

THE FIRST CUT

Written by

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PILOT

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FADE IN:

INT. ESSALLENNE HOUSE - DAY

CU: A framed photo atop the fireplace mantle of a six-year old BOY OF COLOR, filled with adorable, wide-eyed innocence.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

Being blessed with the name Camille brings out the devil in Christians. I heard all the jokes. And I love my name. But I'm known mostly by my middle name, Isaac. I used to not care when people said it wrong. My name's pronounced Isaach (Ee-SAAK). But once a certain race gets hold of a name foreign to them, they'll contort it and mispronounce it 'til it suits their tongue. Not giving our names the respect they deserve. And our names are everything to us. Don't believe me? Ask Kunta Kinte.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: A multitude of framed pictures over the fireplace and personalizing the walls of the front room. A FAMILY OF COLOR ranging from infant to elder and representing African, Spanish, European, and Native American hybridism.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

I come from a line of free Creoles of color, as my people were called back in the day. A mix of African, European, Spanish and Native blood. They traveled here from the French colonies in the Caribbean and West Africa during the Spanish rule in Louisiana. My elders were artists, authors, educators, seamstresses, musicians, hairdressers, and cooks. They owned property, maintained boarding houses. Even owned slaves. I know my history. Because any man who hasn't learned from his past is doomed to get owned. And that's why I stay woke. We as a people can't afford to be misinformed. Not when a hateful element out there feels threatened by our existence. By our empowerment. It's why I choose to take a knee. It's also why I choose to be a healer. A gift I inherited.

CUT TO:

INT. AUTOPSY CHAMBER - DAY

An overhead LIGHT comes on illuminating the dark room. It's large, cold, and clean with stainless steel and bright tile. A MEDICAL ASSISTANT enters and preps the room. The autopsy table with down-draft system is rinsed off with its shower hose. The exhaust system and adjustment levels are tested.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

Popá inherited the Gift for healing from his mother, Granmè Prevella. Healing is more intoxicating than a first kiss, he says to me. I was twelve when I kissed my first boy. Hero Jean, from parochial school.

Instruments are lined up meticulously: Dissection scissors, Arterial & jugular tubes, Head rest, Restraint, Autopsy saw, Rubber gloves, Goggles, Blades, Towel clamps, Skull breaker, Bone saw, Sternal saw, Scalpel, Toothed forceps, Brain knife, Skull key, Rib shears, Dissecting scissors, Speculum, Foley catheter, Non-absorbable sutures, postmortem needles, Swabs, Syringes, Nasogastric tube, Specimen jars & packets, Double-ended probe, Tongue tie, Osteometric board, Fingerprint set.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

Hero's dad, Dr. Henri Jean, who was my doctor during my lowercase years, mocked faith healing because it wasn't backed up by science. Dr. Jean died the summer right after we graduated high school. He willed his body to a medical school in another state. To give the students there a chance to perform what's called the first cut. Sadly, Hero and I don't talk anymore. His loss.

CUT TO:

INT. MOREHOUSE COLLEGE/AUDITORIUM - DAY

The Louisiana drawl we HEAR belongs to CAMILLE ESSALLENNE (EE-sah-lehn). Boy-next-door handsome, mixed race, eighteen here. Uniformly dressed in a MAROON BLAZER with other BLACK MALE FRESHMEN, their hands locked in prayer following orientation.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

Faith healing is a dying tradition, which sadly skipped my generation. But it continues to intrigue me.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOREHOUSE COLLEGE - DAY

BLACK FRESHMEN (including CAMILLE) march single file through the main gates of campus during the Parents Parting Ceremony.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

Because being healed allows us to dream. And dreaming big's where I prevailed. I got to be whatever I wanted to be. A lawyer. An actor. An astronaut. Even a superhero.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARTA BUS (MOVING) - EVENING

CAMILLE is on the campus SHUTTLE BUS being re-routed through a swirling chorus of red and blue lights. All eyes are on the car, windshield bullet-riddled in the middle of the street. A BLACK MAN's lifeless body sits behind the wheel treated as an afterthought. POLICE mill about questioning one of their own.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

Especially when reality reminds me how disposable I am. Well, almost.

CUT TO:

INT. MOREHOUSE DORM/COMMON AREA - NIGHT

A magical night of CHEERS and TEARS mixed with HUGS and HI-FIVES echoes throughout the halls. Camaraderie among CAMILLE and the other BLACK STUDENTS surrounding the TELEVISION as they witness BARACK OBAMA become the forty-fourth President.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

But I have discovered over time other ways to help people heal.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE WAITING ROOM - DAY

PRESENT. CAMILLE, thirty-one now, sits. He's wearing his Sunday best on a budget. Dr. RIKKA WIRTH, white, forties, peeks out her office.

WIRTH

Dr. Camille Essallenne?

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE - DAY

WIRTH offers CAMILLE a choice of seating in the office.

WIRTH

I'm Dr. Rikka Wirth. Director of West Los Angeles Medical Center's Department of Pathology. I'm also the deputy medical examiner for the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office. You're here for the post-residency training in forensics.

Wirth sits behind the desk reviewing his multi-page CV.

WIRTH (CONT'D)

Please, have a seat. You come to us from Lafayette, Louisiana. You took in some water recently. I'm sorry to hear about that. You attended the... Academy of Health Careers?

CAMILLE

Also known as Lafayette High. One of Lafayette Parish's career academies on a high school level.

WIRTH

Interesting. Bachelor's in Biology, Morehouse. GPA and M-CAT scores got you into their medical school. Four-year residency, combined anatomic and clinical pathology at Peachtree Prez... Why Forensic Pathology?

CAMILLE

The patients are already dead.

Camille's attempt to elicit a laugh from Wirth falls flat.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Forensics come by me during my devotion to *Law & Order* reruns.

WIRTH

Let me guess: You developed crushes on the show's medical examiners.

CAMILLE

Real talk? My *Law & Order* crush was Detective Curtis Rey. *Law & Order* did help inspire me to re-imagine myself as this illmatic reboot of *Quincy ME*. In my dreams, of course.

WIRTH

Quincy's a show definitely before your time. But as a Nas fan, I am feeling the illmatic treatment.

CAMILLE

Yeah. But living up to "the world is mine" expectations means always backing it up. And I'm sure I'll root up mistakes along the way.

Impressed by his candor, Wirth maintains her professional poker-face. She thumbs through his reference letters, Dean's letter, medical school transcripts, medical licensing scores, and American Board of Medical Specialties certification.

WIRTH

I assume you're eligible for medical licensure in the state of California by the start of the fellowship term next July.

CAMILLE

Once I pass the background.

WIRTH

And this is the part where I take you on a tour of our department.

CUT TO:

EXT. WEST LOS ANGELES MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

An impressive, modern state-of-the-art hospital. ESTABLISH.

WIRTH (V.O.)

West Los Angeles Medical is a non-profit, a thousand bed, and multi-specialty academic medical center with a globally-renowned staff of over two thousand physicians, and ten thousand employees. West L.A. Med's facilities are among the most advanced in the world with state-of-the-art equipment and technologies.

CUT TO:

INT. WEST LOS ANGELES MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

CAMILLE keeps in step with WIRTH. Camille is impressed by the hospital's ultra-modern architecture and interior.

WIRTH

The forensic pathology fellowship offers joint accredited training and rotation with the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office. You'll be assigned a forensic specialist and accompany them to crime scenes when something out of the ordinary pops.

CUT TO:

INT. DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY - DAY

It is a world unto itself. Each department fully staffed with employees, residents and fellows to process the hundreds of autopsies of homicides, suicides and John Does. Departments: Exam Rooms, Trace Evidence, Intake & Processing, etc.

WIRTH

During the fellowship year, you'll perform no less than two hundred medicolegal autopsies on natural and traumatic cases from around the state under supervision of a board-certified forensic pathologist. You are responsible for managing your own cases, final reports and death certifications, while seeking assistance as needed. Training includes rotations in forensic radiology, toxicology, odontology, anthropology, pediatric pathology, neuropathology, and state & local crime lab studies. Not only will you participate fully in crime scene investigations but also courtroom appearances during training.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

FLASH-FORWARD. Polished. Pricey suit straight off of Rodeo Drive. It's a little over a year later. CAMILLE waits outside the courtroom. Beat. A BAILIFF steps out of the courtroom.

BAILIFF

Camille Eastland? Is she here?

Camille side-eyes the Bailiff as he rises to his feet.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

FLASH-FORWARD. All eyes in the GALLERY shift to CAMILLE as he strolls into the courtroom. His eyes move from the JUDGE, to the JURY, the PROSECUTOR, to the DEFENSE ATTORNEY. Calmness fuels Camille as he enters the witness box. He's got this.

PROSECUTOR (V.O.)
Bailiff, swear him in.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEPT. OF PATHOLOGY/COURTYARD - DAY

CAMILLE and WIRTH step out into the courtyard for fresh air.

WIRTH
Once your contract's signed, you are an employee of the State of California. Competitive biweekly salary, four calendar weeks of paid time off, holidays and incidental sick leave. Lab coats and laundry service are free of charge as well as parking. There are incentives available for those who walk, bike, or take public transportation to work. Your insurance covers health, malpractice...

CAMILLE
Malpractice? For medical examiners? Really? I didn't think that was something I should worry about.

WIRTH
Pathologists, in general, are at greater risk for malpractice lawsuits than other physicians.

CAMILLE
From cutting corpses?

WIRTH
Misdiagnoses mostly. A jury's least likely to find in their favor.

CAMILLE
What about housing?

WIRTH
There's a fee-based service we can recommend.

(MORE)

WIRTH (CONT'D)

But here or the coroner's office are the best sources for real estate. Catch my drift? A pre-hire health screening's required, as well as annual physical exams.

CAMILLE

Is there a meal allowance?

WIRTH

Yes for residents. No for fellows. Dr. Salt has selected his fellows for next year. But he is adding a fifth position to accommodate you.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

Since the interview ran into lunch, Dr. Wirth offered to take me out to eat. In case I had more questions.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSCOE'S CHICKEN AND WAFFLES - AFTERNOON

A healthy pair of chicken & waffles (Herb's Special) lands before CAMILLE and WIRTH. Wirth really lets her hair down.

WIRTH

That's what I'm talkin' about.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

She took me to Roscoe's Chicken and Waffles. Really? Okay, Roscoe's was at the top of my things-to-do list.

WIRTH

The last twenty years, I did the working wife thing, the working mom thing... But now that the kids are grown and my bone daddy's kicked to the curb, it's time for me to do me. You feel me? Seriously, you are a breath of fresh air around here. As if we need more stiffs working in the morgue. Now don't get it twisted. At work I have to maintain that professional, fake-white-bitch front. But sheee... You got Jackson Heights up in here. You know how we do. My street name back in the day was Lola Blanca. Holla at'cha girl!

Camille forces a smile and fakes engaging nods throughout.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

What is up with white folks talking to me like I've never been inside the same school their children went to? And shocked when I can talk on their level? I endured four years undergraduate, four years medical, another five years of residency to become a board-certified, woke-as-fuck pathologist. And she's sitting here chopping it up like I'm an Atlanta housewife. But since she's buying lunch, I'll wait until the check's paid. Before I clap back.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: "LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA"

CUT TO:

INT. ESSALLENNE HOUSE/CAMILLE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

We're back inside the house with the vintage FAMILY PHOTOS. CAMILLE is asleep. Until the loud CHATTER and LAUGHTER from the kitchen forces him awake. He's in his old, childhood room. Untouched since high school. Naked under the sheets, Camille grabs his sweatpants off the floor and slips them on.

CUT TO:

INT. ESSALLENNE HOUSE/KITCHEN - MORNING

CAMILLE drifts down the hallway past the Washer & DRYER, his clothes spinning inside. He drifts into the kitchen. Sitting around the kitchen table are his parents, JACQUES & EUGENIE, mid-fifties; his brother PATRICE, thirty-six; and a pet Jack Russell Terrier named POPEYE.

JACQUES

Morning, son. Today's the big day?

Camille exchanges "pounds" with Jacques, and then pulls up a chair to the table. Patrice eyeballs him disdainfully.

PATRICE

Mmm-hmm. Just takes off. Doesn't call or text. Facebook page down.

CAMILLE

You just noticed that? George and Weezy didn't tell you I come home?

PATRICE

Does your mouth work? All this time
I thought you were on that three-
month cruise you been talking up.

CAMILLE

And miss Queen Beyonce on tour?
Boy, you must be plumb crazy.

Eugenie gets up and goes to the stove.

EUGENIE

I'll rustle you up some flapjacks
and bacon, cher. I've been missing
both my boys' faces at this table.

PATRICE

As much as you miss your music, you
mean? Yeah, right. That's enough to
make the cats laugh, old lady.

Patrice and Camille "Hi-Five" each other at her expense.

EUGENIE

I brought y'all in, I'll take y'all
asses out. Now say something else.

PATRICE

And she's back. You're leaving for
Los Angeles tonight, Ike?

CAMILLE

Yep. I need the week to get settled
and be fresh for Monday. I found a
one-and-one online in the middle of
everything. Wired my deposit over.
I got pictures I printed out of it.

Eugenie serves Camille a heavy plate of pancakes and bacon.
The smell from the plate alone is pure rapture to him.

EUGENIE

Look at'cha. Still nothing but skin
and bones. Patrice, why come you
let your little brother arrive home
looking as po' as riff raff?

CAMILLE

I'm right 'chere, ma. And I do eat.

PATRICE

Yeah, if you call sucking microwave
noodles out of a cup eating. They
reimbursing you for gas at least?

CAMILLE

I'll ask 'em. Moving expenses are a part of the package they offered. Along with student loan repayment, which is a huge load off. Mortgage allowance, for if I want a house...

EUGENIE

You won't live in a house for long if you keep microwaving everything. What about furniture? You renting a U-Haul to take everything with you?

CAMILLE

Everything I need fits in my car. And I can afford new furniture, ma.

JACQUES

Ain't you nervous about driving all the way out there by yourself?

CAMILLE

No. I'll tell you what's making me nervous. Most people apply years in advance for a fellowship like this. But this one was just handed to me. Popá, what if I go out there and I fail? I hate having to live up to other people's expectations of me.

JACQUES

Don't allow yourself to fix those thoughts in your head, son. Study and work hard like you've been doing. Look how far you've gotten. You're a doctor, son. A doctor. Be nice to have one of those in this family for a change.

EUGENIE

And remember what Oprah said about not being afraid to step into your greatness.

CAMILLE

Y'all really see me on some next level, *Top Gun* shit? Best of the best? A first-round draft pick?

JACQUES

Ain't that why they chose you? But what I don't understand is why Los Angeles? What will you be doing out there you can't do in, say Atlanta?

CAMILLE

Preparing for the forensics board, popá. The last hurdle I have to clear to become a medical examiner. It's either there or Albuquerque.

PATRICE

The LAPD will make sure you have plenty of bodies to work on. You might even autopsy some famous people. Especially once you throw that proper white talk on 'em.

CAMILLE

As a doctor I have to speak properly anyway. You think I like learning words like Sphenopalatine Ganglioneuralgia, and knowing its spelling and function? You try going to medical school. And by the way, it's a slurpee brain freeze.

EUGENIE

My son the doctor. God is good. Camille, did you find yourself a church while you were out there?

Awkward silence. As if on cue the DRYER buzzes. Clothes done.

CAMILLE

Sounds like my clothes are dry.

Camille quickly jumps from the table to avoid the question.

CUT TO:

EXT. ESSALLENNE HOUSE, LAFAYETTE - NIGHT

Midnight-ish. CAMILLE is halfway in his fully packed, bright red FORD FIESTA. JACQUES and EUGENIE stand off to the side of the driveway saying their good-byes to him.

EUGENIE

You sure you want nothing to eat? There's Etouffee left over.

CAMILLE

It's a week old, ma. I'll have my choice of drive-thrus on the road.

EUGENIE

God only knows why people want they food passed through a damn window.

CAMILLE

And tell Patrice I'll see him out there in the wild, wild west coast.

EUGENIE

You know how far Los Angeles is? I hope you got enough money for gas.

CAMILLE

Maman, you've never shown me this much worry without the benefit of a witch-doctor and a pile of headless chickens. What the hell gives?

EUGENIE

Boy, I ain't studin' you. And watch your tone. I didn't carry you for nine months so you can say hell to me. I'll light your ass up with my switch. The one I'll make you pick out. "It's a week old". Jacques, set your son straight, or so help me God I'll put hands on that boy.

Jacques puts his hand to Camille's face. Camille smiles back.

JACQUES

Ain't it funny how it's your mama's mouth moving but her mother's voice talking? You're the first to finish college in our family. And I'm very proud of you. Doctor Essallenne.

CAMILLE

Thanks, popá. Did you always know? That I was, you know, different? I didn't choose to be this way. But you never seemed surprised by it.

JACQUES

Let me tell you about my very first vision of Jesus. The brother said right then me and your mother were going to have a second boy. And to never be ashamed of him. He is not a punishment. He is a gift. And some gifts have to happen this way. His word I'll take over anybody's.

Camille absorbs what his father says before he hugs him good-bye. Camille climbs into his car, backs out of the driveway and drives off. He looks back at them in his rearview mirror.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN BERNARDINO FWY W - DAY

The FORD turns onto I-10 West crossing into California. Six miles later, San Bernardino Freeway becomes US 101 N./L.A. Notorious BIG's "Going Back to Cali" plays on the SOUNDTRACK.

CUT TO:

INT. FORD FIESTA (MOVING) - DAY

CAMILLE raps along to Notorious BIG's "Going Back to Cali".

CAMILLE

(raps along)

*"N-o-t-o-r-i-o. U-s, you just lay
down slow. Recognize a real don
when you see one. Sipping on booze
in the House of Blues. I'm going,
going back, back, to Cali, Cali."*

Camille is dazzled by the star wattage of the city itself. Every stretch of road is a Hollywood landmark to behold.

CUT TO:

EXT. KOREATOWN, LOS ANGELES - DAY

The FORD turns onto Wilshire Boulevard and into the vibrant neighborhood of Koreatown. CAMILLE cruises down the street until he pulls up to the centrally-located AVANA ON WILSHIRE.

CUT TO:

INT. AVANA ON WILSHIRE - DAY

CAMILLE enters the apartment building's lobby barefoot and wearing a "BOYCOTT BEYONCE" tee-shirt with cargo shorts. A stylish MANAGER steps out of her office looking runway-fresh.

MANAGER

Good afternoon. May I help you?

CAMILLE

Yes, you can. I'm your new tenant.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMILLE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

CAMILLE and the MANAGER enter the furniture-free space.

MANAGER

The floor plan you selected. Your private balcony overlooks the pool. There's gated parking downstairs.

Camille explores his new home for the first time: Nine-foot ceilings. Vinyl plank floors. Slab granite counter-tops. Recessed lighting. Maple cabinets. Walk-in closets. Space-saver washer and dryer. Ceramic tile floors in the bathroom.

Camille steps out onto the balcony overlooking the pool, gas barbecues, private courtyard and lounge areas with fireplace.

CAMILLE

I have the rest of the week to furnish it. Where should I shop?

CUT TO:

EXT. WEST LOS ANGELES MEDICAL CENTER/PARKING LOT - MORNING

CAMILLE pulls into the allotted parking space. Right beside the DODGE PICK-UP with a Texas license plate and confederate flag bumper sticker on it. He hops out dressed to impress, slings his shoulder bag and crosses the lot to the hospital.

CUT TO:

INT. DEPT. OF PATHOLOGY - MORNING

CAMILLE approaches the busy-as-hell reception station.

CAMILLE

Dr. Essallenne. Today's my first...

NURSE

(fast, without looking up)
Locker room's down the hall. Wait there. Someone will come fetch you.

CUT TO:

INT. RESIDENTS/FELLOWS LOUNGE/LOCKER ROOM - MORNING

CAMILLE enters. Lined up neatly are three white lab coats with a doctor's name embroidered over the words "Department of Pathology". Camille finds his "Camille Essallenne MD" white coat. "Kent Swain" and "Graeme Reece" remain unclaimed.

ORION (O.S.)

Are you by any chance Graeme Reece?

ORION MCMANUS, thirty-three, body of a professional athlete and in his white coat. Orion looks more jock than academic.

CAMILLE

No. I'm Camille Essallenne.

ORION

You're Camille? I'm sorry. Orion McManus. You don't meet a lot of guys named Camille these days.

CAMILLE

My name's indigenous to my Creole culture. So it's not that unusual.

ORION

Right, sorry. Hey, you see her?

Camille turns. CORINNE BUCKNER, in her lab coat in the lounge area, reapplying her makeup. She's thirty, white, easy on the eyes without being provocative, with an evident Texan swag.

ORION (CONT'D)

Corinne Buckner. I'm hittin' that before the stroke of midnight.

CAMILLE

I won't get in your way. How do you know you're her type?

ORION

Because I'm every woman's type.

KENT SWAIN enters, white, early thirties, boyish and non-threatening in an endearing way. He grabs his white coat.

ORION (CONT'D)

Kent Swain, Camille Essallenne.

KENT

How's it hanging? Have you noticed there are more organic juice bars here than there are Starbucks? Odd.

CAMILLE

No. But I'll tell you what I did notice: Denny's has valet parking.

ORION

No way! Are you serious? Denny's?

KENT

Insane, right? Eco-friendly enemas. Healthy living scramble dog stands.

CORINNE overhears and joins them.

ORION

Corinne, meet Camille Essallenne.

CORINNE

Does anyone work nine to five or in an office? It's very industry. Work is seasonal. Everywhere is crowded. So, I overheard Wirth on the phone at reception. The fifth fellow has not arrived yet. Problems with his visa. Probably another immigrant with no vowels in his last name who can't speak English clearly.

CAMILLE

Don't you come from immigrants? Or is Buckner a Navajo name?

CORINNE

God, I'm surrounded by snowflakes.

KENT

You're surrounded all right. One hundred and eighty countries. One hundred and forty languages. Living right here. Next door to us. Can your conservative heart bear it?

CUT TO:

INT. DEPT. OF PATHOLOGY/HALLWAY - MORNING

Dr. JORDAN SALT, white, mid-fifties, silver-haired, takes center stage before four of his FELLOWS.

SALT

I'm Dr. Jordan Salt. Senior Chair of the Department of Pathology. I'd like to welcome you, my new five, not my usual four this year, though one's late, fresh off the farm and eager to learn the lay of the land here. Each of you were carefully chosen out of hundreds. So if you don't fulfill your potential, it's a failure on my part. And I abhor failure. Our department has a one-hundred percent clearance rate for identifying and processing John Does and skeletal human remains. So you have your work cut out for you.

KENT

Is this where you made your bones
as a medical examiner, Dr. Salt?

SALT

God, no. I was lucky. If you really
want to be a rock star, Manhattan
will take you to church. All kinds
of ways to die there. Struck by
lightning at a rooftop party in the
East Village. Decapitated by a
runaway egg roll cart. Don't ask.
Falling eighteen feet down an open
manhole and into a pool of three-
hundred degree boiling water from a
broken main. Outer layer of skin
literally peeling off, organs
cooked. Damn it, I miss those days.

(sighs deeply)

Another thing: If you're recovering
a body from an apartment or a home,
ask whoever's there to brew some
coffee. It helps kill the stench.

CUT TO:

INT. DEPT. OF PATHOLOGY - MORNING

CAMILLE and the FELLOWS follow WIRTH down the corridor.

WIRTH

M & M conferences are every Monday
morning in the administrative wing.
And if you're not on scene, check
the board for your autopsies. You
will each be assigned a pathologist
before close of business today. And
those in need of a parking pass or
photo ID report to Human Resources.
Dr. Essallenne, a moment, please?

Wirth and Camille separate from the others.

WIRTH (CONT'D)

Huge favor, Doctor? We're still shy
a fellow. He was having immigration
issues at the airport and managed
to get caught up in that travel ban
mess. He's been stranded in England
since Friday. But everything is all
good and he should be landing any
moment now. Can you pick him up for
me? You'll be reimbursed for gas.

CAMILLE

You promise or you're just saying?

Wirth playfully swats him with the file in her hand.

CUT TO:

INT. LOS ANGELES AIRPORT/ARRIVALS GATE - MORNING

GRAEME REECE, black, thirty-two, British, possessing boyish charm, is seated surrounded by disembarking PASSENGERS and an assortment of heavy luggage with his life packed inside.

CAMILLE holds the placard: "G. REECE, WEST L.A. MEDICAL". He and Graeme lock eyes, acknowledging each other. Graeme rises. He's taller than expected. They step towards each other.

GRAEME

Are you the driver they sent?

Graeme nods hello politely. Camille is excited and elated to see another black doctor.

CAMILLE

I'm Dr. Essallenne. I don't believe this. Another black man in a white coat. I guess I'm no longer the spokesman for the black community.

GRAEME

Funny. I'll get us a trolley.

CAMILLE

Please, I can help you with your bags. Have you eaten, Dr. Reece?

GRAEME

I was upgraded to first class after being "inconvenienced" the entire weekend. I ate and drank with a bloody vengeance during the flight.
(produces his cellphone)
You mind? For my family back home.

CAMILLE

A selfie? I'm on fleek. Why not?

CUT TO:

I/E. FORD FIESTA (MOVING) - MORNING

CAMILLE and GRAEME as they drive away from the airport.

CAMILLE

So, why were you marked in that travel ban madness? You a Muslim?

GRAEME

Well, I respect the beauty of many religions. Truth speaks to my soul. There is a copy of the Qur'an in my hold-all. Came up on X-ray. Airport security went medieval on me. They were quite doubtful I was even a doctor. Even with a legitimate visa and passport, thank you very much. What are your feelings on religion?

CAMILLE

To me, religion's about as dead as Louisiana hoodoo. But its influence still runs heavy. So who am I to judge? For some the illness, for others the antidote. Where am I taking you? Where are you staying?

GRAEME

I'm homeless until I register into a hotel. I expected to have this all sorted before the weekend. All I can think is the hospital. Allow me the opportunity to salvage what I can of my first day. Hotel check-in isn't until four tonight anyway.

CAMILLE

Another rip-off. Can't even get a hotel room for a full twenty-four hours. Bless the Elders for AirBnB.

CUT TO:

INT. DEPT. OF PATHOLOGY/HALLWAY - MORNING

CAMILLE, filled with first-day jitters, locates his name on the dry-erase whiteboard. He jots down his autopsies. WIRTH approaches him hauling an armful of computer TABLETS.

WIRTH

Dr. Salt's looking for you. Your tablet, updated with the latest pathology apps. And your signature.

Camille carefully selects a tablet, then signs her clipboard.

CUT TO:

INT. BREAK ROOM - MORNING

CAMILLE finds DR. SALT feeding money into a vending machine.

CAMILLE

Dr. Salt?

SALT

Dr. Essallenne. Thanks for finding me. I wanted to personally welcome you to the cathedral.

CAMILLE

Thanks for the add. This fellowship is everything to me. How hard you want me to put it down's up to you.

SALT

We expect nothing but A-game and then some. The board was impressed with your resume and your letters attached. Especially a hard sell like Dr. Compton. That's the Angel Gabriel giving God his approval. Which is why we felt compelled to up our offer. To avoid losing you to New York or New Mexico.

CAMILLE

We're talking Maddux Compton? From Peachtree Presbyterian? I didn't attach his letter to my resume.

SALT

Well, Compton did send us a letter highly recommending you for this fellowship. Listen, I am due for an online consultation now, but let's grab a coffee and talk more later.

CAMILLE

Yeah, absolutely. And thanks again.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - MORNING

CAMILLE bursts through the morgue's double doors, seething.

CAMILLE

Jive-ass bastard Compton...

CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE - MORNING

CAMILLE hears a strange, muffled, repetitive BANGING NOISE once inside. He tries to follow the sound to its source. It's coming from one of the crypts. He sets his paperwork down.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

If this were a Tyler Perry, butch-queen-up-in-drag movie and he heard strange noises in the morgue, the movie would be over in two minutes.

Camille takes a deep breath and opens the crypt's door. He grabs the bottom of the slab and rolls it out. The BODY BAG convulses violently. He unzips the bag - the BODY is seizing.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

The pyramidal tract connecting the brain to the nerve fibres sometimes forget the rest of the body's dead. To shut it down means severing the tract.

Camille pulls out a SWITCHBLADE he just happens to have in his coat. As he holds the body's head steady, he shoves the knife sharply into the back of the neck. The seizing stops.

CAMILLE

(boasting to himself)
Better ask who I am.

CUT TO:

INT. COLD ROOM - MORNING

CAMILLE opens the heavy door and finds a fresh group of SEALED CORPSES lying covered on stainless-steel trolleys.

CAMILLE

Number 026538, Grayson...

Camille uncovers one woman and checks the toe tag attached - FLAVIA GRAYSON, white, fifty-two. He covers her back up.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - MORNING

CAMILLE tosses the clipboard and medical file on top of the body and wheels Flavia Grayson's body out of the morgue.

CUT TO:

INT. AUTOPSY BAY - MORNING

The FELLOWS, geared up in scrubs, have already begun working their autopsies. CAMILLE wheels Grayson in and parks her body in an empty workstation.

WIRTH (O.S.)
Dr. Essallenne.

WIRTH appears with GRAEME trailing closely behind her. He's in his scrubs and holding onto his own brand new tablet.

WIRTH (CONT'D)
Dr. Szaragosa will supervise your fellowship. Let me apologize in advance. He's good at what he does. But he can be a bit... unfiltered.

CAMILLE
The little hairs on the back of my neck just raised up.

WIRTH
He's still a little PTSD-ish, so he can be a bit aggressive and hyper-vigilant. But he's the best we can spare. Best way to deal with him is to not be delicate. Give back as much as he dishes out. The man thrives off of conflict.
(checks the ID tag)
Grayson. From the hospital wing. Insurance requested an autopsy.

CAMILLE
To avoid cutting checks, no doubt.

WIRTH
Catalog and document every injury. Can you keep Dr. Reece bright-eyed and bushy-tailed for me?

CAMILLE
Sure. Jump in here, Doctor.

WIRTH
Dr. Singh's on her way to supervise Reece. Clive has mandatory therapy once he finishes community service. I'll be observing. Making sure time off hasn't killed your groove. Just start without me. I'll be back.

Wirth leaves them.

GRAEME

The first thing that comes to mind upon viewing a fresh corpse? A once interactive, vibrant being. Do you visualize the lives they led, their work history, their upbringing...?

CAMILLE

I visualize 'em getting their rocks off. If I meet their partner, I see 'em both getting it in. In my head.

GRAEME

How do you let your mind go there?

CAMILLE

The goofy expressions on their face helps. Doesn't it look like they nutted during their final moment?

GRAEME

Perhaps death is the ultimate release. Too many unanswered questions? What you're working on?

Camille quickly thumbs through Flavia Grayson's file.

CAMILLE

Went down a flight of steps, heart attack possibly. Vacuum cord around her leg also questionable. Subdural hematoma, bleeding in the brain. Shunt inserted to relieve the brain of pressure. Coma for eight months, passed away last night from wounds too severe... Yep, too many unanswered questions. Let's change and make some answers happen.

CUT TO:

INT. AUTOPSY BAY - MORNING

CAMILLE and GRAEME, both in scrubs, transfer Flavia's body from the trolley to the exam table and position her onto the rubber body block. Camille quickly notices a rough, Y-incision already across her chest underneath her clothing.

CAMILLE

Okay, shots fired!

GRAEME

Was she already autopsied?

Graeme PHOTOGRAPHS this. Camille searches Grayson's file.

CAMILLE

She was an organ donor. My bad.

Camille examines her head and upper body closely using gloved hands too feel for anything abnormal. Then he carefully lifts her head to check for bruising. Camille turns on the overhead MICROPHONE:

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Dr. Camille Essallenne assisted by
Dr. Graeme Reece. Case number
026538. Flavia Grayson, fifty-two,
Caucasian. Physical inspection:
Severe bruising and coalescing on
the left side of the face and upper
body. Let's turn her over, Doctor.
(they turn her over)
No bruising on the back.

Camille moves the magnifying glass over her body for a close-up inspection. He physically inspects her hands.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

No indication of severe injuries.
No skeletal fractures... Hold up.

Camille stops and studies Flavia's medical reports again.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

An accelerated level of troponin.
Troponin. That's it. The proof I
need of cardiac arrest. Mic drop.

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY CORONER'S/CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON

CAMILLE moves down the hallway. He reaches into his shoulder bag and pulls out his completed preliminary reports.

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY CORONER'S/WIRTH'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

WIRTH reads CAMILLE's preliminary report on Flavia Grayson. Confusion clouds her face once done reading it.

WIRTH

Are you certain this is the result
you want to stand by for Grayson?

CAMILLE

It's the only one that makes sense.

WIRTH

"Undetermined"?

CAMILLE

No linear bruising from falling backwards or any bruises on the back of the head. No markings on her hands, broken nails, or fingers from falling forward. Did she have a heart attack prior to falling? It could easily explain everything. Except she's an organ donor and her heart's been removed. So there goes that. I checked her medical report. If someone has a heart attack, the cardiac muscles release enzymes. Troponin. There was a high level of troponin in her. So that closed the case for me. At first.

CUT TO:

INT. AUTOPSY BAY - MORNING

RESUME w/CAMILLE and GRAEME post-autopsy. Graeme sews the body closed. Camille dials an extension from a nearby desk:

CAMILLE

This is Dr. Camille Essallenne in Pathology. Could you send me all of Flavia Grayson's blood work? Just triple-checking everything. Mèsi.

(he hangs up)

Reece, where in England you from? What medical school did you go to?

GRAEME

Manchester. There's a medical school at the university. You?

CAMILLE

Lafayette, Louisiana born and bred. And I'm a Morehouse man.

GRAEME

An HBCU. Brilliant. Did you pledge any fraternities while attending?

CAMILLE

I don't want to talk about it.

Camille turns back to the work before him on the desk.

CUT TO:

INT. AUTOPSY BAY - LATER

CAMILLE reviewing the blood work lab results.

CAMILLE
Seriously?

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY CORONER'S/WIRTH'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

RESUME w/CAMILLE and WIRTH.

CAMILLE
Flavia Grayson's troponin levels
only spiked while she was in ICU.
So if cardiac arrest didn't cause
her to trip and fall, what did?

CUT TO:

INT. AUTOPSY BAY - MORNING

RESUME w/CAMILLE and GRAEME hovering over Grayson's body.

GRAEME
I love a good mystery. It's why I
got into this line of work. Give a
man a front row seat, he won't ask
what's behind the theatre curtain.
First, let's rule it out as murder.

CAMILLE
Her old man comes home, finds his
wife at the bottom of the stairs,
assumes she had a heart attack and
reports it. The husband failed to
indicate the cord that was twisted
around her leg. Which may have been
the cause of her trip and fall.

GRAEME
Could the fall be the cause of
death and not the heart attack?

Camille reexamines Flavia's head with the magnifying glass.
He moves in closer for a harder look.

CAMILLE

Same trauma, bruising. Lacerations to the scalp as before. But their directions aren't consistent at all with a fall. No dirt, no debris in any of the lacerations. I need to take a look inside her head.

Camille makes a triangular incision across the top of the scalp with the scalpel. Then he gently pulls the scalp back revealing the skull. He places a towel over her face, employs the bone-saw to cut open the skull revealing her brain.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Massive hemorrhaging to the frontal parietal, occipital and temporal lobes. Consistent with falling down a flight of stairs. Staged? Maybe.

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY CORONER'S/WIRTH'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

RESUME w/CAMILLE and WIRTH.

CAMILLE

The reason I can't conclude if her wounds are the result of a homicide or an accident is because there are too many non-evidentiary methods to factor in. Without all of the hard facts... I left it at undetermined.

WIRTH

I understand. Your John Hancock's on the report, so it is your call.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Wirth!

The voice belongs to Dr. CLIVE SZARAGOSA, white, forties.

SZARAGOSA

Another pair missing, Wirth. And there's no way I left 'em inside the body. No, not this time.

WIRTH

Coming out of your wallet, Clive.
(to Camille)
He's half-kidding. Dr. Szaragosa, this is Dr. Essallenne. You're taking him under your wing.

SZARAGOSA

(to Camille)

My man, my mellow! Come here and
juggle these nuts, high yellow!

WIRTH

Wow, that didn't take long at all.
I seriously underestimated you.

SZARAGOSA

Redbone here's too cool for school.
Ain't that right, home-slice?

CAMILLE

All due respect, you'll get further
with 'Dr. Essallenne'. You feel me?

SZARAGOSA

(suddenly serious)

Yeah. 'I feel you'.

WIRTH

Clive, I want him field-ready by
Friday. Issue him what he needs.

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY CORONER'S/WARDROBE - AFTERNOON

A pair of navy blue polyester shirts hit CAMILLE squarely in
the face. SZARAGOSA also tosses a pair of windbreakers at him
emblazoned with "WEST LOS ANGELES MEDICAL EXAMINER" on them.

SZARAGOSA

Polyester won't absorb the smell.
Pants, up to you. Windbreakers...

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL EQUIPMENT ROOM - AFTERNOON

CAMILLE moves down the aisle collecting items off the shelves
as SZARAGOSA reads them off a list.

SZARAGOSA

Grab a medical bag. Inside the bag,
a storage clipboard. Investigation
and chain of evidence forms inside
that. Toe tags, entomology kit...

CAMILLE

Entomology?

SZARAGOSA

Insect collection duh. Camera, face masks, carbon monoxide, gloves, GSR sampler kit, detectors, flashlight, temp probes, containers, ruler, tape measure, EDM... Everything on this list goes in that bag. Digits on top of the sheet is the number I'll be calling you from. Give it a ringtone you'll recognize as me.

CAMILLE

I have just the ringtone in mind. So what's your steez, Doctor? Is community service the price you're paying for shoving your junk inside some live boy or dead girl?

SZARAGOSA

You got jokes. But since you asked, an ex of mine calls begging to bang one out for old time's sake. I pack a fat rod that bitches swear cures cancer. Next thing, no matter where I am she's there. Then turns around accusing me of stalking her. I'm before a judge and it's either take the community service or risk a felony at a jury trial. Lesser of two evils, homie.

CAMILLE

I ain't your homie. Anything else before I'm ghost?

SZARAGOSA

You're Salt's boy. Damn, he loves him some pepper. I knew that cholo couldn't hold him down for long. Hell, if I was a lumber-sexual I'd let you bob on this knob. But since I'm not... Well, you understand.

CAMILLE

Do you know how not to be basic? We done? Deuces. Two fingers, Doctor.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMILLE'S APT. - EVENING

CAMILLE lets himself and GRAEME in. They haul Graeme's heavy LUGGAGE inside. The apartment is fully but simply furnished.

CAMILLE

The couch in the front room's yours while you hunt for shelter. And no trim. Unless they have their own crib. I don't mean to cock-block...

GRAEME

No, I get it. It's your home. Not a trick gaff for strangers. You pay rent to feel comfortable. This is absolutely brilliant. Thank you.

CAMILLE

Cold cuts and 'my-nez' are in the fridge if you're hungry. There's also a Korean barbecue joint down the street. It closes at midnight.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKS KOREAN BARBECUE - NIGHT

CAMILLE and GRAEME share a signature dish of seasoned Bulgogi, marinated prime beef short ribs, they cook themselves on the table's open grill, plus a side of rice noodles.

CAMILLE

You come from a tight-knit family?

GRAEME

I do. I'm in the middle of four sisters - Brittany, Fifi, Anemone and Sophie. Mum's Nigerian and dad is half-Irish. The best portrait I can paint of them is English post-punk meets Diggin' In the Crates.

CAMILLE

Gang of Four blessed by Lord Finesse? I ain't mad at that.

GRAEME

And what do you know about Gang of Four? They were before my time.

CAMILLE

I know my history. My father has an epic record collection in his cave. Sade, David Bowie, Curtis Mayfield, Boz Scaggs, Prince... Gang of Four, *Hard*. 1983. Every chance I got was spent listening to popá's precious vinyl. So what do your parents do?

GRAEME

My mum is an investigator with the local branch of the New National Consumer Watch. And my dad is the local crown-appointed Coroner. But still maintains his practice as a GP. And your brother's a pilot?

CAMILLE

With a major airline, yeah. Patrice and I weren't as close growing up.

GRAEME

Really? Why not?

CAMILLE

Long story. Basically, he couldn't keep his pants pulled up. And I was bougie as a mofo, according to him. Having high standards is a crime. Haven't you heard? When I relocated to the A - Atlanta, Georgia - to start my residency at Peachtree Presbyterian, he was fresh out the Navy with his new pilot gig. So we made up and got a crib together.

GRAEME

Things are good between you now?

CAMILLE

He's my brother. From the womb to the tomb. I sort of ghosted on him before moving here. But I wouldn't of done it without knowing he could swing the rent by himself.

GRAEME

I don't understand. Then why do it?

CAMILLE

You know how insane residency is. And after studying and passing the boards, I was burnt-out. Reacting without thinking. I needed a break. There's a bus and train schedule I have. For when I can't drive you.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH VERMONT AVENUE - NIGHT

CAMILLE and GRAEME walk back to their apartment building.

CAMILLE

My dad is a mailman and a traiteur.
Which is a faith healer. And my mom
is a Blues woman. She's a musician.

GRAEME

A faith healer and a musician. That
is classic. Is your mum famous?

CAMILLE

On the local circuit, at festivals.
Has a band, the Dust Daughters. She
shreds a mean guitar, but you won't
find her on Wikipedia anytime soon.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - MORNING

CAMILLE and GRAEME are in line ordering breakfast.

GRAEME

Eggs scrambled, potatoes, bacon.
(to Camille)
This M & M meeting I'm expected to
attend every Monday, what is that?

CAMILLE

Morbidity & Mortality. Basically, a
doctor's put on blast for mistakes
made during patient care. Dr. Song
takes attendance at every meeting.
(orders)
French toast and porky pig sausage.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL SUITE - MORNING

WIRTH moderates a slide-show presentation before CAMILLE,
GRAEME and the other FELLOWS.

WIRTH

When you're filling out the death
certificates, be as etiologically
specific as possible. Myocardial
infarct due to atherosclerotic
coronary artery disease is an
example of what's acceptable,
because it's due to something. But
cardiorespiratory arrest or cardiac
arrhythmia are examples of death.

(MORE)

WIRTH (CONT'D)

Not specific causes of death. Cardiac arrhythmia due to rheumatic valve disease is a specific cause of death. End-stage liver disease due to chronic alcoholism or Hep C, another example. Cerebrovascular stroke - due to what? Sepsis - due to what? And try to avoid the word accident. Accidents are a manner of death. Not the actual cause.

CUT TO:

INT. AUTOPSY BAY - MORNING

CAMILLE inserts a NEEDLE into the side of each eye of his latest cadaver to collect fluid. SZARAGOSA taunts him.

SZARAGOSA

I'm anything but basic, my brother. You know what's basic? Rolling with a white girl who calls herself Lola Blanca. That's basic and gay. Your boy double-O-seven'd a patient on the operating table in Manchester. Bet he hasn't shared that with you.

CAMILLE

Because he's the only doctor it's ever happened to? You see? Basic.

The intimate sound of MALE-FEMALE GIGGLING stops Camille. He looks over. It's GRAEME working at the furthest end of the bay assisted by CORINNE. Overseeing them is DR. RHEA SINGH, South Asian, forty. A tinge of jealousy gnaws at Camille.

CUT TO:

EXT. AUTOPSY BAY - MORNING

We WATCH through the window as CAMILLE cuts a large and deep Y-incision on the body, from the top of each shoulder, moving down the front of the chest and meeting at the lower point of the sternum.

The REFLECTION on the window from the outer corridor reveals a handsome, masculine LATINO face. This is JESU DE LA TORRE, forty. He watches Camille grab a pair of shears to open the chest cavity. Jesu TAPS on the window. Camille turns, nods at him and resumes his job. Jesu moves toward the entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. AUTOPSY BAY - MORNING

JESU DE LA TORRE enters the room but maintains his distance from the busy workstations. The smell hits him hard.

CAMILLE
You're wearing a gun?

JESU
Yes. Why? Does the gun make me look fat? You're Dr. Camille Essallenne?

CAMILLE uses the pruning shears to cut through the ribs on the lateral sides of the chest cavity to allow the sternum and attached ribs to be lifted as one chest plate.

CAMILLE
He stepped out. Who's asking for him?

Jesu pulls out his DETECTIVE SHIELD.

JESU
Detective Jesu De la Torre, Robbery-Homicide. Dr. Wirth pointed you out to me, Doctor. Nice try. So, you're the new puppy being housebroken?

As Camille continues to crack through ribs with the shears.

CAMILLE
What gave it away?

JESU
Can we step outside and talk?

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - MORNING

CAMILLE removes his gloves. JESU is relieved to be away from the smell in the autopsy bay.

JESU
Before giving his noon sermon this afternoon, Reverend Omar Singletary stuck a .357 Magnum into his mouth and blew out the back of his head.

CAMILLE
Sorry for the loss. Sounds pretty cut and dried. It doesn't go to the table if it's ruled non-suspicious.

JESU

Dr. Wirth declared it a suicide at the scene. She also said you and I should talk. That you could hook a brother up. Give me what I needed.

CAMILLE

Wirth said that? She's got nerve. Don't get me wrong. I realize I've over-abstained lately. By choice. And until my Afro Sheen, cocoa-butter wearing Barack comes along, I would love to hook up and smash. Just the way you're wearing that suit is making a brother thirsty.

JESU

Thank you, I think. Wait, what?

CAMILLE

But I also take what I do here very seriously. And keeping it one thou hasn't been easy with all the fine-ass trade I've seen in this town.

JESU

Hold up. Dr. Wirth did not hook us up. I'm here because you and I have cases that may have crossed swords.

CAMILLE

Oh. Then I apologize. I didn't know. Just do me one favor, please? Don't pull a 'Jenny Jones' on me.

JESU

Don't bitch up. I'll lose respect. Reverend Singletary did not leave a note. His family and friends remain tight-lipped. And I'm out on the streets piecing his life together. I did discover his wife is a former nanny. For Karen Grayson. The late first wife of Howard Grayson. His second wife passed away on Sunday. You autopsied her on Monday.

CAMILLE

Sounds like a cruel coincidence.

JESU

The one thing I learned in my twelve years as a detective, there is no such thing as a coincidence.

Jesu reaches into his coat pocket, produces a card and gives it to Camille.

JESU (CONT'D)

Call me. We'll grab lunch, get to know each other. Why did you lie about who you are when I arrived?

CAMILLE

Why did I lie? To a total stranger with a gun, with gun control being what it is? You can't be serious. But if you're serious about feeding a brother, I have no plans tonight.

CUT TO:

I/E. DE LA TORRE'S CAR (MOVING) - EVENING

JESU drives CAMILLE. Heavy traffic on Santa Monica Blvd.

JESU

Karen Grayson died in a car accident fourteen years ago.

CAMILLE

What's the 4-1-1 on her husband?

JESU

Howard Grayson? Casting director. Television stuff mostly. He's never been accused of any casting-couch nookie, which is a miracle lately. Would you like to step in and help us with our investigation, Doctor?

CAMILLE

Me? Let's review: I'm barely a week into a one-year fellowship here and you're asking me, not someone with boo-coo years of forensic medical experience, to help you solve a murder case? Hell yeah I'm in.

CUT TO:

INT. L.A.P.D. PRECINCT - EVENING

A BOARD posted with photos of HOWARD GRAYSON, white, fifty, with connecting lines to his late wives FLAVIA and KAREN. CAMILLE sits at JESU's desk for Jesu's idea of a dinner date: Takeout FATBURGERS, a couple of SODAS and baked POTATO CHIPS.

JESU

This is the report we have on Karen Grayson's accident fourteen years ago: At three a.m., Howard Grayson was driving his wife Karen to the emergency room because she was complaining of stomach pains. Her seat belt was not on because it made her uncomfortable. An animal, possibly a dog, bolts out in front of the vehicle, Mr. Grayson swerves to avoid hitting it but crashes into a guard rail. Because she was not wearing her seat belt, Karen's head smashed into the windshield. The husband gets out, calls 9-1-1.

CAMILLE

And it's all treated like an accident, which seems consistent.

JESU

We have two dead wives of one man.

CAMILLE

Was the preacher's wife having an affair with the Mister? Or Missus?

JESU

Nobody knows or nobody's talking. Which means someone's really being careful. You know how hard it is to keep secrets in this town for free?

CAMILLE

I have no secrets. The one thing both wives had in common...

JESU

Besides the husband.

CAMILLE

...They both died from blunt force trauma to the head. I'll see if I can get the first case reopened.

They 'homeboy-handshake' on it.

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY CORONER'S/WIRTH'S OFFICE - EVENING

WIRTH looks over the medical reports CAMILLE gave her.

CAMILLE

Both unwitnessed. No autopsy done
for the first wife...

WIRTH

I appreciate the vaunted initiative
to get this case reopened... Is
there even a body left to autopsy?

CAMILLE

I don't know. I'll ask Jesu.

Wirth REACTS to the name Jesu. Camille shoots Jesu a text.

WIRTH

These pictures were taken at the
scene. So no one's taken a good,
hard look at them since because the
accident wasn't treated as a crime.

The pictures detail the aftermath of the accident. A head-on
collision with the guard rail. Dried blood on the dashboard
of the passenger's side. Dried blood on the passenger's seat.

WIRTH (CONT'D)

The wife's in the car gravely
injured. But the husband manages to
get out, walk away, and call 9-1-1.

Camille's cellphone CHIRPS. A message. Camille reads it.

CAMILLE

Jesu. The first Mrs. Grayson was
cremated.

WIRTH

Hardly any damage to the vehicle.
Certainly not substantial enough to
cause the injuries she died from.

CAMILLE

He was reportedly driving the speed
limit. In a residential zone.

WIRTH

Let's put more eyes on this.

CUT TO:

INT. AUTOPSY BAY - EVENING

GRAEME hovers over the exposed leg wound of a black male
corpse on the exam table. DR. RHEA SINGH is supervising.

SINGH

His body was dumped after lividity set in. Coyotes were feeding on him when they found him in the park.

GRAEME

Coyotes? Should I be concerned?

SINGH

Please. You're more likely to get bitten by a pitbull than a coyote.

Graeme reexamines the gouges on the corpse's left temple.

GRAEME

That's reassuring. I doubt a coyote did this though.

SINGH

That's the result of a different kind of animal. Know what I mean?

GRAEME

Ladies and gents, we have ourselves a murder.

(types into tablet)

Preliminary cause of death for Mr. Maurice Moody, subdural hemorrhage. I keep returning to this leg wound. The marks on the bone are canine. But the lines where the calf muscle connects to the Achilles tendon are too uniformly aligned to have been savagely ripped apart by coyotes.

Singh grabs the magnifying glass for a closer look.

SINGH

You're right. Cut marks. The calf muscle was removed with a knife.

The wall-mounted PHONE RINGS. Singh answers:

SINGH (CONT'D)

Autopsy two, Dr. Singh... Hold on, he's right here.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

GRAEME joins CAMILLE and WIRTH. They are studying the car accident photos spread out across the conference room table.

GRAEME

The blood in the car. Look at it.

CAMILLE

What about the blood in the car?

GRAEME

Look at the passenger's seat and the dashboard. There's no spatter.

CAMILLE

Son of a... How did you see that?

WIRTH

You're right. The blood in the car has to be a transfer. When she hit the windshield there's fresh blood on her head. But the blood on the rest of her body transferred from her and onto her seat and the dash. Somebody put her in the car after she was already bleeding to death.

CAMILLE

Then how do you explain the second wife? If he intentionally meant to kill her, why not finish her off? Why chance leaving her in a coma?

WIRTH

First you have to prove wife number one did not die accidentally.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMILLE'S APT. - NIGHT

CAMILLE and GRAEME enter. Camille beelines quickly into the bathroom. Graeme hauls a heavy grocery bag into the kitchen.

GRAEME

Chemistry came rather easily to me. As if I had a gift for it. I always looked forward to those classes.

CAMILLE (O.S.)

I can't say the same about math and science courses. I struggled with 'em. I needed tutors to help me. It was my advisor's idea to take those courses. To prove I can pass them. And because I had to be more well-rounded to get into medical school.

Camille comes out and joins Graeme in the kitchen.

GRAEME

How do you feel about Faggots for supper?

CAMILLE

I swear that better be English for something.

GRAEME

It's a cheap and easy treat really. Especially when infused with beef.

CAMILLE

Yep. Sounds like a faggot to me. You have run of the kitchen, chef.

GRAEME

With seven of us under one roof I rarely get to cook a proper meal. I met Szaragosa today. He cornered me in the cafeteria. He does offer new definition to candor. I'm trying to imagine you two working together.

CAMILLE

He cornered you in the cafeteria? Did he finally crossover to rape?

GRAEME

No. It was red sausage and rice day today. I got the final serving and he was desperate to trade. He seems quite harmless. More bluster than bite. Heartbroken, really. You asked if he displayed any symptoms for Asperger's. I didn't see any. PTSD is quite common for medical investigators. Imagine the horror show in his head after thousands of autopsies. Are you on Facebook?

CAMILLE

No. I deactivated my page. The way people butcher the English language lately... It hurts my eyes. Sorry.

GRAEME

I ask because the others friended me. Corinne invited me and our colleagues to a night out, mix it up with the locals. I told her I'd check with you. They seem friendly.

CAMILLE

Orion has a healthy self-image. And Kent's cool. But Corinne's madness, with that flag on her truck.

GRAEME

You value language. That's so boss. Are you fluent in other languages?

CAMILLE

French. Not just regular French but the local Creole patois. And I can sign. My tante, Auntie Eulalie, is hearing impaired. Says it's easier for us to learn sign language than it is for her to read lips. You don't need my blessing to hang with a pretty girl, Reece.

GRAEME

(sniffs)

Did that smell from autopsy follow us home? Or is it me? I should pop into the shower before I put the kettle on. Excuse me.

Graeme crosses to the bathroom.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL SUITE/OUTER CORRIDOR - MORNING

The FELLOWS file out and separate. CAMILLE fishes for his cellphone in his back pocket and auto-dials a number:

CAMILLE

Jesu? Camille. Listen, I have an idea about the Flavia Grayson case.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAYSON HOUSE - DAY

A two-story custom-built home in Culver City. CAMILLE and JESU stand in front of the house.

JESU

Some set on this guy. He lists his house two days after his wife dies. "Too many memories." And guess who he's shacking up with now?

CAMILLE

Seriously? The body's barely cold.
Mrs. Singletary's an idiot.

JESU

And possibly victim number three,
based on his track record lately.
Something must have went south
between those two after his first
marriage or else he wouldn't have
married wife number two over her.

A nondescript VAN turns onto their street.

CAMILLE

This is them. Keys? Warrant?

JESU

Got 'em. What do you mean you don't
have any secrets?

CAMILLE

What? Really? Why would I give
anyone that kind of power over me?

The van pulls up to them. The PASSENGER WINDOW rolls down
revealing TWO FEMALES, black and white, from CRIME SCENE.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - DAY

CAMILLE and JESU are upstairs at the top of the landing with
a FORENSIC TECH #1 holding a CRASH DUMMY. FORENSIC TECH #2 is
at a MONITOR to gage the dummy's "reactions" to the impact.

FORENSIC TECH

We'll toss the crash dummy down the
stairs in a dozen or so different
directions. Whatever the dummy
hits, the sensors inside them will
measure the force of the impact.

FORENSIC TECH #2

And we'll use that information to
see if it's consistent with the
pattern on your victim's body.

FORENSIC TECH #1 "recreates" the fall in multiple ways:

PASSIVE FORWARD - She just lets it fall down the stairs.

ACTIVE - She gives the dummy a little push down the stairs.

FRONTWARDS, SIDEWAYS, BACKWARDS, and any possible scenario.

CAMILLE

Well?

FORENSIC TECH #2

I can't call it. We'll need some time to analyze this information.

JESU

Worth a shot. Looks like we have no choice but to see how it plays out.

CUT TO:

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - AFTERNOON

CAMILLE and WIRTH stand at the X-RAY FILM BOX. Wirth has X-rays of Karen Grayson's head in the viewer.

WIRTH

These are Karen Grayson's CT scans when she was admitted. What do you see?

CAMILLE

Is this a trick question? Because I'm not seeing a thing.

WIRTH

It's not a trick question. Because it's not giving us a full picture. But thanks to today's technology...

CUT TO:

INT. DEPT. OF PATHOLOGY - AFTERNOON

CAMILLE and WIRTH sit before a 3-D X-RAY IMAGING SYSTEM and the three-dimensional images of Karen Grayson's X-rays. The DOCTOR feeds data from the original CT scans into the system.

DOCTOR

The 3-D X-ray gives us a three-dimensional configuration with more visual detail. The system allows you to rotate the picture, remove the tissue layer by layer, giving a more intimate look at your patient.

CAMILLE

It's almost like seeing her alive.

WIRTH

So if I strip the bruising away,
I'll be able to see the fractures.

As Wirth strips the images of the bruising away to reveal...

CAMILLE

The direction of the fatal blow.

WIRTH

Those wounds are not consistent
with the windshield impact at all.

CAMILLE

Looks like she was beaten. Struck
by some sort of bat or crowbar.
Badly enough to cause brain trauma.

WIRTH

The husband staged the car accident
after he had already killed her.
This helps confirm she was bleeding
when she was placed in the car.

CAMILLE

Now we need the actual crime scene.

WIRTH

It's the detectives job to crack
that case, Doctor. Okay? This isn't
Crossing Jordan. Your job ends once
you declare the manner of death.

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S LOCKER ROOM - EVENING

CAMILLE and GRAEME getting dressed after taking showers.

GRAEME

Corinne believes you have a problem
with her. Because she chooses to
show pride in her Southern culture.

CAMILLE

Tell fee she's full of shit. "I'm
not racist but I endorse slavery".
That's what that confederate flag
on her truck means. She's a doctor.
So she's far from stupid. And she
is free to flaunt it. But she does
not get a pass. Cultural reflexes
go deep with our people. Listen...

Camille's cellphone RINGS. He answers.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Hang on.

(into phone)

Hello? ...The results? ...Thanks.

Camille hangs up. He clicks on Jesu's number and texts him.

CLOSE ON PHONE as Camille types: "Results from crash test dummies. Wounds not consistent with stairs." He presses SEND.

GRAEME

You were about to say?

CAMILLE

I spoke to the condo manager. A two-and-two's available in three weeks. I can transition my current lease to that unit. And as far as cost, it's an additional eight-hundred a month. If we split the costs I'm saving six-hundred a month. Well?

GRAEME

I'm for it. But are you certain you want to take on a lodger?

CAMILLE

No. But after spending my first week here alone, this grown-ass man is feeling gun shy about living by himself in the big bad city. Plus, you'll have your own bed and bath.

GRAEME

Then I'm in. Absolutely. Thank you.

CAMILLE

Let's get through the year first. Then you can thank me. And tell ol' girl to keep my name out her mouth unless she's screaming my praises.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMILLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CAMILLE is in bed channel-surfing. His cellphone RINGS. It's JESU (on SKYPE or FACETIME). Camille MUTES the TV's volume.

CAMILLE

Detective Jesu. Where are you?

CLOSE ON PHONE VIDEO: Jesu holds his phone at an angle to reveal he is in the dark living room of the Grayson house.

JESU (ON VIDEO)

I got sentimental so I returned to our first crime scene together.

A BLACK MAN in coveralls is there behind Jesu.

CAMILLE

Except there's no proof a crime was committed. Where are you? The Blair Witch Project? Who's that with you?

JESU (ON VIDEO)

Tony Upshaw from Crime Scene Unit. He works nights. I had Tony spray the house from top to bottom with Luminol. You know what Luminol is?

CAMILLE

Anyone who watches CSI knows what Luminol is. You found something?

Jesu goes downstairs holding his PHONE up for a VIDEO POV into the dark basement. An eerie glow illuminates the room.

JESU (ON VIDEO)

You were saying something about a crime scene? Look for yourself.

The fluorescent blood carnage lights up the entire basement. Jesu PANS his PHONE around the room for Camille to see.

JESU (ON VIDEO) (CONT'D)

Evidence that Howard Grayson beat his wife to death in the basement and staged the fall down the steps. We'll grab samples and run 'em for DNA. If it matches, we'll get an arrest warrant for Howard Grayson. We wouldn't have gotten this far without your help. Thanks, Doctor.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

Providing the what, when and how to questions surrounding suspicious deaths is my small contribution to the healing process. Okay, I'm the first to admit it may not be much. But giving the families much-needed results to heal after all the stress they've been through from not knowing... This is my ministry.

Jesu hangs up. A feeling of accomplishment washes over Camille. Before he can lay back and enjoy the moment, he jumps out of bed, slips into his cargo shorts and tee-shirt.

CUT TO:

INT. DEPT. OF PATHOLOGY - NIGHT

CAMILLE is busy on the computer typing a report. Beat.

SALT (O.S.)
Burning the midnight oil, Doctor?

Camille looks up to see DR. SALT, who's on his way out.

CAMILLE
Just getting a head start on one of my final reports. I'll fill in the blanks once I get lab results back. You ever had any fellows wash out?

SALT
On my watch? That's funny. Listen, I'm meeting some friends in a few. We're checking out a visiting production of *Hamilton* and then dinner. If you have nothing better to do on a Friday night, maybe...

CAMILLE
Hamilton? So tempting. But I better pass. How would it look, me having way too much fun with the boss?

SALT
Harmless. But I get what you mean. And don't think of me as your boss. I'm a colleague. Next week, Doctor.

CUT TO:

EXT. WEST LOS ANGELES MEDICAL CENTER/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

CAMILLE strides across the parking lot barefoot. He finds JESU waiting for him, leaning against his Ford Fiesta.

JESU
Damn, you're country. Where are your shoes?

CAMILLE
Front seat. How did you find me?

JESU

Have we met? What do you think I do for a living? You're not the first medical examiner in progress I've parlayed with. You made it through your first week. How does it feel?

CAMILLE

It feels like I may get through this after all. It's restored my confidence. Thanks for asking.

JESU

You're welcome. Tomorrow morning it will be announced that Howard Grayson is to be charged with the double murders of Karen and Flavia Grayson. I thought maybe you'd like to go out and have dinner with me.

CAMILLE

Oh. Well, my new "lodger" did cook tonight. But I do have a hankering for ersters, beg pardon, oysters on the half. So if you know a place...

JESU

Oysters? There's the Blue Plate in Santa Monica. Views of the water.

CAMILLE

Sounds like I'm rolling with you.

Camille unlocks his car with his REMOTE. Jesu retrieves his sneakers off the front seat. They get into Jesu's car.

JESU

Where do you live?

CAMILLE

Like you don't already know, Detective. Wilshire and Hobart.

JESU

Wilshire and... That's K-town.

CAMILLE

Don't tell me you grew up there.

JESU

I grew up in Beverly Hills.

CAMILLE

Mmm-hmm. Huge yards and servants?

JESU

I grew up in the Beverly Hills they don't show on TV. And my parents were the servants and gardeners.

From across the parking lot, SALT watches them from his car.

CUT TO:

I/E. JESU'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

JESU drives as CAMILLE puts his sneakers on.

JESU

I have only one dinner rule: Leave work at work.

CAMILLE

It'll be a very short conversation then. Everything I've done 'til now has been about learning. I have no funny stories about friends or odd dates. I am a big flirt but I don't mean anything by it. You gonna feel some kind of way if I don't invite you back to my crib after dinner?

JESU

What makes you think I'd want to go back to your crib to begin with?

CAMILLE

Cher, I pulled your hoe card the moment you and your wolf tickets come sashaying into my autopsy.

JESU

Wow, you're raking leaves on a windy day. Camille, I'm married.

CAMILLE

Should have known. Brothers on the low are always too good to be true.

JESU

I was married. As of two weeks ago. Together eight years. Married five. We co-parent our four-year old son. My ex got all of our friends. And all I have are work and visitation.

CAMILLE

What's all this then, dinner out?

JESU

It's what I have to look forward to all weekend. When my ex and I met, there was something there. We were in the hands of something more powerful. When he first kissed me, we both felt it. We couldn't live without each other. Now it's over. And I'm the one crying. Over a guy.

CAMILLE

Jesu, for the love of whatever's holy, is the bitch in you going anywhere with this? I'm hungry.

Camille manages to put a smile back on Jesu's face.

JESU

Jesus. Aren't you a good friend.

CAMILLE

Baby, I can be the best there is.

BAILIFF (V.O.)

Please raise your right hand.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

FLASH-FORWARD. The BAILIFF swears CAMILLE in.

BAILIFF

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give is the whole truth without omission?

CAMILLE

Yes, it is.

BAILIFF

Have a seat, sir.

Camille sits.

PROSECUTOR

State your name for the record.

CAMILLE

Dr. Camille Isaach Essallenne.

Camille locks eyes with those of the DEFENDANT (we never see his face). Camille's eyes fill with fear as his heart races.

The Defendant, a mild-mannered but unsettling presence in the courtroom, sits with his back to us. WE SLOWLY MOVE INTO HIM.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMILLE'S APT. - NIGHT

It's late when CAMILLE arrives home. He finds GRAEME curled up on the couch under a blanket writing a letter. By hand.

CAMILLE

I thought you'd be asleep.

GRAEME

Just writing a letter to my mum.

CAMILLE

By hand? Damn, that's gangster.

GRAEME

She prefers handwritten. Though we Skype almost daily. Are you hungry? There's dinner left in the fridge.

CAMILLE

Thanks. But I went out for oysters with the detective. They're not as fresh here as they are back home.

GRAEME

The oysters or detectives? Clearly the detective if you're home early.

CAMILLE

He's fresh. Out of a relationship. He ain't ready for me and my dirty drawers. And there's what my voodoo psychic told me before moving here. I should've stopped for ice cream.

GRAEME

I put a box of lollies in the icebox just yesterday.

Camille goes to the freezer and looks inside.

CAMILLE

Popsicles you mean? This'll work.

Camille takes one and returns taking a seat near Graeme.

GRAEME

Did you always want to be a doctor?

CAMILLE

I knew I wanted to work in the health field. Maybe as a dietician. I was second-born. I didn't get the undivided attention my brother did. Definitely not the good attention. And no one pinned their hopes and dreams on me. Which meant I had to exceed expectations. Everyone's and mine. The bullying started when I was twelve. Online and off. I dealt with uneducated ignorance. This was during my parochial school years. Those little heathens with their parents' blessings always came for me, like inmates from the Parish Correctional. Attention fell off me finally when I began high school. I got my grades up, made honor roll. I liked learning new things. But being a "brainiac" brought me even more hate. It does get better. But living in that moment, all you can think about is how to end the pain.

GRAEME

I'm sorry to hear that. How was the HBCU-Morehouse experience for you?

CAMILLE

How was it being surrounded by the best and the brightest brothers of distinction who flat-out refused to sell themselves short? Empowering. Being a part of that gave me the boost of assurance I needed to pursue medicine. I wouldn't trade that experience for anything.

GRAEME

I wish we had something similar. Mind if I tell my mum you're gay?

CAMILLE

Of course not. But don't use gay. I hate that word. Too Caucasian. I prefer same-gender-loving. Or SGL. I keep forgetting how tall you are. Half my California king's yours if you and my couch aren't compatible.

GRAEME

Thanks. I have slept with a same-gender lover. So it's not an issue.

CAMILLE

You don't mark me as bi-curious.

GRAEME

My sister Anemone is gay. But if your man-box is something serious, I'll definitely stray for some of that extra greasy slap and tickle.

CAMILLE

(laughing, rises)

Greasy? You stupid. 'Night, Reece.

GRAEME

Good night. I just want to finish this first before I come to bed.

CAMILLE

Sure thing. Bonne nuit.

Camille turns and retires to his bedroom. Graeme finishes his letter. He leaves it on the coffee table for now. He wraps the blanket around him and steps out onto the balcony.

CUT TO:

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Late-night SWIMMERS cavort in the pool four floors below. One BATHING BEAUTY waves up at GRAEME inviting him to join them. Graeme responds with a polite wave. He absorbs the night air, mixed with a chorus of diverse MUSIC and DIALOGUE emanating from the neighboring units, thinking how far he is from home.

CUT TO:

INT. LOS ANGELES AIRPORT/ARRIVALS GATE - MORNING

FLASHBACK. CAMILLE leans in close as GRAEME snaps a selfie.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMILLE'S APT./BEDROOM - NIGHT

CAMILLE and GRAEME are in bed sound asleep.

PAN FROM Graeme to Camille, to Camille's cellphone on the bedside table attached to its charger. His *Psycho* "shower scene" RINGTONE CRIES. The screen reads: "**Szaragosa Calling**".

FADE OUT.