

UNDERLING

by

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BROWN, SHAGGY HAIR

This guy hasn't been to a barber in a while. Beneath the wavy strands something catches our attention -

An ENGAGEMENT RING SPARKLES under the hair as a slender hand runs through...

EXT. EAST COAST PARK - DAY

A snug couple, embracing on the hood of a JETTA. It's a beautiful day: waves lap against the rocky shore of a turquoise lake. Idyllic. But they don't give a shit - they are focused solely on each other. The ring belongs to TAMARA STEVENS (22); the hair - ALEX JACOBS (22).

TAMARA

When are we getting this cut?

ALEX

I thought you liked it long.

She grins, shakes her head. The mood is infectious. He smiles back at her. Alex would do anything for her, even--

ALEX (CONT'D)

Okay. When we get there.

I/E. JETTA - DAY - LATER

Tamara drives. We get a better look at the back of the car now - loaded with a coterie of boxes and bags. Disassembled floor lamps are strewn atop the mess. They are moving.

ALEX

And what does mix-master Tamara have in store for us today?

TAMARA

What do you mean?

ALEX

C'mon.

TAMARA

Babe, we were packing all night. You really think "mix-master Tamara" took the time to put together a playlist?

ALEX

Absolutely.

Tamara beams. Hands him an iPod.

TAMARA  
It's all queued up.

We see the iPod screen: the playlist is labeled, "California Dreamin'." Alex allows himself a chuckle.

And, of course, Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York" blasts out of the car speakers.

EXT. INTERSTATE - DAY - HOURS LATER

Some time has passed as we've moved onto another song. A sign pops up on the side of the road - NOW LEAVING NEW YORK.

I/E. JETTA - DAY - CONTINUOUS

TAMARA  
Okay, you ready for the magic of the mix?

ALEX  
I'm ready.

TAMARA  
Skip forward two songs.

A BIG BAND-style song begins to play.

ALEX  
(skeptical)  
This is the magic?

Ignoring him, she dances to the music - simply adorable.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
I always wondered what song was playing when my Grandpa lost his virginity.

TAMARA  
Wait for it...

And, on cue, as they pass the "Welcome to Pennsylvania" sign, Tamara sings along as the band shouts -

GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA (O.S.)  
(on stereo)  
Pennsylvania 6-5000!

ALEX

Ah. I could contribute to this mix.  
(off Tamara's look)  
We just need to take a detour  
through Alabama.

INT. CHEAP MOTEL - NIGHT

Tamara types on her laptop - connected to the internet via dial-up - old school. Alex saunters up behind her.

ALEX

I've never had sex in Indiana.

TAMARA

Is that a fact?

Alex comes right up behind her, rubs her shoulders.

ALEX

What are you doing?

TAMARA

Looking into some of his clients...

ALEX

Any of these guys famous?

TAMARA

The Killers?

(Alex shrugs)

My new boss is like the George  
Steinbrenner of the music industry.

ALEX

(impressed)

Ooh.

He cups her breasts, just leaving his hands in place.

TAMARA

What are you doing?

ALEX

Just standing by to molest you.

TAMARA

Interesting technique.

ALEX

Just pretend I'm not here until  
you're ready.

She types as his hands just hold in place. It looks incredibly awkward but...she still smiles.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
What?

TAMARA  
(blushing)  
That shouldn't be working.

EXT. INTERSTATE - DAY - DAY 2 OF THE DRIVE

Corn. Corn everywhere. "Iowa" by Dar Williams plays.

I/E. JETTA - DAY

Tamara takes in the endless stalks as Alex dials his cell...

TAMARA  
The middle of our country is  
nothing but corn.

ALEX  
(into cell phone)  
Hey Guy, it's Alex.

GUY (O.S.)  
(muffled through phone)  
Buddy! Tied up right now but call  
me when you can see the smog! And  
don't forget your resume.

ALEX  
Bartenders need resumes?

GUY (O.S.)  
LA is dumb, bro. Just play along.  
Where'd you work before?

ALEX  
Stella's for the last two summers--

GUY (O.S.)  
Say you worked there two years.

ALEX  
But I--

GUY (O.S.)  
There's fucking actors everywhere,  
so we're looking for "experience."  
Lie to them, and the job's yours.

ALEX

Uh--

GUY (O.S.)

I gotta jump. Talk soon, buddy!

Alex hangs up with a SIGH.

TAMARA

(trying to comfort...)

There are publishing jobs in LA,  
too. It's just gonna take a while--

ALEX

I love you.

Tamara again runs her hand through Alex's mane. It calms him.

TAMARA

I'm so...thank you for doing this.

EXT. GAS STATION - AFTERNOON

Tamara hangs up a gas pump. Enters the car. She and Alex wear a new set of clothes. A few days have passed.

TAMARA

You ready for this?

ALEX

Let's do it.

Tamara starts the ignition and fiddles with the iPod. Our favorite song blares - 2Pac's "California Love."

They roll out of the gas station, nodding to the killer beat.

I/E. JETTA, 10 FREEWAY - SUNSET

Quintessential Los Angeles on the 10 at dusk - cars tailgating each other in a 30 MPH traffic jam against a backdrop of sunset-lit haze. It delivers the illusion that the city in the distance is on fire - a Smog Inferno.

ALEX

This is what Hell looks like.

Tamara just beams out the window - she has arrived...

TITLE OVER BLACK - **UNDERLING**

EXT. DOWNTOWN BAR - NIGHT

Alex crosses a downtown street - jaywalking. He LEAPS to dodge a car that speeds by like he doesn't exist.

ALEX  
Are you kidding me?

He spots GUY SPICER (mid-20s) smoking a cigarette. At the sight of Alex, Guy grins and spreads his arms, backlit by a NEON DEERHEAD atop the bar's entrance.

GUY  
Welcome to my coast!

INT. DOWNTOWN BAR - NIGHT

Guy and Alex walk through the bar, which wears its masculine vibe on its sleeve: dark lighting, taxidermied heads, one too many billiard tables. They approach a BARTENDER.

GUY  
Chris in the office?

BARTENDER  
Yeah.

GUY  
(nods, then to Alex)  
When you're done, we're gonna hit a  
sushi joint that will blow your  
mind.

ALEX  
I don't eat raw fish.

GUY  
Bro, that's gonna last, like, two  
minutes out here.

ALEX  
I should get back to Tamara.

They stop in front of the Manager's office.

GUY  
Alright, listen. If I don't get you  
this gig, you go back to your  
better half. But if you walk out of  
this room with a job, on your  
second day in Los Angeles mind you,  
you're taking me out for sushi.

INT. SUSHI RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Guy holds out a sake cup for a cheer. Alex joins him.

GUY

Kampai!

SUSHI STAFF (O.S.)

Kampai!

ALEX

Thank you, Guy.

GUY

Come on. Say it with me. Kampai!

SUSHI STAFF (O.S.)

Kampai!

ALEX

Okay...Kampai!

SUSHI STAFF (O.S.)

Kampai!

EXT. BAR - LATER

Guy and Alex stumble out of another downtown bar, not wasted, but they're a little tipsy. Okay, Guy is more than tipsy.

GUY

Where's your car?

ALEX

No car.

GUY

Are you kidding?

ALEX

Is there a subway close by?

Guy laughs maniacally. Points to his car, "I'll drive you."

ALEX (CONT'D)

You shouldn't be driving.

Guy jumps into his car.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Guy...

GUY  
Give yourself a couple months.

He peels off, leaving Alex alone and now wanting that ride.

ALEX  
Fuck.

LATER

Figueroa - a street that turns ugly at the drop of a dime-bag. Alex's halts his brisk walk, fixated...

In a dumpster on the side of the road lays an abandoned fire-truck red bicycle. A BUM (50s) guards the dumpster.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Is that your bike?

The bum shrugs. Clearly it is not. Alex reaches in his back pocket and sifts through his wallet. He doesn't have much.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
How about twelve bucks for it?

EXT. THE APARTMENT - MORNING

The red bicycle is perched against the front door of their small Silverlake apartment.

INT. THE APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Alex nudges open the bedroom door. Looks like some lucky lady is getting breakfast in bed... Tamara sits up, waking.

TAMARA  
What's that smell? Mmm.

He passes her a steaming bowl of oatmeal. She dives right in.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
(mid-bite, adorable)  
Wild night? You cheat on me?

ALEX  
Yes. With Guy. Ugh, my ass hurts.

Tamara laughs as she swallows, a small trail of oatmeal leaking down her chin. As Alex gathers it with his finger--

ALEX (CONT'D)  
So. LA. Shall we?

## MONTAGE - WELCOME TO LA

- Universal CityWalk, in all of its kitschy splendor. In response to Alex's Yankees cap, a PUDGY MAN shouts--

PUDGY MAN  
Yankees fucking suck!

- Michael Jackson's star on the Walk of Fame. Tamara poses atop it, one hand on her crotch, and one hand in the air.

- Amoeba. A bored Alex approaches Tamara.

ALEX  
Ready to go?

Tamara pulls a CD out of the \$1 bin - DARK MATTER'S self-titled debut. An image of a PITCH-BLACK HEART on the cover.

TAMARA  
This is the lead singer of Southern Pass and the guitarist from Ash Wednesday. How have I never heard of them?

ALEX  
It's been an hour--

She runs her hand through his hair, silences him with a kiss.

- The Santa Monica Pier. They look out at a breathtaking Pacific Sunset. The tranquility ends when a cell RINGS--

TAMARA  
(into phone)  
Hello? Oh, hi David! Yeah. Monday would be great...

She pulls away from Alex, giving the call her full attention.

## I/E. JETTA - ECHO PARK LAKE - NIGHT

Tamara's Jetta parks alongside Echo Park Lake, Alex driving for a change. As he puts the car in park...

TAMARA  
(teasing, upbeat)  
We're definitely lost, babe.

ALEX  
(changing the subject)  
Who are these guys tonight? They good?

Alex gets out of the car. Tamara follows suit.

TAMARA

I dunno. How far do we have to walk now?

ALEX

So spoiled. Try commuting by bike.

EXT. ECHO PARK LAKE - NIGHT

Hand-in-hand, they walk alongside the lake. The surface is still, except for the Southside fountains' endless stream.

A MEXICAN MAN approaches speedily, hands in pockets. Alex holds his breath as he passes. He glances back - the Mexican Man disappears into the night, minding his own business.

TAMARA

(lighthearted)

Screw publishing. I think you just qualified for the LAPD.

She laughs at her own joke, but jumps, startled by a sustained bird call, but it's deep, guttural - it resembles the grunt of a pig. Alex shoots her a look.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

Touche.

They walk by TWO MEN who are, yes, FISHING in the lake.

MAN

I ain't settlin' down. I feel the pull. He 'bout to snatch that.

Echo Park is creepy.

EXT. ECHOPLEX CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

A HIPSTER COLLECTIVE has formed around the entrance.

INT. ECHOPLEX CONCERT HALL - BAR - NIGHT

Alex, cold brew in hand, passes Tamara a radioactive-green drink as AN ALTERNATIVE FOURSOME emerges on the stage, waving to their fans and taking their positions.

LEAD SINGER

I wrote this song about the first  
girl I ever loved. So, Jackie, if  
you're listening: Go fuck yourself!

THE CROWD GOES BALLISTIC as the band dives into their song.

Tamara sways to the music, eyes closed. Alex, mind elsewhere, lets his eyes wander. That's odd...an indistinguishable MAN and WOMAN carve through the crowd and, discreetly, head toward the same bathroom. Hot. Alex excitedly nudges Tamara.

ALEX

Babe, look!...I'm so glad we moved  
here.

TAMARA

(watching the couple)  
Keep buying me drinks, maybe you  
get lucky...

ALEX

You know what? I gotta go to the  
bathroom.

She shakes her head: not sure whether to be disgusted or entertained. Alex smiles as he cuts through the crowd, following in the couple's footsteps.

INT. ECHOPLEX BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Well, the far stall is certainly occupied. Alex cranes his head and sees the Man's ALLIGATOR SHOES, and the Woman's STILETTOS.

A pale fluorescent light FLICKERS dimly above their stall, adding to the trashy atmosphere. They're already at work - the Woman's MOANS fill the air.

Alex takes the urinal farthest from the stall. We hear the Woman SHRIEK, and Alex grins like a little kid...

**A SMACK reverberates within the stall**, followed by another SCREAM - embarrassingly loud. And we have arrived at the climax early - non-stop screaming. Alex stifles a laugh.

WOMAN (O.S.)

No. No. No. What? Wait?

BAM. BAM. Hard THUDS of a body SLAMMING against the stall. Alex's smile fades as the screams start to sound...a little too primal: out of control. A final THUD: the side of the stall REVERBERATES and...**SILENCE**. The scream cuts out.

Alex bends down, peering under the stall - the Man's legs are still quivering as he lowers the Woman's body onto the seat. **Her legs are limp...**

PANTING sounds from the man. Outside, we hear the muffled sound of APPLAUSE as the band wraps up a song. Alex retreats from the stall - pulse POUNDING in his ears.

The Alligator Shoes turn around. The stall unlocks. Alex scrambles to the bathroom door, terrified.

The Man walks out, clouded in shadow - face hidden.

Alex backs out, noting out of the side of his eye that the overhead light **STOPPED FLICKERING** the moment the Man left.

INT. ECHOPLEX CONCERT HALL - CONTINUOUS

Alex speeds back to where he left Tamara. He looks for her in the crowd, panicked.

Behind him, The Man follows, silhouetted by the myriad shifting colors from the stage. As the crowd dances and jumps, his unwavering focus stays on Alex.

Even though surrounding faces glow from the house lights, we never see more than this Man's shadow. **It's as if he brings the darkness with him.** Alex turns around, sensing him--

--and the Man disappears in the mass of the crowd. Alex squints, making sure the coast is clear...

Tamara JUMPS at him, engulfing Alex in a big hug.

TAMARA

How was it, peeping Tom?

ALEX

I...

LEAD SINGER (O.S.)

This next one's for all the lovers  
in the house!

She silences him with a GIANT KISS, NEON LIGHTS spreading across the stage as the crowd SHRIEKS for the next song.

ALEX

How long are they going to play?

TAMARA

Alex, they just started.

ALEX  
I gotta go to the bathroom.

TAMARA  
Again?

INT. ECHOPLEX BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Alex swings the door open to an empty bathroom. Not missing a beat, he falls to his hands and knees - nothing to see beneath the stall doors - no trace of the woman from before.

Another fluorescent light FLICKERS, over the adjacent stall, strobing Alex's walk as he makes his way to the end of the row. He pushes the door open, revealing...

NOTHING. The stall is festooned with scratched-in initials, phone numbers, and a mess of toilet paper, but no body.

But...looking down from the air vent above, we see the shadow of...something. Could it be a stiletto heel? Alex strides into the stall, tilting his head for a better view. He is too caught up peering into the shadows of the vent to see--

**--ALLIGATOR SHOES dropping to the ground in the next stall.**

Alex climbs up onto the toilet seat, shoe soles sliding on the black plastic, precarious. He reaches up to the vent--

**--the lock in the next stall RASPS OPEN...**

**--BAM.** The bathroom door FLIES open: pack o' HIPSTERS.

HIPSTER 1  
--their studio sound doesn't  
compare, man. Does not compare.

The Alligator Shoes disappear back into the stall. Alex starts to feel stupid standing on a fucking toilet.

HIPSTER 2  
Maybe I just like my music canned.

HIPSTER 1  
Erase my name from your phone, man.  
I don't ever want to talk to you  
again.

Alex nods to the Hipsters as he makes his way out.

EXT. ECHOPLEX CONCERT HALL - NIGHT - LATER

Alex and Tamara stroll out, keeping some distance from the swarm of East Siders. Alex's mind is elsewhere, obviously.

TAMARA

Hey, what is it?

ALEX

(shaking it off)

Nothing.

But he shouldn't shrug it off so soon, because beyond swarms of Chuck Taylors and Vans - the Alligator Shoes trail Alex.

STALKER POV: Through the bobbing concert-going heads, all we can see are the couple's backs.

EXT. ECHO PARK LAKE - NIGHT

Tamara and Alex, car bound, retrace their path.

TAMARA

He's got a good mix. Most managers just hold onto the same acts and, you know, get old with them...

They approach the Echo Park Boathouse - peeling paint and shuttered gates suggest abandonment.

A bird perches atop the stucco roof, staring at the couple. There's a peculiar quality to this creature. You sense that if you got too close, it would peck your eyes out.

Alex stops. Subconsciously shivers. Behind the couple, the few straggling hipsters vanish into the night.

Tamara tugs at the shoulder of his T-shirt. "Let's go."

FOOM! Alex JUMPS. A motion-activated light illuminates above.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

Did you see a Mexican?

The Bird stares at him with its unerring, hateful gaze.

They walk on **as one of the overhead lights DIMS behind them.**

Pebbles grind beneath Alligator Shoes. The Man appears behind them, steeped in shadow beneath the struggling light.

The Bird opens its beak wide, holding it agape for a moment--

ALEX

Let's never have sex in a bathroom.

--and it lets out a single, scratchy CAW - the kind of sound you'd expect a crow to make...if you shredded its lungs.

They stop dead in their tracks. Alex turns, slowly. Tamara stares straight ahead, sensing the foreboding in the air.

He sees the Figure. And he knows - he just knows it's the same guy. The Man is still, except for deep, excited breaths.

Alex hands the car keys to Tamara. She's shaking. He feels a need to tell her this softly. Which only makes it worse.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Go to the car.

TAMARA

Why? What's--

ALEX

Now.

No more questions. She speeds away.

Alex watches her off and turns back to the Man. For a moment, the two of them simply lock eyes. Gauging and waiting.

The light above the Man EXPLODES - an overheated bulb - **and the Man LUNGES forward, running. FUCK.**

Alex turns and runs toward the car, lagging behind Tamara.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Don't turn around! Run!

Here's the thing - the Man's not flying. He's not leaping. He's just FASTER than a person should be. He gains on them.

Lights dim accordingly as the Man passes under them. It's as if they're being chased by darkness personified.

Tamara stumbles into the car, reversing out.

TAMARA

Baby, get in!

I/E. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Tamara accelerates through the parking lot as Alex dials 911.

TAMARA  
What the FUCK was that?!

ALEX  
(into phone)  
We're being chased. Fuck. Fuck.  
We're leaving Echo Park--

**THUMP! A HEAVY MASS lands on the roof.** Tamara swerves. Alex drops his cell to the passenger floor, reacting.

TAMARA  
What the fuck was THAT?!

There's a SHIFT of movement above. Alex grasps under his seat, frantically searching for his phone.

The Man's head lowers itself, upside down, into the passenger window's frame. Bathed in darkness, we still can't get a good look at him. He peers in through the window, studying Tamara's face, tilting his head, inquisitive.

ALEX (O.S.)  
(still looking, unaware)  
I can't find it.

Alex looks back up and sees the Man staring at Tamara, separated only by a centimeter of window.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
BRAKE! NOW!

SCREECH! ROLLING, THUMPING SOUNDS ABOVE.

FOOTSTEPS RETREAT behind them. They peer through the back window at the Man, standing still in the street, staring at them. Tamara PEELS off, leaving him far behind.

EXT. APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Tamara sits on the porch, bathed in red and blue lights.

Alex talks with an OFFICER on the street.

I/E. PUBLIC BUS - EARLY AFTERNOON

Alex, wearing his Yankee hat, waits by the door as his bus comes to a stop in front of the Rampart Police Precinct. Next to him, A FIVE-YEAR-OLD MEXICAN BOY, wearing a DODGERS hat, looks at Alex with pure hatred as he steps off.

INT. OFFICER RAND FRANKLIN'S OFFICE - NOON

A pig-sty of files, service plaques and random shit. OFFICER RAND FRANKLIN (40s, wiry) hunts and pecks on his keyboard.

OFFICER RAND FRANKLIN  
So he was attacking a girl in the  
men's room?

ALEX  
Yes.

OFFICER RAND FRANKLIN  
(stops typing)  
How'd you see this?

ALEX  
I followed them in.

Franklin looks up at him quizzically. Alex shrugs.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
I think he put her body in the  
vent.

OFFICER RAND FRANKLIN  
There's no woman in the vent.

ALEX  
How do you know? Cause I--

OFFICER RAND FRANKLIN  
I know because I looked.

ALEX  
You looked?

OFFICER RAND FRANKLIN  
Yes. That's what policemen do. We  
follow through. So, thank you.  
Thank you for showing me that vent.  
Any identifying features?

The phone rings. Rand answers it. Listens for a second, and then hangs up on whoever called without a second thought.

ALEX  
He was...uh...it was dark.  
But...white, tall...he was in good  
shape, must have been...Um...

OFFICER RAND FRANKLIN  
You just described the 2 million  
homo thespians infesting my  
beautiful city.

ALEX  
Okay. Well, how many of them do  
their own stunts?

OFFICER RAND FRANKLIN  
(hands Alex a form)  
Fill this out and give it to  
Phyllis up front.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BAR - REAR EXIT - EARLY EVENING

Alex, on break, leaves a voice mail.

ALEX  
Hey, it's me. Just calling to see  
how your first day's going, and  
making sure nobody's chased you  
since last night.

GUY (O.S.)  
Hey, pussywhip! Get back in here.

EXT. ECHO PARK - EVENING

Alex bikes home on Sunset. For whatever reason, El Prado - an adobe hut of a run-down Mexican restaurant - has attracted a cadre of schlubby, European, leather-jacket-wearing CHAIN-SMOKERS. Odd. Alex tenses - uncomfortable after Echo Park.

In a flash, the cigarettes fall to the ground, and the Chain-Smokers pull out CAMERAS: they're paparazzi. They stampede across the street, after their celebrity prey.

Alex rubbernecks as he passes by.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

A PHOTOGRAPH of Alex and Tamara at Yankee stadium floats on Alex's screensaver. Pretty cute picture: Alex is caught up in the game as Tamara's arms sprawl across his back...

Alex lays on the ground, his feet resting above him on the couch, reading Henry Miller's TROPIC OF CANCER, mouth resting on the lip of a Blue Moon. Alex jumps as --

Tamara SWINGS in. He eyes the clock: 12:30AM.

ALEX

I would've bet our new apartment  
you were going to beat me home.

TAMARA

Me too. I would've doubled down.

ALEX

(somber)

Are you okay?

TAMARA

Yeah, it was great. Busy. Really  
busy. Great.

ALEX

I mean after last night...

TAMARA

I'm fine. A little more dangerous  
than when we saw that guy  
masturbating at the Greyhound  
station.

(off his concerned gaze)

Thank you for protecting me.

Tamara gives him a kiss. He tries to prolong it to no avail.  
She slips away into the bedroom.

TAMARA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Kyle, my boss...the guy works a  
million miles a minute, and man  
does he know what he's doing. Baby,  
we were on a conference call with  
Billy Joel. BILLY JOEL! When I  
called him he said, "Well hello,  
Tamara."

ALEX

"Well hello"? Should I be jealous?

(distracted by his laptop)

Hey! I got an interview. Go team!

No reply. Alex finds Tamara in the bedroom, asleep on top of  
the covers. Alex goes into hubby mode and tucks her in.

MONTAGE - THE NEXT 2 WEEKS

- Alex multi-tasks - pulling in tips and shaking a martini.
- Adorned in a dress suit, Alex waits in a lobby, surrounded by OTHER CANDIDATES cramming for their upcoming interview.
- Alex sits down with an INTERVIEWER.

ALEX (CONT'D)

So I wanted to be in publishing and thought, "Why not go to LA?"

INTERVIEWER

Right. The scene here is like the film scene in New York.

ALEX

That's a pretty big scene, right?

INTERVIEWER

For nine people, it is.

- The couple window shops at the ninth level of hell: THE GROVE. Alex's eyes linger on a store's WEDDING ATTIRE while Tamara deals with a crisis on her BlackBerry.

- Alex watches the Yankees on his TV, alone.

- Alex waits in another reception area with many of THE SAME APPLICANTS he saw at the last interview.

- The clock reads 1:25 AM. Alex wakes, alone in bed. Walks to the living room: Tamara slaves away on her laptop, its blue light illuminating her face. She looks up at him and smiles. Mouths, "I'm sorry," blows him a kiss.

END MONTAGE

I/E. JETTA - MOVING - NIGHT

Tamara drives through Hollywood as Alex answers his cell.

ALEX

Hello? This is he. What? Yeah, I'd love to come in. Whenever works for you guys.

He turns to Tamara and points at his phone, mouthing "Interview!" She smiles back.

ALEX (CONT'D)

And where are your offices? Ahh...

Alex's voice catches. Tamara's heart sinks as this plays out.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Umm, there's nothing in the LA office? No, I just moved out of New York. Huh. Yeah. Sorry about that.

Alex hangs up and shakes it off.

TAMARA

That would've been a tough commute.

Alex forces a laugh and nods, looking at the ground.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

Hey, open up the glove compartment.

Alex pulls out a galley copy of YANKEES PAST & PRESENT.

ALEX

This doesn't come out for like --

TAMARA

There's a publishing company in my building. No openings, but I snagged a copy for you.

ALEX

Thank you, honey.

TAMARA

(car cutting her off)  
FUCK YOU YOU FUCKING PIECE OF SHIT  
ASSHOLE MOTHERFUCKERFUCKER!!!

Alex grins at her.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

What?

ALEX

I love it when you cuss.

Alex flips through his galley to a bookmark: a 20% off coupon for FANTASTIC SAM'S. He looks up at Tamara who mimes scissors cutting hair. He shakes his head.

EXT. BOULEVARD 3 - HOLLYWOOD - EVENING

Alex follows Tamara past the BOUNCER and into the outdoor, clubby splendor of Boulevard 3. Mini palms, white reclined couches, and an artificial inlet running down the middle: It's a SoCal postcard brought to life.

Moving through the throng, Tamara hugs her various co-workers and peers, introducing them to a polite but removed Alex.

Tamara moves off to the bathroom, working on her BlackBerry. Alex leans against a wall like James Dean.

MICAH, late 20s, and CHARLIE, mid 20s, argue nearby. If Micah is a snake, then Charlie is best described as a hyena.

CHARLIE  
 Who's going to want to see them?  
 They sound like a shitty version of  
 She Wants Revenge, who are a shitty  
 version of Interpol, who are a  
 shitty version of Joy Division.

MICAH  
 ...Says the kid who wanted us to  
 sign The Bad Habits.  
 (noticing Alex)  
 Hey, you looking for someone?

ALEX  
 Nope. Just waiting for my fiancée.

Charlie gives him a wink. It's hard to tell if it's endearing or threatening.

CHARLIE  
 You a music fan?

ALEX  
 Yeah. But kind of older stuff.

CHARLIE  
 Grunge?

ALEX  
 Further back. British Invasion.  
 Spector's Wall of Sound. And what's  
 better than "This is a Man's  
 World"?  
 (crickets)  
 James Brown. Godfather of soul?

Slight tension as Alex wonders whether or not they knew that.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 So you guys work with Tamara?

CHARLIE  
 Wait, you're with Kyle's girl?

MICAH  
 She's taken the reins rather well.  
 Even without your extensive music  
 knowledge. I'm Micah.  
 (nods to his cohort)  
 Charlie.

CHARLIE  
 Speak of the devil!

Tamara returns from the bathroom.

TAMARA

I haven't been drunk in a month. We gotta make up for lost time.

ALEX

This is why we're engaged.

MICAH

Alex, you never said what you do?

ALEX

Oh, well... I'm actually still--

MICAH

Hold that thought, amigo.

Micah, Charlie and Tamara all pull out their BlackBerries.

CHARLIE

MICAH

TAMARA

He's en route. Star cameo, tonight. I thought he had a...

Alex retreats to the bar.

BARTENDER

What'll it be?

ALEX

Three wise men.

BARTENDER

Somebody wants to get drunk.

ALEX

Yes. And quick. How much is that?

BARTENDER

It's an open bar.

Nice. Alex downs the shot, retrieves \$2 for the tip jar.

ALEX

Compliments to the chef. Refill?

(off Bartender's look)

Come on. It's Friday night.

BARTENDER

It's Wednesday, dude.

LATER

Alex is wasted on a couch, Tamara, wraps her arm around him lovingly, leans in and whispers--

TAMARA  
He's here...

Alex follows Tamara's gaze past the gates where a LIMO has parked and KYLE BARRINGTON (Bruce Wayne meets Gordon Gekko) passes the bouncer.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
Kyle. This is my fiancé, Alex.

KYLE  
Alex! Pleasure to meet you. Your fiancée gives great phone.

ALEX  
(sic)  
That's gotta mean a lot coming from the hardest working man in biz showness.

Tamara massages her temples, embarrassed. Kyle just chuckles.

AT THE BAR - enormous lashes, ironically glittered eyelids - KAILEY (late 20s, counterculture) narrows her eyes at the Kyle/Tamara/Alex triumvirate. She sucks her gin and tonic between her teeth.

KYLE  
How you liking LA? Everything you wanted?

TAMARA  
He's looking for a publishing job.

KYLE  
Good luck! Kidding. Not my thing, but I know a few guys in that world. Tammy, should we bring your boy in? We can figure out how to get him started out here.

TAMARA  
Wow. That would be...Isn't that great honey?

ALEX  
Yeah, uh...thanks.

KYLE  
You're a good kid, Alex. I like hiring assistants with people in their lives.  
(Cheshire smile)  
Makes you think...about priorities.

Kyle gives them an index finger salute and is off to the bar.

ALEX

Wow. That was not what I was expecting.

TAMARA

Yeah, he's something.

AT THE BAR - Kyle approaches Kailey, who tries to ignore him. He runs his finger down her back - tracing her vertebrae in a serpentine gesture. In spite of herself, Kailey breathes heavily. Kyle smiles. King of the castle.

ALEX

(drunk, to Tamara)

I'm going to sing you a little song  
I wrote with some guys 40 years  
ago.

Alex starts a bizarre dance (snapping fingers, clapping hands) that only makes sense when his singing complements it:

ALEX (CONT'D)

*I never met a girl who makes me  
feel the way that you do. You're--*

In the background, Kailey SLAPS Kyle's hand away, bolting from the bar.

ALEX (CONT'D)

*--alright! Whenever I'm asked who  
makes my dreams real, I say that  
you do. You're outta sight!*

Tamara rolls her eyes, but shuffles a little to humor him. Nearby HATERS take notice. Kailey passes by, starts lip-synching the words as Alex sings them.

ALEX (CONT'D)

*So fee-fi-fo-fum, look out baby.  
Cause here I come. And I'm bringing  
you a love that's true so get  
ready. So get ready.*

Alex and Kailey make eye contact. He raises an eyebrow to her, like a question mark.

ALEX (CONT'D)

*I'm gonna try to make you love me  
too. So get ready. Get ready.*

Kailey catches herself smiling, retreats into the crowd.

INT. IMM BUILDING - RECEPTION - AFTERNOON

Alex reads a book (a little thick for our taste) under a looming sign: INTERNATIONAL MUSIC MANAGEMENT - IMM.

It's a little cramped: An intense-looking rock band (think KORN) is sprawled out over the couches - chugging RED BULL and taking turns BURPING. Real classy.

The doors open, and Tamara emerges. Alex goes in for a kiss.

TAMARA  
(dodging)  
Not here, hon. Follow me.

INT. IMM MAIN HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They pass a conference room where MANAGER #1 and MANAGER #2 (we'll see them again) sit erect across from an ICED RAPPER, who lounges with his feet on the table.

PHONE CALLS. MUSIC OF ALL SORTS. Corporate chaos. But as they approach an office at the end of the hall, the surroundings seem more hushed: intimidating.

There's one, small bastion of warmth in this cold corner, however - Alex nods as he sees the Yankee Stadium Picture of the Couple, prominently displayed on Tamara's desk.

ALEX  
That your desk?  
(off her nod, RE: photo)  
I'm keepin' an eye on you.

INT. KYLE BARRINGTON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

KYLE keeps his back to us, staring out his panoramic window. A RADIO STATION PLAYS at his desk.

KYLE  
(into headset)  
Yes. Yes, I know. That could work.  
Or Sony. Upsell it, man. It's  
chicken and egg with who they open  
for and where they sign. It's a  
matter of time. Okay.

Kyle keeps listening and, with his back still turned, motions Alex to sit down on his couch (which probably cost \$15,000).

KYLE (CONT'D)

I like Kelly for publicity. Because I've done nothing but well in her hands. Sounds good. You got it.

Kyle disconnects. Walks past Alex, ignoring him.

KYLE (CONT'D)

(out the door, to Tamara)

Set a call for me, him, and Kelly tomorrow. Send him her last EPK we have on file. Who's my lunch?

TAMARA (O.S.)

McMurton. His office confirmed.

KYLE

Good. Cancel it.

Kyle closes the door and heads back to his computer, as if he's forgotten Alex is on his couch.

Alex takes in the office. PLATINUM records. Pictures of Kyle with various bands over the years from 80s HAIR BANDS to 90s GRUNGE ACTS to MODERN-DAY ROCKERS. Kyle doesn't look like he's aged a day: it's probably the botox.

Finally, Kyle grabs a chair to sit across from Alex.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Good to see you again.

ALEX

Yeah. You too. Thanks for this.

Alex doesn't know what to say. Notices a very cool SCANDINAVIAN PAINTING on the wall. Points to it.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Nice painting.

Kyle waits to respond, measuring Alex for an extended beat. Studying him a little too closely. Finally, Kyle walks toward the painting. It's slightly crooked.

KYLE

David - Tamara's predecessor - gave me that. One thing he did right in his nine months here.

Kyle adjusts the painting, pushing aside a STANDING LAMP...

ALEX

What's he going on to?

This is strange - the lamp DIMS as Kyle's hand gets close to it. Maybe it's just an electrical failure, but...hmm...

KYLE

I could care less. In my position, you know if something's gonna happen right off the bat. And that's what you gotta run with. David was meek. Here, you gotta see what you want. And attack.

Alex eyes the lamp, which springs back to life as Kyle walks away from it. Is he seeing things?

ALEX

(shaking it off)

Right. I...I see. That's what--

KYLE

(raises the radio volume)  
You hear this radio station? One day, I'm going to rep every band on their top 10.

(Alex is speechless)

I set the record with 6. No one else's had more than 3. But believe me when I say this...I'm going to do everything it fucking takes to own that countdown. Tamara's got that. Not meek. She's the kind of person who'll do whatever it takes to get me there. That's why I hired her. You gotta want it.

ALEX

(at a loss for words)

You always know you wanted to do this?

KYLE

What if you could be a rock star and never wash up? I've got the sex, the drugs, and the rock and roll. Only thing I'd trade this for is MORE of it.

A PHONE BUZZES.

KYLE (CONT'D)

I gotta get on the phone with London. It's past midnight, my band's landing there.

And before we know otherwise, Kyle is back on the phone, crossing one leg over the other...revealing his footwear: You guessed it, **ALLIGATOR SHOES**.

Alex stares at the lamp. The shoes. The lamp. The shoes.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
(waving "bye" with shoe)  
Publishing. I'm on it.

INT. IMM HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Alex stands by Tamara's desk, staring into Kyle's office, transfixed, questioning his own sanity.

TAMARA  
Hey. How was it?  
(Alex doesn't hear her)  
Hello?

ALEX  
(autopilot)  
He's a great guy. Thanks.

Tamara walks him out. As they make their way down the hall, THE SINGER FROM THE ECHOPLEX CONCERT walks by them.

LEAD SINGER  
Hey there, heartbreaker.

Alex does a double take. Behind them, Kyle and Micah step out of their offices. Kyle speaks to Micah and points toward Alex. Micah nods as the lead singer hugs Kyle.

KYLE  
(guttural, escalating)  
Tamara! Back here!! NOW!!!

She runs back as Alex's mind races.

INT. IMM RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Alex walks by a FEMALE RECEPTIONIST (20s) to the elevator, feigning composure.

RECEPTIONIST  
Do you need your parking validated?

ALEX  
Don't own a car.

RECEPTIONIST

How can you not own a car?

ALEX

Yeah. How do you like working here?

RECEPTIONIST

It's not bad. Pay's okay, and when I need to audition, I have interns to sit in.

ALEX

(light bulb)

Very cool. Hey, did you know David? Kyle's old assistant?

RECEPTIONIST

Sure.

ALEX

Did he leave a forwarding number?

INT. IMM OFFICE SUITE - ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Alex looks the Korn-esque band over, nervously.

KORN-ESQUE ARTIST

Going down?

EXT. DOWNTOWN BAR, BACK EXIT - EVENING

Alex emerges from the bar. Sipping a beer...deep in thought. He knows this is fucking crazy. He pulls out a buckslip: "David Turner - 310 228 8323." Dials. We hear the MURMUR of David's voice mail as Alex stares out into the City. BEEP

ALEX

(into phone)

David. Hi. My name's Alex Jacobs.  
Um...This is gonna sound a little weird, but--

INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

TWO CELL PHONES lie side by side in Alex's living room. Tamara listens intently to the Dark Matter CD she picked up at Amoeba. Alex watches the Yankee game, but finds his eyes drawn to his cell phone, waiting for David's call...

He tugs at Tamara's headphone cord.

TAMARA  
What is it, baby?

ALEX  
I...

Alex trails off. How do you say, "Your boss jumped on the roof of our car in Echo Park," without sounding like an idiot?

TAMARA  
What?

ALEX  
I...uh.  
(eyeing the cell)  
Just goin' a little stir crazy.  
Let's do something.

TAMARA  
I'm kind of in the middle of this.  
(RE: CD)  
These guys are really good.  
Unrepped!

ALEX  
All right.

Back to her music...Alex leans in, peels her headphone back:

ALEX (CONT'D)  
(whispers into her ear)  
What if we--

The rest is unintelligible. She sighs.

TAMARA  
I can't say no to miniature golf.

Alex grins, victorious. A CELL PHONE RINGS. Alex practically leaps out of his seat.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
That's me, honey.

ALEX  
Oh.

TAMARA  
(into phone)  
Hello?

We hear what sounds like bellowing through the tinny cell speaker. The magic is broken.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

No. That's my mistake. I'm sorry,  
Kyle. I said I was-- I'll go back  
in. I'm sorry... Hello? Kyle?

She lays the phone down, rattled. Kyle hung up on her.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

I gotta go back to the office. I  
fucked something up and--

ALEX

Was he yelling at you?

TAMARA

(voice wavering)  
I've really gotta go.

Alex hesitates, is this the moment?

ALEX

Tam--

TAMARA

What?

It really looks like she's about to lose it.

ALEX

I didn't drive 3,000 miles to fuck  
up your career for mini golf.

Tamara smiles.

EXT. MINI GOLF COURSE - NIGHT

Lamps illuminate a mini golf course. It's past bedtime for  
the kids, so it's just rowdy teenagers and couples.

Alex walks across the course, on his cell...

ALEX

Hey David, it's Alex Jacobs again.  
Sorry to keep calling. I just  
wanted to know if you--

CLICK. David picks up!

DAVID (O.S.)

Stop calling me.

ALEX

Look, I just--

CLICK. Alex scowls at his phone. Redials: **instantaneous pickup and hang-up.** David really doesn't want to talk.

EXT. BATTING CAGES - NIGHT

Alone at the batting cages, Alex wields a Louisville Slugger. POP - a ball comes flying at him.

ALEX  
Fucker.

CRACK! Alex sends the ball SOARING. Across the way, the park is lit by a single dim lamp. It FLICKERS for a moment as the SHADOWS shift beneath it.

Alex squints at the light. Is there something out there?

POP - a ball flies by Alex. No new movement in the distance. Alex shakes his head. Paranoid.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
David Turner. I am coming for you.

POP - CRACK!!!

INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Alex TEARS the plastic cover off a Silverlake Yellow Pages. He flips to "T." No David Turner... Alex looks to The Culver City Yellow Pages and Hollywood White Pages lying in wait.

ALEX  
Yep. This is insane.

EXT. MELROSE BLVD - DAY

Alex rides his bike down Melrose, clutching a map printout to the handlebar. A BLUE BMW speeds by him, so close that he nearly loses his balance from the WIND.

ALEX  
HEY!

Ahead, the BMW idles at a red light. Alex speeds toward him.

The MAN in the car turns to the side, allowing us a view of his profile through the dark, tinted windows. A CIGARETTE GLOWS for an instant as the Driver sucks at it in silent thought. Alex SMACKS his palm against the trunk.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Watch where you're going, asshole!

The light turns green, but the car just sits there, idling.

Alex makes to pedal off, coming alongside the car, wary. The car inches forward, creeping along. Alex speeds up, and the car matches his speed: the Driver staying just out of his view, mired in shadow within.

Slowly the driver's side window INCHES down with a mechanical WHIR. It gapes wide and still, without reason.

**The Driver FLICKS his cigarette out the window in a perfect shot - it SPARKS as it hits Alex RIGHT IN THE FACE.**

ALEX (CONT'D)  
FUCK!

Not thinking, Alex grabs at his face - his hands flying off the handlebars - his bike CRASHING into the street. The BMW races off, engine ROARING. A horn BLARES as a JAGUAR speeds past, swerving to avoid Alex. He scrambles off the street, staring at the BMW disappearing into the distance.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Fuck this town.

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY

A small house with a fenced-in yard. Exhibit A against home ownership in LA. An ELECTRONIC JAM pulses from within: a DJ is at work. Alex KNOCKS on the front door. The music cuts.

In the out-of-focus background, THE BLUE BMW pulls under the shadow of a tree across the street.

David's door swings open. Alex jumps back as a TABBY CAT scurries out of the house...DAVID TURNER is a black 20-something with a small, shy, nerdy quality to him.

ALEX  
David? We talked on the phone. I'm--

DAVID  
(cringing)  
You couldn't leave me alone.

He closes the door, Alex catches it, bruising his knuckles. David shakes his head - no stopping this idiot. He retreats into the house.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A cozy room. Unremarkable, except for the meticulously filed vinyls and turntable setup. David sips lemonade.

DAVID

I'd offer you something to drink,  
but I'd rather get you out. So what  
do you wanna know?

ALEX

You worked for Kyle Barrington?

DAVID

You know I did.

ALEX

How'd you like it?

DAVID

How's your girl like it?

ALEX

(baiting)

Was it fun?

DAVID

He threw a teletype at me once. You  
know what a teletype is?

(Alex does not)

It's fucking big is what it is.

ALEX

So not the best job.

Behind Alex, through a picture-frame window, we see the BMW's door open. **The Driver leans out, motioning to the tabby cat - "C'mere little fella..."**

DAVID

The job is Kyle's life, so the job  
was my life. He never leaves the  
office, so I never left the office.  
I didn't eat. I didn't sleep. I...

ALEX

What?

DAVID

The bottom line is: I got a wife.  
And there came a point...I couldn't  
do that to her.

ALEX  
What do you mean?

David leans forward - he's not giving Alex much, but he'll give him this:

DAVID  
I mean either your girl is gonna give up her dream job, or your relationship is gonna get  **Fucked up.**

(shrugs)  
Hope you didn't come too far for that.

ALEX  
That's it?

DAVID  
What else do you want? Job I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy.  
The end.

ALEX  
Look, I gotta tell ya, I thought calling you was a nutty move, and I might've been okay with your explanation just now. But you are so fucking weird about all of this...If that's all there is to it, why couldn't you just tell me that on the phone?

DAVID  
I'm not allowed to talk about Kyle.

ALEX  
What, like you signed an NDA?

DAVID  
(sarcastic)  
Yeah. An NDA. Look, Kyle keeps a good firm grip on his kids. Not a lot of us get the luxury of leaving. I got a peaceful out, and I wanna keep it that way.

ALEX  
What does that--

CRASH!!! The picture-frame window is SMASHED. A SHREDDED BALL OF FUR lands on the carpet of shattered glass. It's David's cat - dead. Close up, it looks like it's been split in two at the jaw - a barely recognizable, bloody, torn-up thing.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
What the fuck--

DAVID  
(about to lose his mind)  
Get. Get the fuck out my house.

## I/E. TAMARA'S CAR - NIGHT

Tamara sits in the driver's seat with a stack of contracts and a Hi-Liter. THUP THUP THUP THUP...a helicopter lands right in front of her car, kicking up a storm of dust.

## EXT. BURBANK HELIPAD - NIGHT

Tamara stands at the ready, clutching an envelope. She double-checks the package contents - a packet of papers, a call sheet, and the Dark Matter CD.

A blonde STARLET emerges, hidden from view by her dense entourage. They rush toward a waiting limo.

Kyle swoops out of the 'copter, SNATCHING the package out of Tamara's hands. Tamara rushes to keep up with him.

KYLE  
We are so fucking late.

TAMARA  
Kyle, I put something in there.  
Really great group. Unrepped--

Kyle stops dead in his tracks.

KYLE  
You didn't bring the papers?

TAMARA  
No, the papers are there, too...

Kyle stalks off, calling behind him.

KYLE  
Hot tip. When I'm climbing out of a helicopter and into a limo, with Gwen Stefani, that's a bad fucking time to educate me on new talent.

## INT. IMM BUILDING - TAMARA'S DESK - LATE NIGHT

Tamara sluggishly stuffs papers into a file.

She reaches to her side for a cup of COFFEE, pulls it out of frame, revealing a desktop CLOCK. Nothing like 11PM Espresso.

Defying the late hour, Kyle Barrington rolls in.

KYLE  
You're still here. Get me Micah.

Tamara blinks..."Now?" Robotically dials the phone.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
(shouting from his office)  
You need to clean your desk.

Tamara looks at her desk - he's right. It's more cluttered than ever, her bulletin board so covered in a mishmashed array that the Yankees Stadium picture is barely visible.

TAMARA  
Hi, uh, Micah, I have Kyle for you.  
(putting the line on hold)  
Micah on one.

KYLE  
Stay off this call.

INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Tamara staggers through the front door, laden down with a pile of CDs. Alex looks up from yet another BOOK.

ALEX  
Late night?

TAMARA  
I think he's at a club now. I don't know how he does it. I sleep five hours a night, but when I get in, he's already there. And I just want to collapse, and I make these stupid mistakes.

Alex rises from the couch.

ALEX  
Tamara, we need to talk...

Tamara hesitates, exhausted. Sleep would be better...

TAMARA  
What is it?

He braces himself. Building up the will to make his case...

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
What?

ALEX  
I had a conversation with David.

TAMARA  
David?

ALEX  
David Turner.

TAMARA  
Why would you do that?

ALEX  
He said the job was hell. He--

TAMARA  
Can we talk about this in the  
morning?

ALEX  
Tamara, I think Kyle is the guy who  
attacked us in Echo Park.

Tamara laughs. Alex returns her laugh with a forlorn stare.

TAMARA  
That's a joke, right? You're  
joking.  
(Alex shakes his head)  
Baby, this is... Can we...? Let's  
talk in the morning.

ALEX  
He reps that band, right? So he  
must have been at the concert.

TAMARA  
That doesn't mean he attacked us.

ALEX  
His shoes are--

TAMARA  
(measured)  
Alex. I am exhausted. And this is  
insane.

She walks to the bedroom.

ALEX  
I'm going to the cops tomorrow.

Tamara stops in her tracks, tripping over Alex's threat.

TAMARA  
What did you say?

ALEX  
The detective I spoke to--

The day has been too long for this bullshit.

TAMARA  
Are you fucking kidding? You want to go to the police to report my boss cuz you think he's trolling Echo Park for mugging victims? What? You think he wanted to steal our wallets? He's a fucking millionaire. This. Is. Crazy. I just spent sixteen hours in the office, and I have to be back in seven. I'm not going to field a call from the cops tomorrow because my boss got narc'd out by my boyfriend.

ALEX  
Fiancé.

TAMARA  
Good night.

The bedroom door slams.

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

Charlie raises a margarita glass -

CHARLIE  
A toast!

The table is full of 20-SOMETHINGS. Some are familiar faces...Tamara, Kailey, Charlie, Micah. The rest are new.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
To the overlord...

Assorted chuckles across the table...

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
To Kyle!

MICAH  
Here, here!

Glasses clink.

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Snippets of conversation: KATRINA talks to Micah...

KATRINA

...Here, you can have my copy. It's  
fucking astounding--

She pulls a CD out of her bag, handing it to him...

Kailey talks to JULIANA.

KAILEY

Yeah, after I left, I started doing  
drinks two days a week.

JULIANA

Well that sounds...relaxing.

Micah slips Juliana the CD...

MICAH

Hey, log this.

KAILEY

(smiling)

Beats havin' a boss.

JULIANA

Why do you keep coming to these?

Tamara is wrapped up talking to Charlie...

TAMARA

How often do you, I mean, I guess,  
how often do we do this?

CHARLIE

All the Kyle proteges get together  
last Thursday every other month.

A cute, petite girl with Eurasian features sits next to  
Charlie - this is CHRISTINE. Her voice is squeaky, grating.

CHRISTINE

Guess you should start scheduling  
the next one, right?

Christine and Charlie both laugh at this. They enjoy each  
other far too much...

TAMARA

When did you work for Kyle,  
Christine?

CHRISTINE

Never. I'm a groupie.

Christine squeaks out an endless titter...

INT. ECHO PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY - LOUNGING AREA - DAY

Alex looks at jobs online, scrolling through--

He bites his lower lip. Takes the leap - Googles "Kyle Barrington." Mostly it's "Alanis Morissette wins Grammy" kind of stuff. Far down the page is a footnote, "She is repped by Kyle Barrington and CAA Music."

He flips through a couple of those - "The Sex Pistols," "The Killers" ... Kyle's had some good bands through the years.

And then, there's an odd one..."Alice Davy Murdered." Alex scans over it - "found dead in her hotel room..." "...bled to death." "No leads." And there's a quote from Kyle - "Alice was a truly gifted musician, and a very dear friend."

INT. ECHO PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY - MICROFICHE MACHINE - DAY

Montage of Alex looking through the Billboard magazine archives. Again, mostly good news, but every once in a while, we catch a "died in suicide," or a "drug overdose."

We settle on a report from 1985 - "Bassist commits suicide," "slit his wrists in the hotel shower," "the band is repped by Kyle Barrington." - And there's a picture of Kyle.

Alex holds up his laptop - a 2010 picture of Kyle against the pale microfiche reader. That is some pretty potent plastic surgery - Kyle hasn't aged a day in the last 25 years...

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - LATER

Tamara's plate is picked clean, but the rest of the table is festooned with greenery - untouched salads. Juliana stabs at her dish, but that's all she's doing - stabbing.

Kailey sits with her arms crossed - aside from Tamara, she's apparently the only one at the table who's eaten anything...

TAMARA

...Oh he's driving me crazy.

CHARLIE  
Doesn't get the hours?

KAILEY  
Is this the James Brown guy? I like  
the James Brown guy.

Across the table, Micah accidentally brushes his smoking FAJITA PLATTER. It takes him a second to recognize that the sizzling sound is actually his skin. He YANKS his hand into his mouth, sucking at the wound.

What's odd is that Juliana & Katrina jerk their hands back in an identical motion, as if they too had been burned. Weird. Kailey looks on in interest...

TAMARA  
He needs a real job.

CHARLIE  
He'll get used to it.

Micah calls from across the table, clearly listening to this side conversation the whole time.

MICAH  
We lost David to a naggy wife.

TAMARA  
Alex actually went behind my back  
and called up David.

A hush falls over the table.

CHARLIE  
What did David say?

TAMARA  
He must have trash-talked Kyle. I  
don't know.

Tamara looks down the table. All eyes are on her. Kailey is practically glaring at her.

CHRISTINE  
You should dump him.

TAMARA  
We're engaged.

CHRISTINE  
Trust me, honey. It doesn't get any  
easier.

Tamara doesn't even know how to respond. She looks around the table for support, making eye contact with every person, one by one. She is met by detachment, arch amusement at this argument. Charlie breaks in--

CHARLIE  
(to Christine)  
We fought, when I was on the desk.

CHRISTINE  
Please. I wasn't hunting down old assistants--

CHARLIE  
You took some breaking in.

For some reason, the whole table laughs at this. Even Christine cackles. Kailey breaks away from the table, hands the waiter a pair of twenties. She's out.

Tamara is overwhelmed.

INT. IMM BUILDING - CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

Tamara enters a cold, metallic conference room, carrying the Dark Matter CD past a long line of Managers in 4-figure suits. Kyle kicks up his feet at the head of the table.

KYLE  
He's a Medina guy, right?

CHARLIE  
Yup.

KYLE  
Yeah, let's fucking poach the shit out of him.

Tamara hands Kyle the CD. She ambles out of the room slowly: she wants to hear this next part...

KYLE (CONT'D)  
Anyone heard of these guys? "Dark Matter"?  
(nobody has)  
They're fucking great. Micah...  
(tosses him the CD)  
Give 'em a call. Get into their lives.

MICAH  
Cool. How'd you find them?

Tamara waits at the door to the conference room, beaming.

KYLE  
I'm just that fucking good.

Tamara's SLAMS the door with a deafening THUD. The manager's heads turn in unison to the source of the sound.

INT. IMM BUILDING - TAMARA'S DESK - LATER

Tamara scowls, cleaning her desk. She rearranges the bulletin board, carefully carving out a space for the Yankees Stadium picture. She allows herself a smile at the memento.

Looking down the hall, now, Tamara takes in the sight of an endless row of assistants, typing, gabbing into headphones.

A swarm of managers pass by, out from the meeting.

KYLE  
Dude!

Tamara STARTS. Turns to see Kyle leaning on his office door.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
(pissed)  
Get in here.

Tamara sneers as she walks into the office. Not gonna suffer this shit with a grin. We watch through the open door.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
Shut the door.

Kyle rises as the door closes...

INT. THE APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Home from work, Alex crawls into bed with a sleeping Tamara. He cuddles up next to her, surprised to hear - SOBBING.

ALEX  
Baby?

Alex turns on the light. Tears pour down Tamara's face.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Baby, what's wrong?

TAMARA  
Can you just hold me?

Confused, Alex wraps her in his arms. She reaches back and grabs his hair, exposing...**PUNCTURE WOUNDS ON HER ARM. They look like track marks...** Oblivious to the wounds, Alex just holds her as she sobs...

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - NIGHT

David in bed with his wife: IRENE. He wakes to the sound of BREAKING GLASS. Sits up. Sound of a CAR SCREECHING down the street. Probably hit a beer bottle. Still...

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

David pads down the stairs, flips a switch... Everything looks intact - fresh caulking around the brand-new picture window.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

David pours himself a glass of water. He looks at a rear door - locked, chained, everything's okay...

He pads out into the main room of the house, sipping his water. Ugh. Gonna be hard to fall back asleep now...

A LAMP in the corner of the house FLICKERS for a moment. David eyes it warily...

He must have just imagined it. David heads back--

**The lamp DIMS** - ever so slightly - and the way it dims is...strange. It's like one half of the light dims before the other - like darkness itself is passing through the bulb. David's eyes follow the shadow to his picture window--

A BLACKENED FIGURE passes by, RIGHT NEXT TO THE GLASS. David sets his water on the ground, leans up to his front door's peephole...

David'S POV: Charlie stands on the front porch. The porch-light gleams off his glasses but, eerily, behind the thick frames - his eyes are shadows.

Beat.

Charlie raises his arm. Waves his fingers at David.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Irene sleeps, oblivious. David shakes her awake.

DAVID

Get up. Keep the lights off. Lock  
the bedroom door behind me.

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - NIGHT

David swings open the door, a knife handle hanging out from  
his pajama pants. Charlie waits on the lawn, now.

DAVID

Charlie?

No response. David steps onto the porch.

Charlie stands still and silent as David calls out.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Pretty late for a visit, Charlie.

As David focuses his attention on Charlie, ANOTHER SHADOWY  
FIGURE STEPS BEHIND HIM - it hovers there for a minute,  
poised to strike. David doesn't notice any of this...

DAVID (CONT'D)

(to Charlie)

I didn't tell him anything.

The Figure slips into the house behind David, soundless.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Get the fuck off my lawn, freak.

Charlie walks out of sight behind a hedge.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David starts up the stairs, but stops when he sees **the glass  
of water is spilt on the floor**. He feels a BREEZE blowing  
from the back of the house. The curtains billow as the wind  
makes a soft WHISTLING sound.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

David enters to see the rear door AJAR, air BLOWING in. He  
moves to shut the door, but--

**--The door swings WIDE OPEN as Charlie ENTERS THE HOUSE.**

David ducks out of sight, hiding in a crook between the  
kitchen door and a wall. We can barely see Charlie through  
the door's hinges.

Charlie scans the kitchen, eyes slithering from side to side. He seems out of place as a home invader - gangly, slight hunch, and a grin on his face like a child playing a game.

He walks toward the living room, his body passing RIGHT BY THE CROOK OF THE DOOR. David holds his breath, clutching the knife. Charlie stops right next to him. He slowly turns his head, staring straight at David through the crack.

Without warning Charlie SMASHES the door against the wall, crushing David, who SCREAMS. Charlie SMASHES the door again and again, with a giggle: beating David senseless.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Irene sits on the bed in darkness. We hear, very faintly, a WHUMP from downstairs. Irene tenses, listening--

As she focuses on the sound, we hear everything MAGNIFIED, mostly the sound of her own BREATH, then--

KNOCK KNOCK on the bedroom door.

Irene pauses for a moment - should she say anything?

IRENE  
David?

For a moment, silence, and then - the handle of the door RATTLES. Whoever's outside feels that it's locked.

WHUMP - someone jumps against the door. Irene SCREAMS. Whoever's outside takes this as an encouraging sign - WHUMP WHUMP WHUMP - trying to break the door down.

Irene scrambles for the bedside phone, dials 9-1-1... There's a moment of silence...and then a single, metallic CLANG, followed by a jangling CRACK. What was that?

The doorknob falls to the ground with a THUD. And the bedroom door swings open revealing - Christine.

Irene retreats into a corner as Christine strides forward.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
No. No. Please...

Irene hyperventilates as Christine rips the phone out of the wall. She reaches out to grab her. Snags her wrist--

IRENE (CONT'D)  
No! No! No! No!

CHRISTINE  
Shut. The. Fuck. Up.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - STAIRS - NIGHT

Here's the thing, Irene is a big girl - tall, muscular. And Christine is puny, which makes what follows stunning:

Christine DRAGS Irene down the stairs, putting forward no more effort than if she were pulling a doll.

Irene is struggling, stumbling, falling, crawling - forced down the stairs by the power of Christine's relentless drive.

She sees David straining on the ground, trying to crawl away as Charlie pins him down. The carpet is dyed a deep red.

Charlie is in an altered state - high as a kite. He giggles, slashing again and again at David's back with his own knife. David's skin is peppered with red marks - vivisected.

Irene SCREAMS.

CHRISTINE  
Please...

Christine GRABS Irene's neck, pressing thumb to throat, cutting off the scream. SNAP. **Irene's windpipe breaks.**

Irene collapses to the ground in pain, grabbing at her throat: PAINED WHEEZING sounds. She struggles to lift her head - meeting David's gaze. They stare at each other, dying.

Christine scampers over to Charlie, leans down, and kisses him. They grope, underscored by a dead silence.

INT. DOWNTOWN BAR - NIGHT

Close on RED WINE as it cascades out of a glass.

ALEX (O.S.)  
That's twelve even.

He's distracted by something over his CUSTOMER's shoulder. Is that...Yes it is. Kyle Barrington stands on the back landing with a RAPPER & ENTOURAGE.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BAR, BACK EXIT - NIGHT

Alex approaches as Kyle and Co. unwrap cigars.

ALEX

Kyle?

KYLE

You work here, yeah? Glenfiddich.  
18-year. What are you guys having?

ALEX

It's me--

Kyle's not gonna cop to knowing the Help...

KYLE

Fascinating.  
(man of the people)  
Yo, J. Whatcha want, playa?

Alex pulls out his order pad, shocked by the rudeness.

INT. DOWNTOWN BAR - NIGHT

Guy mans the bar for a moment as Alex surreptitiously dials his cell - David's number.

AUTOMATED VOICE

This number has been disconnected  
and is no longer in service.

That's odd.

INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alex walks in, looking totally exhausted. Tamara sits on the couch, listening to music, devouring a bag of Cheetos.

ALEX

I guess I shouldn't be surprised to  
see you still awake.

TAMARA

I set Kyle's drinks at your--

ALEX

Yeah. I saw him.

Tamara walks into the bathroom.

TAMARA (O.S.)

Did he introduce you to J?

ALEX

No. He did not introduce me to J.

Tamara's cell RINGS. Alex looks at the clock in disbelief. Who the fuck is calling this late?

KYLE BARRINGTON. Alex picks up the phone.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Hey, she's--

KYLE (O.S.)  
Do you think before you act? Does your brain communicate with the rest of your body? Why the fuck would you send my star client to a fucking bar where your fucking boyfriend works? What the fuck were you thinking?

Alex is stunned speechless as Kyle continues.

KYLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
You know what that's like? When you do crap like this, it is like you're walking up to me, pulling back my head, and taking a shit down my throat. You are shitting all over my business. I want to know: Do you do it because you're a retard? Or are you deliberately trying to fuck me?

Beat as Kyle waits for an answer.

ALEX  
This is Alex. Tamara's in the bathroom.

Awkward pause.

KYLE  
(suddenly friendly)  
Oh, hey Alex, it's Kyle. Tell her to give me a call.

EXT. BATTING CAGES - DAY

Alex chants as the balls fly his way...

ALEX  
Kyle Kyle Kyle Kyle Kyle Kyle  
It almost starts to sound like "kill." Swing and a--  
CRACK!!! Going, going, gone!

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY

Alex bikes down a familiar street, brakes squeaking when he sees - David's house has been cordoned off by crime scene tape. Forensic techs shuttle in and out of the front door.

The second story of the house is a grisly picture - a red, bloody swath runs across the pristine, white paint - suggesting that **David's entire body was ground up against the second floor**. Alex staggers forward, only to be cut off by a GREY VOLKSWAGEN, **driven by Kailey**. Alex bangs on the window.

Kailey turns to Alex, a moment of searching her memory - "Where do I know this guy from?"

ALEX

Don't I know you?

Simultaneous recognition. Kailey's first instinct is to get the fuck out of there. She pounds the gas.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hey!

Alex looks around and, without even thinking, picks up a loose chunk of asphalt and LOBS it at Kailey's car. It lands with a THUD, scratching the trunk. Kailey BRAKES, leaping out of her car - more shocked than angry--

KAILEY

You threw a rock at my car? Is this happening?

ALEX

What are you doing here?

KAILEY

Uh. I'll tell you what I'm not doing here. I am not lobbing asphalt at other people's cars. You?

ALEX

I'm here to see a buddy of mine, but--

KAILEY

But...he's dead. Good work.

ALEX

What does that mean?

KAILEY

I'm off--  
(picks up chunk of rock)  
Do not want you doubling up on  
this.

ALEX

5DAZ754.

KAILEY

What?

ALEX

I'm just gonna give your plates to  
the cops. Have a nice day.  
(that stops her)  
Unless...you want to tell me what  
the fuck's going on.

Kailey's stare shifts nervously across the street, eyeing--

--the familiar Blue BMW. The driver, who we now recognize as Micah, leans against it. Cool: sunglasses, smoking a cigarette - staring straight at Alex. And here's the weird thing - it's like light doesn't hit Micah. The area around him is bathed in sun, but he stands in a man-sized shadow. It's as if his body repels the sun's rays. Creepy.

KAILEY

I would rather deal with the cops.

ALEX

What am I supposed to do?

KAILEY

You are supposed to get out of  
town.

ALEX

And my fiancée?

He stares into her eyes, probing. She meets his gaze, skittish, weighing her options. **She elects to SHOVE Alex.**

KAILEY

Stay away from me.

ALEX

I need to--

Kailey pushes him repeatedly.

KAILEY

Stay. Away. From me.

Alex looks down at her hand, with each shove she's grinding a piece of paper into his chest, like she's trying to hand it to him. He takes it, on the sly, out of Micah's sight. Sneaks a glance at it - it's Kailey's BUSINESS CARD.

KAILEY (CONT'D)  
(whispered in his ear)  
Call me when you're alone.  
(distraught)  
When you are fucking alone.

And one last PUSH for show. Kailey saunters back to her car. Takes a deep breath, collecting herself.

KAILEY (CONT'D)  
(is she amused?)  
I cannot believe you threw a  
fucking rock at my car.

She lets out the hint of a grin, peeling off. Alex hops on his bike. Micah climbs into his car. Alex starts to pedal, Micah revs his engine, pulls a u-ey and follows him, matching his speed. How's Alex going to shake this guy?

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Alex walks down a bustling downtown street, stealing the occasional glance over his shoulder: Micah trails behind at a comfortable distance. Alex breaks left, jogging down an alley, emerging the next street over. No one follows.

Alex walks at a brisk pace, trying to put some distance between him and Micah. He glances back again, smiling. Lost him. He BUMPS into a pedestrian.

ALEX  
Oh, sorry, I--

**It's Julian, one of the women from the Mexican restaurant,** but Alex has never seen her before, so he thinks nothing of it. She walks off, pulling out her cell.

Alex continues down the street, still scanning for a sign of Micah, not believing how easy that was.

...Until Micah rounds the corner in front of him, also on his cell phone, boring into Alex with his eyes, unshakable.

INT. DOWNTOWN BAR - DAY

Alex walks into his bar, harried. Micah follows behind, sits at a table, smooth as silk, like he was meant to be here.

The lights dim in Micah's corner as Guy approaches Alex.

GUY

I thought you were off today.

ALEX

Yeah man, let me just work off the clock for an hour.

Off Guy's confused look.

INT. DOWNTOWN BAR - LATER

Later in the day, more people mill about for happy hour. Micah remains at his table - he doesn't look like he's moved an inch. Alex glares at him as he stocks up a tray with drinks. He walks toward the outdoor patio.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BAR, BACK EXIT - EVENING

The moment he's out of Micah's eye line, Alex drops the tray of drinks. Businesslike, he walks to the fire escape. He has been waiting for this all night. He KICKS it and it drops with a clang.

EXT. DOWNTOWN ALLEY - EVENING

Alex hops onto his bike, punches Kailey's number into his cell.

INT. DOWNTOWN BAR - CONTINUOUS

Guy hands a slip to Micah.

GUY

Alex asked me to give you this.

Micah stares down at the slip - "Fun first date. Maybe we can chat more on #2. - A". He sits in silence for a moment, casually takes a sip of his drink: unfazed.

EXT. DOWNTOWN ALLEY - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Alex mounts the bike, finger poised to send, when he sees--

--Juliana across the street, rocking out to an iPod. Juliana locks eyes with Alex as the street lamp above her FLICKERS - now it's obvious that she's one of them.

He slams his cell shut and pedals like his life depends on it. Juliana doesn't miss a beat, nodding her head to the music as she swings her leg over a dark red DUCATI.

Alex strains to go as fast as he can - but he's no match for a motorcycle. Juliana rockets up next to him and brakes to keep pace, flipping up her helmet. TINNY MUSIC from her headphones is somehow audible even from Alex's vantage. She flashes a toothy grin.

Alex spies the Third Street Tunnel ahead - an ancient traffic passage that looks like it's been carved right out of an overhead development - like the entrance to a castle.

Traffic is heavy, but fast at the head of the tunnel. Cars HONK as they pass the first-gear Ducati. Alex shakes his head, takes a massive breath, steeling himself...

Juliana flips the bird at a passing driver as **Alex WHEELS his bicycle to the right, hopping up onto the pedestrian walkway.** He pedals against the flow of traffic as Juliana speeds past.

Juliana tries to pull the same maneuver, but it's not easy in a motorcycle. Her tires SQUEAL against the curb...Alex is getting away, almost out of sight at the lip of the tunnel.

Juliana SCREECHES to a halt, evoking another chorus of HONKS from surrounding cars. She pushes at the curb again, slowly turning the Ducati around to follow Alex.

EXT. THIRD STREET TUNNEL - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Alex jumps off his bike, **throwing it into the pedestrian walkway.** He sprints down the street, toward a nearby CAB.

ALEX  
HEY! HEY!

I/E. THIRD STREET TUNNEL - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Juliana tears down the walkway, PEDESTRIANS leaping out of her path. Seeing Alex in the cab, she revs her engine, **right as she hits Alex's bicycle.** Her Ducati FLIPS on its side. Momentum and friction TEAR through the leg of Juliana's jeans. **Red STREAKS the sidewalk.**

Juliana bolts to her feet. Her jacket and leg look pretty torn up - is that bone sticking out? Ignoring a wound that would floor most people, Juliana sprints forward as if she were just afflicted with a paper cut.

But it's too late, the cab is out of sight.

INT. KAILEY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - EVENING

Kailey's bedroom is lit by a string of Christmas lights that lend a cheap nightclub vibe to the air. Her cell RINGS. Answer/Ignore? Kailey clutches a RED BOX to her chest, fingers wandering the edges, her face unreadable. She lets the phone go just one ring too many before she PICKS UP.

KAILEY  
6830 Fountain.

ALEX (O.S.)  
(through phone)  
Got it.

KAILEY  
(fast, nervous)  
Do not tell anyone about this. Do not call your girlfriend.

EXT. KAILEY'S APARTMENT - HOLLYWOOD - EVENING

Alex watches the cab drive off and turns to see Kailey emerging from her apartment. She walks toward her car - the scar from Alex's asphalt still prominent on the trunk.

ALEX  
That cab ride cost forty bucks.

Kailey presses a button and her car BEEP BEEPS! Unlocked.

KAILEY  
Get in.

I/E. KAILEY'S CAR - WEST HOLLYWOOD - DRIVING - MINUTES LATER

Kailey, driving, looks ahead. Alex stares at her.

ALEX  
Where are we going?

KAILEY  
I am not saying. Mind if I smoke?

ALEX  
Why would it be a secret?

KAILEY  
(rolling down her window)  
Because if I told you, you would not agree to go. Roll down your window.

I/E. KAILEY'S CAR - MINUTES LATER

Smoke gushes out the windows as Kailey drives through West Hollywood, fast approaching Beverly Hills.

KAILEY  
Call your girlfriend.

ALEX  
Why?

KAILEY  
(sarcasm)  
Alex. Would you believe me if I told you that Kyle was a werewolf?

Beat.

ALEX  
(deadpan refusal)  
No. I would not believe you if you told me he was a fucking werewolf.

KAILEY  
Explaining this isn't going to help. Call Tamara. I need to know if Kyle is in the office, at a dinner, whatever.

ALEX  
You're one of his lackeys, right?  
Why don't you just ask him?

KAILEY  
I do not work in music anymore.  
Event planning. I only see Kyle Barrington when they hire me for release parties. And I am not looking to increase our face time.

ALEX  
(while dialing, to Kailey)  
He isn't really a werewolf. Right?

KAILEY  
Idiocy is unattractive, Alex.

INT. IMM BUILDING - TAMARA'S DESK - NIGHT

Tamara answering phones while simultaneously filing, and finishing off the last slice of a CPK Pizza. She's a multi-tasker.

TAMARA

Kyle Barrington's office. May I ask  
who's calling? One moment.

(answers another line)

Kyle Barrington's office. Alex!?  
Hold on.

Kyle looms over Tamara at her desk, waiting for her to  
announce the lines. He scrutinizes her desk.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

Bill on one.

KYLE

Who's on two?

TAMARA

Nobody. I'll handle it.

He stays put at her desk as he takes the call.

KYLE

Hey, what's up?

Tamara juggles e-mails and the phone sheet while picking up  
Alex's line, acutely aware of Kyle's presence.

TAMARA

What is it?

Intercut them as necessary. Alex fans smoke away.

ALEX

Hey. Just calling to say I love--

TAMARA

Not now. It's crazy over here. I've  
gotta--

KYLE

(into phone)

I hate him. I wanna fucking rape  
him.

ALEX

What? Is he watching you?

TAMARA

Yes. Right now. Literally.

KYLE

(covering his mouthpiece)

Why aren't you on this call?

ALEX  
I...okay I love you.

Kyle nods at the Yankee Stadium photo.

KYLE  
The fuck's that picture? Your  
boyfriend? Is this a dentist's  
office?

Alex hears this through the earpiece and SIMMERS.

Tamara's hand flies out, robotic, taking down the photo. She stares at it for a moment, as if her mind just caught up with her hand...not quite sure what to do with it.

Kyle retreats into his office.

TAMARA  
Loveyoutooobye.

Alex hangs up and stares at the phone. Looks out his window.

KAILEY  
Is he at the office?  
(no response, Alex sulks)  
Yo! Motown!

Alex flashes a thumbs up.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT - LATER

A mansion-laden street. Alex watches Kailey type in a code at a large, wrought-iron entrance. He stiffens at the name carved on the gate: BARRINGTON.

ALEX  
No...

KAILEY  
Got another forty bucks to burn?

ALEX  
Are you out of your mind?

KAILEY  
Hey, I would rather be home right  
now.  
(Her gaze lingers on him)  
But I wanna help.

Alex gives a paranoid "anyone following?" look as they enter. They pass a hopelessly racist lawn jockey ornament.

KAILEY (CONT'D)  
David really loved this.

She reaches under the lantern, pulls out a key. Alex gapes at the lack of security.

KAILEY (CONT'D)  
I was his assistant. Wanna know his social?

INT. KYLE BARRINGTON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

ELECTRONIC VOICE  
FAULT. MAIN FRONT DOOR.

The house is very dark. Drawn shades shut out the daylight. The furniture is modern, but antiques pepper the mantles and tables. Is that a platinum album hanging above a mechanical iron coin bank? Chic meets your grandfather.

INT. KYLE BARRINGTON'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

A door opens with a CREAK. Kailey and Alex enter to see an ancient-looking crib in the middle of an empty room.

KAILEY  
This is the nursery. But he doesn't have children. Engaged twice, but never married.

BEDROOM

Kailey and Alex tiptoe in. Complete darkness due to air-tight shades. Kailey flicks a switch. **Pale fluorescent lights come to life.** Alex and Kailey see neon versions of one another.

ALEX  
(nervous)  
Maybe we should go.

KAILEY  
Come over here.

He follows her to the bed where she runs her hands across the covers, holds them up - **HER FINGERS COVERED WITH NEON DUST.**

KITCHEN

Beautiful. The finest counter tops, industrial sink, and a MONSTROUS BRICK OVEN. Kailey throws open the fridge - nothing. Freezer - nothing. Cupboard - a moth flies out.

ALEX

Doesn't sleep... Doesn't eat...

KAILEY

Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

She approaches what looks like a pantry door in the darkest corner of the room. But it's no pantry...

SPIRAL STAIRCASE

They wind down and around the steps. As they approach the base, their surroundings take on a shade of deep red.

THE WALLS TO A REFRIGERATED WINE CELLAR

Alex, fascinated and horrified, turns to Kailey as she swings open the doors to an Argento-esque cavern: hundreds of rows of bottled red fluid. Alex stiffens as he walks through the room, rubbing his arms.

KAILEY (CONT'D)

Cold, yeah?

Alex pours a bottle on its side - the fluid leaves much more of a path than wine would. Different viscosity. Blood.

ALEX

(floored)

Oh my god.

He looks down the line of bottles: all unlabeled.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You tell the cops?

KAILEY

No.

ALEX

Why not?

ELECTRONIC VOICE (O.S.)

FAULT. MAIN FRONT DOOR.

Kailey and Alex turn to each other - their faces ASHEN WHITE.

She walks back up the stairs. Alex rushes past the wine racks toward a pitch black corner of the cellar. A HUMMING RISES as he approaches the darkness.

Alex shines his cell phone into the unknown corner and sees the source of the noise: A LARGE VENTILATION SHAFT. He puts his hands up to it and feels the cold air blowing.

Kailey mounts the stairs, listening for the intruder when - ALLIGATOR SHOES stop right in front of her.

KYLE (O.S.)  
I've got drinks in an hour, let's move it.

She races to the bottom of the stairs, panic building - this was NOT the plan. Sees the flash of Alex's cell and sprints through darkness toward him.

He helps her up and into the VENTILATION SHAFT: no time to think. He jumps in with her, the two barely fitting in together as they listen to the approaching footsteps.

Kyle strides into the cellar with the IMM Receptionist in tow. She is oddly quiet, except for...her breathing. She sucks in erratic, staccato gulps, looking at Kyle expectantly. He motions her to a chair in the center of the room, where she sits. Her eyes stare forward, unwavering.

Alex and Kailey's eyes peek out of the darkness, watching as Kyle walks toward them - WAY TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT. We hear a DRAWER OPEN, and the TINKLING of glass and metal. Our heroes hold their breath as Kyle stalks back to the Receptionist.

She exposes her underarm to him - a rehearsed move. He runs his hand down her arm, her breath quickening at his touch.

**Kailey shelters her eyes, like she knows what comes next.**

Kyle's hand JERKS, stabbing at the Receptionist's arm. She GASPS as Kyle does...something to her. She MOANS.

Kyle kneels down, holding a GLASS SYRINGE filled with her blood. He rolls back his sleeve... The Receptionist grins in anticipation. This isn't her first time...

**Kyle PLUNGES the syringe into his own arm.**

Confused horror on Alex's face as he and Kailey shiver in the freezing shaft, trying their damndest not to move.

For a moment: silence, punctuated only by more gasps.

Kyle's gaze never wavers from her eyes as he depresses the plunger, drawing her blood into his vein. His nostrils flare, his breath deepens as he watches his effect on her.

The Receptionist jerks, cries out. He's not even touching her, but her mouth lets out a sound that can only be described as orgasmic - this is the ultimate high.

Alex hears a MOAN, close by, to his side.

Kailey is biting her lip, breathing heavily, experiencing some kind of contact high. Alex backs away from her, pressed up against the side of the pipe. 360 degrees of revulsion.

He closes his eyes, trying to will this away.

I/E. KAILEY'S CAR - NIGHT

Alex is chilled pale, Kailey trembling. At a stoplight, she lifts her shivering arm to light a cigarette, but can't connect the actions. Defeated, she flicks it out the window.

KAILEY

Fuck.

ALEX

What was that?

(Kailey's unresponsive)

What the fuck is going on?

HONK! The light's been green. Kailey accelerates. Out of nowhere, she REPEATEDLY SLAMS the steering wheel.

Alex grabs a new cigarette. Lights it, getting it started, inhaling. He puts it to her lips. Like a baby breast-feeding, she calms.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Those will kill you, you know.

Kailey manages a small laugh. Sniffs away a tear.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm losing Tam to a fucking monster.

KAILEY

Does she come home at night?

ALEX

She comes home at dawn. And she doesn't go to bed til God knows--

KAILEY

That's the job. You lose her to this like you lose her to anything else...when she doesn't come home at all. That desk ended my engagement and I would not bet on yours.

ALEX

Fuck you. How did you know about that cellar?

KAILEY

Alex. He's bad news. What else do you want? A fucking drawing? Leave Los Angeles.

ALEX

I was freaking the fuck out, and you looked like a tween on E.

KAILEY

(glaring at him)

Go home, pack your suitcase, and kiss your fiancée goodbye.

ALEX

How about telling me something tangible instead of working me with a French fucking tickler. DID HE DO THAT TO YOU? AND WHY SHOULD I TRUST YOU?

The car SCREECHES to a halt. She cuts the motor.

KAILEY

Fuck you. How many people have to die because you like the beach? Get out of my car and get the fuck out of LA.

INT. THE APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

Bagels POP out of a toaster. Cream cheese. Lox. Onions. Bacon? Tamara speeds through her breakfast preparations.

ALEX

Hungry?

TAMARA

(startled)

I like bacon. I like lox. Why not put 'em together?

She gives him a peck on the cheek as she heads for the door.

ALEX

I went to Kyle's house last night.

Tamara stops abruptly.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
He was sucking blood out of your  
receptionist with a syringe, and  
injecting it back into his arm.  
Just thought you should know.

Tamara tugs at the edge of her long sleeves, pulling them  
down to cover her forearms.

Long beat.

TAMARA  
I don't want to talk about this.

She storms out. Alex's eyes narrow.

EXT. RAMPART COMMUNITY POLICE STATION - DAY

Alex hops off a bus and strides toward the Police Precinct.  
He becomes more certain with each step: This is the right  
thing to do.

The bus ROARS off behind him revealing: Micah lying in wait.

A PAIR OF OFFICERS emerge from the Precinct. Alex holds the  
door open for them, readying himself to enter, when--

--Micah appears right in front of him.

ALEX  
Micah, right?

MICAH  
Your girl mentioned you stopped by  
the boss man's house last night.

Alex fumes at the betrayal.

MICAH (CONT'D)  
C'mon. Don't be mad at her. She's  
just worried about you. I'm worried  
too. Your late shifts must be  
driving you crazy.

Alex's phone rings.

ALEX  
(into phone, eyeing Micah)  
Hello. Yes, this is him. Oh. Yes.

MICAH  
You wanted...publishing, right?  
Congrats on the new job.

ALEX  
 (deadpan mock-shock)  
 Amazing. Of course I'll take it.  
 Yeah, he's right here.

Alex reluctantly hands Micah the phone.

MICAH  
 Yeah. Thanks a lot. He's a good  
 kid. You'll love him. Can you just  
 text him the address? I wanna  
 borrow him for a sec. Great.

Alex takes the phone back from Micah who WHIPS his hand out,  
 grabbing his arm.

MICAH (CONT'D)  
 You've got a happy little job. Your  
 fiancée's got a happy little job.  
 You're a happy fucking couple.  
 Problem is, I don't think you're  
 happy enough.

His hand clamps down on Alex's arm, effortlessly eliciting a  
 crunching sound.

ALEX  
 Fuck.

MICAH  
 Are you happy now?

ALEX  
 Yes. Fuck.

His thumb DIGS into Alex's palm, making him wince, a  
 sharpened nail draws blood.

MICAH  
 You gonna talk to the police?

ALEX  
 No.

Micah smiles, releases his grip.

MICAH  
 One day, you can tell your  
 grandkids a cool story about how  
 you got that scar.

And with that, Micah backs away from the precinct, eyes  
 focused on Alex, rubbing his bloodied finger along his gum.

INT. SUSHI RESTAURANT - NIGHT

SLAM!

Alex, Tamara, Guy, and TRACY (20, Guy's slutty date) enjoy a sake bomb. Judging from the cluttered empties, they've been going a while.

Alex stares at Tamara despondently as hungrily slurps down a bowl of Udon. She signals a waiter for another round.

TAMARA

What's wrong? We're celebrating...

ALEX

Yeah. Still hungry.

(chewing the last roll)

There. Better.

She smiles.

TRACY

Guy. I can't feel my hands anymore.

GUY

Excellent. I might actually have a chance tonight. KAMPAI!

SUSHI STAFF (O.S.)

KAMPAI!

Alex is miserable.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alex stumbles backwards into his bedroom. He's down to his boxers (and one shoe) as Tamara slides out of everything save her bra and panties.

ALEX

(feeling sick)

I...

Before he can launch a protest, Tamara throws him on the bed.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Whoa, babe... Did--

TAMARA

Shut up and fuck me.

She, literally, TEARS her bra off her chest and her panties from her waist. Fragments float to the ground.

She attacks him from all angles, hands squeezing everywhere as he slides his boxers off. Alex is overwhelmed by all of this, but can't help being turned on.

The fucking starts immediately, bed rocking RHYTHMICALLY. And there is no doubt that Tamara is the one in control.

CLOSE ON HER HANDS as they knead and pull at his neck, back and chest. His skin reddening at the contact.

Gyrating faster and faster, she takes her hand, sucking at her fingers. She notices the cut on his palm with the dried, smeared blood around it. She stares at it, transfixed.

Her hands and mouth explore all parts of his body, but she never looks away from his bloody palm. It's as if she's in a staring contest with it until--

ALEX  
(prepare for glory)  
Shit...

The trance is broken. Whatever thoughts she just had are now long gone. She bends down to him.

TAMARA  
Wait for me...

And on command, her MOANING INCREASES to a FEVER PITCH.

LATER

Alex's eyes blink open. Groggy. Still drunk. Time unknown. He looks to the end of the bed where Tamara gets dressed again.

ALEX  
Tam? What's going on?

TAMARA  
Emergency at work. Go back to sleep, baby.

ALEX  
I...isn't this my--

TAMARA  
Alex. Go back to sleep.

EXT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Alex and Tamara emerge and walk toward her Jetta, where Alex's BRAND-NEW (still red) BIKE sits atop a bike rack.

EXT. IMM BUILDING - LATER THAT MORNING

Alex walks with Tamara toward the building. Why?

INT. IMM BUILDING - ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

DING!

The door opens - 10th Floor. Tamara gives Alex a quick peck.

ALEX

It's really great to be working in  
the same building as you.  
(sotto)  
And Kyle.

Tamara backs into the IMM Reception area. And now it's clear:  
The job he got is in the same building as IMM.

TAMARA

(right before doors close)  
Good luck, honey.

Alex hits the button for the 11TH FLOOR.

INT. RUTHCHILD PUBLISHING - AFTERNOON

JONAS (28, nerd) walks Alex around the offices.

JONAS

And now we have the print and copy  
room, aka Cabo Cantina. "Why,  
Jonas, do you call it that?"  
Because it's where I spend my  
entire Friday night every week.  
That way, on Monday, when somebody  
asks what I did Friday night, I can  
say "I was at Cabo Cantina!" I call  
that machine "college girls"...

Alex looks down the sea of cubicles, his future stretching  
out before him...

INT. IMM BUILDING - ELEVATOR - EVENING

Alex waits in the elevator as it stops on the 10th floor. The  
doors open, revealing, you guessed it: Kyle Barrington, eyes  
on his blackberry. He gets in, fingers working away at the  
keypad. You'd think Kyle didn't see Alex, until--

KYLE  
(eyes still reading)  
How are you liking it so far?

Alex glares at him. Kyle slips a shit-eating grin.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
Great. And hey, you're welcome.

Kyle lightly slugs him on the shoulder.

EXT. LOS FELIZ STREETS - EVENING

Alex bikes home. Dense haze coats the sky as smoke billows in from a Hollywood Hills wildfire. Fire engine horns BLARE as they crawl through the dense traffic.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alex flips a page in an epic-sized manuscript. He looks at the clock - 2:15AM. Shrugs. Not to worry.

LATER

He flips another page. Much further along now. 3:45AM. Looks at his cell phone - still no word from Tamara.

He puts the manuscript down and paces back and forth. Tired, worried. He calls her.

ALEX  
(leaving voice mail)  
Hey, it's almost 4...

LATER

Alex passed out on the couch. He blinks awake. No Tamara. The clock reads 6:50AM. Maybe she came home and left for work?

LATER

Alex jerks awake as Tamara rushes in the front door.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Did you come home last night?

TAMARA  
No....I was....at the office working  
on tonight's concert.

ALEX  
You should've called me.

She shrugs, enters the apartment without touching Alex, heads for the bedroom. He grabs her by the wrist gently, tenderly.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Is everything okay?

TAMARA  
Fine. I should get going.

ALEX  
What time will you be home tonight?

TAMARA  
Did you hear what I said? I was up  
all night prepping this show. So  
I'm going to be at that show  
TONIGHT. All night.

She disappears into the bedroom.

ALEX  
Any chance I can join you?

TAMARA (O.S.)  
It's a small venue. More of a  
business thing. It's that band I  
found.

ALEX  
Hey. That's great, baby!  
(no response from Tamara)  
Just tell me where you'll be. Ease  
my neuroses.

She comes back in a new set of clothes.

TAMARA  
The Viper Room.

She's out the door again without another word.

ALEX  
What. The. Fuck.

INT. KAILEY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Kailey, fresh out of the shower, picks up her phone. INTERCUT AS NECESSARY.

KAILEY  
(sarcastic)  
Hey. Congrats on your new job.

ALEX

Please. Don't. I need to do something... She's... I need you to help me.

KAILEY

Does this involve me risking my life and you showing your appreciation by being a prick?

Beat.

ALEX

Maybe. Do you have any hookups for The Viper Room?

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Sunset Strip: The Viper Room, Whiskey A-Go-Go, Roxy and The Rainbow are all within a stone's throw of each other.

Neon reigns everywhere. Even outside a packed Coffee Bean.

A MEXICAN MAN sells bacon-wrapped hot dogs and his greasy concoctions are a big hit: a long line has formed.

A police car drives by, and a loitering, TATTOOED MALE yells with a raised fist. Fight The Power.

Kailey parks on an out-of-the-way side street.

EXT. THE VIPER ROOM - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Alex moves forward in the queue. Up ahead, Kailey gets a few hugs and fist bumps as this was, at one point, her scene.

INT. THE VIPER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alex looks across the venue to see Kailey sipping a beer. She's playing down their acquaintance for obvious reasons. He scans the crowd for Tamara. 250 people are tightly packed here in this small music hall. It'd be hard to find anybody.

On stage, a TECHNICIAN finishes his last sound check. He gives a "let's roll" twirling of the index finger off-stage. Micah, alone and wearing sunglasses (yes, inside), nods back.

INT. VIPER ROOM - SECLUDED HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Christine flirts with a BRUNETTE (20, female).

They touch and whisper against the bathroom door as Charlie, with his arm around BLONDE (20, female), watches from a few feet away. Smiles.

MICAH  
Showtime. Go get them.

Charlie doesn't like Micah pulling rank. Nevertheless, he abandons the young lady whose eyes fall to Micah: ready to move up the food chain.

Christine is now making out with Brunette. Charlie squeezes Christine's ass on the way out. She appreciates the sentiment, opening her eyes and smiling mid-kiss.

INT. VIPER ROOM - BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charlie enters this underlit hideout. He finds Tamara alongside Kyle and the MEMBERS OF DARK MATTER (20-somethings with a gothic look). VIP SUITS & HIPSTERS sprinkled in.

CHARLIE  
Ladies and gentlemen, you've been such lovely guests tonight. But I'm afraid the show must go on.

The Band exits to soft applause. Kyle turns to Tamara.

KYLE  
Stay with us after the show. And since you have so much free time, I'm going to have you run day-to-day for these guys now.

Tamara nods, elated. Kyle manages the smallest of grins and exits as Christine enters with her young groupies in tow.

CHARLIE  
You guys want to know why their new album's my favorite?

Ta-da! Charlie lifts a DARK MATTER CD from the table with two lines of cocaine cut across it. What a guy.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
(to the young females)  
You girls want to rock out?

POV DARK MATTER CD (2 LINES BLOCKING OUR VIEW)

Brunette snorts. Blinks. Smiles.

Blonde snorts. Blinks. Smiles.

Tamara is uncomfortable, but hides it.

BRUNETTE  
Aren't you guys going to have some?

BLONDE  
Janelle, shut up.

CHRISTINE  
We have special stuff we like to  
save for after the show.

Charlie raises one more line on the CD to Blonde.

CHARLIE  
Because you're my favorite...

INT. VIPER ROOM - CONCERT STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The Black Heart from the album cover projects onto the back wall: flickering backlight. A spotlight slides from one musician to the next. The crowd goes nuts.

Looking around, Alex is all business. Kailey heads to the bar, passing Tamara. Tamara gives Kailey one of those "I know you" looks. Kailey ducks out of sight.

Tamara joins Christine and the hotties who dance unbridled on the floor - possessed by the music, lighting, and drugs.

Tamara cringes at the sight of Alex. She looks across the floor to Kailey and then back to him. Silent alarms go off.

Christine senses fury. She holds Tamara in, dancing with her.

CHRISTINE  
Relax, baby...Kyle'll be here soon.

They are bathed in RED LIGHT, crawling every which way around them. Tamara is hesitant for a moment until she feels the contours of Christine's body and mentally escapes.

Alex catches Kailey's attention and waves his hand toward Tamara, "Can you fucking believe this?" Kailey nods. Sensing Alex panicking, she beckons him, retreating to the hallway.

Alex follows her in path. As he passes the back room A MOAN stops him in his tracks.

BRUNETTE (O.S.)  
Charlie...

**Alex cracks open the door and sees Charlie fucking Brunette wildly on the couch.**

Charlie buries his face in Brunette's neck. Her MOANING crescendoes. He looks up at Alex, blood dribbling from his nose and lips. Alex's takes a knee-jerk step back. Hand on heart, he catches his breath as he looks at Charlie's wild eyes. Blood + Coke = Charlie's turn to get high.

A HAND GRABS Alex's shoulder. It's Kailey. She looks in with him for a moment and then closes the door. They start walking back toward the concert, arguing in hushed tones--

KAILEY  
Walk ahead of me.

ALEX  
Let's get Tamara and get out of here. I've had--

KAILEY  
It's too late, Alex. We're getting the fuck out of here. No Tamara.

Kailey being around all this is bringing back the wrong kind of memories. Alex follows her, a good twenty feet behind, as they rejoin the crowd.

He sees Christine, Blonde, and Micah all at their original spots. No Tamara. Where'd she go without them?

Kailey stops at the door and looks back at Alex, sensing what's to come...

Confused, Alex sifts through the crowd, panicking. Then at the back corner of the stage, Alex sees a room that looks suspiciously abandoned. None of the other doors have a twenty-foot buffer zone. Behind him, Kailey shakes her head.

He approaches it, feeling more alone and vulnerable than ever. He nudges the door, revealing - his worst fear come to life: **Kyle is injecting himself with Tamara's blood. She MOANS.** They are both extremely high: oblivious to Alex.

Alex's heart skips, like, three beats as the cold tinge of betrayal courses through his veins. Enraged, he SLAMS the door wide open and LUNGES into the room--

He doesn't get far, though, as his head SNAPS BACK...Alex falls to the ground, skull hitting the floor with a CRACK. **Charlie looms over him, clenching a fistful of Alex's mane.**

Alex holds his head as his ears RING, dizzy.

CHARLIE

I dare you to get up, you fucking  
pussy.

(to Kailey at the door)

Seriously, Kailey? You aren't here  
with him, are you? I had fun with  
David, but it's gonna be a fucking  
field day with you.

Kailey steps back, horrified at being discovered. Alex  
stammers to his feet, but SMACK! Charlie knocks him back to  
the ground with another vicious right.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(leaning down, softly)

Now Micah and I have both warned  
you. Let Tamara go and we'll let  
you live. Step on our toes again  
and you'll know what having your  
heart ripped out REALLY FEELS LIKE.

Charlie is off. Alex just lays in utter, shit-kicked defeat.

I/E. KAILEY'S CAR - SUNSET BLVD - MOMENTS LATER

Kailey smokes a cigarette as SMACK! Alex punches the  
dashboard so hard that the glove compartment unlatches. Put  
it on his tab.

INT. VIPER ROOM - HALLWAY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Kyle, Micah, Charlie, Blonde, and Christine return to the  
back room...

The horror of what's become of Brunette hits Blonde like a  
ton of bricks. She turns to her new "friends" for emotional  
support but the twisted look on their faces instill fear  
instead of pity.

BLONDE

No. NO!--

Kyle pulls her into the room and out of view as the group  
follows.

IN THE OTHER BACK ROOM

Tamara is passed out leaning against the wall, drained in  
every sense of the word. Ignorance is bliss.

## I/E. KAILEY'S CAR - NIGHT

Alex holds his head in pain as Kailey continues her chain-smoking habit.

ALEX  
So he's turning her, right? She's  
becoming one of them.

Kailey nods. Alex stares ahead into the night. Hold on his burning eyes - **THIS BITTER CRUCIBLE HAS CHANGED HIM.**

## INT. HOME DEPOT - NIGHT

Kailey and Alex in a Home Depot. They stare straight at us. We have no idea what they're looking at, but their faces are portraits of grim determination - they're on a mission.

ALEX  
(points near the camera)  
I like that one.

KAILEY  
I think we should get the big one.

ALEX  
Alright. How about one of each?

## INT. CHARLIE &amp; CHRISTINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

RING. That would be the doorbell.

Charlie is alone in the kitchen, rubbing his nose and watching TV. Crusty remnants of blood cover his face.

CHRISTINE (O.S.)  
(from upstairs)  
Charlie?

CHARLIE  
I'll get it.

He walks to the front door. Outside, we hear a faint grumbling - probably a motorcycle. Charlie looks through the peephole:

CHARLIE'S POV: Alex standing on his porch - right next to the door. Alex's face is tense: his nostrils flared.

Charlie grins. Unbuttons his sleeves. Neatly rolls them up. He swings the door open, ready for whatever Alex is going to--

**ALEX SWINGS A CHAINSAW UP BETWEEN CHARLIE'S LEGS.**

For a moment, Charlie is too stunned to act as Alex shoves him back into the living room. It's hard to cut up Charlie, his body is as hard as, well, as hard as a tree.

**Christine SCREAMS from upstairs.** Charlie snarls, knocking the chainsaw out of Alex's hands. It spins around and away from them on the living room floor like metallic Russian roulette. Good luck picking that up.

Charlie raises his hand to swipe at Alex, but **KAILEY SWOOPS IN, DIGGING HER CHAINSAW ("the big one") into Charlie's arm.**

She drives forward, tearing up his bicep. Charlie finally caves into the pain, SCREAMING. Alex punches him hard in the face to shut him up. Instead of silence following, an identical, WAILING ECHO comes from Christine upstairs.

Charlie reels as Alex looks down at the spinning chainsaw, trying to time this right and save a few fingers.

ALEX

What the fuck is she doing up  
there?

Kailey pulls her chainsaw out of Charlie and heads up the stairs for Christine. Charlie coughs, building up his strength.

UPSTAIRS

Kailey looks down a long, dark hallway - lots of rooms to hide in. Total silence now, no sign of Christine. Kailey BURSTS into the first room on her left, revving her chainsaw--

--A DARKENED STUDY. The only source of illumination is a night-light glowing in a corner. Kailey's eyes scan the room, looking for nooks that could hide her quarry. They settle on a bathroom door...slightly ajar...

DOWNSTAIRS

Alex strikes: GRABBING the spinning chainsaw.

He revs it, and looks up to see - Charlie, just out of reach, on his feet. And yeah, he's bloody, but he's still a fucking force to be reckoned with. Alex GULPS.

UPSTAIRS

Kailey SWINGS into...an EMPTY bathroom. Dammit. Kailey catches her breath, heart pounding. She pads back through the study...

...the camera moves a little faster than her, panning into the hall, where we see...**CHRISTINE** - nestled right next to the door frame. Her breath is ragged, anticipating her second meal of the night...

DOWNSTAIRS

The Men circle each other, Charlie pressing closer and closer to Alex, but staying just outside of striking range.

CHARLIE

You really fucked this up.

Alex REV'S the chainsaw, menacing. Charlie FEINTS toward him. Alex SCREAMS, FLAILING at Charlie, who ducks back.

**PSYCH!** Charlie cackles.

UPSTAIRS

Kailey raises her chainsaw as she approaches the door to the hallway. THINKS for a second. Don't want to make too much noise. She CUTS the motor (bad idea, Kailey), and steps toward the hall - wooden floorboards CREAKING beneath her feet in spite of her best efforts.

She gets right up next to the door frame. Takes a deep breath. She lowers her head to look into the hall, eye line just clearing the doo--

**CHRISTINE'S HANDS DART in, grabbing her head.** She SHOVES Kailey to the floor, pinning her by the throat.

DOWNSTAIRS

Charlie attacks for real now, LUNGING at Alex. Before Alex can raise his weapon, **Charlie's hand CLAWS at his face, drawing blood.** Alex staggers back, dazed, SLAMMING into a wall.

UPSTAIRS

Kailey CHOKES as Christine's fingers DIG into the sides of her neck. Kailey pulls at her weapon. The saw GRINDS to life! But, hearing the sound, Christine SNATCHES it out of her hands. Kailey SQUIRMS helplessly under her iron grip as Christine studies the chainsaw.

CHRISTINE

Fun toy.

**Restraining Kailey with one hand, she lifts the huge saw with the other, its blade biting through the air.**

## DOWNSTAIRS

Alex dodges as Charlie's fist SMASHES through drywall. He's not so lucky on the second blow, which CLIPS his ear. Charlie winds up for a third and swings his fist as Alex raises the saw. **Charlie's fist flies INTO the CHAINSAW BLADE, which slices in between his knuckles.**

## UPSTAIRS

Christine SWINGS the chainsaw down at Kailey's face, but--

--DROPS IT MID-SWING. Kailey's head dodges out of the way as the chainsaw DIGS into the floor and FLIPS down the stairs, tearing into everything it hits, its motor gradually dying. The dissected railings fall apart, one after another.

Kailey looks on in surprise at Christine's chainsaw wielding hand: **IT'S SOMEHOW BEEN SPLIT DOWN THE MIDDLE - her RING and MIDDLE finger separated by a BLOODY CLEAVE. We should, of course, notice that this wound is IDENTICAL to the one Alex just inflicted on Charlie downstairs.** Christine CRIES OUT, clutching her hand as Kailey BREAKS FREE of her grasp.

## DOWNSTAIRS

Charlie CLENCHES at the chainsaw with both hands, ignoring the BLADE as it digs further into his flesh. The chain GRINDS to a halt, unable to pull harder than Charlie's muscles can squeeze. Charlie BARES his teeth, moving to BITE at Alex.

Alex's grasps blindly to his side, looking for another weapon. He finds one in the form of a MASSIVE STANDING LAMP. **He SLAMS IT DOWN on Charlie's head.** Once, twice - it dims with each blow, darkening as it approaches Charlie - a third blow, a fourth...finally Charlie STAGGERS back, CLUTCHING his head. The chainsaw ROARS back to life.

## UPSTAIRS

Christine, **similarly CLUTCHING at her head**, GRABS Kailey by the scruff of her neck, dragging her back toward the STAIRS. Kailey's legs KICK uselessly at the hardwood floor.

## DOWNSTAIRS

Charlie HOWLS as Alex brings the chainsaw down on Charlie's leg, right at the KNEE. Alex SHOVES all his weight behind it as it cuts through muscle and bone.

## UPSTAIRS

Christine's leg suddenly GIVES out from under her, her shin bending out the wrong way beneath the knee as blood SPRAYS, soaking her pant leg from within - again mimicking Charlie's injuries. Kailey KICKS the off-balance Christine, sending her FALLING down the stairs - impacting all the way down - WHAM. BAM. THANK YOU. MA'AM.

DOWNSTAIRS

Charlie CRAWLS along the ground, one leg hanging uselessly behind him. **He GRABS at Alex's legs.** Alex fights to keep his balance as he sees Christine fall to the bottom of the stairs. Christine doesn't miss a beat. She picks up Kailey's fallen chainsaw and REV'S it to life. HOPPING toward Alex on her good leg.

Charlie TUGS at Alex's legs, sending him falling forward. Alex breaks his fall with his chainsaw, **pushing the blade into Charlie's back, right at his heart.** Alex throws his full weight onto it as his legs give out from under him.

Kailey comes running down the stairs to see:

**An identical fatal wound manifest on Christine's back.**

Alex revs the motor up higher and higher.

ALEX

I dare you to get up, you fucking pussy.

He looks on in surprise at Christine, who stands in place, SPASMING. Alex finishes the job: FULLY IMPALING CHARLIE.

BLOOD EXPLODES inside Christine's shirt, as she FALLS.

INT. KYLE BARRINGTON'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS WINE CELLAR

A BOTTLE SHATTERS on the ground. Liquid oozes everywhere.

Kyle jerks up. On the ground the, corpses of Brunette and Blonde are being drained into several wine bottles.

His eyes build in rage as he realizes what's become of his close friends. Somehow, he knows.

INT. CHARLIE & CHRISTINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alex stumbles toward Christine's body. He looks it over with Kailey, examining the broken leg, the bloody back, the split tendons in her hand...

ALEX

How'd you do all this without your chainsaw?

INT. CHARLIE & CHRISTINE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Alex, now in a fresh set of Charlie's clothes, walks downstairs, carrying clean attire for Kailey. Kailey opens the gas cap of her chainsaw and shakes the fuel all over the dead couple.

KAILEY

Everything you cut on him got sliced right into her.

ALEX

He made her one of them, right?  
(off Kailey's nod)  
And you didn't do any of that...  
mutilation?

Kailey shakes her head, handing him the chainsaw in exchange for the clothes.

KAILEY

Finish this for me?

Alex shakes out the remaining fuel as Kailey, without a second thought, takes off her shirt and jeans: HOT.

ALEX

(oblivious)

So if you kill one, the minions die with him...

Alex turns, finally noticing Kailey's striptease. He averts his eyes, sheepish.

KAILEY

(RE: her exposed body)

Alex. We just killed two people.  
This isn't a big deal.

**Alex nods, IGNITING the edge of the gas trail.** He looks at Kailey, shyly checking her out. The glow of the fire grows off-screen. She shakes her head, smiling as she pulls her new clothes on. Alex runs a hand through his blood-caked mane, actually giving it a little style--

KAILEY (CONT'D)

(head poking through  
shirt)

Your hair's looking cool right now.

Alex looks back at her. The crackle of the fire.

I/E. KAILEY'S CAR - NIGHT

Kailey and Alex enjoy a cigarette in silence as she starts the car. Through the window, we see the glow of a fire in Charlie's living room. It spreads through the house.

ALEX

Smoking. I get it now.

I/E. KAILEY'S PARKED CAR - ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Parked. Kailey lectures.

KAILEY

You cannot do this. She is being groomed to kill. You...

Unwilling to hear this, and his mind made up, Alex gets out of the car.

KAILEY (CONT'D)

It's your funeral.

Alex leans in the window.

ALEX

I have to try and make it work,  
Kailey. What would you do?

The words sting Kailey. She peels out, nearly knocking him over, speeding off into the night.

INT. THE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tamara's face is paler than ever - dimly lit by her laptop. Behind her, Alex enters. She looks up, her nostrils flare.

TAMARA

Your girlfriend's a smoker?

ALEX

She's not my girlfriend.

TAMARA

Charlie told me you were with her.

ALEX

Well, I just spoke to Charlie, and he takes that back.

TAMARA

What do you mean?

ALEX

Leave LA with me.

Tamara laughs - a creepy, sickly cackle.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm serious.

TAMARA

This is my job--

ALEX

It's your soul.

TAMARA

(refocusing on her laptop)

You're so fucking dramatic.

Alex speeds up to her, shuts the laptop, grabs it.

ALEX

You know I'm not...YOU KNOW I'M NOT  
BEING DRAMATIC.

TAMARA

GIVE ME BACK MY FUCKING LAPTOP,  
ASSHOLE.

She PUNCHES him in the chest. HARD. Alex winces.

ALEX

Jesus. Fuck.

She snatches the laptop back. Alex bends down, wheezes.

TAMARA

Alex?

Alex takes shallow breaths. A tear rolls down his cheek. Like an abusive husband, Tamara coddles her victim--

TAMARA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, baby. Are you okay?

ALEX

Come with me. Let's have a normal  
life. You don't need...

(chokes, vulnerable)

Can't you just be happy with me?

Tamara starts to cry with Alex. They share a kiss, wettened by their tears. She runs her hand through his hair and --

ALEX (CONT'D)

Oww!

Her hand has opened up a head-wound from the fight with Charlie. A SMALL DROPLET of blood presents itself.

TAMARA

I'm sorry.

She moves to kiss it, make it all better. Again, her nostrils FLARE. She smells, and then she sees the blood.

Oblivious, Alex holds her. Tamara's mouth moves toward the blood. Hesitant, excruciating, slow. **Her lips press against the wound. She holds there for a moment as the blood seeps into the creases of her mouth.**

Alex senses that something's off. He eyes Tamara, wary, as her breathing quickens. She tightens her grip on him.

ALEX

Tam--

TAMARA

I'm sorry.

She licks the wound. Her breathing is heavy now, a pant.

ALEX

Stop--

She BRINGS HER TEETH DOWN TOWARD HIS NECK. Alex shoves his hand in her face, pushing her back. Tamara shrieks, slapping his hand away - it slams into the wall with a CRUNCH. Tamara squeezes his head, holding him in place in a deadly grip.

TAMARA

I need this.

She RIPS at the skin of his neck, tearing the wound WIDE. Blood flows freely. Alex SCREAMS.

TAMARA (CONT'D)

I won't hurt you. I'll make it good for you. I'm so hungry...

He slaps at her body. Tamara GROWLS, tightens her grip. She lowers her mouth toward the wound - she's so close... Alex reaches out for something, anything, his fingers clasp on... Tamara's laptop. Alex takes a deep, gasping breath and--

**SWINGS THE LAPTOP INTO HER HEAD, CRACKING THE COMPUTER IN TWO. Tamara REELS BACK. SCREAMING.**

Alex retreats, falling onto the floor. Tamara growls, LUNGES at him. He lifts his elbow, KNOCKING her in the chin, flipping her over. Still she GRUNTS with hunger. Reaches for his leg, grabbing it. He KICKS her in the face, knocking her out.

ALEX  
FUCK!

I/E. TAMARA'S JETTA - 10 EAST (DOWNTOWN) - LATE NIGHT

Alex is leaving Los Angeles. He turns up the radio as a distraction. It is, of course, the hit song that the band at The Echoplex opened with. He grunts, shutting off the radio.

A momentary calm washes over him until he looks outside at a passing Manny Ramirez billboard reading "THIS IS DODGERTOWN!" He exhales, bottling his growing frustration.

And then he BRAKES HARD, nearly hitting the car in front of him. Ahead, even at this late hour, is an insane traffic jam. Bumper-to-bumper, nobody moving.

ALEX  
MOTHERFUCKER!!!

He signals to turn, fighting his way towards the exit.

INT. CHARLIE & CHRISTINE'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

CHARRED. WET. GRAY SMOKE wafts through the air in the burnt remains of Charlie's house. A FIREFIGHTER lugs a hose out of the living room, nearly tripping over Christine's carcass in the process. We don't get a good look at her, but based on the queasy look on the firefighter's face, it's clear that she ain't pretty.

As the Firefighter walks out the door, the porch light FLASHES, stuttering. He pulls out his walkie-talkie.

FIREFIGHTER  
(voice trailing off as he moves out of sight)  
Hey, this is Kev, I'm gonna throw the breaker--

Kyle lunges out of a shadowy alcove behind the front door. He stares at the corpses, eyes burning with rage.

I/E. MICAH'S BMW - LATE NIGHT

Micah cruises up PCH when his cell rings.

MICAH

Hey.

KYLE (O.S.)

(on car's speakerphone)

Christine and Charlie are dead.

The hint of a smile washes across Micah's face. No love lost there.

MICAH

(sounds sincere)

Fuck, man.

EXT. MICAH'S BMW - LATE NIGHT

Micah turns around, heading back to the 10.

INT. KAILEY'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

KNOCKING. Strong, insistent banging on the door. Kailey opens up, revealing Alex, clutching gauze to his neck.

KAILEY

(concerned)

Are you...?

ALEX

(waving her off)

I gave worse than I got.

KAILEY

Did you get the engagement ring back? I know a good pawn shop.

ALEX

Is it too late for her?

KAILEY

(is he insane?)

You are fucking relentless.

She retreats into the house. It's a mess - like Alex's apartment when he was moving in, but Kailey's moving out.

ALEX

(RE: the mess)

What's this?

KAILEY

This? Um. This is what a rational human being does after she conducts a pre-meditated double murder. Leaves town. It's that thing you should have done instead of offering yourself up for dinner.

ALEX

Why didn't you turn? He took your blood, too. Why aren't you like them?

KAILEY

How do you know I'm not?

Alex grabs a floor lamp and tips it on its base, drawing it close to Kailey's face. It burns bright - unfaltering - illuminating them both as they stare at each other.

KAILEY (CONT'D)

I still feel him in my veins...but I never finished it. I never killed. I came close. I wanted to. I was...hungry...

(lost in the thought)

But I wasn't hungry enough. Not for that. I watched the new ones come after me...over and over again. Their fiancés, boyfriends, best friends from school...their loved ones always disappear. And the next day, Kyle's bright-eyed, ambitious assistant becomes...something else.

#### I/E. THE APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Micah KNOCKS on Tamara's door, which springs open with his fist - ajar. The living room is awash in candy wrappers, cereal boxes, half-eaten cartons of ice cream. It looks like an animal has made its way through the kitchen pantry. Micah does his part to add to the mess, dropping a butt onto the carpet. He lights up another - his lungs can take it.

Micah follows CRUNCHING and RUSTLING sounds that lead him into THE KITCHEN, which is awash in the same detritus that clutters the rest of the house. Tamara curls in the corner, quivering like an addict. He touches her shoulder and she LUNGES at him, hungry and wild.

He SLAPS HER. Very hard, without remorse. She retreats, whimpering like an abused animal.

TAMARA  
(suddenly weak, softly)  
Micah. I'm so hungry.

We see a half-eaten raw steak in her hand - red stains on her face.

MICAH  
Where's your boy?

TAMARA  
What's happening to me? I don't  
know what I...I tried to--

MICAH  
So he's alive?

TAMARA  
(sad, sober)  
I'm going to lose him...

Micah gets up to leave, shaking his head.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
...to that whore.

Micah snaps back to Tamara, a spark in his eye.

MICAH  
There's a woman?

Tamara nibbles at the steak, afraid that she's already said too much.

TAMARA  
Don't hurt him.

Micah retreats to the front door, whipping out his cell.

MICAH  
(over his shoulder)  
Get something real to eat.

TAMARA  
What? What am I supposed to eat?

Micah shoots her a cold gaze: "You know what."

INT. KAILEY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Alex trails after Kailey into the bedroom.

ALEX

I can still save her, then. As long  
as she hasn't killed--

KAILEY

Alex, what are you going to do?  
Reason with her? She was trying to  
devour you.

ALEX

I'll kill Kyle.

Kailey laughs, but Alex is stone-cold sober.

KAILEY

(sincere)

You're a good boyfriend.

ALEX

I think I might be, like, 10  
percent less likely to die if you  
helped. And brought a chainsaw.

Kailey pulls out a dresser drawer, avoiding.

KAILEY

Yeah, you could raise your odds to,  
like, two in a million. All we can  
do is run. I think--

(She holds up an overly  
large t-shirt)

--some of Rafi's old stuff could  
fit you, I--

ALEX

I thought you split up.

KAILEY

Yeah, we--

ALEX

And he just left you his entire  
wardrobe?

Kailey bites her lip. Doesn't want to talk about this. Her gaze wanders to a picture frame on the dresser top. Alex stares at the frame - a picture of Kailey, just a smidge younger, her arms wrapped around RAFI. Rafi has a familiar look - long, brown hair, a goofy grin - an uncanny resemblance to Alex.

ALEX (CONT'D)

He's dead, isn't he?

(her silence says yes)

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 And you couldn't...so Kyle did.  
 (her scowl says yes)  
 And you watched the train of  
 boyfriends, fiancés die. You would  
 have watched me die... I'll bet you  
 want to kill him so bad...

Something stirs in Kailey. She takes a deep, silent breath.

She reaches into the dresser drawer, through the clothing, pulling out a BRIGHT RED BOX with Rafi's picture TAPED to the top. Alex takes the box, as Kailey reaches into the clothing for something else...pulling out A SAWED-OFF, DOUBLE-BARRELED SHOTGUN. Alex opens the box to reveal SHELLS lying in wait beneath the picture of Rafi.

KAILEY  
 The thought had occurred to me.

EXT. KAILEY'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Juliana's Ducati TEARS through the street, SCREECHING to a halt in front of Kailey's house. She leaps off of the motorcycle, limp barely noticeable. She yanks off her helmet and, down to business, pulls out her iPod. She runs forward and DIVES headfirst through Kailey's front window--

INT. KAILEY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--she jumps to her feet. Shards of glass molt harmlessly off her face and hair. Her eyes sweep the living room, taking in the disarray - most of the mess is gone, packed, but it's obvious that whoever was here left in a hurry. The red box lies on the floor...empty of its ammunition.

I/E. MICAH'S BMW - LATE NIGHT

Micah on the phone with Kyle.

MICAH  
 It's empty at Kailey's. She's  
 packed and out. What do we do?

Silence on the other end of the line.

MICAH (CONT'D)  
 Kyle?

KYLE (O.S.)  
 (on speakerphone)  
 Get everyone in to the office.  
 (MORE)

KYLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
We're going to hunt them down and  
fucking flay them.

INT. IMM MAIN HALLWAY - LATE NIGHT

HOLLOW POUNDING SOUND. Kyle paces down the interminable Main Hallway of IMM. He throws a baseball hard against the carpeted floor. It bounces back into his hand. Throws it again, again, HARDER, AGAIN.

He is a boiling core of anger, waiting to explode.

INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Tamara stares out her window at her residential complex. Her eyes dart from apartment to apartment, searching...hungry. Her gaze settles on a pink, plastic tricycle in front of a neighbor's house. A drop of DROOL slides down her chin.

She catches herself, frantically wiping off the spit.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Kailey fills up her car as Alex looks on.

KAILEY  
Would you get me an ice cream  
sandwich?

ALEX  
Really? Tamara is a rare steak away  
from becoming a soulless creature  
of the dark, and you're thinking  
about dessert?

KAILEY  
Alex, we're going to kill Kyle  
tonight, or die trying. So cut me  
some slack, and get me a goddamn  
ice cream sandwich.

EXT. GAS STATION, CONCESSION STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Alex walks out of the store, carrying a plastic bag full of goodies. He stops dead in his tracks, something catching his eye...

BACK AT THE CAR

Kailey pulls her RINGING cell out of her pocket. Caller ID flashes - IMM OFFICE. Kailey's heart skips a beat, but that doesn't stop her from putting the phone to her ear.

KAILEY

Kyle?

THE DUMPSTER

Alex walks up to a dumpster. Some kind of wood stub hangs out the edge. He flips the lid open, and his eyes light up.

THE CAR

Kyle lays into Kailey...

KYLE (O.S.)

Let me ask you a question, Kailey. When you were burning Charlie's body, did you think to yourself, "This is the dumbest fucking thing I've ever done?" Or were you waiting for me to call you, and let you know? Because while I was looking at his well-done corpse, I realized the dumbest thing I've ever done. I should have fucking slit your throat and cut a check to Greenpeace to even out my karmic fucking balance. But you're cute, you got me coffee, and it never occurred to me that the kind of gal who refuses to kill for power would murder my colleague just to piss me off. Is that safe to say?

KAILEY

What?

KYLE

Is it safe to say that letting you live is the dumbest fucking thing I've ever done?

Kailey's breath quickens. It's gonna be a bumpy night...

KYLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I asked you a fucking question.

KAILEY

Kyle--

KYLE

I AM COMING FOR YOU, BITCH. I AM  
GOING TO TEAR YOU APART. I HOPE YOU  
FUCKING MISSED ME, BECAUSE I'M  
GIVING YOU A CAREER AS MY PERSONAL  
FUCKING SLAVE--

THE DUMPSTER

We see the contents of the dumpster - inside, atop the black trash bags is a SPOTLESS, SOLID WOOD LOUISVILLE SLUGGER, like a parting gift from the City of Angels.

THE CAR

Alex returns to the car, as Kyle's vitriol flows unabated:

KYLE (CONT'D)  
--YOU FUCKING CUNT. I AM GOING TO  
BLEED YOU SO DRY YOU'D SUCK YOUR  
FATHER'S--

Kailey hangs up, visibly shaken. But keeps it under control.

KAILEY  
He's at the office.

INT. GUY'S STUDIO APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Guy is perched on his couch, in boxers, focusing on his laptop. He writes a screenplay while sipping Capri Sun. On his small TV across the room, WIPEOUT! plays on mute.

His phone RINGS. He gives it an odd look - pretty late.

GUY  
Hey? It's pretty la--  
(suddenly concerned)  
Oh, is everything okay?  
(listening)  
Of course. I'll be right over.

He hangs up, thoughtful look on his face as he sips out the last of his fruity beverage. Behind him, Tracy stirs in bed.

TRACY  
Who was that?

GUY  
Tamara. I guess Alex broke up with her. I'm gonna go over there.

TRACY

Guy!

GUY

Hey! She's a good friend.

Tracy grunts, trying to fall back asleep as he heads to the door... Wait a minute...if she just broke up with Alex... He walks back to the dresser and picks up a couple condoms on the sly.

INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Tamara sinks to her knees in front of the door, waiting for her meal to arrive. She dials her cell phone...

I/E. KAILEY'S CAR - LATE NIGHT

Kailey drives, enjoying her ice cream sandwich as Alex inspects all angles of the shotgun like a baby with a toy. He SNAPS open the chamber and loads it with two shells.

KAILEY

Careful, McQueen.

Alex's cell rings. Tamara! Intercut as necessary.

TAMARA

Hey.

ALEX

Baby. I know you can't control yourself right now. I promise you I'm going to take care of it.

TAMARA

I'm sorry for...I just need something to eat, and then we can work this out.

ALEX

We can't work it out if you--

TAMARA

After I do this, it'll all go back to normal. I promise.

She hangs up.

ALEX

How fast can this car go?

EXT. IMM BUILDING - BEVERLY HILLS - NIGHT

Kailey pulls weapons out of the trunk as Alex runs to IMM's front door. He whips out - HIS RUTHCHILD PUBLISHING KEY CARD.

INT. IMM BUILDING - ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

MUZAK version of "I THINK WE'RE ALONE NOW." Alex sets down his backpack: the tip of the baseball bat and shotgun poking out. Kailey holds both chainsaws. Badass. He swipes his key card and hits the button for the 10th Floor, but the button won't light up. He swipes again.

ALEX

My card can't...FUCK!

KAILEY

Just get it to take us up.

Alex hits the button for the 11th floor publishing suite...

I/E. THE APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Guy emerges from his parked car and approaches Tamara's apartment. He knocks on the front door, which swings open immediately. Tamara has been waiting...

TAMARA

Thank you so much for coming.

GUY

Least I could do. How are--

TAMARA

Why don't you come in?

He walks in, unnerved by how dark it is. A candy wrapper CRINKLES under his shoe - drawing his attention to the mess. Tamara SHUTS the door behind him.

INT. IMM BUILDING - ELEVATOR - LATE NIGHT

Alex turns to Kailey, as they approach the 10th Floor.

ALEX

You ready?

Kailey takes a deep breath. She pulls the EMERGENCY STOP LEVER.

INT. IMM BUILDING - LOBBY - LATE NIGHT

Micah walks into the IMM Lobby, on his cell, missing Alex and Kailey by a hair.

MICAH

How long are you gonna be, baby?

I/E. KATRINA'S CAR - LATE NIGHT

Katrina (from the Mexican restaurant) speeds down the street. The Receptionist, unusually pale, rides shotgun.

KATRINA

I'll be there in a few. I had to pick up Erin.

(smiling)

She was in no condition to drive.

INT. IMM BUILDING - RECEPTION - LATE NIGHT

DARKNESS is complimented by a GLOW from the RED BULL fridges. All is quiet except the MUTED ALARM coming from the elevator. The tip of the chainsaw PIERCES through the elevator. It jerks, levering the door open, revealing Kailey and Alex. They swing out at full speed, looking down the halls for any sign of Kyle.

No movement. Light pools out from his office down the hall.

Kailey quietly raises her chainsaw, Alex his shotgun. Alex releases the elevator: the RINGING ceases as it glides up toward the Ruthchild offices.

Their walk down the hall is slow, agonizing. Every footfall is another chance to be heard. Every office they pass threatens to house a creature waiting to kill them.

They reach the threshold of Kyle's office. Alex looks at Kailey. He holds up THREE fingers. Kailey nods. Two. One...

They plunge into Kyle's office--

**--only to find it empty.**

ALEX

(frustrated, whispering)

Where the fuck is he?

INT. THE APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Guy wades in the darkness through the empty food containers.

GUY

So what happened? He left and you,  
uh, went on a bit of a binge.

Guy nearly trips over the edge of a table he didn't see. Tamara emerges from the darkness to catch him. Her grip on him lingers. They stand up together. There is an immediate charge - lust from Guy, hunger from Tamara.

TAMARA

I love it here and Alex doesn't.  
I've done so much to try and make  
him happy... But I can't--

GUY

C'mere.

He draws her into a supportive hug. She heaves a deep breath, taking in his scent. She bares her teeth - still fighting with herself about what she is willing to do.

Compromise: She pulls him down onto the couch. Guy's eyes open wide. Is he really getting this lucky?

INT. IMM BUILDING - KYLE'S OFFICE - LATE NIGHT

Kailey draws behind the door with the chainsaw, lying in wait.

KAILEY

He's gotta come back here.

Alex looks back into the office suite - staring at Tamara's empty desk. Finicky. He knows he doesn't have time.

ALEX

Which way's the bathroom?

KAILEY

It's back past the elevator.

Alex picks up a chainsaw, and stalks down the hallway - double-fisted chain and shotgun action.

KAILEY (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Alex!

He jerks his head, "c'mon." Kailey shakes her head in disbelief. This is stupid. She nervously eyes the assistants' bullpen. She hears a distant THUMP. Her breath catches. THUMP. KYLE ROUNDS INTO THE BULLPEN, still playing bouncy-ball with the baseball. THUMP. Kailey revs her chainsaw - it doesn't catch. THUMP. Again, no luck. She looks desperately to Alex who walks down the other hall, oblivious.

Thump thump thump...the sound of a baseball being dropped...

Kailey looks up, terrified of what she'll see--

**Kyle stands stock still in the bullpen, staring right at her, stunned that his prey would come right to him.** Kailey backs into Kyle's office, frantically clutching her chainsaw.

KAILEY (CONT'D)  
ALEX!!! HE'S HERE!!!

Kyle comes stampeding down the hall. The rage on his face equals the sheer terror on Kailey's.

ELEVATOR

Alex turns toward Kailey, ready to race back...

**...behind him the elevator door opens REVEALING Micah.**  
Micah's jaw drops at the sight of Alex.

KYLE'S OFFICE

Kailey PULLS the door shut just in time. Kyle's body BATTERS into it. Fortunately, the door holds. Another SLAM as Kyle KNOCKS the door again - this time knocking a splinter loose.

ELEVATOR

The elevator DINGS. Alex swings the shotgun toward the sound, just as Micah LEAPS at him.

BAM!!!

A DOUBLE SHOT sprays Micah's chest at point blank range and sends him flying back into the elevator. Micah's body convulses as blood leaks out of him from myriad wounds: chest, eyes, mouth, nose. Alex RELOADS, shaking as adrenaline pounds through his veins. He raises the gun again.

EXT. IMM BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The Receptionist dizzily looks on as Katrina activates her car alarm - CHIRP. We hear a distant BANG from the upper floor.

Suddenly, Katrina drops her keys and grabs her chest, falling to the ground. Her head SLAMS against the marble steps of IMM.

Receptionist rushes up to her, dumbfounded.

RECEPTIONIST  
Are you okay?

Katrina reels in pain, tearing off her shirt in a FERAL CRY. Her body is sprayed with buckshot wounds identical to Micah's.

She panics, hyperventilating. **We hear more BANGS from upstairs as her skin opens up before our eyes.** A second set of wounds manifests, and then a third.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATE NIGHT

Juliana DARTS down the 10 freeway, MUSIC DEAFENING. Suddenly she jerks. The motorcycle SKIDS left before she pulls it back under control.

She CLUTCHES her chest as the second shot hits. Hands off the wheel, the Ducati's front tire JERKS to the side and the bike FLIPS over the median. Juliana lands with a CRUNCH. Her helmet's visor TEARS off on impact with the asphalt.

Her bike skids off down the road toward an approaching BIG BLUE BUS. (Can you guess where this is going?)

Juliana - for the first time in her life - is terrified. She heaves herself up to her knees - broken bones buckle under her as she rushes to pull herself off the road.

But today's just not her day. The Bus swerves to avoid the Ducati, instead striking Juliana.

It rolls over her, and we tilt up to see an advertisement on its side - **"GWEN STEFANI - LIVE AT STAPLES CENTER."**

INT. IMM OFFICE SUITE - ELEVATOR - LATER

Smoke pours from the empty barrels of Alex's gun, which has rendered Micah's body UNRECOGNIZABLE. Still, he stirs, sluggish but unstoppable. Alex reloads once more--

Micah's bloodied hands reach out and pull Alex's legs from under him - he falls on his ass with a thud, shotgun FIRING uselessly into the reception area.

Micah pulls Alex into the elevator, hand over fist - angry eyes staring out from a mess of flesh and buckshot. Frantic, Alex reaches out, hand grasping at THE FALLEN CHAINSAW.

His fingers just brush it, though, before he's pulled in.

KYLE'S OFFICE

Kailey looks on in terror as the door continues to DENT under Kyle's blows. It's only a matter of time...

ELEVATOR

Micah releases Alex's legs, climbing up towards his body. The elevator doors start to close...Alex desperately lunges and **opens the doors just in time before Micah pulls him back in.**

Alex lands a quick punch to his disfigured face. Micah reels - Alex uses what little time that affords him to grab his chainsaw. He tugs the cord - VVVRM. Micah grabs at Alex's chest. VVVRM. Micah squeezes his hand into Alex's FLESH, pushing with all the strength he has left. VVVRM - **the chainsaw ROARS as it finally catches.**

ALEX

My grandkids are going to love  
hearing about this scar...

EXT. IMM BUILDING - LATE NIGHT

Receptionist pulls out her cell phone as Katrina convulses. BLOOD SPRAYS from Katrina's neck onto her face as Alex digs into Micah upstairs.

The two IMM Managers from the conference room earlier, decked out in their best suits, race up to the Receptionist.

IMM MANAGER #1

What are you doing?

RECEPTIONIST

I don't know what's happening to  
her, I...

IMM Manager #1 SLAPS the cell phone out of her hand.

IMM MANAGER #1

Don't call 911 about this shit.

The Managers drag Receptionist to her feet, pulling her toward the building. **She looks back as Katrina's HEAD ROLLS OFF HER SHOULDERS.**

INT. IMM BUILDING - KYLE'S OFFICE - LATE NIGHT

Kailey finally fires up the chainsaw as the top hinge of the door BUCKLES under Kyle's weight. Kyle's face leers at her through the wedged-open wood.

KYLE

You remember our little chat? The things I'm gonna--

Kailey THRUSTS the ROARING chainsaw through the door at his face. Kyle dodges out of sight. The chainsaw JERKS as she tries to pull it back into the office. Avoiding the chain, Kyle palms the blade, BENDING the metal with his bare hands.

The chain BUCKS, KICKING back toward Kailey. She drops the inoperable machine. Kyle SLAMS into the door again, knocking the latch out of the socket. **He pushes down, crashing onto the weight of its one remaining hinge.**

Kailey backs away, naked without a weapon. Kyle cracks his knuckles in preparation. From across the hall--

BAM!

Kyle grabs at his neck - stray buckshot.

Alex clammers down the hall, abandoning the chainsaw, reloading his gun. Kyle narrows his eyes at this new threat...before DISAPPEARING INTO THE SHADOWS.

INT. IMM BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The Managers grab at their necks as they both experience Kyle's buckshot wound. IMM Manager #1 jabs angrily at the elevator button.

INT. IMM BUILDING - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors jam repeatedly, blocked by Micah's decapitated head.

INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Tamara and Guy on the couch. Tamara is losing what control she had, her breathing heavy.

GUY

Are you...?

TAMARA  
I can't wait...

No idea what that means, Guy takes the initiative, grabbing her breast. Tamara licks her lips. Her hand slides across his neck, down his chest. She brings her other leg over his lap - smoothly segueing into straddling him...pinning him.

She pulls off his shirt and begins sucking on his torso. He feels all over her. Buttons come undone. Within moments she's formed a BRIGHT RED HICKEY on his neck: a TARGET.

INT. IMM BUILDING - KYLE'S OFFICE - LATE NIGHT

Alex backtracks into Kyle's office, eyes locked on the dark corridors of IMM.

KAILEY  
Where is he? My chainsaw's fucked.

Alex motions for her to follow him out of the office. She trails behind him as he points their way with the gun.

All sounds are AMPED UP: Papers blowing. The AC. Electronics.

ALEX  
Fuck.

KAILEY  
What?

ALEX  
The other chainsaw...it's gone.

A MASS flies at them out of the darkness. Alex makes with the shotgun--

BAM!!!

Another direct hit. The object plummets to the ground. **But what lands is the carcass of their other chainsaw:** the one that might've actually worked.

KAILEY  
Fuck!

And with that, all of the lights, in a one-by-one staccato, TURN OFF, leaving us with **100% BLACKNESS**. Dead quiet descends on the offices: The AC and electronics off.

Alex fishes around for more bullets in his pocket but spills the case and the last remaining few bounce across the floor.

ALEX

Shit.

KAILEY

I can't see dick.

POUNDING THUDS race to them from down the hall.

Alex turns Kailey's lighter on. It provides just enough of a view to see hints of Kyle running toward them.

Alex grabs her and they dive into the nearest cubicle, knocking over files as Kyle breezes by.

Alex grabs the lighter. Ka-Chk. Lights the wooden table. Grabs the fallen files, torching them as well.

He turns toward Kyle, holding the burning files to get a proper look. Shadows and traces of movement are all he sees.

Alex watches as the fire spreads from one cubicle to another. Kailey tosses more papers on the fire, feeding it.

They look at each other, backlit by the growing flames. There is a mutual understanding: They don't really have much of a chance here, but they're gonna do as much damage as possible.

Kyle doesn't move. He waits and stares at them, his pupils reflecting the burning empire before him. His hatred and contempt boil over, combining into SEETHING ANGER.

The CRACKLING CRESCENDOES as more desks fall victim to the spreading conflagration. Alex and Kailey duck toward Micah's office as Kyle stalks them.

Kailey retreats into the office, slamming the door shut as Kyle strides toward Alex, ushered by the flames.

Alex sprints away.

MICAH'S OFFICE

Kailey is shrouded in darkness, listening at the door. She opens it and the growing fire provides her with ample light. She looks through the office for a weapon. And Jenga!--

A RED FIRE AXE in a glass case signed by a band. She smiles.

INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Hot Tamara on Guy action.

TAMARA

(breathless)

I loved Alex, Guy, but he couldn't give me what I need. Can you give me what I need?

GUY

Sure.

And without further ado, she ATTACKS HIS NECK.

INT. IMM BUILDING - BATHROOM CORRIDOR - LATE NIGHT

Kyle reaches the doors for MEN and WOMEN and thinks briefly. The fire helps him see that the Women's Door is ajar.

He walks into the Women's Room and SNIFFS. Twists his head at just the slightest of angles, trying to figure this out.

It is completely silent. Nobody here. Kyle walks back out and sees the MEN'S DOOR is flapping back and forth. Alex has escaped the area.

Kyle whips around... There they are, at the end of the hall - a stoic Alex, reunited with his bat, and Kailey, wielding the fire axe. They are back-to-back, flanked by the inferno.

Alex turns to a GOLD-PLATED RECORD on the wall.

ALEX

WOLFMOTHER's self-titled debut, 2007. Never heard of 'em!

And with that, he shatters the framed success story. Beats it into oblivion on the ground.

KAILEY

NICKELBACK, ALL THE RIGHT REASONS, 2005. Eight times platinum. I worked for you when this came out.

And BAM!!! The platinum record meets a similarly tragic end.

ALEX

You'd think a guy who's been around so long would have better taste...

And with that, Kyle, taunted into action, leaps through the air, connecting a BRUTAL PUNCH to Alex's jaw. He goes down hard and the bat rolls away. Kailey slams the axe downward.

Kyle catches it just under the blade and the power struggle quickly falls in his favor. He grins.

Just as he is about to usurp possession, **Alex's bat slams into his head, spinning Kyle around.**

Alex swings again, but Kyle blocks the blow with his forearm. Quickly retaliates - punching Alex in the gut. Alex goes down again. This time much harder.

But Kyle turns around a second too slow and **Kailey LANDS HER AXE IN HIS CHEST.** Not quite fatal, but it will slow him down.

Alex winds up, readying the bat to beat the life out of Kyle. Kyle's eyes go wide, sensing something.

KYLE  
Wait...Tamara...

INT. THE APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Tamara lies on her couch, bathed in darkness.

A car drives by - its lights penetrate the interior and momentarily reveal Tamara's face: drenched in blood.

She erratically SPASMS and ARCHES at unnatural angles.

In silenced pain, she opens her mouth to cope and, in doing so, kicks the couch. It splits in two.

Without explanation, the apartment's lights flicker on and off around her in rapid succession: fireworks to celebrate her transformation. Her pupils DILATE. The lights shut off as one, plunging her once again into darkness.

**A final set of car lights flash, revealing The UGLY AND TORN REMNANTS OF GUY.**

Tamara lets out a GUTTURAL HOWL, which ECHOES into--

INT. IMM BUILDING - BEVERLY HILLS - CONTINUOUS

Kyle smiles his widest, most shit-eating grin.

KYLE  
She took a life.

Alex grits his teeth. Finally, after all of the work - after all of the death - he has finally, truly lost.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
I know you want to hit me. But are you ready to bash her pretty little brains out?

Alex lowers the bat.

KAILEY  
Alex?

KYLE  
You start running, Alex. I'm gonna give you a real long head start...

Alex staggers, dizzy, processing the loss.

Kailey raises the axe for another blow, but Kyle grabs her hands, squeezing them with a satisfying crunch. She tries to pull them away, but he holds on, forcing her to the ground, **overpowering her in a twisted game of "Mercy."**

She struggles as he holds her down, looks up for help, but Alex is GONE.

KAILEY  
(pleading)  
Alex! Alex!!!

TAMARA'S DESK

Alex passes Tamara's desk as he staggers out of the office, crushed. He slumps as he stares over the desk, bat hanging loosely in his hand - defeated. He freezes when he sees...

A cup of coffee rests on a crinkled copy of the Yankee Stadium Photograph - brown liquid eats away at the varnish.

**In its place on the bulletin board? A Dark Matter concert flier...complete with the image of a blackened heart.**

KAILEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(screaming, terrified)  
ALEX!!!! NO!!!!

Alex's eyes brim with water. But he does not tear.

ALEX  
(under his breath)  
Goodbye.

KYLE AND KAILEY

The flames DIM around Kyle, flickering for dear life as his sheer, dark power SUCKS the wind out from them, casting a lengthening shadow across his features.

KYLE  
I'm gonna drain you. I'm gonna bring him back here.  
(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)  
You're gonna be hungry...and you'll  
finish what we started.

Kailey whimpers.

Through the darkness we see the bright GLEAM of his INCISORS  
as they seem to stretch downward: white points in the night.

But then, a blur of movement behind him - Alex returns,  
running, and he...

**...BRINGS THE BAT SWINGING DOWN**

INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tamara stands, covered in Guy's blood. **Suddenly her head SNAPS to the side - utter confusion painted on her face.**

INT. IMM RECEPTION - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The Receptionist runs away from the slumped bodies of IMM Managers #1 and #2. Blood SQUIRTS from their heads onto the elevator. SPLAT. SPLAT. The silver doors are painted red as Alex takes out all of his rage upstairs.

INT. IMM BUILDING - KYLE'S CORPSE - CONTINUOUS

Kailey lets out a PRIMAL SCREAM, contorting in equal parts jubilation and agony as Kyle's influence dies in her veins. Alex holds her as she recovers, chest heaving.

EXT. IMM BUILDING - CRACK OF DAWN

Kailey and Alex emerge dripped in all different shades of black, blue, grey, and red as the fire spreads throughout the building.

INT. THE APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN

Alex zips up his suitcase. Dons the Yankee cap.

INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Alex contemplates the gruesome vision of Guy's carcass. Shakes his head. Tamara's corpse is a black, burnt crisp. Ash in human shape. A TWINKLE of light catches his eye.

Alex crouches over the corpse--

--pulls the ENGAGEMENT RING off her burnt finger. He stares at the ring in silence, a torrent of conflicting emotions battering at his heart.

EXT. STREET - DAWN

Alex emerges and heads toward Kailey's idling car.

BRIEF MONTAGE

Kailey drives Alex in her car. They pass familiar sites:

- Echo Park. Hipsters watch as they drive by.
- The acid trip that we've come to know as Sunset Blvd.
- A highway crew cleaning Juliana's remains off the pavement.

I/E. KAILLEY'S CAR - MORNING

Kailey drives them down the 405 SOUTH and they suddenly find themselves in bumper-to-bumper traffic.

ALEX

Ugh.

Kailey shrugs. They wait as the dawn's purplish smog that once greeted Alex now sends them a fond farewell.

YANKEE FAN (O.S.)  
Go Yankees!!!

Alex looks out his passenger window where a YANKEE FAN (50s, undeniably overweight) sits in his TOYOTA YARIS, donning an identical cap and raising a brotherly fist.

For the first time in what seems like forever, Alex smiles. Nods back and returns the sentiment, raising his fist.

Alex grabs Kailey's iPod, picks a song, and reclines in his seat. In spite of his bludgeoned features, we see that he is finally at peace.

Suddenly, the traffic dissipates and Kailey guns it. The open road awaits them. Anything is possible.

James Taylor's "Mexico" plays...

KAILEY  
I love this song.

CUT TO BLACK.