

Hotel

An original screenplay by

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FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

CU - LIGHT above the elevator

It illuminates in red as a beep is heard. The large steel elevator doors are opening.

CARMEN'S P.O.V.

Looking directly down the hallway it appears endless.

REVEAL:

Stepping forward, Carmen walks down the hallway, while shadows dance behind her.

A platinum blonde, she's wearing a jet black dress with matching four-inch heels. The strands of her diamond earrings are swinging back and forth as her golden purse shines, stationary on her arm. The wrist of her left hand has a diamond tennis bracelet with the initials CP engraved in it.

Closing, the elevator doors THUD much like the lid of a steel coffin.

Looking over Carmen shoulder. She sees nothing.

The hallway is bleak as the lights are dim. Casting shadows, every piece of furniture, picture frame, and door knob appears larger than and darker as she passes each of them. The tan wall color and dark carpet hides the blemishes well.

CARMEN'S P.O.V.

Reaching her room, NUMBER 2440, she SLIDES the key in and out of the lock. Green light. The lock is now open.

Opening the door, the interior of the room is black and cold. The darkness makes it appear empty, as only the outline of hotel furniture and picture frames can be seen.

REVEAL:

Stepping inside the room, the door slowly closes behind her.

INT. CARMEN'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is black, quiet. A gasp for air is heard followed by a whisper.

CARMEN

Not yet.

FLASHBACK - INT. PELAZ MANSION HALLWAY - DAY

From the hallway directly outside Zenadine's bedroom, a heated argument ensues.

REVEAL:

Stopping in his tracks, a look of worry crosses the butler's face as he peers through the crack in the door. Dressed in black slacks with a white shirt, he's middle-aged and clean cut with short gray hair. His punctuality and posture are impeccable.

BUTLER'S P.O.V.

Through the crack in the door, neither Zenadine or Carmen is visible.

ZENADINE PELAZ (O.S.)

Dammit Carmen! Where is it! You're the only one who knew where it was! The only one!

CARMEN (O.S.)

I already told you I don't know!

ZENADINE PELAZ (O.S.)

You expect me to believe that!?! You're out of control! I've given so much for you!

CARMEN (O.S.)

(crying)

You haven't cared about our family since she died -- and now you blame me? Why would I take it? I don't need your money!

ZENADINE PELAZ (O.S.)

(cutting her off)

Don't question me girl! She was my bride and she gave her life for you! You find her band or don't ever come back...

CARMEN (O.S.)

I already told you...

ZENADINE PELAZ (O.S.)

I will not let you tarnish her memory. You're a disgrace to everything she stood for... Get out!

Suddenly, the OFF SCREEN sound of glass shattering from inside the room is heard, followed by the door swinging OPEN as

Carmen comes rushing through. Tears are streaming down her face as she runs past him. The OFF SCREEN sound of the front door opening and slamming shut, causes a picture to fall from the wall.

END OF FLASHBACK

EXT. SOUTH FLOWER STREET - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

The street traffic is oddly quiet in the occurrence of the early morning hours. Damp, due to a light rain, the pole lights nearby appear luminescent. The sidewalks are empty, as a reflection of a faint moonlight glistens off the large hotel glass.

From the sidewalk below, briefly lighting up the side of the building, two matching flashes spark with a strobe effect. Seconds later, the glass window of the very same floor explodes, as large shards and the make out of a body fall like rain. A SCREAM is heard, fading.

SIDEWALK

The shattering of glass on the sidewalk deafens the cry.

CU - Carmen laying in a bed of shattered glass.

Carmen's blonde hair is scattered across the pavement as blood lines the crevices of her open mouth. Her arms, legs, and back are contorted in a crooked manner. Much like the white sheets of an unkempt bed, her body lies still as her black dress is in stark contrast to her pale, cold, skin.

HOTEL

The hotel is the eerily silent as the OFF SCREEN sound of a distant siren is heard.

MONTAGE - SCENES OF LOS ANGELES AT NIGHT

-- The scene then pans out to show Aerial shots of Downtown Los Angeles at streets, buildings, and the hotel at night.

ROLL CREDITS

TITLE OVER: HOTEL

END MONTAGE

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VERONICA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: 4:40AM

The time is 4:40AM, and the bedroom is quiet. The solid black interior is striped like a zebra from the glow of surrounding skyscrapers.

Suddenly the phone RINGS in the background.

Coming out of a deep sleep, VERONICA reaches for the phone, which is somewhere on the night stand.

With long black hair, and colorful dark eyes, she is a mix of Latin and Italian. She has green eyes that accentuate her stark beauty. After years of reporting, she doesn't sleep very well, thus she wears a mask over her eyes.

Knocking the phone off the receiver, she manages to grab it just before it falls to the floor.

VERONICA

(groggy)

Hello?

JIM (V.O.)

Veronica. Its Jim. Turn on your TV.

JIM is Veronica's boss.

VERONICA

What? Jim, it's like four in the morning.

JIM (V.O.)

I'm aware of that. This can't wait.

NIGHTSTAND

REACHING for the remote control, Veronica grabs it from the nightstand.

CU - TV

Turning on the TV, every chanel appears to be broadcasting the same story. Settling on channel 7, there's a hotel with SIRENS and multiple ambulances. The headline at the bottom of the screen stating "Tragedy at the Westin."

LOCAL TV REPORTER (V.O.)

The body has been confirmed to be that of Carmen Pelaz, the famous actress and daughter of Zenadine Pelaz. The details are not yet clear of exactly what happened, but it does appear that Ms. Pelaz, has fallen from the window of the 24th floor.

BACK TO HUCK

VERONICA

Oh my god... How?

JIM (V.O.)

There's no time for that. We need you on site right now. I've got you booked for the next couple of days in the same hotel and your flight leaves in forty-five minutes.

VERONICA

What! 5:30AM! But I'm not even awake! Is O'Hare even open yet?

JIM (V.O.)

We needed you in L.A. an hour ago. That's the best I could do. Vince and Jen Schultz are going to be your crew on this one, and they're already in route from San Francisco.

(pausing)

Veronica?

VERONICA

Yeah Jim?

JIM (V.O.)

Your father would be proud of you.

Hanging up the phone, Veronica's thoughts are swirling like the winds of a hurricane as she stumbles to her feet, groggy and confused.

EXT. WESTIN BONAVENTURE HOTEL - LATER

The hotel is seen surrounded by police cars as well as emergency response flashers, surrounding the mighty exterior.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Ascending up the street to the hotel, flashing police lights can be seen in the distance in bright blue and red tones, steadily rising in illumination as the taxi nears.

There is a commotion among POLICE OFFICERS, MEDICAL STAFF, & HOTEL STAFF on the scene. Crime scene tape surrounds them like the bow of a Christmas present. The CABBY, a middle-aged man of Middle-Eastern descent comments on the scene.

CABBY

(eyeing the mirror)

I know why you're here... For this town -- we didn't need this...

Viewing the hotel it's scope and magnitude is overpowering. Attempting to formulate a plan of attack, Veronica goes deep into thought.

INT. WESTIN BONAVENTURE LOBBY - NIGHT

SUPER: 6:03AM

Walking through the front door, the lobby is full of LOCAL NEWSCASTERS, POLICE OFFICERS, EMERGENCY RESPONDERS, and extra HOTEL STAFF.

Usually at this time of morning the first of the early-birds would just be coming down for breakfast, but today everyone is awake, from the hotel staff, to every single patron in the entire complex. Navigating through the maze, Veronica approaches the front desk. The OFF SCREEN commotion is loud.

CUTAWAY TO: FRONT DESK

ANNA GERSHON is behind the counter. A light brunette, she has melting chocolate eyes, and an innocent vocal tone second-to-none. Clearly stressed out, the phone keeps ringing. Trying to answer every call, she can hardly keep up.

ANNA

Thank you for calling the Westin
Bonaventure. Please hold.

Clicking the hold option, Anna sets the phone down, only to have it ring again. She's becoming more and more frustrated.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Thank you for calling the Westin
Bonaventure. Hold please. Thank you.

Clicking the hold button, she VENTS some frustration.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I can't take all these calls!

When Veronica approaches the counter, Anna instantly recognizes her as one of the most popular reporters in America. Somewhat startled, she's caught completely off-guard.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Oh my! Hello Ms. Frenz. Will you be
checking in this morning?

VERONICA

Yes I will.

ANNA

(typing)

And have you stayed with us before?

VERONICA

No. My family would be quite envious if they knew I was staying here -- though maybe not with the circumstances of my visit...

ANNA

So far everyone keeps interviewing Matt the manager...

Capitalizing on the opportunity Veronica leans in.

VERONICA

And you?

Instantly Anna's hands stop typing. Looking up, she responds.

ANNA

I haven't told anyone yet...

VERONICA

Can you meet me later?

ANNA

Yeah, definitely. Anything to help. I'll actually be on break in the next hour or so. I usually take my break around mid morning...

The OFF SCREEN sounds of commotion getting louder gives Veronica a sense of urgency as she fumbles quickly through her purse for a business card.

VERONICA

Here's my number. Feel free to call -- anytime...

LOOKING at the card Anna, puts it into her pocket

ANNA

I'll call... Oh, here's your hotel keys. Your room will be on the 16th floor. Number 1616. Feel free to let us know if there's anything we can do to make your stay any better...

Trailing off in the sentence, Anna stares blankly into an abyss.

BACK TO HUCK

Walking away from the front desk, Veronica notices MATT, the hotel manager. MATT is in his mid-thirties with short brown hair combed off to the side. In full uniform, he's wearing black slacks with leather shoes, a short-sleeve white shirt with a matching tie. His name tag has shiny lettering.

Standing next to Matt is OFFICER SHAW. African, he has a thick Congolese accent. In full uniform, dark blue, he stands firm.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Separating herself from the crowd, Veronica sees her prey as a lioness may see a pack of Thomson's Gazelle.

REVEAL:

Flaring her long black hair like the flap of a crow's wing, Veronica engages. Raising her voice, she easily maneuvers through the crowd towards the two.

CUTAWAY TO: ENTRYWAY OF THE LOBBY

VERONICA

Hello. I wanted to introduce myself...

Extending his hand first, officer Shaw greets Veronica.

OFFICER SHAW

Veronica Frenz. We've met before...

Thinking and attempting to remember him, Veronica cannot seem to place where he knows her from.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

I was fresh out of the academy in Chicago, and you were covering The Outfit. Life has changed since then... Where are your comrades?

Remembering that story, she still does not remember his face. Regardless she pretends as if she knows him.

VERONICA

I actually just arrived, and have yet to meet up with my crew...

Nodding, then looking around, officer Shaw realizes that he has not introduced Matt.

OFFICER SHAW

Ah, Ms. Frenz -- this is Matt Raines. He is the hotel manager, and most important person to talk to regarding your story.

Holding his hand out, Matt shakes Veronica's hand.

MATT

Nice to meet you Ms. Frenz.

OFFICER SHAW

Matt has been here since midnight, and may be a valuable witness in this case.

MATT

I saw Ms. Pelaz enter the building late last night. I think she had been staying with her boyfriend...

Trailing off in his sentence, Veronica takes this opportunity to see what information she can get from officer Shaw.

VERONICA

Well it was a pleasure to meet you Matt. Can you excuse us for a moment?

MATT

Oh, certainly.

Stepping aside, Matt faces the opposite direction as Veronica begins to ask officer Shaw some questions.

VERONICA

So do you really think she just fell through the glass?

OFFICER SHAW

This is an on-going investigation. Her body was taken away shortly after 2:30AM. They're going to perform an autopsy, and due to her stature, that process should be fast.

(pausing)

A shroud of cloudiness surrounds her death...

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Entering the room, Veronica is met by a large plush bed full of cotton candy pillows. Laid in the middle of the bed is a fine plush robe, like the fur of an arctic seal.

Granite covers the vanity and shower walls, much like the top of the desk near the door. Large mirrors line the walls like art, as to make the room feel larger than it actually is. The unmatched elegance has attracted Hollywood's elite since its conception.

Settling in, Veronica lifts her suitcase onto the rack.

VERONICA (O.S.)

I need to know who she was fucking --
who her ex's were, and if any of
them had reason to want her dead...

Suddenly, her room phone lights up and begins to RING.

REVEAL:

Startled, Veronica stares at the phone for a moment before walking over and answering it.

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

Nobody knows I'm here...

Reaching for the smooth black phone, Veronica picks up the receiver and places it to her ear.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Hello?

CUTAWAY TO: FRONT DESK

ANNA

(crying)

Hello, Ms. Frenz? Its Anna.

INTERCUT: VERONICA AND ANNA

Veronica has a look of shock across her face at the odd phone call.

VERONICA

Anna, what's wrong?

Panicked anna is twisting the phone cord around her fingers as her body waves back and forth.

ANNA

I just heard someone say she was
murdered! I can't believe it! I mean,
who would do such a thing?

VERONICA

We don't know that yet, Anna. And
you shouldn't assume that you're in
any danger.

ANNA

I don't...

Putting her fingers near her mouth Anna starts to chew her fingernails.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'm just real emotional today. I need to talk to you -- in person... I saw something...

VERONICA

Okay Anna. Come on up. Knock three times so I know it's you, okay?

BACK TO HUCK

As the line goes dead, Veronica hangs up the phone. Staring at it for a moment, slightly confused, she's not sure if she's going to have to play momma to a lost puppy or if Anna really did see something important.

CUTAWAY TO: BED

Walking over to the bed, she sits down on the edge, waiting. Staring at the door, thoughts are racing through Veronica's head.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Why would Anna be crying? Maybe she really did see something and now she's worried about it...

Suddenly a knock is heard at the door. Just one.

DOOR

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

Just one?

BED

Fixated on the door, Veronica waits for a moment. Just then, two more knocks...

DOOR

Walking towards the door, Veronica looks through through the peep hole.

PEEPHOLE

Anna is on the other side of the door, holding her arms, clearly distraught.

DOOR

Opening up the door, Veronica invites Anna in.

BACK TO HUCK

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Come in Anna. Please, sit down...

Crying and nervous, Anna appears very uneasy. Walking inside she sits down on the bed, while Veronica stands over her.

ANNA

Okay, I'm so sorry. I'm usually not like this. Its just -- Ms. Pelaz...

Reaching for the tissue box on the desk, Veronica offers it to Anna.

VERONICA

Go on...

FLASHBACK - INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

ANNA (O.S.)

Last night, I had already been here for four or five hours, so I decided to go out front to get some fresh air. Sometimes it just gets really stuffy in the lobby, so I like to take breaks outside. Something about the city at night just -- calms me.

Checking the clock on the wall, Anna steps away from her post, walking through the lobby office door, and exits through the front entrance.

EXT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

ANNA (O.S.)

So anyway, I was standing outside looking at the the Pelaz limo. It was parked right out front.

PELAZ LIMO

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

Then when I was looking at it, I noticed behind it, about four car links down was a fancy black Mercedes.

MERCEDES

About four car links down from the door, a black Mercedes with jet black tint, is parked.

ANNA'S P.O.V.

Looking closer, anna eventually notices exhaust coming from the tailpipes.

BACK TO HUCK

The realization is that the car is on.

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

It took me a minute, but eventually I realized that the car wasn't parked. Someone was sitting in it, and it was in idle! It was so dark and they had really dark tint. It was through the windshield that I saw the faint outline of somebody. I think they saw me, because as soon as I started to get closer, they sped off fast!

Walking towards the car, it speeds away.

CU - LICENSE PLATE

The last three digits of the license plate were JBL.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS - PRESENT DAY

VERONICA

Oh, my.

ANNA

I saw the license plate. The last three was -- R-L-7.

Staring away into the carpet, Anna's voice grows cold and lifeless.

ANNA (CONT'D)

They're going to want to come back for me...

Anna is now crying hysterically again. Attempting to console her veronica sits down on the bed next to her and places her arms around Anna's shoulders.

VERONICA

Its okay Anna. If you're really scared you should talk to the police...

ANNA

And when it sped off, it almost hit
Ms. Pelaz's limo!

VERONICA

What?

ANNA

It was parked right up front, but...

VERONICA

What? Up front? How did you know it
was her limo?

ANNA

It said PELAZ on the tag... I can't
believe it! They know who I am! God
I've got to get out of here!

Quickly standing up, Anna lunges towards the door.

CUTAWAY TO: DOOR

Almost tearing it off the hinges, she rips it open with the
violent force of a tornado. Panicked and startled, Veronica
runs after her.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Running down the hall, Anna disappears into a side door that
exits to one of the stairwells.

VERONICA

Anna! Come back!

ELEVATORS

As Veronica reaches the elevators, she sees the stairwell
door steadily closing as neither elevator was anywhere near
her floor.

STAIRWELL DOOR

Rushing through the door, she spots Anna descending to the
floors below.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

ANNA

I've got to get out of here!

STAIRWELL DOOR

Stopping and realizing that she cannot catch Anna, Veronica
is in complete awe of what just occurred.

HOTEL HALLWAY

REVEAL:

Heading back towards her room, Veronica is feeling discouraged that she let Anna run away feeling so bad.

BACK TO HUCK

Upon entering the room her thoughts are jumbled like the unwritten words of a scrabble board.

VERONICA

God, she was -- terrified... I need water. I just need to cool my face and gather my thoughts...

CUTAWAY TO: BATHROOM

REVEAL:

Entering the bathroom, the lights are out as she splashes water over her face in hopes that it will wash away her fears. Reaching behind her, she flips on the light switch.

Eyes still closed, Veronica dries her face in a towel.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Finally looking up and into the bathroom mirror, she suddenly notices a message taped to it! Tearing it off the mirror she heads back into the bedroom.

CU - MESSAGE

In a scribbled verse it reads:

We need to talk. Tonight. 1:00AM. The grand ballroom. -
MATT.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

What the?

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER

SUPER: 7:30AM

Attempting to gather her thoughts, Veronica sits down on the bed, replaying everything Anna told her.

BED

Leaning back onto the plush mattress, she DIGS her fingers into the comforter in an attempt to gather her thoughts.

Shaking her head, Veronica tries to make sense of the story.

Confused she reaches for the message. Waving it back and forth something is not adding up.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Out of the corner of her eye a red flashing light suddenly catches her attention. From the hotel phone centered on her desk it's blinking like a house alarm. Leaning forward for a better view, there seems to be a message.

PHONE

Picking up the phone and dialing the message line she listens intently.

AUTOMATED VOICE

You have one new message. To play
your messages press one.

Pressing the one key on the receiver, the message begins to play.

VINCE (V.O.)

Hey Veronica, this is Vince Schultz.
Jen and I arrived in this morning.
We're staying in room 1204. Give us
a call. I think we may need a couple
of practice runs to build some
familiarity before tonight's
broadcast. Talk to you soon.

Hanging up the phone Veronica dials room 1204. Answering with a surprised, yet confident tone, is Vince.

CUTAWAY TO: VINCE AND JEN'S HOTEL ROOM

VINCE and JEN SCHULTZ are a husband and wife team, where Vince operates the camera and Jen does the prep work.

Somewhat of a sportsman, Vince is in his early thirties with a brown ponytail and matching goatee. With his trademark combat boots, one would peg him for special forces before a cameraman. He's an Aussie.

Jen Schultz is actually of Asian descent. Short and thin, her shoulder length black hair is almost always in a ponytail, matching Vince.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Hello?

Vince is laying on the bed with the phone, while Jen is in the bathroom.

In the background, the OFF SCREEN sounds of the tv can be heard concerning a sportsman's hunting show.

INTERCUT: VERONICA AND VINCE

VERONICA

Vince. Its Veronica.

VINCE

Oh, you're already here?

VERONICA

Yeah, we touched down sometime shortly after five this morning. I've already talked with a few people in the lobby, including the front desk girl, the hotel manager, and one of the police officers.

VINCE

Did any of them tell you how they thought she might have fallen?

VERONICA

Actually its a little more serious than that. There's a report of two flashes of light before she went out the window.

VINCE

Flashes?

VERONICA

Gunshots.

Leaning up in his bed, vince realizes the seriousness surrounding Carmen's death.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

They've already taken the body for autopsy...

Picking up the rest of the phone, Veronica walks over to the window and looks out over the city.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I'm going to try and compile a list of who was here last night. Hopefully the witnesses are still willing to talk...

Grabbing the remote, Vince turns on the tv to find the local news following a car accident that just occurred on the freeway right by the hotel.

VINCE

Well, at least most of our reporting will be done here at the hotel.

VERONICA

Why do you say that?

VINCE

I just turned on the TV and the local news is showing a bad wreck on the highway. Evidently a car went off the overpass, and the girl driving it was killed. I wouldn't want to be caught in that mess.

BACK TO HUCK

Suddenly, Veronica drops the phone and dashes out the door.

VINCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Veronica? Veronica? Are you there?

As the receiver lies on the floor, the heavy door can be seen closing in the background.

VINCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Veronica? Veronica?

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

REVEAL:

Exiting the elevator doors, Veronica is in a panic. Spotting the front desk, Matt is running the counter. Running towards him, Veronica causes the surrounding officers to reach for their guns.

CUTAWAY TO: FRONT DESK

VERONICA

Matt! Where's Anna?

Caught off guard, Matt has no idea what Veronica is talking about.

MATT

What? Ms. Frenz! Please!

As the volume in her voice continues to rise, Veronica is frantic.

VERONICA

I need to know...

Noticing the commotion, Matt leans forward as he attempts to calm her.

MATT

Anna?

VERONICA

The accident! Was it her?

MATT

What? Anna? No, she's on her lunch break... I just saw her. It must have been...

REVEAL:

Spotting Veronica at the counter, officer Shaw decides to intervene. Approaching, he shouts her name in hopes that she will turn around.

OFFICER SHAW

Ms. Frenz...

Turning around, Veronica is somewhat uneasy in her expression.

VERONICA

The accident? The bad one on the freeway... was it her?

Guiding her off to the side, officer Shaw attempts to console her, as Matt just raises his hands in the air.

SIDE LOBBY

OFFICER SHAW

She's been taken to the hospital in critical condition...

VERONICA

Oh god.

Feeling defeated, it as if the air had just been sucked out of Veronica's sails.

OFFICER SHAW

We do not have any reason to believe that it was any more than a bad traffic accident. I'm sorry.

Sniffling, Veronica wipes her nose with the back of her hand.

Looking into Veronica's facial expression, officer Shaw suddenly realizes that Veronica may know a little more than she let on. Taking her by the arm, he pulls her further off to the side.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

You know more than you are letting on... I can see it in your face.

Staring at officer Shaw, her cloudy eyes and pursed lips convey knowledge of Anna's story.

VERONICA

She came by my room, and told me that the night of Ms. Pelaz's death, that she saw a black Mercedes out front. The car was on, but just sitting there in idle...

Staring intently into her eyes, officer Shaw does not blink.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

When she went to get a closer look the car sped off. She was terrified. She thought she may be next... Then she just ran off.

OFFICER SHAW

Where?

VERONICA

The stairwell. I tried to catch her...

OFFICER SHAW

And how did you know of the accident?

Suddenly getting the feeling that she's being questioned, Veronica becomes somewhat combative.

VERONICA

It's on the news...

Walking away, officer Shaw is immediately approached by additional POLICE OFFICERS.

BACK TO HUCK

After talking to him, one of them distinctly looks back at Veronica.

CUTAWAY TO: ELEVATORS

Back towards the elevators, a ding is heard, followed by Vince and Jen, rushing out of the doors.

Upon spotting Veronica, they run right up to her.

BACK TO HUCK

VINCE

Veronica! Are you okay?

Approaching Veronica, Jen has a look of worry across her face, as she wants to understand what happened.

JEN

Veronica, we were worried about you.
What happened?

VERONICA

It all just happened so fast. The front desk girl, Anna -- she was in that car accident.

VINCE

(confused)
What? You mean from the tv?

JEN

Oh my god -- that's terrible...

VINCE

I had no idea...

JEN

Well at least you're alright. You really had me worried when you dropped the phone.

VERONICA

I'm sorry guys. It all just happened so fast.

Staring off and down towards the floor Veronica remembers a similar event from her past.

FLASHBACK - INT. BANQUET HALL (CHICAGO) - NIGHT

SUPER: THE OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY, 2001

Inside the banquet hall, the commotion is overwhelming. OFFSCREEN sounds of MUSIC, CHATTING, and CLANGING plates are heard. Christmas colored streamers and balloons are all around, tied to tables, chairs, and even live band's drum set. Accommodating a few hundred guests the room is packed.

At her table, Veronica is sitting directly across from Jim and SHERRY, while other CO-WORKERS and their spouses fill the adjacent seats to the left and right.

Middle-aged and steadily balding, Jim has a medium build, dark hair, and glasses. Extremely confident, he's been in his current role for over twenty years.

SHERRY is Jim's highschool sweetheart, and thus know's everything about Jim. She is a middle-aged brunette with a beautiful smile. Wearing a Christmas sweater and matching earrings, she loves to attend the company Christmas party.

JIM

So Veronica, is that man of yours going to join us for the party?

VERONICA

(blushing)

Well, Charlie should be here shortly. He wouldn't miss Channel 7's Christmas party for anything.

JIM

(joking)

Hey better not. I ordered extra egg nog just for him.

Glancing at her watch, Veronica notices that Charlie is running late.

JIM (CONT'D)

Now haven't you two been dating for about four years now? I'll tell you, my wife had me on time in about four days!

SHERRY

It used to drive me nuts when he would show up late. Then he always blamed it on the car...

JIM

Hey, that Datsun was a great car. It didn't always run very well though...

Laughing about Jim's car, he and Sherry share a moment. In the middle Veronica's phone begins to BUZZ. Looking at it, Charlie's name is lit up.

CU - Phone

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY - PRESENT DAY

JEN

Well I think you need some rest, if only for a few hours. I'll call the hospital and check on her condition.

VINCE

Yeah. You've got our number.

Retracing their steps back towards the elevator, the three ascend to both of their floors like marbles in a pinball machine.

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Instantly Veronica finds herself back in the room. Eyeing the plush bed, its aura is appealing.

VERONICA

Just a few minutes...

Falling backward into the mattress, Veronica is put under an instant spell, where she immediately falls into a deep sleep.

REVEAL:

The R.E.M. sleep takes over, as Veronica's body starts twisting and turning as she goes into a cold sweat. Her dream is marred by the image of the black Mercedes, followed by Anna's car going off the overpass.

DREAM SEQUENCE - EXT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Sitting in idle, just past the Pelaz limo, the black Mercedes stalks its prey.

EXT. PASADENA FREEWAY - MORNING

Jarring loose through the freeway wall, Anna's Honda plunges over the side, as the impact crushes the frame and shatters the glass.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Shaking, Veronica's body is very uneasy with the images her mind is producing.

Sweating. Twisting. Turning.

Her head is shaking back and forth, still asleep, as she begins to visualize Carmen.

DREAM SEQUENCE - EXT. THE HOTEL SIDEWALK - NIGHT

The body of Carmen Pelaz shatters the hotel glass like rain as she falls to her death. The images, more and more graphic.

As the Mercedes speeds off, the license plate on the limo is starting to become clear.

Pe...Pel...Pela...Pelaz...PELAZ...PELAZ...PELAZ...PELAZ!

EXT. CHICAGO BLIZZARD - NIGHT

Driving, the Mustang locks up the breaks, as the faint outline of a kid on a bike brushes off the hood of the front left fender. Plunging over the side of the bridge, the car goes through the ice.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

REVEAL:

Veronica snaps awake as her eyes suddenly open. Shaking, she slowly calms herself as she wipes the sweat from her forehead.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Focusing on the fan blades above, she mouths out the word Pelaz in a faint whisper.

VERONICA
(whispering)
Pelaz...

Rising to her feet, she rushes over to the desk.

BEDROOM DESK

Picking up the receiver, she dials room 1204. Gripping it tight, her ear smothers the speaker.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Come on -- pick up.

Ringling once, twice, three times...

CUTAWAY TO: VINCE AND JEN'S HOTEL ROOM

JEN
Hello?

INTERCUT: VERONICA AND JEN

VERONICA

Jen. I think I'm onto something.
Pelaz!

JEN

What?

VERONICA

Zenadine Pelaz!

JEN

Zenadine Pelaz? I don't follow.

Looking up from lying on their bed, Vince recognizes the name.

VERONICA

Yeah, Zenadine Pelaz! It wasn't
Carmen's limo -- it was his! Why it
was there, I don't know, but he might
be involved...

JEN

Wow. Okay...

VERONICA

Tell Vince and let him know we're
meeting outside the lobby in twenty
minutes. It's time to shoot our
first report.

JEN

You got it.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOTEL - EVENING (SETTING SUN)

Veronica is standing out near the edge of the property, with the hotel and crime scene tape in the background. Directly in front of her, Vince is readying the camera while Jen is checking her notes.

VINCE

Okay Veronica, are you sure you're
ready?

VERONICA

Yeah. Let's go.

JEN

Okay. Then in three, two, one...

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

As Vince clicks the record button, Jen signals Veronica, that the first take is in progress.

INT. JIM'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Set to only channel 7, Jim looks up from his desk as Veronica comes on the tv.

CU - TV

VERONICA

Sometime around 2:00AM this morning, the body of famous Hollywood actress, Carmen Pelaz, was found here, twenty-four floors below the room registered to her name. An unimaginable tragedy, it appears as if she somehow fell through the thick double pane glass in the early hours of last night.

(pausing)

Details are foggy at the moment, but we do know that her body was immediately taken for autopsy. With that, the L.A.P.D. has not ruled out foul-play. There have been rumors of gunshots, a mysterious black Mercedes, and the limousine of her famous father, Zenadine Pelaz, spotted before her death.

(motioning behind her)

As one can see behind me, the early signs of a makeshift memorial are developing on the sidewalk near where Ms. Pelaz's body was found, and mourners have been visiting the site throughout the day.

Behind Veronica, photos, flowers, ribbons, cars, a teddy bear, and numerous lit candles line the the sidewalk in a makeshift memorial.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

One can only imagine what led to this most unimaginable tragedy. As Hollywood lies in shock, so does the rest of the country and the world abroad where she was deeply loved.

A wind blows a few strands of hair in front of her face
Veronica wipes them aside.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

In a related story, the woman who was manning the front desk last night, Anna Gershon, and who also may have been a witness in this case, is in critical condition tonight after her 2001, Honda Accord, went off an overpass near the Pasadena Freeway. For Channel 7 National News, this is Veronica Frenz reporting live, from Los Angeles, California.

REVEAL:

Leaning back in his chair, Jim is taken back by the gravity of both deaths.

EXT. AERIAL SHOTS OF LOS ANGELES AT NIGHT - NIGHT

Cars, taxis, trucks, and buses are all quietly moving through the downtown streets.

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

WINDOW

Standing in her hotel room, Veronica is peering out the window into the darkness. The moon is illuminating her profile. Washing over her like a hot flash is a keen sense of accomplishment, as she manages a slight smile. In an instant the smile fades...

VERONICA

I need to find her father...

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE - EXT. SAN DIEGO NAVAL AIR STATION - MORNING - (1981)

SUPER: SAN DIEGO NAVAL AIR STATION, 1981

Standing at the edge of the Navy tarmac a FIVE-YEAR OLD VERONICA, holds the left hand of her MOTHER. Dressed in a little flower dress, she only reaches her mother's waist. Her mother is dressed in a bright sun dress and matching shoes, with short shoulder-length hair.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Seeing her FATHER in the distance, a scared, little Veronica begins to call out for him. Dressed in a full flight suit, with short dark hair and matching mustache, his presence commands respect.

BACK TO HUCK

Reaching out for him, he's in her sights yet out of reach.

FIVE-YEAR-OLD VERONICA
Daddy... Daddy...

Holding on to her mothers leg, she begins CRY. In the distance, her father, who is just about to enter the cockpit of his A7 CORSAIR II, notices the cry of his little girl.

REVEAL:

Walking back down from the ladder, her father signals for one more minute, as he jogs towards Veronica and his wife.

BACK TO HUCK

Bending down, he grabs Veronica with his outreached arms.

FATHER
Don't cry baby... I need you to be
strong...

Holding on to him, she feels so safe in his arms.

FATHER (CONT'D)
You may not understand, but this is
who I am... and a pilot must fly.

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS - PRESENT DAY

Waking her from the daydream, the hotel room phone starts ringing in the background.

BEDROOM DESK

In hopes that its good news, she grabs the receiver and pulls it right to her ear.

VERONICA
Hello?

CUTAWAY TO: VINCE AND JEN'S HOTEL ROOM

Sitting in the desk chair, Vince is combing through his freshly written notes on the notepad in front of him. Jen is sitting on the bed, with notes, a phonebook, and an open pizza box.

VINCE
 Veronica, I wanted to call you and
 get you updated on something we just
 uncovered.

INTERCUT: VERONICA AND VINCE

VERONICA
 Yeah?

Turning around, Vince looks over at Jen.

VINCE
 Well, actually Jen uncovered it.

VERONICA
 Okay.

VINCE
 We've been trying to track down
 Zenadine Pelaz, and having a real
 hard time. Then, finally we had a
 break when we, actually when Jen
 tracked down where he keeps his
 private plane over at the Bob Hope
 Airport.

VERONICA
 Bob Hope Airport?

VINCE
 Yeah, its in Burbank.

VERONICA
 Okay...

VINCE
 Well, his plane left for Johannesburg,
 South Africa -- yesterday...

Walking over to the window and adjusting the blinds, Veronica
 looks out into the night.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

VERONICA
 South Africa?

VINCE
 That's what I said. Then we did a
 Google search on him, and sure enough,
 that's where he grew up, before he
 migrated to the U.S.

VERONICA

Wow. So did you guys have any luck tracking down why he's there now?

VINCE

No luck yet, but Jen's working on it.

VERONICA

Huh...

VINCE

Just keeping you in the loop.

BACK TO HUCK

Hanging up the phone, Veronica continues to look out the window into the night.

VERONICA

Why go home? Why now? Travel halfway around the world without telling anyone?

INT. HOTEL ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Entering the elevator, Veronica hits the button for the first floor, like a game of whack-a-mole.

Descending, the elevator begins to slow as she reaches floor number twelve. Coming to a complete stop, another patron must be getting on.

As the doors open CAESAR, an older hispanic man in a maintenance outfit gets onto the elevator. Short in stature, his black hair and moustache help to mask his timid physique. Unable to speak English he nods as if to say hello.

VERONICA

Hello.

Inspecting his suit, Veronica can see his name tag: Caesar Ramirez. Leaning back again, she suddenly realizes that he must be the maintenance man who saw the gunshots.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Hey -- were you the one who was outside last night -- fixing the motion lights?

CAESAR

(nodding)

Oh, ah, main-ten-ance.

VERONICA

You were fixing the motion light,
right? Was that you?

Understanding Veronica, Caesar nods faster and forces a timid smile.

CAESAR

Ah, Si, Si!

Realizing what Veronica is referring to now, a frown crosses his face as his eyes slowly cloud over.

VERONICA

Did you see flashes of light? Um,
Lunas dos?

Extending her right hand Veronica holds out two fingers, much like a peace sign. Somewhat confused, Caesar unexpectedly realizes what Veronica is referring to.

CAESAR

Ah! Si senorita. A destellos de la
luz.

VERONICA

And you're positive of this?

Holding out his hand now, Caesar is making the PEACE SIGN.

CAESAR

Si. A destellos de la luz.

VERONICA

(nodding)
Gracias, Caesar.

Managing a faint smile, Caesar nods his head.

Upon reaching the ground floor the elevator doors begin to open. Extending his hand towards the doors as if to say, you go first, Caesar waits as Veronica exits.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Exiting the elevator, Veronica then heads straight for the Grand Ballroom.

GRAND BALLROOM

Entering the Grand Ballroom, it is completely black, as no lights are on. Letting go of the door it quietly shuts behind her.

VERONICA

Matt?

Just then, a shadow jumps! As a warm hand covers her mouth, another wraps around her waist!

VERONICA (CONT'D)

(muffled)

Mmm! Mmm!

MATT

(whispering)

Veronica! Veronica! It's okay! It's me, Matt...

Slowly releasing pressure, Matt removes his hand from her mouth. Somewhat pissed off, Veronica responds in quick whisper.

VERONICA

What was that Matt?!? What the hell is going on?!?

MATT

I'm sorry, I had to make sure we were quiet. I have some important information for you. Over the last couple of weeks I've seen Ms. Pelaz here, more than once, accompanied by Mr. Vander.

VERONICA

What? Vander?

MATT

Yeah. Jason Vander -- the actor...

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE - INT. CARMEN'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

SUPER: TWO WEEKS EARLIER

MATT

I was delivering white rose petals to her room. She always requested them. She believed they were cleansing -- a rebirth of sorts... And we always try to cater to our clients needs...

Laying in together in bed, Jason has his arms wrapped around Carmen. They're both awake.

As Carmen rolls over, she and Jason share a moment, staring into each others eyes. As she raises her hand to his face, his arm pulls her close.

CARMEN
You make me feel loved...

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF CARMEN'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Politely knocking on the door, Matt is waiting outside with a fresh bouquet of white rose petals.

MATT'S P.O.V.

A few moments pass before the door is opened by a GLOWING Carmen Pelaz.

MATT (O.S.)
When she opened the door, she was just staring at me with those big eyes, giddy as a schoolgirl.

CARMEN
(smiling)
Rose petals -- my favorite! Come on in...

INT. CARMEN'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Walking in, JASON VANDER is lying in bed, the sheets only halfway up his torso. Muscular in stature, he has a thin build with short brown hair, blue eyes, and trademark wide smile. On his left pectoral he has the Kanji Zen character tattooed in black ink.

MATT (O.S.)
So the moment I walk in, there he is laying there in her bed...

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. GRAND BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS - PRESENT DAY

MATT
I didn't think anything of it at the time, but looking back...

VERONICA
Jason Vander is married Matt.

MATT
Yeah -- I know. I've never seen him here with his wife.

VERONICA
Never?

MATT

Never. Gossip usually spreads like wildfire here in L.A., but I hadn't seen that anywhere. From what I've heard, they were both cast for an action movie called Decoys. Supposedly its been filming for the last couple of weeks.

VERONICA

So does his wife know?

MATT

I don't know. All I know is that Jason Vander was in this hotel last night.

Without warning, a noise is heard. Someone is outside the door!

MATT (CONT'D)

Quick! Get down under the table...

Ducking down as if they were playing a game of hide-and-seek, Veronica and Matt both disappear under the tablecloth.

UNDER THE TABLE

There is a sound of the door opening. Looking towards the door, the black leather shoes of someone can be seen first entering, then pausing for a moment, before finally exiting, as the door slowly closes behind them.

Stepping out from under the table, they both stand up.

MATT (CONT'D)

I've probably already told you too much, but with what happened to Anna, I have to be prepared for my safety.

VERONICA

Well, have you already told police of any of this? I'm sure they could protect you if...

MATT

Look. If I told the L.A.P.D. about this I may wind up just like Anna, or just like Ms. Pelaz. I'm telling you, so you can expose whoever committed these crimes, regardless of how much power they have in L.A.

VERONICA

Well, thanks for your help Matt.
I'll look into Vander as well as the
wife.

MATT

Hollywood owns this town Veronica.
Don't forget that. And just so you
know, this conversation never
happened.

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM, DESK - MORNING

SUPER: WEDNESDAY

Sitting at her desk, Veronica is scribbling some notes, when she decides to pick up the phone. Putting the receiver up to her ear, she dials room 1204. One ring. Two rings. Then, answering in an energized tone is Jen. She either slept very well, or she has new information.

CUTAWAY TO: VINCE AND JEN'S HOTEL ROOM

JEN

Hello?

INTERCUT: VERONICA AND JEN

VERONICA

Hey Jen, its me.

JEN

Hey Veronica. I hope you slept well.
What's up?

VERONICA

I need a few phone numbers, and I'd rather not deal with any publicists if we don't have to. I need you to track down Jason and Courtney Vander, as well as a representative on the behalf of Zenadine Pelaz. The latter may be harder to find.

Looking over her shoulder, Jen has the tv on channel 7, as a nicely made bed sits adjacent. Vince, already gone, left the hotel a few hours earlier.

JEN

Okay. Jason and Courtney Vander may take a minute. On Mr. Pelaz though, his personal assistant is supposed to read a statement on behalf of the family in the next minute or so. Aren't you watching it?

VERONICA

What? What channel?

JEN

Umm, Channel 7 of course. Vince is already down there. He tried calling you and even stopped by your room. He assumed you were already there.

Confused, Veronica, checking her cell phone sees the missed call from Vince.

VERONICA

Shit. I must be jet-lagged.

Putting the phone down and looking for the remote, Veronica finds it on the night stand, just where the maid had left it. Picking it up, she hits the power button, and changes the channels until finally reaching channel 7.

JEN

It looks like they're right about to open the gate.

CU - TV

Live from the mansion of Zenadine Pelaz, a podium has been set up outside the front gate, where local film crews have been anxiously awaiting a response from the family. A few moments pass before the front gates suddenly begin to open, leaving this impenetrable fortress instantly vulnerable.

EXT. THE PELAZ MANSION - MORNING

FRONT GATE

As the film crews ready themselves, the Pelaz limo idles through the gate like the timid head of a tortoise.

REVEAL:

Turning on his camera, and chewing on a fresh stick of gum, Vince is ready to start filming. Hitting record, the live feed is active.

PODIUM

Stepping out of the limousine, SHELLY WINSTON, Mr. Pelaz's personal assistant, is dressed in a sheer white blouse, onyx skirt, and glasses with progressive frames.

She walks up to the podium, statement in hand, stilettos below. Matching her almond eyes, her dark brown hair is held up with a pin. Looking out over the crowd, she smiles, just before looking down to read the document.

SHELLY WINSTON

Good morning. I would like to say that on behalf of the family of Mr. Pelaz, we have been struck with grief and guilt ever since we learned of Carmen's death, in the early hours of last night. We would appreciate privacy and understanding over this matter, as an investigation continues into the events that lead to her death. In wake of flowers, donations may be sent to the Africa Needs You, campaign, of which the family has been an avid proponent.

Looking down at the document, Shelly folds the sheet of paper, creasing it with her hands. Looking up, she concludes.

SHELLY WINSTON (CONT'D)

Mr. Pelaz will not be making an appearance today. Thank you.

Walking away, she is seen being greeted by officer Shaw, who guides her back to the limo. Behind them, the OFF SCREEN voices of LOCAL NEWS CREWS can be heard, like a pack of dogs begging for a scrap. Unfortunately Ms. Winston isn't the generous type.

As she gets back into the limo, the driver shifts into reverse and begins to steadily back up through the driveway. Once fully passing the gate sensor, the sound of TURNING IRON is heard as the gate slowly closes.

Upon closure of the gate, officer Shaw, walks up to the podium to address the local news crews.

OFFICER SHAW

There will be no further comments from the family today as an open investigation is proceeding. The results from the autopsy should be available shortly, further shedding light on this case.

FRONT GATE

Stepping away from the podium, OFF SCREEN commotion erupts. Returning to his fellow L.A.P.D. officers, the camera steadies on officer Shaw, as they gather in a circle.

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

VERONICA

No mention of his trip to Africa...

CUTAWAY TO: VINCE AND JEN'S HOTEL ROOM

JEN

Nope. I wanted to tell you though that I did manage to track down some interesting information.

(checking her notes)

We got a tip from a valet attendant downstairs that said he saw Vander in a shouting match with another individual. He said the guy acted like he knew Vander from somewhere and was shouting that he needed to back off. He said the guy was about 6'1", around 185lbs had his hair slicked straight back.

INTERCUT: VERONICA AND JEN

VERONICA

Ex-boyfriend?

JEN

I did a little research and found a guy named Gabriel Throckmorton.

VERONICA

Throckmorton?

JEN

Yeah, you may have seen him.

VERONICA

(confused)

It's not ringing any bells...

JEN

Get out your phonebook.

DESK DRAWER

Opening up and rummaging through the hotel desk drawer, Veronica finds the phonebook.

VERONICA

Okay...

JEN

Now turn it over.

VERONICA

Hmm.

Flipping it over, there he is.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

(stunned)

Wow.

PHONEBOOK

Studying the picture she wedges the phone between her shoulder and her ear.

The picture has GABRIEL THROCKMORTON, standing tall with both arms crossed, and a library of law books behind him. Sharp, he's dressed in a black suit and tie. His dark hair is slicked back and his moustache is pencil thin. The stern expression on his face exudes confidence.

JEN

He's a founding partner of Throckmorton, Landing, & Lens. A big prosecutor here in L.A. Evidently he and Pelaz used to be an item before her last couple movies took her out of his league.

VERONICA

Hey Jen?

Turning off the tv, Jen sits back down on the bed.

JEN

Yeah?

VERONICA

Good work.

As Veronica is mid sentence, Jen's cell phone begins to vibrate. Vince is calling.

JEN

Oh, hey, Vince is calling. Hold on a sec.

As Jen sets the hotel phone down, Veronica can hear her talking to Vince in the background.

JEN (CONT'D)

Hey Hun. Uh huh. Yeah I found her... She overslept. Yep, we both saw it. Crazy isn't it.

Veronica is still listening intently on her end of the phone.

JEN (CONT'D)

Oh you did? Great. Veronica will be pleased. Okay, I will. Talk to you later. Drive safe. Bye.

Placing the cell phone down, Jen picks the hotel phone back up.

JEN (CONT'D)

Veronica?

VERONICA

Yeah?

JEN

Vince managed to track down Courtney Vander. She said she's willing to speak with you only, and that if you wanted this story, then you should meet her at the Los Angeles Central Library at noon.

VERONICA

What did he tell her?

JEN

That you'd see her there, of course.

Looking down towards the carpet Veronica manages a grin as the sun shines in.

JEN (CONT'D)

Oh, and one last thing...

VERONICA

Yeah?

JEN

The front desk girl didn't make it. She was pronounced dead late last night.

EXT. LOS ANGELES CENTRAL LIBRARY - DAY

It's a mildly cloudy day as an oncoming rain shower is evident. Taxis, cars, and other trucks are hastily driving past as the echoes of OFF SCREEN honking horns bounce through the air. Some LIBRARY PATRONS are sitting outside reading on the sidewalks as well as under the occasional tree.

COURTNEY VANDER (V.O.)

Tell her to meet me at the Los Angeles Central Library at noon. When she enters the building, she needs to go to the 3rd floor, then sit down at the first table she sees.

VINCE (O.S.)

Well how will she find you?

COURTNEY VANDER (V.O.)

I'll find her.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Exiting the taxi cab, Veronica looks up to take in the the magnitude of the Los Angeles Central Library.

FRONT WALKWAY

Walking towards the building, the entrance is a set of black glass doors. Pulling open the door, she allows herself in.

CUTAWAY TO: FRONT ENTRANCE

Once inside, she walks towards the escalators.

ESCALATOR

Ascending to the third floor, there are multiple tables in front of her.

TABLE

Deciding on the open one to the left, Veronica walks over, setting her purse down. Taking out the tape recorder and notepad, she pulls out a chair and sits down. Taking in her surroundings, she begins to study the crowd.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

VERONICA (O.S.)

Well, I'm here. Now where is she?

Continuing to wait, the vision of an odd mannered patron catches her eyes.

ESCALATOR

Getting closer now, the woman is wearing a long white dress, matching blouse, black boots, and a pair of jet black rimmed sunglasses. Her blond hair is tied back, while a designer purse is on her arm. Stomping her boots across the floor, COURTNEY VANDER introduces herself.

TABLE

COURTNEY VANDER

Ms. Frenz?

VERONICA

Yes.

COURTNEY VANDER

Courtney Vander.

VERONICA

Please, sit down.

Pulling out the chair, Courtney Vander sits down, sunglasses still on. Placing her purse on the desk, she begins to look over her shoulder, giving off the impression that she has somewhere else that she would rather be.

COURTNEY VANDER

I wanted to meet with you only, so you could get the right story out there.

Nodding her head and clicking record on the tape recorder, Veronica slides her notepad in front of her. Lifting the pen she's ready.

REVEAL:

Looking UNEASY at the recorder, Courtney begins to get agitated.

COURTNEY VANDER (CONT'D)

Actually, I would appreciate it if you didn't record this.

BACK TO HUCK

VERONICA

Oh?

COURTNEY VANDER

That's not a request.

VERONICA

(surprised)

Okay.

Reaching for the recorder and pressing the stop button, Veronica places it back into her purse.

COURTNEY VANDER

Now I guess it all started when he was cast for Decoys...

VERONICA

Jason that is?

Biting her lip, TENSION washes over Courtney's face.

COURTNEY VANDER

Yeah...

Glancing around the room, Courtney checks to make sure no one else is listening in.

COURTNEY VANDER (CONT'D)

He started to be more and more distant with each day that he spent on that set. At first I thought it was me, and that maybe I was doing something wrong. He had no interest in us or the life that we had built together...

Scribbling notes, Veronica hastily writes on the piece of paper.

VERONICA

Okay...

FLASHBACK - EXT. SET OF DECOYS - DAY

COURTNEY VANDER (O.S.)

So, one day I decide to surprise him out on the set. I wanted to take him to lunch, but when I got there, I came to find out that he hadn't been there all day long.

Courtney Vander is seen talking to the DIRECTOR, an older gentleman, slightly overweight, who motions, shaking his head, that Jason hasn't been there all day.

CUTAWAY TO: THE PARKING LOT

Standing outside of her car, Courtney is pacing back and forth as the phone continues to ring on Jason's end.

COURTNEY VANDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

So I tried his cell phone and got no answer.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. LOS ANGELES CENTRAL LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS - PRESENT DAY

COURTNEY VANDER

At that point I was living every wife's worst nightmare. I knew it was another woman.

Nodding in agreement, Veronica continues to scribble notes onto the paper.

COURTNEY VANDER (CONT'D)

So I left. Later that evening when he came home, he was completely unresponsive towards me.

(MORE)

COURTNEY VANDER (CONT'D)

So, I told him I stopped by the set, to which he asked what time, then just said that he must have been out playing golf.

(shaking her head)

He never had his golf clubs with him. I know this because when I arrived home his clubs were sitting in the garage.

Starting to become upset, Courtney's emotions are still raw from the memory.

COURTNEY VANDER (CONT'D)

It didn't make any sense...

VERONICA

Did you ask him about this?

COURTNEY VANDER

(crying)

No. Later, when I was back home I decided to call the studio. I wanted to find out if they had given him any time off, and they told me that Friday they wouldn't need him.

Placing the pen down, Veronica reaches into her purse. Pulling out a tissue, she hands it to Courtney.

COURTNEY VANDER (CONT'D)

Finally, Friday arrived, and I knew I had to follow him.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE - INT. COURTNEY VANDER'S AUDI - DAY

REVEAL:

Driving a good distance behind Jason, a suspicious Courtney Vander follows her husband down the highway.

PARKING GARAGE

Exiting the highway, Jason drives straight into the Westin parking garage, where he proceeds to leave his car.

COURTNEY VANDER (O.S.)

Eventually he went in the parking garage to the Westin.

Exiting the vehicle, he enters the hotel.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MORNING

FRONT DESK

Heading straight to the front desk, he asks Anna for Carmen's room number, while smiling and flirting with her.

REVEAL:

In the distance near the elevator, Courtney watches from around the corner of the wall.

ELEVATORS

COURTNEY VANDER (O.S.)
 Following him, I kept my distance.
 Then I actually saw him go all the
 way to the front desk and ask what
 room she was staying in!

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. LOS ANGELES CENTRAL LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS - PRESENT DAY

VERONICA
 Oh, my...

COURTNEY VANDER
 Yeah. That bitch at the front desk
 gives him her room number and says
 something about how it's on the 24th
 floor as usual, just a different
 room.

VERONICA
 Who?

Taking off her sunglasses, Courtney slams them down on the desk.

COURTNEY VANDER
 Carmen Pelaz!

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE - HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

COURTNEY'S P.O.V.

Turning away from the counter, Jason heads to the elevators, as Courtney ducks behind the corner.

ELEVATORS

As Jason enters the elevator, the doors slowly close.

COURTNEY VANDER (O.S.)
 I watched him get into the elevator.
 As soon as the door closed, I took
 the next elevator to the 24th floor.

Courtney, no longer hiding, runs into an adjacent elevator.

HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF CARMEN'S HOTEL ROOM

Five seconds behind him, she exits just in time to catch him entering Carmen's suite.

COURTNEY VANDER (O.S.)
 I followed him until he entered her
 room. Room 2440...

CU - ROOM SIGN: 2440

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. LOS ANGELES CENTRAL LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS - PRESENT DAY

Courtney Vander is now shaking like an earthquake, and crying like a lonely Texas thunderstorm.

COURTNEY VANDER
 (crying)
 I couldn't believe it! That asshole!
 He threw away everything we had!
 Everything!

Reaching back into her purse, Veronica takes the entire tissue packet and places it on the table.

VERONICA
 Here.

Reaching for the tissues Courtney takes a handful.

COURTNEY VANDER
 I was standing outside the door, and
 I could hear them laughing and
 flirting inside... I almost threw
 up. I had get out of there as soon
 as possible, so I went straight home.
 I cried the whole way.

VERONICA
 Is there anything after that?

COURTNEY VANDER
 (snapping back)
 What? No! There's not anything after
 that! What else would there be!?!

VERONICA

I'm sorry.

COURTNEY VANDER

You know what?!? You reporters are all alike! You pray on people's feelings! If it was your husband you would be destroyed too!

Upset, Courtney Vander jumps out of her seat, knocking the wooden chair back. Lifting up her black sunglasses, she unfolds them, putting them on with both hands.

COURTNEY VANDER (CONT'D)

Now you've got the story. Tell the whole world how she wrecked our marriage!

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Running past Veronica, Courtney heads straight to the escalators.

CUTAWAY TO: ESCALATORS

Pushing her way through other patrons Courtney descends the moving stairs.

VERONICA (O.S.)

I need to follow her.

REVEAL:

Getting out of her chair like a bullet being fired from a shotgun, Veronica heads for the escalator.

CUTAWAY TO: ESCALATORS

A good fifty yards behind Courtney, she's still in hot pursuit as she passes numerous escalator patrons.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Excuse me! Sorry! Excuse me! Sorry!

FRONT ENTRANCE

As Courtney runs out the front door, she's got a good ten-second jump on Veronica.

Finally making her way to and through the front door, Veronica stops to catch her breath.

EXT. LOS ANGELES CENTRAL LIBRARY - DAY

Looking at the street she sees Courtney Vander just as she's closing the door to a taxi.

VERONICA

Shit!

Stopped, Veronica takes a deep breath. Then, heading for the street, she raises her arms in an attempt to HAIL A TAXI.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Taxi!!! Taxi!!!

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Looking around, it just happens by a stroke of bad luck that no taxis are there to be found. Unable to catch her in time, Courtney Vander is gone.

Digging into her purse Veronica rummages until she finds her cellphone. Calling Vince, she presses her ear to the receiver as she listens to it ring.

Just as Vince answers, Veronica starts talking before he has a chance to say hello.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Vince!

CUTAWAY TO: A LOCAL COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Walking out the front door, Vince has two coffees in his hand, while his cell phone is wedged between his shoulder and his head. Looking around he spots Jen sitting at one of the tables under an umbrella.

VINCE

Yeah, what's up?

INTERCUT: VERONICA AND VINCE

VERONICA

I need you to find out what kind of car Courtney Vander drives... Specifically a black Mercedes with limo tint.

Approaching the table he sets the coffees down, mouthing the word Veronica without any sound to Jen.

VINCE

You think she's involved?

VERONICA

Maybe. She was really upset.

A gust of wind blows her hair back.

VINCE

Understandable, but we're talking about murder.

Looking around Veronica, checks her surroundings.

VERONICA

I don't know. By the look in her eyes... Did you have any luck finding Jason?

Jen is now pointing to the phone.

VINCE

No. I haven't been able to find him. Hey, hold on one second. Jen wants to talk to you.

Handing the phone across the table to Jen, she puts the receiver up to her ear.

JEN

Hey Veronica.

VERONICA

Yeah?

JEN

I wanted to let you know that I tried calling the law firm, but each time I called the secretary told me he wasn't there or or was unavailable.

VERONICA

You think he's dodging us?

JEN

It definitely feels that way.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Looking around at all of the large, looming buildings, Veronica spots a large cluster of skyscrapers.

VERONICA

In that case I'm going over there now. Where's their office from here?

JEN

Its actually right around the corner from you. They have an entire floor in the Executive Tower.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Looking off to her right Veronica notices a large cluster of buildings. One in particular though, is taller than the rest, thus commanding respect. Instinctively she knows that's most likely where he is.

VERONICA

Got it. If you see officer Shaw, let him know I have some information for him...

JEN

Will do.

VERONICA

I imagine they'll be conducting a briefing later this afternoon. I'll call you guys when I return so we can get together and run over each other's notes before tonight's broadcast.

JEN

Okay. Hey Veronica?

BACK TO HUCK

VERONICA

Yeah?

JEN (V.O.)

Be careful over there...

EXT. EXECUTIVE TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Approaching the building, it looms over, casting an endless shadow upon the streets below. The fine architecture and tinted glass is sharp and precise in all aspects. Like Throckmorton, it's presence is intimidating.

CUTAWAY TO: LOBBY

Pulling open the door and heading straight to the elevators, the signs next to the elevator doors indicate, which businesses operate on which floors.

ELEVATORS

Reading the sign, Veronica sees the law firm.

CU - BUSINESS SIGN, which reads:

Throckmorton, Landing, and Lens - 35

INSIDE THE ELEVATOR

Stepping inside the elevator, and hitting the button for the thirty-fifth floor, questions are racing through Veronica's mind like balls in a lottery machine. Making hand gestures to herself, she's now thinking aloud.

VERONICA
So you two had a falling out?

A beat.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
What's your opinion on Vander?

A beat.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Where were you on the night of
Carmen's death?

HALLWAY

As the elevator doors open, the hallway leads to a set of fogged glass doors. A dark wood plaque reads: Throckmorton, Landing & Lens.

INT. OFFICE WAITING ROOM - DAY

Opening the door, the RECEPTIONIST eyes Veronica with a subtle disdain, before greeting her with a not-so-friendly, hello. With stunning blonde hair, long legs, and natural beauty she's almost perfect with the exception of her bitchy attitude.

RECEPTIONIST
Hi. What can I do for you?

Looking to her right, a BUSINESSMAN is sitting in one of the waiting room chairs. With thinning brown hair and no facial hair, his body is past its prime as his stomach shows. Wearing a long black coat, he's reading the comic section of the newspaper and laughing to himself.

Glancing over, he looks Veronica up and down, then goes back to the paper.

VERONICA

Hi, Veronica Frenz with Channel 7 National News. I'd like to speak with Mr. Throckmorton -- if he's available.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry Ms. Frenz, but he is unavailable right now. Have you scheduled an appointment?

VERONICA

Actually, my assistant already tried to -- numerous times... I'd appreciate it if you would let him know that I'm not going anywhere.

INT. GABRIEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Looking from the security screens in his office, Gabriel can see Veronica and the receptionist going back and forth, jarring.

GABRIEL (O.S.)

(British accent)

It appears I shall have to handle this myself...

REVEAL:

Standing up and walking to the door he cracks it to see Veronica talking to the receptionist.

Shutting the door and pressing his back against it, Gabriel has hands flat against the wood. His nerves are tense, as clammy sweat has started to form on his forehead.

Dotting his brow lightly with a silk handkerchief, he decides to open his office door.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Hello, Ms. Frenz. I heard you've been trying to reach me. Please come in.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Large in stature, Gabriel's black hair is slicked straight back, while his dark eyes are as cold as limestone.

CUTAWAY TO: INSIDE GABRIEL'S OFFICE

Walking through the office door, Gabriel guides her through with his hand held out.

REVEAL:

Looking back at the receptionist, Gabriel nods, giving her the okay.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

A few minutes...

WAITING ROOM

UPSET, the receptionist sits down in COMPLIANCE.

GABRIEL'S P.O.V.

Then glancing and making eye contact with the gentleman in the waiting room, Gabriel nods in his direction.

WAITING ROOM

Getting up, the man in the waiting room, walks towards the door and exits the office.

BACK TO HUCK

Inside Gabriel's office, the large interior is lined with fine cherry floors. His large cherry desk, centered among the many buck heads that line the walls. The grand office windows look directly out onto the streets below.

In front of the desk are two fine leather office chairs. Pulling one of them out, Gabriel gestures with his hand for Veronica to sit down.

Physically grand and intimidating, he often refers to his office as "The Lion's Den."

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Please...

DESK

Walking around to his end of the desk, Gabriel sits down in his fine leather chair. Leaning forward, both of his hands are clasped.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

So, what brings you to my office?

Setting down her purse and lifting her notepad, Veronica takes out a pen and begins to scribble notes.

VERONICA

Well, I'd like to ask you about your relationship with Carmen Pelaz. You were together?

GABRIEL

(easing back)

That was a long time ago Ms. Frenz.
From what I've heard -- she moved
on.

VERONICA

There's a lot of people that say you
couldn't let her go. There's even
rumors that you had been following
her. What would you say to that?

GABRIEL

(smiling)

Hmm... It's funny how people I've
never met, claim to know my life
better than I. What is it exactly
that you're looking for? May I remind
you that I am a lawyer, and I've
played this game before...

VERONICA

I need to know what happened -- what
really happened -- and asking her ex-
lover where he was on the night of
her death is certainly a valid
question.

GABRIEL

(leaning forward)

I've already given my testimony,
however, since you insist, I was on
a date that night with a beautiful
woman. I've always had a thing for
blonde birds and my secretary fits
that profile. She'll gladly testify
on my behalf.

(sighing)

Now as for Carmen, from what I know,
she moved on with some actor.

VERONICA

You're referring to Vander?

GABRIEL

If that's his name. It's really of
no interest to me. I have game heads
with more personality. His acting
is robust and crude.

Continuing to jot notes, Veronica is scribbling away.

VERONICA

What do you know about him?

GABRIEL

(leaning back)

About as much as you do. His flash extorted her, and as naive as she was, she ate it up. Now look where she is...

WINDOW

Standing up, Gabriel casually walks over to the window, looking down upon the streets below. In a serious tone, he reveals his true feelings.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

(somber)

I loved her. More than anyone. More than her father, and definitely more than that hack actor.

VERONICA

Did you feel betrayed?

Disregarding Veronica's question, Gabriel changes the subject.

GABRIEL

Do you know I've spent twenty years in this court system?

Writing, Veronica's pen suddenly stops.

Starting fairly quietly, Gabriel chuckles to himself, shortly before shaking his head back and forth.

Putting her pen down, Veronica fixates on him.

Staring out the window, Gabriel suddenly looks down at his elegant watch.

WATCH

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, but I have an appointment and really must get going.

WINDOW

Shifting his mood completely, the feeling of losing Carmen overwhelms him. Grimacing, he lifts his arm, pointing towards the door.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

(quiet)

Get out.

Shocked, Veronica gathers her things.

WAITING ROOM

Opening the office door, Veronica passes the receptionist who waves a sly good-bye. The man in the waiting room is now gone.

EXT. EXECUTIVE TOWER - AFTERNOON

Exiting the building, the wind is blowing through the street corridor as Veronica's hair catches her lip. Looking up, the sky is dark, as the black clouds begin to open up.

Standing under the awning Veronica is shuffling through her purse, looking for her cell phone. Shaking her head in frustration, she cannot seem to put together the awkward encounter that just took place.

Finally finding the phone, she begins to wave her hand in the air as she flags down a taxi. Running towards it, the rain begins to pour down.

INT. TAXI CAB - AFTERNOON

Hopping inside, Veronica barks directions at the driver.

VERONICA

The Westin.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Nodding his head, the driver lets off the brake, as he turns on the wipers.

BACKSEAT

Dialing Vince on the cellphone, Veronica places it to her ear as she glances out the window. After just one ring, Vince picks up.

CUTAWAY TO: THE LOBBY

VINCE

Veronica -- you need to get here now... Something's come up.

INTERCUT: VERONICA AND VINCE

VERONICA

Yeah?

VINCE

They've received word of the preliminary autopsy results.

VERONICA

Are you serious? How the hell did they get them in so fast?

VINCE

Stature. They're doing a press conference in five...

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Checking her watch, Veronica has plenty of time.

VERONICA

Okay, well I'm just around the corner. Were you ever able to find Jason Vander?

VINCE

Nope, but I'd be willing to bet the police have.

VERONICA

We need to find him.

VINCE

Easier said than done. He hasn't been seen publicly in days. He's living through the back doors of Hollywood...

INT. THROCKMORTON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Gabriel's office, now darker than before due to the falling rain outside, is casting shadows off the walls.

REVEAL:

Gabriel is sitting at his desk with his head in his hands.

FLASHBACK - INT. HIGH END RESTAURANT - DAY

Sitting at the table, Gabriel, JUDGE BOBBY GRAY, and ALAN, have just arrived and are sipping their first drinks.

The judge is drinking a martini. With a thick mustache, and large frame, he could be mistaken for an opera singer. Alan on the the hand, is thin with glasses, and a relaxed demeanor. He and Gabriel both have Crown and Sprite.

Showing them the ring in the little box, Gabriel is on top of the world.

ALAN

Wow. That's quite a ring.

JUDGE BOBBY GRAY

(smiling)

A very good choice Gabriel. About time you treated someone other than yourself.

GABRIEL

(sarcastic/smiling)

Looks like I'll be downgrading your Christmas gift from the ninety-seven Dom Romane Conti to a bottle of Night Train.

Extending his finger, Gabriel flips off the Judge.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Well, you guys are going to have to excuse me. I need to use the men's room.

Standing up, he places his napkin on the table and heads for the bathroom.

CUTAWAY TO: RESTAURANT HALLWAY

Walking towards the bathroom, a pudgy little SERVER balancing a a platter of food approaches. Stepping to the side, Gabriel lets them pass, when out of the corner of his eye he catches Carmen.

GABRIEL'S P.O.V.

Noticing Carmen he can't quite see who she's eating with.

REVEAL:

Smiling, he shifts a little further to the left to reveal a man... Jason Vander.

GABRIEL'S P.O.V.

Just then, Carmen extends her hand towards his face as he grabs it, gently kissing her fingers. Then she leans in as they share a passionate kiss.

REVEAL:

Distraught, Gabriel is completely destroyed. Shaking, sweat is beginning to form over his brow, as he tries to hold back tears.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. OFFICE WAITING ROOM - AFTERNOON - PRESENT DAY

From her desk, Gabriel's receptionist, hears the sounds of loud opera music followed by the faint sound of crying. Confused, she gets out of her chair and heads to the doorway of his office, knocking quietly on the open door.

DOORWAY

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Throckmorton?

Hearing her voice, Gabriel responds, with his head still in his hands.

GABRIEL

What is it?

RECEPTIONIST

Is there something I can do?

DESK

Hearing her words he raises his head, while wiping his nose with the back of his hand.

GABRIEL

You know disrespect can undermine even the greatest talent... I don't like her. Not one bit. And Carmen...

REVEAL:

The receptionist is VERY UNEASY as she stands in the doorway.

DESK

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Leave me be.

OFFICE WAITING ROOM

Shutting the door quietly behind her, the receptionist steps out, feeling sorry for him.

Suddenly, the receptionist is startled as the OFF SCREEN sounds of a SHATTERING lamp amongst numerous DESK CONTENTS BEING SHOVED TO THE FLOOR, can be heard from behind the door.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - EVENING

Marching into the lobby, Veronica can see its buzzing like a freshly stepped on ant hill, with everyone entering and exiting the grand ballroom.

CUTAWAY TO: GRAND BALLROOM

Stepping just inside the door, Veronica sizes up the crowded room. Amongst the set up folding chairs random members of THE PRESS and local news outlets have gathered amongst the adjoining OFFICERS.

PODIUM

Behind the podium, officer Shaw, shuffles through a few papers, before finally walking up to the microphone.

OFFICER SHAW

For the matter at hand...

Stalling, officer Shaw slowly LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

Just fifteen minutes ago we received the preliminary autopsy results regarding the body of Ms. Pelaz.

(taking a deep breath)

It does appear that the cause of death was blunt force trauma to the head, resulting in severe brain injury and hemorrhage. We do believe that her impact with the ground below her room was what directly lead to her expiration. Furthermore, not only was she with child, but...

At mid sentence the entire room goes silent. Looking into the facial expressions of the press, officer Shaw is finding great difficulty in expressing the next sentence.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

There were also two bullets removed from her body.

Sounds of OFF SCREEN gasps are heard throughout the crowd as if the last breath of air was sucked clean from the room. The realness and gravity of her murder sets in like a pair of concrete shoes.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

The first bullet was removed from the lower section of her throat, while the second appeared to have lodged into her abdomen.

The words echo like raindrops.

REVEAL:

Veronica holding her hand over her mouth, is taken back, just as everyone else, feeling sadness and human emotion for Carmen.

GRAND BALLROOM

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

At this point we do not have a murder weapon. However, the ballistics testing is showing that both bullets found are most likely consistent with that of a Colt 45 automatic pistol. There are also witnesses in nearby rooms that reported hearing shots fired.

Leaning forward, officer Shaw grasps the podium with both hands.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

There are a few individuals whom we do consider suspects. Mainly, it's the people that were near her in the moments before her death. We are investigating their alibis.

Reading further notes from the paper in front of him, officer Shaw continues.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

Conflicting reports pin her at an after hours party as well as at a local nightclub with friends. We have not been able to confirm either report.

(pausing)

At this point in time, anybody who may have additional information is encouraged to come forward. If you know someone that may have had a motive in this crime, then you need to come forward.

Looking back towards another DEPUTY, officer Shaw leans over and whispers, then nods his head.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

That will be all for today. We will not be taking any questions, due to the gravity of this ongoing investigation. Thank you.

As OFF SCREEN commotion erupts among reporters, officer Shaw is surrounded by additional POLICE OFFICERS. While pictures flash, questions race through the air.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Scribbling onto her note pad, Veronica underlines Colt 45, circled among the random notes such as two shots and with child.

GRAND BALLROOM

Gathering her wits, Veronica is approached by Vince and Jen, who were both in the room for the press conference, yet hidden, off to the side. Vince has his camera with him while Jen has her notepad. Leaning over, Vince sets the camera down.

VINCE

Wow. I had no idea.

With an UNEASY distant gaze on her face, Veronica nods her head.

VERONICA

Yeah. And to think she was with child...

JEN

It's just -- terrible... To think somebody would...

VINCE

I bet she had just recently found out, and the wrong person got word of it.

VERONICA

Any of them had reason to...

VINCE

Are you thinking you want us to set up here for tonight's piece?

VERONICA

Yeah. This seems like a good spot. It's relevant as well as a central location. We'll edit in your shots from the press conference.

VINCE

Gotcha.

Reaching down, Vince starts adjusting the settings on his camera for the indoor shot, while Jen, clearly having something on her mind, pulls Veronica aside.

SIDE BALLROOM

Looking around she checks to make sure no police officers are close by.

JEN

Hey -- I overheard a few officers talking about Vander.

A look of seriousness crosses Veronica's face, in light of the news.

JEN (CONT'D)

They questioned him yesterday.

Leaning in, Jen whispers to Veronica.

JEN (CONT'D)

They think he's involved...

VERONICA

How?

JEN

I'm not sure -- but they must have questioned him, maybe even multiple times...

Nodding, Veronica looks down to her wrist, checking her watch.

VERONICA

We need to find him...

BACK TO HUCK

Combing through the notes on her notepad as well as highlights from the day's interviews, Veronica attempts to gather her thoughts.

Standing up and brushing his hand through his hair, Vince fixes his ponytail before lifting the camera back up onto his shoulder. Turning it on, he faces Veronica while he steadies the shot.

VINCE

Okay. You ready?

Putting her earpiece into her ear, Veronica adjusts it right until it fits snug.

VERONICA

Let's make the news...

JEN

In three, two, one...

VINCE'S P.O.V.

From Vince's camera, Veronica is seen directly in front of him while the empty chairs and podium sit in the distance behind her.

VERONICA

Just minutes ago the preliminary autopsy results were released concerning late Hollywood actress, Carmen Pelaz.

(reading notes)

Confirmed, the cause of death was due to blunt force trauma to the head in relation to her fall from the twenty-fourth floor.

Unexpectedly, the Los Angeles coroner also confirmed that not only was Ms. Pelaz with child, but she was also shot two times with what the ballistics tests are confirming is a Colt 45 automatic pistol.

NOTEPAD

Glancing down at her notepad, she sees her key notes and continues on.

VINCE'S P.O.V.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

The L.A.P.D. is treating this case as a homicide, and they are aggressively investigating multiple suspects.

(pausing)

One of those confirmed earlier this afternoon was that of Jason Vander, her current co-star of the upcoming action-film, Decoys. Hidden from the rest of the cast, they kept this affair very quiet. However, we have personally confirmed it through multiple witnesses, including Courtney Vander, Jason's Hollywood wife.

NOTEPAD

Looking down at her notepad again, Veronica spots some of her interview notes with gabriel. Looking back up she transitions.

VINCE'S P.O.V.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Today, we were also able to visit and interview her one-time ex-boyfriend, Hollywood lawyer, Gabriel Throckmorton. Mr. Throckmorton did not give many details, other than that he deeply loved her and that he felt betrayed when he learned of her relationship with Vander.

BEHIND THE CAMERA

Jen is now holding up her notepad, with the word gun, bold and underlined.

VINCE'S P.O.V.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

As of this evening, the official murder weapon has yet to be found, but the L.A.P.D. is exhausting all resources in pursuit of it. In the days ahead, this picture will most likely clear, as more evidence is uncovered. For right now though, it seems to soon to tell, as one cannot possibly draw on any single suspect to solve this case. From Channel 7 National News, this is Veronica Frenz, reporting live from the Westin, Los Angeles, California.

GRAND BALLROOM

Waiting a few seconds, Vince hits the stop button and turns the camera off.

VINCE

And we're done. Good job tonight.

Taking the camera off of his shoulder, Vince lowers it to his side, holding it similar to a briefcase.

JEN

I think tonight we really demonstrated a progression. You nailed the facts.

VERONICA

It was a team effort...

Confident with the delivery of the night's broadcast, Veronica can't help but feel a sense of accomplishment with the validation of their hard work.

VINCE

I don't know about you guys, but I could use a strong drink and a fresh meal.

Holding her notepad by her side, Jen tucks her pen into her pocket.

JEN

I second that motion. Veronica?

As both women look at Vince, he knows better than to argue.

VERONICA

As long as its not sushi. That's an acquired taste I never acquired...

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Entering the room, the blinds are wide open as moonlight shines in with a soothing quietness.

CUTAWAY TO: WINDOW

Gazing out the window, Veronica can see that the streets below have come alive in a not-so-innocent fashion.

BACK TO HUCK

Fully relaxed from dinner, she casually kicks her shoes off. Glancing at the desk as she walks by, the red blinking light is flashing on her room phone once again. There appears to be a message.

CUTAWAY TO: DESK

Lifting the receiver to her ear, she dials for the message line. Listening in for her message, a recorded man's voice begins to play.

JASON VANDER (V.O.)

I saw your piece on the evening news. Even though it's true, it doesn't mean you have the right to broadcast it over the whole fucking country.

A pause is heard in between the sniffle of his nose.

JASON VANDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I loved her! And now she's gone!
Courtney is leaving me too... I didn't
do it! To be married for years and
never know -- a love like that... I
would never hurt her! Anyway, what
do you care?

Another pause is heard.

JASON VANDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Oh god... Wouldn't it be something
if your next story was about the guy
who fell through the window in 2528.
Oh no...

REVEAL:

Just then, the message goes dead. Slowly placing the phone
back down, Veronica shocked, can't believe what she just
heard.

VERONICA

What was that? He was crying out to
me -- for help. He called here...

BED

Sitting down on the bed, Veronica suddenly realizes that
Jason is not only in the hotel, but she also knows where he
is.

BACK TO HUCK

Jumping to her feet like a gymnast from a dismount, a sense
of urgency begins to encompass her, as she knows she has to
get to him fast. Hopping back into her shoes, Veronica heads
for the door.

Opening it, she suddenly realizes that she left her room key
on the desk. Lunging back and reaching for it, she grabs it
from the desk. Heading back out the door swings behind her.
Not closing completely. Veronica, now gone, is unaware of
the new vulnerability.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

REVEAL:

Veronica is exiting the elevator onto the twenty-fifth floor.
TRACKING SHOT on Veronica In stride, as she hurries down the
hallway. Passing rooms like the lane lines on a highway,
she gets ever closer, passing 2506, then 2512, 2520, and so
on, until 2528.

OUTSIDE JASON'S HOTEL ROOM

Reaching Jason's room, it suddenly hits Veronica that she doesn't know how to approach him, especially in a fragile state of mind. Almost knocking, then pulling back, she's torn over the correct words of the moment. Should she knock or just say her name?

Brushing her hand through her hair and straightening her blouse, she takes a deep breath. Finally, with only impulse guiding her, she knocks on the door.

VERONICA

Jason? Are you there? It's -- It's Veronica. You left me a message.

Behind the door, the OFF SCREEN sound of a loud smash startles Veronica. Calling out again, she feels a growing urgency inside.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Look. I know you loved her. Please let me in.

INT. JASON'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

From the inside of the door, Jason's hotel room is black. The mattress has been flipped over and thrown against the wall, while the lamp is broken in the corner. An open suitcase and all of its contents are strewn across the floor.

Unable to look at himself, Jason has also shattered the large bathroom mirror with both fists.

CUTAWAY TO: FLOOR

Distraught, JASON VANDER is sitting on the floor next to the bed, back against the wall. Wearing only a white t-shirt and boxers, his hands are painted with dried blood, while his face is buried in his hands. Unshaven with the exception of his head, Carmen's photo leans against his foot.

Hearing Veronica on the other side of the door Jason is unresponsive. Looking up, the tears run down his face, as he catches a glimpse of Carmen's photo.

CU - CARMEN'S PHOTO

REVEAL:

Managing a slight grin only for a moment, the photo is tearing Jason up inside. Replaying their love in his head, the deeper he gets, the further he falls.

FLOOR

Reaching for her picture, he holds it gently in his hand as he raises it to his face. Whispering to himself, more tears roll from his eyes.

JASON VANDER

I miss you Carmen...

Sitting with a lifetime of guilt, he holds the picture close to his heart as he closes his eyes. Shaking his head, he combs the floor with his hand until finding one of the large shards of glass from the bathroom mirror.

JASON'S P.O.V.

Placing her photo down directly in front of him. He stretches for one of his designer shirts. Putting the shirt in his mouth, he bites down hard, as he pulls down with his left hand.

The OFF SCREEN sounds of Veronica can still be heard, calling for him from the other side of the door, trying to coax him out any way she can.

Biting down especially hard Jason takes the glass shard, tearing it through the tender skin of his left wrist, instantly spraying blood all over himself as well as the wall and floor.

JASON VANDER (CONT'D)

Mmm!!!

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JASON'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Hearing the sudden OFF SCREEN scream from behind the door, Veronica starts frantically pulling at the knob.

VERONICA

Jason! Open the damn door! Open up! Oh god, please open it!

CUTAWAY TO: DOWN THE HALL

Hearing the commotion another HOTEL GUEST in the room next door, opens his door. Walking out, he's an older caucasian man, slightly overweight, with gray hair, yet clean cut. Standing in the doorway with only his white robe and boxers on, he peaks around the corner instantly recognizing Veronica.

HOTEL GUEST

Do you need help with something?

Hysterical now, Veronica is tugging at the doorknob while POUNDING her fist against the door.

VERONICA

I need to get in this door!

HOTEL GUEST

You need me to call the...

VERONICA

Yes!!!

INT. JASON'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Inside the hotel room, Jason lies against the wall while blood pools on the floor around him. Repeating the same mantra over and over, his only thoughts are of Carmen as his life is steadily extinguished.

JASON VANDER

Soul mates never die. Soul mates
never die. Soul mates -- never --
die...

Exhaling his final breath, his hands fall to his sides, while his head swings to the side.

CUTAWAY TO: FLOOR

The picture of Carmen lies centered on the floor directly in front of Jason.

DOORWAY

At that moment, the door finally swings open. Standing in the doorway, Matt is there, while behind him, Veronica and the hotel guest look over his shoulder.

BACK TO HUCK

Propped up against the wall, a lifeless Jason Vander remains with his head hunched over, both hands on the floor. Surrounding him, a pool of blood has emerged. Carmen's photo lies directly in front of him, unscathed.

Startled by the grotesque image and sheer amount of the blood, Matt begins to gag.

MATT

Oh god...

Veronica's tears are pouring down now as she's tense and shaking. Getting a full view of the scene, she breaks down.

VERONICA

No!!!

CUTAWAY TO: FLOOR

As the three run over to his body, Veronica tries unsuccessfully to bring him back to life. Shaking him, his body falls to the floor. Attempting CPR to no avail, Veronica eventually pounds on his chest with clenched fists.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Why... How could you do this to yourself!!! Why?!? Why...

Pulling her away, Matt sitting on the floor, grabs ahold of her in a bear hug fashion, while she uneasily lets go of him.

As the situation steadily calms, the overwhelming sadness sets in, as they observe his poetic death.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Studying his lifeless body, there's just too much blood.

DESK

Picking up the phone receiver and slowly placing it to his ear, Matt dials 911. Answering after only one ring is the 911 operator.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)

Nine, one, one. What's your emergency?

MATT

This is hotel manager Matt Raines at the Westin. I need you guys to come back. There's been another...

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

POLICE OFFICERS as well as EMERGENCY RESPONDERS are walking back and forth between the elevators and the front entrance.

CUTAWAY TO: LOBBY WAITING AREA

Sitting in the lobby with a blanket around her shoulders, Veronica has her hands clasped around the outline of her face.

Looking to her right, Vince is sitting with his hands clasped, while Jen is to the left with her arm around Veronica's shoulder. One seat down from Vince, Matt is clearly distraught by the events of the last hour as he is endlessly staring into space.

FRONT ENTRANCE

From outside the lobby doors, the flashing lights from two ambulances and a fire truck light up the interior like the rainbow flash of a disco ball.

LOBBY WAITING AREA

JEN

You didn't do anything wrong Veronica.

Looking to her side, Jen frowns at Vince. Knowing Veronica has been down this road before.

JEN (CONT'D)

You weren't meant to get through that door...

VERONICA

I should have done more... I should have called the police the moment I heard the message...I couldn't save him...

Upon hearing her words, both Vince and Jen uneasily frown at each other as they know how hard death has on Veronica's life.

FRONT ENTRANCE

Amongst the chaos currently outside, officer Shaw enters the building, maneuvering his way to Veronica and Matt.

With additional OFFICERS by his side he attempts to deflect all questions from the LOCAL PRESS that is starting to gather in the room. Signaling to the OFFICER on his right, he nods his head for him to try to hold back the press.

BACK TO HUCK

OFFICER SHAW

Here. Take care of this. I, I do not have time...

Then motioning to the officer on his left, he nods again.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

You. Come with me...

CUTAWAY TO: LOBBY WAITING AREA

Making their way through the crowd, officer Shaw and the additional POLICE OFFICER are greeted by Vince, who upon spotting them through the crowd, rises to his feet.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)
How are they doing?

VINCE'S P.O.V.

Looking over his shoulder, Vince's eyes are on Veronica.

LOBBY WAITING AREA

VINCE
Not well.

OFFICER SHAW
Well, I need to speak with both of them. I've arranged a car to take us back to the station.

Realizing that this is not negotiable, Vince complies as he nods his head.

VINCE
Okay.

As Vince steps aside, officer Shaw approaches Veronica and Matt, whom are both still sitting.

OFFICER SHAW
We will require that you two come with us back to the station.

Looking up Veronica and Matt, both appear UNEASY.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)
There are a lot of questions we need to answer.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Staring out the window from the backseat of the police car, Disturbing thoughts keep swirling through Veronica's head, as Jason's words keep replaying like a broken record.

JASON VANDER (O.S.)
Soul mates never die...

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE - EXT. CHICAGO BLIZZARD - NIGHT

Snow continues to fall as there is no let up in sight. Approaching gingerly, a taxi idles up to the spot of the accident.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

From inside the taxi, Veronica can see the iron guardrail of the bridge, mangled and twisted.

The exact spot where Charlie's car went through is clearly visible, even under the gathering snow. Two police cars, along with an ambulance are at the scene.

EXT. TAXI CAB - CONTINUOUS

Slowly stepping out of the taxi, Veronica, taken back, cannot believe the situation.

BRIDGE

Staring down at the water, both EMERGENCY RESPONDERS are shining flashlights into the giant hole in the ice.

RIVERBANK

Near the riverbank an OFFICER shines his flashlight into the hole.

BACK TO HUCK

Directly in front of her another OFFICER approaches with a look of sadness in his eyes.

VERONICA

No -- No -- I don't want to believe
it...

Looking into his face, she knows it to be true, that Charlie went through the ice.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Charlie!!!

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS - PRESENT DAY

Staring into the blackness of the night the phrase repeats as an empty expression masks Veronica's face.

JASON VANDER (O.S.)

Soul mates never die...

EXT. L.A.P.D. HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

L.A.P.D. Headquarters is seen looming over the many police vehicles.

INT. L.A.P.D. HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Following officer Shaw, Veronica and Matt are making the awkward late-night walk through the station.

At this time of night, L.A.P.D. Headquarters is similar to a tour through the city's darkest allies. Hookers, pimps, and gangbangers, it's like a treasure trove of scumbags, all waiting to pounce on their next victim.

Eyed down by every arrestee in the room, Veronica and Matt steadily come back to reality, as each awkward stare jolts them out of their trance.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

By accident, Veronica manages to lock eyes with a HOOKER as they walk by. Dressed in skimpy black lingerie, with boots and a leather jacket, the girl has a thick Long Island accent. Waving her hand and overly long acrylic finger nails, the hooker doesn't take kindly to the stare.

HOOKER

The fuck you lookin' at? Huh? Bitch.

REVEAL:

A startled Veronica instantly looks down at the floor, as they continue walking.

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

Yeah. That's what I thought. Keep fuckin' goin'.

CUTAWAY TO: HALLWAY

Exiting the room and continuing to making their way to the back of the station, officer Shaw guides each of them to separate and secure interrogation rooms.

INTERROGATION ROOMS

Viewing both rooms, officer Shaw guides Matt into interrogation room #1, while Veronica is guided into interrogation room #2.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM #2 - CONTINUOUS

Looking at Veronica, officer Shaw follows her into the room. Reaching around her, he pulls out the wooden chair for her.

OFFICER SHAW

We have got a lot of talking to do.
Would you like a cup of coffee?

SHAKEN, Veronica accepts the offer.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

Okay. I shall return shortly.

CUTAWAY TO: INTERROGATION ROOM #1

Walking through the door with coffee in one hand and a notepad and pen in the other, officer Shaw offers Matt the cup of coffee.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

Here you go.

Reaching for the coffee, Matt accepts the drink, as he slides it closer.

MATT

Thanks.

Walking around to the other end of the table, officer Shaw pulls out the adjacent chair and sits down. Pulling his reading glasses out of his pocket, he places them on, and begins to sketch notes.

OFFICER SHAW

So tell me your side of the story.
I want to know from the moment she
called you until we arrived.

Nodding with his lips pursed, Matt appears very uneasy.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Staring into space, Veronica analyzes the cracks in the white painted walls. Once a sturdy and polished foundation, they're now showing evident signs of wear.

REVEAL:

Veronica is suddenly awakened from her day dream, as the door swings open.

CUTAWAY TO: DOORWAY

Turning around, officer Shaw enters the room. Looking past officer Shaw and outside into the hallway, Veronica spots Matt with a blank stare. Giving the okay nod, he briefly waves his hand as if to say goodnight.

As officer Shaw shuts the door, he then walks around the table.

BACK TO HUCK

Pulling out the chair, he sits down. Placing his notepad and pen on the table, he slides his glasses lower to rub his eyes. Raising the glasses back up he's ready to begin.

OFFICER SHAW

I want you to know that we can hold you here for as long as it takes... I want you to know I was trained at eight years old to handle automatic weapons, and I take this job very seriously.

Leaning forward officer Shaw stares into Veronica's eyes. Shaking and frightened, Veronica nods in acceptance, as he leans back, backing off.

Taking a deep breath, the chief stares at the lights as if to look for answers.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

This case is starting to get out of control, and that is not the standard set forth in this department.

Without hesitation, officer Shaw pounds his fist into the table, jarring Veronica awake. Shaking his head, he grabs the notepad and push-pen, ready to write.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

Now tell me what happened tonight? Why does Mr. Vander contact you? Why now?

VERONICA

He left a message at my hotel room He saw the broadcast. It sounded like he had been drinking... First he declared his innocence -- then, it was as if he was reaching out for help -- making a threat against his own life...

Nodding, officer shaw periodically looks up as he scribbles onto his notepad.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

When he ended the call, he left his room number. It all happened so fast that I knew something was wrong. I knew I had to get to him fast.

Veronica pauses for a moment.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I've been through this before...

OFFICER SHAW

(writing)
Uh huh...

VERONICA

I ran all the way there, before I realized that I didn't know what to say. When I finally started knocking on the door, I was calling his name, and I could hear him inside...

Hearing the hurt in her voice, officer Shaw looks into Veronica's eyes, understanding her fragile emotional state.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I tried to get in, but the door was locked. The neighbor next door must have heard me yelling. He walked out of his room, and I told him to call the front desk -- that it was urgent...

(tearing up)

I could hear him in there, alone. He just kept repeating...

(choking up)

Soul mates never die.

OFFICER SHAW'S P.O.V.

Writing the phrase into his notes, officer Shaw circles the words: SOUL MATES NEVER DIE.

BACK TO HUCK

OFFICER SHAW

Hmm...

Attempting to compose herself, Veronica takes a deep breath as she wipes her eyes.

VERONICA

When Matt finally got there with the master key it was too late. We opened the door and found him against the wall in the corner. I tried to save him...

Hesitating for a moment Veronica, instantly thinks of Charlie.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I was too late...

Seeing the pain in her eyes, officer Shaw feels empathy for Veronica.

OFFICER SHAW

I'm sorry.

Setting the pen down on his notepad, officer Shaw takes off his reading glasses, folding them up, and placing them back into his pocket.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

This issue with her pregnancy -- I think it may have set off the killer. As of now it could be any one of them. Ms. Vander, the ex-boyfriend, or a third party. You see, we think she came back into her father's life when she learned of it.

Realizing that officer Shaw is telling her privileged information, Veronica TRIES TO FOCUS.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

Her father arrived back from South Africa this evening. He's being treated in Johannesburg for an undisclosed illness.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Analyzing the expression on his face, Veronica fully realizes the seriousness in the chief's voice.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

He's not well.

VERONICA

You know, I still can't seem to understand why her father's limo was outside the hotel that night. And what about Anna? When she left my room she was scared. She knew the driver of the black Mercedes saw her.

OFFICER SHAW

As of right now her death is considered a traffic accident.

VERONICA

I know... I just -- don't think so...

OFFICER SHAW

We'll find out. We always find out. This case will be solved.

Looking up at the clock, officer Shaw notices the early hours of the morning are approaching.

CU - CLOCK

BACK TO HUCK

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

The press is not aware, but the estate is planning on having a funeral service tomorrow morning at the Westwood Village Cemetery. If you should attend be respectful.

(leaning forward)

This means no cameras.

Receiving the tip, Veronica, nods in agreement with officer Shaw's request. As he stands up, Veronica follows his lead. Pushing in their chairs, they share one last look at each other.

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

Look. I know you've had a rough night. I do not want to see anything bad happen to you here.

Looking into his eyes, Veronica can feel the empathy in his tone.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Sitting in the police car, Veronica stares out the window into the cold black night. The OFFICER sitting next to her says nothing.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Inside the hotel, the lobby is quiet as the early morning hours move in.

CUTAWAY TO: FRONT DESK

Behind the counter, Matt is the only employee in the room. Midway into a phone conversation, his frustrations are audible, in his pitched whisper.

MATT

(whispering)

I didn't sign up for this! You know that I spent half the night in an interrogation room!

SHELLY WINSTON (V.O.)

As long as you keep you're cool they're not going to find anything.

MATT

What are you talking about? Now
I've got two dead people on my plate.
Shit! None of this would be happening
if she hadn't fallen through the
damn window!

Checking again to see if anyone else is in the lobby, Matt
is the only one.

SHELLY WINSTON (V.O.)

I know that baby, and I'm sorry.
The doctors think it's going to be
any day now and when it happens...

MATT

What about Veronica Frenz?!? She's
all over this thing!

Pulling the receiver closer, Matt tenses up.

MATT (CONT'D)

I've tried to steer her away, but
eventually she's going to figure it
out!

SHELLY WINSTON (V.O.)

Get your shit together! Alright? I
didn't put up with years of shit to
have it slip from my grasp at the
end. We came from nothing and we're
both in this together! Don't forget
that!

A pause is heard, as she huffs into the receiver just before
she concludes.

SHELLY WINSTON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I've got a plan...

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Tossing and turning, Veronica's dreams are vivid.

DREAM - CARMEN FALLING THROUGH THE WINDOW - NIGHT

IN SLOW MOTION:

P.O.V. from above, as Carmen is seen falling through the
glass and out the window as a look of both panic and pain is
clear on her troubled face.

END OF DREAM

BACK TO HUCK

Shaking, twisting, and turning, Veronica's body SPASMS in a disjointed state.

DREAM SEQUENCE - ANNA WORKING IN THE HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

IN SLOW MOTION:

Anna is seen smiling and laughing with hotel guests while she types their reservations into her computer. Her innocence, visible to each guest.

INSIDE ANNA'S CAR

IN SLOW MOTION:

Upset, Anna's tears are rolling down her face, forcing her make-up to run.

PASADENA FREEWAY

IN SLOW MOTION:

Instantly, Anna's car plunges through and off of the overpass.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

BACK TO HUCK

Continuing to twist and turn, sweat is beginning to run down veronica's head as her deep sleep continues.

DREAM - JASON'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

IN SLOW MOTION:

Jason is seen bleeding to death as he lies on the floor, propped up against the wall, slowly slipping into unconsciousness. The photograph of carmen is placed directly in front of him on the blood-soaked carpet.

END OF DREAM

BACK TO HUCK

Veronica's rapid eye movement has increased as her body continues to shake.

IN SLOW MOTION:

DREAM SEQUENCE - VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Suddenly, snapping straight up, she heaves a heavy breath. Getting out of bed, half naked and in her nightgown she walks over to the window.

WINDOW

Looking out over the moonlit streets below, she feels as if the city swallowed all of their lives just as quickly as it gave them.

Instantly rising from the black shadows of the wall behind her, a large dark figure approaches. Extending his hands towards her mid back, her frame jerks forward.

IN REAL TIME:

Her head and chest cavity shatter the glass, as her body exits the window into the night.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

BACK TO HUCK

Suddenly snapping straight up, Veronica heaves a ten thousand pound breath, as her hand grabs her throat. It was just a dream.

PAN from calming herself, Veronica suddenly spots a large black shadow in the peripheral vision of her left eye, lurking in the corner.

CUTAWAY TO: BED

If she lunges and he has a weapon, he could kill her, but if she lays back down he could strangle her with the sheet. She's got to make move.

BACK TO HUCK

Suddenly, Veronica lunges towards her left, a crash is heard. Having the awkward sense of touching cold metal, she then finds cloth, followed by glass shards from a broken light bulb. Feeling a sharp pain in her fingertip, she managed to cut her pointer finger

VERONICA

Ow...

Getting up and walking over to the light-switch, she flips the switch, as only the lights over the bed illuminate. THE POLE LIGHT in the corner though has seen better days.

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

In front of the rising sun, the blinds normally covering the large windows are strewn wide open.

With her legs crossed underneath her, Veronica, sitting central to the windows has each arm positioned over each knee, with her back straight as if she were sitting in an upright chair.

On both hands, her middle and index fingers are held down by her thumbs, as they lay facing up upon her knees. Veronica is clearing her mind with yoga.

EXT. WESTWOOD VILLAGE CEMETERY - LATER

SUPER: THURSDAY

Gathering around the grave site, the family and friends of Carmen Pelaz are dressed in black. The gray in their hearts matches the sky.

Many notable faces are in attendance at Carmen's funeral, as well as many of her CO-STARS from Decoys and past films.

Her FATHER is also in attendance, propped up in his personal wheelchair, while his assistant, Shelly Winston, is standing directly behind him with her hands on his shoulders. Officer Shaw and other OFFICERS line the perimeter.

Joining the funeral post Liturgy, Veronica is respectfully dressed in solid black, while carrying one white rose. Though many in the crowd question the motive for veronica's appearance as an outsider, they accept her in mourning, as they also know she was with Jason when he took his life.

CUTAWAY TO: GRAVESTONE

Standing near the gravestone, a local Roman Catholic PRIEST presides. Dressed in a black cassock, his white clerical color matches his the white cross necklace around his neck. The priest's hair is starting to gray.

PRIEST

And today we mourn the loss of Carmen as our sister, mother, lover, and friend, Carmen Rain Pelaz. Taken from us she was. She is now surrounded by love and eternal sunshine. Bless her, for she will never leave us, as her spirit is a part of this Earth, and a part -- of all of you.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

From where Veronica is standing, an ailing Zenadine Pelaz, staring into the abyss, is unconsciously avoiding all eye contact with everyone. Shelly Winston on the other hand is giving Veronica a cold stare, with clear and divisive anger behind her eyes.

BACK TO HUCK

Acknowledging the stare, Veronica looks down to the white rose in her folded hands.

WHITE ROSE

Inspecting the ivory petals, she can't help but feel its perfection and innocence.

Breaking Veronica from the trance, the sound of an OFF SCREEN communal gasp is produced by many of the attendees in the crowd.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Looking up, Veronica eyes Gabriel approaching the grave site. Dressed in black suit with dark sunglasses, his hair is slicked straight back.

BACK TO HUCK

Attempting to get out of his wheelchair, yet too weak to walk, Zenadine lunges towards Gabriel, falling to the ground.

ZENADINE PELAZ

You son of a bitch! You get the hell out of here!

GABRIEL

Hey, hey, hey!

ZENADINE PELAZ

(struggling)

You're not welcome! You hear me!?!

As officer Shaw grabs Gabriel by the arm, he guides him away from the casket as OFF SCREEN sounds of commotion are heard from the funeral guests.

CUTAWAY TO: WALKWAY

Looking back, Gabriel takes his sunglasses off, getting one last view of her funeral before shaking his arm loose.

GABRIEL

Alright, alright! Let go of me. I'm leaving...

(MORE)

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

(shouting)

And just so you know -- I loved her!
I'm the only one!

REVEAL:

While Shelly and another guest manage to lift Zenadine back into his wheelchair, he's clearly distraught. Focusing on a departing Gabriel, the hurt and pain in Zenadine's eyes, is clearly visible to all in attendance. Covering his face in his hands, Shelly places a hand on his shoulder.

ZENADINE PELAZ

Get me out of here. It's time to
leave. Now.

BACK TO HUCK

Grabbing the handles of his wheelchair, Shelly slowly turns him around, guiding him back towards the waiting car.

CUTAWAY TO: PELAZ LIMO

Carefully helping him out of the wheelchair and positioning him into the back seat, the stress of the encounter has left Zenadine short of breath. Reaching inside Shelly also connects his oxygen.

Shutting the door, her facial expression grows serious. Turning around and walking back, Shelly heads straight for Veronica, making a pointed stare.

BACK TO HUCK

SHELLY WINSTON

You think you have a right to come
to this funeral. You don't know
her, and you don't know him.

VERONICA

I only...

SHELLY WINSTON

(cutting her off)

Look. I don't need to hear anything
that comes out of your mouth.

(pausing)

He's a beautiful man. If you dare
disgrace him...

VERONICA

But I...

SHELLY WINSTON
 We know who did it. I hope you do.

Turning her back on Veronica, Shelly storms away.

CUTAWAY TO: PELAZ LIMO

Walking around to the adjacent door Zenadine, Shelly opens it up and climbs in. As the limo drives away it gives clear view to Gabriel getting into his car.

BLACK MERCEDES

VERONICA
 (squinting)
 A black Mercedes...

As he pulls the car around through the lot it clearly has the same jet black tint that Anna described.

REVEAL:

Veronica squinting, attempting to read the license plate.

CU - GABRIEL'S LICENSE PLATE, which reads: M67-R17.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
 He was there...

BACK TO HUCK

Turning back around in a flash, Veronica spots officer Shaw. Navigating through the funeral guests, she calls out for him.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
 Officer Shaw! Officer Shaw! I need
 to talk to you...

Hearing the commotion an adjacent OFFICER reaches for his gun in reflex. Spotting and recognizing Veronica, he eases up.

OFFICER SHAW
 What is it?

VERONICA
 The black Mercedes.

Veronica is seen pointing to Gabriel's Mercedes.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
 Anna saw one the night of the murder.
 The license plate matches!

BACK TO HUCK

OFFICER SHAW

Okay. We're going to press his alibi.

VERONICA

I know it was him...

OFFICER SHAW

Now you're sure of this?

VERONICA

Yes, and he doesn't know that she told me.

POLICE CHIEF SHAW

According to his secretary, they went out for a late dinner around 9:00PM. Afterwards, they came back to his place for a nightcap. He says he was with her all night, however, she claims that she woke up in the middle of night, turned over and he was gone. Security tapes at the office show him entering and leaving the building sometime around 3:00AM.

(grinning)

I think its time to build our case.

Walking away now, the chief is in hot pursuit of his police vehicle.

VERONICA

(hollering)

Well are you going to keep me posted on what develops?

POLICE CHIEF SHAW

(yelling over his shoulder)

I'll find you when the time is right.

REVEAL:

Veronica is taking in what just transpired. Realizing she's still standing there holding the white rose, she looks down to her hand. There is only one place for it.

BACK TO HUCK

Walking back towards Carmen's casket, Veronica holds the rose out.

IN SLOW MOTION:

Veronica's right hand releases the rose over Carmen's casket. As it falls from her hand, the delicate flower has full weight of Los Angeles behind it.

INT. TAXI CAB - DAY

Taking her phone from her purse, Veronica speed dials Vince.

VERONICA

Vince.

CUTAWAY TO: VINCE AND JEN'S HOTEL ROOM

Sitting on the bed, Vince, notes, as well as Vince's camera are on the bed. Jen on the other hand is sitting at the desk with the phonebook and matching yellow notepad.

VINCE

Hey. Where were you?

INTERCUT: VERONICA AND VINCE

VERONICA

I went to the funeral...

Leaning up in his seat SURPRISED, Vince had no idea.

VINCE

This morning?

VERONICA (V.O.)

Yep. Gabriel showed up -- in a black Mercedes...

VINCE

Oh yeah?

VERONICA

Yeah. Her father was very upset.

VINCE

You would think he would have expected that kind of reaction.

VERONICA

Yeah, you would have. I told officer Shaw about the car, and he mentioned holes in Gabriel's alibi.

VINCE

You definitely need to put that into tonight's report.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Looking at the mirror, she notices that the TAXI DRIVER is periodically looking back at her.

VERONICA

I'd like to get a lead on the murder weapon. Gabriel's office was lined with buck heads, and I'm guessing his gun collection is extensive.

VINCE

Could be. You know who else was also an avid hunter?

VERONICA

Who?

VINCE (V.O.)

Her father...

Focusing, Veronica squints her eyes as she realizes this truth that has just been brought to her attention.

VINCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hunting expeditions all over the world.

Knowing that she needs to visit the mansion, Veronica taps on driver's seat, waving her finger around in a circle.

VERONICA

I'm going to take a trip over to the mansion. I need to talk to him.

VINCE

Is there anything we can do?

VERONICA

Yeah, buy me some time. I need to get his assistant away from him long enough to really talk to him. I had a run-in with her earlier.

VINCE

Well that's no surprise. I'll talk to Jen.

VERONICA

Thanks Vince.

Hanging up the phone, still clenched in her hand, Veronica bites her lower lip, as her eyes drift downward in thought.

REARVIEW MIRROR

Letting go, she looks up towards the rear-view mirror.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

New location. Take me to the Pelaz mansion, Beverly Hills.

TAXI DRIVER

Yes ma'am.

AERIAL SHOT while cutting the wheel in a full U-turn, the tires squeal, as they change course.

INT. TAXI CAB - DAY

Approaching the mansion, Veronica's phone beeps. There's a message. Looking down, she flips open the phone as a message comes across the screen.

PHONE

Bought you some time. You're from the funeral home. He's expecting you.

BACK TO HUCK

Shaking her head with a sly grin, Veronica wonders how Vince pulled this one off.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Nearing the closed gate, the taxi driver pulls up to the intercom, looking over his shoulder at Veronica for guidance.

VERONICA

Tell them I'm from the funeral home -- here to see Zenadine Pelaz.

INTERCOM

Acknowledging the direction, the taxi driver leans out the window towards the intercom.

TAXI DRIVER

Yeah -- from the funeral home. Here to see Mr. Pelaz.

Suddenly an unlocking mechanism is heard as the large iron gates begin to slowly open. Once wide enough for the car to fit through, the driver slowly hits the gas as they edge closer to the front door.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Working in the front yard, the GARDENER, acknowledges the taxi with the wave of his hand.

Managing a slight smile, Veronica waves back.

DRIVEWAY

Pulling up to the front entryway, the taxi driver shifts into park.

TAXI DRIVER (CONT'D)

Well, this is it Miss.

Throwing the driver a twenty, Veronica steps out onto the pristine grounds.

VERONICA

Thank you.

EXT. PELAZ MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Taking in the full scope of the property, the mansion LOOMS like a CASTLE fit for a king.

Walking up under the walkway near the large front double doors, Veronica presses the intercom button. Similar to the front gate, the OFF SCREEN sound of the heavy locking mechanism unlatches, as the door slowly opens. Greeting her from the inside is the BUTLER.

BUTLER

Well hello Ms. Frenz.

VERONICA

But I...

Confused, Veronica is taken back by the statement.

BUTLER

I've been waiting for you. We need to get out of sight though. Walk with me?

Unsure where this might lead, Veronica agrees to the walk.

VERONICA

Sure.

Gesturing for her to come around the back of the garage, he has a look of worry on his face. While looking beyond her towards the front gate, he knows they must hurry.

BEHIND THE GARAGE

BUTLER

Have you ever felt strange in your own home Ms. Frenz?
(MORE)

BUTLER (CONT'D)

It's quite a dreadful feeling when
the familiar becomes the unknown.

Looking into his eyes, Veronica can see that something is
clearly wrong.

BUTLER (CONT'D)

About two weeks ago, Carmen returned
home. She hasn't been home in almost
eight years...

Reaching into her pocket, Veronica hits the record button on
her portable tape recorder.

Shaking his head, the thoughts of her original disappearance
still bother him.

BUTLER (CONT'D)

You see, Mr. Pelaz has always been a
very good man, but a very strict
father. He holds everyone under a
code of honor -- trust if you will.
He's kept her mother's wedding band
ever since her passing, and when it
went missing, he thought she had
taken it.

VERONICA

Oh my...

BUTLER

It was very painful because she was
my little girl just as much as she
was his...

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE - INT. PELAZ MANSION KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cleaning up the kitchen, the butler, wipes his finger along
the top of the refrigerator. A nice coat of dust. It needs
to be cleaned.

BUTLER (O.S.)

I decided to do a thorough cleaning
of the kitchen one night, and I
noticed a thick coat of dust on top
of the refrigerator...

The butler then grabs a foot stool, placing it directly in
front of the refrigerator.

REVEAL:

Stepping on top of the stool, a sudden look of shock overtakes
him.

BUTLER'S P.O.V.

Directly in front of him, right on top of the refrigerator was her mother's wedding ring.

BUTLER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 After I stepped upon the stool, there
 it was, looking right at me. She
 hadn't taken it after all.

CUTAWAY TO: ZENADINE'S OFFICE

Presenting him the ring, Zenadine cannot believe it. In an instant a heaviness comes to rest on his chest as he feels immense guilt for the words he shared with Carmen.

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

EXT. BEHIND THE PELAZ MANSION GARAGE - DAY - PRESENT DAY

VERONICA
 And she had just returned...

BUTLER
 She came back to tell him the news.
 I guess the years apart probably had
 a little to do with it, as well,
 but... it was as if black clouds
 had rolled in...

Confused again, Veronica needs him to elaborate.

VERONICA
 Black clouds?

BUTLER
 His illness became much worse, while
 his mind has steadily deteriorated.
 He began signing away rights to Ms.
 Winston. Many rights -- but one --
 his will.

Suddenly the butler is making a whole lot of sense as Veronica realizes exactly what he's getting at.

BUTLER (CONT'D)
 She hasn't been here in eight years.
 He become's sick, and she re-enters
 his life...

In an instant, the OFF SCREEN sound of turning iron is heard. The look on the butler's face shifts to worry as he feels Veronica may be in danger.

BUTLER (CONT'D)
You may be in danger.

BUTLER'S P.O.V.

Peeping around the corner he spots the limo as it pulls up into the large garage.

BUTLER (CONT'D)
Wait until we're out of sight --
then go. I'll handle this...

GARAGE

Stepping around the corner, the butler greets Ms. Winston as she exits the limo.

BUTLER (CONT'D)
Ms. Winston. Can I trouble you for
cocktail.

Surprised, he startles her, coming out from the side of the garage.

SHELLY WINSTON
(startled)
Cocktail? Where were you?

BUTLER
Receiving some fresh air. It appears
the house may need the ventilation
cleaned.

Then changing the subject back to the drink, he attempts to distract her.

BUTLER (CONT'D)
Can I get you your usual?

SHELLY WINSTON
Make it a double. I just took a
ride to the cemetery for nothing.

INT. TAXI CAB - AFTERNOON

Sitting inside another taxi on the never-ending freeway, Veronica is on her way back towards the hotel.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Looking out the window she admires the large concrete structures with all of their complexities, but can't help but think for as empowering as they are, that a simple crack could take any of them down.

REVEAL:

Veronica wakes from the daydream, as her purse begins to RING. The sound of the boss ring-tone is playing, indicating Jim calling on the other end. Flipping open the phone Jim's name is visible, as she accepts the call, and says hello.

VERONICA

Hi Jim.

INT. JIM'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Sitting in his personal office, Jim is at his desk, with numerous news stories laid out in front of him. His door is closed while the blinds are open. Across his desk, are random photos of his wife and two sons. The large window overlooks downtown Chicago and the Chicago River.

JIM

Hey Veronica. How's it going for you out there?

INTERCUT: VERONICA AND JIM

VERONICA

Jim. Its been...something else.

JIM

Look, I know you've been under a lot of pressure, and both Charlie and your father would be really proud. If its any consolation, your pieces have been just blowing away everyone. The whole country is tuning in to your broadcasts.

VERONICA

Thanks Jim.

JIM

So what's the deal with the ex-boyfriend? Do you think he could have done it?

VERONICA

Any one of them could have done it. The rolodex is full. Each of them had their own reasons to resent her...

EXT. WESTWOOD VILLAGE CEMETERY - NIGHT

Walking outside the cemetery gates, a slight gust of wind is felt, blowing that familiar strand of hair across Veronica's lip.

Off to the side, Vince is playing with his camera, as Jen is studying her notes. Standing in front of the iron vine-covered gates, the three of them are like uninvited guests at an Oscar ceremony.

VINCE

I'm thinking I'll stand back towards the street and we'll get a few shots with the gates in the background...

JEN

And when you go into the funeral portion of tonight's piece, you may want to mention some of the celebrities that are buried here. One in particular that shares some eery similarities is Marilyn Monroe.

Nodding her head, Veronica's facial expression turns to an odd frown as she realizes that similarities between both starlets.

VINCE

Okay. Are we ready?

Looking around at each other, everyone appears to be set.

CAMERA

Turning on the camera, the spotlight shifts to Veronica.

VINCE (CONT'D)

And in three, two, one...

VINCE'S P.O.V.

VERONICA

(serious)

Earlier this morning, the Westwood Village Cemetery behind us, was the site of the final goodbye and tribute to the brightly-colored life of Carmen Pelaz.

PAN across the cemetery.

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

Friends, family, distant relatives, and even an unexpected visitor or two were in attendance.

INT. PELAZ LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Inside the black limousine the TV is set to CHANNEL 7, Veronica's report.

VERONICA (V.O.)

At one point, her one-time ex-boyfriend, Gabriel Throckmorton, who many consider to be a prime suspect, showed up, causing panic and disdain throughout.

Folding down the central armrest, normally secured for cupholders, it has been fashioned with a secret compartment. Lifting out the plastic tray, she lifts the black velvet cover, exposing the murder weapon.

VERONICA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Rattled and overwhelmed with emotion, Zenadine Pelaz left the funeral shortly there after.

EXT. WESTWOOD VILLAGE CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

VERONICA

In addition, its also been verified that the police department is investigating links between Gabriel Throckmorton and Anna Gershon...

INT. PELAZ LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Loading two additional bullets into the clip, she focuses on the TV.

VERONICA (V.O.)

The front desk clerk who was killed only days ago in a tragic auto accident.

EXT. WESTWOOD VILLAGE CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

VINCE'S P.O.V.

VERONICA

Tonight's broadcast is also a difficult one, in the sense that I too witnessed an unbelievable tragedy. Last night, I received a chilling message from Jason Vander. I, I tried, to get to him, but I just couldn't, get to him in time...

INT. JIM'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Inside Jim's office, he is sitting in his desk, while the TV is on in the background, tuned into to Veronica's broadcast.

REVEAL:

Jim's expression saddens as he views the pain and sense of loss across her face.

EXT. WESTWOOD VILLAGE CEMETERY - NIGHT

VINCE'S P.O.V.

Choking up and holding back glassy eyes, Veronica is having a hard time continuing.

VERONICA

Shortly after reaching his room, he took his life in a terrible expression of emotion.

BEHIND THE CAMERA

Both Vince and Jen look at each other as they see the struggle upon her face.

VINCE'S P.O.V.

Gathering herself, Veronica wipes the corners of her eyes.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

It would be fitting to end this broadcast with a comparison to only one woman, who's life seems all the more parallel to Ms. Pelaz's with each passing day.

INT. PELAZ LIMO - CONTINUOUS

CU - LIMO TV, as the OFF SCREEN sound of the clip sliding into the gun is heard.

VERONICA (V.O.)

Mirror images of each other, they both grew famous in the spotlight, while never losing sight of the true beauty, which would later leave them infamous.

EXT. WESTWOOD VILLAGE CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

From Veronica, the camera moves across and through the cemetery gates.

INT. PELAZ LIMO - CONTINUOUS

CU - LIMO TV

VERONICA (O.S.)
From Channel 7 National News, this
is Veronica Frenz, Los Angeles,
California.

SHELLY'S P.O.V.

Holding the gun in her hands, black leather gloves mask her.
Cocking the gun, a round is now in the chamber.

INT. THROCKMORTON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Working late on the prosecution's arguments for his latest
case, Gabriel is deep in thought.

CUTAWAY TO: DOORWAY

Knocking at the door and walking into the office, the
receptionist enters.

RECEPTIONIST
Mr. Throckmorton?

DESK

GABRIEL
Yes?

GABRIEL'S P.O.V.

With a look of worry across her face, she seems concerned.

RECEPTIONIST
There's an urgent phone call for
you. Should I patch it through?

GABRIEL
Urgent? Yeah, go ahead.

DOORWAY

Nodding her head, the receptionist exits the room.

DESK

In an instant the phone on the desk lights up. Answering in
a confident tone, Gabriel is still somewhat distracted with
work.

SHELLY WINSTON (V.O.)
Mr. Throckmorton?

GABRIEL
Yes?

SHELLY WINSTON (V.O.)
This is Jen Schultz -- personal
assistant to Veronica Frenz.

Just hearing her name invokes anger in him, as his train of
thought is shattered.

GABRIEL
I thought I told her...

SHELLY WINSTON (V.O.)
She knows you were there that night --
but she can prove your innocence.
Carmen wrote you a letter...

Stunned, he's taken back by the statement.

SHELLY WINSTON (CONT'D)
Would you be willing to meet with
her?

GABRIEL
(confused)
Yes, of course. But...

SHELLY WINSTON (V.O.)
It needs to be now. There's no time.

GABRIEL
But I...

SHELLY WINSTON (V.O.)
Meet her in the hotel. Room 1616.

REVEAL:

Gabriel surprised, yet engaged as the phone goes dead.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Standing behind the desk, while another EMPLOYEE is checking
in a new guest. Hearing the OFF SCREEN sound of the front
doors, he instantly turns his head.

MATT'S P.O.V.

Noticing Veronica as she enters the building, his eyes follow
her as she heads for the elevators.

BACK TO HUCK

Picking up another phone, he dials room 1616. The moment
the phone is picked up he gives the signal.

MATT

She's here.

Hanging up the phone, he grabs a lamp behind the counter. Exiting his post, he immediately heads towards the elevators.

ELEVATORS

All of them appear to be in use.

MATT (CONT'D)

Shit!

Seeing the doorway for the stairs he enters.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Standing in the elevator Veronica is lost in thought. The numbers above continue to illuminate as she ascends higher.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Inside the stairwell Matt is running up the stairs as fast as he can.

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Walking into the hotel room, the lights are out, as the starlit sky illuminates shadows onto the wall.

Reaching for the remote control, Veronica flips on the tv. Looking to her left, the damaged light in corner appears to have been removed but not yet replaced.

Kicking her shoes off, she walks towards the window.

WINDOW

Looking out for only a moment, she then turns towards the bathroom, when a solid three knock sequence is heard against her hotel door. Turning back around she walks towards the door.

DOOR

Leaning forward against the door, she looks into the peep hole.

PEEPHOLE

Standing on the other side of the door, Matt is there, slightly out of breath, with a brand new lamp.

MATT'S P.O.V.

Opening the door, embarrassed, yet managing a smile, Veronica greets him cheerfully.

VERONICA

Hi Matt.

CLOSET

At the same time the bedroom door opens, her closet door quietly slides open as a black figure steps out into the space off to the side, behind her.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Looking somewhat nervous, Matt appears to have something on his mind.

MATT

Yes, I brought you this new light to replace the damaged one.

DOORWAY

VERONICA

I feel terrible about it. I seemed to have a little run-in with it the other night, and underestimated my own strength.

MATT

It's not a problem -- really.

Smiling and completely unaware, Veronica does not sense the figure which is now directly behind her.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

In an instant, Matt, suddenly startled, catches eye of the intruder.

MATT'S P.O.V.

The gun pistol whips Veronica in the back of the head, as her body falls limp towards him.

HALLWAY

Catching her like a forklift, he moves her inside as the sudden slam of the door behind him echoes through the elegant hallway.

EXT. THE HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Pulling the black Mercedes four distinct car links down from the entryway before finally shifting into park, Gabriel turns off the ignition. Exiting the car, he begins his walk towards the front entrance. Clicking the lock button on his remote, The headlights flash.

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dragging Veronica's body towards the bathroom, her heels dig into the floor, as her limp body crosses the moonlight shadows. Matt has his hands around her waist, while her head hangs backwards.

BATHROOM

Entering the bathroom, he flips on the light switch, while still holding her with his other arm. Then, leaning over, he places her into the bathtub.

SHELLY'S P.O.V.

As he places Veronica into the tub, she pulls out the gun, placing to the back of his head. Completely unaware, he lifts Veronica's legs.

Pulling the trigger, the gunshot shatters his body, causing him to fall limp on top of her as his blood begins to soak her clothes.

INT. L.A.P.D. HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Sitting at his desk, officer Shaw is going over the murder file and surrounding crime scene photos, when an instant another OFFICER opens his office door.

OFFICER

Hey. We just got a 911 call that
the killer was in room 1616 at the
Westin.

OFFICER SHAW

(startled)
1616 -- Veronica!

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Approaching room 1616, the door appears to be slightly cracked. Analyzing the situation for a moment, he decides to enter.

GABRIEL'S P.O.V.

Reaching out and pressing the door open, he steps inside as it closed behind him.

CUTAWAY TO: AN AERIAL SHOT OF FLASHING POLICE CARS HEADING TO THE HOTEL.

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Looking around the room, Gabriel does not see Veronica anywhere

GABRIEL'S P.O.V.

Looking down towards the floor, dried spots of blood are visible. Leading into the bathroom, the door is halfway closed with steam rising from under the door.

BACK TO HUCK

Cautiously stepping forward towards the bathroom, he looks around the room for signs of anyone.

EXT. WESTIN BONAVENTURE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

As police cars come screaming into the entryway, they surround the front door.

OFFICER SHAW'S POLICE CAR

Pulling into the back, officer Shaw and another officer exit the car. Running towards the door officer Shaw notices something peculiar and stops.

OFFICER SHAW'S P.O.V.

Looking towards his left he spots a parked black Mercedes, with the last three digits being R -- L -- 7.

ENTRYWAY

As the officer notices him stopping he looks over into the same direction.

OFFICER SHAW
Quick! There's no time!

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Slowly opening the bathroom door, steam billows out as the shower is on hot, with the curtain closed.

SINK

Checking the sink, there appears to be a gun, holding an envelope with a note in place.

Reaching for the gun, Gabriel lifts up the Colt 45 automatic pistol, looking it over, shocked. Taking the note out from the envelope and lifting it to his face, Gabriel reads the message.

CU - THE MESSAGE, which reads:

"She's mine forever. I'm the only one." -Gabriel.

REVEAL:

Gabriel is holding the note.

GABRIEL
(disturbed)
What the hell...

MIRROR

Looking forward into the mirror now he sees, matt's body propped behind the door. Startled he begins to feel sick.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Oh god...

GABRIEL'S P.O.V.

Looking at the shower now, he begins to make out the outline of someone inside the tub.

In a deep sleep, vivid dreams haunt Veronica.

DREAM SEQUENCE - INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

IN SLOW MOTION:

Carmen is dancing among other celebrities under imposing black lights amidst a group intoxication. Smoke filled air adding density, her body moves with a rhythmic wave of cocktails. Exotic drugs, flow through her peaking sensations, her eyes roll back.

From a distance, Veronica can see the distinct faces of all the suspects scattered throughout the crowd.

Gabriel is dressed in black, with a cold, unflinching stare is watching her, while Courtney Vander, hiding amongst the other club-goers is fixated like a chained pit bull.

In the furthest corner, her father, Zenadine Pelaz watches in disbelief as his daughter disgraces the name that he's honored for so long.

INT. CARMEN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Suddenly Veronica pictures Gabriel in Carmen's hotel room. As she enters the room his figure startles her as the sound of the acceptance of her fate leaves her last breathe.

He raises the cold steel of the Colt 45.

There is no remorse on his face. Just burning, uncontrollable, twisted emotion. Clenching the trigger, grimacing he releases two bullets.

IN SLOW MOTION:

A startled panic is seen on her face as a giant gulp of blood erupts from her throat. Tears mixed with panic glaze her eyes. Stumbling backwards, she falls.

INT. CARMEN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Entering the hotel, Carmen heads to the bedroom. Flicking on the light switch she finds the barrel of a gun pointed right at her. Instantly recognizing the face of her soon to be killer, she knows she messed up.

As Courtney Vander's tears run down her face, her head twitches, spasming left, then right. Grimacing, she pulls the trigger, once, then once more.

Feeling a sudden overwhelming pain, Carmen reaches down only to find herself covered in blood. Staggering backwards in a toxic haze, her shoe catches the ground. Losing her balance, she stumbles through the blind, crashing through the window. Exalting her last breath she manages a fading scream.

INT. CARMEN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Opening, and stepping into the door to her hotel room, Carmen, startled, suddenly catches the eyes of her father.

Sitting in the chair, with his head down, full of disgrace in the mockery of their family name he shakes his head back and forth.

Suddenly uncovering his hands, he raises his steel Colt 45.

Taking a deep breath filled with more panic than she's ever felt, she musters her final words.

CARMEN

Not yet...

Pulling the trigger not once, but twice to finish the job, her father fires two rounds into his only daughter.

Lowering the gun, tears run down his face.

Filled with utter shock and a pain deeper than any bullet wound, Carmen stumbles backwards. Turning, she falls through the window with a feeling of loss larger than anything she's ever experienced.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

Storming inside the lobby, officer Shaw in addition to numerous other OFFICERS infiltrate the waiting area.

Spotting Vince and Jen off to the side, he approaches them, in hope's they've seen her.

SIDE LOBBY

OFFICER SHAW

Have either of you two seen Veronica?

Caught off balance by the commotion, neither Vince or Jen has any idea of what's going on.

VINCE

(affright)

We've actually been waiting here for her for quite a while now. Is something wrong?

OFFICER SHAW

She's in danger. Stay down here!

JEN

Oh my god!

Waving his hand and pointing for the other OFFICERS, officer Shaw turns towards the elevators.

ELEVATORS

Coming to a temporary stop in front of the elevators, each one is in use.

OFFICER SHAW

1616! You guys take the elevators, we'll take the stairs!

As the OFFICERS split, a few of them remain, waiting for the elevator, while officer Shaw and three additional men, head into the stairwell.

STAIRWELL

OFFICER SHAW (CONT'D)

Come on -- come on!

Darting upwards into the stair well they begin their steady ascent.

INT. VERONICA'S HOTEL BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

GABRIEL'S P.O.V.

Leaning forward, he slowly reaches for the edge of the shower curtain. Eventually getting his fingers around the edge, he begins to pull back.

BATHTUB

Pulling the curtain, Veronica is visible, duct-taped unconscious, in pool of blood. Rising water is just starting to cover her nose.

REVEAL:

Gabriel is staggering backwards, off-balance.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF VERONICA'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

At the door, officer Shaw and the adjacent OFFICERS are gasping for air as they notice something peculiar. The door it appears is not completely closed, as there seems to be a loose screw in the locking mechanism.

Motioning down to it, officer Shaw points towards the door. Pulling out their guns, the adrenaline is flowing through legs as they're burning from the ascent up the stairs.

KICKING the door open with FORCE, they barrel inside.

EXT. HOTEL SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

From the streets below, the night is quiet.

In an instant, from the street, the a BARRAGE of gun shots go off, SHATTERING A MASSIVE PANE OF GLASS in the upper floors.

INT. VERONICA'S BATHTUB - CONTINUOUS

Two dark hands followed by blue sleeves lunge into the water, yanking veronica's body out.

EXT. CALIFORNIA HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

SUPER: FRIDAY

Exiting the hospital doors, Vince, Jen, officer Shaw, Jim, and Veronica, are each greeted by HOSPITAL STAFF as well as MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS. The wind is blowing cool.

Around Veronica's head A bandage as covers the stitches across the back of her head, while scratches across her face are only covered by the newly formed scabs as her eyes are black.

Serious in demeanor, she's earned the respect of the press.

CUTAWAY TO: POLICE CAR

Approaching the police car, Vince opens the door. As Veronica and Jen get inside, Jim motions to Vince.

JIM

I'll see you guys back at the hotel.

INT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Shutting the doors, Jim's words echo through Veronica's head as officer Shaw gets in the drivers-side door. Starting the engine, he shifts into to drive and hits the accelerator.

PAN OUT from the hospital as the police car disappears into the distance.

EXT. THE HOTEL - EVENING

With a warm breeze across Veronica's face, the sun is setting.

REVEAL:

Taking a deep breath of air, Veronica closes her eyes. Relieved, she knows that this will the final broadcast on this story.

BACK TO HUCK

JEN

Are you sure you're ready for this?
You really don't have to, and I don't
think anyone at the network expects
you to.

JIM

If you were ever going to take a
night off, tonight would be it.

Managing a slight smile, Veronica acknowledges their consideration, but she doesn't take nights off.

VERONICA

This is who I am. This moment.
(MORE)

VERONICA (CONT'D)

This broadcast. This is my dad... I know sometimes I push too hard and drive the ones I love away...

REVEAL:

Staring into the distance, Veronica, nods her head in acceptance of her fate.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Earlier I felt as though I was driving this story, maybe even dictating it, but in the end -- it was just too much -- without -- help. More than others, this place has reminded me of what I lost, and who I am. I'm ready...

VINCE

Never one to back down -- hey, this one's for Charlie.

Managing a smile Jen looks over at Jim. Covering his hand over his mouth, he leans towards Jen.

JIM

Don't tell her, but that's exactly why she's so good she. She presses everyone the same...

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Lifting the camera onto his shoulder, Vince is ready. Turning on the power, he steadies the shot.

Looking at him, Jen gives her the queue.

JEN

In three, two, one...

Giving her the signal, they're live.

REVEAL:

Veronica is composed as they begin the broadcast.

VERONICA

With imposing grace and stature, this beautiful building behind me has seen tragedy and pain, once thought unimaginable, over the course of this past week.

PAN UP TO GET A FULL SHOT OF THE HOTEL.

VERONICA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 However beautiful, yet flawed, it
 continues to stand on firm ground.

BACK TO HUCK

VERONICA (CONT'D)
 In the early hours of last night,
 police were tipped off by a random
 911 call, that lead them back to the
 Westin once more. The difference
 was that this time, the killer was
 in the building.

(pausing)

Gabriel Throckmorton was found inside
 room -- 1616 -- carrying the same
 murder weapon that was used in the
 case of Carmen Pelaz, that was
 confirmed through ballistics testing.

(gathering a serious
 tone)

Having already taken one hostage, it
 appears that he killed the other,
 the longtime front desk manager,
 Matt Raines, just before the L.A.P.D.
 managed to take him out in a high
 powered shoot-out. One officer was
 wounded, however he is in stable
 condition.

VERONICA'S P.O.V.

Holding up her notepad behind the camera, Jen has written
 the word "Pelaz," on across it.

JIM'S P.O.V.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
 It was also learned that earlier
 this morning, Zenadine Pelaz, father
 to Carmen Pelaz, died shortly after
 take-off, on his private jet that
 was headed for Johannesburg, South
 Africa. The cause of death -- cancer.

REVEAL:

Jim is shaking his head, as he learns of Zenadine's cause of
 death.

VINCE'S P.O.V.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

The trail of victims though, does not stop there as there were many in this story, including Jason Vander, who took his own life, Courtney and Anna Gershon, was killed in a tragic auto accident.

(pausing)

In closing, I would like to bid all of you a farewell with words of hope from another time, that still hold true today. Good night, and good luck. This is Veronica Frenz reporting live in Los Angeles.

EXT. THE PELAZ MANSION - NIGHT

As a For Sale sign is being nailed into the front lawn, the last of the STAFF is leaving in a taxi cab.

TAXI CAB

The butler in particular is looking out the window, leaving the home that he's had for the last fifty years.

FRONT GATE

Exiting the driveway and out the front gate, the iron slowly turns, closing for the last time.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

TRACKING SHOT on the black stilettos as they enter the plane. Walking forward, they stop at a first class window seat.

Noticing her arrival, a quaint STEWARDESS with long black hair and bright lipstick, approaches.

STEWARDESS

Hello miss. May I get you a drink.

PAN UP to find Shelly Winston sitting in the seat.

SHELLY WINSTON

Why yes. Scotch -- on the rocks.

Accepting, the stewardess heads back to the drink cart.

While making the drink, an OLDER GENTLEMAN, checks his ticket, then sits down next to her. Checking his very expensive watch, he makes sure she sees. Noticing her ring he comments. It's the same ring that Carmen had been accused of stealing years earlier.

OLDER GENTLEMAN

That's a lovely ring.

Smiling, Shelly rolls her hand back and forth making sure the stone and shine glistens in the light.

Approaching, the stewardess hands her the scotch and a napkin. Leaning in, she over's the gentleman a drink.

STEWARDESS

Is there anything I can get you sir?

Looking at Shelly Winston's drink, then at Shelly, he orders.

OLDER GENTLEMAN

I'll have what she's having...

Turning back around, Shelly is smiling with a very devious look across her face.

EXT. WESTIN BONAVENTURE HOTEL - LATER

PAN UP from outside the front entrance. The OFF SCREEN sounds of plane engines are heard.

END CREDITS

FADE TO BLACK.