

RIOT.s. PILOT SCRIPT & A SHOW BIBLE

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A Show Bible
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RIOT.s.

PILOT: HOW IT BEGINS

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SERIES TITLE

"PILOT RIOT.s.: HOW IT BEGINS"

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. BUS - DAY

The bus is full of people with big labeled suitcases. EDWARD "ED" sits by the window, his feet resting on his large travel bag.

ED yawns. Looks out the window. Rain taps the glass. The sky is grey. Passengers get on and off as the bus moves through different neighborhoods:

Suburb, quiet, empty streets lined with heritage houses.

Asian neighborhood. Then Indian.

The bus crosses a bridge and enters Downtown. Ed looks up, studying the tall buildings.

Homeless people board. Among them, drug users - "crackheads."

They're marked, damaged, mid-trip, curled into themselves.

They sit on the floor. Some pass out.

Ed watches. The bus rolls on.

The next stop flashes: DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE.

The bus passes through Downtown Eastside. Sidewalks are crowded with homeless and addicts.

Some lie motionless, others are hunched over, drifting.

A few wander aimlessly between the bodies, stretching for blocks.

No one reacts. No one looks.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS STOP, 12TH AVE - DUSK

It's getting dark. A light drizzle falls.

The bus pulls up and stops. A few passengers get off. ED is the last to exit, lugging his large travel bag. He walks down the sidewalk.

Near the bus shelter, under a store awning, three homeless people smoke crack and shoot up. Another lies motionless on the ground in front of them.

Suddenly, an OLD MAN appears behind ED and grabs his arm.

OLD MAN

Hey, got a cellphone? Please call
911.

ED

What?

OLD MAN

There's a dead woman. Call an
ambulance.

ED looks down. A woman lies on the pavement, pale and still.

The three others mumble incoherently nearby, lost in their high.

INDISTINCT MUMBLING

Ed pulls out his phone and dials.

ED

Hi, there's a person here. She's
not moving.

(to the old man)

Uh... where are we?

OLD MAN

Give me that.

The OLD MAN grabs the phone.

He moves toward the body, the phone cradled between his ear and shoulder. He gently shifts the woman, then begins chest compressions.

ED watches silently, curious, not shocked.

The woman GASPS awake, vomiting and coughing. The old man rolls her into the recovery position.

SIRENS WAIL IN THE DISTANCE

Red lights strobe down the street. An ambulance pulls up. Paramedics jump out and rush to the woman on the ground.

The OLD MAN walks back to ED, handing him his phone.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
You're not from here.

EDWARD "ED"
Nope. East Coast. Just got off the plane.

OLD MAN
Well, welcome to Vancouver. Opioid crisis. We just call 'em "crackheads" now. You never know if they're dead or alive.

EDWARD "ED"
No kidding. Still, props to you.

OLD MAN
For what?

EDWARD "ED"
You just saved someone's life. That's not nothing.

OLD MAN
If you say so.

EDWARD "ED"
I saw way more of them earlier. Lined up on the sidewalk for blocks. Just a few streets from here.

OLD MAN
Downtown Eastside. There's a place like that in every North American city now.

EDWARD "ED"
Yeah, but I've never seen one this big.

OLD MAN
So what brings you here?

EDWARD "ED"
Tom Mcendrick. An old writer from another era. He inspired me to write. Far as I know, he's still alive. I'd love to meet him one day. I need a fresh start. New inspiration. Maybe this city's the place for that.

OLD MAN

Ah, Tom Mcendrick. Last of the Beat generation, huh? One of those broke adventurers who lives on the road, then writes it all down.

EDWARD "ED"

(laughing)

Pretty much sums me up.

OLD MAN

Met him once.

EDWARD "ED"

Seriously?

OLD MAN

Yeah. Hasn't written in years. Last I saw him was at The Porcelain, lounge bar, downtown.

EDWARD "ED"

Got it. Maybe I'll find him there.

OLD MAN

Who knows? One day maybe. Hope this city gives you what you're looking for. Alright... take care, writer.

The OLD MAN walks off the way he came. ED watches him disappear.

Paramedics lift the woman onto a stretcher and into the ambulance.

ED turns away and continues walking down 12th Avenue – wet, dark, silent.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)

The old man... not a bad first encounter. Vancouver. Downtown Eastside. The Porcelain. New city. New house. Five strangers I'm about to meet, right here, on 12th Avenue. Feels like the first day of school. But that's why I'm here. To experience life. To get inspired. To write. Am I running from something? Nah... just starting fresh. Like that woman he saved, she came back. Maybe I will too.

He stops in front of a weathered East Vancouver heritage house.

Lights glow from the windows. Shadows drift behind a wide bay window. He steps onto the porch.

LAUGHER AND MUFFLED CHATTER FROM INSIDE

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)
You've done this before. Just
breath and walk in. Do it!

He takes a big breath, opens the door.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The door opens. ED enters and drops his bag. He's facing away from the living room, closes the door, then turns around.

In front of him, BRENDA and AMBER are slouched on the couch watching TV. NICOLAS is sitting nearby, rolling a joint. JOHN is at the kitchen table working on his laptop with headphones on. ASHLEY is cooking.

TV SOUND - COMMERCIALS

All five stare at him blankly, no expression.

BRENDA
Hey!

ED smiles. He steps forward and shakes hands with each of them.

EDWARD "ED"
Nice to meet you. Edward.

BRENDA
Nice to meet you. I'm Brenda.

NICOLAS
Hey, man. Nice to meet you.

EDWARD "ED"
Nicolas, right?

NICOLAS
Yeah, man.

EDWARD "ED"
I remember you from the video chat.

AMBER
Hi, I'm Amber.

JOHN
(to the point)
Nice to meet you. John.

ASHLEY
Ashley. I'm John's wife. How was
your flight, Edward?

EDWARD "ED"
You can call me Ed. Yeah, good! Not
too much turbulence. Glad to be
here.

ASHLEY
Long flight from the East Coast?

EDWARD "ED"
From Europe, actually. I was living
in London and Scotland the past
five or six years. Spent some time
in Asia too.

ASHLEY
Oh, but you told us you're from the
East Coast?

EDWARD "ED"
Yeah, way east. Small town near the
Atlantic. I left when I was
nineteen and since then I've been
moving around.

BRENDA
And now you're back in the
homeland. For good?

EDWARD "ED"
I don't know... I hope so. I just
wanted to see what's happening
here. The West Coast vibe, you
know.

BRENDA
And for your writing too, right? I
remember you mentioned that during
the video call.

EDWARD "ED"
Yeah. I was wondering if Vancouver
might inspire me to write again, I
didn't write anything for the past
five years.

BRENDA

Well, another artist in the house!
Nicolas is in a band, Amber's a
singer, and now you.

EDWARD "ED"

Artist? If you say so. The only
thing I have in common with an
artist is that I've got no savings
and no job, so I'd better find
something quick to pay the bills.
(smiling alone)
And you're a therapist, right?

BRENDA

About to be. I'm finishing my last
internship in a couple months. I'll
be working with people diagnosed
with schizophrenia, can't wait! Oh,
and Amber's a therapist too. She
works with kids.

AMBER

Art therapist. With kids.

EDWARD "ED"

That sounds really interesting. And
you sing too? You're in a band?

AMBER

No, I play guitar and usually sing
solo on stage.

EDWARD "ED"

That's awesome. And John? IT guy, I
guess?

No response. John's wearing headphones.

ASHLEY

He's coding, yeah. That's mostly
him, works full-time, remote. As
for me, I'm working part-time at a
hospital.

AMBER

(ironically)
Did we go through everyone now?
Finally done?

BRENDA

(laughing)
Yeah, now I just wanna play video
games. Nicolas, give me the remote.

NICOLAS

Here you go. And now, smoke break. You want some, man?

EDWARD "ED"

Huh... you know what, man? I'm exhausted. After a 13-hour flight, I don't think weed's gonna help me. I'm gonna lie down, probably sleep till tomorrow night.

ASHLEY

Sounds like a plan.

EDWARD "ED"

Alright, nice meeting you all. Have a good night, guys.

BRENDA

Night!

No one else responds. Ed grabs his things and heads upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE, ED'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BLACK.

SOUNDS OF FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING.

The door creaks open. ED steps inside the room and switches on the light.

It's bare, just a mattress and a chair. He drops his bag with a heavy thud, then closes the door. He steps forward. A mirror leans against the wall near the window, resting on the floor.

He looks at himself in the mirror. From the inside pocket of his coat, he pulls out a worn, sealed envelope. He stares at it, sighs, and lies down on the mattress - no sheets, no blanket.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)

Okay. Five new people. Seems like they've known each other for a while. We'll see what happens. You made the first move, Edward. That's the hardest part. Don't forget why you came. To change your life. To move forward. The goal is clear: meet McEndrick, get back to writing, live something real... become a great writer.

(MORE)

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(He shuts his eyes.)

But what was that welcome? Lying on the couch, no smile, no warmth? And that guy; didn't even take off his headphones? Married, really?

He opens his eyes. Sits up suddenly. Bites his thumb, tense. Then stops. Exhales. Lies back down.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)

Stop it. Always angry, always on edge. That rage. It's okay. You're moving forward. You took a real step today.

He sets the envelope on the window sill, then lies down again and closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - MORNING

ED steps out of his room and heads downstairs with energy. He slips on his shoes in the front hall and spots BRENDA, slouched on the couch. She's wrapped in a blanket, a bowl of cereal in one hand and the remote in the other.

EDWARD "ED"

Hey.

BRENDA

(mouth full)

Hey.

EDWARD "ED"

How's it going?

BRENDA

I'm okay.

EDWARD "ED"

Good. I landed an on-call job as a swamper for the day.

BRENDA

Oh, nice. Is that what you're into?

EDWARD "ED"

Hm... not really. I've worked in so many different fields by now. I like trying new things, more inspiration for my writing, you know?

(MORE)

EDWARD "ED" (CONT'D)

I've always wondered what it's like to work in a restaurant... or a hospital at night. Just think of all the horror stories I could come up with. Only thing is, I've got zero medical skills, so that might be a bit tricky.

BRENDA

Oh yeah, you should totally get a job like that.

EDWARD "ED"

What about you?

BRENDA

Too much work. I have to finish a paper and I've got a couple therapy sessions this afternoon. Just need to chill for a few hours.

EDWARD "ED"

Ah, okay. What are you watching?

BRENDA

The Little Mermaid.

EDWARD "ED"

The one from the '90s?

BRENDA

Yep.

SOUND FROM TV - FILM STARTS

Brenda eats and sinks deeper into the couch.

EDWARD "ED"

Okay, well, enjoy.

BRENDA

See ya.

Ed exits the house.

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Rain pours steadily. People walk by with hoods up and umbrellas, their faces hidden. ED stands in front of a coffee shop window as an employee hands him a cup.

EDWARD "ED"

Thanks. Have a good day.

CASHIER

You too!

Ed turns around. He's already getting soaked. He throws on his LA cap.

Suddenly, a 5-ton truck screeches to a stop in front of him –

LOUD BRAKES – HONK!

The passenger-side window rolls down, revealing MARK, the driver. His face is sharp, tired, tense.

MARK

Yo! You the Ed guy? Get in!

Ed takes a breath... then climbs into the truck.

CUT TO:

NT. TRUCK – CONTINUOUS

MARK drives fast, erratically. ED sits tensely, on alert.

EDWARD "ED"

So... what's your name?

MARK

I'm Mark, man! Just fuckin' Mark!

EDWARD "ED"

Nice to meet you!

MARK

Yeah, man.

Mark's driving gets faster, his steering more aggressive.

MARK (CONT'D)

You hungry, man?

EDWARD "ED"

Not really. I had a quick
breakfast. Ready to work, you know?

MARK suddenly slams the brakes and double-parks. He jumps out and walks into a nearby fast-food joint.

Ed looks confused. Cars honk all around him.

PHONE BUZZES. ED checks it – a message from the recruiter:

TEXT – RECRUITER:

ON THE ROAD, GUYS? YOU SHOULD BE CLOSE TO THE PROP SHOP AND GRABBING THE FIRST FURNITURE NOW.

ED texts back. TEXT - ED:

IN THE TRUCK WITH MARK THE DRIVER. WAITING TO GET THE FIRST FURNITURE.

He looks around. The honking continues. Mark comes running back with food and hops in.

MARK
(shouting)
Damn, I was starving, man!

Cars keep honking. Mark casually unwraps his sandwich and starts eating. A car pulls up beside the truck. The driver yells through the window.

DRIVER (O.S.)
Hey! You can't park here!

MARK
Yeah! Go fuck yourself!

He turns to ED and bursts out laughing.

EDWARD "ED"
Maybe we should go... I think
they're waiting for us.

MARK
Yeah, damn it. I know.

Mark finishes his burger and tosses the wrapper out the window. He shifts into gear, the truck stalls.

MARK (CONT'D)
Fucking truck.

LOUD CLUTCH GRINDING SOUND.

He gets it going and drives off.

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE FURNITURE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

The truck pulls up fast and brakes in front of the prop shop's delivery exit.

Two EMPLOYEES wait with two beds and a dresser.

ED hops out and walks toward them.

FURNITURE SHOP EMPLOYEE
You were supposed to be here 45
minutes ago.

EDWARD "ED"
Sorry, guys, we ran into some
trouble on the road.

FURNITURE SHOP EMPLOYEE
Alright, you've got two beds and
the dresser. I'd suggest strapping
the beds together. They'll hold
better and they lock easily if you
flip one upside down.

EDWARD "ED"
(lost)
Uh... okay.

LOUD CRASH – the truck's back door flies open.

MARK (O.S.)
Wooh! Fuck!

The two employees give Ed a weird look. Ed says nothing,
embarrassed.

MARK walks up, drooling slightly, laughing like an idiot.

MARK (CONT'D)
So, these are the fucking
furnitures?

EDWARD "ED"
Yep. Let's load this shit up.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK OF THE TRUCK – CONTINUOUS

MARK is inside, wrestling furiously with a tangled mess of
straps. The two beds are in the truck already. The two
EMPLOYEES help Ed guide the dresser onto the lift.

EDWARD "ED"
Alright, push it here.

They slide the dresser into the truck.

FURNITURE SHOP EMPLOYEE
Okay, we're out.

EDWARD "ED"
Yeah, thanks, guys. Appreciate it.
Bye.

The employees walk off.

BANG! - Mark slams the straps against the dresser.

MARK
What the fuck is this shit?! Fuck,
man!

EDWARD "ED"
Okay, forget it. Just go back to
the front, I've got this, no
problem.

MARK
These fucking straps... bullshit!

He jumps out of the truck and heads back to the driver's seat. ED is now alone in the back, pushing the furniture the best he can. His face is tense and frustrated.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)
What the fuck is this? Who are
these people? Is the whole town
like this? Stay calm. You chose
this. You wanted the experience.
And think about the money, you need
to pay your bills. This is what
you're doing. So do it.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - LATER

MARK is still driving like a maniac. ED eyes him, then looks out the window at the road. MARK runs a red light at the last second. He speeds toward a crosswalk, two women are crossing. He doesn't slow down.

EDWARD "ED"
Hey! Stop!

MARK slams the brakes, screech, and starts laughing. - HONK!

MARK
(shouting)
Come on, ladies! Move it!

He glances at ED, laughing hysterically.

MARK (CONT'D)

Alright, so when are we supposed to be there?

EDWARD "ED"

GPS says twenty minutes.

MARK

Let's make it ten. I wanna go home, it's party time!

He hits the gas again, driving even faster.

MARK (CONT'D)

You know how to drive? I gotta take a leak.

EDWARD "ED"

Nope. Don't have a truck license.

MARK

(angry)

Damn, it's not that complicated, man. It's like a car, just bigger.

EDWARD "ED"

Hey dude, no worries. Just park here and take a leak.

MARK

Yeah?

EDWARD "ED"

Yeah, sure. We've got time.

MARK

Okay!

MARK slams on the brakes and jumps out of the truck. ED pulls out his phone and calls the RECRUITER.

RINGING...

VOICEMAIL (O.S.)

I'm not here, but leave a message...

Ed hangs up and sends a message:

TEXT: CALL ME BACK ASAP. THERE'S A PROBLEM WITH THE DRIVER.

MARK hops back into the truck and hits the gas hard.

MARK

Alright, let's get this shit done and head home.

EDWARD "ED"

Yeah, let's finish this fucking day.

MARK

Fuck yeah!

EDWARD "ED"

Hey, hey dude! Watch the red light!
And seriously – no need to speed.
There's traffic in this neighborhood anyway.

MARK

Come on, who gives a shit?

EDWARD "ED"

I don't. But there are pedestrians out there. And if they're up against a five-ton truck, they don't stand a chance. Just... take it easy, alright?

MARK

Hell yeah! Teamwork, baby!

EDWARD "ED"

(checked out)

Yeah. Sure.

Mark glances at him, wipes his nose, and bursts out laughing.

MARK

Yeah!

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE TRANSIT STATION - CONTINUOUS

ED climbs out of the truck.

MARK (O.S.)

Bye, man! Good job today!

EDWARD "ED"

Yeah, sure. Later, dude. Go easy on the road, would you?

MARK

Returning the truck, then it's party time, man!

ED shuts the door. The truck pulls away, horn blaring. ED watches, shaking his head in disbelief.

He slumps down onto a bench, exhausted.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)
I'm wiped out. How the hell do people live like this? Is this really what happens every single day in this town? None of them seem normal. First thing I see when I get here: crackheads, a dead guy in the street... The therapists eat cereal in front of cartoons like they're children. Is this even real? I feel like throwing up.

It starts raining. Rush hour. People swarm in and out of the SkyTrain station, faces hidden under hoods and umbrellas.

CELL PHONE VIBRATES - ED ANSWERS.

EDWARD "ED"
Yeah?
-
I called you hours ago. No, of course it didn't go well, the driver was insane. On drugs or something.
-
Yeah, the furniture's in the truck. I loaded it myself. Mark's heading to the warehouse... if he makes it.
-
Yeah, no doubt, the guy's high as hell.
-
Hey, I tried to reach you. No answer.
-
What, you wanted me to just leave the truck and wait for you? He was about to kill people on the road. So no, I didn't leave it.
-
Yeah, okay. But no, not tomorrow, not the day after either. Alright. Bye.

He hangs up, exhales deeply. Puts in his headphones.

Gets up and heads inside the station.

EXT. SKYTRAIN - EVENING

A SkyTrain glides toward the city through clouds and rain.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREETS - NIGHT

Rain pours down. People move through the streets, faces hidden beneath hoods and umbrellas. ED walks among them.

A CRACKHEAD, high and out of it, stumbles by in just a T-shirt and shorts, mumbling to himself.

INDISTINCT DIALOGUE

He crosses the street recklessly, weaving through traffic.

Cars brake hard and screech to a stop to avoid him.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)

Not a single honk. They do whatever they want, because no one here will say a word. No one confronts anything. People here just look away. What a strange thing to witness. But... did I confront anything?

ED gets bumped by a passerby, stops, and looks up - he's in front of AJ'S BAR.

He pushes the door open and walks in.

INT. AJ'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

A quiet sports bar. Screens play muted games. Only a few customers inside.

The door swings open. ED steps in, sighing, earbuds still in. He approaches a small sign: "PLEASE WAIT TO BE SEATED."

Behind the bar, a BARTENDER (EMILY), types on her phone. She looks up, surprised to see him.

EMILY

Oh hey! Here to eat or just a drink?

EDWARD "ED"

Just a drink.

EMILY

Anywhere you like.

EDWARD "ED"
The bar okay?

EMILY
Sure. You know what you want, or
want to see a menu?

ED heads to the bar and takes a seat.

EDWARD "ED"
Just a beer. Something strong?

EMILY
IPA?

EDWARD "ED"
Sounds good.

She grabs a glass and fills it from the tap. She hands it to him.

Their eyes meet for a brief moment, intense, direct, then they both look away.

EMILY
Here you go.

EDWARD "ED"
Thank you so much.

EMILY
You're more than welcome.

She walks away to serve other customers. ED exhales, takes off his jacket, and pulls a small notebook and a pen from his inner pocket.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)
(looking off into space)
What a damn day. Now... back to
writing. Five years without
touching a pen. Tons of ideas, no
movement.
(he scribbles shapes, then
begins to draw)
You came here for this. What are
you going to write about? Old burns
from the past? Is that what you
want to dig into?
(he sketches a house on
fire)
Or should you draw from what's
happening around you? What is this
city anyway?
(MORE)

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Everyone in their own bubble, eyes down, avoiding each other. No one takes responsibility. So much rage inside me.

(he starts writing)

Tom Mcendrick... that guy traveled and wrote on the road. That's who I should follow. Do it for real. First job, first dead body, those drug addicts... Damn drugs. Damn addiction.

EMILY

So? You staying at a hotel?

The bartender is mixing cocktails in front of ED. He's deep in his own world, still writing, earbuds in.

He looks up and notices EMILY watching him. Caught off guard, he takes out his earbuds.

EDWARD "ED"

(with a big smile)

I'm deeply sorry, what did you say?

EMILY

Are you staying at the hotel?

EDWARD "ED"

The hotel? What hotel?

EMILY

We're the hotel bar, it's just upstairs.

EDWARD "ED"

Oh, not at all. I just finished a long day. Needed a drink. Saw the bar was open, not too crowded, works for me.

EMILY

I see. New guy in town?

EDWARD "ED"

Yep. Just moved here a few weeks ago.

EMILY

Where from?

EDWARD "ED"

East Coast.

EMILY

Oh, me too, Toronto. Came here for work, I guess?

EDWARD "ED"

Yes and no. I've been living in Europe for the past five years. Had to come back, but I wanted something new, so here I am, trying to catch the West Coast vibe. I'm a writer. I'm hoping Vancouver will inspire me.

EMILY

Ooh, a writer and an adventurer.

EDWARD "ED"

If I want to say something true in a book, I guess I have to live something true first.

EMILY

You gotta make it real. I get that. So you picked AJ's Bar to write your next bestseller, I'm honored to be a part of it. So, what's your book about?

EDWARD "ED"

Glad to be here. Well, that's the thing. I don't know yet. I've got full-on writer's block at the moment. I'm exploring the city... And yeah, I've noticed the opioid crisis, obviously. But I'd say a lot of people here are on drugs, an addiction, one way or another. Downtown Eastside's just the tip of the iceberg. Maybe... there's something to write about in that.

EMILY

Oh, definitely. Drugs are everywhere. Not just that, addiction in general. Well, Downtown Eastside is... something. You've never heard of Riverview Hospital?

EDWARD "ED"

Riverview? Nope.

EMILY

It was a big psychiatric hospital. They shut it down, like, fifteen years ago. Pretty much overnight.

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

And the government, in its infinite wisdom, made zero plans for the aftermath. So... where did all the patients go? Out on the streets.

EDWARD "ED"

Downtown Eastside?

EMILY

Exactly. Maybe you should check it out. Could be a great story.

EDWARD "ED"

Indeed! A zombie story?

They laugh. Their eyes meet, just for a second. Then they quickly look away, slightly blushing. She reaches out her hand.

EMILY

I'm Emily.

EDWARD "ED"

Nice to meet you. Edward. Thanks for the chat, you never know when inspiration might hit.

EMILY

I'm here to help.

She finishes her cocktails, places them on a tray and walks off.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)

Emily... Where attention goes, the miracle shows? I feel no more rage...

Ed straightens up and starts writing with energy.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - LATER / NIGHT

Amber is sprawled on the couch. A small bag of mushrooms is half-open on the table. She stares at the TV, clearly mid-trip.

TV SOUND - COMMERCIAL

SOUND OF FRONT DOOR OPENING

Ed walks into the house, headphones in. He takes off his shoes and coat, head down. He turns.

EDWARD "ED"
 (surprised)
 Oh, hey.

She grins and waves vaguely with a giggle. He heads to the kitchen, grabs a piece of fruit, then stands in the living room, watching TV.

EDWARD "ED" (CONT'D)
 How was your day?

AMBER
 (very brief)
 Yeah, yeah. You?

TV: END OF COMMERCIAL - CHANNEL NEWS

VERONICA OHCHI
 Hello, I'm Veronica Oh Chi. You're watching Channel News 92. Breaking news: Two people stabbed in Downtown Vancouver. Our reporter Ramesh Khan is on site. Ramesh, what do we know about their condition, and what have the authorities said so far?

REPORTER RAMESH KHAN
 Yes, Veronica. It has been confirmed by authorities that one person died from multiple stab wounds while being treated en route to the hospital. The second victim, a 19-year-old woman, is in critical condition at St. Paul's Hospital. Police mention a shift in behavior among the homeless and those dealing with addiction amidst the opioid crisis. While this crisis has long been evident in the Downtown Eastside, the reality is that many areas now house individuals living in extreme vulnerability and dependency. Witnesses report sudden and erratic behavior, often without warning. Volunteers describe people living like zombies, with fentanyl leaving them in vegetative states, or pushing them into aggressive, unprovoked violence. Authorities are increasingly concerned but overwhelmed by the scale of this public health emergency.

EDWARD "ED"
Well, I had a tough day at work.

AMBER
Oh, ok.

EDWARD "ED"
A swamper job. Worked with a kind of crazy guy. Full of drugs. Funny to think maybe he's the one from the news. Haha.

Silence. She doesn't respond.

EDWARD "ED" (CONT'D)
And... you? How are you?

She looks up, sighs.

AMBER
I'm... I'm ok.

EDWARD "ED"
(surprised)
Ok.
(beat)
Alright. Have a good evening.

He grabs his things and heads upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE, ED'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ed enters the room, turns on the light and closes the door behind him. He stares into space, then grabs a half-burnt keychain from the desk while undressing and grabbing his towel.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)
(his face tense)
Who even acts like that? She's over thirty. She works with kids dealing with mental health issues. What is she teaching them? How can someone living like this help anyone? It's like these people stopped growing up when they were fifteen...

SOUNDS FROM DOWNSTAIRS - DOOR OPENS - SMALL HYSTERICAL LAUGH
- VOICES FROM THE LIVING ROOM

BRENDA (O.S.)
(cheerfully)
Wah! How are you?

AMBER (O.S.)
(playfully)
Hey, I'm doing well, how about you?

BRENDA (O.S.)
What a bad day at work. Too many
sessions back to back.

AMBER (O.S.)
Oh no, poor you! You must be
exhausted.

Ed listens, then shakes his head, disappointed. He grabs his
towel.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE, BATHROOM - LATER

Steam clouds the room, the mirror is fogged up. A phone sits
near the sink. ED is in the shower.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)
(relaxing)
Alright, think positive. You met
someone who inspired you. And now,
you've got a subject to write
about. Focus on that.

He turns off the water and steps out of the shower. He wraps
a towel around himself. Wipes the mirror with his hand and
looks at his reflection.

EDWARD "ED"
Get a job. You always wanted to
work in a restaurant. Go work in a
restaurant. You can easily find
something and start right away.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE, ED'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ED, still in a towel, is in his room. He checks his phone.
It's 12:01 a.m. November 12th. He glances at the old envelope
resting on the windowsill. He types a message on his phone.

CONTACT: MOM

MESSAGE: HEY, HOW ARE YOU GUYS? I'VE BEEN IN VANCOUVER FOR A FEW WEEKS NOW. A LOT HAS CHANGED. WE COULD TALK SOMETIME SOON IF YOU WANT. GOOD NIGHT.

He looks at himself in the mirror.

CUT TO:

INT. CHOCHO RESTAURANT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

CLOSE ON PHONE: MESSAGE TO MOM - NO REPLY.

The sound of clinking dishes and chaotic chatter fills the air.

JAL

Hey bro! What are you doing? No time for that.

ED, wearing an apron, slips his phone into his pocket and gets back to work as a dishwasher. He sprays off the plates and utensils, stacks them into racks, and shoves them into the industrial washer with speed and intensity.

The kitchen is in full rush. Cooks shout orders, pans sizzle. There's a wide window where servers drop off dirty dishes. Ed can't see their faces, only torsos and arms.

A server dumps leftover food into a bin and drops plates onto the counter before pushing the swinging door open and walking out.

Behind ED, JAL pulls clean dishes from the washer and stacks them on shelves. Another server bursts through the door with his foot.

SERVER 1

Those fucking sons of bitches! They didn't tip me.

He throws the plates onto the counter without clearing the food.

SERVER 2

Which table?

SERVER 1

Table 28. Five people. Always the same assholes. You saw where they're from? And I offered shots to all of them. Pricks.

ED glances at the still-full plates. The SERVER tosses silverware carelessly, some nearly hitting ED.

ED pauses, watching the servers' torsos move frantically on the other side of the window. JAL looks at him.

JAL

Hey man.

Ed turns around.

JAL (CONT'D)

The dishes. It's rush time.

ED looks at him, says nothing, and gets back to work. The two servers exit. A SOUS-CHEF comes in behind JAL.

SOUS-CHEF

Jal, go to the garage and deal with the cardboard. It's a fucking mess over there. Please!

He walks off. JAL looks at ED.

JAL

During rush hour! It's always like that. Get used to it. I'll be back in ten minutes. Gonna grab a smoke too.

EDWARD "ED"

No problem, bro. Take your time.

JAL leaves. Two other servers enter and drop dishes and cutlery carelessly onto the counter.

SERVER 3

Five hundred bucks.

SERVER 4

No way, from table 12? And there's just two of them. A couple. Plus, she's ugly.

SERVER 3

(laughing)

Yeah she is. What a fucking monster.

SERVER 4

Btw, are you seeing Zack?

SERVER 3

We're just hanging out. Met him once at BeeBee Club. Saw him doing some coke and he offered me some.

SERVER 4

So, friends with benefits?

SERVER 3

Yeah, kinda. We're going to Hawaii for two weeks next month.

SERVER 4

Oh damn, I need a vacation so bad. Last one was like... two, three months ago.

SERVER 3

Thailand, right?

SERVER 4

Yeah, beaches, massages. I miss that.

The kitchen door swings open.

MANAGER (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, please! The tables are waiting for you.

SERVER 3

Sure thing, boss.

The two servers walk out.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)

Twenty-three, twenty-four years old max? Needing a vacation already, huh? Five hundred bucks from one table. And no respect for the people working for them. Just selfish folks who only think about themselves. A restaurant run by migrant students for rich migrants who come here to eat paella in Vancouver, Canada, on a Tuesday night in October. Makes total sense, of course. And these people selling their smiles and dignity for tips. What a weird world this is.

He slams a plate onto the rack - CRACK - It breaks.

EDWARD "ED"
(upset)
Son of a...

SOUS-CHEF (O.S.)
Guys! Pick-up!

ED turns around, pissed. He walks past the SOUS-CHEF.

EDWARD "ED"
Hey, you sent Jal to do the
cardboard. I'm on my own and it's
rush hour!

SOUS-CHEF
(rolling his eyes)
Come on, the pick up!

ED walks to the cook line. He grabs a huge container full of greasy pans and plates and hauls it back to the dish pit. The pile of dishes is massive. Jal returns.

JAL
Dude, why are you so upset?

EDWARD "ED"
How can't you be?

JAL
I'm not asking myself too many
questions. I gotta pay my fees, so
I gotta work.

EDWARD "ED"
Yep. Fair enough.

JAL
You'll get used to this quick. So
far, you work well. Fast.

They both get back to work.

CUT TO:

INT. CHOCHO RESTAURANT, LOCKER ROOM - LATER

ED ties his shoes, sitting on the bench. JAL puts on his coat, glances in the mirror, and fixes his hair. He notices some books next to ED's bag.

JAL
What are those books about? I
thought you weren't a student.

EDWARD "ED"

No need to be a student to read,
right? I'm interested in the
history of this city. Trying to
learn more about Downtown Eastside.
So I went to the library.

JAL picks up one of the books titled: RIVERVIEW, THE ASYLUM.

JAL

Asylum, huh. Are you a crazy guy or
something?

EDWARD "ED"

(smiling)

Haha, maybe. We all are, no?

JAL

I'm not, bro! I know exactly what I
want. I'm here for school, totally
focused on my goal. But you—you're
probably a madman.

(laughs)

I mean, you came here to work as a
fucking dishwasher. This job is for
us. Not for you. I wonder what
you're doing here.

EDWARD "ED"

I want to experiment.

JAL

Experiment being a dishwasher? What
a fucking stupid thing to do.

They both laugh out loud.

JAL (CONT'D)

Alright, bro. See you tomorrow.

EDWARD "ED"

Bye, man. Always a pleasure.

CUT TO:

EXT. AJ'S BAR, FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

It's raining, night has fallen. ED walks down the street and
arrives at AJ's.

CUT TO:

INT. AJ'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

ED enters the bar. Few customers inside. EMILY is behind the counter.

EMILY
(yelling)
Edward!

ED beams at the sight of her. He sits at the bar. She pours him a beer right away. He pulls out a notebook, a pen, and a book from his bag.

EDWARD "ED"
How's your shift going?

EMILY
Kinda slow. But it's ok. How was your day?

EDWARD "ED"
It was the rush actually. Now I'm good.

EMILY
Ready to write?

EDWARD "ED"
Oh yeah. The best part of the day.

They exchange a quick glance and just as quickly look away.

EMILY
I wish I could be like you sometimes. But I don't have any artistic skills.

EDWARD "ED"
What do you want to do? What's your goal? Your dream? Your inspiration?

EMILY
(surprised)
Oh, what I want to do? It's been a while since I've asked myself that question.
(silence)
Hm, I guess I'm just surviving. First, I'd like people to leave me the fuck alone. I'm tired of trying to please everyone.
(laughs)
You know, I'm from a small town back in my province.
(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

And there, like in every small town in this country, you get three options: have kids from different dads, fall into drugs and become a crackhead, or end up in jail because you're the one selling the drugs. Or worse, you die.

(silence)

But me? Hm, let me think... I don't know. I just want to be happy.

A receipt prints from the machine. EMILY grabs it and gets back to work. ED smiles and dives into his book.

A SERIES OF SHOTS -

ED reads his book, takes notes, sips his beer. EMILY serves customers, wipes tables, and cleans her bar.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)

So, Riverview.

-

"The creation of Downtown Eastside began when the province shut down its psychiatric hospitals."

-

"The government wanted to cut funding. 'Shut down the hospital, no matter the cost, as soon as possible.'"

-

"The infrastructure and community care system weren't prepared for such a fast and total closure of institutions like Riverview."

-

"Thousands of patients were released with no medical follow-up. They were taken in by drug dealers who gave them new substances they weren't ready for, and they got totally hooked."

-

"One man ate another. Both were under the influence of a cocktail of drugs."

He finishes his last sip of beer.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)

They're turning into zombies.

(looks outside)

They already are. No dreams, no ambition. They're surviving? Here?

(MORE)

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In this part of the world?
Surviving means choosing addiction
to avoid life, or killing yourself
one way or another? What a tragic
thing to witness.

BOOM - EMILY sets a new beer in front of him.

EMILY

What do I really want to do? That's
a really good question. You know,
Edward, I've always wanted a simple
life. I left school at 15 and
started working in restaurants when
I was 16. I love animals, and I
prefer cooler weather. I've always
dreamed of having a house near the
ocean in Costa Rica, maybe building
an animal shelter there.

EDWARD "ED"

(smiling)

I love that. Do it!

EMILY

(smiling)

"Do it!" You're making me laugh.
But yeah, Edward... you're probably
right. Do it... Now is the time
right?

EDWARD "ED"

There is no better time than now...

Silence. Her cellphone vibrates, breaking the moment between
them. She picks it up.

EMILY

See? There's always something to
ruin the moment. Now I have to give
Glenn money again because something
broke in the car. Fuck me.

(puts phone to her ear)

Hi honey, what the fuck did you do
this time?

ED watches her. He quickly finishes his beer, packs up his
notebook, leaves a few bills on the counter, and heads out.
As he reaches the door, he looks at EMILY and gives her a
small wave. She returns it with a big smile.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

BRENDA and NICOLAS sit on the couch, playing video games.

BRENDA
Hey, take that rocket! Yeah!

NICOLAS
Don't you dare, little frog.

BRENDA
Frogs always win, you'll see!

NICOLAS
Oh, so now Brenda's the frog
hitting me with rockets?

BRENDA
Yeah, right in your face!

Footsteps on the stairs. ED comes down, walks past the TV,
and heads into the kitchen.

EDWARD "ED"
Hey guys.

NICOLAS
Hey.

ED turns on the kettle and grabs a piece of fruit. He sits at
the table, watching them play. The kettle begins to boil
louder.

BRENDA
No, no! Don't go near the cliff!

NICOLAS
See? You're gonna fall!

BRENDA
No! That's not fair!

NICOLAS
It's totally fair. Here's my
rocket, little frog.

BRENDA
I was about to win!

NICOLAS
It's not over, two rounds left.

ED eats his banana, watching them, slightly incredulous.

EDWARD "ED"
What's the name of this game?

They don't answer. The kettle hisses louder.

NICOLAS
(focused)
Uh... Rocket something?

EDWARD "ED"
Okay. And the goal?

NICOLAS
Just finish first, I guess.

BRENDA
Just have fun, damn right! Look,
I'm passing you again!

NICOLAS
Wait, little frog!

BRENDA
First! You see?

NICOLAS
So the little frog finally won.
How's that even possible?

BRENDA jumps up energetically in her pajamas, grabs a yogurt from the fridge, then flops back onto the couch. NICOLAS starts rolling a joint.

EDWARD "ED"
How was your day? Lots of
consultations today, Brenda?

BRENDA half-listens while eating her yogurt and scrolling on her phone.

BRENDA
Hm, yeah yeah. It was fine. A few
consultations, then came back, nap,
dinner, and video games with
Nicolas.

EDWARD "ED"
Okay. And you, Nicolas?

NICOLAS
I sleep during the day, remember?
This is basically my morning. Time
for a big joint.

They both laugh. ED watches them.

BRENDA

Damn it.

NICOLAS

What's up, little frog?

BRENDA

I don't know. Why does writing a simple message take so long?

NICOLAS

You know you can send a voice message, right?

BRENDA

Yeah, but it's not the same.

NICOLAS

Reminds me of that time I tried texting my manager while cooking pancakes.

BRENDA

The time you dropped all the batter on your shoes?

NICOLAS

(laughing)

Not just my shoes, my whole pants!

They burst out laughing. ED stares at them, expressionless. The kettle whistles loudly.

EDWARD "ED"

Honestly, I don't get you guys. It's been five months living here and I still don't understand how you live. I don't get your relationship, I don't even really get what you're talking about half the time.

NICOLAS tosses the joint onto the coffee table and stands up, pissed.

NICOLAS

Hey man! You know, I've been living in this house for nine years. It's the first time someone ever told me that, you know? I'm done with this shit, man.

EDWARD "ED"

(surprised)

Oh wow, I didn't expect that reaction. It's my mistake. Forget what I said.

NICOLAS stands up, pacing around the living room and kitchen without purpose, just venting. The kettle switches off with a click. Silence.

NICOLAS

No man. I don't want to hear this shit anymore. That's the first time I've heard anything like that. What don't you understand? It doesn't make any sense, man. I've lived with roommates since I was twenty-one. I'm almost forty now. Never had any problem, man. Just be with us. I want you to come and play video games at night. I keep trying to tell you to come hang out. You're almost never in the living room with us.

EDWARD "ED"

But dude, when I'm here, you two are always together. You look at me like I'm the new kid at school. I mean, we're all over thirty now. I'm not used to that anymore.

NICOLAS

What does that even mean? No, man. I wish when I woke up I'd see you on the couch, drinking something, watching a movie or reading or writing, 'cause that's your thing. But you don't. So enough.

ED stands, walks to the kettle, pours himself a cup of tea.

EDWARD "ED"

Hey, it's okay, right? My bad. I'm sure you're right.

NICOLAS sits again. He seems drained, like it took a lot out of him to speak up.

NICOLAS

Every time I offer you a joint, you know. Let's smoke this one.

EDWARD "ED"
I'm not smoking as much as you are.
It's okay guys, forget about it.

ED picks up his mug and heads upstairs.

EDWARD "ED" (CONT'D)
My bad, guys. Good night.

BRENDA
Night!

INT. HOUSE, ED'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ED closes the door and puts his mug on the table. He buries his face in his hands, then looks at himself in the mirror.

He SCREAMS silently, staring at his reflection.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS - DAY

It's raining and overcast. ED walks down the street, cap on, phone to his ear.

RINGING TONE

EDWARD "ED"
Hello? Yes, can you hear me? Hello?
Yes, okay, I can hear you now. How are you?
-
Yeah, I'm good. And you?
-
I live in Vancouver. I moved back to Canada a few months ago. But I already told you that, didn't I?
-
Okay, yeah, I get it. I always try to call you around the same time. Did you go to the cemetery?
-
No, I was just asking if you went; at least you. I know Dad never goes.

SIRENS WAILING IN THE DISTANCE

EDWARD "ED" (CONT'D)
 Yeah, I know. But you're doing
 okay? Dad, what are you doing now
 that you're retired?

THE SIREN GROWS LOUDER

EDWARD "ED" (CONT'D)
 (speaking louder)
 What? Hello?

An ambulance speeds past him and pulls over just ahead on the sidewalk.

EDWARD "ED" (CONT'D)
 Hold on, I can't hear you well,
 there's an ambulance coming. I'll
 call you back in five minutes.
 -
 What? You're going to bed?
 -
 Okay, I didn't realize how late it
 was.
 -
 Alright. Goodnight.

He hangs up. There's a drug addict lying in the middle of the sidewalk. Firefighters are already performing CPR, paramedics come out and take over care of the person. They talk with the firefighters, three other drug addicts sit in front of a garage door, high, growling.

DRUG ADDICT 1
 Yeah, don't think you're here too
 late? Fuckers.

FIREFIGHTER
 Please, easy sir, let us do our
 jobs.

DRUG ADDICT 2
 Fucking job.

The DRUG ADDICTS laugh erratically. The paramedic continues the CPR, his colleague mechanically looks at his watch and taps him on the shoulder.

PARAMEDIC 1
 Ok, done.

PARAMEDIC 2
 Ok.

They stand up and put a sheet over the man's body. They lift the corpse onto a stretcher. Everything happens fast. Ed stays back, watching the scene.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)
It's the second one. Two dead
bodies. Dead or alive, it's the
same damn thing.

One of the paramedics shakes hands with the firefighters.

MUMBLED INDISTINCT CONVERSATIONS

They all smile. Then the ambulance drives away. The firefighters stay behind and clean the area, laughing together. The drug addicts remain in the same spot. One is tripping hard, the other two talk.

Some young students with backpacks arrive laughing. They pass by and almost bump into the firefighters, who say nothing. One of them pulls out a joint and lights it. A plume of smoke blows right in front of ED's face as he stops, watching the scene.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)
No difference. They're all the
same. The more I move forward, the
less empathy I have.

CUT TO:

INT. CHOCHO RESTAURANT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

ED'S POINT OF VIEW: HE ONLY SEES THE TORSOS AND ARMS OF THE SERVERS AND MANAGERS THROUGH THE DISH PIT OPENING.

Gunfire of orders, ED is cleaning plates. JAL and DURBA are behind, organizing everything. The cooks shout and give orders - UNINTELLIGIBLE.

SERVER 1
(shouting)
Those assholes tipped 18% on a
\$1200 table. Son of a bitch!

SERVER 5
I hate when they do that.

SERVER 1
Can't wait to open my own place.
I'm sick of working for someone
else.

SERVER 5

Me too. I gotta write a business plan and open my own restaurant. I'm an entrepreneur.

SERVER 1

Dude, it's simple. Invest 200K, start your business, and then it runs itself. I know what I'm talking about. I need to finish my coding degree first. Then I'll freelance for big US companies, Nike, Microsoft. I'll make at least 200K a year in USD.

SERVER 5

Yeah man, that's how it works. I just need to find investors and have it up and running in six months max.

The door opens.

MANAGER

Hey, you're servers for now, guys. Let's hurry up please.

SERVER 1

Hey, just one thing. Could you give me tables 1 to 12? I've been serving here for five years, I earned it.

MANAGER

Wait, we'll see. It's rush hour tonight.

The manager leaves.

SERVER 5

I can't stand that guy.

SERVER 1

Me neither. I won't let anyone talk to me like that, I swear.

SERVER 5

Same here. Nobody talks to me like that here. One day I'm gonna lose it, and he won't understand.

The two SERVERS angrily slam their plates down under ED's eyes. The door opens again, the MANAGER enters.

MANAGER

Please, let's get back to work. The tables won't clean themselves. You can talk after your shift.

The two servers exit, SERVER 6 enters. JAL and DURBA are working quickly while chatting and laughing in Hindi.

INDISTINCT DIALOGUE.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Hey guys! It's rush hour, stop talking and get back to work! Too much laughing, be professional! What the hell is that supposed to mean?

ED turns around and exchanges looks with JAL and DURBA, who resume working silently.

SERVER 6 throws down plates, splashing dirty water onto ED.

EDWARD "ED"

(angry)

Hey! Easy, okay! In case you didn't notice, people are working here.

SERVER 6

Oh, sorry.

The MANAGER sticks his head under the counter.

MANAGER

Is there a problem here?

EDWARD "ED"

Hell fucking yeah!

They stare each other down without looking away. ED grabs a knife, his eyes filled with rage. The MANAGER leaves.

EDWARD "ED" (CONT'D)

Tss.

SOUS-CHEF (O.S.)

Hey guys, pick up! Come on, move!

EDWARD "ED"

Durba, please, can you go do the pick-up?

DURBA

Of course.

JAL and DURBA speak in Hindi.

EDWARD "ED"
What are these people saying?

ED angrily throws the dishes onto the rack while cleaning.

JAL
Hey bro, why are you always upset?

EDWARD "ED"
What the fuck, Jal. How can you
accept that?

JAL
Accept what?

EDWARD "ED"
Those people don't have any
respect. Don't let them talk to you
like that.

JAL
I don't give a damn, man. I do my
job, and when I'm out of here, I
don't even think about them.

EDWARD "ED"
I wish I could be like you.

DURBA comes back with a container full of dirty pans and
dishes, placing it in a pile, out of breath. Behind him, the
MANAGER and the SOUS-CHEF, heading to the back of the
kitchen.

DURBA
Alright, I'm going for a smoke now.

EDWARD "ED"
Yeah, sure.

JAL
Then I'll go after you.

DURBA leaves.

EDWARD "ED"
There's not a single damn day I
don't want to kill every one of
them!

JAL
(smiling)
Come on, bro, you're too worked up.

EDWARD "ED"

Yeah, I am. How could I not be?

JAL

I am too, bro, but I came here to study. I can't complain. And honestly, I feel sorry for them/ Bro look at their lives, the streets full of zombies just vegging out on the sidewalks. I'm good with who I am.

EDWARD "ED"

You've got a point there.

DURBA comes back.

EDWARD "ED" (CONT'D)

Already?

DURBA

Yeah, there are a bunch of managers, bartenders, and the sous-chef hanging out in the garage right now, talking and smoking.

EDWARD "ED"

So?

DURBA

So I'm just gonna wait to smoke.

EDWARD "ED"

What the hell? You have the right to take a break. We've been at this for five hours. Go smoke.

DURBA

Nah, it's all the managers.

EDWARD "ED"

So?

DURBA

Edward. I'm a foreigner.

EDWARD "ED"

What the hell is that supposed to mean? Most of them are foreigners too. What kind of mindset is that? That's exactly why those people take advantage of you. Just go!

DURBA
No, my friend, it's okay.

JAL
Yeah bro, it's okay.

The SOUS-CHEF arrives.

SOUS-CHEF
Edward, come here for a minute. I
need to talk to you.

ED stops, JAL takes his place. The SOUS-CHEF and ED go to the
back of the kitchen.

SOUS-CHEF (CONT'D)
What the hell did you do?

EDWARD "ED"
What did I do? You mean my job?

SOUS-CHEF
Man, you can't be upset like that
and grab a knife every time someone
asks you to do something.

EDWARD "ED"
Beg your pardon?

SOUS-CHEF
Look, it's nothing personal, but
pack your stuff and go. We'll pay
you for the rest of your shift.

ED looks him up and down and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. AJ'S BAR - LATER

ED walks into the bar. There are a few more customers now,
but the bar itself is empty. He stops in front of the sign:
"PLEASE WAIT TO BE SEATED."

EMILY comes out from the kitchen.

EMILY
(shouting from across the
room)
Edward!

ED smiles and sits at the bar. EMILY pours him a beer right
away.

EMILY (CONT'D)

How are you today?

EDWARD "ED"

I just got fired.

EMILY

What? What happened?

EDWARD "ED"

I've never worked in a restaurant before. It's a fucking jungle out there.

Pardon my French.

EMILY

Oh, don't worry. I've been in this business for almost fifteen years. I've seen some real shit.

EDWARD "ED"

What's your story? What's the worst thing you've ever experienced on the job?

EMILY

Oh, Edward... if only you knew. One time, a customer grabbed my arm at the bar and spat right in my face because I wouldn't pee in his mouth, while his wife and daughter were out of town.

EDWARD "ED"

Wait... what?

EMILY

Yep. Fun part? He was a regular. I knew his wife and daughter. They used to come in every Friday for a nice little family dinner.

EDWARD "ED"

Jesus Christ.

EMILY

True story.

EDWARD "ED"

You know what? Let's do shots.

EMILY pours two shots. They lock eyes with small, knowing smiles. No rush. They clink glasses and drink.

A CUSTOMER walks in.

EMILY
Anywhere you like!

The customer, a bit tipsy, sits down next to ED.

MATT
A lager, please.

EMILY
(while serving it)
Are you staying at the hotel?

MATT
Yep. Conference at Canada Place.
Flying back home tomorrow.

Started drinking this afternoon—figured I'd finish the job here, haha.

EMILY
Alright, just so you know, we're closing in about 45 minutes.

MATT
No worries, darling. Just here for a couple of beers.

MATT glances over at ED, squints.

MATT (CONT'D)
Edward?

EDWARD "ED"
(surprised)
Do we know each other?

MATT
Matt! Matthew McBraw. Peterson High School.

EDWARD "ED"
Oh, Matt. Yeah, I remember.

MATT
What are you doing here? You in town for the conference too?

EDWARD "ED"
Not at all. I live here now.

MATT
You left the city when you were, what, 18?

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

After your sister died, huh? I
heard you moved to Asia or
something for a while?

ED looks disturbed. EMILY looks surprised.

EDWARD "ED"

Hm. Yeah.

MATT

Can't blame you, after what
happened.

(to Emily)

This guy burned down his house!

(laughs)

Sorry, I shouldn't laugh—but it was
wild seeing a ten-year-old do that.
He kinda became the school freak
after that. And then your sister...
Holy shit. Sad story. Everyone was
wondering what the hell was going
on in your family. There were even
YouTubers covering that shit, haha.

ED stares at him, angry. MATT, drunk, doesn't notice the
shift in mood. Silence.

MATT's phone rings. He answers and walks outside.

MATT (CONT'D)

Yo?

EMILY looks at ED.

EDWARD "ED"

(taking a breath)

I was eight or nine. It was just me
and my sister. She was older, she
used to babysit me. She was out in
the yard practicing her
cheerleading routine. I was in her
room, and I don't know, there was a
bunch of stuff around. I lit one of
the candles in front of her mirror.
Then I left. She went back upstairs
to the bathroom. I was downstairs
watching TV. Then I heard these
loud crackling noises. And a
scream. I ran outside and saw
flames coming out of the upstairs
windows. The neighbors came and
called the fire department. I was
frozen, I couldn't move. I just
stood there crying in the yard.

(MORE)

EDWARD "ED" (CONT'D)

One of the neighbors went in and pulled my sister out of the bathroom. She had third-degree burns all over her face and body. She was the most popular girl at school. She never recovered.

(silence)

I was a kid. No one really blamed me... but everyone avoided me. Especially my parents. The only one who kept talking to me... was her. She took her own life a few years later. She was disfigured. She couldn't live with it. She left a letter. I took it. I've never read it. I never told anyone. This is the first time I'm talking about it.

(silence)

I left when I was nineteen.

EMILY

Wow, Ed... I'm really sorry to hear that.

EDWARD "ED"

You know what's the worst part? I remember blowing out that candle. I'm sure of it.

Silence. The bar door opens. GLENN enters.

EMILY

My love! I missed you so much!

GLENN

I thought I'd come help you close up. Nothing going on at home.

EMILY goes to kiss him.

EMILY

I missed you so much.

GLENN

Me too.

EMILY

Here, this is Ed, our best regular.

GLENN

Hi, nice to meet you, man. I'm Glenn.

EDWARD "ED"
Nice to meet you.

GLENN
You know what? We got the van. We can leave anytime you want, hit the road together.

EMILY
Oh my god! Really? You actually bought it?

GLENN
Yeah, it was a surprise. And here are the keys.

He places the keys on the bar. EMILY kisses him, excited.

EMILY
Oh my love, that's awesome! How much did it cost?

GLENN
Don't worry about that. But hey, we could take a week or two, head out to the island or maybe the Sunshine Coast. What do you think?

ED watches them silently, then downs his beer in one go. He puts a bill on the counter and walks out.

EMILY
That sounds amazing...

EXT. STREET, AROUND THE CORNER - CONTINUOUS

It's raining. ED steps out of the bar and walks off. He passes MATT, who's on the phone. ED ignores him. MATT notices, hangs up, and jogs after him.

They reach a back alley. Three homeless addicts are nearby, about to shoot up and smoke crack. They freeze, watching ED and MATT.

MATT
Hey, man! Come on, come back; let me buy you a drink. For old time's sake.

He grabs ED's arm. ED shoves him off violently.

EDWARD "ED"
Don't fucking touch me!

MATT

What the fuck is your problem, man?
Yeah, go fuck yourself, freak. Just
like your fucking sister.

He turns away, putting his phone back to his ear. The three addicts watch, amused.

ED turns back. He spots an empty beer bottle on the ground, grabs it, and hurls it at MATT's head.

It smashes. Matt staggers, touching his scalp, his hand comes back bloody.

MATT (CONT'D)

The fuck is that?!

He turns just as ED charges him and punches him straight in the face. MATT falls hard. Ed gets on top of him, pummels him with fists, over and over until he's out of breath.

MATT coughs, gasping, face bloody and crying. ED stands.

He turns toward the three addicts, they're laughing.

EDWARD "ED"

What the fuck do you want, you
fucking pieces of shit? Why don't
you do something with your lives?

He picks up a shard of the broken bottle and throws it at them. They step back, laughing.

EDWARD "ED" (CONT'D)

That's all you've got? What are you
running from? Face it. Be useful for
once.

(stepping toward them))

You don't even understand a fucking
word I'm saying, do you? Because
you're too fucking stupid. You're
trash. That's what you are.

One of the drug-addict lights a match, brings it to his crack pipe, but stops. Then he lights the whole matchbook on fire and tosses it into a dumpster full of cardboard.

ED watches the flames rise. The three drug-addicts start growling and laughing like animals.

One of them picks up the bottle shard and hurls it through the window of a backstore. The glass explodes.

ED grabs a burning cardboard box from the dumpster and throws it inside the shop. The flames begin to spread.

The crackheads run off, one of them kicking Matt, still on the ground, knocking him unconscious.

Out on the street, they stop a passing taxi, then flip it over. One lights a burning box and sets the car on fire. The taxi driver runs away, as do the two passengers.

Ed watches them go.

SOUNDS: GLASS BREAKING, TIRES SCREECHING, CAR HORNS, SCREAMING

Matt starts twitching on the pavement. Ed looks at him, then walks away in the opposite direction.

INT. HOUSE - LATER

BRENDA and NICOLAS are on the couch. NICOLAS is playing video games. BRENDA is lying down, scrolling on her phone. JOHN and ASHLEY are at the kitchen table eating.

The front door opens. ED walks in, removes his earbuds. He seems zoned out. He turns and sees everyone.

NICOLAS
Hey Edward! My man.

EDWARD "ED"
(surprised)
Hey everyone.

BRENDA
Hi.

ASHLEY and JOHN say nothing.

NICOLAS
Come hang with us.

BRENDA
We've got beers if you want. Grab one.

ED goes to the fridge, takes out a beer.

EDWARD "ED"
Sure. You guys want one?

NICOLAS

Nah, I already had one. I'm gonna step out for a smoke.

BRENDA

Still working on mine, thanks.

JOHN doesn't answer. ASHLEY smiles and shakes her head.

ED sits down on the couch next to Brenda.

EDWARD "ED"

What's the game today?

NICOLAS doesn't answer, fully focused on the screen.

NICOLAS

Hm? What?

EDWARD "ED"

What are you playing? What's the goal?

NICOLAS

(eyes locked on the screen)

Man, you know. It's a video game. It's always more or less the same. You've got a character, you go from point A to point B, and on the way there are monsters and goblins trying to stop you. So you kill them.

BRENDA

Behind you, there are two goblins or something.

NICOLAS

What? Behind me? Nah, what are you talking about, those are my fairies. I got them like ten levels ago, Brenda.

BRENDA

What? I didn't even notice.

They all laugh.

JOHN

Come on Brenda, you have to open your mind and be aware of what's happening!

NICOLAS
How's the mushroom trip, man?

JOHN
Great!

EDWARD "ED"
Oh, you're on mushrooms?

JOHN
Yep. Me and Ashley. It's our wedding anniversary.

EDWARD "ED"
Oh, congratulations guys.

JOHN
Thanks.

Silence. ED sips his beer.

EDWARD "ED"
Where's Rayhan?

BRENDA
She had a bunch of patient appointments today. And some kind of guitar concert tonight, or maybe it was vocal cord training?

EDWARD "ED"
Ok...

NICOLAS
Hey you! Stop!

JOHN
What, Nicolas?

NICOLAS
He's killing me!

BRENDA
What about your two fairy wingmen or whatever?

NICOLAS
This thing already killed them. Damn it!

SFX from TV: "YOU LOSE!"

JOHN
Try again!

NICOLAS
Nah, enough of that shit.

NICOLAS grabs the remote and turns off the console.

TV cuts to news coverage – FOOTAGE OF THE RIOTS IN
VANCOUVER'S STREETS.

REPORTER (O.S.)
Violence is currently erupting in
downtown Vancouver. Several cars
have been set on fire, reports of
assaults, and multiple businesses
burning...

ED finishes his beer.

He stands up, opens the front door, and tosses the empty can
into the bin outside.

He closes the door behind him.

EDWARD "ED"
Ok guys. Thanks for the beer.

NICOLAS
You're not heading to your room
already, are you?

EDWARD "ED"
(wondering))
Hm... Actually, yeah. I'm tired.
Good night, guys.

JOHN
Night, man.

BRENDA
(while playing))
Night! Hey, take that, you damn
goblin!

ED grabs his stuff and heads upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. ED'S ROOM – CONTINUOUS

ED lies in the dark, on his bed.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)
Kids... they haven't grown up since
they were fifteen.
(MORE)

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It's like they just stayed on their teenage couch, removed their parents, and kept on living that way. They have no clue what's going on in the world. Not even on the other side of the street. It's like they never even opened their front door and crossed it.

He takes out his notebook and pen from his bag.

He looks at the old envelope sitting on the windowsill.

He picks it up, hesitates, about to open it, but stops.

He writes on the first page: "TOM MCENDRICK."

EXT. GRANVILLE AVENUE, VANCOUVER - EVENING

SOUNDS OF A CROWD - VERY BUSY - POLICE SIRENS

The street is lively, filled with bars, theaters, concert venues, and fast food joints. People of all kinds roam: drunk youth smoking outside bars, older folks coming out of plays, people from every background. Homeless folks and crackheads linger around. Tensions rise here and there.

Ed makes his way through the crowd.

It's grey out, but not raining.

Signs of damage: burned cars, looted shops.

There's a bit of chaos.

People walk around, loud chatter.

DISTANT POLICE SIRENS.

He reaches a bar. There's a crowd outside, voices shouting.

Across the street, police watch but don't intervene.

He passes them and heads inside.

A hostess greets him.

EDWARD "ED"

Hi, just here for a drink at the bar. Is that okay?

A POLICE CAR SCREAMS PAST OUTSIDE - her answer is inaudible.

EDWARD "ED" (CONT'D)

What?

HOSTESS

(not in the mood)

Can I see your ID?

ED pulls out his driver's license and shows it to her. She opens the door.

CUT TO:

INT. PORCELAIN BAR - CONTINUOUS

LOUD RNB MUSIC.

The bar is packed. People are drunk, talking loudly, but still somewhat well-dressed. Ed sits at the bar between two people. He holds a pen in his hand. The BARTENDER approaches.

BARTENDER

What can I get for you?

EDWARD "ED"

Just a lager. Hey, I wanted to ask you. Do you know if an old guy, Tom McEndrick, is here?

BARTENDER

(can't hear)

Who?

EDWARD "ED"

Tom McEndrick! He's a famous author.

The BARTENDER points to an old man in a booth at the back, completely wasted. He's surrounded by standing people talking among themselves. Ed stands up and makes his way through the crowd.

He reaches the booth. TOM MCENDRICK, dead drunk, laughs to himself. A young man sits beside him, making sure his drink stays on the table and trying to keep him from falling.

The YOUNG MAN looks up at ED. They lock eyes. The young man nods, as if to say "What do you want?" ED's face remains expressionless, pale. He drops his pen, turns around, and exits the bar.

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

ED walks through the city. People are agitated. Some run. Riots break out in the distance. Homeless people, but also young people caught up in the chaos.

CROWD NOISE, POLICE SIRENS, SMASHING SOUNDS, FIRE IN THE DISTANCE.

He arrives at the metro station. A wave of people rushes toward the entrance. Police are standing out front.

COP

This is the last train tonight.
We're shutting down downtown. Last
train leaves in five minutes.
Downtown is closed!

ED follows the crowd past the SkyTrain gates.

EXT. SKYTRAIN VIEW - LATER

WIDE SHOT OF THE ELEVATED SKYTRAIN LINE - THE TRAIN DEPARTS THE CITY. BEHIND IT, DOWNTOWN GLOWS WITH FIRES, RED AND BLUE LIGHTS FLASH, PLUMES OF SMOKE RISE FROM THE BUILDINGS.

EXT. TRANSIT STATION, 12TH AVE - LATER/NIGHT

It's quiet compared to downtown. People exit the SkyTrain station, either running or walking quickly. A fire truck speeds past with its sirens blaring. A small group of well-dressed upper-class suburban white kids, privileged suburban rebels, seize the chaos of the riots as an excuse to smash things for thrills.

SIREN WAILS.

Ed exits and walks along 12th Avenue. He passes a back alley where three drug addicts are smashing garbage bins and setting them on fire.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)

How did we let it all rot like
this? How was I ever inspired by
any of this? What a disappointment.
Everything here is disappointment.
People are disappointing. No drive,
no dreams, no ambition. No spark,
no enthusiasm. No art, no culture
being cultivated. Just pure decay,
masked as total freedom. Freedom to
do what?

(MORE)

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Whatever you want, no matter the
cost. Ego leading the human race.

He stops in front of a scenic overlook of downtown, flames
flickering in the distance.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)

Keep ignoring it and it smashes
right into your face. In the most
violent way. We should've faced it
earlier. We have to face it now.

EXT. 12TH AVE - SAME TIME

CAMERA FOLLOWS RAYHAN FROM THE FRONT AS SHE WALKS DOWN A DARK
STREET. WE SEE THE BACKGROUND BEHIND HER.

Rayhan walks briskly down the dimly lit street.

SOUNDS OF GLASS SHATTERING, POLICE SIRENS WAILING.

The same three drug addicts emerge from the alley behind her.
One hurls a glass bottle at a car windshield - it explodes.

Rayhan doesn't look back. She breathes heavily, panicked,
walking faster and faster.

CAMERA MOVES BEHIND HER TO SHOW HER POV AHEAD

She sees the house in the distance, and Ed. He's standing
alone with his back turned.

EDWARD "ED" (V.O.)

Maybe it's time I take action too.
This time, I'll be fully aware of
what I'm doing. Those bastards
didn't speak to me for six months.
What's the point? Maybe I'll be the
reality that crashes into them.
They won't be able to dodge it
this time.

CAMERA MOVES AROUND TO THE FRONT TO REVEAL EDWARD WAITING.
CAMERA MOVES OVER HIS LEGS, THEN RISES - HE'S HOLDING THE OLD
ENVELOPE.

CAMERA FOCUSES TIGHTLY ON HIS LIPS.

EDWARD "ED"

I'm going to kill you guys!

AMBER stops behind Ed, frozen in fear. He pulls a lighter from his pocket. Looks at the envelope in his hand... and sets it on fire.

AMBER lowers her head, terrified, and runs past Ed toward the house.

Seeing her, Ed suddenly comes back to himself. The envelope drops, burning on the ground.

BUZZING – INCOMING TEXT

He checks his phone. A message from EMILY:

MY EDWARD! IT'S INSANE OUTSIDE. I'M WORRIED AND THINKING OF YOU. PLEASE ANSWER ME.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO – NIGHT

VERONICA OHCHI sits at a news desk, presenting live coverage.

VERONICA OHCHI

We interrupt regular programming to bring you breaking news. There are multiple outbreaks of violence and fires spreading across Vancouver. Cars and entire buildings are on fire. Police are overwhelmed, and firefighters are forced to choose which structures to save. Let's go live to our reporter Ramesh Khan. Everett, where are you now?

NEWS FOOTAGE – MONTAGE (VARIOUS LOCATIONS)

- Drug addicts attack random pedestrians on the sidewalk, punching and pushing them to the ground.
- A group of privileged white youths sets fire to parked cars; police intervene, chasing them down. One is tackled to the ground and handcuffed.
- People from various communities smash the windows of a shoe store.
- The crowd floods in, looting the store in a frenzy.

EXT. DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER - NIGHT - LIVE FOOTAGE

A chaos-lit street. Firefighters are working behind RAMESH KHAN, who speaks to the camera as smoke billows around.

REPORTER RAMESH KHAN

Yes Veronica, I'm in the heart of downtown Vancouver. Fire crews are trying to save what's left of this commercial building behind me, but cars all around are still burning.

VERONICA OHCHI (O.S.)

Were you able to speak with police? Do we know what sparked these events?

RAMESH KHAN

Well, no. Police seem unsure where to respond first. Initial reports suggest a mix of synthetic drug use, fentanyl and others, might have triggered the first wave. But now there are looters, assaults... A firefighter just told me there have also been murders... and rapes. It's all extremely chaotic. It's like a wave of collective madness with no clear cause. And it's not just the homeless, we're seeing people from all walks of life join in. It's become a mass hysteria, unstoppable.

INT. TV STUDIO - SAME TIME

VERONICA OHCHI

We're seeing people actively setting fires behind you. Please be careful. Could this be the start of full-scale riots in Vancouver? The last time this city saw anything like it was in 2015, after the Canucks' defeat. But now... there's no apparent reason.

She presses her finger to her earpiece and listens in.

VERONICA OHCHI (CONT'D)

Hold on... I'm getting word of similar incidents in other cities.

(MORE)

VERONICA OHCHI (CONT'D)

There are now reports of unrest in L.A., Seattle, Philadelphia, and more across North America. This is no longer local. These are RIOTS.

FADE OUT.

THE END

RIOT.s.

By Damien Colomb

A Show Bible
July 2025
Vancouver, Canada

IS THERE AN ARCHITECTURE OF A RIOT?

Anatomy of the Beginning of an Ending

PART I.

- . **AN IDEA, A FORM** *What shape does a riot takes?*
- . **UNDERLYING THEMES** *Should we explain a riot?*
- . **NARRATIVE & AESTHETIC STYLE** *Is there any beauty in a riot?*

PART II.

- . **THE MAIN PROTAGONISTS** *Is there any backbone in this chaos?*
- . **SEASON 1: STRUCTURE** *What does the skeleton look like?*
- . **Episode Breakdown: Characters, Places & Perspectives** *Ten days. Ten cities. Ten stories.*

PART I.

RIOT.s. ignite across America, unstoppable and unpredictable. Each episode dives into a single day, one city, one perspective, capturing a society on the brink of collapse.

"You know what? It's wrong, but it's exciting"

AN IDEA, A FORM *Is there an architecture of a riot?*

10 x 52-minute Anthology – Apocalyptic, Socially-Driven Drama Series

RIOT.s. is a gripping dramatic anthology series that delves into the rapid escalation of violent riots erupting in a North American city, which then spread explosively across the continent, spiraling out of control.

The series features a unique format: one day, one city, following one or more characters. Each episode unfolds over a single chronological day of the uprising and is set in a different city, showcasing characters from diverse social, cultural, and political backgrounds. The goal is to provide each episode with a compelling, intimate, and distinct human perspective on the unfolding collective chaos.

Season 1 comprises 10 episodes, each 52 minutes long, capturing one day of the uprising while gradually unveiling the magnitude of the phenomenon and its far-reaching social, political, and psychological consequences.

Two narrative threads connect all the episodes:

Veronica OhChi, a live news anchor who first alerts the public to the events unfolding in Vancouver (pilot episode). From episode to episode, she becomes the central witness to the nationwide evolution of the riots, while her own life is increasingly affected by the chaos.

The **RIOT.s.** themselves become a character. We follow their rising and falling momentum, marked by contrasts and irregularities, often treated like a living entity. Seen through the eyes of characters and those filming them in a world obsessed with immediacy, everything must be shown, told, analyzed, and decoded. The riots have taken on a life of their own.

UNDERLYING THEMES *Should we explain a riot?*

A dramatic, chronological anthology series, **RIOT.s.** allows for a direct, unfiltered exploration of contemporary social fractures, shown without commentary, without judgment.

Each episode presents raw facts, lived through the eyes of characters from vastly different backgrounds. The only judgment comes from the protagonists themselves, or from the viewer, should they choose to form one.

Because each episode follows a single day of riots in a different city, **RIOT.s.** opens up a multiplicity of perspectives: individuals from all walks of life, social classes, political groups, cultural, religious, or identity communities. What they share is a common point: like everyone, they each have a personal story, a flaw, a unique emotional arc.

This structure allows the series to explore major societal themes: precarity, racism, identity, ecology, capitalism, power, marginalization, authority, privilege, the anonymous citizen, and more, without ever becoming a lecture.

Everything is lived. Nothing is explained.

The aim is to portray the full spectrum of today's complex, fragmented societies.

The riots erupt from a minor spark, something deeply buried in the human psyche, and spread uncontrollably across a city, a country, a continent.

Each person enters (or avoids) the chaos for their own reasons:

- some to express a long-silenced anger in a society that has erased them;
- others to make a political stand;
- others still to gain power or protect what remains.

But then there are those drawn to the violence itself, those who seize the moment to break, steal, or surrender to a primal urge they never dared to release.

A contagious kind of madness emerges, revealing the darkest corners of the human soul.

NARRATIVE & AESTHETIC STYLE *Is there any beauty in a riot?*

RIOT.s. was born from a personal tipping point; a lived moment where I felt caught somewhere between *Taxi Driver* and *World War Z*.

Coming from France and settling in Vancouver, I experienced a deep cultural disconnect. The way people interacted, or didn't, felt alien. My perception of this world slowly pushed me to its margins, turning me into a lucid but powerless witness.

The pilot episode follows a man who, after fleeing a troubled past, arrives in Vancouver in search of meaning and redemption. But instead of rebuilding, he finds only silence. The city isolates him. Slowly, he begins to talk to himself, narrating what he sees, what he feels.

Around him, everything seems broken. In the streets, opioid users collapse like fallen bodies. Most people look away, hiding in their bubbles, avoiding reality. For him, there's no difference anymore: everyone is a zombie.

When the riots erupt, their scale and violence feel apocalyptic; like an invasion, a collapse, something inevitable.

That's why the tone of **RIOT.s.** is built around two parallel forces:

MICRO LEVEL. An intimate, introspective atmosphere; inspired by *Taxi Driver*; where we dive deep into the psyche of individuals in existential crisis. Voiceover becomes an inner dialogue, a raw, subjective narration of a disintegrating world.

MACRO LEVEL. A large-scale, visceral intensity; echoing the chaos of *World War Z* or other disaster epics; where riots unfold with realism, urgency, and an almost contagious brutality.

RIOT.s. lives at the intersection of genres: psychological, political, emotional, social, cinematic, and deeply human. It's as much about the world we see burning, as it is about the people watching it burn, or lighting the match.

PART II.

THE MAIN PROTAGONISTS *Is there any backbone in this chaos?*

VERONICA OHCHI:

Veronica is the throughline of Season 1. As a TV news anchor, she is the first to announce that the unrest in Vancouver has escalated into full-blown “riots” spreading across other North American cities. She embodies cold, calculated journalism; obsessed with image and ratings.

An independent, career-driven woman in her thirties, she is exactly what’s expected of her: flawless appearance, no visible emotion, and an air of strict neutrality. Yet she remains sincere in her work; she believes in what she does. There is no need to criticize, comment, or judge; she represents what exists today.

As the situation spirals out of control over the episodes, Veronica emerges as a central character, culminating in a dedicated episode:

In the finale, riots sweep across the country, including the media itself. Beneath her professional mask, we see a woman confronting her choices, her emotions, and the question of her own role. She offers a subjective viewpoint on the events and her experience, in stark contrast to her career-long demand for “objectivity.”

Can one remain neutral in a world on fire, in a life burning from within?

THE RIOT.s.:

The riots move on their own momentum. They are a singular character, hard to define because they lack a conscience; they do not originate from any single political or social event but stem from all the problems of society and the human soul. They represent everything we are, both individual and collective. They will be born, grow, subside, and intensify until transforming into something entirely new.

They are violent, raw, graphic, and real. They are like us.

SEASON 1: STRUCTURE *What does the skeleton look like?*

The first season of **RIOT.s** consists of 10 episodes, each set over 10 consecutive days in a different North American city. The narrative is both anthological (each day features new characters and unique stakes) and serialized (the riots escalate and spread day by day).

The unrest begins abruptly in Vancouver, on the margins of society, particularly among those left behind by the opioid crisis. But what first appears to be a local incident quickly spreads in unpredictable ways. A wave of anger, confusion, and opportunism sweeps across the continent. Each new episode marks a visual, political, and emotional intensification.

The structure follows a rising tension curve:

. **Episodes 1 to 5** – *The escalation begins*: Broken windows, fires, first clashes. The rioters are disorganized, but the movement grows.

. **Episodes 6 to 8** – *A deceptive lull*: Media reports suggest the unrest is slowing down, but in truth, it shifts to the suburbs, rural areas, and places far from the public eye.

. **Episodes 9 and 10** – *A violent resurgence*: Symbols of power, city halls, media towers, banks, and government buildings, are stormed. Even supposedly untouchable locations are overwhelmed.

The riots become a character of their own: elusive, violent, erratic, and visceral. They are experienced through the eyes of people on the ground, but also through the media; especially *Veronica OhChi*, a prominent newscaster who serves as the narrative throughline of the season. In the final episodes, even Veronica is pulled from the screen into the streets, confronted by the chaos and her own contradictions.

The season ends not with a return to order, but with the collapse of the social contract. Instead of peace, the world descends into **CHAOS**, a prelude to Season 2.

If you're wondering why this series, and why now, the world we live in inspired it. It feels like **RIOT.s** is inevitable in today's media landscape, as if people have been waiting for that spark to ignite the simmering tensions. **RIOT.s** is simply what had to happen.

EPISODE BREAKDOWN: CHARACTERS, PLACES & PERSPECTIVES

Ten days. Ten cities. Ten stories.

Each episode covers one day of riots, in one city, following one or more different characters, all in chronological order.

The goal is clear: to show varied viewpoints without moral judgment. There is no right or wrong here, only human reactions to an extraordinary, violent, chaotic, and unpredictable situation. Each character faces it in their own way, shaped by who they are.

It would be highly interesting if each episode is written by a screenwriter with a personal or cultural connection to the environment and themes explored; authors who understand these worlds, codes, and tensions.

The aim is to avoid simplistic good-versus-evil narratives and to embrace complex, nuanced characters: some who understand the violence, others who suffer from it, some who remain on the sidelines as mere witnesses. Every person is their own universe.

At the heart of **RIOT.s** is the crowd movement, but through it shines the human element.

Historically, riots have always been a mirror: they reveal, confront, and sometimes transform.

Coming from a country where riots evolved into revolts, then revolutions; using the guillotine to cut down centuries-old social structures. I know that an uprising leaves scars and brings change. And that change; political, social, or personal, belongs to each individual.

All episode ideas presented here serve as foundations for the season's storytelling. It's up to each writer to take them on sincerely, with their own perspective. The common thread remains: the riots; they shake, expose, and crystallize. Each story will find its own form.

PILOT: HOW IT BEGINS – Vancouver (BC)

Themes

- Isolation and emotional detachment
- Denial and refusal to grow up
- Collective apathy, Urban numbness

Main Characters: *Edward*, a man in his early 30s, recently arrived from the East Coast who shares a house with five other roommates in their 30s who live in arrested development.

Everything begins in Vancouver; a laid-back West Coast city with a chill, peace & love, semi-hippie vibe, where diverse communities coexist but rarely connect. We follow *Edward*, a young man from the East Coast, hoping to start over, escape a troubled past, and find inspiration to write a book. But he quickly runs into an unexpected reality: a city that feels asleep.

A place full of disengaged people drifting through life without purpose or dreams. From the addicts collapsed on every corner to his roommates (all in their thirties, so supposed to be adults) who spend their days smoking and playing video games like teenagers, *Edward* sees no difference.

To him, they're all the same: zombies, numb, in denial, running from adulthood and responsibility. *Edward* remains alone, isolated; talking to himself more and more, unable to connect, swallowing his anger and hate. He becomes a ghost in his own life, adrift between observation and obsession, watching the world rot around him while his own mind begins to fracture.

Edward tries to keep himself together, to stay grounded. But when his past violently resurfaces, he breaks. That emotional explosion becomes a spark that ignites the city's buried tensions. His rage has been simmering for a long time. When it finally erupts, it sets off a chain reaction. The city explodes. Drug addicts see this new chaos as a rush stronger than anything they've ever used.

Others; frustrated, silent for too long, finally unleash what they had kept buried. And those who refuse to participate now have to face the consequences of their willful blindness.

News anchors begin reporting live. *Veronica OhChi*, the country's most recognized face on the nightly news, delivers a chilling update:

*"Hold on.... I'm getting word of similar incidents in other cities. There are now reports of unrest in L.A., Seattle, Philadelphia, and more across North America. This is no longer local. These are **RIOT. s.**"*

EP2: DAY 2 - Philadelphia (PA)

Themes

- Collapse of inherited values and social illusions
- Hypocrisy of the privileged when facing social crises
- Raw violence in a world unprepared for it

Main Characters: Alden family; a progressive lawyer (father), a charity foundation president (mother), and their two teenage children.

The *Alden's*, a liberal elite family in their early forties watches *Veronica OhChi's* news broadcast from the safety of their plush Philadelphia home. They observe, with sincere yet socially conditioned empathy, the early signs of what appears to be a riot.

Coming from an intellectual lineage shaped over generations, they know the opioid crisis; especially in the Kensington neighborhood, but have never truly encountered it. They've kept it at a distance, both physically and ideologically.

They return to their daily lives. For them, the chaos remains on TV, confined to neighborhoods they avoid. They maintain their image at Rotary Club dinners or by donating thousands to charities that bear their name. But reality is about to hit home. Hard.

For the first time, they will face a type of violence they've never known, a world their privilege once protected them from. And yet, they are human. Not naive, either, there's a darker side to them, one capable of cruelty if pushed. But what are they protecting? As facades crack, they must come down from their pedestal and face the truths their world has long denied. Perhaps, for the first time, they will become real, beyond performance.

The riots unfold much like in Vancouver: burning cars, smashed windows, unrest erupting in neighborhoods across the city. Many rioters are homeless or drug-addicted, but they are quickly joined by young people; diverse in background, class, and race.

Even teens from WASP or liberal elite families, ones this family may know, join the chaos.

The **RIOT.s** doesn't discriminate. It attracts everyone...

EP3: DAY 3 - San Antonio (TX)

Themes

- Latino-American identity and racial prejudice, heritage and dual identity
- Belonging to a community in a globalized society
- The American Dream and the limits of personal success in the face of collective collapse

Main characters: *Juan*, a Mexican-American entrepreneur who is never fully seen as “American.” As his city burns around him, he watches with quiet detachment, and a faint, ironic smile.

We follow *Juan*, a successful Latino-American small business owner, as the riots reach San Antonio. He observes the chaos with measured distance, a man who’s seen too much to be surprised. Often reduced to tired stereotypes, gangs, illegal immigration, border talk, *Juan* is none of that.

He was born here, owns a thriving business, and plays by the rules. Still, the shadow of the stereotype follows him: some of his relatives are in gangs, he knows undocumented immigrants, and the system has never made things easy. To him, the chaos on the screen feels familiar, almost justified.

America has never truly welcomed him, but he still believes in it. He believes in merit, in rising through effort. And he’s succeeded. But violence doesn’t shock him, this country was built on it. It’s not a tragedy. It’s a legacy.

As the **RIOT.s** escalates, *Juan*’s detached stance begins to crack. The violence gets closer. His clients, his employees, his family, all are affected. He can no longer stay a spectator. When does a bystander become a participant? What finally tips the balance? In San Antonio, many rioters are also immigrants, perhaps illegal, who see the unrest as a rare political opportunity, a chance to be heard, to dismantle a system that erased them.

Will *Juan* see this as a moment for personal transformation, a chance to finally choose a side, or will it only strengthen his skepticism?

EP4: DAY 4 - Oakland (CA)

Themes

- Gender identity and the queer experience in the face of raw, amoral violence
- Reconstruction — of the body, of identity, and of the world itself
- Radical change: chosen or imposed

Main characters: *Fable* and *Ahola*, a married transgender couple living within the LGBTQ+ community, now forced to confront a transformation that is no longer personal, but external, violent, and unpredictable.

In Oakland, *Fale* and *Aloha* a queer couple has relocated from San Francisco, fleeing unaffordable rents and hoping to build a quieter, more stable life in a more livable space. But that hope is fragile, they've always felt like they're walking a tightrope, existing in a society that could reject them at any moment.

When the riots spread to their neighborhood, tension resurfaces. First within their relationship: two different personalities, two different pasts, and two opposing instincts when violence comes. One wants to run. The other wants to stay, maybe even fight. Their relationship begins to fracture.

Then a neighbor shows up. Also queer, but older. He challenges them, not with hatred, but with perspective. He's from another generation, one that survived previous storms. He refuses the perpetual victim narrative. To him, the world has always been brutal. The only question is: *who do you choose to be within it?*

Between the rising chaos outside and the tremors inside, the couple must face their own fear, their convictions, and who they want to become in a world on the edge.

In a community where radical personal, bodily, and social transformation has already been claimed, **RIOT.s.** delivers a new kind of chaos; collective, unpredictable, and going against everything they stand for. Will they adapt, or fight back?

The **RIOT.s.** are no longer confined to poor neighborhoods. They've reached unexpected zones, communities once thought immune. The participants are now wildly eclectic. The uprising has no single face.

EP5: DAY 5 - Wallace (ID)

Themes

- Patriotism and national identity
- Conservative values confronted with modern reality
- Paranoia and survivalist fantasy

Main characters: *John, Cameron, Hudson, Eleanor, Catherine, and Nancy*, a group of childhood friends living in the same neighborhood, forced to confront the reality behind the fantasy they've nurtured for years. A stranger arrives, and with him, everything they believed begins to crack.

In a small, rural, and isolated town in northern Idaho, a tight-knit group of lifelong friends live in retreat from the outside world. Most of them lean toward far-right ideologies; some openly flirt with white supremacist beliefs.

Their worldview is built on mistrust, fear of the "other," and a survivalist fantasy: *"us versus them," "the collapse is coming," "we'll have to defend our land."* » But they're not monsters. They are as alive, flawed, and emotionally complex as anyone else. They have their own histories, wounds, and what they believe to be their version of the truth.

They watch the riots unfold on screen, with a mix of dread and fascination. For them, this isn't chaos. It's prophecy. It's exactly what they feared... or deep down, wanted. Their static, insulated daily life, marked by beers, guns, and apocalyptic conversations, is suddenly interrupted. Something brutal happens. Not necessarily tied to the riots.

A stranger arrives. Maybe a madman. Maybe a survivor. Maybe something worse. He brings with him a real, physical fear, something no ideology can explain away. And suddenly, the fantasy collapses. What had always been a mental exercise or ideological game becomes terrifyingly real.

Violent. Unpredictable. Out of control. **RIOT.s.**, once thought confined to urban centers, begin to creep into rural landscapes. They're no longer just physical mass movements, they inspire, mutate, contaminate. Isolated towns start to tremble. Acts of violence erupt where no one expected them.

These are no longer organized protests. They are chaotic tremors. Spontaneous, erratic, and terrifying. Change is no longer a matter of choice. It's already happening. And no one is safe.

EP6: DAY 6 - Los Angles (CA)

Themes

- African-American identity in a historically divided society
- Loyalty to an idea vs. loyalty to a community
- What does it mean to belong to something?

Main characters: *Stan Gilroy*, a Black LAPD officer stationed in a predominantly African-American neighborhood. He's been here before, he knows the streets, but this time, it's different.

As the riots continue to spread across the country, Los Angeles becomes one of the epicenters of the unrest. The events surpass even those of 1992. This isn't just a riot anymore, it's a full-blown street war. National Guard and military reserves are being deployed.

In the middle of it all: *Stan*, a 15-year veteran of the LAPD. Every day and every night, he's sent into the field, into neighborhoods like South LA, places he knows, streets he grew up near, full of people who look like him.

Now, those same people glare at him with hate. They shout at him, curse him, call him a traitor. To many, he's not just a cop, he's the enemy.

Caught between his badge and his identity, between order and empathy, he begins to fracture. Can he still do his job? Should he? Obey, resist, walk away, or break?

There's truth in everyone's rage, in his, in theirs. There's grief, history, trauma, and the need to finally break something open.

The **RIOT.s**. appear to be calming in most major cities, but not here. Not in these neighborhoods. The poorest areas, the most over-policed, continue to burn. To the public eye, that's almost expected. It's a false calm, the pressure hasn't dropped. It's only deepened.

EP7: DAY 7 - Cocopah Indian Reservation (AZ)

Cocopah Xawil Kwñchawaay

Themes

- Native, Identity revolt and inner violence
- Ancestral memory and cultural transmission
- Forced assimilation, displacement, and dispossession

Main characters: *Tyler Manygoats*, a tribal casino employee, and his wife *Kayla*, caught between the life they live, the culture they inherited, and the world around them — a white capitalist system where their roles are reduced to exotic hosts in their own land.

On a tribal reservation in southern Arizona, we follow *Tyler Manygoats*, an employee at a tribal casino, a symbol of the American capitalist stereotype: gambling, money, vice; which quietly clashes with the values of his heritage. He lives between two worlds: the wealthy tourists who flood the casino every weekend, and the quiet but powerful presence of his family, his elders, and the land beneath his feet.

He is not angry, not yet. But he feels it. Like everywhere else, he experiences fear, weariness, shame, pride, and a kind of silent resignation. He is more than what he represents, more than his heritage or his role in the country. He is, above all, a human being. Complex. Emotional. Torn between ideas, instincts, and doubts.

At first, the riots sweeping the nation seem distant, like another wave crashing far from shore. But gradually, the echo reaches even here. Buried resentment, inherited trauma, and generational rage begin to resurface. The violence happening “out there” starts to feel familiar, even logical. Should he take part? Is this the right moment? But more importantly, is it what he truly wants?

The real question becomes: can culture heal? Can it protect? Or will it, too, be consumed by the fire? The **RIOT.s** here are not about race, not about identity, and yet they are all of that, and none of it. They exist as a raw, human eruption; a violence deeply woven into the human experience, one that no culture, no tradition, no distance can completely contain.

EP8: DAY8 - Washington D.C.

Themes

- Politics vs reality
- L'ordre établi facile, perte de contrôle
- Rôle, responsabilité et représentation

Main Characters: Congresswoman Kamala Huston and her chief of staff Edmond Morton, both seasoned political figures, suddenly confronted with the collapse of the system they've always trusted.

In the heart of American power, panic takes hold. *Kamala Huston*, a congresswoman known for her strategic poise, and *Edmond Morton*, her long-time advisor, try to navigate a political storm unlike any they've faced.

The city is tense, the streets are on edge, and the country is unraveling, but within the walls of Congress, there is silence. No direction. No unity. Just paralyzed debate and fearful glances. *Kamala* must choose: speak out to reassure the public, protect her party's interests, listen to her conscience, or shield her own family.

But reality crashes in: the **RIOT.s**. are now bigger than politics. No one is listening. Authority means nothing. Procedures feel irrelevant. She remembers the Capitol riot in 2021, a moment when institutions were directly targeted. But this time, the chaos is everywhere *except* D.C., and that absence feels even more ominous. It's as if the nation has stopped expecting leadership.

For *Kamala* and *Edmond*, who have spent their lives operating inside a structured, rule-bound system, the question becomes clear: do we still matter? Outside, the country seemed to be calming, the **RIOT.s**. scattered in rural areas or low-income neighborhoods, manageable pockets of violence. But that was a false lull.

By the end of the episode, Washington ignites. The epicenter that had been spared is suddenly engulfed. Not just by protest, but by fire.

EP9: DAY 9 - US Military Base (Middle-East)

Themes

- Obedience vs. conscience
- Military loyalty and internal division
- The armed forces as both a shield and a weapon

Main characters: Kyle “Mascot” Harper and José “Peligroso” Armando, two elite soldiers returning from a covert mission, confronted with a crumbling homeland they can no longer reach.

We follow a Special Forces unit deployed in the Middle East. Returning to base after days cut off from the outside world, they discover that massive, fast-moving riots have erupted back home. The news channels, with *Veronica OhChi*, as well as their own command, remain in a state of uncertainty. The past few days have seemed calmer, though occasional surges of violence still erupt. Everyone is on edge, waiting to see what happens next.

At the base, talk of the riots spreads quickly. Between brothers-in-arms, discussions grow heated but stay respectful; at first. The soldiers were supposed to go on leave, spend time with their families.

But suddenly, they learn the unrest has exploded again in New York, where overwhelmed local authorities are now calling in the army. Some officials are even pushing for the use of live ammunition, a red line for many. *Peligroso* volunteers immediately, along with several others. For them, defending the country means doing so at all costs, even against fellow citizens, even if this isn't the war they thought they'd be fighting.

Others, like *Mascot*, are more conflicted. The idea of turning their weapons on civilians, people just like them, doesn't sit right. This deployment brings deep cracks to the surface: what are they really defending? Orders? The government? The people? Or the Constitution? Men trained to fight abroad are now expected to enforce order at home; a chilling echo of a nation once divided.

As the **RIOT.s** spread like wildfire, insurgent cells begin to take shape. The military, once unified, starts to fracture. Will soldiers start choosing sides? Will loyalty split along personal lines? One thing becomes clear: the government's strongest arm may no longer be under its control. Even bases and barracks are no longer immune, **RIOT.s** are everywhere.

EP10: DAY 10 – The News Network’s Broadcast Tower

Themes

- Reality vs. the screen - Information vs. truth
- Who am I? Who do I want to be vs. who I was told to be
- Facing choices - past, present, and future

Main character: *Veronica Ohchi*, TV news anchor. Now confronted directly by the chaos she once reported from a distance. There’s no time left to comment, it’s about survival.

The entire country is in flames. The unrest is no longer limited to major cities; it’s reaching rural towns and remote corners. Everyone reacts in their own way, some fight, loot, lose their minds, unleash long-buried rage; others hide, help, or try to calm the storm. Even the media is no longer immune.

At the news station, *Veronica* finds herself in the middle of the storm. The once-imposing media tower is no longer a safe haven. She now has to protect herself. And through that, we discover the other side of the screen: her real life, her unfiltered thoughts, her fears is not the image she’s been trained to project, but the woman behind the glass. Perhaps she’s the one who reflects us the most.

After sweeping across North America, touching every home, mind, body, and heart, the story now narrows to *Veronica*, who’s trapped in a tense lockdown inside the TV news tower where she has spent the past days covering the unrest. firsthand.

Outside, the devastation is far greater than she ever imagined from behind a desk. Her personal life unravels.

These are no longer **RIOT.s**: this is pure **Chaos**.

END OF SEASON 1

Here are the 10 episodes, the 10 places, the 10 perspectives, the concept of these **RIOT.s**.

Essential themes carried by characters rooted in reality, from communities, backgrounds, silences, or long-buried anger; ideally written by screenwriters who know the subject and have experienced it, in one way or another.

These stories cast no judgment: they offer raw truths and deeply human emotions, complex, contradictory, and profound; all set against a backdrop that is both spectacularly apocalyptic and powerfully entertaining.

From the **RIOT.s**, we gradually descend into Season 2:

Chaos.