

TITLE CARD:

"TIME IS A MATTER OF FACT. AND IT'S GONE AND IT WILL NEVER COME BACK."--Daniel Johnston

Ext. Morning Brook Institute Daytime

We slowly glide up a meticulously maintained patch of lawn to the Institute's main building. The building is a classic east coast old-world example with ivy climbing the stone walls. But there are thick metal gates over the windows. Voiceover begins as the camera stalks up the lawn and then pushes in through a window to find NIAL GENET, wearing a bathrobe, sitting in a chair and reading.

NIAL:
(v.o.)

Before I died, I was a DEA agent. Now I'm in the same institute my mother was. Some days it's hard to see the goal line. I could explain to you what I know, if you have the time. But then, time...it's so damn subjective. You always have less of it than you think and maybe, it could be and you don't even realize it, time isn't a closed box. And time isn't a loop. If you change one thing, you change the world and it all remains the same.

NIAL shuts the book and places it on a small table beside his recliner. We linger on the book, A Practical Guide to Time Travel and Understanding the Universe. There is the cadenced jingling of change as an orderly, TERRY PRATCHETT, approaches NIAL'S vicinity. We hear it stop. A key into a lock, the squeal of a metal door opening. The jingling resumes as the camera continues on NIAL'S face, staring out the window.

TERRY:
(o.s.)

You looking for something out there, Nial?

NIAL does not respond.

We start on TERRY'S shoes and then gliding up his side, past his clinching fists, to his face.

TERRY:

You fucking stink, man. Did you take a shit and roll in it?

NIAL does not respond and TERRY cautiously moves in on him. TERRY grabs NIAL'S face and yanks it toward him.

TERRY:

Do I have to hose you down? Holy shit, you did shit yourself, didn't you?

NIAL continues his silence.

TERRY:

You've got a long eye on you, you know that? If I was in this place: Free cable tv, clean sheets every day, full medical staff, three hots per, and not having to lift a damn finger for it... Okay. It's, look, you don't, you can't sit around here smelling like shit. So you go take a shower right now while you've still got teeth. You get me?

He releases NIAL'S face and waits for a second. When NIAL makes no attempt to stand, TERRY pinches him hard where his neck meets the shoulder. NIAL lunges away from him, tumbling onto the floor and knocking the table over. The noise spooks TERRY and he glances around nervously to see if anyone heard. He closes in on NIAL, clinching his fists again as he walks, but he halts when he sees the book NIAL was reading. He stops and picks it up.

TERRY:

What the holy fuck is this now? You know you're not allowed to read books like this.

TERRY opens it and begins to randomly tear out pages. He tears the pages into smaller pieces and then drops the handfuls into a trashcan. He gives NIAL the smile of a bully who knows he's dominating effectively and says:

There. Sanitized for your protection.

We hear the door swinging open again and TERRY turns to face the intruder. It is NURSE SLOUGH, a young nurse.

SLOUGH:

What is going on here?

TERRY:

I think you over-medicated him. He shit himself, so I tell him he needs a shower and then he keels over standing up.

SLOUGH knows that TERRY is a bully but he's always been smart enough to keep his aggression in check around the rest of the Institute's staff. All of the patients have been too proud to inform on TERRY and NIAL is no exception.

SLOUGH:

I'll take him.

She helps NIAL stand and he quivers a bit with adrenaline and embarrassment.

SLOUGH:

Did you have an accident, Nial?

TERRY:

He just fell over. I never touched him.

SLOUGH:

I was referring to the defecation. I have him, Mr. Pratchett, you may go.

TITLE CARD:

2006

Int. Long's Office Daytime

Establishing shots of LONG'S office at the DEA. A thick

Rolodex, a nameplate on the desk, children's crayon drawings on the wall behind him as well as commendations and diplomas. One of the crayon sketches features a clock that stands at full midnight, but the 12 replaced with the words "We love our daddy." LONG is a heavy-set man, balding, middle-management type. NIAL sits in a chair opposite his desk, reading a bullet point summary of his report.

NIAL:

Subject Blackfoot continues to lead the group. Subject Simmons has gone missing, Blackfoot claims he was arrested in a related matter.

LONG:

Any clue what?

NIAL:

Not a drug charge, I'm assuming robbery.

LONG:

Locals only?

NIAL:

Robbery or burglary.

LONG:

Date specified?

NIAL:

Just sometime the week before.

LONG:

We'll check the records. He could be the one to turn if he's got a rap hanging over him. You still think Blackfoot's the key?

NIAL:

He knows more than the others.

LONG:

You getting close to him?

NIAL:

It's like smiling while getting a beating. Whole thing makes me sick, propping up a psycho like that. Fucking sycophant to him.

LONG:

You ever worry that you won't get there? Right time, I mean.

NIAL:

It's always worked before so I don't go looking the gift horse in the mouth.

LONG puts his hands behind his head and slowly turns away.

LONG:

There's someone I want you to bring in on this. I worked with him at the Bureau.

NIAL:

I haven't had a partner since-

LONG:

Not a partner. Completely unrelated. He needs what we've got here before we trace the source.

Int. A Murder Scene Daytime

The shades are drawn in this beaten little room. The darkness is punctuated by the flashing of cameras as the police photograph the scene. The body on the bed is face down, its ankles and wrists connected by a length of wire. An officer stands at the door of the room. Inside are forensics crew, a homicide detective, a medical examiner,

and GRAYS. AARON GRAYS is near 50, carefully dressed, very proper. He has a look of carrying the pain of dozens in his heart. GRAYS looks through the books on a bookshelf.

MEDICAL EXAMINER:

We've got algor mortis, rigor mortis, livor mortis. Took the body longer to cool because of the heat rising from the floors below, that also explains the smell. I'd say over 24 hours.

HOMICIDE DETECTIVE:

What do you say, Grays? This boy one of yours?

GRAYS slides a copy of Gravity's Rainbow by Thomas Pynchon back into its slot on the bookshelf.

GRAYS:

No.

HOMICIDE DETECTIVE:

What do you suppose happened?

GRAYS:

A murder. And before that, torture.

NIAL enters the room after conferring with the officer at the door. He addresses the homicide detective.

NIAL:

Special agent Grays?

The homicide detective points.

NIAL:

Nial Genet, DEA.

HOMICIDE DETECTIVE:

DEA? This is drug-related?

Int. NIAL'S car Daytime

GRAYS and NIAL drive to the DEA office.

GRAYS:

Agent Genet, I don't care for b.s. I don't care to speak it, don't care to hear it. So I hope you won't be offended when I say my guy isn't a druggie and I'm not interested in pooling resources. I have my method and I don't need a partner to-

NIAL:

No partners. My work has nothing to do with yours.

GRAYS is surprised.

GRAYS:

I don't understand.

NIAL:

Hank Long is my boss. He wants to help you.

GRAYS:

Hank Long? I haven't seen him in over ten years. Haven't thought of him either. But even so, I do not require or appreciate any outside help.

NIAL continues driving.

Int. The DEA Office Daytime

NIAL walks GRAYS to LONG'S office. In the following dialogue, GRAYS is short with NIAL, temperamental.

NIAL:

You married?

GRAYS:

Not anymore.

NIAL:

Any kids?

GRAYS:

None.

NIAL:

Do you have any hobbies?

GRAYS:

No.

NIAL:

You don't like being asked questions, do you?

GRAYS:

I don't like being pulled away from my work.

NIAL:

I thought the stiff back there wasn't your guy's?

GRAYS:

My investigation is always active.

NIAL:

So you do have a hobby. Working unsolved homicides from thirty years ago.

They arrive at LONG'S office. The door is open, LONG hunched over paperwork on his desk. NIAL knocks and LONG looks up. His face works itself into a smile.

LONG:

Grays. Good to see you. What's it been, ten years?

GRAYS:

Twelve.

LONG:

That's right. How's Suzie?

GRAYS:

She left me two years ago.

NIAL:

I'll get out of your hair, I'm sure you have catching up to do.

LONG:

No, you should stay. You're the only one that's used it, you can explain it if he has questions.

GRAYS:

Used what?

LONG:

Please, sit.

GRAYS seats himself. NIAL remains near the door, leaning against a small desk in front of a bookshelf, idly picking at the wood finish.

LONG:

What I'm about to tell you doesn't leave this room, okay?

GRAYS:

Speak.

LONG:

I'm serious. This is practically classified information.

GRAYS:

Do you think I've made friends since the last time we saw each other?

LONG grins.

LONG:

No, you haven't changed a bit.

He clears his desk absentmindedly.

LONG:

We have been tracking a substance. We call it Leap. We've analyzed it and still don't know exactly how it works. Listen, Grays, this is something that you need to do.

GRAYS:

Do? Do what?

LONG:

Take Leap.

GRAYS:

The DEA wants me to take drugs?

LONG:

This isn't a drug that gets you high, not exactly. Leap causes a sort of time displacement.

GRAYS:
(Bewildered)

Time?

LONG:

Its initial effect is somewhat like mescaline. You have brief visual hallucinations, a heightened sense of oneness with the earth, doors of perception open and then...

NIAL:

Leap.

LONG:

Yes, leap. You jump to another place in time.

GRAYS:

I'd say you're putting me on but I can't imagine you'd pull me in here after twelve years to play a joke on me.

LONG:

Oh, Leap is no joke, Grays. And I know you're going to take it because it needs to be done for your investigation.

GRAYS:

You're saying you think I can take this drug and catch my guy?

LONG:

No, I know you will use this drug because you already have.

GRAYS:

I don't understand.

LONG:

Nial, can you give him a rundown?

NIAL:

So far we've traced this drug back to a cell of users in 1976. For the last four months, I've taken it every other day. Duration is about 24 hours. You're there, you're back the next day. There's no warning, you just...fade out. You come to like you just woke up, headache and blurred vision. You're still wearing whatever you had on. And then it reverses itself and you start all over in present time.

GRAYS:

And what is the point?

NIAL:

The point is to track the source and stop production before it spreads. If this gets out-

GRAYS:

No, I mean what is the point of taking the drug? If it doesn't get you high-

LONG:

Come on, Grays, you never wanted to be somewhere else in time? Save Lincoln or Kennedy? Maybe warn someone about 9/11?

GRAYS:

If I did any of that, this present would cease to exist as it is, wouldn't it?

NIAL:

We're getting ahead of ourselves. I've studied a lot of theoretical physics about time travel, so-

GRAYS:

I've read Slaughterhouse Five and the idea doesn't sit well with me. Why haven't I heard about this before? Why do you come to me now? You said you've been using it for four months, you've done lab tests and haven't even cracked it yet, that's at least another six

months. Why is now the right time to approach me about this?

LONG:

I can't answer that. But your math is too pessimistic, we've had access to the drug since before I got here.

GRAYS:

Well why didn't someone help me then? I've been on this case 15, 16 years now and-

LONG:

You were helped. You were given the list weren't you? This case didn't fall in your lap, someone wanted you to work it.

GRAYS:

And all I've had is my intuition on this, the notes that the original agents left me. I see special meanings in there, that's the only reason they never reassigned the case.

LONG:

That's not intuition. Those clues were placed there by you.

GRAYS:

Come again?

LONG:

Why do you think you see the details no one else saw? You're going to use this drug and go back and-

GRAYS:

Are you saying I worked these cases as they happened?

LONG:

Yes. And you left yourself hidden clues in the notes so that you could do your work later. And who do you think arranged for this case to go to you?

GRAYS:

This is- I can't-

LONG:

It's not a hard choice, Grays. You want to solve this case, imagine doing it without the clues you've seen.

GRAYS:
(Turning to NIAL)

Is this for real?

Cut to:

Int. Morning Brook Institute Daytime

NIAL looks up from his book, the torn pages taped together.

NIAL:

What?

Reverse to BEATRICE, a frazzled women of older age.

BEATRICE:

If this is not real, if this is all a dream, it is conceivable that I would not be able to wake myself up. Perhaps a coma dream.

(Beat)

How would you make yourself wake up?

NIAL:

Why do you think this isn't real?

BEATRICE:

I am not a good Catholic, Nial.

NIAL:

Sure you are. Why would you say that?

BEATRICE:

Because if I was a good Catholic, I'd have a child.

It sits between them.

BEATRICE:

I thought if I didn't have the child, I would keep the father's love. But that love evaporated and I now realize that I would always have the child's love. It makes you want to turn back time, if that were possible.

(Beat)

I dream that I am free again. I drive to the grocery store or walk down the street to buy stamps at the post office. And I like that because it's the only time I'm free to do those things. And while I dream, I think it is real. When I stop thinking that it is real, that is when I will know this is for real. Until then, there's always the chance I could wake up from this.

A voice suddenly whispers to BEATRICE from behind, startling both of them. It is TERRY PRATCHETT.

BEATRICE:

If you traveled back in time, your hairstyle might be current again.

BEATRICE instinctively begins to scurry away from him but PRATCHETT grabs her wrist.

TERRY:

My sources tell me you've been talking out of school. You know what happens to the naughty girl that talks out of school?

BEATRICE is struggling to get away.

TERRY:

She gets a whipping in front of the whole class.

Cut to:

TITLE CARD:

1976

Int. The dope den Nighttime

NIAL is sunk into a beanbag chair. GREG is the most lucid, cooking up a shot and talking. WAYNE and MAX are nodding out.

GREG:
(o.s.)

Grass smokers are a whole different class of user. You take what we do, we pay for our shit and get the hell out of there. These potheads want to talk all night. And they buy a ten sack and expect you to listen to them for hours. Thing about potheads, they don't just want to get high. They can't enjoy it unless they get EVERYONE high with them. You ever get one of these WASPs getting high with you? You ever done that?

NIAL:

What do you mean WASPs?

GREG:

Well if you had one, you'd know it. You get these names come up, Wellington? Or a hyphenate, a Smith-Johnson?

NIAL:

I don't think so.

GREG:

Well you would know. You would know, trust me.

GREG injects himself and then sinks back onto the floor.

SHEP BLACKFOOT, a muscular Native American, enters the room from the kitchen. He takes up the needle from GREG and looks around the room. He settles on NIAL.

SHEP:

Gatlin. You need another shot.

NIAL:

No, I'm still nodding.

SHEP:

You're coming down, I can tell. Don't worry, I'll give you the perfect bump to stay up there.

NIAL:

I'd rather not, I don't want to do too much, it's dangerous.

SHEP:

Come on, we're playing trust games tonight. You trust me don't you?

NIAL:

Sure I do, Shep.

SHEP:

I've never given anyone an OD before, I can spot the right amount by eye.

GREG:

He can smell it.

SHEP:

That's right, I can smell it with my mind's eye. Give me your arm.

NIAL appears dubious, obviously concerned for his safety.

Shep:
(Forcefully)

I said give me your arm, Gatlin.

The apartment door bursts open and VANESSA SEGAL and SLIM tumble in, laughing wildly. SLIM has his arm around VANESSA. They do not pick up the tension in the room.

VANESSA:

Oh my god, Shep, you won't believe it!

SLIM:

It's entirely unbelievable but we saw it!

VANESSA:

Glenda was driving us around, going to meet Blackie to buy some, and we're smoking a joint and she's drunk.

SLIM:

Completely shit-faced! She couldn't stay in the lane!

VANESSA:

So of course we got pulled over.

SLIM:

And she's freaking out because she has a warrant for jumping bail.

VANESSA:

And doesn't even realize she's still smoking the joint when the cop gets to the window.

SLIM:

She can only think of that damn warrant!

VANESSA:

And she posed under a fake name for that skin mag Jackie started.

SLIM:

You know that stroke book?

VANESSA:

So she tried to use that as ID for the cop!

SLIM and VANESSA are falling over with laughter. Without warning, SHEP backhands her viciously. She flies into the wall and collapses. SLIM retreats from the area immediately, nearly cowering.

SHEP:

I don't want to see other guys touching you, you fucking cunt!

The whole room is silent, impossibly tense.

VANESSA:

(bleeding from the nose and disoriented)

Nothing would ever happen, Shep. I love you. I love you.

SHEP holds the needle like a knife and begins advancing on her. TRAVIS suddenly enters through the door. He picks up the tension and defuses it by saying:

Shep! The security guards at Rawling's are on strike. It's wide open to boost shit.

This freezes SHEP. You can see the gears turning as he decides whether to inflict pain or feed his addiction. It's not a tough choice.

SHEP:

I'll get my coat.

He strides past VANESSA, making sure to give her a kick in

the ribs as he passes. He snatches a beaten old army coat off a hook and exits with TRAVIS. The room is still tense, everyone unsure what to do. WAYNE finally breaks it by standing up and saying:

I'll cook you a shot, Vanessa.

VANESSA:
(In tears, distraught)

I don't know why I do it. I don't know why I make him angry.

No one says anything.

FADE OUT

TITLE CARD:

2006

Int. A murder scene Daytime

GRAYS is scanning the bookcase while MEGGS, a homicide detective, argues with him.

MEGGS:

There's no god damn reason for you to be here. You don't have jurisdiction. This isn't a damn serial case, Grays. We have an abusive boyfriend, arguing all night, he vanishes, and the neighbor calls it in. There's probably not even premeditation here. It's a domestic fight that led to death, it's our jurisdiction.

GRAYS has found a copy of The Stranger by Camus. He does not even remove it, his finger merely stops on it. He turns and walks to the victim. Producing a small pair of tweezers, he opens the mouth and extracts a small scrap of paper. He looks at it. It says: EXECUTION. He turns to MEGGS and says:

Here's my fucking jurisdiction.

Int. Gray's desk Nighttime

The desk is located in the middle of rows of desks in the FBI field office. The desk is cluttered with files and pictures of victims. NIAL sits on the corner of the desk while GRAYS goes through the most recent file.

NIAL:

Why do you still go through the old files you've seen a thousand times? Doesn't it make you sick?

GRAYS:

Every damn day. But it's my ritual. He's got his, I've got mine.

NIAL:

What do you see when you look?

GRAYS:

Untold pain. And a highly intelligent predator with no discernible pattern as to how he chooses his victims.

NIAL:

Where do you start with a serial killer?

GRAYS:

The first thing I did was consult one of the profilers to get an estimate on his age. They said 25 to 35 for the first murder. I went back twenty years from there and worked up to ten, looking through arson records from youthful offenders.

NIAL:

Why?

GRAYS:

Most serial killers abuse animals and start fires for fun when they're teenagers. It's a way to get the thrill they need before they actually kill. I narrowed

it down to forty suspects in this area and interviewed all the ones we could find. I was able to rule all of them out.

NIAL:

What was the next step?

GRAYS:

You really want to hear the details?

(Beat)

Ten percent of all deaths in this country are caused by homicide. That's over 1.8 million per year. Of those, roughly one of 10,000 is performed by a serial killer. They have patterns and that is how they are caught. This case is difficult because there's almost nothing linking the victims. They are of different races, different ages, different occupations and backgrounds. About all they share right now is the geographical location, all these murders have happened within a ten mile radius. Another unusual feature is that they were all born around the same time, more evidence that my guy is that age. My guy is methodical, highly intelligent-

NIAL points to the photos on GRAYS' desk.

NIAL:

He's a fucking nut. He gets off on killing people and he does it randomly. People think druggies are bad news, at least they have a clear motive for their crimes. That's why I never did homicide.

GRAYS:

It's easy to say he's some sick freak. It's comforting to think no one could be compelled to kill except by madness. I have to assume there's a purpose in these crimes, that he is following a plan. I can rule out crimes of passion immediately, his work is too structured for that. This guy knows what he's doing and he's leaving me clues that could catch him. And that is why I look at these files every day. Because there's a message here, from him to me.

NIAL:

I have a hard time believe this guy is leaving clues for you to find him. It just doesn't make sense to me that-

GRAYS:

It doesn't have to make sense to you. He is not looking to turn himself in. It's part of what gets him off. He proves himself a genius if he can give us pieces necessary to catch him and still remain at large. That is where his thrill is, not just in the killing. Things are ramping up now. I think he's reaching out more.

GRAYS' phone rings. He calmly places the folder in a drawer of his desk and then answers it.

Int. A murder scene Nighttime

GRAYS and NIAL are the first to arrive since the patrolman called it in.

GRAYS:

You stay out here. I'll know in thirty seconds.

GRAYS walks to the bookshelf, not even checking the victim, and scans. He finds The Stranger and calls for the patrolman to get a forensics team.

PATROLMAN:

Don't you want to see the tape?

GRAYS looks at the victim and finds a videotape in his hand.

Int. FBI conference room Late night

GRAYS and NIAL watch the video, again and again. It shows a smiling woman, MARY THERESE BROWN, laughing and trying to hide her face. The setting is a small brownstone-style home. The rooms are lit brightly and traffic can be heard from outside. The walls are crumbling. It is clearly not

the murder scene they have just left. A male voice off-camera jokes with MARY, gives her instructions.

MALE VOICE:

Do a little dance, kitten.

MARY:

Stop it! Our children could see this someday!

MALE VOICE:

Teach them to dance.

MARY:

Put that down, I feel stupid.

MALE VOICE:

Take your top off.

MARY rolls her eyes and giggles. The tape suddenly breaks up and switches to a rather different scene. Now the lighting is dim, intimidating with its many shadows. The camera focuses on the window for several seconds, nude branches visible beyond it. GRAYS writes something in a little notebook. There is the sound of terrified sobbing. The camera jerks a bit and then is clearly attached to a tripod, ending the jerkiness. The tripod is twisted and turned to focus on MARY, now bound and gagged on a bare mattress.

NIAL:

So if she's not the victim at our scene, and you don't have her in your files-

GRAYS:

Please.

NIAL:

You'd think if they can afford a video camera, they

could buy a frame for the bed instead of mattresses on the-

GRAYS:

Nial, please.

A male figure steps from behind the camera and presents a rolled up knife-carrier, its pockets full of blades. He lays this at the head of the bed, in MARY'S line of sight. She sobs harder when she sees them. The figure produces a needle and goes to work shooting her up.

NIAL:

I don't get it. Is he giving her a sedative? Something to help her through the torture?

GRAYS:

Doubt it. He wants to dominate, he wants her aware that she is powerless. I'd guess it's speed. Something to fuel the adrenaline, make her even more aware.

NIAL:

God, that's fucking sick.

He stands and starts to walk away.

NIAL:

I can't watch this shit again.

GRAYS has rewound a bit and freezes it on a frame of the window.

GRAYS:

This might be what he intended us to see.

NIAL turns back. GRAYS picks up the phone and dials an extension.

GRAYS:

It's Grays. What's the story on the analysis?

Int. FBI film lab Late night

GRAYS and NIAL are consulting the expert, BRAD, in the lab. There are several flat-panel monitors set up around the room, each showing separate frames of the video.

BRAD:

We have a 2001 Handycam, Maxell brand tape. It's two separate sessions piggybacked. First one is nothing, I think. I could give you a rundown but-

GRAYS:

Just tell us what you've learned.

BRAD:

Internal clock is fried. It skips randomly. Frame 5205: We see a hand here, in a glove. Then here, 5899: Camera dips to show the shadow. You can recreate the light setting and measure un-sub's height. Here's what I think you're really looking for though. Frame 4783: Looking out the window, right? But we clean it up, invert the colors, and there you go: A solid quarter face. Just looking at this suggests the light is from a lamp that had been knocked over on the floor behind the camera's position. See here?

(Regular frame)

Just blurs. But here?

(Inverted colors)

Quarter face. Suspect is clean-shaven, no visible scars or tattoos on lower face or neck. Thin lips and nose like a Greek statue. Aside from that, there are no more clues that we can see.

GRAYS studies the frame carefully. BRAD leans a bit closer.

BRAD:

Grays, we've never worked together before but we hear lots of rumors in here. Is it true? The words? He cuts words out of a book and leaves it in the victim's

mouth?

GRAYS:
(still absorbed in thought)

Mmmm.

BRAD:

What book?

GRAYS does not respond so NIAL fills in.

NIAL:

The Stranger.

BRAD:

How do you figure that out? Is it like from page one onward or-

GRAYS:

No. The words are mixed up. They've never been in the right order. Word from the end of a sentence, word from the beginning, word from the middle, all mixed up like that. Haven't figured out why, but that's what he does. Can you guys clean this up anymore? Can you lighten or do a fade or, I don't know what you guys do, can you get me a full face? Even just a profile?

BRAD:

Nah, can't do it. This is as clean as it gets. Like I said, lamp on the floor, it's like holding a flashlight under your chin, it only lights up right there.

GRAYS:

Thanks.

A close up of the video, the camera staring out the window.

TITLE CARD:

1976

Ext. Fire escape of the drug den Late afternoon

GREG and NIAL are making wallets out of duct tape while WAYNE and MAX sit on the railing, idly conversing.

WAYNE:

So a few years ago, this girl's doing the Fountain of You with me. That's when you sit on her face for a rim job while you jerk it and cum all over her tits. And it's like 4 PM because her mom will be home soon and-

MAX:

What did her mom do?

WAYNE:

She was a shoe salesman to fucking centipedes, what the fuck do I know? Anyway, it was almost 4 and that meant she'd be home soon and-

MAX:

She lived with her mom?

WAYNE:

No, her mom just made regular surprise visits at 4 PM every day.

MAX:

If she was a shoe salesman, do you think she could get me a deal on some shoes?

WAYNE:

What the fucking hell?! Nial!

NIAL:

He's just trying to be a part of your story, indulge him.

WAYNE begins packing his cigarettes very loudly.

WAYNE:

Anyway, she caught us and I asked her to join in.

GREG:

Wildly inappropriate. You know, Wayne, your ability to fantasize is only overshadowed by your ability to exaggerate something that isn't even true.

SHEP sticks his head into the scene from the window, disheveled and clearly not amused.

SHEP:

Wayne, I can hear you packing your cigarettes in fucking China.

WAYNE:

I like my cigarettes how I like my women. Crushed into a little stick at the feet.

SHEP:

If you pack them again, I'm taking your thumbs.

WAYNE:

That's fascism!

SHEP:

You know, we had a guy like you in Wikkipau. Always joking, always the center of attention.

WAYNE begins simulating masturbation with a sly grin on his face.

SHEP:

Crossed a couple Latinos to win favor with the guards. They lit him on fire after spiking his milk. Bastard

was only awake enough to know that he was burning.

WAYNE lights a cigarette.

GREG:

Well, you know what they say: Teach a man to make fire and he'll be warm for a little bit; set him on fire and he'll be warm the rest of his life.

WAYNE:

Last night I'm scamming up at Bodrick's cuz the supposed bouncer has a supposed connection that can get some supposed new stuff nobody's supposedly heard of before. And that band Vaginal Discharge is playing.

SHEP:

They're a bunch of queers.

WAYNE:

Yeah, but that singer, she's fucking BAM! Right? You know. Nial knows what I'm saying.

NIAL:

I'd give her some throat lessons, if you know what I mean.

WAYNE:

I'd fuck her onstage, if you know what I mean.

GREG:

Wayne, we *always* know what you mean.

WAYNE:

Anyway, this limo pulls up and guess who's in it.

MAX:

Lana Turner?

WAYNE:

No, it was- Lana Turner?! What the hell are you on? Seriously, I want some. Do you think this is 1956 or something?

MAX:

No, because I was born in 1957.

There is a pause of disbelief at this absurdity. WAYNE recovers and plows onward.

WAYNE:

Melody Fresh, the porn star! We smoke a joint, do some blow, eat pizza, have champagne, I fuck her and her manager gives me two hundred bucks.

GREG:

Wayne, you are so full of shit.

WAYNE:

Well, I seem to remember someone has three girlfriends-

GREG:

That's the oldest fucking lie there is.

WAYNE:

-who you haven't met because they live in Canada.

WAYNE lays down on the fire escape and stares up at the sky.

WAYNE:

When I was a kid, I'd scoop the cream filling out of a whole bag of Oreos and make it into a big ball and I'd put that in the freezer for a couple days. And then I'd take three bites and pass out.

NIAL:

What was the drug?

WAYNE:

Huh?

NIAL:

You said the bouncer at the club could get a new drug nobody's heard of before. What is it?

SHEP:

You've got a mind like a camera, don't you? You're always remembering every little thing we do.

NIAL:

No, it's just...I'm curious. I'm always looking to try new stuff. What is this drug?

GREG:

It's nothing. He made it up, he made the whole thing up.

WAYNE:

You might think I'm crazy and shit, but you don't know. You don't know, if there's more than one universe, I'm right in one of them. You don't know.

SHEP:

If the Saturday night sewing circle is finished, I need help cutting this stuff. You guys work for me, remember?

TITLE CARD:

2006

Int. GRAY'S desk Daybreak

NIAL and GRAYS are sharing shots from a bottle of bourbon

that GRAYS keeps in his desk. They are serious, not drunk, not playful.

GRAYS:

I know the clue is right there in front of us, waiting. It's usually just one thing. One thing in sharper focus than the rest. But it's also in the background. It's some detail too small for us to see in the big picture. I go piece by piece. I analyze every nail fragment, every defensive wound, scraps of carpet fiber.

NIAL:

And where has it gotten you? Sixteen years and you're still on the same guy.

From outside, we hear a car's stereo blasting, followed quickly by calls for quiet. Eventually, we hear glass shattering and then tires screeching with yelling after it to "come back and take it like a man".

NIAL:

It's like they let the crazies out on the street now, isn't it? Like they just gave up and let them go free.
(Beat)
Ever bother you?

GRAYS:

Everything bothers me. I keep it bottled up, keep it locked here-
(he sticks his thumb into the point where his throat meets the sternum)
-right here. Keep it in the heart and it will eat you alive. Let it go to your brain and you retreat to a small farm for the rest of your life. I keep it here.

NIAL:

What's that do for you?

GRAYS:

Makes me feel like I'm drowning.

NIAL:
(sarcastic)

That sounds pleasant.

GRAYS:

If you're drowning, you keep trying to get out of the water. It's what keeps me going.

Throughout following monologue, GRAYS is carefully unrolling a large sheet of paper that has a bizarre flow chart on it. This is his record of what words from The Stranger have been used, along with the dates of each victim's death.

NIAL:

I shouldn't have said that, the crazies. I shouldn't call them that. My mom, she was...oh Christ, sometimes I forget about my mother. She was a paranoid psychotic, she was convinced she had survived her own death, if you can figure out how that works, and she started cutting herself to, I guess, know she was still alive or because it was a way to control pain or whatever it is they say cutting means. My dad had to put her in an institute and I had to go visit her twice a month and it was just creepy. She went so early in my life that I never connected her with being my mother, it was like she was an aunt that I rarely saw or-

GRAYS:

Will you be quiet, please?

NIAL:

Oh, I'm sorry. I thought we'd had a moment, I thought we were coming out of our shells a little bit like-

GRAYS is suddenly alert, aware that he may have something.

GRAYS:

Turn on the video again.

NIAL:

We've seen it.

GRAYS:

One more time, I just want to check one thing.

NIAL hits play and the tv begins to broadcast the footage from the start.

NIAL:

There's nothing you can do. Whoever this girl is, she's already dead and we'll find her soon enough. You can't bring her back, Grays. You can't bring her back.

GRAYS:

There! Pause it.

NIAL pauses the tape. It is on that shot of the window again. NIAL still does not see it. GRAYS looks to the office's window.

GRAYS:

Sun's coming up. Look out that window and tell me what you see.

NIAL complies, walks to the window and peers out the blinds.

GRAYS:

What do you see?

NIAL:

A homeless man pissing in what I can only hope is an abandoned hatchback. Buildings. A taxi. Some small trees-

GRAYS:

What do the trees look like?

NIAL:

Bark and leaves.

GRAYS:

Leaves?

NIAL:

Yeah, it's June, of course there are leaves. Why are you-

He turns back and stares at the television screen. There are no leaves on the trees visible outside that window.

NIAL:

What the-

GRAYS:

He is doing The Stranger in order.

NIAL:

No, no, you said there was no pattern. He mixes it up, he-

GRAYS:

No pattern standing still. No pattern if you're looking at it as time going forward.

NIAL:

Time?

GRAYS:

He's using your little drug. Your case and mine are connected. We haven't found this body because he hasn't killed her yet in our time.

NIAL:

No fucking way.

GRAYS:

We're going to see Long. I'm ready to try this little drug and see what happens.

BLACK SCREEN

O.S. a fly buzzes. You hear it bob and weave, maneuvering deftly. You hear a ping pong game in progress and the sound of a television. Fade in on NIAL in the institute. Unshaven, clad in pajamas and a bathrobe. He is seated in a recliner, as usual. The fly lands on his forehead and crawls along his hairline. BEATRICE sits in a rocking chair to his right, flipping through a TV Guide.

BEATRICE:

They never give it to us before the week, it's always the week after, isn't it?

(Beat)

I'm reading the past every week, finding things I would have liked to see had I known they were coming on.

She tosses the TV Guide onto a small table.

BEATRICE:

Does no good. Can't turn back time.

TWO VOICES fade in, arguing back and forth. One voice argues that NIAL is dead while the other responds that he clearly is not. The fly lights off from NIAL. The television is broadcasting a soap opera. The ping pong game is heating up, voices chattering about the play, offering encouragement, cursing the serves and returns.

BEATRICE:

This show is called Far Rockaway. It's about New Yorkers that own beach houses. Do you like the beach, Nial?

We're on the ping pong match, the tension rising in the

close match. Camera on the television. Characters BRI and SLATER are arguing.

BRI:

It's like you've been living some other life.

SLATER:

Other life? Try thousands of them.

Throughout, the two dueling voices are growing louder and louder until NIAL leaps from the chair and shouts:

ENOUGH!!! STOP IT!!! LEAVE ME ALONE!!!

The ping pong match freezes. The only noise comes from the soap opera.

SLATER:

Can we exist in a place outside of time?

BRI:

I've built this fort to stay in. It's a time-free zone because we will never change if we stay in it. No clocks to pass the minutes, just each other.

The squeaking of the door cage as it is opened. TERRY waltzes in, nonchalant, as though bored with his duties.

TERRY:

What's the problem in here?

He scans the room, looking for trouble. He lingers on the ping pong players. He motions for them to continue playing but they do not. He finally notices NIAL standing, trembling.

TERRY:

Nial, are you going to give me another headache?

BEATRICE:

He's fine. He just got a little upset by something he saw on tv.

TERRY looks up to the soap opera.

BRI:

There will be no pictures to mark the way. It's a long, hard road out of hell, right?

TERRY:

You people really belong in here.

NIAL sits back down in the chair and TERRY turns and leaves.

BEATRICE:

Well aren't we lucky to have him to remind us of our mental fatigues?

NIAL:

The funny thing is that his formal training is in pediatrics.

There is a silence for a second and then those in the room begin to laugh. BEATRICE wipes a tear from her eye, giggling throughout. The ping pong game continues.

FADE OUT

TITLE CARD:

2006

Int. DEA Leap room Daytime

The room is reinforced concrete, no windows. The fluorescent bulb buzzes and flickers. GRAYS is being fed the drug through an intravenous tube. He is dressed in a suit. He appears uncomfortable. A TECHNICIAN oversees the procedure. NIAL sits on the opposite end of the table.

GRAYS:

What exactly is going to happen? Is it like falling asleep or...?

NIAL:

No no, you're wide awake the whole time. You'll feel yourself start to fade, just sort of flicker out. It feels a bit like being socked in the gut but you get your wind back in just a second.

GRAYS:

And what are the side effects? What if something goes wrong?

NIAL:

The only side effect we've seen so far is that if you leap too much, say five days in one week, you'll begin to experience a confusion. Your skin starts to flake off heavily. I don't know, cells regenerating or something. The confusion is like, well, have you ever been so drunk that you can't quite remember what you did the night before?

GRAYS:

More and more in the last two years.

NIAL:

It feels a lot like that.

GRAYS:

How do I control where I want to go?

NIAL:

Well, basically, you don't.

GRAYS:

I don't?

NIAL:

We don't know what force is in charge of this. It takes you where you need to go, just have faith in that.

Pan across the room. As the camera moves past NIAL'S back, it reveals that GRAYS is no longer present.

TITLE CARD:

1997

FADE IN

Ext. A cathedral Daytime

GRAYS, dressed the same, rounds the block and spots the cathedral. He enters it.

Int. Cathedral Daytime

GRAYS stalks the church, approaching the door to the rectory. He spots a familiar form praying at one of the pews near the front. He pauses, not sure what to do. SUZIE GRAYS crosses herself and then looks up. She catches sight of GRAYS and smiles.

SUZIE:

You do make your own time, don't you?

GRAYS:

Time is only at your disposal when there's too much of it, wouldn't you say?

SUZIE:

I can't imagine you're out of things to do.

GRAYS:

You always had the prettiest green eyes I ever saw.

SUZIE:

They're brown.

GRAYS:

And even more beautiful for that.

(Beat)

Is it a Sunday and I don't know?

SUZIE:

I like coming on Thursdays. It's more intimate.

(Beat)

Have you come to tell me it's over? You caught the guy and he's ready to sit in a safe deposit box the rest of his life?

GRAYS:

I think I'm making some considerable progress.

SUZIE:

Can't be that good, you look like your hair's gone more gray, just since last night. Have you got time to walk me home?

GRAYS:

Just let me check in with the Father. I have a couple questions I think he can help me with.

SUZIE walks from the pew and begins to light a candle while GRAYS knocks on the door to the rectory. FATHER SLATER ushers him inside.

Int. SLATER'S office Daytime

GRAYS:

Father, I'm Special Agent Grays of the FBI. I have a bit of a math question that I can only submit to a skilled theologian. Do you think you could help me?

SLATER:

I went into the priesthood to avoid math problems.

They share a laugh.

GRAYS:

The accepted chronology is that Jesus was born in 0 B.C, lived for 33 years, and then time started A.D., correct?

SLATER:

You're concerned that there's 33 years missing there?

GRAYS:

How many years, right now, has it been since Jesus' death? Without arguing historical facts beyond a certainty, of course, just accepting the standard thinking as, well, gospel.

SLATER:

It's 1997, so in the standard thinking, it's 1,997 years.

GRAYS writes this down in his notebook.

SLATER:

Is there anything else I can help you with, Agent Grays?

GRAYS:

That beautiful woman out there is my wife. If you could give her a little extra attention when she comes-

SLATER grins.

SLATER:

Of course.

SLATER seems to be expecting more. Gray stands and shakes his hand.

SLATER:

If that's the kind of pressure the FBI lays on you in an interrogation-

GRAYS:

We try to play with kids' gloves when it comes to the clergy.

SLATER:

And why is that?

GRAYS:

Maybe because they answer to a higher authority.

Ext. City street Daytime

GRAYS escorts SUZIE home. The day is beautiful, the color rich and intoxicating.

GRAYS:

If you could go anywhere, where would it be?

SUZIE:

The Fair Oaks Fountain in the park at 39th Street.

GRAYS:

Not just in the city. Anywhere. Anywhere in the world.

SUZIE:

I still pick the fountain. I check it every day when winter's ending, every day until the water starts flowing again. That's the day Spring starts for me. It's like everything is put on hold until then. Like time stops. And then they turn it on and birds come out and children laugh and flowers bloom. It's what I wait for, all winter long.

(Beat)
That's my place. What's yours?

GRAYS:

That first apartment we had together.

SUZIE:

You mean the roach motel on 12th?

SUZIE giggles.

GRAYS:

That was the first moment I held you in my arms, in our own apartment together, and told myself that it all meant something.

SUZIE:

What did it mean back then?

GRAYS:

(Considers for a long moment)

Suzie, I think you know there won't be a happy ending to my case. Even if I do catch this guy, I've taken on the souls of all those he's murdered. There's no way we could punish him enough, there's no way-

SUZIE:

The law isn't just for punishing, Aaron. When you catch him, you save how many others? A hundred? A dozen? Even just one? That's a life saved and nothing you ever do will be as important as that. That's why you joined the force, wasn't it?

GRAYS:

I've missed this.

SUZIE:

I don't think we've ever done this before.

GRAYS:

Well that's nostalgia at the millennium for you.
Missing something you never even had.

(Beat)

Would you be interested in stopping for a cup of
coffee?

SUZIE:

Here we are at the doorstep of the millennium and you
offer to do something that we would have done in 1931.

GRAYS:

We'll make it Starbucks, that should be millennium
enough for the gods.

SUZIE:

I like that people still get coffee. Like time stands
still while it's moving forward.

Int. A Starbucks Daytime

SUZIE stirs her coffee while GRAYS studies her hands.

SUZIE:

What brought you into that church today?

GRAYS:

I was hunting down a lead for the case.

SUZIE:

At the church?

(Beat)

Did Father Slater help at all?

GRAYS:

He did.

(Beat)

I was surprised to see you there. Oh, I forgot how delicate your hands are.

SUZIE lays her hands flat on the table, embarrassed. GRAYS reaches out and lifts one to inspect it. He slowly fingers the knuckles, slides down to the nails.

GRAYS:

Your hands were never clumsy like mine. They never touched me with anything other than love and the skin was soft and rare for that.

SUZIE:

Aaron, please-

GRAYS:

No, just let me have this moment.
(Beat)
You still believe in God, don't you?

SUZIE:

Don't you?

GRAYS:

I do when I see your hands.

SUZIE:

Great cookie, where's the fortune?
(Beat)
Don't you see it in *your* hands?

GRAYS:

My hands are ruined. Gave me a stone and a chisel, didn't say how to hold it.
(Beat)
Would you do me the honor of escorting you to dinner?

SUZIE:

What's gotten into you today?

GRAYS:

I saw an old friend I haven't seen in a very long time. Someone I try not to think about anymore.

SUZIE:

I'm not sure one day will make up for all the-

GRAYS:

It might be all we have anymore. Let's walk up to that park and look at the fountain. What about it makes it so special to you?

SUZIE:

We were sitting on the edge of that fountain when I realized that I was in love with you.

GRAYS:

Let's walk up there. I want to see it.

SUZIE:

Don't you have to get back to work?

They are in the process of standing. This question stops GRAYS in his tracks. He recovers and continues putting on his jacket.

GRAYS:

Work can wait today.

FADE OUT

CUT TO

Int. The Institute Night

BEATRICE is reading NIAL'S palm by the light of a single caged bulb in the ceiling. NIAL seems agitated, possibly

beset by the interior voices again.

BEATRICE:

You were never lucky with money. That line almost isn't there at all.

NIAL:

What would you be doing if you weren't here?

BEATRICE:

Oh, lord, if I weren't here. I guess I would be tending my garden. Talking on the phone to my grandson. It's funny how you never take the time to appreciate something like that while you've still got it. I've only been here five months and I can barely remember freedom anymore.

NIAL:

Why are you here, Beatrice?

BEATRICE:

My husband tried to kill me.

NIAL:

Shouldn't he be the one in here then?

BEATRICE:

He died three years ago. Look here, you see your life line? It's very unusual.

NIAL:

How did he try to kill you?

BEATRICE:

I was trying to change the subject. And a more apt change I can't imagine, just look at this.

NIAL:

I just see lines, like they've always been.

BEATRICE:

Yes, maybe, but you see...this line says you're already dead. Isn't that unusual?

NIAL:

Nobody lives forever.

BEATRICE:

Only lawyers and ex-husbands. But if you have crossed over to the other side...I'll find out about that.

They hear the sound of FOOTSTEPS and WHISTLING approaching. They freeze, don't say a word, stare at the door. The FOOTSTEPS stop at the door. They hold their breath. The WHISTLING resumes and the FOOTSTEPS move on.

BEATRICE:

I need you to do something for me, Nial.

NIAL:

What's that?

BEATRICE:

I need you to kill Terry Pratchett.

TITLE CARD:

2006

Black screen

GRAYS' voice reading off an incident report. Slowly fade in.

Int. Long's office Daytime

GRAYS:

Agent arrived on July 17, 1997, in vicinity of Liberty Park. Stopped at the St. Bartholomew Cathedral located there to obtain date. No murders coincide with that date, so-

LONG:

You missed that one?

GRAYS:

Yes, that's what I'm saying.

NIAL:

What'd you do?

GRAYS:

I took in a movie and treated myself to a sub from a stand that closed five years ago. And was very grateful for the opportunity.

LONG:

Oh, Christ, maybe this was all a bad idea.

GRAYS:

I disagree. I may have been slow to come around to it, but that was only because I didn't understand the reality. This is the most valuable tool ever given to me in pursuing this killer.

LONG:

Grays, this is no joke. This is still a drug, we can't vouch for its safe use if-

GRAYS:

I'll take all risks.

LONG:

Well, there are risks. I don't know if Nial told you about the confusion, the-

GRAYS:

I'll take full responsibility for my choices.

LONG:

We have a one day on, one day off rule for this stuff. So, uh,-

GRAYS:

I'll see you tomorrow morning.

Int. DEA office Daytime

GRAYS is searching for the door in the maze of cubicles. NIAL catches up with him.

NIAL:

Grays, wait up.

GRAYS does not pause but he does slow his pace.

NIAL:

What really happened? You didn't see a movie and eat a sandwich for twenty four hours. Where did you go?

GRAYS:

Just as I said, St. Bartholomew's.

NIAL:

You saw something, didn't you?

GRAYS:

I saw a year I missed out on.

NIAL:

Someone, then.

GRAYS stops and turns to face him. He considers for a second and then moves on without saying a word. We follow GRAYS as he maneuvers through the maze, finding the lobby eventually.

Int. FBI office Daytime

GRAYS desk is empty but beginning to fill with boxes of files. Eventually, GRAYS appears at the desk, lugging two more of these boxes. He lays them on the desk and this process is repeated several times.

Establishing shots, now night, of GRAYS searching through the file boxes. He finds the file he was looking for and lays it on the only open spot on the desk. He then stands and begins to lug the boxes back to their place. He returns to the desk and opens the file. Inside are pictures of SUZIE. He stares at these pictures wistfully. The phone begins to ring. GRAYS ignores it, continues to stare into the pictures. The ringing will not stop and he answers the phone.

CALLER:

I know you did your first leap today.

GRAYS is instantly more aware, leaping into action.

GRAYS:

If this is who I think it is-

CALLER:

It's my dime, I'll do the talking, Grays. I need you to quit. Because this will get ugly.

GRAYS:

You know I can't quit.

(Beat)

You're leaping too, aren't you? How long do you think you can go?

CALLER:

I already know what will happen if you don't stop. I am almost finished with what I'm doing, and you should let me finish.

GRAYS:

What are you doing?

CALLER:

What I'm doing will never be fully known. I call you as a friend, Grays. If you keep coming after me...I might have to speed up my schedule. I might have to kill even more and it will be your fault.

There is a click and then the dial tone. GRAYS springs into action, asking the office's switchboard to send up all info on the call. Then GRAYS calls NIAL.

Int. FBI office Daytime

NIAL looks over the files of GRAYS' investigation while GRAYS talks to him.

GRAYS:

All calls to the FBI are routinely traced and recorded, a matter of procedure. This trace led to-

NIAL:

A public phone, right?

GRAYS:

No, actually. A house in Broadside Park.

NIAL:

Well that's not very smart. Doesn't seem like your guy to leave a trace like that.

GRAYS:

It is if it's another piece of evidence for us to chase. You can't think of this in a black and white way, there's no smart or stupid. If he's smart enough to-

NIAL:

Move on, take it further. He's left a clue, we follow it.

GRAYS:

The house is abandoned. No power, no water, only a phone line, just activated three days ago.

NIAL:

In whose name?

GRAYS:

Aaron Grays.

NIAL:

Okay, so he's got a sense of humor.

(Beat)

How could he do that? You need I.D., you leave a paper trail.

GRAYS:

That's our ace. The account was set up over the internet. He gave a bank account under the name Charles U. Farley to do an electronic transfer, set it up under my name.

NIAL:

Chuck U. Farley, great. You subpoena the provider, right? Get info on this guy's internet habits.

GRAYS:

Yes, we'll get to that. But there's more.

NIAL:

Okay, this house is his flop house. Neighbors?

GRAYS:

Whole neighborhood's abandoned, mostly condemned. It's an industrial area now. Warehouses. One of them, half block down, has surveillance cameras.

NIAL:

Okay, what do the tapes show?

GRAYS holds up a photograph. It is grainy, too distant. We merely see a dark figure entering the abandoned house.

GRAYS:

It's my guy. He goes into the house an hour before the call, he never comes out, not by the front door.

NIAL:

He leaped again.

GRAYS:

That's right, that's what I'm going by.

NIAL:

What about the internet thing? Will they turn the records over?

GRAYS:

An internet café on the east side.

NIAL:

We've got fucking nothing. He's giving us everything except what we can use. Doesn't it get to you, the waiting?

GRAYS:

This is the job.

NIAL:

You just sit and wait for him to strike again? He could be out there killing right now. Yeah, right now. And you sit, you wait.

GRAYS:

That's what homicide is, Nial. We collect evidence, try to connect some dots, hope that someday we can see the guy in court. It's not thrilling but it is exact.

NIAL:

Fuck it, man. Let's go out and search this house ourselves. Maybe the p.o.'s missed something.

GRAYS:

No, forensics has to clear it first. We wait, we study. But we now have more to look at. You never even asked the significance of the house.

NIAL:

What house?

GRAYS:

That he called from.

(Beat)

It was where the first murder happened.

NIAL:

And what do you think that means?

GRAYS:

That he likes to come back to his old haunts. We have a new mission. We have to identify everyone that was milling around these crime scenes for the last thirty

years.

NIAL:

Oh, is that all? You call me in for back up on some fool's errand? You want me chasing your tail with you?

GRAYS pulls out a newspaper clipping. It is dated November of 1976. The headline screams DRUG DEATHS TERRORIZE CITY. The picture shows a body on a gurney being fed past the p.o.v. into an ambulance. NIAL considers it. GRAYS points and NIAL sees himself standing in the crowd. NIAL drops the clipping and then notices a color photo beneath it. He plucks it out. It shows GRAYS and SUZIE posing in front of the Seattle Space Needle, arms around each other, smiling. GRAYS snatches it from his hand and places it in a drawer. NIAL looks at the newspaper clipping again.

NIAL:

This is my cell.

GRAYS:

Then you can help me.

NIAL:

No, you don't understand. This is *my* cell. I've been living with them for the last six months, more or less. Long just said they scattered after October, most of them disappeared. He said they were just gone.

GRAYS:

He didn't know where to look.

NIAL:

Christ. The devil knows your name.

TITLE CARD:

1976

Int. The drug den Daytime

SHEP is wrestling WAYNE, easily manhandling him. NIAL watches, amused.

NIAL:

Come on, Wayne, just give up.

SHEP:

This is why there's always three guys in a shower room rape. Someone has to hold the punk down.

NIAL:

Wayne! Submit!

WAYNE:

He's got longer arms than me!

NIAL:

His arms are fine.

WAYNE:

He smells like his mother's crotch!

SHEP:

But you can do a lot with just one arm. You wanna see me tie him up with just one arm?

SHEP wraps an arm behind WAYNE'S neck, pinning his arms in between. WAYNE is completely defenseless.

WAYNE:

You'd better let go or you're really going to get hurt.

NIAL:

Wayne, you couldn't hurt him with a baseball bat.

WAYNE:

I'm warning you, Shep, I'm about to put on my game face!

SHEP:

Hey, Nial, you wanna see me cripple him using just his fingers?

WAYNE:

Leave my fingers alone! Your mom would be very angry if-

SHEP grabs two of WAYNE'S fingers and pulls back. WAYNE stops struggling immediately and says:

Okay. That's good. Let's all just calm down here.

SHEP:

You jam them further back, you've got a baby in your care. If I said roll over right now-

WAYNE instantly rolls over.

SHEP:

Easy as that. Right, Wayne?

WAYNE:

Yes, sir. Thank you for the opportunity to cry in front of my friend, sir.

SHEP:

Say you're a fag, Wayne.

NIAL:

I think you've made your point.

SHEP releases WAYNE and lights a cigarette.

WAYNE:

You're lucky you quit. You were about to get really hurt.

NIAL:

Oh, Wayne. Sleeping giant.

WAYNE:

Fuck you guys. Fuck you both!

SHEP:

(Handing WAYNE a couple dollars)

Go buy me some quinine to cut this shit.

WAYNE grabs the money and hustles out the door. SHEP produces a folding blade and begins to clean his fingernails with it.

NIAL:

Why do you pick on him? We're all friends aren't we, Shep?

SHEP:

No friends in this business.

(Beat)

Listen, I'm not picking on him. He just needs toughening. You can be dumb in this world if you're tough.

NIAL:

He's probably tougher than you think.

SHEP:

Then why'd I just humiliate him all over the apartment? But you might be right. It might be that this country's too tough. It might be that we're all a nation of thieves that take advantage of poor boys with no common sense. That might be exactly how it is. Are you gonna change it? Fuck no! All you can do is try

to teach the ones that get cheated how to defend themselves from it. Don't try to change the world, Nial. Don't try to be great. They just shoot you for that. The only thing as bad as the weak are the ones that humor the weak.

SHEP presents his clinched fists at eye level. The left has the word "LOVE" written across the knuckles. The right features "HATE".

SHEP:

I'm right-handed. Which do you think I use more?

TITLE CARD:

2006

Ext. A seedy neighborhood Daytime

Establishing shots of NIAL, in the rain, knocking on doors, asking questions. After three or four false starts, an elderly woman, welcomes him into her dilapidated house.

Ext. Seedy neighborhood Early evening

NIAL exits the dilapidated house with a bundle under his arm. His breath is heavy in the air now and leaves are falling from the trees.

Int. The BROWN murder scene Daytime

GRAYS is looking over MARY THERESE BROWN while MEGGS argues.

MEGGS:

That's two in the same week, Grays. Your killer is speeding up and he's leaving bodies in my city. Why isn't there a task force on this? Why is this hush hush? The media's going to start asking questions-

GRAYS:

Why is it that the media never asks a question until five people have been killed if it's in a low-income neighborhood? Why does one dead white girl mean more

than ten dead black ones? That's five this month, so what are the media asking? You do realize I have a bit more invested in this than the media does, don't you?

MEGGS:

(Beat)

Okay, fine. But the DA is getting heat for this and he's putting me in charge of a local task force. You can be as involved as you want, I'd prefer it if you kept your distance.

GRAYS:

Mmmm. And why's that?

MEGGS:

Because I've seen you searching for answers for sixteen years. Because I think you couldn't find your couch in the living room. Because you're a failure.

GRAYS:

I'd tell you to kiss my ass but I'd have to use both hands to find it.

(Beat)

What do you really want, Meggs? You want us to come to blows over something we agree on?

GRAYS has made his way to the bookcase and is eyeing The Stranger now.

MEGGS:

I'd actually be glad to take this away from you.

GRAYS:

Is there baby powder in the bathroom?

MEGGS:

What the fuck does that have to do with anything?

GRAYS:

(To one of the forensics)

Powder in the bathroom?

FORENSICS MALE:

No, none.

MEGGS:

What the fuck are you on about now, Grays?

GRAYS points to a small layer of powder on the bookcase near The Stranger.

GRAYS:

It's the powder inside the latex glove my guy was wearing. He took it off to handle that book and that means there might be a fingerprint we can use.

(To the FORENSICS MALE)

Get this dusted right away. Call me with the results. I'll get out of your crime scene, Meggs.

GRAYS begins to exit and then stops at the door and turns back to MEGGS.

GRAYS:

There is one thing for you to consider. I've tracked this guy over 16 years now, as you said. And I could go another sixteen if I have to. But if you take on the investigation, you've got a lot more to lose than I do. If you solve it, I'll clap you on the back and buy your boys the first round. But if you spend another sixteen years following this guy around...your career is going to go the same direction as mine has.

MEGGS:

Thanks, Grays, I'll take it the fuck under advisement.

GRAYS:

Just because I haven't won yet doesn't mean I'm a failure. Consider if you want that same black and

white view attached to your career.

GRAYS exits.

Int. FBI office Daytime

GRAYS is going over files. All around him is the buzzing of chatter, the ringing of telephones, the commotion of a busy office. A figure approaches behind him and

CUT TO:

A thick bundle of four-page newspapers lands on GRAYS' desk. GRAYS looks up to see NIAL with a grin on his face.

GRAYS:

Something tells me you found something but I don't see what.

NIAL:

Old woman, right? The widow Neiborg. She's been in that neighborhood since '62, right? Well when she was a young housewife, she ran the block's newsletter. You know one of those "get to know your neighbor"-

GRAYS:

Are you shitting me?

NIAL:

Beautiful, isn't it? She maintained that letter up till 1984 and she has announcements of every new person that moved there. She's got crime watches, descriptions of suspicious characters. It's all there, right there.

GRAYS:

It's funny how I thought nobody cared anymore.

NIAL:

Right there. I haven't even looked yet. Probably a

whole mountain of clues.

GRAYS:

Don't go thinking that we can count on outsiders too much. I'm sure this woman was very nice and-

NIAL:

Amazing cherry pie. Tea was weak.

GRAYS:

Okay, but don't start thinking of her as the messiah. How big was this neighborhood newsletter? One block? Two blocks? Ten?

NIAL:

She wasn't specific. If you must know, I don't think she's playing with a full deck.

GRAYS is leafing through the pages while NIAL talks.

NIAL:

She must have asked me eight times if I'd like her to knit me a scarf. I've got six on order now. And then her husband, well, don't you know that HE was a saint. If he hadn't gone and gotten cancer and died, she'd probably still be hating him loudly. Sometimes the best thing you can do to be remembered is to just die. And she kept asking if I heard a phone ringing.

(Beat)

Okay, I did my part. What's next? Do you look at births? New tenants? What's the thread?

GRAYS lays the stack back on his desk and looks away.

GRAYS:

Nial, I'm getting to be an old man.

NIAL:

Nonsense. You don't look a day over 78.

GRAYS:

Yes, well, I can't do the legwork I used to do. I just want to catch this guy so I can retire and live off my pension. I'll get a little place outside of town, tend to my gardening.

(Beat)

But, Nial, if I don't catch him...if this guy gets away with everything because I'm too old to chase him down...I need to take you on as an unofficial partner. I need to know what you know. If you'll help me sort this out, let me bounce ideas off you-

NIAL:

That's insane. I can't believe you're just going to give it up when we catch this guy. You're the best I've ever seen, we need guys like you.

GRAYS:

My wife needed me, Nial. I about tore her heart out with this case and I can't blame her for leaving me. If we can catch this guy...if we put the cuffs on him and see him in court...that won't bring anyone back. There's still no winner there.

NIAL:

There are winners. There's whoever you saved along the way. There's-

GRAYS:

I have my own files for you to see.

NIAL:

I didn't agree to be your partner. I helped you out, I've got my own case to work.

(Beat)

You said you never even wanted a partner.

GRAYS:

On a hunch, I called Long and went over the files from your case.

NIAL:

How is that even legal? Don't I have, I don't know, eminent domain or-

GRAYS:

Take a look at what I found.

GRAYS hands NIAL a collection of newspaper clippings. NIAL begins to look through them.

GRAYS:

My case is your case. I've found the motive.

Reverse on NIAL'S face, surprise registering.

GRAYS:

He killed your cell first. He didn't start as a serial killer, it was ritual execution. He's trying to stop the spread of that drug. He's...cornering the market on time travel.

Ext. A park Night

There is a candlelight vigil for the victims of our killer. GRAYS stands on the outer ranks, quietly observing. He is approached by PATTERSON, a short, balding reporter.

PATTERSON:

Here to do your part, Grays?

GRAYS notices him for the first time.

GRAYS:

Christ, Patterson, can a man get five minutes off the clock with you guys? My life doesn't revolve around my guy.

PATTERSON looks around the crowd.

PATTERSON:

You don't think he's here, do you? Casing the fallout?

GRAYS:

Would be pretty heartless, wouldn't it?

PATTERSON:

Why are you here?

GRAYS:

Because I do have a heart. Feeble and used up though it may be.

(Beat)

Why are you here?

PATTERSON:

Pay my respects, right?

(Beat)

What have you got?

GRAYS:

What have *you* got?

PATTERSON:

You've been going to the DEA office. You think drugs are involved?

GRAYS:

I'd rather not answer.

(and then cynically)

But I'm sure I'll read all about it tomorrow.

GRAYS begins walking away.

PATTERSON:

(after him)

It's my city too, Grays.

Int. FBI office Night

GRAYS is leafing through NEIBOLT'S newsletters but finding little of interest. He finally lays down the copy in his hands and places a hand over his eyes. He picks up the phone and dials.

SUZIE:
(on the phone)

Hello?

GRAYS:

Hey.

SUZIE:

Aaron?

GRAYS:

Yes.

(Beat)

I just dialed. I thought I would know what to say if-

There is a commotion on SUZIE'S end of the conversation.

GRAYS:

Suzie? Are you there?

SUZIE:
(talking off the phone)

It's nobody.

GRAYS:

Tell him you're talking to me.

SUZIE:
(again)

No, it's nothing. I'll be right there.

(To GRAYS now)

Do you know what time it is?

GRAYS:

It's late, I know.

SUZIE:

You can't do this, Aaron. You can't. I have a life, I have responsibilities, I have-

GRAYS:

Do you remember that day I found you in the church and we had coffee together?

SUZIE:

That was a long time ago.

GRAYS:

Just remember that. Remember all those times like that. What else was there? It didn't happen just that once, did it? I did something like that more than once, right?

SUZIE:

(sighs)

Aaron, it's late. I have to go to bed.

She hangs up. GRAYS tenderly places the phone back in its cradle and stands. He walks to the television set and turns it on. MEGGS is on the screen, holding a press conference in the daytime.

MEGGS:

It's a heinous series of crimes and the task force is working closely with the Federal Bureau of Investigations to catch this killer. We have several promising leads and are asking that if anyone knows the

man in this photograph--

(He holds up the warehouse surveillance photo)
--they should call our tips hotline. You can even make an anonymous call to that line and the tip will still be fully investigated.

(Beat)

This is a crime against our community and it will be solved with the help of the community. We have very skilled detectives and officers working this case. We'll catch him. We'll catch him, it's a matter of time. It's a mathematical certainty, this man will face justice.

GRAYS turns the television off. A voice speaks up behind him. It is DIETRICH, GRAY'S boss.

DIETRICH:

I expect you won't be joining the task force.

GRAYS is not startled. He merely turns his cold gaze on DIETRICH.

DIETRICH:

Christ, Grays, I wouldn't pick any other man in this office to handle this case. You know that. But it might be time for you to step aside.

GRAYS:

Step aside?

DIETRICH:

You came to the Bureau with higher performance ratings than any agent has ever had before. You worked exactly four cases before this one and you solved them all in under a month.

GRAYS:

I don't need my history spelled out.

DIETRICH:

This task force that Meggs is heading up. They've been put together to squeeze you out. If it fails, they're just going to pin the blame on you down the line. And if they do catch the guy, that's it for you. They'll take all the credit and hang you out to dry.

GRAYS:

We have jurisdiction-

DIETRICH:

It doesn't matter anymore. We're not going to get into a fight over that just so you can keep going in circles. That puts our ass on the line alongside yours and the director doesn't want that. We're backing off.

GRAYS:

Mmmmm.

(Beat)

Well, I don't back off. I never have and I never will.

DIETRICH:

What's that saying? "You can get further with a smile and a gun than with just a smile"?

(Beat)

The Bureau's leaving you with just a smile. And you've never been much of a people person, Grays. You'd better learn to smile big.

GRAYS' phone begins to ring. He answers it.

TITLE CARD:

1976

Int. The dope den Daytime

NIAL sits with a very pregnant VANESSA, who is going through a stack of records, while everyone else is passed out after a night of drugs. This room is empty, save them.

VANESSA:

My father was raping me every night. My brother and my father would fight. The winner was the one that had the most to drink that night and it was always a hot contest.

NIAL:

That's horrible.

VANESSA:

That, yes. This-
(she holds up one of the records)
-this is terrific.

She displays it for NIAL to see. It is Close to You by The Carpenters.

VANESSA:

Have you seen how thin she is? They're always saying, "No drugs" but then you look at her. She's the most beautiful woman with the most beautiful voice and she's thin as can be. At least with the H, I get to be that thin.

NIAL:

She also died from it.

VANESSA:

She died?

NIAL realizes that he's just let something slip that could give him away.

NIAL:

I don't know, did she? I thought I heard that somewhere.

VANESSA:

You're weird, Nial.

NIAL:

I try not to be.

VANESSA:

No, I mean in a good way. You're not like any of the others. The way Shep-

NIAL:

(Glancing around nervously)

Shep is a bully. Wayne would be a bully if he had any muscle. Shep keeps us around to act as lightning rods for his anger. My entire purpose here is to be a punching bag when he needs to prove he's tough.

VANESSA:

I love Shep.

NIAL:

Did you love your dad?

VANESSA:

...Yeah, but-

NIAL:

Then that makes sense.

VANESSA:

What does?

NIAL:

When you've been hurt a lot and taught that you're not worth anything...you take what you can get. And you think it's what you deserve.

VANESSA begins crying. NIAL shows no reaction. He lights a cigarette. He finally breaks the tension by saying..

NIAL:

We could leave. The both of us. We could get out of here, together.

VANESSA:

I can't leave him. I don't know what he'd do without me-

NIAL:

I don't know what he'll do to you if you stay.

There is a tense pause.

VANESSA:

I have to stay for the baby.

NIAL lights another cigarette. VANESSA points to the ashtray where his first one is still burning.

NIAL:

Oh. Thanks. You want this? Oh, you probably shouldn't.

VANESSA:

Why's that?

NIAL:

Smoking is bad for the baby.

VANESSA:

Says who?

NIAL'S brain starts working fast.

NIAL:

I have an idea.

TITLE CARD:

1999

Int. The Grays home Daytime

GRAYS and SUZIE lay in bed together, holding each other.

GRAYS:

I think I waited my whole life for this moment.

SUZIE:

Why wait? I've been here for fifteen years with you.

GRAYS:

And I apologize for all of them. I wish I could make things better for us-

SUZIE:

Aaron, you do.

GRAYS:

There's no setting right some wrongs.

SUZIE:

Do you mean your case?

GRAYS:

Don't talk about the case. This is our time and it's always too short.

SUZIE:

It feels like I'm having an affair with my own husband.

(Beat)

After you leave, it's like it never happened. You come home from work and you don't show me this tenderness anymore. Is it the work? Does it get to you that much?

GRAYS:

Best not to pursue it. Just know: My world unravels without you in it. I may not show it, but-

SUZIE:

You're telling me. That's good enough.

They hold each other tighter.

CUT TO:

Int. DR HEWSON'S office Daytime

The office is cluttered, too small, filled with tall stacks of paper covering every available surface. NIAL is disheveled but calm, the appearance that he has sunken into his chaos rather than fight it anymore. DR HEWSON is gray-haired and not too composed. He looks casual. He is making notes on NIAL'S file as NIAL talks.

NIAL:

The voices are getting louder. Like something is about to happen.

HEWSON:

Do you think you'll die again?

NIAL:

No, not that. When I die, it'll all be over. I look forward to death.

HEWSON scribbles in the file.

NIAL:

They argue constantly. Everything makes me uneasy and sometimes I sense that things are about to happen and then they do.

HEWSON:

When you time traveled, did you ever do it too much?
Did you cause the-
(Consults his notes)
Confusion?

NIAL:

Yes, I kept going back too much and then I was on an airplane and then I was in here.

HEWSON:

Yes. And this confusion, when did that start?

NIAL:

I was with Vanessa.

HEWSON:

Your mother?

NIAL:

Yes, my mother. But she was a teenager and I wasn't born yet.

HEWSON:

Did you know your mother well?

NIAL:

No, she was in the institute since I was a little kid.

HEWSON scribbles some more in the file.

NIAL:

Beatrice asked me to kill Terry Pratchett.

HEWSON:

That's a very serious thing. You understand what would happen if he was killed?

NIAL:

They'd lock me up for the rest of my life?

HEWSON:

You do understand that Terry Pratchett would cease to exist and that you would be the cause?

NIAL:

Yes. Death, die, cease to exist. He would be dead and it would be my fault.

HEWSON:

How does that make you feel, Nial?

NIAL:

I don't think anyone would miss him. But I don't want to make you go through all that paperwork.

HEWSON:

I was doing some research on time travel.

NIAL:

I like to do the same when they let me.

HEWSON:

Yes, well, you must understand that that could be counterproductive.

(Beat)

Have you read about the Anthropic Principle?

NIAL:

No.

HEWSON:

It's an idea that time travel would be weeded out by

the universe. If we traveled freely through time, our minds would become too confused, unable to comprehend the world. We would not be able to make sense of the things we see if the order is all jumbled. Under those conditions, time travel would doom all of us. So the Principle suggests that time travel would be sort of evolved out of the universe for us to survive.

NIAL:

So our very existence proves that time travel is not possible?

HEWSON:

Yes. What do you think, Nial? Do you agree with this idea?

NIAL:

If we were not aware that we were time traveling-

HEWSON:

Confused, perhaps?

NIAL:

Then we would die, cease to exist.
(Beat)

Okay, I have to concede that that principle is valid and fills the bill of scientific theory very well. Or hypothesis or-

(Beat)

Do you think I'll ever get out of here?

HEWSON:

It's not up to me. I will present my notes to the board for review, as always.

NIAL:

I wasn't asking if you could get me out. I was asking if you think I'll actually get out someday?

HEWSON looks up. Lays the pen down. Shuts the file.

HEWSON:

Time's up.

TITLE CARD:

2006

Int. The FBI lab Night

GRAYS enters the room to find a typical medical laboratory. The technician in charge, PAUL, is monitoring a blood centrifuge.

PAUL:

You can leave the sandwiches there, guy.

GRAYS:

I'm agent Grays.

PAUL looks up.

GRAYS:

Are you telling me security is so lax around here that a delivery boy could walk right into our crime lab?

PAUL:

Christ, don't make a federal case out of it. I don't have the time to go out to eat.

GRAYS:

I can't imagine that eating in the lab would help in court either, for that matter.

(Beat)

What have you got?

PAUL:

It's really weird. Medical examiner did a standard toxicology on Brown and turned up something puzzling. Locals wanted to keep it in the family, I think, but the examiner sent it over here for tests.

GRAYS:

Well...what is it?

PAUL:

You tell me, pal. The blood is disappearing. Not evaporating, disappearing. Whatever is in here...it's coming through the liver clean. It doesn't get broken down at all. But, the blood. I had eight full vials when the package arrived, I've got four half vials now. What the fuck is that?

GRAYS:

I don't know, this isn't my area.

PAUL:

This doesn't happen. As far as I can tell, I'm going to have just enough time to do an electron scope and DNA test it. After that, the blood will have gone.

GRAYS:

Gone? Gone where?

PAUL:

That's what I'm telling you. The blood is disappearing.

(Beat)

I'm doing a full spectro-analysis right now, just hoping it lasts long enough to finish it. You know much about blood, agent Grays?

GRAYS:

Only what it points to.

PAUL:

Well I don't know what the fuck this means. I've never seen this, never even heard about something like this.

GRAYS:

It's okay. I have my suspicions. Here's what I want you to do: Call the DEA and ask for Long, he's an assistant administrator in the Intelligence division. I want you to have his boys match up your results with their results. Say it's for me, he'll know what this is about.

PAUL:

Then what?

GRAYS:

Then you're finished.

NIAL appears at the door.

PAUL:

You can just lay the sandwiches down there, pal.

NIAL produces his badge and says...

NIAL:

Agent Genet, DEA.

PAUL:

Christ, that was fast.

GRAYS:

No, he's here for me.

PAUL:

Been using on the side, Grays? Personal-like?

GRAYS and NIAL exit.

PAUL:

Fucking cocksuckers. Do this, do that! Cocksuckers.
(After them)
Bring me a sandwich!

Int. Gray's desk Night

NIAL:

We always end up back here, don't we? I don't even
have a desk.

GRAYS:

How do you like the view from this one?

NIAL:

I need your help with something.

GRAYS:

Quid pro quo, that's only fair. What have you got?

NIAL:

What have you got? What was that in there?

GRAYS:

My guy's starting to think he really is clever. You
remember that injection he gave her?

NIAL:

The speed?

GRAYS:

It was Leap.

NIAL:

What was the purpose of that?

GRAYS:

I'm not sure. He might have been trying to send her body out so we'd never find her and always have that tape hanging over us. It could be hard to sleep knowing we've just missed a victim.

NIAL:

Fucker could have been experimenting.

GRAYS:

He could be. Think about this: If he injects a victim, kills them. The blood stops flowing after they leap. They don't come back. If they go into the future, bodies start popping up years later.

NIAL:

Why would he do that?

GRAYS:

Maybe in case he gets caught. He's sitting in jail and a fresh body or two shows up, we let him go.

There is a silence as they both contemplate this.

NIAL:

But it worked?

GRAYS:

No. She stayed right where she was.

NIAL is considering heavily.

GRAYS:

What's on your mind, Nial? You're burning hot tonight, you're practically vibrating.

NIAL:

I need you to help me steal some of the Leap powder.

CUT TO:

Int. Morning Brook Institution Daytime

NIAL is prowling the halls, skulking about. He hears voices inside a door and peeks through the small window. He sees HEWSON addressing a group of men and women in business suits, all seated at a table across the room from him.

HEWSON:

Genet, Nial. Patient was admitted at the age of eight after drowning his younger sister. Patient still claims no memory of this incident or much of his life until the last five years.

MAN 1:

Is this the one that said he died?

HEWSON:

Yes, a complex schizophrenic schism, he shows both positive and negative traits. His mother was committed here in 1983 with the same general delusion.

FEMALE 1 (MARSHA):

The same? Who committed her?

HEWSON:

(consulting his files)

The husband, Shep Blackfoot.

MAN 1:

Marsha, if I may call our attention back to-

HEWSON:

Oh, of course. Patient is operating under the delusion that he has died at the age of 30 and spent his life as

a DEA agent prior to admittance at that age. He claims to have been involved in time travel and often credits this, a "confusion" caused by displacement, for his residence here.

MAN 2:

Dr. Hewson-

HEWSON:

Yeah, yeah. At this week's session, he confessed that time travel would not be possible under the Anthropic Principle.

MAN 2:

Does he still believe himself a time traveler?

HEWSON:

No, he thinks he already died. But he did concede the point that-

A hand grabs NIAL'S shoulder and pulls him away from the door. It is NURSE SLOUGH.

SLOUGH:

Nial, you aren't supposed to be in this wing. Come on, let's get you back to the rec room.

SHE leads NIAL away down the hall. We hear the voices continuing, fading, and then there is laughter. NIAL'S shoulders sag.

TITLE CARD:

2006

Int. NIAL'S car Nighttime

NIAL drives and GRAYS looks out the window of the passenger seat.

NIAL:

Okay, why don't you just be honest with me?

GRAYS:

When am I not honest?

NIAL:

Oh, you keep missing the dates, but you're there every time to go back. Who are you seeing?

GRAYS:

Do you ever consider the Leap to be private?

NIAL:

Private, how? I don't follow you?

GRAYS:

Okay. By telling you this, I'm placing a lot of faith in you. I don't trust people much.

NIAL:

We're partners, right? Do or die, from now till the end.

GRAYS:

If you had a chance to get my guy, you would do it?

NIAL:

Of course I would.

GRAYS:

You would do anything to take him down?

NIAL:

If you're going to tell me you keep going on a fool's errand because-

GRAYS:

It's not that simple.

NIAL:

It is that simple. If it was all for shit, you wouldn't be coming back. You're doing this with pleasure. I see it. You think I don't see it? You're enjoying these Leaps and it's got nothing to do with your guy.

GRAYS:

...I'm seeing Suzie.

There is a tense pause. GRAYS feels he is admitting a dark secret, something that could destroy him.

NIAL:

I'm seeing my mother.

GRAYS:

How's that?

NIAL:

Vanessa. She's one of the subs in my investigation. Punching bag for the asshole leader.

(Beat)

What I'm saying is, I understand why you do it. I think if we had the choice, we'd keep going back and our lives be damned. You ever think you wouldn't come back?

GRAYS:

(staring out the window)

I hope for it every time. I would stay there. I would fix what went wrong.

NIAL:

And what about your guy?

GRAYS:

That's the thing, isn't it? If it's a choice between your victories and defeats, you'd always fix the defeats instead of making a new win.

(Beat)

Why are we stealing the Leap?

NIAL:

To fix a mistake.

Int. DEA Leap room Nighttime

NIAL is being fed Leap intravenously while GRAYS watches.

NIAL:

How did you know it was over with her?

GRAYS:

She cleared her stuff out, it was pretty clear.

NIAL:

No, before that. What was the final straw that you saw?

GRAYS:

It was our last anniversary together. We found one body that night at the exact same time he was killing a second. Suzie and I had dinner reservations at Umbrella. I remember seeing her in there, waiting. She was at a table and all the beauty of the world centered on her. As I walked in the door, my pager went off. I didn't even make it to the table, I notified the maitre d' to inform her and I was gone. I walked right past that window as I headed to the scene and never once looked at her. It had me.

NIAL:

He had you. You give everything and you lose it all

anyway.

GRAYS is staring down at the table. When he looks up, NIAL has vanished. GRAYS stands and walks over to his seat and inserts the needle into his own arm.

TITLE CARD:

2003

Ext. Umbrella restaurant Nighttime

GRAYS, present, stands across the street from the restaurant. Without thinking, he steps off the curb, headed for her. He is stopped short when he sees himself, from the past, walking around the corner and into the door of the establishment. He sees himself stop and hold up a pager. He realizes that this is it. This is the night he has tried so hard to keep from his memory. He sees his past self say a few words to the maitre d' and then exit the building. GRAYS, present, starts to cross the street and then freezes. He knows this is it, that he must make his choice. He hesitates. A truck honks its horn and he steps back onto the sidewalk. He stares at SUZIE through the window of the restaurant. The maitre d' approaches her table, shaking his head as he talks. SUZIE nods at him and he exits. She reaches into her purse and retrieves a cell phone. Makes a call. She looks down, puts a hand over her eyes. GRAYS begins to cross the street. A police car passes him, siren blaring. GRAYS does not stop until he is right outside the window, staring in at SUZIE. She looks out the window but only sees herself and the restaurant reflected in it. A waitress appears with a glass of wine. SUZIE shakes her head but the waitress nods toward a young man in a business suit. He smiles at SUZIE. She accepts the drink and he approaches her table. GRAYS' heart is breaking. He waits no more. He hails a cab.

Ext. A tenement building Nighttime

GRAYS arrives at the decaying apartment building and steps out of the cab. He leans in the passenger window to pay his fare.

CABBIE:

Ain't my business but you won't get far wearing that suit around here.

GRAYS gives him a twenty and says to keep it. The cab drives away. GRAYS turns and faces the building, looks up. He counts the windows until the top floor, a window painted black.

TITLE CARD:

1976

Int. The dope den Nighttime

NIAL is presenting a mirror with lines of Leap cut on it for VANESSA to take.

VANESSA:

What happens if I take this?

NIAL:

It's called Leap and that's what you do. You...fade out. You end up in a different time.

VANESSA:

But how will that help?

NIAL:

The baby is a conscious being right now, separate from you. You Leap, he Leaps too.

VANESSA turns her face away in disgust.

NIAL:

It's about the least painful abortion possible, I would think.

(Beat)

For you, anyway.

VANESSA:

You're asking me to kill Shep's child. My child.

NIAL:

If you stay here, you'll be dead. He'll kill you or someone else will. You can't stay, you have to go.

VANESSA:

I don't know if I can.

NIAL:

I'll do a line with you if you want. Just to show you that there's nothing bad about the whole thing.

VANESSA:

You're not from here, are you, Nial?

NIAL:

What do you mean?

VANESSA:

This stuff is a time travel drug, right?

NIAL:

Oh, I gotcha.

VANESSA:

What is the future for me? Are you here to get me where I need to go? Like an angel?

NIAL:

I'm changing things so I don't know what will happen. All I know is that if I leave you here through all this, your life is ruined.

(Beat)

I found a way to beat the universe.

VANESSA bends and inhales.

VANESSA:

How long will it take?

Int. Tenement building Nighttime

GRAYS enters the building and approaches the elevator. A sign says it is not functioning. He begins to climb the stairs.

Int. Apartment 11J's door Later

GRAYS almost knocks on the door but then stops. He draws his gun and kicks the door open. The interior is dark. He knows where to go, he has been in this crime scene a thousand times in his mind. He confidently strides to the back bedroom, not quite sure what he will find.

GRAYS:

This is the FBI! Come out with your hands up!

There is no response. He gets to the door and kicks it open and then ducks behind the frame. He crouches and pops into the open door, his gun aimed. He finds JEREMY TYLER bound facedown on the bed and our killer, WALTER KASABIAN, standing calmly next to the bookcase. KASABIAN is dressed in dark colors, rubber gloves, holding a scalpel.

GRAYS:

Drop it! Hands up now!

KASABIAN:

I always wondered how we would meet, Grays. I may get to traverse the space-time continuum at my pleasure but I am not entirely sure any of the realities I have experienced are to be believed as the truth.

(Beat)

Why don't you put away your gun and we can talk about this?

GRAYS:

The gun goes away when the cuffs are on you.

KASABIAN:

It's never been like this before. Would you care for a chair? I believe I saw one in the kitchen.

GRAYS:

Drop the knife and-

KASABIAN:

Oh yes, how silly of me.

KASABIAN lets the scalpel fall to the floor. He holds his hands out like Jesus on the cross.

KASABIAN:

If you're not planning to shoot me, could you please put that away?

GRAYS:

Afraid not. Who are you?

KASABIAN:

I am Walter Kasabian, though that is irrelevant. The pressing thing at the moment is how you broke procedure. You gave Nial that Leap so that he could abort himself. Do you realize what this means?

GRAYS:

I don't question Nial's integrity and I placed my faith in him. And tonight I got what I wanted. You, right here. My pistol aimed right between your eyes.

KASABIAN:

And it's all you'll get. When she takes that drug, he will be removed from her womb and left for dead. You see, you've helped him in a murder. A living person will die because of your actions. And you stand over

me and say that I am the sick one?

GRAYS:

Well if that baby is himself, then he's just committing suicide, isn't he?

KASABIAN grins.

GRAYS:

Why did you do this, Walter?

KASABIAN:

I can't justify what has happened up to now. It started as an exercise in control and then became a strict ritual. I had to put on a show of doing this randomly to escape real scrutiny. Had the original agents bothered to research into the social circles of my first dozen victims, they would have found me standing in all their spotlights. But, as you said, it is never important when death happens to the poor. You're running out of time and you haven't even asked the most important question.

GRAYS:

And what's that?

KASABIAN:

What happens next?

GRAYS:

Okay, what happens next?

KASABIAN:

I'm rather curious to see that myself. Nial was the first source of the Leap and it came from the future. How's that for a logic puzzle? Does it exist because it was introduced or was it introduced because it exists? But the real question is, what happens to us? You see, Nial was your source for the Leap so you will

never come here to capture me if he is aborted before he's born. But what happens to him? The dead don't die here if Leap is involved. They're all populating mental institutions because the universe is covering for its own mistakes. You ever hear of the Anthropic Principle?

GRAYS:

I can't say as I have.

KASABIAN:

The universe will fix me better than you ever could. And our very existence right now is about to disappear. Have you ever seen a tangent universe collapse because it's not the true one? No, you wouldn't know anything about that, would you?

(Beat)

You really want to slap those cuffs on me, don't you, Grays?

GRAYS:

More than anything in the world, but I won't.

KASABIAN:

And why's that? Would arresting me ever stop the dark things inside you? No, of course not. I will always be killing, even after I'm dead. I've left bodies through the rest of your life and you will never get any closer to me than you are right now. And you won't have time to take me to jail because this universe, the real universe, will cease to exist when Nial gives her that powder. I will escape from you. I will disappear to a place you don't even understand.

GRAYS:

Are you talking about the afterlife?

KASABIAN grins again.

GRAYS:

What are you going to tell God when he asks why you murdered those people? What will you say to justify the ritual slaughter of dozens?

KASABIAN:

The same thing you'll tell yourself when you die old and alone, a failure in every way because of me. "I did my best."

(Beat)

Come on, now. Might as well put the cuffs on me and try to take me in. We won't make it, but I would like you to think, even for just a few minutes, that you have won. I can do that because this has never been about my pride.

GRAYS:

I can't do that.

KASABIAN:

Sure you can. You can try, but-

GRAYS:

You're not understanding me. I can not do that. This is not my time. This is the past for me, I already exist here. I am across the river right now, looking into another of your victims. I am playing with time right now, using a cheat to my advantage.

KASABIAN:

And doesn't it feel good?

The room begins to shake. Pictures on the walls begin to disappear and the color fades out of the walls.

KASABIAN:

It's happening! You caught me and I will still get away.

GRAYS:

I have no warrant and no probable cause to be here.

KASABIAN:

So?

GRAYS cocks the hammer and points it square in KASABIAN'S face.

GRAYS:

So, this.

He pulls the trigger. Everything in the room flies upward, with the ceiling, and is sucked out of the frame. There is just black facing us.

CUT TO:

A black screen. There is a sound like a P.A. system, distorted, full of feedback, very loud.

Int. A passenger jet Daytime

NIAL'S eyes open. He is dressed in touristy tropical clothing. He turns away from the window to the man seated next to him. The man is talking calmly but he appears to be the one producing this loud feedback noise. NIAL looks down to his hands and finds himself holding an in-flight magazine. There is a full-page ad, something spiritual presumably, that says:

DEATH, DISEASE, HUNGER, and LONELINESS ARE A PROJECTION OF THE MIND. FIND EVERLASTING LIFE THROUGH _ _ P _.

A STEWARDESS stops in the aisle as she passes.

STEWARDESS:

Sir, you're going to have to put on your life vest.

NIAL:

Excuse me?

STEWARDESS:

We have swells blanketing the airport runway. We may have to make an emergency landing in the water.

The feedback abruptly stops. NIAL turns to face his co-passenger. He is pouring peanuts into his mouth from the little bag.

STEWARDESS:

It's not easy, Mr. Genet. This job is not easy. If you could help me-

NIAL:

Where is my life vest?

STEWARDESS:

I'll ask the captain. He's flown around the world more times than an astronaut.

The STEWARDESS walks up the aisle and disappears. The feedback sound resumes.

Int. Airport ramp Daytime

The passengers are exiting the plane and filling the ramp, only to discover that family members are waiting to meet them on the ramp itself. They hug their loved ones, there are shouts of "Haven't seen you in years!" and the like. NIAL marches past all of this and enters the airport itself. It is mostly glass, white walls where there isn't glass, all very modern and well-kept. He walks to baggage claim and waits for his bag to arrive. LUCILLE appears next to him, awaiting her own luggage.

LUCILLE:

I've been in and out of airports all my life.

NIAL:

I know what you mean, seems like I'm always traveling now.

LUCILLE:

Were you with the charter group?

NIAL:

Is that what that was? It seemed they were all a bit too friendly.

LUCILLE:

Well, company retreat, you give them alcohol and all the walls of Rome. I take it this was a pleasure trip for you?

NIAL:

Why would you say-

He looks down at his clothing.

NIAL:

Sure. Just trying to relax.

LUCILLE:

Funny, isn't it? We spend all this time being wound up by plane rides so the first thing we think to do when we have time for ourselves is climb on another plane.

(Beat)

A vacation to me is staying at home. Unplug the phone, don't set the alarm, and ice cream for dinner. Non-fat, obviously.

NIAL:

(Pointing at her ring)

Husband must like that.

LUCILLE:

He's not back yet.

NIAL:

Oh? How about that?

The bags begin dropping onto the conveyor belt.

LUCILLE:

Have you ever seen it happen so fast? They're really loaded for bear. They put everything right out there here, don't you find? There's probably a fleet of taxis waiting to ferry us home.

NIAL:

Did you want to get a cup of coffee?

LUCILLE:

Can't, I'm pressed for time. I've got people waiting for me, I'm sure. You too, I'd bet.

NIAL:

What people?

She smiles, lifts a small bag from the conveyor and walks away. NIAL grabs his bag and turns to head to the door. He spots a limo driver holding a sign that says N. GENET. He approaches him.

NIAL:

I'm Nial Genet.

DRIVER:

Very well, sir. Follow me.

NIAL:

I can't shake the feeling you're familiar. Have you driven me before?

DRIVER:

No, sir, I should say not. I've only been at this for two weeks now, but don't let that fool you. I won't

get lost on the way there.

NIAL:

Where?

DRIVER:

Why, to see your family, Mr. Genet. They're all waiting for you.

NIAL:

I don't have a family.

DRIVER:

We all have families, sir. Even if we don't know it. Are you ready?

Ext. Airport curb Daytime

There is a white limo waiting at the curb. The windows are tinted and the sound of a television can be heard from inside it.

NIAL:

Who arranged for this limo?

DRIVER:

Sir, we are pressed for time.

NIAL looks into the window and can see a female form move, but her features are indistinct through the tinted windows.

NIAL:

I've got two days of vacation left. Nothing but time for me.

DRIVER:

Time is subjective. There's always less of it than you think.

NIAL:

Where are you taking me?

DRIVER:

Oh, we don't talk like that, sir.

NIAL:

Excuse me?

DRIVER:

We don't say things like that. It is rude to ask the driver where he's taking you.

NIAL grabs the door handle but feels a tug on his suitcase.

DRIVER:

You're not allowed to take bags with you, sir.

NIAL:

Well, put it in the trunk.

DRIVER:

This is the new model. It doesn't have a trunk. Just leave that here.

NIAL:

I don't want to. My whole life is in here.

DRIVER:

You need to let it go.

NIAL:

Why can't I bring it?

DRIVER:

Baggage isn't allowed where we're going. They're waiting for you.

The DRIVER begins to walk around to the driver's side door.

DRIVER:

Come along, Mr. Genet. We're almost done.

NIAL:

I don't know if- I'm scared to go with you.

DRIVER:

It's nothing to be scared of. They hired me.

DRIVER opens the door and climbs in. NIAL sees him pick up a clipboard and begin writing on it. A bus parked behind the limo begins honking. The DRIVER sticks his hand out the window and begins to motion the bus to go around him. NIAL turns and walks back into the airport. Fade to white as the doors open and close over and over behind him.

TITLE CARD:

2006

Int. GRAY'S desk at the FBI office Daytime

GRAYS sits staring at the newspaper photo from November 1976, but now NIAL is missing from the picture. GRAYS makes some notes in a file. He stops and considers. The phone rings. He answers. He says thank you and hangs up. DIETRICH approaches him.

DIETRICH:

Got something weird for you, Grays.

GRAYS:

Nothing surprising about that.

DIETRICH:

Indeed, with this case. When it rains, it pours. Just a heads up, that palm print wasn't in the felony offender database. But that's the weird part. We did get a hit.

GRAYS:

We did? How come I didn't-

DIETRICH:

Meggs and his team are spearheading the investigation now. You're becoming unpopular with the bosses and they're glad to hand off the blame. One of Meggs' boys just called it in for us.

GRAYS:

To let me know or-

DIETRICH:

Doesn't matter. The lead's going nowhere, they probably thought they were throwing you a bone.

GRAYS:

Well who is it?

DIETRICH:

Walter David Kasabian. But that's the weird part. He's institutionalized. Has been for close to twenty-five years.

GRAYS:

Institutionalized?

DIETRICH:

Yeah, up at Morning Brook.

(Beat)

Look, Grays, you can throw a p.o. up there and he'll come back with nothing, same as you will. I know

you're getting old and don't like to move like you used to.

GRAYS:

I'll take it. I'll check this guy out myself.

DIETRICH:

He doesn't fit the profile. And he's been, you know, incarcerated for a lot of the murders. On top of not really being old enough to have committed these-

GRAYS:

I'll take it. If his palm print was there then he must have-

DIETRICH:

It was probably a screw up at the lab.

GRAYS:

It's mine. I'll take it.

DIETRICH nods and walks away.

Ext. Morning Brook Institute Daytime

Grays strolls up the main path through a sea of green lawn.

Int. Morning Brook Institute Soon after

GRAYS is shown into the rec room by TERRY PRATCHETT. NIAL and BEATRICE are staring out the window together, talking in a low tone. GRAYS takes no notice of them and zeros in on KASABIAN. He is dressed in a hospital nightgown and a bathrobe, untied. He is drawing what appear to be math equations on the dry-erase board.

TERRY:

You want me to see if I can get you a private room to-

GRAYS:

Here will be fine. It doesn't get loud, does it?

TERRY:

I keep them in line.

GRAYS:

In here's fine. I'm sure it will be just a few minutes.

GRAYS walks up behind KASABIAN and says:

GRAYS:

Walter David Kasabian?

KASABIAN:

Yes.

GRAYS:

I'm special agent Grays of the FBI.

KASABIAN:

Yeah?

GRAYS:

How long have you been here?

KASABIAN points at a graph he has drawn on the board.

KASABIAN:

I was born here, and died here. I have been in this place for at least five years, but they tell me it's been much longer.

GRAYS:

Do you have day passes? Are you ever released on furlough?

KASABIAN turns and faces him.

KASABIAN:

You don't know much about mental institutes do you,
Grays?

GRAYS:

Is that a no?

KASABIAN:

Why the questions?

NIAL:

Grays?

GRAYS turns to face him. KASABIAN sort of slides away.

GRAYS:

How do you know my name?

NIAL:

We worked together for a bit.

GRAYS:

I think I'd remember you.

NIAL:

It was before I died.

(Beat)

Was that him? Is that the guy you're looking for?

GRAYS:

No. It was just a mix up.

NIAL:

Not if he's time traveled. Think about it, he could do all those murders in just a few weeks if time isn't linear for him.

GRAYS looks to PRATCHETT, who immediately comes over.

NIAL:

It's Leap! The drug is still out there, it hasn't been contained! That's the guy! He time traveled!

PRATCHETT pushes NIAL back into his seat and gives GRAYS an embarrassed shrug. GRAYS returns the shrug and begins walking out, NIAL shouting after him that KASABIAN is the killer, that he's a time traveler. PRATCHETT leads GRAYS out.

CUT TO:

Int. Rec room at Morning Brook Nighttime

NIAL sits calmly, staring at KASABIAN as he does calculations on the board. They are alone here.

NIAL:
(v.o.)

Is it wrong, Beatrice, to kill someone who has murdered so many others?

BEATRICE:
(v.o.)

No, Nial, of course not. The motive to kill is the tricky thing about murder. If you think about a thing like rape, there is never any justification, even if the person is very sick. But with murder, you can do it for self-defense, you can do it by accident. If your reason was good enough, you may not even do any time for it.

NIAL:
(v.o.)

I may never get out of here.

NIAL stands from his recliner and crosses to KASABIAN'S back.

NIAL:
(v.o.)

I could fulfill a man's deepest wishes by setting the universe right.

BEATRICE:
(v.o.)

I want us both to get out someday. I want us to go to the grocery store together and buy some cheap wine and be able to talk under the stars.

NIAL:
(v.o.)

I feel I owe a debt to someone that does not even know I exist now. I made a fool of myself.

NIAL wraps an arm around KASABIAN'S throat and begins to strangle him.

BEATRICE:
(v.o.)

You've never made a fool of yourself, Nial. You just do not fit society's construct of good and evil. Good and evil aren't always mirror images. There are gray areas, there is the necessary evil.

KASABIAN is flailing but easily overpowered by NIAL.

BEATRICE:
(v.o.)

I find you the most lucid and perceptive person I've ever spoken to. You only feel inadequate because others can not properly understand you. I think you are kind and generous and would only hurt someone under the most serious and noble circumstances.

KASABIAN'S dead body is released by NIAL and he falls to the floor, immobile.

NIAL:
(v.o.)

I found the moment that all time stops. When you cease to exist. That is the only instance where what you understand as time stops.

BEATRICE:
(v.o.)

I would like time to stop. I would.

CUT TO:

NIAL sitting in his room. There is a simple bed, a desk against the wall, a small bathroom. A thick wire mesh covers the window. He is writing a letter at the desk. The door bursts open and TERRY PRATCHETT storms in. NIAL looks down at the page he has written on. It says:

Dear Grays,

I did my best.

Nial

END