be my ex-wife's pet experiment. I don't belong here. I don't have an issue with booze or dope. And the sex thing isn't a problem, it's my nature as a human male.

MARTHA MIA

You tried to castrate yourself, Francis.

Frank smiles.

FRANK

A "momentary lapse in judgment."

Long beat.

MARTHA MIA

You know, It wasn't a mistake that I allowed you to come here.

He looks at her curiously.

MARTHA MIA (CONT'D)

I've got a film crew following me around for the next few days. I need to make sure the insanity that I stumbled into today gets put to bed and not on camera. I need you to use your leadership skills to quell the -- *revolution* -- that's been brewing inside these walls for a while now... Our future partnership depends on the world seeing this as a place of healing, not a place where disgruntled billionaires bitch about the ice cream.

(beat)

I'm tired, Francis.

Frank stares at Martha for a long beat.

FRANK
You're still the most beautiful
thing in the world, Minnie.

A crack in Martha's harsh facade as she smiles tenderly at Frank.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Does Michael know who I am?

MARTHA MIA
You know he doesn't.

He moves closely towards her.

FRANK
I'm hurting bad, baby.

MARTHA MIA
I know you are... Let me help you.
Let's do this together, like old
times.

FRANK
Just like old times.

Frank leans in and kisses Martha tenderly. Martha pushes him away.

MARTHA MIA
Show it to me.

Frank looks down at his crotch.

FRANK'S INNER VOICE
You thought you could get rid of
me? Just cut me off? You ain't seen
nothing yet, Colonel...

Frank slowly opens his robe as we--

FADE OUT.

END OF PILOT