BABYLON FIELDS

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TEASER

INT. NIGHT CLUB -- NIGHT.

A rapid beat. Heavy, wild bass. STROBES FLASH, reveal: sweat-drenched CLUBBERS frozen in time and space. The strobe flashes from slow to fast to relentless. A DANCE FLOOR comes to flickering, jerky life. Clubbers wildly flitter to and fro.

One of those clubbers: JANINE BELTRAN (early 30s), cocksure beautiful, high on booze and adrenalin. Lost to the beat, she grinds with a BEARDED HIPSTER. They tongue. A SERIES OF CUTS: The hipster pulls Janine behind the stage. Has her up against a wall. Pants down. They rut.

EXT. NIGHT CLUB -- NIGHT.

The club lets out. Janine exits alone, unsteady. We can smell the sex and booze on her as she moves for the PARKING LOT, fumbles for keys.

I/E. JANINE'S CAR -- NIGHT.

Janine gets in. Starts the car. Catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror. Sure, she's beautiful, but there's trouble behind those eyes. A squirt of Visine, an Altoid, and she drives off. We see: her car has M.D. LICENCE PLATES.

I/E. JANINE'S CAR -- DAWN.

Janine chugs a Red Bull. Drives down a TWISTY, WOODED ROAD. She forces tired eyes wide and alert, flicks through radio stations and -- someone skirts out into the middle of the road!

Janine sees -- an AFRICAN-AMERICAN BOY, clothes ragged and filthy. A flash of shocked recognition. She swerves, slams the breaks -- SMASHES into a guardrail at the edge of a RAVINE, tires caught in the muddy gully under it --

The boy watches from the darkness --

Janine bolts from the car, shaken, scared, looks back down the road. *She knows him*. But... the boy is gone.

Off Janine -- unnerved.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET -- DAWN

A quiet late winter's dawn. Babylon, Long Island -- an upscale suburban burg situated near the bay. McMansions, older ranches, colonials, manicured lawns, high-end cars in the driveways.

A FIT WOMAN JOGGER exits a Tudor colonial, tightens the laces on her running shoes. Ear buds in, iPod on, song chosen, she hits the street.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL CORPORATE PARK -- NIGHT.

The jogger runs past the corporate park. We HOLD, see: a STRAY DOG wander up to a FLAG POLE set in the center of a flower garden. The dog sniffs the pole, then... jerks back, nervous, barks as -- the flower bed moves, the flag pole shudders --

BEETLES, WORMS and GRUBS are SQUIRMING up out of the soil. Escaping. And then... something else, something bigger -- the dog barks and barks --

EXT. WOODS ON EDGE OF TOWN -- DAWN

The jogger pounds dead leaves, exhales blasts of cold steam, pauses. Cramped. Goes hands to knees. Collects her breath. She goes to switch songs, and in the momentary silence --

A rustling. A branch snaps. The jogger holds up. Nervous. Scans the area. Nothing. A beat. New song chosen, she resumes her run.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL CORPORATE PARK -- DAWN.

The dog runs in wild circles, barks as the flower bed moves, then... dirt caves in... the flag pole tilts, falls over. The dog crouches in an attack stance, growls as --

-- SOMETHING painfully emerges from the flower bed. Soil falls away, reveals: a FACE! Man or woman, we can't tell, but we see: eyes wide with terror, mouth open, gasping!

EXT. WOODS ON EDGE OF TOWN -- DAWN.

We're with the jogger as she gets back up to speed. And then, suddenly -- someone or something plummets into her like a train, tackling her out of frame!

Her scream is immediately muffled. We see: she's held down by a DARK MALE FIGURE, his filthy, HEAVILY SCABBED HAND over her mouth. He raises a thick branch over his head, brings it down hard onto the woman repeatedly. It's savage, fast, bloody.

As he drags her barely conscious by the hair, through the brush and leaves and dirt --

EXT. UPSCALE SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT -- DAY.

Normalcy. Shoppers coming and going. An ACURA SUV pulls out of the lot.

I/E. RHONDA WUNCH'S ACURA -- DAY.

THOMAS WUNCH (early 30s), earnest and good looking, sits in the passenger seat, talks on his cell as his mother RHONDA (50s), drives.

THOMAS (ON CELL)
-- Flight leaves at six, should be home by ten. Yeah, everything's fine. My mom says hi --

He looks to his mother who gives a small smile and wave.

THOMAS (ON CELL)
Can't wait to see you, babe. Love you.

He hangs up.

THOMAS
(to Rhonda)
Laura says hi.

RHONDA
You should just stay. I'll make the chicken piccata you like.

THOMAS
Too much going on at work --

CONTINUED:

RHONDA
(w/ distaste)
Atlanta...

THOMAS
-- there's an outbreak of legionnaires, a cruise ship in from Norway...

His attention is caught by a FREAKED OUT WOMAN running down the street in the opposite direction --

Thomas and Rhonda catch a quick glimpse of -- THREE APPARENTLY HOMELESS PEOPLE, filthy and in rags, moving down the street -- but they're different somehow -- and there are several of them -- Thomas' brow tightens --

RHONDA
So sad. I've seen a lot more of them lately.

THOMAS
In this neighborhood?

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE/NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL -- DAY.

Cleaned up, dressed for work, yet hungover, Janine nurses a take-out cup of coffee, sits across from DR. WILLIAM FREZZOLA (50). It's an at-work shrink session, first thing in the morning.

Make-up does a poor job of covering a small bruise over her eye. A badge clipped to her blouse announces her as a NEUROLOGIST. She nervously fingers an ANATOMICALLY CORRECT HEART PENDANT hanging from her neck, the kid she almost hit weighing on her. Frezzola eyes her with a mixture of professional interest and... opportunity.

FREZZOLA
... the drinking, your inability to retain relationships beyond the first stages of gratification --

JANINE
(distracted)
I know. Being a slut.

FREZZOLA
(smiles)
Far from me to judge.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

FREZZOLA (CONT'D)
Look, bottom line -- this Courtney-Love-as-high-functioning-neurologist routine will only work until it doesn't.

Janine nods, crosses her legs, Frezzola's eyes go *there*. She catches him. He quickly looks away. Busted. Brings it back to business --

FREZZOLA
(re: bruise)
Your head... what happened there?

She absently touches the bruise.

JANINE
Driving home last night... I almost hit somebody. Could've killed him. He... he looked *exactly* like this kid I used to know. A foster brother.

FREZZOLA
Was it?

JANINE
Couldn't be, this was still a kid. Anyway Dontae disappeared, ran off or something, when we were twelve... I can't get it out of my head --

BLAM -- she's cut off by a huge commotion in the hallway. It sounds like wild panic -- running feet, SMASHES --

FREZZOLA
What the --

But Janine's radar is up, she's out of her chair, opens the door, peers out --

-- A frantic SECURITY GUARD runs down the hallway, barks into his walkie -- *he trips, sprawls.* Behind him: nurses, orderlies, running --

INT. SANCTUARY/ST. MATTHEWS CHURCH -- DAY.

A short line of parishioners wait by the confessional booths.

INT. PRIEST'S CONFESSIONAL -- CONTINUOUS.

FATHER BRIAN HARRIES (30s) patiently listen to a RASPY VOICED MAN'S confession

RASPY MAN
... I've stolen from family. Sold my body. Beaten a lame man half to death for five dollars -- all so I could shoot poison into my veins.

Father Harries is suddenly uneasy. He looks to the dark mesh partition, can't make out the man's face on the other side.

RASPY MAN
And like Esau coming to Jacob, I begged the person I loved the most for his forgiveness. And like Esau, I was rejected...

Father Harries's mouth falls open -- recognizing.

INT. SANCTUARY/ST. MATTHEW'S -- CONTINUOUS.

Harries exits his booth, throws open the booth's other door, sees --

-- a grey, slightly decayed, TWIN VERSION of *himself*. This is GRAHAM HARRIES (late 20s), the Priest's identical twin.

Off the priest -- who's flat-out terrified --

INT. THE WUNCH HOME -- DAY.

Thomas and Rhonda heft groceries into the house.

THOMAS
Maybe next month --

RHONDA
Next month becomes the month after becomes six --

THOMAS
C'mon, Ma --

RHONDA
Did you leave the TV on?

CONTINUED:

Thomas hears it -- television static. Then notices: muddy boot prints in the vestibule. Bugs on the rug. Something's not right.

THOMAS
Mom --

-- but she's already moving for the living room --

THOMAS
Mom? Mom, don't --

Rhonda freezes, SCREAMS --

Drops her groceries. Thomas bolts for her. She loses her balance, stumbles back into him -- looking ahead. Thomas sees the cause of the scream --

ERNIE WUNCH (late 40s), a filthy bruiser of a man, skin grey, signs of decay, eyes dead, stands in front of the flat screen TV, two remotes in hand...

He turned on the scream -- recognition in his eyes, flashes a wicked, rotted smile --

ERNIE
How the hell do you work this thing?

A black shiny BUG scuttles from his ear.

Off Thomas' and Rhonda's shock and fear --

INT. WAITING ROOM/HOSPITAL -- DAY.

Wide-eyed, Janine enters -- a CROWD of freaked nurses and patients back away from the front entrance. The security guard blocks Janine's view, takes a fearful step away, reveals --

A LEGLESS AMPUTEE using decayed arms and rotted hands to painfully walk himself across floor. Half his face is a festering mess. His clothes filthy and ragged. A woman screams --

WOMAN
Somebody help him!

What the -- Janine moves for the legless man, hesitates -- *wait* -- stops, scared, *sees that he's dead*, then looks behind him, through the ER's ambulance bay doors --

CONTINUED:

A large crowd of filthy, decayed DEAD PEOPLE, stretching back into the parking lot a HALF-MILE -- some moving stiff and others more limber -- all as though they're lost, desperately needing answers --

EXT. THE WUNCH HOME -- DAY.

Frantic. Shocky and panicking, Thomas explodes out the front door, pulls Rhonda from the house -- towards the car.

RHONDA
Thomas, he -- how --

THOMAS
Get in the car, Mom!

RHONDA
But --

She comes to a hard, shocked stop on the driveway. Thomas snaps his eyes to where she looks --

DOWN THE STREET: a dozen living dead people wander the street, some looking lost, some crossing lawns for houses.

At one house: a woman runs out, tear-streaked, gratefully EMBRACES a filthy, grey ONE-ARMED MAN in a tattered burial suit. Mad, impassioned clinch.

A BADLY DECAYED MAN just stands, crows pecking at his ankles.

Another house -- a LARGE WOMAN, stark naked and completely bald (from chemo?), bangs on the front door --

BALD WOMAN
Let me in, Patrick!

RHONDA
(numb with shock)
Lisa?

The front door is thrown open. A man in a track suit aims a shot gun at the woman (LISA) and -- bam! In the chest! Lisa's body jolts back! Stumbles off the lawn! Collapses in the street.

CONTINUED:

Off Rhonda's scream -- Thomas pulls her to the car. As he forces her in --

PULL BACK TO:

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW --

-- of the chaos in the street -- the wanderers, the bodies, the runners -- a car RUNS OVER a dead man --

-- then, as we ascend we see, beyond --

BABYLON'S MAIN STREET and surrounding neighborhoods:

More chaos. A car crash. Screams. Living people shocked, some running, some staring dumbfounded --

-- as more than a hundred LIVING DEAD stream like ants down side streets into the center of town --

END TEASER

CONTINUED:

ACT ONE

I/E. RHONDA'S CAR -- DAY.

Thomas drives hard, talks on his cell via headset. Rhonda bites her fist, teary, hysterical.

THOMAS (ON CELL)
-- Shut up and listen! *Something's* happening here! The dead, yes! Dead people! C'mon, you know me, man! Contact the damn police, town hall, if you don't believe me! That's right, Babylon. Do it!

He disconnects --

THOMAS
They don't believe me.

RHONDA
We saw it! We saw... *him...*
How could he -- ?!

THOMAS
I don't know!!!

RHONDA
-- be back!!!

THOMAS
Enough!
(collects himself)
I'm taking you out of town --

He turns onto the MAIN STREET.

CHAOS. Traffic jammed. Living people scramble in fear. Dead people emerge from alleys and side streets, WANDERING, looking into cars....

THOMAS
Dammit!

He throws the car into reverse, fishtails, speeds back down the street he exited.

INT. LOBBY/NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL -- DAY.

The living are gone. Scores of the dead gathered in the waiting room. Scared. Confused. They bang and push at a double door.

CONTINUED:

LIVING DEAD WOMAN
What's happened to us?!

LIVING DEAD MAN
Let us in!

INT. OTHER SIDE OF DOORS/HOSPITAL -- CONTINUOUS.

Two SECURITY GUARDS hold the doors shut as another fumbles with a lock. The doors start to buckle -- frightened living patients are escorted deeper into the hospital --

Janine stands near the back of the hallway with a group of doctor's and nurses. She swallows back her fear, eyes locked on the door, talks on her cell --

JANINE
Pearl, please... stay inside. There's... call me when you get this. You --

A scream. Janine looks as -- the doors burst open! The dead enter in a mad rush.

LIVING DEAD WOMAN
Help us!

The doctors and nurses dash back. Janine looks on in frozen horror. A KINDLY LIVING DEAD MAN stands in the middle of the melee, lost and scared. Janine flashes stunned recognition --

JANINE
Mr. Scharbo... ?

Ten or so dead people push past and around Scharbo. Janine remains frozen, eyes on Scharbo. She knows him. From a long way back. In the middle of the chaos --

SCHARBO
We're just scared, Janine...

EXT. ROAD LEADING OUT OF TOWN -- DAY.

Again, traffic at a stand still. People leaving cars, running. Thomas pulls around a corner. Shit! Again, he backs up, goes back the way he came.

I/E. RHONDA'S CAR -- DAY.

Rhonda clasps her eyes shut, mutters a frightened prayer. Thomas thinks -- *where the hell do they go?!* -- then --

THOMAS
We'll try Uncle Alan's -- he still has all those guns?

RHONDA
Thomas, *what we did*... if your father --

THOMAS
Mom?!

RHONDA
Yes...

Thomas makes a sharp turn down a side street.

INT. THE WUNCH HOME -- DAY.

In the kitchen: Ernie GUZZLES out of a gallon of bottled water. Grabs RARE ROAST BEEF out of the meat drawer. Crams it into his mouth, MOANING...

JUMP: in the BATHROOM: Ernie, naked and filthy and rotten, picking his teeth, looking at himself in the mirror -- his eyes, his tongue... Looking at what's in the medicine cabinet, tossing things aside... Fingering a SINGLE TOOTHBRUSH poking out of a cup...

He looks again at the mirror, sizing himself up... Pretty damn good. Checks his package off-frame... Fiddles with it, looking for signs of life.

JUMP: a nude Ernie steps into in a steaming shower, moans in gratitude as caked dirt and dead skin and bugs wash from his veiny grey body.

Hand over his wet hair -- his fingers freeze at the back of his head. He flashes confusion. Worry. Something wrong. We move off his shocked face, follow the dirt and dead flesh streaming off his body into the tub.

ERNIE (O.C.)
Ah, Jesus...

As the mess swirls down the drain --

INT. ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH -- DAY

People are coming in. First five, then ten, all panicked hysterical -- a shaken, terrified FATHER HARRIES tries to help or comfort them, neither's happening --

FATHER HARRIES
Alright, alright, please, everybody, please calm down, sit down --

HYSTERICAL MIDDLE-AGED GEEK-MAN
WHAT IS HAPPENING!?

FATHER HARRIES
We have to remain --

OLD FAT LADY
Dead people are crawling out of the ground!

40-ISH FAMILY MAN
My mother was standing over me! My dead mother! She touched me, father! Kissed me!

EARNEST DOE-EYED CO-ED
I saw a neighbor I hadn't seen since he got killed by a drunk driver when I was 10!

Hysterical wailing and arguing takes over -- it's becoming a flat-out panic. AIMEE STANLEY, a black woman (30s), stands up --

AIMEE
Father, is this happening everywhere?

FATHER HARRIES
I don't know!

AIMEE
Is it the Rapture? Is Judgment near?!

FATHER HARRIES
Judgement?

AIMEE
What does the Pope say?

FATHER HARRIES
The Pope?! I don't think the Pope knows what's --

CONTINUED:

OLD FAT LADY
But he's the Pope!

A frenzied argument ERUPTION booms out of the crowd -- several members grab others by their coats -- several start screaming: *It's the end! What're you going do to help us! Why is God doing this?*

Harries is bug-eyed, shocky, but he makes an attempt.

FATHER HARRIES
Listen, people! PLEASE! Look, this... maybe... maybe it's a message from God! A wake-up call...

BIKER
To what?!

FATHER HARRIES
... how we've lived our lives. Where we've put our faith. What we don't know, is whether this is good or bad. Do we? Has anyone been attacked?

The crowd calms a bit, shaking heads no...

FATHER HARRIES
Maybe... Maybe how we get through this... could determine the weight of our lives. What kind of people we are. Maybe that's what this is... a tribulation. For all of us. Do we live in fear, or do we live in love and hope?

BIKER
Homilies, Father, really?! We need answers!

FATHER HARRIES
Look, all I know, what I believe, is that we must... trust in God.

RASPY MAN (O.C.)
But maybe God is giving up. On all of us.

The congregants turn.

It's GRAHAM --

CONTINUED: (2)

GRAHAM
Maybe God's tearing up the lease.

The crowd recoils in fear... Major freak out. Graham enjoys the moment. Father Harries holds on his brother -- a man trapped in a nightmare.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET -- DAY.

Car's race up and down the street. A DEAD BOY kneels on a lawn, crying -- *MOMMY, LET ME IN! MOMMY!*

Rhonda's car pulls into the driveway of a RANCH. Thomas races around to the passenger side, one eye on a wandering group of dead people.

THOMAS
Mom, move!

RHONDA (IN CAR)
I can't.

Thomas throws open the door, pulls her out, hustles to the ranch's front door. He pounds the doorbell, knocks.

THOMAS
Aunt Maria! Uncle Alan! It's Thomas!

No answer.

THOMAS
Aunt Maria!

RHONDA
(sad and scared)
Oh, Thomas...

Thomas turns, sees -- the living dead boy walks towards them, pathetic and frightened.

LIVING DEAD BOY
Lady, mister... my parents won't let me in. Help me? Please?

Thomas holds on the kid, empathy pushing and then -- the door opens. Thomas' UNCLE ALAN (50s), stands in the doorway -- unaware of what's going on.

UNCLE ALAN
Thomas, what's --

CONTINUED:

Thomas pushes his Uncle back into the house, pulls his mother in, slams the door behind him.

INT. ALAN AND MARIA'S HOUSE --DAY.

Alan watches confused as Thomas locks the door. Rhonda's sister, MARIA, exits from the kitchen. She sees the state Rhonda's in. Moves for her --

AUNT MARIA
Rhonda?

Rhonda collapses into Maria's arms, sobs. Maria looks to Alan -- who shrugs, turns to Thomas.

UNCLE ALAN
What's this all about, Tommy?

Thomas pulls his Uncle over to the window, points outside.

THOMAS
Do you know that kid?

ALAN'S POV OUT WINDOW: The little dead boy sits on the grass, pulling at it, fear in his eyes.

UNCLE ALAN
(shocked)
Little Gary McGovern... He... he died of kidney disease last August... Went to his funeral.

He looks at Thomas electrified, then back -- and beyond the kid, up and down the street, sees: more dead people. Wandering.

UNCLE ALAN
Thomas, what the hell is this?!

Thomas just shakes his head, mind racing.

RHONDA
(sobbing)
He's back...

Thomas shoots his mother a look.

AUNT MARIA
Who's back?

CONTINUED:

RHONDA
Ernie.

UNCLE ALAN
From Daytona?

RHONDA
No. He --

THOMAS
(cuts her off)
He died. How or when, we don't know.

UNCLE ALAN
Ernie died? And now he's back?!

RHONDA
It's true!

AUNT MARIA
Rhonda, you're not making sense --

THOMAS
(to Uncle Alan)
That kid out there died! You said so yourself. Now he's back. All those people... they died and now they're back.

AUNT MARIA
But --

THOMAS
(all business)
Your guns --

INT. BASEMENT/ALAN AND MARIA'S HOUSE -- DAY.

Alan unlocks a large two door locker, reveals -- an arsenal. Shotguns. Pistols. Automatics. Alan hefts a shotgun and a box of shells.

UNCLE ALAN
(to Thomas)
Never thought I'd use 'em... this way.

Thomas loads in a shell, clicks the gun shut --

THOMAS
Hopefully you won't.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY.

EMPTY. The doors are locked. Living people hammer at the doors, but no one's answering.

INT. CHURCH RECTORY -- DAY

A shaken Father Harries pours himself a stiff scotch. His dead twin, Graham, leans back in a large chair, amused. Harries keeps his distance -- bugged out.

GRAHAM
You should just relax, really.

FATHER HARRIES
This... you... it's some kind of sick joke.

GRAHAM
You're not laughing.

FATHER HARRIES
You're not my brother! You can't be. My brother's *dead* --

GRAHAM
Our confirmation, the back of my pants split. Remember? You fixed 'em with duct tape. Saved the day. Never told anyone that.

Father Harries holds on Graham -- there's no way he would have known this unless the impossible was true; that he is, indeed, his brother.

GRAHAM
I'm back, Brian. Accept it.

Father Harries grabs the bottle, slumps into a chair, minds racing, grappling --

GRAHAM
So Mom and Dad. Still in kicking it in Wisconsin?

No response.

GRAHAM
We should call them, tell them the great news. Tell 'em I'm clean, too.

CONTINUED:

He looks at his hands, turns them over --

GRAHAM
It's like I've been taken apart, scrubbed, and put back together.

FATHER HARRIES
What... do you want?

GRAHAM
Christian love and compassion, of course. Maybe now, after all of what's happened.

FATHER HARRIES
(tight)
I didn't put that needle in your arm --

GRAHAM
No, you didn't...

FATHER HARRIES
Turning our family inside out until there was nothing left.

GRAHAM
You call what we had a *family?* Please, Brian. You know better than that.

FATHER HARRIES
You've returned from the grave... for this.

GRAHAM
Oh, I've got a feeling there's something else. Bigger.

Father Harries clasps his eyes shut, prays --

FATHER HARRIES
Holy Father, I've been a good priest, a good man...

GRAHAM
Matter of opinion.

FATHER HARRIES
I've been devout -- committed to service!

CONTINUED: (2)

GRAHAM
I'm sorry, Brian, but from where I've been, I can tell you, everything you believe about God and faith and mortality and souls... it's all about to be completely rewritten.

FATHER HARRIES
(scared)
What do you mean?

GRAHAM
You should remain... flexible.

Graham grins. Off Father Harries uneasy reaction --

INT. TOOL SHED --

Dark. We hear barely audible labored breaths. The door opens. A shaft of harsh light hits -- the JOGGER, bound with rope, mouth covered by duct tape, bruised and bleeding in a corner. A MAN enters. Quickly shuts the door behind him.

The jogger's eyes flash open, terrified -- on her arm we see a large MOUTH-SIZED BITE WOUND... She tries to scream, but the tape muffles it.

The man kneels down beside her, touches her face with a SCABBED HAND. We see: it's Graham.

GRAHAM
Shh! This won't take long.

He's playing. He leans in to her crotch area -- then lower -- and BITES HER THIGH!

The woman shudders in pain, eyes rolling up in her head. As blood gushes --

EXT. TOOL SHED -- DAY.

Silence from within. We PULL BACK, reveal --

The tool shed sits on Church grounds.

END ACT ONE

CONTINUED:

ACT TWO

INT. BEDROOM/THE WUNCH HOME -- DAY.

Ernie stands with his back to us in front of the dresser mirror. Touches the back of his head. Off his wince --

MOMENTS LATER.

Ernie rummages through a closet. Takes down a cardboard box. He places the box on the bed, looks through it, finds old family photos -- him, Rhonda and Janine in better times. He drops it. Picks up a photo of him as a young cop hoisting beers with another COP (MATT CONTE), and then... a POLICE SHIELD. Ernie removes the shield. A glint comes to his eyes.

INT. KITCHEN/THE WUNCH HOME -- DAY.

Ernie sits at the kitchen table, voraciously eats cold cuts. He sees a NEWSDAY on the counter, pulls it over, reads: the date: 2014...

ERNIE
What the... Are you kidding me...

He leafs, scan pages -- sees OBAMA'S FACE --

ERNIE (CONT'D)
He's *still* President?

INT. MARIA & ALAN'S HOUSE -- DAY.

Thomas paces the living room, talks on his cell.

THOMAS (ON CELL)
Yes -- Thank God. Remote sensing?
Ok.

He hangs up, checks a new message: an INFRARED SATELLITE PHOTO of Babylon. A circle delineates the town limits. Within the circle: RED DOTS for living people, BLUE DOTS for... the dead.

In the KITCHEN: Rhonda, her sister Maria, brother in law Alan, sit at a table, stunned. Alan grips his shotgun.

AUNT MARIA
If this is true... what about mom and dad?

CONTINUED:

Rhonda just shakes her head, still in shock.

UNCLE ALAN
Your folks are buried in Maine, wouldn't worry about them right now.

Thomas moves into the KITCHEN. All eyes go to him.

THOMAS
That was the CDC. They know what's going on.

Everybody pauses, gasps. A validation.

UNCLE ALAN
How?

THOMAS
Satellite imagery, surveillance drones... There's a lot of remote sensing apparatus set up all over for environmental changes, and it's going berserk.

UNCLE ALAN
So what're they going to do?

THOMAS
There's going to be a quarantine.

UNCLE ALAN
They think it's an infection?

AUNT MARIA
So we can't leave?!

THOMAS
They want me at the hospital. I need to gather some trained help.

RHONDA
Tommy, please, you can't go --

THOMAS
I have to.

A last look to his mother and he exits --

EXT. NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL -- DAY.

Thomas drives Rhonda's car into the parking lot. Passes rambling walking corpses at intervals. The place is thick with them: the hospital attracts them...

INT. NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL -- DAY.

Some nurses and doctors, emergency-set, moving quickly, try to restore a sense of calm and normalcy. Others are freaked, shell-shocked. Or weeping...

Janine works a wide examining area. Like everyone she's in a state of shock, but her autopilot is making her act pro as she helps a frightened, old WHEELCHAIR BOUND WOMAN with an IV stand.

JANINE
Don't worry... they haven't hurt anyone. You're going to be fine.

OLD WHEER CHAIR WOMAN
How do you know?

Janine holds on the woman -- she doesn't. And then -- a commotion. A man shouting. Janine looks down the hall, sees --

Thomas. He moves down the hallway, eyes out for someone in charge. He flashes his CDC badge, presses them, and nobody can answer --

THOMAS
I'm from the CDC, I need to talk to who's in charge. Excuse me!

Janine holds on him, knows him and is surprised... but also glad.

Thomas stops a frazzled NURSE.

THOMAS
Where's your administrator?

The nurse sputters a frightened, half-crazed laugh.

NURSE
Anywhere but here!

She pulls away. Thomas realizes -- no one is in charge.

JANINE
Thomas!

He turns, sees her. There's a history here, something that gives both pause. They both struggle with revealing too much on their faces --

CONTINUED:

JANINE
What the hell are you doing here?

THOMAS
I was visiting my mother.

JANINE
Your timing always did suck.

He manages a half-grin.

THOMAS
You OK?

JANINE
I guess. I don't know...

JANINE
Your foster mom?

JANINE
Been trying to reach her. This is f'd up, Thomas.

THOMAS
I'm in touch with Atlanta. No one knows what this is. But I need help -- a medical team. Scientists. Until the cavalry arrives.

JANINE
When's *that*?

THOMAS
Soon. They want me to go the cemetery, search for... I don't know... evidence.

JANINE
Everyone here's freaked. They won't go outside.

THOMAS
And you?

Janine holds, then --

JANINE
I want to know more.

I/E. RHONDA'S CAR -- DAY.

Thomas maneuvers side streets. Janine is beside him, edgy but serious, and trying not to focus on Thomas' presence. They drive in uneasy silence. We get the sense that in more normal times their past would be hashed out. Janine keeps things on point --

JANINE
My head is swimming... part of me wants to run and hide... but... the hows and whys of this... The neurophysiological facts alone...

THOMAS
Things calm down we'll need to examine them. They might be carrying something, a pathogen, who knows what...

EXT. POLICE STATION -- DAY.

The surrounding streets are clogged with cars, frightened people. Armed, jittery cops form a perimeter around the precinct house. A check point is set up at the parking lot entrance. Thomas pulls Rhonda's car into the parking lot, Janine beside him. They're stopped by a nervous YOUNG COP.

YOUNG COP
Turn around!

Thomas flashes his CDC badge.

THOMAS
I'm with the CDC.

YOUNG COP
I don't care who you're --

JANINE
He's from the government!

Off the cop -- unsure.

INT. POLICE STATION -- DAY.

Anxious chaos. Red-eyed, freaked out cops and detectives work phones. One burly cop is elbows to knees, head in hands.

CONTINUED:

Thomas and Janine enter. Thomas looks, finds who he's looking for --

MATT CONTE (early 50s) -- the cop we saw posing with Ernie in the photo. Wiry and edgy, he barks orders at some frightened cops.

MATT
I don't want to hear '*scared!*' Get your asses on the street before this town implodes!

THOMAS
Matt!

Matt sees Thomas, knows him, is surprised.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Matt looks at the infrared remote sensing photo on Thomas' phone.

THOMAS
Whatever this is, it's seems to be contained to Babylon. The blue dots are... the...

MATT
Unbelievable. So your bosses propose we do what?

THOMAS
They're mobilizing a quarantine. Babylon will be locked down.

Matt shakes his head -- this is becoming all too real, earth shattering; the last thing he ever imagined.

MATT
In the meantime?

EXT. CEMETERY GATES -- DAY.

Thomas and two cop cars pull up. Thomas and Janine get out, SURGICAL MASKS and GLOVES, anxiously leery about what they're about to do. Matt Conte and two other COPS -- also in masks and gloves -- follow them into the cemetery...

CONTINUED:

Thomas looks out: the Babylon graveyard. From his POV, it's a creepy, disheveled mess: mounds of raw soil, tipped-over stones, etc.

THOMAS
Never my favorite spot in town.

JANINE
(nervous titter)
Liked it when we used to get high here.

MATT
What exactly are we looking for?

THOMAS
Hopefully we'll know when we see it.

They enter, tread slowly, see: 2 out of 3 graves are disinterred: holes half-filled with loose soil, trails of dirt, ripped up grass. Headstone dates ranging from the '60s to the early '00s.

Janine's eye is caught by -- a row of SEALED MAUSOLEUMS.

Thomas moves away, crosses to a disinterred grave. Sees: pieces of coffin poking through the loose dirt. And something else: whitish FUNGAL ROOTS are glimpsed in the soil. Thomas holds on them a beat, then --

JANINE (O.C.)
Over here!

Thomas lifts up, moves over to: Janine, standing in front of the MAUSOLEUMS.

Thomas follows Janine's haunted thoughts -- they both lean in to listen at the door. *Is there anyone in there?*

THOMAS
We should look inside.

Matt mutters displeasure, readies his gun, rattles the rusty padlock and it crumbles into dust. He pushes open the door. Thomas turns on a pocketlight, looks: inside, nothing. He stoops in. Janine hesitates, then follows, after him, stooping -- barely enough room for the two of them --

The flashlight beam hits a STONE CASKET atop a slab. They cross to it, huddled close. A weird, stray intimate moment.

CONTINUED: (2)

Janine's blouse is open -- and Thomas spots the anatomically-correct HEART PENDANT. An old memory. Janine feels his eyes on it.

JANINE
Never comes off.

Uncomfortable, Thomas GRABS the edges and shoves the top half of the casket cover over, reveals --

Inside: rotting, cobwebby, half-rotten, inanimate SKELETAL REMAINS.

Janine instantly dry-retches, covers her face with her gloved hand. Thomas doesn't flinch. He holds on the rotted face, thinks, then --

QUICK CUTS: Other mausoleums and crypts opened. Rotted, INANIMATE BODIES revealed. One horrific face and state of decay after another. *Dead.*

CUT: Thomas and Janine stand outside the opened MAUSOLEUMS, baffled.

THOMAS
...It's like only the ones buried below ground came back.

Janine wonders, then -- shouts reverberate from outside the cemetery.

EXT. OUTSIDE GRAVEYARD/BABYLON STREET -- DAY.

Thomas, Janine, Matt and the other cops step out onto the street, see: CARS clogged up the road, and --

LARGE ANONYMOUS BLACK VANS have blocked the road leading out of town -- people are ranting outside of their cars, terrified and furious --

Around the vans -- WHITE HAZMAT-SUITED GUARDS with MACHINE GUNS -- forming lines across the yards and fields on either side of the road.

MATT
Finally.

He wades towards the blockade, holds up his badge.

MATT
Matt Conte, chief of police! Who's in command here?

CONTINUED:

A silent, eerily blank response from the line of hazmatted guards, then -- people bolt from cars, rush the blockade. The hazmats push them back -- silent and ominous against the pleas for help and escape.

MATT
Hey! You can't --

Thomas can't believe what he's seeing.

THOMAS
(to Janine)
Wait here.

Janine watches as he runs through the crowd of frightened people who surge back, scared, shouting. Her cell rings. PEARL. She answers, relieved --

JANINE (ON CELL)
Pearl. Are you -- *what?*

Her eyes are still on Thomas as he beseeches the line of hazmatted guards to listen to him. He's ignored. A hazmatted guard shouts over a bullhorn --

HAZMAT GUARD (OVER BULL HORN)
Any attempt to breach the perimeter will be met with force!

Janine turns away, cups an ear, has trouble hearing Pearl.

JANINE
Pearl... listen to me! You have to leave. Please. Pearl -- Ok. Ok.

She hangs up, flustered and anxious, as Thomas marches back towards her, shouts into his cell --

THOMAS (INTO CELL)
Dammit, Jim, they're about to start a war! Get me a damn contact! Now!

He hangs up in disgust, turns to Janine.

THOMAS
Everything's moving too fast. No one's talking.

JANINE
I need to get to Pearl's.

CONTINUED: (2)

THOMAS
What happened?

Off Janine -- shaken.

EXT. PEARL MONTOYA'S HOUSE -- DAY.

It's a poorer, cozier house than what we've seen. Thomas pulls up out front. Janine gets out, hesitant. Thomas calls to her from the driver's seat.

THOMAS
I'll go in with you.

JANINE
No. It's better if it's just me.

She moves slowly for the house.

INT. PEARL MONTOYA'S HOUSE -- DAY.

Janine walks through the front door, nerves on edge.

JANINE
Pearl?

Silence. Janine moves in, slowly but she knows the place. She turns the corner, toward the dining room and kitchen, and sees --

A DEAD BLACK BOY -- DONTAE (10) -- his skin bluish and decayed, his clothes rotting off him, bugs and soil all around -- sits at the center of the kitchen table, his legs crossed -- STARING out, blank, creepy.

Janine jumps, FREEZES -- a hanging moment -- then PEARL MONTOYA (60) bustles in from the back rooms, right between the other two -- she's tired and shocky like everyone, but naturally buoyant. She sees Janine -- goes in for a fast hug --

PEARL
Janine honey! I was so worried about you!

JANINE
I'm fine, Pearl -- you're OK?

PEARL
Oh yes, specially now that Dontae is back. You remember him?

CONTINUED:

Janine nods, wary eyes on the boy.

JANINE
(to Dontae)
It *was* you...

Off Dontae -- staring into some void.

INT. BEDROOM/WUNCH HOUSE -- DAY.

Ernie, showered and dressed, has his old bedroom turned upside-down. The closet's on the floor, every drawer emptied. HEARS: a door shutting. Someone else in the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM/THE WUNCH HOME -- MOMENTS LATER.

Ernie enters, the shield clipped to his waist. He looks around the room, to the front door. There's no one. He moves for the window, looks out. No one out front, but --

THOMAS (O.C.)
(tight)
Ernie.

Ernie turns with a start. Thomas stands in a doorway in a fight or flight stance, yet trying to stay defiant. This is the first dead person he's spoken to thus far.

ERNIE
What, no hello dad? How you been pops?

Thomas stares back, guard up --

ERNIE
Where's my gun?

THOMAS
We got rid of that years ago.

ERNIE
Goddammit, you and your mother, always working against me -- where is she?

THOMAS
None of your business.

CONTINUED:

ERNIE
Well, tell her to come on back! I won't bite! I'm in the best mood I've been in years!

THOMAS
I need to talk to you.

ERNIE
Oh boy, do I got questions --

THOMAS
What do you remember?

ERNIE
Remember, about what?

THOMAS
Coming back.... Dying. Any of it.

ERNIE
I dug out of some corporate park on Scanlon is all I know! Why? Who put me there?!

THOMAS
I don't know -- no one knew you were dead.

ERNIE
Really?! No one?! I didn't kill and bury myself, Stephen Hawking!

THOMAS
(trying not to sweat)
...Then who did?

ERNIE
How should I know?! What the hell do you think happened to me?!

Thomas is relieved, but tries to hide it.

THOMAS
You left, five years ago, took off for Daytona with one of those stripper girlfriends.

ERNIE
Daytona?! Who the hell goes to Daytona!

CONTINUED: (2)

THOMAS
That's what Matt and the crew at the precinct said.

ERNIE
Oh crap on that! I didn't leave!

THOMAS
Honestly, I don't care what happened to you. I'm only trying to find out what's going on, right now.

ERNIE
Big doctor. Maybe you should be talking to the priests!

THOMAS
We need answers.

ERNIE
We? Who's we? The government?!

THOMAS
(patience thinning)
The whole town -- everyone out there --

ERNIE
I don't give a rat's ass about this town!

THOMAS
What you experienced --

ERNIE
I want to know what happened to *me!! Screw this town!!!*

THOMAS
(tries again)
What you experienced, there has to be some memory, something --

Ernie holds on his son, absently touches the wound at the back of his head, cackles.

ERNIE
Gotta tell ya, Tommy, your line of questioning gets me wondering if there's something you're not telling *me.*

He moves in close -- too close.

CONTINUED: (3)

THOMAS
(firm)
Step back!

ERNIE
You show some respect or I'll slap that education I paid for straight out your ass!

THOMAS
Those days are long gone.

ERNIE
You think.

Full on Thomas -- it's hopeless. He turns and leaves out the door, toward his car -- Ernie shoves open the door, yelling, enjoying this --

ERNIE
I got a new shot over here, and I'll be goddamned if you or any other government cockroach is going to push me around! This ain't over, pissant! Know what I think -- it's just the beginning!

INT. PEARL MONTOYA'S HOUSE -- DAY.

Janine leans against a counter, eyes on Dontae -- who remains motionless. Pearl strains and plates some noddles, acts as if having a dead boy in the room is the most natural thing in the world.

PEARL
I was napping, dreaming of Prague of all things, and I was woken by some scratching at the window. Imagine my surprise when I saw that face staring back. I'd always thought he and Errol just ran away that year... He was only a few years younger than you then --

JANINE
Pearl, maybe you shouldn't be here. Come with me to my place --

PEARL
(didn't hear a word)
I don't know how he died.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

PEARL (CONT'D)
He hasn't said anything yet, and that's fine. Right, Dontae? You take your sweet time.

She sits beside him, feeds him a spoonful of noodles. The boy chews, slow, dead eyes fixed on nothing.

JANINE
Pearl, please --

She grabs Pearl. Dontae suddenly snaps his head to Janine, eyes defiant -- *hungry* -- drool hanging from dead teeth. Janine let's go. Scared. Pearl puts a calming hand to Dontae's back.

PEARL
It's alright, sweetie. It's just Janine. You were kids together.

Dontae holds on Janine for a tense beat, then -- turns away, his gaze going back to the nothing.

Pearl notices Janine's fear and discomfort --

PEARL
Life has dealt us different cards, Janine... Can't quit now.

Off Janine -- unnerved, trying to process.

INT. THE WUNCH HOME -- DAY.

Ernie cracks a beer, passes the window. Something catches his attention. He looks out, sees --

In the yard across the street: a single DEAD WOMAN is standing stock still in front of a medium-sized TREE that unlike the winter barren trees around it is IN FULL LEAFY BLOOM --

The woman is looking up at it, her eyes open, her mouth slack and open --

Off Ernie -- intrigued.

EXT. THE WUNCH HOME -- DAY.

Ernie steps outside. The door slams shut behind him. On the lawn, with his beer... He hears an odd, low droning sound... Is it coming from the woman?

CONTINUED:

He makes a move to cross the street and --

-- he stops cold. His jaw goes slack. Eyes go blank. Beer drops to the grass.

Frozen, he emits the same odd, low drone from the back of his throat.

We go CLOSE ON THE TREE the woman stands in front of. The same odd, white fungal roots we saw in the cemetery wrap around the base.

We PULL BACK: see Ernie, the woman and THREE MORE DEAD PEOPLE, down the block, all eerily still, all blank, all emitting the drone... All in collective unison.

END ACT TWO

CONTINUED: (2)

ACT THREE

INT. NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL -- DAY.

Thomas and Matt walk the corridor, nerves frayed.

THOMAS
You can't just unilaterally implement martial law!

MATT
I'd say that's already been done. Meanwhile, your fed goons have us scrambling in the dark and these *things* are still on the street.

THOMAS
They're people.

MATT
They're dead, Wunch. I've got the trucks and I'm rounding them up. We'll lock 'em down in the high school gym --

THOMAS
But --

MATT
We move tonight. With or without you.

Thomas watches Matt go, worried. Janine steps up behind him.

JANINE
Thomas -- come here.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY/EXAMINATION ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Janine and Thomas walking --

JANINE
Do you remember, Mr. Scharbo?

THOMAS
The eighth grade math teacher.

CONTINUED:

JANINE
He died three weeks ago. Brain cancer. I treated him. Well... he's here and he's agreed to some tests.

They enter an EXAMINATION ROOM: Scharbo sits shirtless, flaky and grey, on the table. His wife, MARGARET, kind-faced and alive, stands beside him -- in a SURGICAL MASK and GLOVES -- tenderly holds his withered, veined hand.

Thomas is stopped by the sight of dead/living intimacy.

JANINE
His wife.

They approach, freaked, but wanting to be helpful. Scharbo sees them, smiles a corpse's smile. No teeth.

JANINE
Mr. Scharbo, you remember Thomas Wunch?

SCHARBO
Sure. One of my best students. Not that you weren't.

Margaret sees how Thomas is looking at them -- like them being together is *wrong.*

MARGARET
(to Thomas)
This is so unnatural, I know, but... I've been praying for my Max to come back since the hour he left this world.

SCHARBO
Guess we don't live in the natural any longer, ey?

Husband and wife clasp their hands tighter.

THOMAS
(all business)
How're you feeling Mr. Scharbo?

SCHARBO
Call me Max. And I haven't felt so good in a long while.

Thomas places a stethoscope to Scharbo's bony, sunken chest.

CONTINUED: (2)

SCHARBO
(laughs)
Guess it's too late for a full check up though. Maybe I wouldn't be in this situation if I was able to afford one before... Damn district pension.

MARGARET
(dismissive)
That union...

Thomas is flummoxed, not paying attention to the husband and wife's banter. But Janine is watching Scharbo, concerned. Despite his sunny banter and exterior, his eyes are predatory, hungry. As his gaze flicks over Thomas EXPOSED THROAT --

THOMAS
Mr. Scharbo, Max, I'd like to take some blood and tissue samples.

The dead man grins and shrugs. Thomas and Janine walk, away and out into the hall. Thomas is vexed, Janine is still bugged.

THOMAS
His heartbeat... it's ridiculously slow.

JANINE
I know. Ten beats a minute.

THOMAS
If it's not the heart -- what's acting as the engine?

JANINE
Some kind of parasympathetic aggregation, an autonomic anomaly, perhaps, but I'm vamping. A PET scan may tell us more.

He looks back at Scharbo and his wife. Margaret lowers her surgical mask and kisses her husband's dead lips.

YOUNG E.R. DOC (O.C.)
Hey Janine?

They turn, see ROGER, a young ER doc, in the doorway.

ROGER
Something you need to see.

INT. ANOTHER EXAMINATION ROOM -- DAY.

Thomas, Janine, Roger and a nurse surround LISA, the returned woman who was shot earlier.

THOMAS
Lisa Hernandez... She lived on my block.

JANINE
She was dead?

ROGER
And is again.

THOMAS
Any cell activity?

ROGER
Nothing.

Janine looks at Thomas, with impulsive meaning --

JANINE
Only one second chance...

INT. HOSPITAL ER WAITING ROOM -- DUSK.

The room is in disarray, no nurses to be seen. The doors to the ambulance bay open and close haphazardly, by themselves. About 30 people crowd the room --

-- confused dead people, all ages but mostly older, one with a missing hand (in need of a prosthetic), one with a huge visible tumor on their throat, several in bloody makeshift bandages -- they've been there awhile, slumped.

The bay doors open again -- and in slowly strides Graham. He stalks the room, looking at everyone, the empty check-in desk... Silent for seconds. Calculating. Addressing the room in a revolving circle --

GRAHAM
...I see... Everyone here, looking for help? Only natural. Only thing is, they're not helping you, are they. They don't know *what* to do. Is this *your* second chance? Maybe? Is it? Then... what're you doing *here*? Maybe this is true: if you were old and sick when you died...
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
you're not old and sick now.
You're *reborn*.

Faces looking up at him, stages of bafflement and dawning awareness --

EXT. BABYLON STREETS -- DUSK/NIGHT

Night falls on Day One. There are dogs in the streets, and occasional wandering dead. But it's quiet. Occasional distant sounds: screams, gunshots...

EXT. POLICE STATION -- NIGHT.

The round-up mobilizes. Armed. Police tactical vehicles and SUVs revving. Thomas moves for a truck, Janine beside him.

THOMAS
Scharbo's blood work shows no sign of pathogens --

JANINE
That's a good thing.

THOMAS
Yeah, but... his blood is actually too clean. Like it's been scrubbed of all bacteria -- even the kind that keeps us healthy. We'll need to find test other subjects

JANINE
I'll see who's willing.

He climbs up into the back of the truck. Janine holds, wants to say something -- a goodbye, a be careful -- but holds her tongue.

I/E. BACK OF TRUCK -- NIGHT.

Thomas sits with a gang of heavily armed, masked and gloved cops.

THOMAS
(to driving cop)
Remember -- they haven't physically threatened anyone, so let's try to do this like humans.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Right? They're dead people. But they're still people.

The cop casts an eye on him, dubious --

TACTICAL COP #1
You say so...

EXT. THE STREETS OF BABYLON/VARIOUS SHOTS -- NIGHT.

Trucks stop at different HOMES, PARKS, STREETS, etc. The cops escorts dead people to the trucks. Most go peaceably. Some fight back. It begins to get messy --

EXT. OPEN FIELD -- NIGHT.

A troop of tense TACTICAL COPS approach a group of dead people who stand in a jagged circle. The dead are tranced out, mouths open, emit the strange droning.

A FAT COP brings his gun up, eye through the sight, targets a particularly NASTY AND DECAYED DEAD MAN.

Then the POV moves down a bit: to a FIVE-YEAR-OLD DEAD boy. The boy stops droning, lifts yellowy eyes, locks on the fat cop. Defiant.

I/E. THOMAS' TRUCK -- NIGHT.

Thomas rides, tense and watchful, he sees something outside, eyes go wide --

THOMAS
Whoa, pull over! Now!

Truck brakes -- Thomas is out in a flash --

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME -- NIGHT.

Another, smaller truck is parked out front. Cops in riot gear rip a TEN-YEAR-OLD DEAD BOY away from his LIVING MOTHER, who's screaming. The cop has a baton out and bashes the kid and slams the mother --

Thomas is on them, his federal ID badge out --

THOMAS
WHOA, WHOA, EVERYBODY HOLD UP!
THIS is not how this will happen!

CONTINUED:

RIOT-GEAR COP #1
(panic mode)
She wouldn't let me --

DEAD KID'S MOTHER
(crying)
My baby!

THOMAS
Let the boy go!

RIOT-GEAR COP #1
We don't know WHAT it is!

THOMAS
(closer, angry)
It's a boy! Now back off!

DEAD KID'S MOTHER
I can't let him go!

THOMAS
Listen, they're bringing them all in, just to be safe. He'll be fine -- (to cop) -- because no one's going to hurt him! Let her ride with him, at least.

RIOT-GEAR COP #1
(frustrated, furious)
...Whatever.

Thomas moves off, watching to make sure it's OK -- back at his truck -- three armored cops are standing, watching, dumbfounded.

TACTICAL COP #1
(skeptical)
What exactly are you doing, doc?

THOMAS
Trying to keep this town from tearing itself to pieces.

INT. BEDROOM/MARIA & ALAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT.

Rhonda in bed -- trying to sleep. She listens to the neighborhood outside: tiny distant noises, sirens, howls... Then: a thump. Close. On the house. Rhonda bolts up. Waits. Then it thumps again. Rhonda jumps out of bed.

INT. HALLWAY/MARIA AND ALAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT.

Rhonda runs into the hall --

CONTINUED:

RHONDA
MARIA! Alan! MARIA! Something --

Maria flies out of her room, pulling on a robe -- all yelling in a hush --

MARIA
What is it?!

RHONDA
Something's downstairs, trying to get in --

MARIA
Alan!

Alan barrels out of their room, nervous hands on his shotgun. They all head downstairs --

ALAN
The shells are down here --

MARIA
You unloaded it?

ALAN
Not safe leaving a shell in the chamber.

The three hit the ground floor, crouching in the darkness, waiting --

MARIA
What could they want.

RHONDA
Anything. Food. Car keys.

ALAN
The dead can't drive!

THUMP. The three turn -- it's happening at a side window. Alan scurries for the shells, cursing to himself -- the window shatters --

RHONDA
Alan?!

Alan panics, can't find the shells. A heavy body crawls through the window and hits the floor -- Rhonda turns on the lights --

It's Ernie. Brushing himself off.

MARIA
Omigod.

CONTINUED: (2)

ERNIE
Didn't think you'd open the door for me.

Alan holds up the unloaded gun.

ALAN
Get out!

ERNIE
Wow... Nice, Alan. I came to see my wife.

MARIA
What for?!

ERNIE
'Cause she's MY WIFE! You don't think I have any RIGHTS AROUND HERE?! Husband's rights!

Alan scrambles, looking for the shells. Ernie eyes him.

ERNIE
Y'know what else I got: the right to know what the hell happened to me. Any of you got any ideas about that?

MARIA
What do you mean, you left! God knows how you died!

Rhonda is silent.

ERNIE
C'mon, Maria -- if I'd gone to Daytona, why would I be here now, standing in your kitchen... like this?!

He comes closer; threatening vibe rising. Alan finds the shells, loads --

ERNIE
I didn't just die, Rhonda. Someone killed me!

RHONDA
(whimpers) Please...

ERNIE
Right here in Babylon! You have any idea who this someone could be, Rhonda? Huh?!

CONTINUED: (3)

He grabs Rhonda at the wrist. She screams, pulls back, but he's too strong. Maria grabs his arm, but he shoves her off -- it's a frenzied clinch --

He brings Rhonda's hand to the back of his head, forces her fingers deep into --

A large, long canyon in his scalp --

As Rhonda goes white with fear and disgust --

ERNIE
WHO DID THIS, RHONDA?!

The shotgun barrel clicks shut, hits his ear *hard* --

ALAN
(shaky)
Let her go!

Off Ernie -- he holds. Rage builds --

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. INDUSTRIAL CORPORATE PARK -- DAWN.

Sun's coming up on Day 2. Ernie stands on the fallen flag, over a deep-dug hole that appears to have caved in on itself. He looks around, disturbed -- he doesn't want to be the one guy without a proper death-&-burial story. Pisses him off. He's the most alone person in town. He touches the wound in his head. Looks down --

Mind made up, he climbs down into the hole, the loose dirt. Digs around. He sees: the same white fungal roots that were wrapped around the base of the lush tree poke through the soil.

Curious, he touches one. Holds. Eyes unblinking. A thought comes and... he digs. Slowly, then faster, with purpose. Dirt and rock are displaced, and... a RUSTED HATCHET HEAD covered in dirt and long dried blood is dislodged, falling into the palm of his free hand. Ernie looks at it, incredulous: *this is it?*

I/E. CHURCHYARD/SHED -- DAWN/DAY.

Graham heads to the shed --

INSIDE SHED: the jogger is barely alive, bloodied bite marks on her face... We see: one of her legs has been gnawed off at the knee. She's barely conscious.

Graham falls to his knees matter-of-factly, leans over her --

GRAHAM
I have to leave now. Thank you so much for everything.

And he bites her THROAT -- killing her finally -- blood spumes -- Graham rips flesh, feral, eats and eats --

INT. CHURCH -- DAY.

Exhausted and traumatized, Father Harries busily and with obvious revulsion removing the MORTICIAN'S THREAD from the inner lips of an frail DEAD OLD LADY, delicately, with tiny scissors --

CONTINUED:

A few other numb congregants slump in the pews.

Coming through the door: RHONDA, MARIA and ALAN. The women are wide-eyed, desperate. Alan carries a shotgun on his hip.

RHONDA
Father!

Harries turns to them --

Rhonda, Maria and Alan tense up at the sight of the dead woman. Alan's finger goes to the gun's trigger.

RHONDA
Please take my confession.

MOMENTS LATER:

Maria kneels at the altar, prays. Alan stands behind her, watchful eyes on the dead woman who stares back and absently touches her freed lips.

ALAN
(under breath)
What are we doing here...

Maria crosses herself.

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH -- CONTINUOUS.

Harries opens the dark mesh partition, Rhonda on the other side.

FATHER HARRIES
Rhonda, I understand the need for spiritual guidance, but... perhaps, for now, it'd be better if you went home.

RHONDA
I can't, father. My husband...

Father Harries is confused.

FATHER HARRIES
Ernie?

RHONDA
He died, father. He...

Father Harries is surprised. Rhonda breaks down in tears.

CONTINUED:

FATHER HARRIES
Easy, my child. Just relax.

RHONDA
-- I can never be forgiven...

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET -- DAWN/DAY.

A TRUCK, loaded with the dead, barrels toward us... and slows to a stop. Standing in the middle of the street: GRAHAM. We see: he's looking better, the decay diminished a bit, color coming back. He holds up a hand in greeting. The scabs mostly healed.

Two tactical cops disembark, guns aimed. Graham smiles, holds up a greeting hand.

GRAHAM
I'd like to come to quarantine.
Please.

Off the cops' incredulous reactions --

EXT. POLICE STATION -- DAY

Cops, Guardsmen, bustling, busy, coming and going -- and here comes Ernie. Badge clipped to his belt. Strutting a little, remembering his old swagger. But on serious business. More than one frazzled cop flinches and steps back, recognizing him and recoiling --

ERNIE
Miss me?

Just then -- Matt comes out of the station, flanked by two officers. He spots Ernie -- freezes.

ERNIE (CONT'D)
Whoa, look at you, Matty Conte,
big man in charge.

MATT
Wunch?

ERNIE
Yeeeaaah... Long time.

MATT
I didn't know you... When did
you... die?

CONTINUED:

ERNIE
That’s the hot question.

MATT
We all thought --

ERNIE
Yeah, yeah, Daytona. Well, that didn’t happen.

They hold on each other, an old animosity returned.

MATT
We’re rounding up, Ernie. Quarantine in the high school gym. Until we --

ERNIE
-- You’re a busy bull, Matty, I get it. But I’ve got something else for your docket. ‘Cause I don’t actually know how I died or when I died, and that makes me a case doesn’t it?

MATT
What?

Ernie plants a hand on his chest. Matt flinches back.

ERNIE
Somebody killed me!

Matt nods to the guardsmen -- but Ernie suddenly has the axe head held forth in his fat hand.

ERNIE
You’re not done with me, because I’ve even got the murder weapon, so even you couldn’t screw it up --

The Guard suddenly grabs him!

ERNIE
Get the hell off!

He fights back, bellows, throws punches. He connects with a guard who stumbles back, lip split and bleeding. Ernie goes at him then... holds up, eyes locked on the man’s busted mouth, the blood. Ernie blinks, some urge flashing through. The other cops take advantage of the lull, get him to the ground, knee to back, cuffed. He still doesn’t stop --

CONTINUED: (2)

ERNIE (CONT'D)
Pissant douchebags!

He kicks one of the guardsmen in the groin. The other slams the butt of his rifle into Ernie's back. He goes down, spins over to fight back and --

Finds the barrel of a gun in his face. Sees: the terrified guardsmen holding it is more than ready.

I/E. TRANSPORT TRUCK -- MOMENTS LATER.

The truck moves out. Ernie is cuffed to an interior rail. Spitting and fuming. He looks: the truck is filled with ten other dead people: teens, grandmothers, middle-agers, fathers. They're all looking at him, startled and cowed.

A DEAD 13-YEAR-OLD GIRL, tranced out and creepily angelic, sits in a corner -- sings an opera piece, Menotti's THE BLACK SWAN. Ernie raises his voice, talks over the singing girl --

ERNIE
(to the other dead)
You just gonna accept this?...
Really? They're carting us off to God knows where, will do God knows what to us, and you do nothing?

Their response: more blank, exhausted stares. Ernie bristles, turns to the girl --

ERNIE
Hey, kid, enough!

The girl goes quiet, looks as if she's about to cry.

GRAHAM (O.C.)
Officer Wunch...

Ernie looks, sees: Graham sitting across from him, an odd glimmer in his dead eyes.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
Be patient.

ERNIE
I know you. Harries, right? The priest's brother. Last time I saw you, you were knocking over taco stands for crack change.

CONTINUED:

GRAHAM
Heroin. But yes. That was me.
(beat)
It's a new world, isn't it?

ERNIE
I'd say so. Everyone's confused.

GRAHAM
But not you. You see the possibilities.

ERNIE
Don't know about that. I just know I shouldn't be in here. I've got things I've got to do. Questions I need answered.

GRAHAM
Of course you do. We all do.

ERNIE
But these people, they don't seem to get it -- they're *back*. We're back! Holy crap, why aren't they dancing in the aisles? God, all the things I want to do now --

GRAHAM
Does that include making all the same mistakes?

Ernie holds on Graham -- *was he just insulted?*

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
As things go forward, the past will have to be erased. It will require a good deal of thought. Planning. The future... will require leadership.

ERNIE
Leadership...

GRAHAM
We're here now, herded like undesirables. But you wait, Officer. There will be a reckoning. We just have to be patient.

Ernie is silent, for once --

INT. NEUROLOGY LAB/HOSPITAL -- DAY.

Janine examines Scharbo's brain scans on the computer. We see reams of cryptic graphs and notation, all hers.

Around her: the hospital is a shambles -- no crew, sheeted bodies on gurneys. We see cops nervously, gruffly, escorting the last of the dead people out of the waiting room...

She rubs her face in exhaustion, gets up, makes sure no one is looking and... She goes to her locker, removes a bottle of vodka, takes a deep slug --

FREZZOLA (O.C.)
How're you holding up?

Janine turns to see Dr. Frezzola, shrink-on-the-make, also exhausted, in the doorway.

JANINE
What are you doing here?

FREZZOLA
I work here, remember. I've been in high demand.

JANINE
I guess I can imagine. Everything's gone crazy.

FREZZOLA
You wouldn't believe the life stories I've heard...

He notices the bottle in her hand. Janine, embarrassed, goes to put it away --

FREZZOLA
Oh, please. Considering the situation... Mind?

He gestures to the bottle. Janine holds a beat -- he wants to drink with her? -- then hands it over. Frezzola takes a healthy late-night pull.

I/E. THOMAS' TRUCK -- DAY.

Thomas sits in the back with some gathered dead -- and the dead boy's mother. The boy stares at Thomas as the mother holds him, whispers in his ear.

CONTINUED:

Thomas attempts a reassuring smile, but the kid just stares. It's almost as if he's sizing Thomas up. As Thomas flashes unease --

COP (O.C.)
Hold up here --

The truck comes to a stop. Thomas looks out. He's thinking a mile a minute --

-- because they've stopped across from the industrial park Ernie dug out of. Thomas STEPS OUT, looks around -- the cops are heading toward a house, rounding up. He figures it's his chance -- to see.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL CORPORATE PARK -- CONTINUOUS.

Alone in the faint morning light, Thomas approaches the HOLE --

-- looks down into it. We see: *he knows it*. He stares down into it, mind racing, thinking *I should look around...* But he glances over his shoulder, worried about being seen.

Big breath. What can he do?

Thomas steps down into the hole, roots around in the soil -- looking for something. His digging grows more frantic as he comes away with nothing but soil...

It's not here.

INT. NEUROLOGY LAB/HOSPITAL -- DAY

Janine and Frezzola are deep into the bottle and conversation --

JANINE
-- there's got to be some explanation for this. Some... hard science. Something that can be measured --

FREZZOLA
One would think. Unless one believed in Heaven and Hell... You never answered my question. How are you doing?

CONTINUED:

JANINE
How is anybody doing.

FREZZOLA
What're you feeling.

JANINE
Aw c'mon, Will. Not now.

FREZZOLA
Why not. Feeling. C'mon.

Beat --

JANINE
Ok. I'm scared. Confused...

FREZZOLA
That CDC scientist, Wunch? He's the one you talk about. Your old boyfriend.

JANINE
... Yup.

FREZZOLA
The first.

JANINE
The first everything. Ridiculous.

FREZZOLA
Why.

JANINE
With all of this happening... I found myself thinking that no matter how this ends... He'll be gone again.

Frezzola goes to pat her on the shoulder, consoling. A beat --

And desperate, woozy, Janine goes up suddenly into a big KISS -- wildly hungry and lusty, like she's gripped by an instinct --

He is surprised but responds. Mashing and grunting and writhing -- lab coats come off. Janine is half-lidded and unreadable --

Then, in mid-kiss, saliva and breathing -- Janine BITES Frezzola's lower face --

CONTINUED: (2)

-- and holds on, grabbing his head and tearing! Roger screams! Tries to pull away. But her grip is like glue. She's totally feral, gnashing, pulling, biting. They fall to the floor -- he's muffled. As blood gushes --

INT. CHURCH RECTORY -- DAY.

Father Harries, alone, looking from room to room -- the TV is on...

FATHER HARRIES
Graham?

He stops, and focuses on the TV newscast -- we see fuzzy PHONE VIDEO images of DEAD PEOPLE, and a clearly terrified NEWSREADER --

NEWSREADER
-- What was thought to be localized to communities in Suffolk County is now besieging areas in Nassau, Westchester and in at least three Connecticut counties --

FATHER HARRIES
My God.

INT. HOSPITAL -- DAY.

Frezzola is dead, lying flat, his face a bloody mess, chunks missing, also a big chunk of hand meat from thumb to index finger is gone, leaving teeth marks --

In the corner of the room... Janine's huddled on the floor. Face, hands and scrubs covered with blood, in shock: confusion and bugged-out terror --

FLASHBACK:

EXT. WOODED STRETCH OF ROAD -- DAWN.

Janine's Nissan is stalled at the edge of a ravine, the fender smashed into the guardrail. Janine gets out, frustrated, moves around to the hood. Opens the hood -- and the ground at her feet gives way! She slips, tumbles into the ravine!

EXT. RAVINE -- CONTINUOUS.

Janine slides, tumbles, down, down and hits the bottom. Her head slams into a rock and -- she falls face first into an icy puddle.

As the ice cracks -- Janine lays motionless. Water seeps up... into her mouth. She's still.

Dead. In the ground beside her, the white roots protruding...

BACK TO:

INT. BACK ROOM/QUARANTINE -- DAY.

Janine sitting on the floor... covered in blood, completely freaked, shuddering, crying. We close in on her horrified realization -- gasping --

END PILOT EPISODE *