

LUCID LOVE

Written by
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FADE IN:

INT. UNKNOWN

STEVEN THOMPSON, late 20's, glides down an escalator. He is handsome but unkempt, wearing a suit.

An escalator traveling in the opposite direction, runs parallel to him. Hordes of MEN and WOMEN ride the two escalators.

A beautiful WOMAN, mid 20's, in a maroon dress with long brown hair, glides up the opposite escalator. As the woman passes, they briefly make eye-contact, she smiles and quickly looks away.

Steven tries to push people out of the way so he can run after her, but they barely move and seem annoyed.

Steven suddenly realizes he is naked. Steven covers himself but no one seems to notice.

Steven climbs on the hand rail and jumps to the other escalator. As he lands, he falls and rolls down the escalator as it continually rises.

He SCREAMS as he tumbles and --

STEVEN

And his desk chair hit the ground. He lets out a YELP. He is wearing a white collared shirt with a plain tie. He is in a --

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

In the middle of a large block of cubicles in a large room with fluorescent lighting. His cubicle has a cheap desk with an outdated computer on it.

Steven quickly hops up, picks up his chair and pretends to work as PHIL HANFORD, late 30's, pops his head over the cubicle wall, like a chubby jack-in-the-box.

PHIL

Fall asleep again?

STEVEN

(annoyed)

No!

(beat)

(MORE)

STEVEN (CONT'D)
My chair collapsed. Everything
around here is falling apart.

PHIL
You might want to have that
checked. I had a cousin who had
narcolepsy and fell asleep while
driving, nearly killed him.

STEVEN
It's not narcolepsy, it's this
place.

PHIL
It's not so bad. They give us gift
baskets on our birthdays with two
types of jelly.

STEVEN
(sarcastic)
That makes it all worthwhile then,
doesn't it?

Steven stands up, grabs a form off his desk and walks through
the office of --

BINDENMEYER, GRUFFMAN AND ASSOCIATES INSURANCE

On his way to the copier.

PHIL
I'm just saying, two types of
jelly. Most places don't give you
one.

Phil follows Steven as he tries to lose him by weaving in and
out of the cubicle walkways.

PHIL (CONT'D)
They hired someone to replace
Donna.

STEVEN
Great, now they're going to finally
layoff the ten percent she refused
to.

PHIL
Getting fired wouldn't be the end
of the world.

Steven reaches the --

COPIER NOOK

And makes a copy of the form. Phil pops his head in the nook.

PHIL

Have you reconsidered my invitation
for tonight? My wife's sister
recently got out of a relationship
and is staying with us. She's cute,
and it might help get your mind off
Veronica.

STEVEN

No, I'm really busy. I have to --
(beat)
Help my neighbor wash his cats.

PHIL

Say no more. I'm an animal lover
and a strong believer in community.
(beat)
How about my Halloween party next
weekend?

Steven pulls out his cell phone and barely glances at it
before putting it back in his pocket.

STEVEN

Nope, I'm booked solid.

PHIL

If you can't, you can't.

Phil wanders off as Steven pulls out his phone and turns it
on. There is a text from his mother that reads: "Call me
ASAP!" He ignores it and continues to make copies.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Steven carries a briefcase as he glides down an escalator
into a large lobby. MEN and WOMEN with solemn expressions,
ride the escalators and file out the front entrance.

Steven notices an attractive WOMAN, mid 30's, with red hair
and stylish business attire, climb on to the escalator and
ride it up. The world seems to slow down as he takes her in.

When he gets to the bottom, he turns around and watches her
walk into his office.

I/E. STEVEN'S CAR - DOWNTOWN DENVER, COLORADO - DAY

Steven is parked at a red light, he is driving a beat up, late nineties Honda.

As he waits, Steven examines an advertisement for the circus on a bus stop. It has a picture of a clown juggling as a man on a motorcycle jumps over his head.

EXT. STEVEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Steven walks up to the front door of his apartment. On the doorstep there is a package with a stamp that reads: "98% natural recycled materials. One life, one consciousness, one Earth."

INT. LIVING ROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Steven sits on an old brown couch, surfing the internet on his laptop. There is a game show on the television.

His apartment is small with very little furniture. Steven notices the blinking light on the answering machine next to the couch.

Steven mutes the television and pushes the answering machine button. He listens to the messages as he pulls up his e-mail account. There are two new e-mails, both from his mother.

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE (V.O.)

You have three new messages. First new message:

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

This is Grace, with Doctor Klein's office. We got your blood work back and would like to schedule a follow up consultation to discuss depression medications --

Steven pushes the button on the answering machine, skipping over the rest of the message.

The first e-mail reads: "Call me when you get home. Love, Mom"

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE (V.O.)

Second new message:

MOTHER'S VOICE (V.O.)
 Hi, Steven. This is your mother. I
 hope you got the package. I think
 it will help with your issues --

Steven pushes the button on the answering machine, skipping
 over the rest of the message.

The second e-mail reads: "Please let me know, the tracking
 number said it arrived today. I want to make sure you got it.
 XOXO - Mom."

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE (V.O.)
 Final new message:

MOTHER'S VOICE (V.O.)
 Steven, mom again. Please call me.
 It's time to move on and let go of
 Veronica. This device will --

Steven pushes the button once again and grabs the package off
 the coffee table and opens it. Inside there is an odd black
 mask. The mask has LED lights on the front and headphones on
 the side. The embroidering on the mask reads: "Dream Weaver
 2000." There is a phone book sized manual in the box.

Steven examines the contents, confused, then tosses the
 package to the side.

Steven turns the volume on the television up and watches a
 CONTESTANT spin a large wheel.

INT. CASINO - NIGHT (DREAM)

Steven wanders through an empty casino past rows of slot
 machines playing themselves. Posters of circus performers and
 animals line the walls.

He approaches a large prize wheel with positive and negative
 awards. Some of the negative prizes are: "attacked by bees"
 and "punched by grandma." Some of the positive prizes are:
 "free egg salad" and "lifetime supply of silverware."

Steven gives the wheel a tug and it spins.

STEVEN
 Come on, jelly!

The wheel almost lands on "two types of jelly" but at the
 last moment lands on "axed." A trap door opens up underneath
 Steven and he drops into the darkness below.

INT. CONVEYOR BELT ROOM - NIGHT (DREAM)

Steven lands on a conveyor belt leading to a menacing ROBOT with two giant axes for arms. Totem poles, wooden animals and various other furniture move down the conveyor belt toward the robot who quickly chops them into pieces.

Steven tries to run but keeps stumbling over the objects.
Steven dives into a --

WOODEN SARCOPHAGUS.

It stops moving after Steven closes the lid.

INT. MUSEUM - NIGHT (DREAM)

Steven opens the lid of the sarcophagus. He is in a large room marble covered room. Statues are displayed throughout.

Steven sees the woman in the maroon dress examining a statue of a mime crying.

STEVEN

Hi!

The woman is surprised when she notices Steven. She then runs down a long corridor. Steven jumps out of the sarcophagus and chases after her.

The corridor twists and turns, becoming more and more narrow as he pursues her. Steven turns a corner and sees a door slam shut. He runs through the door into a --

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY (DREAM)

Steven hears a shower running in the distance. He slowly makes his way toward the shower past rows of lockers.

Steven reaches the shower and sees the woman washing herself, nude with her back turned to him. After a moment she looks over her shoulder and smiles as she soaps herself up.

The fire alarm RINGS, growing in intensity as --

CUT TO BLACK.

A phone RINGS loudly.

INT. LIVING ROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven is asleep on the couch, dry humping the cushion in pair of sweat pants. He grabs the ringing phone as he opens his eyes.

STEVEN
(into phone, irritated)
What?
(beat, embarrassed)
Oh, hi, mom.

INT. GLORIA'S HOUSE - SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO - NIGHT

GLORIA THOMPSON holds a phone up to her ear. She is in her mid-sixties wearing a long flowing dress, turquoise jewelry, and horn rimmed glasses.

Her adobe house is decorated with bright tapestries and various other new age items including a massive dream catcher.

GLORIA
(into phone)
Did you get it?

MICKEY GOLDMAN waters a cactus in the center of the room. He is a skinny man in his late sixties wearing only a pair of tight corduroy shorts as his long white hair flows down his back.

INTERCUT with Steven's apartment.

STEVEN
Yeah, thanks.

GLORIA
I know you don't believe in this stuff but I think you should open your mind and give it a chance.

STEVEN
I don't know.

GLORIA
What do you have to lose? Listen to these testimonials from their website.

Gloria grabs a piece of paper off of the table and reads from it.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

"This mask is amazing. I've been in control of my dreams and couldn't be happier." Dan Houser, Houston, Texas. "My dreams are coming true. I can finally ride that unicycle." Lucy Limon, San Diego, California. "I've always wanted to share a sundae with Lincoln. Now I finally can." Gary Skooner, Buffalo, New York.

STEVEN

Fine, I'll give it a shot.

GLORIA

Exquisite. Mickey and I are really worried about you.

Mickey walks over and starts rubbing her shoulders.

STEVEN

You told Mickey?

GLORIA

Of course, he is my spirit partner.

(beat)

We can talk more later. Your dreams await.

STEVEN

Thanks, mom.

GLORIA

Please consider attending the Mind Temple Convention next week. We have an extra ticket, it would really nurture your soul. I love you. Be well.

STEVEN

I love you too. Good night.

Steven hangs up.

END OF INTERCUTTING

Steven grabs the box his mom sent and pulls out the dream factory mask and manual.

INT. BEDROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven lies in bed, reading the manual. The Dream Weaver Mask is on the bed next to him.

Steven examines diagrams in the manual displaying how the mask works.

THE FIRST DIAGRAM

Shows a man sliding the mask on his face.

THE SECOND DIAGRAM

Is of a man asleep with the mask flashing and beeping.

THE FINAL DIAGRAM

Is of the man asleep with a thought bubble over his head. In the bubble he is riding a buffalo, wearing a crown and eating an ice cream cone.

STEVEN

Looks at the last diagram, confused. He puts the manual down, opens a magazine and looks over an article about a luxury hotels.

He then grabs the mask and slides it over his head as he lies back.

INT. LOBBY - LARGE HOTEL - NIGHT (DREAM)

Steven wanders through the lobby of a large ornate hotel decorated with white and black marble and abstract paintings. He is wearing a pair of pajamas covered in circus animals.

THREE CLOWNS sit on leather couches in the lobby.

CLOWN

I wish someone would hit me with a
cherry pie for a change. I am sick
of all these cream pies.

The other two clowns honk their noses in agreement as Steven keeps wandering. He notices an elevator down a hallway and makes his way toward it.

As he approaches, the elevator doors fly open and a LITTLE MAN dressed in a helmet, cape, and red, white and blue leather jumpsuit, zooms down the hallway toward him on a minibike.

Steven jumps out of the way as the little man screeches to a halt. He lifts his visor. It is a CHIMPANZEE.

The chimp then revs his engine and peels off down the hallway as Steven climbs into the elevator. The doors close and it shoots up through the hotel.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven lies in bed asleep. His eyes twitch as he enters the REM stage of sleep. The LED lights on the mask blink and a soft BEEPING emanates from the headphones.

BACK TO:

INT. ELEVATOR - LARGE HOTEL - NIGHT (DREAM)

As Steven reaches the top, the elevator BEEPS and the red lights on the control panel flicker.

Steven closes his eyes and opens them. He is suddenly wearing a tuxedo with his hair slicked back. He looks debonair as the doors open, revealing a --

EXT. ROOFTOP TERRACE - LARGE HOTEL - NIGHT

Steven walks across the desolate terrace toward the woman from his other dream as she stands at the edge of the building staring into the endless desert below. Her maroon dress and long brown hair blow in the wind.

STEVEN

Well, hello!

(beat)

I'm Steven.

WOMAN/JULIA

(turning toward him)

Julia.

Steven grabs her hand and kisses it.

JULIA
I'm sorry I avoided you for so
long. It was out of my control --

STEVEN
We're together now and that's what
matters.

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP TERRACE - LARGE HOTEL - LATER

The full moon shines brightly as a fire pit flickers in the center of the rooftop. Steven and Julia hold each other, lying on an art deco couch as they watch the stars.

STEVEN
I'm glad we're finally together. If
only we could stay like this
forever.

JULIA
I wish we could. We have almost
everything in common.

Steven sighs and stares at Julia.

JULIA (CONT'D)
What's on your mind?

STEVEN
I can't remember the last time I
was this happy.

Julia strokes his cheek and Steven slowly leans in for a kiss as Gloria walks out of the elevator. Steven glares at her.

The color in the dream slowly fades away.

Steven leans in again as Gloria walks slowly toward him. She is now dressed like a clown, loudly HONKING her nose.

JULIA
Ignore her.

The honking gets louder as she approaches. The three other clowns pop out of the elevator and all start honking their noses.

STEVEN
(frustrated)
I can't, but I shall return.

Steven struts over to Gloria and pushes her back into the elevator. He turns and smiles at Julia, who smiles back.

INT. BEDROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

The alarm BEEPS loudly as Steven slowly rolls out of bed and hits the alarm. Steven, pulls off the mask and stretches.

Suddenly he freezes, sits down on the bed and grabs his cell phone.

STEVEN
(faking sick, into phone)
Hi, Tanya. I'm not going to make it
in today. I'm really sick.
(forced cough)
I think it's best if I stay home
and rest.
(beat)
Okay, thanks.

Steven hangs up and grabs a magazine off the nightstand. He opens it and stares at a picture of an apple orchard.

He puts the mask back on and lies down. He tosses and turns for a moment and pulls off the mask, frustrated.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Steven wanders down the medicine aisle of a grocery store examining various bottles of cough syrup. He picks up a bottle of green syrup that reads: "Night Time Relief" and puts the bottle in his basket.

INT. BATHROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Steven cautiously measures a dosage of the cough syrup. He stares at the cup for a moment before he quickly drinks it.

INT. BEDROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Steven climbs into bed. The alarm clock reads: "11:00 AM" as he slips the mask over his eyes and lies still.

EXT. APPLE ORCHARD - DAY (DREAM)

Steven aimlessly strolls through an orchard filled with rows of dead trees. Their branches reach out like claws against the overcast sky.

In the distance Steven sees a run down barn and walks toward it. He notices a scowling scarecrow and examines it.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven lies in bed asleep. The LED lights on the mask blink and a soft BEEPING is emitted from the headphones.

BACK TO:

EXT. BARN - DAY (DREAM)

The scarecrow's eyes flicker with a red light as it makes a quiet BEEPING sound. The scowl turns into a smile.

Steven is now wearing a seersucker suit and the orchard is full of life. Birds chirp and large ripe apples hang from branches covered in lush green leaves.

Julia steps out from behind a tree.

STEVEN

Hey.

The world around him seems to become more vibrant as Julia speaks.

JULIA

You came back sooner than I thought.

STEVEN

I couldn't resist.

Julia and Steven tenderly embrace.

JULIA

Follow me.

They smile and look in to each other's eyes as they walk through the orchard and hold hands.

INT. BARN LOFT - SUNSET - LATER (DREAM)

Steven and Julia hold each other on a bed made of hay bales in the barn's loft as they watch the sunset.

JULIA

I think I'm falling for you.

STEVEN
Don't think, know. I know I'm
falling for you.

Steven kisses Julia.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
And I know I want to spend eternity
holding you in my arms.

A loud RINGING emanates from the barn below.

Steven looks to see what the noise is. A fire has broken out
setting off an alarm.

Steven grabs a fire extinguisher off the wall as the color
around him fades away.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
I'll take care of this.

JULIA
Hurry and be safe.

Steven slides down the ladder into the barn below and sprays
the extinguisher.

INT. BEDROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Steven has a huge grin on his face as his cell phone RINGS
loudly. The grin quickly shifts to a frown as Steven tears
the mask off and answers it. The clock now reads: "3:00PM."

STEVEN
(aggravated, into phone)
What!?!?
(beat)
What do you want, Phil?
(beat)
I'm fine, just a little under the
weather.
(beat)
I have --

Steven looks around. He notices a magazine on the nightstand
with a walrus on the cover.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
The Walrus Flu. It's very rare, but
I should be better soon.
(beat)
They've been asking about me?
(beat)
(MORE)

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Tell them, I'll be back tomorrow.
(beat)
Don't worry, they're not going to
fire me because I'm sick one day.
I'll see you tomorrow.

Steven hangs up and pulls the mask over his face. He tosses and turns for a moment.

INT. BATHROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Steven grabs the bottle of cough syrup and takes a gulp.

Steven then stares at an ad for breath mints with a couple lying together in a hammock in the forest.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT (DREAM)

Steven and Julia lie in a hammock hanging from a large tree branch, high above the forest floor. Steven holds Julia as he watches a shooting star with a dreamy expression on his face.

STEVEN
Have I told you how happy you make
me?

JULIA
You don't have to, I know.

STEVEN
I love you.

JULIA
I love you, too.

Steven closes his eyes and when he reopens them a bouquet of roses is in his hand. He gives them to Julia.

JULIA (CONT'D)
They're beautiful.

STEVEN
Only a fraction as much as you are.

They kiss as Steven pulls off Julia's dress.

The hammock sways between the trees as Julia moans.

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - SUNRISE

Sunlight shines through the tree tops as Steven and Julia lie nude, swaying in the hammock. An owl that resembles Phil lands on a branch next to them. It stares at them for a moment and HOOTS.

STEVEN

Go away!

The owl hoots louder and louder as the color drains from everything around them.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Get out of here!

Steven swats at the owl, loses his balance and tumbles out of the hammock. He SCREAMS as he crashes through tree branches. He hits the --

BEDROOM FLOOR

And lets out a yelp.

INT. BEDROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven pulls himself up, removes the mask, and grabs the RINGING phone. The clock now reads: "8:00PM."

STEVEN

(into phone)

Hello.

(beat)

Hi, mom.

(beat)

It worked great. I think I finally found the key to happiness.

(beat)

I haven't given up.

(beat)

I have moved on.

(beat)

Look. I need to go.

(beat)

I love you, too. Good bye.

INT. BATHROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - LATER

Steven chugs the rest of the bottle of cough syrup as he stares at a deodorant ad with a couple dancing at a masquerade party.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT (DREAM)

Steven and Julia twirl around a lavish ballroom. People wearing masks and evening attire, watch them as they glide around the floor.

Julia pulls Steven into a --

COAT CLOSET

Julia and Steven tear fur coats off of the coat racks and throw them in a pile.

Steven pulls Julia onto the pile. They kiss, which quickly evolves into them making love.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. COAT CLOSET - LATER

Julia and Steven lie on the pile, wrapped in coats and each other's arms.

STEVEN

I didn't know sex could be like this.

JULIA

I love you so much. I don't want you to leave.

STEVEN

I have to work.

JULIA

Quit, you hate that stupid job anyway.

STEVEN

I can't.

JULIA

Why? It makes you miserable and keeps you away from me. What other incentive do you need?

STEVEN

I need it and unless I get fired I have to go. But I'll be thinking about you the entire time.

Steven kisses Julia as the world around them turns gray and starts to fade away.

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

Steven types at his desk with a huge grin on his face. He looks like a new man. Phil's round head pops over the cubicle wall.

PHIL

Wow, someone seems chipper. You must have knocked out that Walrus Flu?

STEVEN

Huh?

(beat)

Oh, right. I'm feeling great.

PHIL

Since, you're feeling so wonderful, why don't you stop by for a drink after work?

Steven contemplates this for a moment.

STEVEN

You know what? Sure, I can't stay long but I'll finally take you up on that offer.

PHIL

Great, I'll e-mail you my address.

(beat)

You missed the new boss's introduction. She and Mike were wondering where you were.

STEVEN

She?

PHIL

Her name is Lauren Parks. She seems nice enough. They're meeting with everyone one on one to discuss our performance.

STEVEN

When is she going to start letting people go?

PHIL
She didn't say during the
conference or should I say
snoozefest.

MIKE PETERS

Steps out of Lauren's office. He is short, stalky and in his
late 40's.

MIKE
Steven, can I see you in Lauren's
Office?!

PHIL
Uh oh. Good luck.

INT. LAUREN'S OFFICE - BINDENMEYER, GRUFFMAN AND ASSOCIATES
INSURANCE - CONTINUOUS

Mike leads Steven into the large office.

LAUREN PARKS,

The red headed woman Steven saw on the escalator, looks over
Steven's file. Steven is transfixed by her beauty and the
world around him seems to disappear as he glares at her.

Steven snaps back to reality as Mike speaks.

MIKE
Take a seat.

LAUREN
Hi, Steven.
(beat)
I'm Lauren.

STEVEN
I've heard Ms. Parks.

Steven sits across from Lauren in an uncomfortable chair as
Mike closes the door and takes a seat near Lauren.

LAUREN
I hope you're feeling better. It's
a shame you missed my little meet
and greet.

MIKE

You're out of sick days, if you miss anymore we're going to be having a different conversation.

STEVEN

I'm feeling much better. The bed rest did me a world of good.

LAUREN

Good to hear. I've been going over everyone's files and meeting with them individually to get to know them better.

STEVEN

Alright, I'm a Capricorn and enjoy rainy days.

Mike stares blankly as Lauren chuckles.

LAUREN

This is more about your work performance. You were one of the top claims adjusters, but once you were promoted to head of claims, your performance declined. Do you have any idea why this might be?

STEVEN

I've been dealing with some personal issues and I guess I'm not as passionate about the work as I used to be.

MIKE

Were you ever passionate?

LAUREN

These positive questionnaires from clients seem to indicate you were very passionate.

STEVEN

(hesitating)

I loved my job, then I went through a rough patch and got stuck behind a desk. I think everything just escalated and I hit a low period.

LAUREN

I see. I think I know how to rekindle that passion.

(beat)

(MORE)

LAUREN (CONT'D)

I want you to get back out in field again as an adjuster. We'll let Mike take over as head of claims in the mean time. How does that sound?

STEVEN

It's worth a shot.

MIKE

I'm already swamped. I'm supposed to be the head of HR and the Head of Claims?

LAUREN

It's just until we find someone to takeover for Steven, you won't even have to move offices. The rest of the HR department can help make sure you don't get overwhelmed.

MIKE

They'll love to hear that.

LAUREN

(to Steven)

I'll send you out tomorrow. If there's anything else I can do, don't hesitate to ask.

STEVEN

(standing up)

Thanks. I appreciate it.

LAUREN

Don't mention it. We value our employees and make sure they are taken care of.

Steven walks out of the office.

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

Steven sits back down. Phil appears behind him and rubs his shoulders.

PHIL

How did it go?

STEVEN

She said they should create an employee of the year award just for me.

PHIL

Really?

STEVEN

No, but I'm not fired. They're going to have me be an adjuster again.

PHIL

Isn't that a step down?

STEVEN

It's less pressure and less boring. I'm good with it.

PHIL

That's great, I was worried you'd cancel after you met with them. Why don't you come over around seven? I'll have a cold one with your name on it waiting for you.

STEVEN

Sounds good.

PHIL

We'll raise the roof.

Phil awkwardly dances, waving his hands above his head.

STEVEN

Fine, just stop dancing.

PHIL

Careful or the party train is going leave without you.

Phil continues to awkwardly dance as he ducks down behind the cubicle wall.

STEVEN

That's a train I don't want to board.

Steven resumes typing.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Steven notices Lauren checking her phone as she steps onto the escalator. He quickly catches up to her and they glide into the lobby together.

LAUREN
Hey, Steven.

STEVEN
Thanks again for this opportunity.
I think it will be the push I need.

LAUREN
No problem, just don't let me down.

STEVEN
I'll try not to.

LAUREN
If it doesn't work, we'll cut you
loose.

STEVEN
Oh.

LAUREN
I'm kidding, you'll do fantastic.

Steven halfheartedly laughs as they walk toward the exit.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Steven holds the door for Lauren as they exit the building.

LAUREN
Thanks, but you should know sucking
up to me won't get you special
treatment.

STEVEN
It's worth trying.

Lauren laughs and then notices her boyfriend, DOUG WEAVER, handsome, mid 30's, sitting in a new Mercedes parked at the curb. He is wearing a bomber jacket and designer sunglasses.

DOUG
Hurry up, babe! I don't want to be
late again.

LAUREN
(to Steven)
That's my boyfriend.

Steven walks Lauren to the car.

STEVEN
Nice car.

LAUREN
That's what he keeps telling me.

They reach the car and Lauren opens the door.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
(to Doug)
This is Steven. He works in the
claims department.

DOUG
Great, let's go. We got a
reservation at Elway's Steakhouse.

LAUREN
(annoyed)
Have a good night, Steven.

STEVEN
Thanks, you too.

Lauren climbs in Doug's car and he peels out, leaving Steven awkwardly waving goodbye.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Steven walks up the driveway. It's a small ranch style in a middle class neighborhood, covered in Christmas lights. An animatronic Santa dances next to the garage.

Steven sees Phil and walks into the --

I/E. GARAGE - PHIL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Phil is working on the back of a large object covered by a sheet. Boxes of Christmas decorations fill the garage.

Phil notices Steven and walks toward him. Phil is wearing a Santa hat.

PHIL
Steven!

Phil grabs Steven and gives him a bear hug.

STEVEN
You must really like Christmas,
it's not even November.

PHIL
It's never too early to spread
Christmas cheer.
(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)
I'm going to show the whole
neighborhood who the king of
Christmas is this year.
(gesturing to the object)
This is my master piece.

Phil grabs the edge of the sheet and yanks it off. Underneath is a life-size Santa Claus sitting in a sleigh, holding a sack of toys in his arms like a rocket launcher. His jovial face is twisted into a frightening grimace.

STEVEN
What is it?

PHIL
(grinning)
I'm hoping to get this baby up and
running by Thanksgiving. It's got a
few bugs, but it's almost there.

Phil plugs in the Santa robot's power cord in and it starts twisting back and forth, aiming the sack of presents as it makes a loud MECHANICAL GRINDING.

ROBOTIC SANTA
(in menacing tone)
Ho! Ho! Ho!

STEVEN
(loudly over noise)
Is that it?!?!?

PHIL
Hold on, it's coming!

A present shoots out of the bag. Steven ducks as the present nearly hits him in the head.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Pretty neat, huh?!?!?

Steven nods, feebly as the robotic Santa twists back and forth increasingly faster.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Uh, oh!

Phil runs toward the plug. A present shoots out of the canon and hits Phil in the gut, knocking the wind out of him.

ROBOTIC SANTA
Ho! Ho! Ho!

Phil drops to the ground. Steven dives out of the way as a flying present smashes into the wall.

Steven crawls over to the outlet on his belly and unplugs the cord. The robotic Santa grinds to a halt as Steven jumps up and helps Phil to his feet.

ROBOTIC SANTA (CONT'D)

Ho! Ho! Hoooo...

JENNY HANFORD, mid 30's, cute and perky, runs into the garage as Steven helps Phil to his feet.

JENNY

What's going on out here?!

PHIL

(still winded)

Santa went crazy again.

JENNY

Why can't you buy your Christmas decorations like everyone else? No one would know the difference.

PHIL

(annoyed)

I would.

(to Steven)

This is my wife Jenny?

JENNY

You must be Steven. I've heard a lot about you. Too bad we couldn't meet under better circumstances.

STEVEN

It's still nice to meet you.

JENNY

Let's get him in the house.

Steven helps him into the house, as Phil clutches his gut.

INT. DINING ROOM - PHIL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Steven helps Phil into the dining room as Jenny heads into the kitchen to get an ice pack.

JENNY

Take a seat. Dinner is almost ready.

Steven notices four place settings with a pot roast at the center as he hands Phil a beer.

STEVEN

I thought we were just going to have a drink.

PHIL

Don't worry. I sent the kids to their grandparents for the night. Enjoy yourself.

Steven scowls at Phil as he takes a seat. Jenny walks in from the Kitchen, handing Phil the ice pack.

Steven notices a large portrait on the wall. In the portrait: Phil is dressed like Santa Claus, his wife is dressed like Mrs. Claus and their three daughters are dressed like elves.

RACHEL VINCENT

Enters the dining room. She is in her mid 20's and looks like a younger, slightly more attractive version of Jenny.

RACHEL

It smells great, Jen.
(noticing Steven)
Hello.

STEVEN

Hi.

JENNY

This is my sister Rachel.

PHIL

This is Steven. He saved my life.

RACHEL

Did you choke on piece of fruitcake again?

PHIL

Very funny. No, King Claus went on a rampage. He pulled the plug.

RACHEL

He truly is a hero.

STEVEN

Don't mention it. I stop at least five robotic Santas a week.

Rachel giggles as Phil gives a knowing nod to Jenny.

INT. LIVING ROOM - PHIL'S HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

Phil's house is moderately furnished with family photos and children's toys strewn about. Christmas paraphernalia adorns every open space.

Steven, Rachel, Phil, and Jenny sit around the coffee table playing Jenga. The stack of blocks wobbles slightly as Rachel slides one out.

STEVEN

(to Rachel)

What made you decide to be an elementary school counselor?

RACHEL

Initially for the fame and fortune but then I found out I love helping kids.

Steven chuckles.

PHIL

It's your move, big guy.

Steven examines the stack, trying to decide which block to pull.

STEVEN

Maybe you could evaluate me sometime. It's probably cheaper than going to a therapist.

RACHEL

Sure, but I may need you to draw a picture showing how you're feeling.

JENNY

It's a shame you can't come to our little get together this weekend.

Steven chooses a block and slowly makes his move.

STEVEN

I think my schedule might have cleared up.

Steven smiles at Rachel and the Jenga stack topples over as he finishes pulling out the block. Jenny and Phil groan.

PHIL
Stack em' up, chief.

Steven stacks up the Jenga tiles.

RACHEL
Do you like art museums, Steven?

STEVEN
I don't know too much about art,
but sure.

RACHEL
This surrealist exhibit is opening
tomorrow night. I want to check it
out, but Jenny isn't interested.

JENNY
I prefer art that shows something
real. Why do I want to see bunch of
clocks melting when there's so much
beauty in the world?

STEVEN
How about tomorrow night?

RACHEL
Yeah, pick me up around 7.

STEVEN
Sounds great.

Steven finishes stacking the Jenga tiles.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Phil walks Steven to his car.

PHIL
I'm sorry about setting you up, but
it's the only way I could get you
two to meet.

Steven looks toward the house and sees Rachel in the window.
She is framed by snowflake decorations and looks like an
angel.

STEVEN
I'm glad you did, just don't trick
me ever again.

PHIL
You have to admit, sometimes I know
what I'm doing.

The moon shines brightly.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. SNOWY WOODS - NIGHT (DREAM)

The moon illuminates the snow as Steven rides a big wooden sled down a steep hill. Large pine trees dusted in snow, jut out from the barren landscape.

As he glides through the powder he notices rows of trees decorated with lights and Christmas ornaments. Steven sees a large tree with a beautiful angel adorning the top. The angel looks like Rachel.

He jumps off the sled and climbs the tree to get a better look. As he reaches the top, the angel's eyes flicker and it quietly BEEPS.

Startled, Steven falls off the tree and lands on his face in the snow. Julia stands over him in her maroon dress as he looks up. Her long brown hair blows in the wind.

STEVEN
(smiling)
Hi.

Julia helps Steven to his feet.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
I missed you.

Steven kisses her and then they walk together, holding hands.

JULIA
Where have you been? I've been
waiting.

STEVEN
I was out with a coworker. He kept
pestering me to come over. I wanted
to finally get him off my back.

JULIA
Sounds like fun, and so does your
date tomorrow.

STEVEN
You saw that?

JULIA

I see everything you do. This is
all part of you, including me.

Steven freezes in place.

STEVEN

Maybe we should stop seeing each
other, this is just a dream after
all.

JULIA

(pulling away)

I thought we had something special,
but I guess not.

Snow starts to rapidly fall, causing a white out as Julia
walks away.

JULIA (CONT'D)

If you aren't man enough for me,
then fine go be with that bimbo.
The sex will never be as good as
ours.

STEVEN

Wait, can we talk about this? I can
still see you, too.

JULIA

You can't just put me on a shelf,
waiting for you to screw things up.
Have a good time with that tramp.

STEVEN

She's not a tramp.

Julia stops and turns toward him.

JULIA

Whatever. Have fun, see if I care.

STEVEN

I will.

JULIA

Fine.

STEVEN

Fine!

JULIA

Then we're in agreement, that's
fine!

(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)
Maybe I'll start seeing someone
else too. There are lots of men who
would appreciate me.

A few moments pass as awkward tension consumes the space
between them.

STEVEN
I'm sorry.

A loud TRUMPETING noise emanates in the distance. The world
turns gray as snow covers everything in sight.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
I've got to go.

Rachel appears as an angel, floating in the air and playing a
trumpet.

JULIA
Then go already.

The trumpeting gets louder.

JULIA (CONT'D)
But don't come crawling back to me
when you blow it.

Julia walks off as everything turns gray and the dream fades
away.

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

Steven sits at his desk, reading a warning in the manual. It
reads: "Dream Factory is not responsible for results of mask.
Use at own risk."

Phil pops over the cubicle wall and Steven quickly throws the
manual into his desk drawer.

PHIL
That was a blast last night. You
need to come over more often.

STEVEN
I'd like that.

Steven's phone RINGS, he picks it up and puts it up to his
ear.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
I'm on my way.

Steven hangs up the phone, grabs his briefcase and hops out of his chair, ready for action.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

Steven stands in front of a moderate suburban house holding a camera and a clipboard, taking in the wreckage. There is a gaping hole with the back half of a large luxury car sticking out of it.

Steven approaches a POLICE OFFICER, mid 30's, gruff.

STEVEN

Did they miss their turn?

POLICE OFFICER

Not exactly. This is the second one like this in the past week.

STEVEN

Who's car is it?

POLICE OFFICER

It was reported stolen yesterday.

Steven snaps a picture.

STEVEN

Is the owner around?

POLICE OFFICER

She ran inside to call her fiancée.

(beat)

There she is.

Steven's jaw drops as he sees --

VERONICA HAINS

Step outside. She is in her late 20's and bears striking resemblance to Julia. She is in her first trimester and is starting to show.

VERONICA

Steven?

She walks over to Steven. He can't keep his eyes off her belly.

STEVEN

Hey. When did this happen?

VERONICA

It's been over a year, Steven. Gary and I are going to get married soon.

STEVEN

Congratulations.

POLICE OFFICER

You two know each other?

STEVEN

Yeah. It's a long --

VERONICA

We were engaged.

POLICE OFFICER

Oh, boy. This must be awkward.

STEVEN

No --

VERONICA

A bit.

STEVEN

Okay, a bit.

(to Veronica)

So, what happened?

VERONICA

(gesturing to officer)

I already told him everything. It was about five in the morning. I woke up to my whole house shaking. I looked out the window and saw a man running down the street.

STEVEN

Are you sure it was a man? What did he look like?

POLICE OFFICER

Leave the police work to me, Columbo.

VERONICA

I could barely see him, it was dark out. I think he was wearing a mask.

STEVEN

Mask? What type of mask?

VERONICA
It was hard to tell.

POLICE OFFICER
It was probably some punk kid. Not enough parents put the fear of god in their children, if you ask me.

STEVEN
Thanks, officer. Do you mind getting me a copy of the report? Can I get a copy of the report for the other accident as well?

POLICE OFFICER
It was already filed with your company.

The police officer walks over to his car.

VERONICA
I don't think it was a kid. It looked like a man, but it was hard to tell.

STEVEN
If there's anything else you can think of, don't hesitate to call me.

Steven hands her a card.

VERONICA
I have your number.

STEVEN
Take it, just incase.

Veronica takes the card.

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

Steven sits at his desk entering the report for the accident on his computer. Steven pulls up the other report from the company's database. His eyes grow wide as he reads it.

STEVEN
Holy crap.

Phil pops over the wall.

PHIL
What's going on?

STEVEN

These accident cases are bizarre.
Two in an almost identical fashion
with huge policy payouts.

PHIL

(whispering)

Don't tell anyone I told you, but
when I was putting the numbers in
the books, I noticed something
weird.

STEVEN

What?

Phil looks around to make sure the coast is clear before
continuing.

PHIL

In the last case, half the money
went to the victim and the other
half went to this account in
Cheyenne.

STEVEN

I didn't approve that.

PHIL

You were out of the office. Mike
approved it.

STEVEN

What's in Cheyenne?

PHIL

I'm trying to find out, but no luck
yet.

STEVEN

Let me know what you come across.
I'm going to talk to Mike.

PHIL

Can you not tell him what I told
you? I don't want to say anything
until I'm a hundred percent sure.

STEVEN

You got it.

PHIL

Thanks.

Steven walks toward Mike's office.

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - BINDENMEYER, GRUFFMAN AND ASSOCIATES
INSURANCE - CONTINUOUS

There is a TAP on the door. Mike looks up from a stack of paperwork on top of his desk. Stacks of paper are all over the messy office.

MIKE

Come in!

Steven walks in and sits across from Mike.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Do you have that report ready so I
can send the claim to corporate?

STEVEN

I'm finishing it now. I thought you
should look at this.

Steven hands Mike the file. Mike looks it over.

MIKE

Yeah, so?

STEVEN

It's just like the case you handled
while I was sick.

MIKE

And?

STEVEN

It's too coincidental.

MIKE

Interesting. Isn't Veronica Hains
your ex?

STEVEN

Yes, but that's irrelevant.

MIKE

Is it?

STEVEN

Wait, you don't think I did this,
do you? That's lunacy!

MIKE

Right.

(looking over claim)

Don't you think this payout is a
little low?

STEVEN

I thought it seemed fair.

MIKE

I know she's your ex but put that aside. The damage seems quite extensive.

STEVEN

Okay, I'll increase it.

(beat)

Do you have the files for the other case lying around? Maybe there's a clue in there.

MIKE

It's in that stack.

Mike points to a stack of files in the corner.

MIKE (CONT'D)

If you find out anything else, let me know. I need to make sure we don't make any false accusations.

Steven digs through the stack as Mike writes a memo: "Steven Thompson is a person of interest. He was out of the office during the first incident and his ex is involved."

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

Steven tucks the files for both cases into his briefcase. He snaps it shut and walks toward the exit through --

BINDENMEYER, GRUFFMAN AND ASSOCIATES INSURANCE

Phil joins him as he walks.

STEVEN

Any news?

PHIL

I tracked down the name on the account but that's all.

STEVEN

Keep me in the loop.

PHIL

Will do.

(beat)

(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)

I asked Lauren to come to the party this weekend.

(whispering)

I'm hoping if I get a few drinks in her, she'll tell me who she's going to layoff.

STEVEN

It's worth a shot.

PHIL

Good luck on your date. Don't blow it.

STEVEN

Thanks for the support.

Steven and Phil walk out of the office.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Steven walks out of the building, carrying his briefcase, and notices Lauren, waiting for a ride.

STEVEN

Do you need a lift?

LAUREN

No, Doug should be here any moment. How did it go in the field today?

STEVEN

It was great. I forgot how much I enjoyed it. I think I might have linked --

Doug's Mercedes screeches to a halt in front of the curb, splashing water from the gutter on to their shoes. He rolls down the window.

DOUG

Hey, babe. You ready?

LAUREN

Yeah.

(to Steven)

I'll see you at Phil's party, right? We can talk more then.

STEVEN

Sure. Have a nice night.

Lauren climbs in the car.

DOUG

Your shoes are filthy. Do you know
how expensive it is to have this
baby detailed?

Lauren waves at Steven as Doug peels off.

INT. DENVER MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART - NIGHT

Rachel and Steven wander through a large art gallery taking
in the surrealist paintings and sculptures on display.

They stop in front of a --

LARGE PAINTING

Of an oddly colored desert landscape. Mountains that resemble
faces and trees that look like claws point toward the sky. A
polar bear wearing a top hat rides a bicycle in the middle.
To the right, a man with a large beard holds a purple
umbrella that pours water on his head.

STEVEN AND RACHEL

Examine it.

STEVEN

Interesting, what's this supposed
to mean?

RACHEL

It's by a contemporary of Dali. I
think it's meant to represent the
unadulterated imagination, like a
dream.

STEVEN

My dreams aren't usually this
bizarre.

RACHEL

Too bad, I think polar bears are
cute. What are your dreams usually
about?

STEVEN

I used to have these dreams where I
was losing control. I was
constantly chasing this woman and
never able to catch her.

(MORE)

STEVEN (CONT'D)

This is going to sound silly, I got this mask as a gift that's supposed to help control your dreams.

RACHEL

Did it work?

STEVEN

Yes, but I realized they were just dreams. I should pay attention to the world around me or I might let something real slip away.

Steven grabs Rachel's hand.

RACHEL

Who knew an insurance adjuster could be so poetic?

STEVEN

Sometimes I even surprise myself.

A STRANGE MAN in a trench coat, with glasses and a bushy beard, watches them from across the gallery.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SOGNARE'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The strange man sits alone in a booth on the opposite side of a small family run restaurant from --

RACHEL AND STEVEN.

They each have a glass of wine and a plate of lasagna as they sit across from each other.

STEVEN

It must be fun working with kids.

RACHEL

It is, but we occasionally get a troublemaker. Most of the time it's not the kid's fault. Something in their life is causing them to act out. So I talk with them and find out what's going on. If that doesn't work, puppets come in handy.

(beat)

What excites you about your job?

STEVEN

(hesitant)

Sometimes it's like being a detective. I get to solve mysteries. Plus, I help people cope with loss.

RACHEL

In different ways, we both help people by trying to solve their problems. What are your problems?

STEVEN

(caught off guard)

I've had trouble with relationships. I seem to find a way to sabotage them.

RACHEL

Is that what you have planned for us?

STEVEN

(flustered)

No, I --

RACHEL

I'm joking.

Steven looks relieved.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

(re: strange man)

Is it me or has that guy been following us?

STEVEN

Maybe it's just a coincidence.

Steven looks at the strange man, who quickly takes a phone call and rushes outside.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Steven walks Rachel up to the front door. Phil peeks out through the curtains as they stop on the porch.

RACHEL

What's your costume going to be? Wait, don't tell me I want to be surprised.

(beat)

I had fun.

STEVEN

Me too.

There is an awkward moment as they look into each other's eyes. As they finally lean in, the front door swings open. Phil's daughter, LEILA, 6, stands in the doorway dressed like a bumblebee.

LEILA

What are you doing, Aunt Rachel?

RACHEL

I was saying good night to my friend Steven. Shouldn't you be in bed, Leila?

LEILA

Daddy's helping with my costume. We're going trick or treating with grandma. I'm a bee.

Phil pops out and picks up Leila.

PHIL

Let's get you back to your hive, little bee.

Leila starts buzzing as Phil carries her inside.

STEVEN

Where were we? Oh, right.

Steven pulls Rachel in close and gives her a passionate kiss.

INT. BEDROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven sits in bed. He takes a deep breath before slipping on the mask and lying back.

EXT. SURREAL LANDSCAPE - DAY (DREAM)

Steven wanders through a barren landscape resembling the surrealist painting in the gallery. Large craggy mountains that look like human faces loom in the distance. Trees that look like claws reach toward Steven.

Steven walks down a narrow path between rows of strange vegetation. A POLAR BEAR wearing a top hat rides a bicycle toward Steven. He tips his hat as he passes.

Steven notices a large bush covered in bumps. Steven touches one of the bumps.

All of the bumps open up to reveal eyes with different brightly colored irises. Steven jumps back as the eyes flicker and make a soft BEEPING sound.

There is a loud CRASH behind him. He spins around and sees a car crashed into a tree.

The rear door of the car falls off. Julia and a STRANGE BEARDED MAN stumble out. Julia kisses him on the cheek and drapes her arms around him. He is wearing a trench coat and holding an umbrella at his side, looking around nervously.

JULIA
You're so funny, Gus.

STRANGE BEARDED MAN/GUS
(mumbling)
Time, time. Too much time.

STEVEN
What are you doing?

JULIA
If you can see other people, so can
I. This is Gus.

GUS
Sand through an hour glass.
Everything's flying toward the
future.

STEVEN
Why are you doing this?

JULIA
Gus is really deep.

GUS
Here a there. There a bear. Nobody
cares who's over where.

STEVEN
If this is what you want, then be
with Gus. He seems like a catch.

Steven walks away and Julia runs after him. Gus opens his umbrella, water pours as he holds it over his head and he shuffles away.

JULIA
Wait!

STEVEN
(turning around)
What?

JULIA
I love you and wanted to give you a
taste of your own medicine.

STEVEN
We should stop this. I'm falling
for someone --

Julia passionately kisses Steven. She pushes him on to the
ground, ripping his clothes off as she kisses his neck.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
No, stop. Wait!

JULIA
I've been waiting long enough.

Steven struggles as she pounces on top of him. The multi-eyed
bush watches as Julia scratches her nails across Steven's
chest. Steven howls in pain.

INT. BEDROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Steven examines the bright red scratch marks across his
chest. He then grabs the mask and stuffs it into his sock
drawer.

The phone RINGS. Steven grabs it.

STEVEN
(into phone)
Hi, mom.
(beat)
I don't think I need it anymore.
(beat)
I was about to go costume shopping
for a party.
(beat)
I'll make sure I have fun. See you
tomorrow.
(beat)
I love you too. Bye.

Steven hangs up and continues to examine the scratches.

INT. COSTUME STORE - DAY

Steven wanders the aisles of a costume store. He stops and examines an apple costume with a worm coming out of the side. He puts it back and continues to browse.

Steven stops at another costume. A huge smile spreads across his face.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Steven rings the door bell.

DOORBELL
(in a robotic Santa voice)
Ho! Ho! Ho!

Jenny opens the door. She is dressed like a witch.

JENNY
Nice costume, Steven. Come on in.

Steven is dressed like a polar bear but the costume looks more like a white teddy bear with Steven's face peeking out of the mouth.

Steven follows Jenny into --

INT. LIVING ROOM - PHIL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Steven looks around the house, which is still decorated for Christmas. A single paper ghost hangs from the ceiling. Everything that says, "Merry Christmas" has been doctored to read, "Happy Halloween." Various PEOPLE from the office wear costumes and chat.

Mike stands by the snack table, observing everyone.

STEVEN
Couldn't get Phil to get away from
the Christmas theme?

JENNY
He wanted me to dress like Mrs.
Claus but I thought the decorations
were confusing enough.

Steven sees Phil. He is dressed like Santa Claus.

JENNY (CONT'D)
It's the only costume he'll wear. I
try to be supportive but it's
getting harder every year.

Phil approaches Steven. He is slightly drunk.

PHIL
Hey, buddy! Glad you made it.

Phil picks Steven up and squeezes him.

STEVEN
(gasping for air)
A little too tight.

PHIL
(putting Steven down)
I hope Lauren shows up soon. I need
to know who's getting canned. Can I
get you anything?

STEVEN
I'm okay for now. Thanks.

PHIL
If you see the bossy, let me know.

Rachel walks out from the kitchen. She is dressed like a cute
ladybug.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Go get her, tiger. I'm going to get
another drink, or two.

Phil smacks Steven on the back then walks into the kitchen as
Steven walks over to Rachel. Her face lights up.

RACHEL
I love your costume.

STEVEN
Thanks, you make a pretty cute
ladybug.

RACHEL
I do what I can.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - PHIL'S HOUSE - LATER

Rachel and Steven sit on the couch with drinks in their hands. Mike watches them from across the room.

STEVEN

We would plan our trick or treat routes weeks in advance. I once made a map to maximize the amount of candy we got.

RACHEL

Now that's dedication.

STEVEN

What was your favorite candy?

RACHEL

I love peanut butter cups.

The doorbell RINGS. Jenny opens the front door.

STEVEN

Those are my favorite too. I also really liked the wax lips. I chased my sister around with them.

Lauren and Doug enter the living room. Steven's eyes lock on to Lauren. She is dressed like a slightly sexy vampire. Doug is dressed like Don Johnson from Miami Vice.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I need to say hi to my boss really quick.

RACHEL

Go ahead.

Steven walks over to Lauren.

STEVEN

Hi, Lauren.

LAUREN

Hi, Steven. What an adorable costume.

STEVEN

Thanks. I like yours too. That's a great Don Johnson costume, Doug.

Lauren laughs.

DOUG
(indignant)
I'm not wearing a costume.

Steven looks embarrassed as Rachel walks up next to him.

RACHEL
(to Lauren)
Hi, I'm Rachel.

STEVEN
This is --
(beat)
Phil's sister-in-law.

Rachel shoots Steven a bewildered look as Phil stumbles out of the kitchen and over to Lauren, drunker than before.

PHIL
Hey, boss. Thanks for coming.

LAUREN
Thanks for inviting me. It's nice
to mingle with my staff.

DOUG
Plus we get to drive out to the
boondocks.

PHIL
You're welcome to leave any time.

DOUG
If I could, I would.

PHIL
(to Lauren)
Have a drink.
(winking)
Don't worry, your secrets are safe
here?

Phil stumbles off.

LAUREN
What was that about?

STEVEN
Phil's a character, but his heart
is in the right place.

From across the room, Mike monitors Lauren and Steven.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - PHIL'S HOUSE - EVEN LATER

Most of the guests have left, including Mike. Steven and Lauren sit on the couch. Doug is visibly bored as he fiddles with his Blackberry. Rachel makes two drinks by the snack table.

LAUREN

I heard you've been trying to find
a link between two claims. Any
breakthroughs?

STEVEN

I'm still trying to figure out what
the common denominator is.

(beat)

I forgot how much I love this
stuff.

Rachel hands Steven a drink as she sits next to him and watches Lauren, suspiciously.

LAUREN

Passion is important. If I can help
reignite that, we'll both be
happier.

DOUG

Can we go? This party's deader than
Elvis.

LAUREN

I put up with your stupid work
functions. You think I like going
to minor league hockey games?

Doug grabs Lauren's arm as Phil stumbles in from the kitchen and sees them. His beard is around his neck and his Santa jacket is open.

DOUG

Come on, babe. I've got an early
tee time.

LAUREN

Fine.

Doug and Lauren stand up and walk toward the front door as Phil lumbers toward them.

PHIL

You can't manhandle a woman like
that, you big jerk.

Phil tackles Doug and they roll across the floor as everyone looks on in horror.

Steven pulls Phil off Doug, restraining him in front of the snack table. Doug hops up and punches Phil in the jaw.

Phil topples over, crashing into the table and passing out. Snacks fly everywhere as Jenny runs over to him.

LAUREN

(to Doug)

That's enough. I can't believe you.

DOUG

He had it coming.

Lauren storms out of the house as Doug chases after her.

STEVEN

(to Jenny)

We better get him to bed.

Steven helps Jenny carry Phil.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Steven stands on the front porch with Rachel

STEVEN

Besides Phil's outburst, I had fun.

RACHEL

I'm glad.

Steven leans in for a kiss but Rachel gives him a peck on the cheek and quickly pulls away.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Have a good night.

STEVEN

You too.

Rachel goes inside and closes the door as Steven stands on the porch, confused.

INT. BEDROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven opens up the sock drawer and looks at the mask. He shuts the drawer and climbs in bed without putting it on. He then closes his eyes.

INT. LARGE CREEPY HOUSE - NIGHT (DREAM)

Steven wears the polar bear costume as he wanders through the halls of large, stereotypical spooky mansion. He passes antique furniture covered in cobwebs. Candles are lit, everywhere.

Steven passes a row of mirrors. In the mirrors' reflection two headlights zoom toward the window. Steven spins around as the car SMASHES through the wall. Julia jumps out of the car.

JULIA

You're real smooth.

STEVEN

Shut up. I feel dumb enough. Why are you here? I'm not even wearing the Dream Weaver.

JULIA

You're not going to get rid of me that easy. With or without those stupid goggles, we're going to be together forever, baby.

STEVEN

I need something more.

JULIA

If you try to leave me, I will destroy you. Isn't that right, Chauncey?

STEVEN

(confused)

Chauncey?

Steven hears a GROWL behind him and spins around. His reflection in the mirror has been replaced by a massive POLAR BEAR that looms over him with a studded collar that reads: "CHAUNCEY."

Julia laughs hysterically as Chauncey lunges at Steven.

INT. BEDROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven shoots out of bed, dripping with sweat.

INT. KITCHEN - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven paces around the kitchen as a pot of coffee brews. He is visibly shaken.

INT. LIVING ROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven sits on the couch with a cup of coffee in his hand as examines the accident files.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Steven is still staring at the files. He looks exhausted with dark circles under his eyes. He picks up his phone and dials.

STEVEN
(beat, into phone)
Hello, Rachel?

RACHEL (O.S.)
Hi, Steven.

STEVEN
How are you?

RACHEL (O.S.)
I'm fine.

STEVEN
Look, I'm sorry about last night.

RACHEL (O.S.)
Don't be, it was eye opening.
Especially with that text you sent.
Who is Julia?
(beat)
How many woman are you dating?

STEVEN
(stunned)
Wait. Let me explain. It must have
been that woman in my dreams I told
you about, her name is Julia.

RACHEL (O.S.)
Don't insult my intelligence. Have
fun with your floozies. Good bye,
Steven.

Rachel hangs up and Steven pulls up his sent text messages.
There is a message to Rachel.

"I don't want to see you anymore. I'm in love with Julia, she
is the woman of my dreams. Why would I ever want to be with
someone who hangs out with smelly brats all day?"

Steven grabs the report he filled out and stares at the phrase: "a man wearing a mask." The phone RINGS and he grabs it.

STEVEN
(into phone)
Hi, mom.
(beat)
Great, I'll see you then.

INT. GAIA BISTRO - NIGHT

Steven sits across from Gloria and Mickey in a small vegetarian restaurant.

GLORIA
You really must see our new cactus garden, it is divine. Are you sure you don't want to attend the convention with us?

MICKEY
I hear opal is this year's topaz.

STEVEN
Will the Dream Weaver people be there?

GLORIA
I thought you were going to stop using it?

STEVEN
I'm trying, but that dream woman won't leave me alone. I don't want to go back to sleep.

GLORIA
You have to confront her. Use the mask and tell her to go away.

STEVEN
I tried.

GLORIA
Try again. You did the same thing with Veronica. When things got rocky, you avoided her and your engagement fell apart. Communication is the key to a happy relationship.
(beat)
Great sex doesn't hurt either.

Mickey nods in agreement.

STEVEN
(disgusted)
I just hope she didn't completely
ruin my chances with Rachel.

INT. BEDROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven lies in bed reading the Dream Weaver manual. The clock reads: "4:00AM." Frustrated, he throws the manual, grabs a magazine and flips through it.

He lands on a picture of a graveyard. Steven quickly flips the page, landing on a picture of a man skydiving. Steven frantically flips the page again, landing on a picture of a large grassy field. Steven stares at the picture for a moment.

Steven takes a deep breath and slips the mask on.

EXT. FIELD - DAY (DREAM)

Steven wanders through an empty field. A BUNNY jumps in front of him. He ducks down to pet it but Julia appears and snatches up the bunny.

JULIA
Waiting for this?!

She holds the bunny in front of her. Its eyes flicker and it makes a quite BEEPING noise. Julia then dropkicks the bunny into the horizon.

STEVEN
I just want to talk.

JULIA
Then start talking!

STEVEN
Why did you send that text?

JULIA
The same reason I made that call.
We're meant to be together.

STEVEN
Call?

JULIA
You'll see.

STEVEN

Leave me alone. You're ruining my life.

JULIA

If I can't have you, no one can.

Julia pulls a large battle axe from behind her back. Steven runs for his life as Julia chases him.

Steven closes his eyes, concentrating while he runs. Steven reaches behind his back and pulls out a sword. Steven grins as turns around, using the sword to block Julia's strike.

Steven's sword goes flaccid. He throws it and runs as fast as his feet will carry him toward a siren SCREECHING in the distance.

INT. BEDROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Steven's alarm BEEPS loudly. He shoots up out of his sleep, dripping with sweat, tears off the mask and hits the alarm.

Steven pulls out his phone and checks his outgoing phone calls. There is a call to Lauren's office. His eyes grow wide. He then, dials and puts the phone up to his ear.

STEVEN

(into phone)

It didn't work, mom. I need to talk to the people from Dream Weaver.

(beat)

Great, see you after work.

Steven hangs up and stares at his phone in disbelief.

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

Steven sits at his desk staring at his monitor as Phil peeks over the cubicle wall. Phil's jaw is bruised. Steven has dark circles under his eyes and looks disheveled.

PHIL

Rough night?

STEVEN

You could say that.

(looking up)

How about you?

PHIL

Hopefully I didn't make too big of an ass out of myself. I thought he was... I don't know. I just hope I don't lose my job.

STEVEN

Like you said, if you get fired it wouldn't be the end of the world. What about your decorations? You could always make those for a living.

PHIL

Do you think they're good enough?

STEVEN

If you work out the bugs. You could expand into other holidays and special occasions. People would love to have Valentines shot at their loved ones.

Phil charges into Steven's cubicle and gives him a hug.

PHIL

Thanks.

(beat)

What happened with Rachel? She said you're dating someone else?

STEVEN

I was, but I'm not now. I'm falling for her and I don't want my stupidity getting in the way. Would you tell her, I was an idiot and I'm sorry?

PHIL

Being an idiot is a good excuse. Being a liar isn't. Don't screw her over or King Clause might have a special delivery.

STEVEN

That's a present I don't want.

PHIL

That claim you investigated the other day had half the money go to someone in Wyoming too. I tracked down info for both names.

(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)
They're former policy holders that
died within the last three years.

STEVEN
That's odd.

PHIL
Let's keep this under wraps for
now. Something fishy is going on.

Steven nods as his phone RINGS. He answers it.

STEVEN
(into phone)
Hello.
(beat)
You got it. I'm on my way.
(beat, confused)
You want to come with me? Sure.

I/E. STEVEN'S CAR - EAST COLFAX - DAY

Steven drives as Lauren sits in the passenger seat.

LAUREN
Thanks for letting me tag along. I
wanted to see how you're doing in
the field.
(beat)
I got your message. Are you sure
you want to put in your two weeks?

STEVEN
(surprised)
Yes, I mean no.

LAUREN
So you don't want to quit? I
thought we had gotten to the root
of your problem, so I was a bit
surprised.

STEVEN
(hesitating)
I thought I had to quit for
personal reasons, but I don't have
to now.

LAUREN
That's good to hear. We think this
case may be another one like the
other two.

(MORE)

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Mike decided we should pay the full amount on the last one.

STEVEN

I agree with that.

LAUREN

That wouldn't have anything to do with the fact she's your ex, would it?

STEVEN

Of course not. I would feel the same way, no matter who was involved.

LAUREN

We need to be cautious with how much we're paying out.

STEVEN

It may be someone in the company behind this. That's the only common thread I can find.

LAUREN

What about Phil? He seems to be nervous whenever I'm around and after this past weekend --

STEVEN

(surprised)

Phil is harmless. He is a little strange, but he would never do anything like this.

Lauren does not seem convinced as she looks out the window.

EXT. UPSCALE SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

Lauren and Steven stand in front of a house in a wealthy neighborhood. Steven holds his camera and clipboard. A cement truck is crashed into the house.

The same police officer from the last accident is talking to another HOMEOWNER, a man in his late 40's.

LAUREN

I'll observe from over here.

Lauren stands off to the side as Steven approaches the police officer.

STEVEN

Hello.

POLICE OFFICER

The insurance guy, right?

Lauren watches Steven. Monitoring his reactions.

STEVEN

That's me. Too bad we couldn't run into each other again under better circumstances.

POLICE OFFICER

There are never better circumstances in my line of work. I made sure they assigned me to this spree. I'm going to track down the little jerks responsible.

STEVEN

What happened?

POLICE OFFICER

What's it look like, Perry Mason? A cement truck crashed into the side of this house.

STEVEN

Where did the cement truck come from?

POLICE OFFICER

Windemre Construction, one of their trucks went missing last night.

STEVEN

Did you get the security footage from their lot?

POLICE OFFICER

(hesitating)

No, but I was going to.

Steven look over at Lauren, who smiles and nods with approval.

I/E. STEVEN'S CAR - EAST COLFAX - DAY

Steven drives as Lauren sits in the passenger seat.

LAUREN

That was nice work back there.

STEVEN

Thanks, I hope I can get my hands on that tape.

LAUREN

Want to get lunch tomorrow and share your findings?

STEVEN

People might think you're showing favoritism.

LAUREN

We'll be talking about the case.

STEVEN

Aren't you worried about Doug getting jealous?

LAUREN

After that incident at Phil's, we're no longer together.

STEVEN

I'm sorry to hear that.

LAUREN

I'm not.

STEVEN

Fair enough. Since it's a business lunch, the company is paying, right?

LAUREN

Of course, just don't order the lobster.

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

Steven sits at his desk with the phone pressed against his ear.

STEVEN

(into phone)

Can you print me a DVD?

(beat)

Great. I'll be by to pick it up after I get off. Thanks for your help.

(MORE)

STEVEN (CONT'D)

(beat)

You too. Bye.

Steven hangs up. He hesitates before picking up the phone again and dialing.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Veronica?

(beat)

It's Steven.

(beat)

Yes, that Steven.

(beat)

Would you mind meeting me?

(beat)

The case. Yeah, that's what I want to meet about.

(beat)

I can be there around eight. Does that work?

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - BINDENMEYER, GRUFFMAN AND ASSOCIATES
INSURANCE - CONTINUOUS

Mike listens over the phone.

STEVEN (V.O.)

Okay, thanks. I'll see you then.

Mike jots down an address on a note pad as Steven hangs up.

EXT. THE DENVER CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

Steven walks up to the massive convention center. Gloria is wearing lots of crystal jewelry and waiting with Mickey outside.

GLORIA

I'm so glad you came.

STEVEN

I'm just here about the mask.

Mickey hands Steven a ticket printed on a piece of fabric.

MICKEY

When the convention is over,
they're going to sew the tickets
into the world's largest hemp
beret.

They walk into the convention center.

INT. THE DENVER CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

Steven follows Gloria and Mickey through the convention center past performance artists and booths selling new age products and services, such as dream catchers, crystal wind chimes and chi readings.

Throngs of NEW AGERS and HIPPIES glare at Steven, because he seems out of place.

A bearded HIPPIE approaches him.

HIPPIE
(re: Steven's tie)
Release yourself from your
corporate leash.

GLORIA
(whispering)
Only if you want to, honey.

They continue to make their way to the opposite end of the convention center. Mickey and Gloria smile and wave to almost everyone they pass.

They finally reach the --

DREAM FACTORY BOOTH

It is the only corporate looking booth in the entire building and takes up a massive amount of space. It is decorated with huge banners and signs displaying the Dream Factory logo.

GLORIA
Let's see if we can find someone
who can help.

They make their way past various sleep products on display, including fancy dream catchers, white noise machines, etc. EMPLOYEES mill about, wearing black polo shirts with the company logo. Steven, Mickey and Gloria approach --

MARK BRAWN,

The owner with a name tag to prove it. He stands near the Dream Weaver display. He is in his late 30's with a neatly groomed beard.

MARK

Hi, folks. Are you interested in dreaming better? This mask can help you control your dreams and --

STEVEN

I already own one.

MARK

Great. How is it working for you?

STEVEN

It was working well, but not anymore.

GLORIA

He's being attacked in his dreams.

STEVEN

I'm afraid to sleep and this woman in my dreams is ruining my life. She sent a woman I was dating a breakup text, while I was sleeping.

MARK

I'm sorry to hear that, but your dreams are just a manifestation of your subconscious. You're the one who sent the text.

STEVEN

Against my will.

MARK

Maybe if you try some of our other sleep products it will help you with your situation. How about a therapeutic pillow?

STEVEN

I don't need to buy a bunch of crap. I just want to sleep without being attacked.

MARK

Then I can't help you. If you read the warning you would know we are not responsible for anything that may happen while using the mask, but you're welcome to have a free hat.

Mark reaches into a box on the floor and pulls out a cheap hat with the Dream Factory insignia on it.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. THE DENVER CONVENTION CENTER - LATER

The Dream Factory hat sits on top of Steven's head as he, Gloria and Mickey walk away from the booth.

STEVEN

What a crock of --

GLORIA

He's right. If your dreams are causing relationship issues then you probably wanted to sabotage the relationship, whether you realize it or not.

STEVEN

You're wrong. The dream woman even tried to make me lose my job.

MICKEY

Are you sure you want that job?

STEVEN

(frustrated)

Don't turn this back on me.

GLORIA

He makes a good point, Steven.

STEVEN

Whatever. How do I stop it?

GLORIA

You need to be aware of what you truly want and make sure every part of you wants it. The mask has caused the deepest darkest part of your subconscious to go haywire. But that dark part is still you.

STEVEN

I want a real relationship and I don't care what I have to do.

MICKEY

You're the only one getting in your way.

STEVEN

How do I convince the "darkest part" of my subconscious?

MICKY

Go back in your dream and let this woman know, let yourself know.

STEVEN

I don't think I'm ready yet.

GLORIA

You can't treat this like every other relationship you've had, avoiding things never worked.

STEVEN

Right now, I'm going to give it a shot. Plus, insomnia has its perks. It's given me a chance to order the entire family Christmas gifts off the home shopping channel.

Gloria shakes her head, not finding his joke very amusing.

INT. COFFEE CZAR COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Steven sits in front of a coffee shop. He looks anxious, staring off into space as Veronica walks over to him.

VERONICA

Hi.

STEVEN

Hey. Thank you so much for meeting with me. I've been struggling with this case and I'm desperate. Can you go over what happened with me again?

VERONICA

Sure, let's go inside.

Steven holds the door for Veronica as they enter the shop.

INT. COFFEE CZAR COFFEE SHOP - A LITTLE BIT LATER

Steven and Veronica sit across from each other in the middle of the Russian themed coffee shop. Steven sips coffee while Veronica drinks a bottle of juice.

The strange man with a beard and glasses, who's been following Steven, reads a paper at a table nearby.

STEVEN

Was he short, tall, fat, skinny?
Did you catch any physical details?

VERONICA

I think he was fairly short.

STEVEN

Shorter than me?

VERONICA

I think so.

STEVEN

This is going to sound crazy, but
is there anyway it was me?

VERONICA

(confused)

What? I don't think so. Wouldn't
you know if you did it?

STEVEN

I'd hope so.

VERONICA

Is there anything else you need to
know?

STEVEN

(hesitating)

What went wrong between us?

VERONICA

Really? Is this why you called me?
Okay, if you have to know. You
weren't around much, too busy with
your job. Anytime there was an
argument you walked away and we
never resolved things. It was so
frustrating.

STEVEN

I'm sorry.

VERONICA

It's fine. We've both moved on. At
least I hope you have.

The strange man holds up his cell phone and snaps a few
pictures of Veronica and Steven.

EXT. COFFEE CZAR COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

The strange man walks out of the coffee shop and climbs into a Volkswagon Beetle.

I/E. VOLKSWAGON BEETLE/MIKE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Mike removes the fake beard and peers over the dashboard as Veronica and Steven walk out of the coffee shop and hug.

EXT. COFFEE CZAR COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Steven and Veronica finish hugging.

STEVEN
Gary is a lucky man.

VERONICA
Good luck with the investigation.
Take care of yourself.

STEVEN
Thanks. You too.

Steven watches Veronica as she walks to her car. He waves goodbye as she climbs in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven holds his phone up to his ear as he sips an energy drink.

STEVEN
(into phone)
I'm sorry, Rachel. Please forgive me. I want you in my life. In the past I never knew what I wanted, but now I know, and it's you.

Steven hangs up the phone and stares at it for a moment before popping in the security footage DVD from the construction site and hits play.

ON THE DVD: A SHORT MAN, dressed in all black and wearing a skeleton mask, creeps through the construction site. He picks the lock of the cement mixer door and climbs in. After a moment the cement mixer rumbles to life and drives away.

Steven looks relieved after watching this and flips through the channels. He stops and watches TV.

TELEVISION ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Next up on Greek week, a mythical
monsters marathon.

INT. KITCHEN - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven paces around his kitchen as a pot of coffee finishes brewing, studying the files. His hands shake as he pours a cup.

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

Steven's hand shakes as he sips his coffee and sits at his desk, staring at the monitor. The circles under his eyes are massive.

His eyes close and his head nods. He catches himself and smacks his cheek. Steven hears Phil sit down and peeks over the wall of --

PHIL'S CUBICLE.

It is covered in Christmas decorations and a smaller version of the family portrait from his home sits on his desk.

PHIL
Hey, buddy. Still having trouble
sleeping?

STEVEN
(on edge)
Did you talk to her?

PHIL
She said she was going to call you.

STEVEN
I need to talk to her.

PHIL
She'll call.

Steven's phone RINGS. He ducks back into his --

CUBICLE

And snatches the phone off the receiver.

STEVEN
(into phone)
I'm on my way.
(beat)
Fine, I'll see you in a minute.

Steven slams the phone down.

I/E. STEVEN'S CAR - WASHINGTON PARK - DAY

Steven drives, swerving a bit, as Lauren sits in the passenger seat.

LAUREN
Be careful.

STEVEN
(annoyed)
Why did you want to come again?

LAUREN
(hesitating)
I'm really interested in this case
and wanted to watch you in action.

STEVEN
I watched the footage. It looks
like a short guy wearing a skeleton
mask.

LAUREN
Are you sure it was a man?

STEVEN
I'm not sure of anything anymore.

EXT. TASTY TREATS BAKERY - DAY

Steven and Lauren pull up to a shopping center and get out. A city bus sticks out of the front of a large bakery. Baked goods are scattered everywhere.

A distraught BAKER, 50's, anxiously marches around near the same police officer as the previous accidents. Steven walks over to the officer and Lauren follows.

POLICE OFFICER
You again?

STEVEN
Yep.

Lauren watches Steven.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

The same deal?

POLICE OFFICER

You got it, Matlock. They're hitting bigger targets with bigger vehicles. These little jerks make my blood boil.

The baker walks over to Steven.

BAKER

This bakery has been in my family for three generations. It was my life.

STEVEN

Was anyone here when this happened?

BAKER

I was. I was making dough at four AM when the bus came crashing in. I was nearly crushed when it hit the bread ovens.

STEVEN

Did you see anything?

BAKER

A short man in a skeleton mask. I think he hurt his leg, he was limping as he ran down the road.

STEVEN

What about the bus? Where did it come from?

POLICE OFFICER

There was a break in at the bus depot last night. The cameras went down shortly before.

Steven takes out his camera and starts snapping pictures of the accident. Steven glares at the camera's display screen.

MATCH CUT TO:

LAUREN

Looks at the picture on the camera.

LAUREN
Who would do this?

Lauren puts the camera down on the table in --

INT. HANDSOME RAY'S DELI - DAY

Lauren and Steven sit across from each other in the small deli. Lauren eats a salad as Steven drinks a cup of coffee and picks pickles off his sandwich.

STEVEN
(muttering)
I asked for no pickles.

LAUREN
This is the most damage yet. We're already facing huge budget cuts and now this BS.
(jokingly)
What about you? Are you the culprit, trying to throw me off your trail?

STEVEN
(realizing what was said)
What? Of course not.

LAUREN
Never mind. Is everything okay?

STEVEN
I've been having trouble sleeping lately.

LAUREN
If you eased up on the coffee, that might help.

STEVEN
You should ease up on being a ball buster!

Lauren is speechless.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I'm a little on edge.

LAUREN
You sure it's just the sleep?

STEVEN
Yeah, yeah. I'm sorry.

LAUREN

How are things between you and Rachel?

STEVEN

Not good.

LAUREN

That's a shame.

(beat)

Since we're both single, would you ever be interested in taking me out.

Steven spits his coffee out, shocked.

STEVEN

What?

LAUREN

Forget it. I've been lonely since Doug and I split up. I thought you could help me blow off some steam.

STEVEN

You're very beautiful and if you asked a few weeks ago, I would have been on board.

(beat)

But I think I'm falling in love.

LAUREN

I understand. You need to tell her how you feel.

(beat)

When we get back, I'm going to start going through files and see if I can narrow down the suspects.

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

Steven sits at his desk, filling out paperwork as Phil peeks over the cubicle wall.

PHIL

How was lunch with the boss? Did she mention who's getting fired?

STEVEN

No, we talked about these recent cases.

PHIL

Speaking of. I found out that those checks sent to the dead people were signed over to a charity in Laramie.

STEVEN

What charity?

PHIL

Senior's Against Fraud. I'm looking into it now.

STEVEN

That's ironic.

INT. LIVING ROOM - STEVEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steven paces around the living room, gulping an energy drink as the phone RINGS. Steven runs and picks it up. He takes a moment to catch his breath before answering.

STEVEN

(into phone)

Hello.

RACHEL (V.O.)

Hi, Steven. How are you?

STEVEN

Look, I'm really sorry.

RACHEL (V.O.)

I know, I got your message. I like you too Steven, but I'm nervous. I've been hurt before.

STEVEN

I don't want to hurt you. I was unsure of what I wanted, but now I know. I want to see you and no one else. You're so beautiful and smart and funny. You're amazing. Can we get coffee or dinner tomorrow?

RACHEL (V.O.)

(hesitating)

Okay, call me when you get off and we'll get coffee or something.

STEVEN

Sounds great. I miss you. I know this seems crazy considering we haven't known each other for very long, but I feel a connection to you I haven't felt in well... ever.

RACHEL (V.O.)

I think I feel the same.

STEVEN

I'll stop rambling and see you tomorrow.

RACHEL (V.O.)

Good night, Steven.

STEVEN

Good night.

Steven hangs up the phone as a smile spreads across his face. He then grabs the case files and studies them for a moment. He tosses them to the side, frustrated, and chugs the rest of the energy drink.

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

Steven stares at the case file, hoping to find some missing piece of information. It reads: "wearing a skeleton mask." The words jumble together and look blurry.

Steven nods off as Phil pops over the cubicle wall.

PHIL

You look like you crawled out of a coffin.

Steven jerks awake.

STEVEN

Huh?

PHIL

Go home and get some rest, you look terrible.

STEVEN

You go home and get some rest. Your face looks terrible.

PHIL

Whoa, relax.

(beat)

(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)

I looked into that charity. There's only one person on their payroll, an Eleanore Peters. Do you think there's any relation to Mike?

STEVEN

Maybe but it's a pretty common last name.

PHIL

True. I heard you're going out with Rachel tonight, nice work.

(beat)

Do you have any white out?

Steven opens his desk drawer. Inside there is a skeleton mask like the one from the video. He slams the drawer closed.

STEVEN

No!

PHIL

Are you sure? You barely looked.

STEVEN

I'm positive.

PHIL

(ducking into cubicle)

Sorry I asked, weirdo.

Steven slowly opens the drawer. The mask is still there. He slams it shut. Steven sticks his head out of his cubicle and looks over the entire office.

JULIA

Pops her head out of a cubicle at the far end and waves.

STEVEN

Dives back into his cubicle, dripping with sweat. He crouches on the floor as his phone RINGS. He jumps up and grabs it.

STEVEN

(into phone)

Okay, I'll be right there.

Steven stands up and collects himself as walks through --

BINDENMEYER, GRUFFMAN AND ASSOCIATES INSURANCE.

He works his way down the cubicle walkway toward Lauren's office.

The cubicle walls undulate as Julia's LAUGHTER echoes through the room. Everyone in the office judges him as he passes.

Steven reaches Lauren's door. It looks like it is breathing, expanding and contracting.

He wipes his brow before he taps on it and pulls it open.

INT. LAUREN'S OFFICE - BINDENMEYER, GRUFFMAN AND ASSOCIATES INSURANCE - CONTINUOUS

Lauren sits at her desk. Mike sits next to her as Steven walks into the office.

LAUREN
Steven, please sit down.

Steven takes a seat.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
You've been working on these cases very hard. But Mike brought some things to my attention.

She hands him a few pictures. Steven looks at them. They are of him and Veronica at the coffee shop.

STEVEN
Are you accusing me?

LAUREN
I didn't want to, but it makes sense. You've been acting odd lately.

MIKE
The first accident happened while you were sick and the second was your ex. The photos indicate you're still close with her. She could be your accomplice.

LAUREN
I'm sorry, Steven. We aren't going to file charges until we're one hundred percent sure. But we can't take the risk.

MIKE

Security is on their way to escort
you out. You'll be suspended while
we sort this out.

Julia's LAUGHTER fills the office as tears stream down
Steven's cheeks.

INT. BINDENMEYER, GRUFFMAN AND ASSOCIATES INSURANCE -
CONTINUOUS

Steven bursts out of Lauren's office and runs through the
cubicle walkways.

The walls sway back and forth as Julia pops up from behind a
cubicle wall and grins. He keeps running.

STEVEN

It's a conspiracy!

Everyone in the office peeks out of their burrows to watch
the chaos.

Julia pops out from behind the copier nook and waves.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Screw you!

Steven jumps on a desk and kicks a stack of papers. They fly
everywhere.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Don't let them crush your spirit!
It's all we have!

Julia steps out of a cubicle, laughing and pointing.

Steven jumps off the desk and runs. Knocking over everything
he comes into contact with.

A large SECURITY GUARD tackles Steven and with the help of
ANOTHER GUARD, they pick him up off the ground and restrain
him.

Everyone in the office watches Steven get dragged out of the
building, kicking and SCREAMING.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING PARKING LOT - DAY

The security guards throw Steven into the parking lot.

STEVEN

Fine, I didn't want to work there
anyway!

Steven walks toward his car, ashamed and disheveled.

MIKE

Drops two pills into a Styrofoam cup as he walks across the
parking lot.

STEVEN

Unlocks his car door.

MIKE (O.S.)

Steven!

Steven spins around and sees Mike limping toward him, holding
a Styrofoam cup of tea.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about how things went
back there. With the unusual nature
of these claims, we're all a little
on edge.

(beat)

Are you okay?

STEVEN

(suspicious)

Are you?

MIKE

(gesturing to knee)

It's an old tennis injury. It acts
up when there's moisture in the
air, feels like snow. Let me give
you a ride home.

STEVEN

No thanks.

MIKE

How about some tea? It always helps
me to relax. It looks like you
could use it.

STEVEN

Fine, I'll take the tea.

Mike hands Steven the cup of tea.

MIKE

I'm sure you'll be back to work as soon as we sort this whole mess out. You seem exhausted, let me give you a lift. I don't want you getting in an accident.

STEVEN

(hesitant)

Okay, I'd appreciate that.

Mike walks toward his car.

MIKE

It's over this way.

Steven follows him, sipping the cup of tea.

I/E. MIKE'S CAR - DOWNTOWN DENVER - DAY

Mike drives as Steven sits in the passenger seat, sipping the cup of tea.

STEVEN

I'm sorry about my outburst.

MIKE

I understand. You should use your time off for some R and R.

Mike puts some smooth Jazz on the radio.

STEVEN

This is nice.

MIKE

Just sit back, you'll be home in no time.

Steven leans back and his eyelids start to droop.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

STEVEN

For what?

MIKE

Being the perfect scapegoat.

STEVEN

(panicked)

Oh, sh --

Steven passes out as a grin spreads across Mike's face.

INT. BINDENMEYER, GRUFFMAN AND ASSOCIATES INSURANCE - DAY
(DREAM)

Steven wanders through an endless maze of abandoned cubicle walkways. The walkways expand in every direction.

Steven walks around a corner. At the end of a long walkway he sees Julia waving. Steven runs away and hits a dead end. He spins around. Julia carries a giant axe as she slowly walks toward him.

Steven pulls out his phone and dials Rachel's number.

STEVEN
(into phone)
I'm sorry, Rachel. If you never see
me again, I hope you'll at least
forgive me.

Steven slumps against the wall as Chauncey, the polar bear, smashes through it. His massive jaws clamp down on Steven's shoulder.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Glass sprays as Mike's car crashes through the front window of the office building.

I/E. MIKE'S CAR - OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Steven sits in the driver's seat of Mike's car, passed out. Mike is nowhere to be seen. Steven is jolted awake and SCREAMS in pain as the windshield explodes, spraying chunks of glass into his arm.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Mike's car comes to an abrupt stop when it hits the wall.

I/E. MIKE'S CAR - OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Steven's head smashes into the steering wheel, blood drips down his face as he slips into unconsciousness.

INT. BINDENMEYER, GRUFFMAN AND ASSOCIATES - DAY

A huge CRASH shakes the building as Mike runs into the office. Everyone stares at him, including Lauren and Phil.

MIKE

He stole my car! Call 911! He's out
of control!

EXT. JUNKYARD - NIGHT (DREAM)

Steven wanders through a massive junkyard, taking in the chaos around him. It spreads infinitely in every direction. A graveyard of stacked car corpses and scrap metal tower over him.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING PARKING LOT - DAY

Steven lies unconscious on a gurney. PARAMEDICS rush him into the back of an ambulance. The ambulance's SIREN BLARES as it speeds away.

EXT. JUNKYARD - NIGHT (DREAM)

As Steven walks, a MAN in a skeleton mask pops out of the trunk of a car and stares at him. Steven stops and the man mirrors his movements.

Steven steps left. The man steps right, blocking him. Steven turns around and walks the other way. The man does the same. Steven charges toward the man. The man charges toward Steven.

Just as Steven is about to collide with the man, the man expands into a large black net and wraps around him. Steven struggles as the net contracts until he can no longer move and falls to the ground.

Julia's LAUGHTER echoes through the junkyard.

INT. STEVEN'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Steven lies in a hospital bed in a coma. His arm and forehead are bandaged and his skin has tiny glass cuts all over it. A NURSE hooks him up to an IV drip as a DOCTOR goes over his chart.

Gloria bursts into the room and runs toward the bed, Mickey chases after her.

GLORIA

My baby!

Gloria hugs Steven.

DOCTOR

There weren't any life threatening injuries, but he suffered a pretty strong blow to the head.

GLORIA

How long is he going to be like this?

DOCTOR

It's hard to tell. It could be a day, it could be a week, it could be longer.

Gloria bursts into tears. Mickey holds her.

EXT. JUNKYARD - NIGHT (DREAM)

Julia appears over Steven. He is still wrapped up.

JULIA

Welcome home, handsome. I knew we would be together again.

Steven tries to scream but is gagged by the net as Julia drags him behind her.

INT. STEVEN'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Gloria sits next to Steven's bed, holding his hand. Mickey holds his other hand. There is a KNOCK on the door.

GLORIA

Come in!

Phil, Jenny and Rachel enter. Phil bursts into tears when he sees Steven and runs over to the bed. Rachel and Jenny follow his lead.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

I'm his mother, Gloria. Are you close to him?

PHIL

He was my best friend. It feels
like just yesterday he started
working in the cubicle next to
mine, eager to fill out paperwork.

Gloria smiles and gives him a hug. Mickey hugs both of them.

GLORIA

(to Rachel)

You must be, Rachel. I've heard a
lot about you.

Rachel smiles back.

EXT. JUNKYARD - NIGHT (DREAM)

Julia drags Steven toward a massive Gothic cathedral, built
from mangled cars and fragments of buildings, surrounded by a
garden of wreckage.

JULIA

We are going to be so happy
together.

As she passes rows of cars, MEN in skeleton masks pop out of
the trunks and follow them, forming an endless procession.

INT. STEVEN'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Everyone stands around Steven. Rachel and Gloria hold
Steven's hands.

GLORIA

I wish I never got that stupid
mask. This is all my fault.

MICKY

(rubbing Gloria's
shoulder)

You were just trying to help him.

RACHEL

I wish I could have told him how I
felt before all of this happened.

GLORIA

It's never too late.

INT. JUNKYARD CATHEDRAL - NIGHT (DREAM)

Julia drags Steven through the cathedral, it is adorned with large stained glass windows depicting scenes from their dates; walking through an apple orchard, making love on a pile of fur coats, etc.

JULIA

Remember all the good times we had together? That was just the start, we're going to have so many more.

INT. STEVEN'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Gloria and Rachel hold Steven's hands, Mickey is asleep on the floor, and Phil is asleep in a chair.

RACHEL

He looks so calm.

GLORIA

He told me losing you was one of his biggest fears and you just started dating. It took him six months before he even mentioned his feelings for Veronica.

Rachel squeezes Steven's hand even tighter as a nurse TAPS on the door and enters the room. Mickey's eyes slowly open and Phil snorts as he is startled awake.

NURSE

Visiting hours are over. You can come back tomorrow.

(to Gloria)

If you would like to stay the night you're welcome to.

GLORIA

Okay, thank you.

Phil, Mickey and Rachel stand up.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Why don't you all go get a good night's rest?

PHIL

We'll be back as soon as we can.

RACHEL

I'll be back as soon as I wake up.

INT . DRESSING ROOM - JUNKYARD CATHEDRAL - NIGHT (DREAM)

Julia cuts off the net with a dagger as she shoves Steven into medieval stocks and pulls off the mask.

STEVEN
Why are you doing this?

JULIA
You left me no choice.
(beat)
Didn't you miss me?

STEVEN
You can't make me stay --

Julia kisses Steven as he squirms.

JULIA
We'll be together forever. Don't
fight it.

STEVEN
Let me go!

Julia pulls the mask over Steven's face again.

JULIA
Why do you have to spoil the
moment?
(clapping her hands)
Bring in the tux.

A tall, pale, emaciated TAILOR wheels in a rack of suits.

JULIA (CONT'D)
This will be a magical ceremony.
(looking over the rack)
Perfect.

Julia pulls a jacket that is a combination tuxedo and straitjacket off the rack.

INT. STEVEN'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - SUNRISE

Gloria holds Steven's hand as the sun rises over the horizon.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - JUNKYARD CATHEDRAL - NIGHT (DREAM)

Steven is now wearing the tuxedo straitjacket with his arms bound.

He has a steel collar bolted around his neck, with chains attached to it. TWO GIANT ROBOTS made of scrap metal, hold the other end of the chains.

STEVEN

Come on, guys. Do we really need to do this?

One of the robots whips Steven with the chain.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I guess we do.

Julia bursts in the room wearing a tattered wedding dress, holding a bouquet of dead roses.

JULIA

I know it's bad luck to see the bride before the wedding, but I couldn't resist.

STEVEN

You're crazy.

JULIA

If that isn't the pot calling the kettle black.

STEVEN

I'm not this big of a nut job.

JULIA

You'd be surprised.

STEVEN

This was never going to work. I'm ready for a real relationship and this isn't it.

JULIA

I know what you truly want and it's me.

STEVEN

Not anymore.

JULIA

It's a little late.
(to robots)
Let's get started.

Julia gleefully skips out of the room as the robots drag Steven by the chains.

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

Mike and Lauren inspect Steven's desk as Phil spies on them from behind his cubicle wall. Mike opens the drawer and pulls out the mask.

MIKE

I guess that seals it.

LAUREN

I can't believe it. I had my suspicions but --

MIKE

About that, I spoke to corporate and since you didn't act quick enough in dealing with Mr. Thompson, your judgement has been called into question.

LAUREN

What are you getting at?

MIKE

Make sure your resume is up to date.

(to Phil)

Same goes for you, Mr. Hanford. I'd start looking for a good lawyer.

Phil pops his head over the wall.

PHIL

I don't know anything about this.

MIKE

That's for a jury to decide.

INT. STEVEN'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Mickey holds Gloria as they sit next to Steven's bed. Rachel TAPS on the door before entering the room.

RACHEL

How's he doing?

MICKEY

He hasn't gotten any worse, so in a way that's positive.

RACHEL

Can I get you two anything?

GLORIA
Your company is enough.

RACHEL
I can provide that.

INT. WEDDING CHAPEL - JUNKYARD CATHEDRAL - NIGHT (DREAM)

The robots drag Steven down the aisle, past hordes of MONSTERS, toward the altar. The men in skeleton masks guard the room and act as ushers.

Steven passes Phil who is tied up in one of the pews with his mouth sewn shut. Medusa sits next to him with pink bows around each snake.

STEVEN
Phil!

Medusa looks into Phil's eyes and turns him to stone as the robots drag Steven down the aisle. He sees Mickey and Gloria sitting next to a MINOTAUR, wearing a top hat, in another pew.

MINOTAUR
I spend the summers in Florida and
the winters in my maze.

GLORIA
That sounds lovely. We moved to --

STEVEN
Mom! Help me!

GLORIA
Go get her, honey!

MICKEY
We're proud of you!

Gloria turns back to the Minotaur as Steven is dragged away by the robots.

Steven reaches the --

ALTAR

Chauncey, the polar bear, is wearing a priest's collar and standing behind the pulpit. The robots chain Steven to the right of the pulpit.

STEVEN
(to the robot)
I don't even get any groomsmen?

MIKE (O.C.)
It looks like I'm your best man.

Steven turns around to see Mike dressed in a white tuxedo, dripping in blood.

STEVEN
(lunging at him)
I'll kill you. You did this to me.

The robots yank Steven's chain.

MIKE
Don't worry, Gus is here too.

Gus, the strange bearded man, steps out from behind Mike, wearing a white tuxedo too.

GUS
They're all here. Time for cheer.

The WEDDING MARCH starts. It is being played on an out of tune harpsichord by a WEREWOLF wearing sunglasses.

Steven notices Lauren and Veronica on the other side of the pulpit, acting as Julia's bridesmaids.

Julia slowly walks down the aisle.

MIKE
You're a lucky man.

STEVEN
You're a dead man as soon as get
out of here.

INT. STEVEN'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Rachel holds Steven's hand. Gloria and Mickey hold his other hand together.

MICKEY
(to Gloria)
I'm hungry.

GLORIA
I want to be here when he wakes up.

MICKEY
He hasn't moved in twenty four
hours. We have time.

Gloria shoots Mickey a dirty look.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
I'm just saying.

RACHEL
Go eat. If he wakes up, I'll come
get you.

GLORIA
Thanks.

Mickey and Gloria walk out of the room as Rachel squeezes
Steven's hand. Rachel looks at her phone and realizes there's
an unheard message from Steven. She listens to the message.

RACHEL
(shocked)
Oh, my gosh.

INT. WEDDING CHAPEL - JUNKYARD CATHEDRAL - NIGHT (DREAM)

Julia reaches the altar. Chauncey clears his throat and then
speaks in a deep baritone voice.

CHAUNCEY
Dearly beloved, we are gathered
here to --

STEVEN
(to Julia)
I will never be with you!

A large curtain hanging behind Chauncey drops. Rachel is
strapped to a torture rack with her hands and feet bound, she
looks terrified.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
RACHEL!
(to Julia)
Leave her alone. It's me you want.

Two CENTAURS run in from the wings and pull the levers on the
torture rack, causing the chains Rachel is bound with to
tighten. Rachel HOWLS in pain.

JULIA
You can save her, you just have to
say I do.

STEVEN
Let her go!

JULIA
Wrong answer.

INT. STEVEN'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Rachel sits by Steven's side, holding his hand and staring at her phone.

RACHEL
Wake up.

Rachel dials Phil's number and puts the phone up to her ear.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(into phone, beat)
Come on pick up.
(beat)
Phil! Call me back. I have
something that will clear Steven's
name. Hurry.

Rachel hangs up and stares at Steven, intently.

STEVEN
(muttering)
Rachel. Don't move...

Rachel hits the nurses' call button and grasps Steven's hand tighter, waiting for him to speak again.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING PARKING LOT - DAY

Lauren and Phil walk to their cars, carrying boxes of their possessions.

PHIL
How am I going to tell my family?

Phil's phone RINGS. He ignores it.

LAUREN
Aren't you going to answer that?

PHIL
I don't want to talk to anyone
right now.

LAUREN
What if it's about Steven?

Phil puts the box down and pulls out his phone.

PHIL
It's my sister-in-law. She left a
message.

Astonishment fills Phil's face as he listens to the message.

PHIL (CONT'D)
We have to get to the hospital.
Come on, I'll drive.

EXT. WEDDING CHAPEL - JUNKYARD CATHEDRAL - NIGHT (DREAM)

Steven struggles against the robots as Rachel stares at the centaurs, panicked.

JULIA
You're in quite a pickle.

Julia snaps her fingers and a pickle costume appears on Steven.

STEVEN
I hate pickles.

JULIA
(snapping again)
Lighten up. This is a joyous
occasion.

Steven is wearing the straitjacket tux again.

STEVEN
This is just in my head. You can't
hurt Rachel.

JULIA
But I can make you watch her get
tortured for the rest of your life.

Julia snaps her fingers and a short BLUE MONSTER jumps out of a pew and whips Rachel with a cat o' nine tails and laughs.

STEVEN
You monster.

JULIA
No, he's the monster.

Julia waves her hands and the centaurs wind the chains tighter, stretching Rachel even more.

RACHEL

Save me!

Steven struggles but the robots hold him in place.

STEVEN

I will, Rachel.

Steven closes his eyes, focusing. Nothing happens.

JULIA

(to blue monster)

Gouge her eyes out with a spoon.

The blue monster pulls out a rusty spoon and giggles as he prances toward Rachel.

STEVEN

(opening eyes)

No!

(to Julia)

Fine, let's get this over with,
just don't hurt her.

INT. STEVEN'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Rachel stares at Steven, intently.

STEVEN

(muttering)

I will, Rachel...

RACHEL

Come on, Steven. Come back to me.

Rachel squeezes Steven's hand. His eyelids twitch as the nurse rushes into the room.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

(to nurse)

Get his mother! He's waking up!

EXT. WEDDING CHAPEL - JUNKYARD CATHEDRAL - NIGHT (DREAM)

All of the monsters in the chapel watch the wedding ceremony.

CHAUNCEY

...If any person can show just
cause why these two may not be
joined together...

A centaur covers Rachel's mouth.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)
...let them speak now or forever
hold their peace.

Rachel's voice echoes in the distance.

RACHEL (V.O.)
Come on, Steven. Come back to me.

JULIA
Don't listen to her. You're stuck
with me.
(to Chauncey)
Finish it.

CHAUNCEY
Do you Julia take this man to be
your husband and personal slave?

JULIA
I do.

CHAUNCEY
Do you Steven take this woman to be
your wife and master for eternity?

RACHEL (V.O.)
Steven, come on.

Steven closes his eyes, concentrating. The robots crumble
into pieces as the collar around his neck falls to the
ground.

STEVEN
(opening his eyes)
Never.

The straitjacket disintegrates and the chains binding Rachel
release her and wrap around the centaurs, holding them in
place.

All of the monsters in the crowd jump up and charge toward
Steven, snarling and gnashing their teeth. Steven grabs
Rachel's hand and they jump through the massive stained glass
window behind them.

EXT. JUNKYARD CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS

Steven and Rachel burst out of the window as shards of
colored glass fly everywhere. They land on a pile of rubble
and roll.

Steven hops up and helps Rachel to her feet. He then pulls a flaming Molotov cocktail from behind his back and tosses it through the hole in the window.

The cathedral erupts into flames as they run away.

INT. STEVEN'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Gloria bursts into the room. Mickey and the nurse follow close behind.

RACHEL
He said my name! He's about to wake
up, I know it!

STEVEN
(muttering)
I'm so sorry, Rachel...

GLORIA
Keep talking to him.

RACHEL
(to Steven)
Come on, Steven. I'm right by your
side, waiting for you.

EXT. CLEARING - MAZE - JUNKYARD - CONTINUOUS (DREAM)

Steven and Rachel run until they hit a massive wall.

Steven hears a growl behind him and turns around. Julia charges toward Steven, riding Chauncey and holding a sword.

JULIA
You should have just said, I do.

Monsters from the wedding, including the centaurs, Minotaur, Medusa, etc., surround them. They are all armed with maces, swords, battle axes, etc.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Make her suffer and make him watch.

The monsters close in on them.

RACHEL (V.O.)
Come on, Steven. I'm right by your
side waiting for you.

Rachel looks at Steven helplessly.

STEVEN
You're not her.

Steven pulls a dagger from behind his back and stabs Rachel.
She disintegrates as the dagger pierces her heart.

JULIA
You're still stuck here with me.

Steven pulls a flamethrower from behind his back.

STEVEN
When I'm done there won't be a
here.

Steven sprays the flamethrower, igniting everything it comes
into contact with. The junkyard burns all around him.

Julia charges out of the flames swinging the sword above her
head, while she burns. Steven closes his eyes, concentrating,
and Julia bursts into cloud of smoke and ash.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Here I come, Rachel.

INT. STEVEN'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Steven slowly opens his eyes.

STEVEN
Hey.

Rachel gives him a passionate kiss and then tears stream down
her cheeks as she hugs him.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
It's good to see you, too.

Gloria joins in on the hug, sobbing with tears of joy. Mickey
soon follows.

RACHEL
You left me a message. I must have
missed it in all the commotion

STEVEN
I thought that was just part of the
dream.

RACHEL
I think someone set you up.

Lauren and Phil charge in to the room.

PHIL
I got here as fast as I could.

STEVEN
Mike set me up.

RACHEL
This message will prove it.

Rachel plays the voice message and puts it on speaker. They all listen, intently.

ON THE VOICE MESSAGE: A car door is heard opening, followed by the dragging of Steven's body. The THUMP of Steven being dumped into the driver seat is followed by the shuffling of Mike arranging his body.

MIKE (V.O.)
(voice message)
You have been a major pain in my
ass.

ON THE VOICE MESSAGE: The engine starts.

MIKE (V.O.)
Your friend Phil almost figured it
out. We won't have to worry about
that though. Hopefully that bitch
Lauren will be gone soon, too.

ON THE VOICE MESSAGE: The engine revs.

MIKE (V.O.)
This felt good to get off my chest.
It's a shame you won't remember it.

ON THE VOICE MESSAGE: The car door SLAMS shut. After a moment there's a SCREECH of tires and a CRASH. The message ends.

PHIL
I knew he didn't play tennis.

LAUREN
This means we can probably get our
jobs back.

PHIL
I'm alright. I hated my job.

STEVEN
Shouldn't you have Mike arrested?
He almost killed me.

LAUREN
Right, I'm on it.

Lauren runs out the door.

PHIL
It's good to have you back, buddy.

STEVEN
It's good to be back.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Mike is lead out of the building in handcuffs by a TWO POLICEMEN. The smashed front entrance is now blocked off with police tape.

LAUREN

Stands by a police car as Mike is lead toward it.

LAUREN
You'll have plenty of time to
update your resume in prison.

MIKE
I guess I won't be using you as a
reference then.

The police officer pushes Mike into the backseat.

INT. STEVEN'S ROOM - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Rachel and Gloria sit by Steven's side as he eats a bowl of pudding.

STEVEN
I know I was in a coma, but I felt
like I barely got any rest.

GLORIA
We'll let you get some sleep.

Gloria gives him a hug.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Sweet dreams.

STEVEN

(to Rachel)

Do you mind staying until I fall
asleep? I'll sleep easier with you
by my side.

RACHEL

Of course.

Gloria leaves as Steven squeezes Rachel's hand and closes his eyes.

EXT. CLIFF - SUNSET (DREAM)

Steven sees a WOMAN in wedding dress standing at the edge of a cliff. Steven cautiously approaches her. Her face is covered by a wedding veil.

Steven nervously tears the veil off the woman's face. It's Rachel with a huge smile on her face.

MATCH CUT TO:

RACHEL

Is wearing an elegant wedding dress as she and Steven stand on cliff in front of a --

EXT. MOUNTAIN WEDDING CHAPEL - DAY

It is small and wooden, overlooking a picturesque valley. Steven is wearing a tuxedo.

SUPERIMPOSE: "One year later"

A MINISTER stands in front of them. Jenny stands to Rachel's side as her maid of honor. Their wedding is decorated with lots of elaborate decorations designed by Phil.

MINISTER

I now pronounce you man and wife.
You may kiss the bride.

Steven and Rachel kiss as rows of their friends and family cheer.

PHIL

Operates his Santa cannon in the back of the crowd. It is modified to look like Cupid. It blasts in the air, covering the entire wedding procession in red and white confetti as --

STEVEN AND RACHEL

Make their way down the aisle. They pass Gloria and Mickey who smile and wave. They pass Lauren, holding her handsome new BOYFRIEND's hand.

They reach a limo and hop in. "Just married" is written on the back.

Phil jumps in his new van parked behind them. It has a sign on the side that reads: "Phil's Party Planning and Decorations" with a picture of him below it. On top of the van there are a few small cannons and speakers mounted.

The limo drives away as Phil's van follows them, playing music and filling the sky with bubbles and confetti.

I/E. LIMO - MOUNTAIN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Steven holds Rachel in the back of the limo.

RACHEL

That was amazing. It all feels like a dream.

STEVEN

It's better than a dream.

Steven kisses Rachel.

RACHEL

Much better.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - SUNSET - CONTINUOUS

The limo drives down a windy mountain road. Phil's van follows them, spraying bubbles.

STEVEN (V.O.)

Is he going to do that all the way to the reception hall?

RACHEL (V.O.)

Probably, I saw him load a fifty gallon drum.

STEVEN (V.O.)

At least he's not shooting presents
at us.

RACHEL (V.O.)

Just wait until your birthday.

The two cars drive into the horizon as the sun sets.

FADE OUT.

THE END