

HELLHOUND

Written by

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Original Concept

EXT. WET ALLEY - NIGHT

Rain slicks cracked pavement, reflecting jaundiced neon.

A WHITE MIDDLE-AGED MAN in a wrinkled shirt barrels through the alley, breath ragged.

He stumbles over garbage bags - CRASHES into metal cans that CLANG and roll across the ground.

Behind him - SOMETHING unseen but heavy splashes through puddles. CLOSE. Hunting.

He clutches a HAND-HEWN FLUTE, ancient markings, carved and worn, like an heirloom.

He skids around a corner - DEAD END. Wall of soaked brick. No exit. He backpedals towards the wall.

A FOOT lashes from the darkness - TRIPS him.

He SLAMS down, the flute skittering away, echoing against wet concrete.

He crawls backward, wild-eyed.

From the shadows - THE BARTENDER steps forward, rain haloing her like a bad omen. She picks up the flute and examines it, tapping it with her nail.

BARTENDER

You really thought that flute would  
tame me?

She pivots and disappears into the dark.

BARTENDER

That note's borrowed, sweetie. My  
leash is eternal. Save a seat for  
your boss.

The man's trembling hand folds into a fist. A sharp WHISTLE splits the air-

A CRIMSON GLOW ignites beneath his skin - he ERUPTS in flame, twisting in the downpour.

Silence. A steaming pile of ash remains.

From it, a POLICE BADGE gleams, untouched by fire.

EXT. PORTLAND STREET - NIGHT

Rain slashes across neon-lit alleys. A sleek car idles outside a modest home.

INT./EXT. LUXURY CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

ANDRE TALBOT (18, Black, tuxedo) adjusts his bowtie, eyeing the PURPLE CORSAGE on the passenger seat - PHONE BUZZES - LAKAYLA ROSS texts: "Can't wait to see you in your tux!"

ANDRE  
(to himself)  
Come on, Dre. You got this.

He takes a deep breath and exits the car.

EXT. ROSS RESIDENCE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Andre approaches the door, dodging raindrops with corsage in hand. Before he can knock, the door swings open.

LAKAYLA ROSS (18, Black, stunning prom dress) beams at him.

LAKAYLA  
Andre! You're so handsome.

MR. ROSS (40s, protective father) appears behind her.

MR. ROSS  
(stern)  
You didn't bring an umbrella?

Andre searches for a response, his mouth half-open.

MR. ROSS  
Not too late, young man. You hear?

ANDRE  
(nervous)  
Yes, sir. Of course, sir.

As they dash through the rain to the car, a police cruiser slowly rolls by.

INT./EXT. LUXURY CAR - NIGHT

Andre and Lakayla share a glance and settle in, excited for the night. Andre starts the car - crimson and blue lights flash behind them.

ANDRE  
 (tense)  
 What did I do?

LAKAYLA  
 (worried)  
 Don't freak, okay?

INT. PATROL CAR - NIGHT

OFFICER HENRY REDMAN (late 30s, white) sits in the passenger seat, wide-eyed. Next to him, OFFICER PATRICK CUMMINGS (40s, white, cold-eyed) grips the wheel. On his finger, a UNIQUE METAL RING - a red smudged circle at its center.

CUMMINGS  
 This ring makes us untouchable.

INT./EXT. LUXURY CAR - NIGHT

Andre's heart pounds as he white knuckles the steering wheel. Whispers to himself.

ANDRE  
 Okay, hands on the steering wheel  
 at all times, don't reach for  
 anything, no sudden movements.  
 Hands on the steering wheel at all  
 times, don't reach for anything-

Lakayla observes him. The patrol car door shuts O.S.

Cummings approaches, hand resting on his weapon. He knocks on the driver's window.

Andre jolts - fumbles, rolls it down. Rain lashes his face and shoulder.

CUMMINGS  
 License and registration.

ANDRE  
 Yes, sir. It's in the glove box.

As Andre reaches for the glove box, Cummings tenses.

CUMMINGS  
 (shouting)  
 Hands where I can see them!

ANDRE  
(panicking)  
I'm just getting my license!

LAKAYLA  
(pulls out her phone)  
I'm recording this.

Cummings' hand tightens on his weapon.

CUMMINGS  
Out of the car! Now!

ANDRE  
(terrified)  
Please, sir. I'm just trying to-

FOUR GUNSHOTS ring out.

Lakayla SCREAMS-

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - INTERROGATION ROOM - PRESENT

Detective JEREMIAH TALBOT (40s, seasoned, Black man) and Detective AMYR TAYLOR (30s, loyal, Black man) sit opposite a suspect when his phone vibrates insistently.

He silences the notification when officer CAMBRI RUSSELL (30s, Latina, female) enters with a file.

JEREMIAH  
Thanks, Officer Russell.

Russell exits. Jeremiah scans the file, hands it to Taylor.

JEREMIAH  
So, you saw what happened, but you weren't there? We gonna give you a minute to get your story together.

Jeremiah and Taylor exit, closing the door behind them.

TAYLOR  
I don't think I ever asked you, but why did you join the force?

Jeremiah unwraps gum, chews.

JEREMIAH  
Thought I could fix things from the inside. I kept- What about you?

TAYLOR

Same. But the plan is to do it from  
the captain's seat.

JEREMIAH

Oh, that's all yours, my boy.

They chuckle.

JEREMIAH

If you want that seat – take high-  
profile cases, solve them. Anyway,  
according to my son, I'm now part  
of the problem.

Phone BUZZES again. Multiple missed calls. His face falls.

JEREMIAH

Speaking of my boy–

His face drops.

EXT. PORTLAND STREET – NIGHT

Emergency vehicle lights cast a crimson and blue glow upon  
the grim scene.

Taylor's car screeches to a halt. Jeremiah BURSTS from the  
passenger side, shoving through officers.

JEREMIAH

(desperately)

My son? Where's Andre?

His gaze finds a white sheet concealing a body. He collapses  
beside it, lifts the sheet.

Heart-wrenching sobs wrack his body.

JEREMIAH

God-no, no, no–

He holds Andre close, foreheads touching – a silent prayer.

He raises his forehead, taking in the last time he'll see his  
son. He caresses Andre's head.

JEREMIAH

I'm going to make this right. I  
promise you.

Nearby, Lakayla trembles, still recording.

LAKAYLA  
 (crying)  
 He didn't do anything!

Jeremiah gently lowers Andre, shrouds him, and rises, his face a mix of grief and determination.

JEREMIAH  
 (to Lakayla)  
 I need that video.

He locks eyes with Cummings, who watches from his cruiser.

FLASHBACK - POLICE PRECINCT - ROOM - YEARS EARLIER

Cummings (sweaty, nervous) sits across from Jeremiah. A police report lies on the table, inconsistencies glaring.

CUMMINGS  
 (pleading, low)  
 Back me up, J. Don't leave me out here alone.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. PORTLAND STREET - NIGHT

Cummings, cool and collected, raises a phone to his ear.

CUMMINGS (V.O.)  
 It's done.

INT. UNKNOWN OFFICE - NIGHT

GRAVEN (50s, ambitious, white male) watches coverage of the shooting on TV. A matching RING gleams on his hand.

GRAVEN  
 (into phone)  
 On to the next.

EXT. PORTLAND STREETS - MONTAGE

- Protesters rally, signs demanding justice.
- Lakayla hands out flyers outside City Hall.
- Jeremiah speaks at a press conference, Lakayla's video behind him.

SUPER: 2 YEARS LATER

ON TV SCREEN - SHIANN LI (30s, Asian, truth-seeker) reports from a peaceful downtown protest.

Jeremiah, Lakayla, and MONIQUE "MO" JACKSON (40s, Black, restaurateur, Jeremiah's girlfriend) stand nearby.

SHIANN

-on my side, Detective Talbot, the father of the young man who was shot and killed.

She pivots towards Jeremiah.

SHIANN

Charges have been filed - this must hit differently being a cop.

Jeremiah fights back tears and agreeably nods.

JEREMIAH

Cummings was wrong for what he did to my son and the video evidence will prove it-.

Lakayla lunges at the mic.

LAKAYLA

We need body-cam laws and reform, so this never happens again!

- Monique's hand clutches Jeremiah's, intimate though unwed.

They share a quiet, supportive smile.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Jeremiah sits behind the prosecution, gripping hands with Monique and Lakayla.

JUDGE (60s, white male) looks over to the jury pool.

JUDGE

Jury, have you reached a verdict?

JURY FOREMAN (30s white female) stands.

JURY FOREMAN

We find the defendant, Officer Patrick Cummings, not guilty.

The courtroom ERUPTS. Lakayla storms out.

Jeremiah crumples between the bench - faith and soul broken. He stares hollowly as Monique tends to his husk of a body.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - POLICE CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Jeremiah BURSTS in. He strips his badge, SLAMS it and his service weapon on the desk. Storms out.

INT. TALBOT HOME - NIGHT

SUPER: "TWO WEEKS LATER"

Dim, quiet. O.S. FLIES BUZZ faintly.

LIVING ROOM - strewn clothing, old pizza boxes, Andre's obituary, purple corsage, framed plaque on the mantel.

KITCHEN

Chaos of empty bottles, dirty dishes. Stacked neatly beside a laptop are files labeled "Circuit Court of Appeals - Civil." Overdue law firm envelopes.

O.S. TOILET FLUSHES in the distance.

Jeremiah shuffles in, disheveled, phone to ear.

He opens the fridge - bare save condiments, beer, Chinese takeout.

He grabs the beer, shuts the door and enters-

LIVING ROOM

He approaches the mantel.

JEREMIAH

(into phone)

Sweets, I've done right by you and your son. Haven't asked for anything - until now.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - RECORDS ROOM - NIGHT

SWEETS (60s, heavysset, Black male), rests at a desk, phone to his ear, eating a doughnut.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED

SWEETS

J, this ain't like when you wore a badge. Pulling records on cops—

JEREMIAH

-- I know!

He collapses onto the stained couch.

JEREMIAH

I don't even need the file. Just some photos. Use your personal cell, send 'em to me. Delete after.

Sweets rubs his head.

SWEETS

I don't know, man.

JEREMIAH

What if it was your boy?

Beat. Sweets exhales and nods.

Jeremiah closes his eyes in relief.

JEREMIAH

Appreciate you.

He hangs up. His eyes land on Andre's obituary.

FLASHBACK - INT. TALBOT HOME - ANDRE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sports trophies line the dresser. Posters of Black icons on the walls. Andre, headphones on, reads - "HBCU MAGAZINE".

Jeremiah knocks, enters.

Andre pulls off his headphones.

ANDRE

Yeah, dad?

JEREMIAH

I told you, Tuskegee.

Andre and Jeremiah chuckle. Jeremiah sits on the bed's edge.

JEREMIAH

Found a note in the kitchen. You weren't gonna tell me you had a girlfriend, huh?

Andre blushes.

JEREMIAH  
So, tell me something about her.  
Then I'll drop it.

Andre contemplates.

ANDRE  
She stands up for people when  
nobody else will.

END FLASHBACK

INT. - TALBOT HOME - LIVING ROOM

JEREMIAH stares at Andre's obituary. His gaze sweeps to a golden plaque - "Plaque of Excellence for Investigative Prowess - Recipient: Jeremiah Talbot."

He SLAMS the plaque down, beats it with a vacuum.

JEREMIAH  
I gave you my life! I fought for  
you! I bled for you! I fucking  
defended you!

He hurls the vacuum. Breaks down sobbing.

JEREMIAH  
It's my fault. I looked the other  
way so many time. YOU TOOK MY BOY!

BUZZ - he snatches his phone.

TEXT: Mo: You need anything?

He stares, wipes his face, swigs liquor, exits clutching the empty bottle.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - STREET - NIGHT

Flashing crimson and blue lights cast an eerie glow upon the barricaded shops and wrecked cars. A faint echo of Black Lives Matter protests REVERBERATES through the empty streets and allies.

Jeremiah stumbles past a pole plastered with flyers.

One flyer bears Lakayla's face: "DON'T FORGET TO VOTE."

He eyes a shuttered liquor store: "Liquored Down."

MATCH CUT:

FLASHBACK - SAME STORE - DAY

Sunny, bustling. Jeremiah and Andre walk, eating ice cream.

ANDRE

I think I want to be a defense attorney.

JEREMIAH

Really? This from "I wanna be a cop like you, Dad"?

ANDRE

That was middle school.

Jeremiah's eyebrows raise.

JEREMIAH

Okay, that puts us on opposing sides.

Andre chuckles.

ANDRE

Does it? Both jobs supposed to serve and protect the public. Right?

Jeremiah glances, contemplative.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

BUZZ - He snaps to and places his phone to his ear.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - RECORDS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sweets clutches a file, glancing nervously around.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED

SWEETS

J, this some Olivia Pope, Scandal-type shit. I'll build you a target file and drop it tomorrow.

JEREMIAH  
Thanks. I owe you.

SWEETS  
J, be careful.

They hang up.

LIQUOR STORE

CRASH – a store window shatters. Jeremiah whips around – FOUR MASKED PROTESTERS run past, chased by sirens.

Floodlights snap onto him.

Two cops exit: OFFICER JORDAN (30s, rookie, white female) and Redman.

REDMAN  
You out here breaking shit?

JEREMIAH  
No, officer.

JORDAN  
Put your arm down, sir. We need to identify you.

Jeremiah lowers his arm. Redman squints – recognition.

REDMAN  
Talbot? What the fuck man? You look like shit.

Jeremiah remains stone-faced. Jordan stands respectfully.

JORDAN  
Sorry, sir.

Redman looks back at Jordan.

REDMAN  
He's not a detective anymore, quit kissing ass.

Redman circles Jeremiah, tapping his EMPTY BOTTLE with a UNIQUE RING like Cummings'. Clink echoes ominously.

REDMAN  
Could haul your ass in for public intoxication.

He chuckles, unsettling Jordan.

REDMAN

Naw! I'm fucking with ya Talbot!

His solitary chuckle fades, swallowed by ensuing stillness.  
His eyes cut sharp.

REDMAN

Condolences about your boy. Looked  
like he was drawing down. Our kids  
should outlive us, right?

Jeremiah's grip tightens on the bottle.

Redman smirks.

Dispatch crackles.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

10-40, Second and Market.  
Requesting units.

JORDAN

That's us, sir.

REDMAN

I know it's fucking us, Jordan.

He taps his walkie.

REDMAN

Show Central-3-Charlie responding.

Redman and Jordan enter the patrol car and pull away.

Jeremiah trembles, rage spilling. He ROARS, hurls the bottle.

From the alley across the street, a CRIMSON NEON SIGN  
flickers: "THIRSTY SOUL." Tapping Jeremiah on the shoulder.

The "O" - a smudged circle. The "U" pulses like MORSE code.

Drawn, Jeremiah approaches the 18th century door.

INT. THIRSTY SOUL - CONTINUOUS

A bar of rich wood and ritual. Patrons in black and crimson;  
a mirrored back-wall throws Jeremiah's ruin back at him. His  
gaze sweeps across the room as he approaches the bar, landing  
on BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (30s, Black) in the back.

Bartender watches him with flinty compassion.

BARTENDER  
Looking for an invite to talk to  
her? That was it.

Jeremiah faces her.

BARTENDER  
Whatcha drinking handsome?

JEREMIAH  
Strongest shit you got.

Bartender prepares a drink.

BARTENDER  
You look like a man bargaining with  
ghosts. I'm a good listener - you'd  
be surprised who used to drink  
here.

He scans the counter with clenched jaw.

JEREMIAH  
Two years since cops murdered my  
son.

BARTENDER  
Thought you looked familiar.

She sets down the drink.

BARTENDER  
I've seen it way too many times.  
Sure I'll see it way too many more.

She wipes the counter as Jeremiah gulps his drink.

JEREMIAH  
If I could, I'd get who killed him.  
Make sure it never happens again.

Music DIES. Bar-goers blankly stare at Jeremiah.

BARTENDER  
But would you really?

She places a hand on his. They look into each other's eyes,  
sharing a moment of contemplation.

A CONTRACT unfurls - mirror-like, ancient markings,  
reflecting Jeremiah and Andre's faces.

JEREMIAH  
What is this?

BARTENDER

The answer.

She pricks his finger. BLACK BLOOD drops, absorbed.

BARTENDER

No pen. Just intent. If you really want vengeance, just want vengeance and I'll help you get it.

Jeremiah stumbles out of his seat, retreating backwards - his head on a swivel.

JEREMIAH

I don't know what the fuck is going on, but I don't want shit to do with it.

He turns, stumbling towards the door-

BARTENDER

If you don't stop this shit from happening, or get justice for your son- who will?

Jeremiah stops in his tracks and his eyes fall to the floor. He turns around-

WHOOSH - he's transported back in front of the contract.

Bartender stares into his soul- Smirks.

BARTENDER

(seductively)

Just want it.

Jeremiah stares at the contract - ancient and alluring.

Flashes of Andre flicker in his mind: YOUNG ANDRE at his tenth birthday party. Andre at a professional basketball game. Andre trying on his tux for prom. Andre lying on the ground, shot and lifeless-

A faint flicker of fire flashes in Jeremiah's eyes - a silent confirmation.

The prick on his finger flashes a faint crimson beat.

ANDRE (V.O.)

(whisper)

Make it right.

Jeremiah surveys the area. His blood, BLACK - hot, thick - it BEATS onto the page. The page drinks it.

QUICK FLASH

- GROUP OF GUYS play pick-up ball in a gym. Water bottles and other belongings line the bench area - a ring pulses crimson.

- Graven at home at his desk, scotch and laptop open. He clocks his ring pulse crimson. A grin grows on his face.

The mirror clouds.

BARTENDER

Here's what you need to know: I  
give powers to those who sign -  
they get what they desire, my  
whistle calls that power-

A soft WHISTLE cuts the air - Jeremiah winces, a leash he both hates and answers.

BARTENDER

And the contract decides who owns  
the soul. One circle.

She leans in and with her middle finger, traces a circle from condensation on the bar counter.

BARTENDER

That means eternity. I play for  
keeps.

She locks eyes and moves in closer.

BARTENDER

Now, you choose when to change.  
Every change burns tar out of you.  
That's your soul. Hurt an innocent,  
someone who never took a life, and  
you burn faster.

She slides him one last shot.

JEREMIAH

Who are y-

Her look cuts him short.

BARTENDER

Lose control and the thing wears  
you - not the other way around.  
Burn through enough- and you're  
mine.

Beat.

BARTENDER  
Call me Consequence.

She pours herself a drink.

CONSEQUENCE  
I loaned power before to grieving  
men who thought they could rise  
above me. You wouldn't do me like  
that. Right, brotha?

OFF the mirror, where Jeremiah does not recognize himself.

INT. TALBOT HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sun bleeds through the blinds. Jeremiah stirs shirtless on  
the floor. His forefinger scar, healing.

DOORBELL RINGS.

He approaches the front door, unlocks and opens it.

-- Startled, Monique, clutching a hefty manila envelope on  
the porch, abruptly stands.

JEREMIAH  
Monique, hey.

MONIQUE  
Hey. This was left on your porch.

She hands it over. Awkward silence.

MONIQUE  
Since you weren't texting back,  
thought I'd check in. You okay?

JEREMIAH  
I'm alright.

Her gaze slips past him, sees the mess.

MONIQUE  
I'm helping you clean this up. And  
I'm sorry - shouldn't have put a  
timeline on your grief. Maybe  
dinner later this week?

Jeremiah inhales deeply and looks away.

JEREMIAH  
Dinner sounds good.

Her smile beams.

MONIQUE

At my restaurant. Wear something I  
don't have to roast.

She scans Jeremiah's attire.

Jeremiah smirks.

MONIQUE

Okay, I'll text you. Bye.

She exits.

INT. TALBOT HOME - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jeremiah opens the file: "CUMMINGS." A sticky note: This  
ain't a fight, J. It's a war.

Inside: reports and a SSD drive. He plugs it into his laptop.

MONTAGE

- REPORTS: "incident resolved," signed by MAYOR GRAVEN.

- PHOTOS: "SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE." Cummings, REDMAN, GENE,  
FRISK, Graven - all wear the ring.

- He grabs a pencil, some nearby paper and sketches.

- Jeremiah prints, builds a CONSPIRACY BOARD.

RIGHT SIDE: faces, red yarn. Cummings, Redman and Graven at  
the top.

LEFT SIDE: scattered - sketch of the enclosed circle, the  
word "WHISTLE" and "CONTRACT" - the former circled in red. A  
large question mark at the top, "Consequence" written below.

END MONTAGE

Jeremiah stares at the left side and mutters to himself.

JEREMIAH

What's with the whistle?

His gaze falls onto the laptop screen.

Laptop clock: "6:15 PM."

He dashes out.

INT. MEETING HALL - LATER

Digital clock keeps time on the wall: "6:35pm". GRAVEN stands at the podium, white men filling chairs.

GRAVEN

Break's over. If we're going to clean up these *hoods*, they need a reason to vote for Bill 67.

(beat)

No one else should have to lose a loved one to senseless violence. Next idea.

EXT. MEETING HALL - STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The wet cement sparkles crimson from the traffic lights. Quiet, HIGHWAY TRAFFIC O.S. in the distance. A single vehicle parked across the street - it's Jeremiah.

INT./EXT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jeremiah's gaze, fixed on the meeting hall. His healing finger, repetitively traces a circle in his steering wheel. Opens a scab - blood smears.

The crimson dribble catches his eye.

JEREMIAH

Shit.

He shuffles for napkins and wipes the wheel, leaving a faint crimson circle.

The door opens - people pour out. Jeremiah films on his phone.

EXT. MEETING HALL - CONTINUOUS

Graven exits with MICHAEL (20s, white).

GRAVEN

Welcome to the family. You'll be called to do great things, brother.

He embraces Michael, then pulls away.

## GRAVEN

I'm visiting my daughter's grave site tomorrow, so come early afternoon. We'll make sure you get your ring before the group photo.

INT./EXT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

JEREMIAH'S PHONE SCREEN - a formulated email with multiple pictures and a video as attachments.

He hits send, starts the car and pulls away.

INT. TALBOT HOME - LIVING ROOM - HOURS LATER

Asleep on the floor, Jeremiah fights off a bad dream.

Jeremiah mumbles incoherently. All we can make out:

JEREMIAH

I'm sorry.

ANDRE (V.O.)

Make it right! Make it right! Make it right!

Jeremiah's agitation intensifies as Andre's desperate plea reverberate, escalating into a maddening crescendo.

He erupts from sleep with a furious shout, his eyes blazing a fiery scarlet.

He rises as blood fills his eyes, dripping down his face. He holds his stomach and winces.

He convulses, falling to the floor in a ball and holding his ribs as he SCREAMS. His joints and ligaments POP, as he's pulled in opposing and unnatural directions.

-A wet and hairy lump bursts through his back-

Skin stretching, ripping at its seams, to allow the ever-growing hairy lump to escape. The ripped skin disintegrates into the air, blood boils into vapor as it hits surfaces.

His neck rips from the shoulders and his head hits the ground with a THUD. The lifeless head holds an expression of pain as it disintegrates piece by piece.

Thickly muscled hind legs, black as soot, cross over the disintegrating head, leaving scorched paw prints behind.

EXT. CUMMINGS HOME - NIGHT

The quiet neighborhood is laced with pools of darkness beyond the reach of just two street lights, on either end of the block.

Cummings exits the front door of his white, two story home carrying a bag of trash, approaching curbside bins.

He lifts the lid and tosses the bag in-

O.S. GLASS CLINKS across the street. He freezes.

CUMMINGS  
Max, is that you?

Darkness stares back.

-A SHADOW emerges. HUNCHED. GROWLING.

Cummings chuckles nervously.

CUMMINGS  
Quit prowling like a damn coyote-

SHADOW ERUPTS forward, a guttural HOWL splitting the night.

Cummings bolts inside, stumbling over the garbage bin-

Shadow hunches over, SNARLS, and CHARGES QUADRUPEDALLY.

INT. CUMMINGS HOME - CONTINUOUS

A pair of shoes sit next to the front door near a small runner rug that leads to the kitchen.

Cummings explodes through the doorway, SLAMS the front door behind him and darts into the-

LIVING ROOM

Television, playing the news, above an in wall fireplace. A painting hangs near the television. A large glass table separates the fireplace and couch.

Cummings bursts in - rips the painting off the wall, frame splintering. Behind it: a steel safe glints in the dim light. He slams his fingers over the keypad, punching in the code like every second might kill him.

Spins around, firearm trembling - trained at the door.

Cummings wipes away the dripping sweat from his forehead-

WINDOW SHATTERS – Wolf-Beast crashes through. Cummings FIRES—  
Clipped, Wolf-Beast crashes into the couch, crushing it.

CUMMINGS runs for the window – he's VIOLENTLY snatched out of  
the air, SMASHED into a glass table.

Wolf-Beast pounces on him, snapping the bones in his limbs  
all at once with massive paws – his AGONIZING SCREAM gargled  
by TEETH sinking into his neck.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)

Although Oregon is a sanctuary  
state, Mayor Graven announced his  
cooperation with I.C.E. officers in  
their raids for undocumented  
civilians.

EXT. ALLEY – DAWN

Jeremiah awakens NAKED, curled in filth. He sits up, chest  
heaving. His HAND – the scar on his forefinger ANGRY and RED,  
pulsing like infection. He VOMITS black tar onto the concrete  
– a single intense spew, coughing, shaking.

Nearby, a HOUSELESS MAN stirs under a tarp. Wordless, he  
offers Jeremiah a BLANKET.

Jeremiah takes it, wraps himself, shivering. He walks away,  
head hung low – SIRENS in the distance.

INT. TALBOT HOME – BATHROOM – DAY

Jeremiah scrubs his skin raw under the shower. The water runs  
BLACK with tar– then RED, from blood that isn't his.

MINUTES LATER

He reaches for his towel, behind the shield of the shower  
curtain. Dries off and steps out – towel around his waist. He  
glances in the mirror – for an instant, WOLF-BEAST'S EYES  
glare back at him.

Startled, he falls into the shower curtain – pulling it down.

He risks another glance in the mirror – just his reflection.

He takes a reflexive breath, then exits.

INT. TALBOT HOME - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jeremiah leans forward on the couch, watching television. He changes the channel.

TELEVISION - headline- "Community Questions Committee". A grainy photo of Graven flashes, the photo Jeremiah took.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

-The taxpayers want answers.

Jeremiah smirks - his anonymous email got some attention.

TELEVISION - The chyron shifts: "Mayor Graven Calls For Stronger Safety Bill."

GRAVEN (V.O.)

This violence towards authority  
proves one thing: We need order. We  
need control. Animal or otherwise.

Jeremiah's smile fades. He turns the television off.

DOORBELL RINGS.

Jeremiah opens the door - it's Monique. She waves.

MONIQUE

I was down the street and I figured  
I would just stop by and see if you  
were free for dinner tonight. You  
okay?

JEREMIAH

Yeah, why you ask?

MONIQUE

You look like you're coming down  
with something. Let me see.

She reaches to check his forehead temperature-

JEREMIAH

Don't touch me!

Monique recoils, frightened.

JEREMIAH

Sorry, I-I didn't sleep well. I'm  
fine though. I promise.

Monique nods.

MONIQUE

Tonight at 7pm. If you end up not feeling well, just text.

Jeremiah's shoulders slump as Monique walks away.

PEDESTRIAN (O.S.)

Here boy!

She WHISTLES, a melody of false cheer.

The sound scrapes Jeremiah's bones - he flinches.

QUICK FLASH: warped memories of Cummings murder and approaching the Thirsty soul.

He shakes it off. His gaze slips to his festering finger.

PEDESTRIAN

Excuse me, have you seen a brown husky?

Jeremiah shakes his head.

JEREMIAH

No, sorry.

He shuts the door.

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

Lakayla pins flyers on the courthouse doors: "NO TO BILL 67." A CITY AIDE rips them down. Lakayla slaps another one right back up, locking eyes with him.

LAKAYLA

(quiet, fierce)

See you at the ballot box.

City Aide, intimidated, walks away in a huff.

INT. THIRSTY SOUL - LATER

Jeremiah enters in a hoodie, scanning the room.

He approaches the bar. PATRON in the back raises his fist in solidarity to Jeremiah.

PATRON

Hey, J!

Jeremiah glances, tilts his head back.

Consequence waits, polishing a glass, as if she knew he'd come.

CONSEQUENCE

Congrats are in order. Drinks on the house.

She smirks, pouring amber liquid into a glass. It swirls dark - like blood.

Jeremiah sits.

CONSEQUENCE

Well? Worth it?

FLASHBACK - POLICE PRECINCT - ROOM - YEARS EARLIER

Cummings (sweaty, nervous) sits across from Jeremiah. A police report lies on the table, inconsistencies glaring.

CUMMINGS

(pleading, low)

Back me up, J. Don't leave me out here alone.

Jeremiah's hand trembles over a pen. His jaw locks tight. Through the glass, a Black mother sobs in the lobby, ignored. Jeremiah looks down at the report-

END FLASHBACK

INT. THIRSTY SOUL BAR - DAY

Jeremiah startles, clutching the drink Consequence just poured.

CONSEQUENCE

(knowingly)

Ghosts keep you up at night, Detective?

JEREMIAH

More like silence. What, what did you do to me?

CONSEQUENCE

A little of what you wanted.

(leans in)

A lot of what I needed.

Jeremiah feels gravity holding him down.

JEREMIAH

So, are you the devil?

She slides him a glass of amber liquid.

CONSEQUENCE

I go by many names, but that's not important.

Jeremiah stumbles out of his chair.

CONSEQUENCE

Sit. Down.

He slides back onto the stool.

CONSEQUENCE

We're way past that now.

-She materializes behind him - lips to his ear.

CONSEQUENCE

Look at the big picture.

Jeremiah startles.

CONSEQUENCE

You did in one night what the system wouldn't do for two years.

Jeremiah nods, a spark of understanding in his eyes as he sees the other side.

CONSEQUENCE

Making big change comes with big consequences. What you're doing for your son-your people, is noble.

Jeremiah revels in the moment, staring into his glass.

JEREMIAH

How many times can I do this before-I'm yours?

CONSEQUENCE

You're already mine, but I get it. I don't know. Every soul's different.

(beat)

But I'll tell you when you're getting close.

She rubs his shoulders.

CONSEQUENCE

Download the app "Crimes Against Us". It tracks police involved incidences against-

She slithers to his other ear.

CONSEQUENCE

-your kind.

Jeremiah pulls out his phone and types.

CONSEQUENCE grins, watching Jeremiah peruse his phone.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Jeremiah, throws his hoodie over his head, marching amongst the crowd of pedestrians. Then-

A FAINT GROWL.

-He spins around searching for the source-a flurry of pedestrians blowing by him in every which way.

He starts to spiral-

GOOD SAMARITAN

Sir.

He snaps out of it.

GOOD SAMARITAN

You okay?

Jeremiah pushes past Good Samaritan.

EXT. BREAKING BREAD - NIGHT

Hanging lights and tiki poles light the area.

Jeremiah and Monique dine. She notices blood on his shirt.

MONIQUE

You're bleeding.

Jeremiah looks down, smears it with his napkin, dismisses it.

His eyes slide to his finger, oozing, a slight crimson glow beneath the surface.

JEREMIAH

It's nothing.

Jeremiah leans in, changes the subject.

JEREMIAH

So what'll it take to get us back?

They flirt, almost kiss - BUZZ.

Jeremiah checks phone. "CRIMES AGAINST US" - "Another cop killed a Black man."

MONIQUE

What's wrong?

With furrowed brows he tosses the napkin, stands.

MONIQUE

J, what are you doing?

JEREMIAH

Trying to be more than just angry.

He storms out.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - LOBBY - LATER

CIVILIANS sit in chairs and walk about. At the far end of the lobby, Russell approaches Taylor, playing on his cell.

RUSSELL

Thanks for waiting for me.

Taylor pockets his cell.

TAYLOR

No worries.

They approach the exit.

TAYLOR

Is that why you aren't gunning for detective? Scared of the dark?

She punches him, laughing.

RUSSELL

No, asshole. You run around figuring out who did it and why. I get the chance to stop shit before it happens.

Taylor nods as if to agree.

TAYLOR  
It's giving recruitment video.

RUSSELL  
I hate you.

OFFICER BOWERS (40s, white male) and OFFICER GUTIERREZ (30s, Latina female), escorts an unarmed Redman.

Taylor and Russell stop.

TAYLOR  
What's this?

BOWERS  
Questionable shooting. He's debriefing with his rep when they get here.

Redman panics.

REDMAN  
I swear he had a gun!

GUTIERREZ  
Shut up. Don't say a word except to your rep. Dumb ass.

She forcefully guides Redman ahead.

Taylor and Russell continue for the exit.

TAYLOR  
What's up with Redman's situation?

RUSSELL  
A civilian recorded him shooting a Black teen male a few hour ago.

She shakes her head with raised brows.

Taylor listens for something.

TAYLOR  
You hear that?

--EXPLOSION, Russell and Taylor fly through the air, slam against a wall and crash against the floor. Civilians SCREAM and panic, ducking for cover.

TAYLOR'S

Out cold near a pillar.

RUSSELL'S

A slow-moving lump behind an overturned desk.

Civilians pull out their phones and record.

RUSSELL  
(to civilians)  
Stay down!

Civilians get low, but a few still record.

Wolf-Beast rushes Redman - Bower and Gutierrez, petrified.

REDMAN  
Oooh fuuuck.

He shoves Gutierrez into its path.

REDMAN  
Shoot that thing!

Gunfire erupts - Redman bolts and Wolf-Beast dodges, bullets searing - CLICK, CLICK. Out of bullets, they reload.

Wolf-Beast shakes one bullet free - TING on the floor.

It GROWLS, baring teeth. Its paws scorch the tile.

It charges for Redman, knocking down Bower and Gutierrez.

Russell dives between Wolf-Beast and Redman, weapon trained.

-Wolf-Beast SNAPS its head, SWATS her aside, sending her flying back.

TAYLOR

slow moving.

Wolf-Beast leaps - rips Redman's head clean off-gore splattering tile.

Taylor leans on his elbow and fires a round at the beast - miss.

Wolf-Beast flees.

TAYLOR'S P.O.V.: eyelids are heavy, closing to darkness.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

TAYLOR'S POV: eyelids open - blurry.

Taylor, in bed, surveys his surroundings, Russell and CAPTAIN NICKELS (50s, white male) sit nearby.

Groggy, Taylor struggles to sits up.

NICKELS

Easy.

Taylor winces in pain, favoring his left arm.

NICKELS

What do you remember?

TAYLOR

It went straight for Redman.

Nickels nods.

NICKELS

Russell said the same. Rest up.

Visitors exit. Russell stays.

RUSSELL

I tried to stop it.

TAYLOR

No pity parties. You did good.

She clenches her fists.

TAYLOR

I'm not dying. No need to get mushy.

She smiles.

He stares at the ceiling, haunted.

INT. TALBOT HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

Plain, a present reflection of his life after Andre's death.

Jeremiah, shirtless - exposing an unnatural, redish tint, pus-leaking bullet wound on his chest. He clutches the sink.

He violently vomits black tar into the basin - it's getting worse. O.S. EVANGELIST COMMERCIAL plays on television. He stares at his reflection - hollow, trembling. A RUMBLING GROWL builds-

-He punches the mirror. His wound knits - SLOW. Not instant.

He wipes the slick from his lips and stares at his red pulsing finger.

LIVING ROOM

He enters.

TV: Shiann stands across the street from the police precinct holding a microphone. She reports.

SHIANN

Another local officer mutilated.  
PPD confirms – wolf attack.

QUICK FLASH

- WOLF-BEAST'S P.O.V.: mauling Cummings.

- WOLF-BEAST'S P.O.V.: galloping towards a cowering Redman.

Jeremiah snaps out of it and continues watching.

SHIANN (V.O.)

Some call it "Hellhound."

Jeremiah exhales, nodding at the T.V.

INT. BREAKING BREAD - DAY

Monique and Lakayla prep supplies.

MONIQUE

Mind on something?

LAKAYLA

Yeah. You heard about this wolf thing, right? Is it bad that I low-key feel it's helping, even though it's killing people?

MONIQUE

That's a hard one. I don't know. To protect me and mines, it's by any means necessary. I guess you gotta answer that for yourself.

Lakayla nods with understanding.

LAKAYLA

I will. Thanks. Can we make this a regular thing?

Monique smiles.

MONIQUE  
I'd like that.  
(beat)  
Have you heard from Jeremiah?

LAKAYLA  
No, why?

MONIQUE  
Oh, nothing. Just checking.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - DETECTIVE FLOOR - DAY

The room is subdued, whispers and typing. Detectives nod greetings.

Taylor, wearing a sling, eases into his seat. A case file box labeled "Hellhound" sits on his desk. He stares at it.

Footsteps approach - RUSSELL.

RUSSELL  
Welcome back, fragile.

Taylor smirks faintly.

TAYLOR  
They named it, huh?

RUSSELL  
Yep.

Beat.

TAYLOR  
Meet me in Interrogation Three.  
Five minutes.

He exits.

LOBBY - RECEPTIONIST DESK - SAME TIME

Jeremiah enters holding two sets of flowers in vases. He examines the destruction he caused.

He approaches the desk.

JEREMIAH  
Flowers for Taylor and Russell.

Receptionist hands him a guest pass.

JEREMIAH  
Thanks. Good to see you.

RECEPTIONIST  
You too.

Jeremiah walks away.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM 3 - LATER

Dim, bland walls, two-way mirror. Russell sits on the table.  
Taylor enters.

RUSSELL  
How you late to your own meeting?

TAYLOR  
Restroom.

RUSSELL  
Fine. Now, what's up?

Russell watches Taylor somberly approach the metal table -  
what's going on with him? Russell hops off the table and  
Taylor pulls out a metallic chair. They both sit.

With his elbow on the table, Taylor rests his head in the  
palm of his hand, staring at the ground.

TAYLOR  
Remind me why I'm still here.

He looks up at Russell who recites-

RUSSELL  
Because what we can do here is more  
impactful than what we could do if  
we were just civilians.

Taylor nods, conflicted.

TAYLOR  
This Hellhound thing- it's fucking  
with me. We worked with Cummings.  
Everyone heard stories about  
Redman.

They lock eyes, communicating silently. Russell looks away.

TAYLOR  
Two of us down. And because of  
that-

RUSSELL

More of us will make it home.

She steels herself.

RUSSELL

Every day I ask my brother if I'm  
honoring him, or betraying him.

Behind the glass, CAPTAIN NICKELS watches, arms crossed,  
empathetic.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Pedestrians walk the well-lit sidewalk as cars pass by. A large, haunting shadow of a canine stalks a nearby alley. A vibrating growl harmonizes with the city's ambience. Around the corner-

Two white COPS chase a BLACK MAN. They scan cars, weapons drawn. They turn down a neighborhood street-

A street light down the block and a few porch lights illuminate through a ominous mist.

Cops scan the street - Black man is gone. They draw their weapons to hunt - checking behind and under cars.

WHITE COP 1 stumbles into a scorched paw print. His face drains.

WHITE COP 2 turns around and sees White Cop 1 sprinting to the main street.

Behind White Cop 2, a civilian steps onto the sidewalk, illuminated by the street light, approaches a car.

-- A SHADOW, with glowing eyes, gallops at high speed, flattens the civilian - Hellhound!

Hellhound continues towards the unaware, White Cop 2-

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Trash and recycling bins are at the curb for pickup.

SUZAN (50s, white) rages at cops on her porch.

SUZAN

About time you got here! I pay  
fucking taxes, you know.

She points next door – a Black family celebrating a birthday.

SUZAN

They've been at it for hours! Do something!

CRASH! A metal trash can thrown, sparks down the street.

The cops bolt to their car and drive away.

SUZAN

Are you guys fucking kidding me?

-A RECYCLING BIN slams her back inside her house.

INT. PRECINCT - BACK OFFICE - NIGHT

A smoky room, blinds drawn. Two RING-WEARING DETECTIVES shuffle through files, shredding reports.

DETECTIVE #1

(to himself)

We'll frame it as random cops being targeted. Make 'em think some nut's out here hunting cops.

DETECTIVE #2

(uneasy)

Families are asking questions - how long can we keep painting our own as saints?

Detective #1 holds up his ring, glaring.

DETECTIVE #1

As long as we wear this, the circle covers its own.

INT. TALBOT HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jeremiah, gray in complexion, a glove covering the hand with the rotting finger, drags two white trash bags filled with tar vomit - sloshy viscous substance.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Teens gather for a workshop. Lakayla speaks passionately.

LAKAYLA

They want us quiet. That's why we can't be.

Shiann and cameraman EDDIE (20s) observe as she passes pamphlets – Bill 67 warnings.

LAKAYLA

Tomorrow – protest outside the Mayor's banquet. Pop out.

Fists rise in solidarity.

Shiann approaches her.

SHIANN

What you're doing is amazing. I remember you were really about punching the system back. What changed you?

Lakayla looks around.

LAKAYLA

I'm still about punching the system back. Just finding my way to do it.

SHIANN

What do you think about Hellhound?

Lakayla points to Robbie, Kisha and Sean passing out pamphlets.

LAKAYLA

Those three just told me how Hellhound probably saved their lives. I think Hellhound fulfills a need. It's not right, but real.

Shiann raises an eyebrow.

SHIANN

Careful-you're starting to sound like a candidate.

Lakayla chuckles.

LAKAYLA

Well, you never know.

INT. CITY HALL – MAYOR'S OFFICE – DAY

GRAVEN sits at his desk, staring at a birthday photo of his late daughter.

FLASHBACK - MEMORIAL SERVICE - DAY

SUPER: 4 YEARS AGO

Crowded with people draped in black. Graven stands in front of a child-sized coffin, with a WOMAN, who sobs. Graven places a comforting arm around the woman-she shoves him away.

WOMAN

You could've prevented this! Our baby is gone because you're weak! Too fucking worried about public opinion, I fucking hate you!

She spits in his face.

FUNERAL GOERS GASP - a couple men pull Woman away from Graven. She spits in his face before she is taken away.

END FLASHBACK

Graven caresses the photo.

ON LAPTOP SCREEN - website titled "CHAOS - SIGNS OF THE END OF TIMES". Below the title is the quote, "When the land becomes flooded with chaos, the grieving will be granted strength for revenge."

KNOCK, KNOCK O.S., Graven closes his laptop.

GRAVEN

Enter.

Marcy approaches the desk.

MARCY

Last night two officers were killed and three pedestrians were wounded - two in critical condition.

Graven rubs his forehead.

GRAVEN

Have families been notified?

MARCY

Yes.

GRAVEN

Good.

(beat)

Schedule a press conference.

MARCY

Yes, sir.

She exits.

Graven reaches in a desk drawer, pulling out a small HAND-HEWN FLUTE, with ancient markings, carved and worn. He spins towards the office windows and smiles.

GRAVEN

(to himself)

Weakness cost me my baby girl. I'll never be weak again. Soon I'll calm the beast.

He places the flute to his lips-

EXT. STREET - DAY

HORN blares as Jeremiah jogs across the busy street. He stops in front of a church, examines it, looks around and enters.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Sunlight filters through cracked stained glass, scattering faded colors across rows of empty pews. The air hums with quiet reverence and dust.

Jeremiah meanders down the aisle, admiring the stained glass.

FATHER RILEY (O.S.)

Jeremiah.

Jeremiah whips around to see FATHER RILEY (70s, white male) in religious garb.

JEREMIAH

Father Riley.

INT. SACRISTY - MOMENTS LATER

Large desk, couch, a few chairs. Behind the desk, bookshelves lined with old religious books.

Jeremiah and Father Riley sit at the desk.

FATHER RILEY

I had a previous request for this book a couple months ago - a cop, said he was working a case. He never did return it.

JEREMIAH

So, Father, how does whistling play into the bible?

FATHER RILEY

Well, shepherds whistled to gather their flock. The lord is our shepherd, so when he whistles we come. I know that's not exactly how the passage goes.

They share a smile.

FATHER RILEY

The whistle signifies God's supreme authority and the ease at which he can command nations and orchestrate events. Man has tried to copy this - even the church made flutes from sacred wood to help with exorcisms.

JEREMIAH

Who else had the ability to do the whistle thing?

Father Riley contemplates.

FATHER RILEY

Some believed his second in command did. Before his fall-  
(beat)  
Lucifer.

SANCTUARY - MOMENTS LATER

Father Riley walks in with Jeremiah and stops.

FATHER RILEY

Come back again. You're always welcomed here.

Jeremiah forces a half smile and nods.

JEREMIAH

Thanks again, Father.

Father Riley watches him as he exits.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - DETECTIVE FLOOR - DAY

A beam of sunlight slips past the open blinds. Taylor reviews a notepad. Russell approaches with a book tucked to her side.

Russell scans Taylor's desk.

RUSSELL  
Your desk is atrocious.

TAYLOR  
This is what it looks like when  
detectives put in the work.

Taylor notices the book under Russell's hand.

BOOK COVER - "DETECTIVE INVESTIGATOR: STUDY GUIDE."

TAYLOR  
What is that?

RUSSELL  
What?

TAYLOR  
The book. What is-

- Taylor snatches the book and smiles.

- Russell snatches it back, embarrassed.

RUSSELL  
I was serious.

TAYLOR  
You'd make a great detective.

She blushes, determined.

RUSSELL  
I know.

Russell smiles at Taylor.

TAYLOR  
Get the captain's blessing. He  
hates surprises.

She nods, exits.

TAYLOR  
After, let's check on J. This case  
is bringing up shit.

INT. TALBOT HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jeremiah lies shirtless on the couch, the bullet wound on his chest has declined. A new tied white bag of black spew nearby. The television plays, muted.

He stares at the ceiling - SCREAMS of his victims and GROWLS play in his head.

He stands, drags the white bag of tar into the kitchen.

He returns, his gaze lands on the television.

TELEVISION - headline- "Hellhound".

He grabs the remote and unmutes it.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)  
...leaves collateral damage - a  
homeless woman hospitalized after  
its last attack.

Jeremiah's jaw locks - he squeezes the remote tightly.

-A KNOCK.

TAYLOR (O.S.)  
Hey J, it's me and Russell.

He turns off the television and approaches the front door.

FRONT DOOR

Jeremiah opens the door - O.S. KIDS PLAYING BASKETBALL.

TAYLOR  
Can we come in?

JEREMIAH  
Come in.

LIVING ROOM

Jeremiah hurries to tidy.

JEREMIAH  
Excuse the mess.

TAYLOR  
Bro, you don't need to explain.

Russell nods.

Taylor walks over to the mantel looking at photos.

JEREMIAH

Thanks.

RUSSELL

This Hellhound situation has been keeping us busy. Thanks for the flowers by the way.

TAYLOR

Yeah, thanks.

JEREMIAH

No problem. I'm glad you guys are okay. And thanks for coming by.

TAYLOR

What's up with the glove?

JEREMIAH

I was doing some cleaning.

Taylor nods.

RUSSELL

You taking care of yourself?

Jeremiah smiles.

JEREMIAH

Yeah, some version of that.

They chuckle.

Taylor's smile fades as he hones in on-

JEREMIAH'S CHEST: an unnatural red-ish tint, healed bullet wound he didn't have before Andre's death.

Reflexively, Jeremiah covers it as if scratching an itch.

JEREMIAH

Let me go put on a shirt-

TAYLOR

Was that a bullet wound on your chest? Looks recent.

Jeremiah looks Taylor in the eye.

JEREMIAH

Yeah. I was in a dark place.

Taylor studies him.

TAYLOR  
Looks like you're on the other side  
of that place now.

JEREMIAH  
Getting there.

Russell's eyes bounce between them.

Taylor changes the subject.

TAYLOR  
How's you and Mo?

JEREMIAH  
Complicated.

RUSSELL  
You two are cute together. I hope  
things work out.

Jeremiah smiles.

TAYLOR  
We should probably head out.

RUSSELL  
Yeah, you're right.

Jeremiah walks Taylor and Russell to the door.

INT./EXT. TAYLOR'S CAR - DAY

O.S. KIDS PLAYING BASKETBALL - Russell and Taylor enter and  
shut the doors behind them. Russell buckles up.

RUSSELL  
I couldn't fathom going through  
what he's been through.

Taylor stares out, haunted.

TAYLOR  
What kind of man could control that  
animal?

Russell stiffens.

RUSSELL  
You think J's connected?

Taylor shakes his head.

TAYLOR

This shit is weird. I don't know  
what to think.

-BANG! Basketball hits the hood of the car. Russell jolts.

RUSSELL

Shit!

NEIGHBORHOOD KID (O.S.)

Sorry!

Russell glares.

RUSSELL

Shut up.

They laugh weakly.

Taylor starts the car.

TAYLOR

You need a nap.

INT. MONIQUE'S HOME - NIGHT

Monique lies on her bed, staring at her phone. She picks it  
up, places a call and holds it to her ear - voicemail.

JEREMIAH (V.O.)

You know you reached, leave a  
message at the tone.

MONIQUE

Hey J. I know there's a lot going  
on and there's not much I can do to  
help with that, but-

(beat)

I just want to let you know that I  
don't see you as an angry monster,  
I see you as the man that you are.  
So, if you're trying to be more  
than angry- Let me help. Well, I'll  
see you tomorrow - be ready to  
clean.

She sets the phone down and crosses the room -

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

A PERSON crosses the sidewalk, revealing a SEA OF PLACARDS behind them.

On one side, a crowd of white people protest, and facing them on the other side are a crowd of Black people led by Lakayla. Between them, two officers guard the walkway and entry.

WHITE PROTESTORS' SIGNS - "Blacks get away with crimes cause you're scared of a dog", "Stop Harassing Us! We Pay Taxes!"

BLACK PROTESTORS' SIGNS - "You made the beast now live with it!", "Reform NOW", "Hold yourself accountable, or IT will".

Shiann and Eddie walk past the protesters and up the stairs.

INT. BANQUET HALL - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Opulent. Armed men in suits scan the crowd.

Shiann and Eddie walk up the red carpeted stairs. Shiann notices the armed men surveying the area. She covers her mouth and fakes a laugh.

EDDIE

What the hell's wrong with you?

SHIANN

Just play along.

Eddie smiles and gestures as if he is fishing.

SHIANN

What the fuck are you doing?

EDDIE

I'm telling a fish joke.

They enter the ballroom.

OFFICE

Set up for conversations, or phone calls.

Graven sits at a desk across from Michael.

MICHAEL

I did the research. It's not racist if data proves it. It's math.

Graven beams.

GRAVEN

You get it! The ring isn't just  
power - it purges weakness.

Marcy opens the door.

MARCY

Sir, they're ready.

INT. BANQUET HALL - BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

SOUND of a restless AUDIENCE, a low, impatient rumble.

Graven stares at his feet, wide-eyed, fearful. He grips a small flute with ancient writing on it - his hand trembles. He grips the flute tighter.

EXT. BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

Crowds chant louder. Jeremiah slips inside. Lakayla calls out but is blocked.

INT. BANQUET HALL - BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lights are dim, 150 people sit and converse at decorated, white linen tables as champagne is served by waiters. In front, a nicely dressed stage where a large projection screen hangs over a podium that Graven stands behind.

GRAVEN

I told myself not to ask for money  
until everyone has had at least two  
or three glasses-

The crowd LAUGHS. Shiann and Eddie stand in the back.

GRAVEN

So, I'll hold off. I will say that  
because of our diligent efforts our  
bill will pass.

APPLAUSE fills the room. Graven smiles and gives an accomplished nod.

INT. BANQUET HALL - BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

The crowd CLAPS. Jeremiah enters and scans the room. Graven stares at Jeremiah -- Shiann notices Graven's gaze. Jeremiah stands against the rear wall, watching.

GRAVEN

Thank you. Please enjoy yourself.  
And for crying out loud, drink!

The crowd chuckles and Graven exits the stage. STRING MUSIC plays from the overhead sound system.

Shiann leans against the wall next to Jeremiah.

SHIANN

You're the last person I expected  
here.

Jeremiah looks over.

JEREMIAH

Shiann.

Jeremiah gives her a hug.

SHIANN

Oh, hey. I didn't expect that.

Jeremiah pulls away.

JEREMIAH

Sorry. I've seen you so much during  
my son's case, I-I feel like I know  
you.

SHIANN

Okay, I guess we have put in enough  
time to move to hugging.

They chuckle.

SHIANN

So, why are you here?

JEREMIAH

Well, let's just say.

(beat)

It's going to be a big story.

--Graven claps his hand on Jeremiah's shoulder.

GRAVEN

Is that story about you returning  
to the force?

Jeremiah shoves his hand away.

JEREMIAH

Never. I'll change things from where I'm at.

Graven smirks, motions him aside.

GRAVEN

Jeremiah, let's chat. Ms. Li and-your friend-these men will show you out. Invite only.

Two armed men approach Shiann and Eddie.

SHIANN

Don't touch me! I'm an investigative reporter. I will figure this out. I promise you!

Jeremiah follows Graven.

SIDE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dimly lit, furnished with huge roll-away white board, a large desk, and a couple chairs along the wall.

Graven holds the door and Jeremiah enters. Gene and Frisk, from the Special Events Committee photo, approach Graven and stop in the doorway.

GRAVEN

(whispers)

I would like to read her obituary tomorrow morning with my coffee.

GENE

(whispers)

Maybe I take my time with her-

Graven grabs his arm.

GRAVEN

This isn't about your little urges.

Vision obscured, Jeremiah clocks Graven handing Frisk a wooden object that he places in his jacket.

GRAVEN

It didn't work on her, but it should work on our furry friend.

(darker)

She thought she could control me. She forgot - power outgrows its maker. Be careful, brother.

He pats Frisk on the shoulder as they exit.

Jeremiah confronts Graven.

JEREMIAH

I know what the fuck you're doing.  
Your committee of Klansmen - I'm  
putting an end to that shit.

GRAVEN

I have no idea what you are talking  
about. I'm going to guess you're  
equally confused.

JEREMIAH

How's this? Your whole committee's  
wearing murder on their fingers. I  
have enough to make people ask  
questions.

Amused, Graven smirks and nods. Impressive.

GRAVEN

Sounds like a grieving father's  
fantasy.

Jeremiah grabs Graven by his shirt. Graven smirks.

JEREMIAH

My son's killer belonged to your  
ring-wearing cult.

GRAVEN

My cult? And haven't you already  
exactd retribution for that?-

He leans in.

GRAVEN

Hellhound.

Jeremiah releases him - stiffens. Graven smiles.

GRAVEN

Been to any good bars lately?

Graven circles him, fascinated.

GRAVEN

All that power inside you.  
Remarkable. Join me.

Jeremiah glares.

GRAVEN

With Bill 67-89 passing- oh the things we will do now that we control the police department.

JEREMIAH

Like tear my community to shit.

Graven chuckles.

GRAVEN

Portland will be purified. We gotta crack a few eggs. Right, Detective?

Jeremiah pushes Graven away.

JEREMIAH

Fuck you! I won't let you guys take another Black life again.

Graven's stone face bares no wrinkle of expression.

GRAVEN

All beasts can be tamed.

Jeremiah flares his nose and locks eyes with Graven.

JEREMIAH

I said what I said.

Jeremiah turns and storms out - Graven follows.

BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Graven trails Jeremiah, who bumps into a waiter.

GRAVEN

Conviction cuts both ways. You remind me of that reporter lady.

Jeremiah stops.

GRAVEN

Except, it's highly likely that situation has already been resolved by now.

Jeremiah contemplates before he dashes to the exit.

GRAVEN

Once a public servant always a public servant, huh?

EXT. BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

Jeremiah bursts into the midst of the protest. CROWD  
INSTIGATOR slips past the cops and confronts Jeremiah.

CROWD INSTIGATOR  
You ain't safe, ni-

--Jeremiah turns to Crowd Instigator - his eyes flare RED.

--Crowd Instigator stumbles backwards, terrified.

Jeremiah bolts away.

INT./EXT. UBER RIDE - NIGHT

Shiann smiles at her phone - a video of Lakayla posted.

Car stops. She exits.

SHIANN  
Thank you.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - CONTINUOUS

Quiet. Desolate. Scattered street lights and warm glows from  
residents' windows barely illuminate the parked cars that  
line the curb.

Shiann strolls down the sidewalk, her heels ominously echoing  
through the darkness.

Gene and Frisk exit a vehicle a few cars back, CAR DOORS SHUT  
- they tail Shiann.

Her hand fumbles in her pocket. She whips around holding a  
petite can of mace.

SHIANN  
You want some of this!?

Gene and Frisk stop, and put their hands up. Frisk lifts his  
shirt, revealing his badge.

FRISK  
Whoa, we're police. Graven told us  
to make sure you made it home safe.

Shiann sighs and returns her mace to her pocket.

SHIANN  
And I thought he was an ass-

-THWACK, Gene slugs Shiann - she's out cold.

FRISK

Fuck! Now we gotta carry her.

GENE

Sorry, I-I didn't think--

FRISK

Shit! I'm not fucking picking her up. Not with this back.

Gene grabs her legs.

GENE

I'll just drag her. She's pretty.

He spreads her legs, getting a peek.

FRISK

Don't start that sick shit. They can only bury so many cases. Follow orders this time, fucking perv.

Frisk surveys the area.

--With ferocious speed, Hellhound darts forward, severing Gene's arm in a gruesome instant.

A gut wrenching SCREAM tore from Gene's throat as blood spews from his mangled limb.

Gene collapses with a THUD.

Shiann stirs awake. Unsteady, she makes it to her hands and knees.

SHIANN'S P.O.V.: MUFFLED COMMOTION - a severed, mangled limb is hurled on the blood soaked sidewalk.

Recoiling in fear, she tries to stand - falling on her backside.

Frisk panics, pulls the FLUTE. He blows - EERIE TONE.

Hellhound spasms as a horrifying visage emerged from its skull: Jeremiah's contorted face. It releases a earsplitting scream and canine yelps.

In disbelief and terror, Shiann's reporter instinct kicks in as she wildly searches for her phone and records the frightening spectacle in front of her.

Frisk raises the flute again – Hellhound SLASHES, severing fingers, shattering it.

FRISK YELLS, clutching his bleeding hand, stumbling towards his vehicle.

Shiann crawls over to a nearby fence.

Hellhound YIPS – Frisk freezes, paralyzed.

He breaks free, stumbles, runs – YIP again, frozen.

Hellhound appears to smile after discovering the effect of his yips.

FRISK stumbles to the ground, grabs his service weapon, turns and unloads his clip. Nothing there.

ON SHIANN'S PHONE: Frisk unlocks his car, opens his door—  
CRASH! Hellhound slams Frisk into the car, catapulting his head over the roof- CAR ALARM BLARES.

SHIANN fumbles her phone, it clatters to the pavement.

Hellhound swings around and glares, EYES OF CRIMSON FIRE.

They gaze into each other's eyes. A low growl vibrates the air as it stalks towards her, each step searing the ground.

Shiann trembles as Hellhound stops feet from her face.

SHIANN  
(shaky)  
Jeremi-

Hellhound bolts away in the direction he came, leaving Shiann the carnage, scorched prints and blaring alarm.

EXT. RESTAURANT – BACK LOT – DAY

Monique approaches her car with cleaning materials.

LAKAYLA (O.S.)  
Are we really closed today?

Monique turns around to see Lakayla approaching.

MONIQUE  
Oh, I'm sorry. My mind has been occupied-I forgot to tell you.

LAKAYLA  
Everything okay?

MONIQUE  
Yeah, everything is fine.

Monique ponders.

MONIQUE  
You think you're up for a little  
community service?

INT. TALBOT HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Jeremiah's asleep, head down on the table. He clenches  
Andre's Damian Lillard jersey in his hand.

O.S. KNOCK

He stirs awake. Another O.S. KNOCK.

He stands, grabs the bottom corners of the conspiracy board,  
and tacks them to the top corners. He steps back and observes  
the board. HEAVY KNOCK O.S.

FRONT DOOR

Jeremiah opens the door, squinting from the sunlight.

Monique and Lakayla stand holding cleaning supplies and bags.  
Both wearing T-shirts and sweatpants.

MONIQUE  
As advertised, and I brought help.

LAKAYLA  
Aye, Mr. Talbot.

Monique and Lakayla enter, brushing past Jeremiah. He rubs  
his eyes.

A cleaning cloth hits him in the chest. He shuts the door.

KITCHEN

Monique enters with cleaning supplies. Approaching the sink,  
she notices the folded sheet on the wall and sticky notes.

She stares at it, before turning on the faucet. She notices a  
black, viscous, tar-like substance near the faucet handles  
and runs her finger over it. Rubbing it between her fingers  
she contemplates.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cleaning supplies and empty bags lie on the floor. Lakayla picks up the busted vacuum as Monique enters.

MONIQUE

So, you never left this area?

Jeremiah smiles, gazes at the jersey in his hand.

JEREMIAH

I use to set up camp in here whenever Andre was out late. Guess part of me always thought he was coming back home.

Monique's eyes well. She wipes away a tear.

MONIQUE

Come on, we got some work to do.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A small stage holds a podium with a state and country flag behind it. The room is full of reporters, sitting and standing, facing the podium. Shiann, with a large bruise on her face, stands in the back with Eddie.

DOOR OPENS O.S., Graven approaches the podium with a GRIEVING WOMAN holding a small child. He slyly smiles at Shiann, who avoids eye contact.

GRAVEN

I want to thank you for showing up on short notice. I want to give the floor to a woman who lost her husband.

Grieving Woman approaches the microphone.

GRIEVING WOMAN

My son will grow up without knowing his father. I'll have to teach him how to shave, how to catch, and how to be a man-

She sobs uncontrollably and is ushered off the platform.

AD-LIBBED questions come from every reporter as their hands go up. Graven waves a hand in the air.

GRAVEN

Hold your questions for my press secretary.

The sea of reporters calm as photos are SNAPPED.

GRAVEN

Years ago, I wasn't strong enough to make the hard decisions to protect this city and our families. Because of that, I lost my baby girl to senseless gang violence. I won't allow weakness to destroy what's left of this city. Hellhound has murdered over ten officers and three civilians. One, a young Black boy. This creature is escalating.

Graven takes a sip of water and looks out to the crowd.

GRAVEN

So, we must escalate as well.

A number of SWAT members join Graven on the stage. Michael stands in his SWAT gear next to Graven.

Graven places a hand on Michael's shoulder.

GRAVEN

PPD's best and brightest will take down this threat to our city and send an unmistakable message.

Graven leans into the podium with an intense gaze.

GRAVEN

You don't police the police, you don't hurt our civilians and you sure as hell don't mess with our city. Thank you.

AD-LIBBED questions from reporters and cameras flash as Graven and his entourage exit.

EXT. STREET - FOOD CART - DAY

Shiann and Eddie stand in line behind a number of customers waiting to order food - Shiann jumps at a nearby.

EDDIE

Okay, now you're jumping at sirens. You've been acting weird all day. What's up? You gonna tell me about that bruise on your face?

SHIANN

I told you, I f--

EDDIE

--Fell, yeah I know. Never mind, I don't know why I try.

Shiann contemplates and pulls Eddie out of line.

EDDIE

What are you doing? You know people don't play when it comes to standing in line here.

SHIANN

Shut up. What if I told you I know who Hellhound is?

EDDIE

Who Hellhound is?

SHIANN

--I know, I know - just, what if? Should I turn him in if he's cleaning the department up? And if he saved my life?

EDDIE

Shit, uh - I don't know. He killed some innocent people too though. I guess if you consider him a hero, protect his identity. Right?

Shiann contemplates.

INT. TALBOT HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Clean and nearly empty. Lakayla and Monique laugh together on the couch as the T.V. plays.

Jeremiah enters in new clothing holding an open notebook and a pen. He sits on the couch.

LAKAYLA

You need a new lamp too!

Jeremiah writes in the notebook.

JEREMIAH

Y'all better be donating.

MONIQUE

Well, I don't know about money, but our Lakayla here will be donating a lot of her time. Since she decided she wants to run for local office.

Jeremiah snaps to Lakayla.

JEREMIAH  
Really? That's amazing.

Lakayla smiles.

LAKAYLA  
It's how I'm going to change the  
system from the inside.

Jeremiah's face betrays him with guilt and envy.

JEREMIAH  
Okay, Councilwoman. Give us your  
opinion on Hellhound?

Monique's gaze lands on Lakayla.

LAKAYLA  
Okay, real talk-this Hellhound  
debate is polarized. You either  
ride with Hellhound or against the  
movement. But like- are we going to  
ignore the innocent people that it  
hurt?

Jeremiah nods, defensively.

JEREMIAH  
By any means necessary.

LAKAYLA  
It's not justice if it looks just  
like their hate.

Jeremiah bristles. Beat. He doesn't answer.

Lakayla grabs her bag, heads for the door. Turns back once.

LAKAYLA  
If it's just flipped, how's that  
justice?

She exits - front door SHUTS.

Jeremiah looks away, struck with an undeniable truth.

Silence engulfs the room, broken by Monique pivoting towards  
Jeremiah and resting her hand on his knee.

MONIQUE

What's going on with you? You're never here, erratic outbursts, you're arguing with a child and you always have that glove on.

Jeremiah opens his mouth to speak-

MONIQUE

I know you heard my voicemail. I want us to be - *something* like we were. Just be honest. Please.

Jeremiah exhales. He looks over to Andre's photo - his eyes water before returning his gaze to Monique.

JEREMIAH

I've changed. I'm not the man I was. I'm-

--O.S. DISTANT WHISTLE - Jeremiah's hands shoot up to cover his ears, he squints and shakes his head.

JEREMIAH

Do you hear that whistle?

Monique listens for something.

MONIQUE

I don't hear anything.

-- An unseen force tugs Jeremiah's foot, dragging it menacingly towards the door. He wrestles it underneath him.

EXT. THIRSTY SOUL - ALLEY - SAME TIME

Consequence's face to the sky, WHISTLES.

INT. TALBOT HOME - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Jeremiah's heart POUNDS - the WHISTLE grows louder.

MONIQUE

Do you have a migraine? I think I got some ibuprofen in the car.

Jeremiah stumbles to the couch. Monique follows--

JEREMIAH

--I'm fine.

MONIQUE  
I'll be right back.

Monique grabs her purse and exits in a hurry.

EXT. TALBOT HOME - CONTINUOUS

Under the hushed glow of scattered street-lamps, Monique rummages in her purse while approaches her car.

A lonely, chilling resonance of the car's CHIRP reverberates down the deserted, eerie streets, the car's hazard lights flash to indicate the doors are unlocked.

She shoulders her purse and opens the car door.

--WHOOSH! A LARGE, DARK and HAIRY FIGURE zips behind her.

--Monique spins around - nothing there. She surveys the area before turning back to her car. Reaching for the glovebox.

--BEEEP!! She startles, accidentally hitting the horn. She grabs a bottle of ibuprofen from the glovebox.

INT. TALBOT HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Monique enters holding ibuprofen in hand.

She scans the room - Jeremiah is gone-

INT. THIRSTY SOUL - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Packed with people, Consequence stands behind the pristine counter drying a beer mug with a white towel.

--O.S. METALLIC CRASH!

CONSEQUENCE  
He's here!

The crowd CHEERS. Consequence WHISTLES two distinct notes.

BAM! BAM! at the old steel door - it bursts open. Hellhound ambles into the bar panting heavily, crashes to the ground.

Bones CRACK - Jeremiah stands naked, drenched, coughing tar onto the bar counter.

A faint WHISTLE needles the air - Jeremiah blinks-

QUICK FLASH: last night's violence surfacing like film burn.

CONSEQUENCE wipes tar off the counter with her bare hand. The tar SIZZLES against her skin. She doesn't flinch. She smiles.

CONSEQUENCE

At this rate, you'll be soulless in no time. Whatcha drinking?

Jeremiah wipes the tar residue from his lips with his hands and examines the bottles on the wall behind the counter that sit in front of a large mirror.

IN THE LARGE MIRROR - Patrons engage in conversation and drinking, unfazed by Jeremiah's transformation.

JEREMIAH

Apple Crown Royal, on the rocks.

She grabs a whiskey glass from a shelf on the wall.

CONSEQUENCE

Dessert time, huh? You got it.

She adds ice to the glass and prepares the drink.

JEREMIAH

You got anything I can put on?

Consequence ducks behind the counter.

BARTENDER

Here you go.

She plops sweat pants and a T-shirt on the counter.

She pours as Jeremiah sheepishly dresses.

She slides Jeremiah his drink and leans in.

Jeremiah takes a sip.

JEREMIAH

You could've just called me--

CONSEQUENCE

--I did call you. Hence, why you're here. Let's talk business.

She snaps - a long PRIMEVAL SCROLL materializes from fiery ash, stretching across the bar.

PRIMEVAL SCROLL: list of names, written in cursive, progress down the scroll. Crossed off: Redman, Cummings, Gene and Frisk. Graven's name is on the list.

CONSEQUENCE

I made you a list.

(beat)

You're welcome.

She leans in closer, nearly nose to nose, peering into Jeremiah's window to his soul.

CONSEQUENCE

Aw baby, you're running dangerously low. Two more innocents. Then you're mine.

She pulls away.

JEREMIAH'S GAZE - pulled to its fiery calligraphy.

Jeremiah looks away, swirling the ice cubes in his drink.

Consequence studies Jeremiah.

CONSEQUENCE

Well, say what's on your mind.

Jeremiah pivots in Consequence's direction.

JEREMIAH

I'm done.

Consequence nods understandingly and pours herself a drink.

CONSEQUENCE

(leaning close, low)

You think you're my first?

(sips her drink)

I've dealt with men like you before. Grieving. Desperate.

One of them even wears a crown now.

Jeremiah stiffens.

CONSEQUENCE

He thought he could cheat me - with same damn instrument.

(grins)

But the leash always outlives the servant.

Jeremiah grips his glass tighter.

JEREMIAH

Graven.

Consequence doesn't answer – just taps her nail against the primeval scroll, where Graven's name burns faintly.

CONSEQUENCE

You want justice.  
(beat, a whisper)  
I want payback.

she slides him the scroll, names half-burned away.

CONSEQUENCE

Funny how our goals overlap.

JEREMIAH

Why don't you just kill him  
yourself?

CONSEQUENCE

The truth is. I can't kill anything  
that has a soul. I can make you  
wish you were dead, but I can't  
kill you. God can-  
(chuckles)  
and they call me evil.

She throws back the contents in her glass.

CONSEQUENCE

You know what he'll do. He'll use  
your justice to pass his bill. Is  
that justice for your boy?

Jeremiah lowers his head and stares, shaking.

CONSEQUENCE

Fine. New term: you kill Graven, I  
give your soul back. One rule – do  
it before you burn what's left of  
you. Deal?

Jeremiah looks up at Consequence, hope in his eyes.

CONSEQUENCE

So, how about we get back out there  
and go out with a bang-in the name  
of justice!

A devilish grin spreads on her lips.

EXT. TALBOT HOME - LATER

Jeremiah approaches the front door, noticing that Monique's car is gone. He enters.

INT. TALBOT HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jeremiah collapses on the couch, staring into the far corner of the room- PERSISTENT BUZZING - jolts him. He stands and uproots a couch cushion, discovering his phone.

JEREMIAH'S PHONE - illuminated displays, alerts a new voice message awaits.

He returns the couch cushion, lowers himself down to sit and checks his voicemail.

LAKAYLA (V.O.)

Hey Mr. Talbot, it's Lakayla. I've been thinking and I know you have your reasons for feeling a way about Hellhound, and part of me feels the same-

Jeremiah's gaze shifts to his phone.

LAKAYLA (V.O.)

I just want you to know that. Andre believed in you. Not the badge. So I know there's another way. Any way, good night.

Jeremiah breaks, tears streaming.

He stands and exits.

EXT. STREET - MAKESHIFT VIGIL - NIGHT

Candles flicker. Photos of a BLACK TEEN boy Andre's age glow in the light.

A crowd chants. Anger. Grief.

Jeremiah watches from the edge - the weight of the dead pressing in.

He walks away.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT

Traditional, vast and empty. Jeremiah enters scanning the nave, he walks the long runner rug towards the front.

CONFESSIONAL BOOTH

Jeremiah sits, his head lowered a screen separates him from an UNIDENTIFIED PRIEST on the other side.

JEREMIAH

Uh, sorry father. I'm not Catholic,  
you were just the only church open.

UNIDENTIFIED PRIEST

No need to be sorry my son. All are  
welcomed to confess before God.  
What have you come to confess?

Jeremiah holds back tears.

JEREMIAH

I've done horrible things. Some on  
purpose and some on accident.

Beat.

UNIDENTIFIED PRIEST

Go on my child.

JEREMIAH

It didn't have to get here. It's my  
fault. I could've saved my son. I'm  
sorry, please forgive me.

Head lowered, his lap catches his tears-

UNIDENTIFIED PRIEST

Everything, good and bad, happens  
for a reason. Find what your's is.

Jeremiah looks up at the screen.

UNIDENTIFIED PRIEST

God forgives you. But he can't make  
you forgive yourself.

Jeremiah contemplates.

INT. TALBOT HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

In a trance state, Jeremiah, gray-ish skin, clammy with bags  
under his eyes, sits on the couch, wrinkled in yesterday's  
clothing. Taylor stands across from him - open jaw.

On Jeremiah's lap, a legal pad, full of written words.

JEREMIAH

I thought about this all night.  
It's the only way to stop. The only  
way to keep her safe.

Taylor reluctantly grabs the pad.

TAYLOR  
Okay. Let's go over this.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DUSK

Crimson sky. Rush hour traffic.

INT./EXT. TAYLOR'S CAR - DUSK - MOVING

Taylor drives, jaw tight, knuckles white on the wheel.  
Jeremiah sits cuffed in the back, face against the window  
like a kid on his first road trip.

Taylor checks the rearview. Jeremiah gazes out, oddly serene.

Taylor returns his gaze to the road.

JEREMIAH  
I'm not going to transform.

TAYLOR  
I don't know if you can, or not.  
But I know what I saw and it's a  
little fucking-

JEREMIAH  
-Crazy. Yeah, I know.  
(beat)  
I made a deal - I thought it was  
for justice. But all she wanted  
were souls- mine included. And  
Graven.

TAYLOR  
What about him?

JEREMIAH  
He's the one she really wants.

Jeremiah looks into the rearview mirror.

JEREMIAH  
I just wanted to do right by my  
son, and stop this shit against us.

Taylor glances into the rearview mirror, forcing Jeremiah's  
gaze out of his window.

JEREMIAH  
You know what nobody ever asks?  
How many times I did it the  
right way.

The car comes to a stop and idles.

JEREMIAH

How many reports I wrote that went  
nowhere. How many nights I sat in  
my car after shift telling myself,  
not tonight. Tomorrow.

Taylor eases forward, going nowhere.

JEREMIAH

I told myself that was patience.  
Told myself I was being smart. I  
was just waiting to be in a  
position to do something about it.

He exhales through his nose.

JEREMIAH

Truth is... I was waiting for  
permission.

He realizes the truth as he speaks it.

JEREMIAH

My son used to ask why I checked  
the locks every night. I told him  
it was my job. Told him the world  
was dangerous.

His reflection stares back at him.

JEREMIAH

But the danger wasn't outside. It  
was everything I stayed quiet  
about.

A beat.

JEREMIAH

When he died, everybody wanted me  
angry. Wanted me to cry. Wanted me  
to make noise.

He turns, just enough to catch Taylor in the mirror.

JEREMIAH

All I could think about was how  
many times I stood there and did  
nothing...

His voice lowers.

JEREMIAH

So men like that could go home.

Cars honk in the distance.

JEREMIAH

I didn't do this because I wanted power. I did it because the system already decided who mattered. And it wasn't him.

He shakes his head.

JEREMIAH

I'm not quiet anymore.

He turns back to the window.

Taylor doesn't respond.

INT. TALBOT HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Monique enters, calling out.

MONIQUE

J? You here? We need to talk.

She continues through the living room to the kitchen-

KITCHEN

Neat and eerily quiet.

MONIQUE

J? Your door was unlocked.

The folded sheet and sticky notes, called to her from her peripheral, sparking her curiosity. Pivoting, and drawn to the sheet, she unpinned it and recoiled in awe.

She stares with wide eyes and dropped jaw. She pulls out her phone and and places a call.

MONIQUE

Meet me at my restaurant in fifteen minutes. It's urgent. Bye.

She hangs up, her gaze locked on the conspiracy board.

CONSPIRACY BOARD - a crimson "X" covers the faces of the officers that were killed by Hellhound.

EXT. WATERFRONT - JUNETEENTH FESTIVAL - CONTINUOUS

The JUNETEENTH FESTIVAL. Carnival glow, crowds, food carts, basketball game.

BASKETBALL COURT

A twenty feet tall cyclone fence cages the court. Inside the cage an intense and physical game of basketball is being played - a CROWD spectates from the perimeter.

OFFICERS RICH and OFFICER STANLEY (both 40s, white) watch.

PLAYER #1 (early 20s, Black male) goes up for a dunk and PLAYER #2 (early 20s, Black male) blocks him. Player #1 SLAMS into the ground - CROWD OOHS. Slow to rise, Player #1 gets to his feet and hustles down court.

RICH

That looked like assault to me.

Rich and Stanley chuckle.

PLAYER #1

Well, I ain't pressing charges, pig, so don't worry about it.

He hustles back on defense. Rich clutches the cyclone fence and turns to Stanley with teeth clenched.

RICH'S HAND - bares the ring with the red, smudged circle.

He hits Stanley on his shoulder.

RICH

Time to earn your ring.

Rich struts down the fence line, Stanley follows.

ON THE BASKETBALL COURT

Player #1 guards Player #2 vigilantly at the top of the arc.

RICH (O.S.)

Black timeout!

Rich and Stanley approach the top of arc - Game comes to a halt. Player #2 holds the ball. The other players groan at the interruption. Player #1 faces Rich and Stanley.

PLAYER #1

What do y'all want man? We in the middle of a game.

RICH  
Pressing charges isn't up to you.

PLAYER #1  
Fine, whatever-

Blowing off the officer he returns to playing defense.

PLAYER #1  
Come on, game on.

RICH  
Game's not on.

Rich points to Player #2.

RICH  
You, turn around and put your hands  
behind your back.

Player #2 takes a step back.

PLAYER #2  
What? Why?

PLAYER #1  
Fuck that, y'all tripping-

CROWD BOOS with AD-LIBBED PROTESTS.

Rich and Stanley exchange glances, overwhelmed by the  
menacing number of hostile faces.

PLAYER #1  
Check ball. Let's go.

Player #2 checks the ball to Player #1, then dribbles.

Stanley looks at Rich - what do we do now? Rich pulls his  
service weapon out and points it at Player #2.

RICH  
Drop the fucking ball. Hands behind  
your back!

CROWD SHRIEKS and YELLS. Stanley fumbles with his holster and  
draws too, aiming shaky.

PLAYER #1  
What the fuck is your problem? Why  
you pointing your guns at us!? We  
ain't did shit!

RICH  
Shut the fuck up! Everybody on the  
fucking ground. Now!

STANLEY'S - head is on a swivel, he licks his dry lips and  
struggles to swallow.

Phones rise. A BLACK WOMAN records.

Stanley sees Black Female pointing something at him -- He  
pivots in her direction BLAM!, BLAM!, BLAM!

CHAOS ERUPTS! Crowd FREAKS, scattering in every direction.

Player #2 throws the ball at Rich and bolts.

RICH - blocks the ball with his elbow and aims - BLAM!, BLAM!

INT. BREAKING BREAD - CONTINUOUS

Lakayla enters to Monique leaning against the counter,  
vigorously tapping her foot. Lakayla scans the room.

LAKAYLA  
Business is slow. What's up?

-Monique grabs her wrist and pulls her to the back.

OFFICE SPACE

Monique sits at a table, Lakayla joins her - a laptop open,  
Jeremiah's photos spread across the table.

MONIQUE  
He's spiraling. But this - this  
proves Graven's dirty.

LAKAYLA  
Then let's use it.

INT./EXT. TAYLOR'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Still stuck in traffic - CELL PHONE RINGS through the car  
speakers - Taylor hits a button on the steering wheel,  
answering the call.

TAYLOR  
This is Taylor--

RUSSELL (V.O.)  
--What's wrong with your radio!?  
I've been trying to reach you.

TAYLOR  
I had a personal errand to run--  
what's wrong?

RUSSELL (V.O.)  
It's all hands on deck. Two cops  
opened fire on the Waterfront.

Taylor looks in the-

REARVIEW MIRROR - Jeremiah is fuming with clenched teeth and flared nostrils. His breathing is heavy and rapid.

RUSSELL (V.O.)  
At least four civilians are down.

TAYLOR  
What?

Taylor's eyes well, he swallows his emotions.

TAYLOR  
What race were they?

RUSSELL  
Don't make me say it.

Taylor nods.

TAYLOR  
I'm on my way.

He pushes a button on the steering wheel - the call ends.

Beads of sweat rest on Jeremiah's forehead and nostril. Agonized gasps struggle escaping through his clenched jaws. His eyes water.

JEREMIAH  
I tried, I tried. It doesn't matter  
what I do, everything is wrong!

TAYLOR  
That's not on you! That's on those  
cops. You're doing the right thing.

JEREMIAH - stares into his lap.

FLASHBACK - INT. POLICE PRECINCT - ROOM - NIGHT

Jeremiah (in uniform, years earlier) sits across from OFFICER CUMMINGS, who is sweating under the weight of his own lie. Between them - a police report with glaring inconsistencies.

Captain Nickels approaches the doorway from a distance.

Jeremiah's eyes flicker – conflicted. Across the glass, a BLACK MOTHER sobs in the lobby, ignored.

CUMMINGS

(quietly, pleading)

Back me up, J. Don't leave me out  
here alone.

Jeremiah stares at the report. His hand trembles over the signature line.

He locks eyes with the grieving mother outside the glass.

A long, suffocating silence.

Jeremiah sets the pen down.

JEREMIAH

(steady)

Write your own lie.

Jeremiah storms out.

END FLASHBACK

JEREMIAH

The right thing would've been to  
stand up and say something about  
this shit a long time ago.

Taylor's gaze search the dashboard for a response.

JEREMIAH

I won't wait for someone else to  
take care of it ever again.

TAYLOR

J, let us handle thi-

JEREMIAH

Let me go.

Taylor's gaze shifts to the rearview mirror.

JEREMIAH

You can't be blue and Black at the  
same time. Trust me, I was blue  
until they reminded my ass that I  
was Black.

TAYLOR

So an eye for an eye at all costs?  
When will it stop?

JEREMIAH

Why don't you ask them that? I'm on  
borrowed time-I'm a dead man  
walking anyway.

Marinating with their thoughts, the WHIRRING of the engine  
drowns out the silence-

Jeremiah scowls out of his window when - handcuff keys JINGLE  
and land on his lap.

JEREMIAH

I didn't need these. I wanted your  
support.

STREET - OUTSIDE OF TAYLOR'S CAR

PEDESTRIANS walk the sidewalk as a CYCLIST in a helmet,  
shorts and T-shirt rolls down the bike lane.

--EXPLOSION! Hellhound bursts through the roof of Taylor's  
car, sending Pedestrians scattering in terror.

Leaping from his car, Taylor's jaw drops. Hellhound  
materializes before him, a breathtaking, terrifying reality.

Hellhound collides violently with several vehicles - it  
thunders away.

Taylor snatches up the abandoned bike and gives chase.

EXT. WATERFRONT - JUNETEENTH FESTIVAL - NIGHT

PEDESTRIANS stampede, shrieking, clawing for exits. Sirens  
swell O.S.

Hellhound skids to a stop, scanning.

A CONCERNED MOTHER shoves through the flood, wild-eyed.

CONCERNED MOTHER

Sarah! Has anybody seen a little  
girl!? Sarah!

SARAH (3) stands frozen in the chaos, smiling.

The Mother sees her. Horror.

CONCERNED MOTHER

No, baby!

She lunges— CRASH! The stampede crushes her to the ground.  
She reaches, helpless.

CONCERNED MOTHER

SARAAAH!

CONSEQUENCE (V.O.)

(echo from within)

Every death you cause is a drink in  
my glass. But his death is my  
toast. Bring them all to me.

Hellhound's POV — THERMAL VISION. Two glowing figures stalk a  
third, crawling away. Five cold bodies litter the court.

Hellhound snarls, drool sizzling as it hits the ground. He  
barrels toward the court, thundering towards Sarah—

He stops inches from her.

They lock eyes. A growl rumbles — then Hellhound veers,  
tearing toward the basketball court.

Russell sweeps in, crouching to Sarah.

RUSSELL

You okay?

SARAH

Big doggie.

RUSSELL

Yeah. Big doggie.

The Mother pulls Sarah into her arms, smothering her in  
kisses.

SARAH

Thank you!

RUSSELL

Get out of here.

They flee. Russell steels herself.

RUSSELL

Stopping things before they happen.

She bolts after Hellhound.

ON THE BASKETBALL COURT

RICH grinds his shoe into Player #1's ankle. Player #1 SCREAMS.

RICH  
Not so tough now, huh?

He leans in, taunting Stanley.

RICH  
Go ahead. Pop your cherry.  
Graven'll pin this on you. You'll  
get your ring.

Stanley raises his pistol, hands shaking.

BOOM! A food cart SMASHES down, exploding splinters.

They whirl.

HELLHOUND. A juggernaut charging downhill. Benches explode. Lampposts uproot and snap like twigs.

Primal terror seizes them. They run.

Rich risks a backwards glance and fires at Player #1- BLAM! Miss.

RICH  
Shit!

He flees.

HELLHOUND - burst through the chainlink fence. His gaze locked on Rich and Stanley making their escape.

The posts of the chainlink fence unearth - the entire fence falls on Player #1, who shields his face-

SNAP - Hellhound's jaws clamps the fence before it makes impact and slings it into the grass. Hellhound YIPS.

Rich and Stanley frozen by an invisible force, limbs LOCKED.

The fence SHRIEKS, bending and tearing O.S.

A low, guttural rasp grows louder.

Suddenly - freedom. They stumble, too late.

Hellhound EXPLODES out of the dark. Jaws clamp RICH's torso - ribs SPLINTER with a wet CRACK. He's lifted in the air, legs thrashing - Hellhound SLAMS him against the pavement.

Stanley pisses himself. Stares hollow-eyed at the monster.

Hellhound's bloody fangs hover inches from his face. For a flicker- Jeremiah's whisper seeps out:

JEREMIAH (V.O.)

Stop.

The pause evaporates.

CHOMP.

Blood sprays. Stanley crumples in halves.

PLAYER #1 lies motionless, eyes wide, pretending to be dead.

Russell stumbles onto the court, sees him move.

RUSSELL

Hey, you okay? Where are you hurt?

PLAYER #1

My leg. I got shot.

She approaches Player #1-

WHAM! Hellhound accidentally rams into her, sending her flying. Hellhound continues on its path-

HELLHOUND'S - ears perk. RUSSELL GROANS (O.S.).

FESTIVAL GROUNDS

Debris litters the ground like after a hurricane. Russell sits, slumped against a wrecked food cart.

Hellhound approaches her, head down - WHIMPERING.

Russel makes a feeble attempt to reach for her weapon - her arm drops to her side.

RUSSELL

Go ahead, do it.

RUSSELL'S P.O.V.: HELLHOUND - steps closer, soft, eyes reflecting remorse. She closes her eyes. Then she opens them - Taylor kneels in front of her.

EMTs triage victims, firefighters drag hoses.

RUSSELL

Late as usual.

TAYLOR  
You scared me. Come on-

RUSSELL  
Not going anywhere.

He glances behind her-

A thick, steel fence post juts from her back. He steels himself, but his eyes crack with grief.

TAYLOR  
It isn't that bad.

RUSSELL  
Liar.

Blood bubbles at her lips.

RUSSELL  
Don't start crying. I don't wanna die thinking you're a little bitch.

Taylor forces a laugh through tears.

TAYLOR  
You would've been the best detective.

RUSSELL  
I know. Tell Nickels- I passed the exam.

Her smile softens. Her head rests on his shoulder. She exhales. Gone.

Taylor lowers his forehead to hers, lost in the carnage.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Three walls of glass look out onto a bustling precinct. The room is PACKED with over eighty UNIFORMED OFFICERS. A low, hostile MUMBLE hangs in the air.

The door opens. Silence.

GRAVEN, NICKELS, and TAYLOR stride in. Purposeful. Grim. Graven goes straight to the podium. Nickels and Taylor flank him, a united front.

GRAVEN  
Good morning. Let's proceed.

The MUMBLING dies. Every eye is on him.

GRAVEN

Last night, three of our brothers,  
four teens, and two adults were  
slaughtered at the Juneteenth  
Festival. By this- Hellhound.

Taylor's head whips toward Graven. His jaw tightens. He  
buries the shock, faces the crowd.

MARCY moves through the crowd, handing out thick PAMPHLETS.

GRAVEN

Effective immediately, I am issuing  
an executive order to militarize  
this department under my command.  
We are invoking martial law. A  
seven PM curfew starts tonight.

A wave of uneasy murmuring.

GRAVEN

We will protect the public. My way.  
We will eradicate this thing.  
Weakness buried my daughter. Order  
will save yours.

Graven steps back. Taylor moves to the podium, all business.

TAYLOR

We're taking this beast down, fast.  
And we're using them.

He jabs a finger toward the glass wall. The room turns.

Through the glass: A HORDE OF REPORTERS. Among them, SHIANN  
and EDDIE, watching intently.

TAYLOR

We're partnering with the media.  
Our Captain has volunteered to play  
a vital role in the operation.

Taylor shoots a glance at Nickels. Nickels gives a tight,  
confirming nod to the room.

TAYLOR

So here's the plan.

INT. CITY HALL - MAYOR'S OFFICE - HOURS LATER

MARCY (V.O.)

Go ahead and drop the Hellhound  
file on his desk. Going to run to  
the ladies room, back in a sec.

The door opens. Taylor enters, approaches the desk and drops the file. An old folder labeled "Bamana Artifacts" catches his eye. His gaze falls back to the door before opening the file.

BAMANA ARTIFACTS FOLDER: sketches of the flute with ancient markings and a note - "made of olive wood, used to rebuke demons and malicious spirits. Tested on Subject#11 (1987)."

A photo of Graven paper-clipped to the inside. Written on the bottom: "Transference Subject #1".

It's the same hand-hewn flute with ancient markings we've seen before. Intrigued, Taylor reaches to turn the page-

MARCY

--Still here, huh?

Taylor swings his head towards the door.

TAYLOR

Yeah, I saw this and was curious.

Marcy approaches.

MARCY

Oh, I don't know what that is. Boys  
and their toys right? I know he has  
about three of them, or so.

Taylor chuckles.

TAYLOR

Thanks.

He exits.

INT. THIRSTY SOUL - NIGHT

Sizable crowd sits at various tables. Jeremiah and a LATINA WOMAN (mid-20s) sit at opposite sides of the bar. R&B music plays in the background.

Jeremiah, welling eyes, dressed in a burgundy sweatsuit, collection of empty shot glasses in front of him. Pale skin, sunken face, the bar counter holds him up. He scolds himself.

JEREMIAH

I almost killed that little girl  
and- I didn't see Russell.

Consequence sets down a drink in front of Latina Woman and approaches Jeremiah with a full shot glass.

CONSEQUENCE

It's okay if you're sad. That'll go  
away. Look on the bright side, you  
didn't hurt that little girl.

She examines Jeremiah.

CONSEQUENCE

Looks like the incident with  
Russell got you on your last leg.  
Drink this while you can.

She sets the shot glass in front of Jeremiah. He shoots it and SLAMS down the glass.

He trembles to his feet and drags himself towards the exit. He stops and leans in towards Latina Woman.

JEREMIAH

You shouldn't sign shit here.

He staggers to the exit.

Latina Woman looks to Consequence. In Spanish, subtitled:

LATINA WOMAN

Sorry, I don't speak English.

Consequence slithers forward, speaking in Spanish.

CONSEQUENCE

He said, have a great day.

Latina Woman smiles and waves to Jeremiah as he exits. Consequence continues speaking in Spanish.

CONSEQUENCE

Tell me more about your mother  
being deported-

INT. MONIQUE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Black and different shades of brown dominate the color scheme. Black art hangs on the walls.

Monique sits on the couch with remote in hand. She shakes her head, stands and exits.

ON TV - A photo of Jeremiah, underneath the photo "HELLHOUND DISCOVERED - WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE".

EXT. STREET - MINUTE LATER

Desolate, silent, just the sporadic glow of street-lamps. Jeremiah hobbles through the streets, his hands clenched deep in his pockets. Every step a blessing.

BUZZING disrupts the silence. He takes out his cell and examines it with apprehension.

JEREMIAH'S CELL - "Mo".

Silencing the incoming call, he stuffs it deep in his pocket and continues his purposeful shuffle.

INT. MONIQUE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Worry etched on Monique's face, she places another call.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

DING, his cell betrays the silence once more. Reaching back into his pocket, he examines it.

JEREMIAH'S CELL - Crime Against Us app - "ALERT: CAPTAIN OF PPD ARRESTED FOR SHOOTING UNARMED BLACK WOMAN."

Jeremiah halts, recoiling from the message. A wave of bewilderment washes over him; head throbbing with denial.

JEREMIAH  
FUCK! FUCK! FUCK!

He SLAMS his phone to the sidewalk, shattering to pieces. He's exhausted, his legs barely keeping him up and what's left of his soul, barely keeping him going.

He crouches, his face buried in his palms, grappling with the news. Exhaling a few fierce intentional breaths. Slow to rise, he staggers off with a new purpose - one more time.

EXT. STREET - BUS STOP - CONTINUOUS

Empty, sporadically illuminated by street lamps, a single vehicle passes by. Lakayla, Robbie, Kisha and Sean pin up flyers.

FLYERS: Titled, "Vote for Someone Who Stands for Something". Centered, a medium shot image of Lakayla smiling, dressed business casual.

BUZZ, BUZZ - Lakayla answers her phone.

LAKAYLA  
Hey, what's up?

INT. MONIQUE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MONIQUE  
The news just confirmed it.  
Jeremiah is Hellhound.

LAKAYLA  
How is that possible?

MONIQUE  
I don't know. I mean thinking it is one thing, but they showed the video of him changing.

LAKAYLA  
He's out there killing people.

MONIQUE  
He's saving people too.

Lakayla glances over to her group pinning up flyers.

MONIQUE  
Lakayla, he is just a flawed man, doing the wrong thing, for the right reasons.  
(beat)  
I know there's a better way. But sometimes things have to get worse before they can get better.

Beat.

LAKAYLA  
Then I'll make sure things get better.

Monique nods.

MONIQUE

Good girl.

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - NIGHT

Quiet and still, a mournful wind sweeps city debris down the deserted street. Three police transport vehicles pull to the curb, with blue and amber lights flashing.

INT./EXT. MIDDLE TRANSPORT VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

TACTICAL OFFICER NGUYEN (30s, Asian-American male) sits in the driver seat and TACTICAL OFFICER IRVING (30s, Black female) sits adjacent. They scan the area.

An anxiety washed, fidgeting Nickels in the back seat.

INT./EXT. TAYLOR'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

From a vantage point half a block distant, Taylor intently observed the precinct, looking over a small whiteboard.

WHITE BOARD - tactical map of positions and players involved.

He engages his walkie:

TAYLOR

Any sign of him?

INT./EXT. MIDDLE TRANSPORT VEHICLE - NIGHT

Nguyen glances in the back seat. Engages his walkie:

NGUYEN

Nothing on the way here.

Irving looks out the backseat driver side window.

IRVING

What the fuck is that?

IRVING P.O.V.: Hellhound gallops down the middle of the street, a trail of fiery ash flying from its body.

-Irving drops her seat back, pulls her handgun and points it at the window across Nickels' face. She scans the street - nothing there. *I'm I fucking losing it.*

-Nguyen and Nickels look out the window.

The street is clear.

NICKELS  
Did you see something?

IRVING  
I just saw it, I swear-

--SMASH! Hellhound RAMS the rear transport car, sending it tumbling onto the sidewalk.

NICKELS  
Holy shit!

IRVING  
Move! Move! Move!

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - CONTINUOUS

Nguyen and Irving jump out of the car. Irving throws the back door open - Nickels falls out of the vehicle.

Irving helps Nickels up - they sprint for the precinct.

Nguyen slides on the hood of the car and follows.

INT./EXT. TAYLOR'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Taylor opens his door, draws his service weapon, uses his door as cover as he engages his walkie:

TAYLOR  
Don't shoot! Let him go inside.

Hellhound flinches at the overturned vehicle and looks inside. He spots Nguyen through the vehicle's window, running inside the precinct.

Hellhound snarls and stalks to the entrance.

Weapon trained on Hellhound, Taylor engages his walkie:

TAYLOR  
Heads up, he's coming in.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - CONTINUOUS

Fully armored PPD officers, clad in head-to-toe protective gear, aim tranquilizer rifles at the main entrance. As Nickels sprints past the line of officers, Michael swiftly redirects him to the rear exit.

MICHAEL  
This way. Follow me.

In a desperate sprint, Irving reaches the nearest posted officer and grabs two tranquilizer guns. She hurls one with precision to Nguyen, who, in a dynamic, low slide, snatches it mid-air and twists, positioning himself prone.

Catching their breath, they aim at the main entrance.

NGUYEN  
Where did the captain go?

IRVING  
He ran to the back.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Taylor lowers his weapon, observing Hellhound. Hellhound stops short of the entrance and prowls to the side of the precinct sniffing the air and surveying the area.

Taylor engages his walkie:

TAYLOR  
What the hell happened in there?  
Where's the captain?

IRVING (V.O.)  
He's in the back.

Hellhound bolts down the street.

TAYLOR  
Fuck!

Frustrated, he pounds the hood of his car.

INT. OLD CHURCH - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Michael pushes open the massive, weathered oak doors and enters, the Catholic ambiance heavy. Nickels' gaze slips behind him before entering.

With purpose in his stride, Michael approaches a long dark hallway leading to a room illuminated by flickering candles. Nickels secures the large doors and follows.

DARK HALL - a long crimson runner extended into the illuminated room. Nickels' gaze lingers on the antique religious art that hang on the ancient walls.

SANCTUARY - immense, round, and tiered, balconies spiral upwards, an amphitheater of shadowed intimacy. A few tattered banners with nearly enclosed smudged circle on them, hang.

Flickering candlelight beneath stained glass of CHRIST ON THE CROSS casts a haunting glow. Christ's painted eyes seem to watch what's to transpire below.

Trailing Michael, Nickels steps inside, his gaze arrested by the breath taking chamber.

NICKELS

What the hell is thi--

--PLUNGED into Nickels' chest, an antique knife baring the red, smudged, nearly enclosed circle.

MICHAEL

Sorry, sir. Direct orders.

Nickels falls to the ground and Michael drags his body.

FOYER - MINUTES LATER

BANG! - Hellhound bursts through the massive oak doors. Surveying the area it releases a GUTTURAL GROWL, before it stalks inside, making its way to the sanctuary.

SANCTUARY

Arcane, crimson symbols stain the middle of the floor. Nickels lie in a puddle of blood.

Hellhound emerges from the shadowy hallway, its gaze sweeping across the chamber, locks onto Nickels' lifeless body. It wrinkles its nose and bares its teeth; then with a predatory gleam in its eyes it advances.

From the second floor's balcony, Graven steps out from behind a pillar.

Hellhound halts in the middle of chamber, its gaze locked on Graven - SNARLS.

Graven sets a framed photo of his daughter on the banister, removes his cult ring and preaches like a twisted pastor.

GRAVEN

Weakness buried her. Strength will  
keep the rest alive.

The hairs on Hellhound's back rise.

From the sanctuary shadows, CLOAKED FIGURES emerge - CHANTING, their cadence mimicking a church choir. Michael holds an antique flute - his badge gleams from the candles.

The walls tremble with corrupted gospel.

Hellhound DASHES-

The flute SCREAMS. Hellhound freezes - winces, fighting it. His eyes flare crimson. The spell breaks.

He snarls at Michael and charges.

Two Cloaked Figures raise imitation flutes - no cryptic markings, cheap knockoffs. Their flutes SCREAM in unison.

Hellhound CRASHES, YELPING at the edge of the crimson circle, convulsing as tar, leaking in black ropes, escape his orifices.

Gaven raises his arms to the heavens as the black ropes make their way to him.

GRAVEN

Behold, your successor.

He convulses, a HELLISH SHRIEK tearing from him.

Hellhound collapses - drained.

Graven's body twists and convulses - the beast that emerges shudders, unstable. Fire eating itself alive. A counterfeit Hellhound, fueled by nothing of substance.

Hellhound's eyes SNAP OPEN-

HELLHOUND'S P.O.V.: Andre kneels.

ANDRE

You became what killed me. End it-  
for me.

Hellhound's eyes IGNITE. A GUTTURAL ROAR-FLAMES ERUPT beneath him! Fire consumes the circle, figures, banners-

TRANSFORMED GRAVEN - leaps from the balcony - BOOM - obliterating the flute bearer's charred remains on impact.

A hollow growl escapes his muzzle.

Their gaze locked - two heavyweights awaiting the bell.

From the flames, almost biblical, Consequence emerges unscathed. She watches from the balcony with a sly grin.

A sharp threaded whistle escapes her lips, signaling the fight to begin.

TRANSFORMED GRAVEN - charges and paws Hellhound in the face, sending him FLYING ACROSS THE ROOM. He pounces-

-HELLHOUND rolls out of the way.

-STOMP! A gaping hole where Transformed Graven's paws landed.

CONSEQUENCE'S elbows rest on the banister next to the framed photo of Graven's daughter and his cult ring - the ring burns bright with a crimson light.

Their silhouettes clash on the walls - an unholy cage match.

INT THIRSTY SOUL - CONTINUOUS

Jeremiah's soul contract rests on the bar counter - smoke rises from the smoldering top left corner.

INT. OLD CHURCH - SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Hellhound pins Transformed Graven, snarling as acid drips from his teeth, ready to deliver the final blow.

CONSEQUENCE (V.O.)  
Do it and your free- or mine.

Jeremiah hesitates mid-strike, contemplating her words.

Transformed Graven bites Hellhound's paw and kicks him to the other side of the room - CRASH!

HELLHOUND - stumbles to all fours, favoring his paw, as Transformed Graven continues to amble towards him-YIP.

TRANSFORMED GRAVEN - paralyzed by an unseen force.

Hellhound seizes the opportunity, CHARGES, sinking his teeth into his throat.

Transformed Graven YELPS and struggles to get loose as soaked ash seeps from his neck. He goes limp.

Hellhound frees him from his jaws - a THUD on the floor.

Graven reverts to his human form staring at the ceiling, GASPING for a breath - he's dying.

GRAVEN  
 (choking on blood)  
 You're not better than me – you're  
 a killer. I never spilled blood.

GRAVEN'S P.O.V.: Consequence, delivers a serpent's smile. He  
 blinks – she's gone.

CONSEQUENCE (V.O.)  
 (echos from within)  
 Graven – time to pay your tab.

GRAVEN'S P.O.V.: Eyes stutter shut.

INT. THIRSTY SOUL – CONTINUOUS

Jeremiah's soul contract smolders out of existence.

INT. OLD CHURCH – SANCTUARY – CONTINUOUS

Hellhound staggers and collapses to the ground.

Andre appears, petting his snout, calming him, transforming  
 him back to Jeremiah.

JEREMIAH  
 (chokes)  
 She tricked me. She knew his hands  
 were clean.

ANDRE  
 It's time. You can rest now, Dad.

Jeremiah falls to the ground, relief on his face.

JEREMIAH  
 Did you ever pick which HBCU you  
 would attend?

ANDRE  
 Yeah. I picked Tuskegee.

Jeremiah cough-laughs as tar oozes from all orifices.

JEREMIAH  
 I knew you would.  
 (sobs)  
 I didn't know what else to do. I'm  
 sorry. I'm sorry.

ANDRE

You showed me to care when no else  
did. You never stopped trying.

Jeremiah's eyes glisten.

JEREMIAH

Then maybe- maybe she'll build what  
I couldn't- for us.

Michael's BADGE, half buried in ash, flickers from the  
flames. The same image from the opening. Jeremiah sees his  
reflection in the badge - recognizing himself, smiles  
faintly, watching it crumble to dust.

ANDRE

Rest now. She'll carry the fight.

Andre watches Jeremiah's body-ASHES blending into the debris.

EXT. THIRSTY SOUL - CONTINUOUS

"THIRSTY SOUL," sign sputters; the smudged "O" flickers out.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - DETECTIVE FLOOR - DAY

Box of donuts sit on a table. Officers go about their normal  
routine. MCCALLISTER (30s, white male) glides past, snags a  
donut and continuous towards an office labeled "CAPTAIN".

CAPTAIN OFFICE

Taylor sits at a desk reviewing papers: "CITIZEN COMPLAINT  
FORM". In front of him - two stacks. The stack to the right  
stamped: "INTERNAL AFFAIRS REVIEW REQUESTED".

KNOCK, KNOCK - it's McCallister, chewing on the donut.

TAYLOR

Perfect. Save me some time.

He picks up the stamped stack of papers and hands them to  
McCallister - he grabs them.

TAYLOR

Take these to the I.A. Liaison.

MCCALLISTER

Oh, they can't find Talbot's badge.

TAYLOR

Don't worry about it. I put it  
where it's supposed to be.

MCCALLISTER

Also, reporters are asking about  
the committee evidence.

TAYLOR

Share it with them.

He grabs another form and reviews it. McCallister's eyes are  
wide with confusion.

MCCALLISTER

Okay.

He exits. On a cabinet sits a photo: Taylor and Russell  
posing back to back - *Lethal Weapon* style.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Burned out. Torched bones. Shiann stands on the street,  
beyond a "Crime Scene" tape cordon.

EDDIE (O.S.)

Aaaand we're on.

SHIANN LI (V.O.)

The community harbors mixed  
feelings after receiving the report  
that, Jeremiah Talbot, A.K.A.  
Hellhound, fell victim to the fire  
that torched the church that once  
stood behind me.

EXT. CORNER STORE - DAY

Kisha, Sean and Robbie hang on the corner laughing. Kisha  
holds a news paper, front paged titled: "PPD Disbands  
'Special Events Committee' - New Oversight Promised."

Patrol car slow-rolls past the teens, then stops. The  
PASSENGER COP shakes his head to the DRIVING COP, the patrol  
car pulls away.

Kisha, Sean and Robbie HOWL like wolves.

SHIANN LI (V.O.)

Evidence brought forth by Lakayla  
Ross, Junior County Commissioner,  
has led to numerous arrests.

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

Lakayla Ross raises her hand, sworn in as the youngest CITY COUNCIL MEMBER. She looks out at the crowd - sees a sign being held up: "Justice Doesn't Need Monsters!" Monique and Taylor make eye contact with her. They nod. Her path begins.

INT. BREAKING BREAD - KITCHEN - DAY

Monique straightens a shadowbox: Andre's purple corsage, Jeremiah's detective badge, a small photo of them together. She touches the glass.

SHIANN LI (V.O.)  
Sometimes the truth doesn't bring  
justice. It brings a reckoning.

MONIQUE  
(whispers)  
We'll keep building.

She exits.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Shiann stands beyond a "Crime Scene" tape cordon.

SHIANN  
Praying for healing for our city,  
this is Shiann Li with The Portland  
Pursuer, signing off.

FADE OUT.

**THE END**

POST CREDIT SCENE

EXT. A NEW CITY - DOUGHNUT & COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Wallpaper of donut sprinkles and coffee mugs. TWO ICE AGENTS sit in a booth.

ICE AGENT1's HAND - SAME UNIQUE RING worn by Graven's men glints. Distant HOWL.

Both agents' gaze outside the window - O.S. HEAVY GALLOPING in the distance grows louder and louder-

CUT TO BLACK