

HYPNOTIZING TO GET AHEAD

written by

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WGAE REGISTERED

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

An overview of the metropolis.

EXT. UNIVERSITY COURTYARD - ESTABLISHING

The heart of a campus. Young adults carry backpacks and satchels. Many sit together with books and note pads.

JIMMY (V.O.)
Don't fuck with me.

MALCOLM (V.O.)
I'm not gonna fuck with you.

JIMMY (V.O.)
I need to remember.

INT. MEN'S DORMITORY - HALL

A stale passageway.

MALCOLM (V.O.)
Don't tell anyone about this.

JIMMY (V.O.)
Thinking about that night... Goddamn it. I can hardly remember anything.

MALCOLM (V.O.)
What do you know for sure about what happened that night?

INT. DORM ROOM

On a wall, framed Bachelor's and Master's of Science degrees bear the name MALCOLM GRAVES (mid-20s; handsome; in shape), who's sitting on the edge of a bed.

JIMMY SKOPEK (mid-20s) paces. Takes off sunglasses. Reveals a nasty black eye.

JIMMY
I got my ass beat to shit.

MALCOLM
And they robbed you.

JIMMY
That's all I know for sure.

MALCOLM
Well, I'll try to help you, man.

JIMMY
Whoever did this to me --
(then)
If I can just recognize one --

MALCOLM
(interrupts)
Start from the start.

JIMMY
I had a date. Supposed to meet her
at a bar. I waited.
(then)
She blew me off.

MALCOLM
So you drank.

JIMMY
I drank.

FLASHBACK - INT. BAR - NIGHT

A dizzy blur.

The place is packed. Jimmy stumbles around drunk bumping into people... Wobbles out through an exit with the hiccups.

INT. DORM ROOM

Jimmy goes to a window and gazes out, trying to focus on his thoughts. Malcolm finds a pad and starts scribbling notes.

JIMMY
I can remember leaving.

MALCOLM
Then what?

JIMMY
I don't really know exactly.

MALCOLM
Tell me whatever you see.

FLASHBACK - EXT. STREET

Jimmy staggers down a sidewalk. He struggles to stay upright as passersby ignore him.

FLASHBACK - EXT. ALLEY

Jimmy falls... He's encircled by --

Legs... People in jeans. Boots.

A steel toe kicks his face.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. DORM ROOM

Malcolm and Jimmy.

JIMMY

I woke up in a hospital. The most
humiliated I've ever been.

MALCOLM

A hypnotherapy session can make you
relive what happened.

JIMMY

Let's do it.

MALCOLM

I need you to completely trust me.

JIMMY

Just make me remember.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

Jimmy's lying on a bed. His eyes are closed and his hands
are interlocked atop his stomach. Malcolm sits on a chair
beside him, filming with a tablet.

MALCOLM

Three. Two. One.

(then)

Sleep.

Malcolm waits for several beats. Jimmy lies still. Malcolm
takes a deep breath, then:

MALCOLM

Focus on the black. It's a place,
and you're in it.

(then)

Listen for another countdown from
three. At its end, the black will
be overtaken by a flash. You'll be
there -- in the bar that night.

(then)

Understand?

JIMMY

Yes.

MALCOLM

Three. Two. One.

CUT TO WHITE.

FLASHBACK - INT. BAR

Jimmy motions to a bartender.

He guzzles a beer.

Downs a shot.

A girl scowls as she turns her back on him.

INT. DORM ROOM

Malcolm keeps filming. Jimmy's eyes move under his lids.

JIMMY

Boozing it up.

(then)

Flirting with a beauty. Or at least,
I'm trying.

MALCOLM

You're leaving. You're out the door
and outside.

FLASHBACK - EXT. STREET

Jimmy staggers down the sidewalk. He rushes toward a random alley... Pukes in his fist.

INT. DORM ROOM

Malcolm and Jimmy.

JIMMY

Oh, shit.

MALCOLM

What?

FLASHBACK - EXT. ALLEY

Jimmy's hunched over beside a dumpster. His clothes are soaked in vomit.

He tries pulling himself together, coughing and spitting.

MEN WEARING HOODIES

Converge on him. Their hoods are up.

YELLOW HOODED MAN

Blows smoke in Jimmy's eyes. The man's face isn't able to be seen.

INT. DORM ROOM

Malcolm and Jimmy.

JIMMY
Blowing smoke.

MALCOLM
Who?

JIMMY
I don't fucking know who. There's a yellow hood over his head.

FLASHBACK - EXT. ALLEY

Jimmy's surrounded by the Hooded Men... They shove him like a rag doll... He falls to the pavement hard. Looks up as:

YELLOW HOODED MAN

Boots his face.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. DORM ROOM

Malcolm and Jimmy.

JIMMY
Gone black.

Malcolm taps the tablet and it stops filming. Puts it flat on his lap... Takes a deep breath.

MALCOLM
It's not over.

JIMMY
I'm not seeing anything else.

MALCOLM

You're about to remember the most important part of it.

JIMMY

OK.

MALCOLM

Listen for another countdown from three. At its end --

(then)

Don't speak. Do what I say like it's instinct. Three, two, one.

Jimmy lies still. Not a flinch... Malcolm waits for another several beats. Then leans in to Jimmy.

MALCOLM

Know that you're in danger.

Several beats.

MALCOLM

This isn't me. Forget me. This is you trying to remember.

Several beats.

MALCOLM

You have to remember him. You must remember who's hurt you.

Several beats.

MALCOLM

I'm instinct.

(then)

That "Yellow Hooded Man" who blew the smoke -- he's coming back. To hurt you more. Even worse.

(then)

Unless you hurt him first.

He taps the tablet. Brings something up. Spins it and holds it above Jimmy.

MALCOLM

Remember him. See the face you'll have to recognize.

(then)

Open your eyes.

Jimmy does.

ON TABLET

There's a pic of DAMAIN BERRY (mid-20s; hunk), which is taken from afar. He's wearing a sweater vest over a dress shirt.

MALCOLM

Trembles.

MALCOLM

Close 'em!

Jimmy does.

Malcolm sighs.

EXT. NYC - ESTABLISHING - SUNSET

Another day gone.

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm has a bag of chips. He eats them by the handful as Jimmy watches the tablet.

ON TABLET

Video from the session.

JIMMY (V.O.)

(on tablet)

I don't fucking know who. There's a yellow hood over his head.

(then)

Gone black.

It ends.

JIMMY

Tosses the tablet.

JIMMY

I remember.

MALCOLM

... What?

JIMMY

Everything I was telling you.

MALCOLM
If you buy-in, it works.

JIMMY
Thanks, Malcolm.

MALCOLM
I'm sorry that you still don't know
who did it.

JIMMY
Yeah, I still can't remember any of
their faces. But I know this:
(then)
I'll never get rolled again.

He digs into a backpack with his back to Malcolm. Pulls out something, but Malcolm can't see... Jimmy turns. Malcolm quits chomping on the chips as he sees what it is -- a pistol.

JIMMY
Parents let me borrow it.

MALCOLM
Get rid of it.

JIMMY
Hell no.

MALCOLM
You dumbass!

JIMMY
It's not happening to me again.

Malcolm throws the bag of chips. It hits Jimmy and spills all over the floor.

JIMMY
Fuck, man?

MALCOLM
Don't even think about going around
campus with that. I mean it.
(repeats)
Get rid of it.

JIMMY
Whatever.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Malcolm and Jimmy spy from a concealed vantage point off to one side. Jimmy wears sunglasses.

JIMMY
You're pathetic.

MALCOLM
I want you to see him. Moving on my
girl, like I don't know it.

JIMMY
Well, how do you know he's gonna be
here?

MALCOLM
Kim. She has to make a documentary.
Damain guy's helping her.

JIMMY
Volunteers to be her cameraman.

MALCOLM
Believe that shit?

JIMMY
You should be her cameraman.

MALCOLM
I got my dissertation.

Jimmy leaves.

JIMMY
Stalker.

MALCOLM
Jimmy!

Malcolm stands alone.

Gets out a digital camera.

EXT. COURTYARD - MINUTES LATER

Malcolm aims the camera. Takes a few pics from afar of Damain
Berry walking with KIM JANSING (mid-20s; beautiful).

EXT. MAIN BUILDING - DAY

University's hub.

Malcolm approaches.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Stage lights gleam.

ROMONA (20s) has a canister of air freshener. Sprays it at the feet of THREE HOMELESS MEN advancing toward sandwiches on the edge of the stage. One of them is DICK (30s).

ROMONA

After.

DICK

Now.

She keeps spraying, but they don't back off. Malcolm arrives and rushes down an aisle.

MALCOLM

What the hell's going on?

ROMONA

You're late!

(then)

They're animals.

MALCOLM

God damn it, guys. You get paid and fed after you practice.

DICK

I'm not dancing on an empty stomach.

ROMONA

Go stretch.

INT. AUDITORIUM - MINUTES LATER

Dick and the bums warm up on stage. Malcolm and Romona sit front row.

ROMONA

We should have them try the whole routine right off the bat.

MALCOLM

They're not ready.

Kim appears in the aisle beside him. Damain follows her with a pro video camera.

KIM

Hey!

MALCOLM

... Hey!?

He springs up.

They kiss.

KIM

No point in me asking first. You would'a said no.

MALCOLM

No to what?

KIM

I'm doing my documentary on your hypnotism theories.

MALCOLM

No.

KIM

Doing interviews. Filming whatever you've been working on here.

MALCOLM

This isn't ready.

ROMONA

It might be.

MALCOLM

Kim. Romona -- dance instructor.

Romona stands.

They girls shake.

KIM

Malcolm... Damain.

DAMAIN

Nice to finally meet you.

MALCOLM

It's nice to meet you.

They shake.

DAMAIN

"Homeless guy dance routine"?

INT. AUDITORIUM - MINUTES LATER

Damain operates the camera.

CAMERA'S POV

of Kim interviewing Malcolm.

MALCOLM

These gentlemen on the stage --
(then)

Each is a random homeless guy off of
the street.

KIM

They can't dance at all.

MALCOLM

Until now.

KIM

They're warming up like they plan on
busting a move.

MALCOLM

Because I'm trying to hypnotize them
into learning and performing a dance
routine -- of a professional standard.

KIM

Sounds like a major human rights
violation.

MALCOLM

I fairly compensate them.

KIM

You're not being supervised.

MALCOLM

I was when I had 'em listen to the
beat a million times under hypnosis.

KIM

Don't humiliate them.

MALCOLM

They don't have any skill -- that's
the whole point.

KIM

What exactly is the goal?

MALCOLM

Inducing mind-over-matter.

KIM

And how does that happen?

MALCOLM

They hear the beat. Suppress fear.
Doubt. Embrace learning and repeating
what's being taught -- in this case,
dance moves in a sequence.

KIM

Pretty cheesy shit.

MALCOLM

You're a bitch.

They kiss.

DAMAIN

Whips the camera off them.

INT. AUDITORIUM - MINUTES LATER

Dick and the bums are center-stage.

MALCOLM

Sits mid-second row, leaning on a front row seat.

DAMAIN

Films the bums. He looks to Malcolm. They stare daggers at
each other.

KIM

Sneaks up on Malcolm. Sits on his lap.

KIM

Sorry if I was rough.

MALCOLM

I love that you're stubborn.

KIM

No you don't.

MALCOLM

Actually, I do.

INT. BACKSTAGE

Romona's at a control station.

Pushes a "play" button.

INT. AUDITORIUM

A dance beat BLASTS from speakers.

Dick and the bums naturally scramble into formation.

Their routine commences. They dance like nimble pros. As a team. Complete with flips. Breakdancing.

Everyone's eyes pop with shock.

INT. AUDITORIUM - MINUTES LATER

Damain operates the camera.

CAMERA'S POV

of Kim interviewing Dick.

KIM
That wasn't a hoax?

DICK
I ain't no dancer.

KIM
You remember doing that?

DICK
Yeah. I just did it.

KIM
How does it feel?

DICK
I just want a goddamn sandwich to eat. What's a guy gotta do?

INT. AUDITORIUM - MINUTES LATER

CAMERA'S POV

of Kim interviewing Malcolm.

KIM
Are they still hypnotized?

MALCOLM
Technically, no. It's just how they got the motivation to accomplish what they did.

KIM

Explain that.

MALCOLM

While under hypnosis... They were given the inspiration to respond to that beat.

KIM

So anytime that beat plays, they do the dance.

(then)

What happens if it plays, but they don't wanna dance?

MALCOLM

Privately owned beat. They're not gonna hear it at the mall.

KIM

But you could play it against their will. What happens?

MALCOLM

It's not against their will. They agreed to this beforehand.

KIM

So there's no potential for abuse?

MALCOLM

None. It's not possible to hypnotize someone into doing anything against their will.

KIM

How do you know that?

MALCOLM

There's just no proof.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Nobody's here except Malcolm and Kim. They're sitting center-stage under the lights.

MALCOLM

I don't know what else I got for your documentary.

KIM

It's the equivalent of my Master's thesis.

He lies down.

MALCOLM
My dissertation blows.

KIM
That was impressive.

MALCOLM
It's a joke.

KIM
Stop it.

MALCOLM
Flower keeps trying to brainwash us
into doing better.

KIM
Professor Flower -- ask him if he'll
do an interview with me.

MALCOLM
Every lecture: we only get so many
chances; not everyone makes it; gonna
wake up screwed in the future if we
sleep-in today.

She crawls over and lies on him. They kiss. Stare at each
other face-to-face.

MALCOLM
I love you.

KIM
Love you, too.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

Every seat is taken.

MALCOLM

Enters in back. Quietly shuts a door. Sneaks in and spies
on a lecture that's underway.

AN ANTIQUE WOODEN CHAIR

Is displayed up front. It's three-hundred-years old, and is
the prized possession of:

PROFESSOR WILSON FLOWER (50s; chubby; aged), who circles it
while admiring.

FLOWER
You sick?
(MORE)

FLOWER (CONT'D)

More people will buy this antique piece of history than will buy you medicine.

Students exchange glances.

Malcolm snickers.

FLOWER

Why's the chair more valuable than all of you?

(then)

Simple. It's an accomplishment.

STUDENT #1

Celebrities ever use it?

FLOWER

Yours truly.

STUDENT #1

Who built it?

FLOWER

Someone whose intention from the start was to build something great.

STUDENT #2

(whispers)

Reverse psychology.

FLOWER

Not every chair is built to last. People fail all the time. Come up short everyday.

(then)

Only when you strive to be great from the start, that's how you end up with a real accomplishment.

STUDENT #2

(whispers)

I feel like shit.

EXT. MAIN BUILDING - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Late afternoon.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE/HALL

Collections and antiques are displayed.

Flower sits at a nineteenth-century desk. He skims an essay and pens a grade.

MALCOLM

Malcolm peeks in from the hall. He discovers a lounge area of sofas and armchairs unoccupied. Enters and claps.

MALCOLM

You inspire me.

FLOWER

Tell me what you really think.

MALCOLM

I think that was the most degrading, wrecking-ball-to-the-balls lecture that I've ever heard. And I didn't even hear the whole thing.

FLOWER

You kids think you're invincible.

MALCOLM

Try and stop us.

Malcolm sees the antique chair.

MALCOLM

That's the one?

FLOWER

Careful.

(then)

Like the Ark of the Covenant, you better be worthy.

MALCOLM

I'm worthy.

FLOWER

Well, you are my best student.

(then)

I'll dub you worthy.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE - DAY

The door's shut. Malcolm sits on the antique chair. Flower gives him his full attention.

MALCOLM

... It's unmistakable. They're not athletes. But they overcome it.

FLOWER

Start a traveling circus. Pull the world out of poverty one dancing bum at a time.

Malcolm squirms.

Chair CREAKS.

Flower cringes.

MALCOLM

I'm here to talk about that.

FLOWER

Don't start a traveling circus.

MALCOLM

My dissertation.

FLOWER

You just made it sound like you're happy with it.

MALCOLM

It's gonna be mocked. I need it to be great, and it's not.

FLOWER

Sorry, I didn't mean to joke.

MALCOLM

No, you're right. If I can't make this a big accomplishment, I'm gonna come up short.

Malcolm squirms.

Chair CREAKS.

Flower grimaces.

FLOWER

Mind's in the right place.

(then)

Your ass better park it.

MALCOLM

My ass?

FLOWER

Don't break my chair.

Malcolm repositions.

Chair CREAKS.

MALCOLM

It sucks.

FLOWER

Maybe you're not worthy?

MALCOLM

Hard asses, back then.

FLOWER

Had the Founders been able to foresee you kids today, they'd of had second thoughts about given the power to the people.

MALCOLM

The chair's a piece of shit.

FLOWER

Smartass.

Malcolm moves to a modern chair.

FLOWER

Well, you better think of something. You're going to wake up screwed in the future if you sleep-in today.

MALCOLM

Yeah. I know.

FLOWER

Any ideas?

MALCOLM

I need to do something that hasn't been done before.

FLOWER

Well, thank God you're a smartass.

MALCOLM

I need to make somebody do something they didn't agree to do beforehand.

FLOWER

... Don't be a dumbass.

MALCOLM

What if I could hypnotize someone into committing a crime?

FLOWER
Don't even think about it.

MALCOLM
You know people at the CIA.

Malcolm gets up and paces.

FLOWER
So? They don't use hypnotism.

MALCOLM
I don't believe that.

FLOWER
OK. Slow down.

MALCOLM
Someone has to look at experimental
psychology.

FLOWER
What are you talking about?
(then)
Sirhan Sirhan-type shit.

MALCOLM
Maybe.

FLOWER
You know, I do believe that was a
conspiracy. Multiple shooters.

MALCOLM
I'm talking about our time.

FLOWER
On JFK, too. Somebody found a way
to use a lot of bullets. I doubt it
was hypnotism.

MALCOLM
I'm talking about today.
(then)
Doesn't the intelligence community
have to look at hypnotism? Methods.
Theories.

FLOWER
To what end?

MALCOLM
I'm interested in that work.

FLOWER
 You and me both.
 (then)
 It's a damn fantasy.

Malcolm sighs.

Flower snickers.

FLOWER
 A person has to buy-in. Willingly.
 Or hypnosis... It doesn't work.

MALCOLM
 No getting around it.

FLOWER
 Criminals, terrorists -- they never
 buy-in. Ever.

MALCOLM
 I know how to take free will out of
 the equation.

FLOWER
 No. You don't.

MALCOLM
 Let the patient keep it. Instead,
confuse 'em.

FLOWER
 You've been studying for ten years.
 Academic marathon. You're about to
 get your Ph.D.
 (then)
 Don't fuck up now.

EXT. NYC - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

Dinner time.

INT. RESTAURANT

The place is packed.

Malcolm and Kim have a table.

MALCOLM
 What's the deal with him?

KIM
 With who?

MALCOLM
Your cameraman.
(then)
Damain Berry.

KIM
He's harmless.

MALCOLM
I know a prick when I see one.

KIM
Look at yourself. Right now.

He smirks.

MALCOLM
There's, like... Bullshit. On my
radar. Coming from him.

KIM
You've only met him once.

MALCOLM
Am I wrong?

KIM
Damain has a friend, who's dating my
roommate, Ashley.

MALCOLM
... OK.

KIM
Radar, huh?

MALCOLM
Tell me I'm wrong.

KIM
You're not wrong. Ashley wants me
to dump you for Damain.

MALCOLM
That bitch.

KIM
And he admitted he wants me.

MALCOLM
Mother fucker.

KIM
It's OK.

MALCOLM
That's a lot of bullshit.

KIM
I'm using him. Hard to be a field reporter without a cameraman.

MALCOLM
I'll do it.

KIM
Don't make a fuss.

MALCOLM
I'm not gonna put up with this.

KIM
He tries to flirt. But I just toy with him.

MALCOLM
Oh. Having fun?

KIM
I am.

MALCOLM
Tell him to leave you alone.
(then)
Or I will.

KIM
Ask how my day was.

Several beats.

MALCOLM
I can tell. Partly shitty. But most of it sunny.

KIM
That right there is why you don't have to worry.

MALCOLM
You're beautiful.

KIM
Don't worry.

Their meals arrive.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Students mingle or pass through. A few policemen patrol on foot. Malcolm and Jimmy spy from the same concealed position off to one side. Jimmy wears sunglasses.

JIMMY

Not again.

MALCOLM

There he is!

DAMAIN

Walks alone.

MALCOLM

Hustles to intercept him. Jimmy struggle to keeping up with him as he speed-walks.

JIMMY

What are you gonna say?

MALCOLM

Fuck off. I love her. Don't even look at her, you piece of shit.

(then)

Something like that.

JIMMY

Look, this isn't my fight.

MALCOLM

Yes it is, Jimmy.

Malcolm cuts Damain off.

Jimmy hangs back.

DAMAIN

What do you want?

MALCOLM

Don't bother Kim anymore.

DAMAIN

Eat shit.

Damain goes to leave. Malcolm side-steps into his path and cuts him off again.

MALCOLM

Hey. Fuck off.

DAMAIN

Move.

MALCOLM

Don't even look at her.

DAMAIN

Or what?

Damain steps toe-to-toe with Malcolm, who has to look up but is otherwise unfazed.

DAMAIN

Piss ant.

MALCOLM

No more of this cameraman bullshit.
That's done.

DAMAIN

Did she say that?

MALCOLM

I'm saying it.

Damain smirks.

MALCOLM

Leave her alone.

DAMAIN

She could be happier.

MALCOLM

Don't you fucking push me.

DAMAIN

She deserves better than you. I can
give it to her.

He shoves Malcolm.

Malcolm shoves him back.

JIMMY

Focuses on Damain.

FLASHBACK - EXT. ALLEY

Jimmy's encircled by the Hooded Men.

YELLOW HOODED MAN

Is chief among them.

EXT. COURTYARD

Malcolm and Damain each clench a fist.

MALCOLM

I'll fight you right here.

DAMAIN

I'll break you.

Students glance at the confrontation.

JIMMY

Slides a hand into one of his pockets.

JIMMY

Hey, asshole.

Damain faces him.

Malcolm's eyes widen.

DAMAIN

Asshole? Who the hell do you think
you're talking to?

JIMMY

I recognize you.

FLASHBACK - EXT. ALLEY

The Yellow Hooded Man goes to Jimmy. Takes a drag from a
cigarette. Blows smoke into his eyes.

JIMMY'S POV

as the smoke clears... Dizziness settles. Blur focuses...
The face under the yellow hood is... Or becomes... Damain.

EXT. COURTYARD

Damain shoves Jimmy.

DAMAIN

Stand beside Malcolm. I'll knock
you both out. One punch.

JIMMY
You were there.

Jimmy rips his sunglasses off. Damain scowls at the sight of his black eye.

JIMMY
You did this.

DAMAIN
... What?

JIMMY
You beat me up.

DAMAIN
No I didn't.

JIMMY
You robbed me.

DAMAIN
Robbed you?

JIMMY
In the alley.

DAMAIN
What are you talking about?

JIMMY
Last week.

DAMAIN
Are you insane?

JIMMY
I remember.

DAMAIN
You're full of shit.

Damain glances at Malcolm, who smirks.

FLASHBACK - EXT. ALLEY

Jimmy lies on his back looking up.

DAMAIN

Pulls back the yellow hood. High-fives the other men. Takes the money out of Jimmy's wallet.

EXT. COURTYARD

Jimmy steps back up to Damain.

JIMMY

You took the money out of my wallet
yourself.

DAMAIN

I'll blacken your other eye.

Damain shoves him. Jimmy stumbles backward. He trips over his own feet and falls hard.

FLASHBACK - EXT. ALLEY

Jimmy tries scrambling to his feet. Damain shoves him back to the ground.

EXT. COURTYARD

Jimmy springs up and whips out his pistol. Aims at Damain, who freezes. Malcolm rushes over.

MALCOLM

Whoa! Jimmy.

JIMMY

Don't touch me.

DAMAIN

Jesus Christ.

MALCOLM

I told you to get rid of that shit.

DAMAIN

(repeats)

It's not happening to me again.

MALCOLM

Hey. Put that shit away.

JIMMY

It's him.

DAMAIN

It's not me.

JIMMY

It's you.

MALCOLM

Calm down.

JIMMY

(repeats)

It's him.

MALCOLM

Listen to me. Put the fucking gun
away now.

JIMMY

I can't believe it's --

DAMAIN

Lunges for the gun.

JIMMY

Stumbles. BANG!

The bullet ZIPS across the courtyard.

STUDENTS

Duck and flee.

POLICEMEN

Run toward the shot.

MALCOLM

Finds cover.

DAMAIN

Punches Jimmy in the stomach. Jimmy keels over. Collapses
onto his knees, gun in hand.

FLASHBACK - EXT. ALLEY

Jimmy again tries scrambling to his feet. Damain rears back
to kick him.

EXT. COURTYARD

Jimmy sees Damain charging at him. He flails the gun up his
direction and BANG!

MALCOLM

Goes pale as he watches:

DAMAIN

Fall dead.

JIMMY

Scrambles to his feet.

POLICEMEN

Aim pistols at him.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

MALCOLM

Hides behind his cover as:

JIMMY

Hits the ground lifeless. Policemen converge on the two bodies. Sirens BLARE O.S. on approach.

MALCOLM

Sneaks away.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

Malcolm locks the door. He presses his hands and forehead against it. He fights tears.

He paces while shuddering.

Screams in a pillow.

Punches the pillow.

Throws the pillow.

Gets on his smartphone.

ON PHONE

LIVE NEWS REPORT:

Helicopter footage of the campus outside. Headline reads, "UNIVERSITY ON LOCK DOWN."

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE - DAY

Flower's at his desk.

WOMAN (V.O.)

(on intercom)

... Lock every door. Shelter in
place for the time being. This is
an active shooter situation.

He unveils a tazor. Looks it over. Then presses a button.
ZAP! Electricity BUZZES. His eyebrows shoot up and he nods.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Sirens BLARE.

Emergency personnel respond from every direction. Two white
sheets are laid over Damain and Jimmy respectively.

DETECTIVE RICHARD PERCY (40s) passes an officer stretching
crime scene tape around the perimeter.

PERCY

Find me I-D!

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

Malcolm's on the tablet.

ON TABLET

Video from Jimmy's hypnotherapy session is deleted.

The pic he showed Jimmy of Damain is deleted.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE - DAY

Flower sits in the lounge area. He's got his tazor in one
hand. A glass of wine in the other.

FLOWER

(to himself)

This world is so fucked up.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

Malcolm crumples the notes from Jimmy's session. Then gets
the digital camera.

ON CAMERA

Pics of Damain and Kim together are deleted.

INT. BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Malcolm locks himself in a stall. He FLUSHES the crumpled notes down the toilet.

Unveils a velvet ring case and opens it. Inside, there's an engagement ring. He looks from the ring to the toilet several times. Then is distracted by:

STUDENT #3 (O.S.)
(in hall)
Dude, holy shit!

He pockets the ring case.

Sneaks out of the bathroom.

EXT. WOMEN'S DORMITORY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Sirens BLARE.

Policemen stand guard.

INT. DORM ROOM #2

ASHLEY (mid-20s) is on her phone.

Kim is also on her phone.

INT. DORM ROOM

Malcolm answers his RINGING smartphone.

MALCOLM
(into phone)
I love you.

KIM (V.O.)
(on phone)
Are you safe?

MALCOLM
(into phone)
I'm hoping so.

KIM (V.O.)
(on phone)
I can't believe this shit.

MALCOLM
(into phone)
Neither can I.

He's on the tablet.

ON TABLET

Backup files are deleted.

INT. DORM ROOM #2

Ashley turns to Kim.

ASHLEY
Two dead.

KIM
(into phone)
Two are dead.

ASHLEY
Students. But nobody knows who.

INT. DORM ROOM

POUNDING on the door.

Malcolm tosses the tablet.

KIM (V.O.)
(on phone)
They're not saying who yet.

MALCOLM
(into phone)
Promise me we'll talk later.

KIM (V.O.)
(on phone)
Why wouldn't we talk later?

MALCOLM

(into phone)

Because my roommate's the fucking
shooter and the police are knocking.

INT. DORM ROOM/HALL - DAY

Detectives put everything of Jimmy and Malcolm's into bags,
which are piled in the hall.

Students watch from afar as Malcolm stands with Detective
Percy, who looks over the written statement Malcolm's given.

PERCY

Why was Jimmy Skopek even there?

MALCOLM

Coincidence, I guess.

PERCY

Jimmy happens to recognize Damain
Berry as a perpetrator in an assault
and robbery he was the victim of a
week ago. Pulls a gun.

MALCOLM

I tried stopping him.

PERCY

They scuffle. Jimmy shoots Damain.

MALCOLM

Cops unload on Jimmy.

PERCY

As they're trained to do.

MALCOLM

Are we done?

PERCY

Kim Jansing -- she know you were
going to confront Damain?

MALCOLM

She knows that I don't like him.
Or... That I didn't.

PERCY

How do you feel that he's dead?

MALCOLM

I've told you everything.

PERCY
What about hypnotism?

MALCOLM
... What about it?

PERCY
(mocks)
You dangle a watch and tell people
they're getting sleepy?

MALCOLM
I don't appreciate that.

PERCY
Something else you won't appreciate:
I'm confiscating almost everything
that you own, except for these clothes
on your back.

MALCOLM
Everything?

PERCY
Including this:

He holds up a clear evidence bag up for Malcolm. Inside is
the velvet ring case.

PERCY
Looks like evidence to me.

MALCOLM
No, it's not. Come on, man. I can't
ask her to marry me without a ring.

PERCY
You're free to go for now. But don't
even think about leaving the city.

EXT. WOMEN'S DORMITORY - DAY

Less of a police presence. Students are out mingling or on
their phones. Malcolm weaves through them.

INT. DORM ROOM #2 - DAY

Malcolm is cornered by Kim and Ashley.

MALCOLM
Can I get past?

KIM
Who did Jimmy kill?

ASHLEY
Talk, asshole.

MALCOLM
Ashley. Fuck off.

Ashley stares daggers at him. She rears back to strike, but Kim restrains her.

ASHLEY
I'll slap you.

MALCOLM
I got one coming.

INT. DORM ROOM #2 - DAY

Ashley's gone.

Kim smacks Malcolm.

MALCOLM
It's not my fault.

KIM
Yes it is!

MALCOLM
Jimmy lost it.

KIM
Handling Damain on my own --
(then)
It would have been easy.

MALCOLM
He admitted he was trying to steal
you from me. I was protecting you.

KIM
I wasn't in danger.
(then)
I never did anything with him. I
was never going to, Malcolm.

She sits on a bed. Hides her face in her hands. He sneaks a quiet sigh.

KIM
I'm worried about the press making
this a love triangle when it's not.

MALCOLM

It does look like shit.

KIM

Damn it! How am I gonna get a job
as a reporter after this?

He sits with her. She turns to him. He wraps an arm around
her. Looks her in the eye.

MALCOLM

Tell the truth, like I did. You're
not guilty of anything.

(then)

Neither am I.

KIM

What was Jimmy thinking?

MALCOLM

Damain tried to fight us. Jimmy was
in fear of his life, like the night
he was mugged.

KIM

But why kill?

MALCOLM

It's like he thought it was happening
again, by the same person.

KIM

There's no way it was Damain.

MALCOLM

I don't know why he thought it was.

They hug.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

Nobody's here except for Professor Flower, who's at the podium
scribbling his thoughts on paper.

Malcolm creeps to the front row and sits.

MALCOLM

You been told?

FLOWER

I was supposed to give a lecture.

MALCOLM

I heard they canceled everything a couple of days.

FLOWER

I'm penning a lecture about how there's really no such thing as a civilized society.

MALCOLM

You know the shooter was one of your students, right?

Flower freezes.

Slams his pen down.

MALCOLM

Damn, you didn't know.

(then)

Your dry sarcasm -- nobody can read that shit, man.

FLOWER

Who was it?

MALCOLM

... It was me.

FLOWER

... You're the shooter?

MALCOLM

Basically, yeah.

FLOWER

You had something to do with this.

MALCOLM

I didn't pull the trigger. There wasn't even supposed to be a gun.

FLOWER

What the hell does that mean?

MALCOLM

The shooting was the result of an experiment that went out of control.

FLOWER

Are you out of your fucking mind?

MALCOLM

No. Very much in it.

FLOWER
What experiment?

MALCOLM
I asked you: what if I could hypnotize
someone into committing a crime?

FLOWER
I guess you forgot what I said.
(repeats)
Don't fuck up now.

MALCOLM
I'm on top of it.

FLOWER
Who was the shooter?

MALCOLM
Jimmy Skopek.

FLOWER
Oh, Jesus... You're telling me you
hypnotized your roommate!?

MALCOLM
Could you not yell things like that
in here.

FLOWER
You bastard.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE - DAY

Malcolm goes to sit in the antique chair. Flower pulls it
out from under him.

MALCOLM
Fucker!

Malcolm falls on his ass. Flower puts the chair off to the
side. He paces. Malcolm gets comfortable on the floor.

FLOWER
I'll have to answer questions from
everyone.

MALCOLM
There's nothing to suggest hypnosis.
I destroyed everything that did.

FLOWER
Oh. Great. I assume you falsified
a statement, too.

MALCOLM
Barely had to lie. One detective
mocked hypnotherapy.

Malcolm smirks.

FLOWER
You smile like you're mad.

MALCOLM
I'm getting away with this.

FLOWER
I'm a psychology professor. One of
my students went psycho and shot up
the campus.

MALCOLM
Coincidence.

FLOWER
What if people stop enrolling in my
courses?

MALCOLM
Help me. To perfect whatever I'm on
the verge of.

Several beats.

FLOWER
Sum it up.

MALCOLM
Jimmy couldn't remember who attacked
him. But he wanted to.

FLOWER
He bought-in.

MALCOLM
While he was under, I showed him a
picture of someone -- a target.

FLOWER
No mention of it after?

MALCOLM
I told him to forget me.
(then)
I said that I was instinct.

FLOWER
That shit worked?

MALCOLM

When he saw the target in-person, he fucking lost it.

FLOWER

One session?

MALCOLM

Probably why it blew up.

FLOWER

Who were you targeting?

MALCOLM

Some asshole. Trying to steal my girlfriend of three years from me.

FLOWER

God damn it, Malcolm. You made it look like shit. The press will have an orgy with this.

MALCOLM

Flashy headlines. But as they dig, they'll find nothing.

FLOWER

No, they'll find something.

MALCOLM

There's nothing. The shooter didn't even know he was hypnotized.

FLOWER

You got people killed.

Malcolm lowers his head.

MALCOLM

... I know.

FLOWER

You said there wasn't even supposed to be a gun.

MALCOLM

I told Jimmy to hurt the target. I was hoping he'd just punch Damain.

FLOWER

Instead, the guy ends up fucking dead. And Jimmy.

MALCOLM
But I've done it.
(then)
It's possible to hypnotize --

FLOWER
(interrupts)
Get out.

Malcolm scrambles up and moves to confront Flower, who turns his back on him.

MALCOLM
We could show it to your connection
at the C-I --

FLOWER
(interrupts)
We're keeping this between us.

Malcolm stares at the back of Flower's head for several beats. Then rushes out. Flower sighs... Looks to the door.

INT. STAIRWELL - MINUTES LATER

Malcolm stomps as he trudges down. A door on the floor above swings open. Flower enters. Malcolm peers up at him.

FLOWER
You destroyed all the evidence?

MALCOLM
Even the backup files.

FLOWER
No going back.

MALCOLM
I don't have a clue where to go from
here, to be honest.

FLOWER
How you did whatever you did --
(then)
You're gonna explain it all to me.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE - DAY

Flower's behind his desk, once more giving his full attention to Malcolm, who paces before him.

MALCOLM

Step one: find someone who's been hurt. Who can't remember who did it. Or why.

FLOWER

Who wants to remember.

MALCOLM

Step two: hypnotherapy session.

FLOWER

Where they relive the event.

MALCOLM

And after, while as deep under as they're gonna go, inject a warning.

FLOWER

Show them a target, with an assurance that it's the person they're trying to remember.

MALCOLM

And establish the target as a future threat.

FLOWER

Confusing the memory.

Flower smirks.

MALCOLM

I used his free will against him.

FLOWER

By completing his memories with the wrong information.

MALCOLM

I lured him into seeing the target in-person.

FLOWER

Where he must have reimagined all the wrong shit.

MALCOLM

I made the interaction as chaotic as possible. He was threatened.

FLOWER

And he reacted with self-defense.

MALCOLM
Might as well be offense.

FLOWER
Holy shit.

MALCOLM
Helluva lot better than my dancing
bum circus.

Flower nods.

Malcolm sits.

MALCOLM
Who do you know at the CIA?

FLOWER
I can't tell you that.

MALCOLM
You trust 'em?

FLOWER
I've got a trustworthy connection.
That's all you need to know.

MALCOLM
Come on, I just told you my crazy
shit. Tell me yours.

FLOWER
He's a liaison.

MALCOLM
... OK.

FLOWER
He secretly brings in consultants to
analyze the things they publicly
dismiss. Like hypnotizing people to
get ahead.

MALCOLM
Every part of what I did is illegal.
It's a weapon.

FLOWER
People who make new weapons don't go
to jail -- they get jobs.

Several beats.

MALCOLM
So what do you think?

FLOWER

You know, it's always been my dream
to covertly experiment.

MALCOLM

Here's your opportunity.

FLOWER

I have to see it for myself.

MALCOLM

Let's do this shit again.

FLOWER

I can find a suitable patient.

EXT. WOMEN'S DORMITORY - DAY

Malcolm approaches the building and stops. Police and news
media crowd the front entrance.

He sneaks in through a side entrance.

INT. DORM ROOM #2/HALL - DAY

Detectives put everything of Ashley and Kim's into bags,
which are piled in the hall.

Kim and Ashley watch with their arms crossed. Malcolm weaves
around onlookers. Kim goes to him. They hug. Then stare
at each other face-to-face, trying to hide from the all chaos
around them. They keep their voices down.

KIM

I was questioned.

MALCOLM

We gotta deal with this until they
officially clear us.

PERCY (O.S.)

Well, shit. What do we have here?
Front page news.

Percy goes to them.

MALCOLM

Detective.

KIM

Can we have privacy, please?

PERCY

I doubt it. You're officially now
Persons of Interest.

KIM

We're the victims.

PERCY

Both of your dorm rooms are a couple
of crime scenes. I'll need to know
where you're staying at.

(offers them his
business card)

Enjoy the press.

EXT. WOMEN'S DORMITORY - DAY

Malcolm and Kim sneak out through the side entrance. The
news media notice and chase them, filming and photographing.

EXT. MAIN BUILDING - MINUTES LATER

Malcolm and Kim race in.

INT. STAIRWELL - MINUTES LATER

They catch their breaths.

KIM

Get us a hotel room.
(then)
I'm going shopping.

He scoffs.

MALCOLM

Let me handle the plan.

KIM

We don't have any clothes!

MALCOLM

Shit... Buy me a few things.

KIM

Underwear and shirts?

MALCOLM

Ankle socks.

They hug.

KIM
This is terrible.

MALCOLM
We'll be OK.

EXT. HOTEL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

In NYC. Near the University.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

KNOCKING on the door.

Malcolm opens it. Kim enters followed by a bellhop pushing a cart. Atop it are a few cases for pro cameras, lighting equipment. Shopping bags.

MALCOLM
What the hell?

KIM
Surprise.

MALCOLM
We got the room for two days.

KIM
I was able to rent equipment from
the University.

MALCOLM
For what?

KIM
My documentary.

MALCOLM
... On my hypnotism theories.

KIM
We're doing a sit-down interview.
On camera.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm and Kim sit at a table eating room service meals while peeking at a muted TV.

ON TV

LIVE NEWS REPORT:

Replay footage of them running across the campus earlier.
Headline reads, "PERSONS OF INTEREST."

MALCOLM

Shuts it off with a remote.

Several beats.

KIM
Every hypnotize Jimmy?

MALCOLM
... You kidding?

KIM
Have you?

MALCOLM
He mocked it.

KIM
That's not an answer.

MALCOLM
I never did.

KIM
You made homeless people dance.

MALCOLM
Don't insult me right now.

KIM
I have to ask you about the shooting
in the interview.

MALCOLM
Not tonight.

EXT. NYC - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Queens.

EXT. FLOWER'S HOUSE

In Queens. Malcolm knocks on the front door. It opens and Flower shows him inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Collections and antiques are displayed.

GINA ST. LOUIS (late-20s) lies on a sofa. She's a beauty in a business suit. Her eyes are closed. Hands are interlocked atop her stomach. Pointed at her is a pro camera. She also wears headphones.

ON HEADPHONES

A recording of a GENTLE HEARTBEAT plays.

MALCOLM

Checks her out. Flower picks up a briefcase. Then stands with Malcolm.

FLOWER

She's under.

MALCOLM

What's up with the music?

FLOWER

Sound of a normal heartbeat.

MALCOLM

(mocks)

You got her listening to a beating heart?

FLOWER

In a later session, when it's time, I'll make it a pounding heart attack.

(then)

Trying to induce adrenaline.

MALCOLM

She's our patient.

FLOWER

Gina St. Louis.

MALCOLM

A woman.

FLOWER

Out of everyone I see in my private practice, her memories are the most easily corruptible.

MALCOLM

What happened to her?

FLOWER
 Moved here for a job. Hasn't made
 friends. Every Saturday night, she
 goes club-hopping.
 (then)
 One Sunday morning after, she woke
 up in a hotel room.

Malcolm braces.

FLOWER
 She was alone. Naked. And what do
 you think?

MALCOLM
 Raped.

FLOWER
 She thinks date-raped.
 (then)
 No idea who's guilty.

MALCOLM
 That's disgusting, man.

FLOWER
 Well, it's the nature of what we're
 doing.

MALCOLM
 I never thought we'd be doing this
 on a woman.

Flower opens the briefcase. Inside are his tazor. A small
 camcorder. A pistol.

FLOWER
 We doing this or not?

MALCOLM
 I guess.

FLOWER
 You guess?

MALCOLM
 Yeah. No, we're doing it.

FLOWER
 To do a great thing, you have to go
 for it -- that's when the stars align
 for you.
 (then)
 When you get tentative, the Universe
 will always work against you.

EXT. POLICE HQ - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A skyscraper on Manhattan.

KIM (V.O.)

... Please.

PERCY (V.O.)

What is this?

INT. PERCY'S OFFICE

Detective Percy is behind his desk. Kim's on the edge of a chair before him.

PERCY

You're investigating a story you're in the middle of?

KIM

I wasn't there.

PERCY

Well, I respect your ambition. But I'm not saying shit for the record.

KIM

I'm wondering if hypnotism might have been involved.

Percy snickers.

PERCY

(mocks)

Yeah. Me, too. Looking forward to the toxicology reports.

KIM

Can you tell me anything?

PERCY

Kid, I'm investigating you.

KIM

Thanks for your time.

She's about to stand when:

PERCY

Stop... There's something.

(then)

I'd like to get your reaction to a couple of things. Wait here.

He stands and exits.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gina remains on the sofa. Flower and Malcolm huddle some distance away.

FLOWER
Give her the warning.

MALCOLM
We don't have a target.

FLOWER
Preliminary warning. Reinforce that she has to remember who did it.

MALCOLM
Alright.

FLOWER
I'm filming it.

MALCOLM
What? Fuck that.

FLOWER
Not for her. For us.

MALCOLM
No. Hell no.

FLOWER
We can't just display the result of an experiment. We have to document how we got there.

MALCOLM
... Shit.

Flower goes to Gina. Malcolm sneaks out a quiet sigh as he watches her remove her headphones.

INT. PERCY'S OFFICE - DAY

Percy sits on a chair beside Kim. He places the velvet ring case on the arm of her chair.

She takes it. Opens it. Sees the beautiful engagement ring for the first time.

PERCY
It was in Malcolm's possession when we searched him.

KIM

... It's an engagement ring.

PERCY

He was pissed. Said he was going to ask you to marry him.

KIM

... How long has he had it?

PERCY

When you ask him that, you should also ask him what he deleted from the various electronics in his dorm room.

KIM

I don't know anything about that.

PERCY

Still piecing it together, but we know two things: whatever it was, it's probably gone forever; and he erased it after the shooting.

KIM

I'll get him to tell me.

PERCY

Ring's catalogued in evidence.
(then)
Use it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Malcolm leans against a bookshelf in the b.g. Flower sits on an armchair near Gina. They listen to her.

GINA

... Dirty dancing.

FLASHBACK - INT. CLUB - NIGHT

The place is packed. Music PULSATES.

Gina's on a crowded dance floor, dirty dancing with anyone who's willing.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Flower, Malcolm and Gina.

GINA
Everybody's a stranger. I'm really
just trying to fit in.

FLASHBACK - INT. VIP ROOM

Overlooks the dance floor. Several dozen partiers are huddled
in groups, all having a good time.

Gina follows a random group in.

She wanders aimlessly.

Does a shot.

Another shot.

Nobody really looks at her until SOMEBODY appears and gives
her a champagne glass.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Flower, Malcolm and Gina.

GINA
In a VIP room. I snuck in. Nobody
cares that I'm here.
(then)
Handed a champagne glass.

FLOWER
From who?

GINA
Nowhere.

FLASHBACK - INT. VIP ROOM

A dizzy blur.

Gina puts down the empty glass.

She's in a circle of people.

Indistinguishable faces.

Smiling. Talking. Laughing.

FLASHBACK - INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Gina's dazed in back.

DARK FIGURE sits opposite.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Flower, Malcolm and Gina.

GINA

Now it's me that can't see nobody.
I'm surrounded... People without
faces are talking to me... Don't
know what we're talking about.

FLOWER

You're leaving.

GINA

In a cab.
(then)
I'm not alone.

FLOWER

Who's with you?

GINA

Went black.

FLOWER

You're entering a hotel. You're
going to a --

GINA

(interrupts)
I'm not going.

FLOWER

... OK. You don't have to go in
there just yet.

Flower stops the pro camera. He gets out the camcorder and starts filming as Malcolm kneels beside Gina.

Malcolm hesitates.

MALCOLM

Listen for another countdown from
three. At its end --
(then)
Don't speak. Do what I say like
it's instinct. Three, two, one.

Gina's still.

Malcolm leans in.

MALCOLM
Know that you're in danger.

Several beats.

MALCOLM
 This isn't me. Forget me. This is
you trying to remember.

Several beats.

MALCOLM
 I'm instinct.
 (then)
 You have to remember who drugged,
 kidnapped, and raped you.

FLOWER
 You must.

MALCOLM
 That person is coming back. To hurt
 you again. Very soon.

FLOWER
 You'll have to recognize that person.

MALCOLM
 And hurt that person first.

FLOWER
 You'll have to kill that person.

Malcolm hesitates. Then looks to Flower. They stare daggers
 into each other.

EXT. NYC - ESTABLISHING - SUNSET

Another day gone.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Malcolm enters and finds Kim dressed formally.

The table's been moved. Two chairs are positioned opposite,
 with pro cameras on tripods pointed at each, illuminated by
 lights on stands.

KIM
 We're taught to do everything solo.
 So we can free lance.

MALCOLM
I need something to eat.

KIM
We're doing this.

MALCOLM
It's been a long day.

KIM
Sit down.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm and Kim sit before the two cameras. She scribbles something on a clapperboard. Holds it near his camera.

CLAPPERBOARD

Reads, "ASSHOLE - TAKE 1."

KIM

Tosses it.

He squirms.

MALCOLM
I got a shit posture.

KIM
Stop it.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

CLAPPERBOARD

Reads, "ASSHOLE - TAKE 2."

KIM

Tosses it.

Malcolm waits.

KIM
What's your education level?

MALCOLM
Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in
Psychology. Doctorate in research
within sight.

KIM
Why psychology?

MALCOLM

When it comes to life, the most powerful thing is the Human mind.

KIM

You're probably right.

MALCOLM

I am right. Without a mind to perceive it, there's no Universe.

KIM

You're definitely wrong.

MALCOLM

I'm not wrong. If nobody can see it, then what's the point?

KIM

What's the point of oxygen?

He smirks.

MALCOLM

You learned how to be a smartass from me.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

CLAPPERBOARD

Reads, "ASSHOLE - TAKE 3."

KIM

Tosses it.

Malcolm eats chips. Starts choking.

KIM

God damn it!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

CAMERA'S POV

of the clapperboard.

Reads, "ASSHOLE - TAKE 4."

It's pulled O.S. to reveal:

Malcolm with his face in the lens.

MALCOLM
Why'd you have me do this?

KIM (O.S.)
I adore you.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

CLAPPERBOARD

Reads, "ASSHOLE - TAKE 5."

KIM

Tosses it.

Malcolm waits.

KIM
Talk about hypnotizing people into
doing things.

MALCOLM
... I'm happy to answer a specific
question.

KIM
Do you wonder if it's possible to
hypnotize an unsuspecting person
into doing something against their
free will?

MALCOLM
... I do.

KIM
What are you taught?

MALCOLM
It's not possible.

KIM
But you wonder.

MALCOLM
I don't know.

KIM
What do you think?

MALCOLM
Hypnotism is in the category with
aliens and Bigfoot -- it's easy to
just imagine and speculate things.

KIM
 Maybe aliens and Bigfoot do exist?
Out of sight.

MALCOLM
 I doubt it.

KIM
 Ever wish you could try -- to make
 someone do something without them
 ever knowing you influenced it?

MALCOLM
 I'm not lazy. I can do things for
 myself.

KIM
 Ever wish you could hypnotize me?

MALCOLM
Never.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

CLAPPERBOARD

Reads, "ASSHOLE - TAKE 6."

KIM

Tosses it.

Malcolm's antsy.

KIM
 How did me hanging around Damain
 make you feel?

MALCOLM
 Kim. You know --

KIM
 (interrupts)
 You were prepared to fight him.

MALCOLM
 I was.

KIM
 Why did Jimmy have a gun?

MALCOLM
 Because Jimmy was an idiot.

KIM
Hypnotism is perfect for Jimmy's
case -- a victim needing to recall
memories of a crime.

MALCOLM
He didn't want to remember.

KIM
What did you say to Damain?

MALCOLM
Fuck off. Asshole. Stay away from
the girl that I love.
(then)
Something like that.

KIM
What did he say to you?

MALCOLM
It doesn't matter.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

CLAPPERBOARD

Reads, "ASSHOLE - TAKE 7."

KIM

Tosses it.

Malcolm squirms.

KIM
Close your eyes.

MALCOLM
... No.

KIM
Trust me.

He does. She tosses something. It lands on his lap. He
looks down and finds the velvet ring case. Opens it. Sees
the ring.

KIM
Hold that up for the camera.

MALCOLM
How the fuck did you get this?

KIM
I tried interviewing that detective.

MALCOLM
You weren't supposed to see this.
Not until --

KIM
(interrupts)
You ask me to be your wife.

MALCOLM
This is bullshit.

KIM
Malcolm. How long?

MALCOLM
Christmas. New Year's. Valentine's
Day. Everyday.

KIM
You've had it for months?!

MALCOLM
It needs to be the right moment.
(pockets the case)
Right now ain't it.

KIM
They know you deleted files.

MALCOLM
... I don't --

KIM
(interrupts)
I love you. Don't lie to me about
this. Tell me what you deleted.

Several beats.

MALCOLM
Pics. Videos.

KIM
Of what?

MALCOLM
Jimmy and me.
(then)
Partying. Using a few drugs. I was
afraid of getting expelled for it.

KIM

That better be the truth.

MALCOLM

You're making me feel guilty.

KIM

Something's on my radar.

MALCOLM

Well... That's a wrap.

He storms off.

She sighs.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Middle of the night in the dark. Malcolm and Kim lie in bed. They're both awake, preoccupied with their thoughts.

She crawls to him... They kiss... Make out... Take off their night clothes and start making love.

EXT. NYC - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Queens.

EXT. FLOWER'S HOUSE

A cab pulls up.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Flower's wearing his best suit. He's in front of a mirror tying a tie.

KNOCKS at the front door get his attention. He goes to the door, opens it and finds:

KIM

Hi there!

FLOWER

... Hello?

KIM
My name's Kim Jansing. I'm dating
Malcolm Graves.

They shake.

FLOWER
Oh. Where's Malcolm?

KIM
I came alone.

FLOWER
Oh... OK?

KIM
I don't know if Malcolm said, but
I'm a broadcast journalism major
working on a documentary.

FLOWER
... I don't recall that one being
mentioned.

KIM
It's about hypnotism. I was hoping
we could talk. On the record.

FLOWER
... I have somewhere to be.

KIM
A few minutes. It's not a waste of
time. It's my thesis, basically.

Several beats.

He smiles.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Flower sits on the armchair. Kim on the sofa. She aims her
phone at him and snaps a pic.

ON PHONE

Pic of an ass ugly blur.

KIM

Chuckles.

FLOWER

Is that what you kids are all doing these days? It's a little rude.

KIM

Sorry. I'm recording the audio of our conversation. I need a pic to put on screen.

FLOWER

Well, I'm happy to pose.

KIM

Let's try that one again.

She takes another pic.

ON PHONE

Pic of Flower smiling.

KIM

Puts her phone on a coffee table, where she has it record.

FLOWER

Malcolm told me they confiscated his phone.

KIM

Mine, too. I just had to buy this one new.

FLOWER

That's not fair. Having to focus on your studies amid --

KIM

(interrupts)

Are you familiar with any cases where lines were crossed in hypnotherapy?

FLOWER

... Not sure how you mean.

KIM

Someone trying to fill a patient's head with shit. Give 'em thoughts that aren't really theirs.

FLOWER

Hypnotherapy is a profession. A livelihood. There's no money to be made from abuse.

KIM

To know free will's unbreakable,
somebody must have tried to break
it, and failed.

FLOWER

I suppose.

KIM

You're not aware of a single case of
abuse?

FLOWER

I'm not.

KIM

Absorption, disassociation, and the
mind-fuck of suggestion.

(then)

That's the recipe for getting into
somebody's head -- is it not?

FLOWER

I try to help.

KIM

And corporations? Governments? Do
they use hypnotism?

FLOWER

No. But they brainwash.

KIM

Brainwash?

FLOWER

With corporations, it's advertising.
They replicate your fantasy and taunt
you with it until you think you're
inspired, and you buy their product.

KIM

I'll give you that.

FLOWER

Punch their logo and slogan into
your head relentlessly, until you
remember them better than your own
childhood.

KIM

What about Government?

FLOWER

Public grade school. They pay for books full of shit they approve of, all of which becomes the foundation for everything you know.

She squirms.

FLOWER

For twelve years, you think you're learning, but you're really just being told things -- what language to speak, what systems to use, what happened in history.

KIM

I don't want this all over the place with conspiracy theories.

FLOWER

Columbus didn't discover America. The Declaration of Independence was approved on July second and signed in August; forget the fourth of July. And in case you haven't noticed, we're not all created equal.

(then)

They repeat things. Over and over. Get us locked in. Beating us down, until we think we're standing tall.

KIM

Got a point?

FLOWER

Hypnotism is not how the powerful have chosen to control minds.

KIM

What if you wanted to kill a person with hands that aren't yours? Maybe your ticket's hypnotism?

FLOWER

Conspiracy theory.

KIM

Has Malcolm said anything to you about the shooting?

FLOWER

... He's my patient.

KIM

... Patient?

FLOWER

Doctor-patient confidentiality is going to prevent me from telling you anything. I'm sorry.

KIM

He hasn't mentioned it.

FLOWER

Communication's a tricky thing.

(then)

I have to go now.

She grabs her phone and stops recording. He gets out a smartphone of his own and aims it at her. She smiles as he snaps a pic.

ON PHONE

Pic of Kim.

FLOWER

Nods.

FLOWER

To put with your number. So I can reach you if this interview might be resumed.

EXT. FLOWER'S HOUSE - DAY

Up the street. Malcolm gets out of a taxi, then leans back in to see the DRIVER.

MALCOLM

Can you wait?

DRIVER (O.S.)

Sure thing, pal.

He shuts the door. The tires SCREECH as they spin. The cab speeds away.

MALCOLM

Fucker!

Tires SCREECH as they lock up. The cab suddenly stops. Kim hurries out to it. Climbs in back.

Malcolm hides. Watches the cab race down the street, around a corner, and out of the neighborhood.

Flower exits his house. He starts down a walkway toward the sidewalk. Malcolm speed-walks to him and confronts him.

MALCOLM
What the hell was that?

FLOWER
You're dating a wanna-be reporter.

MALCOLM
She's harmless.

FLOWER
She interviewed me! On the record,
for some bullshit.

MALCOLM
She doesn't know anything.

FLOWER
She definitely wants to know.

MALCOLM
I'm sorry.

FLOWER
She didn't tell you she was coming
here? Sniffing around.

MALCOLM
She's stubborn.

FLOWER
This is a fucking problem. We'll
talk about it after. We're late.

MALCOLM
For what?

EXT. NYC - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Countless skyscrapers.

INT. GENERIC OFFICE SPACE

Random floor of a skyscraper. It has furnished cubicles,
offices and conference rooms. But not a single person until
Flower and Malcolm step off an elevator and look around.

MALCOLM
Business ain't exactly booming, is
it?

FLOWER
It's like a "standby" status.

MALCOLM

A what?

FLOWER

I don't know where he is, but we're here to see my connection.

MALCOLM

Asshole. You should'a told me.

FLOWER

I'm doing the talking.

MALCOLM

Back up. Where are we?

FLOWER

This place is run by the CIA.
(then)

Built-in excuse for being late -- we can say we couldn't find the place.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Seated together on one side of a long table are Flower and Malcolm. At the table's end is AGENT BOB WALKER (50s).

WALKER

... Can you make a woman think she's a man, or a man think he's a woman?

FLOWER

Sorry, Bob.

WALKER

They don't give me interns. Can you hypnotize a dog into making coffee?

MALCOLM

It doesn't work on animals.

FLOWER

Get serious.

WALKER

Nobody thinks that hypnotism can be a means to get ahead.

FLOWER

Methods and theories change.

WALKER

Alright, tell me what you're up to.

FLOWER

We have a guinea pig -- an innocent, unsuspecting, female civilian.

WALKER

And what trick is your female guinea pig gonna do for me?

FLOWER

Kill.

Several beats.

MALCOLM

It's possible.

FLOWER

Already did it once -- University shooting a few days ago.

MALCOLM

The shooter was hypnotized.

WALKER

To do what?

FLOWER

Target someone.

WALKER

You're saying you can make a random person an assassin. Without them knowing it. For real.

FLOWER

This conversation isn't happening.

WALKER

I say that.

FLOWER

I always wanted to say it.

WALKER

I need proof.

FLOWER

We're doing our experiment again. This time, filming it. Making a step-by-step demonstration for you.

WALKER

You can really do it.

FLOWER
This kid did it in his dorm. If he
can do that, what can America's most
determined enemies do?

WALKER
What do you want?

FLOWER
With a successful demonstration in
hand, we want jobs. Explaining it.
Experimenting. Using it.

WALKER
That all?

FLOWER
We want to disappear.

Malcolm's puzzled.

Several beats.

WALKER
Back in the day, my boss rejected
you because you were desperate.

FLOWER
Now you're the boss.

INT. GENERIC OFFICE SPACE - MINUTES LATER

Walker has the keys to vending machines. He opens a few and
steals goodies as Flower and Malcolm watch.

WALKER
Don't tell the taxpayer.

FLOWER
I'm the taxpayer, you bastard.

MALCOLM
What's "disappear"?

WALKER
Shit, Wilson. You're not dragging
him down that road, are you?

FLOWER
I was gonna tell him.

MALCOLM
Tell me what?

WALKER

"Disappear" means you die.

FLOWER

Figuratively.

WALKER

And get reborn a government agent
with a six-figure salary.

Malcolm looks to Flower.

FLOWER

I was gonna tell you.

WALKER

Most people apply to the CIA like
any other job.

FLOWER

But when you're breaking the law,
there's a different protocol.

WALKER

An asset guilty of a crime has to be
snuck through the back door.

FLOWER

Still call it the Asset Protection
Program?

WALKER

Where criminals we can use are given
new identities.

FLOWER

In exchange for ten years of service
in the intel community.

WALKER

Hell yes, my friend.

Malcolm stares at Flower, who shrugs.

Walker stuffs his pockets.

WALKER

Fingerprints and dental records are
linked to your new identity.

FLOWER

We'd be kept out of sight.

WALKER

No social media. No talking to your friends and family ever again.

FLOWER

Suddenly, we're missing.

WALKER

Eventually, presumed dead.

MALCOLM

Are you fucking --

FLOWER

(interrupts)

Don't be so quick to dismiss it.

Walker tosses them sodas.

WALKER

Do your experiment. Bring me your demonstration.

(then)

This meeting never happened.

EXT. DANCE STUDIO - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A small business.

INT. DANCE STUDIO

Dance beat #2 PLAYS on a STEREO. An instructor teaches women a routine.

Kim and Romona sit together off to one side. Kim holds her phone as it records.

ROMONA

... I never saw what he did or said to the bums. But it's amazing that it worked.

KIM

So those are real bums.

ROMONA

They're from an alley just around the block.

KIM

Are they still hypnotized?

ROMONA

Like I said, I have no idea how it all works.

KIM

Did Malcolm flirt with you?

ROMONA

He was hellbent on his dissertation the entire time.

KIM

You got a copy of that beat?

EXT. PUBLIC SQUARE - DAY

Manhattan. Flower eats a candy bar. Malcolm waits for them to get privacy, then:

MALCOLM

Asset Protection Program?!

FLOWER

Don't yell it.

MALCOLM

I'm not disappearing.

FLOWER

You're a Person of Interest in the University shooting.

MALCOLM

So far, so good.

FLOWER

Somewhere, you slipped up.

Several beats.

MALCOLM

Kim spoke to a detective who said they know I deleted things.

FLOWER

Now you have an escape route.

MALCOLM

Disappearing has been your plan all along.

FLOWER

We'll be reborn in a place where we can do great work.

MALCOLM

I don't want a new life.

FLOWER

Sure, we'll be like what the unknown carpenter is to my chair, but --

MALCOLM

(interrupts)

Fuck your chair.

Several beats.

FLOWER

When I was in my thirties, my wife divorced me.

MALCOLM

Finally, something logical.

FLOWER

It became my dream to completely start over.

MALCOLM

I'm happy with my life.

FLOWER

I tried to disappear. They rejected me. I moved on. But I never really started over.

MALCOLM

What about my doctorate?

FLOWER

CIA can help.

MALCOLM

I got fucking family, man.

FLOWER

We're a team. We can do conspiracy theory shit. What's there to be mad about here? Come on.

Malcolm reaches in a pocket. Gets out the ring case. Opens it for Flower. He sees the ring.

MALCOLM

I love her.

FLOWER

You have to dump her.

MALCOLM

... What?

FLOWER

How many clandestine agents do you think have a wife who's a reporter?

Malcolm pockets the case.

Clenches a fist.

MALCOLM

You piece of shit. Mother fucker. I should beat your ass down --

FLOWER

(interrupts)
Alright! I'm sorry.

MALCOLM

Fuck you.

FLOWER

I apologize.

MALCOLM

This is bullshit.

Malcolm paces.

Flower shadows.

FLOWER

Hey, you came to me. You smiled like you were mad. Remember?

MALCOLM

I thought I had control.

FLOWER

You do. So take it... And destroy Kim's documentary.

MALCOLM

What the fuck is wrong with you?

FLOWER

It's better for us if it doesn't exist.

MALCOLM

It's her thesis. I promised I'd help her make it.

FLOWER
Tonight's the night. We're doing
the experiment. We're disappearing.

Several beats.

FLOWER
Steal her new phone. Video footage.
Her notes. Bring it all to my office
later.

Flower leaves.

Malcolm stands alone.

EXT. ALLEY #2 - DAY

Dick tries to rest in a makeshift hut. Kim creeps up to it.
Puts down a stereo. Gets out her phone. Films him. Clears
her throat. He looks to her.

KIM
I'll pay you to talk.

DICK
Don't mock me.

KIM
Actually, I'm wondering if you're a
victim.

DICK
Do I look like one?

KIM
Society's let you down.

DICK
No apology needed.

She taps the stereo.

KIM
Feel like dancing?

DICK
I don't really know how to.

KIM
Do you lose control when the beat
starts playing?

DICK

Lady, I'm sleeping. Can you just
leave me --

She hits "play." Dance BEAT blasts from the stereo. Dick scrambles up. To starting formation. Commences the routine. Dances with energy like a pro until he accidentally kicks his hut down.

She hits "stop." The beat stops. He lies exhausted. She puts her phone away. Gets money out of her purse and tosses it to him.

KIM

I'm sorry.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

The phone RINGS. Malcolm enters. He runs across the room and over the bed. Answers.

MALCOLM

(into phone)
Hello?

PERCY (V.O.)

(on phone)
About time.

MALCOLM

(into phone)
Detective.

PERCY (V.O.)

(on phone)
Listen up. I need you to come see
me tomorrow.

MALCOLM

(into phone)
Uh, I'm kinda busy --

PERCY (V.O.)

(on phone)
I don't care. You're coming to see
me tomorrow.

MALCOLM

(into phone)
... OK. Tomorrow.

PERCY (V.O.)

(on phone)
So did she say yes?

Malcolm hangs up. Gets the ring case out. Lies on the bed. Toys with the ring.

EXT. NYC - ESTABLISHING - SUNSET

Another day gone.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Malcolm's curled in a ball on the floor beside the bed. He kisses the ring.

MALCOLM
I never deserved you.
(then)
Kimberly, I'm sorry.

He scrambles up. Pockets the case.

Gathers footage from the pro cameras.

Gathers all of Kim's notes.

Goes through her stuff.

Exits with a full plastic shopping bag.

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

Nobody's out except Malcolm, who carries the bag.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE/HALL - NIGHT

KNOCKING at the door. Flower opens it and finds Malcolm out there pacing... He confronts Flower.

MALCOLM
Let's do it.

FLOWER
I've already started.

Malcolm enters and gives him the bag. Flower rummages through it, not finding what he's looking for.

FLOWER
I don't see her new phone.

MALCOLM

She has it.

Flower shuts the door. Malcolm notices Gina in the lounge area lying on a sofa. Her eyes are closed and she's wearing headphones.

ON HEADPHONES

A recording of POUNDING HEARTBEAT plays.

MALCOLM

Ponders a thought.

MALCOLM

We still need a target.

From behind, a tazor presses his neck. ZAP! Electricity BUZZES. Malcolm falls to the floor unconscious at the feet of Flower, who grips the tazor.

INT. TAXI #2 (NYC HIGHWAY) - NIGHT

Struggling to get through traffic. Kim's in back. Answers her RINGING phone.

KIM

(into phone)

Who's this?

FLOWER (V.O.)

(on phone)

Professor Flower.

KIM

(into phone)

Oh... OK? Hi there.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Flower sits at his desk. Rocks back-and-forth in his chair while on his phone. Fiddles with a roll of duct tape.

FLOWER

(into phone)

In addition to teaching, I practice hypnotherapy. I've got a patient willing to let you observe a session.

KIM (V.O.)

(on phone)

Tonight?

FLOWER
 (into phone)
 Yeah. I feel bad. About kicking
 you out earlier.

INT. TAXI #2

Kim thinks about it.

KIM
 (into phone)
 Uh... At your house?

FLOWER (V.O.)
 (on phone)
 No, the University.

KIM
 (into phone)
 I'm in slow traffic.

FLOWER (V.O.)
 (on phone)
 We'll be here for a while.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Flower opens his briefcase. Snatches the pistol. Pulls the slide back. A bullet CLICKS into its chamber. He tucks it in his waistline.

He glances at Gina on the sofa... Then at Malcolm, who's on the three-hundred-year-old chair. His arms, legs and chest are duct taped to it. His mouth is taped. He's unconscious.

Flower grabs the camcorder. Goes to Gina.

INT. TAXI #2 - NIGHT

Battling traffic. Kim gets on her phone.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

The phone RINGS in the dark.

INT. TAXI #2

Kim hangs up and tries to think. The cab's horn HONKS, which unnerves her.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Malcolm hasn't moved. Flower sits on the edge of the sofa beside Gina, who's not wearing the headphones anymore.

FLOWER

... You're in the hotel room.

GINA

It's black.

(then)

Except for one lamp in the corner of the room.

FLASHBACK - INT. HOTEL ROOM #2 - NIGHT

A dizzy blur.

Lit by a single dim lamp.

Gina can barely stand. The Dark Figure approaches her and gives her a champagne glass. She drinks from it.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Flower films:

GINA

Another champagne glass. I'm drinking more poison. I'm already fucked up.

(then)

Too dark to see him.

FLOWER

Or her.

FLASHBACK - INT. HOTEL ROOM #2

Gina drops the glass... She collapses onto the bed... Rolls onto her back... The Dark Figure pounces on her.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Flower films:

GINA

Spinning. Everything. Jumping on me. That's it.

(then)

I never see him.

Her. FLOWER

... Her. GINA

Is it black? FLOWER

Totally dark. GINA

That's the end of that. FLOWER
 (then)
 But it's not over. It's happening
 to you again, Gina. Tonight.

Several beats.

Listen for another countdown from FLOWER
 three. When it concludes --
 (then)
 Don't speak.

Malcolm comes to... Realizes he's tied... Looks around and
 sees Flower busy with Gina.

Three. Two. One. Forget that I'm FLOWER
 speaking. What you're being told is
 from your own instinct.

Malcolm groans. Flower glances at him. Then looks back to
 Gina and talks louder.

Gina, the person who hurt you is FLOWER
 almost here. To give you another
 glass of poison.

She gets tense. Malcolm starts squirming, but the tape is
 too thick to rip. The chair CREAKS.

You're going to remember. Going to FLOWER
 recognize this person.

Flower gets his phone.

You'll stop her. You won't let her FLOWER
 escape you unpunished.

He holds it above her.

FLOWER

Save yourself. Save others. This will be done when you kill her.

(then)

Open your eyes.

She does. Sees what he wants.

FLOWER

Close your eyes.

She does. Lies still.

FLOWER

That's her. It's not a man. Of all people, it's a woman. Probably why you can't remember. Probably how she thought she was going to get away with it.

Malcolm groans louder. He jerks from side-to-side, making the chair CREAK on the verge of snapping.

FLOWER

The pain you feel, she's done it to others. But only you can --

The chair's arm SNAPS off. Flower snaps his attention to Malcolm, who gives Flower the finger.

FLOWER

Sense the unraveling.

(then)

Chaos awaits you, Gina.

Malcolm tries slicing tape around his chest with the jagged wood, still taped to his forearm.

Flower pockets the camcorder and goes to Malcolm. Punches his nose, leaving him bloodied.

Malcolm dives off his tip-toes. Flower grabs the chair and swings it. It flies through the air and lands on its side with Malcolm, who's stuck.

Flower goes to Gina.

FLOWER

Remember your pain when you punish her. The confusion will end when you kill her.

He puts the headphones on her.

ON HEADPHONES

POUNING HEARTBEAT.

FLOWER

Goes to Malcolm and kicks him in the stomach. Watches him struggle to breathe.

FLOWER

I'm doing you a favor. We're still a team here.

Flower goes to a shelf.

FLOWER

You broke my fucking chair. Good thing I'm not taking it with me.

He opens a bottle of wine. Finds a single champagne glass and fills it. Malcolm watches, catching his breath.

FLOWER

I'll cut you free of the tape when the experiment's completed.

(then)

Because of the target.

Flower goes and retrieves his phone. He returns and holds it above Malcolm.

ON PHONE

The pic he took of Kim.

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

Nobody's out except Kim, who's got her purse.

INT. BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Flower drags the chair with Malcolm into a connected room used for storage. All the while, Malcolm swipes at him.

Flower gets out the tazor and holds it inches from Malcolm's face. ZAP! Electricity BUZZES.

FLOWER

I'll roast your nuts.

KNOCKING O.S. on the door.

FLOWER
You've ruined your life. Because of
me, you can restart clean.
(then)
You're welcome.

He exits and shuts the door. Malcolm tries cutting tape
with the broken chair arm.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Gina hasn't moved. Flower shuts the door behind Kim.

KIM
Sorry. City traffic.

FLOWER
Session itself is over. But you can
ask her about it.

KIM
... Well, I guess I'll take whatever
I can get.

FLOWER
Let me wake her.

INT. BACK ROOM

Malcolm jerks violently. The chair's other arm SNAPS off.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Kim hears and looks toward the back room. Flower appears
beside her, startling her. He holds out the champagne glass
for her to take.

FLOWER
Can you hold his for her?

KIM
Yeah. Sure.

FLOWER
Special occasion.

INT. BACK ROOM

Malcolm can't uncover his mouth. Tries slicing tape around
one of his legs. Has some leverage with his arms free.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Kim has the glass. She follows Flower. Stands over him as he sits beside Gina.

KIM
What's up with the headphones?

FLOWER
Easy listening afterward is proven
to relieve stress.

ON HEADPHONES

POUNGING HEARTBEAT.

FLOWER

Takes them off of Gina.

KIM
It's like she isn't here.

FLOWER
Listen for another countdown from
three. At its conclusion, wake up.
(then)
Three. Two. One!

Gina's eyes open. She rockets up to a sitting position and starts breathing heavily. Looks to Flower... Then Kim.

FLASHBACK - INT. HOTEL ROOM #2

Gina struggles to stand... The Dark Figure approaches her... Dizziness steadies... Blur focuses... Features of the Dark Figure become more clear... Long hair. Curvaceous figure... The Dark Figure is... Or becomes... Kim, who offers Gina a champagne glass.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Flower smirks as Gina stares at Kim, who holds the glass out for Gina to take.

KIM
For you.

FLOWER
Cheers.

Gina hesitates... Abruptly swipes the glass. Backhand smacks Kim, who drops her purse. Gina chokes her. Kim stumbles backward, gagging. Slams a wall.

Flower gets the camcorder out.

Kim punches Gina, who's unfazed.

FLOWER
Gina, kill the bitch.

KIM
No! What the fuck?

INT. BACK ROOM

Malcolm's halfway to freeing a leg. Hears the COMMOTION O.S. Cuts faster.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Flower films Gina strangling Kim. Kim grabs a book off a shelf. Whacks Gina upside the head with it. Gina stumbles backward, but recovers.

KIM
You're shitting me.

FLOWER
Kill her!

Kim and Gina trade blows. Gina constantly lunges back for more. She won't let Kim escape. They tackle each other.

INT. BACK ROOM

Malcolm gets his leg free. Stands on it... Balances... Hops backward... Leaps at the wall. The chair SPLINTERS. He tumbles. Slams the floor.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Flower hears and glances at the back room. But continues filming Kim and Gina battling. Kim flees to the door.

KIM
Snap her out of it!

INT. BACK ROOM

Malcolm uncovers his mouth. Gasps for air.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Flower pockets the camcorder... Snatches Kim's purse. Steals her new phone.

INT. STAIRWELL

Kim hobbles down to the ground floor. Leaves behind a trail of blood.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Flower has the tazor. Heads for the back room.

INT. STAIRWELL

Gina follows the blood, zombie-like.

INT. BACK ROOM

Flower enters. Freezes upon discovering something on the floor. A pile of broken wood -- his chair.

Malcolm hides behind the door. Swings a chair leg around. Bats Flower's forehead, leaving him bloodied. Flower staggers out. Malcolm shadows him.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Malcolm rears the wood back like a bat. Takes a home run swing. Flower ducks. Attacks with the tazor. Electricity BUZZES. Malcolm hacks it out of his hand.

MALCOLM

Where's Kim?

FLOWER

It's working.

INT. AUDITORIUM

Kim enters. GUNSHOT O.S. A bullet CLANGS off the door. She screams. Scampers down aisle #1.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Malcolm's distracted by the shot. Flower gets hold of the chair leg. Rips it from him. Tosses it.

FLOWER
This is the greatest opportunity of
your life.

MALCOLM
I'm saving her from this.

FLOWER
I can't let you.

They trade punches. Flower gets knocked the fuck out. He falls and drops the camcorder.

Malcolm snatches it. Pockets it. Retrieves the chair leg and hurls it like a tomahawk. Pelts Flower as he comes to.

MALCOLM
God damn right, I'm worthy.

FLOWER
Bastard!

Malcolm exits.

INT. AUDITORIUM

Gina enters and surveys.

Kim crawls along a center row toward aisle #2. She peeks up and looks back.

HER POV

of Gina, who starts down aisle #1.

INT. STAIRWELL

Malcolm hurries down. Notices the blood.

MALCOLM

Shit.

INT. FLOWER'S OFFICE

Flower staggers to his desk. He snatches up his office phone and dials 911. Waits until someone answers.

FLOWER

(into phone)

Help! Thank God. There's an active shooter at this location.

Listens.

FLOWER

(into phone)

Female. Late-twenties.

Listens.

FLOWER

(into phone)

Couple of us were hostages. But we escaped her. Now she's hunting us.

(then)

Fucking insane!

Hangs up.

INT. AUDITORIUM

Gina hurries down aisle #1, peering up and down every row as she passes them.

KIM

Crawls into aisle #2 just before:

GINA

Reaches that row on the other side. She sees the blood and follows it.

MALCOLM

Creeps down aisle #1.

MALCOLM

Gina.

Gina turns.

KIM

Peeks up.

MALCOLM

Approaches Gina.

MALCOLM

Take it easy. Listen to me. You're
under hypnosis right now.

(then)

Three, two, one. Wake up.

She aims the gun at him. He raises his arms. Her eyes are
dripping tears, but doesn't blink.

KIM

Waves at him.

MALCOLM

Notices her down near the front. Sees her turn toward the
stage and descend to crawl.

GINA

Shifts focus back to the blood.

MALCOLM

Runs down aisle #1.

KIM

Rounds the front row.

MALCOLM

Does the same on his end. Motions for her to keep coming,
which she does.

GINA

Follows the blood into aisle #2. Proceeds down toward the
stage.

KIM

Struggles to crawl. She stands and presses a wound as she
hobbles.

MALCOLM

Stay down!

KIM

Help me!

GINA

Aims at her.

BANG!

MALCOLM

Tackles Kim.

The bullet ZIPS past.

GINA

Rounds the front row. Malcolm gets between her and Kim. Gina marches closer trying to aim around Malcolm. Kim hides behind him.

MALCOLM

She wants you, not me.

KIM

What's happening?

MALCOLM

Stay behind me.

KIM

Malcolm!

MALCOLM

On your feet.

(then)

Back us up.

Malcolm and Kim stand. Kim uses Malcolm to try and stay out of Gina's view as she fast approaches.

MALCOLM

Gina, don't!

(then)

You're being taken advantage of all over again.

Kim guides Malcolm back... Up stairs to the stage... Gina follows them up.

EXT. COURTYARD

Sirens BLARE O.S. on approach.

INT. AUDITORIUM

Malcolm and Kim back across center-stage. Gina stays with them. Finger on the trigger.

Suddenly, the stage lights all come on at once. Malcolm and Kim use a hand to shield their eyes.

FLOWER
Stop right there, Gina.

Gina stops. Flower emerges from backstage. He's got the plastic bag full of Kim's documentary-related materials, and his briefcase.

FLOWER
Malcolm. The camcorder.

MALCOLM
Only if Kim gets out of here.

FLOWER
I have to go all the way.

KIM
You're all crazy!

EXT. COURTYARD

Sirens BLARE.

Policemen invade.

INT. AUDITORIUM

Sirens BLARE O.S. outside.

Flower, Malcolm, Kim and Gina.

FLOWER
He's protecting this woman, and you know why.
(then)
Close your eyes.

MALCOLM
He's telling you what to think.

FLOWER
Gina, he was there that night. You saw him. In the VIP room.

Gina closes her eyes.

FLASHBACK - INT. VIP ROOM

Gina's in the circle of people.

Indistinguishable faces.

Smiling. Talking. Laughing.

INT. AUDITORIUM

Sirens BLARE O.S. outside.

Kim pulls Malcolm, who won't budge.

Flower gets in Gina's ear.

 FLOWER
They hurt people.

 MALCOLM
It's confusion.

 KIM
Let's run!

FLASHBACK - INT. VIP ROOM

Gina has a glass. The group raise their glasses for a toast.
Malcolm joins the group... Taps Gina's glass with his.

INT. AUDITORIUM

Sirens BLARE O.S. outside.

Kim pulls Malcolm. He starts backing up with her, continuing
to shield her.

Flower's in Gina's ear.

 FLOWER
Open your eyes.

She does.

 FLOWER
FIRE!

BANG!

THUD-THUD!

Through him. Into her. Malcolm and Kim fall together with chest wounds.

Flower dives on Malcolm and finds the camcorder. Their eyes meet. Malcolm's afraid. Flower's disappointed. He takes off backstage.

Gina lowers the gun.

COP (O.S.)

Don't move!

She turns.

POLICEMEN

Aim pistols at her.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

GINA

Drops dead.

POLICEMEN

Advance down each aisle, methodically checking each row.

MALCOLM AND KIM

Bleed out. He gets on her and puts pressure on one of her wounds. They stare at each other, knowing this is the end.

MALCOLM

Don't forgive me.

KIM

You tried to save me.

MALCOLM

It's my fault.

KIM

Don't let me die first.

MALCOLM

I'll be here.

KIM

Whatever's happening, I know this isn't what you wanted.

MALCOLM

I don't know what I wanted.

KIM
I forgive you.

MALCOLM
Take it back.

KIM
You tried.

MALCOLM
I did this... Shit, what the fuck
have I done?!

KIM
You took a bullet for me.

MALCOLM
That shit went through me.

They touch each other's faces.

KIM
I love you.

MALCOLM
Love you, too.

He reaches in a pocket and reveals the case. He opens it
and gets the ring.

They hold hands with the ring in the middle. With bloody
lips, they kiss.

DETECTIVE PERCY

Leads policemen onto the stage.

MALCOLM AND KIM

Lie in a sea of their own blood, dead.

FADE TO BLACK.

WALKER (V.O.)
Damn. What the fuck happened?

FLOWER (V.O.)
I bet that's the last question he
was asking himself.

WALKER (V.O.)
Tragedy.

EXT. NYC - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Countless skyscrapers.

FLOWER (V.O.)
People fail all the time.

INT. GENERIC OFFICE SPACE

"Standby" status.

FLOWER (V.O.)
What can I say? To do a great thing,
you have to go for it -- that's when
the stars align for you.
(then)
When you get tentative, the Universe
will always work against you.

WALKER (V.O.)
Great thing -- like murder?

FLOWER (V.O.)
Greatness isn't always good.

INT. OFFICE

Agent Walker's behind a desk. Professor Flower sits before
him with his face bandaged.

WALKER
Blew up on you, a little.

FLOWER
It's a weapon.

WALKER
Congratulations.
(then)
Welcome to a new life.

They shake.

FADE OUT.

FLOWER (V.O.)
This world is so fucked up.

THE END