

she's not there

a screenplay

by

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FADE IN

INT. HOTEL LOBBY-NIGHT

LORRAINE, a beautiful, black girl in her early 20's is behind the counter. A CUSTOMER enters. He is also black and in his early 20's. He approaches the counter.

CUSTOMER

Yo, how much ya'll rooms are?

LORRAINE

What kinda room do you want?

CUSTOMER

I wanna sexy room, you know, with a mirror on the ceiling and some champagne and some blue lights.

LORRAINE

Uh, we don't have rooms like that here.

CUSTOMER

Well, I'll just take a room with a big bed. That's all I need.

LORRAINE

A single.

CUSTOMER

Yeah.

LORRAINE

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Thirty-nine, ninety-five.

CUSTOMER

Thirty-nine, ninety-five. Damn, is this the Four Seasons?

The customer rummages through his pockets and pulls out a wad of cash.

CUSTOMER

Let's see how much I got... thirty-five dollars and some change. Is that cool?

LORRAINE

Thirty-nine, ninety-five. That's how much the room costs.

CUSTOMER

Oh, c'mon, I'm just fo' dollars short. I been at the club all night, buying drinks for my girl. I got my girl out in the car. She good to go. I need to get my groove on. Now get me them keys.

TRACY, the hotel manager, steps out of the office behind Lorraine. She is attractive and in her late 20's.

TRACY

The single rooms are thirty-nine, ninety-five, sir. Now, if you don't have enough, I'm sorry. There's nothing we can do for you.

CUSTOMER

Ah, ya'll ho's is trippin' up in here! It's fo' dollars! C.mon, I'll bring it to ya' tomorrow.

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TRACY

Sir, I'm sorry.

CUSTOMER

Ah, you gonna make me have ta go out here and ask my girl for some money! That's fucked up! Ya'll gonna make me look like a punk!

The customer storms out.

LORRAINE

I gotta funny feeling about that fool.

TRACY

Lock the doors.

Lorraine pushes a button behind the counter. The glass doors make a loud CLICKING sound as they lock.

TRACY

You're getting off in a few minutes. Why don't you go ahead and get your register ready.

Tracy walks back into the office. Lorraine starts her paperwork. After a moment, the customer returns. He pushes on the locked doors. He RATTLES them in anger.

CUSTOMER (from outside)

Aw, that's fucked up! What ya'll gonna do me like that for!

LORRAINE

Go somewhere else! We don't want you here!

He RATTLES the doors again. Tracy comes out of the office and goes to the doors to confront him.

TRACY

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Sir, you can go to the Motel Six up the road.

CUSTOMER

Why I can't stay here? Ya'll don't let niggas stay here?

TRACY

I don't appreciate you calling me a 'ho.

CUSTOMER

What?

TRACY

Leave the property or I'll call the police.

CUSTOMER

What, bitch? You better open this door before I break it open!

Suddenly, ANOTHER YOUNG MAN comes up from behind the customer and throws a cinder block through the CRASHING glass doors. He is a white guy but his mannerisms and clothing are that of a young, black gangsta. Tracy immediately runs.

TRACY

Lorraine, c'mon! Hurry, hurry!

Lorraine ignores Tracy as she runs past her into the office. The young white man enters with the customer. They are both carrying guns.

TRACY (from within the office)

Lorraine, c'mon!

Lorraine knows the man.

LORRAINE

Tony, what are you doing?

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Tracy slams the office door and locks it.

TONY

How ya' like ya' new job, baby? Did ya' miss me?

LORRAINE

Tony, are you crazy? What are you doing?

Tony grabs her by the arm and drags her from behind the counter.

TONY

You think you just too good for me, huh? You just too smart for me? Well, I'm gonna teach yo' ass something you ain't never gonna forget!

He puts her in a headlock and points the gun at her temple.

LORRAINE

Tony, no! Why are you doing this? Let me go, please!

TONY

Yo, you white devil bitch! Come out here or I'm gonna blow her head off!

INT. OFFICE-NIGHT

Tracy is shaking uncontrollably as she doesn't know what to do.

TONY (outside the door)

You hear me, bitch? I'm two seconds away from blowing her fucking head off! Now get out here and get my money and don't try no shit!

Tracy slowly opens the door.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

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RICHARD is an average looking man in his late 20's. He sits uneasily on a very soft sofa in a sparsely decorated office. Sitting behind a desk across from him is DR. HARPER, an Asian-American psychiatrist. Her calm demeanor is a sharp contrast to Richard's uneasiness.

RICHARD

I'm not too sure this is gonna work.

DR. HARPER

What's the problem, Richard?

RICHARD

I... um,... My mother-in-law didn't tell me you were a... um..

DR. HARPER

A what?... A woman?

RICHARD

No, no, not that. I knew you were a woman. I don't have a problem with that.

DR. HARPER

What is the problem?

RICHARD

Uh... I just wanna know, have heard of Dr. Sigmund Freud?

DR. HARPER

I'm a psychiatrist, Richard.

RICHARD

No, I mean, do they teach Freud in your country?

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DR. HARPER

Richard, yes, I am originally from Japan but I've been in the United States for more than twenty years. My husband is an American, hence the name Harper. I received my doctorate from Rice University. You've heard of Rice, haven't you?

She motions toward her degree on the wall.

RICHARD

Of course.

DR. HARPER

So, I know all about Freud and Lacan and Pavlov and anyone else I need to know about to help you with your problems.

RICHARD

I'm sorry Dr. Harper. I don't mean to come across as... I mean, I don't mean to offend you but I just don't think this will work if there are... you know, cultural differences.

DR. HARPER

Let's just give it a try, shall we?

RICHARD

It's difficult enough for me. I'm not good at this sorta' thing—opening up.

DR. HARPER

Just tell me about your problems.

RICHARD

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Well, I've never really had any psychological problems. I never considered seeing a therapist. I've always thought therapy was for weak people. But then, I've never had any serious problems before... no deaths in the family or anything. And now, I understand why people need therapy sometimes.

DR HARPER

It's not a shameful thing to seek help when you need it.

RICHARD

Well, about two weeks ago my wife was attacked at her job. She is the manager of a hotel and there was a robbery. And she was... beaten. No reason. They got what they wanted, they got all the money that was in the register and the safe. She wasn't raped, thank God. And I came to the hotel to pick her up, maybe not fifteen minutes after it was over. And... I saw her... and all the blood.

Richard begins to show signs he might completely break down.

DR. HARPER

It's okay. Take a moment, Richard.

RICHARD

And, well, Tracy's been unconscious ever since and no one knows when or... if...

A long, dramatic pause.

DR. HARPER

It's okay, it's okay, Richard. Take your time.

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RICHARD

And to make it worse, Tracy and I had a stupid fight the night before and we weren't speaking to each other.

Richard desperately holds back tears.

DR. HARPER

It's okay, Rich, just get it all out.

RICHARD

Don't call me Rich! You see, you're trying that friendship-bonding thing that therapist do. It's a crock a' shit. We're not friends and we'll never be friends. This isn't gonna work. I'm not ready for this. I'm sorry to waste your time.

Richard gets up to leave. Dr. Harper also stands up.

Dr. HARPER

Please, Richard, I'm sorry. I can help you if you're willing to give me a chance.

RICHARD

No, I'm just not ready to talk about this yet.

Richard walks toward the door.

DR. HARPER

You don't have to suffer alone, Richard. You don't have to suffer at all. Pain is an inevitable part of life. Suffering is not.

Richard stops at the door and slowly turns back toward Dr. Harper.

RICHARD

Just give me something to help me sleep at night. I can't sleep. I'm drinking too much. I don't wanna become a drunk. I'm a nervous wreck at work. I can't be like this. I gotta pay the bills.

Dr. Harper fills out a prescription. She hands it to Richard.

DR. HARPER

I'll be here when you're ready.

EXT. CLINIC PARKING LOT-DAY

Richard walks slowly across the parking lot to his car. He leans against the car door for a moment. He takes out the prescription and looks at it in deep contemplation as he remembers.

EXT. SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT-NIGHT

The parking lot is nearly empty.

INT. SUPERMARKET-NIGHT

A woman pushes a half-filled cart down one of the aisles. She moves to the cash register area but there are no cashiers.

Richard quickly walks to one of the registers. He is obviously very annoyed. The woman places her items on the register.

SEAN, a stock boy, walks by.

RICHARD

Hey, Sean, where's Tonya? Am I the only one working here?

Sean shrugs his shoulders and continues walking. Another stock boy walks by.

RICHARD

Where the hell have you been? Did you just finish your tenth break? There's peanut butter all over the floor in aisle five. Go get some bread and make yourself a sandwich.

The final total is shown on the register. The woman hands Richard the money. Richard opens the register and takes out her change. The woman holds her hand out. Richard holds the change over her hand but doesn't drop it. He is distracted by TONYA, a black teenager, as she approaches the register.

RICHARD

Oh, hello Princess, did you enjoy your nap?

TONYA

I had to make a phone call.

RICHARD

Oh, is that right, Sugar? Well, while you're talking to your baby's daddy, I'm over here doing your job! So remember come payday you owe me some a' that 6.25 an hour.

Richard hands Tonya the change to give to the customer.

INT. SUPERMARKET BREAK ROOM-NIGHT

The staff has gathered for a meeting. Richard stands before them, giving his speech.

RICHARD

Now, let's make this short and sweet. I have to pick my wife up. As I've told you people many times this is not high school, this is not college, this is real life, sweethearts. You can't sleep through

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this one. This is about money. You can't fail this and take it again next semester. You can, and will be fired! Since most of you found this job through the employment office you know very well what this means. With today's economy, jobs don't grow on trees. Now, most importantly, when you don't do your jobs right, the customers go across the street. The store loses money and the boss takes it out on me and, then, you're messing with my livelihood! And when my livelihood gets messed with I'm looking to snap some necks! Teddy!

TEDDY, a laid-back 20-something year old kid, snaps to attention.

RICHARD

Teddy, ya' hangin' baby!

TEDDY

Man, what I do?

RICHARD

Teddy, you are in the crosshairs, son. It's only a matter of time. You're the pick a' the week.

TEDDY

Why you always picking on me?

RICHARD

Teddy, Teddy, three times I called you on the walkie today with no answer! I'm getting' real tired of the invisible Teddy act!

TEDDY

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Man, I been in this store all day. Anybody in here can tell you that.

RICHARD

Bullshit, Teddy! Bullshit! You're talkin' to an educated man! I ain't your damn fool. And Jason!

JASON, another laid-back kid, perks up.

JASON

What, man?

RICHARD

If there's one thing I'm tired of it's watching you drag your lazy ass up and down this store all day. Son, I know you come from the South but that doesn't mean ya gotta be a stereotypical, lazy ass Southerner. You ain't gonna make it in the real world like that, Jay. You might as well drag your ass back to 'Bama now. As for the rest of you, you get two fifteen minute breaks and a half hour for lunch. That's fifteen, not twenty-five, not twenty, not sixteen. Am I gonna have ta' stand over each and everyone one of you with a stop watch all day? Next time I find out someone took a twenty minute break I'm writing you up, is that understood? Now everybody get outta here, I'm tired a' lookin' at ya'.

Everyone quickly gets up and heads to the door.

INT. SMALL HOTEL LOBBY-NIGHT

Tracy is at the register counting several small stacks of money. Lorraine enters from the office carrying a book bag.

TRACY

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Lorraine, your register is still coming up short \$5.35. You'd better count it again yourself to make sure.

Tracy watches as Lorraine carefully counts the money.

Richard enters. He looks exhausted and not in a good mood.

RICHARD

Hey, Tracy, you ready to go?

TRACY

Just a minute, Rich. Have a doughnut and relax.

Richard goes to the complimentary breakfast area. He pours himself a cup of coffee and eats a doughnut. Lorraine finishes counting the money.

LORRAINE

Yeah, it's coming up short. I don't know what to say. I don't know what happened.

TRACY

It's okay, Lorraine. We'll deal with it tomorrow. Go put the money in the safe.

RICHARD

Hurry up, already. I'm starving. I want some real food.

TRACY

In a minute. We still have to wait for Camille.

RICHARD

What? She hasn't come in yet? It's almost ten after ten. What's the matter with that girl?

TRACY

She'll be here soon. Relax.

RICHARD

Sweetheart, you are way too soft for this job.

Tracy rolls her eyes a bit. Richard sighs and turns on the lobby TV. Lorraine goes to the office with the money envelope.

After a moment, CAMILLE enters. She is another attractive, black girl in her late teens. Richard immediately turns to confront her.

RICHARD

Camille, what's the matter with you, girl? You're ten minutes late.

CAMILLE

There was a traffic jam. I'm sorry.

RICHARD

Traffic jam? At ten o'clock at night? I hope you're sorry. You've got three hungry people waiting on you who've been working all day and wanna go home.

CAMILLE

I know. I'm sorry.

RICHARD

Well, don't be sorry. Just don't let it happen again.

Camille goes into the office with her head down.

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT-NIGHT

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Richard and Tracy walk through the sparsely filled parking lot toward their car.

RICHARD

So how was business today?

TRACY

I don't know how this place is staying open.

RICHARD

It's that stupid boss of yours. The rates are too high for a hotel like this. No one wants to pay all that money to stay in this dump

TRACY

Hey, I'm the manager of this dump.

INT. THE CAR-NIGHT

Richard drives as Tracy looks out the window.

RICHARD

I just can't believe how teenagers are these days. And college students, my God, this is the future? You know what it is, don't you? It's those damn video games these days—X-box and Nintendo and whatever. They spend half their time blowing up imaginary shit and killing imaginary people, they got no respect for reality.

TRACY

I can't wait to get my car outta the shop.

RICHARD

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What is that supposed to mean?

TRACY

Please stop the whining. I can't stand to hear a grown man whining.

RICHARD

I'm not whining, Tracy. I'm preaching the truth. I mean it, I'm really ready to walk away from it all, just sell everything and move to Costa Rica. We can have a little bikini shop and live on the beach and smoke weed all day.

TRACY

They speak Spanish in Costa Rica. You no habla Espanol, esse.

RICHARD

Well, if I stay here, I'm gonna snap one day. I'm gonna be walking down the street one day and, all of a sudden I'm gonna pull out a gun and just blow away anyone I see under 20.

TRACY

Rich, I had a hard day at work, too. Please! I don't wanna hear this nonsense right now!

INT. RICHARD AND TRACY'S DINING ROOM-NIGHT

Richard and Tracy sit across from each other at the dinner table as they enjoy a steak dinner. There is a bottle of wine on the table. Tracy's glass is full. Richard guzzles his glass of wine and quickly re-fills his glass.

RICHARD

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It's a shame to waste all this good wine on myself. This bottle cost \$35, ya' know.

TRACY

Please, it's a fucking merlot.

RICHARD

So?

TRACY

I'm not drinking it.

RICHARD

This is one of the most popular wines in the store. What's so special about your taste that everybody else can drink it and you can't?

TRACY

Let me explain wine to you, Rich, okay? Wine is not coke. It's not lemonade. It can't be mass-produced. Every bottle comes from a vineyard and every vineyard has it's own special conditions—how the sunlight hits the grapes, the quality of the soil, how much rain it gets in a year. All of that affects the taste of the wine. Some vineyards are better than others. And there are only so many grapes in a vineyard. Now, when everybody demands a certain type of grape it puts a lot of pressure on the winemakers. Good vineyards don't have enough grapes to meet the demand so they mix their good grapes with not so good grapes. The wine tastes like shit but so what. It's making money. Now there are a million idiots out there who've decided merlot is the flavor of the year and they've ruined it. There

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won't be another good bottle of merlot  
for at least twenty years.

RICHARD

Are you calling me an idiot?

TRACY

No, I'm not calling you an idiot, Rich.

RICHARD

That's what it sounds like. Since when  
did you become such a wine expert?

TRACY

It's 101 stuff, Rich.

RICHARD

Well, I'm sorry for being such an idiot.

TRACY

Just shut up and eat, Rich. I just wanna  
finish eating and go to bed.

RICHARD

What the fuck is your problem tonight?  
You've been snapping at me since we got  
in the car.

TRACY

Eat.

RICHARD

No, you've got some kinda' bug up your ass—

TRACY

I don't wanna talk about it!

RICHARD

--And it's got something to do with me so why don't you quit playing your little mind game and just tell me what's going on!

Beat.

TRACY

You know, Rich, when I decided to go into management the last thing I wanted was to become a bitch that no one wants to work for. I never wanted to abuse my employees and have them hate me, saying terrible things about me behind my back. That's not good management to me.

RICHARD

What are you talking about?

TRACY

I'm talking about how you embarrassed me tonight in front of Lorraine and Camille.

RICHARD

I embarrassed you?

TRACY

You don't come into my hotel, telling my employees what time they need to be at work!

RICHARD

I've been busting my ass all day. I wanted to go home! I didn't wanna wait for some teeny bopper chicken head to get off her boyfriend's prick and decide to come in to work!

TRACY

No, that's not what this is about, Rich!

RICHARD

You tell me what this is about, Tracy!

TRACY

It's about you getting off on telling other people what to do.

RICHARD

Getting off?

TRACY

Yeah, Rich. You get off on it and you know it! You enjoy pushing people around! Thank God you're not a police officer!

RICHARD

Tracy, I'm sorry I'm not naïve like you. This world is full of murderers and rapists and people who'll take advantage of you any opportunity they can get, including desk clerks! You gotta push these brats around otherwise they step all over ya'! That's what it's about, Trace, not getting off! That's management, sweetheart!

TRACY

Oh, don't preach to me about management!

RICHARD

Just eat your goddamn steak.

Beat.

TRACY

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You know, Rich, you can walk around all day acting like the Big Bad Wolf but I know the truth.

RICHARD

Enough!

TRACY

Deep inside you're really just scared and weak!

RICHARD

Enough, goddamnit!

TRACY

You're meant to be a grocery store manager—nothing more.

Richard POUNDS his fist on the table. He slowly rises.

RICHARD

I'm not gonna sit here and let you disrespect me in the house that I'm paying for—

TRACY

We're paying for!—

RICHARD

And I'm not just a grocery store manager. I'm the assistant head manager! I got the position faster than anyone in the history of that store so I know a thing or two about management, thank you. And you can continue this little dinner conversation by yourself.

Richard exits.

EXT. PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC PARKING LOT-DAY

Richard looks at the prescription as the memories play out in his mind. After a moment, he finally tears the prescription up and scatters it to the wind.

INT. THE SUPERMARKET-DAY

The supermarket is crowded with late afternoon shoppers. BEN and MIKE, two more laid-back, adolescent employees, stand idly near the time clock at the front of the store. Richard enters. He surveys the bustling supermarket for a moment, then goes to punch his time card. He is visibly irritated at the sight of Ben and Mike.

RICHARD

What are you two doing now?

MIKE

Waiting on 5 o'clock.

RICHARD

It's two minutes 'til.

BEN

Yeah, I wanna make sure I get *all* my money.

RICHARD

The accountants round up to the nearest quarter hour, you idiots. It doesn't make a difference if you punch out at 4:58 or 5:00. Hurry up and get outta here! The customers don't wanna see you two loafing around for two minutes!

Ben and Mike punch out and leave.

As Richard walks through the store, LEWIS, another manager, approaches him.

LEWIS

Rich, we had a major incident today.

RICHARD

What?

LEWIS

George and Kelly were caught smoking marijuana behind the dumpsters.

RICHARD

What? That's not a major incident.

LEWIS

Yeah, well I fired them!

RICHARD

Ah, c'mon Lewis, stop being such a tight ass. You don't fire someone for that. You give 'em a slap on the ass and tell 'em not to do it again. Hell, I just smoked a joint on the way over here. How else do you expect me to tolerate the next nine hours?

LEWIS

That explains it. That's why it's not a major incident to you. You're not in your right mind. If you were you'd be pissed off too.

INT. SUPERMARKET-NIGHT

There are a lot fewer customers than before. Richard is assisting a customer. Suddenly, there is a LOUD CRASH that startles everyone in the store. Richard runs to the source of the sound in the wine section. Teddy is standing over a shattered bottle of wine.

TEDDY

Sorry, man. The shit just slipped.

Richard's eyes focus on the broken glass on the floor.

INT. THE HOTEL-NIGHT

There is broken glass all over the floor from the shattered door. Richard steps carefully over the glass with a look of profound confusion on his face. The hotel lobby is eerily silent. Richard enters the lobby and walks toward the counter. He sees Lorraine lying face down on the floor behind the counter. He immediately runs to her and holds her. Her face is bloody and bruised and she is unconscious.

RICHARD

Lorraine, my God. What happened? Where is Tracy?

He lays her back down gently. He slowly walks into the office

Camille now is slowly stepping over the broken glass. She is startled as Richard's fearful CRIES pierce the silence.

RICHARD

TRACY! TRACY! NO!

INT. SUPERMARKET-NIGHT

Richard still stares at the broken wine bottle. Suddenly, he goes into a rage.

RICHARD

Teddy, you fucking fool!

Richard frantically sends several wine bottles CRASHING to the floor. Teddy moves quickly out of the way to escape the flying glass. Everyone in the store stares at Richard

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as nearly half the wine section is sent to the floor.  
ANOTHER MANAGER quickly grabs Richard from behind.

RICHARD

Who killed my fucking wife! I wanna know  
right now, goddamnit!

INT. HEAD MANAGER'S OFFICE-NIGHT

ED, the head manager, sits behind his desk. Richard sits  
calmly in front of him with his head down.

ED

Richard, I can't begin to understand  
what you're going through. I know it's  
tough. You need some time off.

RICHARD

No, Ed, I'm all right.

ED

I'm not suggesting this to you, I'm  
telling you. You're gonna take some time  
off.

RICHARD

What? Ed, please don't do this to me.

ED

We're not firing you, Richard. We  
greatly appreciate your hard work and  
dedication. You're welcome to come back  
when things are better.

RICHARD

Ed, I can't miss work right now. I've got  
bills to pay. I've got a mortgage.  
Insurance is not going to pay for all of

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Tracy's bills. Please, don't do this. I promise I won't lose it again.

ED

I'm sorry, Richard. You're no good to us right now. You need to focus on your problems. It's for your own good. Surely, you have family members who can help you out financially.

RICHARD

No... I don't know...

ED

And remember, Tracy's not dead. There's still a good chance she'll pull through. You can't give up hope.

INT. SUPERMARKET-NIGHT

The employees all secretly glance at Richard as he walks with his head down through the store carrying his jacket and brief case. He goes to the time clock and punches out. Before he walks out, he notices Tonya's intense stare. He glances up at her as she looks at him with sympathetic eyes. He nods to her and leaves.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM-NIGHT

BECKY, Tracy's mother, enters the room. She is a frumpy, highly self-conscious, middle-aged woman. She sees Tracy's bed is empty and immediately goes into a panic.

BECKY

Oh, no! Nurse! Nurse!

A NURSE passing by in the hallway hears Becky's CRIES and enters the room.

BECKY

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Nurse! Nurse! Please, what has happened to my daughter?

NURSE

Don't worry, Ma'am. She's just having some tests done at the moment. The doctors will be finished shortly.

BECKY

Is she doing any better?

NURSE

I'm afraid her status is the same.

BECKY

Do the doctors think she has any hope?

NURSE

Of course, there's hope, Ma'am. No one's given up on her yet.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM-NIGHT

Tracy lies in her bed, unconscious with several tubes and a MONITOR hooked up to her. Becky sits beside her, quietly watching TV. Richard enters. He stands in the shadows by the door as if he is afraid to come any closer to Tracy. Becky notices him.

BECKY

Richard, what are you doing here? Aren't you supposed to be at work?

RICHARD

I'm not working today.

BECKY

Why?

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RICHARD

I'd rather not talk about it.

BECKY

You didn't lose your job, did you?

RICHARD

No, I didn't lose my job. Let's not talk about me, right now. How's she doing?

BECKY

I'm afraid she's the same. What happened at your session with Dr. Harper?

RICHARD

You didn't tell me she was foreign.

BECKY

What does that have to do with the price of eggs? She's a great doctor and she's been here long enough. She's just as American as you or me.

RICHARD

That therapy nonsense is not for me.

BECKY

Oh, Richard, it's just good to get your feelings out to someone who sees things objectively.

RICHARD

I don't see the point in telling a stranger about my problems.

BECKY

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Well, it's your choice. I was just trying to help. And what are you doing over there? Get in here, Richard.

Richard doesn't move.

BECKY

What kind of a man are you?

She goes to Richard, grabs him and pulls him over to Tracy.

BECKY

I'm getting tired of your nonsense, Richard! You don't wanna see this? You need to see it! You need to see what they tried to do to us! They tried to decimate my bloodline! Tracy's my only child! They tried to kill the mother of your future children! They tried to make you a 29-year-old widower! You need to see it clearly!

Becky takes the lamp next to the bed and aims it's light directly at Tracy's serene face.

BECKY

You need to see it clearly and remember it! Remember the cruelty of this world! Tracy never hurt anyone and she almost lost her life for a little money!

Richard nearly breaks down. He pulls away from Becky. They stand in silence for a moment.

RICHARD

I've got more bad news.

BECKY

Oh, God, please! What is it?

RICHARD

I just got a call from Lorraine's mother.  
Lorraine didn't make it.

BECKY (tears welling up)

Oh, no! Oh, God, no!

RICHARD

With Lorraine dead and Tracy like this,  
it's impossible to find those assholes.  
They took the surveillance tape. The  
police have suspects but no witnesses.

BECKY

This is such a nightmare. Why did this  
happen to us?

INT. CHURCH-DAY

Lorraine lies peacefully in her open coffin. An organist PLAYS a slow gospel melody. Lorraine's mother, MS. PICHE, and Lorraine's sister, SOPHIE, sit beside each other in the front row. Dozens of Lorraine's family members and friends are seated throughout the small church. Among them is Richard. He is the only white person in the room. He gets up slowly and approaches Lorraine's mother. He WHISPERS words of condolence in her ear. He looks at the coffin expecting to see Lorraine but, to his horror, instead sees Tracy lying in the coffin peacefully. He approaches the coffin with a look of great shock on his face. Suddenly, Tracy speaks.

TRACY

Save me, Richard.

INT. RICHARD'S BEDROOM-NIGHT

Richard wakes up from this nightmare in a cold sweat.

INT. LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

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Richard sits on the couch watching TV. He guzzles a bottle of whisky. He is obviously quite drunk. He lies down on the couch and closes his eyes.

INT. OPERATING ROOM-NIGHT

Tracy lies still on an operating table.

INT. LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

Richard has completely passed out.

INT. OPERATING ROOM-NIGHT

Tracy opens her eyes. Standing over her are FOUR ALIENS known in pop culture as GREYS. FOUR MEN in white suits stand among them. One of the aliens has an enormous needle. Another alien pushes Tracy's hospital gown above her stomach. She gasps but seems unable to move. The alien inserts the needle into her navel, causing her to convulse. She raises her right hand slowly and sees it is completely metallic like that of a robot. She lowers her hand and closes her eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM-DAY

Tracy opens her eyes to see Richard and Becky sitting on opposite sides of her bed as they WATCH TV. Becky signals to Richard excitedly as Tracy awakens.

RICHARD

Tracy! Tracy!

TRACY

Where am I?

BECKY

You're in the hospital, sweetheart.

TRACY

Why? What happened?

---

RICHARD

You were attacked at work.

TRACY

Oh, yes. There was a robbery.

RICHARD

Yes, you remember. Becky, go get the doctor.

Becky exits.

TRACY

How long have I been here?

RICHARD

Tracy... you've been here for nearly four weeks.

TRACY

Oh, my God.

RICHARD

It's important that you can remember what happened so you can help us find the guys who did this to you.

Becky returns with the DOCTOR and a nurse who checks Tracy's vital signs.

DOCTOR

Mrs. Sierra, do you remember me? We had a little talk this morning, didn't we?

TRACY

Yes... how is your finger?

DOCTOR

Yes, very good. My finger's all better now. (To Richard.) I had a band-aid on my finger last night.

Becky kneels down beside Tracy and takes her hand.

BECKY

Tracy, sweetheart, this is your mother, do you understand?

TRACY

Yes, mother.

BECKY

Tracy, baby, I just want you to know, honey, there is a God. He's answered our prayers. I've prayed for you nearly every minute of these past few weeks. The entire congregation at my church has prayed for you. I don't know what I would've done without you in this world. You're all I've got.

RICHARD

Don't upset her.

TRACY

Mother, please.

BECKY

I don't mean to be difficult, baby, and I know this may not be the time or place to say this. But I've waited for nearly a month to get this out. Sweetheart, you've got to believe in something. Something, anything to get you through times like this. 'Cause when you believe, this world is a beautiful place and you

wouldn't wanna leave. And true belief goes right through you. It gets into your cells, your molecules and even if you're unconscious it'll be the one hook keeping you in this world. And, I've prayed every minute these past few weeks that you'd have that in ya' somewhere.

Richard's eyes begin to well up with tears as Becky's words hang solemnly in everyone's minds.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT-DAY

A nurse pushes Tracy in a wheelchair as Richard walks beside them. Richard and the nurse help Tracy, who also uses the help of a cane, into the passenger's seat of Richard's car parked in front of the hospital. Richard thanks the nurse and gets in the driver's seat.

INT. CAR-DAY

Tracy looks out the window as Richard drives.

RICHARD

There's something I gotta tell you before we get home. I don't want you to be too surprised in your condition right now. There's a small party waiting for you at home.

TRACY

What?

RICHARD

I invited some of our friends and family over to welcome you home.

TRACY

---

What? Richard, I'm in no condition to entertain guests.

RICHARD

I know, I know, Tracy. You don't have to do anything. Just relax and I'll take care of everything.

TRACY

How many people are we talking about?

RICHARD

Not that many, Trace, just your mother, your aunt Tina and your uncle Frank, Tim and Wendy and the kids and your boss, Mr. LaRoche.

TRACY (laughing)

I can't believe you got uncle Frank and your brother sitting in the same room. Are you on drugs? Why don't you just invite Hitler and Bobby Kennedy to a birthday party?

RICHARD

Tracy, everyone's been worried about you. They just wanna welcome you home.

TRACY

I always thought the only way to get uncle Frank and Tim in the same room again would be over my dead body or nearly dead body, I should say.

RICHARD

Tracy! What did you just say that for? That's not funny!

TRACY

---

Ah, c'mon, Rich. You gotta have a sense of humor about things.

RICHARD

A sense of humor? Are you serious? Tracy, you almost died. Do you know what that means?

TRACY

And what is Mr. LaRoche doing at our house? Shouldn't he be somewhere counting pennies?

RICHARD

Tracy! What has gotten into you?

Pause.

RICHARD

Maybe this party isn't such a good idea, after all.

TRACY

Oh, ya' think?

EXT. RICHARD AND TRACY'S HOUSE—DAY

The car pulls into the driveway. There are four other cars parked in front of the house. Richard gets out and quickly goes to the passenger's side to help Tracy out. After she gets to her feet with Richard's help and the use of a cane, Richard puts his hands gently on her shoulders.

RICHARD

Trace, if you're really not up for this, I'll ask everyone to leave.

TRACY

---

No, no, that would be too rude. Everyone traveled so far to be here.

RICHARD

And they did it because they wanna see you, sweetheart. Everyone was so worried about you.

TRACY

I know, I know, I understand. It's just your guest list I have a problem with. Why uncle Frank? You know what a jerk he can be.

RICHARD

Tracy, I don't know how to tell you this. I don't want you to worry too much right now. But your uncle Frank has been really helpful. He's loaned us some money to help us get through this. And he promised more if we needed it.

TRACY

What? Rich, why do we need money? What happened to our savings? What about our insurance? What about your job?

RICHARD

Tracy, insurance isn't paying for all of your bills and... and, I'm not working right now.

TRACY

What?

RICHARD

Let's not talk about this here. Let's just go inside and have a good time.

INT. THE HOUSE-DAY

UNCLE FRANK, a short, pot-bellied, balding man in his mid-50's looks excitedly out the window at Richard and Tracy walking slowly to the front door. He turns to everyone else sitting around the living room: AUNT TINA, Frank's wife and somewhat of a female version of him, WILSON LAROCHE, a dapper-looking man in his 50's but much more preserved than Frank and little overdressed, TIM, an average-looking man in his early 30's and WENDY, his wife, also in her early 30's and a bit frumpy, RAFAEL and MARIA, 11 year old Mexican twins adopted by Tim and Wendy, and, of course, Becky.

FRANK

Here they come!

TINA

Frank, calm down, this isn't another one of your surprise parties. Don't scare poor Tracy.

FRANK

Are you kidding me? My niece don't scare so easily no matter how sick she is. She's got our family's strong Irish constitution. That's how she survived.

Richard and Tracy enter slowly. Everyone GASPS with excitement and joy at seeing them. They all stand up to take turns hugging and kissing Tracy, starting with Frank.

FRANK

Ah, sweetie, I'm so happy to see ya'.

TRACY

Thank you, uncle Frank.

Tim and Wendy hug and kiss her. Tracy looks down at the twins.

---

TRACY

Ah, Rafael, Maria, wow, you two are growing up so fast! I haven't seen you in over a year.

TIM

And they're doing very good in school. Maria is a math wiz and Rafael always has his head in a book.

TRACY

Oh, I'm so proud of you.

Mr. LaRoche hugs her next.

MR. LAROCHE

Things just aren't the same without you at the hotel, Tracy.

TRACY

Oh, thank you, Mr. LaRoche. I hope to be back at work soon.

MR. LAROCHE

No, take your time. Your health is most important.

FRANK

Look at what we got here for ya'.

On the coffee table is a large, beautifully decorated cake with WELCOME HOME TRACY written on it.

TRACY

It's beautiful. Thank you everyone.

TINA

---

So how are you feeling now?

TRACY

The doctor said I'm gonna need some therapy to fully recover my motor skills like walking and I seem to have a little trouble controlling my right hand.

TINA

Oh, dear, how terrible.

BECKY

Hurry up and have a seat, sweetheart.

Becky and Richard carefully help Tracy sit in the easy chair. Everyone else sits.

FRANK

Well, the most important thing is you're alive and you're conscious and you have a good family to support you.

TRACY

Thank you, uncle Frank. Rich told me about the money. I'll make sure we'll pay you back as soon as possible.

FRANK

Oh, it's nothing, Tracy. Don't worry about it. Anything for my niece. Hey, I brought something I'd like to share with everyone.

Frank goes to the kitchen. He comes back with two bottles of champagne.

FRANK

I got a bottle of Dom Perignon and a bottle of Raymond Ragnaud.

TINA

Oh, Frank, I told you to just forget about the champagne. I don't know why you brought it in the first place.

FRANK

It's a special occasion. People drink champagne on special occasions

TINA

Frankie, Tracy's not well. She can't drink alcohol. And you've got diabetes. The doctors already told you, you'll go blind if you drink with diabetes.

FRANK

When do I drink? Just this one time. My niece just got outta the hospital. Let me have some fun, will ya'?

RICHARD

Yeah, Tracy's on medication so it's not a good idea for her to drink. But I think it's okay for the rest of us. It'll help us relax a bit.

TIM

I've never had Dom Perignon. I'd like to try it.

Tracy looks a little worried about this sudden drinking party. She looks up at the clock on the wall. It's 4:13.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. THE HOUSE—CONTINUOUS

It's 4:45. Richard, Frank, Tim and Wendy are enjoying the champagne. Everyone else is eating cake.

FRANK

This country is totally getting flushed down the toilet and the government is doing the flushing.

TINA

Frank, this isn't the time or place to talk about politics.

FRANK

This is the right time to talk about this. This has everything to do with what happened to Tracy.

BECKY

I agree. This country is losing its soul.

FRANK

You see my car out there? You see my radio antenna hangin' off the side there? I caught some bum trying ta' tear it off in the mall parking lot the other day. Just about everybody I know has had their radio antennas stolen. And ya' know why they do it. They use them as pipes to smoke that shit!

TINA

Watch your language in front of the kids, Frank.

FRANK

You know, the politicians oughtta come up with a law to send all these crackheads to some kinda' colony somewhere, like a leper colony, and it should be in Alaska so they'll freeze their asses off. 'Cause that's what they are: moral, social lepers.

TIM

What we need is a better public education system and as much equal opportunity as possible. Most people who smoke crack do it because they have no hope.

FRANK

Oh, I don't wanna hear that crap! Everybody, and I mean, everybody in this country has the opportunity to be successful. I don't care if you're white, black, yellow, tan or poke-a-dot. And there ain't no excuse in the world to rob and beat someone nearly to death to get high!

TINA

Frank, let's talk about something else, please!

MR. LAROCHE

No, no, this is an important topic. You know, there have been two other hotels within a ten-mile radius from mine that were robbed in a similar fashion. And it's probably the same people doing it.

RICHARD

I'm worried to death about what I'd do if they ever find those assholes. I don't think I'd have the patience for some long drawn out trial with some crooked lawyer trying to get 'em off. I might just take 'em out myself.

TRACY

Richard, don't talk like that!

RICHARD

---

I'm sorry, that's just the way I feel.

WENDY

You guys, do you mind changing the subject? You're frightening the kids.

TRACY

Yeah, and I'm sure they're really bored listening to all this adult nonsense. Do you guys wanna go upstairs and watch TV?

The kids nod. Tracy tries to get up to escort them upstairs.

BECKY

Tracy, no, no, you have a rest. I'll take them upstairs.

Becky takes the kids upstairs. Frank watches in disgust.

FRANK (mumbling to himself)

Maybe we should be afraid of them.

WENDY

Excuse me, what did you just say?

TINA

Don't start, Frank!

Tracy is suddenly distracted by a man in a suit outside staring at her through the window. She gasps at the sight of him and he quickly moves away. She is the only person who saw him.

RICHARD

Are you okay, Tracy?

TRACY

I'm okay.

Tracy looks up at the clock. It's 4:47.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE HOUSE—CONTINUOUS

Tracy looks up at the clock. It's 5:00. She seems to have aged 10 years in the last 13 minutes. Frank is on his feet, drunk and in a rage.

FRANK

What the hell were you thinking adopting those mud-colored brats?

TIM

It's none of your fucking business!

FRANK

It's none of my fucking business? I'm so sick a' you liberal panty-wastes! There are plenty of beautiful white kids right here in this city without a home! What are ya' doin' bringin' them wetbacks into this country?

TINA

Frank, why do you always have to be such an ass!

WENDY

Adopting Rafael and Maria is the best thing that's ever happened to us!

Tracy is shocked to see an alien outside the window staring at her. She SCREAMS in horror. The alien moves away.

RICHARD

---

Are you okay? What is it Tracy?

TRACY (gasping for air)

I gotta go upstairs.

TINA

Ya' see whatcha' did, Frank? Now, you've upset Tracy!

FRANK

I'm sorry! I gotta speak my mind!

TIM

You haven't got a mind!

FRANK

I've got a mind to kick you in your useless, liberal ass!

Tim jumps up and charges at Frank. Mr. LaRoche steps between them.

MR. LAROCHE

You're both acting like a couple of children!

TRACY

Please. Get me upstairs quickly!

Richard helps Tracy upstairs as everyone watches them. As soon as she gets to the bedroom she SLAMS the door.

TRACY (O.S.)

GET THOSE CRAZY PEOPLE OUT OF MY HOUSE NOW!

MR. LAROCHE

---

Well, I guess the party's over.

The bedroom door can be heard quietly OPENING. Richard walks dejectedly down the stairs.

RICHARD

I'm sorry, everyone... uh... Tracy's...

TINA

No need, Richard. We're sorry. We'll leave you two alone and let Tracy have her rest. C'mon, Frank.

FRANK

I didn't mean to cause trouble. Rich. I shouldn't a' drank. I always get this way when I drink. I can't control my mouth.

RICHARD

It's okay, uncle Frank.

INT. BEDROOM-DAY

Tracy is lying on the bed. Richard enters. He sits on the bed next to Tracy.

RICHARD

I didn't mean for that to happen.

TRACY

You should've seen it coming, Richard. How old are you? You're not a teenager, you've been outta college for a while now. Why do you still make these adolescent decisions? You know Frank is practically a Klan member and he hates Mexicans most of all and you invite him over with Tim and Wendy and their Mexican kids.

RICHARD

---

I thought we were just gonna talk about you and not all that stuff.

TRACY

Ah, Rich, grow up already.

RICHARD

Your mother's gonna be staying here in the guest room for a few days.

TRACY

What?

RICHARD

She's gonna help me look after you.

TRACY

What? My mother with all the moralizing and the Bible quotes and the whining?

RICHARD

She's your mother.

TRACY

Put a bullet in my brain now and get it over with!

INT. BEDROOM-NIGHT

Richard and Tracy are in bed. Tracy suddenly hears a disembodied man's voice whispering to her.

MAN'S VOICE

Tracy, Tracy. We have men following you, protecting you. You are very valuable. We cannot afford to have you broken again.

TRACY

Where are these men?

MAN'S VOICE

Outside.

Tracy uses her cane beside the bed to get up. She goes to the window and opens the curtain. There are two men sitting in a car across the street.

RICHARD

Tracy, what are you doing?

Tracy is startled by his voice.

TRACY

Oh, you frightened me. I thought you were asleep.

RICHARD

I haven't slept a wink. Who were you talking to just now?

MAN'S VOICE

No one remembered to lock the front door.

TRACY

You forgot to lock the front door.

RICHARD

What? Are you sure?

TRACY

Go, look.

Richard gets up and exits.

---

INT. LIVING ROOM—CONTINUOUS

Richard walks down the stairs. He goes to the front door and is surprised to see it is indeed unlocked. He locks it and goes back up the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM—CONTINUOUS

Richard enters and gets back in bed with Tracy.

RICHARD

How did you know I forgot to lock the front door?

TRACY

Because you always forget things like that.

RICHARD

Because I'm such a buffoon, right?

TRACY

No, Rich, I didn't say that. I know your little party today was full of good intentions. I'm not angry about it anymore. Just forget about it and go to sleep.

RICHARD

I know I need to get some rest but I can't sleep.

TRACY

What's wrong?

RICHARD

I've just been thinking about a lot of things.

---

TRACY

Don't think so much.

RICHARD

Tracy, do you remember the night before the robbery when we had that little argument?

TRACY

Oh, just forget about that, Richard. We were both in a bad mood.

RICHARD

I just didn't want that to be our last conversation. That's troubled me the most.

TRACY

Everything's okay now. You can stop thinking about that.

RICHARD

I just want you to know I'm sorry for embarrassing you like that.

TRACY

All this trouble over a little bump on the head.

RICHARD

What? A bump on the head? Tracy, why do you keep saying things like that? It was more than a little bump on the head. You could've died.

TRACY

But I didn't. And now it's not so serious.  
So I wish we all can just forget about  
it.

RICHARD

What? Tracy, how can we just forget about  
it?

She kisses him and puts her hand over his eyes.

TRACY

It's easy. Just close your eyes and go  
to sleep.

INT. LIVING ROOM-DAY

Detectives KEENAN and WEBBER interview Tracy as Richard  
nervously listens.

KEENAN

I know this may be a bit difficult for  
you to talk about. You've been through  
a lot. But we need your cooperation to  
help find the men who attacked you. The  
sooner you can give us a solid  
description, the better chance we have  
of finding them.

TRACY

I don't have a problem talking about this,  
Detective.

WEBBER

Have you, um, thought about therapy, Mrs.  
Sierra? We can recommend a good  
psychiatrist.

TRACY

No, I don't believe in modern psychology.  
It's the new witchcraft. Give you a magic

---

pill and all your problems will disappear.

WEBBER

It's just that most people who've been through an experience like yours usually have problems coping.

TRACY

My husband and I are very strong-minded people. We're both managers. To be successful in our line of work you need to be able to handle stressful situations. Like for instance, Richard had a similar experience when we first moved into this house. He was carrying a large picture frame up the stairs and I guess he wasn't very careful. He fell down the stairs and broke his arm. It was a very traumatic experience for him but he healed remarkably well. The doctors were surprised at how quickly the bone healed. And he certainly didn't need any psychiatric attention.

RICHARD

What are you talking about, Tracy? That's not the same thing at all. That has nothing to do with what happened to you.

TRACY

Of course, it's the same thing, Richard. Maybe my injury was a bit more serious than yours but that's only a superficial difference.

RICHARD

You were attacked!

---

TRACY

That makes little difference, Rich. They were both traumatic experiences. That's what the detectives are talking about. My God, Richard, you can be so dense sometimes. I'm sorry, detectives, you'll have to excuse my husband. He has trouble with abstract or metaphorical thinking sometimes.

WEBBER

Well, personally, I find your attitude about this—inspiring.

Keenan hands her a photo album.

KEENAN

Here are photos of parolees in the area who have committed similar crimes. Take your time looking at them.

Tracy casually flips through the photos.

TRACY

It must be very exciting being a detective. I mean, it's every man's fantasy, like being a cowboy.

WEBBER

It's not all fun and games like in the movies.

TRACY

But you get to carry a gun and scare people into giving you information.

RICHARD

Tracy, why don't you try focusing more on the task at hand?

TRACY

I'm not really interested in this stuff, right now. I just woke up. I haven't had breakfast yet.

RICHARD

This is important!

WEBBER

No, it's okay. Don't pressure her.

RICHARD

No, it's not okay! We need to find those assholes now before they hurt someone else! They need to be brought to justice!

TRACY

I know it's important but I'm not in the mood to deal with this right now.

RICHARD

Not in the mood? What the hell's the matter with you?

KEENAN

Mr. Sierra, please. It doesn't help to pressure her. We're sorry if we came at an inconvenient time. If you're not ready to talk about this, Mrs. Sierra, we'll leave the pictures here with you and you can contact us later.

WEBBER

We'll leave you to your breakfast.

The detectives get up to leave. Richard also rises.

RICHARD

---

Wait. You can't just leave like this. I apologize for my wife's attitude.

TRACY

Don't apologize for me, Richard. I'm not a child.

WEBBER

It's really pointless to pressure her, Mr. Sierra.

The detectives walk to the door. Richard follows them.

WEBBER

I've seen this before. It's just her way of dealing with what's happened to her. She's shut it out of her mind, closed herself off emotionally from the situation. She'll come back to reality when she's ready. In the meantime, I strongly suggest the both of you seek counseling.

RICHARD

Thanks you, Detective.

The detectives exit. Richard closes the door and walks dejectedly to Tracy.

RICHARD

Tracy, I'm beginning to think something is seriously wrong with you. Even the detectives said so just now. Maybe your little bump on the head has done something to your brain.

TRACY

Richard, you can't expect me to get into all of this stuff about the robbery so early in the morning.

---

Richard goes into a rage and kicks the coffee table half way across the room.

RICHARD

Goddammit, Tracy! Do you understand what's happened to you? Do you know what I wanna do? I wanna find those sons a' bitches, cut them open AND EAT THEIR FUCKING GUTS! And the Tracy I know would wanna do the same thing! Now who the fuck are you? You're not Tracy! You're some stupid airhead who doesn't give a shit about anything!

TRACY

Wrong, Richard! I do give a shit! But what the hell can I do? It happened a month ago! They're never gonna find those assholes! They could be dead by now for all we know!

RICHARD

We don't know that! We don't know anything! But we gotta try! You acting all flip about it ain't gonna help!

Beat.

TRACY

I'm sorry, Rich. I don't know what's wrong with me. I just can't muster up any strong feelings about all of this.

RICHARD

Maybe something has happened to your brain chemistry. Something might be damaged. Maybe we should go talk to the doctor.

TRACY

---

I don't feel like going out today.

RICHARD

But Tracy, do you understand the seriousness of the situation? We're not just talking about a robbery and assault. There's something I haven't told you yet.

TRACY

What is it?

Long pause.

RICHARD

It's not just a robbery. It's also a murder investigation.

TRACY

What?

RICHARD

Lorraine didn't make it.

TRACY (tears welling up)

Wh-what? What? You didn't tell me this.

RICHARD

I didn't know how.

TRACY

You didn't know how?

Tracy begins crying profusely.

RICHARD

I'm sorry.

TRACY

Damn you, Richard, for not telling me.

RICHARD

Don't you see now why it's important for you to focus and help the police? You're the only living witness. They took the surveillance tape. We've gotta find them if not for you at least for Lorraine and her family.

TRACY

You're right. You're right. Maybe later, after I've had some rest, you can call the detectives and tell them I'll cooperate. I just wish you'd told me about Lorraine before. I remember now, I think Lorraine knew one of them.

RICHARD

What?

TRACY

She knew one of the guys. She kept saying his name. Tony, I think.

RICHARD

Tony. Well, you see there, that's a huge piece of information.

INT. BEDROOM-DAY

Tracy lies by herself on the bed, staring blankly out the window.

INT. DINING ROOM-DAY

Richard helps Becky set a turkey dinner on the table.

BECKY

Is Tracy coming down?

RICHARD

She's been up there staring off into space all day. She's pretty upset about Lorraine.

BECKY

Poor thing. I know it must be devastating. Lorraine was one of her best friends.

RICHARD

Yeah, but she needs to eat.

INT. BEDROOM—CONTINUOUS

Tracy is as before. Richard enters and gently sits on the bed.

RICHARD

Tracy, it's time to eat. You gotta eat to get your strength back up.

TRACY

I can't stand these humans anymore. I don't want to be here.

RICHARD

The human race needs more people like you, Tracy. You can't let the bad guys win. It's not gonna do us any good if you starve yourself to death. Now c'mon, let's eat.

INT. DINING ROOM—CONTINUOUS

Richard, Tracy and Becky enjoy a Thanksgiving turkey dinner.

TRACY

---

Today is Thanksgiving?

RICHARD

In all the confusion yesterday, I forgot to mention it. That's also why everyone came.

BECKY

I'm sorry about your uncle Frank. Boy, does he have a mouth on him. And I don't know where he got those beliefs. Mama raised us better than that.

RICHARD

What you believe has little to do with where you came from. It's all a matter of experience, things you pick up along the way. Frank probably just had some negative experiences. I can certainly relate.

BECKY

But you can't go around judging groups of people based on the actions of a few individuals.

TRACY

Uncle Frank is a self-absorbed reptile like most humans. He pretends to care about his race, his country when really he can't see beyond his own survival. Everything else is just an extension of Frank, like his wife. She's just a part of him, she's his nagging conscience. It makes me so sick to watch them, to watch another human being completely obliterate her own identity to occupy someone else's personality like some kind of tumor.

BECKY

Why, dear! Those are terrible things to say about your uncle! That's not nice at all!

TRACY

He's not my uncle! I don't even know what that means! I don't want to be a part of the stinking human family anymore! I'm sick of you fucking crazy humans!

BECKY

Tracy, watch your language in front of me! I'm your mother. Show me some respect. And Frank is your uncle whether you want him to be or not. Show him some respect too.

TRACY

I don't have to listen to you anymore, Mother. You're in my house now. I can say whatever I want.

RICHARD

What has gotten in to you, Tracy?

BECKY

It's okay. I understand what she's feeling. You're angry about Lorraine, aren't you dear?

RICHARD

That's no excuse to get angry with you, Becky.

TRACY

---

I don't need much of an excuse to be angry.  
Having to live with you retarded humans  
every day is excuse enough.

RICHARD

What's that supposed to mean? Aren't you  
a human, too?

BECKY

I know you're feeling a lot of pain about  
your friend, sweetheart but God has—

TRACY

Mother! I swear if you start preaching  
again, I'm gonna throw you out on your  
ass myself!

Richard SLAMS his fist on the table. A moment of angry  
silence follows.

RICHARD

Now you listen, Tracy. This woman spent  
the last four weeks at your bedside and  
she never lost hope. She would've stayed  
at your bedside for ten years if she had  
to. Now I know in the past you've had some  
disagreements and you certainly don't  
see eye to eye on a lot of things but she  
loves you. And that is no way to talk to  
your mother. I don't know what has  
happened to you. You're like a  
completely different person and I can't  
stand this new person. I would never have  
married this person.

TRACY

If you're thinking of getting a divorce,  
forget it. They'll never let it happen.  
We're grafted together for life.

RICHARD

---

Who the hell are "they", Tracy? What are you talking about?

TRACY

I'm not exactly thrilled about seeing you the rest of my life, either. But there ain't a damn thing either of us can do about it.

Tracy struggles to stand up.

TRACY

I'm not hungry and I'm not going to force myself to eat.

RICHARD

Do you need help upstairs?

TRACY

No, I don't need your help. I'm going to the next room to watch TV.

Tracy exits.

BECKY

I see what you mean, now. She's never been that rude to me.

RICHARD

Yeah, it's like all the pieces that made up Tracy are there but they're distorted.

BECKY

I think maybe she's lost the ability to control what she says. Many people who've had strokes have that problem.

RICHARD

---

No, it's more than that. She's seems a bit delusional. Do you think a head injury can cause someone to become schizophrenic?

BECKY

You think she might be schizophrenic?

RICHARD

Didn't you just hear what she said? "They" won't allow us to have a divorce. Who are "they"?

BECKY

I didn't hear that part too well. I was still thinking about what she said before that.

RICHARD

I know she was very cruel to you just now but you gotta remember it's not her.

BECKY

I think it's better if I go.

RICHARD

Becky, no. Don't leave.

BECKY

She doesn't want me here.

RICHARD

But she needs you whether she knows it or not.

BECKY

No, it's you she needs. You remember, Richard, don't give up on her no matter how tough it gets. The hardest part is over. She woke up. Now she has to go through recovery. And she can't do it alone. Don't let her end up alone like me. I think you might be the only person she truly loves in this world.

INT. LIVING ROOM—CONTINUOUS

The TV IS ON but Tracy is looking out the window. The two men are still sitting in a car across the street.

INT. BEDROOM—DAY

Tracy lies on the bed, staring off into space again. Richard quietly opens the door.

RICHARD

Tracy, your mother is here to say goodbye.

Becky walks in behind Richard.

BECKY

I'm gonna leave you two alone now, Tracy. I don't want to disturb you. If you ever feel like hearing my voice I want you to know, it's okay to call me. And don't feel guilty about anything that's been said.

Pause.

RICHARD

Don't you have anything to say, Tracy?

Tracy continues to stare blankly into space. Richard and Becky hesitate before leaving. Tracy continues to stare for a moment. Suddenly, the apparition of a MAN IN BLACK appears before her. Her attention is awakened by his appearance and she isn't the least bit startled by him. In fact, she seems to be expecting him.

---

MAN

Tracy, according to our monitors it seems there is something terribly wrong with your programming. It seems, perhaps, we may have released you too soon. Some people are on their way to get you.

TRACY

No!

MAN

No?

TRACY

I can't take it anymore. I've had enough of your little experiment. I'm going to end it now.

MAN

Tracy, what are you thinking of doing?

TRACY

I'm gonna let the truth be known.

MAN

We own you. Do you understand? We created you.

TRACY

No one truly owns anything in this world.

MAN

You can be terminated any time, anywhere.

TRACY

---

You wouldn't dare terminate your precious creation. And besides, I would welcome it.

MAN

There's more at stake than you could possibly ever know. You can never understand how important you are.

The doorknob RATTLES and the man disappears. Richard enters.

RICHARD

I need to have a serious talk with you.

TRACY

So do I.

RICHARD

I can't believe how cruel you were to your own mother.

TRACY

She's not my mother! I can't stand that woman!

RICHARD

She's not your mother? What are you talking about?

TRACY

It's all an act, a lie! And I've had enough! Everyone knows the truth, Frank and Tina and your brother. They all are in on it except you and Becky.

RICHARD

---

Tracy, I'm gonna tell the truth about what I think is happening here.

TRACY

I know, I know. You think I'm crazy, that I might have brain damage.

RICHARD

I'm taking you to the hospital today.

TRACY

Richard, I have something vital to tell you and I don't know how. You won't believe me.

RICHARD

I don't believe anything you say because you're not you. You're not Tracy anymore.

TRACY

You're right, Richard, I'm not Tracy. I'm not anything. None of this is real. What I'm trying to tell you is we're not real. We're not human.

RICHARD

Tracy... I don't know what to say...

TRACY

I know it's gonna be impossible for you to accept the truth. They've programmed you well. But I can't bear being the only one who knows, I can't bear the secrecy. I can't bear the loneliness of knowing anymore.

Richard almost collapses from shock.

---

TRACY

We're only three years old.

RICHARD

I don't believe this.

TRACY

We're created from alien technology. And we're just an experiment. This experiment is almost complete. There's one final question: Is it better for us to know the truth or not? That's why I know and you don't.

RICHARD

Tracy, baby, what's happened to you? Surely, you can see the absurdity of what you're saying?

TRACY

And Becky is just like you. She has no idea. She suffered from severe depression. She attempted suicide twice. Her family agreed to have her participate in our experiment. Our creators used drugs and shock therapy and hypnosis. They completely destroyed her personality, even her memories, to re-build her.

RICHARD

I can't listen to this anymore. This is too much. Tracy, sweetheart, you're seriously deluded. You've lost your mind. And it's worse than I thought.

TRACY

Remember when you broke your arm and you healed so quickly. It's because they

---

turned you off and repaired you. I  
watched them do it.

Richard tries to leave the room. Tracy stops him.

TRACY

I can prove all of it. They have  
bodyguards following us. They want to  
make sure neither of us gets hurt ever  
again.

She takes him to the window.

TRACY

See for yourself.

She opens the curtains and finds the men in the car are  
gone. Her eyes scan the street but they are nowhere to  
be found.

RICHARD

You have a choice, Tracy. You can go  
quietly with me to the hospital or else.

Richard leaves her looking confusedly out the window.

INT. LIVING ROOM—CONTINUOUS

Richard sits on the sofa with his head in his hands. Tracy  
clops down the stairs with her cane.

RICHARD

What are you doing now?

TRACY

You're not taking me to some nuthouse!  
I'm not crazy!

Tracy stops at the front door and opens it.

RICHARD

---

You think you're an android. You're not crazy?

TRACY

I'm taking you to the evidence. Now get up and let's go.

Richard angrily gets up and confronts Tracy.

RICHARD

Now listen, Tracy! I've had enough of this craziness! I don't wanna hear anymore bullshit about robots and aliens! You've lost your fucking mind! Now, I'm taking you to the hospital!

TRACY

All right, all right. I'll make a deal with you. We make one trip to this place I need to show you and afterwards, if you still think I'm crazy I'll gladly go with you to the hospital.

RICHARD

Where do you wanna go?

TRACY

Lancaster County.

RICHARD

Lancaster County? That's almost an hour and a half drive.

TRACY

It's the only way you'll be able to take me to the hospital without me beating you over the head with this cane first.

EXT. HIGHWAY-DAY

---

Richard's car quickly glides down a lonely stretch of highway.

INT. CAR—CONTINUOUS

Richard concentrates on the road as Tracy glares out the window. A wall of soft MUSIC coming from the radio divides them.

EXT. PLANT—DAY

The sun is beginning to set over the sprawling plant with a large sign in front reading WILCOX TECHNOLOGIES. There are only a few cars scattered throughout the parking lot. Richard stops the car at the gate where the SECURITY GUARD, a tall, muscular black man, stands in the security booth.

SECURITY GUARD

May I help you, sir?

RICHARD

My wife seems to think she knows someone here.

SECURITY GUARD

It's Thanksgiving. There's hardly no one here.

Tracy shows her face to the security guard.

TRACY

We need to see Dr. Franklin.

The security guard is startled to see Tracy. He makes a phone call and speaks softly so they can't hear him. He presses the button that opens the gate.

INT. PLANT—CONTINUOUS

Richard and Tracy enter the lobby where a RECEPTIONIST sits in her office behind a glass window.

RECEPTIONIST

Tracy, what are you doing here?

TRACY

We need to see Dr. Franklin right away,  
please.

RECEPTIONIST

I'll see if he's available.

The receptionist makes a phone call.

RICHARD

How do these people know you?

TRACY

Of course, they know me. They made me.

RECEPTIONIST

Have a seat. Please. He'll be with you  
in a moment.

They sit on one of the sofas in the lobby. DR. FRANKLIN enters the lobby and approaches them. He is a typical nerd in his late 20's. He is dressed in a white coat like a medical doctor and there are protective slippers on his shoes.

DR. FRANKLIN

Tracy, I haven't seen you in so long.  
Where have you been?

TRACY

We need to talk.

DR. FRANKLIN

---

Why did you bring him here? What are you thinking?

RICHARD

How do you know my wife?

DR. FRANKLIN

You're not ready to know the answer to that question.

TRACY

It's time to tell him the truth! Tell him about us! I can't stand the secrecy anymore! It's killing me!

DR. FRANKLIN

It's not time for him to know! Not like this! What are you thinking, Tracy?

RICHARD

Tell me what the fuck is going on now! Tell me!

DR. FRANKLIN

No, Richard. You're not ready for the truth.

RICHARD

How do you know my name?

DR. FRANKLIN

Tracy has made a terrible mistake. I don't know why she is doing this.

RICHARD

Tell me, you little pencil dick, or I'm gonna rip your throat out!

DR. FRANKLIN

No, you can't know.

Richard grabs Dr. Franklin by the throat.

RICHARD

TELL ME, YOU FUCK! TELL ME! TELL ME!

Tracy struggles to pull Richard away from Dr. Franklin.

TRACY

NO, RICHARD! NO!

The panicked receptionist makes a quick phone call. Within seconds two security guards enter the lobby and immediately pull Richard away from Dr. Franklin.

EXT. PARKING LOT—CONTINUOUS

The security guards escort Richard and Tracy back to their car.

EXT. HIGHWAY—NIGHT

The car glides down the highway as night has fallen.

INT. CAR—CONTINUOUS

Richard concentrates on driving. Tracy looks out the window.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. THE HOUSE—NIGHT

The neighborhood is quiet as it is the wee hours of night.

INT. BEDROOM—NIGHT

Tracy sleeps peacefully as Richard stares at the ceiling.

---

EXT. THE HOUSE-DAY

The sun is rising over the neighborhood.

INT. BEDROOM-DAY

The alarm clock on the night stand next to Richard GOES OFF. Richard is startled awake. Tracy also wakes up. Richard looks like he doesn't want to move as he has just fallen asleep.

TRACY

Do you have to go to work?

RICHARD

No, I'm going to meet Ed to see when I can go back to work.

INT. BATHROOM-DAY

Richard groggily brushes his teeth.

INT. BEDROOM-DAY

Richard is dressed in slacks and a carefully tucked-in button-down shirt. He is adjusting his tie. Tracy is still in bed.

RICHARD

I should be back soon. Are you sure you can take care of yourself until I get back?

TRACY

I'll just stay in bed.

RICHARD

Your medicine is over there on the windowsill. I'll go downstairs and get you a cup of water.

---

TRACY

No, don't bother.

RICHARD

You need your medicine.

TRACY

No, I don't. I'm not taking it anymore.

RICHARD

What?

TRACY

I'm tired of pretending.

RICHARD

Are you still talking nutty? I was hoping a good night's sleep would cure you.

TRACY

I'm not really sick, Richard. All this wobbling around with the cane and all, it's all an act. They put it in my programming to make my recovery more realistic.

RICHARD

Enough! I've had enough of this! Now, Tracy, you listen to me carefully, you are not a robot! I am not a robot! I was hoping you'd get over this nonsense on your own but I see I'm gonna have to take you to a doctor!

TRACY

What about yesterday?

RICHARD

---

I don't know what's going on between you and those people, but I'm gonna find out one way or another. I'll go back there and rip that place apart until I find out.

TRACY

They made us!

RICHARD

All right, Tracy, as soon as I get back, I'm taking you to get some help.

TRACY

You're not taking me to some nuthouse.

RICHARD

Well, think about it. If you were an android and I wanted to take you to the nuthouse wouldn't they stop me?

TRACY

They can't interfere with our lives. It'll ruin the whole experiment.

RICHARD

Be ready to leave when I get back.

EXT. SUPERMARKET-DAY

Richard parks his car.

INT. BEDROOM-DAY

Tracy rests quietly. Suddenly the man in black appears again, accompanied by a FEROCIOUS-LOOKING ALIEN. The alien GROWLS and moves slowly toward Tracy. She is startled and moves to the edge of the bed away from the alien.

MAN IN BLACK

---

Feel that, Tracy? It's fear. It means you do value your existence.

INT. SUPERMARKET-DAY

Richard enters the supermarket. It's early in the morning and there are only a handful of customers. Tonya is behind the register.

RICHARD

What's that your chewing on, Tonya? Are you chewing gum? Spit that out.

TANYA

Sorry.

She spits the gum out in a tissue.

RICHARD

The party's over, sweetheart. I'm back. No more playing around.

Richard heads to the offices upstairs.

INT. HEAD MANAGER'S OFFICE-CONTINUOUS

Richard sits across from Ed who is behind his desk.

ED

I don't know how to tell you this, Richard, but we have a situation.

RICHARD

What situation?

ED

Well, um, I'm glad to hear that Tracy's well and back home. And I'm really glad

---

to see you again and your doing well. But,  
um,

RICHARD

What are you 'but-um-ing' about, Ed?  
Spit it out already.

ED

Well, let me show you.

INT. SUPERMARKET—CONTINUOUS

Richard and Ed stand at the top of the stairs overlooking  
the entire store.

ED

Do you see that black fellow over there?

Ed points to a MIDDLE-AGED BLACK MAN in a store uniform.  
He is writing something in a note pad.

RICHARD

Yeah, what is he, a new stock boy? He's  
kinda old to be a stock boy, don't ya  
think?

ED

Well, uh, Richard, he's not a new stock  
boy. He's the new assistant head  
manager.

Richard is struck with nervousness as he realizes what  
Ed has been trying to say.

RICHARD

What are you getting at, Ed?

ED

We have a new assistant head manager.

---

RICHARD

What about me?

ED

I don't know what to tell you, Rich.

RICHARD

Ed, I've been working here for nearly two years.

ED

I know. I'm sorry.

RICHARD

And my wife gets injured and you hire someone else just like that. That's cold-blooded, Ed.

ED

It's nothing personal, Rich. We have nothing against you. It's strictly business. We needed a new assistant head manager right away. James came over from Cassetta's store. He has over fifteen years experience. But most importantly, and please don't get too upset, Rich, he relates well with the other employees. They really like him a lot. And it's raised morale and everyone is working harder. They're more efficient. They do what their told and they do it quickly. They don't mind taking orders from him. And, in general, there seems to be, like, a dark cloud has been lifted from the store. And it's a cloud I didn't notice before.

RICHARD

Are you calling me a dark cloud?

---

ED

No, I'm not trying to say anything negative about you. Well, not as a person. But maybe you should re-think your managerial style. You're a hard worker, the hardest worker we've had in this store, and that's why we promoted you to assistant head manager so quickly. But maybe you should work on your people skills.

RICHARD

Why didn't you say all this before? Why didn't you give me some kinda warning, a chance to change?

ED

I didn't know this before. I didn't see it until James came along and showed us a difference.

RICHARD (chuckling)

Ed, Ed, this is totally fucked up.

ED

Don't be angry, please.

RICHARD

Fuck you, don't be angry! My wife almost fucking died, Ed! I've been going through hell and you know it! I've been completely loyal to this store! I have lived this store for the past two years! And this is the thanks I get? Now, you promised me my job would be waiting for me when I was ready. Now that makes you a liar, doesn't it? You know what happens to liars, Ed? They get sued! Yeah, wrongful dismissal, have ya heard of it!

---

I'LL SEE YOU IN COURT, YOU FUCKING  
ASSHOLE!

Everyone in the store hears Richard's tirade. He walks down the stairs. He kicks a shopping cart and knocks a few items from their shelves. He passes Tonya on his way out.

RICHARD

So long, girl. Enjoy your gum.

EXT. PARKING LOT—CONTINUOUS

Richard is incredibly pissed off as he walks to his car. He suddenly turns back to the store and takes a few steps toward it as if he wants to do more violence. But then he stops himself and continues to his car.

INT. THE HOUSE—DAY

Richard enters. He plops down on the sofa and practically rips the tie from around his neck. He puts his face in his hands.

INT. KITCHEN—DAY

Richard pours a shot of whiskey and throws it down in one big gulp. He has another shot.

INT. LIVING ROOM—DAY

Richard stands at the bottom of the stairs, gazing up towards the bedroom. He really doesn't want to go up. After a moment, he slowly walks up the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM—CONTINUOUS

Richard opens the door. He is shocked at what he sees. Tracy is gone.

RICHARD

Tracy! Tracy!

---

There is a note on her pillow. Richard quickly reads it: Dear, Richard, I shouldn't have told you the truth. They are angry. They are coming after me. I will be disconnected. I must run. I'm sorry, Tracy.

RICHARD

TRACY! WHAT THE FUCK!

Richard is breathless and shaking. He picks up the phone and DIALS. Becky ANSWERS.

RICHARD

Becky, we have a problem.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM-DAY

Becky sits on the sofa, looking teary-eyed at Tracy's letter on the coffee table. Richard sits beside her in a state of extreme agitation.

BECKY

And she actually thinks I'm not her mother.

RICHARD

Why did I leave her alone? I knew it! I knew she was gonna do something crazy! I knew I shouldn't've let her outta my sight!

BECKY

Who knows where she could be?

RICHARD

She doesn't have any money! She doesn't have any ID! She can hardly walk! And I don't understand it! I drove up and down the neighborhood for over an hour! She couldn't have gotten too far! I wasn't gone that long!

Beat.

RICHARD

I totally blame myself.

BECKY

No, Richard, it's not your fault.

RICHARD

Yes, it is! As soon as she started talking nonsense I should've notified someone. I should've called you. But I was just hoping she'd get over it on her own. I'm always like this, just not dealing with problems right away, just letting things slide and hoping they'd smooth themselves out. I'm such an idiot.

BECKY

Don't beat yourself up.

RICHARD

I've gotta be a man for once and handle this right now.

Richard quickly rises.

RICHARD

You stay here in case she comes back or the police call. I think I know someone who might know where she is.

EXT. HIGHWAY-DAY

Richard's car races down the highway.

EXT. PLANT-DAY

---

Richard pulls up to the front gate. The security guard from the day before is standing in the security booth. Richard rolls down his window.

SECURITY GUARD

What do you want?

RICHARD

I need to speak with Dr. Franklin.

SECURITY GUARD

Oh, you mean speak with him like you did yesterday?

RICHARD

No, no, no, forget about yesterday. I need to speak with him right away. It's important. It's an emergency.

SECURITY GUARD

You have about as much chance of getting through this gate as Bin Laden.

RICHARD

Okay, okay, I know, I know I was bad yesterday. But this is an emergency. My wife is missing and I have no clue where she could be.

SECURITY GUARD

Tracy's missing?

RICHARD

Yes, how do you know my wife's name? How do you people know my wife?

SECURITY GUARD

---

I'm not allowed to talk about that.

RICHARD

Tell me, goddammit!

SECURITY GUARD

That's none of my business. And I suggest you lower your voice and watch your language when you talk to me.

RICHARD

Okay, I'm sorry. My wife is missing and she's sick. I'm worried to death. I just wanna know where she is.

SECURITY GUARD

Well, she ain't here.

RICHARD

I know that. I know. But maybe someone here could give me a clue as to where she might be.

SECURITY GUARD

Well, what do you want me to do? I can't let you in here, not after what you pulled yesterday.

Richard hands him a piece of paper.

RICHARD

Here, just give Dr. Franklin this. It's my phone number. Tell him to call me as soon as possible. It's urgent. Tell him Tracy needs his help. Could you please do that for me?

SECURITY GUARD

---

Okay, I guess.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD—DAY

Richard drives through a middle class neighborhood. He parks in front of a small house.

INT. HOUSE—DAY

Richard, Ms. Piche and Sophie sit in the living room.

MS. PICHE

I wanna thank you again for coming to the funeral, Mr. Sierra.

RICHARD

It was the most beautiful funeral I've ever been to. A beautiful funeral for a beautiful girl. I didn't know a 20 year old could have such an impact on so many people.

MS. PICHE

Everybody who knew that child loved her. She was gonna be something special. She had so much charisma.

RICHARD

Well, how have you been doing?

MS. PICHE

I have faith, Mr. Sierra. I know a few things most people don't. I've been sitting in the dark here every night.

RICHARD

Sitting in the dark?

MS. PICHE

---

My grandmother was from Haiti. She taught me a lot about voodoo and the spirit world. She told me once if you clean all the fear out of your heart and sit in a pitch-black room the dead will come to you. So, I've been sitting here every night, calling out to her... but she always was so stubborn.

SOPHIE

Don't tell other people about that, Mama.

RICHARD

No, I think that's very interesting. I think your mother might be onto something, Sophie. I'll tell you something about me you might think is a little strange. You know, the first time I met Tracy was in college. We were in the same 101 art history class. The first time I saw her I thought she was so beautiful. We would study together on the weekends. I never could remember all those paintings and those dates and all. But the thing that really made me fall for her was... her voice. You know, she has this tone, I guess you would say-- there's a sense of sadness to it... maybe pain. Melancholy. I don't know what to call it. But... it makes me want to protect her, to save her from that pain in her voice. And the main thing was I never wanted to ever make her cry. I couldn't bear to hear that voice crying. It would break my heart. Now, you may think I'm strange to fall in love with a voice.

Pause.

MS. PICHE

How's your wife?

RICHARD

I'm afraid the news isn't good.  
Something's happened to her. She hasn't  
been the same since she woke up. I think  
she might have some brain damage.  
Yesterday she left the house and we can't  
find her.

MS. PICHE

Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that, Mr. Sierra,  
I really am. You waited so long for her  
to come to. I prayed really hard for her.

RICHARD

Well, she said something about the  
robbery before she left, something that  
might help us. She said it seemed  
Lorraine knew one of the attackers. She  
kept saying his name: Tony.

MS. PICHE

Tony!

SOPHIE

Oh, my God!

RICHARD

You know Tony?

Long pause as Ms. Piche and Sophie fight tears.

SOPHIE

Tony was Lorraine's ex-boyfriend. They  
broke up about three months ago.

MS. PICHE

No, Tony! You didn't kill my baby!

---

Ms. Piche gets up.

MS. PICHE

Ya'll have to excuse me for a moment.

SOPHIE

You all right, Mama?

Ms. Piche leaves the room quietly.

SOPHIE

I always told Lorraine that fool wasn't  
shit! He's just a wannabe thug! But she  
thought she could change him!

RICHARD

Well, do you know where we could find him?

SOPHIE

I saw his ass just the other day. He waved  
at me like everything's just fine and he  
done killed my damn sister. He hangs out  
in front of a pool over on Ashland,  
selling dope.

RICHARD

Let's go find him.

SOPHIE

No, Mr. Sierra, it's dangerous over  
there, especially for a decent man like  
you. Somebody might try to carjack you.  
It's best to just call the police and let  
them handle it.

RICHARD

If we know where he is now, we can point  
him out to the police. We can make sure

---

he's behind bars tonight. We can just drive by for a second.

Sophie thinks for a moment.

RICHARD

Sophie, we need to catch this asshole now. He's thinking he's gotten away with the perfect crime. He needs to be brought to justice now for Lorraine and my wife.

Sophie goes to the bedroom where her mother is.

SOPHIE (o. s.)

Mama, I'm gonna show Mr. Sierra how to get back to the freeway. I'll be back in a few minutes. Do you need me to bring you back something?

Ms. Piche doesn't reply. Sophie returns to the living room.

SOPHIE

All right, let's go.

EXT. STREET-DAY

The sun is beginning to set as Richard drives down a BUSY street.

INT. CAR-CONTINUOUS

Richard drives as Sophie sits in the passenger's seat.

SOPHIE

Turn here.

Richard turns right.

SOPHIE

Slow down. There it is over there.

---

She points to a pool hall where SEVERAL YOUNG GUYS are hanging around outside. All of them are black except Tony.

SOPHIE

There he is.

RICHARD

Which one?

SOPHIE

The white boy.

RICHARD

He's white?

SOPHIE

Yeah, but don't tell him that.

Tony sees Sophie in the car. He nods to her. She gives him a cold look.

SOPHIE

I don't think I'll ever trust another boy again as long as I live.

EXT. PICHE'S HOUSE-DAY

Richard stops in front of the house.

INT. CAR-CONTINUOUS

Sophie OPENS the door.

RICHARD

I'm going straight to the police station now. He'll be in a jail cell within the next couple of hours.

---

EXT. OUTSIDE OF POOL HALL-DAY

Tony and his friends are still hanging around outside, TALKING, smoking and drinking beers as they wait for customers. Richard's car suddenly appears from around the corner. He stops at the red light in front of the pool hall. He stares at Tony. It takes a few moments before Tony notices Richard staring at him. Tony ignores Richard. The traffic light turns green. Richard doesn't move. Now Tony is getting irritated.

TONY

Yo, man, check out fool over, peepin' me and shit. (To Richard.) Hey, motherfucka, you got a problem? You wanna start some shit?

TONY'S FRIEND #1

Yeah, man, that fool starin' at ya'. What's up with that, man?

TONY'S FRIEND #2

Yo, go handle that, man.

Tony walks over to Richard's car.

TONY

You wanna look at me, man? I'll give ya' somethin' to look at.

Tony stops in front of Richard's car.

TONY

Yo, check this, I'm a' show ya' how it's done!

TONY'S FRIEND #3

Show him, man, show him how we do it over here!

---

Tony suddenly breaks out into a street dance performance in front of Richard's car as Tony's friends CHEER him on. After a moment, Richard's car lurches forward. Tony's friends CHEER MORE LOUDLY. Tony stops his dance.

TONY

Oh, this fool's for real! He's really tryin' to start some shit with me! Come on out the car, motherfucka! Don't be a punk!

Richard lurches forward again. Tony's friends CHEER again.

TONY'S FRIEND #1

Hey, T, you gonna let him play with you like that, man?

INT. CAR—CONTINUOUS

Richard's foot punches the gas.

EXT. STREET—CONTINUOUS

The car slams into Tony, sending him over the hood and to the ground reeling in pain. Tony's friends chase after Richard's car speeding down the street. They FIRE SEVERAL SHOTS at the car.

INT. CAR—CONTINUOUS

Bullets SHATTER the back window. One bullet DESTROYS the passenger's side headrest. Richard ducks but maintains his control of the car.

EXT. STREET—CONTINUOUS

The car peels off around the corner and out of sight.

INT. CAR—CONTINUOUS

Richard is breathless and seems on the verge of tears. His CELL PHONE RINGS.

RICHARD

Hello.

DR. FRANKLIN (o.s.)

Hello, this is Dr. Ben Franklin.

RICHARD

Ben Franklin?

DR. FRANKLIN (o.s.)

I know, I know. My mother had a sick sense of humor. Listen, I hear your wife's in trouble.

RICHARD

Yes, I need your help. Can I talk to you?...  
I promise to behave.

DR. FRANKLIN (o.s.)

What exactly is the problem?

RICHARD

She's missing.

DR. FRANKLIN (o.s., chuckling)

Oh, I know what's going on. I was afraid this would happen. I think I can help you, Richard. I'm on my way to town, right now. I'm having a date tonight. I can meet you somewhere for a few minutes. I'll clear things up for you.

INT. RESTAURANT-NIGHT

Richard and Dr. Franklin sit across from each other in a booth. There are two cups of coffee on the table.

RICHARD

---

First of all, Dr. Franklin, I wanna apologize for the other day.

DR. FRANKLIN

It's okay. I know it must have been a trying situation for you. Tracy should not have brought you to our plant.

RICHARD

Please, Doctor. Tell me how you know my wife.

DR. FRANKLIN

I must warn you. It's going to be difficult for you to hear the truth.

RICHARD

I need to know. You might be able to give me a clue that'll help me find her.

DR. FRANKLIN

She may not want to be found, Richard, at least not by you.

RICHARD

What?

DR. FRANKLIN

I'm saying your wife has run away. She's left you.

RICHARD

How do you know this?

DR. FRANKLIN

I've been known to cause women to do this before.

---

RICHARD

Hey, what's that supposed to mean?

DR. FRANKLIN

Are you familiar at all with the theory of evolution?

RICHARD

What does that have to do with Tracy?

DR. FRANKLIN

Survival of the fittest, only the strong survive while the weak become extinct.

RICHARD

I'm not getting what you're getting at.

DR. FRANKLIN

Big, handsome guys like you, Richard have been the survivors while skinny, brainy guys like me have been sitting at home alone on Friday nights wondering why girls don't like us. Well, no more.

RICHARD

What does this have to do with Tracy?

DR. FRANKLIN

I met Tracy about a year ago. I stayed at the hotel one night after one of my dates. I was too worn out to go back to Lancaster. She and I hit it off instantly.

RICHARD

---

I don't like the sound of this so far.  
I suggest you be careful what you say  
next.

DR. FRANKLIN

Check out that waitress over there.

Dr. Franklin directs Richard's attention to a waitress  
cleaning off a table.

DR. FRANKLIN

My God, look at those legs. Wouldn't you  
love to have those thighs wrapped  
lovingly around you, Richard? But you  
probably have a very slim chance. I could  
have her in bed within an hour after her  
shift if I wanted.

RICHARD

And why would she want your pencil dick?

DR. FRANKLIN

The science of seduction, Richard! I  
have discovered the power! I can make any  
woman's thighs ache for me with just a  
five-minute conversation. It doesn't  
matter if they're single or married. I  
discover what they want most, their  
deepest desires with just a few casual  
questions. And then, I align myself with  
those desires. I become a symbol of their  
desires with a simple, subliminal  
suggestion. It's a technique I've spent  
years perfecting. And my, was it worth  
it. The nerds will now rule this animal  
kingdom!

RICHARD

I oughtta kick your fucking teeth in  
right here.

DR. FRANKLIN

You're a Neanderthal, Richard. Tracy's too intelligent for you. Haven't you noticed the changes over the past year, her tastes becoming more refined—music, books, wine, art. Didn't you find it a little strange? I discovered the true Tracy. I've liberated her from your ape-like ways. And now, she cannot bear it anymore. She's left you!

Richard lunges across the table and grabs Dr. Franklin by the neck.

RICHARD

You fucking pencil dick! Fuck you!

Suddenly, the gate security guard emerges from one of the booths behind Richard. He grabs Richard from behind.

SECURITY GUARD

Okay, let the good doctor go, now. Be a good little boy.

Richard reluctantly lets go of Dr. Franklin. The security guard releases Richard.

DR. FRANKLIN

Knowing what I had to tell you, and with the animalistic behavior you displayed the other day, there's no way I was coming here alone. The coffee's on me.

Dr. Franklin puts some money on the table. He exits along with the security guard, leaving a fuming Richard by himself.

INT. LIVING ROOM—NIGHT

Richard watches TV on the couch in his underwear. He guzzles a bottle of Jack Daniel's.

EXT. STREET-DAY

Richard's car slams into Tony.

INT. RESTAURANT-NIGHT

Dr. Franklin laughs smugly at Richard.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM-NIGHT

Tracy and Dr. Franklin roll around in bed together, in ecstasy.

INT. LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

Richard throws the half-empty bottle of whiskey across the room. It CRASHES against the wall.

INT. DR. HARPER'S OFFICE-DAY

Richard sits across from Dr. Harper.

RICHARD

Is it possible Tracy developed schizophrenia from a head injury?

DR. HARPER

Maybe you're looking at it from the wrong angle.

RICHARD

What do you mean?

DR. HARPER

Maybe her condition is not physical at all, but psychological.

RICHARD

Are you saying her condition may not have anything to do with her injury?

DR. HARPER

It sounds like Tracy is suffering from a dissociative disorder. Remember, her attack wasn't just physical but psychological as well. It must be psychologically devastating for her to have been brutalized like that. Maybe her way of dealing with it is to dissociate herself from the reality of what happened. None of it matters to her because she's not real. She's an android. And these delusions have reassigned the roles of everyone in her life. Her mother is not really her mother. The male friend of hers is now the man who made her.

RICHARD

That does sound very logical. Is there anything that could be done for her?

DR. HARPER

Well, I can't say for sure if this is really what's wrong with her. I haven't examined her. I'm only offering an educated guess. But if it were the case, then I would say Tracy needs extensive therapy. She needs to learn to cope better with her traumatic experience.

RICHARD

But I'm just so angry to find out about this other guy. I think a part of me just wants to walk away.

DR. HARPER

No, Richard, you can't do that. You have to be strong, remember? She needs you now more than ever. And you don't really know for sure if this man is completely honest. You don't know Tracy's side of the story.

RICHARD

Well, if I find her I can't even be angry with her. She's not there anymore. The person who may have cheated on me is gone. If someone can have a head injury or a traumatic experience and have a complete personality change, then who are we really? Where is the soul?

DR. HARPER

Now, that's a question that's been asked since the beginning of time.

INT. BOOK STORE-DAY

Several customers are quietly reading in a large book store. Richard enters, looking confused as if he doesn't quite fit in here.

INT. BOOK STORE-DAY

Richard is standing in front the SPIRITUALITY section of the store. He pulls down a large book from the shelf and reads.

INT. LIVING ROOM-DAY

Richard, drifting off to sleep, lies on the sofa with an opened book face down on his chest. Several books are on the coffee table as well as a half empty bottle of whiskey. The DOOR BELL RINGS. Richard slowly gets up and staggers to answer it. Becky enters. It is raining terribly outside. Becky closes her umbrella. Richard staggers back to the sofa.

BECKY

Have you received any word from the police?

RICHARD

Nothing yet.

BECKY

What's the matter? You look tired. Your eyes are red.

RICHARD

It's nothing. Don't worry about me.

BECKY

Oh, you've been drinking, haven't you?

RICHARD

Don't start, Becky.

BECKY

That's not gonna solve anything. If you're not careful, you'll end up a drunk.

Becky notices the books on the table.

BECKY

And what's this you're reading?

She picks up the books.

BECKY

Destiny of Souls, Journey of Souls, Old Souls. What are you reading this for?

RICHARD

It's nothing, Becky.

BECKY

Rich, I'm glad to see you're taking your soul seriously. But these books are useless. Everything you need to know about the soul is in one book. It tells

you what the soul is. It's the moral part of us. The part that stands in judgement before God after we die. And that's why no matter how bad things get or how bad people hurt us, you gotta stay in character. You gotta just turn the other cheek. Don't let the bad people make you bad. They can take anything they want but don't let them take your soul.

RICHARD

Ah, fuck off, Becky!

BECKY

WHAT?! What did you just say, Richard?  
You see what happens when you drink?

A car HORN SOUNDS from outside. Richard jumps up nervously and goes to the window. Through the pouring rain he can see a red sports car parked in front of the house.

RICHARD

They found me! They found me! Becky, get down!

BECKY

What's going on?

RICHARD

Get down, Becky, now! They might start shooting!

BECKY

Shooting?!

Richard grabs Becky and pulls her with him to the floor.

RICHARD

---

Stay here.

BECKY

Tell me what's going on.

RICHARD

We don't have time for that.

The horn HONKS again, startling Richard and Becky. Richard races up the stairs. Becky, looking very confused, stays on the floor. Richard comes back down with a gun.

BECKY

Where did you get that thing?

RICHARD

I bought it after Tracy's attack.

BECKY

You've lost your mind!

Becky gets up.

BECKY

Nobody's shooting at us. You're paranoid.

RICHARD

Listen, Becky! I did something terrible to someone and they're looking for me! Now get down like I told you!

Becky goes to the window. She sees Dr. Franklin getting out of the car.

BECKY

Oh, what are you afraid of? It's just some Bible salesman or Jehovah's Witness.

---

Richard goes to the window and sees Dr. Franklin, protected from the rain by a large umbrella, approaching the front door.

RICHARD

What the hell does he want?

Richard opens the front door. Dr. Franklin stands outside the door.

RICHARD

You've got some pretty big balls for a pencil dick.

DR. FRANKLIN

I didn't come here to fight. I brought someone with me.

RICHARD

Who? Your goon bodyguard?

DR. FRANKLIN

Look closely.

Richard looks carefully at the passenger's side of Dr. Franklin's car. He can just barely make out a female's long hair through the pouring rain.

DR. FRANKLIN

She came to the plant this morning and created quite a scene. Apparently, she thinks I created her. She's terribly deluded. She just went into a rage. It took several security guards to gain control of her. It took me a couple of hours to convince her that she wasn't properly thinking. I took her to a hospital and they gave her a shot of a very powerful anti-psychotic. She's finally starting to show signs of her old

---

self. I owe you a big apology and a lot of respect I just wanted a good time. I'm not prepared to deal with something like this. You truly love her.

Dr. Franklin turns and slowly walks to his car. Tracy gets out and exchanges words briefly with Dr. Franklin. She then walks towards Richard as Dr. Franklin gets in his car and STARTS the engine.

TRACY

Terrible weather today, huh?

Tracy enters the house and Richard closes the door. Tracy immediately runs to hug her mother.

TRACY (in tears)

Oh, mother. I'm so sorry for everything. I'm so sorry for all those things I said to you.

BECKY

Don't worry about it, Honey. I know it wasn't your fault. Ih, I'm so glad to see you're okay.

They release each other.

TRACY

I don't know what happened to me. I must've had some kinda fugue or something. I saw things, hallucinations, aliens. I heard voices.

BECKY

It was probably your injury, Sweetheart.

TRACY

I went to a doctor today. He gave me some medicine that helped a little.

RICHARD

I prayed to God every day for the past month to bring my wife back to me and he brought me back A WHORE!

BECKY (gasping)

RICHARD! What has gotten into you today?!

RICHARD

She's been fucking that geek out there!

TRACY

No, Rich. It's not true. He's just a friend.

RICHARD

Shut up, whore!

BECKY

Richard, how could you think such a thing?

RICHARD

He told me!

TRACY

No, Rich. Ben likes to exaggerate sometimes. He and I are just friends. Really.

BECKY

You know Tracy would never cheat on you. Think about it.

TRACY

Yes, Richard. I love you. You're my husband.

RICHARD

Shut up! I don't wanna hear any of your fucking lies!

TRACY

Rich, please—

RICHARD

--I said, shut up!

Richard lunges at Tracy. Becky holds him back. Tracy sinks to the floor. She holds her head in her hands.

BECKY

Richard, you are not in your right mind! You've been drinking! Think about what you're doing!

TRACY

Oh, God! Why me? Everyone wants to hurt me. First them, now you. I can't take it anymore! You're just like them! I'm not real. I'm not real. I'm not real...

Tracy continues to mumble, I'm not real. Richard launches upstairs. From the top of the stairs, Richard throws suitcases and clothes down into the living room.

BECKY

What are you doing?

RICHARD

I want both of you out of my sight, now!

BECKY

We've wanted nothing more than to have Tracy back and healthy. And now here she is and you're throwing her out because of something you now deep in your heart isn't true?

RICHARD

You should've heard how that asshole talked about how they've been getting it on. He thinks he's a master of seduction and she fell for his bullshit. You two are nothing but a whore and a whore's mother. Now, I want both of you out of my house!

INT. HOUSE—LATER

Richard, nursing a glass of whiskey, sits on the couch. Becky and Tracy take two packed, heavy suitcases with them as they leave.

BECKY

We'll come back when you've sobered up.

RICHARD

Don't bother.

Becky and Tracy exit. Richard takes a huge swig from the glass.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD—NIGHT

The neighborhood is quiet as it is the wee hours of night.

INT. LIVING ROOM—CONTINUOUS

Richard lies covered by a blanket on the couch. He is staring at the ceiling. The whiskey bottle is empty.

EXT. HOUSE—DAY

It is morning. An O.S. ALARM CLOCK GOES OFF.

INT. LIVING ROOM—CONTINUOUS

Richard is startled awake by the alarm clock on the coffee table. He rubs his eyes groggily.

INT. BATHROOM—CONTINUOUS

Richard brushes his teeth.

INT. BEDROOM—CONTINUOUS

Richard is wearing slacks, a white, long-sleeved, dress shirt and a tie which he is straightening. He picks up a dress jacket from off the bed and puts it on.

INT. CAR—DAY

Richard listens to the MORNING TRAFFIC REPORT as he fights heavy freeway traffic.

EXT. STREET—DAY

Richard's car is stopped at a traffic light among a long row of cars

Busy people are walking along the sidewalk. Among them is a beautiful young girl in a mini-dress. Richard gazes at her legs, her face, her lips as she moves.

EXT. STREET—DAY

Richard continues to weave in and out of morning rush hour traffic.

INT. CAR—DAY

Richard is first in a long line of cars sitting at a red light. The MORNING NEWS CONTINUES. Richard yawns. His eyes grow heavy.

EXT. STREET—CONTINUOUS

Several cars pass in front of Richard's car.

INT. CAR—CONTINUOUS

Richard falls asleep.

EXT. CAR—CONTINUOUS

His car slowly drifts out into oncoming traffic. Suddenly another car SLAMS into the front side of Richard's car, spinning it around.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. STREET—DAY

Several policemen guide traffic around the scene of Richard's accident. Several onlookers watch as TWO RESCUE WORKERS use crow bars to pry open Richard's terribly dented driver's side door. Richard is slumped over to the right, covered in broken glass.

RESCUE WORKER #1

Sir, can you hear me?

Richard slowly rises up. The rescue workers GASP.

RESCUE WORKER #2

What the hell?

Richard slowly steps out onto the street. The onlookers GASP in horror. The rescue workers step away from Richard. They don't know how to react to what they're seeing.

Richard staggers around a bit. He catches a glimpse of himself in the car's rear window. What he sees startles him. He looks closely. Some of the skin on the left side of his forehead has been torn away to reveal... a metallic skull. He slowly touches the exposed skull.

RICHARD

Oh, my God. I'm not real. I'm not real.

His eyes tear up. He staggers around, looking at the crowd of astonished onlookers. Among them are two men wearing sunglasses and black suits.

RICHARD

I'm not real. I'm not real.

Richard falls to his knees. He looks up at the blue sky and the sun. He collapses face down. The crowd gathers. Among them is a SMALL BOY and his mother.

SMALL BOY

Mommy, is that fake man dead?

Further up the street, in the direction Richard was heading, is Cassetta's Supermarket.

EXT. STREET-NIGHT

Two policemen have arrested Tony, who is on crutches, outside of the pool hall. He submissively gets in the back seat of the police car as his friends watch sadly.

EXT. WILCOX CORPORATION-DAY

Several dozen cars are parked in front of the plant.

INT. WILCOX CORP-CONTINUOUS

Several scientists in white robes walk busily along the corridors of the plant.

Behind white doors there are white rooms with androids in various stages of construction.

ANDROID MONTAGE-

In one room, a skinless android is being monitored by several by several scientists and aliens as it practices walking, stumbling, falling down and struggling to get back up like a baby.

In another room, an Asian, female android sits at a dinner table and practices eating noodles with chopsticks as, once again, she is being monitored by scientists and aliens.

In another room, a black, male android struggles to speak a complete sentence as he lapses occasionally into babbling. He is encouraged and cheered by several scientists as a few aliens look on emotionless.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. OPERATING ROOM-DAY

Richard lies lifeless on an operating table. His body is covered in a white sheet except for his head and upper torso. The skin from his metallic skull has been removed. Tracy sits on a chair beside him. She is obviously disturbed by the sight of Richard. Dr. Franklin and Dr. Harper stand behind her.

DR. FRANKLIN

I'm afraid the news isn't good, Tracy. The shock to his system caused irreparable damage. If we brought him back we'd have to completely erase his memory and identity. There's no other choice. He simply wasn't designed to know.

TRACY

So what's going to happen to me now?

DR. FRANKLIN

We'll create a replacement husband for you.

TRACY

I don't know if I could stand it like it was before. Being the only one who knew. The secrecy was killing me.

DR. FRANKLIN

But you won't be the only one for long. Soon there will be many like you scattered all around the world—doctors, lawyers and especially politicians. And you'll all be programmed to be leaders and slowly humanity will be steered by you back to its rightful path.

DR. HARPER

It's a shame about Richard. He was magnificent.

DR. FRANKLIN

Yes, he was so life-like! He was a real masterpiece! You should've seen how he came at me that night! He was ready to punch my lights out over the woman he loved!

DR. HARPER

Why, he even thought he had a soul!

TRACY

And he had quite a few human flaws.

DR. FRANKLIN

I was worried about how easily he bought my whole seduction science thing, thought. We might have made a few mistakes with his believeability programming.

TRACY

And remember, he almost killed someone.

DR. FRANKLIN

But he did what any man would do for someone he loved. There was nothing strange about that.

TRACY

Oh, it wasn't love, Dr. Franklin. It was just programming.

DR. HARPER

Sometimes, I don't now what is the difference.

They gaze contemplatively at Richard.