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Publication Date

2012

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Deader

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in

Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts

by

Kevin Christopher Jones

June 2012

Thesis Committee:

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University of California, Riverside

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Regina for encouraging me to believe I could fly, MHS for pushing me over the edge, all my professors for their enduring patience as I tumbled, and all my students for showing me how to soar,

For Cassidy lu

FADE IN:

EXT. MONDIALE HOTEL - NEW ORLEANS - MORNING

A MERCEDES-BENZ pulls up to the hotel's grand entrance. A VALET rushes out to greet the arriving GUEST.

VALET

Good morning. Welcome to the
Mondiale. Will you be checking in
with us today?

Nearby, a BELLHOP finishes loading luggage from a CADILLAC onto a PUSH CART and heads into the building.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - MONDIALE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

A JANITOR pushes a DUST MOP across the MARBLE FLOOR of this grand style lobby with a strong French and antebellum accents.

INT. HALLWAY - MONDIALE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

A HOUSEKEEPER pushes her CART down a wide, opulent hallway, coming to a stop in front of room 907 where a "DO NOT DISTURB" SIGN hangs from the door handle. The Housekeeper frowns. She consults a CLIPBOARD that hangs from her cart before stepping up to the door to KNOCK.

HOUSEKEEPER

(calling)
Housekeeping!

No response. She takes the sign off the door, pulls out her MASTER ROOM KEY and inserts it. The ROBOLOCK releases with a mechanical THUNK, and the Housekeeper opens the door.

INT. SUITE - MONDIALE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

The Housekeeper slowly enters the darkened room.

HOUSEKEEPER

Housekeeping.

She turns on the light, bringing the room fully into view. The place is trashed, a mess of tangled bedding and fast food containers strewn across the floor.

She moves to the window and draws open the CURTAINS. Sunlight floods in. A low MUTTERING draws her attention to the bathroom. The door is closed. She moves to it, calling again.

HOUSEKEEPER

(calling)

Housekeeping.

Still no response. She pushes on the door. It swings slowly open. She steps into the bathroom, immediately notices in RAPID FIRE SUCCESSION:

ON THE FLOOR, RED LIQUID oozes across on the white tile.

ON THE MIRROR, A large OCCULT SYMBOL drawn in RED.

IN THE BATHTUB, the grotesquely mutilated WOMAN'S NAKED BODY lies in a broken heap.

The Housekeeper SCREAMS...

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

BEN BANE (40's) steps out of the shower into a fog-filled bathroom. Grabbing a towel that he wraps around his extremely fit body, Ben moves to the sink. He wipes away fog off the mirror and grimaces at the reflection staring back at him.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Dressed in conservative SUIT PANTS, Ben finishes buttoning a starched white shirt before picking up a leather SHOULDER HOLSTER off a bureau and putting it on. He moves to the closet.

INT. CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Ben squats down and punches a CODE into a small GUN SAFE. The OPEN light flashes. He swings open the safe's door and retrieves a WALTHER PPQ handgun.

MATTY (O.S.)

Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!

Ben rises quickly just ahead of his 6-year-old son MATTY rushing in.

BEN

Matty! You know better than come in here.

Ben leads Matty out of the closet.

BEN

Cole said you're going to shoot me and put me in jail.

MRS. THORNTON (60's), a solid, mature woman with kind eyes, stands at the door.

MRS. THORNTON

Sorry, Mr. Bane. Cole's been scaring him again.

MATTY

Are you, daddy?

BEN

Of course not. Let's have a talk to your brother.

(to Mrs. Thornton)

Where is he?

MRS. THORNTON

In his room. Let's go, Matthew. Time for breakfast.

INT. FOYER - BEN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ben walks to the foot of the stairs and calls.

BEN (O.S.)

(calling)

Cole Andre Bane! Get down here right now.

COLE (15), an awkward, introverted youth arrives at the top of the stairs, wearing a SCHOOL UNIFORM so wrinkled, it looks like it's been slept in.

COLE
Yessir.

BEN
Get down here right now.

Cole descends the stairs like the last put-upon teenager in existence.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A POT OF OATMEAL cooks on the stove. Matty sits at the breakfast table drawing with CRAYONS. Ben leads Cole into the kitchen.

BEN
Why are you scaring your brother?

COLE
He sneaks into my room and takes stuff.

MATTY
I don't...

COLE
Liar.

BEN
You don't call someone a liar.

COLE
Well, he is.

BEN
Matty?

Matty shakes his head.

MATTY
Do I still have to go to jail?

BEN

No.

(turning to Cole)

As for you, you're grounded.

COLE

What?

BEN

For the rest of the week, no computer, no video games, no phone.

COLE

That's not fair!

BEN

Is that clear?

Cole stares daggers at Matty but sensing that he can't challenge his father, Cole hangs his head in defeat.

MATTY

Daddy, do you really shoot people?

BEN

Is that clear, Cole?

COLE

Whatever.

MATTY

Daddy, do you?

BEN

I'm a police officer, Matty.
Police officers protect people.

MATTY

Even if you have to shoot them?

Mrs. Thornton sets two BOWLS of OATMEAL down onto the table.

BEN

Cole...

COLE
I'm going to get you, you little
shithead!

MRS. THORNTON

BEN

Ben moves toward Cole when his PHONE RINGS. He looks at the
CALLER ID and realizes he has to answer it.

BEN
(into phone)
Yeah... All right. I'll be right
there.

Ben hangs up the phone.

BEN
I've got to go to work. We will
deal with this later. I want you
home straight from school. Is
that clear?

COLE
Yeah.

Ben exits.

MATTY
Bye, daddy.

Mrs. Thornton follows him out.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Ben is putting on his SUIT JACKET when Mrs. Thornton ambles up
to him.

MRS. THORNTON
I just want to say...

BEN
(interrupting)
This isn't your concern.

MRS. THORNTON
But, Matty does take things.

BEN

I assumed that, Mrs. Thornton, but Cole has to learn to be more disciplined about what he says to Matty, especially after...

Ben can't finish the thought or the sentence.

MRS. THORNTON

Cole lost his mother too.

BEN

I will not treat him like he's broken or he'll give into it.

MRS. THORNTON

Are you talking about the boy or yourself?

BEN

I can't have this conversation now.

Ben exits through the front door. Mrs. Thornton stares after him for a moment before returning to the kitchen.

CUT TO:

EXT. PONTCHARTRAIN EXPRESSWAY - NEW ORLEANS - MORNING

A '68 Bonneville moves through light morning traffic against a backdrop of iconic sights of the area starting with the LOUISIANA SUPERDOME.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

(over radio)

With Fat Tuesday less than a week away, this city is literally coming back to life...

INT. BONNEVILLE/EXT. PONTCHARTRAIN EXPRESSWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ben drives along the main New Orleans business artery listening to news radio.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

(over radio)

As it prepares for the hundreds of thousands of tourists expected to flood into town. Mayor Patton Behrman had this to say.

Ben exits the expressway onto Poydras Street, heading into the heart of the Big Easy.

MAYOR BEHRMAN (V.O.)

(radio)

It has always given me tremendous pride in this city's amazing resilience. We have taken the dregs of the earth and turned it into the most beautiful, plentiful and delicious things known to the senses. It is our commitment to tradition that makes us great. And so with open arms I welcome the world into our home for another incredible Mardi Gras celebra...

Ben changes the station. The Spinners classic "Rubberband Man" fills the car with a jumping bass line.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANAL STREET - MORNING

Ben drives passed the mixture of old and new buildings along Canal Street until he arrives at a ROAD BLOCK.

POLICE TAPE undulates in the breeze. POLICE CRUISERS --lights flashing-- have the street cordoned off, while PATROLMEN sip coffee and stamp their feet to keep warm on this frosty morning.

The Bonneville pulls up to the blockade. The PATROLMEN part like the Red Sea before Moses.

PATROLMAN 1

Morning, detective.

Ben grunts as he drives ahead.

EXT. MONDIALE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

The Bonneville pulls into the hotel's grand driveway. His partner GRACE DESJARDINS, who camouflages her athletic good looks inside a conservative suit and retro hairstyle, rushes up to greet him as he steps out of the car.

GRACE
What took you so long?

BEN
The usual morning fisticuffs.

Ben notices a SURGICAL MASK tied around Grace's neck.

BEN
What's with the mask?

Grace shakes her head.

GRACE
You'll see...

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR - MONDIALE HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Ben and Grace ride the elevator to the 9th floor. The doors open and they step into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - MONDIALE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Grace offers a spare SURGICAL MASK.

GRACE
Here. Better take this.

BEN
I'm a big boy.

GRACE
Suit yourself. I hope you haven't eaten yet.

The two detectives continue down the hall to room 907. They enter the suite.

INT. SUITE - MONDIALE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

The two detectives enter the room. Ben notices a FORENSIC TECHNICIAN snapping photographs of the mess with a digital CAMERA.

BEN

(sniffs)

That smell? Burnt flesh?

GRACE

Um hum...

She offers the mask again.

GRACE

You sure?

BEN

I'm good.

GRACE

The room was listed as vacant. Maid discovered the body when she came in to turn the room around.

BEN

Where?

TECH

In the bathroom.

Grace pulls up her own Surgical Mask and then leads Ben into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben and Grace enter the small bedroom where a CORONER ASSISTANT wearing RUBBER GLOVES and a SURGICAL MASK over his face sits on the tub taking notes.

Ben sees the body in the tub and reacts instinctively.

BEN
Jeezus.

GRACE
Toldja.

Ben moves to inspect the body. It's covered with SYMBOLS.

BEN
Burnt into the body?

GRACE
Branded.

BEN
Do we know with what?

GRACE
There's nothing left in the room.

BEN
Run the victim's prints yet?

CORONER ASSISTANT
You kidding?

The Coroner Assistant raises one of the victim's arms.

CORONER ASSISTANT
Look, Ma, no hands.

The ARM ends at the wrist with a blood-encrusted STUMP.

CORONER ASSISTANT
We still got dental, but that'll
take a while.

BEN
What about those?

Ben points to the dead girl's breasts.

GRACE
I've seen better. What about 'em?

BEN
If memory serves, those are 500cc
silicone gels.

(to the Tech)
There should be an IMF incision
under the left arm.

The Assistant Coroner checks the side of body.

ASSISTANT CORONER
Right here.

BEN
Those gels come with a serial
number you can use to locate the
plastic mechanic that installed
'em.

CORONER ASSISTANT
No shit?

BEN
Saw it on a cop show once. Let me
know as soon as you get something.

CORONER ASSISTANT
Sure bet.

Ben steps to the up mirror and stares at the SYMBOL drawn
there.

BEN
And you said the room was supposed
to be empty?

GRACE
According to the manager.

Ben continues to stare at the strange symbol like he's
hypnotized. He begins to hear GARBLED VOICES coming from the
mirror.

GRACE
Hey. You all right?

BEN
I just need some air.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - MONDIALE HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

An ELEVATOR DOOR opens returning Ben and Grace to the lobby where they are immediately approached by WINSTON BONHAM (40's), a short, balding bespectacled man in a tailored suit.

BONHAM

Are you in charge of circus?

BEN

Yeah.

BONHAM

Winston Bonham. I am the general manager of this hotel and I am trying to find out how long the police intend to interrupt my business. I was told you would have an answer.

BEN

Mr. Bonham, a murder has been committed. We have the usual process of collecting evidence. Now, I'm told that the room was listed as vacant.

BONHAM

I already told that to your secretary.

BEN

I assume all of your housekeepers have master keys?

BONHAM

Yes, but they're re-coded daily and only for the floors they are assigned.

BEN

Then there shouldn't be a problem getting a list together of everyone who had a key to room 907.

BONHAM

I can check on that, but you have to tell me how much longer before I get my hotel back.

BEN

Shouldn't take more than a few days.

BONHAM

That's impossible. We are completely booked through Mardi Gras. What am I supposed to do with the arriving guests?

BEN

There's a dead girl in one of your bathtubs. Would you like me to drag the body into an alley?

BONHAM

To be frank, I didn't expect someone like you to understand the importance of maintaining a business, but I didn't get to my position without knowing how to find someone who does.

Bonham turns in a huff and walks away.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONDIALE HOTEL - MORNING

Ben lights up a CIGARETTE as he steps out of the building with Grace in tow.

GRACE

I thought you quit.

BEN

I did. I like quitting. I've done it enough that I'm starting to get good at it.

Ben's CELL PHONE RINGS. He answers.

BEN
(into phone)
Ben Grimes. Yeah. All right.
I'll be right there.

GRACE
What is it?

BEN
Captain wants to see me.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. BENEDICT PREP SCHOOL - DAY

A BELL signals the beginning of a period. Cole enters through the gate of an elegant, old prep school.

INT. HALLWAY - ST. BENEDICT PREP SCHOOL - DAY

Cole is one of the last straggling students rushing into class.

INT. CLASSROOM - ST. BENEDICT PREP SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

The TEACHER stands at the front of the classroom waiting to have everyone's attention as Cole moves through the crowded classroom. He doesn't notice when LUKE (15), a tall, thin, rat-faced boy in a crisply pressed BLAZER, sticks his foot out.

BAM

Cole trips and tumbles to the floor, his books go flying every which way. The class laughs. Luke and his cronies match eyes and snicker.

TEACHER
Are you all right, Mr. Bane?

RAVEN DIONNE (15), a dark-skinned girl with long, curly black hair rises to help. When Cole rises to his feet, Raven hands back his stuff. They make eye contact. Cole looks down and moves to take a seat in the very back row.

TEACHER

Now. We'll get started. Mr. Bane, do you think you could you summarize for the class what George Washington meant by "passionate attachments?"

COLE

Uh...

TEACHER

You did last night's reading assignment, didn't you?

COLE

Uh...

Raven raises her hand.

TEACHER

Miss. Deleon.

RAVEN

He meant that it was better to remain independent and not get dragged into things based on a passionate commitment to another country.

TEACHER

Very good. Now, before anything else can happen, let's open our books to page 72 and begin reading.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Police Officers, administrators and visitors flow in and out of the midtown station. Ben's Bonneville is parked in front.

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - MORNING

CAPTAIN GUIDRY DAVIS (70's), a barrel-chested good-ol'boy sits behind a stern wooden desk, talking with a strong local accent to an unseen visitor.

DAVIS

I am completely sympathetic to the mayor's predicament.

A KNOCK at the door.

DAVIS

What?

Ben opens the door, but hesitates at the threshold.

DAVIS

Oh, Ben... Come on in.

Ben enters the room. GREG TALBOT, in a SEERSUCKER SUIT and WHITE BUTTON DOWN SHIRT, stands near the back wall.

DAVIS

There's somebody I want you to meet.

Talbot rushes up, hand extended and a wide smile.

GREG TALBOT

Detective... Deputy Mayor Greg Talbot. I believe I have seen you at St. Benedict's.

BEN

Yes. My son's in 10th grade.

GREG TALBOT

So's my boy Luke. We should get them together, don't you think? It's a fine institution. I went there myself. And I am always pleased that it maintains a solid diversity on campus.

DAVIS

Greg is here about that bit of trouble over at the Mondiale this morning.

BEN

I figured.

GREG TALBOT

The mayor and I are both extremely worried in this kind of violence coming to our city. What do you think is going on?

BEN

I think we've got some crazy running murdering people as part of some kind of satanic ritual.

GREG TALBOT

Wait. Hold on there. Are you saying this is some kind of cult that did this?

BEN

Well, off the top of my head, I'd say the symbols left at the crime scene are a pretty good clue.

GREG TALBOT

We need to keep the details on this under wrap until after Mardi Gras.

BEN

Are you kidding?

GREG TALBOT

This city's been through a lot. We don't need this right now.

BEN

You wouldn't want a psychotic killer interfering with Mardi Gras.

GREG TALBOT

Precisely.

BEN

What do you suggest?

GREG TALBOT

The mayor's more than willing to provide whatever resources are needed to resolve this situation quickly and quietly.

BEN

Quietly?

GREG TALBOT

Report it as a simple homicide. Sex deal gone bad. Maybe it'll scare some people away from prostitution.

BEN

You don't think the public's got a right to know there could be a homicidal maniac on the loose?

DAVIS

Of course they do.

GREG TALBOT

You know what the press'll do with this. I'm here to help you focus on the big picture like they teach our boys at St. Benedict.

BEN

The big picture.

GREG TALBOT

And the sooner you catch the killer, the sooner the problems go away. I'm here to see what the mayor's office can do to expedite things.

BEN

Great.

EXT. HALLWAY - POLICE STATION - DAY

Ben fumes as he walks down a hallway with Grace.

BEN

Idiot!

GRACE

What happened?

BEN

We've got a homicidal maniac to catch, and they're worried about tourism.

GRACE

That all?

BEN

They want us to find this guy before a couple hundred thousand people pour into town.

GRACE

What do you want to do?

BEN

We need an ID on the victim. Go down to the morgue and whip those guys into gear.

GRACE

I'm on it.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - ST. BENEDICT PREP - DAY

Cole walks dejectedly down the crowded hallway filled with UNIFORMED STUDENTS visiting lockers and moving between classes.

Two students, HUEY and BEAU, walk up to Cole from behind and pull him into a bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - ST. BENEDICT PREP - CONTINUOUS

Cole struggles as Huey and Beau drag him into a bathroom stall where Luke is waiting.

LUKE

Well, what do we got here?

COLE

Leave me alone.

LUKE

I thought I smelled something vial in class. Did you smell it, too, fellas?

HUEY

I smelled it.

BEAU

The great unwashed.

LUKE

I bet the fellows here it was you.

Luke sniffs around Cole.

LUKE

Jeezus. It is you.

Luke punches Cole in the stomach

LUKE

Listen. I don't want any trouble, but have you no decency, man? No self-respect? If they let your kind in this school, the least you can do is clean yourself, unless maybe you need us to do it for you.

Luke gives a nod and the two thugs drag Cole into one of the stalls.

LUKE

Here we are.

Seeing what's in store for him, Cole struggles harder, but he's no match for the two goons.

RAVEN (O.S.)

Let him go.

They all turn to the sound of the voice and find that Raven has entered the bathroom.

LUKE

What the fuck's she doing in here?

RAVEN

You heard me.

Luke and Raven lock eyes. It's anybody's guess what's about to happen until surprisingly Luke backs down.

LUKE

All right. Let him go.

As soon as Cameron and Brick release Cole, he bolts out the door without looking back.

LUKE

Come on. We're out of here.

Luke leads his buddies out of the bathroom.

EXT. ST. BENEDICT PREP - DAY

A BELL rings, signaling the end of the school day and prompting an explosive exodus of kids through the building's main door. Most of the kids travel in groups of two or more. Cole walks along the edge of the crowd alone, head slumped, shoulders hunched.

He arrives at the BICYCLE RACK and moves to open his COMBINATION LOCK.

RAVEN (O.S.)

Hey.

Cole looks up to see Raven standing over him.

COLE

Hey.

RAVEN

Your name's Cole, right?

COLE

Yeah.

RAVEN

I'm Raven. Nice to meet you.
Which way you walking?

Cole points.

RAVEN

Me, too.

Raven starts walking. Cole follows, walking his bicycle.

RAVEN

Why do you let those assholes get
away with it?

COLE

I can handle it.

RAVEN

Yeah. You're doing a great job so
far.

COLE

It's none of your business,
anyway.

RAVEN

Luke and his jerk friends are just
a bunch of creeps and assholes.
They don't mess with me. Wanna
know why?

COLE

No.

RAVEN

Good. Let's go down here. I want
to show you something.

COLE

I can't. My dad says I'm supposed
to go straight home.

RAVEN

He ain't watching, is he?

Cole regards the strange new girl curiously, and then his SMARTPHONE RINGS. He looks at the CALLER ID.

COLE

Apparently, yeah.

Cole holds up the SMARTPHONE. It reads: Dad. He answers.

COLE

(into phone)

Hi, Dad.

BEN (O.S.)

(into phone)

Cole...

INT. BONNEVILLE/EXT. STREET - DAY

Ben drives holding his cell phone to his ear. Grace rides in the passenger seat.

BEN

(into phone)

I'm going to be working late. I want your homework ready to show me when I get home. All right?

COLE (O.S.)

Yes sir.

BEN

Good beans. I'll see you tonight.

EXT. SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Raven smiles as if she expected the call.

COLE

Bye, dad.

Cole hangs up and returns the phone to his pocket.

RAVEN
C'mon. It won't take long. It's
pretty cool.

COLE
All right.

EXT. FUNKY NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

Raven and Cole walk through an area of the city that hasn't
recovered much from the Katrina devastation.

COLE
You said it wasn't far.

RAVEN
It's not. We're here.

Raven stops in front of a rundown shack.

COLE
What's in there?

RAVEN
You'll see. Unless you're scared.

INT. SHACK - DAY

The SOUND of rats scrambling away echoes through the empty
shack as the two teens enter through a busted back door.

RAVEN
You know what this place is?

COLE
Nuh uh.

RAVEN
Junkies come in here to shoot up.
A lot of 'em die in here, which
means it's full of ghosts.
Whadaya think about that?

COLE
What are we doing here?

RAVEN

I want you to meet somebody.

COLE

Who?

RAVEN

You'll see. I know a lot about you Cole Bane. Your mom's dead, right?

COLE

Yeah.

RAVEN

She died in the Hurricane?

Cole nods.

RAVEN

Where was your dad?

COLE

Helping other people.

RAVEN

Come here.

Raven leads Cole into a bathroom, walls covered with graffiti. A broken MIRROR hanging on the wall still has enough jagged GLASS left in the frame to reflect the teens as they approach.

RAVEN

You know how to open a mirror?

COLE

What do you mean?

RAVEN

Mirrors are a window to the other realm. You can open them by drawing special signs. It's old magic.

COLE

That's bogus.

RAVEN

I've done it.

COLE

Bullshit.

RAVEN

Wanna see me do it again?

COLE

What's it do?

RAVEN

Depends on what you want. What do you want, Cole Bane?

COLE

Nothing.

RAVEN

Really? How about those slugs at school? Maybe you want something to happen to them?

COLE

I don't know.

RAVEN

Maybe you want them to leave you alone.

Raven picks up a piece of BROKEN GLASS off the floor. He moves the sharp edge of the glass towards his finger.

COLE

What are you doing?

RAVEN

Just watch.

Raven cuts the tip of his finger. A RED bead of BLOOD forms quickly onto the tip. Cole stands mesmerized as Raven touches the mirror with his ink-like blood and draws a DIFFERENT SYMBOL on the mirror.

As she nears completion, the MIRROR begins to roil like an angry, slate-gray ocean.

COLE
What is it? What's happening?

RAVEN
You'll see.

COLE
Stop!

Raven stops drawing. A mischievous smile spreads across Raven's face

RAVEN
I'll let you finish it.

COLE
I.. I don't want to.

RAVEN
Okay. But if you change your mind, type mortis eternum in the mirror to find out how. The password is "release."

COLE
I gotta go.

Cole exits quickly.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - MILLEPIED HOTEL - DAY

Another HOUSEKEEPING CART rolls down a hallway and stops before a room with a DO NOT DISTURB SIGN hanging from the ROBOLOCK. She KNOCKS.

ANOTHER HOUSEKEEPER
(calling)
Housekeeping!

She quickly inserts her MASTER KEY into ROBOLOCK. It flashes GREEN. The lock disengages with its signature THUNK.

She opens the door and enters the room.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM - MILLEPIED HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

The HOUSEKEEPER draws open the DRAPES, allowing the sunlight into the room. The room has been defaced just like the first. She reacts as if she smells something foul. She looks around and, seeing the BATHROOM DOOR closed, moves to it.

The Housekeeper opens the door and...

CUT TO:

INT. BONNEVILLE - AFTERNOON

In the backseat of Bonneville, Ben and Grace go at each other like prom night teenagers. Grace breaks for air.

GRACE

I put in for a transfer.

BEN

Why?

GRACE

We can't keep on like this. I feel like I'm back in high school.

BEN

In a Camaro with the quarterback?

GRACE

In a Suburu with the head of the English department.

BEN

Maybe I'm the one who should transfer.

Ben tries to kiss her again, but she pulls away, the look on her face saying more than Ben wants to hear.

BEN

You're serious.

GRACE

What is this, anyway? Hiding from work. Hiding from home.

It's the kind of relationship
broken people put together.

BEN

You knew what was going on when we
started. My kids aren't ready for
a sudden change.

GRACE

They're not, or you're not.

BEN

I'm not a high school teacher.

GRACE

And I'm not trying to pressure you
into anything. You got your life
so compartmentalized there's no
room for anything else. It'll
break you.

Grace's CELL PHONE RINGS.

BEN

Don't answer it.

GRACE

I have to.

She answers.

GRACE

Hello. All right. We'll be right
there.

Grace hangs up.

GRACE

Shit's about to hit the fan now.

BEN

What?

GRACE

They found another body. This one
at the Millepied.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - MILLEPIED HOTEL - AFTERNOON

A Photographer takes photos of the new VICTIM, lying in a bathtub, marked up the same as the first. This one is MALE.

GRACE

Gonna be hard sweeping it under
the rug now.

Ben studies the bathroom mirror where the same symbol has been drawn again in red. Ben pulls a small NOTEBOOK from his pocket.

BEN

Gimme a pen.

Grace hands him one. Ben takes it and draws the symbol onto the paper.

GRACE

Any idea what that's about

BEN

I know somebody who does. I need
you to keep pushing for an address
on the victim.

GRACE

Where you going?

BEN

Home.

CUT TO:

INT. BEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Cole enters through the front door.

COLE

(calling out)
I'm home.

He flies straight upstairs, passing Mrs. Thornton coming down the stairs carrying a BASKET OF LAUNDRY.

MRS. THORNTON

Cole Bane.

Cole stops at the top of the stairs and turns around.

MRS. THORNTON

You're moving so fast, I thought
your pants were on fire.

COLE

I've got homework.

Cole heads into his room. Mrs. Thornton stares after him a bit before continuing down the stairs.

INT. COLE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cole enters the room and shuts the door. He immediately tosses his school bag aside and moves to his desk. He opens his LAPTOP COMPUTER and navigates to a Google-esque search engine. In the search bar he types: **munretesitrom** and presses ENTER.

In the center of the screen, a DIALOGUE BOX calls for a PASSWORD.

Cole sits on his bed with his laptop open. He types in the blog address and the screen requests a password. He types: R-E-L-E-A-S-.

He hesitates, finger hovering apprehensively over the 'E'. With a deep breath, he presses the key. Instantly, the screen refreshes, garbled OTHERWORLDLY VOICES chatter with SOUNDS of perverted delight.

The BLOG PAGE appears with the same SYMBOL drawn on the mirrors and a banner on top that reads: WELCOME. The page is broken down into categories that include SPELLS & INCANTATIONS; SUMMONING; CHARMS; and SACRIFICES.

EXT. PONTCHARTRAIN CAUSEWAY - AFTERNOON

The Bonneville cruises across the longest bridge in the USA, heading away from the big easy.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - BEN'S HOUSE - EVENING

Mrs. Thornton sets a STEAMING DISH onto the table. Matty draws.

MRS. THORNTON
Matty, call your brother to dinner
for me please.

MATTY
Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. COLE'S ROOM - LATER

Cole scrolls through PHOTOGRAPHS accompanying each category is extremely graphic and realistic depictions of DEMON-LIKE CREATURES doing vial things to humans.

The door OPENS, and Cole nearly jumps out of his skin.

COLE
Shit.

Cole slams closed the laptop and looks to see Matty standing sheepishly in the doorway.

COLE
You're supposed to knock.

MATTY
Mrs. Thornton says it's time for
dinner.

COLE
Is dad home yet?

MATTY
Nope.

COLE
Tell her I'll be right down.

MATTY
Okay.

Matty heads back downstairs.

MATTY (O.S.)
(calling)
He's coming!

Cole slowly reopens his laptop and stares at the screen, deciding which category to explore first.

CUT TO:

INT. BONNEVILLE/EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Ben drives along a small ribbon snake of a highway that winds through the bayou before passing directly through the heart of town.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BONNEVILLE/EXT. DIRT ROAD - EARLY EVENING

Ben navigates the multitude of potholes along this stretch of single-lane mostly dirt road, cursing to himself every time he hits one. The road itself winds so much that it's almost impossible to see more than fifty yards ahead.

Finally, the car comes up over a rise and reveals a backwater village of about two hundred. A HANDWRITTEN SIGN on the side of the road reads: Lafon, Louisiana, pop. 338.

EXT. LAFON, LOUISIANA - EARLY EVENING

The Bonneville cruises slowly into the village, drawing stares from the locals, who look as if the car was a time machine that transported Ben back one hundred years.

The Bonneville parks in front of a single story wood-frame building that serves as the General Store/Saloon. Ben exits the car and enters the building.

INT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

A BELL over the door rings to announce Ben's entry into a room stuffed to the gills with an odd assortment of goods.

DIGGS (30's), a large, serious-looking man, comes out from behind a curtained-off section behind the counter.

DIGGS

Yeah...

Diggs is caught off-guard by the sight of Ben standing before him.

BEN

Brother...

Diggs cocks his head curiously.

DIGGS

What you doin' here?

BEN

Two-Momma in the back?

DIGGS

She busy.

BEN

(calling)

Two-Momma!

Ben moves around the counter, heading to the curtained off area. Diggs moves to cut him off.

DIGGS

You ain't part of this no more.
Now, get the hell out before I do
something.

BEN

(dismissive)

Like you ever could.

Ben continues past Diggs like he's irrelevant. Diggs grabs hold of Ben as he passes and smashes him hard into a wall, pinning him there with sheer physical force.

DIGGS

I ain't a kid no more. Brother.

Ben gets an arm free and using the bigger man's leverage against him, turns the situation around. In a flash, Diggs is on the ground with Ben standing over him.

Two-Momma (80's), a small but formidable looking woman with grey-black hair, her left eye completely consumed by cataract, comes out from behind the curtain carrying a CARPET BAG. She shakes her head in disappointment.

TWO-MOMMA

When you two ever gonna learn.

Ben releases Diggs, and the bigger, younger man rises.

BEN

Two-Momma. I need...

TWO-MOMMA

I ain't got time fo' what you need, boy. You wanna see me, you gotta work.

DIGGS

Two-momma!

TWO-MOMMA

You just mind the store and leave him be.

She thrusts her carpetbag at Ben.

TWO-MOMMA

Here...

Ben takes the bag.

TWO-MOMMA

Got a passin' up at the Delano place.

INT. SHOTGUN SHACK - NIGHT

An OLD MAN (90's), whose dark, wrinkled face could be even older, lies on a severe wooden COT, fighting for every breath like it could be his last, while his DAUGHTER (60's) looks on in anxious concern.

Her BROTHER (60's) sitting a low CHAIR in the corner of the room looks as if displeasure has been chiseled onto his stone-like face.

BROTHER
I don't like this at all.

DAUGHTER
Tais toi!

A KNOCK on the door.

DAUGHTER
That's her. Praise the Lord.

Brother rises from a nearby chair and opens the door. Two-Momma enters without a word and moves straight to the old man's beside. Brother locks eyes on Ben, pinning him in the doorway.

DAUGHTER
He's almost gone.

TWO-MOMMA
Not yet, he ain't.

Two-Momma bends down and whispers something to the old man. The Old Man's eyes open wide.

TWO-MOMMA
Get in here, boy, and bring me my bag. Can't you see I got work to do?

Ben moves slowly past Brother and hands Two-Momma her bag. She digs inside and pulls out a PENDANT hanging from a simple LEATHER STRING and an ANTIQUE HAND MIRROR.

TWO-MOMMA
Apportez-moi le bouc émissaire.

Brother looks reluctant to obey the command.

DAUGHTER
Faire comme elle le dit!

Brother disappears outside. Two-Momma turns to Ben and hands him the mirror.

TWO-MOMMA

Tu souviens-toi, pas vrai?

Ben takes the mirror just as Brother reenters the room holding a small GOAT. He walks over and kneels beside the cot. Two-Momma holds the Pendant over the Old Man and begins to chant.

She begins to moan and shake like a voodoo priestess.

Ben raises the mirror, angling it to reflect the old man's face with the goat's face.

Two-Momma releases a SCREAM loud enough to flush nearby birds from their roost. She collapses on top of the old man.

TWO-MOMMA

Relâchez la chèvre!

Brother releases the goat and it dashes out the door into the darkness.

TWO-MOMMA

Il est fait.

The slightest smile spreads across the Old Man's face, as he takes another breath.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHOTGUN SHACK - LATER

Ben stands on the narrow wooden porch smoking a CIGARETTE. The shack door opens and Two-Momma steps onto the porch.

TWO-MOMMA

He gone.

CUT TO:

INT. BONNEVILLE/EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Ben and Two-Momma ride along until Two-Momma breaks the silence.

INT. BONNEVILLE/EXT. GENERAL STORE - LATER

The Bonneville parks in front of the store.

TWO-MOMMA

Now, what's so all fired up
important it would drag you all
the way back here?

BEN

I came to see what you know about
this.

Ben retrieves the NOTEBOOK from his pocket and flips it open.

TWO-MOMMA

Where'd you get that? Put it
away!

BEN

I remember this stuff from growing
up, but not like this...

TWO-MOMMA

(cutting him off)
I said put it away. NOW!

Ben does as instructed.

BEN

What's the matter? What is it?

TWO-MOMMA

It's very old, very unstable. You
just lucky you ain't finished it.

BEN

Somebody put it up at a murder
site.

TWO-MOMMA

On a mirror.

BEN

Yes.

TWO-MOMMA

Marked up..

BEN

What is it, Two-Momma? What's
going on with this?

Two-Momma exits the car.

BEN

Wait...

Ben hops out the car after her, catching up to her on the porch. Diggs opens the door to the store and steps onto the porch.

DIGGS

You gave up your right to
understand when you left.

TWO-MOMMA

Hush up.

(to Ben)

You so grew up and thinking you
could just shut the door on who
you are. Now, you better open
your ears, boy, and hear me good.
Your own born is at stake.

BEN

This is police business, Two-
Momma. If you know something
about this symbol, I have to know
it.

TWO-MOMMA

You wanna know about that mark,
ask your father.

BEN

It's been twenty years, Two-Momma.
How'n heaven's name am I supposed
to know where he's at?

TWO-MOMMA

You leave that to me. Now you git
on. I got work to do.

Without another word, two-Momma walks into the store, leaving Ben outside.

CUT TO:

INT. BONNEVILLE/EXT. PONTCHARTRAIN CAUSEWAY - NIGHT

Ben drives in silence, the lights of the Big Easy looming ahead.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Bonneville pulls into the driveway and parks. Ben exits the car and heads to the front door.

INT. BEN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ben enters through the front door.

MATTY (O.S.)

Daddy's home.

Matty rushes in from the kitchen.

BEN

How ya doing, big guy?

MATTY

I'm doing homework. Did you shoot anybody today, daddy?

BEN

Not today?

Mrs. Thornton enters.

MRS. THORNTON

Come on, Matty. Let's finish up your homework.

BEN

Where's Cole?

MRS. THORNTON

In his room.

Mrs. Thornton takes Matty by the arm and leads him back into the kitchen. Ben heads upstairs.

INT. COLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cole sits on his BED with his laptop. The door to the room opens. Cole instinctively jumps, closing the laptop with an awkward jerk.

COLE

Dad. You're supposed to knock.

Ben enters the room.

BEN

What're you doing?

COLE

Homework.

BEN

Look, about this morning... I'm sorry Matty sneaks into your room. I'm going to talk with him about it. I also realize that what I saw this morning would probably be inadmissible. Still, there's a matter of safety that's still on the table, and I need you to understand how important it is.

COLE

I do.

BEN

I knew everything when I was fifteen, and I have to tell you how easy it is to get yourself into something you can't get out of.

COLE

I know, dad.

BEN

Cole...

Cole looks annoyed, and Ben thinks better of continuing.

BEN

All right.

A DOORBELL.

BEN

What now?

Ben exits.

INT. ENTRY - BEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ben approaches the front door. Matty flies by him.

MATTY

(calling)
I'll get it.

BEN

Matty, wait. Ask who it is first.

Matty reaches the door.

MATTY

(calling)
Who is it?

He swings open the door without waiting for a response. Brother stands on the porch. His stern, penetrating stare causes Matty to back away.

Ben walks in front of Matty.

BEN

What are you doing here?

DIGGS

Harry wants to see you.

BEN

Fine. Tell him he can come by the station in the morning.

MATTY

Who is it, daddy?

Cole enters.

BEN

Matty, Cole. This is your uncle.

Mrs. Thornton enters.

MRS. THORNTON

Everything all right in here?

The sight of Diggs standing in the foyer stops Mrs. Thornton.

BEN

Mrs. Thornton, this is my brother.

MRS. THORNTON

Very nice to meet you.

DIGGS

You ain't got much time.

MATTY

Are you a policeman like my dad?

DIGGS

Your father don't talk about us much, does he?

MATTY

Nuh uh.

DIGGS

Well, Matty, I guess. Sort of.

MATTY

Do you shoot people?

DIGGS

They's better ways to stop a man than a gun.

BEN

Get the boys ready for bed, Mrs. Thornton. I'll be back as soon as I can.

(to Diggs)
Where're we going?

INT. BONNEVILLE/EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Ben drives. Diggs keeps an eye on the SIDE MIRROR, looking back to see if they're being followed.

BEN
Why do you think we're being followed?

DIGGS
Maybe cuz you looking for something you shouldn't be looking for.

BEN
It's my job. Looks like I got a killer outta the bayou.

DIGGS
That the way you see it?

BEN
Looks that way.

DIGGS
Two-momma say you too proud or too dumb to know what this is about.

BEN
And you do?

DIGGS
Ain't my place to say.

BEN
If you know something about the murders going down here, I could take you in for questioning.

Diggs snorts.

DIGGS
I tole Two-Momma this here was a waste of time.

BEN

What's that supposed to mean?

DIGGS

Look at you. You think just changing your clothes and how you talk's gonna make a difference? You best remember where you come from before it's too late.

Diggs goes back to looking out the window. Ben lets the silence malingering.

INT. BONNEVILLE/EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

They drive in silence down a narrow highway on the outskirts of the city.

DIGGS

But you won't. Pull over there. We're here.

Ben pulls the Bonneville over and parks. He looks up at the building. The marquee reads: CLUB MAJESTIC. Diggs hops out of the car.

DIGGS

C'mon.

Ben grunts as he throws the car in park and hops out.

INT. CLUB MAJESTIC - NIGHT

A STRIPPER gyrates on the center stage before a loud, drunken audience of accountants and out-of-towners.

Diggs approaches the bar, where a peroxide BARTENDER tops off a MUG of Ale and slides it in front of a STRIPPER in a rayon KIMONO seated at the bar flanked by a couple of BAR RATS carrying on drunkenly about the state of the world.

DIGGS

I'm looking for somebody.

BARTENDER

They ain't here.

DIGGS
I ain't described 'em yet

BARTENDER
You don't see'em; they ain't here.

DIGGS
How 'bout a couple of beers, then?

BARTENDER
Coming right up.

DIGGS
(to Ben)
I ordered. You pay.

BEN
What now?

Diggs shrugs.

DIGGS
I don't know about you, but I'm a
have a drink and enjoy the
scenery.

The bartender sets two BEERS on the bar in front of them.

BEN
I don't have time for this.

DIGGS
Sure, you do. Pay the woman.

Ben retrieves a TWENTY DOLLAR BILL from his WALLET.

DIGGS
Good boy.

Diggs takes the bill and slams onto the bar.

DIGGS
(to bartender)
Keep the change, sugar.

BARTENDER
Thanks.

BEN

Where is he?

DIGGS

Look at him getting all fired up.
Now you listen to me, little
brother. I tole 'em you weren't
cut out for this job I can handle
this, and that's what I'm doing.

BEN

What's going on, Diggs? Is Harry
part of this or not?

DIGGS

Harry's gonna see what I can do.

Bar Rat 1 rises on shaky legs, announcing to no one in
particular.

BAR RAT 1

I gotta hit the head.

He heads to the back of the room. Diggs watches him a bit.

DIGGS

I'll be right back.

Diggs heads towards the back of the club.

The Stripper lean over to Ben and, steadying herself with a
hand close to his crotch, whisper into his ear.

STRIPPER

You got a name, sweetie?

BEN

No.

STRIPPER

Aw. Don't be that way.

She stands and accidentally knocks over a beer that splashes
onto Ben's shirt and pants.

STRIPPER

Oh, Jeez. I am so sorry, sweetie.
You better go rinse that out in
case you get pulled over.

BEN

I'm a cop.

STRIPPER

I give service discounts.

Ben checks his WATCH, agitated that Diggs is taking so long.
The bartender returns.

BARTENDER

Another round?

BEN

No, thanks. Is there a back way
out of here?

BARTENDER

If there was, sweetie, this place
would go broke in a heartbeat.

The Kimono stripper stands and wobbles unsteadily away on nine-
inch platform heels.

INT. BATHROOM - CLUB MAJESTIC - CONTINUOUS

Diggs enters the dilapidated room. A single stall hidden
behind a graffiti-covered door. A urinal filled with ice is
wedged next to a rust-stained sink. He steps up to the sink
and begins to draw on the mirror.

Kimono Stripper explodes into the bathroom, grabs Diggs and
with uncanny strength, slams him against the SINK, knocking it
away from the wall and releasing a GEYSER OF WATER from the
broken PIPE.

STRIPPER

You are weak, just like your
father.

Diggs tries a counter-move that she easily redirects, spinning
Diggs around and pinning his head into the urinal full of ice.

STRIPPER

Tell Harry I will have the scroll,
and there's nothing he can do
about it.

DIGGS

Tell him yourself.

The Stripper slams Diggs against the mirror, blood gushes from his head. With a free hand, the Stripper uses the blood to begin draw the SYMBOL onto the mirror and it begins to ROIL.

STRIPPER

I will.

INT. BACK HALLWAY - CLUB MAJESTIC - CONTINUOUS

Ben walks down the hallway and starts to hear strange SOUNDS emanating from the bathroom. Ben pulls his gun.

INT. BATHROOM - CLUB MAJESTIC - CONTINUOUS

Ben bursts into the bathroom, gun extended, ready to fire, but the room is completely empty.

He kicks open the STALL DOOR.

Nothing.

He scans the room, searching for any possible way out. He comes to a single WINDOW, too small to climb through.

Something catches his attention. Holsters his weapon, he turns to face the mirror and stares at the SYMBOL drawn there.

CUT TO:

INT. BONNEVILLE/EXT. STREET - MORNING

Ben drives. Grace sips COFFEE from a chain store cup.

BEN

Next thing I knew, he was gone.

GRACE

You think it means something?

BEN

I don't know. My father was always playing around with mumbo-jumbo.

GRACE

Mumbo-jumbo?

BEN

That's what I called it. Deep bayou stuff he called religion. It didn't know what to make of it. When I got older, it looked so primitive. It was embarrassing.

GRACE

Where's he now?

BEN

No idea. He left when I was fourteen. I haven't seen him since.

GRACE

And your brother said he was taking you to him?

BEN

Yep.

INT. HALLWAY - ST. BENEDICT PREP - MORNING

Cole hurriedly retrieves a book out of his locker. The SOUND of boys BARKING like dogs causes his head to sag.

LUKE (O.C.)

(calling)

Where is it, boys!

Cole closes his locker door slowly before turning to see Luke holding onto Huey and Beau by their backpacks like leashes while the two goons act like "tracking dogs," sniffing the air in an exaggerated manner and clamoring to get at their "prey."

LUKE

I told you something was still
stinking up our fine academy.

A hushed whisper sweeps through the crowded hallway like a
wildfire.

LUKE

It's gotta be around here
somewhere. Go get'em!

Luke releases their backpacks. Huey and Beau rush up to Cole
and begin BARKING loudly, like they've treed a raccoon.

LUKE

Well, well. It looks like we get
to have that little bath after
all.

INT. BATHROOM - ST. BENEDICT PREP - DAY

An eighth grade BOY stands at the sink, washing his hands.

EIGHTH GRADER 1

(calling)

You're taking too long. I'll see
you in class.

INSIDE ONE OF THE STALLS

A second Eighth Grader sits on the toilet, meticulously
wrapping his hand with TOILET PAPER.

EIGHTH GRADER 2

Hold up. I'm almost done.

AT THE SINK

Eight Grader 1 pulls PAPER TOWELS out of a dispenser when the
bathroom door bursts open. He flattens himself against the
sink trying to be invisible as Huey and Beau carry/drag Cole
into the room. Luke enters and immediately locks eyes on the
paralyzed Eighth Grader.

LUKE

You didn't see this.

The boy nods.

LUKE

Git!

He blasts out of the room.

LUKE

Now, where were we? Oh yeah.

Luke kicks open a stall door and is surprised to find Eighth Grader 2 staring back at him. A thick, toothy smile spreads across Luke's face.

LUKE

Don't flush.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ben double-parks the Bonneville in front of a row of converted loft buildings. Ben and Grace exit the car and head to the front steps of the building.

EXT. LOFT COMPLEX - CONVENTION CENTER DISTRICT - DAY

Grace's finger traces the BUILDING DIRECTORY and presses the BUTTON labeled: **manager**.

MANAGER (O.S.)

(over intercom)

Yeah.

BEN

(into intercom)

Police. Open up.

MANAGER (O.S.)

(over intercom)

Fuck off.

Ben presses the button repeated, playing a one-note, rhythmic song until finally he stops to listen.

MANAGER (O.S.)
(over intercom)
All right, ass-bite. Now hear
this...

The SOUND of a SHOTGUN being pumped comes loud and clear over
the intercom.

MANAGER
My Mossberg 500's got a hard on
and is ready to come in your ass
if you ain't gone by the time I
get down there.

INT. LOFT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

The Manager fumbles with a massive KEY RING as he leads Ben
and Grace down a dark hallway.

MANAGER
Like I said. Some punks been
trying to break into the building
lately. I ain't seen Jessie in a
while. She in some kind of
trouble?

BEN
Not any more.

They arrive at the end of the hallway.

MANAGER
This is it.

Grace knocks.

GRACE
(calling)
Police!

The door swings openly, revealing a thoroughly trashed main
room

MANAGER
Sonovabitch.

Ben and Grace draw their gun.

BEN
(to Manager)
Stay here.

The two detectives cautiously enter the apartment.

INT. LOFT APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ben opens a bathroom door and comes face to face with his mirrored reflection. He checks the shower. It's empty.

BEN
(calling)
All right. It's clear.

The Manager enters the trashed room.

MANAGER
Now who the hell's gonna do this?

BEN
Somebody looking for something.

GRACE
Looks like they didn't find it.

BEN
(to Manager)
Notice any new people coming by more.

MANAGER
Jessie pretty much kept to herself.

BEN
Any idea where she worked?

MANAGER
Sure. She danced over at the Majestic.

The information hits Ben like a slap in the face.

GRACE (O.S.)
Hey. Come check this out.

INT. BATHROOM - APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ben enters the bathroom and finds Grace staring at the mirror.

GRACE

It's the same.

BEN

But not finished.

GRACE

What do you think it means?

BEN

I don't know. Maybe.

Ben looks around and sees DISPOSABLE RAZOR in the bathtub and picks it up. Ben uses the razor to draw a thin line down the tip of his index finger. BLOOD rushes in to fill the void.

GRACE

What are you doing?

BEN

I'm not sure.

Ben raises his bloody finger to the mirror and finishes the symbol, the MIRROR begins to rattle. OTHERWORLDLY VOICES fill the room.

GRACE

What's happening?

SMOKE VIPER 1 explodes from out of the mirror with a terrifying wail, rushing straight at Grace, wrapping her in a coil.

GRACE

What is it?!

The Smoke Viper begins to drag him into the mirror.

GRACE

I can't get it off me!

SMOKE VIPERS 2 emerges from the mirror, grabbing onto Ben, who struggles against the viper's pull as he watches in horror as Grace, eyes wild with fear, is PULLED INTO THE MIRROR, her terrified scream consumed by the mirror's silver abyss.

Ben gets an arm free. He pulls out his gun and fights to aim for the mirror. He sees Grace's horrified face as her lower half disappears into the mirror. Ben FIRES at the mirror, which explodes in a shower of glass, sending Grace's upper torso crashing to the ground.

Smoke Viper 2 instantly disintegrates, releasing its grip around Ben. With a desperate GASP, Ben pulls life-giving air back into chest.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHACK - AFTERNOON

Cole walks up to the shack, his uniform wet and soiled.

INT. SHACK - CONTINUOUS

Cole enters the shack and looks around. He moves to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - SHACK - CONTINUOUS

Cole enters the bathroom and approaches the mirror. He stares at the remnants of Raven's symbol a moment before bending down to retrieve a MIRROR SHARD.

Cole moves the jagged shard to this open PALM and slowly drags it across the exposed pink flesh, leaving a pink ribbon of BLOOD in its wake.

Next, Cole presses his palm against the MIRROR, leaving a bloody imprint. With a finger, he begins redrawing Raven's symbol.

Again the MIRROR begins to roil. Garbled voices emerge. The room is engulfed in white light.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Ben sits on the bathroom floor as uniform legs move around him. The room is now an official crime scene. The CORONER ASSISTANT makes notes of the manager's torso. Shiny black shoes walk up to Ben, who looks up into Davis's face.

DAVIS

Got here as soon as I heard.
Let's go outside. You're not
doing any good here.

He offers a hand. After a beat, Ben takes it and rises to his feet.

EXT. APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Davis offers a cigarette. Ben takes it and lights up.

DAVIS

My Gawd, Ben! What the hell
happened in there?

BEN

I don't know.

DAVIS

One of my officers has been cut in
half. "I don't know" isn't the
answer I'm looking for.

BEN

Black magic.

Davis frowns.

DAVIS

Horseshit! You think I'm going to
tell the public that their town is
being overrun with boogeymen?

BEN

If that's what's happening, they
should know.

Ben shoots Davis a look.

EXT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

Ben walks up to the steps leading to the building's main entrance. A gaggle of JOURNALISTS gathered in front of a PODIUM set up at the top of the steps where Captain Davis stands with Greg Talbot and several uniformed officers. Davis steps up to the microphone.

DAVIS

(into microphone)

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming. Early this week, a body was discovered inside local hotel. At this point we know the first victim was female...

A loud murmur rises up from the crowd.

DAVIS

(into microphone)

...the first victim was female, approximately 26 years of age. Yesterday, a second body was discovered in another hotel.

JOURNALIST

Do you think this is some kind of terrorist action targeting Mardi Gras?

DAVIS

There is no evidence to support a possible terrorist plot.

JOURNALIST 2

What about the hotels? Is there a killer in our city targeting hotels?

DAVIS

We have strong reason to believe the victims were connected to the sex trade. Sadly, today, a police officer investigating the murders was accidentally killed in a freak accident.

Greg Talbot steps up to the microphone.

GREG TALBOT

The mayor wants everyone to know that he has placed this investigation as highest priority. Security will be increased throughout the city, concentrating on hotels.

JOURNALISTS jostle to be chosen for a question.

GREG TALBOT

There is absolutely no reason to believe the public is in any danger, but because we are entering one of our city's most popular events of the year, the mayor intends to do everything in his power to maintain public safety. Thank you.

Ben stands to the side looking grim as Greg Talbot and Davis are escorted back into the building.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - MONDIALE HOTEL - AFTERNOON

Ben walks up to the front desk. An officious looking clerk looks up from his screen.

DESK CLERK

May I help you?

BEN

Winston Bonham.

DESK CLERK

Is he expecting you?

BEN

Tell him it's a police matter.

DESK CLERK

Yes, of course.

The Desk Clerk picks up a phone and dials.

DESK CLERK

(into phone)

I have a police officer at the
front desk to see Mr. Bonham.
Very good.

The Desk Clerk hangs up the phone.

DESK CLERK

He will be out directly.

The Desk Clerk resumes reviewing his computer screen.

BEN

Thanks.

Ben steps away from the front desk and looks around the lobby.
A moment later. Bonham emerges from a hallway behind the
front desk.

BONHAM

Good to see you again, Detective.
Thank you so much for helping us
get back to preparing our hotel.

BEN

You have a lot of friends, Mr.
Bonham.

BONHAM

It's good to have that unfortunate
event behind us.

BEN

You make the girl's murder sound
like an inconvenience.

Bonham shrugs.

BONHAM

Unpleasant no matter the label,
n'est-ce pas? So, what can I do
for you, Detective?

BEN

You've been slow providing a list of occupants for 907. I was wondering what the hold up was.

BONHAM

Not slow, detective, thorough. As a licensed hotel, we have many privacy issues to consider before releasing sensitive records. I'm sure your captain understands. I suspect we will have what you need very soon.

BEN

Soon like today?

BONHAM

Soon, detective.

BEN

While I'm here, I wanted to walk through 907 again, unless you've booked it already.

BONHAM

I'm afraid your humor is wasted on me, detective.

BEN

I didn't think I was joking.

BONHAM

I'll have Andre make you a key right away.

BEN

Thank you. You've been extraordinarily helpful.

Bonham smiles. He walks back to the front desk and whispers something to the Desk Clerk who looks up at Ben and nods.

INT. HALLWAY - MONDIALE HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Ben exits the elevator and heads down the hallway. He passes by a HOUSEKEEPER emerging from a neighboring room carrying DIRTY TOWELS that she tosses into a HAMPER in the middle of her CART.

Ben arrives at room 907. The door still has POLICE TAPE across it. Ben uses his KEY to disengage the lock and enter.

INT. SUITE 907 - CONTINUOUS

Ben enters the room. Nothing has changed. He walks slowly across the room towards the bathroom.

IN THE BATHROOM

A TINY SLIVER of MIRROR still on the wall begins to VIBRATE as a FOG begins to emerge, condensing on the floor into a DARK MASS OF SMOKE.

Ben enters the bathroom and is immediately ambushed by a GARISH FIGURE, face covered with garish, tattoo-like symbols and piercings that add a voodoo-like appearance.

Ben tries to pull his gun, but VOODOO-FACE is faster, grabbing Ben up and slamming him into the wall.

Ben tries to fight back, but he is clearly no match for the intruder who quickly pins Ben to the white tile floor

BEN'S POV

From the floor, Ben watches small SHARDS OF MIRROR melt, forming into liquid balls like mercury that begins pooling together to form a small WHIRLPOOL. The Whirlpool grows quickly and begins to pull Ben into it.

The Housekeeper enters the room. She pulls out a SILVER STAFF and raises it as she speaks in an ancient, otherworldly tongue.

NYX

Vibium loso!

A LIGHTNING BOLT tears from the tip, striking Voodoo Face dead center.

The single blast reduces him into a dark SMOKE that malingers then fades away with the Whirlpool, returning the room to normal.

The Housekeeper approaches Ben and quickly places a PENDANT around his neck. She grabs him by the arm.

HOUSEKEEPER

We have to get out of here now!

She pulls him towards the door.

INT. ELEVATOR - MONDIALE HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Ben and the Housekeeper ride down to the basement. The doors open, and the Housekeeper leads Ben into the parking garage.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - MONDIALE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

The Housekeeper struggles to carry Ben down a row of automobiles.

HOUSEKEEPER

(calling out)

Dammit, Ollie! Where are you?

BEAMS from a vehicle headlights bounce across the parking garage and settle on the two as a beat-up and filthy 70's CADILLAC HEARSE comes to a screeching halt directly in front of them.

OLLIE, a homeless man so dirty his odor is practically visible jumps from the car and approaches.

OLLIE

Sorry, Nyx. Best I could get quickly.

NYX

I got him.

OLLIE

I see that.

NYX

We've gotta get him to the Abbey.

OLLIE

You know the rules. We can't
bring him like this...

NYX

We don't have a choice. You know
what happens to Harry if we don't.

OLLIE

Simon's not going to like it.

NYX

Simon's not in charge. Not yet,
anyway.

OLLIE

All right. Let's go.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

The Hearse emerges in front of the Mondiale Hotel's rear
entrance and heads down the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAND OLD MANSION - EVENING

Stately dressed VALETS attend the line of LUXURY CARS
depositing elegantly dressed, masked GUESTS to the front of a
large southern mansion that recalls antebellum grandeur.

Huey and Beau arrive in a new BMW and proceed to the entrance.

INT. FOYER - GRAND OLD HOME - EVENING

Huey and Beau wait in line of guests handing their ENGRAVED
INVITATIONS to the formally dressed BUTLERS.

Huey hands his Invitation to a butler while Beau grabs two
FLUTES of CHAMPAGNE from one the HOSTESSES off a SILVER TRAY.

Luke enters the foyer and moves to intercept his friends.

LUKE

Put that back.

(whispers)

The good stuff's downstairs.

Luke leads them out of the room.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - GRAND OLD HOME - EVENING

Luke leads Huey and Beau into a large family game room with PINBALL MACHINES, FOOZEBALL and PING PONG TABLES. Three GIRLS (16) talk amongst themselves in front of a large, FLAT SCREEN TELEVISION mounted on the wall.

Luke quickly maneuvers around to the back of a large, old BAR.

LUKE

Now. What are you having?

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - EVENING

The Hearse cruises down a rundown street, passing many boarded up storefronts and turns into an alley just beyond a large lit sign that reads ETERNAL WATCH MORTUARY.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

The alley dead-ends at a barb wire-topped fence. An automatic gate opens, allowing the hearse to proceed into a parking lot behind the Mortuary.

The Cadillac parks at the Mortuary's loading dock. A ROLLING GARAGE DOOR opens, and LUZ (30's), a Latina powder keg, leads a group of ORDERLIES out to meet the arrivals.

OLLIE

Look alive, peeps. We've got a live one here.

The Orderlies load Ben onto a gurney and roll it into the building.

LUZ
You know better.

OLLIE
Don't look at me.

NYX
Luz. I need one pulled and
collared.

LUZ
He has to be prepped.

NYX
There isn't time.

LUZ
We could damage it.

Ben's body starts to convulse.

NYX
We're going to lose him either
way.

LUZ
All right, all right. Here
goes...

INT. LAB - MORTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Ben lies unconscious on a stainless steel EMBALMING TABLE. Around him are rows of CAGES and strange-looking INSTRUMENTS that give the large sterile-looking room the appearance of a laboratory.

Luz pulls a DEMON out of Ben.

LUZ
Quick! Hand me a collar!

Ollie hands Luz a collaring device while the strange-looking creature shrieks and rails against Luz's grip. Luz quickly fasten the collar around the creature's neck.

Ollie sets a small metal CAGE on a CART next to the embalming table and opens the top.

LUZ

On three. One... two... three.

On three, Luz transfers the creature into a small cage that the Orderly immediately slams shut.

LUZ

We're good to go.

NYX

How's the Ag?

LUZ

Still breathing.

A sudden shift of weight inside the cage causes it to tumble to the floor it.

LUZ

C'mon! Watch it, all right!

OLLIE

Who gives a shit?

LUZ

You don't have to log'em.

Orderlies step in to pick up the Cage and place it with the others.

NYX

I need to talk with the Ag as soon as he regains consciousness.

LUZ

Haven't you done enough damage?

SIMON (O.S.)

Nyx!

Nyx turns to face SIMON BONFANTE(50's).

SIMON

What's going on?

NYX

We brought in Harry's son.

SIMON
On whose authority?

NYX
Standard procedure.

SIMON
Clearly he's infected.

NYX
Was infected.

SIMON
You were there to watch over him
not to expose the entire Order.

NYX
Yes but right now that Aggie is
the last clue we have.

SIMON
That doesn't explain breaking
protocol.

NYX
There wasn't time. I assessed the
situation and made the call.

SIMON
Precisely what you should not have
done.

NYX
But he's Harry's son.

SIMON
All the more reason to leave him
to his own course. Harry would
have said you followed procedure.

NYX
He's our only chance of stopping
Mortis.

SIMON
Contrary to your attitude, you are
not in charge here.

NYX

Neither are you unless Harry
doesn't return.

SIMON

He could expose us all. Have you
even considered that?

NYX

You know what Mortis is capable
of.

SIMON

Perhaps you are trying too hard to
win.

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM - GRAND OLD MANSION - NIGHT

Greg Talbot move with the proud, peacock gate through the
crowd of well-wishing guests. He finds a BUTLER at the side
of the room and whispers something to him.

INT. HALLWAY - GRAND OLD MANSION - NIGHT

The Butler walks with purpose down to a closed door at the end
of the hall and opens it.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - GRAND OLD MANSION - NIGHT

Luke is making out on the couch with DELPHENE, while Beau and
Huey play doubles BEER PONG with the other two girls.

BUTLER enters, causing Delphene to jump.

LUKE

Dammit, Harlson! You know better.

BUTLER

Forgive me, sir. Your father
expects you in the ballroom.

LUKE

Tell him I'll be right there.

BUTLER

Very good, sir.

The Butler withdraws.

LUKE

Shit. Time for dad's speech. Go on up. I gotta take a leak first.

The teens exit. Luke heads to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - GRAND OLD MANSION - NIGHT

Luke enters the bathroom, rushing to the toilet as he undoes his fly. Once he releases himself, a look of serenity washes across his face.

Luke finishes, zips up and moves to the sink. Something catches his eye in the mirror. He sees Cole standing behind him.

LUKE

What the fuck?

Luke spins to find the bathroom empty. The spin combined with the alcohol makes Luke a bit unbalanced. The garbled SOUND of OTHERWORLDLY VOICES returns his attention to the now roiling mirror.

LUKE

Whoa. I need to sit down.

A SMOKE VIPER tears from the mirror and strikes at Luke, leaving a BURNING MARK on his chest.

LUKE

Ow!

Two more Smoke Vipers emerge from the mirror and strike, each hit leaving another BRANDED SYMBOL on Luke's skin. The teen howls in pain.

INT. BALLROOM - GRAND OLD MANSION - NIGHT

Greg Talbot looks anxious, standing with his wife ANNA and their 9-year-old daughter AMANDA.

GREG TALBOT
Gawdammit. Where is he?

Anna sees Huey, Beau and the girls enter the ballroom.

ANNA
Look. Here they come.

Greg looks expectantly for Luke to enter but he doesn't.

GREG TALBOT
That's it.

ANNA
I'll send Harlson.

GREG TALBOT
No. I'll get him myself.

Greg storms out of the room.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - GRAND OLD MANSION - NIGHT

Greg enters the family room.

GREG TALBOT
(calling)
Luke.

Seeing that the room is empty, he looks around and notices the bathroom door is closed. He moves to it and KNOCKS loudly.

GREG TALBOT
(calling)
Gawddammit, Luke. The mayor's waiting.

No response.

GREG TALBOT
If I have to...

He thrusts open the door.

CUT TO:

INT. VIEWING ROOM - MORTUARY - NIGHT

Lying on a plain wooden cot in what would be considered a viewing room, Ben struggles against the STRAPS on his wrists and legs that hold him in place.

He stops with a SOUND at the door gets his attention. Ollie enters pushing a WHEELCHAIR.

OLLIE

How's are you doing in here?

BEN

I'd be better if you tell me where I am and what I'm doing here.

OLLIE

All in good time.

Ollie leans his STAFF against the wall then removes Ben's straps. Ben eyes the staff.

OLLIE

(without looking around)

You can walk out of here any time.

Ben stops. Ollie rises.

BEN

I don't need that thing.

OLLIE

It's a service we provide. My friends call me Ollie. Now, all aboard for the magical mystery tour. Step right this way.

BEN

Where are you taking me?

OLLIE

Please save all questions for the end of the ride.

Ben moves slowly to the chair and sits. For the first time, the PENDANT placed around Ben's neck can be seen clearly: a wooden, hand-carved SYMBOL suspended from simple LEATHER STRAP.

OLLIE

Keep your arms and legs inside the vehicle at all times until we come to a complete stop. Thank you.

Ollie sings as she wheels Ben out of the room.

OLLIE

(singing)

"Roll up... Roll up for the mystery tour. Roll up..."

INT. LAB - CONTINUOUS

Ollie wheels Ben into a large sterile room. Rows of CAGES gives the appearance that animal testing goes on here.

OLLIE

You probably don't remember this little room, but here's where Luz saved your life.

Standing at a lab table, Luz looks up from her work to acknowledge the new arrivals.

OLLIE

As you see, our resident exorcist is a tough hombre who cares more about her critters than her fellow agents.

Nyx arrives, carrying several large, heavy BOOKS.

NYX

I've got something.

OLLIE

Let's see it.

NYX

Whoever did this knew what they were doing?

This is what you pulled this off the demon. See here. It's from a scroll that was destroyed by the Order four centuries ago.

OLLIE

Destroyed? I thought everything was archived.

LUZ

A scroll can be destroyed if it holds knowledge believed to be extremely dangerous.

OLLIE

Any idea how a scroll destroyed 400 years ago happens to pop up now?

NYX

Million-dollar question.

LUZ

It could have been copied.

NYX

Or never destroyed in the first place. Part two of the strange. The original destruction order is missing -- wait, here's something. If someone knew what they're doing, they could open the Acherusian Gate.

LUZ

He would need the energy of a thousand souls for that.

OLLIE

If this scroll is so dangerous, why not just leave it buried?

NYX

Don't you see? Mortis knows it exists. He won't stop until he recovers it.

BEN

What's in those cages?

NYX

Let's have a look?

Nyx starts to wheel Ben towards to a wall of CAGES, which begin to shake violently as they approach.

LUZ

Back off, Nyx.

NYX

If this is going to work, he has to see.

Nyx wheels Ben over to the cage. Ben stares inside, locking eyes with a tiny, muscular CREATURE covered in strange, tattoo-like SYMBOLS.

The creature explodes with a primal fury that topples an entire row of cages. Ace rushes over to help pull Ben away from the cascading cages.

LUZ

I told you to back off.

Luz rushes over to help.

LUZ

Get him out of here! Get him out!
Now!

Nyx rolls Ben out of the lab and back into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - MORTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Nyx wheels Ben back into the hall, the SHRIEKS of demons fading behind them.

NYX

That was messy, but it'll make what I have to tell a little easier to understand.

BEN

What are those things? Where am I? Who are you people?

NYX

Harry said you were stubborn.

BEN

Harry -- my father?

NYX

Recognize this man.

Nyx holds out a photograph of Winston Bonham.

BEN

Bonham.

NYX

He's a sorcerer known for using some very dark magic. We believe he conjured a demon called Mortis.

BEN

What's another demon on the loose?

NYX

Mortis only has one agenda. His singular purpose in existence is opening the gates of hell. It looks like he needs this scroll to pull it off.

BEN

What's any of this have to do with me?

NYX

Let's go in here.

INT. ROOM - MORTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Grace wheels Ben up to a single COT on which HARRY BANE (60's) lies dormant.

BEN

He's dead?

NYX

Dormant. Your father is the leader of our Order. He was projecting to reach you but something went wrong.

BEN

Projecting.

NYX

You've probably started projecting already, right? Ever experience a dreamlike state that felt very real?

BEN

I guess.

NYX

I won't bog you down with technical mumbo-jumbo, but it is possible to separate your physical body from your awareness. Some people call it ghosting. We call it projection. It's awkward at first but you get used to it pretty quick. The hard part is your controlling your mind because it will pull you to places you don't want to go. Now, focus. When you have a clear image in your mind's eye, remove the chain.

Ben removes his pendant and...

The room recedes in a rush.

SWOOSH CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - BEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ben and Nyx materialize in the dining room. Cole and Matty sit with Mrs. Thornton.

MRS. THORNTON
Matty Bane, you're not leaving the
table until you finish your
broccoli.

MATTY
When's daddy coming home?

MRS. THORNTON
I don't know, sweetheart. I tried
his number but he didn't answer.

The DOORBELL SOUNDS.

MRS. THORNTON
Jeezus. What now?

Matty jumps up excited.

MATTY
I'll get it!

He dashes to answer the door. Clearly oblivious to his father
standing in the doorway, the little boy runs right through
him.

BEN
Matty...

MRS. THORNTON
(calling)
Matty...

Mrs. Thornton trots after Matty, walking right through Ben as
well. Ben follows them to the door. Nyx trails.

INT. ENTRY - BEN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Matty rushes up to the front door.

MATTY
(calling)
Who is it?

MRS. THORNTON
Matty, wait!

BEN

I feel like a ghost.

Matty opens the door to find two UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS police officers standing on the porch.

NYX

You're not a ghost, but they are.

MRS. THORNTON

Can I help you?

OFFICER WINSLOW

I'm Officer Winslow, ma'am. This is Officer Sanders. May we come in?

MRS. THORNTON

Uh... sure.

The Officers enter the home. Sanders looks around the place suspiciously.

BEN

What are they doing here?

NYX

They're after the scroll.

MRS. THORNTON

Is everything okay? I mean... is Detective Grimes all right?

WINSLOW

That's what we're here to find out. When was the last time you saw Detective Grimes?

MATTY

Is daddy all right?

MRS. THORNTON

Of course he is, sweetheart.

WINSLOW

I didn't mean to upset the boy, ma'am. Everything is all right as far as we know.

We're just trying to locate something and we think Detective Bane knows where it is. Maybe we should wait until he returns.

MRS. THORNTON

It's late. You'll have to come back in the morning.

Sanders flashes a smile that makes it clear he has no intention of leaving.

WINSLOW

I think it would be best if we waited, ma'am.

Cole enters.

COLE

What's going on. Are they here about dad?

MRS. THORNTON

No, honey. They just need something your father has.

NYX

I have a plan.

Nyx walks up to Mrs. Thornton and disappears inside her.

MRS. THORNTON/NYX

Cole, take Matty back to the kitchen.

SANDERS

Just a minute, ma'am...

MRS. THORNTON/NYX

Do it now!

Cole takes his little brother by the arm.

COLE

Come on.

The two kids exit with Matty looking over his shoulder.

MRS. THORNTON/NYX
Vibium loso voce!

WINSLOW
Well, well, look who's here.

SANDERS
I thought I heard something.

MRS. THORNTON/NYX
You're not hard to find. I just
follow the smell.

WINSLOW
Funny.

MRS. THORNTON/NYX
I heard your boss lost something.
He must be pretty angry.

WINSLOW
It's all right. We'll have it
back soon enough.

MRS. THORNTON/NYX
I think it's time for you to
leave, isn't it.

SANDERS
She's alone.

WINSLOW
Forget it. We're good here.

SANDERS
He's with you, isn't he? Nice
family he's got here. Shame what
has to happen to them.

WINSLOW
Oh yeah. We'll tell Harry you
said hello.

WHOOSH CUT TO:

INT. VIEWING ROOM - MORTUARY - NIGHT

The image snaps to clarity back inside Ben's cell.

NYX

(to Ollie)

Get him fed and tucked in for the night. We'll try again tomorrow.

She exits.

OLLIE

Nyx doesn't have much in the social skills department, but she's knows what she's doing.

INT. OFFICE - MORTUARY - NIGHT

Simon works at his desk. A KNOCK at the door interrupts.

SIMON

Come.

Nyx enters.

NYX

They have his son.

SIMON

Then we're too late. The Ag must be sealed.

NYX

We can't.

SIMON

Mortis knows the Ag is the way to the scroll. Sealing him buries it for good.

NYX

And blinds us to Mortis's movement now that he's finally made a mistake.

SIMON

Yes?

NYX

The first victim worked for Ibarra. If she was the mole, Mortis won't be happy. I'm going to see what Ibarra knows before he disappears.

INT. KITCHEN - MORTUARY - NIGHT

Ollie and Ben enter a small kitchen where about a half dozen MEMBERS of the Order sit at a table eating in silence.

OLLIE

Projecting works up an appetite, am I right? And the chow's not terrible, either -- for institutional food.

Ollie leads Ben to an empty table. They sit. Ollie picks up a CARAFE on the table and pour its dark amber contents into TWO GLASSES, offering one to Ben.

OLLIE

Go ahead. We make it ourselves. It'll help you relax.

Ben takes the glass. Ollie raises his own.

OLLIE

Cheers.

Ollie drinks. Ben does the same.

OLLIE

It takes some getting used to. When we started, we'd rush back to our physical bodies all the time, but after a while flesh and bone was pretty limiting. We go where we want, moving from body to body whenever we need.

A SERVER comes over and sets two stone BOWLS in front of them and leaves.

SERVER

Here you go, Aggie.

BEN

What's that everyone keeps calling me?

OLLIE

Aggie? Agnostic. Non-believer. The thing is, boyo, some of us've got no idea how long we've been living in projection not that chronological time means sheit. Now drink up. Nyx has big plans for you, I think.

Nyx enters.

OLLIE

What's up?

NYX

We're going out.

CUT TO:

INT. HEARSE - NIGHT/EXT. TREME DISTRICT - NIGHT

The hearse drives through a section of urban blight.

BEN

Who is Lenny Ibarra.

OLLIE

How 'bout the biggest purveyor of all things demented, disgusting and disturbing on three continents.

NYX

The seven deadly sins would be his ten commandments.

OLLIE

If the fat bastard only knew how to count.

EXT. IBARRA IMPORTS - NIGHT

Ollie brings the Hearse to a stop across the street from a squat brick building in the wholesale section of Brooklyn. A sign over the door reads IBARRA IMPORTS - OBJETS D'OCCULT.

Nyx leads Ben and Ollie cautiously towards the She sees TWO GOONS serving as lookouts on the porch. As they approach the building, Nyx points out a BLACK TOWN CAR parked in an alley along the side of the building, engine idling.

OLLIE

I'm all over it.

Ollie breaks off towards the car. Nyx and Ben continue towards the office. She turns to Ben.

NYX

Wait here.

Ollie moves into position along the car's blind spot. The DRIVER sits oblivious behind the wheel, eating an OYSTER PO'BOY over a grease-stained PAPER BAG in his lap.

Nyx signals Ollie before carefully moving onto the porch and easily dispatches GOON #1. The dull THUD of his collapsing compatriot attracts Goon #2.

GOON 2

Hey!

Goon #2 isn't as easy. Nyx has a tough time until Ben arrives to take him out.

The Po'Boy-eating Driver, catching sight of the action, pulls a HAND GUN from a chest holster and struggles to quickly exit the car. Ollie slams the car door back onto his arm. The Driver yelps in pain as the GUN clatters to the ground.

OLLIE

Sorry about that.

INT. IBARRA IMPORTS - NIGHT

LENNY IBARRA, a portly man in a white suit, round owl-like glasses and the temperament of a ferret on Red Bull, hastily throws items from a concealed safe into an open BRIEFCASE.

The SOUND of the door opening causes him to jump and nearly spill its contents.

IBARRA

I thought I told you idiots not to bother me...

Ibarra spins around to face Nyx, Ben and Ollie standing in his office. His expression shifts quickly from fear to annoyance.

NYX

Lenny! You don't look so happy to see us.

IBARRA

Whaddaya mean barging in here? You got nothing on me.

(calling)

Where's my fuckin' security?

OLLIE

They're indisposed.

NYX

You seem jumpy, Lenny.

OLLIE

Like maybe you need your blood pressure checked.

IBARRA

Maybe you should go to hell.

OLLIE

Aw, Lenny. That hurts.

NYX

That your car outside?

IBARRA

What if it is?

NYX

And it looks like you're cleaning out in here.

OLLIE
Ain't even spring.

NYX
Makes me wonder what spooks a
slimeball like you, Ibarra.

OLLIE
Must've pissed somebody off.

IBARRA
Get outta here. I got a business
to run.

NYX
The sooner we get what we came
for, the sooner you get back to
doing what you were doing.

IBARRA
What do you want?

NYX
Who's been snatching souls?

IBARRA
Get the fuck out of here.

Ben bars the door.

IBARRA
Hey. Who's this asshole?

NYX
Harry's son.

IBARRA
No shit? You don't scare me.

BEN
Maybe not, but something does, and
we've got nothing but time.

LENNY
You got no idea what you're
messing with.

BEN

You could tell us?

IBARRA

This guy ain't no ordinary player.

NYX

Don't be dumb, Lenny. We can make a deal.

BEN

Looks like you're already in hot water, Lenny. Why not cut your losses and tell us.

IBARRA

Then you're out of here, right?

NYX

Promise.

IBARRA

I'm safer a million miles away from you.

NYX

Let's have it.

IBARRA

This guy comes outta nowhere, see, and wants to bring something in through my container outta Europe. He's got cash -- lot's of it -- and I got space.

OLLIE

You are the 1%, Lenny.

NYX

This guy got a name?

IBARRA

I dunno.

NYX

Where from?

IBARRA

I'm telling ya -- from outta
fucking nowhere.

NYX

Nowhere's a pretty big place.

BEN

What about the shipment?

IBARRA

Comes in tonight over at Port New
Orleans. But that's all I got,
okay?

NYX

What about a ship name? A
container number?

IBARRA

Aw, fuck it.

Ibarra goes to his LEDGER, rips out a sheet and hands it to
Nyx.

IBARRA

Here. Take it and get out.

NYX

Good boy.

IBARRA

I've seen a lot in my time, but
this guy... He even gives me the
creeps. Now close my fucking door
on your way out.

NYX

All right. C'mon.

Nyx opens the door, and Goon 1 stumbles into the room covered
in blood and crashes on the floor dead.

IBARRA

Jeezus!

Nyx and Ollie react to SMOKE VIPERS that enter the room,
moving like cobras on the hunt.

NYX
(to Ben)
Stay back.

IBARRA
Get away from me!

One of the BLACK SMOKE SNAKES entwines his body.

IBARRA
Get it off of me! Get it off!

The SMOKE VIPER enters Ibarra mouth.

IBARRA
Ayyyyyyyyeeeeee!!!!

Ibarra collapses to the ground, his body writhing and heaving as his insides are sucked completely out, leaving only a shriveled shell of a corpse on the floor.

The second SMOKE VIPER wraps around Ben and pulls him out the door. Nyx rushes after him. Ollie follows.

EXT. LOADING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Nyx and Ollie exits onto the porch where they find Goon 2 is also sucked dry.

NYX
Over there.

Nyx points out a SEDAN backing away from the building.

OLLIE
C'mon. We have to stop him.

They move to the sedan.

Sanders sits behind the wheel.

Nyx and Ollie raise their STAVES.

BOOM!

LIGHTNING BOLTS tear from the staves, blasting the fleeing sedan, raining BROKEN GLASS down over Ben and Sanders.

SANDERS exits the car, firing at Ollie and Nyx.

IN THE FRONT SEAT

Ben's EYES the KEY CHAIN dangling from the ignition and gives it a twist. The engine chugs to life. Jamming the SHIFTER into drive, Ben punches down on the ACCELERATOR, raising himself just enough to peek out the spiderweb-cracked WINDSHIELD.

Sanders stands defiantly in the middle of the road, firing off a few more shots. The SOUND of OTHERWORLDLY VOICES fill the car as the REARVIEW MIRROR begins to ROIL like an angry sea. A SMOKE VIPER shoots out of the mirror and wraps around Ben. He CRANKS the STEERING WHEEL hard.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Sedan careens across the street, wildly out of control, fishtailing and careening off parked cars like a pinball off bumpers.

Sanders stand defiantly in the middle of the road, firing at the wildly approaching Sedan.

BAM!

The Sedan's front windshield explodes, exposing Ben now almost completely engulfed by the Smoke Viper.

INT. SEDAN/EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ben uses his knee to steer directly at Sanders. On IMPACT, the Smoke VIPER vanishes. The Sedan crashes into a light pole, bringing the action to a dead stop.

CUT TO:

INT. HEARSE/EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Ollie drives. Nyx rides shotgun. Ben sits in the back.

NYX

Harry always felt guilty about leaving you.

I think he wanted to keep you as far away from this life as he could. He didn't realize that it was impossible.

BEN

What about you? What's your story?

NYX

I started projecting when I was six, thought they were nightmares until the time I dreamed my father was killed a half-hour before my mom got the news. By the time I was eleven, I was self-medicating to block out as much as I could. I was pretty far-gone the night I met Harry. One look at me, and knew straight away my problem. He taught me to control my projections. Still, it was a long time before he finally told me about the Order. He said if I wanted to join, I would have to choose one world or the other. I never saw it as a choice at all.

OLLIE

We're never going to make it holding onto these bodies.

NYX

Do we have a choice.

They pass a HIGHWAY SIGN that reads: Gas, Lodging, Next Exit.

BEN

I have an idea.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Nyx and Ben lay on a Queen-sized bed. Ollie lies on the floor.

OLLIE

You couldn't get two Queens.

BEN

It's all they had.

NYX

If something goes wrong, if you get caught, the dark side can access your physical body and find their way to the Abbey. The entire Order would be in jeopardy.

BEN

What happens then?

OLLIE

Your body'll be burned in the incinerator, which would leave your spirit subject to whatever pain they can muster for eternity.

NYX

You still up for this?

BEN

Let's go.

EXT. PORT OF NEW ORLEANS - MORNING

Nyx, Ollie and Ben stand atop the bridge's main tower, looking down onto one of the south's biggest shipping hub.

Massive CRANES hoist CONTAINERS off of CARGO SHIPS from around the world, setting them onto BIG RIG TRUCKS constantly rolling in and out of the area.

NYX

How ya doing, Ag?

BEN

Still here.

OLLIE

How're we gonna to do this?

BEN
The harbormaster's log should have
what we need. C'mon.

WHOOSH CUT TO:

EXT. VIEWING DECK - CONTINUOUS

Ben and company stand on the viewing deck and scan the area.

NYX
Sure you're up to it?

BEN
Let's go.

NYX
(to Ben)
Find the container. We'll meet
you there.

Nyx flies off following Ollie. Ben walks through the wall to enter the Harbormaster's station.

INT. HARBOR-MASTER'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Large floor-to-ceiling windows look out on all the port activity. Behind a counter, a half-dozen station masters work coordinating the arrivals and departures of ships from around the world.

Ben moves to the log and thumbs through it.

BEN
The Caldonia. Got it. Berth
312C. 312C. It's unloading now.

EXT. PORT - CONTINUOUS

A ROLLER COASTER of a cat-and-mouse game as the fleeing figure leads Nyx and Ollie all over the active port, in and out of containers and ultimately to the hull of a ship

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ben looks over Ibarra's ledger sheet and realizes something's not right.

BEN

It's a trap.

Ben takes a breath and then leaps/lurches forward awkwardly, part running, part flying.

EXT. PORT - CONTINUOUS

Ben's clumsy pursuit continues with the trail getting clearer as he proceeds. Ben lands on top of a container directly across from the Figure and watches him leap into a BLUE CONTAINER hoist up on a crane heading to the cargo hold of a ship.

BEN

Got'cha now.

Nyx calls out.

NYX

Wait!!!!

Too late. Ben leaps into the blue container after the figure.

NYX

Shit.

OLLIE

I got him.

Ollie leaps in after Ben.

INT. CONTAINER - CONTINUOUS

Ben lands inside the container and sees that the container walls are completely covered with mirrors on all sides.

OLLIE

Ayyy...

Ollie is being pulled by two Smoke Viper snakes into one of the mirrors.

Another Smoke Viper shoots out from one mirror and wraps around Ben's leg. Another one emerges from another and drags him off his feet.

From his prostrate position, he watches in horror as Ollie is pulled screaming into one of the mirrors.

EXT. PORT - CONTINUOUS

Nyx watches the Dark Figure jump down from the blue container.

NYX

Shit.

She looks around and sees the CRANE OPERATOR working inside the cab.

INT. CRANE CAB - CONTINUOUS

The HOIST OPERATOR steers his container to the hold of a large CARGO SHIP.

INT. CONTAINER - CONTINUOUS

Two more Smoke Vipers shoot out from the other mirrors and wrap around Ben's arms and begin pulling him in four directions, like he's being quartered.

Ben screams in agony. Images appear in the mirrors.

The Dark Figure appears.

DARK FIGURE

Harry Grimes is a fool. He thought he could stop me, but look where I am.

The Dark Figure holds up a glowing ORB.

DARK FIGURE

This will unlock the scroll. I will have everything I need when you tell me where it is.

BEN

I don't know.

DARK FIGURE

Of course not. Harry would've been a fool to trust you. But he had to tell someone. Your son, perhaps?

INT. CRANE CAB - CONTINUOUS

Nyx enters into the Operator but quickly finds that she doesn't know how to operate the crane. She stares at the control panel before slamming her fists down in frustration.

The whole cab is showered in ELECTRICAL SPARKS. The Operator jumps out of the cab quickly as the Blue Container lurches to one side and begins to swing like a pendulum.

Nyx comes out of the Operator, who is suddenly confused by what's going on.

OPERATOR

What the fuck?
(calling)
Look out! A runaway!

The first cable holding the container snaps and then the second. The container falls, crashing down onto the deck of the ship with a thunderous percussive jolt.

INT. CONTAINER - CONTINUOUS

The mirrors explode. Smoke Vipers disintegrate in a shower of glass.

EXT. DECK OF SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Nyx lands on the ship's deck amidst panicked SAILORS scrambling around trying to deal with the accident. Ben emerges from the container, looking drained.

NYX

Ollie?

Ben shakes his head. The realization of Ollie's loss hits her hard.

BEN

He's after Cole.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - MORTUARY - AFTERNOON

Nyx and Ben trail behind Simon as he leads them determinedly down the hallway. Behind them, several MEMBERS of the order follow.

SIMON

Two members lost! The entire Abbey exposed. You deliberately disobeyed my orders.

NYX

I can explain.

SIMON

There's no excuse.

NYX

Well, it's going to be just the beginning if we don't figure out what Harry was trying to tell us.

Simon spins in anger to confront Nyx.

SIMON

Enough! We will discuss this later.

The group continues down the hallway. Other MEMBERS of the Order fall into formation at the rear of the solemn pageant.

Rounding a corner, the group arrives in front of a CELL DOOR that has been sealed. Luz and her ORDERLIES are the last to join up.

Simon moves aside and gives a nod to the CAPTAIN of the guard. The Captain signals, and a GUARD unseals the door. Another signal and the door is cautiously opened, while the other GUARDSMEN assume defensive positions before entering the darkened cell.

INT. OLLIE'S CELL - MORTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Simon, Nyx, and Luz walk up to the bed and look down at the OLD MAN in a silk body sleeve lying peacefully asleep in a wooden shell. Nyx places Ollie's staff into the Old Man's hand.

NYX

Ashi memo si vene memento.

LUZ

Vene memento.

Luz opens a small BLACK LEATHER SATCHEL, revealing several HYPODERMIC NEEDLES. She moves toward the Old Man.

LUZ

Are we sure about this?

SIMON

Nyx?

NYX

Yes.

Nyx turns away. Luz INJECTS the Old Man. Nyx rushes out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - ABBEY - AFTERNOON

Ben looks up to see Nyx emerge from the cell.

SIMON

He knew the risks.

NYX

You know what your problem is?
You've been out of your body too
long to remember how anything
feels.

SIMON

The Ag has corrupted your
thinking.

NYX

How can protect something you
can't get close enough to
understand?

A SINGLE TEAR forms in the corner of her eye. She turns away
to hide it from Ben. Simon exits the cell and sees Ben.

SIMON

Take him back to his cell.

GUARD

Yessir.

The Guards emerge from the cell carrying Ollie's wooden shell.
They place it onto a GURNEY and begin to CHANT as they proceed
down the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. CREMATORY - MORTUARY - CONTINUOUS

TWO GUARDS transport the wooden shell into the crematory.
GUARD 1 adjusts the thermostat, and the temperature gage
starts to rise, rushing quickly past the 1000 DEGREE mark
moving toward the 1700 activation level.

The two guards remove the lid of the RETORT burn chamber and
set the wooden shell inside.

INSIDE THE RETORT

The Old Man's eyes pop open.

The Guards are replacing the lid onto the Retort when a HAND
shoots out and grabs Guard 1 by the wrist.

The LID explodes off the retort, slamming Guard 2 into the incinerator. Guard 1 recovers in time to witness the Old Man rise out of the retort brandishing the STAFF. A LIGHTNING BOLT tears from the staff and slams into one of the Guards.

The Old Man steps out of the retort, HISSING at his fallen enemy.

OLD MAN
Si veni memento!

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - MORTUARY - EVENING

Ben lies on a wooden cot, hands and feet bound. He hears the SOUND of approaching footsteps.

INT. HALLWAY - MORTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Nyx approaches a GUARD stands sentry in front of the door to Ben's cell.

GUARD
No one is allowed contact the Ag.

NYX
By whose order?

GUARD
Brother Simon.

INT. CELL - MORTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Ben listens to Nyx's footsteps retreating down the hallway.

INT. LAB - MORTUARY - NIGHT

All the cages shake and rattle like caged animals sensing impending doom. Luz barks at Orderlies loading cages onto carts and dollies.

LUZ
Keep moving. Get it out of here!

Nyx enters.

NYX

What about the Ag?

LUZ

How can you worry about him now?

NYX

You can't seal him. He's the key
to the scroll.

LUZ

And sealing him buries it forever.

NYX

You know nothing is forever.
It'll only be a matter of time
before Mortis finds it.

LUZ

What do you want?

NYX

I need to get the Ag out of here.

LUZ

You're overlooking the obvious.

NYX

What's that?

LUZ

The scroll was used recently. The
only possibility was Harry.

NYX

No!

LUZ

He had access. You said yourself
the whole thing doesn't add up.
If Harry turned, it would all
makes sense, wouldn't it?

NYX

Then why bring his son into it?

LUZ
Insurance.

NYX
Luz, you knew Harry. Do you
really think he turned?

A GUARD enters.

GUARD
All is ready.

LUZ
Let me get my things. I'll be
right there.

The Guard returns to the hall. Luz picks up her black satchel
containing hypodermic needles.

NYX
I need you.

CUT TO:

EXT. CELL - MORTUARY - NIGHT

DEMONIC HOWLS echo down the corridor as Guard leads Luz
through the pandemonium. They arrive at Ben's cell.

LUZ
I can handle it from here. See to
the others.

GUARD
Okay.

Guard heads down the hall. Luz enters Ben's cell.

INT. CELL - MORTUARY - NIGHT

Luz enters the cell and approaches Ben. She pulls out a
HYPODERMIC NEEDLE.

Ben struggles against his bonds.

LUZ
Calm down. There is much to do.
You will need your strength.

Luz injects Ben.

CUT TO:

INT. LOADING DOCK - MORTUARY - NIGHT

Luz leads her orderlies as they roll a gurney to the back of the Hearse. She opens the door and slides the wooden case into the back. She walks to the driver's window where Nyx sits behind the wheel.

LUZ
Good luck out there.

Nyx nods, then drives off.

Three SMOKE VIPERS shoots out of the building, lunging after the Hearse.

LUZ
Go.

Nyx floors it. The Hearse peels out, leaving a wake of rubber and smoke.

Luz pulls out her staff and turns to face the attackers, letting loose a barrage of LIGHTNING BOLTS that tear into the Smoke phantoms. The Orderlies follow her lead and together they are able to hold off the attackers.

CUT TO:

INT. HEARSE - NIGHT

Ben's eyes pop open in the back of the Hearse.

NYX
I was wondering when you were
going to wake up.

BEN
They have the scroll.

NYX

Once he has the key, it's all over. Do you have it?

BEN

I know where it is. Kill me now, and you take away his last chance of ever finding it.

NYX

No. There will always be another key and another chance.

BEN

He knows that Cole has it.

NYX

What can I do?

BEN

You ever wonder why if Harry stole the scroll from Ibarra, why not go straight to the Abbey with it? Why come to me?

NYX

He tried. He didn't make it.

BEN

Harry joined the Order because had to. The way he saw it, he didn't have a choice.

Ben rubs his head.

BEN

I didn't realize until today that for the last thirty years, Harry's come back to help me more times than I'll ever know. The point is, I think I know what Harry was trying to do. If I'm wrong, the key dies with me.

NYX

What are you going to do?

BEN

I need you to take my body to the cemetery.

NYX

That's crazy.

BEN

It's the only way this is going to work. Once he has my body, he won't worry about anything else.

NYX

They will be on you as soon as you get there.

BEN

I know. I don't have much time.

NYX

You don't have to do this?

BEN

This is the way it has to be.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOURBON STREET - NIGHT

Cole moves through the crowded street packed with thousands of revelers anxious for the Mardi Gras parade to begin.

He keeps looking over his shoulder as if sensing something's not right.

EXT. ALLEY - EVENING

Cole arrives at the float. He sees Raven.

RAVEN

Did you bring it?

COLE

Yeah.

RAVEN
Ready for some fun?

COLE
Let's do it.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONDIALE HOTEL - DAY

The Hearse pulls up to the main entrance. Ben hops out as a VALET approaches.

VALET
Welcome to the...

Ben strides into the hotel.

INT. LOBBY - MONDIALE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Ben walks to the front desk. An idle DESK CLERK looks up as Ben approaches and calls to him.

DESK CLERK
Can I help you, sir? Sir.

Ben ignores the clerk, walks around the front desk and proceeds to a back hallway. The Desk Clerk follows him.

INT. HALLWAY - MONDIALE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Ben moves down the hallway. He comes to the first door, opens it and peers inside, starting a YOUNG WOMAN on the phone.

DESK CLERK
Sir. You can't be back here.

Unsatisfied, he continues down the hallway.

DESK CLERK
I will have to call security.

He continues down to the next door on the hall. The Woman from the first office steps into the hall to see what's going on. The anxious desk clerk calls to her.

DESK CLERK

Lisa, call security. Get them
back here, now!

Ben spins to face the Desk Clerk, grabbing him close, bringing
the young man's face a breath away from his own.

BEN

Bonham!

BONHAM (O.C.)

It's all right. Let the boy go.

Ben turns to find Bonham standing in the doorframe of the last
office. Ben releases the Desk Clerk.

BONHAM

Detective Grimes is understandably
upset. It seems he lost his son
today. All right, then. Everyone
back to work, if you please.

The employees reluctantly withdraw from the scene. Once
they're gone, Bonham returns his attention to Ben.

BONHAM

Now, how may I help you today,
Detective?

BEN

You know why I'm here.

BONHAM

Of course. Well then, let me make
this as simple as possible for
you. You have something we want.
Now we have something you want.

BEN

Where is he?

BONHAM

No more games. Bring the scroll
to Jefferson Cemetery at midnight.

BEN
If you hurt him... I'll make him
wish he was deader.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL ST. PIERRE - NIGHT

Raven leads Cole into the hotel.

INT. ELEVATOR - HOTEL ST. PIERRE - CONTINUOUS

RAVEN
Don't be nervous.

COLE
I'm not.

RAVEN
It's easy.

The elevator stops and the doors open.

RAVEN
Come on.

Raven exits the elevator. Cole follows.

INT. HALLWAY - HOTEL ST. PIERRE - CONTINUOUS

The teenagers walk down the hallway.

RAVEN
You do this and you can do
whatever the fuck you want from
here on out. Here we are.

Raven pulls a KEY CARD from his pocket and inserts it into the
ROBOLOCK.

The LED LIGHT flashes green as the LOCK disengages with a
THUNK.

INT. BATHROOM - SUITE - HOTEL ST. PIERRE - CONTINUOUS

The boys enter the bathroom.

COLE

Why don't you just do it?

RAVEN

You have to do it for yourself.

COLE

I forgot my knife.

RAVEN

I didn't. Here.

Raven pulls out a KNIFE and hands it to Cole who looks at the sharp blade but doesn't take it.

COLE

I can't.

RAVEN

What do you mean you can't?

COLE

I changed my mind. I don't want to do it anymore.

RAVEN

It's too late to change your mind now. Do it.

COLE

No.

Raven grabs Cole roughly, pulling him close.

RAVEN

Don't you get it? You don't have a choice anymore.

Cole struggles as Raven moves the knife towards him. Raven strength is surprising. He moves the blade against Cole's cheek and slices.

Raven smiles as a red line of BLOOD quickly forms and gathers onto the stainless steel blade.

CUT TO:

INT. FOYER - BEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ben enters through the front door.

BEN
(calling)
Cole...

MATTY (O.S.)
Daddy?

Matty enters the room, wide-eyed with excitement.

MATTY
Daddy!

Matty runs and jumps into Ben's arms.

Mrs. Thornton enters the room.

MRS. THORNTON
Where on Earth've you been?

BEN
Later. Where's Cole?

CUT TO:

EXT. BOURBON STREET - NIGHT

A Mardi Gras parade moves down a street crowded with REVELERS.

NYX
A needle in a haystack.

BEN
Not quite. We know he likes to nest in hotels. It's got to be close to here. I won't have time on foot. Is there a way to separate without the drug?

NYX
It's too dangerous.

BEN
We don't have a choice.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The Hearse is parked in an isolated alley.

INT. HEARSE - CONTINUOUS

Ben lies in the back. Nyx kneels over him.

NYX
You have one hour. If you can't
make it back in time, your
physical body will die. Is that
enough time?

BEN
It has to be. I need you to go to
the cemetery. That should
distract them long enough.

NYX
Good luck.

Nyx administers the drug.

SWOOSH CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - HOTEL ST. PIERRE - CONTINUOUS

Ben stands in the lobby. He looks around, gathering his
senses.

SWOOSH CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - HOTEL ST. PIERRE - NIGHT

Ben materializes in the room and sees Cole lying unconscious
in the BATHTUB. Raven stands at the mirror drawing a large
SYMBOL in blood. Otherworldly Voices fill the room.

Ben moves to Cole's body and enters. Cole's eyes open. He digs into his pocket and pulls out the item Harry gave him.

Raven completes the symbol. Smoke Vipers erupt from the mirror and move to Cole. Cole rises, holding up the item.

RAVEN

What?

Raven watches as the Smoke Viper is consumed by the item in Cole's hand.

RAVEN

NO....

Raven looks at Cole.

RAVEN

You.

COLE

In the flesh.

Cole steps out of the bathtub.

RAVEN

It's still too late for you.

Raven starts to move at Cole but stops short at the SOUND of OTHERWORLDLY VOICES calling to him.

RAVEN

I shall deal with you later.

A VAPOR emerges from Raven's body and disappears into the mirror, leaving the empty shell to collapse onto the floor.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

The Hearse pulls through the Cemetery's main gate and drives along the winding road to the top of the hill.

EXT. CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

The wind howls like a banshee. A bouquet of FLOWERS left on a grave rolls across graves like a tumbleweed until a well worn and dirt-encrusted BOOT steps on it. The CAMERA TILTS to reveal the Dark Figure watching as the Hearse approaches.

INT. HEARSE/EXT. CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

Nyx drives slowly through the cemetery. Out the window she sees dozens of SHADOWY FIGURES standing among the headstones.

EXT. CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS

The Hearse parks in front of the mausoleum. Nyx opens the door and slowly gets out. The marauders with dark encircle her.

Two MARAUDERS with dark, soulless eyes move to the back of the Hearse and pull out Ben's body and drag it roughly to the Mausoleum entrance.

BONHAM (O.S.)

You didn't think you could stroll
up here unnoticed, did you?

Bonham steps out of the Mausoleum.

NYX

Actually, I was hoping you'd be
here.

BONHAM

Brave talk for someone facing
eternal damnation.

The Marauders throw Ben's body down on the ground in front of Bonham.

BONHAM

A small price for immortality.
Seems I haven't yet thanked you
properly.

Bonham kicks Ben viciously.

BONHAM

A hundred souls is such a small price.

NYX

Harry didn't bring the scroll back to the Order because he knew you had stolen it in the first place.

BONHAM

Of course. But he also knew that without the key, the scroll and the souls would be useless.

NYX

So he made up his mind to find it first.

BONHAM

There is so much to be said for stubborn determination. He beat me to it, of course, but then he didn't know what to do with it. Come along. Time to wake up, Cinderella. Watch how I can bring him out of it.

Bonham pulls out a device that looks like a metal syringe and stabs Ben's body with it. Nyx recoils at the sight.

BONHAM

This amusing little antique can actually pull the spirit back into the body. I don't think it's the easiest way but it's certainly effective enough.

Bonham twists the device's handle, and Ben's body convulses. A few more twists produce a shock-like reaction until Ben opens his eyes.

BONHAM

Welcome back, Mr. Grimes. I hope I didn't interrupt anything important.

BEN

I was just looking for a place to bury you.

BONHAM

Humor even now. You are so very much like your father, and that is your undoing. Now, will you give me the key or do you need more prompting.

Bonham shoots a glance behind him and a Marauder drags Cole out from the mausoleum.

BONHAM

Third generation's the charm.

COLE

Dad...

Cole tries to run to Ben, but the Marauder holds him back.

BEN

It's all right, Cole. Just stay there.

BONHAM

Very sensible. Cole and I've become quite good friends, you know. He helped me with my last few souls. He was terrific.

COLE

I didn't mean it, dad.

BEN

It's all right.

BONHAM

Come now. There's still a bit more work to do.

EXT. MAUSOLEUM - CONTINUOUS

An AXE strikes repeatedly into the mausoleum's WOODEN DOOR and the wormwood barrier yields with a thunderous CRASH. The motley crew rush inside like rats after food.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - CONTINUOUS

Frail moonlight filtered through a large STAINED GLASS WINDOW reveal iconic images of death and resurrection.

With a sharp, empty crack, an alabaster ALTAR standing at the center of the room crashes down onto the marble floor. SLEDGE HAMMERS assault the floor beneath, clearing away ghost-white marble to reveal a TRAP DOOR.

Bonham pulls on the door's BRASS HANDLE. Rusted hinges bemoan the intrusion as the door swings slowly up to reveal a SPIRAL STAIRCASE that twists downward into a black abyss.

INT. SUBTERRANEAN STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

TORCHES ignite. Several MARAUDERS descend the rickety staircase until an ominous MOAN freezes them in their tracks. A moment later, the steps collapse sending the marauders hollering and plummeting down into the darkness.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBTERRANEAN LAIR - MOMENTS LATER

The rope lands on top of a pile of nearly dead bodies impaled on spikes at the bottom of the staircase. Bonham descends the last few feet of ROPE, stepping onto the bodies of his fallen comrades like a step stool.

He uses his torch to look around and sees a DOOR to a BURIAL VAULT. He moves to the door and pulls it open. Inside, a single SARCOPHAGUS lays unmolested for centuries.

INT. BURIAL VAULT - MOMENTS LATER

Bonham enters the room and eagerly caresses sarcophagus's heavy stone lid.

BONHAM
I've come so far...

Marauders drag Ben, Nyx and Cole into the room.

BONHAM

Now, with the scroll, I cannot be stopped. Where's the key, boy?

Cole stares at his father.

BEN

Give it to him.

COLE

But, dad...

BONHAM

Oh look. How sentimental. A touch of nobility. Nonsense. You will hand me the key or watch your father beg for death.

Cole reaches into his pocket and pulls out the small box. Bonham snatches it from him.

BONHAM

Now...

Bonham turns back to the sarcophagus and presses the box to open it.

BONHAM

Get this lid off.

The marauders push away the heavy stone lid.

Inside the coffin, a dark brown, leather-like skin holding together a face badly disfigured by decay. A small object is clenched in the corpse's bony hands.

Bonham reaches down to claim his prize, but as soon as he touches the object, the corpse's EYES pop open, revealing large white pupil-less ORBS. It's mouth opens and releases a SMOKE VIPER that moves straight into Bonham's mouth.

The color drains from his face as he realizes that he's been tricked. He staggers backwards, dropping the prize.

BONHAM

No...

His cry turns into a scream of anguish as he's pulled into the corpses mouth.

The Prize explodes, releasing a radiant light that fills the room.

EXT. BEN'S HOUSE - DAWN

The Hearse pulls up in front of the house.

INT. HEARSE - CONTINUOUS

Nyx drives.

NYX

Hey. If you ever want to change jobs, there's plenty of work in the afterlife.

BEN

I think I'll keep my day job.

NYX

I'm sorry about your father. He was a good man.

BEN

He did what he knew how to do.

Ben opens the passenger door and steps out. He looks up and sees Cole come around the corner.

BEN

I've got my work cut out for me here.

NYX

Take care of yourself.

BEN

It's been a long night.

The Hearse drives off down the street.

FADE OUT.