

CRYOLIFE

Pilot - "The Here and The After"

by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A quiet stillness. The bedroom is dimly lit, with moonlight filtering through the window. Modest furnishings speak to a life lived simply.

ELI JOHNSON (70s), his face etched with a lifetime of experiences, lies beside BEVERLY JOHNSON (70s), her mocha skin a testament to time's gentle touch, her beauty deepened by the years. They hold hands, their fingers intertwined.

ELI
(softly)
You're trembling.

A single tear escapes Beverly's eye, tracing a path down her wrinkled cheek.

BEVERLY
(whispered, breaking)
What if it's not what they
promised? What if I'm... alone?

Eli's hand rises, his thumb brushing away the tear, lingering on her skin. He cups her face in his hand.

ELI
It will be.

BEVERLY
How can you be so sure?

Beverly looks into his eyes, searching for answers.

ELI
Because I believe. It's a new
beginning... our beginning.

Eli leans in, his forehead resting against hers.

ELI
Just hold on until I get there.
I'll find you.

INT. CRYOLIFE BUILDING - ROOM - DAY

Sunlight gently filters through the sheer curtains. The sparsely furnished room is centered around a sterile hospital-like bed.

A sentimental SONG plays in the background. Beverly and Eli slow dance, her head resting against his chest.

ELI
(softly)
Remember this song?

BEVERLY
(smiling)
Our first dance. The night after we met.

ELI
(voice thick with emotion)
You haven't changed. Still as beautiful.

Their eyes meet, filled with unspoken love and sorrow.

The door opens. NURSE ANN (30s) enters holding an electronic pad. Her white coat bears a CryoLife emblem above her name.

Nurse Ann hesitates before approaching them, sensing the weight of the moment.

NURSE ANN
(gently)
We're passed the waiting period. You still want to go through with it? Remember, there's no coming back.

Beverly pulls back slightly from Eli, her eyes filled with trepidation. She glances at Eli, who gives her a reassuring nod. She turns to Nurse Ann.

BEVERLY
(with a tremor in her voice)
Yes.

NURSE ANN
Okay. Sign here.

She hands Beverly a stylus. Beverly signs with a shaky hand.

NURSE ANN
(softly)
I'll give you a moment alone.

Nurse Ann exits, closing the door behind her.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

BLAKE JOHNSON (40s), steely eyes, firm jawline, weathered face, stands up from his seat. Next to him is SARAH JOHNSON (17), with doe eyes and a stern expression, her book smart demeanor evident.

NURSE ANN
You can go in now.

Nurse Ann steps aside. Blake takes a deep breath, gathering himself.

BLAKE
(to Sarah)
Let me have a moment with her.

Sarah nods, her eyes reflecting a mix of apprehension and understanding.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Blake enters the room, his eyes immediately drawn to Beverly.

BLAKE
(his voice hoarse)
Mom.

Beverly turns, her eyes filled with tears.

BEVERLY
(smiling sadly)
Blake.

BLAKE
Are you sure about this?

Beverly reaches out and takes his hand.

BEVERLY
(softly)
Sometimes life doesn't give us a
choice.

She pauses, her eyes searching his.

BEVERLY

But we can choose how we face it.

She reaches into his pocket and pulls out a pack of cigarettes.

BEVERLY

(voice firm)

And you can choose to stop this.

She crushes it in her palm. Unable to meet her stern gaze, he looks down.

BLAKE

(struggling)

Sarah, she's still...

Beverly touches his face.

BEVERLY

You did all you could for Zoe.
Sarah is young. Someday she'll
understand.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Nurse Ann enters the room. Beverly stands with Eli, Blake, and Sarah. The air is thick with tension and unspoken fears.

NURSE ANN

(gently)

It's time.

Beverly's hands tremble as she clutches Eli's arm, her eyes searching his for reassurance.

BEVERLY

(visibly nervous)

Eli...

Eli pulls her into a tight embrace, his voice a soft whisper in her ear.

ELI

It'll be okay. I won't be long.

Beverly nods, drawing strength from his words. She looks at Blake and Sarah, her resolve hardening.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOVING - DAY

Beverly stands beside Nurse Ann, her reflection distorted in the elevator's polished steel walls. Floors flash on the --

LED DISPLAY

B20, B25, B30, descending deeper underground.

NURSE ANN

We're in B43.

Beverly's eyes flicker between the display and the floor, her breath shallow, uneven. Nurse Ann glances at her.

NURSE ANN

(hint of concern)

The medication... are you feeling it?

BEVERLY

(voice strained)

Not... not yet.

Silence lingers for a moment.

BEVERLY

Is everyone here like me... facing death?

NURSE ANN

Not necessarily. Some people come here seeking peace, or to join loved ones. Everyone's journey is different.

The elevator slows to a stop. The doors slide open with a pneumatic hiss, revealing a long, sterile corridor. On either side is a row of cryogenic pods with the faint outlines of human forms within.

Beverly swallows hard, her gaze locked on the endless line of pods. She hesitates before stepping out.

INT. CRYOLIFE - FLOOR B43 - DAY

Beverly lies motionless as a clear solution envelops her like a second skin. Mist billows from the extreme cold, curling around her pod like a ghostly shroud. The chamber's glass door seals with a hiss, encasing her in the cryogenic pod.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. ELI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The digital clock on the nightstand blinks: 2:00 AM. Eli lies on his back, eyes open, staring into the darkness. His expression is vacant, lost in thought.

He turns slowly to look at the emptiness beside him. His hand reaches out, trembling slightly, fingers brushing the untouched sheets. His eyes mist with unshed tears.

With a sigh, Eli sits up. He glances at his cellphone, hesitates, then picks it up and dials a number. The phone rings, breaking the silence.

REALTOR (V.O.)
(groggy)
Hello?

ELI
(voice cracking)
It's Eli Johnson.

REALTOR (V.O.)
It's two in the morning, Mr.
Johnson.

ELI
I know. I'm sorry, but... I can't
wait thirty days.

REALTOR (V.O.)
(empathetic, waking up)
What's going on, Mr. Johnson?

ELI
(sobbing)
I need her...

REALTOR (V.O.)
(pausing, considering)
Alright. Let me see what I can do.
I'll call you first thing in the
morning.

INT. ELI'S HOUSE - DAY

The house is quiet, serene. Eli sits by the window, his gaze fixed on the lush green backyard where birds flit about. The beauty of the scene contrasts sharply with his wistful, sad expression.

REALTOR (V.O.)
Hi Mr. Johnson. It's Brad. I
talked to the buyer, and he agreed
to move up the closing date.

Eli's eyes move to a pair of Beverly's slippers, a stark
reminder of her absence.

INT. CRYOLIFE BUILDING - ROOM - DAY

A hushed stillness permeates the sparsely furnished room
centered around a sterile hospital-like bed.

Eli gazes into the distance, his eyes clouded with memories.
His attention shifts to a --

FRAMED PHOTO

A younger Eli, beaming with joy, stands beside Beverly at
Washington Square Park, New York City.

ELI
It's where we met.

He gently lifts the photo, his fingers tracing the edges as
if trying to touch the past.

ELI
I couldn't stop looking at her.

His eyes drift to other photos on the nightstand, capturing
moments of their life together.

ELI
Even forty seven years later.

Blake watches from across the room, his expression a mix of
concern and sorrow.

BLAKE
Are you sure about this? You're
still healthy.

Eli's gaze remains fixed on the photos.

ELI
Everyday I walk by her slippers. I
keep waiting for her to slide her
feet into them.

His voice cracks, tears glisten in his eyes.

ELI
 Don't you see? I have no life
 without her.

Blake points towards the door.

BLAKE
 What about Sarah?

ELI
 She has you.

The door opens. Nurse Ann enters holding an electronic pad.

Seated in the hallway is Sarah. She glances into the room as
 the door closes behind Nurse Ann.

NURSE ANN
 We're passed the waiting period.
 You still want to go through with
 it?

ELI
 Yes.

Nurse Ann hands him the pad.

NURSE ANN
 Okay. Sign here.

Eli signs with a stylus, his hand trembling slightly. Nurse
 Ann gives him a comforting smile.

NURSE ANN
 I'll let you say your goodbyes.

The nurse opens the door, stepping into the --

HALLWAY

Sarah stands up, her eyes red from crying.

NURSE ANN
 You can go in now.

SARAH
 Is he...?

The nurse nods. Sarah tilts her head, biting her lip to hold
 back the tears. She walks into the --

ROOM

Stands beside Eli, who reaches out to her.

ELI
It's okay, Sarah. This is what I
want.

Sarah takes his hand, squeezing it tightly.

SARAH
I'll miss you, Grandpa.

They embrace, sharing a moment of silent understanding. Blake joins them, placing a hand on Eli's shoulder.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOVING - DAY

Eli's hand twitches as he stands beside Nurse Ann. The elevator's descent is a steady hum. The floors flash on the --

LED DISPLAY

B20, B25, B30, each number sinking them further underground.

NURSE ANN
(voice clipped, eyes
forward)
We're in B43.

Eli glances at her, but she doesn't meet his gaze. The elevator slows to a stop.

The doors slide open with a metallic hiss, revealing a long, dimly lit corridor lined with cryogenic pods. Each pod is illuminated with a soft blue light, revealing the human figure inside.

Eli steps out hesitantly. He takes in the sight of the pods, his expression a mix of awe and apprehension.

INT. FLOOR B43 - DAY

Eli stands next to a pod. Inside, Beverly is immersed in a clear liquid, transmitters attached to her skull. The soft hum of ventilation fills the air. Eli's pod is beside hers.

He places a trembling hand on her pod, his eyes glistening with unshed tears.

ELI
(voice choked with
emotion)
I'll be there soon.

Nurse Ann, a compassionate presence, approaches with a gentle smile.

NURSE ANN
Any last requests?

Eli pulls out a worn piece of paper from his pocket and hands it to her.

ELI
Can you play this?

She glances at the paper, nods warmly.

NURSE ANN
Sure.

MOMENTS LATER

The same sentimental SONG plays overhead, filling the sterile room with warmth. Eli lies still in his pod as a clear solution envelops him. Mist billows from the extreme cold, curling around his pod like a ghostly shroud.

ELI (V.O.)
What should I expect?

INT. CRYOWORLD - SUBWAY STATION - DAY

SONG continues.

A vortex of colors swirl about, then dissipates. The lighting suddenly shifts. Eli stands on the escalator, ascending slowly.

NURSE ANN (V.O.)
You'll ascend an escalator.

He steps off.

NURSE ANN (V.O.)
When you exit, you'll be in the
place you wanted us to take you.

EXT. CRYOWORLD - STREET - DAY

Eli emerges from the subway station.

Snowflakes gently descend. CARS, TAXIS, TRUCKS move over the sloshy pavement. PEOPLE walk by, bundled in heavy coats.

Across the street, the Washington Square arch looms, blurred by the falling snow. Eli smiles slightly as he sees it.

EXT. CRYOWORLD - WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

Beverly stands in the courtyard, wistful, quiet. The snowfall turns the scene into a dreamy landscape.

ELI (V.O.)
I told Beverly I would be there.
Just look for me.

Eli, now visible, approaches Beverly. She recognizes him, her eyes filling with tears.

CLOSE ON:

Beverly's face as a tear traces down her cheek.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ELI'S HOUSE - DAY

Mid-century home with a sold sign in the front.

INT. ELI'S HOUSE - DAY

Blake stands in the doorway, watching Sarah empty a dresser drawer into a box. The room is barren, with a few scattered boxes on the floor, an empty bed, no pictures on the walls.

SARAH
Why did Grandpa sell the house?

BLAKE
It was the only way he could swing
it.

Sarah stops packing, looks at Blake, her eyes searching for answers.

SARAH
So he sold everything to be with
her.
(beat)
Why didn't you do that for Mom?

Blake's face tightens.

BLAKE
We did everything we could, Sarah.

SARAH
Not everything. You never even
considered CryoLife.

Sarah steps closer to Blake, her eyes blazing.

SARAH
(accusingly)
Did you even love Mom? You weren't
there half the time. I was the one
taking care of her, watching her
suffer.

Blake looks down, unable to meet her gaze.

SARAH
(voice breaking)
Where were you when she died? I
tried calling you over and over
again. She was asking for you.

Blake's face contorts with guilt as he recalls. He struggles
to find the words, but none come.

BEGIN FLASHBACK SEQUENCE:

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Blake strides down the bustling hallway, his eyes sharp,
taking in every detail. POLICE OFFICERS move past him,
focused on their tasks.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Detective.

Blake nods, his mind already elsewhere. He passes the
conference room and glances inside.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Several DETECTIVES hover over a large map of New York City,
intense and murmuring. Three pins are stuck in it, marking
locations of interest. A news report playing on a nearby TV.

REPORTER (V.O.)
(on TV)
... authorities have found another
body this morning. This time in
Pelham Bay Park. This is the third
murder in two weeks.

CAPTAIN JIM WALLACE (50s), salt-and-pepper hair, a face etched with years on the force, spots Blake at the back of the room.

CAPTAIN WALLACE
Blake? Shouldn't you be with your
wife?

Blake stares at the TV, his reflection merging with the disturbing images. A muscle twitches in his jaw.

BLAKE
(voice rough)
I just needed to take my mind off
things.

Wallace studies Blake for a beat, his steely gaze softening with a touch of empathy.

CAPTAIN WALLACE
We got this. You need to go home.

Blake hesitates, his gaze lingering on the map. He seems torn, the weight of the case and his personal struggles pushing him in two directions.

CAPTAIN WALLACE
Go.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

ZOE JOHNSON (40s), pale and frail, lies on a hospital bed. By the door, NURSE JAMIE (30s) whispers to Sarah.

NURSE JAMIE
(sotto)
She doesn't have long. Hours,
maybe.

Zoe stirs, her voice a raspy whisper.

ZOE
Blake...

I/E. BLAKE'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Blake speeds through deserted streets, his face etched with worry. The police scanner crackles to life.

SCANNER (V.O.)
(urgent)
Officer down! Requesting backup!
2138 Forrester.

Blake slams on the brakes, his phone ringing. He glances at the screen - it's Sarah. The scanner explodes with another call.

SCANNER (V.O.)
This is Rodriguez! Tenth floor!
Hurry!

Blake stares at the phone, then throws it on the passenger seat. He gets out of the car and sprints towards the building.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Blake steps into the elevator, pressing the button for the tenth floor. The doors close with a dull thud. The elevator hums, numbers ticking up.

The elevator jolts to a stop on the eighth floor. The doors slide open, revealing a dimly lit hallway. The PERPETRATOR (30s), gun drawn, fires at Blake.

Blake staggers, clutching his shoulder, then lunges at the shooter. They grapple fiercely, the confined space amplifying the intensity.

The perpetrator tries to aim again, but Blake slams him against the wall. The gun clatters to the floor. The attacker pulls a knife, slashing wildly. Blake deflects the blade, twisting the perpetrator's arm.

A shot rings out. Blake's gun fires. The perpetrator collapses. Breathing heavily, Blake steadies himself against the elevator wall, blood seeping through his fingers.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Blake stumbles into the room, wounded and tattered. He sees Zoe, already passed away. Sarah has her head on Zoe, looking up, tears streaming down her face. The room is heavy with the finality of loss.

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE.

INT. ELI'S HOUSE - DAY

Sarah sits on the edge of a faded armchair, her body tense, her gaze fixed on the floor. Her fingers tracing the frayed edges of the upholstery.

Blake stands across from her, his shoulders slumped. He opens his mouth to speak, but no words come. The silence stretches between them, thick with unspoken accusations and regrets.

Sarah breaks the silence, her voice barely above a whisper.

SARAH
I didn't think you cared.

Blake flinches as if struck. He takes a step towards her, then hesitates.

BLAKE
Sarah, that's not --

A sharp BUZZ cuts him off. Blake's phone vibrates on the table. He glances at it, then back at Sarah, his face a mask of conflict.

SARAH
Go ahead. Answer it.
(beat)
It's what you always do.

Blake's jaw tightens. He stares at the phone, then slowly reaches for it.

BLAKE
(into cellphone)
Yeah?

He listens, his expression hardening with each passing second. Sarah watches him, her heart sinking.

BLAKE
(into cellphone)
Okay. I'm on my way.

He ends the call, looks back at Sarah, his eyes pleading for understanding.

BLAKE
Sarah, I --

SARAH
(cutting him off, teary
eyed)
Save it. Just go.

EXT. COMMERCIAL BUILDING - DAY

The midday sun beats down on a desolate commercial building. Cracked windows stare blankly. Peeling paint hangs from the facade like sickly skin.

A yellow police line zigzags across the shattered glass double doors. Several squad cars huddle in the otherwise empty street.

Blake steps out of his beat-up sedan, the door creaking in protest. He stretches his back, a grimace twisting his features.

OFFICER ZACH DANIELS (30s), a focused African-American cop with a buzz cut and sharp eyes, strides towards him.

OFFICER DANIELS
You gotta see this.

They duck under the yellow tape and enter the building.

INT. COMMERCIAL BUILDING - DAY

A wave of gut-punching cold slams into Blake as he follows Officer Daniels through the open freezer door. Fluorescent lights cast a sickly glow over the scene before them.

Five female figures lie sprawled across the metal floor, each meticulously arranged in a twisted tableau. Broken limbs defy natural angles, some frozen mid-contortion. Their faces locked in silent screams.

Officer Daniels lets out a low whistle, the sound swallowed by the sterile tomb.

OFFICER DANIELS
(voice low, filled with
revulsion)
What a sick fuck.

DETECTIVE JOSE BATISTA (30s), built like a brick wall with a perpetually furrowed brow, approaches, his expression grim.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
Previous owner went belly-up a year ago. Place has been a frozen wasteland ever since. The prospective buyer was doing a walkthrough and... well, there it is.

Daniels gestures with a gloved hand towards the bodies.

OFFICER DANIELS
Why keep them here, though? In a
damn freezer?

Blake doesn't answer. He circles the bodies, his gaze
lingering on the disturbing display.

BLAKE
(quietly)
This is his art gallery.

He stops in front of one victim, a young woman frozen in a
desperate plea.

BLAKE
(more to himself)
He wanted to admire his work.

Batista points to her wrist.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
They each have this strange symbol
etched on their wrist. You see
that?

Blake crouches for a closer look.

CLOSE UP:

The victim's wrist reveals a gruesome tattoo - a disjointed
mannequin looking up, clutching a rose shaped like an "S".

DETECTIVE BATISTA
(looking at Blake)
Any ideas? His signature, maybe?

BLAKE
(eyes narrowed, a flicker
of something in his gaze)
Maybe. Maybe more.

INT. CORONER'S EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

The sterile white room hums with the low drone of a
ventilation system. Five gurneys hold unnaturally still
figures, partially shrouded in white sheets.

CORONER (50s), a permanent grimace etched on his face,
approaches Blake and Detective Batista.

CORONER

They died about a month apart from each other. The last one about three months ago.

DETECTIVE BATISTA

Did he...?

The coroner nods.

CORONER

No match in the system.

BLAKE

Let's see if there's a connection. Phones, locations... anything that ties them together.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A fierce wind whips Captain Wallace's trench coat as he strides toward the station. The CAMERAMAN (40s), ruffled, struggles to keep his camera steady against the gusts.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

(voice tight with
suppressed anger)

Another sunrise. More lifeless bodies. This city's turning into a graveyard.

NEWS REPORTER (30s), polished appearance, hungry eyes, thrusts her microphone toward Wallace.

NEWS REPORTER

Captain Wallace, five bodies found in a freezer. Any leads?

Wallace stops, takes a deep breath that barely calms the storm in his eyes.

CAPTAIN WALLACE

(measured tone)

The investigation is ongoing. We understand the public's concern.

NEWS REPORTER

(pressing)

Concern? People are terrified! How can you say there's no progress?

CAPTAIN WALLACE
(a hint of steel in his
voice)
We're throwing everything we have
at this. There will be an arrest.

Wallace pushes past the news reporter, disappearing into the station. She whips around, facing the camera.

NEWS REPORTER
(eyes blazing)
Captain Wallace's confidence
is...inspiring? Maybe. But with
each sunrise, hope feels a little
dimmer.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Sunlight streams through dusty windows, illuminating the worn linoleum floor of the precinct.

Several POLICE OFFICERS hustle past a mounted TV hanging on the wall outside Captain Wallace's office. A couple of them stop in their tracks, drawn by the flickering images.

On the screen, a NEWS ANCHOR's voice cuts through the station's low hum.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
(grave tone)
The bodies. Five in total. Found in
a commercial freezer.

CLOSE UP - TV SCREEN

Headshots of the victims and their names flash across the screen, all females in their twenties and thirties.

INT. CAPTAIN WALLACE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sunlight peeks through the blinds, casting sharp shadows across the room. Captain Wallace rubs the bridge of his nose, his eyes shut tight in frustration.

Across from him, Detective Batista leans back in his chair, tension etched across his face. Blake stands nearby, arms crossed, his jaw set.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
All five were frozen in these...
twisted positions.
(MORE)

DETECTIVE BATISTA (CONT'D)
Each killed a month apart. Last one
was three months ago.

CAPTAIN WALLACE
(voice tight)
Nothing since then?

DETECTIVE BATISTA
Maybe he's getting smarter, hiding
them better. More freezers, new
dumpsites. Or maybe he got scared
and stopped.

BLAKE
(sharply)
Guys like him don't stop.

CAPTAIN WALLACE
Why turn them into some sick art
project?

BLAKE
(calm, but intense)
He's building to something. Some
masterpiece.

CAPTAIN WALLACE
(scowls)
The Mayor's breathing down my neck.
Find this son of a bitch.

Batista and Blake exchange a look, a silent promise hanging
between them. They turn and exit the office, leaving Wallace
alone in the unforgiving sunlight.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Fluorescent lights buzz overhead, casting a sterile glow on
the cluttered desks. Half-eaten takeout containers litter the
surface, remnants of a long, grueling day. The clock on the
wall reads 8:00 PM in bold red digits.

Batista pushes a manila folder across the desk towards his
partner.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
One common thread - a phone number
linked to all five victims.

Blake rolls his chair closer, his eyes scanning the report.

BLAKE
Did you trace the phone?

DETECTIVE BATISTA
Dead end. Prepaid. Burned after the
last call. But... we got CCTV
footage from the store where it was
purchased.

BLAKE
(grimacing)
Another dead end?

DETECTIVE BATISTA
Some kid on a street corner.
Barely out of high school. Clean
record. Said some tall guy
approached him, offered him cash.
Too dark to get a good look.

Blake slams his fist on the desk, the sudden movement making
Batista flinch.

BLAKE
He's playing us.

Blake's eyes light up with determination, his mind racing.

BLAKE
Cell tower data. Find a common
location for all five phones.
That's our starting point.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is a study in contrasts. Soft, feminine touches like
a lavender comforter and silk pillows are juxtaposed with the
stark absence of family photos.

Blake struggles into his shirt, his movements jerky and
tense. Across the bed, KAY (early 30s), striking with an air
of raw sexuality, lies sprawled, sheets tangled around her.

Kay watches him with a mix of concern and something deeper.

KAY
(voice husky)
You were... rougher tonight. Not
like you.

Blake avoids her gaze, throws a crumpled pack of cigarettes
on the nightstand.

BLAKE
Long day.

He reaches for his pants, the movement revealing the outline of a gun tucked into his waistband. She sits up, concern etched on her face.

KAY

Did something happen? You can talk to me, you know.

Blake hesitates, his jaw clenching. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a wad of cash, peeling off several bills. He places them on the nightstand, the gesture impersonal, almost cruel.

BLAKE

Here.

Kay stares at the money, her expression hardening.

BLAKE

I gotta go.

He throws her a single glance, a flicker of regret warring with steely resolve. Then, he disappears into the darkness, leaving Kay alone with the money and a growing sense of unease.

INT. BLAKE'S CAR - NIGHT

Cigarette smoke swirls like ghosts in the dim light. Blake stares at the steering wheel, the key dangling limply between his fingers. His face is etched with regret.

A violent cough shakes him, splattering blood across the windshield. He winces, wiping his lips with the back of his hand. He stares at the crimson smears staining his skin.

A harsh buzz shatters the silence. Blake flinches, then pulls out his phone, the worn leather testament to years of late-night calls. The caller ID flashes with a name: "Batista".

BLAKE

(gruffly)

Yeah.

A low rumble comes through the phone, Batista's voice laced with grim determination.

DETECTIVE BATISTA (V.O.)

You were right. All the victims were at the same address.

A flicker of something akin to hope dances in Blake's eyes. He grips the phone tighter.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

The early morning sun cuts through the dusty windows of a once-vibrant commercial space. A crooked FOR LEASE sign hangs like a forgotten dream.

Blake approaches Batista with a steaming cup of coffee. He accepts it with a grateful sigh.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
Tenant skipped town a month ago.
Some French guy. Had an art
gallery. More like a high-priced
flea market.

They walk into the commercial space.

INT. COMMERCIAL SPACE - DAY

Empty and echoing, the commercial space feels like a forgotten tomb. Blake scans the bare white walls. Batista trails behind.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
Gallery was downstairs. Upstairs
was a crash pad for his "artists."

Outlines of where large canvases once hung mar the starkness.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
Paid rent with their "art."

BLAKE
Did you get any names?

DETECTIVE BATISTA
Working on it. But these types are
good at vanishing into thin air.

INT. CRYOLIFE FACILITY - FLOOR B43 - DAY

An industrial hum thrums through the sterile corridor lined with chrome pods, each containing an unmoving figure suspended in a viscous clear liquid. Silence reigns except for the rhythmic hiss of ventilation.

Suddenly, a red light pierces the sterile atmosphere, flashing like a malevolent eye above one of the pods.

On the pod's LED screen, a stark message flickers into existence: "DECEASED."

INT. COMMERCIAL SPACE - DAY

Dust motes dance in a shaft of sunlight filtering through a grimy window. Empty paint cans and haphazardly removed canvases hint at a hasty departure.

BLAKE

Let's have someone dust for prints.
See if anything interesting turns
up.

(beat)

Have them do a UV sweep too.

Blake's phone buzzes in his pocket. He pulls it out, a puzzled look crosses his face as he glances at the screen.

INSERT CELLPHONE SCREEN

"CryoLife" flashes on the display.

A beat of hesitation before he swipes to answer.

BLAKE

(into cellphone)

Yeah?

A solemn voice emanates from the speaker.

CRYOLIFE REP (V.O.)

Mr. Johnson?

BLAKE

(into cellphone)

Yeah.

CRYOLIFE REP (V.O.)

This is Greg Olson with CryoLife.
Mr. Philips asked me call you.
There's been... an incident.

Blake's grip tightens on the phone.

BLAKE

What kind of incident?

CRYOLIFE REP (V.O.)

It's best if you came to the
facility in person.

BLAKE
 Why me? Why not call the station?

CRYOLIFE REP (V.O.)
 He believes you'll be discrete
 since your parents are residents
 here.

INT. CRYOLIFE LOBBY - DAY

A sleek, ultra-modern lobby glistens with cold, clinical precision. Transparent displays cycle through serene images: faces of patients drifting into cryosleep, then awakening in an idyllic world.

The displays emit a calm, almost hypnotic voice.

DISPLAY'S VOICE (V.O.)
 (warm, soothing)
 Life doesn't have to end. Imagine
 waking up in a world untouched by
 time. A world where your dreams
 become reality. Cryoworld. Your
 future begins now.

The display shifts to a close-up of a radiant, youthful face. It's almost otherworldly.

DISPLAY'S VOICE (V.O.)
 Eternity awaits.

The CryoLife logo – a stylized snowflake that hints at both fragility and eternity – pulses softly, its glow inviting and reassuring.

Blake enters the lobby, the automatic doors sighing softly shut behind him.

Across the polished lobby sits the RECEPTIONIST (20s), impeccably dressed, a warm smile playing on her lips. Blake approaches her.

RECEPTIONIST
 Good morning, Mr. Johnson. Welcome
 back to CryoLife. They're
 expecting you.

INT. CRYOLIFE BUILDING - EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Examination room screams cutting-edge. Glowing translucent blue panels line the walls, flickering with indecipherable data. A body rest on a gurney, shrouded in a pristine white sheet.

TRENT PHILIPS (40s), an amalgam of scientific brilliance and business acumen, impeccably dressed, strides towards Blake.

TRENT

(British accent)

Mr. Johnson, I apologize for the unexpected summons. This is, quite frankly, unprecedented.

BLAKE

Your staff mentioned an incident?

Trent hesitates, his gaze flickering towards the shrouded body.

TRENT

(voice heavy)

One of our residents passed away.

BLAKE

What? How's that even possible?
They're all frozen.

Trent takes a deep breath, his composure faltering slightly.

TRENT

Even in cryostasis, the mind remains active. Sometimes, trauma can trigger something... catastrophic.

Trent gestures towards the gurney. A gloved hand gently peels back the sheet, revealing a WOMAN (40s). Her face is serene, untouched by time, but her body is contorted.

TRENT

As she unthawed, her body twisted.
And we saw this.

CLOSE UP

A faint version of the same mannequin tattoo is on her wrist.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. CRYOWORLD'S NEW YORK CITY - APARTMENT - DAY

Sunlight streams through the window, casting a warm glow on Beverly's face as she gazes out at Central Park. Autumn leaves blanket the park in vibrant hues.

Eli enters, a steaming cup of coffee held aloft. He sets it down beside Beverly on the window sill.

BEVERLY
(a soft sigh)
Thank you.

Eli leans in, his arms wrapping around Beverly from behind. He nuzzles his cheek against hers, placing a tender kiss on the corner of her mouth.

ELI
How about we take a walk in the park today? Get lost in all that autumn glory.

BEVERLY
(a smile gracing her lips)
It does look like a scene straight out of a painting.

She turns, taking his hand in hers. Her eyes sparkle with contentment.

EXT. CRYOWORLD'S NYC - CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Sunlight filters through the crimson and gold leaves. Laughter mingles with the crunch of fallen leaves under Beverly's boots.

Beverly and Eli stroll hand-in-hand, their faces flushed with the crisp autumn air. Beverly glances at Eli, a playful glint in her eyes.

BEVERLY
(smiling)
You know, I can't wait for tonight.
"La Traviata" is my favorite.

ELI

(teasing)

You say that now, but wait until you hear me sing "Libiamo ne' lieti calici" in the shower. You might change your mind.

Beverly swats him playfully on the arm. She looks around, her eyes taking in the remarkable resemblance to the real Central Park.

BEVERLY

All this... it's more than I ever dreamed of. I just wish...

Eli notices the shift in her tone and stops walking, turning to her with a concerned look.

ELI

What's wrong?

BEVERLY

Blake and Sarah. I wish they could experience this with us.

Eli's expression softens, and he gently squeezes her hand.

ELI

Maybe one day they will. We can hope for that, can't we?

Beverly nods, a mixture of hope and uncertainty in her eyes. They continue their stroll, leaves crunching beneath their feet, the laughter of children echoing in the background.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CRYOLIFE BUILDING - EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Blake stands rooted, his eyes fixed on the mannequin tattoo lightly etched into the woman's wrist. His knuckles turn white as he grips the edge of the metal gurney.

BLAKE

The killer... he's here.

Trent steps closer, concern etched across his face.

TRENT

(confused, gentle)

What are you talking about?

Blake's gaze shifts, haunted, as if seeing ghosts from his past.

BLAKE
(whispering, to himself)
My parents...

He turns to Trent, his eyes hollow yet burning with intensity.

BLAKE
The man who killed those five
women. He's here now.

Trent's eyes widen in disbelief.

TRENT
(stammering)
How could I have known? This has
never happened before.

Blake's expression hardens, determination replacing the haunted look.

BLAKE
(firm)
This is not going to end.

TRENT
Why do you say that?

Blake runs a hand through his hair, trying to steady his thoughts.

BLAKE
Because killing in this life wasn't
enough for him.

He takes a step closer to Trent, his voice dropping to a near whisper.

BLAKE
I need to know more about this
Cryoworld of yours. Every detail.

Blake's phone vibrates, jolting him slightly. He pulls it out, Detective Batista's name flashing on the screen. He answers with a grim expression.

BLAKE
(gruffly)
Yeah?

DETECTIVE BATISTA (V.O.)
Got something.

BLAKE
Come down to CryoLife. I'll
explain when you get here.

Blake ends the call and looks back at Trent, a steely resolve in his eyes.

INT. CRYOLIFE BUILDING - DAY

Trent fidgets outside the gleaming, almost translucent metallic doors. The words "Cryoworld Simulator" are etched on the doors. Blake and Detective Batista approach.

TRENT
Ready to see our world?

He gestures towards the doors.

INT. CRYOLIFE BUILDING - SIMULATOR - DAY

The doors hiss open, revealing a bustling cityscape. Pedestrians weave through vibrant streets, cars inch along avenues lined with towering skyscrapers.

The ground beneath their feet vibrates subtly, generating a convincing illusion of movement as they walk.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
(whistle in awe)
Damn. It's like the real New York.

TRENT
(proud, smiling)
This is why our residents'
subconscious minds are at ease.

Blake surveys the scene, his eyes scanning the crowd.

BLAKE
How many residents do you have?

Around them are people rushing to work, vendors selling food, couples taking carriage rides.

TRENT
Eight hundred thousand in
cryostasis.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
This looks way more than that.

TRENT
The rest are "sims" - simulated humans.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
(skeptical)
How real are these "sims"?

Trent hesitates. Detective Batista spots a WOMAN (30s) rushing past, flags her down.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
(to the woman)
Excuse me, miss.

The woman spins around, her face etched with annoyance.

WOMAN
(flustered, brushing off her clothes)
Watch it! Can't you see I'm in a hurry?

The woman hurries away, leaving Batista and Blake watching her.

TRENT
Their reactions, emotions - everything is designed to be as lifelike as possible. It keeps the residents engaged, makes the world feel authentic.

INT. CRYOLIFE BUILDING - TRENT'S OFFICE - DAY

The office's expansive design boasts a futuristic ambiance, highlighted by gleaming metallic accents and soft, diffused lighting.

Trent, an air of calm authority, reclines on a chaise lounge. Blake and Detective Batista sit across from him, a palpable tension hanging in the air.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
(leans forward, gaze piercing Trent)
The sims... How'd you make them so lifelike?

TRENT
(a sly smile curls his
lips)
Our secret sauce... the sentient
code. Proprietary, of course.

BLAKE
The killer's already figured out
who's real and who isn't.

Trent's eyes meet Blake's, acknowledging the gravity of what
he said.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
We need a complete list of everyone
who's entered Cryoworld in the last
three months.

TRENT
Certainly, Detective. However, some
residents opt for privacy or
anonymity.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
(scoffs)
Yeah, I get it. CryoWorld. A
sanctuary for the rich and
untouchable.

BLAKE
(cutting in, voice steady)
This isn't about privacy, Mr.
Philips. People were murdered. We
need those names.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
We can get a court order.

Trent's smile fades, replaced by a cool, calculating look. He
leans forward, his voice low and menacing.

TRENT
No judge would issue it. Once
you're in the Cryoworld, the laws
don't apply. The Supreme Court
already ruled on that.

EXT. CRYOLIFE BUILDING - PARKING LOT - DAY

The sun beats down on the asphalt parking lot, shimmering off
the chrome of the CryoLife building. Detective Batista scans
the list provided by Trent.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
(mutters under his breath)
Shit. Five hundred people on this
list.

BLAKE
Let's see if your lead can narrow
it down.

I/E. DETECTIVE BATISTA'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Traffic crawls through midtown Manhattan, a symphony of honking horns and frustrated shouts. Detective Batista flicks on the windshield wipers, wipes away smears left by squashed bugs. Blake sits beside him, stoic, pensive.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
This guy saw the news report.
Called the station. Said he bought
some paintings from that gallery.

Batista points to the top of a gleaming, high-rise apartment building overlooking Central Park. The penthouse suite shimmers in the afternoon sun.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
He's up there. Some life, huh?

Blake coughs, a sharp, painful sound. Blood splatters onto Batista's crisp white shirt and the dashboard. Batista's eyes widen in alarm.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
(grabbing Blake's arm)
Blake! What the hell? How long has
this been going on?

Blake wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, his face pale.

BLAKE
(voice hoarse)
It's nothing. Just a cough.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
(urgent)
That's not nothing, Blake. You need
to see a doctor. Now.

Blake leans back against the seat, his eyes closed. He's clearly in pain, but there's a stubbornness in his posture.

BLAKE
 (weakly)
 We've got a lead. Let's just focus
 on that.

Batista slams his fist on the steering wheel, frustration and concern warring within him.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
 (voice raised)
 Damn it, Blake! This is serious.
 You're not invincible.

The traffic light turns green, but Batista doesn't move. He stares at Blake.

BLAKE
 Alright. I'll get it checked out.
 But after.

INT. HIGH-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING - PENTHOUSE - DAY

Sunlight bathes the room, highlighting the sleek lines of modern furniture and the bold colors of abstract paintings. A sensual MELODY plays in the background.

LAURENCE AUCLAIR (40s), a European version of a hippie, sits bare chested on a plush white sofa. Two scantily clad WOMEN (20s), with their feet on his lap, laugh, flirt, engage in conversation.

A long, insistent BUZZ at the door cuts through the laughter. It's unlike a typical doorbell - more of a low, electronic hum.

He raises an eyebrow, the smile fading from his face. He gets up, then saunters towards the massive pivot door.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Blake and Detective Batista exchange a glance as Laurence takes his time opening the door.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
 (gruffly)
 Mr. Auclair?

LAURENCE
 (strained)
 Yes.

Batista flashes his badge.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
Detective Batista, NYPD. This is
Detective Blake. You called about
your paintings.

LAURENCE
(stepping aside, voice
tight)
Please, come in.

INT. PENTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Batista steps inside, letting out a low whistle as he takes
in the breathtaking panoramic city view. Blake barely
registers the luxury, his gaze darting across the hallway
walls adorned with provocative paintings.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
(eyes gleaming)
Nice digs. Quite the art
collection.

LAURENCE
(briefly meeting Batista's
gaze)
Thanks.

BLAKE
(voice clipped)
Let's see the paintings you
mentioned.

LAURENCE
(nodding, a hint of
unease)
This way.

They follow him down a plush hallway to the --

BEDROOM

Bedroom door swings open, revealing a scene of opulent
excess. A king-sized bed dominates the center, a balcony
overlooking the glittering cityscape. But the walls steal the
show.

Nude paintings adorn every surface. The female subjects, all
the missing victims, are depicted in various states of
undress, their expressions a chilling mix of arousal and
vulnerability. Some posed in unnatural contortions.

DETECTIVE BATISTA

(low voice)

Shit. That's them.

(to Laurence)

This is all evidence now.

One painting, in particular, snags Blake's attention. The woman, posed provocatively, has the artist's initials - "JL" - scrawled in a flourish of dark paint.

BLAKE

(eyes narrowed, a whisper
escaping his lips)

JL...

Batista pivots sharply to Laurence, his tone cutting through the room like a blade.

DETECTIVE BATISTA

Who's JL?

LAURENCE

(avoiding their gaze,
stammering)

They... they never said. I'm just
here for the art, you know?

Batista turns back to Blake.

DETECTIVE BATISTA

What do you think?

Blake's eyes scan the other paintings, a cold determination in his expression.

BLAKE

They weren't scared. They wanted
this.

INT. CRYOWORLD'S NYC - MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA) - DAY

Visitors weave between abstract sculptures. Polished floors reflect the vibrant colors of the paintings. A quiet hum of conversation fills the air.

JULIEN LAVIGNE (30s), alluringly attractive, fit, meanders through one gallery. We only see him from behind.

JULIEN'S POV

A kaleidoscope of colors assaults Julien's vision. Tourists snap selfies in front of giant, clashing Pollocks. He scans the room, his gaze finally landing on a lone figure.

CAITLIN PERKINS (20s), dressed in a simple sundress, stands transfixed before a painting. A canvas of muted greys and blues, depicting a bridge shrouded in a heavy downpour. The brushstrokes are thick, almost desperate, the lines blurred.

She leans closer, tracing a finger along the distorted image of a streetlamp. Julien approaches, his steps soundless on the polished floor.

His shadow falls over the canvas. Caitlin turns, startled.

JULIEN

(a hint of a French
accent, smooth as aged
wine)

I apologize if I startled you.

CAITLIN

(flustered)

No, I... it's fine.

JULIEN

It's captivating, isn't it? Like
you're there.

Caitlin takes a step back, their shoulders brushing.

JULIEN

What do you think he's trying to
say?

CAITLIN

Maybe that's how he saw the moment.

JULIEN

Or maybe that's how he sees life...
distorted.

She looks at him, a sparkle in her eyes.

JULIEN

Art enthusiast?

CAITLIN

Curator. Well, at least in my past
life.

JULIEN

And now?

CAITLIN

An admirer.

JULIEN
Of what?

CAITLIN
Everything.

She points.

CAITLIN
There's another painting by the
same artist. I can show you.

They head off together, their initial awkwardness replaced by
a spark of something more.

INT. CRYOWORLD'S NYC - MOMA - RESTAURANT - NIGHT

An elegant, near-empty restaurant. A few straggler CUSTOMERS
linger, their conversations dwindling like dying embers.
Outside the floor-to-ceiling windows, a smattering of lights
pierces the darkness of the MoMA atrium.

Behind the sleek marble bar, the BARTENDER (20s) meticulously
polishes a glass. A WAITRESS (20s) carefully places a wine
glass in the cabinet, her movements quiet and precise.

Caitlin sits beside Julien at the bar.

JULIEN
What was it like, everyday walking
by famous paintings?

CAITLIN
I would've done it for free.

JULIEN
How often did you look at the
"Scream"?

CAITLIN
That was one of my favorites.

JULIEN
Is it true what they say? That he
heard noises one night and felt
nature was crying out to him?

CAITLIN
(impressed)
How did you know?

JULIEN
I paint... try to.

CAITLIN
What do you paint?

JULIEN
Portraits mostly. Do you know
what's most difficult?

He touches her face.

JULIEN
Capturing something this beautiful.

EXT. CRYOWORLD'S NYC - MOMA - NIGHT

Yellow taxi cabs whoosh, their headlights carving luminous streaks down the rain-slicked street. The wet pavement gleams like a black mirror reflecting the city skyline. A lone COUPLE huddles under an umbrella as they hurry past.

Caitlin stands on the curb, a hint of a smile playing on her lips. Julien stands beside her.

CAITLIN
(smiling)
That was... really nice.

JULIEN
I would love to do it again
sometime. Maybe I can cook you
dinner.

CAITLIN
(intrigued)
That sounds lovely.

JULIEN
Better yet. How about a night cap?

He gestures towards the upper floor of a nearby art deco building. Warm golden light spills from expansive windows, casting an inviting glow onto the rain-soaked street.

JULIEN
I live right there, above the art
gallery.
(a beat, his voice
dropping to a murmur)
You'll get a sneak peek of my new
painting.

Caitlin hesitates for a beat, her eyes lingering on Julien's face.

CAITLIN
(softly)
Okay. Just a nightcap, though.

INT. CRYOWORLD - JULIEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rain lashes against the expansive windows, blurring the neon tapestry of the city into an impressionistic watercolor. A solitary lamp hangs high above, casting a warm glow on the hardwood floors and exposed brick walls.

Art, mostly abstract splatters, adorn the walls. A large canvas, shrouded in a thick white sheet, stands sentinel against the far wall.

Caitlin stands in the kitchen sipping wine, her eyes drawn to the art that adorns the space. Julien fiddles with the stereo.

JULIEN
What kind of music do you listen to?

CAITLIN
(a soft smile playing on her lips)
Classical, mostly.

JULIEN
Mozart?

CAITLIN
Bach.

Julien puts on Bach. The music washes over them, resonating within the vastness of the apartment.

JULIEN
Why Bach?

Caitlin closes her eyes, letting the music transport her.

CAITLIN
(soft voice)
It's... complex yet calming.

She gestures with her hand.

CAITLIN
The movement, the form...
Sometimes it feels like I'm...
lifted.

JULIEN

Where?

She hesitates, then opens her eyes, meeting his gaze with a vulnerability.

CAITLIN

The heavens.

Her gaze drifts towards the shrouded canvas.

CAITLIN

(a hint of curiosity in
her tone)

Is that it?

JULIEN

Yes. It's still work in progress.

With a slow, deliberate movement, he pulls away the sheet, revealing the canvas. The scene depicted is both abstract and strangely familiar - a disjointed mannequin, like the tattoo, reaching skyward, a perfect "S" shaped rose held aloft.

Caitlin steps closer, mesmerized by the vibrant colors and swirling shapes.

CAITLIN

(her voice filled with
awe)

It's breathtaking. Is there a story
behind it?

JULIEN

What story does it tell you?

He steps closer, his presence a warm pressure beside her.

CAITLIN

(a thoughtful smile
gracing her lips)

I'm not sure yet, but it's
captivating. Like a puzzle waiting
to be solved.

She studies the painting, her brow furrowed in concentration. Julien reaches out, his fingers brushing against her cheek.

JULIEN

You don't have to leave.

Caitlin meets his gaze.

CAITLIN
(a hesitant breath
escaping her lips)

I...

JULIEN
(soft voice with
conviction)
You won't regret it.

The promise of something extraordinary hangs heavy in the air.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. CRYOLIFE FACILITY - FLOOR B35 - DAY

Silence reigns throughout the sterile corridor. Chrome pods line the walls, each one gleaming faintly under the harsh fluorescent lights.

Suddenly, a red light flashes above one of the pods. On the pod's LED screen, a stark message flickers into existence: "DECEASED."

INT. KAY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sunlight spears through a gap in the blinds, painting stripes across the rumpled sheets. Beneath the tangled sheets, two figures move in a slow, languid rhythm. Moans escape Kay's lips, soft at first, then building with urgency.

MOMENTS LATER

Their movements stop. Kay throws one leg over Blake's hip, her head resting on his chest. She touches his shoulder, follows the jagged line of scar tissue from his bullet wound.

KAY

I worry about you, you know.

BLAKE

(low voice)

Don't. I know what I'm doing.

Her fingers trace a slow path down his chest.

KAY

How about if I make you breakfast?

A harsh BUZZ shatters Blake's peaceful moment. He picks it up, squinting at the screen. It's CryoLife. His easy demeanor evaporates, replaced by a tense frown.

BLAKE

(into cellphone)

Yeah?

TRENT (V.O.)

We had another incident.

BLAKE

(voice tight)

Alright. I'll be right there.

He ends the call, the tension in his shoulders palpable. He sits up, gathering his clothes.

BLAKE

I gotta go.

INT. CRYOLIFE BUILDING - EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

A low, hi-tech hum permeates the sterile room. Translucent blue panels line the walls, streaming indecipherable data on the surfaces of a holographic 3D cube.

Trent stands rigid next to a gurney in the center of the room, where a body lies shrouded in a pristine white sheet. The outline of a twisted, unsettling shape is visible beneath the fabric.

Blake and Detective Batista approach, their footsteps echoing ominously.

TRENT

(turning to Blake, his
voice heavy with
resignation)

I'm afraid you were right. Another
resident passed away.

Trent peels back the sheet, revealing the face of a WOMAN (30s). Her features are frozen in a grimace, her lips tinged with frost. She is not Caitlin.

DETECTIVE BATISTA

Why is she here? Looks too young
for this.

TRENT

Under normal circumstances, I
couldn't tell you. But... as you
can see.

(hesitates)

She had a terminal disease.

BLAKE

Looking for eternal life.

DETECTIVE BATISTA

What about her wrists?

Trent gently lifts the woman's wrist, exposing a faint mannequin tattoo lightly etched into her cold skin.

Blake leans in, scrutinizing the tattoo, tracing its lines with a gloved finger.

Batista unfolds a list of names, its paper crinkling in the still air, hands it to Trent.

DETECTIVE BATISTA

Ten men. All under fifty. Hooked up in the last three months. They're all from out of state, except for one.

BLAKE

(eyes narrowing)

We need to see him.

Trent nods, his face a mask of concern.

TRENT

Of course. I'll take you down myself.

Trent moves towards the door, his movements deliberate, as if weighed down by the gravity of the situation. Blake and Batista exchange a glance, then follow him.

INT. CRYOLIFE BUILDING - FLOOR B67 - DAY

The rhythmic THRUM of the ventilation system echoes through the sterile, dimly lit corridor. Trent leads Blake and Detective Batista deeper into the facility. A faded sign reads "Floor B67."

Rows of gleaming chrome pods line the walls, each a window into suspended animation. Inside, figures float serenely in a viscous liquid, their faces tranquil, bodies frozen in time.

Batista's footsteps break the silence as he scans the nameplates, his gaze drawn to a pod labeled "PRIVATE." Its glass is opaque, hiding the occupant within.

DETECTIVE BATISTA

(voice barely above a whisper)

This is him... "Mr. Private."

He turns to Trent, his eyes sharp with suspicion.

DETECTIVE BATISTA

(pointedly)

Enlighten us, Mr. Philips. Anything you can share about this particular client?

Trent's face remains impassive.

TRENT
 (monotone)
 I'm afraid I can't.

Batista's frustration is palpable. He leans closer to the pod, trying to see through the glass.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
 (pressing)
 Are his initials "JL?"

Trent remains silent, a masterclass in discretion.

INT. CRYOWORLD'S NYC - JULIEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sunlight streams through loft windows, casting elongated shadows that dance across the exposed brick and hardwood floors. The half-finished canvas of the disjointed mannequin rests against the wall.

A lone figure stirs beneath a rumpled duvet, sunlight illuminating chiseled features and tousled hair.

The digital clock on the nightstand blinks 10:00 AM as a persistent BUZZING fills the quiet space.

INSERT CELLPHONE SCREEN

"Caller Unknown"

JULIEN
 (groggily, into cellphone)
 Yeah?

CAITLIN (V.O.)
 (hesitantly)
 Julien? It's Caitlin.

Julien's eyes snap open, sleep instantly forgotten. He pushes himself upright, a slow smile spreading across his face.

JULIEN
 Hey.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
 I wanted to thank you for last night.

Julien runs a hand through his hair, his voice a low rumble.

JULIEN
 I was hoping to wake up with you.

CAITLIN (V.O.)
It's not that I didn't want to.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Detective Batista hunches over a greasy burger. With a sloppy bite, a cascade of ketchup and mayo splatters onto his already stained tie.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
(muttering through a
mouthful)
Son of a...

He fumbles for a napkin, smearing the mess further. Across the desk, Detective Blake stares intently at the floor, his fingers drumming a nervous rhythm.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
(wiping his mouth,
exasperated)
How do we get to "Mr. Private?"

Blake's eyes dart up briefly, a flicker of doubt crossing his face.

BLAKE
I don't know.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
You know he's our guy.

Just then, Blake's phone vibrates insistently against his thigh. He glances at the screen, his brow furrowing as he reads the incoming call.

INSERT CELLPHONE SCREEN

"Brooklyn Hospital Center"

BLAKE
(answering, voice tight)
Hello?

DR. NATHAN ADLER (V.O.)
(filtered through the
phone speaker)
Mr. Johnson?

BLAKE
Yeah.

DR. NATHAN ADLER (V.O.)
This is Dr. Adler at Brooklyn
Hospital. We have the results. Can
you come by today?

INT. DR. ADLER'S OFFICE - DAY

Office is sleek and modern, with a lounge-like ambiance. A massive, almost translucent screen dominates one wall, displaying Blake's CT scans in stark detail.

Blake across from the distinguished, gentle DR. NATHAN ADLER and DR. JIM HANSEN (40s). Hansen's unwavering gaze and clinical detachment makes Blake uneasy.

DR. NATHAN ADLER
Mr. Johnson, this is my colleague,
Dr. Hansen.

DR. JIM HANSEN
It's a pleasure to meet you.

BLAKE
(impatiently)
Can we cut to the chase?

Dr. Hansen approaches the screen, gesturing towards a specific scan with blackened lungs.

DR. JIM HANSEN
Your lungs...

BLAKE
How bad is it?

DR. JIM HANSEN
Stage four.

BLAKE
What about chemo?

Dr. Adler meets Blake's eyes with somber expression, shakes his head.

DR. JIM HANSEN
(with a bluntness that
lacks empathy)
The prognosis is six months.

Blake's head drops, the news hitting him like a physical blow.

DR. NATHAN ADLER
(gently)
I wish there were better news.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

Sunlight filters through a canopy of weeping willows, casting dappled shadows on Zoe Johnson's weathered tombstone. A gentle breeze stirs the grass, carrying with it the soft murmur of distant traffic.

Blake lies on his back next to her grave. His eyes, glazed over, are fixed on the wispy clouds drifting across the cerulean sky. A lone bird's melancholic song echoes in the stillness.

A bitter smile curves Blake's lips as a memory flickers.

BLAKE (V.O.)
What am I supposed to do without
you?

ZOE (V.O.)
Chase bad guys, like you always do.

BLAKE (V.O.)
I'm sorry I... wasn't there for you
all the time.

ZOE (V.O.)
I know.
(beat)
You'll need to explain to your next
wife why you're so quiet.

A sharp intake of breath, a silent plea. His eyes clench shut.

BLAKE (V.O.)
There won't be a next wife.

The world seems to hold its breath as the weight of his words sinks in. A tear escapes, tracing a path down his sun-kissed cheek.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. BAR - DAY

Blake, shoulders slumped, stares into a half-finished whiskey. His face is etched with exhaustion and sorrow. Detective Batista sits beside him, the lines around his eyes deepening with sympathy.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
(quietly)
I'm sorry, man.

BLAKE
(voice raw with despair)
How do I tell Sarah? How do I even start?

Blake takes a long swig, the amber liquid barely registering.

BLAKE
And my parents...

DETECTIVE BATISTA
Only a matter of time before the killer... Sorry.

INT. BLAKE'S HOUSE - DAY

The living room is cluttered but lived-in. Cheap paintings compete for space on the walls.

The front door creaks open, Blake enters. He scans the room before settling on Sarah. She sits hunched over a textbook, highlighter forgotten in her hand.

She turns, sees his eyes filled with an unfamiliar hollowness.

SARAH
Dad? What's wrong?

Blake doesn't answer. He moves to the worn armchair, sinking into it with a heavy sigh.

SARAH
You're scaring me.

She gets up, crossing the room to kneel beside him. He looks at her, a flicker of pain in his eyes.

BLAKE

The doctor... he gave me some news today.

Sarah's heart pounds. She reaches for his hand.

BLAKE

It's not good, Sarah.

He touches her hair.

BLAKE

Six months. That's all they're giving me. Because of these...

Blake takes out his pack of cigarettes, puts them on the side table.

SARAH

(voice breaking)

No... Dad, no...

Blake reaches out, his thumb brushing away a tear from her cheek.

BLAKE

At least you, Grandpa, and Grandma will be okay.

Sarah shakes her head, tears streaming down her face.

SARAH

I won't be okay. Not without you.

She leans into him, her arms wrapping around his neck. He holds her close, the weight of his diagnosis pressing down on them both.

SARAH

(muffled against his shoulder)

We have to fix this. There has to be a way.

His gaze slowly hardens, giving way to steely resolve.

INT. CRYOLIFE BUILDING - TRENT'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is bathed in a cool, clinical light. The hum of advanced technology fills the air.

Blake, his face etched with grief and determination, leans forward in his chair. His voice is a low rasp, barely audible over the ambient hum.

BLAKE
I'm... dying.

Trent, the epitome of corporate polish, remains unreadable. His voice is smooth, carefully modulated.

TRENT
I'm sorry to hear that, Mr. Johnson.

Blake leans forward, his gaze unwavering.

BLAKE
(a bitter edge creeping
into his tone)
Look, I'm not a fan of the corporate sympathy bullshit. Fact is, I can't afford your services. But I have an offer.

TRENT
I'm listening.

BLAKE
Having clients killed at your facility isn't good for business. Word will get out.

TRENT
What are you proposing?

BLAKE
I'll go in and stop him. In return, Sarah gets into Cryoworld when the time comes. But I'll need more than your word. A contract.

INT. CAPTAIN WALLACE'S OFFICE - DAY

Captain Wallace sits behind his desk, looking at Blake with a mix of concern and skepticism. Detective Batista stands beside Blake, his arms crossed.

CAPTAIN WALLACE
You're certain about this?

BLAKE
(nodding solemnly)
It's the only play left.

DETECTIVE BATISTA
What if this is all a setup and
he's still out here?

BLAKE
Then it'll be up to you.

INT. KAY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kay, in a slip of midnight silk, moves toward Blake with a feline grace. Her eyes sparkle with a playful invitation, her lips curled into a knowing smile.

Blake sits hunched on the edge of the bed, a statue of despair. His eyes are hollow, his face etched with lines of sorrow. He doesn't even glance in Kay's direction.

Kay halts, her smile fading as she reads the desolation in his posture. A tremor of unease runs through her.

BLAKE
(voice rough with emotion)
I won't be coming back.

The words pierce the silence like a shard of ice.

KAY
(her voice a hesitant
whisper)
I... don't understand. Is it the
money?

Her hand flutters to her throat as if to stifle a rising panic.

KAY
You know, it's more than that with
you.

BLAKE
I'm leaving New York.

Blake's eyes meet hers for the first time, filled with a mixture of pain and longing.

KAY
(desperation creeping into
her voice)
What if I came with you?

BLAKE
(his voice thick with
regret)
You can't.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a wad of cash,
placing it on the nightstand.

BLAKE
For today.

Without another word, he rises and walks out of the room,
leaving Kay standing alone in the silence.

INT. BLAKE'S HOUSE - DAY

Blake walks in. The afternoon sun filters through the
windows, casting a warm glow on the photos of his life with
Zoe and Sarah. His gaze lingers on a picture of the three of
them smiling together.

Sarah watches him approach, her eyes searching his face for
any sign of hope.

SARAH
(softly, hopeful)
Did you find a way?

Blake takes a deep breath, his expression conflicted.

BLAKE
(nodding, but hesitant)
For when the time comes... you can
go into the Cryoworld.

Sarah looks bewildered, her brow furrowing.

SARAH
(incredulous)
I thought we couldn't afford it.

Blake shifts uncomfortably, unable to meet her eyes.

BLAKE
There's a catch... I have to go
first. There's a killer in there
that needs to be stopped.

Sarah's eyes widen, her fear and confusion evident.

SARAH
(voice trembling)
You're going to leave me here...
alone?

Blake finally looks at her, his eyes filled with a mixture of determination and sorrow.

BLAKE
(firmly)
Yeah.

Sarah shakes her head, tears welling up.

SARAH
(determined)
No way. I'm going with you.

Blake steps closer, placing his hands on her shoulders.

BLAKE
You have your whole life ahead of
you.

Sarah's jaw tightens with resolve.

SARAH
(intensely)
No, Dad. I'm going with you.

Blake sighs, seeing the stubbornness he knows all too well.

BLAKE
Sarah...

Sarah interrupts him, her voice breaking but resolute.

SARAH
You're not leaving without me.

They stand there, the weight of the moment hanging between them. Blake pulls her into a tight embrace, knowing he can't change her mind.

I/E. TAXI - MOVING - DAY

Sunlight dappling Sarah's face as she stares out at the cityscape. The taxi weaves through traffic on FDR Drive, the rhythmic whoosh of passing cars a stark contrast to the silence inside.

Blake sits beside her, jaw clenched, fingers drumming a silent beat on his thigh.

SARAH
(voice barely a whisper)
What's it like? You never really
said.

Blake's gaze follows hers, settling on the iconic skyline. He takes a deep breath, the sound almost a sigh.

BLAKE
Like this.

EXT. CRYOLIFE BUILDING - DAY

The taxi slows to a stop, the imposing structure of the CryoLife building looming over them. The sleek glass facade reflects the harsh sunlight.

Sarah's breath hitches, her fingers digging into Blake's arm. Her eyes, wide with a mixture of fear and awe, dart between the building's imposing entrance and her father's face.

SARAH
(voice trembling)
Daddy.

Blake's hand finds hers, his grip warm and reassuring.

BLAKE
(softly, his voice a
steady anchor)
It's okay. We're doing this
together.

INT. CRYOLIFE - ELEVATOR - MOVING - DAY

Blake and Sarah stand next to Nurse Ann as the elevator rapidly descends. The floors flash on the --

LED DISPLAY

B30, B35, B40, descending deeper underground.

NURSE ANN
We're in B70.

The elevator stops.

The doors open to a long corridor lined with cryogenic pods, each sized for a human.

INT. CRYOLIFE - FLOOR B70 - DAY

Nurse Ann leads Blake and Sarah down a seemingly endless corridor. Rows of cryopods, each a gleaming chrysalis of chrome and glass, line the walls.

Sarah's eyes, wide with a mixture of fascination and trepidation, stares at the figures inside floating serenely in a viscous liquid, their faces tranquil, bodies frozen in time.

Just ahead, Trent waits beside two empty pods, their nameplates reflecting the bluish fluorescent lighting overhead.

LATER

Blake and Sarah lie motionless, their forms suspended, as a clear solution envelops them. Mist billows from the extreme cold.

SARAH (V.O.)
What should I expect?

INT. CRYOWORLD'S NYC - SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Sarah and Blake ascend an escalator, the sign "Court St" embedded in subway tiles. The hum of the city above grows louder.

TRENT (V.O.)
You'll ascend an escalator.

They step off, blending into the bustling flow of commuters.

EXT. CRYOWORLD'S BROOKLYN HEIGHTS - STREET - DAY

Blake and Sarah emerge from the subway station. The crowd, a mix of tourists and locals, swirls around them. Street vendors call out, their voices a vibrant mix of accents and languages.

TRENT (V.O.)
When you exit, you'll be in the
place your dad wanted to be.

Sarah's eyes widen, taking in the vibrant, gritty energy. She spots a landmark, her face lights up with recognition.

SARAH
(in awe)
Borough Hall.

A flock of pigeons bursts into flight, their shadows dancing on the aged stone of Brooklyn Borough Hall.

BLAKE (V.O.)
What then?

TRENT (V.O.)
Go home.

EXT. CRYOWORLD'S BROOKLYN HEIGHTS - DAY

Sunlight filters through the leaves of towering oak trees, casting dappled light on the cobblestone streets.

Sarah and Blake walk side-by-side, their footsteps echoing softly. They pass under a wrought-iron sign reading "Pierrepont Street," their eyes drawn to a particular brownstone

The brownstone's facade is worn but dignified, colorful stained glass windows hinting at a storied past.

Blake glances at Sarah, a silent question in his eyes. She nods, and they ascend the worn stone steps together.

BLAKE
Wait. There's something we need to do first.

INT. CRYOWORLD'S NYC - HALLWAY - DAY

Blake and Sarah stand in front of an apartment door. They share a tense look, a moment of silent communication. Blake knocks.

The door opens to reveal Beverly and Eli, their faces a mixture of shock and emotion.

END OF ACT FOUR