

Black Hole Bannion

By

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BLACK SCREEN

Something psychedelic in the vein of Shocking Blue's *Love Buzz* plays over, building louder and louder.

SOUNDS OF BREATHING INTENSIFYING

ZEM (V.O.)
(hushed)
Your dreams are your reality.

FADE IN:

INT. ZEM'S PLACE - BEDROOM

The music continues, though at a much lower volume, playing from an old digital clock/radio. 4 zeroes across where the time should be: 0000

ZEMIRA (ZEM) (30) sleeps on her side. She's striking, pale, has a very Zoë Lund look to her. Her hair is dyed black, though her goldish-reddish natural roots are fighting back, creeping out from underneath.

Her eyes open suddenly. Big beautiful green eyes. She tries to move, unable to. Her eyes are stuck too. They stare straight ahead. Her breathing becomes heavier.

Seconds later, she blinks, able to look around. She looks up at the clock radio then shifts the rest of her body. Zem sits up. She grabs the half-smoked joint from off the nightstand next to her then strikes a match.

She lights up and takes a few hits.

She starts to get dressed.

EXT. ZEM'S PLACE

Zem steps under the streetlight revealing her all-black business casual outfit.

She waits, staring up at the sky at the few stars up there. For a moment she's drawn to a specific star. It entrances her.

A dark limo pulls up, breaking her from the star's grip.

The DRIVER exits the limo, comes around the car and opens the back door for Zem. Bright light emerges from inside the limo. The same music from before playing.

She studies the driver then walks over to the car. She looks inside then at the driver. The driver stares ahead, not really even acknowledging her. She gets in, squinting her eyes as she does and he closes the door after her.

INT. LIMO - MOVING

The back seems overly spacious, being that it's only Zem. A bucket of ice and champagne, but otherwise empty.

The bright lights inside the limo dim until completely dark. Zem can open her eyes all the way again.

She stares out through the tinted windows.

EXT. CLUB

Zem steps out of the limo. She stares up at the rather small nightclub. She walks over and heads inside.

INT. CLUB

The same music continues to play, now inside the club, blaring.

A PURPLE FOG fills the club, colored spotlights flashing through, silhouetting the people dancing.

Zem continues past them and enters

INT. BACKROOM

where she finds a MYSTERIOUS MAN sitting at a booth, his back to her. His face is not shown.

Zem takes a seat across from him.

MYSTERY MAN

You came.

ZEM

It was difficult to resist. The chance to author my own story. The stories of others. Isn't that what you're offering?

MYSTERY MAN

We're offering the chance to remake the world.

(CONTINUED)

ZEM

Playing God, are we?

MYSTERY MAN

God only exists to give humanity some form of.. hope. We wish to open the eyes and minds.. and hearts of people around the world. To something greater than "God." Something real. Something you can feel. Something you can.. believe in.

ZEM

That's quite the sales pitch. Why me?

MYSTERY MAN

We need someone with an open mind, someone who's not afraid of knowing the truth.

ZEM

Which is?

MYSTERY MAN

.. It's not exactly something that can be put into words.

ZEM

(beat)

You said I'd be helping people. How?

MYSTERY MAN

Yes, ultimately you will, but know that it's a slow process. If we move too quickly, the truth won't hold. People won't accept what they don't understand. You will help them to understand. Make the pill easier to swallow, if you will. You will be our facilitator. The bridge between us and them.

ZEM

Sounds like a pretty important gig.

MYSTERY MAN

It's the most important role we could possibly offer.

(CONTINUED)

ZEM
(thinks)
So when do we start?

Zem stares back at the mystery man, waiting for an answer.

JJ O'BANNION (V.O.)
(hushed)
One pill, two pill, red pill, blue
pill.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JJ'S OFFICE

JJ O'BANNION (30s), Caucasian, with dark hair and bright blue eyes, sits fast asleep in the chair behind the desk. JJ wears a sandy/tan tweed suit with a gold tie with dark swirls on it (his whole outfit akin to Nicholson's in *Chinatown*). White long sleeve gridded button up shirt under his suit jacket. His matching fedora rests on top of his desk.

The office is small and compact. There is only ever room for JJ and one other person. There are no windows in the room. At the center a small desk, with a chair behind it and a chair in front of it. A painting of a black hole hangs on the wall behind JJ. A fan hangs from the ceiling, creating unexplained shadows across him. The large fan creates the only noise present in the room.

JJ suddenly wakes up, as if from a nightmare. He looks around the room. It all ushers back to him and he remembers who he is.

He sighs then opens the top drawer of his desk. He removes a bottle that reads *Spinach* across it, and takes out a single round, colorless pill. He puts the cap back on and sets the bottle back into the drawer, then shuts it.

He stares down at the pill as if remembering something else. JJ throws the pill down the hatch, swallowing it dry.

He slouches back into his chair.

SUPERIMPOSE (ACROSS SCREEN): BLACK HOLE BANNION

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

A knock on the door breaks the almost dead silence of the room, if just for a moment. JJ sits straight up in his chair.

(CONTINUED)

JJ O'BANNION

It's open.

Silence then another knock on the door.

JJ O'BANNION

It's open!

The door opens and in walks SPIKE.

Spike, Caucasian, looks bummy. He has greasy hair and dirty, ripped-hole clothes. His shirt has a repeated image of little eggs. Spike stands slightly hunched and has a habit to scratch behind his ear. He appears nervous.

SPIKE

You JJ?

JJ O'BANNION

Last time I checked.

(beat)

You know what that chair's for?

Spike shrugs. JJ motions his hand towards the chair.

JJ O'BANNION

You know my name. I like to know whose shit I'm gonna rub my nose in.

SPIKE

Spike. I'm Spike.

Spike sits across from JJ.

JJ O'BANNION

You on the needle, Spike?

SPIKE

Nah, I'm-buh--nah-I--

JJ O'BANNION

Take it easy. Just give me one syllable at a time.

SPIKE

I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

JJ O'BANNION

What's there to be sorry about?

(CONTINUED)

SPIKE

I'm just kinda freaking out, man.

JJ O'BANNION

Spike, some people look at this office, they see four walls, a ceiling and floor. I see a safe space. Spit it out.. or don't.. I have places to be.

Sweat drips down Spike's forehead. He spaces out, stuck.

JJ O'BANNION

Spike? You still on planet Earth?

Spike comes out of it.

SPIKE

(unsure)

Is that where we are?

JJ O'BANNION

Is that a joke?

SPIKE

(afraid)

Who's laughing?

JJ O'BANNION

What is it? What are you afraid of?

SPIKE

(works up courage to say it)

The Sandman.

JJ's eyes widen. He leans in.

JJ O'BANNION

What do you know about him?

SPIKE

(tears in his eyes)

He won't leave me alone. Every time I close my eyes.. I see him. I open them and.. I can't move.. and there he is, hiding in the shadows. He's always there.. watching.. waiting..

JJ O'BANNION

Waiting for what?

(CONTINUED)

SPIKE

I dunno.

JJ O'BANNION

Show me.

SPIKE

Wha-what?

JJ O'BANNION

Show me the pills.

Spike hesitates before reaching into his pants pocket and pulling out a pill bottle filled with purple pills. He holds it up enough for JJ to see, but keeps it out of arm's reach.

JJ O'BANNION

Where did you get it? Who's your source?

SPIKE

(shivers)

.. I can feel him.

Spike shakes in fear.

JJ O'BANNION

Who is he?

SPIKE

(realizing)

Oh God! He's here! He's come for me!

JJ O'BANNION

Spike, give me a name!

SPIKE

No! Please!

Spike braces for impact as an invisible force seems to move through him.

Spike begins to convulse. JJ quickly jumps up out of his chair and climbs over his desk. His hands hover over Spike, unsure what to do.

Foam begins to emit from Spike's mouth.

JJ O'BANNION

Shit.

(CONTINUED)

Spike shows no signs of slowing down. JJ pulls out his chair and brings Spike to the carpet slowly, resting his hand under Spike's head.

The foaming stops as does the shaking. Spike almost seems to be returning to the world. Spike whispers something incoherent.

JJ O'BANNION

Say again?

Spike continues to whisper what sounds like nonsense. JJ puts his ear close to Spike's lips.

SPIKE

Larry-Larry.. Fuqua..

JJ O'BANNION

Who's Lar-

JJ sits back up to find that Spike's eyes have rolled back into his head. JJ gives Spike one last shake. Nothing.

He puts a hand to his forehead then turns his attention to the pill bottle. He grabs it and holds it up closer to his face.

RING RING RING

JJ looks over at the wired ringing phone on his desk (which wasn't there before). He gets up and walks over to it. He answers it.

JJ O'BANNION

O'Bannion.

VOICE (V.O.)

I know who I'm calling. Any leads?

JJ O'BANNION

You ever hear tell of a Larry Fuqua?

VOICE (V.O.)

Larry Fuqua? Hmm, sounds familiar. I'll get back to you on that. What do you know?

JJ O'BANNION

Nothing really, just that he might be our guy. Pill head by the name of Spike came wandering in.

(CONTINUED)

VOICE (V.O.)

Where is he now? You should have followed him.

JJ O'BANNION

(looks over at dead Spike)
Yeah, don't think he's gonna be leading us anywhere.

VOICE (V.O.)

Shoot straight, O'Bannion.

JJ O'BANNION

He's dead.

VOICE (V.O.)

(sighs)
.. You kill him?

JJ O'BANNION

No, he had a seizure right here in my office.

VOICE (V.O.)

(confused)
Your office?

JJ O'BANNION

Should I call someone?

VOICE (V.O.)

No. You were never there, get out.

JJ O'BANNION

I can't just leave him in my office like this.

VOICE (V.O.)

(aggressive)
O'Bannion, you better stop fucking around. I don't have time for your Raymond Chandler delusions. When I call, you answer.. and I will be calling soon.

The man on the other end hangs up.

JJ stares down at the purple pills in their bottle.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOO HOUSEHOLD

SUPERIMPOSE: Client 1

Two men stand side by side outside the front door.

One man is ROMAN (30s), a quietly imposing ethnically-ambiguous man (even though he's the smaller of the two). There's an eerie stillness in his eyes; the kind someone who has killed would have. He's no-nonsense and always on the clock. He wears a dark coat, keeping his hands in his pockets as if ready to pull a gun on you any second.

The other is SIDNEY (40s), an African-American man, imposing through actual size, but the bigger softie, the more morally righteous of the two.

ROMAN

First thing I'd check for is dogs.
And I don't give a shit if he says
it's a service dog, it stays
outside.

SIDNEY

You got a thing about dogs?

ROMAN

They're unpredictable animals.

SIDNEY

Yeah?

ROMAN

And they're fucking stupid. The
smartest dog ain't smarter than the
dumbest human.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Roman knocks harder than before, annoyed.

SIDNEY

.. I don't know about that. I've
met some pretty dumb fucking humans
in my time. You used to be a
mailman, huh? Vietnam flashbacks.

ROMAN

If the client becomes emotional,
they may become erratic and if they
start acting erratic, the animals
might involve themselves, which of
course could be dangerous for her.

(CONTINUED)

SIDNEY

Erratic?

The owner, DANIEL WOO (40s), a Chinese-American man, opens the door. He wears something casual, good enough to wear for guests, but comfortable enough to chill in the house in. He gives a nervous smile.

DANIEL

You must be the guys she mentioned.
(looks around)
I don't see her.

ROMAN

She doesn't arrive until we've made sure the location is clear.

DANIEL

Oh, right, of course. She mentioned that as well.

ROMAN

You'll excuse us then while we look around.

DANIEL

Sure, come on in.

Daniel makes a path, but Roman stops right before entering the house.

ROMAN

You got any dogs? Or other animals?

DANIEL

No, no dog, the wife has.. no.. nothing.

Daniel gives a half smile that quickly fades.

ROMAN

(close)

Don't ever keep anything from me.
Understand?

Daniel nods his head, wondering what he's gotten himself into.

Roman passes him, entering inside, followed by Sidney.

Sidney turns to Daniel as he passes.

(CONTINUED)

SIDNEY
(low, joking)
He has a thing about dogs.

ROMAN (O.S.)
Please wait outside mister Woo.
(to Sidney)
Shut that door.

DANIEL
Oh.

The front door is shut in Daniel's face. He looks around, slightly puzzled.

DANIEL
Hm.

INT. WOO HOUSEHOLD

The place is fairly nice, the home of an upper middle class working man. Framed photographs of Daniel with his ex-wife and 12 year old son.

Roman has already gone to work, feeling around furniture, inspecting everything closer.

SIDNEY
What are we doing?

ROMAN
You did time for robbery, right?

SIDNEY
(beat)
Right. Zem tell you that?

ROMAN
You know how to case a joint. We're just checking to make sure the place is clean. We ain't exactly legal. Zem tell you **that**?

SINEY
She mentioned it. How do you know her exactly?

ROMAN
Mutual friends. Let's check the bedrooms.

Roman wanders off into the hallway towards the nearest bedroom.

INT. CAR

Zem sits inside the back of a dark car, watching through tinted windows.

A walkie talkie goes off beside her on the seat.

ROMAN (V.O.)

The coast is clear. Come join the party.

Zem grabs the walkie and raises it to her lips.

ZEM

On my way.

Zem sets the walkie back down then grabs a thick briefcase from the floor of the car. She exits the car.

EXT. WOO HOUSEHOLD

Daniel watches as Zem, the briefcase in one hand, walks over to him. She, her black hair shoulder-length and straightened, could easily be a model going down the catwalk.

Daniel is startled by his front door opening behind him. He turns to find Sidney standing there.

SIDNEY

Come on back in.

DANIEL

Sure, okay.

Daniel walks past Sidney.

Zem approaches Sidney. She looks at him stone-faced for a moment then breaks it to smile, revealing her two buck teeth with a little gap in between. It makes her look a little younger than her age. A cute innocence she doesn't show most people.

ZEM

You came.

Zem moves to hug Sidney. He embraces her like a daughter. She kisses him on the cheek before entering.

SIDNEY

(low)

Wouldn't miss it.

(CONTINUED)

ZEM (V.O.)
After my boys have cleared the
place..

4. EXT. PARK

The sky is grey. Clouds block the sun.

Zem and Daniel sit on a park bench side by side.

ZEM
.. that's when I come in.. and
hypnotize you.

DANIEL
How?

Zem slowly smiles.

INT. WOO HOUSEHOLD

ZEM (V.O.)
First you'll get comfortable.

Zem has Daniel slowly lie down on his couch.

ZEM (V.O.)
Then I administer the drops.

Zem removes a small dropper filled with clear liquid.

ZEM
Open wide.

Daniel widens his eyes as Zem drops one drop into each eye.

ZEM
Close your eyes.. and repeat after
me.

Zem removes what looks like a small purple glowstick filled
with sand. She holds it up underneath Daniel's nose.

ZEM
My dreams..

DANIEL
(low)
My dreams..

(CONTINUED)

ZEM
.. are..

DANIEL
.. are..

ZEM
.. my reality.

DANIEL
.. my reality.

Zem breaks the purple stick in half and a purple mist emerges from it. Daniel winces as the mist moves up and into his nose.

It's as if the wind has been knocked out of him for a second, like a spirit has flung itself into his body. His body regains control. His breathing is now steady. His chest slowly moves up and down. His closed eyes move back and forth as if in REM sleep.

Zem hovers her hand over Daniel and snaps her fingers. No reaction from Daniel.

INTERCUT

Zem and Daniel on park bench.

DANIEL
That's it?

ZEM
Just a few magic words.
(beat)
There's a few more steps after that, but you'll be asleep for that part.

INT. WOO HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM

Zem reaches down and pulls up her briefcase. She opens it up and sets it on the small coffee table pushed off beside the edge of the couch (near Daniel's head).

The briefcase consists of multiple screens. Two large ones on top.

What looks like an EED Electrode Cap is held in place, clipped to the bottom of the briefcase. Zem unclips it, carefully pulling it out with the connected wires.

(CONTINUED)

She places the cap onto Daniel's head then flicks on a small switch inside the briefcase. It powers on, the two screens up top turn on, everything lights up. One for monitoring brain activity. The other a feed to the client's dream, creating rough, distorted images of what they are seeing.

Another smaller screen on the bottom monitors Daniel's heart rate.

INTERCUT

Zem and Daniel on the park bench.

DANIEL

What happens after that?

ZEM

(pause)

We talk about your problems.

(beat)

Today will actually be our first session. I prefer not to go in blind. So..

INTERCUT

Zem in Daniel's living room (present)

Zem shuts her eyes.

ZEM

.. tell me what's on your mind.

DANIEL'S DREAM

INT. HOTEL ROOM - 4TH FLOOR

Daniel slowly opens the door, letting in light from the hallway into the dark room.

He looks over near the window to see an old sniper rifle propped up.

INTERCUT

Daniel and his WIFE (MRS. WOO) sit across from each other, a long dining table between them. A cross centered above on the wall. Framed family photos to the left and right of the cross.

(CONTINUED)

DANIEL

(pause)

Now what?

MRS. WOO

I'm taking him with me.

DANIEL

He's my son, too.

MRS. WOO

You never had time for him before,
what's going to change?

DANIEL

I will make time.

MRS. WOO

Now you will make time.

Daniel shifts, uncomfortable in his seat.

DANIEL

Sundays we-

MRS. WOO

-we go to church and pretend to be
a perfect Christian family. Then we
come home and you sleep for the
rest of the day. Even when you're
here, you're not here.

Daniel shifts again.

INTERCUT

Zem and Daniel at the park.

DANIEL

I was always working. Always too
busy for them. She said she.. fell
out of love with me.

INTERCUT

Daniel and Mrs. Woo at dining table.

DANIEL

.. So when did this happen?

MRS. WOO

I don't know when it started, I
just know that one day I realized

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MRS. WOO (cont'd)
 it. We had grown so far apart, I
 didn't even think of you anymore.
 (tearful)
 And that made me feel the saddest
 I've felt in a long time.. because
 I knew that meant I was alone.

INTERCUT

Daniel in the hotel room. He starts to walk towards the
 sniper rifle at the window.

Zem is omnipresent, her words booming into Daniel's mind.
 She is now the little (big) voice in his head.

ZEM (V.O.)
 Your work must have been very
 demanding.

DANIEL
 .. I didn't have to work that
 hard.. and it wasn't the money.

ZEM (V.O.)
 What was it?

Daniel continues to walk towards the rifle and window, now
 halfway across the hotel room.

MRS. WOO (V.O.)
 It's because of **him**. Who else would
 you be doing it for?

INTERCUT

Daniel and Mrs. Woo at dining table.

MRS. WOO
 Ever since I met you, you didn't
 care about what was right for me,
 or us, or our **son**.. only him.

INTERCUT

Daniel stops at the sniper rifle at the window. He drops to
 one knee, looking out the window.

ZEM (V.O.)
 Who is "him?"

Daniel turns his attention to the rifle, leaning down to
 look through the sights.

(CONTINUED)

He sees an OLDER CHINESE GENTLEMAN. He freezes up, his heart now in his throat.

INTERCUT

Daniel finds himself in his childhood living room. He sits on his knees, wearing children's clothes he's clearly outgrown.

He looks up to see the same older Chinese gentleman standing over him. A mean stern look on his face.

DANIEL
(afraid)
Bàba.

INTERCUT

MRS. WOO
You've spent so long trying to be
your father's son, you forgot
you're a father to one yourself.

DANIEL
He's my dad, of course I want to
make him happy.

MRS. WOO
You want him to love you!

INTERCUT

Zem in Daniel's living room. Zem watches distorted images come over one of the screens. The other screen shows what parts of Daniel's brain are active.

Sidney watches by the front door, fascinated by the process.

ZEM
(hushed)
Why did you feel he didn't love
you?

Daniel stirs in his sleep. His shut eyes become a little wet, his breathing slightly heavier. His heart rate has increased.

He mumbles creepily.

INTERCUT

Daniel continues to stare at his father through the rifle sights.

(CONTINUED)

DANIEL
(teary eyed)
He was always.. disappointed..

ZEM (V.O.)
Talking about him seems to bring up
a lot of pain in you.

INTERCUT

Daniel follows his dad down a hallway towards his parents' bedroom. Daniel, who appears child-sized, looks up at the family photos along the walls as he passes them.

DANIEL (V.O.)
.. He controlled my life..

INTERCUT

Roman sits outside the Woo Household, keeping watch.

DANIEL (V.O.)
Everything I did was in service of
him.

INTERCUT

MRS. WOO
He never wanted you to marry me.
That was the only thing you ever
challenged him on. I thought,
maybe, things would change after
that.. but there he was, telling
you how to live your life. Where to
work. What to do with your money.
How to treat your wife. How to
raise your son.
(pause)
I didn't marry him! I didn't have
his child!

Daniel stirs in his seat, unsure what to even say.

MRS. WOO
Your ambitions are **his** ambitions.
Your dreams are **his** dreams. You're
your own man, Daniel.

INTERCUT

Daniel stands outside his parents' bedroom, scared to enter.
His father's voice comes from the shadows of the room.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER (O.S.)
(Chinese)
This is not how a man should
behave. I will teach you the right
way.

INTERCUT

Daniel watches his father through the rifle sights.

DANIEL
(voice cracking)
He just wanted the best for me.

INTERCUT

MRS. WOO
You worship him. Like he's God.
After everything he's done to you.
(beat)
You disappoint me.

Daniel looks up at her, upset, tears in his eyes.

Mrs. Woo stands up.

MRS. WOO
But mostly you've disappointed your
son.

Mrs. Woo sets her wedding ring down on the table then turns
and leaves the dining room.

Daniel moves to go after her, but realizes he's strapped
down into the chair. He squirms.

INTERCUT

Daniel watches his father through the rifle sights.

DANIEL
I wanted his respect.

ZEM (V.O.)
His respect or his love?

INTERCUT

Daniel sits on his knees in front of his father's bed (in
his parents' bedroom).

SMACK SMACK

(CONTINUED)

Daniel's body is rocked forward as he's smacked on his behind with a belt.

A cross hangs on the wall over him, shaking with every hit.

DANIEL

I thought if I could get one, maybe
the other would come with it.

SMACK SMACK

INTERCUT

Zem in living room.

ZEM

The truth of it is, Daniel, you
don't need his love. You don't need
his respect either.

Sidney turns his head towards Zem, curious of her choice of words.

ZEM

I can show you how to free yourself
of this burden. How to achieve
inner peace. Do you want that?

Distorted images on the screen. Increased brain activity.
Increased heart rate.

DANIEL

(mumbles)
.. Yes..

INTERCUT

Daniel watches his father through the rifle sights.

DANIEL

More than anything.

ZEM (V.O.)

It's not love I sense.
(beat)
It's hate.

DANIEL

(almost breaks)
I hate him **so much**.

INTERCUT

Daniel gets spanked by his father.

(CONTINUED)

SMACK SMACK

DANIEL
He never gave me a choice.

SMACK SMACK

INTERCUT

Daniel strapped down to the dining chair.

DANIEL
I idolized him. I wanted to be
him..
(beat)
I got what I wanted. My own son..
he thinks I don't love him..

Daniel looks up as his father enters the dining room from where Mrs. Woo left. Daniel stares back at him, unsure what to do.

INTERCUT

Zem leans in closer to Daniel on the couch.

ZEM
There's only one thing left to do,
Daniel.

DANIEL
Whuh--what.

ZEM
You take these memories and you put
it all in one place..

INTERCUT

Daniel watches his father through the rifle sights. his hands reach down around the gun and find a bullet. He raises it up then loads it into the gun.

ZEM (V.O.)
.. and that'll be how you kill him.

Daniel's eyes widen.

INTERCUT

The lights in the Woo Household dim for a moment before returning to normal. Sidney notices.

(CONTINUED)

Sidney stands up, taking a few steps closer to Zem. Her back being to him, he can't see that her eyes have now rolled back into her head.

DANIEL
(mumbles)
Kill.. Kill?

INTERCUT

Daniel squirms in the dining chair as his father begins to slowly come around the table and walk towards him, belt in hand.

DANIEL
What if I can't?

ZEM (V.O.)
Then you'll never be able to live
your life. You'll live his.

INTERCUT

Daniel's takes aim at his father down below. He can't hold the rifle steady enough.

ZEM (V.O.)
You're the only one who can do it.
You just have to.. squeeze.

Daniel turns to look behind him at a dark corner of the hotel room. Zem's voice, or something reminiscent of it, softly echoes from the dark corner. Something about the darkness instills more fear into Daniel.

He turns back to the rifle, lifting it up again.

INTERCUT

Daniel's breathing becomes shallow. His body begins to tremble.

Zem's eyes are still rolled back.

Sidney inches closer to her.

Distorted, wild images dance on the monitoring screen.

INTERCUT

Daniel squirms in the dining chair more, his father growing near.

INTERCUT

(CONTINUED)

Daniel finds himself in a dark room.

A spotlight turns on, illuminating a semi-naked figure on the ground and what appears to be a giant wooden cross, half propped up behind them.

INTERCUT

Daniel's hands shake as he tries to zero in on his father below. His finger slowly moves to the trigger.

ZEM (V.O.)
(from the shadows behind)
Squeeze.

INTERCUT

Daniel squirms as his father is mere steps away from him.

INTERCUT

Daniel walks towards the Christ-like figure on the ground.

MRS. WOO (V.O.)
You worship him.

DANIEL
I idolized him.

INTERCUT

Daniel's finger edges on the trigger, slightly squeezing then stopping. Slightly squeezing then stopping.

ZEM (V.O.)
(again from the dark corner)
What are you waiting for?

INTERCUT

Daniel stops at the Christ-like figure. From behind it's apparent that it's actually Zem and not "Jesus".

He stares at it, frozen.

INTERCUT

Daniel's father is only inches away with the belt. Daniel closes his eyes, accepting what's coming.

INTERCUT

Daniel's finger begins to squeeze the trigger.

(CONTINUED)

INTERCUT

Daniel stares at Zem half on the cross.

Suddenly, tendrils rip out of her, reaching to pull him in.

INT. WOO HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM

Daniel wakes, out of breath.

Zem's eyes return to normal as she comes to. She puts her hand on Daniel's chest in an attempt to relax him.

ZEM
Breathe, just breathe.

Daniel starts to breath again. It takes a moment for him to calm.

ZEM
There we go. Nice and easy. Just
listen to the sound of my voice as
you start to come back.

Zem continues to monitor Daniel's heart rate. His brain is all lit up on one screen. The other screen now has a dead feed.

Daniel is finally back in the driver's seat. His breathing has calmed, though it's still shallow. He pulls off the cap from his head, drenched in sweat.

ZEM
How was your trip?

DANIEL
(confused)
What happened?

ZEM
(half smile)
Progress.

EXT. WOO HOUSEHOLD

Zem steps out for a breather. She's hit by a breeze.

Sidney steps out after her. He shuts the front door behind him.

(CONTINUED)

SIDNEY

What did I sign up for here, Zem?

ZEM

Two more sessions and he should be right as rain.

SIDNEY

(beat)

At what cost?

ZEM

A lot of fucking money, Sid.

SIDNEY

That's not what I meant.

ZEM

.. This is what these clients come to me for. They don't want to just talk about their problems, like they're talking to a wall. They want to solve them. Sometimes that takes you to some uncomfortable places, but it's completely necessary.

SIDNEY

"Kill" and "hate" are words that should not be thrown around lightly.

ZEM

And they're not.

SIDNEY

I'm just saying that I think maybe you could try another approach.

ZEM

(pause)

There's a great violence brewing inside each and every one of us.. just waiting to come out.. waiting for a reason to. We've found a way to weaponize that. To put the gun back in their hands.. and the power to squeeze the trigger themselves.

SIDNEY

You can't just kill the past.

(CONTINUED)

ZEM

They're not "just" killing the past.. They're making peace with it. To move forward with their lives.

Sidney stares back at Zem, unsure.

ZEM

Sid, I hired you because you were a friend of my dad's. I also hired you because of your.. prior experience.. I know you're born again and all that, and that's great.. but.. I have to do things my way. I'm running the show here. This isn't a church. It's a service.

(beat)

You know what I mean.

Sidney thinks on her words for a moment.

SIDNEY

(pause)

Fair enough.

ZEM

I know you worry about me.

SIDNEY

Somebody has to.

Zem places one hand on each side of Sid's face.

ZEM

I've got it under control.

Zem's hands slip away. She walks off, gently patting Sidney on his shoulder. He watches her go, concerned.

SIDNEY

I hope so...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK

JJ, suit jacket and fedora on now, wakes up on the park bench, slobber on his face. He wipes it away, still in a daze.

(CONTINUED)

He reaches into his suit jacket's inside pocket and pulls out his bottle of pills (that reads *Spinach* across it). He takes out a purple pill and drops it down the hatch.

RING RING RING

JJ feels around his pants and pulls out an old flip phone.

JJ O'BANNION

Hello.

VOICE (V.O.)

(the same from before)

I've been trying to reach you for two fucking hours.

JJ O'BANNION

I was chasing a lead.

VOICE (V.O.)

Yeah, sure. You sound like you were just chasing some z's. So what's new?

JJ O'BANNION

.. I hit a dead end.

JJ stands up and starts walking.

VOICE (V.O.)

I don't think I have to remind you of your situation here.

(beat)

It's grim. You're a hopeless sack of shit. This is the only chance you'll ever get to be worth a fucking thing.

JJ O'BANNION

(stops)

You got the address?

VOICE (V.O.)

I've got three. You're gonna have to hit em all. So get to work. And don't forget, O'Bannion--

JJ O'BANNION

--when you call, I answer. I got it.

(CONTINUED)

VOICE (V.O.)

Well keep it and don't fucking
forget it again.

The man on the other end hangs up. JJ checks a text from him showing the three addresses.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX

JJ walks down a long dark hallway. Half of the lights in the complex are out.

SOUNDS of groups of people, arguing and fighting, and loud music emits from the different apartments JJ passes.

CRACK

JJ stops in his tracks and looks down to see pieces of a shattered white egg shell and yellow goo leaking from under his shoe. He lifts his foot, which yolk drips off the bottom of, revealing the smushed egg.

He appears slightly annoyed, but continues down the hallway.

JJ turns the corner and stops as LARRY FUQUA opens his apartment door. He freezes and looks up at JJ.

LARRY FUQUA (30s), AFRICAN-AMERICAN, wears a dark casual suit.

Larry slowly shuts the door and locks it again.

LARRY FUQUA

Need something?

JJ O'BANNION

You Larry Fuqua?

LARRY FUQUA

Who wants to know?

JJ O'BANNION

(looks around)

I'm trying to score some
dreamcatchers. Heard you're the man
to see.

LARRY FUQUA

Dreamcatchers? Isn't that those
things you hang on the wall?

(CONTINUED)

JJ O'BANNION

Look, man, it's been a time and a half since I last dropped. I've been searching a while now.

LARRY FUQUA

So search somewhere else. Shit, you look high right now.

JJ O'BANNION

Just on life.

JJ smiles weird. Larry only grows more suspicious.

LARRY FUQUA

Your eyes tell a different story. I don't have time for junkies in clown suits. Go score some rock somewhere else. Excuse me.

Larry waits for JJ to leave. JJ stares back for another moment before getting the big picture.

LARRY FUQUA

And you'd do best to forget that name.

JJ smiles again then turns and walks away. He turns the corner where he came from then stops to listen as Larry is opening his door again.

JJ bolts from around the corner, throwing himself at Larry with all his weight (though he is a skinny fella) and tackling him to the ground. His fedora is knocked off in the process.

They roll around some, Larry clearly stronger than JJ, but JJ clearly more out of his mind.

LARRY FUQUA

Get off me you fucking base-head!

JJ reaches into Larry's suit jacket, grabbing something hidden from within.

Larry tries to get JJ to let go by punching him square in the center of his face. He's successful.

JJ is thrown back against the hallway wall.

Larry quickly gets back up on his feet then checks inside his suit jacket.

(CONTINUED)

JJ O'BANNION
(slowly rises)
Looking for this?

JJ stands up, his nose bloody, with Larry's SNUB NOSED REVOLVER aimed at him.

LARRY FUQUA
Bet you don't know how to use that.

JJ O'BANNION
I might just surprise us both.
(beat)
I like surprises. Do you?

LARRY FUQUA
What the fuck you want from me?

JJ O'BANNION
I wanna know what you know about..
the Sandman.

LARRY FUQUA
The Sandman?
(laughs)
Oh yeah, you're on a trip right
now, aintcha? Don't know why you're
coming to me. I've never seen him.
Far as I can tell he only exists..

Larry points at his head.

LARRY FUQUA
.. up here.

JJ O'BANNION
He's as real as this gun.

LARRY FUQUA
(amused)
So you're not a cop.. but maybe
you're some cop's snitch.
(beat)
Shoot me.

JJ O'BANNION
Let's just say I got a
get-out-jail-free-card if I need
it. No one will miss a drug dealer.

LARRY FUQUA
But you'll miss out on whatever it
is you think I know.

(CONTINUED)

JJ fires a shot towards the ceiling, blowing out the light bulb above them. They're enshrouded in darkness.

LARRY FUQUA
What are you, fucking crazy?

JJ O'BANNION
(manic)
Just a little out of my mind is all. I want names, Fuqua. You tell me someone else's, I'll forget yours.

Larry looks left and right then back at JJ.

LARRY FUQUA
(pause)
I don't know who this supposed "Sandman" cat is.. I just know some guy..
(thinks)
.. the "Greek" or something. He unloaded them off to me and I never heard from him again. Don't even know if he's bringing more pills or what. Radio silence.

JJ O'BANNION
(beat)
You got those dreamcatchers right now?

LARRY FUQUA
(amused chuckle)
You really are out of your goddamn mind.

JJ O'BANNION
I thought we already established that. How about you and me move this conversation inside?

JJ looks as he hears the opening of a door at the end of the hallway. TWO imposing men, Larry's BODYGUARDS reach for their guns as they start to move towards JJ.

JJ O'BANNION
To be continued.

JJ snatches up his fedora then bolts off around the corner and outside the apartment complex.

(CONTINUED)

LARRY FUQUA (O.S.)
Get that mother fucker! He's got my
gun!

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX

He finds a corner to hide in as the two bodyguards run out after him. They look around then split up, continuing their search of JJ.

LATER - NIGHT

JJ watches a car slowly pull up to the curb nearby. It sits there, running.

One of Larry's bodyguards emerges from the complex, near where JJ is hiding.

He walks over to the running car, too far for JJ to make out exactly what's being said between the bodyguard and driver.

JJ tucks in more into the shadows as the bodyguard walks back over and opens the door to the hallway.

BODYGUARD
He's clean.

LARRY FUQUA (O.S.)
Doesn't mean his car is. Bring him
over.

The bodyguard goes back to the driver as Larry slowly steps outside, right under the light.

The driver turns off his car and exits, revealing himself to be none other than Daniel Woo (Client 1). The bodyguard walks Daniel over to Larry.

Daniel appears quite nervous.

LARRY FUQUA
Heard you're in the market for some
magic sand.

DANIEL
I.. I was hoping..

LARRY FUQUA
You wanna dream a little dream?

(CONTINUED)

DANIEL

(nods)

.. Yes, I was told you have something.. an alternative.

LARRY FUQUA

By who?

DANIEL

(flusterd, trying to remember)

Oh, uh--his name was--it's--Tye?

BODYGUARD

He got the word from Philly.

LARRY FUQUA

(slow nod)

I guess you're alright then if you heard it from Philly.

(looks Daniel up and down)

You don't look like you're from around here. What did you mean by "alternative?"

DANIEL

(head down)

.. I had a few sessions of dream therapy with Zem. Do you know her?

LARRY FUQUA

(shakes head)

Never heard of a Zem.

DANIEL

Well, you see, I was paying.. quite handsomely for those sessions and.. I'm sort of in a financial bind at the moment.. My assets are split down the middle..

LARRY FUQUA

So you're looking for some knock off action is what you're saying?

DANIEL

I was told it's the next closest thing. I just need..

(desperate)

Anything. I have to go back. I haven't finished--I need more time.

(CONTINUED)

LARRY FUQUA

Okay, okay. Understand, mister-

DANIEL

Woo.

LARRY FUQUA

Understand, mister Woo, I'm not giving handouts. Your situation means nothing to me. Everything costs something and whatever price I give is what you pay.

DANIEL

Of course, I can pay.. just not what they're asking for. How much for some drops?

LARRY FUQUA

We don't do that fancy drop shit, that's for silly white people. Pills, that's it. Take it or leave it.

DANIEL

(thinks)

.. How does it work? Do I take them before I go to sleep?

LARRY FUQUA

.. Not exactly. You can, though most people drop em in the middle of the day. Think of it like a hallucigenic.. it, uh.. distorts your world view if you know what I mean.

(beat)

Like a waking dream.. yeah, that's it.. but more intense.

DANIEL

(thinks)

.. Okay, how much?

Daniel moves to start removing his money.

BODYGUARD

Whoa, not here.

LARRY FUQUA

Step into my office, mister Woo.

Larry motions towards the door to the complex.

JJ watches as they go inside.

INT. DANIEL WOO'S CAR

Daniel gets into his car. He sits there for a moment before starting it up then takes another few seconds to reflect on his actions.

Suddenly, JJ enters the backseat, snub nosed revolver drawn.

DANIEL
(looks up)
What--who are you? What are you--

JJ O'BANNION
I'll ask the questions now.

Daniel throws up his hands.

DANIEL
What do you want?

JJ O'BANNION
That sounded like a question.

DANIEL
Just tell me what you want!
(beat)
Please.

JJ O'BANNION
I need the name and contact info on your connect.

DANIEL
What connect?

JJ O'BANNION
(brings gun down)
How many times are we gonna go over this?

DANIEL
(pause)
I'm not sure what to say without asking it in question form, okay.

JJ O'BANNION
The dream therapy. This Zem character. What's her number?

(CONTINUED)

DANIEL
(thinks)
I'm not--I don't-I..
(beat)
I don't remember it.

Daniel almost turns around to look at JJ behind him.

JJ O'BANNION
Whoa. Admire your windshield.

JJ moves the snub nosed closer To Daniel's face causing him to face back forward and stare at his windshield as directed.

JJ O'BANNION
You gotta have it written down
somewhere.

DANIEL
I did, but I lost it. By then it
didn't matter because she wouldn't
see me anymore.

JJ O'BANNION
Why not?

DANIEL
The well ran dry.

JJ O'BANNION
(thinks)
How's your memory?

DANIEL
Above average.. but I never
committed **that** to memory. I wasn't
supposed to.

JJ O'BANNION
Well, have I got a game for you.

JJ empties out the revolver, letting all of the bullets hit the floor of the car. He spins the cylinder.

JJ O'BANNION
In this gun is a single bullet.

JJ cocks back the hammer.

DANIEL
What kind of game is this?

(CONTINUED)

JJ O'BANNION
Thought it might help jog your
memory. So here's how it works. You
have six chances.. actually
anywhere from one to six..

DANIEL
What!

JJ O'BANNION
Hey, I'm giving you a fair shake
here.
(beat)
Okay, let's start with the area
code.

DANIEL
Uh--it's..

JJ waits as Daniel tries to remember.

DANIEL
Six? Six-one..

JJ squeezes the trigger.

CLICK

Daniel jumps, startled by the sound and anticipation. He
feels around his body as if he's been shot.

JJ O'BANNION
Six-one-what?

DANIEL
(breathing heavy)
I'm thinking, I'm thinking..
San-San..

CLICK

Daniel jumps.

DANIEL
Nine!

JJ O'BANNION
Six-one-nine? Okay, now the next
three. You're doing good so far,
keep it up.

(CONTINUED)

DANIEL
(rubs the side of his head)
Umm.. I think maybe.. five.. five?

JJ O'BANNION
One five, two fives?

DANIEL
Two--wait.. maybe three.

JJ O'BANNION
555? That sounds like a made up
number.

CLICK

Daniel throws his hands up as he makes a stupid face.

DANIEL
Wait, what are you--I'm trying!

JJ O'BANNION
I can think of at least two reasons
to try harder.

DANIEL
(slaps forehead)
619-555.. 555.. please.. just give
me a little longer..

JJ taps his wrist with the gun.

DANIEL
(low)
Zero, one, two, three, four.. zero?

JJ O'BANNION
Choose one.

DANIEL
Uh--umm.. shit, shit--

CLICK

Daniel cowers again.

DANIEL
Zero! Zero, one!

JJ O'BANNION
Try singing it back.

(CONTINUED)

DANIEL

What?

JJ O'BANNION

Singing it back works for me
sometimes. Come on--

(sings)

6-1-9, 555--

Daniel is slow to get with the program.

BOTH

6-1-9-555-01--

DANIEL

Nine?

JJ O'BANNION

Nine! That's it! 619-555-0199!

CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK

JJ clicks away at the empty revolver.

Daniel screams, cowering in fear, shaking. It's more comical
than tragic.

DANIEL

(muttering)

This is a dream, this is a dream,
it's just a dream.

Daniel's words trigger something in JJ, a memory perhaps.

JJ O'BANNION

(low, remembers)

Your dreams are your reality...

(snaps out of it)

Who's the Greek?

DANIEL

I don't--I don't know any
gree--Fuck you, man! Get out of my
car!

JJ leans over and pats Daniel on the shoulder.

JJ O'BANNION

You have a good night now, don't
let the Sandman bite.

JJ quickly exits the car and Daniel starts it and takes off
right away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SIDNEY'S PLACE - BATHROOM

Sidney flips the light switch up and stops in front of his bathroom mirror.

He sets an eyedropper of dreamcatcher drops on the counter and stares down at it.

He grabs it then slowly and carefully proceeds to squeeze a single drop into each eye. He blinks a few times.

Suddenly everything starts to slow down. He's not seeing things yet, but the drops are clearly already starting to work their magic.

He stares back at himself in the mirror.

ZEM (V.O.)

My dreams are my reality.

SIDNEY

(cautious)

.. My dreams are my reality.

BEDROOM

Sidney climbs into bed, under the covers.

His room is a decent size, some furniture, a few framed pictures on his dresser. One of his mom, one of his little brother, another with all three. One has him with a few other men (friends). A cross hangs above his bed.

Sidney closes his eyes. He shivers for a passing moment then tries to lie still, waiting to fall asleep. It seems the drug isn't waiting for that though.

Sidney can feel a presence around him. He opens his eyes. The room is getting smaller, darker. The shadows are closing in on him. He can't move, he's paralyzed. His eyes dart around the dark, afraid.

A piece of classical music creeps in (piano)

It gets louder as Sid's eyes become heavier. He can't fight back any longer. He shuts his eyes.

SIDNEY'S DREAM - INT. SIDNEY'S CHILDHOOD HOME

Sidney opens his eyes, taking a moment to find his bearings.

He looks around, realizing where he is.

The piano playing continues.

He walks down the hall and moves towards the sound. He turns the corner and stops. He quickly becomes emotional as it's revealed who is playing the music.

In the living room, in front of the piano, are Sidney's MOM and LITTLE BROTHER (7). They keep their backs to Sidney, never turning around to look at him.

A smile filled with sadness stretches across Sidney's face. He starts to walk over towards them, realizing after several steps that they're still the same distance away. It's as if he's walking in place.

A concerned look shoots across his face.

MA

Sid, you better take over for me.
Need to get dinner going before it
gets late.

Just to hear her voice again brings another smile to Sid's face.

SIDNEY

Sure thing, Ma. I can do that.

His mom gets up and walks away all while keeping her back to him.

He turns his attention to his little brother, who keeps hitting the wrong key.

SIDNEY

Move over, Will. Let me show you
how it's done.

Sidney tries to walk over again, but gets no closer. He looks down at his feet to see a shackle on his leg. He looks back up at the piano. His brother, WILL, is gone.

SIDNEY

Will?
(worried)
Will?

EXT. FIELD

Sidney finds himself in a big open field with tall grass, woods nearby.

The piano music continues, echoing from afar, as if coming from the sky around him. The music continues throughout the dream.

SIDNEY

Will?

Sid looks up at the hill to see a line of people walking down, searching every bit of the field.

SIDNEY

(panicked)

Will?!

Sid's eyes get wet.

SIDNEY

(cries out)

WIIILLL?!

Sid drops to his knees then falls back onto his butt.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Where you at right now, Sid?

Sid starts to turn his head to look at who asked.

INT. VAN - MOVING

Sid finishes turning his head, looking over at the man, LEO (late 30s).

LEO

Thinking about your mom?

Sid and Leo are in the back of a moving van, Halloween masks in their lap. A DRIVER and another MAN up front.

SIDNEY

My brother.

LEO

You miss him?

Sidney keeps silent.

(CONTINUED)

LEO
(sighs)
You ready to do this?

Sidney takes a second before nodding. The van comes to a stop.

LEO
Remember who you're doing this for.

INTERCUT

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Sid's mom lies in a hospital bed, older, weaker. Her hand in his hand.

SIDNEY
I'm not gonna lose you, too.

INTERCUT

Sid and Leo in the stopped van.

LEO
It can't be so bad if it's outta
love, right?

Leo grins then places on his mask (as the man in the passenger seat does the same). He brings up a submachine gun.

BANG

Sid jumps at the sound, shutting his eyes.

RATTATTATT

BANG BANG

EXT. BANK

Sid, maskless, realizes he's running. He stops and turns around just as Leo takes a bullet in the back.

Leo goes down, face first into the street.

SIDNEY
Leo!

Sid tosses his gun and drops the bag of money from over his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

The van they arrived in takes off without them, continuing their firefight with the police.

Sid drops down to tend to his friend. He turns him around onto his back.

SIDNEY

No. Come on, man. Stay with me.

LEO

(raspy breathing)

I'm going now.. I can feel it..

SIDNEY

You can't. You have a little girl waiting for you at home.

LEO

(weak)

.. I'm already gone..

Sid shuts his eyes as if hoping when he opens them he'll move on from this memory. He opens them, still there with Leo dying in his arms.

LEO

Tell her..

(beat)

.. well she already knows.

Leo smiles before fading away.

ZEM (V.O.)

Tell me what?

INT. PRISON - VISITATION

Sid looks up from where Leo was to find himself sitting behind a glass partition, a wired phone to his ear.

He looks down at the jumpsuit he's in then up at a teenage Zem (13/14). Her eyes have dark bags under them.

SIDNEY

He said.. he said you already know.

ZEM

.. I can't cry anymore. I tried.
What's wrong with me?

(CONTINUED)

SIDNEY
Nothing, darling. Nothing.
(beat)
Tonight I think I'll cry for you.

INT. PRISON CELL

Sidney finds himself in the corner of a small dark empty room, sitting against the wall, holding his knees and softly crying. Thinking of his mom, Will, Leo.

The same cross from his bedroom hangs above him on the cell wall.

A shadow of cell bars comes across his face.

Sid seems resigned to rot away behind the shadow bars.

ZEM (V.O.)
(distorted)
Why don't you come out of there?

SIDNEY
I don't think I want to.

ZEM (V.O.)
(distorted)
It's nice on this side.

SIDNEY
What's nice about watching the
people you love die? I can't take
anymore of this.
(beat)
It's safe here.
(shakes head)
It's safe here.. Just me and..
God..

Another shadow overlaps with the shadow of the cell bars. A tendril/tentacle waving across slowly.

MA (V.O.)
Hey, look at me, Sidney.

Sidney looks up.

INT. SIDNEY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - LIVING ROOM

Sidney sits in front of his mother, looking up at her.

MA

You need to stop beating yourself up. I can't bare to see it any longer.

SIDNEY

If I didn't leave, if-

MA

-Lots of ifs and coulda-shoulda-wouldas.. but that doesn't matter now.

SIDNEY

It's my fault. Everything.

MA

I've already lost one child, I won't lose another. I need you to be strong.. because frankly..

(voice breaks)

.. I'm having a difficult time myself.

Sid's mom has tears in her eyes.

MA

I need your strength, Sidney. I need your love, that's all. Keep me and God in your heart. That's all you'll ever need. You'll never be alone.

SIDNEY

What if I lose you?

MA

That love will always be there.

(beat)

Just remember, baby.. like God, the Devil finds ways to talk to you.

Even in your dreams. Love, hope.. they're more powerful than any evil that exists in this world.

Sid hugs his mom, refusing to let go.

The piano music is close again.

Sid looks over to see it's Zem playing the piano, her back to him. He feels himself drawn to her then:

INT. SIDNEY'S PLACE - BEDROOM

Sidney wakes up catching his breath. He looks around his dark room waiting for something to appear, but there's nothing.

The music has stopped.

SUPERIMPOSE: Client 2

INT. MARY B. WATERS' MOBILE HOME

Zem and Sidney find themselves inside the mobile home of one MARY B. WATERS. Zem sits in front of her, briefcase at her side. Sidney stands nearby, watching Roman outside through the window.

MARY (30s), Caucasian, appears to be in not-so-great shape. Her mobile home an extension of her, though worse looking.

The place is trashed, dirty and full of useless things.

ZEM

Miss Waters, I can't continue to see you. Not like this.

MARY

But I have the money, I can still pay.

ZEM

Barely, but it's not the money that concerns me. It's the state you're in. Understand that it's dangerous for me to make a connection to you. I'm putting myself under the knife every time and each time the knife is a little sharper.

MARY

(desperate)

Please, I feel like there's still so much I have to do. We were so close last time. Just one more--

ZEM

(frustrated)

Okay!

(CONTINUED)

(calms)
Okay. This is the last time.

MARY
Last time.

ZEM
Sid, take a walk.

SIDNEY
Zem, I really think I should stay.

ZEM
I can handle this.

SIDNEY
(nods)
Right. I'll be outside if you need me.

Zem nods without looking his way. Sidney slowly backs out outside, closing the door behind him.

ZEM
Lie down.

EXT. MARY'S MOBILE HOME

Sidney watches Roman smoke.

SIDNEY
Mind if I bum one?

Roman quietly reaches into his coat and removes a pack of cigarettes. He takes one out and presents it to Sid. He pockets the rest.

Sid leans over and Roman lights his cigarette for him.

They smoke in silence for a moment.

ROMAN
She's a little young for you, don't you think?

SIDNEY
Excuse me?

ROMAN
You heard what I said.

(CONTINUED)

SIDNEY

.. It's not like that.

ROMAN

What's it like then?

Sidney decides not to encourage him and keeps silent. They both smoke.

INT. MARY'S MOBILE HOME

Mary is all set for Zem's dream therapy, cap on her head, eye drops administered. Zem flicks the switch, powering the different monitors.

MARY

My dreams are my reality.

MARY'S DREAM - EXT. CREEK

Mary finds herself surrounded by a beautiful creek.

The sight brings a smile to her face. For a moment, she feels peace.

Some distance ahead is her mobile home covered with overgrown roots. Her smile fades.

Something in the trees catches her attention. She looks to see a figure wearing a gas mask.

MARY

I see you.

ZEM (V.O.)

In our last session we talked about your childhood.. or lack thereof. Your father took it with him.

MARY

(low)

He took it from me.

ZEM (V.O.)

What else did he take from you?

Mary starts to walk towards her overgrown mobile home.

MARY

(ignores question)

I had this boyfriend.. I've had a few.. but this one.. his name was

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARY (cont'd)

Chris.. he used to bring me to this creek. We used to come up here and shoot up. We'd make love if we weren't already nodding off. We'd laugh and cry and he'd listen to my bullshit and I'd listen to his. We were two fucked up kids getting fucked up together.

ZEM (V.O.)

What happened to Chris?

Mary stops in her tracks.

MARY

One day we came up here like usual. When I woke up the next morning, he was gone.. He took me for everything I had.. left me with nothing.. I never saw his face again..

ZEM (V.O.)

How does that make you feel? Your dad leaving you? And then Chris? The others?

MARY

(tears up)

Alone. So alone.

Mary plops down into the grass.

ZEM (V.O.)

What are you doing?

MARY

Everyone leaves me? What's the point?

Mary looks up, spotting the same figure in the gas mask. The figure is closer now. Mary seems unafraid of it.

MARY

I hate them. I hate them all.. Why couldn't they take me with them?

Mary sobs uncontrollably.

(CONTINUED)

ZEM (V.O.)

Did you think you weren't good enough?

MARY

I wasn't.

ZEM (V.O.)

You let others dictate your worth. You let them define who you are. You have to cut them out of your life for good. Move forward. They don't want you to. They want to be the most important thing in your life. The reason for your existence. **You** are the reason.

Mary starts to collect herself. She looks up at the figure in the gas mask. The figure stands over her now, a hand extended out. Mary grabs it and let's it help her up.

The figure reaches into its jacket and removes a large kitchen knife (like Michael Myers uses). It presents it to Mary.

Mary accepts the gift.

The figure turns its head towards the overgrown mobile home, signaling Mary where to go next.

Mary knows what she has to do. She moves towards the mobile home, going into a speed walk now.

ZEM (V.O.)

Everyone in your life has abandoned you. Now it's time you abandon your ties to them. Once they've been severed, you'll be free.

Mary stops right outside the door of the home.

ZEM (V.O.)

What are you waiting for?

Mary's hand trembles as she moves it towards the door handle. She opens the door and takes a step inside.

INT. OVERGROWN MOBILE HOME

Sleeping side by side are multiple people from Mary's life (all of whom abandoned or hurt her at one point or another). Her father, Chris, a few others.

ZEM (V.O.)

Cut away.

Suddenly things take a turn for the worse as Mary goes into straight slasher mode.

Mary screams as she brings the knife down into one of the sleeping people.

She moves onto the next one and does the same.

ZEM (V.O.)

Cut away, cut away..

MARY

I'll cut you all out for good this time! You're nothing to me!
Nothing! I hate you!

Mary brings the knife down into the person beside her ex, Chris. She moves over to him next.

Mary hesitates before bringing the knife into Chris. She holds down the knife for a few moments before moving onto her father.

Mary brings up the knife slow. She shrieks, like a banshee.. and brings the knife down. She keeps stabbing until she looks like Carrie (covered in blood) and keeps stabbing after that.

ZEM (V.O.)

Cut it all out. Cut away anything that will keep you from being happy. From finding peace.

Mary suddenly stops stabbing. She looks down at her belly. Something moves inside it.

MARY

What about her?

ZEM (V.O.)

Who?

(CONTINUED)

MARY
Should I cut her out?

Mary stares at her reflection in the bloody knife. Her hand trembles.

Her eyes move away from the knife, staring off into nothingness. She shakes uncontrollably. She closes her eyes and everything starts to:

FADE TO BLACK:

CUT TO:

EXT. CREEK

The figure in the gas mask wakes up lying on their back. The figure sits up then removes their gas mask to reveal Zem. She catches her breath.

Zem gets up on her feet, looking around the creek. She turns her attention to the overgrown mobile home.

ZEM
Mary? Who were you referring to
just now?

MARY (V.O.)
There's someone growing inside me.

ZEM
(realizes)
Mary, this is very dangerous. Maybe
we should take a step back here.

MARY (V.O.)
What if I'm not good enough?

Zem realizes the voice is being directed from the overgrown mobile. She starts to walk towards it.

ZEM
So you'd abandon her? You see the
irony here, don't you?

MARY (V.O.)
.. This world is so mean.. and so
cruel.. What kind of mother brings
a child into that?

Zem picks up the pace.

(CONTINUED)

MARY (V.O.)
Why should I force her into it?
Just to leave her?

Zem gets to the overgrown mobile. She swings open the door to find Mary standing over a baby crib, same bloody knife in hand.

INTERCUT

INT. MARY'S MOBILE HOME (REAL WORLD)

The feed is dead, only static on the screen.

Zem's eyes have rolled back into her head.

Mary mutters creepily just like Daniel did. Her eyes are wet and there's a frown on her face.

EXT. MARY'S MOBILE HOME

A shiver runs down Roman's spine, prompting him to look inside.

Sidney notices and turns his head as well. It takes him a second to notice Zem appears to be sitting strange, as if about to fall out of her chair.

A surge moves through the mobile causing the lights to dim down then come back up.

Sidney moves quick, about to run in, when Roman side steps in front of him.

ROMAN
Hold on.

SIDNEY
What are you doing? Something's wrong.

INTERCUT

Zem watches as black roots grow along the feet of the crib and upward.

Mary stares down into the crib, split on what to do.

INTERCUT

(CONTINUED)

SIDNEY
Get of my way.

Sidney tries to get past Roman. Roman side steps again.

ROMAN
Let her finish.

SIDNEY
I'm warning you.

INTERCUT

The black roots continue to grow upward.

MARY
It wouldn't be fair. She wouldn't
stand a chance.

Mary cries softly.

ZEM
Mary, give me the knife.

INTERCUT

SIDNEY
Get--

Sidney tries to push back, but Roman persists. Sidney, tired of his shit, overpowers him, pushing him aside.

Roman hits the ground as Sid hurries inside the mobile home.

INTERCUT

MARY
You're the one who said to cut them
out.

ZEM
This is different.

MARY
Is it? Maybe I'm saving her.

ZEM
From what?

MARY
Disappointment. Loneliness. Hate.
Evil. From all the things that want
to take her away from me. Including
me.

(CONTINUED)

INTERCUT

Sidney stops in front of Zem, his eyes darting to Mary then back to Zem. He notes her white eyes.

He goes in to wake her up.

ZEM
(mutters)
The Sandman..

INTERCUT

The black roots have almost reached the very top.

MARY
I've seen it.

ZEM
Seen what?

MARY
How the world ends.
(beat)
I don't want her to be here when it
does.

A shadowy tendril slithers from beneath the crib, slowly moving towards Mary's feet.

Zem, for the first time, looks visibly confused. She doesn't know what to do. Her eyes dart around from the tendril to Mary to the crib, but she doesn't make a move.

INTERCUT

Sid continues to shake Zem violently.

ZEM
(mumbles)
Sandman..

INTERCUT

The lights in the mobile home dim and Zem starts to lose Mary in the darkness. One last glimpse of the crib as the roots grow over and into it.

ZEM
Wait, what am I doing here? What
are you doing to me?

(CONTINUED)

The shadowy tendril has passed between Mary's legs and makes its way towards Zem. She is saved by the same darkness engulfing the rest of the home.

INTERCUT

Sid shakes Zem harder.

ZEM

San..

A light bulb explodes.

Finally, Zem awakes. The wind is knocked out of her. She tries to catch her breath as her eyes roll back to the front where they belong.

SIDNEY

(drops to knees)

Hey, Zem, Zem, you alright? It's alright now. It's alright.

Zem gathers herself, taking deep breaths.

ZEM

It felt like there was someone in my head.

SIDNEY

What? What the fuck is going on?

ZEM

She's a junkie, Sid.. and she's not alone in there.

Sidney looks over at Mary. He gets up and moves over to her to check on her. He feels her pulse.

SIDNEY

She's still out. We should take her to a hospital.

ZEM

She'll be fine.

SIDNEY

What part of this seems fine to you?

Zem looks away from Sidney.

(CONTINUED)

SIDNEY
Who's the Sandman?

ZEM
What?

SIDNEY
You were repeating that.

ZEM
It's just something people dream
about. It doesn't mean anything.

Sid, frustrated:

EXT. MARY'S MOBILE HOME

barges outside. Roman is where he left him.

SIDNEY
Why did you try to stop me? And
don't give me anymore of your vague
bullshit!

ROMAN
Either way it could have backfired.
Better to just let these things run
their course.

SIDNEY
Just because it's not real, doesn't
mean it can't still harm her.

ROMAN
I never said it wasn't real.

SIDNEY
(taken aback)
.. Who's the Sandman?

ROMAN
(beat)
The Sandman? Throws a little dirt
in your eye, makes you take a nap.
Sweet dreams. That Sandman?

SIDNEY
You know more than you're saying.

ROMAN
It's a delicate operation we got
going here. Everything is on a
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ROMAN (cont'd)
need-to-know basis.. you know the
rest, I'm sure.

SIDNEY
You ever try that stuff yourself?

ROMAN
I don't dream much these days.. I'd
prefer to keep it that way.
(beat)
You're not gonna be a problem for
me, are you?

SIDNEY
(pause)
What does that mean?

ROMAN
It means any concerns you might
have.. keep em to yourself. I don't
wanna have to start plugging
leaks.. but I'll do what I have to.

Roman walks away from Sidney and moves towards the car.

SIDNEY
Asshole leaves me with more
questions than answers.

Zem steps outside, briefcase in hand, shutting the door
behind her.

SIDNEY
I can't keep watching you do this
to yourself. Or other people for
that matter. I don't see how this
is helping anyone.

ZEM
.. I'm disappointed to hear you say
that, but I see where you're coming
from.
(beat)
I don't blame, you know. I know you
feel like you have to protect me
cause of what happened.. but you
don't.
(chuckles)
There's something changing in me. I
can't really explain it. I feel
this.. power.. deep inside me.

(CONTINUED)

SIDNEY

Doesn't that scare you? Where it came from?.. Who it belongs to? Something isn't right.

ZEM

I'm not afraid of anything anymore. For the first time in my life, I feel like I'm starting to see the bigger picture.. and Sid.. I like what I see. It's a big, dark world out there. I'm just trying to shine a little light on it.

SIDNEY

Now you're sounding like him.

ZEM

Who, Roman? He understands it better than anyone I know.

SIDNEY

Sounds like a match made in Heaven.

Sidney stares back at Zem, unable to shake the look of worry on his face.

SIDNEY

I don't know what you've gotten yourself into.. or what you've involved me in.. but it's fucked up. I don't know what else to call it. It's fucked up.

(beat)

Take care of yourself, Zem. Whatever has it's grip on you.. don't let it change the kind-hearted person I know you to be.

Zem watches as Sidney walks away, past the car.

Roman watches from inside the car, expressionless.

Zem gets into the passenger seat of the car.

ROMAN

Is he gonna be a problem?

Zem turns to Roman and glares at him.

(CONTINUED)

ROMAN

.. I'll take that as a "no."

Roman starts the car and drives off.

ROMAN'S DREAM - EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A heavy rain starts up, wetting a dark road. A boot steps down onto the wet pavement. Roman's.

Roman looks around him. He's on a road in the middle of nowhere.

A look of frustration almost instantly shoots across his face. He seems aware of what's happening to him.

ROMAN

(grits teeth)

You fucking bastards. I'm not playing your games. No.

Roman shakes his head.

WOMAN (V.O.)

(sings)

Now there's a look in your eye..

Roman looks for the voice, but he's still alone in the rain.

WOMAN (V.O.)

.. like black holes in the sky..

That's what you are. A black hole.

Roman brushes off the insult and decides to walk down the road. He cuts through the rain, ignoring it as it hits his face and body.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Our marriage ended a long time ago.
Even before him. I wasn't happy
then, I'm not now.

ROMAN

(mutters angrily)

So leave.

WOMAN (V.O.)

All your negativity, all your
cynicism.. You want to bring
everything crashing down with you.

Roman is getting visibly worked up. It's the most emotion he's displayed thus far.

(CONTINUED)

Roman looks left to see a WOMAN standing in the rain. She's more of a silhouette. It stands motionless.

ROMAN

Fuck you.. I'm this way because of you, you bitch.

WOMAN (V.O.)

That's what you are. A black hole.

ROMAN

Fuck you!
(turns to the sky)
FUCK YOU!!

Something off to the right side of the road catches Roman's eye. His face drops when he realizes what it is.

Off the side of the road is a smoking car that appears to have just been in an accident. The smoke that rises from it is a mix of grey and purple.

ROMAN

We had a deal.

Roman stands still as if refusing to move towards the wrecked car.

ROMAN

I don't wanna see this. Not again.

WOMAN (V.O.)

(hysterical)
See what you did?! You did this!
You did this!

The woman continues screaming this over and over, sobbing between her words.

Roman starts to walk forward, if nothing else but to get away from the voice haunting him.

Roman's boot crushes a glass liquor bottle. He continues forward, stepping through more glass, broken beer bottles.

The woman's voice is getting further. The pitter-patter of the rain starts to drown her out.

The purple dreamcatcher pills seen previously make an appearance here. For a moment, they hit the ground beneath Roman, replacing the rain. Roman steps on them as he continues to walk, crushing them under his boots. The rain returns to normal.

(CONTINUED)

He passes a man lying dead (face up) in the water. Who the man is, is unclear.

Roman stops some distance away from the wreck. His eyes travel down until they spot something on the road. A child's shoe.

Roman clenches his jaw. It's difficult to say whether he's crying. He turns his attention to the sky once more.

ROMAN

You said you wouldn't show me this anymore! I don't wanna see it! I won't!

Roman stares into the dark sky. A black hole is forming.

ROMAN

What else do you want? I've given you all of me..

He continues to stare into it, waiting for a response.

JJ O'BANNION (V.O.)

(hushed)

One pill, two pill, red pill, blue pill.

Roman turns towards the direction of the voice. He looks down on the wet road to see that his legs are now submerged in water. Floating in the water, just beneath the surface is JJ O'Bannion.

Roman seems familiar with the face and knows what he has to do now. He turns his attention back towards the black hole in the sky.

ROMAN

Fine. You hold up your end.. I'll hold up mine..

A shadowy tendril emerges from the water, slowly rising up behind Roman.

ROMAN

.. but when my head hits that pillow.. I better fucking see black.

The tendril is now above Roman like a puppet master holding the strings.

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Roman sits outside a motel room, smoking a joint.

Zem steps out from the neighboring room. She turns to see Roman and walks over to him.

ZEM
Bad dream?

ROMAN
.. Just remembered something is
all.

Roman offers Zem the joint. She accepts it and takes a hit.

ZEM
(pause)
Are we doing the right thing?

ROMAN
What is the "right thing?"

Roman takes a hit.

ZEM
Are we hurting people more than
we're helping?

ROMAN
(beat)
We provide a service that requires
our clients to directly confront
their past traumas. A whole lotta
people out there.. got a whole
lotta pain.

Zem takes a hit.

ZEM
I felt like I lost control. It felt
like there was someone else in
there with me. And I'm not talking
about her baby. It was like.. I was
looking at a mirror.

Roman takes a fat hit while turning his head away, as if to avoid eye contact with Zem.

(CONTINUED)

ROMAN

You handled yourself just fine.
Don't over think it.

ZEM

.. I was starting to wonder if I've
been putting **enough** thought into
it.

Zem goes to take another, but doesn't.

ROMAN

You shouldn't have to feel guilty
for how other people live their
lives.. You have the power to
influence.. So use it.. 'for they
use it against you.

ZEM

"They."

ROMAN

.. You know what the truth is? The
one they keep teasing? Like it's
some grand mystery? The truth is
that we're not free. We never
were.. and.. we are alone.. because
that's how they want it.. What's
the point? There is no point..
That's the truth.

Zem, still holding the joint, passes it back to Roman
without hitting it again.

ROMAN

That's what you're giving these
people. The chance to understand
that. Once you've accepted your
place in the universe.. you can be
at peace with it.

Zem remains silent, thinking on Roman's words.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS - DAY

JJ, in his usual *Chinatown* get-up (complete with fedora)
steps inside to find rows of chairs, half of them filled
with people.

(CONTINUED)

Up front, speaking to the scattered group of people is Mary B. Waters. She's reminscent of her previous appearance; she looks like a broken mess, though sober here.

JJ gets a few looks from certain individuals, looks of familiarity.

JJ takes a seat near the back and listens.

MARY

My name is Mary B. Waters and I have been an off and on user for some time. Mostly heroin. Some of you have seen me before.. heard my story.

Mary chokes up a little.

MARY

I've been sober one week.

Some light claps around the room.

MARY

It's been.. After I lost.. my baby, I.. I really tried to get clean.. but everytime I think about her..

Mary stops for a moment, if only to hold back from breaking down in front of an audience.

MARY

.. I'm reminded that I was the one who killed her.. She never had a chance.. I was so afraid of the possibilities that I never stopped to think what she would have wanted.. and then I felt like I had become my mother.. I hated her.. yet she was the only person who didn't leave me. She controlled me in life. There were others who controlled me in my memories.. in my dreams.. This.. "Sandman"..

JJ notices a few people squirm in their seats. He narrows his eyes back on Mary, more than intrigued.

MARY

.. became all that.. I realized it was nothing more than me just trying to.. I guess literalize the horrible things I was feeling.. and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARY (cont'd)
 so I think to myself.. now that I'm
 aware of all this.. how does that
 make things better? I don't want to
 feel this way anymore. I don't want
 to be afraid of the world and the
 people in it anymore. I don't want
 to be afraid to fall asleep.. and
 to dream.. But I guess, like
 Enrique always reminds us.. one day
 at a time.

A few of the people sitting, echo her last sentiment.

TOGETHER
 One day at a time.

MARY
 Thank you for listening.

Mary steps down and walks over to the back row of chairs to
 the tune of a few scattered claps.

She takes a seat near JJ. JJ won't stop looking at her. She
 notices, but doesn't take offense and is instead a little
 amused by his appearance.

MARY
 What's with the funny outfit?

JJ O'BANNION
 What's so funny about it?

MARY
 (shrugs)
 Kinda makes you look like a
 detective.

JJ O'BANNION
 I am a detective.
 (extends hand)
 JJ.

Mary shakes it.

JJ O'BANNION
 Mary.. what can you tell me about
 the Sandman?

Mary's smile fades.

MARY

The "Sandman" isn't real.

JJ O'BANNION

(pause)

How did you come to know about him?
Dreamcatchers?

MARY

(hesitates)

I just remembered I have to be
somewhere.

Mary gets up in a hurry and starts to move towards the door.

JJ O'BANNION

Wait.

JJ gets up to follow after her, but his exit through the door is blocked by a Mexican-American man named ENRIQUE (40s).

JJ O'BANNION

Rique, how's it hanging?

ENRIQUE

JJ. You know you're not allowed here anymore. Not after the last time. I really hate to do this, but I have to ask you to leave..

JJ O'BANNION

(grins)

What do you think I'm doing?

ENRIQUE

.. and not come back. If you're really, truly ready to get help.. You still have my number, right?

JJ O'BANNION

Yeah, I still got it. If you'll excuse me now, I'm in the middle of a case.

Enrique, a concerned look on his face, sighs and steps aside.

ENRIQUE

Just take care of yourself, JJ.

JJ bolts out the door past him and runs after Mary.

EXT. AA

JJ O'BANNION
Miss Waters!

Mary is already in her car, starting it up, when JJ stops at her window.

JJ O'BANNION
Please.

Mary reluctantly rolls down her window.

MARY
What do you want from me?

JJ O'BANNION
If there's any information you can give me about him, it'd be especially useful.

MARY
(explodes)
The Sandman isn't real!

JJ O'BANNION
(pause)
Not in the way you think, but someone's out there, tainting people's dreams and corrupting every moment they're awake. Someone's at the top and I intend to find out who.

MARY
Why? Why do you care?

JJ O'BANNION
(thinks about his answer)
.. I'm working with the police.. Whatever you know, would be helpful.. I'm like anyone else, you know.. just looking for answers.

Mary thinks on JJ's words, looking away to process them then looks back at JJ.

INT. MARY'S MOBILE HOME

JJ stands in the middle of the living room, noting the messy place. There's been an attempt to start cleaning and organizing, but it's reached one corner of the space.

Mary sits on the edge of her couch, rarely making eye contact with JJ.

MARY

A few months ago I started seeing this woman.. Zem. That name.. easy to remember, hard to forget.

JJ's eyes light up.

MARY

I had some money put aside so I thought.. why not give it a shot? We had a few sessions, but it was by the second or third.. when I started to really see her.

JJ O'BANNION

What do you mean?

MARY

She guided me through my dreams.. which.. were really just memories all.. mashed up together. She helped me to see certain things.

JJ O'BANNION

What things?

MARY

The truth about who I was and am and how I came to be. The truth about my past and what it meant for my future.

JJ O'BANNION

The ol' dream therapy, huh.

Mary stops and looks up at JJ. She searches for something in his eyes.

MARY

You know this already, don't you? How it works. What it does to you.

JJ seems reluctant to answer, as if holding back a secret.

(CONTINUED)

JJ O'BANNION
.. Just putting the pieces
together, that's all.

He looks away, but Mary continues to watch him.

MARY
(realizes)
They broke you, didn't they? Same
as they did to me.

JJ O'BANNION
(pause)
Last time I checked everything was
in working order.

Mary chuckles, now sure JJ's hiding something.

MARY
(beat)
You didn't come here to hear my
story.. So what do you really want?

JJ O'BANNION
I just want a lead. A way to
contact this Zem character. If I
can find her, I can find the
Sandman.

MARY
You don't get it, do you? You're
not seeing the big picture.

JJ O'BANNION
So take it for me.

MARY
(shakes head)
You're already lost. Trust me, I
know the look.

JJ O'BANNION
You gotta have a number buried
somewhere under this mess.

MARY
Maybe. Maybe I don't want to go
digging for it. It's dangerous..
what they've done to us..

JJ O'BANNION
There is no "us." I'm fine. Look,
lady, this is just the case of the
week.

MARY

I don't believe you. You don't even believe yourself.

JJ thinks on her words, trying to figure out his next move. He reaches into his jacket and removes his *Spinach*-labeled bottle of purple pills.

Mary's eyes widen at the sight.

JJ O'BANNION

I think we can come to an understanding.

MARY

.. You're just like the rest of them. Another user. Another abuser.

JJ O'BANNION

Sometimes you gotta fight fire with fire.

MARY

(tears in her eyes)
Doesn't matter if anyone else gets burned along the way, right?

JJ O'BANNION

(shakes pill bottle)
I got something for that.

Lust and fear wrapped together in Mary's eyes.

JJ O'BANNION

Don't you wanna see her again?

A couple tears run down Mary's cheek.

MARY

.. My baby.

Mary puts her head down in a mix of shame and defeat.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

JJ exits from the mobile home community. He turns the corner and walks down the street, searching through his suit jacket for his burner phone.

He watches as a car with tinted windows slowly passes him. It turns the corner.

JJ continues to walk forward, still searching for the phone.

(CONTINUED)

The car from before emerges from around the same corner, passing JJ again and heading in the direction it came from. JJ recognizes the car and starts to become suspicious.

He picks up the pace, his walk getting faster. Still no phone. He can hear the car turning around again. He starts to panic, almost tearing apart his jacket to find this damn phone.

Nothing.

The car pulls up, braking hard near his side, the headlights blinding him as he jumps out of the way and onto the ground.

All four car doors open and one after another, Larry Fuqua and THREE of his boys (two being the bodyguards seen previously) step out. The four approach JJ, who's still on the ground.

He looks up at them, still being half blinded by the car headlights. Part of the time they step in front of the lights, giving JJ a chance to reacclimate and see the faces of his attackers, but not before it's too late..

LARRY FUQUA

I told you to forget my name.
Instead, you've been opening that
big mouth all over town. Now
everyone knows it. Can't have that.

JJ O'BANNION

I've just been telling everybody
what a nice guy you are.

LARRY FUQUA

(beat)

I'm not here to play games. I'm
through. No..

(shakes head)

.. I'm here to give you yours.

The other three spread out, creating an almost-circle around JJ. He looks up at them, his eyes shifting from man to man.

JJ suddenly reaches into his suit jacket and rips out the snub nosed revolver he stole from Larry. He clicks away, swaying his arm left to right to left.

JJ stops clicking, finally realizing that it's empty.

LARRY FUQUA

You've been making me out to be
some kind of fool.. Now who's got
egg on their face?

(CONTINUED)

JJ slowly raises his hand up as if to touch his face and be sure.

SPLAT!

An egg comes crashing into JJ's face. Followed by another, then another. JJ never even saw the eggs come out and now the three bodyguards are hurling what seems like an endless supply of them.

LARRY FUQUA

The little white pillhead, sat on a wall.. This little white pillhead, he had a greaat fall..

JJ drops the revolver and throws his hands up to defend his face from the egg onslaught.

LARRY FUQUA

.. All the king's horses and all the king's men..

After a moment, the eggs stop coming.

LARRY FUQUA

.. couldn't put the little white pillhead together again.

JJ slowly uncovers his face, only to be met by Larry's foot. JJ goes down. Larry and his boys stomp on him until he's physically broken.

No longer able to defend himself, JJ crumbles over onto his back, beaten and bloody.

Larry leans down beside his face.

LARRY FUQUA

What's my name?

Larry turns his head to move his ear closer to JJ's mouth. JJ says nothing, only breathing shallow. Larry turns his head to face him again.

LARRY FUQUA

We understand each other then.

Larry gets back up on his feet and snaps his fingers. One of his bodyguards moves towards the car and opens the back door for Larry as another scoops up the revolver from the ground.

The headlights shine bright on JJ once again, revealing his head has been split at the top. A combination of blood and yellow egg yolk leak from his head, mixing on the sidewalk.

Larry's car pulls away, leaving JJ to rot in the darkness.

INT. FELIX'S PAD - BEDROOM

FELIX ANDRADI (late 30s), wakes suddenly in his bed as if from a nightmare. His almost-shoulder length hair and pillow are drenched in sweat.

His bedroom is dark, a little messy. A bong on the floor beside his bed. Dark curtains up to block the sunlight from creeping in, though a beam slips through the one uncovered corner.

Felix slowly turns his head and reaches for his cell phone from the ground. He pulls away the charging cable then checks his messages. Missed calls from some hospital.

He calls back as he slowly rises out of bed. He rips away his bed sheet and gets up onto his feet.

He's shirtless with sweats. His body is of a man's who was once very disciplined.. and is starting to lose it.

He rips away the dark curtain from his window, causing his room to explode with sunlight. It reveals the dark bags under his eyes and blinds him momentarily, just as his call goes through.

FELIX ANDRADI
This is Felix--Andradi.

Felix listens as his eyes start to adjust to the light.

FELIX ANDRADI
What's the name of the hospital?
(listens)
Thanks.

Felix hangs up. He stares out his bedroom window.

FELIX ANDRADI
So this is how it ends.

SUPERIMPOSE: Client 3

EXT. HOSPITAL

Felix pulls up in his fifteen year old, black Toyota. He shuts off his car and exits.

He wears jeans, a plain t-shirt and bomber jacket.

INT. HOSPITAL

Felix walks down the halls of the hospital, searching for a specific room. He finds it.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Felix enters the room to find JJ, halfway looking like a mummy (covered in bandages), lying in the hospital bed. He approaches him just as he's starting to open his eyes.

FELIX ANDRADI
 (disgusted)
 O'Bannion. Suppose you think this
 is my fault?

Felix waits for JJ to respond. He has a difficult time speaking, mumbling something incoherent.

FELIX ANDRADI
 Nah, that's alright. Better you
 don't say anything at all. Unless
 you got something worth saying.

Felix watches JJ's lips slowly move. JJ garners enough strength to repeat himself louder.

JJ O'BANNION
 (weak)
 Jack..

Felix cocks his head sideways like a dog, as if to turn his ear in JJ's direction. His face reads curious.

JJ O'BANNION
 Jacket...

FELIX ANDRADI
 Jacket? Who's?

JJ tries to turn his head towards his suit jacket. Felix catches on fairly quickly.

Felix's eyes travel to JJ's suit jacket bunched up on the counter nearby.

He grabs the dirty, bloody loose jacket (a far cry from what it usually looks like) and jams his hand into each of the pockets. The first thing he pulls out is the pill bottle labeled *Spinach*. He shakes the bottle, a few purple pills remaining.

(CONTINUED)

FELIX ANDRADI
You're walking on egg shells here,
O'Bannion.

Felix pockets the pill bottle then continues rummaging through JJ's suit pockets. He stops and slowly removes a crinkled up piece of notepad paper.

He drops the jacket to the floor then unkrinkles the paper to reveal a phone number: 619-555-0198

FELIX ANDRADI
Son of a bitch.
(chuckles in disbelief)
Off by one number.
Un-fucking-believable.

Felix looks over at JJ. He reaches into his own jacket and removes a pack of cigarettes. He slides one out and places it in JJ's mouth. He lights it.

JJ gently sucks on the cigarette.

FELIX ANDRADI
Take the rest of the day. You
earned it.

START MONTAGE

INT. FELIX'S CAR - MOVING

Felix dials Zem's phone number

INTERCUT

The phone continues to ring over the montage.

Felix stands in his bedroom staring at the wall. On the wall hangs a giant evidence board complete with pictures and names, lines drawn linking names.

At the very top is SANDMAN. Underneath that, a few other names from left to right: *Adrian Zaragosa aka "Pony"*, *Roman*, *Larry Fuqua*, *Zem* and *"The Greek."* *The Greek* has a line drawn to *Roman*. A question is posed underneath that line that reads *same person?*

Under *The Greek*: *pills distributer*

Roman: *muscle, enforcer, right hand?*

-A description of *Roman*.

(CONTINUED)

Adrian Zaragosa: original therapist aka dealer (middle man?)-dream therapy (drops), linked to cartel? killed?

-He has a picture of him above his name. It's the same dead man from Roman's dream.

Zem: new therapist/dealer-dream therapy.

Larry Fuqua: dealing pills for/buying from The Greek.

-Larry also has a picture (his mugshot).

There are many more notes and posed questions near the bottom of the board.

INTERCUT

Felix paces around his living room, waiting for the call to go through. No one picks up. He tries again.

INTERCUT

The phone continues ringing

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

Felix, in a sweatshirt and sweats (a badge clipped to them), hunches over the table. JJ, coming down from a high and looking like absolute shit, wears a dirty oversized button up and sits across from him. Their faces are close now.

FELIX ANDRADI

His name, what's the dealer's name?

JJ O'BANNION

Pony.

Felix smacks JJ across the face, causing him to bleed from his nose.

FELIX ANDRADI

You said he was the "Sandman." Now you're changing your story.

JJ O'BANNION

No, he works for him. He's just a fall guy.

FELIX ANDRADI

What's his fucking name? Look at me, tell me his fucking name.

(CONTINUED)

JJ O'BANNION
Something Zaragosa.

FELIX ANDRADI
You don't know his first name or
you forgot it?

JJ O'BANNION
I don't know it.

FELIX ANDRADI
(beat)
So then what happens?

INTERCUT

The phone continues ringing

JJ in his tiny apartment (the same box that was his "office" earlier in the film), going through the same process for dream therapy (setting up the briefcase and cap), just with "PONY" instead of Zem.

A bookshelf nearby displays JJ's love for everything noir/detective. Movies like *Chinatown*. Raymond Chandler books, Ed Brubaker comics and other old pulpy detective stories (maybe some early Detective Comics for good measure).

Roman stands nearby, keeping guard. He looks the same.

Pony drops one drop in each of JJ's eyes.

JJ O'BANNION (V.O.)
They put me to sleep. A drop in
each eye and made me say:

JJ O'BANNION
My dreams are my reality.

JJ O'BANNION (V.O.)
Then I would dream.. and it was
true.. what they said..

INTERCUT

JJ in interrogation room.

JJ O'BANNION
.. It felt real.. like I was
reliving all my worst memories.
Some I didn't even know existed..
It's like they got off on my pain.

(CONTINUED)

FELIX ANDRADI
Who's the "Sandman?"

JJ O'BANNION
(afraid)
.. He's my shadow.. he's yours..

INTERCUT

JJ is caught inside his dream, back in his pristine, tailored *Chinatown* suit.

He backs against an alley wall.

A dark shadowy tendril creeps closer to him.

JJ O'BANNION (V.O.)
I don't know who he is.. just that
he lives in our dreams..

The call fails to go through

EXT. ALLEY

Felix tries again. The phone keeps ringing

JJ wears his *Chinatown* get-up, though it's clearly too big for him, comically so.

FELIX ANDRADI
Are the pills coming from them or
someone else? If somewhere else,
are they knock offs, rips offs, or
playing for the same team?

JJ O'BANNION
It's the real thing. Except no one
pops em 'fore they sleep. They just
do em during the day. Funner that
way.

INTERCUT

The phone continues ringing

Felix at home, in his bathroom.

He stands in front of a mirror, practicing lines.

(CONTINUED)

FELIX ANDRADI

The name's Felix Andradi. Grew up in a small town, so small they didn't have a fucking wal-mart. Nothing but mom and pop's and farmland.

He does a line of cocaine.

FELIX ANDRADI

Pretty standard stuff, really. My mother loved my father. My father loved his booze..

INTERCUT

Felix drives in his car, still practicing.

FELIX ANDRADI

.. I have the same dream every night..

INTERCUT

Felix sits in his car, parked at a park (night). JJ gets into the passenger seat. He's looking worse than before.

FELIX ANDRADI

We found a body. It's been confirmed as your old therapist, Adrian Zaragosa. "Pony."

INTERCUT

Felix stands in front of his bathroom mirror.

FELIX ANDRADI (V.O.)

.. I have the same dream every night..

INTERCUT

Felix stands in front of his evidence board.

FELIX ANDRADI (V.O.)

.. I have the same dream every night..

INTERCUT

Felix lies in bed, staring at the ceiling.

(CONTINUED)

FELIX ANDRADI (V.O.)
.. I have the same dream every
night..

INTERCUT

Felix stands at his bedroom window. The phone stops ringing.

ZEM (V.O.)
Hello?

A surprised look crawls across Felix's face. It turns to one of satisfaction.

INT. SIDNEY'S PLACE - BEDROOM

Sidney, lying in bed, answers his phone.

SIDNEY
Zem?

ZEM (V.O.)
Hey, Sid.

SIDNEY
Everything alright?

ZEM (V.O.)
I could really use your help. What
would it take?

SIDNEY
It's not about the money. I just
don't want to see you get hurt.

ZEM (V.O.)
That's why I'm calling.

Sid shifts in his bed, sitting up against the wall.

SIDNEY
What's going on?

ZEM (V.O.)
New client. Can't find anything on
him. Supposed to meet with him for
our initial session. I don't want
to be alone.

SIDNEY
Where's Roman?

INTERCUT

EXT. ALLEY

Roman stands in front of a couple JUNKIES. He shows them a picture of JJ. One shakes his head, the other nods.

ZEM (V.O.)
He's running some errands.

EXT. RESTAURANT

Zem sits across from Felix at an outdoor place. Felix has cleaned up his look some. Zem doesn't touch her food. Felix has already dug in by this point.

ZEM
Typically, when I first meet with a client, I consider this to be our first session. It's better for me so I don't go in blind.

FELIX ANDRADI
Makes sense. So what do you wanna know?

ZEM
Everything.

FELIX ANDRADI
You already know my name. Grew up in a small town, so small they didn't have a fucking wal-mart.

Felix smirks.

INTERCUT

INT. AA

Roman shows JJ's picture to Enrique. He flashes a look of recognition.

FELIX ANDRADI (V.O.)
.. Nothing but mom and pop's and farmland. Pretty standard stuff, really. My mother loved my father. My father loved his booze..

Enrique starts to tell Roman about the last time he saw JJ there.

EXT. RESTAURANT

ZEM

What did they do for work?

FELIX ANDRADI

My father was a full-time piece of shit. My mother, an angel. She was the only working one. Used to wait, didn't make much. Just enough for us to get by.

INT. SIDNEY'S CAR

Sidney watches and listens to them from inside his car. He has a gun at his side.

ZEM

Your father, was he abusive towards you or your mother?

FELIX ANDRADI

(slight grin)

Taking the gloves off, are we?

EXT. MARY'S MOBILE HOME

Roman knocks on Mary's door. She answers. She looks at Roman as if he was the grim reaper himself.

FELIX ANDRADI (V.O.)

.. I have the same dream every night.

EXT. RESTAURANT

ZEM

What's the dream?

FELIX ANDRADI

I'm down the street from this house. It's snowing. Doesn't usually there. People I knew are lined up on each side of the street. As I pass them, they don't say a word to me, I don't say a word to them. I just keep walking straight.. towards the house.

(CONTINUED)

ZEM

What's inside the house?

FELIX ANDRADI

My childhood. It's where I grew up.
I can feel myself being drawn to
it. I smile.. then my smile fades
as I realize I'm getting closer to
it. Or.. it's getting closer to me.

ZEM

You're afraid of it.

Felix looks down, trying to remember his lines.

INT. FELIX'S PAD

Sidney searches every nook and cranny of Felix's place. His living room, his bedroom, kitchen, bathroom. Felix has been careful, removing anything that could blow his cover.

FELIX ANDRADI (V.O.)

.. Yeah.. scared of what I might
find. What I might learn about
myself. Who I really am.

ZEM (V.O.)

And who are you?

FELIX ANDRADI (V.O.)

I'm just a guy trying to do right
by the world.. who's maybe done
some wrong along the way.. and
looking for a chance to make this
all worth something.

EXT. RESTAURANT

FELIX ANDRADI

So when do we start? The real deal.

ZEM

I can do tomorrow morning the
soonest.

FELIX ANDRADI

Good. One request.. I don't know
that I like the idea of a stranger
I just met coming into my home and
putting me into a deep sleep.

(CONTINUED)

ZEM

You came to me. I have a certain way of doing things.

FELIX ANDRADI

And I respect that, but I've had some experiences with hypno-therapy that.. went sideways. If it's not too much to ask, I'd just like to be a little more present.

ZEM

You need to be asleep for the magic to work.

FELIX ANDRADI

(beat)

And like a good magician, you won't reveal your secrets.. Could I at least have my own security present?

ZEM

You're asking questions you already know the answer to.

FELIX ANDRADI

Ya know something? You remind me of my mother.

ZEM

How so?

FELIX ANDRADI

She was beautiful, like you.

The compliment doesn't faze Zem. Felix notices and continues.

FELIX ANDRADI

Always in control of her faculties.
(first honest words he says)
.. I wish I had that.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

JJ, appearing sickly, lies in his hospital bed, attempting to eat lunch.

He pokes at it and takes in a very small forkful. It's obviously painful for him to chew and he doesn't seem to have much of an appetite anyway.

(CONTINUED)

He attempts to move the tray from his lap to the counter nearby. It's too far and so he's straining.

ROMAN (O.S.)
Who'd you piss off this time?

JJ looks up to see Roman slowly entering the room. His eyes grow wide. He's at a loss for words.

Roman stops near him, grabbing the tray from him and setting it down on the counter JJ was trying to reach.

JJ O'BANNION
(still sort of weak)
Ro--Roman.

ROMAN
You look like you've had a rough time.

JJ O'BANNION
What are you doing here?

ROMAN
I thought it was time you and I had a talk.

JJ O'BANNION
How'd you find me?

ROMAN
Would you believe me if I said I saw it in a dream?

JJ O'BANNION
This is more like a nightmare.

Roman takes a couple steps closer to JJ, towering over him. JJ is notably more afraid. He shakes some.

ROMAN
Cold?

Roman pulls up JJ's blanket.

JJ O'BANNION
(stammers)
I know what you did to Pony.

ROMAN
I did what I had to. He was hurting people.

JJ has a curious look on his face, unsure whether to believe Roman.

ROMAN

Yeah, I felt bad what happened to you. He really broke you, huh?

(beat)

Anyway, turned out he wasn't the right person for the job afterall. That's since been rectified and.. we wanna offer you an opportunity.

JJ O'BANNION

For what?

ROMAN

For rehabilitation.

JJ O'BANNION

Who says I wanna get better?

ROMAN

You'd rather die with a needle in your arm?

JJ O'BANNION

Is that a rhetorical question?

ROMAN

Once a junkie, always a junkie, that it?

JJ O'BANNION

It's all I've ever been. Never claimed to be anything more..

Roman stares back at JJ for a moment before reaching into his coat.

ROMAN

You look restless. When's the last time you had a real good night's sleep?

Roman removes a pouch and out of the pouch one of those small purple sand-filled glowsticks.

JJ O'BANNION

Nuh-no. What are you-

Roman breaks it under JJ's nose. The purple mist is freed and sucked up into JJ's nostrils.

His eyes start to get heavy.

(CONTINUED)

ROMAN

Just a sprinkle of his magic sand
and..

JJ's eyes shut and he goes into a deep sleep.

EXT. HOSPITAL

Roman wheels JJ out in a wheelchair. JJ's in a deep sleep. He's back in his loose fitting, dirty suit with bandages underneath. His head is still wrapped up.

Roman brings him to his car and stops at the trunk. He removes his cell from his pocket and answers it.

SIDNEY (V.O.)

You're needed here.

ROMAN

You asking me for help?

SIDNEY (V.O.)

No, Zem is.

Roman looks down at JJ.

ROMAN

.. Yeah, I'll be right over. Send
me the address.

Roman hangs up and pockets his phone then looks around to make sure he's in the clear.

Roman opens his trunk with his key and quickly loads JJ in it.

He gets in his car and peels away.

EXT. FELIX'S PAD

Roman pulls up right outside Felix's place, JJ still in the trunk.

He steps out and approaches the house. He looks around at the street and surrounding houses. They're clearly in the rough part of town.

He knocks.

Sidney answers it, revealing Zem and Felix also inside, already setting up for the session.

(CONTINUED)

SIDNEY

They're about to get started.

ROMAN

I thought you were against all this.

SIDNEY

I'm just looking out for her. She was my best man's kid.

ROMAN

Was?

SIDNEY

(beat)

I have things handled in here. Should I be expecting another seance?

ROMAN

You joke, but ghosts are real. Everything we do leaves a trace. Of course, it won't matter in the end, but right now..

Roman shrugs and turns away from Sidney. Sid gives him an annoyed look then shuts the door.

ZEM

Roman?

SIDNEY

Yeah, he's going to keep watch outside.

The briefcase is already open.

Zem adjusts the cap on Felix's head then flicks on the switch in the briefcase. It lights up.

FELIX ANDRADI

I feel like a puppet with all these..

Felix grabs one of the wires from the cap and pulls it closer to his eye. Zem pulls it away from him.

ZEM

Refrain from touching any of the equipment please.

(CONTINUED)

FELIX ANDRADI

One thing you'll learn about me growing up is that I never was good at following the rules.

ZEM

It's for your own safety.

FELIX ANDRADI

So it doesn't cook my brain like an egg?

ZEM

You signed the waiver, didn't you?

Felix smirks then backs down.

Zem removes the drops. She hovers it over the first eye.

FELIX ANDRADI

Did you think about what I asked?

Drop

ZEM

About?

then the other

FELIX ANDRADI

Going easy on me.

Zem removes one of the little purple sand-filled glowsticks

ZEM

Now why would I do that?

then quickly brings it up to Felix's nose and breaks it open. As the mist is about to shoot up into Felix's nose he blows air out of it instead of inhaling. Half still makes it inside.

Zem watches Felix closely, suspicious of every action and word.

Felix's eyes grow heavy as he fights to keep them open as if afraid to face the music. All the preparation in the world wouldn't be enough.

His eyes shut. Zem slaps him to be sure. He's out.

Zem closes her eyes.

Sid keeps his open, watching all throughout.

FELIX'S DREAM

EXT. WOODS - GRAVEYARD

Felix wakes suddenly to find himself in a twisted graveyard deep inside the dark woods.

Zem whistles to the tune of *Dream A Little Dream Of Me*

Her whistle carries through the woods.

Felix stares up at the dark sky as snow begins to fall. A flake lands on his face. He wipes it off

and gets up on his feet.

He looks around to get a better look, but realizes most of the woods are draped in shadows.

He looks down at the gravestone beside him.

Here lies Pony

Lightning strikes in the distance illuminating a CABIN and a path to it.

The whistling continues.

ZEM (V.O.)

"I have the same dream every night."

Felix looks around for the voice. It travels to him like the whisper of a ghost.

ZEM (V.O.)

Isn't that what you told me?

FELIX ANDRADI

I told you a lot of things.

ZEM (V.O.)

None of them true apparently.

Felix starts his trek towards the cabin.

FELIX ANDRADI

Maybe it's your drugs that got me all fucked up.

(CONTINUED)

ZEM (V.O.)
Not likely.

Just when Felix thinks he's losing the trail, lightning strikes in the sky, again illuminating the cabin.

He continues towards it.

FELIX ANDRADI
You ever try this shit on yourself?

ZEM (V.O.)
Where did you go?

Felix looks around. No sign of Zem.

He continues down the dark path when something on the side of the trail catches his eye.

He looks over at a ghostly image of a loved one. The recognition in his eyes says it all. He reaches for the memory and it dissipates between his fingers.

Zem continues to whistle.

Felix gets back to the task at hand and starts to walk again. He passes more of these memories, hiding between the trees.

ZEM (V.O.)
What are you running from?

Felix looks up to see that the cabin appears to be much closer than he last saw, as if it's moved on its own.

ZEM (V.O.)
Is anyone in there?

Felix keeps tight lipped as he approaches the cabin.

INTERCUT

Zem in Felix's living room.

ZEM
(eyes shut)
I think I lost him.

INTERCUT

Felix opens the cabin door.

INTERCUT

Zem gasps as she feels herself being pulled back into Felix's dream. She opens her eyes wide.

INTERCUT

Zem in her childhood bedroom.

She's sitting on her bed with her legs up. She looks down as black tendrils slither from underneath her bed.

At first she's afraid, but as the tendrils work their way up her bed, she's seemed to accept it. Her initial look of fear becomes something else. There's a curiosity in her eyes. A fascination in her face.

The tendrils fuse into Zem then quickly cover her head to toe.

INTERCUT

Zem throws her head back as her eyes roll up.

The living room light bulbs explode.

Sid turns towards her.

SIDNEY

Zem?

The front door opens. Sid turns towards it. It's Roman.

ROMAN

Don't interfere.

Roman stares back at Sid with a threatening look. Sid backs down.

Roman shuts the door.

INT. CABIN

Felix shuts the cabin door then turns around to take a look around the cabin.

Felix's face drops once he notices the cabin walls are covered with pictures of him throughout his life. One wall in particular almost gives him a heart attack.

The pictures on this wall depict Felix at varying points in his career as a police officer.

Zem's whistle has made its way near the cabin. Felix looks towards the door.

(CONTINUED)

ZEM (V.O.)
Are you hiding from me?

Felix doesn't waste anymore time. He starts to tear down the various pictures.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Zem attempts to open the door with no luck.

ZEM (V.O.)
Little pig, little pig..

Felix moves faster.

FELIX ANDRADI
Just a second.

ZEM (V.O.)
You don't seem to want my help.

FELIX ANDRADI
I do, I just.. I just need a second.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Felix finishes tearing down the pictures as Zem continues to try the door.

ZEM (V.O.)
What are you hiding, "Felix?"

Felix turns around and something shiny catches his eye. At the opposite corner is a suit of knight's armor and SWORD.

Felix looks down to see a purple fog slowly creeping inside from outside the cabin.

He turns his attention back to the armor, opting to put it on.

CRASH

Something crashes into the cabin door startling Felix.

CRASH

He hurries to place on the armor.

CRASH

A sliver of the door goes flying as something breaks into it. Felix freezes.

(CONTINUED)

Everything seems to go quiet for a moment. Felix keeps his eyes on the door as he finishes suiting up.

Still quiet.

Felix grabs the sword and inches his way towards the cabin door. He waits. Still nothing.

He moves closer to the hole in the door, putting his face close so he can look through

when the tip of a SWORD is plunged into his right eye.

He falls backward, putting a hand over it. Blood runs from underneath his hand.

Zem continues to chip away at the cabin door.

Felix crawls backward some. He gets up on his feet, bringing his sword up, ready to fight. His right eye continues to bleed.

Zem's attack on the door stops. It's mostly destroyed now. It creaks open, what's left shattering into tiny pieces.

The purple fog rolls in, slowly enveloping the cabin.

ZEM (V.O.)

Where are you gonna go?

Suddenly, Zem, also decked out in armor, emerges from the fog, lounging at Felix. Their swords clash.

Zem comes after Felix, putting him on the defense. She swings and he barely dodges out of the way. Her sword clashes against his over and over.

They use the rising fog as cover all throughout the fight, becoming dark silhouettes at times.

FELIX ANDRADI

I know who you are.

They each exchange and receive blows to their armor.

ZEM

Yeah? Who are you?

FELIX ANDRADI

The one that's gonna put an end to this nightmare once and for all.

Zem strikes Felix across his armor then she goes in for the kill. Her Excalibur-like sword pierces through to his surprise. It slides right in.

She slides her sword back out and he falls to the ground. A look of amazement. Like this was impossible.

ZEM

You thought that would protect you?

Felix, bleeding out, feels something cold against the top of his head. He turns to notice something that wasn't there before: an opening at the bottom of the wall (opposite the front door).

INTERCUT

Felix shifts in his sleep as if waking.

INTERCUT

ZEM

Don't you know whose story this is?

Felix crawls towards the opening. Zem follows, creeping towards him, dragging the sword across the ground.

ZEM

Whose world?

Felix gets closer.

ZEM

You never had any power here. Any control over what your life would be.

(beat)

None of you do.

Zem stops over Felix and raises her sword above her head.

Felix turns on his back, having failed to make it out in time. He stares up at Zem, watching the same shadowy tendrils slithering from behind her and rising up.

ZEM

It gets easier. You just have to let a little darkness into your heart until eventually.. it's consumed entirely.

A pair of hands grabs Felix by the face and pulls him through the opening and out of the cabin. More fog shoots in, making it difficult for Zem to see where he's gone.

EXT. CABIN

Felix lies bleeding in the snow, staring up at the dark sky that has ripped open.

Felix stares up in the black hole. He can feel it pulling him like a tractor beam. He stares at the center of the black hole, sure he'll be sucked in at any moment.

Zem's whistling grows near..

ZEM (V.O.)
Your dreams are your real--

CUT TO BLACK:

CUT TO:

INT. ROMAN'S DARK TRUNK

JJ wakes, but can't stop daydreaming. He can't stop remembering.

FLASHING IMAGES:

- of him and Spike doing dope in his "office"
- him staring down as Spike dies
- him whacked out on a park bench
- acting like a tweaker and trying to fight Larry Fuqua
- hanging out then suddenly fighting other junkies
- popping dreamcatchers with Mary B. Waters

All throughout, JJ is revealed as he truly was: a sickly junkie in a dirty, oversized suit.

He hears the sound of an egg cracking.

JJ screams from inside the trunk, gripping the side of his head. He can feel his mind breaking. It's painful. He sobs, halfway sick.

EXT. FELIX'S PAD

Roman hears the scream from his trunk. A look of annoyance shoots across his face.

He approaches the trunk, sticks his key in and opens it.

ROMAN

(low)

You've been nothing but trouble
since you came into my life.

A shiver runs down Roman's spine. He turns his head towards Felix's house.

Roman, sensing something is wrong, starts to move back to the house, leaving the key inside the trunk lock.

INTERCUT

Sid catches Zem and brings her lightly to the ground, putting his back to Felix. Sid shakes Zem, attempting to wake her up.

SIDNEY

Hey, you with me?

Felix, lying on his couch, slowly wakes. He rips away the cap from his head and lets it fall.

SIDNEY

Wake up. Wake up. Come on.

INTERCUT

JJ meekly climbs out of the trunk, falling right out.

Roman doesn't notice as he's entering the house.

ROMAN

What the Hell's going on?

Roman looks over as Zem is starting to wake. Sid continues to talk to her. Felix pretends to sleep, having moved the pillow from behind his head onto his lap.

A car door is slammed shut.

Roman turns around to see JJ has managed to get into the driver seat of his car.

Roman doesn't bother to run. He walks back over to where the car is as JJ gets it running.

(CONTINUED)

INTERCUT

Felix unzips the pillow and reaches in to pull out a small PISTOL.

FELIX ANDRADI

Freeze!

INTERCUT

JJ peels away just as Roman is upon him.

Roman stops in the middle of the road, raises his gun and fires a shot into the rear left tire. He lands the shot, blowing out the tire and causing JJ to crash into a parked car, effectively stopping him in his tracks.

INTERCUT

Felix turns towards the gunshot, but quickly turns back to Sid and Zem. He slowly gets up onto his feet.

FELIX ANDRADI

Don't touch that gun.

Zem looks up at Sid. He stares back at her, noticing her eyes have changed color, now hazel (a combination of green, brown and gold), rather than just green. He's unsure of what to make of it.

SIDNEY

I'm not.

FELIX ANDRADI

Put your hands up.

SIDNEY

Alright, just don't shoot.

Sid puts his arms up slowly.

INTERCUT

Roman stops outside the car window just as JJ is lifting his head from off the steering wheel. His nose is broken and bloody.

He slowly turns his head towards Roman, smiling and showing off his bad teeth.

Roman punches him square in the face, knocking him unconscious.

INTERCUT

(CONTINUED)

Zem slowly reaches towards Sid's gun at his hip, tucked under his shirt.

Sid shakes his head, but she continues.

FELIX ANDRADI
Stand up and take a step to her right.

SIDNEY
Mine or hers?

FELIX ANDRADI
Don't get fucking smart. Any right, I don't give a shit.

SIDNEY
Okay, I'm coming up. Don't shoot.

Sidney tries to pull away from Zem as she continues to try for his gun. He remains on one knee.

SIDNEY
(low)
Zem, stop, please.

Roman appears in the doorway, his gun hidden.

Felix swings his gun towards Roman.

FELIX ANDRADI
Don't come any closer or your friends get it. While you're at it, get rid of that gun.

ROMAN
.. You're really causing me a lot of grief here.

SIDNEY
Just do what he says, Roman. This guy sounds like a cop.

ROMAN
He show you a badge?

FELIX ANDRADI
This is my fucking badge! This is all I need!
(to Zem)
What was that about not being in control? Who's holding the cards now, bitch?

SIDNEY

What do you want?

FELIX ANDRADI

I'm taking you fucking assholes
down! You and your whole fucking
operation. You're murderers!

ZEM

How are we murderers?

FELIX ANDRADI

You're poisoning their minds.
Killing hope and everything that
comes along with it.. As far as I'm
concerned.. it's a goddamn
massacre.

Zem is the first to reach for a weapon. She grabs Sid's gun.

BANG!

Felix fires a shot into Sid's back.

Roman quick draws his gun from under his coat and fires
multiple shots into Felix, causing him to fire off a couple
more shots towards Zem's direction. Another hits Sid.

Zem manages to get Sid's gun and as Sid falls over she joins
Roman in the action and fires off a few rounds. One hits
Felix in his left eye. He drops onto his couch, dead.

Sid, lying on his back, bleeds out on the living room
carpet. He stares up at Zem, water in his eyes.

He grabs Zem's hand and grips it tight.

Zem seems to be swapping between two different
personalities. The one that loves and cares for Sidney and
another that doesn't seem phased at all.

SIDNEY

You okay?

ZEM

I'm fine.

Zem's eyes fill with tears then just as suddenly, dry up.

SIDNEY

.. You think there's a heaven?

(CONTINUED)

ZEM
Of course, Sid.

Zem gently places her hand above Sid's eyes.

ZEM
Now sleep.

She runs her hand down, shutting his eyes. Sid is dead.

INT. SIDNEY'S CAR - MOVING

Roman drives. JJ sits passed out in the passenger seat, seatbelt over him and hands in handcuffs. He has new injuries on his face from the small crash.

JJ starts to wake, still out of it and still weak and exhausted.

JJ O'BANNION
Sandman.. Sand..

ROMAN
You're a real hard-boiled son of a bitch, O'Bannion. Kind of like me.. nothing to lose, nothing to gain. You're stuck. That's alright.. we all are. Some of us have just accepted the fact before others.
(beat)
We're trapped at the center of a black hole, you and I.. ready to be pulled through at any moment.

JJ O'BANNION
(weak)
What's on the other side?

ROMAN
(pause)
Nothing.

JJ appears disappointed.

ROMAN
.. You might have been made for this world, but.. this world wasn't made for you.

The two sit in silence for a moment. JJ attempts to keep from passing back out.

(CONTINUED)

JJ O'BANNION

Where are we going?

ROMAN

To visit your old friend, Pony.
It's some time to the desert.. You
should get some shut eye.

JJ stares back at Roman through squinted eyes, giving a knowing look. His eyes slowly start to shut. He fights to keep them open, but is failing. They shut.

EXT. CLUB

A YOUNG WOMAN stands outside the same club from Zem's dream.

She stares up at the night sky. A star twinkles just for her. She smiles then enters the club.

INT. CLUB

The woman walks past others, dancing amidst the purple fog and under the colored spotlights, until she gets to the

INT. BACKROOM

She stops in front of a booth.

ZEM (O.S.)

You came.

YOUNG WOMAN

Couldn't stay away.

She takes a seat across from Zem.

YOUNG WOMAN

(nervous)

.. I've always wanted to be part of something.

ZEM

(smiles)

This is more than that.

(beat)

We're offering the chance to remake the world.

END