

GROSVENOR ARMS

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. GROSVENOR ARMS - NIGHT

Pouring rain. Lightning flashes, thunder ROLLS and RUMBLES.

The 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 Ave 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.

WOLFE

Of course they live on the top floor of a building with no elevator.

Wolfe 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.

WOLFE

Christ, I'm getting old.

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 (cont'd)

Los Angeles Police Department, open up.

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

WOLFE

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.)
(groggy)
Hello?

WOLFE
Did I wake you up?

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)
I was just taking a cat nap.

WOLFE
You won't be able to sleep tonight.

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)
Who is this?

WOLFE
Officer Wolfe with the Los Angeles Police Department.

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)
You guys again? 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.)

Yes.

WOLFE

And?

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

Is there a problem?

WOLFE

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

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

As far as I know, yeah.

WOLFE

Do you know of their whereabouts?

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

No.

Wolfe waits for more, but Gerry remains silent.

WOLFE

Okay...Well, we've gotten a couple
of calls from concerned friends and
family. They haven't heard from
them in a couple days. I'm here at
the building and their door is
locked.

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

Okay.

WOLFE

Which means I'll need access to
their apartment.

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. Where are you?

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

Santa Clarita.

WOLFE

(incredulous)

Santa Clarita?

Gerry remains silent.

WOLFE

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.)

They pay their rent. That's all that matters to me.

WOLFE

You know nothing?

GERRY WALKER (V.O.)

Look, I have the keys to their apartment. Isn't that what you want? I'll come by to unlock the door and that's it. 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.

LILY BERG
(disappointed)

Oh...

WOLFE
Sorry to be a disappointment.

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

WOLFE
Well, sorry to be a disappointment again, 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 in this building.

LILY BERG

Oh my!

WOLFE

Yes. 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 you 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.

WOLFE (cont'd)

Let me guess, your favorite color is red.

LILY BERG

Blue, actually.

WOLFE

Really?

Lily joins Wolfe and sits in a red chair.

LILY BERG

I'm kidding.

Wolfe smiles.

Mitochondria stretches and jumps into Wolfe's lap.

LILY BERG
That's Mitochondria.

WOLFE
Mito-what?

LILY BERG
Mitochondria. The powerhouse of the cell. He was a little terror as a kitten. Lots of energy.

Wolfe pets Mitochondria.

LILY BERG (cont'd)
Do you have any pets?

WOLFE
Yeah, four two-legged little animals.

Lily GIGGLES.

LILY BERG
Oh Mister Wolfe, you're so funny. What are their names?

WOLFE
Peter, Theodore, Maria, and Frankie.

LILY BERG
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.

LILY BERG
Do you have a photo?

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 look so precious.

She hands the photograph back to Wolfe.

LILY BERG (cont'd)
Your wife must be one lucky lady. You're a good husband and father, I'm sure.

WOLFE

That, I try to be. It isn't exactly the easiest job. Neither is this one, for that matter.

LILY BERG

Oh, I can't imagine. How do you 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 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

That's funny. Anatomy professor, favorite color is red...

LILY BERG

I don't get it.

WOLFE

Blood...?

LILY BERG

Oh. Nope! I don't really know why I like the color red. I just do! You must see a lot of blood in your line of work, don't you, Mister Wolfe?

WOLFE

Actually, not that much.

LILY BERG

Oh.

WOLFE

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

LILY BERG

For about two years 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 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, but it's never pointed out. 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,

(MORE)

TAMARA (cont'd)
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
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 sets her script in her lap.

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

I hope I get this part. I think I would be perfect for it.

LILY BERG

I think you would be too.

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 doing 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 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

Do you think Jeffrey would ever cheat on me again?

LILY BERG

Oh my, no! Why would anyone cheat on a girl like you?

TAMARA

Lily...

LILY BERG

There would be absolutely no reason for him to cheat on you.

TAMARA

I have been busy lately...

LILY BERG

Because you're on your way to becoming a successful actress! If he doesn't understand the time you 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 doing 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.

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 joking...

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

LILY BERG (cont'd)
Are...Are you 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 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. 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 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 asking 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)

If you ever do come around blood,
be careful. Viruses spread easily
that way.

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 contemplates, then takes the glass.

WOLFE

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 smirks slightly.

WOLFE
You're a very beautiful woman.

MONICA SNYDER
So I've been told.

WOLFE
You used to model, didn't you?

MONICA SNYDER
You're very good at your job,
Mister Wolfe.

WOLFE
And you're very good at
eavesdropping.
(beat)
I've seen you before. In magazines.
You've got that certain look that
no young man could forget.

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.

Wolfe takes a sip.

MONICA SNYDER
Why don't you rest a bit. Have a
couple glasses of that wine.

WOLFE
It's very 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. And Jeffrey and Tamara, are
they well-traveled?

MONICA SNYDER
I'm not sure. Why do you ask?

WOLFE
Well, if they're on some vacation
that they didn't tell anybody
about, I need to know that.

MONICA SNYDER
They haven't mentioned anything
about any vacation whenever I've
seen them stop on through.

WOLFE
How often are you out here?

MONICA SNYDER
I've got nothing better to do than
to just hang around and see what
others are up to, Mister Wolfe. I
know a lot about this place.

(MORE)

MONICA SNYDER (cont'd)
 Something strange is going on,
 that's for sure. Something just
 feels...off.

WOLFE
 That's what I'm here for. To figure
 out what's off about it. Anything
 else you know about them?

MONICA SNYDER
 Nothing that would probably help
 for your case. I do know that they
 can get a bit freaky.

WOLFE
 How do you mean?

MONICA SNYDER
 I mean, they're swingers.

WOLFE
 Swingers?

MONICA SNYDER
 Okay, so I don't know for sure if
 they are, but...

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 - ANOTHER NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Monica stands in her doorway, yet again with a glass of sparkling wine in her hand. It's like she never sleeps.

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

When was this?

MONICA SNYDER

Tuesday night.

WOLFE

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

MONICA SNYDER

Oh yes, she's not feeling well. Maybe she had to go to the hospital. Have you called any of them?

Wolfe scribbles something on a small notepad.

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

So she got upset when Jeffrey showed interest?

MONICA SNYDER

I think she's been cheated on before. I get that feeling from her.

WOLFE

Well your intuition is right. Jeffrey has cheated on her before. Do you think she would be the kind to just get up and leave if Jeffrey ever cheated on her again?

MONICA SNYDER

Probably. I get that independent woman feel from her. One where she wouldn't take shit from anybody. Reminds me of myself...

WOLFE

And you're telling the truth? You and Jeffrey didn't end up doing anything with each other on St. 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, Mister 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 is still available.

WOLFE

I do appreciate the offer, but I'm a loyal 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

From what it sounds like, this place has grabbed its fifteen minutes of fame.

MONICA SNYDER

Trust me, I know this place pretty well. Stuff doesn't happen often.

WOLFE

Who can I ask questions around here then?

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

And to think you were a professional eavesdropper.

MONICA SNYDER

Only for handsome officers.

Wolfe smirks. He hands Monica the glass of wine.

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, Mister 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 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.

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 Thao and 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
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.

TAMARA
Jeffrey, come on. Come back
upstairs.

JEFFREY
Go back inside, Tamara.

TAMARA
Come on, Jeffrey.

JEFFREY
This doesn't concern you.

As Tamara tries pulling Jeffrey away from the three
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

See, I told you. Just be quiet.
That's all we ask.

Jeffrey puts his arms around Tamara as he leads her up the stairs. The three brothers watch them leave.

EXT. THIRD FLOOR PLATFORM - NIGHT

BACK TO PRESENT

Wolfe and the three brothers in the doorway.

WOLFE

Jesus.

JOHNNY NGUYEN

Yeah, she was real bad.

WOLFE

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

JOHNNY NGUYEN

Oh yeah, fucked up, huh? How does a freak like him get a girl like her?

WOLFE

Do you know what Jeffrey does for a living?

JOHNNY NGUYEN

No.

WOLFE

He's a mortician.

KENNY NGUYEN

Weird.

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.

Kenny SNORTS.

KENNY NGUYEN
This place ain't that interesting,
Johnny--

JOHNNY NGUYEN
(to Kenny)
If I tell you to shut up one more
time I'll rip your fucking voice
box out.

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

You're goddamn right. It's always when women are in trouble that you're all over that shit. Nobody cares about us men.

WOLFE

I don't hold any prejudice in my cases. Besides, both Tamara and Jeffrey were reported. Stories revolve around Tamara, fingers point to Jeffrey. I'm just doing my job.

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, who bumps into Thao.

Johnny YELLS at them 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

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

Oh, it's okay. You always gotta save the best for last, right?

WOLFE

Not the last, but certainly not the least, I hope.

MARKY MESQUITE

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

Wolfe smirks.

WOLFE

Have you met Monica Snyder on the second floor? You two would be perfect for each other.

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, Mister 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, Mister Wolfe? I'm just making the best of this wonderfully dull Sunday

(MORE)

MARKY MESQUITE (cont'd)
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. Besides, you've already had
wine.

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
How strong do you like it?

WOLFE
I'm not interested.

MARKY MESQUITE
I didn't ask if you were.

Marky sticks his head into the living room.

MARKY MESQUITE (cont'd)
 Oh, you're talking about the Bloody
 Mary.

He resumes making the drink.

MARKY MESQUITE (cont'd)
 If you don't drink this, I guess
 I'll have to!

WOLFE
 Looks like you're drinking for two
 then.

MARKY MESQUITE
 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 (cont'd)
 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, Mister
 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
 How do you know where the landlord
 lives?

MARKY MESQUITE
 Gerry? He and I are besties.

WOLFE

You're friends with the landlord?

MARKY MESQUITE

I know everyone in this building.
And those who've lived here before.
And will probably get to know
anyone new who ends up here. I've
lived here a long time.

WOLFE

Okay. And what about Tamara and
Jeffrey Burmeister?

MARKY MESQUITE

Oh, Mister Wolfe, 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 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 beans.

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

They were reported missing two days ago.

MARKY MESQUITE

What do you think happened to them?

WOLFE

That's what I'm here to find out.

MARKY MESQUITE

And what have you found out, Mister Wolfe?

WOLFE

Well, 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

I mean, I know he makes some crass comments, but that's just Jeffrey being Jeffrey. And 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. Sounds like she's ill.

MARKY MESQUITE

Maybe they're both sick 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. Relationship issues, possible cheating, illnesses... 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, Mister 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, Mister 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.

WOLFE

Not the healthiest, that's for sure.

ROBERT MUSCA

Ah, 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)

I can't believe this place doesn't have an elevator. 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
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 stating that they might be missing. They were last heard from two days ago.

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 pressed for time now. And 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

Look, it doesn't smell like either of those things. You said it started the other day?

ROBERT MUSCA

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

WOLFE

Tamara and Jeffrey.

ROBERT MUSCA

Right. I complained to Jeffrey about it. Said it had to be coming from him because the weirdo downstairs seems too clean to make a smell like that.

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...and he isn't wearing pants, just underwear and a shirt. He still has his shoes on.

Jeffrey moves his bare legs behind the door and closes it a tad more.

JEFFREY
What?

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

JEFFREY
Do you mind? I have my own problems
too, ya know.

ROBERT MUSCA
Well, we've also sort of been
smelling something...bad, and I
don't think it's our apartment,
and...

JEFFREY
And what? You think it's mine?

ROBERT MUSCA
I'm just saying, it smells like
something might've...you know...
died?

JEFFREY
Seriously? I can practically smell
your guys' dinner from last week
every time I walk past your door.
Your place stinks.

ROBERT MUSCA
Sheen's not the cleanest--

JEFFREY
I know what you both do, so it's not surprising that your apartment smells. Why do you think it's my place?

ROBERT MUSCA
Well, for one I can smell it now--

JEFFREY
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? And there's a smell floating around in the building. I just thought I'd stop by and ask.

JEFFREY
Well, thanks for asking.

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
Aw shit.

SHEEN MUSCA
What?

WOLFE
This case just got 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 that that would happen around the same time that the two might have gone missing. Now, my question is, 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 on one of my walks.

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

Shut up!

SHEEN MUSCA

No, you shut up!

ROBERT MUSCA

No, you shut up!

SHEEN MUSCA

No, you shut up!

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. She was seen at a hospital on Saturday and Monday, possibly for an illness. I wonder if she got sick from the dog bite.

SHEEN MUSCA

Must've been one sick dog if she got ill from it.

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)

I've been interviewing the residents of the building and I think I have a good lead on what might've happened, but I won't find out until I get in their apartment.

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

Of course. No resident goes without one.

WOLFE

And nothing came up for either of them?

GERRY WALKER

I mean, minor traffic violations, but nothing concerning if that's what you're asking.

WOLFE

I just have a feeling that there's more to Jeffrey than meets the eye.

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 foolishly 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. You ask, I tell. I'm not afraid to answer anything.

Tamara thinks.

TAMARA

I guess answer my last question.
How young? Or, what's the youngest
you've dealt with?

JEFFREY

Youngest, as in actual human body?
Because one time we got this tub
filled with what looked like red
punch with chunks of pineapple in
it.

TAMARA

You're disgusting!

JEFFREY

Hey you asked. I told you, I'm not
afraid to answer anything!

TAMARA

Okay, okay...Have you ever had sex
with a dead body?

JEFFREY

Now you're the one being
disgusting.

TAMARA

I thought you weren't afraid to
answer anything.

JEFFREY

I'm not.

TAMARA

So answer the question!

JEFFREY

Does that really need an answer? Of
course I haven't!

TAMARA

Would you ever?

JEFFREY

Do you really want me to answer
that question?

Tamara slaps Jeffrey playfully.

TAMARA

Now you're just being goofy.

Jeffrey smiles.

JEFFREY

I'd like to keep seeing you.

TAMARA

I'd like to keep seeing you too, ya
freak.

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) Jeffrey and Tamara get comfortable 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.

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.

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.

JEFFREY
You sort of look like Tamara.

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

JEFFREY (cont'd)
There we go. A bit better.

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.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Tamara practices reading her lines in front of a mirror. Jeffrey walks into the apartment. He looks stoic.

TAMARA
Hey babe. Late night?

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.

TAMARA
How was work?

Jeffrey ignores her and walks into the dark bedroom. He shuts the door.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

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

TAMARA (cont'd)
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. 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

You've just been acting so distant lately, this is the same exact shit you pulled last time. 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.

Tamara heads for the door.

JEFFREY

Where are you going?

Tamara ignores him.

JEFFREY

Tamara!

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.

A dumpster dog, mangey-looking and starved, WHIMPERS pathetically as Tamara approaches it. She kneels down a few feet away from the dog.

TAMARA

Hey there. Poor thing. Come here.

The dog, frightened, doesn't move. Tamara inches closer.

TAMARA (cont'd)

Come on, buddy. I won't hurt you.

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

TAMARA (cont'd)

There we go. See? Nothing to be afraid of--

The dog SNAPS at her hand and BITES it.

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

She SMACKS the dog, harder and harder.

Finally, the dog 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.

TAMARA

Do I have to worry about anything else? I mean, like, what if the dog had rabies or something?

DOCTOR

The right precaution would be to get the shot anyway. Did you notice if the dog was foaming at the mouth, or acting weird in any way?

TAMARA

Uh, besides the fact that it bit me unprovoked? I think I'd like to have the shot.

DOCTOR

Understandable. While it's very painful, it's best to be safe than sorry.

TAMARA

Trust me, doc. I've learned my lesson.

Tamara looks at her bandaged hand.

EXT. SIXTH FLOOR PLATFORM

Robert and Sheen's voices ECHO through the stairwell.

SHEEN MUSCA (O.S.)

No, you shut up!

ROBERT MUSCA (O.S.)

No, you shut up!

SHEEN MUSCA (O.S.)

No, you shut up!

Tamara unlocks the door and walks inside.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT

She shuts the door and leans against it, BREATHES. She pulls out her cell phone and dials a number.

TAMARA

(into phone)

Hey Lily...Oh nothing, just got back home. You busy...? Great. Wanna help me with my lines...? Nah, I'll come to you. Be down there in a few.

She hangs up and looks at her bandaged hand.

TAMARA (cont'd)

(to her hand)

Heal quickly. I don't want you messing up my auditions.

She takes a DEEP BREATH, which makes her COUGH. She clears her phlegmy throat.

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 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.

Tamara, dressed in her hoodie and yoga pants, looks in a heavy plastic bag with shock or fear. Blood drips down from her nose.

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. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HOSPITAL AT HOLLYWOOD - DAY

Tamara on the examination table. The doctor scribbles a prescription and hands it to her.

TAMARA
Are there any side effects I should know about?

DOCTOR
Nothing serious. Probably some nausea, drowsiness, lack of appetite. You can always ask the pharmacist if you're concerned.

TAMARA
And if it doesn't seem to be working?

DOCTOR
Come back and see me.

She looks at the prescription.

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 tonight. We should've just stayed home and I made you soup and--

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 think I need to go to the emergency room.

JEFFREY

No, no, you're fine, Tamara. It's probably the antibiotics.

TAMARA

I just don't feel "right."

JEFFREY

I'll take care of you. You're just
at the peak of the illness right
now. It'll be over soon enough.

He 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 finishes talking to the Nguyen brothers.

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

Jeffery clears his throat and regains normal composure.

TAMARA

Jeffrey, come on. Come back
upstairs.

JEFFREY

Go back inside, Tamara.

TAMARA

Come on, Jeffrey.

JEFFREY

This doesn't concern you.

As Tamara tries pulling Jeffrey away from the three
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
See, I told you. Just be quiet.
That's all we ask.

Jeffrey puts his arms around Tamara as he leads her up the stairs. The three brothers watch them leave.

INT. JEFFREY AND TAMARA'S APARTMENT

Jeffrey walks Tamara into the apartment. He barely gets the door shut when 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 small 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 sound of something MUSHY SQUIRTS from somewhere within the apartment.

As the two slowly trek through the living room and toward a closed bedroom door, the MUSHING gets LOUDER.

They reach the bedroom and open the door. 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.

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. His pants pulled down around his ankles.

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 fuck...?

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.

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.