

THE LABYRINTH

Pilot

"Subterraneans"

Written By:

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FADE IN:

EXT. SEATTLE - NIGHT

The Space Needle towers above a collection of skyscrapers, reaching toward the gray storm clouds looming above.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

EXTREME CLOSE: Warped neon letters illuminate the surface of a puddle. Rain drops bombard the puddle, sending neon waves rippling across the surface.

WIDEN TO REVEAL: The activity in the puddle mirrors the frenzied activity of the downtown street around it, near the:

EXT. NORTHGATE MOTEL - NIGHT

Rain and driving wind buffet a grim stretch of half-empty strip malls, rattling a neon green sign that reads:

Northgate Motel

Newly Renovated, Free HBO and Wi-Fi, Low Weekly Rates.

INT. HALLWAY - NORTHGATE MOTEL - NIGHT

Peeling paint, well worn carpet. This place hasn't been renovated in decades. The only sounds are the HOWLING winds and rain outside and the BUZZ of flickering fluorescent lamps.

It's depressing, the type of place you'd go to end it all:

INT. ROOM - NORTHGATE MOTEL - NIGHT

Perched on the edge of the bed, THEA WINGARD: early 30s, a mohawk, jeans, Sub Pop t-shirt, biker boots, heavy black eyeliner -- is preparing to do just that.

On the nightstand next to her: a well-worn, dog-eared, copy of "Mindhunter", a half empty bottle of vodka, and dozens of painkillers.

She scoops the pills into her hand and looks at them, experiencing some last minute doubts. She picks up her iPhone, and is about to open 'Photos'. She hesitates, but finally clicks on it:

CLOSE - PHONE: She scrolls through an album titled 'HARRY': early 30s, skinny, dark-haired, bookish.

In the first picture he's sitting at a microphone, in a podcast recording studio. As she scrolls through the album, there are pictures of her and HARRY. It's clear they're very much in love.

Within seconds, she's in tears. Black eyeliner running down her cheeks.

Her iPhone BUZZES. She looks at the display. A beat, as she debates. She decides to answer it:

THEA
Not a good time.

RUBEN (V.O.)
(insistent)
Something you need to hear,
about... you know, the...
(choosing his words
carefully)
... 'guy' you've been looking for.

EXT. I-5 SOUTH - NIGHT

Unconcerned with the treacherous road conditions, THEA races down the I-5 on a crotch rocket.

EXT. WESTERN AVE. - NIGHT

Blanketed by rain. A dark cantilevered bridge overhead blocks out the streetlights, covering the street in shadows.

A few LATE NIGHT SHOPPERS leaving Pike Place Market, try to make it to a parking garage without getting soaked.

THEA, mohawk, smeared eyeliner, looks dangerous (which isn't wrong). The crowd parts like the Red Sea, to let her pass.

She pulls the collar of her coat a bit closer around her neck to guard against the cold and wind - but doesn't pay any attention to them.

She reaches the entrance, pulls on the door and steps inside:

INT. PIKE PLACE MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Where a burly SECURITY GUARD uses his considerable girth to attempt to block her entrance.

SECURITY GUARD
We're closing Miss.

Not only doesn't this intimidate her, it brings a smile to her face. She looks at her watch, then back at the GUARD:

THEA
Just need to talk to a friend, be
out in a few.

She gracefully side steps him, walking deeper into the market, where steel shutters are CLANGING to the floor as the shop owners and restaurants are closing for the evening. One store is still open:

INT. THE ONE-ARMED MAN - CONTINUOUS

Bins of comics and graphics novels in plastic sleeves - like a record store. Board games and collectibles in glass cases line the walls. The cashier - a pudgy, cheerful man in his 30s - ironically nicknamed FLACO, greets THEA as she enters.

FLACO
You look like shit.

She smiles at the jest, it's part of their ritual. She walks through a door marked "Employees Only" into the:

INT. BACK OFFICE - THE ONE-ARMED MAN - CONTINUOUS

A combination office/communications center/living quarters. No reason to ever leave this room, which RUBEN doesn't.

Besides the usual office equipment, and a cot, one wall is devoted to an elaborate, but lovingly assembled, short wave radio set-up.

Adjusting the dials of the radio is the room's full-time occupant RUBEN SUAREZ: A balding man in his 50s, world-weary, physically fragile - using a cane for support. As she enters, he doesn't even bother with a greeting:

RUBEN
I work with a Sub-Reddit group from
time to time. We spent the last
week deciphering this code on a
dark web site...

He points to a computer screen to his right.

CLOSE - DISPLAY: A mixture of numbers and symbols, not unlike the Zodiac killer's cypher.

RUBEN sees THEA is completely disinterested, and speeds up his delivery:

RUBEN (CONT'D)
... that reveals the time and date
of a pair of broadcasts on 'the
mystery station'.

THEA
(irritation growing)
Is this 'mystery station' going to
tell me where to find him?

RUBEN adjusts the dial of the radio again, through a sea of white noise before finally stopping on: 347.81 MHz

RUBEN
Word around the campfire is that
tonight...
(beat - chooses his words
carefully)
... he'll give us a general time,
and a place. Tomorrow, a list of
potential victims.
(beat)
The rest... is up to you.

He motions towards a chair. THEA sits reluctantly. Using the cane, RUBEN walks to the chair across from her, and sits down.

THEA shoots him an irritated look; as a VOICE issues from the speakers, filling the small space, with a sonorous and foreboding baritone:

MYSTERY STATION D.J.
Did you know that the F.B.I. used
to call Seattle, and The Pacific
Northwest, "America's Killing
Fields"?

INT. UNDERGROUND TOUR - NIGHT

A tourist attraction, closed for the night. A 19th century city street, beneath 1st Ave; lined by long since abandoned stores. After hours, it takes on a decidedly sinister appearance.

A door at the far end of the street, opens with a loud CREAK:

MYSTERY STATION D.J. (V.O.)
 ...The Green River Killer, Ted
 Bundy, John Allen Muhammad, Robert
 Yates Jr., all called the area
 home....

A MAN, camouflaged in shadow, appears to glide across the
 door's threshold, then down the darkened, empty street.

MYSTERY STATION D.J. (V.O.)
 ... The Behavioral Sciences Unit
 speculated that the rain, and the
 gloom, at least partially, fueled
 their insatiable appetites for
 blood and death.

A SECOND FIGURE follows him, then a THIRD. The trio moves
 toward a brightly lit 'Exit' sign, and surface streets.

MYSTERY STATION D.J. (V.O.)
 But sometimes, these murderers are
 committed by what are sometimes
 known as the 'Subterraneans', their
 motives, older, and darker, than
 the F.B.I. or police could possibly
 imagine... and tonight...
 (beat)
 ... the 'Subterraneans' are
 bringing blood and death to
 "America's Killing Fields".

INT. BACK OFFICE - THE ONE-ARMED MAN - NIGHT

With that, the broadcast mysteriously ends, filling the space
 with STATIC. RUBEN turns down the volume.

RUBEN
 We don't know who this dude is, or
 where he gets his info, but every
 time he broadcasts, a series of
 bizarre, ritualistic killings start
 shortly thereafter...
 (hesitant to continue)
 ... just like Harry's. So this
 means...
 (beat)
 ... he's back.

THEA'S earlier boredom and irritation have been replaced by,
 a combination of dread and determination - as she starts to
 formulate a plan:

THEA
 (quiet - almost to
 herself)
 I need 'The Room'. So I gotta pay
 Paul a visit, and maybe eat some
 shit. That should be fun.
 (beat - then to RUBEN)
 Then I'm going to find this sonnuva
 bitch, and kill him.

TITLE CARD: **THE LABYRINTH**

FADE IN:

EXT. GREEN LAKE PARK - SEATTLE - MORNING

CLOSE: GABRIELLE 'GABBY' CHUNG, late 20s, Asian-American,
 beads of sweat forming on her brow, her face a mask of
 determination - as she controls her breathing.

The sounds from her 'Running' playlist pumping through her
 earbuds.

GABBY, fit, fiery and competitive despite her diminutive
 stature, in University of Washington sweats - a big purple
 'W' emblazoned across the chest - runs along a path, the lake
 visible beside her.

There aren't many other joggers at this hour, she's got the
 place to herself; which is how she likes it.

Still running, she looks down at her Fitbit, dissatisfied
 with what she sees - she picks up the pace, finally rounding
 a bend and disappearing behind some trees.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Wood-paneled walls, tasteful, old money - overlooking
 downtown Seattle. An intimidatingly attractive RECEPTIONIST,
 mid 20's, sits behind the desk.

GABBY sits across from her, small leather portfolio in her
 lap, trying not to fidget. She's out of her element, a bit
 intimidated, but tries not to let it show.

RECEPTIONIST
 (with poorly disguised
 disdain)
 Miss...

The RECEPTIONIST doesn't even bother with her last name.

GABBY
Chung. Thanks.

The RECEPTIONIST doesn't respond at first, only looks at her condescendingly - before pointing toward the office door behind her.

RECEPTIONIST
Mister McFarland will see you now.

INT. MCFARLAND'S OFFICE - DAY

DONALD MCFARLAND: 50s, new money, an arrogant bully, lays eyes on GABBY. He instantly decides he doesn't like her - you can almost see the shutters coming down behind his eyes.

GABBY sees it too, but puts on a brave face and extends her hand.

GABBY
Mister McFarland, it's a pleasure
to meet you, thank you for seeing
me.

MCFARLAND extends his hand toward the chair, but doesn't shake her hand. An awkward moment passes. She sits down.

MCFARLAND
Your resume.

A request GABBY was prepared for, she's already producing a resume - which she hands to him.

MCFARLAND gives the resume a cursory glance before quickly dropping it to his desk like it's radioactive.

MCFARLAND (CONT'D)
Hmm. Laid off from your last job.
Been unemployed for six months.
(beat)
This gap in your resume is
troubling.

She can already see him mentally checking out, tries to salvage the interview:

GABBY
It's a difficult job market, but
I'm a hard-worker and a quick
study, and if you'll just give me a
chance...

He doesn't allow her to finish.

MCFARLAND

I don't think you're the right
'fit' for this position, but if
something more appropriate for your
skill set, opens up, I'll keep you
mind.

With that, the interview is over. MCFARLAND returns to his
desktop monitor. GABBY takes her cue, stands up and slinks
out, back into:

INT. RECEPTION AREA - CONTINUOUS

Where the RECEPTIONIST sits with the faintest hint of smug
smile on her face. GABBY hands her the parking ticket.

GABBY

Do you validate?

RECEPTIONIST

No.

GABBY finding it increasingly difficult to be polite.

GABBY

Of course you don't.

EXT. MADISON STREET - FINANCIAL DISTRICT - DAY

GABBY leaves the building, emerging into a light drizzle.
GABBY opens an umbrella, mutters to herself as she walks
toward the parking lot.

GABBY

Assholes.

Her phone CHIMES. She looks at the screen, a notification
from her bank: 'Low Balance Alert \$-2.27'

GABBY (CONT'D)

Fuck my life.

Across the street she's being watched, by a MAN of
indeterminate age, dark eyes, a clear plastic raincoat over a
gray suit, and bow tie.

CLOSE - MAN: The sclera of his eyes are red, not from burst
capillaries - just unnaturally red.

INT. GABBY'S VW - PARKING LOT - DAY

She steers her VW toward the exit. She reaches the PAYMENT BOOTH. The electric window slides down and she hands the BOOTH OPERATOR, a tired-looking blue collar type in her 40s, her ticket - who places it in the machine.

BOOTH OPERATOR
That'll be fifteen dollars.

GABBY
What? I've only been parked here
for half an hour.

BOOTH OPERATOR
It's fifteen dollars per hour, and
we round up.

GABBY hands her the last \$15 in her purse.

BOOTH OPERATOR (CONT'D)
(flat and insincere)
Have a nice day.

EXT. PIONEER SQUARE - DAY

'Old' Seattle. Light rain falls on a collection of Romanesque Revival brick buildings, around an empty park.

INT. HALLWAY - GABBY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

GABBY walks down the corridor quietly, like a burglar. She creeps past Apartment 9. She's just about reached the end of the hall, when she hears the door to Apartment 9 open - followed by:

MRS. ROONEY
(irritable)
Eleven thousand, nine hundred and
ninety-nine.

GABBY turns around to find her landlady, MRS. ROONEY, late 50s, glasses, surgical scrubs - standing in her doorway.

MRS. ROONEY (CONT'D)
According to The Times there are
currently eleven thousand nine
hundred and ninety-nine homeless
people in Seattle-King county.
(MORE)

MRS. ROONEY (CONT'D)

If I don't get three months of back rent from you, by Friday, that number is going to be eleven thousand two hundred.

(beat)

Three months back rent, by Friday, or I start eviction proceedings.

GABBY'S so ashamed, she can't even meet MRS. ROONEY'S gaze.

GABBY

I'll try and get everything to you by the end of the week.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREETS - DAY

South Park. Empty streets, vacant buildings. Since Boeing moved their headquarters, it's become a ghost town.

The light link rail, visible in the distance, is virtually the only sign of movement.

EXT. HYPERION - SOUTH PARK - DAY

Brutalist-style building; no signage to indicate if the occupants are part of a government agency or in the private sector.

On closer inspection we see there are no windows, or doors...

...lending it an ominous quality.

A familiar motorcycle is parked out front.

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE - HYPERION - DAY

Drab gray walls. Institutional. Utilitarian. THEA sits at a desk, across from PAUL KEITA, Malian, early 70s, serious, lab coat over a bespoke suit. He's framed by a massive screen displaying Webb telescope images of the Canis Major constellation:

PAUL

(w/slight French accent - reproachful)

When you left, I believe your exact words were "I'm never coming back to this fucking place again."

(beat)

Yet here you are.

THEA attempts to appear contrite, fails miserably, before turning more serious:

THEA
I need 'The Yellow Room'.

INT. UNDERGROUND CORRIDOR - HYPERION - DAY

Gray concrete walls, a few feet thick, like a bank vault - all lit by a mysterious unseen source. PAUL leads THEA down the corridor, their footsteps ECHOING in the subterranean space:

PAUL
You're absolutely sure, this is what you want?

THEA
I don't have much choice, do I?

Finally they arrive at a barred double door; where PAUL inserts a large elaborately shaped key into the first door.

INT. YELLOW ROOM/OBSERVATION ROOM - HYPERION - LATER

Bleak. Large dark spots on the walls: bloodstains that couldn't be properly cleaned. THEA, sits in the room's only chair, hands and legs bound.

PAUL stands on the opposite side of a heavy 2-way observation window -- watching THEA brace herself for what's coming. PAUL activates a microphone:

PAUL
You've done this before, so I won't bother repeating the list of potential side effects.

THEA
(over speaker)
Yeah, I remember them.

PAUL moves close to the observation window, so that he's looking directly at THEA:

PAUL
Last chance...

THEA nods.

PAUL changes tack, tries to mask his uneasiness with gallows humor:

PAUL (CONT'D)
If you survive, give my best to
Ruben.

PAUL returns to the control panel. His hand hovers a button; he's reluctant to press it.

A beat.

He presses the button...

ANGLE ON THE YELLOW ROOM

CLOSE - VENT: As a thick gas billows sinuously from the vents...

...engulfing the room in a yellowish cloud.

THEA inhales a lungful of yellow gas. Her exhale turns into a violent cough.

As the gas works its way into THEA'S bloodstream, the violent cough, in turn, becomes a bloody one.

POV - PAUL: Blood starts to pour from THEA'S eyes, nostrils and mouth.

She SCREAMS in pain.

THEA
Nooo!!!!

She spasms, struggles against the leather restraints, chafing her wrists and ankles in the process. Her movements grow more frenzied, then faster - until they're a blur.

Similarly her SCREAMS start to Doppler: They seem like they're coming at you, and moving away at the same time.

The effect is deeply unsettling.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

GABBY'S tired and demoralized, but instead of sinking into a depression, she's decided to do laundry.

She's changed out of her business suit and into a weird, mismatched 'laundry day outfit'. She walks around the small room, tossing dirty laundry into a basket.

As she heads out of the room, she passes a framed photograph on her dresser: GABBY and her GRANDPARENTS, taken when she was in her teens. They're posed, but smiling. It's a happy memory, now tinged with sadness.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

GABBY throws her colors into one machine, whites into another. She slots the quarters, as her friend and neighbor JENNIFER DIAZ, early 30s, a trainer, in workout gear - enters carting her very own big bag of laundry.

GABBY
Back from the gym already?

JENNIFER
Had two clients cancel, figured I'd do some laundry, then a little 'Jen Time' later tonight.

She notices GABBY'S demeanor.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
How was the interview?

GABBY
The guy hated me.

JENNIFER
Must be a huge asshole.

GABBY appreciates the vote of support, but desperation creeps into her voice.

GABBY
I need to find something soon.

JENNIFER
What are you going to do? Move back in with your folks?

A beat. She's reluctant to dig up these memories:

GABBY
My parents died when I was little,
grandparents are gone too.
(as she tries to hide her
sadness)
I got nowhere to go, no one to go
to. It's just me.

JENNIFER drops her laundry basket, reaches out and wraps GABBY in an impromptu hug.

It's awkward at first, then GABBY returns the embrace, taking comfort in some positive human contact.

GABBY releases JENNIFER from her embrace.

JENNIFER
You've got me and 'E', James,
Colin...the whole Landers Hall
crew.

Her declaration catches GABBY by surprise, her eyes start to well up - and so do JENNIFER'S. Instead of crying in the laundry room, they compose themselves.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Worst comes to worst, I've got a
perfectly good couch.

GABBY
I couldn't do that to you two, but
the way things are going, who
knows.

Something dawns on JENNIFER.

JENNIFER
It won't cover your rent, but how'd
like you to make sixty bucks
tonight?

GABBY
Every little bit helps.

JENNIFER
Could you watch E? Tinder date
tonight, well 'date' is probably
being generous.

They share a knowing laugh and it helps lighten the mood.

GABBY
E's a sweetie. You don't have to
pay me to watch him. He can hang
out at my place anytime, especially
when Mom needs a little 'Jen Time'.

JENNIFER shakes her head.

JENNIFER
I'm paying you, and that's all
there is to it.

Realizing it's pointless to argue, GABBY nods gratefully.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Messy, like her bedroom. Not much furniture in the small space: couch, table, tv and two half-eaten bags of Trader Joe's Grand Slam popcorn.

GABBY studies her laptop. Next to her is JENNIFER'S 8 year-old, ETHAN, absorbed in Resident Evil 7: Biohazard.

CLOSE - T.V.: ETHAN'S AVATAR is trapped in a garage, being attacked by an 'infected' axe wielding maniac. He shoots the maniac in the head, but it keeps attacking.

ETHAN

This guy with the axe, I can't kill him, I just shot him twice.
(working the controller)
You want a turn? This level is pretty good.

GABBY

Don't forget our pact, you never tell your Mom I let you play this.
(eyeing the popcorn)
Or about the snacks, you know how she gets, basically what I'm saying is, don't tell your Mom anything.

And ETHAN recites the phrase he's committed to memory:

ETHAN

"Snitches get stitches", I know.

They both chuckle.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

GABBY

Trying to find a job.

On the screen - Three tabs: Indeed.com, Monster.com, and CRAIGSLIST JOBS.

A cursor clicks on CRAIGSLIST JOBS.

She scrolls down a list of jobs, finally stopping on: Product Tester Wanted. Fast Cash. Call Now.

GABBY (CONT'D)

Hmmm.

She moves her mouse and CLICKS it:

Testers wanted for new game.

\$45/Hr

Start immediately.

(206) 653-2871

ETHAN hits pause on the video game and gives her his full attention.

ETHAN
(hearing her reaction)
Find something?

GABBY
Maybe. But some of these jobs seem
kind of shady...

Since ETHAN is a smart kid, he can't help but wonder:

ETHAN
Then shouldn't you probably stay
away from them?

GABBY
Probably, but rent, bills, don't
pay themselves.

She stands, picks up her phone. ETHAN resumes the game, while GABBY moves into the:

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She dials the number from the Craig's List ad.

RECEPTIONIST
(over-phone, cheery)
Good Evening, this is Venery Games.

GABBY
Hi, my name's Gabby Chung. I'm
calling about the Craig's List ad.

The RECEPTIONIST responds with even more enthusiasm:

RECEPTIONIST
Oh yes! The ad for our product
tester. Email me a copy of your
resume, I'll look it over while
I've got you on the line.

With a few clicks, GABBY'S emailed her resume. A beat.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
Hmmm. Very impressive background.
Would you like to come in for an
interview?

GABBY feels compelled to match her enthusiasm:

GABBY
Yes. Definitely. Do you have any
times available this week?

RECEPTIONIST
As a matter of fact, we just had a
couple cancellations for tomorrow,
ten AM and two PM.

GABBY
I'll take the ten.

RECEPTIONIST
An early riser. That's just the
kind of spirit we need at Venery.
(a beat)
Ok Ms. Chung, we'll see you
tomorrow at ten AM. You have a
great night.

GABBY is a bit thrown by the relentless enthusiasm and
politeness.

GABBY
You too. See you tomorrow.

She hits 'End Call', and looks enviously at ETHAN enjoying
his video game - not a care in the world.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Sugar rush over, ETHAN has crashed on the couch. He's fast
asleep, his head in GABBY'S lap.

She's watching television, trying not to squirm and wake
ETHAN: "Seven". DETECTIVE MILLS is leaning over the mouth of
the 'Sloth' victim. She whispers to the t.v.:

GABBY
Don't get so close to his mouth.

There's a KNOCK at the door, which momentarily startles
GABBY. She jumps, waking ETHAN; then laughs at her
skittishness:

GABBY (CONT'D)
Sorry bud. I think that's your Mom.

He puts on his sneakers and follows her to the door, where his mother JENNIFER is waiting, post-coital glow, a huge grin plastered on her face. GABBY has to stifle a giggle:

GABBY (CONT'D (CONT'D))
I guess your 'date' went pretty well.

JENNIFER
It did. Twice.

They giggle. ETHAN watches them, annoyed.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
(to ETHAN)
Say goodnight to Aunt Gabby.

He waves sleepily. She tousles his hair and smiles. GABBY hugs JENNIFER goodnight, grateful for her support.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

GABBY wakes up to a rare sight: a sun filled morning in Seattle. A good omen. She smiles.

INT. CAR - PARKING LOT - DAY

She pulls up at a toll booth, rolls down her window - takes a ticket, only to find the same BOOTH OPERATOR from the day before:

GABBY
I know, I know... you round up.

EXT. VENERY GAMES BUILDING - DAY

Dressed in the same suit we saw from the previous interview, GABBY walks toward a curved, postmodern office building, the large glass facade reminiscent of an Apple store. She double checks the address before going in:

INT. LOBBY - VENERY GAMES - DAY

Sleek and modern. The silver, white plastic and white marble surface throw light everywhere. GABBY crosses the sun infused lobby toward a bank of elevators.

INT. ELEVATOR - VENERY - DAY

Like so much of the building, the elevator is transparent as well. GABBY watches the lobby shrink below her as she rises into the building.

INT. RECEPTION - VENERY - DAY

She steps off the elevator half-expecting to see someone in a blue 'Genius' t-shirt waiting to greet her. Instead she sees an office with large, brightly colored oversized furniture; almost like a kindergarten.

Instead of children - the office is filled with VENERY GAMES EMPLOYEES, moving through the office, and dozens of INTERVIEWEES.

She makes a beeline to the RECEPTIONIST desk. The RECEPTIONIST is reading a copy of Walter Isaacson's "Elon Musk". GABBY'S almost reluctant to interrupt her:

GABBY

Hi, I have an appointment at ten.

She looks up from her book. She's 20s, bubbly, friendly, and definitely drank the Kool-Aid:

RECEPTIONIST

Gabrielle! I spoke to you last night.

GABBY

You can just call me Gabby.

A MAN carrying a cup of coffee passes by, late 30s, a bit befuddled, like an absent-minded academic, but generally pleasant. The RECEPTIONIST calls out to him.

RECEPTIONIST

Ted, Ted...

Hearing his name he stops and turns to the RECEPTIONIST.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

This is your ten o'clock.

LOHMUS

(to RECEPTIONIST)

Thanks Skye. I'll take it from here.

He smiles, shakes hands with GABBY.

LOHMUS (CONT'D)
Hi, Ted Lohmus, V.P. of Development
for our New Products Division. Nice
to meet you.

He motions toward the suite of offices behind them:

LOHMUS (CONT'D)
If you'll follow me.

They turn the corner, entering:

INT. HALLWAY - VENERY GAMES - CONTINUOUS

While dodging other EMPLOYEES hectically moving through the
space - LOHMUS almost spills coffee on GABBY.

LOHMUS
I didn't get you did I? No third
degree burns?

GABBY looks down at her arms.

GABBY
No I'm fine.

LOHMUS
(smiling)
Good. Don't want to start the day
with a lawsuit.

INT. LOHMUS' OFFICE - VENERY GAMES - DAY

Almost like a teenage boy's bedroom: the room is littered
with game consoles, the walls covered with promo posters from
Venery Games - games she's never heard of.

LOHMUS
Gabby, Gabby you brought your
resume?

GABBY
Right here.

He brings up a copy of her resume on his desktop monitor. He
peruses it:

LOHMUS
Graduated from U.W., bachelor's in
Business Administration. Been out
of a job for a few months.
(beat)
(MORE)

LOHMUS (CONT'D)

From what I see here, it's obvious,
you're smart and capable and that's
ultimately what we're looking for.

She's relieved to hear this.

GABBY

Oh. Ok. Great. If you don't mind my
asking, what does game testing
involve, I'm not a huge gamer, the
ad was a little vague, and seems
like there are a lot of people
interviewing.

LOHMUS smiles at her candor.

LOHMUS

Yes. We're pleased with the
response, but we're looking for a
very specific skill set.

(beat)

We're testing a new Live Action
Role Playing game. Although...

He picks up a stray gaming console on his desk:

LOHMUS (CONT'D)

...the video game industry is huge,
and still growing, we think our
service, a subscription based
'LARP' is the future.

(beat)

It's basically an SaaS. Users will
pay a monthly subscription to
participate in the game.

(a beat)

But the users go in blind, and then
as the game unfolds, they deal with
the situations they're placed in.

LOHMUS smiles like a proud father:

LOHMUS (CONT'D)

We think it's going to be unlike
anything you, or anyone else, has
ever experienced.

GABBY

I have to admit, it sounds kind of
cool.

He stands and motions for her to follow him out into:

INT. HALLWAY - VENERY GAMES - CONTINUOUS

As they walk:

LOHMUS

Our interview process is a little on the intense side, three parts: a physical, a questionnaire, some tests, then you'll meet with me again.

He opens a door on his right, and they step into a:

INT. LAB - VENERY GAMES - CONTINUOUS

Like a large doctor's exam room: table, counter, treadmill. He picks up a gown from the table, hands it to GABBY:

LOHMUS

Okay, if you'll just slip into the gown, after I leave, then the doctor will do your physical.

She furrows her brow.

GABBY

Seriously?

LOHMUS

Have to make sure you're healthy and physically capable of participating.

(a beat)

I'll give you some privacy, then I'll see you after the tests are done.

INT. MEDICAL LAB - VENERY GAMES - DAY

In sweats again, now bearing the VENERY GAMES logo, GABBY runs on a treadmill, while a DOCTOR monitors her heart-rate. She runs confidently.

INT. MEDICAL LAB - VENERY GAMES - DAY

Now sitting on the exam table, GABBY is attended to by a DOCTOR and NURSE.

DOCTOR

We need to take some blood.

The NURSE gently takes GABBY by the wrist, but she pulls her arm away.

GABBY
A blood sample?

DOCTOR
Didn't Lohmus explain this to you?
This is standard procedure.

Reluctantly she extends her arm. The NURSE swabs the crook of her elbow, then delicately plunges a syringe into her arm. Once it's filled with blood, she takes the tube and promptly she leaves the room.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
(off his clipboard)
And a D.N.A. sample...

He leans in toward her mouth, but she recoils.

GABBY
This just seems really... invasive.
I've never heard of a job interview
that required D.N.A. and blood
samples.

DOCTOR
It's all standard. Open up please.

GABBY refuses to open her mouth.

GABBY
You said the same thing about the
blood, listen is there someone else
I could talk to? Can I talk to
Mister Lohmus?

But the DOCTOR is firm:

DOCTOR
If I don't sign off on the exam and
get all the necessary samples, you
don't get the job.

A beat. GABBY doesn't respond while she considers. The DOCTOR can see her resistance and repeats himself:

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Do you want this job or not?

Reluctantly, GABBY opens her mouth and the DOCTOR expertly swabs her mouth, places it in a tube - before setting the tube in a holder with several others.

INT. TESTING ROOM #2 - VENERY GAMES - DAY

A small classroom, with a single desk. GABBY, still in VENERY provided sweats, is at the desk, hunched over a thick booklet - very much out of her element.

CLOSE - BOOKLET: FAMILY HISTORY. Followed by a line for the names of her parents, siblings, and a box labeled 'Deceased'.

GABBY

Just all up in my business.

This clearly isn't a standard employee application. She looks down at the bottom of the page: Poly Questionnaire - Thorpe Institute.

INT. TESTING ROOM #3 - VENERY GAMES - DAY

Another lab. This one features a chair sitting opposite a table and white light-box atop. GABBY is seated at the chair, electrodes attached to her temples and wrists.

The white-light box is operated by a TECHNICIAN, personable, female, mid-30s - also holding a clipboard.

TECHNICIAN

Alright.

(off clipboard)

Gabby. I just want you to relax.

The TECHNICIAN points to the front of the white-light box:

TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)

Look right here. I'm going to ask you a series of questions.

GABBY

Uh, okay?

Where the DOCTOR was flat, emotionless, the TECHNICIAN is pleasant and reassuring:

TECHNICIAN

I know it seems a bit strange, but this is an integral part of the process. It's quick and painless, I promise.

(a beat)

First question: Do you feel that you are being tracked, followed, or watched at home or outside?

GABBY

Huh?

TECHNICIAN

There are no right or wrong answers. Just relax, think about it for a minute, then answer the question. Easy.

The TECHNICIAN smiles again, attempting to set GABBY at ease; it works -- GABBY visibly relaxes, settles into the chair.

The TECHNICIAN repeats the question:

TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)

Do you feel that you are being tracked, followed, or watched at home or outside?

Before GABBY answers, the TECHNICIAN clicks a button on the box and there is a FLASH of soft white light. Off to their left is a one-way mirror:

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - VENERY GAMES - DAY

Where a SECOND TECHNICIAN studies a trio of computer monitors: GABBY'S name at the top, rows of data scroll, changing midway down the page.

The SECOND TECHNICIAN regards the sudden change of data with great interest.

INT. LOHMUS' OFFICE - VENERY GAMES - DAY

Now changed out of the sweats and back into her suit, GABBY is ushered back into LOHMUS' office, by the female TECHNICIAN.

While GABBY has her back to the TECHNICIAN, she gives LOHMUS an almost imperceptible nod.

Once she's seated, the TECHNICIAN leaves. Off his iPad:

LOHMUS

Well Gabby, I'm happy to say that you passed with flying colors.

She smiles, it's been awhile since she's received any good news, let alone praise.

GABBY

I did? The whole thing was kind of...

LOHMUS

I said it was 'intense'. But you passed and we'd like to hire you, if you're still interested.

GABBY

I am. But what am I doing exactly?

LOHMUS

We'll go into more detail during the first onboard meeting.

(beat)

We're hiring you as an independent contractor, so you don't get benefits, but your annual salary will be...

He writes down a figure on a small piece of paper, turns it face down, then slides it across the desk. GABBY picks up the paper and must fight the urge to YELP with joy.

LOHMUS (CONT'D)

Happy?

She plays it cool and calmly replies:

GABBY

That's acceptable.

LOHMUS

Great! Well let's get you over to H.R.

INT. HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE - VENERY GAMES - DAY

GABBY finds herself sitting at another desk, pen in hand, signing paperwork; hovering over her shoulder is a smiling HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER, a middle-manager in her early 40s.

At the bottom of the page are three separate lines, bright yellow adhesive arrows attached to each, awaiting her signature.

Much like SKYE, the receptionist, and TED LOHMUS, the H.R. MANAGER is warm, friendly and enthusiastic.

H.R. MANAGER

Just sign here, here and here.

GABBY makes the requisite signatures. H.R. MANAGER takes the forms and gives her a big smile:

H.R. MANAGER (CONT'D)
You're all set. Your first paycheck
will be direct deposited into your
account.

EXT. RECEPTION - VENERY GAMES - DAY

Where LOHMUS is waiting to show her out, as they walk past the reception desk. SKYE hands GABBY her parking ticket:

SKYE
That's all validated for you.

GABBY smiles in gratitude, while LOHMUS escorts her out.

LOHMUS
Welcome aboard Gabby. We're going
to do great things. You start first
thing tomorrow, nine AM, main
conference room.

As they approach the double glass doors, in her periphery she notices SKYE smiling triumphantly and another INTERVIEWEE, a YOUNG MAN in his mid 20s, waiting patiently.

GABBY
Thank you for the opportunity. You
won't regret this.

They shake hands. He holds the door open for her. She steps across the threshold, and just before the doors close:

SKYE (O.S.)
Ted, this is your two o'clock, Alex
Donahue.

LOHMUS (O.S.)
Thanks Skye. I'll take it from
here.

There is something familiar with the exchange, almost robotic - but before she can finish the thought, the elevator CHIMES and the doors open. She steps in.

INT. ELEVATOR - (INTERCUT W/JENNIFER AT GYM) - CONTINUOUS

Once the doors have closed, she lets the relief wash over her. She takes out her phone, eager to share the news, and exchanges a series of texts with JEN:

"Interview was weird AF."

"Sorry."

"But I got the job!"

"Bitch, why didn't you lead with that? We're going out! James and Colin are coming with. Pick you up at nine."

EXT. SEATTLE - DAY

The sunshine didn't last long; the sunny day has become a foggy, rainy one.

EXT. WESTERN AVE. - DAY

CLOSE: Raindrops form and reform as they run down a shiny, curved surface. We're too close to make out what it is.

WIDEN TO REVEAL: It's a motorcycle helmet.

Stopped at a light, a helmeted THEA surveys an intersection choked with SHOPPERS; resentful of their presence.

Her iPhone BUZZES. She takes out her phone, checks the display. A text from Ruben:

"Still alive? Second broadcast. Two hours."

THEA laughs at his joke, but, still suffering the effects of 'The Yellow Room', her laughs devolves into a coughing fit, before finally:

THEA
Yeah, I'm alive.
(beat - then more serious)
More or less.

The light turns green. THEA navigates her bike through the crowd, before disappearing into the crush of traffic and SHOPPERS.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Still pissing rain, crowded with PEDESTRIANS. Walking safely under an umbrella, GABBY passes by a small diner. She looks up at the sign: CASCADIA DINER

Her grumbling stomach makes the decision for her and she heads inside.

INT. CASCADIA DINER - LATER

Half-empty, just after the lunch rush. Safely ensconced at a table, GABBY is seated against the window, where rain gently pelts the glass next to her.

She ignores the rain, eating a salad. She stops to take a sip of tea and as she looks up:

Sitting at a booth in the back, facing her, is the MAN who watched her exit the Venery building. He's voraciously eating a rare steak, shoveling in chunks of meat.

It's savage, like a lion tearing through a gazelle, blood running down the sides of his mouth.

The VORACIOUS EATER, looks up and makes eye contact with GABBY; fixes her in his unnerving gaze, before smiling.

His stare is deeply unsettling. She breaks eye contact (as any normal person would) and searches the restaurant for the WAITRESS. Spotting her, she makes the sign for the bill.

The WAITRESS arrives moments later, with the bill.

WAITRESS

I'll take that when you're ready.

GABBY quickly searches through her purse, removes her last twenty and shoves it in her hand.

GABBY

Keep the change.

WAITRESS

(smiling brightly)

Thank you sweetie. You have a good day.

GABBY

You too.

GABBY gathers her coat and umbrella, the only thing that she wants in life, is to get as far away from the VORACIOUS EATER as possible.

She takes one last look to the far end of the restaurant: The VORACIOUS EATER is gone.

She sighs with relief, but as she stands to leave - shockingly, the VORACIOUS EATER is standing right next to her, fixing her with his terrifying gaze.

VORACIOUS EATER
Leaving so soon?

He is even more disturbing-looking up close. His skin is loose, ill-fitting, and his teeth are unusually pointy - not fangs precisely, but unusually sharp.

She instinctively backs away:

GABBY
Excuse me.

VORACIOUS EATER
Well you should take a moment to rest and digest.

He takes her by the wrist and insistently forces her to sit back at the table. She stares into those strange eyes and they seem to drain her will. Without much conviction:

GABBY
I have to go.

The VORACIOUS EATER ignores her:

VORACIOUS EATER
Too much activity after a meal can impede digestion.

He smiles, revealing those rows of horrible teeth.

VORACIOUS EATER (CONT'D)
We wouldn't want that would we?

As if she's 'under the influence':

GABBY
No we wouldn't.

VORACIOUS EATER
If you don't take the time to savor what you eat, let it properly digest, it's almost like you're disrespecting it.
(beat)
You see, I'm something of a gourmand, I travel the world, sampling rare delicacies...and I always take the time to properly eat and digest a meal.
(beat)
And Seattle is rich with culinary treasures...

He examines GABBY. His glance isn't licentious, it's at once more intimate, and more disturbing:

VORACIOUS EATER (CONT'D)
...if you know where to look.

He smiles again, when he does, a thin string of saliva slides off his lower lip.

GABBY can't help but notice it, and that's enough - that steels her. She stands again, this time determined to get to the door.

GABBY
I really have to be going.

VORACIOUS EATER
Well, if you gotta go, you gotta go.
(beat)
But I have a funny feeling we'll be seeing each other again.

He's taking pleasure in how uncomfortable he's making her. He smiles that horrible toothy smile again.

The WAITRESS sees GABBY standing in the middle of the diner, coat in hand, staring vacantly into the distance.

She walks over to her, shaking her gently by the shoulder.

WAITRESS
Miss? Miss?

GABBY snaps out of it. She looks around disoriented.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
You okay?

It takes GABBY a moment to realize she's standing in the middle of the diner. She rubs her temples:

GABBY
I'm fine. I think. How long was I just...standing there?

WAITRESS
That man said something to you, he left, but you stayed there, for a couple minutes. I was about to call nine-one-one. You sure you're okay sweetie?

Without answering, GABBY forcefully pushes the door open, bursting out onto:

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Where it's still raining. She walks briskly down the street, eager to get away from that diner.

Troubled by the sense that she's being followed, she looks over shoulder: Where, sure enough, the VORACIOUS EATER is standing at the corner, a block back, watching her leave - his lips still twisted into a smile.

She turns away and picks up her pace, fighting the urge to run. She reaches the corner and turns onto the:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The large open sections of the wall usually allow for plenty of light, but on an overcast day, it's dark.

GABBY nervously makes her way to her car. She fumbles for her keys. When she tries to insert them into the lock, she realizes her hands are shaking.

Despite her unsteady hands, she manages to jam the key into the lock and open the door.

INT. GABBY'S VW - PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Where she slams the door shut and hits the 'Lock Key' button on her key. The doors shut with a satisfying CLUNK.

Before GABBY can calm herself, there's a loud KNOCK at her window. She lets out a panicked YELP, before almost forcing herself to look out the driver's side window, half expecting to find the VORACIOUS EATER, instead she sees:

A YOUNG WOMAN holding her umbrella.

YOUNG WOMAN
(muffled - through window)
Sorry, didn't mean to startle you.
You dropped your umbrella.

She composes herself, rolls down the window and takes the umbrella.

GABBY
Little jumpy. Too much coffee.
Thanks.

The window goes back up. She takes a moment to breathe in deeply, exhale - then inserts her keys and starts the engine.

INT. GABBY'S VW - DAY

She happens to look out the driver's side window: Where she sees the VORACIOUS EATER, standing in the middle of the sidewalk staring at her.

She blinks. Looks again: But he's gone. GABBY hears:

TECHNICIAN (V.O.)
Do you feel that you are being
tracked, followed, or watched at
home or outside?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A KNOCK at the door. GABBY, dressed for a night on the town, is careful to look through the peephole: JENNIFER, also dressed up.

She opens the door, sees GABBY'S energy is 'off':

JENNIFER
What's wrong?

GABBY
I stopped at Cascadia for lunch.
There was this guy there...

Almost reluctant to conjure up the memory again.

GABBY (CONT'D)
...scared the shit out of me.

JENNIFER
Fuck him, tonight is your night and
no creepy asshole is going to ruin
it.

She delicately lifts GABBY'S chin:

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Okay?

GABBY
K.

INT. SHIKAR RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A dozen tables and well-stocked bar, all suffused with an orange candlelit glow. It's warm and intimate; a hedge against the cold and rain outside.

GABBY sits with JENNIFER, and two men also in their early 30s - JAMES OBI, Nigerian-British, glasses, and his friend COLIN ANDERTON, amiable.

A sumptuous feast on the table in front of them. From the smiles and empty wine bottles in front of them, the celebration is well underway, but GABBY is distracted.

She's about to dig into her meal, when the conversation around her fades -- and all she can hear is the VORACIOUS EATER'S voice:

VORACIOUS EATER (V.O.)
If you don't take the time to savor
what you eat, let it properly
digest...

The voice fades away and GABBY'S attention returns to the conversation around her:

COLIN
Oh no, it was a complete nightmare.

JAMES
You have shit taste in women mate.

JAMES, COLIN and JENNIFER laugh - but GABBY is still a bit distracted.

COLIN
(to JAMES)
What about you? You haven't dated
anyone since Katelin. You've got to
put yourself out there.

Before JAMES can answer:

JENNIFER
Tinder.
(to JAMES)
Set up a profile, your dick will
thank me.

She pauses, realizes how that sounded.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
That's not what I meant!

INT. BACK OFFICE - THE ONE-ARMED MAN - NIGHT

The atmosphere here is almost funereal. THEA, now suddenly vibrant, bristling with energy and RUBEN are gathered around the radio, when the broadcast starts.

MYSTERY STATION D.J. (V.O.)
To the authorities, the general
public, these murders will appear
brutal, random, and
unconnected...but I assure
you...they are not.

THEA looks over to RUBEN.

MYSTERY STATION D.J.
I'm going to read you a list of
names; and if you, or someone you
know, is on this list...

INT. SHIKAR RESTAURANT - NIGHT

GABBY drinks what's left of her wine, as she places her glass back on the table, her distraction fading.

MYSTERY STATION D.J. (V.O.)
...you are probably going to be one
of the victims...

JAMES' voice brings GABBY out of her reverie:

JAMES
(to GABBY)
You didn't get an offer from
McFarland?

JENNIFER jumps in and answers for her:

JENNIFER
He was an asshole.

JAMES
Really? Firm's got a great
reputation. Sorry about that.

GABBY
Well, it all worked out in the end.

JAMES has an innate fear of giving offense; still apologetic:

JAMES
I never would've arranged an
interview had I suspected that...

She lays a consolatory hand on his bicep.

GABBY

I appreciate you setting it up for me, and like I said, it all worked out in the end.

COLIN

(to JAMES)

What have you heard about Gab's new company?

JAMES

Venery?

GABBY

Big offices on Madison. Seemed like a big deal...still...

(beat)

...the interview was weird.

JENNIFER

All those tech, gaming companies are like that.

JAMES

And they make it weird because they're a group of socially challenged men-children.

GABBY

That's not it. I don't know. Can't quite put my finger on it.

INT. BACK OFFICE - THE ONE-ARMED MAN - NIGHT

STATIC fills the air. The broadcast over, RUBEN turns off the radio, sits down at his desk. He turns to face THEA, who looks like a patient who's just been given a fatal prognosis.

THEA

Can you get me the addresses of the people on that list?

Instead of waiting for a response from THEA, RUBEN turns his attention to one of the computer screens, quickly entering information.

RUBEN

Might take some time.

He studies the screen, displeased by what he sees:

RUBEN (CONT'D)

Anyone who's not on social media
will take a little longer to track
down, have to go through DMV,
property, tax records.

THEA

How much time do we have?

RUBEN

A few hours, at most.

INT. SHIKAR RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The WAITER returns and sets a leather sleeve containing the
bill in front of JAMES. GABBY reaches for it, but JAMES
slides it away.

JAMES

Please.

GABBY

You don't have to. Really.

JAMES slips a credit card into the sleeve, then slides it
back to the WAITER.

WAITER

Back in a moment.

As the WAITER leaves, JENNIFER interrupts:

JENNIFER

Thank you James.

She checks her watch:

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I hate to eat and run, but I have a
second 'date'.

GABBY

Same guy from last night?

JENNIFER

My Mom's got Ethan all night, might
as well take full advantage.

JENNIFER smiles. COLIN looks at his expensive diving watch:

COLIN

Oh come on, the night is young.
There's a new bar I want to check
out.

JAMES

(to GABBY)

Nightcap?

GABBY

Thanks, I'm going to head home.
Don't want to go into work on my
first day with a hangover.

INT. BACK OFFICE - THE ONE-ARMED MAN - NIGHT

RUBEN works his keyboard:

RUBEN

I think I've got an address on the
first name.
(as he studies the screen)
Heavy social media presence, with a
little luck, I can break into his
calendar, find out who he's met
with the last couple days.

THEA'S half-listening; she's psyching herself up, like an
athlete, moments before a big game:

THEA

We've got the element of surprise.
They're not expecting me... not
much of an advantage, but it's
something.
(with grim determination)
This time's going to be different.

EXT. SHIKAR RESTAURANT - NIGHT

GABBY, JENNIFER, COLIN and JAMES -- along with some of the
other PATRONS from the restaurant, wait out front; some are
waiting for cars, others making a last ditch attempt to avoid
going home alone.

A grey economy-sized car pulls up to the curb, the passenger
window rolls down.

DRIVER

(to COLIN)

Colin Anderton?

COLIN

That's us.

COLIN opens the door, hops in - and JAMES follows suit.

JAMES

(to GABBY - hopefully)

Last chance.

GABBY

Next time.

He smiles, the window slides up and the car pulls away. The moment the car's disappeared into traffic JENNIFER turns to GABBY:

JENNIFER

For such a smart woman, you are
incredibly stupid sometimes.

Before GABBY can ask a follow-up question, a blue sedan pulls up, again the passenger window slides down.

SECOND DRIVER

Jennifer?

JENNIFER

That's me.

She scans the area:

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Are you going to be alright here? I
can wait around.

(to DRIVER)

We're going to wait here until my
friend's car gets here.

GABBY still hasn't forgotten her encounter earlier in the day. She looks around: It's well-lit and there are lots of people on the street around here.

She checks the Uber app: Your car is 2 minutes away.

GABBY

My car's almost here, I'll be okay.

She gently pushes JENNIFER into the car.

GABBY (CONT'D)

Have fun, I'll talk to you
tomorrow.

JENNIFER kisses GABBY on the cheek, gets into the car. It drives away, leaving her alone on the street.

GABBY looks nervously up and down the street. It's well-lit, but she questions her decision to wait alone.

A black sedan pulls over, and slows down. As it creeps towards her, she gets increasingly apprehensive.

It stops, the window slides down, and a friendly DRIVER smiles at her:

DRIVER
Hi. Are you Gabby?

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Filled with a CREAKING SOUND, as the ancient elevator grinds to a stop. The doors open and GABBY emerges into the hallway.

There are pools of light, but also large areas of shadow. The hallway seems unusually dark and threatening - but the doorway to her apartment and safety is in sight.

She passes Apartment 9, when she hears another set of footsteps ECHOING on the floor behind her. She turns around to find: MRS. ROONEY carrying a basket full of laundry.

GABBY'S pleasantly tipsy and a bit more effusive than she might be normally:

GABBY
Mrs. Rooney. I got a new job, I get
my first paycheck tomorrow, so I
can drop off all the rent I owe.
(beat)
And it shouldn't be a problem
again.

MRS. ROONEY
It better not be.

With that, she opens the door to her apartment and SLAMS it shut behind her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Shutting and locking the door behind her. Safely at home, MRS. ROONEY appeased, and wine buzzed, she can finally breathe a sigh of relief.

EXT. I-5 SOUTH - NIGHT

The WHINE of a motorcycle engine pierces through the ambient noise of the surrounding traffic.

THEA flies down the expressway on her bike, expertly weaving between cars.

She steals a look at the speedometer: Pushing 110mph.

And opens it up a little more.

EXT. STREET - SODO - NIGHT

Industrial. Empty streets, lined by empty warehouses. The corner of the block is taken up by a new apartment building: sleek, modern, and soulless. A Porsche Cayenne pulls into the building's garage.

INT. GARAGE - SODO - NIGHT

The car parks in its space and walking H.R. nightmare DONALD MCFARLAND emerges from the Cayenne (because of course he does).

His tie's loosened, he's left the office, but is still working the phones:

MCFARLAND
(into phone)
Do you understand what we do for a
living, because it doesn't sound
like you do...

He makes his way across the empty parking lot. He steps into a waiting elevator:

INT. ELEVATOR - MCFARLAND'S BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

As it rises into the building.

MCFARLAND
(into phone)
...that's right... very good... so
if our goal is to make fucking
money... we put that clueless corn-
fed cow tipper and his hundred
million into the fund.

EXT. I-5 - NIGHT

THEA'S bike comes SCREAMING up an off-ramp...and onto...

EXT. STREET - SODO - NIGHT

A street leading into the SODO neighborhood.

INT. CORRIDOR - MCFARLAND'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Dark gray walls, absorb most of the ambient illumination, leaving only small pools of light like a Renaissance painting.

He steps off the elevator and can hear FOOTSTEPS ahead of him. He peers into the large areas of darkness, but can make nothing out.

MCFARLAND
(into phone)
I don't care if it's risky.

He hears the FOOTSTEPS ahead of him. They stop, still shrouded by darkness.

MCFARLAND (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hold on.
(to corridor)
Is somebody there?

No answer. With a CLICK, his keys slide into the lock, tumblers fall into place and he enters:

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - MCFARLAND'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

An open floor plan. Like the building, and the apartment's owner, the place is sterile and soulless.

The lighting scheme is the same as the corridor, large parts of the large open space swallowed by shadows.

MCFARLAND has poured himself two fingers of scotch, and sips it while finishing his phone call.

MCFARLAND

(into phone)

I want him in that fund, I want a
'strippers and speedboats', Miami
coke dealer in the eighties, sized
year-end bonus, and this is how I
get it.

The FOOTSTEPS again, but this time coming from inside the
apartment.

MCFARLAND (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Let me call you back.

He opens a drawer in the kitchen, where he keeps a loaded
.38. The stainless steel gun catches the light. He trains it
on the shadowy parts of his living room.

Nothing. An eternity passes as he scans the darkness.

MCFARLAND (CONT'D)

(with false bravado)

Whoever you are, you came into the
wrong goddamn apartment, because I
am armed and not afraid to exercise
my Constitutional right to blow you
the fuck away.

Challenge accepted, there is movement. The shadow ahead of
MCFARLAND seems to COME TO LIFE.

A FIGURE, wearing a clear plastic raincoat over a dark suit,
emerges from the shadows - it's the:

VORACIOUS EATER

I didn't mean to startle you. I
wanted you calm...

MCFARLAND

Who the fuck are you?

VORACIOUS EATER

I've gone by many names... but you
can call me 'Mister M.'

(beat)

Question is, who are you Mister
McFarland.

(beat)

I did some digging. Everyone who
knows you, loathes you.

(beat)

(MORE)

VORACIOUS EATER (CONT'D)

If you suddenly disappeared, no one would miss you, no one would mourn your death.

(beat)

You're the perfect victim.

MR. M looks, MCFARLAND over:

MR. M

Well almost perfect. There's not enough fat on you, a little too lean for my tastes, but I thought you'd make a nice 'amuse bouche'.

Before MCFARLAND can respond, MR. M opens his mouth and exhales:

His breath is visible as a slowly expanding black cloud, billowing like squid ink in water.

CLOSE - MCFARLAND: As he breathes in the noxious gas.

MCFARLAND suddenly finds himself unable to raise his gun, or even move. He looks down in confusion at limbs that refuse to obey his commands.

MCFARLAND

What's happening to me?

MR. M floats toward him, seeing MCFARLAND'S mounting distress, he speaks in measured, reassuring tones:

MR. M

No, no, relax, relax...

He glides across the floor, closing the distance between them.

MR. M (CONT'D)

... see when you're scared, body gets flooded with epinephrine, norepinephrine, adrenaline... all those hormones... spoil the meat.

CLOSE - MR. M: The darkened, red eyes.

MR. M fixes MCFARLAND in his hypnotic gaze, then smiles.

CLOSE - MCFARLAND: Tears stream down his face as he realizes what's about to happen.

MCFARLAND

...no, please, don't... please, don't...

MR. M is only inches away when:

Yellowed teeth FLASH.

There is an explosion of blood and gore.

Drops of blood splash off MR. M's raincoat.

MCFARLAND...

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

...SCREAMS. It ECHOES down the hall, before transforming into the sound of...

EXT. ALLEY - SODO - NIGHT

...brakes SQUEALING. THEA'S motorcycle SCREECHES to a halt, just behind MCFARLAND'S building.

She takes out her phone and checks the address on Google Maps.

Convinced she's at the right place, she gets off the bike. At the maintenance entrance, she produces a lock-pick kit and in seconds, she's:

INT. MAINTENANCE CORRIDOR - MCFARLAND'S BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Running down the corridor toward the service elevators.

INT. CORRIDOR - MCFARLAND'S BUILDING - NIGHT

She emerges from the elevator more cautiously, carefully checking the surrounding darkness around her for signs of movement.

At MCFARLAND'S front door, she repeats the trick with the lock pick kit, before stepping...

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - MCFARLAND'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

...across the threshold. She slips, almost loses her footing, glances down: A wide streak of blood runs across the marble floor.

A long beat as she follows the trail.

It ends in the kitchen, beneath MCFARLAND'S CORPSE.

His chest and stomach have been ripped apart in a killing frenzy, the floor is thick with dark red, congealing blood.

For a few moments, she studies the apartment with complete scientific detachment -- scanning the darkened space with an intensity usually reserved for someone who's taken a lot of Ritalin.

Her eyes pour over the room, taking in every detail, not missing anything. She spots droplets of the black gas, near the body.

But... the longer she looks, the more impossible it becomes not to react emotionally.

Horror, revulsion, play across her face.

The lights in the apartment start to STROBE, as painful memories swim back to the surface:

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

HARRY lies in a pool of blood, abdomen ripped open, entrails spilled out like uncut sausages across a motel floor.

END FLASHBACK.

The apartment's lightbulbs FLICKER, SPARK, then EXPLODE, plunging the room into darkness.

(Forcing you to ask the question: Did Thea do that?)

Her reverie's interrupted by the sound of SIRENS in the distance.

THEA forces the memories back down into the deepest levels of her mind, regains focus and realizes she's got to get out of the apartment...immediately.

EXT. STREET - SODO - NIGHT (INTERCUT W/RUBEN)

The motorcycle idles a block away from MCFARLAND'S building.

The normally empty street is now abuzz with police activity: cruisers block entrance to the street, C.S.I. vans parked out front, yellow police tape separates curious ONLOOKERS from the building's entrance.

THEA watches from a safe distance, phone to her ear:

THEA
He's dead.
(beat)
(MORE)

THEA (CONT'D)

The wounds, the blood splatter,
traces of that strange black
substance near the body.

She hesitates, it's difficult to discuss:

THEA (CONT'D)

It's 'Him'.

(beat)

Did you find out who McFarland's
been in touch with?

RUBEN

I did.

THEA

They'll probably be next.

RUBEN hears the frustration in her voice and tries to offer
some type of consolation - repeating her own words back to
her:

RUBEN

We've still got the element of
surprise, they're not expecting
you, it's not much of an advantage,
but it's something.

She doesn't share his optimism.

THEA

Yeah... maybe... we'll see.

With that, she ends the call and stows the phone. She slips
on her helmet, flips down the visor and works the throttle.

The motorcycle races down the wet street, merging into
traffic; the lights of her motorcycle become one among a sea
of lights moving through the outskirts of the city.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE - WINDOW: drops of rainwater form against the glass.

WIDEN TO REVEAL: Flashes of LIGHTING pierce the slatted
shades, momentarily painting stripes of silver light across
the darkened room.

GABBY sleeps through the thunderstorm.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A FIGURE, cloaked in darkness, glides noiselessly walks down the hallway of GABBY'S apartment.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

GABBY lies on her stomach, oblivious to what's approaching.

The bedroom door opens. The FIGURE glides into the room, without making a sound.

There's a FLASH of lighting, illuminating the FIGURE: it's MR. M. Still wearing a trench coat, suit and bow-tie, all spotted with MCFARLAND'S blood.

MR. M approaches a sleeping, completely vulnerable GABBY.

Sleeping peacefully. Her head lying on her pillow. MR. M leans in CLOSE...then SNIFFS her.

He smiles in rapturous delight. A thin rope of drool, descends from his open mouth, dangling...

Just above GABBY'S cheek.

Noticing that he's just about to drool on her, MR. M, sucks it back into his mouth.

To call it disgusting would be an understatement.

With that, MR. M stands up, and floats out of the room - just as quietly as he entered.

INT. BEDROOM - DAWN

Fast asleep, GABBY is awakened by the sound of the sound of her alarm clock.

She narrows her eyes, troubled by a vague sense of danger. She looks around the room, but doesn't see anything overtly troubling.

It's another moderately sunny day. She rubs the sleep from her eyes, then swings her feet over the side of the bed, eager for her first day of work.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - VENERY GAMES - DAY

GABBY, more casually dressed this time, walks into the conference room, there are six WOMEN and seven MEN, all under 35 seated around the table; everyone is nervous, talking, excited - like the first day of school. GABBY is mortified to discover she's the last person to arrive.

She checks her watch: 8:50am

TED LOHMUS is at the front of the room, standing next to a monitor, going over notes on an iPad. He sees GABBY enter and then as if reading her mind:

LOHMUS

Don't worry, everyone got here early.

GABBY settles into the last open chair, next to the guy who she recognizes from the reception area: ALEX DONAHUE.

ALEX

Late on the first day, not a good look.

GABBY blushes, checks her watch again.

GABBY

I'm ten minutes early.

ALEX

I'm just fucking with you.

GABBY

Gabrielle. Everyone just calls me Gabby.

ALEX

Alex, everyone just calls me Alex.

Before their banter can continue, the YOUNG MAN on GABBY'S other side gets a look at GABBY and feels compelled to introduce himself.

GORDO

Was up? Gordo.

GORDO shakes her hand, a little too vigorously.

GORDO (CONT'D)

Pretty sweet gig, huh?

LOHMUS
Okay! If I could have everyone's
attention. You wanted specifics
about the game...

The room quiets, all eyes are focused on LOHMUS.

LOHMUS (CONT'D)
(points to the large
monitor)
...first off...

On the monitor: The Venery Games logo, accompanied by the
title: 'The Labyrinth'.

LOHMUS (CONT'D)
The marketing department finally
settled on a title for the game...

Despite the ominous-sounding title, the room bursts into
APPLAUSE.

LOHMUS (CONT'D)
...and it represents the next step
in the evolution of gaming.

On the monitor: Pictures of the new employees seated around
the table.

LOHMUS (CONT'D)
Featuring you, the newest members
of the Venery Games family.

More spontaneous APPLAUSE. Like a veteran performer, LOHMUS
waits until the noise dies down before finishing.

LOHMUS (CONT'D)
So we'd like everyone to watch a
video, sign some more forms and
then you're ready to start.

On the monitor: The final image is the Seattle skyline on a
bright sunny day.

ALEX raises his hand. LOHMUS turns to him, like a teacher
happy his students are participating in class:

LOHMUS (CONT'D)
Mister Donahue!

ALEX
Wait, that's it? Watch a video,
sign some forms?

He smiles broadly:

LOHMUS
That's it. Not a bad first day,
right?

The toothy grins and LAUGHTER all around suggests that clearly everyone agrees.

On the monitor: A black screen, with a 'Play' icon. The cursor double clicks it.

EXT. GREEN LAKE PARK (VIDEO) - DAY

A typical corporate video. A blandly handsome HOST, strolls through the park, while directly addressing the camera:

HOST
Congratulations on becoming part of
the Venery Games family...you're
going to be participating in our
new game...
(beat)
...'The Labyrinth'.

INT. GROCERY STORE (VIDEO) - DAY

The HOST is picking up some meat, wrapped in brown paper from the store's friendly neighborhood BUTCHER, in a spotless white apron.

HOST
In the next couple days...

The BUTCHER smiles creepily at the CAMERA in the b.g., while the HOST continues:

HOST (CONT'D)
... your first clue will be
delivered to you. Once you solve
it, it will lead you to the next
clue...

INT. IKEA (VIDEO) - DAY

The Renton store. The HOST wanders through the vast kitchenware section.

HOST

... and the clues will help you
navigate a secret course we've laid
out, across the city.

(a dramatic pause)

The first player to successfully
navigate the course, and reach the
center of the labyrinth, will be
our Grand Prize Winner.

INT. UNDERPASS (VIDEO) - DAY

Now he's moved into a pedestrian underpass. It's the middle
of the day, but the space is filled with shadow.

HOST

(fast - like a warning
about drug side effects)

One last thing, it's very
important, NOT to discuss the game,
or your employment with Venery
Games to any non-Venery Games
employee. Failure to adhere to this
rule, will result in a breach of
contract and loss of income.

INT. GREEN LAKE PARK (VIDEO) - DAY

The HOST is again standing in the middle of the park on a
sunny day, wearing his best plastic smile.

HOST

So when you're ready to start, just
sign the forms acknowledging your
consent to play.

(beat)

What awaits you in the labyrinth?
You'll have to enter to find out.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

GABBY turns to ALEX and whispers:

GABBY

That was, different.

Before ALEX responds, an ADMIN. sets a packet of papers and
pens in front of them. They both enthusiastically, pick up
the pens. Without reading the documents, they take pen to
paper and sign.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - VENERY - LATER

The new EMPLOYEES file out. ALEX hustles to catch up with GABBY before she leaves.

ALEX

I was about to ask you before...

They both cast a glance at GORDO, who's busy accosting two other FEMALE EMPLOYEES.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Human frat paddle interrupted us.

GABBY

How do you know he's a frat guy?

ALEX

C'mon look at him.

She does: Polo shirt, chinos, sunglasses on the back of his head. Then as if reading her thoughts:

ALEX (CONT'D)

All the tell-tale signs. He's not wearing the puka shells today, but he definitely owns some.

He has a point, GABBY can't help but laugh.

ALEX (CONT'D)

There's a date rape skeleton in his closet, and a Supreme Court nomination in his future.

Their lighthearted repartee has taken a darker turn - as they reach the elevators.

GABBY

Anything about this seem a little 'off' to you?

ALEX

With what they're paying us, I can deal with a little weird.

GABBY

I guess.

The elevator arrives. GABBY hops in.

ALEX

Hey, it was nice meeting you.
(beat)

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)
You think maybe we could grab a
coffee sometime?

Her smile disappears, then in a deadly serious tone:

GABBY
Are you asking me out on a coffee
date? Very inappropriate Alex.

ALEX'S face registers alarm, thinking he's crossed a line.
Just before the elevator doors close:

GABBY (CONT'D)
I'm just fucking with you.

The doors close. Leaving ALEX alone, his expression hard to
read:

ALEX
Well played Gabby, well played.

EXT. STREET - DAY

GABBY navigates a busy downtown street. Her phone CHIMES. She
looks at the screen, another bank notification: 'Checking
Account Balance: \$5,440.83'

She does an impromptu (but restrained) 'happy dance'.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Still shadowy. Only slightly less ominous during the day. The
familiar CREAKING SOUND of the elevator echoes through the
dark space.

The doors open and GABBY steps out into the hall.

She pauses in front of Apartment 9. Using the wall as an
impromptu desk, she writes out a check, then slips it under
MRS. ROONEY'S door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

GABBY is straightening up when there is a KNOCK at the door.
She crosses the room, opens the door to find a smiling ETHAN
and JENNIFER (in workout gear), holding a pizza box.

ETHAN
Want some company?

GABBY notices the pizza box.

GABBY

Pizza?! That's not Keto. I thought
carbs were strictly verboten.

As they walk in.

JENNIFER

You've earned some carbs. Just
don't make them a habit.

JENNIFER and ETHAN settle in, make themselves at home. She
moves between them, swinging her hips, playfully bumping each
of them gently to the side.

GABBY

Make some room.

ETHAN

Hey!

They all giggle, as ETHAN accidentally loads "Resident Evil
7". JENNIFER sees the imagery and pretends to be shocked.

JENNIFER

(to ETHAN)

She lets you play this?

ETHAN turns to GABBY hoping she'll bail him out, instead she
plays dumb:

GABBY

What? How did that get in there?

GABBY starts giggling, and it's infectious - soon ETHAN and
JENNIFER are giggling uncontrollably. Everything is puppies
and rainbows.

EXT. SEATTLE - NIGHT

The Space Needle, and the surrounding forest of skyscrapers
dotted with illumination, their lights twinkling beneath gray
storm clouds.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

JENNIFER and ETHAN have gone home. Hip-Hop playing in the
b.g.

GABBY: Hair up. Make-up off. Sweats on. Her head bobbing to
the beat as she tosses an empty, grease-stained pizza box
into the garbage, followed by empty soda cans.

She closes the lid of the garbage can, then turns her attention to a sink full of dishes. There is a KNOCK at the door, it is loud, persistent, aggressive.

GABBY heads back into the:

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She quickly scans the area, expecting to find one of ETHAN'S forgotten toys on the couch or the floor.

There is another series of KNOCKS, more urgent now. She picks up the pace, bops to the door.

GABBY
'E' forget something?
(to herself)
Oh, maybe it's my clue.

She doesn't look through the peephole; throws the door open expecting to find JENNIFER and/or ETHAN standing in the hallway.

Instead, she finds THEA, still wet from the rain: A mohawk, clutching a motorcycle helmet, nervous energy coming off her in waves.

THEA
You Gabby? Gabby Chung?

Despite the events of the last few days, GABBY is more intrigued by, than fearful of, the damp stranger standing on her doorstep.

GABBY
Are you delivering my clue?

THEA
Your wha'? Your "clue"? No, my name's Thea.

There is a CREAKING behind them. GABBY'S barely registered the sound, but THEA'S already spun around, facing in the opposite direction - muscles tensed, ready for anything - but:

The hallway behind them is empty.

THEA relaxes, and returns her attention to GABBY; who's taken note of THEA'S strange, nervous behavior and closed the door slightly. THEA takes note, but presses on, undeterred:

THEA (CONT'D)
You know a guy named McFarland?

GABBY
I interviewed with him, couple of
days ago. Why?

GABBY studies THEA'S reaction, as her nervousness gives way
to a now familiar dread.

GABBY (CONT'D)
Listen, Thea, is it?

Despite the strange nature of their conversation GABBY
doesn't want to be rude, and as gently as she can:

GABBY (CONT'D)
... if this isn't part of the game,
it's late, and I need to get some
sleep...

INT. HALLWAY - OUTSIDE GABBY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

GABBY tries to close the door, but THEA sticks her foot
between the door and the frame.

THEA
(more urgent)
Last couple days, have you felt
like someone's following you?
Watching you?

The questions hit close to home, and wipe the polite smile
from GABBY'S face as...

THEA (CONT'D)
Yeah, you have, haven't you? That's
not your imagination.
(beat)
There's no easy way to say this,
but, you're in serious danger...
(a beat)
...from someone that calls himself,
'Mister M'...

The smile on GABBY'S face has now turned to irritation.

GABBY
This isn't part of the game?

THEA shakes her head.

GABBY (CONT'D)
Ok, if this isn't work related,
like I said, it's late.

GABBY manages to push THEA'S foot back across the threshold.

GABBY (CONT'D)
So, Thea, was it? Thanks for...
whatever that was, but I gotta go.

She SLAMS the door shut. The lock CLICKING loudly into place.
THEA changes her approach, softens:

THEA
(through the door)
Listen, I know how this sounds...

GABBY (O.S.)
Lady, I'm calling the cops.

THEA
(through the door)
I'm trying to save your life here.

A beat.

GABBY (O.S.)
Cops are on their way.

THEA
Shit. Cops. Last thing I need.

THEA turns, studies the hallway, looking for shadows, places to hide.

A beat. She senses she's not alone, scans the hallway again.

It's empty, but she proceeds toward the stairwell cautiously.

She enters the stairwell; disappearing from sight.

Besides the sound of THEA'S boots DESCENDING the stairs, the hallway is quiet, empty.

A long beat.

(Shouldn't we be 'fading out' at this point?)

Then it happens...

The elevator doors open, filling the empty hallway with a loud CREAKING SOUND.

MR. M silently steps into the hall, red eyes focused on GABBY'S door.

He SNIFFS the air, breathes in a lungful of THEA'S scent:

MR. M
You'll try to save them my dear,
and you'll fail...
(beat)
... just like last time.

He smiles. It's every bit as disturbing as you imagine it is.

FADE OUT.

END OF PILOT