

monster

A live action series proposal by Stephen Fox

Tonight is the darkest moment in David's life...

...tomorrow will be worse.

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Series Guide

By Stephen Fox

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Tonight is the darkest moment in David's life.

David's best friend, his brother, is dead. His marriage is falling apart. His career and reputation are in ruin. It's been a year since the nightmare began, and David is out of things to lose.

David believes his brother killed himself. In reality, he was murdered. The killer wasn't a demented man. He was an ancient Egyptian demon who feeds on human blood.

Matthew is a vampire, and he's been destroying men, body and soul, for thousands of years.



His ritual isn't just about blood. It's about tearing apart the spiritual core of his victims before he steals their bodies and lives to wear them as his own. Matthew is part vampire and part serial killer. His favorite prey are virtuous men like David's brother, Ray. For eighteen months, Matthew tormented Ray. When the time came for Matthew to take his body, Ray chose instead to kill himself. Now, Matthew stalks David.

Monster is the story of David's redemption, and Matthew's past. Every episode details both present day, and the twisting past of these two characters.

Tonight is the darkest moment in David's life...

Tomorrow will be worse.





David

David is a good man. His grew up an orphan. As a teenager, he lost the grandfather that took his parent's place. Pain and loss have always been a part of David's life, but something inside him broke the day his brother died.

David and Ray were more than brothers. In the midst of chaos, the two of them always found refuge in one another. As kids they dreamed of becoming superheroes. As adults, they built a small, successful art studio. Just as the business found its footing, David met Jennifer. After just a few months, the two were married. For the first time in years, Ray felt alone...but he wasn't. Matthew began amplifying Ray's feeling of isolation into an intense depression.

Ray became unreliable, emotionally unstable, and chemically dependent. David worked twice as hard to keep the studio afloat, but in the end it wasn't enough. The brothers lost their studio. A few weeks later, Ray killed himself.

David has withdrawn. Every day his depression gets deeper. Every day Matthew takes another step toward making David his new host. Tonight, David will meet Matthew for the first time.

It's been a year since the nightmare began, and
David is out of things to lose.

Matthew/MONSTER*

Matthew is a destructive force. Since ancient Egypt, he has preyed on the souls of righteous men. Not simply a murderer, **he's a parasitic hunter.** Each victim grants Matthew a body to live in. His real treasure though, is feeding on his hosts' relationships, identity, & principles.

Monster explores Matthews history from ancient to modern. Beginning in the age of Pharaohs, and leading to David and his brother — Matthew has left behind him a massive wake of diverse stories and victims. Through all the ages though, **David is Matthew's favorite prey.**

Matthew discovered David while tormenting Ray. The brothers' love for one another created an obsession inside him. When Ray killed himself, he robbed Matthew of that pleasure. Now Matthew wants revenge on a man.

Now, Matthew will unleash his wrath on David.



characters - secondary

Jennifer:

Jennifer sincerely loves David. Before Ray's meltdown, Jennifer and David were trying to have a baby. Around the same time, Ray killed himself. David withdrew, money dried up, and life became empty.

It's been over a year and things are much worse. A warm home has been replaced by a drafty apartment, and a hopeful marriage has become a painful wreck. Jennifer doesn't want a perfect husband. She wants a husband that loves her more than the memory of a dead brother.

Ray:

Ray was David's hero. The day his parents died, Ray decided that David was his responsibility. When David was five, he was nearly run over by a reckless driver. Instead, Ray protected him and almost died in his place. From that day on, David knew his brother was willing to die for him.

David and Ray grew to be very different men, but loyalty trumped their differences. Ray always had a dream, and David always had a plan. Together, they built a studio and planned their lives. Then, David met Jennifer.

After Jennifer and David married, Ray felt orphaned again. From the shadows, Matthew used his abilities to manipulate David's already intense feelings. What began as a mild depression quickly escalated to thoughts of suicide. Ray became erratic, and his actions led to the bankruptcy of the brothers' studio.

After a vicious fight with David, Ray disappeared. That same night, Matthew approached Ray as a "friend." Two weeks later, Ray was dead.

Jason:

Jason grew up down the street from David and Ray. He came from an abusive home. The brothers would often hide him in an old unused bomb shelter on their grandfather's farm. Over the years, Jason and David have kept in touch. When Ray died, Jason reached out to David in support. Since then, Jason has done his best to be a constant voice of encouragement in David's life.

synopsis—pilot episode

It's pitch black. A very young David cries out to his brother, begging him to turn the light back on. After a second, Ray complies. **Ray is teaching David how to be brave. It isn't working.**

Present day, David lays on a nice couch in a shoddy apartment. He snores loudly as his wife Jennifer tries to wake him. He's overslept for a rare interview opportunity. David rushes to get to make the appointment, but arrives twenty minutes late, unshaven, and unshowered. **He doesn't get the job.**

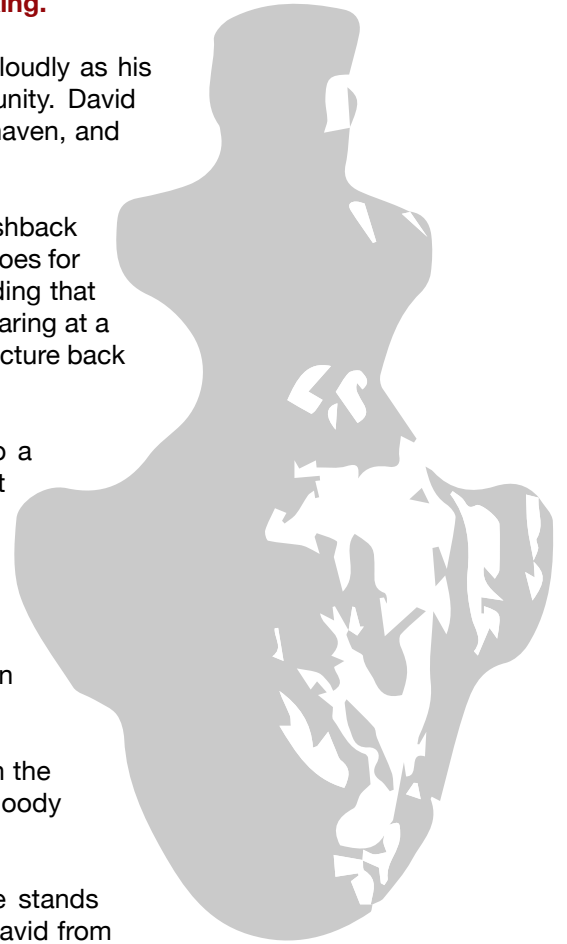
The rest of David's day doesn't improve. He fights with his wife, has a painful flashback of Ray, and then passes out on the couch again. When he awakes at 2am, he goes for a stroll to clear his head. On his way to a bar, he stops by a burnt down building that was once he and Ray's studio. He remembers bits about the last year while staring at a damaged picture of he and his brother. The scene ends with him tossing the picture back into the ashes and walking on to a bar he's never visited.

"Jakes" is a sweaty, smoke-filled, dive of a bar. David makes his way to a stool. Sitting next to him is Matthew. David doesn't know Matthew, but **Matthew has been stalking David since before Ray died.** Matthew strikes up a conversation that begins awkwardly, but gives David a focus for his frustration. As the two talk, Matthew becomes progressively more irritable. David feels uncomfortable, and begins to leave. Matthew uses his mental abilities to amplify David's fear—immobilizing him. Before David's eyes, Matthew transforms into a vampire. In a few seconds, Matthew kills everyone in the building...everyone except David.

Matthew thanks his new "friend" for the conversation, and tosses a twenty on the blood-covered bar. He slaps David on the back on his way out, leaving a bloody hand-print.

The next scene begins with another bloody hand-print. David is 8, and he stands horrified at the scene of an accident. Ray was hit by a car while protecting David from a reckless driver. David and the boys' grandfather fear the worst. The scene ends with David singing to his hurt brother while an EMT re-inflates Ray's lung.

David snaps out of the flashback, and he's at home on his couch. In front of him is the leather jacket he wore the night before. **The bloody hand-print stares back at him.** The episode ends as David runs to the bathroom and violently vomits.



synopsis—season 1

Monster is a story of redemption.

David tries every day to “fix” himself, but can’t. He doesn’t know that Matthew has been manipulating his emotions and circumstances since the day Ray died. **Matthew is actually the reason Ray died.**

When Matthew and David meet, things begin with a conversation, and end when Matthew contorts into vampire and massacres everyone in a tiny bar...everyone except David.

Over the next several nights, Matthew ambushes David and forces a very tense relationship. **David is terrified by Matthew. Matthew is fascinated by David.** More than that, **Matthew has begun the ritual to make David his new host body.** The final step of this ritual is complete **when David commits murder.**

Season one is about the temptation of David and the origin of Matthew. David will be tempted to steal, lie, and ultimately kill. As we follow David’s path, we also see glimpses of Matthew’s history. **Season one explores key victims in Matthew’s past.** From a Roman warrior, to a virtuous inmate, *Monster* Season One will follow Matthew’s path from **mindless demon to ritualistic killer.**

Near the climax, David nearly kills 20 year old man his wife slept with. That event begins the process of David “waking up” from the emotional coma Matthew has put him in. When David quietly leaves the city, he quickly realizes that physical distance from Matthew has a dramatic result. That distance weakens Matthew’s emotion-manipulating abilities. As a result, David has a clear mind for the first time in 18 months. In that moment of peace, David takes several steps toward rebuilding his life. When Jennifer sees David making real strides toward recovery, the two start down the path of reconciliation. While the two lay in bed talking, David thinks about his brother.

David rereads Ray’s suicide note, and realizes that it’s full of hidden warnings. David finally understands that Matthew hunted Ray. From that moment on, David fights back.

David finds Matthew, and confronts him. To his surprise, Matthew tells David every detail of Ray’s final days. David attacks Matthew. Matthew is weakest just before he takes a new host, so David is actually able to do some damage. Matthew lashes out and nearly kills David.

The next morning, David calls in an anonymous tip that brings a SWAT team to Matthew’s door. While Matthew battles the SWAT team, David travels to his grandfather’s old farm.

Matthew is battered from his battle, and must find David before his body dies. The final episode of season 1 is a parallel story about Matthew hunting David, and David locking himself in an old bomb shelter on his grandfather’s farm. He intends to die there, preventing Matthew from taking his body. The episode ends as Matthew apparently dies in a gutter, and David reconciles with the ghost of his dead brother.

season 1 episode summaries

Among the Ashes *(the full script is included in the final section of this series bible)*

See page 4 (synopsis—pilot episode)

Meat

David finds himself in the freezer aisle of the grocery store...staring at the butchered, wrapped meat. His mind flashes back to the massacre at the bar—until Matthew slaps his hand on his back just like he did night before. David stumbles backwards shocked to see Matthew again. Matthew catches David by the collar and drags him out of the store. Their “walk” ends at an abandoned warehouse that’s been burnt to the ground (the former studio of David and Ray). After a very tense few minutes, David accepts that he can’t overpower or escape Matthew. The two begin to talk more about David’s life as Matthew sort of interviews him. Matthew listens intently. By the time the evening is over, the two are talking and most of the tension is gone. The episode ends with a slow reveal that **Matthew secretly lives in the apartment next to David**, and has for many months.

Dedication

Jason’s daughter is being dedicated, and David has been invited. He and Jennifer fight, because he didn’t mention it to her and now she’s unable to attend due to work. The dedication is at a small church of 50 or so people, and David falls asleep just as the service begins. Jason is hurt. After the dedication, he and David talk in the church for several hours remembering Ray and the times they had together as kids. David is reminded of everything he loved about his brother as the two talk. He’s starting to feel differently about things, and a sort of small sense of hope takes hold just as Matthew appears (but doesn’t enter the church). David leaves, and lashes out at Matthew on the way out. As a parallel story, we see glimpses of Matthew from the 15th century as he preys on a Catholic priest, who is struggling with his role in a corrupt church. In the end, the priest refuses Matthew but is killed as a result.

Not Again

David comes home after a late night of talking to Jason. His goal is to really try and reach out to Jennifer. When he arrives home though, Jennifer has left a letter for him. David stares at the folded paper for a second, and then breaks down. The letter has his name on it just like the suicide note from his brother did—an unfortunate coincidence that spirals David into an overwhelming flashback of that day. When he recovers, David throws the letter away without reading it and leaves the house. He goes to the warehouse instinctively. After a couple of hours, Matthew appears. The events of the day have sort of reset all the progress David had made the day before. In this episode, we follow Matthew in ancient Rome. He’s stalking a Roman soldier whose commander has just ordered him to purge an entire opposing village. The soldier wrestles with the brutality of the order, and finally submits. When he kills the first villager, Matthew takes his body and uses the seige as an opportunity to feed.

Little Bastard

David’s wife had an affair with a nineteen year old busboy at the diner where she’s taken a job. This episode begins with David and Matthew eating at the same diner. David is becoming more cynical and despondent. Oddly, he’s also becoming more comfortable with Matthew’s company. The two speak more casually, and less about the circumstances of their “friendship.” The episode ends with David sort of reflecting on the irony that the person that’s helped him the most is a murderer. The final shot is of Matthew staring into the bar at the nineteen year old busboy. Meanwhile, we learn about Matthew’s time as an American soldier in Vietnam. While anticipating a battle, Matthew uses his ability to bend other’s emotions and causes the soldiers to open fire on civilians. The incident escalates to an event similar in scale to the Mai Lai Massacre.

season 1 episode summaries

Let's Negotiate

After talking to David over the last several nights, Matthew decides to do something “nice” for his new friend. After dinner at the diner, the two make their way to the warehouse where Matthew has abducted the busboy and tied him to a chair. Matthew essentially tells David that whatever he decides to do, Matthew will make sure he doesn't pay a consequence. The two spend the night talking through what killing or hurting the busboy will and won't accomplish. In his frustration, David begins to brutalize the busboy, but ultimately the night ends with David cutting him free. Matthew is frustrated. David walks home alone. Once he's there, he sits down at a the dining room table, next to the place Jennifer always sits. The final shot ends with Matthew devouring the busboy. As this story unfolds, we follow Matthew to a poker game in a lavish 20s hotel. During the game, Matthew manipulates every player at the table to his own warped end.

Darkest

Darkest begins with a hard knocking on the door that wakes David from his spot at the dining room table. He stumbles to the door, and Jason is standing there with coffee. Jennifer sent him after she left, knowing that David would be a mess. The two go walking in the park, a start contrast to a burnt-out warehouse. David wears sunglasses as the brightness of the park is almost too much for him. The two talk, but David doesn't want to hear anything Jason has to say. David leaves Jason and his coffee alone on a park bench. As Jason leaves the park, Matthew catches up to him. Matthew pins Jason by the throat against the hood of his own car. Jason is afraid, but he doesn't back down. Matthew barks a threat and leaves. In “Darkest” we meet Matthew as a young Egyptian boy. It's before he becomes a demon. While we don't delve into the entirety of his origin, in this story we learn that Matthew was at one time a virtuous man himself. Matthew did however, have four brothers. These brothers were a constant source of torment for Matthew.

Second Chance

Matthew dresses like a wealthy man. It turns out, he is. Tonight, Matthew offers David a job. No interview, no tests, just a few days in New York to see the business. Before David leaves, Jennifer comes home to see him. The two fight, and David leaves with Matthew. What David doesn't know? Part of Matthew's ritual is setting his new host up in a suitable life. When Matthew kills his new victim, and uses their body, they're already established in a life he's accustomed to. The trip is also the last step in the ritual. It's intended to be a final temptation. While he's in New York though, David visits a gallery featuring one of he and Ray's favorite artists. That, combined with a few other triggers is able to give David some much needed perspective. David leaves New York to find Jennifer without telling Matthew. The change in spirit angers Matthew. The second track of this episode focuses on Matthew stalking David before they met. We get details about Matthew's obsession with David and his brother. We also discover at this point that Matthew is responsible for Ray's death.

Alcohol & Blood

David returns early from New York. He doesn't know it, but the physical distance from Matthew makes it easier for him to think clearly for the first time. He spends his first day back home cleaning the apartment and putting together a resume. While he's unpacking, he finds Ray's suicide note. Not quite ready to take that reality head on, he puts it away. Later that night, Jennifer comes home and she's floored by the progress. The two begin talking. The distance between them shrinks just a bit, and they have sex for the first time in months. Afterwards, as they lay there, David sort of reflects on the parallels between Ray's last days and what he himself has been going through. David remembers something about Ray's letter. He gets up and rereads the letter. In it, there are clues that Ray was also being tormented. During Matthew's flashbacks in this episode, he and Ray meet. The process is eerily similar to David's encounter with Matthew. These scenes are a real opportunity to show Ray as a good man, and not the albatross he appears.

season 1 episode summaries

The Truth

David reads Ray's suicide letter in voice over as the episode begins at the brothers' old studio. It's a heartfelt note from a loving brother trying to prepare David for Matthew. The letter reads with dual meanings, so Matthew is never mentioned directly. However it does talk about being tested by demons, and Ray trying to protect his brother. As David finishes reading, Matthew appears. David confronts him. Surprisingly, Matthew denies nothing. Instead, he explains in very specific detail the way he hunted Ray, why he's now tormenting David, and what will happen if David refuses him. The episode ends with David attacking Matthew. Oddly, he's somewhat successful. In the end though, Matthew breaks David's arm and leaves him on his back in the ashes. The episode ends with David laying next to an old picture of he and his brother that had been discarded in the first episode.

SWATing Flies

After Matthew reveals his ultimate plans, David begins to plot a means for putting an end to him. After a day of planning, David anonymously follows up with a detective at the local police station. During that conversation, David leads the detective to believe that the massacre at the bar was perpetrated by 5 men living in an apartment next to him. He says the men are heavily armed, and come home at early hours every morning. In response, the police force mounts a raid on the apartment building, specifically targeting David's apartment. The rest of the episode is a flurry of violence. In this episode, the flashbacks are David's. These scenes continue the story of Ray nearly dying after he was hit by a car. We follow the brothers to the hospital and through a tense surgery.

BOOM

Based on the information Matthew shared about himself, along with the best research David could throw together, David sets a plan in motion. Using the SWAT raid to buy himself some time, David sends his loved ones as far away as he can. Meanwhile, he stockpiles food and weaponry. After preparations, David drives to his grandfather's farm, and barricades himself in the bomb shelter. His belief is that Matthew has a very specific amount of time to complete the hosting process. If he can't bond with a host in that time, David hypothesizes, he'll die. This episode reconnects David and Ray in an almost supernatural setting. The memories of the place create an opportunity for David to talk to his brother, and reconcile. As a parallel plot thread, Matthew is hunting David. As the episode ends, Matthew collapses during his search. The final shot is of David turning off a flashlight in the bomb-shelter.









sequential samples







sequential samples

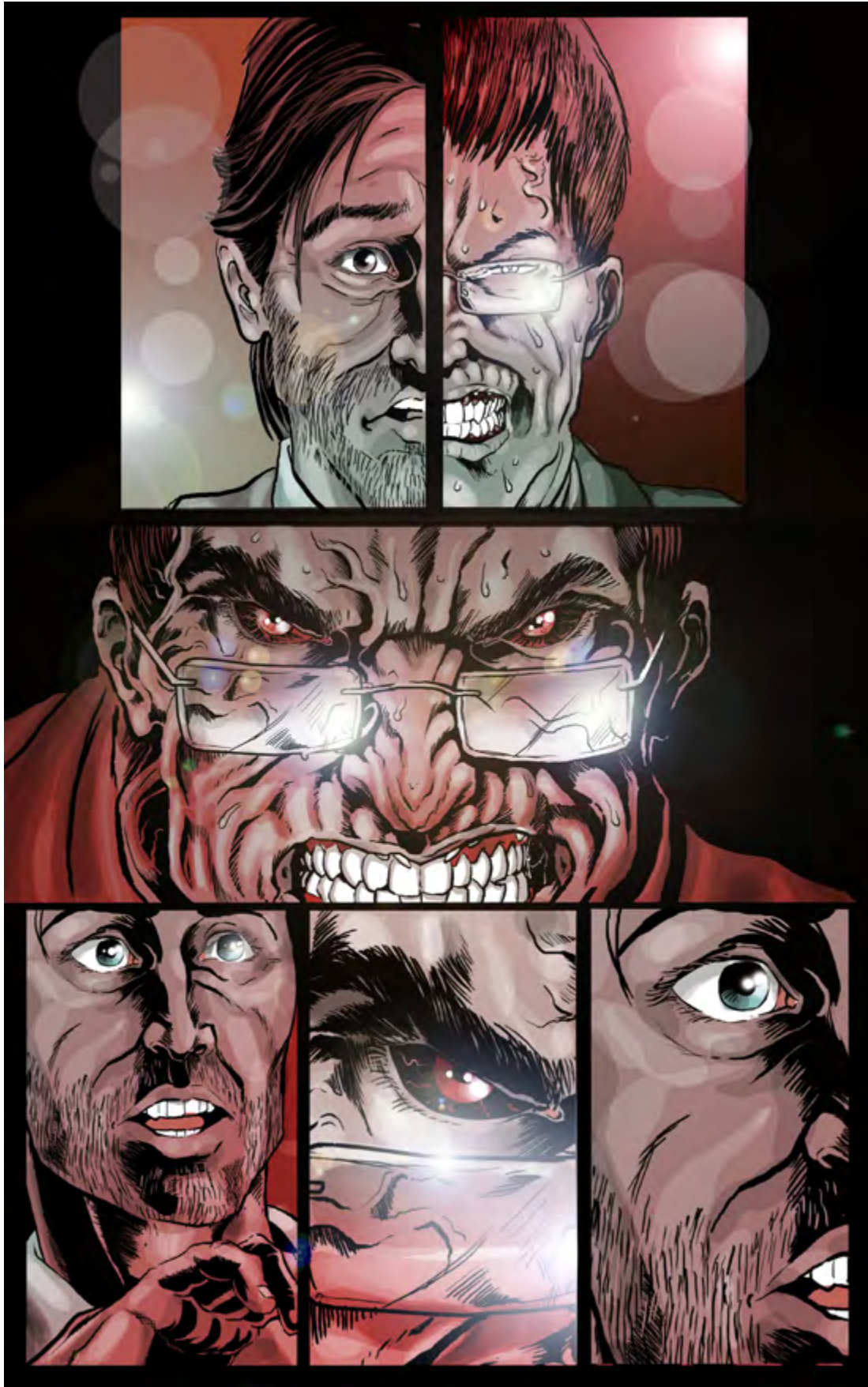
















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Pilot Episode: Among the Ashes

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3/29/2013

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pilot episode: among the ashes

SCENE 1: SHELTER

INT. GRANDFATHER'S FARM/BOMB SHELTER - DAY

Scene opens on a pitch black screen. The voices of two little boys fill the void.

DAVID
Pleeeeease, Ray.

RAY
Calm down David! Nothing can hurt you down here. This place was built to get hit by a bomb.

DAVID
I don't like it. PLEASE, just turn it back on.

RAY
You're being a baby.

David's voice turns frantic.

DAVID
(screaming)
TURN IT OOOOOOOOON!!!

RAY
OKAY, OKAY!

A cone of light pops on, revealing a small 10'x10' concrete room with no windows. A ladder is bolted to one wall that leads out of the shelter. Ray, a ten year old boy stands with a flashlight in the middle of the room. There are old comics & toys scattered all around. David, a five year old, is huddled in one corner.

RAY
If we're going to be superhero--

Ray notices that David is crying. He quickly stoops down to comfort his brother.

RAY
Hey, I'm sorry. Are you okay?

DAVID (CRYING)
I--I--jus-just don't want to do that any more. It's TOO dark.

Ray sits next to David on the floor, and places the flashlight between them. He grabs his little brother by the hand.

(CONTINUED)

pilot episode: among the ashes

CONTINUED:

2.

RAY

Listen, if we're going to be superheroes, we have to be brave. I'm scared too, but we don't know if we'll have to fight in the dark sometimes. Part of being a hero is ignoring how you feel and just doing what's good.

Beat.

RAY

I'm going to turn out the light again, are you ready?

DAVID (CRYING)

NO! *I don't want tooooo!*

RAY

I know, but we can't just be superheroes in the daytime. Anybody can be a hero when it's easy.

DAVID

Could--couldn't the dark be my weakness? Every superhero has to have a weakness...

Ray takes a deep breath and thinks. He doesn't like the idea, and he really thinks he's teaching his 5 year old brother an important principle.

RAY

I'll be right here. Just hold my hand and it won't be so bad.

Beat.

RAY

Don't be scared...I'll protect you.

DAVID

Can I sit in your lap?

RAY

Just this time. We'll do it this time just for practice, okay?

David climbs in Ray's lap and clings to him.

RAY

Ready?

David snuffles and nods.

pilot episode: among the ashes

CONTINUED:

3.

RAY
If we're partners, you'll still
have to go into the dark...

Ray turns off the flashlight.

SFX (FLASHLIGHT)
Click!

The room is black again.

RAY
...but I can always go there with
you.

SCENE 2: GETTING THERE

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

It's present day, and David is now a man in his mid-thirties. He's passed out on a couch in the middle of a old, low rent apartment.

The screen is still black. A woman's voice echos in the distance but sounds closer each time she speaks.

JENNIFER
...david...

JENNIFER
David...

JENNIFER
David! Wake up!

The screen blurs into focus as David opens his eyes. Jennifer is above, Nudging him. She's in a bath robe with a tacky diner uniform folded across one arm.

David groans, and slowly sits up. The apartment around him isn't nearly as posh as it's furniture. Paint is cracked, and the carpet is course and worn. An old fan spins slowly overhead. In one corner of the apartment there are 7 or 8 large paintings stacked and leaning against the wall.

David rubs his eyes while he gets his bearings.

DAVID
Wha--What? What's wrong?

Jennifer glares at David for an awkward second. He looks back blankly. He's unshaven and his clothes look like he's been wearing them for about three days.

(CONTINUED)

pilot episode: among the ashes

CONTINUED:

4.

JENNIFER

Remember? Interview? The one you
swore I wouldn't have to wake you
up for? It's in *twenty minutes*.

David's face goes slack. He shakes his head. He's
humiliated.

DAVID

I'm...I--*I can still make it*. I
just have to leave right now.

Jennifer gives David a long gaze. She's worn out with her
husband but she still loves him.

JENNIFER

David.

Jennifer shakes her head and stands up to get ready for
work. She walks to their bedroom and closes the door hard.

DAVID

Dammit.

SCENE 3: LIKE THIS

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT, LOBBY - DAY

A man dressed in a nice suit stands in the mailbox area of
the apartment lobby. This is Matthew. He's talking to the
property manager, who counts a large wad of bills.

PROPERTY MANAGER

You keep payin' six months
ahead...I don't care what you do in
there.

MATTHEW

Something told me that money might
be the road to your heart.

David straightens his jacket collar as he runs down the
staircase. He accidentally bumps Matthew. Matthew doesn't
budge. David stumbles, but keeps moving. He gestures an
apology as he goes.

DAVID

Sorry, pal!

Matthew smiles to himself.

(CONTINUED)

pilot episode: among the ashes

CONTINUED:

5.

MATTHEW

Trust me, I'm in **your** way.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY (MORNING RUSH HOUR)

David cuts his way through crowded sidewalks, looking up at the skyline from time to time to keep his bearings.

EXT. NEW HORIZONS CORPORATE OFFICE

It's a typical business office. David slides in the front door, and onto an elevator with a few other people.

David exits the elevator and approaches a receptionist in the lobby. She types away as if David weren't standing there.

STEPHANIE

Can I help you?

DAVID

Yes, ma'am. I'm here to interview with Jeff?

The receptionist looks at David somewhat judgmentally.

STEPHANIE

Oh...kay. You can have a seat right over there.

David heads to a chair, but sees the restroom just a short distance way.

INT. NEW HORIZONS CORPORATE OFFICE/BATHROOM

David enters the restroom as another man exits. He carefully checks each stall, trying not to stare at a half-naked man through the crack. The last stall actually has another guy in it--David and he exchange an awkward glance. David backs away and leans against the wall.

After a few seconds, there's a flush, and the other man exits his stall. He and David have a brief, silent exchange. The other begins to wash his hands, but notices that David is still just leaning against a nearby wall. The man dips his hands under the water and hurriedly exits the bathroom.

As soon as he leaves, David locks the bathroom door.

In a flurry, he takes off his shirt and tries to wash his hair using hand soap and a sink that's entirely too small. He washes his face, and dries off with paper towels. He does the same with his armpits, and then attempts to uncrease his shirt using the hand dryer.

(CONTINUED)

pilot episode: among the ashes

CONTINUED:

6.

After he finishes, David stands back and reevaluates. He grabs his face by the chin. He's not impressed.

While David stares at himself, someone jiggles the handle to the door.

OFFICE WORKER

Who the hell would lock the bat--

David tucks in his shirt and slides over to the door to unlock it. On the other side there's a surprised office worker. David smiles and scoots past him.

INT. NEW HORIZONS CORPORATE OFFICE/JEFF'S OFFICE

Jeff, an average, overweight man, shuffles through some papers on his unorganized desk while he chews a piece of gum. He's interrupted by a knock on his door.

SFX

Knock! Knock!

A cute, but heavy secretary sheepishly peeks in the door.

STEPHANIE

Hey Jeff? Your 800am interview *just* got here. He's waiting in the lobby.

Jeff leans forward and straightens his posture.

JEFF

Thanks, Steph...nice skirt, by the way.

Jeff smiles anxiously.

STEPHANIE

Um...*thanks*.

Stephanie ducks back out of Jeff's office.

JEFF

(mumbling)

Probably shouldn't have said *that*.

Jeff looks down at his watch. It's 820am.

INT. NEW HORIZONS CORPORATE OFFICE/LOBBY

CONTINUED:

7.

David and several other men sit in a row of chairs. Directly beside David is a young guy, in a dress shirt and tie. David still looks rough despite his best efforts. His phone vibrates. He pulls it out of his pocket. On the screen there's text from Jennifer.

TEXT

We'll be okay. Good luck.

David starts to respond just as the young guy next to him strikes up a conversation.

YOUNG GUY

You here for the call center job?

David looks over at him, and smirks.

DAVID

Sign-spinner. I've always wanted to do that.

David yawns and smiles.

YOUNG GUY

Seriously?

DAVID

30 bones an hour. Plus you get to take the sign home.

The young guy laughs and goes back to reading a Highlights magazine. Curiosity gets the better of David.

DAVID

What about you? Call center?

YOUNG GUY

No, that's where I'm coming from. I'm here for the accounting gig.

DAVID

What are you, twenty?

YOUNG GUY

Four, actually...twenty-four.

DAVID

Wow. Lookatcha. Ten years younger and all caught up.

David smiles as if he's said something witty. The young guy doesn't get it.

pilot episode: among the ashes

CONTINUED:

8.

YOUNG GUY
...right. Thanks.

The young guy straightens his tie and continues reading. David sort of gazes at the kid while his mind drifts. After a second, he leans his head back to take a quick nap while he waits. He's jarred at the sound of his name.

STEPHANIE
David? Jeff's ready for you.

INT. NEW HORIZONS CORPORATE OFFICE/JEFF'S OFFICE

Jeff is staring at his socks, which are white despite the fact that he's wearing dress clothes. He leans over and tugs his pants down to cover them a couple of times, but they keep riding up. He's startled by a knock on his door. It's David.

Jeff and David shake hands. Jeff looks down at his socks again and makes one last attempt to casually pull his pant leg over them.

JEFF
Dave?

DAVID
Uh--David actually.

There's an awkward moment as Jeff evaluates David's sloppy dress and unshaven face.

JEFF
Hm...Well, have a seat I guess.

David sits down, and quickly brushes his wet hair back as Jeff takes a seat. There are a couple of silent moments while Jeff looks through the papers on his desk.

JEFF
(clears throat)
Uh--UHN...I don't suppose you brought a copy of your resumé?

Beat.

JEFF
I seem to have misssssssplaced mine.

DAVID
I'm sorry. I didn't...I guess in retrospect that would've been a good idea...If it would help, I can run down the highlights?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

9.

Jeff continues shuffling papers. He reaches over to his phone.

JEFF

UH-UHN...No, that's okay. I'll
uh--I'll just have Stephanie find
it really quick.

Jeff's old office phone beeps as he presses the button to speak to Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

Yes Jef--Mr. Dickerson?

JEFF

Could you track down a copy of
David's resumé? It looks like I've
misplaced mine, and he didn't bring
one.

David smiles ironically as Jeff passively criticizes him.

STEPHANIE

Yes, sir. I'll have it in one sec.

Jeff folds his hands on top of his desk and looks at David as they wait. After a few beats, Jeff can't handle the silence.

JEFF

Sooooooo...you're Jason's friend?

DAVID

Yep. Since I was six.

JEFF

He's a good friend to have.

DAVID

That's absolutely true...

David's expression becomes thoughtful for a second.

DAVID

...honestly, with everything that's
happened over the last year...I
don't know what I would've done
without a friend like Jason.

JEFF

Right. We all really appreciate him
around here...that's for suuuuure.

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CONTINUED:

10.

Two quick, cute knocks rap on the door and Stephanie pops her head in.

STEPHANIE

Here you go! One M.I.A. resumé. It was really odd. For some reason it was listed as "Danny" in the computer.

DAVID

If Danny got here on time, I can be Danny.

David smiles, but Jeff and Stephanie only give polite grins in return.

DAVID

Too soon? ...right.

Stephanie exits the office, and Jeff takes a few seconds to skim David's resume.

JEFF

Uh-UHN!

Beat.

JEFF

Huh...so you were an artist for fifteen years? I guess that makes sense...

DAVID

Actually, I ran the logistical side of the studio. It was more of a small business, really. Bookkeeping, vendors, collec--

Jeff leans back in his chair and finally raises his eyes to David.

JEFF

Right. Well tell me about yourself.

David seems surprised by the question.

DAVID

Let's see...I...I like writing and art. Not to toot my own horn, but I'm pretty great at math...

Jeff leans back to his desk and taps David's resume with a pen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

11.

JEFF

It looks like your business closed almost six months ago...what've you been doing since then?

DAVID

If you find out, let me know.

David smirks, and then realizes that wasn't an "interview" response.

DAVID

Sorry--I guess I've been trying to sort out what's next.

Beat.

DAVID

I actually really enjoyed the accounting stuff at the studio, so when Jason mentioned the position here...

JEFF

(interrupting)
if you could go back to art, would you?

David fumbles around for a second, nervous.

DAVID

Yeah. Yes I would.

Beat.

DAVID

Honestly though, I just need a fresh start with something I'm good at.

Jeff scribbles a few lines through David's name on the resume and then stands up and straightens his pant leg.

JEFF

Okay, I think that does it for me...Thanks for coming by.

Jeff stands and extends his hand to David. David is a little taken off guard.

DAVID

Should...should I call back, or just wait to hear from you guys?

CONTINUED:

12.

JEFF
I'll have H.R. give you a call if
things move forward.

David and Jeff stand and awkwardly shake hands.

DAVID
Oh...*Okay*.

Jeff opens the door for David to exit his office. David stands, but doesn't move to the door just yet.

DAVID
Any chance this went well?

David has a very desperate expression. Jeff and he hold eye contact for just a minute, until Jeff shifts his focus away.

JEFF
Heh...well...*uh-UHN*...I just don't
think it's a good fit.

David takes a deep breath.

DAVID
Yeah, I get it.

Jeff rubs his neck and slowly shakes his head.

JEFF
I just--I mean...

DAVID
I KNOW I was late--and that's so,
so bad for an interview. The whole
"best foot forward" and
everything...but...Is there
anything I can do? I'll come back
tomorrow if that would help. I'll
come back the next *three* days and
get here before you unlock the
doors. If you can just give me a
chance to prove myself...

Jeff is sympathetic, but hasn't changed his mind about David.

JEFF
I don't know what to say.

David continues to stare at Jeff. A begging expression is the only tactic he has left.

CONTINUED:

13.

JEFF

I don't think this is what you want anyway. It's pretty obvious you're not out to impress anyone today.

DAVID

Just one more shot. I can do this job--Ask Jason.

JEFF

We all love Jason around here... But, I can't spend six months on someone that just want's a job to fill the gaps. *I'm sorry.*

David stares at Jeff.

DAVID

PLEASE. I'm not...I'm not usually like...

David catches a glimpse of himself in a glass window behind Jeff. He hates what he sees.

DAVID

...this.

SCENE 4: THANKS, JASON

EXT. MODERN COFFEE SHOP - DAY

It's a sunny day, and life buzzes on around the tiny cafe. Jason & David are sitting outside at a table just out front.

DAVID

Thanks for giving it a try. Hopefully I didn't make you look too bad.

Jason looks back at his friend, his expression is kind.

JASON

It's not like that, man. I just thought it might be a job you could stomach until things calmed down a little.

DAVID

So I shouldn't hold my breath for a second interview?

Jason laughs loudly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

14.

JASON

I'm not sure, but I think crying at the end might've been the wrong strategy.

DAVID

I thought maybe if I pulled the "emotionally unstable card" it might help him see past the unshaven hobo thing I have going lately.

JASON

NO. JOKE. You look awful. Like, REALLY awful.

DAVID

At least I wore a tie.

JASON

That tie looks like it's been in your back pocket for a month.

DAVID

Yeah, I know. I just...I dunno.

JASON

If anyone has a reason to be stuck in neutral, it's you. I'm not condemning you or your wrinkly-ass tie.

DAVID

I know, man. You never do.

David sort of stares down at the table, lost in his own thoughts.

DAVID

I don't know what's wrong with me. I just can't budge.

JASON

You know I understand.

Beat.

JASON

Can I give advice?

David looks back at him and nods.

CONTINUED:

15.

JASON

Just pick one thing every day and do it right. Tomorrow, add something else.

DAVID

Where would I even start?

JASON

Shaving. For the love of all that is holy, start with shaving. If I have to look at that pathetic excuse for facial hair--HOW do you have so many holes in your hair follicle patterns? Aren't you like 35?

DAVID

32. Point taken.

JASON

Seriously, if you try to change your life in a day--that doesn't happen. Just make progress every day.

DAVID

Okay. I can do that. One thing, every day.

David stares at his coffee.

JASON

Oh, hey I almost forgot--You and Jennifer are coming Sunday, right?

DAVID

Sunday?

JASON

I'll try not to take that personally. Callie's dedication. Remember?

DAVID

Ooooooh, yeah. Absolutely. We'll absolutely be there.

David's gaze drifts away from Jason's.

DAVID

Are you sure about this whole godfather thing? I'm a wreck, man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

16.

Jason grabs David by the arm, forcing David to look up at him.

JASON

We all go through hell, man. I know you though. You'll pull it together.

DAVID

Look at me, man. I'm lucky to pull my shoelaces together these days.

JASON

There's a difference in *who* you are, and *where* you are. I don't have faith in you blindly. I **know** you.

DAVID

If you ever die I guess it would make a helluva Lifetime movie.

JASON

Hilarious. Seriously though. This is my baby...not really joke territory.

DAVID

Yeah...yeah. You're totally right. We'll be there for sure.

Jason stands and starts collecting his trash. David does the same.

JASON

Do you guys need groceries or anything?

DAVID

I can't do that to you again, man.

JASON

You and Ray were there for me my whole life. Helping is kind of an honor.

DAVID

Thanks. I don't even know what we need.

Jason looks down at his watch and realizes he's been gone longer than he meant to be.

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CONTINUED:

17.

JASON

Crap. I gotta get back. Let me know what you guys need though. And seriously...SHAVE.

SCENE 5: BUDGETS & CUTS

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT/DINING ROOM - DAY

Jennifer is sitting at the dining room table sorting through a stack of bills and adding them up in a sloppy budget. Under a column that reads "income," it says "Jennifer \$350, David ?"

Jennifer's cell phone vibrates. As she answers, you can see that her fingernails have been bitten down.

SFX

BZZZZZZT! BZZZZZZT! BZZZZZZT!

JENNIFER

Hey, Jason...Everything okay?

Jennifer rubs her head anxiously. She begins to cry.

JENNIFER

No...No...It's not your fault.
Thank you.

Beat.

JENNIFER

Yeah, I'll try. Thanks, Jason...I appreciate you being there for him.

Jennifer scribbles through "David ?" on her makeshift budget. She begins to sob just as she hears David's key in the door. She quickly dries her tears and scoops the mail up. As David opens the door she puts the bills in a kitchen drawer.

David enters with a plastic bag from a local pharmacy.

JENNIFER

Hey, how'd it go?

David slides the bag on the kitchen table and takes off his jacket.

DAVID

I can't ever tell. You okay? I thought you'd be at work?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

18.

JENNIFER

Every once and a while I get to take a lunch. I thought we could maybe eat together and talk?

DAVID

About?

JENNIFER

I don't know...just talk.

Jennifer turns to the cupboard to get some ingredients for sandwiches.

JENNIFER

I did kind of start on a budget...

David lets out a quiet, frustrated laugh.

JENNIFER

What?

DAVID

Nothing.

Beat.

DAVID

I just knew you had an agenda.

Jennifer stops and takes a deep breath.

JENNIFER

I don't always have a checklist.

DAVID

You do. I guess one of us should, though.

David walks over to the kitchen and takes the bread and knife from Jennifer.

DAVID

Here, let me do that. You've been serving other people all morning.

Jennifer leans against the counter. and looks at the floor.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry.

CONTINUED:

19.

DAVID

For?

JENNIFER

I was pretty hateful this morning.

David keeps making lunch. He talks, but doesn't look Jennifer in the eye.

DAVID

I screwed up again.

Jennifer leans on David's back and slides her arms around his chest. She's trying not to cry.

JENNIFER

What can I do, baby?

David pulls away from Jennifer's embrace.

DAVID

DON'T--just *don't*.

David starts to walk to another room.

JENNIFER

We don't have to--Just stay and talk to me...*please*.

Jennifer takes David's hand.

JENNIFER

(desperate)

Please.

David stops and just stares at Jennifer. He loves her. He closes his eyes and turns to walk away.

DAVID

I can't. Not today.

Jennifer's eyes fill with tears. Her expression is regretful and exhausted.

JENNIFER

David, *please*?

David stops, and looks just over his shoulder at Jennifer.

DAVID

I didn't get it.

Jennifer is crying, but she's trying to contain it. David turns to look at her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

20.

JENNIFER

I don't *care*.

DAVID

Don't say *that*. I know you do. You don't have to pretend not to be disappointed. I am.

Jennifer grabs David by the hand. David pulls away.

JENNIFER

I DON'T. Yes, it would be great if you found a job. But that's *not* what I want.

DAVID

I don't think you know what you want right now. Whatever it is, I sure as hell don't have it anymore.

Jennifer covers her mouth, and starts to sob.

David turns, walks toward the bathroom and shuts the door.

SCENE 6: MIRROR, MIRROR

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM

Open on David's reflection in his bathroom mirror. The glass is old, and chipped around the edges. The bathroom is dark except for the light directly over the sink.

David stands staring at the bathroom mirror with his hands on either side of the sink. The water is running, and shaving cream sits on the toilet within hand's reach.

For a long minute, David examines his face. It's haggard and uneven. His eyes are sunken, and his wrinkles are deep. He's no longer an attractive young man.

He fills his hands with shaving cream and begins lathering it slowly across his face. He takes the razor in his hand and begins shaving.

Begin Flashback to:

EXT. YOUNG STUDIOS - DAY

An old brick building with a pitched roof and warehouse-style windows is situated in an old, neglected part of town.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

21.

RAY

Are you sure we can afford this?

DAVID

As long as we don't lose all our clients overnight...I think I might have sold a logo to the realtor actually.

INT. YOUNG STUDIOS

Ray and David stand in the middle of small warehouse space that's about 30'x30'. Ray walks around, taking it all in. David has a clipboard in his hand. He's mapping out where equipment can go.

DAVID

If we take down the shelves over there I think we can fit both light tables across that far wall. We'll have to figure out the electric. I want someone to check it out before we move it. Looks like it hasn't been used in years.

RAY

This is amazing.

Ray stares at the building. He's a little overwhelmed. He stops and smiles at his brother.

RAY

Do you realize we're finally here?

Ray's mind is buzzing with possibilities. David laughs at his brother.

RAY

Seriously! Look at this place, man. It's perfect. It's even better than what I imagined all those late high school nights.

Ray affectionately smacks David on the arm.

RAY

It's even got that eccentric artist vibe, yunno? Man...

DAVID

It's been a long time coming.

David shows Ray a drawing of the building that he has on his clipboard, under the map he's been sketching.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

22.

DAVID

I figure we can hand paint the logo right on the brick above the door outside? I think it'd be really authentic and cool looking. What do you--

Ray hugs David tight.

RAY

Thank you.

Beat.

RAY

I know I can be a pain in the ass. I really do. We wouldn't be here if we hadn't stuck together, though.

David grabs Ray by the shoulders and holds him at arm's length.

DAVID

I know, man. You're not a pain in the ass. It's just been a really hard year. Maybe this place can be a fresh start.

The brothers quietly celebrate the moment.

Ray flips a switch on the wall. The switch box sparks, and flashes as the circuit shorts. Ray jumps.

RAY

ARRRGHH! CRAP!?

DAVID

Dude. YEARS.

At entrance of the building. Jennifer pokes her head inside the door.

JENNIFER

Wooooooooow...

David's face lights up. Jennifer walks in the building holding bags of Chinese take out.

DAVID

I know! Awesome, right?!

David jogs over to Jennifer and hugs her tight. Ray stands in the background by himself. He doesn't seem as pleased to see Jennifer as his brother.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

23.

RAY

Hey, Jenn.

Jennifer waves at Ray. Her excitement is instantly contained.

JENNIFER

Congratulations, Ray.

Ray walks toward David & Jennifer.

RAY

Thanks. This was all David, though.

He smacks David on the back affectionately. After a second, Ray excuses himself. He smiles superficially and walks toward the exit.

RAY

I think I'm gonna go get some materials. We have a logo to paint.

DAVID

We just got Chinese though? Can't you go after?

Ray shrugs it off, but below the surface it's obvious that there's unspoken tension between he and Jennifer.

RAY

I do love me some Chinese. Save me some?

Ray heads outside, pulls out his keys, and walks toward an old red pickup truck. After a second, he realizes he's forgotten something and heads back to the warehouse.

RAY

Crap...swatches.

He stops walking when he hears David & Jennifer talking.

DAVID

Please don't do this, we're in the middle of celebrating.

JENNIFER

I know you're happy right now. I can't help that I don't think it's a good decision or a good time.

David closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. He's thinking before he says something rash.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

24.

DAVID

I understand. I promise though, he just needs someone to have a little faith in him. It's been so long since anyone risked anything on him.

JENNIFER

I know you love him. I know you want to help him. I just want to be sure you're being wise. He's not predictable right now, David. We're just getting our lives the way we want them. What are we going to do if we get pregnant and he leaves you holding the bag?

David clutches the clipboard.

DAVID

He wouldn't do that. I know it's hard to understand...you've only known him the last couple of years. He hasn't always been--He wouldn't abandon me like that.

David starts to turn away, but Jennifer guides him back with a gentle hand under his chin.

JENNIFER

I know he loves you, and he'd never hurt you *on purpose*.

Beat.

JENNIFER

...but he does hurt you a lot.

After hearing the conversation, Ray quietly gets in his truck and closes the door. He sits for a second, and then starts the truck.

End Flashback.

Cut back to David in front of the bathroom mirror. The water is running, and he's still standing there, sort of hunched over the sink. His face is only partially shaven.

He raises a glance to the mirror. For a brief second, the reflection is Ray.

David staggers backwards. His face changes from confusion to anger. In a flash of rage he throws the shaving cream can at the mirror.

CONTINUED:

25.

Glass showers the bathroom, one shard slices David's shoulder.

He slumps onto the sink again. His jagged, broken reflection staring back at him.

SCENE 7: ISSUES

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's about 2am. David is asleep on the couch again. Jennifer has draped an old afghan over him. The television illuminates the room, and an old sitcom rambles on in the background. David begins to stir.

TELEVISION

Oooooops! Did I do thaaaaaaaat?

TELEVISION

STEEEEEEVE!!!!!!

David rolls his eyes and turns the television off.

DAVID (TO HIMSELF)

Even I'm not that depressed.

He leans forward, and rubs his eyes. The coffee table in front of him is messy with beer bottles, an empty Ramen package, & assorted junk from his pockets.

David reaches for one of the beer bottles and takes a swig. A frustrated expression crosses his face.

He turns the bottle over and stares longingly as a single drop falls from the lip of the bottle onto the carpet.

He lets the bottle drop onto the floor as he stands up and begins walking to the kitchen.

David passes the microwave, which blinks an unset "1200" and makes his way to the refrigerator. He opens the door. Inside there are only pickles, cheese, a box of diner leftovers and an empty six pack box.

He closes the door with a sigh.

David grabs his jacket from a hook next to the apartment door. Across the hall is he and Jennifer's bedroom. She's asleep in their bed. David pauses to stare at her for a second as he slumps his jacket on his shoulders.

CONTINUED:

26.

David leans against the doorway and just gazes at Jennifer. She lays on her side facing the camera, with David in the background. She seems to sleep soundly. On the side of her body hidden to David, there are several photos scattered on the bed as if she fell asleep reminiscing.

David takes a slow step into his bedroom. His glance moves to an arrangement of wedding photos on the wall near the bed.

He straightens his collar and heads toward the door.

David walks down the stairs toward a the apartment building lobby. A silhouetted figure stands at the top of the staircase watching as he walks.

EXT. DAVID'S APARTMENT COMPLEX

Outside the apartment is a run-down portion of the city. There are cash advance businesses, other old apartment buildings, and a littered street.

David flips up his collar and walks slowly away from the apartment. As he goes, an old street light flickers off above him.

David laughs to himself.

DAVID
Huh...Bad omen...*funny universe.*

David walks for a block or so trying to clear his head. All the businesses are closed, and the street is dark except for a single homeless guy that tries to panhandle David. David is distant though. He either ignores or is oblivious to the panhandler.

A little further down the street, David stops in front of an old burned down building. Tattered yellow caution tape wraps around the property. It's the old Young Studios building.

David ducks the caution tape and walks into the wreckage. Among the ashes, he spots a framed picture of he and Ray. It's nearly been destroyed by the fire and the elements afterward. He picks it up and wipes the cracked glass clear of ash.

David fights back tears.

After a few seconds, he tosses the picture back into the ashes, straightens up, and continues walking for a bit.

He walks to a small market, with heavy steel rods on the windows. David begins to pull the door open, but stops when the neon sign from a bar across the street catches his eye.

SCENE 8: WHAT I NEED...

INT. JAKE'S BAR - NIGHT

Inside it's dark, and noisy. Behind the counter is a heavy, angry-looking bartender. A cute girl and her rough-looking boyfriend play pool in the back corner. There are 3 bearded "motorcycle guys" playing poker at a table near the front window.

A man in a designer suit sits at the bar looking very uncomfortable. This is Matthew. He's hunched over the bar as if he's about to vomit.

David enters, and makes his way to a stool near Matthew, who nurses a mixed drink. David takes a seat and a deep breath. The bartender looks up from cleaning mugs to address him.

BARTENDER
Whadaya want?

David blinks blankly.

DAVID
Uh...

BARTENDER
WHAT. DO. YOU. WANT.

David is a little surprised by the bartender's frustration.

DAVID
Oh...right... Lessee...I'll have a dark domestic...you guys have any micro brews?

BARTENDER
If it's not on the board, we don't have it.

DAVID
Not really a customer service guy, huh?

The bartender glares at David.

CONTINUED:

28.

DAVID
I'll take a Yahzoo.

One stool over, Matthew takes a long, labored breath. He reaches for a pack of cigarettes in his jacket pocket and slips one into his mouth.

BARTENDER
No smoking. Put it out, or get out.

MATTHEW
Relax. It's not lit...yet...and who the hell ever heard of a nonsmoking bar?

BARTENDER
Don't be a smartass. If you light up, your out.

The bartender furrows his brow, and continues cleaning the bar glasses.

DAVID
I don't think he likes you.

MATTHEW
Look who's talking. At least I'm testing his patience. You pissed him off without even trying.

Matthew smiles awkwardly. The unlit cigarette hangs from his lips.

DAVID
It's a shame too. I've been looking for an asshole to buddy up with.

Matthew laughs, and winces in pain.

Every few seconds, Matthew glances over his shoulder at the couple playing pool. Each time the balls clack, he looks a little irritated.

Beat.

DAVID
...Nice suit.

SFX
(pool balls)
CLACK!

CONTINUED:

29.

MATTHEW

Thanks. After tonight I think it may permanently smell of beer and puke.

DAVID

Ahhhhh, the stench of depression and dodged problems.

Matthew smiles a little. There's something sinister in his eyes.

The girl playing pool scratches the cue ball.

SFX

(pool balls)

CLACK!

The cue ball bounces onto the floor and rolls slowly next to Matthew's foot. Matthew picks it up and holds it up without speaking

The girl approaches sheepishly.

GIRL

Thaaanks. Sorry about that. I'm still learning.

The girl's boyfriend stares at Matthew. Matthew smiles back sarcastically and hands over the cue ball.

He turns back toward David.

MATTHEW

What are you dodging?

DAVID

Awkward conversations mostly. That and old-fashioned guilt.

MATTHEW

That's a pretty light list if you ask me.

DAVID

Guilt? You mean the thing that drives good men to suicide?

MATTHEW

Guilt is *nothing*. Guilt is where cowards hide so they can pretend to be noble.

Matthew takes a drink from his glass, and continues.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

30.

MATTHEW

Feeling guilt doesn't make you good. It just makes you impotent.

Beat.

DAVID

But enough about me being a coward...What are you in for?

Matthew wipes his brow, and straightens his glasses.

MATTHEW

My problems are...*complicated*.

DAVID

Aren't they all.

David takes another drink and stares straight ahead. A few empty seconds pass.

DAVID

You have a point, though.

Beat.

DAVID

I think we all cling to guilt. Like if we can recognize how terrible we are, maybe we still have a good heart.

DAVID

That's kind of depressing, actually.

Beat.

DAVID

I'd hate to hear what you think about love.

SFX

(pool balls)

CLACK!

The girl playing pool behind them scratches again. Again, the ball rolls to Matthew's feet. He picks it up and stares intensely at the girl. She bounces over apologetically.

GIRL

OH MY GOSH! I'M SOOO SORRY!

CONTINUED:

31.

David feels awkward for the girl, and tries to diffuse the tension. Matthew seems irritated, and his brow begins to sweat. The hand holding the cue ball clutches it hard.

DAVID

No...problem. Right, man?

Matthew glances at David and hands the cue ball to the girl.

She walks back to her boyfriend, who stares aggressively at Matthew. The boyfriend takes a step toward Matthew, but is stopped by his objecting date.

David tries to redirect Matthew's attention conversationally.

DAVID

So..."*complicated*."

Matthew breaks his stare at the boyfriend and returns to his drink.

MATTHEW

My body is dying.

David is jarred a little by Matthew's candor.

SFX

(pool balls)

CLACK!

DAVID

Not what I expected. I'm...uh...I'm sorry, man.

MATTHEW

It's no tragedy. Things haven't gone the way I hoped, but it's been a good run.

Beat.

DAVID

Religious?

MATTHEW

Why?

DAVID

You said "your body" was dying...kind of a "*spirit moves on*" sort of thing to say.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

32.

SFX (POOL BALLS)

CLACK!

MATTHEW

I've never had much use for gods.
We've talked about my perspectives
on guilt.

DAVID

You don't find the idea of God
comforting?

Another wave of pain washes over Matthew. He clinches his teeth as his "fangs" begin to slightly press against his upper lip. (*See Matthew "Beast" Character design.*)

SFX

(pool balls)

CLACK!

MATTHEW

An ultimate--*uhn*...being that cares
enough to cr--create humanity, but
not enough to communicate with them
in all the ways he made them to
communicate? Invisible, silent,
intangible?

Beat.

DAVID

Hey, are you okay?

David stands and takes a concerned posture. Matthew takes a deep breath and wipes his brow with a napkin.

MATTHEW

Yeah--relatively. It's just time
for medication.

David waves for the bartender's attention.

DAVID

Can I get a water for my buddy
here?

The bartender pours a glass of water and haphazardly slides it onto the bar.

DAVID

Thanks, dewdrop.

Matthew closes his eyes, and tries to control his breathing. After a few seconds, he looks better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

33.

MATTHEW

Thanks.

DAVID

If I looked as bad as you do right now, I think I'd head home and try to get some sleep.

MATTHEW

I'm alright now. I just...just needed to catch my breath. And for the record, you do.

David looks perplexed. Matthew takes a long drink of cool water.

MATTHEW

You *do* look as bad as I do.

David grins, and slides back onto his stool.

DAVID

Touché.

DAVID

So...you're an athiest?

MATTHEW

No. It just all sounds like the perfect mouse trap to me.

Beat.

DAVID

I think you might be missing the point.

SFX

(pool balls)

CLACK!

Matthew clinches his teeth as he tries to ignore the loud sounds coming from the pool table. He reaches into his jacket and pulls out a lighter.

MATTHEW

The point is...I make my choices.

The bartender narrows his eyes at Matthew. Matthew raises the lighter to his cigarette.

CONTINUED:

34.

MATTHEW

Good. Bad. *They're mine*, and I'm
not interested in hanging my head
over the parts of me that don't
align with some invisible beard.

The bartender tosses his drying towel down angrily and
reaches for Matthew's cigarette.

Matthew leans back. The bartender's hand misses. The girl
playing pool scratches again. Again the ball pops off the
table and rolls toward Matthew's foot.

SFX

(pool balls)

CRACK!

BARTENDER

OUT. GET O--

Matthew grabs the bartender around the throat.

MATTHEW

You miserable little...

the veins in Matthew's face pop to the surface, and his skin
turns dark red. His voice is much deeper. For a second,
David is completely frozen in shock. The poker players stand
in an aggressive posture. The girl and her boyfriend playing
pool stand slack-jawed in the corner.

MATTHEW

DON'T. JUST DON'T.

Matthew turns to David. The whites of his eyes turn black,
and a row of fangs that were hidden above and below his
human teeth protrude outward, extending his jaw forward
several inches. The skin around his jaw tears as his face
changes.

David reels backwards almost falling off his stool. He makes
a move to leave.

MATTHEW

Where are you going?

Matthew glares at David intensely.

MATTHEW

Hang out, finish that terrible
beer.

David tenses and involuntarily sits back on the stool. He
sits frozen. Matthew lays his cigarette on the bar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

35.

Matthew uses his foot to pop the cue ball into the air. He catches it, and sort of rolls it around in his hand. The bartender struggles against Matthew to no effect.

Matthew addresses the boyfriend playing pool.

MATTHEW
...and you. What the hell are you
looking at?

Matthew hurls the cue ball through the air. In a flash, it tears through the boyfriend's skull. His body slumps to the floor. His girlfriend falls backward to the floor screaming and crying.

GIRL
AAAAAAAHHHHHH!!!

POKER PLAYER 1
Holy...He just--

POKER PLAYER 2
Shoot that thing before it kills
Jake too!

One of the poker players pulls a pistol from under his vest. His friends lunge toward Matthew.

Matthew's hand tightens around the bartender's neck. He jerks him over the counter by the neck, nearly decapitating him. The bartender's body lands on the three poker players. The pistol discharges as its owner falls backwards.

SFX
(gunfire)
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Two bullets strike Matthew and tear through his body, but they don't seem to slow him down.

The poker players struggle to get out from underneath the now dead bartender. Matthew loosens his tie, and over the course of just a few moments kills everyone in the bar excluding David.

David sits frozen on his stool.

Matthew stands in the middle of the blood drenched bar. His suit is head to toe red. He's breathing heavily.

MATTHEW
Like I said...

Matthew smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

36.

MATTHEW

...time for medication.

For several awkward moments, Matthew feeds on the dead bodies while David sits at the bar, beer bottle still in hand.

After he feeds, Matthew stands and makes his way to the bar. He grabs a glass from the other side and fills it with blood from one of the bodies. He sits down next to David. His body has returned to normal.

MATTHEW

It's not that I don't believe in God. It's that he wants me to act on my belief one way or the other.

Matthew turns to look at David more directly.

MATTHEW

That tells you something, right?

Matthew takes a drink from his blood-filled glass, and wipes his mouth with his sleeve.

MATTHEW

If belief demands action, then that means one of two things...one, he doesn't have a problem with who I am.

David anxiously turns to look at Matthew. David is horrified.

MATTHEW

Or the second option...he's a hypocrite.

Matthew slides off his stool, straightens his tie, and takes a long drag off the cigarette he left on the bar.

MATTHEW

Either way, it's not the game I want to play. There are...better games.

Matthew pulls out his wallet and sorts through a few bills.

MATTHEW

Drinks are on me. You think fifteen

CONTINUED:

37.

MATTHEW

Regardless, I appreciate the talk.
I'm sure I'll see you around.

On his way out, Matthew slaps David on the back, leaving a streaked hand print on David's jacket.

SCENE 9: ANGEL ON MY SHOULDER

FLASHBACK

EXT. SUBURBAN ROAD INTERSECTION/SCENE OF ACCIDENT - NIGHT

A bloody hand print echoes the last shot of scene 8.

The hand print is on a white t-shirt worn by David, who is about 8. He's crying hysterically. David's grandfather leans down on one knee to talk to/comfort his grandson.

The surrounding scene is chaos. A police cruiser and an ambulance are both parked nearby. A policeman redirects traffic around a parked car and crumpled bike. A second, undamaged bike sits on the other side of the road.

The owner of the car watches as EMTs move Ray onto a gurney. David & Ray's grandfather stands next to Ray. Flashing lights from both emergency vehicles strobe the area.

David stares at Ray who is being loaded into the back of the ambulance.

David & Ray's grandfather rushes over to David. the driver that hit Ray tries to apologize. Grandpa doesn't break stride.

DRIVER

Hey man, I am so sorry.

GRANDPA

(angry)

Get away from me.

Grandpa leans down to talk to David.

GRANDPA

David, are you okay?

David is crying too hard to talk. He shakes his head "yes."
His whole body heaves with each breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

38.

GRANDPA

I know you're scared, but I need you to be a big boy and listen to me.

DAVID

(crying)

Is--is Ray going to die?

Grandpa is doing his best to calm David down, but he's distraught himself. He closes his eyes, takes a deep breath, and tries again.

GRANDPA

Listen, son. Ray needs you. He needs you to be strong for him right now...do you understand me?

David is listening, but he's still staring at the ambulance. EMTs rush around and are about to close the doors.

DAVID

But is he going to--

GRANDPA

(interrupting)

DAVID.

David snaps his eyes toward his granddad. His chest heaves as he chokes on tears and fear. Grandpa puts his hands on David's shoulders.

GRANDPA

Your brother is really hurt and really scared right now. He needs you. You're going to ride with us in the ambulance and do your best to keep him calm. You can't say or ask anything that will scare him any more than he already is--*understand?*

David still can't catch his breath, but he rubs away his tears and tries to calm down as best as he can. Grandpa gives him a quick hug.

GRANDPA

Good boy.

EMT1

Sir, we're leaving now.

Grandpa loads himself and David into the back of the ambulance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

39.

Ray is strapped down in the middle of the bay. His face and one arm is covered in road rash, and several other bruises and abrasions are all over his body. His chest raises erratically as he tries to breathe. The ambulance doors slam shut, and they begin to drive. Grandpa strokes Ray's head, and holds his hand.

EMT1
Okay, this might hurt, but it'll
help you breathe okay?

The EMT raises his eyes to grandpa.

EMT1
You the dad?

GRANDPA
Close enough.

EMT1
I need you to do your best to keep
him from jerking around. This won't
take a second.

RAY
Grandpa, *HUHN*--am I gonna die?

Grandpa gives Ray's hand to David, and holds Ray down with both hands. David swallows hard and takes a deep breath.

RAY
We'll be here with you the whole
time. Everything's going to be
fine.

RAY
Ar--Are theeeeey--

GRANDPA
Hush. Don't talk. You'll feel
better in just a second.

DAVID
You're going to be fine, Ray.

Ray smiles at his brother through the pain. A tear rolls down his cheek. The EMT sterilizes and locally anesthetizes an area around Ray's ribs.

Grandpa prays quietly while he holds Ray down.

CONTINUED:

40.

GRANDPA
(whispering)
Please, please take care of this
boy. Comfort him, show us mercy and
heal him...

Ray looks at his little brother for comfort.

RAY
P--Promise?

The EMT makes an incision in Ray's side, and inserts a tube
in the hole. Blood quickly fills it.

Ray jerks and gasps. David's eyes react with shock. He
chokes back a new wave of tears.

RAY
ARGH!

DAVID
I do. I promise.

Ray takes a few breaths to deal with the pain.

He looks at his brother. His face is battered, but his
expression is loving.

Their grandfather takes a breath and tries to distract Ray.

GRANDPA
Ray, I need you to know...I
couldn't be prouder of you. You
took care of your brother. It's
been a long time since I've seen
anything that brave.

David gently lays his head on Ray's shoulder. He begins
singing softly.

DAVID
(whispering)
"When it's over, so they say, It'll
rain a sunny day, I know shinin'
down like water..."

NOTE David is quoting lyrics from the CCR song "Have You
Ever Seen the Rain." He continues to sing as his Grandfather
speaks.

Ray lifts his hand, and puts it on the back of David's head.

CONTINUED:

41.

GRANDPA
You're going to be just fine, Ray.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David awakens from the couch, sweating and breathing heavy.
He sits his face in his hands, and tries to calm down.

He wipes his brow, and starts to stand.

Directly in front of him is the jacket he was wearing at the
bar. His eyes fill with disbelief.

David jerks from the couch and stumbles to the bathroom. He
covers his mouth with one hand.

Once inside the bathroom, David begins vomiting violently.

DAVID
(vomiting)
RAAAAAAAAAAUUUUUUGGG!!!

David's body goes limp as he pukes out everything that was
in his stomach. He rolls himself onto his back, and just
lays in the middle of the bathroom floor.

FADE TO BLACK.