

Grosvenor Arms

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. GROSVENOR ARMS - NIGHT

Pouring rain. Lightning flashes, thunder ROLLS and RUMBLES.

A **LOST DOG** flyer FLAPS in the wind and rain while stapled to a telephone pole.

An apartment building stands six stories tall. Above the entrance is a neon sign that glows: **GROSVENOR ARMS**

A police vehicle pulls up in front of the building, parks.

INT. POLICE VEHICLE - NIGHT

In the driver seat is OFFICER WALTER WOLFE (early 40s), dressed in uniform; he has a bushy mustache paired with scruff, light brown hair with darker streaks along the sides, big brown eyes.

He stares at the building for a moment. Observes it.

Wolfe handles his radio.

WOLFE

This is Wolfe. Over.

RESPONSE (V.O.)

Copy that. What's your status?

WOLFE

I just arrived at the 10-42 call at 601 North Rossmore Avenue for Jeffrey and Tamara Burmeister.

RESPONSE (V.O.)

Copy that. Will stand by for backup.

WOLFE

No need for backup. Just another check up, shouldn't take long.

RESPONSE (V.O.)

Copy that. Remaining on stand by, just in case, Wolfe.

Wolfe smirks.

He pulls out his wallet and opens it.

Tucked inside, he pulls out a small photograph of himself with a WOMAN and FOUR KIDS (3 boys, 1 girl).

Lightning flashes, thunder GROWLS--

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

--and fades away as the storm batters the window panes.

Wolfe sits on the bed of his oldest son, PETER (8), who lies beneath the covers.

In the doorway is Wolfe's wife, OLIVIA (30s), who watches warmly. She holds a toddler boy FRANKIE (2), and next to her is MARIA (4) with a doll in her arms.

WOLFE

Alright, gotta go, buddy.

PETER

The lightning scares me.

WOLFE

What about the thunder?

PETER

Oh right, I mean the thunder.

WOLFE

There's nothing to be scared of.
Besides, if you're scared, then who's
gonna take care of Mommy while I'm
gone?

THEODORE (O.S.)

I will!

Wolfe looks over at THEODORE (6), big glasses and chipmunk face, who lies in the twin bed next to Peter's.

Wolfe smiles.

PETER

Do you fight bad guys?

WOLFE

Sometimes. Not all the time.

THEODORE

What about monsters?

WOLFE

There's no such thing as monsters.
Only bad guys.

PETER

What if it's a monster that looks
like a bad guy? Like in the scary
movies?

Wolfe looks behind him at Olivia. She shrugs innocently.

WOLFE

Who says you could be watching those?

PETER

It wasn't me, it was Ricky! He turns
them on when his mom and dad go to
sleep!

WOLFE

I'm gonna have a word with his
parents. You're too young to be
watching that kind of stuff.

PETER

It scares me.

WOLFE

Well I'll make sure the monsters
never get you.

PETER

Promise?

WOLFE

Promise. Now get some sleep.

Wolfe kisses Peter on the forehead.

He moves to Theodore and also kisses his forehead. Wolfe
removes his glasses and sets them on the bedside table.

Wolfe turns for the doorway and sees Maria.

WOLFE(CONT'D)

Alright, you're next, little lady!

Maria SQUEALS in laughter as she runs down the hallway.

Wolfe walks out of the bedroom and shuts the door.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Wolfe and Olivia stand in the hallway.

OLIVIA
Go on ahead. I'll put her to bed.

WOLFE
You sure?

OLIVIA
I've got this.

WOLFE
Seems like you've got more than just
"this"!

He squeezes the cheeks of little Frankie, which makes him GIGGLE. A kiss on his forehead calms him down.

Wolfe then looks at Olivia and caresses her face.

WOLFE(CONT'D)
I'll be home in the morning.

OLIVIA
Please be careful.

WOLFE
I will.

OLIVIA
I love you.

WOLFE
I love you, too.

They kiss.

EXT. GROSVENOR ARMS - NIGHT**BACK TO PRESENT**

Wolfe exits his vehicle and quickly runs up to the entrance of the building.

He notices the front door partially open, grabs the handle and lets himself inside.

INT. GROSVENOR ARMS - LOBBY - NIGHT

Wolfe lets the door close behind him, but it doesn't shut all the way. It remains open just a sliver.

Wolfe shakes his head.

He walks deeper into the lobby and notices a desk in a corner. A sign sits atop the desk that reads: **FOR ASSISTANCE OR INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT MANAGEMENT**

In front of the sign is a stack of business cards that read: **GERRY WALKER, LANDLORD** followed by a phone number. Wolfe takes a card.

He walks to the middle of the lobby and looks up. The stairwell of the building spirals upward, leaving a clear view of the building skylight at the very top floor.

He gazes back down at the elevator--blocked by criss-crossing warning tape. Out of service.

Wolfe looks back up the stairs. SIGHS.

He begins his trek up the stairs.

EXT. SIXTH FLOOR PLATFORM - MOMENTS LATER

Out of breath, Wolfe reaches the top floor and leans against the stairwell banister to rest a moment.

With a quick whip of air, he composes himself and KNOCKS on the apartment unit door. Waits.

No answer. He KNOCKS again, this time a bit louder.

Still no answer.

WOLFE

Los Angeles Police Department, open up.

Silence from the other side. Wolfe tests the doorknob. Locked. He POUNDS on the door.

WOLFE(CONT'D)

LAPD. Open the door or we will have the landlord open it for us.

More silence. Wolfe SIGHS.

He backs away from the door and looks down the dizzying height of the stairwell.

A CURLY-HAIRED RESIDENT, looking upward at Wolfe from the fourth floor, sneaks out of sight when Wolfe meets his gaze. A door shuts (O.S.). Wolfe rolls his eyes.

INT. LOBBY - LATER

Wolfe paces back and forth with his cell phone to his ear. He holds the business card in his hand.

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

Hello?

WOLFE

Hi, Officer Wolfe with the Los Angeles Police Department.

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

What's the issue this time?

WOLFE

I got a call to make a welfare check for two residents in your building.

Wolfe notices a smear of dry blood on the floor, which perplexes him.

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

Which building? I manage a few.

WOLFE

Uh, Grosvenor Arms. Jeffrey and Tamara Burmeister on the sixth floor. Do you know them?

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

Yeah.

WOLFE

Well do you know if they still reside in your building?

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

Yeah.

WOLFE

Do you know of their whereabouts?

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

No.

Wolfe waits for more, but Gerry remains silent.

WOLFE

Okay...Well, I'm here at the building
and their door is locked.

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

Can't you just force yourselves
inside?

WOLFE

I'm afraid not. Not for a welfare
check.

Gerry SIGHS.

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

It'll take me a while to get over
there.

WOLFE

How long?

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

Thirty to forty-five minutes.

WOLFE

You're kidding me. Okay. Okay. I'll
wait. In the meantime, do you have
any leads to their whereabouts? Do
any of the residents know them?

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

I don't know anything.

WOLFE

No residency issues? Nothing that
would have them evicted? No apartment
concerns? Nothing?

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

Look, they pay their rent. I've got
nothing else for you.

WOLFE

Alright. I'll see you soon.

Wolfe hangs up. He looks at the stairs again, then at the

first floor apartment unit. He begins his ascent.

EXT. FIRST FLOOR PLATFORM

Wolfe walks up to the door and knocks.

LILY BERG (O.S.)
(squeaky)

Oh!

(O.S.) Tiny footsteps.

The door opens: LILY BERG (late 20s), short, curvy, black hair in a bob haircut, red lipstick; dressed in a red outfit with black polka dots. She speaks with a southern accent.

LILY BERG
(disappointed)

Oh...

WOLFE

Sorry.

LILY BERG
Oh! No, I was just gettin' ready for a date and I thought you were him. And here I was wonderin', why is he so early?

WOLFE
Well, sorry to be a disappointment, but I'm taken.

LILY BERG
That's okay, you're not my type.

WOLFE
I'm devastated.

LILY BERG
What seems to be the problem, officer...?

WOLFE
Wolfe. And may I ask who you are?

LILY
Miss Lily Berg.

WOLFE
I'm checking in on a couple who lives
(MORE)

WOLFE (CONT'D)
 in this building. Are you familiar
 with either Jeffrey or Tamara
 Burmeister on the sixth floor?

LILY BERG
 Oh, yes. Tamara especially.

WOLFE
 Do you mind if I come in and ask you
 a few questions?

LILY BERG
 Oh! Not at all! Come in.

Wolfe walks inside.

INT. LILY BERG'S APARTMENT

Red. Red everywhere. Red walls. Red furniture. Red
 appliances. Wolfe is slightly taken aback.

LILY BERG
 Can I make ya some tea?

WOLFE
 (looking around)
 ...No, thank you...

Wolfe walks through the living room and sits down on a red
 couch. A cat, MITOCHONDRIA, sits on one end.

Lily joins Wolfe and sits in a red chair.

WOLFE(CONT'D)
 So what do you do for a living?

LILY BERG
 Is this part of your interrogation,
 Mister Wolfe?

WOLFE
 Just trying to warm you up.

LILY BERG
 I'm an anatomy professor.

Wolfe looks around the apartment one more time at all of the
 red furniture and decor. He smirks.

He pets Mitochondria.

LILY BERG(CONT'D)

Do you have any pets?

WOLFE

Yeah, four two-legged little animals.

Lily GIGGLES. Wolfe pulls out a small notepad.

LILY BERG

Oh Mister Wolfe, you're so funny.

WOLFE

So, about Tamara--

LILY BERG

Do ya have a photo?

WOLFE

Miss Berg, if we could please talk about what's important here...

LILY BERG

I'll bet they're precious. Just a quick peek.

Wolfe pulls out the photograph of his family and hands it to Lily. She melts in the cuteness of the kids.

LILY BERG(CONT'D)

They are precious! I was the only girl in my family, too. Her brothers pick on her?

WOLFE

Actually, she's the toughest out of them all. Never seen her cry. Not once.

She hands the photograph back to Wolfe.

LILY BERG

Your wife must be one lucky lady. You're a good husband and father, I'm sure.

WOLFE

That, I try to be. Speaking of which, what's Tamara and Jeffrey's relationship like?

LILY BERG

They're married. Oh! I can't wait to get married and have kids. What's it like, Mister Wolfe?

Wolfe gives in to conversation.

WOLFE

It's the best thing that's happened to me. It isn't exactly the easiest job. Neither is this one.

LILY BERG

Oh, I can't imagine. How do ya do it?

WOLFE

Lots of whiskey. Can you guess for which job?

LILY BERG

Mister Wolfe!

WOLFE

I'm kidding.

Lily playfully shoos the comment away.

WOLFE(CONT'D)

So, you said you knew Tamara especially well. How long have you known her for?

LILY BERG

For about a year now. Shortly after she moved into the building. We became friends, like, instantly.

WOLFE

Must be a close friendship.

LILY BERG

I mean, we really only hang out here at the building. We never have a girl's day out or anything.

WOLFE

Does she not like to go out?

LILY BERG

She's always so busy with her dog walking and acting. So, I help her
(MORE)

LILY BERG (CONT'D)
with her lines instead...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LILY BERG'S APARTMENT - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lily sits on the couch as she admires:

TAMARA BURMEISTER (early 30s) beautiful, fit, the perfect look for a leading female actress. Her hand is bandaged. She reads from a script.

TAMARA

Death is so scary. Aren't you scared?
I don't want to die. I get so scared
thinking about it, I can't sleep. And
then I start imagining what it will
be like...You know, being dead in a
coffin, being underground all alone
in the dark...with mice and, and
spiders, and worms crawling over
me...and, and dead people moaning all
around me...And, and then I start
thinking about being there forever
and ever and ever and ever until my
body's a skeleton...a clattery
skeleton with grinning teeth and no
eyes...And, and...Oh no, it's
starting to happen now...I don't want
to die, I don't want to die...

She holds a beat at the end of her monologue, then smiles.

TAMARA(CONT'D)

How was that?

LILY BERG

Oh, it was wonderful!

TAMARA

You really think so?

LILY BERG

Oh yes! Mitochondria agrees.

She looks at Mitochondria, who sits in a chair unimpressed.

Tamara sits down next to Lily.

TAMARA

My agent said that this contract is the real deal. World release. Not that straight-to-TV crap. Can you believe this?!

LILY BERG

That's incredible! I'm so excited for you!

TAMARA

This could be it, Lily. This could be my big break.

LILY BERG

Just don't forget about me, 'kay?

TAMARA

Oh Lily, you've helped me so much since I've moved into this building. How could I? I owe you one.

LILY BERG

If they ever need someone to play a dead body, call me.

Tamara drinks some tea. Lily SIGHS.

LILY BERG(CONT'D)

I wish I could be as beautiful and talented as you.

TAMARA

Oh stop.

LILY BERG

Jeffrey must be so lucky to have someone like you. How's he doin' anyway?

TAMARA

He's fine, I guess. He's been acting weird lately. Distant.

LILY BERG

How?

TAMARA

Well...it's been going on for a while now. I know everyone has their secrets, but I feel like he's hiding
(MORE)

TAMARA (CONT'D)
something, from me. I don't know,
maybe I'm just being crazy--

LILY BERG
No!

TAMARA
--but there was one night where he
came home late from work. And he just
had this...stoic look to his face.
And he went straight to bed. Didn't
say a word.

LILY BERG
Maybe he was stressed.

TAMARA
I've seen him after a stressful day
at work. Something happened to him
that night.

LILY BERG
Did you talk to him about it?

TAMARA
I asked him if everything was okay.
He said things were fine. But I could
tell something was off. Ever since
then, he's been acting different.

LILY BERG
Different, how?

TAMARA
I dunno...I have been busy lately...

LILY BERG
Because you're on your way to
becomin' a successful actress! If he
doesn't understand the time ya need
to devote to that...

TAMARA
Right. Plus with my dog walking on
the side, I just don't really have a
lot of time. Do you wonder if he
thinks I'm relying on him too much? I
mean, I don't make a ton of money...

LILY BERG
You're doin' your best.

TAMARA
You're so right. I'm probably over-
thinking things. It's just been a
weird past few weeks.
(beat)
Anyway, let's try this again. I want
to be perfect when I audition.

Tamara stands up and clears her throat. She COUGHS heavily,
sickly. Phlegm. Congestion.

It barely gets noticed by the two girls.

INT. LILY BERG'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT

DING! An oven timer ends.

Lily excitedly hops from her red chair while Wolfe finishes
taking notes.

LILY BERG
Oh! The red velvet cake is ready!

Lily walks into the kitchen. (O.S.) The sound of her taking
a cake out of the oven.

LILY BERG (O.S.)
I love red velvet cake. And I make
the best.

WOLFE
Do you have any more information on
the whereabouts of Tamara or Jeffrey?

LILY BERG (O.S.)
We can talk about them over a slice
once it's cooled down.

WOLFE
Miss Berg, if you have nothing more
for me, I should be on my way.

LILY BERG (O.S.)
So soon?

WOLFE

There are others I need to talk to.

Lily walks out from the kitchen, sits back down.

LILY BERG

Well, now that I think about it,
there was that one other time I saw
Tamara...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIRST FLOOR PLATFORM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lily walks up to her door, but stops at the sound of rushing
FOOTSTEPS as someone comes down the stairs.

Tamara appears in a hoodie, hood up, and yoga pants. She has
bags beneath her eyes. She looks a bit pale.

She carries a plastic bag.

LILY BERG

Hey, Tamara.

Tamara stops and looks at Lily with tired eyes.

LILY BERG(CONT'D)

You okay?

TAMARA

Yeah. I'm fine.

LILY BERG

You look terrible.

TAMARA

Jeez, thanks.

Lily studies Tamara. Her face LIGHTS UP.

LILY BERG

(attempted whisper)

Are you pregnant?!

TAMARA

No! Why would you think that?

Lily GIGGLES, but stops short when Tamara DRY HEAVES. She
holds the plastic bag up to her mouth, attempts to HURL.

LILY BERG

Oh, I was just jokin'...

Tamara VOMITS into the plastic bag. Lily can't help but watch. A sick fascination. An anatomy professor.

LILY BERG(CONT'D)

Are...Are ya sure you're not pregnant?

Tamara finishes vomiting. She looks into the bag.

Her eyes grow wide. Shock? Fear? She looks over at Lily with her fearful eyes.

BLOOD drips from her nostril.

LILY BERG(CONT'D)

(motioning to her nose)

Uh, you've got somethin'...

Tamara touches her nostril and sees the blood.

TAMARA

I've gotta go to the doctor...

Tamara rushes toward the entrance of the apartment building, leaving Lily in the dust.

INT. LILY BERG'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT

Wolfe and Lily in the living room.

WOLFE

So did she ever say if she was pregnant or not?

LILY BERG

I haven't seen her since then.

WOLFE

When was this?

LILY BERG

Monday, I think. She looked pretty sick. And nose bleeds aren't common with pregnancies, if, like, at all.

WOLFE

And what about Jeffrey? Did she go
(MORE)

WOLFE (CONT'D)
 into anymore detail about why he
 might be acting distant?

LILY BERG
 I wish I could be more help but I
 just don't know him as well, and she
 didn't say much more about him.
 You're better off askin' other people
 in this building.

As if on cue, there's a KNOCK at the front door (O.S.). Lily
 hops from her seat.

LILY BERG(CONT'D)
 Oh! That's him!

WOLFE
 Yes, I should get going anyway.

Lily guides Wolfe to the front entrance.

EXT. FIRST FLOOR PLATFORM

The door opens and reveals LILY'S DATE, a nerdy man, short
 and round. Big glasses magnify his eyes.

Lily LIGHTS UP.

LILY BERG
 Oh! Hello.

She looks at Wolfe, who stands next to her.

LILY BERG(CONT'D)
 He's not with me.

WOLFE
 No, just stopping by.
 (to Lily)
 Thank you for your time.

LILY BERG
 Yes, of course.

Wolfe leaves the apartment, while Lily's date enters.

LILY BERG(CONT'D)
 Oh, and Mister Wolfe?

Wolfe turns around.

LILY BERG(CONT'D)

Be sure you're up to date on your vaccinations. Don't want ya gettin' sick, too.

WOLFE

Thanks for the reminder, Miss Berg.

She smiles and shuts the door.

Wolfe makes his way upstairs to the...

EXT. SECOND FLOOR PLATFORM

...where he is greeted with a beautiful mature black woman with short, vibrant red hair. She wears a fiery orange and black-striped silk nightgown with large bell sleeves, and holds a glass of sparkling wine.

This is MONICA SNYDER (60s).

Monica stands in the doorway of her apartment, leans against the door frame. She looks seductive, attractive for her age.

Wolfe stops and admires her.

MONICA SNYDER

I couldn't help but overhear you crashed a dinner date.

WOLFE

It wasn't my intention.

MONICA SNYDER

Right. Wine? It's sparkling.

WOLFE

I don't drink on the job.

MONICA SNYDER

One glass won't hurt.

She holds out her glass to Wolfe.

MONICA SNYDER(CONT'D)

It's my nectar.

Wolfe looks at the drink, back at Monica and her seductive stare, then back at the drink.

WOLFE

Anyway, if you were eavesdropping,
you must know why I'm here then.

MONICA SNYDER

Bits and pieces. You're looking for a
missing couple, am I right?

WOLFE

Just a welfare check. Jeffrey and
Tamara Burmeister. Do you know them?

MONICA SNYDER

Yes.

WOLFE

Can you tell me a little about them?

MONICA SNYDER

Why don't I tell you more about me.
What would you like to know?

WOLFE

I would like to know about your
interactions, if any, with Tamara or
Jeffrey.

MONICA SNYDER

You scratch my back, I scratch yours.

Wolfe smirks slightly.

WOLFE

You used to model, didn't you?

MONICA SNYDER

You're very good at your job, Officer
Wolfe.

WOLFE

And you're very good at
eavesdropping.

(beat)

I've seen you before. In magazines.

Monica smiles. It's hypnotizing.

MONICA SNYDER

What a great memory you have. Come
into my apartment. Rest a while.

WOLFE

I have a job I need to do.

MONICA SNYDER

You're waiting for something.

WOLFE

The landlord, with the keys to the top unit apartment.

MONICA SNYDER

Why don't you rest a bit. Have a couple glasses of this wine.

WOLFE

I'm sure it's good.

MONICA SNYDER

I've tried wines from all over the world. The life of a model meant that I traveled a lot. I've seen places that not many people get to.

WOLFE

Migratory. I like it.

MONICA SNYDER

I'm well-traveled.

WOLFE

Right. Okay, my turn. Jeffrey and Tamara, what do you know about them?

MONICA SNYDER

Nothing that would probably help for your case. I do know that Jeffrey can get a bit freaky, however...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SECOND FLOOR PLATFORM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

JEFFREY BURMEISTER (30s), handsome, fit, drunk, and Tamara, also drunk, stumble up the stairs. They're dressed in green.

Monica stands in her doorway with a glass of sparkling wine.

MONICA SNYDER

Having fun, you two?

Jeffrey and Tamara stop with big smiles.

MONICA SNYDER(CONT'D)
Where'd you come from?

TAMARA
Molly Malone's off Fairfax. It's
Saint Patrick's Day! Duh!

Jeffrey HOWLS excitedly.

MONICA SNYDER
You two look like you know how to
have a lot of fun. Want to come in
for a few more drinks?

She winks.

JEFFREY
And do what?

Tamara slaps Jeffrey playfully.

TAMARA
He's drunk. Don't listen to him.

MONICA SNYDER
I don't mind. Come on in.

TAMARA
We're not interested.

MONICA SNYDER
It'll be fun.

JEFFREY
Yeah, it'll be fun.

Tamara becomes SERIOUS.

TAMARA
Jeffrey...

JEFFREY
What? We were just joking!
(to Monica)
Right?

MONICA SNYDER
Why don't you come inside.

Jeffrey is captured by Monica's seductive stare. He finally
breaks away and looks at Tamara.

JEFFREY

One drink won't hurt.

TAMARA

Jeffrey, why do you always--

She stops herself, and instead GRUNTS in frustration and STORMS up the stairs.

JEFFREY

She gets jealous sometimes.

MONICA SNYDER

Nothing to be jealous about. I'd make sure she'd have plenty of attention paid to her. Do you still want to come inside?

Jeffrey drunkenly contemplates it.

MONICA SNYDER(CONT'D)

I'll let you.

JEFFREY

I don't know...

MONICA SNYDER

Have some wine.

JEFFREY

Wine and beer don't go well together.

MONICA SNYDER

I'll get you drunk off of something else, then.

Jeffrey smirks. He steps forward, but stops.

JEFFREY

I need to get upstairs to Tamara.

Monica smiles softly.

MONICA SNYDER

Yes. Take care of her. Remember, I'm always here, Jeffrey.

Jeffrey drunkenly smiles as he stumbles up the stairs.

EXT. SECOND FLOOR PLATFORM - NIGHT**BACK TO PRESENT**

Wolfe writes in his notepad.

WOLFE

So she got upset when Jeffrey showed interest?

MONICA SNYDER

I think she's been cheated on before. By him.

WOLFE

What makes you say that?

MONICA SNYDER

I've heard rumors...

WOLFE

Do you think she would be the kind to just get up and leave if Jeffrey ever cheated on her?

MONICA SNYDER

I would.

WOLFE

Anything else?

Monica thinks.

MONICA SNYDER

Oh, yes, Tamara is also not feeling too well. It was Tuesday night...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SECOND FLOOR PLATFORM - ANOTHER NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Monica stands in her doorway, yet again with a glass of sparkling wine in her hand.

MUSIC plays softly from within her apartment.

Then the sound of...VOMITING.

Monica steps away from her doorway and looks over the railing of the stairwell.

In the lobby, Jeffrey and Tamara stand in the foyer of the apartment building. Tamara is doubled over as she vomits onto the floor. Subtle, but it's a red puddle.

MONICA SNYDER

You two better clean that up when she's done.

JEFFREY

We will. Mind your own business.

Tamara finishes, and Jeffrey helps her up the stairs.

As they reach the second floor, Monica backs away.

MONICA SNYDER

I don't want whatever she has.

Jeffrey glares at Monica.

JEFFREY

Come on, Tamara.

They continue upstairs.

INT. LOBBY - LATER

Jeffrey mops up the red puddle.

EXT. SECOND FLOOR PLATFORM - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT

Wolfe and Monica standing at the second floor platform.

WOLFE

You're the second person to tell me about how Tamara was feeling ill.

MONICA SNYDER

Maybe she had to go to the hospital. Have you called any of them?

Wolfe scribbles notes.

WOLFE

No but that will be my next stop once I look in their apartment. I'm not familiar with this area, where would the nearest hospital be?

MONICA SNYDER
Southern California Hospital at
Hollywood.

He scribbles more down.

WOLFE
And you're telling the truth? You and
Jeffrey didn't end up doing anything
with each other on Saint Patrick's
day, did you?

MONICA SNYDER
We did not.

WOLFE
I need to know, because if Tamara is
the type to leave, that's vital
information.

Monica caresses Wolfe's face.

MONICA SNYDER
So serious, Officer Wolfe. If you
stress yourself too much, you could
kill yourself.

WOLFE
I can handle myself perfectly fine.

MONICA SNYDER
You'll work yourself to death. Take a
break. The offer to come inside is
still available.

WOLFE
I do appreciate the offer, but I'm a
faithful man to my wife and children.
Maybe the next officer who makes his
way through this building.

MONICA SNYDER
Oh please, this place isn't that
interesting.

WOLFE
Who else can I ask questions around
here?

MONICA SNYDER
Try the Yellow Jackets upstairs.

WOLFE
The Yellow Jackets?

MONICA SNYDER
A trio of Vietnamese brothers and
their mother.

WOLFE
Isn't that a bit racist?

MONICA SNYDER
Hey, I didn't come up with the name.
Anyway, they had a confrontation with
Tamara and Jeffrey a few days ago, I
think?

WOLFE
Over what?

MONICA SNYDER
I'm not sure.

WOLFE
Well thank you, you've been very
helpful. Have a good night, Miss...?

MONICA SNYDER
Monica Snyder.

She holds out her hand. Wolfe takes it and kisses it gently.

He turns to leave.

MONICA SNYDER(CONT'D)
Oh, and one other thing about
Jeffery, Officer Wolfe.

He stops and looks back.

MONICA SNYDER(CONT'D)
There's something...interesting about
him. Just a vibe. Like he's hiding
something.

WOLFE
Like what?

MONICA SNYDER
Ask around. I'm sure you'll find out
sooner or later.

She sinks back into her apartment and shuts the door.

EXT. THIRD FLOOR PLATFORM - MOMENTS LATER

Wolfe KNOCKS on the unit door. It opens quickly, revealing--

JOHNNY NGUYEN (late 20s), yellow t-shirt, muscular, a scar across his neck.

KENNY NGUYEN (early 20s), baggy black shirt with yellow baggy pants, heavysset, a resting bitch face.

THAO NGUYEN (mid 20s), yellow and black thick-striped shirt, skinny, small face.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

I knew you'd come knockin'.

WOLFE

Everyone here watches over one another, don't they.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

We're all neighbors here. Small places don't leave much room for business to hide.

WOLFE

That's the opposite from what I've been told.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

What do you want?

WOLFE

Los Angeles Police. I'm here to ask a few questions about a couple who lives up on the top floor of this building.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

We don't know anything.

KENNY NGUYEN

Yeah, we don't know anything.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

Shut up.

WOLFE

Well correct me if I'm wrong, but I was told you would know something

(MORE)

WOLFE (CONT'D)
about Tamara and Jeffrey Burmeister.

JOHNNY NGUYEN
You're wrong.

KENNY NGUYEN
From who?

JOHNNY NGUYEN
Shut up.

WOLFE
Monica Snyder from the floor below.

JOHNNY NGUYEN
That old hag needs to keep her
fucking mouth shut.

THAO NGUYEN
(reserved)
Just tell him, Johnny.

JOHNNY NGUYEN
Shut. Up.

WOLFE
Listen to your brother, Johnny.

JOHNNY NGUYEN
Look, we didn't do anything, okay?

WOLFE
I'm not here for you. Though, I know
who you are.

Johnny looks away.

Wolfe looks at Thao, then at his hand. He's missing his
index finger.

WOLFE(CONT'D)
What happened to your index finger?
Gang get ya too?

Kenny SNICKERS.

THAO NGUYEN
I lost it to--

JOHNNY NGUYEN
 (in Vietnamese)
 Shut up! Do you want him to call the
 health department on us?

WOLFE
 What did you say?

JOHNNY NGUYEN
 Nothin', nothin'. He's just being
 stupid. Yes, we know them.

WOLFE
 I was told you got in a bit of a
 confrontation with them?

JOHNNY NGUYEN
 It was nothin'.

KENNY NGUYEN
 Yeah, it was nothin'.

THAO NGUYEN
 They almost got in a fight.

JOHNNY NGUYEN
 Shut up!

THAO NGUYEN
 Just tell the guy what happened so we
 can go back to taking care of Mom.

JOHNNY NGUYEN
 How about you go take care of her?
 Check on the soup, too!

Thao disappears into the apartment.

WOLFE
 What's wrong with your mom?

JOHNNY NGUYEN
 She's sick. Anyway--

WOLFE
 Woah, wait, your mother is sick?

JOHNNY NGUYEN
 Are you deaf?

WOLFE

Well, so was Tamara, according to the others I've talked to. What's she sick with?

THAO NGUYEN

The flu, we think.

WOLFE

In March? Springtime cold?

THAO NGUYEN

Worse than a cold.

WOLFE

So there's some kind of virus going around? Are we sure Tamara's not just holed up in her apartment?

JOHNNY NGUYEN

How should we know?

WOLFE

Why wouldn't they tell anyone that they were sick? Call into work?

KENNY NGUYEN

Like he said, how should we know? We don't even talk to them that much.

(to Johnny)

Except that one time.

WOLFE

What one time?

JOHNNY NGUYEN

It was nothin'. We just had somethin' heated, that's all.

WOLFE

Everything helps. What happened?

Johnny SIGHS and motions to Kenny.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

It was Wednesday night. I was arguing with these two jerkwads, I can't remember over what. Probably something stupid they did...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THIRD FLOOR PLATFORM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Johnny, Kenny, and Thao ARGUE with one another in Vietnamese. The arguing ECHOS through the stairwell.

Jeffrey STORMS down the steps.

JEFFREY

Can you guys not argue so loudly? Or do it inside of your apartment?

JOHNNY NGUYEN

Or what? Mind your own business.

JEFFREY

Look, my girlfriend is sick and you guys are being loud as fuck. Shut up or take it somewhere else.

KENNY NGUYEN

Yo, don't talk to my brother that way.

JEFFREY

Stay outta this.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

You looking for a fight, man?

JEFFREY

Back off.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

No, you back off.

JEFFREY

You think I'm afraid of you?

THAO NGUYEN

I'd be if I were you.

He and Kenny SNICKER.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

Shut up.

The two stop SNICKERING.

Johnny and Jeffrey have a stare-down.

JEFFREY

I deal with death every day. What
(MORE)

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
 makes you think I'm afraid of you?

JOHNNY NGUYEN
 Oh yeah? What do you do?

Jeffrey's eyes are wide. Maniacal. Crazy.

JEFFREY
 I take dead bodies. And I cut them
 open. Men. Women. Children. Every.
 Single. One. And you know what? I
 like it.

The three brothers look at Jeffrey with pale faces.

JEFFREY(CONT'D)
 So tell me, what makes you think I'm
 afraid of you?

JOHNNY NGUYEN
 The fuck's wrong with you, man?

JEFFREY
 Your guess is as good as mine.

Wide-eyed stare. Sociopathic.

JOHNNY NGUYEN
 Fuckin' freak.

Tamara walks down the stairs. She looks pale, with dark bags
 beneath her eyes.

Jeffery clears his throat and regains normal composure. He
 forces a smile.

JEFFREY
 Hey man, I was just joking. I'm a
 mortician, just some dark humor.

Jeffrey looks back at Tamara.

TAMARA
 Jeffrey, come on. Come back upstairs.

JEFFREY
 Go back inside, Tamara.

TAMARA
 Come on, Jeffrey.

JEFFREY

This doesn't concern you.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

Yo, how does a freak like you get a girl like her?

Tamara SNAPS her head at Johnny. She takes a step toward him, her face twitchy. Another step forward.

Johnny steps forward too, sizes himself up.

Tamara emits a deep, animalistic growl from within her.

Jeffrey cautiously grabs her shoulders and gently pulls her away from the brothers.

She COUGHS.

BLOOD SPRAYS onto her hands, onto the floor.

Everybody steps back from her. She stares at them, mostly out of fear.

TAMARA

Don't look at me like that!

JOHNNY NGUYEN

(to Jeffrey)

Look man, your girl's real sick. Get her the fuck away from us.

JEFFREY

Just be quiet. That's all we ask.

Jeffrey puts his arms around Tamara, who doesn't take her eyes off of the three brothers, and they walk up the stairs.

EXT. THIRD FLOOR PLATFORM - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT

Wolfe and the three brothers in the doorway.

WOLFE

Jesus.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

She was real weird.

WOLFE

And what about what Jeffrey said to you? About the dead bodies?

JOHNNY NGUYEN

Oh yeah, fucked up, huh?

WOLFE

So he's a mortician?

Wolfe scribbles down some notes.

KENNY NGUYEN

Weird, huh?

WOLFE

What do you think he meant by how he likes cutting up dead bodies?

JOHNNY NGUYEN

What kind of question is that? Of course he meant exactly what he said.

WOLFE

You get angry easily.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

Screw off.

KENNY NGUYEN

Yeah, screw off.

WOLFE

Just asking questions here.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

The dude probably sliced up his girl. Ever think that?

WOLFE

It's crossed my mind.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

Think about what the guy does. He practices cutting up bodies and cleaning everything. He could be a serial killer for all we know.

WOLFE

Until I see their apartment, I'm not jumping to any conclusions.

KENNY NGUYEN

He did say he liked cutting them up.
The dude probably does other stuff to
the bodies too.

WOLFE

Like what?

JOHNNY NGUYEN

That's fucking foul, Ken.

KENNY NGUYEN

I'm just sayin', the guy gave me
weird vibes is all.

WOLFE

You're not the only one.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

It's always you white boys that are
the crazy ones.

WOLFE

Don't think I don't know what you get
yourself into.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

You ain't got nothin' on me.

WOLFE

Like I said, I'm not here for you.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

Are we done here?

WOLFE

You've got nothing else for me?

JOHNNY NGUYEN

No. Now leave.

Johnny turns around to go back inside of his apartment, but
bumps into Kenny instead.

Johnny YELLS at him in Vietnamese and SLAMS the door.

Wolfe turns and walks away.

EXT. STAIRWELL - BETWEEN THIRD AND FOURTH FLOOR - LATER

Wolfe sits on the steps with his cell phone to his ear. He

speaks to a SECRETARY.

SECRETARY (V.O.)
Southern California Hospital at
Hollywood, how can I help you?

WOLFE
Hi, this is Officer Walter Wolfe with
the Los Angeles Police Department.
I'm working a welfare check for a
couple that appears to be missing,
and I'm calling to see if anybody was
admitted to your guys' hospital
recently?

SECRETARY (V.O.)
What is the name of the patient, sir?

WOLFE
Tamara Burmeister. She might've been
admitted a couple of days ago for
some kind of illness.

SECRETARY (V.O.)
Can I put you on hold while I search
for her records?

WOLFE
Please.

HOLD MUSIC begins to play.

He looks up and sees the same curly-haired resident peeking
over the railing from the floor above him. The man, caught,
sneaks away quickly. A door SLAMS shut.

The secretary resumes the call.

SECRETARY (V.O.)
Are you still there, sir?

WOLFE
Yes, hi. What did you find?

SECRETARY (V.O.)
We show that Mrs. Burmeister was seen
by one of our general practitioners
on Saturday and then again on Monday.

WOLFE
Okay, but she's not there right now?

SECRETARY (V.O.)
I'm afraid not.

WOLFE
But she was seen there though? Do you mind if I ask what for?

SECRETARY (V.O.)
Unfortunately I cannot share that kind of information with you without proper paperwork.

WOLFE
I get that it goes against policy, but--

SECRETARY (V.O.)
I'm sorry, sir. Due to HIPPA regulations I can't give out that information.

WOLFE
Is there anything you can tell me, who she was referred to that I can call, anything?

The secretary SIGHS. She lowers her voice.

SECRETARY (V.O.)
(reluctant)
Okay, look...We sent blood tests out to be examined. Just as a precaution due to why she came in...They came back...inconclusive to be able to properly diagnose her. In fact, we've been trying to call her to get her for a follow up appointment but we haven't been able to get a hold of her.

WOLFE
So they don't know what she was sick with?

SECRETARY (V.O.)
I've given you enough information.

WOLFE
Okay. Okay. Thank you. What you've told me helps enough.

Wolfe hangs up and SIGHS. He looks back up the stairwell at

where he saw the man.

EXT. FOURTH FLOOR PLATFORM - MOMENTS LATER

Wolfe raises his fist to knock on the door, but it opens just before he can.

At the door is MARKY MESQUITE (mid 30s), tall, skinny, a big beak of a nose and curly hair. He drinks a Bloody Mary.

MARKY MESQUITE

Well. It's about time.

WOLFE

Sorry to make you wait.

MARKY MESQUITE

I may know a thing or two about Tamara and Jeffrey. What can you do for me in return, Wolfe?

Wolfe smirks.

WOLFE

Have you met Monica Snyder on the second floor?

MARKY MESQUITE

Isn't she great? But alas, she's lacking something that I desire quite insatiably.

Marky Mesquite runs his index finger along Wolfe's sleeve.

WOLFE

(re: Bloody Mary)

How many of those have you had?

MARKY MESQUITE

Does that really pertain to your case, Wolfe?

WOLFE

I just want to know if your time will be of value.

MARKY MESQUITE

The privilege of speaking with me alone is value enough.

WOLFE

The clock is ticking.

MARKY MESQUITE

Oh daddy! You've got quite a bite to you.

WOLFE

Only when provoked.

MARKY MESQUITE

Am I really that provoking, Wolfe?
I'm just making the best of this
wonderfully dull Sunday evening. And
I know how to make things...fun.

Marky winks.

WOLFE

I take my job very seriously.

MARKY MESQUITE

Ugh, you're one of those men.

WOLFE

Indeed I am.

MARKY MESQUITE

Why don't you come in? I'll make you
a Bloody Mary while you interrogate
me.

WOLFE

I'll interrogate, but nothing more.

MARKY MESQUITE

Oh come on. I make the best Bloody
Marys.

Marky steps away from the doorway and invites Wolfe inside.

Wolfe stands and hesitates, but eventually goes inside.

INT. MARKY MESQUITE'S APARTMENT

It's very clean and organized. Everything looks like it came from IKEA. Slick, modern, no curved edges. A desk with three monitors--a very nice setup--sits in the corner of the living room.

Marky walks into the kitchen while Wolfe sits down on the couch in the living room.

MARKY MESQUITE (O.S.)
How strong do you like it?

WOLFE
I'm not interested.

MARKY MESQUITE (O.S.)
I didn't ask if you were.

Marky sticks his head into the living room.

MARKY MESQUITE
Oh, you're talking about the Bloody
Mary.

He resumes making the drink.

MARKY MESQUITE (O.S.)
If you don't drink this, I guess I'll
have to!

WOLFE
Looks like you're drinking for two
then.

MARKY MESQUITE (O.S.)
Oh, stubborn, I like it.

(O.S.) Liquid POURING, ice STIRRING.

Marky walks into the living room and sets a Bloody Mary in
front of Wolfe, then sits himself down.

Wolfe looks at the drink.

MARKY MESQUITE
Tempting, I know.

WOLFE
What can you tell me about Tamara and
Jeffrey Burmeister?

MARKY MESQUITE
Straight to business, no room for
fluff. What, you don't want to get to
know each other a bit, Wolfe?

WOLFE
The landlord will be here soon with
the keys to their apartment.

MARKY MESQUITE
 He lives so very far away, though.
 You've got plenty of time.

WOLFE
 What about Tamara and Jeffrey
 Burmeister?

MARKY MESQUITE
 Oh, Wolfey, relax. Take a sip. Get
 your mind off of work for a hot
 minute.

WOLFE
 I thought you said your time would be
 valuable to me.

MARKY MESQUITE
 I can make it worth your while.

WOLFE
 So answer the question.

Marky SIGHS.

MARKY MESQUITE
 Okay, fine. I know them. Jeffrey
 moreso than Tamara. I'd only usually
 see her when she was heading to or
 from her apartment.

WOLFE
 And Jeffrey?

MARKY MESQUITE
 Well, he and I have a bit of a closer
 friendship.

WOLFE
 How close?

MARKY MESQUITE
 Let's just say that Jeffrey has needs
 that can't always be fulfilled by
 Tamara.

WOLFE
 What do you mean?

MARKY MESQUITE
 Oh honey. I don't want to have to
 (MORE)

MARKY MESQUITE (CONT'D)
spell it out for you.

WOLFE
Every detail is important.

MARKY MESQUITE
Well, I don't know how important this
is to what you're looking for, but...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARKY MESQUITE'S APARTMENT - DAY - FLASHBACK

Marky Mesquite and Jeffrey sit in the living room. They both sip on Bloody Marys.

JEFFREY
Man, these are great. They're exactly
what I needed this morning.

MARKY MESQUITE
Is Tamara sure she doesn't want to
join?

JEFFREY
She's too busy studying lines and
shit. As if she isn't investing
enough time in that already.

MARKY MESQUITE
Ruh roh. I hear drama.

JEFFREY
It's nothing.

MARKY MESQUITE
Oh you straight men, it's always
nothing. Drink some more and spill
the tea.

Jeffrey takes another drink from his Bloody Mary.

JEFFREY
Welp. The bedroom is completely dead,
so that's cool.

MARKY MESQUITE
Well, you are a mortician.

JEFFREY

It might as well be a mortuary.

MARKY MESQUITE

Oh no. It's gone stale, hasn't it?

JEFFREY

Yep. I get it, acting is hard and dog walking is tiring. But I've got needs too.

MARKY MESQUITE

How long has it been?

JEFFREY

Nearly a year.

MARKY MESQUITE

(cringe)

Oof.

JEFFREY

Right? Even if she just laid there and took it, that'd be fine. The dead don't mind it!

MARKY MESQUITE

Oh Jeffrey!

JEFFREY

It's a joke!

MARKY MESQUITE

You know there are people out there who actually do that? And I thought I had some sick kinks.

Jeffrey takes another drink from his Bloody Mary.

MARKY MESQUITE (CONT'D)

Do you two have any fetishes?

JEFFREY

I've got a couple.

MARKY MESQUITE

Oh, do tell.

Jeffrey winks.

MARKY MESQUITE(CONT'D)
What's that for?

JEFFREY
What's what for?

MARKY MESQUITE
Playful. Cute.

JEFFREY
I'm not opposed to some things,
Marky.

MARKY MESQUITE
The Bloody's hitting you hard, isn't
it?

JEFFREY
I told you how long it's been.

MARKY MESQUITE
Right. And Tamara...

JEFFREY
Doesn't have to know. It's not like
it's cheating or anything. Think of
it more as doing a favor.

Marky takes a thirsty drink from his Bloody Mary, finishes
it off. He stares down at Jeffrey's legs, spread wide.

INT. MARKY MESQUITE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT

Wolfe and Marky Mesquite in the living room.

WOLFE
Did Tamara find out?

MARKY MESQUITE
Eventually.

WOLFE
How?

MARKY MESQUITE
Word gets around quickly in this
building.

WOLFE
How did she react?

MARKY MESQUITE

Let's just say...she didn't like it.

WOLFE

Did she leave Jeffrey?

MARKY MESQUITE

I don't know. I didn't see much of either of them after then.

WOLFE

When did this happen?

MARKY MESQUITE

Couple weeks ago.

WOLFE

So, just when everything started to go downhill.

MARKY MESQUITE

When did they go missing?

WOLFE

Now you're interrogating me.

MARKY MESQUITE

Just being my nosy self.

WOLFE

Jeffrey has come off as a bit...odd to say the least. From what I've been told. Did he seem to act weird to you?

MARKY MESQUITE

Just because he's a mortician doesn't make him weird.

WOLFE

I didn't say that, but he has made some questionable comments from the sound of it.

MARKY MESQUITE

And Tamara?

WOLFE

She's a different story.

MARKY MESQUITE

Oh drama, I love it. Come on, fess up.

WOLFE

When you last saw her, did she seem ill to you?

MARKY MESQUITE

Oh that's it? She's sick? Maybe they're both ill and forgot to call into work. I found out recently that Jeffrey isn't exactly the cleanest guy out there.

WOLFE

How do you mean?

MARKY MESQUITE

He's been poking around in places he probably shouldn't be. Didn't really smell so fresh..."down there". I could smell it in his pubes.

WOLFE

(disgusted)
Christ.

MARKY MESQUITE

Sorry, you wanted details, I gave you details.

WOLFE

If they were sick, why would they just shut themselves in and not tell anyone?

Marky shrugs.

WOLFE(CONT'D)

Did Jeffrey ever talk about any other women?

MARKY MESQUITE

Nope. Just Tamara, but really just to complain about his relationship issues.

WOLFE

Right. Right now it could be anything.

MARKY MESQUITE

Something strange is going on here. Call it women's intuition.

WOLFE

Monica said the same thing. What do you think it is?

MARKY MESQUITE

Not sure. Just that I saw something happen about a week ago with Tamara and since then everything's felt off.

WOLFE

What happened to her?

MARKY MESQUITE

I was hanging out in my apartment when I heard a door slam shut. I usually look through the peephole just to spy on people coming and going and...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARKY MESQUITE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

(O.S.) A door SLAMS shut.

Marky looks into the peephole of the door.

MARKY'S POV: an empty stairwell. Stillness. Then, FOOTSTEPS fade in. Slow. Feet DRAG along the steps and floor. Then, Tamara comes into view. She sluggishly walks down the steps BACKWARD. Her hand is bandaged.

BACK TO SCENE

Marky pulls away from the peephole, perplexed.

EXT. FOURTH FLOOR PLATFORM

Marky's door opens and he steps out onto the platform, yet another Bloody Mary in hand. He watches Tamara as she continues to walk backward down the steps.

MARKY MESQUITE

Tamara?

She ignores him as she walks beside him. He sees her face.

Her eyes are wide open, her mouth agape. Her face is pale. She looks sick. She never blinks.

MARKY MESQUITE(CONT'D)

Tamara?

Tamara continues down the stairs.

CUT TO:

Marky leans against the stairway banister. He watches Tamara continue to the main level of the apartment building.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Tamara reaches the bottom of the staircase and stands still like a statue.

EXT. FOURTH FLOOR PLATFORM

Marky continues to watch. He sips on his Bloody Mary.

Suddenly, she SNAPS AWAKE with a GASP. She looks around, absorbs her surroundings. Then, looks up. She sees Marky. He waves to her.

MARKY MESQUITE

Hey, sweetie.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Tamara walks up to the fourth floor where Marky awaits her.

MARKY MESQUITE(CONT'D)

Somebody's a sleepwalker.

TAMARA

Shut up.

MARKY MESQUITE

Oh come on, you should've seen your face. You looked like you saw your dad's dick.

TAMARA

Not in the mood, Marky.

She continues up the steps.

MARKY MESQUITE

What's wrong with your hand, babe?

TAMARA

Buzz off.

Tamara disappears beyond the stairs as Marky sips on his Bloody Mary and casually steps back into his apartment.

INT. MARKY MESQUITE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT

Wolfe and Marky on the couch.

WOLFE

What was wrong with her hand?

MARKY MESQUITE

It was all bandaged up. Not sure.
Like I said, she didn't explain.

WOLFE

Well, I think I've gotten what I came
for. Landlord should be here any
minute.

MARKY MESQUITE

Maybe he'll drink this Bloody Mary. I
can call him to see where he's at for
you.

WOLFE

No need. I'll just wait for him.

Wolfe stands.

MARKY MESQUITE

You still have one more unit to
interrogate, Wolfe.

WOLFE

I think I've gotten enough
information.

MARKY MESQUITE

You sure? They live right below
Jeffrey and Tamara's place. They
probably know a lot more than I do.

Wolfe contemplates this, then turns to leave. Marky remains
on the couch.

MARKY MESQUITE(CONT'D)

Oh sure, all talk and no play. Thanks
for the chat, Wolfe!

Wolfe shows himself out.

EXT. FOURTH FLOOR PLATFORM

As he exits the apartment unit, Wolfe BUMPS into ROBERT MUSCA (30s), short, heavysset, bald, bug-eyed. Just, not the most attractive person. Twitchy and greasy.

Robert carries bags of groceries full of junk food. He drops one bag, its contents spill on the floor. He BREATHEs heavily from the climb up the stairs.

WOLFE

Sorry.

Wolfe bends down to pick up some of the junk food. He hands them to Robert.

ROBERT MUSCA

You'd think I'd learn my lesson by now with this kind of food. But I love it. So does my brother.

WOLFE

Is that who lives in this unit?

ROBERT MUSCA

Oh, no. The guy who lives in there is weird. I live in the unit above.

WOLFE

I suppose you wouldn't mind if I ask you a couple questions then?

Robert's face drops.

ROBERT MUSCA

Did I do something, officer?

WOLFE

Not at all. I'm actually here to see the couple that lives above your apartment.

ROBERT MUSCA

Oh, right. Them.

WOLFE

Do you mind?

ROBERT MUSCA

Not at all. Come on, I'll let you in.
My brother might be able to help,
too.

They begin to walk up the stairs to the next floor.

ROBERT MUSCA(CONT'D)

The elevator has been out of service
for ages. I should've lost some
weight by now.

WOLFE

I hear a healthy diet trumps
exercise.

ROBERT MUSCA

Try telling that to my brother. Our
family isn't--wasn't--the healthiest.
Always short-lived, never reached the
age of sixty due to heart attacks and
other health issues. Just long enough
to fuck and die.

WOLFE

Marvelous.

EXT. FIFTH FLOOR PLATFORM

The two reach the platform where the fifth floor apartment
unit sits. Robert unlocks the door and opens it, inviting
Wolfe in first.

Wolfe hesitates as he looks inside. He's overcome with the
stench of something unpleasant, and it's very clear that the
inside of the unit is a complete dump:

From the outside looking in, Wolfe notices trash and old
delivery food boxes, drinks, clothes, expired items, all
occupy the inside.

Sitting on the couch is SHEEN MUSCA (30s), a twin of Robert.

ROBERT MUSCA

Go on in, make yourself comfortable.
Sorry for the mess.

WOLFE

Do you mind if I ask you two a few
questions out here?

ROBERT MUSCA

I have to put the groceries up. My
(MORE)

ROBERT MUSCA (CONT'D)
arms are killing me.

WOLFE
Right...

Wolfe hesitates again, and then reluctantly walks into the apartment unit.

INT. THE MUSCA'S APARTMENT

Robert shuts the door as Wolfe cautiously steps over trash. He walks up to Sheen, who watches TV. He has a bandage on his hand.

ROBERT MUSCA
Damn it, Sheen, I told you to clean this place up. You never know when we're going to have guests!
(to Wolfe)
That's my brother, Sheen.

SHEEN MUSCA
(eyes glued to the TV)
Hey.

Robert walks into the kitchen and unloads the groceries.

ROBERT MUSCA
He's a pooper scooper.

WOLFE
Excuse me?

SHEEN MUSCA
I pick up dog shit.

WOLFE
I see. What happened to your hand?

SHEEN MUSCA
Dog bite.

WOLFE
Must've been a big dog.

SHEEN MUSCA
Chihuahua.

ROBERT MUSCA

(to Wolfe)

I'm sorry, I never got your name. I'm Robert.

WOLFE

Officer Wolfe. Los Angeles Police Department.

SHEEN MUSCA

We didn't do nothin'.

ROBERT MUSCA

He's not here for us, you idiot. Now get off your ass and pick up your shit!

SHEEN MUSCA

I already picked up enough shit today. You do it!

ROBERT MUSCA

(to Wolfe)

Brothers...

WOLFE

So, you might be able to tell me about the couple that lives above you?

ROBERT MUSCA

Oh, right. Who are they again?

WOLFE

Tamara and Jeffrey Burmeister. Do you know them?

ROBERT MUSCA

Not really. Just that they live above us. What happened to them?

WOLFE

That's not really important right now. I need to know if you guys have any information on their whereabouts.

ROBERT MUSCA

Well how can we tell you if we don't know what happened to them?

Wolfe SIGHS.

WOLFE

We've received phone calls from relatives and coworkers concerning their whereabouts.

SHEEN MUSCA

The girl works with dogs too.

WOLFE

Yes, I'm well aware of that. Look, I'm supposed to meet with the landlord any minute. Do you know anything about them?

ROBERT MUSCA

Like what?

WOLFE

Anything that would point me in the right direction for why they aren't answering their door.

SHEEN MUSCA

Oh, that was you pounding on the door up there?

WOLFE

Yes, it was, and I would like to know anything that might seem suspect regarding them. Also, and no offense, but it smells in here and I'd like to make my stay as short as possible.

ROBERT MUSCA

Oh, yeah. That smell's been here for a little while now.

WOLFE

You mean it's not always like this?

ROBERT MUSCA

Well if this dummy would actually clean up like I asked--

SHEEN MUSCA

You do it!

ROBERT MUSCA

I'm about to make dinner! Do you want to eat or not?

WOLFE

Look, I'm really pressed for time now. Are you sure you didn't have an animal die recently?

ROBERT MUSCA

The smell just started, like Friday or something. Not sure what it could be. Sheen, you cleaned the dog crap from your shoes, didn't you?

SHEEN MUSCA

Yes! Quit telling me to! You're the garbage man, maybe it's you.

WOLFE

You said it started the other day?

ROBERT MUSCA

Yes. I complained to...who are they again? The people above?

WOLFE

Tamara and Jeffrey.

ROBERT MUSCA

Right. I complained to Jeffrey. Not about the smell though, that started afterward. I haven't seen them two since.

WOLFE

So you've talked to Jeffrey recently? What happened?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SIXTH FLOOR PLATFORM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Loud MUSIC plays from the other side of the unit door.

Robert KNOCKS on the door. He waits patiently, but there is no answer.

He KNOCKS again. Still, no answer. So he POUNDS on the door.

The MUSIC stops. Finally the door opens, slowly and just a crack. Jeffrey looks through.

JEFFREY

What do you want?

ROBERT MUSCA

Hey, sorry to bother you. I'm from
the apartment below. Remember?

Jeffrey doesn't say anything.

ROBERT MUSCA(CONT'D)

Anyway...do you mind keeping it down?
My brother's trying to watch his show
and keeps telling me that you guys
are making too much noise.

JEFFREY

Why doesn't he have the balls to come
up here and tell me himself?

ROBERT MUSCA

He doesn't really like confrontation.

JEFFREY

Then tell him to deal with it.

ROBERT MUSCA

Look, I'm just playing mediator here.
What are you doing to make so much
noise?

JEFFREY

I'm working on a project.

Robert studies Jeffrey. He notices a drill in Jeffrey's
hand.

JEFFREY(CONT'D)

What?

Something from inside of the apartment THUMPS around.
CRASHES. Jeffrey looks behind him, then back at Robert
impatiently.

JEFFREY(CONT'D)

Look, why don't you mind your own
business? I'm kind of busy at the
moment.

ROBERT MUSCA

Can you just...keep it down a bit?

JEFFREY

Yeah.

Jeffrey shuts the door aggressively. Robert turns around and

rolls his eyes.

INT. THE MUSCA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT

Wolfe, Robert, and Sheen all look up at the ceiling.

ROBERT MUSCA

You don't think...

Wolfe SIGHS.

SHEEN MUSCA

What?

WOLFE

This case might have just gotten a lot more interesting.

ROBERT MUSCA

Maybe an animal got in their walls, or maybe there's an attic in the building that it crawled into.

WOLFE

It's just a strange coincidence. What was Jeffrey doing? And where was Tamara at the time?

ROBERT MUSCA

Right. About her...

WOLFE

What about her?

SHEEN MUSCA

We saw her before that. This past weekend, like Saturday or Sunday.

WOLFE

And? Was there something about her that would tip you off on her whereabouts?

SHEEN MUSCA

Not really.

ROBERT MUSCA

You idiot, just tell him.

SHEEN MUSCA
 Jeez, okay! We bumped into her one
 day. She was hurt.

WOLFE
 Hurt, how?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIFTH FLOOR PLATFORM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The apartment unit door opens, and Robert and Sheen step out
 of the unit as Tamara makes her way up the steps.

SHEEN MUSCA
 Hey there, beautiful.

Robert slaps Sheen upside the back of the head.

SHEEN MUSCA(CONT'D)
 Ouch! What was that for?

ROBERT MUSCA
 She's taken, dipshit!

SHEEN MUSCA
 I was just being nice! Jeez!

Tamara looks obviously uncomfortable to talk to them. The
 two move closer to her.

She covers her nose and mouth with her bandaged hand. A
 small spot of fresh blood soaks through the gauze.

TAMARA
 What's that smell?

SHEEN MUSCA
 Oh, that's just my brother. He's
 trash.

Robert elbows him in the gut.

SHEEN MUSCA(CONT'D)
 Sorry, a trashman.

ROBERT MUSCA
 My brother here, he picks up dog
 poop. You cleaned your shoes, right?
 I don't want you tracking that into
 our apartment.

SHEEN MUSCA

What happened to your hand, little lady?

TAMARA

Don't call me that.

ROBERT MUSCA

I apologize about him. He's a bit socially awkward.

TAMARA

A, uh...a dog bit me.

Sheen holds up his bandaged hand.

SHEEN MUSCA

Me too! Twinsies.

ROBERT MUSCA

You're already a twin, dummy.

Tamara still looks uncomfortable.

TAMARA

Right. I'm going to my apartment now.

SHEEN MUSCA

Do you need any ointment? I have plenty inside.

Robert slaps him upside the head again.

ROBERT MUSCA

Our apartment is a mess. Why would you invite a pretty gal into our home when it looks like that?

SHEEN MUSCA

Well if you would clean up for once!

ROBERT MUSCA

I do clean up, it's your dirty ass that trashes the place!

Unbeknownst to the two brothers, Tamara slowly sneaks away and continues up the stairs while they argue.

Sheen notices that Tamara has disappeared beyond the stairs.

SHEEN MUSCA
Hey, where are you going?

ROBERT MUSCA
Nice going, you scared her off! This
is why you're still single.

SHEEN MUSCA
You're just as single as I am!

ROBERT MUSCA
Stop it!

SHEEN MUSCA
No, you stop it!

ROBERT MUSCA
No, you stop it!

SHEEN MUSCA
No, you stop it!

They shove one another back and forth as they continue to
argue with each other.

INT. THE MUSCA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT

Wolfe with Robert and Sheen.

WOLFE
People get bitten by dogs all the
time.

ROBERT MUSCA
I guess we thought it would be worth
noting.

WOLFE
It does, actually. I wonder if she
got sick from the dog bite.

SHEEN MUSCA
Must've been one sick dog.

WOLFE
You think so?

ROBERT MUSCA
Do you think it could be rabies?

WOLFE

Only one way to find out, and that's by getting in their apartment. Thank you for your time, gentlemen. I'll show myself out.

Wolfe walks to the door and shows himself out.

EXT. FIFTH FLOOR PLATFORM

Wolfe shuts the apartment door and walks to the stairwell banister. He looks down the spiraling staircase and sees GERRY (40s) the landlord waiting in the lobby.

WOLFE

Are you the landlord?

Gerry looks up and sees Wolfe.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Gerry, breathy, meets with Wolfe on the fifth floor. He is very tall and lanky, with long skinny arms and legs. He wears glasses and looks meek, quiet.

They begin their ascent.

WOLFE(CONT'D)

It's about time. I've been interviewing the residents of the building. Let's just get in the damn unit.

GERRY WALKER

Make it quick. It's late.

WOLFE

I just need to assess what's inside. You ran a background check on these two, right? Especially Jeffrey.

GERRY WALKER

No resident goes without one.

WOLFE

And nothing came up for either of them?

GERRY WALKER
Minor traffic violations.

They reach the--

EXT. SIXTH FLOOR PLATFORM

They walk up to the door.

WOLFE
You have the keys right?

Gerry holds up a ring of hundreds of keys. He quickly shuffles through the keys until--as if he knew where it was-- he finds the one to Jeffrey and Tamara's apartment.

He unlocks the door, and twists the knob.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The door SWINGS open as Jeffrey and Tamara SPILL into the apartment through the front door, making out passionately.

Jeffrey fumbles for the light switch as he continues to kiss Tamara, who drunkenly removes her jacket.

They continue to make out as they strip each other down: Tamara's tank top, then Jeffrey's shirt, both of their pants, as they maneuver toward the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Jeffrey rolls off to the side from Tamara after they finish each other off. Out of breath, they lay there and stare at the ceiling.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

They're much more calm now. Soft breathing. They lay on their sides and stare into each other's eyes.

TAMARA
I thought you were pretty sexy on the dance floor.

JEFFREY
Yeah?

TAMARA

Yeah.

JEFFREY

What happened to your friends anyway?

TAMARA

They went to Lure. No way in hell am I spending twenty dollars on a cover.

JEFFREY

I'm glad you stayed behind.

Tamara smiles.

TAMARA

You wanna know something embarrassing?

JEFFREY

Sure.

TAMARA

You can't make fun of me, okay? And I apologize in advance. But, I might've forgotten your name at some point in the night. When we got back here and you went to the bathroom, I got into your phone on Facebook and looked at your profile.

JEFFREY

That's actually pretty funny. You're a little hacker!

TAMARA

You don't have a passcode, ya dork.

He tickles her. She GIGGLES. They kiss.

JEFFREY

I hope you don't mind getting up early in the morning. I've got work.

TAMARA

What do you do?

JEFFREY

I'm a mortician.

Tamara sits up.

TAMARA
You're serious?

JEFFREY
One hundred percent.

TAMARA
What's that like? Do you get sad? Do
you get kids? Like, how young?
(beat)
Oh my gosh, now this is embarrassing.
I'm so sorry.

Jeffrey CHUCKLES.

JEFFREY
It's fine.

Tamara is hesitant about something.

JEFFREY(CONT'D)
What is it?

TAMARA
My younger sister...she drowned when
we were kids. Scarred me for life.
I've been afraid of death ever since.

JEFFREY
I'm sorry to hear that.

TAMARA
I would never be able to do what you
do.

JEFFREY
Someone's gotta do it.

Tamara smiles.

TAMARA
So brave. I just can't imagine...I'm
sure you have tons of stories.

JEFFREY
I do. Like, one time we got this tub
filled with what looked like red
punch with chunks of pineapple in it.

TAMARA
You're disgusting!

JEFFREY

You think that's disgusting? Wait until you hear what else I do with dead bodies.

Tamara slaps Jeffrey playfully.

TAMARA

Now you're just being goofy.

Jeffrey smiles. They kiss.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - OVER TIME

BEGIN MONTAGE:

1) Jeffrey and Tamara sit at the kitchen table and have a candlelit dinner date.

2) The two hang out in the living room, both reading. She is on the couch while he sits against the couch on the floor. He leans his head back and she kisses him.

3) They walk into the apartment carrying large moving boxes.

4) The two stand in the living room and argue. Tamara holds up Jeffrey's phone with a picture of a WOMAN.

5) Tamara walks into the kitchen and finds a bouquet of flowers on the table with a note next to it. The note reads: **I'M SORRY. PLEASE FORGIVE ME. I LOVE YOU.**

6) Jeffrey, on his knees, begs to Tamara while she cries into her hands.

7) Jeffrey, in a tuxedo, carries Tamara, in a wedding dress. He walks her into the apartment.

8) Tamara cooks dinner. Jeffrey comes up behind her and kisses her neck. She turns around and they make out.

9) Another night, Tamara and Jeffrey make love on the couch in the living room.

10) Another night, Jeffrey and Tamara get in bed. Tamara turns her lamp off and kisses Jeffrey goodnight on the cheek before turning away from him and going to sleep.

11) Another night, Jeffrey and Tamara in bed. She is faced away from Jeffrey, who rolls over and attempts to kiss her neck. She shakes her head. Jeffrey, defeated, rolls away from

her.

END MONTAGE

EXT. STREET - DAY

Tamara walks a dog down the sidewalk. She walks up a stoop and returns the dog to its owner.

She leaves the stoop and passes by an alley.

A dog WHIMPERS from within the alley. Tamara stops and walks into the alley, where she sees the dog.

It steps out from behind a dumpster and weakly walks to Tamara, who picks it up.

TAMARA

Hey there. Poor thing. Come here.

She cradles the dog and carries it with her out of the alley.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jeffrey and Tamara stand in the kitchen.

JEFFREY

Tamara, I don't want a dog. I don't want to put down the deposit, I don't want to have to pay for any vet bills...Hell, my apartment isn't even big enough for a dog!

TAMARA

Please! Let's keep him! We can't take him to a shelter, they'll euthanize him.

JEFFREY

Oh please, no they won't.

TAMARA

Yes they will. Let's keep him. He'll grow on you. I've even come up with a name. Buddy.

JEFFREY

I don't want to argue with you.

TAMARA

I want him!

JEFFREY

Oh, I get it. You want him, but not other things.

TAMARA

What's that supposed to mean?

JEFFREY

Nothing. Get rid of the damn dog.

Jeffrey exits the kitchen.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - DAY - DAYS LATER

The dog lies on the floor. Vomit and diarrhea are splattered on the floor.

Tamara cries over the dog while Jeffrey cleans up the vomit and diarrhea.

JEFFREY

This is exactly why I didn't want to keep him.

TAMARA

We have to take him to the vet.

JEFFREY

I'm not paying for that.

TAMARA

We can't just let him die!

Tamara stares at Jeffrey with red, puffy eyes.

JEFFREY

Okay. Fine. Take him to the vet. I need to get ready for work.

INT. MORTUARY - NIGHT

A mortuary transport TECHNICIAN wheels in a dead body on a stretcher, covered in a sheet.

Jeffrey, in embalming gear, greets the technician.

JEFFREY

Who do we have here?

TECHNICIAN
Miss Rose Porter.

JEFFREY
What's her story?

TECHNICIAN
Hit and run. Help me get her onto a
table?

The technician and Jeffrey pick the body up and set her on
an embalming table.

Jeffrey removes the sheet from the dead woman's head and
admires her. She looks similar to Tamara.

JEFFREY
Shame, she's a beauty.

TECHNICIAN
Sure is. Sign here.

The technician hands Jeffrey some paperwork. He signs it.

TECHNICIAN(CONT'D)
Working late?

JEFFREY
Trying to get as much done as I can.
The freezer's getting full.

TECHNICIAN
You the only one here?

JEFFREY
Yeah.

TECHNICIAN
Doesn't it get creepy here at night
all alone?

JEFFREY
Nothing like a bit of music to fill
the silence.

TECHNICIAN
I guess I watch too many horror
movies.

Jeffrey hands the paperwork back to the technician.

TECHNICIAN(CONT'D)

Thanks. See ya later. Don't get spooked.

JEFFREY

Rose here will keep me company.

TECHNICIAN

I'll leave you two alone then.

The technician winks and smiles. Jeffrey returns the smile.

He watches the technician leave.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey wheels Rose toward the freezer, a big, metal door.

He opens the freezer. The inside is packed with bodies on shelves and metal embalming tables. Jeffrey looks back down at Rose.

Despite being a hit and run victim with some blood caked on her face and also trickling from her mouth, she looks fine.

He grabs some paper towels and wets it with his tongue. He gently wipes the blood from her mouth. Smiles.

He brushes some strands of hair out of her face. Stares at her. Admires her some more.

He leans in slowly, and KISSES her. He pulls back, almost in shock of what he just did.

He grabs the sheet to pull back over her face, but stops.

He leans in again and kisses her once more. This time more passionately. He slips his tongue past her lips.

Fondles her breasts.

Moves his hand down her body toward between her legs.

The other hand begins to unbuckle his belt.

EXT. EMERGENCY ANIMAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Rain POURS. Lightning FLASHES. Thunder RUMBLES.

The door BURSTS open and a FRIGHTENED GUEST stumbles out the doorway.

Buddy zips out the doorway into the storm.

Inside, a VET TECH SCREAMS in ANGER on the phone.

VET TECH
 ...tried to attack me and the other
 guests! You could have warned us that
 he would be dangerous! You're lucky
 nobody got hurt...!

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tamara is on the phone. The vet tech SCREAMS incoherently on the other line. Jeffrey walks into the apartment. He looks stoic.

TAMARA
 Thank God you're home. I'm on the
 phone right now with the vet. Buddy's
 escaped.

Jeffrey remains quiet as he walks through the apartment toward the bedroom.

TAMARA(CONT'D)
 Everything okay?

JEFFREY
 Everything's fine.

TAMARA
 You sure?

JEFFREY
 I'm sure.

Jeffrey walks into the dark bedroom. He shuts the door.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Tamara walks up to the closed bedroom door. She knocks.

TAMARA
 Are you sure you're okay, Jeff?

No answer.

In the dark bedroom, Jeffrey lies in bed still awake, still in his work clothes, and on top of the covers.

Tamara knocks again (O.S.)

TAMARA (O.S.)
Jeffrey?

He remains quiet.

INT. MORTUARY - ANOTHER NIGHT

The freezer door is open.

Inside, Jeffrey is on top of a body on an embalming table. He THRUSTS his hips up and down.

He stares at the body with dead eyes as he thrusts.

REVEAL: the body, purple and black, swollen with some decomposition.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - ANOTHER NIGHT

Rain pours outside and batters the windows. Lightning flashes and thunder RUMBLES.

Jeffrey and Tamara are in the middle of a fight.

TAMARA
Why won't you just tell me who she is?

JEFFREY
Because I'm not seeing anyone else!

TAMARA
That's what you said last time!

JEFFREY
Tamara, I promise, there is nobody else but you.

TAMARA
Who is she?

JEFFREY
Tamara, please!

TAMARA
Who. Is. She?

JEFFREY

Look, I know I fucked up last time but I swear on my life, I would never do it again to you. I love you so much.

TAMARA

Bullshit, you fucking liar. It's probably not even a woman after what you did with Marky.

JEFFREY

You're being ridiculous.

TAMARA

Fuck off! I have every right to be acting like this!

JEFFREY

What do I have to do to prove to you that I'm not seeing anyone else?

TAMARA

Forget it, Jeffrey. If you're not going to tell me then you can go fuck yourself.

JEFFREY

I've had to for nearly a year because you're "so busy."

TAMARA

Oh so because we haven't done anything in a while means you can go out and sleep around to get your fix?

JEFFREY

Tamara, how many times do I have to say it, there's nobody else alive that I would do anything with. Just you.

TAMARA

Fuck it. I'm done.

She turns and walks away.

JEFFREY

Where are you going?

Tamara grabs the stack of **LOST DOG** flyers and heads for the front door.

JEFFREY(CONT'D)
 You love that fucking dog more than
 me!

Tamara ignores him. She leaves the apartment and SLAMS the door shut.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Tamara walks through the pouring rain, drenched. She cries.

As she passes an alley, she stops at the sound of an animal WHIMPERING. She walks into the dark alley and approaches a dumpster overflowing with trash.

It's a dumpster dog, mangey-looking and starved. In fact, it's BUDDY. He WHIMPERS pathetically as Tamara approaches him.

TAMARA
 Oh my God...Buddy! Come here!

She kneels down a few feet away from Buddy. He doesn't move. Tamara inches closer.

TAMARA(CONT'D)
 Come on, Buddy. I won't hurt you.

She reaches for him gently and warmly. The dog cautiously moves toward her.

TAMARA(CONT'D)
 There we go. See? Nothing to be
 afraid of.

Buddy SNAPS at her hand and BITES it.

Tamara SCREAMS as he doesn't let go of her hand.

She SMACKS Buddy, harder and harder.

Finally, he lets go and skitters away. Tamara rushes out of the alley as she holds her injured hand.

INT. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HOSPITAL AT HOLLYWOOD - DAY

Tamara sits in an examination room with a DOCTOR. Her hand is bandaged. He explains something to her inaudibly.

EXT. SIXTH FLOOR PLATFORM

Robert and Sheen's voices ECHO through the stairwell.

SHEEN MUSCA (O.S.)
No, you stop it!

ROBERT MUSCA (O.S.)
No, you stop it!

SHEEN MUSCA (O.S.)
No, you stop it!

Tamara unlocks the door and walks inside.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT

She shuts the door and leans against it, BREATHES deeply. She COUGHS.

She pulls out her cell phone and dials a number.

TAMARA
(into phone)
Hey Lily...Oh nothing, just got back home. You busy...? Great...

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The front door SLAMS shut (O.S.) and wakes up Jeffrey. He sits up in bed.

Tamara enters the bedroom and slides into bed.

JEFFREY
Where did you go?

TAMARA
I must've sleptwalked down to the lobby.

JEFFREY
What?

TAMARA
Yeah. Or, at least that's what Marky said.

Tamara gets comfortable. Jeffrey rolls over and attempts to spoon her but she shrugs him off.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT DAY

Tamara VOMITS into the toilet. She is pale with dark circles beneath her eyes.

Jeffrey looks into the bathroom and watches her.

JEFFREY

Are you okay?

TAMARA

Do I look okay?

JEFFREY

Are you sick?

TAMARA

I think it's from the rabies shot.

JEFFREY

You sure you don't need to go back to the doctor?

TAMARA

I don't know.

She VOMITS some more.

EXT. FIRST FLOOR PLATFORM - LATER

Lily Berg and Tamara stand on the first floor platform.

LILY BERG

(motioning to her nose)

Uh, you've got something...

Tamara touches her nostril and sees the blood.

TAMARA

I've gotta go to the doctor...

Tamara rushes toward the entrance of the apartment building, leaving Lily in the dust.

INT. LOBBY - THE NEXT NIGHT

Jeffrey walks a sick Tamara from the building entrance to the stairwell.

JEFFREY

I knew you weren't up for a date
(MORE)

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
tonight--

Tamara VOMITS BLOOD onto the floor. Jeffrey holds her hair back, slightly taken aback from the sight.

MONICA SNYDER (O.S.)
You two better clean that up when she's done.

Jeffrey looks up at Monica.

JEFFREY
We will. Mind your own business.

Monica watches a moment longer, then moves away from the stairwell railing.

TAMARA
It's red. Why is it red?!

JEFFREY
You're fine, Tamara. You're okay.
Come on.

He begins his ascent up the stairs with her.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT NIGHT

Tamara lies in bed. She has a cold compress on her forehead. She is pale and sickly-looking.

TAMARA
I'm scared, Jeffrey. I think I need to go to the emergency room.

Jeffrey turns his head to the sound of loud Vietnamese ARGUING (O.S.). He SIGHS in frustration.

JEFFREY
Be right back.

He leaves the bedroom.

EXT. THIRD FLOOR PLATFORM - LATER

Jeffrey cautiously grabs Tamara's shoulders and gently pulls her away from the brothers.

She COUGHS.

BLOOD SPRAYS onto her hands, onto the floor.

Everybody steps back from her. She stares at them, mostly out of fear.

TAMARA

Don't look at me like that!

JOHNNY NGUYEN

(to Jeffrey)

Look man, your girl's real sick. Get her the fuck away from us.

JEFFREY

Just be quiet. That's all we ask.

Jeffrey puts his arms around Tamara, who doesn't take her eyes off of the three brothers, and they walk up the stairs.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT

Jeffrey walks Tamara into the apartment. He shuts the door.

TAMARA

I'm dying, Jeff.

JEFFREY

No, you aren't. You're going to be okay.

TAMARA

Okay? Okay?! I'm fucking coughing up blood!

JEFFREY

Calm down, Tam...

TAMARA

Don't tell me to calm down! I'm fucking dying and I'm fucking scared and you don't even care!

JEFFREY

Tamara--

TAMARA

You don't care about me! You only care about yourself--

She COUGHS some more. A huge COUGHING FIT. Blood drips out of her mouth, her nose. She collapses onto the floor.

JEFFREY
Tamara? Tamara?!

She foams from the mouth as she convulses in Jeffrey's arms.

JEFFREY(CONT'D)
Tamara?!

She continues to convulse.

He rushes to grab his cell phone and begins to dial 911, but stops when he notices that Tamara has stopped convulsing.

He approaches her and feels her pulse. There is none.

JEFFREY(CONT'D)
Oh my God. Oh my God...

Unsure of what to do, he paces back and forth, thinks. He looks at his phone, at 911 dialed and ready to call.

He looks back at Tamara.

MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey carries Tamara into the bedroom and lays her down on the bed.

He backs away, runs his hands through his hair, still unsure of what to do.

Tamara lies in bed. Dead. Eyes wide open. Pupils dilated.

ZOOM IN ON: Tamara's dilated pupil. Closer and closer until the pupil engulfs everything, and it all...

FADES TO BLACK.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT

The door opens.

Wolfe and Gerry enter the dark apartment.

Immediately, they retch back in disgust. Something smells awful inside.

Wolfe pulls out a flashlight and turns it on.

They walk into the living room.

All the lights are off. It's pitch black in the apartment save for the beam of Wolfe's flashlight.

The two slowly trek through the living room and toward a closed bedroom door.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Jeffrey stands in the bedroom, faces away from dead Tamara, runs his fingers through his hair as he breathes heavily.

In the B.G., Tamara slowly SITS UP.

Jeffrey perks up. He senses her.

He slowly turns around.

JEFFREY

Tamara?

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT

Inside the bedroom is even darker than the rest of the apartment.

Wolfe glides the beam of his flashlight across the room. Empty formaldehyde bottles and metal embalming tools shimmer as the flashlight shines on them.

A tipped over chair sits in the middle of the room. Pieces of rope drape over the armrests.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

LOUD MUSIC plays from within the apartment.

Tamara sits in the chair. She emits MUFFLED MOANS as a CLOTH GAG stuffs her mouth. Her face is unseen.

Her hands are TIED TO THE ARMRESTS. She struggles to break free from the rope.

A FORMALDEHYDE MACHINE PUMPS FLUIDS INTO HER.

Jeffrey LOUDLY bolts a metal pad to the bedroom wall.

He DROPS the drill onto the floor. THUMP.

FAINT KNOCKING (O.S.)

He picks up a link of metal chains. Examines them. Then DROPS that as well with a METALLIC CLATTER.

More FAINT KNOCKING (O.S.)

He connects the chain to the metal pad on the wall.

THEN WRAPS THE CHAIN AROUND TAMARA'S NECK. PADLOCKS IT.

LOUD POUNDING (O.S.)

Jeffrey looks out the bedroom doorway, in the direction of the front door.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey stands at the doorway with Robert Musca. The music is off.

ROBERT MUSCA

Look, I'm just playing mediator here.
What are you doing to make so much
noise?

JEFFREY

I'm working on a project.

Robert studies Jeffrey. He notices a drill in Jeffrey's hand.

JEFFREY(CONT'D)

What?

TAMARA

Rocks the chair over in the bedroom. THUMP! The formaldehyde machine CLATTERS to the floor. Her face is still unseen.

JEFFREY

Looks behind him, then back at Robert impatiently.

JEFFREY(CONT'D)

Look, why don't you mind your own
business? I'm kind of busy at the
moment.

ROBERT MUSCA
Can you just...keep it down a bit?

JEFFREY
Yeah.

Jeffrey shuts the door aggressively.
He walks back to the bedroom and stops.
The chair is tipped over. The ropes have been broken.
Jeffrey stares at the chair, then looks up just as HANDS
GRAB HIS FACE as TAMARA ATTACKS HIM.
He screams (O.S.). Blood SPRAYS onto the wall.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT

Wolfe and Gerry look beyond the tipped over chair.
The beam of light falls onto...
...a WOMAN. Hunched over in the corner of the room, facing
away from Wolfe and Gerry.
She rocks back and forth slowly.
It sounds like she's...CHEWING on something.
Wolfe and Gerry get closer. The flashlight beam shines down
onto the floor, littered with USED CONDOMS.
The beam travels across the floor and onto...
A MAN'S BLOODY BODY. JEFFREY BURMEISTER.
Gerry stumbles backward.
Wolfe, slightly unfazed, slowly rounds the body, to get a
better look...
The body is MISSING HIS HEAD.
The woman is TAMARA BURMEISTER. Her skin is pale, blueish
gray, veiny. Her hair, a matted mess. Blood, all over.

She CHEWS ON JEFFREY'S HEAD. Or, what's left of it. It's a
MEATY SKULL, the EYES still intact and PIERCING with a wide,

eyelid-less stare. She's too transfixed on the head to notice Wolfe and Gerry's presence.

WOLFE

What the hell...?

His flashlight beam shimmers on a METAL CHAIN TIED AROUND TAMARA'S NECK. The beam travels up the chain toward a crudely bolted pad on the wall.

The woman is a prisoner in her own home.

If she's even a woman.

Gerry backs away, and into a decorative table with a vase on top. The vase falls and SHATTERS on the floor.

Tamara SNAPS her head at Wolfe, HISSES with a bloody snarl.

Suddenly, she LUNGES at Wolfe! The chain SNAGS at her neck, the metal pad SLIGHTLY DISLODGES FROM THE WALL.

Wolfe YANKS his gun from his holster.

Tamara LUNGES again!

The PAD BREAKS FROM THE WALL.

Tamara falls forward, inadvertently tackling Wolfe with her.

BLAM! Wolfe FIRES his gun on accident.

Gerry's head SNAPS BACKWARD as the bullet PIERCES his forehead. He falls dead against the wall.

Wolfe's gun falls from his grip. Tamara scratches at his legs as she pulls herself toward him. He attempts to kick her away.

She VOMITS blood. It SPRAYS onto Wolfe's face, BLINDS him.

He loses the battle as Tamara pulls herself up to his face. She CHOMPS ONTO HIS NECK. He SCREAMS.

Like a dog, she doesn't let go.

Finally, Wolfe pushes her away. MUSCLES STRETCH. TENDONS SNAP. BLOOD POURS.

Tamara rolls away and chews on the large piece of meat she's now acquired.

Wolfe rolls onto his stomach and attempts to crawl away. He loses blood by the second.

Slowly...slowly...death overtakes him. Labored breathing, ceases. Blood gushing, finally stops. A heart stops pulsing. One last SQUIRT...

SILENCE.

Tamara is too busy chewing on Wolfe's neck gizzard.

A moment that seems to last for a long time.

Then...

Wolfe's body TWITCHES. More and MORE. His body suddenly SNAPS AWAKE.

But it's not Wolfe. It's not human anymore...

Tamara finishes her meal and stands to her feet. Wolfe stands up too.

They survey the dark apartment.

LILY BERG (O.S.)
Mister Wolfe?

The two SNAP their gaze toward the OPEN DOOR to the apartment.

EXT. STAIRWELL

All of the residents of the building stand in the stairwell and look upward at the top floor. It's QUIET.

LILY BERG
That was a gunshot, wasn't it?

MARKY MESQUITE
It sounded like a firework.

JOHNNY NGUYEN
I know a gunshot when I hear one.

They continue to look up the spiraling stairwell.

FOOTSTEPS. RUNNING. A RATTLING CHAIN.

Louder and LOUDER.

GROWLING. HISSING.

More FOOTSTEPS, echoing down the stairwell as Tamara and Wolfe RUN down the steps!

The HISSING and GROWLING get louder!

ROBERT MUSCA (O.S.)
Oh shit!

A door SLAMS SHUT (O.S.).

The RUNNING continues. It gets LOUDER.

EXT. FOURTH FLOOR PLATFORM

Wolfe and Tamara race down the stairs as they SCREECH and HISS.

Marky backs toward his door.

MARKY MESQUITE
What the fuck?

Wolfe and Tamara LUNGE toward him with wide, bloody eyes, slobbery mouths, outstretched arms.

Marky jumps into his apartment and SLAMS the door shut. The two monsters POUND on the door for a moment before they continue their trek down the--

EXT. STAIRWELL

Floor by floor, they speed down the steps. The stairwell fills with loud SCREECHING and HISSING.

The residents cautiously back into their apartment units as these creatures reach their respective floor, attempt to attack them.

They VOMIT blood.

Some sprays onto Johnny's face as he shuts the door.

The creatures run down another floor.

Monica, who peeks through a crack in the door, drops her glass of sparkling wine. She SLAMS the door shut.

The creatures near the FIRST FLOOR.

Lily Berg SCREAMS as her date YANKS her into her apartment.
The door closes swiftly.

The creatures reach the--

INT. LOBBY

--and SPRINT toward the entrance: the door that doesn't shut
all the way...

Closer. CLOSER.

They BURST through the entrance of Grosvenor Arms.

Out of the building. Into the rainy, thundery streets.

Into the city...

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.