

EPICENTER

Written by

Mike Wilczynski

Jeremy Loethen  
Courageous Artists  
jl@courageousartists.com  
310.210.6299

FADE IN:

INT. WHITAKER HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

PHILIP WHITAKER (70's) sits awkwardly in a wheelchair at the table. A bib sits around his neck. His daughter ELEANOR (late 30's) sits at his side, wiping his mouth.

MARGARET WHITAKER (70's) stands at the sink doing dishes.

ELEANOR  
Finished eating, Dad?

PHILIP  
Who are you?

ELEANOR  
Your daughter... Ellie.

MARGARET  
Time for bed, Philip. You've got chemo in the morning.

PHILIP  
I have cancer?

Ellie warmly pats her father's head.

PHILIP (CONT'D)  
Are you both doctors?

ELEANOR  
Mom was a surgeon. I'm a geologist.

PHILIP  
I'm a geologist.

Margaret smiles painfully. Nods.

MARGARET  
Great geologist. Like father, like daughter.

Philip smiles.

ELEANOR  
I'll take him up.

Eleanor wheels Philip out of the room.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eleanor tucks him under the covers.

PHILIP  
You're not my doctor?

ELEANOR  
No, Dad. A geologist. Like you.

Philip thinks, smiles.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
Get some rest. I'll go with you and  
Mom to the hospital tomorrow.

Philip is confused. Eleanor turns off the light. The moon  
glows on the bed.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
Good night. I love you.

Eleanor closes the bedroom door. Philip stares at the moon.

ZOOM: in to the moon. The moonlight almost flickers.

SFX: Wind chimes

Philip's eyes get wider. Big smile. Too excited to sleep.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eleanor enters the kitchen.

ELEANOR  
Chemo's not working. He wouldn't go  
if he understood it was hopeless.

Margaret turns quickly. Speaks with passion.

MARGARET  
I've seen patient recoveries that  
seemed impossible... beyond what  
they teach in medical school.

Eleanor looks down, sad. Helps her mother with the dishes.

ELEANOR  
You loved saving lives. (beat)  
Ever miss it?

MARGARET  
I'm busy trying to save this one.

Ellie pats Margaret's shoulder. Kisses her head.

MARGARET (CONT'D)  
Don't you have a speech tomorrow?

ELEANOR  
Ugh, I hate public speaking.

MARGARET  
You can skip the hospital.

ELEANOR  
Between him getting me to the top  
and you taking me in, I owe you  
both.(beat) I'll be there.

Margaret hesitates.

MARGARET  
I... ah... I called Julian today  
about the chemo.

Ellie is upset.

ELEANOR  
Julian? Why would-- (beat) His  
malpractice suit ruined us.

MARGARET  
He's a bum, but a brilliant doctor.

ELEANOR  
After the divorce, I vowed never to  
talk to him again.

MARGARET  
Your dad and I both couldn't stand  
him from the first time we met him.

ELEANOR  
That's why we eloped.

MARGARET  
Dad dreamed of walking you down the  
aisle someday... just not with him.

Eleanor heads toward the door. Sighs.

ELEANOR  
I know. After chemo, I need to rush  
to the NGC... White House meeting.

Margaret walks over and hugs Eleanor.

MARGARET

You need a break. No vacations...  
only dates with that Jon--

ELEANOR

They weren't dates. Night, mom.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - ELEANOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eleanor's room looks like a high-tech seismology office. Wave machines. Earth models. Richter scale printer.

A small dish on her desk holds a wedding and engagement ring.

She sleeps in pajamas on a small bed sitting in the corner. There is a recliner behind her desk.

The full moon brightly shines through the window. The night is calm. The house is quiet.

A neighbor's dog BARKS. The window VIBRATES. The rings CLANG. Everything shakes. Feels like an earthquake.

Ellie jumps, looks out the window, boots up her computer.

Margaret knocks at the door, hand on stomach.

MARGARET

Did you feel that?

ELEANOR

On it. Not much for the Bay area.  
Checking it out now.

All of Eleanor's machines are humming. She clicks on a file.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Minor seismic event. Just a 3.8.  
(beat) Is Dad okay?

MARGARET

We've made it through worse.

Eleanor continues to monitor the machines. She pulls a report off the printer.

She looks confused. Her jaw drops.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

What is it, Ellie?

ELEANOR

The epicenter.

MARGARET

Where?

Turns to her mom. Takes a breath.

ELEANOR

Everywhere. Simultaneous. This  
isn't tectonic.

Margaret looks perplexed. Eleanor's mobile phone rings. She answers.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

I saw. I'll figure it out--

Ellie points to herself. Frantically looks at the monitors.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

It's a 3.8 here... on the east  
coast... Japan?

A red phone rings. It's the White House.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Hang on, Nathan.

She puts down one phone, answers the other.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Dr. Whitaker. (beat) I understand.

Ellie stands up. Throws a sweater on over her pajamas.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Mom, could you make me some coffee?

Ellie picks up the other phone.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

White House wants answers. Twenty  
minutes.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

PRESIDENT LUCAS ANDREWS (60) enters the Oval Office wearing a robe. Chief of Staff JON WILK (40) is waiting for him.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

I felt it. Is it over?

JON

Everybody felt it.

Jon gently places his hand on his stomach.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Preliminary damage report? Contact  
FEMA?

JON  
Hardly anything. Some  
communications are down.

President looks confused.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Then why was I called down here?

JON  
Sir, it appears as though we've had  
a global phenomenon.

President Andrews look irritated. Wants details.

JON (CONT'D)  
Every system around the world  
reported the same earthquake  
according to The National  
Geological Center.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Where was it centered?

JON  
We have a call, now, with the  
director. I've gotten to know her.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Phil Whitaker's daughter?

Jon smiles widely.

JON  
Eleanor, she's awesome.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Phil had a sixth sense about  
things. I miss him.

JON  
He's still alive, sir.

President Andrews makes a face.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Barely.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - ELEANOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret enters with a cup of coffee.

ELEANOR

Thanks, Mom. I need to jump on this call with the Chief of Staff.

MARGARET

That guy you liked in Washington?

Eleanor smiles.

ELEANOR

They were work dinners.

Margaret smiles.

MARGARET

Sure sounded like a date.

Eleanor looks at herself in the mirror. Grabs a brush to quickly fix her hair. Adds some lipstick.

Eleanor takes a deep breath. She clicks on the video call, alone on the screen waiting. She looks away at her printouts. A voice startles her.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

Dr. Whitaker. Tell me this isn't as bad as it looks.

Eleanor jolts seeing the President. Takes a big gulp.

ELEANOR

Mr. President... call me Eleanor.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

You report to the White House. I'll stick with Doctor.

JON

It's Jon. Thanks for joining us.

Jon has a boyish smile. Ellie has a cute smile in return.

Ellie pushes her old wedding rings to the back of her desk out of camera view.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

The whole Earth? This thing happened everywhere?

ELEANOR

Based on our readings, yes sir.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

Has this ever happened before?

ELEANOR

A century ago, a quake in Chile... was felt in Japan. Happened on the moon in the sixties. But this one... it's not natural.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

What should we expect next?

Eleanor's bedroom door opens. Philip hobbles into the room. Eleanor motions for him to leave, but he sits down on the chair behind the desk. Eleanor is mortified.

ELEANOR

I'm sorry Mr. President.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

Phil. Good to see you again.

Philip picks up some of Eleanor's print outs. Doesn't acknowledge the screen.

ELEANOR

Doesn't even recognize me any more, sir. Sorry for the interruption.

JON

We understand. He looks good.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

What's next? After shocks?

ELEANOR

This could have been the pre-shock.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

The world is going to want answers. What should I tell the press?

Eleanor looks at her printouts. Hesitates.

PHILIP

You've got a window. (beat) Seventy-two hours.

Jon's face scrunches. Ellie's embarrassed. The President stands.

ELEANOR  
 Sorry, sir. I'll lead the--

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
 What did Phil just say?

ELEANOR  
 I strongly advise against random  
 specu--

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
 One hour. Or I'll find someone with  
 answers. Understood?

ELEANOR  
 Yes sir.

JON  
 Eleanor will figure it out.

Jon winks.

ELEANOR  
 It's what I do.

Eleanor clicks out of the video. Her head lowers.

She sends a group text message to the NGC team: FULL W.H.  
 DEBRIEF NEEDED. MEET ON ZOOM IN TEN MIN

She stands up and turns around, reaches for her dad's hands.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
 Let's get you back to bed.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eleanor aids Philip toward his bed. Margaret comes upstairs.

ELEANOR  
 He interrupted my call.

Eleanor rolls her eyes, but giggles.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
 I get so nervous with Andrews.

MARGARET  
 The President? Sorry. I've got him.

Philip holds his stomach. He lays down, staring at the moon.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - ELEANOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eleanor is on a video call with members of the US Geological Center team as well as experts from other countries.

ELEANOR  
Exact same frequency. Same time.

AMERICAN GEOLOGIST  
It was mild. Don't overblow this.

ELEANOR  
Andrews needs to tell Americans something. What do we have?

JAPANESE GEOLOGIST  
I need to provide answers too.

Eleanor is reading reports. Speaks slowly.

ELEANOR  
North and South Poles. Stronger.  
One second earlier.

Her door opens Philip walks in again.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
Dad, please.

Philip sits down. Looks at the camera.

PHILIP  
Harmonic Cascade.

Eleanor turns to him. Stunned. A couple of the geologists slowly nod as if they vaguely remember something.

ELEANOR  
What?

PHILIP  
I wrote about it at Princeton...  
Have you seen that moon tonight?

ELEANOR  
Dad, how are you doing this?

PHILIP  
Ellie... I'm a geologist.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - KITCHEN

Philip takes a seat at the table.

ELEANOR  
Mom! Mom, get down here.

PHILIP  
Can I get a beer?

ELEANOR  
I could use a beer. I'll get you  
coffee.

Eleanor moves to the counter to make coffee.

Margaret joins them.

MARGARET  
Sorry. I didn't see him get up  
again. Honey, you should be in bed.

ELEANOR  
It's not that. Talk to him.

Margaret grabs Philip's hand.

MARGARET  
What are you doing up? You need  
some rest. Can you walk upstairs by  
yourself?

Philip turns his head. Gives Margaret a kiss. Looks her in  
the eyes.

PHILIP  
Maggie, you're gonna need to leave  
us alone. We have a situation here.

Margaret is dumbfounded.

ELEANOR  
This time, he walked into my  
leadership call. Started reading  
the printouts.

Philip nods his head. Shrugs.

PHILIP  
Technology is better now. I'm  
behind.

Margaret's hands are on her cheeks. She stares at Philip.

ELEANOR  
New meds?

Margaret shakes her head no. Looks emotional.

MARGARET  
A miracle? How--

Eleanor lets out a little laugh.

ELEANOR  
You're the doctor, you tell me.

Margaret steps close, touches his cheek. Philip winks at her.

MARGARET  
Philip, tell me what's going on?

PHILIP  
We've got a global tremor on our  
hands. Never before in history.

MARGARET  
Not that. You?

PHILIP  
Little tummy ache, but I'm back.

Eleanor looks at her. Margaret grabs his hand.

MARGARET  
You've been having some health  
issues lately.

PHILIP  
Lower right quadrant. Persistent.

Philip feels his stomach.

PHILIP (CONT'D)  
It's cancer, isn't it?

Eleanor starts to tear up.

Silence.

Philip processes it. Calm. Clinical.

PHILIP (CONT'D)  
How long have we known?

MARGARET  
A couple of years.

ELEANOR  
You two talk. I need to get to  
work.

Eleanor puts her hand on her dad's shoulder. Walks out.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE

The President sits behind the resolute desk. A television camera is pointed at him.

Jon runs in to the office. Places the speech on his desk. It's marked: Final Version.

JON

A few NGC notes in the speech.  
They're still digging through the numbers.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

If China gets in front of this, we don't just lose the story... we lose control.

Jon nods.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)

What about the thing Phil said?

JON

He's been fighting dementia.  
Eleanor is the best in the country.  
We'll have more shortly.

President looks annoyed.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

We may not have time for more models.

INT. NATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CENTER - DAY

Eleanor sits at the head of a conference room table. The large photo on the wall is Philip with a shovel at the NGC groundbreaking ceremony.

Six chairs are filled.

NATHAN (50), naturally distracted, walks in late, playing with a jumbled Rubik's cube. He stutters on words beginning with W.

NATHAN

Sorry.

ELEANOR

You're the seismologist. What are you hearing?

Nathan takes out his mobile phone.

NATHAN

A minister says it a sign from God.  
Some nut says it's aliens. An  
astrologist says it's the moon.

That gets Eleanor's attention.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

And my mom says it's the end of the  
wa...wa... world.

ELEANOR

Not helpful. We need to find the  
truth before somebody weaponizes  
this. (beat) Tell me about the  
moon.

GEOLOGIST

Full tonight. Brighter than usual.  
Who cares?

NATHAN

Something impacted both polar  
regions without any plates moving  
to cause the higher readings.

ELEANOR

No epicenter. No fault movement.  
Call NASA. See what they know. And  
look up a Princeton paper on  
Harmonic Cascade.

The RECEPTIONIST opens the conference room door.

RECEPTIONIST

Dr. Whitaker. There's a man in the  
lobby who says he's your husband.

Eleanor looks exasperated.

ELEANOR

Not now.

RECEPTIONIST

He says he knows something about  
the effects of the quake.

Eleanor puts her head down. Exhales. Gets up to walk out.

ELEANOR

Keep at it.

INT. NATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CENTER - LOBBY - DAY

DR. JULIAN MERCER (35) paces in the lobby. He always wears all black. Oozes with arrogance.

Eleanor enters the lobby.

ELEANOR  
You can't be here. Not today. Not ever.

JULIAN  
Still mad at me?

ELEANOR  
We lost everything. Your reputation. Marriage. Such a waste.

Julian waves her off.

JULIAN  
Old news. I have something big to share with you.

ELEANOR  
You have to know what I'm dealing with today. I'll call you when--

As Eleanor walks away, Julian yells.

JULIAN  
How's your dad?

Eleanor stops.

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
Today... how's he doing?

Eleanor turns back and walks up to his face.

ELEANOR  
What do you--

Julian smiles.

JULIAN  
You're probably just looking at your readouts. Studying rocks.  
(beat) Not seeing it yet.

Julian sneers. Eleanor's face shows frustration.

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
Check the hospitals. He's not the  
only one.

ELEANOR  
Only one what?

Julian smiles bigger.

JULIAN  
I was working overnight at Sutter  
Health.

Eleanor frowns.

ELEANOR  
Your license was revoked.

JULIAN  
I'm acting as a consultant.

ELEANOR  
Scammer.

JULIAN  
They woke up after the quake.  
Literally and figuratively.

ELEANOR  
What does that--

JULIAN  
One hadn't spoken in three years.  
So how is your father?

Eleanor storms away.

ELEANOR  
I'm calling Sutter Health.

JULIAN  
Do that. Then call me.

Eleanor enters the elevator. She yells to the receptionist.

ELEANOR  
Get me a number for Sutter Health.

The elevator doors close.

INT. NATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CENTER - ELEANOR'S OFFICE

Ellie's office mirrors the technology in her bedroom. Her Stanford diploma hangs on the wall. Her promotion day picture with Philip sits on her desk.

Eleanor hangs up the phone. Shakes her head.

ELEANOR

Nathan!

Nathan enters the room.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Anything?

NATHAN

We... we... we've got nothing.  
No tremors. No damage. Might  
just... be nothing.

ELEANOR

Nothing? Nothing doesn't happen  
everywhere.

NATHAN

Sometimes, the science isn't there.

Eleanor starts to stand.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

But, that Harmonic Cascade... just  
a theory about wa... wa... waves  
from the moon hitting both poles...  
felt by all living things.

Eleanor is intrigued.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Wr... wr... written by... your  
father.

ELEANOR

Shoot. I need to meet my parents at  
the hospital.

Nathan chuckles.

NATHAN

Philip actually jumped on your  
screen... with the President?

Eleanor shakes her head.

ELEANOR  
He's unbelievable.

Eleanor exhales.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
Can you cover for me--

Eleanor's cell phone rings with a video call. It's the White House. She answers it. Jon is overly enthusiastic.

JON  
Eleanor... how's it going?

ELEANOR  
No aftershocks, which is a great sign. Not much else yet.

JON  
How can I help? Name it.

ELEANOR  
Approve NASA sharing info with us?

JON  
I'll call their administrator,  
Isabella Lopez.

ELEANOR  
And tell me if HHS is seeing  
neurological impairment patients  
showing improvement.

JON  
That's a big ask. Tell me more.

ELEANOR  
It's too early to--

JON  
Can we do dinner again? The  
President is going to want you in  
D.C. with a report.

Eleanor has a smile. She likes him.

ELEANOR  
Dinner to prep?

JON  
Whatever you want to call it.

ELEANOR  
I'll be in touch.

Eleanor disconnects the call. Smiles to herself.

NATHAN  
Flirting with the Chief of Staff?

Eleanor smiles and shrugs.

ELEANOR  
He's an important resource.

NATHAN  
Sure.

ELEANOR  
Now, you got this?

NATHAN  
Go.

INT. SUTTER HEALTH - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Eleanor enters the conference room. Margaret and Philip are sitting with Sutter Health Director DR. KRISTINE LOCKE (40).

ELEANOR  
Dad, how are you feeling?

PHILIP  
Fine. How are things at the office?

KRISTINE  
Eleanor, I'm Kristine Locke, the  
director for Sutter Health.

MARGARET  
A medical phenomenon. Not just  
recovery... it's reversal.

KRISTINE  
What your mother is telling you, is  
that all neurocognitive patients  
have shown astonishing cognitive  
restoration... similar to your  
father.

PHILIP  
The old man's back.

Eleanor gets up and embraces her father in a long hug.

KRISTINE

One patient was doing crossword puzzles. Another went from not talking, to chatting--

ELEANOR

Something had to trigger it.

MARGARET

In nearly 50 years as a surgeon, never heard of anything like this.

ELEANOR

Any explanations... how it happened or what's going to happen next?

PHILIP

I was just going to ask Ellie that same question.

Eleanor laughs.

ELEANOR

Dr. Locke, could I speak to you privately for a moment?

Kristine nods. They step aside outside the conference room. Philip is chatting with Margaret.

KRISTINE

I only have a moment, the damn hospital board is waiting for another financial report.

Eleanor nods, takes a breath.

ELEANOR

Julian Mercer.

Kristine sighs.

KRISTINE

Oh dear. What did--

ELEANOR

He's my ex. You know he can't practice medicine in this state.

KRISTINE

I can't talk about personnel. But he's not practicing directly with patients.

ELEANOR

Good. (beat) He was sharing  
information with me before anyone--

Kristine doesn't react with concern. A little distracted.

KRISTINE

He is a brilliant surgeon.

Ellie stiffens.

ELEANOR

Yeah (beat) I fell for that. (beat)  
But, he was selling organs on the  
black market.

Kristine speaks with authority.

KRISTINE

He was saving lives.

ELEANOR

There are laws. Ethics.  
His case cost us--

Kristine's smile is thin, controlled.

KRISTINE

Sometimes the system fails the  
patient. Julian doesn't.

ELEANOR

I study faults. (beat) I know what  
they look like.

There is a long silence.

KRISTINE

I wouldn't worry about him. He's my  
concern now.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Philip and Margaret are eating dinner. Ellie enters -  
exhausted.

MARGARET

Dinner's ready.

ELEANOR

I've been up since midnight. Need  
some rest.

The Whitaker's home phone rings. Margaret checks the caller ID.

MARGARET  
It's the White House.

Eleanor exhales. Answers professionally.

ELEANOR  
Eleanor Whitaker.

Eleanor's expression shifts. She turns.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
It's for you.

Eleanor hands Philip the phone.

PHILIP  
Philip Whitaker.

Philip listens. Focused. A faint smile.

PHILIP (CONT'D)  
Uh-huh. (beat) Yes, that makes sense. (beat) I'll be ready.

He hangs up the phone.

Margaret and Eleanor stand, waiting. Philip takes a bite of his dinner.

ELEANOR  
Dad!

He looks up.

PHILIP  
They want me to come to Washington.

Eleanor looks shocked and hurt.

PHILIP (CONT'D)  
What?-- They want both of us on a plane tomorrow.

Eleanor exhales - relieved.

ELEANOR  
Both?

Philip winks.

PHILIP

It's what we do. Get some rest.  
Need to be at our best.

Eleanor shakes her head. Philip takes another bite.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

I'm gonna need copies of your  
reports.

That stings. Eleanor nods.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

I don't want to look like I'm out  
of it. Help me get up to speed on  
these new systems.

Eleanor walks away. Margaret shows concern for both of them.

ELEANOR

I'll send them right now.

Eleanor looks back at her dad. He's casually eating.

INT. WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Eleanor sits next to Philip in the conference room, studying maps and charts. Along side her are other experts including NASA Administrator, ISABELLA LOPEZ (50).

Jon walks into the room. Hustles straight over to the Whitaker's. Shakes Philip's hand.

ELEANOR

Dad, this is Jon, the Chief of  
Staff.

Philip turns to Ellie.

PHILIP

This him? The fella your mother--

ELEANOR

Shhh.

Ellie is mortified. Jon gives Eleanor a little hug.

JON

Great to see you. Meet Isabella  
from NASA.

Eleanor turns as the President enters.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Phil. Fantastic.

The President turns to Jon.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
I first met Philip when I was an  
undergrad at Princeton. He returned  
to give the commencement speech.

PHILIP  
In the nation's service--

PHILIP & PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
-- and the service of humanity.

They share a laugh.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
It was great.

PHILIP  
Go Tigers.

The President turns to Ellie and Isabella.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Anything definitive?

ISABELLA  
No atmospheric abnormalities.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Good. What about the aftershocks?

ELEANOR  
Negative. None.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Philip, on our call the other  
night, you predicted something in  
three days.

Philip looks at Eleanor.

PHILIP  
More research needed, but I saw  
something.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
What do NASA and NGC see coming in  
three days?

ISABELLA  
Houston's just getting up to--

Isabella is surprised at the interruption.

ELEANOR  
At this time, there are no facts to confirm another occurrence in the near future.

PHILIP  
Sometimes proof comes too late.

Eleanor stares at her father. Angry.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
I'd like a word with you, Phil.

Eleanor stands up.

ELEANOR  
My job is to find the truth, not a spin. Let me--

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Jon, could you find a spot for Eleanor to work? I'd like to meet with her dad in the Oval.

Eleanor is furious. Fists clenched.

ELEANOR  
He's retired. I have research--

JON  
Yes sir.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Thank you everyone.

The President stands and heads for the door. Philip follows him. He looks back at Ellie and shrugs. Exits.

ISABELLA  
That's one way to handle that.

JON  
Sorry. He heard an answer from your father. He'll learn to trust you like I have.

ELEANOR  
They shouldn't be making predictions--

JON

Let him have a moment with your dad.

ELEANOR

He's been out of it for years. I'm not sure--

JON

We need a story for the press.

Eleanor shakes her head. Silence.

JON (CONT'D)

I'll buy you dinner.

Jon and Eleanor look at each other. Isabella, jealous, waits to be invited too.

JON (CONT'D)

I DID provide all the information you requested.

Eleanor nods, smiles.

ELEANOR

Fine.

Isabella is ignored. She grabs her files and storms out.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE

Philip sits across from the President at his desk. The President picks a binder on his desk from Sutter Health and quickly shoves it in a drawer.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

I'm not sure the crew at NGC is ready for something like this.

PHILIP

It's a different time. More information available.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

Hesitant to make decisions. You weren't like that.

PHILIP

Sure. I used experience and intuition. Ellie uses data.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

We need this nailed down. I don't care where they come from.

President Andrews stands.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)

There's a White House dinner with Ivy League executives tonight. Care to be my guest?

Philip rises, very slowly.

PHILIP

My intuition says that would be a great idea.

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - NIGHT

Eleanor and Jon are strolling across the National Mall.

ELEANOR

Thanks for babysitting me tonight.

JON

Even though you spent half of the time studying this thing--

ELEANOR

Sorry, I can't figure this out.

JON

You will. (beat) I had a great time (beat) ...Ellie. Other than our dinners, I haven't dated any--

ELEANOR

They weren't--

Ellie grabs his hand. Turns to him.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Listen, I really like you. But, I trusted someone once... didn't end well.

JON

Julian?

Ellie nods.

ELEANOR

Do you know him?

JON  
 You don't trust yourself? Because  
 of one bad--

ELEANOR  
 Two-thirds of divorced women repeat  
 their mistake. I shouldn't jump--

Jon stops. Takes Ellie by the hand. She is distracted looking  
 up at sky.

JON  
 We're not jumping. We're  
 walking...and talking... in the  
 beautiful moonlight... And--

Ellie stops walking, stares at the moon. (beat) Stomps a  
 foot. Grunts.

ELEANOR  
 Ugh. Oh my gosh. (beat) Call Lopez.

Jon gets out his phone.

JON  
 What is it?

Ellie grabs his face and kisses him. Looks him in the eye.

Jon is stunned but thrilled.

ELEANOR  
 The moon. Let's go. Run.

Eleanor takes Jon by the hand and starts running as fast as  
 she can toward the White House.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

The President and Philip enjoy a cocktail in the Oval Office.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
 You certainly are the public  
 speaker of the family.

President Andrews laughs.

PHILIP  
 That was an honor. I should be  
 getting back to the hotel and see  
 how Ellie is doing.

The door flies open. Ellie and Jon run in. Breathless.

ELEANOR  
It was a gravitational impulse.  
Harmonic Cascade.

Philip smiles.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Explain.

JON  
Lopez at NASA is on her way. They  
confirmed a micro-impact on the  
moon a couple nights ago.

ELEANOR  
It rang us.

Silence.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
We don't ring. Explain it in a way  
I can use.

The President looks confused but Philip looks at him and  
nods. Eleanor moves closer to the President.

ELEANOR  
Some earthquakes feel like a  
rolling wave. Others like a jolt.

Ellie is excited. Smiling.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
This was neither. No epicenter. The  
Earth reacted to a moon strike.  
It's like we all jumped... at the  
same time.

The room stills. Philip taps the side of his temple.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Some asteroid hits the Moon... and  
it shakes the whole planet?

ELEANOR  
Not shakes. (beat) Oscillates.

Philip nods again.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Why didn't anyone else see this?

JON  
No one else was looking.

Ellie stands tall. Gives Jon a big hug in front of everyone.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
I'll need help explaining this.

Eleanor's hand sways out, then back in.

ELEANOR  
Compare it to a bell that rings,  
but then returns to its original  
position.

The President paces. Thinking.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
If you're right--

ELEANOR  
The projections all point--

He stops pacing. Frustrated.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
If you're right, could it happen  
again?

Ellie hesitates. She and Jon look at each other.

ELEANOR  
It's already about to happen.

Ellie looks at her dad.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
(quietly)  
Tonight.

JON  
NASA confirmed.

Philip is excited.

PHILIP  
A second oscillation. Right on  
time.

ELEANOR  
I don't know how you predicted that  
one, but yes.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Will this one be worse?

ELEANOR

The model suggests the bell will  
ring a little louder.

Philip winks at Ellie. Jon smiles at her and nods.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

No time to warn the public. Get key  
personnel on stand-by.

Jon nods. Begins to text.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)

Can you two stay in Washington?

JON

Great idea. Yes, please stay...  
help... address the press.

Jon nods rapidly.

ELEANOR

I should get back to my team.

She looks at her dad.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

And get you to your treatments. We  
have work to do.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

We'll fly you back first thing in  
the morning. I need you both here  
tonight.

Jon smiles and gives a thumbs up.

INT. WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM - NIGHT

The President sits at the head of the table next to Jon. The  
Joint Chiefs of Staff are in the room, as is Lopez from NASA.  
Philip and Eleanor sit in a back row.

The room is tense. Military leaders whisper to each other.

ELEANOR

(to her Dad)

Can you believe we're in this room?

Philip looks tired, shakes his head. Looks at his watch.

PHILIP

How many minutes?

ELEANOR  
Any second. Our team is ready.

The President stands up.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
It's time. Will we feel--

A faint vibration. Then the room starts to shake. A tone bleeds through the speakers - almost a musical frequency.

The President grabs the table. Philip and Ellie calmly nod to each other.

JON  
Eleanor nailed it.

Some military leaders follow Andrews by grabbing the table. Lopez hides under it.

PHILIP  
It's okay, boys. Feels like a small pulse.

Eleanor, calm, is looking at her I-pad. She stands.

ELEANOR  
Mr. President, we had an echo event. Stronger than the first.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Jon - damage report.

Jon holds his stomach with one hand, studies his i-pad with the other.

JON  
FEMA reports structures are solid. Roads intact. More issues with communication towers, internet and satellites.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
How are you getting this so fast?  
(beat) Fatalities?

Jon shakes his head no.

JON  
Strange.

PHILIP  
You're gonna be fine - this time.

The President looks up.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
You predicted this one. Is there  
another?

Lopez is still under the table. Philip gets up, takes over  
her laptop.

ISABELLA  
Hey.

Philip makes a few clicks. Everyone stares in silence.

He brings the laptop to Ellie. Shows her something. Holds  
back on saying something. Isabella gets up, tries to look.

PHILIP  
You should be good. (beat) For a  
few months.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Then what?

PHILIP  
If--

ELEANOR  
Mr. President. We need to get back  
to California. It's not prudent to  
predict something quickly.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
What do I tell the world?

ISABELLA  
NASA is on the--

PHILIP  
No imminent threats. Enjoy their  
lives.

Eleanor looks suspiciously at Philip. Isabella grits her  
teeth, angry.

Jon steps over to the President.

JON  
We'll have a statement on your desk  
by 6am.

The President walks over to Philip.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
You were right so far.

He looks at Eleanor.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
We need answers - faster this time.

The President and Jon wave goodbye to Isabella, shake Philip's hand. The President shakes Eleanor's hand. Jon pulls her into a longer-than-expected hug. Eleanor holds him too.

JON  
I'll see you soon?

Isabella looks on, jealous.

ELEANOR  
Coming out west?

JON  
I want to. (beat) Right now, I've got to keep him from making a mistake.

Philip watches the hug. Looks exhausted, but smiles. Takes a pained breath.

PHILIP  
Ellie. I need to go.

INT. NATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CENTER - DAY

Philip and Ellie walk into the National Geological Center.

People are moving faster. Talking faster.

PHILIP  
(smiles)  
Feels like I never left.

ELEANOR  
You're so lucid. How did you know it's 166 days this time?

PHILIP  
I didn't say I knew, but how do you know 2 plus 2 equals 4? It's all upstairs.

Nathan comes running into the lobby. Sees Philip.

NATHAN

Philip Whitaker. Welcome back sir.

Nathan moves a completed Rubik's cube from his right hand to his left. Shakes Philip's hand quickly.

PHILIP

Good to see you again, Nathan.

Eleanor looks strangely at Nathan.

ELEANOR

Whitaker. Welcome.

Nathan smiles. Shrugs.

NATHAN

My stutter disappeared.

Eleanor gives him a friendly hug.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Ellie, you need to see the metrics.

Nathan is excited but nervous. Eleanor raises her eyebrows.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

166 days. Five and a half months  
until the next event.

Eleanor looks at her dad. Smirks.

ELEANOR

This stays classified. I'll notify  
the White House. Then I have to get  
him home. Too much for him the last  
few days.

Philip grabs Nathan's shoulder to balance himself. Speaks softly.

PHILIP

Nathan, your 166 matches my  
prediction. How did you come up  
with it?

NATHAN

How are mathematicians solving  
impossible proofs overnight?

ELEANOR

All of this since the event?

NATHAN

It started right after the event. I never understood any of this... Now we're as smart as A.I..

ELEANOR

A.I. isn't always right. Everyone's thinking is accelerated?

NATHAN

Almost everyone.

Eleanor turns quickly.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Estimates are 93% of the population are experiencing superior brain function.

Nathan picks up a binder.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

We're getting dissertations from high school students.

ELEANOR

I don't feel any different. Does anyone know how, or why the other 7% are not?

Nathan shakes his head and shrugs.

NATHAN

I heard your ex may be a resource.

Ellie turns to walk away. Nathan speaks louder.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I'm coming up with answers faster than ever. (beat) How could a quake pick who gets smarter?

Ellie is processing the events. She turns back.

ELEANOR

People will use this to their advantage, not for good.

MONTAGE

CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS circle around a lab table, excited about a new discovery.

A MATHEMATICIAN works frantically fast solving an equation at a white board. Takes a bow.

NASA EMPLOYEES discuss a trip to Mars. The countdown clock goes from 24 months to 3 months.

A TRADER on Wall Street has eyes darting back and forth looking at the big board. Jumps up celebrating his success.

A SURGEON in an operating room sees a patient's heart beat go from flatline to starting again.

The President squints reading a report at the Resolute Desk - trying to keep up. A DOCTOR sits in front of him. The President holds his head - confused.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Ellie is dressed and ready for a new day at work. Philip and Margaret are sitting at the kitchen table drinking coffee.

ELEANOR

Sorry I can't go to the oncologist with you today.

PHILIP

I should be going to work with you.

ELEANOR

Just because your mind has recovered, it doesn't mean you're in remission.

MARGARET

Maybe one of the smarter people will come up with something.

Philip holds his side.

PHILIP

It's still there.

MARGARET

They just cured diabetes. Maybe cancer next.

Philip shakes his head.

PHILIP

Not enough time.

ELEANOR

Just see the doctor.

MARGARET  
You aren't feeling anything  
different, are you Ellie?

ELEANOR  
I'm stressed, but what are you  
talking about?

MARGARET  
Like others around the world, we're  
experiencing some kind of superior  
brain power.

ELEANOR  
Seems like a social media story.

Philip and Margaret both shake their heads no.

PHILIP  
The mystery is, why aren't you  
noticing it?

ELEANOR  
Let's focus on the real mystery.

Philip holds his side.

PHILIP  
Aren't there times when you just  
know something?

ELEANOR  
If it's verified.

Philip laughs.

PHILIP  
That's why you were top of your  
class at Stanford. It's what made  
you such a great geologist.

Philip's arms wave above him.

PHILIP (CONT'D)  
But sometimes, you have a hunch.

ELEANOR  
Not about science.

MARGARET  
I've done thousands of surgeries.  
Sometimes things go wrong. The  
doctor needs to go with instincts  
to save a life.

ELEANOR  
Understood. But right now, you're  
implying... something that's never  
happened in medical history...  
occurred to people like Dad.

Margaret holds her side.

MARGARET  
And me.

Eleanor doesn't buy it.

PHILIP  
Do you remember that feeling you  
get when you just rode a roller  
coaster? Your stomach feels gurgly.  
Something's loose in your brain.

ELEANOR  
Sure.

PHILIP  
But then you want to do it again.  
You actually feel good.

ELEANOR  
Your point?

PHILIP  
There's a reason you know it in  
right here.

Philip touches his stomach.

MARGARET  
Like when we met your lousy ex-hus--

ELEANOR  
Woah, that's where this is going?

Eleanor stands and puts car keys in her purse.

PHILIP  
No, that's not our point. (beat)  
Trust yourself.

ELEANOR  
You loved Ronald Reagan. He said,  
"trust, but verify".

MARGARET  
If verification is too slow, the  
opposition gets an advantage.

Eleanor heads toward the door.

ELEANOR  
Mom, can you drop off Dad after his  
appointment?

Margaret nods.

PHILIP  
See you at work.

INT. NATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CENTER - LOBBY

Ellie enters the lobby. There is a small crowd waiting for her. The receptionist stands.

NATHAN  
We have so much to share with you.

RECEPTIONIST  
But you should meet with him first.

The receptionist points over to Jon. He has a big smile.

ELEANOR  
You travelled west! Really missed  
me?

JON  
Yes, but I'm here on an order from  
the President. We need to talk.

They walk toward a conference room. Jon's hand brushes Ellie's hand.

They take a seat close to each other.

JON (CONT'D)  
Can I ask you something...  
personal?

ELEANOR  
Is this something that you are  
curious about... or something the  
government wants?

JON  
Did you ever have any surgeries  
when you were younger?

Eleanor is surprised.

ELEANOR  
You flew here overnight to ask me  
my medical history?

JON  
Partially. Willing to share?

Eleanor looks away for a moment. Then back at Jon.

ELEANOR  
Alright. I had my appendix removed  
when I was nine. Why is this so  
important?

Jon opens up a folder, hands her a graph. Ellie scans the  
material.

Jon points to a spreadsheet tabled "Cognitive Data".

Ellie leans back. Processes.

JON  
Look at the second column.

ELEANOR  
All people who have retained their  
appendix. Doesn't seem poss-

Ellie's face shows disbelief.

JON  
It's not useless. It reacts...  
affects brain function.

ELEANOR  
So what, I don't have it anymore  
because of a childhood procedure.  
Why are you really here?

Jon stands up. Ellie is afraid she's about to get fired.

JON  
You believe in facts. So does the  
President. He had his appendix  
removed 4 years ago. Everyone  
knows.

ELEANOR  
So?

JON  
Our adversaries will think he's  
unable to compete.

(MORE)

JON (CONT'D)

His opponent will turn seven-percenters into a campaign slogan.

ELEANOR

I don't feel any different. The president shouldn't--

JON

There is a difference. If there's a next level arms race, he may not be the smartest guy in the room--

Eleanor looks down. Shakes her head.

ELEANOR

They're measuring the wrong thing. Values are--

JON

I don't make decisions. He's getting pressure on the hill. They want 93%ers running the government.

Ellie's face shows her anger.

JON (CONT'D)

The 166 day event. What'll happen?

ELEANOR

We were already working--

JON

Make sure you're seeing the whole picture.

ELEANOR

You're sounding like my father.

JON

Ellie, the President talked to your dad. Your father still has his appendix.

Ellie looks threatened.

JON (CONT'D)

Some think your dad or Lopez should be our lead.

Ellie tosses his binder.

ELEANOR

That's what you think?

Jon straightens his papers. Shakes his head no.

JON  
I hear what they're saying...  
(beat) I still came to you.

Eleanor's demeanor softens.

JON (CONT'D)  
Let's make your dad visible, while  
you lead the search for answers.

Ellie is burning with frustration.

ELEANOR  
He'll be here shortly.

INT. NATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CENTER - ELEANOR'S OFFICE

Philip enters Ellie's office. Face somber. Ellie reacts nervously.

ELEANOR  
What did they say?

Philip shakes his head.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, Dad.

PHILIP  
Hey, so far, I'm thinking clearer  
than ever. Who knows what the next  
chapter will bring?

ELEANOR  
We aren't doing a countdown for the  
next 164 days are we?

Philip shrugs his shoulders.

PHILIP  
So, where are we on--

ELEANOR  
Where are we? Or where are you?

PHILIP  
What kind of question is that?

ELEANOR  
Jon was here.

PHILIP  
The boyfriend?

ELEANOR  
The chief of staff. You talked to  
the President and didn't tell me?

PHILIP  
There was nothing--

ELEANOR  
He wants you to take back over?

PHILIP  
That doesn't matter.

ELEANOR  
Why?

PHILIP  
They're wrong. I'll consult, but I  
told him you're the best person for  
the job... and you are.

Ellie's face turns from anger to pride.

PHILIP (CONT'D)  
I'll do anything to aid you, but  
this country needs Ellie Whitaker  
at the helm.

ELEANOR  
Thanks, Dad. Jon should have--

PHILIP  
Let's get to work. People get  
dangerous when they think others  
are getting an advantage.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Philip and Ellie walk in to the house. She sees Julian  
sitting at the kitchen table with her mother. Binders and  
documents sit on the table.

She drops her keys. Freezes.

ELEANOR  
What is he doing here?

MARGARET  
Just chatting. He wanted my  
diagnosis.

ELEANOR  
You never used to talk to him...  
with good reason.

JULIAN  
Your mother was one of the nation's  
greatest surgeons. (beat) Still is.  
Just wanted her assessment.

MARGARET  
You want more than that.

Philip steps forward. A little shaky.

PHILIP  
What are you up to this time?

JULIAN  
A solution.

Julian smiles confidently. Ellie scoffs.

ELEANOR  
You always find a way to make greed  
sound like innovation.

MARGARET  
Julian is proving the appendix  
produces a compound that is  
increasing brain activity. And if  
transplanted to someone like Ellie,  
the benefits could transfer with  
it.

Eleanor is angry. Raises her voice.

ELEANOR  
Could. If. The same thing that got  
you in trouble.

JULIAN  
They've been wrong about the human  
body before. (beat) We tested it.  
Organ donor. End of life.

MARGARET  
Clean transfer. It is interesting.

ELEANOR  
Again? Without validation.

JULIAN

I just wanted to talk through the science with a doctor who understands... is sympathetic... experi--

ELEANOR

Because you don't have a license.

JULIAN

We can do it right. Document it. People will pay--

ELEANOR

Stay away from my mother.

PHILIP

So I guess you'll be leaving now?

JULIAN

We have a long list of prospective patients. I was hoping for an answer before I leave.

ELEANOR

What's the question?

MARGARET

He wants me to lead a surgical team to document the process for a successful appendix transfer. Other than his test case, it's never been done.

ELEANOR

You're retired.

MARGARET

I paused to take care of your dad. What he needs now, I can't provide.

PHILIP

Is this something you want to do?

MARGARET

Never... but it will spiral out of control if not done right.

ELEANOR

He has no clue about the long-term effects. What could happen next?

PHILIP

Looks like you got your answer. The door is over there.

Julian pats Margaret's hand.

JULIAN

Thank you for all of your insights.  
(to Margaret)  
You are part of the ninety-three percent.

Julian looks at Ellie. Raises his eyebrow.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Keep the reports. If you change your mind...

Julian smiles.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

And you will, with some encouragement.

ELEANOR

Julian, stay out of trouble. They'll throw you in--

JULIAN

Curie... Salk... my shot at--

ELEANOR

Oh never mind.

Philip opens the door. Julian nods to him and walks out.

Silence.

MARGARET

It's revolutionary.

Ellie's disappointed. Speaks quietly.

ELEANOR

He'll make a fast buck on it.

Lips pressed together.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

And someone else will suffer for it.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Jon escorts Eleanor and Philip into the Oval Office. They take a seat on the couch. Isabella Lopez sits in a chair.

JON  
You haven't returned my messages.

ELEANOR  
I'm screening my calls.

Philip snorts a little laugh. Jon is disappointed.

JON  
I convinced Andrews that your Dad was right about you.

ISABELLA  
A seven percenter?

Eleanor huffs. The President enters the room. Shakes Philip's hand.

ELEANOR  
My father doesn't need to be here.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
I'd like his opinion.

ELEANOR  
And you'll get it through me.

ISABELLA  
Shouldn't we only be working with accelerated minds?

The President and Eleanor give Isabella an angry stare.

JON  
We've got ten minutes. What can you share?

ELEANOR  
There will be one more strike as originally predicted.

She looks at her dad.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
But this one will be different.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Catastrophic?

Eleanor shakes her head.

ELEANOR  
First, this asteroid is coming from  
a different angle.

Isabella nods her head.

ISABELLA  
NASA has always tracked things  
headed toward Earth, not the moon.  
I've already redirected resources.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
And?

ISABELLA  
It's the size of the first two  
combined.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Jeez. Should we try to blow it up?

ELEANOR  
Alter the path and it might cause  
more damage.

ISABELLA  
We don't have time. 166 days. It's  
happening too fast.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
This one could make us even  
smarter?

ELEANOR  
Excuse me. (beat) There's more.

Eleanor looks at Philip. (beat) The President leans in.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
It's the 166 day prediction.

Eleanor takes a deep breath. Looks at Isabella.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
The data-based projections say it  
will hit... thirty days from now.

The room gasps. Philip sinks in his chair. Lopez is alarmed.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
How could everyone have gotten this  
wrong? She's a seven-percenter.

Isabella shrinks in her chair.

ISABELLA  
NGC does earthquakes, not--

ELEANOR  
We follow scientific evidence.

The President stands. Paces.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
There will be panic in the streets.  
This can't get out yet. Understood?

JON  
Yes, sir.

The President walks over to the window. He's nervous.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
There's a case of someone close to  
me accepting an appendix transfer.  
They were enlightened.

ELEANOR  
One example isn't scientifically--

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Not long ago, Burkhardt, my former  
Defense Secretary couldn't  
recognize his wife. This morning,  
he briefed my Joint Chiefs on  
vulnerabilities we didn't even know  
existed. I'm putting him back in  
charge.

Eleanor stands.

ELEANOR  
Dangerous.

Eleanor is looking around the room for support.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
But is it? Especially for the  
leader of the free world? If you  
and I were smarter, we might have  
answers.

JON  
Private clinics are flooded. People  
are already trying to get it. We  
need regulation.

ELEANOR  
You're actually considering this?

The President looks at Jon.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
I'm sure there is someone--

Eleanor looks at him.

ELEANOR  
Sure? No, you're guessing.... and  
that might get someone killed.

President glances at Lopez, looks long and hard at Eleanor.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Don't you wish you had one?

ELEANOR  
Until this is over, I couldn't  
answer that.

PHILIP  
Who knows who will be impacted  
next?

Eleanor nods in agreement.

ELEANOR  
The official stance of the NGC will  
be to prepare your families, your  
homes... expect one more ring.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
One more?

ISABELLA  
After this, we don't foresee an  
asteroid near us for another 200  
years.

The President looks out the window. Says nothing. Silence  
continues. Jon stands.

JON  
That's all. Thank you for coming.

Jon escorts them out of the office. Whispers to Ellie.

JON (CONT'D)  
Time for a bite?

Philip is struggling to stand. Ellie rushes to his aid.

ELEANOR  
My dad's dying. Don't ask him to  
come out here again.

INT. SUTTER HEALTH - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Eleanor sits in a very crowded waiting room with her parents.  
She looks at her watch.

PHILIP  
Are they giving away free soup  
today? This place is nuts.

MARGARET  
What would bring them all here  
today?

ELEANOR  
Chemo appointments are never this  
crowded.

Eleanor looks around. Not typical patients. Most of the  
patients are dressed in fine clothing.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
Recognize anyone here today?

Philip and Margaret look around. Whisper.

PHILIP  
Our former senator.

The SENATOR is hiding behind a newspaper. An article says  
"Are the 7% falling behind?"

Margaret points to another patient.

MARGARET  
That's Alan James - won an academy  
award.

ALAN JAMES is fidgeting. Nervous.

ELEANOR  
That woman... social media  
influencer.

The YOUNG WOMAN is scanning the room. She turns away when her  
eyes connect with Ellie.

A MAN ON GURNEY is wheeled by after surgery. He has a body  
guard at his side.

PHILIP

What brings them all here today?

Julian walks briskly through the lobby.

ELEANOR

Or who?

Julian sees them. Stops. Pivots the other way. Quickly.

Eleanor thinks. Then gets up and sprints after him. Grabs him by the shoulder. People notice.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

What is all this?

JULIAN

It's a busy place.

Eleanor looks at his nametag, sees his title.

ELEANOR

Enlightenment doctor?

Julian smiles.

JULIAN

Kristine likes it. The board just extended her contract. So she's giving me a share of each procedure.

ELEANOR

You aren't a doctor anymore.

JULIAN

Semantics. People are afraid of the enhancement gap. I'm giving them a choice that they're happy to pay for.

ELEANOR

The lobby looks like the rich and famous. Who helped you so quickly?

Julian smiles insincerely, smug.

JULIAN

We have some very generous donors to our new foundation. Talk your mom into getting involved.

ELEANOR

It's not legal.

JULIAN

You'll be surprised at who is planning a big endorsement. Someone you trust.

Julian leans in and whispers.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

You still think about right and wrong. That's not how things work.

ELEANOR

You're trying to capitalize on--

JULIAN

The '29 crash, the pandemic...

Julian nods. Cocky.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Someone profits from helping desperate people.

Julian starts to walk away. Rubs his fingers together.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

If you ever want to visit my new Caribbean isl--

ELEANOR

Everyone thinks you're a genius - until they pay for your mess. You don't know what the long term--

Julian smiles like he already won. No hesitation.

JULIAN

Neither do you.

Eleanor turns around and walks away. Julian yells.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Hello Philip. Margaret, we should get together again real soon.

Julian walks away. Eleanor returns to her father's side.

ELEANOR

His scam is already cashing in.

MARGARET

Julian could get you in the program.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESS ROOM - DAY

Ellie sits next to Jon on the side of the press room stage.

JON

You're a back-up... if he needs help with a question.

ELEANOR

Not my comfort zone.

JON

I'm here for you. How's your dad?

ELEANOR

He's been slipping the last few days.

The door opens. President Andrews enters. Kristine follows with Julian's hand on her back. They sit next to Ellie. She is furious. She bites her tongue glaring at Julian, then at Jon, then the President.

DEFENSE SECRETARY BURKHARDT(65) enters. Nods to Julian. Takes a seat.

The President stands at the podium.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

There's a lot of noise now. Speculation. Fear. Today, we're bringing clarity.

President Andrews looks toward his guests.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)

Before I introduce our guests. Questions?

REPORTER #1

Will you confirm another event in three weeks?

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

The first two have been a blessing to society. Great advances. Yes, there will be another event. The government is prepared. No reason for concern.

REPORTER #2

How do respond to those who say God is upset with this planet and we might just float away in the future?

The President looks over to Eleanor and nods.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

Dr. Whitaker from NGC--

Eleanor stands slowly. Struggles.

ELEANOR

The next event... next moon... will be the last... well for over 200 years.

Reporter #2 wrinkles their brow.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

The planet--

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

Thank you, Dr. Whitaker. Reassure everyone that God is giving us another 200 years.

Ellie stands for a moment. Embarrassed. Looks to Jon who looks down at her chair. She takes a seat.

REPORTER #3

Dozens of people have gone to the black market and received an appendix transplant for a fee. Will you issue a Presidential order to ban the process?

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

You've led me right into today's news. Yes, Americans have suffered from harmful unapproved drugs... unauthorized, botched surgeries.

He looks over to Kristine and Julian. Smiles.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)

Today, my administration is banning any appendix transplant, outside of the Sutter Health organization.

Kristine and Julian stand. Ellie fumes.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
Working with the White House, this  
one organization has done what no  
one else has been able to do. They  
mastered it, completing trials, and  
have received my support. (beat)  
Dr. Kristine Locke.

Kristine comes to the podium.

KRISTINE  
Under the guidance of Julian  
Mercer, Sutter has successfully  
launched a procedure so that  
everyone's brain can be tuned to  
work at its full capacity. Safely.

REPORTER #4  
This seems so soon. Unproven.

KRISTINE  
We are at a 100% success rate.

Kristine shows some arrogance.

KRISTINE (CONT'D)  
You're obsolete if you don't  
evolve.

Ellie whispers to Jon.

ELEANOR  
Not possible.

REPORTER #1  
I've heard humans use about 10% of  
their brain capacity--

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Less than that in Congress.

Andrews and Kristine fake laugh.

REPORTER #1  
What percent will your patients  
use?

Kristine looks to Julian. He is charming.

JULIAN  
10% is a myth. You and I don't have  
a spare 90%. Our procedure doesn't  
unlock the brain, it lets the brain  
use itself better... faster.

Eleanor can't take it. She starts to stand. Jon grabs her arm.

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
We've upgraded.

Julian nods to the Defense Secretary Burkhardt who gives a thumbs up.

REPORTER #2  
Many leading doctors have  
questioned this type of transplant.

KRISTINE  
Doctors once questioned blood  
marrow... kidney... Life saving  
transplants.

Julian smiles and winks. Ellie rolls her eyes.

REPORTER #3  
Is it true wealthy donors are  
offering up to a quarter million  
for access?

KRISTINE  
We're here to talk medicine, not  
money.

REPORTER #4  
Mr. President - It's been reported  
that you had your appendix removed  
four years ago. Will you do the  
procedure to keep up with other  
superpower leaders?

The President looks to Julian. Then Kristine. Jon stands.

JON  
That will be all for today  
everyone. We thank our guests for  
their insights.

Eleanor whispers to Julian.

ELEANOR  
You're going to--

Julian slightly shakes his head. Whispers.

JULIAN  
Those who evolve will join us.

Julian looks at Eleanor. Eyes wider.

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
Some have to be left behind. You  
might not make the cut.

Julian laughs. Kristine rubs Julian's back in support.

The President walks toward the door. He, Kristine and Julian  
are very chummy. They leave together.

Ellie rushes toward the President. Burkhardt and two Secret  
Service agents jump in front of her.

ELEANOR  
Don't stop me... stop them.

Ellie tries to push by the agents.

A press reporter snaps a photo.

Jon grabs her by the waist, lifting her off the ground.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
You brought THEM to the White  
House. Why?

Jon's face shows a mix of emotions. Ellie grabs Jon's hand.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
Find a way to warn him.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - CHIEF OF STAFF OFFICE - DAY

Ellie storms into Jon's office. He closes the door quietly.

JON  
Ellie, I'm sorry. I'm not always in  
the loop.

ELEANOR  
Julian will say anything for money.

JON  
Please, keep your voice down.

Ellie walks over to the door separating the Oval Office from  
the Chief of Staff's. She hears voices softly.

JULIAN (O.S.)  
The compound these new appendixes  
are secreting... the results are  
immediate.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
I need to be sure the transactions  
are controlled.

KRISTINE (O.S.)  
We've made the arrangements.

Ellie's jaw drops.

ELEANOR  
What arrangements?

JULIAN (O.S.)  
We met with your re-election team  
earlier. Everything is... aligned.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (O.S.)  
Please. I don't need to... What's  
the exposure?

KRISTINE (O.S.)  
It's contained.

Silence.

Ellie storms over to Jon.

ELEANOR  
Did you hear that? This isn't about  
helping people in need.

Jon nods slightly.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
You need to go in there or I will.

JON  
I hear a lot. The administration  
works hard to do the right things.  
Occasionally, we fail, but that  
doesn't take away from--

Ellie looks Jon in the face.

ELEANOR  
This isn't medicine. Tell the world  
they don't need this to live.

Ellie paces.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
What are they paying him?

JON

It's not something I'd know.

Ellie gets up and walks briskly toward the door. Jon runs in front of her to block her.

JON (CONT'D)

You walk through that door... your mission is over.

ELEANOR

Are you with me, or him?

JON

Both.

Ellie reaches for the door knob.

ELEANOR

We don't have the luxury of waiting.

JON

You'll get arrested by the Marines.

Ellie looks at the door knob, then back at Jon, then back to the door. She exhales. Her hand drops.

ELEANOR

Somebody needs to help me find the crack in their outcomes.

Jon grabs her hand.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Philip and Margaret are in the kitchen. Philip is back in his wheelchair.

Julian's documents remain in a stack on the table.

The living room is filled with flowers.

PHILIP

Late stage four. No need to keep going.

MARGARET

There's always hope. You've only been through 6 of the 8 treatments. Maybe the next event will bring a cure.

Philip looks at her. He doesn't buy it. He struggles to get food on his fork.

Ellie walks in the door. She looks around the living room.

ELEANOR  
What's with the floral shop?

MARGARET  
More from Jon.

Ellie sighs. Then smiles. Looks at the flowers.

MARGARET (CONT'D)  
There's a note.

Ellie picks up the note. Reads it. Sighs.

ELEANOR  
He's willing to resign to prove something to me.

PHILIP  
I like this guy. The country needs him there.

Philip breathing is heavy. He speaks softly.

PHILIP (CONT'D)  
People should accept an apology.

Margaret nods.

ELEANOR  
People should fight for what's right.

Margaret points at all the flowers.

MARGARET  
He's fighting for something.

Ellie takes the stacks of Julian's documents from the table.

ELEANOR  
I don't want to see this.

She throws them on a back counter.

Philip waves Ellie over.

PHILIP  
I need to talk to you.

ELEANOR  
This sounds bad.

PHILIP  
The treatments aren't going to  
work. I'm accepting it.

Ellie looks toward her mom, who nods. She tears up.

PHILIP (CONT'D)  
I've been thinking. I want to live  
on... through you.

ELEANOR  
My whole life is a reflection of  
you.

Philip shakes his head. He struggles with a deep breath.

PHILIP  
There's something I want to give  
you. We're a perfect match. You'd  
get all the benefits.

ELEANOR  
Dad!

PHILIP  
I want to.

ELEANOR  
No. We don't know... no.

Eleanor looks at her mom.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
You don't support this do you?

MARGARET  
I just don't know anymore.

PHILIP  
It's my wish.

MARGARET  
Sutter is having no failures. And  
it's important to him.

ELEANOR  
Even if I was interested, we don't  
have the money for what they are  
extorting.

PHILIP

Not an issue. Your mom could do the procedure.

ELEANOR

We live by standards.

MARGARET

I've talked to Julian.

ELEANOR

You what? Again?

MARGARET

I wanted to understand more.

PHILIP

She could do it for free at his hospital under their supervision.

MARGARET

He said he owes you one.

Ellie exhales. Shakes her head no.

PHILIP

Think about it. For me.

Eleanor gets up, kisses her dad on the head. Walks into the living room, turns on the television. It's the Dr. Phil show.

DR. PHIL

Should seven-percenters be flying planes, performing surgery, leading government agencies? Let's ask the Enlightenment Doctor, Julian Mercer.

The audience applauds. Julian loves it.

ELEANOR

You've got to be kidding.

JULIAN

People have always followed the smartest among them. Since the event, my IQ has jumped from 135 to nearly 200. Would you like advice from the old me or the new me?

ELEANOR

They're both dumbasses.

Dr. Phil holds the microphone to an audience member.

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER  
You're saying the rest of the  
population is unable to compete?

JULIAN  
Evolution isn't fair. It never has  
been. But, I'd tell them... you  
don't to be limited.

ELEANOR  
It's turning into a circus.

DR. PHIL  
So now, intelligence has a price  
tag.

Ellie nods.

JULIAN  
Appendix donors are seeing more  
money than imaginable.

FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER  
Can you now cure anything?

Julian smirks.

JULIAN  
Not yet. But trust me Dr. Phil, we  
will.

Ellie clicks the off button. Throws the remote. Speaks like  
an announcer.

ELEANOR  
And if you talk to him, just  
know... at some point, you won't  
get the truth.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - ELEANOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

It's late. Ellie sits at her desk deep in thought. She eyes  
her rings. Drops them in a junk drawer. Closes it.

She looks out at the moon. Deep in thought.

She pulls up Jon's info on her screen. Hesitates. Initiates a  
video call.

Jon answers in his bed, half-awake.

JON  
Hey. What's wrong?

ELEANOR  
Nothing's wrong. I didn't know who  
else to call.

Jon smiles. Sits up. More alert.

JON  
Great. (beat) You do realize it's  
three hours later here.

ELEANOR  
Sorry.

JON  
What's on your mind?

ELEANOR  
Going with your gut. My dad says to  
trust it.

JON  
Do you?

Eleanor hesitates.

ELEANOR  
I don't know how.

JON  
I've been on call twenty-four seven  
for years. I'm glad I get to be  
here for you.

Eleanor softens. Looks at him - really looks at him - for the  
first time.

EXT. SUTTER HEALTH - DAY

Construction workers are building an huge extension to the  
facility.

Hospital executives are outside in suits and hard hats.

INT. SUTTER HEALTH - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Kristine and Julian sit close to each other at a conference  
room table. Philip and Margaret are sitting across from them.

Kristine wears a Cristallini suit. Julian wears an Armani  
suit and wears a Rolex. They are giddy with success.

KRISTINE

Philip, this is a beautiful gift  
you're going to give your daughter.

MARGARET

She said she'd only do it if I was  
confident.

JULIAN

We've shared all of this with you.

MARGARET

Everything?

Kristine pauses. She spots Eleanor pacing outside of the  
conference room.

JULIAN

We've shared everything relevant.

PHILIP

Relevant to who?

KRISTINE

The Surgeon General, the AMA,  
everyone's been through here.  
Reviewed procedures... test  
cases... we got the green light.

Kristine wants to say something. Looks to Julian.

JULIAN

We can reveal it... I trust them.

Kristine and Julian see Eleanor talking to two men in suits.  
Look at each other.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

The President's not waiting. His  
will be done before the event.

PHILIP

Wow. How much are you charging him?

Philip coughs hard. Ellie's head turns in the hallway.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

From what I've seen around here, he  
can't afford it.

Philip keeps coughing.

Eleanor runs in. Pours her dad some water.

ELEANOR  
Can you give us a moment?

KRISTINE  
Certainly.

Kristine and Julian rise and head to the door. Julian whispers to Eleanor.

JULIAN  
You used to believe in me. Part of you knows I'm right.

Kristine and Julian stop outside the room. Philip catches Julian giving Kristine a kiss on the cheek.

ELEANOR  
They have hedge fund managers waiting... at a hospital?

MARGARET  
I only care about the two of you. The readings and the procedure all check out. But...

ELEANOR  
Did he lie?

MARGARET  
He leaves out the truth.

PHILIP  
I'm still in favor. Even the President is doing--

Ellie stands. Paces.

ELEANOR  
You really believe--

PHILIP  
Ellie, look at me.

Ellie stops.

PHILIP (CONT'D)  
The results speak for themselves.

Ellie walks past her dad. Hand on his shoulder.

ELEANOR  
Mom?

Ellie looks at her mom. Margaret looks afraid. She says nothing.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
Oh, Dad. (beat) Based on mom's hesitation... and his history--

PHILIP  
I may not have much time left.

Ellie takes a deep breath.

ELEANOR  
This next event might help us all.  
(beat) It might kill us. (beat)  
Even the smartest can't say.

Ellie looks at her mom. Then her dad.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
I can't pretend to support this.

Ellie hugs her dad.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
It's a no. I'm sorry Dad.

He pats her hand.

PHILIP  
Your choice. I get it.

ELEANOR  
Thank you.

Philip studies her.

PHILIP  
Then I need something else.

ELEANOR  
Anything.

PHILIP  
I want to walk my daughter down the aisle... while I still can.

Margaret grabs Philip's hand. Begins to cry. Philip tears up.

MARGARET  
Are you talking to Jon yet?

ELEANOR  
We've been talking. He's coming  
here tomorrow.

Ellie smiles. Touches her father's cheek.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
We're figuring it out.

Ellie hugs both parents.

INT. NATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CENTER - CONFERENCE ROOM

Eleanor enters to meet with her executive team who are  
talking fast.

NATHAN  
Sixteen days.

STAFFER  
Three hundred eighty-four hours--

ANOTHER STAFFER  
Twenty-three thousand minutes.

They high-five each other, laughing. Nathan jokingly looks  
toward Eleanor.

NATHAN  
And you used to correct my math  
mistakes.

ELEANOR  
Let's focus.

Her team fires off ideas rapidly.

NATHAN  
We've remodeled the San Andreas  
fault line --

STAFFER  
We're integrating the new Chinese  
technology.

ANOTHER STAFFER  
Predictive modeling at 98%  
accuracy.

STAFFER and ANOTHER STAFFER are excited, talking over each  
other.

Eleanor tries to follow. Her eyes dart from speaker to speaker.

NATHAN  
Eleanor. Are you getting this?

Eleanor shivers.

ELEANOR  
I'm with you.

NATHAN  
Let's us know if we need to slow down.

Eleanor's eyes squint.

ELEANOR  
Continue. Wait... go back.

They stop. Look at her.

STAFFER  
A seven-percenter.

Staffer raises their eyebrows.

NATHAN  
How far back do you need us to go?

ELEANOR  
No... we don't slow down. Continue.

Eleanor stares at her notes. She knows she missed something. She glances at her dad's groundbreaking photo on the wall.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Jon and Ellie walk down the beachfront. Ellie stops and looks up at the moon.

ELEANOR  
Sorry I over-reacted. You probably spent a month's salary on flowers.

JON  
You're worth it.

Ellie grabs his hand.

ELEANOR

You're in DC. I'm on the west coast. Where do you want this to go?

JON

You are kind, brilliant, direct. This feels right to me. Where do you want this to go?

ELEANOR

What if he gets re-elected?

JON

He knows. One term and I'm done. I feel dirty about some things that happen there, but I don't know what would happen if I suddenly left.

ELEANOR

So one year.

Jon nods.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Could you love a seven percenter?

JON

Tell me what you want.

Eleanor takes the deepest breath.

ELEANOR

I don't want to wait. Not for this.

Eleanor turns to Jon.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

I want to marry you.

JON

Seriously?

ELEANOR

As soon as possible.

Jon's head wobbles back and forth.

JON

That's a lot.

Jon looks out at the ocean. Ellie's hand is over her heart.

ELEANOR

I want the life that happens after  
this...with you. You're good to  
me... good for me.

JON

This isn't a small thing. (beat)  
It's everything.

ELEANOR

But I've got to be honest, part of  
me is pushing for urgency to make a  
dying man happy.

JON

Your dad... I'm sorry.

ELEANOR

But not all of me.

Jon kisses Eleanor. Studies her face. Smiles.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

I don't know how much time--

JON

Yes. Let's get married tomorrow.  
(beat) But, can I ask?

Ellie giggles. Nods.

The bright moon shines on them.

Jon gets on one knee.

JON (CONT'D)

Eleanor Whitaker, will you marry  
me?

Ellie and Jon enter into a deep embrace. They hug. They kiss.

ELEANOR

I'm so excited. How can we get a  
license by tomorrow?

JON

I know a guy.

Ellie laughs.

ELEANOR

Let's go tell them.

Jon grabs Ellie by the hand and starts to run.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Jon stands near the ocean in a casual shirt and khakis. A justice of the peace stands on one side of him. Nathan stands on the other side.

Nathan clicks his phone and a small speaker plays soft music.

Philip rises from his chair. He's in a tuxedo. Already sweating.

Ellie steps up, wearing a white satin sun dress. No shoes.

Philip proudly takes her arm. Steadies himself. Nods to Ellie. She nods back. They are ready.

Philip musters up the strength and escorts Ellie like the man he used to be.

Margaret follows behind, her watchful eye on Philip.

When the bride and her father reach the others, he kisses her on the cheek. Beaming with pride. He shakes Jon's hand, then surprises him with a hug.

Philip lowers himself on a beach bench. Exhausted.

Margaret steps to the other side of Ellie as matron of honor.

The ceremony begins. Unheard.

Jon and Ellie exchange words. They exchange rings.

The judge speaks and they kiss. Nathan and Margaret applaud.

Philip rises to applaud. Claps once. Stumbles. Catches himself. Sits back on the bench. No one notices.

The happy couple hug, then walk away hand-in-hand.

Philip watches and smiles. Mission accomplished.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Philip is getting ready for bed. Margaret gives him his pill and a glass of water.

MARGARET  
You looked great today.

PHILIP  
My dream came true.

He exhales - heavier than usual. Margaret notices.

MARGARET

They make a nice couple.

PHILIP

So do we.

Philip kisses Margaret. Stumbles a little. Catches himself.

He lays down on the pillow. Margaret turns off the light. The new moon leaves Philip in the darkness. His breathing settles. Still. Quiet.

EXT./INT. WHITAKER HOUSE - DAY

Ellie and Jon are walking up to the Whitaker house the day after the wedding. As they get close, they see an ambulance with lights flashing in front of the house.

They run as fast as they can. Ellie faster than Jon.

Ellie bursts inside. Margaret is crying.

ELEANOR

What happened?

Margaret shakes her head no.

Two EMT's bring a body bag on a stretcher from the bedroom.

Ellie freezes. Her body starts to shake.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

No. (beat) Not now. (beat)  
It's not fair.

Jon holds Ellie tight as she sobs. Margaret speaks through tears.

MARGARET

If you took his original offer,  
he'd live on through you.

Jon whispers to Ellie.

JON

He still does.

MARGARET

Philip went to bed so happy. Never  
woke up.

Ellie grabs her mother.

ELEANOR  
He was so strong walking down the aisle. Did I push him too hard?

MARGARET  
Yesterday was everything for him.

Margaret touches Ellie's hand.

ELEANOR  
It was so reassuring to have him back to normal.

MARGARET  
He couldn't stop talking about you.

ELEANOR  
Taught me everything. I didn't learn how to go for something because you feel it...

She glances at Jon.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
... until now.

MARGARET  
We were both glad you found what we've always had.

Margaret touches Jon's cheek.

MARGARET (CONT'D)  
You two make us happy.

The EMTs take the stretcher away. The door closes.

ELEANOR  
What do we do?

MARGARET  
What you've always done. The right thing.

JON  
The President truly liked him. The White House will want to make a statement.

Margaret's mobile phone gets a text from Julian. Ellie looks over her shoulder.

The text reads: RESIDENT DOC BOTCHED PROCEDURES. NEED YOUR HELP.

MARGARET

Hell no.

She looks at Jon and Ellie.

ELEANOR

I need to stop this. Being right doesn't help if we're too late.

INT. PRESIDENTIAL LIMO - DAY

The President and Jon are in the back seat.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

How's your wife?

JON

It's hard. He was a great man.

The President nods. He looks out the window. Sees the Sutton Health sign in the distance.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

Less than a week. (beat) Do you think I'm doing the right thing?

Silence. Jon stammers.

JON

I, I, I'm not qualified--

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

Just tell me what you think.

JON

You're listening to Julian. I trust Ellie. She turned it down. She is sure you should tell all Americans to do the same.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

What if the 93% get even smarter? If I fall vulnerable... so does the country. Does she get that?

The presidential motorcade approaches the hospital. Crowds are large. Cheering.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
It worked for Burkhardt, it should  
work for me.

The President nods. Not convinced. But decided.

EXT. SUTTER HEALTH - PARKING LOT - DAY

The Presidential limo pulls up and Andrews exits the car. Jon is at his side.

Cameras flash. The press yell questions. The President waves.

Kristine and Julian are waiting for him. Julian straightens his tie. Waves to the press. He acts like this is all for him.

As the President approaches the hospital door. Eleanor walks out.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Eleanor. I was sorry to hear about  
your dad.

ELEANOR  
He liked you too. That's the main  
reason I'm here.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
I don't understand.

ELEANOR  
Don't do this. They are hiding  
something.

The press fight to get their microphones near them.

KRISTINE  
Eleanor, we've been cleared.

Eleanor turns to Julian.

ELEANOR  
When my parents asked what you  
haven't shared, they said you  
refused to answer.

JULIAN  
The intelligence shows--

ELEANOR  
Forget the data. Tell him what  
you're not saying.

Julian turns to Jon.

JULIAN  
Some wife you have.

Eleanor's public speaking fears vanish. She speaks louder. Her voice needs to be heard.

ELEANOR  
Avoiding the question. Like always.  
Tell him the truth.

Photographers snap photos. Julian tries to explain himself.

JULIAN  
I always tell the truth.

Julian has an uncomfortable fake smile. All of the live cameras shift, fully on Ellie. Microphones are shoved in her direction.

The President stops to watch her. She is the center of everything.

ELEANOR  
Tell the press about the botched surgery. Tell them what Sutter paid to get this exclusive?

The crowd murmurs.

JON  
Ellie. No.

The President holds his hands up trying to calm the crowd.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
She's grieving. Please ignore--

Jon runs over to Ellie. She puts up her hand to him, turns to the press. Points at Kristine and Julian.

ELEANOR  
You two think he's going to come through with a pardon to make this scam go away some day? The press will investigate.

Julian charges toward Ellie. Jon steps in and pushes him to the ground. Julian pleads with Ellie.

JULIAN  
Don't blow this for me.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

If an officer could help us here.

Ellie looks over at approaching police. Grabs the President's sleeve. Talks faster.

ELEANOR

Don't risk it. (beat) Or at least wait one week until the event. Find what he's hiding.

Police grab Ellie and pull her away from the President's sleeve. As they forcefully move her, she yells back toward the President. Sincere.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

If you do this now and I'm right, you all won't get a second chance. Just... One week.

Police take Ellie away.

Jon and the President turn to each other.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

She's been right all-along.

Jon thinks for just a second.

JON

Sir, I have to go.

The President isn't paying attention as Jon walks away.

The press follow Ellie entering the back of the police car. She instructs the press.

ELEANOR

Do your job. How did Julian Mercer buy an island in the Caribbean?

The police car door closes. Sirens blare. The car pulls away.

Julian whispers to Kristine. Urgently.

JULIAN

We need him on board. Now. I'm not going down for this again.

Kristine guides the President toward the hospital door. He stops, looks at the police car driving away. Looks at his staff who stare back. One shrugs. One shakes their head no.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

Jon? Jon?

The president searches for Jon. He sees Ellie looking back through the police car window.

With the echoes of sirens, the President turns back, opens the door to his own limo, climbs in.

The press begin to barrage him with questions.

REPORTER #1

Is Dr. Whitaker correct?

REPORTER #2

Did a patient die?

The President yells.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

Jon?

REPORTER #3

Was Whitaker trying to warn you at the White House press conference?

The President looks at the press. Then at Julian. Eleanor's words have rattled him. Beat.

Julian approaches, bruised from Jon's defense. Looks the President in the eye.

JULIAN

You leave, I can expose everything.

The limo driver's head turns. Julian pulls a check out of his jacket.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

We have receipts on you.

The President slams the door. Head down.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

We're not doing this.

He points for the limo driver to go.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Jon and Margaret sit near the television. The newscast shows Ellie speaking out at Sutter.

MARGARET

This isn't how I ever thought she'd  
be famous.

JON

She made a difference at Sutter.  
Massive cancelations.

Margaret nods. Proud.

MARGARET

Can you do something--

JON

The Chief of Staff certainly can.  
Let's get our girl out of jail.

EXT. JAIL - DAY

Jon paces outside the jail. Margaret sits nearby.

The door opens. Ellie walks out. Haggard. Wearing the same  
clothes as yesterday.

ELEANOR

No press today?

Jon and Margaret race to hug Ellie.

MARGARET

Are you okay?

Ellie nods. Looks at Jon.

ELEANOR

The government should do something  
about the food at this place.

Jon grins.

JON

So far, the honeymoon sucks.

Ellie laughs. Margaret laughs.

ELEANOR

What now?

JON

I think he'll drop all charges. He  
just needs to make a point for a  
day or two.

MARGARET

You've been on the front page of every paper.

ELEANOR

I'm sure they are making me look horrible.

JON

Well, at first. And... I had to help him write a statement... that you were terminated.

Eleanor laughs.

ELEANOR

Fired for--

MARGARET

But then the story turned. They wrote how President reconsidered surgery.

Eleanor is shocked.

JON

You may have looked a little crazy, but he believed you.

MARGARET

All of Sutter's procedures are on hold.

JON

You've been carrying this alone too long.

Eleanor's eyes get big.

ELEANOR

Then why did I get fired?

JON

You implied that he offered a pardon in exchange for money. He hadn't.

ELEANOR

This is all I know.

JON

You just went one step too far. That false charge was cause for termination.

Ellie thinks. Smiles.

ELEANOR

It's a good thing I have a husband  
to take care of me.

JON

Hey... I know a guy with a place on  
the beach. We've got a week until  
the event. Let's run away and hide?  
Have a honeymoon?

Ellie gives him a hug.

ELEANOR

Can I take a shower first?

Jon sniffs.

JON

Please do.

ELEANOR

I want to available before it  
happens though... In case anybody  
needs me.

The trio walk away.

INT. WHITAKER HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Margaret is sitting at the kitchen table. Julian's binders  
and logs are spread all over the table again.

Ellie enters, drying her hair with a towel.

ELEANOR

Find something?

MARGARET

It's thorough. Clean. Something  
keeps bothering me?

ELEANOR

Too perfect?

MARGARET

AMA would have flagged fabrication.

ELEANOR

Unless they were ordered not to.

Something clicks for Ellie.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
If the last event boosted  
cognition, couldn't the next one  
reduce it?

Margaret studies her.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
We keep asking what it does to the  
planet. (beat) What if the next one  
does something different to us?

Ellie moves to the table. Flips pages. Points repeatedly at something.

MARGARET  
Not even a footnote.

Ellie grabs her phone.

ELEANOR  
I'm calling Jon.

MARGARET  
I'll keep digging. Send you proof.

Jon answers the phone. Ellie is anxious.

ELEANOR  
They never considered a reset--

Eleanor looks at her Dad's empty chair. Taps her stomach.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
He said to trust it.

Margaret smiles, nods.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Jon and Ellie are relaxing on the sand. Alone. Quiet. Happy.

JON  
I sent the White House everything.

ELEANOR  
Good. (beat) What's for lunch?

Jon smiles.

JON  
Sandwich, a beer, then we disappear  
for a few hours.

Ellie nods.

Jon's mobile phone rings. He looks at caller ID. Straightens slightly. It's the President. He answers.

JON (CONT'D)  
Yes, sir. (beat) I understand.  
(beat) Yes, sir. (beat) I'll see  
you tomorrow.

He hangs up.

Ellie watches him.

ELEANOR  
This honeymoon does suck. Does he  
want you back before it happens?

Jon smiles.

JON  
Ah... well... actually... he wants  
you back.

Ellie looks surprised.

ELEANOR  
Me?

JON  
And your mom... in person.  
Tomorrow.

ELEANOR  
That's it?

Jon nervously nods.

Ellie laughs.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
So we have tonight?

Jon leans over and romantically kisses Ellie.

INT. SUTTER HEALTH - KRISTINE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Kristine sits at her desk. There's a knock at the door. It  
flies open.

SIX FBI AGENTS enter with guns in hands. Some immediately box  
up her computer. One helps her rise out of the chair, while  
another places handcuffs on her wrist.

The FBI shows her a picture of Julian. She shrugs her shoulders.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

The President is surrounded by campaign advisors. Some are holding banners and signs. Many are talking at the same time. The desk is cluttered with campaign information.

Jon sits far away by himself.

The President is lost in his own thoughts. Jon sits staring at the President. When the President catches Jon's eyes, Jon stands up, and slowly walks out of the office.

Andrews eyes follow him out the door. The President stands and dramatically orders everyone out of his office.

Andrews wipes everything off his desk into a trash can. The desk is empty.

The President turns, looks at his reflection in the window.

INT. WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Margaret calmly sits at the conference room table for her first time at the White House. Ellie paces looking out the window.

ELEANOR

Just a couple days left. I should--

The door opens. The President enters. Jon follows.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

Dr. Whitaker. Please. Have a seat.

Ellie sits next to her mom. Jon sits next to her.

Now the president paces where Ellie stood.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)

Folks, thank you for coming here.  
We have a lot to talk about.

Ellie sits up.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)

First Eleanor, Jon, congratulations  
on your marriage. Everything has  
been so crazy--

Ellie smiles for the first time.

JON/ELEANOR  
Thank you, sir.

The President looks at Margaret.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Jon told me about Philip's dream to  
walk his daughter down the aisle.

MARGARET  
He was so proud.

The President pats Margaret's hand.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
A few minutes ago, I signed a  
release. All charges against  
Eleanor Whitaker have been dropped.

Margaret is relieved. Ellie is a little sheepish.

ELEANOR  
Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
We thought we were making people  
better.

ELEANOR  
We don't need more brilliance. We  
need meaning.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
With that in place, I'd like you to  
consider returning to run NGC. You  
don't have to tell me now, other  
than I hope you'll help us through  
the last final hours of this mess.

ELEANOR  
I had planned on being available  
for Nathan and the team. You can  
count on me.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Thank you. Good. Great. (beat) Now  
come the hard ones.

The President takes a seat next to Margaret.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
When your daughter had her little  
outburst, she said they were hiding  
something. Then, Jon shared what  
you found.

Margaret nods.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
You were right. One of the dementia  
patients had a hard fall.

MARGARET  
Oh no.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
They weren't hurt, but they  
reverted back to their previous  
condition.

ELEANOR  
A reset.

JON  
The oscillation. It wasn't a  
permanent cure.

The President stands. Walks over to Ellie.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
You were right about something else  
too.

ELEANOR  
How so?

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Kristine Locke was arrested... but  
Julian is missing.

ELEANOR  
Of course.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
The FBI hasn't found him.

Margaret gasps. Silence.

Ellie nods. She knows the man Julian is.

The President is fighting back tears.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
I'm so sorry for everything I put  
all of you through. For everyone  
who believed in the Sutter  
solutions.

ELEANOR  
So many people.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Julian told a convincing story. We  
all wanted to believe it. It was  
wrong and I have to live with that.

The President looks out the window. Pauses.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
I won't be running for re-election.

He takes a very deep breath.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
I don't think I should.

Jon gets up to console the President. Pats his shoulder.

The President pats him back.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
A little while ago, the FBI  
questioned Jon.

ELEANOR  
What?

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
About how this started.

JON  
It's okay.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
We had to ask him - how you heard  
about a kickback. He told us about  
your eavesdropping.

Ellie shrugs her shoulders.

ELEANOR  
I was so-

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Let me finish. Nobody said it out  
loud...

Andrews shrugs his shoulders.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
 ...but everybody knew. (beat)  
 That's the way it works, damn it.

The President walks back toward Ellie.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
 I can't force you to stay quiet.

Ellie stands.

ELEANOR  
 We've all suffered loss--

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
 You don't owe me any--

ELEANOR  
 Let me finish... We've all made  
 mistakes. (beat) We can learn from  
 them.

Ellie stares at him. Smiles.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
 I don't have the data. So, I'm  
 going to trust you.

The President looks at Margaret.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
 I plan to order my campaign to  
 donate any money we received--

MARGARET  
 To dementia causes.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
 Absolutely.

The President looks at Ellie.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
 In your dad's name.

Ellie thinks. Looks at Jon. Pats her mom's hand. Stands.

She hugs the President. Looks him in the eye.

ELEANOR  
 Now what?

The President takes a deep breath.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS

Well... Jon needs to write me one  
hell of a speech.

The President smacks Jon in the back.

He turns to Ellie.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)

And you need to get back to work.

Everyone smiles. Ellie helps her mom rise. They head toward  
the door.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)

Oh, and Jon... when this is over...  
take her to Hawaii on behalf of a  
thankful nation.

Everyone chuckles.

EXT. MONTAGE - NIGHT.

In Washington D.C, the streets are empty.

A sentry patrols the roof of the White House. Watches the  
horizon.

In New York, only a homeless man sits in Times Square.

An airport is empty. The board shows all flights cancelled.

A church is full. A mother holds her children's hands.

At Sutter Medical, the actor Alan James walks in to the  
emergency room visibly ill.

Julian climbs the stairs onto a private jet at the airport.  
Stops at the top stair looking for Kristine. Sees an airport  
security car and gets on-board.

Margaret stands alone at home, looking out the window at the  
moon.

Outside National Geological Center, the parking lot is full.  
Lights are on in every window.

President Andrews stands alone in the Situation Room in  
prayer.

INT. NATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CENTER - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Scientists work feverishly. Whiteboards filled. Equations everywhere.

They move fast.

INT. NATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CENTER - ELEANOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Ellie sits alone, watching all of her monitors.

A digital clock TICKS. Two minutes remain on the countdown.

A video call comes through. It's Jon.

JON

The world is so quiet. No traffic.  
No ball games. International  
ceasefires. Everyone... waiting.

ELEANOR

How are things there?

JON

Nervous. I've already helped to  
write two different versions of the  
President's remarks - after it  
happens.

ELEANOR

How is he?

JON

Taking a lot of criticism, but he  
delivered his speech with  
sincerity. He still feels so bad.

ELEANOR

Tell him I'm not saying ANYTHING  
else to the press. Other than if he  
decides to run again, I'll endorse  
him.

Jon smiles. Nods.

JON

I need to get into the Situation  
Room. Good luck.

ELEANOR

We'll be fine. I love you.

JON  
I love you too.

They disconnect the call.

Nathan knocks on the door.

NATHAN  
One minute. What do ya think will  
happen?

ELEANOR  
Sharp. Scary. Then it's done.

Nathan nods, walks away.

Ellie looks at her monitors. She checks a printout. Takes a sip of her coffee when it hits. She puts the coffee down.

SFX: A loud mournful, hollow drone. It rattles through the walls.

Everyone's cell phone BUZZES with an emergency alert.

Heavy vibration. Ellie's eyes get big.

Coffee splashes out of the cup. The overhead light flickers.

She continues to look at her monitors.

Nathan yells in her door.

NATHAN  
Wa... wa... what are you seeing?

Eleanor turns her head. Under her breath.

ELEANOR  
Oh no.

Nathan's stutter returned.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
It's stronger.

NATHAN  
No epicenter... again?

ELEANOR  
The bell rang. One last time.

Eleanor looks at monitors, printouts, messages.

Time passes.

The video phone rings. It's Jon.

JON  
What can you share?

ELEANOR  
Everywhere. Again. It's over.

JON  
Reports are slower this time but other than communication issues, minimal damage again.

ELEANOR  
But what about the transplant patients?

JON  
It's bad. Hospitals are going to be overloaded. Accidents. A private plane went down. The Defense Secretary... passed.

ELEANOR  
Shit. (beat) What about the 93%?

JON  
I'm not thinking as clearly. Early reports suggest... we're all back to the way we were.

ELEANOR  
Welcome back to normal.

JON  
The president sounded like you. He said, "Smart isn't the same as wise."

ELEANOR  
We've got a lot of work to do.

JON  
Yeah.

The blow each other a kiss. Smile. Disconnect.

MONTAGE

A FAMILY embraces in a living room - relieved.

A NEWS REPORT shows "US-China enter new arms agreement".

A TECH LAB white board questions are half-erased. Engineers stare. Lost.

Nathan struggles to complete his Rubik's cube.

In Times Square, the homeless man sits alone. He watches a digital billboard flash: "Global IQ Surge Ends". He doesn't react.

Outside the Pentagon, two ambulances arrive. SOLDIERS lift a gurney with lifeless body of Defense Secretary Burkhardt. President Andrews stands back and slowly salutes his friend.

At Sutter, a maintenance worker takes down a SUTTER LAB sign. EMTs pull gurneys with the bodies of the Social Media Influencer and the Politician through the empty lobby.

Flowers and candles surround actor ALAN JAMES' star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Kristine Locke sits on a metal bench behind bars. Still in designer clothes. Now wrinkled.

Julian sits on a Caribbean beach in dark sunglasses and a large hat.

Alone.

EXT. HAWAII - BEACH - DAY

Ellie rests on the beach. Jon dozing by her side. The waves barely ripple. The slightest of wind. Quiet all around her.

Ellie watches the horizon. For the first time in a long time... nothing to solve. No reports. No noise. Just quiet.

A moment of peace. She smiles. Closes her eyes.

Jon's phone rings. He jumps.

JON

It's him.

He answers the phone on speaker.

JON (CONT'D)

Yes, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (O.S.)

Aloha.

ELEANOR

Aloha.

JON  
How are things, sir?

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (O.S.)  
The inventions... the discoveries  
are all still here. But, I'm  
attending a lot of funerals. (beat)  
They didn't have to happen.

JON  
I'm sorry for the loss of your  
friends.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (O.S.)  
Eleanor--

President Andrews chokes up.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (CONT'D)  
Thank you for saving my life.

Jon nods to Ellie. Proud.

ELEANOR  
I should have seen it sooner.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (O.S.)  
Hundreds of people cancelled their  
procedure. They listened. (beat)  
Many folks you saved are making  
donations in the Whitaker name.

Eleanor shrugs it off.

ELEANOR  
But not the ones I saw every day in  
that lobby at Sutter. We both have  
to live with that.

Ellie's head is down. Jon consoles her.

Beat.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Eleanor Whitaker. On behalf of a  
grateful nation, I intend on  
awarding you the Presidential Medal  
of Freedom.

Jon looks at her - proud. Ellie is shocked.

ELEANOR  
Thank you, Mr. President.

A long beat.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS  
Well, the other reason for my  
call... I heard your decisions.

Pause. Jon and Ellie look at each other.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
I hope you enjoy the west coast,  
Jon. We are going to miss you.

Jon looks out to the ocean.

JON  
It's been an honor, sir.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (O.S.)  
And Eleanor, thank you for staying  
on board. Your country appreciates  
it.

ELEANOR  
It's what my family does, sir.

PRESIDENT ANDREWS (O.S.)  
Enjoy some quiet time. Alone. You  
earned it.

The President disconnects the call.

Ellie and Jon hold hands looking out at the ocean.

ELEANOR  
This is nice.

JON  
It's a good thing I have a wife to  
take care of me.

They both chuckle, then lay back down wearing sunglasses.

Suddenly, large waves crack the shore. Ellie lifts her  
sunglasses. Eyebrows raised.

ELEANOR  
Just a regular old earthquake. I  
can feel it.

JON  
You've got to be kidding me.

The sand begins to shake. A drink falls off the table.  
Swimmers run out of the ocean. Jon shakes his head.

Eleanor is nonchalant.

A small smile. Ellie takes it all in.

ELEANOR  
Something we can't predict... but  
actually understand.

She pats Jon's hand. Closes her eyes.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
Nathan's got this. I don't need to  
be the center of everything.

FADE TO BLACK