

**BABYLON**

PILOT: BLESSINGS AND CURSES  
by  
Daniel Knauf

ACT 1

OVER BLACK

JULIA (V.O.)

In order to understand power, *true* power, one must first understand that every second of every day is a point of no return.

FADE IN:

INT. TUESDAY MORNING CLUB - SOLARIUM - DAY

A SLOW PUSH on FOUR WOMEN sitting perfectly still at a table. Stunningly beautiful, refined, charismatic, they gaze intently into their teacups.

JULIA (V.O.)

Time unfolds, unseen, a silent assassin, each event a thread in a tapestry. Power is knowing which thread leads to the desired outcome, and having the courage, skill and finesse to give that thread an ever... so... gentle...

JULIA CHANDLER - 30, honey-blond hair, a light spray of freckles across camera-perfect cheekbones, stares into her cup with intense, single-minded focus. A SLIGHT WINCE, as if jabbed by a needle.

JULIA (V.O.)

... *tug.*

INTERCUT WITH THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCES:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - GARDEN - DAY

*(NOTE: When indicated "REMOTE VIEWING EFX/POV," employ a distinctive digital filter, the effect of which mimics seeing the world through the BOTTOM OF A CLEAR DRINKING GLASS.)*

MOVING (REMOTE VIEWING EFX/POV) - FOLLOWING A BEE as it darts, hovers, darts, hovers in front of a sunflower blossom.

JULIA - narrows her eyes, WHISPERS:

JULIA

No. Not the flower... the *trowel.*

MOVING (REMOTE VIEWING EFX/POV) - THE BEE BACKS AWAY from the blossom, lands on THE HANDLE OF A TROWEL.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN - wearing a gardening hat, reaches for the trowel without looking, CRIES OUT when she is STUNG.

INT. SOCAL EDISON OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A RINGING PHONE. A MIDDLE AGED MAN answers it, listens.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

Dear Lord...

He hangs up and turns to his ASSISTANT as he grabs his coat and prepares for a quick exit.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

My wife's got stung. She's allergic to bees. Gotta meet her at the E.R. Get on the horn; call someone in to fill in for me.

(off ASSISTANT's reaction)

*Just do it! Now.*

And he's gone. The Assistant cracks his COMPANY DIRECTORY...

ASSISTANT'S POV (REMOTE VIEWING EFX) - one finger tracing down a list under the heading SHIFT SUPERVISORS.

CHLOE DEVEREAUX - Early 30s, an exquisite Creole beauty, leans forward, squeezes her eyes shut, exerting will; *tugging* with her mind as she MURMURS:

CHLOE

*Not Callahan. Lopez. Call Lopez...*

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

LOPEZ wipes sweat off his brow, looks up at his CREW, ONE MAN next to the truck, TWO MORE MEN up in a cherry-picker basket replacing a transformer. His CELL CHIRPS and he ANSWERS:

LOPEZ

Lopez...

He listens a moment, then disconnects. SHOUTS to his crew:

LOPEZ

*Wrap it up! We been called home!*

*Man says pronto!*

The Crew begins hurriedly packing their equipment as they lower the cherry-picker. The MEN hop out of the basket, climb into the rear of the truck-cab. The LINSEMAN turns, foot on the running-board, HESITATES when he sees...

LINEMAN'S POV (REMOTE VIEWING EFX) - His TOOL-BELT dangles from a hook in the bucket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VERONICA (NICA) PICO-MONTOYA - A stunning Latina, late-20s, narrows her almond eyes in laser-beam concentration, WHISPERS:

NICA  
*That's not going anywhere.*

THE LINEMAN dismisses his inclination to retrieve the belt:

LINEMAN  
*That's not going anywhere.*

He climbs into the truck. As they power onto the highway and SWEEP A HARD U-TURN...

THE TOOL BELT - swings wildly, A SCREWDRIVER TOSSED OUT. It tumbles through the air and bounces on the asphalt; comes to rest in a pothole, BLADE PROPPED AGAINST THE EDGE AT A 45-DEGREE ANGLE POINTING DOWN THE ROAD.

INT. MERCEDES SLS ROADSTER - DAY

Pushing 80 MPH down the DESERT HIGHWAY. A CELL CHIMES over the BLUE-TOOTH. CLAIRE UNDERWOOD, mid-30s, exquisitely beautiful, looks at the DASHBOARD SCREEN; the caller I.D. reads "JULIA." Her lips settle into a smug grin as she CONNECTS:

CLAIRE  
I can't imagine *why* you're calling me, Julia. Other than to thank me. You are, after all, still alive. And with four of us against you, that's quite an accomplishment!

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. TUESDAY MORNING CLUB - SOLARIUM - CONTINUOUS

Her iPhone set on "SPEAKER" so the others can be entertained as well.

JULIA  
*Against me? A quartet?*

Julia THROWS A SHARP, SUSPICIOUS GLANCE at Nica, who brusquely shakes her head, denying the allegation.

JULIA  
That's odd. Nica and Natasha are with us right now. We're having a *wonderful* time!

Claire's expression slides into one of dawning horror, then white-hot fury.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIRE  
You bitch! You're *lying!*

INT. F.M. RADIO STUDIO - DAY

Broadcasting LYNRYD SKYNYRD's "FREE BIRD." A creaky old hippy D.J. spins in his chair to select the next CARTRIDGE.

D.J.'s POV (REMOTE VIEWING EFX): He selects a cart marked TOM PETTY.

NATASHA BETTINGER - a lithe Eastern European redhead HISSES:

NATASHA  
Not Petty. The Eagles. *The Eagles!*

D.J.'s POV (REMOTE VIEWING EFX) - The D.J. hesitates, then sets aside TOM PETTY and withdraws THE EAGLES.

INT. SEMI-TRUCK CAB - DAY

A long-haired, tatted DRIVER barrels down the highway as the LAST CHORDS OF "FREE BIRD" FADE and a cheesy slide-guitar pulls the opening notes of "LYIN' EYES."

DRIVER  
Aww Hell, not the freakin' *EAGLES!*

His eyes leave the highway as he starts BLINDLY JABBING RADIO BUTTONS.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The driver's eighteen-wheeler DRIFTS OVER THE CENTER LINE.

INT./EXT. MERCEDES SLS ROADSTER - CONTINUOUS

Claire sees the ONCOMING SEMI. Swerves toward the shoulder and narrowly avoids a collision. She SHRIEKS TRIUMPHANTLY:

CLAIRE  
You bitch! Your half-assed tug  
*FAILED!* I'm gonna--

She's cut off when...

HER RIGHT FRONT TIRE - Is IMPALED by the ERRANT SCREWDRIVER.

Claire fights the wheel as her roadster FISHTAILS OFF THE HIGHWAY, SMASHES THROUGH A CHAIN LINK FENCE and HURTLES OVER AN EMBANKMENT INTO THE CALIFORNIA AQUEDUCT.

INT. TUESDAY MORNING CLUB - SOLARIUM - CONTINUOUS

The EXPLOSIVE SOUND OF A FATAL HIGH SPEED CRASH blasts over Julia's iPhone speaker. She calmly disconnects and gives the other three women a twinkling, wrinkle-nosed smile.

JULIA  
So, who wants warm blueberry  
scones?

TITLE SEQUENCE

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS - NIGHT

A SHITBOX SUBARU rolls through a tony neighborhood. Wide medians, palm trees, manicured lawns, spotlit mansions.

HAYDEN (PRE-LAP)  
Holy crap, can you imagine living  
in one of these places?

INT. SUBARU - NIGHT

HAYDEN MILLS, mid-20s, clean-cut good looks, former Army Ranger, eyeballs the homes lining the street. His wife, DOROTHY, early-20s, Nordic beauty, a sharp young attorney in the L.A. Public Defender's office, rides shotgun, focused on her SMART-PHONE'S G.P.S.

DOROTHY  
Turn left here.

HAYDEN  
Here?

DOROTHY  
Here.

Hayden PULLS A LEFT up a smaller, winding street. The homes are even more impressive, some with estate-sized lawns so broad the houses aren't even visible.

HAYDEN  
We should've rented a car.

DOROTHY  
Don't be stupid.

HAYDEN  
C'mon. We're gonna pull up in this  
heap and everybody's gonna think  
we're lost or something.

DOROTHY  
We're not lost. See?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With a bright cheesy grin, she holds up the G.P.S., pressing the SPEAKER BUTTON, a FEMALE VOICE ANNOUNCING:

G.P.S.  
You have arrived at your  
destination.

They pull through a LARGE GATED ENTRY into a enormous walled estate.

EXT. CHANDLER ESTATE - NIGHT

Double doors wide open, WARM LIGHTS inside, THUMPING POP spilling out as stylish GUESTS linger and talk and laugh-- *here we are, look at us, we're the cool kids!*

Hayden and Dorothy make their way up the front steps and inside...

INT. CHANDLER ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

AT THE DOOR, Hayden's hand is seized by ANDREW STEELE, a short 50-ish producer with a head of leonine salt-and-pepper hair and a bright-pink chemical peel.

STEELE  
Haydee, you rugged bastard, who is  
this *vision*?

HAYDEN  
Andrew, this is my wife, Dorothy.  
Dorothy--

Steele takes Dorothy's hand in both his paws, flashing a set of preternaturally whitened choppers.

STEELE  
--Andrew Steele!  
(to Hayden)  
Shame on you! Whyn'tchya tell me you  
were married to an angel! C'mon...

They follow him further inside.

TED AND JULIA CHANDLER - Julia greets Guests with her husband, media mogul TED CHANDLER, early-50s, mustache, trim, golf-tan--Rupert Murdoch meets Ted Turner.

STEELE  
Ted, Julia, this is the genius I  
was telling you about! Hayden  
Mills, Ted Chandler...

As Chandler pumps Hayden's hand...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PUSH IN ON JULIA - eyes locked on Dorothy's, captivated.

CHANDLER

My honor. How long've you been back  
in-country, Mills?

HAYDEN

I was discharged seven months ago.  
(introduces)  
My wife, Dorothy.

JULIA

Dorothy... I'm Julia. Julia  
Chandler. Welcome to our home.

She embraces Dorothy, who returns it, a little disconcerted.  
Julia takes both Dorothy's hands.

JULIA

You're absolutely *stunning*. What a  
beautiful dress! Chanel?

DOROTHY

No. Tarjé.

Julia wrinkles her brow, curious; she's never heard of a  
designer named Tarjé. Dorothy clarifies:

DOROTHY

Target. Thirty-nine-ninety-nine on  
sale.

Delighted, Julia LAUGHS, hooks her arm.

JULIA

Mrs. Mills, allow me to introduce  
*you to everyone who matters.*

DOROTHY

(playfully)  
After you, Mrs. Chandler.

SARAN WEISS-GANZ - approaches the bar. Early-30s, neo-hippy-  
gypsy, hasn't aged a day since she won her first Grammy for  
Best New Artist 2002.

SARAN

Skyy greyhound.

As the BARTENDER mixes her drink, Claire Underwood's lover,  
white hip-hop sensation TREVOR SLIMM, mid-20s, Abercrombie &  
Fitch pretty, sidles up. He sounds nervous.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TREVOR  
Is Claire here?

SARAN  
I haven't seen her.

TREVOR  
She was supposed to pick me up an hour ago. I came straight here thinking maybe she forgot.

SARAN  
Have you tried calling her?

TREVOR  
It goes straight to voice mail. There's something wrong, I *know* it.

SARAN  
You think she had an accident?

Trevor gives her an ACCUSING GLARE.

TREVOR  
I don't know. Did she?

They hold gazes a moment, then Trevor turns and moves off. Saran looks across the room.

HER POV - Julia introduces Dorothy to Chloe, Natasha and Nica (MOS); senses someone looking at her and TURNS TO CAMERA, giving us a slight nod, a smug, knowing grin on her face.

SARAN - suddenly looks like she swallowed a bag of concrete.

EXT. TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Ted Chandler leads Hayden and Steel over to a table. A group of men sit smoking COHIBAS: ANTHONY MONTOYA, late-30s, Prosecutor on a fast track to Mayor; YUL DEVEREAUX, fashion designer, mid-40s, trim and sleek as a Mako shark; BARRY GANTZ, early-50s, deep tan contrasting with silver hair and beard; GREGORIO DE MARCO, late 20s, yoked and superstar-handsome, long raven hair pulled back in a ponytail.

CHANDLER  
Fashion designer Yul Deveraux. Our esteemed District Attorney, Anthony Montoya. Music producer and living legend, Barry Gantz; and of course, I'm sure you recognize Gregorio de Marco. Gentlemen, Hayden Mills.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gregorio immediately alerts on Hayden's name, leans forward, impressed; inquires with a SOFT SPANISH ACCENT:

GREGORIO  
Sergeant Hayden Mills?

HAYDEN  
(grins, nods)  
I'm a big fan--

GREGORIO  
--no. I will not hear this! It is *I*  
who is a fan of *yours!*  
(to the others)  
Gentlemen, do you know who this man  
is? He is the creator of "99 Nights."

YUL  
The documentary?

GREGORIO  
*Philistine!* To call a work of art  
such as his a "documentary" is to  
call this...  
(raises his cigar, sneers)  
... a "smoke."

He pulls out a chair and gestures to Hayden.

GREGORIO  
Come, sit, sit, sit. We have much  
to talk about!

INT. CHANDLER ESTATE - POOL AREA - CONTINUOUS

LINDY TILTON, early-20s, this season's celeb-tard-train-wreck-  
*du-jour*, whispers something to the D.J. stationed by the  
pool. He begins spinning Jacki-O's "PUSSY" and Lindy, eyes  
closed, sways sensuously to the music, a drink in one hand.

SELA DEGAS-DE MARCO - Gregorio's stunning young wife; artist,  
and cultural provocateur, her jet-black hair asymmetrically  
bobbed, sits with Chloe's niece, JACQUI FONTENOT and SEVERAL  
OTHER YOUNG BEAUTIES in their early-20s, all of whom watch  
Lindy make a spectacle of herself.

SELA  
At least we won't be putting up  
with *that* much longer.

JACQUI  
Poor thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SELA

Please. Without Claire, she'll be turning tricks behind Pinks in a week.

JACQUI

Claire dropped her as a *protégé*?!

Sela's lips bend in a cruel smile. SNIFFS:

SELA

Ooh no! Little Lindy didn't just lose her *scholarship*. Her whole damn *college* burned down.

DOROTHY, JULIA AND CHLOE - Wine glasses in hand, the three walk down the steps from the terrace toward the pool.

DOROTHY

The Tuesday Morning Club?

CHLOE

I know. It sounds like a bunch of crones getting together for totties and bridge--

JULIA

--but it's not--

CHLOE

--not even close. Membership's by invitation only. Two-hundred women.

JULIA

(affects a snooty voice)  
Culled from only the most *reputable* families--

CHLOE

(affects street-jive)  
--*snap!* There be streets downtown named after *half* these bitches!

Julia and Chloe LAUGH, but Dorothy's attention has been captured by something O.S.

HER POV - ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE POOL, Lindy dances, the center of attention and clearly drunk, caressing men, attempting to grind on a few.

DOROTHY

Is that...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JULIA  
 (long suffering)  
 Yes, I'm afraid it is.

LINDY - getting wild, more lascivious, SPINS herself dizzy, STUMBLES and FALLS, landing heavily in an older man's lap, everyone REACTING, "WHOA!"

With a curt nod from Chloe, the D.J. TURNS OFF the JACKI-O, segues to something a bit less strip-clubby. Dorothy and Julia help a GIGGLING Lindy to her feet.

JULIA  
 C'mon, sweetheart. I think it's time to lie down.

LINDY  
 I'm fine... where's Claire? *I want Claire.*

JULIA  
 She's upstairs, baby, c'mon...

Propping her up, Julia and Dorothy lead her toward the house. Lindy gives Dorothy a drunken squint.

LINDY  
 Who're you?

INT. CHANDLER ESTATE - GUEST BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dorothy and Julia guide Lindy to the bed, help her lie down, where she almost instantly passes out. Julia pulls off Lindy's shoes.

JULIA  
 Poor thing. What a mess...

DOROTHY  
 Who's Claire?

JULIA  
 Who? Oh...! God knows. Probably one of her dealers.  
 (looks down at Lindy)  
 So sad. They come here and make every single one of their dreams come true and it's still never enough.  
 (sighs, shakes her head)  
 Well, better safe here than some dive down on Sunset.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dorothy can't take her eyes off the celebrity sprawled on the bed. *Is this some kind of weird dream?*

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. CHANDLER ESTATE - HOURS LATER

The last few Guests exit the house, an ARMY OF VALETS efficiently reuniting them with their LUXURY CARS and SPORTS COUPES. Ted and Julia say good night to Hayden and Dorothy.

JULIA

(to Dorothy)

Don't forget. Thursday at four o'clock. I'll text you the address.

DOROTHY

I won't. I promise.

They move toward the Valet. Hayden hands off his claim-stub.

HAYDEN

What's that all about?

DOROTHY

High tea with Mrs. Chandler.

HAYDEN

Impressive. Of course, you're probably not much interested in who I was hanging with the whole time.

DOROTHY

Who?

HAYDEN

Gregorio de Marco.

DOROTHY

Gregor--*get out!*

HAYDEN

I swear! Like *two hours* smoking *Cubanos* and deconstructing...  
(a sexy SPANISH ACCENT)  
... the emotional reality of combat.

DOROTHY

Unreal.

HAYDEN

Tell me about it.

INT. CHANDLER ESTATE - MOMENTS LATER

After saying goodbye to the last of the stragglers, Ted closes and bolts the front door, follows Julia into the GREAT ROOM where FIVE COUPLES still linger: Chloe and Devereaux; Nica and Montoya, Saran and Gantz; and Natasha and her husband, renowned defense attorney, J. HOLLIS BETTINGER.

JULIA

That went well. Shall we...?

EXT. CHANDLER ESTATE - POOL AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Now wearing WHITE SILK, FULL LENGTH HOODED SPA-ROBES, all FIVE remaining COUPLES (absent BARRY and MONTOYA) position themselves equidistantly around the LIT POOL.

At the head of the pool, standing next to the DIVING BOARD. Julia reaches back and PULLS UP HER HOOD. The others FOLLOW SUIT, the group taking on the aspect of a Druid Circle.

JULIA

Hail *Moir*a, we gather to celebrate  
this most bountiful *Litha*. Praise  
be to thy munificence, our holy  
mothers...

She nods toward someone O.S. On cue, Gantz and Montoya step from the darkness, supporting a barely conscious Lindy Tilton, NAKED BUT FOR A SHEER SILK KIMONO. They guide her to the head of the pool, lay her down on the diving board.

JULIA

Oh *Clotho* the Spinner; *Lachesis*,  
Drawer of Lots; *Atropos* the  
Inevitable, we offer up this gift  
to replenish thee!

With that, she raises a CEREMONIAL DAGGER and PLUNGES THE BLADE INTO LINDY'S HEART. The starlet's eyes fly open wide. She arches her back in a shivering rictus then collapses, exhaling a prolonged, hideous DEATH RATTLE. Her BLOOD stains the kimono, pours into the clear water and BLOSSOMS INTO CRIMSON CLOUDS.

As one, all the celebrants but Julia SHRUG OFF THEIR ROBES, letting them fall to the deck. NAKED, THEY STEP INTO THE BLOOD-TINGED WATER and immediately fly into a FEROCIOUS ORGY.

JULIA - gazes down at the naked, writhing degenerates in the pool, her lips slowly tracing a sated grin. After a beat, SHE SLIPS OUT OF HER OWN ROBE AND JOINS THE DEBAUCHERY.

END ACT 1

ACT 2

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A POLISHED MAHOGANY CASKET is SLOWLY LOWERED into an open grave as an insipidly upbeat FEMALE EPISCOPALIAN MINISTER invokes Lamentations 3:17 - 26 as if it's a really yummy recipe for red-velvet cake-pops.

MINISTER

I have been deprived of peace; I  
have forgotten what prosperity is.  
So I say, "My splendor is gone and  
all that I had hoped from the  
Lord..."

TREVOR SLIMM - dressed in a stylishly cut black suit, head bowed, a WOEFUL GROAN escaping his lips as his legs wobble. Barry Gantz and Anthony Montoya flank him, supporting him should he collapse in grief.

As the Minister CONTINUES HER READING, Ted Chandler, Yul Devereaux and Hollis Bettinger MURMUR IN LOW VOICES:

HOLLIS

Look at him. Poor bastard.

YUL

Won't last another year.

HOLLIS

Two months if the lawsuit goes  
south. And it *will* go south without  
Claire around to see it doesn't.

CHANDLER

Screw him.

Yul and Hollis look at him, surprised at his callousness.

CHANDLER

His bitch tried to take out Julia.  
She got what she deserved. Better  
him than us.

SARAN'S POV - Julia stands grave-side with Chloe and Nica, her smug smile not quite obscured by a lace veil as she watches the COFFIN SINK INTO THE GROUND.

SARAN (O.S.)

(whispers)

What were you thinking? We finally  
had a chance to put that bitch  
down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAN AND NATASHA stand together in the knot of Mourners.

NATASHA

It was the smart play. I knew Nica would betray us.

SARAN

So you leave me twisting in the wind. Nice.

NATASHA

You would have done the same to me. Besides, you don't have anything to worry about. They can't move against you without my cooperation.

SARAN

So now my life is in your hands.

NATASHA

It appears so. At least for now, until we choose a new Governess. But you must know that was not my intent.

(regards her fondly)

I love you, Saran. You know that.

Saran looks away. No, she doesn't know that. A LOUD SOB. The two women glance at Trevor weeping inconsolably.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

The funeral concluded, the mourners move toward their vehicles. Saran and Barry approach a waiting LIMO.

TREVOR

*Saran...*

They turn, Trevor catching up to Saran, taking her hand.

TREVOR

Would you mind if I rode with you?  
(miserable, broken)  
I... I really don't think I can handle being alone right now.

Saran gives Barry a subtle nod.

BARRY

Sure, Trevor. No problem.

The BEEFY DRIVER holds open the rear door. Barry stands by and watches Saran climb in the limo followed by Trevor.

INT. LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

Seated next to Saran in the back, Trevor has dropped the bereaved lover act.

TREVOR

What a ginch. How could Claire be that stupid! That *selfish!* To go up against *Julia?*

SARAN

She had a quartet.

TREVOR

Oh, sure. Like you can bank on Nica! And that viper Natasha...?

He SNORTS, shakes his head, frustrated, gazing out the window for a moment to cool down.

TREVOR

At least this doesn't affect you and me, right?

Saran doesn't respond. He turns to her, sliding his hand down her inner thigh.

TREVOR

We're still good, huh?

He begins kissing her neck and ear, his hand gliding up the hem of her black dress.

TREVOR

Nothing has to change.

Saran relaxes, closing her eyes, lips parted, passively allowing him to fondle her. After a LONG BEAT, she PURRS:

SARAN

Oh Trevor. You really are such a beautiful idiot...

She grips his wrist; PUSHES HIS HAND OFF HER THIGH. Stung, Trevor turns to SOMEONE O.S. IN THE PASSENGER COMPARTMENT.

TREVOR

C'mon, Barry. Talk to her! Gimme a freaking break!

REVEAL - Barry is seated ACROSS FROM THEM, absently gazing out the window. He turns and looks at Trevor, SMIRKS:

BARRY

Sure, kid. An arm or a leg?

EXT. FOREST LAWN DRIVE - LONG (MOS) - CONTINUOUS

The limo SWINGS HARD OVER TO A STOP on the dirt shoulder. The Driver gets out, HAULS TREVOR FROM THE BACK SEAT and dumps him unceremoniously on the ground, gets back in the car. Rear wheels kick up dust and gravel as they POWER AWAY.

TREVOR - picks himself up, suit and pomaded hair POWDERED WITH DUST. Now *truly* bereft, he watches, helpless, as the limo disappears around the bend.

EXT. L.A. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

LOUD BUZZERS, the CLANGS of steel doors sliding open and shut, the constant ECHOING MURMUR of incarcerated men.

ANTOINE (PRE-LAP)  
Maybe we should take the deal.

INT. L.A. COUNTY JAIL - CONSULTATION ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Dorothy sits across a table from her client, ANTOINE DRAKE, mid-30s, black, a hulking 6'4". Papers and depositions are laid on the table by her open briefcase.

DOROTHY  
I don't want to do that. They've got no physical evidence; no murder weapon. If it wasn't for this one witness, there'd be no case--

ANTOINE  
Yeah, and if I had a cape I'd be Superman.

DOROTHY  
They're offering twenty years. That's crap.

ANTOINE  
Just a dime with good behavior. I can do that standing on my head.

DOROTHY  
You're innocent.

He averts his eyes. She takes his hands in hers, forces him to meet her gaze.

DOROTHY  
Right?

A LONG BEAT, then he nods..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOROTHY

So give me something I can work with. Where were you that night?

ANTOINE

I told you, I was home alone--

DOROTHY

(cuts him off)

--I need the truth.

He opens his mouth to object, but one look at the intense confidence in her eyes dissuades him. He sags, SIGHS.

ANTOINE

No, I was not at home and I was not alone. But you'll never find who I was with, not in a million years. All it's gonna do is make me look like a rat. And that is not a good thing for me. Not on the inside.

DOROTHY

Fine. I get it. You were breaking the law. But I also know whatever you were doing, it wasn't as bad as capping a twenty year-old pre-med student for thirty-eight dollars and change. Now *talk* to me...

(leans in)

Where. Were. You?

EXT. OMEGA NEWSCORP - DAY

A Century City high-rise, its crown emblazoned with the NEWSCORP LOGO.

STEELE

The thing's a shoo-in for an Oscar.

INT. OMEGA NEWSCORP - CHANDLER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Floor-to-ceiling glass and wall-to-wall swank, decorated in low-slung Danish Moderne and Eames originals. Seated in a chair, feet on his coffee table, Chandler squeezes a HAND STRENGTH BALL. Hayden and Steele sit on the sofa.

CHANDLER

Awards are nice, yeah, but at the end of the day, they don't pay the bills.

STEELE

It's a great story--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHANDLER

--set in Afghanistan, and so far that's been box-office poison. People are fed up. They don't want to see war-pictures.

HAYDEN

That's crap.

Chandler blinks, surprised. Steele is horrified. Undaunted, Hayden continues.

HAYDEN

What people are sick of watching are movies that make American soldiers look like a bunch of trigger-happy half-wits and goons. I was there. Three tours. I never met *anybody* like that.

STEELE

Hayden--

Chandler holds up a hand; he wants to hear this. Hayden CONTINUES:

HAYDEN

Yeah, I met a few jerks. But most everybody I served with were good guys. Seems to me this is *just* the kind of movie people need to see right now. THE WAITING GAME is about who we *are*. Who we've *always* been. The good guys.

A U.S.B. HIGH-DEF COMPUTER CAM - wired to a laptop rests on the edge of the desk, trained on the meeting area. A RED L.E.D. Imbedded above the lens BURNS RED.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BEVERLY HILLS DAY-SPA/SALON - CONTINUOUS

TIGHT ON - AN IPHONE SCREEN, the interior of Chandler's office, the tableau being LIVE-STREAMED as it CONTINUES.

STEELE

Kid's got a point.

CHANDLER

Yeah. Where the Hell's John Wayne when you need him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Chandler stands, tosses the ball to Hayden and steps over to the window; gazes out at the Los Angeles skyline.

CHANDLER

There's only one actor in town with the stature to carry this thing, and that's Gregorio. You get him to play Vickers, I'll give it a go.

STEELE

Come on, Ted. There's gotta be half-a-dozen other guys. What about Leo--

CHANDLER

--forget it. Lock up de Marco in the lead or the deal's D.O.A.

The meeting is over and everyone knows it. Steele SIGHS, stands.

STEELE

All right, then. We'll be in touch.

Steel and Hayden exit. As soon as the door shuts, Chandler steps over to the U.S.B. CAM on his desk, leans close, FACE DISTORTED BY THE WIDE-ANGLE LENS, and INQUIRES OBSEQUIOUSLY:

CHANDLER

Good...?

REVEAL - Julia reclining in a spa-robe and towel head-wrap as she receives a mani-pedi.

JULIA

Perfect.

EXT. JAMIE SIMONE'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

A Mid-Century architectural gem up in the hills with a commanding view of West Hollywood and beyond. TWO SLEEK YOUNG MEN cavort in the pool.

JAMIE SIMONE, mid-30s, a stunning PRE-OP TRANSSEXUAL, is in the middle of what she calls "multitasking," doting on her HAIRLESS CHIHUAHUA, VALENTINO as she conducts business on her cellphone and manages her portfolio on an iPad.

JAMIE

Of course, Charlie, I love you too, but the fact is you're getting a reputation...

A FILIPINO HOUSEBOY brings her a BUSINESS CARD. She glances at it and, curious, dons a kimono and follows him inside.

INT. JAMIE SIMONE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Open floor-plan, original art, Italian furniture, gleaming white marble floors and thick shag carpets. Jamie CONTINUES ON HER CELL:

JAMIE

Oh puh-lease, you know *exactly* what I'm talking about. That whole glass-bottom boat thing. That's just plain old *freaky*...

She finds Dorothy waiting in the entry hall.

JAMIE

Gotta go, there's someone here...  
(listens)  
Don't have a conniption. It's just going to cost a little more is all.  
Ciao.

She purses her collagened lips and makes a KISSING NOISE; disconnects and regards Dorothy.

JAMIE

I'm Jamie. What can I do for you?

DOROTHY

I represent one of your employees in a criminal case.

JAMIE

Don't be silly, darling. I don't have any employees. I'm a day-trader.

DOROTHY

His name's Antoine Drake.

JAMIE

Doesn't ring a bell, sorry.

DOROTHY

You employ him as muscle to escort your outcalls. On September third, you sent him out to Pacific Palisades with a girl who calls herself Jasmine. I need her real name and her contact information.

JAMIE

I have no idea what you are talking about.

(calls to Houseboy)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Riki...! Could you please show this young woman out?

The Houseboy approaches. Dorothy turns on him and holds up a warning finger.

DOROTHY

Put a hand on me, and I will break it off.

The Houseboy freezes. Dorothy turns to Jamie.

DOROTHY

I am not interested in you or your little operation. I have only one interest, and that is clearing a client who is facing a charge of first-degree murder with special circumstances. Now you can give me the information I need, or I can call my friends in the D.A.s office, and I assure you, they will make your life very, very complicated.

Jamie wrinkles her nose; how cute! This pretty little twink thinks she can strong-arm her.

JAMIE

Well that's all very impressive...  
(checks Dorothy's card)  
... Dorothy. But *I* have friends downtown who sign *your* friends paychecks, and I suggest you run along or I will file a harassment complaint.

The two stand off A BEAT, eyes locked. Furious, Dorothy turns and walks out.

EXT. CHANDLER ESTATE - NIGHT

Establish. The mansion illuminated by LANDSCAPE FLOODS.

INT. CHANDLER ESTATE - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

LOOKING DOWN on a ROUND BED, naked female flesh wrapped in twisted Egyptian cotton sheets. Gregorio's wife, Sela Degas-de Marco, the stunning, snarky artist seen poolside at the party, lies on her back, Julia tenderly kissing her neck, nibbling her earlobe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JULIA

What's the matter, Sela? You seem tense.

SELA

(hesitates, then)

Why *Jacqui*?

JULIA

You know my hands are tied, darling. The last time there was an opening on the board, I elevated Nika. I can't play favorites twice in a row. Besides, *Jacqui* is Chloe's niece, and you know how fond she is of her.

Sela pouts; Julia strokes an strand of hair from her cheek.

JULIA

Your time will come soon. And once you're a Governess, we'll have a permanent quartet--you and me; Chloe and *Jacqui*. No one'll be able to touch us.

Sela's eyes fill with rapture. Julia seals the promise with a passionate kiss. A STEADY RISE toward the CANOPY where, behind TWO WAY MIRRORED GLASS, an L.E.D. BLINKS ON A VIDEO CAMERA.

INT. CHANDLER ESTATE - SAFE-ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A WALL OF LARGE FLAT-SCREEN MONITORS displays LIVE FEEDS of Julia and Sela making love from MULTIPLE ANGLES.

TED CHANDLER - seated in a FULL RESTRAINT CHAIR before the monitors, mouth sealed with a BALL-GAG, WRISTS AND ANKLES STRAPPED TIGHTLY, naked save for a SATIN ROBE, watches the two women make love.

A RIDING CROP - glides down inside Chandler's robe, brushing his chest, its owner DIPPING INTO FRAME FROM THE SHADOWS to bite his earlobe, give it a painful stretch: CHLOE, dressed in a BUSTIER, GARTER-BELT AND SILK STOCKINGS. Chandler GROANS IN LUST. Aroused, both steal glances at the live feed as she straddles him.

END ACT 2

ACT 3

EXT. TUESDAY MORNING CLUB - DAY

A large, two-storey Greene & Greene Craftsman-style mansion in the heart of Hancock Park.

JULIA (PRE-LAP)  
The Tuesday Morning Club is the oldest, most exclusive private women's club in the United States...

INT. TUESDAY MORNING CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Julia, Chloe and Dorothy descend a staircase lined with FRAMED, BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOS of bygone functions and happy groups of women, pausing before an OIL PORTRAIT of an ethereally beautiful woman in period dress that might have been painted by Monet.

JULIA  
We were founded in 1913 by suffragette Caroline Morgan and dedicated to the--

Dorothy READS ALOUD from a SMALL PLAQUE affixed to the frame of the portrait.

DOROTHY  
--"arts, culture and betterment of society."

Pleased, Julia gives her a gracious nod, trades a knowing glance with Chloe.

INT. TUESDAY MORNING CLUB - SOLARIUM - LATER

Find Julia, Chloe and Dorothy seated at a table taking HIGH TEA, including CUCUMBER FINGER-SANDWICHES AND FRESH SCONES.

CHLOE  
We mainly serve the community through fund-raisers and private parties hosted by the club's Board of Governesses.

JULIA  
There's six of us--

CHLOE  
--well, five at the moment. We're shy one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JULIA

Our roster includes accomplished women from all walks of life; surgeons, journalists, lawyers, architects...

(nods toward Dorothy)

... attorneys.

Dorothy smiles, feeling a little awkward; the idea of joining a "ladies club" is as foreign to her as joining the Klan.

DOROTHY

It's like... stepping into another time.

CHLOE

I know. It does feel like a bit of an anachronism. But there's a huge difference between being obsolete and being timeless.

JULIA

Really, once you get past the traditions and the titles, T.M.C. boils down to a fellowship of very bright, very beautiful women who make things happen in this city.

CHLOE

Almost everything.

JULIA

We always have. We always will.

DOROTHY

(dubious)

Everything...

CHLOE

You'd be surprised at how resourceful we can be. It's just a matter of finding the right thread...

DOROTHY

... and giving it a nice, firm tug.

Julia and Chloe share another knowing look over the rims of their teacups.

DOROTHY

I only wish it was that simple...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A concerned expression on her face, Julia sets down her cup and covers Dorothy's hand with her own.

JULIA

What? Perhaps we can help.

DOROTHY

I doubt it.

She hesitates. The other two wait patiently, politely inquisitive expressions on their faces. Dorothy CONTINUES:

DOROTHY

I don't suppose either one of you is acquainted with a transsexual Hollywood madame by the name of Jamie Simone...

Julia and Chloe give her wide-eyed, scandalized innocence.

JULIA

Good *God*, no.

CHLOE

But you *must* tell us *all* about her.

INT. BLUE DIAMOND RECORDS - BOARDROOM - DAY

Sleek, elliptoid mahogany table and matching paneling, subtle indirect lighting. Unshaven, disheveled, Trevor Slimm sits with his LAWYERS and the CORPORATE LEGAL ADVISORS. One READS FROM A DECREE:

LEGAL ADVISOR

Whereas it has been alleged by the John Lee Hooker Estate that the defendant's number one single, "*Bang Bang Bang*" is a note-for-note rip-off of the plaintiffs classic hit, "*Boom Boom Boom*"...

TREVOR

Why are we going over all this crap? I already know this.

Trevor's lead counsel, JOSH STEIN, holds up a hand to silence him. The corporate flack CONTINUES:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEGAL ADVISOR

... the Court hereby grants the plaintiffs request that the defendants cease and desist all future distribution and sales of the aforementioned intellectual property pending trial.

TREVOR

What's that mean?  
(to Stein)  
What does that mean?

STEIN

It means they have to pull your single out of distribution.

TREVOR

You said that would never happen!

STEIN

We said it was extremely unlikely.

TREVOR

Oh. Great. Extremely unlikely. So what happens if they win?

LEGAL ADVISOR

It's not your problem.

STEIN

Per your contract, the company will indemnify you against any judgments or settlements.  
(squeezes his shoulder)  
It's all gonna be good.

Trevor gives him a dubious sidelong look.

TREVOR

Really. You think so.

Trevor shakes his head. *I am so screwed.*

EXT. TUESDAY MORNING CLUB - EVENING

Julia walks Dorothy out to her Subaru.

DOROTHY

Thanks so much. That was fun.

JULIA

It was our pleasure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dorothy nods, keys open her door.

JULIA  
You mind if I ask you something?

DOROTHY  
Depends on what it is.

JULIA  
You're obviously a very bright, charismatic woman. What would ever possess you to take a job with the Public Defender's office rather than one of the big firms downtown.

DOROTHY  
I got a few offers, but I always wanted to help people who, you know... maybe don't have so much money.

JULIA  
Like your client, Mr. Drake.

Dorothy nods.

JULIA  
That's very admirable. But you know there's another way to do that. Do you remember Natasha? I introduced you to her at the party.

DOROTHY  
The redhead?

JULIA  
(nods)  
Her husband is Hollis Bettinger. Perhaps you've heard of him.

DOROTHY  
Who hasn't?

Julia pulls a BUSINESS CARD from her iPhone case, hands it to Dorothy, who looks at it.

JULIA  
Besides his high-profile clientele, his firm does a *lot* of *pro bono* work for people in need.

DOROTHY  
Really?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JULIA

It's his passion. He doesn't talk about it, but it's a big part of his practice. You really ought to give him a call. I bet you'd fit right in.

DOROTHY

(offers the card back)  
I really couldn't. I just started my job three weeks ago and--

Julia holds up a hand.

JULIA

--no. Just keep it. For a rainy day.

Dorothy smiles, gets in her car and STARTS THE ENGINE. Julia leans in toward the window.

JULIA

Remember. We make things happen.

Dorothy nods farewell and backs out. Julia watches her go.

INT. SUBARU - CONTINUOUS

As Dorothy drives down the street, she looks at the BUSINESS CARD: J. HOLLIS BETTINGER engraved in GOLD LEAF. After a moment, she tosses it out the window.

THE CARD - flutters, unseen, BACK THROUGH THE REAR WINDOW and comes to rest on the back seat.

EXT. JAMIE SIMONE'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Jamie enjoys some quiet me-time in her BUBBLING JACUZZI, sipping WHITE WINE from a Waterford crystal glass between LINES OF BLOW.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. JAMIE SIMONE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A black TESLA MODEL S glides silently to a stop at the curb. By the dashboard light, Chloe dips her head in rhythm to the TECHNO-AFRICAN BEAT OF D'BANJ over the custom sound system, falls into a SEMI-TRANCE.

MOVING (REMOTE VIEWING EFX/POV) - as we follow Jamie's Chihuahua, Valentino, across the deck toward his mistress. He sniffs the rim of her wineglass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

                  CHLOE  
                  (whispers)  
                  Drink...

Valentino upsets the glass; it FALLS INTO THE jACUZZI.

                  JAMIE  
                  *Damnit...*

She ducks down under the water.

UNDERWATER - As Jamie gropes reaches for her glass, HER LONG HAIR IS SUCKED INTO THE WATER-JET INTAKE. BUBBLES SURGE from her mouth as she SCREAMS. She begins losing consciousness, her struggles weakening...

CHLOE - SHUTS OFF THE JETS, steps over to the Jacuzzi and hauls Jamie to the surface. An expression of mild distaste on her face, she waits patiently as Jamie GAGS UP WATER.

Jamie looks up, eyes filling with terror as she GASPS:

                  JAMIE  
                  *You! Wha-what do you want?*

SLAM TO:

INT. MILLS APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dorothy and Hayden sleep soundly. The TELEPHONE SHRILLS. Hayden answers, dazed. He shakes Dorothy awake.

                  HAYDEN  
                  S'for you.

                  DOROTHY  
                  Whoizzit?

                  HAYDEN  
                  I dunno... some dude.

She takes the receiver.

                  DOROTHY  
                  Yeah, who is this?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JAMIE SIMONE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Wrapped in a blanket, Jaime's a wet, miserable rat, eye-make-up smeared, hair plastered to her head. She's traded the smoky chanteuse voice for a STREETWISE BARITONE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAMIE

The woman you're looking for in the  
Drake case is Jessica Vogel.

(spells it)

V-O-G-E-L...

Dorothy switches on her bedside lamp, searches for something  
to write on, begins taking notes.

JAMIE

... she lives at 19225 Parthenia  
Drive in Reseda. You can reach her  
at eight-one-eight...

DOROTHY - writes down the telephone number.

JAMIE

I hope that'd it. Cuz that's all I  
got. Don't ever come around here  
again, you hear?

(blurts)

*Whyn't you tell me you was in with  
those bitches?!*

Jamie SLAMS OFF. Perplexed, Dorothy looks at the dead  
receiver.

END ACT 3

ACT 4

INT. TUESDAY MORNING CLUB - DAY

A SPECIAL MEETING of the FULL MEMBERSHIP; YOUNG, SMARTLY ATTIRED WOMEN in their early-20s ranging up to mid-30s, all of them poised and strikingly beautiful, greet one another with SQUEALS OF DELIGHT, hugs and air-kisses. SERVERS carry trays of CHAMPAGNE, MIMOSAS and delicate PASTRIES.

The five GOVERNESSES are seated behind a LONG TABLE. Behind them on an easel, a FRAMED PORTRAIT OF CLAIRE UNDERWOOD surrounded by GARLANDS OF SPRING FLOWERS. Chloe nods to Julia; it's time. Julia takes the podium.

JULIA  
Ladies... ladies...?

She RAPS the podium with her knuckles. The room FALLS SILENT, all eyes on her.

JULIA  
As you're all aware, one week ago,  
our sister and Governess Claire  
Underwood passed unexpectedly.

A somber mood among the women.

JULIA  
Nevertheless, this community--this  
*sisterhood*--must continue. And the  
time has come to choose one from  
among you to take her seat on the  
Board.

Dressed in matching DESIGNER SUITS, the FIVE PROTÉGÉS file in and stand before the Governesses. As MEMBERS APPLAUD, Chloe trades a silent, encouraging acknowledgement with her niece, Jacqui Fontenot.

JULIA  
As Head Governess, the burden of  
that choice falls to me. On this  
occasion, it has never been more  
difficult. All the candidates are  
beautiful, intelligent and  
extraordinarily accomplished women.  
I would be thrilled to elevate all  
of them. But I must choose one...

Chloe glows with pride, brushes a tear from her eye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JULIA

Ladies, it is my honor to introduce to you the newest Governess of the Tuesday Morning Club, *Sela Degas-de Marco!*

A moment of STUNNED SILENCE. No one, however, is more surprised than Sela, who cuts a SHORT SQUEAL OF GLEE. Members break into APPLAUSE as she gives her fellow *Protégés* conciliatory hugs. The Governesses REACTIONS ARE TELLING:

CHLOE - furious at Julia's betrayal.

NATASHA AND SARAN - staring at one another, mouths open, brows raised in delighted surprise. *WTF?!*

NICA - Clueless as usual, smiling and APPLAUDING Sela's good fortune.

As the other Members mob Sela to offer congratulations, Julia turns to Chloe who glares back, eyes blazing at the inexplicable betrayal. Julia jerks her head, silently urging Chloe to join her in the adjacent LIBRARY. Chloe FOLLOWS.

NATASHA

(to Saran)

Things are about to get very interesting...

Saran flashes a wicked grin. *Oh yeah.*

INT. TUESDAY MORNING CLUB - LIBRARY

Chloe BOLTS the door behind her, turns on Julia, who stands at a tea-cart pouring two Sapphire Bombays on the rocks.

CHLOE

*What the Hell was that?*

JULIA

I had no choice. Sit.

CHLOE

What do you mean you had no choice?!

JULIA

*Sit.*

Chloe takes a seat on the sofa. Julia places a drink before her on the coffee table. Chloe makes no move to pick it up.

JULIA

I can't rely on Nica.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHLOE

She was your *Protégé!*

JULIA

You heard Claire. She managed to cobble together a quartet and Nica was part of it.

CHLOE

She could have been lying.

JULIA

If she was, she never would have moved against me in the first place.

Chloe considers it.

CHLOE

I don't see it. Nica's the weakest of us. She has no ambition to lead.

JULIA

That's the problem; she's *too* weak. I chose her because I knew I could control her. It never occurred to me that others could, too. I need someone who's strong *and* loyal.

CHLOE

Jacqui's loyal--

JULIA

--to you. She's *your* niece. She's *your Protégé*, not mine.

CHLOE

We would *never* turn on you!

Julia maintains a level gaze. Waits for Chloe to hear the hollowness of her own words--unconditional loyalty is a check no Governess will ever cash. Chloe drops her eyes, SIGHS:

CHLOE

You're right. I would have done the same thing if I was you. But you could've given me a heads up.

JULIA

Would that have made it any better?

The answer is evident in Chloe's downcast expression. Julia crosses, sits next to her on the sofa and takes her hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JULIA

I promise, Jacqui will be the next  
*Protégé* we elevate to the board.

Julia places her finger under Chloe's chin, tilts her head up until their eyes meet.

JULIA

... and I promise it will be  
soon... very soon.

EXT. VOGEL HOUSE - DAY

A dilapidated bungalow in a lousy neighborhood. KID'S TOYS--  
TRIKES, and a BROKEN WADING POOL clutter the front yard.  
Dorothy RINGS THE DOORBELL. The door opens a crack, secured  
by a chain. A pale brunette JESSICA "JASMINE" VOGEL, late-  
20s, peers out.

DOROTHY

Jessica Vogel...?

JESSICA

Yeah.

DOROTHY

(slips her a card)  
I'm Dorothy Mills from the Los  
Angeles Public Defender's office. I  
represent Antoine Drake.

Jessica starts to close the door. Dorothy places her palm  
against it.

DOROTHY

You are Jessica.

Jessica looks down, nods with a RESIGNED SIGH.

JESSICA

I knew somebody would come  
eventually.

INT. VOGEL HOUSE - LATER

A 9-year old BOY plays a VIDEO GAME in the next room as a  
TODDLER in a play-pen looks on. Dorothy captures Jessica's  
statement on a DIGITAL RECORDER.

DOROTHY

What time was it when you concluded  
your business in Pacific Palisades?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JESSICA

About one in the morning. Maybe a little after.

DOROTHY

And Mr. Drake was present the entire time?

JESSICA

Yeah.

DOROTHY

Is that normal?

JESSICA

For one-on-one, no. But this was a party. Antoine sticks around to make sure things don't, you know...

DOROTHY

Get out of hand?

JESSICA

Yeah.

DOROTHY

So there were others present who could identify him.

Jessica's eyes widen in alarm.

JESSICA

I'm not going there. These people are public figures.

DOROTHY

I understand. Would you at least be willing to testify to all this in court?

Jessica hesitates, stressed, conflicted. Dorothy waits.

JESSICA

I'm not stupid. I got a degree in graphic design. I *used* to have a husband. Mortgage. Things didn't work out. Now it's just me and the boys and...

(forces a smile)

All this is just temporary, you know. Until I can get something decent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Dorothy nods. Staring a hole in the braided rug, Jessica wrings her hands. Thinks about it. She looks up at her sons in the adjoining room.

JESSICA

Are there gonna be cameras in there?

DOROTHY

No. It's not that kind of a case. And I can get the judge to bar photography while you're on the stand.

Jessica draws a deep breath, exhales. A BEAT, then:

JESSICA

Okay then.

INT. MILLS APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

At his laptop, Hayden works on script revisions. The TELEPHONE RINGS.

HAYDEN

Yeah.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. STEELE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Typical mid-level player's office--signed movie posters on the walls, an informal conference area. Steele sits at his cluttered desk speaking through a HEAD-SET as he scrolls through email on an Apple.

STEELE

Bad news first: de Marco's agent says he's booked solid through 2018 and is not considering any new material.

HAYDEN

So we're screwed.

STEELE

I said bad news first. Here's the good news. You and Gregorio hit it off real good at the party, right?

HAYDEN

I thought so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEELE

Okay, well right now, the man is on the Universal back-lot shooting a remake of Phantom of the Opera. I got you a drive on. You hump over to Stage 23, where you're gonna bump into your old pal Gregorio and, *oh hey! Look!* You just happen to have a copy of your script!

HAYDEN

And I hand it off?

STEELE

No. You don't hand it off. You wait for him to ask you if he can read it.

HAYDEN

*Then* I hand it off.

STEELE

No. You tell him it's under wraps and I'm going out with it next week. Tell him not to worry; he's on the list.

HAYDEN

What list?

Steele rolls his eyes. *These guys! Jesus...*

STEELE

There *is* no list, but you're gonna say just what I said. What'd I say?

HAYDEN

Not to worry; he's on the list.

STEELE

Perfect.

HAYDEN

Then what?

STEELE

Then he'll be salivating to get a sneak peak. You know why? Because nobody says "no" to guys like de Marco. I guarantee you, this could very well be the first time he's ever heard it. You might literally have to bust out a dictionary and read him the definition.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HAYDEN

Fine. I get it. I'm Tom Sawyer and I'm whitewashing a fence.

STEELE

(confused)

Tom *who*? What the hell are you talking about?

Hayden rolls his eyes. *These guys! Jesus...*

HAYDEN

Forget it. So assuming this works and he's begging me to read it, *then* what?

STEELE

*Then* you hand it off. Remember, Haydee: *face* time, don't waste time. Make it happen. Gotta go. I'm late for my peel.

Steele DISCONNECTS. Hayden stares at the dead receiver.

INT. TUESDAY MORNING CLUB - SOLARIUM - DAY

The first meeting of all six GOVERNESSES: Julia, Chloe, Natasha, Nica, Saran and Sela. In front of them is an updated member roster. Nica acts as Board Secretary, taking notes.

JULIA

That concludes our agenda. Any additional business?

NATASHA

Actually, yes. Regarding our fund raiser for the New You Foundation, A unique opportunity has presented itself. You know my friend, Jasper Harmon? Harmony on Robertson?

JULIA

The Gallery?

NATASHA

(nods)

I was thinking it might be fun to hold it there. Jasper suggested a gala opening. He'd be willing to donate his commission on every piece sold. It could raise quite a lot of money.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SELA

Depends on the artist.

NATASHA

Exactly, dear. Which is why I recommended you.

SELA

A solo opening? At *Harmony*?!

Julia looks at Natasha. It's clear this is a peace-offering for her prior alliance with Claire.

JULIA

Natasha. What an amazing gesture.

NATASHA

It's the least I could do.

SARAN

I think that's a fabulous idea! All in favor?

Sela's hand shoots up like a rocket. Everyone else follows suit. This time it's unanimous. Julia gives Natasha a measured nod. *All is well between us. For now.*

INT. OPERA HOUSE SET - DAY

A FILM CREW SHOOTS as a PHANTOM-MASKED De Marco, wired for safety, ZIP-LINES down a rope, RAKING MERCENARIES WITH AUTOMATIC FIRE from an H&K MP5 IN EACH HAND.

THE DIRECTOR - Way too old for the skater-boy chic he's wearing, he watches THREE LIVE VIDEO FEEDS with the open joy of a 10-year-old on crack.

Gregorio lands on the stage, tosses aside one of the machine-guns, hooks the STARLET playing Christine by the waist with one hand and, ROARING, continues FIRING with the other.

Christine reaches up, WHIPS OFF THE MASK, revealing de Marco in FULL, CLASSIC LON CHENEY-HIDEOUS GOGGLE-EYED PHANTOM MAKE-UP. Inexplicably, he gives her a deep, passionate kiss. Even more inexplicably, Christina responds, grinding her pelvis against the hideous freak.

DIRECTOR

*Cut! Print! Perfect, Gregorio!*  
Let's go again, right away.

The Crew APPLAUDS. Hayden stands among them, a FEATURE SCRIPT in one hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A.D. (O.S.)  
Reset, let's go go go...!

De Marco spots Hayden, abruptly releases the Starlet and strides over to greet him with an effusive embrace.

GREGORIO  
*Sergeant Mills! Mi hermano!*  
(re: Hayden's script)  
What do we have here?

INT. MAKEUP TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

TIGHT ON the TITLE PAGE of a script: "THE WAITING GAME" by Hayden Mills.

HAYDEN  
You promise you won't tell anyone I gave it to you.

Seated in a stylist's chair, the script open before him, De Marco gets his wig and face touched up by a HAIR & MAKEUP TEAM as ONE ASSISTANT gives him shots of RED-BULL AND GRAPPA from a sippy-cup and SECOND chop-sticks sushi into his mouth.

GREGORIO  
On my father's grave, I will not breathe a word.  
(hands the script to an Assistant)  
Put this in my satchel. Guard it with your life.

HAYDEN  
I appreciate it.

Gregorio takes Hayden's hand in a Viking grip.

GREGORIO  
Nonsense, my friend. It is my *honor* to read a script by such a man who has won the Congressional Medal of Honor!

SLAM TO:

INT. PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE - DOROTHY'S CUBICLE - DAY

Stacks and boxes of case-files overflowing the small credenza, a computer wedged on her desk. Dorothy exclaims into her phone:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOROTHY  
*Congressional Medal of Honor?* Did  
 you correct him?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - DEALER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Hayden excitedly speaks into his cell:

HAYDEN  
 Are you kidding? Whatever it takes  
 to get him to read it.

Dorothy LAUGHS.

DOROTHY  
 This is nuts.

HAYDEN  
 Tell me about it. He wants me to  
 drop by his suite at the Chateau  
 Friday night to talk about it.  
 That's assuming he likes it.

DOROTHY  
 He's going to love it. So where are  
 you now?

A DEALER enters with some paperwork. Hayden LIES:

HAYDEN  
 Andrew's office. We got some stuff  
 to go over. Listen, I gotta go.  
 Just wanted to give you a heads up.  
 Later.

He quickly disconnects. Dorothy is dazed. She looks up, sees  
 an OVERWEIGHT SECRETARY standing at the entrance to her  
 cubicle, an apologetic expression on her face.

SLAM TO:

INT. PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE - HALLWAY

Angry, Dorothy confronts her boss, TOMMY JOHNSON, 50,  
 porcine, cheap haircut, cheaper suit, as he rushes to a  
 meeting, arms loaded with files.

DOROTHY  
 She's my sole witness in a capital  
 case.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHNSON

All I say is I ran it up the line  
and they didn't go for it. She's  
not under any imminent threat--

DOROTHY

--she's a hooker and she has two  
young children. The people she  
works for are *criminals!*

JOHNSON

That's not why she's testifying.  
It's not even gonna come up.

DOROTHY

*They don't know that!*

He arrives at his destination.

JOHNSON

Forget it. We just don't have the  
resources to sequester every single  
witness!

DOROTHY

But--

JOHNSON

*Forget it!*

He enters a conference room.

INT. MILLS APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Still wearing her work clothes, Dorothy pours herself a glass  
of white wine. A MOTOR SNARLS in the driveway. Curious, she  
peers out the window, can't believe what she sees.

HER POV - Hayden sits behind the wheel of a new ticket-red  
PORSCHÉ BOXSTER in the drive, top down. He stands up in the  
seat; tips his sunglasses up on top of his head and beams.

HAYDEN

(shouts)

What do you think...?

Off Dorothy, stunned.

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE TURNOFF - NIGHT

The Porsche noses up to the edge. A SPECTACULAR VIEW OF THE  
CITY LIGHTS. Hayden SHUTS OFF THE MOTOR.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOROTHY

You sure we can afford this?

HAYDEN

It's an incentive bonus. Andrew's signing over the pink slip the minute we nail Gregorio.

DOROTHY

What if you don't?

HAYDEN

Hell, I dunno. Car's in Andrew's name. Probably fob it off on one of his girlfriends. But it isn't gonna happen, because I'm gonna get this guy.

DOROTHY

I got a text from Julia Chandler. She asked me to some charity thing her club's putting on at a gallery that night.

HAYDEN

You should go.

DOROTHY

No. I'll wait up for you. I want to hear what happened.

(cuddles up)

We can celebrate...

HAYDEN

No. Seriously. You should go. Tuesday Morning Club's a *really* big deal in this town. Besides, I probably won't be in any shape to celebrate. Andrew says Gregorio likes to party hard.

DOROTHY

Oh, *really*?

HAYDEN

(raises three fingers)

I promise to be good. Scouts honor.

She takes his hand, sucks two of his fingers, then kisses him passionately. They begin making out like high school kids, the sparkling promise of Los Angeles spread out below them like a sea of rhinestones.

END OF ACT 4

ACT 5

EXT. CHANDLER ESTATE - REAR TERRACE - DAWN

Julia and Chloe practice yoga as the SUN RISES, breathing controlled, peaceful, the only sound the morning CHIRPING of birds, the calming TRICKLE OF WATER INTO THE KOI POND.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - HIKING TRAILS - DAY

Jessica Vogel jogs, listening to MUSIC on her iPod.

MOVING (REMOTE VIEWING EFX/POV) - running alongside Jessica from an oblique angle.

JESSICA - suddenly feels uneasy.

ON A WOODED HILL - In the sun-dappled shadows skirting the trail, SOMETHING IS PACING HER. A dog? No. Bigger than a dog.

*It's a fucking MOUNTAIN LION.*

JULIA - Expression intense as she rocks in a Salamba Kapotasana pose, she WHISPERS.

JULIA  
(whispers)  
*Get her!*

MOVING (REMOTE VIEWING EFX/POV) - The lion CUTS LEFT and scrambles down the hill to intersect her prey. Jessica pivots, begins running full-tilt down the path, the MOUNTAIN LION GIVING CHASE.

Panicked, Jessica digs in her shorts pocket, pulling out her CAR-KEYS. Attached to the ring, A CAN OF MACE. She stops and turns just as the big cat catches up with her, gives it a FULL BLAST IN THE FACE.

JULIA - clenches her eyes shut with a STARTLED CRY.

THE LION - YOWLS in pain, rolls over and over in the dust.

Jessica launches, sprinting for her car parked at the trail-head. The CAT RECOVERS, RESUMES THE CHASE. Jessica's Toyota CHIRPS as she unlocks it on the run, a commanding lead over the mountain lion. *She gonna make it! SHE'S GONNA-*

--just before she reaches her car, A SECOND MOUNTAIN LION BLIND-SIDES HER.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHLOE - grins fiercely with satisfaction, gnashing her teeth as...

THE SECOND MOUNTAIN LION - CRUSHES JESSICA'S NECK WITH A SINGLE BITE. The TWO LIONS begin feeding.

JULIA AND CHLOE - hold a knowing glance, then continue their morning yoga.

SLAM TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A JUDGE POUNDS his gavel.

JUDGE  
Defendant please rise.

AT THE DEFENSE TABLE - Antoine, Dorothy and Johnson stand.

JUDGE  
The Jury has found the defendant,  
Antoine Reginald Drake, guilty of  
murder in the first degree. I  
hereby sentence you to a term of  
life in prison without parol.

The sentence is like a point-blank round to Dorothy's guts. Devastated, she watches as her first client--*an innocent man*-- is led off in manacles. Johnson places a consoling hand on her elbow and she recoils.

She hurriedly gathers her files, flees the courtroom.

INT. PUBLIC REST ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dorothy rushes in, closes the door behind her and LOCKS IT. Discards her briefcase, papers, and turns the SINK FAUCETS ON FULL, then breaks into SOBS, the RUSHING WATER drowning out the sound of her ANGRY WEEPING.

INT. HARMONY GALLERY - DAY

NEAR THE ENTRANCE, a PROFESSIONAL TRADE-SHOW DISPLAY is set up for the NEW YOU FOUNDATION, PAMPHLETS on the table, slick COLOR PHOTOS of smiling, sun-shriveled THIRD WORLD WOMEN, lips slathered with pink gloss, eyelids caked with sparkled shadow, are mounted around a VIDEO FLAT-SCREEN.

JULIA  
Sela calls the series Blessings and  
Curses. Men see women as abstracts--  
either goddesses or gutter-snipes...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JULIA talks up an L.A. WEEKLY ART CRITIC, who takes notes as he examines a series of large ABSTRACT CANVASSES painted in menstrual blood--monochromatic values of RUST TO NEAR-BLACK.

JULIA

Their illusions of women eclipse their physical reality, the inescapable monthly *stigmata* that is the truest demonstration of our power. Sela's work explodes those barriers. The medium *becomes* the message.

SELA (O.S.)

Okay, careful now... move back a step...

Julia and the Critic glance O.S. at...

THEIR POV - Sela supervises the installation of the central showpiece, a rust-red, life-size sculpture of a WOOLLY MAMMOTH, its thick pelt of DREADLOCK-LIKE "HAIR" CONSTRUCTED ENTIRELY OF USED TAMPONS.

CRITIC

Are those...?  
 (realizes what he's seeing)  
 Oh dear lord. That's *outrageous!*

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A VIDEO INTERVIEW plays on a large, FLAT-SCREEN MONITOR featuring Trevor Slimm and his partner, R.J. Laffer, both CLEARLY BAKED. They GIGGLE as they discuss the genesis of "BANG BANG BANG:"

TREVOR

We were totally digging "BOOM BOOM BOOM" in the studio. I'm going, "Who is this guy? Who sings like that?"

R.J.

John Lee Hooker, man. Eat that up!

TREVOR

So I say we need to lay it down just like that and we get all inspired and stuff--

R.J.

--puttin it down--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TREVOR

Hells yeah! Laying it down hard and wet! We write "BANG BANG BANG" in like, fifteen minutes--

THE VIDEO FREEZES as Trevor's enraged attorney, Josh Stein, snaps PAUSE on the remote, disgusted. Trevor sits at the conference table, UNSHAVEN, pale and drawn, dark baggage under the eyes; appears he hasn't slept in days.

STEIN

Fifteen minutes?! Got all inspired and stuff?! You *IDIOT!*

TREVOR

I don't see what the big deal is. You said I was protected--

STEIN

--if the infringement was "accidental or inadvertent." This video is a major smoking gun for the other side.

TREVOR

Nobody's seen that. It was like three years ago on some nothing German hip-hop site.

STEIN

This morning it was embedded on TMZ. Story's gone viral with over Two-hundred-and-twenty-million views on YouTube alone.

TREVOR

Two-hundred-and-twenty-*million*? Do I get a piece of that?

Stein looks at him--*could this guy be any more stupid?*

STEIN

Here's your piece: demonstrable proof that you *deliberately* ripped off John Lee Hooker and personal liability for what looks to be an absolutely *titanic* settlement.

TREVOR

So what do we do now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STEIN

*We...? There is no "we" in the word  
screwed.*

TREVOR

*(ponders that)  
Yeah there is.*

Trembling with fury, Stein leans in, face inches from Trevor's.

STEIN

*As of this moment, you are no  
longer my client. I'm calling  
security.*

Stein storms out, leaving Trevor shell-shocked.

INT. COMMERCIAL KITCHEN - DAY

JAPANESE CHEFS construct sushi rolls in an assembly-line. A MASTER SUSHI CHEF expertly fillets a FUGU PUFFER FISH.

FLOATING (REMOTE VIEWING EFX/POV) - as a kitchen assistant cuts strips of seaweed. A WOMAN'S VOICE WHISPERS:

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

*Step back...*

The Assistant takes a step backward and TRIPS A BOY CARRYING A STACK OF METAL BOWLS. They CRASH TO THE FLOOR.

THE MASTER CHEF - turns toward the noise, DISTRACTED.

HIS KNIFE - slips; MEDICAL MACRO C/U as the BLADE NICKS THE FUGU'S LIVER, BLACK TOXIN oozing out, immediately absorbed by the surrounding flesh.

The Master Chef SCOLDS THE BOY IN JAPANESE, turns back to his work. He sweeps the bones and guts into the garbage, slides the meat to the next Chef in the line and begins work on another Fugu.

INT. MEDITATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A VELADORA CANDLE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE. A SLOW RISE REVEALS the Woman seated behind it as she looks up, eyes sparkling with malevolence, the trace of a smile playing about her bee-stung lips: Nica! She blows out the candle and throws us OUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT 5

ACT 6

EXT. MILLS APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT

Dressed in a stunning cocktail dress, Dorothy opens the rear door of her Subaru to hang up her coat. She spies BETTINGER'S CARD ON HER BACK SEAT.

She picks it up, climbs behind the wheel and, again, reads the name, the tony Beverly Hills address. Comes to a decision. She PROPS THE CARD UP on her center console, starts the car and backs down the driveway.

INT. HARMONY GALLERY - NIGHT

FLAT-SCREEN MONITOR - a TEAM OF PROFESSIONAL COSMETICIANS perform make-overs on squat, sun-baked WOMEN in a squalid AFRICAN VILLAGE as an unctuous FEMALE NARRATOR GUSHES:

NARRATOR

These impoverished women have never had the opportunity to avail themselves of the skin-care products, cosmetics and fragrances we in the civilized world so take for granted...

CHILDREN - with DISTENDED BELLIES look on with vacant disinterest, too hungry to express more than vague curiosity of the strange white people painting their mother's faces.

DOROTHY - arrives at the Gallery Opening, passing the NEW YOU FOUNDATION BOOTH. She looks around at the distinctively BOHEMIAN L.A. ART CROWD. This may be fun after all! Julia steps up, embraces her.

JULIA

I'm so glad you made it!

DOROTHY

I've never done one of these things before.

JULIA

You look perfect! Love that coat.

Dorothy strikes a pose. They LAUGH and she takes Julia's arm, leans in.

DOROTHY

Tell me something; is Hollis Bettinger here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JULIA

Of course. Would you like to meet him?

DOROTHY

No. Actually, I'd like him to meet me. I assume you can "make that happen."

Julia answers with a slow grin.

INT. CHATEAU MARMONT - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

DEEP BASS THUMP outside de Morcos' suite. Hayden KNOCKS. Gregorio, wrapped in a hotel robe, swings the door open, releasing a wall of BLASTING TECHNO, and embraces Hayden.

GREGORIO

*Mi hermano!* Come in, come in, come in...

INT. CHATEAU MARMONT - GREGORIO'S SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Gregorio guides Hayden to a sofa upon which sit THREE DROP-DEAD BEAUTIFUL MODELS in low-cut minis.

GREGORIO

Sit, my friend. Bitches, make room for an American hero!

The girls move over and Hayden squeezes between them. Gregorio sits on a chair and busies himself cutting LINES OF COCAINE on the glass coffee table. De Marco's co-star, the STARLET WHO PLAYED CHRISTINE, stripped to bra and panties, dances in what appears to be a trance-state.

HAYDEN

So, how're things going on The Phantom?

GREGORIO

No! No business, my friend. Tonight, we speak only of life!

Gregorio snorts a FAT LINE, offers Hayden a glass tube.

HAYDEN

No. Thanks...

GREGORIO

Ah! Yes! How foolish of me! You are a warrior. You will not compromise your senses in such a way. Drink?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAYDEN

Sure.

One of the Models hands Hayden a slice of lime while the second sprinkles salt in the back of his hand. De Marco pours a tumbler of AsomBroso Reserva, hands it to him.

GREGORIO

Mother's milk, my friend!

Hayden bites the lime, licks the salt and takes the shot.

GREGORIO

Well done!

HAYDEN

Wow. That's smooth.

Gregorio snatches to shot-glass, immediately pours another.

HAYDEN

So, Sela's your wife, right?

GREGORIO

She is.

HAYDEN

My wife's going to her opening tonight. Maybe we should pop in and say hi.

GREGORIO

(a dismissive wave)

*Bah.* I hate that scene. We'll have a lot more fun right here!

Gregorio hands him a shot. Hayden looks around, up at the dancing Starlet. What rabbit hole has he just jumped down?

INT. HARMONY GALLERY - NIGHT

The opening is in full swing, HIPSTERS in black mixing with WEALTHY COLLECTORS; GORGEOUS SERVERS in tie-dyed black-and-rust leotards snake through the crowd with trays of SUSHI, SAKE SHOTS and WHITE WINE.

NICA - stands unnoticed in a corner, gazes intently over the rim of her wine glass at one of the SERVERS offering HORS D'OEUVRES to the guests. She WHISPERS:

NICA

*The artist...*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SERVER'S POV (REMOTE VIEWING EFX) approach Sela, surrounded by ADMIRERES. Sela plucks a SUSHI ROLL off the platter, pops it in her mouth and continues her conversation.

NICA - a smug smile on her lips, she slips out the front door into the night.

DOROTHY - chats happily with Chloe and Saran. Natasha and J. Hollis Bettinger approach.

NATASHA

Dorothy, this is my husband,  
Hollis.

HOLLIS

My pleasure. I'm so sorry to hear  
about your witness. Unbelievable.

CHLOE

Was this the case you were telling  
us about? You found that girl?

DOROTHY

(nods)

She agreed to testify but she was  
attacked in Griffith Park.

NATASHA

By mountain lions, can you believe  
that?

SARAN

Oh God...

Chloe and Julia trade knowing grins.

HOLLIS

I'm surprised she was even out  
there alone. Didn't you get a  
protective custody order?

DOROTHY

I tried, but my boss felt it wasn't  
worth the resources.

HOLLIS

Shame. Resources are never a  
problem in my office.

DOROTHY

Really. Julia tells me you do a lot  
of *pro bono* work...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JULIA'S POV - ACROSS THE ROOM Bettinger brightens and begins stalking to Dorothy (M.O.S.), who flatters him with her undivided attention.

JULIA - Her lips curl up in a subtle smile.

INT. CHATEAU MARMONT - GREGORIO'S SUITE - NIGHT

Hayden, the Starlet curled up against him, drunkenly watches Gregorio slurp BELLY-SHOTS OF ANEJO from the one of the Models, now stripped to bra and panties. The other two Models dance, sensuously touching and kissing.

HAYDEN

So did you ever get a chance to read my script?

GREGORIO

What script?

HAYDEN

The Waiting Game.

GREGORIO

Oh yeah. S'great. Later, though...

Gregorio SLURPS a shot from the GIGGLING Model's belly-button. The Starlet offers Hayden lime and salt on the edge of her hand. He gamely licks it off and takes a shot of tequila. She kisses him passionately, her hand sliding down the waistband of his jeans. The sensation SMACKS HAYDEN SOBER. He pushes her hand away, springs to his feet.

HAYDEN

I can't do this!

Everyone stares at him, quizzical expressions on their faces.

HAYDEN

I'm sorry. This just isn't my thing. I'm married, okay? I really love my wife and...

Ahh, fuck it. Gregorio looks at him, astonished. Hayden reads his expression as offended, sure that he has just killed the deal. Suddenly, de Marco GROWLS:

GREGORIO

*Bitches, LEAVE!*

The women hurriedly gather their clothes, scramble out the door as de Marco SHUTS OFF THE MUSIC. Hayden is framing an apology when de Marco SILENCES HIM with a finger to his lips.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GREGORIO

There is no need to apologize, *mi hermano*. You are obviously not one of these foolish writers who knows nothing more than he sees in the movies...

(closer)

You are a warrior. You have lived these words. *Semper Fidelis*. Always Faithful.

HAYDEN

I'm not a Marine--

Gregorio again silences him, pressing his fingers to Hayden's lips.

GREGORIO

Shh. Do not speak.

De Marco quickly crosses the room, pulls the script from a desk drawer. It's already MARKED UP WITH SCRIBBLED MARGIN-NOTES, the protagonist's lines HIGHLIGHTED.

GREGORIO

I never do this. I rely on my people before I commit to any project. But this time, I do not have to.

(holds up the script)

This is a work of pure genius.

HAYDEN

So... you wanna do it?

GREGORIO

*Mi hermano, mi compadre...* it would be my *honor* to speak your lines.

Before Hayden can thank him, de Marco grabs him by the collar and gives him a deep, passionate French kiss. They break. Hayden is shocked senseless. Gregorio gazes at him, PLEADS:

GREGORIO

Stay with me tonight.

Hayden gapes at him, mouth opening and closing like a landed fish, finally STAMMERING:

HAYDEN

I--I can't.

Gregorio SIGHS, wounded but noble.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GREGORIO

I understand. This should be savored. Go then. There will be much time for us to know one another.

INT. CHATEAU MARMONT - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Trembling, Hayden exits in a state of utter shock. Then it dawns on him. He did it! *He closed the fucking deal!*

INT. HARMONY GALLERY - NIGHT

A "SOLD" STICKER is affixed over the PRICE (\$24,500) on a CARD next to one of the paintings. COLLECTORS wait in line at TWO DEALERS DESKS, BLACK CARDS AND CHECKBOOKS in hand. Julia MAKES AN ANNOUNCEMENT:

JULIA

Ladies and gentlemen, guests, friends, Jasper has just informed me that we have raised a total of one-hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars tonight and there are still four remaining pieces unsold.

POLITE APPLAUSE.

JULIA

As you know, Mr. Harmon and the artist have agreed to donate 100% of the proceeds to the New You Foundation, because we all know that every woman...  
(locks eyes with Dorothy)  
... every woman, deserves to be a goddess.

Another ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

JULIA

And now, it is my honor to present my dear friend, the young genius responsible for the beauty that surrounds us tonight, *Sela Degas-de Marco!*

To ENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE, Sela steps to the center of the gallery space. Pale, a bit unsteady on her feet, she opens her mouth to speak, and suddenly BLOOD POURS FROM HER LIPS DOWN HER CHIN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Guests REACT with a COLLECTIVE GASP.

CONVULSING, Sela FALLS TO HER KNEES, every orifice, NOSE, EARS, EYES, BLEEDING.

DOROTHY - horrified; turns to Julia, who is staring at Sela in disbelief.

SELA - Her eyes roll up into her head and she collapses in a POOL OF BLOOD. The CROWD FALLS SILENT with shock and horror.

Hold a BEAT...

... then the L.A. Weekly Critic steps forward, APPLAUDING, and ROARS:

CRITIC  
*BRAVO! Brilliant...!*

Convinced Sela's collapse is a macabre piece of performance art punctuating the theme of the show, the crowd ERUPTS IN ENTHUSIASTIC CHEERS. Dorothy gamely joins them.

Julia, shoots accusing glares at Saran, Natasha and, finally, Chloe. *Who dared do this?*

A VERTICAL RISE from Sela's still body, eyes open and sightless, curled in a fetal position in a SPREADING POOL OF BLOOD on the hardwood floor as we SLOWLY...

FADE TO WHITE:

FADE IN:

INT. TREVOR'S CONDO - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The steady DRIP DRIP DRIP of a LEAKY FAUCET. WHITE PORCELAIN TILE. A slow FLOAT reveals EMPTY PRESCRIPTION BOTTLES scattered across the floor, FINDS TREVOR SLIMM, eyes half-closed, showing whites, naked in a STEAMING BATHTUB.

Suddenly, SOMEONE GRABS HIM BY THE HAIR, hauls him forward. He finds himself face-to-face with Nica, who gazes into his eyes with fierce determination.

NICA  
*You're not gonna die!*

He mumbles incoherently.

NICA  
(shouts)  
*HEAR ME?! You are not gonna die!*  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICA (CONT'D)  
(violently shakes him)  
I'm gonna help you! And you're  
gonna help *me!*

Trevor's eyes blink open full wide as the full realization of what she's saying dawns on him. *He has a chance!* He can get his life back! He nods stupidly and she SMACKS her palm down on the drain-lever and we...

SLAM TO BLACK