

SUBJECT

ZERO

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

It's dark in here.

In the shadows of this small, but well appointed lab we meet ROBERT BLOCK, 41, who, even when COVERED IN BLOOD, still has an air of scientific genius about him.

Maybe it's the clinical way he's pouring gasoline from a 12 gallon can. Making sure he hits all the corners. Making sure that when he strikes the match, the entire place incinerates much like the tinderbox of which he now calls his life.

He looks toward the door and drizzling gas behind him, heads upstairs.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

It's brighter up here, but not by much. The house is early 19th century with modern touches. Robert splashes gas along the walls, walking backward toward the foyer.

He's careful where he steps and turns the corner into his --

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

He methodically splashes gas for maximum burn. Suddenly,

A SHADOW PASSES, crossing his path, but only briefly.

Robert turns. Nothing. A trick of the light combined with his own exhaustion.

He continues splashing the gas over his once beautiful furniture.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

CLOSE ON - Robert staring down at...

The GASOLINE spreads across the hardwood floor and meets a thick PUDDLE OF BLOOD. The blood begins to mix with the gasoline creating a grim kaleidoscope.

We follow Robert's slowly moving gaze, tracking the mixture of blood and gasoline until we fall on...

CLOSE ON - A CORPSE, face down, A BASEBALL TROPHY IMPALED THROUGH THE BACK OF ITS SKULL.

It's unclear if it's a man or woman. There's too much blood and the hair is all matted.

Again, the SHADOW FLICKERS against shards of broken glass and the wood floors CREAKS nearby. But Robert has only one directive at this point. He plants his foot on the back of the CORPSE'S NECK and --

PULLS THE TROPHY FREE with a sticky THUCK!!!

Robert holds the trophy up. HE WIPES SOME OF THE GORE FROM THE SMALL MAN HOLDING THE BAT and carefully places it back on what remains of a demolished trophy case.

Next to the replaced trophy is a TEAM PHOTO. We move in slowly on the photo, into ONE BOY'S FACE, slowly, until we are TIGHT ON HIS EYES and we stay there for a moment...

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY

CLOSE ON - THOSE SAME EYES, but when we pull out, the photograph is of A PERFECT BABY BOY. Over this image we hear the voice of Robert Block. There's a sureness to his words, a confidence that suggests he understands deeply what he's talking about.

ROBERT (V.O.)
They say beauty is only skin deep.

The stillness of the boy's flushed cheeks. Full lips and perfectly new hair.

ROBERT (V.O.)
But here, we sell the idea that
beauty can translate into altruism.

The clear blue eyes. Starbursts of sunlight floating spectral like behind his beaming toothless smile.

ROBERT (V.O.)
Still that's all it is. An idea.

Robert, a different entity from the beaten, dragged down, blood covered guy we just met, sits at his desk, perfectly studious in his laboratory whites. The photo we've been looking at...a screen saver on his laptop. A keystroke extinguishes it from the screen and Robert types some data into a spreadsheet. He rolls on his chair, ACROSS THIS VERY HIGH TECH R&D LABORATORY to,

A STRING OF CAGES all containing RATS. Robert stops at CAGE #R&D 18. A big female, clearly pregnant, sniffs lazily around the cage. Robert speaks to her as if she's a colleague.

ROBERT
Can looking younger make us better
people? Or is that all an illusion?
Thoughts, Gracie?

The rat, Gracie, sniffs the air in Robert's direction. She couldn't give a shit what he has to say.

ROBERT
Well, if this works then you're
going to be the prettiest rat the
world has ever seen. But will it
make you any nicer?

He reaches into the cage and Gracie tries to bite him. Still, Robert grabs her without incident.

Under her EAR an IMPLANT extends directly into her brain. Robert connects the implant to an intravenous tube and administers...

A DOSE OF A VISCOUS FLUID labeled - ARGENTUM "A" TRIALS.

He places Gracie, lovingly, back in her cage.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE COSMETICS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The hub of a cosmetics giant. Laurant DeMonde caters to all things beautiful.

Robert sits amongst several colleagues. He's scribbling in a small notebook. Something tells us that he works better with rats than he does with people.

HAILEY DEMONDE, 28 and strikingly gorgeous, leads the meeting.

HAILEY
Robert.

Robert looks up.

ROBERT
I'm sorry?

HAILEY
I asked how it was going with Argentum.

ROBERT
Too soon to tell.

He goes back to his scribbling.

HAILEY
Excuse me?

He looks up.

ROBERT
These meetings are really just an
extraordinary waste of time for me,
Ms. DeMonde.

HAILEY
These meetings are a necessary evil
to prevent our investors from
upending this company through a
proxy vote. So if you wouldn't mind
giving a real update from R&D
instead of scribbling your life
away.

Robert turns the notebook for everyone to see. A molecular
stew of drawings.

ROBERT
This...scribble...represents the
molecular breakdown of a protein
that will be the difference between
treating a grandma and watching her
face melt off into a puddle of
liquefied flesh or witnessing the
miracle of agelessness.

(beat)
So, when I say it's too soon to
tell, I mean it. Argentum is only
in rat trials. And we just got
there. I mean just got there. That
being the case, I guess you need to
tell your proxy voters to hold
their horses...they do all have
horses, don't they?

Robert turns back to his drawings. Hailey stares at him
hatefully.

She sits back down next to DeMonde's CFO, RICK NATALE, 45 and
ruggedly charismatic. Whispers to him...

HAILEY
Why can't we fire him?

RICK
Because he's a genius.

HAILEY
Fuck.

Rick leans forward.

RICK
Alright, thank you everybody.

The employees gather their things and get up. Robert pushes away from the table.

RICK
Bob? Quick chat?

Robert rolls his eyes.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - HALLWAY - DAY

Rick and Robert stroll past framed GLOSSY PHOTOS that display DeMonde's rich history of making women beautiful. The decor is modern minimalism at its most cliche.

RICK
Can you try to not be such an asshole? I have to answer to that woman everyday about why not to fire you.

ROBERT
Let her fire me, then. I'll make some other spackle merchant a cool trillion.

Rick rubs his eyes. This is a pointless conversation.

RICK
You weren't this impossible before Lainey.

ROBERT
Yeah, well, Lainey destroyed my faith in humanity. So, now I'm impossible.

RICK
You hear from her?

ROBERT
That would be counterproductive to doing a silent meditation retreat.

RICK

Seriously?

ROBERT

Apparently my nonsense drove her to seek out a wordless existence.

RICK

That's really depressing.

ROBERT

You're telling me.

RICK

How's Derrick taking it?

ROBERT

Put it this way, Lainey traveled halfway around the world for peace and quiet when my house could be the silent meditation retreat. It's always the mother who gets the wings in these situations. I work twenty four/seven and she's the good guy.

RICK

He'll come around. The key is you gotta give him everything he wants. That's how I get my kids to like me better than their mother.

(beat)

So when can we check out Argentum?

They get to an elevator. Robert hit the down button.

ROBERT

Soon. Maybe this year.

RICK

Don't fuck with me.

The elevator doors open and Robert steps in. He just smiles at Rick as the doors close.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY

Robert enters. GAIL, 28, all business research assistant, stands up from in front of Gracie's cage.

GAIL

Our little girl is all grown up.

Robert approaches.

ROBERT
Gracie gave birth?

GAIL
Twelve tiny miracles.

Robert looks in on the cage. GRACIE cuddles as cute as a rat could with her TWELVE miniscule offspring.

ROBERT
Excellent. Let's do hourly updates.
I want to see if Argentum has any
effect on that baby weight. And
lets track her milk production. If
it gets low bring in the big guns.

GAIL
Mama Jamma?

CLOSE ON - In another cage, a big, fat, rat feeding several babies.

ROBERT
She could feed a rat army.

Robert looks at his watch.

GAIL
Derrick?

ROBERT
Yep. I'll see you tomorrow.

Robert grabs his bag and walks out.

EXT. MONROE HIGH SCHOOL - DUSK

Robert pulls his Porsche Carrera into the school parking lot.
It's pretty empty.

INT. ROBERT'S CAR - DUSK

He spots DERRICK, 16, handsome, fit and athletic, wearing a baseball uniform, making out with a CHEERLEADER near the gym entrance.

Robert waits impatiently for the pawfest to chill out, but it doesn't look like it's ever going to end. Finally, HE LAYS ON THE HORN.

Derrick, coolly, holds his hand up, "WAIT!", and gives the cheerleader a final tongue lashing. Derrick pulls away and the cheerleader, SAMANTHA, 17, oh so hot, waves.

SAMANTHA

Hi, Mr. Block.

Robert delivers a weak wave as Derrick smoothly jogs over to the car and gets in.

DERRICK

Alright.

He whips out his phone and texts...

ROBERT

What are you doing?

DERRICK

Texting Samantha.

Robert notices her look at her phone. She looks up and smiles.

SAMANTHA

I LOVE YOU TOO!!!

Robert just rolls his eyes and eases out of the parking lot.

INT. ROBERT'S CAR - NIGHT

Robert takes easy turns as Derrick busily texts away on his phone.

DERRICK

You drive this animal like a nerd,
dad.

ROBERT

I am a nerd.

DERRICK

Yeah, but with a Porsche.

ROBERT

Which makes me a cliche.

They pull into a long driveway that leads, at the end, to a quaint FARMHOUSE with very modern amenities.

ROBERT

Besides, with all your texting, I
didn't think you'd notice.

DERRICK
I'm a varsity short stop. I notice
everything.

Robert parks.

ROBERT
What do you want for dinner?

Derrick is out of the car...

DERRICK
I already ate.

...and slams the door in his father's face. Not much respect
going on here.

Robert gets out of the car and makes the walk to his front
door. He's about to open it when...

A BARKING DOG, a mutt, around 35 lbs., startles him.

ROBERT
Go home.

The dog growls at Robert.

ROBERT
I swear, one day...

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Outside, the dog continues RANTING while Robert walks past a
TROPHY CASE filled with baseball trophies that dominates the
hallway.

He puts down his bag and wanders into the --

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Robert sinks into an Eames Chair and rubs his tired eyes.

EXT. LAURANT DEMONDE COSMETICS - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A shining diamond deep in the rural backwoods of Northern New
Jersey.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY

Robert stands over Gracie's cage. The look on his face is one of disgust.

ROBERT
Are you sure they didn't escape?

Gail actually seems emotional.

GAIL
They weren't even ambulatory.

ROBERT
There's no blood.

GAIL
There's no nothing.

ON GRACIE - Looking good for a rat. She's alone in her cage. No sign of her twelve offspring. She sniffs the air innocently.

Robert kneels to her level.

ROBERT
You sick, twisted bitch.

Gracie licks her chops. Robert straightens up.

ROBERT
I don't know how it's even possible
for an animal her size to
completely devour twelve newborns.
That's over half her body weight.
(beat)
Has she had a bowel movement yet?

GAIL
No. And I'm not looking forward to
seeing what comes out.

ROBERT
Let's weigh her.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY

Gracie is placed on a scale. She seems oddly docile.

GAIL
She weighs less than before she was
pregnant.

ROBERT

And what's the status on her milk supply.

GAIL

What milk supply?

Robert turns to Gail.

ROBERT

This is an excellent sign.

GAIL

I know. It's reversing the aging process.

ROBERT

More like eradicating it.

Gail picks up Gracie and puts her back in her cage.

GAIL

When should we introduce her into general population?

Robert looks at the other rats in their respective cages.

ROBERT

Let's give her a few days under observation. If she's tracking well, we'll jump into the behaviorals.

EXT. LAURANT DEMONDE - OUTDOOR CAFETERIA - DAY

Robert is eating alone. Rick sits with him.

RICK

You mind?

ROBERT

Join me.

RICK

I heard you had some progress with Gracie.

Robert digs into his lunch. Social awkwardness works to his advantage.

ROBERT

Where'd you hear that?

RICK
I gave Gail a raise.

ROBERT
You are a sneaky sumbitch, aren't you?

Rick can only deliver a shit eating grin.

ROBERT
We're seeing some early effects
that seem promising.

RICK
Human trials?

ROBERT
Let's first see if the rat dies.

RICK
I thought Gracie was your pride and
joy. You talk about her as if she
doesn't matter.

ROBERT
Never get too close to the ones you
love. They're bound to disappoint.

EXT. LAURANT DEMONDE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Gail follows Robert to his car.

ROBERT
You don't have to be here all
night.

GAIL
I just want to monitor Gracie for a
few more hours.
(beat)
Robert, this is very exciting.

ROBERT
It's big.

He opens the door to his Porsche. Throws his stuff on the
passenger seat.

ROBERT
Now I get to be berated by my
ungrateful son. Spend the day
inventing agelessness and go home
to thanklessness.

GAIL
Life is so unfair.

ROBERT
You're preaching to the choir.

He gets in the car, revs the engine and takes off. Gail heads back inside.

INT. MONROE HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

It's dark and empty. We hear voices drifting from the locker rooms.

We follow.

INT. GIRLS LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Derrick, Samantha and another couple, HARRISON, 17, and LYNN, 15, are all half naked and drunk, playing strip poker. A solid after practice party gone sexily awry.

Samantha throws down a full house.

SAMANTHA
(to Harrison)
Boxers, bitch.

Harrison looks at her with faux concern.

HARRISON
You're sure you're ready for it?
Derrick, you might want your
girlfriend to reconsider because
once she catches a gander of the
python she'll be shouting my name
every time you bone down.

Derrick shoots a shot of cheap whiskey.

DERRICK
I'm not too worried.

HARRISON
Alright then...

Harrison stands up, starts stripping off his boxers. They come off.

On Samantha...

SAMANTHA

What is that? It's not that cold in
here, is it?

Lynn cracks up.

LYNN

C'mon, Harry, you're supposed to
represent.

SAMANTHA

I really expected...more?

HARRISON

Shut up and deal.

He sits back down on his naked ass.

HARRISON

And no cheating. I want to see
those love pillows once and for
all.

A cell phone PINGS. Derrick reaches for his pants. Harrison
checks out his cards.

HARRISON

Oh, yeah. That bra is coming off.

Derrick checks his phone.

DERRICK

Oh, shit, my dad is outside.

HARRISON

Fuck you, Derrick.

Derrick starts putting on his pants.

DERRICK

Party's over, douches.

Samantha starts to put on her shirt.

HARRISON

No. No way.

SAMANTHA

You heard the man.

Harrison throws down his cards.

HARRISON

I had straight flush. Dealt.

Derrick looks at Samantha.

DERRICK
He had a straight flush, baby.

Samantha takes a beat.

SAMANTHA
Fine.

She pulls down her bra and flashes Harrison her tits. He stares in wonder.

HARRISON
Those are awesome...

And Lynn smacks him upside the head.

EXT. MONROE HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Derrick, Samantha, Harrison and Lynn all walk toward the lonely Porsche in the parking lot.

Harrison is still going off.

HARRISON
I wasn't saying that hers are better than yours.

LYNN
We need a non partial opinion.

HARRISON
Bitches be sensitve.

LYNN
Did you just actually say that?
We'll get Derrick's dad to judge.

Derrick laughs at that.

DERRICK
Unless it's a rodent with c-cups I don't think my old man'll have much interest.

They get to the car and Derrick opens the door.

DERRICK
Hey, Dad.

Robert signals for him to get in the car.

ROBERT

We've got to go. I still have work
to wrap up at home.

DERRICK

Hey, Dad, can we give these guys a
ride back to our house?

ROBERT

How are they going to get home?

HARRISON

My Mom'll come pick us up later. No
probs.

Robert thinks about it. Somewhere is Rick's voice telling him
to bend over backward for his kid.

ROBERT

Sure. We'll have to put the roof
down to fit you kids in the back.

Robert starts putting roof down.

DERRICK

Dad. Can I drive?

Derrick nods toward Samantha.

DERRICK

Please.

ROBERT

It's dark.

DERRICK

I know, but I'm with you. C'mon. It
would be doing me a solid.

Robert hesitates.

ROBERT

There are reasons that a learner's
permit doesn't allow you to drive
at night.

DERRICK

C'mon. Please. I mean, I get it if
you say no, but...

ROBERT

Forget it. Just be careful.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

Samantha, Harrison and Lynn are squeezed in the back seat as Derrick deftly handles the Porsche down a winding road.

INT. ROBERT'S CAR - NIGHT

Robert watches Derrick with slight concern, but is actually loosening up in the presence of these kids, so alive and vital.

LYNN
This car is amazing.

Robert turns around. The look on her face is pure joy. Harrison winks at him.

HARRISON
I don't care what they say about old dudes and fast cars, Mr. Block. This ride is the tits.

Robert winces at Harrison's forwardness, but goes with it.

ROBERT
Thanks. I think.

Samantha leans forward and gives Derrick a kiss on the cheek.

SAMANTHA
You're so Bourne.

Derrick looks in the rearview at his laughing, ecstatic crew and then sees --

A LOOK OF HORROR ON HARRISON'S FACE.

He turns back to the road just as --

A DEER, dead center, is frozen in the headlights.

INT./EXT. ROBERT'S CAR - NIGHT

Derrick tries to swerve. Everyone screams. The DEER barely twitches.

The handling on the Porsche is clutch as it FISHTAILS around the DEER into the oncoming lane.

HARRISON
NICE DRIVING, SLICK.

Robert looks back as...

THE DEER bounds off into the woods, but is suddenly ILLUMINATED.

He turns back around. A MINI-VAN in the oncoming lane turns the corner and --

SLAMS HEAD ON INTO THE PORSCHE.

The DRIVER of the Mini-Van punches through the windshield --

LYNN is also jettisoned from her seat and the two meet midair...

SMASHING FACE FIRST INTO EACH OTHER in an explosive spray of blood and spine.

The Mini-Van launches over the hood of the Porsche, and a sharp braid of twisted metal...

HOOKS HARRISON through the chest, tearing him out of his seat and as the Mini-Van flips, and WHIPS HARRISON through the night air, saving his rib cage as a grim souvenir.

And then as time catches up to the collision, the Porsche flips, almost gaining momentum as it skids off the road like a skipping stone.

Robert looks over at Derrick as the SEATBELT slices through his neck and ARTERIAL SPRAY is caught in a moment of anti-gravity, frozen like raindrops in a snow globe.

The Porsche flips again, now tail over nose, and SAMANTHA is catapulted from the back seat into the trees, right before the car DROPS onto its top and spins lazily to a silent finish.

There's not a single sound, just the steady heartbeat of a fickle brakelight...and then that goes dark.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Pandemonium. Too bright lights. Doctors shouting orders. Nurses barking back.

Robert is being wheeled through the small country hospital EMERGENCY ROOM. He can only see peripherally, immobilized by the paralyzing spinal brace keeping his neck in traction.

To his left, SAMANTHA, a web of deep cuts crisscrossing her face, is wheeled through, tubes jutting out of her nose and throat. A respirator thumping next to her...

A woman, this is Sam's mother ELIZABETH, 39, is running next to her.

ELIZABETH
Is she going to be okay? Can you
help my little girl?

She's wheeled past. And Robert's SPUN, putting him to face DERRICK, laying unattended on a gurney, and staring at the ceiling.

And then Derrick's head FLOPS to its side. Half his face is torn off, left on the road. He stares at Robert with dead eyes.

ROBERT SCREAMS.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Robert SITS UP IN BED, SCREAMING.

A NURSE runs in. She puts her hands on his shoulders and gets him to lay back down.

ROBERT
My son.

The Nurse puts her hand on his head. Strokes his hair.

NURSE
I'm terribly sorry.

He eases back, tears streaming down his face.

ROBERT
Anyone else?

NURSE
Only you and the girl, Samantha
Leach. But she's critical.

Robert closes his eyes. Washed over by anguish, he falls back to sleep.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Robert wakes up. Painfully, he gets out of bed. Miraculously, there's nothing very wrong with him except for the massive concussion he's about to experience as he...

...puts his feet to the floor and the room SPINS like a carnival top. Robert sways and goes crashing into his side dresser.

But he finds his feet and manages to stumble to the door. He opens it.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Empty except for Robert. He stalks painstakingly toward the elevators. The desperation on his face is palpable. He clearly has a goal in mind.

A NIGHT NURSE turns the corner and Robert ducks into the stairwell.

INT. HOSPITAL - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

It's much brighter in here. The bruises on Robert's face and body are so much more pronounced. As the Nurse passes the door, he looks down the stairwell.

Dizzy, he begins his descent.

INT. HOSPITAL - BASEMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The stairwell door opens and Robert, sweaty and exhausted exits. He turns down the hallway and walks unbalanced toward the...

HOSPITAL MORGUE

Robert stands in front of the swinging steel doors and enters.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORGUE - NIGHT

Robert walks along the cool metal cabinets, reading names and numbers until he reaches.

DERRICK BLOCK/AGE 16/WT 185/HT 6'1"

Robert stands in front of the cabinet. Emotionless, he pulls it out and is faced with the contents of...

A BLACK BODY BAG.

Robert grabs onto the zipper and slowly unzips the bag.

ON ROBERT looking down on his son. Then...

ROBERT

Wake up.

He waits. Almost as if he's fully expecting Derrick to sit up.

The MORGUE TECHNICIAN enters. He stands frozen in the doorway as...

Robert grabs the body bag and shakes it. Robert can sense the tech, but he doesn't look up. Only explains...

ROBERT

He won't wake up. He'll be late for school.

The Morgue Tech cautiously approaches. He lays a hand on Robert's shoulder and --

ROBERT promptly passes out.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Seeing it in its entirety for the first time, the hospital is slightly podunk, not quite the metropolitan, slammed type of urgent care facility and similarly not backwoods. Just small and efficient.

A nurse pushes Robert past the ICU where he sees --

ROBERT'S POV - Elizabeth sits next to Samantha, who's hooked up to an onslaught of machines.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - DAY

Rick waits. He spots the nurse wheeling Robert toward him. As they approach...

ROBERT

Thanks for coming.

RICK

What are friends for?

He accompanies Robert to the door. The Nurse stops and Rick helps Robert to his feet.

He leads him out of the sliding glass doors into the bright sunlight of a new day.

The DOORS CLOSE BEHIND THEM.

EXT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - DAY

Rick's Mercedes pulls up to the front gate. Robert steps out of the passenger side. He leans into the car.

ROBERT
I'll walk from here.

RICK
You sure?

ROBERT
I'll see you tomorrow.

RICK
Robert.

ROBERT
I need my work, Rick. Or I'll die.
I swear.

RICK
They want you to take a few days.

ROBERT
Tell them to drop dead.

RICK
You know I can't do that.

ROBERT
Fine. Tell them I'm working or I quit.

Robert leaves Rick hanging. He walks to the gate and punches a security code.

THE GATES SLOWLY OPEN. Robert walks onto his property and Rick watches him go as...

THE GATES CLOSE BEHIND HIM.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - DAY

The shades are drawn and apart from some low lights it could be night or day.

Robert sits in a chair in the living room, staring at his phone. Time ticks on. He's probably been like this for hours.

He finally reaches over and picks up the receiver. Dials. Waits.

The expectation on his face conveys a punchy combination of fear and dread.

The ringing on the other end becomes a woman's voice and then a BEEP.

ROBERT
(into phone)
Lainey, it's Robert...Lainey,
there's been a terrible accident.
Please call me as soon as you get
this message. Please.

He hangs up. Was that the right thing to do? To leave her hanging like that?

EXT. MCPHERESON FUNERAL HOME - DAY

A cab pulls up and Robert gets out. He walks up the front steps.

INT. MCPHERESON FUNERAL HOME - DAY

ANGUS MCPHERESON, 35, walks amongst the dozen or so caskets that McPhereson's has to offer.

MCPHERESON
This is the Royalty Senior. Silk lined with down feathering. Hand stitched and solid rosewood. Apart from the detail it is also has the benefit of titanium casing and is polymer sealed.

Robert is only half listening, but hears...

ROBERT
Why is that a benefit?

MCPHERESON
Excuse me?

ROBERT
The titanium casing? Is that so my son isn't eaten by worms?

McPhereson is taken aback.

MCPHERESON
Some customers prefer that peace of mind, Mr. Block.

ROBERT

Well I'm not the customer am I? My son is the customer. Are you suggesting I question what he wanted? I don't think he ever thought he was going to die. I think he thought he was going to live forever. Didn't you think that when you were sixteen years old?

MCPHERESON

I did, sir.

ROBERT

I believe life should find its own way. I believe that, that is something I would have been able to teach my boy, if I had the time. If I gave him the time...

McPhereson can tell that Robert is about to come apart.

MCPHERESON

Would you like some time, Mr. Block, to be alone here? Make your choice in private.

Robert stares at him and his practiced sympathy.

ROBERT

I don't want to be alone. A month ago I was married to the woman I loved and had a beautiful sixteen year old boy. Does that sound like the life choice of someone who wanted to be alone? Yet, here I am.

(beat)

Something simple. No fucking polymer casing. You got a pine box?

MCPHERESON

Um, no, ah, we don't offer those.

ROBERT

Then build one. I'll pay for this monstrosity if you build me a pine box. Understand?

MCPHERESON

Yes sir?

Robert walks out.

MCPHERESON
So I should put you down for a
Royalty Senior?

EXT. MCPHERESON FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Robert walks out. Across the street is a GMC DEALERSHIP. He walks toward it.

EXT. LAURANT DEMONDE - DAY

Robert pulls up in spanking new black Denali. He parks the beast in his reserved space.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - HALLWAY - DAY

Robert walks past several colleagues on his way to the lab. He nods and responds robotically as people extend their condolences. But Robert hears nothing, only the steady hum of the fluorescent lights and his own heart beating.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY

Robert enters his domain. Gail turns as he walks through the door.

She walks over to him and puts her arms around him.

GAIL
It's good to have you back.

ROBERT
Thank you. And thanks for the
flowers. And the food.

GAIL
Have you figured everything out?
The arrangements, I mean. If you
need any help.

ROBERT
I'm waiting to hear from his
mother.

GAIL
Oh, my God, you mean she doesn't
know?

ROBERT

I...I can't get in touch with her.
She's on some damn retreat. No cell
service. No fucking talking.

GAIL

What are you going to do?

ROBERT

Bury him without her. She's the one
who left us. Let her regret that
till the day she dies.

Gail is dumbfounded by his words, swallowing any response.
Turning away, Robert walks over to Gracie's cage. Pauses for
a beat.

It's EMPTY.

ROBERT

Where's Gracie?

Now Gail is nervous, walking on eggshells here...

GAIL

I was going to call you. I didn't
think the timing was right.

He gets it and he's hardly pleased.

ROBERT

God damnit.

(beat)

When?

GAIL

Two days ago. I've got her in cryo.
I assumed you'd want to do the
autopsy.

ROBERT

You assumed correctly.

Robert walks out of the lab without another word.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

He's back in his chair, phone in hand. He dials. Waits.
Lainey's voice mail picks up.

ROBERT

Lainey. You're going to hate me for this, but no less than I already hate myself. So here it goes. There's no easy way to say this, but Derrick is dead. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I'm burying him tomorrow and for that, for robbing you of that closure...I have no words.

He hangs up. And then he THROWS THE PHONE AGAINST THE WALL.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Robert sits in a pew, alone. At the front of the chapel is Derrick's simple PINE BOX COFFIN.

Robert's eyes are red. In his hand he holds Derrick's baseball cap. He gets up and OPENS THE COFFIN, and places the baseball cap on Derrick's chest. He closes the coffin.

He feels a presence and turns --

ELIZABETH WARREN, 43, an attractive woman beleaguered by the duties she's been saddled with recently. Her tired eyes say it all...

ROBERT

You're Samantha's mother.

ELIZABETH

You're Derrick's father.

ROBERT

Are you here to vilify me? Everyone else has.

ELIZABETH

No. I saw you had no one.

ROBERT

His mother couldn't be here. I can't give to others what she'll never have. So...it's just me.

ELIZABETH

May I sit with you?

Robert doesn't know what to say. It's been so hard...

ROBERT

Thank you.

EXT. CEMETARY - LATER

Close On - A SIMPLE PINE BOX being lowered into the ground.

Pull back to... Robert and Elizabeth watch as a cemetery worker operates the crank. He stops as the box nestles into the soft earth. No minister. No undertaker. A grim triumvirate.

Elizabeth walks over to a mound of freshly unearthed soil. She grabs a handful and tosses it over the box.

She turns to look at Robert. He has TEARS STREAMING DOWN HIS FACE.

Elizabeth grabs another handful of soil and walks to Robert. She takes his hand and opens it, placing the soil in his palm. She nods to him that it's "okay".

Robert walks over to the edge of the grave. He looks in for a long time and then opens his hand...

The DIRT falls through space before pelting the hard bland wood of Derrick's coffin.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The place has a comfy, woodsy feel and is pretty packed. The kind of joint where you can get a great steak and where the whiskey is flowing. Elizabeth and Robert sit at a small table near the bar.

Robert drinks a beer. Elizabeth is sipping wine.

ELIZABETH

Sam's father died when she was just six, so it's been pretty much the two of us since then. Hal's parents were involved, helping us out and all for about five years after he passed away, but then his mom got sick and they needed to move to Arizona for her health. I decided that we were going to stay here where Sam had her life.

The relevance of that decision hangs between them. Elizabeth looks at Robert with the shared compassion that exists between parents who've experienced an immense loss.

ELIZABETH

I would've done the same thing, Robert. It's not your fault.

ROBERT

I didn't follow my gut. I...I
wanted to be a good dad.

ELIZABETH

Our kids were just being kids.
Maybe the other parents have their
right to be angry, but I don't
know, I...I don't know.

ROBERT

We make bad decisions every day.
It's just sometimes those decisions
take time to gestate and by the
time we witness the consequences,
history has erased the kernel from
which that decision was made. I
never thought a bad choice would
have such immediate repercussions.

ELIZABETH

You talk like a scientist. You know
that?

ROBERT

It's one of my natural faults. I
tend to pontificate over people's
heads. My wife hated it.

ELIZABETH

I think it's sweet.

Elizabeth drinks her wine. Robert looks at her strangely. Did
she just hit on him?

ROBERT

Well then, I'll keep it up.

Elizabeth finishes her glass.

ELIZABETH

I have to go back to Sam. I've been
sitting with her until eleven and
then they kick me out.

She reaches into her bag for cash. Robert reaches across and
puts his hand on her arm.

ROBERT

Please. I've got it.

(beat)

Maybe we can do this again. It's
nice to talk.

ELIZABETH
I'd like that.

Elizabeth gets up. She takes pause.

ELIZABETH
How come you didn't have a ceremony
for Derrick? No prayers? No sermon?

Robert doesn't hesitate.

ROBERT
I won't pander to a god, real or
imaginary, for stealing my son. My
final memories aren't going to be
some practiced speech by a stranger
in a suit burying him for good. I
promised myself that I will
preserve his memory in a different
way. A real way.

Elizabeth nods.

ELIZABETH
Samantha loved him. I like that.
That's my memory. Her happy like
that.

She leans down and kisses Robert on the cheek and walks out.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY

A VACUUM SEALED CANISTER pops with a rush of air. Robert reaches in with a pair of stainless steel tongs. He slowly extracts...

GRACIE, frozen in cryo rigor. He carefully places the dead rat on a medical tray.

Robert speaks into a sound activated recorder.

ROBERT
Argentum trials one point five. Lab
specimen code name Gracie post
mortem autopsy.

Robert stares at the rat. All that work, down the drain.

ROBERT
Gracie's reaction to a standard
dose of Argentum was at first
positive. Minor behavioral quirks
but generally good health.
(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)
This autopsy should determine cause
of death.

Robert turns a video camera to detail the autopsy. He picks up a scalpel and --

CUTS INTO THE BACK of Gracie's skull. He peels her fur back and grabs a tiny BONE SAW.

The WHIR of the saw devolves into a wicked grinding as Robert cuts through Gracie's skull, removing the bone and revealing her tiny brain.

ROBERT
Her brain matter seems normal at
first glance. We'll see what cross-
section images reveal.

He's about to cut into her brain with his scalpel when --

GRACIE'S PAW TWITCHES.

But Robert doesn't notice. He lowers the scalpel into her brain and SUDDENLY --

GRACIE'S ENTIRE BODY wracks with SPASM. Robert drops the scalpel.

Startled, he sits rigid in his chair. He leans down and looks at Gracie's peaceful face. HER EYES POP OPEN.

ROBERT
HOLY FUCK!!!

GAIL (O.S.)
That doesn't sound terribly
scientific.

Robert spins around. Gail stands behind him with a coffee in her hand. Gracie is just out of her eyeline.

Robert looks at Gracie. The RAT cocks her head at him. He turns back to Gail.

ROBERT
You mind getting me a cup of
coffee?

Gail hasn't noticed the strangeness going on. She moves to hand Robert her cup.

GAIL
Have mine. I'm coffee'd out anyway.

ROBERT
Is that decaf?

GAIL
No. High octane.

ROBERT
I'd like a decaf.

GAIL
I asked you, before. You never hear
a thing I say...

Gail rolls her eyes and heads out.

Robert turns his attention back to Gracie. She's on her feet now, sitting up on her hind legs. He doesn't know what to do. Gail is about to come back and this development is beyond his level of expertise...

He GRABS GRACIE and shoves the rat back into the cryo tube. It's kind of awful, hearing her scratch at the metal interior.

Robert quickly connects the tube to a LIQUID NITROGEN PUMP and injects a blast of gas into the tube. The scratching stops. He shoves the TUBE into his satchel.

Gail enters. She goes to hand Robert his coffee.

ROBERT
Changed my mind.

Robert throws the satchel over his shoulder and heads out. Gail simply drops the coffee in the trash.

EXT. LAURANT DEMONDE COSMETICS INTERNATIONAL - DAY

Robert walks quickly to his car. He gets in.

INT. DENALI - DAY

He carefully puts his satchel on the floor of the car when SUDDENLY --

There's a RAP on his window. He turns to face --

SHERIFF DAN COOPER. Robert swallows hard and rolls down his window.

SHERIFF
Bob.

ROBERT
Dan.

SHERIFF
Bob, we've got a problem.

INT. POLICE STATION - SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Robert sits across from the Sheriff.

SHERIFF
We should clarify a few things,
Bob. The accident that night...it
got a lot of folks riled.

ROBERT
My son is dead, Dan. Don't you
think I know how angry "folks" are
getting?

SHERIFF
I was willing to overlook the fact
that Derrick was driving after dark
and in clear violation of his
learner's permit. But...

He hands Robert a toxicology report. Robert reads it. He
stares at the numbers, digesting the facts.

ROBERT
This suggests his blood alcohol
level was 1.8%.

SHERIFF
Seems he was pretty intoxicated.

ROBERT
I was with him. He wasn't drunk.

Robert throws the report on the Sheriff's desk.

SHERIFF
He was almost two points over the
limit, Bob. Now that makes those
kids deaths a homicide.

ROBERT
So, what? You're going to charge
Derrick with murder?

SHERIFF

No.

(beat)

You were the responsible adult.

ROBERT

Yeah?

SHERIFF

I'm going to make this simple.
You're going to need a very good
lawyer, because I have to charge
you with Involuntary Manslaughter.

ROBERT

You can't be serious.

SHERIFF

You lost your boy, Bob, and I know
that you need time to grieve. So
I'm gonna sit on this. Take my time
to push the paperwork upstate. But
in about a week this shit's gonna
stir and you need to be prepared.

Robert looks at the Sheriff and the gravity of his situation dawns on him.

ROBERT

May I go?

CUT TO:

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gracie paces in a cage on the kitchen table. She stares with red eyes at Robert. He doesn't know what to do.

He walks out of the kitchen in a hurry.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - WORKROOM - NIGHT

Robert lays a wooden plank on a worktable. Kept orderly are rows of tools hanging from a nearby pegboard.

Robert then lays several strips of FLAT NYLON CABLE next to the plank.

He pulls Gracie from her cage. She doesn't show any aggression toward him. He holds her down on the plank and places one end of the nylon cable on one side of her neck and STAPLES IT IN PLACE.

Then Robert tightens the cable, pushing Gracie down onto the wood and staples the other end, effectively limiting her movement.

He fastens a cable over her back and then her hind legs.

ROBERT
Sorry, Gracie.

He picks up a scalpel and gets to work.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

Sun's just coming up and Robert's been up all night. He types, taking dictation from his notes that are repeated back to him via his recorder.

ROBERT (V.O.)
Hour three. I have removed all of Gracie's internal organs and she still shows normal signs of life. The organs themselves seem to possess a certain reanimation, reacting to electric stimulus. The subject is clearly alive even without a heart or the flow of blood. Lastly, I am going to sever the brain stem and remove the cerebral cortex.

There is a long beat as Robert leans back from his writing. Off camera, from the recorder comes an INHUMAN SQUEAL...and then silence.

Robert leans into the keyboard again as his voice drifts over the scene.

ROBERT (V.O.)
The subject, Gracie, Argentum trials experimental animal has reacted in a negative way to the cutting of the brain stem and subsequent removal of all brain matter. The body appears to be dead.

(beat)

Yet the proteins in the flesh still seem somewhat alive. Alive beyond any normal cellular sustenance.

Robert looks to his left. In a SMALL METAL PAN lies GRACIE'S TINY, BUT STILL SLOWLY BEATING HEART.

EXT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Robert stands at his outdoor grill. He places a COFFEE CAN over the grates and pours lighter fluid into the can. He sets the thing on fire and watches it burn.

Over the warped heat he stares at Derrick's BICYCLE leaning up against the back SHED. Through the rising, warbling flames he can almost make out his son playing as a little boy in the backyard.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - WORKROOM - DAY/NIGHT

Robert tosses tools and wood into a pile at one end of the room.

Robert CLEANS EVERYTHING, scouring the floors, tables, benches with a bleaching fluid.

Robert staples PLASTIC SHEETING to everything that could contain bacteria.

Robert switches the fluorescent lights for bacteria identifying blacklights.

He connects computers and equipment that is typically seen only in a laboratory. Heart monitors. Medical gear.

It's taken several days, but finally...Robert stands by the door looking at --

The Workroom has been transformed into a makeshift working lab. its centerpiece, a STAINLESS STEEL table. The far side of the room is dominated by a LARGE FLOOR MOUNTED FREEZER UNIT...large enough to hold a body.

EXT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - DUSK

Robert lines the back of his Denali with plastic sheeting. He lays three bags of LIME into the back of the truck and puts in several digging tools. A shovel. A pick-axe.

EXT. CEMETARY - NIGHT

Standing at Derrick's grave, plumes of cold breath drift from Robert's mouth and nose. His nervousness evident from his breathing.

He brings the shovel down against the freshly laid soil.

LATER...

Robert is deep in the grave when he hits the hard wood of the pine box. He falls to his knees and rubs the dirt away from the top of the box. He leans his head against it.

ROBERT
If I can make this right, isn't it
my duty?

He looks up. An atheist searching for an answer that only science can give.

And with that, HE CRANKS OPEN THE LID OF THE COFFIN.

The stench hits him first, but then he's looking at his son...

Not what he expected. Derrick's face, previously broken and destroyed, now sunken and haunted. Lack of muscle tone and resiliency in the skin combined with the onset of rigor mortis has left him a stiff shell of his former self.

And suddenly Robert has second thoughts. He slams the coffin shut and with panicked urgency CLIMBS OUT OF THE GRAVE.

But just as he picks up the shovel again...

HEADLIGHTS TRACK OVER THE CEMETARY GROUNDS as a groundskeeper drives slowly, making his rounds.

Robert slips back into the grave.

Waiting, he sees a MILLIPEDE trying to make its way into the slightly ajar coffin.

Robert reaches down and grabs the worm. Stares at it wriggling between his fingers.

EXT. DENALI - NIGHT

CLOSE ON - Derrick's FACE as...

Robert pours LIME over his son's body. Finished, he covers him with the dark plastic sheeting. Before he slams the rear hatch, he throws Derrick's baseball cap in the back of the car.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY

Gail is crunching numbers at the computer, but she seems bored. Fed up with the lack of research amidst Robert's absence --

She walks to the cryo chamber and opens it up...looking for Gracie's cryo tube. It's not there. She checks again.

GAIL
Fucking hell.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Robert stares into the mirror. He opens the cabinet and grabs a pill container marked ADDERALL. There's a bottle of Xanax next to it labeled for Elaine Block.

Robert opens the Adderall and pops four pills. Puts them back and slams the cabinet shut.

Again...his face staring back at him. Who is he?

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - WORKROOM - DAY

Lit only by overhead fluorescent lighting, Robert, wearing a laboratory issue coveralls, attends to all of his equipment...running numbers, checking levels. He monitors his backup generators.

He prepares several syringes filled with pharmaceutical morphine and lays them on a rolling try.

Finished with his basic preparations, Robert slowly approaches the freezer unit and opens it. Dry cold air pours out.

Robert attaches a pulley system to the interior of the freezer and turns it on.

SLOWLY, Derrick's NAKED BODY rises, buoyed on a flexible stretcher.

Robert pulls the stretcher on a ball bearing ceiling mounted track over to the stainless gurney and gently lays Derrick on the table.

He carefully slides the stretcher out from under him so that Derrick lays on the cold steel.

Then Robert REVEALS from the other side of the table what looks like a fully realized BODY BRACE. He lowers it over Derrick's body and fastens it in place...a nest of graphite that completely encases Derrick.

He wheels a COMPRESSOR and places it next to Derrick's head.

Next, Robert INSERTS about a dozen needles into DERRICK'S MAIN ARTERIES and runs the tubing through the compressor.

He fixes the MAIN INTRAVENOUS TUBE into the base of Derrick's skull, UP INTO HIS BRAIN STEM.

He pulls from a portable fridge a large metal and glass TUBE filled with what we recognize as ARGENTUM.

Robert SCREWS the bottom of the Argentum Tube into the top of the compressor and as it clicks into place he takes a deep breath and flips the compressor ON.

BLACK BLOOD begins to fill the tubes extracting plasma from Derrick's body, literally emptying him and then running...

Through the tubes...into the compressor...mixing with the Argentum in its mounted tube...back through the compressor and now...a mix of almost purplish substance, running back through the tubes and into Derrick's body.

Finished, Robert switches off the compressor. He pulls another TUBE OF ARGENTUM from the fridge, snaps off the now empty, used tube and replaces it with a full dose. He flicks the switch and repeats the process.

LATER --

Several tubes discarded, Robert repeats the process again until now, the blood mixing back into Derrick's body is DEEP RED. The blood of life.

Robert checks machines. Looking at his monitors. Desperately waiting for some sign of life.

Yet, nothing.

He pops more pills.

The SUN SETS. And THE SUN RISES.

Robert stands over his son's body. He methodically begins to unhook him from the monitors.

Once again, Robert raises Derrick on the pulley and leads him to the freezer. He slowly lowers him into the freezing abyss and...closes the lid.

Leaving, he hits the lights. Only the flickering blacklights stay on.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING

Robert opens the medicine cabinet. He grabs the XANAX with Elaine's name on it. Dolls out three and downs them dry.

He looks in the mirror.

ROBERT
We tried. At least we tried.

Flicks off the lights.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Robert sleeps coma-esque. And then in a moment of fitfulness turns over...seemingly fighting something. He moans and then speaks.

ROBERT
Who are you?

But it only lasts a brief moment before he descends back into slumber.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We track through the house. The HALLWAY outside his bedroom is empty.

Down the stairs...all is quiet.

Half eaten meals litter the kitchen.

The living room is empty and SUDDENLY -- THE PHONE RINGS. On the Caller ID we read -- ELAINE BLOCK.

Over the ringing phone we enter the basement to...

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - WORKROOM - NIGHT

The hum of the blacklight fluorescent sound deafening as we move slowly toward...

THE FREEZER.

BAM!!! The LID IS PUNCHED OPEN FROM THE INSIDE!!!

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The morning sun is seeping through the curtains as we slowly fall on Robert in bed...SHIVERING.

Under the covers, he shakes uncontrollably, teeth chattering. His eyes pop open.

He turns in bed and sees --

DERRICK, pale blue from the freezer lays with his back to Robert.

Robert FALLS OUT OF BED. Wearing only boxers, he scuttles backward across the floor till he hits the wall. He stares at his son in bed and...

He slowly gets up and walks over to the bed, crawls across the sheets and gently PEALS the covers from atop Derrick. He tries to get a look at Derrick's face when --

DERRICK TURNS to him. His once ravaged face, now a quilt of fresh healing skin. He looks at Robert with tired eyes.

DERRICK

Dad?

Robert rushes to Derrick, but contains himself, careful not to come on too strong. He holds out his hand, almost as if approaching an animal, but touches his shoulder.

ROBERT

You're so cold.

Derrick just looks at him with lost eyes. Robert climbs onto the bed and WRAPS HIS ARMS AROUND HIS SON. He pulls him close, warming him, almost happy again.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Robert is rifling through the closet, tearing out blankets when he finds what he's looking for...

An ELECTRIC HEATING BLANKET. He turns just as --

DERRICK walks past him, seemingly dazed. Naked, he walks down the stairs. Robert just watches...and then follows.

Derrick walks through the house, touching furniture, books, the walls as if it's the first time.

He walks into the...

KITCHEN

Bright in here, the sun hits Derrick's face. Under his skin we can see the freeway system of capillaries crisscrossing and repairing.

Robert comes up slowly behind him and Derrick SNIFFS the air. He spins around on his father.

Robert is unfazed by Derrick's behavior. He touches Derrick's face, tracing the healing skin.

ROBERT
Incredible.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - WORKROOM - DAY

Derrick is wearing the electric blanket around his shoulders, pacing while Robert works at the computer.

DERRICK
How long was I dead?

ROBERT
It's been ten days.

As Derrick moves into the light we see his face is healing even more rapidly. The skin that seemed patchwork is now blending nicely.

Robert gets up from the computer and inspects his son's complexion.

ROBERT
Exponential.

DERRICK
Where's my phone?

Robert can't believe this is actually a concern.

ROBERT
You can't call anyone.

DERRICK
I need to call Samantha. If she thinks I'm dead...

Robert takes pause. He makes a decision.

ROBERT
Derrick...I was the only survivor.

Derrick backs up against the wall, not wanting to hear this.

DERRICK
I don't believe you.

ROBERT
Why would I lie to you? You need to
trust me. This thing...this is
bigger than both of us.

Derrick buries his face in his hands. His body wracks with
emotion.

DERRICK
I'm not an experiment, dad.

ROBERT
Quite the contrary. You're what
might be called Test Subject Zero.

DERRICK
Why zero?

ROBERT
Because, scientifically, you don't
exist.

DERRICK
You might want to work a little on
your bedside manner.

ROBERT
I'm being pragmatic, Derrick. We
accomplished something here that's
beyond everyday science. It's a new
step toward...

DERRICK
Immortality?

ROBERT
I suppose you could say that.

DERRICK
So do what you did to me for
Samantha.

ROBERT
You know I can't do that.

DERRICK
No. Actually I don't.

ROBERT

The ethical implications are too great.

DERRICK

But you had no problem using me as a guinea pig?

ROBERT

I did this out of love. Now we need manage it, correctly.

DERRICK

How's that?

ROBERT

Start a new life elsewhere.

DERRICK

No. We can make this work somehow. I know it. Dad...I don't want to leave everything I know.

ROBERT

Even if we could, we can't. You were drunk that night. The crash...was my fault, for letting you drive.

DERRICK

So what are they gonna do, arrest me?

ROBERT

No, they're going to charge me instead. If we stay, Derrick, I'm going to jail.

DERRICK

That's bullshit and you know it.

ROBERT

This isn't a debate, Derrick. We need to be careful. We need to be discreet. And we need to leave.

DERRICK

I have a life. And what about Mom?

ROBERT

I'll deal with your mother, somehow.

(beat)

(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)
But your life, what was your
life...now it's time to
reevaluate...redefine.

Derrick isn't hearing him. How can who he was be no more?

DERRICK
What have you done to me?

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - RICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Ah, the splendor of being the COO of a huge cosmetics corporation. Rick sits behind his monstrous desk shooting off emails.

His computer pings and he reaches to his intercom...

RICK
Send her in.

He wipes the hair off his forehead as GAIL enters.

RICK
Please tell me you have good news.

Gail sits across from Rick.

GAIL
When's the last time you spoke to
Robert?

RICK
Alright, that's not how you begin a
good news conversation.

GAIL
Because it's not.

RICK
What's going on?

The gravity of Robert's offense weighs on Gail, but she won't turn him over just yet.

GAIL
He's just gone off the grid
and...I'm concerned.

RICK
Gail, the guy lost his kid. For
fuck's sake, he buried the boy
alone. Zero emotional support.
(MORE)

RICK (CONT'D)
I'm just pleased he's taking a few days to recoup. Let him. And in the meantime, you take the lead.

GAIL
I wish I could.

RICK
And why not?

GAIL
Robert changed all the passcodes to get into the research.

Rick thinks this over.

RICK
Well, he's always been proprietary over his work.

GAIL
True.

RICK
But if you don't hear from him in the next two days --

GAIL
I'll let you know.

She leaves. Rick rubs his eyes.

RICK
Don't fuck me, you sonofabitch.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Derrick sits on the couch, playing video games. Robert enters. He sits next to Derrick, but Derrick puts up a wall, moving further away from his father...

ROBERT
I know this is difficult. I promise you that it'll get better, but we've got a lot of work to do to get there. Are you willing to do the work with me?

But Derrick is antagonistic.

DERRICK
You're getting what you've always wanted, aren't you?
(MORE)

DERRICK (CONT'D)
You hated it that I was different from you. That I couldn't think like you. And now you've looped me into you world. What if I don't want to be part of it? What if I want to be myself?

ROBERT

I want to give you that chance again. I do. But think, Derrick. If you go out there unprepared, people won't understand. Derrick, you are dead out there. People won't be able to grasp it. Like it or not you are exceptional now.

DERRICK

And I wasn't before?

ROBERT

Before? Average doesn't make you special.

DERRICK

I wasn't average. I was special.

ROBERT

But now you're a miracle.

Robert's words hurt, but they're doing the trick.

DERRICK

Mom always said I was a miracle.

ROBERT

The glow a child has in a mother's eyes does not inform the shine you have on the world, son. I want you to change the world and together we can do just that.

Off Derrick's look we cut to...

EXT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - DAY

Gail drives up in her truck. She gets out and walks to the front door.

She rings the doorbell. Waits. Then slams her fist against the door.

GAIL

ROBERT!!!

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Robert glances toward the sound of Gail's voice. Ignores it. Turns back to --

Derrick jogs on a treadmill. Robert watches him with an analytical eye. He keeps track of Derrick's speed and time on a digital tablet.

ROBERT

That's fifty minutes at a four mile minute.

Derrick hasn't broken a sweat.

ROBERT

Are you the slightest bit thirsty?

DERRICK

No.

(re: the pounding on the door)

Are you just going to ignore that forever?

ROBERT

Now's not the time for taking visitors.

He continues jogging. Shakes his head like this is total insanity.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - WORKROOM - DAY

Robert takes blood from Derrick's arm. The BLOOD spurts into a test tube. Robert detaches the tube and replaces it with a new one.

LATER --

Robert examines Derrick's blood under a microscope. He speaks into his voice recorder.

ROBERT

After six hours of exercise there is no sign of dehydration. Normal cellular function. Accelerated healing is...

Robert uses a thin heating coil to --

POV MICROSCOPIC IMAGE OF DERRICK'S BLOOD SAMPLE as Robert touches it with the heating coil. The BLOOD reacts, damaged, but then rapidly reconstitutes...healing itself.

ROBERT

...clearly evident. The addition of Argentum has created a cellular memory. A perfect recall to an ideal cellular structure.

INT. DERRICK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Derrick sits on his bed listening to music. He stares at the computer on his desk. He gets up and walks over and tries to get online.

A FIREWALL blocks him from getting out.

DERRICK

Fucking asshole.

SUDDENLY, he wracks with pain, BENDING OVER AT THE WAIST. He grips his twisting gut. Agonizing.

Derrick stumbles off his bed. He knocks over a lamp with a loud crash and weaves toward the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Derrick falls before the toilet. With shaking hands he manages to get the lid open and --

PUKES A TORRENT OF BLACK BLOOD into the toilet.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Robert races up the stairs toward the noise.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Robert rushes into the bathroom to find Derrick cleaning himself off. There's no sign of the blood.

ROBERT

Are you alright? I heard something fall.

Derrick throws a towel into the corner of the bathroom.

DERRICK
I'm fine. I was just having a bad dream.

ROBERT
So you slept? That's an improvement.

DERRICK
Does everything have to prove some theory with you? Yeah, I was tired. I slept. I had a bad dream. I woke up. It's not fucking rocket science.

ROBERT
Anything else?

DERRICK
I think I'm hungry.

Derrick walks past Robert.

ROBERT
This is good.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Derrick sits at the kitchen table staring at...

A SIMPLE PLATE OF FOOD. A roasted CHICKEN LEG. Some vegetables.

He looks up at Robert who watches with interest.

DERRICK
I don't want it.

ROBERT
Your blood work suggests a deficiency in proteins. Your body is experiencing ketosis. If you don't eat...your metabolism will find nutrients within your own muscle mass.

Derrick pushes the dinner away.

DERRICK
I don't want it.

Robert pushes the food at him.

ROBERT
You have to try.

A beat. Derrick picks up the chicken leg.

CLOSE AS - He opens his mouth and takes a bite.

REPULSED, Derrick spits the chunk of meat back onto his plate and pushes it away.

DERRICK
I can't. It's, there's something about it. It's disgusting.

Robert writes something down.

DERRICK
What are you always writing?

Robert's phone rings. He looks at the CALLER ID...

CLOSE ON - The CALLER ID reads, LAINEY.

Robert stares at it. His world is closing in.

DERRICK
Who is it?

ROBERT
Nobody.

He HITS END. The ringing stops.

Suddenly...THE DOORBELL CHIMES. Robert looks toward the door.

ROBERT
Stay here.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Robert opens the door to REVEAL --

ELIZABETH stands on his front step.

ELIZABETH
I'm sorry to come over. I just need to talk. I tried calling, but...

Robert steps outside. He shuts the door behind him.

ROBERT
No. That's fine.

ELIZABETH

I thought maybe you had gone out of town.

She begins to cry. Robert doesn't know how to react. Should he hold her?

ROBERT

I've been consumed with work. I think it's a reaction to everything.

ELIZABETH

It's better to take your mind off things.

(beat)

Can I come in for a minute.

ROBERT

No. I mean, not being rude or anything, I've been kind of the bachelor lately. Ah, the place is a mess. I'd feel judged.

ELIZABETH

Don't be silly.

ROBERT

Maybe we can talk out here.

The setting is awkward and Elizabeth reacts to his strange mood. But she knows he's kind of a strange man and relents.

ELIZABETH

I'd like that.

(beat)

I wanted to talk to you because I need to make a decision about Samantha.

Robert looks toward the house.

ROBERT

I'm not sure I'm the right person to talk to about this, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

It's silly, I know, but the other night...I felt something between us. I mean I'm not getting all crazy. Don't think I'm getting crazy, Robert, please.

ROBERT
Of course not.

ELIZABETH
And I know what grief does. It
clouds emotions, but...you felt it,
didn't you.

He did. Robert can't help being touched by her.

ROBERT
Elizabeth, we're going through a
lot, separately and in a strange
way together. It would be wrong for
us to --

ELIZABETH
I know. I know that. It's just...I
haven't anyone else to talk to.
There are the doctors and the
nurses and...a woman from the
insurance company came over today.
There are just so many voices in my
head and I can't decide what the
right thing is to do.

ROBERT
What right thing?

ELIZABETH
Samantha's not getting better. Her
activity levels dropped last night.

ROBERT
How bad is it?

ELIZABETH
She'll never regain consciousness.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Derrick is standing next to the door, listening.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)
Her body will shrivel and die. Only
machines will keep her alive...if
that's even living. It's not. It's
monstrous to condemn her to that.

Derrick is slowly reaching for the door handle. Perhaps if he
reveals himself, his father won't have a choice other than to
help her.

EXT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elizabeth falls into Robert's arms.

ELIZABETH
I'm going to take her off of life
support.

And then she pushes away from him.

ELIZABETH
I think I just needed to hear
myself say it.

She turns to leave.

ROBERT
Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH
I have to go Robert.

She walks quickly away. Robert watches her leave and then turns as the front door opens. Derrick looks pissed.

Robert pushes past him into the house.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Derrick slams the door.

ROBERT
What were you going to do? Make
some grand pronouncement? Hey. Look
at me. I've risen from the dead.

DERRICK
You lied.

ROBERT
I was protecting you.

Derrick is shaking with anger. He tempers it...

DERRICK
You can save her.

ROBERT
I can't. Not like this. The science
is unproven.

DERRICK
This is my life.

ROBERT
Spoken like a true sixteen year
old.

Derrick begins to beg.

DERRICK
I love her, Dad. I love her so much
and she's going to die and you can
change that.
(beat)
Look at me. Look at what you can
do. You're like a god.

ROBERT
I know how you feel. I felt that
way before...a long time ago, but
it'll change. If we act on our
impetuous notions of love and
emotion --

DERRICK
We actually live. Try to remember
what it's like to be really alive,
Dad.

ROBERT
I'm not willing to shoulder that
responsibility.

Derrick lashes out.

DERRICK
Fucking shoulder it, asshole.

Robert is shocked. Derrick gets in his face.

DERRICK
Step up for once in your sad life
and do something for your family.

He pushes Robert, becoming more and more agitated.

DERRICK
Like you have never done before.
Can you do that? Can you be a man?

ROBERT
Stop it Derrick.

DERRICK
If you won't help her. I'll expose
you.
(MORE)

DERRICK (CONT'D)
I'll walk right down Franklin Ave.,
and tell every last person in this
town what you are.

ROBERT
And what am I?

DERRICK
You create monsters, dad. I am
living proof.

ROBERT
They'll take you and cut you up
into a million slide samples for
the study of mankind. You won't be
any kind of hero. You'll be as dead
as Samantha.

DERRICK
Then that's exactly what I want. I
don't want to live another second
without her.

Derrick goes for the door. Robert stops him and Derrick
turns...

DERRICK
Get out of my way.

ROBERT
I can't let you go.

Derrick grabs Robert by the neck and with a display of
extreme strength...

DERRICK
I don't want to repeat myself.

He THROWS Robert across the room. Robert hits the far wall
and collapses in a heap.

Derrick throws open the front door and walks out.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

Derrick runs down the road at a steady clip.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Robert stirs. He touches the back of his head and pulls his
hand away.

Stares uncomprehendingly at the blood on his fingers.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Robert stumbles into the bathroom. He goes to the mirror and tries to get a look at the nasty gash on the back of his skull.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Robert walks to the kitchen. He's pretty out of it, holding a wet towel to his head.

He enters the bright kitchen...

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

He's stopped dead in his tracks.

ON THE TABLE - The uneaten CHICKEN on Derrick's plate is making a wet sticky sound.

Robert walks slowly over to the plate. The look on his face is of total revulsion. He POKES at --

THE CHICKEN LEG and it PULSES, FLEXING at Robert's touch.

Startled, Robert HOLLERS. He leaps back from the plate. And then gets closer, clinically examining what's taking place.

The Chicken Leg almost leaps off the plate. Robert jumps back. Stares at this recent development.

ROBERT

Oh, no.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Derrick stands outside the small community hospital. It's very quiet. Little action in this tiny hamlet.

He walks toward the front doors.

EXT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Robert shouts for Derrick.

ROBERT
DERRICK!!!

He sees a light come on in a nearby house. The neighbor's dog begins to bark and then he sees his neighbor's back door open.

The BARKING DOG races across two lawns, running straight for Robert.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - NIGHT

One of five critically ill patients...

Samantha lies in her bed surrounded by life support machines. Bandages have been removed from her face and her wounds are in the process of healing.

Deep open cuts crisscross her cheeks and split lips.

DERRICK (O.S.)
I am so sorry.

REVEAL - Derrick stands at the end of her bed. He moves around to her side. Looks around, taking note of the quiet hallway before he sits.

Derrick puts his hand on Samantha's.

DERRICK
I know he's right. It just hurts
too much to think I'm losing you.
(beat)
Please, Sam, give me a sign that
you can hear me. Something...

Nothing. Derrick lays his head on her bed and begins to cry.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - WORKROOM - NIGHT

The DEAD DOG lays on the steel table in the center of the room.

Robert is at his workstation. He speaks into his recorder.

ROBERT
Using a sample of Derrick's
saliva...

Robert pushes away with a SYRINGE filled with some compound.

ROBERT

...we can test the compound
degradation.

Robert injects the DEAD DOG with the fresh compound. He sets his watch to time the possible transformation.

ROBERT

If I theorize correctly, then I
will have no choice other than to
destroy what I've created.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Elizabeth walks down the hall flanked by TWO DOCTORS AND A NURSE. The walk slowly toward the ICU.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - NIGHT

Derrick hears footsteps approaching. He gazes with desperation at Samantha.

He hears Elizabeth mutter through anguished sobs.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)

I'm sure.

Derrick takes Samantha's hand. Whispers.

DERRICK

I will get you back. I promise you
that. Death's got nothing on me.

He leans over and kisses Samantha deeply.

DERRICK

I love you.

He kisses her again and then backs away as...

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Elizabeth, the Doctors, and the Nurse turn from the hallway into the ICU.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - NIGHT

Elizabeth and the medical team enter. Samantha lay unaccompanied in her bed. There's no sign of Derrick.

Elizabeth holds the doctors back and approaches Samantha's bed. She leans very close to her ear.

ON SAMANTHA'S LIPS - Glistening wet, not the dry cracked skin of a dying girl. Leftover from a passionate kiss, yet the WOUND SPLITTING HER LIP seems to be ever minutely healing...turning from gash to scar.

ELIZABETH

My dear, sweet, angel. I've heard
you in my heart. I know it's time.

She lays her head on Elizabeth's chest. A Doctor puts his hand on her shoulder for comfort.

ELIZABETH

(to Doctor)

But her heart sounds so strong.

DOCTOR #1

It's the machines. It's all the
machines.

She pulls away.

ELIZABETH

Then turn them off.

She kisses Samantha on the forehead.

ELIZABETH

God's speed, love.

Doctor #1 nods to Doctor #2 and with a practiced sense of finality, TURNS OFF SAMANTHA'S LIFE SUPPORT.

The HEART MONITOR beats weakly. The RESPIRATOR stutters.

DOCTOR #2

She's on her own, now.

ELIZABETH

How long?

DOCTOR #2

Minutes. Not long.

Elizabeth is breaking down. The weight of the moment coursing through her veins like a runaway train. Did she do the right thing? Did she just murder her daughter? She collapses, the cries coming from her, ANGUISHED AND PRIMAL.

The HEART MONITOR FLATLINES. The RESPIRATOR FALTERS and STOPS.

It's over. Elizabeth stares at the flaccid machines as if they are her daughter. A representation of something that was once alive. She can't find the words when...

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. The Heart Monitor ticks back to life.

Elizabeth turns to the Doctors for an answer...

DOCTOR #2

I'm sorry. This is typically routine. It's not a sign of brain function.

Doctor #1 leans over Samantha. He opens her eyes. They are unmoving...completely dead and then --

SAMANTHA'S EYES DART, from left to right, SHAKING IN THEIR SOCKETS like pachinko balls searching for an exit.

AND THEN SHE WRACKS WITH A DEEP DESPERATE BREATH.

The Doctor leaps back.

ELIZABETH

What is it?

As the Respirator hums back to life.

DOCTOR #1

We need to get this girl for a brain scan.

ELIZABETH

What's happening?

DOCTOR #1

I think your daughter is finding her way back.

Off Elizabeth's shocked, but jubilant expression.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - WORKROOM - NIGHT

The DOG GROWLS a low menacing growl at --

ROBERT. He stands several feet from the chained animal, holding an AXE. He's nervous to use it. He steps closer to the dog.

The Dog is practically clawing his way through the floor. It's not clear who he's growling at, but there's something very NOT RIGHT about it.

When Robert gets closer, it can't seem to sense his presence, but rather is going berserk for some other unseen, unknown reason.

Robert raises the axe high.

The DOG YANKS hard at the chain and SUDDENLY, the CHAIN RIPS FROM THE WALL.

And the Dog launches through the air, but misses Robert as he pinwheels out of the way. It runs to the door, trying, seemingly to escape.

Robert stumbles, preparing to protect himself, but is puzzled by the Dog's lack of interest in him.

The Dog slams again, and again, and again into the door. Wood begins to splinter. If he gets out, he'll escape so...

Robert walks up to the oblivious animal and raises the axe. He SWIFTLY BRINGS THE AXE DOWN UPON THE DOG.

But the dog doesn't even register pain. It continues to growl through the beating...as Robert decapitates the animal...its growls turning to garbled, warped pops in it's throat. And then nothing.

Robert stares down at the dead Dog, still twitching on the stone floor.

A SLAM from above...inside the house. Derrick is home.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Robert comes up from the basement workroom and closes the door behind him.

Derrick stands in the dim light of the hallway.

DERRICK
She's gone.

Robert lowers his head. He looks up at his son. So much pain. He walks to him and HUGS HIM.

Derrick falls into his father's arms. He holds him tightly, finding warmth and love that maybe hasn't been there for years.

DERRICK
It was all my fault.

ROBERT

I should have told you. I thought I could spare you that pain. I already felt that pain by losing you...I didn't want you to have to feel that ever.

Derrick cries into his father's shoulder. Robert hugs him harder. And then SUDDENLY - DERRICK'S EYES OPEN WIDE with a sudden awareness.

He looks at Robert's NECK...the flesh beckoning him. His lips pull back, much like the snarling dog. His breath sharpens. Entire body stiffens as he bends his neck, his TEETH just grazing his father's vulnerable throat.

And, Derrick pushes Robert away from him. Hard.

ROBERT

What is it?

DERRICK

There's something wrong.

Robert stares at him, trying to decipher his son's mood. He already knows there's something wrong, but to what extent?

ROBERT

Tell me.

DERRICK

It's difficult to explain. It's more like a craving.

ROBERT

For what?

Derrick can't convince himself to say it.

DERRICK

You know how that chicken...I found it gross...inedible.

ROBERT

Yes.

DERRICK

I haven't wanted to eat anything until right now.

ROBERT

What then? What is it?

Derrick steps forward. He sniffs the air and looks straight at his father.

DERRICK
You.

Robert runs this through his bank of memory. Something is beginning to add up. Then Derrick notices the blood splatter on Robert's clothes.

DERRICK
What happened to you?

ROBERT
We have a small problem.

Suddenly Derrick collapses in agonizing pain, bent over at the gut. Robert runs to him. Grabs his elbow and helps him to the living room where he sits him on the couch.

DERRICK
Why do I feel this way?

Robert kneels before Derrick. He studies him, but no longer with that clinical glare, but fatherly.

ROBERT
When we first tested the product we did rat trials. Something the rat did which we found odd but not concerning was eat all her young.

DERRICK
You didn't find that concerning?

ROBERT
It's common with rats.

DERRICK
You know what I'm beginning to think? I'm beginning to think that you're not as good a scientist as you claim to be.

ROBERT
I missed all the signs. I didn't follow protocol. I made decisions with my emotions instead of my mind.

DERRICK
So what happened to the rat?

ROBERT

She died. But then she came back to life. Which gave me the idea --

DERRICK

To dig me up. Not terribly clear headed dad.

ROBERT

No. Not clear headed at all. And then there was the dog.

DERRICK

What dog?

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - WORKROOM - NIGHT

Robert stands over the still twitching corpse of the Dog. Derrick stares dispassionately at the carnage.

ROBERT

It was clearly feral, but it had no interest in me. Which makes me think...

DERRICK

What?

ROBERT

It was hungry for something else.

DERRICK

What?

ROBERT

Dog meat.

(beat)

If the proteins in the reconstituted cellular makeup are controlling the activity in the brain, then they trigger what we consider...cravings. Now lets assume that the proteins need to match up with familiar proteins, you will be less inclined to satiate with any food source other than those marked with a common cellular fingerprint.

DERRICK

So the rat ate rat. The dog wanted dog and I got wicked craving for...

(MORE)

DERRICK (CONT'D)

(beat)

Are you fucking kidding me?

ROBERT

Which explains the ketosis. Your body is eating itself. If I can replicate a food source that would mimic human flesh.

DERRICK

Fucking disgusting. I won't eat that.

ROBERT

There's one other thing.

DERRICK

Yeah?

ROBERT

Your condition is...infectious. It seems to have properties that are, well, viral in nature.

DERRICK

So I can give it to people?

ROBERT

Theoretically, yes. It was your saliva that I injected into this dog. The only thing is that the dog, when it reanimated, wasn't right.

Derrick leans back against the wall. He slowly crouches down. Hands over his face.

DERRICK

This is unbelievable. What am I, not supposed to come in contact with anyone?

ROBERT

Just let me figure it out. Until then. Stay quarantined.

INT. ELIZABETH'S CAR - NIGHT

Elizabeth drives as she dials a number on her cell. She looks elated.

She waits a beat as the phone rings.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - WORKROOM - NIGHT

Robert is crunching data when his cell rings. He looks at the caller ID and answers.

ROBERT
Elizabeth. Are you alright?

INTERCUT WITH ELIZABETH IN THE CAR.

ELIZABETH
I have wonderful news, Robert.
Absolutely amazing.

ROBERT
Tell me.

ELIZABETH
I mean, I was prepared. I've never been more scared in my life. Just the thought of losing her...but there was a miracle.

ROBERT
A miracle?

ELIZABETH
The doctors switched off the machines...

ON ROBERT as Elizabeth's voice drifts off. He looks upstairs. Something's not right.

INT. DERRICK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Robert storms in. Derrick sits up in bed.

ROBERT
What happened when you went to see Samantha?

DERRICK
It's personal, Dad.

ROBERT
Did you touch her?

DERRICK
Well, yeah, barely though.

ROBERT
Did you kiss her?

DERRICK
Of course I kissed her.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - NIGHT

Samantha lay in her bed. She's breathing on her own.

SUDDENLY - She wracks with pain. But she's still asleep. As her body straightens out.

HER EYES POP OPEN. There's something unfocused about them. She turns her head and --

Stares at the patient next to her. A STRING OF DROOL drips off her lips.

EXT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Robert and Derrick race out of the house to Robert's car. They jump in.

INT. ROBERT'S CAR - NIGHT

Robert starts the car, slams on the gas and tears out of the driveway.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A DOCTOR walks toward the ICU...

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - NIGHT

The DOCTOR enters and notices --

Samantha's EMPTY BED. Her I.V. hanging off its frame, dripping blood and solution onto the tile floor.

He quickly scans the ICU and sees SAMANTHA hunched over another patient at the far end of the room.

DOCTOR
Samantha.

She doesn't answer. He slowly approaches.

DOCTOR
Honey. We really need you to get back into bed.

As he gets closer he can make out the slow, slurpy, chewing noises. He strains for a clearer look.

Samantha's muscles RIPPLE under her garment. Her JAW is working hard, masticating.

DOCTOR

Sam...

A BLOOD STAIN BLOSSOMS across the white sheets and Samantha turns.

BLOOD DRIPS OFF HER CHIN as if she's been face deep in the abdomen of the DEAD PATIENT that lay before her.

DOCTOR

Oh, my God. What have you done?

Samantha cocks her head.

SAMANTHA

I was...

(searching for the word)

...starving.

The Doctor backs away. He bumps into a bed and falls onto his ass.

Samantha walks toward him. Her tongue is slow. She can't find the words. There's something wrong with her mind.

DOCTOR

Take it easy, Sam. We'll get some help.

SAMANTHA

I...want...go...home.

The Doctor gets to his feet, backing away.

DOCTOR

We'll call your mom. It'll be okay.

Samantha makes a jerky motion, like she's going to run at him.

The Doctor reacts. Samantha smiles.

DOCTOR

HELP!!!

He turns and runs into the --

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Doctor turns out of the ICU, running hard when, SAMANTHA follows, bare feet tracking blood, she's faster and on the Doctor before he can get halfway down the hallway. She reaches for him and...GRABS HIM BY THE HAIR. Samantha puts on the brakes and in a feat of speed and strength, she whips the Doctor clear off his feet and --

SMASHES HIS SKULL into the hard floor.

Then she flips over on top of him, straddling him and GOES FOR THE THROAT.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

WE HEAR THE SMASHING OF GLASS as...

SAMANTHA leaps out the third story window. SHE LANDS ON HER FEET AND --

Her right knee POPS like snapcracker, bending dramatically in a very wrong direction, but she stands up and as she walks...

THE KNEE SEEMS TO GRIND AND CRACK AND SNAP BACK INTO PLACE.

She limps away, in the direction of the woods.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - NIGHT

The Sheriff walks up to the front desk. Leans across to the SENIOR CITIZEN manning the phones.

SHERIFF
Eloise. Word is that Samantha Leach is coming to.

SENIOR CITIZEN
They're keeping a sharp eye on her.

SHERIFF
Mind if I head on up? Sit with her for a beat?

SENIOR CITIZEN
Go right ahead, Sheriff. I'm sure she'd like that.

The Sheriff raps on the desk with authority and heads toward the elevators.

INT. ROBERT'S CAR - NIGHT

Robert turns to Derrick. He watches the trees pass in the dark, but really he's staring at his reflection in the window.

DERRICK

What are you going to do when we get there.

ROBERT

I need to determine if Samantha is a danger.

DERRICK

Why would she be a danger?

Up ahead, the sign for the HOSPITAL looms.

ROBERT

We need to avoid an outbreak. It's possible she might not have your self control.

DERRICK

Let me deal with her.

ROBERT

If she can be dealt with at all.

DERRICK

Can you not be so fucking clinical?

Robert turns into the Hospital parking lot. It's relatively empty. Dead quiet. He spots the Sheriff's PATROL CAR.

ROBERT

Just work with me here, Derrick. It's all I can do to keep this situation under control.

DERRICK

You make it sound like I'm going to let you down, like I'm unreliable.

ROBERT

Honestly, collaborating with a hormonal sixteen year old boy who only cares about seeing his girlfriend and demands personal freedoms works against the basic concept of a controlled test environment.

Robert parks close to the entrance.

DERRICK
Helps explain why I failed biology.

ROBERT
Actually it doesn't. It would seem, however, that those worries are now in the past.

INT. HOSPITAL - ADMISSIONS - NIGHT

Robert and Derrick enter through the waiting room. It's eerily empty. No one at the admission's desk. No security.

Just the dim hum of machines and hospital technology. Robert looks down the hallway.

ROBERT
Hello???

He turns to Derrick.

ROBERT
Where was Samantha.

DERRICK
Third floor.

INT. HOSPITAL - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Robert and Derrick ride up to the third floor. It's slow going.

DERRICK
It's a skeleton staff anyway.
Probably no more than two or three doctors on duty.

ROBERT
Probably.

The ELEVATOR DINGS. The doors open.

The HALLWAY IS EMPTY. THE NURSE'S STATION...EMPTY. LIGHTS FLICKER FROM THE ICU down the hall.

Robert and Derrick step out of the elevator.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As the elevator doors close, Robert takes note. Then he shoots a glance down the hallway.

ROBERT
(down the hall)
HELLO???

No answer.

ROBERT
ANYONE???

Still nothing. Derrick notices something...

DERRICK
Blood?

He slowly approaches the pool of blood in the hallway.

Then a MAN'S VOICE...

VOICE (O.S.)
Help me...

Robert turns to --

A SECURITY GUARD, 35ish, bleeding badly, but walking is stumbling toward them. His gun hangs loosely from his right hand.

The Security Guard lifts his arm. Aims.

SECURITY GUARD
You one of them?

Robert cautiously approaches. He holds his hands up.

ROBERT
We can help.

The Security Guard laughs.

SECURITY GUARD
There ain't no one left to help,
buddy. Everyone's dead...or
something like it.

DERRICK'S POV - DOWN THE HALL, a FEMALE PATIENT, completely nude, exits the ICU. She seems to be dragging something.

The Woman turns and we see that this was the patient Samantha had been feeding on.

She takes shaky steps and yes, that thing she's dragging are her own intestines roped out behind her.

The Security Guard takes a few cautious steps forward,

SECURITY GUARD
Speak up, lady, or I will put you down.

But the Woman doesn't answer. Instead, she SNIFFS the air and begins walking quickly toward the Security Guard.

She's deadlocked on him. Security Guard raises his gun. Aims at her shoulder.

Robert NOTICES A FIRE AXE HANGING IN A CASE.

Now she's walking FAST. Her lips are curled in a snarl. Pure hunger.

SECURITY GUARD
I fucking warned you.

She's unfazed and keeps coming.

ROBERT
Shoot her in the head.

SECURITY GUARD
And who the fuck are you?

ROBERT
Do it.

SECURITY GUARD
I said, stop right the fuck there, lady.

The Woman is getting closer, faster. Her bloody entrails creating a slick on the floor.

Security Guard doesn't have a choice. He fires a round -- INTO HER SHOULDER. She JERKS from the impact, but doesn't stop.

ROBERT
In the head.

SECURITY GUARD
What?

ROBERT
Shoot her in the head.

He aims for the head, but the bullet tears into her neck. She JERKS again, but keeps moving, faster and with more determination.

Robert presses himself against the wall as she races past him and Derrick. She kind of glances at Robert, sniffing, but the Security Guard must smell tastier.

When she's almost upon him.

Robert STOMPS DOWN ON THE TRAIL OF INTESTINES and...

The Woman is PULLED OFF HER FEET and lands SMACK ON HER BACK and looks up just as --

ROBERT SWINGS THE FIRE AXE right at her head, cleaving her neck and cutting her head clean off.

Her body TWITCHES, still alive, but directionless. The head dies.

Security Guard looks down on her.

SECURITY GUARD
What is happening?

ROBERT
Your welcome.

The Security Guard hits the button for the elevator.

ROBERT
Have you been bitten?

The elevator doors open.

SECURITY GUARD
No. And I don't plan on it.

He turns to the elevator, but...

THE DOCTOR, his throat eviscerated, appears from behind the nurse's station and is on him and sinks his teeth into the Security Guard's throat.

A GEYSER OF BLOOD sprays out and he drops the gun.

ROBERT PICKS UP THE GUN and AIMS IT AT THE DYING, SCREAMING SECURITY GUARD and with one shot --

BLOWS BOTH THEIR HEADS OFF.

DERRICK
Holy shit.

Robert hands Derrick the axe.

ROBERT
We've got a mess to clean up.

Derrick stares at the carnage.

DERRICK
Badass.

Derrick follows Robert toward the ICU. Gruesome sounds echo down the hallway. Sounds like a pack of wolves at an all you can eat buffet.

Robert raises the gun.

DERRICK
Dad.

ROBERT
Samantha. I know. But you see what this has become?

DERRICK
It's my problem. Alright?

Robert looks at his son. There's a new found respect brewing both ways.

And they enter the ICU.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - CONTINUOUS

If they haven't been devoured, they've been turned. Two PATIENTS, four NURSES and three DOCTORS are busy feeding on several dead patients.

The carnage is ankle deep. As soon as Robert and Derrick enter, the flesheaters smell them and are distracted from their orgiastic food fest.

ROBERT
Dan!!!

The SHERIFF turns. They've eaten away his eyes. He chews what's in his mouth with hungry relish and sniffs the air for fresh meat.

DERRICK
Holy shit.
(beat)
On the bright side --

ROBERT
Don't say it.

DERRICK
Okay, but you know what I'm thinking.

A NURSE is the first to pounce. She separates from the group, her RIGHT HAND a mess of ripped flesh and torn ligaments and completely ignoring Derrick, RUNS right at Robert.

Robert raises the gun, but is off balance. He fires off a shot that goes wild and then another that PINGS OFF the side of the Nurse's skull.

It doesn't slow her down and now the others are moving toward him, some quicker than others.

DERRICK
Dad!!!

ROBERT
Run, Derrick, run.

But they ignore Derrick as they pass him, hungry for Robert.

He fires off another shot. This time nailing the Nurse right in the center of her forehead.

She goes down. But the others are too many. His nerves getting the best of him, he fires recklessly and when they are just about on him, trapping him against the wall...

ROBERT
Derrick, I'm sorry.

He holds the gun under his chin, ready to pull the trigger.

SUDDENLY, Derrick comes in swinging the fire axe. Oddly, the flesheaters don't even acknowledge him.

Derrick grabs one patient, closest to Robert, a PONYTAILED WOMAN, by her hair and whips her into some monitors. But starved for meat, she quickly gets to her feet, all the while...

ROBERT
Get them in the head or neck. Aim for the brain stem.

Robert takes aim again. Closer is better and he puts a slug right through the eye of a FEMALE DOCTOR.

The Sheriff runs blindly toward them, tripping over beds to get to Robert. He climbs atop a mattress and launches himself at Robert who --

GRABS AN IV STAND and PLUNGES IT THROUGH THE SHERIFF'S EYE.

Derrick swings the axe, taking out two DOCTORS in three quick hacks.

Robert shoots another NURSE, and as PONYTAIL crawls in blood toward Robert, he places the gun as close to the back of her head and pulls the trigger, putting her down.

Derrick lowers the axe. He looks at his father just as...

THE PATIENT they were feeding on, is hobbling toward them. An obese bypass patient, the SCAR ON HIS CHEST pulling at the stitches, he stands on half eaten legs.

Robert turns. He raises the gun and walks toward BYPASS. But Bypass is three generations of the virus in. He's only focused on eating and it's motivating him. He's fast.

Robert pulls the trigger. Nothing. Empty.

He turns as DERRICK, runs at him with the raised axe and PLANTS IT RIGHT IN BYPASS'S SKULL.

Bypass stands there. Dull surprise across his dead face. And then he drops to his knees.

Derrick pulls the axe out of his head.

ROBERT
Thank you.

DERRICK
No problem.

INT. HOSPITAL - SUPPLY ROOM - NIGHT

Robert searches for chemicals. He finds what he needs.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Derrick loads the last of the dead into the open elevator. Robert is carrying a gallon bottle.

DERRICK
What's that?

ROBERT

Basically, a bomb.

Robert douses the dead bodies with the liquid.

DERRICK

You can't just set the hospital on fire.

ROBERT

The elevator shaft will keep the blaze contained. At least long enough for the fire department to get here.

DERRICK

We were lucky, weren't we?

ROBERT

Not if we don't find Samantha before she does this again and we can't control it.

He lights the bodies on fire. They go up in a WHOOSH of flame.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Samantha walks with determination, her bare feet stomping broken twigs and desiccated leaves.

ON HER FOOT - as it is IMPALED by sharp branch.

Samantha looks down. Not even feeling the pain, she tears the branch from her foot. She continues on.

Ahead, the lights of a neighborhood dot the treeline.

INT. ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Elizabeth is showering. Thick steam fills the bathroom as she washes the day off her body.

She THINKS she hears a sound. She sticks her head out of the shower and listens.

Then she reaches over to check her phone. No new messages.

She slips back into the shower and we move out of the bathroom...THROUGH THE...

INT. ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

To the top of the stairs, where we hear as steady KNOCKING on the front door.

And then we're moving down the stairs toward the door. It's very dimly lit, only illuminated by the moonlight streaming through the windows. The knocking doesn't change its rhythm, just a constant rapping of knuckles against the wooden frame. It stops.

And SUDDENLY, Elizabeth, covering herself with a towel, rushes past us to look through the peephole --

ELIZABETH'S POV - There's no one out there.

Elizabeth opens the door. A cool wind blows leaves into the house.

ELIZABETH

Hello???

No answer. She quickly slams to the door to REVEAL --

SAMANTHA STANDING BESIDE HER. Her head dropped and shoulders hunched, she looks up under the crest of her brow.

SAMANTHA

Mommy.

Elizabeth is shocked, but a mother's instinct throws her toward her daughter.

ELIZABETH

Samantha.

She tentatively grabs Samantha by her shoulders.

ELIZABETH

Are you alright? How did you leave
the hospital?

SAMANTHA

Mommy.

ELIZABETH

Yes, love?

SAMANTHA

I'm sooooo...hungry.

Elizabeth hugs Samantha. She pulls away.

ELIZABETH

I should call the hospital.

SAMANTHA

So hungry.

And now Elizabeth is beginning to recognize that something's wrong with Sam. She lifts up her face. Stares into her eyes.

ELIZABETH

Come, sweetie, let's get you sat down.

She tries to lead Sam to the living room, but Samantha stands rigid, her lips PEELING BACK aggressively.

Elizabeth FLICKS ON THE HALLWAY LIGHT.

Samantha turns to her mother, eyes fluttering, teeth bared. Elizabeth is distracted by the copious amount of BLOOD COVERING SAMANTHA'S BODY.

ELIZABETH

Sam?

Samantha lunges.

INT. ROBERT'S CAR - NIGHT

Robert drives fast, taking country road turns, crossing over the double line.

ROBERT

Just from basic observations, it seems that the molecular regeneration deteriorates generationally. Each of those people back there displayed a unique level of cognisance the lowest level driven simply to attack and eat.

(beat)

But, they didn't attack you. They must sense the change in you.

He looks over to Derrick. He's staring out the window.

DERRICK

Because, really, I'm no different from them.

ROBERT

I will fix it. I promise. Can you forgive me, Derrick?

DERRICK

You're only doing what you know.

Robert stares off down the dark road.

ROBERT

I always wanted us to spend more time together.

(beat)

Maybe I did things the wrong way.
Put too much time into my work...

DERRICK

It's okay, Dad.

ROBERT

No. It's not. You live your life thinking all those moments are going to amount to some great meaning, but really all those moments are lost in time. The only thing that matters is what's happening in the present.

DERRICK

Well it looks like we're finally getting that quality father and son time after all. Personally, I would have preferred a fishing trip.

Robert laughs. Derrick laughs as well. And soon the two of them are in hysterics.

Robert crosses the double line and SUDDENLY, ONCOMING FIRE TRUCKS SCREAM AROUND THE CORNER AND INVADE HIS LANE!!!

Robert cranks the wheel, just missing the trucks, their SIRENS wailing into the distance. Derrick kicks his feet up on the dash.

DERRICK

Don't worry, Dad, if you die I'll just pump you full of your magic potion and then the two of us can hang out all we want.

Robert gathers himself behind the wheel.

ROBERT

Special times.

EXT. ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Robert drives slowly down the driveway toward the dimly lit house.

He parks behind Elizabeth's car. He and Derrick get out and begin walking toward the OPEN FRONT DOOR.

Robert quickens his pace.

DERRICK

Dad, if she is here, let me deal with it.

But Robert's not listening. As he runs up to the door...

ROBERT

ELIZABETH!!!

Derrick comes up behind him. The house is dark and seemingly empty.

DERRICK

You don't think --

ROBERT

I don't know.

(beat)

ELIZABETH!!!

Robert's voice echoes through the house.

DERRICK

You check upstairs. I'll check Sam's room.

Robert starts off.

DERRICK

If you see her...call for me.
Promise me.

ROBERT

I promise.

As Robert ascends the stairs...

INT. ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Derrick walks slowly toward Samantha's room.

DERRICK

Sam???

He stands in front of the door and afraid of what might be inside, his hand hovers over the doorknob.

Finally, he opens it and ENTERS THE ROOM.

INT. ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - SAMANTHA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Memories of a life that once was. Derrick walks amidst the perfectly made bed, the rows of photographs, collages. Derrick's friends who not two weeks earlier were alive and happy.

Derrick picks up a photo of his crew. Samantha is kissing the side of his face. Pure bliss.

A TEAR forms in Derrick's eye.

INT. ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

BARE FEET run with determination, slapping against the wooden floor.

INT. ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - SAMANTHA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Derrick picks up Samantha's pillow. He buries his face in her scent.

INT. ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Samantha clears the corner and sprints for her open door.

INT. ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - SAMANTHA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Derrick puts down the pillow and HEARS FOOTFALLS SPRINTING down the hallway, he turns just as...

SAMANTHA bursts into the room and LEAPS at Derrick and --

CLINGS ONTO HIM. She wraps her legs around his waist and clutches onto his neck.

He stands there, holding her, not sure what to do, when she pulls away from him and stares into his eyes. It's hard for her to articulate...

SAMANTHA
My...love.

Derrick grasps onto her. Decimated by her affection.

DERRICK

Sam, I missed you so much.
(beat)
Are you alright?

But she just nestles into Derrick's shoulder. A child searching for warmth.

DERRICK

I've got you now. I'll take care of you.

She holds on tighter.

Suddenly ROBERT APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY. He's holding a large BUTCHER'S KNIFE.

Samantha, spins off of Derrick and LUNGES FOR ROBERT, but Derrick grabs her and holds her back.

ROBERT

She's not the same girl you fell in love with.

DERRICK

Mom's not the same girl you fell in love with. Does that give you the right to kill her?

ROBERT

There's something wrong with her Derrick.

DERRICK

Then fix her.

ROBERT

I wish I could. I just don't know how. And right now, she's dangerous. You know that.

Samantha is snarling. Derrick turns on her.

DERRICK

STOP IT!!!

And oddly enough, Samantha obeys. A cloud of lucidity wafts over her features.

SAMANTHA

We can live.

DERRICK

And we will.

ROBERT

Don't make this choice, Derrick.

DERRICK

It's already been made. It was made when you dug me out of that cemetary.

ROBERT

I take the blame. That's without question. But you, you're talking about a dead future. Do you really think you can control her?

DERRICK

I love her.

ROBERT

You loved what she once was.

DERRICK

You forget, Dad, that I'm not who I used to be either.

ROBERT

If this gets out of control, Derrick, we're talking pandemic. We need to stop it now. Put aside your high school crush. Please. Think about the position you're putting me in.

DERRICK

You don't get it. You think you understand me, but you have no idea who I am.

Robert takes a step toward them. He tightens his grip on the handle of the knife.

ROBERT

You sound like a teenager.

DERRICK

I am a teenager.

ROBERT

You'll come to understand why I have to do this.

DERRICK

Dad, don't.

Robert rushes Samantha, the KNIFE HELD HIGH, and is about to bring it down against her lily white throat when --

Derrick grabs Robert's hand, takes his father by the throat and THROWS HIM WITH AWESOME STRENGTH against the wall.

Robert slams into the plaster, but fueled by adrenaline, and possibly the need to save the world, launches at Samantha again.

Derrick STEPS FORWARD and DELIVERS a HUGE PUNCH to the side of Robert's head. Robert's eyes dim like the lights have been switched off. He stumbles and falls onto the floor. Unconscious.

Derrick begins to grab clothes for Samantha. She stands there, looking at Robert.

A STRING OF DROOL drips from her lips. Derrick notices. And then the pain comes. He doubles over, grabbing his stomach.

Samantha croaks out...

SAMANTHA
You need...to eat.

She nods to Robert. Derrick stares at his father. He grabs Samantha by the hand and races out of the room, slamming the door behind them.

INT. GAIL'S HOUSE - DAWN

Gail enters from a morning jog. Out of breath, she checks her phone. Walks through her house to the kitchen. We see the fridge is decorated with children's artwork...

Frustrated, she dials a number.

INT. RICK'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAWN

Rick's cell phone rings. He stirs from his sleep and reaches over to answer it.

RICK
Gail. What is it?

INTERCUT WITH GAIL --

GAIL
I'm sorry to call so damn early.

RICK

Come on then, what's the problem?
Is it Argentum?

GAIL

You could say that. It's Robert.
There's something I haven't told
you.

CUT TO:

INT. ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - SAMANTHA'S ROOM - DAWN

Rays of sunlight stream through the window, landing across Robert's face. Robert's eyes flutter, responding it seems to the constant beat of a body SLAMMING into the door.

He slowly comes to. Grabs his head in agony and looks up at --

THE BEDROOM DOOR. It rattles on its hinges every time it's slammed up against.

Robert gets to his knees and falls back again. Stares at the door. He's afraid.

But he pulls himself up. Rubs the side of his head, tracing a huge lump.

He looks to the window. Seems quiet out there. Back to the door. It shudders against the weight.

Robert puts his hand on the doorknob and tests it, sure it's locked...

But the knob twists and as the LATCH PULLS BACK INTO THE DOOR,

ELIZABETH SLAMS THROUGH THE DOOR and into the room.

Robert falls back against the wall. Elizabeth turns to him.

ROBERT'S POV - In the MIRROR, we see Elizabeth's BACK, a scarred, ground beef mess of sinew and spine.

Yet, from the front she looks normal. Just plain mad.

She runs full bore at Robert. He dives for the KNIFE ON THE FLOOR. Grabs it. Turns.

ROBERT

Please forgive me.

Elizabeth leaps at him and ROBERT PLUNGES THE KNIFE UP THROUGH HER JAW and out the back of the neck.

Still, she claws at him, but he TWISTS THE BLADE, cracking through her spinal column. It's as if her face goes dead, but her body continues its attack, in spasm.

Robert scuttles away from her. He watches with a deep sadness in his eyes.

EXT. ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - DAY

Robert steps outside. He notices his truck is missing, but sees Elizabeth's car parked in the driveway.

INT. ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - DAY

Robert finds Elizabeth's purse. Grabs her keys.

INT. GAIL'S TRUCK - DAY

Gail drives Rick down the country roads. Rick tries calling...

RICK
(into phone)
Robert, it's important. Call me back ASAP. I got DeMonde crawling up my ass and your job on the line.

He hangs up.

RICK
Motherfucker.

GAIL
He's had a rough time.

RICK
Agreed. The board, however wants results, not liabilities. I've done just about everything to protect his arrogant ass, but stealing highly sensitive scientific materials is too goddamn much.

GAIL
We'll go over there and talk to him.

RICK

One ounce of uncooperative bullshit
from him and I'm calling in a
private fucking army to end him.

Gail is quiet. She lays on the gas.

EXT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - DAY

Gail pulls her truck to the front of the house and parks next to Robert's truck. She and Rick get out.

GAIL

His truck is here. That's
promising.

RICK

If we find him smeared in his own
feces, you get to deal with it.

GAIL

I'm sure it's not going to be that
bad.

RICK

I always expect the worst. That way
I'm always pleasantly surprised.

They approach the front door. Rick rings the doorbell. They wait. He looks at Gail.

RICK

For the record I don't expect him
to answer the door.

Gail knocks and the door CREAKS OPEN. They just stand there listening to the emptiness of the house.

GAIL

What was your worst case scenario?

RICK

Smeared in feces.

GAIL

Hmm.

She pushes the door open and steps inside.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - DAY

Gail enters. Rick follows. Rick smells something...

RICK
Smells like jungle rot in here.

They step further into the foyer as we ANGLE UP.

REVEAL - SAMANTHA hovers above them, spreadeagle, holding onto the walls and ceiling with her hands and feet.

GAIL
ROBERT???

RICK
BOBBY!!!

Now they're directly underneath Samantha. Her teeth shred back in a wicked snarl.

Suddenly, Derrick steps into the hallway.

DERRICK
Hello, Uncle Rick.

Gail gasps. Rick steps forward. He turns to Gail, not even acknowledging the phenomena before him.

RICK
How's this possible?

Gail realizes.

GAIL
Argentum.

DERRICK
I am the world's most successful
regenerative face creme test
subject.

He steps forward. Rick takes a step back.

DERRICK
That's right, Uncle Rick. You
should go. Before things
get...complicated.

Derrick is struck by the hunger. He creases at his waist. The pain looks excruciating.

Gail runs to him. He holds his hand out to stop her.

DERRICK
Don't come any closer.
(beat)
(MORE)

DERRICK (CONT'D)
Trust me when I say you should
leave.

RICK
Where's your father?

DERRICK
We had a falling out.

RICK
I'm not going anywhere until I see
Robert.

Derrick recovers, but is still in pain.

DERRICK
Aren't you even the slightest
intrigued by this turn of events?
You both saw me dead and buried.
Are you so callous that this...
(re: himself)
is just another day at the office?
What the fuck is wrong with you
people?

RICK
Frankly, I'd say this is a
testament to your father's pure
genius. However, you are currently
the property of DeMonde.

Derrick looks at Rick like nothing could be more
preposterous.

DERRICK
Oh. Sure. Let me just grab some
clothes.
(beat)
I should mention something. There's
a side effect to being resurrected
from the dead. Something I've been
avoiding that maybe I need to come
to terms with. After all. My
girlfriend has...

Samantha drops down from the ceiling. Rick spins to face her
and SHE LUNGES AT HIM.

Rick SCREAMS as Samantha bites into his throat. Gail stares
in horror, suddenly splattered by blood.

Samantha looks up at Gail, working her esophagus to swallow
down a huge chunk of meat.

Gail turns to Derrick.

GAIL
Gracie. She ate all her young.

DERRICK
Charming, isn't it?

Gail runs. She bolts into the heart of the house, but Derrick is on her.

She races up the stairs, taking five at a time. Turns the corner.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Gail looks behind her. Derrick is fast, but almost not trying.

GAIL
Derrick, please. Maybe I can help you.

DERRICK
What makes you think I need help?

Gail looks around, searching for an escape.

GAIL
You said yourself you don't want to do this.

DERRICK
I think you're making more of it than I meant.
(beat)
What I really meant to say is that, well, I've always been a picky eater.

Gail shudders at the thought. And that lights a fire under her ass. She bolts for a smaller door that leads up toward the...

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - ATTIC - DAY

Gail slams the door behind her and locks it from the inside. She runs up the stairs.

The DOOR at the base of the stairs splinters off its hinges. Derrick tears the pieces away.

Gail sees her only way of escape, which could mean her death. She runs hard for a STAINED GLASS WINDOW in the peak of the attic.

EXT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - DAY

Gail EXPLODES out the stained glass window, REACHING for the close branches of a massive tree.

DERRICK'S HAND falls onto her ANKLE and grasps it in a death grip.

Gail's fingers skim the branches, but are then YANKED BACK --

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

And Derrick rips Gail back inside and with awesome strength whips her through the room like a human boomerang.

Gail SMASHES AGAINST the attic's wooden beams. Out.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - DAY

Derrick tosses Gail across the floor to --

Samantha. She looks up, her face drenched in Rick's blood.

DERRICK
You do it. I...can't.

Samantha straddles Gail. As Gail's eyes flutter open, Samantha pulls back her fist and...

PUNCHES A HOLE right through Gail's chest. In a painfully slow move, she grips onto and PULLS GAIL'S HEART OUT.

Gail gasps and dies.

Samantha holds the still beating heart out to Derrick. He takes tentative steps toward her. Kneels before her and...

BURIES HIS FACE IN HER HAND, WOLFING DOWN THE HEART. Finally satiated. He looks up and GRINS, blood cascading down the sides of his face. Happy.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

Robert drives Elizabeth's car, heading north.

INT. ELIZABETH'S CAR - DAY

Robert drives in silence. Finally he picks up his phone and dials...

ROBERT

Rick Attison's office, please. It's urgent.

(beat)

Fine. Give him this message. Tell him Argentum has gone off the rails and we need to --

Driving past his house he sees Gail's truck parked next to his Denali in the driveway. He throws down the phone and SLAMS ON HIS BRAKES.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

Robert turns the car around and drives slowly up to his house. He parks near the edge of the street.

INT. ELIZABETH'S CAR - DAY

Robert looks around the car, seemingly for a weapon. He hefts her CLUB in his hand. Not pleased, he reaches for the glove compartment. Opens it and hits the button for the trunk.

He goes to close the glove, but notices...

He moves some of the car's documentation around to REVEAL...A SMALL HANDGUN. A Sig Sauer. He grabs it and looks up at his house in the distance.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Derrick cleans the blood off of Samantha. He's gentle with her, responsible for her, in love with her. But her eyes are lost, controlled by her hunger.

DERRICK

We can survive, Sam, but you've got to do what I tell you.

(beat)

We can't just hurt people. It needs to be thought out. Planned.

She looks down at him as he cleans the blood from her stomach.

SAMANTHA
Or we...can live.

EXT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - DAY

Robert runs along the treeline and then beelines for the backyard.

He sneaks along the edge of the house and slips around to the back patio.

He glances through the window into the kitchen.

ROBERT'S POV - All clear.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Robert enters. He quietly shuts the door behind him. He can hear the water running upstairs and carefully walks into the...

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

He stops dead, seeing at the end of the hallway Gail's body. Strangely, or not so, Rick is missing. Robert, however, doesn't know that.

He looks into the living room and spies the tools for the fireplace.

INT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Robert stands over Gail's corpse. In his right hand he holds the fireplace shovel.

He places it against her neck and with all his might --

SLAMS HIS FOOT DOWN on the shovel. Again. Again. And Again. Until with a CRACK, Robert severs her head.

DERRICK (O.S.)
She wasn't going to turn.

Robert spins around. Samantha stands poised behind Derrick on the stairs. She wears one of his mother's prettier dresses.

ROBERT
You fed.

Derrick nods. Slightly ashamed, but rejuvenated.

DERRICK

It didn't have to go down the way it did. But it shows how Sam and I can survive without creating more of us.

ROBERT

One mistake and that notion is dead. And then what?

DERRICK

I promise you. All I ask is that you have some faith in me.

ROBERT

It's a lot to ask.

DERRICK

Let me prove it to you.

Robert looks at Samantha. She's putting on a show...smiling at him.

ROBERT

You seem to have
Samantha...controlled.

DERRICK

She listens to me. Really, Dad, I can handle this thing.

Robert puts the shovel down. Leaning it against the wall.

ROBERT

You'll need to go far away. And what will you do for food?

DERRICK

We'll be smart about it. Something I've figured out, if we can't smell it, the hunger doesn't really hit us.

ROBERT

Until your body needs food.

DERRICK

And then we'll eat.

ROBERT

Do I have a choice?

DERRICK

No, Dad. You don't.

Robert holds his gaze. Beat.

ROBERT
Then you'll be careful.

DERRICK
I'll be careful. I mean, we. We'll
be careful. I mean it.

Robert hangs his head. Defeated. He goes to the bottom of the stairs and...

HOLDS OUT HIS ARMS.

Derrick walks down. He turns to Samantha and gestures for her to stay put.

He stands in front of Robert and then like a son who desperately needs his father's love, falls into his arms. Robert hugs him, trying to inhale every bit of Derrick that he can. To remember him as long as he lived...

Because as he grasps at him with his left hand, he pulls Elizabeth's GUN and shaking, holds it to the side of Derrick's head.

ROBERT
I'm sorry it has to be this way.

DERRICK
Don't be sorry, Dad. We'll be fine.

ROBERT
I know we will.

And ROBERT PULLS THE TRIGGER.

Samantha SCREAMS and launches off the stairs. SHE SLAMS INTO ROBERT, clinging onto his back and goes in for a nasty bite.

Robert spins with her. Samantha watches in horror as Derrick drops to the floor in a splash of blood. The look of desperation in her eyes turns to seething hatred as...

Robert slams Samantha into a large MIRROR. He desperately holds her gnashing teeth away from him. He grabs her by the neck and --

FLIPS HER OVER. Her body TWISTS unnaturally, like a contortionist. Robert stumbles back and Samantha charges him.

He raises the gun, HER FOREHEAD IN HIS SIGHTS and FIRES.

But Samantha just flicks her head to the left and bullet grazes her skull, digging a trough through her bone, yet not slowing her down at all.

Robert tries to get off another shot, but Samantha is on him and SLAMS HIM INTO THE SHATTERED MIRROR.

The GUN falls to the floor.

She SHIMMIES up Robert's torso and wraps her legs around his neck and...

PULLS HER HAND BACK as if she's going to punch a hole through his face.

Robert RUNS straight at the far wall and just as she's about to hammer her fist into his forehead he slams her into the TROPHY CASE --

GLASS RAINS DOWN AROUND THEM and Robert stands there, waiting for Samantha's fist to hit him.

Robert looks up at her, tentatively assessing the surprise on her face her arm falls to her side and her mouth goes slack.

He backs away from the broken trophy case and turns to REVEAL -- DERRICK'S MVP TROPHY sticking out the back of Samantha's head.

And then, suddenly, she falls from Robert's shoulders and smacks, back first on the floor. The MVP TROPHY PUNCHES RIGHT THROUGH THE BRIDGE OF HER NOSE.

Robert backs away. He falls against the door, staring at the carnage around him. He turns, gazing with incomparable sadness at Derrick, still twitching, in a pool of blood.

EXT. ROBERT'S HOUSE - DAY

Robert exits. He's covered in blood. The gun hangs in his hand.

In his other hand is an empty GAS CAN. The final drops spill on the front stoop.

LAINY (O.S.)
What have you done?

Robert raises his head --

LAINY BLOCK, 44, an emotional wreck of a woman, is standing several feet off the front of the porch. She's shaking, seething with anger and confusion.

Robert CLOSES THE FRONT DOOR.

ROBERT
Lainey.

His appearance doesn't stop her from walking up the steps and SLAPPING ROBERT across the face. And then she slaps him again. And again. And then she just stands there, her tears drying in the dark hollows of her eyes.

LAINEY
What have you done, Robert?

ROBERT
Things...got away from me.

LAINEY
Take me to his grave. I want to see my son.

Robert takes pause. Not the simplest request. Not the best timing.

ROBERT
Lainey...I have to do something right now.

LAINEY
It can wait.

ROBERT
It can't.

She stares at him.

LAINEY
Then I'll wait for you.

ROBERT
No. Come with me. And then we can see Derrick. I promise.

LAINEY
Fuck you, Robert. Fuck you.
You...you killed my son, you fucking asshole. You killed him and now what do I have? You? I'm better off dead.
(beat)
Go. Do whatever you need to do.
I'll wait here.

ROBERT
I can't let you do that.

Now she notices him, really, for the first time. The BLOOD. The GUN. The EMPTY GAS CAN.

LAINEY

What are you doing? Why do you have
a gun?

(beat)

Are you going to burn down our
house?

Robert says nothing.

LAINEY

I knew you were sick. I told people
how you weren't all there. I knew
it.

ROBERT

Then why did you leave Derrick with
me? If you knew I was so sick...

LAINEY

Don't blame me, Robert.

Robert holds up his hand, but he's looking pretty crazy with
a gun against his palm.

ROBERT

Let's not do this. Not now. Come
with me. Just for a little while.

LAINEY

I'm not going anywhere with you.

She pushes past him and he tries to grab her, but she's a
powerful person and PUSHES him. Robert stumbles off the edge
of the porch, landing on the walkway.

Lainey opens the door.

ROBERT

Lainey. NO.

And she's confronted by the carnage in the foyer. It takes a
moment for her to realize than amongst the dead, lies
Derrick.

And she SCREAMS.

Robert's POV - As Lainey stands in the doorway, screaming
when SUDDENLY, RICK, fully turned, TACKLES LAINEY out of our
line of vision. Her screams of anguish turn to howls of
terror as...

Robert gets up. He picks up the gun and walks inside the house and CLOSES THE DOOR.

SFX - TWO FINAL GUNSHOTS RING into the dawn.

INT. ROBERT'S CAR - DAY

Robert TWISTS the ignition. He lays the gun on the passenger seat and HITS THE GAS.

We pull back on Robert driving out of his driveway to...

REVEAL -- ROBERT'S HOUSE GOING UP IN FLAMES. Windows popping from the heat. Wood buckling and cracking. Hell fire.

EXT. LAURANT DEMONDE COSMETICS - DAY

Robert pulls up in his Denali. He parks directly in front. Gets out.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE COSMETICS - DAY

Robert enters the lobby. He's a mess. He walks straight to the elevators. A Security Guard steps between him and the elevator.

SECURITY GUARD

Mr. Block, Miss DeMonde wants to see you immediately.

ROBERT

Miss DeMonde will have to wait.

The Security Guard stares at him. The elevator doors open.

SECURITY GUARD

You don't look too good, Mr. Block.

ROBERT

Noted.

SECURITY GUARD

I can't let you down there without seeing Ms.--

Robert SHOOTS the Security Guard right in the leg and then pushes him into the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

The Security Guard is screaming as the elevator goes down. Robert just looks ahead.

SECURITY GUARD
Jesus, fuck, I'm bleeding to death.

ROBERT
There's worse fates.

The doors open and Robert steps into the hallway. The elevator doors close on the screaming Guard.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - HALLWAY

Robert walks toward Research and Development.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - LOBBY - DAY

Cops raid the lobby. Hailey DeMonde greets them at the door. She makes several mad gestures to get her point across.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY

Robert POURS a HIGHLY FLAMMABLE LIQUID all throughout the research facility. He covers all of the equipment, test animals cower at the odor.

Then he runs to his computer and...

PULLS UP ALL HIS FILES. A secretive man, he possesses everything and begins the process of erasing it all.

He pours the flammable liquid all over the desk and then finally --

ALL OVER HIMSELF.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - HALLWAY

COPS burst from the stairwells and the elevator, followed by Hailey DeMonde and several gawker employees.

They race down the hallway toward R&D.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY

Robert stands in the center of the room and drenched in highly combustible liquid he...

LIGHTS A MATCH.

INT. LAURANT DEMONDE - HALLWAY - DAY

The Cops stampede toward Research and Development and Hailey punches in the security code to open the door.

The door opens to REVEAL -

Robert stands with his back to the group. He's rigid. Cops take positions. Guns are cocked and ready.

Hailey enters. A Cop tries to grab her.

COP
You need to stand back.

HAILEY
Fuck off.

She pushes past him.

HAILEY
Robert?

Robert doesn't move.

HAILEY
Let's talk about this Robert.

As she gets closer, we push in on Robert. Around him. The match in his hand is but a whisp of smoke, BURNED PAINLESSLY INTO HIS FINGERTIPS.

And then around his left side where we finally see it...a BITE MARK, clearly Samantha's parting gift.

Around him until we're back on Hailey DeMonde slowly approaching.

HAILEY
C'mon, Robert. Violence is not the answer.

She puts her hand on his shoulder and on his face now, he sniffs her presence and...

SPINS on her, TEETH CLAMPED DOWN ON HER CHEEK. Hailey screams as --

A DOZEN COPS tear Robert off her. He bites one and then another and then they fire on him, but he keeps coming until one cop finally puts a bullet right in Robert's EYE.

He falls back against the cages of test animals. As we push in on him, the mayhem spurned from Robert's attack drifts into the background like white noise.

Closer on Robert until his ragged face is all there is and --

SMASH CUT TO TITLE:

SUBJECT: ZERO

The End