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CONTAGION

by

Scott Z. Burns

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INT. AMERICAN AIRLINES LOUNGE, O'HARE AIRPORT - EVENING

Outside the window long lines of planes wait for taxi and take off in the November dusk. Their lights blink impatiently. Rush hour at O'Hare.

BETH EMHOFF (30's) reads a magazine and stretches-- her hand reaches for the communal bowl of peanuts on the bar as she battles jet lag with diet coke and aspirin. She looks exhausted.

Her phone chimes. She answers.

BETH

Mmmm...Yeah, it was delayed...Sorry I got so panicky...It was good to see you, too. I'm glad it worked out.

She purrs this last part. Smiles at the response we never hear. She coughs-- deep and wet.

BETH (CONT'D)

I will...Just a little tired and warm.

A GATE ANNOUNCEMENT drowns out the conversation.

BETH (CONT'D)

I gotta go.

She sighs and gathers her stuff.

EXT. HONG KONG/MACAU FERRY - FEW DAYS LATER

LI FAI (20) stands at the rail of the multi-decked ferry as it approaches the pier in Kowloon. The Hong Kong skyline looms beyond the ferry terminal building. The waters of Victoria Harbor churn with boat traffic and birds. Tourists snap photos and locals gather their belongings.

Fai looks worn down from the crossing. A SHIP'S MATE steadies him at the rail. **(All scenes between Chinese Nationals are in local language).**

SHIPS MATE

(subtitled)

Stare at something that's not moving. We'll be there in five minutes.

INT. HONG KONG CHINA FERRY TERMINAL - MOMENTS LATER

Fai makes his way through the crowded transportation hub-- past kiosks and advertisements. He leans heavily on the escalator railing and makes his way down toward to the metro. He carries a small duffel, but struggles against its weight.

INT. HONG KONG METRO - MOMENTS LATER

Fai sits on the clean and crowded metro with the duffel in his lap. Behind him some very HIP KIDS are joking and laughing. Fai shoots them a look, but the KIDS just keep talking and giggling.

He turns on them.

FAI

I don't know you, OK? So, don't pretend I do.

The HIP KIDS look at each other, convinced he is a madman-- then they burst out laughing even louder. Fai stumbles away from them and looks out the window of the train.

FAI'S POV

Lights passing by on the tunnel interior and a strange fish-eyed reflection of the people behind him. FAI CLINGS TO A METAL POLE FOR BALANCE WITH BOTH SWEATY HANDS.

INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT - MORNING

IRINA MODELSKOVA (23, Ukrainian model) stands at the baggage claim trying to get a signal on her phone. She's groggy from the flight.

IRINA

Hello...Yes....We just landed. I took something on the plane and I feel miserable...To sleep, yes...I am sorry for what I said. I get anxious and I don't know what to say...I just wanted to call and tell you that.

The bags begin to tumble down the chute.

IRINA (CONT'D)

I would like to go to New York with you very much...OK?

(MORE)

IRINA (CONT'D)

Yes...I am going to take a bath and a nap when I get to the hotel. Bye, darling.

Her bag comes down the chute and she walks toward Customs with it.

INT. HEATHROW - MOMENTS LATER

Irina is through customs. She sees a DRIVER with her name on a sign. SHE HANDS HIM HER BAG.

EXT. KWUN TONG - HONG KONG - EVENING

Kwun Tong is the most densely populated area in the world. Clothes hang drying from the windows. FAI makes his way toward an entrance to one of many overcrowded housing blocks.

INT. HOUSING BLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

A tiny, well-kept studio apartment. Fai's sister, BAI turns down the radio and goes to respond to the knock on the door.

Fai enters and greets his sister warmly.

BAI

Hello. I was worried about you. Was there a problem?

FAI

No. There is a new TV system in the casino. It's very complicated and so we are all working overtime.

Fai sits on a small sofa. She works the acupressure point in his wrist for a moment-- studies his face.

FAI (CONT'D)

It's so bright in here.

She rummages around for a blanket.

BAI

If you go get a chicken at the market, I'll cook dinner tomorrow. There's a girl from work who I think you will like. I'll invite her.

EXT. COTAI STRIP - MACAU - NIGHT

Vegas of the Orient-- neon and the sprawling architecture of excess. Familiar names in lights: The Sands, Wynn, The Venetian, etc.

INT. GOLDEN DRAGON CASINO - NIGHT

The gaming floor is buzzing-- slots, cards and Asian games. Roulette and dice. It could be the floor of the Bellagio, but the clientele is decidedly Asian.

Two UNIFORMED MAINTENANCE men skirt the action and head toward a bank of elevators. A walkie-talkie crackles with urgent instructions. A man with a TOOL BELT looks frazzled. He responds.

TOOL BELT

(to walkie-talkie)

We are on our way to 1219. We are short-staffed tonight. One guy called in sick and someone else is on vacation.

More urging from the walkie-talkie. TOOL BELT hits the elevator button.

TOOL BELT (CONT'D)

2311 after 1219. Got it.

The other Maintenance Man writes down the room numbers as they step onto an elevator full of GAMBLERS. Tool Belt coughs, rubs his eyes.

INT. NOBLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MINNEAPOLIS - DAY

THOMAS EMHOFF (40-ish) hustles through the foyer of the school. Thanksgiving themes predominate with children's rendering of pilgrims, Indians and turkeys.

He enters the school's administrative offices.

EMHOFF

I'm Thomas Emhoff, I'm here for Clark. Clark Morrow. I'm his stepfather.

An ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT walks back toward the school infirmary with Thomas.

NURSE LEAR (50's) emerges from a room with a cot with a forlorn looking CLARK (7). His eyes are a little glazed and he has a cough. He walks toward his stepfather.

EMHOFF (CONT'D)

Hey there kiddo. Not feeling too well?

CLARK

Tired.

NURSE LEAR

He said he was feeling very warm in Miss Tatum's class, dozed off. I took his temperature again since I called-- a touch over a hundred.

EMHOFF

It's making its way through the family. First his Mother goes down and now the mighty Clark. Let's go get you and Mom some soup and beat this thing down before Turkey Day.

NURSE LEAR

Hope you feel better Clark, OK?

Clark pulls the door shut behind him by the doorknob as he leaves. A moment later, Nurse Lear opens the door.

INT. AMIKA NIGHTCLUB - LONDON - NIGHT

TRUSTAFARIANS and THE PHYSICALLY BLESSED drink and smoke and fight off ennui with anything they can get their hands on.

Irina is dragging a bit-- she drops a BEROCCA into a martini glass. A GOATEED TRUSTAFARIAN sidles up beside her.

GOATEE

(off the drink)

What do you call that, Rina?

IRINA

The Jet Lagatini. I'm in three different time zones.

GOATEE

Yeah, how about something not quite so over the counter?

She smiles at him.

SMASH CUT

INT. AMIKA BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

They sit in a stall-- Irina straddling him.

Irina finishes a rail of blow and hands the sterling silver straw back to Goatee. He hoovers in a line of his own and then licks the straw clean.

She perks up-- his hands bring her mouth to his. They kiss deeply.

GOATEE

Good to see you, Rina.

She giggles and grinds.

GOATEE (CONT'D)

Are you in love with this one?
Rafik? It's been months now.

She kisses him hard-- sucks on his tongue with all her might.

IRINA

(sarcastic)

Yes. We're soul mates.

They both laugh.

INT. NICE HOUSE - EDINA, MINNESOTA - NIGHT

Clark Morrow climbs out of bed and makes his way down the hall toward the murmur of his parents. He's dragging ass.

INT. PARENTS' ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clark enters.

CLARK

Mom? I don't feel well.

A light comes on. Thomas and Beth are in bed. She isn't looking so good either.

BETH

What is it?

CLARK

My throat is scratchy and I have a headache.

BETH

Me, too, honey. You want some water?

EMHOFF

Mmm...Poor guy. You want to curl up with your mom?

BETH

Let me see if we have something for you.

She gets out of bed and staggers to the closet. She gets out her CARRY-ON bag. Takes out some COUGH DROPS AND TYLENOL LIQUID FLU MEDICINE.

EMHOFF

OK. I'm headed to the guest room-- this is now officially the sick ward.

Thomas grabs a pillow and heads off. Clark lies down.

BETH

I'm going to see if I can do my conference call from home and then take you to the doctor.

She kisses Clark's forehead. He's warm.

INT. LI BAI'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Fai wakes up in the empty apartment. He coughs a few times then swallows hard. Sleep seems to have done little to restore him.

He forces down some water and puts on his shoes. The morning sun tortures his eyes. He squints against the day.

Bai's pet bird squawks at nothing in particular.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Fai fingers the GROUND FLOOR button. He leans hard against the elevator wall. TWO LITTLE GIRLS and an OLD CHINESE WOMAN eye him with concern. He rubs his temples. Coughs again.

FAI

My sister lives here.

The doors open and Fai stumbles out.

EXT. KOWLOON BIRD MARKET - A LITTLE LATER

Fai is hallucinating now. The world comes at him in ways only he understands. He shifts away from non-existent shapes and curses at the birds in their cages.

PASSERS BY wonder if he's drunk or drugged. Fai uses pedestrians and lamp posts to keep his feet. Finally, he settles down hard on the dirty, damp curb.

The sun has become relentlessly bright-- he shields his eyes against it with a trembling hand. Muttering.

Fai looks back over his shoulder-- what he sees scares him into rising. He moves away from the onslaught of a seizing brain and takes three blind steps backward into the street.

A TRUCK wipes Fai off the face of the earth with a sudden mechanical ease. He is pulled half-way down the block in the suspension before the driver knows what happened.

People gather round as blood pools out from his body. Crowds fill the street. Dogs come to check out the carnage.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO - LONDON - DAY

Irina at a commercial casting looking rough in a short skirt. She is sweaty and feverish and irritable with the PA.

IRINA

How much longer?

There are five other girls there, also in short skirts. They sit with their portfolios in their laps.

Irina crosses to the water cooler. Takes a drink and coughs. She is miserable. Squints at the light. She walks outside and lights a cigarette with a lighter she borrows from another BORED MODEL. Dials her phone.

IRINA (CONT'D)

Hello...Seamus...I've been here for an hour. I feel like shit...I don't know-- did something last night and it must have had something in it...Yeah, OK. I know that. I'm a million degrees...I'm getting in a cab and going back to the hotel-- getting a massage. I'll come back and smile tomorrow all they like.

She hangs up and curses in Ukrainian. She goes back and leaves the PORTFOLIO case with the PA.

INT. NICE HOUSE - EDINA, MINNESOTA - MORNING

Beth stands in the kitchen somehow confused by the coffee maker. She squints at the morning sun. She drops the coffee pot and pours coffee all over for reasons that it would take a microscope to understand.

Thomas enters.

EMHOFF

Beth? What?

BETH

I have no muscles in my right arm.

He comes closer to her.

EMHOFF

Sit down.

She almost misses the chair.

EMHOFF (CONT'D)

Did you take too much of that
Theraflu shit?

She puts her head down on the table and then begins to SHAKE with seizure.

EMHOFF (CONT'D)

Jesus, Beth.

Thomas jumps back.

EMHOFF (CONT'D)

Clarky? Stay in your room for a
couple of minutes, OK? Wait till I
come and get you.

He grabs the phone and dials 911. Somewhere another phone rings. A silly ringtone takes us to...

INT. BAI'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Bai is shaken by the news of her brother's death as it is delivered over the phone. She holds onto his duffel bag as if it was his body. The desperate sound of her grief brings people into the hallway.

Bai collapses into the arms of NEIGHBORS. One WIPES THE TEARS from her face. Another picks up her CELL PHONE as if was a murder weapon and puts it on the table.

She moves from hug to hug searching for comfort. The bird squawks and kicks feed from the cage onto the floor.

BAI

I want to go home. I just want to go home.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - FAIRVIEW SOUTHDAL E HOSPITAL - MINNESOTA

BETH EMHOFF is out of it-- trouble finding words, not making sense. The doctors and nurses work on her. Thomas looks on anxiously.

ER DOC

Beth, can you hear me? My name is Dr. Arrant and you are in the hospital.

BETH

Why are there so many people here?

ER DOC

You had a seizure this morning, Beth. Have you ever had something like that before?

BETH

There's a meeting in the big conference room today-- I can be on the speaker phone.

EMHOFF

Beth, what are you talking about?

ER NURSE

Does she have a history of seizures? Allergies? Other medical problems?

THOMAS

I think she's allergic to penicillin.

ER DOC

Did she fall recently? Slip on the ice and hit her head? In the shower?

EMHOFF

Beth? No. She said she had a sore throat a few days ago.

ER DOC

What about drugs? MDMA? Ecstasy?

EMHOFF

What? No. Nothing recreational.
She's only taking over the counter
stuff.

BETH

(sotto)

It's so bright in here--

And with that she goes into another seizure. The ER TEAM
moves to put in an IV and stabilize her head. She foams at
the mouth.

EMHOFF

Beth...What's happening? What's
going on?

ER DOC

Can you step outside, Mr. Emhoff?

He searches her pupils for something-- nothing there. Dr.
Arrant orders Ativan and antibiotics. They put an oxygen
mask over her face.

EMHOFF

Beth...

The ER Nurse pulls Thomas out of the treatment area. He sits
down underneath a CDC poster concerning H1N1-- instructing
you how to cover your mouth when you sneeze.

INT. CLARIDGE'S HOTEL - LONDON - EVENING

The Concierge and a POLISH MAID are at the door.

CONCIERGE

Hello? It's the Concierge.

He takes out a security key and opens the door.

INT. CORNER SUITE - CONTINUOUS

They enter. The sitting room is undisturbed. The TV blares
MTV. A bottle of EVIAN is half-empty on the coffee table.

CONCIERGE

Anybody here? Mr. Khalifa?

The Maid steps into the bedroom. Nothing. The bathroom door
is not quite closed and the tap is running.

MAID

Mr. Kieron?

He enters the bathroom.

HIS POV

IRINA'S DEAD BODY. Half-covered by a bathrobe. Blue and rigid. There are pills scattered around and vomit on the floor by her mouth.

He turns off the water and closes the door behind him.

The maid looks at him-- searchingly.

CONCIERGE

We need to get security up here...

He picks up the phone and dials security.

CONCIERGE (CONT'D)

I hope you understand the need for discretion, Ms. Wolski.

And then into the phone.

CONCIERGE (CONT'D)

Jordan? Yes, this is Kieron...I'm in 404 and there's a...one of the guests has passed away...Room is registered to Mr. Rafik Khalifa...His girlfriend...I think maybe drugs.

INT. ICU - FAIRVIEW SOUTHDAL E HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Beth Emhoff is on a ventilator. She is comatose and flat lining. No sign of life from her brain.

ICU DOC

I'm calling it at 6:42pm.

The nurses go about the business of disconnecting her from the machines. Tape is gently pulled from her-- IV's taken out.

INT. WAITING ROOM - FAIRVIEW SOUTHDAL E HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Thomas and Clark watch a MINNESOTA WILD game on TV.

THOMAS' POV

A DOCTOR and a SOCIAL WORKER IN A BUSINESS SUIT come down the hallway. Thomas sees them and gets up.

EMHOFF

You let me know what happens on the power play, Clarky. I'm gonna go talk to the doctor.

We don't have to hear every word to know what's being said. Just fragments of conversation punctuated by grim body language. The force of the news collapses Emhoff. He squats in the hallway and holds onto his head.

The Social Worker's voice is soothing.

SOCIAL WORKER

If you want help with arrangements we can be of assistance.

Thomas tries to take in what has happened.

EMHOFF

I just...I don't understand.

SOCIAL WORKER

Maybe the boy has a friend he can stay with while you deal with this.

Thomas nods.

EMHOFF

His biological father lives in Duluth.

The SOCIAL WORKER walks toward CLARK. Thomas turns to the ER DOC.

EMHOFF (CONT'D)

She got back from a business trip. She was tired-- she always got sick when she got on a plane. I don't understand.

ER DOC

You mentioned that. Hong Kong. We checked the latest from the CDC-- the only things were Measles and H1N1. It wasn't that.

EMHOFF

Then what was it?

ER DOC

She was very sick. We tried everything we could-- she just didn't respond.

EMHOFF

From what?

ER DOC

We don't always know. Some people get a disease and live. Some become sicker and die. My best guess is that it was either meningitis or encephalitis and with encephalitis we're in the dark 90 per cent of the time-- if it was summer I might say a bug bite. West Nile. Herpes can cause encephalitis. We can tell you how, but not always why. Her blood work indicated some sort of massive infection-- that's how.

EMHOFF

I don't understand. She didn't have herpes.

ER DOC

If you want, we can order an autopsy-- but I can't guarantee it'll be conclusive. There are also grief counselors who are very helpful with this sort of passing. I find that is where most people get some resolution.

ACROSS THE FOYER

BUSINESS SUIT sits with Clark watching the game.

BUSINESS SUIT

Hi, Clark. My name is Miss Gage. You want to go get a milk shake or something?

CLARK

I'm not hungry.

BUSINESS SUIT

Well, I am. Do you want to come with me while your father talks to the doctor? Come on...

She takes his hand.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - TOKYO - DAY

A man holds on to a HAND STRAP on the absurdly crowded Tokyo subway train. His face is sweaty. He coughs a couple of times, annoying fellow commuters. He mutters to himself and squints against the flashing lights of a tunnel.

Suddenly he begins to CONVULSE. He falls to the ground SEIZING violently. Onlookers don't know what to do-- they scramble to make room for the man. A YOUNG WOMAN calls for a Doctor, an OLDER MAN hits an alarm on the inside of the car.

A WELL DRESSED business man stands with his cell phone aimed at the seizing man-- still twitching and struggling like he's the victim of electrocution. He videotapes the man thrashing around on the ground.

Slowly the man comes to a halt-- he lies there on the floor of the train.

EXT. DUBAI - MORNING

The sunlight splashes off the high-rises. A plane vectors in on final approach. The white caps fire in the Gulf of Aden.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

INT. STUNNING APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

RAFIK KHALIFA (40's) is propped up in an opulent bed before a picture window. He is weak and exhausted. DR. AL-KURDI and the butler AHRAF tend to him. The Doctor reads the thermometer.

AL-KURDI

(off the thermometer)

It's down. You keep resting and you'll beat this thing. Take aspirin for the fever and for the headaches.

RAFIK

I feel a little more myself today-- just so shocking about Irina. They're still saying it was drugs?

AHRAF

Yesterday he couldn't remember my name he was so delirious.

AL-KURDI

If he gets like that again you have to take him to the hospital. But, I think he's on the mend.

Ahraf nods and takes away a glass of water and plate of eggs.

RAFIK

Maybe someone can get me a newspaper and some tea.

EXT. NICE HOUSE - EDINA, MINNESOTA - MORNING

A WOMAN runs through a snow flurry at dawn in her bathrobe. She turns up the driveway to Thomas' house.

She is sobbing and holding her cell phone. She arrives at the door. Thomas answers.

RUNNING WOMAN

Oh my God, Thomas. Something happened with Clark. I went in to wake him up this morning and I couldn't. He had thrown up and he wasn't breathing.

Thomas starts running toward his neighbor's house. An AMBULANCE red-shifts toward them.

INT. NOBLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MINNEAPOLIS - LATER

MRS. TATUM takes attendance-- FIVE DESKS ARE EMPTY this morning.

MRS. TATUM

So either we're getting an early start on Thanksgiving vacation or there's a bug going around-- and that means everyone needs to be extra good about hand washing, right? Remember what we learned during swine flu?

The kids nod. She pretends to sneeze into the crook of her arm.

MRS. TATUM (CONT'D)
Anyone carpool with Luke or Clark?
How about Liza or Steven J.?

Nobody.

INT. CREMATORIUM - HONG KONG - DAY

Li Bai sits in the waiting room. An older woman enters pushing a cart with a simple URN on it. Bai is still in shock.

BAI
(off the urn)
Is it heavy? I'm taking him home.

URN WOMAN
I am sorry.

BAI
May I have some tea? I am exhausted.

URN WOMAN
Yes, sit.

INT. NOBLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Tatum heads down the hall toward the office. She passes a COUGHING kid.

She arrives at the office.

MRS. TATUM
I need to speak to Nurse Lear. My class is shrinking.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR
Lesley called in sick today-- we're trying to find a sub.

MRS. TATUM
The nurse is sick?

MR. GREY, the school principal, enters the office-- ashen.

MR. GREY
(to Tatum)
You heard?

MRS. TATUM
What? Lesley is sick?

MR. GREY

Come in.

She follows him into his office. He closes the door.

MR. GREY (CONT'D)

We got a call from Luke Warfield's mother. Clark Morrow and his mother passed away-- they're not sure from what.

INT. MOSQUE - DUBAI - MORNING

Rafik's butler, Ahraf does his morning prayers. The men are lined up shoulder to shoulder on their mats. Ahraf is sweating, but so are many of the other men, he rocks back on his heels and coughs repeatedly.

The men on either side of him are distracted by the coughing-- it disrupts the prayer. Unable to stop, Ahraf makes his way toward the exit.

INT. NOBLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MINNEAPOLIS

The school is being evacuated in accordance with a plan nobody ever planned on using. The buses aren't where they are supposed to be. There's chaos in the foyer. MR. GREY wears rubber gloves and stands in the crowd of kids-- he has a directive that he reads from.

MR. GREY

Now, you want to go on the same bus that you took to school-- unless your parents drove you or are picking you up, in which case you need to go outside to the baseball field. Again if you have to cough-- into your elbow and wash your hands for thirty seconds. Sing the happy birthday song and you'll know you did it right.

Mrs. Tatum looks at the clusterfuck in front of her. A kid with PIGTAILS approaches her.

PIGTAILS

Mrs. Tatum, will you feel my head?
Do I feel warm?

She is reluctant to touch the kid.

MRS. TATUM

I don't think they want us to do that, Becca.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - FAIRVIEW SOUTHDAL E HOSPITAL

EMHOFF sits alone in an ISOLATION ROOM-- despondent over the loss of his wife and step-son. A mask of grief and shock across his face. A sign on the door says "RESPIRATORY ISOLATION." A FACE in an N-95 mask appears in the door.

A knock on the window brings Emhoff back. He pauses for a moment and then remembers-- he pulls a surgical mask over his own face.

THE MEDICAL TEAM enters, all wearing protective gear. They regard him as though he is radioactive.

They present him with a cup of pills. They take blood, etc.

ER DOC

Are there any open chemicals in your house, Mr. Emhoff? Anything in the basement or garage that your son or wife may have come in contact with?

He shrugs.

EMHOFF

Why them and not me? I'm not sick.

ER NURSE

Your temperature is a little high, Mr. Emhoff. Is that normal for you?

EMHOFF

I don't know...I have a daughter-- she's coming home from a band trip today. Can someone give me my cell phone? I want to call her mother.

A NURSE hands him his phone in a plastic bag. Every item is suspicious.

ER DOC

There are a number of children who are sick at your son's school, Mr. Emhoff. The Health Department has asked that we keep you here in isolation for now.

EMHOFF

I need to make arrangements-- the funeral. Funerals.

ER DOC

The Medical Examiner is going to do an autopsy on your wife and Clark. We need to do that to understand what is making people sick-- but we need you to call the funeral home and have them release the bodies. I'm sorry. I know this is an incredibly difficult time for you. Can you do that for us?

Emhoff nods. He gets the phone out of the plastic bag.

EMHOFF

I don't know the number.

INT. MINNESOTA MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE - LATER

The ME and the ASSISTANT ME perform an autopsy on Beth in a drab green room. A microphone hangs over the metal table to record their findings.

On the next table lies CLARK's corpse as well waiting for autopsy.

MINNESOTA ME

The deceased is a female, thirty-two years of age. Case was referred to the Medical Examiner's office 36 hours after time of death on suspicion of meningitis.

They begin to open her skull with a surgical saw. They look into Beth Emhoff's brain and are aghast.

ASSISTANT ME

What the hell is that?

The ME is dumbstruck.

ASSISTANT ME (CONT'D)

You want me to take a sample?

The ME looks at the blood and tissue that has been sprayed on both of them by the saw.

MINNESOTA ME

I want you to move away from the table.

The Assistant does-- frightened.

ASSISTANT ME
Should I call someone?

MINNESOTA ME
Call everyone.

INT. BUS - MAINLAND CHINA - DAY

Bai sits holding a bag with her brother's urn inside of it on her lap. She does not look well. She swallows hard as the bus pulls into the station.

The PASSENGERS gather up their packages and produce and line up for the door. Bai seems disoriented. She does not get up. The passenger next to her is CONFUSED and wants to get out.

CONFUSED
(subtitled)
Are you getting off? This is
Chong'an.

BAI
(subtitled)
I'm not dressed for the beach.

CONFUSED is baffled by her response and pushes by her.

INT. BUS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Bai is the last off the bus. She almost falls down the steps. She too is coughing now.

PULLING UP AND AWAY FROM BAI

She walks unevenly through the crowded bus station. People cross her path oblivious to the threat she poses. She nearly drops her bundle and a YOUNG MAN stops to help her.

He takes her bag and she leans on him. They walk toward the exit together. Vanishing into the throng.

LAUGHING VOICE (O.S.)
How do we know you're not gonna put
us all in the hospital?

SMASH CUT

INT. CONDO - CHICAGO'S GOLD COAST - AFTERNOON

A large dining room with a stunning view of Lake Michigan. November gray and white capped. A party of ten watches DR. ELLIS CHEEVER (40's) carve a Turkey as the Detroit Lions play the Washington Redskins on a TV in the corner.

CHEEVER

According to our records you're more likely to slip in the shower, or get in a car wreck than contract E. coli from Turkey.

Cheever gets a kiss from SUZANNE AUBREY (30's)-- the laughing voice.

AUBREY

Elizabeth made the stuffing-- I don't think it can hurt anyone, can it, baby? Or, the sweet potatoes. They have little marshmallows for airbags.

Plates and platters are passed around the table. ELIZABETH NYGAARD fills her plate with salad. Her THREE-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER MISTY tugs at her leg.

MISTY

I want marshmallows.

ELIZABETH

Stuffing for Misty, but no bird for me. I'm off the animals. Good thing we didn't go to Dallas. No animal survives. My Dad makes this Turducken thing...

Her husband-- DANIEL NYGAARD-- chimes in.

DANIEL

It's a chicken inside a duck inside a turkey. Not a thing that happens in nature.

ON CHEEVER

His cell phone chirps-- and he puts down the carving knife and answers.

DANIEL

He fries it in an oil drum in the driveway...

CHEEVER

I'm sorry I gotta take this.

Daniel continues on about the carnivores of Texas as Cheever makes his way to the kitchen. Misty follows him.

CHEEVER

(on phone)

This is Dr. Cheever...OK...Uh-huh. Outside of Minneapolis...I'm heading back to Atlanta in the morning. I don't know who's around off the top of my head, but I'm sure we can find somebody's holiday to ruin. Alright, you enjoy your dinner...I took the Redskins and gave the points.

Cheever ends that call and scrolls through his phone. Hits send. As he waits for the phone to ring he jots down some notes on a scrap of paper in the kitchen.

ANGLE ON THE PAPER

"2 DEAD, 16 reported...Bloomington, Minnesota..."

CHEEVER (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Hey, it's Cheever at about 5-ish on Thanksgiving...I know this kinda sucks, but we have something in Minnesota. I'm in Chicago, but heading back first thing. If you can meet tomorrow at the office around noon. Bring warm clothes.

Cheever puts the phone away. Takes a small bottle of PURELL out of his pocket and douses his hands. He heads back in to join the others and resume his dinner.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE - DAY

ALAN KRUMWIEDE (30's) sits in the Cafeteria with LORRAINE VASQUEZ (40's). They are hunched over his laptop-- plastered with a collection of stickers speaking to Krumwiede's fascination with conspiracies.

KRUMWIEDE

I showed it to a doctor. He says it doesn't look like epilepsy.

ANGLE ON COMPUTER SCREEN

A YouTube video of the Japanese man dying on the Marunouchi Line.

KRUMWIEDE (CONT'D)

And it wasn't some sort of Falun Gong sarin attack. Only one person got sick.

VASQUEZ

Nobody helps him. Is he OK?

KRUMWIEDE

Read the posts. Some people say it was staged, an art project, some say that he died and they wouldn't do an autopsy-- covered it up.

VASQUEZ

Covered what up?

Krumwiede clicks on his computer.

KRUMWIEDE

Not sure. Maybe Minamata disease-- makes you mad as a hatter. It's in the fish. There have been outbreaks in the past, but the fishing industry suppresses it. Industrial disease. You know how many people read your paper over a plate of sushi everyday?

VASQUEZ

It's just one man and we don't even know what happened.

KRUMWIEDE

Just one man on video tape. We don't know how many others-- fish is being shipped all over the world. Send me to Tokyo-- come on Lorraine.

VASQUEZ

Hobart does our health stuff, Alan, you know that. We have almost no freelance budget anymore. And after swine flu ended up being a punch-line, I think he'll want to wait.

KRUMWIEDE

You wait a few days and this will be tweeted and MySpaced all over the planet.

VASQUEZ

I'll ask Hobart.

KRUMWIEDE

You're gonna give him my story, aren't you Lorraine?

VASQUEZ

(offended)

What? Alan-

KRUMWIEDE

I taped this meeting. This story runs in the Chronicle I will sue your ass.

He shows her a tape recorder.

VASQUEZ

Good-bye, Alan. Don't call me anymore.

She walks away.

KRUMWIEDE

Print media is dying, Lorraine. I'll save you a seat on the bus.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Emhoff sits in his bed in an isolation room. A NURSE in serious protective gear draws his blood. She places the vials directly in a COOLER and moves from his bedside to a sealed vestibule.

Another person stands in the air-lock vestibule waiting-- it's hard to make out much about the person from the amount of protective gear they are wearing. But, they hold a piece of PUMPKIN PIE.

COOLER and PUMPKIN PIE share the vestibule for a moment.

COOLER

Wait until I'm out before you go in, OK?

PUMPKIN PIE nods and watches as Cooler leaves the isolation room. She enters.

Emhoff fights through the fear and loss to put on a brave front for his daughter JORY (15).

EMHOFF

Welcome to quarantine. Be careful. They might not let you leave.

JORY

They told me it's isolation not quarantine, Dad. Quarantine is when they lock up everyone whether they're sick or not. Isolation is just when they lock up the sick people.

EMHOFF

From my perspective there's not much difference.

JORY

God, Dad-- what happened?

Emhoff shrugs.

EMHOFF

They were really sick, Jory. There was nothing anyone could do.

She tries to understand.

JORY

Mom sends her condolences. This is from her.

She hands him the pie.

EMHOFF

After I eat it they'll probably need to shoot the plate and fork into space. They don't even want me peeing in the plumbing.

JORY

It's on the news. They say twenty-six people have it now, but like a thousand people have come to the emergency room. But, you're fine, right?

EMHOFF

Yeah, I'm fine. Don't worry.

JORY

But, you were with them.

EMHOFF

Some people are immune. They either don't get it-- or if they do get it they don't die from it. Somehow their bodies figure it out.

JORY

Am I immune?

EMHOFF

I don't know-- I've asked them to try and find out, but they don't seem to know very much yet.

JORY

Do they know what it was?

EMHOFF

They sent people over to the house to check for chemicals, food, rodents. Nothing there. The house is fine.

JORY

So, when do you get to leave?

EMHOFF

I'm not sure. They want me to wait a few days after my temperature is back to normal-- make sure I can't get anyone sick.

She sits on the corner of his bed.

JORY

You've never been normal.

He smiles underneath the mask.

EMHOFF

Yeah, well normal seems pretty far away right now, but we'll get there.

She lies down across the end of his bed-- drapes herself across his feet.

EXT. CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC) - ATLANTA - DAY

DR. ERIN MEARS (30's and bright eyed) pulls her Toyota next to an Audi in the parking lot. She gets a hanging bag from the trunk and heads toward the elevator.

INT. CDC - MOMENTS LATER

Mears sits with Cheever in the mostly empty building reading a file.

CHEEVER

We have outbreaks all the time up there--- usually some bug in a daycare center, or a chemical someone has been working with in a basement. No ventilation when the weather gets cold, or food that spoils at the county fair. The Health Department contact-- what's their name? Swanson? Oshman?

Mears flips some pages.

MEARS

Swanson. Oshman is an ER doc.

CHEEVER

They have five deaths and thirty-two cases-- there's a cluster in an elementary school.

MEARS

(off the file)
But, nothing confirmed. I mean, it's all just encephalitis.

Cheever shrugs.

CHEEVER

You get Christmas and New Year's off for this. Call me when you get there.

EXT. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION - GENEVA - MORNING

People file into the building on a dreary late November day.

INT. WHO - ORANTES OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

DR. LEONORA ORANTES (30's, European) notes something on her computer.

ANGLE ON THE SCREEN

The Marunouchi Line video-- she watches the man die for the millionth time on the internet.

There's a knock on the door. It's her boss-- DAMIAN LEOPOLD (50's).

LEOPOLD
Meeting's starting. Drug resistant
TB forum.

ORANTES
Yeah...In a minute. You've seen
this?

LEOPOLD
What?

ORANTES
Video. YouTube.

LEOPOLD
Of what?

Leopold moves around the desk to watch.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)
Who posted it?

ORANTES
Journalist in San Francisco--
claims the government is concealing
cause of death.

LEOPOLD
Looks like epilepsy. Come on, we
have people waiting.

She gets up and heads to the movie.

INT. HOUSING BLOCK - HONG KONG

The OLD CHINESE WOMAN enters the elevator with a package.
She does not look well.

ANGLE ON THE BUTTON FOR THE 4TH FLOOR

Smudged and smeared with repeated pressing. She presses it.

MAN (O.S.)
Hold the elevator!

She presses the DOOR OPEN button as well. A MIDDLE AGED MAN
gets on as well.

DOOR OPEN MAN

How are they?

OLD WOMAN

No better. The younger one has fever.

DOOR OPEN MAN

Sorry.

OLD WOMAN

(off the package)

Vinegar helps. I got the last bottle. Half the people on the floor have it.

The elevator arrives at the 4th floor. She shuffles off. He HOLDS THE DOOR OPEN BUTTON for her.

Then rubs his nose.

INT. MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL AIRPORT - EVENING

Mears sees a man holding a sign with her name on it. She approaches.

MEARS

Erin Mears, CDC.

SWANSON

Dave Swanson from the Department of Health. Flight OK?

MEARS

Fine.

SWANSON

You going to be warm enough? We're looking at around zero with the wind chill.

MEARS

This is the heaviest coat I have.

They head off.

SWANSON

Don't want you to catch a cold.

INT. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, MINNESOTA - DAY

Mears, Swanson and other OFFICIALS from different departments sit at tables taking notes.

On the wall is a schematic on brown butcher paper of all the cases.

MEARS

Any cases involving health care workers who treated Emhoff or the boy?

An FRESHLY SCRUBBED BUREAUCRAT (30's) gives the update.

FRESHLY SCRUBBED

We have 47 cases and 8 deaths as far as we can tell-- but nothing's confirmed. Because we don't know what we're confirming yet. We have the health care workers in iso.

SWANSON

A grief counselor who had contact with the boy has symptoms-- so does the ER nurse.

A DIRE LOOKING ASIAN MAN chimes in.

DIRE

It's a weekend-- these numbers might be low. People just stay at home sick for a couple of days and see if they get better.

MEARS

So at this point I think we have to believe this is respiratory-- maybe fomite, too.

SCHOOL OFFICIAL

What's that? Fomite.

MEARS

Transmission from surfaces. The school kids touching water fountains, door knobs and what have you. It means it lives outside the body for a period of time.

SCHOOL OFFICIAL

Is that something we want to release to the press?

Beat. DIANE NORDQUIST (40-ish) perks up at this. She's the Assistant Chief of Staff for the Governor.

NORDQUIST

I think we're going to need to walk the Governor through this before we freak everybody out. Is there a big risk in waiting til Monday, Dr. Mears? I mean, we can't even tell people what they should be afraid of right now-- that doesn't play well. We tried that with swine flu and all we did was get healthy people scared to death. It's the biggest shopping weekend of the year.

DIRE

I think we need to consider closing the schools.

NORDQUIST

And who stays home with the kids? People who work at stores, government workers-- people who work at hospitals. When will we know what this is? What causes it? What cures it?

SWANSON

We've sent samples to CDC...two other labs as well.

NORDQUIST

(to Mears)
How long?

MEARS

In 72 hours we'll know what it is-- if we're lucky.

NORDQUIST

Clearly, we're not lucky.

EXT. GENEVA - LATER

ORANTES takes the train home past postcard-perfect Lake Geneva. Her phone comes to life.

ORANTES

Dr. Orantes...Yes?

LEOPOLD (O.S.)

We received a call from a Dr. Tanaka in Tokyo. They're sending a sample for analysis. They have a number of people sick and can't identify the pathogen.

ORANTES

How many?

LEOPOLD (O.S.)

Three dead. Seven sick.

ORANTES

The man from the Marunouchi Line video? The man with the seizure?

LEOPOLD (O.S.)

No, his wife and boss.

EXT. HARTSFIELD AIRPORT, ATLANTA - EVENING

A cargo plane taxis across the tarmac. Thanksgiving weekend. Commercial flights are lined up nose to tail.

INT. ATLANTA - FEDEX COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

Boxes from all over the world are unloaded roughly by the graveyard shift.

CLOSE ON A BOX

"DANGEROUS BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL. KEEP REFRIGERATED." It is addressed to the CDC. The NIGHT MANAGER considers the box-- reads the waybill.

NIGHT MANAGER

(off the waybill into a Nextel phone)

We got an urgent for CDC in Druid Hills.

NEXTEL VOICE (O.S.)

We've got all sorts of urgent. The last truck went out twenty minutes ago.

He puts the box in the next day's pile.

NIGHT MANAGER

Monday it is then.

INT. JOHN G. SHEDD AQUARIUM - CHICAGO - DAY

PAMELA NEAL walks with her FOUR YEAR OLD BOY past the GIANT KELP FOREST toward a bathroom. She looks overwhelmed by the crowds and the pain in her head.

The boy is melting down in a big way. She holds her phone like a divining rod looking for a signal.

PAMELA NEAL

I don't feel that well, Tiger.
Whatever Dad brought home he gave
to all of us.

Nobody is answering.

PAMELA NEAL (CONT'D)

Honey, can you just sit here with
me a minute. My legs feel really
strange...

The boy sits down and she holds him close.

PAMELA NEAL (CONT'D)

(leaves a message)

Josh, where are you? I'm at the
Shedd and I just feel awful. Maybe
you're asleep. I don't know that I
can drive home...I'm gonna try your
uh...uh...

She seems to have forgotten the word. She drops the phone and her son picks it up. She walks awkwardly toward the exit.

MEARS (O.S.)

(prelap)

She flew back Hong Kong, Chicago,
Minneapolis. She had a five hour
layover at O'Hare.

INT. EMHOFF'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

EMHOFF is still in isolation. Mears interviews him.

EMHOFF

She felt pretty bad when she got
home, but it just seemed like jet
lag and then it kinda turned into a
sore throat.

MEARS

Did her work involve contact with livestock in any way? We know she was in Hong Kong. On business?

EMHOFF

A few days for a team-building exercise. She traveled a lot for work.

MEARS

She mention seeing anyone who was ill? Anyone on a plane? She maybe eat anything off the street that she mentioned? I know this is a hard time to answer questions.

EMHOFF

She was kind of a food snob--don't think she would do the street thing. I already gave the Health Department her itinerary and the credit card receipts. Maybe she got it from Clark. There's like ten sick kids at that school. And I went there too, to pick him up.

Mears considers all the possibilities.

MEARS

She went through customs at 11:15am and was on a 6pm flight to Minneapolis. Any idea what she did in Chicago during that layover?

Beat. This is news to Emhoff.

EMHOFF

Why? Is there anyone sick in Chicago?

Mears studies him.

EMHOFF (CONT'D)

She said she missed her plane.

MEARS

Did she?

EMHOFF

Before we got married, my wife had a relationship with a man there. Josh Neal.

Beat.

EMHOFF (CONT'D)

Is Josh Neal sick-- did we get this from him?

MEARS

I can't- we're investigating all the-

Emhoff's anger rises at the prospect of someone to blame.

EMHOFF

I think I have a right to know. Look at where I am. I'd just like to understand some of this.

INT. NEAL HOUSE - EVANSTON, IL - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Paramedics are putting JOSH NEAL into an ambulance. Pamela looks on. The Paramedic gets right in his face.

PARAMEDIC

Mr. Neal? I want you to stay with me here. Can you hear me?

PAMELA NEAL

He's breathing right? I couldn't wake him. We got home and I couldn't wake him. We both woke up sick this morning. He had a sore throat and his head hurt from the light.

The PARAMEDIC puts his flashlight in her eyes. Checks her pupils.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

Emhoff watches Mears leave through the air lock-- only the pen she was using to take notes remains on the side table.

INT. INTERNET CAFE, SF -- NIGHT

Krumwiede paces while he's jacked up on coffee. A JAPANESE WOMAN speaks on the SKYPE HEADSET on his laptop. Krumwiede coaches her on what to say.

KRUMWIEDE

Ask if they've admitted anyone else in status epilepticus. Has anyone else died?

She translates into the phone. Krumwiede waits on a response.

JAPANESE WOMAN

They want to know who you are?

Krumwiede looks through his notes.

KRUMWIEDE

Tell them I'm from the World Health Organization.

JAPANESE WOMAN

Alan, I don't think you should-

KRUMWIEDE

Why are they keeping secrets? Tell them I work in infectious diseases and saw the video on the internet.

She translates reluctantly. Krumwiede is keyed up.

JAPANESE WOMAN

They're transferring me...

She takes off the headset and hands it to Krumwiede.

KRUMWIEDE

Hello...Dr. Alan Krumwiede here...

JAPANESE ACCENT (O.S.)

Yes...We spoke to a Dr. Orantes in Geneva yesterday. Five are dead--thirty five cases.

Krumwiede makes notes.

JAPANESE ACCENT (CONT'D)

Have you heard anything more about the London cases? I hear they have two clusters.

KRUMWIEDE

(lying)

Yes, we know about the London outbreak.

JAPANESE ACCENT (O.S.)

Three of our sick work here at the hospital. Massive swelling in the brain. I've seen nothing like it.

Krumwiede hangs up. Dazed.

JAPANESE WOMAN

What did he say? Is it the fish?
Should I call my parents and tell
them not to eat the fish?

Krumwiede gets out a bottle of Purell.

KRUMWIEDE

(rattled)

Uh...I think you should definitely
call your parents.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MINNEAPOLIS - MORNING

Mears makes a flow chart of the disease on the wall. It is spreading...More cases now. Behind her on TV a news report updates the latest information from in front of the hospital.

TV NEWS REPORTER

(on TV)

Beyond the Edina Executive and her son, five more Minnesotans have now succumbed to what is believed to be a deadly encephalitis outbreak over the holiday weekend. Officials at the health department are urging people to come to the emergency room if they have any of the following symptoms...fever, sore throat, sever headaches, fatigue or seizures.

She kicks it back to the ANCHOR MAN.

ANCHOR MAN

Fever and headache and sore throat.
It's not our friend the swine flu
coming back around?

TV NEWS REPORTER

The official I spoke to did mention
that many of the symptoms might
appear to be flu-like.

ANCHOR MAN

Well, we'll want to keep a close
eye on that story for any updates.
Next on sports. The Vikings
prepare for Monday night's showdown
against the Giants.

The phone rings.

MEARS

Mears.

CHEEVER (O.S.)

So, the affair in Chicago?

MEARS

Joshua Neal.

INT. CHEEVER'S APARTMENT, ATLANTA - NIGHT

Cheever is on the phone in his apartment.

CHEEVER

He was DOA at a hospital in Chicago. His wife and kid were also admitted. I'm asking for samples.

INT. MEARS' HOTEL ROOM - INTERCUT

Mears is already taping more paper to the wall. The flow chart grows.

MEARS

So she either had it in Chicago, or she caught it in Chicago.

CHEEVER

We need to check the passengers on the plane from LAX to O'Hare and from Hong Kong to LA. We're getting the manifests-- it's just hard on a Sunday. Everyone's travelling because of the holiday.

MEARS

If you were going to do a biological weapon-- nothing like a few million family dinners to get it going. People travelling. Shopping. Saying hello and good-bye. I'm sure it's crossed someone's mind.

CHEEVER

It's crossed a lot of minds. Other agencies are all over this now.

MEARS

(off the weather report)
It's like ten degrees here.

CHEEVER

(joking)

Ebola usually happens in warm places-- you rather be on that?

INT. HOUSING BLOCK - HONG KONG - DAY

A man in a robe RUNS down the hall. He knocks on the door of an apartment urgently.

RUNNING MAN

(shouting at door)

Look out the window...Look.

He runs to another door and a third in the hallway opens. A COUGHING man emerges.

COUGHING MAN

What is it? What's happening.

More doors are opening now and the inhabitants are flooding toward the stairwell.

RUNNING MAN

They're outside.

EXT. HOUSING BLOCK - HONG KONG - CONTINUOUS

A number of military style trucks are parking and a small army of MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS in masks move quickly on the building.

There are ARMED PERSONNEL wearing masks as well. They enter the building and seal off the exits. A MAN WITH A MEGAPHONE speaks.

MEGAPHONE

Residents of Chrysanthemum Gardens.
Please stay in your apartments. We
will be coming door to door with
medical treatment. Please stay
inside. This is for your own safety
and the safety of your neighbors.

But, some of the panic stricken residents are making a run for it. The RUNNING MAN jumps out a second floor window and is heading round the corner when he is apprehended by a SOLDIER.

But, other RESIDENTS escape scattering into the crowds.
Running.

Two nurses take the temperatures of those who do not run--
THE OLD WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN are in line. They call out
the RESULTS.

RESULTS

38.1.

They are put in the truck. Next, the man from the elevator.

RESULTS 2

Normal.

And the man is allowed to walk away.

INT. BSL-3 LAB - CDC - DAY

DR. ALLY HEXTALL (40's) and her colleague-- DR. DAVID
EISENBERG (30's, Israeli) put on protective BLUE SUITS with N-
95 masks with Plexiglass face shields. They make their way
through the air-locks and chambers.

EISENBERG

You have a good Thanksgiving?

HEXTALL

I worked.

EISENBERG

(sarcastic)

Really? You?

HEXTALL

Salmonella thing in Texas-- pretty
limited.

They move past centrifuges and incubators-- mechanical boxes
and microscopes.

They arrive at an air-locked compartment in the wall.
Eisenberg opens it and retrieves THE PARCEL. He puts it on a
table and begins to open it. Careful not to lance his suit
with a BOX CUTTER.

HEXTALL (CONT'D)

What do we have?

Eisenberg delicately opens the blood sample from its
containment. He places it in a centrifuge.

EISENBERG

Young woman in Minnesota-- goes
into a coma after seizure. Dies a
few hours later.

(MORE)

EISENBERG (CONT'D)
Recently traveled to China. Son
also died. As of this morning, 87
cases and fifteen dead.

Hextall opens the tissue sample of brain. She places it on a
tray. Speckles of blood on her rubber gloves.

EISENBERG (CONT'D)
Is it anywhere else yet?

HEXTALL
(off the brain)
Yeah, it's on my gloves.

INT. WHO - CONFERENCE ROOM

The daily briefing. Ten people sit around a table watching
slides of the evacuation from the CHRYSANTHEMUM GARDENS
housing block in Hong Kong.

LEOPOLD
What we are hearing from Beijing is
that the outbreak is contained to
Chrysanthemum complex in Hong Kong.
Two deaths and ten suspected cases.

An Asian Doctor is dubious.

DUBIOUS
Nothing in Hong Kong is contained.

ORANTES
How many people live in
Chrysanthemum?

LEOPOLD
Six thousand. It's central
Kowloon.

DUBIOUS
Hospital admissions?

LEOPOLD
They are not disclosing yet.

ORANTES
Is there any vinegar left in the
stores?

LEOPOLD
Vinegar?

DUBIOUS

Traditional remedy. If the vinegar is gone-- we're way behind the curve.

LEOPOLD

The Chinese are sending samples. Should be here in 24 hours.

An INDIAN DOCTOR starts handing out a report.

INDIAN DOC

OK, we are seeing Cholera in Bangladesh in large numbers following the flooding.

The slides are now of Bangladesh. The world never runs out of the sick.

EXT. CDC - PARKING LOT - MORNING

Cheever heads toward the entry. ROGER the JANITOR (50's, African American) takes a hit off his INHALER as he moves some trash bins.

ROGER

Morning, Dr. Cheever.

CHEEVER

You kicked ass in the pool this weekend.

ROGER

Go Falcons!

Cheever is clocked by a MAN ON A BENCH who is talking on his cell phone.

BENCH MAN

Dr. Cheever?

Cheever stops.

CHEEVER

Can I help you.

BENCH MAN

Dennis French, Department of Homeland Security. Have a moment?

Cheever shrugs. French finishes up his call.

FRENCH

(to phone)

I found him-- tell the unit on the way to his house to come in.

Cheever is alarmed by this.

INT. CDC - CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cheever, French and CDC ASST. DIRECTOR LYLE HAGGERTY who is in his COAST GUARD UNIFORM. French has photos of the enforced quarantine in Kowloon.

FRENCH

This happened yesterday in Kowloon. Workers at a casino in Macau striking over conditions-- three have died in one bunk house. CIA thinks there may be a connection.

Cheever writes down the numbers.

HAGGERTY

Casinos are of particular concern to Homeland Security.

FRENCH

If someone is ready to blow themselves up at a pizzeria, then the thought of walking through a crowded casino or an airport spreading Small Pox or anthrax must have crossed their mind. We're asking for a list of casino guests.

CHEEVER

What did they die of? The three.

FRENCH

Reports are vague-- seizures, comas.

Cheever and Haggerty share a look.

HAGGERTY

We've reached out to WHO-- see what they know.

CHEEVER

Emhoff traveled to Hong Kong-- I'll check on Macau. She stopped in Chicago on the way home.

FRENCH

And?

Beat. Cheever knows what's coming.

CHEEVER

We know of at least one death in Chicago-- no confirmation yet. But, we believe that Emhoff was in contact with the Chicago case.

FRENCH

We've run scenarios like this. We're going to want to alert the administration and the NSA. When will we know how to stop this?

CHEEVER

After we figure out what it is-- and if it's the same thing everywhere.

French is not happy with this answer.

FRENCH

Is there any way someone could weaponize bird flu? Is that what we're looking at?

CHEEVER

Someone doesn't have to weaponize bird flu. That's what the birds are doing.

INT. CDC - LAB - SIMULTANEOUSLY

THE VIRUS! Electron microscopy shows irregular spheres with spikes. There are bulbs at the end of spikes that fit into human cells like keys in locks.

A MONITOR

The Virus has been isolated. Eisenberg and Hextall puzzle over it.

HEXTALL

Go in a field.

Eisenberg clicks a mouse and the virus enlarges.

EISENBERG

I'm not seeing much cross-reactivity. Her body had no idea what to do about it.

HEXTALL

Novel. Shit.

Another computer display spells it out in genetic sequence. A series of consonants and numbers spell out a brand new word.

HEXTALL (CONT'D)

Send the image to Sussman in San Francisco and Feldman in New York. See if they have any ideas. But, I don't want it going wide yet.

EISENBERG

What do we say upstairs?

HEXTALL

All we can tell them is what it's not-- and they can tell the world what that means.

INT. ORANTES' OFFICE - NIGHT

She watches the Marunouchi Line video again and again. There have now been two million hits. It has gone viral.

She notices something. Pauses the video. She makes it full screen.

ANGLE ON SCREEN

The man carries a BAG on his shoulder-- when he tumbles, but the contents spill out.

THE DUBIOUS COLLEAGUE from the earlier briefing works across the hall. She yells to him.

ORANTES

Can I ask you something?

He walks into her office.

ORANTES (CONT'D)

What does that look like to you?

DUBIOUS

Airplane ticket.

ORANTES

Which airline?

DUBIOUS

I'm not sure, I don't fly that much.

Orantes types quickly on her computer-- brings up the AIR CHINA HOMEPAGE. The colors on the website match the ticket jacket lying near the Marunouchi Man.

ORANTES

This one?

DUBIOUS

Looks like it to me.

ORANTES

Yeah, me too.

INT. CHICAGO BOARD OF TRADE - MORNING

The futures floor is crowded with TRADERS shoulder to shoulder waiting for the day to begin. A MAN WITH A ROUGH VOICE gets up with a microphone.

ROUGH VOICE

Over the weekend, a friend and colleague passed away. Joshua Neal. He was a good father. A good man. And a loyal friend. I'd like us all to join in a moment of silence for our co-worker Josh Neal.

Silence spreads across the men in the pits. They search the top of their shoes for solace. The silence is punctuated with the HOARSE COUGH of a TRADER BREAKING A SWEAT.

INT. 3M OFFICES - MINNESOTA - DAY

Mears, Swanson and other MEMBERS of an INVESTIGATIVE TEAM enter the office building on a mission. They wear DEPT OF HEALTH windbreakers-- some wear masks, all wear gloves. They carry vessels for containment of biological matter.

A HUMAN RESOURCES WORKER points toward the stairs. It feels like an FBI raid.

HR WORKER

Ms. Emhoff was on the third floor.

Swanson and the team head into the stairwell. Mears leads the way with the HR worker.

HR WORKER (CONT'D)

We have the list you asked for.

She hands her a slip of paper.

HR WORKER (CONT'D)

They're in the conference room on the fifth floor. They were told to keep ten feet apart.

MEARS

By whom?

HR WORKER

The on-site nurse. There was a lot of anxiety and it seemed getting them all in the same place and away from the other employees would be best. We closed up the bathroom she was using and brought in a cleaning team.

THE CLEANING TEAM

Ten strong and fully outfitted. Washing down every work surface and keyboard with ammonia and Lysol and anything else that kills the small and nasty. They treat it like it's a hazardous waste spill.

SWANSON

We're not gonna get much here-- pretty much been sanitized.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mears addresses a group of ELEVEN NERVOUS EMPLOYEES.

NERVOUS 1

There was a package she messengered from Hong Kong that I opened.

MEARS

Shouldn't be an issue-- virus can't live for days on a box. Anybody meet her at the airport or see her when she got back?

Nervous looks all around.

NERVOUS 2

Sometimes we do pilates together,
but she didn't feel up to it.

MEARS

So, you had no contact with her?

NERVOUS 2

Only over the phone.

NERVOUS 3

(holds forward a coffee
cup)

We had coffee the day she came in--
I think she might have moved my cup
because it was on some papers. I
can't remember.

SWANSON

How many days ago?

NERVOUS 3

Six. I'd like to be tested-- my
head is buzzing.

People move away from her.

HR WORKER

The security log says that Dave
Amdahl was here during those hours.

NERVOUS 1

Dave worked on another floor.

SWANSON

Was he at the meeting?

NERVOUS 3

No, but he was with her.

MEARS

And how's that?

NERVOUS 3

Her car was stuck in the snow and
he pushed it out.

MEARS

Where is he?

HR calls down to his office. Everyone waits and watches.

HR WORKER

May I speak to Dave...Uh...uh...20 minutes.

She hangs up.

HR WORKER (CONT'D)

He got a late start this morning-- he's on his way in.

MEARS

Does you have his cell phone number?

INT. MINNEAPOLIS CITY BUS - SIMULTANEOUSLY

DAVE AMDAHL (30's) on a crowded city bus-- he coughs and drinks his coffee. Looks a little sweaty-- not great. His phone rings.

AMDAHL

Hello...This is. Yeah, should be there soon...I got a late start today. Two sick ones at home. Needed to get my sister to come over and stay with them.....

A long pause as we hear Mears trying to remain calm on the other end of the line.

MEARS (O.S.)

Where are you at this moment?

AMDAHL

On the bus.

He pulls the wire to signal the bus to stop at the next corner. Anxiety building.

AMDAHL (CONT'D)

Yeah, I'm getting off.

He does.

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS STREET CORNER - CONTINUOUS

People mill about. Amdahl is still on the phone. Freaked out.

AMDAHL

She couldn't get the car out so I helped. I pushed for a while, but then I just drove it out for her...

He looks at his own hands.

AMDAHL (CONT'D)

They were on the wheel.

INT. OFFICIAL CAR/CHEEVER'S OFFICE AT CDC - MOMENTS LATER -
INTERCUT

Mears drives to get Amdahl-- sirens blazing. Speaks to Cheever who is on the phone in his office.

MEARS

As of this morning we have somewhere between 22 and 39 fatalities-- but people are coming back from the holiday-- could get crazy. Two more deaths last night. Both connected to the hospital-- ER nurse who saw Emhoff and another patient in the ER.

CHEEVER

Hextall says it's novel. Sussman says it's mosaic. Feldman says it's part human and part pig-- but not H1N1. We're trying to put together a press statement for this afternoon. We've got dead in Tokyo, London, Macau and the WHO is telling us the Chinese quarantined an apartment building-- they have five dead.

MEARS

Out of how many?

CHEEVER

They're not saying.

MEARS

You gonna call a national emergency?

CHEEVER

And say what? We can't hide from the air. Can't spell pandemic without spelling panic. Still cold there?

MEARS

Until July from what I understand.
Just bought a down parka and wool
hat. I'll be expensing those.
There's a football game here
tonight. Sixty thousand people in a
small space, using the same rest
rooms and water fountains.

CHEEVER

We called the governor-- he has
tickets on the 50 yard line.

MEARS

I gotta go-- we found our spreader.

They arrive at Amdahl. He sinks to his knees-- terrified.

MEARS (CONT'D)

Mr. Amdahl, I want you to put on
this mask and get in the ambulance.
We believe you may have come in
contact with a highly contagious
virus. OK? Do you understand?

He is given a mask and climbs into the ambulance.

INT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - DUBAI - DAY

In a conference room with an American Flag framed on the
wall, three U.S. OFFICIALS IN SUITS sit with Rafik and a HIS
LAWYER. Two of the officials wear N-95 masks and the third
PACES.

PACES

Prior to London you were in Hong
Kong and Macau. Prior to that you
were in Dubai and Riyadh.

RAFIK'S LAWYER

We have provided a complete
itinerary.

RAFIK

Are the masks necessary? No one
here is ill.

They ignore him.

OFFICIAL 1

And the young woman who died in
London? You had known her long?

RAFIK

We met last spring in Chamonix.

RAFIK'S LAWYER

He has meetings in Miami next week.
I don't understand--

RAFIK

I've never had a visa request
rejected before. I've had two
congressmen as guests here in
Dubai.

OFFICIAL 2

Also, we understand your butler
died of an undetermined illness as
well this week.

PACES

Is gambling a passion of yours, Mr.
Khalifa? Have you been to Las
Vegas? Atlantic City? Macau?

Beat.

RAFIK'S LAWYER

You know he was in Macau.

PACES

You have holdings in two Romanian
drug companies. We'd like to talk
to you more about that, Mr.
Khalifa.

RAFIK

This is bullshit. Absurd.

RAFIK'S LAWYER

He's lost a loved one and an
employee in the last week or so--
he himself has been ill. Why are
you harassing him?

PACES

There are people in this part of
the world who have stated an
interest in biological weapons. Do
you know any of these people?

Rafik gets up to leave.

OFFICIAL 1

We would like a blood sample, Mr.
Khalifa.

RAFIK

What are you saying? I killed someone?

OFFICIAL 1

We'd like a blood test to be administered by a physician affiliated with the US military here-- I think you can understand how we would arrive at such a request. We mean no offense.

He slides an appointment card toward him.

RAFIK

I'd like to go now. I'll be contacting Senator Schumer's office about this.

He leaves the card on the table.

HAGGERTY (O.S.)

(prelap)

It's always a good idea to have water and canned goods on hand...

INT. CDC - PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY

Cheever holds forth before a sea of reporters. Haggerty and a group of other grim faced officials stand behind him. They are active on their Blackberries-- new reports are walked in.

HAGGERTY

...Regardless if the threat is an earthquake or outbreak or hurricane. All emergency service providers advocate that. I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Ellis Cheever, Deputy Director of our Infectious Disease Center.

CHEEVER

OK. There is a release posted on our website that is updated hourly. Here's the situation in Minnesota-- which is very fluid right now. 35 are believed dead. We are processing samples. Until we do that we can't confirm that the deaths are the result of the same illness.

REPORTER 1

Can you say what drugs you believe will be effective at this point? Antibiotics? Antivirals?

CHEEVER

I can't answer that. We need to identify the infectious agent first.

REPORTER 1

Tamiflu? Relenza? Were they depleted by the Swine Flu outbreak?

CHEEVER

It would be irresponsible to recommend a course of treatment without an understanding of the disease.

REPORTER 2

So, there's no medical treatment?

CHEEVER

We have isolated the virus, but not identified it. That's job one.

REPORTER 2

And when will it be identified? There are reports on the web out of Hong Kong that it's avian flu. Can you comment on that?

INT. AIRPORT GENEVA - NIGHT - SIMULTANEOUSLY

In the departures lounge, Orantes watches the press conference on CNN INTERNATIONAL.

CHEEVER

We do not believe this is H5N1-- or a mutated H1N1. The World Health Organization has sent an epidemiologist to Hong Kong to try and identify the origins of whatever it is we are looking at. We do know that the person in Minnesota who appears to be the index patient had travelled to that part of the world.

REPORTER 2

But, you don't know what it is?

CHEEVER

That doesn't stop us from knowing what it's not.

REPORTER 3

Are you issuing any warning about plane travel at this point? Or, schools?

INT. NICE HOUSE - EDINA, MINNESOTA - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Emhoff watches the conference on a local NBC affiliate with Jory.

HAGGERTY

The CDC is in discussions with Homeland Security and other branches of government and we refer you to our website for updates on warnings and school closures. That will be up to the states.

REPORTER 4

Is the FDA prepared to pull any foods or issue any warnings? Farmers in Iowa have voluntarily culled birds today and farmers in Texas are following suit.

CHEEVER

There is no reason to believe at this point that food stocks have been compromised.

REPORTER 4

But, you don't know?

Beat.

CHEEVER

We believe it is passed by normal respiration from an infected person. We have posted symptoms on the website-- One more question.

INT. INTERNET CAFE, SF -- SIMULTANEOUSLY

Krumwiede watches on FOX NEWS.

REPORTER 5

There is blogging on the internet from credible sources that this may be a biological weapon we are seeing. In fact, an extremist organization has taken credit on the internet-- an Algerian group with ties to Saudi Arabia...

CHEEVER

Again, that's not my world. We are in touch with Homeland Security--

HAGGERTY

And we are sharing information and samples with health and intelligence organizations around the world. Thank you.

REPORTER 3

Can you repeat the affected cities so far?

CHEEVER

Again, the US cities affected are Minneapolis, Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston and Salt Lake...We expect that number to grow as people return from their holidays.

Cheever steps away from the podium.

REPORTER 2

Your name again.

CHEEVER

Ellis Cheever...C-H-E-E-V-E-R.

INT. METRODOME - MINNESOTA

The Vikings are playing the GIANTS-- MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL. There are some empty seats. A few fans wear N-95 protective masks, most do not. There is a crawl on the scoreboard that says: "The Minneapolis Health Department reminds you to cover your mouth when you cough and wash your hands frequently."

A SOFT PRETZEL makes its way down a row of FANS and a TWENTY DOLLAR BILL makes its way back toward the vendor who licks his fingers and peels off change. A conveyor belt of virus spread.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MINNEAPOLIS - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Mears watches the game on TV. She has some soup and salad.

At the bar THREE DELTA FLIGHT ATTENDANTS talk among themselves.

ATTENDANT

The company is saying that if we think someone is sick we need to report them. Are we gonna throw them out at 30,000 feet?

ATTENDANT 2

Has the union said anything yet? I hear that BA is stopping flights to Chicago and Boston.

ATTENDANT

There's a thing today on the internet that there are samples missing from the Army labs in Maryland. That's what this is. They were trying to make a flu shot and this happened. Someone messed up big time.

Mears signs her check.

INT. CHEK LAP KOK AIRPORT - HONG KONG - MORNING

Orantes arrives from Geneva. She is ushered through an INFRARED FACE SCAN machine that checks her temperature. The line is outrageously long. Children are checked with ear thermometers.

She steps through the machine. No alarms, no problems. She is fifty feet away when a kerfuffle breaks out behind her. A man is being DETAINED. He is a bit older and speaks English with an accent. She stops.

DETAINED

My temperature is always high. I have a thyroid condition.

But he is being led away by uniformed and masked workers.

DETAINED (CONT'D)

I am a Dutch citizen and I want to be taken to my Embassy. You have no right to do this.

People give him a wide berth. Orantes keeps going.

INT. CRISIS ROOM - CDC - NIGHT

A mission control set-up to monitor the progress of the disease. Screens cover the local news in different cities. Different parts of the room are dedicated to different regions of the country.

In a glass walled conference room, Cheever surveys a white board covered in marker. A diagram of what we know so far-- Minneapolis, Chicago, London, Hong Kong, Dubai and beyond-- dotted lines connecting places and names. It's spreading like a blood stain on the map.

Cheever's cell phone rings.

CHEEVER

Yeah, I'm still here...What's the news saying?

He looks at the butcher paper flow chart-- eyes Chicago.

CHEEVER (CONT'D)

We don't know about Tamiflu yet. Yeah, we have samples from Chicago. I don't know...Get some saline spray for your nose. You still eating leftovers? Yeah...I think New Year's in Mexico sounds good. Where is Daniel's place?

Hextall walks in, grim look on her face.

HEXTALL

The Japan sample matches the Minnesota samples. The WHO says they have a match with the London cluster. We're level four and headed to level five.

CHEEVER

(into phone)

Babe, I'll call you later. I gotta go.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT

A tired man in his late 40's comes out of the science building. His name is DR. IAN SUSSMAN-- he speaks into a dictaphone. He is unaware of this but ALAN KRUMWIEDE is a few steps behind him.

SUSSMAN

(into a tape recorder)

Shows novel characteristics and looks mosaic in origin. All attempts to grow the virus on tissue have failed...

KRUMWIEDE

I knew it was a mosaic. It's Godzilla, King Kong and Frankenstein all in one.

He recognizes Krumwiede.

SUSSMAN

Fuck, really? Get away from here, Alan. You're not a doctor and you're not a reporter.

KRUMWIEDE

I am a reporter. Yes I am.

SUSSMAN

Blogging isn't writing.

KRUMWIEDE

(getting angry)

There are rumors that it's a biological weapon-- have you spoken to USAMRIID?

SUSSMAN

Go away, Alan.

KRUMWIEDE

It's getting on planes, it's going to museums, you always said in class when medical people are dying it's time to be scared. The nurses' union in Minneapolis is raising ethical issues-- they're staying home. Tamiflu doesn't do shit this time. We're naked.

SUSSMAN

I'm surprised you remember anything from class, Alan.

KRUMWIEDE

I've been following it online since the Marunouchi Man-- it's 25% fatal. Small Pox numbers. The nightmare cometh.

SUSSMAN

The nightmare is online, Alan. The nightmare is you. Get away from my lab.

Sussman gets in his Prius and drives away.

INT. MEARS' HOTEL ROOM - MINNEAPOLIS - MORNING

Mears wakes up to the sound of her own cough. She doesn't give it much thought, but as she sits up the force of the headache hits.

She rushes to the bathroom and grabs a battery powered thermometer from her toiletries bag. Hands shaking she puts it in her mouth. Sits on the toilet scared out of her mind.

MEARS

(with thermometer in mouth)

Please god, please god.

She checks the thermometer. It's high. Mears rips into a package of Tamiflu. She takes a pill and swallows with water.

MEARS (CONT'D)

No...no...no...

She opens the drapes and looks outside-- another gray day in Minnesota. But, today is different THE NATIONAL GUARD is now out.

She picks up the phone and calls the front desk.

MEARS (CONT'D)

This is Dr. Erin Mears in 318. I want to know the name of everyone who has serviced this room in the last few days...Also, you need to get in touch with the waitress who was working in the lounge last night. I need all of their numbers...Yes...It's an emergency.

INT. KWONG WAH HOSPITAL - ISOLATION - DAY

ORANTES wears a spacesuit and interviews THE OLD WOMAN from the elevator at Chrysanthemum Gardens. Everything goes through a TRANSLATOR (male, 30's). TWO CHINESE HEALTH OFFICIALS sit in. All wear protective gear. One we will come to know as Orantes' CHINESE COUNTERPART.

OLD WOMAN

In the fall we try and eat an animal. One with a good coat. They say it protects you...A civet or another strong animal that gives you strong wind.

ORANTES

And did you eat such an animal this year?

OLD WOMAN

No. I could not afford it. That's why I'm sick. Just the chicken from the wet market. I tried to buy more vinegar for the children-- but it's all sold out. Everyone is sick.

INT. KWONG WAH HOSPITAL - CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A Chinese health official discusses the findings with Orantes and the Translator. He switches back and forth between English and Chinese with the other officials in the room.

CHINESE COUNTERPART

There are 37 from Chrysanthemum who have symptoms. Ten have died.

ORANTES

Are there any other clusters? In Kowloon? In Hong Kong proper? What about on the mainland?

An animated conversation breaks out in Chinese. Orantes tries to keep track, but clearly they do not want her to be a part of it. The men gesticulate at the flow chart on the wall.

The Chinese Health Official calms his cohorts.

CHINESE HEALTH OFFICIAL 2

We have nothing on the mainland to report.

Orantes isn't sure if she should believe this.

ORANTES

What about the Macau cluster?

CHINESE HEALTH OFFICIAL

It is possible that this Japanese index patient brought it from Thailand. We have heard rumors of a new virus there in the North.

CHINESE COUNTERPART

Perhaps you would like to go to the hotel now. We will arrange a meal for later and you can tour the other hospitals.

She studies the flow chart on the wall.

ORANTES

I want to go to Macau.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - MINNESOTA - AFTERNOON

Emhoff and his daughter, Jory, search the aisles for items. Emhoff asks a SALES CLERK for help.

EMHOFF

They're out of them over at the Walgreens. The N-95 is the one the website says is the most protective.

SALES CLERK

We don't carry anything like that-- I think you want to go over to a medical supply store or something.

EMHOFF

We tried that place on Lyndale. They're out as well. What about one for working with hazardous chemicals...If you were sanding something. A mask like that?

JORY

You want me to wear one of those around? Really? Maybe I'm immune like you.

EMHOFF

People do it in Japan all the time, Jory.

The sales clerk leads them over to the aisle where the masks might be. They're also sold out.

SALES CLERK

Must of sold out of these this morning.

JORY

What if I just wear a bandana like Jesse James?

SALES CLERK

Is there anything else I can help you with?

EMHOFF

Flashlight, duct tape and some water purification tablets.

INT. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION/CDC/DHS/VARIOUS COUNTRIES - INTERCUT

A video-conference call in progress. Leopold and a host of other Doctors from the WHO convene with officials at the CDC-- Cheever, Haggerty and others. There are also officials from China, Japan and the UK on the phone.

LEOPOLD

We have clusters in London, Manchester, Dubai, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Kyoto, Chicago, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, Boston, and Macau. This morning we have learned of suspected cases in Amsterdam and Frankfurt. We have met the criteria for level four.

AFRICAN REPRESENTATIVE

Depending on samples from the cases in Pretoria it may be level five. They all came from London.

A map of the world is broadcast to all the representatives. The charge of the virus is alarming. It spools out over time.

LEOPOLD

Using our models we believe there are approximately 89,000 cases at this point and that we are heading toward 267,000-- and from there using our model based on the R naught of 3.2, here is where we expect to be in 48 hours.

The Map animates to reflect this rate of spread-- exponential increases pool out. Over a million cases around the world.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

The fatality rate is 26.3 per cent.

CHINESE OFFICIAL

We are not prepared to connect the Macau casino cases with the ones in Kowloon at this point-- I think we need to wait for analysis of the samples.

CHEEVER

But, my understanding is that there is considerable traffic between the two...

CHINESE OFFICIAL

Yes. But, we should wait for the science.

LEOPOLD

We have an epidemiologist on the ground in Hong Kong-- her work in determining the origins of the outbreak is crucial. Once we know where this thing came from, we can get about the business of solving it.

CHINESE OFFICIAL

We are cooperating fully.

In the CDC video conference room, Cheever, Haggerty and Hextall smirk at this.

LEOPOLD

Dr. Cheever-- perhaps you can update us on the research.

An image of THE VIRUS is broadcast.

CHEEVER

We believe it is a paramyxovirus. We know that it is transmitted easily by respiration and believe it also can live on surfaces for up to 24 hours. As of right now, nobody has been able to grow the virus in cells.

AFRICAN REPRESENTATIVE

And why is that?

HEXTALL

Because it kills all the cells we put it in. Pig, chicken and human. Until we can grow enough of it we can't vaccinate against it.

Beat.

JAPANESE OFFICIAL (ON SCREEN)

Have you found any treatment at all? Any antivirals? Anything Anyone?

ENGLISH OFFICIAL

We've begun studies with the survivors, but that's going to take some time.

FRENCH OFFICIAL

I think it is important to discuss issues of patent and distribution now-- I know there are conversations in progress between pharmaceutical companies...

LEOPOLD

WHO is encouraging the sharing of information between the private and public sector.

ENGLISH OFFICIAL

As of an hour ago there weren't even any test monkeys available. Someone's cornered the market...There are reports on the internet that Relenza is effective.

AFRICAN REPRESENTATIVE

No doubt started by the makers of Relenza.

CHEEVER

That is not our experience.

CHINESE OFFICIAL

Obviously, if someone has discovered a treatment protocol we would like full disclosure and a commitment to forfeit patents and share revenues.

FRENCH OFFICIAL

I don't know if we are prepared to agree with that right now in a blanket statement.

BRITISH OFFICIAL

Not until we know if we are talking therapy or vaccine. Too many unknowns.

JAPANESE OFFICIAL

But, we know one in four or five will die.

FRENCH OFFICIAL

I think we need to hear first from the Americans.

CHEEVER

Excuse me, Dr. Leopold, but I don't see the point in arguing about who gets the rights to a cure that doesn't even exist yet.

CHINESE OFFICIAL

Maybe it does exist. That's why we need disclosure.

JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN

I think we all would like an answer to that question. What is US policy on sharing medicine with the rest of the world?

Cheever and Haggerty share a look.

HAGGERTY

We are awaiting a decision on this matter from Homeland Security and other departments of our government. I think there are important legal issues here for all of us.

Beat.

CHINESE OFFICIAL

So, there will be no full disclosure.

EXT. WASHINGTON, DC - DAY

The Capitol Building on a fall day.

INT. SENATE OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

SENATOR BOXER discusses the emerging situation with her staff and some other INTERESTED PARTIES.

BOXER

We've got 50 different states with 50 different policies, we've got CDC, HHS, FEMA-

CONGRESSIONAL AID

They're all Homeland Security now.

BOXER

So who sets policy? We've got 500 phone calls from San Francisco on just this. Where's Martin? We need to issue a statement.

CONGRESSIONAL AID

He left after the breakfast-- looked like he was coming down with something.

INT. MINNEAPOLIS ARMORY - DAY

Mears lies in a bed in a long row of beds in the makeshift infirmary. Swanson approaches in protective gear.

SWANSON

Dr. Mears, Dr. Cheever called again. We're just having a very hard time with the logistics of evacuating you. Finding a plane and all--

Mears nods-- she's miserable.

MEARS

There's nothing we can do anyway, might as well do it here as in Atlanta.

Swanson hands her a phone in a plastic bag.

SWANSON

I did get your phone. Dr. Cheever asked that you call if you feel up to it.

MEARS

I'm having word finding problems.
Sensitive to light. Same things
Emhoff reported.

SWANSON

We're setting up a special ward for
first responders and medical
personnel at the University. I
want to move you there, but the
nurses' union is calling a stoppage
until protocols are in place.
There are volunteers and nuns--
it's hard to know where's the best
place.

Mears nods-- sweaty and miserable.

INT. CASINO - MACAU - NIGHT

Orantes and her Chinese Counterpart wander through the Casino
with a MAINLAND MAINTENANCE WORKER. Very few gamblers are
present. She is escorted as always by other Chinese Health
Officials and CASINO MANAGEMENT.

MAINLAND

First there were two who got sick.
Then there were many more and now
everyone is sick or sleeping
outside. Now, so many people.

ORANTES

Do you remember who got the first
headache?

CHINESE COUNTERPART

We know that Sun Ke and Zou Lufeng
became ill on the same day.

MAINLAND

Yes, they did. And then Chen Nanxi
when he moved into Li Bai's bunk.

ORANTES

What happened to Li Bai? He was
resistant?

MAINLAND

He went on vacation-- before.

Orantes scratches his name off a list.

CHINESE COUNTERPART

That's why he is not among the sick.

MAINLAND

He died anyway though. An accident.

Beat.

ORANTES

When?

MAINLAND

He went to see his sister and was killed in an accident-- but, it was before Sun Ke and Zou Lufeng got sick.

ORANTES

Where did his sister live?

MAINLAND

Kowloon.

Orantes goes back and circles his name.

INT. CDC BSL LEVEL 4 LAB - NIGHT

An even more extensive series of rooms within rooms-- glass cubes connected by air-locks. In the innermost area a BENCH SCIENTIST works with the VIRUS-- slides are moved from machine to machine. Its most basic composition appears on a computer screen TWO ROOMS OVER.

HEXTALL and EISENBERG review the results. A short alphabet displayed before them like a high stakes game of scrabble-- A,C,T and G.

EISENBERG

(off the screen)

Part pig, part human and part bat.
Maybe Nipah or Hendra viruses.

HEXTALL

Did the Emhoff woman have any evidence of a bat bite in the autopsy?

Another set of results appears on the screen. A bell curve wavers from right to left.

EISENBERG

It's still changing. The swarm is shifting every few days. Could still mutate in a major way.

HEXTALL

It's figuring us out faster than we're figuring it out.

EISENBERG

It doesn't have anything else to do.

INT. CDC EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER - NIGHT

Cheever and a host of other workers monitor screens and answer phones. The map on the wall shows the virus has spread exponentially. Butcher paper spans the area-- but you can't wrap this up in butcher paper anymore. They've run out of walls.

Haggerty walks into the center.

HAGGERTY

Ellis, Can I borrow you for a moment?

INT. HAGGERTY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Haggerty and Cheever behind closed doors.

HAGGERTY

There's a sick congressman from Illinois in DC. He just got back from Chicago. The governor there is gonna call out the National Guard and try and do some isolation. They're closing Midway and O'Hare. Some rumor on the goddamn internet about it being in the water.

CHEEVER

That's gonna make it hard to get people to wash their hands.

HAGGERTY

The WHO is taking it to five in an hour. The secret service is moving the President underground. Congress is figuring out how to work online. It's fucking surreal.

(MORE)

HAGGERTY (CONT'D)

When word goes out there's gonna be a run on the banks, the grocery stores, gas stations.

Cheever nods. He can see implications in the shaded maps on the walls.

CHEEVER

It's all gonna tip over. Virus'll be the least of our problems.

HAGGERTY

Let's just make sure nobody knows until everybody knows.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - HONG KONG

Orantes and her CHINESE COUNTERPART work backwards against time. Butcher paper up on the wall. A diagram with boxes and names. And a map with pins in it.

ORANTES

We have Emhoff at the Mandarin Oriental in Hong Kong. We have Marunouchi Man at the Golden Dragon...We have Khalifa and Irina on a helicopter that landed in Macau. All on the 15th of November.

CHINESE COUNTERPART

Li Bai had contact with Khalifa and took it to Kowloon where Emhoff was a tourist. Khalifa could have dispersed it-- he may have vaccinated himself somehow. I think we still have to consider the possibility that it is a biological weapon...Or Marunouchi Man brought it from Thailand.

ORANTES

The first cluster in Thailand was on the 27th. It didn't start there.

She crosses to the window looks out.

CHINESE COUNTERPART

Do we believe the Thai ministry is a reliable reporter?

HONG KONG

A plume of dark smoke rises in the distance.

ORANTES

What are they burning?

CHINESE COUNTERPART

The dogs-- health minister says they could be transmitters. It has to be considered.

Orantes goes back to the diagram.

CHEEVER (O.S.)

(prelap)

When you have a virus your body sends out armies of antibodies. And the antibodies look at the virus and compare it to every virus you've ever had...

INT. CDC PARKING LOT - ATLANTA - LATE NIGHT

Cheever paces and stares out at the sea of press standing vigil beyond the gates. He's on the phone.

CHEEVER

...And it figures out how it beat it the last time. You are your own pharmaceutical company-- you're born with a catalogue of cures. The problem is sometimes, there is no last time. It doesn't know the answer. Every fifty years or so somebody has to go first.

AUBREY (O.S.)

How many people are gonna die?

CHEEVER

In 1918, about one percent of the population died from the Spanish Flu outbreak. 40 million.

INT. AUBREY'S APARTMENT - CHICAGO - INTERCUT

AUBREY

But, we're better now. We have drugs we didn't have and better science. So it won't be that bad.

CHEEVER

It used to spread only as fast as we could walk. Now it gets on planes and goes 500 miles an hour. We live in cities. Hang from straps on subways. It wants us in schools and elevators. Shaking hands...Mears is sick in Minneapolis.

AUBREY

Who?

CHEEVER

The Doc I sent up there-- she's on a cot at an armory. There are no nurses.

AUBREY

Why not?

CHEEVER

There's a strike.

AUBREY

How can they do that?

CHEEVER

Because there's nothing they can do-- we're just putting healthy people next to sick ones. There are still people dying of cancer and strokes today and tomorrow. We need them there.

AUBREY

I'm sorry, Ellis. That's not your fault. You went places, too. You took risks. It's random.

Something in Cheever unravels at this-- he starts talking faster.

CHEEVER

I want you to get in your car and drive here. Drive by yourself. They're gonna close the airport and the banks are gonna go to shit. There's only enough food in supermarkets for 3 days. It's gonna get difficult in a lot of ways and it's gonna start soon.

AUBREY

What? What are you talking about?

CHEEVER

Get as much cash as you can out of the ATM. Get across state lines and don't tell anyone. Just get in your car now.

He hangs up. From behind a pillar emerges ROGER the JANITOR.

CHEEVER (CONT'D)

Did you hear any of that?

ROGER

I got people, too, Dr. Cheever. We all do.

EXT. NICE HOUSE - EDINA, MINNESOTA - NIGHT

A black sedan pulls up to the house. A man in a suit gets out of the car and walks to the door.

INT. NICE HOUSE - EDINA, MINNESOTA - CONTINUOUS

Emhoff and Jory sit in the kitchen and work on their computers. The news provides a steady stream of flu updates and school closings. The doorbell rings.

Emhoff goes to answer it. He doesn't recognize the man and hesitates to open the door.

EMHOFF

Uh...Can I help you?

BOOTH

Stuart Booth. I'm looking for Thomas Emhoff.

EMHOFF

I'm Tom Emhoff. Do I know you, Mr. Booth?

BOOTH

Mr. Emhoff, I'm a lawyer and I want to discuss with you what could be incredibly lucrative.

EMHOFF

An offer? What kind of offer.

BOOTH

May I come in? I'd need you to sign something before I can disclose all the details.

Emhoff considers-- beyond Booth a TOWN CAR idles in the driveway.

BOOTH (CONT'D)

I flew in privately this morning to meet you Mr. Emhoff-- I'd really appreciate a chance to make my presentation.

INT. DOMINICK'S GROCERY CHICAGO - NIGHT

Aubrey is stocking up on provisions-- she has filled her cart with WATER, CLIFF BARS, CANS OF TUNA, BANANAS-- she stands in front of the display for PURELL. She takes as many bottles as can fit in the cart.

She gets in line-- ANOTHER SHOPPER clocks her cart curiously. Aubrey struggles against the desire to share what she knows.

EXT. DAN RYAN FREEWAY - CHICAGO - NIGHT

Aubrey drives down the freeway-- NATIONAL GUARD trucks move in the other direction toward the city. SEMI-TRUCKS stand parked on the shoulder front to back for a mile.

She heads south. Her phone rings-- her friend from Thanksgiving dinner.

NYGAARD (O.S.)

Hey, friend what's up with blowing off dinner?

AUBREY

I'm sorry, Liz.

NYGAARD (O.S.)

Sorry? Why so flaky You feel OK? This flu shit is really spooky. What does Ellis say? Facebook says it's a terrorist thing and that they're keeping the antidote until demands are met.

AUBREY

Uh...He says it's serious.

Nygaard's daughter cries in the background.

NYGAARD (O.S.)

Honey, shush...What does that mean?
Where are you?

AUBREY

I'm getting out of town.

NYGAARD (O.S.)

What? What's going on?

AUBREY

I'm going to tell you something and
you're not going to repeat it.

And so it spreads...

INT. NICE HOUSE - EDINA, MINNESOTA

Emhoff and Booth. Emhoff reads a non-disclosure agreement.

EMHOFF

You want to buy my antibodies?

BOOTH

We want to have an antiserum on
hand for private use. The
scientists we are working with
believe they can generate small
quantities in their lab.

EMHOFF

You want to pay me a million
dollars for my blood?

BOOTH

There are other survivors, Mr.
Emhoff, but because of the
publicity around your wife it was
easy to find you.

EMHOFF

And who would get it?

BOOTH

It would be kept for my client's
private use. The contract states
that it would not be for commercial
gain or manufacture-- not a vaccine
mind you, an antiserum. It would
be a very limited quantity.

Emhoff thinks about it.

EMHOFF

May I ask who your client is?

BOOTH

I'm sorry, that's confidential. We are offering you a million dollars for two pints of blood. We suspect others will explore this avenue and that at some point the courts will become involved. This offer is only good for today. There's a registered nurse in the car outside with the necessary equipment.

ANGLE ON THE CAR

In the backseat sits the REGISTERED NURSE in question.

EMHOFF

(off his daughter in the next room)

However many doses you were going to make, could you make one more?

BOOTH

I'm sorry, but that would raise issues of indemnification and other sorts of exposure. You won the genetic lottery Mr. Emhoff-- we're here to help you cash in your ticket. If you don't want to, we'll find another winner.

Emhoff weighs his options.

EXT. NICE HOUSE - EDINA, MINNESOTA

Booth gets into the car and drives away. No deal.

BOOTH

Who's next?

The Nurse looks at a list.

RN

1121 Wills Place.

INT. LAB - UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT

TIME LAPSE: We see the Virus replicate over and over again in cells on a monitor. It's exponential charge across the slide is consuming.

Sussman replays the image over and over again. A group of his COHORTS share a glass of champagne.

SUSSMAN

To cancerous pig cells.

ANGLE ON CDC ROOM

Hextall, Eisenberg, Cheever, Haggerty and others-- see the same image. A small victory.

KRUMWIEDE (O.S.)

First they have to figure out how to grow it.

WHO CONFERENCE ROOM

So do Leopold and his counterparts.

KRUMWIEDE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's been three weeks now-- but they'll figure it out eventually.

A CONFERENCE ROOM IN FRANCE

So do Scientists at AVENTIS. A large logo on their wall.

KRUMWIEDE (O.S. (CONT'D)

And then everyone will start growing it.

CONFERENCE ROOMS IN NYC/LONDON/MOSCOW

Every drug company in the world strobos by -- all looking at the same image.

KRUMWIEDE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Then the race is on. They'll be growing it in every lab on earth. And that's a bad day to be a Rhesus Macaque Monkey.

EXT. MORGAN ISLAND, OFF SOUTH CAROLINA - DAY

We see a Rhesus monkey coaxed into a cage and carried away.

KRUMWIEDE (O.S.)
They're endangered in India
already. And this'll probably
finish them off.

He is loaded on a truck with other monkeys.

KRUMWIEDE (CONT'D)
The US has an Island off of South
Carolina where we raise them for
just this kind of thing.

INT. BROKERAGE - SF - DAY

Krumwiede sits wearing an N-95 mask speaking to a broker.
Most of the offices are empty.

KRUMWIEDE
The Rhesus was in space before us,
and it'll get the vaccine before
us.

MORGAN STANLEY
And how long will that take?

KRUMWIEDE
Hard to say. Months. The FDA will
fast track it. But, there's always
a chance the virus could mutate--
tomorrow or the next day and then
we're starting all over.

MORGAN STANLEY
All the Pharma stocks are already
through the roof. Are you
suggesting we invest in Monkeys?

He chuckles. Krumwiede is offended.

KRUMWIEDE
You're familiar with Forsythia?

MORGAN STANLEY
Can't say that I am. Is that a
medicine?

KRUMWIEDE
It's an herb-- the Chinese have
used it for years.

(MORE)

KRUMWIEDE (CONT'D)

I have various sources in the medical community both here and abroad so what I am about to tell you is backed up by tests that will be out shortly in peer reviewed journals. There are two manufacturers of Forsythia. I want to invest in both of them.

He hands Morgan Stanley a slip of paper.

MORGAN STANLEY

What does Forsythia do?

KRUMWIEDE

It's the cure. And a cure is a lot more useful than vaccine if you're already sick.

EXT. PEACE PARK - MINNESOTA - EVENING

A trench is being dug by a BACK HOE. Adjacent to it is another trench lined with THE DEAD. WORKERS from the STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT wear protective gear and keep track of the bodies and where they have been laid. Quantity begins to trump compassion now.

Swanson appears with some PLASTIC FLOWERS. He sees MEARS' body in the mass grave. It is covered with BLUE PLASTIC SHEETING-- it flaps in the wind. He puts in the flowers.

SWANSON

When did we run out of body bags?

MORGUE WORKER

Last week. Trying to get some from Canada. Was over at the crematorium this morning-- it's all backed up. Workers are afraid to come in. Average day maybe a hundred people die-- we're expecting twice that today. Ground is frozen.

An EARTH MOVER begins to fill in the trench.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Orantes walks in. Her COUNTERPART is having a very animated conversation in Chinese. Pictures of BAI, IRINA, KHALIFA and MARUNOUCHI MAN are still on the wall.

ORANTES

What is it? What do we know?

CHINESE COUNTERPART

The American woman used an ATM at the Golden Dragon...Bank of America just confirmed with her statement. The CIA has shared this with us.

ORANTES

Was she there the same night as Khalifa and Irina?

CHINESE COUNTERPART

Yes. Bai was working as well.

Orantes puts Emhoff's picture on the wall.

ORANTES

I want to see the Casino security footage.

EXT. MINNESOTA/WISCONSIN BORDER - NIGHT

A bridge over the St. Croix River is patrolled by the NATIONAL GUARD on both sides. Cars are backed up in both directions from checkpoints. Searchlights sweep the bare trees on both sides of the river-- they find people heading east.

EMHOFF'S CAR AT THE CHECKPOINT

Jory sits in the backseat. A GUARDSMAN in protective gear stops the car by some cones. He uses a megaphone. Keeps his distance.

GUARDSMAN

There is no crossing to Wisconsin at this time by order of the governor of Wisconsin. An order of quarantine has been issued in accordance with the state of emergency...

Emhoff rolls down the window.

EMHOFF

(yelling back)

I want to get my daughter out.
We're not sick.

But, the Guardsman can't hear him above the honking and rotor wash of a BLACKHAWK HELO. Emhoff gets out of the car.

EMHOFF (CONT'D)
I already had it.

GUARDSMAN
Get back in your car, Sir.
Keep fifteen feet away.

EMHOFF (CONT'D)
I had it already. I want to get her out of here-- there's no nurses. We hear there's more food there, and medical care. We have family in Madison.

GUARDSMAN
Get back in that car, sir and turn it around. Or we will arrest you.

EMHOFF
And take me where? Where will you put all of us?

Down on the river a JET SKI is making a run for the Wisconsin side of the river in the cold water. TWO FIGURES ON THE JET SKI...one falls off and the Jet Ski doubles back. Guardsman on the Wisconsin side pour into the trees with flashlights and weapons.

Emhoff gets back in the car. Joins the traffic headed back to Minneapolis.

INT. TV STUDIO - SF - MORNING

Krumwiede sits there checking his iPhone madly. A CAMERAMAN stands 25 feet away.

CAMERAMAN
Anything you can tell me off the record?

KRUMWIEDE
You should buy some forsythia. Enough for you and everyone you love.

EXT. CDC - SIMULTANEOUSLY - DAY

Cheever sits, mic-ed up with ANDERSON COOPER on a make shift set outside the CDC.

COOPER

There are stories on the internet that in India and elsewhere ribavirin has been shown to be effective in the treatment of the virus-- but Homeland Security has asked the CDC not to make any announcements until stockpiles of the drug can be secured.

CHEEVER

There are ongoing evaluations of a number of drugs-- ribavirin is one of them. So far our best defense is social distancing.

COOPER

And do we have enough ribavirin for everyone in America?

CHEEVER

Right now there are ten million doses. But, we don't want to send people out searching for something that may not be effective...

COOPER

If there are 200 million of us-- who gets it?

CHEEVER

We are currently in the process of prioritizing-- starting with first responders, health care providers and other officials.

COOPER

We'd like to bring Alan Krumwiede into the debate...Alan is a freelance journalist who was one of the first to track the story of the Marunouchi Man video.

INT. TV STUDIO - SF/CNN SET AT CDC - INTERCUT

Krumwiede listens through an ear piece.

COOPER (O.S.)

On Twitter this morning, you stated the truth about the virus has been kept from the world by the WHO and CDC to allow for the "friends of the current administration to benefit from it both financially and physically."

KRUMWIEDE

This is the result of government being involved in health care. There are therapies that we know are effective right now-- like Forsythia-- and they do not even appear on the CDC website. Because the friends of the administration don't control forsythia.

COOPER

You also say that the World Health Organization is in bed with the pharmaceutical companies.

KRUMWIEDE

Because they are. That's who stands to gain from this.

CHEEVER

The CDC has explored forsythia and other alleged homeopathic treatments, there's just no science to back up these claims. We are ruling nothing out-- people are sick and dying and we are doing everything we can to stop it.

KRUMWIEDE

Dr. Cheever is being a bit disingenuous here.

CHEEVER

The WHO and the Chinese are working very hard to figure out where this virus came from and once we know that it will be much easier to treat it. To get sick you need to come in contact with a sick person or something they touched-- to get scared all you need to do is come in contact with a rumor or a TV or the internet. Mr. Krumwiede is spreading misinformation even faster than the virus.

Krumwiede seethes.

KRUMWIEDE

Really. That's funny. Because if you look on Twitter there is a communique attributed to Dr. Cheever by Elizabeth Nygaard about the quarantine of Chicago hours before it was announced to the public. So, that's why I say he is disingenuous when he talks about equal care for all.

COOPER

These are some pretty wild allegations here-- can you tell us what information appeared on Twitter and when? What is your relationship to Elizabeth Nygaard?

Cheever is stunned.

CHEEVER

I'm not aware of anything attributed to me-

KRUMWIEDE

It's pretty clear that Homeland Security and CDC and Health and Human Services and FEMA and the Army have their own agenda here. These things, they go two, four, eight, sixteen and you think you've got it in front of you-- but then it's 256 and then it's 65,000 and it's behind you and above you and all around you. And that's where it is now. Whoever let the genie out of the bottle isn't gonna put it back in...They can't now.

INT. BOOTS PHARMACY - LONDON - EVENING

A long line of people reaches out the door and down the street. A BOOTS EMPLOYEE counts the people in line.

BOOTS

...Forty eight, forty nine, fifty.

Beyond the fifty people are at least another TWO HUNDRED folks.

Someone in the back of the pack begins to cough.

LINE STANDER
Cover your mouth, brother.

COUGHER
Eh, fuck off.

BOOTS
We will only be able to give out
fifty courses today-- that's our
forsythia allotment...

The crowd reacts. There's pushing.

LINE STANDER WITH DREADS
You're keeping them, aren't you?
Driving up the price?

It's getting ugly. A TOUGH AND HIS GIRL push toward the
front.

THE TOUGH'S GIRL
(sotto to Boots Employee--
offering money)
We have a little one at home.

COUGHER
We all have little ones and money--
park it back, bitch.

And with that a melee ensues. Store displays are turned
over. People make mad grabs for the herbs. Some climb over
the counter.

The Pharmacist clutches the packets and tries to lock the
door. The CROWD ransacks the shelves.

INT. CDC BSL LEVEL 4 LAB - DAY

A row of cages filled with RHESUS MONKEYS. Workers in heavy
protective gear survey. Each cage is numbered with the
corresponding vaccine.

Trial and error. The confused monkey faces stare into the
camera. They're our astronauts again.

TWO MONKEYS are not moving-- they are removed.

FLASHBACK - INT. GOLDEN DRAGON CASINO - MACAU

It's the night in question. Beth Emhoff stands with her co-
workers near a FISH-PRAWN-CRAB TABLE.

A traditional Chinese dice game. The Marunouchi Man gather up the dice and throws them.

People laugh.

BETH

I don't understand this game at all.

Her host laughs.

CHINESE HOST

It's Fish Prawn Crab.

BETH

I want to try.

She maneuvers through the crowd toward the Marunouchi Man. He gathers up the dice for another throw. Rubs them together. He says something in Japanese and holds the dice out toward Beth.

BETH (CONT'D)

What?

She moves closer.

THE IMAGE CHANGES - THE PICTURE GOES BLACK AND WHITE

It's the security image on a CCTV. Beth Emhoff leans into the frame and BLOWS ON THE DICE. The Marunouchi Man rubs the dice in his hands and tosses them across the table.

It rewinds and plays again. Breath. Transmission.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - PRESENT

Orantes is watching the image on a monitor. Stacks of DVD's surround her. Other CHINESE OFFICIALS watch other monitors. She crosses to her CHINESE COUNTERPART.

ORANTES

It didn't come from Thailand.

She hands the disc to him.

CHINESE COUNTERPART

Maybe it came from America.

ORANTES

She was in Hong Kong five days
before that. It's here. It came
from here.

EXT. LAKE MINNETONKA - MINNESOTA - DAY

Emhoff and Jory pick away at the ice-- four inches thick.
Scattered across the frozen lake, other groups are gathered
around exposed holes and in small shacks. Ice fishing.

They break through to open water. Jory puts a kernel of
canned corn on a hook and drops it into the water.

A NEW WOMAN appears and begins to struggle with a hatchet on
the ice. Jory watches her.

A small celebration breaks out at another hole-- a fish has
been caught.

EMHOFF

(shouting toward the
celebration)

What are you using for bait?

Nothing back.

EMHOFF (CONT'D)

What are you using over there?

They talk amongst themselves.

FISHERMAN

(shouting back)

We need milk? You have any milk?

The HATCHET WOMAN pauses. Shouting.

HATCHET WOMAN

Cows are dying-- I saw them by St.
Cloud. People are afraid. No milk.
We're eating the dog's food...

Her voice breaks.

JORY

(sotto)

Dad.

EMHOFF

What?

He studies the woman for a moment-- failing at the ice.

JORY

Help her.

Emhoff walks toward the woman.

EMHOFF

You OK?

She drops to her knees.

HATCHET WOMAN

Our pilot light went out and I
can't figure out how to start it
again. There's gas in the house.

EMHOFF

Where do you live?

HATCHET WOMAN

Orono.

EMHOFF

Maybe I can help.

She looks at him mistrustfully.

EMHOFF (CONT'D)

My daughter and I-- we're fine.

INT. CHEEVER'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Aubrey sits in the living room. Tension in the air. Cheever
cooks some rice and beans in the kitchen.

AUBREY

I told her not to say anything
Ellis, I did. I've trusted her my
entire life. I've told her a
thousand things she never repeated.

CHEEVER

We're messy little animals. We
lick our fingers and turn the page.
We rub our eyes and eat the peanuts
out of the communal bowl. We
spread everything around. I did.
You did. We can't keep anything to
ourselves. Our spit, our secrets.

AUBREY

I'm trying to explain-

CHEEVER

You have to admire the virus-- it climbs inside a cell and changes it. We can't even do that ourselves. We're just six billion rough drafts. We're the most dangerous thing that ever happened to each other.

AUBREY

She's like my sister. I'm the god mother to that little girl.

CHEEVER

A hundred people were killed in shootings in Chicago.

AUBREY

And maybe a hundred people we know weren't there to die.

CHEEVER

I asked you not to say anything.

AUBREY

You think other people aren't giving their loved ones information first? You think it's a level playing field? If a boat was sinking who would you put on the life raft, Ellis? Us, our family and friends or strangers? It's survival of the fittest-- and being fit has a lot to do with who's on your speed dial.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

A man in a full PROTECTIVE SUIT sits on a bench alone. We can see through his mask that it's KRUMWIEDE. He waits for a lab door to open.

DR. SUSSMAN

Surrounded by NATIONAL GUARDSMAN as security. They walk toward a black SUV. He's precious cargo.

KRUMWIEDE

The monkeys will take too long.

Sussman keeps walking.

Sussman pauses. Tired and angry, he turns.

SUSSMAN

Go home, Alan. And lie to people about mutations and herbs. Go home.

KRUMWIEDE

I have sick friends.

SUSSMAN

We all do.

KRUMWIEDE

Let me go first, Dr. Sussman. People trust me.

SUSSMAN

Go home, Alan. Tell people to wash their hands and to cover their mouths when they cough.

KRUMWIEDE

I feel very hot today. Three days ago I went to a rally.

SUSSMAN

You're hot because you're wearing that suit.

Sussman gets in the car.

INT. HATCHET WOMAN'S HOUSE - ORONO, MINNESOTA - DAY

Emhoff, Jory and THE HATCHET WOMAN enter the house. It is cold and dark.

HATCHET WOMAN

I tried to light it but I was afraid there was gas in the house. And nobody would come and help me. It'll be Christmas in a few days and nobody cares.

There's a tree in the next room-- a couple stockings hung over the fireplace. Jory clocks them. Pauses.

Emhoff gets down on the ground with a book of matches. He hears a GROAN from another room followed by a cough.

GROAN (O.S.)

Rebecca? Is that you?

Emhoff sits up quickly.

EMHOFF

I thought you said you were alone?

GROAN (O.S.)

Rebecca??

JORY

EMHOFF

Dad-

Jory get out of here-- don't touch anything.

HATCHET WOMAN

He's dying and I'm going to die too. I have a fever.

Jory scrambles toward the door-- her scarf over her face. Hatchet woman grabs at Emhoff.

HATCHET WOMAN (CONT'D)

Feel my head. Nobody answers when you call 911. The car is almost out of gas.

Emhoff looks out the window. Jory is safely outside. He puts his hand on the woman's head. She shudders at human contact.

EMHOFF

I can't really tell. Do you have a thermometer?

Hatchet woman nods and goes to the drawer to find it. Emhoff gets back to the pilot light.

HATCHET WOMAN

Why aren't you afraid like everyone else?

He wonders if it's safe to admit his immunity. He decides against it.

EMHOFF

I'm just not.

INT. WHO GENEVA/CDC/WHITE HOUSE BUNKER/BEIJING AND OTHER PLACES - NIGHT

Leopold holds court over the group. A screen full of monitors.

LEOPOLD

Before we start, I just want to mention that we have been having infrastructure problems with our communications system and we may lose some of you during today's briefing-- please bear with us. Also, the Portuguese translator is in isolation. Dr. Haggerty?

Haggerty, Cheever and Hextall.

HAGGERTY

Thank you, Director Leopold. We are no longer tracking case numbers as we are discouraging people who are symptomatic from contacting medical providers. In short, we need to keep the hospitals open for the people we can help-

ENGLISH OFFICIAL

This is not our policy. We continue to treat everyone.

CHINESE OFFICIAL

To what end?

ENGLISH OFFICIAL

To the end that it decreases panic for people to know that doctors will see them. Because it's humane.

HAGGERTY

We respectfully disagree.

MONTAGE- INTERCUT VISUALS OF THE WORLD-- MASSIVE MIGRATIONS OF POPULATIONS IN AFRICA

CHEEVER

Our models show we should anticipate one-in-fifteen people on the planet will contract Macau Encephalitis Virus or MEV-1. Higher in urban areas. The mortality rate fluctuates between 19 and 26 percent depending on underlying medical condition and other socioeconomic issues-- nutrition and fresh water.

LOOTING IN SAO PAULO

AFRICAN REPRESENTATIVE

It is near 30 percent here. We are burning bodies. We have limited essential services.

LEOPOLD

The Cambridge Study suggests that we can anticipate anything over a five percent infection rate and ten percent mortality will cause major social breakdowns. Ten percent is the tipping point.

And this is how it looks in the world...

MARTIAL LAW IN TEHRAN

ARGENTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE

It will be more pervasive in the Southern Hemisphere in the coming months. We are seeing hoarding, people heading to isolated areas.

EMPTY STREETS IN TIMES SQUARE

CHEEVER

That's better than having them in buses and trains.

SWEDISH OFFICIAL

We are continuing to experiment with other drugs-- sedatives, anticonvulsives. They might buy time.

CHEEVER

There are some reports of inducing a coma and ventilating victims. Hard to tell if the results are better than placebo.

AFRICAN REPRESENTATIVE

And what if you don't have 100 million ventilators?

FOOD DROPS OUTSIDE OF LONDON

RUSSIAN OFFICIAL

Do any of you think we are prepared to share before taking care of our own?

LEOPOLD

We should be governed by need, not self-interest.

A HUNTER TAKES DOWN A DEER OUTSIDE OF MOSCOW

RUSSIAN OFFICIAL

And we should only sleep with our wives and return the wallets that we find on the street-- but we are not so perfect.

LEOPOLD

We have asked the UN to plan manufacturing and distribution of a virus once it is available.

THE NYSE/MOSQUE/MALL OF AMERICA/HYDE PARK/ST. MARK'S SQUARE/SHEDD AQUARIUM - ALL CLOSED AND EMPTY

HEXTALL

There are rumors in the scientific community that the Russians are testing vaccines on prisoners-- it is unethical and brutal.

CHINESE OFFICIAL

And what should we test on? We're out of monkeys. We are not trying to save laboratory mice-- we are trying to save people.

MONKEYS IN CAGES AT CDC - ANOTHER DEAD ONE IS REMOVED

RUSSIAN OFFICIAL

And did the US not test anthrax vaccine on its Army? Is that not unethical?

US OFFICIAL

I think that's different. We were trying to protect our military.

IRANIAN OFFICIAL

And if you are safe from anthrax
are the rest of us safe from you?

US OFFICIAL

I don't see how this is productive.
We have been a leader in sharing
our resources with the entire
world.

SHEPARD FAIREY POSTERS OF KRUMWIEDE PLASTERED ACROSS THE
CAPITOL BUILDING IN DC

Underneath his image they say-- "PROPHET OR PROFIT?"

LEOPOLD

I think we need to remain focussed
on containment and buying time for
the science.

HEXTALL

And the sharing of responsible
science.

FRENCH OFFICIAL

You can't rely on the free
market to motivate people and
then complain that
competition causes someone to
lose.

INDIAN REPRESENTATIVE

We would still like to begin
discussions of reparations
with the Chinese.

JAPANESE OFFICIAL

As would we.

The picture starts clipping-- satellite problems. Some
countries break off.

US OFFICIAL

We would like to continue a
conversation with G10 countries off-
line about freezing markets.

The picture clips some more. Leopold is gone.

HAGGERTY

I think we lost them.

INDIAN REPRESENTATIVE

India is still here...

SPANISH REPRESENTATIVE

So is Spain.

CHINESE OFFICIAL

If the Index Patient is an American Business Woman or Arab National-- or a Japanese Tourist, how are we to blame? Who do you sue for an earthquake?

FLASHBACK - INT. GOLDEN DRAGON CASINO - NIGHT

Beth demurs a drink and leaves the Fish-Prawn-Crab table.

BETH

Whew...I need to use the loo.
Anybody know where it is?

One of her CHINESE HOSTS points across the casino. Beth sets off. She is a little sweaty and clammy. As she walks she checks her purse and takes out a digital camera. She takes a picture of the flashing lights.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - HONG KONG - MORNING

It's early and Orantes is still pouring over CCTV footage from the Casino.

ANGLE ON BETH ON A MONITOR

She enters the LADIES' ROOM and stands at the sink. She stares at herself in the mirror for a moment. And dabs her finger in a pot of LIP GLOSS. As she does, IRINA emerges from the stall behind her...

The two women stand next to each other at the sink. Irina searches her purse for something.

IRINA

Shit, I left mine in the room.

Beth offers hers.

BETH

Not sure if it's your shade.

They share the lip gloss.

FREEZE FRAME ON THE MONITOR

Orantes leans back. The moment of infection. She looks up at the flow chart of transmission.

ORANTES

Emhoff gave it to the model. The model gave it to Khalifa. It isn't a weapon. I read the work reports. Bai cleaned that bathroom an hour later when his shift started. He was likely exposed.

CHINESE COUNTERPART

They say the French and Americans have a cure. They are manufacturing it in secret. WHO knows, but they are in bed with the Americans.

ORANTES

Who says?

CHINESE COUNTERPART

Blogger on the internet.

ORANTES

You don't believe that, do you?

Chinese Counterpart shrugs.

ORANTES (CONT'D)

How is your mother?

CHINESE COUNTERPART

We tried forsythia. But, she didn't make it. There's a mass grave on Lantau.

ORANTES

I'm sorry.

He nods.

ORANTES (CONT'D)

I'm going to go out for a run. We need to know where Emhoff was before the casino.

He nods. Orantes leaves. The Chinese Counterpart picks up the phone. He looks out the window. Someone answers on the other line.

CHINESE COUNTERPART

Yes, now. I'll want to be included.

EXT. HONG KONG - MORNING

Orantes goes for a run. She wears a mask and gloves. It's a crisp morning in Hong Kong. Not much traffic. The city is primarily shut down. A few high end sedans. A few military vehicles. Everyone wears a mask.

SOME OF THE AFFLICTED are huddled together around trash can fires. Bundles of food are left for them. Orantes steers clear of them.

Orantes turns a corner and a VAN does the same. It slows to match her pace. She speeds up. So does the van.

She turns a corner.

The van does, too. The window rolls down.

DRIVER

Dr. Orantes, you're needed back at the hotel. There's a call from Geneva.

ORANTES

Who are you?

DRIVER

The ministry sent me. We're targets in the official vehicles-- sorry to frighten you. Get in.

ORANTES

How did you know where to find me?

DRIVER

Many of us are looking.

She remains suspicious.

ORANTES

I'll run back now.

She turns and starts back toward the hotel. She is just a few feet away when the back of the van opens. THREE ARMED MEN IN BALACLAVAS get out and give chase.

Orantes runs. But, they are on her and force her to the ground. Her mask gets sideways in the fall. She turns her face away from HER ATTACKERS dodging their breath and sweat. Hands and faces and germs.

She turns her face to the pavement and curls in a ball. They pick her up and drag her away.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Orantes is thrown in the back. She is cuffed to the frame of the compartment. The cuffs scratch her wrist opening up a small wound. She sees a new point of entry on her body opening to a world full of danger.

DRIVER

You are the news in Geneva, Dr.
Orantes.

INT. NICE HOUSE - EDINA, MINNESOTA

Jory sits by the window and TEXTS messages to somebody somewhere. A blanket of bright white snow stretches invitingly.

MERRY CHRISTMAS :- (

And she types back.

PAN ACROSS THE SNOW AND THEN UP TO A WINDOW A FEW HOUSES
DOWN...

Through a window and into a TEENAGE BOY'S room. He lays on his bed thinking what boys think about. His phone reads:

I WANT TO GO OUTSIDE AND JUMP IN THE SNOW

He types back. She reads.

I WANT TO JUMP ON YOU

A little smile.

Across the street another family is gathering up the fresh snow in WATER JUGS and PAILS. Emhoff enters the living room-- putting on his warmest clothes.

EMHOFF

They're doing a drop at the park.
I'm gonna go help.

JORY

I saw on the news that they're
getting closer to a vaccine.

EMHOFF

Saw that, too. Then they just need to make about 6 billion doses.

She hands him a piece of paper folded up.

JORY

Merry Christmas.

He unfolds it. A picture of the new iPhone. He is confused.

JORY (CONT'D)

They're not sure when delivery is gonna be back to normal. So for now you can just look at the picture.

EMHOFF

Shoot, I should have done that. I'm sorry, Jory. Just stay inside. I'll let you beat me at Rock Band when I get back then I'll take you to Mom's.

He walks outside. A STRAGGLE of NEIGHBORS keeps their distance all walking the same directions toward a pre-arranged locale.

She watches him leave. Then returns to her texting. She sends:

SNOW ANGELS?

She begins to put on her parka and snow boots.

INT. CDC BSL-4 LAB - MONKEY ROOM - DAY

Cages line the walls. Some more have died since the last time we have seen them. Most are empty now.

TRACKING DOWN THE CAGES

Some LAB TECHS in full space suits take a sample from another dead Rhesus-- number 23. They put the animal in a trash bag.

Further down, another BENCH SCIENTIST examines MONKEY 57. Still alive. Resistant in some way. He pushes an intercom button on the wall.

BENCH SCIENTIST

Fifty-seven. Symptom free for 72 hours.

EXT. BRYANT PARK - MINNESOTA

A MILITARY PLANE flies over the snow covered park and dumps out pallets with parachutes. They crash to the ground and their foil covered contents scatter around.

A FEMA MAN

Stands with a megaphone trying to bring order to the food dispersal.

FEMA MAN

Please observe social distancing policies when retrieving your MREs. One at a time.

But, this isn't going to work. Too many people. Some have shopping carts and others have wheel barrels. A SNOWMOBILE appears out of nowhere.

They race for the food like they're dollar bills. A man has filled a SHOPPING CART and is trying to push it through the snow.

A man with a BASEBALL BAT cuts him down at the knees-- right in front of Emhoff.

EMHOFF

Hey.

Other PEOPLE descend on the shopping cart. A fight breaks out. BASEBALL BAT menaces an OLDER MAN.

OLDER MAN

You don't want me to breathe on you, bud.

The OLDER MAN reaches into the cart.

BASEBALL BAT

Bullshit. Drop it.

The Old Man looks up and spits at him. Baseball Bat recoils and rears up with the bat.

Emhoff steps in. He stops the downstroke of the bat.

EMHOFF

Let it go.

The Old Man glares at Emhoff as well.

OLD MAN

You stay away too, Hero. You don't want what I've got.

Emhoff wipes the spit off of Baseball Bat. He puts a couple of MREs in a shopping bag and troops off.

INT. CDC - CHEEVER'S OFFICE/HEXTALL'S OFFICE - DAY

Both on the phone.

HEXTALL

Nothing conclusive today.

CHEEVER

Not much of a merry Christmas.

HEXTALL

I'm an atheist.

CHEEVER

Science can do that to you.

HEXTALL

What're you gonna tell the administration today?

CHEEVER

I'm going to tell them that we can't protect people from madmen in airplanes, or greedy men in banks or very small organisms that move from one species to another. Then I'll tell them we're working on it. We're closer with every failure. Things like that. And then they'll ask me "when?"

HEXTALL

If we had it right now, we'd still need to do human trials. We'd have to figure out manufacturing and distribution, we'd have to figure out who gets it first-- the young, the military, people at risk...

Roger the Janitor lingers down the hallway. Cheever gets up and closes the door.

CHEEVER

Homeland Security wants to know if we can put it in the water like fluoride.

ANGLE ON HEXTALL

Hextall looks at a vial on her desk. VACCINE #57.

HEXTALL

In 1982 there was an Australian doctor who proved that stomach ulcers were caused by bacteria not stress. You know how?

CHEEVER (O.S.)

Nope.

She takes out a syringe.

HEXTALL

Drank a bunch of water with the bugs in it and got sick. Won a Nobel Prize. Changed the way we treat ulcers. Barry Marshall.

CHEEVER

Do we have anything even close?

HEXTALL

I'll ask the monkeys and get back to you.

She injects herself with vaccine.

EXT. MINNEHAHA CREEK - MINNESOTA - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Jory lies on her back in the snow making an angel. She wears her protective mask-- the same cargo plane flies over her.

A SHADOW PASSES OVER HER

The TEENAGE BOY appears. He also wears a mask.

JORY

Don't step on my angel.

Her eyes smile. His smile back.

He lies down on top of her. Their breath making soft clouds. The watch it dissipate in the cold air between them.

He starts to lower his mask. She turns her head. Holds her breath.

TEENAGE BOY

I'm fine, Jory. If neither of us have it, then we can't give it to each other.

Instead, she unzips her jacket. He rolls over and does the same.

KRUMWIEDE (O.S.)

(prelap)

"Alas! Our ships enter the port,
but of a thousand sailors hardly
ten are spared. We reach our homes,
our kindred and our neighbors come
from all parts to visit us..."

She climbs on top of him-- cheek to cheek. Tentative.

KRUMWIEDE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

...Woe to us for we cast at them
the darts of death! Whilst we spoke
to them, whilst they embraced us
and kissed us, we scattered the
poison from our lips...

INT. KRUMWIEDE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

He sits by himself in front of his web camera. Sweating.
Reading aloud from an old tattered book.

KRUMWIEDE

...They in turn soon infected their
whole families, who in three days
succumbed, and were buried in one
common grave. Priests and doctors
visiting the sick returned from
their duties ill, and soon were
numbered with the dead. Oh death!
Cruel, bitter, impious death! Which
thus breaks the bonds of affection
and divides father and mother,
brother and sister, son and wife.
Lamenting our misery, we feared to
fly, yet we dared not remain."
Gabriele de' Mussi, 1348, Genoa,
Italy. The black plague. Here it
comes again.

He puts a thermometer to his ear.

KRUMWIEDE (CONT'D)

Most of us will live. Our immune systems will tell the story to our children's immune systems. Most of us...

The thermometer beeps.

KRUMWIEDE (CONT'D)

My temperature is 101-- higher than it was earlier. My head hurts and my throat feels like it's closing.

He takes some forsythia tincture and drops it into water.

KRUMWIEDE (CONT'D)

This is Forsythia. I have been taking it since the onset of symptoms.

He swallows the water.

KRUMWIEDE (CONT'D)

If you see me here tomorrow-- you will know if it works.

INT. CHEEVER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cheever comes running in-- the place has been ransacked. The door is shattered. Cupboards are emptied. Drawers are thrown around. Aubrey is sobbing. Curled in a corner on the floor.

AUBREY

They knew where you worked. They waited for you to leave.

He gathers her up in his arms.

AUBREY (CONT'D)

They took the food and the water bottles. They went through the medicine chest. They asked where the cure was.

CHEEVER

The cure for what?

He carries her into the bedroom.

AUBREY

It's because they saw you on the news and they heard about what happened, isn't it?

CHEEVER

It's not your fault, Aub. It's all breaking down. There are studies that say it will fall apart now for awhile.

AUBREY

I tried to stop them. I did. They threw me down.

He puts her down on the bed-- steps back. Thinking.

CHEEVER

They threw you down? I thought you said they didn't touch you? Did they look sick?

A shadow of doubt crosses Cheever.

AUBREY

They had masks on, Ellis. I cleaned everything after they left. You can smell the ammonia.

He looks around.

AUBREY (CONT'D)

You have to trust me, Ellis.

He sits down next to her. Embarrassed by his own paranoia.

CHEEVER

I trust you, Aub. I do.

AUBREY

(sotto)

Do you?

But, does he? She moves to kiss him-- nuzzles him. Mingling breath. He is uncertain at first and then gives in to it.

They kiss.

INT. STAIRWELL - EVENING

THE DRIVER who kidnapped Orantes takes her down a winding staircase at a pace. She is hooded and stumbles to keep up.

DRIVER

Down, step, down, step...

ORANTES

I can't help you.

DRIVER

We will trade you for a hundred doses.

ORANTES

There is no cure. You can't trade me. There are no doses.

They arrive at the bottom of the stairs. Breathless.

DRIVER

Yes, there is medicine. But, they won't share it. It stays in Beijing. Or Washington. Or London. They watch us die from satellites while they give it to each other.

He removes her hood.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

You are the cure. You're a mirror.

He opens a door and pushes her inside.

INT. DIMLY LIT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Orantes' eyes adjust to the light. She sees...

A HUNDRED KIDS

A few adults as well. Crowded into a room. Scared and hungry. Orantes shrinks from them. Terrified.

ORANTES

Are they sick?

The driver says something in CANTONESE to the group. She doesn't understand. Panic coming at her.

ORANTES (CONT'D)

You can't leave me in here.

He moves to the door.

DRIVER

We need to save electricity.

He kills the lights.

DIP TO BLACK

SUPER: 4 MONTHS LATER

MEGAPHONE (O.S.)

You will need identification that confirms your number is One. For today.

FADE IN:

EXT. ARMORY - MINNEAPOLIS

A cool spring day. People stand in line. Think of it like a polling place. The people keep their distance from each other. Signs on the wall remind them:

SIX FEET IS SAFE

Other signs tell people how to cough and not to shake hands. A new social order has taken hold in signage and custom. One sign displays a crest with an EAGLE HOLDING A SYRINGE against a US FLAG.

MEGAPHONE

If you have a fever-- you will not be given a vaccination. If you have received the vaccine, make certain that you are stamped on the left wrist.

TRACK DOWN THE LINE

Toward the front. NATIONAL GUARDSMAN keep it orderly.

At the front of the line now. A MIDDLE AGED man goes into a curtained cubicle. One of ten. Inside he finds...

EMHOFF

Dressed in nurse's attire. He administers the vaccine.

MIDDLE AGED MAN

You weren't one of the ones that went on strike were you?

EMHOFF

No, just got trained in the last couple of months. A program for the immune.

MIDDLE AGED MAN

You had it?

EMHOFF

Yeah, I had it. Head back.

The man tilts his head back and Emhoff sprays two bursts up the man's nose.

MIDDLE AGED MAN

That's it?

Emhoff stamps his wrist with the EAGLE/SYRINGE crest like a doorman at a bar-- the stamp works once and is discarded.

EMHOFF

Yeah, that's it.

MIDDLE AGED MAN

Seems so easy.

EXT. LANTAU ISLAND, CHINA - DAY

A group of buildings at the foot of the Tian Tan Buddha. THE DRIVER who abducted ORANTES comes down the steps of a monastery building. He carries a sidearm.

He goes down the staircase to the LOCKED ROOM.

INSIDE

The same 100 children and Orantes. She feeds them. They teach her words of CANTONESE. She repeats after them and laughs-- then she teaches them the same words in English. Her other abductors also tend to the kids.

Everyone is healthy. Isolated.

The DRIVER comes over and kneels next to her.

DRIVER

They accepted the terms.

She smiles-- squeezes his hand. A look passes between them.

EXT. KRUMWIEDE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Krumwiede stands at the window with a microphone and an amp. A Shepard Fairey poster on the adjacent window.

A FEW PEOPLE GATHER AROUND on the street below. Disciples.
Among them a MIDDLE AGED WOMAN who takes notes.

KRUMWIEDE

Today the government will begin poisoning the people. In 1976, we vaccinated against swine flu and five hundred people got Guillain-Barré Syndrome. Twenty five people died. I had the virus-- I got through it. I took forsythia and I stayed away from others. What else is going up your nose when they tell you they are keeping you healthy?

A police car pulls up.

KRUMWIEDE (CONT'D)

These are my first amendment rights. Freedom of assembly. They're throwing the constitution away.

POLICE

You are in violation of Virus Libel Code. Please cease and desist or you will be charged and arrested.

KRUMWIEDE (CONT'D)

And taken where? What are you doing for prison guards? Who's gonna try me? Where you gonna get a jury?

The POLICE disperse the crowd.

Krumwiede scatters the leaflets in the wind-- shuts the window.

INT. CDC - CHEEVER'S OFFICE - DAY

Haggerty makes the rounds with TWO ARMED GUARDS. He has with him a cart filled with doses of MEV-1 VACCINE.

HAGGERTY

Two for Dr. Ellis Cheever and wife.

Cheever takes the doses.

HAGGERTY (CONT'D)

Congrats on the marriage.

CHEEVER

We'll have a ceremony and party in a couple of months, once there's something resembling normal going on.

HAGGERTY

You want me to give you yours now?

CHEEVER

Nah, she'll want us to do it together. I think she has champagne.

Haggerty holds up his stamped LEFT WRIST.

HAGGERTY

See you at the airport?

CHEEVER

Lawyer says I should stay out of sight for now. Bad idea to be part of the victory dance.

HAGGERTY

Screw 'em. It's all politics, Ellis. Patriot Act won't apply here. Not to you taking care of your fiancée. Come on. The President'll pardon you-- if it ever goes that far.

CHEEVER

I'll watch you on TV.

He leaves the box of vaccines with Cheever.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK - DAY

KRUMWIEDE sits on a bench with the MIDDLE AGED WOMAN from outside his house. She is dressed conservatively. He sips water from a NALGENE bottle.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

We've been following what you've been saying for some time now. You are in a unique position going forward-- something bigger than Forsythia.

KRUMWIEDE

I've been harassed and threatened. I've lost a family member. My mother. And they've accused me of fraud-- just because Forsythia made me some money.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

Do you think you would be willing to help us? To reframe things. Use what has happened as a catalyst for change.

KRUMWIEDE

After the Spanish Flu in 1918, you know, people got rich. Vicks VapoRub, Lysol people. Look it up...A country slaughters all the chickens-- red meat goes into higher demand. Then a news story comes out and the price plummets. I'm a man stepping up to a microphone in front of a very large crowd. That's who I am. You want to talk? Money talks.

Krumwiede locks on a man in the distance. The man is with the PARKS DEPARTMENT. He has his finger in his ear-- maybe concealing a HEARING DEVICE.

KRUMWIEDE (CONT'D)

Is he with you? Are you wearing a wire?

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

What? Who? No. You're immune anyway aren't you?

Krumwiede gets up and leaves-- walking briskly. Head on a swivel. The PARKS DEPARTMENT MAN lays down his rake and begins to follow.

Krumwiede looks back at the MIDDLE AGED WOMAN. She reaches into her bag and gets out a badge.

Krumwiede begins to run across the park. Various PARKS DEPARTMENT MEN drop their rakes and converge. Alan isn't much of an athlete. They quickly converge on him.

KRUMWIEDE

For what? Tell me for what?

The MIDDLE AGED WOMAN arrives.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

On your stomach, Alan. Do not attempt to cough or spit at any FBI personnel.

KRUMWIEDE

This is entrapment.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

You never even had it. You lied.
It's a scam.

KRUMWIEDE

Forsythia helped a lot of people--
the administration is in bed with
Big Pharma.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

Forsythia helped you and a couple
of other investors.

KRUMWIEDE

I had it...I had it...

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

We'll see, Alan.

KRUMWIEDE

You can't look at my blood. You
can't.

THE AGENTS, in masks and gloves, twist tie his wrists and
hood him. They take him away.

EXT. KOWLOON LADIES' MARKET - DAY

Orantes stands with a GUN TO HER HEAD. It is held by THE
DRIVER. Fifty yards away are CHINESE AUTHORITIES. Some are
armed. In the middle of them is LEOPOLD.

He watches Orantes hopefully.

TWO HOODED CHINESE NATIONALS pick up the boxes of vaccine and
bring it toward the van.

DRIVER

Is it French or American?

CHINESE OFFICIAL

We could not get enough doses from
the French. We are making it here
now. Same formula.

DRIVER

Then we will not release her.

The HOODED NATIONALS stand next to Orantes and the driver.
They rip into the boxes to explore the contents.

LEOPOLD

We have shared the vaccine with the Chinese government-- it is being manufactured in Beijing. Please, let Dr. Orantes go.

The driver rips open a packet. He tilts Orantes' head back and sprays the vaccine up her nose.

CHINESE OFFICIAL

And now, what? We stand here for days and see if she gets sick?

ORANTES

(sotto)

It's the best we can hope for.

The Driver weighs his options. On a signal the NATIONALS grab the boxes and head toward the van. The Driver drags Orantes back toward the van with him.

LEOPOLD

Wait...

DRIVER

Nobody comes closer.

They are back at the van now. Boxes loaded. One of the HOODED NATIONALS behind the wheel-- engine revving. The DRIVER pulls Orantes to the rear of the van. Hidden from sight.

The Van peels out. Leaving...

ORANTES

Standing in the street. Hand-cuffs gone. Free. Leopold rushes toward her. He embraces her.

LEOPOLD

Are you OK?

ORANTES

What could be safer than being a hostage?

EXT. FREEWAY, ATLANTA - DAY

CHEEVER sits alone in the back seat of a Town Car. Music plays on the radio.

DRIVER (O.S.)
You want to hear the news instead?

CHEEVER
Up to you.

DRIVER (O.S.)
Anything you think I need to know?

The Driver has more questions than a kid on Christmas, but he knows not to ask.

CHEEVER
I'm sure you've heard it all before.

DRIVER
I saw a thing on the internet that said it isn't random assignments. That people are forging and selling and that there's politics in it. You think that's true, Doctor Cheever?

CHEEVER
I don't know. I try not to go online anymore.

DRIVER
I got number 59. They say that should be fine. You think that? You think that will be fine?

CHEEVER
Sounds like a good number to me. Good odds.

DRIVER
I hear that. You know, I heard one of your co-workers say that it wouldn't even happen in the spring or summer.

CHEEVER
Maybe. It happens. It always happens. Nice out...

Cheever puts down the window.

ANGLE ON THE DRIVER

He is wearing an N-95 particulate respirator mask. A little soiled and tattered.

DRIVER

You sure that's cool, Doc?

CHEEVER

Turn left up here, Lewis.

DRIVER

Left. That's not the way.

Cheever puts a briefcase on the seat next to him. He unfolds a slip of paper and hands it forward. The DRIVER takes it from him. He wears RUBBER GLOVES.

CHEEVER

Just turn up here. We have to make a stop.

EXT. SUMMERHILL, ATLANTA - MOMENTS LATER

Cheever's car rolls through the depressed neighborhood. What the economy didn't board up and destroy the MEV has shuttered. Piles of trash and posters directing people to-- AVOID HANDSHAKES AND HUGS and WASH THEIR HANDS FOR THIRTY SECONDS.

People look out their windows at the clean black car. It stops in front of a simple house.

ROGER IN HIS WINDOW

Cheever walks to the door with his briefcase.

CHEEVER

Your son here?

ROGER

In his room.

INT. ROGER'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Cheever sits with Roger.

ROGER

You don't have the stamp on your wrist.

CHEEVER

I'll get mine later. There's a dog and pony show at the airport.

(MORE)

CHEEVER (CONT'D)

They're gonna start some flights again. Everyone was busy. What's your number?

ROGER

283. They'll run out by then. They say maybe by next January they'll have more.

Cheever nods grimly.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Are we really giving some to the Mexicans?

CHEEVER

I'm not sure who's getting it.

He opens up his briefcase.

CHEEVER (CONT'D)

You want to go get him.

ROGER

How'd you get it?

CHEEVER

I don't see the point in getting into that. If I can get another one I will.

Roger calls to his son.

ROGER

Anthony? The doctor is here.

Cheever gets out a dose of vaccine.

CHEEVER

We can't give him the stamp. They'll check his number. But, he'll be safe.

ROGER

Yeah...No worries. He's stamped on the inside. Anthony?

Anthony enters with a book.

CHEEVER

What are you reading, Anthony?

He holds up the book-- LORD OF THE FLIES.

ROGER
How many times you read that one?

ANTHONY
Ten I think. We're out of books.

ROGER
Dr. Cheever is here to make sure
you don't get sick with MEV.

Anthony walks over and Roger holds his head back as Cheever prepares the vaccine.

EXT. ROGER'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Roger extends his hand toward Cheever.

ROGER
Thank you, Dr. Cheever.

Cheever looks at his hand.

CHEEVER
You know where that comes from?

ROGER
What?

CHEEVER
Shaking hands. It was a way of
showing a stranger that you weren't
carrying a weapon. You offered
your right hand to show it was
empty. That you meant no harm.

ROGER
Didn't know that.

CHEEVER
I wonder if the virus did. Figured
out the thing we did to make
ourselves feel safe and saw a
chance to spread.

ROGER
Maybe we're just not that safe
around each other to begin with.

Cheever extends his hand-- Roger takes it. They shake.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Good luck with everything, Doc. I
know you have some trouble.

INT. NICE HOUSE - EDINA, MINNESOTA - DAY

Close on a wrist lighting Birthday Candles on a homemade cake. The wrist has the INSIGNIA on it. Thomas Emhoff.

Jory sits at the head of the table. Emhoff hands her a folded up piece of paper-- as she did on CHRISTMAS. A BIRTHDAY PRESENT.

EMHOFF

I'm not sure what the delivery date is-- or I can go and pick it up for you. Oh, wait, let me get the camera.

He runs upstairs. She unfolds the paper-- A BASS GUITAR AND AMPLIFIER are on it.

JORY

(yelling up to him)
That's amazing, Dad. Thank you!
Thank you!

ON EMHOFF

He gets Beth's CARRY-ON down from the closet. It's been there since the beginning. He gets her digital camera out of the bag.

Heads back downstairs with the camera.

EMHOFF

What did Alex get?

JORY

He's an 11.

EMHOFF

That's a good number.

JORY

So, if he gets his vaccine, then he can come over and watch a movie or something, right? Because if he's immune than I can't get it from him.

Emhoff smiles at her as he raises the camera.

EMHOFF

Smile, Jory. Make a wish.

INT. CHEEVER'S BUILDING - EVENING

Cheever runs up a flight of stairs and stops at the landing. He opens his briefcase. Takes out the vaccine packets. He still has the stamp from the dose he administered to Anthony.

He puts the insignia on his own wrist--it appears he has been vaccinated.

AUBREY (O.S.)

(prelap)

I didn't see you at the ceremony at the airport...

INT. CHEEVER'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Cheever prepares the vaccine for Aubrey.

AUBREY

I saw Haggerty and Dr. Hextall. The President gave her a medal.

CHEEVER

I'm out of the public eye until the hearing.

AUBREY

There was a story on the news about couples getting married to get better numbers. You're not gonna get in trouble for this if it doesn't work out, are you?

CHEEVER

What?

AUBREY

Us. My number is 199 without you.

Cheever kisses her.

CHEEVER

Just taking care of the people in my life boat.

She caresses the insignia on his wrist. He administers her vaccine. Two puffs up her nose and it's over.

AUBREY

Someday they'll figure out why only bad things are contagious.

He stamps the inside of her wrist.

INT. NICE HOUSE - EDINA, MINNESOTA - NIGHT

Jory hears a knock on the window. She goes downstairs and turns on the lights in the living room.

ANGLE ON THE WINDOW

Alex-- the SNOW ANGEL BOY stands with a PIECE OF PAPER pressed against the glass. It says:

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Jory mouths the words "THANK YOU." He turns over the paper and it says.

10 MORE DAYS

She walks up to the window. They kiss each other on the mouth with the glass in between them.

ANGLE ON EMHOFF

In his room. He looks at the birthday pictures on the camera. Jory and the candles, Jory eating the cake...And then something else.

15 SECONDS OF VIDEO

On the memory stick. Beth stands in the kitchen of a GOURMET RESTAURANT IN HONG KONG. Next to her is the Chef who is giving her a tour of the restaurant's kitchen...

BETH

(tinny audio from camera)
OK, well in America we have refrigerators but here in Hong Kong everything is kept fresh by...

FLASHBACK - HONG KONG RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Beth is escorted by the Chef and her Chinese Host who translates for her. Beth narrates for the camera.

BETH

And so we have ducks cooking here and wait, he wants to show me something.

The Chef takes her by the arm and leads her back to a little room. We can't see what she sees initially. We just see the chef bending down out of frame.

BETH (CONT'D)

Oh, my God, he's so cute. What is he?

The Chef rises into frame with a small PIG in a cage. The Chef says something in Mandarin-- the word for pig.

Beth takes the camera and gets in closer with it.

BETH (CONT'D)

So, that was our main course. And he tastes as amazing as he looks...

The pig sneezes and everyone giggles.

BETH (CONT'D)

What was that? A sneeze. God bless you!

The Chef puts the cage back down on the ground and the group goes back to the dining room. Beth laughs, not knowing that the Bat/Pig/Human virus has just jumped into her body.

We stay with the pig.

INT. HONG KONG AIRPORT - DAY

Orantes and Leopold wait to board a flight.

ORANTES

It was the Emhoff woman, wasn't it? She was the index patient. Not Khalifa or the Marunouchi Man?

LEOPOLD

I'm not sure we'll ever know.

FLASHBACK - HONG KONG WET MARKET - ANOTHER DAY

The pig in a cage. Stacked among other cages-- baring the logo of a SPECIFIC FARMER. All manner of bird and beast. They are inspected by locals and the restaurant trade. This is how protein finds its way into humans in much of the rest of the world.

LEOPOLD (O.S.)

6.2 billion flips of the coin--
eventually it's going to land on
its side.

The CHEF haggles with a vendor over price. He doesn't feel well today and is not up to the struggle of bargaining. He coughs a couple of times and gives in to the VENDOR'S price.

He purchases two pigs and they are transferred to another cage and carted off. Coughing as they go...Human Virus jumps into pig.

INT. HONG KONG AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Orantes and Leopold.

ORANTES

Could we have done more to stop it?

Leopold shrugs.

FLASHBACK - PIG FARM - SOUTHERN CHINA - NIGHT

The pigs are penned together in a long corrugated structure with a large sliding door emblazoned with the same logo as the cages from the wet market.

CLOSE ON THE DOOR

Open by a small margin, but enough to allow in a LARGE BAT. Followed by another and another. A flurry of bats makes their way into the long corrugated building and roost in the rafters.

One bat swoops down and grabs an APPLE CORE from a trough. It returns to the rafters and gnaws on the apple core.

The bat loses its grip on the core and it falls back down into the trough where a pig is waiting to eat. Bat virus jumps into pig.

INT. HONG KONG AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Leopold opens his briefcase.

LEOPOLD

It evolves the way it does because
we evolve the way we do. Maybe it
puts pressure on us to be better.

Leopold gives Orantes another PACKAGE OF VACCINE.

ORANTES

What's that?

LEOPOLD

The one you took was placebo.

ORANTES

What?

LEOPOLD

The Chinese insisted-- they don't capitulate with kidnappers. It wasn't up to us. Their operation.

Orantes is stunned.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

(off the real vaccine)

I took it a couple of days ago-- no side effects.

ORANTES

It wasn't for them. There are children.

She wanders away.

LEOPOLD

What children?

Moving faster now-- thinking of the children.

LEOPOLD (CONT'D)

What? Leonora, where are you going?

Running now.

FLASHBACK - MALAYSIAN JUNGLE - DAY

A tree falls under the attack of a chainsaw raising a mist of dirt and dust. Elsewhere earth movers tear at the ground. A large ground clearing operation is in progress. LOCAL LABORERS toil in the heat of the jungle day.

A truck pulls onto the site bearing a logo-- 3M. The same company that employed BETH EMHOFF. A WHITE FOREMAN gets out. As another tree succumbs to appetites, economics and gravity.

CLOSE ON THE CANOPY

A FEW FLYING FOXES-- a breed of large bat-- fly away from the onslaught of machinery-- then more follow. They head off toward the relative safety of a group of CORRUGATED buildings.

KRUMWIEDE (O.S.)

You want to blame me? Or the Chinese? What about the bats? Or the pigs?

INT. FBI INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Krumwiede and the MIDDLE AGED WOMAN.

KRUMWIEDE

Cuz' we're all connected. We ran out of room and now we're all squeezing into the margins. We're where we've never been before. Digging in caves. Thawing the tundra. Shaking out whatever's been hiding in the treetops. If you're the next unknown virus or bacteria, we're a hundred million pounds of meat and mess ready to swallow.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

Your blood results came back, Alan. You never had the virus. You have no antibodies. You lied.

Beat.

KRUMWIEDE

Of course that's what your labs say. Of course that's what the administration wants you to say-- that's the real virus here: wealth and power. And that's what I'm saying. And I have the right to say it. Free speech. Your virus didn't affect the constitution did it?

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

Where's the money, Alan? Where's the money you made from scaring people?

Another AGENT enters. He looks resigned.

OTHER AGENT
Bail's been posted.

Krumwiede smiles. Stands up.

KRUMWIEDE
People should be scared-- you think
other animals aren't scared?

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN
You're the fucking virus...You're
the mutation.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - FBI BUILDING - A LITTLE LATER

Krumwiede walks away-- down the street, past a line of people waiting to get their inoculations. He's loose in the world.

INT. CDC - BSL 4 - DAY

A series of air locks and doors. We track with Hextall and Eisenberg in full space suits as they make their way deeper into the secured area. They carry with them a metal case.

INT. DENNY'S - INSIDE THE BELTWAY, DC - MORNING

Cheever sits with a LAWYER having eggs and bacon. Files spread across the table. PURELL has now joined the other condiments on every table.

LAWYER
These hearings have a way of getting nasty. People are running for re-election. Everyone's out for a sound bite.

CHEEVER
Oh, I know what they're gonna say. They're gonna say 35 people died in a riot in Chicago. They're gonna say I crashed the stock market and caused a run on food.

INT. CDC - BSL 4 - CONTINUOUS

Hextall removes a hi-tech cylinder from the metal box. A clear liquid within. It is labeled: MEV-1.

CHEEVER (O.S.)

They're gonna say I scattered the thing across people's imaginations-- I yelled fire in a crowded theater...

INT. DENNY'S - INSIDE THE BELTWAY, DC - CONTINUOUS

CHEEVER

...Or even worse, I just whispered it to the person closest to me. Is that any different than what a terrorist would do?

LAWYER

You told someone you loved.

CHEEVER

And someone else probably lost somebody they loved.

LAWYER

And so, what are you gonna say?

CHEEVER

That I'm human.

LAWYER

They'll probably ask you to resign from that, too.

INT. CDC - BSL 4 - CONTINUOUS

Eisenberg puts the cylinder into a bracket. Next to it are other brackets holding other cylinders-- each one is marked with a year going back in time. All hard fought victories.

Eisenberg notices Hextall staring in the other direction.

EISENBERG

What is it?

HEXTALL'S POV - THE OTHER DIRECTION

Beyond the bracket with the newest virus in it we see:

MORE BRACKETS

Empty. Extending to the end of focus. Waiting for new viruses. The future.

CONTAGION

1/14/10

130.

HEXTALL

Nothing.