

APART

Written By
Hunter Davis

FADE IN:

EXT. KESWICK GARDENS, LOWER GARDEN DISTRICT - NIGHT

An older apartment building rests in the shadows of a pleasant neighborhood.

New Orleans, 1985

INT. HALLWAY/DOORWAY, KESWICK GARDENS - NIGHT

A door SWINGS open. **Apartment #106.** CHARLES BUNSON (Mid 40's, 1980's fashion) steps into the hall.

A WOMAN (30's) in a sexy robe stands in the doorway.

WOMAN

Wait.

He turns back to her. She hands him his leather briefcase.

CHARLES

Guess my mind's somewhere else.

She smiles at him coyly. He takes his briefcase.

WOMAN

Next time we're going on a date first.

CHARLES

Wherever you want to go.

He leans in. She obliges with a passionate kiss goodbye.

Charles finally heads down the hall toward the elevator. She smiles and closes the door --

INT. APARTMENT 106, KESWICK GARDENS - CONTINUOUS

Post passion exuberance radiates from the Woman as she tidies up the apartment. A beat passes. There's a KNOCK at the door.

She saunters back smiling - opens the door--

WOMAN

Already back for--

Her expression drops.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

Black gloves COVER her face with a damp rag. MUFFLED SCREAMS.

INT. KESWICK GARDENS LOBBY - NIGHT

Charles exits the elevator into the apartment lobby. A spacious area surrounded by vertical green stripes and matching floral patterns. A dated look, for even the 80's.

With a key from his chain, he opens the mailbox that says, "RENT." Charles transfers all the rent checks from the rent box into his briefcase.

INT. PARKING GARAGE, KESWICK GARDENS - NIGHT

Charles exits the lobby into the parking garage. It's large for the building's size. Dark and dingy. Exposed pipes.

He reaches his car, a Mercedes-Benz. He notices something on the hood. A SMALL WOODEN FIGURE the size of a shot glass.

He inspects the little totem closely. It's male, painted brown with a white face. Multiple nails have been driven into its body. Its horrified facial expression is unsettling.

Charles tosses the talisman to the ground, a little creeped out. He looks around the garage...It's quiet and empty.

He enters his car and cranks the ignition. He puts it in reverse, looks in the mirror, then PUMPS the brakes--

In the rear view mirror are two MALE TEENS.

Charles puts it in park and exits the vehicle.

CHARLES
You scared the shit out of me. What the hell are you boys doing here?

Standing behind the car are ROBERT (18) and JACKIE (15) BUNSON. Their clothes are covered in dirt.

ROBERT
Mother has us doing some work in the basement. Special project.

CHARLES
She has you working at this hour?

JACKIE
We don't mind. We like the night.

CHARLES
You should be back home.

Robert approaches Charles.

ROBERT
We wanted to say goodbye. Before
you went on your big business trip.

Charles is confused.

CHARLES
I'll only be gone a few days. Just
like last time. You know that.

Robert holds out his arms for a hug. Charles puts down his
briefcase. They embrace.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
I'll miss you guys.

ROBERT
We'll miss you too, Charles.

Robert releases.

CHARLES
I'll be back in a couple of--

Charles looks down. A large knife STICKS in his gut.

ROBERT
Mother sends her best.

Charles is in shock. Blood drips from the blade.

Robert YANKS it out. The knife is ornately decorated with a
carved wooden handle.

Charles backs off, SLAMMING into the car door. He FALLS to
the ground, holding his wound. Blood flows through his hands.

Robert GRABS his car keys and rushes to the driver side door.
He looks across the hood to Jackie.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Like a robbery.

Jackie nods. Robert gets in the car and starts up the engine.

Jackie picks up the knife and stands over the dying man.
Charles looks up at him in disbelief.

CHARLES

I treated you like a son...

Jackie just stares back at him. There's a disturbing darkness
in his dilated eyes...

He STABS Charles repeatedly in the chest. Ruthless and
without remorse, like a youth possessed.

ROBERT

Jackie!

Jackie snaps out of it. He grabs Charles' wallet and
briefcase. He gets in the passenger door with the knife.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE ENTRANCE, KESWICK GARDENS - NIGHT

UNSETTLING THEME MUSIC

The garage gate OPENS. The boys pull out of the garage and
SPEED off down the street in the stolen Mercedes.

In the background, Charles lays dead in a pool of his own
blood. We STAY on the closing garage gate.

Welded to the middle of the gate is an affixed iron emblem.
We PUSH IN slowly on the STRANGE SYMBOL...

A SPIRAL with two lines intersecting in the middle. Arrows
connect a moon and sun on top with a skull at the bottom.

As we move closer, the enigmatic emblem merges together with
the OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE...

APART

EXT. GLORIA'S CAR - LOWER GARDEN DISTRICT - DAY

A modest sedan drives through a nice New Orleans neighborhood
lined with older quaint homes and upscale apartments.

New Orleans, March 2020

INT. GLORIA'S CAR, LOWER GARDEN DISTRICT - DAY

GLORIA "G" STEELE (African American, mid 20's) is behind the
wheel. Windows down, music loud. Her nails long and sharp.

Her arms lined with tats. She has a no bullshit vibe without ever having to say a word.

AMY (O.S.)
(On speaker phone)
Oh, come on, don't be lame.

GLORIA
You know what's lame? Going into
work on my day off.

Gloria breaks at a stop sign. An OLDER COUPLE in masks crosses the street in front of her. She waits impatiently.

AMY (O.S.)
It's the weekend, bitch. What else
are you going to do?

GLORIA
Shit, Mardi Gra is was like ten
weekends in one. I need a break.
Plus, my new couch arrives today.

The elderly couple finally makes it to the other side. Gloria feigns a smile and accelerates ahead.

AMY (O.S.)
New couch vibes, nice. So are we
ever actually gonna see your new
place? Or just hear about it?

GLORIA
Soon. I just need a minute to fix
it up. Work's been kicking my ass.

AMY (O.S.)
Just be thankful you're still
working. It's bad out there.

GLORIA
People gotta drink.

INT. GLORIA'S CAR, KESWICK GARDENS - CONTINUOUS

Gloria pulls up to her apartment complex, Keswick Gardens. The same building from the opening. It hasn't changed a bit.

AMY (O.S.)
True. K, real talk tho...What Did
you think of Dillion?

Gloria presses the clicker. The garage gate opens.

GLORIA

Oh, God.

AMY (O.S.)

He's cute, right?

Gloria stares at the strange SPIRAL SYMBOL emblem welded into the center of the iron garage gate. Something she's noticed before, but never really looked at closely.

GLORIA

You're relentless. I'm pulling into the garage, I'll call you tonight.

INT. PARKING GARAGE, KESWICK GARDENS - MINUTES LATER

Gloria exits her car. The parking garage looks the exact same as it did in the 80's other than the modern vehicles.

She hears STRANGE NOISES coming from one of the exposed pipes above. She stops to look at it. After a moment, the sound passes. She keeps walking toward the lobby entrance.

INT. KESWICK GARDENS LOBBY - DAY

The lobby hasn't changed since 1985. It has the same retro wallpaper with vertical green stripes and floral patterns, only now with more wall blemishes.

Gloria checks her mail slot: "*G. Steele #106.*"

Her landlord, BOB, (50's, glasses, cargo shorts) exits the elevator. Dorky dad vibes on full display.

BOB

Hey, Gloria, been meaning to catch ya. I'm sending up our plumber this afternoon. Johnny.

Gloria grabs her mail.

GLORIA

Oh, cool, thank you. I don't know why it keeps clogging.

BOB

Old building, old pipes, but don't worry. Johnny'll take care of you.

GLORIA

I appreciate it. Oh, and I have some delivery guys coming this afternoon. Just fyi. New couch.

BOB

Groovy. Let me give you a little hint. Just have them take it over the balcony. Much easier that way.

GLORIA

Yeah?

Gloria sees how that would be easier.

BOB

Trust me. I've been here 25 years. I know all the shortcuts.

She gives him a thankful nod.

INT. 1ST FLOOR HALLWAY, KESWICK GARDENS - MINUTES LATER

Gloria exits the elevator. In front of her is JOON (75, African descent) walking the hallway with the help of a professional CARETAKER.

JOON

Don't mind us. Not moving too fast these days.

GLORIA

Oh, it's fine.

Joon wears a vibrant satin gown and loud jewelry. A green headband wraps around her gray hair. She walks by slowly with tubes in her nose. Her Caretaker leads her past the elevator.

Gloria politely moves past them and heads toward her door.

JOON (O.C.)

Just moving in?

GLORIA

Yeah, about two weeks ago. 106.

Gloria takes out her keys. Joon is closer now.

JOON

Oh, that's right, Bob told me we had a new tenant.

Joon's Caregiver leads her down the hallway.

JOON (CONT'D)

I'm Joon, but my friends call me,
Cameroon Joon. You can probably
guess where I'm from.

She winks at her. Gloria nods politely.

GLORIA

Gloria. Nice to meet you, Joon.

JOON

You too, child. Welcome to the
Gardens.

GLORIA

Thank you.

Gloria inserts the key and enters her apartment. Unit #106.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Gloria throws her purse and keys on the entry table. The
apartment is old, but very spacious. 1,500 square feet.

The living room is partially furnished with no couch. Several
unpacked boxes line the walls.

Gloria's phone DINGS. She looks at it.

(All texts superimposed on screen)

Amy Text: *So...Dillion? [Heart emoji]*

Gloria smiles and shakes her head. She pours some water into
a glass and takes a drink.

Her cell RINGS. It's a Facetime call from "Dad." She answers.

Gloria's Dad, ELI STEELE (late 50's, low-key), is in his
backyard with a water hose.

GLORIA

I thought you're paying the
neighbor kid to do yard work?

ELI

Well, I'm here. Not working, might
as well do something productive.

GLORIA

You're retired. You're not supposed
to be doing anything productive.

ELI
 (laughing)
 So that's what you think retirement
 is?

Gloria turns on the TV.

GLORIA
 Yeah. Drinking beers, watching
 sports all day. I'm jealous.

A NEWS PROGRAM plays in the background. COVID-19 headlines
 scroll across the bottom.

ELI
 Isn't that what you get paid to do
 now?

She laughs.

GLORIA
 Good point.

ELI
 So next Friday. Nana's--

GLORIA
 Nana's birthday, I know. I'll send
 her something soon.

Gloria changes the station to a familiar sitcom.

ELI
 Don't wait too long. I hear the
 mail is a lot slower now too.

There's a knock at the door.

GLORIA
 Dad, let me call you back. I think
 the couch guys are here.

She hangs up and opens the front door. It's JOHNNY (32,
 awkward) the apartment plumber.

JOHNNY
 Here for the toilet.

He looks her up and down, oblivious to the social stigma.

GLORIA
 Sure, come in.

She leads him inside.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
It's the second door on--

JOHNNY
I know where it is.

Johnny walks down the hall and into the guest bathroom.

Gloria gets an incoming call. She answers.

GLORIA
Hello?...Great. Yeah, up and over.
I'll slide the glass door open now.

Gloria rushes to her balcony and opens the sliding glass door. She hears a THUMP against the balcony ledge. She looks down. The COUCH GUYS are already below on a step ladder.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
You guys good?

She peers over the side. The COUCH GUYS nod and wave back. Couch Guy #1 PUSHES the sofa from below while Couch Guy #2 LIFTS from the balcony.

Loud CRANKING sounds come from the guest bathroom.

There's a KNOCK at the front door. Gloria rushes back across the living room to answer it. Bob stands in the doorway.

BOB
Hey there, just checking in. Did
Johnny make it up?

GLORIA
Yeah. He's working on it now.

Bob walks past Gloria down the apartment hallway like he owns the place. Gloria follows behind.

BOB
How we doing Johnny?

GUEST BATHROOM

Johnny's crouched down, meticulously organizing his tools in the toolbox. Bob and Gloria enter.

BOB (CONT'D)
Working hard, or hardly working?

JOHNNY
Finished.

GLORIA

Wow. That was quick.

BOB

Johnny's the best there is.

He methodically places each tool back in its designated place. Each movement quick and efficient.

BOB (CONT'D)

So I have this talk with every new resident here. This building might be old, but we still have to comply with the state mandated flushing rates of 1.6 gallons per flush. Which means things happen from time to time, if you know what I mean.

Johnny FLUSHES the toilet. The water swirls, flushes fine.

BOB (CONT'D)

In my experience, there are all kinds. I've got 250 pound meat-eating linebacker types on the third floor, and I got 100 pound elderly ladies on other floors. All using the same pipes. You never know who's going to have a clog.

GLORIA

Oh, I don't use this toilet. I mean, not like that, I use the master bathroom--

BOB

It's okay. No judgement here.

Johnny's tools are in their place. He shuts his tool box and heads into the hallway. Bob follows behind, lingering.

BOB (CONT'D)

I know it's not the prettiest building on the block, but we take care of our people here.

Johnny exits the apartment. Bob follows him into the hallway.

BOB (CONT'D)

Let me know if you need anything else. Unless it's after hours.
(Beat) Just kidding. But seriously, try not to call after hours.

GLORIA
Okay, will do. Thanks again.

Gloria smiles politely and closes the door.

Across the room, she sees the large sofa wavering on the ledge of the balcony. The Couch Guys are struggling. She sprints over to help them.

Gloria GRABS the top half of the sofa and helps them PULL it back safely onto the balcony, nearly avoiding disaster.

She sighs. They all catch their breath.

COUCH GUY #1
Where do you want it?

INT. LIVING ROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gloria lounges on her new couch, eating a bowl of ice cream, watching TV. She stretches out in comfort glory. Phone dings.

Amy Text: ??? (*Frustrated emoji*)

Gloria texts back. *Okay, fine. He's cute.*

She watches the three dots in her thread.

Amy Text: *I knew it!*

Gloria: ;)

Gloria scrolls through her instagram. She notices a new unread DM. The user name is **JanePerry8_9_2016**. No image.

She hesitates at first, then CLICKS on the new message.

CU ON DIRECT MESSAGE: **You are not safe.**

--Gloria SITS UP. Now at full attention.

GLORIA
What the fuck.

Gloria clicks on the user. The page is blank. No followers. No posts. Clearly a dummy profile. Phone dings again.

Amy Text: *Double date soon. For reals.*

Gloria ignores her text, now laser focused on the strange DM.

She walks to the front door and checks the lock. Then over to the balcony window. She flips off the light and peeks out the blinds. Nothing out of the ordinary.

INT. LIVING ROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Gloria sits upright on the sofa with a glass of wine and her laptop computer. She Googles, "*Jane Perry 8/9/2016.*"

A list of articles POPS UP. All *Missing Persons* stories.

Gloria's eyes go wide.

She clicks on the first link from the *Baton Rouge Advocate*. The headline reads, "*New Orleans Woman Still Missing.*" She reads through FLASHES of information in the article:

"Perry had moved from Minneapolis to New Orleans in 2015..."

"She is described by her family as very responsible and would keep in regular contact with her Mother and Sister..."

Gloria starts a new window. She clicks on the NOPD WEBSITE. She navigates to the *Missing Persons Profile* tab. In the search bar she types, "*Jane Perry.*" Jane's page pops up.

An IMAGE of Jane is at the top left corner by her name.

Jane S. Perry

Missing: August 9, 2016

Age: 25

Sex: F

Descent: Caucasian

Height: 5'5"

Weight: 115

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Green

Missing From: New Orleans, LA

Report #: 2016-1225433

CIRCUMSTANCES

Ms. Perry lived on the 4000 block of Keswick Ave in New Orleans, LA. She was last seen on 8/9/2016 exiting a gas station at the corner of Delachaise St and Louisiana Ave in the 11th Ward district at approximately 1:05am.

If you have any information that can help locate this individual, please contact Detective Luis Carson at the NOPD Support Division, Missing Persons Unit. 504-555-8990.

Gloria sits back sipping her wine. Thinking.

She opens the mysterious DM message again. She types a response: *"Who are you?"*

She waits for a possible quick answer. There is none.

Gloria goes back to her computer. She types in the Google search bar, *"What happened to Jane Perry, Missing Person."*

A Jane Perry blog site pops up. It's a low rate page devoted to the Jane Perry missing persons case. She clicks on it.

At the top of the page are several different IMAGES of Jane. One of the photos is Jane with her sister, DAWN (26). There are several photos of them together. They appear to be close.

Gloria SCROLLS through the comment section below the photos.

"Surprised they never found the body."

"She was murdered."

"Probably got too wasted, found herself in an alley with a bad hombre and that was that."

"Holes in the story, facts don't add up."

"Nothing but rapist and perverts in New Orleans."

"Follow the Apartment."

This last comment gets Gloria's attention. It's an anonymous post made in 2018. The last comment from the blog page.

There's an IMAGE attached to the comment. Gloria clicks on the thumbnail to enlarge it.

CU ON PHOTO: An exterior image of an apartment building. **It's Keswick Gardens.** Gloria's apartment complex.

Gloria takes her hands off the keyboard. Stunned. The realization hits her. **Jane lived here.**

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE, KESWICK GARDENS - MORNING

Bob sits behind an old desk in a dated office, now wearing a mask. Gloria sits on the other side, fuming.

GLORIA

Aren't you, like, required to tell me about this kind of thing before signing the lease?

BOB

Only if a tenant passes away *inside* the unit. If the incident occurs elsewhere, then it isn't reported to the department of real estate.

GLORIA

So, a technicality.

Bob adjusts his glasses and folds his hands.

BOB

If it makes you feel better, the last tenant in your unit was a wonderful young family who lived here several years after the Jane Perry incident.

GLORIA

Why did they move out?

BOB

Samantha had a second child, they bought a house out in Algiers I believe, but I can tell you they loved their time in this building.

Gloria crosses her arms. Still upset.

GLORIA

So I'm locked into the lease. That's what you're telling me?

BOB

Gloria, I can assure you this is a very safe area. Honestly, one of the safest blocks in the Garden District. Just ask around. You have nothing to worry about here.

Bob adjusts his mask around his glasses, flashing her a courteous grin. Gloria's not impressed.

EXT. KESWICK GARDENS - DAY

Gloria exits the apartment in jogging gear. She puts in her AirPods, ready to run off some steam. Her phone dings.

Amy: *No more happy hours? WTF?! : (*

Gloria ignores the text, ready to get into her workout.

EXT. GARDEN DISTRICT, KESWICK NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK - DAY

Gloria jogs the squared neighborhood lap. Friendly PEOPLE walk their dogs. MOMS push babies in strollers. No trash piles. No homeless.

Her phone RINGS as she rounds the corner. She looks at the display. "Dad." Gloria slows down and taps her AirPods.

GLORIA
(winded)
Hey.

ELI (O.C.)
Catch you in a run?

Gloria transitions to a slow walk. Breathing heavy.

GLORIA
Yeah. It's okay. What's up?

ELI (O.C.)
How you taking the news?

GLORIA
What news?

ELI (O.C.)
You haven't heard?

GLORIA
Dad, just tell me.

ELI (O.C.)
The New Orleans order. They're closing all bars and restaurants.

Gloria stops. She takes a moment to process this information.

ELI (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Sorry, honey, but I figured you were already expecting this.

GLORIA
Yeah. Kind of. Just didn't think it'd happen this fast. Or at all.

An OLDER WOMAN in a face mask stares at Gloria as she passes.

ELI (O.C.)
I'm actually a little relieved. It's best you not be around so many people for awhile. At least until this thing passes.

GLORIA

I guess.

An IG notification pops up on her phone. A new DM.

ELI

I've been thinking. Since you're not working now I really think you should come home for a bit.

It's from JanePerry8_9_2016. She clicks on the DM: *Leave*.

ELI (CONT'D)

Hello?

She's distracted by the disturbing new DM.

GLORIA

Yeah, I've been thinking the same thing.

ELI

That's great to hear. I know things will be tough with your rent and bills and what not, but I can float you some money until you start working again. And in the meantime, you can visit more with the fam.

GLORIA

You sure you want me around 24/7?

Eli laughs.

ELI (O.C.)

Careful what you wish for.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Gloria puts on a Dallas Cowboys t-shirt. Her hair still wet, fresh from the shower.

STRANGE NOISES come from the pipes in the walls. She tracks them closer, then SMELLS something vile coming from the vent. She cringes and sprays freshener in the room.

LIVING ROOM

The TV is on a news channel. Non-stop coverage of the Corona virus outbreak. Gloria watches a moment. Cases are mounting.

KITCHEN

Gloria opens the pantry cupboard. She rummages around for something. She doesn't find what she's looking for.

She bends down and reaches her arm deep into the bottom shelf...She pulls out a family size tub of HAND SANITIZER.

GLORIA

Knew you'd come in handy someday.

Gloria looks at it proudly and sets it on the entry table next to a stack of mail. One of the letters is addressed to the previous tenant. "*Samantha Prewitt.*" Gloria opens it.

BEDROOM

Gloria sits at her bedroom desk with her laptop open. She searches for "*Samantha Prewitt Algiers*" on Facebook.

She researches further, finding several matches. She scrolls down. A married Mother of two living in Algiers, Louisiana.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

That's gotta be her.

Gloria hits the messenger icon. She starts to type, but stops. She doesn't know what to say. She starts typing again.

CU ON MESSAGE: "*Hello, I think I live in your former apartment at Keswick Gardens and was just wondering...*"

Gloria keeps typing and finishes the short message.

We don't see the screen. She hovers over the send button, hesitating...then CLICKS send. The direct message is away.

Gloria's cell RINGS. Facetime from Amy. Gloria answers.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Hey.

AMY (27, Asian) is doing her nails.

AMY

Girl.

GLORIA

I know.

AMY

So shitty.

GLORIA

Finally make it to the mecca of bartending, and the Big Easy closes up shop.

AMY

Look at it like a mini-vacation.

GLORIA

Yeah. An unpaid vacation with no end in sight.

AMY

No way this goes any longer than a couple weeks. There's only like a thousand cases total.

Gloria carries her phone with her to the living room. A NEWS PROGRAM broadcasts alarming COVID data from New York.

GLORIA

I don't know. You see what's happening in New York?

AMY

Yeah, but that's New York.

GLORIA

Maybe Dillion was right.

AMY

Speaking of Dillion...

GLORIA

Wow, even a pandemic can't stop you.

AMY

Come on, G. He's hot and into you. You really want to be alone during this thing?

Gloria leans back on the couch.

GLORIA

How do you know he's into me?

AMY

I can just tell. And...because he told Steve, who told me, which is why I'm calling.

Gloria smiles and shakes her head.

GLORIA

Okay, enough with the foreplay.
What's your pitch?

AMY

K, hear me out. Me and Steve come over tonight to celebrate your new place. Total chill vibes. We bring bomb weed. And...we bring Dillion.

GLORIA

There it is.

AMY

Bitch, please. You know you want to spend more time with him.

GLORIA

Amy, I just moved in. This place is like a nursing home. Lots of old people. Probably shouldn't be throwing any parties right away.

AMY

I'm not talking about a rager. I'm proposing an intimate gathering of likeminded people.

Gloria sighs.

AMY (CONT'D)

Oh, come on it'll be fun. We could all use a release right now.

Gloria takes a moment to consider it.

GLORIA

Fine. But no one else. And it better be good weed.

INT. LIVING ROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CU ON FOUR SHOT GLASSES. A spout POURS high-end Whiskey into each glass.

GLORIA is behind the wet bar pouring the shots.

DILLION, (handsome, late 20's) Amy, and her boyfriend STEVE (cool, mid 20's) each take a glass.

DILLION

Here we go.

AMY

Yessss.

STEVE

Damn, G. Top shelf? That's that
Bourbon Street money.

GLORIA

Fuck no, I'm broke as shit. Swiped
this bad boy on the last day we
were open. Don't tell.

She gives Dillion a pretend stern glance.

DILLION

Circle of trust.

GLORIA

Drink up, bitches.

They all hold up their shot glasses.

STEVE

To the end of the world.

AMY

So negative. To G's new place.

Gloria nods in recognition.

GLORIA

New place, new life.

They clink glasses. Gloria and Dillion steal a glance at each
other. They down the shots, post tequila cringes all around.

INT. LIVING ROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT- LATER THAT NIGHT

Amy DANCES in front of the TV, drink in hand. A Pandora
station blasts progressive HOUSE MUSIC from Bose speakers.

Steve lounges on the couch, vibin' out while rolling a joint
on the new coffee table.

Behind the wet bar, Gloria makes a drink for Dillion. She
sparks a lighter and puts the flame to a fresh orange peel.
She rubs the lip of the glass and hangs it over the edge.

GLORIA

Try this.

She hands Dillion the perfect whiskey Old Fashioned.

DILLION

This on my tab?

GLORIA
Might as well be. Going to be
awhile before I get paid for it.

Dillion takes a sip of the drink. He makes a face.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
What, you can't handle a double?

DILLION
No, no it's fine. Tastes great.

He forces another sip of the super strong drink.

DILLION (CONT'D)
I like your place by the way.

GLORIA
Thanks.

Gloria makes herself the same drink, only a triple.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
My last place was in the warehouse
district. Such a dump. Gentrified
my ass. I had to get out of there.
I wanted to be in a nicer area near
my work. This was the only place I
could afford.

She lights the orange peel and hangs it over the edge.

DILLION
Yeah, killer location for the
garden district. Total steal.

GLORIA
People keep telling me that. Now I
know why...

Dillion's confused by the comment. Gloria doesn't expand. She
takes a healthy sip of her extra strong drink.

EXT. BALCONY, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Steve sits on a chair smoking a J. Amy's on his lap. Dillion
sits across from them while Gloria stands in the doorway.

AMY
Dude. There's already been so many
layoffs at my office. It's crazy.

Amy swipes the joint from Steve and takes a hit.

AMY (CONT'D)
 (exhaling)
 I am not asking my parents for
 money again.

Dillion laughs. Steve scrolls through his phone.

STEVE
 This is such bullshit. Every
 freaking bar is closed.

GLORIA
 How do you think I feel?

Amy passes the joint to Dillion, who politely waves it off.
 Gloria notices.

DILLION
 Maybe it's a good thing. Look at
 Italy. That could be us soon.

GLORIA
 You sound like my Dad.

DILLION
 He sounds like a wise soul.

Gloria smirks. Steve takes the J back and hits it again.

STEVE
 Come on, bro. This virus only kills
 old people. Like, crazy old. We
 should be allowed to do our thing.

DILLION
 Your grandparents would be so
 proud.

STEVE
 Fuck you. I love my Grammy.

Gloria laughs. Steve passes the joint to her.

AMY
 Last week some knuckle dragger on
 Canal Street called me "Kung Flu."

GLORIA	DILLION
What?! That's ridiculous.	People suck.

Amy shrugs.

DILLION (CONT'D)

See, that's the scariest part of this whole thing.

Gloria takes a hit.

GLORIA

(exhaling)

What, misguided racism? We didn't need a pandemic for that.

DILLION

True. But it's just evidence of a larger truth. In times of great crisis, people tend to revert back to their core impulses. Protect thy neighbor? Fuck no. Historically, when shit hits the fan, it's every man for themselves.

The group thinks on this for a moment.

STEVE

Damn. That's some Purge shit right there.

Gloria passes him the J. Steve hits it.

GLORIA

You guys want to see something freaky?

This gets everyone's attention.

AMY

Your double jointed elbows? Seen it. Hard pass.

DILLION

I'd like to see that.

GLORIA

We're not there yet.

DILLION

We'll work up to it.

She gives him a coy look and pulls out her phone. She shows them the missing persons article on Jane Perry.

AMY

What am I looking at?

Gloria lowers her voice.

GLORIA
She was a former tenant.

AMY
Here?

GLORIA
Same unit.

STEVE
No fucking way.

Gloria nods and takes a sip of her drink.

DILLION
When was this?

GLORIA
Four years ago. She went missing
one day and they never found her.

STEVE
Fuck me.

The group takes a collective moment to process.

AMY
You should ask your landlord for a
discount.

Amy takes the joint back from Steve.

GLORIA
Already tried. Rents so low I don't
have much leverage. I'm stuck here
for now, on the hook for a year.

DILLION
I'm sorry.

Gloria shrugs. Amy takes a big hit. Too big.

AMY
Let's be honest though...You can't
beat this square footage.

Amy exhales, COUGHING loudly.

GLORIA
Shhhh. Hold it in, girl.

Steve pats her on the back. Gloria looks around.

INT. LIVING ROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gloria says goodbye to everyone. She hugs Amy and Steve.

AMY

This was so much fun, thanks for hosting.

STEVE

Yea, we needed this.

GLORIA

Get home safe.

Amy waves goodbye, pulling Steve with her into the hallway, purposefully leaving Gloria alone with Dillion.

DILLION

If you ever need a bar patron to practice on during the downtime, just let me know.

GLORIA

I'd need your number for that.

His eyes light up. She hands him her phone.

DILLION

Yeah, of course.

He types his number in her phone. She saves it and texts him back, "G" with a *sunglass face* emoji. They share a glance.

GLORIA

Goodnight, Dillion.

He steps into the hallway, unsure if he should stay longer.

DILLION

Goodnight.

She waves bye and shuts the door. Gloria's once again alone.

She starts cleaning up the empty beer bottles and trash.

Gloria rounds up the used glasses and puts them in the sink. She rinses them out. Several moments pass...

Her cell RINGS. It's Dillion.

Gloria's surprised by the quick call back. She answers.

GLORIA

Dillion?

DILLION (O.C.)
Hey, I know this is kind of weird.

GLORIA
What is it?

DILLION (O.C.)
Well. I'm outside, waiting for my Uber, and I saw something kind of strange.

GLORIA
Okay...What does that mean?

DILLION (O.C.)
I mean, it's probably nothing--

GLORIA
Dillion. What did you see?

DILLION (O.C.)
I saw someone standing across the street...staring directly at your window.

Gloria's expression drops.

GLORIA
Is he still there?

DILLION (O.C.)
No, I think I scared em' off.

She peaks out the blinds, now on high alert. No one's there.

GLORIA
Come back up. Right now.

DILLION
I don't want to alarm you. It's probably just some drunk dude or a homeless guy roaming around or som--

GLORIA
Dillion. Get your ass back up here.

DILLION
On my way.

INT. LIVING ROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Gloria and Dillion sit on the couch, sipping on new drinks. The Pandora Station plays late night vibes.

GLORIA
So what did he look like?

DILLION
Skinny. Not tall. Wearing a black
Hoodie like Elliot from Mr. Robot.

GLORIA
I don't know who that is.

DILLION
Really? Rami Malek, cyber hacker.
Great show. Not important.

Gloria gets up from the couch. She peers out the blinds, then turns back to Dillion.

GLORIA
Be honest with me. Did you really
see someone? Or are you just trying
super hard to get in my pants?

Dillion laughs. Gloria walks back over to him.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
I won't be mad if you're lying.
Props for originality.

DILLION
I'm not lying.

Buzzed, she leans in and gives him the interrogation stare.

DILLION (CONT'D)
I saw someone. But it was dark,
they were across the street, and
honestly, I've had blurry vision
ever since that second old
fashioned you gave me.

Gloria backs off. Unsatisfied. She lingers toward the window.

DILLION (CONT'D)
Truthfully, this is all most likely
a total overreaction based on the
simple fact that I care about you.

Gloria blushes, caught off guard. She sits back down on the couch and takes another sip of her drink.

GLORIA
There's something I didn't tell the
others earlier.

DILLION
You can tell me.

Gloria hands him her phone. It's her instagram page.

GLORIA
I got this DM last night.

Dillion reads the DM message: *You are not safe.*

DILLION
Okay. I'll admit, that's definitely
a ping on the creepy radar.

GLORIA
Whoever it is, they wanted me to
know about Jane. The girl that went
missing.

DILLION
You think about calling the police?

GLORIA
And tell them what? That I got a
freaky DM on Instagram?

DILLION
Maybe.

GLORIA
I'm a black person in America. I
only call the cops when it's life
or death.

Dillion can't help but laugh. Gloria sips her drink.

DILLION
Well. I'm staying here tonight.

GLORIA
Is that right?

DILLION
For your protection. I'll sleep on
the couch.

GLORIA
First off, I don't need your
protection. Second, this is a brand
new couch. I don't want you messing
it up.

Dillion nods. Gloria stands, downs the rest of her drink, and
holds out her hand.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Let's go.

Dillion perks up. He rises, taking her hand. She leads him down the hallway toward the bedroom.

INT. GLORIA'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Gloria and Dillion lounge on her bed together, fully clothed. The only light emits from the TV in the background.

Dillion points to a "drinking tiger" tattoo on her upper arm.

DILLION

And that one?

Gloria grimaces. The ink is old, the artwork poorly done.

GLORIA

Open to interpretation.

DILLION

(laughing)

What does that mean?

GLORIA

It means I was 19 and confused.
Give a girl a break, will ya?

DILLION

Okay, fair enough.

GLORIA

What about you, preppy? No tats?
Not even a secret one on your butt
or something?

DILLION

Nope. Completely unscathed. My body
is a temple.

GLORIA

Figures. You look like the church
boy type.

DILLION

Looks can be deceiving.

Dillion gives her a promiscuous look. She likes it.

He points to a butterfly tattoo on her inner wrist. Inside the wing is a date: 11/5/2007.

DILLION (CONT'D)
What's the story with that one?

Gloria's expression veers slightly.

GLORIA
My grandmother calls it my guardian
angel.

Gloria runs her finger over it gently. A moment of silence.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
My mother loved butterflies. I got
it for her. (Beat) She passed away.

The tone shifts.

DILLION
I'm sorry.

An awkward beat passes. Dillion's unsure what to say.

GLORIA
Cancer. Hodgkin's lymphoma. Figured
it was your next question.

Dillion nods in sympathy.

DILLION
How old were you?

GLORIA
Fourteen.

DILLION
Wow. I can't imagine how hard that
must've been for you.

GLORIA
I had my rough years. Lashed out,
got into some trouble. But I
eventually made peace with it. Only
way to move forward, you know?

He nods. They watch TV for a moment. More COVID headlines.

DILLION
I lost my Mom too.

This gets her attention. She faces him.

GLORIA
Really?

DILLION

Well, she's not dead. She left my
Dad and moved to Jersey.

Gloria SLAPS him hard on the shoulder.

GLORIA

You're so bad!

DILLION

Okay you're right, I should've lead
with that.

Gloria turns back to the ceiling, morbidly laughing.

DILLION (CONT'D)

She was an alcoholic. Big drug
addict. Real piece of work.

Gloria shifts a little closer to him. He notices.

GLORIA

So that's why you don't smoke weed?

Dillion nods. Gloria gets it. He slowly moves his arm around
her, hoping she doesn't push it away. She doesn't. They both
lay back together watching TV.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

We gotta switch spots.

She sits up. Dillion is confused.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

You should be closest to the door.
That way if the stalker comes in
he'll stab you first. Then I whack
him with my bat.

Gloria points to her baseball bat leaning against the wall.

DILLION

Solid plan.

Dillion scoots toward her side of the bed. Gloria rolls up
and over. She pauses, hovering above him. Dillion leans up.
She leans down. A moment of anticipation...They kiss.

DILLION (CONT'D)

This feels right--

GLORIA

Shut up.

DILLION

Got it.

Their lips press together as their bodies intertwine. Clothes start coming off. More passion with each passing second. The dim TV light illuminates their united figures.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BALCONY, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Gloria beams joyfully in a cozy robe. She walks out to her balcony, cup of coffee in hand. She sees Dillion exiting the apartment below. His shirt's wrinkled, bed head hair.

GLORIA

Enjoy your walk of shame.

He looks up at her and smiles, ringing a fake bell.

DILLION

(English accent)

Shame.

Gloria's confused.

DILLION (CONT'D)

Game of Thrones. No? That's okay.

She shakes her head. His Uber is arriving.

DILLION (CONT'D)

I can stay longer. No plans today.
You sure you'll be alright?

GLORIA

I'm fine. Call you later?

DILLION

I hope so.

She smiles. Dillion gets in the car. They share a flirty morning after glance. Dillion waves goodbye.

INT. MASTER CLOSET, GLORIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Gloria has a mountain of clothes stacked up on the closet floor. All on hangars. She hangs them in chunks along the long wooden bar attached to the back of the closet.

She's almost used up the entire rack. The weight of the clothes has the wooden bar slumping in the middle.

She hangs another group of clothes on the end. The weight is too heavy, the wooden bar CRASHES down to the floor.

GLORIA
Son of a bitch.

Gloria shakes her head, staring at all the clothes on the ground. She maneuvers deeper into the closet under the half hanging bar. She attempts to put the bar back on the rack.

The bracket is too loose. While struggling with the bar, she notices something carved into the wood on the back wall...

It's a small SPIRAL EMBLEM. Multiple lines intersect the middle with arrows connecting a moon and sun at the top. A little skull is at the bottom. The wood work is exemplary.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
What the hell...

She takes a closer look. The symbol is similar to the one welded onto the front drive gate of the parking garage.

Gloria pulls out her phone and SNAPS a photo of the carving.

INT. HALLWAY, KESWICK GARDENS - DAY

Gloria exits her unit in pool clothes carrying a drink and her laptop. She heads for the elevator. The doors are closing, she squeezes inside before they close--

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

MS. RUTH, an elderly tenant, is already inside. She wears both a mask and a clear face guard. Gloria gives her a friendly smile. Ms. Ruth glares back, pointing with her cane.

MS. RUTH
You should be wearing a mask.

Gloria nods, not sure how to react.

The doors open into the lobby. Gloria quickly exits.

EXT. POOL AREA, KESWICK GARDENS - DAY

Dated loungers with underlying rust occupy an older pool area surrounded by a fence line covered in overgrown vegetation.

Gloria sunbathes on a reclined lounge. She's the only one out there. She listens to music while working on her laptop.

CU ON GOOGLE SEARCH BAR: *"How to find property owner information in Louisiana."*

She CLICKS the first result. *"Orleans Parish Assessor's Office."*

A text from Amy pops up on her screen.

Amy Text: *Stop the presses. Just heard from trusted source, Dillion spent the night!?!?*

Gloria smirks. She responds with a *Shhhhhh emoji*.

Outside the pool fence, Johnny the plumber walks by with his tool box. He STARES at Gloria as he passes.

GLORIA
(to herself)
Creep.

Amy Text: *Oh, come on. I want details! (Heart face emoji)*

A BLACK CAT emerges from the overgrown vegetation into the pool area. It spots Gloria and starts meowing for attention.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Where did you come from?

Gloria sits up. The cat lingers nearby. She approaches it slowly. The stray cat rubs up against her lower leg.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Looking for some lunch?

Gloria strokes the cat gently across its back. SOMETHING catches her eye behind the cat along the fence line.

Half covered by the overgrown foliage, Gloria notices a row of carved WOODEN STATUES. She inspects them closer.

The mini statues resemble tribal warriors fighting ancient demon beasts. Unusual choices for poolside landscaping.

Gloria's phone dings. A new IM alert. She clicks her instant messenger. It's a new message from *Samantha Prewitt*.

Samantha Prewitt: *"Hi Gloria, no problem at all, happy to discuss our old place."*

Gloria perks up, thrilled.

INT. KITCHEN, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gloria paces in her kitchen, holding her phone. She opens her fridge and pulls out a bottle of mayo.

She puts in her AirPods and DIALS the phone number in Samantha's FB message. It rings...

SAMANTHA (O.C.)

Hello?

GLORIA

Hi Samantha, I'm Gloria Steele.
From Keswick Gardens.

We hear small kids playing and yelling in the background.

SAMANTHA (O.C.)

Oh, yes. How are you doing?

GLORIA

Good. Well, I mean, not great. You know. Pandemic.

SAMANTHA (O.C.)

I hear ya. We just took our two boys out of daycare. The little monsters are taking over the house.

Gloria grabs the bread from her pantry.

GLORIA

I bet. Thanks again for agreeing to speak with me. I just had a few questions about the apartment and thought I'd reach out.

SAMANTHA (O.C.)

It's no problem. I take it you're calling about the plumbing?

GLORIA

No, but, now that you mention it, yes, the plumbing is pretty awful.

SAMANTHA (O.C.)

Yeah, it was a factor for us when we decided to move out. Just comes with the territory when you live in an old building like that.

Gloria nods, spreading some mayo across the bread.

GLORIA

I'm realizing that now. But that's not why I was calling. I was just curious, was there ever a time when you were living here when your family maybe felt...unsafe?

SAMANTHA (O.C.)

Unsafe? No. I mean, the building's a little old and quirky, but it was a good place for us at the time. Safe neighborhood, cheap rent, and plenty of space for a rambunctious two year old.

GLORIA

Yeah. Can't beat the square footage.

Gloria adds some lunch meat. She cuts the sandwich in half.

SAMANTHA (O.C.)

Why do you ask? Are you okay? Did something happen?

GLORIA

No, nothing happened, it's just...I'm fine.

SAMANTHA (O.C.)

Listen, if you're having any issues, or feel unsafe, just let Bob know. He was always a big help around the place, especially when something broke, which was often. One of the better landlords I've ever had. How is Bob by the way?

GLORIA

Bob's good.

One of Samantha's kids starts CRYING in the background.

SAMANTHA (O.C.)

Great, well, I hope this helped put your mind at ease somewhat.

GLORIA

Yes, thank you again for talking with me. I really appreciate it.

SAMANTHA (O.C.)

You're welcome. It was nice chatting with you, Gloria.

GLORIA

You too.

CLICK. Gloria processes the reassuring news. She takes a bite of her sandwich. Chewing, feeling much better.

EXT. POOL AREA, KESWICK GARDENS - LATE AFTERNOON

Gloria enters the pool area with a small plastic bowl of milk. She walks over to the fence line in the back.

The stray cat emerges from the foliage. Gloria puts the bowl of milk on the ground for her. The cat starts licking it up.

GLORIA

Someone's hungry.

From across the courtyard, SOMEONE watches Gloria from their apartment window. Gloria turns. The blinds CLOSE quickly.

Gloria sees the blinds close. The cat rubs up against her.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM, KESWICK GARDENS - NIGHT

Gloria opens the dryer in the dingy, poorly lit laundry room.

She starts pulling out clothes. She holds up a few garments. Still wet. She assesses the old dryer unit.

GLORIA

What a piece of crap.

A foul smell catches her attention. She sniffs. It's coming from the large metal pipes lining the back wall.

Gloria walks closer to the pipes to confirm the smell--

JOON (O.C.)

Old pipes.

Gloria turns around, startled. Joon stands in the doorway.

JOON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry dear. Didn't mean to scare you. This is the only time I can take walks by myself.

Gloria composes herself and smiles.

GLORIA

No, it's okay. I've been a little on edge lately.

JOON
You know, laundry hours end at
9:00pm during the weekdays.

Gloria looks at the sign on the wall. "*Laundry Hours: 8:00am-9:00pm, M-F.*" The clock on the wall says, 10:05pm.

GLORIA
Yeah, it's been a busy week. I just
really needed to wash some clothes.

JOON
It's okay. I won't tell, Bob. It'll
be our little secret.

Gloria nods and smiles awkwardly.

Joon strolls further into the laundry room, inspecting the
pipe Gloria was looking at.

GLORIA
Sorry, I don't have my mask on me.

Joon hits the pipe with her cane.

JOON
Honey, I've got cancer. This COVID
thing doesn't scare me one bit.

Gloria nods in sympathy, remembering her Mom's struggles.

GLORIA
I'm sorry to hear that.

JOON
Sickness is a part of life. But you
won't see me in a hospital, no sir.
I'm fighting this battle right
here, just as I always have.

Gloria pulls out more damp clothes.

GLORIA
Just be careful. They say COVID is
more harmful to...people of your
generation.

JOON
Thank you for your concern.

Joon slowly turns her walker toward the hallway.

GLORIA
Wait, Joon.

Joon stops. Turns back around.

JOON

Yes, dear?

Gloria steps closer, but keeps her six feet distance.

GLORIA

You've lived here a long time,
right?

JOON

Oh, yes, off and on many years. My
children moved me in here full time
about 15 years ago. Better than a
retirement home I guess.

Gloria nods and presses further.

GLORIA

Do you happen to remember the girl
who went missing here about four
years ago? Apartment 106.

Joon thinks for a moment.

JOON

Oh, yes. Pretty girl. She had a
nasty smoking habit though. Tobacco
isn't good for the skin. Gives you
wrinkles. Do you smoke?

GLORIA

No. I was just curious if you
remember anything about her
disappearance. Maybe from the
police? Or someone else?

JOON

I remember there was quite a bit of
commotion here for a week or two.
The police searched her apartment.
So tragic for a girl her age. She
was so young and pretty. Like you.

Gloria nods politely, not sure how to react.

JOON (CONT'D)

Did you know this girl?

GLORIA

No, just read about her on the
internet. I was just curious.

JOON

Ahh, yes. Where everything lives
these days. Well, you know what
they say. Curiosity killed the cat.

Gloria is a little shook by her comment.

GLORIA

I better get back to my clothes.

JOON

Okay, child. You have a good night.
Don't let the bedbugs bite.

Joon slowly pushes her walker down the hallway. Gloria goes
back to her laundry, a little creeped out.

INT. LIVING ROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gloria follows a YOGA program on TV. She holds a downward dog
position, trying to keep up with the instructor.

All the damp clothes from the dryer are draped over the couch
behind her. She has a fan blowing on them.

Gloria's phone DINGS. At first she ignores it, but can't
resist. She exits her downward dog and picks up her phone.

Eli Text: *Long day, home depot kicked my butt. Headed to bed,
talk tomorrow?*

Gloria texts back: *You shouldn't be in big crowds. Did u at
least wear a mask!?*

Gloria abandons her yoga session. She COUGHS a few times,
then starts separating the dry clothes from the wet ones.

Eli Text: *Of course. ;)*

Eli sends a PHOTO of himself wearing a LUCHADORA MASK.

Gloria cracks up. She hits voice text on her phone:

GLORIA

Planning to drive home this
weekend. I just need to pick up my
last check from work.

She hits send and puts down her phone. She holds up a damp
towel. It's really wet. Too wet to lay over her new couch.

Gloria opens the sliding glass door and steps onto her
balcony. She lays the wet towel over the edge and freezes--

A HOODED FIGURE watches her from across the street. The skinny Figure wears a dark hoodie with a black face mask.

The Figure appears to be female. She just stands on the sidewalk, totally still, staring directly back at Gloria.

Gloria races back inside, SLAMMING the sliding glass door shut. She locks it, then checks the lock on the front door. She turns off all the lights inside.

She picks up her phone and dials 911. It rings repeatedly.

911 OPERATOR (O.C.)
911, what's your emergency?

GLORIA
Yes, hi. There's a woman outside my place, or maybe a young teen, I don't know, but she's watching me.

911 OPERATOR (O.C.)
Watching you?

GLORIA
Stalking me. For a few days now.

911 OPERATOR (O.C.)
Has this person threatened you?

GLORIA
She's a stalker. Who knows what she's capable of.

911 OPERATOR (O.C.)
Can you see this person right now?

Gloria peeks out the blinds. The Figure is gone.

GLORIA
No. But she was just there.

911 OPERATOR (O.C.)
Okay, mam, we'll have a unit do a drive by of the address.

GLORIA
Okay, but can they please hurry--

911 OPERATOR (O.C.)
An officer will call this number if they see anything.

CLICK. The operator hangs up.

GLORIA
What the fuck?

Frustrated, she texts Dillion. *You up?*

No immediate response. She jets over to her computer.

She scrolls through the Missing Persons page on the NOPD website. She highlights a name. *"Detective Luis Carson."*

She dials the Missing Persons number and gets put on hold.

While waiting, she goes back to the blinds and peers out slowly. Still no one there. Gloria COUGHS again.

She checks her thread with Dillion. Still no response. She texts him again: *U were right. But Mr. Robot is a she!*

POLICE OPERATOR (O.C.)
New Orleans PD, how can I help you?

Gloria holds the phone to her ear.

GLORIA
Yes, hello, I'd like to speak with
Detective Carson please.

POLICE OPERATOR (O.C.)
Detective Carson isn't here.

GLORIA
Do you know when he'll be in?

POLICE OPERATOR (O.C.)
Not sure. The department is on a
limited schedule at the moment.
Most PD staff are working remotely.

Gloria sighs in disbelief.

POLICE OPERATOR (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Would you like to leave a message?

INT. BEDROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Gloria's at the window, peering outside. Still nothing.

GLORIA
Send a unit by my ass.

She COUGHS again, now more raspy and from the chest.

Gloria lays back on her bed above the covers. Her baseball bat is by the pillow next to her. A half packed suitcase is on the floor next to the bed. She opens her laptop.

She navigates back to the Jane Perry disappearance page. Gloria stares at the PHOTO of Jane and her sister, Dawn.

She scrolls down to the last comment. *"Follow the Apartment."* The exterior image of Keswick Gardens is directly under it.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Follow the apartment...

Gloria navigates to the state government site she was researching earlier, *"Louisianaassessors.org."* She scrolls down and selects the *"Orleans Parish"* button, *"11th Ward."*

There's a property address bar. She types in *"4008 Keswick Ave. New Orleans, LA 70130."* An Assessment number for the property address pops up. *"#11W409301."*

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Nice.

She copies and pastes the Assessment number into the corresponding contact form, then selects, *"Generate Report."*

A beat passes. Gloria coughs again. The Tax Assessment report for the corresponding property pops up. A PDF. She opens it.

The report provides a ton of information, most of it meaningless. She hones in on the property ownership section:

Property Location: 4008 Keswick Ave, New Orleans, LA 70130
Property Owner: The Bunson Family Trust
Owner Mailing Address: 4008 Keswick Street, Unit 104, New Orleans, LA 70130.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Unit 104.

She takes a screenshot before breaking into a coughing fit.

Gloria checks the time. *2:25am.* Her eyelids are heavy now. She can barely keep them open. She leans back, pulls the bat closer, and starts to nod off.

INT. GLORIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gloria's eyes open. She shoots out of bed - thinking she heard something. She looks at the clock. *4:35am.*

Gloria quietly gets off her bed. She grips her bat tightly.

With the bat in swing position, she cautiously tip toes down the hallway. No lights. Gloria enter's the living room...

She scans the room. It's dark. The only light comes from the moonlight escaping through the blinds. As her eyes adjust to the darkness, she creeps forward a few steps, bat ready...

She pauses to listen. Nothing. Eerily quiet. Furniture shadows look deceptively monstrous, but the room is still.

Gloria flips on the main light. Her eyes sweep the room...Looking for anything - She shudder's back--

GLORIA
Jesus Christ.

On the floor between the door and couch is a decent size WOLF SPIDER. The spider remains still, caught in the light.

From the spider's perspective, we see the end of Gloria's bat SMASH it from above.

INT. GLORIA'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Gloria's asleep. The sun beams through her bedroom window. She wakes up COUGHING. She tries to go back to sleep, but can't. She coughs again, this time louder and harsher.

BATHROOM

Gloria opens a bottle of Tylenol. She pops two pills and chases them with a big gulp of water.

KITCHEN

Gloria pours boiling water into a cup of thermal tea.

LIVING ROOM

Gloria sits on her couch sipping tea and watching the local news broadcast. She looks miserable.

A LOCAL NEWS REPORTER discusses the statewide Stay-at-Home order, effecting 4.6 million people across Louisiana.

The date on the TV reads, *March 24th, 2020.*

Gloria shakes her head. The lockdown reality has arrived.

Gloria looks at her phone. She has three missed texts from Dillion and one missed call.

Dillion: *Sorry, I crashed crazy early last night. You okay?*

Dillion: *What happened? Call me.*

Dillion: *Freaking out over here. Are u safe?*

Gloria texts back: *For now. Shit's getting weird tho. Call u soon.*

Gloria coughs again. She can't shake it. She rubs her temples, clearly dealing with a pounding headache.

BATHROOM

Gloria looks at herself in the mirror. She looks like crap. A digital thermometer is in her mouth. She takes it out. 101.5.

GLORIA

Shit.

Gloria googles, "*COVID-19 symptoms*" on her phone. She scrolls through the symptoms. "*Coughing, fever, body aches,...*"

Gloria's expression changes. The fear is on her face now. The reality sinks in. **She might have COVID-19.**

EXT. CRESCENT CITY URGENT CARE - DAY

Gloria pulls into the packed parking lot of a busy urgent care clinic. She sits for a moment, dreading going inside.

She finally exits her car and heads for the clinic lobby.

EXT. GAS STATION, 11TH WARD, NEW ORLEANS - DAY

Gloria, now wearing a mask, pumps gas into her car. She looks at the cross streets: **Delachaise St. and Louisiana Ave**, the last place Jane Perry was seen before going missing.

She looks around. It's eerily quiet. No activity at the pumps. Quiet streets. Something only possible in a pandemic.

INT. GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gloria enters wearing a mask. She immediately takes it off and lays a plastic bag from the pharmacy on the coffee table.

She plops down on the couch and opens her laptop. She navigates to the "*Quest Diagnostics*" homepage. She signs in and goes to the "*Patient Results Portal*." Her name pops up.

"*Gloria Steele.*" She clicks on it.

CU ON SCREEN: *"Results not available."*

GLORIA

Oh, come on.

Directly underneath the results in big bold letters it reads:
***"Lab results may take 3-5 days. Please do not call before
this amount of time has passed."***

Gloria sinks. She knows she can't go home to stay with her Father before knowing the results. She holds back her tears.

INT. BEDROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gloria nervously paces in her room with the phone to her ear. It's ringing. Amy answers.

AMY (O.C.)

There you are.

GLORIA

Hey.

AMY (O.C.)

So what's up? You totally ghosted me yesterday. I want the deets on Dillion? Did you--

GLORIA

--Amy.

AMY (O.C.)

(jokingly)

You did didn't you? You little slut. So are you guys coupled now?

GLORIA

There's something I need to tell you.

This gets Amy's attention. Her tone changes.

AMY (O.C.)

What is it?

GLORIA

I might have COVID. (Beat) Which means you and Steve might have it.

Silence on other end.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Amy?

AMY

Yeah, I just...Do I have to
quarantine now? What the fuck, G?

LIVING ROOM

Gloria paces in front of her couch, phone to her ear. It's
ringing. Dillion answers.

DILLION (O.C.)

She's alive. You had me worried.

GLORIA

Hey.

DILLION (O.C.)

Is everything okay?

GLORIA

I need to tell you something.

DILLION (O.C.)

Okay...I'm listening.

Gloria takes a deep breath.

GLORIA

I'm sick. There's a chance it's
COVID. I won't know for sure until
a few days, but...I just thought
you should know.

A beat passes.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

It's my fault. I had you guys over
to my place. You can blame me, I
deserve it--

DILLION (O.C.)

--No, that's bullshit. It's not
your fault. We're grown ass adults,
we know what's going on out there.
We're all equal idiots.

Her expression brightens, lightening the mood.

DILLION (O.C.) (CONT'D)

How are you feeling?

She finally stops pacing. Plops down on the couch.

GLORIA

Like shit. High fever, coughing. So far still under 102 though. No ventilator yet.

Dillion laughs.

DILLION (O.C.)

Let's hope not.

BATHROOM

Gloria pours more cold medicine into the little plastic cup. She downs it, then wipes her face with cold water.

KITCHEN

Gloria waits in frustration on the phone. We hear a voicemail beep. She shakes her head.

GLORIA

Hi Detective Carson, this is Gloria Steele calling. Again. Please call me when you get this. I have some info about the Jane Perry case you worked on a few years ago that I think might be connected to some things happening now. So, please call me. Hopefully soon. Thanks.

She hangs up, disheartened.

BATHROOM

Gloria pours cough medicine into a plastic cup. She downs it.

LIVING ROOM

Gloria sits on her couch, staring tepidly at her phone display. *"Dad, 3 missed calls."*

She dials her Dad's number, the call she's been dreading the most. She puts it on speaker. It rings...Eli answers.

ELI (O.C.)

I was wondering when you were going to call. No Facetime?

GLORIA

Yeah, I look like crap.

ELI (O.C.)

I got your text. You still driving home this weekend?

GLORIA

No. That's why I was calling. I have too much to do getting the place ready. I'm staying here now.

Eli is confused.

ELI (O.C.)

Honey, talk to me. What's up?

GLORIA

Nothing. I just have too much to do.

ELI (O.C.)

But we already discussed it. You were supposed to--

GLORIA

I know, Dad. I changed my mind. I'm sorry.

ELI (O.C.)

Gloria, I can't justify sending you money if you're not coming home.

GLORIA

I'm not a little girl. I can take care of myself.

ELI (O.C.)

Is this because of the stay-at-home order? You know they can't stop you from traveling, right?

Gloria knows she can't put her Dad in danger.

GLORIA

No, I just...I can't run home every time there's a problem. I'm a grown ass adult. You can't always be there to save me.

ELI (O.C.)

Listen to me. These may be scary times, but this pandemic is everyone's problem, not just yours.

A beat passes as she suppresses her emotion.

ELI (CONT'D)

Are you sure you're okay?

Gloria holds back the tears forming in her eyes.

GLORIA

I'm fine.

Eli knows something's wrong, but doesn't press too hard.

ELI (O.C.)

I'm worried about you. Did you send
Nana her gift yet?

GLORIA

I'm sorry, but I need to take this
other call. You and Nana be safe,
okay?

ELI (O.C.)

Gloria--

CLICK. Emotional, she curls into the fetal position on the
couch, hugging the pillow tight. She takes a few calming
breathes and closes her eyes, slowly drifting to sleep...

INT. LIVING ROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Gloria's awakened by a loud KNOCK on the front door.

BOB (O.C.)

Hello? Gloria?

More KNOCKING. Gloria gets up. She coughs a bit.

GLORIA

Just a minute.

Gloria finds her mask and puts it on. She opens the door for
Bob and steps back a few feet.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Hey, Bob. What's up?

Bob, wearing a mask, is surprised to see her wearing one too.

BOB

Well, I just thought you should
know that I received several noise
complaints the other night.

GLORIA

Sorry about that. It was just a few
people, but I guess we got a little
loud with the music.

Bob rubs a wall smudge in the hallway with his sleeve.

BOB

Don't get me wrong, I'm a music lover myself. Mostly contemporary jazz. If you wanna groove out to some funky tunes that's fine, but we have to keep it to a respectable level. There are many senior citizens living in this building.

GLORIA

I noticed.

BOB

And Miss Joon is only a few doors down. She gets cranky when she doesn't get her rest.

GLORIA

Got it. No parties. Old people. Anything else?

Gloria has a mini coughing attack.

BOB

Are you sick?

She considers lying, but doesn't have the energy.

GLORIA

Apparently so.

This gets Bob's attention. He takes a mini step back.

BOB

You know, you really need to self quarantine for two weeks.

GLORIA

I'm aware. And I am.

Gloria holds up her trusty tub of hand sanitizer.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Want some?

BOB

No, thank you. I carry my own.

Bob pulls out a travel size sanitizer bottle from his pocket.

GLORIA

Bob, since we're being real with each other, I want you to know that I won't be paying rent this month.

Bob's expression shifts. He rapidly rubs the sanitizing gel between his palms, suppressing his frustration.

BOB
May I ask why?

GLORIA
I'm sure you saw the news about the 60 day rent moratorium. With the bars closed, I don't have any money coming in right now, so I need the break. It's only temporary.

Bob adjust his glasses back over his nose.

BOB
Might I remind you, Gloria, that your rent is well below market value. And I'm sure you noticed we overlooked your criminal record.

GLORIA
My what?

BOB
We run background checks on all potential tenants.

GLORIA
(flustered)
Oh my God, it was a stupid--I was 18. I spent one night in jail. I do not have a criminal record.

Bob holds up his hands, de-escalating.

BOB
Hey, I'm not judging. At the end of the day, you gotta do what you gotta do.

GLORIA
Thanks for understanding.

Gloria starts to close the door - Bob stops it.

BOB
Be safe. And please, stay inside.

Gloria nods and closes the door, locking it behind her.

INT/EXT. BALCONY, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gloria surveys her block. It's not the same lively neighbored as before. More PEOPLE with masks. Less people out walking.

INT. BEDROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gloria's at her desk, laptop open. She looks through the property assessor report again. She focuses on the Property Owner Mailing Address line: **4008 Keswick Street, Unit 104, New Orleans, LA 70130.**

Gloria sits back in her chair, processing this information.

She stands up, determined. She puts on her mask and a pair of disposable plastic gloves.

INT. 1ST LEVEL HALLWAY, KESWICK GARDENS - MINUTES LATER

Now in PPE, Gloria walks down the hallway toward Joon's apartment. She looks at Joon's door. Apartment unit **#104**.

INT. LOBBY, KESWICK GARDENS - MINUTES LATER

Gloria exits the elevator into the main lobby. She walks over to the metal row of tenant mailboxes.

She finds **#104**. The name plate next to it says, "*J. Bunson*."

GLORIA
Joon Bunson...

She observes the odd lobby with its retro floral wallpaper.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
She owns this place.

INT. 1ST LEVEL HALLWAY, KESWICK GARDENS - MINUTES LATER

Gloria exits the elevator back into the hallway. She walks toward her apartment at the end of the hall.

As she approaches her door, she pauses--

A three inch WOODEN TOTEM is on her doormat facing the door.

GLORIA
What the fuck.

She looks down the hallway. No one is there. She's alone.

Gloria pulls a wad of tissue paper from her pocket. She picks up the small talisman with the tissue and inspects it closer.

The figure is female with real looking black hair. Her face is grim. She has at least ten small nails hammered into her lower torso. Yellow spirals are carved into her brown body.

Gloria snaps a pic of the creepy visitor on her doorstep. The totem's haunting expression stares back at her.

Gloria's concern shifts to anger. She walks with a purpose down the hallway to the trash chute. She opens it up and TOSSES the disturbing totem down the chute, SLAMMING it shut.

INT. LIVING ROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DUSK

Gloria's at her computer now. Focused. Determined. Obsessed.

She types "*Joon Bunson, Keswick Gardens*" into a Google search bar.

To her surprise, a list of articles POPS UP about the murder of *Charles Bunson*, Joon's late husband. She CLICKS on the first article.

CU on Headline: "*Garden District Man Murdered in Apartment Burglary Gone Wrong.*" The date reads, "*May 20th, 1985.*"

She scrolls further. "*The crime remains under investigation as Police continue their search for suspects.*"

Gloria rubs her forehead, confounded by what she's reading.

RESEARCH MONTAGE SEQUENCE

We CIRCLE around Gloria at her desk. Time speeds up. The sun sets. It's nighttime now. Gloria jots down notes while scrolling through more articles.

She CLICKS on a "*Missing Persons*" report from *August 20th, 1985*. The photo on the NOPD website shows the same woman from the opening in Gloria's apartment with Charles.

Gloria's phone dings. A text from Dillion. *You okay?* She ignores it. Her focus is 100% on the screen.

She has a mini coughing attack. She pops a cough drop.

Gloria examines the PHOTO she took of the creepy wooden totem with the nails from her doorstep.

She googles, "*Creepy African totem.*" Clicks on "*Images.*" A wide variety of Afro Caribbean TOTEM FETISHES appear.

Gloria clicks on a totem that looks similar to the one on her doorstep. Underneath there's a link to a page about "**Palo Mayombe, the dark religion.**" She clicks on it.

"Palo Mayombe is an ancient religion characterized by its focus on sorcery, spiritual growth, and tangible results..."

Gloria scrolls through information on Palo Mayombe. Images of rituals, curses, communicating with the dead, etc.

One of the images shows a dark ritual being performed on a woman. A CIRCULAR SYMBOL is drawn on the floor around her.

Gloria compares the circular ritual symbol online with the one she found carved into her closet wall. Almost identical.

She clicks on a ceremonial ALTER CLOTH image titled, "*Working Destruction Curse.*" The description reads, "*I am a tata palero with over 16 years of palo mayombe and occult practice. I will use my spirits and knowledge to help put your enemies in their place.*" The listed price is \$3,0000.00.

Another link catches her eye. A news article on, "*Kindoki, the sorcery of Kongo.*" The story reads, "*In the Congo basin, Kindoki is thought by it's believers to be a form of powerful witchcraft used by the initiated to manipulate evil spirits in the form of possession, often by young children who are most susceptible to Kindoki's influence.*"

Now on the dark web, she CLICKS on a video, "*Kindoki Child Witch Exorcism.*" The grainy footage shows a restrained young child with dilated eyes being submerged in water by a Congo priest. The child laughs unnaturally with a malignant grin.

Gloria's phone DINGS. A notification from TELEGRAM (anonymous messaging app). It's an invite from *JanePerry8_9_2016*.

END OF MONTAGE.

INT. LIVING ROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Gloria goes pale. She stares at the invite on her phone for a beat, then hits accept.

The message pops up: *The walls are watching. Restroom. Now.*

Gloria hesitates. Unsure what to do. She heads down the hall.

INT. BATHROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Gloria shuts the door. She types back.

Gloria: *Who are you?*

The three dots appear...

JanePerry8_9_2016: *A friend.*

Now uneasy, Gloria sits on top of the closed toilet seat.

Gloria: *What happened to Jane?*

Gloria waits in anticipation for a response.

...

JanePerry8_9_2016: *The apartment.*

This stops Gloria in her tracks.

...

JanePerry8_9_2016: *Your life is in danger.*

Gloria rubs her temple, the anxiety swelling in her head, now overwhelming her.

Gloria: *From who? You're the one stalking me.*

...

JanePerry8_9_2016: *Trust no one.*

Gloria texts back frantically.

Gloria: *It sounds like u have more information. Why not go to the police?*

Gloria paces while waiting for a response.

...

JanePerry8_9_2016: *The police are useless.*

...

JanePerry8_9_2016: *I couldn't save her, but you can still save yourself. Leave.*

Gloria closes her eyes, knowing she's stuck in quarantine.

Gloria: *I can't.*

Gloria coughs. She waits for a response. None comes.

Gloria: *Hello?*

No response. A beat passes. Gloria types another message.

Gloria: *Who in the apartment? What do they want with me?*

No three dots. No response. The concealed thread self-deletes. The messages are gone. The thread is now blank.

GLORIA

Fuck.

Gloria SLAMS her phone down in frustration. She paces in her bathroom, having a mini-meltdown. She throws some water on her face and looks at herself in the mirror.

INT. GLORIA'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

A tired Gloria peers out her window curtains, bags under her eyes. Dillion's on speaker phone.

DILLION (O.S.)

Any idea who it is?

GLORIA

No. But whoever it is they keep telling me I'm in danger.

DILLION

I would say you're just being paranoid, but now I'm getting paranoid.

She goes back to the bed, sitting above the covers.

GLORIA

Get this, my elderly neighbor, the creepy old woman from Africa I was telling you about...I think she owns this place.

DILLION

What, like the apartment complex?

GLORIA

Yeah. And her former husband, the original owner, was murdered here back in the 80's.

DILLION

What?

GLORIA

Stabbed to death in the parking garage. No witnesses. No suspects.

DILLION (O.S.)
This is starting to sound like an
episode of Dateline.

GLORIA
And now all these things are
happening to me, in the same
apartment? It's gotta be connected,
right?

DILLION
I don't know. Maybe. Did you get in
touch with that detective?

She lays back on the bed, deflated.

GLORIA
Nope. I've left like five messages
on his voicemail. Nothing.

DILLION
That's ridiculous.

She has a mini coughing attack, forced to sit back up.

DILLION (O.C.) (CONT'D)
You sure you can't go back home?

GLORIA
Believe me, I want to. I've thought
about trying to make it work, but
my Dad has a heart condition and my
Grandma's really old. I can't risk
their health over some creepy DMs.

She throws back two cold pills with a sip of water.

DILLION (O.C.)
Stay with me then.

GLORIA
At your place?

DILLION (O.C.)
Yeah.

She lays back down again on her pillow, bat by her side.

GLORIA
Reality flash. I'm sick, remember?
Probably the Rona.

DILLION (O.C.)
Let's be honest. After the night we
had together, I'm pretty sure you
already gave it to me.

Gloria laughs.

GLORIA
You're crazy. I'll be okay.

DILLION (O.C.)
Hey, you put me in this quarantine.
The least you could do is let me
spend some of it with you.

Gloria blushes. She puts the phone on the pillow next to her.

GLORIA
Laying it on kind of thick tonight
are we?

DILLION (O.C.)
Guilty. Guess that means I do care
about you. Don't be mad.

Gloria looks at the phone, smiling at the sentiment.

GLORIA
That's sweet, but stupid. You don't
want to mess around with this
thing. You watch the news, it's
unpredictable. Way too risky.

DILLION
I'll take my chances.

GLORIA
Dillion, stop. Don't put me in that
position.

DILLION
Okay, understood. But there's gotta
be something I can do to help.

Gloria looks at the empty pillow next to her.

GLORIA
Just stay on the phone with me
tonight. I don't want to be alone.

DILLION (O.S.)
Done. Not going anywhere.

Gloria reclines back on the pillow and closes her eyes. She takes a few calming breathes. A beat passes.

DILLION (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Is it cool if I play Call of Duty?

INT. GLORIA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sunlight beams into the room. Gloria wakes up coughing, looking miserable. She sips her water on the nightstand.

She hears SNORING coming from her phone. It's Dillion asleep on the other end. She grins. He was with her all night.

BATHROOM

Gloria brushes her teeth while viewing her phone. A headline gives a COVID-19 update for the US: *18,763 cases, 258 deaths.*

She gargles and spits toothpaste into the sink.

LIVING ROOM

Gloria walks down the hall into the living room with her water. She takes a sip--

She DROPS the cup. The glass SHATTERS into a million pieces on the hard wood floor--

Across the room on the coffee table is A DEAD CAT. The same black cat from the pool.

WEDGED in the cat's mouth is the same nail covered female talisman that was on her doorstep the night before.

Gloria covers her mouth with both hands. Total shock.

INT. LOBBY, KESWICK GARDENS - DAY

Two NOPD police officers enter the lobby. OFFICER JACK SMITH (late 40's, tall) and OFFICER LINDA LEWIS. Bob greets them.

BOB
Thanks for coming. I'm sure things must be a little crazy right now at the station.

OFFICER SMITH
The whole world's going a little crazy.

Bob leads the officers toward the open elevator. They enter.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Bob pushes level one. He puts on a mask.

BOB

I believe I'm required by law to
inform you that the tenant in this
unit most likely has COVID-19.

The officers look at each other, concerned.

OFFICER LEWIS

Are you sure?

BOB

Afraid so. She's currently self
quarantining.

The elevator door opens. The officers step into the hallway.
They start gearing up head to toe with PPE gear.

INT. LIVING ROOM, GLORIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gloria sits on a chair in her living room facing the bloody
cat. She just stares at it, lost in a frozen daze.

In the background, a news channel broadcasts a report about
the stock market crashing.

There's a KNOCK at the front door.

BOB (O.C.)

Hey Gloria, it's Bob. The police
are here. Time to stash the grass.
Just kidding.

She looks at the time. 1:30pm. Many hours have passed since
she first discovered the break in. She puts on her mask.

Gloria opens the door and stands several feet back.

GLORIA

Officers. Please, come in.

Officers Smith and Lewis enter, but stay in the entry way.
They don't go any further. Bob stands in the doorway.

BOB

I'll be in the management office if
you need me.

GLORIA

What's the update on the new locks?

Bob turns back around.

BOB
Might be a couple days.

GLORIA
A couple days? My place was just broken into, I need them now.

BOB
Let's chat more later. I'm sure these fine officers have some questions for you.

Bob exits down the hall toward the elevator. The officers scan the apartment from the entryway.

OFFICER SMITH
So. Dead cat, huh?

GLORIA
Yeah.

Gloria points to it on the living room table. The officers look at it from afar.

OFFICER SMITH
What's in its mouth?

GLORIA
A talisman.

OFFICER LEWIS
A what?

GLORIA
Some sort of voodoo curse thing, I'm not really sure. It's the second time I've seen it.

OFFICER SMITH
Huh. That's pretty freaky.

Officer Smith scans the area by the entertainment center.

OFFICER SMITH (CONT'D)
Was anything taken? Valuable items? Money? Drugs?

GLORIA
No. I wish there was, then maybe this would all make more sense.

Officer Lewis inspects the front door.

OFFICER LEWIS
Any signs of forced entry?

GLORIA
No, I didn't find any.

OFFICER SMITH
And all the doors were locked last night before you went to bed?

GLORIA
Yes. But the balcony door was unlocked this morning.

The Officers look at each other, skeptical.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Look. There's been someone stalking me ever since I moved in.

OFFICER LEWIS
Is there anyone you suspect might be angry with you? Maybe holding a grudge, like an ex?

GLORIA
No. My last relationship was years ago and we're on good terms.

Gloria coughs. The Officers keep their distance.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
I think this may have something to do with the Jane Perry case.

OFFICER SMITH
Who?

GLORIA
Jane Perry. The missing persons case from four years ago? She lived in this same apartment.

The Officers just stand there, confused.

OFFICER SMITH
I was not aware.

OFFICER LEWIS
We'll look into it.

Gloria's disappointed. The Officers keep their distance.

GLORIA
Aren't you going to take prints?

OFFICER LEWIS
I don't think that'll be necessary.

GLORIA
What do you mean? I haven't touched anything, the crime scene is pristine. The cat and talisman probably have fingerprints on them.

OFFICER SMITH
It's okay. We can take photos from here.

Smith takes a cell pic of the dead cat from the entry way, hesitant to go any deeper into the apartment.

GLORIA
Did Bob tell you I have COVID?

They don't say anything, but it's obvious he did.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
I see.

She goes to the hand sanitizer tub.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
My place is spotless. I sanitize everything. See?

She pumps some sanitizer gel in her hands from the tub.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
I'm wearing a face mask. Here, I'll put on some gloves.

Gloria puts plastic gloves over her hands.

OFFICER SMITH
Mam, we're currently in a pandemic. We can't take any chances.

Officer Jack Smith motions to the TV. A news segment focuses on the COVID cases skyrocketing internationally.

GLORIA
So what are you going to do with the evidence?

OFFICER SMITH
Look. If you want to put everything in a bag for us, we'll take it downtown for further examination.

Gloria shakes her head. She walks to the kitchen and pulls out a fresh garbage bag. She mutters under her breath.

GLORIA
Un-freaking-believable.

OFFICER LEWIS (O.C.)
Someone was probably just trying to scare you. A bad prank. It happens.

Gloria walks back into the living room with the garbage bag.

OFFICER LEWIS (CONT'D)
If you want some good news, crime is way down right now. People aren't committing felonies during the pandemic. They're staying home.

She winces while picking up the mutilated cat. She drops the dead cat and little talisman into the garbage bag.

GLORIA
(to cat)
You deserved better.

Gloria TWISTS the garbage bag, ties it off, and presents it to the Officers.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Here. Evidence.

Officer Smith handles the bag like it was filled with radioactive material.

OFFICER SMITH
Best case, this is just someone messing around with you. Worst case, it could be something more dangerous. Just as a precaution, I'd recommend staying somewhere else tonight. At least until the locks are changed.

OFFICER LEWIS
Is there somewhere else you can go?

GLORIA
I'm working on it.

The Officers nod and turn toward the door.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
I've been trying to reach Detective Carson about this, but he's not returning my calls. If you see him, will you please have him call me?

This gets Officer Smith's attention.

OFFICER SMITH
Carson? Will do. And if any more incidents happen you let us know.

They retreat back into the hallway. Gloria nods, defeated.

OFFICER LEWIS
Have a good day now. And be safe.

GLORIA
I'll try.

Gloria gleans a fake smile and slams the door shut.

INT. HALLWAY, KESWICK GARDENS - CONTINUOUS

The Officers walk toward the elevator. Officer Smith carries the garbage bag like a landmine is inside.

OFFICER SMITH
I don't want this thing anywhere near our patrol car.

OFFICER LEWIS
It's probably contaminated.

He motions to the garbage chute. Lewis is hesitant.

OFFICER LEWIS (CONT'D)
(lowered voice)
I don't know, Jack.

OFFICER SMITH
I have an elderly mother with respiratory problems. What about your sister? Isn't she high risk?

OFFICER LEWIS
Obese with diabetes.

Officer Smith nods. Lewis nods back. They silently agree.

Officer Jack Smith walks a little further up the hallway to the trash room. He ducks inside, opens the trash chute, and DROPS the garbage bag of evidence down the chute.

He walks back into the hallway with no bag.

OFFICER SMITH
Can't take any chances.

Lewis nods. They step into the elevator.

INT. GLORIA'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Gloria's suitcase is on top of her bed. She packs with a purpose. Moving quickly, packing clothes and other items.

Her phone rings. It's Dillion. She answers.

GLORIA
Hey.

DILLION (O.C.)
So what did they say?

Gloria puts the phone on speaker and tosses it on the bed.

GLORIA
The police didn't do shit. They
wouldn't go near me. Afraid of
getting infected.

She hurriedly organizes her toiletry items.

DILLION (O.C.)
That's insane.

GLORIA
You were right. It's every man for
themselves right now. And women.

Gloria stuffs her medicine bottles in a ziplock bag.

DILLION (O.C.)
So you're staying at a hotel?

She flips the suitcase closed, but struggles to get the zipper fastened all the way around it.

GLORIA
Yep. In the 7th Ward. Back to the
hood for me. Not staying here
another night, quarantine or not.

The zipper is stuck.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
Why the fuck won't this close.

DILLION (O.S.)
It's going to be okay.

GLORIA
Okay? That's what people say when something's not okay. Nothing about this is okay!

She pulls the zipper aggressively, it doesn't budge. She throws it down, suddenly becoming emotional. A beat passes.

DILLION (O.S.)
You're right. It's not okay.

GLORIA
Why is this happening to me?

Gloria takes a moment to compose herself.

DILLION (O.S.)
Okay, that's it. I'm putting my foot down. Gloria Steele. Please stay with me tonight. I insist.

Gloria stops and looks at her phone.

GLORIA
I thought we went over this?

DILLION (O.S.)
I don't care that you're sick. I understand the risks. I just want you to be safe. That's all that matters.

Gloria shakes her head, pondering the request.

GLORIA
I don't know.

DILLION (O.C.)
Come on, it'll be fun. We both have masks. We'll stay six feet apart the whole time. You still have that giant tub of sanitizer?

GLORIA
Yeah. Probably the most valuable possession I own right now.

DILLION (O.C.)
That's hygiene gold, baby. We can bathe in that shit.

She laughs, breaking the tension. She considers the invite.

GLORIA

It would save me a lot of money.

DILLION (O.C.)

For sure. Plus, it's always best to avoid the Seventh Ward at all cost.

Gloria looks at her packed suitcase. A beat passes.

GLORIA

Okay, fine. Just don't sue me if you get sick. You're owning this negligence.

DILLION (O.C.)

A thousand percent. Email me the waiver and I'll docu-sign it tonight.

Gloria smiles. Only Dillion could diffuse her anxiety.

INT. PARKING GARAGE, KESWICK GARDENS - DUSK

Gloria wheels her two stuffed suitcases behind her through the garage. She approaches her car and pops the trunk.

Her phone dings, she checks it. A text from Dillion.

Dillion: *2825 Freret St. Bring your own toothbrush. ;)*

Gloria smirks, beaming with fervor. She tosses her heavy suitcases in the trunk and slams it closed.

INT. GLORIA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Gloria cranks the ignition. She places her giant tub of sanitizer in the front seat and buckles her seatbelt.

She pulls up Dillion's address on her phone. The directions pop up on Google Maps. No traffic, short ten minute drive.

Her phone dings. Another text, this time from Eli.

Eli: *Call me soon. I'm worried about you.*

Gloria sighs and texts back: *I'm fine, really. Thanks for checking in on me. Talk tomorrow, k?*

Gloria shifts to reverse and glances in the rear view mirror--

A CLOAKED MAN in a surgical mask RISES from the backseat--

Before she can scream, black leather gloves COVER her mouth--

Gloria lifts the seat lever and PUSHES the seat back - The impact forces the Cloaked Man backwards--

She unbuckles her seatbelt - BOLTS for the door - The Man GRABS her ponytail, PULLING her back into the seat--

She fights and squirms - He JABS a syringe into her neck--

Within seconds Gloria's eyes start to dim. Her body starts to slow down. She's barely conscious now...

A text pops up on her locked phone screen. Eli: *Okay. Goodnight, my love. Talk tomorrow.*

The Cloaked Man places Gloria's limp thumb on the phone to unlock it. The display lights up. **Dillion's address.**

Gloria's eyelids shut for good...

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Darkness. We hear--

ELECTRIC BUZZING moving in a rounded motion.

A loud POWER SAW churns and grinds across the room.

CONTEMPORARY JAZZ plays softly in the background.

Gloria's POV: Eyelids open and close...Blurred light. Shadowy figures. Everything's hazy and distorted. Her visual perception is off. The room slowly comes into focus.

Gloria's in a large basement. Ritual candles fill the room.

A spiral Dikenga mural is painted on one of the walls.

To her right is a metal rolling cart filled with sharp tools and surgical instruments.

Over 20 TALISMAN FIGURES line the walls on shelves, each with their own unique design and carvings. They all face Gloria.

She looks up. Hanging from the ceiling above is a group of monitors, each showing live CAMERA FOOTAGE from different units in the building. She recognizes her unit, #106.

Bob comes into focus hovering above her. He wears a N95 mask, heavy duty gloves and an industrial grade slaughter coat. A PALERO PRIEST NECKLACE hangs from his neck.

He sways joyfully to the jazz music while cutting Gloria's long hair with a pair of electric clippers.

BOB

There she is.

Gloria scans the large space. There's a wooden staircase in the back of the room leading up to a closed vertical hatch.

She shifts her eyes left. In her peripheral, Johnny the plumber dismembers a BODY on a metallic table with an electric bone saw. A work light flickers on his table.

Gloria shifts her eyes right. A MAN films her from behind a video camera on a tripod.

JACK/JACKIE

Good evening, Gloria.

The man tilts his head away from the camera. It's Officer Jack Smith, the police officer who visited her apartment earlier. Only Jack (Jackie) is no longer in police uniform.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)

Remember me?

Jackie wears protective surgical scrubs and a clear face visor. He flashes a sadistic smile while filming the action.

Next to Jackie is a ceremonial cauldron called a NGANGA. The Nganga is adorned with human bones draped around the outside.

End Gloria POV.

Still drowsy, Gloria tries to talk, but can't. A ball gag is wrapped around her mouth. She looks down...

Gloria's in her underwear, strapped to a bolted exam chair. Her beautiful locks lay in heaps on the floor around her.

A sacrificial vestige called a PATIMPEMBA encircles Gloria in chalk. One of the Patimpemba symbols is the same emblem she saw carved into her closet.

BOB

Fun fact, I was our unit's barber back in the day. I always found the act of cutting hair to be a relaxing exercise. Don't you think?

Fully conscious now, she tries squirming out of the tight leather straps around her wrists. They don't budge. An intense fear consumes her. Bob continues shaving her head.

JACK/JACKIE

What's the matter, Gloria? You don't like the new look?

Gloria notices a large drain in the middle of the room. She follows a long tube from the drain to the work table in front of Johnny. Sprawled out on the table is Dillion's CORPSE.

The tube is connected to his chest, draining all his fluids. Dillion's hair has been shaved. His body is pale white. Johnny works quickly and efficiently. No emotion. No mess.

Gloria looks away in horror.

Bob SHAVES the final patches of hair around her head. The buzz cut is complete. He plucks out one remaining strand.

BOB

There we go. All done.

Gloria's eyes dart all around. She sweats with terror. Bob notices her eyeing the talisman figures watching her.

BOB (CONT'D)

They're called Nkisis. Powerful creatures, each with their own flaws and temperament. Just like people.

Bob grabs a female NKISI FIGURE from the shelf.

BOB (CONT'D)

To most, their just figures. But for the initiated, they're a source of divine power. Vessels for the soul. You remember Bibaaku here?

He brings Bibaaku closer to her. It's the same female totem from Gloria's doorstep. Yellow spirals, haunting expression, multiple nails sticking out of her torso.

BOB (CONT'D)

She's a real nasty one. A heedless female without child who causes suffering to others. Sound familiar?

Bob scoops up a handful of Gloria's hair from the floor.

JACK/JACKIE
Do you know what heedless means,
Gloria?

She nervously shakes her head no.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
Careless. Neglectful,
Inconsiderate. Basically, you.

Bob uses a hot glue gun to affix a handful of Gloria's hair
onto the head of Bibaaku.

BOB
Twenty two hundred a month for a 2-
bed 2-bath in the Lower Garden
District? You were a moth to the
flame my dear.

Bob places Bibaaku on the floor in the middle of the
Patimpemba chalk circle. Directly facing Gloria.

BOB (CONT'D)
There were other candidates of
course. But with your occupation,
your age, your criminal record...I
knew you wouldn't let us down.

Jackie glares at her.

JACK/JACKIE
Don't go feeling too special.
You're a dime a dozen with your
generation. You just happened to be
the lucky one.

He winks at her. Bob grabs a bottle of dark rum from a shelf.

BOB
How we doing, Johnny?

Johnny stops sawing. Dillion's BODY has been perfectly
dismembered. The head, hands, torso, arms, legs, and feet are
all separated by exactly three inches apart.

JOHNNY
(without looking up)
Behind. One minute, thirty two
seconds.

Johnny begins separating Dillion's flesh from the bone.

Bob nods and pours the entire bottle of rum into the Nganga.

BOB

It's not personal, Gloria. Mother's sick. Inoperable. You're her magic carpet. This is the only way.

Bob opens a container of dried leaves. He crushes the leaves together and releases them into the Nganga.

BOB (CONT'D)

And besides. We can't have you endangering the lives of our tenants now can we?

Bob places a thin stick inside a container of soil.

A GIANT CENTIPEDE crawls up the long stick.

Gloria tries to scream, but can't.

Bob shakes the stick over the Nganga. The massive centipede falls inside, HISSING in the hot liquid. He nods to Jackie.

Jackie acknowledges and retrieves a decorative wooden box from a shelf. He presents it to Bob and opens it...

Inside on a bed of velvet is the "Rayamiento" knife. A ceremonial knife with ornate wooden carvings. The **SAME KNIFE** they used to kill their stepdad, Charles Bunson, years ago.

Bob carefully removes the knife. He admires it with nostalgia, as does Jackie. They share a moment of fond memories. Bob nods. Jackie returns the wooden box.

JACK/JACKIE

You're a curse, Gloria. A scourge on society. A poison with no anecdote.

Bob approaches her with the Rayamiento knife. He forcibly SPREADS her fingers apart. She squirms and resists.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)

You must be extinguished.

Jack reframes the camera position and zooms in on her hand.

Bob CUTS through her pinky finger - Blood SPURTS from the joint - Gloria recoils in pain, biting on the gag--

Bob removes the bloody finger and holds it directly over Bibaaku. Her blood DRIPS onto Bibaaku's little head and body.

Jackie rises. Bob hands him the finger. Jackie dangles it in front of Gloria's face like a trinket. She looks away.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
 You think this is pain? This is
 nothing.

Jackie forces her face forward. He DRAGS the bloody finger vertically down her forehead like a paint brush, across her nose, and over her mouth, creating a stripe of blood.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
 The suffering you feel now will
 feel like a fond memory in a couple
 hours.

Gloria resists, looking away. The landline RINGS. Jackie turns. Johnny stops cutting. They all look at the phone.

JOHNNY
 It's the landline.

BOB
 Might be the hospital. I gave them
 the building line as a secondary
 number.

The phone keeps ringing. The brothers look at each other. Bob takes off his gloves and walks over to the phone. He answers.

BOB (CONT'D)
 (on Phone)
 Keswick Gardens, how can I help
 you?...Yes, this is him.

Bob turns away from Gloria. Jack and Johnny are concerned. They crowd around Bob, trying to listen in on the call.

BOB (CONT'D)
 (on Phone)
 I appreciate the update, but what
 exactly does that mean?...I see.

On the other side of the room, Gloria maintains focus. She remembers her talent...she's double jointed. No one is watching. This is her chance.

Gloria DISJOINTS her right elbow and rotates her palm upside down, making it easier to pull through the straps. She PULLS with all her strength - The leather burns across her skin-- Her right hand POPS out. No one notices.

BOB (CONT'D)
 (on Phone)
 I understand...Okay. Thank you.

Bob hangs up. He addresses his brothers, eager for a report.

BOB (CONT'D)

They just put her on a ventilator.

Jackie sinks. Even Johnny looks concerned.

Across the room, Gloria REACHES for the rolling cart of tools...It's too far away, just outside her reach. She puts her hand back into the strap before they notice.

Jackie paces nervously, then addresses Bob.

JACK/JACKIE

So what does that mean?

BOB

It means we're out of time.

Bob hurriedly removes his plastic slaughter coat.

BOB (CONT'D)

I need to bring her back now. You two carry out the ceremony. When we return, Mom will drink. And this will all be behind us.

Across the room, Gloria begins discreetly TWISTING something under the right arm rest of the chair.

CU ON FINGER: With her range now expanded, she uses her long fingernail to unscrew a loose metal screw under the arm rest.

JOHNNY

Why do you get to go?

BOB

Because Jackie's the only other initiated Palero, and you have to finish the bodies.

JOHNNY

Bunson Boys stick together. Isn't that what you always say?

Bob sees that he's upset. He hangs his coat on the rack and walks over to Johnny, placing his hand on his shoulder.

BOB

It doesn't matter where, brother.
We're always together.

Bob motions to the spiral Dikenga mural on the wall. Johnny acknowledges and nods in agreement.

Bob turns to Jackie. He takes off the Palero ritual necklace and places it around Jackie's neck.

BOB (CONT'D)

Wait for the lunar position.
Complete the ceremony. Dispose of
the bodies. You know what to do.

Jackie nods assuringly. Bob hands him the ceremonial Rayamiento knife. Jackie accepts it with honor.

JACK/JACKIE

Be strong for Mom. We'll see you
both soon.

Bob nods. He takes one final look at Gloria.

BOB

Joon appreciates your sacrifice.
She wanted you to know that.

Gloria tries to say something. Bob exits through a HIDDEN DOOR in the back of the room. A brief moment passes.

Johnny gets back to work, meticulously separating body parts. He places the skeletal remains inside an industrial size tub.

Jackie walks back to the camera. He repositions the lens for a better wide angle on Gloria, then tilts his head out.

JACK/JACKIE

My turn...

He looks up at the circular skylight in the ceiling.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)

We still have a few minutes until
showtime. Let's have some fun shall
we?

Jackie strolls over to the rolling tool cart. He surveys the items and picks up a power drill. Gloria's eyes go wide.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)

She's a stubborn ole' bird. Joon
hates hospitals. Almost lost her a
few years back to a stroke. Put her
in a comma for over a week. But she
survived, thanks to Jane. Came out
stronger than before. Always does.

Jackie inserts a long and skinny drill bit.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)

You see, my brother would never admit it, but he made a mistake with you. He brought you in to rid Mom of cancer, but he didn't realize your reckless, amoral lifestyle would bring the virus into her home.

Jackie presses the trigger. The drill bit SPINS with a high pitch buzz. Gloria squirms, shaking her head.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)

Lucky for us, this ain't our first rodeo.

He gives her a wink and approaches with the drill. He bends down, putting his mouth inches from her ear...

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)

You should see my collection.

He motions toward the camera. Gloria tries to say something, the ball gag prevents her from speaking.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)

I think you've got something to say. This is America, I respect freedom of speech. Let's hear it.

Jackie removes the ball and gag from her mouth. Gloria SCREAMS OUT for help, YELLING as loud as she can.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)

Gloria. Come on now. Johnny's been sawing through bone for hours. This room is sound proofed ten times over. You can do better.

GLORIA

Let me go you fucking psychopath!

JACK/JACKIE

There we go, yes. A little spunk!

She glares at him. He turns to Johnny at the work table.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)

Hey Johnny, how can you tell if a psychopath is a magician? (Beat)
They make everyone disappear.

Johnny is oblivious to the joke, solely focused on making precision cuts of Dillion's flesh. Jackie turns back around.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
Autism and comedy. They don't
really mix.

Gloria's fear transforms into unfiltered anger. She glances
at Dillion's corpse, then back at Jackie.

GLORIA
You killed him for nothing.

JACK/JACKIE
I'd say it's the other way around.
He knew too much, thanks to you.

GLORIA
It's 2020, asshole. How many
murders you think you can get away
with in one damn building.

Jackie smiles, amused.

JACK/JACKIE
Murder? They only report tenant
deaths if it occurs in the unit.
Why do you think we waited until
you were out? You're not special,
Gloria. Just another statistic.

He moves the drill closer to her face. She remains defiant.

GLORIA
(hostile)
My family will never stop coming.

JACK/JACKIE
If I had a nickel for every time I
heard that.

He presses the trigger, the drill bit spins.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
Tell me, Gloria, how far would you
go to protect your family?

GLORIA
My family doesn't worship the
devil.

JACK/JACKIE
The devil?!

He stands, letting off the trigger, bursting into laughter.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
The devil she says.

Gloria glances up at the monitors - She sees a HOODED FIGURE
dart through the parking garage - Jackie doesn't notice.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
Look around, Gloria. Is that really
what you think this is?

Gloria is silent. Jackie motions across the ritual room.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
The forces we're conjuring tonight
pre-date Christianity by thousands
of years. You could never
understand that kind of power.

He kneels beside Bibaaku, gazing at the totem with reverence.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
Joon taught us how to control them.
How to harness their energy. Put
them to purpose, especially against
our enemies.

GLORIA
Sounds like a real Mother of the
year.

Jackie smirks.

JACK/JACKIE
She's not just our mother, Gloria.

He STRADDLES Gloria, now face to face. He holds up the drill.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
She's our savior.

GLORIA
I didn't give Joon COVID. I was
always careful around her.

He taps the drill bit on her forehead.

JACK/JACKIE
You know, Jane Perry said something
similar when Mom got emphysema. But
that bitch smoked two packs a day.
And not just inside, the common
areas too. So selfish. We couldn't
let that conduct continue.

Gloria recoils in disgust. Jack GRABS her by the cheeks.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
But you make Jane look like an
angel compared to what you've done.

She glares back in death stare defiance. Jackie forces her eyelid open, Gloria tries to turn away--

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
It's time for your close-up.

Jackie squeezes the trigger, moving the drill closer - Gloria SCREAMS in resistance - He moves the drill toward her exposed eyeball - She SPITS at his face - The saliva SPLATTERS all over his clear face visor.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
Now that's just gross.

A narrow MOON BEAM shoots down from the skylight directly into the Nganja cauldron.

Johnny notices. He stops working and looks up from the table.

JOHNNY
Jackie. It's time.

Jackie sees the bright moon beam. His expression changes. He looks back at Gloria and shakes his head, disappointed.

JACK/JACKIE
Looks like playtime's over.

He slaps her cheek playfully and stands up, putting the drill back on the cart. He starts a timer nearby. **Thirty minutes.**

Johnny positions Dillion's severed head upright on the table.

Jackie SLICES the Rayamiento knife against the inside of his left palm. He clenches his fist and lets the blood DRIP into the Nganga cauldron.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
Bring the oil.

Johnny holds a torch lighter under Dillion's chin. As his flesh burns, a yellowish oil DRIPS DOWN from the chin into a bowl placed underneath, catching the heinous substance.

Gloria looks on in utter horror.

Johnny takes the bowl of corpse oil to Jackie, who dumps it inside the Nganga.

Jackie removes a ritual candle from the stand and drops it into the bubbling cauldron. The flame hits--

WOOSH. A GLOWING VAPOR CLOUD rises from the cauldron.

The lights in the Basement flicker. A light gust of wind blows across Johnny's face. He looks around.

JOHNNY
It's happening.

JACK/JACKIE
Moon shift, now.

Johnny snaps out of it. He pushes a button on the wall. The custom skylight rotates slightly, reflecting the moonlight forward, angling the beam directly onto Bibaaku.

Jackie draws a straight line in chalk connecting the circle around Gloria with the circular Patimpemba around Bibaaku. He raises his arms, gazing up at the moonlight.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
Na moganga. Accept these offerings
for the health of our Mother, life-
long disciple of Nzambi, high
priestess of Zarabanda.

A stronger gust BLOWS through the room, whisking the candles.

Jackie approaches Gloria with the charged Rayamiento knife.

GLORIA
Fuck you.

He lifts the knife high in the air--

A loud alarm FLASHES RED on one of the monitors above--

Jackie stops and looks up. Johnny moves to the monitors.

JOHNNY
Proximity alarm.

The camera shows a FEMALE FIGURE in a dark hoodie snooping around a portable storage unit in the parking garage.

JACK/JACKIE
Who. The fuck. Is that?

JOHNNY
Police?

JACK/JACKIE
No, they'd be on radio. Friend of
yours?

He looks at Gloria. She says nothing.

JOHNNY
Whoever it is, she's right on top
of us.

The Hooded Figure inserts something into a thick padlock
securing the storage unit's door.

JACK/JACKIE
She's trying to pick the lock.

Upset, but determined, Jackie places the ceremonial knife
back in its box. He steps out of his industrial surgical
scrubs. Underneath, he's already in full police uniform.

JOHNNY
What about the ritual?

Jackie checks the timer, then looks at the moonbeam.

JACK/JACKIE
We've got 25 minutes before the
lunar position changes.

Jackie, now Officer Jack Smith, unholsters his 9MM and screws
a silencer onto the end of the barrel.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
I need to take care of this. Watch
her close, I'll be right back.

Johnny nods. Jack puts on a pair of black gloves and mask.

JOHNNY
Be careful.

JACK/JACKIE
I'm never careful.

He winks at Johnny, then exits through the hidden tunnel door
in the back. Johnny is now alone with Gloria.

He stares at her for a second, she stares back. Johnny goes
back to his worktable, starts working again, but hesitates.

He stops working. Johnny walks over to the landline and dials
a number. He turns away from Gloria so she can't hear him
speak on the phone.

JOHNNY
(on phone)
We got a problem...Yes, I feel that
might be best...

With no one watching, Gloria continues TWISTING the loose screw under the armrest as fast as she can.

CU ON SCREW: There's a gap between the screw head and chair.

INT. STORAGE UNIT, PARKING GARAGE, KESWICK GARDENS - NIGHT

The Hooded Female Figure fiddles with a locksmith tool jammed into the padlock of a storage unit in the back of the garage.

Officer Jack Smith approaches from behind.

JACK/JACKIE
Looking for something?

She freezes. He points his flashlight directly at her eyes.

The Hooded Figure turns around...squinting from the blinding light. She pulls back her hood. We see her face. It's **DAWN PERRY** (30's), sister of Jane Perry, and Gloria's stalker.

DAWN PERRY
I just needed to grab something
from storage.

JACK/JACKIE
Are you a resident here?

DAWN PERRY
Yeah.

Jack gives her a look. He motions to the lock on the unit.

JACK/JACKIE
Then why don't you have a key?

DAWN PERRY
I lost it.

JACK/JACKIE
You lost it.

Dawn looks around. The garage is silent and empty.

DAWN PERRY
What are you even doing down here?

JACK/JACKIE
On patrol. Received a noise
complaint from this address.

Dawn knows this is suspicious.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
I'm going to need to see some ID.

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Johnny watches his brother interact with Dawn on the monitor.
He sneaks a peak at Gloria, checking her out. She notices.

He walks back over to his work table and picks up a small
slab of flesh. He places it on a large digital scale.

JOHNNY
(without looking up)
Two point five pounds.

GLORIA
What?

Johnny checks the weight on the scale. 2.3 pounds.

JOHNNY
Give or take. Anything more clogs
the pipes.

Johnny removes the flesh from the scale and puts it inside a
massive industrial sized cooler on the floor.

Gloria continues discreetly turning the armrest screw.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
After the bones are burned down,
this entire body will be in the
gulf within 62 flushes. Completely
disposed and untraceable.

Johnny can't help but stare at Gloria's body.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
My brothers don't appreciate the
precision it takes. The attention
to detail. One hundred pounds every
thirty days. That's the limit.
Usually late at night. People do
most of their business in the
morning.

Gloria catches him mid-stare, he looks back down.

GLORIA
You've never been with a woman
before, have you?

He retreats back into his work, uncomfortable with the question. It's obvious Johnny's a virgin.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
That's cool.

Gloria shoots him a sultry stare. Johnny notices.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Dawn hands Officer Jack her license. He looks it over.

DAWN PERRY
Where's your body camera?

JACK/JACKIE
It's broken. Waiting on a new one.

Jack scans her ID. A Minnesota drivers license. "**Dawn Perry.**"

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
Dawn Perry.

Jack stares at Dawn, now realizing who she is...Jane Perry's sister. He puts her ID in his pocket. His tone shifts.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
I'm gonna need you to come with me.

DAWN PERRY
What? On what charges?

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Johnny's behind his work table, but only pretending to work. He keeps looking up, staring at Gloria from across the room.

GLORIA
I've seen you looking you know.

Johnny looks back down.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
It's okay. You can touch me if you
want. No one's around.

She glances at him sensually. Johnny thinks for a moment...

He picks up the knife and meanders over to her.

JOHNNY

I look at people differently now.

Johnny hovers over her, torn between reason and lust. He gently grips her calf, squeezing it lightly.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

When I see someone, I just
calculate how many parts they'll be
in my head.

He works his way up her leg to her upper thigh.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

I don't want to. I can't help it.

He caresses her flesh in his palm. Gloria suppresses her disgust, pretending to like it. Johnny holds up the knife.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Your number is 46.

He gently drifts the knife from her chest to her naval.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Just my type.

CU ON GLORIA'S RIGHT HAND: Her fist is clenched. The sharp metal screw is wedged between her fingers--

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Jackie pulls out his handcuffs. Dawn holds firm.

JACK/JACKIE

This'll be a lot easier if you just
come quietly.

DAWN PERRY

No body camera, no probable cause.
Where's your partner?

JACK/JACKIE

Took the night off. Now, I'm not
going to ask you again.

Dawn senses something's not right.

DAWN PERRY

I know my rights. I'm not going
with you.

Jackie realizes she's not going willingly. He smiles.

JACK/JACKIE
That's funny. I remember your
sister saying the same thing.

Dawn's expression drops. She knows now. A tense beat passes.
It's a stare down. Dawn slowly reaches for her back pocket...

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
Don't.

--Dawn pulls out a canister of Mace - Jackie draws his 9MM -
She SPRAYS him in the face and runs - He FIRES two muffled
shots into her back - Dawn drops to the ground.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
Damn it.

Jackie rubs his eyes and winces, tearing up from the mace.

Dawn clings to life nearby on the concrete. Jackie composes
himself. He turns her over, now hovering above with the gun.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
Say high to Jane for me.

He FIRES one more shot into her forehead. She dies instantly.

INT. PORTABLE STORAGE UNIT, PARKING GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jackie unlocks the padlock and enters the unit with Dawn over
his shoulder. He drops her down, closes the door, and pushes
a heavy tool cart away from a hidden hatch on the floor. The
hatch has a bolt lock that can only be opened from above.

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The hatch opens at the top of the basement stairs. Jackie
steps down inside with Dawn's corpse over his shoulder.

JACK/JACKIE
Clean up on aisle nine, Johnny.
Need a blood scrub in the garage.
Pronto.

Jackie closes the vertical hatch and makes sure it's locked.
He heads down the wooden stairs into the basement room.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
Johnny?

As he turns the corner, he sees Johnny on all fours, DRAGGING himself across the floor, blood SPEWING from his neck.

Gloria POPS OUT from the exam table - She PLUNGES the Rayamiento knife into Jackie's stomach--

He drops Dawn's body - THROWS Gloria off him - She FLIES back. He sees the ceremonial knife protruding from his gut.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
You fucking bitch...

Jack draws his gun - Gloria DIVES behind a rolling tool cart - He FIRES at her - the bullets ricochet off the metal cart--

Gloria ROLLS the cart from behind - Jackie FIRES more shots--

The cart RAMS into Jackie - He SLAMS against the wall, dropping his gun. Gloria has him pinned--

She GRABS Johnny's electric hand saw off the cart and CHARGES at him with the spinning blade--

Jackie PUSHES the cart away and GRABS Gloria's forearms - They struggle for control of the spinning saw--

He takes out her legs with a strong LEG SWEEP - Gloria crashes to the floor - Jackie has control of the power saw.

JACK/JACKIE (CONT'D)
This is for Johnny.

Jackie PLUNGES the saw down on Gloria - She ROLLS AWAY at the last second - the spinning blade hits the floor - Sparks fly--

Gloria LUNGES for Jackie's gun a few feet away--

Jackie charges at her - Gloria grabs the gun, ROLLS to her back, FIRES multiple shots into his upper chest--

Jackie stops. He drops to his knees, holding his wounds...

He looks to his left...The moon beam disappears from above. He smirks, then falls forward, inches from Gloria.

Gloria stands up gingerly, now covered in blood. Her expression is blank. Beyond shock. Jackie's lifeless body lies face down, blood pooling all around him.

She FIRES another shot into Jack's dead heart. Still dead.

Gloria looks at Dawn's corpse. Her eyes are still open. She bends down next to her and looks closer at Dawn's face--

MEMORY FLASH: Online PHOTOS of Dawn with her sister Jane.

Gloria realizes all this time her stalker was Jane's sister, Dawn Perry. She gently closes Dawn's eyes.

Gloria eyes her hoodie and carefully removes it from Dawn's body. She puts the hoodie on herself and zips up the front.

She searches for her pinky finger, finding it in a clay bowl. She wraps it in bandage from the table along with her bloody nub. She puts the bloody finger in the hoodie pocket.

Johnny's corpse is next to her. She FIRES two bullets in his back, just to make sure. Still dead.

The 30 minute alarm goes off at the work table nearby. She FIRES a shot into the alarm. It burst into pieces.

Gloria rushes up the wooden stairs. At the top, she PUSHES upward against the overhead vertical hatch. It doesn't budge.

GLORIA

Come on.

She tries again, no movement. It's locked from the outside with something heavy on top.

Gloria hurries back down the staircase. She scans the room for another exit. There's only one. The SMALL HIDDEN DOOR on the opposite end of the basement. She approaches it.

The colorless door is blended into the wall. She cautiously opens it. In front of her is a dark, man-made TUNNEL.

No choice. She throws the hoodie hood over her head, readies the gun in her hands, and steps inside...

INT. BASEMENT TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Gloria creeps down the narrow tunnel, crouching slightly to avoid hitting the wooden support beams.

Faint, yellow light emits from a few dirty bulbs hanging from above. The floor is a mix of aged cement and dirt.

Disturbing SYMBOLS and IDEOGRAMS are carved into the walls.

The gun shakes in her hand. Gloria suppresses her fear, now threatening to overwhelm her. She cautiously presses on...

Gloria approaches the end of the tunnel. An elevated ramp leads to a vertical hatch, just like the one in the basement.

At the base of the ramp, she spots an old impression in the concrete. It says, "R & J '84'."

Gloria moves slowly up the ramp. She reaches the vertical hatch at the top, turns the knob. This one is unlocked.

INT. MASTER CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Gloria ascends into a large walk-in closet space. It's too dark to see. She finds a light switch and flips it on--

Vintage clothes fill the racks. Mostly women's clothes. Many outfits are wrapped in plastic. Gloria opens the door...

MASTER BEDROOM

She steps into a women's master bedroom. The decor is old. Mostly upscale, antique furniture. Colorful and vibrant.

Gloria notices a circular skylight in the ceiling. Directly below it is another smaller skylight in the floor. She hovers over the lower skylight, peering into the basement below.

On the dresser is a cut out PHOTO of Gloria. She inspects it further. Strange red markings are inscribed across her face.

No time to look around, she steps quietly into the hallway...

HALLWAY

Gloria inches softly down the long dark hallway. A TV blares loudly from the living room ahead. The glow from the screen gives her just enough light to see where she's going.

Along the wall, an intricate shelf displays an assortment of EXOTIC INSECTS preserved in clear resin. Gloria keeps moving.

Several FRAMED PHOTOS line the wall. Many show a much younger Joon visiting the Congo Basin in Africa.

Another older photo shows Joon posing with TWO YOUNG MEN in American military uniforms, home on leave.

Another photo shows Joon in her late 30's holding a BABY BOY. Two YOUNG TEENS pose next to her, fawning over their new baby brother, Johnny. The young men are **Robert (Bob)** and **Jackie (Jack) Bunson**, the same homicidal teens from the opening.

Gloria approaches the end of the hall. The TV gets louder. She steadies the gun and peers into the living room...

INT. LIVING ROOM - JOON'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Every inch of space is decorated with Afro-Caribbean decor and disturbing African Palo Mayombe paintings and artwork.

Strange mahogany OSHINA WARRIOR STATUES flank the couches. (Similar to the ones by the pool.)

A spare oxygen tank is propped against the couch. The front door is just past the couch on the back wall.

Gloria takes one stride into the living room - She hears a key being inserted into the door lock--

She dives back into the darkness of the hallway--

Bob throws open the door, speaking on his cell.

BOB
(on cell phone)
I'm aware the hospital is at
capacity, but she's not just
another patient. She's my mother...

Gloria crawls quietly and undetected into the kitchen.

Bob flips on some lights in the living room. Pacing.

BOB (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Don't pull that--No. This has
nothing to do with insurance.

KITCHEN

Now trapped, Gloria hides behind the kitchen counter, She sweats, containing her breathes, gripping the gun tight.

BOB (O.C.) (CONT'D)
That's correct.

Gloria eyes the landline phone directly above her. She raises slightly and carefully removes the phone, bringing it down.

BOB (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Like I told you, I don't have time
right now, I'm in a hurry.

Gloria dials "9-1-1" and holds the phone close to her ear.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
911, what's your emergency?

Gloria says nothing. She holds the phone tight, concealing the sound from the other end.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hello?

Gloria remains quiet, praying Bob doesn't hear anything.

LIVING ROOM

Bob paces on the phone, rubbing his temple, clearly concerned with what's being said on the other end.

BOB

(on phone)

Listen, if she wakes up, tell her
I'll be there soon. Can you do that
for me?...Great. Oh, and if she
dies on your watch, you'll be next.

Click. Bob hangs up and storms down the hallway toward Joon's bedroom.

KITCHEN

From behind the counter, Gloria peers into the living room. The coast is clear. An open path to the front door.

Gloria places the phone receiver face down on the tile floor. She rises and slinks quietly into the living room.

LIVING ROOM

Gloria creeps carefully past the couch. She picks up the pace, moving quicker now, almost to the front door--

Her leg brushes one of the mahogany warrior statues - It tips over, making a loud sound. She B-lines for the door--

INT. 1ST FLOOR HALLWAY, KESWICK GARDENS - CONTINUOUS

Gloria burst out of Joon's apartment and sprints down the hallway--

The elevator doors are closing - She reaches her hand between them - The doors open back up - She dives inside--

INT. ELEVATOR, KESWICK GARDENS - CONTINUOUS

Miss Ruth is already in the elevator. Gloria frantically pushes the "Door Close" button. The doors start to close.

BOB (O.C.)

Oh, Gloria...

The doors finally shut. Before Gloria can hit Lobby, Miss Ruth PRESSES the 4th floor button with her cane. Top floor.

GLORIA

Why would you--He's trying to kill me!

MISS RUTH

(Calm)

I'm sorry, dear. It's too late for you.

Miss Ruth casually backs into the corner of the elevator. Gloria can't believe it. A long, tense moment passes...

The elevator reaches the 4th floor. The floor bell dings. Gloria readies her gun. The doors open--

Bob CHARGES forward - SWATTING the gun to the side - Gloria FIRES, the bullet misses - He SLAMS her against the elevator wall, holding the gun away - She FIRES again, missing wide--

The elevator doors close - Close combat ensues - Miss Ruth remains still as a statue in the corner.

Bob controls Gloria's wrist, rendering the gun useless - He places his chloroform soaked handkerchief over her face--

With her free hand, she pulls down Bob's mask - Bob quickly adjusts it back over his nose, providing an opening - Gloria PUSHES him back, separating herself from his handkerchief--

She breaks for the door - Bob regains his grip on her wrist, SWINGING her back inside - Now up against the wall--

Before she can fire, Bob RAMS his forehead into her nose, instantly breaking it - The gun drops from her hand--

Gloria's on the floor. Dazed. She tries to regain her senses. She looks up. Bob has the gun now. He points it at her head.

BOB

Where are my brothers?

Gloria finds this funny. Blood pours like a hose from her broken nose. Her teeth are red. She grins a bloody smile.

GLORIA

Why don't you go down there and find out.

Bob glares at her, seeing red. Murder in his eyes.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Do it...

Bob's finger is on the trigger. He thinks about it...

BOB

We still need a beating heart. Your
legs, not so much.

He shifts his aim to her thigh and pulls the trigger. CLICK.
Nothing happens. CLICK. Still nothing. Out of bullets.

Gloria swipes Ruth's cane, PLUNGING it into Bob's groin--

Bob doubles over in pain - Gloria presses the "Open Door"
button and scampers into the hallway--

HALLWAY

Gloria limps into the stairwell across the hall. She swings
open the door--

STAIRWELL

She looks down, four flights of stairs. She'll never make it.
She looks up, a quick half flight to the roof--

INT. ROOFTOP, KESWICK GARDENS - MOMENTS LATER

Gloria barges out the door onto the flat roof. She maneuvers
across the roof obstacles toward the next apartment building.

She reaches the ledge. The gap between the buildings is way
too far to jump. She hears the rooftop door open...

She turns around. Bob comes into view on the other side of
the rooftop. He pulls a large knife from his belt strap.

BOB

You young people are all the same.
No respect for others. Only care
about yourselves.

Bob advances. His blade glistening in the moonlight.

BOB (CONT'D)

I mean, what did you think was
going to happen, Gloria? That you
were going to stop us?

Gloria makes her way around the perimeter of the ledge,
distancing herself further from Bob.

BOB (CONT'D)

The things we've seen. The wars
we've won. You couldn't even
imagine. You're a speck of dust.

Gloria reaches the other side of the roof. Bob's closing in.

BOB (CONT'D)

I know earlier I said this wasn't
personal...

She's trapped, nowhere else to go. Bob presses forward.

BOB (CONT'D)

Well. Now it's fucking personal.

He's within striking distance now. Gloria looks over the
ledge, then back at Bob. She shakes her head.

GLORIA

Worse. Landlord. Ever.

Gloria LEAPS from the rooftop and FALLS four stories--

--SPLASH. Into the deep end.

After a moment she surfaces, gasping for air. She makes it to
the shallow end. She looks back up at the roof. Bob's gone.

POLICE SIRENS reflect off the large white POOL RULES sign. We
hear radio and police activity nearby. Gloria exits the pool.

With her last bit of strength she plops onto a pool lounge.
Completely drained, her body pushed to the brink.

Several STUNNED TENANTS watch from their pool facing windows.
Gloria waves to them as new neighbors do.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Gloria. 106.

Police officers enter the pool area, guns drawn.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM, POLICE STATION - DAY

Gloria, now in fresh clothes, sits at a table with a cup of
coffee. She wears a mask. Her hand has been properly stitched
and bandaged. Crutches lean against the wall behind her.

Across the table is DETECTIVE LUIS CARSON (African American,
40's). Carson wears a clear face guard.

Gloria looks at a PHOTO on the table in front of her. It's a younger photo of Bob. She nods and slides it back to Carson.

GLORIA
(distant)
That's him.

DETECTIVE CARSON
Robert Bunson. Age 53. Born
September 8th, 1967. Biological
Parents unknown. Adopted in 1972 by
Joon Mwamba.

GLORIA
Cameroon Joon.

Carson nods. He slides over a younger PHOTO of Joon.

DETECTIVE CARSON (V.O.)
Immigrated here in 68. Only 20 at
the time. Ten years later married
Charles Bunson, a wealthy real
estate developer, who in 1984
became legal guardian of Joon's two
adopted sons. Robert and Jackie
Bunson.

Carson shows her a younger PHOTO of Jackie in full NOPD
uniform, aka, Officer Jack Smith.

DETECTIVE CARSON
Jack changed his name in 98, a few
years before joining the force.
Turns out most everything we knew
about Jack Smith was a lie.

Gloria glares at the photo, then back at Carson.

GLORIA
Are we done here?

Carson takes a moment. He folds his hands on the table.

DETECTIVE CARSON
Look. I get it. You have some
distrust. And rightfully so. But I
swear to you on my mother's grave
this is a clean precinct. Jack was
an aberration. Nothing more.

GLORIA
An aberration? Is that what you
call a serial killer?

Gloria shakes her head.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
You could've done something. Why
didn't you return my calls?

DETECTIVE CARSON
I would do anything to turn back
time and stop this nightmare from
happening, but I can't. What I can
do is stay focused. Bringing in Bob
Bunson is my number one priority.

Another DETECTIVE enters the room. He whispers something into
Carson's ear. He nods.

DETECTIVE CARSON (CONT'D)
Looks like we located your car. It
was parked by the Crescent City
Connection Bridge, right where
their suicide note said it would
be.

GLORIA
(remembering)
Just another statistic.

DETECTIVE CARSON
I'm sorry, Gloria. I truly am.

GLORIA
Dawn always knew. She tried to warn
me. You should've listened to her
from the beginning.

DETECTIVE CARSON
Suspicion and evidence are two very
different things, Gloria. You ever
wonder why she didn't just tell you
who she was?

Gloria has no answer.

DETECTIVE CARSON (CONT'D)
Dawn was obsessed. Hellbent on
vengeance. I dealt with her for
years, believe me I know. When you
moved in, she saw an opportunity. A
chance to stoke the fire, put some
pressure on the people she thought
responsible for her sister's death.
I guess her plan worked. (Beat) And
now four people are dead.

GLORIA
There's more than that.

Carson strokes his temple, knowing the scope of this mess.

DETECTIVE CARSON
We need your cooperation, Gloria.
Not for me. Not for the department.
For the victims. Do you understand?

He looks at Gloria, a look of determination in his eyes. She nods back, knowing he's right. Carson TAPS Bob's photo.

DETECTIVE CARSON (CONT'D)
We're going to find him.

EXT. PARKING LOT, SAINT MARY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - MORNING

NURSE MIKE DIAZ (late 20's, full scrubs) walks through the large parking lot after a long night shift.

DETECTIVE CARSON (V.O.)
We know his identity. We know what
he looks like. And we have his DNA.

Nurse Diaz reaches his car toward the back of the lot. No one else is around. He unlocks the door and gets in.

DETECTIVE CARSON (V.O.)
Bob Bunson's not a bogeyman.

Diaz puts the key in the ignition and starts up the car.

DETECTIVE CARSON (V.O.)
He's just another monster.

A SHADOWY FIGURE in a surgical mask pops up in the back seat--

DETECTIVE CARSON (V.O.)
And monsters get caught.

The Figure WRAPS a piano chord around Diaz' neck - Diaz WRITHES and GASPS - blood spurts from his neck--

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM, POLICE STATION - DAY

Carson looks at Gloria with assurance. She nods back.

DETECTIVE CARSON
Since we know you're helping us
now, what can we do to help you?

Gloria thinks for a moment.

GLORIA
Can I borrow a computer?

INT. EMPTY OFFICE, POLICE STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

Gloria's behind a desktop computer in a small, mostly empty office. In the background through the glass wall we see OFFICERS and POLICE STAFF bustling about.

Multiple DM windows are open on the computer screen.

Amy DM: *Love you, girl. (Heart emoji) Coming to visit u in D-Town as soon as I'm out of quarantine. Talk soon.*

Another DM is from Eli: *Almost there. Ten minutes out. Don't worry about me, I've got plenty of PPE. That rhymed.*

Gloria smiles. She navigates to the *Quest Diagnostics* homepage. She signs in and clicks "*Patient Results Portal.*"

CU ON SCREEN: Her name pops up. "*Gloria Steele.*" She clicks on it. "*Results available.*"

Her COVID results are finally in. She's nervous. Gloria hovers her hand over the mouse for a beat...she CLICKS.

CU ON SCREEN: "**COVID-19, NEGATIVE**"

Emotion overwhelms her. Gloria cries unexpected tears of joy.

There's a KNOCK on the office door. Gloria quickly wipes her tears and puts on her mask.

Detective Carson enters with a fresh New Orleans Saints CAP.

DETECTIVE CARSON
I thought you might want this. You know, for your...

Carson points to her buzz cut. He hands her the Saints cap.

GLORIA
Thanks. And for letting me use the computer. Still need a new phone.

DETECTIVE CARSON
Of course. That's what this office is for.

Gloria logs out of all her accounts.

GLORIA
So, I'm allowed to leave, right?

DETECTIVE CARSON
I can't force you to stay, but I
wish you would. Just awhile longer.

Gloria stands up. She hobbles to her crutches.

GLORIA
I just need to be somewhere safe.

DETECTIVE CARSON
Safer than a police station?

Gloria puts on her new Dodger cap, covering her buzz cut.

GLORIA
Can't stay here forever.

Carson nods begrudgingly. He opens the door for her.

DETECTIVE CARSON
Okay. You know how to reach me. I
promise I'll answer next time.

He smiles in jest. She nods back.

DETECTIVE CARSON (CONT'D)
Be careful, Gloria.

Gloria looks back at him from the doorway.

GLORIA
Good luck.

EXT. VISITOR LOT, POLICE STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

Gloria exits the police station on crutches.

Waiting outside in the visitor lot is Eli. He stands by his car wearing a mask and latex gloves, waving at Gloria.

She moves faster, finally reaching her PPE covered Father.

ELI
Are we allowed to--

She throws her arms around him. He hugs his daughter tightly. They embrace in a long moment before finally releasing.

ELI (CONT'D)
So you're a Saints fan now?

He motions to her hat. She smiles, wiping away her tears.

GLORIA

One of the detectives gave it to
me. Still Cowboys, all the way.

Eli sees his daughter's injured hand and sinks. Despair in
his eyes. Unsure what to say. She diverts his attention.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Good thing you won't have to wear
that thing the whole way home.

She pulls down his mask. Eli is confused.

ELI

The results were negative?

She nods. Javier's eyes go wide.

ELI (CONT'D)

Thank God. Seven hours to Dallas, I
thought I might pass out at the
wheel.

Gloria laughs. The nightmare is over.

Eli puts her crutches in the back and helps Gloria into the
passenger seat. He plops down into the drivers seat.

GLORIA

Two weeks ago I was living the
dream...what the hell happened?

Eli helps buckle her seat belt.

ELI

It's like your mother always
said...Life goes on.

She nods. He starts the engine.

GLORIA

Let's go home.

From above, we see them pull out of the police station
parking lot, pulling on to the main road.

ELI (O.C.)

I could get used to this whole no
traffic thing.

INT. PATIENT WING, SAINT MARY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Two armed POLICE OFFICERS stand guard outside of a patient ICU room. They each wear gloves and face masks.

A female doctor, DOCTOR YU, approaches them in full PPE gear. She shows them her hospital ID badge, "*Yu, Kim MD.*"

POLICE OFFICER

One of your nurses is already in there.

Dr. Yu is confused.

INT. PATIENT ICU ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Doctor Yu enters the ICU. A MALE NURSE covered head to toe in PPE sits next to an elderly patient. It's Joon. She's in a medical comma. A ventilator is connected to Joon's face.

DOCTOR YU

I wasn't aware anyone else was making rounds.

The Male Nurse stands, taken off guard.

MALE NURSE

I was just checking in. Leaving now though. She's all yours.

The nurse heads for the door. Doctor Yu glances at his ID badge as he scoots past her. "*Diaz, Mike.*"

Nurse Diaz stops at the door, turning back to her.

MALE NURSE (CONT'D)

I think she might need more oxygen.

Doctor Yu finds the comment odd. Diaz exits the room.

Dr. Yu checks Joon's vitals on the screen. She notices a clump of dark hair protruding from her clasped hands.

Dr. Yu carefully pulls apart Joon's fingers...**It's Bibaaku.** The same Nkisis totem from the ritual. Dr. Yu inspects the wooden figure. Bibaaku's haunting face stares back at her...

--JOON's eyes shoot open. She GRABS the Doctor's wrist--

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR, MEN'S RESTROOM - MINUTES LATER

UNSETTLING THEME MUSIC

The fake Nurse Diaz removes his scrubs in the bathroom stall. Underneath are regular civilian clothes. He takes off his PPE hood and mask. **It's Bob.**

Bob's head is now shaved. He puts on a new mask and pulls out a flexible ball cap from his back pocket. He puts it on.

Bob bundles together all the nursing scrubs and medical IDs. He **TOSSES** everything into the trashcan on the way out.

INT. HOSPITAL MAIN LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Bob causally walks through the lobby headed for the exit. The hospital is bustling with people and activity, a stark contrast to the desolate environments of peak COVID life.

A WOMAN (40's) carrying several overnight bags struggles to push her ELDERLY MOTHER (70's) in a wheelchair. Bob notices.

BOB
Please. Let me help.

Bob takes the wheelchair so the Woman can carry her bags.

WOMAN
Thank you.

The Woman smiles with appreciation as Bob pushes her elderly mother toward the main exit doors. The Mother is smitten.

POLICE OFFICERS rush past them in the opposite direction.

The Woman turns briefly to watch the commotion. She turns back to Bob. They share a bewildered shrug.

EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE, HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

The three of them exit the hospital together. The Woman and Mother smile politely. He shoots them a friendly smile back.

BOB
You be safe out there.

WOMAN
You too.

They head to the parking lot. Bob walks swiftly down the sidewalk in the opposite direction.

END THEME MUSIC. FLASH TO BLACK.

APART