

Plague

By

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FADE IN ON:

CLOSE-UP: VIDEO SCREEN

Jumbled images. Alarmist news - raised to pure art-form:

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVILIANS scream at COPS.

ISAAH WASHINGTON (30s) heads the protest. Dark-skinned BODYGUARDS flank him left and right.

ISAAH
Black lives matter. And you don't give a
fuck!

One MAN hurls a bottle. The crowd surges. BARRIERS break.

Cops focus on the most violent. SPARKING TASERS take protestors down. It's Chaos everywhere.

The camera swings towards... a lone WHITE MALE. He stands on the sidewalk - clean cut. Waves a sign in the air:

"Miscegenation Kills Soldiers. Join Flatlihn and Repent!"

A bloody PROTESTOR tackles him. The sign tumbles end-over-end through the air.

INT. NYC SUBWAY STATION - EVENING

The news unfolds in HD. The screen's mounted high, near the gates. A SPEAKER CRACKLES overhead.

MTA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
A train is approaching. Please step away
from the tracks.

The ROARING TRAIN arrives. Colorless faces blur behind its windows. The platform swirls with puffs of air.

MONICA CLARK (30s) shields her face. Smooth, mahogany skin: petite and elegantly dressed. BROADWAY MUSIC pours through speakers in her ears.

The train stops, and the doors open. Revealing: lots of STRAPHANGERS and few seats. This train's packed.

MTA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Courtesy's important. Let passengers exit
the doors.

A small WHITE TATTOOED PUNK (19) shoulders past Monica. He darts inside, grabs a seat.

Monica rolls her eyes at a FELLOW COMMUTER. They wait until their turn - then step inside.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Advertisements plaster the walls: "Welcome to MTA. Now Wi-Fi capable at all stations!"

Monica scores the last seat: ironically beside the Punk. He's manspreading - taking up all the room he can.

She wedges into the seat. The punk shoots her a look. Monica spots a "White Supremacy" tat on his neck.

She glances away... toward the screen outside. The news continues. More skirmishes between protestors and police.

The car starts rolling. Monica looks around the train.

Lots of COUGHING. Some COMMUTERS don surgical masks. PEOPLE jam against each other in awkward ways.

Monica turns off tunes, and toggles to news on her phone.

ONSCREEN: A FEMALE REPORTER at a desk.

FEMALE REPORTER

Due to the widespread flu outbreak, Mayor Connor has authorized funding for 24 hour clinics in all five boroughs. Residents who show signs of infection are urged to contact their doctor immediately.

The punk leans close to Monica.

TEEN PUNK

Staten Island, too? That's some fucked up shit right there.

Monica scootches away. She surfs through channels:

More riot news. Flatlihn PROTESTORS chant onscreen.

Then: a video of Congress in session. A fight's brewing there, as well.

INT. CONGRESSIONAL OPEN SESSION - ONSCREEN - DAY

These combatants are better dressed:

PRESIDENT JOHN MARLIN: 50s, graying hair.

VICE PRESIDENT ELIZABETH ROLLINS: 30s, and blonde.
Deepening stress lines on her face.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, DOUG TRUMBULL: 40s - A shaved Pug
in a designer suit. Elegant hair frames his rough face.

The Reporter's voice rings in Monica's ear:

FEMALE REPORTER (O.S.)
Debates continue to rage between
President John Marlin, VP Rollins and
Speaker of the House Doug Trumbull -
discussing how recent civil rights
clashes should be handled. Should the
military be brought in?

Marlin speaks first:

PRESIDENT MARLIN
Our priority is to maintain order.
Protect civilian property, of course.

VICE PRESIDENT ROLLINS
But ensure legitimate concerns are heard.

TRUMBULL
These are rapists and thugs we're talking
about. Ones that capitalize on discord! I
don't care what color they are. They're
no better than domestic terrorists.
Criminals who should be tossed in jail!

INT. SUBWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

The tattooed thug leans close to Monica.

TEEN PUNK
Which guy are you rooting for?

MONICA
Um, none of your business?

TEEN PUNK
Trumbull, or that Commie Marlin?

MONICA
Vice President Rollins has a point.

TEEN PUNK

You agree with her 'cause she's got a
snatch? Or because she's on *your people's*
side?

Monica slides further away. The broadcast turns back to
the protests. It's erupted in full violence now.

EXT. NYC STREET - CONTINUOUS

Isaah stands firm in the eye of the storm. He screams out
slogans: protected by guards on all sides.

ISAAH

Patrick Henry was wrong. Give us liberty -
or *you die!*

INT. SUBWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

The tattooed teen looks at Isaah's image. Up at Monica.
Compares skin shades.

TEEN PUNK

You're digging *that* guy?

He stares intently at Monica's face. The train slides to
a stop: 81st Street. Monica leaps to her feet.

MONICA

My stop. About time!

She pushes through passengers towards the door. The teen
follows in her wake.

TEEN PUNK

I asked you a question.

Monica darts for the exit. She bumps into a T-shirt, the
slogan reads: "FAGS and SOCIALISM kills Soldiers!"

She looks up at the wearer: a FLATLIHN MAN in jeans. Very
white. Clean-cut. A simple face.

MONICA

Excuse me. I'm trying to get out!

FLATLIHN MAN

Me, too. Wait your turn.

Monica pushes by - onto...

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

The tattooed punk gets off as well. Monica fights through the crowd. Paranoid, she looks from face to face. Time seems to slow down.

She fumbles in her purse... for MACE.

Another Monitor BABBLES overhead. More flickering shots of turmoiled streets. The punk gets closer still.

TEEN PUNK

Why you scared? You're pretty. You won't talk to "my kind"?

Monica darts for the turnstiles. And runs smack dab into... a suit. She looks up: into a male face.

KEVIN CLARK (30s) smiles at her. White and cute.

KEVIN

Going somewhere?

MONICA

Kev. Thank God, it's you!

KEVIN

I wish you'd say that more often. Sounds like music to my ears.

Monica swings around, points. The punk freezes in place.

MONICA

That kid followed me.

TEEN PUNK

Bitch, that's a lie!

KEVIN

What did you just call my wife?

The teen turns pale; his tats stand out in bas relief.

TEEN PUNK

You're married to a -

MONICA

White guy? Yeah. Eight years.

KEVIN

Hear that? She's taken. Scram.

The teen realizes: the odds have turned. He ducks under a turnstile, runs away. Kevin watches his retreat, amused.

KEVIN
(to Monica)
Do I get a few hero points for that?

MONICA
Cut the damsel in distress crap. I had
Mace. I could've sprayed him in the face.

KEVIN
But you didn't have to.

MONICA
Why are you here?

KEVIN
Jayden and Darren have the sniffles. So I
picked up dinner...

He raises a plastic bag.

KEVIN
Happy Family discount. Pad Thai's on me.

The man with the Flatlihn tee strolls by. He spots Monica
and Kevin hugging: his face wrinkles in disgust.

MONICA
That man. He's one of those...

KEVIN
Religious nuts? Yeah, I know. I did an
expose on them last week.

Flatlihner opens his mouth. Kevin shoots a look his way.

KEVIN
Got problems with a man holding his wife?

FLATLIHN MAN
Armageddon is upon us. Rep-

Kevin goes into *Fuck you* mode. He bends Monica backward,
plants a dramatic kiss. COMMUTERS stop and stare. The two
hang suspended in the moment. Monica whispers in his ear.

MONICA
Honey, this is overkill.

KEVIN
But do you like it?

MONICA
Oh yeah.

Kevin shoots "Mr. Flatlihn" the evil eye.

KEVIN

Does *that* float your boat, "Noah"?

The Flatlihner scuttles away. STRAPHANGERS APPLAUD.

KEVIN

(bows to his 'audience')

Thank you. No donations needed. But please: tell your friends. We'll be playing the Upper West Side all weekend.

MONICA

Exit Stage Left, Shakespeare. We have starving progeny to feed.

The two head for the exit. A TRAIN ROARS into the station. Drowns out commuter COUGHS nearby.

EXT. NYC STREET - EVENING

Kev and Monica stroll along. Monica eyes the street.

MONICA

No riots here. Quiet.

KEVIN

Big surprise; it's all downtown.

He pulls a wrapper out of the takeout bag.

KEVIN

Want an egg roll?

MONICA

They serve that American crap at *Sookk*?

KEVIN

I went to *Pleasure Palace* instead.

Monica's stomach RUMBLES. She grabs a roll, takes a bite. The *Museum of Natural History* visible as they walk by.

KEVIN

Look, it's work! Wanna wave?

MONICA

If they want anything, they have my cell.

The two hang a right.

MONICA

Jayden gave Darren his sniffles? Don't tell me it's that flu?

KEVIN

I called Dr. Roth. He said it can't be. They'd have had fever by now.

MONICA

Are they warm?

KEVIN

Not in a volcanic way.

MONICA

What about Tianna?

KEVIN

Full of fire, as always. She kept interrupting my writing; streamed *Star Wars* from every device in the house.

They reach a townhouse, step inside.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Music assaults their senses. A watered down version of HIP HOP. Monica rolls her eyes.

KEVIN

Don't you like this song? It's catchy.

MONICA

Give me *Alexander Hamilton*, any day.

Monica stabs a button. The elevator rises.

KEVIN

Have you thought it over yet?

MONICA

Thought what? And why?

KEVIN

Where we're going for Easter. Your folks invited us last week.

MONICA

If the boys are sick, the answer's no.

KEVIN

It's still a few days away. Don't use your parents as an excuse. You avoid them all the time.

MONICA

Just because you thrive on conflict -

KEVIN

You want our kids to miss out on the "Grandparent Experience"? Non-stop spoiling and gifts?

MONICA

You mean, the "Grandparents" that won't accept their father?

KEVIN

Cut Evelyn and Tom some slack. They need more time to mourn Nick.

The elevator CHIMES. Monica finishes her egg roll, storms out the door.

INT. CLARK PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Luxury in every detail. This is how the top 15% live. Monica enters first; rants at Kevin over her shoulder.

MONICA

Don't get me started. He may be Tianna's father. But he's not her "Dad". No way!

She swings around; shuts up fast.

TIANNA (9) stands in the living room. She's dressed like Rey from *Star Wars*. Dark skin, almond eyes.

Awkward silence. Tianna's heard Monica's every word.

AMY (16) emerges from a back room, infant DARREN in her arms. Kevin takes the baby.

MONICA

Everything ok?

AMY

(hesitates)

About Mr. Jackson. T's dad? He left a message. Says you should call him back.

She extends paper with a number. Monica snatches it from Amy's hand. And replaces it with money.

MONICA
Thanks. You can go.

Amy backs out the door. Monica and Kevin watch her flee.

KEVIN
You gonna call?

MONICA
After dinner. Maybe.

A SNIFFLE behind them. Not from Tianna.

JAYDEN (6) stands at the door: light skinned, and slender. A wadded Kleenex in his hand.

JAYDEN
Mom, Dad. I feel funny.

The land line RINGS. The Caller ID reads. *"CNCC Press"*.

MONICA
Not Nick. Thank God. Kev, it's for you.

MOMENTS LATER

Kevin paces the room; phone in his hand.

KEVIN
(into the handset)
But I'm scheduled for vacation. The Bronx? Are you kidding me? Montecore Hospital: 208th Street. Fine. Leaving now. I'll be there.

CLICK. Kevin turns to face his family.

KEVIN
Um, work wants me to go uptown; cover how the flu's been there. I'll be back in a few hours.
(mutters)
Visiting the sick ward before Easter. I lead such a glamorous life.

He heads for the door, waves at the bag of takeout.

KEVIN
Save some of that for me!

INT. CLARK PENTHOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Monica sits with the kids; Pad Thai laid out on plates.

Darren's in a high chair. Tianna and Jayden compete with how many noodles they can shove into their mouths.

Monica's phone RINGS. She whips it out.

MONICA

Kevin?

The screen reads "Nick". Tianna stops chewing. Stares.

TIANNA

Mom? You gonna talk to Dad?

MONICA

(into the phone)

Nick. What a surprise. Yes, I got your message. I *planned* to call. But not yet. It's dinner time.

A MALE VOICE RUMBLES. Monica stalks away from the kids.

MONICA

I *know* she's your daughter. Don't hand me that "why can't we be a family" line! Do you know what family *is*? It's making a commitment. Being married. Eight whole years.

(beat)

Of course I want you in her life!

Monica looks towards Tianna. Then heads towards the living room - and privacy.

INT. CLARK PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Monica hisses at Nick one last time.

MONICA

If you cared about family, you'd have said those words long ago. You know - promising to always be there? In sickness, and in health. You have no idea what that really means!

Monica stabs the phone: disconnect. Guilty, she looks back to the kitchen - did the kids see?

Jayden sucks down noodles. Tianna stares at her intently.

INT. FLATLIHN BEDROOM - EVENING

The opposite of the Clark home: peeling paint. Stained curtains. The decor, extremely bare. Spiritual posters grace the walls:

Psalm 127:3-5 - Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD. The fruit of the womb is a reward.

Deuteronomy 17:17 - A King shall not have too many wives.

Preach the Word Always! Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort!

It's a tiny room. COUGHS fill the air.

RACHEL FLATLIHN (50s) lies on a soiled mattress on the floor. Her sweaty face glistens. Hair sticks to her skin.

AMMON FLATLIHN (50s) hovers over her: his hand pressed to Rachel's face. The two wear: MATCHING RINGS.

AMMON

I layeth hands on you, Dear Wife. I beseech the heavens, hear my prayer.

RACHEL

(weak)

Ammon? You've been here for hours. Have you missed your sermon?

AMMON

They can wait. My First is more important. In sickness and in health. Neither way shall we part.

Another COUGH. FOAM from Rachel's lips spatters Ammon's cross and lapel. She reaches out to wipe it clean.

RACHEL

I'm sorry -

AMMON

Don't. Sarah will make it right.

He nods to SARAH (40s) - a petite, mousy blonde. On her face: a sullen pout. On her hand: ANOTHER RING.

Ammon dabs Rachel's face with a washcloth. Hands it to Sarah with a basin.

AMMON

Take this and clean it.

SARAH
I'm tired. It's as hot as the Devil
today.

AMMON
That's a cross you can bear. Go now and
leave us alone. Your sister wife deserves
privacy.

Sarah frowns but scuttles away. She passes CONNOR
FLATLIHN (20s) at the door. A young clone of his dad.

CONNOR
(to Rachel)
Mother, are you okay?

Ammon grits his teeth, eyes glued to Rachel's face.

AMMON
Connor. Weren't you leading the lecture?

CONNOR
I did. We finished early.

AMMON
And what was the topic? Inform me.

CONNOR
The 'Power of Prayer' in times of strife.

Rachel MOANS. Connor grows upset.

CONNOR
Some of the parish were asking: should we
seek outside help for the sick?

AMMON
And you replied?

CONNOR
That God works mysteriously. Perhaps
through Doctors he sends our way.

AMMON
That's not my teaching.

CONNOR
What if we brought Mother to the
hospital? If God does not wish it, he'd
tell us - with a vision. But if he does,
he'll let us go. Mother's - not ready to
ascend.

AMMON

We don't need the heathen's hospitals.

CONNOR

God's busy with other things. Why not use the tax-funded services they provide?

AMMON

You twist words like the Devil!

CONNOR

No. I'm a Believer. I swear.

AMMON

God hates sons who do not listen.

CONNOR

What of sons who let their parents die?

Sarah slips into the room; the washed basin in her hand. She looks even more weary. Drops of sweat on her brow.

CONNOR

Leave us, Sarah. Men are talking.

SARAH

You were fighting. Your father should be obeyed.

CONNOR

My mother needs help!

AMMON

If God wanted us to go to the hospital, he would give us a sign!

Sarah COUGHS. Blood spatters her hand; she collapses. Connor swings on his father.

CONNOR

Are you prepared to hear God's Word now?

EXT. FLATLIHN LAWN - EVENING

Four figures stagger towards a rusted Buick. Connor supports a weak Rachel. Ammon carries Sarah in his arms.

A CROWD OF PARISHIONERS watch in silence. They hold hands, mutter PRAYERS. A few walk towards CARS.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - LOBBY - NIGHT

FAMILIES loiter. Kevin shoulders through the doors.

The lobby's packed; masks on almost every face. A MAN SOBS in one corner. Kevin squints: the man turns away.

Kevin heads for a sign which reads "ER". A GUARD blocks his way.

GUARD
Hospital personnel only.

KEVIN
I'm here for Dr. Alan Gibney. He's expecting me.

Kevin flashes his Press ID. The guard hands Kevin a mask, points him past the door.

GUARD
The tall, smart guy. Over there.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - ER - NIGHT

MOANS fill the air. Every gurney's taken. And every inch of the floor.

Kevin tightens the mask on his face. He heads for the tallest man in the room. His eyes wander when he sees...

A BLACK TEEN with a Hoodie. His shirt underneath is bloody. A NURSE examines his sweats - ripped to shreds.

HOODIE TEEN
Don't touch me!

NURSE
That's a lot of blood. Where you shot?

HOODIE TEEN
Nah. Just stabbed. A bit.

The nurse prods the wound. The teen recoils.

NURSE
Where did this happen? I have to ask... for our records.

HOODIE TEEN
Downtown. I gotta get stitched up. But don't ask me nuthin' more. Okay?

He points towards a CROWD IN THE CORNER.

HOODIE TEEN

Damn. Who are they?

Kevin follows the teen's finger. To...

A CROWD OF FLATLIHNERS. Connor and Ammon hover over two gurneys - unconscious Sarah and Rachel side by side. A few parishioners wear "Repent" tees.

KEVIN

The Flatline Wackos are here?

ALAN (O.S.)

We don't discuss patients unless you're family. If you're not sick, it's best to wait outside.

Kevin glances up: at DR. ALAN GIBNEY (50s), a salt n' pepper streak in his hair. Kevin consults an e-mail on his phone. Matches it to Alan's distinguished face.

KEVIN

Dr. Alan Gibney, I presume.

ALAN

You presume correctly. Who are you?

KEVIN

Kevin Clark. CNCC. I was told you're the person to talk to about... all this?

Alan pulls Kevin aside. The two men lean against a wall.

KEVIN

This is horrible. Jesus.

ALAN

The name is "Alan." And this is what you came to see. But don't take any pictures. That's against our policy.

A FEMALE PATIENT near the Flatlihniers SCREAMS. NURSES rush to her side.

ALAN

Enough gawking. Start talking. You've got questions? Ask away.

KEVIN

How many patients have been brought in?

ALAN

One every half hour, more or less. We've run out of beds upstairs.

KEVIN

What do you do with the overflow?

ALAN

We transfer some upstate. Reassign rooms if someone dies.

KEVIN

This thing's always fatal?

ALAN

If you don't catch it in time.

A PATIENT VOMITS. Residents SCRAMBLE to clean the mess.

KEVIN

How could flu be this bad?

ALAN

You think this is the *flu*? Is investigative journalism dead?

KEVIN

Then it's Ebola? Or Zika?

ALAN

It's viral: and spreading fast. Unlike anything I've ever seen.

KEVIN

Why hasn't the press heard more?

ALAN

Stats are misleading. Things can be reclassified. Not everyone dies of the "flu". Pick a disease and run with it. Pneumonia, Congestive Heart Failure. There's tons of alternatives to choose.

KEVIN

Is there a cure?

ALAN

Not quite. But I've got ideas.

Alan points to HAILEY (20s): a light skinned African American in scrubs. Petite frame, gorgeous eyes.

ALAN

You see that woman over there?

KEVIN

Hard to miss. She's a nurse?

ALAN

A new "medical assistant". The military assigned her to me yesterday. Supposedly to help gather data. The city's just days away from quarantine.

Hailey draws blood from a PATIENT. She looks concerned.

KEVIN

It's that serious?

ALAN

A national crisis in the making. That sound serious enough to you?

JOSE LOWRY (20s) edges toward Alan: Mixed Latino and buff in light green scrubs.

JOSE

Dr. Gibney? Private Hailey wants to compare samples.

ALAN

In a moment, Jose. I'm busy.

(to Kevin)

Excuse me. I have sick patients to see.

Across the room: the woman coughing blood SPASMS. Her IV CRASHES to the floor. RESIDENTS race to her side.

One of the Flatliners draws their shared curtain closed, giving Ammon and Connor more privacy.

Alan hisses in Kevin's ear:

ALAN

You want to be a real reporter? Check out the CDC website. My ID's cgibney@monte.org. Password: Monkey123. I'd get out now, if I were you. And if you've got family, move them upstate.

The woman on the gurney SCREAMS. Alan leaves Kev behind.

INT. CLARK PENTHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kevin and Monica huddle at the table. The kids play X-Box in the living room nearby.

MONICA
It was that bad?

KEVIN
The ER was a madhouse!

MONICA
It's The Bronx. You know how that is.

KEVIN
Dr. Gibney's a viral expert. He says we
should get the hell out of town.

Kevin pours a glass of wine, slides it her way.

KEVIN
Drink up. It's your favorite.

MONICA
You're just trying to get me drunk, so
I'll say "OK."

Infant Darren SNIFFLES. Jayden COUGHS in Tianna's face.

Tianna whacks her brother with the controller. Monica
grabs the wine and GULPS it down.

KEVIN
Let's go visit your parents. Out in
Scarsdale, where it's safe!

MONICA
It's probably just a media scare. And you
know how my parents are. They're going to
nag me to death.

KEVIN
Death's what I'm trying to avoid. Let's
take the kids to your folks' PCP.
According to your Mom, Dr. Binder's
great.

He refreshes Monica's drink.

KEVIN
Humor me. We've got two out of three with
a fever.

MONICA
Sniffles is all it is.

KEVIN

Along with tummy aches. Let's go away for the weekend - before Tianna catches their bug and seals the deal.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - ER - NIGHT

The clock reads 10PM. PATIENTS sprawl out on the floor. Everyone moves molasses slow.

FLATLIHNERS SNORE. One snuggles against his sign.

Rachel and Sarah - both asleep. Connor and Ammon? Wide awake. They face each other across the makeshift beds.

AMMON

They've been left here for hours. Out in the open; like homeless scum!

CONNOR

"No room at the inn". What a surprise.

AMMON

We should take them home, let them sleep.

CONNOR

You haven't slept for days. Think you can carry them to the car?

Ammon stares at his snoozing men.

AMMON

I have help.

CONNOR

Mother could be contagious. You think they'd let us out the door? I don't want to "pray the flu away". Let her stay where she's safe!

AMMON

Watch your words, Young Man. Believe.

CONNOR

I do believe. Miracles can happen - here.

Ammon SNARLS and rips out Sarah's IV in one sharp move. A monitor alert BLARES. Ammon reaches for Rachel's IV next. Connor snags his wrist.

CONNOR

No!

AMMON

Don't defy me.

Ammon lunges across the gurney, over Rachel's body...

Hailey yanks him away. She may be dressed like a nurse, but military steel glows in her eyes.

HAILEY

Sir? If you have a problem, go outside.

AMMON

Let go of me, N -

Hailey gets the implication, tightens her grip.

Several Flatlihners jump to their feet. They circle Hailey. And close in.

Hailey grabs Sarah's IV needle - wields it as a weapon. One Flatlihner lunges towards her. She SWIPES - inches from his face.

Jose races over. Ready, willing and able to swing.

JOSE

You need some help there, *Nurse*?

The Flatlihner men back away. The IV monitor WAILS LOUDER. Jose shuts it off. Sarah GROANS in her sleep.

Tense faces glare back and forth. Hailey. Jose. Connor. Ammon. And ten irate, righteous men.

HAILEY

(to Jose)

I didn't need your help.

JOSE

That's what it looked like to me.

HAILEY

You're wrong. But thanks, anyway.

JOSE

Things may be bad, but let's calm down. Hailey's bringing you folks good news.

AMMON

Pray tell, what could that be?

HAILEY

There's a bed available upstairs.

AMMON

Why did it take so long?

Hailey and Jose exchange looks.

HAILEY

We had - an opening.

CONNOR

Just one?

HAILEY

You were next on the list.

Jose compares Sarah and Rachel's conditions.

JOSE

Which relative's been sick the longest?

CONNOR

(points at Rachel)

Take her - please!

Jose unlocks Rachel's gurney. Ammon CLEARS HIS THROAT.

AMMON

The "problem's" over. Unhand me.

Hailey still has him in a joint lock. She lets go, grabs Rachel's gurney rail instead.

HAILEY

Sir, I apologize. Please stay here, with -

AMMON

Her name is "Sarah."

HAILEY

Based on the situation upstairs, there may be more openings. Please be patient, and just... wait.

She pushes Rachel towards the elevator. Connor follows. He shoots his father a backwards glance:

CONNOR

See you later?

AMMON

If there's a bed.

Ammon grabs Sarah's hand. Connor walks away, next to Mom.

AMMON

(mutters)

We have several beds at home. You may be
Second, Sarah. But you're my wife.

LATER

Weary NURSES tend to PATIENTS. Everyone else is asleep.

Except for Ammon and his followers. They inch towards the
lobby - Sarah hidden between the men.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The security guard nods at his desk.

The glass doors slide open. The Flatliners shuffle Sarah
into the night. They breathe in freedom - and fresh air.

INT. CLARK PENTHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kevin and Monica drink wine, watch the kids. Tianna and
the boys stay glued to the X-Box and TV.

Tianna blows up her digital target. Screams at Jayden:

TIANNA

In your face!

JAYDEN

Shut up, Leia. My finger slipped.

TIANNA

That's ignorant. Everyone knows I'm Rey.

KEVIN

(grins)

Our kids are nerds.

MONICA

Cute little nerds, aren't they?

Kevin takes her glass and pours. The wine: all consumed.

KEVIN

Your folks will be happy to see them.

MONICA

I'd be happy to wean them from that TV.

KEVIN

They'll play outside. In fresh air.

MONICA

Okay - you win. We'll go upstate.

The two toast. Glasses CLINK.

The land line RINGS. The caller ID declares it's Nick. Monica holds her breath as voicemail kicks in:

NICK (O.S.)

You wanna ignore my calls, fine. But I got a right to see my daughter. Evelyn says you're visiting this weekend. Don't think you won't see me there!

Nick SLAMS down the phone. Monica stares.

MONICA

I take it back. We're staying home.

KEVIN

But, you said OK.

MONICA

I won't go, if Nick is there!

The kids look over. They hear her tone, if not the words. Monica storms towards the couch.

MONICA

Turn it off. Time for bed.

KEVIN

Let's talk this over, Hun.

MONICA

We did. I won't let Nick ruin things. He wants to play games, we stay here!

Monica shuttles the kids to their rooms.

Kevin SIGHS and wanders through the living room. He opens a door, turns on the light...

INT. CLARK PENTHOUSE - KEVIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The room screams "Writer." Toys and books everywhere.

Kevin snags a Red Bull from a mini-fridge. He fires up the computer, drops into the seat.

Types on a browser - CDC.gov. A cartoon logo fills the screen - a boy with a thermometer, surrounded by text:

"Think You've Got Flu? Tell Your Mom to Keep You Home."

KEVIN

Read about disease, or fight with your wife? Tough call, Kev. Clear your mind.

Kevin looks for a login. Finds a hidden form and types: *cgibney@monte.org. Monkey123.*

The headers on the next page are horrifically telling: Ebola. Zika. Smallpox. Influenza (Anargen Mutation.)

Kevin CLICKS the Flu. Fatality stats flow down the page. Manhattan: 1,000. The Bronx: 3,050. New Jersey: 6,032.

KEVIN

"Reclassified?" No shit, Sherlock.
"Congestive Heart Failure", my ass.

A red button BLINKS: For Treatment Protocols, click here.

KEVIN

Choose the red or blue pill? There's only one I see.

An unending list follows: most undecipherable science terms. A few pop out at Kevin's eye:

- Vaccinations: 2% effective.
- Complications: Congestive Heart Failure.
- Source and Propagation Method: Still Unknown.

Kevin leans closer to the screen. His cell BLARES. He jumps back in alarm. And answers - it's his boss:

KEVIN

If this is about Monte: I interviewed the doctor. I'm typing it up now. What? You're kidding me. What station? I'll stream it - call you back in three.

Kevin toggles to CNCC Online. EMERGENCY BULLETIN scrolls across the screen. It's that female reporter, at a desk.

FEMALE REPORTER

As those just tuning in may not be aware, President Marlin has been airlifted to an undisclosed hospital for treatment, due to complications of the Flu. Vice President Rollins has been sworn in.

Given the racial unrest that has rocked DC, LA and NY in recent days, it's a troubling shift in the balance of power... in a national time of strife.

More images assault the screen:

- A HELICOPTER rises from the White House lawn.
- Vice Present Rollins stands proud at her podium.

VICE PRESIDENT ROLLINS

President Marlin is in the best of hands. It's my understanding he will be back in office in a matter of days. In the meantime, I swear to you all that my utmost priority will be the continued welfare of the United States, and continuance of the President's policies.

The camera ZOOMS IN: highlights sweat on Rollins' brow.

The NEXT SHOT: Speaker of the House Trumbull, addressing a different white-bread crowd.

TRUMBULL

The Vice President swears that the "welfare of the nation" is her priority. Given the tenuous issues we now face, why put our nation in her inexperienced - albeit delicate - hands? What we need now is a proven leader. If Rollins truly cares about her constituents rather than power, I am pleased to accept the role.

Kevin turns up the volume. The reporter's next:

FEMALE REPORTER

According to Speaker Trumbull's office, VP Rollins herself is not well. In other news, Radical Rights Activist Isaah Washington has urged his followers to not let this crisis slow down civil protests.

The screen SNAPS to Isaah - addressing his angry crowd.

ISAAH

They say now is the time for peace. I say this is the very time we must rise. Only vulnerable governments *listen* to what citizens have to say!

A KNOCK. Kevin swings around. Monica's at the door.

MONICA

I'm sorry. Nick pushes my buttons.

She stares at the EMERGENCY BULLETIN on the TV.

MONICA

The President's in the hospital?

KEVIN

I better go back there, myself. Tonight.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

A muted TV flashes overhead: More coverage of the riots. Isaah Washington's face in almost every frame.

The door CREAKS open. Hailey slips inside.

Outside: NURSES race down halls - towards wailing patient ALARMS. Hailey closes the door, muffles the noise.

And inches towards a bed. Containing: an unconscious Rachel. Tubes snake from her mouth and arms.

Across the room: Connor slumps in a chair.

Hailey sneaks a peek outside. No-one sees.

She draws a curtain around Rachel's bed and steps inside. Now, she has privacy.

Hailey removes a blood sample tube from a pocket. She attaches it to a needle, plunges it into Rachel's vein.

Rachel WHIMPERS. Connor's shadow stirs beyond the curtain. But he continues to SNORE - fast asleep.

Blood RUSHES into the tube. Hailey stares at the silent TV to kill time.

On TV: COPS beat a PROTESTOR. Hailey shivers, looks away.

The tube GURGLES. Hailey pulls out a SYRINGE, and TAPS the liquid to remove bubbles -

- and injects it into Rachel's IV.

Hailey waits for a reaction. Then Rachel starts to SEIZE.

Hailey snaps off the alarm. Rachel goes limp, but draws a breath. Hailey relaxes, relieved.

She samples more blood and dots a drop on a slide.

The door opens behind her. Hailey focuses on the smear, unaware. A silhouetted FIGURE advances...

The curtain's YANKED BACK. Hailey jumps, wheels around. Jose's standing there.

JOSE

What the -

HAILEY

Shhh... family!

She points towards Connor in his chair.

JOSE

What are you doing?

HAILEY

Why are you here?

JOSE

The patient's cardio monitor went off.

HAILEY

She's okay. Breathing fine.

JOSE

You turned off the alarm? What's that in your hand?

He points at Hailey's tube.

HAILEY

Blood samples. For Dr. Gibney.

JOSE

I'm meeting him next. Give them to me.

HAILEY

No!

Jose frowns, suspicious. His eyes slide to Rachel's IV. *Hailey's needle still inserted.*

JOSE

You administered drugs? You're not authorized!

He grabs Hailey's wrist. The blood tube wobbles between them. The two lock eyes: neither willing to let it go.

Hailey grabs the needle, and points it at Jose's throat.

JOSE
You have a thing with sharp objects?

HAILEY
I can use it. I have training.

JOSE
Based on what I saw downstairs, don't
color me surprised.

Connor SNORTS in his sleep. Hailey and Jose swivel in his
direction. Hailey measures the distance to the exit. A
bulky Jose blocks her way.

JOSE
I'll call security.

HAILEY
I'm trying to save her, don't you see?

JOSE
We're *all* trying to save her.

HAILEY
Not like I am.

JOSE
Who are you working for? Really?

HAILEY
You've heard the rumors. I'm Federally
authorized. And on your side.

Rachel WHEEZES. Hailey glances down at her bed.

HAILEY
What harm could this do? She's dying.
They don't last more than two days.
You've seen it. So have I.

JOSE
What was in that needle?

HAILEY
Maybe an antidote. We have ideas how to
slow the infection's spread.

JOSE
You're testing it behind our back?

HAILEY
We can't create a panic. Let me go - I
have orders!

She pulls back. Jose holds on tight.

JOSE
Let's go talk to Alan.

HAILEY
He doesn't have clearance. I can't!

Rachel's RATTLING stops. Jose and Hailey look her way.
Still breathing. In fact, Rachel seems a bit... better.

HAILEY
See? Maybe we can help... each other?

A moment of Understanding. Perhaps Chemistry.

JOSE
You're asking me to keep secrets. Sure,
it'd be better if we worked together.
Along with Alan, I mean.

HAILEY
Let me ask my boss if it's OK. Let me go.

JOSE
I don't know if I should.

He studies Hailey's face. She glances towards the news
broadcast of the riots. Frowns.

JOSE
That bothers you?

HAILEY
So do lots of things.

JOSE
Including me?

HAILEY
What's happening here. And on TV.

Jose points Hailey towards the door.

JOSE
Fine. Follow me.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Hailey and Jose study blood under dual microscopes.

Rachel and "Patient A's" samples: side by side.

CLOSE-UP: Viruses attack Patient A's blood cells. Walls collapse inward like soggy paper mache.

Rachel's blood crumbles, too. But the virus seems slower to take effect. Hailey points to her slide.

HAILEY

See?

JOSE

That's no cure. There's still damage.

HAILEY

It's a start, nonetheless.

JOSE

We should show Alan. Find out what this really means.

INT. CAR GARAGE - NIGHT

BMW's. Saabs. SUV's. Kevin CLICKS his key chain and strides towards one. An Anti-Theft alarm CHIRPS in his hand.

Kevin slides behind the wheel. A blue tooth flashes on his ear.

INT. CLARK PENTHOUSE - KEVIN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Monica sits at the desk; eyes glued to News on her PC.

Isaah Washington rages into a microphone. It's unclear where he's broadcasting from.

A little GIRL (CRISSA) hugs his leg. BODYGUARDS flank them on all sides.

INTERCUT BETWEEN KEVIN'S CAR AND MONICA

Monica hits speaker on her phone.

MONICA

Why go to Monte now? Your family needs you here!

KEVIN

The flu's getting worse. I saw some data that was... classified. I'm going to find the Doctor I "interviewed", demand he tell me the truth!

Kevin starts his car. The garage door opens. Kevin and his ride slide into the night.

MONICA
You'll come back soon?

KEVIN
Keep an eye on the kids. And stay safe.

Kevin hangs up. The car swings onto the Westside Highway.

Monica puts down her phone, and turns up Isaah's speech.

ISAAH
(on screen)
You think we win if Marlin dies? Rollins ain't got juice. And Trumbull's the biggest Nazi there is. It's time for the people to take to the streets, and show them what our movement means! Fuck their lies; we're gonna insist on the truth!

Kevin drives through the night, worry on his face.

ISAAH (V.O.)
Everyone's life matters. No matter what fascist Trumbull says!

INT. FLATLIHN BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ammon sits near the mattress on the floor. Somber PARISHIONERS on every side.

This time, it's Sarah he's caring for. Ammon kisses her forehead, wipes the sweat away.

ISAAH (V.O.)
Just let Trumbull push us; he'll discover our true strength. We care about our families. Even more than ourselves.

INT. CLARK PENTHOUSE - KIDS BEDROOMS - CONTINUOUS

Monica watches over a sleeping Tianna. She touches her daughter's forehead: she seems fine.

She checks on Jayden next. Monica SIGHS in relief. He's sweaty, but breathing okay.

She scoops up Kevin's *Red Bull* can, and heads to...

INT. CLARK PENTHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

In one corner, Darren's crib. The baby BABBLES - disturbed by strange infant dreams.

MONICA

Shhh. Momma's here. She's gonna watch you all night. Make sure you're okay.

Isaah rages on in Kevin's office - unseen.

ISAAH (V.O.)

We'll protect our children. And die for them. That's how we play!

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - LOBBY - NIGHT

Kevin barges inside. The lobby's more packed than last time. The security guard recognizes Kevin right away.

GUARD

You again. Don't you sleep?

KEVIN

I need to talk to Dr. Gibney. Where is he? The ER again?

The guard shakes his head.

GUARD

You wanna breathe in that air? That's on you. He's second floor. Take the stairs.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Hailey and Jose step from the lab. NURSES race between rooms. Jose looks left. Hailey right.

JOSE

You see Alan?

HAILEY

There he is!

Alan's torn between two NURSES:

BLONDE NURSE

His count's elevated. If we change the antibiotic, he might stand a chance.

RED-HEADED NURSE
My patient's not breathing well.
Authorize a tracheotomy for me?

Alan glares at Jose and Hailey.

ALAN
What Fresh Hell do you bring?

JOSE
Hailey needs to talk to you.

ALAN
Okay, Hailey. Fire away.

HAILEY
In private. It's - the reason I'm here.

Alan pulls Hailey and Jose aside.

ALAN
Excuse me: *Private*. Spill the beans.

HAILEY
My employers tasked me to conduct certain tests. Ones you don't know of. Yet.

JOSE
It looks like some are working.

ALAN
You told Jose? A resident?

HAILEY
I didn't want to. He walked in on me.

She points towards Rachel's room.

HAILEY
There's a patient you should see.

Kevin emerges from the stairwell, just twenty feet away.

KEVIN
Dr. Gibney! I have more questions.

Alan swings around. Just as Rachel's ALERT BLARES.

HAILEY
Not now. We're so close!

She darts towards Rachel's room. Alan, Jose and Kevin follow in her wake.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Connor and TWO PANICKED PARISHIONERS hover over the bed.

Rachel's in full Grand-Mal. A NURSE holds her down. Alan shoves her away, and grabs a needle from the night-stand.

HAILEY

What's that?

ALAN

Take a guess. Anti-seizure meds.

HAILEY

That could cause an interaction!

ALAN

With what?

HAILEY

Something we... I gave her. But it was working fine before.

ALAN

Well, it's not working now. And I don't have time to play games.

He plunges the needle into Rachel's IV. The seizures subside. But Rachel's throat - starts to swell. She turns blue, WHEEZES. Glazed eyes bulge from her head.

ALAN

Shit! Let's intubate.

He snags a scalpel, and SLICES. Connor lunges for his mother. Jose pulls him away.

CONNOR

Don't touch her!

JOSE

He has to do that, so she can breathe.

CONNOR

You're killing her. My father was right!

Connor struggles, but can't break free. Ignoring the drama, Alan threads a tube through Rachel's throat. It's bloody work, but he stays focused on his work.

ALAN

(to Hailey)

I'm not killing her. But maybe you did.

HAILEY

I'm here to avert a national crisis!

Kevin's right behind her. Hears her words.

KEVIN

Speaking of: I saw the CDC numbers.
They're hiding something, Dr. Gibney.

ALAN

Shut up. I'm working here.

Kevin grabs Hailey instead.

KEVIN

What "national crisis"? Tell the truth.

HAILEY

I can't. Let go of me!

Rachel GAGS. Alan repositions the tube. Rachel breathes -
then FOAM wells up. Through the hole in her throat.

Another ALERT blares. Cardiac arrest.

Alan rips open Rachel's shirt, and starts compressions.
Foam leaks through Rachel's lips. She's gone.

Connor SCREAMS and drops to his knees. Alan stares at his
patient, sad defeat in his eyes. He turns to Hailey.

ALAN

Okay. Let's talk.

(to Kevin)

And you. Get your family out of here. You
needed proof? Well, now you see.

Kevin backs away. Connor's WAILS ring in his ears.

INT. FLATLIHN BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ammon and his parishioners SOB as well. Ammon rocks back
and forth: Sarah dead in his arms.

INT. KEVIN'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Kevin screeches out of the parking lot. He fires up Blue
tooth and dials. Monica picks up, groggy.

KEVIN

Monica? You're awake?

MONICA (O.S.)
(sarcastic)
Well, this guy I'm married to just
called. I was in the middle of a dream.

KEVIN
Wake the kids. Start packing.

MONICA
Why? Are we late on the mortgage again?

KEVIN
Sweetheart, I'll explain when I'm home.

Kevin hits the gas. The car speeds down dark streets.

INT. CLARK PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Kevin rushes inside. Monica greets him at the door. The
TV plays in the background; some black and white film.

KEVIN
Are the kids ready?

MONICA
I've packed, but they're still sleeping.
Time for you to explain.

Kevin races across the room, throws his laptop in a bag.

KEVIN
Easy. We're visiting your mom and dad.

MONICA
You look like you've seen a ghost.

KEVIN
Not a ghost. Exactly.

MONICA
Tell me why you're freaking out! What did
you see at the hospital - this time?

KEVIN
Enough to convince me to leave town.

MONICA
It's one AM. My folks won't answer the
door.

KEVIN
To see their grand-kids? They'll open it
in a heartbeat.

MONICA

Is it really that bad? Tell me!

The TV BUZZES an alarm. The movie switches to the news...

INT. CONGRESSIONAL OPEN SESSION - ONSCREEN

A pale VP Rollins stands at a podium; addressing a half-filled House. The images aren't live. The reporter's voice narrates:

FEMALE REPORTER (O.S.)

The following video is VP Rollins' speech before Congress, live ten minutes ago.

VICE PRESIDENT ROLLINS

I have just met with President Marlin's doctors. It is my duty to inform you his condition isn't good. He has been placed in a medical coma; one he may not awake from for months. If at all.

The room BUZZES. Rollins waves her hand.

VICE PRESIDENT ROLLINS

It is this reason I have called you all together. Given this nation's state of civil unrest, and the medical emergencies we face - I ask that each and every one of you address your constituents tomorrow morning. And our message should be unified. We must support each other. Regardless of color, religion or creed.

SEVERAL MEN stand up and shout. Trumbull's the loudest.

TRUMBULL

Is the President dead? What are you hiding? Do you consider yourself worthy to lead?

VICE PRESIDENT ROLLINS

That's not my point! I urge you, give up partisan games. What we need is -

She pauses. Pales. Sways on her feet.

VICE PRESIDENT ROLLINS

What I need is...

VP Rollins collapses. Congress erupts. MEDICS and SECRET SERVICE AGENTS swarm to the stage.

The onscreen image freezes. Replaced with the reporter.

FEMALE REPORTER

VP Rollins is alive; moved to a different facility than President Marlin. In further breaking news, Speaker Douglas Trumbull has been sworn into office....

The camera switches to Trumbull's smug face. He smiles into a microphone:

TRUMBULL

A great man once wrote: "It was the Best of Times, the Worst of Times." And that is exactly what we face. As your interim President, I assure you I will guide our nation through this crisis. We will not descend into lawless chaos. We'll come out stronger on the other end!

Kevin and Monica exchange glances.

MONICA

You'll wake the kids?

KEVIN

I'm there.

EXT. NYC STREET - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

CROWDS face each other; bloody.

On one side - POLICE dressed in riot gear.

Isaah stands with LIEUTENANTS. A BODYGUARD cradles young daughter Cissa in his arms.

WHITE PROTESTORS heckle from the sidelines: The tattooed punk who harassed Monica.

Flatliners form their own crowd. Ammon and Connor and several MEN, surrounded both by slogans and signs.

A COP hollers through his bullhorn:

COP WITH A BULLHORN

All we ask is you disperse. No questions. You won't be charged.

TEEN PUNK

Bullshit! Look what they've done!

Connor and Ammon exchange glances.

CONNOR
Do you think they'll listen?

AMMON
Does it matter? They will suffer for
their sins.

Connor's face crumples; about to cry.

CONNOR
I'm sorry I disobeyed you, Father.
Mother... did not die peacefully. Do you
think she's in heaven? Even though you
weren't there to pray?

AMMON
With her Sister Sarah? Indeed.

The two turn to the crowd, ready for judgement.

A bodyguard WHISPERS in Isaah's ear.

ISAAH
Is the VP dead? Who's in charge? No way.

The cop with the bullhorn speaks again.

COP WITH A BULLHORN
We're all in this together. Let's put our
differences aside.

The crowd shifts, provides - an opening. Isaah's face in
full view. The tattooed teen pulls a gun.

TEEN PUNK
Wow. It's my lucky day. I'm gonna make
history.

He SHOOTs: the bullet WHIZZES past Isaah - SHATTERS
little Cissa's leg. Isaah HOWLS and runs to her. Glares
up in fury at his men.

ISAAH
Kill them now!

The crowd erupts. On all sides.

EXT. SCARSDALE - JACKSON HOUSE - NIGHT

A beautiful lawn. A perfect house.

Kevin's car cools at the curb. Tianna slumps in the
backseat, her face a-glow with cell phone light.

Monica and Kevin stand on the porch, Darren bundled in Monica's arms. Jayden clings to Kevin's leg. Kevin waves to Tianna in the car.

KEVIN

What are you waiting for? Get over here.

TIANNA

I'm playing a game.

(mutters)

Boba Fett, your ass is mine.

Monica and Kevin exchange looks.

MONICA

She'll come out when they open the door.

KEVIN

Are you going to knock? Or should I?

MONICA

Before I do, promise me four things.
Don't tell them about Montecore. Mom'll
have a heart attack. Second, don't
mention Nick.

KEVIN

Nick? He's old news. No way.

MONICA

And don't joke about politics, like you
did at Thanksgiving.

KEVIN

Your Dad likes it when I'm "feisty".

MONICA

You're the one who insisted on coming.
Behave.

Kevin hugs Jayden closer. Frowns at the heat he feels.

KEVIN

You're the boss. I'll be good, I swear.

Monica lifts her hand to knock. The door opens:

Revealing EVELYN and TOM JACKSON (70s). African American -
elegant. Despite the hour, they're fully dressed. Evelyn
swings towards Tom, a crystal wine glass in her hands.

EVELYN

I knew they weren't burglars!

TOM
Mon. Kevin. What a surprise.

INT. TOM AND EVELYN'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The room glistens; recently cleaned. A wine bottle chills on the table. Two glasses beside it - both filled.

Evelyn hands them to Monica and Kevin. Tom pulls out chairs.

TOM
Okay folks, off your feet.

Everyone settles in - to a moment of awkward silence.

But Tianna's cell phone BEEPS. She's still playing. Evelyn glances her way.

EVELYN
Tianna, you look so grown up. Let me see your pretty face.

Tianna forces a smile. Goes right back to her game.

EVELYN
Are you hungry? We've got coffee cake.

TIANNA
Uh, no thanks. Not for me.

Tom focuses on Monica and Kevin.

TOM
Driving to the in-laws at three AM. Isn't that unorthodox?

Kevin eyes the wine.

KEVIN
So's drinking at this hour.

EVELYN
We were up for a... nightcap. You know old people don't sleep.

TOM
To what do we owe the pleasure of your company?

MONICA
Because it's Easter. You asked us here.

TOM

In two days. Not tonight.

MONICA

We wanted to avoid traffic out of town.

TOM

Due to the holidays? Or the riots?

KEVIN

The truth? A little bit of both.

Something CLATTERS in a back room.

EVELYN

That damned cat!

TOM

Honey, relax. Want more wine?

Evelyn focuses on Jayden instead.

EVELYN

Big boy, you look beat.

JAYDEN

I feel sick. It's hot in here.

He COUGHS - rough and jagged, like a smoker.

EVELYN

Oh dear. I'll get you tea!

Evelyn darts to the stove, lights a kettle. Busies herself scrubbing pans. Tom pulls out an E-Cig, puffs.

TOM

Speaking of "sick" - how's the flu in the city? Here, it's been pretty bad. Just today, they cancelled middle school.

MONICA

Dad! Don't smoke near the kids!

TOM

This here's "vaping." It's harmless.

MONICA

You know what those things burn?

KEVIN

About that flu. I heard - from someone - that it's worse than they say. That's another reason we wanted to leave.

It's better the kids get fresh air.
Jayden's got a touch of the bug. That
Doctor of yours: Binder. Could he see him
tomorrow?

TOM

On a weekend? This isn't 1953.

EVELYN

Dr. Binder's on vacation. In Malibu.

Evelyn picks up the kettle. Monica watches, concerned.

MONICA

Mom, you have a cat? Did you adopt?

Evelyn hands Jayden a cup of tea.

EVELYN

Drink up, dear. Finish this, you'll sleep
right.

MONICA

I thought you said Pinky died?

Tom leans back and puffs again. Eyes locked on Kevin.

TOM

Man to man: I hear it's getting violent
in New York. What's *your* take on the
riots? Come on, now. For or against?

KEVIN

Uh, I'm in favor of compromise. It's not
a black and white issue. No pun intended.
(chuckles lightly)
Can't we all just get along?

All adults turn and stare. Monica shoots the evil eye.

KEVIN

What?

MONICA

No jokes or politics. You promised.

The back door to the kitchen EXPLODES open. Revealing:

NICK (30s): Dark skin. Handsome. Rugged. Really pissed.

NICK

You think that's funny? Say it to my
face!

Nick storms towards Kevin. Evelyn blocks his way.

EVELYN

You promised you'd stay in the back.

NICK

Ironical choice of words. And that's before I heard *him* say *that*.

(to Monica)

You let that Asshole make comments? With my daughter in the room?

MONICA

She's *our* daughter, Nick! And that word's worse than Kevin's jokes. What are you doing here?

A flustered Evelyn holds her ground.

EVELYN

Nick asked to be here for the holiday. He'll always be Tianna's father. Family. And always welcome in our home. I was going to tell you soon. We didn't know you were coming - tonight!

Nick drops down at Tianna's side.

NICK

Baby, you look beautiful. What are you, eight?

TIANNA

I'm nine.

NICK

Time goes fast. You should visit more. Before you're grown up, in your teens.

MONICA

We've been through this. I have custody!

Nick jumps up, in Kevin's face.

NICK

My daughter deserves to know who she is. She's not some white man's property!

He **SHOVES** Kevin - who stumbles into Evelyn's tea tray. Porcelain **SHATTERS** against tile.

TIANNA

Dad!

Both Kevin and Nick swing around.

KEVIN

Honey, go to the living room.
Everything'll be OK.

NICK

She means me. Come on T, let's go away.

Tom slides between the combatants.

TOM

Nick, you promised you'd be civil. Now
you need to leave. Right away.

Little Darren WHIMPERS. An enraged Nick looks his way.

TOM

That's right. There's babies here. I
don't care what your problem is. There'll
be no violence in my home today.

Tom puffs e-cig smoke in Nick's face. Nick makes a fist,
but backpedals towards the exit. He points at Monica.

NICK

I'm calling tomorrow. You'd better pick
up. Or it'll be my lawyer - next time.

He SLAMS the door. The adults look stunned. Monica
reaches for her daughter.

MONICA

Come to Mom -

TIANNA

Don't touch me!

Tianna runs for the back room.

MONICA

Where are you going?

TIANNA

To the couch. And to sleep!

Another SLAM. This one's hers. The adults turn towards
Jayden. The boy looks detached. Oddly remote.

KEVIN

Maybe you should go to bed, too.

Jayden glances meekly up from his tea. He opens his mouth... And VOMITS. Foam sprays across the table. Laced with blood.

MOMENTS LATER

Monica and Kevin cradle an unconscious Jayden. Evelyn paces, on the phone. She hangs up and looks their way.

EVELYN

The hospital's full. They're turning people away.

FLASHBACK TO MONTECORE

Kevin and Alan lean against a wall.

KEVIN

Is there a cure?

ALAN

Not quite, but I've got ideas.

RETURN TO PRESENT

Monica and Kevin exchange looks.

KEVIN

We have to go to Montecore. Dr. Alan Gibney's there.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - ER - MORNING

Morning sun peeks through barred windows. The place looks worse by light of day. FLU PATIENTS lie on gurneys - hooked up to tangled IVs.

INJURED PROTESTORS take up remaining space. Stab wounds. Concussions. Broken limbs.

Alan and Jose work on FRANKLIN (40s) - one of Isaah's bodyguards. Alan digs a bullet out of Franklin's arm. The big man struggles. Jose holds him down.

Alan drops the bullet in a metal tray. CLINK.

ALAN

So - where was the shooting? You know I've got to ask that, right?

FRANKLIN

Uh, in the neighborhood. Two blocks away.

ALAN
So you just walked in. Casually?

FRANKLIN
It wasn't my fault! I went out to get a candy bar. Then WHAM - someone shot me from behind.

JOSE
Sure. That always happens here.
(to Alan)
You know where these guys are really coming from? That fuckin' melee downtown.

Alan slaps gauze on Franklin's wound.

FRANKLIN
Ow!

ALAN
And you traveled an hour or more on the D train - just so you can't be traced? I'll give you credit; that takes guts.

He turns away. Franklin grabs his hand.

FRANKLIN
I need meds. For the pain.

ALAN
Jose, prescribe this man - something.
(to Franklin)
Excuse me while I make my rounds. There are people really dying here.

Across the room: the elevator door slides open. Hailey darts out, carrying BLOOD SAMPLE TUBES.

HAILEY
Here's the contrasts you asked for!

Alan hands the tubes to Jose.

ALAN
Take these to the lab. Add two ML of the solution I've marked 958-A. That one's a long-shot, but we got to give it a try.

The lobby doors BURST open. The security guard and a PARAMEDIC rush through with a gurney.

An unconscious Cissa lies buried in bloody sheets.

Isaah races alongside. His face swollen - unrecognizable.

PARAMEDIC

We've got a four year old. She's been shot!

ISAAH

Save my Cissa. Please!

Alan swings the gurney towards OR. He races with it to the doors: Isaah and the others in tow.

ALAN

Where did this happen?

ISAAH

Who cares?

ALAN

How long has she been bleeding out?

ISAAH

About forty five minutes. I think.

ALAN

You waited that long? You're kidding me?

ISAAH

My cousin's a doctor. Sort of. We thought it was under control!

Alan KICKS open the OR doors.

ALAN

Sir, I know you're upset.

ISAAH

She's my baby, Dammit!

ALAN

I know. But don't get in my way.

Alan nods to the Security Guard.

ALAN

Get details from this man. And bring him some coffee. Please.

The OR doors shut. Alan - and Cissa - are gone. Isaah stands at the entrance, ready to bolt inside.

The Security Guard gently lays a hand on his gun. Isaah collapses in a chair, SOBS. The guard pats his shoulder.

GUARD

I'll get coffee, Buddy. Stay right there.

MOMENTS LATER

A coffee machine GURGLES. The guard and paramedic watch Isaah from across the room.

Franklin wanders over to Isaah. Isaah glances up. The two men recognize each other, and hug.

GUARD

(to the Paramedic)

Bet they got injured in the same place.

PARAMEDIC

Gee, I wonder where that could be?

GUARD

That guy with the kid - it's sad.

PARAMEDIC

I see shit like that all the time.

GUARD

He looks familiar.

PARAMEDIC

Dunno. All patients look the same to me.

MOMENTS LATER

Jose and Hailey watch the Guard serve Isaah's coffee.

HAILEY

That poor baby. I hope she's ok.

JOSE

I know. Innocent kids are the worst.

HAILEY

I never see that where I work.

JOSE

The military? When do you guys start: 17?

Chaos at the entrance. The Clark family bursts inside.

Kevin carries a SEIZING Jayden. Monica hugs Darren to her chest. Hailey and Jose run their way.

JOSE

Haven't I seen you before? You're the reporter. That guy.

KEVIN

Where's Dr. Gibney? My son is sick!

HAILEY

I'm sorry. He's in... the ER.

Jose scoops Jayden out of Kevin's arms.

The Paramedic passes with Cissa's bloody gurney. Jose lays Jayden down, and pokes a needle into his arm.

MONICA

What are you giving him?

JOSE

I've seen this flu reaction before. Don't worry, it's just seizure meds.

Jayden relaxes. He lies on the gurney, PANTING. Monica holds Darren out to Hailey, at the verge of tears.

MONICA

Check Darren. He's sick, too.

Hailey takes the infant, and frowns at the heat she feels. She passes Darren to a NURSE.

HAILEY

Start IVs for both children. Bring the baby up to ICU.

KEVIN

I've got to talk to Alan!

MONICA

Will my baby be okay?

Hailey bends down to a shell-shocked Tianna.

HAILEY

Honey, you're quiet. How do you feel?

TIANNA

It's no big. I'm okay.

Hailey touches Tianna's forehead.

HAILEY

Yeah, you're fine.

She points to a vending machine across the room.

HAILEY

Go get water for your Mom and Dad, okay?

Hailey stands up, faces Monica.

HAILEY

The best thing you can do now is wait.
Trust me, you're in the best of hands.
(to Jose)
Let's get those tests going. The cure
isn't going to wait.

MONTAGE:

- Isaah slumps on a gurney, wounded Franklin at his side.
- In the OR: Alan operates on Cissa. Things aren't going well.
- Monica and Kevin sit on either side of Jayden's stretcher. They hold hands across his chest.
- Tianna watches a TV bolted to the wall. Images of the riots fill the screen. Tianna sees a shot of Isaah, looks over. Recognizes the grieving father's face.
- In the Lab: Hailey and Jose mix blood samples with 958-A. Hailey examines the mixture through a microscope. She looks up at Jose and smiles.
- In the OR: A machine BEEPS. Cissa CODES. Alan does his best to bring her back. But fails.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - ER - DAY

Alan steps out of the OR. Isaah runs to him, reads the tragic news on Alan's face.

ISAAH

How'd it go? Where is she?

ALAN

This never gets easier to say...

ISAAH

No!

ALAN

I'm sorry, Mister -

ISAAH

You bastard. You didn't try!

Isaah lunges. The security guard yanks him away.

Franklin leaps to his feet, ready to fight. Then assesses the situation and stops. Whispers in Isaah's ear.

FRANKLIN

Let it go. I know it's hard. But you
can't get arrested here.

Monica and Kevin watch from several feet away.

MONICA

That poor man. His child is dead?

KEVIN

That won't be us. No way.

He makes a bee-line towards Alan.

KEVIN

I'll get us answers. I swear.

Hailey and Jose run to Alan's side; just as Kevin
arrives. Hailey bounces with giddy excitement.

HAILEY

958-A's a success!

JOSE

Well, it didn't *kill* the virus. But it
reacted - with every slide.

ALAN

You're kidding.

JOSE

Nope. Dead serious. What's it mean?

ALAN

958-A's not a cure. But it traces how the
virus works. I was wondering why some
people get infected, others don't. Now
that there's this... it's obvious. The
evidence - why didn't I see this before?

Alan stares out into space. Kev waves a hand in his face.

ALAN

Give it a rest, Dan Rather. I'm having an
"Ah-Ha" moment.

He points out patients to Hailey and Jose.

ALAN

What do these people have in common?
Come on, Geniuses. Think hard.

HAILEY

Age?

ALAN

We've treated everything from infants to ancients here.

JOSE

Income strata? Geographical location?

ALAN

Innovative, but no dice. It's even worse in New Jersey. Hailey, your turn again.

HAILEY

You know something? Give me a hint.

ALAN

Try ethnic similarities. It's plain as the nose on your face.

JOSE

This is The Bronx, Alan. Lots of rainbow colors here.

ALAN

Focus on the Flu only. Rule out patients with battle wounds.

HAILEY

Okay, there's that one. And this one. That man over there.

ALAN

Very good. And all white.

JOSE

That's not possible!

HAILEY

What about the kids that just came in?

She turns to Kevin.

HAILEY

I mean yours. No offense.

ALAN

Look at the mother! They're mixed. Which means they *might* be saved...

Alan runs towards the lab. Kevin, Hailey and Jose follow.

KEVIN

Only Caucasians get the flu?

ALAN

This nasty version? Ever hear of Sickle Cell Anemia? Imagine that, in reverse.

KEVIN

Then what caused it?

ALAN

(shrugs)

Nature. I guess.

They enter the lab. The door closes. Franklin and Isaah exchange looks. They'd overheard everything.

FRANKLIN

Holy shit.

ISAAH

Nature's a bitch. Ain't it?

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - LAB - CONTINUOUS

Alan grabs all slides labeled "958-A". He slips one under a microscope. Peers myopically through the lens.

ALAN

That's what I call beautiful.

He selects another slide, and looks again. Then beams at the others; a wide grin on his face.

ALAN

Textbook amazing. See this - and believe!

He practically head-butts Kevin into the scope. Kevin fumbles with the focus, blinks.

INSERT: The virus swarms a red blood cell. But only attacks one side.

KEVIN

What am I looking at?

ALAN

A god-damned miracle.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - ER - CONTINUOUS

Isaah and Franklin WHISPER back and forth. Tianna tugs on Monica's sleeve.

TIANNA

Mom, I saw those guys on TV.

MONICA

Baby, don't make stories up. Or tell one to your brother, instead. Something he likes to hear.

Isaah and Franklin huddle closer.

FRANKLIN

It's attacking white people?

ISAAH

Good. It's their turn to suffer.

Isaah stands up to leave; Franklin pulls him down.

FRANKLIN

That doctor said they have a cure. Maybe we should do something. About - him.

ISAAH

He tried to save Cissa!

FRANKLIN

And failed.

ISAAH

Are you suggesting - we kill *him*?

FRANKLIN

So what if one guy dies? He should let the Flu do it's thing. Level the god-damned playing field.

ISAAH

Are you crazy?

FRANKLIN

Nah. Just thinking in strategic ways.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - LAB - CONTINUOUS

Alan holds a slide up to the light. Hailey, Jose and Kevin squint.

HAILEY

You understand how the virus works?

ALAN

958-A suppresses a combination of genomes. All of them, a Caucasian trait.

KEVIN
So there's a cure?

ALAN
At this point, just a theory. But one
that could clean up this mess.

JOSE
A theory you haven't told us about.

ALAN
I don't tell you all my ideas. If I did,
you'd call me insane.

HAILEY
What genomes are in play?

ALAN
Got a few hours? I'll explain.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - ER - CONTINUOUS

Isaah heads for the lobby doors. Franklin follows.

ISAAH
I'm not gonna kill an innocent man!

FRANKLIN
Too bad *they* don't feel that way.

The doors burst open, revealing...

The Tattooed Teen who shot Cissa. The security guard and
paramedic hold him up. The punk bleeds from a dozen
wounds; weak on his feet.

Isaah LEAPS.

ISAAH
Motherfucker!

The guard rips him off the teen.

GUARD
What the hell are you doing?

ISAAH
He killed my baby!

Isaah struggles. The guard holds him back.

The punk raises his head. He locks eyes with Isaah and
smirks.

TEEN PUNK

I have no idea what he's talking about.
That's Isaah Washington, by the way. I
saw him at the riots, shooting police.
He's dangerous. And bug-fucking insane.

The guard stares at Isaah's face.

GUARD

Holy shit. He's right.

He sucker punches Isaah, and yells towards the lobby.

GUARD

Call the police. We got a criminal here!

Franklin lunges at the guard. Isaah wipes blood from his
mouth, waves him away.

ISAAH

I can handle myself. You do what you
want. Your way.

Franklin caresses a HIDDEN GUN at his waist. Calmly, he
turns around and marches towards the lab doors.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - LAB - CONTINUOUS

Alan hops up on a counter. His audience awaits his words.

ALAN

Okay, folks - here's the story: a real
doozy. It's about a genome specific to
those of European lineage. With this
teeny tiny vulnerability. One that the
Anargen virus finds... quite nice.

Franklin KICKS OPEN the door. Aims. Shoots.

Two bullets RIP through Alan's chest. It's a perfect
shot; Alan drops dead.

A third bullet SMASHES the microscopes and slides. Jose
and Kevin instinctively dive. Glass shrapnel flies over
their heads.

Hailey switches into combat mode; she tackles Franklin.
They hit the floor. But Franklin's too big to handle. He
rolls Hailey over in seconds.

HAILEY

You idiot! You know what you've done?

FRANKLIN

Bitch - you know what side you're on?

He aims the pistol at her head. Hailey joint-locks his wrist, twists. The room reverberates - BANG!

Franklin's throat vaporizes in a red mist. Hailey collapses on his chest. Kevin and Jose run to her side.

HAILEY

(gasps)

Don't mind me. Check on everyone outside.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - ER - CONTINUOUS

It's chaos out there as well.

Isaah grabs the gun from the guard's belt. PATIENTS and MEDICAL PERSONNEL duck and cover. Isaah swings the weapon around, wild-eyed.

Monica yanks Tianna onto Jayden's bed; shields them with her body.

The TV on the wall broadcasts updates of the riots.

And Congress. Everywhere you look, it's bad news.

INT. FLATLIHN BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Here - it's quiet as a tomb.

A bruised Ammon and Connor stand before a memorial. PARISHIONERS at their side.

Connor kneels before a picture of Rachel. He lights a candle. Ammon lights one for Sarah, as well. The flock behind them MUMBLES prayer.

CONNOR

(whispers to Ammon)

Mother and Sarah are gone. What do we do?

AMMON

Do? Pray - and await God's command.

CONNOR

But Father, it's getting worse outside.

AMMON

Let the non-believers burn.

INT. MONTECORE HOSPITAL - ER - CONTINUOUS

Kevin and Jose race from the lab. SEVERAL NEW GUARDS run in the door.

Isaah shoots wildly, edges for the exit. A few RIOT INJURED PATIENTS take his side.

Kevin spots Monica and the kids across the room.

He darts towards them. Bullets from Isaah and the Guards SMASH into the wall. Plaster rains down on Kevin's head.

Kevin skids, and slides to a stop - inches from his family. Thinking quick, he builds a barrier made from medical carts. Pushes both kids to the floor.

MONICA

What about Darren?

KEVIN

He's safe. Upstairs!

Monica tries to stand. Kevin yanks her back down.

KEVIN

Whatever happens, don't get up.

Tianna's frozen where she is. She *looks* up - at the TV.

A BREAKING NEWS ALERT BLINKS. It's the female reporter - somber and pale at her desk.

FEMALE REPORTER

Broadcasting from the White House,
Sitting President Trumbull has announced
a unilateral coalition of his party.

An image of Trumbull fills the screen.

TRUMBULL

Our nation has been through trying times.
Trials of crime and disease equally. I
hereby declare a State of Emergency.

A bullet grazes Isaah's cheek. He reaches for the door.

Jose dives for him - a stray bullet from a guard SMASHES his shoulder. Jose SCREAMS, hits the floor.

Isaah runs out. ALARM BELLS RING.

Tianna crawls over to her parents. Kevin and Monica hug their children tight.

TIANNA

I'm scared!

KEVIN

Sweetie, it'll be okay.

MONICA

Really?

KEVIN

I don't know. Just say "yes."

The smoke clears. The Clark family stares up at the TV.

The brightest thing in the room? Trumbull's smile.

TRUMBULL

As of today, April 15th, I propose to have VP Rollins ruled incompetent. I ask for the nation's good - not mine. As your President, I promise to make the hard decisions. Law and order will be restored - in every corner of the land. Until we find out what's going on, every malcontent will shot, or thrown in jail. I swear, once this is over... America will rise again.

Kevin stares at the rubble that used to be the ER.

KEVIN

Not from the Hell I've just seen.

FINAL FADE OUT: