

MORPHINE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. VIEW FROM A BRIDGE - DAY

Down on a lake.

A perfect day. Picturesque blue sky. Not a cloud. A calm breeze causes a light ripple in the water.

MUSIC plays in the background. Golden Oldies. A romantic love song.

The sun reflects off a silver boat just ahead.

IN THE BOAT

The MUSIC plays from an old style radio. Empty beer cans on the floor.

JOHN (35) haggard looking and drunk, puffs on a cigarette. Lost in his own world.

SPLASHING SOUNDS. A child screams.

JOHN turns. EARLY (4) splashes frantically in the water. A spitting image of JOHN. He screams desperately for help. Struggles to stay afloat. Up and down in the water.

JOHN looks away again. Loses himself in the MUSIC. Exhales smoke. He puts the cigarette out.

JOHN
(under his breath)
Happy birthday.

He reaches down and grabs a shotgun. Places the barrel firmly under his chin.

BOOM! Blood shoots from the back of his head. He topples over. Red mist resonates in the air.

IN THE WATER

Early plunges below dark water. Back up to blinding sunlight.

The bridge above: WINSTON leans over the ledge. Waves his arms. Merely a silhouette. His identity indiscernible.

Early goes under. Emerges to see Winston dive into the lake.

Early dips under again. Into darkness.

The HAPPY BIRTHDAY song is sung off key...

INT. DINNER TABLE - DAY

TINA (30) and FRED (38) sing happy birthday with eager smiles. Birthday cake at the center of the table. Candles lit.

They exude a warmth and kindness.

Early stares at the cake from across the table. Deadpan.

The song closes. All eyes on Early.

TINA
(re: off silence)
Well, honey? Aren't you going to
make a wish?

Early looks up at them. Blank.

WHAM! Early bangs his forehead on the table. Tina and Fred exchange a confused glance.

TINA (CONT'D)
Honey?

WHAM! Early bangs his head again.

TINA (CONT'D)
(disturbed)
What are you... doing?

WHAM! Bangs his head again. Forehead now red. Swelling.

TINA (CONT'D)
Early, stop that!

WHAM! Again. Harder. Throttles silverware. Tina cries out.

FRED
Early! You're upsetting your
mother! Knock it off!

WHAM! Again. Even harder.

He lifts his face. Tina gasps. Covers her mouth in shock. Clutches onto Fred's arm.

Blood from Early's forehead cascades down his expressionless face.

He touches the blood on his forehead. Looks at his fingers. Up at Tina and Fred.

Early erupts into sudden tears. Tina hurries to his aid and lifts him from his chair.

BATHROOM

Tina carries Early to the sink. In a panic. Early continues to cry.

She runs the faucet. Holds his head under.

Early gazes at blood washing into the drain. In a trance.

SPECIALIST (V.O.)
Pain is good.

INT. PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

SPECIALIST, a doctor in white coat, sits behind his desk. His walls decorated with plaques and diplomas.

SPECIALIST
It lets us know if something is wrong.

Tina sits across. Confused. In tears.

Early sits next to her with a bandage over his forehead. Out of his element during grown up talk.

SPECIALIST (CONT'D)
Your son has a neuropathic disorder caused by the mutation of the NTRK1 gene. This results in an inability to register pain stimuli. This also includes insensitivity to extreme temperatures, hot or cold. Absent or reduced ability to sweat may cause recurrent high fevers and sometimes seizures from exposure to warmer temperatures --

TINA
What exactly are we talking about here? What is wrong with my son?

SPECIALIST
Your son is unable to feel pain.

TINA
Is this common?

SPECIALIST

It effects less than one in one million, Mrs. Upchurch.

Silence. Tina doesn't know how to respond.

TINA

How does this happen?

SPECIALIST

Symptoms are usually present during infancy. It's a hereditary disorder. Has anybody in your family or your husband's family --

TINA

We're not his birth parents.

Tina looks down at Early. Saddened.

SPECIALIST

Unintentional self injury is common in most cases, so it's important that he's under constant supervision. Especially during adolescence. Repeated injuries can cause chronic bone and skin infections --

TINA

This doesn't make sense.

Silence. Tina looks up at SPECIALIST with desperate eyes.

TINA (CONT'D)

He was crying.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Tina pushes Early on the swings. He wears a helmet and mouth guard.

TINA (V.O.)

Why would he cry if he wasn't hurt?

In SLOW MOTION. Early observes another CHILD near the monkey bars.

CHILD cries. Holds his knee. Shows a scrape on his knee to his MOTHER. She blows on it to calm him.

Early seems oddly fascinated.

Meanwhile, Tina sees other PARENTS and CHILDREN stare and laugh. She labors a smile. Continues to push Early on the swing.

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

Tina drives. Early in the passenger's seat. She flashes him repeated glances. Concerned.

SPECIALIST (V.O.)
Some people may perceive this as a gift.

Early bites his finger nails while gazing out the window.

Tina catches him. Reaches over and takes his hands away from his mouth. She eyes blood on his finger tips.

SPECIALIST (V.O.)
But I assure you... it is not.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tina tucks Early into bed. Socks over his hands.

She kisses his forehead. En route to the door she stops. Looks to Early. Turns on a night light.

Before she can leave:

EARLY
Can you play the piano for me?

She stops. Turns. Confused.

TINA
Piano? We don't have a piano, honey.

She returns to the bed. Sits at the edge.

TINA (CONT'D)
And even if we did, I don't know how to play.

He nods. Falls into deep thought.

EARLY
Do you ever wish that you can have a baby? Your own baby?

She runs her hand through his hair.

TINA
I have you.

His eyes well up.

EARLY
I'm not normal, am I?

Tina fights tears. Forces a smile.

TINA
You're special. You're a special
boy. My special boy. Everything. It
all happens for a reason.

Kisses him on the forehead again.

TINA (CONT'D)
Close your eyes, honey. Everything
will be okay.

He nods. Shuts his eyes.

EXT. LAKE - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Early fights to stay afloat but struggles. He dips under.

UNDER WATER

He holds his breath. Suspended. SLOW MOTION. Blood droplets
hit the surface above. Form red clouds under water.

Early reaches the surface.

ABOVE WATER

Returns to blinding sunlight. Head just above water.

Winston (25) swims to him. Water beads off his thick beard
and shaggy hair.

WINSTON
I gotcha buddy! Everything is gonna
be okay, you hear me? I gotcha!

Early dips under again.

UNDER WATER

Early looks up. Sun rays shine from above. A PAIR of HANDS
reach down and pull him to the surface.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY - (PRESENT TIME)

Early (18) rises from the sink. Rinses his face.

He stares at himself in the mirror. Now an adult. Fresh-faced. He looks young for his age. A shy, awkward type.

Early pops pills into his mouth. Swallows them dry. Eyes his reflection again. Feels a scar on his forehead.

He puts on thick-framed sunglasses. Leaves.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Fred lies in bed. Gaunt and sickly. Hooked up to tubes and equipment. Oxygen mask.

He removes the mask but has a coughing fit.

Early sits at bedside. Tilts his head at the coughing.

Tina, slightly aged, wipes Fred's mouth with a handkerchief. She sports a bump in her belly. Very pregnant.

She places the mask over Fred's face. He takes a few breaths and removes it again.

Smiles up at Early.

FRED
How's it feel, kiddo?

EARLY
Feel?

FRED
To be a man?

EARLY
(shakes head)
Not any different.

Fred coughs. Clears his throat. He struggles to speak. His breaths labored.

FRED
Guess I should stop calling you
kiddo, huh?

Turns to Tina. Touches her pregnant stomach. They hold hands. Share a warm yet sad smile.

He addresses Early:

FRED (CONT'D)
You're a good kid. And you're gonna
be a good brother. I just know it.

Early flashes a sad smile.

FRED (CONT'D)
Promise me you'll take care of your
mother for me, okay?

TINA
Fred.

FRED
She's a good woman.
(falls to tears)
A good woman.

She holds his hand tighter.

FRED (CONT'D)
Do me that favor, will ya?

Early nods.

FRED (CONT'D)
(sobbing)
Seems like yesterday, I was your
age, kiddo. I remember when me and
your mother first met.

Fred struggles to continue. Falling apart. He looks Early
dead in the eye.

FRED (CONT'D)
Why does life go by so fast?

TINA
Fred, stop talking like that,
everything is going to be okay.

FRED
(explodes)
Everything is NOT gonna be okay!
Why do you keep saying that?

His hand trembles while holding onto Tina.

FRED (CONT'D)
(whispers to her)
I can't do this anymore.

TINA
 (falls to tears)
 Fred.

FRED
 It hurts too much, Tina. It hurts
 too much.

TINA
 Please. Stop talking like that.

Early can't take it anymore. He stands up. Leaves the room.

INT. HOSPITAL ELEVATOR

Early boards the elevator. Distraught. He tries to contain himself but his emotions boil to the surface.

He lets out an ear-shattering scream. Pounds on the door with both fists. In a frenzy.

Stops. He tries to calm himself. Breathing heavily. He catches sight of his distorted reflection in the elevator doors.

He bangs his forehead. Again. And again. Blood smudges his reflection.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Early sits at the piano and plays a gloomy ballad. Sad yet beautiful.

A light KNOCK on the door. He stops playing.

TINA (O.S.)
 Early? Are you in there?

EARLY
 Yeah?

TINA (O.S.)
 Winston's on the phone. He wants to
 say happy birthday.

EARLY
 (reluctant)
 Tell him I'll call him back.

Brief pause.

TINA (O.S.)
Okay. Don't forget.

Early glimpses out the window. In deep thought.

MOMENTS LATER

Dips under his bed. Slides out a shoe box. He opens it.

Piles of envelopes inside. Unopened. All sent from the same address. A CORRECTIONS FACILITY. The name WINSTON HILL.

He contemplates. But shuts it. Slides the shoe box back under his bed.

INT. DINNER TABLE - MOMENTS LATER

Early sits across from Tina. A birthday cake sits at the center. Candles lit.

A somber silence.

Early stares at the candles. Looks up at Tina who hides tears with a forced smile.

He blows out the candles. Another silence.

TINA
Did you make a wish?

He shakes his head. Not into it.

TINA (CONT'D)
But honey, you're supposed to make a wish.

EARLY
Do you know I've never coughed before?

Tina stares blankly at him.

EARLY (CONT'D)
I don't think I've ever sneezed before either. I don't know what to think about that.

An uncomfortable silence.

TINA
Let's have some cake.

He bangs his fist on the table suddenly and throttles silverware. Alarming her.

EARLY

No. No cake. I don't like cake and I don't want any cake. Okay?

TINA

You've always liked cake, honey.

EARLY

(raises voice)

I've never liked cake. I hate cake. And I hate candles. And there's nothing I hate more than cake and candles. Okay?

(louder)

Okay?

TINA

Okay, honey, calm down.

Early hangs his head. Pounds on the table. Jumps to his feet.

EARLY

You're not my mother, you know that, right?

Tina looks down at the floor. Despondent.

EARLY (CONT'D)

You're gonna have your own baby, so you can stop pretending now, okay?

Her eyes well up.

EARLY (CONT'D)

(louder)

You're not my mother. My mother, my real mother? She's fucking dead.

He bangs his fist on the table:

EARLY (CONT'D)

Dead! Dead! Dead!

Silence. Tina falls to tears.

He sits down.

EARLY (CONT'D)

(softly)

I'm sorry.

His eyes well up.

EARLY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

Rises.

He hurries out. DOOR SLAMS SHUT from OS. Tina continues to weep.

EXT. UPPER WEST SIDE (MANHATTAN) - LATER

A city setting. Sidewalks flooded. Hotdog VENDORS and VAGRANTS on every corner.

Early passes a series of crowded bars and outdoor cafes.

INT. SEX SHOP

Lingerie hangs from the walls. Aisles of pornographic material. Magazines and DVDs. Rows of sex toys.

Early moseys in. His eyes wander the shop en route to the counter.

The CLERK stands behind the cash register. Watches Early.

CLERK
Can I help you?

Early turns. Faces CLERK.

EARLY
What's that?

CLERK
Do you need help finding anything?

EARLY
Oh, no. I'm good. But, uh, does Winston still work here?

CLERK
Winston? I don't know who that is, kid.

Early nods. Looks around. Turns to CLERK again.

EARLY
You sure he's not here?

CLERK nods.

EARLY (CONT'D)
I just wanted to talk to him for a
second. Say hi.

CLERK
There's no Winston here, okay?

Early nods. Leaves.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Dog walkers and joggers everywhere. Constant motion. Taxi cabs and other vehicles zoom back and forth along the busy street.

Early walks along a cobblestone sidewalk just bordering the park.

His eyes shift chaotically. Overwhelmed by the large crowds.

He eyes a group of TEENAGERS clad in tuxedos and extravagant dresses. Everywhere.

The SOUND of a PIANO grabs his ear. He turns.

A STREET PERFORMER sits at the edge of the park with a keyboard. Hat stuffed with cash by his feet.

He plays CLASSICAL MUSIC. Early watches while passing. Fascinated.

Reaches a street corner.

STREET CORNER

Early crosses without looking. His eyes on STREET PERFORMER.

A DON'T WALK sign blinks across the street.

Early turns ahead just as WHAM! A car slams into him.

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

INT. PRISON VISITATION ROOM - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Early (4) sits at a glass partition. Tina by his side. A phone hangs from the wall.

Winston sits at the other side of the glass in an orange prison uniform. Phone to his ear.

Early seems shy. Hesitant. He turns to Tina. She hands him the phone.

TINA

Early? This is Winston. Do you remember him?

Early looks to Winston. To Tina. Blank look.

TINA (CONT'D)

He saved your life.

Early reluctantly takes the phone. Places it to his ear. Looks up at Winston with big, curious eyes.

WINSTON

How you hanging in there, little buddy?

They stare at each other. Winston struggles to maintain eye contact. Uncomfortable. Partly ashamed.

The SOUND of a PIANO takes us to...

INT. PIANO ROOM - (FLASHBACK)

John sits at the piano and tickles the keys. A familiar romantic ballad - same SONG from the boat.

Early (4) sits and watches attentively.

John, his back to Early, misses a note. Grows frustrated and pauses.

Early senses something amiss.

John bangs away on the keys violently. Off key. Painful to the ears.

The notes reverberate and become more and more violent. Jarring.

He whips his head around and cuts an evil look into Early's direction. Bad intentions. Almost demonic.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - (PRESENT TIME)

Early opens his eyes. Moonlight shines on his face. The room otherwise dark.

He finds himself in bed wearing a gown. A cast over his arm.

CLASSICAL PIANO plays softly from a CD player. He shuts it off.

A small gift wrapped box and envelope sit upon his night stand.

He opens the envelope. A birthday card.

INSERT BIRTHDAY CARD

Love Mom & Dad XOXO

BACK TO SCENE

He opens the card and unfolds a piece of paper inside. A check.

Early looks over the box curious. But doesn't open it.

A ruckus from the hallway diverts his attention.

HALLWAY

Early limps out. Barefoot. Gift box and check in hand.

TEEN GIRL (O.S.)

I hate you!

TEEN GIRL marches out of a room down the hall wearing a dress and corset. Plops down on a bench.

She cries hysterically while on her cell phone.

TEEN GIRL (CONT'D)

This is so unfair!

Early limps to her curious.

TEEN GIRL (CONT'D)

(on phone)

He's not even hurt that bad, I don't understand why I need to be here! All my friends are out having fun and I'm stuck here because Dad doesn't know how to fucking drive!

Early stands above her. Stares at her with wide eyes.

TEEN GIRL (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Fuck you Mom! I'll talk any way I want! You don't understand, this was supposed to be my night! MY NIGHT!

She feels Early staring at her. Lowers the phone and looks up at him annoyed.

TEEN GIRL (CONT'D)
Can I help you?

He eyeballs her. Disturbed.

EARLY
Why is everybody dressed up for?

She cocks an eye at him perplexed.

TEEN GIRL
It's prom night.

He nods confused.

She returns to her phone call.

Early peeks into the room curious. Tiptoes in.

HOSPITAL ROOM

STEVEN (50) lies in bed. Leg hoisted in a sling. Both arms in casts. Elevated. Face heavily bandaged.

He hits a button on a remote control repeatedly.

EARLY (O.S.)
What's that?

Steven turns. Early stands at his bedside.

STEVEN
Morphine.

EARLY
For what?

STEVEN
For the pain. I was in an accident.

Early looks him over.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Who are you?

EARLY
Early. Early Upchurch.

Silence. Steven narrows his eyes.

STEVEN
Wait a minute.

Suddenly enraged.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
You. I know you.

Early raises an eyebrow.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
It was you. You fuck. You walked in
front of my car.

Steven attempts to sit up but groans. In pain.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
It was you!

Early carefully backs away.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
You have any idea how much pain I'm
in? How much this fucking hurts?

Early turns and escapes.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
I almost died you little shit!

HALLWAY

Early limps out of the room.

Teen Girl continues on the phone:

TEEN GIRL
I wish he would've just died!

Early quickens his pace to another corridor.

STEVEN (O.S.)
You mother fucker! I'll kill you!
I'll fucking kill you!

ELEVATOR

Early leans his back against the wall and breathes heavily.
On the brink of a panic attack. In tears.

The doors slide shut.

LOBBY

Early moves past a SECURITY GUARD preoccupied with a newspaper.

The RECEPTIONIST spots him just as she hangs up the phone:

RECEPTIONIST
Excuse me, sir?

Early darts out the front doors.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
Sir!
(to Security)
Security!

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

SECURITY GUARD hurries out. Looks both ways. Not a trace.

EXT. CITY STREETS - LATER

Early limps barefoot with his gift box and check in hand.

Ready to explode, he breathes in and out to calm himself. But the tension continues to build. Unhinging.

He punches and kicks at the air. Murmuring to himself as PASSERSBY stop and stare. He fights tears. Trying hard to keep it inside. Until...

He looks to the sky and screams at the top of his lungs until out of breath.

Near hyperventilation. He drops to his rear and sits on a nearby stoop. Hides his face, sobbing deliriously.

MUSIC draws his attention. He looks up at a crowded bar across the street.

A romantic love song is sung from inside - the song from the boat.

INT. KARAOKE BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Early saunters in. Stops.

A ruckus CROWD. DRUNK COLLEGE STUDENTS everywhere. Hectic and extremely loud.

Early sticks out like a sore thumb. The SONG from the boat continues to play. He follows the voice. Squeezes through the CROWD.

A DRUNK GIRL drops a glass of beer. It shatters on the floor. Her FRIENDS mock her with applause.

Early steps on the broken glass with his bare feet. Doesn't feel it. His eyes focused on the stage.

Spotlight on the stage. TRANNY belts out the SONG while reading off a Teleprompter. The CROWD loves it. Early is immersed.

PATRON (O.S.)
Hey, dude?

Early turns to a stocky drunk PATRON.

PATRON (CONT'D)
You're bleeding.

Patron points to the floor. Early sees blood gushing from beneath his bare feet.

He cuts through the CROWD. Leaves a trail of bloody footprints.

MEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Early yanks glass shards from the bottom of his foot. Tosses them in the trash.

He washes and dries his hands. A bit of graffiti piques his interest.

INSERT GRAFFITI

Do You Want Agony? 212-954-9923

BACK TO SCENE

Early thinks for a moment. Staring at the number.

He lifts his foot and dips his index finger in blood. He uses the blood like ink. Writes the number on his forearm.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

A VAGRANT jingles a cup full of change.

Early stops. Backpedals. He peers down at Vagrant's sneakers.

Early wiggles his toes. Eyes the sneakers again.

EARLY
I'll trade you. Sneakers for this
box.

VAGRANT
What's inside?

EARLY
I don't know.

VAGRANT
Open it.

EARLY
No.

Vagrant nods. Intrigued but on the fence.

VAGRANT
(nods)
Okay.

EXT. PAY PHONE - LATER

ANGLE ON sneakers.

Early reads off his arm and dials the number.

AGONY (V.O.)
Bad dog!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DARKO SHANKWEILER. Middle-aged, chubby and balding. A distinct birth mark above his right eye.

He crawls on all fours in only boxer shorts. His ankles bound together. Spiked dog collar on his neck.

He makes whiny dog noises through a gag stuffed into his mouth.

AGONY (21) stands above him. Heavy make-up. She wears a skimpy leather outfit that may as well be painted onto her perfect body.

She cracks a baby whip. Darko cowers.

AGONY
You've been a very bad boy.

Darko continues to whine like a dog.

She props her leg onto a chair seductively. Exposes her succulent thigh.

AGONY (CONT'D)
I bet you want a treat, dontcha?

Darko nods. She cracks her whip.

AGONY (CONT'D)
Like a dog!

He makes dog noises.

AGONY (CONT'D)
I want you to beg for it.

Darko makes begging noises. Crawls to her and rubs his chin against her ankle.

She nudges him back with her pointy heel.

AGONY (CONT'D)
Sit like a good doggy.

He sits like a dog.

AGONY (CONT'D)
Now speak.

He barks.

AGONY (CONT'D)
Good boy.

She pets him. Teases him with her breasts. But backs away.

AGONY (CONT'D)
Now I want you to shit.

Darko tilts his head.

AGONY (CONT'D)
You heard me. Shit!

Confused, he clenches his stomach. Tries. Pushes. She whips his back and leaves a welt. He yelps.

AGONY (CONT'D)
On the newspaper!

Darko crawls to newspaper spread across the floor.

AGONY (CONT'D)
No treats until you --

A PHONE RINGS. She reaches for it. Reads the caller ID. Sets it aside.

It continues to RING. She ignores it.

She approaches Darko. Stands above him. Watches him struggle.

Darko mumbles something through his gag.

AGONY (CONT'D)
Problem?

He mumbles again. She removes the gag.

DARKO
I'm constipated.

AGONY
Constipated? Guess I'll just have to beat the shit outta you!

She whips him again.

DARKO
Ow!

AGONY
No treat until you shit on that fucking newspaper!
(whips him again)
Now shit!

DARKO
Ow! Darko! Darko! Darko!

Agony smirks. Shakes her head.

AGONY
You are fucking pathetic.

She departs from her character. Takes a gander at her phone again.

AGONY (CONT'D)
Always a next time.

EXT. PAY PHONE - CONTINUOUS

Early hangs up the phone disappointed. Leaves.

The PHONE RINGS. He returns. Answers.

EARLY
Hello?

AGONY (V.O.)
Who is this?

EARLY
(delayed)
I got this number from a bathroom
wall?

AGONY (V.O.)
And?

Early thinks. Not sure what to say.

EARLY
I want Agony.

INT. DINER - LATER

At a booth by a window.

Agony rolls a joint. She wears a bubble jacket with patches
sewn onto it. Names of Rock & Roll grunge bands on the
patches.

She licks the rolling paper. Her eyes shift to Early who sits
across from her.

He stares at her. Curious.

EARLY
Is Agony your real name?

AGONY
So what if it is?

EARLY
(shrugs)
It's just a weird name, that's all.

AGONY
And what's your name? Mike? John?

EARLY
Early.

She puts the finishing touches on the perfectly rolled joint.

AGONY

Early? And that's normal?

EARLY

I was born three months premature.

She stashes the joint. Eyeballs him confounded.

AGONY

How old are you anyway?

EARLY

Eighteen.

AGONY

No you're not.

EARLY

Why would I lie?

AGONY

It looks like you're still waiting
for your balls to drop.

They continue to study each other.

EARLY

Why are you wearing a winter
jacket? It's June.

AGONY

I'm anemic. And you're one to
judge. You look like you escaped
from a mental hospital.

EARLY

Just a regular hospital.

AGONY

And what were you doing at a
regular hospital?

EARLY

I got hit by a car.

AGONY

Maybe you should go back.

EARLY

I don't like hospitals.

AGONY

What about your parents? Where are
they?

Early scratches his temple.

EARLY
My mother died when I was born.

AGONY
Where's your dad?

EARLY
He tried drowning me when I was a kid. But he's dead. He killed himself. I was there.

AGONY
That's a lot to tell somebody you don't know.

EARLY
You asked.

AGONY
You didn't have to go into detail.

EARLY
I like talking about it.

AGONY
That's weird.

EARLY
I mean, I don't enjoy it, but I don't mind. It's everybody else who doesn't like talking about it.

Agony pretends to check her phone. Uncomfortable.

AGONY
On that note.

She gathers her purse. Stands up.

AGONY (CONT'D)
As much as I enjoy talking about dead family members, I have things to do.

Leaves the table.

EARLY
Wait, where are you going?

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Early tries to keep up with Agony.

EARLY
Hey, wait up.

She lights up her joint.

AGONY
You've all ready wasted enough of
my time, kid.

EARLY
I have money.

She stops. Faces him. Blows smoke in his face.

AGONY
What do you think I do?

He shrugs.

EARLY
I have an idea.

AGONY
I'm a dominatrix. Do you have any
idea what that is?

EARLY
I've seen videos. On the internet.

AGONY
I'm not a hooker, if that's what
you think. I don't fuck people for
money.

EARLY
You hurt them.

She thinks about it. Nods.

AGONY
Not anymore than they wanna be
hurt. Do you wanna be hurt?

EARLY
Yeah. I do. But it's complicated.

AGONY
What's complicated? You either want
to or you don't.

Early sighs. Not sure how to explain.

EARLY
I can't feel pain.

She takes a puff from her joint. Laughs.

AGONY
What?

EARLY
It's a genetic disorder.

AGONY
Are you some kind of a psycho
murderer or something?

EARLY
What? No. Why would you ask that?

AGONY
You're not exactly normal.

His expression falls for a moment.

EARLY
I'm just telling the truth.

AGONY
I don't know why anybody would lie
about something like that, so I'll
take your word for it. But I'm in
the business of pain, and you
apparently can't feel pain. So,
what exactly would you be hoping to
accomplish with me?

He shrugs. Self conscious.

AGONY (CONT'D)
And if you even utter as much as a
sexual innuendo, I will cut your
dick off and fuck you with it.

She draws a switch blade.

Early looks at the blade. Up at Agony.

EARLY
I wanna watch.

She studies him for a moment. Retracts the blade.

AGONY

Kinky.

EXT. MOTEL - LATER

A trashy lodging in a sketchy inner city neighborhood.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The definition of a shithole.

An OLD GUY lies on the floor handcuffed to the radiator. Blindfolded. In only socks and boxer briefs.

A CRACK of the WHIP. Agony enters the frame in her sexy leather one-piece. Pointy high heel boots.

She whips his shoulder. Draws a welt.

OLD GUY

Oh, yeah!

AGONY

Do you like the way it hurts, baby?

OLD GUY

God, yes! I like the way it hurts!

She digs her heel into his shoulder.

AGONY

Lick my boot, you filthy fucking animal! Lick it!

He licks her boot. Savors it.

AGONY (CONT'D)

What's it taste like?

OLD GUY

Like fucking blueberries!

AGONY

Watch your fucking mouth!

She whips him again.

OLD GUY

Ow! More please!

Whips him again. Harder.

OLD GUY (CONT'D)

Fuck!

Again. Even harder.

OLD GUY (CONT'D)

Geezus Christ! It hurts so good!

AGONY

I stepped in dog shit, did you like the way it tasted? Did you enjoy licking dog shit from my boot?

OLD GUY

Yes, I liked it! I liked it a lot!

Agony winds back and whips him even harder.

OLD GUY (CONT'D)

Ahhh! Quasimoto! Quasimoto!

She crouches down. Squeezes his cheeks.

AGONY

Do you need a break, baby? Is it too much for you?

OLD GUY

(catches his breath)

That one hurt.

AGONY

That's too bad.

She sits on the bed and waits.

AGONY (CONT'D)

Tell me when you're ready.

He takes a few breaths.

OLD GUY

(eager)

Okay, I'm ready.

She leaves the bed. Cracks her whip into the air.

ANGLE ON a linen closet in the background. Slightly ajar.

LINEN CLOSET

Early stands in the dark. His eye peeking out.

A CRACK of the WHIP followed by screams.

MOTEL ROOM - LATER

Early sits at the edge of the bed and watches Agony change.

She removes her shirt. Exposes her supple breasts. He looks away. She notices and smiles. Charmed by his innocence.

AGONY

So? What did you think? Was it everything you dreamed it would be?

He sneaks a peek. Shifts his eyes to the floor.

EARLY

How much do I owe you?

AGONY

One fifty.

She slips into a T-shirt.

AGONY (CONT'D)

You can look now.

He faces her again. Check in his hand.

EARLY

I only have a check for 300.

AGONY

What?

He shows her the check. She plucks it away from him. Looks at it and shakes her head. Tosses it to the bed.

AGONY (CONT'D)

I only take cash.

EARLY

I don't have cash.

AGONY

Then take your ass to a fucking bank and get cash.

EARLY

Banks are closed. I can't cash the check until morning.

AGONY

You're kidding me, right?

EARLY

It was a birthday present from my parents. They wouldn't give me a bad check, if that's what you're worried about.

AGONY

I thought your parents were dead.

EARLY

I was adopted when I was five, they're not my real parents.

She sighs in frustration.

AGONY

I don't know why I did this. I don't know why I even picked up the phone.

EARLY

Listen, the check's good, okay? We just have to wait until morning to cash it.

She eyes him suspiciously.

AGONY

Are you trying to spend the night with me?

EARLY

What?

AGONY

You sneaky little fucker!

EARLY

How am I sneaky?

AGONY

You're lucky I don't cut your balls off right now and flush them shits down the toilet.

EARLY

I can't feel pain, remember?

AGONY

But you would like to keep your balls, correct?

EARLY

(nods)

Correct. But I don't know what you
want me to do.

She falls back into a chair. Lights a cigarette.

EARLY (CONT'D)

There has to be something.

She ponders to herself. Smiles.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Early stands still. In position. He waits as Agony rummages
through a nearby garbage bin.

She fishes out an empty beer bottle.

AGONY

This will do.

She turns to him.

AGONY (CONT'D)

You sure about this?

EARLY

What choice do I have?

AGONY

You're not gonna cry or call the
police on me or anything, are you?

EARLY

(shakes head)

You might need to stitch me up
after.

She walks about ten feet away from him.

AGONY

Now, that sounds fun.

She turns. Faces him.

AGONY (CONT'D)

Ready?

He nods. She gets a running start and SMASH! Shatters the
bottle over his head.

He staggers a bit. But remains standing. Not fazed.

She laughs. Giddy. Staring at the broken half of the bottle.

AGONY (CONT'D)
Holy shit!

Early feels a gash across the bridge of his nose.

AGONY (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

He looks at his fingers.

EARLY
Just some blood.

She leans in for a closer look. Grimaces.

AGONY
Ouch. I think I broke your nose.

EARLY
How's it look?

AGONY
It's an improvement.

She touches his nose. Quickly draws back her hand. Touches his nose again.

AGONY (CONT'D)
That doesn't hurt?

He shakes his head.

AGONY (CONT'D)
(amazed)
That's awesome.

EARLY
Is it?

AGONY
You're like a superhero. Right out
of a fucking comic book.

She wipes blood from Early's eye. They stare at each other. A brief but tender moment.

AGONY (CONT'D)
And you feel nothing? Not even a
twinge?

EARLY
I don't know what a twinge is.

She laughs.

AGONY

You could be like a sideshow at the circus. You know, like the fat guy who gets shot with a cannon?

EARLY

That wouldn't be humiliating.

She studies him. Forms a devious smile.

AGONY

I'm not completely sold. Not yet.

LATER

She fishes a stun gun from her purse. Pulls the trigger and BZZZZ! A bright blue light flashes from it.

AGONY (CONT'D)

This is gonna be killer.

She approaches Early. He lifts his gown. Her eyes shift down.

EARLY

(re: off her reaction)

Don't look.

Her eyes return to his face.

EARLY (CONT'D)

Try not to do any permanent damage.

She looks him dead in the eye. Almost seductive. Stun gun by his genitals.

AGONY

Just the testicles.

She zaps him - BZZZZ!

SLOW MOTION. Blue light bounces and flickers off their faces as she holds the stun gun at his genitals.

A romantic moment. A LOVE SONG plays inside Early's head.

They gaze into each other's eyes.

She leans her forehead to his. Kisses him softly on the lips.

He shuts his eyes.

The moment lasts forever as MUSIC takes us to...

INT. TV ROOM - NIGHT - (FLASHBACK)

Early (4) stands by the couch. Watches TV. The SONG from the boat plays.

ON TV

A wedding video. John wears a tuxedo. Dances with his WIFE in front of GUESTS to their SONG. All smiles. The tape zooms in as John and WIFE kiss.

BACK TO SCENE

John sits on the couch. Sad smile on his face as he watches the video. He hits rewind. Plays back the kiss.

Smiling. But he notices Early. His smile immediately fades.

He shuts off the TV. End MUSIC.

AGONY (V.O.)

Why did your father try to drown
you?

EXT. RITE AID PHARMACY - NIGHT - (PRESENT TIME)

Early sits at the curb out front.

EARLY

I would've drowned me too, if I
were him. It was my fault my mother
died.

Agony cleans blood from the bridge of his nose with a wet nap.

AGONY

Now, how is that your fault?

EARLY

She died giving birth to me.

AGONY

You think about it, it was his
fault for getting her pregnant.

He gives it thought as she cleans his cut.

AGONY (CONT'D)

Look on the bright side, you're
pretty fucking blessed.

EARLY
You think so?

AGONY
You don't have to deal with pain
like everybody else. That's a
luxury most people wish they had.

She opens a tube of Neosporin. Squeezes onto a Q tip. They
meet eyes for just a moment.

AGONY (CONT'D)
Must be pretty bad ass, huh?

EARLY
I don't really have a frame of
reference. It's all I ever knew.

AGONY
You were born that way?

Early nods.

AGONY (CONT'D)
You ever wonder what it feels like?

EARLY
To feel pain?

She nods.

EARLY (CONT'D)
You know how some people cut
themselves? I used to bang my head
against the wall when I was a kid.

AGONY
You might wanna see a neurologist
about that.

She applies the Q tip to his gash.

EARLY
For some reason, I thought if I
banged it hard enough, I'd feel
something.

She peels film from a cartoon themed band aid. Places it over
his gash.

AGONY
Can't deny fate. You have a fucking
gift. Embrace it.

She smooths the band aid over his gash.

AGONY (CONT'D)

You are the way you are for a
reason. Everything. It all happens
for a reason.

She pats the band aid flat.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Middle of nowhere.

Winston pumps gas into a rusty jalopy. He looks to the pump
ahead. At a red car.

GUY stands at the red car and fuels. Staring at Winston as if
he recognized him.

Winston grows weary. Eyes the pump gauge as he fills up.
Sense of urgency. He glances at Guy again.

Guy continues to stare.

Winston stops. Twists the cap on and hurries off.

INT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Winston approaches the counter.

WINSTON

Pump two?

CASHIER, a blue-collar townie, nods.

CASHIER

Fifteen, forty-five.

Winston quickly counts cash. Glances outside. Guy approaches
the entrance.

Winston turns to Cashier. Slaps cash on the counter. But
Cashier doesn't take the money. Only stares at Winston with
big eyes.

Winston glimpses at a wanted sign with a police sketch
hanging nearby.

The sketch resembles Winston.

Winston stares back at Cashier. Brief silence.

Cashier quickly ducks down.

Guy charges into the station with a gun pointed at Winston.

Cashier rises from behind the counter with a shotgun.

POP! BOOM! Winston ducks. Cashier and Guy FIRE simultaneously and shoot each other by accident.

Silence. Winston stands frozen. In shock. He looks outside to see a VAN approaching the station.

He dashes out the front door.

INT. RUSTY JALOPY - MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Winston behind the wheel. He steps harder on the gas. Near panic. Breathing heavily.

He peeks into his mirrors. Nobody behind him.

WINSTON (V.O.)
I've hurt a lot of people in my
life. Did a lot of bad things.

EXT. BRIDGE - LATER

Rickety and makeshift. A country road.

Winston paces nervously. Jalopy parked nearby. A million thoughts race through his mind.

He stops. Leans over the rail at the edge of the bridge. Looks down at the lake below and brainstorms.

Stares aimlessly at a silver boat up the lake. Hears MUSIC. Golden Oldies. Romantic love song.

Early (4) splashes around in the water. John in the boat.

John lifts a shotgun. Winston stands erect. Momentarily distracted from his thoughts. *What is going on?*

BOOM! John topples over. Winston gasps in shock. He leans over the rail for a better look.

Early struggles in the water.

WINSTON (V.O.)
Then you came along and changed
everything.

EXT. LAKE - CONTINUOUS

Early bobs above and below the water.

Winston waves his arms from the bridge. Merely a silhouette in front of the bright sun.

WINSTON (V.O.)

It was meant to be, ya understand?

Winston jumps from the bridge. Splashes into the lake. Swims to Early.

EXT. SHORE - MOMENTS LATER

Winston gives young Early mouth to mouth. Presses down on his chest.

WINSTON (V.O.)

If anything in my life had gone differently up to that moment I saw you in that lake... who knows what would have happened?

Early awakens. Spits up water. Coughs.

WINSTON (V.O.)

I had to be on that bridge. On that day. At that exact moment. Everything before that? It happened for a reason. As to why? I don't know. Maybe we'll never know. But destiny doesn't need no explanation. Only we can figure out why.

LATER

A chaotic scene. Police cars everywhere. An ambulance. Blue and red flashing lights.

MEDICS tend to Early who shivers under a blanket.

Winston is escorted by OFFICERS into the back of a police car. Wrists cuffed.

OFFICER slams the door shut. Winston sits inside. He and Early meet eyes for just a moment.

WINSTON (V.O.)

My path was not a righteous one.
But you opened my eyes.

INT. PRISON VISITATION - DAY - YEARS LATER

Winston and young Early sit across from each other. Glass partition between them. They speak over the phone.

WINSTON

You probably don't understand everything I'm telling you right now. But one day, you will. And I want you to know that I'm not here because of you. None of this was your fault. Maybe I would've been caught, maybe not. But, like I said, things happen for a reason. I truly believe that.

His eyes well up. Brief pause.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

You are the one good thing I've done in my life. And this place? One day, I'll get out of here. And when I do, I'll be a better man. Until then, all I can do is live through you.

Early lets his words resonate.

INT. LINEN CLOSET - NIGHT - (PRESENT TIME)

Early hides in the dark. His eye at crack of the door. Sliver of light shines vertically on his face.

A CRACK of the WHIP. A painful cry.

MOTEL ROOM

Linen closet in the background. Ajar.

Agony, in full dominatrix gear, punishes yet another CLIENT.

Client crawls around on all fours. Ankles bound. Wrists tied. Gag in his mouth.

She whips him across the back. He howls. Tears in his eyes. Face red.

Agony spies the linen closet from the corner of her eye. She whips Client even harder. A big red welt. He lets out another muffled howl.

EARLY'S POV. From the closet. Agony cuts Early a menacing yet seductive glance. She wants to impress her audience. Whips Client again. Harder.

A puffy welt forms across his back. Another sharp lash makes him weep. In excruciating pain.

She gazes at Early. Eyes never leaving him as she whips Client again and again.

Client spits out his gag. Drenched in sweat.

CLIENT

Tabitha!

Agony whips him. Harder. Faster. Over and over again. She ignores his cries. In a frenzy.

CLIENT (CONT'D)

Tabitha!

Another lash across his back draws blood.

CLIENT (CONT'D)

(top of his lungs)

Taaaabithaaaa!!!

She snaps out of her trance. Stops. Steps back shocked.

Client drops to his belly. In tears. Slobber down his chin as he cries in agony. Near hyperventilation.

CLIENT (CONT'D)

(gasping)

Tabitha... Tabitha... Tabitha...

LINEN CLOSET

Early looks on. Perplexed yet excited.

EARLY (V.O.)

Who is she?

EXT. NEW YORK SKYLINE - NIGHT

In the background: Tall buildings. Bright lights. Bridges. East River.

Sounds of a TRAIN RUMBLING grow LOUDER...

A train bullets into view. Speeds along an above ground track.

AGONY (V.O.)
Who is who?

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Hums along the tracks. Wonderful view of the skyline. Near empty. Only a few STRAPHANGERS.

Agony tags the wall with graffiti with a black marker.

EARLY (O.S.)
Tabitha.

He sits across from her. Observes.

AGONY
(delayed)
I don't know who or what Tabitha is. That's his business.

EARLY
Then why was he calling you that?

AGONY
He wasn't calling me anything. It's a safe word.

EARLY
What is that, code?

She lights up a cigarette and admires her graffiti.

AGONY
Something like that.

She sits. Faces Early. Puffs smoke into the air.

AGONY (CONT'D)
It's like a time out. If it gets too rough for them, they call out their safe word and I stop. It gives them a chance to recuperate. Get their shit together.

EARLY
Why doesn't he just say stop?

AGONY
Because stop doesn't always mean stop.

EARLY
What's your safe word?

AGONY

I'm a sadist, remember? I wouldn't need one. You?

He thinks about it. Gazes out the window down at the water as they cross the East River. Lights from tall buildings shimmer off its surface.

EARLY

I guess I wouldn't need one either.

EXT. TRASH BAR - NIGHT

Neon light in the window reads TRASH BAR. Beer ads.

INT. TRASH BAR - CONTINUOUS

Typical dive. Darts. Pool table. Jukebox.

Nearing last call. Only a few DRUNKEN REGULARS remain. Music low.

Agony and Early sit at the end of the bar. The bartender SAM, silver hair in a pony tail, denies under-aged TEENS dressed for prom.

Sam comes to the end of the bar.

AGONY

Salutations, Sam. What's shakin'?

SAM

(shakes head)

These fucking teeny boppers.

The group of TEENS leave the bar.

SAM (CONT'D)

At least in my day, we had the decency to bring fake IDs. All night with them. Don't know what it is.

EARLY

It's prom.

Sam looks to Early. Checks out his gown. Bracelet.

SAM

Groovy threads, kid. Escape from a mental hospital or something?

EARLY
Just a regular hospital.

SAM
You got ID? Fake ID?

AGONY
He's with me, Sam.

Sam wrinkles his brow at Early. Shrugs.

SAM
Whatever you say, darling. The usual?

AGONY
Make it two.

Sam pours a couple beers from the tap. Sets the glasses in front of them.

Early stares at the glass unsure.

AGONY (CONT'D)
(re: off his expression)
It won't kill you.

He lifts the glass to his lips.

AGONY (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

He stops.

She raises her glass.

AGONY (CONT'D)
We have to drink to something.

Early thinks. No ideas.

EARLY
I don't know, what do people normally drink to?

AGONY
Fuck what people normally drink to.

Has an idea. Raises her glass.

AGONY (CONT'D)
To your testicles.

Early smiles, bewildered.

EARLY

Okay. To my testicles.

They clank glasses. Early takes a sip. Grimaces.

AGONY

So how come you're not out
gallivanting like the rest of these
rapscallions?

EARLY

I was home schooled.

AGONY

Well. It is your birthday.
Shouldn't you be out at a strip
club or something?

EARLY

Should I?

AGONY

You're 18 fucking years old! You
should be out with your friends
getting into some shit. Or at least
doing something special.

EARLY

This is kinda special, isn't it?

She gazes at him in wonder.

AGONY

You ever been with a girl before?

EARLY

(thrown for a loop)
What?

AGONY

You don't have any girlfriends or
anything?

He shakes his head timidly.

EARLY

What about you? Do you have a
boyfriend?

She smiles. Sips her beer.

AGONY

I'm far too fucked up to have a
boyfriend.

EARLY

I think you're okay.

She smiles. Looks past him for a moment. Through the window looking outside.

She spots a young TEENAGE COUPLE in prom gear kissing passionately out front.

She looks to Early. Something on her mind. Then to Sam.

AGONY

Hey, Sam? Mind if we fire up the Jukebox?

SAM

(wiping down bar)
Fire away.

She sets a dollar on the bar. Slides it across to Early.

AGONY

Pick a song.

JUKEBOX - MOMENTS LATER

Early shuffles through tracks. Finds a song. Inserts the dollar and hits RANDOM.

MUSIC plays. The SONG from the boat. Early can't believe it.

AGONY (CONT'D)

Dance with me.

He turns. Faces her.

EARLY

Dance?

She nods.

EARLY (CONT'D)

But... I don't know how.

She takes him by the hand.

AGONY

Neither do I. Come on.

Leads him to the dance floor.

DANCE FLOOR

The lights dim just for them. A spotlight.

Agony takes his hand. Places it on his waist. Other hand on her shoulder. She leads him in a slow dance.

Their eyes meet. A warm exchange. She embraces him closely. Rests her head on his shoulder.

The moment last forever. A romantic and surreal.

MUSIC takes us to...

INT. STRIP CLUB - BATHROOM

In SLOW MOTION. No other sound.

A line of cocaine is snorted from the edge of a dirty sink.

Winston lifts his head. Worn and defeated. Haggard. He clears his nostrils. Rolled up dollar bill in his hand.

He looks down at the dollar bill. Sees blood at the tip.

INT. STRIP CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Continue SLOW MOTION. MUSIC.

The joint nearly empty. Sketchy. Third rate DANCERS with average bodies.

Fluorescent lights accentuate the cigarette smoke that rises into the air.

Winston sits by the stage. He puffs away on a cigarette while looking up.

At a naked FEMALE DANCER on stage. He unrolls the bloody dollar bill and hands it to her.

Leans back into his seat. Sad look on his face. A defeated man.

INT. CRUMMY APARTMENT - LATER

Continue SLOW MOTION and MUSIC.

Crammed space. Dirty plates everywhere. Crushed beer cans on the floor.

Winston sits at the edge of a naked bed. No sheets. He reveals a revolver. Pops open the chamber. One bullet.

He lays it on a coffee table and spins it. Watches it as if in a trance.

The revolver stops spinning. Pointing into the other direction.

INT. TRASH BAR - CONTINUOUS

Early and Agony on the dance floor. Lights out. Spotlight on them.

The SONG reaches its conclusion. They gaze into each other's eyes. About to kiss.

The entrance door crashes open. Spotlight goes out. Lights up. Back to reality.

Early and Agony turn to the door. Her expression falls.

AGONY
(murmurs)
Shit.

NATHAN (30) marches in. Tattoos. Handle bar mustache. A bad mother fucker.

NATHAN
I thought that was you.

As he nears:

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Miss me?

Nathan cocks his hand back. Smacks her hard in the face.

SAM (O.S.)
Hey!

She falls to her back. Bloody lip. Looks up at Nathan frightened. Shocked.

EARLY
What's going on?

Nathan looks to Early. Down at Agony.

NATHAN
Friend of yours?

Turns to Early and WHAM! Punches him in the face. The force drops Early to the floor.

Nathan yanks Agony to her feet by the hair. Drags her along to the front door.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Big fucking Apple, huh? Real city
girl now, aren'tcha?

SAM
Agony?

NATHAN
(points at Sam)
Shut your mouth, ain't none of your
fucking business.

Agony cries, trying to put up a fight as Nathan pulls her along by her hair.

AGONY
Let me go!

Early jumps on his back, but Nathan easily shakes him off. But Early keeps forward.

Nathan stiff arms him back. Early throws punches but struggles to land a shot. Finally...

WHAM! Early hits him in the face. But doesn't hurt him. Annoys him more than anything.

Nathan throws Agony to the floor. Comes at Early with a vengeance

WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! Punches Early three times. Each shot drives him further and further back.

He slides Early's face across the bar and knocks bottles and glasses to the floor.

Nathan throws him hard to the ground. Picks up a bar stool and SLAM! Smashes Early over the head.

Nathan dusts his hands off. Sees PATRONS staring at him, rising from their stools.

Nathan draws a pistol. PATRONS back off.

NATHAN
Let's not get squirrely.

He returns to Agony. Sam and PATRONS watch with caution.

Nathan stands over Agony, who remains on the floor.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

What makes you think you can just pack your fucking bags and leave me?

AGONY

I'm sorry!

NATHAN

You had to know I'd find you. Deep down in your heart, you had to know. No way I'd just let you leave.

EARLY (O.S.)

Hey!

Nathan turns. Early faces him from the other end of the bar.

NATHAN

This fucking kid.

Nathan moves toward him. Gun in hand.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I don't know who the fuck you are.

Early marches aggressively to Nathan.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

But you're gonna hurt. You're gonna hurt real fucking bad.

As they meet at the middle of the bar, Early grabs a bottle and WHAM! Clocks Nathan in the forehead.

Nathan staggers back. WHAM! Early nails him again. Nathan drops his gun. WHAM! Early smashes him in the face again and shatters the bottle.

Nathan drops to his back. Dazed.

Early straddles him. In a frenzy. Grabs him by the shirt collar and screams into his face at the top of his lungs.

Early wipes blood from his face and smears it onto Nathan's face. He then grabs the broken half of the bottle and jabs it into Nathan's forehead. Over and over.

Nathan screams.

EARLY

Tell me it hurts! Tell me it fucking hurts!

Nathan continues to howl in pain.

AGONY

Early! Stop!

Agony grabs Early from behind and pulls him away. He tries to move forward but Agony stays in front of him.

He tries to maneuver around her but SLAP! She smacks him in the face.

He stops. Looks at her confused. Hurt.

Agony hurries to Nathan's aid. Early looks on confounded.

Nathan remains dazed. Barely conscious.

AGONY (CONT'D)

What do you want? What are you doing here?

Nathan blinks his eyes. Blood blinding him. Shards of glass sticking out from his forehead.

NATHAN

(gasps)

You didn't even say goodbye...

She shakes focus into him. He looks her in the eye.

AGONY

How did you find me?

NATHAN

Daddy. He's here.

Agony can't believe it.

AGONY

That's impossible.

NATHAN

Oh, it's possible all right.

AGONY

You're lying to me!

NATHAN

He's here. And he ain't happy.

Agony quickly rises to her feet.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Just give him what he wants!

She backs away in disbelief. Turns and grabs her purse.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
You can't keep running!

She hurries out of the bar. Early follows after her. Glances down at Nathan on his way out.

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Agony walks with urgency. On her phone.

AGONY
Come on, Melinda, pick up!

It continues to ring.

AGONY (CONT'D)
Come on! How many fucking times
does it need to ring?

Early tries to catch up with her.

EARLY
Who was that?

AGONY
Melinda, it's me, listen I need you
to pick up the phone! I'm gonna
keep calling, okay?

She hangs up. Dials again.

EARLY
Who was it?

She faces Early, walking backwards.

AGONY
You need to go home.

Places phone to her ear. Listens to it ring.

EARLY
Tell me who he was.

AGONY
You need to go home, Early!

EARLY
Was it a client? That's it, isn't
it? It was a client.

She turns her back to him and walks faster.

AGONY
You wouldn't understand.

EARLY
Who the fuck was he!

She stops. Turns to Early again. Surprised.

AGONY
I'm in deep shit, okay? It's not safe for you. It's not safe for anybody.

Sees a cab and runs to the corner, waving her hand.

EARLY
I'm not leaving you.

AGONY
(shakes head)
Early.

EARLY
You told me everything happens for a reason.

The cab stops. She opens the door.

EARLY (CONT'D)
What about me? What about tonight? We met for a reason, right? It didn't just happen. Did it?

She stops. Faces Early again.

EARLY (CONT'D)
Wherever you're going, I'm going with you. Because that's how it's supposed to be.

She stares at him conflicted.

INT. AGONY'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

The room dark. TV glows. Volume low.

MELINDA (28) lies on the couch half asleep.

KEYS JIGGLE from OS. The door opens. Agony hurries in. Melinda lifts her head.

MELINDA

Hey, you.

Early comes follows in after Agony.

Agony quickly shuts the door. Locks it.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

(to Early)

Hi.

He nods. Face tattered. Blood trickling.

AGONY

Where's Lovely?

MELINDA

She's in her room.

As Agony vanishes into the hallway:

AGONY

That's my roommate, Melinda.
Melinda, Early.

Melinda sits up. Flicks on a light switch. Puzzled by Early's appearance. Looks to the hallway.

MELINDA

Agony? What's going on?

BEDROOM

LOVELY (6) cute as a button, lies snuggled under the covers. Sound asleep.

The door creaks open. Light shines in from the hallway.

Agony pokes her head in. Relieved. She opens the door further. Tiptoes in. Stares down at Lovely.

Early stands at the doorway. Watches from outside the room.

Agony gently strokes hair from Lovely's forehead. Kisses her.

Early moves out of frame. Melinda pokes her head in.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Agony.

Agony takes one more look at Lovely. Leaves the room. Shuts the door.

HALLWAY

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Who is that? And why is he wearing a gown?

AGONY

That's Early. He's a friend.

MELINDA

Your friend is bleeding all over the place. What the hell's going on? What happened?

AGONY

It's nothing.

MELINDA

You bring in some kid who looks like an escaped mental patient, and it's nothing? He's fucking bleeding!

Agony hushes her.

AGONY

Listen to me. Did anybody stop by? Or call?

MELINDA

No. Why?

Agony nods. Clearly shaken.

AGONY

Probably just a false alarm.

Melinda studies her. Concerned.

AGONY (CONT'D)

(re: he look)

What?

MELINDA

You're freaking me out right now.

AGONY

Everything's fine.

MELINDA

I live here too, okay, this is my home. Now tell me what the hell's going on. I mean, how would you feel if you were me right now?

AGONY

I wish I was.

The SOUND of a PIANO. A slow and somber classical piece.

Agony and Melinda turn.

MELINDA

He bleeds on that rug, I'm sending
him the carpet cleaning bill.

LIVING ROOM

Back of the room. At a piano.

Early gently strokes the ivories. A sad yet beautiful piece.

Agony stands behind him. Looks over his shoulder. Early stops.

Brief silence.

EARLY

What's her name?

AGONY

Lovely.

EARLY

How old is she?

AGONY

She turns seven next month.

Early nods. A long somber silence.

AGONY (CONT'D)

Don't stop.

Early turns slightly. Glimpses back at Agony. She motions to the piano.

Early faces the piano again. Continues playing. The same piece.

As the piece reaches its conclusion.

BZZZZ! The BUZZER rings.

Early stops playing. They both turn to the door.

MELINDA (O.S.)

What now?

Melinda enters the room. To the door. About to hit the intercom button.

AGONY
Melinda, no!

Melinda stops. Looks at Agony.

MELINDA
What?

BZZZZ! The BUZZER continues to ring. Constant.

Melinda stares at the intercom. Turns and looks to Agony.

Agony stands frozen. Her frightened eyes say it all.

AGONY
(whispers)
Whatever you do. Do not. Answer.
That door.

BZZZZ! BZZZZ! BZZZZ!

INT. TINA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

BZZZZ! BZZZZ! BZZZZ!

At the front door.

FOOTSTEPS approach from OS. Tina waddles into frame. In pajamas. Half awake. Eyes heavy. She holds her pregnant stomach.

Hits the intercom button.

TINA
Hello?

Dead pause.

WINSTON (V.O.)
Tina?

Tina balks.

TINA
Who is this?

WINSTON (V.O.)
Winston.

Tina wonders to herself befuddled. Slightly annoyed.

TINA

A little bit late, Winston, don't you think?

WINSTON (V.O.)

(delayed)

Can we talk?

Tina thinks twice about it. Unsure. But she BUZZES him in.

INT. AGONY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Agony, Early and Melinda. All still. Tense silence. Eyes on the door.

Melinda, almost in tears:

MELINDA

Agony? I'm about to lose my shit.

AGONY

Keep your voice down.

MELINDA

I'm gonna call the police.

AGONY

(hisses)

No.

MELINDA

(in a panic)

I'm gonna cry, Agony, I swear I'm gonna cry. Please, just tell me what's going on. I'm fucking scared shitless right now.

Agony hushes her. Signals for silence. Tiptoes to the door.

EARLY

Who is it?

Agony places her ear to it. Listens.

EARLY (CONT'D)

Is it the guy from the bar?

She ignores him. Listening closely. Faint sounds of FOOTSTEPS. Somewhere in the building.

She takes her ear away from the door.

AGONY

Melinda?

Turns away from the door. Faces Melinda.

AGONY (CONT'D)

Get Lovely. We need to leave.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

Agony jumps. Queues Melinda with a head nod. Melinda hurries to the hallway.

Early rises from his seat. Ready. But Agony signals him back. Silences him with an index finger to her lip.

Silence.

KNOCK! KNOCK! Violent. Jarring.

INT. TINA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

SMASH! A glass of water hits the floor and shatters. At Winston's feet.

Winston slides back in his chair. At the table.

Tina arrives with a dustpan. Kneels down and cleans it up.

WINSTON

Sorry.

TINA

No worries.

She rises. Empties the glass into a trash bin.

WINSTON

You got anything else to drink?

TINA

Is tea okay?

A tea kettle sits on the stove. Over a flame.

Winston gazes at a birthday cake at the center of the table.

WINSTON

I didn't know you were pregnant.

She grabs an extra teacup from the cabinet. Places it on the counter.

TINA
Yup. Ready to blow any second.

WINSTON
Where's Fred?

Her expression falls.

TINA
He's in the hospital.

WINSTON
Yeah? He okay?

TINA
He's been sick.

WINSTON
Still?

She nods sadly.

He looks at her belly.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
But how...?

Tina palms her pregnant stomach.

TINA
Miracle, I guess. All these years,
we've been trying. And now...

She drifts off. Sighs.

TINA (CONT'D)
Do you like honey with your tea?

WINSTON
Sure.

She squeezes honey into the teacups.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Early never called me back.
(beat)
He never calls.

TINA
I'm sure he doesn't mean anything
by it.

Steam rises from the tea kettle. Whistles.

She kills the flame. Shuts off the stove. Pours piping hot water.

TINA (CONT'D)

It's four in the morning, Winston.
What exactly did you want to talk about?

WINSTON

I was hoping to talk to Early.

She dips tea bags into the hot cups.

TINA

Well, he's not here right now.

She turns around. Stops frozen. A revolver sits on the table in front of Winston.

WINSTON

So, where is he?

INT. AGONY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Melinda maneuvers her way out the window. Onto the fire escape.

BANG! BANG! BANG! Violent pounding at the door. Constant.

Agony, one eye on the door, lifts Lovely from the ground. Lovely wipes at her eyes. Tired.

LOVELY

Mommy, where are we going?

Agony hands her to Melinda, through the window.

AGONY

Taking a little trip, that's all.

BANG! BANG! BANG! Agony looks to the door. A piece of wood panel around it cracks. BANG! Dust particles in the air.

Agony and Early exchange a worried glance. She motions to the window.

Early nods. Squeezes out. Waits for Agony on the fire escape.

BANG! The wood panel cracks more. BANG! Wood splinters fall to the floor. The door ready to give.

Agony takes Early's hand and shimmies through the window.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE

Melinda guides Lovely further down the escape ladder.

Early waits by the window as Agony maneuvers the rest of the way out.

BANG! From inside. Agony muscles the window shut just as BANG! The front door bursts open inside.

Agony ducks. Just out of eyeshot.

DOWN ON THE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Melinda and Lovely wait at the bottom. Finally, Early and Agony reach the end of the ladder. Jump down to the pavement.

STREET CORNER - MOMENTS LATER

Agony races to the curb and waves frantically for a cab.

MELINDA

Where are we going?

AGONY

Take her somewhere safe.

A taxi pulls up. Agony opens the back door and waves Melinda in.

MELINDA

What about you?

AGONY

I'll call you in a little bit.

Melinda looks at her as if expecting an explanation.

AGONY (CONT'D)

Hurry up! Get in the cab!

Melinda jumps into the back.

Agony gives Lovely a big hug.

LOVELY

Mommy, why aren't you coming with us?

AGONY

(near tears)

I'll see you in a little bit, okay?

Kisses the top of her head. Lifts her into the cab. Shuts the door.

She takes one more look at Lovely. Kisses her hand and touches the window.

The taxi takes off and merges onto the road. Lovely looks out the back window and waves bye.

Early looks up to the fire escape. Nudges Agony. Points up.

Agony looks. Sees a figure in the window. Agony pulls Early along.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - MOMENTS LATER

A train departs.

EARLY (V.O.)
Where are we going?

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - MOVING

Agony and Early sit side by side. The subway car empty.

AGONY
A motel.

EARLY
Why?

AGONY
I take clients there sometimes.
They know me.

EARLY
But why are we going there?

AGONY
I don't know. To think.

She glances out the window. They flash past several underground tunnel light.

AGONY (CONT'D)
Maybe if I close my eyes, I'll wake
up and everything will be okay.

EARLY
Why can't we go to the police?

AGONY
Because. We can't.

Silence. Only the SOUNDS of the TRAIN RUMBLING over the tracks.

EARLY
At least tell me who that was. At the bar.

Agony exhales. Hangs her head. A lot on her mind.

AGONY
His name is Nathan.

EARLY
Is he the one who's after you?

She lifts her head. Sinks back into her seat.

AGONY
I moved here from Seattle about a year ago. Before then, I was a call girl.

Dead pause. She struggles to continue.

AGONY (CONT'D)
I was raped when I was fourteen. And I got pregnant. I didn't have anywhere to go when she was born. I had to take care of her.

EARLY
Nathan was your pimp?

She spaces out. Stares at nothing. Faraway look on her face.

AGONY
He's my brother.

INT. TINA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Winston and Tina sit across from each other at the table.

Tina keeps a close eye on the revolver on the table.

WINSTON
You treat him good, don'tcha?

TINA
We try.

WINSTON
He's got a good life?

Tina glances at the revolver. Up at Winston. Nods.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
(re: her reaction)
What about me? What about my life?

TINA
(careful)
Winston. I think you've had too
much to drink.

He pounds his fist to the table. Startles her.

WINSTON
Ten years! Ten fucking years I
spent living under that rock!

Tina battles tears. Petrified.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
That whole time, that whole fucking
time, all I did was think about
him. I wrote him letters, asking
how he was doing. He was the most
important person in my life and I
don't even get a fucking letter?

TINA
Winston, we tried --

WINSTON
You came to see me once, Tina! And
that was thirteen God damn years
ago! Once!

TINA
He's just a kid, Winston.

WINSTON
And when I got out, where was
everybody then? Huh? I remember
leaving those gates, hoping
somebody would be there waiting.
But nobody was there. Nobody. Just
me.

A tense hush.

TINA
What do you want from us?

WINSTON

(pounds on table)

I want some fucking gratitude! Look at me! Look at my life! I got nothing!

Winston breaks down into tears.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

I even moved here, to the city. Just to be close to him. Had a job just up the street. A ten minute walk. I'd see him from time to time. And he'd look at me. But he would just walk away. Like I was a stranger.

He hangs his head. Pauses. Then explodes. Knocks the birthday cake to the floor. Rises.

Tina cowers into her chair. Breathes heavily. Near panic.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

It wasn't supposed to be like this. This wasn't supposed to be my fate.

TINA

If this wasn't your fate, then why are you here?

WINSTON

Even God makes mistakes sometimes. If anything, I defied fate when I jumped into that lake and saved your boy.

He takes his revolver from the table.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

And now, I gotta make things right.

Tina glances at the gun. Up at Winston.

TINA

I don't know where he is. And even if I did, I wouldn't tell you.

He pops open the chamber. One bullet left. Pops it shut. He closes his eyes. Takes a deep breath.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Winston stands at the end of the bridge. Leans over the guard rail. Waves his arms.

Down at the lake. The silver boat drifts. John lies dead inside. Early (4) struggles to stay afloat.

Winston leaps off the bridge. Splashes into the water.

UNDER WATER

He sinks fast like a rock. Fights his way back to the surface.

ABOVE WATER

Winston emerges. Swims to Early. Eyes just above the surface. But he stops for a moment. Hesitates.

AGONY (V.O.)
I wish I can go back in time. Do
things the right way.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT - (PRESENT TIME)

SLOW MOTION. Early at the sink. Splashes water onto his face.

Blood rinses off into the drain.

He looks up at his reflection in the mirror.

AGONY (V.O.)
I'd make sure he was dead.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Early and Agony lie in bed. Side by side.

Agony stares up at the ceiling. In a trance. Lost in thought.

AGONY
I mean, I killed him. I thought I
killed him. I was sure he was dead.

She wipes a tear from her eye.

AGONY (CONT'D)
I had to take my daughter away from
that. I couldn't let her grow up in
the same world as me.

Turns. Faces Early.

AGONY (CONT'D)
I did what I had to do.

Early looks her over. Understands.

She looks back up to the ceiling.

AGONY (CONT'D)
And yet, here I am. Hiding. I guess
you can't deny fate, huh?

Silence.

AGONY (CONT'D)
Why does life have to be so fucked
up?

Early also stares up at the ceiling.

EARLY
If it wasn't so fucked up, your
daughter wouldn't have been born,
we would've never met, and this
moment would've never happened.

She turns. Stares at him. Entranced. He turns. Faces her.

EARLY (CONT'D)
If everything in my life led to me
being here next to you right now,
at this moment... I'd do it again.

Agony curls up close to Early. Kisses his forehead. Holds him
tight.

AGONY
Everything will be okay, right?

Brief silence.

EARLY
Yeah. Everything will be okay.

A long, peaceful silence. Until...

A TAP on the DOOR. Early and Agony exchange a glance.

Another TAP at the DOOR. Tense silence. Their eyes on the
door.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

She sits up. Turns to Early. Desperate look on her face.

AGONY

Hide.

INT. HOSPITAL

Reception desk.

Winston approaches. RECEPTIONIST looks up.

WINSTON

I'm looking for a patient. His name
is Early Upchurch.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Winston plods down a narrow corridor. He walks past NURSES
and DOCTORS.

Stops at a room. Turns. Stares at the door.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

The door crashes open.

Agony trips backwards. Onto the bed. Early nowhere in sight.

Nathan saunters in. Forehead bleeding. Shards of glass
sticking out. Gun in his hand.

Followed by Darko. In a suit and tie. He smiles at Agony. She
immediately recognizes him. Befuddled.

DADDY (O.S.)

I'm sure you recognize my good
friend Darko Shankweiler.

Nathan and Darko move aside to create a path. DADDY (55)
emerges from behind them. Into the room. Gray hair. Patch
over his eye and a long scar across his throat. Voice deep
and raspy.

He pats Darko on the shoulder. Smiles down at Agony.

DADDY (CONT'D)

Detective Darko Shankweiler. If you
ever need to find somebody, look no
further.

(MORE)

DADDY (CONT'D)

This sandbagging son of a bitch can find a turd in a mud slide. For the right price of course.

Daddy moves further into the room. At the foot of the bed. He glowers down at her.

DADDY (CONT'D)

What's the matter? You look like you've just seen a ghost.

She forces a defiant glare to mask her fear.

DADDY (CONT'D)

Remember at your mother's funeral? When you looked up at me with those big, beautiful eyes and asked me if I was gonna die one day?

A single tear trickles down her cheek as he moves in closer. Stops at the foot of the bed. Above her.

DADDY (CONT'D)

Was I lying?

Agony fights tears. Trembles.

DADDY (CONT'D)

I'm not angry, if that's what you think. I'm actually proud of you. You really are a chip off the old block, aren't you?

Daddy reveals a pistol in his waist. He crouches down and looks her in the face. Strokes her hair. Gently thumbs her chin.

DADDY (CONT'D)

You're even more beautiful than I remember. Just like your mother.

AGONY

(whimpers)

I'm sorry, Daddy.

Daddy leans in close. Sees a tear trickling and licks it from her cheek.

He whispers into her ear:

DADDY

Where is my daughter?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Winston sits at the edge of the hospital bed. Disappointed.

He spots a CD player on the night stand. Reaches over and hits play.

CLASSICAL PIANO plays softly through the speakers. He notices a birthday card on the night stand.

Reaches over and opens it. He reads. Lets it drop from his hand and flutter to the floor.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Darko locks the door. Turns to the bed. Eager grin on his face.

Daddy whispers into her ear:

DADDY
Just tell me where she is.

Agony looks him in the eye. Toughens her stance. Spits in his face.

AGONY
Fuck you. She's not yours.

Daddy wipes the saliva from his face and chuckles.

DADDY
I'd agree to disagree, but that
would only give your opinion the
credence it don't quite deserve.

He takes her by the hand. Runs his fingers across her palm.

DADDY (CONT'D)
Ever been to Saudi Arabia?

He laughs immediately.

DADDY (CONT'D)
Of course, you haven't, what a
stupid question to ask.

Stops laughing. Suddenly serious as he looks her dead in the eye.

DADDY (CONT'D)

Do you know what they do to people
who take things that don't belong
to them?

They stare at each other. A long and tense silence. Until...

In a flash, he draws his pistol and POP! Shoots her in the
hand, blowing apart a couple of her fingers.

He clutches tightly onto her wrist as she writhes in pain and
tries to pull away. Her hand a bloody mess. Mutilated. A
whimper barely escaping her lips. Jaw clenched.

He leans in and whispers in her ear:

DADDY (CONT'D)

Let it out, baby. Scream for me.

Agony, with all of her might, tries to internalize the pain.
Her face beet red and pouring with sweat. Veins protruding
from her neck. Eyes moist with held back tears.

DADDY (CONT'D)

No?

Daddy rises. Unbuckles his belt and yanks it emphatically
from the waist loops in his pants.

She cowers in fear as he CRACKS the belt into the air.

DADDY (CONT'D)

Remember this?

Cracks his belt into the air again. She inches back while
clutching her bloody hand.

He grabs her by the ankle and yanks her closer to him.

WHAP! He nails her across the face with the belt buckle. A
giant welt across her cheek.

DADDY (CONT'D)

Scream, bitch!

WHAP! Lashes her again.

She whimpers, holding back screams. Fighting tears with all
of her might.

DADDY (CONT'D)

Tell me...

WHAP! WHAP!

DADDY (CONT'D)
Where the fuck...

WHAP! Again.

DADDY (CONT'D)
Is my...

WHAP! Harder.

DADDY (CONT'D)
Fucking daughter!

He cocks back and WHAPPPP! Her marked up body resembles stigmata. Her welts puffy and bleeding.

She kicks at him, but WHAP! He hits her again. Pulls her closer. Yanks her pants off and tosses them to the floor.

Her stares at her perfect backside. Only a thong on.

DADDY (CONT'D)
Mmm, mmm, mmm, haven't changed a bit, have you?

WHAP! Belts her across the backside.

DADDY (CONT'D)
SCREAM!!!

WHAP! WHAP! Over and over again. Mercilessly.

Darko wears a perverse smile. Nathan seems slightly bothered.

EARLY (O.S.)
Stop!

Everybody turns.

Early stands outside the closet. All eyes on him.

WINSTON (V.O.)
Where is he?

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

Winston stands outside the hospital room. Livid. He speaks with a NURSE.

WINSTON
The patient who was assigned to this room is not here. So where is he?

NURSE
(stumped)
I'm not really sure. Maybe someone
at the front desk can help you?

WINSTON
The front desk? I was just at the
front desk.

Nurse shrugs.

NURSE
I'm sorry, sir, I don't know what
to tell you.

WINSTON
You're sorry?

He explodes. Grabs her by the back of the neck and shoves her
face into a chart by the door.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
What does that fucking name say?

Other STAFF sees Winston gripping her up. He presses her face
harder to the chart.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
What does it say?

NURSE
(shaken)
It says Early!

WINSTON
Early, what?

NURSE
Early Upchurch!

WINSTON
So, where the fuck is he?

SECURITY and other STAFF slowly converge on him. Approaching
with caution.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Early on the floor. On his knees. Cuffed to a radiator.

Nathan holds him at gunpoint. Glaring down at him.

NATHAN

Daddy, please, let me shoot this
little fuck?

Daddy stands over Agony at the bed. Glances back at Nathan.

DADDY

Sounds like you have some kind of
vendetta.

NATHAN

This piece of shit stabbed me with
a fucking bottle.

DADDY

So, he's the one who did that to
your face? Nice work, kid.

Nathan kicks Early in the face. No effect.

DADDY (CONT'D)

Cool your jets, boy, we'll take
care of him when we're done here.

Daddy turns back to Agony.

DADDY (CONT'D)

First things first.

He taunts Agony with his pistol.

DADDY (CONT'D)

You think your hand hurts, baby?
You ain't seen nothing yet. I will
shove this up your fucking cunt and
blow apart your insides.

AGONY

(weakened)

I told you all ready... she's not
yours...

Nathan quickly becomes nervous. On edge.

DADDY

What the fuck are you talking
about?

AGONY

I went to the doctors. She's not
yours.

Daddy glares down at her. Tense silence.

Agony and Nathan exchange a nervous glance.

Daddy catches on. Grimaces in disgust. Glances back at Nathan.

Nathan freezes. Speechless.

DADDY
You twisted little twerp.

A stare down. Nathan hangs his head.

DADDY (CONT'D)
Geezus, boy, how many times do I
have to tell you? Always use
protection.
(turns to Agony)
Especially with this little whore.

He stares down at Agony in shock.

DADDY (CONT'D)
God.

Shakes his head.

DADDY (CONT'D)
This changes everything.

He turns back to Nathan.

DADDY (CONT'D)
You realize what I have to do now,
don't you?

Nathan's eyes widen. Worried.

Daddy turns back to Agony. She inches back in anticipation.

He zips his pants open. Unbuttons them. Lets them drop to the floor.

NATHAN
Daddy!

Daddy glances back at Nathan.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
(tears in his eyes)
Please. Don't.

Daddy faces Agony.

DADDY

You had your fun. Now it's my turn.

Daddy grabs her by the ankles. Pulls her close again. She fights back, but he knocks her over the head.

Early tries to break free from the cuffs.

Daddy flips her over. Rips her thong off. Positions himself behind her. Gun to the back of her head. She whimpers.

Early lunges forward. Tries to break free again.

Darko stands off to the side. Feels himself through his pants. Perverse look on his face as he watches.

NATHAN

Knock it off!

Daddy turns. Nathan holds Daddy at gunpoint.

Daddy takes a few steps towards Nathan. Nathan firms his aim.

DADDY

How dare you.

NATHAN

I can't let you do this to her anymore.

Daddy looks down the barrel. Not the least bit threatened.

DADDY

Never point a gun at something you don't intend on shooting.

Nathan breaks down. In tears. He lowers the gun.

Daddy shakes his head. Disappointed.

DADDY (CONT'D)

You're pathetic.

Quickly raises his gun and POP! Shoots Nathan in the head.

Nathan drops his gun. Falls to the floor.

Early eyes the gun. Extends his arm. Just out of reach.

Agony bawls her eyes out. Daddy turns his attention back to her. Gun ready.

Early continues to lunge forward. Reaching for the gun.

Daddy gets behind Agony again.

DADDY (CONT'D)
Now, where were we?

Early jerks his arm. He snaps his wrist and peels skin as he yanks his arm free from the cuffs. Jumps on the gun.

Darko's eyes widen. He jumps onto Early's back.

A struggle on the floor. Early fights for position. Can't seem to get the gun out from under him. Darko too heavy on his back.

Early positions the barrel so that it points at his shoulder. Pulls the trigger.

POP! Early shoots himself through the shoulder. The bullet travels through and hits Darko in the throat.

Darko gurgles on his own blood. Falls to his back.

Daddy turns. Sees Early on the floor with the gun. They aim at each other and POP! POP! POP! They exchange gunfire.

Bullets miss Early.

Daddy catches two to the chest. Drops.

Early rises. Looks down at Darko. POP! Shoots Darko in the head.

Daddy lies motionless. Face down on the floor.

Early turns to Agony.

They stare at each other.

Finally, they embrace and hug each other tightly.

But her eyes widen. Early notices and turns around.

Daddy groans while lying on his back. Reaches for his pistol lying nearby.

Early leaves the bed, immediately kicks the pistol out of Daddy's reach. They exchange a tense stare down.

Early points his gun down at Daddy. Daddy grins.

DADDY (CONT'D)
Go ahead, asshole. Do it. Fucking
DO IT!

AGONY (O.S.)

No.

Early lowers the gun. Looks back at Agony. He steps aside, out of view.

Agony moves into frame and stands above Daddy, bearing her stun gun. She hits the trigger - BZZZ!

DADDY

Wait... what are you doing?

She drops to a knee. By Daddy's side. Holds the stun gun to his genitals.

DADDY (CONT'D)

What are you doing? What are you DOING!!!

In SLOW MOTION. The SOUNDS of CLASSICAL PIANO.

BZZZZ! Agony holds the stun gun to his genitals. Never takes her finger off the trigger. In a frenzy.

Early stands behind her and watches. Places a hand on her shoulder as she continues to electrocute Daddy's privates.

Blue light flickers and bounces off their faces.

Daddy screams. The pain intense. Excruciating.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Continue SLOW MOTION. CLASSICAL PIANO.

Winston trashes the room. In a rage. SECURITY enters the room and tries to contain him. But he fights back.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Continue SLOW MOTION and MUSIC.

Daddy continues to scream in pain. Stun gun to his genitals.

Agony never breaks eye contact. Soon, smoke rises into the air. Daddy stops screaming. Turns stiff. His eye open but lifeless.

She takes away the stun gun. Rises to her feet. She looks back at Early. He nods. Touches her shoulder and leaves the frame.

Agony gives Daddy one final glance and follows Early.

End SLOW MOTION and MUSIC.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT - LATER

At the curb.

Agony bites down on her purse handle as Early pours liquor over her bloody hand. Both of them a bloody mess.

She spits out the purse handle.

AGONY
FUUUUUCKER!!!

She pants heavily. Tears in her eyes as she looks at the bloody stumps that were once her fingers.

EARLY
You okay?

She whimpers while shaking her head.

AGONY
(breathing heavily)
I think... I think I need a
doctor...

Early nods, her jacket in one hand, a balled-up cloth in the other. He opens the cloth - pieces of her fingers lie inside of it.

EARLY
Maybe they can still reattach them.

She glimpses at the severed fingers and immediately turns away in disgust. Almost gags.

AGONY
Please don't show me that shit.

EARLY
Sorry.

He wraps the cloth into a ball again and hides the fingers.

EXT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Early sits at the curb. Just outside the emergency room entrance. He wears Agony's jacket. Her purse by his side.

He opens the jacket and checks on his shoulder wound. Closes the jacket and covers it again.

He hangs his head, shoulders slumped. Face buried into his hands. Exhausted.

FOOTSTEPS approach. Early takes his hands away from his face. Sees a pair of bare feet. Covered in dirt.

Looks up at Vagrant, who holds a gift box with a bow on it.

VAGRANT

You okay, young brutha?

Early nods at the gift box.

EARLY

What's in the box?

VAGRANT

I don't know. Didn't open it yet.

Early removes the shoes from his feet. Holds them out.

EARLY

I'll trade you.

Vagrant looks at the shoes. At the box. Back to Early.

VAGRANT

And the jacket.

Early shakes his head. But realizes something.

EARLY

I'll tell you what...

Digs into the front pocket and fishes out a check.

EARLY (CONT'D)

This is a check for three hundred dollars.

He holds the check out. Vagrant thinks it over. Unsure.

LATER

Early sits at the curb. His bare feet touching the pavement.

He holds the box on his lap. Stares at it. Finally, he opens it. Looks in. His eyes well up.

Shuts the box.

INT. TINA'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

The front door hangs open.

EARLY (O.S.)
Hello? Mom?

Early enters. Looks to the door confused. He surveys the room. Everything still. Quiet.

EARLY (CONT'D)
Mom?

He walks in further. Sets the gift box on the kitchen counter.

KITCHEN

Tiptoes in. Sees the birthday cake on the floor. Two cups of tea on the table.

EARLY (CONT'D)
(worried)
Mom?

He peeks into the living room.

LIVING ROOM

The room a mess. A broken vase. Coffee table flipped over.

KITCHEN

He sits at the table. Silent. Somber. Falls into deep thought.

TINA (O.S.)
Early?

He lifts his head.

EARLY
Mom?

Early rises from the chair.

BATHROOM

The door cracks open. Early peeks in.

Tina sits on the floor with her back propped up against the bathtub. Her legs sprawled out in front of her. Nearly hyperventilating.

Early inches his way in. Cautious.

EARLY (CONT'D)

Mom?

Her forehead is covered in sweat. A gash above her eye.

EARLY (CONT'D)

What happened?

She continues to breath heavily.

TINA

Winston was here. He was looking
for you.

Silence. Early stands at the door. His mouth agape. Not sure
what to think.

She looks up at him.

TINA (CONT'D)

I think my water broke.

INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM - LATER

Tina screams in agonizing pain. Drenched in sweat. Her chest
puffs up and down. Deep breaths.

DOCTORS and NURSE crowd around her and aid her through the
process.

An OB/GYN is positioned between her legs. Ready to deliver
the baby.

She continues to scream. Grips onto the nearest person
tightly.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Early sits in a chair. He hears her screams from down the
hall.

Loses himself in thought. Finally, he stands up. Moves out of
frame.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Early wanders through a narrow corridor en route to a room at
the end of the hallway.

But as he looks ahead, he sees DOCTORS and NURSES rush into the room. He stops. Worried.

He speeds up his pace. To the room.

HOSPITAL ROOM

Early stands at the doorway and peers in.

Sheer chaos. DOCTORS and NURSES crowd around Fred Upchurch, who lies unconscious in bed. Medical equipment BEEPS loudly.

Jargon is tossed back and forth between STAFF with breakneck delivery as they attempt to revive him.

Long BEEPS are momentarily interrupted as a defibrillator is applied.

Early looks up at a monitor. A flat line.

He tries to enter the room, but a MALE NURSE keeps him back.

DELIVERY ROOM

Tina continues to scream. She pushes harder and harder. Breathing in and out repeatedly.

The OB/GYN nods while focusing on the soon to be baby.

HOSPITAL ROOM

Early sheds tears as he tries to fight his way into the room.

But the MALE NURSE keeps him back. Holds him at bay.

Early looks on helplessly as a LONG BEEP echoes. Until...

A flat line on the monitor.

The chaos ends. An collective hush.

DELIVERY ROOM

Tina cries while screaming. One final push. OB/GYN delivers a crying NEWBORN. Coated in blood and white fluid. Umbilical cord attached.

Tina lets out several deep breaths and stares at the baby exhilarated. Unable to control her tears.

The OB/GYN cuts the umbilical cord. Hands the NEWBORN to Tina.

Tina holds the baby. Smiles proudly. Tears of joy.

HOSPITAL ROOM

The medical monitor continues to display a flat line.
Accompanied by a LONG BEEP.

DOCTOR and NURSE stand somberly above Fred.

DOCTOR looks to NURSE and shakes his head. Looks out into the hallway. At Early.

DOCTOR hangs his head.

Early screams and tries to fight his way into the room again.
But MALE NURSE holds him back. Hugs him tightly.

Early stops fighting. Sobs into MALE NURSE'S shoulder while staring at Fred lying motionless.

EARLY (V.O.)
Open your eyes.

INT. STEVEN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Steven lies asleep in bed. His broken, cast-covered leg propped up.

His eyes slam open. He flinches. Startled.

Early stares down at him from bedside.

STEVEN
You again. What do you want?

EARLY
Why does your daughter hate you?

Steven narrows his eyes at Early. Annoyed. Bewildered.

STEVEN
(to the hallway)
Nurse! Somebody get this kid outta here!

Early rises. Shuts the door. Returns. Stares down at Steven.

EARLY
What do you know about pain?

Early jerks Steven's broken leg.

EARLY (CONT'D)
Huh?

STEVEN
Aaaawwww!!!

Early cups his hand over Steven's mouth. Hushes him.

EARLY
Is that pain to you?

Steven shouts are muffled.

EARLY (CONT'D)
Why does your daughter hate you so
much? Can you tell me?

Steven looks up at Early puzzled and frightened.

EARLY (CONT'D)
You almost died. And she didn't
want to be here. She cared more
about a school dance. Why?

Steven goes silent. Thinks about it. Looks up at Early again.

EARLY (CONT'D)
Where's your wife? How come she's
not here?

Steven's expression falls. Suddenly melancholy.

EARLY (CONT'D)
You're all alone, aren't you?

Tears fill Steven's eyes.

EARLY (CONT'D)
I bet your leg doesn't hurt quite
as much now, does it?

Steven shifts his eyes away from Early. Ashamed.

Early takes his hand away from Steven's mouth.

EARLY (CONT'D)
See that? Now, that's pain.

Silence as they stare at each other.

INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM - LATER

Early stands at the doorway. Peeks in.

Tina lies in bed with the NEWBORN in her arms. She looks up
at Early with a sad smile.

TINA (V.O.)
 Winston listened to the answering
 machine. He found out you were in
 the hospital.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - MOVING - LATER

Early sits at an end seat, still wearing Agony's jacket. His eyes wandering the car.

TINA (V.O.)
 But you weren't there.

A GIRL and BOY in prom wear sit across the aisle. She rests her head onto his shoulder. A long night.

Another PASSENGER quietly reads the newspaper. OTHERS just sit and listen to music.

Early turns. Agony sits beside him. Her hand wrapped heavily in gauze, she wears a hospital gown and medical bracelet.

She smiles at him. Places her gauze-covered hand over his hand, caked with dry blood and dead skin. Wrist puffy and most likely broken.

They stare at each other warmly. She rests her head onto his shoulder.

EXT. BUS TERMINAL - DAY

Early and Agony wait at a bench with other COMMUTERS. They all stand up as a bus approaches.

TINA (V.O.)
 The police asked me if I knew where
 he was. But I didn't know.

INT. BUS - MOVING - LATER

Early gazes out the window, Agony resting her head upon his shoulder.

Trees and mountains all around. No longer near the city. He looks down. A long stream flows below.

EARLY (V.O.)
 I think I know where he is.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

A picturesque morning. Not a cloud in the sky. The sun shines brightly upon the water below.

Winston leans over the ledge. Stares down at the lake. He sees a sliver fishing boat. Early (4) splashes around in the water.

Winston shuts his eyes. Opens them. The silver fishing boat is gone. Early (4) no longer there. Just his imagination.

Early and Agony appear behind him.

Winston continues to stare at the lake.

WINSTON
Happy birthday, little buddy.

A gentle breeze breaks a deafening silence.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Can't help but wonder how things
would have been. If only I had let
you drown.
(beat)
I robbed three banks. Had a big old
pile of cash in the trunk of my
car. Probably enough to start a new
life.

He pops open the revolver. One bullet.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
You know, I probably woulda been
halfway to Mexico by the time
anybody found you?

Shakes his head in regret.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
I shoulda let your drown.

He nods, peering down at the lake.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
That's what shoulda happened.

Winston turns. He eyeballs Agony for a moment, puzzled. His eyes shift to Early.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Who's she?

EARLY
(delayed)
Agony.

Winston raises his eyebrow. Looks her over. Returns to Early.

WINSTON
Agony? That's her name?

Early nods.

Winston looks at her again. Sighs. He turns around and faces the lake again.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Can you please tell her to leave?

AGONY
I'm not going anywhere.

WINSTON
This is between me and him.

AGONY
I don't care. I'm staying.

She and Early exchange a glance.

Winston nods while staring at the lake. He turns around again. Fixates his eyes on Early and frowns.

WINSTON
How come you never came to see me?

Early gives it some thought.

EARLY
I never asked you to jump into that lake. And for a long time, I wished you hadn't.

WINSTON
What changed your mind?

Early glances at Agony. Back to Winston.

Winston nods. Tears in his eyes.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
I wanted to hurt her. But I couldn't.

Early nods. Bemused.

Winston looks up at Early. Shows his gun.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
 There's one bullet left in this
 chamber. I thought it was meant for
 you.

He spins the chamber. Pops it back in.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
 I'm not so sure now.

Places the tip of the barrel to his temple.

EARLY
 What are you doing?

Winston pulls the trigger. CLICK. Early and Agony flinch.
 Sigh in relief.

EARLY (CONT'D)
 Put the gun down, Winston. You
 don't have to do this.

Winston shakes his head.

WINSTON
 But it's your turn.

He raises the pistol at Early.

AGONY
 No!

Agony charges at Winston but POP! A SHOT goes off just as
 Agony tackles him through the guard rail, off the bridge.

The revolver drops to the pavement. Smoke rising from it's
 barrel.

Early feels his chest. Eyes wide in shock as he sees blood on
 his hand. A dark crimson.

He drops to his knees. Blood flowing from a hole in his
 chest.

Early collapse to his side. His eyelids heavy.

LAKE

Agony and Winston splash into the water.

BELOW THE SURFACE

They sink like rocks, straight to the bottom.

Winston nails the back of his head on a large rock. Seemingly unconscious, blood streams from his head gash. A red cloud.

Agony swims to the surface but stops suddenly. She looks down. Winston has her by the ankle.

She kicks at him while stroking her arms frantically in an attempt to reach the surface. But she is overpowered.

Winston pulls her down, deeper into the water. Bubbles stream from her mouth as she screams. Short of air.

EXT. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Early lies on his side. He barely clings to consciousness. His eyes flutter as he struggles to stay awake.

EXT. BELOW THE SURFACE - MOMENTS LATER

Winston wraps his hands around Agony's throat and keeps her from reaching the surface.

Her eyes grow heavy. Losing consciousness. Succumbing to the lack of air.

Early shoots down into the water. On top of Winston. Agony breaks free and desperately swims to the surface.

ABOVE THE SURFACE

Agony emerges and gasps immediately for air.

BELOW THE SURFACE

Winston tries to reach the surface.

But Early grabs him from behind, gets him in a headlock. They grapple with each other while sinking to the bottom.

They fight for position, rolling over rocks and fungus covered tree branches.

Winston seemingly gains the upper hand. But Early keeps Winston from swimming away.

They look each other in the eye. A shared sadness as they gradually fall into unconsciousness.

TINA (V.O.)
Close your eyes, honey. Everything
will be okay.

Early shuts his eyes.

EXT. BOAT - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Early (4) sits across from his father John. They stare at each other.

John wears a sad look. On the brink of tears while staring at Early.

EXT. BELOW THE SURFACE - (PRESENT TIME)

Early and Winston drift lifelessly. Suspended deep below the surface.

WINSTON (V.O.)
I had to be on that bridge. On that
day. At that exact moment.
Everything before that? It happened
for a reason. As to why? I don't
know. Maybe we'll never know. But
destiny doesn't need no
explanation. Only we can figure out
why.

ANGLE ON Early suspended. Drifting. His eyes shut.

WINSTON (V.O.)
You probably don't understand
everything I'm telling you right
now. But one day... you will.

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. SHORE - DAY

Eyes slam open. Early immediately spits up water. A long coughing fit. Lying on his back. Still wearing Agony's bubble jacket. His face pale. Dark circles under his eyes.

He gasps for air. Catches his breath. Sucking wind. He looks up.

Agony peers down at him relieved.

She embraces him tightly. Early still disoriented.

Agony looks him over. Tears of joy in her eyes. She opens his jacket and tries to remove it.

But she stiffens. The joy in her eyes quickly dissipates as she sees the bullet hole in Early's chest. She covers her mouth in shock.

Blood leaks from the bullet hole.

AGONY

Oh, my God.

Early sits up. Stares off at the lake. The water still and peaceful.

AGONY (CONT'D)

(distraught)

Early. You're hurt.

He continues to gaze at the calm waters. A long silence.

EARLY

I don't feel a thing.

FADE OUT:

THE END