THE MESSENGERS:

PILOT:

"AWAKENING"

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CW Revision

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ACT ONE

OVER BLACK a ‘40s crooner SINGS about the one who got away...

FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - HOUSTON - DAY

The hot summer sun beats down on a rough street in Houston circa 2007. Folks sweating in their Sunday best, heading for the neighborhood church, paying no mind to the beat-up OLDSMOBILE parked across the street...

INT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY

The incongruous ‘40s MUSIC comes from the car radio.

A pale, hollow-eyed teenager, GARY (18), fidgets nervously as he peers out the window at a group of three young men who loiter near the church stoop. Dressed like GANGBANGERS, they exude a tough vibe.

Gary reaches under a pile of fast food wrappers on the passenger seat and retrieves a HANDGUN. His hand trembling slightly, he flips off the SAFETY as --

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH - HOUSTON - DAY

Arm-in-arm, a young African-American couple, ROSE and JAMES (mid-20s), cross in front of Gary’s car.

ROSE
We could move out of here, you know. Someplace cleaner, safer. With your new job...

JAMES
My hypothetical job.

ROSE
The job you’re definitely gonna get. I have this inkling.

He gives her a smile. Totally in love.

JAMES
I like your inklings.

She grins at him -- but then a wave of vertigo hits her, and Rose stumbles. James catches and steadies her.

JAMES (CONT’D)
Whoa there.

He notices her blank expression.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Rose? Are you okay?

ROSE
Something bad is coming...

JAMES
What are you talking about?

Beyond James, Rose sees Gary walking toward the Gangbangers, muttering to himself. He pulls the gun from his jacket, unnoticed by anyone but Rose...

JAMES (CONT'D)
Rose? *Rose.*

Gary moves right past the Gangbangers and levels the gun at his real target -- ROSE.

For a moment all the SOUND falls out and they lock eyes. Gary hesitates, but then, before Rose can scream, the SOUND returns with a -- BANG! -- as he shoots her. BANG! -- again.

Rose crumples to the ground. The Gangbangers dive for cover. Bystanders scatter, panicked and screaming --

And Gary, blinking in shock, drops the gun and turns away, walking then running --

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Gary rounds a corner and slows, out of breath. A bolt of pain shoots through his chest, and he falls to his knees. Stunned, he looks up to the sky...

GARY
No! I did what you asked! What is this? I tried...

And as his voice starts to catch in his throat, something strange happens -- wrinkles and a deathly pallor creep across his face -- and he touches his own skin, in a panic --

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH - HOUSTON - DAY

Blood everywhere, a frantic James tries to put pressure on the wounds in Rose's chest...

JAMES
You're gonna be okay. You're gonna be okay. Please, Rose... please...

But her breathing is labored, blood at her lips...

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Gary holds his face in his hands. And when he finally looks up -- incredibly, he's now an OLD MAN (80s), wrinkled and continuing to desiccate...

And with a gesture of supplication to the sky, he DIES, and his flesh dissolves to DUST, leaving his clothes behind...

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH - HOUSTON - DAY

As the life leaves Rose's eyes, she continues to stare straight up at the BLINDING SUN --

THE MESSENGERS

EXT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - HOUSTON, TX - DAY

A massive MEGACHURCH dominates the landscape.

SUPER: SEVEN YEARS LATER; HOUSTON, TEXAS

JOSHUA JR. (PRELAP)
Does God want us to fear him?

The last stragglers hurry into the front entrance...

INT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - AUDITORIUM - DAY

A theater that seats 10,000. And it's full. And everyone is rapt by charismatic preacher JOSHUA SIMMONS JR. (mid 20s), smooth and polished in his earnest conviction.

JOSHUA JR.
Does he? Is that what you think?

Members of the predominately white congregation shake their heads, murmur: "no, never."

JOSHUA JR. (CONT'D)
I don't think so either, friends.
My father's teachings...

A nod to JOSHUA SIMMONS SR. (60s), a white-haired dynamo from a different era, who sits among a group of church elders on the stage behind Joshua Jr.

JOSHUA JR. (CONT'D)
...show us that God wants us to
LOVE.
(MORE)

JOSHUA JR. (CONT'D)
He want us to love Him, to love our neighbors, to love, most importantly, *ourselves* -- as we are His creations...

He pauses, reading the audience, pulling them close, intimate...

JOSHUA JR. (CONT'D)
I ask you to remember John 10:10. "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." That's what Jesus brought to humanity. LIFE.

A CAMERA records Joshua Jr.'s sermon -- and suddenly we careen out -- as A SIGNAL flies -- through WIRES into the WALL -- to a BROADCAST SATELLITE ANTENNA on the ROOF --

Joshua Jr.'s voice crackles with static, broken into packets of information -- and suddenly we are in --

EXT. GEOSTATIONARY ORBIT

22,000 miles below, Earth curves out, a marbled blue sphere.

A COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE glints in the sun, swimming into view, collecting a CHATTER OF DATA, out of which we hear:

JOSHUA JR. (V.O.)
Believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, friends, and you have nothing to fear... not destitution, not the Devil, not Judgement -- nothing --

BLINDING LIGHT and ROAR OF HEAT -- something FLASHES past the satellite, barely missing it --

EXT. NASA DEEP SPACE OBSERVATORY - DAY

Gears groaning, hydraulic pistons engaging -- a huge, seventy-meter-tall RADIO ANTENNA DISH rotates, tracking a signal --

SUPER: NEW MEXICO

Several such DISH ANTENNAS tower over a couple of small, pre-fab buildings -- marked with the NASA seal.

VERA MARKOV (early 30s), an intense, brilliant spitfire, indicates the movement of the largest dish to a sweating, suited good-ol-boy, U.S. Rep. WILLIAM RICHMOND (50s).

VERA
We're not only in constant communication with our deep space exploration vessels, but also tracking asteroids and comets with the potential to strike Earth, mapping celestial radio sources --

RICHMOND
I'm burning up. How do you do it?

Vera's thrown off her train of thought. He looks her over, not altogether appropriately.

RICHMOND (CONT'D)
Probably a lot of sunbathing...

Holds her tongue:

VERA
Sir, this is a vital --

RICHMOND
Miss Markov. You're telling me you're looking for E.T. in the middle of a budget crisis...

VERA
That's not at all a fair characterization --

RICHMOND
I'm not seeing how any of your... *science* out here is "vital" or relevant. I'm recommending a 50% cut in your annual budget. We have to think about the economic future, fiscal responsibility... Do you have children?

A brief *something* in Vera, but she doesn't speak.

RICHMOND (CONT'D)
If you did, you'd understand.

Vera pauses. Gathers a response...

VERA
You know, it's kind of a relief. I've been having such a hard time trying to justify my expense account to people who are so... *actually significant*, like you...

RICHMOND
Well, well, it's not so much --

VERA
-- I mean, I'm sure you're just as qualified to judge the research of an internationally renowned team of radio-astronomers as you are to hold public office.

It takes a moment...

RICHMOND
Excuse me?

VERA
Your daddy's oil money. It qualifies you for both, right?

And if he was boiling before...

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DEEP SPACE OBSERVATORY - MOMENTS LATER

ALAN CHIN (30s), a handsome, introverted techie, is drawn out of his reverie by an anomaly, which you or I would never see, in the data scrolling across his several computer screens...

ALAN
What the -- ?

Vera storms in --

VERA
God *damnit*.

Alan's fixed on the screen.

ALAN
How-did-it-go-I-assume-poorly, but first, you should see this.

She's over his shoulder, politics forgotten, in a heartbeat.

VERA
What?

A few KEYSTROKES, and Vera and Alan peer at the screen. We don't see what appears there, but whatever it is --

VERA (CONT'D)
Jesus.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

An adorable young girl in a ballet outfit, AMY (8), focuses on completing an oil pastel drawing, a desert landscape with a RISING YELLOW SUN filling the horizon...

SUPER: PHOENIX, AZ

Amy's mother, ERIN (mid 20s), bubbly despite the stress in her life, peers over Amy's shoulder...

ERIN
Wow! You're getting good at those sunrises, Van Gogh.

AMY
I don't want to be Van Gogh. He cut off his ear.

Erin tickles her -- and Amy giggles, in heaven.

ERIN
And your ears are so cute, too!

The RINGING of Erin's cell phone. Erin pulls away.

ERIN (CONT'D)
Hands. Wash. We leave in three minutes.

Erin answers the phone.

ERIN (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hello?

Amy keeps coloring. Erin pokes her: "go!" Amy exits...

ERIN (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hello? Who is this?
(whispers)
Ronnie? If that's you... I swear. I know what you're trying to do, but she's not going with you. You hear me? So long as I live, not again.

AROUND A CORNER

Amy listens, distressed. A television plays at low volume in the background.

ERIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(into phone)
I'm hanging up.
(louder)
Amy!? Ready?

Amy slips away as Erin enters the room, unaware her daughter has been listening -- and heads to the television, on which we see Joshua Jr, and catch a snippet --

JOSHUA JR.
(on television)
...our Lord Jesus Christ, friends, and you have nothing to fear...

-- before Erin turns it off --

CUT TO:

ANOTHER TELEVISION, this one with a grainy picture, plays Joshua Jr's sermon, dubbed in Spanish...

JOSHUA JR. (CONT'D)
(Spanish, dubbed)
[...nothing to fear... not destitution, not the Devil, not Judgement...]

SUPER: JUAREZ, MEXICO

Reveal the television plays in the corner of...

INT. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - CAFETERIA - DAY

INMATES in prison garb shuffle in line, approaching a narrow slot, through which disembodied hands proffer lunch trays.

Armed GUARDS watch their every move.

One particular inmate, RAUL (early-mid 30s), handsome, hard, cartel tattoos snaking up his arms, surveys the room like he owns the place, and cuts to the front of the line.

As he takes his tray, a SCRAWNY MAN steps close behind him --

SCRAWNY MAN
(Spanish, subtitled)
[Don't turn around.]
(Raul freezes)
[The Chief thinks you're going to testify. It's coming. Today. That's all I know.]

All the color and confidence drain from Raul, who turns slowly to the cafeteria full of killers and dealers...

And only now does he realize that no one is looking his way, like they all know what's coming...

CUT TO:

BLUE SKY

Perfect, quiet, still, just a few wisps of cloud --

SUPER: FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

-- until a BRIGHT LIGHT, like a shooting star, but half the speed, FLASHES briefly --

A young man, PETER WHITE (17), soft features, stares up -- having seen the light. He seems transfixed --

Then a voice reaches him --

ALICE (O.S.)
Hey. Hey. Peter.

He turns back and we find --

EXT. FAYETTEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Peter, an Emo outsider with a long swimmer's body, next to ALICE (16), a flower-child born decades too late --

Both sitting on the edge of their high school's front steps, a swarm of students rushing past them, out into the world...

ALICE
Space cadet. Are you even listening?

PETER
Sorry?

She just looks at him a moment, a little exasperated.

ALICE
Well, I was trying to ask when you were heading to Lindsey's party...

PETER
I'm not sure I'm going. It'll be too...

ALICE
Too... much fun? You can't swim laps *all* night... and also I want you to drive.

OUT OF NOWHERE, a hand SLAPS the back of Peter's head, HARD.

Peter moves to defend himself, but his attacker has already bounded down the stairs. SAM (17), a rough, muscular hick backed by three other HICK THUGS, turns around to sneer --

SAM
Ya know, hanging out with this slut isn't foolin' anybody.

Peter's eyes burn into the ground, and we can feel the fire trying to get out... but he remains quiet, still.

SAM (CONT'D)
We all know you're a fag.

Alice looks from Peter to Sam.

ALICE
Hey Sam. You know Susan Davidson, from Springdale, right?

Sam looks over to his friends, laughs.

SAM
You could say that.

ALICE
So she was right about the four-inches thing? I guess it's not that surprising.

Sam turns bright red as his friends crack up.

SAM
She's pissed 'cause I dumped her.

Peter can't help but laugh. Sam points at him.

SAM (CONT'D)
Next time I see you, you're dead.

He turns on a dime and storms off -- swatting away the jokes of his friends. Peter's smile fades.

PETER
That didn't help, Alice.

Peter stands up.

ALICE
What, I'm just supposed to sit there?

PETER
It's hard enough without you defending me.

He leaves. Alice watches him, then looks up, to the SKY.

CUT TO:

ON A SCREEN

A computer model of the trajectory of an OBJECT, speeding through the atmosphere toward Earth...

ALAN (O.S.)
Yeah, we've got something anomalous...

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DEEP SPACE OBSERVATORY - DAY

Vera and Alan are back where we left them, peering at the computer screen. Alan speaks into a headset.

ALAN
Extra-orbit entry...
(to Vera)
He wants to know, what is it?

VERA
Haven't the foggiest... but we can at least project...

She hits a few keys, pushing Alan aside, a familiarity and intimacy about them...

VERA (CONT'D)
Move, move.

ALAN
(into headset)
We're checking...

Manipulating a few variables on the screen, aligning with a topographical map...

VERA
Whatever it is, it's going to hit in about fifteen seconds right around...

She's stunned. Alan studies the screen. But Vera's already heading out the door --

OUTSIDE

Vera emerges in time to see --

A FALLING STAR -- a bright light cutting across the sky, bigger and CLOSER than Peter saw it --

Vera gawks as the light disappears behind a rise, coming down some distance away --

A BEAT of nothing. Then: A BLINDING FLASH --

And a PULSE OF ENERGY expands -- RUSHING toward Vera -- but she can't pull herself away, fascinated, eyes wide -- as a wave of nearly invisible distortion HITS her --

And passes right through -- causing the slightest disturbance in Vera, like a SHIVER AT THE MOLECULAR LEVEL --

And now there's something EMPTY about Vera's unmoving eyes...

INSIDE

The electronic equipment around Alan BLINKS OUT and GOES HAYWIRE -- Alan fiddles with controls --

ALAN
(into headset)
Whoa, that was... Maybe an electromagnetic pulse...? Hello? You there?

He fiddles with controls. And yells out the open door...

ALAN (CONT'D)
Vera! Something weird is going on!

OUTSIDE

Vera still stands FROZEN -- and then COLLAPSES, UNCONSCIOUS...

EXT. HIGHWAY / INT. CAR - PHOENIX, AZ - DAY

A mellow yellow Bug. Oldies on the radio. Erin drives and Amy in her tutu bops along to the music and pops GOLDFISH CRACKERS from a small bag. Fast:

ERIN
Idaho?

AMY
Boise.

ERIN
Texas?

AMY
Austin.

ERIN
Kentucky?

AMY
Frankfort.

Erin pauses.

ERIN
Frankfort?

Amy nods. Crunching a Goldfish.

AMY
Can we go to Texas this summer?

ERIN
Why do you want to go to Texas?

AMY
I've never been to Texas.

ERIN
You've not been a lot of places.
You're eight.

AMY
I *know*.

ERIN
I do have a cousin in Houston.

They're silent for a moment. The music.

AMY
I'm not going to Dad's anymore?

ERIN
No, sweetie...

AMY
Did he do something wrong again?

Erin looks to her daughter, seeing the confusion in her eyes.

The MUSIC suddenly crackles with STATIC and the dashboard lights FLICKER -- Erin turns to see an almost invisible wave of distortion, like a mirage, rapidly approaching...

As Amy, oblivious, tries to tune the radio, the sound comes back in... and she looks to her mother --

Who is FROZEN, eyes unmoving. Erin goes LIMP --

AMY (CONT'D)
Mom?!

The car VEERS straight for the median as Amy SCREAMS --

INT. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - CORRIDOR - DAY

-- a metal door SLAMS -- Raul, his wrists zip-tied, is the last in a line of inmates led by four SECURITY GUARDS...

Raul's on edge, trying to keep an eye on the sinister inmates near him. He fingers a shard of knife-like metal, ready...

At a doorway, a GUARD stops Raul -- and CLOSES THE DOOR, leaving him behind with the THREE REMAINING GUARDS...

All three pull their guns, fan around a cornered Raul...

GUARD #1
[The Chief knows.]

Raul realizes these are his last moments, but he doesn't cower. Even three guns against one piece of jagged metal, the Guards know this won't be easy...

But then the lights FLICKER, electronic locks CLICK... and that same almost imperceptible WAVE of distortion passes through him, causing that molecular-level SHIVER --

And Raul FREEZES, eyes empty -- and COLLAPSES --

INT. YMCA - DAY

Peter extends his long body in a stretch -- naked torso, swim-cap, racing swim-shorts. A chatter of echoing voices nearby, but nothing distinct... He pulls on his goggles...

The sound DROPS OUT, as he inhales, breathing deeply, closing his eyes, finally at peace -- and DIVES --

UNDERWATER. The crystal blue of the pool. Here, Peter is perfect. A self-sufficient machine, propelling himself forward with controlled, powerful strokes...

Until -- the lights FLICKER, and there's a kind of ENERGY VIBRATION, the slightest *distortion*, in the water --

And with that strange shiver, Peter's eyes FREEZE OPEN under water -- and his strokes cease --

JOSHUA JR. (PRE-LAP)
...And before we all go our separate ways, brothers and sisters...

Floating facedown, bubbles escaping his mouth, unconscious...

INT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Joshua Jr brings his sermon to a close, as the congregation prepares to beat the rush to the parking lot...

JOSHUA JR.
I pray that you may prosper in all things, just as your --

He cuts off in the middle of his sentence, caught off-guard by something -- and the audience members notice...

JOSHUA JR. (CONT'D)
Do you hear that?

A seated Joshua Senior leans forward -- annoyed...

JOSHUA JR. (CONT'D)
Who is that?

The lights FLICKER. And only Joshua, in fear, sees the now nearly subliminal wave of distortion approach -- then he FREEZES and COLLAPSES -- GASPS from the audience --

BROADCAST CAMERA FOOTAGE: several staff members RUSH to him --

INT. NASA DEEP SPACE OBSERVATORY - DAY

Alan is in the midst of re-booting his system, checking various diagnostics. Speaking into the wireless headset...

ALAN
Looks like it's all coming back on line... just a temporary glitch. I'll grab Vera...

He moves to the open doorway --

OUTSIDE

Seeing where Vera lies sprawled in the hot sun --

ALAN
Vera!

He rushes to her -- touches her shoulder --

ALAN (CONT'D)
Vera! Wake up!
(into headset)
She passed out! Send an ambulance...

He checks her vitals... for breathing... for a pulse... Horror on Alan's face...

ALAN (CONT'D)
(into headset)
I can't find a pulse.

In the wide desert, Alan and Vera are just specks --

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: A MAN'S SUNBURNT FACE

More than just sunburnt. Like his flesh has been singed and still smolders. Pulling out, we're at the...

EXT. IMPACT SITE - DAY

The sun beats down on the THE MAN's naked body, fetal in a patch of blackened sand. He's muscular and lean, his whole body as burnt as his face...

And he's not breathing. DEAD. Until...

He GASPS, COUGHS. He pulls himself up, peels open his dry, bloodshot eyes...

As he staggers to his feet like a newborn foal, we see the sand around him is scorched black in a STAR-SHAPED PATTERN exploding ten meters wide. The impact site.

The Man looks up to the sky, directly into the blinding SUN. He stares, without blinking, without discomfort...

And SMILES.

THE MAN
Wake up.

Blast out on the WHITE HOT SUN --

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - BACK STAGE - DAY

Move with Joshua Jr, pallid and lifeless, as he is carried on a stretcher by two INTERNS, who slide him onto a table...

A YOUNG INTERN (19), baby-faced, starts tentatively examining Joshua Jr, but no one else is paying much attention...

...As we are in the midst of the staging area for the massive undertaking that is Redeemer's Wednesday service -- Church ELDERS and PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS in a state of PANIC --

TALL ELDER
Did we cut the live feed? Anybody?

P.A.
We're in "intruder" mode... so it's cut, playing the choir...

STOUT ELDER
Where's the medic?

Senior strides in, full of fire -- and all turn to him.

SENIOR
What was that? Was that planned?

No answer...

SENIOR (CONT'D)
Well, where the hell is my son?

All eyes turn to the terrified-looking Young Intern, standing over Joshua Jr...

YOUNG INTERN
I don't think he's breathing...

Senior's stunned expression --

INT. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - CORRIDOR - DAY

A haggard PRISON DOCTOR (50s) kneels over Raul, who is limp on the floor. He feels for a pulse. Looks up to the three GUARDS, who still seem wary, guns drawn...

PRISON DOCTOR
(Spanish, subtitled)
[Dead.]

GUARD #1
[How did he die?]

The Doctor shrugs: what do I know?

PRISON DOCTOR
[Heart attack?]

GUARD #2
[What a pussy.]

The Guards laugh, releasing nervous tension...

INT. YMCA - DAY

A GRIZZLED MAN (50s) drags Peter out of the pool. Peter is cold and blue. A couple of young KIDS gawk.

As we pull up and away, a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN rushes in and starts CPR in earnest...

CUT TO:

A VISION. Pure, blinding light... a figure, silhouetted...

THE MAN (V.O.)
Wake up.

EXT. NASA DEEP SPACE OBSERVATORY - DAY

Vera GASPS AWAKE -- surprising the PARAMEDIC who is leaning over her --

VERA
Michael!

She blinks back to reality, her gaze landing on Alan, who kneels next to her -- with tears in his eyes --

ALAN
Vera. You're... okay.

VERA
Yeah, I'm okay. I just... I just must have been dehydrated...

The Paramedic stops Vera from getting to her feet.

PARAMEDIC
You should probably stay sitting for a minute there...

VERA
I'm fine.

PARAMEDIC
You sure? This guy's name is Alan.

Vera looks at the Paramedic, confused.

ALAN
You said Michael. When you woke up. Who's that?

This throws Vera. She doesn't answer.

PARAMEDIC
Frankly, you don't seem fine. But there's nothing physically I see --

VERA
I'm *fine*. And we gotta go find out what the hell that was. The impact...

She pushes herself up to stand, but staggers, almost falling. Alan steadies her, holds onto her.

ALAN
No, you need to get some rest. Whatever it was, it can wait.

He brushes a strand of her hair aside. Then KISSES her. Brief but tender, familiar. Pulls back and looks into her eyes.

ALAN (CONT'D)
You're really okay?

She nods. And looks away, unable to hold his gaze.

INT. HOSPITAL - PHOENIX - DAY

AN ELECTRIC JOLT from a DEFIBRILLATOR jars Erin's limp body -- but there's no response. A FLATLINE on the heart monitor.

ANOTHER JOLT. Nothing.

An OLDER DOCTOR leans close over Erin, who seems battered by the car wreck... He checks his watch, turns to two NURSES.

OLDER DOCTOR
Call it. 4:15pm.

A nurse moves to cart Erin's body out, when suddenly --

ERIN SITS UP, GASPING!

The Nurse leaps back, stifling a yell. The Older Doctor stops in the doorway, dumbstruck.

Erin blinks, gaining her bearings -- remembering --

ERIN
Where's Amy? *Where's my daughter?*

The others are too stunned to respond.

INT. YMCA - DAY

On his side, covered in a towel, blue and dead, Peter COUGHS AWAKE -- HACKING OUT water on the cold cement...

He comes out of the blur, shaking his head awake, and lifts his eyes to see --

A GAGGLE OF ONLOOKERS staring at him, briefly horrified...

Before the Middle-Aged Woman gets over her shock and moves toward Peter as he struggles to stand --

She helps him to his feet, taking him by the arm, draping the towel over his shoulders...

PETER
Thank you...

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
There are kids here. Why would you do this here?

PETER
What's... do what?

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
It's a sin, is what it is. Taking your own life.

Peter moves to speak, but nothing comes out. He looks at everyone around him, staring, judging...

She leads him to an adjacent hallway... where he sees a couple of POLICE OFFICERS arriving...

INT. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - BARE ROOM - DAY

Raul's eyes BLINK OPEN. A light BUZZES above. Disoriented, he sits up with difficulty, his wrists still zip-tied...

He glances over, and is stunned to see, on the adjacent cot --

A MAN'S CORPSE, THE THROAT SLIT EAR-TO-EAR --

Raul nearly falls off the cot, just managing to catch his balance and land on his feet...

...and notices that there's a TAG tied to his toe. Looking around, he realizes --

HE'S IN THE PRISON MORGUE.

Raul moves to a door, finding it unlocked...

INT. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - CORRIDOR - DAY

Raul walks quickly -- incredulously -- through an empty, low-security section of the prison. Ahead: DAYLIGHT.

INT. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Pushing through an UNLOCKED DOOR, Raul finds himself only one more gate away from the outside world --

And nearly bumps straight into Security Guard #1.

Both men freeze -- and the Guard backs away, afraid...

With a rush of intense pain, Raul hears an overwhelming RINGING like TINNITUS... and from out of the noise come fragments that almost sound like words...

GUARD #1 (V.O.)
...muerto... fantasma...

The Guard makes the sign of the cross. Holding his head in pain, Raul staggers past him, out the door...

EXT. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - CONTINUOUS

Where the bombardment stops... Raul shakes off the strange sensation. Regains his bearings. HE'S OUTSIDE THE PRISON.

Raul glances back to the door -- no one following -- and begins to hurry away, not running, not looking back...

As the SUN burns down...

DISSOLVE TO:

WHITE

A HUMMED UNDERTONE... Out of the blur emerge...

INT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - BACK STAGE - DAY

HANDS, palms down. Several ELDERS, Senior among them, muttering prayers, eyes closed... above us... above...

Joshua Jr, whose eyes are in the process of blinking open. He lifts his head, looking around, disoriented --

And makes eye contact with the gobsmacked Intern who struggles to find his voice...

YOUNG INTERN
Um... Everyone? Everyone?!

One by one, the Elders open their eyes to see Joshua Jr...

STOUT ELDER
Joshua...

Senior opens his eyes. Seeing his son alive, he's astonished, sincerely euphoric.

SENIOR
Josh, you were gone... Praise Jesus...

But Joshua Jr seems too disoriented to respond... Something clarifies for him, and he turns to his father --

JOSHUA JR.
I need to make a broadcast. Tonight...

SENIOR
Anything, son.

STOUT ELDER
We must share our miracle!

Joshua Jr stands...

JOSHUA JR.
If only that were all...

The others look to Joshua Jr, but he is not forthcoming, turning away from them... Whatever has happened to him, he is *changed... haunted...*

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Erin, looking haunted herself, nearly catatonic, still too shocked to cry, sits alone in an ICU waiting room...

Down a hallway approach two police officers. In the lead is a large REDHEADED DETECTIVE (30s) with an angry bearing. His PARTNER (30s) trails behind...

When Erin sees the officers, she pulls herself up, vulnerable but somehow defiant...

The Redheaded Detective strides straight up to Erin --

And SLAPS HER ACROSS THE FACE.

There's a stunned beat. The Detective is furious and volatile...

REDHEADED DETECTIVE
If she dies, I'll make sure you go to jail for the rest of your life.

A NURSE appears, drawn by the noise. Seeing her, the Detective's Partner leans in...

PARTNER
Ronnie, I'm not sure this is the best...

RONNIE, the Redheaded Detective, Erin's ex-husband, moves close to her, speaks in a menacing whisper...

RONNIE
And no matter what happens, you sure as hell won't have custody...

ERIN
It was an accident...

RONNIE
Really? The arresting officers have already logged that you were drinking...

ERIN
But that's not true.

RONNIE
What they say is true. And they look out for their own.

There's real panic here.

ERIN
Ronnie. Don't. Please...

Tears in his eyes, at first almost vulnerable...

RONNIE
You take my daughter away from me?
(hard)
You'll learn to regret everything.

The Nurse moves toward them, and Ronnie breaks off, storming away, trailed by his Partner...

Erin is shaken, on so many levels...

EXT. VERA’S HOUSE - DAY

A desert outpost. Adobe and low-slung. One with its bleak environment. Next door, there is a dilapidated playground, complete with rusted SWING-SET.

INT. VERA’S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Vera SPLASHES her face with water. Reaching for a towel, she stops -- staring at her own reflection.

She seems to come to a decision.

INT. VERA’S HOUSE - BEDROOM

Vera strides with purpose to the closet, flinging open the doors. From under a pile of clothes, she extracts a FILE BOX.

Moments later, the box sits on her bed. Vera stares. It’s clearly labeled:

“MICHAEL, JR.”

Vera lays her hands on the box, a holy object -- on the verge of opening it... But it’s just too much. She can’t.

Instead, she turns away and takes out her phone, hitting speed-dial...

VERA
(into phone)
Alan. Either you’re taking me to the impact site, now, or I’m going alone.

Behind her, the box sits, unopened...

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Her back to us, Erin stands before a glowing VENDING MACHINE. A FEMALE DOCTOR approaches, and Erin turns to look...

The Doctor starts talking, but at first we don’t hear. Moving closer, we catch snippets...

FEMALE DOCTOR
...stabilized, and there is a slim chance... to be prepared... cases like this, she may never wake...

Erin, her face a mask, looks past the Doctor to the vending machine, staring at SOMETHING we don’t see...

It mesmerizes her... we finally see it:

A BAG OF GOLDFISH CRACKERS.

CUT TO:

VARIOUS CHIPS AND SNACKS, ARRAYED FOR SALE...

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

A shifty CLERK (40s), nametag: “JOHNNY”, sits behind the counter watching a subtitled Mexican SOAP OPERA on a television between a couple BLACK-AND-WHITE SECURITY FEEDS.

On one of the FEEDS, which covers the FRONT DOOR, movement approaches... but Johnny pays no mind, focused on his soap...

DING. The SOUND of the door opening.

Johnny glances to the security monitor, in which he sees a BRIGHT LIGHT seeming to enter the store.

Unthinking, he looks back to the soap, then processes what he’s seen and peers at the feed, confirming a GLOWING WHITE FIGURE stands in the store...

Johnny swivels slowly in his seat to see -- standing where the glow on the screen would indicate --

THE MAN, stark naked but healed of his burns, standing before him. Johnny picks up the phone...

JOHNNY
Definitely calling the cops, bro.

But the Man flashes him a dazzling smile. A handsome devil. And lifts his hand in a gesture: wait.

THE MAN
Friend. I seem to find myself in need of some clothes.

Phone poised in his hand, Johnny looks at the Man curiously.

JOHNNY
We don’t really... sell clothes.

But the Man just smiles.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

A LIZARD soaks in the warmth of the still sun-hot pavement. DING. The door opens.

The lizard skitters away as a figure steps out. Fully clothed. Nametag: Johnny.

The Man is now dressed in the clerk's clothes. He looks out to the road, watching a set of HEADLIGHTS pass...

EXT. DESERT ROAD / INT. HONDA - NIGHT

In his nondescript sedan, Alan drives Vera as they pass the convenience store. Vera's monitoring a handheld GPS DEVICE.

VERA
And you actually spoke to them?

ALAN
Yeah, the brass say they've got it covered. Whatever it is.

VERA
The energy from the impact *knocked me out*. Something I can't explain happened, and I feel... like I really have to get to the bottom of this...

ALAN
You know, you didn't answer... when I asked who Michael is...

She's silent for a moment. Finally...

VERA
He's somebody who's been gone a long time.

Alan sees that's all he's going to get.

ALAN
Sorry if I...

VERA
Don't worry about it.

Vera turns on the radio low to a news program...

ALAN
When I got to you, I couldn't find your pulse. It was just me being panicked. But until you woke up, I thought you might be...

VERA
Well, I wasn't.

ALAN
Afterward, though... it made me *realize* something. Or, it made me realize I needed to *say* something.

Alan's opening up, but Vera turns up the NEWS, distracted...

ALAN (CONT'D)
I know you say you can't really *be* with someone, and you know I've definitely, uh, enjoyed what we do have, but I really need to --

RADIO NEWS (V.O.)
...May have noticed some weird hiccups in electrical systems this afternoon...

Vera holds up a finger. Not noticing Alan deflate.

VERA
Shh. Listen.

RADIO NEWS (V.O.)
...Well, sources at NASA tell us that you can thank a giant solar flare...

VERA
What?! What NASA sources? We're NASA sources. There was no solar flare!

RADIO NEWS (V.O.)
...For a burst of radiation that disrupted radio signals across North America...

She silences the radio, almost excited. Glances at the GPS...

VERA
Turn here.

Alan takes a side road, into the desert.

VERA (CONT'D)
Why would they say it was a solar flare?

ALAN
I guess it could be some kind of misunderstanding...

As the car crests a rise, a desert expanse opens up before them -- revealing --

A SWARM OF MILITARY VEHICLES AND PERSONNEL converged around an area in the middle of nowhere -- THE IMPACT SITE --

VERA
Yeah. A misunderstanding.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Vera and Alan leave the car behind and approach a roadblock on foot. An armored Humvee straddles the road, flanked by a couple of soldiers...

Vera, leading a hesitant Alan, spots men in HAZMAT SUITS piling out of another Humvee... before a stoic SOLDIER (20s) steps in front of her.

SOLDIER
You need to turn around, folks. Toxic spill.

VERA
You expect me to believe that?

SOLDIER
Yes, ma'am.

Vera looks him over, evaluating.

VERA
You have no idea what's going on, do you? Does anyone?

SOLDIER
You need to move on.

She flashes her NASA credentials. He peers at them.

VERA
What I *need* to do is talk to your commanding officer.

SOLDIER
Not possible, m'am. For your own protection.

ALAN
Maybe we should go...

VERA
Well, if it's for *my own protection*...

She spins around and heads for the car, Alan trailing...

ALAN
I have a feeling I'm not going to like whatever it is you're thinking...

VERA
There's no way they have a roadblock on the bridle path...

ALAN
Point for Alan.

INT. HOSPITAL - OFFICE - NIGHT

Peter, still shirtless and draped in the towel, sits across from a YOUNG PSYCHIATRIST (late 20s) who flips through a file on his desk -- then looks up --

YOUNG PSYCHIATRIST
Why don't you have a shirt or shoes?

PETER
Because when I was out, someone stole my clothes from the side of the pool. Do psychiatrists always interrogate people who almost drown?

YOUNG PSYCHIATRIST
Your previous suicide attempt is in your file, Peter.

Peter goes cold.

PETER
That was a long time ago, and it doesn't have anything to do with today. I was swimming, and the next thing I know, I'm coughing up water. That's the end of it. I have school tomorrow. Early.

The Young Psychiatrist studies Peter, seeming to acquiesce...

YOUNG PSYCHIATRIST
We'll need to notify one of your parents, then you can go.

PETER
Notify the group foster home. Where I live. Is that not in your file?

They stare at each other.

EXT. JUNK YARD - JUAREZ - NIGHT

Still in his prison jumpsuit, Raul slips through an overgrown junk yard... toward a SHED...

INT. SHED - MOMENTS LATER

SNAP! The ZIP-TIE on Raul's wrists BREAKS under the pressure from a VISE.

Shaking his numb but freed wrists, Raul peers around the dark space, which is full of tools.

He reaches under a workbench and extracts a plastic bag taped there. He finds inside: HANDGUN, DISPOSABLE CELL PHONE, CASH.

His eyes land on a pair of paint-spattered OVERALLS...

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Raul, wearing the overalls over his prison garb, powers up the cell phone as he walks...

He presses and holds down ONE. Speed-dialling. There's no ring, just a TONE. He speaks in perfect, unaccented English.

RAUL
Hotel. Alpha. Whiskey. Kilo.

A filtered RECORDING comes on:

RECORDING
Access granted. State desired extension.

RAUL
Eight. Three. Five. Seven. Seven.

RINGING... A FILTERED VOICE comes through...

FILTERED VOICE
We heard you were dead.

RAUL
Did you cry?

FILTERED VOICE
Where are you?

RAUL
Compromised. I require extraction. You need to get me to Houston.

Raul continues walking, keeping to the shadows...

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

A BRIDLE PATH in the shadows of a steep ridge. Vera, eyes locked on the GPS, and Alan, carrying a laptop case, hike along the trough created by centuries of hooves and boots.

They come to an old chain-link FENCE. Without hesitation, Vera scales it. Alan makes it over, with a bit of a struggle.

ALAN
Where are you leading us?

VERA
33.6773 North, 106.4754 West.

ALAN
It was a little more rhetorical than that. What do you expect to find?

VERA
Whatever they're hiding...

The land opens up around them, and they find themselves -- INSIDE the cordoned-off area.

There are soldiers and nondescript officials milling about. Men in HAZMAT SUITS make their way over the crest of a hill.

The other side of the rise is illuminated by FLOODLIGHTS. But we can't see what the lights are trained on...

Vera heads for the lights. Alan tries to keep up.

VERA (CONT'D)
Just act like we belong.

An OFFICIAL glances at them, but doesn't break stride...

Approaching the crest, they pass near a cluster of MILITARY OFFICERS... and keep going.

VOICE (O.S.)
Wait a second...

Vera turns to face an Army Officer, CAPTAIN ZACK PARKER (late 30s), African-American, chiseled, firm and articulate.

CPT. PARKER
That's far enough, I think.

VERA
Maybe you can fill me in.

He takes her by the arm.

CPT. PARKER
Maybe I can show you out...

She stops him, handing over her NASA credentials.

VERA
Do not try to tell me this is a toxic spill. My associate Mr. Chin and I were tracking the extraplanetary object that made impact here this afternoon. This is my site as much as anyone's, and I will have you defer to NASA's authority under its charter from the Executive Branch.

Parker hesitates.

CPT. PARKER
"Extraplanetary"?

CUT TO:

ON A SCREEN

The previously seen "radar" computer model of the OBJECT's trajectory. Vera, Parker, and Alan huddle around Alan's laptop, which sits on the trunk of a military vehicle.

CPT. PARKER
In our monitoring systems, it just appeared. Out of nowhere.

VERA
They don't reach far enough. NASA's got you beat on this one.

ALAN
If we track the trajectory back, it clearly comes from outside the Earth's orbit...

VERA
It's some kind of meteor event. Our territory. Not the military. What made you think it was a weapon?

Parker pulls back, his expression unreadable.

CPT. PARKER
Do you know today's date, Ms. Markov?

VERA
July 16th.

CPT. PARKER
And do you know where we are?

Vera holds up the GPS.

VERA
I know *exactly* where we are.

CPT. PARKER
Do you though?

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Vera, Alan, and Parker stand before a twelve-feet-tall LAVA ROCK OBELISK. It's like something otherworldly...

VERA
Trinity...

Reveal: on the obelisk, really a man-made monument, there is a PLAQUE commemorating the TRINITY NUCLEAR TEST.

CPT. PARKER
July 16, 1945. Sixty-nine years ago *to the day*, here at the Trinity test site, humanity detonated its first nuclear device...

Parker turns toward the impact site, beyond the crest of the hill... indicates...

CPT. PARKER (CONT'D)
Or more precisely, it was detonated over there -- exactly where your supposed "meteor" came to earth...

Vera and Alan let this sink in.

CPT. PARKER (CONT'D)
You can see why this seems like more than just a coincidence.

ALAN
What are you saying?

VERA
He's saying: if it's a meteor, *who aimed it?*

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. HOSPITAL - FAYETTEVILLE - NIGHT

Peter emerges from the front of the hospital into the empty, dark street. The towel is still draped over his shoulders, and he wears a hospital gown over his swimsuit -- a makeshift shirt -- and hospital-issue slippers.

He looks up and down the street. Nothing. Not surprised, he begins walking... His thoughts are far away...

INT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - STUDIO - NIGHT

Joshua has the same faraway look in his eyes. He sits facing a CAMERA in a room set up like a news broadcast studio, but with a cross looming behind him on the wall.

TECHS move around him, one adjusting a microphone on his lapel, but it’s as though he’s unaware of their presence...

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Erin moves through the hallway, the Nurse leading her, supporting her by the arm.

They come to a door and pause. Erin looks to the Nurse, who nods... With trepidation, Erin steps forward...

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Peter cuts across the empty, sporadically lit parking lot of a shopping center, closed for the night.

He spots, out of the corner of his eye, a group of DARK FIGURES in the shadows, smoking cigarettes...

Peter pretends he doesn’t see them, continuing. But one of the figures steps out of the shadows...

SAM
Hey, faggot!

Peter picks up his pace, not turning around. Sam starts to follow him... as do the other figures...

Peter TAKES OFF --

INT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - STUDIO

Joshua stares down at his hands, like he’s alone in the world. A Tech behind a camera speaks to him...

TECH
You're on in four, three, two...

The Tech counts off the last beat silently, then --

Joshua looks STRAIGHT INTO the camera. It's unsettling.

JOSHUA JR.
This is a special broadcast. At 4:10pm today, on live television, I, Joshua Simmons Junior, died.

Senior watches his son addressing the camera. It's clear he doesn't know where this is going -- which he doesn't like.

JOSHUA JR. (CONT'D)
And yet, here I am.

Joshua's intensity reaches through the screen...

INT. HOSPITAL - AMY'S ROOM

When Erin SEES her daughter, looking so small and fragile in the hospital bed, hooked into a respirator -- it hits her like a punch in the gut.

ERIN
Amy...

Barely holding in her anguish, she kneels next to the bed, taking her daughter's hand...

ERIN (CONT'D)
Mom's here. I'm here.

On the side of Amy's head is visible, extending beyond the bandages, an incision from major surgery, sutured shut...

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Peter RUNS -- sprinting parallel to the front windows of the shops -- trying to reach a corner --

Behind him, Sam and another teen pursue. Peter pushes, but they're gaining on him -- as he's essentially barefoot --

Two more FIGURES cut him off before the corner. Peter is trapped. He stops under a lamp-post, as the two groups converge around him...

We see the three Hick Thugs from earlier, as well as Sam. Peter takes a defensive stance, but it's four to one...

SAM
Get his arms.

They rush Peter, who struggles for a moment, but is overwhelmed, pinned to the ground...

As Sam's boot KICKS into Peter's side --

INT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - STUDIO

Joshua begins to grow more heated. Whereas before his "death" he seemed polished, there's something ragged in him now...

JOSHUA JR.
I have seen... such things that would make your blood freeze...

Senior, concerned, catches the eye of the Stout Elder...

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Peter's hospital gown is torn off, as the beating continues.

JOSHUA JR. (V.O.)
I have had a vision of the future, brothers and sisters...

Two of the thugs lift Peter, propping his limp form against the lamp-post, pinning his arms behind him --

JOSHUA JR. (V.O.)
I have seen the face of God...

Sam picks up a BEER BOTTLE from the ground nearby --

INT. HOSPITAL - AMY'S ROOM

Erin's tears begin to flow...

JOSHUA JR. (V.O.)
...And it is a terrible thing to behold...

She bows her head over her comatose daughter...

ERIN
Please, please, God, let her come back to me...

We move in on Amy's motionless eyes... but there's nothing...

EXT. PARKING LOT

Peter's eyes peel open, stinging with blood, to see Sam holding the beer bottle, menacing...

SAM
Say you're queer.

One of the Hicks holding Peter seems uncertain...

HICK #1
Sam, you could kill him.

Sam PUNCHES Peter in the kidney --

SAM
That's right. I could. So say you're queer. Say it.

Peter, in terrible pain, seems terrified. He gathers himself to speak -- Sam moves closer --

And Peter SPITS in his face --

INT. HOSPITAL - AMY'S ROOM

Erin holds her face close to Amy's bandaged head. Tears stream down her cheeks...

JOSHUA JR. (V.O.)
The Wheels of Revelation have begun to turn...

Focus on: a TEARDROP falls to her daughter's forehead... like a blessing, a baptism...

JOSHUA JR. (V.O.)
There will be Chaos and War...

EXT. PARKING LOT

Sam wipes the spit from his face, furious -- and SWINGS the bottle down --

SMASHING it across Peter's skull with a wet, sickening sound.

JOSHUA JR. (V.O.)
And what we do now will mean everything...

Sam's friends, who continue to hold Peter's arms, propping him up, are stunned at how far this has gone...

HICK #1
Jesus, man...

Peter seems more puzzled than hurt -- as BLOOD begins to PULSE from a deep wound across his temple --

INT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - STUDIO

Joshua stares into the camera...

JOSHUA JR.
For the great day of his wrath is come...

EXT. PARKING LOT

There's a silent stand-off between a dazed Peter and Sam, who sees he may have gone much too far...

JOSHUA JR. (V.O.)
...And who shall be able to stand?

Then Peter straightens up, his expression CHANGING...

PETER
Hey, Sam.

Peter's hands clasp around the wrists of the two Thugs who think *they* are holding *him* --

And he HEAVES them -- flinging them across the pavement, an impossible show of strength --

Sam's friends stare in shock... then take off running...

Peter, covered in blood, looking like a newly risen demon, moves toward a petrified Sam...

INT. CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER - STUDIO

As Joshua speaks into the camera, out of our hearing, Senior whispers to a TECH. The Stout Elder listening...

SENIOR
Cut him off.

STOUT ELDER
Are you sure...? It's going live...

Senior looks to the Tech, his hand on the switch...

SENIOR
End it.

With Joshua...

JOSHUA JR.
Heed my words, or perish. *For I am a Messenger of God.*

FLICK OF THE SWITCH.

CUT TO:

A BEAT OF BLACKNESS... then...

INT. HOSPITAL - AMY'S ROOM

Close on: Another of Erin's TEARS falls... landing on Amy's eyelid... which twitches...

THEN OPENS --

The wound from her surgery CLOSES, HEALS before our eyes -- sutures falling out...

Amy blinks, coming to --

EXT. PARKING LOT

Peter RAINS a series of VICIOUS PUNCHES on Sam -- knocking him back, not even giving him a chance to fall --

He SLAMS an uppercut under Sam's chin, lifting him off the ground with the force...

Sam hits the pavement, unconscious. Blood and spit trickling from his lips...

Peter picks him up, and lifts him above his head, rushing toward the WINDOW of the storefront --

And THROWS him through the PLATE GLASS --

INT. HOSPITAL - AMY'S ROOM

Amy looks around, regaining her bearings. Erin still hasn't seen her daughter is awake.

AMY
Why am I here?

Erin is astonished --

ERIN
Amy! You're...

She can't even get it out, hugging her. Amy sits up, apparently unfazed by her injuries...

ERIN (CONT'D)
Stay still, honey, you're hurt...

Amy pulls away the bandage from her head...

AMY
Where?

Nothing seems wrong with her... Erin is baffled.

ERIN
You don't feel anything?

Amy shakes her head, no, confused...

AMY
What's going on?

Erin looks at her daughter, then to the door, deciding...

EXT. PARKING LOT

Peter's chest rises and falls, as he calms...

He walks slowly to the broken window of the shop, and peers through the shattered hole in the glass...

Where he sees Sam sprawled -- a POOL OF BLOOD blooming -- Sam's eyes fixed open --

DEAD.

Peter backs away, horrified...

In the jagged, mirrored glass, he views his own reflection -- and he's astonished to see --

He has WINGS -- broad, moonlit, feathered WINGS --

LIKE AN ANGEL.

As we pull back, we move behind him... and see... the wings are *only in the reflection*.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. DESERT, IMPACT SITE - NIGHT

Parker, Vera, and Alan stand at the crest of the hill, looking down onto the floodlit site, which we don't yet see.

CPT. PARKER
This is the site of a great human achievement -- a marshalling of industry and intelligence never before seen.

VERA
And hubris. A lot of that.

Reveal: Floodlights illuminate the impact site. It's the black star-burst where The Man awoke. HAZMAT takes samples...

CPT. PARKER
Which is why Trinity would have symbolic value, as a target, for certain terrorist organizations.

VERA
But let me guess. You've found no fuels of any kind, explosives...?

CPT. PARKER
Our people are baffled.

ALAN
I'm going with aliens.

VERA
There has to be some kind of simple, scientific answer to this.

CPT. PARKER
Do you know what Robert J. Oppenheimer said when the bomb he created lit up the night sky?
(they shake their heads)
It's from the Bhagavad Gita: "Now I am become death, the destroyer of worlds."

They look down on the mysterious black star. Vera's expression betrays a sense of uncertainty. Only Alan sees it.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Ronnie and his partner stride through the hallway with purpose... coming to the open door of Amy's room...

Ronnie stops dead when he sees the bed is EMPTY. He flags down a passing NURSE...

RONNIE
Where's the girl that was in this room? Amy Connors.

The Nurse looks into the room, confused... and Ronnie SLAMS his hand against the door jamb in anger --

INT. ERIN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Erin tosses clothes into a suitcase, and Amy -- looking totally healthy -- sits calmly on the bed, watching her.

ERIN
We'll go to Houston to visit my cousin... you'll like that, right?

AMY
Texas is on my list.

Erin stops packing and moves to her daughter...

ERIN
You're okay? You don't feel funny?

AMY
Mom! I keep saying. I'm fine.

ERIN
Okay, okay. So much has happened that doesn't make sense...

She closes the suitcase, latches it shut.

ERIN (CONT'D)
Are you scared? It's okay to be scared.

Amy shakes her head, no.

ERIN (CONT'D)
My brave girl.

AMY
He told me not to be scared.

ERIN
Who did?

Amy hesitates.

ERIN (CONT'D)
Tell me, honey.

AMY
When I was dreaming... I saw an angel...

Erin takes in her daughter -- bringing about the tearful smile of someone who knows how lucky she is, in the end...

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Shirtless, Peter clambers up a steep rise in the dark wilderness, brambles snagging his legs... but he pushes on, toward a LOW, POUNDING NOISE...

He crests the rise... and ahead spots a two-storey house, pulsing lights and a low BASS BEAT emanating from within...

INT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT

The door opens and BOOM -- the loud throbbing BEAT hits us --

As Peter staggers in, colored STROBE LIGHTS illuminate his bloodied face and chest -- a vision straight out of hell --

Drunk TEENS dance and make out in the dingy house. Those who notice Peter back away, freaked out, giving him room to pass... as he heads up the stairs...

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Up here, it's a lower-key scene and the scattered teenagers all stare at Peter, who peers into the dark, searching...

TEEN
Try to kill yourself or something?

Some laughter. Peter clenches his fists, ready to explode again. He spins when he feels a hand on his shoulder --

But it's Alice, who is stunned at his appearance.

ALICE
What happened!? Are you okay?

She pulls him through a door into --

TEEN (O.S.)
Hey, you can't go in there --

INT. PARTY HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A teen's room. The music is MUFFLED as Alice closes the door. Locks it. Somebody tries the knob and BANGS on the door --

But Alice just flips on a lamp and steers Peter to the messy bed. She tries to examine his wounds...

PETER
It's not as bad as it looks...

Alice rushes into the adjacent bathroom, running water over a towel as she calls back to Peter...

ALICE
Do we need to call an ambulance?

PETER
No. Definitely not.

She returns, starts to wipe away the blood with the towel...

ALICE
I'll be the judge of that. Who did this to you?

Peter won't answer.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Was it Sam? We have to call the cops, Peter, he can't get away --

PETER
Stop.

He pushes her away... She stares at him, hurt.

PETER (CONT'D)
He... He's dead.

ALICE
How...?

Peter's look says enough. Aghast, Alice sits next to him.

ALICE (CONT'D)
It was self-defense. It was, right?

He's silent for a moment. Then...

PETER
I have to leave here, Alice.

ALICE
You can come to my place. For the night. My mom won't --

PETER
I mean... *leave*.

ALICE
No...

PETER
Something is happening to me... I'm changing. And this isn't the place to figure it out.

Tears well in her eyes. He reaches up to touch her face...

Then KISSES her. A passionate, real kiss. He pulls away, leaving her reeling... they stare into each other's eyes...

THUD THUD -- somebody outside POUNDS on the door --

TEEN (O.S.)
Better come out! Lindsey's pissed!

Peter moves to the window, opens it. Turns back to Alice. She hands him a t-shirt from off the bed and he accepts it.

PETER
I'm confused about everything, but I know how I feel about you.

She manages a smile -- and then he's gone.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MEXICO / U.S. BORDER - NIGHT

Vehicles are lined up at the border crossing -- a multi-lane bridge. Below, Raul moves stealthily along a gulch...

The coast clear, Raul slips through a GAP in a CHAIN-LINK FENCE -- into a tangle of brush below...

EXT. RIO GRANDE - MEXICO / U.S. BORDER - NIGHT

Raul half-stumbles down toward the banks of the river, which here is wide and fast-flowing...

A FLASHLIGHT BLINKS TWICE down the shore... Raul moves toward the light... two BLINKS again....

Two FIGURES in black stand in a DIAMONDBACK AIRBOAT, Border Patrol standard-issue --

As Raul approaches, he makes out an OLDER AGENT (50s) and a YOUNGER AGENT (30s). They look more like Feds than Patrol, and Raul remains wary...

OLDER AGENT
Guess we call you “Hawk”.

Raul smiles, relieved to hear the code word...

RAUL
Haven’t heard it in a while.

OLDER AGENT
Five years?

RAUL
And three months.

As Raul moves to the boat, *a wave of TINNITUS hits him,* and he staggers back, wincing --

OLDER AGENT
You alright there?

Fragmentary words reach Raul in the midst of the noise --

VOICE (V.O.)
...kill... training...

Raul takes another step back, and the ringing in his ears leaves as fast as it arrived. He shakes out the cobwebs.

OLDER AGENT
Hawk? What’s wrong, buddy?

RAUL
I’m getting these... headaches.

OLDER AGENT
Migraines. My wife gets them.

YOUNGER AGENT
You escape alone? And unarmed?
Seems impossible.

The Older Agent gives the Younger Agent an almost imperceptible glance, which Raul doesn’t notice.

RAUL
Somebody’s looking out for me.

OLDER AGENT
Well... let’s get you out of here.
Nobody knows you’re here, right?

But Raul hesitates. Not quite ready to get into the boat. He eyes the Younger Agent, noticing him fidget, anxious.

RAUL
Where are you taking me?

OLDER AGENT
Across the river.

RAUL
And then?

OLDER AGENT
Classified. Then Houston, promise.
Come on. We got a slim window.

Raul moves toward them, *and again the RINGING hits Raul, stronger this time -- and he grabs his head, closing his eyes -- the pain unbearable -- and words reach him --*

VOICE (V.O.)
...Three to the chest... love you, Isabel...

Raul stumbles back, and again the tinnitus ceases. Raul looks back to the agents. The Younger one has his hand on his gun.

RAUL
Who's Isabel?

The Younger Agent seems stunned.

OLDER AGENT
Isabel? What are you talking about?

The Younger Agent whips out his gun, trains it on Raul, who takes a step back and raises his hands --

YOUNGER AGENT
She's my wife. My wife. Jesus. How the hell do you know her name?

OLDER AGENT
We're all on the same side here.

RAUL
You're here to kill me, aren't you? "Three to the chest", right?

OLDER AGENT
No one's killing anyone --

The Younger Agent steps toward Raul --

YOUNGER AGENT
He knows. What's it matter? Yeah, we're here to kill you. And I'll make you suffer first if you don't tell me how you know --

In a flash, Raul and the Older Agent draw at the same time and -- BANG! BANG! BANG! -- Raul shoots the Younger Agent first, before he can get off a shot, then the Older --

Raul is hyperventilating, in shock -- but he's the only one left standing -- the agents sprawled DEAD --

SHOUTS and LIGHTS reach him from above -- no time for a conscience -- Raul jumps into the boat and speeds away...

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

The mansion overlooks a broad lawn. Light pours out of tall windows... and A CHOPIN PIANO NOCTURNE PLAYS...

INT. MANSION - GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

High ceilings. Chandelier. Joshua sits at a GRAND PIANO, his eyes closed, as the NOCTURNE continues...

As we move around Joshua, we see his HANDS aren't moving. The keys are PLAYING THEMSELVES, as though Joshua is controlling them with his mind...

Senior walks up behind Joshua and watches for a few seconds, unreadable... then he reaches to the side of the piano --

-- and FLIPS the OFF SWITCH. The PLAYER PIANO stops playing. There was no magic after all.

SENIOR
This episode you had, it was very traumatic, I know, but it's no excuse. What you said today, it isn't our message. We counsel hope, not fire and brimstone.

Joshua cowers in the presence of his father. Looks down.

JOSHUA JR.
I have... a new message.

SENIOR
When I started Redeemer, it was twenty folding chairs in a basement, and I will not allow you to destroy what I've built.

JOSHUA JR.
This has nothing to do with you.

SENIOR
To hell it doesn't.

JOSHUA JR.
I have no choice. Dad...

SENIOR
You will recant these things you have said. You will say that a fever overtook you and addled your brain. If you do not, if you continue this... *sacrilege*... you will not be welcome in my church. Look at me. Look at me!

Joshua meets his father's eyes, and for a moment he seems like a lost child --

SENIOR (CONT'D)
You will do exactly as I say, and all will be forgiven.

-- but then Joshua's eyes harden, full of certainty.

JOSHUA JR.
It's not *your* church. It's God's church.

There is a silent stand-off...

SENIOR
So be it.

He turns and walks out.

Joshua holds his hands above the piano keys. He closes his eyes, focusing... for a long beat...

PINGGG. A PIANO KEY plays, out of view. Joshua's eyes OPEN.

EXT. VERA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Alan's car pulls to a stop outside Vera's house.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Alan looks over to Vera.

VERA
We'll figure it out.
(pause, smile)
(MORE)

VERA (CONT'D)
Even if it's aliens. Which it's not.

ALAN
Ha ha. But, I wonder -- maybe there is something *more* than what we can just figure out...

Vera shakes her head. This is about more than just her scientific career...

VERA
More? It's all random. There's no meaning. Everything we do, we're just the universe trying to get a good look at itself in the mirror. Nothing more. Nothing less.

She opens the door...

ALAN
You sure you don't want me to stay over?
(off her wry look)
Just to keep you company.

She leans over and gives him a quick kiss...

VERA
Goodnight, Alan.

As she starts to get out...

ALAN
Vera, wait.

She turns back to him.

ALAN (CONT'D)
I need you to hear this. Like, really hear it. You know I'm here for you, right? Anytime. Always.

With a melancholy smile, she nods. Then turns and goes.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Parker, phone to his ear, stands outside a heavily guarded military TENT at the edge of the cordoned-off area.

CPT. PARKER
Of course. Yes, sir.

He ducks under the tent flap --

INT. TENT - NIGHT

-- revealing the tent has been constructed over a smaller building, basically just an ELEVATOR, guarded on either side by two more heavily armed SOLDIERS. They nod.

CPT. PARKER
(into phone)
I told her just enough. She won't be back.

He hangs up. He presses his palm to a scanner, and as the DOORS slide open and he steps forward --

INT. VERA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Vera moves through her dark house. As she passes her bedroom door, something catches her eye, and she enters...

INT. VERA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

On Vera's bed, the BOX labelled "Michael Jr" has been opened, the contents spread across the comforter... photos, baby clothes, a stuffed elephant...

As Vera approaches, puzzled and uneasy... we see a SHADOWED FIGURE sitting in a chair behind her...

Oblivious, Vera selects, from among mementoes of a childhood, a PHOTO. It shows the same TODDLER from her vision. Labelled: *Michael Jr., Jan 2007*. Vera does her best to hold in her emotions, but it's almost more than she can bear...

Suddenly a LIGHT switches on behind her -- Vera nearly jumps out of her skin and spins around to find --

THE MAN, still wearing the convenience store clerk Johnny's uniform, sitting in a chair next to an illuminated LAMP.

THE MAN
I figured you needed some light.

Primed with adrenaline, Vera rushes to a bedside table, withdrawing a HANDGUN from her drawer -- and points it at the Man. But he's unfazed.

VERA
This is loaded. Don't move.

THE MAN
I don't need to move. You'll come to me.

END ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

INT. VERA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Trying to tamp down her fear, Vera keeps the gun on The Man.

VERA
What do you want?

THE MAN
You've been chosen, Vera.

Vera moves closer, and spots his nametag --

VERA
Johnny, I'm not sure what you think you're going to get --

THE MAN
That isn't my name. These clothes were... a gift.

VERA
Who are you?

THE MAN
Who I am doesn't matter. What matters is what I know.

She pulls out her cell phone.

VERA
I'm calling the cops.

THE MAN
It's about your son.

Vera stops. Goes cold. Cocks the gun.

VERA
What do you know?

THE MAN
Look at your computer.

He indicates her laptop computer. She's wary...

THE MAN (CONT'D)
Ocular proof.

Keeping the gun trained on him, she reaches to the computer, trembling, flips it open...

On the screen: a VIDEO CLIP starts playing...

A BOY, about ten years old, a mop of brown hair, jogs into frame, all smiles. He says something to the camera-operator, MOS, and a soccer ball comes flying toward him...

With dexterity, he stops the ball and begins to dribble... The camera pushes in on his face... and as he looks up, right at us, the image FREEZES...

And because of something in his expression... Vera *knows*. She lets out an involuntary gasp.

THE MAN (CONT'D)
It's Michael.

The video begins to play again... and Vera can't take her eyes off it... letting the gun dangle...

THE MAN (CONT'D)
He's alive, Vera. I know who took him. I know why. And I know where you can find him.

She turns to look at him...

THE MAN (CONT'D)
I just need you to finish a job for me, first.

EXT. INTERSTATE - NIGHT

A lone hitchhiker -- Peter -- is briefly illuminated by the headlights of a passing car... which doesn't even slow...

PETER
Yeah, I wouldn't stop for me either...

He continues walking, glancing over his shoulder...

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

A FLAT-BED TRUCK pulls into a gas station and parks. In the back, a tarp covers lawn equipment. A HAND pulls aside an edge -- and Raul peers out...

INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Inside the station, a groggy Amy stands with Erin, who passes a couple of energy drinks to the bored CLERK.

ERIN
(to Amy)
You want a snack? Goldfishes 'cause they're so delishes?

Amy shakes her head, no. Her eyes drift up to a television, playing silent NEWS... a brief clip of Joshua's telecast...

DING! The front door of the gas station opens. Erin glances over, and sees --

RAUL. They make eye contact, and despite everything they've both been through lately, there's a spark. Erin smiles, and Raul manages a smile back. In another life, maybe...

On the NEWS, RAUL's MUG-SHOT appears. A breaking story: he's wanted for the killing of two Border Patrol agents...

The Clerk hands Erin her change, and she grabs Amy's hand.

ERIN (CONT'D)
Let's go, kiddo.

Amy's eyes leave Raul's mug-shot to land on Raul himself. She looks back up to the screen. Yes, it's the same guy. Raul follows her gaze... sees himself.

Erin and Amy walk out -- DING! -- Amy turning back to stare at Raul, as they head for their car...

Raul has a moment to decide. The Clerk looks at him blankly.

CLERK
Help you?

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Erin arranges her energy drinks in the cup holder. Fumbles for her keys in her purse...

Amy looks out the window, to see Raul coming toward the car... Erin is oblivious...

AMY
Mom? MOM!

The back door swings open and Raul is suddenly in the back seat, gun pointed at Erin -- who's too stunned to scream --

Raul *winces, like he's hearing the ringing again,* then hardens himself...

RAUL
Stay calm. Stay quiet. I won't hurt you... Or your daughter...

Erin is petrified.

RAUL (CONT'D)
Just give me a ride, and I'll let you go. Nod you agree, okay?

Erin grips her daughter's hand, and nods.

RAUL (CONT'D)
Good. Now start driving.

EXT. INTERSTATE - NIGHT

The headlights of an EIGHTEEN-WHEELER approach. Brakes GROANING, it pulls to the side of the road, ahead of Peter --

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Peter climbs into the cabin, finding himself next to a sallow-skinned TRUCKER (50s). The Trucker looks Peter over...

TRUCKER
You on the run, buddy?

PETER
No sir.

TRUCKER
I believe that. Why not.

The Trucker puts it into gear, pulls back onto the highway...

PETER
Where you headed?

TRUCKER
Houston.

PETER
Sounds good to me.

The curving highway ahead...

INT. ERIN'S CAR - NIGHT

...becomes a straight stretch across flat country, through a different windshield. Erin drives, staring ahead, holding in her panic. Amy looks back at Raul, who gives her a smile.

AMY
(to Raul)
Where are we going?

ERIN
Honey, don't talk to him.

AMY
Why not?

RAUL
Houston. We're going to Houston.

AMY
That's lucky.

RAUL
Lucky, huh?

ERIN
(stern)
Honey, don't --

AMY
We were going there anyway. It's lucky you picked us.

ERIN
Amy, what did I say? No more talking. Do your drawing.

Amy frowns, takes out her sketchbook. But...

AMY
Why are *you* going to Houston?

RAUL
My family's there. I need to make sure they're okay.

Erin glances at Raul, intrigued by his answer...

EXT. VERA'S HOUSE - PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

The sky above is large and full of stars. In the playground next to her house, Vera sits in the swing-set, illuminated by the glow of the computer in her lap. The light of the video plays across her face... like the emotions beneath...

The Man walks up behind her. He carries her gun.

THE MAN
You shouldn't worry. She's already basically gone. She has been for seven years. Killing her will be a mercy.

Vera turns to look at him.

VERA
Why... why do you want this?

THE MAN
She's a threat.

VERA
To *you*?

THE MAN
In a fashion.

He extends the gun, handle first...

VERA
And after seven years... why now?

The Man pauses, considering. Then he smiles.

THE MAN
You'll see.

INT. VERA'S HOUSE / BEDROOM - NIGHT

Grabbing items from a drawer, Vera finishes packing a duffle, placing the PHOTO of toddler Michael Jr on top of clothes.

THE MAN (V.O.)
Something awoke in you today...

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Peter rides next to the Trucker. Both silent.

THE MAN (V.O.)
You're trying to deny it...

A ROSARY hangs from the rear-view mirror. Peter stares at the slowly spinning CRUCIFIX...

EXT. VERA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Vera climbs into her car, and pulls away into the night.

THE MAN (V.O.)
But you feel it...

INT. ERIN'S CAR - NIGHT

As Erin drives, she glances at Raul in the rear-view mirror. He's staring out the window, lost in thought.

THE MAN (V.O.)
...You feel something drawing you
to a destiny...

As if sensing her look, Raul looks over and meets Erin's eyes in the mirror. She looks away.

In the passenger seat, Amy has fallen asleep with a pastel in her hand -- in the midst of finishing another drawing of a YELLOW RISING SUN -- which becomes --

EXT. HOUSTON MEMORIAL - DAY

-- An eerily similar RISING SUN, this one a LOGO on the side of a large building, the words "HOUSTON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL" emblazoned beneath...

THE MAN (V.O.)
...You died, and were reborn...

INT. CAR - DAY

Staring up at the rising sun logo -- or, rather, at a WINDOW right next to it -- Joshua sits in his car. In a daze.

HONK! The car behind Joshua BLARES its horn and Joshua snaps out of it -- disoriented. The light's turned green.

THE MAN (V.O.)
And now you face a choice.

But still Joshua hesitates, not ready to drive off...

EXT. VERA'S HOUSE - PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

Vera stares at The Man, who continues to hold out the gun to her, his offer. She shakes her head, refusing to believe...

VERA
You're insane.

THE MAN
Maybe I'm schizophrenic. Maybe I'm lying. Maybe this is some kind of con. But none of that matters. You'll choose your son.

Vera hesitates. Then takes the gun.

EXT. HOUSTON MEMORIAL - DAY

Ignoring the BLARING HORNS, Joshua gets out of his car -- his eyes still focusing on the WINDOW, where the curtains move --

INT. HOUSTON MEMORIAL / PATIENT ROOM - DAY

-- As a female NURSE pulls the curtains shut, dimming the room, and steps away from the window.

She HUMS to herself over the SOUND of a VENTILATOR MACHINE, and straightens a vase of FRESH FLOWERS next to a FRAMED PHOTO -- of Rose and James, the couple from the opening.

And we find, in the bed, unconscious, on life support --

ROSE, IN A COMA.

EXT. HOUSTON MEMORIAL / STREET - DAY

Joshua clambers onto the roof of his car, where he stands. The cars behind him BLAST horns, and a MAN SHOUTS at him.

JOSHUA JR.
The End is *here*... with us...

He points up to the hospital, to the WINDOW...

JOSHUA JR. (CONT'D)
But *our* War is just beginning. The fate of the world is in our hands. And we must choose a side.

Passersby gawk, and a few start to RECORD on their PHONES, as Joshua's voice rises above the cacophony of the traffic...

JOSHUA JR. (CONT'D)
I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, "*Come and see*"...

INT. HOUSTON MEMORIAL / ROSE'S ROOM - NIGHT

In Rose's room, the Nurse passes in front of an EMPTY CHAIR next to the bed, making one final check of Rose's ventilator.

JOSHUA JR. (V.O.)
And I looked...

And when she passes it again on her way to the door --

JOSHUA JR. (V.O.)
...And behold, a pale horse...

THE MAN IS SITTING IN THE CHAIR. Waiting.

JOSHUA JR. (V.O.)
...And his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.

And as the Man's mesmerizing eyes bore into the deepest, darkest recesses of our souls...

END OF SHOW