

TAURED

PILOT

"The Looming Crisis"

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OVER BLACK:

"Please remember: things are not what they seem."

-1Q84, Haruki Murakami

FADE IN:

INT. FIRST CLASS CABIN - JAL AIRLINER - DAWN

Overnight Trans-Pacific haul. Most of the PASSENGERS are asleep; quiet except for the muted WHINE of jet engines and soft HISS of recycled air.

A CHIME rouses some PASSENGERS from sleep. A FLIGHT ATTENDANT, Japanese, unfailingly polite, attractive, appears next to a console at the front of the cabin, microphone in hand:

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
(over P.A. - in Japanese,
then English)
The Captain has turned on the
seatbelt sign...we ask that you
return to your seats, bring your
chairs to their full upright
positions and prepare for landing
as we make our final approach to
Los Angeles International Airport.

As she finishes the announcement, she shudders as a chill runs through her.

She looks down at her sleeveless arms and notices:

CLOSE: Goosebumps rising on her forearms.

In her peripheral vision she notices a series of bright flashes from beneath the bathroom door.

She crosses the aisle to the bathroom door and knocks politely.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
Excuse me, could you please return
to your seat? We're preparing to
land.

The door opens and HELEN L. JONES - mid-30s, business-like, determined, glasses - steps across the threshold, straightening her hair as she squeezes past the FLIGHT ATTENDANT. She's apologizes:

JONES
Too much champagne.

She moves down the corridor to SEATS 5C & D:

In the window seat is YVONNE DOUGLAS, early 30s, ambitious, African-American - Valentino shoes, upscale work dress - so focused on the laptop in front of her, she hardly notices the stunning view beyond the window, or JONES squeezing past her.

JONES (CONT'D)
Pardon me.

YVONNE looks up, startled, as if seeing her seat-mate for the first time. JONES is eager to strike up a conversation:

JONES (CONT'D)
(re: laptop)
Hard at work?

YVONNE dismisses her lack of recognition as forgetfulness.

YVONNE
I work at a talent agency. Closing a deal for an unappreciative client.

JONES
Lot of incredibly powerful people in your industry. Hypothetical question:
(locks YVONNE in her unwavering gaze)
Do you think it's possible to accumulate so much wealth and power, become so disconnected from normal life, that it drives you insane?

An odd question from a complete stranger. YVONNE'S expression registers her surprise, while JONES patiently awaits her response.

INT. BAGGAGE CLAIM - LAX - DAWN

The JAL baggage carousels. A crowd of RELATIVES, BUSINESS ASSOCIATES, LIMO DRIVERS wait for the arriving PASSENGERS.

We focus on a MAN in the crowd: GEORGE TAU, mid 30s, would commonly be described African-American, physically imposing - towering over everyone else; intelligent eyes scan the arriving PASSENGERS but ignore the happy reunions taking place around him.

INT. IMMIGRATION - INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL (LAX) - DAWN

Digital Signs hang from the ceiling indicating lines for U.S. Passport Holders and for Non-U.S. Citizens.

YVONNE is looking through her purse for her passport. She fishes it out, looks up and happens to catch JONES' eye, standing in the next line.

JONES

Yvonne if you're heading into L.A.,
I've got a car waiting, I could
give you a ride.

YVONNE isn't exactly eager to spend more time with her strange ex-seat mate and politely declines.

YVONNE

Uh thanks, I've got a car waiting
too.

JONES reaches the IMMIGRATION WINDOW.

The IMMIGRATION OFFICER is wearing a bored expression that can only be achieved by performing a repetitive task for 8 hours at a time.

IMMIGRATION OFFICER

Passport please.

JONES absent-mindedly fishes through her purse before handing him an olive green passport. It's a task the IMMIGRATION OFFICER has performed so many times, he doesn't even bother to look at the cover.

He opens it to the second page, sets it on the scanner. A light passes over the page. He glances at the screen:

Surname/Nom/Appellidos

JONES

Given Names/Prenom/Nombres

HELEN L.

Nationality/Nationalite/Nacionalidad

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The IMMIGRATION OFFICER screws his face in confusion. He stabs at the escape button on his console, re-scans the passport - then checks the screen, but it's the same information.

The IMMIGRATION OFFICER looks back up. He clearly knows something's amiss. JONES plays off her mistake with a practiced nonchalance:

JONES
Well, this is awkward.

The IMMIGRATION OFFICE leans over into a microphone.

IMMIGRATION OFFICER
Supervisor to station four,
supervisor to station four.

EXT. RANDY'S DONUTS - INGLEWOOD - DAWN

The iconic restaurant. A large brown donut set against a magenta and pink sky.

INT. RANDY'S DONUTS - INGLEWOOD - CONTINUOUS

No EMPLOYEES. A lone diner. AGENT ELYSE WHITEHORSE -- late 30's, Native American, intelligent, professional -- but vibrating on her own special frequency.

She sits in a booth, speaking into an iPhone sitting in the middle of the table.

CLOSE - PHONE: The red 'record' light is illuminated.

WHITEHORSE
Ok Doc, as requested... this is Day
One of my insomnia journal... it's
about six am...

As she scans the surrounding area, her gaze settles on a ROADSIDE WORKCREW on La Cienega Blvd., setting diseased palm trees on fire. She watches the brown bark and green leaves slowly being consumed by flames.

She is simultaneously transfixed and terrified by the sight, and it appears to trigger a memory:

WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)
(beat - reluctant to
divulge this)
... When I was a kid... right
before Nine-Eleven I was scared
shitless for days... couldn't
figure out why... it's like all
that evil was just... in the
air...just floating around and I'd
accidentally tuned into it...
(MORE)

WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)

(beat - as she considers)

...If 'free floating evil' makes you uncomfortable, how about I'd somehow tuned into the collective unconscious... does some Jung make it more palatable?

(beat)

Anyway, that feeling came back, years later, when I was investigating the disappearances in Oklahoma.

(beat)

And whatever it is, wherever it's coming from... I'm starting to sense it, again, now, at the edges of my consciousness, and whenever I get 'The Feeling'...

Before she can elaborate, her iphone RINGS. She stops recording, answers immediately. Listening for a moment before responding:

WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)

(a beat)

No, no problem. I'm up.

A long beat as she continues to listen, never taking her eyes off the burning palms.

WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)

Yeah, that is weird. No, no, I'm close... be there in ten.

INT. BAGGAGE CLAIM - LAX - DAWN

As the last PASSENGER from the flight arrives, and walks past GEORGE TAU, he becomes visibly dismayed.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - LAX - DAY

A small white box: table, two chairs, harsh fluorescent lighting. JONES sits on one side of the table. Without glancing down, she almost absent-mindedly taps her wristwatch, and...

CLOSE - SURVEILLANCE CAMERA: The red activation light goes dark.

AGENT WHITEHORSE, still exuding that same warmth, enters and sits across from her. She activates the record function on her iphone:

WHITEHORSE
I'm Agent Elyse Whitehorse,
Homeland Security. I have some
questions for you.

JONES cocks her head, smiles, as if she's just heard a bit of Mozart.

JONES
That's a lovely name.

The compliment momentarily catches AGENT WHITEHORSE off-guard. She quickly recovers her composure and pushes on:

WHITEHORSE
Your name and country of origin?

JONES
Helen L. Jones, friends call me
Jonesy. Taured.

WHITEHORSE
(smiling-still polite)
My geography is pretty good. I've
never heard of 'Taured'.

JONES
No, I suppose not.

AGENT WHITEHORSE
Because it's not a real place and
this...
(holding up the passport)
...isn't a real passport; trying to
enter the U.S. on a fake passport
is a Federal offense.

JONES
I didn't mean to give you that
passport. Agent Whitehorse...

Then JONES' tone changes, a hint of menace creeps in beneath the politeness:

JONES (CONT'D)
...this is not a rabbit hole you
want to go down.

AGENT WHITEHORSE
Why you tried to enter the
country...
(holding up the passport)
(MORE)

AGENT WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)
...with this, and what you plan to
do here is definitely something I
intend to find out.

JONES sighs, looks down at her watch, then seeing that AGENT
WHITEHORSE is stubbornly committed to this course of action:

JONES
Very well, don't say I didn't warn
you.
(a beat)
I'm sure you need to call some
people, decide how to proceed here,
the sooner you do that, the sooner
I can be on my way.

Realizing she's partially right, AGENT WHITEHORSE tries to
regain control of the situation.

AGENT WHITEHORSE
When I get back, I expect some
answers.

JONES
I'm afraid that when you get back
you'll have more questions than
answers.

INT. OFFICE - CUSTOMS (LAX) - LATER

Through the window of an empty office, we see but don't hear
AGENT WHITEHORSE on the phone, pacing the length of the floor
during her conversation.

She ends the call, then steps back out into:

INT. CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE INTERROGATION - CONTINUOUS

Where a SUPERVISOR is guarding the door. There is a brief,
blink and you missed it flash of light, in the b.g. - that
neither of them notices.

AGENT WHITEHORSE
We're going to move her. Let's get
an escort.

SUPERVISOR
(into walkie-talkie)
I need two guards at interrogation
three.

AGENT WHITEHORSE
Alright, let's get this show on the road.

The SUPERVISOR opens the door and what they see leaves them both speechless: The room is completely empty.

SUPER TITLE CARD: **TAURED**

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Dappled sunlight glints off the blue-green waters of the Pacific, as a group of ARYAN SURFERS who look like they belong in a Leni Riefenstahl movie, ride healthy 6 ft. swells.

EXT. SAN JUAN AVENUE - VENICE - DAY

A quiet street, of modest (million dollar) 2-3 bedroom ranch homes, just off Abbot Kinney.

ON THE RICHARDS HOME

In contrast to some of the new construction on the block, this is a slightly shabby three bedroom, with a small guest house in the back:

INT. BEDROOM - VENICE - DAY

Essentially a small library with a bed in the middle. Lying on that bed is KYLE RICHARDS early 40's, depressive, unshaven, dark circles under his eyes.

His iPhone starts BEEPING.

CLOSE - HOME SCREEN: 7:45am
 Thursday, November 2

He reaches over to the nightstand to silence it, then puts on the pair of tortoise shell glasses next to the phone. Reluctantly, he gets out of bed. He heads for the bathroom, moving slowly - feeling every one of his 40+ years of age.

INT. BATHROOM - VENICE - CONTINUOUS

KYLE opens his medicine cabinet, revealing its' contents: toothpaste, mouthwash, shaving cream and a prescription bottle marked: Zoloft.

He slides two blue ovals onto his open palm, pops them in his mouth, then washes them down with a glass of water.

EXT. NORTH HOLLYWOOD - DAY

A thick cloud of orange haze hangs over a vast sprawl of highways, suburbs and mini-malls that stretches as far as the eye can see.

INT. BEDROOM - NORTH HOLLYWOOD - CONTINUOUS

Another bedroom - this one littered with pizza boxes, empty (ish) beer bottles, gaming consoles and computer equipment.

DEREK HURLEY, late 20's, lanky, with a mop of curly blond hair - asleep on his stomach. His alarm goes off, and without looking, manages to grab the beige vaporizer on his nightstand. He mutters to himself:

DEREK

A little Desert Gold to start the
day Mister Hurley? Why thank you
Mister Hurley, don't mind if I do.

A strong proponent of 'Wake 'N Bake', he takes a long hit before his feet hit the floor.

DEREK (CONT'D)

(mimicking an oenophile)
Hmm...notes of mango with a hint
of...peach.

Vape pen still in hand, he ambles over to his 'workspace': two monitors, printer, and large cpu's. He clears off an empty pizza box and turns on the computer.

As it boots up, he takes another long pull on the vape.

He can't help but grin as the Sativa works its magic. Ready to start the day, he loads a page on his browser: A website called 'Anomalies'. At the bottom of the page are two pictures of KYLE and DEREK.

The cursor moves to a button marked 'Mail'. An empty email with an audio file attachment. The cursor clicks on 'Play'.

DEREK slips on headphones. What he hears wipes the stoned grin from his face.

EXT. BACKYARD - VENICE - CONTINUOUS

Dressed for work, but barely passing for professional, KYLE makes his way from the guest house -- across a small but nicely maintained yard, toward the main house.

INT. KITCHEN - MAIN HOUSE - VENICE - CONTINUOUS

With a bowl of Cheerios in one hand, coffee in the other, he's about to sit down at the kitchen table - when he notices a pamphlet for Southwestern Law School on his chair.

KYLE

You've got to be fucking kidding
me.

He sets the bowl and coffee on the table, then takes the pamphlet and throws it in the garbage.

EXT. THE 101 - DAY

Morning rush hour. A parking lot. Bumper to bumper traffic that resolutely refuses to move.

INT. JEEP CHEROKEE - DAY

The dreamy, hypnotic sounds drift from the car speakers. DEREK bobs his head with the beat. He scans the traffic around him - more fascinated than aggravated.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD. - CONTINUOUS

The JEEP crawls down Sunset, past a glass and steel pyramid - like a larger version of the I.M. Pei Louvre structure.

There is a massive sign, visible from the street, in raised letters above the main entrance: ASOMATOLOGY.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

DEREK'S JEEP turns off Sunset Blvd., pulling into the parking lot of a small office building.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

DEREK'S just about to hit the 'Close Door' button, when he hears:

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Hold it please!

Moments later, JESSICA TRAN, mid 20's, Asian-American, sharp, effortlessly charismatic, wholesome girl next door beauty, runs into the elevator - out of breath.

JESSICA
Thanks. I can't be late again.

DEREK
Hey Jess.

As the elevator rises to the third floor, JESSICA steals a furtive glance at DEREK, which he doesn't pick up on.

They arrive at the third floor, immediately stepping into:

INT. RECEPTION - MOBILETECH - DAY

Before heading to the reception desk:

JESSICA
You're a life saver. Left Coast around one?

DEREK
Sounds good.

DEREK nods, then she turns toward the right and he turns left.

EXT. THE 10 - DAY

Compared to the 101, the traffic on the 10 is (relatively) light, KYLE'S Prius moves through rush hour traffic at a brisk 40 mph.

INT. PRIUS - DAY

KYLE removes the thermos in the cup holder and takes a drink, while still keeping an eye on the road, his car radio tuned to KCRW:

RADIO
...with National Public Radio, I'm Lakshmi Singh...

EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE - DOWNTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

A beige Art Deco building, tall trees line the walkway to the main entrance.

INT. ELEVATOR - DOWNTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

KYLE steps onto the elevator still gulping down coffee as if his life depended on it.

He's so focused on his coffee, that he doesn't notice his immediate supervisor, RAFAEL 'RAFA' MARQUEZ, late 50's, also bespectacled, so grandfatherly - he's only missing the cardigan and Barcalounger.

RAFA

Kyle?

Hearing the familiar voice temporarily breaks KYLE out of his reverie and he turns toward RAFA:

RAFA (CONT'D)

Can't find the Parnell material.

KYLE resists the urge to smack his forehead, but from his hesitation - RAFA can tell that he's forgotten.

KYLE

Still working on it.

RAFA

Guy who requested them said he's coming by at three and I still have to double-check them.

The elevator comes to a stop at KYLE'S floor. The doors open, he turns to her before stepping off:

KYLE

I'll have everything ready by lunch. Promise.

INT. OFFICE - DOWNTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Much like his bedroom, the office is filled with neatly organized research materials. KYLE plops down into his desk chair, sets his weathered briefcase on top of the desk, and turns on his desktop, all without ever releasing the coffee.

No sooner has he finally gotten comfortable, than he notices a stack of mail on his desk. He focuses on the thick manila envelope on top.

With some trepidation he opens it, and his worst fears are immediately confirmed: Petition For Divorce.

He sighs, tosses the papers back on the stack.

KYLE
Nope. Too early.

His iPhone starts ringing - he looks at the display and smiles, grateful for the distraction.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Hey man.

INT. CUBICLE FARM - MOBILETECH - CONTINUOUS

An open floor plan. Two sets of cubicles, SALESPEOPLE in corporate uniforms on one side - TECH SUPPORT on the other.

DEREK wears a wireless headset. Three monitors in front of him.

DEREK
(excited)
Did you finish proof-reading the
Sedona story or read that email I
sent?

There is a familiarity, the result of years of friendship however:

KYLE
(over headset)
Haven't had a chance. I have a real
job, remember?

DEREK
(over phone)
If you're not into this, then why
bother?

KYLE
(agitated)
My day is already off to a
colossally shitty start, but I will
look at it as soon as I can. I
don't have as much energy as you,
these meds really take it out of
me.

DEREK
Check your inbox.

He taps his headset, putting KYLE on 'Hold'.

INT. OFFICE - DOWNTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

KYLE puts the phone on 'Speaker' setting it down near the edge of the desk. Once his desktop's booted up, KYLE'S hands fly over the keyboard - bringing up a forwarded email:

To: anomalies@gmail.com
From: 9735jqrn@omp.net
Subject: Listen

KYLE
You forwarded spam?

DEREK
(over speaker)
Open the attachment.

On his monitor the cursor moves to the attachment: an audio file. It flashes as KYLE double clicks the 'Play' button.

The desk speakers fill the small space with the sound of an eerie, digitally altered voice:

SPEAKER
(altered voice)
Something happened to me, in the
desert. I need to warn people about
'Them', YOU need to warn people.
I'll tell you my story, on one
condition, complete anonymity.
(a long beat)
Be at the Santa Monica Place
parking lot. Section Five-C.
Tonight at ten pm. Come alone. You
can call me 'The Night Watchman'.

The message ends abruptly.

KYLE
Weird.

DEREK
Cool codename though.

KYLE can't help but be even more annoyed at DEREK'S early morning enthusiasm.

KYLE
Yeah I guess so.

DEREK

Whoever this 'Night Watchman' is,
they went through a lot of trouble
to stay hidden.

KYLE

Did you try and trace it?

DEREK

It's like you don't even know me.
They used a proxy server, bounced
it off ten different locations.
They definitely don't want to be
found.

KYLE

You going to check it out?

DEREK

I'M not going to check it out, but
WE are.

KYLE rubs his forehead as if the mere prospect is giving him
a headache:

KYLE

Man, I don't know. I've got a
divorce to deal with, my Mom's on
me about Law School, and I have to
find a new place to live. I've got
to get the fuck out of the house
before I kill her or vice-versa. I
just, just don't know if I have the
bandwidth for this too.

DEREK

Dude, this whole operation is
hanging by a thread.

A long beat as he considers. KYLE rubs his eyes wearily.

KYLE

Maybe I should step back.

DEREK

We've got a good thing going here,
we've just been...unlucky.

KYLE

Dude, face it. It's been fun, but I
think it's run its course. Maybe
you should find another partner.

Attempting to lighten the mood a bit:

DEREK

Who else is going to put up with me?

It was intended as a joke, but stirs up some unwelcome memories:

KYLE

This sounds like a conversation Lorraine and I had before we split.

DEREK

So, don't be like her. Give this one more shot. Let's meet with this guy, see what he has to say. If it's B.S....

(a beat)

...you can step away, I'll find somebody to replace you.

A long beat as KYLE considers.

KYLE

Alright. We'll meet this guy, but if this isn't going anywhere. I'm out.

DEREK

Coolcoolcool. I'll pick you up at nine-thirty.

KYLE

Now if you'll excuse me, I have actual work to do.

DEREK

(heavy sarcasm)

Yeah, I better let you get back to the pulse-pounding excitement of the library sciences.

KYLE smiles, presses 'End' - then stares at the blank email. As he looks at the sound file, his smile is replaced by concern.

INT. MAIN ENTRANCE - DOWNTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Now, midday. A fair amount of activity in the glass-enclosed, light-filled atrium - as people leave the building for lunch.

INT. OFFICE - DOWNTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

KYLE is loading books onto a cart, when RAFA arrives.

KYLE

I've compiled all of Parnell's
published work and some papers
about him...I'm not a physicist...

(beat)

...but from what I could tell, his
ideas were radical, way ahead of
his time...Wedd and Michel both
cite him as a major influence on
their work.

He pushes his glasses, higher up his nose:

KYLE (CONT'D)

Weird that he's not more well-
known. Who requested this stuff?
An academic? Biographer?

RAFA examines the stack of books, impressed, before
remembering to respond to KYLE'S question.

RAFA

Come to think of it, he never said
why he needed them.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD. - DAY

Palm trees, fast food joints and glass-covered office
buildings line a section of Sunset in Hollywood -- the glass
pyramid of Asomatology looms in the distance.

INT. LEFT COAST CAFE - DAY

A small gastropub, full of professionals at lunch, ambient
noise of conversations, and KLINK of utensils. DEREK'S at a
table in the back reading over hard copies of the emails from
'Anomalies', stopping occasionally to take a bite of chicken
from his half-empty plate.

He looks up and finds JESSICA setting her tray down on the
table. Her smile practically lights up the room.

DEREK

Hey. What's new?

JESSICA

In the world of temping? Not much,
but Natalie's been really good
about letting me take an hour off
here and there to go to auditions.

DEREK

How're those going?

She rolls her eyes.

JESSICA

Don't ask. Confession...
(a beat - then faster)
...I'm a theater geek. High school,
college, we used to do productions
of Artaud, Brecht, Beckett...

She gets even more animated as she starts to talk about her
true passions, goes off on a bit of a tangent:

JESSICA (CONT'D)

I don't know if you get high...

He grins knowingly:

DEREK

I've been known to partake.

JESSICA

Take an edible, watch Jodorowsky's
"Holy Mountain".

JESSICA pantomimes her head exploding:

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Mind-blowing. Wait, where was I?

Getting back on track:

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Anyway, I love that stuff, and I
really want to play something
challenging... but so far, my agent
just sends me out for roles like
'female victim number one' or let's
not forget the ever popular
'sorority murder victim number
one'. And my character's usually
half-naked, for some reason.

DEREK laughs at her joke, while involuntarily picturing her
without any clothes on.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

...and if that's not bad enough...
half the time the casting agent
isn't even paying attention during
the audition, they're on their
phones, and I'm like "Hey this is
my life here."

(beat)

The other day, I went on a call-
back, they told me I probably
wasn't going to get it. I walked
out of the audition, got in my car
and cried. Crying over not getting
a crap part. How pathetic is that?

Embarrassed by her confession, JESSICA looks down at the
sheath of papers next to DEREK, eager to change the subject.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Secret project?

He gives her an embarrassed smile. They finish their lunch,
bus their trays and head toward the door:

DEREK

My buddy Kyle and me, run a
website. Well soon, it might just
be me.

(beat)

He's got a lot going on. If things
with the site don't turn around
soon, he's gonna bail.

JESSICA

What's the site? It's porn isn't
it?

DEREK

You're probably going to think this
is really lame, but it's about
unexplained phenomenon.

As they reach the door and step out onto:

EXT. SUNSET BLVD. - DAY

Where they are the only pedestrians on the street. They pass
a Chevy Malibu parked at the curb. JESSICA is so excited, she
almost drops her phone trying to get it out of her back
pocket:

JESSICA

Url please.

DEREK
Anomalies dot com

She types the address into her browser, quiet as she studies the page.

DEREK (CONT'D)
You think it's stupid don't you?

JESSICA
I told you, I love this stuff, the stranger, the better. This is very much my jam.
(beat)
So you and your friend...
(off the screen)
... you research and report on unexplained phenomenon, like ghosts, poltergeists, demons?

DEREK
No ghosts or demons, we investigate places, events with no rational explanation, we look into it and publish whatever we find.

A beat. He's embarrassed to admit the next part:

DEREK (CONT'D)
Problem is we're amateurs, no one in 'the community' takes us seriously. I'm not even sure Kyle takes us seriously.
(a beat)
We don't have advanced degrees, hell after most of these investigations, we don't even end up with hard evidence.

With perhaps too much excitement:

JESSICA
Is it dangerous?

DEREK
It's usually us spending long nights in places that are supposedly...haunted, maybe we hear some strange noises, suddenly get cold, but that's about as close to danger as we get.

JESSICA
Bummer.

DEREK

I know, right? Just once, I'd love to run into something people can't easily explain away.

EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING - WESTWOOD - DAY

A massive white stone building on Santa Monica Blvd.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - HOMELAND SECURITY - DAY

A bank of surveillance monitors mounted above a desk, a TECHNICIAN, the IMMIGRATION SUPERVISOR and AGENT WHITEHORSE watch two monitors in the upper left hand corner: One is static, the other displaying the corridor outside interrogation.

TECHNICIAN

(re: static)

That's weird. Corridor's all we got.

They shift their focus to the other monitor. The TECH works a toggle switch, fast-forwarding the footage of the corridor.

AGENT WHITEHORSE

So I made the call at...

Checks her cell phone log.

AGENT WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)

...eight twenty-four AM.

The TECH works the toggle, as the time-stamp races ahead.

The door behind them swings open, AGENT DANIEL FARREN, balding, mid 40s, powerfully built, bursts into the room and settles in next to them. His mere presence makes an already tense atmosphere more so:

AGENT FARREN

I've got to see this for myself.

AGENT WHITEHORSE

Almost there.

The time stamp on the monitor reads 8:35am. AGENT WHITEHORSE emerges from the interrogation room. She turns to the SUPERVISOR, words are exchanged, then she heads o.c. The SUPERVISOR remains stationed outside the door.

AGENT WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)
That's it. Stop there.

The TECH hits pause and the screen freezes.

AGENT WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)
(to FARREN)
Okay, it's eight twenty-four...I'm
leaving to call you...

The image on the monitor fast forwards, until the time-stamp
reads 8:35am.

AGENT FARREN
No one's come in or out.

SUPERVISOR
And security cams cover that hall
from a couple angles. No
blindspots.

The image moves frame by frame, until the time-stamp reads
8:37am. The SUPERVISOR shudders and rubs his arms.

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)
(dismissive)
Just got a chill.

On the monitor, AGENT WHITEHORSE re-enters the frame. Again
she exchanges words with the SUPERVISOR. The very, very brief
flash of light.

AGENT WHITEHORSE
What was that?

AGENT FARREN
Probably a power surge.

On screen: WHITEHORSE and the SUPERVISOR open the door and
stand on the threshold, mouths agape. AGENT WHITEHORSE
immediately commands the SUPERVISOR, seconds later the FRAME
is filled with armed security guards.

AGENT WHITEHORSE
We locked down the area but there
was no sign of her.

AGENT FARREN
So let me get this straight, she
just walked the fuck out of a
locked room in a high security area
and no one saw her? Only one
explanation.

The tension in the room increases exponentially.

AGENT FARREN (CONT'D)
You're a 'Diversity Hire' and
you're in over your head.

But AGENT WHITEHORSE can give as good as she gets:

AGENT WHITEHORSE
And you're the expert on
qualifications? You got this job
because you and your Dad play golf
with the Director.

Touché. Caught in an insult crossfire, the SUPERVISOR and
TECH look like they'd rather be literally anywhere else right
now.

AGENT WHITEHORSE pauses, then turns to the SUPERVISOR and the
TECH.

AGENT WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)
(as politely as possible)
Could you give us the room?

The SUPERVISOR and TECH are only too happy to oblige. The
door closes behind them. Once they're alone:

AGENT WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)
While you were on 'the links' this
morning, I was already working
this. I talked to my contacts at
'the acronyms'. They ran her.
(beat)
No background.

AGENT FARREN
(incredulous)
What do you mean 'no background'?

AGENT WHITEHORSE
Even if 'Helen Jones' is just a
cover, and she's really MI-6,
S.V.R. or Mossad, they would've
created a legend, in case anyone
went looking.

AGENT FARREN
And?

AGENT WHITEHORSE
There's no record of her anywhere,
like she never existed.
(beat)
(MORE)

AGENT WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)
And before you ask, I looked into
'Taured' too.

AGENT FARREN
And?

AGENT WHITEHORSE
Nothing.
(beat)
It's a black box.

A beat, as they ponder the unsettling implication of that statement.

EXT. A.T.A. BUILDING - BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

A massive, formidable looking glass and steel cube on Wilshire that could easily be mistaken for NSA headquarters.

Across the street on the other side of...

EXT. WILSHIRE BLVD. - BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

JONES, standing in a wooded section, among the trees, perfectly still. Unseen.

Her attention is focused across the street, watching AGENTS WHITEHORSE and FARREN exit a government vehicle, and enter the A.T.A. Building.

JONES watches, looks down at her watch...

CLOSE - WATCH: Time. Day. Date. And another, not readily identifiable function.

She returns her attention to WHITEHORSE and FARREN, her expression difficult to read.

INT. RECEPTION - A.T.A. - DAY

Sleek, modern. An incredibly striking RECEPTIONIST sits at her desk, rolling calls:

RECEPTIONIST
(posh English accent)
Good Morning, A.T.A., please hold.

INT. OFFICE - A.T.A. - DAY

CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE WALLS: decorated with YVONNE DOUGLAS' degrees from U.S.C. and Southwestern Law School.

Straight into the office after her flight, she's on the phone
- with a movie star client: ROGER TEMPLE.

YVONNE

Deal's done. You go to Tokyo for two days, the agency's going to put you up in style. It'll take a day to shoot the spot, you turn around and come home, four million dollars richer.

ROGER TEMPLE

(over speaker)

Minus your commission.

YVONNE

C'mon Roger. You can't complain. It's four million for basically a day's work.

ROGER TEMPLE

(over speaker)

And no one here sees it?

YVONNE

Never airs in any North American media. That's in the contract. They violate the terms, we sue the fuck out of them.

(a beat)

They signed off on your rider, all you need to do is show up and flash that movie star smile.

Agency partner, GEOFF LYDDON, mid 30s, expensive bespoke suit, entitled, short attention span, morally flexible -- steps into her office.

ROGER TEMPLE

(over speaker)

You did good Yvonne, maybe we should celebrate...

(lasciviously)

...just the two of us...

YVONNE mimics a gagging motion.

YVONNE

Can't tonight. Agency's having a
get together. Talk soon.

She quickly hangs up. GEOFF sits down across from her.

GEOFF

How was Tokyo?

YVONNE

Great. I just made that slimy fuck
four mill he doesn't need.

They nod to nosy passing CO-WORKERS.

GEOFF

I hate to keep bringing this up.

YVONNE

I know, I know.

She slides open a desk drawer, reaches in and produces a copy
of a thick quality paperback.

She puts it on the desk: Earth, covered by criss-crossing
lines of energy, beneath the title "Energy Fools The
Magician" and "New York Times #1 Bestseller", at the bottom
of the page, the author's name "B.E. Shoumatoff".

YVONNE (CONT'D)

I haven't read it yet.

GEOFF

I read that, and it opened doors.
The right doors.

(beat)

You want to head the talent
department, be part of the 'inner
circle'...

(he picks up the book)

...this is your 'in'.

He pushes the book toward her, along the desk.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

Want to come with me to this
charity benefit tonight? Great
chance to do some networking.

YVONNE

What's the charity?

GEOFF

Some kind of cancer...maybe?

YVONNE laughs. She picks up the copy of "Energy Fools The Magician":

YVONNE
I want head of talent, so if this
is what it takes, this is what it
takes.

A strange smile creeps across GEOFF'S face. Before she has an opportunity to study it, and become appropriately unnerved: Her intercom CHIMES.

ASSISTANT
(over speaker)
Ms. Douglas, there are two agents
from Homeland Security here.

YVONNE
(puzzled)
Send them in Dani.

GEOFF
Guess I shouldn't have called in
that bomb threat. Better make
myself scarce.

YVONNE smiles. He lets himself out, just as AGENT WHITEHORSE and AGENT FARREN enter.

AGENT WHITEHORSE
We're sorry to bother you Ms.
Douglas.

YVONNE
No problem. What can I do for you?

AGENT WHITEHORSE
You were on JAL Flight eight thirty-
seven from Tokyo?

Without waiting for YVONNE'S answer:

AGENT FARREN
You were seated in five C. In First
Class.

YVONNE
Yes.

AGENT WHITEHORSE reaches into her jacket and produces two hard copy photos of JONES.

AGENT WHITEHORSE
Does this woman look familiar to
you?

YVONNE instantly recognizes her.

YVONNE
She was sitting next to me.
(a beat as she remembers)
I was going over a contract, I
didn't really talk to her until
just before we landed.

AGENT WHITEHORSE
Did she introduce herself, indicate
where she was coming from, or what
she was going to be doing in LA?

YVONNE
We only chatted for a minute, then
out of the blue, she asked me the
strangest question.

AGENT WHITEHORSE
What was the question?

YVONNE
"Do you think it's possible to
accumulate so much wealth and
power, become so disconnected from
normal life, that it drives you
insane?"

WHITEHORSE and FARREN exchange a troubled look.

YVONNE (CONT'D)
I saw her again for a hot second at
Customs. That was it.

AGENT WHITEHORSE
If you see her, or she tries to
make contact again...

She hands YVONNE her business card.

AGENT WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)
...call me, right away.

YVONNE
Of course.

Before the AGENTS turn to leave, something dawns on YVONNE.

YVONNE (CONT'D)

One other thing, it's been in the back of my mind all day, bothering me, like an itch I couldn't scratch.

AGENT FARREN

What was that?

YVONNE

I've got a really good memory, not quite photographic, but close. Helped me get through law school...
(realizing that isn't relevant)
...while we were in line at Customs she offered me a ride into town and she called me 'Yvonne'.

AGENT WHITEHORSE

And why's that's unusual?

YVONNE

I never told her my name.

EXT. STREET - DTLA - DAY

The outer reaches of downtown. Not a neighborhood you see on travel posters. Bleak. Few cars, HOMELESS people roaming a stretch of warehouses and recent condo conversions. Not a palm tree in sight.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

The room is filled with the sounds of John Coltrane - the opening notes of 'Blue Train'. A MAN sits in a chair, with his back to the CAMERA, with a Buddha-like calm, listening to the song.

He's holding a book from the L.A. Public Library titled: "Meridians & The Future of Mankind" by Dr. Franklin Parnell.

There is a bright FLASH of light (o.s.), quickly followed by a pair of women's heels.

The heels, already in mid-stride, belong to JONES.

She crosses the room, powerful, confident. The MAN hears the approaching footsteps, but he's too engrossed in the music to bother turning around.

When the footsteps stop just behind him, the CAMERA PANS AROUND: It's GEORGE TAU, whom we recognize from Baggage Claim.

GEORGE
I've traveled across war zones that
were easier to navigate than LAX.
Where were you?

JONES
(reluctantly)
Detained. Gave Customs my Taured
passport by accident.

Practically raising 'dryly delivered sarcasm' to an art form:

GEORGE
Jonesy, it's my understanding that
as a 'covert operative', your job
is to go about your
job... 'covertly'.

She offers a 'non-apology' apology:

JONES
I'll be the first to admit,
'mistakes were made'...

As 'Blue Train' plays in the b.g., GEORGE makes, what initially seems like a conversational hard left turn:

GEORGE
Blue Train. Nineteen fifty-eight.
John Coltrane, tenor saxophone, Lee
Morgan on trumpet, Curtis Fuller...
trombone...
(a beat as he searches his
memory)
...Kenny Drew, piano...Paul
Chambers on bass and the inimitable
Philly Joe Jones on the
drums...wait here it is...

He pauses to savor Coltrane's first solo, before:

GEORGE (CONT'D)
...extraordinarily talented
musicians...who gave each other
space to solo, to improvise, yet
still working in harmony toward a
common goal.

JONES attempts to steer the conversation back to that morning's events:

JONES

I was questioned by a Homeland
Security agent named 'Whitehorse'.

GEORGE has the same reaction that JONES did to hearing the
name.

GEORGE

Oh, that's lovely.

JONES

I waited until I was alone, then...
left. But they've seen me.

(beat)

No idea how this affects your
scenarios.

GEORGE

I understand that sometimes in the
field, things go...sideways...and
it's necessary to improvise.

(a beat)

I'll see where she's at, maybe have
a look at her file...

(re: the music)

...and then, like this ensemble,
you and I will continue to work
together...

(smiles)

...'in harmony' toward our common
goals.

INT. CUBICLE FARM - MOBILETECH - LATE AFTERNOON

The SUPPORT TEAM are at their desktops, finishing up their
day's work: DEREK, MANISH, mid 20's, a diet of Red Bulls and
Cheetos have left him very skinny. Next to him is FRED:
doughy, goatee, Texas accent, also mid-20's and generally
gross.

MANISH

What's going on tonight?

FRED

Thursday night football! We're
gonna pick up some beers and head
over to my place.

JESSICA pops her head around the corner.

JESSICA

Good night guys, see you tomorrow.

FRED & MANISH

Night.

After she leaves. FRED looks around to make sure they're alone.

MANISH

That new temp is hot as fuck.

FRED

She's an actress, those bitches'll do anything for a part. I'll just pretend I know someone that's got some pull in the movies...and before you know it...

FRED makes a gesture simulating sex.

FRED (CONT'D)

(mimicking JESSICA'S voice)

"...Oh Yes Freddy, give it to me!"

DEREK

How about not being an asshole for once? Try it on, see how it feels.

FRED

(changing the subject)

So you guys coming by or what?

MANISH

I'm down.

FRED

(to DEREK)

What about you Boy Wonder?

DEREK

Chillin' with Kyle. Something for the site.

FRED

Why are you hanging with that beta cuck?

(beat)

You need to forget that Bigfoot bullshit, hang out with us, and if you're lucky, you might eventually get laid.

INT. ENTRANCE - DOWNTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY - NIGHT

The setting sun fills the glass enclosed entrance with warm orange light. Dozens of students, and library employees make their way toward the exit.

KYLE, briefcase in hand, looks just as exhausted as he did at the beginning of the day as he heads for the exit. He's lost in his own thoughts, as per usual.

EXT. THE 10 - NIGHT

KYLE'S sky blue Prius navigates the evening rush hour traffic as he heads west.

INT. KITCHEN - MAIN HOUSE - VENICE - NIGHT

KYLE walks in the kitchen, listening for sounds of movement, like a cat burglar. Silence. Grateful for the solitude, he goes to the refrigerator.

The quiet is interrupted by the sound of MRS. RICHARDS, late 60's, retiree, walking in the front door, with an armload of Whole Foods grocery bags.

MRS. RICHARDS
Is that you Kyle?

She enters the kitchen and sets the bags on the counter.

KYLE
Yeah.

She notices he's putting on a jacket.

MRS. RICHARDS
We never eat dinner together any
more.

This is not by accident. KYLE suppresses the urge to say this aloud.

KYLE
I'm on my way out.

MRS. RICHARDS moves to the sink, with her back to him - unwilling to face him while asking:

MRS. RICHARDS
Did you see the pamphlet I left for
you on the table?

Despite being a grown man, KYLE almost involuntarily reverts to his teenage self - sighing loudly before answering:

KYLE
Yes I saw it.
(anger and frustration
creeping into his voice)
Can we not do this right now?

He's about to say more, but doesn't. The room falls quiet, but is thick with tension. KYLE'S iPhone buzzes, momentarily diffusing the tension. He looks down at the screen: I'm out front.

He doesn't say 'Goodbye', but simply turns around and leaves.

INT. JEEP CHEROKEE - CONTINUOUS

KYLE settles into the passenger seat and puts on his seat-belt.

KYLE
Good timing.

DEREK
Mom?

KYLE just sighs as DEREK pulls the JEEP onto the street.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Well, forget about that for a few,
we've got bigger fish to fry.

INT. PARKING LOT - SANTA MONICA PLACE - NIGHT

The mall has closed for the night, this level is dark - almost entirely in shadow.

They wait in front of DEREK'S JEEP, glancing around nervously - when they hear FOOTSTEPS behind them.

A short, unassuming MAN shuffles toward them. The MAN scans KYLE and DEREK'S faces, recognizing them - his expression impossible to read.

DEREK realizes that this must be their contact - the anonymous emailer, and hits the red record button on his phone.

The NIGHT WATCHMAN sees DEREK'S phone and responds angrily:

NIGHT WATCHMAN
Are you recording this?

DEREK
Just want to make sure we get the
facts right.

The NIGHT WATCHMAN turns to leave.

NIGHT WATCHMAN
I'm out of here.

KYLE steps towards him - playing peacemaker.

KYLE
We're just trying to be thorough,
make sure we don't miss anything.
You don't want us to record, we
won't record.

NIGHT WATCHMAN
No recording. You don't get my
name, occupation, my voice,
nothing, or no deal.

DEREK looks at KYLE, who nods. DEREK presses 'Stop' on his
phone.

DEREK
Okay, chill, it's off.

KYLE
Why'd you come to us?

NIGHT WATCHMAN
I'll be honest you weren't the
first people I contacted, from what
I could tell, no one really takes
you seriously.

DEREK
Believe me, we're aware.

NIGHT WATCHMAN
But you were the only people that
responded to my email, so here we
are.

DEREK
(trying to make amends)
Hey man, I'm sorry about the
recording. I didn't think you'd
have a problem with it.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

I can't be linked to this. I signed an N.D.A., and our lawyers are like ravenous wolves.

(beat)

So to protect myself, I'm not giving you my name, my company's name or describe the nature of our work.

(beat)

But people have to know what's out there. I guess you two are as good a messenger as anyone.

KYLE

Out, where?

NIGHT WATCHMAN

Lambertville.

(a beat)

About a year ago...

(beat)

...I was sent out for an inspection at...our facility...in Nevada, just outside Lambertville. It was a top priority.

He pauses while considering how much he should reveal. After a moment he continues:

NIGHT WATCHMAN (CONT'D)

Figured I'd drive all night, do the inspection, then turn around and head back to L.A.

(a beat)

But I left too late in the day, before I knew it was almost midnight and I was getting tired...

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. CAR - INTERSTATE 15 - NIGHT

It's not 'city dark' - but 'country dark'. The headlights illuminate the area about five feet in front of the car; everything else is engulfed in darkness.

The a talk radio show drones on in the b.g., as the NIGHT WATCHMAN starts to lose his battle with fatigue, heavy lids closing for a just a second.

He snaps back awake. His eyes immediately go to the dashboard clock: 11:57pm

He scans the road ahead of him. Luckily (or unluckily) there's a rest stop just ahead.

EXT. REST STOP - NIGHT

The car pulls into the almost empty rest stop, lit by a lone fluorescent lamp. A small oasis of light in a vast sea of blackness.

INT. CAR - REST STOP - NIGHT

The NIGHT WATCHMAN takes in his bleak, isolated surroundings.

NIGHT WATCHMAN (V.O.)
 Figured after a couple hours of
 shut eye, I'd wake up, keep going,
 and still get to the site first
 thing.
 (a beat)
 That was the plan, then something
 woke me up...

INT. CAR - REST STOP - NIGHT

The driver's seat is fully reclined, the NIGHT WATCHMAN fast asleep, when there is a KNOCK at the window.

He sits bolt upright and feels a shudder pass through him.

He looks down at his arms, despite the temperature,
goosebumps have formed across both forearms - like the
moments just before an electrical storm.

A shadowy face - made from the darkest part of the night, its features impossible to discern - leans in close to the driver's side window. The NIGHT WATCHMAN instinctively jumps away.

DISCIPLE #1
 (unnaturally low,
 guttural)
 We are his Disciples. We come in
 the night.

The NIGHT WATCHMAN quickly checks that the driver's side door to make sure it's locked. As he's inching away from the driver's side window - there is another KNOCK - this time from the passenger side window.

DISCIPLE #2
 Through the shrouded door.

The NIGHT WATCHMAN moves back toward the middle - not wanting to be near either window. He's in the grip of a primal, lizard-brain panic. His heart starts POUNDING in his chest:

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP.

The door handle starts to jiggle.

They're trying to get in.

That snaps him out of his near-panic and into action.

The NIGHT WATCHMAN steels himself, slides in behind the wheel, DISCIPLE #1 just on the other side of the window.

He take a deep breath and presses the 'Start Engine' button.

Nothing.

DISCIPLE #1 & #2
(chanting - in a low
guttural tones)
We drink your fire. Then come back
for more.

The NIGHT WATCHMAN struggles to keep a lid on the panic rising within him. He stabs at the 'Start Engine' button again, but it only CLICKS.

NIGHT WATCHMAN
(punches the steering
wheel)
Piece of shit! Don't do this to me.

He stabs at the button a third time. This time the engine TURNS OVER. He throws the car into reverse, slams on the gas and backs out onto the interstate without so much as a glance.

The speedometer climbs past 70, and it's only after a few moments of deep breaths, that his heart finally slows down.

EXT. INTERSTATE 15 - CONTINUOUS

Where the car is heading deeper into the Nevada desert.

INT. CAR - LATER

The NIGHT WATCHMAN guns the car, focused on the road ahead of him, where impossibly - the two DISCIPLES are standing in the middle of the road.

He swerves hard to avoid them. He doesn't bother to slow down. Once he's clear of them, he presses the accelerator all the way to floor, the engine ROARS in response.

EXT. INTERSTATE 15 - CONTINUOUS

As the car disappears into the night.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. PARKING LOT - SANTA MONICA PLACE - CONTINUOUS

KYLE and DEREK, hanging on the NIGHT WATCHMAN'S every word.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

It was the most terrifying thing
I've ever experienced in my life.

He takes a moment to collect himself before continuing:

NIGHT WATCHMAN (CONT'D)

I'd been driving at seventy plus
for minutes, they didn't have a
car, at least I didn't see one...so
how did they get ahead of me on the
highway? How...

(a beat)

...did they get ahead of me?

KYLE and DEREK don't have a good answer.

KYLE

Did you call the police?

NIGHT WATCHMAN

And tell them what exactly?

KYLE considers this.

KYLE

As soon as they heard that these
'things' had suddenly traveled
twenty miles, on foot, in a couple
minutes, they would've just assumed
you were crazy.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

That's why I came to you two. You
have to warn people. Those
'disciples', or whatever they were,
are still out there.

KYLE

We'll look into this, see if
Lambertville or that stretch of the
I-fifteen has a history of unusual
activity.

This seems to satisfy the NIGHT WATCHMAN, and he backs away
into the shadows, until he's little more than a voice in the
dark.

NIGHT WATCHMAN (O.S.)

You get this story out there. Warn
people, but leave my name out of
this.

DEREK

We couldn't if we wanted to...
(almost to himself)
...we don't know your name dude.

DEREK smacks his head as he makes a realization. KYLE looks
at him quizzically:

KYLE

What?

DEREK

Somebody I should've invited.

INT. CORRIDOR - CASTING OFFICE - NIGHT

An audition that's run late. Two dozen, blonde, surgically
enhanced ACTORS, JESSICA sticking out like a sore thumb, wait
outside an audition room. They eye one another suspiciously.

DEREK (V.O.)

She would've loved this.

JESSICA watches a video on the anomalies.com site, when the
door to the audition room opens.

An irritated CASTING ASSISTANT sticks her head out, consults
a clipboard:

CASTING ASSISTANT

Jessica Tran.

JESSICA puts her phone away, nervously rises to her feet,
puts on a brave face and walks through a gauntlet of
dismissive stares.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - HOMELAND SECURITY - NIGHT

CLOSE - PHOTO: A blown up version of JONES' passport photo.

WIDEN TO REVEAL: The photo of JONES, her question, a copy of her passport are pinned to bulletin board at the front of a conference room.

Styrofoam takeout containers and folders with background checks of all the JAL passengers are spread out on the table in front of AGENTS FARREN and WHITEHORSE.

The tension from earlier hasn't dissipated. They absent-mindedly pick at the take-out as they examine passenger dossiers, surveillance photos, and avoid speaking to each other. FARREN focuses on a photo of DOUGLAS:

AGENT FARREN

Douglas might be a target. Then again, she's a lawyer...er...an agent, they lie just about as easy as they breathe, hell she could be in on it.

AGENT WHITEHORSE is a step ahead:

AGENT WHITEHORSE

Which is why I already put a team on her.

EXT. BRENTWOOD - NIGHT

Palm trees, leaves gently rustling in the breeze, line a quiet street of beautiful homes, with equally beautiful landscaping.

An unmarked van is parked, discreetly, just down the street from...

INT. BEDROOM - BRENTWOOD - NIGHT (INTERCUT W/GEOFF LYDDON)

A luxurious master suite. YVONNE DOUGLAS in expensive silk pajamas, is about to climb into bed. Before getting comfortable, she picks up her phone:

EXT. ASOMATOLOGY BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The ominous glass pyramid on Sunset.

INT. BATHROOM - ASOMATOLOGY BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

A pair of men's hands, manicured. Water flowing over them before disappearing down the drain.

The hands belong GEOFF LYDDON, elegant in a tuxedo, leaning over the sink, calmly washing his hands.

His mobile phone and a small red box sit nearby, on the counter. His phone rings.

GEOFF dries his hands, then answers the phone. He hits 'speaker', before setting it back on the marble counter next to the red box.

YVONNE
(over speaker)
I'm starting the book.

GEOFF checks his appearance in the mirror.

GEOFF
(into phone)
Great. You won't regret it.

INT. BEDROOM - BRENTWOOD - CONTINUOUS

YVONNE slips beneath the seats, phone still at her ear. She smiles.

YVONNE
(into phone)
Better not. Talk to you tomorrow.

She ends the call, then picks up a copy of "Energy Fools The Magician" from her nightstand and begins reading.

As she reads, she hears what she imagines is the VOICE of the author, B.E. SCHOUMATOFF, narrating his work:

SCHOUMATOFF (V.O.)
"...what I offer in these pages is
an invitation, to leave behind the
prosaic fears and ignorance that
plague mankind...and step into a
new world, a world in which...
(beat)
...the hidden mysteries of the
universe will be revealed to
you..."

EXT. BRENTWOOD - NIGHT

What the Homeland Security agents in the unmarked van have failed to notice is that a Chevy Malibu is parked a bit further down the street, watching them.

INT. CHEVY MALIBU - CONTINUOUS

Miles and Coltrane's 'Round Midnight' plays softly on the car stereo. GEORGE sits behind the wheel, JONES in the passenger seat; both focused on the government van.

JONES

This'll make another approach more difficult...

Again with ample sarcasm:

GEORGE

...but not impossible. Not for a woman of your talents.

She smiles at both the artful sarcasm and the genuine compliment underneath.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Complicating matters further...I looked at Agent Whitehorse's personnel and medical files. The department psychologist...
(a beat as he remembers)
...Dr. Larry Paxton... he's quite a character...

He realizes he's gone off on a tangent, then:

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Doctor Paxton diagnosed her with a rare form of chronic insomnia.

JONES

She doesn't sleep?

GEORGE

Not for days at a time.

A beat while JONES processes this.

JONES

That must annoy you. This unforeseen variable introduced into your meticulously crafted scenario.

GEORGE
And whose fault is that?

JONES
Point taken.
(beat)
But it's nothing you can't
compensate for...

She can't resist:

JONES (CONT'D)
Not a man of your talents.

Well played. With the barest hint of a grin, GEORGE checks his watch.

CLOSE - WATCH: Again, with that same mysterious feature.

GEORGE starts the engine. The levity gone, deadly serious:

GEORGE
In any scenario though, our
immediate concerns are still the
primary target and...

EXT. BRENTWOOD - CONTINUOUS

The Chevy Malibu, lights off, cruises by the unmarked van, unnoticed -- before disappearing into the L.A. night.

JONES (V.O.)
...the 'Disciples'.

INT. BEDROOM - NORTH HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

Dark, except for the light of a solitary lamp and glow of DEREK'S computer screens. DEREK is seated at the desktop, working the keyboard - while KYLE paces nearby.

DEREK
That story. Can't be real, right?

This is the most energized, the most alive we've seen KYLE thus far.

KYLE
You said it yourself, he went to a
lot of trouble to hide his
identity, he doesn't want any of
this traced back to him.
(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

Who would go to all that trouble if it wasn't real?

DEREK

I think the word you're looking for is 'a schizophrenic'.

KYLE

Or maybe, he has a high profile job...

(a beat)

...and if this became public, it'd cause some problems for whoever sent him out there...

(a beat while he considers)

...but he knows that these 'disciples'...is that what we landed on...

(doesn't wait for DEREK'S response)

...anyway they're out there, so he comes forward because he doesn't want someone else to accidentally stumble onto these things like he did.

DEREK

Real model citizen.

KYLE

Do me a favor...

DEREK brings up twin newspaper stories on his monitors.

DEREK

(finishing his sentence)

...and find any stories with similar characteristics in that part of Nevada.

Turning around and seeing the information already there KYLE can't help but smile.

DEREK (CONT'D)

I started work on an adaptive algorithm to find relevant info as soon as we got here.

He pulls up a seat next to him.

KYLE

So what've you got?

DEREK

(off monitor)

Two stories from the Lambertville Post, a pre-digital story they transferred from microfiche. Local guy, Earl Patterson, was walking home one night, and he claimed he was attacked by a strange gang he claimed were made from 'smoke'...

KYLE

Which I'm sure the local cops laughed off.

DEREK

Because surprise, surprise Earl was a noted Schedule One drug enthusiast: heroin, LSD, you name it, Earl took it. There was another one, more recent...

(looking at the screen)

...from two years ago...

An image of a HOUSEWIFE in her late 30s, posed with her family.

DEREK (V.O.)

...a local woman, Carmen Hernandez, called her husband, said she was on her way home, the drive would've taken her over that stretch of the I-fifteen, but she never came home.

No response from KYLE as he stares off into space, considering.

DEREK

Are you having a stroke or something?

On KYLE'S disbelieving look:

DEREK (CONT'D)

That is a concern for guys your age.

KYLE

Dude, I'm not that much older than you.

(a beat)

What was the date of the first disappearance?

DEREK
November third.

KYLE
When did the husband report his
wife missing?

DEREK
November fifth.

KYLE
(a beat - his mind racing)
What time did Earl Patterson say he
was attacked?

DEREK
Midnight.

KYLE
What time did the wife go missing?

DEREK
(the realization hitting
him)
A little after midnight.

KYLE
So two Lambertville residents and
our 'Night Watchman', all
encountered something on that
stretch of I-fifteen in early
November, around midnight.
(a moment while he comes
to a decision)
We need to talk to Earl Patterson
and Carmen Hernandez's husband.

DEREK
Or even better...Today's November
second. Whatever these people
encounter it always happens on
November third. So we go out
there...tomorrow.

DEREK pulls up Google Maps on his phone:

DEREK (CONT'D)
If we leave work early, that gives
us time to prep, get out there
around midnight, and see for
ourselves.

Almost giddy at the prospect:

DEREK (CONT'D)
I can invite Jess.

KYLE is understandably hesitant to sign off on this plan.

KYLE
We don't know what we'd be getting
into dude.
(beat)
Not only should you not bring
someone else into this...I'm not
sure we should go.

DEREK considers, then comes to the same conclusion.

DEREK
Maybe you're right about Jess.
(beat)
But if something's out there
hurting people, it's our
responsibility to warn the general
public.

KYLE ponders this, before reluctantly concluding:

KYLE
And if we go to the cops with what
we've got so far, they'll write us
off as a couple of Earl Pattersons.

DEREK
So, we go out there, and record it.
Get definitive proof of an
unexplained phenomenon! Phenomenon
or Phenomena? Anyway, this could be
our 'big break', the story that
really puts us on the map.

KYLE
(not quite sharing his
enthusiasm)
Or in the ground.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - HOMELAND SECURITY - DAWN

The takeout containers are gone. The room is clean, almost
Zen. It's just a chair, table, computer monitor and pictures
of YVONNE and HELEN JONES.

AGENT WHITEHORSE is still there, staring at the pictures,
when a HOMELAND SECURITY AGENT, holding a file, enters:

HOMELAND SECURITY AGENT
You been here all night?

Even as she stares intensely at the pictures, her response is friendly and easy-going:

AGENT WHITEHORSE
That's what I do.
(beat)
What've you got on Douglas?

He consults the file:

HOMELAND SECURITY AGENT
She made a call to a colleague,
Geoff Lyddon, read for a couple
hours then went to bed.

He stands there quietly as AGENT WHITEHORSE looks back and forth between the pictures of JONES and YVONNE, thinking out loud:

AGENT WHITEHORSE
Maybe I'm getting distracted by
Jones' disappearing act.

A beat as she considers several possibilities, before concluding:

AGENT WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)
She booked that seat to ask Douglas
that question about someone. That's
the key.

She ignores the AGENT standing awkwardly beside her, her full attention focused on YVONNE'S picture:

AGENT WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)
So who was Jones asking about?
Who's her real target? Who sent
her?
(a beat)
And where, or what, is Taured?

INT. RAFA'S OFFICE - DOWNTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Seated at his desk - in a large corner office, suffused in warm early morning sunlight - his attention on his monitor:

From: KyleR@lapublib.org
To: RafaelM@lapublib.org
Subject: Leaving Early

Reading the subject line, RAFA smiles briefly - before returning to work.

EXT. GAS STATION - INTERSTATE 15 - DUSK

The lone building on this part of the interstate. The sun is sinking just below the horizon.

EXT. GARAGE - GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

The hood of DEREK'S JEEP is popped up. A MECHANIC, in cowboy hat and coveralls, inspects the engine while DEREK and KYLE look on.

KYLE

I want to go on record as saying I still think this is a really bad idea.

DEREK

(chuckling)

Ok.

(checking his phone)

Phone is charged, camera is working.

Satisfied, the MECHANIC slams the hood and wipes his oily hands on his coveralls.

MECHANIC

Everything looks good. Should run fine, no problems.

DEREK

(cautious)

So it'll definitely start if I need it to, like if I needed to start it and drive away fast.

This piques the MECHANIC'S curiosity.

MECHANIC

You two robbin' a bank?

DEREK

(appreciating the joke)

No, nothing like that. Just need to make sure it's dependable.

MECHANIC

You need it to run. It will.

DEREK hands him a few \$20 bills.

DEREK
Thanks man.

He extends his hand. They shake.

MECHANIC
Anytime.
(as DEREK and KYLE climb
into the car)
Don't forget to look for the dye
packs. Those things'll really fuck
up your day.
(muttering to himself)
That blue ink never washes off...

They're not sure if he's joking. The MECHANIC gives them a thumbs up as they drive away. There's a faint trace of blue ink on his thumb.

INT. JEEP - INTERSTATE 15 - NIGHT

The desert rolls by outside, the high-beams cutting through the darkness.

DEREK tunes the radio, as stations fade in and out; casts a sideways glance at KYLE, and notes his growing trepidation:

DEREK
(trying to lighten the
mood)
Hey, look at the bright side, if
you get killed, at least you won't
have to go to law school.

KYLE
No she'd probably find me in the
afterlife, "Mrs. Sloane thinks a
law degree could really come in
handy here."

They both laugh. KYLE looks at the time: 11:57pm.

KYLE (CONT'D)
It's almost time.
(turning off the radio)
I'm going to start recording.

He activates the camera phone and speaks into it.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Hi folks. A couple days ago, we
received an anonymous tip from
someone who identified himself as
'The Night Watchman'.

DEREK
(leaning over into frame)
Pretty cool name huh?

KYLE pushes him out of the frame.

KYLE
Derek's obviously a big fan of the
name, anyway he told us about these
mysterious people...

DEREK
And we're using the term 'people'
very loosely here...

KYLE
...on I-fifteen, in the Nevada
desert.

KYLE points the camera toward the window.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Which is where we are now by the
way.
(a beat)
We met with him and his story was
pretty convincing. Did a little
digging and found two other very
similar attacks in the area, so
Derek and I came out here to
investigate.

EXT. REST STOP - I-15 - CONTINUOUS

The JEEP pulls into the rest stop, it's the only car there.
It parks.

INT. JEEP - CONTINUOUS

As KYLE continues to record and narrate:

KYLE
We just pulled into the rest stop,
all of the attacks happened around
midnight, and right now it's twelve
oh-three am.

His phone screen shows an empty rest stop and a dark desert beyond.

KYLE (CONT'D)
We'll see what happens.

INT. JEEP - LATER

The tedium of the stakeout. DEREK is playing Mario Kart on his phone, when he shifts uncomfortably in his seat. He slips the phone back in his pocket and opens the door.

DEREK
Gotta take a leak.

He steps out into the:

EXT. REST STOP - I-15 - CONTINUOUS

He scans the area - not much to see. A strong breeze kicks up some sand. Alert to any possible danger, he constantly looks around to confirm he's alone. He walks, his steps ECHOING on the concrete walkway to:

INT. BATHROOM - REST STOP - CONTINUOUS

The bulb is out. Moonlight provides the only illumination. From what he can see, it looks like it hasn't been cleaned, ever. He reconsiders how badly he needs to use the bathroom.

DEREK
Not feelin' this.

With his foot, DEREK pushes open the only stall door.

Empty.

Satisfied he's alone, he walks over to one of the urinals and relieves himself.

He zips up quickly, doesn't bother to wash his hands, and heads back to the JEEP, not wanting to stay in there one moment longer than is necessary.

INT. JEEP - LATER

DEREK has gone back to his video game. KYLE has set his phone down on the dash. He looks at the dashboard clock: 12:37am.

With nothing better to do, KYLE picks up his phone again and resumes his narration.

KYLE
Derek's totally bored.

DEREK
(not even bothering to
look up from Mario Kart)
Yup.

KYLE
We've been out here about a half
hour and not much has happened,
maybe this was...

EXT. REST STOP - INTERSTATE 15 - CONTINUOUS

BZZZ. The lone fluorescent lamp providing light to the rest stop begins to FLICKER.

INT. JEEP - CONTINUOUS

As do the dashboard lights and electronics. Out of habit, KYLE hits his phone with his free hand, thinking that will make it work. It doesn't.

DEREK feels a shudder pass through him. He looks down at his arms, despite the temperature: Goosebumps have formed across both forearms.

DEREK
Dafuq?

Then all the lights go out, in the rest stop, the JEEP and their phones. They've been plunged into total darkness.

DEREK (CONT'D)
How bad would it smell if you shit
your pants in a really small space,
like a Jeep? Asking for a friend.

There is a KNOCK at the window. A shadowy face presses itself against the driver's side window, startling DEREK.

DISCIPLE #1
We are his Disciples. We come in
the night.

DEREK and KYLE instinctively check to make sure their doors are locked. Just as the NIGHT WATCHMAN described, there is a second KNOCK - from the passenger side window.

DISCIPLE #2
Through the shrouded door.

KYLE raises his phone to the window, hoping to get a recording of the DISCIPLE - but the phone refuses to turn on.

KYLE
Damnit.

DISCIPLE #1 & #2
(chanting in unison)
We drink your fire. Then come back
for more.

The KNOCKS grow more aggressive. KYLE sets his phone down.

KYLE
Start the car man, start the car.

DEREK reaches for the electronic ignition. He hits 'Start Engine', only to be greeted by an empty CLICK.

DEREK
Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

There is another series of GROWLS. DEREK and KYLE cover their ears.

A hairline fissure appears on the driver's side window.

DISCIPLE #1, SLAMS dark, smoky fists against the plexiglass. It starts to spiderweb, then buckle...

DEREK tries the ignition again. Nothing. Meanwhile the DISCIPLES continue chanting their frightful mantra:

DISCIPLE #1
We are his Disciples. We come in
the night.

DISCIPLE #2
Through the shrouded door.

DISCIPLE #1 & #2
We drink your fire. Then come back
for more.

KYLE attempts to calm DEREK.

KYLE
Seat-belts.

DEREK remembers his seat-belt. They fasten themselves in. KYLE looks around trying to rationally evaluate the situation:

KYLE (CONT'D)
The 'Night Watchman' said his car
wouldn't start...it's not the
cars...

He points at the DISCIPLES:

KYLE (CONT'D)
It's 'Them'. Try it again.

DEREK manages to remain calm and presses 'Start Engine'.
Mercifully the engine STARTS.

He SLAMS the car into reverse, foot pressing the gas all the
way down to the floor - and within seconds...

EXT. INTERSTATE 15 - NIGHT

...they're back on I-15.

INT. JEEP - CONTINUOUS

DEREK is completely focused on putting as much as humanly
possible between them and the rest stop.

DEREK
Which way did the 'Night Watchman'
head when he drove away?

KYLE
(pointing ahead)
Nevada.

DEREK spins the wheel.

EXT. I-15 - CONTINUOUS

So the JEEP does a complete U-Turn.

INT. JEEP - CONTINUOUS

DEREK, white knuckling the wheel.

DEREK
So we're headed back to L.A.

DEREK grinds the accelerator into the floor, pushing the JEEP to its limits.

The speedometer climbs past 90.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Are they back there?

KYLE turns around: Nothing but an empty interstate.

KYLE
No sign of them.

EXT. 1-15 - CONTINUOUS

And that's because they're ahead of them. The DISCIPLES stand on either side of the yellow line.

INT. JEEP - CONTINUOUS

DEREK spots them before KYLE can turn around again. He reacts immediately, SLAMMING on the brakes: they SQUEAL in protest.

As DEREK tries to control the spin.

EXT. I-15 - CONTINUOUS

The JEEP spins to the right, but it's traveling too fast to turn that hard. It's not built for that. The JEEP flips.

INT. JEEP - CONTINUOUS

Chaos. Everything not fastened down goes flying: glasses, phones, food wrappers. DEREK and KYLE are fastened to their seats. The jeep flips over, once, then twice, before coming to a stop - upside down.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

Thank goodness for the hardtop. KYLE and DEREK hang upside down, their seat belts holding them suspended in midair.

KYLE opens his eyes. Can only make out blurry images.

A beat, as he realizes he doesn't have his glasses.

He reaches blindly for them, covering the roof - finally he finds them and slips them on.

Once his eyes are able to focus, he takes in his surroundings: The windshield and passenger window to his right are shattered. Looking back to his left, DEREK is still strapped into his seat, unhurt but unconscious.

He shakes DEREK roughly.

KYLE

Wake up man, wake up!

No response. KYLE looks outside: Where he can see two pairs of shadowy feet in the distance, approaching the JEEP.

He tries to rouse DEREK again.

KYLE (CONT'D)

C'mon man, wake up! We're in some serious shit.

DEREK'S eyes flutter open. It takes him a moment to get his bearings.

KYLE (CONT'D)

(relieved)

We've got to get out of here, they're coming.

Those words immediately focus DEREK.

DEREK

Okay. Okay.

KYLE unlocks his seat-belt, but DEREK is still moving too slowly.

KYLE

Hold on.

He STABS at the orange release button, releasing DEREK who falls on his head.

DEREK

Ouch!

KYLE

I told you this was a bad idea!

DEREK

You can yell at me later...

KYLE can see the footsteps are growing closer.

KYLE
...oh believe me, I will...

Moving as fast as he can, KYLE crawls out.

EXT. DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Where he can see the DISCIPLES are no more than 30 feet away. It's a head start, but not much of one.

KYLE runs around to the driver's side of the overturned JEEP, where DEREK is struggling to extricate himself from the wreck.

KYLE drops to one knee, reaches in and grabs DEREK under the armpits, dragging him out.

KYLE
(urgent, but masking
rising panic)
...but right now we need to get the
fuck out of here.

Finally, they're both on their feet, but the DISCIPLES are only 20 feet away and closing...

KYLE and DEREK instinctively turn and sprint in the opposite direction, until they disappear in the inky blackness of the desert night, the DISCIPLES in pursuit...

EXT. RANDY'S DONUTS - INGLEWOOD - NIGHT

A lone car parked out front.

INT. RANDY'S DONUTS - INGLEWOOD - CONTINUOUS

AGENT WHITEHORSE in her usual booth. On the table: A cup of tea, her iPhone, set to record:

AGENT WHITEHORSE
Doc, it's Day Three... little after three... I've been on a weird case this week... mysterious passports, people disappearing from locked rooms... I know you said that hallucinations were a possible side effect of my condition, but I'm not imaging this, strange things are happening and in the last few days, 'The Feeling' has come back, stronger than ever.

(MORE)

AGENT WHITEHORSE (CONT'D)

I get the sense...

(beat)

... this case isn't what it appears
to be, there's more to it, a lot
more, and just beneath the surface
it's hiding something ominous,
maybe even catastrophic...

EXT. LOS ANGELES - CONTINUOUS

A carpet of twinkling lights, stretching out to the
Pacific...beautiful...from a distance:

AGENT WHITEHORSE (V.O.)

... I just hope I can identify it,
and stop it, before it's too late.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT