

BRUJO

(broo-hoh)

Written by  
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WHITE TEXT SCRATCHES INTO A BLACK BACKGROUND:

"Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices witchcraft, interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord." ~ Deuteronomy 18:10-12

The words swirl around until they become part of...

STATIC ON A TV SCREEN. The mix of black, white and grey pulsates hypnotically like a living, breathing thing.

INT. BREAK ROOM, KIRBY FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DAY

Two **BIG GUARDS (30's)** stare emptily at THROBBING WHITE NOISE on a small TV. As they murmur in an unknown tongue, their eyes meet with the same confused, horrified look.

EXT. KIRBY FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DAY

Bleak and foreboding despite being bathed in sunlight.

INT. BLOCK C, KIRBY FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DAY

A dungeon of misery.

The endless *PLEAS* & *SHOUTS* of mentally unstable inmates.

The Big Guards, clad in riot gear and armed with M4 carbine assault rifles, lead a patrol of equally outfitted guards past electronically sealed steel doors. Their guns tremble and their eyes glisten as their feet shift forward.

Several doctors and executives trail the guards.

The entourage reaches a cell at the end of the hall secured top-to-bottom with large deadbolt locks.

The Big Guards undo the locks. The door *CREAKS* open, unveiling the thick, unnatural darkness within.

Big Guard 1 crosses himself before stepping inside the cell. Big Guard 2 follows him despite the fact that he's shaking.

INT. CELL, KIRBY FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The duo inches inside, rifles clenched.

The door SHUTS behind them and a *COMMOTION BUILDS* outside. They peer through a slot in the door.

THEIR POV: The other guards turn their rifles on the doctors and executives, who flee. The guards OPEN FIRE until the last of them falls dead, then blast each other away.

The Big Guards GASP in horror. They yank on the door handle. It's stuck. They bang on the door.

BIG GUARD 1  
Let us out! Let us out!

BIG GUARD 2  
We can't be here! Please!

Realizing no one is going to save them, they turn around.

The cell window is covered by a pillow sheet, allowing the faintest light to outline a gaunt figure huddled on a cot.

**THE PRISONER** has his knees pressed to his chest, chin down. His silhouette suddenly SHAPE-SHIFTS into a much larger man. It reverts back to its original gaunt shape, then repeats to the tune of *CRACKING BONES*.

The Big Guards clam their eyes shut. A *DEMONIC CACKLE* booms from the darkness. Their eyelids peel open and they take aim at each other, terror scribbled onto their faces.

The Prisoner cocks his skeletal face up. He leans into the light to reveal his ghoulish features, shiny amber eyes.

The Big Guards shoot each other in the face.

INT. BREAK ROOM, KIRBY FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DAY

The Big Guards GASP and fall off their chairs. Terrorized. They search their faces and bodies but find no injuries. They scramble outside.

EXT. KIRBY FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DAY

The Prisoner from the vision is escorted to the main gate by a platoon of armed and anxious guards. Behind them, the Big Guards and most of the staff watch him go with pure relief.

As the main gate retracts, The Prisoner turns back and waves them goodbye very slowly. He flashes a hair-raising smile.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GREENWICH - DAY

Spotless streets blend modern and old-world architecture. Storybook cottages line both sides of a residential street.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

An imposing symbol of wealth and power.

INT. OFFICES, MENDES CAPITAL - NIGHT

**ROBERTO "ROB" MENDES (38)** - clean cut, wrapped in a smart suit tailored to perfection, ready to take on the world - takes his place under a banner. HAPPY BIRTHDAY MENDES CAP!

Twenty-five intoxicated employees shower him with praise. Rob raises a glass of water. The office falls silent.

ROB

Been a long road, but we made it.  
Highest performing firm in the fin-  
cap for the last two quarters.  
Please take some goddamn credit!

He lauds them with applause. They cheer festively.

**LAURA MENDES (36)** laughs in joggers and an oversized hoody, one hand on her bulging pregnant stomach. She has the intellectual but easy-going vibe of a hip teacher.

ROB (CONT'D)

Our past can haunt us in different  
ways. For me, it's a nagging fear  
that I'll be back in The Bronx,  
miserable and broke. But then I  
think about all of you. And that  
fear becomes my fuel.

Inspired faces stare back at Rob. Laura blows him a kiss.

ROB (CONT'D)

As we go into our sixth year, I  
want you to focus on your fuel,  
whatever it is. Because we're going  
to keep putting confidence over  
fear and systems over trends,  
learning and improving with every  
pick and trade. Because we're going  
to keep fucking winning!

The office explodes into celebration. People fade and reappear at their desks in a time lapse.

INT. ROB'S OFFICE, MENDES CAPITAL - DAY

Enormous and opulent with a gorgeous view of the city. Rob stands at the floor-to-ceiling windows taking it all in.

**JANEY FOX (27)** strides through the open door and brings Rob a mug of coffee. She is refined but as tough as they come.

JANEY

Decaf. You can die of high blood pressure after the holidays, boss.

ROB

Keep that same energy when I'm deciding on raises.

They laugh as she steps out.

Rob sits behind a mahogany desk. He studies stock charts and financial statements on six monitors with laser focus. He brings the mug to his lips - the office phone *RINGS*. He sneaks in a sip, places the mug on a warmer, and answers.

JANEY

(office phone speaker)

Edward Gomez is here.

ROB

Did you offer him coffee?

There is a pensive pause. Rob grins in anticipation.

JANEY

(office phone speaker)

I don't know, Rob. Do drug dealers take cash?! Running out of rhetorical to your dumb questions!

Rob cackles.

ROB

Yeah, alright. Buzz him in.

Rob watches the door open... The Prisoner strides inside. His now burly body fits snug into a costly 3-piece suit. **EDWARD GOMEZ (36)** shuts the door behind him.

His huge eyes, vacant and dull, seem to take in everything and nothing at the same time. Aged and grisly burn scars mar the left side of his face and neck.

Rob hides his uneasiness with a grin as he rises.

ROB (CONT'D)

Welcome, Mr. Gomez.

They shake. Ed grips his hand for an extended beat. His voice strikes a delicate balance between firm and soft.

ED  
"Ed", please. Love the bracelet.  
(Spanish)  
The protection of Changó!

A red and white beaded bracelet graces Rob's wrist.

ROB  
Abuela says so. Please, sit.

They sit. Ed places a DSLR Nikon camera on the desk. Rob reads over Ed's file on his computer monitor.

ROB (CONT'D)  
So, we're a small firm. Why us?

ED  
Only Latin-owned firm in Greenwich.  
Double digit returns quarter over  
quarter. Easy pick, man. Come on.

ROB  
Thanks. Done your homework, I see.

ED  
Yeah. Wish I could say I hit it big  
with photography. Just can't be  
another lotto winner gone broke.

ROB  
You made the right choice.

Ed beams but the creep factor in his eyes remains. Rob squints at something on the PC.

ROB (CONT'D)  
It's you.

ED  
Come again?

ROB  
Address. You're our new neighbor.  
Saw your truck parked outside the  
gate the other night.

ED  
Wait, we're vecinos?

ROB  
It's a beautiful house.  
Congratulations.

ED

Gracias! Wow, this is so exciting.  
I'm guessing there's not a lot of  
"us" in the area?

ROB

Eh, put it this way: You'll be a  
big-ass breath of fresh air.

INT. MOVING FERRARI - NIGHT

Rob cruises a blue Ferrari SF90 through an old money suburb.

EXT. MENDES DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Rob rolls past an electronic gate to a modern masterpiece.  
Deep, mysterious woods loom beyond the mansion.

EXT. MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

The garage door closes behind Rob.

A muscle-bound GERMAN SHEPARD scampers across the lawn.

ROB

Chico! There's my papa!

Rob kneels down. **CHICO (7)** slaps his tongue across his face.  
Rob cracks up.

INT. MENDES MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Laura sits at her vanity organizing congratulations cards  
drawn by children into a folder titled "4th Graders, 2025."

ROB (O.S.)

Miss them already, huh?

Rob enters in a Versace robe. She nods and pouts playfully.

ROB (CONT'D)

Picked this up on the way.

He kisses Laura and drops a jewelry box on the desk. Laura  
opens it. Her mouth drops. She removes a PLATINUM NECKLACE  
with a guardian angel charm. Tears well up in her eyes.

EXT. GREENWICH COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Rob approaches an elegant clubhouse on a tree-lined lawn.

A camera shutter *CLICKS* in the distance.

INT. CIGAR ROOM, GREENWICH COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Rob and **MARK YOUNG (37)** - preppy but cool - mingle with some **DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMEN (60's)** savoring cognac and cigars.

MARK

Tupac famously said, "Revenge is like the sweetest joy next to getting pussy." I actually think it's making a fuck ton of money. Nothing's better than that shit. But then, I've never taken revenge.

DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN 1

You're still young. Give it time.

They laugh and slosh cognac down their throats. Rob stares.

Cocky trust fund brothers **CHAD (29)** and **TRAVIS (28)** strut over clad in squash gear. Chad points his racket at Rob.

CHAD

Standing me up again, New Money?!

INT. SQUASH COURT, GREENWICH COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Rob and Mark engage Chad and Travis in a long squash rally. Rob hustles like his life depends on winning the game. Travis can't help being impressed. Chad can hardly keep up.

Rob **BASHES** a kill shot across the court, scoring. He whoops.

INT. ED'S TRUCK - DAY

Ed pricks his finger with a thumbtack and uses his blood to mark a photo of Rob entering the country club with a sigil. **FOUR ARROWS PROTRUDING FROM A HORNED SKULL.**

EXT. GREENWICH - DAY

Leaves dance in the crispy fall air.



INT. GREENWICH BAKERY - DAY

Rob scrolls through news articles on an impending recession.  
Ed drops into the seat across from him.

ED  
Pretty good for Gringo coffee.

Rob looks up surprised to see him.

ROB  
Oh, Ed. Yeah. How's it going?

ED  
Honestly? Not used to all this  
freedom. And you know what they say  
about idle hands. Being rich is  
harder than people think.

ROB  
You think about a job?

ED  
Ain't that hard.

Rob chuckles and raises his mug. They toast and drink.

ED (CONT'D)  
So, what's your story, vecino?  
How'd you make it to the top?

ROB  
Well, uh, abuela's ass whippings  
paid off when I got a scholarship  
to Fordham Business. An internship  
at Goldman became a job. Cashed out  
some risky stock and crypto picks  
that rallied to start Mendes Cap.

Ed's face takes on a sinister quality. He uses his finger to  
CARVE A SHAPE into the empty space between them. Rob's eyes  
glaze over like he's hypnotized. The sounds around him fade.

Ed grins like a predator playing with his catch.

ED  
How did you get your fortune?

Rob's voice is monotone.

ROB  
I shorted several companies.  
Invested in others. I also inves-

ED  
What happened to your parents?

ROB  
My father was killed in prison.  
Mami got sick and died.

Ed's energy suddenly wanes. Blood trails down his nostrils.  
He wipes it clean and traces the air again.

Rob snaps out of it. The sounds of the bakery return.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Sorry, what- what was I saying?

ED  
You were just asking if I have any  
Thanksgiving plans.

EXT. MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

Dapper guests file inside. Rob greets Ed at the door.

ROB  
Vecino. Thank you for coming.

Ed holds up his camera and smiles.

ED  
No, thank you. I'll have the prints  
over to you by morning.

INT. MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

Ed follows Rob inside. The foyer opens up to soaring  
ceilings and marble twin stairs. Ed is beyond impressed.

ED  
I mean, wow. You are blessed.

Despite its enormity, the house is intimate and worldly.  
Posters of Salsa and Hip Hop legends mingle with fine art. A  
wedding photo of Rob and Laura hangs over the fireplace.

INT. BALLROOM, MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

Clean and trendy like an upscale cocktail bar. Guests dance  
Salsa to a LIVE BAND. Tuxedoed servers deal drinks and apps.

Ed swings around the party SNAPPING PHOTOS with his Nikon. Having a blast. He stops at Rob and raises his beer bottle. Rob captures a selfie.

Mark dances with **MARIA GONZALES (67)** who moves with vigor and poise in a fearless red dress, her eyes wise and steady.

Ed watches with deep interest. He photographs them.

ED

If there's one thing money can't  
buy, vecino, it's family.

ROB

Yeah. Met Mark in Grad school.  
Abuela Maria raised me after my  
parents died. Too stubborn to leave  
The Bronx, though. Neighborhood  
Santera won't abandon her clients.

ED

Oh, I'm so sorry. She must be super  
proud, though.

Rob looks unsure. Maria dances towards him. Ed hones in on her SAINT BARBARA CHAIN. She catches herself staring at his scars and stops. She checks her watch and waves Rob over.

MARIA

Mijo, help me pack some food!

Rob follows her to the kitchen. Ed watches them.

INT. MENDES KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maria pulls Rob inside. She speaks with hushed urgency.

MARIA

(Spanish)

That man. Bad vibes. Who is he?

ROB

Ed? He's our new neighbor. At least  
say hello before you judge.

MARIA

Can't. I have to see a client. And  
I know people. Energy. Trust me.

ROB

Yes. I'll be safe, abuela. Promise.

He smiles reassuringly and kisses her forehead.

INT. DINING ROOM, MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

Rob, Laura, Ed and the guests sit at a Last Supper-like table before a Latin feast. Only Rob's plate lacks meat.

LAURA  
This seven-month bundle of joy.

Rob rubs her belly.

ROB  
Same. My baby boy!

LAURA  
Stop. You don't know it's a boy.

ROB  
See that belly? That's a boy.

LAURA  
I just want it to be healthy.

ED  
That's all that matters.

MAURICIO (O.S.)  
I'm grateful for this food but it's getting cold.

**MAURICIO RIVERA'S (37)** biceps bulge through an NYPD T-shirt. He sports a full beard and faded tattoos. A born protector.

He nudges **VICKY RIVERA (15)**, a blonde bundle of wit with many facial piercings. She doomscrolls on TikTok.

VICKY  
Uh, TikTok, I guess.

LAURA  
Your turn, Ed.

ED  
Easy. I am grateful for this day.  
This food. And mostly, this family.

MAURICIO  
Amen, brother. Amen.

LAURA  
Happy to have you, Ed.

ROB  
Definitely. Let's eat!

Everyone digs in. Ed gives Laura two thumbs up. She smiles.

ED

Rob says you teach.

LAURA

Mmm-hmm. Elementary. And you?  
Photographer by trade?

ED

Mmm. Yes. Mostly family photos.  
Events. Not much but it kept me  
afloat. Would never monetize my  
only other talent.

LAURA

Which is?

ED

Eh, I just have this special  
connection with the spirit realm.

*WOOF-WOOF-WOOF!* Heads turn to see Chico hunched in an  
aggressive posture at the doorway, his eyes clamped onto Ed.

LAURA

Chico, stop! Sorry, Ed. He can be  
so overprotective with new faces.

ED

Gorgeous, too!

He photographs Chico. The dog whimpers and runs off.  
Mauricio casts Ed a suspicious glance. That was odd.

VICKY

(to Ed)

Can you channel spirits?

ED

Under the right conditions. Why?

Rob and Laura swap dubious glances.

VICKY

I want to talk to my mother.

MAURICIO

What the fuck, Vick?

Mark and the other guests are taken aback.

ED

Oh. Um, I don't think our hosts-

VICKY  
 If he's full of shit, we'll know.  
 If not, we get to speak to mom.

She implores Mauricio, Rob and Laura with her eyes...

EXT. MENDES DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Rob sees the guests to their vehicles.

EXT. MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

Lights go off throughout the house. The windows are shut.

INT. DEN, MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

Candles cast sparse pools of light throughout the room.

Rob, Laura and Mauricio sit on the couch staring straight ahead while Vicky records on her iPhone.

Ed looks directly into the gold chandelier above and spins with his arms held out to his sides.

ED  
 (Spanish)  
 We invite you, mother of Victoria,  
 who is here with me! Join us,  
 Pamela Morales! Join us now!

Mauricio is on edge. Rob and Laura, skeptically entertained. Vicky expects to be disappointed.

ED (CONT'D)  
 I am your willing vessel! Use me!  
 Use me, Pamela Morales! Use me to  
 speak to your daughter! I am your  
 willing vessel!!! Speak to her!!!

ED'S POV: The chandelier rotates with dizzying speed.

ED (CONT'D)  
 Speak to her! Speak to her! Speak-

*THUMP-THUMP-THUMP!*

Everyone staples their eyes to the door.

ED (CONT'D)  
 She's here! Let her in, Victoria!

Vicky stammers.

ED (CONT'D)  
Let her in, or she'll go!

VICKY  
C- come in, mom! Mom, come in!

A GUST OF WIND ruffles Vicky and Laura's hair. Small furniture pieces float several feet into the air.

Rob shoots up to his feet and Vicky drops her iPhone as Laura gawks in fear and amazement.

Mauricio teeters between rage and complete terror.

Orbs of light circle above Ed's head. He shakes violently.

MAURICIO  
Okay, stop this shit, now!

The airborne furniture ROTATES around the room.

Mauricio leads Vicky away by her arm. They dodge furniture.

Ed WHEEZES like a dying man. Spins quicker. Tremors harder.

Mauricio twists the doorknob.

The furniture crashes back down. Wind blows out the candles. The orbs fly into the top of Ed's head. He freezes mid-spin. At a high pitch:

ED  
Don't leave me, Cheeky!

Vicky and Mauricio halt. They turn around, stupefied.

Ed fixates on Vicky. A sad, endearing look.

ED (CONT'D)  
Oh, my baby. You're all grown up!

Vicky gravitates back to Ed. He strokes her hair. Tears well up in Vicky's eyes.

VICKY  
Ma- mami?

ED  
I miss you so much, baby. I'm sorry  
I had to go. I'm so sorry.

Laura watches them with wet eyes and Rob's mouth hangs open. Mauricio's face contorts with conflict and grief.

Ed takes Vicky into his arms. She weeps openly.

Mauricio trudges up to Ed.

ED (CONT'D)  
My love. My sweet Maury.

MAURICIO  
Pam? Is it really you?

Ed releases Vicky.

ED  
It's me, Maury. It's me.

MAURICIO  
I'm sorry. Should've saw the signs.

Ed opens his arms. Mauricio slides into them and weeps.

MAURICIO (CONT'D)  
Oh, God. I love you so much.

Ed pulls back and looks him dead in the eyes.

ED  
Then why did you kill me?

Vicky's face crumbles and Mauricio's eyes widen with shock. Rob and Laura stare in horrified disbelief. Ed grips Mauricio's shoulders and SHAKES HIM violently.

ED (CONT'D)  
You broke my heart! You killed me!

Rob tries to pry Ed's grip off of Mauricio. Blood flows from Ed's nose. He SLAPS the color out of Mauricio's face.

VICKY  
STOP IT! STOP IT! STOP IT!

Ed's stabbing gaze hits Rob.

ED  
You! You always wanted to fuck me!  
Even before you started dating that  
stuck-up bitch, Laura!

Ed grabs a fire poker and rushes Rob.

Vicky flicks a switch and light floods the room.



Ed freezes and drops the poker. His eyes roll to the white. His back arches dramatically. He ROARS full of pain.

The chandelier bulbs EXPLODE.

EXT. MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

Vicky races away in tears. Mauricio chases her.

MAURICIO

Vick, that wasn't your mother!

VICKY

She knew my nickname!

MAURICIO

Maybe it was a familiar spirit!

VICKY

What even is that?!

MAURICIO

If you read your Bible you'd know!

He catches up and pulls her around.

MAURICIO (CONT'D)

Mami got over my dumb mistakes years ago, okay?! She just... couldn't take the pain anymore. Whatever that was, it wasn't her.

VICKY

It's not fucking fair!

Mauricio pulls her into his chest.

INT. MENDES FOYER - NIGHT

Rob leans against the wall harboring a spaced-out look. Laura's hands are shaking. They are too shocked to talk.

EXT. ED'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shrouded in deep, almost otherworldly darkness.

INT. ED'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

A large IRON CAULDRON lurks in the dark. It is marked by the skull & arrows sigil in white chalk.

Ed sits cross-legged at the cauldron in a receptive state. **JUAN (65)**, a craggy and mysterious man, sits at his side. His eyes are like deep space. Dark, remote and cold. As they speak in Spanish, Juan's raspy voice conveys calm authority.

JUAN

Are you sure they are worthy of The Unholy Trinity, this family? Their hearts mustn't be too heavy.

ED

The child will be born soon. Pure and innocent. The parents are also, to my surprise, both good people.

JUAN

Good. The others will be pleased. The child... is it a male?

ED

Yes. The spirits have confirmed.

He pats Ed's back and looks at him poignantly.

JUAN

You've done well. But you must offer The Unholy Trinity to a more powerful spirit. One capable of sustaining you during The Black Awakening. Ending the nosebleeds. You have my blessing.

Ed bows obediently. They gaze upon the cauldron.

EXT. GLENVILLE - DAY

Day breaks over the serene suburb.

INT. OFFICES, MENDES CAPITAL - DAY

Rob scans a complex portfolio spreadsheet on his computer. He fidgets in his chair. Can't concentrate.

INT. MENDES KITCHEN - DAY

Laura observes a PHOTO OF AN OLD MAN on the fridge, longing. She grips the angel charm on her necklace.

EXT. GLENVILLE - DAY

Rob walks Chico down to a corner. Chico squats on the floor. Rob tugs on the leash. Chico doesn't budge.

ROB  
Chico?

Ed pulls up to the corner in his truck. Drops the window. Chico tenses and grumbles, exposing his teeth.

ED  
Rob, I'm so sorry about last night.  
Feel horrible. Is everyone okay?

ROB  
No, yeah, it's... You did warn us.

Ed locks eyes with Chico. The dog whimpers and takes a shit.

INT. MENDES KITCHEN - NIGHT

Laura drinks a milky white substance in a glass and shops online. Rob comes inside with grocery bags and empties them on the counter, noticing the bottle of Laura's drink.

ROB  
Hey. Where'd you get the coquito?

LAURA  
Oh, Ed stopped by with the photos.  
Said he felt terrible and offered.  
It's virgin. Have some.

ROB  
Oh. Nah. Never liked the taste.

A small tadpole looking thing SWIMS across the bottle.

INT. ED'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Ed drops copies of the Thanksgiving photos in the cauldron. He pours in dirt, dead bugs, sticks, rocks and animal bones.

INT. MENDES MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Rob takes a shot of NyQuil.

INT. ED'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Ed crowns the cauldron with a HUMAN SKULL. He surrounds it with seven railroad spikes, four machetes, and a rum bottle. Ed wraps a chain around the cauldron and padlocks it. *CLINK!*

INT. MENDES MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rob JOLTS awake. He sits up against the headboard and audits his body for injuries that aren't there. Laura sleeps soundly at his side. Rob glances at his clock. It's 3:36 am.

His phone VIBRATES on the nightstand.

EXT. BRONX HOSPITAL - DAY

Rob and Laura rush through the automatic doors.

INT. VICKY'S ROOM, BRONX HOSPITAL - DAY

An IV and a bag of blood feed Vicky's veins as she sleeps. A tube between her legs deposits blood into a plastic pouch.

Mauricio hovers over her in distress.

MAURICIO

She just collapsed. Doctors said it's like a super-heavy period that won't stop. Don't even have a name for it. How the fuck, primo? How?

Rob and Laura stand at the foot of Vicky's bed, ruffled.

MAURICIO (CONT'D)

They're trying to find a surgeon before it puts her in a coma, or worse. I- I can't live with that shit, bro. I can't.

Rob palms his shoulder. Vicky's eyelids flutter open.

VICKY

Pa- papi?

Mauricio kisses her forehead.

MAURICIO

I'm right here, Vick. I'm here.

VICKY

I feel so weak, papi.

Mauricio fights back tears. He strokes her hair.

MAURICIO  
You're gonna be fine, baby.

Rob secures Vicky's hand.

ROB  
I'll pay for the best doctors.  
Money fixes everything, right?

Vicky manages a weak smile.

INT. HALL, BRONX HOSPITAL - DAY

Rob and Laura wait for the elevator in a somber state.

LAURA  
Jesus. Just the idea is too much.

ROB  
Can't think of anything scarier.

INT. MENDES MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

Rob holds his troubled reflection in the mirror. His phone VIBRATES on the sink. Rob fixates on it... Then answers.

MARK  
(phone)  
Game on, bro-boss! We're waiting.

ROB  
Sorry, it's just... family shit.

MARK  
(phone)  
Damn. Everyone alright?

ROB  
They will be.

MARK  
(phone)  
All good. I'll just tell them-

ROB  
No, I- I'll be there.

INT. SQUASH COURT, GREENWICH COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Rob stares down at the floor deadpan.

CHAD (O.S.)  
Yo, New Money! Your serve!

Rob snaps back. He serves the ball hard. Travis returns it. Mark pops it back. Chad whacks a volley and scores on Rob. Chad and Travis smack hands in victory.

CHAD (CONT'D)  
Where's that inner city grit, huh?!

INT. SAME - MOMENTS LATER

Rob plays with unabated aggression. Greedy for every shot. Even Mark looks worried. Chad drives the ball angrily.

Rob dives for a swat. Travis lobbs the ball. It bounces and shoots behind Chad. Rob sprints around him and scores.

The scoreboard flips to 11-0.

ROB  
Bagel, motherfucker!

Chad cocks back a fist. Rob WHACKS him with the racket and he crumples. Rob beats him bloody. Mark and Travis stop him.

EXT. ED'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ed stands at his window holding a dead, fifty yard stare...

INT. CAFETERIA, MASPETH HIGH SCHOOL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A melting pot of students chill and eat.

**TEEN ED** sits alone jotting notes into a small black book. There's a school lunch pizza and milk carton on his tray.

A boisterous clique makes their way down the aisle. Ring leader **CARLOS (17)**, tall and handsome, stops in front of Ed. He releases **LISA'S (16)** hand. Pours Ed's milk over his food. Ed stops writing but he keeps his eyes on the page.

CARLOS  
Did you a favor, Pizza Face!

His gang laughs. Ed squeezes the pencil into the page.

CARLOS (CONT'D)  
Gonna use your brujeria bullshit on  
me? Try it, bitch!

The pencil SNAPS. Carlos slaps Ed. He falls out of his seat.  
Carlos pounds his face.

EXT. ED'S HOUSE - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Ed bashes his fists against the window in a fit of rage.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GREENWICH - DAY

Car horns scratch the air in a jammed street.

INT. ROB'S FERRARI - DAY

Rob leans on his horn and curses under his breath.

INT. OFFICES, MENDES CAPITAL - DAY

Rob speed-walks past Janey who holds out a coffee mug.

INT. RESTROOM, MENDES CAPITAL - DAY

Rob dashes to the urinal. He relieves himself and sighs.  
Something shuffles around him. Rob cocks his head.

Mark meanders around like an aimless zombie. He stops and  
stares down at his feet. Beads of sweat glide down his face.  
He looks up. His skin is pale, his eyes are sunken in, and  
his mouth hangs ajar in a disturbing, uncanny manner.

ROB  
The fuck, Mark? You dying on me?  
Take the day, brother. Now. Go.

Mark nods absently and slithers away. Rob shakes his head.

INT. ROB'S OFFICE, MENDES CAPITAL - DAY

Rob's eyes roam his PC monitors. His focus drifts outside.  
He catches a glimpse of a ghostly white image.

A BARN OWL glides by. It fixes Rob with a piercing glare.  
Rob holds its gaze, a smile forming...

Three *GUNSHOTS* shatter the peace. Rob *JUMPS* off his chair. Mortified wails erupt from the main offices. Rob scrambles behind his desk. *BANG-BANG-BANG!* He flinches at each shot.

JANEY (O.S.)  
Mark, please put it down!

Rob goes into survival mode. He swipes a letter opener off his desk and draws a prolonged breath, steeling himself... He creeps over to the door sweating. He nudges it open.

A DEAD EMPLOYEE lies at his feet riddled with bullet holes. Rob cups his mouth. He nudges the body back with the door.

INT. OFFICES, MENDES CAPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Rob steps into a BLOODY MASSACRE. Corpses litter the space. Survivors cower under desks. Mark presses a pistol to Janey's temple. She cries with her hands up in surrender.

Rob conceals the letter opener behind his back.

ROB  
Hey. What- what's going on, Mark?

Mark aims the pistol at Rob, his eyes distant and lost.

ROB (CONT'D)  
I'll get you help, brother.  
Whatever you need. I swear. Just-

Mark aims the pistol at Janey again. She cowers and weeps. Rob snails towards Mark.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Please, listen to me. Just listen  
to me. Put it down, Mark. Put it-

Rob storms Mark, stabbing him in the shoulder as they fall. They wrestle for the gun. Mark *SLAMS* his forehead into Rob's nose, stunning him. He stands and points the gun at Rob.

ROB (CONT'D)  
No, no, no! Don't!

Janey charges Mark. He pivots and *SHOOTS HER* in the face. She falls beside Rob, the shock of death in her eyes.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Janey!

*BLAM!* Blood *SPLASHES* across Rob's face. Mark collapses in front of him. Smoke flows from a bullet hole in his temple.



INT. OFFICES, MENDES CAPITAL - DAY

Photographers and forensic techs capture the crime scene.

INT. LOBBY, OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Rob sits with his face buried in his hands, shaken to his core. Two **GLENVILLE COPS (30's)** take notes.

GLENVILLE COP 1  
Was he overworked? Losing sleep?

Rob looks up at him, offended.

ROB  
No. That's what I'm saying. It  
doesn't make sense. He was happy.  
Healthy. Making more than ever.

The cops write that down.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Please tell the families Mendes Cap  
will cover all expenses and provide  
a relief fund. One million each.

GLENVILLE COP 2  
Very generous of you.

ROB  
They were all breadwinners.  
Families are going to need it.

Laura breaks inside the lobby panting with grave concern.  
She speaks to a cop. He points her to Rob. She jogs over.

LAURA  
Oh, my God! I'm so sorry!

Rob clings to her like a scared child.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

A crowded wake. Rob and Laura hover at Janey's open casket.  
Rob absorbs her dead face. He grips Laura's hand.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - NIGHT

A jubilant photo of Mark shines on a stand at the entrance.

Rob and Laura exit arm in arm. His eyes are bloodshot.

INT. ROB'S BMW - NIGHT

Rob reads an article of the shooting on his phone.

ROB

"Police are investigating if the  
shooter may have been overworked or  
had any grudges."  
Unfuckingbelievable. I'm ruined.

Laura takes the phone from him and puts it down.

LAURA

No. Not unless you decide to be.

Rob nods with admiration at her resolve.

ROB

Gonna go check on Mo and Vicky.  
Drop you off home?

LAURA

Two funerals in one day. I'm beat.

INT. CAFETERIA, BRONX HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Rob watches Mauricio devour a tuna sandwich.

MAURICIO

Mmm. Know what this sounds like?

Rob draws a blank.

MAURICIO (CONT'D)

A curse, cabrón. Brujería.

Patrons cast them wary glances.

ROB

What? Why? I don't have enemies.

MAURICIO

Anybody can have enemies.  
Especially someone with everything.

Rob's shoulders sag.

MAURICIO (CONT'D)

Then there's whatever Ed summoned.  
Pam would never say all that shit.

Rob rubs his face and stares fixedly at his cousin.

MAURICIO (CONT'D)

Look, I know this ain't your world,  
but talk to abuela. If it's just  
bad luck, she'll know. Give it a  
shot, brother, please. For Vicky.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A BMW M8 Gran Coupe rips past a "Welcome to The Bronx" sign.

EXT. BRONX BUILDING COMPLEX - NIGHT

A one way in and out community of red brick giants.

EXT. MARIA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Several prayer candles surround a teenage boy's picture.

Rob parks the BMW. A weed-smoking crowd admires the car.  
They snicker at an unheard joke. Rob kills the engine.

**JEFF (42)** lumbers towards him smoking a spliff. He's tall,  
muscular, and high as hell.

JEFF

Get the fuck outta here! Rob?!

ROB

Jeff?! El Jefe?!

JEFF

In the flesh, papi!

Rob exits the car. They embrace firmly. Rob pulls back and  
admires Jeff's bulging biceps while Jeff takes in his  
designer outfit, a bit embarrassed.

ROB

Still can't drop the weights, huh?

JEFF

Never that! Plus, I just came home.  
Five years up north.

ROB

Welcome back, brother.

Jeff swigs on a bottle of cheap liquor and offers it to Rob.  
He gestures a polite refusal.

JEFF

Going to see abuela, right? I'll  
watch the car. Can't trust nobody.

INT. ELEVATOR, MARIA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

The graffitied box rises with creaks and groans.

Rob fidgets with his bracelet.

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A SHRINE: Cigars, a Virgin Mary figurine, offering bowls, a crucifix candle and laminated photos of the Catholic saints.

Rob sits on the couch. He can't stop bouncing his leg. He scans the home like he hasn't seen it in years.

Maria steps through a colorful beaded curtain trailed by **BRENDA (30)** and **TITO (30)**. Fraternal twins. Vintage pastels. They exude cool and caring charm.

MARIA

Brenda and Tito came to help.

Rob sticks out a hand. Tito pulls him into a bear hug.

TITO

Heard nothing but good things!

Rob pulls back awkwardly. Brenda shakes his hand.

BRENDA

Mom dropped him on his head. A lot.

Maria lights the crucifix candle. Pours rum into the bowls. Spills three drops of holy water on a straw mat. She shakes several cowrie shells and throws them on the mat, reading.

MARIA

(Spanish)

The spirits have agreed to speak.  
But they come with warnings.

She cracks open a red notebook labeled "LIBRETA DE SOMBRAS" (BOOK OF SHADOWS) and marks a record of the reading. She collects the cowrie shells. Drops them again. Unsatisfied, she scrapes up the shells. Exhales. Tosses them once more.

Maria grips the twelve beaded necklaces around her neck. Brenda and Tito swap nervous glances.

ROB

What is it? What does it mean?

Maria looks like she's about to diagnose him with cancer.  
Brenda says it for her.

BRENDA

Death follows you. You are cursed.

Maria slaps her own forehead.

MARIA

That man... Your neighbor.

ROB

I- I don't get it. Why would he-

MARIA

(Spanish)

I don't know. It feels personal.  
You must identify the curse. The  
more we know, the better we can  
fight against it.

ROB

Identify it how?

TITO

Brujo's usually prepare their  
curses in an extra space, like an  
attic or basement. Take pictures.

ROB

What? I can't just break in.

MARIA

You'll find a way. You must.

BRENDA

If you see something, no matter  
what it is, do not confront him.

TITO

It'll only make shit worse.

Rob stands and paces, beyond overwhelmed.

ROB

What if I move? Will that stop it?

TITO

Distance doesn't matter once a  
curse has been sealed on you.

(MORE)

TITO (CONT'D)

It might make him more aggressive.  
Best that he sees you as oblivious.

Rob comes to a damning realization.

ROB

How am I supposed to live next door  
to someone like that?

MARIA

Better to succumb to his power, or  
make him question it?

That makes Rob think. Maria grabs his hands.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Trust me. Trust abuela Maria.

EXT. MARIA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Rob marches to his BMW. Jeff leans against it smoking weed.

A **TALL THUG (32)** runs up to Jeff.

TALL THUG

Remember me, motherfucker?!

JEFF

Who the fuck-

Tall Thug SHOOTS Jeff in the head. His blood and brains  
splatter across the car and his body slumps to the ground.

Rob stares at Jeff's crumpled body in terror and shock...  
Tall Thug spits on Jeff's corpse. Swings around to face Rob.

TALL THUG

Fuck you looking at?

Rob's hands fly up. Tall Thug clocks his Changó bracelet.  
Something makes him peer up past Rob.

Maria glares down at the thug from her balcony. It's a cold  
and frightening stare, even from this distance... Spooked,  
Tall Thug tucks his pistol in his waistband and jets off.

Rob's eyes swing up to the balcony. Maria is gone.

INT. MENDES GARAGE - NIGHT

Rob frantically hoses Jeff's blood off his BMW.

INT. OFFICE, MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

Rob sits at the window in a state of sheer fear and trauma. He watches Ed drive away from his house in the truck. Rob checks his phone. 11:15 PM. He sets an alarm for 11:30 PM.

EXT. MENDES BACKYARD - NIGHT

Rob approaches the fence, his breath shaky. He looks around. Clear. He climbs over.

EXT. ED'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Ghostly fog drifts across a dying garden.

Rob crouches to the house. He finds an open basement window. Plots his next move.

ROB  
(to himself)  
This is crazy, Rob. Fucking crazy.

INT. ED'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

A ceiling bulb casts a faint glow over the large space.

Rob drops in through the window. Flies swirl. Stacked boxes. A washer-dryer. Normal as can be. Rob navigates... He slips on something and catches himself on the wall. He looks down.

A STREAK OF BLOOD runs across the floor.

Rob follows the crimson trail, moon-eyed, his breath paused. The blood leads to a large tin bucket where flies gather. Rob makes himself peer inside.

A severed goat head stares up at him.

Rob gags and groans. He notices that he is standing inside a PENTACLE OF BLOOD. Black skull candles at its five points. The grim cauldron in the center...

A METALLIC RATTLE makes Rob jump. He traces the sound to a white sheet draped over a big, cubed object. He lifts the sheet, exposing the bars of a steel cage.

A pair of goat legs KICK against the prison. STEEL CLATTERS as Rob falls backwards, stripping off the sheet.

The caged goat SMASHES its face against the bars and BLEATS.

ROB  
Fucking hell, man!

He gathers himself. He photographs the goat with his phone.  
A black curtain billows behind the cage.

INT. ED'S SHRINE ROOM - NIGHT

Rob inches past the black curtain.

ROB  
What in the actual fuck?

Vivid, floor-to-ceiling DEPICTIONS OF SATAN cover the walls.  
In one, his arms are folded, and his long tongue lashes out  
with a leering smile. In another, he is skeletal, hooded and  
wielding a scythe. The third Satan is ghastly and horned.

Rob forces himself to venture further inside...

A SHRINE is populated by rum bottles, black skull candles,  
three small black boxes and a skull-bowl full of blood.

Rob peers into one of the bottles. Something is partly  
submerged in the alcohol. Rob turns the bottle over.

The liquid spills to one side revealing a photo of Rob and  
Laura. Four intersecting arrows mark their eyes.

Rob puts the bottle down with a groan. He opens a black box.  
Inside is a WAX DOLL. Yellow string hangs down its head.  
Short strands of red string cover the crotch area.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Vicky?

HEADLIGHTS spill through a window.

Rob crouches behind the shrine. Boots *CRUNCH* over the grass  
outside, then trail off. Rob checks the other black boxes,  
finding wax dolls that look eerily like himself and Laura.

A sense of doom rises in Rob. He snaps photos of the room.

*BEEP-BEEP! BEEP-BEEP!*

Rob silences his phone alarm in a flash and looks at the  
black curtain like he just got sentenced to death.



INT. ED'S BASEMENT - SAME TIME

The basement door creaks open. Ed's shadow stretches over the stairs. He descends at a deliberate pace while tapping a rusty machete on the wall. *TINK-TINK. TINK-TINK. TINK-TINK.*

INT. ED'S SHRINE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rob's eyes dart around the room.

INT. CLOSET, ED'S SHRINE ROOM - NIGHT

Rob stands statue stiff. His big tense eyes comb over a myriad of occult items cramming the shelves.

ED (O.S.)  
(Spanish)  
Oh, father Satan! I offer you this  
flesh and blood, how you like it!

INT. ED'S SHRINE ROOM - NIGHT

Rob creeps to the black curtain. He peels it back a sliver.

ROB'S POV: The goat stands within the pentagram surrounded by the now lit black skull candles. Ed grips the animal by its throat and raises his machete. He SWINGS down--

Rob cringes to the goat's *DEATH GROAN*.

INT. ED'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Ed holds the goat's severed head over the cauldron. Something *THUDS* behind the black curtain.

INT. SHRINE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ed bursts inside. His electric eyes sweep over the room.

He strides to the closet and grabs the doorknob as he raises his machete. A tea kettle *WHISTLES* upstairs.

EXT. ED'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Rob crawls out of the basement window with all the tension of a soldier behind enemy lines. He hops up to his feet and guns it. He clears the fence in one adrenaline-fused hurdle.

MARIA (V.O.)  
(Spanish)  
Your neighbor is a "Palero", a  
priest of Palo Mayombe, a religion  
that boasts the most powerful and  
feared form of black magic on  
earth. Congolese slaves in Cuba  
preserved its essence for  
centuries.

INT. MOVING FERRARI - NIGHT

Rob flies down a highway crushing a stress ball.

MARIA (V.O.)  
(Spanish)  
While most Santeros use the forces  
of light, Paleros proudly use the  
powers of darkness for their gain.  
To them, evil is a misunderstanding  
of the forces for cosmic balance.

EXT. 47TH PRECINCT - NIGHT

Rob shoves the doors open and stomps through the lobby.

MARIA (V.O.)  
(Spanish)  
They embrace power through pacts  
made with fierce and unruly spirits  
summoned into a cauldron. The  
Nganga.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM, 47TH PRECINCT - NIGHT

Mauricio sits with **OFFICER SPERRY (46)**, the kind of jaded,  
hard-to-impress cop that can't wait for his pension to hit.  
He scrolls through Rob's phone.

Rob paces chewing his fingernails.

ROB  
Can't find anything on him online.  
I want to know who he is and why  
the fuck he's doing this.

Mauricio tears his eyes away from the phone with a shiver.  
Sperry scratches his head.

SPERRY  
They're just... selfies.

Rob snatches his phone back. He swipes through selfies of himself with creepily exaggerated expressions of terror, joy, sadness and rage. Rob's head sways from left to right.

ROB  
I... I didn't take these. I didn't  
fucking take these!

OFFICER SPERRY  
What exactly did you see?

ROB  
There's all this occult shit in his  
basement. He has pictures of us in  
liquor bottles. Fucking wax dolls!

OFFICER SPERRY  
How'd you come to see his basement?

ROB  
That's not important. Please, I'm  
coming to you for help, man. The  
point is I need to know who he is.  
His name is Edward Gomez, from  
Queens. There must be something!

Sperry gives Mauricio a chastising look. Queries a database. Thousands of names populate on the screen.

OFFICER SPERRY  
How about a picture?

ROB  
Okay, yes! We, uh, took a selfie.

Rob taps his for the photo. His jaw drops.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

Laura sits on the bed steeped in dread, holding Rob's phone. It shows the selfie he took with Ed at the party, but Ed is noticeably absent from the photo. Laura puts it down.

LAURA  
I... I saw you two take it.

Rob paces the room covered in sweat.

LAURA (CONT'D)  
Isn't he a photographer? Get a  
physical picture to give Sperry.

ROB  
I know. But how?

Laura marches into the closet. She rummages for a moment, then emerges with a 500 Smith & Wesson Magnum.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Whoa. Hold on. What are you doing?

LAURA  
We have to protect this family.

ROB  
By going to jail for murder?!

She loads bullets into the chamber.

LAURA  
I'm not going to shoot him.  
(snaps the cylinder shut)  
Not unless he makes me.

EXT. ED'S HOUSE - DAY

Laura rings Ed's doorbell, right hand in her jacket pocket. Hulking footsteps come from inside...

ED (O.S.)  
Coming!

Laura clears her throat and waits... The door swings open. Ed looks at Laura, pleasantly surprised.

LAURA  
Me and my dead father have  
unfinished business.

Ed steps back and motions for Laura to enter. She hesitates, then steps inside. Ed scans his lawn and driveway.

EXT. ED'S DRIVEWAY - SAME TIME

Rob hides in the bushes equipped with a knife and an earbud.

INT. ED'S HOUSE - DAY

Gilded Age elegant. Ed ushers Laura past classic European paintings and busts on the floor, which have been replaced by the Afro-Latino artwork on proud display.

INT. ED'S DEN - DAY

Laura follows Ed inside.

The room is rustic and adorned in Central African decor. Bakongo masks hang over a shelf of African history books.

ED  
First room I made my own.

LAURA  
Love it. Yeah. Not so Eurocentric.

ED  
Thank you. Please, get comfortable.

Laura parks herself on a straw chair.

ED (CONT'D)  
Have to set the mood.

As he turns out the lights and shuts the windows Laura quietly draws her phone from her left jacket pocket. The display shows an active call with HUBBY.

ED (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
How does Rob feel about this?

LAURA  
(pockets phone)  
Honestly, he's still spooked by the whole thing. If we can keep this between us, I'd appreciate it.

ED  
Secret's safe with me, vecina. So, what happened to your father?

What Laura is about to say is clearly hard for her.

LAURA  
He abused me when I was young. My mother took him back when he was released from prison. Said he found God. But I never forgave him. When he got cancer he kept asking to see me in the hospital. Seeking forgiveness before the end. I never went, so... he died alone. Hated by his only child.

Laura finds herself in tears. Ed offers a tissue.

ED  
Some things only God can forgive.

LAURA  
(standing)  
Sorry. Can I... use your bathroom?

INT. ED'S FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Thick grey curtains draped over windows subdue the sunlight.

Laura marches the dim expanse breathing shakily.

Wood-carved Central African power figures hang on the walls. Their bellies are open and nails protrude from their bodies. Their inert, penetrating eyes seem to watch Laura.

Laura stops at the first door. She opens it. A small gym. She opens more doors. A piano room. Library. Bathroom. Rubber strips cover the borders of the last door.

INT. ED'S DARK ROOM - DAY

Laura shuffles to a workstation under amber safelights. Eerie pictures of the forest develop inside chemical trays.

EXT. ED'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Rob watches anxiously. Maria calls his phone. He declines.

INT. ED'S DARK ROOM - DAY

Laura rifles through the workstation drawers. *FOOTFALLS* rise from the hallway. Her search becomes frantic. The footsteps gain in volume and pace. Laura opens the bottom drawer.

A red folder labeled "TUT" lays inside. She flips it open. Her face ripples with fear and rage. She draws her phone.

INT. ED'S FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Laura gently shuts the darkroom door. Skips to the bathroom. Opens and closes the door. Ed appears downhall.

ED  
Find what you were looking for?

Her stomach drops. She tucks her right hand in her pocket, puts on a smile and turns to face Ed. He comes closer.

LAURA  
All good. Thank you.

ED  
Okay. Back to the den?

LAURA  
Actually, I was thinking... I'm not  
sure I can handle it yet. I'm just-

Ed raises his finger. Laura backs up tensing her right hand.  
Ed senses danger. Laura realizes he's pointing behind her.

ED  
You, uh, left the door open.

Laura turns her head real slow. The bathroom door is ajar.  
Ed stalks past her. And shuts the door.

INT. MENDES KITCHEN - DAY

Rob reviews voyeuristic photos of he and Laura on her phone.

LAURA (O.S.)  
That one was almost two years ago.

She gives Rob a photo of Ed. In it, he reaches to the sky  
under a tree in the forest and gazes dead into the camera.  
His expression is powerful and mocking, as if staring  
through space and time, right at Rob.

EXT. MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

Thick clouds loom overhead.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

Laura lies on an examination table holding Rob's hand. The  
**SONOGRAM TECHNICIAN (34)** glides her tool over Laura's  
stomach and studies the feed on a monitor.

SONOGRAM TECHNICIAN  
Congratulations. It's a boy!

Tears of joy rush to Laura's eyes. Rob kisses her.

ROB  
I knew it! I knew it! Ha!

He gets a phone call.

EXT. PARKING LOT, MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

Rob assaults a dumpster like it did him wrong.

CLIENT #1 (V.O.)  
This is it for me. I'm pulling out.

CLIENT #2 (V.O.)  
In this economy, it's- risk just  
isn't a virtue, you know?

CLIENT #3 (V.O.)  
Like fucking 2008 all over!

INT. ROB'S FERRARI - DAY

Rob stares vacantly at a red traffic light...

LAURA (O.S.)  
It'll get better, baby. You...

Everything goes mute. The traffic light flips green.

Rob doesn't move. Doesn't blink. *HONK!*

INT./EXT. ROB'S FERRARI - MENDES DRIVEWAY - DAY

Rob bullets to the house. Chico appears in front of the car.  
Rob SLAMS the brakes. Chico stands in a pouncing posture.

ROB  
Chico? What is it, buddy?

Chico SNARLS ravenously, scaring and confusing his owners.

ROB (CONT'D)  
What the hell?

Rob steps out of the car and inches towards Chico...

ROB (CONT'D)  
It's okay, Chico.

Chico bounds and LEAPS at him. Rob catches him by the neck  
and falls on his back. Chico CHOMPS at his neck.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Chico, no! No!

Chico's SNAPPING TEETH inch closer to Rob's throat.



ROB (CONT'D)  
Ugh-gah! Laura, please!

Laura CLOCKS Chico on the head with her phone. He whimpers and bolts past the gate. Rob jets back into the car.

EXT. GLENVILLE - DAY

Chico bounds down the sidewalk spouting saliva.

INTERCUT - ROB'S FERRARI/GLENVILLE - DAY

Rob drives against traffic narrowly swerving other vehicles. He cuts into the right lane, overtaking more cars.

Chico barrels through the neighborhood at blinding speed. Rob navigates a tight turn and runs into a WALL OF TRAFFIC.

ROB  
Drive!

He pumps the brakes. Pops off his seat belt. Dashes outside. Sprints down the street at full tilt.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Chico! Chico! Chico, stop!!!

Chico cuts over a lawn, adding space between him and Rob.

EXT. GLENVILLE HOME - SAME TIME

A Middle-Aged Man and a Small Girl walk outside all smiles.

EXT. GLENVILLE - DAY

Rob loses sight of Chico.

ROB  
Fuck!

EXT. GLENVILLE HOME - SAME TIME

Chico comes out of nowhere and POUNCES on the Small Girl.

EXT. GLENVILLE - DAY

Rob drags air into his lungs. Head on a swivel. Two GUNSHOTS echo in the distance - Rob jolts.

EXT. GLENVILLE HOME - DAY

Rob's Ferrari jumps the curb and comes to a *SCREECHING* halt. Laura flees the car. She halts under a wave of shock.

LAURA

Chico?! Oh, my God! NO! CHICO!

Chico moans and wheezes on his side while Rob presses the GUNSHOT WOUNDS in his back. Blood leaks through his fingers.

The Middle-Aged Man, armed with a hunting rifle, sobs and clutches the Small Girl. Blood spurts from her gored neck.

EXT. MENDES BACKYARD - NIGHT

Numb, Rob places a small gravestone over a patch of dirt. Laura weeps hysterically.

INT. ED'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Ed kneels at the cauldron, head bowed. He raises his hands.

INT. ROB'S FERRARI - NIGHT

Rob peers into a liquor store. He battles the temptation...

EXT. MASPETH HIGH SCHOOL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Teen Ed walks home alone. A blue Honda Civic follows him...

INT. MOVING NISSAN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Young Rob (mid-20's) speeds through a New York City street. He eats a red light and careens around a corner.

EXT. MASPETH HIGH SCHOOL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Carlos launches a cup of soda out the window and it splashes on Teen Ed's hoody. Carlos speeds off cackling.

INT. MOVING NISSAN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A CHILD crosses the street in front of Young Rob. He cuts the wheel, veers onto the sidewalk and COLLIDES with a wall.

INT. ED'S BASEMENT - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Ed BEATS HIS CHEST like a drum and barks unintelligibly.

EXT. ROB'S FERRARI - NIGHT

Rob BASHES the steering wheel with alternating fists.

INT. MENDES MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rob shifts inside. Laura lays in bed. Her eyes are unusually heavy and distant. Rob immediately knows something is wrong. His gaze shifts to the open pill bottle on Laura's dresser.

ROB

Hey. Hey, how much did you take?

LAURA

Don't leave me. You can't leave me.

ROB

How much did you take? How much?!

She passes out.

INT. GREENWICH HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Laura is asleep and Rob sits at her side with his head down. There's a knock at the door. The **PHYSICIAN (32)** enters.

PHYSICIAN

Good news. There's not nearly enough Trazodone in her system to harm her or the child. In for a helluva night's sleep, though.

ROB

Do you think she was trying to...

The doctor removes his glasses. His eyes are empathetic.

PHYSICIAN

Only a psych evaluation can truly determine. But no. Not in my opinion. Stress mixed with the effects of the drug easily explain.

Rob nods and exhales in relief.

EXT. MENDES MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Rob tucks Laura into bed. She sleeps. He kisses her head.

INT. STUDY, MENDES MANSION - DAY

Rob studies a security monitor displaying his driveway.

MONITOR: Chico barks at something unseen and tucks his tail. He quivers and foams at the mouth as if being electrocuted.

Rob's wide eyes glisten.

On the monitor, Chico ceases all motion and collapses, his eyelids falling. A moment later, he SPRINGS up to his feet.

Rob stiffens in his chair, chilled. His cell phone BUZZES.

INT. BAR - DAY

A lively crowd mingles.

Rob joins Mauricio and Officer Sperry at a table.

MAURICIO  
Sorry about the setting.

OFFICER SPERRY  
Gonna need a few for this.

Mauricio fills two beer mugs from a pitcher.

Sperry opens a folder and unpacks a crime scene photo.

OFFICER SPERRY (CONT'D)  
Notice anything familiar?

Rob scrutinizes the picture in front of him.

INSERT PHOTO #1: NYPD officers lead a Disturbed Young Woman in handcuffs away from a courthouse filled with onlookers. Ed stands in the crowd, his mein strange and knowing.

OFFICER SPERRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Sandra Brown dropped her baby son  
from their fifth floor balcony.

Rob inhales deeply, preparing himself for more pain.

Officer Sperry swaps the first photo with another.

INSERT PHOTO #2: Cops stare down at a dead Young Man and his assault rifle in a mall. Ed hovers in a throng of horrified witnesses with a spooky, hard-to-miss grin.

OFFICER SPERRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Christopher Rivera emptied an M16  
into a crowded mall.

Rob presses a palm into his forehead and shakes his head.

INT. MENDES MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Laura glares out towards Ed's house. She closes the blinds.

INT. BAR - DAY

Sperry offers another picture. Despite himself, Rob looks.

INSERT PHOTO #3: Commuters pin a Spiritless Teenager to the ground in a subway station. Ed watches with gratification.

OFFICER SPERRY (O.S.)  
Adam Delgado shoved four people  
into an oncoming train before he  
was almost beaten to death.

Rob writhes in his chair.

ROB  
Holy. Fucking. Shit.

INT. MENDES MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Laura lays in bed reading "Bearing the Unbearable."  
Footsteps shuffle outside the room.

LAURA  
Hey. Back already?

No answer. Laura's eyes pull to the hall past the open door.  
It is dark and still. No more footsteps. Laura grips her  
angel charm like it's going to protect her.

A Shadow Figure STREAKS past the doorway.

Laura gasps and drops the book.

INT. BAR - DAY

Rob drags his intimidated eyes up to Officer Sperry.

OFFICER SPERRY

Sandra was his tutor. Chris, his neighbor. Adam, classmate. None of them remembered the killings.

He vanishes a pint of beer. Mauricio slings a sorry look. Down the hatch.

OFFICER SPERRY (CONT'D)

I arrested Alex Diaz, AKA Ed Gomez, a year after all this shit went down. Looked familiar, but I couldn't call it. So I dug through some old case files and...

ROB

Why did you arrest him?

Mauricio refills the mugs. Rob dabs the sweat on his face. Sperry spreads out more photos.

OFFICER SPERRY

Got a noise complaint that night.

INSERT PHOTOS: A dead woman sprawled out on a bloody bedroom floor with a battered face, eyes pressed into her skull.

OFFICER SPERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

When I got inside, Alex was standing over his stepmother's corpse. He was eighteen.

INT. MENDES MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

The Shadow Figure sways left to right in the doorway. Laura yanks the revolver off her nightstand.

INT. BAR - DAY

Rob's leg bounces incessantly.

OFFICER SPERRY

Defense claimed temporary insanity due to emotional and physical abuse, including sleep deprivation, by his stepmother. Plea deal for manslaughter won him 16 years in Kirby. Docs cleared him in '23.

Rob grips the beer pitcher. Mauricio seizes his wrist. Shakes his head. Rob releases the pitcher. He guzzles water. The cops vanish their refills.

OFFICER SPERRY (CONT'D)  
 Paid him a visit at Kirby once.  
 Wanted to connect the dots on all  
 those killings. But we didn't end  
 up talking about him at all.

Sperry's eyes water up.

OFFICER SPERRY (CONT'D)  
 Motherfucker knew things about me  
 nobody should. Things only God...

He helps himself to another drink. Rob fights paranoia.

ROB  
 Does "TUT", T.U.T., mean anything?

Sperry seems to recall something.

OFFICER SPERRY(O.S.)  
 He mentioned "The Unholy Trinity."  
 Said I wasn't good enough.

INT. MENDES MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

The Shadow Figure CONTORTS violently, *BONES SNAPPING*.

Laura's heart *THUMPS* against her chest.

The figure leans into the light, revealing itself as the old  
 man from the photo on her refrigerator.

LAURA  
 P- papi?

**LAURA'S FATHER** slips into the room with a threatening smile.  
 Blisters populate his nude, decomposing body. A hole in his  
 throat expands and contracts with each long, ragged breath.

The gun shakes in Laura's unsteady hand.

Her father shuffles closer. Hair falls from his lumpy head.  
 Laura taps the trigger but she's too weak to pull it. Her  
 Father comes in nose-to-nose. In a scathing, gravelly tone:

LAURA'S FATHER  
 (Spanish)  
 Nobody deserves a daughter like  
 you! NOBODY! NOBODY! NOBODY!

Liquid explodes across Laura's pants.

INT. LAURA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Laura clenches her teeth in excruciating labor.

INT. SAME - NIGHT

A **NICU NURSE (32)** eases a premature baby into an incubator.

NICU NURSE

Do we have a name for him yet?

Laura, pale and depleted, shares a proud look with Rob.

ROB

Jordan Mendes.

LAURA

Jordan Mendes.

NICU NURSE

You can see Jordan in a few hours.

LAURA

Will he be okay?

NICU NURSE

Few days in the NICU should do it.

Laura heaves a relieved sigh. The nurse wheels **JORDAN** out.  
Laura suffers a dry hacking cough.

INT. NICU HALL, GREENWICH HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Rob eyes Jordan through a window. A mask feeds him oxygen.

ROB

What is The Unholy Trinity?

Maria takes his hand.

MARIA

If you have to ask, trust me, you  
don't want to know.

Their eyes meet. Rob puts two and two together.

ROB

No. I'll kill him. I fucking will.

MARIA

(Spanish)

First we must nullify his attack,  
then go on the offensive with the  
Orishas. We will end him, Roberto.



Rob nods resolutely.

ROB  
Whatever it takes.

EXT. BOTANICA - DAY

The awning reads "BOTANICA." The doors and windows feature pictures of several saints, the Virgin Mary and Jesus.

INT. BOTANICA - DAY

Maria puts seven white prayer candles, a white skull candle, and an assortment of herbs on the counter.

The **BOTANICA CLERK (43)** behind the register shows concern.

BOTANICA CLERK  
(Spanish)  
Problems, lady Maria?

Maria grabs a few cigars and adds them to the pile.

MARIA  
(Spanish)  
Not for long.

The Botanica Clerk bags the items for her.

BOTANICA CLERK  
(Spanish)  
No charge. Go with God, the Holy  
Virgin and the saints.

MARIA  
Amen.

EXT. VIVERO - DAY

The awning says "VIVERO" over graphics of livestock.

INT. VIVERO - DAY

Caged and roped animals ready for the slaughter.

The **VIVERO CLERK (50)** comes to Maria with a welcoming smile.

VIVERO CLERK  
(Spanish)  
The usual, lady Maria?

MARIA  
(Spanish)  
Keep it caged. Ram's blood, too.

His smile wanes to a knowing look. Maria offers up the cash.  
He raises a hand in polite refusal.

INT. LAURA'S BATHROOM, GREENWICH HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Laura captures her urine in a jar.

INT. VICKY'S ROOM, BRONX HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Mauricio cuts some of Vicky's hair with a pair of scissors.

INT. MARIA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Maria wrings out Jordan's wet diaper into a boiling pot.  
Deposits samples of hair and urine, herbs and ram's blood.

INT. MENDES KITCHEN - DAY

Rob sticks a dropper into a mason jar containing a brown,  
jelly-like substance. He suctions the liquid and puts three  
drops in two mugs of coffee each. He gives Laura a mug.

LAURA  
To ending that motherfucker.

ROB  
Cheers.

They sip and wince in disgust.

INT. VICKY'S ROOM, BRONX HOSPITAL - DAY

Rob offers Vicky a cup of orange juice.

INT. GLENVILLE BAR - DAY

Ed sits alone with a glass of beer. He eyes a Pretty Blonde  
sitting at a table by herself. He works up some courage and  
approaches her. She notices. Ed stops and smiles awkwardly.  
She smirks dismissively. Clearly not interested.

Ed turns and sits back down, dejected.

INT. LIVING ROOM, SMALL APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Middle-aged Hispanics dance Salsa in a small house party.  
**OLGA (46)** drinks rum and plays Dominoes with some friends.  
She's a self-absorbed housewife at war with father time.

Teen Ed wanders out in his pajamas. He turns off the radio.  
Everyone stops to stare at him.

OLGA  
Uh, what are you doing?

TEEN ED  
Trying to sleep.

OLGA  
I'll lower the music. Put it back.

TEEN ED  
They should clean up and go home.  
My father will be home tomorrow.

OLGA  
It's Saturday night. Go have fun.  
Don't you have friends? A girl?

TEEN ED  
No. They're all sluts, like you.

OLGA  
(Spanish)  
You dirty child of the devil! Thank  
God you won't have kids! No woman  
will ever touch you!

Teen Ed grabs an ashtray and LAUNCHES it at her. She dodges  
but falls off her chair as the ashtray SHATTERS the window.  
The guests gasp. Olga stands up absolutely livid.

OLGA (CONT'D)  
God's cruel joke was letting you  
survive that fire! Now, get out!

Ed trembles with outrage. He storms out and SLAMS the door.

INT. GLENVILLE BAR - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Ed SLAMS his empty glass on the bar.

EXT. MENDES MANSION - DAY

A beautiful sunny day.

Laura greets Rob at the front door and hands Jordan over.  
Rob kisses his son and beams at his wife.

ROB  
The investigation concluded. MC can  
continue business. And I just  
signed two whales. I'll need to do  
some hiring. Find a new office.

Laura starts to protest.

ROB (CONT'D)  
I know. It's too soon and we still  
have the best neighbor ever. Point  
is, I think it worked.

Laura takes a long, proud look at her husband.

LAURA  
So, when does Ed choke and die?

Rob's phone rings. He answers right away.

MAURICIO  
(phone)  
It stopped! The bleeding stopped!

EXT. MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

Darkness falls on the estate.

INT. MENDES MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rob and Laura in the midst of passion-infused lovemaking.  
Eyes locked. Bodies thrusting. They climax together.

INT. ED'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ed spies on Rob and Laura's home through his camera... He  
puts it down. Something is off. Wrong. His jaw clenches.

INT. ED'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Flies swirl around a severed lamb's head. Peculiar sigils  
drawn in chalk smother the walls. Small piles of gunpowder  
lay sprinkled along the floor.

Ed and five **PALEROS** stand barefoot at the cauldron in  
colorful open robes. Their torsos are replete with scars  
that match the chalk symbols.

Juan ignites the gunpowder piles. SMALL EXPLOSIONS initiate the ceremony as Ed BANGS a staff into the floor three times. *THUNK-THUNK-THUNK!*

ED  
(Spanish)  
Oh, Dark Dead! Dark Dead hear our  
calls! Hear us and obey us!

Ed cuts his palm open. He feeds the cauldron his own blood.

INT. MARIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maria JERKS awake as if splashed with cold water.

INT. MENDES MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rob and Laura sleep like lambs. *PING!*

INT. MOVING BMW - NIGHT

Rob grills Ed's house as he zooms past.

EXT. MARIA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Rob marches past a group of boisterous teenagers.

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rob sits on the couch bouncing his leg.

Maria steps out from behind the beaded curtains gripping a bottle of Bacardi. Sweat cakes her face. She pours rum into the offering bowls, then guzzles from the bottle.

ROB  
What's wrong, abuela?

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Inky dark. Dead quiet.

Ed stands tall beneath a pine tree drenched in lamb's blood. His icy breath swirls. A striking, malevolent presence.

ED  
(Spanish)  
Dark Dead, protect me and guide me  
to crush my enemy!

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maria spins on her heels.

A band of BARN OWLS perch themselves on her windowsill.  
Their large dark eyes stand out against off-white faces.  
They observe Rob and Maria.

Maria takes in this obvious omen for a pregnant moment.

MARIA  
Your mother made me swear not to  
tell you. Never. No matter what.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Paleros slap on three-headed drums, vocalize and dance  
around six horned goats. Ed's eyes spin in his head.

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rob sits at the edge of his seat. Maria chugs more rum.

ROB  
Tell me what?

MARIA  
I didn't want to believe it, mijo.  
I couldn't believe it!

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Ed and the Paleros dance and swallow rum. He lights three  
cigarettes and smokes them. Spreading his arms out wide, he  
faces the black sky.

ED  
(Spanish)  
Dark Dead, accept this offering!  
This is how you like it!

Paleros brandish machetes and raise them over the goats.

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maria holds Rob's face. She stares into his soul.

MARIA  
Mijo, you are not...

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Ed picks up a jar of bones.

ED  
(Spanish)  
Oh Dark Dead, strike down my enemy  
with a mighty cauldron blow!

He hurls the jar into a small grave.

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maria explodes to her feet, kicking over the rum bottle. She clutches her throat and takes short, strained breaths.

Rob's eyes flood with panic as he leaps off the couch.

ROB  
Abuela!

Maria's PUPILS DILATE. The veins in her face and neck BULGE. Rob watches helplessly. Mortified. Maria goes limp.

The owls rotate their heads 270-degrees in unison.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Abuela?

He reaches for her shoulder...

Her head cocks up. Her BIG RED EYES shed pure malevolence. She SHOVES Rob into the wall with raw supernatural strength. He lands on his knees and groans.

The lights go out, plunging the apartment into darkness.

A SINISTER CACKLE drifts out of the kitchen.

Rob dashes to the door. Flips a lock. Snaps the deadbolt. Swings the door open. He starts to run when--

MARIA (O.S.)  
(disembodied)  
You can't protect them, Roberto!

Something clicks inside Rob. Anger. He shuts the door, gathers his grit and shifts into the kitchen.

Maria whispers unintelligibly and sways side to side.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Juan carves a sigil into Ed's chest.

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

*OMINOUS HOOTS.* The lights flicker as Maria hovers toward the ceiling, arms spread out and legs pressed together. A cross. Rob watches her rise. Unblinking. Horror-struck.

Maria looks down on him with a foul, mocking expression.

MARIA  
(disembodied)  
WE MADE YOU! YOU OWE US EVERYTHING!

Tears flow down Rob's mortified face. He does not breathe. One blink and Maria is gone. Rob vomits a breath and leans against the counter like he's having a heart attack.

Maria floats down before him with a horrid ear-to-ear grin. Rob grinds his teeth in defiance.

ROB  
W- where is she? Where is she?!

Maria touches his forehead. Countless wails rise as Rob endures a brief vision. He reels from a wave of terror.

ROB (CONT'D)  
No. You're a liar! That's a lie!

A FLASH OF STEEL cuts the dark--

Maria swings a butcher knife. Rob traps her wrist. The owls make blood-curdling hissing sounds.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Don't!

She SINKS THE BLADE into his shoulder, forcing his scream. Rob slams his forehead into her face. She stumbles back. Rob drags the blade out of his shoulder with a shuddering groan. He whimpers and holds the knife out in front of him.

Maria brings her nails down both sides of her face with a *SHARP SCREECH* that can only be described as evil.



Rob blurts in desperation.

ROB (CONT'D)  
I- I cast you out! In Jesus' name!

Maria writhes in revulsion. Rob runs with it.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Flee in the name of Jesus Christ!

Maria squirms and screams.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Christ compels you back to hell!!!

Maria's chin drops to her chest. She weeps softly.

MARIA  
(natural voice)  
My love wasn't enough. Nothing was  
ever enough for you, mijo. Even  
now, the money isn't enough!

Guilt shatters Rob's heart. He succumbs to tears.

ROB  
I'm sorry, abuela. I just wanted  
more for us. Was I so wrong?

Maria strikes up an amused, vile giggle. Rob's heart sinks.

Maria POUNCES on him like a tiger, gripping his throat as she rams him into the wall. He drops the knife to pry her hands off his neck but she's too strong.

The owls hoot and spin their heads at a maddening pace.

Maria dislodges the knife in the wall and raises it sharply. Rob bites her arm. Shoves her back. Retrieves the knife. Retreats into a corner wheezing. Maria revels in his horror.

MARIA  
(disembodied)  
Kill your own abuela, mijo?!

She mocks Rob with a hideous laugh. A laugh that could drag Mother Teresa to hell. Rob covers his ears, grimacing.

The non-stop hoots becomes increasingly dreadful.

Maria SLASHES at Rob with ruthless maniacal force, cutting his hands and forearms as he shields himself.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
DIE, MIJO! DIE! JUST FUCKING DIE!

ROB  
STOP! STOP! STOP!

He JAMS the knife into her chest. Maria falls on her back. Motionless. Blood pools around her wound.

The owls fall silent and still. Rob drops to his knees.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Oh, fuck. Oh, fuck. Fuck. I-

Maria's arm shoots up. Rob screams. She pulls the blade out of her chest, sits up straight and licks her blood off the blade. Rob scrambles away.

Maria's predatory eyes meet his shit-faced stare.

ROB (CONT'D)  
This isn't you! Wake up, abuela!

Maria floats onto her feet. Rob fixates on her undead face.

ROB (CONT'D)  
You're stronger than this!

Maria streaks forward and dashes past him.

EXT. MARIA'S BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

The owls take to the sky with eerie, drawn-out screeches. Rob follows Maria outside. She leaps onto the railing.

ROB  
Don't do this! Please, don't!

She cuts Rob an ice cold glare.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Fight, abuela! Don't let him win!

MARIA  
(disembodied, Spanish)  
Don't be afraid. Soon, we'll all  
reunite in the flames of hell!

She leaps off the balcony.

ROB  
ABUELA!!!

Rob tries to catch her but Maria plunges toward the ground. He leans over the rail stunned with horror.

Maria collides with the concrete - *CRUNCH!*

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rob chugs the rum in Maria's offering bowls. He needs more. He finds the rum bottle and drains it. He slides down to the floor rocking back and forth. He SCREAMS like he's on fire.

EXT. MARIA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Horrified onlookers stand behind yellow caution tape.

Mauricio shoves through the crowd and ducks under the tape. He discharges everything in his stomach.

Maria's mangled body lies on the ground in a pool of blood.

INT. MOVING AMBULANCE - NIGHT

Rob lays on the gurney in a catatonic state. Paramedics tend to his wounds. Mauricio grieves on the bench beside him.

INT. ICU ROOM, BRONX HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Rob stares into space, broken. Laura clutches his hand. **SCRAWNY DETECTIVE (38)** and **HUSKY DETECTIVE (34)** scrutinize.

HUSKY DETECTIVE  
No history of mental illness?  
You're absolutely sure?

Rob summons a nod.

SCRAWNY DETECTIVE  
What about your parents?

ROB  
I... wouldn't know.

HUSKY DETECTIVE  
Again, we're very sorry.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A gold-laced mahogany casket is swallowed by the earth.

A Priest prays the rosary passionately.

Laura, Rob, and Mauricio stand in a procession of mourners.  
Rain spits on the crowd. Black umbrellas blossom.

Rob stares blankly as dirt is shoveled onto the casket.  
*THUMP... THUMP... THUMP.* Rob's breath quickens.

MARIA (V.O.)  
DIE, MIJO! DIE! JUST FUCKING DIE!

Rob backs away from the casket bumping into Tito and Brenda.

THROUGH A CAMERA LENS: The twins come into focus.

INT. DINER - DAY

Rob sits in a booth across from Tito and Brenda, subdued.

ROB  
I don't want anyone else to die.

BRENDA  
Maria was close to our mother.  
Saved us all from a curse when we  
were kids. We owe her our lives.

TITO  
So, no offense, but we don't give a  
shit if you want our help or not.

Rob swallows that with a tinge of hope.

ROB  
You have experience with this?

TITO  
We worked for drug dealers in  
constant conflict with the law and  
each other. Pretty much nothing we  
haven't done or seen.

BRENDA  
We suggest a three-pronged  
approach. First, we petition the  
Orishas for their assistance. Then,  
we collect the rival's DNA.

TITO  
Usually, we'd pay people to sleep  
with the target. They'd drug them  
and take DNA from blood, hair-

BRENDA

Semen is the most useful in casting spells on a man.

Rob rubs his forehead.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Phase three: A double summoning. Ogún is the god of war. Changó, the ruler of nature. Giver of courage.

TITO

If they agree to take on your plight, and you can withstand their power, they'll fight through you.

BRENDA

You should know: A successful double summoning hasn't been seen in our lifetime.

TITO

It is a gift, but one that requires immense strength to wield.

BRENDA

Most never try for fear of failure.

ROB

Why? What happens if you fail?

BRENDA

You die.

TITO

You die.

INT. ED'S DARK ROOM - NIGHT

Wet prints of Brenda and Tito at the funeral hang on a dry line stretching the room's length. Ed watches them dry...

INT./EXT. CARLOS' HONDA - UNDERPASS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Carlos leads a three-car race down the street. No seatbelt.

Ed worms through the large crowd cheering on the sidewalk. He sees Lisa and waves. She doesn't wave back. He bares his teeth in a big ghastly grin. Lisa shudders and turns away.

Ed strides into the street. Right into Carlos's path.

CARLOS

Fuck outta the way, Pizza Face!

Ed unzips his backpack. Withdraws a wax doll of Carlos.  
Inserts a sharp nail into the doll's nose.

Blood trickles out of Carlos' nose. He dabs at it.

CARLOS (CONT'D)  
Shit. Shit. Shit.

Ed twists the nail.

Blood gushes down Carlos' nostrils.

CARLOS (CONT'D)  
What the fuck?! What the fuck?!

Ed stabs the wax doll like a maniac.

Flesh breaks all over Carlos' face and body. He wails and  
loses control of the vehicle.

People freak out and run. Lisa finds that she can't move.  
Her eyes swing to Ed. She vomits a *BLOODCURDLING SCREAM*.

Carlos jerks the wheel, swerves Ed and SMASHES Lisa into a  
streetlight. He ejects headfirst through the windshield and  
his skull SMACKS the pole bursting open.

EXT. THE MILBROOK CLUB - NIGHT

Chickens and goats roam the exclusive estate.

Tito and Brenda guide Rob down a well-lit stone course.

Dozens of affluent guests pick liquor, cigar and food  
offerings from a cart, then enter a cylindrical building.

ROB  
Wait, is that Governor Hope?

BRENDA  
Power is not only secured by votes.

INT. RITUAL ROOM, THE MILBROOK CLUB - NIGHT

Grand and circular. Torch lights lend a ceremonial mood.

Guests fill the chairs set against wood slat panel walls.  
Colorful paper maché masks bearing bizarre and frightening  
expressions hang on each slat. Rhythmic *DRUM TAPS* pulsate...

TITO (V.O.)  
 West Africans brought to The  
 Caribbean weren't allowed to  
 practice their native religion.

Rob, holding a bottle of cognac and a cigar, looks like he  
 landed on an alien planet. The drum beat gains speed.

TITO (CONT'D)  
 They hid their spirituality from  
 the Spaniards by identifying their  
 idols with seven Catholic saints.

Smoke rises from a bed of hot coals.

TITO (CONT'D)  
 They called it "Santeria."

**SANTEROS** dressed in ornate African garb carrying instruments  
 and metallic weapons form a circle in the room's center.

Rob sits beside **GOVERNOR HOPE (55)**. He bounces his leg. She  
 faces him with a commanding, persuasive smile. She whispers.

GOVERNOR HOPE  
 The flow. Just go with it. Yeah?

Tito and Brenda enter the circle of Santeros.

Drummers play double-headed drums shaped like hourglasses.  
 More instruments join, forming a melodic and rhythmic choir.  
 Performers engage in a West African dance as they vocalize  
 with grace. The immersed **LEAD SINGER (40)** calls out:

LEAD SINGER  
 (Spanish)  
 Orishas! Orishas, come down!

Dancers move with mesmerizing flow. Brenda's eyes close as  
 she whirls and swirls. The dancing circle clears for her.  
 She bumps up against the human ring that encloses her and  
 gently rebounds back to the circle's center.

The call and response between the Lead Singer and the  
 congregation becomes tighter and more intense.

SINGERS  
 (Spanish)  
 Keep the rhythm! Keep the Orisha!  
 Keep the whirling dancer!

Brenda dances sensuously and confidently with gigantic eyes  
 and an enormous smile.

With a sharp *DRUM-SLAP* Brenda falls to the ground. Santeros pull her up and escort her out the room.

Rob stops bouncing his leg in complete fascination.

Brenda returns a moment later draped in a gold gown. Her long hair is unbound, her feet are bare, and she radiates the same magical smile and unearthly eyes. The musicians direct their instruments at her. The lead singer bellows:

LEAD SINGER  
(Spanish)  
Oshún! Oshún has arrived!

SINGERS  
(Spanish)  
Oshún is here with us!

Brenda/Oshún blows kisses to her votaries and dances with seductive and sweet grace. The musical intensity rises.

Tito falls flat out on his belly and SHAKES.

Rob's spine straightens. Guests guzzle their liquor.

Tito leaps onto his feet with supernatural ease. He dances across the bed of hot coals without a care.

Rob unscrews the liquor bottle cap and hesitates. Governor Hope holds out a lighter.

GOVERNOR HOPE  
(whisper)  
Easier to go with the flow.

Rob nods and she sparks the cigar. Rob puffs it to life.

Tito runs around the room with masculine, virile swagger, shouting boastfully as he chops across the air with a machete and axe, his eyes opened to a foreign world.

LEAD SINGER  
(Spanish)  
Changó! Welcome, Changó!

SINGERS  
(Spanish)  
Changó! Changó has arrived!

A Tall Santero foams and sways like ocean waves. Recognizing the dance, another Santero dresses him in a white gown.



LEAD SINGER  
(Spanish)  
Yemaya! Welcome, Yemaya!

SINGERS  
(Spanish)  
Yemaya is here! Yemaya is with us!

A guest slides a box of cockroaches across the floor.  
"Yemaya" stuffs her face with the bugs.

Rob is taken aback.

A Santera breathes noisily and extrudes her tongue. Her face becomes grotesque and terrifying. Noticing, another participant places a red flowered dress over her clothes.

LEAD SINGER  
(Spanish)  
OYA! Welcome, Oya!

SINGERS  
(Spanish)  
Oya is here! Oya has joined us!

"Oya" weaves multicolored ribbons around her head as she dances an ultra-intense Yoruba warrior dance.

Onlookers avoid eye contact with her - and Rob follows suit. But a businessman waits too long and screams like a madman:

BUSINESSMAN  
Oh, no! I'm blind! I'm blind!

He is led outside the room kicking and screaming. Rob stares with concern but everyone carries on with business as usual.

Santeros dance to match the instruments' now breakneck pace.

"Oya" grabs a bunch of smoldering coals with her bare hands.

The singers and dancers direct a litany of praises to the possessed santeros as they wander among the guests eating, drinking and advising them in exaggerated voices.

Tito and Brenda engage in a mock fight. Their blades connect with *DRUM SLAPS* and *SHOUTS*. The battle ends in a stalemate.

Tito and Brenda arrive at Rob, their dispositions grave.

TITO/CHANGÓ  
(Yoruba)  
I, who feast on dark souls, know  
how to destroy them!

BRENDA/OSHÚN  
 (Yoruba)  
 We will fight! On all things sacred  
 and holy, we will fight with you!

TITO/CHANGÓ	BRENDA/OSHÚN
(Yoruba)	(Yoruba)
WE WILL FIGHT WITH YOU!	WE WILL FIGHT WITH YOU!

They shout battle cries as the instruments boil to a climax.

Rob becomes delirious under the heat, noise and thick smoke.  
 The ROOM SPINS until he vomits.

INT. MENDES KITCHEN - NIGHT

Laura dumps red pasta sauce into a pot of spaghetti. She glances at the wall clock. It's late. She grabs her phone.

INT. MENDES OFFICE - NIGHT

Laura checks the security monitors, finding the empty Ferrari at the driveway gate.

EXT. MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

Laura marches outside gripping the revolver. A light in the guest house catches her eye.

INT. MENDES GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

Laura sneaks in not knowing what to expect...

Rob lays on the couch in a drunken slumber hugging a bottle of cognac. Laura sighs wearily. Tucks the gun. Takes the bottle. Dumps it in the trash. She stares and starts to cry.

Rob stirs awake. He sees Laura in tears. Busted. She gathers her breath and confronts Rob, as livid as she is sad.

LAURA  
 I won't let you go back to that  
 shit, Rob. I won't let you ruin us.  
 I won't let you hurt yourself or  
 other people because you can't stop  
 yourself from drowning in a bottle!

ROB  
 I'm trying to protect us!

LAURA

From jail?! The grave?! Did you forget what happened?!

ROB

It has to stop! It has to stop!

LAURA

Not like this! This is exactly what he wants! And what about Jordan? Doesn't he deserve better than a life without a father?!

ROB

I'm only fucking human! And so what if something happens to me?! Might make him tough! Make him a winner!

Laura scoffs incredulously. That stung.

LAURA

Not everyone needs trauma for fuel. But here you go, Rob. Have fun.

She yanks the bottle out of the trash, shoves it in Rob's hand and storms out. Rob hangs his head in shame.

EXT. BRONX STREET - DAY

Rob's BMW is parked by an aging subway station. A train rumbles along the tracks above.

INT. ROB'S BMW - DAY

Maria's Saint Barbara chain hangs from the rearview mirror. Mauricio contemplates in the passenger seat.

MAURICIO

I can shoot the motherfucker. Burn the house down. Just end this shit.

Rob spits his nails out the driver's side window.

MAURICIO (CONT'D)

But he might see me coming a mile away. Might see us coming anyway.

Rob scans the streets for any sign of danger.

ROB

Maybe. But we're out of options.

**STACY (34)** struts over to the vehicle. Her surgically enhanced body bulges through revealing, skin-tight clothes.

**ROB (CONT'D)**  
Seriously, Mo? A hooker?

**MAURICIO**  
High-end escort.

**ROB**  
You know this high-end escort how?

**MAURICIO**  
Shh. She's a pro. Here she comes.

Stacy opens the back door and sits behind Mauricio. He hands her a thick stack of hundred dollar bills.

**MAURICIO (CONT'D)**  
Half now, half if you get it done.  
What'd you learn so far?

**STACY**  
He's the easiest kind of mark.  
Drinker. Lonely. Desperate, even.  
I'll chat him up at the bar.

**MAURICIO**  
Please just... tone down the dress.

INT. GLENVILLE BAR - DAY

Ed and Stacy sit in a booth. He is peering down her shirt studying the tattoos on her chest.

**STACY**  
'Course I regret it. But I was just  
a dumb-ass teenager, right?

She dumps a vial of white powder in his drink. It dissolves.

EXT. GLENVILLE BAR - DAY

Stacy puts a woozy Ed into a taxi and gets in. It takes off. Rob and Mauricio follow in the BMW.

EXT. ED'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Stacy rushes out. Rob and Mauricio meet her on the driveway. She hands Rob a small jar of Ed's semen.

MAURICIO

Dick juice masseuse strikes again.

STACY

Don't even wanna know what kinda  
crazy shit ya'll about to get into.

Rob hands her a bundle of cash.

STACY (CONT'D)

Door's open like you asked.

INT. ED'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rob and Mauricio creep inside.

Ed *SNORES* on the couch in his boxers.

Rob waves a hand in front of his face. No reaction. Rob comes up with a pair of scissors and a small Ziploc bag. He pokes Ed's neck with the sharp end of the scissors, tempted.

Mauricio shakes his head and draws Rob's hand away.

Rob snips a bit of Ed's hair. Deposits it into the Ziploc. Mauricio ties a rubber tourniquet around Ed's bicep. He gives Rob a syringe and collection tube. Draws his Glock.

MAURICIO

(whisper)

Stick and pull.

Rob finds a vein. His hand wavers as he pierces Ed's skin. Taking deep breaths, Rob collects Ed's blood into the tube.

MAURICIO (CONT'D)

(whisper)

Got what we came for. Let's go.

Rob isn't done. He moves to an open door. Peers through it. Concrete stairs vanish into the pitch black basement.

ROB

Not taking any chances.

Mauricio's face screams "fuck my life."

INT. ED'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Rob leads Mauricio in a slow descent down the stairs...  
Mauricio's eyes probe the unnerving darkness...

ROB  
We have to destroy everything.

MAURICIO  
No. Let's fucking go, primo. Now.

He follows Rob deeper inside. Rob stomps to the cauldron.

MAURICIO (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
What- what the fuck?! Rob!

Rob about-faces to see Mauricio's Glock pointed at his head. It shakes in his tremulous hand. Rob's blood runs cold. He throws his hands up.

ROB  
O- okay. We can leave, man.

Rob steps left. Mauricio keeps the gun fixed on his face. Rob steps to his right. The gun follows.

MAURICIO  
It's not me. It's-

CREAAAK.

Mauricio's eyes fill with tears. His face tremors.

A *HAUNTING WHISTLE* fills the room. It gets obnoxiously loud. Then, supernaturally loud. Rob cups his ears.

Ed pokes his head over the stair railing. A Cheshire grin frames his face. The whistling finally ends.

Rob and Mauricio's eyes burst with panic. They're paralyzed. Ed comes for them with his arms behind his back.

ROB  
K- keep him out of it. Please.

Ed places his rusty machete in Mauricio's free hand and whispers into his ear while keeping his dark eyes on Rob.

ROB (CONT'D)  
W- why?! You don't even know me!

Ed projects an ethereal, angelic voice:

ED  
You never felt worthy of love  
because of your dead parents. You  
attempted to fill this hole in your  
heart with the pursuit and love of  
money. But it never worked, did it?

Rob clutches at his chest, *HEARTBEAT* on steroids.

ED (CONT'D)

That's why you wrapped your  
identity up in success. Why you  
pretend to want a family of your  
own. WHY MONEY IS YOUR GOD!

Rob balloons with shame and terror.

ED (CONT'D)

I know so, so much about you!

Mauricio raises the machete. Rob suffers from the shakes.  
Mauricio sticks his arm out. The machete plunges down--

Blood splatters across Rob's face as Mauricio's severed arm  
falls at his feet. Mauricio *SCREAMS* at the top of his lungs.  
He brings the machete up again through no control of his  
own. Rob groans and spasms.

ED (CONT'D)

(Maria's voice)

Deep down, you know you're still  
the sad and lonely bum you've  
always been. Bum! Bum! BUM! BUM!

Mauricio *CHOPS* his right leg below the knee and collapses.  
His screams intensify with each self-mutilating blow.

ROB

You fucking monster!

Ed twirls his finger. Rob finds himself able to move again.  
He reaches down and pry's the gun out of Mauricio's hand.

Ed *SNAPS* his thumb. Mauricio's screams lose their sound. Rob  
aims the gun at Ed. Ed shakes his head. Points at Mauricio.  
Rob involuntarily trains the gun on Mauricio, tortured.

ROB (CONT'D)

S- S- S- STOP! STOP! STOP!

Mauricio keeps chopping at his leg and screaming inaudibly.  
His eyes beg for mercy. Blood spurts as his leg detaches.

ED

(angelic)

Put him out of his misery!

Rob's heart *GALLOPS* in his chest. A full-blown panic attack.

ED (CONT'D)  
(demonic)  
Do it, Roberto! Save him!

Mauricio HAMMERS the machete into his left leg.

ED (CONT'D)  
(angelic)  
Save him! Save him! Save him!

The Glock trembles violently in Rob's hand.

ED (CONT'D)  
(demonic)  
SAVE HIM! SAVE HIM! SAVE HIM!

Rob shakes so bad it looks like he's having a seizure.  
Mauricio divorces himself from his last leg.

ED (CONT'D)  
(Maria's voice)  
SAVE HIM, MIJO! SAVE HIM!

Mauricio WHACKS the machete into his own neck.

A *GUNSHOT* rings through the basement.

Mauricio flattens, his face contorted in unfathomable pain.  
Fumes rise from the hole under his eye.

Rob drops the smoking gun. Tears dive down his face.

Ed's *WICKED CACKLING* fills the space.

Rob cups his ears, wobbles like he's drunk, and collapses.

INT. MAURICIO'S AUDI - NIGHT

Rob awakens behind the wheel in a hangover-like daze.

The headlights illuminate the dense woods and nearby lake.  
Rob looks behind him. His BMW is parked behind the Audi. He  
gathers his gumption and exits the car.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Flies circle something on the forest floor. Rob follows...

Mauricio's SEVERED LIMBS surround his torso in reverse order  
like some sick and twisted human puzzle. His decapitated  
head sits at his crotch beside a shovel.



Rob EJECTS his stomach contents over the forest floor.

EXT. FOREST - LATER

Rob packs the last patch of dirt over a large hole.

EXT. FOREST LAKE - NIGHT

Isolated by a ring of trees. Rob scans for witnesses. Clear.

EXT. SAME - MOMENTS LATER

Rob places a rock on the gas pedal. Puts the car in drive.  
He watches the Audi drive into the lake...

MARIA (V.O.)

Mijo, you are not-

ED (V.O.)

I know so, so much about you!

Rob has a light bulb moment. Fishes a pocket for his phone.  
Dials up Sperry. His thumb hovers over the call button...  
Scared shitless. But he has to do it.

Rob makes the call. The phone rings. Rob waits dreadfully...  
The call is finally answered.

ROB

Does Ed have any family left?

EXT. QUEENS NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Rob glides the BMW through a tight little street. Modest homes on either side are guarded by wrought iron bars. He parks in front of one and exits the car.

A Spanish sign is pegged to the door: "People waste so much money on mortal sorcerers while God is FREE AND ETERNAL."

INT. GILDA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Depressed by drab decor and outdated furniture.

**GILDA GOMEZ (65)** hands Rob a mug of coffee. She sits on the couch across from him under a big wooden cross on her wall. She's a gentle soul who carries the weight of a dark past.

Rob shows her the photo of Ed.

ROB  
That's him. The man who cursed me.  
Do you recognize him?

One look makes her sigh. She interlocks her fingers.

GILDA  
He's older... but that is Alex. My  
only nephew. His brother died.

ROB  
Brother?

GILDA  
Alex's mother was widowed when she  
met my brother. They had twins.

She walks to the wall unit and brings back a photo album.  
She dusts it off. Turns through pages of old family photos.  
She taps a picture of CHILD ED. He has the burn scars on his  
face and neck. There's an unmistakably dark edge about him.

GILDA (CONT'D)  
(Spanish)  
Alex was six years old when I  
introduced him to Palo Mayombe. He  
grew so obsessed with its power  
that he surpassed most of our  
elders before he was fourteen.  
That's when he began worshipping  
Holy Death. And Satan himself.  
Paleros do not cling to one system.

Rob takes an enlarged gulp of coffee.

GILDA (CONT'D)  
The Lord eventually rescued me from  
my wicked ways. But for my nephew,  
the damage was already done.

ROB  
Wh- where is his father now?

GILDA  
(Spanish)  
Dead. Heart attack. He was healthy.

She gets teary eyed.

GILDA (CONT'D)  
I gave him my testimony. Took him  
to church. He wanted out of Palo,  
but it's a blood oath.  
(MORE)

GILDA (CONT'D)  
 Alex only spared me so that I'd  
 live with the guilt.

ROB  
 How did he get his burn scars?

Gilda looks down at the album. She takes an enlarged breath.

GILDA  
 (Spanish)  
 Alex's mother had an older son from  
 her first husband, but she was  
 always working. Her mother and I  
 took turns babysitting the boys.

She flips pages. Removes a picture. It depicts toddler Ed,  
 his twin and a slightly older boy on Gilda's couch.

Rob squints at the older kid. A TEARDROP-SHAPED BIRTHMARK  
 marks his right shoulder. Rob pulls his shirt collar aside  
 to reveal an identical birthmark on the same shoulder.

Rob's stupefied gaze drifts to Gilda. She cups her mouth.

GILDA (CONT'D)  
 Mother of God. It's you. It's you!

The revelation rocks Rob like a wrecking ball to the face.

GILDA (CONT'D)  
 (embracing him)  
 I missed you so much!

Rob wrestles with what he's about to say next.

ROB  
 Why... does he hate me?

**BEGIN FLASHBACK:**

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - DAY

**SARAH LOPEZ (38)** looks heavenward and curses God.

GILDA (V.O.)  
 (Spanish)  
 When your mother's health began to  
 fail, she knew she would die poor.  
 She saw her prayers for a good life  
 as having fallen on deaf ears. She  
 didn't want that for you.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Sarah places a photo of Child Rob into a small black box containing money and jewelry for "MAMON." She seals it.

GILDA (V.O.)  
(Spanish)  
Satan fooled her into making a  
Faustian bargain. A bargain that  
you would not live and die with the  
regrets and burdens that she did.

Sarah buries the box in the ground. She cuts open her left hand and offers her blood to the patch of dirt.

GILDA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
That you would be a wealthy man.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young Gilda enters and is surprised to see the room empty. There is a HANDWRITTEN NOTE on the bed. Gilda reads it... Her face explodes with alarm.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Toddler Ed and his twin sit under a sprawling oak tree.

GILDA (V.O.)  
(Spanish)  
Your mother wanted what was best  
for you, Roberto. But she went  
about it in the worst way.

Sarah stands over the twins in tears, torn and tormented. She grabs a tank of gasoline off the ground.

GILDA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The more innocent the sacrifice,  
the greater the reward.

Sarah splashes her children with gasoline. Trembling with distress, she strikes a match. She stares at it, hesitant. The flame eats the match and burns her finger. She drops it. THE TWINS GO UP IN FLAMES.

GILDA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Alex wished he died with his twin.  
Lord, forgive me for agreeing.

Young Gilda invades the scene yelling her head off. She removes her jacket and swats at the engulfed children.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Sarah bleeds out from major gashes in both her wrists.

**END FLASHBACK.**

INT. GILDA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rob wears the shattered face of a man questioning his entire existence. Tears prick his impotent eyes.

ROB

No. No, no, no. It's not true. Only  
one of them died! And I- I worked  
so hard! I made my life! I did!

Gilda grieves with guilt.

GILDA

(Spanish)

One dead child is more than enough.

She wipes Rob's tears away.

GILDA (CONT'D)

(Spanish)

I never should've told him how he  
got the scars. Please, forgive me!

INT./EXT. ROB'S BMW - HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Rob drives into oncoming traffic, setting himself on a collision course with a SEMI-TRUCK. Its horn blasts. *HONK!*  
Rob STOMPS the gas pedal. The truck tries to swerve.

*HONK! HONK! HONK!*

The truck and BMW close in on each other.

*HONK! HONK! HONK!*

Rob pumps out a grieved shout from the depths of his soul.  
He SWERVES the truck and spirals onto the side of the road.

INT. JORDAN'S ROOM, MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

Laura feeds Jordan on a rocking chair.

Rob shuffles inside frantic and flustered. He kisses Jordan.

LAURA  
Baby, what's wrong?

He kneels before her on the verge of a mental breakdown.

ROB  
I had to do it. He made me do it.

LAURA  
Do what? What did you do?

ROB  
Oh, God. Oh, fuck.

LAURA  
Roberto, calm down and talk to me.  
What did you do? What did you do?

ROB  
He's always been ten steps ahead!

LAURA  
What did you do?!

ROB  
I killed Mauricio! No! I saved him!

Laura claps a hand over her mouth. She backs away from Rob.  
He wrestles with his conscience and he is losing.

ROB (CONT'D)  
What am I supposed to... tell Vick?

Vicky steps into the doorway, rage, grief and confusion  
melted into her tear-streaked face.

Rob looks to Laura for answers. Her voice cracks.

LAURA  
She didn't want to be home alone.

ROB  
Vicky, you- you know I loved him.

VICKY  
You murdered him!

ROB  
No! You didn't see what I saw!

Vicky sprints down the hall. Rob gives chase.

INT. MENDES 2ND FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

He catches up and grabs her. They fall. Rob pins her down. Vicky tries to fight him off in vain.

VICKY

I hate you! I fucking hate you!

ROB

He hurt himself! I stopped it!

Vicky resigns to bawling her eyes out. Rob falls apart.

ROB (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

LAURA (O.S.)

R- Rob?!

VICKY

Oh, my God!

Rob reels around. A gasp escapes him.

Laura's throat UNDULATES with snake-like rhythm.

ROB

Laura, what is that?

Laura chokes violently. She thrashes against the wall. Throws her mouth wide open. There is something inside.

ROB (CONT'D)

What the fuck is that?!

Laura reaches into her throat, GAGGING. She uses both hands to slowly, painfully drag a HUGE CENTIPEDE out of her mouth. It splats onto the floor in a pool of bile and blood.

Laura WAILS like a banshee.

EXT. MENDES DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Rob bee lines to his BMW.

INT. ROB'S BMW - NIGHT

Rob digs into his glove compartment for a bottle of brandy. He looks at it, torn. He slams it back. Relief settles in. TAP-TAP. A knock at the window. Laura stands outside.

Rob drops the bottle and unlocks the door. She gets inside.

LAURA

If there's any left, hand it over.

She's serious. Rob retrieves the bottle. He gives it to her. She uncaps it and gulps the brandy like water. Needed that.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Okay. You said there are three phases. Where are you now?

ROB

Last one. But I... it's dangerous.

LAURA

And vomiting centipedes is safe?!

Rob sighs.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Let me do it. I can handle it.

ROB

No. No. Jordan needs you. Plus, I already have their blessing. And...

He reaches into the glove compartment for Ed's DNA samples.

ROB (CONT'D)

Laura, if it doesn't work I... I won't be coming back.

LAURA

Then make it work. For me. Jordan. Us. You have to make it work, Rob.

Her unwavering glare infects him with resolve.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - NIGHT

Rob's BMW torpedoes down a road sandwiched by deep woods. A large, jagged mountain forms in the dark horizon.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FACE - NIGHT

Waves of mist roll across this forgotten landscape.

Rob peers up the steep craggy formation. He starts climbing.



## EXT. MOUNTAIN LANDING - NIGHT

Rob collapses onto the landing, weak and out of breath.  
Sweat and grime stain his face.

Tito exits a cave mouth in a black hooded robe stitched with seven gold stars. He walks around Rob, hands in the air.

TITO  
(Spanish)  
Oh, Ogún! Oh, Changó! Great Lords!  
Accept this offering!

Tito hands Rob a ceremonial dagger. He grabs a flailing rooster from its cage and offers it. Rob stares, aghast.

TITO (CONT'D)  
Sacrifice or go back home!

Rob grabs the bird by its neck and shoves it into the dirt. He grimaces as he brings the blade to the chicken's neck.

TITO (CONT'D)  
Hard and fast! It's merciful!

Rob's arm moves in a cutting motion. He drops the dagger. The now headless rooster races off.

TITO (CONT'D)  
The blood is draining!

Rob stumbles up to his feet and hunts after the chicken. It escapes his grasp twice before he DIVES and catches it.

TITO (CONT'D)  
Drink, before it's too late!

Rob fights his gag reflex. He takes in a mouthful of blood. Swallows it like poison. Tito snatches the chicken and dumps it on the grass. Rob wipes his blood-bathed mouth, heaving.

Brenda emerges from the cave, smiles, and takes Rob's hand. He rises on shaky legs. She ushers him to the cave.

## INT. ORISHA CAVE - NIGHT

A bleak and winding path. Brenda, Tito and Rob slink by old notes and photos set into the grooves in the walls.

## EXT. SATAN'S CAVE - NIGHT

Ed paces backwards until the black cave mouth swallows him.

## INT. ORISHA CAVE CLEARING - NIGHT

Eight-foot STATUES OF OGÚN AND CHANGÓ pose in the corner. African tribal attire adorns their muscular black bodies. Ogún wields a machete and a sledgehammer. Changó, a thunderbolt and a double-headed battle-axe.

## INT. SATAN'S CAVE CLEARING - NIGHT

Ed reveres a massive STATUE OF SATAN. He wears a lewd smile. One hand grips a trident while the other points down. His nude body, red and muscular, boasts a large erect penis.

## INT. ORISHA CAVE CLEARING - NIGHT

Brenda ushers Rob to an empty grave. She blows into a conch. Its call is sharp and mournful.

Tito laughs haughtily and dances in circles as he uses a metal pick to stroke a guiro. The hollowed out wooden instrument produces a ratchet-like sound.

Rob wipes a curtain of sweat off his forehead.

BRENDA

Take one.

She offers Rob a skull bowl teeming with animal bones. Rob sifts through them and withdraws a chicken thigh bone.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Hold it on your tongue. Lay down.

Rob accepts it into his mouth. He lays inside the hole. Brenda shovels dirt on him. He sits up.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Trust us. Trust abuela Maria.

Rob lays back down. Shuts his eyes. Brenda shovels faster. The guiro *SINGS* & *CLICKS* at a fierce tempo to Tito's chants.

## INT. SATAN'S CAVE CLEARING - NIGHT

Black skull candles in the walls illuminate Ed jerking his body to the fervid drumming, singing and humming of Paleros.

ED

(Spanish)

Oh, Satan! Oh, Lord! OH-HOH!

Juan draws haunting sigils on the cave wall.

INT. ORISHA CAVE CLEARING - NIGHT

Rob is completely buried alive.

Brenda THWACKS a machete against the wall as she guides a lamb to the mock grave. Rob's chest rises and falls rapidly beneath the dirt. Tito plays the guiro with mastery.

INT. SATAN'S CAVE CLEARING - NIGHT

Drums blast as Juan brings a mountain goat to the center.

JUAN  
(Spanish)  
On this dark night, I offer this  
vessel and this sacrifice! Just how  
you like it! Oh, Satan! How it is  
and always will be!

INT. ORISHA CAVE CLEARING - NIGHT

Brenda holds the lamb's severed head over Rob's mock grave. Tito rips the guiro with long, purposeful strokes.

BRENDA  
(Spanish)  
Ogún! Changó! Take this vessel and  
fill it with your power!

Brenda places the lamb's head on the dirt atop Rob's face. She lays her right hand on top of it and prays.

INT. SATAN'S CAVE CLEARING - NIGHT

The goat's now severed head is pegged atop a tall stick. Ed places a hand on it. The Paleros lay their hands upon his.

PALEROS  
(Spanish)  
Sorcerer kills sorcerer!  
Sorcerer kills sorcerer!

Juan sprays lighter fluid around them. He strikes a match and drops it. A circle of fire ROARS to life.

Flames dance in Ed's vehement eyes.

JUAN  
(Spanish)  
Oh, Dead Dark, use this vessel!

INT. ORISHA CAVE CLEARING - NIGHT

The guiro hits the ground.

Rob lies dead still under the dirt.

EXT. GLENVILLE - NIGHT

Nothing moves or makes a sound in the sleepy suburb.

INT. MENDES MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Laura tosses and turns in her sleep. Jordan's *SHARP SCREAM* erupts through the baby monitor. Laura's eyes burst open. She leaps off the mattress. Sprints to the door.

INT. MENDES 2ND FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

Laura bursts out of the bedroom. Jordan's room door is open. Something *FLITS* past her peripheral. She spins to her left.

Her dead, grotesque-looking father drifts down the stairs. He cradles something close to his chest.

EXT. MENDES MANSION - NIGHT

Laura chases her father outside.

LAURA  
Stop!

He about-faces and shushes her. Jordan sleeps in his arms.

Laura starts to shout again but her father draws a sigil in the air with his finger. She falls into a silent trance... Her father resumes his walk. Laura slinks after him.

INT. ORISHA CAVE CLEARING - NIGHT

Brenda and Tito bicker at the foot of Rob's grave.

BRENDA  
It's been too long! This isn't-

TITO

He can do it! Just a little more-

Rob sits up straight. He swipes the dirt off of his face. The twins cross themselves, mouths agape.

Rob exits the grave and stands tall. There's something different about him. Something powerful. Majestic.

Tito and Brenda kneel before Rob in reverence.

TITO

Welcome, Changó!

BRENDA

Welcome, Ogún!

Rob motions for them to rise. They obey.

ROB

(Yoruba)

Blood will flow. Join us?

Tito hands him a sledgehammer. Brenda, a battle axe.

INT. ED'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Laura shadows her father inside.

Dozens of Paleros in hooded black robes stand in a circle holding lit black skull candles. They turn to face Laura. Their faces are covered in wooden Bakongo masks whose dramatic expressions range from whimsical to disturbing.

Laura's Father serves her a perverse smile.

Ed exits the circle in a mask with a feathered collar. He trades a white robe for Jordan and re-enters the circle.

Laura blinks and, as if a veil has been lifted, her father becomes Juan. He SMOTHERS her face with a cloth.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Rob marches to the tree line, Tito and Brenda at his sides. A SHADOW enshrouds them. They stop and slowly turn around, coming face to face with a big BLACK BEAR on its hind legs. 500 pounds of pure and ferocious power.

BRENDA (V.O.)

Ogún is the God of war. Changó, the ruler of nature. Giver of courage.

Rob lowers his right hand. The bear leans down submissively. Rob raises his right hand. The bear stands back up.

Dozens of rattlesnakes emerge from the woods. Cougars and bobcats follow. Birds flock to the surrounding trees.

Brenda and Tito bubble with awe and excitement. Rob swaggers deeper into the forest. The twins and animals follow.

EXT. FOREST HILLTOP - NIGHT

Ed ushers a lamb into a pentacle made of white powder.

Laura fights against the rope binding her to a nearby tree. She wears the white robe and her mouth is taped shut.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Tito, Brenda and over a dozen **SANTEROS** dressed in white dance to *INTENSE DRUMMING* around an enormous bonfire.

The legion of wild animals surrounds them on standby.

Rob sits cross-legged before the fire, his eyes closed.

**ELDER SANTERA (60)** - been to hell and back twice and clawed her way back out - blows dust from her palm into the fire. She feeds the flames a sack of animal bones and sifts through them with a branch, reading...

INTERCUT - FOREST CLEARING/FOREST HILLTOP

Ed tapes a picture of Tito and Brenda to the lamb's head.

Brenda leads the pygmy goat into the circle.

Santeros dance around Rob shouting and playing instruments at a fever pitch. Maracas, conga drums and flutes harmonize.

Tito pours Ed's blood, hair and semen into a skull bowl. Stirs it with his finger. Pours the mix into the fire.

Blood-orange flames SHOOT towards the sky.

Ed places a male wax doll under the lamb's stomach.

The dancing Santeros swig rum and puff cigars until they become possessed. With bulging eyes, they shudder, swoon, yaw and convulse. Everything is surreal. Dream-like.

Ed shuts his eyes and listens to the forest. He points West.

ED  
(Kikongo)  
Everyone dies!

A band of Paleros brandish razor-sharp machetes and daggers. They gallop west whooping and howling like maniacs.

Santeros shake and howl in a frenzy. Rob's eyes snap open.

ROB  
(Yoruba)  
Feast!

The animals break out with dark intentions.

Ed takes up a sledgehammer. He drags it across the ground.

Elder Santera billows cigar smoke in Rob's face as others shout praises and throw their hands in the air rhythmically. Brenda brings her dagger to the goat's throat.

EXT. FOREST PATH - NIGHT

Rob's animal army ZIPS along the path.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Brenda catches the goat's blood in the skull bowl.

EXT. FOREST HILLTOP - NIGHT

Ed looms before the lamb, his eyes narrowed in wickedness.

EXT. FOREST PATH - NIGHT

Wild cats intercept and maul the Paleros.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Tito dances around the Santeros with unfettered energy as they drink from the skull bowl and pass it. It comes to Rob. He empties it in one gulp.

EXT. FOREST PATH - NIGHT

Rattlesnakes and birds attack the Paleros. The black bear SLASHES a throat open. BITES a whole face. RIPS a head off.

EXT. FOREST HILLTOP - NIGHT

Ed swings the sledgehammer at the lamb's leg.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Tito's knee SHATTERS mid-dance. He collapses squealing.

BRENDA

TITO!

EXT. FOREST HILLTOP - NIGHT

Ed brings the hammer down towards the lamb's head.

INTERCUT - FOREST CLEARING/HILLTOP - NIGHT

Tito's face is SMASHED into an unrecognizable pulp.

Paleros invade the clearing and go into a wicked stabbing spree. Brenda unsheathes two machetes with a pained WAR CRY.

Rob brutalizes Paleros with the axe and sledgehammer in a manic display of preternatural strength.

Ed snags a female wax doll off the ground.

Brenda guts Paleros without mercy.

BRENDA

MOTHERFUCKERS!

Juan drops a match onto the white powder, igniting A PENTACLE OF FIRE.

Brenda suddenly halts. Her eyeballs roll in their sockets. Rob grabs her by the shoulders.

ROB

Brenda!

Ed tosses the female wax doll into the fire.

BRENDA BURSTS INTO FLAMES.

Rob's hands catch fire. He jumps back, falling on his ass. The bold power and regal confidence leaves his eyes.

Brenda flails like a headless chicken as she burns alive. Her anguished screams are drowned out by the fire.



Rob fills with dread as her charred corpse hits the ground.  
Elder Santera and the few surviving Santeros jet past Rob.

ELDER SANTERA  
(Spanish)  
You're fucked, kid!

Ed chews on thumbtacks. He spits them into the fire.

ED  
(Kikongo)  
Annihilation!

Metal shards PEPPER the fleeing Santeros to death.

The animals stampede uphill.

Juan grabs a clump of dirt. Rubs it in his hands. BLOWS it  
into the fiery pentacle.

JUAN  
(Kikongo)  
Destruction!

Flames stretch downhill and scorch the inbound animals.

Tears jump from Laura's helpless eyes.

Ed hurls a thick tree limb into the fire.

The tree limb flies into the back of Rob's head - *THUNK!*

EXT. FOREST HILLTOP - NIGHT

The full moon peeks through a window of drifting clouds.

A DOZEN PALEROS stand around the fiery pentacle, their arms  
raised to the sky. Severed goat heads lie at their feet.

PALEROS  
(Spanish)  
WE GIVE TO RECEIVE!

Ed floats upside down over the circle with his eyes closed,  
his feet pressed together and his arms stretched out.

PALEROS (CONT'D)  
(Spanish)  
WE GIVE TO RECEIVE!

Ed's eyelids rise. Black slits float within orange sclera's.

Rob hangs upside down from a tree, his ankles and wrists bound by ropes.

Ed descends into the circle of Brujos. It opens on one side. Ed struts at Rob with the poise of something evil, timeless. His voice is as dark and deep as the ocean.

ED

They say Peter felt unworthy to  
perish like his Lord and requested  
to be crucified upside down.  
Truthfully, I looked into his eyes  
and found no fear in his soul...  
So, I chose to invert the cross.  
Fear entered his heart then. The  
fear of mocking his Lord!

The Paleros close the circle.

PALEROS

(Kikongo)

WE FULFILL YOUR WILL! YOUR WILL!

Ed exudes pride and depravity from every pore.

ROB

What the fuck are you?

ED

It was much easier to find your  
fears. And hers!

Rob's PUPILS JERK into contact with Laura who is tied to an adjacent tree in the same position, fast asleep.

The coven bows to Ed.

PALEROS

(Kikongo)

WE FULFILL YOUR WILL! YOUR WILL!

Juan unveils a dagger with a skull-shaped hilt. He moves to a GRANITE SLAB covered in ancient carvings and blood stains. Jordan lays on the slab below a human skull.

ROB

He's just a baby!

Ed's dragon-like eyes burn with malice.

ED

(Brenda's voice)

Power is not only secured by votes!  
(MORE)

ED (CONT'D)  
 (Spanish, Gilda's voice)  
 The more innocent the sacrifice,  
 the greater the reward!

Rob's heart skips a beat.

ROB  
 I never hurt you!

Ed feigns pity. He touches Rob's face gently.

ED  
 (natural voice)  
 My dear brother. The golden child.  
 Brilliant, but clueless.

Juan cuts his finger and paints the skull & arrows sigil on Jordan's forehead with his blood.

ED (CONT'D)  
 I tried to be good. Was a good  
 student. Studious. But people just  
 kept on... fucking with me!

Juan places a slimy black worm on Jordan's bare stomach.

JUAN  
 (Spanish)  
 We offer this child as a living  
 sacrifice for your power and glory!

PALEROS  
 (Spanish)  
 YOUR POWER AND GLORY!

ED  
 Neighbor, tutor, bully, classmate!

ROB  
 Use me! Just use me! Please!

ED  
 And for what?! So you could live  
 this perfect life?! Why you?!

ROB  
 It wasn't my fault! Our mother-

ED  
 Was weak and desperate! Warped!

He slices Laura's shirt open, exposing her chest.

ROB  
Motherfucker!

ED  
What did I get for it?! A dead twin  
brother! An abusive stepmother! A  
lifetime of deformity and PAIN!

Ed douses Rob and Laura with a tank of gasoline. Rob thrashes against his ropes to no avail.

ED (CONT'D)  
I had a lot of time to think in my  
cell. To think about what led me  
there. It always came back to you.

The Paleros prostrate themselves at Ed's feet.

BRUJOS  
(Spanish)  
ACCEPT OUR OFFERING! OUR OFFERING!

Juan raises the dagger over Jordan and slowly brings it down to his chest, practicing for the perfect blow. He repeats.

ED  
I watched you for two years.  
Admired you. But I knew only one  
way to restore balance to my life.  
Making you my ultimate sacrifice.  
The Unholy Trinity.

Rob groans in hateful anguish.

ROB  
I'm sorry, Ed! You didn't deserve  
to suffer, but neither do we!

Laura awakens in a daze.

LAURA  
R- Rob? What is happening?

Rob can't find his words. Laura sees Juan preparing to sacrifice Jordan.

LAURA (CONT'D)  
No! Not my son! Not my son!

Ed holds a lighter out in front of her.

ED  
Now, my power will know no limits.

ROB  
 (Spanish)  
 Oh, Lord Ogún! Reverse what's been  
 done and send it back to the  
 source, destroying the creator of  
 this sin! Changó, don't let this  
 evil consume me! To your great  
 names be endless praise!

JUAN  
 (Spanish)  
 Accept this sacrifice! Perfect and  
 innocent just how you like it! OH!

The black worm creeps over Jordan's chin to his mouth.

Ed flicks the lighter and births a flame.

Juan raises the dagger for the death blow.

ROB  
 (Spanish)  
 CHANGÓ! OGÚN! YOU PROMISED TO  
 CONSUME MY ENEMIES! TO FEAST ON  
 THEIR SOULS! BATHE IN THEIR BLOOD!

Juan DRIVES the dagger down.

ROB (CONT'D)  
 BATHE IN THEIR BLOOD, NOW!

The BLADE STOPS just over Jordan's heart.

Ed cocks his head to the side.

Rob stands under the tree, the ropes shredded at his feet.  
 His back arches like a "C" and his fingers curl as his  
 throat expands unnaturally. He *HISSES* like a wild cat.

With eyes like white clouds and a face of pure power and  
 malice, Rob extends his hands towards the sky.

DARK CLOUDS form overhead. A torrent of rain pours down,  
 dousing out the fire.

Juan can't believe what he's seeing.

Rob and Ed recognize something in each other.

ED  
 (Yoruba)  
 Long time, Changó. Ogún.

Rob's voice flows with sacred authority and wisdom.

ROB  
(Yoruba)  
Samyaza... The first fallen.

ED/SAMYAZA  
(Yoruba)  
Pity to see you lend yourselves to  
such a weak vessel!

Juan marches after Rob with the dagger held out to his side.

Rob raises a hand in Juan's direction and clenches his fist. Nasty boils riddle Juan's skin. He stops and stares in horror. The boils BURST OPEN with splashes of blood.

Rob tilts his head up then down.

A thunderbolt ZAPS Juan's skull and cooks him from the inside out. His crispy body smacks the ground. Smoke wafts.

Rob SNAPS his thumb.

The Paleros draw daggers. They remove their hoods and masks. They attack each other like barbarians.

Rob's lips curl into a satisfied grin.

LAURA (O.S.)  
He's getting away!

Rob catches sight of a Palero escaping to the trees with Ed. He makes a pulling motion with his hands.

Ed is dragged backwards. He turns to meet Rob eye to eye. Ed's power has escaped him. For once, he is frightened.

Rob points two fingers at Ed's face then draws them back. Ed's eyeballs RIP OUT of his skull. He cups his empty eye sockets screaming like a demon.

Rob mimes shooting Ed with his finger. Ed's blood and brains EXPLODE out the back of his skull. He capsizes to the earth.

ROB  
(Yoruba)  
Strong enough!

Rob swings his hand in a cutting motion.

Laura's restraints are sliced off and she falls free. Groaning, she collects Jordan off the sacrificial rock.

Laura takes in the features of her Orisha-possessed husband. His bulging black veins. The milky white abyss in his eyes. His fierce mien. Laura's chest rises and falls rapidly.

ROB (CONT'D)  
Go on, Laura. Go!

She clings to Jordan and dashes off.

Rob presses a foot into Ed's chest and twists his neck. *CRUNCH*. He tears Ed's head off his shoulders and raises it like a trophy. He smiles triumphantly.

FADE TO:

INT. MENDES APARTMENT - DAY

Modest. A crowded Santeria shrine hugs a corner.

Rob, Vicky and Laura sit at the dining table holding hands, their heads bowed in prayer. Jordan eats in his highchair. He's almost two years old now and growing strong.

EXT. BRONX BUILDING COMPLEX - DAY

Rob strides through a festive block party in good spirits. He wears all white linen and Maria's Saint Barbara chain. People greet him with respect and admiration.

INT. LIVING ROOM, CLIENT'S APARTMENT - DAY

Neat and lonely despite the family photos hung everywhere.

Rob sits across from a **KIND CLIENT (68)** with a troubled visage, one hand on his forehead.

ROB  
(Spanish)  
You should be outside. Getting  
fresh air and sun. With the people.

KIND CLIENT  
(Spanish)  
I can't do anything... without her.

Rob nods understandingly. He stands up beaming with purpose. Motions for the client to rise.

INT. SAME - MOMENTS LATER

Rob mouth-sprays rum into the Kind Client's face. He sparks a cigar and blows three puffs of smoke at him. He sprinkles the man with holy water. Traces a cross on his forehead.

INT. SAME - MOMENTS LATER

Rob shakes red & white maracas and performs an animated dance around the Kind Client while shouting and trembling.

ROB  
(Spanish)  
Changó gives you his courage, his  
strength and all his blessings!

INT. SAME - MOMENTS LATER

Rob stands at the open doorway sweating through his clothes. The Kind Client glows with joy. He stuffs a wad of cash into Rob's hand and cups it firmly.

KIND CLIENT  
(Spanish)  
You have your grandmother's grace!

INT. MENDES APARTMENT BATHROOM - NIGHT

Rob holds his reflection in the mirror. A genuine smile. Happy where he is. In the hallway behind him, visible through the open door, something LUMBERS in his direction.

Rob spins around in a moment of horror and uncertainty.

The figure is none other than his friendly neighbor, ED. He stops at a door and flashes Rob that sick smile of his.

Rob shakes his head. This can't be real.

Ed enters the room.

ROB  
Laura!

He gallops down the hall and into--



## INT. MENDES APARTMENT BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rob TACKLES ED to the floor. Gorilla-pounds his face. SHATTERS the bedside lamp over his head. Ed laughs at him. Rob PLUNGES his thumbs into Ed's eyeballs, screaming.

Ed laughs and hollers. Rob JAMS a lamp shard into his neck. Blood squirts. Ed squirms and holds the wound. Then dies. Rob heaves over his limp body. His gaze cuts to the bed.

ROB

Laura?!

The bed is vacant.

Rob brings his attention back to the corpse beneath him. Confusion, horror, rage and regret all melt into his face. His hands go up to his mouth.

It is not Ed lying dead beneath Rob, but his wife, Laura.

Rob touches the angel necklace around her neck in a gut-wrenching moment of realization.

QUICK-FLASH: During the forest showdown, the Palero Rob let escape peeks over his shoulders. He is actually Ed. Rob attacks a random Palero while Ed vanishes through the trees.

Rob groans in anguished defeat.

## EXT. KIRBY FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIC CENTER, WARDS ISLAND - DAY

The front gate SWINGS open.

## INT. BLOCK C, KIRBY FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DAY

Heavily armed guards escort Rob through in a straitjacket. *DEMENTED WAILS* drift out of the cells.

## INT. ROB'S CELL, KIRBY FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DAY

Rob is shoved inside. The cell door slams shut behind him.

He scans the padded walls, quivering. He cowers into a corner and rocks back and forth, his eyes crazed.

ROB

It was Ed. It was Ed. It was Ed.

INT. SAME - NIGHT

Rob sways in the same corner with the same frenzied eyes.  
His beard is overgrown.

ROB

It was Ed. It was Ed. It was Ed.

A *VIOLENT COMMOTION* rises outside. Rob faces the cell door.  
It beeps, unlocks, then opens wide. Rob gasps and waits...

Ed steps into the doorway. His grin is chillingly inviting.

Rob doesn't know what to believe. Can't trust his eyes.

ED

Come. The Black Awakening awaits.

Ed moves along. Three guards in Bakongo masks follow him...  
Rob treads to the doorway. He sticks his head outside.

INT. BLOCK C, KIRBY FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Pandemonium. The cell doors are open and freed inmates are  
massacring the staff in heinous ways. Ed dances as he  
signals more inmates to attack, orchestrating the chaos.

Rob retreats back into his cell and shuts the door. *BANG!*

THE END.