Executive Producer: Guillermo del Toro
Executive Producer: Carlton Cuse

THE STRAIN

"Pilot"

#101

Written by

Guillermo del Toro
&
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Directed by

Guillermo del Toro

SECOND DRAFT
March 26, 2013

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THE STRAIN

"Pilot"
#101

CAST LIST

EPHRAIM "EPH" GOODWEATHER
NORA MARTINEZ
ABRAHAM SETRAKIAN
KELLY GOODWEATHER
ZACK GOODWEATHER
JIM KENT
THOMAS EICHHORST
ELDRITCH PALMER
AUGUSTIN "GUS" ELIZADE
MATT SAYLES
CAPTAIN DOYLE REDFERN
DR. EVERETT BARNES
GABRIEL BOLIVAR
ANSEL BARBOUR
MR. FITZPATRICK
GUS'S MOTHER
JOAN LUSS
EMMA ATCHISON
GARY ATCHISON
CRISPIN ELIZADE

DR. BENNETT
PETER BISHOP
ROSE (FLIGHT ATTENDANT)
ATC
THERAPIST
DINAH KESSEL
HAZMAT WORKER
AIRPORT COP
PETER (FLIGHT ATTENDANT)
ROOKIE COP
BAGGAGE LOADER
PORT AUTHORITY OFFICIAL
HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICIAL
SITE FOREMAN
SWAT TEAM COP
SWAT TEAM
GOTHS
NEWS ANCHOR (NY1 NEWS)
REPORTER (LAPTOP NEWS)
VARIOUS FAMILIES

CUT:
REPORTER 1 (PRESS CONFERENCE)
REPORTER 2 (PRESS CONFERENCE)
REPORTER 3 (PRESS CONFERENCE)
REPORTERS (PRESS CONFERENCE)

THE STRAIN

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SET LIST

INTERIORS

REGIS AIR 777 (FLIGHT 753):
- FIRST CLASS
- MAIN CABIN
- REAR GALLEY
- FLIGHT GALLEY
- CARGO HOLD
- FLIGHT CABIN

JKF CONTROL TOWER
THERAPIST WAITING ROOM
THERAPIST OFFICE
THERAPIST BUILDING HALLWAY
KNICKERBOCKER LOANS & CURIOS:
- FRONT STORE/COUNTER AREA

SETRAKIAN'S APARTMENT
CDC BIOHAZARD TENT
STONEHEART GROUP/HEADQUARTERS:
- PALMER'S PENTHOUSE

JFK QUARANTINE STATIONS:
- BAY #1
- BAY #2
- BAY #3
- BAY #4

REGIS AIR HANGER:
- BODY BAG AREA
- CARGO AREA
- LUGGAGE STORAGE
- OFFICE

KELLY'S HOUSE:
- BATHROOM
- KITCHEN

SPANISH HARLEM BODEGA
JFK AIRPORT TERMINAL 4
AIRPORT MARRIOTT
- HALLWAY
- FUNCTION ROOM

JFK AIRPORT TERMINAL 4 HALLWAY

INTERIORS (CONT'D)

MEDICAL EXAMINER/MORGUE
JFK UTILITY GARAGE
CDC VAN
NYPD 17TH PRECINCT BOOKING
ELIZADE'S HOME

CUT:
KELLY'S HOUSE:
- KELLY'S BEDROOM
- ZACK'S BEDROOM

AIRPORT CONFERENCE ROOM

EXTERIORS

JFK AIRPORT: TAXIWAY FOXTROT
- TARMAC/BIOHAZARD TENT
- TARMAC/MOBILE WORKSTATION

QUEENS BROWNSTONE
KNICKERBOCKER LOANS & CURIOS
SPANISH HARLEM BODEGA
JFK UTILITY GARAGE
QUEENSBORO BRIDGE
GARY ATCHISON'S HOUSE

TEASER

INT. REGIS AIR FLIGHT 753 - NIGHT

Flight Attendant ROSE checks on her First Class passengers.

TITLE: **FEBRUARY 8th, 20:00.**

THEN: **NIGHT ZERO.**

The pilot's folksy, reassuring voice comes over the PA.

CAPTAIN REDFERN (V.O.)
Ah, folks, this is your captain up in the flight deck. We are beginning our descent into New York for an on-time arrival.

GABRIEL BOLIVAR (30) -- long-haired and speed-thin, a brooding yet charismatic rock star -- sleeps hard, ear buds in, boots up on the headrest in front of him.

ROSE
Sir? We are about to land. Sir?

He barely opens his eyes to size up the woman before him. He hands over three empty Vodka nips, then finishes a fourth.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Would you... power down your device?

The top buttons on his pants are undone for comfort. Bolivar grins and buttons up. Hands Rose a ticket.

BOLIVAR
Come. I'll give you the backstage tour.

Rose looks at the ticket: CONCERT FOR THE ECLIPSE. BOLIVAR.

Touched and excited by the gesture, Rose goes to thank him...

...but Bolivar has returned to his music.

MAIN CABIN

Rose emerges into the cramped cabin. Most PASSENGERS are rising from slumber. Lights start TURNING ON.

CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN REDFERN (V.O.)
...Just wanted to take a moment to thank you for flying Regis Air, and hope to see you again real soon...

Rose spots male Flight Attendant PETER at the very end of the cabin. He looks at her and motions for her to approach.

As she heads there...

ROSE
Sir, please turn all electronics off -- we're landing.

ANSEL BARBOUR (35), wiry and bespectacled, awakes tangled in headphone and power wires. He taps crumbs off his iPad and chest and tosses away an empty chip bag, ready for landing...

ROSE (CONT'D)
Ma'am... Ma'am? Seat backs in the upright position.

JOAN LUSS (40) is a seasoned air traveler, miffed at having to fly "cattle."

EMMA ATCHISON
Are we landing now?

EMMA Atchison (8) is travelling alone with an "UNACCOMPANIED MINOR" sticker on her chest.

ROSE
Yes, sweetie, and you've been a very brave girl.

Rose secures a small winged pin on the girl's dress. Rose looks up at Peter --

-- who is gesturing for her to hurry up. Something's wrong.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Peter, I need you up front in First --

Peter pulls her further into the galley, away from the passengers.

PETER
There's something in the plane.

ROSE
What do you m--

CONTINUED: (2)

PETER
Something alive, in the cargo hold. I heard it move -- big -- thumping under the floor. I heard it --

CAPTAIN REDFERN (V.O.)
Flight Attendants, prepare for landing.

ROSE
Peter -- there are no animals on the manifest, and --

PETER
It tried to open the latch -- I heard a noise -- then it moved away... But you can feel it moving.

Peter pulls her down, to her knees. Forces her to put her palms flat on the flat surface of a trap door on the floor.

An OBESE MAN in the last row turns to watch. Pete kills him with a smile and whips shut the curtain.

PETER (CONT'D)
Can you feel it?

ROSE
A little bit...

She waits for a second -- then a RATTLE is heard -- a violent rattle, something's moving underneath, like a large rat in a cardboard box. Rose bolts up.

The CABIN LIGHTS FLICKER ONCE, almost imperceptibly.

Something tries to open the LATCH on the trapdoor.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Go to Captain Redfern, tell him to warn the landing crew. Get emergency services. Now. Now!

The LIGHTS FLICKER, the plane SHAKES, as though from a sudden shift in weight.

The turbines grow louder and louder!!

The lights go off and --

Something opens the trap door --

CONTINUED: (3)

And DARKNESS springs towards Rose!!

INT. CONTROL TOWER - MINUTES LATER

A fatigued ATC RADAR OPERATOR looks at his screen. The “RS-753” skin-paint tag settles... and VANISHES.

ATC
What the --
(turns)
Sir...

He turns to Air Traffic Control Supervisor PETER BISHOP (45).

ATC (CONT’D)
We have a problem.

Bishop moves past the first few ATCs muttering directions (“United 6-4-2, turn right heading 1-0-0, climb 5000,” etc.) into their headsets.

ATC (CONT’D)
Regis Air flight outta Germany, one of the big babies, a triple-seven. Set down beautiful, turned off the runway onto Taxiway Foxtrot.

BISHOP
And?

The ATC gestures at his dish.

ATC
Gone.

BISHOP
Gone?

ATC
Shut down on the taxiway. Just flat-out quit. Nothing.

BISHOP
Who’s got visual on Regis 753?

Bishop moves to the observation window, grabs a pair of binoculars.

Sure enough, the plane is there. Dead in the middle of the tarmac.

CONTINUED:

BISHOP (INTO MIC) (CONT'D)
Regis 7-5-3, Kennedy ground, over.
(beat)
Regis 7-5-3, Kennedy ground, please respond, over.

ATC
Gross mechanical failure?

BISHOP
Right after landing? If so, seven-five-three is my new lottery number.
(beat)
Hijack? Fire? Cockpit breach?

ATC
Negative. No squawk at all.

Bishop thinks. More PERSONNEL gather, drawn by the mystery...

BISHOP
Okay. Shut down Foxtrot, advise reroute. Ask LaGuardia to take the first batch.
(to ATC)
How many do we have aboard?

ATC consults a printout.

ATC
Passengers and crew... total two hundred ten souls.

Bishop is truly mystified. He removes his headset.

BISHOP
Jesus. Scramble all emergency responders to Taxiway Foxtrot.

ATC
SWAT, Homeland Security?

BISHOP
Port Authority, FBI, TSA, CDC... We got ourselves a goddamn stillborn.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. TAXIWAY FOXTROT - NIGHT

Bishop riding out on a luggage cart, driven by a BAGGAGE LOADER. They round a corner... and the driver slows.

BAGGAGE LOADER
Jesus Santisimo...

We don't see it yet -- only Bishop's wide eyes. He lifts a radio to his mouth -- still staring as he exits the cart...

We see it now...

An IMMENSE WIDE-BODY JETLINER -- sitting on the tarmac in total fucking darkness.

BAGGAGE LOADER (CONT'D)
Looks like a dead animal, uh? Like it'd never moved...

Bishop steps into frame, giving us more perspective. Baggage Loader joins him, squinting at the dark plane.

BISHOP
No movement. No lights. All the window shades are pulled down.

BAGGAGE LOADER
Not all of them...

The Baggage Loader points at a window shade half open.

INSIDE THE PLANE

Inside, something large, dark, twisted... with a claw-like hand... and glowing eyes...

Is watching them.

BACK OUTSIDE

Approaching SIRENS and multicolored lights. Bishop turns.

When he turns back -- the window shades are ALL closed now.

EXT. QUEENS BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

DR. EPHRAIM GOODWEATHER (40), epidemiologist. He parks his Explorer in a “No Parking Commercial Loading Zone” spot in front of a classic Queens brownstone.

He sticks a “CDC OFFICIAL BUSINESS” placard on his dash and rushes to the sidewalk, throwing on a sports jacket, struggling with a necktie.

A stranger (MATT SAYLES, 35, fit, blond, tall and bland) leans against a green Prius, checking his phone.

MATT
Is there really a medical emergency?

EPH
There will be if I can’t get this tie on, buddy.

INT. THERAPIST’S WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Eph rushes inside. His son ZACK GOODWEATHER (11), asthmatic, plucks out ear buds, greeting him. Eph gives his boy a vigorous hug.

EPH
Hey! How’s my man?

ZACK
(disappointed)
You’re late. Again.

Zack takes over fixing his father’s tie. We hear Bolivar’s MUSIC FAINTLY through Zack’s ear buds.

EPH
What’s the weather like in there?

ZACK
What do you think, Dad? You’re late--

EPH
Five minutes. Couldn’t be helped.

ZACK
Ten, Dad. Ten.

EPH
Wish us luck.

CONTINUED:

Zack watches him go -- and he’s worried.

ZACK
Good luck.

INT. THERAPIST’S OFFICE - NIGHT

The crunchy THERAPIST (50) sits in a room decorated for peaceful reflection. She checks a small clock on a table.

KELLY GOODWEATHER (35), slender, fair, and simmering, sits before her. She again checks her phone. Nothing.

A conspicuously EMPTY CHAIR sits to Kelly’s right.

Into this strained silence comes Eph -- his tie perfect now...

EPH
Sorry! I know. Five minutes...

THERAPIST
Ten.

He goes to embrace Kelly, who deftly avoids his kiss. She shows him her Blackberry.

KELLY
I texted you. Five times.

Eph sits in his chair, setting his mobile phone face down on the table -- ready to go.

EPH
I was driving...
(for Therapist’s benefit)
...and I would never text and drive. Especially with Zack in the car.

THERAPIST
Dr. Goodweather, I --

EPH
Just Eph -- please. How come she gets “Kelly,” he gets “Zachary,” and I get “Dr. Frankenstein”?

THERAPIST
This is the last of six court-appointed family counselling sessions. You’ve been late for four of them.

CONTINUED:

EPH
Five minutes is not late...

THERAPIST
It’s not the amount of time --

EPH
You’re going to tell me I’m late because I don’t want to be here -- and I think you may be on to something -- but I have a really good reason.

He grabs Kelly’s hand, trying to “bring her in” to his day.

EPH (CONT'D)
We had an outbreak of hantavirus in a Bronx pre-school, which is extremely rare this far east and north...

THERAPIST
Dr. Goodweather. Every time you come in, you try to take over the session.

EPH
Because I have control issues, I know that. But the fact is -- I need to defend myself, because that’s what this is. I’m the bad guy here -- and why? Because I don’t want out of my marriage. Because I want things back the way they were.

Kelly wrestles her hand free.

KELLY
This isn’t just about you. What you want. Not anymore.

Eph takes notice of a strange, new assertiveness from Kelly.

At the same time, a HUMMING noise interrupts. Eph’s mobile phone VIBRATES on the table. Eph ignores it, sitting back, exaggeratedly giving Kelly his full and undivided attention.

KELLY (CONT’D)
You have an important job, Ephraim. You are great at your job. You get straight “A”’s at your job.

CONTINUED: (2)

EPH
But I’m flunking our marriage -- is that it? How horrible am I?

KELLY
Not horrible. But barely present. And in heart and mind -- absent. Most of the time.

Eph starts to argue... then closes his mouth. What he’s doing obviously isn’t working, so he tries a different tack.

EPH
I’ve done everything you’ve asked me to in order to put us back together -- little and big. I gave up drinking. I kicked it -- with one slip-up -- and that was over a year ago... You wanted time apart -- so I moved out. Against my own wishes. I’ve jumped through every hoop. Tell me what you need.

After a long pause -- Kelly looks straight into his eyes.

KELLY
You say you want our marriage to work. But really you only want us together for Zack. And so do I...
(on Eph’s excitement)
...but that’s not enough anymore. Our time apart has only clarified things for me... allowing me to make room in my life for Matt. We’re going to be living together now, and--

EPH
“We” who? You-and-me we?

Kelly stares at him until... he gets it.

EPH (CONT’D)
Matt? The Sears guy...? My house?

KELLY
Matt is a regional manager --

EPH
At Sears --

CONTINUED: (3)

KELLY
And you know what? He gets straight “A”’s at his job, too. But at home he is present. Unlike you, he is always here. For both of us.

Eph is growing enraged. Trying hard not to explode. Realizing...

EPH
Blond asshole? Green Prius...?

Eph’s phone’s SECOND VIBRATION. The insistent device externalizes his bottled fury. He ignores it, furious -- yet still trying to rescue the situation...

EPH (CONT’D)
Okay, look, this has gotten way out of hand. You want me to quit my job? Is that it? I’ll quit.

KELLY
I don’t want you to quit for me.

Eph is RIPPING OUT HIS NECKTIE now, like a man gasping for air.

EPH
I wouldn’t be quitting for you. I’d be quitting <u>because</u> of you -- <u>for</u> Zack. So he isn’t driving around Queens with a blond jock in a green goddamn Prius...

THERAPIST
Dr. Goodweather, please...

KELLY
It’s too late, Eph. I love you, but... I can’t. I won’t.

Into Eph’s shocked silence comes the THIRD VIBRATION.

Eph stares at his phone. Torn between despair and duty.

KELLY (CONT’D)
Aren’t you going to answer it?

Eph is stunned by the scorn in her voice. It tells him, more than anything else, that this is the end of their marriage.

CONTINUED: (4)

He defiantly retrieves his phone. We see only his face as he reads the text... his reaction momentous, and dark...

KELLY (CONT'D)
Can't you see that this is the problem, Eph? This is who you are.

IN THE WAITING ROOM

Eph exits, approaching Zack. Kelly watches from the shadows.

EPH
Hey.

ZACK
Hey.

EPH
Don't worry, Z. We'll figure out something. Some way to turn this around...

ZACK
You're the grown-ups. I am supposed to trust you.

EPH
It's an emergency at work... Some people could be sick, or worse... We'll watch the eclipse together in a couple of days, just like we planned. Okay? I promise.

Zack looks down, sullenly. Eph steps closer, kneeling.

EPH (CONT'D)
Zack -- if you only understand one thing... I don't care what is said in this room, or a courtroom, or written on a piece of paper. Nothing in this world is ever going to keep us apart. Know that. Nothing.

Eph stands, starting toward the door. Zack speaks suddenly.

ZACK
Yeah but... you're still leaving...

Eph's shoulders fall. He can't argue with that. All he can do... is go.

CONTINUED:

Kelly, feeling awful, goes to Zack -- but he doesn’t want anyone right now.

OUTSIDE WAITING ROOM

Eph is gutted. His phone VIBRATES again -- and he makes to throw it at the wall... then sets himself, answers.

EPH (INTO PHONE)
How bad’s it look?

EXT. TAXIWAY FOXTROT - NIGHT

Outside a cordon of lights shining on the dormant Regis Air Flight 753, anxious SAFETY OFFICIALS confer.

DR. NORA MARTINEZ (35) is compellingly attractive. A biochemist with a social medicine background, she cares more about people than the diseases that threaten them.

NORA (INTO PHONE) Like twelve different agency officials about to have a measuring contest.

Nora stands up to the various Agency Officials.

EXT. QUEENS BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Eph exiting, still smarting.

EPH (INTO PHONE)
International flight, vessel docking from Berlin, Germany, CDC has the first call. I’ll be there in less than twenty. Can you keep the measuring contest going that long?

NORA
Maybe if I show them mine.

Eph crosses to his Explorer. He stops -- finding a PARKING TICKET from under the wiper. He pulls it out. Then turns.

Matt is standing there.

MATT
I guess the Meter Reader didn’t see it as much of an emergency.

CONTINUED:

Eph’s first impulse is to hit him. He takes a step toward doing just that... but then...

...he looks up at the brownstone. Zack stands at the second floor window, looking down.

Eph waves -- more of a reach toward his son.

Looks at Matt’s plate: “1WRKATSRS”

EPH
Matt, huh? Interesting.

He picks up the parking ticket.

EPH (CONT’D)
Have you taken out the trash?

MATT
What?

EPH
Taken out the trash, washed the dishes? Or are you still in the honeymoon phase?
(beat)
How many times have you fucked?

MATT
Hey --

EPH
Double digits?

MATT
That’s no way to talk about --

EPH
Your girlfriend? My wife? ‘Cause right now she’s both.
(beat)
Look buddy -- sooner or later you’ll have to take out the trash, wash dishes, mow the lawn. You won’t be the boyfriend anymore, and two years from now you’ll be going straight to the toilet soon as you arrive and you’ll stay there until your legs go to sleep -- ‘cause that’s the only place you can have silence in and gather your thoughts.
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

EPH (CONT'D)
And then -- if you still love her then and you love playing house -- like I did -- like I do -- then you are a keeper.

He rips the ticket.

EPH (CONT'D)
In the meantime, you're just a plug that works at Sears.

He leaves.

EXT. TAXIWAY FOXTROT - NIGHT

Nora and JIM KENT (35), the savvy and trustworthy political operative of the Canary Group, intercept Eph ahead of the scrum of Agency Officials.

JIM KENT
Finally... Homeland Security's desperate to push the button on a terror alert.

Eph slows... taking in the sight of the MASSIVE AIRCRAFT.

EPH
Terrorists usually crash airplanes, not land them and shut them down. What are the 911 calls saying?

Nora and Jim look at each other.

NORA
There haven't been any.

EPH
Not good.

Eph continues into the fray of Officials.

HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICIAL
Dr. Goodweather --

EPH
I flew to Philly last week. We sat on the tarmac two hours waiting for takeoff, nearly had a Donner Party. First Class was about to kill and eat a fat man in Economy. And you've had how many people sitting there silently for...?

CONTINUED:

NORA
Roughly an hour now.

EPH
With no communication? How long between landing and shutdown?

HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICIAL
Six minutes. Seems like too short a window for a contagious event. Why I think the CDC can take a back seat on this one...

EPH
How many times you touch your face?

PORT AUTHORITY OFFICIAL
What?

EPH
In a day, how many times?

PORT AUTHORITY OFFICIAL
I don’t know, once an hour?

EPH
Every three minutes. You have mouth-hand contact every five. You touch someone else every twenty.
(beat)
You don’t like terrorists? Try negotiating with a virus. A virus or a bacteria exist only to find a carrier and reproduce. That’s all they do, and they do it damn well. They have no political views, no religious beliefs, no cultural hang-ups. And no respect for a badge. Moreover, they have no notion of time or geography. To them this might as well be the Middle Ages -- except for the convenience of hitching a ride in a supersonic sealed container flying from meal to meal to meal. Now -- are you still so eager to be the first in the door to greet this potential Twenty-First Century plague?

The man stays silent.

EPH (CONT’D)
I thought so.

CONTINUED: (2)

Eph walks to the fire truck, grabbing a fire axe from a bracket on the side. Making the officials nervous.

PORT AUTHORITY OFFICIAL
Doctor -- that's a quarter billion dollar airplane...

EPH
Take it out of my pay.

Bishop, the ATC Supervisor, steps to the fore.

BISHOP
All these big birds are built with chop-out areas. We can burn in with exothermic torches. It's the only way. But -- I need someone's authority...

Eph hands him the fire axe.

EPH
Consider yourself authorized.

EXT. KNICKERBOCKER LOANS AND CURIOS - NIGHT

East 118th Street in Spanish Harlem. The pawnshop window shows a Gibson Guitar, brooches, a jukebox, a China setting.

DINAH KESSEL (70), an elderly woman of pride and poise, approaches the store and enters.

INT. KNICKERBOCKER LOANS AND CURIOS - NIGHT

Dinah moves through this neighborhood reliquary of possessions abandoned and obsolete: radios, televisions, VCRs, tea sets, bar signs, gowns, furs. Seeing no one behind the counter, she experiences a moment of worry.

DINAH
Abraham?

Behind the safety glass appears an elderly gentleman of distinguished European bearing. ABRAHAM SETRAKIAN is older than 80, but his extraordinary life -- one of unimaginable trauma and occasional magic -- has left him with the vigor of a man ten years younger.

Near him, the local NY1 news plays on a small portable TV.

CONTINUED:

SETRAKIAN
Dinah, dear, what are you doing out alone so late?

DINAH
And you? The sun is down. Working on *Shabbat*?

SETRAKIAN
Closing time. What have you brought me, more beautiful silverware?

DINAH
This.

She unwraps a shiny silver cigarette case, a gorgeous article. Setrakian examines it with trembling hands -- hands gnarled and twisted by arthritis.

He opens the lid and discovers... an engraved monogram. This stops him. But Dinah nods her head sadly: it is time.

DINAH (CONT'D)
His initials are written in my heart. Besides -- it was those damn cigarettes that did him in.

SETRAKIAN
Dinah, you know what I do with silver. I melt it. This is too precious...

DINAH
I live in the present. And in the present, I need food, medicine.

Setrakian accepts the case reluctantly. From his cash drawer, he withdraws more bills than are necessary.

DINAH (CONT'D)
Abraham. It is not worth so much.

SETRAKIAN
Last customer of the day always gets my best deal.

Deeply touched, Dinah accepts his generous gift.

DINAH
Come to dinner. Let me cook for you. No one should be alone...

CONTINUED: (2)

Setrakian seems inclined to accept... until the TV news distracts him...

NY1 News shows aerial footage of the dead plane: “JFK ON ALERT AS BERLIN AIRPLANE GOES DARK AFTER LANDING.”

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)
...a jumbo jet shut down just after landing, and there has been no communication with the pilot...

Setrakian is transfixed by this bizarre image. It speaks to him. His trembling hands are suddenly PERFECTLY STILL...

His eyes tell us: he knows something. Something evil.

DINAH
Abraham? Something is wrong?

SETRAKIAN
Berlin...

INT. SETRAKIAN’S APARTMENT - LATER

Up one flight from his shop, Setrakian enters quickly -- alone -- pausing only to touch the mezuzah at his door.

Shelves groan under leather-bound books, which also rise from stacks on the floor. Ancient mirrors of all shapes and sizes reflect the old man many times as he moves to his parlor.

On a pedestal table stands an object under a drape of black silk. Setrakian unveils a large GLASS SPECIMEN JAR.

Inside the jar, suspended in a dusky fluid, is a HUMAN HEART.

The heart is FAINTLY THROBBING -- as though agitated.

Setrakian recognizes this. He understands.

SETRAKIAN
He is here...

Setrakian removes the jar’s cover. With a penknife, he slices open a small scar in his fingertip -- feeding a few drops of blood into the fluid...

A worm-like tentacle shoots out of the heart, DEVOURING the blood... the lonely muscle PALPITATING with new strength...

CONTINUED:

SETRAKIAN (CONT'D)
This time, dear... I will not fail...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. CDC BIOHAZARD TENT - NIGHT

Eph and Nora inside a cramped HAZMAT tent erected on the tarmac. They quickly begin to disrobe -- he down to a T-shirt and shorts, she a sports bra and panties...

EPH
Most likely they're all dead in there. In case you were wondering.

NORA
You're sure?

EPH
Plane's airtight. Power's out. No power means no air. It landed over an hour ago. So...
(beat)
I don't think they're holding their breath.

A telling moment comes as they stand before one another in their underwear... not awkwardly... not for the first time...

They pull their astronaut-like contact suits from a rack and begin to climb into them.

Nora touches him. He recoils a little.

NORA
Wow. It went that bad? With Kelly?

Eph is surprised... Nora knows him all too well.

EPH
Do you want me to tell you how bad?

They seal themselves up...

NORA
Engaging as I find your custody tales, this is not a good time...

EPH
(oblivious)
Kelly wants to take Zack away from me. And a younger man is moving in to my house. Sleeping in my bed...

CONTINUED:

Nora’s reaction is first shock... then, briefly, happiness... then, dutifully censoring herself, concern...

NORA
Hey, watch it...

Nora seals a protective layer Eph had missed.

NORA (CONT’D)
Eph. I know how you must feel, but focus on the task at hand.

EPH
You know how I feel...?

NORA
You and Kelly have been separated for a year. Things happen.
(beat)
They happened to us.

EPH
That’s different.

She’s checking all his seals.

NORA
How is it different?

EPH
It just is...

He starts for the tent door.

EXT. TARMAC - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eph exits to Jim’s mobile workstation. Nora follows.

NORA
I don’t think Kelly would agree.

EPH
She has no idea.

Jim switches on their HOOD CAMERAS, his face appearing on twin laptop screens.

NORA
Dr. Goodweather, you really don’t know women at all...

CONTINUED:

Nora’s voice tails off, as she is distracted by something off-screen... something she is the first to notice...

In the distance, SPARKS spray from the torches cutting into the plane’s underbelly...

...but the over-wing door is NOW OPEN... from the inside...

EPH
No one else is going to be a father to my son but me.

NORA
Eph! The door...!

INT. REGIS AIR FLIGHT 753 - NIGHT

Through a LATEX membrane, the team enters the plane.

Weapons hot, gas-masked SWAT TEAM members move around with flashlight beams and laser sights, flanking Eph and Nora.

The SWAT pairs scope the aisles for bad guys... while Eph and Nora turn their attention to the passengers...

All of whom are seated...

All of whom appear peaceful and still...

All of whom... are DEAD.

Staring eyes GLOW unblinkingly, reflecting light sources.

NORA
Oh my God.

EPH
Jim -- are you seeing this? All dead. No signs of struggle. No bruising, no discoloration -- no marks.

EXT. TAXIWAY FOXTROT - SAME TIME

Jim and Safety Officials crowd around the video displays. GASPS are heard as they see the mass casualty victims.

JIM KENT (ON RADIO)
We see it, Eph. What is it?

INT. REGIS AIR FLIGHT 753 - SAME TIME

Eph moving along the aisle. Eerie.

EPH
Something sudden. Painless.

JIM KENT (ON RADIO)
Gas leak? Chemical?

NORA
There's something... You smell that, Eph?

EPH
Ammonia. Right through my mask.

SWAT TEAM
(various)
CLEAR! CLEAR HERE! ALL CLEAR!

Eph looks across the cabin at Nora.

NORA
Who the hell opened the door?

EPH
Change of pressure. Lock release. We'll find out...

Eph drops to his knee before an aisle passenger. We recognize young Emma Atchison and her "Unaccompanied Minor" sticker and Regis Air sun pin. She stares lifelessly...

We alternate between this perspective and Eph's helmet camera (intimate, scary) as Eph examines her under his hood light.

His gloved hands probe her throat glands... then he rotates her head gently from side to side...

EPH (CONT'D)
No visible trauma... No nosebleed or oral discharge... No bloating.

He parts her lips, opening her jaw...

EPH (CONT'D)
Tongue and soft palate appear pale... almost white...

With his fingertip, he pulls down one of her eyelids to view the sclera. When he releases it, the lid remains pulled down, agonizingly slow to return to normal...

CONTINUED:

EPH (CONT'D)
Skin dry, inelastic...

NORA
I'm seeing no vomiting... no blistering or bloating... no sign of panic or struggle... Eph, this isn't right...

EPH
Switch to UV.

Tight on their faces as they switch on the black light wands -- seeing their expressions of ABSOLUTE AMAZEMENT.

Then the TV equivalent of a comic book splash page...:

THE CABIN AWASH IN A SPECTACULAR GLOWING EXPLOSION OF COLOR.

A riotous stain -- over the floor, walls, chair backs...

NORA
What the...?!

EPH
Dry. Some kind of biological matter. But not blood...

REAR GALLEY

Eph checks it. Nothing. Turning back to the main cabin when --

The floor CLANKS a bit under his step. The trapdoor. The latch is undone. Eph reaches down, pulling it open.

Eph shines his UV wand inside. More BRIGHT STAINS.

JIM KENT (ON RADIO)
Luggage compartment. Should be locked from below.

Eph starts down.

FLIGHT GALLEY

Up front, Nora finds more COLOR SPLASHES. As she's examining them up close on the wall...

...the cockpit door SLOWLY OPENS a few inches behind her.

The outside light shining through the cockpit makes her turn.

CONTINUED:

NORA
Jim?

JIM KENT (ON RADIO)
Nora -- that door should not be open.

CARGO HOLD

Eph down below. Following the fluorescent stain, finding it on the luggage compartments.

EPH
The smell is here, too. Whatever it is... it happened down here.

Eph stops. He senses something. A PRESENCE...

He turns. Scanning the dark hold. We also see it via his HELMET FEED POV.

This is when we see ONE CONTAINER WITH LUGGAGE SPILLED OUT.

FLIGHT CABIN

Nora stands very still in the doorway. Lights from the taxiway GLARE through the cockpit windshield. The system displays on the flight deck are all dark.

Nora looks at the backs of two men in the twin chairs. The Captain’s hand remains on a control lever.

JIM KENT (ON RADIO)
Nora, get out of there.

CARGO HOLD

Eph advances on the spilled luggage. Feels like we’re building toward a cheap scare moment but...

...he discovers a few CRUMBS OF BLACK SOIL on the floor. He stoops to collect it...

FLIGHT CABIN

Nora leans over the console between the two seats. CAPTAIN REDFERN (50), whose folksy voice we heard earlier, is slumped forward, his hat in his lap.

CONTINUED:

Nora eases the Captain’s head back. She examines his open eyes... his pupils fixed and dilated. She starts to feel his throat through his neck when --

SUDDENLY THE CAPTAIN SHUDDERS... GROANS...

Nora SCREAMS and FALLS HARD, backward...

CARGO HOLD

Eph reacts, racing back to the trap door.

EPH
Nora! What is it?

FLIGHT CABIN

Nora stares up at the reanimated Captain.

NORA
The Captain. He’s... He’s...

MAIN CABIN

Eph climbs up through the trap door and goes running down the aisle as --

-- an arms grabs at him. Ansel Barbour, coughing, tumbling out of his seat... ALIVE! Eph spins, watching this incredible sight, but still pulled toward Nora. As he turns back to the First Class curtain --

-- he runs into Gabriel Bolivar, staggering out of his seat, GASPING FOR AIR.

JIM KENT (ON RADIO)
Eph! Nora! I’m sending the SWAT Team back in!

EPH
Send paramedics. We’ve got survivors!

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. STONEHEART GROUP HEADQUARTERS - PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

On TV, a REPORTER is discussing the “unfolding situation” Of Regis flight 753.

Watching the report is ELDRITCH PALMER (70). He lies in a hospital bed in a hermetically-sealed room. Frail and withered, the world’s third-richest-man is receiving a dialysis treatment, tubes connecting him to a large machine.

It’s so cold in here, his FAINT BREATH is visible. His naked chest is criss-crossed by a pattern of surgical scars.

FOOTSTEPS approach: his bodyguard and nurse, MR. FITZPATRICK (30), an armoire of a man, wearing a heavy, full-length coat on over his tight, expensive black suit.

MR. FITZPATRICK
Mr. Palmer, Herr Eichhorst wishes to pay his respects.

The door opens. FOOTSTEPS approach: lighter than before. THOMAS EICHHORST (perpetually 40) wears only a light suit -- yet seems unaffected by the frigid temperature.

His gaunt cheeks are rouged, his hair a wig. His accent is German, though his voice emerges strangely from his too-red lips. His appearance is due less to vanity than perversity.

PALMER
Not too cold for you, I trust?

Eichhorst doesn’t answer. His icy blue eyes and white-blond hair confer him an Aryan superiority.

PALMER (CONT’D)
Of course not. It can’t be too cold for you -- can it?

Palmer pushes buttons which elevate his bed and open the curtains behind it -- REVEALING A SPECTACULAR VIEW OF MANHATTAN looking northward from the Wall Street area.

PALMER (CONT’D)
But to me this is vital. The cold slows tissue death. That is all we are, you know, no matter how rich, no matter how powerful -- we are all just a lump of dying tissue.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

PALMER (CONT'D)
(he smiles)
I am only human.

Eichhorst makes no effort to engage.

EICHHORST
The cargo has arrived safely. And the survivors have been found.

Palmer grins icily yet with deep, strange satisfaction.

PALMER
Throughout my life I have learned what it feels to cross a line -- to do things -- things that cannot be undone.

Eichhorst looks out at the nighttime city below them.

EICHHORST
I look out upon this island and I savor what is to come. Purity.

PALMER
Deliverance.

EICHHORST
For the whole world. In the service of one.

Hold on Palmer and Eichhorst... long enough for us to notice that breath steams out of Palmers mouth...

...but none emerges from Eichhorst's.

PALMER
I'll never get used to...

He points at Eichhorst's mouth.

EICHHORST
Even I miss breathing sometimes.

INT. JFK QUARANTINE STATION - NIGHT

The door sign reads: "JFK ISOLATION AREA -- CONTACT PRECAUTION MANDATORY -- AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY."

Eph and Nora, still in their contact suits, pass through an opaque plastic curtain into...

QUARANTINE BAY

A curtain around a stretcher.

The survivors (Ansel Barbour, Joan Luss, Gabriel Bolivar, and Captain Redfern) are being examined by a MEDICAL TEAM.

Captain Redfern rubs his throat over his loosened necktie, looking up anxiously.

EPH
Captain Doyle Redfern?

CAPTAIN REDFERN
What happened on my plane?

Eph and Nora look at each other.

EPH
That’s what we came to ask you.

ANOTHER QUARANTINE BAY

Ansel Barbour sits on his stretcher, stupefied.

ANSEL
You don’t understand. My wife’s gonna panic if I don’t call soon.

NORA
Only four out of two hundred ten passengers survived, Mr. Barbour. You are a very lucky man.

He holds his aching head.

ANSEL
Wish I felt like it.

ANOTHER QUARANTINE BAY

Joan Luss eyes them suspiciously.

JOAN
Only four people survived the crash?

EPH
Ms. Luss... there was no crash.

ANOTHER QUARANTINE BAY

Gabriel Bolivar sits rubbing the back of his neck.

BOLIVAR
The mother of all hangovers. Never fly commercial -- that's the moral of my story.

EPH
Mr. Bolivar, what's the last thing you remember about the landing?

BOLIVAR
Flickering lights, maybe... I dunno. I black out sometimes. How about some Demerol, Doc? What time's the refreshment cart swing by?

JFK QUARANTINE STATION

Eph and Nora re-emerge. They open their hoods, breaking the seals on their suits with evident relief.

NORA
These people were flat-lined. Not breathing. Four minutes without oxygen is the threshold for permanent brain damage -- they were out maybe as long as an hour.

EPH
Let's hope the dead can tell us more than the living.

INT. REGIS AIR HANGAR - NIGHT

BODY BAGS are laid out in long rows on tarps on the hangar floor... more than two hundred total...

HAZMAT Workers have begun loading them onto trucks.

Eph, Nora, and Jim stand with their boss, DR. EVERETT BARNES (60), a genial southern country doctor who used political wiles to rise to the head of the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention.

CONTINUED:

JIM KENT
Due to the high casualty count, we have to spread them out among morgues in Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and the Medical Examiner's headquarters in Manhattan. So -- fifty each.

BARNES
In refrigerated trucks?

JIM KENT
On loan from a Fulton Fish market.

Barnes approves of Jim's ingenuity. EPH receives a text and steps aside. (Phone-style text dialogue bubbles are SUPERIMPOSED on his side of the frame.)

TEXT (SUPER)
Zack: You met Bolivar??? THE BOLIVAR???

ZACK

is in the bathroom, sitting on the bathtub.

Kelly KNOCKS on the door.

KELLY
Hey, kiddo! How much longer are you gonna be in there??

ZACK
Coming!!

He texts --

EPH

receives the new text. Smiles.

BARNES
Any word from where the flight originated?

TEXT (SUPER) *
Zack: TV news flipping out over plane. Scoop?

JIM KENT
They shut down the airport in Berlin for a full security check. No sick employees, and no problems on any other flights.

CONTINUED:

BARNES
And no other similar incidents involving airplanes anywhere else in the world. Good. We can announce that this event is fully contained.

NORA
The four survivors -- they all sat in different parts of the plane. No commonality.

TEXT (SUPER)
Eph: No answers yet. Big mystery, lots to do. Hey -- SORRY about mtg. You OK? *

EPH
We have to move them to a hospital for full diagnostic work-ups while we start in on the autopsies.

BARNES
Of course, of course. I'm sure they'll comply.

EPH
They won't have any choice. We need answers. I'll invoke the Health Powers Act if I have to.

BARNES
I'm not sure quarantining American citizens is the best approach here. Nor even necessary.

EPH
Everett -- I need every tool available to me.

BARNES
Perhaps if you meet with the families of the passengers. The airline has bought out one of the airports here for them.

EPH
Great idea. Jim can do that.

BARNES
No, Eph. You. I want to put a face on our efforts here. The best way to avoid a panic.

Eph looks out at the dead bodies.

CONTINUED: (2)

EPH
Then I want full control over this investigation. And Everett -- no press.

Barnes's phone RINGS. He nods and steps away to answer it.

Nora looks at Eph. She's not sure about this at all...

Then a voice calls out from across the hangar:

HAZMAT WORKER
Dr. Goodweather! Over here!

CARGO AREA

Cats meow and move around. Eph stares in amazement. Nora smiles.

NORA
Who keeps these?

BISHOP
Strays. They live in the grounds, in the shrub around the landing strip.

NORA
They feed on the rats?

BISHOP
They're like rats. Filthy as hell. *And feral.* They'll bite your hand. Hard. Don't go near them. Every week animal control picks up a busload and every week the little bastards drop a new litter in the shrub...

Off-loaded luggage sits on trams, near plastic-wrapped golf clubs, plasma TVs, crates and a kayak tagged with Regis Air stickers...

...but the focus of their attention is a large, ornately-carved CABINET of unvarnished ebony, approximately 8'x4'x3'. Bishop tags along.

EPH
What is it? What's inside?

HAZMAT WORKER
No one's opened it yet.

CONTINUED:

NORA
Looks like a coffin.

EPH
Maybe for a giant... Look at grain of the wood. Smooth.

BISHOP
Ebony. Looks old. Fifty years at least.
(to the Worker) What's the manifest say?

HAZMAT WORKER
It's not on the manifest.

BISHOP
Let me see.
(reads)
Golf clubs... kayak... machine parts... ten thousand condoms, two plasma TVs... but no coffin.

With a gloved hand, Eph touches the strange symbols and distorted human faces carved into the lid: twin doors, split lengthwise down the middle.

EPH
Hand-carved... not machined. Someone put in a lot of care and effort on this one. Help me here...

Reluctantly, the HAZMAT Workers and Nora pull open both doors at once. They open wide -- ANGLED LIKE WINGS. Nora covers her nose -- almost retching.

NORA
Ugh. Smells like roadkill...

The box looks empty... until Eph reaches inside...

...his gloved fingers sinking into RICH, BLACK LOAM.

NORA (CONT'D)
Soil? Why would someone ship a box of soil?
(to HAZMAT Workers)
You sure no one opened this?

HAZMAT WORKER
See for yourself if you don't believe me.

CONTINUED: (2)

HAZMAT Worker points to the rafter cameras.

BISHOP
Those things run 24/7.

EPH
Chances of someone loading this unchecked?

BISHOP
A thing that size? In a flight bound for the US? Not in today's world.

EPH
Call Berlin. They must have some record. Somebody loaded this thing on board.

Eph scoops out some soil for further analysis.

INT. KELLY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN TABLE - NIGHT

Kelly and Matt eating dinner. They beam at each other -- living together is a new sensation, soft and gooey. Kelly is still fired up from the meeting earlier.

Zack's food is there, but his seat is empty. A laptop is open on the counter behind them.

MATT
Any man who doesn't put you first is out-of-his-mind crazy. Tonight was a big step for you...

KELLY
It was! Right? And there's no kind way to hurt someone...

MATT
No such thing as a nice divorce! I told you that! Ask my parents...

KELLY
But that was the best I could have hoped for. While awful just the same... Right?

MATT
The key thing is, now he no longer has any sort of hold on you...

CONTINUED:

Her phone VIBRATES near her plate. She touches the screen -- and we read, SUPERIMPOSED over this quiet dinner scene:

TEXT (SUPER)
Eph: (OBSCURED) “MATT”??!!

(The blurred word is obviously “FUCKING.”) With a flick of her finger, Kelly swipes it away -- and Eph’s superimposed text bubble DISAPPEARS.

MATT
What was that?

KELLY
Facebook.

Zack returns, sliding his phone into his pocket. Kelly knows he’s been texting his father.

KELLY (CONT’D)
Hey. Rough day.

Zack shrugs bravely. Audio from the laptop interrupts them.

REPORTER (ON LAPTOP)
...confirm now there are multiple casualties on the plane... and still no word what caused Regis Air 753 to shut down after landing...

Matt is intent on making Zack his best friend.

MATT
Terrorists -- has to be. What do you think, Zack?

Zack, chewing, doesn’t miss a beat.

ZACK
Zombies from outer space. For sure.

INT. OFFICE, CARGO AREA - NIGHT

Bishop is on the phone. Taking notes.

BISHOP
I know -- we don’t know either. But run it by cargo personnel. I’ll send photographs. Five minutes and I’ll need you to call me back. Yes, tonight.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BISHOP (CONT'D)
I don’t give a warm shit what time it is. You’re calling back.

INT. REGIS AIR HANGAR - CARGO AREA - NIGHT

Bishop at the coffin, studying its carvings, and...

...listening.

We hear it now, too... a THRUMMING sound... but faint... and not coming from the coffin...

Bishop stops a passing HAZMAT Worker.

BISHOP
Hey... you hear that?

The HAZMAT Worker listens.

HAZMAT WORKER
Probably my stomach. Dinner is long overdue.

He moves on. Bishop tries to make out the sound’s source...

It’s not the coffin. At once, he starts across the hangar.

LUGGAGE STORAGE

Rows and rows of storage bins. As Bishop explores -- the noise GROWS MORE DISTINCT, like a basso chorus of voices, churning.

Here, the noise is its LOUDEST... but still no visible source. As Bishop stands still, filled with the droning noise...

...he notices a MOUND OF RAGS in the corner.

The stray cats congregate around it.

The mound is TWITCHING.

Bishop edges closer to the corner, trying to make out the movement among the rags, when...

...the pile ARTICULATES, and A GREAT FORM RISES UP, taking shape... vague... horrible...

Seven feet in height... broad, cloaked... or winged???

CONTINUED:

We never fully see THE MASTER -- but we sense his strength, his speed, his power... as from deep within the Master’s throat, A VEINOUS, MUSCULAR STINGER STRIKES AT BISHOP’S NECK.

Just a flash of it. The shock is: no fangs. Something far, far worse...

Barely a CROAK escapes Bishop’s obstructed throat.

BISHOP
URRGH...

As he is taken... his ARM VEINS SHRIVEL AND COLLAPSE like an emptied Capri Sun juice pouch.... Blood accumulates around the stinger, which filters it, engorged and pulsating.

...until his head is ROTATED WITH A SICKENING CRACK.

Bishop hits the ground, head facing south, body facing north.

And the cloaked figure withdraws... UPWARDS!!!

The hungry cats move in on Bishop.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. SPANISH HARLEM BODEGA - NIGHT

AUGUSTIN “GUS” ELIZALDE (21) is handsome, Mexican, and dangerous. GANG INK marks his arms. He takes zero shit.

He notices the KOREAN STORE OWNER following him around the cramped market -- and acts suspiciously to fuck with him...

GUS
(to himself)
Mexican bad guy... here to rob Poppa-San. Better watch...

In the high security mirror, he sees a FIGURE in the facing aisle... but the reflection is strangely BLURRED...

Gus brings a bottle of Tamarind Jarritos to the front, scooping out all the spare pennies to help pay for it.

No words. Just a stare for the Owner. Then out.

EXT. SPANISH HARLEM BODEGA - NIGHT

With the owner still watching him through the window. Gus opens the bottle and toasts him with a sneer, then drinks...

...and unwraps a slice of Mexican Bread he stole.

Another person exited the store after Gus. Aware of him, Gus slows now, stops. Turns.

The perverse Nazi vampire, Eichhorst.

EICHHORST
You are avoiding me.

GUS
No, Guerito. Just thirsty. Only store on the block that sells Jarritos. Elixir of the Aztec Gods, man!

Eichhorst shows Gus an envelope. (Note: Eichhorst’s lips don’t always sync up perfectly with his German voice.)

EICHHORST
You will pick up the vehicle at the airport.

CONTINUED:

GUS
Airport? Pffft.Place is locked down, blondie. Didn't you see the news?

Eichhorst presses the envelope on Gus with his wax-like hand.

EICHHORST
When you get to a barricade you will be let through. It's all arranged.

GUS
"It's all arranged." You're all James Bond about this shit...

Gus stuffs his food in his mouth and rips open the envelope. He pulls out five crisp $100 bills... and some documents.

The first is Gus's rap sheet, his juvenile jacket, listing convictions for theft and manslaughter.

The second shows copies of his driver's license -- and those of his MOTHER, and his brother, CRISPIN.

EICHHORST
Just a few pages: your brother's criminal record and your mother's immigration status.

Gus glares at Eichhorst.

GUS
If this is a threat -- you just made a big mistake, puto.

Gus's hand drifts down near the side of his waistband, where one might carry a handgun. Eichhorst stays cool as a cucumber.

EICHHORST
Destination and instructions are in the glove box of the vehicle.

GUS
I get picked up driving a stolen van -- that's it. Hard time. Good-bye, Gus. I don't think so.

EICHHORST
It is not stolen. In the glove box, you will find the remainder of your fee.

CONTINUED: (2)

The prospect of $500 more in cash changes things.

GUS
I do this for you, this is the end. Lose my number and my address. I'm trying to do right by my madre now -- so if anything happens to her, I'll find your waxy ass.

Again, Eichhorst is unmoved.

EICHHORST
The task is time-sensitive. Three rules: You will not examine the cargo. You will not make any stops. And you will cross the bridge back into Manhattan before daybreak. Do you understand?

Gus feels abundantly bad about this -- should he cap this motherfucker? He really thinks about it... but finally nods.

EICHHORST (CONT'D)
In English, then. The three rules. So I can hear them.

Gus raises three fingers, counting...

GUS
Fuck you... Suck my dick... It will get done.

Gus moves away. Eichhorst smiles. Unseen by Gus, his neck engorges and the flesh fluctuates, undulating.

INT. JFK AIRPORT TERMINAL 4 - NIGHT

Setrakian approaches a crowd of MEDIA arriving for the press conference. A pack of GOTHS with "ROCK THE ECLIPSE" T-shirts -- Bolivar's devoted fans -- almost get past AIRPORT SECURITY before they are stopped.

GOTHS
BOL-I-VAR! BOL-I-VAR!

Setrakian takes advantage of the distraction to slip inside the cordon with the media...

...then slips down a side corridor. Ahead -- a more fortified security checkpoint. They spot him. No turning back now...

CONTINUED:

Instead, Setrakian slows, pressing his fingertips to his chest. He grabs the wall... then slips to one knee...

AIRPORT COP
Sir? Hey, take it easy there...

An AIRPORT COP helps Setrakian sit on the floor. The old man points to his vest pocket over his heart.

SETRAKIAN
Heart medication...

The Cop wants nothing to do with a heart attack victim.

AIRPORT COP
Wheelchair! We got a medical here!

INT. AIRPORT MARRIOTT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eph and Nora walking with Barnes, who is talking on his phone. Nora is prepping Eph, handing him printouts.

NORA
Master list of victims, with the morgues they were delivered to. We tried to match each decedent to the borough nearest their residence.

Eph flips through the pages, showing passport ID photos of the deceased. He stops at Emma Atchison’s, remembering the young girl from the plane.

EPH
What can I say to these people?

BARNES
You’ll do great.

They stop before the double doors. With Barnes not looking, Nora gives Eph’s hand a tender squeeze.

FUNCTION ROOM

A large hall. A long buffet is set up along one wall.

The mood is oppressively mournful. DISTRAUGHT FAMILIES in small groups turn toward Eph as he enters.

Eph faces them bravely... and then looks to the side.

CONTINUED:

REPORTERS and CAMERAS. The press. Eph turns to glare at Barnes... who gives him a half-hearted look of apology... which Nora is not buying...

EPH
You didn't tell me there would be press.

BARNES
Oh, I didn't?

Sandbagged, Eph focuses on the families that stand before him, some terrified, others shell-shocked, a few hopeful...

EPH
...I've been asked to introduce myself to you... and give you a preliminary update on where we are in the investigation...

VARIOUS FAMILIES
(overlapping)
...How many survivors?
...Where are they keeping my son?
...How did this happen?
...Why can't we see them?

Eph holds up a hand for quiet. This is difficult to say.

EPH
It is my understanding that the survivors' families have all been notified already. I'm sorry...

This settles over the Families, crushing the spirit of most of the remaining hopefuls... though not all of them...

One prominent voice -- and one of the few people standing alone -- is GARY ATCHISON (40), Emma's father.

GARY ATCHISON
I don't believe it. I want to see my daughter! Where have you taken her?

He holds a 8x10 picture of his daughter in a cheap frame.

EPH
The deceased have been transported out of the airport. Our hope is that we may be able to learn something about this tragedy from them.

CONTINUED: (2)

GARY ATCHISON
I don’t care about what you want.
I want my daughter back.

He holds up her picture for all to see.

GARY ATCHISON (CONT'D)
I just want to see her again.
Don’t you have kids of your own?
Don’t you have a heart?

Eph takes this all in. He sees the hurt in this father. It moves him.

EPH
What I can tell you, from having been the first to board the plane, is that they all appeared to die peacefully, without any distress. That is the only comfort I can offer you at this time. You want answers -- real answers -- and so do I.
(beat)
Forty-eight hours. It’s the best I can do. But you have my word.

Eph ignores the Reporters’ questions, making his way past Barnes to the exit...

INT. JFK QUARANTINE STATION - SAME TIME

Setrakian sits on a gurney, watching the press conference break up on TV... while Jim Kent finishes a cursory examination.

JIM KENT
So... your condition is real. You have a well-defined cardiac arrythmia --

He shakes a small pill box.

JIM KENT (CONT’D)
And you carry nitroglycerin pills. But the crisis outside -- that was fake.
(beat)
What do you want?

INT. JFK AIRPORT TERMINAL 4 - HALLWAY - LATER

Nora returning to the airport with Eph. Eph is still shaken and moved by his encounter.

EPH
Two hundred souls in that plane, Nora. They all had plans. Families. Going home, leaving home, birthdays, funerals. And all of them prayed as the air went out or as the decease kicked in.“Not me, no -- too soon, not like this...” And the only consolation we can provide is to learn how and why they died.

The “Facetime” TRILL sounds on Eph’s iPad. He answers it, holding the screen in front of them as they walk.

ON SCREEN: Medical Examiner DR. BENNETT (35), a medically obese man wearing a plastic safety shield mask.

DR. BENNETT (SCREEN)
You’re crushing me here, Goodweather. I’m just getting into it, haven’t started cutting yet. How much do you know?

EPH
Give me anything you have.

DR. BENNETT (SCREEN)
Preliminary exterior exam showed nothing, until I switched to black light...

INT. OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER (OCME) - SAME TIME

The basement morgue. A FEMALE CORPSE laid out upon a table of stainless steel, neck arched over a metal block.

DR. BENNETT
It fluoresced a thin line of bacteria -- here.

Dr. Bennett stands his iPad on a wheeled tray in order to demonstrate to Eph and Nora what he has found.

DR. BENNETT (CONT’D)
Can you see this?

CONTINUED:

He parts the flesh of her neck with gloved fingers -- revealing A NEAT INCISION just a few centimeters long.

EPH (SCREEN)
Yes. How deep?

DR. BENNETT
Deep enough to puncture one wall of the carotid artery without rupturing it.

NORA (SCREEN)
What could have caused that?

DR. BENNETT
Nothing in nature -- nothing I know of, anyway. Scalpel-like precision.

NORA (SCREEN)
A flat needle of some sort?

DR. BENNETT
A spot examination of six other corpses revealed the same. I am going to submit the bodies to other degrees of UV light. Hopefully we can find more markings like these.

INT. JFK AIRPORT TERMINAL 4 - HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Eph and Nora standing still now, absolutely riveted by the visual on the screen in Eph’s hand.

EPH
You’re saying other passengers have this same incision?

DR. BENNETT (SCREEN)
All the ones I’ve looked at so far. Every single one.

Eph and Nora look at each other -- then resume walking, fast.

DR. BENNETT (SCREEN) (CONT’D)
There is one other intriguing abnormality...

INT. OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER (OCME) - SAME TIME

Dr. Bennett selects a big #6 blade scalpel. He sets a steel pan beneath the corpse’s hand, turns its wrist -- and SLICES.

CONTINUED:

What spills out of the vein and into the pan is NOT BLOOD -- at least, not as we know it.

It flows WHITE AND OILY -- a pale, opalescent liquid.

EPH (SCREEN)
What. The hell. Is that.

DR. BENNETT
At first I thought maybe the blood proteins had somehow separated... I'll know more once I cut in to a few.

INT. JFK QUARANTINE STATION - SAME TIME

As they arrive back at the Quarantine Station, Eph ends the call. Nora shares his disbelief.

EPH
I want to take another look at the plane. Maybe we missed something...

As they start that way, Jim approaches with Setrakian.

JIM KENT
Eph, this man --

SETRAKIAN
Dr. Goodweather, my name is Abraham Setrakian.

EPH
I can't talk now...

JIM KENT
Eph, he says he has some insight into the outbreak here.

EPH
Great. Mr. Kent here can take down your information...

Eph tries to walk away... but Setrakian won't let him.

SETRAKIAN
Please. Time is of the essence.

EPH
Jim...?

Eph asking for help getting rid of the old man.

CONTINUED:

SETRAKIAN
I have seen this disease before...
I have faced it before...

Eph stops. Setrakian has his attention... but not his belief. Eph looks at the old man's gnarled hands, his walking stick.

EPH
You've seen it before. Where?

SETRAKIAN
Long ago. You must contain it.

EPH
I assure you, we are taking every available precaution --

SETRAKIAN
You are not. And he is counting on that.

EPH
"He" who?

Setrakian checks himself. Goes more slowly:

SETRAKIAN
Please. It is too much to say all at once without sounding --

EPH
Crazy? No, of course not...

Eph begins walking down the hall with the old man.

SETRAKIAN
The bodies... they are not decomposing normally, yes?

Eph checks Nora, who is following close behind.

SETRAKIAN (CONT'D)
What I am about to say, I do not say lightly. But all the passengers on that plane, dead and alive. They must be... destroyed. Burnt. Or the head must be severed.

EPH
Okay, fellas -- here you go.

Eph hands him off to a pair of Airport Cops -- one of whom recognizes Setrakian.

CONTINUED: (2)

AIRPORT COP
Hey, Grampa -- recovered from your heart attack?

Setrakian is furious -- and desperate now.

EPH
Mr. Setrakian -- we're doctors. We don't "destroy" anybody until we've had a chance to study them, to learn what could have caused --

SETRAKIAN
There is no time for study! You must cremate the passengers and irradiate the airplane. It is the only way to stop this plague...

Eph jerks his head to the Cops, giving Setrakian the hook. The old man calls out as Eph is walking away.

SETRAKIAN (CONT'D)
Doctor! Did you find a coffin?

Eph ignores him, walking on... but Nora slows. Setrakian reads her interest, beseeching her.

SETRAKIAN (CONT'D)
If you have the coffin... then you still have him... it is not too late...

As the Cops try to pull him away, Setrakian's wolf's-head staff TWISTS in their hand... the handle separating and revealing a SHINY SILVER BLADE.

AIRPORT COP
What the hell?!

Handcuffs come out. Setrakian is being led away. He manages to hand Nora something: a small wrapped object.

SETRAKIAN
You must not allow it across the river. You understand? Do not allow it across the river!

Nora, unsettled by the old man's words, pauses a moment... then hurries after Eph.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. REGIS AIR FLIGHT 753 - NIGHT

Eph and Nora enter the now-empty aircraft through the over-wing door, wearing gloves and booties but no contact suits.

NORA
How did that old man know about the coffin?

EPH
You mean -- the cabinet.

NORA
He called it a coffin.

EPH
He was --

Fucking crazy he was about to say, except --

He spots a few CRUMBS OF SOIL on the airplane carpet.

SOMETHING IS SQUIRMING under the soil...

Three WORMS. Capillary-thin, pale white, a few inches long...

Eph brings the wand near for a better look... and the worms REACTS, wriggling away with horrible will. Its undulating movements are full of intention and intelligence.

NORA
Eph... what the hell is that?

EPH
A parasite of some kind... like a horsehair worm... only white... Parasitic. Simple. Body's structure is made of collagen. Degenerate non-functional digestive system.

Eph brings out a small acrylic box, using it to gather up the strange worms, along with the soil.

NORA
Does it live in the soil?

CONTINUED:

EPH
This things needs a host to survive. And it is desperate to find one -- see how it moves? Full of will and drive.

NORA
Eph. The soil. We need to take another look at that cabinet.

INT. REGIS AIR HANGAR - CARGO AREA - NIGHT

Eph and Nora arrive to find the same items as before -- the luggage, kayak and golf clubs, plasma TVs, crates...

...but the floor space where the cabinet was is EMPTY.

Eph goes to a nearby HAZMAT Worker.

NORA
Where’s the cabinet?

The Hazmat Worker expects it to be there, too... but it ain’t.

HAZMAT WORKER
It was right here. I saw it not ten minutes ago...

EPH
Who moved it?

Eph looks around for answers -- then remembers the security cameras in the rafters overhead.

EPH (CONT’D)
The cameras.

REGIS AIR HANGAR - OFFICE

Eph and Nora with the SITE FOREMAN, looking at CCTV monitors.

EPH
Right there.

The Site Foreman steps back the replay, showing the cargo area from the rafter camera POV.

The cabinet is there... and suddenly it is not.

CONTINUED:

NORA
Can you go slower?

He does. The timecode passes more slowly... but the cabinet still vanishes.

EPH
There must be a gap. A cut.

SITE FOREMAN
No cut. Watch the time code.

He runs it again. Same thing. But this time, Eph sees something else.

EPH
Go back. Start there. Wait...
wait... THERE.

The Site Foreman stops playback. Just missed it. He goes back a few frames...

There it is: a dark figure -- a BLUR -- just on the right edge of the screen.

EPH (CONT'D)
What the hell is that?

SITE FOREMAN
I dunno. A lens flare...?

He plays it again. A few frames after the dark blur appears, the cabinet vanishes. Nora straightens.

NORA
The old man said, "If you have the coffin, you still have him."
(beat)
Him.

She points at the blur. Chills.

NORA (CONT'D)
Is that what he's talking about?

EPH
(exasperated)
Nora... please...

NORA
When you went down in the cargo hold... you said you felt something. A presence.

CONTINUED: (2)

EPH
I was spooked, it was adrenaline. If you’re insinuating that someone was there, inside the plane... where are they now?

NORA
Wherever that coffin is.

INT. JFK UTILITY GARAGE - NIGHT

Gus on foot, sauntering down lanes of parked delivery vans and work trucks...

...until he comes to one van with government plates, the letters “CDC” on the door.

He pulls out a small tube of CRAZY GLUE and rubs it onto his fingertips. While it sets, he feels something coming from the rear cargo doors. He leans closer, listening...

It is HUMMING.

INT. JFK AIRPORT TERMINAL 4 - SAME TIME

Eph and Nora rushing. Eph goes to an Airport Cop.

EPH
We have an emergency. We need to seal off the perimeter of the airport.

NORA
Where’d you take the old man?

Away from Nora, Eph grabs his walkie.

EPH (INTO WALKIE)
Jim? Listen -- no vehicles in or out of the security zone. Got it? Jim?

EXT. JFK UTILITY GARAGE - SAME TIME

Gus exits the garage, driving in the CDC van. He turns and...

...runs right into a security checkpoint up ahead.

CONTINUED:

GUS
Chingar. Knew it.

He looks for a way out -- but there is none. A rifle-toting SWAT TEAM COP comes to the window. Time to bullshit.

SWAT TEAM COP
ID and permit.

GUS
Sure thing...

He opens the glove box. Hiding the five $100 dollar bills, he pulls out a CARD bearing the symbol of the Stoneheart Group.

EPH

Charging down a corridor, talking fast over the walkie.

EPH (INTO WALKIE)
Look for a vehicle, big enough to hold the cabinet -- at least 10 feet cargo space --

BACK TO GUS'S VAN

A CANINE HANDLER approaches the van from the rear with a GERMAN SHEPHERD. The dog HITS on something... then abruptly SITS, refusing to obey its Handler.

Gus hands the SWAT Cop the card. The SWAT Cop looks at it, then sees Gus's chest tattoo over his shirt collar.

SWAT TEAM COP
Step out of the vehicle and open the cargo area, sir.

Gus must make a stand. He goes for his concealed gun... slowly opening the door...

...but someone on the outside shuts it before he can exit.

It's Jim Kent. He shows the SWAT Cop his ID.

JIM KENT
This vehicle is one of ours. Let it through.

The SWAT Cop hesitates... then stands aside.

CONTINUED:

Gus looks to Jim for some acknowledgement. Jim looks back at him, but seems as unaware as Gus is.

Gus drives on through and away.

Jim steps away and answers Eph:

JIM KENT (INTO WALKIE) (CONT'D)
Roger, Eph. At checkpoint now. No vehicles in or out.

Then to the SWAT Team Cop --

JIM KENT (CONT'D)
No one in or out -- no exceptions.

SWAT Cop looks at the Handler in frustration... but has no choice other than to follow orders.

INT. OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER (OCME) - NIGHT

Obese Dr. Bennett examines an open body. Its cavity has been overtaken by cancerous growths. He dictates on a small recorder -- set next to a half-eaten bear claw.

DR. BENNETT
So far, five bodies exhibit abnormal growths in heart, liver and kidneys. Attachments have formed all along the small and large intestines.

He examines a heart on a tray, full of the white liquid.

DR. BENNETT (CONT'D)
The alarming fact is that all growths seems to be identical in pattern and attachment points. They do not seem like oncological aberrations but almost like new, fully functional organs...

Bodies awaiting autopsy lie on stretchers as Dr. Bennett places a corpse under a UV light unit. He turns it on. A substructure made of glowing capillary worms is revealed under the skin. A fleshy, obscenely animated map of wriggling patterns.

DR. BENNETT (CONT'D)
What the...?

Plip.

CONTINUED:

The heart beats in the tray with the fluid, the surface RIPPLES. Dr. Bennett switches off his recorder, turning for a closer look.

Plip.

SOMETHING MOVED inside the heart, below the fluid.

He pulls down another specimen jar, pouring half the oily “blood” into it, then setting down both jars side-by-side.

After a moment -- twin ripples. Plip. Plip.

Fascinated, he looks ever closer...

Behind him, just out of focus, one of the corpses SLOWLY SITS ERECT.

The heart explodes with worm activity, festooned by them. Hungry, searching. They twist their way into the fat doctor’s arm.

One of them wiggles under his skin, through the glove. Drawing blood. He screams and rips off the glove.

Three more CORPSES -- all in different stages of autopsy -- stand up and advance, slowly coming into focus...

Dr. Bennett catches the worm by its tail, yanking it off. It wiggles into his finger. Overturning a tray of instruments, he grabs a pair of pliers and yanks it loose. Bleeding through the perforation, he throws the worm in a jar...

Panting, he bends to pick up the fallen surgical instruments.

When he gets up -- the corpses are standing next to him --

-- charging at him --

-- as the screen goes BLACK.

INT. STONEHEART HEADQUARTERS - PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Palmer sits in a chair, dressed in a black suit with a white shirt. Mr Fitzpatrick knots his tie.

Palmer rises to his feet, carefully, a fragile man. Assured of his balance, he walks a few feet to the grand windows overlooking the city of New York.

Eichhorst enters like an undertaker. Palmer sees his reflection in the glass.

CONTINUED:

EICHHORST
Everything went as planned. Love is going to guide them all back... to their homes... to their loved ones. Like a beacon. Love will bring this to an end.
(beat)
One curious thing. An old man was arrested at the airport.

Palmer's head turns... ever so slightly...

EICHHORST (CONT'D)
The Jew. He's still after us. You must admire him for that. I will take care of him.

He moves away. Palmer places his bare hand against the glass, as though touching a membrane.

PALMER
A sentimental man would venture out into the city tonight. To walk these streets one last time. Before the fall.

MR. FITZPATRICK
Do you require anything, sir?

PALMER
No, Mr. Fitzpatrick... I'm sure that -- for the first time in my life -- I have everything I need.

INT. JFK AIRPORT TERMINAL 4 - NIGHT

Jim catches up with an exhausted and flummoxed Eph and Nora.

JIM KENT
Nothing?

EPH
Five hundred pounds, minimum... and the coffin just walked away... vanished.

NORA
You called it a "coffin."

Eph holds up the acrylic sample box. Inside the soil, the thin, white worms are wriggling. Jim is freaked out.

CONTINUED:

JIM KENT
What is that?

NORA
I’m starting to think this goes beyond the bounds of disease control.

EPH
The autopsies are going to answer a lot of questions. We are dealing with something new here.

NORA
Or something very, very old.

EPH
Nora -- it’s not the end of the world.

INT. 17TH PRECINCT HEADQUARTERS, NYPD - NIGHT

A RAVING LUNATIC is dragged through the booking area... past Setrakian answering questions from a ROOKIE COP.

ROOKIE COP
S-E-T-R-A-K-I-A-N...

SETRAKIAN
How soon may I leave here?

ROOKIE COP
Well... nothing happens until morning, when charges are filed. It’s almost dawn now.
(back to form)
Any identifying marks? Any scars, or tattoos...?

After a moment, Setrakian unbuttons his sleeve, rolling back the cuff to reveal, on his left forearm, an old tattoo.

Six black numbers: 230385.

ROOKIE COP (CONT’D)
That’s some ink you got there, old man. Hip. Mean anything?

SETRAKIAN
It means that true evil exists.

I/E. CDC SUPPLY VAN - MOVING - NIGHT

Gus pulls out his phone while driving and dials.

GUS (INTO PHONE) Mama?
Is me, Gusto... No, no trouble... I'm working, Mama... just checking in... Crispin home...?

INT. ELIZALDE'S HOME - NIGHT

Gus's MOTHER, a kind, old Mexican woman, speaks quietly on the phone. In the background, CRISPIN (30), a junkie-thin manchild, blobs out on the sofa, channel surfing blindly.

MOTHER
He is. Bendito Dios. At least he's here, where I can watch him.

CRISPIN
Who's that, Mama?

I/E. CDC SUPPLY VAN - MOVING - NIGHT

Gus frowns at that answer. On the seat next to him are the copies of his, his mother's, and his brother's IDs.

GUS (INTO PHONE)
I'm crossing the bridge now... I'll be home in an hour -- and I'm gonna bring you breakfast... Mama? Te quiero.

MOTHER
I love you, too.

He hangs up, tucks the phone in his jacket, lights a cigarette and smiles.

GUS
(to himself)
Damn. Life is good.

In the back -- the coffin.

EXT. QUEENSBORO (59TH STREET) BRIDGE - WIDE REVEAL - DAWN

The CDC van crosses the Brooklyn Bridge over the East River into Manhattan as the sun rises on the unsuspecting city...

EXT. GARY ATCHISON’S HOUSE - DAWN

Gary Atchison pulls into his driveway. He can’t face going inside his house... but he has to. He drags himself out of his car, walking to the front door.

As he stands there, picking out the right key...

...a SMALL FIGURE moves into view behind him.

We hear a light RASPING... like someone trying to breathe through an obstruction in their throat...

Gary hears it and stiffens. He turns...

It is his daughter, Emma. Still wearing the same dress, though dirty now. Her eyes stare vacantly, as though she is in deep shock...

EMMA ATCHISON
(hoarse)
Daddy. I am cold. So cold. Let me in.

Gary moves to her -- a mass of emotion -- then clutches her to his chest, hugging her hard... and sweeps her up, carrying her...

...into their home.

THE END