

THERE IS LIFE

Written by

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EXT. TEMPORARY RECEPTION CENTERS - DAY

SUPER: POLAND-UKRAINE BORDER

On the Polish side, a series of white tents have been set up as temporary reception centers to welcome the refugees from Ukraine. A camera crew, wearing ANN (American News Network) windbreakers, is set up in front of the tents. The camera is on --

JILL LAWRENCE (late 40s), a seasoned journalist whose ambition is matched only by her dedication to the truth, grabs the microphone.

JILL

Good evening, and welcome to Life with Lawrence. I am here at the Poland-Ukraine border, where conflict has seized the region and has taken a toll not just in terms of geopolitical shifts but on the lives uprooted in its wake. But this is not another report on the devastating effects of the war with Russia...

As Jill speaks, the camera begins to PULL BACK, slowly revealing a wooden bridge...

JILL (CONT'D)

...This report is one of an inspiring individual who, in these darkest of times, has been a beacon of light.

The full view of the BRIDGE OF TOYS now becomes visible -- a kaleidoscope of colorful toys line the guard rails. As Ukrainian families journey across, the children among them pause to grab a toy... and their faces light up with joy.

Next to Jill is PIOTR WOLCZYK, Polish, an average looking man in his 40s.

JILL (CONT'D)

With me is the man who transformed this once ordinary bridge into an extraordinary message of hope. Piotr Wolczyk.

(turning to Piotr)

Piotr-- Tell us. How did this touching initiative come to be?

PIOTR

It started out with bringing food for refugees. One day, I see children... suitcases bigger than they are. So tired... The next I brought my passport, crossed, and offered to take the luggage across. Some ran. They have seen so much... So I started bringing toys and trading, a toy, for a suitcase. And now...

He gestures to the myriad of toys adorning the bridge.

PIOTR (CONT'D)

It's our way of saying, welcome to Poland. You are safe here. And for the children, the toy represents a new beginning.

JILL

What a difference you are making.

Segueing, she reaches into her bag resting on the ground and pulls out a plushy toy.

JILL (CONT'D)

And now you are allowing me to do the same.

The crew cuts. Jill takes up her toy. Her security guards walk behind her as she sets out across the bridge.

JILL (CONT'D)

(to camera crew)

Get some B roll of me crossing. Then once I have picked out a family just roll and keep rolling until we are all the way across. I want to catch any impromptu, emotional moments the family experiences.

EXT. BRIDGE OF TOYS - CONTINUOUS

On the bank of Ukraine, Jill spots the mother and child she'd like to escort immediately. The MOTHER is worn out, thin, tired, in boots and a tattered coat. Her daughter MARYSKA (6) clutches her suitcase tight to her chest. Maryska's bright blue eyes dart around, taking in her surroundings. She is nervous.

Jill approaches.

JILL

Excuse me. Uh
 (trying to remember the
 Ukrainian words)
 Vybachte. Chy mozhu ya
 dopomohty?... May I help you?

She bends down, offers Maryska the toy in exchange for her suitcase. Maryska looks to her mother who nods. The exchange is made. Maryska hugs the plush toy in close. Breathes in the fresh new scent. Jill takes the suitcase and proudly leads the two toward the bridge. They begin their crossing.

The camera crew is capturing every moment without being intrusive. Jill embraces the moment.

The mother looks to the far bank, freedom and safety in sight. Soon to have a reprieve from their days of walking.

Jill looks back to the little girl trailing just behind. She gives the girl a heartfelt smile and the little girl hugs the toy tighter.

Turning back to lead the way, Jill raises her chin, a proud sense of accomplishment and love fills her entire being. All of this is captured by the film crew.

POP POP!

Jill shudders. Memories of gunshots are still painful.

SCREAMS break forth. Chaos overtakes the bridge. Jill, the mother and Maryska duck... as more SHOTS are fired in the air.

A group of Russian Soldiers enter the bridge, on the heels of Jill and her group.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER

Ostnavlivat'sya.

Jill looks to her crew. The mother and Maryska have thrown up their hands in the air. The plush toy falls to the bridge.

Jill bravely moves in front of the family.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Ostnavlivat'sya!

CREW MEMBER

Jill. He's telling you to stop!

Jill is the buffer, standing between the soldiers and the family.

JILL

Tell him. We don't want any trouble. Just let these people cross.

The crew member, sweating bullets, breathing heavily, works hard to translate under pressure.

CREW MEMBER

Pozhaluysta. Davayte peresechemsya.

The soldier points to Jill with his weapon. Another soldier points at the crew with his weapon.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER

Ty mozhesh' idti. Mat' i rebenok idut so mnoy.

The mother begins to cry.

CREW MEMBER

Christ. He's saying we may go... but those two have to go with him.

JILL

No. Tell him no. They are coming with us.

The soldier knows what she is saying. He steps forward, grabs around Jill, and locks onto the mother's arm. Dragging her to him as she screams and pleads. Maryska runs to her mother and is swept up into her free arm. Jill is angry.

JILL (CONT'D)

No. Wait. Please.

Another soldier cuts Jill off with a rifle trained on her. Jill doesn't flinch. She stares straight down the barrel - fury in her eyes.

CREW MEMBER

Don't end up like your father.

Jill watches helplessly as the Mother and Maryska are dragged off the bridge and disappear from sight. The soldiers have seized others and are dragging them back to Ukraine.

Jill looks to her crew. They are just as distraught, not knowing what to do.

POP POP! Gun shots ring out from the direction the family was taken. Jill starts to run in that direction, but the soldier pushes her back.

JILL
Unforgiveable. They can't do this.

The crew member shakes his head.

CREW MEMBER
You think you can change the world?

Jill's head turns sharply. She's offended. Gazes to the clouds, backs away slowly.

Her foot brushes the plush toy on the bridge. She just stares at it, it has lost all significance.

JILL
We tell these stories... the world
keeps burning.

Jill turns to her crew.

JILL (CONT'D)
Run it. All of it.

Then, a sudden movement of clouds overhead -- the sunny day turns gray...

Jill looks up... We follow her gaze into the clouds.. ascending higher and higher until we are consumed by thick dark clouds.

We linger in the darkness for a moment, before a shift in the clouds allows light to peek through... forming three words:

THERE IS LIFE

The TITLE bleeds into the next scene --

EXT. CLOUDY SKY - DAY

And is whisked away by a jet stream. An F-35 fighter jet ZOOMS through the cloudy atmosphere.

SUPER: THREE WEEKS LATER

INT/EXT. F-35 COCKPIT/CLOUDY SKY - CONTINUOUS

Navy pilot GRACE "ACE" LINDSAY (30s) navigates through the harsh conditions, her face etched with concentration.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY
 (into the radio)
 Now at 50,000 feet. Visibility
 remains at 10 percent, with no sign
 of clearing.

CONTROL (V.O.)
 Roger that.

The Air Force F-35 jet slices through the clouds, as
 visibility continues to worsen...

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY
 Control. Visibility is nearing zero
 percent. Switching to infrared
 sensors.

She activates the F-35's infrared technology, painting an
 eerie picture of her surroundings.

Suddenly, the F-35's Traffic Collision Avoidance System
 blares a warning in the cockpit.

CONTROL (V.O.)
 Lieutenant-- We're picking up some
 information from your radar...

A WAVE OF ENERGY CRASHES INTO HER --

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY
 Control...

-- all electronic functions cease as she is WHIPPED SIDEWAYS
 and PULLED WITH SHEER FORCE...

INT. NAVAL COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The room filled with monitors and military personnel goes
 dark with alarm. SERGEANT MOONEY (40s) looks to his operators
 at the central console --

SERGEANT MOONEY
 What just happened?

COMMUNICATION OFFICER works on the control panel, trying to
 bring radar back up --

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
 ... we lost her.

SERGEANT MOONEY
 What do you mean lost her?

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
I don't know. There was an
object...

SERGEANT MOONEY
Did she hit it?

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
I can't get radar back...

Sergeant Mooney moves to the radio --

SERGEANT MOONEY
Lieutenant? Lieutenant... Ace...

INT. F-35 COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Only the sound of Ace's breathing is heard.

Ace's eyes widen --

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY
Oh my God.

Following Ace's gaze, we pan to see --

A GIANT LANDMASS emerging from the haze -- suspended by an
unseen force and surrounded by white clouds... is an island
in the sky, its beauty captivating and surreal.

The jet remains powerless, but some other force allows it to
float around the island.

Returning to reality, Ace pulls out her phone and hurriedly
snaps a few pictures.

Suddenly, the jet... FALLS. Ace's breathing grows rapid as
she frantically tries to power up the engine...

INT/EXT. F-35 COCKPIT/CLOUDY SKY - CONTINUOUS

The nose of her plane peeks through the thick clouds...

EXT. BOAT/ATLANTIC OCEAN - SAME

Standing on the stern of a boat, is a man in a white bucket
hat and a long pony tail, enjoying the solitude of a peaceful
day of fishing... casting a line out into the sea when --

A LOUD WHISTLE pulls his attention to the sky...

Out of a veil of clouds, he sees a fighter jet PLUMMETING toward the ocean...

INT. NAVAL COMMAND CENTER - SAME

A BLIP on one of the screens...

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
-- Wait. I am picking something up
from our satellite... It's Ace.

But the momentary relief is cut short when --

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER (CONT'D)
She's descending rapidly, sir.

-- the grainy feed from a satellite reveals: The F-35 in a free-fall, spiraling uncontrollably towards the ocean...

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER (CONT'D)
No signs of engine activity.

INT/EXT. F-35 COCKPIT/CLOUDY SKY - CONTINUOUS

In a desperate moment, Lt. Lindsay whispers a prayer.

And miraculously... the power returns. She quickly throttles back, managing to pull up from the deathly descent.

EXT. BOAT - SAME

The man on the boat lets out a sigh of relief to see the jet's wings level.

INT. NAVAL COMMAND CENTER - SAME

As does the control room. The screens have flickered back to life. Sergeant Mooney is back at the radio --

SERGEANT MOONEY
Ace, report your status.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY (V.O.)
... I'm here.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

Dark, ominous clouds hang low over the nation's capitol. Iconic monuments, government buildings, and the White House... veiled in an eerie shadow. A newscast plays.

ED (V.O.)
 Today marks 22 days of complete
 cloud coverage across the globe...

A sleek Mercedes-Benz AMG S63 navigates through a sea of traffic.

INT/EXT. JILL'S MERCEDES/PENNSYLVANIA AVE - DAY

Maneuvering behind the wheel with purpose is Jill Lawrence. Her hand at the top of the steering wheel has no jewelry on her ring finger. The ANN news coverage streams from her phone, resonating through the car's speakers via CarPlay.

ON THE PHONE'S SCREEN, Anchor ED ADAMS (63), conservatively dressed with unnaturally dark hair, reports from behind his desk.

ED (V.O.)
 Passenger operations for all major
 airlines are suspended for a second
 consecutive week.

Jill SIGHS, clearly bothered by the inability to travel.

ED (V.O.)
 Meteorologists, our government, and
 physicists everywhere have yet to
 determine the cause of this
 worldwide phenomenon. In World
 News, the escalating conflict in
 Poland claims more lives today...

JILL
 I can't believe he's anchoring our
 coverage.

Jill instinctively switches to the radio.

REPORTER 1 (V.O.)
 ...a convoy of peacekeepers hit by
 an explosion in the capitol of...

She tries another station --

REPORTER 2 (V.O.)
 ...a beach party mass murder in Key
 Largo sends shockwaves through the
 vacation hotspot...

Flipping to yet another station --

REPORTER 3 (V.O.)
 ...the ongoing street violence in
 Chicago leaves four...

JILL
 God. Is there nothing else to
 report on?

Jill tries AM, a POLITICAL ANALYST talks --

POLITICAL ANALYST (V.O.)
 Never have I witnessed an event
 that cast such a long shadow on
 this city... and nation. Today...

She knows where this is going. Her grip on the steering wheel
 tightens.

POLITICAL ANALYST (V.O.)
 ... marks forty years since
 AMERICA'S WOUND - the assassination
 of Senator Robert Lawrence - the
 man who nearly brokered a
 bipartisan deal on gun reform.

Jill glances at her late parents' photo on the sun visor.

POLITICAL ANALYST (V.O.)
 Many still ask: What would the
 world be like today if he had not
 been taken from us. And his
 assassin, gun advocate -

... CLICK. She's had enough.

Jill pulls over to the side of the road. Looks up at the sky.
 Takes a breath. Grabs her phone, pulls up "Steve" from her
 contacts.

Jill shakes her head and puts the phone down.

JILL
 You're past this.

She resumes her drive to work - in silence.

As she passes by the White House, we linger there.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - DAY

So many momentous decisions have been made and so many fateful events have unfolded here that it seems almost alive with the weight of history. PRESIDENT GERALD SCOTT (50s) stands behind the resolute desk, gazing out the window.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
They're dying.

Sitting on one sofa is VICE PRESIDENT JAY RONGSTAD (70), a grizzled military veteran with a flat top haircut and horn-rimmed glasses. On the other is Speaker of the House STEVE RANDALL (50s), handsome, dressed in a sharp blue suit and red tie. Next to them, maintaining supreme posture on a separate chair, is SENATE LEADER STEPHANIE BOX (60s), a crucifix hangs prominently around her neck.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD
Who is dying, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT SCOTT
The roses...

We see now he is looking out over the Rose Garden of the White House.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)
They can't survive without sunlight. Nothing can. Our scientists have been studying this phenomenon for weeks. No progress. How is that possible?

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD
I have my theories.

SENATE LEADER BOX
The Chinese?

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD
The Pentagon backs me on this. Some aerial technology -

STEVE
It's not the Chinese.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD
Let me guess. Global warming.

STEVE
The patterns seem too organized to be natural.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Every choice feels like a mistake
waiting to happen.

Suddenly, the door swings open, and SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
JEFFREY MATTHEWS (50s) enters with a mix of urgency and
disbelief.

SECRETARY MATTHEWS
Mr. President, we have a
breakthrough.

MATILDA, the President's personal secretary, at his heels --

MATILDA
I'm sorry, Mr. President... he
wouldn't wait.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
It's fine.

Matilda exits, closing the door behind her. Secretary
Matthews hands the President a folder. He quickly opens...
eyes a grouping of photographs, then moves onto the report.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)
What am I looking at, Matthews?

SECRETARY MATTHEWS
A floating landmass, sir.
(off his confusion)
It seems unbelievable, but our
pilot, Lt. Lindsay, spotted it
about a mile into international
waters off the coast of Virginia.
She narrowly avoided collision.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
How is that possible?

SECRETARY MATTHEWS
We don't know, sir.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Is it a threat?

SECRETARY MATTHEWS
We're still gathering information,
but it's unlike anything -

PRESIDENT SCOTT
I want a full briefing as soon as
we have more information. If this
is a threat, we need to be ready.

Taking up the pictures.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)
And I don't know what these are,
but I need the pictures your pilot
was able to capture.

SECRETARY MATTHEWS
Sir?

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Matthews, you have given me... One,
two, three, four, five pictures of
clouds.

Matthews rounds the desk.

SECRETARY MATTHEWS
What?

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Rongstad, Randall, Box...

The three join him at the presidential desk, each are handed
photos.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD
Looks like heavy cloud coverage.

Senate Leader Box nods in agreement. President Scott looks to
Steve, who is awestruck.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Steve?

STEVE
I can't believe it -

But before Steve can finish his answer, Secretary Matthews
pulls the photo away --

SECRETARY MATTHEWS
I'm sorry, Mr. President.
(gathering up the photos)
I don't know what happened here,
but I'm going to find out.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
See that you do.

SECRETARY MATTHEWS
(hurrying out)
Sorry again, sir.

As soon as the door closes behind him --

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD
What the hell was that about?

SENATE LEADER BOX
The lack of sun must be getting to
him.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
(to the room)
Where were we?

As the hypothesis continue, we PUSH IN on Steve, whose mind remains on the photographs.

INT. ANN - MR. BIRCH'S OFFICE - LATER

Framed photographs from ANN's storied past, capturing pivotal moments in journalistic history, cover the walls. The awards in the trophy case are a testament to the network's commitment to genuine journalism.

Behind an aged oak desk sits GENE BIRCH, the current president of the network. Jill stands across from him. Adamant. A muted television plays the ANN broadcast behind her. Mid conversation:

JILL
No.

GENE
What do you mean "no"?

JILL
Can't do it, Gene. The show is called Life with Lawrence. How does reporting on a UFO sighting make sense for Life with Lawrence?

GENE
Because you are Lawrence and Life... IT is what you make it.

JILL
When are you going to let me take over the anchor desk for that fossil? This feels like punishment.

GENE

The number one search on the internet right now is "How to prepare for an alien invasion." You're chasing proof again.

She moves towards the window and stares out at the oppressive clouds.

JILL

Ever since I returned from Poland, the network has treated me differently.

GENE

This contact is asking for you directly. I've already assigned your cameraman. Danny Batliner...
(off her look)
His energy will do you some good today.

Wheels turning --

JILL

I'm not covering reactions, I want sources.

GENE

There are no sources.

JILL

What if I can get the First Lady?

GENE

The first lady hasn't sat down with the media in...

JILL

... three years. But what if I can get her?

GENE

That would be a great get for the network, but I still want you to move forward with the UFO piece.

She looks back out the window and takes in the gloom one last time.

JILL

God, I miss the sun.

Then moves to leave.

GENE

Oh, and Jill... I want you to know
that we will not be covering the
40th anniversary...

Jill offers a pained, half-hearted smile --

JILL

Radio already had it. They remember
the shooter, not what my dad
accomplished for his country.

GENE

Forty years is a long time to carry
that burden.

Jill proceeds out the door.

INT. ANN - 8TH FLOOR NEWSROOM - CONTINUOUS

A whirlwind of activity engulfs the vast newsroom, where producers and writers navigate the rapid-fire business of shaping headlines. Jill cuts through the somewhat controlled chaos with purpose, her heels not slowing her down in the slightest - as if an extension of her body. Ed's coverage maintains a steady presence across the myriad of televisions throughout the room.

Arriving at the elevator, the doors open to reveal --

Cameraman DANNY BATLINER. We recognize him as the man on the boat from earlier - the pony tail and bucket hat, which he is still wearing, being a dead give away. He is completely out of breath...

JILL

Danny Batliner.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Jill continues in and punches the 6th-floor button.

JILL

You ran here?

DANNY

Yes. I mean I drove first. Then
ran.

JILL

After the promo, we go straight to
the interview.

DANNY

Great. Great. I'll put in for a
van.

The doors close and the elevator descends. Unable to contain
his excitement --

DANNY (CONT'D)

U.F. freakin' Os, man!

INT. ANN NEWS STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

A typical studio setup. All cameras point at the anchor desk,
where HAIR & MAKEUP personnel tend to Ed during the
commercial break. Danny follows Jill, at her heels --

DANNY

Someone is giving us a big story.

JILL

Facts and algorithms produce
stories.

DANNY

We're gonna be a part of history!

JILL

Danny. I'm supposed to be a trusted
voice for the people, and I am
seconds away from throwing it all
away on a conspiracy...

DANNY

...no, no, UFOs are not a
conspiracy...in fact I was just out
on my boat and...

JILL

...Danny. Danny! Please...

Raising her hand above her head --

JILL (CONT'D)

...you're at an eleven right now,
and I need you down to...

Lowering her hand to her knee --

JILL (CONT'D)

...a three for the rest of the day.

DANNY

A three?

JILL
A three. Can you do that?

Danny nods enthusiastically.

DANNY
A three. I can do a three.

JILL
Great.

She plucks the bucket hat off his head, hands it to him.

JILL (CONT'D)
Now secure the van.

DANNY
Good looking out.

Danny stops near the control room, Jill continues toward the anchor desk.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Go get 'em, captain.

She takes her seat next to Ed.

ED
Jill.

JILL
Ed.

ED
Gene doesn't want to cover the anniversary.

JILL
I've heard.

ED
Unless you do... It's getting covered by other networks either way.

JILL
You know my stance.

An ASSISTANT DIRECTOR calls out --

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
On in 2.

As Hair & Makeup put on their finishing touch ups --

ED

He was your father. You don't want to comment?

Jill remains silent.

ED (CONT'D)

Missed opportunity.

Aides hustle out of frame and the cameras roll.

ED (CONT'D)

Jill Lawrence is here to preview what to look forward to on *Life with Lawrence*.

JILL

Ed... On Sunday evening I will be diving deep into this stratocumulus phenomena. Are the clouds the disastrous effects of global warming? Part of a foreign global surveillance technology? Or are UFOs among us? Sunday night at 7:00PM Eastern. You won't want to miss it.

Jill's smile beams brightly but Ed's is less convincing. ANN goes to a commercial message.

ED

(bursting into laughter)
UFOs! That's what you're covering...

Packing up his stack of papers --

ED (CONT'D)

You were a finalist for the Pulitzer? Wow. Talk about a fall from grace... Beam me up.

Ed walks off.

Danny is there to meet Jill as she exits the stage.

DANNY

That was perfect. You nailed it.

JILL

It was just a tease, Danny.

DANNY

Yes, and you nailed it. You nailed that tease.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND ANN - CONTINUOUS

Jill and Danny walk past a number of ANN Vans.

DANNY

Do you see van 5?

JILL

Press lock for it to beep.

The van at the end BEEPS.

DANNY

There we go.

Jill opens the back while Danny walks around to the driver side door...

CRIMINAL (O.S.)

Wallet...Wallet... Now!

Hearing the demand, Jill swings back from the end of the vehicle to see --

A MASKED CRIMINAL with a Glock pointed to Danny's head.

CRIMINAL (CONT'D)

... do you wanna die?!

Danny has lost the ability to speak. His hands shake so badly he drops the keys and is fumbling to get his hand into his back pocket to retrieve his wallet. Thinking fast --

JILL

My purse is in the back...it's full of cash.

The criminal now has to decide who has the better take. He goes with Jill, following her to the back of the van. All the while his Glock is trained on her.

CRIMINAL

Nice and slow.

Jill slowly opens the back door. She picks up her purse, zips it open, and retrieves her wallet.

CRIMINAL (CONT'D)

Face me as you take it out.

She pauses.

CRIMINAL (CONT'D)
Are you deaf? Face me!

She turns to face him, cash in hand...

Then suddenly stops.

JILL
No... I can't do this anymore.

She makes a new decision... shoving the cash back in and throwing her purse deep into the vehicle.

CRIMINAL
What the fuck?

JILL
The intimidation...it has to stop.

Jill points at the criminal's chest.

JILL (CONT'D)
People who feel they have the right to take have to be stopped.

Jill points at herself.

JILL (CONT'D)
I have a choice, I have a say in the world I want to live in. And this... this is not it. I'd rather die.

Criminal steps back.

CRIMINAL
Have it your way.

The criminal points the gun straight at Jill's head and pulls the trigger -- she closes her eyes...

OVER BLACK we hear the gun FIRE... interrupted by an abrupt HISS... POP!

She opens her eyes to a blinding blue flash and... PFFFT... it's gone. As is the mugger.

Shaking, she grabs her phone. Dials a number by heart --

STEVE (V.O.)
Hey, Sunshine.

The sound of his voice has her hesitating.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Steve, flanked by his Secret Service Agent JOSEPH DOOLEY (30s), a strong and stoic African-American officer in a black suit, holds his phone to his ear as he waits for a response.

STEVE

Jill.

The line goes dead with a CLICK. Steve is disappointed.

AGENT DOOLEY

Everything okay, sir?

STEVE

This day just keeps getting stranger.

Steve spots Secretary Matthews down the hall. He heads in his direction --

STEVE (CONT'D)

Secretary Matthews...

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND ANN - CONTINUOUS

Jill pockets her phone as Danny rushes around the vehicle --

DANNY

Jill. Jill... Oh my God...

Still out of sorts, Jill squints up to the cloudy sky. Intrigued by the single white cloud above her.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I thought you were dead.

A SECURITY GUARD rushes on the scene --

SECURITY GUARD (O.S.)

I heard gunfire? Is everyone okay?
Ma'am, are you okay? Ma'am...

Jill looks up. The white cloud quickly blows across the gray sky.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Ma'am...

JILL
 There was a mugger. He fired...
 but... uh... I'm fine.

Security Guard scans the area.

SECURITY GUARD
 Where is he now?

JILL
 He's gone.

Security guard turns to Danny.

SECURITY GUARD
 What did you see?

DANNY
 I saw the man, the gun...then... I
 must've blacked out. I always
 freeze in real danger.

SECURITY GUARD
 I'll pull the surveillance video.
 Both of you are going to need to
 file a police report.

JILL
 Can it wait? We have an interview
 to get to. It's time sensitive.

SECURITY GUARD
 Make it a priority when you get
 back.

Jill and Danny continue into van.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SECURE HALLWAY - DAY

Steve and Secretary Matthews converse discretely in a less
 traveled hallway. Photographs in hand --

STEVE
 It's as clear as day. How could the
 President and the Vice President
 both not see it?

SECRETARY MATTHEWS
 I'm not going to argue with the two
 most powerful men in the country.
 And it's not just them. I showed
 these photos to five others. Only
 one could see what you and I see.

STEVE

Lt. Lindsay. Did she see anything else?

SECRETARY MATTHEWS

All she could see is what is in the photographs.

STEVE

And the satellite imagery?

SECRETARY MATTHEWS

Looks like storm clouds.

STEVE

Humans have always doubted truth without proof.

INT/EXT. NATIONAL MALL - ANN VAN - DAY

Danny pulls the ANN production van into the only open space in the parking lot. Jill is in the passenger seat.

She checks her watch --

JILL

We're surprisingly early.

Danny pulls out a set of green paper squares from his backpack. He begins setting a few out on the dash.

JILL (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

DANNY

I printed these off the Wellness Society site yesterday.

He reads the first card.

DANNY (CONT'D)

What happened does not define you.
(takes it in)

Woo. I needed that. Back there. Not one of my proudest moments... All I remember is hearing the gunshot... I'm sorry.

JILL

You don't have anything to apologize for.

(grabbing a card)

Except maybe for these.

(MORE)

JILL (CONT'D)

(reads one)

When you separate the reality of what is happening, from your mood or attitude about it... It lights you up & it FEELS good.

Danny lights up, looking to her with hope-filled eyes.

JILL (CONT'D)

Yeah... I don't get it.

Her phone chimes. A text message from an unknown caller reads: *I do not like the world as it is; so I am trying to make it a little more as I want it.*

Jill looks up disconcerted.

DANNY

Everything okay?

JILL

Another spam text.

DANNY

Ah, those are the worst.

She deletes the text and is in the process of blocking the caller when her phone rings -- STEVE.

Jill contemplates answering...

DANNY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

She's here.

Jill looks to see Lt. Lindsay on the lawn. She sends the call to voicemail and exits the van.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - BENCH NEAR THE MLK STATUE - CONTINUOUS

Near the Martin Luther King Jr. statue, a symbol of peace and justice, is Lt. Lindsay. She stands tall in her military uniform, the name 'Ace' proudly displayed on her jacket.

JILL

(shaking her hand)

Lt. Lindsay. Jill Lawrence.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY

Miss Lawrence, it is an honor. Your work in Afghanistan, Israel, Poland... Brave... honest.

Jill takes in the compliment, a bit surprised at Ace's candor.

JILL
I cover wars. You're in them.
(signaling Ace to sit)
Please.

They sit. She waves Danny forward. He mics them.

JILL (CONT'D)
This is Danny, he will be recording the interview for us today. I understand that you would like your face blurred and voice masked.

A simple nod.

JILL (CONT'D)
Ace, before we begin... I want to make sure you're one hundred percent okay with going through with this. We will do our best to anonymize, but as you know-- the government is fairly good at connecting dots...

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY
This is really about time.

JILL
Time?

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY
For the truth.

Ace looks around, then discretely pulls out her phone.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY (CONT'D)
I presented my findings... But it seems we've hit a wall. And I am telling you... this...

She shows Jill the first photo.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY (CONT'D)
...demands attention.

JILL
The clouds?

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY
Uh. Yes and what is hiding inside them?

Jill looks at the photo again and then back to Ace. Ace clocks that she can't see anything.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY (CONT'D)
You don't see it?

JILL
See what?

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY
That... it's right there in the
fucking clouds.

Jill raises her eyebrows, now beginning to doubt Ace.

Ace, frustrated, scrolls through the photos --

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY (CONT'D)
What about this one?

Shakes her head.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY (CONT'D)
This?

Danny peeks over the camera at the photos. His jaw drops.

JILL
They're not gray... they're white.
That's different, I guess. We
haven't seen much of those around
lately.

Danny keeps staring at the image - unsettled. He whispers.

DANNY
It's right there.

Ace leans back mystified.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY
How are they doing this?

JILL
They?

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY
The aliens, or whatever.
(off Jill's look)
You think I'm making this up?! Why
would I lie... risk my career...
the Medal of Honor?

JILL

I'm not sure what you are expecting of me.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY

Trust that what I'm telling you is the truth.

JILL

I don't see what you see.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY

Can you just air the photos and see if there are others out there that see what I see?

Jill hesitates.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY

There are other believers at the Pentagon, but my report is being written up as a system malfunction. But that's not what happened. Something, or someone, kept me suspended. Guided me to the landmass. Like it wanted me to see it.

JILL

What did it look like?

Ace fights off emotion.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY

Paradise.

JILL

Send me everything and I'll look into it.

Jill starts to rise, Ace grabs her hand.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY

The typical human response to the unknown is to destroy... and every bone in my body is telling me that is not the correct course of action.

INT/EXT. ANN VAN/NATIONAL MALL - CONTINUOUS

As Jill and Danny head back toward the van, her cell phone BUZZES with another text message from the unknown caller: *I do not like the world as it is; so I am trying to make it a little more as I want it.*

DANNY

I believe her.

JILL

I've built a reputation separating facts from fiction. I'm not throwing it away on non-sense.

DANNY

Why would she make it up? (beat)
It's not belief that wrecks people - it's being sure.

JILL

I don't know. I'll ask what the government knows... I need to talk to Steve.

She texts STEVE -- *Drinks?*

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE - NIGHT

President Scott enters the dining room to find FIRST LADY ANNA SCOTT, 50, alone with a glass of wine, her quiet elegance and sharp wit dimmed by solitude and an unspoken heaviness. A poodle hops off her lap and scurries to greet him, ignored. He gives Anna a quick, insincere kiss on the cheek before heading to the opposite end of the long table.

A Naval waiter pulls out his chair. He sits, eyes briefly meeting the perfectly proportioned meal before him, and begins cutting his filet with practiced detachment. Anna, mirroring his motions, follows suit.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

We picked a hell of a time to be President, Anna.

ANNA

What happened?

PRESIDENT SCOTT

It's what didn't happen that's the issue. We are nowhere closer than we were three weeks ago.

(MORE)

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)
Steve Randall is ruling out global warming. Rongstad is convinced whatever it is, it's not good and needs to be dealt with.

ANNA
With force?

PRESIDENT SCOTT
It's the Rongstad way.

ANNA
What do you think?

PRESIDENT SCOTT
I can't do anything with theories and hearsay, and mysterious clouds. We need something tangible. I need a face.

President Scott watches Anna take a big drink of her wine.

ANNA
You got a face, babe. You just never show it round these parts.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Jesus. You didn't even make it until noon, did you?

ANNA
It was the cereal aisle at the grocery store. The cereal aisle... I couldn't stop staring at those damn Fruit Loops.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
If there's something you want that isn't in the house, just ask the Residence staff.

ANNA
You're not getting it.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
I get it. You miss our daughter. I miss our daughter! I miss her every second of every day.
(beat)
But what am I supposed to do?

ANNA
Let me in. We used to tell each other everything!

PRESIDENT SCOTT

Back when you didn't find answers
in a glass.

ANNA

Maybe if my husband was around and
not consumed with keeping his job,
I wouldn't have to--

PRESIDENT SCOTT

You're goddamn right I'm consumed.
These are uncertain times. And who
do the people look to for answers?
They look to me. Their leader.

ANNA

You're the president, Gerald.
You're not God.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

I know. I just... I don't want to
be the last President.

Anna gets up, holding her little dog, and heads toward the
door. Without looking back --

ANNA

I'm going to bed.

INT. LOCAL BAR - NIGHT

The sports bar, nestled in a nondescript strip mall, buzzes
with the familiar sounds of a neighborhood hangout. Neon beer
signs cast a warm glow through the window. Flat-screen
televisions line the walls, each tuned to a different game or
sports news channel.

Steve sits in a booth, sipping on a beer. Makes eye contact
with Agent Dooley, standing near the bar, keeping a close
watch on things.

Jill squeezes between two servers and shimmies into the
booth, a bit disheveled. Steve takes her in, she's beautiful.

STEVE

Wow. You look great.

JILL

Please. I've been running around
like a crazy lady.

Jill catches a glimpse of Danny bellied up to the far end of
the bar. Steve follows her gaze. Danny ducks behind his menu.

JILL (CONT'D)
My cameraman. He was supposed to
wait in the van.

STEVE
So, it's a work dinner. Are you
still drinking Kettle-

She looks around for the waiter. He's a little far but she
orders from a distance.

JILL
Excuse me, hi... can I get a Kettle
soda?

She turns back to Steve, who is more amused than upset.

JILL (CONT'D)
Sorry about the pocket dial
earlier.

STEVE
Is that what that was?

JILL
What did you think it was?

STEVE
You chickened out.

JILL
Chickened out?

STEVE
You woke up today. Looked at the
state of the world and thought...
Today I am going to do it. I am
finally going to tell Steve how I
truly feel about him before it's
too late. Then I answer "Hey
Sunshine" and the resonant tone of
my voice...

JILL
Resonant tone?

Jill smirks

STEVE
...it sparked a torrent of emotions
from our many love affairs over the
years...

Jill rolls her eyes.

JILL
There haven't been that many.

STEVE
...and it all became way too much.

Jill tries to suppress a smile, clearly entertained by his dramatics.

JILL
You got all that from a pocket dial?

STEVE
I did.

Steve smiles. Takes a drink of his beer. As the waiter delivers Jill's drink, her gaze inadvertently shifts upward, drawn to the TV above Steve. The one screen not featuring sports cycles - a montage of Senator Lawrence's life - a timeline of his political journey leading to the tragic end.

STEVE (CONT'D)
So how are you, Sunshine? How are you handling everything?

JILL
What do you mean?

ON SCREEN is footage of *Red Onion State Prison* where Senator Lawrence's assassin, Anthony Giannini, is serving life.

Jill's face show fury.

STEVE
Jill.

Her attention returns to Steve.

JILL
I'm fine.

She leans in, her demeanor changing -- uncomfortable.

JILL (CONT'D)
Have you heard anything about a landmass in the sky?

STEVE
Who have you been talking to? What does your network know?

Jill perks up aggressively.

JILL
Have you seen it?

He nods.

JILL (CONT'D)
What did you see?

STEVE
Pictures of a landmass. The size of
an island, floating in the sky.

Jill pulls out her phone, shows him a photo that Ace sent her.

JILL
Was this one of the photos?

Steve nods, confirming. Jill leans back.

STEVE
You can't see it can you?

She lets out a sigh of frustration.

JILL
What is going on?

BUZZ. Text message: *I do not like the world as it is; so I am trying to make it a little more as I want it.*

STEVE
What is it?

JILL
This is the third time I have
received this today...

Steve takes her phone and has a look, reading --

STEVE
"I do not like the world as it is;
so I am trying to make it a little
more as I want it." That's Helen
Keller.

She pauses, thinks.

JILL
Yeah, you're right... Why does this
number keep sending me this?

Suddenly, all the bar's televisions stutter to static.
Patrons yell for someone to fix the TV.

But before the bartender can react -- a DING sounds from everyone's phones simultaneously.

After a brief moment, they pull out their phones in response...

The screens flicker and shift, capturing the attention of everyone in the bar. An older woman materializes amidst a vivid, multi-colored backdrop. Her image is translucent, yet not transparent, and possesses an ethereal glow.

JILL / STEVE
Helen Keller.

HELEN KELLER speaks clearly, in a calm and sincere voice, while doing American Sign Language.

HELEN (V.O.)
Please forgive this sudden
interruption across your devices.
My name is Helen. I represent
Mother and Life. Before we lay out
the task at hand, let us impart
these ideas to you.

Jill looks suspiciously.

JILL
It can't be... can it?

As her message continues, we INTERCUT:

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

President Scott, VP Rongstad, and Secretary Matthews look to their phones and back to the television, flabbergasted.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD
Helen Keller? What kind of AI stunt
is this?

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Is it only our airways and phones?

SECRETARY MATTHEWS
I am being told the entire world's,
Mr. President.

HELEN (V.O.)
We are optimistic you will hear our
message and respond with love.

Helen repeats the American Sign Language for Love Everybody.

EXT. NEW YORK - TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

A massive crowd stands transfixed, staring at an outdoor screen. A little girl amongst the crowd imitates the sign language for Love Everybody.

HELEN (V.O.)
 Now is the time to realize the
 power Mother has given you to see
 the best in everyone, and make that
 part of your lives.

EXT. RIO DE JANEIRO - CHRIST THE REDEEMER STATUE - NIGHT

A group of tourists and locals gathered around the iconic Christ the Redeemer statue, staring at their phones...

HELEN (V.O.)
 (Portuguese)
The world is sown with good.

EXT. JAKARTA, INDONESIA - ISTIQLAL MOSQUE - MORNING

Usually a haven of peace is awash in a restless energy. Worshippers cluster together, eyes on their screens as Helen's message unfolds...

HELEN (V.O.)
 (Indonesian)
*But unless we turn our glad
 thoughts into practical living and
 till our own fields, we cannot reap
 a kernel of the good.*

EXT. MUMBAI - GATEWAY OF INDIA - MORNING

A bustling crowd of commuters and street vendors at the Gateway of India are at a standstill as they watch the screens in the area or are on their phones, captivated.

HELEN (V.O.)
 (Marathi)
*Thus our optimism is grounded in
 two worlds, ourselves and what is
 about us.*

INT. TANK - POLAND - EARLY MORNING

A Russian soldier watches the announcement on his satellite device. Bombs and explosives are heard outside of the tank.

HELEN (V.O.)
 (Polish)
*Mother demands that the world be
 good, and lo, it obeys.*

EXT. JOINT BASE ANACOSTIA-BOLLING - MAIN GATE - NIGHT

The guard at the main gate and Ace Lindsay, in her car mid check in, are locked in on their phones.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - FIRST LADY'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Anna is drawn into a profound connection with the message, her heart open and receptive to every word.

HELEN (V.O.)
 But what she has been observing is your history -- disagreements over land and religion. Battles over misunderstandings and greed. You are failing at the most important thing - Love Everybody. Mother expects peace.

Helen then moves her hands in a way that has Anna inching closer to the television, and her fingertips gently tracing the same gesture on the screen.

Helen stops signing. Her hands drop to her side. She pauses looking into the camera.

INT. WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

The President's expression has gone from intrigue to concern...

HELEN (V.O.)
 Not in the future. Now. Those who take a life without remorse will not be renewed. Mother commands all killing weapons to be destroyed.

And has amplified. Rongstad chuckles --

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD
 That dog won't hunt, lady. They're trying to make us vulnerable.

HELEN (V.O.)
 Some may need proof. I am your proof. You have twenty-four hours.

INT. LOCAL BAR - SAME

Jill is furiously writing notes.

Danny's eyes go wide in disbelief. In a swift, almost reflexive motion, he snatches the cocktail from the patron next to him and chugs it.

GLITCH -- all screens on all devices return to their previous state. Followed by --

The sound of an innumerable amount of incoming text messages and phone calls from loved ones echoing throughout the bar.

Jill and Steve sit for a beat in stunned silence. Then --

JILL
Helen Keller? Why me?

STEVE
You think one person can't change things?

Jill exhales, the question hits deep.

JILL
Some have tried. Got killed for it.

Steve gently takes Jill's hand. She takes a deep breath.

JILL (CONT'D)
Ok... what's your take-- technology gone rogue?

STEVE
That doesn't feel right... There are the clouds, the island in the sky, the call for love and peace... No, this... this feels like...

JILL
What? Aliens?
(off his hesitation)
Say it, Steve. What do you think is going on?

STEVE
Divine intervention. Like the warning to build Noah's Ark.

Jill laughs, part in disbelief and part as a nervous reaction.

JILL
 You think that stunt was God giving
 the world 24 hours to course
 correct or... lights out?

Agent Dooley approaches --

AGENT DOOLEY
 Mr. Speaker, we have to go.

STEVE
 (to Jill)
 Come to the White House with me.

JILL
 Where in your bible is God referred
 to as Mother?

STEVE
 God can manifest however God wants.

CRASH! Chaos can be heard from outside. People have already
 started looting.

JILL
 This is how it starts. Panic in the
 streets. Over-reaction by
 authorities.

STEVE
 Come to the White House. We can
 theorize further in the car.
 Please.

Jill considers for a brief moment. Then grabs her personal
 items and stands, throwing cash on the table for the tab.

JILL
 I have to follow the story.

Jill signals to Danny to set up the camera gear. She gives
 Steve a quick kiss on the lips, surprising him.

Jill and Danny rush toward the door as crowds on the street
 surge.

Calling out:

STEVE
 Jill...

She turns to him.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Have you tried texting the number
back?

Jill raises her eyebrows -- good idea.

INT. ANN NEWS STUDIO - NIGHT

Ed adjusts his seat at the anchor desk.

ED
Good evening everyone, I'm Ed
Adams. We have just witnessed an
unprecedented event. A woman, or at
least a voice, in the likeness of
Helen Keller, claims to represent
Mother and Life. But what does that
mean? Is she claiming there...
is... life... beyond our human
existence?

INSERT: Photo of Helen from her appearance.

ED (CONT'D)
She has called for the destruction
of all killing weapons within 24
hours.

Ed takes a sip of water.

ED (CONT'D)
As you can see behind me, we have
started a 24-hour countdown.

The graphic on the screen shows: 23:34:15

ED (CONT'D)
The ramifications are unclear if
Helen's demands are not met, but I
and the entire ANN news team will
remain on the air for the 23 hours
and 33 minutes that remain on
Helen's doomsday countdown. First,
we go live to Jill Lawrence.

EXT. LOCAL BAR - CONTINUOUS

Jill is standing outside of the bar with a microphone in her
hand, Danny has a camera trained on her. However, her focus
is on her cell phone, eyes on the text messages from the
unknown caller.

In the background, police officers arrive on the scene to attempt to contain an unruly crowd. The air is thick with tension, and the fear of the unknown is palpable.

She quickly types: *What do you want from me?*

DANNY

We're rolling.

Ed speaks to Jill from the studio --

ED (V.O.)

Jill... Just a minute everyone. It looks like we may not have sound on Jill yet. Jill?

Jill looks into the camera.

JILL

Ed... As you can see, moments after Helen's broadcast - the atmosphere is charged with anxiety and uncertainty. Escalating lawlessness... a reflection of the collective fear already gripping the nation's capital.

ED (V.O.)

Indeed. A clear indicator that people are struggling with the idea of what may happen if Helen's demands are not met.

(segueing)

Jill, our producers tell us you have some exclusive information to share.

JILL

That is correct.

(takes a breath)

Earlier tonight, I received confirmation from government and military sources that there is a giant landmass hovering in the clouds over the Atlantic Ocean.

ED (V.O.)

A landmass in the sky?

JILL

That is correct. Before you show the image that I sent the studio I must preface, it is going to be very controversial.

(MORE)

JILL (CONT'D)

Unlike any image that has ever been shown... Some people will see the image and others will not.

ED (V.O.)

That is peculiar. And why is it that some people can see it and others cannot?

JILL

I can't... well... that remains unknown.

INT. ANN STUDIOS - CONTINUOUS

An ANN CREW MEMBER gasps looking at the photo.

Ed looks at the image that has taken over the screens. He's puzzled. We can't tell if he can see the island or not. His eyes briefly glance to the right -- producers are in his ear.

ED

Oh my... that is something else.
Wow. Perhaps some type of foreign military base?

EXT. LOCAL BAR - CONTINUOUS

JILL

Ed, I do believe there is a connection between this island in the sky and Helen's mother figure.

DING. Danny gives her a look - *Are you kidding me?!* He silently mouths to her: *Is your phone on?!*

Jill looks to her phone to see a response to her text message: *To change the world.*

Jill, stunned, pales at the memory of --

EXT. PEACE RALLY - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Demonstrators chant a unified plea, "Give peace a chance."

At the forefront, SENATOR LAWRENCE raises a peace sign, resolute and hopeful. Jill (8), accompanied by her mother, KAREN, waves with youthful enthusiasm among the crowd.

POP! POP! POP!

SCREAMS pierce the air, and chaos ensues as the demonstrators scatter in every direction, desperate to escape the gunfire.

Police officers quickly locate the shooter. They tackle him, wrestle him to the ground, and subdue him. Jill screams.

YOUNG JILL

Daddy!

Senator Lawrence lies in the street, gravely injured. A Christian scapular rests on his bloodstained white shirt. A young aide attempts to tend to his wounds. Jill and her mother push through the panicked crowd to reach her father's side. Jill grasps his hand, and he looks up at her, his smile bittersweet through the pain.

SENATOR LAWRENCE

Jill -

Senator Lawrence gasps for air.

SENATOR LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

... change the world.

His eyes close.

Jill turns to the shooter, her eyes now filling with fury. The distinct tattoo on his face, that runs from the bridge of his nose up into the ragged edge of his hairline, of an upside-down cross is a symbol she will never forget.

Their eyes lock for a fleeting moment as he is hauled away.

DANNY (PRELAP)

Jill. Jill...

EXT. LOCAL BAR - NIGHT (PRESENT)

A running TEENAGER -- SLAMS into Jill. She stumbles dropping her phone and microphone. The teenager's backpack BURSTS open - a small stuffed animal tumbles onto the sidewalk.

Jill freezes on it. (beat)

She scrambles for her phone and microphone.

Recovering --

JILL

I will keep the public updated as I learn what could be behind this global disruption. Over to you, Ed.

The camera lowers. Danny takes note of her frazzled state, his eyes reflecting a shared concern.

INT. ANN NEWS STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Ed can tell Jill is not herself, but keeps it moving.

ED

Thank you, Jill... Be safe.

(segueing from the awkward
outro)

Now, we turn to Dr. Connie Shanks,
renowned historian and professor.

The camera pans to DR. CONNIE SHANKS (mid-60s), a distinguished woman with her silver hair pulled back into a neat bun. She exudes an air of scholarly authority, her glasses perched on the bridge of her nose as she sits confidently next to Ed.

ED (CONT'D)

Your insights on the implications
of this broadcast and its potential
historical significance?

Dr. Shanks adjusts her glasses and begins to speak, her tone measured and thoughtful.

DR. SHANKS

A moment that could reshape our
understanding of the world...
challenge our beliefs. The
implications touch our spiritual
lives but also our political and
social landscapes. We may be
standing on the precipice of a new
way of perceiving our very
existence...

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

President Scott's brow furrows as he faces a countdown clock above the large wall screen, where 16 international government leaders appear alongside Vice President Rongstad, Senate Leader Box and Secretary Matthews. Steve slips into the background unnoticed.

FRENCH PRESIDENT (V.O.)

France requests assurances that no
nation will engage with this
phenomenon independently.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

It is clearly a hostile force using
visual trickery as a means to
instill fear in our citizens.

As he speaks, President Scott notices the French president receiving a note and the Russian president's advisor whispering in his ear. He catches sight of the off-camera ANN broadcast, showing clouds and the banner ISLAND IN THE SKY OFF THE COAST OF VIRGINIA.

FRENCH PRESIDENT (V.O.)

We must commit to open
communication and a unified
response.

The Chinese president receives a note.

CHINA REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)

Agreed.

RUSSIAN REPRESENTATIVE (V.O.)

Agreed.

UN SECRETARY GENERAL (V.O.)

President Scott?

President Scott fidgets with his pen, nerves evident.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

I apologize... I'm being called
away for a briefing. I'll be in
touch.

President Scott quickly ends the video meeting.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)

What in the hell?

He storms over to the television. Working to turn the volume up.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)

An island in the sky?

Off the photographs shown on screen --

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)

(to Secretary Matthews)

Aren't those the cloud pictures you
showed me?

ON TV: Ed and Dr. Shanks speak with author and televangelist REVEREND PERRY PETERS (40s), African-American, connected via Zoom. A bible is clenched in his hand.

REV. PETERS (V.O.)
The island is magnificent. I pray
that everyone on Earth will receive
what these pictures reveal.

President Scott's jaw drops. He looks around the room at a few guilty faces.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Who in this room can see this
island?

He turns to Rongstad, he clearly can't.

Steve raises his hand, waiting the President to ask him.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD
I don't know what all these people
are smoking, but there is no
island.

Senate Leader Box shakes her head. Steve lowers his hand.

STEVE
Mr. President. It's -

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Matthews?

He reluctantly nods. President Scott turns a shade a red that we haven't seen, as if he is about to combust.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)
What is happening?!!

He takes a moment to collect himself.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)
Not one of you had the balls to
tell me you were seeing something I
wasn't?

SECRETARY MATTHEWS
We can't confirm what we're looking
at.

STEVE
Believers see. Doubters are in the
dark.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD
Organize a drone launch
immediately. We need to get eyes on
this thing. I'll lead the response.

President Scott nods.

SECRETARY MATTHEWS
Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Find out who leaked these photos.
Turn them over to the Justice
Department immediately. It's a
goddamn breach of National
Security!

President Scott storms out --

INT. WHITE HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Bustling with activity. Anna is there to meet President Scott
as soon as he exits the Situation Room.

ANNA
Gerald, we need to talk.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Not now, Anna.

He continues past her, she follows...

ANNA
I saw something in that broadcast.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
I'm on it.

ANNA
Helen... did the sign.

President Scott slows.

ANNA (CONT'D)
She did Madelyn's sign.

He turns to her.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
So she made the infinity sign. So
what? She was signing everything
she spoke.

ANNA

Exactly... but she didn't speak it.
She just did it...

Anna mimics the sign.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

What are you getting at? That this
terrorist knows personal things
about our family.

ANNA

This isn't terrorism. She's
campaigning for love and peace.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

Not campaigning... demanding. That
is terrorism.

ANNA

Madelyn is trying to tell us
something. Take these demands
seriously. I think we need to
comply.

President Scott pulls her aside to a more discrete location --

PRESIDENT SCOTT

Madelyn is gone. Okay. She is
gone... Maybe there is a heaven.
Maybe there isn't... but you have
to stop. And you have to move on.

ANNA

I know what I saw, Gerald.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD (O.S.)

There you are.

Vice President Rongstad walks up.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD (CONT'D)

Hello, Anna. Do you mind if I steal
the big man for a minute?

ANNA

What if you're wrong about Helen?

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD

The President of the United States
is never wrong. That is why he was
elected. He's the boss.

ANNA

Maybe not.

The President looks at his watch.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

We have the smartest people in the world working on this. You don't need to worry. Now please, go back upstairs.

The President and VP head off, leaving Anna alone in the shadowy hallway.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD

It wouldn't hurt to consider Steve for questioning? You know, he and Jill Lawrence were quite close, once upon a time.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

I am not cross-examining the Speaker of the House.

EXT. ANN VAN - NIGHT

Danny and Jill are trapped in a sea of unyielding traffic, an orchestra of car horns accompanying the glow of red tail lights.

DANNY

Traffic is fucked.

Danny, unable to resist, adds his own honk to the cacophony.

Jill's attention remains on her cell phone and the text message: *To change the world.*

Jill's hands rise to her head, perplexed.

JILL

I need answers. Why would she text me this?

DANNY

Who?

JILL

Helen.

DANNY

Helen? The Helen? Who just appeared on every screen across the world, Helen... text you?

JILL

I've been receiving Helen Keller quotes from an unknown caller all day. Until now. I asked what she wanted from me and she responded...

Jill shows Danny the text chain.

DANNY

Change the world...

JILL

The day my dad was shot (beat) he said the same thing. His dying wish.

DANNY

(nervous chuckle)
No pressure.

JILL

How should I respond?

DANNY

Well, let's see... If I'm an all-powerful being and I can contact anyone in the world at any given time, why would I choose to establish contact with Jill Lawrence? What does Jill Lawrence do? Jill Lawrence is a journalist. More specifically, what type of journalist is Jill Lawrence?

JILL

Please, you don't have to keep restating my full name like that.

DANNY

Yes, I do. I'm getting somewhere. Jill Lawrence is a public interest journalist. Jill Lawrence has a major platform, is the voice of the people... and most importantly a voice they can trust. I believe Helen, or whatever is behind all of this, is asking you to be the conduit.

JILL
 Alright. Let's find out.

Jill types a message back to Helen, takes a deep breath, and hits send. Message: *My interest is piqued. Will Mother agree to meet for an interview?*

Jill and Danny anxiously await a response...

DING.

Jill checks her phone, nothing.

DING.

DANNY
 Ope. That's me.
 (reads his phone)
 The First Lady wants you to
 interview her.

JILL
 When does she want to do it?

DANNY
 Now.

INT. ANN STUDIO - LATER

Ed and Dr. Shanks continue their conversation with Reverend Peters. The countdown is at the bottom of the screen.

REV. PETERS
 Helen aligns with what I've spent
 my life preaching. (beat) Is Helen
 a divine messenger? I don't know.
 But, if this is one final wake-up
 call... God help us if we ignore
 it.

A *Breaking News* banner on the screen reads: *Explosion at Red Onion State Prison: Two Dozen Inmates Escape.*

EXT. BLAIR HOUSE - NIGHT

A wrought iron fence surrounds the property of the President's guest house, ensuring security and privacy. The main entrance is accentuated by an elegant portico, supported by classic white columns.

Jill and Danny pull up to the designated parking, near the entrance. Security personnel is there to meet them as they exit the van.

INT. BLAIR HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room's soft blues, creams, and golds create an atmosphere of tranquil sophistication. Anna waits patiently on the sofa. Her index finger subconsciously tracing the infinity sign on her pant. The door opens to reveal a member of her security detail.

SECURITY DETAIL

Ma'am. Jill Lawrence is here.

ANNA

Please, let her in.

He steps aside and Jill enters followed by Danny lugging the camera equipment.

JILL

First Lady Scott. Thank you for agreeing to this interview.

Danny sets up the camera.

ANNA

Oh no. I didn't agree to your interview proposal. You agreed to mine.

Jill nods and takes a seat across from Anna. Danny gives the rolling signal and Jill jumps in.

JILL

Good evening and welcome to Life with Lawrence. First Lady Anna Scott... You have been out of the media for quite some time.

ANNA

Three years to be precise.

JILL

I have been putting in requests for an interview with you since your husband first took office. What changed today?

Anna shifts, a bit uncomfortable to dive into the topic, but takes the plunge.

ANNA

Mmm. As you know, when my husband first took office... our daughter, Madelyn... succumbed to Chordoma, a rare form of cancer for a ten-year-old... It has been a lot to bear... too much to bear really. Uh. And I had no interest in interviews, or much of anything. I've had nothing to give.

She pauses. Jill waits patiently.

ANNA (CONT'D)

So why today? Well, today I finally heard from God.

Off Jill's questioning eye.

ANNA (CONT'D)

We all did.

Jill cannot hide her skepticism.

JILL

There are many theories circling the recent events.

ANNA

Finally I have something to give. And if I can reach even one person, that is good with me.

JILL

And what is your message?

ANNA

Helen is real. Mother is real. I have prayed... I said, "God, if my baby girl is safe, with you, give me a clear sign." Tonight my sign came.

She draws the infinity sign in the air.

ANNA (CONT'D)

It may not have significance to you... but that was the sign my Madelyn would use instead of waving goodbye...

Anna puts her hand over her heart.

ANNA (CONT'D)

She knew I hated goodbyes. It was her way of telling me, that she will always be with me.

Anna looks into the camera.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Now it is my duty to testify to my fellow Americans, to step into the First Lady's shoes and stand up for what I know now to be true.

JILL

I am sorry to play Devil's advocate... And believe me, I am not questioning what you believe you saw...

ANNA

You don't believe. I know.

JILL

Okay. But if God is real... and speaking to us as Reverend Peters stated... Why the delay? Why now? Why let the world get to this point? Why was your daughter taken from you at such an early age? Why were my parents taken from me? Why put us through so much pain...

ANNA

When I read scripture, they are not feel-good bedtime stories. The people in the good book suffered and clung to God. He takes each individual to the brink of what they can bear. To see what they will become.

Turns to face the camera.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'm inviting the people of this nation to join me outside the White House tonight for a candlelight vigil for peace. We must come together and love everyone.

Anna does the sign language symbol for "Love".

JILL
 Thank you, First Lady, for sharing
 your heart and your message with us
 tonight.

The red light on the camera turns off, Danny lowers the
 camera.

DANNY
 Wow. That was... Wow.

Anna stands.

ANNA
 I hope I gave America something to
 stand for.

JILL
 Maybe? (beat) I need more proof.

Before Anna turns to go --

ANNA
 Jill, just... be careful. I know my
 husband. He is not going to be
 thrilled with this interview.

JILL
 Would he go live with me, if you
 made the request?

Anna shakes her head, looks down, walks away.

Jill turns to Danny, whispers.

JILL (CONT'D)
 Edit out the scripture notes.
 (beat) It's not helping.

INT. WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

The President's most trusted advisors are present, including
 Secretary Matthews, Senate Leader Box, Speaker Randall and
 GENERAL HERZBERG (60), chairman of the joint chiefs of staff
 in full military dress.

President Scott and VP Rongstad join them around the central
 table. High-res screens display various feeds of intelligence
 data.

Secretary Matthews nods to General Herzberg who pulls up a
 secure video call to --

The Drone Control Room at HURLBURT FIELD AIR FORCE BASE in Florida, a team of OPERATORS sit at the terminal with a set of specific monitors and controls for piloting the drones.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD

The United States doesn't negotiate. We respond.

The President nods, his face stern.

GENERAL HERZBERG

Deploy the drones.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Didn't he see that picture on TV?

GENERAL HERZBERG

Follow orders. Deploy.

The operators' fingers fly over the keyboard, and a screen switches to a live feed from a high-altitude as the drones ascend into the sky.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Approaching target altitude.

The drones' cameras show complete cloud coverage... getting thicker the closer it gets to the target... visibility approaching zero...

PRESIDENT SCOTT

Is this the best you can do?

Suddenly, the feed begins to GLITCH, static crackling on the screens. The room fills with a sense of unease.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

We're experiencing some kind of interference, sir.

The static intensifies. President Scott is on edge.

The video feed returns... but the point of view is of the ocean and we are approaching FAST!

OPERATOR (V.O.)

I'm losing connection.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

Then re-establish it.

Every drone camera splashes into the water. All the screens go DARK. The President is looking for an explanation.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
All units lost, sir.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
I still have to address the
nation... And I have not a goddamn
clue what the hell I am dealing
with!!

He grabs a binder and FLINGS it across the room.

He pinches the bridge of his nose as he takes a moment to
compose himself. Taking this as a cue to leave, people begin
filing out.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)
Matthews...

Secretary Matthews, frightened, hangs back.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)
Bring me Lt. Ace Lindsay.

INT. ANN - 8TH FLOOR NEWSROOM - LATER

Jill and Danny exit the elevator. She tries to call Steve,
gets an unusual, fast busy signal.

Jill and Danny step into an electric atmosphere. The room
buzzes with a frenetic energy as producers scramble to
coordinate more interviews and cover stories related to the
mysterious Helen broadcast.

The pair head down the path to Jill's office. As they pass by
desks fellow employees stop what they are doing and stare.

Jill pays no mind and beelines for her office.

INT. JILL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jill's office is a shrine to journalistic excellence. Each
accolade, article and photograph is a testament to her
career.

Jill and Danny enter... CRUNCH!

Jill lifts her heel, revealing the shattered framed
photographs of her most iconic interviews - one with Muhammad
Ali, the other with Pope John Paul II. They look around to
see --

The room has been turned inside out, papers strewn everywhere, drawers emptied, the computer missing...

GENE (O.S.)

Jill...

Gene stands in the doorway.

GENE (CONT'D)

We couldn't stop the Feds.

JILL

What happened?

GENE

The FBI wanted to know how you procured the photographs that went public... When I told him we don't reveal our sources... this.

Taking in the full mess that they caused --

JILL

I need you to stand up... keep me in the loop.

Gene is a little surprised to be taking orders from Jill.

GENE

I'll have everything cleaned up and put back together.

(sighs)

What a day.

Gene leaves just as the Security Guard walks up.

SECURITY GUARD

Ms. Lawrence-- the police report is a no go. The precinct's a madhouse... and truthfully, I'm not even sure what they would be able to do.

He hands her a thumb drive.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

But one thing is for sure, someone above must be watching out for you.

JILL

What do you mean, you're not sure what they would be able to do?

SECURITY GUARD
Just look at the footage.

Security Guard heads off.

JILL
They took my laptop. My sources. My
private files.

NEWSROOM

Danny runs to the nearest desk and grabs a laptop from a young man wearing an intern badge.

DANNY
Sorry. We're going to be needing
this. Have ANN issue you a new one.

The intern gets up, miffed, but complies. He returns to --

JILL'S OFFICE

Clears off a space on her desk for the laptop, picks up a chair and sits down next to her. She plugs in the thumb drive.

She scans the footage, freezing on the moment the trigger is pulled, holding her chest. Then, rewinding just a few seconds prior. She ZOOMS IN, not on the attacker, but on the sky. A peculiar white cloud appears moments before the trigger is pulled.

Jill pulls up the photograph, comparing it with the image on the screen. Her mouth drops. The clouds are identical.

JILL
Doesn't this cloud look similar to
these?

DANNY
Your cloud...

As Jill focuses on the photograph, shivers. The celestial landmass and otherworldly landscape materializes before her very eyes...

JILL
It is real. I've interviewed
Popes... presidents... nobody ever
had proof. Maybe I just wasn't
ready to see it before.

DANNY
I knew you'd see it.

She resumes the video. He pulls the trigger -- A BLAST OF WHITE CONSUMES THE SCREEN! Then suddenly ends.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Whoa!! It like... totally evaporated him.

JILL
We have the story of all time.
We're going to the White House.

INT. ANN - 8TH FLOOR NEWSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jill and Danny are on the move when one of the many reports covering the societal response to the Helen broadcast pulls her attention --

A *Breaking News* banner on the screen reads: *Red Onion escapees cited near Chesapeake Bay.*

A chill runs down her spine as she watches a reporter in front of a chaotic scene at Red Onion State Prison where emergency efforts are underway.

JILL
Red Onion. Erasing killers... feels like justice.

Note: In the lower third of every television screen is the countdown - 18:53:27

DANNY (O.S.)
Jill... Jill...

Pulled from her reverie -- she looks to see Danny standing inside the elevator holding the doors open, waiting for her.

She stops at the news desk handing Ed the thumb drive.

JILL
I promised Gene proof. Play the video.

Ed looks confused.

JILL (CONT'D)
The danger isn't the cloud - it's what people might do because of it. Don't let them twist Mother's message. The country needs to see this.

She glances back at the Red Onion story, takes a brief moment to compose herself, then joins Danny in the elevator.

DANNY

Are you okay?

She gives a less than convincing nod before the elevator doors close.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

President Scott stands by the window, looking out onto Pennsylvania Avenue, where people are gathering beyond the security fence for Anna's candlelight vigil. His introspective silence broken with --

SECRETARY MATTHEWS (O.S.)

Mr. President.

Flanked to his right is Lt. Ace Lindsay.

President Scott's eyes study her for a moment before he speaks.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

Please, sit.

Ace respectfully takes a seat on the plush sofa, her back straight, her gaze steady on the President. Secretary Matthews starts to follow suit when President Scott raises his hand --

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)

Not you, Matthews. You can go.
Effective immediately, you're
relieved of your duties.

The room grows tense as Matthews stares at the President, in disbelief.

SECRETARY MATTHEWS

I beg your pardon, sir?

PRESIDENT SCOTT

You've been dismissed.

Matthews opens his mouth to protest --

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)

-- Unless you'd prefer I have you
escorted out?

The finality in his words leaves no room for discussion. Secretary Matthews leaves, head down, his exit casting a long shadow on the scene as President Scott turns his attention back to Ace.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)
Lt. Lindsay... A decorated combat pilot. An exemplary officer... A war hero...

Ace remains silent, waiting for the other shoe to drop.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)
And yet, here we are...

He pauses, letting the gravity of the situation settle.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)
Lieutenant, I know it was you who leaked those classified photographs to Jill Lawrence.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY
Sir...

PRESIDENT SCOTT
...No, no. Let me finish. You and I, have a lot in common... Because like you, I swore an oath. An oath to support and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic.
(steely)
And when you were faced with the choice between that oath and whatever it is you think you saw, you made your choice. And it wasn't the Constitution.

The weight of his words hang heavy in the air.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY
Mr. President, I am ready to face any consequences you find appropriate, but what I encountered up there... given the events that have followed, I stand by the fact that my assessment was not off base.

President Scott goes to the window. Looks out at the candle light vigil, a sea of cellphone lights, electric candles and lighters.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

Looking out this window, you know
what I see?

Ace walks over and takes a look.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)

A bunch of wishful thinkers
lighting candles to hope their way
out of, what you and I both know,
is most likely a hostile scenario.

Ace doesn't have an answer, but you can tell she is weighing
his words heavily.

Matilda pokes her head in.

MATILDA

Sir. They're ready for you.

He nods, holds up a finger to signal just a minute.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

You have two options. Continue on
the path you are on, which will
only land you a date in military
court or we chalk this up as a
momentary lapse in judgement and
offer you a chance at redemption.
And I trust when called upon you
will exhibit that same degree of
heroism that has me considering you
for the Medal of Honor.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SECURE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Steve is on his cell phone, texting with Jill. Agent Dooley
walks with him.

He texts: *Do not come here. You will only make it worse.*

He looks up to see Secretary Matthews approaching, visibly
upset.

STEVE

Matthews... What's going on?

SECRETARY MATTHEWS

I've been dismissed.

STEVE

What? Why?

SECRETARY MATTHEWS

He didn't say... but I have an idea why.

STEVE

The photographs?

SECRETARY MATTHEWS

It's fine. I don't like the way he thinks. You don't either.

Steve turns to Dooley.

STEVE

Do me a favor.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - NORTHWEST HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jill and Danny are among a swarm of badge wearing journalists, buzzing with anticipation, as they make their way to the press room.

DANNY

We are literally throwing ourselves into the lion's den.

Jill's eyes are on her text exchange with Steve. *Do not come here. You will only make it worse.*

JILL

I am being asked to do something I have no clue how to do... or if I am even capable to come anywhere near achieving it... The only thing I do know... for the first time in my life... I believe there is something greater... and it's time for me to try to do something about it.

They pass through a security check point -- show their credentials, pass bags through screening check, and pass through the metal detector.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SOUTHEAST HALLWAY - NIGHT

President Scott, VP Rongstad and their secret service detail follow Matilda to the press room.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD
(in the President's ear)
Jill Lawrence's computer has been
seized and we are working on
gaining access to her cell phone.

Steve approaches from the opposite end of the hall.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Steve... I figured you would've
gone home to be with family like
Senate Leader Box and the rest of
Congress.

STEVE
We may disagree, but I've always
had your back.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Very well.

The group proceeds into --

INT. WHITE HOUSE PRESS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As President Scott enters the room, the atmosphere shifts to tense silence. He takes his place at the podium. A look of satisfaction passes over his face as he spots Jill among the sea of Press.

From the sideline Steve locks eyes with Jill.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Ladies and gentlemen, earlier this
evening our airwaves, satellites,
and internet were hijacked... This
entity, which took the form of our
beloved Helen Keller, who passed
away more than half a century ago,
claimed to be a messenger of peace.
(beat)

While we all hope for a peaceful
resolution, I want to assure you
that the United States and our
allies stand ready to take any
necessary action to safeguard our
people from this potential threat.
As such, I am declaring a state of
emergency.

The room erupts with questions. Jill raises her hand. He skips over her to another reporter.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)

Go ahead.

REPORTER #1

What should citizens do during this state of emergency?

PRESIDENT SCOTT

Follow instructions from local authorities, stay informed, stay indoors, and above all else -- stay calm. The National Guard has been deployed and is protecting our streets.

REPORTER #1

What happens at the end of the 24 hours if we don't comply?

PRESIDENT SCOTT

The United States of America does not bow to threats. We are the most powerful country on Earth.

REPORTER #2

And what if it isn't from Earth?

PRESIDENT SCOTT

We're prepared to face whatever this is.

President Scott moves on to the next reporter, skipping over Jill for a third time.

REPORTER #3

Mr. President, are you saying the United States is prepared to go to war with Mother?

PRESIDENT SCOTT

I'm saying the United States of America will do whatever it takes to protect its citizens. Last one.

Unable to bear it any longer --

JILL

Mr. President, what is your opinion of the First Lady's interview, where she expressed her belief in the message and urged for peace?

PRESIDENT SCOTT

My wife is a caring and
compassionate woman, who has been
through allot. (beat) And while I
respect her views, you, the people
of the United States, elected me as
your President. You have put your
trust in me, that I am capable of
making the right decisions during
challenging times.

JILL

What if I can prove it? What if I
can prove that Helen, Mother and
Life... is all real and that
everything that was said is of
genuine nature? And if we just do
what she asks... we will experience
heaven on earth.

CLICK CLICK SNAP SNAP... the photographers' lenses have
shifted from the President to Jill, immortalizing her in a
flurry of flash photography.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

Miss Lawrence, do you have
information on this terrorist that
you are withholding?

JILL

What terrorist organization do you
know whose message is of love and
peace?

PRESIDENT SCOTT

With a stipulation that is a direct
attack against our 2nd amendment.

JILL

A manmade amendment that is clearly
flawed. It's that thinking that put
us in this situation.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

You think disarmament means peace?
Violence has existed since the
beginning of man.

JILL

But it doesn't have to. Why not
give peace a chance?

INT. LOCAL BAR - CONTINUOUS

The packed bar is quiet. Everyone in the crowd is holding their collective breath.

INT. WHITE HOUSE PRESS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Answer the question.

JILL
Answer my question.

Vice President Rongstad hurries to the podium, tugs on the President's elbow.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
That is all.

As the President exits, he subtly nods toward Jill -- the head of the Secret Service detail understands the President's intention. As does Jill. She turns to Danny.

JILL
Go. Don't think. I need you to run.

DANNY
You realize you just cost us our jobs?

JILL
I'm sorry.

DANNY
It was worth it.

Danny hurries off. The Secret Service agent makes his way through the cluster of reporters toward, Jill...

But Steve gets to her first, taking her by the arm, and leading her out through a back exit.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Steve guides Jill with calculated precision, knowing exactly where the surveillance camera's intermittent blind spots are in the hallway.

STEVE
So, she finally texted back?

Jill blinks, shrugs, then smiles.

JILL

Steve, I can't tell you how much you helping me means to me... but you need it distance yourself. I don't want you getting into trouble because of me.

STEVE

Jill, there's no amount of trouble I wouldn't get into for you.

They reach a corner... and Steve immediately halts. He waits for a group of PASSERSBY to draw near, then deftly leads Jill alongside them, using the crowd as a screen from the surveillance camera on the opposite wall.

JILL

What if the President is right?

STEVE

Then, I lose the Speakership. You're worth it.

Before she can protest further, Steve pushes on an unmarked door and guides her inside with urgency.

INT. WHITE HOUSE MAINTENANCE CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Steve leads Jill past cleaning supplies and tools, stopping at a metal rack. He moves it aside. Opens a concealed panel and enters a code on the numeric keypad. A secret door glides open, revealing a hidden passage.

JILL

Is this?

STEVE

It is not "the tunnel." Every administration seems to add a new way of escaping a potential hostile scenario.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SECRET PASSAGEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jill follows Steve down the narrow clandestine passageway. It's quiet. A lot for both of them to process.

Jill stops --

JILL

A mugger tried to shoot me today.

STEVE
Oh my God, Jill...

JILL
Point blank. On the security
footage... there was this light and
this white cloud... It consumed
him... he vanished.

STEVE
Vanished?

JILL
The flash wasn't random... It
judged him.

STEVE
That's why you called and hung up.

JILL
Steve... I just have to say...

STEVE
...not now.

Steve takes her by the hand...

STEVE (CONT'D)
We have to keep moving.

EXT. ELLIPSE PARK - CONTINUOUS

Jill and Steve emerge from the Bulfinch Gatehouse. Steve
secures the door behind them, just as a black SUV pulls up
along Constitution Ave NE - Dooley at the wheel.

Steve and Jill run to the vehicle and duck inside.

INT. BLACK SUV - CONTINUOUS

Steve and Jill work to catch their breath as Dooley drives.

JILL
Hey, Dooley.

AGENT DOOLEY
It's good to see you, Ms. Lawrence.
You'd better turn off that phone.

Jill clicks the phone off.

JILL
I apologize if I get you all
arrested.

AGENT DOOLEY
If the world ends tomorrow, it
won't matter all that much.

Jill's phone BUZZES. Surprised, Jill and Steve look to her
phone, eyes go wide.

JILL
It's her. She responded to my
interview request.

Looking over at Jill's phone --

STEVE
(impressed)
You requested an interview with the
Almighty?

He examines the text: 36.8529° N, 75.0256° W.

STEVE (CONT'D)
These coordinates are on the
water... If we have any hope at of
you making it there we better get
to the Wharf stat.

Love fills Jill's eyes as she looks at Steve.

JILL
(in a soft voice)
You kept it?

DING -- all their phones GLITCH...

INT. ANN STUDIO - SAME

FOOTAGE of President Scott and Jill at the press conference --

JILL
Why not give peace a chance?

Ed is reporting from the ANN anchor desk.

ED
Why not give peace a chance? A
slogan that has become the mantra
for the pro-Mother movement... and
the group referring to themselves
as Lifers.

DING -- every cell phone within the studio GLITCHES, screens flickering in tandem...

INT. SITUATION ROOM - SAME

President Scott and VP Rongstad are here with the HEAD OF SECURITY, surveillance feed of the White House hallways is on display when...

HEAD OF SECURITY
I've looked everywhere. She's
nowhere to be found.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD
Unacceptable.

DING -- screens on their phones GLITCH...

PRESIDENT SCOTT
For fuck's sake.

Anticipating another Helen announcement, but instead are the numbers are 16:09:09... counting down.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)
Someone please, tell me-- how this
is this peaceful?

INT. BLACK SUV - CONTINUOUS

Dooley drives a few feet. Jill and Steve are in back. Steve looks up from the countdown and turns to Jill.

STEVE
Look...

Steve gestures out the window at the First Lady's rally outside the White House --

Anna's crowd has swelled and is now harmonizing in song. Among the handcrafted signs include a heart with "Everybody" and "Why Not Give Peace a Chance?"

Some display the sign language symbol for "Love".

Jill beams, proud.

Anna speaks into a megaphone:

ANNA
Wherever you are, join us. Sing in
the streets. Let the government...
(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)
let the military know... you
believe.

Traffic has come to a complete halt.

AGENT DOOLEY
We're not going anywhere.

STEVE
Find a place to pull over. We'll
run.

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE - LATER

A few blocks away from the White House, the scene is much different -- a mob of looters smash everything in their path...

With his hand on his holstered firearm, Dooley leads Steve, and Jill through the mayhem at a hurried pace.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Agent Dooley, Jill and Steve continue to push their way through the dense crowds. They cross a street with a church on the corner. They hear screams. Crowds are now starting to run toward them.

Jill turns to a woman, then to a man... both running away in panic.

JILL
Why is everyone running?

Most are all too terrified to stop, or even look back.

JILL (CONT'D)
Ma'am, what is happening?

AGENT DOOLEY
Jill, keep moving.

Jill is trying to move quickly past the church, but a crowd member pushes her down on the ground.

JILL
(voice strained)
Steve.

Steve turns back for her, but sees Agent Dooley is already rushing to her aid.

As they try to regroup, a man with a bomb strapped to his body appears in front of the church. His eyes gleam with a fanatical light.

MAN

(voice raised)

Did you hear Helen? Killers will not be rewarded.

JILL

Wait. I can tell the world your story.

The man points back towards the church.

MAN

Your church lied to you too. But I know the truth.

BOOM! The explosion rips through the front of the church, hurtling debris in all directions. Those nearest to the blast are violently thrown back. Sporadic fires ignite amidst the crowd.

A RINGING fills Jill's ears. A panorama of chaos: civilians screaming. A MAN screams into the sky. A WOMAN drops to her knees praying. A CHILD cries as her FATHER pulls her away.

Jill swallows hard. She spots Steve, distanced by about twenty feet... encircled by debris... bizarrely SUSPENDED IN THE AIR... around only the three of them, as if they are protected by an invisible force field.

After a moment, reality reasserts itself as the debris falls to the ground.

No one has words for what they just experienced. They continue on, fighting their way through the crowd.

EXT. MARKET DOCKS AT THE WHARF - LATER

Steve, Jill, and Agent Dooley arrive, the aftermath of a mob's frenzy is evident. Few boats remain and two of those are currently under attack from desperate looters. Dooley steps in front, his weapon drawn and ready.

A flicker of light captures Steve and Jill's attention --

JILL

Sunshine.

Slip #111 is illuminated by the subtle glow of wharf lights, revealing a familiar vessel nestled in its berth.

Steve rushes inside, Jill follows, her hand brushing the wooden railing, fingers trailing over its worn grain. And suddenly, she's somewhere else --

INT. BOAT "SUNSHINE" - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Sunlight pours through the clear blue sky as the boat gently rocks on calm waters. Jill pilots the boat, the breeze blowing through her hair. We see her unlike we've ever seen, at ease, smiling, content, free.

She looks around. Noticing there is no one else on deck she leaves the wheel. She heads down the stairs to the cabin below. She hears low voices. She pauses at the cracked door.

BELOW DECKS

Muted voices. The door cracked just enough.

KAREN, Jill's mom, sits - the oversized sunhat slipping slightly on her fragile frame. She's thin, the kind of thin that comes from years of fighting something bigger than yourself.

Steve sits across from her. The man who always knows what to say, struggling now to find the words.

STEVE

Karen... there's something I'd like to ask you.

She watches him, waiting.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I would've asked Jill's father, but...

KAREN

I know.

STEVE

I love her. I love her more than I know what to do with.

DECK - LATER

Karen, Steve, and Jill share a picnic. Steve pops open a bottle of champagne. Hands Jill a glass. Drops down on one knee.

JILL

Steve... Stop. No. We live in two different worlds.

(MORE)

JILL (CONT'D)
 You're a politician, I'm a
 reporter. You want a church
 wedding... I... don't want a
 wedding.

Steve bows his head in disappointment.

A breeze catches Karen's sunhat and sends it sailing
 overboard along with the beautiful silk scarf that was hiding
 her hair loss.

KAREN
 Oh...

Jill rushes to her, but Karen just watches the hat go,
 disappearing into the waves.

INT. BOAT "SUNSHINE" - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Jill is jolted out of her memory with a stick of splinter in
 her finger.

JILL
 Ouch.

HELM

Steve tears through the navigation station, stowing a
 shotgun, flipping through charts, yanking open drawers...

STEVE
 Where the hell is the marine chart?

JILL
 We have GPS.

STEVE
 Electronics can fail.

Beyond them, a VHF radio crackles from a boat docked nearby.
 A voice filters through, hazy, distorted:

VHF RADIO (O.S.)
 All you Lifers out there... we're
 counting on you to get the word
 out... to make your voices heard...
 and to spread the love.

Jill listens, something shifting behind her eyes. A thought
 forming.

She pulls out her phone and sends a text.

BELOW DECKS

Steve is crouched low, cushions tossed aside, digging through a storage compartment. Above him, the shotgun sways slightly with the boat's rhythm.

JILL
I can't do this alone.

She looks up.

STEVE
What?

She steps closer, not hesitating this time.

JILL
The world can't end like this. I've made too many mistakes... I need time to make it right... to make us right.

Her voice catches, but she pushes through.

JILL (CONT'D)
I never should've said no to you.

Steve searches her face, his usual quick wit failing him.

STEVE
Jill...

JILL
Please, Steve. You have to try. You have to try to talk sense into him.

He exhales.

STEVE
Even if that was possible, I would never let you go out there alone.

She meets his eyes, steady now.

JILL
Danny's a sailor. He's already on his way.

A beat. His jaw tightens.

STEVE
What if I never see you again?

JILL
It's up to us to make sure that
doesn't happen.

A pause that swallows the air between them. Then...

He kisses her.

It starts as more of a goodbye, but then deepens, grows heavier, more desperate than either of them expected...

CREAK.

The sound of Danny descending the stairs pulls them out of the moment. Danny takes off his sailor hat and hides his face.

DANNY
I can come back.

Off the large paper he is holding --

STEVE
Is that a marine chart?

DANNY
I'll get us there... pronto.

STEVE
If anything happens to her...

DANNY
...My dad was a sailor. His dad was
a sailor. His dad's dad was a
sailor...
(beat, then with a grin)
Sunshine is in safe hands.

Steve doesn't move.

STEVE
I'm talking about Jill.

Danny's smirk fades just enough.

DANNY
Oh. Jill too.

Steve softens, turns back to Jill.

STEVE
I will see you soon.

Jill nods, holding onto that hope.

As Steve heads up the stairs, he pauses at the top, one last glance back.

Their eyes meet. A silent promise.

Then he steps out into the night, where Dooley is waiting.

INT. BOAT "SUNSHINE" - HELM - LATER

The engine hums, a low vibration pulsing through the deck. Danny settles into the captain's seat, hands steady on the controls.

Jill sits to his left, silent, lost in thought.

DANNY

You good?

She lets out a small, hollow laugh.

JILL

Not even close.

Danny nods, understanding. No empty reassurances. No forced optimism.

DANNY

Let's set sail.

He eases the throttle forward. The boat lurches gently, then glides into the dark water, leaving the dock behind.

The glowing lights of the wharf fade, swallowed by the vast, open sea.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

President Scott stands at the window, surveying the enduring spirit of Anna's followers as their song of peace and love persists into the ungodly hours. President Scott has a tear in his eye and smiles.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

Anna's back.

A BEEP of the intercom breaks his contemplation.

PERSONAL SECRETARY (V.O.)

The Speaker of the House is here.

President Scott opens the door. Steve enters with serious intent.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Steve... 12 hours left in the
countdown. What brings you here?

STEVE
I know it defies logic... but we
both know it's real. Sir, for the
sake of humanity-- please give the
Executive Order for immediate
disarmament.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Did you help Jill Lawrence escape?

STEVE
Escape? Escape from what?

PRESIDENT SCOTT
The most peculiar thing... I had
asked security to bring her in for
questioning after her little
outburst... But they couldn't find
her anywhere... Not even a flicker
on our surveillance feeds. It's as
if she knew our exact security
layout and how to navigate through
it without being seen.

STEVE
Jill is not the enemy, Sir. Nor do
I think there is an enemy in this
equation period. We are being given
a second chance here... to do
things right. To finally have peace
on Earth.

Before the President can respond the windows START TO
RATTLE... their glass panes quivering in their frames.

President Scott and Steve hurry to the window to see --

The dark clouds, once high in the sky, rapidly descending
onto the city...

Outside, the harmonious chants transform into SCREAMS as
Anna's steadfast followers scatter.

For the first time, a glimmer of fear seeps into President
Scott's eyes. He glances at the picture of his daughter.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
If this thing can be stopped, then
no more American families will
suffer unnecessarily.

STEVE

This is not the work of terrorists.
These are not hollow threats. This
is an instruction from a higher
power... And I urge you to act now.
Because if you don't... you'll be
to blame for the end of humanity.

And with that, Steve turns on his heel and leaves.

President Scott remains at the window, staring out into the
encroaching darkness.

INT./EXT. BOAT "SUNSHINE"/CHESAPEAKE BAY - MORNING

Jill has fallen asleep on the boat deck. Danny guides the
boat, steady at the wheel.

Jill stirs, then wakes.

JILL

Sorry, I drifted off.

DANNY

I'm glad you're awake... Cause
uh... either I'm seeing things...
or the sky is shrinking.

Jill looks to see the clouds have descended, and the boat is
headed into a thick blanket of fog.

JILL

What're we going to do? We can't
even see where we're going.

He pats the wheel.

DANNY

Fear not. This baby has state of
the art navigation. Sunshineth in
darkness.

JILL

I must say, I'm glad you're here,
Danny.

DANNY

You know, I never quite got my head
'round whatever happened with you
and Steve.

JILL

I fell in love with him in college.
Fell apart in Washington. But he
was always there for me... even
when my mom died.

DANNY

I know there was talk about careers
not aligning... but I'm like... Why
do you have to pick one or the
other. Why not try to make both
work?

Jill contemplates this.

JILL

It didn't seem so clear back then.

INT. ANN STUDIO - MORNING

A sleep deprived Ed sits at the anchor desk, looking
earnestly into the camera, while overhead monitors display
images of the eerily low-hanging clouds.

ED

While some leaders still doubt
Mother's power, our own Jill
Lawrence experienced it first-hand.

Video plays of Jill's mugger disappearing.

ED (CONT'D)

In our very parking lot, this
attempted murderer was not renewed.

Ed looks at the countdown clock, then directly into the
camera.

ED (CONT'D)

Nine hours left. Helen's cell phone
takeover, the mugger, along with
the drastic descent of the
clouds... signs that Mother is not
pleased with our response to her
demands.

The headline below him reads: *Mother's Discontent: Clouds
Descend*. Countdown: 09:09:09 is in the lower third.

ED (CONT'D)

The question is: How will President
Scott and other world leaders
respond to the recent events?

INT./EXT. BOAT "SUNSHINE"/ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

Jill and Danny huddle around the navigation console, the coordinates she received glowing on the screen.

DANNY

Okay. So, we have reached our destination. What happens next?

JILL

I have no idea...

Danny looks out to see the cloud cover thickening and visibility dwindling.

DANNY

Well, hopefully something happens fast... because this fog is only getting worse.

The CRACKLE of the radio interrupts -- a voice, frantic, cuts through the static.

VOICE ON RADIO

Mayday, Mayday, Mayday... This is the vessel Blue Gill's Call, Blue Gill's Call, Blue Gill's Call. We're going down... and going down fast...

The transmission cuts off, leaving only the white noise of the radio.

Danny grabs the radio and speaks:

DANNY

Blue Gill's Call, this is Sunshine... Visibility is nonexistent. What are your coordinates?

He releases the talk button and waits for a response... but only silence answers back. Danny tries again.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Blue Gill's Call-- Can you hear me? What are your coordinates?

The silence is deafening. Then, a faint CRACKLE...

VOICE ON RADIO

36.8529° North, 75.0256° West.

Danny and Jill look to each other, taken aback.

JILL
That's here.

DANNY
Fate brought us together.

He immediately kills the engine. Jill and Danny don their life jackets and head to the bow.

BOW

Floating on the tide. Jill strains to see through the dense fog. Danny calls out:

DANNY (CONT'D)
Ahoy! Ahoy! Anyone out there?

His voice seems to be losing the battle against the noisy sea. He tries again, determined --

DANNY (CONT'D)
Ahoy! Is there anyone out there!
Hello!

Another pause. Jill shoots Danny a look - she can't hear a thing. Then, a voice shouts back:

VOICE FROM AFAR
We're over here! Over here!

Danny quickly pulls the cord on their lifeboat -- inflating.

DANNY
Dude... We can't see you. I'm going
to throw you a line.

He casts the line out.

VOICE FROM AFAR
I got it! I got the line!

Danny pulls the line tight. He attaches a carabiner to the life raft and then to the end of the line.

DANNY
I've attached the life raft to the
line. All you need to do is reel it
in.

He attaches another line to the raft - this end is for him to hang on to.

DANNY (CONT'D)

When you're secure in the raft give
two tugs and I'll pull you in.
Cool?

The scene plays out as Danny instructed. No tug.

Calling out:

DANNY (CONT'D)

Do you have the raft?

Nothing. Jill looks to Danny losing faith in their rescue plan. Then - One tug. Beat. A second tug.

Danny begins strong arming the line, reeling it in. It is tough. Jill jumps in behind to help.

Through the clouds the bright orange raft comes into view. Jill can see two figures in the raft, but can't make out their faces.

The raft drifts alongside Sunshine. Danny locks hands with the FIRST MAN and pulls him aboard. The second man extends his hand to Jill. Just as she's about to reach out, recognition freezes her. The unmistakable upside-down cross tattoo. It's her father's killer, ANTHONY GIANNINI.

Off her hesitation, Danny steps in and pulls him aboard.

As he comes on board, she distances herself. He looks at her strangely.

ANTHONY

Man, we thought we were goners for
sure. You two saved our lives.

Danny takes notice of their poorly fitting polo shirts and khaki shorts, a stark contrast to their tattooed bodies and unkempt appearance. The first man, marked by a coiling SERPENT TATTOO around his neck, extends his calloused hand for a handshake.

SERPENT TATTOO

Our boat suddenly lost control.
Dumped us here. We are eternally
grateful. I'm Johnny and this here
is...

ANTHONY

Anthony.

DANNY

Anthony, Johnny. Where y'all headed?

SERPENT TATTOO

Antarctica.

DANNY

Not a bad place to be when time expires, but we're not going to make it there in this rig.

ANTHONY

No worries. We'll just tag along with you then. Not like we have many options.

DANNY

Great. Let's all head port side.

Anthony and Serpent Tattoo head to the wrong side of the boat, but Danny doesn't correct them. He and Jill share a discrete look.

JILL

You guys are probably freezing. Let me get you some blankets.

ANTHONY

Much obliged.

JILL

I'll meet you there.

She heads down the stairs.

BELOW DECKS

In the belly of the boat, she grabs Steve's shotgun. Double checks it is loaded, foregoes the blankets, and heads upstairs.

DECK

Jill walks starboard, shotgun ready. Danny is showing the guests his wellness cards facing the bow, with their backs toward Jill. Anthony, picking up on the tension mirrored in Danny's expression, spins around.

JILL (CONT'D)

Anthony Giannini...

ANTHONY

Do I know you?

Serpent Tattoo also raises his hands as Danny drops his cards and unearths a flare gun hidden in the bow's seat, his hands shaking.

SERPENT TATTOO
Hey hey hey-- What's ruffled
y'all's feathers?

Moving closer to Anthony --

JILL
Sentenced to life imprisonment at
Red Onion State Prison without
parole for First Degree Murder.

He attempts to place her face, but cannot recall any memories associated with her.

JILL (CONT'D)
You don't remember me, do you?
No, I wouldn't imagine you would. I
was just an eight-year-old girl
when our lives intersected. (beat)
How about the name Senator Robert
Lawrence?

His eyes light up. Now he knows.

ANTHONY
The daughter.

Serpent Tattoo looks to Anthony, then back to Jill.

SERPENT TATTOO
I barely know this dude, we fled
together. That's it.

Jill stays focused on Anthony.

JILL
Do you know how long I have dreamt
of this day? The opportunity to
confront the coward that killed my
father. Do you know what I dreamt I
would do to you if I were ever
given that opportunity?

ANTHONY
I've had decades to forgive myself.
I have a pretty good idea of what's
played out in that head of yours.

Jill shakes her head.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Most people believe they're
incapable of murder... yet, here we
are.

His eyes linger on the trigger.

DANNY
Jill! Jill... This is going too
far.

Danny looks as though he is about to faint again. Jill is
consumed by painful memories and unresolved grief.

JILL
(vengeful)
Why? Why did you kill him?

ANTHONY
I didn't know who he was. I was
young... angry... a patsy following
orders.

JILL
Who gave the order?

ANTHONY
People I never saw. But I pulled
the trigger... and have to live
with that every day.

JILL
You didn't just take him. You
destroyed me, my mother... stripped
me of my faith... of ever being
truly happy!

ANTHONY
I thought I didn't have a choice.

JILL
We all have a choice.

Her fingers tighten around the shotgun, pulling it securely
against her shoulder.

DANNY
Jill... You kill this man...
justified or not... it makes you a
murderer. That is not who you are.
Killers will not be renewed.

Jill wrestles with her torment... Clenching her teeth, she looks towards the heavens for an answer. Her grip begins to waver as tears begin to blur her vision. Then --

Fueled by revenge, returns to the sightline of the shotgun, with her finger on the trigger...

DANNY (CONT'D)
Everything your father stood for -

A single white cloud appears overhead, pulls her attention... and years of anguish suddenly spill out of her in a raw, PRIMAL CRY.

Jill looks back at the killer, lowers the gun. Exhausted. Staggeres over to the railing...

JILL
Love Everybody.

And tosses the gun overboard.

JILL (CONT'D)
Your fate lies with Mother.

Anthony looks questioningly to her.

JILL (CONT'D)
The burden is no longer mine.

A WHIRLWIND of white clouds begins forming overhead. They spiral down -- wrapping Jill into a thick blanket of fog, and as quickly as they descended, they recede, spiraling upwards into the sky.

Leaving Danny staring at the empty space where Jill once stood.

DANNY
Jill! Jill!

He slowly looks up, the sky is suddenly still.

EXT. ISLAND IN THE SKY - CONTINUOUS

Jill appears in a majestic land. Before her lies a pathway, veining through an untamed landscape... the vegetation vibrant and alive. The sky, crystal clear. A land in its purest form, best described as a land before man made its mark.

Jill shivers. With her first step upon the path it illuminates -- leading to an ancient castle in the distance.

INT. CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Jill enters into a giant colorful and bright television studio, but without equipment or a control room. Just three empty thrones in the center.

Jill momentarily freezes in total awe of...

Helen Keller.

HELEN
Hello, Jill.

JILL
Helen... Where am I?

HELEN
You are in Life.

JILL
I was just on the boat... the
coordinates... they led me to...

She is reliving the scene with her father's killer. She searches Helen for answers.

HELEN
Mother had to see if you would
truly love everybody...

JILL
A test...

HELEN
She believed you would pass.

Jill processes this. She is overwhelmed with the free flow of emotion that is released through her forgiveness. Tears stream down her face. Helen gives her the time she needs.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Your interview request has been
approved.

The chair is suddenly filled by: A young MUHAMMAD ALI (22), and Karol Wojtyla - POPE JOHN PAUL II, both with same translucent and ethereal glowing appearance as Helen.

JILL
I don't understand. I thought I was
interviewing Mother?

HELEN

Muhammad Ali... Pope John Paul II.
Messengers of the Creator. And
since men have started nearly every
one of your wars, Mother believed
that Earth should hear her through
these advocates of peace.

Helen's arm points to the studio.

HELEN (CONT'D)

The world is watching.

Helen vanishes as a transcendent transformation ensues -- our surroundings shift into towering screens, a global, high resolution look at society through their devices... And as Jill becomes witness to the world, the world becomes witness to Jill...

She's on the mega screens of bustling metropolises to the handheld devices in quiet hamlets - billions are tuned into the spectacle that is Jill.

The countdown appears in the lower third on every image.

Nervously, Jill turns to the panel, takes a seat opposite them, takes a deep breath and exhales.

JILL

I haven't had nerves like this
since my first day on the job.

MUHAMMAD ALI

We can't be brave without fear.
(beat)
It's good to see you, Jill. It's
been a long time.

The Pope nods in agreement.

JILL

I don't even know where to begin.
I've spent my entire life asking
questions nobody could answer.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

How about the beginning? Many
believe that the BIG BANG disproves
creation... when it is the exact
opposite. It says it right there in
your Bible. God spoke... and BANG.
So much of scripture has been
misinterpreted.

Jill leans in.

JILL

What about heaven and hell?

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Think of it as those who advance into Life and those who don't... Very few don't advance. In fact, only the ones who are incapable of change when faced with truth... are eliminated.

Jill's head tilts.

JILL

You are saying people can change?

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Why do you think you're here? You are a living testament.

JILL

I wouldn't have seen this, if I held onto that hate.

MUHAMMAD ALI

You did change. And it was beautiful. There is nothing more inspiring than transformation.

No longer nervous, Jill sounds like the journalist she has always been.

JILL

But why do we have to even go there... Why do bad things even have to exist?

POPE JOHN PAUL II

It's complicated but also simple. Life, or heaven as you call it, can exist on Earth. Our hope is that will happen today before the clock stops.

MUHAMMAD ALI

Violence and hate do not have to exist.

JILL

What about innocents, like Madelyn Scott, who die so young?

POPE JOHN PAUL II
 There are divine moments that may
 be perceived as bad to the people
 not being privy to Life's playbook.

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE - CONTINUOUS

The First Lady watches on her phone, full of emotion, making
 the infinity symbol in the air.

INT. CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Back with Jill, Pope John Paul II and Muhammad Ali.

MUHAMMAD ALI
 Like your role as a journalist...
 there are assignments in Life. And
 if one's assignment in Life means
 one has to return home sooner...
 that is Mother's call.

Jill nods.

JILL
 It is not a coincidence that Mother
 chose you as my interviewees is it?

MUHAMMAD ALI
 There are no coincidences.

POPE JOHN PAUL II
 After your past interviews with us,
 we both saw beyond the journalist.

Jill turns to Ali, then the Pope.

JILL
 You converted to Islam. You led the
 Catholic Church. Which was right?

POPE JOHN PAUL II
 Jesus... Muhammad... Buddha... all
 people of peace were right. The
 only practice that ensures Life is
 love... love everybody.

The Pope does the sign language symbol for "Love".

INT. SITUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

VP Rongstad, Steve, General Herzberg and his other trusted advisors watch the Jill live stream.

President Scott paces, deep in thought (beat).

PRESIDENT SCOTT
Give Lindsay the go-ahead.

President Scott nervously holds his hands to his mouth.

STEVE
Mr. President, please... you have
to reconsider.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD
We have a threat and a deadline.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
If I'm wrong, millions die. If I
hesitate... maybe billions. God
forgive me, either way.

Steve rises, confronts the President.

STEVE
I'm telling you, this is not the
answer...

President nods to Herzberg. He picks up the phone, speaks:

GENERAL HERZBERG
Deploy Lt. Lindsay.

STEVE
Jill Lawrence, an American citizen,
is on that island.

Herzberg receives a confirmation over the phone, sets the receiver down and turns to President Scott.

GENERAL HERZBERG
Lindsay is set to strike in
00:09:00 minutes, Sir.

INT. CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

The interview seen around the world continues --

JILL
What is Life like?

POPE JOHN PAUL II
 An abundance of joy. And time... An
 endless amount of time to enjoy
 with our ancestors.

Jill gulps.

JILL
 My Mom and Dad... are they?

Muhammad Ali and Pope John Paul II look at each other and smile. A fourth throne appears with Jill's parents sitting in it.

Jill is filled with emotion.

JILL (CONT'D)
 Daddy?

ROBERT
 We were watching over you this
 entire time.

Jill's parents are holding hands.

KAREN
 That horrible mugging --

ROBERT
 The church explosion debris --

KAREN AND ROBERT
 On the boat.

ROBERT
 You chose mercy when vengeance
 seemed easier.

JILL
 The white cloud?

Jill's parents nod.

ROBERT
 A doorway. It opened the moment you
 were ready to see it.

Tears roll down Jill's cheeks, her expression radiant with joy.

JILL
 This is the happiest moment of my
 entire life.

KAREN
There could be more.

Jill beams. Mesmerized.

JILL
What else happens in Life?

KAREN
We've met millions of people from
thousands of galaxies. Mother's
universe is indefinite.

ROBERT
As is her love. The things we've
learned...

JILL
Why doesn't Mother introduce us to
them now?

BEEP BEEP BEEP. An alarm sounds. A red light overhead
flashes, casting an eerie hue on the room. Jill looks around,
what is the cause? She looks back to the panel, their faces
are suddenly downcast.

JILL (CONT'D)
(speaking up over the
alarm)
What is happening?

MUHAMMAD ALI
It's the U-S.

POPE JOHN PAUL II
Man has forfeited his chance.

Their images flicker.

JILL
Wait, no...

ROBERT
There's nothing more for us to do.

JILL
Dad, get Mother to stop them.

KAREN
We love --

They flicker once more and are gone.

JILL
Please, please don't go.

With a sense of growing dread, Jill looks to her phone... and her heart plummets at --

CLOSE UP of the countdown jumping forward from 07:00:00 to 00:07:00.

INT. SITUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

WIDEN OUT from the countdown 00:06:59 on another phone's screen to reveal Steve's tense face --

STEVE
Uh, Sir...

PRESIDENT SCOTT
What is it now, Randall?

STEVE
Look at your phone.

President Scott, along with the rest of the room, pull out their phones to see the countdown numbers reading the same as the impending airstrike.

He looks to the TV showing the Jill livestream, where in the lower third in the images on the screen -- Helen's doomsday countdown matches as well.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
My God.

INT. CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

HELEN (O.S.)
Jill, I'll send you back now.

Jill's face, reflecting her anxiety and the weight of this moment, appears on all the screens --

JILL
I'm staying. Mother, I know you can hear me... I am begging you... spare us. Please... I have faith you'll see the best of us.

INSERT shots of people from all over the world, watching her.

JILL (CONT'D)
 People of Earth, if you are
 listening, lay down your arms.
 Wherever you are... in the
 streets... even in battle, I beg of
 you... Show Mother that we want
 what she wants!

Then, an idea pops into Jill's head that has her walking over
 to a screen...

JILL (CONT'D)
 Pull up First Lady Anna Scott.

A live video of First Lady Anna Scott now replaces Jill's
 face. It worked!

PENNSYLVANIA AVE, Anna holds hands with other Lifers staying
 strong amidst the chaos blanketed in a thick fog.

FIRST LADY SCOTT
 Hold strong Lifers. Believe.

A man among the Lifers begins to softly sing "We Are the
 World", his way of comforting himself and bonding together
 with the group.

LIFER MAN
 There comes a time; When we heed a
 certain call; When the world must
 come together as one...

Members of the group join in.

LIFER GROUP
 There are people dying; Oh, and
 it's time to lend a hand to life;
 The greatest gift of all...

The scene continues on the screen as Jill steps to another
 screen with her face on it --

JILL
 Pull up Jürgen Grässlin.

On a makeshift stage at Pariser Platz in BERLIN, with the
 Brandenburg Gate in the background, JÜRGEN GRÄSSLIN looks
 upon a sea of protestors, their banners waving with slogans
 "Give Peace a Chance" and "Love Everybody".

JÜRGEN GRÄSSLIN

(German)

Our fight is not against each other, but against a system that has lost sight of its duty. A system that's forgotten love. Remember, the most powerful weapon we have is love. We must love our country, love our fellow citizens, love our freedom... And we must love everybody!

The crowd CHEERS, united in their quest for change.

Jill picks up the pace, going screen to screen --

JILL

Show me Malala Yousafzai...

MALALA YOUSAFZAI stands in front of MINAR-E-PAKISTAN - LAHORE, speaking loudly to a massive crowd --

MALALA

(Urdu)

The power of love outstrips the love for power. Together we can put an end to tyranny...

On to the next screen.

JILL

Let me see Ai Weiwei.

AI WEIWEI speaks to an expansive crowd at 798 ART DISTRICT - BEIJING --

AI WEIWEI

(Mandarin)

Paint the world with love. Sculpt a future of respect for one another... Share a mission... Love everybody...

Screen after screen.

JILL

Pull up the countries laying down their arms.

The screens light up with images of: France disarming, Turkey destroying weapons, DRC military throwing weapons in a pile to be disposed of... and on and on... surprisingly more countries than she expected fill the screens.

JILL (CONT'D)
 Show the world Piotr Wolczyk.

Piotr holds the hands of two children followed by a single mother crossing the BRIDGE OF TOYS.

JILL (CONT'D)
 Mother, you can't tell me that all of these people are not worth saving. Humanity at its core is good. We are capable of change... I can testify to repenting. I made a different choice. Mother...

The clock ticks to reveal 00:02:00 remaining.

JILL (CONT'D)
 Pull up Steve Randall.

A screen shows Steve in the SITUATION ROOM with President Scott. President Scott's eyes are on Lt. Lindsay's video feed approaching the island in the sky... Steve addresses the president.

STEVE
 You see it, but--

President Scott clearly does.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
 I have a duty.

STEVE
 There is still time. You can call it off.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
 Why would I do that?

STEVE
 Because now you know it's all real.

PRESIDENT SCOTT
 My belief is not in question. I believe.

President Scott walks behind his desk. Picks up a framed photo of his daughter.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)
 I just can't forgive.

The red phone RINGS. VP Rongstad picks it up...

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD

It's Anna.

President Scott takes the phone... and with a deliberate, measured motion, lowers it back into its cradle. Deep breath.

VICE PRESIDENT RONGSTAD (CONT'D)

People cling to faith when they are
out of bullets.

The President speaks into the radio linked to Lt. Lindsay's headset.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

Lt. Lindsay, fire when ready.

INT/EXT. F-35 COCKPIT/CLOUDY SKY - CONTINUOUS

Ace is locked onto the island, her thumb hovering over the weapon release... She is watching the Jill feed on her phone, seeing directly into the situation room.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY

This is wrong. All wrong.
Mr. President... I'm sorry.

Ace begins to change course.

SITUATION ROOM

President Scott doesn't look surprised.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

You disappoint me, Lieutenant.

He nods to General Herzberg, who taps a key on the computer in front of him --

COCKPIT

An OVERRIDE NOTIFICATION flashes on Ace's screen. The F-35's systems have been remotely activated.

LT. 'ACE' LINDSAY

Oh God...

Ace tries unsuccessfully to regain control.

INT. SITUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The clock ticks down. Seconds remain.

STEVE

Gerald... We used to be of the same mindset. Wanting similar things for this country, for this world. Don't do this...

The President touches the picture of his daughter tracing the infinity sign with his finger.

PRESIDENT SCOTT

I do this... so that other children have a chance.

He closes his eyes and takes a big breath.

PRESIDENT SCOTT (CONT'D)

(to Herzberg)

Release.

CLOUDY SKY

Missiles fire from the F-35... toward the island.

GENERAL HERZBERG (PRELAP)

Twenty seconds until impact.

President Scott does the infinity sign -- ready for the world to end.

JILL (O.S.)

Steve... Steve.

Steve turns to see his image on the TV screen - a split screen image with Jill.

INT. CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Jill speaks from her soul to the TV screen of Steve.

JILL

I'm so sorry for all the time I wasted. If I could go back and do it differently I would. You are the love of my life. Your love for everybody used to seem unfathomable to me... I just couldn't allow myself to see what you see. But I do now... Now I love everybody. But most of all I love you. I love you with every fiber of my being.

The clock ticks to :05. Jill and the rest of the world inhale, bracing for what is to come.

INT/EXT. F-35 COCKPIT/CLOUDY SKY - CONTINUOUS

Ace watches on horrified as the missiles draw closer and closer to the island in the sky. The end is nigh.

INT. SITUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

President Scott, VP Rongstad, and General Herzberg anxiously watch the display of the missiles closing in...

Steve's focus is only on Jill --

STEVE

I love you, Jill. And I always
will... I will see you again in
Life.

W/ JILL

JILL

See you in Life.

:02... :01...

...HISS... POP!! A FLASH OF BLUE...

Steve shields himself from the bright light...

EXT. BORDER OF RUSSIA AND POLAND - NIGHT - SAME

GRAPHIC: Border of Russia and Poland

A small militia of Polish police officers, farmers, construction workers and teenagers, armed with hunting rifles, are heavily outnumbered near the border. They drop their weapons.

A RUSSIAN GENERAL yells "stay-let". The thunderous roar of tanks and cannons discharge their deadly payloads...

Soldiers and farmers alike duck for cover just as the familiar HISS... POP!! and a FLASH OF BLUE lights up the sky, accompanied by a PFFFT sound.

INT/EXT. F-35 COCKPIT/CLOUDY SKY - SAME

The blinding, ethereal blue light engulfs the F-35. Ace shields her eyes, struggling to maintain control. The display panels flash erratically before settling.

When her senses return, she sees... the island in the sky has vanished.

INT. SITUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

When Steve opens his eyes... He is the only one standing in the room. Everyone else has disappeared.

Agent Dooley rushes inside with his gun drawn --

AGENT DOOLEY
You okay, sir?

Steve places his hand on the weapon --

STEVE
We don't need this anymore.

Agent Dooley drops his weapon.

He looks to see the Jill livestream has ended. Replaced by ANN coverage. Ed sits at the anchor desk, rubbing his eyes, confused.

Steve quickly pulls out his phone to dial when *Jill* flashes across the screen.

STEVE (CONT'D)
This better not be a pocket dial.

JILL (V.O.)
It's not a pocket dial.

STEVE
Drop a pin on your location. I'm coming to you.

JILL (V.O.)
I'm already here.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - ROSE GARDEN - DAY

Not a cloud in the sky. Steve runs up to see Jill standing in the center of the garden, bathed in sunlight, surrounded by the now vibrant roses. He slows slightly, caught up in her beauty... his heart skipping a beat with the realization that the moment he so long yearned for is finally here.

The desire to hold her in his arms has him picking up the pace... and when he reaches her, that is exactly what he does -- lifting her up and spinning her around. The two of them have never been so happy, overwhelmed with joy.

The only two words that need to be said at this moment...

JILL

Marry me.

EXT. POLAND BORDER - NIGHT

A Polish military leader arrives at the border. He exits his vehicle to find the farmers dancing for joy. A group of them have their backsides turned toward where the Russian soldiers were, smacking their butts exclaiming --

POLISH FARMERS

Pocałuj mnie w dupę!

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

Crowds gather, hugging in the streets.

INT. LOCAL BAR - DAY

Crowds toast each other. Hug. Celebrate. One person stares at an empty bar stool, upset.

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE - DAY

Large crowds with signs are jumping up and down outside of the White House.

INT. ANN NEWS STUDIO - DAY

Video of Anthony Giannini being placed in handcuffs. Danny jumping in the background with a flare gun.

ED

Red Onion escapee Anthony Giannini has turned himself in to port authority police with the assistance of ANN's cameraman Danny Batliner.

News footage shows people gathered at a church memorial.

ED (V.O.)

Flags fly and half-staff across the country. Reports are coming in from around the world, similar events unfolding simultaneously.

(MORE)

ED (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 An estimated one-tenth of the
 population - gone. Murderers...
 terrorist... war mongers. Early
 evidence suggests their lives were
 cut short because they were
 incapable of envisioning a
 different path.

Ed, front and center at the anchor desk, now addresses the world in the aftermath.

ED
 For the rest of us, a rare second
 chance has been granted to us,
 thanks to Jill Lawrence's
 unwavering pursuit to change the
 world.

Video of weapons being disposed followed by video of people hugging in the streets.

ED (CONT'D)
 But now, the question is -- are we
 capable of rising above our
 differences and forging a future
 that transcends boundaries and
 embraces compassion, empathy, and
 unity?
 (beat)
 I hope so. Because all our lives
 are counting on it.

SUPER: Six Months Later

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Matilda opens the door for the CHIEF JUSTICE to enter. Steve turns away from the window.

CHIEF JUSTICE
 Are you ready, Mr. President?

Steve adjusts his tie, looking confident.

STEVE
 Ready, Mr. Chief Justice.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE ROSE GARDEN - DAY

An intimate ceremony is underway. The picturesque Rose Garden is adorned with lush florals.

Esteemed guests, include Anna and Ed. Steve, looking dashing in his suit, stands at the altar with his best man Agent Dooley.

Maryska's mother hands her a rose petal basket with a stuffed animal. Maryska smiles and walks down the aisle.

As the melody of Canon in D Major gently wafts through the air as Jill, wearing a traditional white gown that is elegant but understated with the essence of timeless sophistication, and her escort Danny move with a graceful rhythm down the path to the altar.

As Danny delivers Jill to Steve, she shares a knowing glance with him - a moment of true happiness. The Chief Justice officiates the ceremony.

CHIEF JUSTICE

The world could use a love story.
Jill and Steve have one that will
go down in history-

Jill lifts her gaze towards the sky, where a luminous white cloud drifts overhead.

JILL

(whispering)

Hi, Mom. Hi, Dad. I'm glad you're
here.

As the vows are exchanged and they share a long, passionate kiss, the observing white cloud lingers for a brief moment then ZOOMS AWAY into the limitless sky.

EXT. SUNSHINE/POTOMAC RIVER - LATER

A *JUST MARRIED* banner flutters at the stern, next to the freshly painted *SUNSHINE*, as Jill and Steve jointly steer a *Sunshine*, the setting sun casting a golden path before them. Their silhouettes, united against the twilight, speak of a shared love that will navigate through all waters.

FADE OUT.

THE END