

CLARITY

Screenplay by

Ryan Belenzon & Jeffrey Gelber

March, 2013

Bona Fide Productions / ShowKat Productions

FADE IN:

On the faint undulation of an ELECTROCARDIOGRAM.

PAN OVER to a once-beautiful woman lying still in bed, the glean gone from her skin. Her face is hollow. Sunken.

Almost as if something deep inside were eating her alive.

A HAND tenderly caresses the woman's forehead. There is love in this touch. Follow the hand back to its owner:

DR. DANIEL HERD

The fluorescent overheads cast long shadows over his tired, weary face. No lack of light, though, can hide his sadness.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

With her last bit of strength, the woman's half-mast eyes lock onto her husband. Daniel grabs her cold, chafed hand.

She tries to speak... but can't get it out. Daniel leans in and she WHISPERS SOMETHING into his ear--

Something that makes Herd bolt upright. Something that confounds every rational instinct in his body.

And she knows it too, because in her final act on this earth, Dr. Herd's wife smiles. And then--

SHE'S GONE

The EKG WHINES, like a muted scream, cutting through the silence of the hospital, its diagnosis unappealable. The noise literally stabs at Herd, knocking the air out of him.

A part of him... here... now... has died.

TECHNICIAN (PRE-LAP)
Test number twenty-two complete.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Dr. Herd -- a long five years older -- stands in front of a thick viewing window, eyes locked on the hidden room beyond.

But he's not seeing. He's remembering.

The only clue as to what lies behind the glass -- what Dr. Herd is staring past -- is an out-of-focus REFLECTION just hinting at some gleaming metal monster of a machine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TECHNICIAN (O.S.)
Energy signature confirmed.
Powering down.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
That brings our success rate within
threshold. What do you want to do?

Dr. Herd returns to the present, glances off at the voice of his associate. He thinks for a moment. Then turns back.

And this time he sees. And slightly nods.

DR. HERD
I want to show the world.

BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE OF BLUES L.A. - NIGHT - TO ESTABLISH

The marquee proclaims: GREAT SCOTT - ONE NIGHT ONLY.

INT. HOUSE OF BLUES - GREENROOM

Meet the four indie darlings of the band *Great Scott*:

GUITARIST
...and I'm just dreading they'll
call my name.

DRUMMER
I kinda like jury duty.

GUITARIST
So I run to the bathroom and this
sleazy old suit starts talkin' to
me while I'm takin' a piss...

ON A GLASS TABLE, a line of cocaine -- A nose sweeps in --

It's ADAM DALEY (23), the lead singer. A GROUPIE sits beside him on the sofa. Her clothing sparse. Adam wipes his nose.

ADAM
I hate that shit. I pee in peace.

The groupie -- stoned out of her mind -- licks Adam on the shoulder, leaving her tongue plastered there. Frozen.

Adam looks at her. Used to it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUITARIST

So the lawyer guy says: "When I walk into this building, I make money."

DRUMMER

At the urinal?

GUITARIST

Out of nowhere. And I turn to him and I say... "What, do you bet on the trials?"

Everyone LAUGHS as the BASSIST exits the bathroom. The man's so dedicated he takes his guitar to the john. He's confused--

BASSIST

What's so funny?

They're interrupted by the STAGE MANAGER popping his head in.

STAGE MANAGER

Two minutes.

He's halfway out the door...

ADAM

Waitwaitwait. Is my brother here?

The band members share a knowing look. The clueless stage manager consults his ever-present clipboard.

STAGE MANAGER

Um... I'll check for ya, Adam.

INT. BENTON ACADEMY - MUSIC CLASSROOM - SAME

MUSIC NOTATION scrawled on a CHALKBOARD. Well used instruments set against the wall. Band posters, including one for *Great Scott...* AUTOGRAPHED. At the front--

Is an upright PIANO, covered with piles of papers, arranged by grade. This is the makeshift desk of RONALD DALEY (27). The quieter brother, he's a teacher because he fell into it.

And all the girls are grateful.

He finishes the last exam and we catch a glimpse of the student's name: "Ashley Koner." Ronald writes an: "A"

And deposits the paper next to the "B" papers on its own little pile of perfection. Then, perhaps as a self-referential joke, he plays an A on the piano and...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HIS CELLPHONE RINGS -- "ADAM CALLING"

Ronald picks up the phone and STRONGLY debates answering.

It rings.... and rings... and not answering is killing him.

"1 MISSED CALL"

Carefully, he sets the phone back down and keeps grading.

INT. HOUSE OF BLUES - GREENROOM - NIGHT

Adam cradles a phone at the tail end of a MESSAGE.

ADAM

...Just come to the show, I'll
leave another ticket. I miss you.
And I'm... sorry for everything.

He hangs up. The band's balding manager, BARRY, enters.

BARRY

What's the hold up?

The band members point to Adam; here's the reason.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Your brother really coming this
time?

ADAM

Fuck off, Barry.

Barry holds up his hands and backs out of the room. As he closes the door, the last thing we see--

Adam... snorting another line. STAY WITH BARRY:

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

...Coming down a stairwell behind the stage. The CHANTING of the audience grows louder--

CROWD

GREAT SCOTT! GREAT SCOTT!

Barry sees the stage manager and yells:

BARRY

They're on their way!

The stage manager speaks into a mic on his collar--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STAGE MANAGER
"Great Scott" is coming down.

The manager steps out onto the stage revealing the venue is PACKED. CAMERA FLOWS over the audience as we FOCUS IN ON...

A maturely attractive, too dolled-up ASHLEY KONER. Freshly 18 -- thank God -- Ashley is busy looking around for someone.

CROWD
Great Scott! Great Scott! Great--

AUDIO CUT TO:

A LIVE NEWS REPORT:

MARILYN (INTO CAMERA)
--Scott, I'm standing outside UCLA Medical Center where tomorrow, Dr. Daniel Herd, perhaps America's most famous research scientist...

Reporter MARILYN KONER is a pro. You can tell she's been at this for years from how hard she's trying to hide that's she's been at this for years.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
...will hold his first press conference in five years.

She pauses for the control room to...

CUT TO:

A PRETAPED VIDEO PACKAGE

On the world-famous Dr. Daniel Herd. Marilyn narrates...

MARILYN (V.O.)
Dr. Daniel Herd first rose to prominence when he appeared on national news and proclaimed his team was on the verge of a cure for cancer.

NBC NEWS INTERVIEW OF DANIEL HERD (2005):

DR. HERD
It is our belief that we may be able to use these denatured viruses as targeted delivery systems. They'll attack the tumor, they'll kill the tumor and then they'll disappear.

VARIOUS FOOTAGE:

Of cancer patients receiving injections. Of cancer patients hugging their families. Of cancer patients... cured.

MARILYN (V.O.)

And though Dr. Herd's Nobel Prize winning work did lead to new breakthroughs on rarer forms of cancer, an FDA ruling in 2008 halted human trials after close to 95-percent of patients, including Dr. Herd's own wife, passed away from side effects within eight months of supposedly being cured.

EXT. UCLA MEDICAL CENTER - RESUME

We're back, live:

MARILYN (INTO CAMERA)

The anticipation surrounding tomorrow's announcement is understandably high, as many in the medical community believe that Herd has used the past five years to perfect a safer version of his treatment. We'll find out tomorrow if we're that much closer to a cure to what has been referred to as the 'emperor of all maladies.' I'm Marilyn Koner-- reporting live.

CAMERAMAN DAN holds for a beat before...

CAMERAMAN DAN

And we're clear. That was good.

MARILYN

No shit.

Marilyn instantly drops the smile and turns off the charm.

CAMERAMAN DAN

Don't get mad at me, it's not my fault they're giving the anchor job to Mia.

MARILYN

Well we can't all be young... and Asian, can we?

INT. C.C.'S OFFICE - 37TH FLOOR - NIGHT

A young and Asian secretary waits as...

CHARLES CROWNING "C.C." HUNT, late-fifties, fully graying, signs his name on company letterhead: HUNT PHARMACEUTICALS.

DEAN KENSWORTH, the company's young-gun, enters the office like he's deciding where he'll eventually put his desk.

DEAN

Legal's on my ass. Have you heard back from Dr. Herd about his announcement?

C.C.

Daniel's never been good with returning phone calls.

DEAN

If he's failed, we need to be prepared to distance ourselves.

C.C.

It's going to be hard to distance ourselves when he's making the announcement from a building with my name on it.

DEAN

Your name is the company name, C.C.

For the first time C.C. looks up from his paperwork.

C.C.

I've known Daniel a long time. And this Willy Wonka act means he's got something big... and that means he's got the drug. And if he's got the drug, we have the drug.

Dean looks out the imposing windows at the city, the cars...

DEAN

I hope so.
(then)
I do love this view.

...and a brightly lit CHURCH looming large across the street:

INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH - NIGHT

Empty, save for candles, a sleeping homeless man and the judging eyes of stained-glass saints.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE (PRE-LAP)
Hi, my name's Dave. And I'm an
alcoholic.

INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH - BASEMENT - SAME

Dave is one of fifteen people in a circle of folding chairs--

GROUP
Hi, Dave.

FATHER FRANKLIN REESE, early-fifties and tired, technically
runs the meeting. But maybe... maybe also has a need for it.

DAVE
I've been sober for 67 days.

The group claps, genuinely impressed.

DAVE (CONT'D)
I have to say, I didn't have faith
in the steps. Most of you know I'm
not religious or here by choice.
But I have to thank everyone,
because you're the reason I've been
able to make it this far.
Especially you, Father Reese.

Dave sits and the attention turns to the woman next to him.
This is SALLY HUNT (55) and she's by far the wealthiest here.

SALLY
Hi, I'm Sally and I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP
Hi, Sally.

Whatever she's about to confess, it's not easy. It never is.

SALLY
I took a drink today. So. Eight
months down the drain.

Dave puts a comforting hand on her shoulder.

SALLY (CONT'D)
I'm embarrassed. Not that I took
the drink, actually, I'm
embarrassed telling you all.
Mostly... because it felt good.
Just like I remembered it feeling.
I wish it didn't.
(beat)
I don't have a hobby. I don't have
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALLY (CONT'D)
 kids. I haven't worked in fifteen years, which also happens to be the last time my husband looked at me. My husband, he...

She stops, reconsiders. As she continues, we'll do something a little different... we won't leave Father Reese's face.

Even when it gets uncomfortable, we won't leave his face.

SALLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 I guess I started coming here because I thought if I told everyone about my urges, I'd be able to get rid of them. But I can't. I can only try and control them. Hearing other people's battles, it helps a little. Makes me feel like I'm not alone in this. But when that stops being enough, when there's nothing else left, when you realize you really have nobody... what do you do to fill the void?

We're so close now on Reese we see the pain, the connection to her words, clear as day in his eyes.

SALLY (CONT'D)
 I'm Sally, I'm an addict and I've been sober since this afternoon.

As all eyes turn to Father Reese, waiting for a response...

A response he doesn't have, we juxtapose...

CHEERING:

FROM AN AUDIENCE of roaring fans inside--

INT. HOUSE OF BLUES - NIGHT

As the fingers of a singular talent grind the opening lick of a guitar-fueled anthem...

AN EXPLOSION OF LIGHT

Sends Great Scott into their next number. You know the one.

IN THE AUDIENCE -- Ashley (the dolled up 18 year-old) and her frumpy friend, KATE, dance and sing along.

Lead singer Adam keeps glancing to the side of the stage... Waiting...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

To see if his brother will show.

CUT TO:

A CD CASE

The cheap kind A&R guys have piles of. It's for *Great Scott*'s first self-published album: "HILL VALLEY."

INT. BENTON ACADEMY - MUSIC CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Ronald Daley (the teacher) holds the case, flipping it over.

Debating.

RONALD

Oh, fuck it!

He grabs his jacket and rushes out the door.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Smoothing the wrinkles in her blouse, Marilyn (the reporter) lithely rushes into the dim, crowded dining area.

A pug-faced man in his mid-fifties checks his watch, annoyed. This guy's receding hairline languishes so far behind his ears it can't help but give away the obvious... he's a BOB.

MARILYN

Hi, Bob.

Bob sees her short skirt, instantly forgiving her tardiness.

BOB

It's been too long, Marilyn.
You're looking quite lovely.

MARILYN

I wanted to look my best for the
man behind *Good Morning America*.
(jokingly looks around)
Now where is he?

Bob smiles and takes a full-bodied drink of wine.

BOB

I know this was supposed to just be
two old friends reminiscing, but
your name came up on a conference
call today with some O-&-O station
managers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARILYN

Really?

BOB

Well we were all shocked the anchor job didn't go your way. Shocked. I thought you earned it.

MARILYN

I thought so too.

BOB

So when I told them I was having dinner with you tonight, they said that was... fortuitous.

MARILYN

Is there an opening in New York?

BOB

There may be. Suppose it depends on how this dinner... ends.

Marilyn is only slightly flustered by Bob's sexual overture.

EXT. C.C.'S MANSION - ESTABLISHING

Night hovers over the large, oak-trimmed mansion. A GREY BENTLEY pulls up the curved driveway.

The car stops. Idling.

A long moment. Finally. The ignition turns off.

INT. C.C.'S MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

C.C. Hunt (the CEO) walks through the entry hall and removes his coat, throwing it across a table.

He enters his STUDY and pours himself a scotch. C.C. picks up the glass and takes a gratifying drink.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

At separate ends of a long, ornate table, C.C. and his sad-eyed wife, Sally (the recovering alcoholic), sit stone quiet.

Sally sips a glass of water with lemon. It's all she can do not to stare at the thick caramel colored whisky her husband blithely drinks.

The void between them is bigger than just the table.

C.C. sets down his fork, finished.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

C.C.
I'll be in the library.

The room descends back into silence. Sally stops eating, her husband's coldness stealing her appetite. Also...

He left his drink.

INT. HOUSE OF BLUES - NIGHT

Adam is dripping with perspiration...

ADAM
This next song, I wrote it for
someone very special who I wish was
here tonight.

The band launches into a powerful and melodic hit in the making entitled "YOU'RE MY LAST." The audience erupts...

And it hits Ashley, speaks to her, out there in the audience. A song about loss... about having no one else...

AT THE BACK OF THE HOUSE

Ronald has arrived. He watches his brother with a mixture of pride, love... and tremendous jealousy.

Because God, this song is good.

ON STAGE

Adam pulls back from the mic for a brief musical interlude.

As the cue for him to sing comes... nothing.

Instead, Adam seems to teeter, grabbing the mic stand and pulling it toward his chest as if in confused pain.

The rest of the band vamps.

Suddenly, Adam LOCKS EYES with someone in the audience, ever-so-briefly, then collapses...

The band's manager Barry darts out onstage and finds Adam unconscious, blood leaking from his nose.

ON RONALD

Trying to push through the throng...

Fighting to get to his brother.

EXT. HOUSE OF BLUES - NIGHT

An AMBULANCE races out of the lot onto Sunset...

MONROE (V.O.)
Have you recently lost someone
close to you?

CUT TO:

A TV ADVERTISEMENT

MONROE WEAVER, a stately black man in a cream-colored suit familiar to insomniacs and channel-flippers, addresses us:

MONROE (INTO CAMERA) (CONT'D)
Was there something left unsaid? A
goodbye, an unanswered question...
do you seek closure where none can
be found? My name is Monroe Weaver
and if you call the number at the
bottom of this screen I can help
you speak to loved ones lost.
(O.S. door knock)
My offices...

A hand comes into frame and MUTES THE TELEVISION...

INT. UCLA - DR. DANIEL HERD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

(The infamous) Dr. Herd sets down a TV remote as his loyal associate DR. JANE KEATON steps into the room.

JANE
We have a problem. The Wassermans
changed their mind. We can't use
their son as a candidate.

Herd splay his palms on the desk.

DR. HERD
(damnit)
What about the back-up?

JANE
They're not sure Mr. Humphrey's
will make it through the night.

DR. HERD
Call Dr. Port at Cedars and Jerome
at County, see who they have high
up on the Groff scale.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE
There's another possibility...

INT. UCLA EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Two paramedics BURST in wheeling Adam on a stretcher. Ronald and Barry follow behind. The HEAD NURSE on duty rushes over.

PARAMEDIC
Cardiac arrest. Possible overdose.

Ronald tries to follow but an orderly stops him and points toward the WAITING AREA.

HEAD NURSE
Take him to E.R. six. What are his vitals?

The paramedic launches into the necessary stats as Jane steps out and approaches the stretcher, blocking its way.

JANE
Dr. Herd would like to handle this patient personally.

INT. HOUSE OF BLUES - NIGHT

The crowd, confused and upset, mull around as the lights come on and the stage manager takes the mic.

STAGE MANAGER
Ladies and gentlemen, unfortunately Adam Daley has come down with a severe case of exhaustion. The rest of tonight's show is canceled.
(over "boos")
Your tickets will all be refunded.

FOCUS IN on Ashley, unconvinced, turning to her friend Kate.

ASHLEY
That's bullshit. That's such bullshit.

KATE
They didn't even finish "You're My Last!"

ASHLEY
No. I mean... something's really wrong with him.

KATE
How do you know?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The grumbling crowd moves toward the exits.

ASHLEY

When he collapsed, he looked at me.
Right fucking at me. And he didn't
look tired.

INT. E.R. WAITING ROOM - LATER

Ronald sits in a chair, absently watching a TV on the wall. Barry sits beside him, nervously rubbing his hands. The rest of the band -- in rockstar regalia -- mull around.

A MEXICAN FAMILY sits below the hanging television, the mother saying a quiet prayer as she kisses a ROSARY.

Ronald notices, and suddenly can't take his eyes off the rosary. He watches with a blend of pity and disdain. Then:

BARRY

You know I tried to get him off.

RONALD

I know.

BARRY

You giving up didn't help.

If Ronald had the energy... he just might punch Barry.

YOUNG NURSE

Excuse me. Can I get you anything?

BARRY

Not right now.

Ronald shakes his head. The YOUNG NURSE leaves and he turns back to the television, ignoring Barry.

ON THE TELEVISION:

A REPORTER stands in front of UCLA Medical Center.

REPORTER (ON SCREEN)

...expecting perhaps an announcement of some kind of new cancer treatment. All we know for certain is insiders are calling Dr. Herd's discovery "earthshattering."

Ronald spots something on the screen, in the background. He raises his arm and... yep... that's him, in the waiting area.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REPORTER (CONT'D)
 We've also just received word that
 lead singer of the up-and-coming
 band 'Great Scott' has...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Bob, Marilyn's dinner guest, sits on the bed, watching the same reporter on television as he takes off his shoes...

IN THE BATHROOM -- Marilyn stares at herself in the mirror. Almost like she's psyching herself up for the act at hand--

BOB (O.S.)
 Exhaustion? If he'd have been a
 real rock-and-roller, he'd have had
 an overdose!

Marilyn exhales and returns out to Bob, now in his underwear.

BOB (CONT'D)
 Your phone keeps beeping.

Marilyn walks to the nightstand. She has two missed calls and a text from ASHLEY: "R U coming home 2nite?"

MARILYN
 It's nothing. Just my daughter.

She sets the phone back down and unzips her dress...

INT. KONER RESIDENCE - ASHLEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

No posters or the trappings of a teenager. This is the room of an 18 year-old mature beyond her years. Speaking of--

Ashley sits on her bed, holding her phone. No messages from her mother. Nervous and scared after the night's events, she debates her next move. Steeling her resolve...

She opens her desk drawer and pulls out the BENTON ACADEMY SCHOOL DIRECTORY. Flips a few pages, then...

DIALS:

RONALD'S CELLPHONE, sitting on an end table in a corner of the E.R. When nobody picks up, the phone flashes: "2 NEW MESSAGES"

INT. E.R. WAITING ROOM - SAME

Nobody picked up because Ronald's seat is empty. None of the other UNFORTUNATES in the ER have noticed either because they're too busy rubbernecking out to the hall:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WHERE JANE, Dr. Herd's assistant, explains some hard news to Ronald, Barry and the remaining members of *Great Scott*...

CUT TO:

A CLERICAL COLLAR being removed...

INT. PRIVATE RECTORY - NIGHT

...by Father Franklin Reese (from the AA meeting), who does the only sensible thing he can do after leading one of those--

He pours himself a drink.

His accommodations are spartan, either out of a belief in Christian frugality or a fear he'll have to pack up fast.

THE TELEVISION

Plays the same news report as in Bob's hotel room. Father Reese doesn't pay any attention to it until...

ANCHOR (ON SCREEN)

We're now receiving conflicting reports saying 'Great Scott' lead singer Adam Daley is, in fact, listed in critical condition...

Reese SPINS around, spilling a bit of drink. He walks over to the television, which displays:

CELLPHONE VIDEO -- ADAM COLLAPSING AT THE HOUSE OF BLUES

Reese's hand shakes. Either he's a really big fan.

Or he knows Adam.

He gulps the entire glass, hand trembling the entire time.

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Father Reese turns on the light and grabs a SHOEBOX from the top shelf. He opens the box BELOW FRAME, shuffling its contents until he finds...

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

...A picture. Of two young boys, maybe three years apart. Brothers, happy, dressed in Sunday school vestments.

Reese calmly sets the photo on the neatly made bed next to a small LEATHER WHIP. He then removes his undershirt to REVEAL:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HIS BACK, covered with years and years of scar tissue. He picks up the whip, positions it over his shoulder and we...

SNAP TO:

INT. ADAM DALEY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Adam is unconscious, cold, nearly gone but in some kind of stabilized coma. Ronald is beside him, conflicted.

RONALD

They say you can't hear me. So--

The only reply is the dulcet monotone of a weak EKG.

RONALD (CONT'D)

If you can, you're dying. Or you're already dead, I don't know.

(beat)

God damnit, why didn't you fucking listen to me? How many times did I drag you into rehab? This wasn't you. It wasn't us.

EXT. HALLWAY - SAME

Dr. Herd and Jane watch Ronald through the small window.

JANE

Do you think he'll agree to it?

DR. HERD

He has to. We can't postpone. His brother is our only viable option.

JANE

It doesn't hurt that he's famous.

Beat.

DR. HERD

It always hurts.

INT. ADAM'S HOSPITAL ROOM - RESUME

Ronald is almost more angry than sad...

RONALD

I'm sorry I wasn't stronger. I just-- I couldn't stand to watch you do this to yourself.

(after a beat)

You had so much left to offer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ronald takes his brothers hand and squeezes it goodbye.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jane and Dr. Herd are waiting as Ronald drags himself out of the hospital room like he's on some kind of auto-pilot.

DR. HERD
Hello, Ronald.

RONALD
I know you.

DR. HERD
I'm very sorry about your brother.

RONALD
Yeah, thank you. I...
(suddenly)
He's an organ donor, who do I talk
to about...
(then)
Wait... you're Daniel Herd. You're
on the news... why are...
(beat)
I think I need to sit down.

Ronald teeters. Jane and Dr. Herd help him to a chair.

DR. HERD
Put your head between your legs and
take big breaths... in, out...
that's it.

Dr. Herd sits beside Ronald. Jane stands back.

DR. HERD (CONT'D)
Are you alright now?

RONALD
Yes. I mean--
(beat)
Why are you here? I don't
understand why...

DR. HERD
...Why a guy like me is working an
overdose in the E.R.?

Ronald nods. That's exactly right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HERD (CONT'D)
I'm here because I need you to make a decision, an important one, and I wanted to ask you personally.

RONALD
No, it's okay, Adam was... I'll sign whatever, he wanted to be an organ donor.

DR. HERD
That's very noble of him but actually-- because of the drugs in his system, we can't use them.
(beat; and it's the biggest beat of his life)
But there is something he can do.

Ronald suddenly notices what we might already have--

RONALD
Where'd all the other people go?

Dr. Herd looks around the empty hallway mostly for Ronald's benefit. He know's the floor is empty. He ordered it.

DR. HERD
Mr. Daley, tomorrow I'm holding a well-publicized press conference. For the past five years, I've been working on something game changing. It will be the single greatest scientific achievement in mankind's history. That sounds like a lot of hype but I believe it. Now I know this is the worst time to ask, I wish it didn't have to be this way, but in order to share what I've discovered with the world, I need one last candidate. I need your brother.

RONALD
I don't understand.

DR. HERD
Come with me.

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The two men, followed by Jane, walk up to thick doors emblazoned in big bold letters with: THE HUNT WING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HERD

My discovery... will be difficult
for people to believe.

RONALD

Why?

DR. HERD

Because any sufficiently advanced
technology is indistinguishable
from magic.

Dr. Herd holds up a KEYCARD and the doors unlock.

INT. HUNT WING - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Herd leads Ronald into this much newer area of the hospital. Scientists in non-standard white scrubs bustle.

DR. HERD (V.O.)

If you agree to help me, after
tomorrow your brother's legacy, his
music, will -- I assure you, never
be forgotten.

They reach the end of the hall and enter--

INT. CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, we're in mission control. Dozens of computers and highly streamlined equipment rest under a ROW OF GLASS.

What the windows look onto, we cannot tell; it's dark beyond.

DR. HERD

Please have a seat.

Herd motions to a chair in front of a large central monitor.

DR. HERD (CONT'D)

My experiment, which I have
repeated twenty-two times, requires
an individual on life support. In
this case, Adam. Here's the tough
part for many; the needs of the
experiment call for us to control
time of death precisely. Twenty-
one times, the results were exactly
as I'm about to show you.

Jane begins typing into a computer and ON THE MONITOR:

VIDEO OF AN UNCONSCIOUS MAN --

Laying on a sleek white slab in a sleek white room. A nurse in sleek white garb checks the LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM keeping the subject alive.

TECHNICIAN (VIA MONITOR)
TFS at full power. Clear the room.

Above the unconscious man, elusively out of frame, is just a hint of some kind of incredibly powerful MACHINE.

DR. HERD

This is Subject 17. He suffered a brain aneurysm. What I'm about to show you may be difficult to watch but I ask you to try. And I ask you to understand this has been in no way faked. It was shot with a sensitive, high speed camera. Even still, you must pay attention or you'll miss it.

Jane hits the SPACEBAR and from this point forward we NEVER SEE WHAT'S ON THE MONITOR again. We hear it, and see the change in brightness across Ronald's face...

The WHIR of machinery builds, timed to a slow-thumping EKG.

TECHNICIAN (VIA MONITOR)
Ending mechanical ventilation.

Dr. Herd watches Ronald watch his experiment. The EKG suddenly flatlines and a burst of sound culminates with--

THE VIDEO MONITOR BLOWING OUT

The bright light across Ronald's face forces him to flinch... but he never shuts his eyes. The flash quickly subsides--

And whatever Ronald sees on the monitor... it leaves him shell-shocked. His brother's death -- even for a moment -- pushed aside by the incredible *thing* he has just seen.

RONALD
Was that...?

Dr. Herd nods yes.

RONALD (CONT'D)
How did you do that?

DR. HERD
I'll show you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks to Jane, who types a command and the room beyond the windows LIGHTS UP to reveal--

"THE CHURCH"

It's another world. Three stories tall and curved -- like an operating theater -- "The Church" is the epicenter of the Hunt Wing. Clean and white, it's the room from the video.

The other end of the Church is bisected by a wall of FROSTED GLASS, cutting the circular arena in half. The control room we're in looks out on the half that holds THE DEVICE.

And that's basically all this giant room is... a massive device formed by several large rings running to the ceiling. Time travel, space travel, whatever this thing does...

It's fucking powerful.

DR. HERD
I call this "The Church."

RONALD
The Church?

It's impossible for a small smile not to creep over Dr. Herd:

DR. HERD
Because it's going to change
everything people believe.

SLAM TO:

BLACK.

VOICE
National's cutting in in 5, 4, 3...

We hear the familiar theme of a NATIONAL NEWS BROADCAST as the opening graphic for "BREAKING NEWS" appears on--

THE MONITOR

We're watching. Taped under the monitor it reads: NYC.

NATIONAL ANCHOR (VIA MONITOR)
Welcome to this special report...

Several other monitors show different camera angles of what must be Dr. Herd's press conference.

Right now we're...

INT. NEWS VAN - MORNING

Where TECHNICIANS from the LA affiliate are checking the feed. Bob, the newsman from New York, quietly oversees.

TECHNICIAN 1
TECHNICIAN 2
Camera 2 is soft. --Dan, I'm getting feedback.

PULL OUT the open door of the van...

EXT. UCLA MEDICAL CENTER - CONTINUOUS

...to reveal DOZENS OF OTHER NEWS VANS, their satellite dishes raised high, parked and broadcasting live:

And somehow we can HEAR the many TELECASTS around the world broadcasting into the news vans, forming...

A CACOPHONY OF VOICES, building into a blazing CRESCENDO--

CUT TO:

Silence.

And a microphone. On a podium. Inside...

INT. HUNT WING - PRESS THEATER - CONTINUOUS

This is the OTHER SIDE of the massive room known as "The Church." Built for one purpose: this press conference.

A stadium-seated theater with curved walls, the PRESS are sloped up from a STAGE that's backed with a THREE-STORY WALL of frosted glass. On the other side of that glass...

The Device.

But right now it's HIDDEN, and nobody in the audience knows about the massive machinery only a clouded windowpane away.

The reporters wait with anticipation. The only person not watching with enthusiasm sits in the back row--

RONALD. He'd rather be anywhere else as...

A private door opens and Dr. Herd emerges. The room falls silent as he strides to the podium, practiced and confident.

CONTINUED:

DR. HERD

Good morning. My name is Dr. Daniel Herd. I'm the head of the UCLA Department of Experimental Diagnostic Imaging and the Hunt Chair for Oncology Research. Thank you all for being here.

(beat)

I have looked 2,147 patients in the eye and told them that no matter what we do, they will die. Three of them were foreign royalty. Two of them were US Senators. And one of them was my wife. No matter who I tell, the reaction is the same. Rich, poor, doesn't matter.

They're all scared. The kind of scared you get right at the end of some horrible nightmare. And I've had to tell those 2,147 people they can't wake up.

(beat)

I have singularly and passionately sought a cure for cancer for almost thirty-two years in a selfish attempt to never again see that look of fear. Five years ago, I came close. Closer than anyone else ever has. And that's why you're all here... to see if I cracked it. If I overcame the unfinished science and -- well, youthful hubris -- of five years ago. Unfortunately, I did not.

INT. HUNT PHARMEACUTICALS BOARDROOM - SAME

The company brass, including C.C. and that prick Dean Kensworth, watch the press conference on TELEVISION.

DR. HERD (ON SCREEN)

I leave that elusive panacea to a mind greater than my own -- if it exists -- but here, now, I seek to give the memory of those 2,147 men and women the next best thing.

Dean glances with a Machiavellian confidence at C.C.

But C.C. is stone-faced.

INT. HUNT WING - PRESS THEATER - CONTINUOUS

DR. HERD

If I cannot cure their bodies,
perhaps I can heal their minds.
Perhaps I can banish for once and
for all that heartbreaking look in
their eyes.

Dr. Herd takes a deep breath...

DR. HERD (CONT'D)

For five years, secretly and
without the knowledge of this
medical center's board or its
benefactors, I have led a massive
research project under the guise of
inventing a machine -- a scanner --
powerful enough to detect cancer
earlier than ever before. In fact,
the machine I developed does
nothing of the sort. It is, for
all intents and purposes, far, far
more impressive.

Dr. Herd pauses to gather his notes when--

REPORTER

--Are you saying you
misappropriated funds earmarked for
cancer research?

DR. HERD

I suppose so, yes.

There is an immediate mood change in the room... Reporters
all YELL over each other. Dr. Herd motions for quiet.

DR. HERD (CONT'D)

Please, please. If you'd all turn
your attention to the monitors.

Suddenly, MONITORS set around the room pop on, DISPLAYING:

SUBJECT 17

The same VIDEO Dr. Herd showed Ronald the night before:

AN UNCONSCIOUS MAN on a sleek white slab. Above him, just a
hint of some kind of incredibly powerful MACHINE.

TECHNICIAN (VIA MONITOR)
TFS at full power. Clear the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

This time, like the rest of the world, we'll SEE THE VIDEO...

DR. HERD

The machine you're seeing in the top of the frame is called a Tunneling Fluorescence Spectrometer. It is four-thousand times more powerful than an MRI and capable of detecting the collision of two atoms from as far as six miles away.

ON THE MONITORS: The WHIR of machinery builds, timed to a slow-thumping EKG. The heartbeat REVERBERATES in the room.

TECHNICIAN (VIA MONITOR)
Ending mechanical ventilation.

DR. HERD

This is video of Subject 17. His EKG is directly tied into the TFS machine and in fifteen seconds his heart will stop. Please pay attention.

THE AUDIENCE clamors... are they about to broadcast footage of a man dying?

ONSCREEN: The TFS glows as the EKG flatlines and suddenly--

THE SCREENS ALL BURST WITH WHITE LIGHT

Which quickly dissipates to reveal...

ENERGY, FLOATING ABOVE SUBJECT 17... ENERGY IN AN AMORPHOUS BUT FAINTLY HUMAN FORM. IT HANGS IN THE AIR FOR A FEW SECONDS BEFORE CONDENSING INTO A POINT AND DISAPPEARING...

And now we're back on the AUDIENCE... absolutely perplexed and unsure about what they just saw.

DR. HERD (CONT'D)

I have discovered proof of the human soul.

Fire. The Wheel. Gunpowder. Electricity. Flight.

Fuck 'em.

CHAOS

Erupts amongst the reporters. Fighting to be heard:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

REPORTER #2
Is this some kind of joke?

DR. HERD
No.

The reporters are having trouble processing.

REPORTER #3
How do we know this footage hasn't
been doctored?

DR. HERD
I'm glad you asked.

Dr. Herd hits a button on his podium and behind him--

THE WALL OF IONIZED GLASS DEFROSTS

Turning the wall into a WINDOW. A window into--

"THE CHURCH"

This room, this half of the complex, built for this one purpose. This wall of glass, built for this one moment.

Every reporter, every camera, now perfectly positioned to film the imminent death of SUBJECT 23 -- Adam Daley -- on the white slab under the sleek TFS machine. Hooked up and ready.

DR. HERD (CONT'D)
This is Subject 23. He is being
kept alive by our machines. Please
put on the glasses provided
underneath your seats. It's going
to get very bright in here.

Ronald, in the back of the room, doesn't move. Instead, while everyone around him puts on thick, black glasses...

He just closes his eyes.

INT. NEWS VAN - SAME

Bob stands over the technicians watching the broadcast...

BOB
Is he going to kill a man on
national television?

INT. "THE CHURCH"

Adam Daley, unconscious and close to the end, lies on his death bed as the TFS powers up above him.

IN THE CONTROL ROOM

Jane stands over three scrubbed TECHNICIANS manning controls.

JANE
Cut mechanical ventilation.

THE VENTILATOR

Pumping breath into Adam's chest terminates.

ON THE PRESS SIDE

It almost looks like they're watching a 3D movie, riveted by the machine and the body of Subject 23.

THE EKG of Adam's heart monitor VIBRATES the subwoofers in the wall as the heart slows down and suddenly... STOPS...

THE WORLD GOES NOVA

AS THE TFS MACHINE EXPLODES WITH ENERGY, RIPPING DOWN INTO ADAM'S BODY AND EXPLODING OUT IN A TSUNAMI OF LIGHT.

And as the light disintegrates, there, hanging over Adam...

IS HIS SOUL

CLEAR AS DAY, VISIBLE AND CRACKLING WITH RESIDUAL ENERGY. A BEAUTIFUL RAINBOW OF BRIGHT COLORS...

It floats peacefully as time seems to SLOW DOWN.

Mouths hang agape amongst the press as WE STAY SLO-MO:

INT. BENTON ACADEMY - SCIENCE CLASSROOM

Ashley and her fellow high school seniors watch the first live images of a human soul...

INT. MONROE WEAVER'S OFFICE

Monroe Weaver (the psychic medium from TV) and his rotund secretary, DOLORES, are stunned... But almost... vindicated.

INT. FATHER REESE'S OFFICE

Father Reese has his hand to his mouth as he takes it in...

EXT. NYC - TIMES SQUARE

Hundreds of people, gazing up at the press conference on the intersection's iconic JUMBOTRON...

INT. "THE CHURCH"

And just like that, the soul of Adam Daley CONDENSES down and blasts at light speed out of our existence, leaving only a--

CRACKLE OF ENERGY

And that's it. A singular moment of pure clarity.

In the calm before the storm, Dr. Herd and Ronald LOCK EYES. Dr. Herd nods, a small thank you...

AND THEN EVERY REPORTER

Is on their feet. Screaming to be heard.

IN THE BACK

Ronald watches the insanity around him when he's tapped on the shoulder. It's Jane. She motions for him to follow her.

EXT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jane leads Ronald toward a back exit, all business.

JANE

I thought it best you leave before they found out that was your brother in there. We have a car waiting to take you wherever you'd like. Here.

She hands him a PILL BOTTLE.

JANE (CONT'D)

Get some rest.

INT. BROADCAST STUDIO - MORNING

Marilyn, disheveled, rushes past various televisions displaying the live press conference.

ASIAN REPORTER/MIA (ON SCREEN)
...mean that when we die our soul goes to some form of afterlife?

ONSCREEN: The glass behind Dr. Herd has RE-IONIZED, returning to its frosted state; presumably for removal of Adam's body.

DR. HERD (ON SCREEN)
I imagine that's still a question for endless debate. But the energy does disappear moments after leaving the body, leading me to
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HERD (ON SCREEN) (CONT'D)
 believe it must travel somewhere,
 assuming the first law of
 thermodynamics still applies.

Marilyn approaches a group of station employees. Among them stands her Cameraman, his eyes glued to the monitor.

MARILYN
 Should have been us there.

CAMERAMAN DAN
 (beat; turns)
 Are those the same clothes you were
 wearing last night?

MARILYN
 Fuck you, Dan.

ANOTHER REPORTER (ON SCREEN)
 ...Can you tell us anything about
 the test subject? Subject 23?

INT. "THE CHURCH" - SAME

Dr. Herd looks over and sees Ronald's seat IS EMPTY.

DR. HERD
 We will be releasing footage and
 information on 22 of the subjects
 who took part in this study, each
 of whom was volunteered by their
 immediate family after all other
 means of saving them had been
 exhausted...

EXT. HOUSE OF BLUES - PARKING LOT - MORNING

A TOWNCAR pulls up to the concert venue. It looks completely different in the harsh light of day.

DR. HERD (V.O.)
 As for Subject 23, his name is Adam
 Daley, age twenty-four.

Ronald exits the car, grabs his jacket and walks through the empty lot, lost in thought.

REPORTER (V.O.)
 The singer?

DR. HERD (V.O.)
 Yes. He was brought in at 9:53pm
 last night locked in a comatose
 state. His symptoms continued to
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HERD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
deteriorate until we pronounced him
brain dead at approximately 12:14
this morning.

Ronald approaches the ONLY CAR in the parking lot.

And that car is a DELOREAN. "Great Scott" indeed.

INT. BENTON ACADEMY - SCIENCE CLASSROOM - SAME

REPORTER (ON SCREEN)
--Was it a drug overdose?

Students are in SHOCK, none moreso than Ashley. She begins crying, remembering that moment right before Adam collapsed.

That moment where she was the last thing he ever saw.

Some DICK STUDENT near Ashley mimes SNORTING COKE and then grabs his chest in pain. His friends snicker.

Ashley abruptly grabs her books and rushes out of the classroom. She can't take anymore.

DICK STUDENT
What'd I say?

INT. "THE CHURCH" - MORNING

Dr. Herd is wrapping up...

DR. HERD
...At the time of death the machine
sends out a burst of neutrinos.
But I'll let my colleague from MIT,
Dr. Michael Groff, explain the TFS
device further.

(beat)
I'd like to finish on a personal
note. Our society is obsessed with
death. The pain and suffering of
others has become fodder and sport.
It is my hope that this discovery
fundamentally forces us to question
who we are as a people. And where
we want to go from here. We all
have a soul. What we do with it,
is up to us.

INT. HUNT PHARMEACUTICALS - BOARDROOM - SAME

Dean and all the other board members turn to C.C.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN

Well I'd say we got our money's
worth, wouldn't you, C.C.?

C.C. seethes.

INT. RONALD'S DELOREAN - DAY

In contrast to the exterior, everything inside looks modern,
save for the lovingly recreated flux capacitor.

THE PRESIDENT (VIA RADIO)

--We should embrace this revelation
with open hearts and minds.

In a daze, Ronald pulls into a driveway...

EXT. RONALD'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

A modest two-story house. The grounds -- high bushes and a
sloped driveway -- give a modicum of privacy for L.A.

THE PRESIDENT (V.O.)

Dr. Herd has given us hope, not
just for our souls, but for
humanity itself and the future of--

INSIDE THE GARAGE

Ronald closes the DeLorean's signature door. In the
reflection of the car's downward-swinging window he notices:

A TARP, covering a pile. It's been undisturbed for awhile,
but Ronald walks over and pulls it off to reveal--

INSTRUMENTS. Guitars. An upright piano. All pushed into a
corner. He's ignored this pile, every single day, for years.

But today is not like those other days.

On the drums are various STICKERS for Adam's band.

In fact, the very evolution of Great Scott out of this garage
and onto our radios is in these stickers.

UNTIL A SQUEAL comes from down the driveway. Ronald turns...

As a REPORTER and his crew hop out of a NEWS VAN.

REPORTER

There he is! Mr. Daley! Can we
have a word?

The reporter has started up the driveway...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONALD
What are you doing?

REPORTER
We'd just like a word.

That's when the sound of a HELICOPTER appears... and Ronald realizes he hadn't anticipated the coming media storm.

RONALD
Please, you can't be here. Tell them that too.

He motions to *another* news team just arriving. Distracted, the reporter doesn't notice Ronald click his garage remote.

The last thing we see as the garage WIPES THE SCREEN are...

Two more news vans screeching to a halt.

CUT TO:

AN ANSWERING MACHINE

The red screen flashes FULL as Ronald's finger hits "play"--

INT. RONALD'S LIVING ROOM

Ronald steps away from the machine to drop off his keys.

ANSWERING MACHINE
Tuesday, 10:37pm.

The home's decor is clearly from another era. Someone else decorated... and Ronald just never bothered to change it.

ASHLEY (VIA MACHINE)
Mr. Daley, it's Ashley. I was hoping we could talk.

Ronald stops in his tracks at her voice. Walks back.

ASHLEY (VIA MACHINE) (CONT'D)
I just... I know something's wrong, that something happened at the concert tonight to Adam. I don't know, I tried your cell, left a message there. Just, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to bother you twice. Sorry.

BEEP. Ronald suddenly realizes HE DOESN'T HAVE HIS CELL. He pats his pockets... it's not there. Then...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANSWERING MACHINE
Wednesday, 6:53am.

PRINCIPAL GARRETT (VIA MACHINE)
Hey, Ronnie. It's Principal Garrett. I heard about your brother on the news. I hope he pulls through. Don't think twice, I'll get your classes covered this week. I tried your cell--

Hits DELETE. The machine BEEPS.

REPORTER (VIA MACHINE)
Mr. Daley. Kyle Kennedy, San Francisco Chronicle. Please...

Ronald deletes the message.

ANOTHER REPORTER (VIA MACHINE)
Ronald. Taylor Schwartz, MSNBC...

DELETE.

BOB (VIA MACHINE)
This is Bob Vaughn from *Good Morning America*. I'm calling to see what your reaction...

THE PHONE RINGS

Cutting off the machine. Ronald debates... but he knows it's a reporter. Instead, he PULLS THE PHONE LINE OUT. Silence.

CNN ANCHOR (PRE-LAP)
Across the world...

CNN (LIVE REPORT)

CNN ANCHOR
...this morning's announcement has brought people out of their homes and offices and into churches, temples and mosques in record numbers. Those on the ground are saying they've never seen anything quite like it. In Rome, Vatican City--

B-ROLL of Vatican City, as crowded as Conclave...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CNN ANCHOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ...Has filled with Catholics
 looking for a response from Pope
 Benedict. Mecca, Jerusalem...

Mecca, full of Muslims. Jerusalem, full of... Everyone.

CNN ANCHOR (CONT'D)
 Are also reporting a massive influx
 of pilgrims. From Westminster
 Abbey to the National Cathedral,
 clergy are attempting to
 accommodate numbers the likes of
 which they haven't seen in decades.

INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH - DAY

There's an electricity to the SRO audience. Sally Hunt, on her own, finds the last seat in the back row.

IN THE WING

Father Reese stares from behind a beige curtain in disbelief at the crowd. The CHURCH SECRETARY comes over.

FATHER REESE
 (stuck in the gaze)
 They got here so fast.

CHURCH SECRETARY
 I called Loretta at First Baptist.
 Said the fire marshal almost shut
 them down. Had to start a separate
 service in the parking lot.
 (beat)
 So what are you going to say?

Father Reese never breaks his gaze.

CUT TO:

REESE AT THE ALTAR

Speaking to the massive congregation. Improvising, really:

FATHER REESE
 Many of you, I'm guessing from all
 the new faces, haven't had the
 privilege of reading the bible. If
 you had, two pages in... right
 there on the second page, you'd see
 these words: "The Lord God formed
 man from the dust of the ground and
 breathed into his nostrils the
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER REESE (CONT'D)
 breath of life." For two-thousand years, our church has abided by the idea that our soul was granted to us by God. The bible says so. So I don't know what's worse. Being right, or having to be proven right, just for you to show up.

The Church Secretary looks around the room, afraid Father Reese is offending parishioners.

FATHER REESE (CONT'D)
 Now, suddenly, some doctor comes on television and says science has proven what religion has been telling you all along. He provides a spectacle, he shows you with your own eyes this so-called proof. Well I have seen a magician levitate. It doesn't mean man can fly. But because science decrees it, because you saw it on television, you suddenly believe? To say your faith is true would be a lie.

Congregants look guilty, like deer in headlights.

Sally smirks... because everything Reese says is true.

FATHER REESE (CONT'D)
 Faith is not easy. Faith requires, inherently, belief without proof. Throw in proof, and it's no longer faith. It's fact. I'm ashamed that it requires something like this to fill these seats. I'm ashamed that this day and age has ripped religion out of your lives and made it a chore. But above all, I'm ashamed to be right there with you. I call you faithless.
 (beat)
 So am I.

And you could hear a pin drop.

UNLIKE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE - WAITING AREA - DAY

TWO RECEPTIONISTS field calls -- lots of them -- when a FIGURE rushes past, hell-bent on seeing the chairman.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RECEPTIONIST
--Oh, Mr. Hunt, I'm--

C.C. ignores her and bursts into the--

CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE

Head of the hospital LAWRENCE ADAMS is behind his sleek desk, speaking to Dr. Herd. They've been expecting this...

C.C.
What the fuck is going on here,
Lawrence?

LAWRENCE
Charles, calm down. Take a seat.

C.C.
Calm down? Fifty-million dollars.
A new building. Where's the wonder
drug you promised me?

Dr. Herd very calmly leans forward.

DR. HERD
What we've discovered is priceless.

LAWRENCE
Your generous grant was not
contingent on the delivery of a
cancer therapy.

C.C.
He's a god-damn cancer doctor! If
I build a donut factory, I expect
fucking donuts!

DR. HERD
You invested in me, C.C. Look what
you're a part of? It's not a
matter of dollars and cents. We've
given people a look at the very
essence of what makes us human.

C.C.
Gosh, Daniel, you're right, I feel
so much better. You... You know
what? I'm gonna go back, I'm gonna
tell that to my shareholders.

LAWRENCE
Charles, I'm sure the publicity of
your involvement will easily...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

C.C.

--Pick up the *Wall Street Journal* tomorrow and tell me about fucking publicity.

LAWRENCE

You have no idea how the market...

C.C.

How am I supposed to sell, why... Why would people pay what I make them pay when they don't fear the end result?

DR. HERD

And you accuse me of fraud?

C.C. stares Herd down. Hard.

C.C.

You fabricated research, you lied to my face and you engaged in a conspiracy with who knows how many people beyond the other defendant in this room. When I'm done, this place isn't just going to have my name on a wing... it's going to have my name on the fucking deed.

INT. BROADCAST STUDIO - EVENING

Marilyn's newsroom rival, MIA JANG, sits behind the anchor desk, ON-THE-AIR:

MIA (INTO CAMERA)

Yesterday, many considered him a joke. But today, Monroe Weaver, the city's most infamous psychic medium and spiritualist -- known mostly for his late night commercials -- is suddenly being inundated with new believers.

EXT. MONROE WEAVER'S OFFICE - EVENING

Marilyn Koner -- biting back Miacentric bitterness -- stands behind a sizable mob. POLICE perform crowd-control.

MARILYN (INTO CAMERA)

That's right... *Mia*. I'm standing on La Brea, where a crowd numbering close to one hundred has gathered to see Monroe Weaver, whose 4th floor office is located behind me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VIDEO FOOTAGE - - EARLIER THAT DAY:

Monroe Weaver tries to push past the crowd into the building.

MARILYN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Mr. Weaver! Can you comment on
today's news?

Monroe stops in front of CAMERA. Does his best to stand still amidst the surging crowd. He speaks with authority:

MONROE
Anything that helps build this country's faith is a step in the right direction. When I woke up this morning, I knew every one of us possessed a soul full of humanity...

Monroe gets jostled forward. He quickly regains himself.

MONROE (CONT'D)
...I knew every one of us possessed a soul capable of wonderful things. I'll go to bed tonight still believing the same thing.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

The sun has just set, it's getting cold... but Ashley doesn't seem to notice. She's in her Benton Academy outfit, knees pulled up to her chest, lost in her iPhone...

ON THE PHONE - - Video of Ashley's FATHER, on a FERRIS WHEEL at the famous SANTA MONICA PIER. He seems mildly terrified.

ASHLEY'S FATHER (ON PHONE)
Oh, we're gonna film this?! You are so kind to me.

ASHLEY (ON PHONE; O.S.)
Camera's rolling! What have you got to say for yourself Dad?

ASHLEY'S FATHER (ON PHONE)
Ummmm. I love you. I love you and I hate heights! Everyone catch that at home?! She's...

The video PAUSES, diminishes off the screen and is replaced by a picture of KATE calling. Ashley hits--

IGNORE. The video of her father on the pier pops back up and Ashley REPLAYS it from the beginning...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHLEY'S FATHER (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
Oh, we're gonna film this?! You
are so kind to me.

CAMERA DOLLIES AROUND a wistful Ashley to reveal the Santa Monica Pier -- and its Ferris wheel -- in the distance.

This was their spot.

INT. HIGH RISE CONDO - ELEVATOR - EVENING

A BEEFY DOORMAN in a suit rides up as the numbers tick away. He holds a bag of Chinese take out.

INT. DR. DANIEL HERD'S CONDO - EVENING

Dr. Herd sits at the clean, modern counter in sweatpants and a tattered T-shirt. Picks at chow mein with his chopsticks.

A BASEBALL GAME plays on his giant plasma, casting green and white across the expensive but barely used furniture.

He reaches for a bottle of water when BEHIND HIM:

A FIGURE

Falls past his balcony. It's so fleeting, maybe we imagined--

SCREAMS

Loud, but distant, carried up from the street cause Dr. Herd to turn. He stares out the open sliding glass door.

EXT. BALCONY - SECONDS LATER

Dr. Herd looks over the edge, down 14 floors at...

BROKEN FOLIAGE

Tree limbs snapped off. As if something heavy fell here.

A crowd gathers, including reporters already present, but Dr. Herd can't see what they're staring at through the tree.

He looks up at the balconies above his. Then back down.

And that's when he hears the sirens.

EXT. RONALD'S STREET - NIGHT

The news vans are still here. Through the open door of one, we see a cameraman sleeping. Nearby, a few others smoke.

INT. RONALD'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The television is on and though we'll see bits of it, we mostly hear a DVD of "BACK TO THE FUTURE" playing.

Ronald is splayed on the sofa, in the same clothes he's worn for the past two days. He holds Adam's guitar to his chest, occasionally strumming as he MOUTHS the words alongside:

DOC BROWN (O.S.)
Marty... Have you interacted with anybody else today besides me?

MARTY MCFLY (O.S.)
I'm... yeah, well, I might've -- sorta -- bumped into my parents.

DOC BROWN (ON TV)
Great Scott!

Ronald suddenly STOPS... because he realizes what comes next:

DOC BROWN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Let me see that photograph again of your brother!
(beat)
Just as I thought, this proves my theory... look at your brother.

PUSH IN -- On Ronald... closing his eyes as...

MARTY MCFLY (O.S.)
His head's gone! It's like-- it's like been erased.

DOC BROWN (O.S.)
Erased from existence.

BLACK. THEN RINGING:

INT. FATHER REESE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Father Reese wakes up, twisting around in bed to reach the phone. He answers it, groggy.

FATHER REESE
Hello.
(beat)
When?

Reese turns over, finds his bedside clock.

FATHER REESE (CONT'D)
I'll be there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hangs up, swings out of bed... HOLD on the white sheets:
There's a slight STREAK OF BLOOD from the wounds on his back.

EXT/EST. CATHEDRAL OF OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS - MORNING

Possibly for the first time, people are CAMPING out front. It's a festive atmosphere as L.A.'s many ethnicities mingle.

INT. CATHEDRAL HALLWAY - MORNING

Father Reese is led by a DEACON down the stark, portrait-lined area separating the church from the office chancery.

Reese should feel at home. But the portrait eyes follow him, indict him. This is the last place he wants to be.

INT. AUXILIARY BISHOP'S OFFICE - MORNING

Reese is directed into the large, business-like office of regional Bishop CARLOS AGUILAR. From the look on Aguilar's face, meeting Reese like this isn't uncommon.

BISHOP AGUILAR

Have a seat, Franklin. John, get the door.

Reese can't help but notice a shopworn STRESS BALL in the Bishop's hand, or the obnoxiously framed HARVARD DIPLOMA.

BISHOP AGUILAR (CONT'D)

Most people don't know this about me but I was a history major before I joined the seminary. Did you know that about me?

FATHER REESE

(he did)

I didn't.

BISHOP AGUILAR

Well, I was, it certainly serves a purpose in this job, since all we're doing is teaching our brand of history. Case in point. For 359 years this church told the world that Galileo Galilei was wrong, that the sun revolved around the earth.

Aguilar uses the yellow stress ball as the sun, revolving it around his finger like the pompous ass he is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BISHOP AGUILAR (CONT'D)
Did you know that? We took a lot
of ridicule on that one. Then,
twenty years ago, the Pope decides
to apologize. Just like that. I
think the point of this story is
mostly to say that sometimes, we
get things wrong, but hey,
occasionally we'll cop to it.

FATHER REESE
Just 359 years too late.

Bishop Aguilar smirks.

BISHOP AGUILAR
Now yesterday, just one day ago,
the most respected and famous
proponent of that which we have
spent 359 years losing a battle
against came forward and said... we
got this one right!
(beat)
So what do you do?

FATHER REESE
You got some complaints.

BISHOP AGUILAR
We got some complaints.

Aguilar sets down the stress ball.

BISHOP AGUILAR (CONT'D)
How many times have I had to move
you? Three, correct?

Franklin nods.

BISHOP AGUILAR (CONT'D)
Look. You know as well as I do
this church is in dire straits; if
I could have fired you, I would
have, but I need you more than I
wish I did. Maybe now, after
yesterday, maybe our score will
change. So, for your sake,
whatever the problem is -- and
hopefully the AA meetings are
helping somewhat with the... urges,
right? -- maybe you figure it out
and you fix it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FATHER REESE
Nothing I said was a lie.

BISHOP AGUILAR
You're wrong.

FATHER REESE
Excuse me?

BISHOP AGUILAR
I don't think you've ever really doubted your faith. I think you lied about that. And now that you know we were right about this, who's to say we're not right about heaven. About hell! So you were wrong, you did lie. You didn't abandon your beliefs. You just don't want to believe them anymore.

INT. UCLA CANCER WARD - MORNING

Dr. Herd grabs a CHART off the door of a PRIVATE ROOM...

A nurse is adjusting the I.V. of a restless JEREMY HARRIS (28), his black head hairless, his weight next to nothing.

DR. HERD
Good morning, Jeremy.

As the nurse leaves the room, Jeremy points to the TV.

JEREMY
So I see you took yesterday off.

Dr. Herd puts the chart down. There's an ease between them.

DR. HERD
Didn't I make sure nurse Karen was here to take care of you?

JEREMY
Only problem is every time she adjusts my pillow I think I've finally died and gone to heaven!

DR. HERD
How you feeling today?

JEREMY
Ehh-- not so good, not so hot.
Listen, Doc, I gotta ask, what with all this shit going down about life-after-death and souls and such.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEREMY (CONT'D)

(then)

What is your position on circumcision?

DR. HERD

Look at this nose... You think I had much of a choice?

Jeremy's laugh turns painful. Even joy is now difficult.

JEREMY

One more question for ya, Doc. Any way we can speed this up?

DR. HERD

I'll be out of here in a second.

JEREMY

No. I meant-- this. I'm just tired of hurting.

This stops Dr. Herd... because how many other people -- people who are also hurting -- how many of them...

Want to speed this up?

DR. HERD

I'll see what I can do for the pain.

EXT. BENTON ACADEMY - MORNING - ESTABLISHING

Ivy-covered walls, uniformed students around a quad.

INT. MUSIC CLASSROOM - MORNING

PRINCIPAL GARRETT stands before Ronald's class...

PRINCIPAL GARRETT (CONT'D)

We have a lot to talk about, current events being what they are. However, I think we should consider making a class card expressing our condolences for Mr. Daley and I'll take it over to his house later.

A hand shoots up from the back of the classroom.

PRINCIPAL GARRETT (CONT'D)

Yes, Ashley?

ASHLEY

Mr. Daley lives right by me, I can just take it to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Some of the kids snicker at the teacher's pet.

PRINCIPAL GARRETT
Well, okay. You know where...?
Okay. That should be fine.

Kate leans in, whispers:

KATE
Mr. Daley knows you turned
eighteen, right?

And then winks at a blushing Ashley.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON A LAPTOP

MSNBC ANCHOR (O.S.)
...Dr. Herd's announcement has now
had a full day to impact investors.

A stock-ticker for *Hunt Pharmaceutical Corp. (HPC)* shows the stock fall in real time: 80.77 -- 80.25 -- 80.20 ...

INT. C.C.'S MANSION - DINING ROOM - MORNING

C.C. sits at the long table, not drinking a cup of coffee. He's too busy watching his net value drop. The TV drones:

MSNBC ANCHOR (ON SCREEN)
...We're seeing a rise in consumer confidence; that's translating to a big morning for blue chips. The one industry trending down, interestingly, seems to be Big Pharma. For more on why we go live--

Sally enters from the sitting room and waits for a greeting. Her husband doesn't even look up:

C.C.
Where were you yesterday?

Sally looks at the back of her husband's head.

SALLY
I went to church. Like we used to.

Long silence.

C.C.
Wonderful.

INT. RONALD'S HOME - AFTERNOON

On the ever-present television is a popular MORNING SHOW:

RESPECTABLE INTERVIEWER
 ...but how does this validate
 the Christian world-view
 over, say, the Islamic belief
 in the soul or even...

FANATICAL GUEST
 --George, George... The true
 God is the only one who
 controls death! Muhammed
 dies. Buddha dies. Jesus is
 the only spiritual leader who
 has come back to life!

ON RONALD, eyes red from lack of sleep, sitting on his couch
 staring at the bottle of SLEEPING PILLS Jane gave him.

FANATICAL GUEST (CONT'D)
 You have to examine the science of
 each belief's "holy" scriptures.
 Tell me, where's the proof that
 Buddha reached Nirvana? The Quran
 gets basic biology and anthropology
 incorrect! But the Old Testament,
 that, George, that is a scripture
 with a meticulous, accountable
 history, much of which has been
 proven fact. Let's see the
 Mormon's prove--

A LOUD BANG on the back door causes Ronald to slowly pull
 himself from his stupor. Another bang.

EXT. RONALD'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Ashley is at the back door, frustrated, CARD IN HAND. She
 pounds on the door again.

ASHLEY
 Mr. Daley! It's Ashley!

Ashley leans down to slide the card under the door when she
 notices a KEY sticking out half-way from beneath the doormat.

She uses her foot to scoot the key under the mat just as
 Ronald opens the blinds.

RONALD
 Ashley? What are you doing here?

ASHLEY
 Hi. I brought you this.

She holds the card up to the glass.

INT. DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ronald scans the card as Ashley trails behind.

RONALD
I don't see your name here.

ASHLEY
I signed the back.

Ronald flips it; the back is covered in her perfect dot-the-I with hearts handwriting.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
I told Principal Garrett I'd bring it by because we're neighbors.

Ronald looks up from the card.

RONALD
But we're not neighbors.

ASHLEY
Yeah, but that's what I told him.
It was only half an hour by bus.

Ronald, stoic, looks back down at the condolence:

RONALD
How'd you get past the circus?

He looks up and realizes Ashley isn't in the room.

RONALD (CONT'D)
Make yourself at home.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ashley is bent down looking for something to eat in the fridge. Ronald enters and the first thing he sees is--

HER VERY CUTE BUTT, visible around the edge of the door.

| | |
|---|--|
| RONALD I think it's probably best that... | ASHLEY --What do you eat? All you've got is a jar of pickles. |
|---|--|

She holds it up, like a trophy.

RONALD
I eat out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHLEY

Well then go change or something.
You look like someone just died.

There. It's out of the way. The elephant. Ashley grows nervous in the surrounding silence as Ronald soaks her in.

RONALD

Give me ten minutes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

We hear the sound of a shower as Ashley looks through Ronald's pictures, his music collection, stacks of DVD's...

She notices the *BACK TO THE FUTURE* DVD CASE by the television. She picks it up, smiles--

And sees the telephone is unplugged. She plugs it in, puts the DVD back near the TV when...

THE PHONE RINGS

Just like that. Ashley answers.

ASHLEY

Hello?

INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH - CONFESSORIAL - SAME

Father Reese sits in the dark booth, phone in hand.

FATHER REESE

Is this, um, Ronald Daley's home?

ASHLEY (O.S.)

He's not talking to any reporters.

And she hangs up.

Reese debates, then redials.

INT. RONALD'S LIVING ROOM

The phone rings and Ashley grabs it...

ASHLEY

Look, fuckhole, I said...

FATHER REESE (O.S.)

I'm not a reporter. My name is Franklin Reese. I used to be Ronald's pastor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHLEY

Oh. Sorry. He's in the shower.

FATHER REESE (O.S.)

Are you his wife?

ASHLEY

...Sure.

FATHER REESE (O.S.)

If you would, please, it's quite
important we speak, have him call
me. 310-555-9683.

Ashley takes down the number.

ASHLEY

I'll tell him you called.

She goes to hang up the phone when...

INT. CONFESSIONAL

FATHER REESE

Wait!

Father Reese leans forward, shadow from the lattice
crisscrossing his face...

FATHER REESE (CONT'D)

Tell me. Is Ronald... is he okay?

INT. RONALD'S LIVING ROOM

Ashley is taken aback by the question just as Ronald comes
in, wearing a sweatshirt and jeans, his hair still damp.

RONALD

You plugged in my phone?

Ashley turns, surprised. Covers the receiver...

ASHLEY

Yeah. Who still has a landline
anyway? Uh, there's some guy on
the phone, says he's your old
priest. Reese, I think?

Ronald grabs the phone cord and TUGS it out of the wall.

RONALD

(calmly)

We can go now.

INT. HUNT PHARMACEUTICAL HEADQUARTERS - AFTERNOON

C.C.'s Asian secretary, HANNA, speaks on the phone.

HANNA

Okay. Tomorrow at 4. I'll tell
him.

Hanna hangs up as C.C. strides out of his office. She stands and follows, still wearing her WIRELESS HEADSET.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Where are you off to in such a
rush?

C.C.

Jesus, Hanna. I'm stretching my
fucking legs.

HANNA

Oh, well, Dean called. He's set up
a meeting with the board of
directors tomorrow.

C.C. stops walking.

C.C.

Dean told you this?

HANNA

Just now.

C.C.

He told you? He didn't ask you?
That little prick.

HANNA

What?

C.C.

I'm asking if Dean was saying it
was already...

Hanna holds up a finger and points to her headset.

HANNA

Okay. I'll let him know.

(beat; to C.C.)

Salazar over at Moody's just
downgraded us from 'Buy'.

C.C.

After one day? That little prick.

EXT. RONALD'S STREET - AFTERNOON

A handful of news vans are still here... most have left out of frustration. A lone COP CAR makes sure rules are obeyed--

THE DELOREAN

Breaks the law and shoots backwards out of the driveway unexpectedly, skidding to a stop as a REPORTER runs over...

Ronald -- the only person inside the car -- throws it into drive and guns the engine, swerving to miss the reporter.

He's around the corner before the first news van is even on.

INT. DELOREAN - SAME

Ronald looks over his shoulder as he escapes, then takes a jacket off the folded down passenger seat to reveal Ashley.

She pushes the seat upright and laughs.

ASHLEY

So what happens when this thing hits 88 miles-per-hour?

Ronald, for the first time in awhile... smiles.

INT. DINER - EVENING

Ronald nervously looks around while Ashley glows, somewhere between reserved sympathy and pleased-as-punch.

ASHLEY

And so I told Jason, you gotta start acting your age. But then it dawned on me, he's seventeen, he is acting his age. Last time I go out with a guy who's younger than me.

Ronald finally gets the energy to talk:

RONALD
Ashley.

ASHLEY
...All they want is sex...

Too bad Ashley doesn't take notice.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Everything is some silly calculated ploy to get me in bed for, what, two minutes if they're lucky?

RONALD
I'm your teacher, Ashley.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHLEY
You're also my friend.

Ronald uncomfortably looks down at his water glass.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
I didn't thank you for the concert
tickets the other night.
(beat)
So thanks.

She puts her hand on his. Ronald pulls his back, paranoid.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
You think we're gonna be caught?
That my mom'll walk through the
front door?

RONALD
This was a bad idea.

ASHLEY
What was, two adults having dinner?
(then)
When my dad died, all I wanted to
do was just-- just sit in front of
the TV and never leave and you
can't tell me you don't, just,
right now want to get out of this
restaurant and sit in front of your
fucking TV and sit there forever.
I wasn't even in your class then,
but you found me in the quad and
you handed me your old iPod with
all these bands on it I'd never
heard of. Remember?

The waitress drops off their food...

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Thank you.
(back to Ronald)
Do you remember what you said?

RONALD
I said, "This is what helped me."

ASHLEY
You didn't even know me and you
were there for me. So now that we
are friends, I'm gonna be there for
you and you're gonna eat that
fucking cheeseburger or I will
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Facebook the entire school-- I'm
sitting here, in a booth, with you.

Ronald is overcome. Doesn't know what to say.

So he does what she said. He eats.

CUT TO:

A SYRINGE punctures piebald skin...

INT. DR. DANIEL HERD'S OFFICE - EVENING

Dr. Herd depresses dark liquid into a vein in his inner elbow. He withdraws the needle and applies a band-aid.

A KNOCK--

Jane enters just as Dr. Herd closes a desk drawer FULL OF SYRINGES and vials of serum.

Before Jane says anything, Herd knows:

JANE
It's Jeremy.

EXT. VENICE BOARDWALK - EVENING

Ronald and Ashley walk the beach bum path, the last remnants of the setting sun casting long palm tree shadows.

ASHLEY
So how come you weren't the rockstar of the family?

RONALD
I was.

ASHLEY
What does that mean?

RONALD
I became an adult long before I wanted to be. When it became just me and Adam. And being a musician isn't exactly steady work. So I went to college instead. Someone had to be responsible.

ASHLEY
Mom had me in college. Not a day goes by that she doesn't remind me how I destroyed her "plans." As if I had a choice in the matter.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

(then)

Is that why you stopped talking to
your brother?

RONALD

No... I don't know.

It's exactly why. And Ashley senses it.

ASHLEY

Do you ever think about killing
yourself?

She just asks. Blunt. Ronald is at first put off, then--

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

They sent a psychologist to our
classes this morning because
everyone's now suddenly afraid
we're all going to just jump off a
building or something. They say
now that we know this isn't the end
-- we think this isn't the end --
that everyone wants to give it all
up and trade in for whatever's
next. Why do you think so many
people can't stand this place?

He doesn't have an answer, so she turns to watch the sun
disappear into the Pacific. Ronald watches her for a beat.

Concerned, enamored. Then, slowly, he turns to the sea.

INT. CANCER WARD - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dr. Herd peers through the doorway window into Jeremy
Harris's room. The entire Harris clan -- mother, father,
sisters -- stand vigil over the bed crying.

Because Jeremy is dead.

MONROE (O.S.)

Excuse me.

Dr. Herd steps out of the way of Monroe Weaver, the medium,
who nods an acknowledgement before stepping into the room.

Monroe hugs the family. Comforts them. As the door shuts,
Herd's face appears through the window as -- reflected in the
glass -- Monroe kneels beside Jeremy Harris...

Takes his lifeless hand...

And begins communicating with the other side.

INT. DELOREAN - NIGHT

Ronald's DeLorean pulls to a stop in front of Ashley's house. It's like that awkward moment at the end of a date...

Not that this is a date, of course.

ASHLEY

Thanks for, you know, letting me spend time with you.

RONALD

I always thought you came by after all those classes because of my brother... because of who he was.

ASHLEY

Have you seen him yet?

(off his confused look)

Your brother. When my dad died, I'd wake up in the middle of the night and I'd see him. Right in that moment before my eyes were completely open. Like a flash.

RONALD

No.

ASHLEY

You will.

Beat. Running out of things to say:

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Don't come in.

RONALD

What? I wasn't planning...

ASHLEY

That's my mom's car there. I don't think she...

RONALD

Well maybe I should just say hello.

ASHLEY

Can you please not?

Ronald eyes her up. He'll leave the mother for another day.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

So when are you gonna be back in class.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONALD
Soon.

ASHLEY
Thanks for the ride.
(beat)
Okay.
(beat)
I'm going now.

She gets out, swinging the DeLorean's door upward. Laughs a little at the crazy car.

INT. ASHLEY & MARILYN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ashley quietly closes the front door. She throws her sweatshirt on a hanger and steps into the LIVING ROOM--

MARILYN (O.S.)
Who the fuck was that?

Marilyn appears. She puts an earring in, dressed to go out.

ASHLEY
What?

MARILYN
The man who dropped you off. Who was he?

ASHLEY
Does it matter? If we'd been five minutes later you'd have been gone-- as usual.

MARILYN
How old is he?

ASHLEY
Mom--

MARILYN
Tell me!

ASHLEY
Why, you want him?

Marilyn slaps Ashley on the cheek. Ashley is stunned.

MARILYN
Look what you made me do.
(then)
I'm still your mother and it's my responsibility to make sure you're
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARILYN (CONT'D)
 not out hanging around with older
 men, throwing your life away. Your
 father was older than me, remember?

Ashley retreats. Marilyn's comment hurt more than the slap.

ASHLEY
 It was my teacher. Ronald Daley.
 My music teacher. I went over to
 make him feel better, his brother
 just died, I know how he feels!

MARILYN
 (after a beat)
 Did you say Ronald Daley?

EXT. ASHLEY & MARILYN'S HOUSE - SAME

Ronald sits in his car, engine idling softly, lights off.

He watches Ashley and Marilyn's heated conversation through
 their living room window.

EXT. HOSPITAL VERANDA - NIGHT

Below, on the property line of the hospital, people have
 gathered in a CANDLELIGHT VIGIL. A growing line of pilgrims.

Jane comes out to find Dr. Herd smoking a cigarette.

JANE
 You know those things give you
 cancer, right?

DR. HERD
 That's funny.
 (beat)
 Did I do the right thing?

JANE
 Daniel...

DR. HERD
 --When I stopped researching the
 cure; when I gave up and turned my
 attention to the TFS. Should I
 have cared less about what happens
 next and more about what happens
 here?

Jane reaches over and takes the cigarette out of his hand.

JANE
 It's a little late for that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She drops the cig and snubs it out with her heel.

JANE (CONT'D)

You were given unique insight, you had to pursue this. You had a question you needed to answer and nobody can ever blame you for that. The world is rejoicing. Your legacy is secure. Isn't that what you wanted?

Dr. Herd looks out over Westwood, all lit up.

DR. HERD

The number of reported suicides in the U.S. and Europe tripled yesterday from the day before.

JANE

Those deaths aren't your fault.

Dr. Herd SIGHS. Long and deep. Looks at the candles flickering on the ground.

DR. HERD

I hope they feel the same way.

EXT. PCH - NIGHT

Ronald's DeLorean drives back into the heart of the city. RAIN begins to drizzle the windshield.

EXT. RONALD'S STREET - NIGHT

The rain falls harder now. Ronald pulls around the corner slowly and sees the news vans are gone, though that POLICE CRUISER still waits at the end of the street.

Ronald pulls up to the cop car and rolls down his window. The cop does the same.

RONALD

Not that I'm complaining but where'd all the news vans go?

COP

The Mayor's wife just killed herself. Bigger story, I guess.

RONALD

Huh. Thanks.

COP

Have a good night, Mr. Daley.

INT/EXT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Ronald closes the car door when he hears--

SPLASHES

On the wet pavement behind him. He can't make out whoever's approaching. It's too dark.

RONALD
You're trespassing!

FIGURE
I'm not a reporter.

The figure steps forward, into the light of the garage:

FATHER FRANKLIN REESE

It's been many years but Ronald -- frozen with shock -- instantly recognizes his former priest under an umbrella.

FATHER REESE
I just wanted a moment of your time.

RONALD
What are you doing here?

FATHER REESE
Can we talk inside where it's not so wet?

RONALD
No.

Father Reese nods, lucky Ronald's even talking to him.

FATHER REESE
I read about Adam. Saw on TV, too.
Guess it's the only thing people are talking about these days.
(after a beat)
I'm a bad priest. I'm a bad man.
I stopped believing in the things I was preaching so long ago...

He trails off, wiping some stray water off his face.

FATHER REESE (CONT'D)
You can't begin to know what it's like to devote yourself so fully to God, only to suffer these feelings inside that no human being should
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER REESE (CONT'D)
 ever have. I've done things, so
 many things. To you. To others.
 (beat)
 I didn't stop because I knew there
 couldn't be a God.

RONALD
 Are you blaming God for what you
 did to me?

FATHER REESE
 I can't blame God. I don't know if
 he even exists. Two days ago I was
 positive he didn't. Now I'm not so
 sure.

RONALD
 It's been twenty years. Now! Now,
 you suddenly think you have an
 excuse?

Father Reese nervously fidgets.

FATHER REESE
 I know how much Adam meant to you.
 You know I never laid a hand on
 him.

RONALD
 Because that's what the deal was!
 Keep my mouth shut and... just get
 the fuck out of my driveway.

FATHER REESE
 You should have told. You could
 have stopped me from...

Ronald steps out into the rain.

RONALD
 Stopped you from what? You said
 I'd be the last!

FATHER REESE
 I needed to be stopped.

RONALD
 I was ten!

Ronald throws Reese to the ground. Reese starts crying.

FATHER REESE
 Nobody wants to be a monster.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Ronald kicks him square in the stomach. Leans down to Reese's ear:

RONALD
Come here again and I'll kill you.

And that's that. Ronald goes inside.

Father Reese coughs up blood. He stands, wipes his chin. Looks up at the torrential sky...

FATHER REESE
(sotto)
Just tell me... just tell me what
you want from me. Please.

LIGHTNING sears the sky. Reese's eyes grow wide... Almost as if... as if he heard an answer to his question. Assuaged--

He drops to his knees and lets the rain wash over him.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. HIGH ABOVE LOS ANGELES - MORNING

The sun crests the horizon, sending shards of early morning light through the towering skyscrapers of downtown.

EXT. RONALD'S HOME - MORNING

The street and driveway are empty. Quiet. "BABA O'RILEY" by *The Who* begins its melodic overture...

CUT INSIDE:

A CLOCK RADIO flipping over to 6:00 on the nightstand in the--

BEDROOM

The curtains are open, sunlight pouring in. Over the music:

RADIO DJ (VIA RADIO)
Good morning, Los Angeles. It's
six a.m., say goodbye to the rain
and hello sunshine.

Ronald lays atop his already made bed, eyes open, peering at the ceiling. He makes no movement to turn off the alarm.

Next to the alarm, the bottle of sleeping pills. Unopened.

RADIO DJ (VIA RADIO) (CONT'D)
You're listening to "Rob Rowe in
the Morning" on KFOG 104.5. We got
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RADIO DJ (VIA RADIO) (CONT'D)
 a little "Baba O'Riley" to get your
 day jump-started.
 (beat)
 THE WHO!?!?

As piano and drums crash over the synth, Ronald sits up, revealing he's already wearing a simple black suit.

He's been awake for awhile.

INT. C.C. & SALLY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sally too is dressed, seated on her side of the large bed. C.C. sleeps soundly, tucked in, back to his wife.

Sally -- her heart heavy -- quietly stands up.

INT. ENTRY HALL - MORNING

Sally carries a small rolling suitcase to the front door. From her purse, she removes an envelope with "CHARLES" on it.

She sets it near the keys. Takes her suitcase. And leaves.

CUT TO:

A NEWS SHOW -- the kind where multiple guests appear in squares as they debate -- plays on a television in...

INT. DR. DANIEL HERD'S OFFICE - MORNING

But it's MUTED, so we don't hear the TV. Just *Baba O'Riley*.

Dr. Herd is once again INJECTING HIMSELF with some kind of liquid. He unties the tourniquet, depresses the syringe...

And though it's probably medicine, maybe it's not--

ROGER DALTREY (V.O.)
*Out here in the fields
 I fight for my meals...*

As Herd finishes his twice-a-day ritual, he looks up at the muted news show and see's one of the shows SPECIAL GUESTS IS:

MONROE WEAVER

Dr. Herd reaches for a remote and RAISES THE TV VOLUME...

ROGER DALTREY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I get my back into my living.

Except instead of Monroe, it just makes *Baba O'Riley* louder.

INT. TV STUDIO - SAME

Monroe sits calmly in front of a GREEN SCREEN background. A CAMERA pointed at him for this remote interview.

A LIVE MONITOR -- Shows what home audiences see: Monroe, in front of the LA SKYLINE. He is one of four TALKING HEADS...

ROGER DALTREY (V.O.)
I don't need to fight...

The three other BOXES on the show are filled with RELIGIOUS OFFICIALS (Catholic, Muslim, Jewish). The story's tagline:

"WHOSE BELIEF DOES THIS PROVE?"

The holy men argue, scream and gesticulate over each other in a game of who can yell loudest.

ROGER DALTREY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
To prove I'm right...

Except Monroe, who quietly waits his turn.

INT. CLOSET - MORNING

A lone bulb hanging from the ceiling clicks on and Father Franklin Reese reaches up and grabs his SHOEBOX. The one where he keeps his pictures, his most prized possessions...

ROGER DALTREY (V.O.)
I don't need to be forgiven.

...and his HANDGUN. He stares at it. So shiny and deadly.

He drops the shoebox and leaves... with just the gun.

CUT TO:

A MOTORCYCLE COP

In the middle of an intersection, holding off traffic as--

A FUNERAL PROCESSION

Pulls through en route to a CEMETERY.

INT. LIMOUSINE - SAME

Ronald stares out the window at the cop as the limo passes.

Such a big, lonely car for one person.

INT. MARILYN'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Marilyn sits in her nightgown, staring into the mirror. No makeup, just age and the lines that come from it.

She takes a brush of makeup... So begins the process.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Ashley opens the fridge and pulls out a carton of milk. She's wearing white headphones and holding a battered iPod.

The iconic, first generation type of iPod.

Ashley sets down the iPod and we get a brief glimpse of something engraved on the metal back: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SON!"

She pours milk over her cereal as she MOUTHS ALONG WITH...

PETE TOWNSHEND (V.O.)

*Don't cry
Don't raise your eye*

She doesn't see her mother in the other room. Watching her. Debating whether to say anything to her. Or maybe-- maybe--

Just jealous of her. Marilyn turns and leaves.

PETE TOWNSEND (V.O.)

It's only teenage wasteland.

Using her spoon and her hand, she DRUMS perfectly in time with Keith Moon's famous drum fill.

SLAM ON THE BEAT TO:

INT. C.C.'S ENTRY HALL - MORNING

C.C. finds the envelope his wife left for him.

ROGER DALTREY (V.O.)

*Sally, take my hand
Travel south cross land.*

He opens the letter and something shiny falls out--

ROGER DALTREY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*Put out the fire
And don't look past my shoulder.*

Hits the floor. He bends down. And it suddenly doesn't matter anymore what the note says. It's message is clear:

Because C.C. holds his wife's WEDDING RING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROGER DALTREY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*The exodus is here
 The happy ones are near.*

C.C. slowly PUTS THE NOTE IN HIS POCKET. Doesn't read it.
 Can't read it.

ROGER DALTREY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Let's get together
 Before we get much older.*

He stands up. Gathers his things and leaves the house.

No emotion. Everything just... bottled up inside.

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

A caravan of cars snake along the main artery of this
 unnaturally sunny cemetery, past news vans and a crowd of
Great Scott fans paying tribute to their fallen leader.

ROGER DALTREY (V.O.)
*Teenage wasteland
 It's only teenage wasteland*

Marilyn Koner, along with Cameraman Dan, stand amongst the
 fans behind a police barricade. The fans call out (MOS) as
 the three remaining band members exit their limos.

Despite all the noise, all we hear is the music.

TELEVISION CAMERA POV - -

Marilyn reports live as the hearse at the caravan's front
 pulls to a stop close to the burial site.

ROGER DALTREY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Teenage wasteland
 Oh, yeah
 Teenage wasteland*

RONALD

Joins the band members, Barry and a ROADIE as a pallbearer.

ROGER DALTREY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They're all wasted!

The six mourners carry the casket over to the burial site,
 where flowers encompass the excavated grave. Beside the open
 hole sit TWO IDENTICAL TOMBSTONES for:

JULIE-ANN DALEY MIKE DALEY

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Despite all this formality, there is no sign of a priest.

BABA O'RILEY grows faster and faster as the coffin approaches the grave, dozens of friends watching in the wake.

The mass of people down by the road stand solemnly. Many of them are crying softly.

Father Reese, his clerical collar removed, stands at the back of the crowd. He notices by the front:

Cameraman Dan points his television camera downward for some semblance of respect. Marilyn glares at him: "FILM!"

Ronald and the other Pallbearers reach the grave and lower the casket, carefully aligning grooves on its side with the mechanical wench that takes the coffin into the earth.

The coffin slowly lowers; ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Mourners throw flowers onto the descending black casket.

One by one they approach, faster and faster as the music builds to its blazing CLIMAX.

Ronald stands over the grave. Watches as the coffin comes to a final stop at the bottom. He throws a single rose into the grave as the music comes to a CRASHING END--

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

Much of the crowd has dispersed, leaving only a few devoted groupies, a few devoted officers and a few devoted mourners.

The funeral is finally over.

Ronald heads to his car, briefly pausing to receive the consolation of two older women.

MARILYN (O.S.)
RONALD! RONALD DALEY!

Ronald turns and sees Marilyn, standing beside her Cameraman back past the now almost nonexistent police barricade. Ronald quickens his step over to a limo... damn reporters.

MARILYN (CONT'D)
Ronald! I'm Marilyn Koner.
Ashley's mom!

Ronald stops at the car door and slowly turns around. He makes a quick decision and trudges over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONALD
Put the camera down.

Marilyn nods to Cameraman Dan. He points the lens down.

CAMERAMAN DAN
Camera's off.

Ronald stays a few feet behind the barricade.

RONALD
What are you doing here?

MARILYN
I'm reporting on the funeral for
channel four news.

RONALD
I didn't know you were a reporter.

MARILYN
So I take it then you two didn't
talk about me last night?

Marilyn steps closer, right up to the taped-off barricade.
Ronald sizes her up...

MARILYN (CONT'D)
Look, she's eighteen, I don't care.
(beat)
But the school might.

Ronald sees Dan has the camera on his shoulder, ready to
record. Marilyn's threat is clear:

MARILYN (CONT'D)
So maybe... just a few questions?

INT. HUNT PHARMACEUTICAL BOARDROOM - DAY

C.C. Hunt is at the end of the expensive mahogany table,
silently watching Dean Kensworth unceremoniously usurp him.

DEAN
...The fact that Hunt
Pharmaceutical's very own CEO
funded a research project without
applying due diligence to its
oversight shows gross negligence on
the part of Mr. Charles Hunt.

Dean sits down as all heads look to C.C. for a reaction.
Slowly, methodically, C.C. stands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

C.C.

Seventy-nine years ago my father founded this company. Thirty years ago he handed it over to me. Now you expect me to be blamed for something entirely beyond my control?

He looks for sympathy in the faces of the board members. Finds none.

C.C. (CONT'D)

I personally sought to fund research into a cure for cancer, something Dr. Daniel Herd has always been at the forefront of. He has a fucking Nobel Prize, for god's sake. I made a business decision -- a good one -- but I was deceived. The cure to the most vicious disease on the face of the planet would have made us the biggest pharmaceutical corporation in the world.

Dean smirks condescendingly, cutting in:

DEAN

We all know you had the best of intentions, Charles. That's why we're not suing you for negligence.

Dean considers this an act of contrition.

C.C.

Herd's paperwork was in immaculate order.

DEAN

Or was it that he was your friend and you simply neglected your duties?

(then)

This company must put forward the image of responsibility. And we feel you're no longer a part of that picture.

C.C. knew things would be bad. But not this bad.

C.C.

So that's it then?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

C.C. strides around the table, toward the large oak doors. He starts chuckling to himself as he slowly passes Dean.

C.C. (CONT'D)
You're firing me from my own
company... You little prick.

He exits.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Wearing street clothes, Dr. Herd sits in the patient's chair, carefully reading a file propped on his crossed leg.

DR. BRADLEY MENDELSON, a craggy faced colleague, holds fort with a look of consternation.

DR. MENDELSON
Well, results of these highly illegal injections appear to be the same as five years ago. The cancer has disappeared, but if history is any indication, you'll have bought yourself maybe six-to-eight months.

DR. HERD
There's a five-percent chance you're wrong.

Dr. Mendelson sighs, throwing his elbows on the desk.

DR. MENDELSON
You're right. Just imagine if you'd actually kept working on the drug... like we all thought you were. Who knows where your cure would be by now?

Dr. Herd closes the file. Doesn't flinch.

DR. HERD
Who knows indeed.

INT. MUSIC CLASSROOM - DAY

A VIDEO PROJECTOR shines on a retractable screen in front of the chalkboard. Principal Garrett is at Ronald's real desk.

ONSCREEN -- A DISCOVERY CHANNEL SHOW: "Ancient Instruments of Belarus" (aka The Substitute Teacher Curriculum)

It's as boring as it sounds, and most of the students are either sleeping or covertly on their cell phones--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Including Ashley, who has hers under the desk and is swiping through pictures she secretly took yesterday of Ronald.

The darkness of the room is broken as the door opens and...

Ronald walks into his classroom, still dressed for a funeral. Principal Garrett PAUSES the video, leaving up a frozen image of old Belorussians playing their lyres as a backdrop for:

PRINCIPAL GARRETT

Ronald. What are you... Why are you here?

RONALD

It's not a weekend, is it?

PRINCIPAL GARRETT

Are you sure you're ready to come back?

RONALD

If I wasn't here, I'd just be sitting in front of the TV. I need this.

Garrett nods, hands Ronald the REMOTE on his way out.

Ronald steps to his desk and notices -- like the apples of yore -- that someone has left an OLD WHITE iPOD on the edge.

His old iPod. He looks at Ashley, who gives a knowing smile. Ronald picks it up and turns to the class:

RONALD (CONT'D)

Who wants to listen to some really good shit?

INT. C.C.'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

From his vantage point high above the street, C.C. stares out the window at the hive of activity far below.

The office door opens, reflecting C.C.'s assistant softly in the floor-to-ceiling Plexiglas.

HANNA

Your wife's not answering, C.C.

C.C. doesn't turn around. He's riveted by the bustle below.

C.C.

Try again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HANNA
 I've called a dozen times
 already...

C.C.
 TRY AGAIN!

He bangs a palm against the Plexiglas, shooting a vibration across the high-rise view.

INT. MUSIC CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Ronald, alone, sits at the piano. Debating. And then...

He plays. Beautifully. And if we're perceptive, we'll know the melody. It's his brother's song: "You're My Last."

The faint yelling of students filters in as the door opens.

Ronald stops. Sees Ashley standing across the room. She approaches, her pleated skirt rustling against her legs.

ASHLEY
 I didn't mean for you to stop.
 That was beautiful.

RONALD
 Thank you.

ASHLEY
 I was surprised to see you today.
 (beat)
 How was it?

Ronald turns around on the piano bench, facing her.

RONALD
 It was. Now it's over.

ASHLEY
 Were there a lot of people there?

He studies her, debating whether to say something about her mother. Instead--

RONALD
 Yeah.

ASHLEY
 I wish I could've come. I had a
 math test.
 (beat)
 Okay, I just lied. I didn't have a
 test. I hate cemeteries.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONALD
Don't you ever go visit your dad?

Ashley sits down at a desk, legs pointed right at Ronald.

ASHLEY
I don't need to go to a tombstone
to visit my dad.
(then)
1 to 10.

RONALD
What?

ASHLEY
1 to 10. On a scale of how sad you
are. Like an eight?

Ronald thinks for a moment.

RONALD
Four.

ASHLEY
Really? Jesus, I like live my life
at a constant "four."

RONALD
Being here helps.

ASHLEY
Do I help?

RONALD
Of course. Everything. The whole
rou...
(realizes what she meant)
--Just, even grading papers helps.

Ashley stands, stepping over to the piano. The papers we saw
Ronald grading at the very beginning are still right there.

ASHLEY
These are our papers? What'd I
get?

She's beside the piano, reaching for the papers.

RONALD
You can't look... Ashley, I'll hand
them back tomorrow.

She tries to thumb through the stack, a foot from Ronald.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ASHLEY
Come on, stop being so uptight.

RONALD
I'm not uptight!

ASHLEY
Yes you so are.

RONALD
I'm--

Their lips meet.

For a moment, Ronald doesn't know how to react. But caught up in the moment himself, he closes his eyes.

And for a second, they're like any two lovers kissing.

For a second.

With sudden realization, Ronald quickly pulls away, the force sending him nearly toppling off the bench, hitting his back into the piano and scattering papers over the floor.

ASHLEY
1 to 10. How mad are you that I
just did that?

Ronald remains silent.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Please talk. Ronald.
(then)
I'm feeling really fucking stupid
here.

She starts to softly cry.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
I need to know if that was stupid
or wrong or right or... god damnit.
(yelling)
TALK!

His neck bends slightly, allowing us the slightest glimpse of confused eyes.

RONALD
Go home.

ASHLEY
Not until you tell me why you
kissed back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Ronald can't tell her. He doesn't even know.

Ashley bends down to pick up the papers on the ground--

RONALD
STOP! GO HOME!

His bark instantly crushes her.

She rushes to the door...

Leaving Ronald even more confused and alone.

INT. MONROE WEAVER'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Dolores, Monroe's secretary, sits in the empty waiting room, talking on the phone as she rubs a finger across her teeth.

She doesn't hear Dr. Herd open the office door--

DOLORES (INTO PHONE)
I don't know, sweetie. We had
pizza last night. I know. I'll be
home in twenty-five minutes, we'll
make something.

DR. HERD
Excuse me.

DOLORES (INTO PHONE)
Sweetie, I gotta go. No. We had
pizza last night. Bye. Love you
too.

Deloris hangs up. Begins packing away her purse.

DOLORES (CONT'D)
Press isn't allowed up here.

DR. HERD
I'm not press.

DOLORES
There's no more appointments today.
How'd you get past the guard?

She looks up and freezes. Instant recognition.

DOLORES (CONT'D)
Good Jesus.
(beat)
You've been good for business.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HERD
I can only imagine. Is Mr. Weaver in?

DOLORES
He's finishing up with his last appointment. I can interrupt.

DR. HERD
No. I'll wait.

Herd sits down and grabs a magazine. It's a new edition of TIME MAGAZINE. And his face is on the cover.

INT. NETWORK NEWS BULLPEN - NEW YORK - NIGHT

Bob (Marilyn's "dinner" guest) enters the maze of offices and meets up with a SEGMENT PRODUCER. Rapid fire:

BOB
Why didn't anyone call my cell?

SEGMENT PRODUCER
I did. Went straight to voicemail.

BOB
Why didn't anyone call the restaurant?

SEGMENT PRODUCER
Do you wanna watch this or not?

They enter an EDIT BAY where FOOTAGE is already cued up:

NATIONAL NEWS BROADCAST:

Sitting resolutely behind his desk, addressing CAMERA...

NATIONAL ANCHOR (ON SCREEN)
...has obtained an exclusive copy of the very first interview with Adam Daley's only living relative, his brother Ronald. It comes to us from Marilyn Koner at our affiliate in Los Angeles.

INTERVIEW FROM THE CEMETERY:

It's Marilyn's ambush of Ronald from that morning.

MARILYN (ON SCREEN)
What was your first thought when Daniel Herd asked for your brother's participation?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONALD (ON SCREEN)
I... I didn't have much time to
think.

MARILYN (ON SCREEN)
So he forced you into it?

RONALD (ON SCREEN)
No. No, of course not.

MARILYN (ON SCREEN)
Did you anticipate the reaction?

RONALD (ON SCREEN)
What do you mean?

MARILYN (ON SCREEN)
Your brother's soul was blasted
across every TV screen around the
world. Did you realize the impact
this would have?

RONALD (ON SCREEN)
I-- I wish I hadn't agreed to it,
okay? Is that what you want to
hear?

MARILYN (ON SCREEN)
You don't believe Adam's in a
better place?

RONALD (ON SCREEN)
He isn't here. That's all I know.

BACK ON BOB & SEGMENT PRODUCER:

BOB
Get her on a plane. Now.

INT. MONROE WEAVER'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Dr. Herd looks through the issue of TIME. Inside are pictures from the press conference, plus various diagrams showing how the TFS works. One picture makes Herd pause:

HIM AND HIS WIFE

A candid image of the good doctor from years earlier. It's hard to recognize because she's healthy here, but the woman on his arm is definitely the woman from the opening scene.

The door to the inner office opens. Monroe Weaver escorts out a middle-aged couple, tissues held to their faces.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They say their good-byes and exit, not noticing Dr. Herd.
But Monroe sure does.

DR. HERD
Come into my office.

Monroe laughs a little, sitting down across from Herd.

MONROE
You know we're closed.

Herd holds up the magazine, printed face next to actual face.

DR. HERD
You do make exceptions, though,
right?

MONROE
What can I do for you?

Herd sets down the magazine.

DR. HERD
Jeremy Harris was my patient. I
saw you come by yesterday.

MONROE
I knew his father-- never met
Jeremy, though. Heard he was a
sweet kid...
(then)
He had very nice things to say
about you.

Dr. Herd almost laughs-- It's almost too hard to believe.

DR. HERD
How do you do it?

MONROE
I close my eyes, concentrate really
hard and suddenly I can feel this
energy, like vibrations in my head.
I just give voice to that energy.

DR. HERD
Can anyone do it, you think? We
simply don't know how?

MONROE
What are you asking me, really?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DR. HERD
My wife died. Five years ago.

MONROE
Do you want to speak with her?

Herd weighs the offer, then--

DR. HERD
Right before she died, she whispered something to me. Three words. That's all it took to make me give up my life's work and completely change course. Three words and that's why they put me on the cover of Time Magazine.

MONROE
What did she say?

Three words. Three words he's never said out loud:

DR. HERD
"Johanna forgives you."

MONROE
Was that your daughter?

DR. HERD
She was somebody's. I'd just started my first residency, it was raining, I'd been on call for 36 hours with no sleep and when a few of the doctors invited me out for a drink I should have said no, but I didn't, and on my way home I hit a woman with my car. Nobody saw. It was an accident. But I was frightened I'd lose my medical license so I left the scene.

He trails off, looking out the window at the street below.

DR. HERD (CONT'D)
The next day I read in the paper her name was Johanna Russo. When they did the autopsy the coroner found a tumor in her brain that surely would have killed her in a matter of months. It doesn't forgive what I did, but... she's why I became an oncologist.

(beat)
"Johanna forgives you."
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DR. HERD (CONT'D)
 (turns back to Monroe)
 See, Mr. Weaver, the thing of it
 is, until right now, I'd never told
 a living soul about that night.
 Not even my wife.

NEW ANGLE:

OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

DR. HERD (THROUGH THE WINDOW)
 Everything I've done since then was
 to answer the question of why my
 wife said that. And even now... I
 still don't know how she knew.

CRANE DOWN from the office to the crowd of people below,
 keeping Dr. Herd's silhouette and the window in view.

DR. HERD (CONT'D)
 So I guess what I'm asking, really,
 is do you believe there are things
 we'll just never know the answers
 to? Are we ever really entitled to
 absolute clarity?

GROUND LEVEL -- Past the police and Monroe's devotees we
 find ASHLEY trudging through the milieu. Her eyes are red.

MONROE (V.O.)
 Some people find their answers in
 religion. Some find it in family.
 Over the past few days, millions
 have found some form of it thanks
 to your discovery. And then there
 are others, like me... who find our
 answers within.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ashley turns the corner, leaving Monroe's building behind.
 Cars whip by on the street.

MONROE (V.O.)
 I'll grant you I have a leg up,
 I've always known this isn't the
 end. Mine is an unfair advantage.
 But anyone who didn't believe in
 the human soul three days ago...
 how could they not? *Rigoletto*.
Monet's Water Lillies. Ray
 Charles. They even called his
 music soul!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A homeless man inside an alcove holds a CARDBOARD SIGN:

FOR GOOD KARMA
YOU'RE GONNA NEED IT!

Ashley takes a moment. Reads the sign. She digs into her purse for change before silently moving on through the city.

INT. MONROE WEAVER'S OFFICE

Monroe rises to join Dr. Herd at the window.

MONROE (CONT'D)

You loved your wife. You feel tremendous compassion for people, so much so that you have devoted your life to bettering their bodies and minds. We've all made mistakes and done bad things, but I look at you and I see god's work.

(beat)

That's all the clarity I need.

EXT. BUS STOP

Ashley sits on a bench flanked by advertisements for makeup and hair products.

ON THE STREET, coming toward the intersection in the after-work traffic is a familiar grey Bentley...

INT. C.C.'S BENTLEY

Pulls up to a red stoplight. Through the driver-side window we can see Ashley waiting at the BUS STOP.

C.C. glances over, spots Ashley. They make eye contact...

And that's when he suddenly remembers the note in his pocket.

He pulls it out -- suddenly can't wait -- and reads...

INT. MONROE WEAVER'S OFFICE

They're standing together, the late-day sun dripping in.

DR. HERD

Will what I've done even change anything? Better or worse?

MONROE

It's scary out there for most people, Dr. Herd. Once in awhile it's good to hear someone say

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONROE (CONT'D)
 everything's going to be okay.
 That's what you've done.
 (this one's for Herd)
 Everything is going to be okay.

Dr. Herd nods, thankful, and heads to the door.

MONROE (CONT'D)
 Oh, and Daniel.

Herd turns, his hand on the doorknob.

MONROE (CONT'D)
 Your wife says she'll see you soon.

INT/EXT. C.C.'S BENTLEY - LATE AFTERNOON

C.C. has finally broken. Tears stream down his face onto his wife's note. We catch glimpses of words, wet now in places--

"Lifelong" "Sorry" "Love" "Soulmate"

C.C. smudges "SOULMATE" with his ink stained thumb.

A LOUD CAR HORN

Draws his attention. The light must have turned green. He hits the accelerator before looking up but...

THE LIGHT IS STILL RED

C.C. realizes too late as--

All around him, a CHAIN REACTION of sound and fury as other cars try to avoid him at speed. From the squeals, the horns--

THE HORN... one in particular causes C.C. to spin around.

Into the intersection a giant MACK-TRUCK barrels down.

SLO-MO

As the massive weight of the truck propels it inevitably forward despite screaming brakes.

There's no way it can stop in time...

...C.C. watches as it comes ever closer. Time seems to stand still until--

THE MACK SLAMS INTO THE BENTLEY

Flipping the car onto its roof in an end-over-end ballet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE MACK-TRUCK

Sharply turns left, tilting over onto two wheels...

But we only see it through the tumbling windshield of

THE BENTLEY

As C.C. closes his eyes and the world SMASHES TO NOTHING...

SLAM CUT:

Sally Hunt, holding a glass with about a mini-bar bottle's worth of whiskey in it, yearning for it... Yearning to fill--

IT HITS HER. Something. Like a shock to the soul. She drops the glass, spilling the drink over the carpet in the...

HOTEL ROOM

She's now made her temporary home. Her hand moves to her chest as she sits down on the bed. And then...

As quickly as the feeling washed over her... It's gone.

SALLY

Charles.

EXT. BUS STOP - MOMENTS LATER

Ashley sits on the bench, shaking furiously with fright...

Because she has been witness to the DEVASTATING CAR-ACCIDENT. The Mack-Truck lies only feet away. Miraculously...

THE BUS STOP IS UNSCATCHED

All around her, cars are smashed and lammed. Smoke and dust drift up, the particles catching in the light.

With absolute delicacy, Ashley stands. She steps carefully over the granite chunks and spilled debris lining the street.

In the center of the intersection she stops.

Off to the side a motorcyclist lies unconscious. More likely dead. People are screaming for help from every direction. One pedestrian is on with 9-1-1.

The accident is much bigger than it at first appeared.

Ashley spins and spins as cries grow louder until she sees--

C.C.'S BENTLEY

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOTALLED, now a permanent fixture of the light pole.

Ashley walks over to what was the driver's side window. C.C.'s head rests on the compacted steering column. Dead.

ASHLEY
Help! Somebody...

SIRENS approaching. Ashley looks off in the direction of the sound. Looks back at the Bentley--

C.C. LOOKS RIGHT AT HER

He blinks. Not dead.

Ashley screams -- Backing away -- Faster. She pulls out her phone, finger shaking as she dials:

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Please- Please be there.

A BUSY TONE emanates from the cell phone.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
DAMNIT, Mr. Daley! Plug in your fucking phone!

The destruction finally too much for Ashley to handle, she backs away... turns and runs around a corner.

AIRPORT ANNOUNCEMENT (PRE-LAP)
The white zone is for the immediate loading and unloading...

EXT. LAX - EVENING

A black towncar pulls up. The DRIVER opens the back door for Marilyn Koner, who rolls a hastily packed carry-on.

As she fishes in her purse for a tip, she notices:

A YOUNG DAUGHTER

Has her six-year-old arms wrapped around her MOTHER's legs, not wanting to leave her. Her DADDY leans down--

DADDY
It's okay, Ashley. We'll be back in a few days.

Ashley. The domesticity, the love, the what-could-have-been--

Stops Marilyn. Fills her with a moment of regret.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But only a moment. She hands the driver five bucks, grabs her bag and heads into the airport as the sound of a JET...

TAKES US TO:

A TWILIGHT SKY

As close to heaven as LA smog allows. Father Reese walks up, silhouetted by the patented LA backdrop.

His eyes swirl with their own kind of color; striking, determined, sinister. A man past his breaking point.

EXT. CEMETERY - SUNSET

Reese -- his back to us -- stands at the pile of earthen soil marking Adam Daley's grave. No headstone is yet in place.

CEMETERY SECURITY

Excuse me, sir, we're closing the gates soon.

FATHER REESE

(not turning)

Thank you.

He doesn't turn because he's holding the small HANDGUN, mouthing a silent prayer. After an intense beat:

FATHER REESE (CONT'D)

Forgive me.

Pocketing the gun, he calmly walks away as POLICE SIRENS...

EXT. STREET NEAR THE ACCIDENT - EVENING

...From a COP CAR scream down the *wrong* side of the street--

Because the south lanes are a parking lot. Nowhere to go. Drivers get out of their cars to try and see the holdup...

One of the blocked-in cars is a DELOREAN. Ronald in the driver's seat. Looks destroyed. The worst day of his life.

And now traffic.

He clicks on his radio:

CAR RADIO (V.O.)

...the accident is quickly causing major backups all across mid-city.

INT. TAXI - EVENING

CAR RADIO (V.O.)
 ...Avoid everywhere around La--

The CABDRIVER, a fast-talking odd-job, toggles the volume down on his radio. Father Reese sits quietly in the back.

CABDRIVER
 So who died?

FATHER REESE
 Excuse me?

CABDRIVER
 Well, I picked you up at a cemetery. Figure somebody died. Wrong thing to figure?

Reese doesn't respond.

CABDRIVER (CONT'D)
 I tell ya though. Those fuckin' places. Give me the heebie-jeebies.
 (beat)
 I mean, you think you got three, four thousand people underground? Where do they go? You got this Jew doctor spoutin' out about heaven, sayin' hey, we all got a soul. Meanwhile these guys' in a box shoutin', hey, I ain't goin' nowhere. I'm right here in a fucking box!

FATHER REESE
 What do you think happens when we die?

CABDRIVER
 Who the hell knows. Who cares. We're dead. I'll know when I die. All I know is when I'm gone, I won't have to drive this cab through this fuckin' queer city. No offense. If it applies.

FATHER REESE
 Lets just go where we need to go.

INT. "THE CHURCH" - NIGHT

Three cameras. Studio lights. The stark white chamber has been set-up for a *60 Minutes*-style interview with Dr. Herd perfectly framed in front of the massive TFS machine.

INTERVIEWER

You've released information and footage on 22 of the 23 individuals who took part in your study. There's been rampant speculation as to why you haven't released any information on one particular Subject, number 9.

DR. HERD

We're dealing with a very complicated piece of machinery here. The simple truth of the matter is one time out of twenty-three, we had a malfunction.

INTERVIEWER

What kind of malfunction?

And here, Dr. Herd pauses. He tries to hide that he has something he wants to hide...

--Jane saves him by stepping into the shot...

JANE

I'm so sorry to interrupt. We have a hospital emergency.

INT. RONALD'S HOME - NIGHT

Ronald enters from the garage and is instantly on guard. Because MUSIC is playing in the living room...

RONALD

Hello!

LIVING ROOM

"YOU'RE MY LAST" by Great Scott is playing on repeat from the stereo. Ronald quickly rushes past to find...

THE BACK DOOR IS WIDE OPEN

The spare key from under the doormat still in the lock.

Ronald grabs the only thing he can think of as a weapon--

HIS BROTHER'S GUITAR

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It'll have to do. He holds it over his shoulder, cautiously approaching the stairs. Rubs his eyes. God he's tired.

INT. HUNT WING - HALLWAY - SAME

Dr. Herd and Jane stand outside by "The Church" control room.

DR. HERD
What's going on?

JANE
Take off your microphone.

DR. HERD
Oh...

Dr. Herd removes the lavalier and battery. Turns them off.

JANE
Major car accident.

DR. HERD
Are we short-staffed?

HEAD NURSE
No. But one of the inbounds is
C.C. Hunt.

INT. RONALD'S BEDROOM - SAME

Ronald pushes the door with his foot -- Scans left -- Right.

It's empty. His brother's song plays through the floor.

A SLIVER OF LIGHT

Emanates from under the bathroom door. Ronald readies the guitar as he walks forward--

BANG

He spins around, looking for the cause of the loud noise. Sees a tree-branch hit against the window. Sighs. Relieved.

Turns back to the bathroom--

ADAM

His brother. There. In front of him.

And then he's not. Gone in the blink of an eye.

Ronald shakes his head -- So scared he's seeing things -- But still -- There's something behind that door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A deep breath. He opens the bathroom door...

ASHLEY IS UNCONSCIOUS

On the floor. Pale. And not breathing. Ronald's bottle of SLEEPING PILLS empty on the tile. He grabs her--

RONALD

Ashley!

Shakes her. Tries to wake her...

RONALD (CONT'D)

ASHLEY!

SLAM CUT TO:

MARILYN

Eyes snapping open, a big gulp of business-class air...

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

She tries to shake off what must have been a nightmare... probably caused by TURBULENCE. She tightens her seat belt--

As the little girl from the curb -- ASHLEY -- comes down the aisle, away from the lavatory. Marilyn watches her...

Young Ashley smiles. Marilyn does too. And then...

The plane hits a POCKET of cold air, instantly--

ROCKING

Violently. The cabin rattles, tossing the young girl to the side as Marilyn reaches out, grabs her, pulls her tight...

And the world DROPS 200 FEET in a split second, throwing open overhead bins and sending anything not bolted down flying.

ENGINES WHINE

Emergency lights flash on. The plane's angle crests downward. OXYGEN MASKS drop from the ceiling...

As the cabin seems moments away from RIPPING APART... Under the rattle and thunder of a plane hurtling out of the sky...

WE STAY ON MARILYN -- Holding onto this stranger, this crying child... Their fate rushing at them at 700 miles-per-hour...

BAM:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As a stretcher slams through the entrance to...

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

It's a madhouse as C.C. Hunt's gurney turns a corner. Dr. Herd walks briskly beside an ATTENDING.

DR. HERD

Are you experiencing any blurred vision? Shortness of breath?

C.C.

No.

DR. HERD

Any pain whatsoever?

C.C.

My leg. This one.

He points to his right leg. Herd turns to a NURSE.

DR. HERD

I want a full-body C.T. X-Ray of the chest, skull and the right leg. Find Dr. Mendelson, have him do a spinal-tap.

C.C. is wheeled into a room with an MRI... Herd and the attending wait outside.

ATTENDING

Incredible. Paramedics said he should be dead.

DR. HERD

No he shouldn't.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

STAY TIGHT ON Father Reese, distractedly staring out the car window at his destination. His vindication.

FATHER REESE

Wait. Stop. I'll walk from here.

CABDRIVER

You alright? Something wrong? Well, guess something's gotta be wrong. Comin' here and all. You want I should wait around?

FATHER REESE

That won't be necessary.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hands the driver a fifty and anxiously exits the cab, his left jacket pocket weighed down by the concealed handgun.

INT. E.R. WAITING AREA - THAT MOMENT

Ronald stands with a DOCTOR in the crowded waiting room.

RONALD

...when can I see her?

DOCTOR

Just have a seat, we're
transferring her to a private room.

The doctor steps away, giving Ronald a sudden view of that familiar muted TELEVISION hanging in the corner showing:

A NEWS REPORT -- OF A BOEING 737

On a runway, tipped on it's side, part of it's wing just... gone. Emergency vehicles ATTACK IT from all angles LIVE:

EXT. DENVER INTERNATIONAL - RUNWAY 34/16

A FIRE-TRUCK zooms toward the battered airplane, smoking from its emergency landing. A flanking ambulance SWERVES to avoid

A TORN-OFF LANDING GEAR

One of the emergency exit ramps has inflated and passengers are rushing off the plane to safety. And it's all being...

BROADCAST INTO:

INT. E.R. WAITING AREA - SAME

Ronald is locked on the silent television. Almost as if...

He knows. He knows Marilyn is on that plane. But that's impossi...

YOUNG NURSE

--Sir?

Ronald looks away. He does not recognize the young nurse from the night he was here for his brother.

YOUNG NURSE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry-- Were you here four days ago?

RONALD

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG NURSE
 Yeah, I remember you. I think
 maybe we have your cellphone.

INT. NURSE'S STATION

The young nurse hands Ronald his phone.

YOUNG NURSE
 It kept ringing so we turned it
 off.

She walks away, leaving Ronald to turn on the phone. While he's waiting for the phone to boot up...

BEHIND HIM

Father Franklin Reese enters the bustle of the E.R. right under the nose of a SECURITY GUARD. Nobody gives the priest a second thought. Nor does Father Reese see:

Ronald, fifteen feet away, bringing the PHONE to his ear.

FATHER REESE
 Excuse me.

The young nurse returns to her front desk computer.

YOUNG NURSE
 Is everything alright, Father?

FATHER REESE
 I need to see Dr. Daniel Herd.

YOUNG NURSE
 Um... I'm sorry, Dr. Herd is very
 busy and obviously a lot of people
 want to speak with him so...

FATHER REESE
 --You don't understand, you... I
 need to speak to him, it's...

The young nurse notices Jane escorting the film crew -- from the earlier interview with Dr. Herd -- out via the E.R.

YOUNG NURSE
 Okay. Just hold for one second.
 Jane?

Jane approaches...

JANE
 Is everything alright?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE (CONT'D)
I'm Dr. Keaton, I work with Dr. Herd. Why don't we step into the hallway.

As she leads the way we watch as Father Reese's hand goes into his pocket. And wraps around his gun.

VOICEMAIL (PRE-LAP)
Mailbox full. First message.

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY - SAME

Ronald is leaning up against the wall, phone to his ear.

ADAM (V.O.)
Hey, Ronnie. The show starts in
two minutes and you're not here so
I guess you're oh-for-seven.
Alright, so... it's cool.

Just hearing his brother's voice, here, in the place where he died, where he became an iconoclast...

It leaves Ronald in SHOCK.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'm gonna, um... no, fuck, no.
It's not cool. I fucked up,
alright, but you can't keep
ignoring me. I get that you're mad
at me but I am who I am, okay? I
get it, but this being alone thing
isn't going to protect you from
losing people. 'Cause if you keep
this up, I'm gonna stop tryin' man
and you are going to lose me, okay?
(beat; away from phone)
Wait, some girls used his tickets?
What? Just give me a second, guys.
(beat; back to message)
Fuck. Come on, there's still time.
Just come to the show, I'll leave
another ticket. I miss you. And
I'm... sorry for everything.

Ronald pulls the phone away, in tears. Broken, now, for the first time. Finally crying for his brother. But then--

VOICEMAIL (V.O.)
Next message.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHLEY (V.O.)
Um... Mr. Daley? It's Ashley.
I'm sorry to-- I know you're
probably with your brother but...
(beat)
...I just didn't have anyone else
to call.

And with that... his tears stop.

INT. DENVER INTERNATIONAL - CONCOURSE B

Gates 31-33 have turned into a veritable zoo. Mildly injured passengers are treated by a swarm of paramedics. AIRLINE OFFICIALS and FAA OFFICERS are already on scene.

Marilyn watches it all with borderline detachment. All her choices, all her ambitions have brought her here...

To this second chance.

AIRLINE OFFICIAL
Ms. Koner? Have you made a
decision?

MARILYN
Decision?

AIRLINE OFFICIAL
Yes. We can either get you on a
plane or bus back to Los Angeles or
you may continue on to New York.
Again, if you're not comfortable
getting back on a plane, we've made
arrangements...

Marilyn stops listening-- she watches as that little girl she saved, Young Ashley, sits holding her father. Safe.

AIRLINE OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
Ms. Koner? Where would you like to
go?

For Marilyn, there's no question:

MARILYN
New York. As quickly as possible.

INT. C.C.'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

C.C. lays in bed, staring out the window while Dr. Herd reviews a CT scan on a digital tablet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HERD

We'll keep you tonight just to be safe, but beyond that leg, you're the picture of health.

C.C. can't look Herd in the eye. He just nods.

As Herd turns to leave--

C.C.

There was a moment. During the accident when I knew I was going to die. I watched this truck barrel down on me and I knew and so I owe you an apology. Because in that moment, I wasn't afraid.

(then)

Just sad.

C.C. finally turns away from the window. Looks at Herd.

Herd nods. And then his BEEPER GOES OFF. He grabs it. Whatever it says, it's confusing. And very worrisome.

DR. HERD

Excuse me.

Herd rushes out. C.C. turns back to the window... He has survived, but from the look of things, he wishes he hadn't.

The door opens again.

C.C.

What'd you forget?

But it's not Dr. Herd. It's C.C.'s wife. It's Sally. She sets her overnight bag on the floor. She's crying.

C.C. (CONT'D)

It's okay. I'm okay.

SALLY

They told me.

C.C.

I should be dead three times over.

SALLY

Charlie...

She rushes forward. He envelopes her in a hug. It's the first affection we've ever seen from C.C.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

C.C.

I haven't prayed in 38 years. The last time was right before I asked you to marry me. We were in Nebraska visiting your parents. I prayed you would say yes. I had no idea what I'd do if you didn't.

SALLY

Calm down. Don't... It's okay.

C.C.

I prayed again tonight. In the car. I prayed that...

SALLY

--That I would forgive you. I know.

C.C. feels he knows the answer. But he still has to ask:

C.C.

How?

SALLY

Because. I heard you.

C.C. takes Sally's hand.

CUT TO:

DR. HERD'S KEYCARD

Held up to a scanner, unlocking the doors to the--

INT. HUNT WING - HALLWAY

Where Herd is met by a SECURITY GUARD.

DR. HERD

Rodney, what the hell's going on?

SECURITY GUARD

It's Jane. Some crazy with a gun has her inside The Church.

DR. HERD

How'd he get in here with a gun?

SECURITY GUARD

He's... dressed like a priest. Cops are on their way. But he's demanding to speak to you.

INT. CONTROL ROOM/"THE CHURCH" - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Herd and the guard enter the hub of "The Church," with its giant windows looking out onto the now famous TFS Device--

WHERE FATHER REESE

Holds Jane around the neck, a gun pointed into her side.

ANOTHER GUARD already in the control room speaks into a mic:

ANOTHER GUARD
Okay, he's here. He's here.

The guard nervously stands and let's Herd come forward. Dr. Herd surveys the scene. He presses the two-way mic.

DR. HERD
This is Dr. Daniel Herd. I'm here now. Please let my assistant go.

FATHER REESE
I will. I don't want to hurt her!
But you have to turn it on!

DR. HERD
I don't... turn what on?

FATHER REESE
This! The machine! I need you to turn on the machine, I need to know.

DR. HERD
What do you need to know, Father?

FATHER REESE
I can't be forgiven if I don't have a soul. I need to know if everyone has a soul. It's the only way. It's the only way.

DR. HERD
Just let Jane go, okay, and I'll do whatever you want!

FATHER REESE
TURN ON THE MACHINE!

DR. HERD
I will turn on the machine. But you need to understand there is no way to see your own soul. The
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HERD (CONT'D)
device only works at the moment of
death.

FATHER REESE
I know.

Jane WHIMPERS. Dr. Herd leans back, switches off the mic.

DR. HERD
How much longer 'til the police are
here?

SECURITY GUARD
Two minutes. Just stall him.

DR. HERD
(tapping mic on)
Okay, I've turned it on but it
takes a few minutes to warm up.

Reese takes the gun away from Jane and FIRES two shots
through the frosted window that divides "The Church."

THREE STORIES OF IONIZED GLASS RAIN DOWN...

DR. HERD (CONT'D)
Jesus!

Reese shoves the now HOT muzzle back into Jane's side.

FATHER REESE
Tell him to turn it on now!

JANE
Please, Daniel. Just turn it on,
he wants to use it. He's not going
to hurt me.

Herd slides over slightly and starts typing into the
computer. The machinery powers up...

Reese moves Jane over to the table under the machine.

DR. HERD
Please don't hurt her!

Reese steps back from Jane, but keeps the gun on her.

FATHER REESE
Hook me in.

Jane nods. Begins attaching monitors to Reese.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DR. HERD

Oh god.

(into mic)

You don't need to do this. This isn't the purpose of the device.

(beat; debating)

Listen to me. There was one subject. His name was Ian Kester, he was Subject 9. We have no way of knowing if the machine malfunctioned or not, but when he died, there was nothing. Nobody knows this.

Father Reese momentarily turns away from Jane... looks through the glass into the control room.

FATHER REESE

Was he a good man?

DR. HERD

He... was not.

Jane finishes attaching the monitors. Reese looks at her with something bordering on gratefulness...

The machine is now at a loud whine. We can hear Reese's heartbeat pulsate through the speakers.

JANE

He was a death row inmate with no remorse. But that's not you. He was an exception.

FATHER REESE

I hope so. Find Ronald Daley. Show him I have a soul.

Jane looks surprised -- *Ronald Daley?* -- as Reese jams a picture into her hand...

On the back, a hastily scribbled address. On the front, it's the picture of the two altar boys, Ronald and Adam.

FATHER REESE (CONT'D)

Now go.

She doesn't think twice, bursting into the control room. Herd hugs her tight. She buries her head in his shoulder, leaving him to look out into--

"THE CHURCH"

Where Father Reese has the gun pointed at this head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FATHER REESE (CONT'D)
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be
thy name. Your kingdom come...

The door to the press theater -- now visible through the destroyed window of glass -- BURSTS OPEN and police swarm.

Reese, strapped to the table, under the POWERED-UP MACHINE, takes his gun away from his temple and points it at the cops.

COP COP #2
PUT THE GUN DOWN! DROP YOUR WEAPON!

It's a cacophony.

The screaming police.

The WHINE of the TFS.

The thunderous heartbeat of Father Reese's final seconds.

EVERYTHING SLOWS DOWN

As Reese fires a bullet above the cops, triggering...

RETURN FIRE

And in that mere moment before death, Reese closes his eyes.

As a bullet slams into his heart...

THE TFS IGNITES

Sending energy, so much energy, straight into Father Reese, blowing out the room in a blaze of light and power...

So very, very bright...

RESOLVING INTO:

The faint undulation of an ELECTROCARDIOGRAM.

PAN OVER to a beautiful woman lying asleep in bed, the glean slowly returning to her skin. Her face is serene. Angelic.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Ashley's eyes flutter open as she tries to get her bearings. Immediately, she senses a presence, turns to find...

RONALD

FINALLY SLEEPING SOUNDLY. At some point in the night, he pulled a chair over next to her bed. Ashley tilts her neck--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sees Ronald's hand is intertwined with hers. Holding tight.

THE DOOR OPENS

Dr. Herd steps in, followed by Jane. Herd holds a FOLDER filled with several 8x10 IMAGES, the edges just visible.

Ashley turns to them and weakly smiles.

Dr. Herd takes in the peaceful tableau.

And makes a decision.

He smiles back at Ashley, mouths: "I'll come back."

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Herd and Jane exit the room. As Herd passes a janitor's GARBAGE BIN, he tosses the folder in. Jane smiles.

HOLD ON THE BIN, where one image has slid from the folder:

FATHER REESE AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH

There, hanging above him, frozen in time--

Is his soul.

INTERVIEWER (PRE-LAP)

Dr. Herd, one final question.

CUT TO:

TELEVISION INTERVIEW:

The *60-Minutes* style sit-down Herd filmed in "The Church."

INTERVIEWER

What's next? What do we as a people do with this discovery?

DR. HERD

We live.

INTERVIEWER

Care to elaborate?

Dr. Herd chooses his words--

DR. HERD

None of us know what happens next.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLACK.

DR. HERD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
All we know is... there must be
something.

And then the door opens on RONALD'S GARAGE, illuminating the sticker-covered old band equipment. Ronald sizes it up...

DR. HERD (V.O.)
I refuse to believe this is it.

Ashley gets on a bicycle outside her COLLEGE DORMITORY, waves to some friends in UCLA sweatshirts and pedals off...

DR. HERD (V.O.)
But that doesn't mean we shouldn't
seize every opportunity we can...

C.C. and Sally hold hands on their TERRACE, drinking coffee, enjoying breakfast, enjoying each other...

DR. HERD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...To make the most out of this
life.

Marilyn at the New York anchor desk for a NATIONAL MORNING SHOW. A picture of Dr. Herd over her shoulder reads:

**Dr. Daniel Herd
1947 - 2014**

DR. HERD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
So be bold. Take chances.

Jane stands in front of the TFS DEVICE. The machine that started it all. She wipes a tear from her eye...

DR. HERD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Live, and don't waste a single
moment.

EXT. RONALD'S HOME - MORNING

Ashley rides her bike up the driveway to find that inside:

RONALD'S GARAGE

All of Adam and Ronald's old BAND EQUIPMENT is set-up.
Dusted, cleaned, gleaming in the light.

And sitting behind the drum-set is Ronald.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HERD (V.O.)
Because no matter what you
choose...

Ashley takes headphones out of her ears. We hear a BUILDING
MELODY of guitar and piano coming from her iPod...

DR. HERD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
No matter the path you take...

Ronald holds up his drumsticks. Smiles at her.

She smiles back.

DR. HERD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Everything is going to be okay.

Ronald clicks his sticks in perfect time to the now familiar
opening of *Great Scott's* "YOU'RE MY LAST"...

RONALD
One, two... One! Two! Three! Four!

SLAM TO BLACK.

THE END