

LIMBS

FADE IN:

EXT. THE COTTAGE - SUNSET

Behind the cops yellow tape, the wind blows at the pine trees making them sway under the overcast winter sky. But the woods is not the crime scene, it's --

-- the decaying cottage facing it.

DANIEL (late 20's), in an overcoat, leans against the cottage corner to shield himself from the chilling wind. He smokes a cigarette. Footsteps on dry leaves alert him to a new comer.

MARIANNE (mid 20's), a petite, shy, girl tucked inside a puffer jacket a little too big for her. She looks excited and cheerful. She holds a tool case in her hand.

DANIEL

Either you drew the short straw, or
you are the new CSI.

MARIANNE

Haha, we didn't draw straws.

DANIEL

Welcome to the team.

He shakes her hand.

DANIEL

It's cruel of them to send you
here. It's a nightmare down there.

MARIANNE

It couldn't be helped. A triple
homicide in a diner. All hands on
deck. I'm the only one they could
spare. This case is pretty much a
slam dunk. You already caught the
psycho. There isn't much damage a
rookie like me could do.

Daniel just nods.

DANIEL

Everyone in the lab must be having
a bet on you screwing up.

MARIANNE

Yeah, it makes sense. They seemed a
little too happy when I was
assigned her.

Daniel smiles.

DANIEL

I gotta go.

He walks toward his car and opens the door.

DANIEL

I'll send two uniforms to guard the place while you are working.

Marianne just nods. She scurries toward the door. Fishes the key out of her pocket. Her frozen hand can't put the key in the hole. The sound of BRAKES makes her drop the keys.

It's detective Daniel's car.

DANIEL

I'll be putting a hundred on you.
Don't screw up.

MARIANNE

Okay, I won't.

He drives off. A hint of guilt in Marianne's smile as she watches the car disappears into the woods.

INT. THE BASEMENT - NIGHT

Marianne switches on the lights, then instantly regrets it.

-- Shelves of cutting and sawing tools. Rusty. Bloodied.

-- Metallic tables stained with blood.

-- Black bags with clouds of buzzing blue flies over them.

-- Maggots swarming and covering something in the corner.

The place is a mix between a carpentry and a butcher shop.

Marianne covers her nostrils with the back of her hand. Without missing a beat, she puts the latex gloves on, takes the camera out of the case, and gets busy.

A SERIES OF TAKEN PHOTOS - A biology school lab from hell-

-- A whiteboard with drawings of different point of views of the brain. Formulas. Electronic schematics.

-- A severed arm with some contraption attached to the hand and the forearm.

-- A human anatomy dummy with notes and remarks written on it with a marker.

-- A car battery connected to some wires coated with a thick layer of brown substance you wouldn't want to guess.

END OF SERIES OF PHOTOS

Plastic curtains isolate a square area in the back. Marianne stares at it. She grips her shaking hand.

MARIANNE

You can do this.

INT. THE BASEMENT - NIGHT

Marianne brushes the plastic curtains aside and steps into the isolated area. It's very clean and organized. Well arranged, sterile surgery tools on a table. A cabinet filled with a variety of drugs and chemicals.

Marianne can't take her eyes off the surgery table in the middle. Something lies on it. A white sheet covers it.

Under the table, a thick bundle of wires extends all the way to the wall where it's connected to some kind of lever.

A silhouette slides over the curtains behind Marianne.

Marianne peels the sheet off. It's her first guess: a cadaver. But as she reveals more and more of it, she realizes something.

-- It's made of different body parts stitched together.

The connection between the limbs looks elegant. They blend together perfectly. A flawless symmetry. If the stitches were hidden, you would never guess it's made of different parts.

Electrodes protrude from his temples, neck, and every joint.

MAN (O.S.)

Fascinating isn't it?

She turns to find a cop behind her, hat in hand. She holds her chest. Her heart almost jumped out of her mouth.

COP

Sorry, I thought you heard me opening the door.

MARIANNE

It's okay. I'm just a little jumpy,
that's all. And fascinating isn't
the word I would use.

On his back, the coat has BULLET HOLES. Stained with BLOOD.

COP IMPOSTOR

What would you use?

MARIANNE

Excuse me?

COP IMPOSTOR

What word would you use to describe
this?

Marianne studies him. A cup of doubt spills inside her mind.

MARIANNE

You are supposed to guard the
place. You shouldn't be down here.

The cop smiles, and puts his hat back on. Marianne's hand
inches up toward her gun.

COP IMPOSTOR

True. It's just... what do they
call it? Morbid curiosity? They
told me it's a freak show down
here. I needed to see it for
myself.

Marianne nods. Understandable.

COP IMPOSTOR

I'm gonna go back up. It's freezing
outside, so I'm gonna stay inside
the cottage, if you don't mind.

MARIANNE

You can stay inside, just don't
come down here unless I call you.

The cop leaves. Marianne gets her camera and takes a photo of
the stitched-together corpse.

COP IMPOSTOR (O.S.)

One last thing.

Marianne turns to find him holding a taser gun. BZZZT! He
drops her. She thrashes and convulses. He leans down on her.

COP IMPOSTER
I'm supposed to guard the place
from you.

INT. CSI LAB - IT ROOM - NIGHT

JOSH unscrews a hard-drive. Daniel walks in.

DANIEL
Drop everything. I need you to
check something for me.

JOSH
(without looking up)
No can do. The diner surveillance
system hard drive was found in a
dumpster. Stupid killer thought
taking a hammer to it will do the
job. Didn't know Josh the wizard is
on duty.

DANIEL
It will only take a second.

JOSH
I can't. I'm sorry. The director
will have me fire if he finds me
working on anything else.

Daniel taps the table with his finger.

DANIEL
A victim in one of my cases got a
level-eighty-three character in
SPOW. His user name and password
might find their way to you
somehow.

JOSH
Eighty-three, heh, I'm almost
there.

DANIEL
He got the Emerald Excalibor.

Josh drops the screwdriver.

JOSH
Curse you, Daniel, king of
bargains.

Josh slides his chair toward the PC table.

DANIEL

Footage seven six four. Is it raw
or edited?

Josh types on the keyboard.

JOSH

Raw.

DANIEL

Can you tell if the camera we got
in evidence is the one used to
shoot it? Tag E-D-C-One-One-Seven.

JOSH

One second.

(typing)

Yeah, most likely. It may not be
the exact camera, but it's
definitely the same model.

DANIEL

Shit.

Daniel starts dialing on his smartphone. Josh looks at the
data on his screen.

JOSH

I don't get it.

Without taking the smartphone off his ears, Daniel double-
clicks the file to play the footage. He slides the playback
cursor to 4:31. Josh watches.

JOSH

Okay, corpse on surgery table. Mad
scientist-slash-serial killer walks
into frame. He is not in focus.
Auto-focus kicks in.

Daniel looks at him: *exactly*. Josh squints, still not
following, then his eyes widen at the realization.

JOSH

Shit indeed. This model doesn't
have auto-focus. Sterbenz got an
accomplice.

DANIEL

He's not answering his phone. Fuck!

JOSH

Who?

INT. THE BASEMENT - THE ISOLATED AREA - NIGHT

-- Stanley

-- is the name written on the uniform of the cop imposter, and the first thing Marianne sees as she opens her eyes.

Let's call the cop imposter Clark for reference.

CLARK

Hello sunshine. Had a good nap?

Marianne discerns her situation slowly. Stripped down to her underwear. Strapped to a surgery table. Struggling against the influence of whatever drug running now in her veins that's making her weak.

CLARK

I've got bad news and good news.

He draws a dotted line right below her shoulder with a marker. Marianne turns her head to look at her shoulder.

CLARK

The bad news. I ran out of sedatives. You may feel a little uncomfortable when I saw it off.

Tears run down Marianne's cheek, all the way down to her shoulder, smudging the dotted line.

CLARK

(clicks his tongue)
Look what you've done.

MARIANNE

(barely audible, still drugged)
Please, don't do it. I beg of you.
God, please. Please.

He rectifies the dotted line, wipes Marianne tears off with a compress.

CLARK

Now, now. No need to be melodramatic. It's just an arm. This project is something to lose an arm and a leg for. Beside you haven't heard the good news yet.

Marianne whimpers.

CLARK
We're halfway done.

MARIANNE
Wha--?

She turns to the other shoulder to find just a bandaged stump and no arm.

She --

INT. DANIEL'S CAR - NIGHT

-- Screams of sirens make Daniel rolls up his window.

DANIEL
(on the phone)
I'm stuck on road 92. There has been an accident. Find the closest unit to the cottage and send it there right now!

Daniel stumps on the horn.

DANIEL
Get out of the fucking way!

He puts it in reverse, backs up. BAM! He hits another car.

ANGRY DRIVER (O.S.)
Hey, what the hell!

He revs the engine up, then puts it in gear.

INT. THE BASEMENT - THE ISOLATED AREA - NIGHT

A surgical saw disk spins. The cloth in Marianne's mouth muffles her screams, but the terror in her eyes and the streaming tears remain unmasked. The saw draws near to her skin.

CLARK
You're gonna feel some pressure.

The saw cuts her skin.

O.S. A door CREEKS.

INT. THE BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Daniel mouths "Fuck." He steps toward the isolated area. He tightens his grip on his gun, and points it at the plastic curtains. But something steals his attention.

EXT. THE COTTAGE - NIGHT

A storm rages outside. Lightening strikes in the woods.

A long antenna stands on the cottage roof.

INT. THE BASEMENT - THE ISOLATED AREA - CONTINUOUS

Clark ducks and takes cover behind the table where the stitched corps lies. His gun points at the curtains, concealed under the corpse arm.

Marianne moves her jaws, her neck, and every muscle in her face trying to spit the cloth out of her mouth.

The silhouette of Daniel on the curtains grows bigger and bigger. Clark smiles. Daniel shoulder crosses the curtains.

MARIANNE
HE IS AIMING AT YOU!

Clark SHOOTS. Daniel falls. Marianne freezes.

Clark stands up and walks toward Daniel's body. He glances at Marianne. Blows at the barrel of his gun and winks.

He steps out of the isolated area, to --

INT. THE BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

-- find an ANATOMY DUMMY riddled with bullets and wearing Daniel overcoat.

DANIEL
DROP YOUR GUN!

Clark does as told and raises his hands.

DANIEL
Come on now. Don't be so obedient.
Try something.

-- OUTSIDE, THE LIGHTNING STRIKES THE ANTENNA.

-- ELECTRICITY SURGES INTO THE BASEMENT FRYING EVERY LAMP.

Pitch black.

CLARK'S VOICE
Well, if you insist.

A GUN SHOT. A table gets KNOCKED over. Metallic objects clatter on the floor. Another GUN SHOT. A POP. BZZZT!

Silence.

MARIANNE'S VOICE
Detective. Detective.
(losing hope)
Detective.

IMPOSTER COP'S VOICE
Detective is not home. Please leave
a message after the beep.

A flashlight illuminates Clark's face, which is two inches away from Marianne's.

CLARK
Beep!

He points the flashlight at the floor.

CLARK
One second. I need to find the gun.
Gotta finish off this party crasher
before I take you--

He drops the flash light.

CLARK'S VOICE
You--

The light shows his feet thrashing, then they elevate slowly into the darkness above.

Moments later, Daniel crawls into the light. He picks up the flashlight. He goes to Marianne, unties her. He notices her severed arm.

DANIEL
Jesus Christ. You can walk?

MARIANNE
Yes.

He points the flashlight at the exit to see --

-- *The stitched corpse standing tall.*

He drops the flashlight, picks up again. The corpse is gone.

EXT. THE COTTAGE - NIGHT

It's less dark outside thanks to the moonlight.

Marianne leans on Daniel, wrapping her only arm around his shoulder while holding the flashlight. Daniel looks back over his shoulder, holding a gun.

THUD!

Pitch black.

DANIEL (V.O.)
Then I lost conscious.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Daniel sits in a bed. Bandages wrap both his head and abdomen. MARK (early 50's) sits on a chair facing him. Mark nods, then scribbles something on his notepad.

MARK
That's one crazy story. I bet you
twenty bucks I've got a crazier
story. Is this the one who shot
you?

He hands him a picture. It's Clark.

DENIEL
That's him. That's Sterbenz
accomplice.

MARK
No. That's Clark McDavis. A wack
job from Minnesota. Big fan of
Sterbenz. His fingerprints match
the ones we found in the copycat
crime scene.

DENIEL
Still, it's possible he recruited
him afterward.

MARK
Wrong. Clark's body was found in
the basement. Strangled to death.
Meet the real accomplice.

He hands him a photo.

DENIEL

Are you shitting me? That's CSI
Marianne.

MARK

The real Marianne was found in the
trunk of her car tied and gagged.
Both arms perfectly attached. Her
ID and case missing. She told us a
woman asked her for direction
before tasing the shit out of
her. Guess who that woman is?

Daniel looks at the picture. It's the picture of the woman he
rescued in the basement.

MARK

That's right. But wait. It gets
weirder. We found some of her blood
in the basement. We ran DNA. It was
a familial match to Sterbenz.

Daniel grinds his teeth.

MARK

You owe me a twenty.

Mark stands up to leave.

MARK

I forgot to give you this. Someone
left it for you at the reception.

He hands Daniel an envelop. He opens it.

MARK

I think it's money.

Precisely a hundred dollar, and a note:

"It's alive!"

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END