

Dark World

Written by  
David Lambertson

[Dlambertson@hotmail.com](mailto:Dlambertson@hotmail.com)

FADE IN:

**EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING/LOS ANGELES - NIGHT**

A twenty-story office building - sterile looking.

White Christmas lights hanging from the shrubs and trees twinkle in the darkness.

Atop a large flagpole, OLD GLORY snaps taut in the breeze.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/MAIN OFFICE FLOOR - NIGHT**

Makeshift party tables assembled in the middle of the room.

Various FBI STAFF mingle, eat and drink. They hug and glad hand each other as Christmas MUSIC echoes from a boom box.

Special Agent MARQUIS ADAMS (45), African-American, impeccably dressed, leaves the group. He walks with perfect posture and the measured strides of a soldier.

Marquis' exit is noticed by AGENT JOHN NGUYEN (35), Santa Cap askew, and AGENT PETER RODRIQUEZ (40), muscular build under a discount dress shirt - apparently has no clue on how to iron.

AGENT NGUYEN

Hey, Marquis, hang around a bit.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ

What's the rush? It's still early.

Without breaking stride, Marquis shoots his hand in the air, gives a wave goodbye. He reaches

**MARQUIS' OFFICE**

And flips on the light switch as he enters.

As Marquis grabs his coat from a hook, a Christmas GIFT BOX in the center of his desk catches his eye.

He walks to the desk, picks up the gift, reads the tag: "FROM YOUR SECRET SANTA."

MARQUIS

Hmm.

Marquis unwraps the box - opens it. He pulls out a Virtual Reality (VR) HEADSET and a pair of VR GLOVES.

MARQUIS

Really?

Marquis pops his head out the office door, scans the

**MAIN OFFICE FLOOR**

And spots EDDY GATES (24), thick glasses, rail thin, cheap, ill-fitting clothes watching the party festivities from a safe distance.

MARQUIS

Edward.  
(louder)  
Hey, Eddy.

Eddy looks towards Marquis' office.

Marquis waves his hand in a "come here" motion. Eddy gives him a nervous heads up - approaches.

MARQUIS

(as Eddy nears)  
Not enjoying the party?

Eddy looks back over his shoulder at the gathering.

EDDY

They don't really want me there.

MARQUIS

Sure they --

EDDY

They don't.

Eddy pushes his glasses up against his nose.

EDDY

What do you need?

Marquis waves Eddy into

**MARQUIS' OFFICE**

And points to the VR Gear on his desk.

MARQUIS

You're a techie. What can you tell me about this stuff?

Eddy gazes at the VR Gear as if it were pure gold.

EDDY

Wow. Where'd you get this?

MARQUIS  
Secret Santa.

EDDY  
This stuff isn't cheap.  
(off Marquis' look)  
You don't know what it is, do you?

A shoulder shrug from Marquis. Eddy holds up the headset.

EDDY  
The top-rated Virtual Reality  
headset on the market. Fully  
immersive optics, integrated Dre-  
beats headphones, motion capture --

MARQUIS  
Okay, - got it. It's high tech.

Eddy puts the headset down. Picks up the gloves.

EDDY  
And you wear these on your hands.  
They're Bluetooth linked to the  
headset. Want to see how it works?

Marquis' checks his watch.

MARQUIS  
Okay, but it's gotta be quick.

EDDY  
You download VR Apps to your phone.  
(shows Marquis his phone)  
See, I've downloaded several. My  
favorite is Space.

Eddy taps an icon on his phone.

After a moment, Eddy opens a flap on the top of the VR  
headset, inserts his phone, powers the headset on.

EDDY  
Okay, put the gear on.

Marquis slips the VR gloves on his hand. He fumbles a bit as  
he dons the headset and secures the straps.

#### **VIRTUAL REALITY - SPACE**

Against a pitch black screen, a virtual solar system.  
Brightly colored planets spin on their axis.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Whoa!

EDDY (V.O.)

Now turn your head around.

The screen slowly turns revealing the flaming SUN.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

That's amazing.

EDDY (V.O.)

Okay, the headset has an embedded  
Mic. Say where you want to go.

EDDY (V.O.)

Like a planet you want to visit -  
just say go to Mars.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Go to Mars.

A moment passes before Marquis virtually flies towards MARS,  
it's red hue becoming brighter as he nears.

#### **BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - OFFICE**

Eddy watches as Marquis wobbles a bit, not sure of his  
physical bearings.

EDDY

It takes a while to get used to.  
Try the gloves now.

MARQUIS

What do you mean?

EDDY

Play with the planets. Move them  
around.

#### **VIRTUAL REALITY - SPACE**

Marquis' green virtual hand grabs Mars - flings it towards  
the Sun. It explodes upon impact.

#### **BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - OFFICE**

Marquis removes the headset and gloves.

MARQUIS

Where do you get the games?

EDDY  
Right off the App Store. Some are  
free. The good ones you pay for.

Eddy picks up the gift box, looks inside.

EDDY  
Oh, cool.  
(pulls a coupon from box)  
Looks like you also get a free  
download of Dark World.

MARQUIS  
Dark World?

EDDY  
One of the best VR Apps ever  
developed. Give me your phone.

Marquis takes his smartphone from his pocket, hands it over.

Shifting his focus between the piece of paper and the phone,  
Eddy taps the phone with the speed of a nerd millennial.

After a few moments, he hands the phone back to Marquis.

EDDY  
There you go - downloaded. When  
you're ready, just tap the icon.

MARQUIS  
Thanks.

Marquis starts to pack the VR Gear back in the box.

EDDY  
It's pretty user-friendly.

MARQUIS  
Uh-huh.

EDDY  
You can give me a call if you have  
any questions.

Eddy jots down his number on a piece of paper.

MARQUIS  
I'll be fine. No need to --

Eddy drops the piece of paper in the Gift Box.

MARQUIS  
 (hesitant)  
 Okay, sure.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/ELEVATOR LOBBY - NIGHT**

Marquis approaches a bank of elevators.

He spots ISAAC JACKSON (25), tall, slicked back hair, wears a custodian uniform, emptying a trash can in the corner.

MARQUIS  
 Isaac. There you are.

Isaac looks over as Marquis reaches inside his suit pocket.

ISAAC  
 Yes, sir?

Marquis removes a Christmas Card from his pocket.

MARQUIS  
 (handing card to Isaac)  
 Just a little thank you for taking  
 care of my office.

ISAAC  
 (refusing card)  
 That's not necessary. I get paid.

MARQUIS  
 It's for Christmas. Please, I  
 insist.

Isaac hesitates before finally accepting the card.

MARQUIS  
 Okay then.

Marquis presses the elevator button. The door open. Marquis, enters, gives Isaac a friendly nod as the door closes.

Isaac opens the card, removes a stack of scratch-off lottery tickets. He drops the tickets and the card in the trash can.

**EXT. WEALTHY SUBURB/LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE - NIGHT**

A wealthy neighborhood surrounded by the San Gabriel Mountain Range. Narrow sidewalks with lantern-like street lights.

No tract homes here - all custom made, all adorned with expensive Christmas decorations.

**EXT. MARQUIS' HOME - NIGHT**

A two-story structure, brown stucco and red bricks exterior with high arched windows.

A black, government-issued sedan pulls in behind a red Mercedes-Benz parked in a circular red-bricked driveway.

Marquis, leather satchel in hand, exits the black sedan.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Richly decorated. At one end of a cherry wood formal dining table ALYSSA ADAMS (43), petite, with a short cropped Afro taps the keys of a laptop computer.

She hears the JINGLE of keys as the front door opens.

MARQUIS (O.S.)

I'm home.

ALYSSA

(not looking up)

I'm in here.

Marquis enters. He approaches Alyssa, rubs her shoulders.

MARQUIS

Still working?

ALYSSA

(as she taps the keys)

We've got to respond to a Writ. I just need a few more minutes.

Marquis gives Alyssa a kiss on the nape of her neck, then heads off into the

**KITCHEN**

A large room with stainless steel appliances, marble counters and cherry wood cabinets.

Marquis goes to the refrigerator, looks at a picture of him with HANNAH ADAMS (18) taken at her high school graduation.

MARQUIS

Where's Hannah?

ALYSSA (O.S.)

She went to celebrate.

Marquis opens the fridge door, removes a beer.

MARQUIS

Celebrate?

ALYSSA (O.S.)

A student apartment finally opened up. She and Danielle are moving in as soon as it's cleaned up.

Marquis grimaces as he removes the beer cap. He reenters the

**DINING ROOM**

And takes a sip of beer.

MARQUIS

I thought we settled on her staying at home a while longer. You know, so we could keep an eye on her.

ALYSSA

(still focused on laptop)  
I think she settled on moving out so we couldn't.

MARQUIS

She's still a kid, don't you think it would be better --

ALYSSA

Sweetie, I really have to get this done. We'll talk later - promise.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Marquis, clad only in boxers, faces the mirror vigorously brushing his teeth.

In the mirror's reflection, we see four circular, purple-ish scars on Marquis' muscular upper torso - bullet wounds.

He spits and rinses, checks the choppers - perfect.

Marquis opens the medicine cabinet, retrieves a prescription bottle: "ZOLOFT." He removes the cap, taps out one pill and tosses it in the toilet - flushes.

He places the bottle back in the cabinet then exits into the

**MASTER BEDROOM**

And gives Alyssa, dressed in a silk nightgown, a gentle tap on the ass as she looks at a dresser mirror, applying lotion to her face.

Marquis grabs a TV remote and points it at a flat screen TV mounted on the wall as he slides into bed.

ALYSSA

You remember to take your meds?

MARQUIS

I did indeed.

When Alyssa turns around, she spots the VR gift box on top of Marquis' dresser.

ALYSSA

What's that?

MARQUIS

Something from Secret Santa - you know, at the office party.

ALYSSA

And?

MARQUIS

It's a virtual reality headset - gloves, that type of stuff.

Alyssa slips into bed.

ALYSSA

Why in the world would they think you'd be interested in that?

MARQUIS

I don't know. But I do feel guilty. All I gave was a bottle of wine.

Alyssa leans over, turns off the light. Now the room is only lit from the illumination from the TV.

ALYSSA

They said to keep it inexpensive, didn't they?

MARQUIS

Yeah. Guess everyone didn't listen.

Alyssa snuggles up against Marquis. He mutes the TV.

MARQUIS

You really think that Hannah is ready to be on her own?

ALYSSA  
 (light laugh)  
 On her own? I would hardly call it  
 that. We're paying the rent, the  
 tuition, the --

MARQUIS  
 That's not what I meant.

A moment passes. Alyssa gently caresses Marquis' chest.

ALYSSA  
 I know what you meant.

Alyssa rolls over, fluffs her pillow - nestles in.

MARQUIS  
 I don't think wanting her to stay  
 home a little longer is so wrong.

ALYSSA  
 No, wanting her to stay isn't. But  
 making her stay would be.

Alyssa reaches back, grabs Marquis' hand.

ALYSSA  
 Hug me to sleep.

Marquis points the remote at the TV - clicks it. The room  
 goes dark. He rolls over, spoons Alyssa.

ALYSSA  
 (cooing)  
 I said hug me to sleep.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/KITCHEN - MORNING**

Marquis, in sweats, sits at dinette table, a cup of coffee in  
 his hand. Hannah sits across from him, eating cereal.

HANNAH  
 It's right by the campus. I'll be  
 fine. I promise.

MARQUIS  
 It's not just that. I just want to  
 spend as much time with you as  
 possible. You know, before you're  
 totally grown up.

HANNAH  
 (not buying it)  
 Really? You're playing that card?

Alyssa enters.

ALYSSA  
What am I missing?

HANNAH  
Dad said he liked to spend more  
time with me.

ALYSSA  
Perfect. Then why don't you go  
shopping with us today?

A giggle from Hannah.

MARQUIS  
Shopping...? You know I would, but  
I really need to clean the garage.

ALYSSA  
Uh-huh.  
(to Hannah)  
You ready?

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/GARAGE - DAY**

Partially converted to man cave for both mental and physical needs. In one corner, a boxer's heavy bag, several free weights and other exercise devices on the floor beneath it.

In the other corner, a roll-top desk. On top of it, a computer and a framed picture of a younger Marquis in his Marine formals. A smaller photograph of him and his deployed comrades tucked in the corner of the frame.

A book case stands next to the desk. It shelves mostly crammed with a mixture of high brow material: classic American novels, Shakespeare, The Art of War and others.

But one shelf is dedicated to self-help, Psychology books: The Healing of Trauma, The Five Personality Patterns, A Survivor's Guide to Trauma, Reclaiming Your Life and others.

Marquis, still dressed in sweats, meticulously pushes a broom across the concrete floor. His phone buzzes. He looks at it.

TEXT MESSAGE FROM ALYSSA: *"Still shopping. XMAS Eve Crowds - Going to be a couple of hours."*

MARQUIS' TEXT RESPONSE: *"Take your time - Love U."*

Just before Marquis pockets his phone, he notices the "DARK WORLD" icon - a BLACK HOODED AVATAR on the home screen.

**MASTER BEDROOM - DAY**

Marquis enters, grabs the VR gear from his dresser and heads back out. After a moment he's back in the

**GARAGE**

Pressing the door remote button. As the garage door lowers, Marquis taps the Dark World icon on his smartphone, inserts it in the VR headset.

Marquis slips on the VR gloves, straps on the headset.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD**

A silver HUMAN SKULL spins against a black background.

The only sound - the methodical, THUD of heavy boots.

The RATTLE of a chain as the Skull disappears and the silhouette of a WINGED FIGURE takes form.

COMPUTER-GENERATED VOICE  
(gravelly, sinister)  
Welcome to the Dark World.

FLASH - a beam of light illuminates the winged figure.

Tall and thick, clad in Gothic-like black garments, boots and spiked gloves. A black hood shrouds his face. Dark, red wings extend from his spine.

He holds the end of a thick CHAIN in his right hand. In his left, an ancient silver SWORD. This is EREBOS.

EREBOS  
I am Erebus. The God of the dying  
and of the dead.

Another FLASH of lightning - the BOOM of thunder.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - GARAGE**

Marquis' - startled, jumps back. His back now pressed against the garage wall.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD**

An animal like, guttural GROWL as the pupils of Erebus' eyes turn from black to blood red.

EREBOS  
If you wish to see the battle  
arena, bow your head.

The view shifts from Erebos' face to his booted feet.

EREBOS

Very good.

(another growl)

It takes place somewhere here.

A FLASH of lightning illuminates the background behind Erebos. The skyline of downtown Los Angeles appears.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

That doesn't make sense.

EREBOS

Time for you to meet the victim and  
for the victim to meet her hero.

Erebos raises his right hand, wraps the chain around his gloved fist then gives it a violent yank. The muffled SCREAM of a woman instantly follows.

Another yank from Erebos and a YOUNG WOMAN, blindfolded, is dragged in to view. Her mouth gagged, Erebos' chain connected to an iron collar around her neck.

The Woman whimpers as Erebos slowly rolls in the chain forcing her to his side.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Jesus Christ.

Oddly, the Woman does not appear at all like a computer-generated avatar. She looks real, like an actress in a movie.

Erebos brings the point of his sword to the Woman's throat.

EREBOS

This is the victim.

(a beat)

She is dying, but yet not dead.

#### **BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - GARAGE**

Marquis instinctively steps forward.

#### **VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD**

Erebos folds his wings around his torso - like a cocoon.

EREBOS

Her name is Janet. Her life is in  
your hands now.

Erebos unfolds his wings, steps behind the woman we now know as JANET and removes the iron collar.

A rope with a NOOSE descends from the darkness above.

Erebos places the noose over Janet's head and secures it against her neck. He removes Janet's blindfold. Her eyes reddened, tears streak down her cheek.

JANET  
(muffled from the gag)  
No! No! No!

EREBOS  
Will you save her?  
(an ominous beat)  
Marquis Adams.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - GARAGE**

Marquis yanks the headset off, tears off the VR gloves - removes his smartphone from the VR headset.

He rummages through the gift box, finds the piece of paper with Eddy's number. Taps in the number on his phone.

Marquis paces as he waits for Eddy to pickup.

MARQUIS  
(into phone)  
How did it know my name!?

**INT. EDDY'S APARTMENT - DAY**

A small, messy studio apartment filled with all sorts of electronics - computer, Play Station, screens.

Eddy sits at a small dinette table.

EDDY  
(into phone)  
What are you talking about?

**INTERCUT: PHONE CALL BETWEEN MARQUIS AND EDDY**

MARQUIS  
That - that - creature. In the Dark World thing you put on my phone. It called me by my name.

EDDY  
Well, there's a feature in the App where you upload your profile --

MARQUIS  
I didn't upload anything!

EDDY

Maybe whoever bought it for you  
did.

Marquis paces faster - not quite buying this.

EDDY

You didn't like it?

MARQUIS

No! It was sick. Sadistic!

EDDY

They're some graphic parts but --

Marquis ends the call. With a look of disdain, he tosses the VR gear on his desk as he exits the garage.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY**

A Christmas tree twinkles in the corner. Opened gift boxes and the remnants of wrapping paper strewn about.

Marquis leans back in a reclining sofa, watching TV - a Basketball game. Alyssa sits next to him, holds his hand.

ALYSSA

Remember, I need a ride to the  
airport tomorrow.

MARQUIS

I remembered. Day after Christmas.  
No rest for the weary.

Alyssa picks up the remote, mutes the TV.

ALYSSA

So, you going to miss me?

MARQUIS

(playfully)  
No, I got a girlfriend.

Alyssa gives Marquis a slap on the wrist as Hannah enters.

ALYSSA

Should be two days at the most.  
I'll be back Tuesday - Wednesday at  
the latest.

HANNAH

Hey, can I drive your car when  
you're gone?



DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
She's been missing for four days  
now. We need some damn press on it.

Sanchez joins Holland at the conference table.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ  
Judge Evers still isn't certain  
that she just didn't run off.  
They've had, well - issues. Anyway,  
he doesn't really want anything in  
the news. Not yet.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Well that's helpful.

Sanchez's scowl tells Holland he's crossing the line.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ  
Get an alert out to the Sheriff,  
FBI - all local agencies. The more  
eyes on this the better.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Marquis on one side of the conference table, engrossed in the contents of a manila folder - all business.

Sitting next to him, Agents Nguyen and Rodriguez looking at something on Nguyen's smartphone. The glee on Rodriguez's face tells us it's probably not workplace appropriate.

AGENT JULIA STEVENSON (40), freckled, sun damaged face is on the other side of the table texting on her phone. AGENT TYLER GOODWELL (40), redhead, pale complexion sits next to her.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ  
(leans towards Marquis)  
You should have stayed later at the  
party. Things got...  
(with a wink)  
Interesting.

AGENT STEVENSON  
Christ, you're a dog.

MARQUIS  
(not looking up)  
She has a point.

The conference room door opens. DIRECTOR SUSAN DAVIS (55), tall and fit, carrying a binder, enters. The instant silence from the Agents tells us that this a woman who does not tolerate foolishness.

Davis takes a seat at the head of the table as the Agents mumble their good mornings. She opens the binder.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Let's see what we've got.

(scanning material)

Washington says they've picked up some chatter about Ontario airport.

(looking up)

Julia, did you get that report?

AGENT STEVENSON

First thing this morning. I've already arranged observation posts.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Very good. Keep me in the loop.

(at Rodriguez/Marquis)

What do you got?

AGENT RODRIQUEZ

Both the Commerce and Bicycle Casinos reported a spike in counterfeit twenties - same day.

MARQUIS

They'll be sending the security tapes over. We'll set up a task force with the Sheriff.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Keep me posted.

(back to file)

LAPD has issued a missing person alert. Janet Evers - twenty-three. Reported missing four days ago. Hasn't been seen in five. Anyway, no ransom, so it's not in our shop. Just have your people keep their eyes and ears open.

MARQUIS

Janet?

Davis nods.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

John, what about your shop?

AGENT NGUYEN

Some malware spikes reported in Europe. Nothing in the States yet, but we're monitoring.

MARQUIS  
 Did we get a photo?  
     (off Davis' look)  
 Janet Evers.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
 It's in route.  
     (checks her watch)  
 Probably in thirty. Moving on...

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/RESEARCH WORKSTATION - DAY**

A FEMALE STAFFER (30) sits behind a counter.

Marquis - long, quick strides, approaches.

FEMALE STAFFER  
 Hey, Marquis. What do ya need?

MARQUIS  
 LAPD reported a missing person.  
 Janet Evers, age twenty-three.  
 Davis thinks the photo should be  
 here by now.

FEMALE STAFFER  
 Let me check.

The Female Staffer turns, looks at her computer screen.

FEMALE STAFFER  
 Yeah, something just came in.

A couple of mouse CLICKS and the image of Janet Evers fills the screen. The same woman Marquis saw in the Dark World.

MARQUIS  
 That's impossible.

Marquis hustles off.

FEMALE STAFFER  
 You want me to print you a...  
     (turning around)  
 Copy?

**EXT. MARQUIS' HOME - DAY**

Marquis' sedan speeds into the circular drive, jerks to a stop. Marquis jumps out, rushes towards the house.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/GARAGE - DAY**

Marquis stands in the middle, VR headset and gloves on.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD**

A silver, HUMAN SKULL spins slowly against a black background. The rotation escalates, the Skull blurring as it spins faster.

The Skull explodes. Erebos materializes in the residue.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Who are you?

EREBOS

You should be more concerned about the girl you abandoned.

A blood curdling SCREAM off in the virtual distance.

EREBOS

Ah, that's her now.

From nowhere, a long medieval corridor made from ancient stone materializes.

Erebos turns. As he walks down the corridor, the muffled SCREAMS of men and women echo - a symphony of terror.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Where is she!?

Erebos reaches the end of the corridor. There are four large, ancient, WOODEN DOORS. Erebos turns around.

EREBOS

Time for your test.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Test?

EREBOS

To see if you are capable of playing the game.

The FLASH of a lightning bolt - then - an AVATAR, one that looks disturbingly like Marquis, materializes.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - GARAGE**

Marquis yanks off the headset. Beads of sweat pepper his forehead. He wipes it with the backside of his gloved hand.

Marquis takes a deep breath - puts the headset back on.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD**

Erebos faces the four ancient wooden doors. The door on the far left is now inscribed with a name: "JANET".

Erebos places the point of his sword on the center of that door. It creaks opens revealing a black void.

Erebos' red wings expand. He ascends into the darkness. The door closes.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - GARAGE**

Marquis walks forward.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD**

AVATAR MARQUIS moves down the corridor towards the four doors. He reaches the door inscribed with Janet.

A moment passes. Avatar Marquis' hand moves forward, pushes the door open. Just as Avatar Marquis crosses the threshold, white light fills the void. Then -

Erebos reappears, soaring over the L.A. City skyline.

Erebos descends, like a hawk after prey. Just before hitting the ground, Erebus shifts horizontal and is now amongst cars speeding down a nondescript freeway. The white lane lines appearing as dots as they pass by.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - GARAGE**

Marquis stumbles - out of balance as he follows the action.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD**

Erebos slows and then stops as he reaches a MURAL on the wall of a freeway underpass. It depicts a middle-aged Hispanic woman, the palms of her hand framing her sullen face.

To the right of Erebus, a hundred yards in the distance an abandoned RED-TINTED WAREHOUSE.

Erebos walks through a field of weeds and thistle towards the Warehouse. He reaches a closed metal door, fades through it like a ghost.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - GARAGE**

Marquis reaches his right gloved hand forward.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD**

Avatar Marquis' hand turns the handle to the warehouse's metal door, pushes it open.

A woman's SCREAM, dim at first, grows louder as Avatar Marquis walks down a narrow hall.

Avatar Marquis reaches a room at the end of the hall, enters and finds Janet - Erebus by her side.

A thick, white rope descending from a beam connected to a noose around Janet's neck. Her hands are bound behind her. She frantically stretches her toes to keep her feet on a WOODEN STOOL beneath her.

Erebus wobbles the stool with the point of his sword. Janet frantically tries to keep her footing.

JANET  
(sobbing)  
Someone help me.

EREBOS  
Tell him your name.

JANET  
Who? What are --

Erebus moves the tip of his sword to Janet's throat.

JANET  
Janet - Janet Evers. Please,  
please...let me go. I swear, I  
won't tell anyone.

The pupils of Erebus' eyes shift from black to red.

Erebus reigns his sword down on the rear leg of the stool, knocking it out from beneath Janet's feet.

Janet's face reddens as she kicks her feet, gasps for air.

MARQUIS (V.O.)  
No!

The screen goes pitch black. Janet's GASPS the only sound.

EREBOS (V.O.)  
Perhaps I will show mercy.  
(beat)  
Perhaps I will not.

MARQUIS (V.O.)  
Let her go!

Blackness. Silence.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - GARAGE**

Marquis removes the headset. He's disoriented, soaked in sweat, as if he had run a marathon.

**GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER**

Marquis at the roll-top desk, tapping the keyboard of his computer. In the GOOGLE SEARCH BOX: *"Los Angeles - freeway mural - woman's face, hands."*

Several small images are displayed at the top of the screen. One, with what appears to be a FREEWAY OVERPASS SIGN above it. Marquis clicks on it.

**INSERT COMPUTER SCREEN**

A full-sized image of the LITA ALBUQUERQUE MONUMENT FREEWAY UNDERPASS: A Hispanic woman with her hands framing her face - the same image that Marquis observed in Dark World.

Above the underpass in the image is a green FREEWAY SIGN. It reads: "HARBOR FREEWAY - SAN PEDRO - SOUTH."

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/MAIN ROOM - DAY**

Director Davis walks by Marquis' empty and darkened office. She stops, looks in - a quizzical look crosses her face.

She proceeds towards

**AGENT RODRIQUEZ'S OFFICE**

And finds Agent Rodriguez, loosened tie, feet up on the desk, tapping away on the keyboard in his lap.

Davis RAPS on the door jamb.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Where's Adams?

Rodriquez's feet fly off the desk - he sits at attention.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ

(clears throat)

Um...I don't know. Haven't seen him since this morning.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Well, round him up. You two owe me an update on the counterfeit twenties.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ  
I can do it my --

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
(walking away)  
Both of you.

**INT/EXT. MARQUIS' SEDAN/HARBOR FREEWAY (TRAVELLING) - DAY**

Marquis' hands choke the wheel. The blue and red portable EMERGENCY LIGHTS attached to the sedan roof flash.

The siren WAILS as Marquis speeds through the freeway traffic, weaving in and out of lanes.

The RING of his cell phone through the car speaker. Marquis hits the answer button on the steering wheel.

MARQUIS  
Adams.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ (V.O.)  
Hey, it's Peter. Where the fuck are you man? Davis wants to meet with us. Pronto.

MARQUIS  
In pursuit.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ (V.O.)  
Of what?

MARQUIS  
(swerving to avoid a car)  
Damn it.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ (V.O.)  
Hello. Are you there?

MARQUIS  
My radio's down. I need backup.  
Call the LAPD. Have them meet me --

AGENT RODRIQUEZ (V.O.)  
What the fuck is going on!?

MARQUIS  
Listen!  
(deep breath)  
There's a warehouse just off the Harbor Freeway at the San Pedro underpass. Have them meet me there.  
I think I've found Janet Evers.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ (V.O.)

Who?

MARQUIS

The missing girl - from this morning.

(swerves again)

Just do it!

**EXT. HARBOR FREEWAY/UNDERPASS - DAY**

A full-sized MURAL of a Hispanic woman with her hands framing her face painted on the freeway wall. The same one Marquis saw in the Dark World.

Marquis' sedan creeps by, pulls over to the shoulder.

**INT/EXT. SEDAN - DAY**

Marquis surveys the area. He spots a red-tinted warehouse off in the distance at the end of an exit ramp.

Marquis drives the sedan forward to the end of the ramp, exits the car.

**EXT. RED-BRICKED WAREHOUSE - DAY**

Marquis trudges through overgrown weeds and thistle towards the warehouse. He reaches the

**WAREHOUSE METAL DOOR**

And tests the handle. It's unlocked. Marquis draws his gun from his holster as he pushes the door open.

**INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY**

Marquis enters. Dark other than a light emanating from a room at the end of a corridor that splits the warehouse.

**EXT. HARBOR FREEWAY UNDERPASS - SAME TIME**

Two LAPD CRUISERS, sirens BLARING and lights FLASHING pass the mural of the HISPANIC WOMAN beneath the underpass.

**INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY**

Marquis extends his gun forward as he takes the first step.

SIRENS in the distance as he moves down the dark corridor in a defensive posture.

**EXT. FREEWAY OFF RAMP - DAY**

Dust spews as the two Cruisers brake. The doors open in unison. Two OFFICERS, locked and loaded, exit one cruiser.

Holland exits from the other. He nods towards the warehouse off in the distance.

**INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY**

Marquis, still creeping down the corridor.

MARQUIS  
(calling out)  
FBI. You need to come out with your  
hands up.

Marquis finally reaches the end of the corridor. One deep breath of courage before he turns and bolts into the

**WAREHOUSE ROOM**

Marquis' eyes and gun move in unison as he rapidly scans the room. It's empty other than a small wooden stool tipped on its side in the center of the room.

The sound of the metal door CLANGING open in the distance.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND (O.S.)  
LAPD.

MARQUIS  
Agent Adams. Back here.

Marquis moves forward. He turns the stool and spots a chunk of wood missing from the spot where Erebos' sword had landed.

The sound of approaching FOOTSTEPS.

Holland and the other Policeman enter to find nothing but Marquis staring up at a rust-worn metal beam.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/LUNCH ROOM - DAY**

Agents Goodwell, Stevenson and Nguyen, all holding coffee cups, sit a small lunch table.

AGENT STEVENSON  
On a virtual reality game? Really?

AGENT NGUYEN  
You're screwing with us.

AGENT GOODWELL  
No - that's what Rodriquez told me.

Agent Goodwell goes to the door, looks out over the office.

AGENT GOODWELL  
 He's got the gear in there...  
 (points towards the  
 conference room)  
 With that LAPD Detective now.  
 They're just waiting on Davis.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/DAVIS' OFFICE - DAY**

Davis at her desk, phone to her ear. Rodriguez in a chair across from her.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
 (into phone)  
 Yes, I would feel the same way,  
 Captain.  
 (listening)  
 I promise, anything we get will go  
 through Detective Holland first.  
 (listening)  
 Thanks for your understanding.

Davis hangs up, closes her eyes, squeezes the palms of her hands up against her temples - frustrated.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
 You know what I really hate?

Rodriguez shakes his head.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
 Getting my ass handed to me by  
 local law enforcement.  
 (leans back in chair)  
 You're sure you haven't noticed  
 anything unusual with Marquis?

AGENT RODRIQUEZ  
 No, like I said. Nothing.

Davis takes a deep breath, stands.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
 I need to get this over with.

Davis exits into the

**MAIN FLOOR**

Feeling all of the nosy staff's eyes on her as walks to the

**CONFERENCE ROOM**

And enters, closing the door behind her.

Marquis sits at one end of the conference table, Detective Holland at the other. The VR headset's on top of the table.

Davis takes a seat.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
(at Holland)  
Seems we are squared away with your boss. My apologies. This won't happen again.

MARQUIS  
What are we apologizing for?

An instant glare of anger from Davis - if looks could kill.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
(at Holland)  
You done?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
(Sizing up Marquis)  
For now.

Holland points at the headset.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
But we do have to clear this up.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Of course.  
(to Marquis)  
Let's get on with it.

Marquis removes his smartphone from his pocket. Shows the screen to Davis and Holland.

MARQUIS  
The app is called Dark World.

Marquis taps the APP ICON then places his smartphone in the VR headset flap, closes it.

He hits the power button, slides the headset towards Davis.

MARQUIS  
He might not appear right away.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
He?

MARQUIS  
Erebos, the --

Davis raises her hand - she's heard enough.

Davis puts the headset on. Marquis leans forward, like a defendant awaiting a verdict.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD GAME**

A spinning skull evaporates revealing an EREBOS AVATAR, similar to the one Marquis saw, but more akin to a graphic illustration than an actual being.

EREBOS AVATAR  
Welcome to the Dark World.

The Erebos Avatar turns, walks through a row of ancient marble columns.

DIRECTOR DAVIS (V.O.)  
He's walking through some kind of old Greek structure like the... Parthenon.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - CONFERENCE ROOM**

Marquis' face shows confusion.

MARQUIS  
There should be a corridor. Four doors at the end.

Davis shakes her head. Holland eyes' stay fixed on Marquis.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD GAME**

The Erebos Avatar looks out over ANCIENT ATHENS at night.

From behind one of the pillars, an avatar of THREE-HEADED DRAGON charges the Erebos Avatar.

A swift blow from the Erebos Avatar's sword decapitates all three heads of the beast.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - CONFERENCE ROOM**

Davis removes the VR headset, lays it on the table. She stares at Marquis. There's pity in her eyes.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
It's just a game.

MARQUIS

No...

Davis slides the headset towards Holland. He slides it back.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

Not necessary.

Marquis looks through the glass window of the conference room - spots Eddy on the main floor.

MARQUIS

Wait - let me get Eddy. He'll know.

Marquis bolts towards the door.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

That's not --

Marquis leaves the room. Davis runs her hands through her hair - doesn't really have time for this craziness.

Marquis returns with Eddy.

MARQUIS

(to Eddy)

Go ahead, tell them.

EDDY

Tell them...?

MARQUIS

About the Dark World App.

Eddy's eyes shift from Marquis to Davis, unsure of himself.

EDDY

Um, it's a virtual reality app. A game I guess. Well, more of a challenge. You're supposed to destroy the Greek Gods of the underworld and there's this --

MARQUIS

No, not that. Tell her about the four doors. Tell her about the girl.

EDDY

Four doors? Girl?

DIRECTOR DAVIS

That's enough, Eddy. Thank you.

A very confused Eddy leaves the room. Davis looks towards Holland, gives him the - you can go - nod.

Holland nods, stands, heads for the door.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
(to Marquis)  
Get some help, man.

Marquis sneers at Holland as he exits.

Davis drums her fingers on the table top.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Everything okay at work?

MARQUIS  
Yes, of course.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
And at home?

Marquis squeezes his chin, resisting the urge to yell.

MARQUIS  
Why don't you just ask me what you really want to ask?

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Given the circumstances, it wouldn't be an unfair question.

MARQUIS  
No, I haven't had any more issues.  
Look, I know what I saw. She was there. It was real. I was trying to stop it from happening.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Nothing happened. You found a stool in an abandoned warehouse.

MARQUIS  
So you think I'm crazy.

Davis takes a moment - measures her response.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
I don't think you have a magical headset.

MARQUIS

I'm fine now.  
 (through clenched teeth)  
 That was years ago.

Davis stands, places a hand on Marquis' shoulder.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Take the rest of the day off. We'll  
 talk tomorrow.

Davis moves towards the door, grabs the handle.

MARQUIS

Is that an order, Director?

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Yes, in fact it is.  
 (opening the door)  
 And stay clear of this case. I  
 promised Captain Sanchez.  
 Understood?

Marquis, anger in his eyes, nods. Davis exits.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/MARQUIS' OFFICE - DAY**

Marquis angrily tosses some case folders into an open  
 briefcase on his desk. They're followed by the VR gear.

A knock on the open door - it's Rodriguez.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ

Everything okay?

Marquis shuffles through the top desk drawer, grabs his keys.

MARQUIS

(sarcastic)  
 What do you think?  
 (off Rodriguez's look)  
 Sorry, man.

Marquis closes the briefcase.

MARQUIS

Do me a favor. Check the recordings  
 from the interior security cameras.  
 I need to find out who brought that  
 thing into my office.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ

I'll see what I can do.

MARQUIS

And see what you can find out on the warehouse - who owns it. Maybe get a print crew out there and --

AGENT RODRIQUEZ

LAPD's got it covered, brother. It's their case. Besides, if Davis found out she'd have my ass.

Marquis heads for the door.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ

Where you going?

MARQUIS

Davis has already had my ass.

**INT. LAPD STATION - DAY**

POLICEMAN mill about, STAFFERS work their desks. A WORKER is taking down and boxing Christmas decorations.

**COUNTER - BACK OF THE ROOM**

Holland reads a one-page printout. A FEMALE STAFFER's on the other side of the counter. The look on her face tells us she can't wait for Holland to leave.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

(re: printout)

This is all you could get?

FEMALE STAFFER

That's all there was. Not like we make up the stuff.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

Maybe you ought to start.

(holding up the printout)

This is shit.

FEMALE STAFFER

(As Holland leaves)

Maybe you should Google him.

(under her breath)

Asshole.

**HOLLAND'S OFFICE**

Holland at his desk, focused on his computer screen.

**ON THE SCREEN**

L.A. Times article. Headline Reads: "FBI Agents Shot in Drug Sting." Underneath the headline, two pictures: one of Marquis, one of another MALE AGENT.

Holland clicks his tongue - thinks.

**CORNER OFFICE**

DETECTIVE JAKE ANDERSON (55), portly, at his desk reading a case file.

A knock on the open door - it's Holland, holding a printout of the LA Times article. He enters, takes a seat.

DETECTIVE ANDERSON  
(still reading)  
Yes?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Didn't you have a good friend who worked at the FBI Wilshire office? Johnson or something?

DETECTIVE ANDERSON  
Jackson. He retired last year.

Holland slides the LA Times Article towards Anderson. Taps the image of Marquis.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
I need you to see what he knows about this guy.

Anderson leans back in his chair - studies Holland.

DETECTIVE ANDERSON  
You know that's not right.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
You know I don't care. And you know that you owe me.  
(as he exits)  
I need it ASAP. I'm briefing the Captain tonight.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/DINING ROOM - DUSK**

Marquis at the table, phone to his ear. He methodically clicks the top of a pen as he stares at the screen of a laptop computer displaying: JANET EVERS' FACEBOOK PAGE.

A steno pad next to the computer is filled with Marquis' handwritten notes: names of Janet's Facebook friends, her relationship status, locations she's visited.

MARQUIS  
 (into phone)  
 Background check on all of them.  
 Soon as you can.  
 (listening)  
 I know, I know. Thanks, Peter.

Marquis ends the call and picks up the VR headset on a chair next to him. He inserts his phone, dons the headset.

A moment passes, nothing's happening.

Marquis yanks off the headset, tosses it on the table. He leans back, presses the palms of his hands against his temple - total frustration.

Then, the sound of the front door creaking open.

HANNAH (O.S.)  
 I'll see you later.

MARQUIS  
 Wait. Come here.

Hannah, dressed for a night out, enters.

MARQUIS  
 Where you going?

HANNAH  
 I told you. Dinner and a movie with Danielle.

Marquis looks up, surveys Hannah's apparel - a bit too provocative for his comfort.

MARQUIS  
 Dressed like that?

HANNAH  
 Like what?  
 (proudly showing off)  
 Mom bought this for me. You don't like it?

MARQUIS  
 You got your phone?

HANNAH  
 Of course.

MARQUIS

And your mace - in your purse?

HANNAH

Always.

MARQUIS

Don't be out too late.

HANNAH

Yeah, sure....You okay, Dad?

MARQUIS

Go - go. Have fun.

Hannah gives Marquis the once over, nods - heads out.

**INT. LAPD STATION/CAPTAIN SANCHEZ'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Captain Sanchez, feet on the desk, leans back in a large office chair, a folder labeled: "MARQUIS ADAMS" in hand.

Holland sits in a chair on the other side of the desk.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

(scanning folder)

Marine Corp, deployed in Desert Storm - two tours. More than fifteen years with the Bureau. There's nothing really here.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

It's what's not there.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

Am I supposed to fucking guess?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

Adams started his career in the Bureau's organized crime unit. Real heavy duty shit. Spent nearly a decade there. Until this happened.

Holland slides the L.A. Times article across the desk towards Sanchez. He picks it up.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

Four years ago. He and his partner were on a sting - a big drug buy. Well, at least they thought they were on a sting. It was a setup.

Sanchez puts down the article.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

I remember that now. His partner was killed - right?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

Dead on the scene. Adams took five bullets. Survived - barely. But here's the thing. He goes on unpaid leave for a year after that. When he does come back, he does desk duty - administrative shit. He eventually takes a pretty soft spot in their white-collar crime unit.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

And?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

There are some folks at the Bureau that think he lost his mind a bit. Spent a year in counseling. You know - trauma crap.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

How did you get this -- ?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

You really want me to tell you?

Sanchez thinks for a moment - shakes his head.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

So what do you think?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

I think Janet Evers is still missing. I think Marquis Adams might still be crazy.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Marquis, dressed in sweats, lies on top of the bed covers, phone to his ear. The VR headset is on the night stand.

MARQUIS

(into phone)

So, it went well.

**INT. SAN FRANCISCO HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Alyssa, phone to her ear, at the edge of a hotel bed slipping off her heels.

ALYSSA  
 (into phone)  
 Much better than expected. I think we might get a dismissal. They were shockingly unprepared. Anyway, I should be back in a day or two.

**INTERCUT BETWEEN MARQUIS AND ALYSSA**

MARQUIS  
 Good - good.

ALYSSA  
 How are things going there?

Marquis lets the question hang there for a moment.

MARQUIS  
 Fine...Everything's fine.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/MASTER BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Marquis, still propped up in bed, VR headset on.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD**

A silver SKULL slowly spinning in the darkness.

Sporadic bolts of lightning.

MARQUIS (V.O.)  
 Are you there?

More lightning as the skull continues to spin.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/FRONT DOOR - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Hannah sneaks in, quietly closing the door.

She pulls her cell phone from her purse, grimaces as she checks the time - way past curfew. She tips toes towards the

**STAIRS**

And creeps up with the stealth of a burglar. She reaches the

**SECOND FLOOR**

And tips toes past the half-opened door to Marquis' bedroom towards her bedroom.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/MASTER BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Marquis, still in his sweats and still wearing the headset. His head's tilted to the side on a pillow propped up behind him. A light snore signals he has dozed off.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD**

Erebos sits on a MEDIEVAL THRONE under a faint light cascading from above. His spiked gloved hands rest on the arms of the throne.

EREBOS  
I have returned.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - BEDROOM**

Marquis' head straightens - now alert.

MARQUIS  
Why did you lead me to the  
warehouse?

**VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD**

Erebos - still on the throne.

EREBOS  
To see if you would follow.

MARQUIS (V.O.)  
To find nothing!?

EREBOS  
(standing up)  
So they now must doubt your sanity.  
Do they?  
(flutters his wings)  
Do you?

MARQUIS (V.O.)  
Where is she!?

Erebos turns - faces the dark void behind him.

EREBOS  
She's in the shadows. In the  
darkness between Earth and Hades.  
Where one faces death.

From nowhere, a long medieval corridor made from ancient stone materializes. Erebus walks down the corridor.

EREBOS  
You have until dawn.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - BEDROOM**

Marquis stands.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD**

The Marquis Avatar appears.

As Erebus walks down the corridor towards the four ancient doors, we hear echoes of Janet's voice - HELP ME...HELP ME.

Erebus reaches the end of the corridor and the four large doors. The door on the far left inscribed with: "JANET."

Erebus places the tip of his sword on that door. As he speaks, his words appear in the center of the door, as if they were carved there as each word left his lips.

EREBOS  
*From the rails of a tower  
Near a hundred year lake  
A woman must hang  
For other's mistakes*

The door opens. Nothing but a black void. The Marquis Avatar approaches.

MARQUIS (V.O.)  
Where is she?

EREBOS  
Out there.

Erebus wings expand and flutter. His eyes turn from black to red. He leaps through the open door into the dark void.

Then in an instant - he's in the light, soaring along Pacific Coast Highway. The Pacific Ocean to his right. A rugged coastline to his left.

Then - the black void returns.

EREBOS (V.O.)  
By the time the sun rises, she'll  
be in the dark world.

Lightning BOLTS illuminate the black void. Flashes of Janet hung by a rope secured to the frame of a METAL TOWER surrounded by dry brush and trees.

Janet frantically kicks her feet as she gasps for air.

EREPOS (V.O.)  
If you see her image there - know  
that she's already gone.

Then - total darkness.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - BEDROOM**

Marquis standing, headset still on.

MARQUIS  
Come back!

**HANNAH'S BEDROOM**

Hannah upright - concern on her face as she listens to

MARQUIS (O.S.)  
You coward! Come back!

**MARQUIS' BEDROOM**

Marquis rips off the headset - paces.

MARQUIS  
(to himself)  
From the rails of a tower, near a  
hundred year lake...  
(tapping his forehead)  
Think, think...

Marquis stands, goes towards the dresser, grabs his car keys.

**HANNAH'S BEDROOM**

Hannah on the corner of her bed, phone to her ear. She hears the front door SLAM shut.

HANNAH  
(into phone)  
Mom, pick up.  
(a moment passes)  
Call me. I'm worried about Dad.

**EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Dark, moonless. Marquis' sedan creeps down the highway, then pulls over to the shoulder.

**INT. SEDAN - NIGHT**

The digital clock on the dash reads: "3:00 A.M." Marquis grabs a pair of binoculars from the passenger seat, exits.

**EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT**

Marquis leans up against the hood of the sedan, puts the binoculars to his eyes, looks inland.

**MARQUIS' P.O.V. - THROUGH BINOCULARS**

Rugged, brush and tree-laden hills. Nothing else.

MARQUIS (O.S.)  
Come on - let me see a tower.

**BACK TO SCENE**

Marquis lowers the binoculars - failure written on his face. He squeezes the back of his neck with his left hand.

MARQUIS  
Keep going.

**INT. SEDAN - JUST BEFORE DAWN**

The digital clock on the dash reads: "5:00 A.M."

Marquis rubs his exhausted eyes, looks at his smartphone.

It's open to the GOOGLE SEARCH PAGE. In the search dialogue box: "HUNDRED YEAR OLD LAKE."

Several search results appear on the page.

MARQUIS  
There's no hundred year old lake!

Marquis angrily tosses his phone on the passenger seat.

(taps forehead with fist)  
Hundred-year old lake, hundred-year  
old lake, hundred year...  
(beat)  
Century.

Marquis grabs his phone, starts tapping.

**INSERT SMARTPHONE SCREEN**

The SEARCH BOX fills with: "CENTURY LAKE."

Seconds later, A MAP is displayed with the red GOOGLE LOCATOR symbol. Next to it: "CENTURY LAKE, MALIBU CREEK PARK."

**EXT. MULHOLLAND HIGHWAY/MALIBU CREEK PARK - DAWN**

A paved highway circumventing natural park land. Marquis' sedan parked askew on the shoulder.

**BENEATH THE HIGHWAY**

Dry brush and trees everywhere overlooking CENTURY LAKE - a small, crystal blue body of water.

Marquis, VR headset in hand, stands at the base of a metallic RADIO TOWER looking skyward. A crudely fashioned EFFIGY of a woman hanging from a rope is secured to a tower rail.

The face of the Effigy made from a small white pillow. A cheap wig used as hair. The eyes and a nose crudely drawn with a marker. The lips outlined in red lipstick.

A TOE-TAG dangles from the makeshift foot of the Effigy. In large black letters it reads: "TOO LATE".

Marquis' hands tremble as he puts the headset on.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

Same radio tower against a black background.

Hanging from a tower rail, the corpse of Janet Evers - bulging dead eyes, skin tone an ugly blue.

EREBOS (V.O.)

Three doors remain.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - BENEATH THE HIGHWAY**

Marquis removes the headset, slumps to his knees.

A moment passes. Marquis removes his phone from the headset, taps in a number.

VOICE FROM PHONE - FILTERED

9-1-1. What's your emergency?

**INT. DETECTIVE HOLLAND'S HOME/BEDROOM - DAWN**

Holland asleep in bed. His WIFE by his side.

The RINGTONE from a cell phone on the nightstand wakens him. He fumbles for it, puts it to his ear.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
(into phone - groggy)  
Detective Holland.

His Wife stirs as Holland stands, phone to his ear.

WIFE  
What is it?

Holland puts a sssh finger up as he listens.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
(into phone)  
Uh-huh.  
(listening)  
Where?  
(listening)  
Okay, I'm on my way.

Holland ends the call, heads towards his dresser.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
(to Wife)  
I gotta go.

**EXT. MULHOLLAND HIGHWAY/MALIBU CREEK PARK - LATER**

Two LAPD CRUISERS, emergency lights flashing, parked on the shoulder of the road.

A FEMALE OFFICER walks around inspecting the area. A MALE OFFICER keeps an attentive eye on Marquis, leaning up against the hood of his sedan.

**BENEATH THE HIGHWAY**

A CRIME PHOTOGRAPHER snaps pictures of the area.

Two POLICE OFFICERS search the brush and the area around the base of the metallic RADIO TOWER.

Detective Holland stares up at the Effigy of Janet.

POLICE OFFICER  
Detective Holland.  
(louder from no response)  
Detective Holland.

Holland lowers his eyes - looks at the Officer.

POLICE OFFICER  
We got a separate set of boot  
prints in the mud.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Get them casted.  
(points at tower)  
I want prints from the ground up.

POLICE OFFICER  
That's going to take --

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
I don't give a fuck.

**BACK UP AT THE HIGHWAY**

A RUSTLE from the side of the road. Holland emerges, talks briefly to the FEMALE OFFICER. He turns, stares at Marquis - the silence is deafening.

HOLLAND  
(to the Male Officer)  
Cuff him and bring him in.

Holland walks towards one of the Cruisers. Marquis starts after him. The Male Police Officer takes dead aim.

MALE POLICE OFFICER  
On the ground.

Holland opens the door of the cruiser - looks back.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Make sure you read him his rights.

MARQUIS  
(to Holland)  
Are you crazy?

MALE OFFICER  
I said on the ground - now!

Marquis watches Holland's car pull away from the shoulder as he slowly falls to his knees, then extends prone on the road.

**INT. LAPD STATION/HOLDING CELL - DAY**

Marquis on a metal bench in the corner, head in his hands.

**INT. LAPD STATION/CAPTAIN SANCHEZ'S OFFICE - DAY**

Director Davis in a corner chair, tight-jawed and obviously pissed. Detective Holland sits in a chair a few feet away.

Captain Sanchez hustles in.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ  
Sorry to keep you waiting.

No response from Davis. Sanchez goes to the credenza, pours himself a cup of coffee - turns towards Davis.

CHIEF SANCHEZ  
Coffee?

Davis shakes her head. Sanchez takes a seat at his desk.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ  
(at Holland)  
So, what do we got?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Aside from Adams' sedan, we got one set of tire tracks on the shoulder. Large, like from a maintenance truck. Also got a cast of boot prints by the tower.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Perhaps they're from the person who actually did this.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
(ignoring Davis)  
Probably from a maintenance worker. The boys are checking to see if they had a crew out there recently.

CHIEF SANCHEZ  
What about prints?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Waiting on the lab. Should be any minute.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Someone needs to explain why you have my agent in custody.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
I don't know. Maybe because someone rolled my ass out of bed to go look at a puppet hung on a tower.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Do you really think if he was involved in this that he would show up there? No one in their right mind would do that.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

Is he in his right mind?

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

Careful, Detective.

(at Davis)

You have to appreciate the fact that this is the second time your Agent has had us deployed.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(at Sanchez)

Has he called a lawyer?

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

Said he didn't want one. The only call he made was to you.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

I'd like my folks to take a look at the scene. Examine the --

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

Due respect, but this isn't an interagency investigation. We're only sharing this information with you as a professional courtesy.

(a beat)

Is there anything you can share with us? About Marquis?

The question hangs there.

The desk phone BUZZES. Sanchez walks over, picks up.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

Yes.

(listening)

Alright - thanks.

Sanchez hangs up.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

(to Davis/Holland)

None of his prints on the tower or the effigy.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

So?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

We can hold him without charges for seventy-two hours. You know that.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

I do. And I know the media shit storm we're facing tonight when someone in your shop leaks that you have an FBI Agent in custody.

(at Sanchez)

That ought to create quite the distraction for both of us.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

What do you propose?

DIRECTOR DAVIS

That you and I talk ...  
(glowers at Holland)  
Alone.

**INT/EXT. DARK SEDAN/RESIDENTIAL STREET - (TRAVELLING) - DAY**

Davis at the wheel. Marquis in the passenger seat. The VR headset and gloves are in the back seat.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

You understand all of the conditions?

No response from Marquis - he just gazes out the window.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Marquis, it's important to me that you understand.

MARQUIS

(almost robotic)

I'm on administrative leave. My security clearance will be suspended. No access to records.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Look, hopefully they'll find this girl and --

MARQUIS

Janet Evers is dead. She won't be the last.

An inadvertent eye roll from Davis as she pulls into

**MARQUIS' DRIVEWAY**

And puts the car in park. Marquis reaches into the back seat towards the VR gear.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

That's going to the lab. I've agreed to have it examined.

(a beat)

I need your phone too.

Marquis' eyes narrow in anger as he reaches in his pocket, retrieves his phone - hands it to Davis.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

There's one more thing. You can't return to work until you're cleared by Doctor Silvers.

MARQUIS

The LAPD has no right to impose that requirement. It's none of --

DIRECTOR DAVIS

It's not their requirement.

(puts gearshift in reverse)

It's mine.

Marquis opens the door - exits the car, slams the door.

**INT. LAPD STATION/CAPTAIN SANCHEZ'S OFFICE - DAY**

Sanchez at his desk. An angry Holland in the doorway.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

We could have held him! Christ!

CHIEF SANCHEZ

Throttle it down, Detective.

Holland's jaw tightens - biting his tongue.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

We needed to keep our eyes on him.

CHIEF SANCHEZ

I know.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

(shaking head/confused)

And?

CHIEF SANCHEZ  
It's being taken care of.

**EXT. MARQUIS' HOME/DRIVEWAY - DAY**

A TAXI pulls in. The trunk pops open.

Alyssa and the DRIVER exit the taxi. The Driver pulls her suitcase from the trunk.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Marquis, portable home phone to his ear, paces back and forth - clearly agitated.

MARQUIS  
(into phone)  
You're sure there's nothing?

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/RODRIQUEZ'S OFFICE - DAY**

Rodriquez at his desk.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ  
(into phone)  
I went through three days of recordings, brother. I found nothing.  
(listening)  
Of course people went in there. Staffers, cleaning crew, but no brought in a gift box...  
Hello...Marquis, you there?

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Marquis hurls the portable phone at the sofa.

MARQUIS  
Fuck!

THUD - the sound of Alyssa's suitcase hitting the floor.  
Marquis turns around, agitated - sweaty.

MARQUIS  
You're home already? I thought not until tomorrow.

ALYSSA  
(concerned)  
Why aren't you at work?

HANNAH (O.S.)  
I'm sorry, Daddy. I called her.

Alyssa and Marquis turn, spot Hannah halfway down the stairs.

MARQUIS  
Why? Everything's --

ALYSSA  
(at Hannah)  
Can you go somewhere, sweetie?

Hannah nods, walks down the stairs, picks her car keys up from a table and heads towards the front door.

HANNAH  
(at Marquis)  
I was worried.

Hannah exits, closes the door behind her.

ALYSSA  
We need to talk.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/DAVIS' OFFICE - DUSK**

Davis at her desk. Agents Rodriguez, Stevenson and Nguyen across from her.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
(at Rodriguez)  
You'll take half his caseload for now.  
(at Stevenson)  
I'll need you to pick up the rest.

Rodriguez and Stevenson nod.

Davis looks at Nguyen as she points at a box that contains the VR headset, gloves and Marquis' smartphone.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
I want the Technology Lab to examine all of that. ASAP.

AGENT NGUYEN  
Not sure anyone's there now.  
Quitting time was an hour ago.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Oh, for fuck's sake. Then come pick it up first thing tomorrow!

Silence - eyes averted elsewhere.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Go. You all got work to do.

All stand. Stevenson and Nguyen exit. Rodriguez stays.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ

You okay?

(off Davis' nod)

What about Marquis - he okay?

DIRECTOR DAVIS

I wouldn't be splitting up his caseload if I thought he was.

Rodriguez nods, exits. Davis buries her face in her hands.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Alyssa on the sofa, wine glass in her hand. Marquis, in a chair next to her, his hands squeezing the back of his neck.

MARQUIS

They don't believe me. God, it makes me want to scream.

ALYSSA

Uh huh.

MARQUIS

And they won't let me return to work until I've been cleared by Silvers. It's just not right.

Marquis closes his eyes. Alyssa studies him.

ALYSSA

Maybe you should see him. I mean what would be the harm? If nothing else you can check to see if your meds are still at the right level.

MARQUIS

I don't need to see a shrink!

ALYSSA

Hey, hey. It's me - not them.

MARQUIS

Why would they think I could just make something up out of thin air? About a person I've never met!

ALYSSA

You have met her.

MARQUIS

No...

ALYSSA

Two years ago. You went with me to Judge Evers' fund-raiser dinner. At the Hyatt. She was there.

MARQUIS

I'm sure I didn't see her.

ALYSSA

You shook her hand. On the ride home you said she struck you as... what was the phrase you used...?

MARQUIS

(remembering)

Out of place. I said she looked liked she wanted to be anywhere but there.

Marquis sucks in his lower lip, runs his fingers over his temple - a moment of doubt creeping in.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/MAIN FLOOR - NIGHT**

All lights dimmed - everyone's gone home. Except for Eddy.

He slips a ring of keys off an unattended custodial cart and then walks across the floor towards

**DAVIS' OFFICE**

And inserts a key, opens the door - sneaks in the room.

Eddy reaches Davis' desk and retrieves Marquis' smartphone from the box. He removes a SMARTPHONE THUMB DRIVE from his pocket, inserts it in the bottom of Marquis' phone.

After a few moments, Eddy removes the thumb drive, sneaks back out of the office.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Dark, other than a night light. Alyssa's curled up in bed, her back to Marquis.

Marquis' eyes are wide open, fixed on the ceiling - something's percolating.

MARQUIS

(in a whisper)

You awake?

ALYSSA

Yeah.

Marquis reaches his hand over, caresses Alyssa's hair. He takes a deep breath.

MARQUIS

I stopped taking my medication a year ago.

ALYSSA

(confused)

But you've been refilling them.

MARQUIS

I've been flushing them. I didn't say anything cause I didn't want to worry you.

Marquis places his hand on Alyssa's shoulder.

MARQUIS

Babe, they made me groggy - fuzzy. And I'm fine now.

Alyssa shoves Marquis' hand away. A tear trickles down her cheek.

ALYSSA

You can't put Hannah through this again.

MARQUIS

You really mean I can't put you through this again.

ALYSSA

Get out.

MARQUIS

We need to talk this through.

ALYSSA

Get - out!

Marquis grabs his pillow. Takes a long look at Alyssa, exits.

**EXT. MARQUIS' HOME/DRIVEWAY - DAWN**

The sun just peeking over the horizon. Alyssa, briefcase in hand, walks towards her Mercedes-Benz.

**INT/EXT. JUST DOWN THE STREET/UNMARKED SEDAN (PARKED) - DAY**

Two AGENTS on a stakeout. One sips a coffee. The other holds binoculars on Marquis' driveway off in the distance.

**P.O.V - THROUGH BINOCULARS**

Alyssa's Mercedes-Benz backing out of the driveway.

AGENT TWO  
It's just the wife.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/GUEST BEDROOM - MORNING**

A groggy Marquis wakens. It takes him a second to calibrate his surroundings. He rises, walks to the

**MASTER BEDROOM**

The bed's made. Alyssa's long gone.

Marquis spots a note on the dresser: "Gone to work. You never lied to me before. You need to figure out why now - Alyssa".

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/DIRECTOR DAVIS' OFFICE - MORNING**

Davis at her desk. Her eyes are focused on Alyssa, sitting on the other side, VR headset on.

Alyssa removes the headset, places it on the desk.

ALYSSA  
It's just a game.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
I know. I'm sorry, Alyssa.

Alyssa wipes tears from her eye, gathers herself - stands.

ALYSSA  
I appreciate you letting me see it.  
Um, look...I need a favor. Please  
don't let him come back until after  
he's gotten help.

Davis nods. Alyssa turns, heads for the door.

Davis exhales through pursed lips as she watches Alyssa exit. She hits a button on her intercom.

AGENT NGUYEN (V.O.)  
(filtered - thru intercom)  
Agent Nguyen.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
You can pick up the equipment and  
take it to the lab now. Remember,  
top priority.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/GARAGE - MORNING**

Marquis, unshaven, haggard looking, wearing sweats, sits at the roll-top desk. On the computer screen - Janet Ever's Facebook Page.

Marquis scrolls through Janet's timeline and mumbles to himself as he jots notes in a steno pad.

**SUPER: TWO DAYS LATER**

The garage door opens - It's Alyssa, dressed for work.

MARQUIS

So, we're talking again?

Alyssa looks at Marquis' computer screen, obviously not pleased. She shakes her head.

ALYSSA

Hannah's apartment is ready. She'll be leaving tomorrow morning. I thought you should know.

MARQUIS

(as Alyssa closes door)

Hey...

A moment passes. The dull THUD of the front door closing signals Alyssa's departure.

Marquis bites his lip, returns his focus to his computer.

**INT. LAPD STATION/DETECTIVE HOLLAND'S OFFICE - DAY**

Holland at his desk, paperwork scattered everywhere.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ (V.O.)

Any news on Evers?

Holland looks up at Captain Sanchez, coffee cup in hand, in the doorway.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

Nothing. None of her charge cards have been used. No cell phone activity. We've interviewed dozens of people - nothing. Everything's a dead end.

Holland picks a case file up from his desk, holds it up.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
And now I've got another one.  
Christopher King. Missing for  
several days. Same profile as  
Evers. Young, clean record,  
prominent parents.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/DAVIS' OFFICE - DAY**

Davis at her desk. Agent Nguyen enters, carrying a box with  
the VR headset, gloves and Marquis' smartphone.

AGENT NGUYEN  
Lab's done.  
(sets the box on the desk)  
They said the VR gear is just  
standard, run of the mill,  
equipment.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
And the phone?

AGENT NGUYEN  
Nothing out of the ordinary as far  
as they could tell. But they don't  
have a baseline for the Dark World  
APP.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
I don't understand.

AGENT NGUYEN  
They really can't tell if  
anything's wrong because they don't  
know what the APP as supposed to  
look like in the first place.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
(irritated)  
And?

AGENT NGUYEN  
They've copied the software.  
They're taking it to the developer  
today. You know, so they can tell  
us if the coding is any different  
from what they sell off the shelf.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Did you not understand top  
priority.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/GARAGE - DAY**

The computer's turned off. The top of the roll-top desk is clean. All remnants of Marquis' work - gone.

In the corner of the room, Marquis pummels the heavy bag as if it was the cause of his problems.

Sweat falls from his brow as he punches faster and faster.

Finally punched out, Marquis slips to the floor, rests his sweaty head against the wall. His chest rises up and down as he recovers from the exertion.

He closes his eyes, gently taps his head against the wall.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Steam fills the room.

Marquis in the shower. His eyes closed, head bowed, as he lets the hot water beat the tension out of his neck.

**LATER AT THE SINK**

Marquis, towel around his waist, places a razor down on the sink. He turns on the water, cups some in his hands and splashes the remnants of shaving cream from his face.

As he looks in the mirror, Marquis runs his finger around one of the bullet wound scars on his upper torso - exhales.

He opens the medicine cabinet and removes a prescription bottle - ZOLOFT. He opens the cap, taps out a pill.

Marquis stares at the pill in the palm of his hand. He closes his eyes, pops it in his mouth - swallows.

**IN THE BEDROOM**

Alyssa enters, holding her briefcase. Marquis emerges from the bathroom. Their eyes meet.

MARQUIS

I took my medication...

ALYSSA

That's good...

MARQUIS

And I have an appointment with  
Doctor Silvers tomorrow.

Alyssa drops her briefcase, walks to Marquis - wraps her arms around him.

MARQUIS

But I'm not going back to work. Not there anyway.

ALYSSA

(sobbing)  
I don't care.

**EXT. MARQUIS' HOME/DRIVEWAY - MORNING**

The trunk of a small sedan is open. At the front of the sedan, Hannah and Alyssa.

Marquis approaches dragging two large overstuffed suitcases.

ALYSSA

You're sure you got everything?

HANNAH

I'm all set.

Marquis huffs and puffs as he dumps the suitcases in the trunk, closes it.

MARQUIS

If she had any more we'd have to rent a trailer.

Alyssa hugs Hannah, then lets go.

ALYSSA

Call me once you get settled in.

HANNAH

Mom - of course.

Marquis approaches.

MARQUIS

Keep your head on a swivel - you know what I mean?

HANNAH

Dad - it's forty minutes from here. It's not like I'm going to --

MARQUIS

Okay - okay... I love you. You know that - right.

HANNAH  
 (hugging Marquis)  
 I know.

Hannah breaks the embrace - goes to the sedan, smiles and enters. She gives her parents one last wave.

MARQUIS  
 Should have had her wait another year.

Alyssa slaps Marquis on the ass.

ALYSSA  
 Stop it.

Alyssa checks her watch.

ALYSSA  
 I got to get ready for work. And you, mister - have an appointment.

**EXT. MARQUIS HOME/DRIVEWAY - DAY**

Marquis, dressed in business casual, heads towards his car.

**INT/EXT. DOWN THE STREET/UNMARKED SEDAN (PARKED) - DAY**

Same Agents as before. One holding up binoculars.

**P.O.V - THROUGH BINOCULARS**

Marquis entering his car.

AGENT TWO  
 He's leaving.

Agent One turns the key, starts the engine.

**INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - DAY**

DOCTOR SILVERS (60), bespectacled, gray-haired, sits in a leather chair, notepad in his hand.

Marquis on a small sofa, stares out the window.

DOCTOR SILVERS  
 How long ago did you stop taking your medication?

MARQUIS  
 I don't know. A while.

DOCTOR SILVERS

But now you're taking it again.  
 (off Marquis nod)  
 Good - good. You know you're not  
 alone. There are a lot of agents  
 with issues.

MARQUIS

Really? There's a group of us  
 watching murders on virtual reality  
 games?

DOCTOR SILVERS

You know that's not what I meant.

Marquis stands up, fumbles for his keys in his pocket.

MARQUIS

Yeah, fair enough. You'll refill my  
 prescription?

DOCTOR SILVERS

Of course. But, I'm not quite ready  
 to clear you.

Marquis heads for the door.

MARQUIS

No need, Doc. I'm quitting today.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/MAIN FLOOR - DAY**

Marquis strides towards his office as he's eyed by other  
 Agents - some feeling pity. Some just nosy.

He comes across Isaac, pushing a custodial cart.

MARQUIS

You got a spare trash bag?

ISAAC

Did I miss something in your  
 office?

MARQUIS

No. Just packing. Last day.

Isaac hands him a large green trash bag.

ISAAC

Mine too.

MARQUIS  
 (confused)  
 What? Why?

ISAAC  
 Got to tend to my Dad.

MARQUIS  
 He's sick?

ISAAC  
 No.  
 (eying the trash bag)  
 You sure you don't want a box?

MARQUIS  
 No. Somehow a trash bag seems more fitting.

**MARQUIS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Marquis jams a variety of personal items into the trash bag.

EDDY (O.S.)  
 I'm sorry.

Marquis stops, turns - spots Eddy in his doorway.

MARQUIS  
 For what?

EDDY  
 That I wasn't more help to you. You know, when they were asking about the game.

Marquis stares at Eddy - sizing him up, looking for any sign deception. He turns his attention back to his backing. Eddy starts to say something - thinks better of it, leaves.

**DIRECTOR DAVIS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Davis' back is to the door as she works on the computer behind her desk.

PLOP - Marquis' FBI BADGE hits her desk. She turns around, spots Marquis, a full trash bag slung over his shoulder.

MARQUIS  
 Thought I would give that to you personally. Already checked my service revolver with security.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Really? You're willing to throw  
your career away because you don't  
want to see Silvers?

MARQUIS  
I saw Doctor Silvers.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Then...?

MARQUIS  
My career was over the moment you  
didn't back me. I'm can't work in  
an office where half the staff  
thinks I'm crazy.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
They don't --

MARQUIS  
They do.  
(points at box with VR  
gear/phone)  
I'd liked to have my property back.

Davis slides the box across the desk towards Marquis. He  
picks it up.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
The headset is normal. They're  
still checking the app with the  
developer.

MARQUIS  
Hmm.  
(as he leaves)  
I'm going to need a reference.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/GARAGE - MORNING**

Marquis at the roll-top desk, scribbling notes on a pad as he  
scrolls through job opportunities on his computer screen.

CLASSICAL MUSIC emanates from a BOSE SPEAKER on top of the  
desk. Next to it, Marquis' smartphone.

Marquis leans back, studies the computer screen as he taps  
his feet to the rhythm of the music. He's in good spirit.

His smartphone vibrates. Marquis, eyes on the computer,  
reaches over - grabs the phone, flips it face up.

**ON THE PHONE SCREEN**

A rotating Silver Skull. Underneath it the words: *"The Dark World awaits."*

**BACK TO SCENE**

Marquis stares at the screen.

MARQUIS

No.

Marquis' places the phone back on the desk, returns his focus to the computer. His smartphone vibrates again.

MARQUIS

God damn it.

**GARAGE - LATER**

Marquis with the headset and gloves on.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

Erebos facing the four ancient doors at the end of the corridor.

EREBOS

Time for the second door.

Erebos points the tip of his sword against the door just to the right of the one inscribed with: "JANET." The moment he does, the word "CHRISTOPHER" appears in the door.

EREBOS

Christopher King's fate is in your hands, Agent Adams.

Erebos fades through the door like a ghost.

Avatar Marquis' gloved hand forward, presses up against the door. A moment passes.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

No.

**EXT. MARQUIS' HOME/DRIVEWAY - DAY**

Marquis, phone to ear, approaches his sedan.

MARQUIS

(into phone)

Tell her to meet me in the conference room.

MARQUIS (CONT'D)

And I want witnesses there to observe.

(listening)

I don't give a damn. Just do it!

Marquis, still with the phone to his ear, looks down the road, spots the UNDERCOVER SEDAN. It takes him a moment before he realizes what it is.

MARQUIS

You mother fucker!

(into phone)

No - no. Not you, Peter.

(listening)

I have to stop and pick someone up.

Marquis ends the call, takes one last long look at the Undercover Sedan.

**INT. UNDERCOVER SEDAN - DAY**

Same two Agents in the Sedan. Agent Two lowers his binoculars.

AGENT ONE

He's spotted us.

(picking up radio)

I'm calling it in.

Agent One turns the ignition - puts the sedan in gear.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - DAVIS' OFFICE - DAY**

Davis at her desk. Agents Nguyen and Rodriguez, a small memo notepad in his hand, stand on the other side of the desk.

AGENT RODRIQUEZ

(looking at notepad)

He wants you there - to witness - and he wants it recorded. Um, documented, he said. Also said that he's going to need some space.

(looking up)

I can clear the conference room - have the table moved out.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(at Nguyen)

Has our Lab heard back from the software developer?

AGENT NGUYEN  
 No. Tomorrow.  
 (off Davis' disdain)  
 It's complicated.

Davis leans back in her chair - thinks.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
 (at Rodriguez)  
 Set it up.

**EXT. LAPD STATION/PARKING LOT - DAY**

Marquis exits his car, slamming the door behind him.

He storms towards the Station entrance.

**INT. MARQUIS' INT. LAPD STATION/DETECTIVE BULLPEN - DAY**

Marquis spots Holland through the glass window of a corner office. He marches towards it and enters

**HOLLAND'S OFFICE**

Holland at his desk, studying the contents of the CHRISTOPHER KING case file. He looks up.

MARQUIS  
 Why are you wasting your resources  
 staking out my house?

Holland stands, approaches Marquis.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 You are a crazy fuck, aren't you?

MARQUIS  
 There's a God damn killer out  
 there!

Holland and Marquis now chest to chest.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 Or maybe one in here.

Marquis shoves both hands on Holland's chest. Holland tumbles back against the desk.

MARQUIS  
 Christ. Sorry. I didn't mean to --

Holland puts his hand up in a "be quiet" motion. He presses a button on the phone console on his desk.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 (at the phone console)  
 Two Officers in here - stat.  
 (at Marquis)  
 You have the right to remain  
 silent. Anything you say can and  
 will be used against you in a court  
 of law.

MARQUIS  
 You're arresting me?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 You have the right to an attorney.  
 If you cannot afford an attorney,  
 one will --

MARQUIS  
 I didn't kill her!

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 I'm not arresting you for murder.  
 I'm arresting you for assaulting an  
 officer. But if Janet Evers is  
 dead, how is it that you're the  
 only one that knows?  
 (off Marquis silence)  
 Cat your tongue, Agent Adams?

MARQUIS  
 Because I know.

Two burly OFFICERS show up at Holland's door.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 (at the Two Officers)  
 Cuff him - and make it snug.

A CLICK of one cuff elicits a wince from Marquis.

MARQUIS  
 And I know that Christopher King is  
 next.

Holland looks towards his desk to see if Marquis could have  
 spotted the Christopher King case file. He couldn't have.

The CLICK of the cuff and another wince from Marquis.

MARQUIS  
 And I'm going to go try to stop  
 that. So, you can put me in a cell,  
 or you can go with me.

Holland's eyes narrow - the ultimate WTF look.

MARQUIS  
Cat got your tongue, Detective?

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER THAT DAY**

The conference table and chairs have been removed.

On one side of the room, Holland and Davis sit behind a small table. The CHRISTOPHER KING case file is on the table in front of Holland.

Next to them, a male TECHNICIAN (30) steadies a camcorder on a tripod. He points it at --

Marquis, holding the VR headset and gloves at the other end of the room.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
(At Marquis)  
You're sure you want to do this?  
You don't have to.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Oh, I think he does.

Marquis glowers at Holland.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Marquis, it's your decision.

MARQUIS  
No. It's not really.  
(at the Technician)  
Ready?

The Technician nods.

Marquis inserts his smartphone into the headset. He puts the VR gloves on followed by the headset.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

A silver skull slowly rotating in the darkness.

MARQUIS (V.O.)  
I'm here.

Nothing - the skull just spins. Moments pass.

MARQUIS (V.O.)  
Show yourself.

Nothing - the skull just spins. More moments pass.

MARQUIS (V.O.)  
Show yourself!

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Davis looks towards Holland, shakes her head - looks like it ain't happening. Holland stands.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
I'm taking him in.

Marquis turns his head - alerted to something.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

The skull explodes. Erebus appears in the residue.

EREBOS  
I warned you there would be others.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - CONFERENCE ROOM**

Marquis covers the headset mic with his hand.

MARQUIS  
He's here.

Holland slips backs into his chair. All eyes on Marquis.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

Erebus turns. The corridor made from ancient stone appears.

The thud of FOOTSTEPS as Erebus walks down the corridor.  
SCREAMS of men and women echo in the background.

MARQUIS (V.O.)  
He's walking down the same  
corridor.

Erebus reaches the four large wooden doors. The door on the far left is inscribed with: "JANET".

Erebus points the tip of his sword against the door just to the right, the one inscribed with CHRISTOPHER.

EREBOS  
Rescue or recovery?

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - CONFERENCE ROOM**

A deep breath from Marquis.

MARQUIS  
Christopher's door.

Holland leans forward - studies Marquis.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

Erebos with the tip of his sword on Christopher's door.

As he speaks, Erebus' words appear in the center of the door, as if they were carved there.

EREBOS  
*Neath a lake with a metal sheen  
An innocent will drown  
To pay for what would seem  
A king who stole his crown.*

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - CONFERENCE ROOM**

Still in the center of the room.

MARQUIS  
(reciting)  
*A king who stole his crown.*  
(a beat)  
Christopher King?

Holland looks towards Davis - is she buying this?

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

The door creaks opens - nothing but a black void. Erebus turns his head, his eyes shift from black to blood red.

Erebos turns back towards the door. His red wings spread and he soars into the black void. The door closes behind him.

MARQUIS (V.O.)  
He's through the door.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - CONFERENCE ROOM**

Marquis slowly paces forward, then stops halfway across the room. He extends his gloved right hand.

An eye roll from Holland. It looks like bad theater to him.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

The hand of Marquis' Avatar pushes the Christopher door open revealing Erebos, wings expanded, soaring above a waveless, BODY OF WATER.

Erebos circles around a spot in the water. Then wraps his wings around his torso and dives.

SPLASH as Erebos hits the water.

The light fades. It grows dimmer as Erebos continues downward, then - total darkness.

DIRECTOR DAVIS (V.O.)

What's going on?

MARQUIS (V.O.)

He's in some kind of water.

A BEAM of light cascades down revealing Erebos, neath the water, perched atop a clear, rectangular ENCASEMENT. Erebos' appears wavy - blurred by the water.

Inside the encasement, a YOUNG MAN, wavy blonde hair, dressed in expensive clothes, a diamond ring on one hand and a GOLD WATCH on the other. He frantically pounds the interior walls.

EREBOS

This is Christopher.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Jesus...

EREBOS

He refuses to confess his sins.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

What sins?

A lightning FLASH - then total DARKNESS

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Where is he?

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - CONFERENCE ROOM**

Marquis in the middle of the room, shirt soaked with sweat.

The TECHNICIAN continues to film as the others stare at Marquis - transfixed.

MARQUIS

Where is he!?

Total silence. A moment passes. Then, Marquis, looking defeated, slowly removes the VR gear.

Marquis approaches the conference table, lays the gear on top as he takes a seat. He squeezes the palms of his hands against his temple.

MARQUIS

He was trapped in some kind of a clear box. Plexiglas or something.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

Describe him.

MARQUIS

Somewhere between twenty and twenty-five. Fit. Lean. Blonde wavy hair - He had expensive jewelry.

Holland removes a PHOTO of a young man from his case file, slides it towards Marquis.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

Is that him?

Marquis studies the photo. It's similar to Christopher, but not quite right.

MARQUIS

No.

Holland drums his fingers on the table, his eyes glued on Marquis. He removes a PHOTO of CHRISTOPHER KING (22) from his case file, slides it towards Marquis.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

What about him?

MARQUIS

(recognizing it instantly)  
Why didn't you show me this one first?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

You're an investigator. You know damn well why.

Marquis' jaw tightens.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(points at photo)  
What's the background?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 Christopher King. Age twenty-one -  
 Sophomore at USC. His father's the  
 CEO of King Technologies.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
 Any connection to Janet Evers?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 (looks at Marquis)  
 You mean aside from him?

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
 Is there a connection!

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 No. We've cross-checked their  
 backgrounds with a fine tooth comb.  
 There's nothing there.

Marquis' eyes widen - a light bulb has gone off.

MARQUIS  
 They're both being punished.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 What?

MARQUIS  
 It's retribution.  
 (remembering)  
*King's door - an innocent will  
 drown, to pay for what would seem a  
 king who stole his crown. And  
 Janet's door - a woman must hand  
 for other's mistakes.*

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 (suspicious)  
 How did you remember that?

MARQUIS  
 It's not something you forget.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
 (at Holland)  
 When was King reported missing?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 Five days ago.  
 (at Marquis)  
 Unfortunately, we didn't hold you  
 when we had the chance.

Marquis stands, fist clenched.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Careful, cowboy.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Marquis - steady.

Davis points to the chair. Marquis takes a seat.

Holland stands, gathers his things - nods towards the Technician.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
We're going to need a copy of that.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Of course.

A KNOCK on the door. It's Agent Nguyen.

AGENT NGUYEN  
Lab called. Still no word from the developer. Maybe tomorrow.

Davis exhales - frustrated.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Fine. Keep me posted.

Nguyen nods - leaves.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Lab?

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
We're having the software on his phone analyzed by the developer.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
It's your dime.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
It is. And it seems to me that you ought to get to spending your dime more wisely. Find a connection between Evers and King.

Davis stands.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
We'll be looking too.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

The Captain was clear. This is an LAPD investigation.

(points at Marquis)

And he's still not in the clear.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

If he's a suspect, then fucking arrest him. And if there's a problem with our involvement, I really don't need to hear it from your Captain. I need to hear it from the Chief of Police.

Holland clenches his jaw in restraint.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(at Holland)

Are we clear?

Holland removes a business card from his shirt pocket - flips it across the table towards Marquis.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

That's my cell number. Make sure you call me if this...

(points at headset)

Happens again.

(at Davis)

Remember our deal. He stays out of it. No access to records. No --

DIRECTOR DAVIS

The deal's off. Leave.

A scowl from Holland, not a man that likes to be dressed down. He grabs his things - exits, SLAMMING the door.

A moment passes. Davis slides the VR gear towards Marquis.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

You'll need that.

Davis removes Marquis' badge from her pocket, slides it to him across the table.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

And that as well.

Marquis picks up the badge, rotates it in his hand.

MARQUIS

Why do you believe me now?  
 (off no response)  
 Why?

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Because I know you had nothing to do with Christopher King. I know everywhere you've been since I left you in your driveway.  
 (off Marquis' confused look)  
 Holland didn't have you tailed. I did.

MARQUIS

You had no right.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

I know. But I had a duty.

Marquis grabs the VR gear, starts to exit - turns around.

MARQUIS

You need to call Alyssa. Let her know. Set this straight.

Davis nods. Marquis exits.

**INT. LAPD STATION/CAPTAIN SANCHEZ'S OFFICE - DAY**

Sanchez and Holland at a table watching a laptop screen playing the video that was taken of Marquis on the headset.

The video ends. Holland closes the laptop.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

What do you think?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

He could have just been play acting. I still think he's either crazy or involved somehow.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

You think that's likely?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

It's more likely than him having a paranormal headset.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

Hmm. Hard to argue that.

Sanchez stands, goes to his desk.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

Oh, before I forget. Judge Evers has agreed to a press release.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

Finally.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

Work with the P.I.O. Have them put something together along with the King boy.

Holland picks up his laptop, stands - starts to leave.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

And it looks like you need to start checking out every body of water in the County.

An eye roll from Holland as he exits.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Marquis propped up in bed. Alyssa laying down with her head on Marquis' chest. The TV drones in the background.

Marquis stares at his phone on the nightstand - as if it were a ticking bomb.

**LATER THAT NIGHT**

The digital clock on the dresser reads: "3:00 AM."

Alyssa curled up in a fetal position - asleep. Marquis, eyes wide opened, stares at the ceiling.

BUZZ - his smartphone vibrates on the bedside nightstand.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/GARAGE - NIGHT**

Marquis in the center of the garage, headset and gloves on.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

Erebos stands against a black background.

EREBOS

You will fail again.

Dozens of lights start to twinkle in the distance.

They creep closer. Something's taking shape as they near.

Just behind Erebos, it finally comes in to view - a century old SYCAMORE TREE. More than two-dozen vintage chandeliers are suspended from its branches - all lit, glowing.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

A tree...?

Erebos' guttural GROWL rumbles in the distance. Then --

The BOOM of thunder. Total darkness once again.

Light fades in. The corridor made from ancient stone slowly appears - the four doors at the end of it.

Avatar Marquis walks towards the doors. Presses his hand up against the one inscribed with: "Christopher."

The door opens revealing Erebos neath the water, perched atop the clear, rectangular encasement.

Inside the encasement, Christopher pounds the interior walls.

Erebos taps the encasement with the top of his sword.

EREBOS

Confess your father's sins.

CHRISTOPHER

I already told you. I don't know what you're talking about!

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Christopher, can you hear me!?

EREBOS

He can not.

(looking down)

Confess your father's sins.

CHRISTOPHER

(pounding - panicked)

You're insane!

Erebos raises his sword above his head and plunges the tip on to the top of the encasement, creating a hole.

Water pours through the hole into the encasement. It quickly reaches Christopher's knees.

Christopher now pounds the walls more frantically, his fists reddening with blood.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Stop it!

EREBOS

I cannot stop what others started.

The water reaches Christopher's torso.

CHRISTOPHER

Help! Help!

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Let him go!

The water reaches Christopher's neck. He strains to keep his chin above the water line. It's futile.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Please For the love of God, just stop. Stop...stop.

Now totally consumed by the water, Christopher pushes his palms up against the encasement walls.

The blood from Christopher's fists SWIRLS in the water. His cheeks bloat as AIR BUBBLES escape from his lips.

EREBOS

He'll be in the dark world within the hour.

(a growl)

Two doors remain.

Then total darkness.

MARQUIS

Give me more time!

ALYSSA (V.O.)

Marquis...?

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - GARAGE**

Alyssa places her hand on Marquis' shoulder. He removes the headset and gloves - slumps down against the garage wall. Alyssa slides down next to him, takes his hand.

ALYSSA

What did you see?

MARQUIS

He's was drowning - the boy.

Alyssa squeezes Marquis' hand.

MARQUIS

There also was this odd tree.

ALYSSA

A tree - in the water?

MARQUIS

No, before. It was large - old. And it had lanterns - no, no - they were chandeliers. Hanging from the branches - dozens of them.

ALYSSA

That's the chandelier tree.

MARQUIS

It's real?

ALYSSA

It's a tourist attraction. In Silver Lake.

MARQUIS

(to himself)  
Neath a lake with a metal sheen.

ALYSSA

What?

Marquis kisses Alyssa on the cheek.

MARQUIS

I gotta go.

Marquis removes his smartphone from the headset, stands - head for the door.

ALYSSA

Don't go by yourself...You can't be the first one there.

Marquis' hesitates, hand on the door handle

ALYSSA

Babe, please...You know I'm, right.

**EXT. MARQUIS HOME - DRIVEWAY - DAWN**

Marquis' leans against the hood of his sedan.

Approaching headlights glow in the morning mist. A SEDAN pulls up to the curb at the end of Marquis' driveway.

The driver's door opens. Holland exits the sedan - waves Marquis over.

**EXT. SILVER LAKE RESERVOIR - MORNING**

Concrete banks and a road circumvent a large man-made reservoir. Housing crammed in several places around the perimeter of the water. Park like areas in others.

**AT THE BANK**

Several LAPD Cruisers - lights flashing. OFFICERS searching the area.

Marquis stands next to Holland as they watch LAPD DIVERS bob in and out of the water.

MARQUIS

He's here. I know it.

One of the Divers pulls off his mask.

DIVER

Got something.

**MOMENTS LATER**

Marquis and Holland watch as two Divers pull something towards the bank of the reservoir. A crudely fashioned effigy of Christopher King created from stuffed burlap bags.

On the makeshift arm of the effigy, an expensive GOLD WATCH.

Marquis hunches down on his knees - feels nauseous. He points at the watch.

MARQUIS

Christopher was wearing that.

Holland hunches down next to Marquis, place his hand on Marquis' shoulder.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

You really need that lab test to go your way.

**INT. FBI TECHNOLOGY LAB - DAY**

A white, sterile room - lab equipment and scientific devices on the counters throughout.

Marquis' smartphone on a table in the center of the room.

One seat is occupied by Marquis - tense, nervously tapping his feet on the floor. Davis sits next to him.

Holland, Agent Nguyen and TECHNICAL AGENT SAM JACOBS (50) occupy the remaining seats.

JACOBS

Just to bring everyone up to speed, we made an exact copy of everything on Agent Adam's phone. Our lab examined all of the software components we were familiar with. The developers of Dark World assisted in examining the code associated with their App. That process consisted of --

MARQUIS

Is there anything on my phone!?

JACOBS

Yes. You weren't imagining things.

Marquis closes his eyes for a moment, a rush of air escapes his lips - relief.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(at Jacobs)

Go on.

JACOBS

Well, the most surprising thing was that there are two Dark World Apps on the phone. The real one from the developer and a ghost App.

MARQUIS

Ghost App?

JACOBS

One that you don't know you're activating.

Jacobs picks up Marquis' smartphone from the table, points at the Dark World icon.

JACOBS

This isn't the real game icon. It's - how do I put this...? It's a clone of sorts - made to look like the authentic one. But when you tap it, its programmed to open either the real Dark World App or an alternate Dark World App - the ghost App.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

How does it know which App to open?

JACOBS

Retinal scanning. We found it in the code. I believe that the first time Agent Adams tapped the icon, it took an image of his retina. So, from that point on, the app knew when he's looking at the phone screen as opposed to anyone else.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Meaning?

JACOBS

Meaning that the program's designed to launch the ghost App only when Agent Adams is viewing the phone. When he takes the headset off and disrupts the retinal scan, the Ghost App disengages. Should anyone else try to put the headset on, the real Dark World App loads. In other words, anyone other than Agent Adams will experience the genuine game.

AGENT NGUYEN

Damn. That's pretty sophisticated.

(at Davis)

We're not dealing with a lightweight.

JACOBS

One other thing. The Ghost App is interactive. It's basically a portal. Someone runs the game remotely.

Marquis looks towards Nguyen.

AGENT NGUYEN

It means that Janet, Christopher weren't programmed in the game per se. Whatever you saw is being created somewhere else and then sent - transmitted - to your phone.

JACOBS

The content creation isn't really all that difficult. Basic green screen and CGI technology.

JACOBS (CONT'D)  
Integrating that into a VR game  
though was pretty ingenious.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Is there a way we can see what  
he's seeing?

Jacobs leans back, taps his fingers on his chin.

JACOBS  
I believe there is.

AGENT NGUYEN  
Bluetooth.

Jacobs nods.

JACOBS  
We can link his phone to any  
Bluetooth enabled screen - see  
everything that's transmitted. Even  
digitally record it. That is, as  
long as Agent Adams is within a  
hundred meters of us.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
(at Nguyen/Jacobs)  
Can you two set up something in our  
command center?

AGENT NGUYEN  
Yeah, should be a piece of cake.

Jacobs nods in agreement.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
(at Holland)  
LAPD okay with that?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Probably. But I'll need to brief  
Captain Sanchez. Get his approval.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Understood.  
(at Nguyen/Jacobs)  
Go get started. Just in case.

Nguyen and Jacobs gather their things, exit.

Holland stands.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
I think you owe Marquis an apology.

Holland takes this in - contemplates.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Naw, I don't think so. We haven't  
buttoned up anything yet.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
Listen, I've had it with --

MARQUIS  
Eddy Gates.

A look of confusion from Davis and Holland.

MARQUIS  
We need to talk to Eddy Gates.  
He loaded the software.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/EDDY'S CUBICLE - DAY**

Marquis and Holland look in the darkened cubicle. The  
computer's off - everything closed up neat and tidy.

Marquis scans the main floor, spots Agent Goodwell.

MARQUIS  
You seen Eddy?

AGENT GOODWELL  
(walking by)  
Think he called in sick.

MARQUIS  
(at Holland)  
I'll get his address.

Marquis turns, walks away.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
You're not coming with me.

Marquis, not turning around, flips Holland the bird.

**EXT. EDDY'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Modest, small ground floor apartment.

Marquis and Holland wait as a balding LANDLORD (50) inserts a  
key in the door.

LANDLORD  
You're sure you got a warrant?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
It's in route.

LANDLORD  
I really can't be liable for  
letting you in.

Holland gently moves the landlord aside, turns the key,  
pushes the door open.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Better?

**INT. EDDY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER**

Very messy, filled with all sorts of electronics - computer,  
Play Station, screens.

Marquis searches one end of the room, Holland the other.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Fucking impossible to tell if  
anything's out of place.

MARQUIS  
(as he searches)  
No cell phone, car keys, wallet.

Holland picks up a VR headset from the corner of the room.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Well, lookie here.

MARQUIS  
He said he had one. He's into that  
kind of stuff.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Yeah, I bet he is.

Holland goes to a table, lifts the lid of Eddy's laptop. An  
image of the DARK WORLD ICON appears.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
(at Marquis)  
Look familiar?

Marquis nods.

Holland removes his cell phone, taps a contact.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

(into phone)

I'm going to need a bag and tag crew out here. Take anything electronic. Run background on Edward James Gates - and I need an APB on his vehicle.

As Marquis nods, his phone buzzes. He checks a text message.

MARQUIS

(at Holland)

They're ready.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/COMMAND CENTER - DAY**

A large room. Workstations with high-tech FBI computers surround the perimeter. Radio Consoles in both corners.

A large flat screen is mounted on the center of a wall.

A conference table in the middle. On one side Holland, Captain Sanchez and several other LAPD STAFFERS. On the other side, Marquis, Davis, Agents Nguyen and Rodriguez.

The VR gear is in the center of the table.

AGENT NGUYEN

The Bluetooth works. We'll direct the signal...

(points at flat screen)

There. We should see everything Marquis does.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Good.

(at Sanchez)

Agent Rodriguez's in charge of deployment of any Bureau personnel. On your end?

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

Detective Holland. We've also alerted the Sheriff and CHP. They'll be on the ready.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Okay. Just to make sure we're all clear. If Marquis gets contacted, he'll notify me first, I'll coordinate communications. We all come here.

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

Except for me.

(off Davis' look)

Two Commanders in one command center is one too many.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Thank you.

A knowing nod between two professionals.

**INT. EDDY'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME**

An older HEAVYSET OFFICER and a ROOKIE OFFICER collecting evidence - bagging every electronic device in the place.

Eddy, carrying a SODA and a PIZZA BOX enters. The Rookie Officer's gun is out in a flash - dead aim on Eddy.

EDDY

Jesus Christ!

Eddy's arms shoot in the air. The soda and pizza hitting the ground. The HEAVYSET OFFICER places his hand on the Rookie's Officer extended, trembling arm.

HEAVYSET OFFICER

Easy there...

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/COMMAND CENTER - SAME TIME**

Marquis, Sanchez, Davis, Agents Nguyen and Rodriguez still at the conference table.

Holland's roaming the room - checking out the equipment.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(at Sanchez)

We haven't been able to establish any connection between Evers and King. Anything on your end?

CAPTAIN SANCHEZ

The usual stuff is dry. No social media interactions. No employment or geographical connections. No common acquaintances. Press release will be going out tonight. Maybe we'll get some tips off of that.

Holland removes his phone from his pocket - checks a message.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

They got Gates.

**INT. LAPD STATION/INTERROGATION ROOM - DUSK**

A small enclosed room. Eddy sits at a small table, nervous as a cat. Holland sits across from him.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

How do you explain that you had the app on your laptop?

EDDY

I downloaded it - from Marquis' phone. I thought maybe I could figure out what was going on.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

Going on?

EDDY

You know, if there was a virus or something. Or if it was being hacked. I swear.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

When did you first meet Janet Evers?

EDDY

What? - No, never. You're not listening.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

I will when you stop lying.

(a beat)

Marquis told me that you always felt like an outsider at the bureau - under appreciated. Right?

EDDY

Maybe...a little. But --

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

You were really going to show them all that they weren't as smart as they think they are - that was it, wasn't it?

EDDY

(whimpering)

I was just trying to help.

**INT/EXT. MARQUIS SEDAN/FREEWAY (TRAVELLING) - NIGHT**

Marquis' hands tap the wheel in rhythm as MOTOWN MUSIC pours through the cars' speakers. He's happy, relaxed.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Alyssa, carrying a briefcase, enters from the front door. She drops the briefcase by the sofa, slips off her heels and grabs the TV remote from an end table.

Alyssa points the remote at the television, clicks it. As the TV powers on, she heads off towards the

**KITCHEN**

And opens the refrigerator, removes a bottle of wine, pours herself a glass.

**INSERT TV FROM LIVING ROOM**

A MALE TV NEWS ANCHOR in the center of the screen. Separate images of Christopher King and Janet Evers in the upper corner. A TIP LINE PHONE NUMBER in the banner at the bottom of the screen.

**MALE NEWS ANCHOR**

...Police have taken one person into custody describing them at this time as only a person of interest. Authorities are asking anyone who has information to call the number you see at the bottom of your screen. Christopher King is the son of King Technologies founder, William King.

CRASH - the sound of a wine glass hitting the floor.

**LIVING ROOM**

Alyssa enters, mouth open, eyes bouncing in panic.

**TV NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)**

Mr. King was not available for comment but has announced a hundred thousand dollar reward for information leading to --

Alyssa picks up the remote, mutes the TV. She grabs her purse, fumbles for her phone.

**ALYSSA**

Oh God, Oh God...

Alyssa retrieves her phone, falls to her knees. She hits the contact icon for Hannah. A phone RING echoes in the air.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)  
 (From phone - filtered)  
*The person's mailbox you are trying  
 to reach is full. Please try again  
 later. Good Bye.*

ALYSSA  
 No...no...no.

Alyssa's hands tremble as she scrolls through her contacts.  
 She finds what she's looking for - hits it.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)  
 (From phone - filtered)  
*Hey, you've reached Danielle. I  
 can't get to the phone right now.  
 Please leave a message.*

ALYSSA  
 (into phone - frantic)  
 Danielle, this is Alyssa Adams -  
 Hannah's mom. It's very important  
 that you call me as soon as you  
 can. Please, it's urgent.

Alyssa ends the call, starts to scroll through her contacts.

Marquis enters through the front door.

MARQUIS  
 Hey, I'm ho...

Marquis spots Alyssa, on her knees, sobbing. He rushes to her  
 - kneels beside her.

MARQUIS  
 Baby. What's wrong?

ALYSSA  
 (sobbing - panicked)  
 He has Hannah. I just saw the news.  
 The boy's father is William King!

MARQUIS  
 What does that have to do with  
 Hannah?

ALYSSA  
 I represented William King - his  
 firm, in a case fifteen years ago.  
 The case was heard by Judge Evers.  
 King's son is missing. Ever's  
 daughter is missing. We're the last  
 piece.

MARQUIS

That can't be...They took Eddie in.

ALYSSA

I called Hannah. Her voice box is full. That never happens.

(looking at her phone)

Oh, God! Oh, God!

Marquis places his hands on Alyssa's shoulder. He takes a deep breath.

MARQUIS

Look at me.

Alyssa regains her focus, locks on to Marquis' eyes.

MARQUIS

What kind of case?

ALYSSA

A copyright case. A man - what was his name?

(pressing her forehead)

I can't remember...The man filed a claim that King Technology stole his programming code....

(screaming)

What was his name? I can't remember his name!

Marquis pulls his smartphone from his pocket.

MARQUIS

Sssh, sssh.

Marquis finds the contact icon for Hannah - taps it.

**EXT. BARN - NIGHT**

A white Cargo Van parked alongside a weather-worn barn.

**INT. WHITE CARGO VAN/REAR COMPARTMENT - NIGHT**

Hannah, mouth gagged, legs and arms bound together with duct tape, in a fetal position on the floor of the van.

The RINGTONE of a phone echoes - somewhere outside the van.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Marquis, phone to his ear kneeling next to Alyssa. A RING emanates from his phone.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)  
 (From phone - filtered)  
*The person's mailbox you are trying  
 to reach is full. Please try again  
 later. Good Bye.*

ALYSSA  
 Jackson! The plaintiff. His name  
 was Abraham Jackson. Does that mean  
 anything to you!?

Marquis shakes his head. His phone vibrates. He looks at the  
 screen: *"TEXT MESSAGE FROM HANNAH."*

Marquis' shoulders fall as the tension leaves him. He  
 exhales, places a reassuring hand on Alyssa's shoulder.

MARQUIS  
 It's her.

Marquis taps the message icon.

TEXT MESSAGE: *"SHE'LL ENTER THE DARK WORLD - 9:00 P.M.  
 TOMORROW."*

Marquis' jaw dropped, his eyes frozen on the phone screen.

ALYSSA  
 What did she say? ...She's okay -  
 right?

Marquis drops the phone, embraces Alyssa.

MARQUIS  
 I'll get her back. I promise.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/COMMAND CENTER - DUSK**

Bustling with STAFF. Around the conference table, Davis,  
 Holland, Agents Nguyen and Rodriquez.

In the center of the table, the VR headset and gloves.

Davis has one eye on Holland and one eye on Marquis as he  
 paces back and forth.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 (scanning a file folder)  
 January, 2006. Abraham Jackson  
 sues King Technology for theft of  
 intellectual property. His claim  
 was that King stole some CGI  
 technology.

Davis looks towards Nguyen.

AGENT NGUYEN

Computer-generated imagery. Like the type they use in Virtual Reality games now.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

Jackson claims they stole his work so he sued seeking damages of fifty million dollars. The presiding Judge in the case was Michael Evers. Let's see...

(scanning folder)

King Technology was represented by the firm of Klein and Warfield... Alyssa Adams as lead counsel.

(puts folder down)

Abraham Jackson represented himself. He lost.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Where's Abraham Jackson now?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

He hung himself three months after the verdict. The body was found by his fourteen-year old son.

MARQUIS

(to himself)

Abraham Jackson...Abraham Jackson...

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(at Holland)

What about the son?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

There's not much. Abraham Jackson, junior. Went to live with his Aunt, back East. Graduated MIT at age twenty-one.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

(closing folder)

And no record of him after that. Like he fell off the planet.

Marquis stops pacing.

MARQUIS

Because he changed his name.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

Pardon?

MARQUIS

Janet Evers, daughter of Michael Evers. Christopher King, son of William King. Hannah Adams...

(swallows hard)

Daughter of Alyssa Adams.

(beat)

Isaac, son of Abraham.

Marquis closes his eyes.

MARQUIS

Christ. He worked here.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Here?

MARQUIS

Isaac Jackson cleaned my office for three months. He was with the custodian contractor. He was there the day I found the headset.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(at Rodriguez)

Go! Get anything you can find on Isaac Jackson. Start with the contractor.

**EXT. RURAL LOT/LANCASTER CALIFORNIA - DUSK**

A desolate, shrub-covered acre of land with just two structures - an old, dilapidated ranch style home adjacent to a large wooden BARN.

A weather-worn split rail fence surrounds the perimeter of the property. No neighbors for miles.

**EXT. BARN - NIGHT**

Dark. A full moon the only source of light. A white CARGO VAN parked alongside a weather-worn barn.

Adjacent to the van three graves. Two are filled, recently covered with dirt. A WOODEN HEADSTONE on each of them is inscribed with their name and their epitaph:

ON JANET EVERS  
 From the rails of a tower  
 Near a hundred year lake  
 A woman was hung  
 For other's mistakes

ON CHRISTOPHER KING'S  
 Neath a lake with a metal sheen  
 An innocent did drown  
 To pay for what would seem  
 A king who stole his crown.

The third grave is freshly dug and open. Mounds of dirt piled on the side.

**INT. BARN - DUSK**

Converted to a makeshift movie studio. It's brightly lit and three of the four walls are covered by GREEN SCREEN.

MICROPHONES hang from ceiling rafters. High wattage FILM LIGHTS perched on stands. VIDEO and COMPUTER EQUIPMENT scattered throughout.

Two DRONES, each equipped with a camera on a corner table.

In one corner of the barn, the large, rectangular, clear encasement Marquis saw Christopher in. Next to it, the chain that bound Janet and the rope she hung from.

In the other corner, a portable GARMENT RACK on which an EREBOS costume and a MOTION CAPTURE GREEN SUIT hang.

Hannah's in a chair in the center of the room in front of a GREEN SCREEN. Her mouth is gagged. Her arms and legs are bound by thick rope to a wooden chair bolted to the floor.

Isaac peers at Hannah through the scope of a studio quality digital camcorder on a tripod.

**AS SEEN THROUGH THE CAMERA**

Hannah, panicked eyes, fights against the ropes that bind her. Her screams muffled by the gag.

ISAAC (O.S.)  
 Perfect.

**BACK TO SCENE**

Isaac walks towards a nearby table, a laptop computer perched on top. Its screen displays the same scene as the camera.

More MUFFLED SCREAMS from Hannah.

A few TAPS of the keys and the green screen behind Hannah is converted to an image of HADES - walls made from blackened human skulls, red and yellow FLAMES soar in the air. Hannah in the middle.

Isaac turns the computer monitor towards Hannah.

ISAAC  
It looks real good. Don't you think?

A panicked shake of the head from Hannah.

ISAAC  
To each his own.

Isaac walks to the portable garment rack, grabs the motion capture green suit. He puts it on, complete with hood.

ISAAC  
(putting hood on)  
This must look odd to you.

Isaac goes to another table, picks up a long MOTION CAPTURE STICK and a tiny CAMERA REMOTE. He approaches Hannah.

ISAAC  
I need to warn you.  
(showing her the stick)  
This has an electric shock device at the end of it. It's needed for dramatic effect. You'll feel a shock when I run the tip across your wrists. It'll sting. But I promise, it won't kill you.

Hannah's eyes widen as Isaac takes a deep breath, points the remote at the camera, clicks it and then palms it.

ISAAC  
(to himself)  
Five, four, three, two --

A light on the camera switches from red to green. Isaac stares dead at it. He moves his mouth - mimics speaking.

He turns towards Hannah and slowly runs the motion capture stick across her left wrist - ZAP - a spark flies. Hannah writhes in pain.

Isaac runs the stick over Hanna's right wrist - same result.

Isaac turns back towards the camera - mimics speaking.

After a moment, Isaac clicks the camera remote palmed in his hand. The camera light turns red.

Isaac lowers Hannah's gag. Tears run down her cheek.

ISAAC  
You did well.

HANNAH  
Why are you doing this?

Isaac gently pats Hannah on her head. He removes the green hood, walks towards his laptop computer on the table.

ISAAC  
You wouldn't understand.

HANNAH  
(bargaining)  
No, no. I would.

ISAAC  
Because your mother is an evil  
cunt.

Hannah shakes her head - total confusion,

ISAAC  
Didn't help - did it? Now, please,  
be quiet. I have some editing to  
do.

Isaac pulls a chair to the table, taps keys on his laptop.

HANNAH  
Please - please, let me go. I won't  
tell anyone --

ISAAC  
Of course you would.  
(points at computer)  
It's amazing what you can do with  
green screen technology these days.  
You know, ninety percent of what  
you see in the movies today is  
computer-generated.

HANNAH  
You're insane!

Isaac considers this.

ISAAC  
Yes.

More taps on the computer keyboard.

HANNAH

Let me go!

Isaac, angered by the interruption, marches towards Hannah, roughly stuffs the gag back in her mouth.

ISAAC

That's what you get! That's what you get! That's what...

Isaac steps back, takes a calming breath.

ISAAC

Don't make me do that.

Hannah struggles against the ropes. Isaac returns to the table, takes a seat.

**INSERT COMPUTER SCREEN**

The scene Isaac just recorded plays out, except:

- The green screen background behind Hannah now replaced with the Hades background.
- Isaac's motion capture green suit now overlaid with the image of Erebos.
- The motion stick overlaid with the image of Erebos' sword.

The screen freezes at the last swipe of the sword over Hannah's wrist.

ISAAC (V.O.)

For some reason, real blood never shows up on the screen like virtual reality blood does.

A CURSOR hovers over Hannah's right wrist. A CLICK of a mouse and a steady stream of blood appears to ooze from the wrist just as the tip of the sword crosses it. The process is repeated for the left wrist.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT**

A large DIGITAL CLOCK mounted on the wall reads: "8:45 P.M."

At a table - Davis, Rodriguez and several STAFFERS.

Holland in the corner of the room, cell phone to his ear.

Agent Nguyen gives one last check of the large flat-screen at the front of the room - gives a thumbs up.

Marquis, wearing the VR headset and gloves, stands in the center of the room.

MARQUIS  
(to himself)  
Come on, come on...

**INT, BARN - NIGHT**

Hannah still gagged, bound to the chair. Isaac at his computer. He turns towards Hannah.

ISAAC  
We're almost ready for your father.  
(off Hannah's look)  
You still don't get it?

Hannah meekly shakes her head.

ISAAC  
(points at camera)  
He's there. On the other side.

Isaac returns his focus to the computer.

ISAAC  
Almost show time.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT**

The Digital clock reads: "8:59."

Marquis pacing - nervous.

The digital clock now reads: "9:00." Marquis stops pacing.

MARQUIS  
It's starting.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

A spinning skull evaporates revealing Erebus standing in a black void.

MARQUIS (V.O.)  
Can you see it?

DIRECTOR DAVIS (V.O.)  
We got it.

The MUFFLED SCREAMS of a woman. Unclear at first - then.

HANNAH'S VOICE

(filtered)

Please - please, let me go. I won't  
tell anyone....

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Oh, God.

Erebos raises his sword skyward. His wings expand. He turns  
spreads his wings as he leaps into the black void.

Then - he soars above a desert landscape. Tumbleweeds and  
dried Yucca trees beneath him.

A small city in the distance. Erebos starts his descent and  
then flies parallel above the city boulevard - the buildings  
blurring as he passes by.

Erebos slows as he passes a mural on a concrete wall - a  
painting of a STEALTH BOMBER soaring between two mountains.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - COMMAND CENTER**

All watching the screen. All seeing what Marquis sees.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(points at screen)

That mean anything to anyone?

Shakes of the head from everyone as Agent Nguyen taps the  
keyboard of a laptop.

AGENT NGUYEN

(looking at his computer)

There's a stealth bomber mural in  
Lancaster.

(looking at flat screen)

It's the same as that one.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(to Holland)

What do you got in Lancaster?

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

County Sheriff's got two birds at  
their station. I'll get them in  
the air.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(hushed tone)

Make sure they bring EMTs.

Holland nods, pulls a radio from a console.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

Erebos fades through the mural. The ancient corridor appears.

EREBOS

Two doors remain.

Erebos reaches the four ancient doors. The door on the left inscribed with: "JANET". The second door, inscribed with: "CHRISTOPHER." The third door now inscribed with: "HANNAH."

Erebos removes his sword from the sheath. He places the tip of his sword on the Hannah door.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Don't do this. I beg you.

As Erebos speaks, his words appear in the center of the door, as if they were carved there.

EREBOS

*She'll enter the shadows*

*From a slash to the wrist*

*Dying where he died*

*The ultimate twist*

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - COMMAND CENTER**

All eyes frozen on the scene playing out on the flat screen.

Davis stands, walks towards Marquis.

MARQUIS

Let her go! Please.

Davis puts her hands on Marquis' shoulder.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Stay calm.

Davis points at the poem on the screen.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(at the room)

*Dying where he died...* Do we know  
where he killed himself?

(off Rodriguez's look)

The father!

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

The door labeled Hannah opens revealing a plot of burnt, barren earth.

Erebos walks through the landscape - approaches a Gothic IRON GATE. Small human skulls perched atop the tips of the gate's rods. Flames in the background.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - COMMAND CENTER**

Marquis stands in the center. His body is tense - rigid. His gloved fists clenched. Davis next to him.

Agent Rodriguez shuffles through papers in a folder.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Come on!

AGENT RODRIQUEZ

Got it.

Rodriguez stands, hustles over to Holland, gives him a piece of paper.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

(into radio)

We got an address. Three, fifty-nine Prairie Highway, Lancaster.

As Davis stares at Erebos' image on the flat screen, she grabs Marquis' forearm.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(quiet - in Marquis' ear)

We got an address. Stall him.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

Erebos touches the GATE with the point of his sword.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Wait. Not yet. The game's too fast.

Erebos pushes the door open revealing a dungeon-like room with walls made from blackened human skulls. FLAMES soar in the back of the room.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Please, give me a chance.

In the middle of the room, Hannah, mouth gagged, bound to a chair. There's panic in her eyes. She struggles against the ropes that bind her. Her screams muffled by the gag.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

God no.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - COMMAND CENTER**

All except Holland stare at the screen, as if watching a horror movie.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND

(into the radio)

I want status every minute.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

Erebos removes the sword from its sheath, slowly walks towards Hannah.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Isaac, don't. Please. You don't have to do this.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - BARN**

Isaac's eyes are glued to his computer screen.

MARQUIS' VOICE FROM THE COMPUTER

Isaac, I'm begging you. It wasn't her fault.

Isaac turns towards Hannah.

ISAAC

(sarcastic)

Oh no, they know it's me.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

Erebos reaches Hannah, turns.

EREBOS

Her fate is out of my hands.

Erebos places the tip of his sword on Hannah's left wrist - runs the tip across it. Blood oozes.

MARQUIS (V.O.)

Stop it you crazy fuck!

Erebos runs the tip of his sword across Hannah's right wrist. Hannah writhes in pain. Blood oozes.

Erebos' eyes glow red.

EREBOS

Vengeance.

The screen goes black.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - COMMAND CENTER**

All stare at the black screen, other than Marquis who still wears the headset.

MARQUIS

Come back!...Come back!

(a moment passes)

I'll fucking kill!

Davis places her hand on Marquis' shoulder.

Marquis rips the headset off, presses the palms of his hands against his forehead, walks in circles - total anguish.

Holland's radio crackles.

VOICE FROM RADIO

ETA is ten minutes.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Hannah's eyes frozen on Isaac as he closes the lid of the laptop, drums his finger on the top of the table.

ISAAC

Okay, okay. That part's over.

Isaac stands, grabs a large duffel bag from underneath the table, puts the laptop inside.

He walks towards the camera, removes it from the tripod, stuffs it inside. Then goes to the portable garment rack, removes the Erebus costume.

ISAAC

(scanning the room)

I think that's everything.

Isaac grabs a stool, places it next to Hannah, takes a seat. He gently pats Hannah's knee.

ISAAC

I know that you didn't choose your fate any more than I chose mine.

We're both victims really.

Hannah, red-faced, strains against the ropes.

ISAAC

I would explain it all to you if I  
thought it would make it easier.

(deep breath)

But it wouldn't.

Isaac walks towards the table. He picks up a CARPET KNIFE and examines the blade - turns towards Hannah.

Hannah shakes her head back and forth - frantic.

HANNAH

(muffled, through gag)

No...No....

Isaac, knife in hand, reaches Hannah - sits on the stool. Hannah's eyes widen as she spots the carpet knife.

Isaac runs his fingers through Hannah's hair, caresses her forehead.

ISAAC

I'm sorry. They made me do this.

Isaac runs the blade of the knife across Hannah's right wrist. Blood oozes out.

He cuts her left wrist - more blood. Hannah's eyes bounce in panic. Isaac pats her on the knee.

Isaac stands, grabs the duffel bag and Erebus costume and heads towards the side barn door - opens it.

#### **ISAAC'S P.O.V - NIGHT SKY**

The small searchlights of approaching helicopters.

Isaac turns, looks towards a fading Hannah, her eyes fluttering as she loses consciousness.

ISAAC

Well, I planned on giving you a  
proper burial. They messed that up.

(looking back at the sky)

They did better this time. Maybe  
you'll be the lucky one.

(turning around, spotting  
the pooling blood)

Maybe not.

Isaac exits the door out to

**EXT. BARN - NIGHT**

And opens the door to the Van, tosses the duffel bag inside.

Isaac takes one last look at the approaching copters, then jumps into the van.

The Van, with no lights on, pulls away into the desert darkness.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT**

The flat screen TV is dark, yet most in the room still stare at it.

Holland in the corner of the room, radio to his ear.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 (into radio)  
 Come on, I need status.  
 (static crackling)  
 Do you read me?

Other than the CRACKLING of Holland's radio, the room is silent - like at a funeral.

Marquis' at the table, head down. He crushes the palms of his hands against his temple.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 (into radio)  
 This is Detective Holland - do you read --

MARQUIS  
 (at Holland)  
 You mother fucker! If you would have believed me in the first place we would have got this demon!

Davis places a calming hand on Marquis' shoulder. Holland's radio continues to crackle.

**EXT. BARN - NIGHT**

Two HELICOPTERS land in the desert adjacent to the barn. Dust spews in the night air as their rotors slow.

Three Sheriff SWAT OFFICERS, guns at the ready, exit one Helicopter. TWO PARAMEDICS exit the other.

The SIRENS from Sheriff Cruisers in the distance echo in the night air.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT**

Holland, radio to his ear.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
God damn it! I need status!

Holland's ready to throw the radio against the wall - resists the temptation.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
(at Davis as he exits)  
Going to see if I get better reception outside.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

The SWAT OFFICERS burst in. Their guns rotating around the scene ready to shoot. Nothing's there.

The LEAD SWAT OFFICER spots Hannah bound to the chair. Her face is pale. A pool of blood surrounds her feet.

LEAD SWAT OFFICER  
Jesus Christ.

The Lead Swat Officer waves for the PARAMEDICS to come in.

They rush towards Hannah. One straps tourniquets around her forearms as the other tends to the slices on her wrists.

The Lead Swat Officer removes his helmet.

LEAD SWAT OFFICER  
(at the other Officers)  
Check the house. If's no one's there, get back in the air as soon as you can. Light the whole fucking desert up.

The Swat Officers nod - head out.

LEAD SWAT OFFICER  
(at the Paramedics)  
Status?

PARAMEDIC  
(working on Hannah)  
Alive. But not sure for how long.

The Lead Swat Officer scans the room.

LEAD SWAT OFFICER  
(to himself)  
Like a fucking movie studio.

He removes his radio from his belt clip. Hits the call button as he walks towards the barn door. He peers outside, spots the three graves.

LEAD SWAT OFFICER  
Christ.

He puts the radio to his ear.

**EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING/FRONT DOOR - NIGHT**

Holland with the radio to his ear.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
Ten-four. Over and out.

Holland looks upwards at the facade of the Federal Building. He takes a deep breath and heads for the door.

**EXT. ANTELOPE VALLEY HOSPITAL - NIGHT**

A large beige and brown industrial looking building surrounded by desert landscape.

A sedan pulls up to the curb. The passenger door flings open, Alyssa bursts out and runs towards the hospital entrance.

**INT. ANTELOPE VALLEY/EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT**

The frantic hustle and bustle of a Trauma Center.

A MALE PARAMEDIC pushes an ambulance gurney out of the room as a FEMALE PARAMEDIC hands a clipboard to an INTAKE NURSE.

DOCTORS and NURSES hustle about attending to PATIENTS. Some in the center of the room. Some separated by blue curtains.

Inside one of those

**BLUE CURTAINS**

Hannah in a hospital bed, pale and comatose. An oxygen mask is on her face. Her wrists are bandaged. BEEPS from a medical monitor indicates a slow, steady heart rate.

Marquis sits bedside, his hand on Hannah's arm. His reddened eyes stare at the medical monitor - making sure each heartbeat is followed by another.

Alyssa rushes in - goes to the bed, kisses Hannah's cheek.

ALYSSA

My baby...my baby...my baby.

No response from Hannah. Alyssa runs her fingers through Hannah's hair.

ALYSSA

What did they do to you...

Marquis takes Alyssa's hand. She wipes tears from her eyes with the other.

ALYSSA

What have they told you?

MARQUIS

She lost a lot of blood. They um...  
They think if she can get through  
the next twenty-fours that she'll  
make it. But, there may be...

ALYSSA

What?

MARQUIS

There may be some brain damage...  
She lost a lot of blood, baby.

A DOCTOR, holding a clipboard with a medical chart enters.

DOCTOR

Mister and Misses Adams?

**INT. ANTELOPE VALLEY HOSPITAL/EMERGENCY ROOM LOBBY - NIGHT**

A half-dozen PEOPLE sit in orange, plastic chairs waiting for word on their loved ones - some anxious, some just tired.

Director Davis sits in one of those chairs.

Marquis enters, approaches Davis, slumps down in a chair besides her.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

How's she doing?

MARQUIS

Stable. But we really won't know  
the damage until she wakes up.

(rubs his eyes)

They're going to move her to the  
ICU. Said we could sleep in the  
lobby area.

Davis nods, not quite sure what to say. Marquis closes his eyes, tilts his head back against the top of the chair.

MARQUIS

Thank you for bringing Alyssa.

Davis nods. A moment passes.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Marquis, we didn't get him.

Marquis opens his eyes - disbelief.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

They still have copters in the air and patrols on the ground. But there's no sign of him.

Davis picks up a satchel by the side of her chair.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

You have your phone?

MARQUIS

Yes...

Davis removes three phone batteries from the satchel, hands them to Marquis.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Each of these has an eight-hour charge - just in case.

MARQUIS

In case...?

DIRECTOR DAVIS

I've coordinated with the Hospital Administrator. When it happens, he'll have security escort you to the roof. There's a helipad there. It'll be thirty minutes to the command center.

MARQUIS

I'm not leaving Hannah.

Davis closes the satchel, stands.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

There was a fourth door. Whoever is next deserves the same chance we gave Hannah. You know that - right?

**INT. ANTELOPE VALLEY HOSPITAL/ICU NURSING STATION - DUSK**

The BEEPS of medical monitors permeate the otherwise quiet room. Two STATION NURSES watch a TV mounted on a wall.

**ICU NURSING STATION**

Two STATION NURSES watch a television mounted on a wall in the corner.

**ON THE TV**

A male FIELD REPORTER, holding a mic standing on a rural road. Isaac's barn, surrounded by PATROL CARS and INVESTIGATORS, in the distant background.

## FIELD REPORTER

The bodies of Janet Evers and Christopher King were found last night. An unnamed third victim is in critical condition at Antelope Valley Medical Center. Police are looking for this man...

An image of Isaac Jackson appears on the screen.

## REPORTER

Isaac Jackson, age twenty-four, last seen in the Lancaster area.

**INT. ANTELOPE VALLEY HOSPITAL/ICU ROOM - DUSK**

Hannah in bed, comatose, hooked to medical monitors.

Marquis, unshaven, wearing the same clothes, asleep in one chair. His smartphone propped in his lap.

Alyssa in a chair next to Hannah's bed. She cradles Hannah's hand in her hers.

Marquis's smartphone vibrates, stirring him awake. He rubs his eyes, tries to focus.

**INSERT SMARTPHONE SCREEN**

A rotating silver skull.

**BACK TO SCENE**

Marquis pockets the phone.

## MARQUIS

I have to go.

Alyssa, still holding Hannah's hand, nods. Marquis' takes a long look at Hannah, then stands.

ALYSSA  
Find the bastard.

**EXT. ANTELOPE VALLEY HOSPITAL/HELIPORT - NIGHT**

Marquis rushes onboard a waiting Sheriff's helicopter.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT**

Holland on a police radio in the corner of the room. Agent Nguyen adjusting the resolution of the flat-screen TV.

Davis, Marquis and Rodriguez Holland at the conference table. Other STAFF at stations throughout the room.

**EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT**

The lights from the surrounding structures twinkle in the moonless night.

Isaac positions a digital camcorder on top of a tripod. A cable runs from the camcorder to a laptop computer resting on a small table several feet away.

An Erebus costume is crumpled on the floor next to the table.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT**

Marquis takes a seat, puts the headset on.

**VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

A silver spinning skull against a black void. It slows to a stop, then fades from view. Nothing but blackness.

Then a scrambled screen - static. Slowly, an image comes in to view. It's Isaac, dressed in a custodian uniform, head bowed.

Isaac looks up - dark circles under his tired eyes.

ISAAC  
Surprise.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - COMMAND CENTER**

Marquis with the headset on. All others glued to the large screen in the center of the wall.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
What the fuck?

ISAAC  
 (on the screen)  
 Time for the final door.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 Anyone recognize the location?

A shake of the head from all.

ISAAC  
 (on the screen)  
 But first, a prologue.

A STATIC BUZZ as the screen scrambles. Then a --

BANG and an image of ABRAHAM JACKSON (40), looks like an older version of Isaac, fills the screen.

ISAAC (V.O.)  
 The victim. You don't know who he was. But you should've. The whole world should have.

#### **BACK ON THE ROOFTOP**

The tripod mounted camcorder focused on Isaac, a small mic clipped to his collar.

Just next to Isaac, his laptop computer on a small table.

ISAAC  
 (looks off in distance)  
 He was a software developer. His passion - telexistence.  
 (rubs his eyes)  
 The sensation of being in another place without actually going there - virtual reality. Like...The Dark World.

#### **VIRTUAL REALITY - THE DARK WORLD**

Nothing but the image of Abraham Jackson.

ISAAC (V.O.)  
 My father was a pioneer in the field. Devoted his life to it. He should have been rewarded. Instead -

A BANG - then an image of Michael King fills the screen.

ISAAC (V.O.)  
 The thief. My father tried to sell him his software.

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

But King was too greedy. His company hacked my father's computer - stole his software. As a result, they became a technology empire. My father became a broken man.

A BANG - then an image of Judge Evers fills the screen.

ISAAC (V.O.)

The face of injustice. Paid handsomely by William King to turn a blind eye.

A BANG - then an image of Alyssa fills the screen.

ISAAC (V.O.)

The monster's advocate. Like most geniuses, my father had emotional issues. She took advantage of that. Persecuted him in court. Poked at every doubt. By the end, she had himself believing he was delusional. She broke him.

#### **BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - COMMAND CENTER**

Marquis, still at the table - headset on. All other eyes fixed on the large screen.

On that screen, the image of Alyssa fades. Isaac reappears.

ISAAC

He hung himself.

(looks around/fidgets)

I was just fourteen.

(growing agitated)

Fourteen! I found his body dangling from a beam in our barn.

(licks lips, swallows)

He pinned a note to his shirt. Just one word. Failure. That's when the seed was planted in me.

(clenching jaw)

Vengeance.

Isaac's chest heaves up and down. Sweat forms on his forehead. He wipes it away.

ISAAC

But just killing them wasn't enough. I wanted each of them to feel the same loss that I did. There was only one path.

Isaac closes his eyes, taps his forehead.

ISAAC

I was a child who grew up without a father. My vengeance - that they grow old without their child. Perfect symmetry.

Isaac stands, sucks in his lip - thinks.

ISAAC

I chose Agent Adams because I wanted that cunt to feel the most pain. A lost child. A broken husband.

(a pause)

Because I'm broken.

Isaac closes his eyes, a tear escapes, trickles down his cheek. He opens his eyes, looks off in the distance - then back at the camera.

ISAAC

Time for the final door. It will open here.

A BANG - then total darkness.

**EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT**

Isaac closes the lid of the laptop. He picks up his Erebus costume from the floor.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - COMMAND CENTER**

Silence - all transfixed, staring at the black screen.

Nguyen goes to the screen, checks the setting.

AGENT NGUYEN

We lost the feed.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

(at Marquis)

Anything?

Marquis removes the headset.

MARQUIS

He's in the building.

(off Davis' look)

The final door opens here.

Holland removes his radio from the holster.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 (into radio)  
 Send me all the units you can. I  
 need the Federal Building perimeter  
 secured - stat.

VOICE FOR RADIO (V.O.)  
 Roger that.

DETECTIVE HOLLAND  
 (at Davis)  
 I'm going to the lobby. You got the  
 interior?

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
 (at Agent Rodriguez)  
 Get Agents on every floor.

Holland and Rodriguez rush off. Agent Nguyen continues to  
 fiddle with the flat-screen.

AGENT NGUYEN  
 I'm getting nothing.

The muffled sound of THUNDER from the headset. Marquis  
 quickly puts it back on.

### **VIRTUAL REALITY - DARK WORLD**

LIGHTNING flashes in a black void. THUNDER rumbles.

The silver spinning skull appears then evaporates revealing  
 EREBOS. His eyes shift from black to red.

The long medieval corridor appears. Erebus walks down it  
 towards the four large WOODEN DOORS.

The door on the left has a sign: "JANET". The second door:  
 "CHRISTOPHER" The third door: "HANNAH."

MARQUIS (V.O.)  
 I will kill --

DIRECTOR DAVIS (V.O.)  
 Be steady, Marquis...

Erebus points his sword at the fourth door. A sign appears:  
 "ISAAC." As he speaks, Erebus' words appear in the center of  
 the door, as if they were carved there.

EREBOS

*He'll enter the shadows  
After payment by all  
For the torment of a father  
A son must fall*

Erebos pushes the point of his sword against the door. It opens revealing the WILSHIRE FEDERAL BUILDING at night.

Erebos' red wings expand. The windows blur beneath his wings as he soars towards the top of the building.

Erebos circles in the dark sky, lands on top of the building.

**BACK IN THE REAL WORLD - COMMAND CENTER**

Marquis rips off the headset, bursts from the room into the

**MAIN FLOOR**

DIRECTOR DAVIS (O.S.)

Marquis?

MARQUIS

(calling back)

He's on top of the building.

Marquis rushes towards a metal door. He bursts into the

**STAIRWELL**

Hustles up three flights of stairs and reaches a large metal door: "ROOF ACCESS."

Marquis removes his gun from his holster, quietly pushes the door open and enters the

**ROOFTOP**

Where, with his gun in a shooting position, slowly creeps alongside the back panel of a refrigeration unit.

ISAAC (V.O.)

(screaming)

Father, they have all paid now. You  
have been avenged.

Marquis reaches the end of the refrigeration unit, peeks around the corner.

He spots Isaac, now dressed in an EREBOS COSTUME, standing atop a two-foot concrete wall that surrounds the perimeter of the rooftop. His costumed red-wings fluttering in the breeze.

Isaac watches the flashing lights of police cruisers on the outside of the building - below. He spots the light of an approaching POLICE HELICOPTER in the distance.

Isaac raises and points his sword at the light.

EREBOS

But of course, they demand more.

The helicopter now circles directly above Isaac. It's high beam light illuminating his figure in the darkness.

Isaac removes the shroud from his head. Tears stream down his cheek.

MARQUIS (O.S.)

You're under arrest.

Isaac turns and stares at Marquis with bloodshot eyes. A mocking smile crosses his face.

ISAAC

Agent Adams.

The light from the Copter once again crosses Isaac's frame.

ISAAC

(screaming at the copter)  
I'm coming!  
(turning towards Marquis)  
Is Hannah dead? Did you fail her  
like Janet and Christopher?

MARQUIS

Get down on the ground, hands  
behind your back.

ISAAC

That's not how the game ends.

MARQUIS

Get down!

ISAAC

You know I had to slit your baby's  
wrists? You know that? I do hope  
she died.

Marquis' hands tremble in anger as he holds the gun on Isaac. His chest heaves up and down.

ISAAC

What would you do if you were me  
now? Answer me you childless prick.  
What would you do if you were me!?

An eerie moment of silence.

MARQUIS

Jump.

A satisfied smile from Isaac.

ISAAC

Now the game is complete.

Isaac turns, leaps off the building into the night air. The light beam from the helicopter capturing his costumed body as it hurtles towards earth - his wings flapping in the wind.

Marquis rushes towards the railing, looks over.

**EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING - NIGHT**

A sickening THUD as Isaac hits the pavement just to the right of one of the Cruisers. Holland rushes out from the lobby.

**BACK ON THE ROOFTOP**

Director Davis and two ARMED AGENTS arrive.

DIRECTOR DAVIS

Where is he?

Marquis slumps down against the railing.

MARQUIS

He's in the shadows.

**INT. FEDERAL BUILDING/MAIN FLOOR - DUSK**

In the middle of the room, makeshift party tables have been assembled. A Christmas party is in progress.

**SUPER: CHRISTMAS SEASON - ONE YEAR LATER**

Various FBI STAFF mingle, eat and drink. They hug and glad hand each other as Christmas MUSIC echoes in the room.

Eddy, wearing the Santa cap Nguyen wore the year, before chats with Rodriquez and Nguyen.

Marquis makes way out of that crowd. He heads towards

**MARQUIS' OFFICE**

And flips on the light switch as he enters. He grabs his suit jacket from a coat rack.

Just before he flips off the light, Marquis glances at his desk - nothing on it. Marquis flips off the switch, heads to

**THE MAIN FLOOR**

And paces towards the lobby.

DIRECTOR DAVIS (V.O.)  
Agent Adams.

Marquis turns, spots Davis.

DIRECTOR DAVIS  
(mouthing)  
Merry Christmas.

Marquis turns, permits himself a smile. He nods at Davis and then continues on.

**INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE/WAITING AREA - DUSK**

Typical patient lobby.

Marquis, suit coat in hand, sits in a chair staring at a door with a sign: "DOCTOR SILVERS."

Marquis closes his eyes.

**FLASHBACK**

Marquis on the rooftop of the Federal Building. His focus - Isaac, costumed as Erebus - tears streaking down his cheek.

MARQUIS  
(mouthing the word)  
Jump.

**BACK TO SCENE**

The SOUND of a the door opening.

Marquis opens his eyes - sees Doctor Silver hand Hannah a piece of paper as he escorts her through his office door.

HANNAH  
Hey, dad.

A warm smile from Marquis at Hannah, a nod towards Silvers.

**INT/EXT. SEDAN (TRAVELLING) RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT**

Marquis at the wheel. Hannah in the passenger seat looking out at the Christmas lights twinkling on the large homes.

HANNAH

How long did it take for you? After you were shot?

Marquis glances over at Hannah. She turns towards him.

HANNAH

To feel normal again.

Marquis pulls into his

**DRIVEWAY**

Puts the car in gear - thinks. He unbuttons the top two buttons of his dress shirt revealing one of the bullet wound scars on his upper torso. He points at it.

MARQUIS

This...

He takes Hannah's hand, gently rubs his finger across the scar on her wrist.

MARQUIS

And this. Are signs of healing.

Marquis taps his temple.

MARQUIS

This heals too. But you can't worry about how long. You'll heal - right on time. I promise.

**INT. MARQUIS' HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Alyssa on step ladder trying to place an ANGEL on top of a stubbornly crooked branch at the top of the tree.

Marquis and Hannah enter. Alyssa releases her grasp on the Angel, it tilts to one side.

ALYSSA

(regarding the angel)  
Just in time. I need a little help -  
I can't quite get this straight.

MARQUIS

Leave it like it is - imperfect.

(squeezes Hannah)

Like we all are.

FADE OUT.