



FRANKLYN

by

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FADE IN:

INT. MEANWHILE CITY - CELL - NIGHT

The silhouette of a DISHEVELLED MAN slumped against the wall of a featureless grey cell. His back is to us. A barred window beyond lets in a beam of moonlight that sprays the shadows of the bars across the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MEANWHILE CITY - ROOM - DAY

In extreme close up:

A black tie against a crisp white shirt is tied elegantly into a prince of wales knot.

Shoe laces tied on a pair of shiny black brogues.

A black suit jacket put on, a gloved hand flattening out the lapel.

A dark overcoat taken from the back of a chair.

A blank white mask with two inky black spots for eyes is taken carefully from the table.

The silhouette of this imposing figure now dressed.

A gloved hand holding a photo fragment of a smiling eleven year old girl.

EXT. - ROOFTOPS - MEANWHILE CITY - EVENING

Moving in on the blank staring mask of our suited figure. He stands tall, overcoat billowing in the cool evening air. His name is JONATHAN PREEST. We track around him to reveal the vista of MEANWHILE CITY. Sky traffic thunders past high above in steady streams, steam billows from a myriad of monolithic towers that sit astride many of the enormous buildings.

Note: Meanwhile City is a metropolis constructed from a variety of different styles and architectural origins. Just as the city's populous will be shown to be formed from many different religions, so too the buildings reflect the dichotomy of these faiths. There are domed mosque-like skyscrapers, interconnected with jaw-droppingly tall Gothic cathedral style towers and buildings. Colossal statues of deities stretch into the clouds connected to walkways and skyways that stretch off into every direction. The vehicles of Meanwhile City are a mish-mash of colourful engineering - mostly steam driven, the clunkiness and bulkiness of these flying chunks of metal are decorated with bright religiously themed markings and identities.

(CONTINUED)

Meanwhile City is a collision of worlds and cultures - the grandeur of Rome or Florence interwoven with the scale and dizzying heights of Tokyo or Manhattan all thrown into the throbbing deafening throng of Bombay or Bangkok. Truly awesome.

PREEST (V.O.)
Meanwhile City. So beautiful from
the upper heights. It almost looks
like it makes some kind of sense.

Preest squats down on his knees, suddenly cautious. He watches as a group of MINISTRY GUNSHIPS thunder past many stories below amongst the other flying traffic.

PREEST (V.O.) (cont'd)
From up here you'd never think this
city was hopelessly insane.

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY - MAIN THOROUGHFARE - EVENING

We move through the busy hub of the city:

The streets are jammed with busy religious emporia, signs adorn the ramshackle market-like thoroughfares and walkways: 'GOD-U-LIKE', 'AUTO-PRAYER', 'EZ-ENLIGHTENMENT CENTRE', 'CONVERZION WHILE-U-WAIT'.

The POPULATION of Meanwhile City seem to be sub-defined by smaller groups, each group sporting a different style - some dressed quite spiritually, some in bizarre head-dress, some masked like Preest, others in somber hooded simplicity. A haze of incense hangs over the street stalls and PREACHING STATIONS that line either side of the roadway. Preest pauses by a STREET PREACHER on his platform.

STREET PREACHER
..applies the unchanging values of
our religion to the new priorities
of the people of Meanwhile City..a
plan to improve your lives, to
provide opportunity and security
for all in a changing world...

Preest moves down the road. A FEMALE PREACHER is speaking to a large group of enraptured DISCIPLES.

FEMALE PREACHER
..we are all immortal, spiritual
beings. Our experience extends well
beyond a single lifetime..join the
Church of the 8th dynamic...my
personal favorite since..well, it's
just so big....

Preest turns away from the Preacher disinterested. Across the street a couple of MINISTRY CLERICS (Meanwhile City's Police Force) are questioning an OLD WOMAN. Preest backs off into the crowd, not wishing to be seen. The Clerics are dressed in semi-religious black frock coats; pious but militant.

PREEST (V.O.)
 You've got to have religion to live
 in Meanwhile City...

Preest watches as one of the Clerics search her bags and
 clothes while the other takes down information.

PREEST (V.O.) (cont'd)
 ..It's the law.

MINISTRY CLERIC
 How long as resident?

WOMAN
 17 years m'lord..

MINISTRY CLERIC
 Current faith?

WOMAN
 Ministry Adventist, m'lord.

MINISTRY CLERIC
 Your ID?

The other Cleric takes her ID. He waves it at his partner.
 The Ministry Clerics drop the woman's bags by her feet in
 disinterest and casually walk away. The woman scrabbles on
 the pavement for her belongings.

WOMAN
 (muttering)
 Sonsobitch Cleric bastards..

Preest moves on. Another preacher is standing amongst a
 bizarre sculpture of washing machine parts.

WASHING MACHINE PREACHER
 ..always look through the glass
 door to check if water has been
 drained...any objects such as
 coins...safety pins....nails,
 SCREWS, STONES, CAN CAUSE EXTENSIVE
 DAMAGE AND MUST NOT BE PLACED INTO
 THE MACHINE!

The assembled crowd nod and murmur positively.

PREEST (V.O.)
 There are now so many faiths
 registered in this town that it
 gets kind of hard to be original..

The Preacher lowers his voice to a conspiratorial tone. The
 assembled crowd gather in.

WASHING MACHINE PREACHER
 ...if in doubt always consult the
 care label on the clothes..

PREEST (V.O.)
 ..you can form an entire faith and
 attract a healthy congregation
 simply based on washing machine
 instructions.

Preest looks through the crowd. The Clerics are now
 questioning a group of leather clad S&M style CITIZENS.
 Preest moves quietly away up the street.

PREEST (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Without faith it's difficult to be
 controlled...

Preest crosses the road and makes for a shabby looking bar.

PREEST (V.O.) (cont'd)
 ...and I didn't like being
 controlled, not by anybody. My name
 is Jonathan Preest, and I'm the one
 and only non-believer in Meanwhile
 City..

As he enters we tilt up to reveal a neon sign flashing an
 image of a scantily clad angel flapping her neon wings.
 Underneath a crackling legend reads 'Faith Lift Bar & Grill'.

INT. THE FAITH LIFT, BAR AND GRILL - EVENING

Preest makes his way into this dark and grotty establishment.
 A television blares out evangelical broadcasts while huddles
 of DINERS and DRINKERS sit talking animatedly in the shadows.
 The place has a baroque feel about it, most of the bar's
 illumination coming from a bizarre shrine in one corner - a
 celebration of the automobile - a set of exhaust pipes
 straddle the sanctuary, thick incense belching from them and
 adding to the claustrophobic atmosphere.

Preest approaches the bar. The barman, SAUL (45), nods in
 greeting.

SAUL
 How's tricks?

PREEST
 Whisky please, Saul - straight.

SAUL
 Comin' up. Hot outside today.

Saul nods to the window.

Preest looks out through the faded glass at the Ministry
 Clerics, still patrolling the streets.

PREEST
 He here?

Saul puts down a small shot glass of whisky.

SAUL
Sure you want to stay for this
drink?

PREEST
Think I shouldn't?

SAUL
He's in the back.

Preest looks up at the TV. A commercial extolling the virtues of laxative to promote a religiously fulfilling lifestyle is playing loudly. Preest raises his mask halfway and knocks back the whisky shot. He replaces his mask.

PREEST
Thanks.

SAUL
No problem. Y'God Bless ya.

PREEST
And yours.

Preest heads into the dingier end of the establishment and sits down at a gloomy booth. A small Buddhist style shrine illuminates the grotty table. Sitting at the table is WORMSNAKES, a wiry little ferret of a man who is visibly twitchy and nervous.

PREEST (cont'd)
Wormsnakes.

WORMSNAKES
Mr. Preest.

Wormsnakes looks terrified. There is a beat.

WORMSNAKES (cont'd)
You're looking...well..

PREEST
You know how I feel about public appearances. Just tell me what you got.

Wormsnakes knocks back his whisky, his hands shaking.

WORMSNAKES
I..uh..

PREEST
Where's the girl?

WORMSNAKES
Look..Mr. Preest...if he finds out that I..

PREEST
 ..it'll be nothing to what *I'll* do
 if you don't. The girl, Snakes,
 where is she?

Preest's blank stare bores into Wormsnakes. The little man slumps in his seat.

WORMSNAKES
*She's dead...*the girl is dead.

Preest lunges across the table and grabs 'Snakes by his collar - he splutters.

PREEST
How?

WORMSNAKES
 Please, I didn't know until..

PREEST
 (calmly)
 The Individual?

Wormsnakes nods.

PREEST (cont'd)
 Did he do it himself?

WORMSNAKES
 I don't know the..details..she
 didn't..she didn't suffer is all I
 know..

PREEST
 Just tell me where he is..

WORMSNAKES
 I don't..no one knows. I swear! All
 I know is that you should get out
 of here before..

Preest lets go of him, his senses suddenly alerted.

PREEST
 Before *what?*

WORMSNAKES
 They made me..

PREEST
 ..what have you done..?

Blinding searchlights suddenly blast through the windows of the bar and a high pitched klaxon starts to peal from the street. Preest turns to the cowering figure of Wormsnakes.

PREEST (cont'd)
 You treacherous little..

Preest leaps to his feet as a squad of six armed CLERICS come piling through the front doors of the bar.

Saul and the other customers hit the deck as Preest grabs the nearest table, upends it and charges toward the oncoming Clerics. The table forces them back and they lose balance, all sprawling over each other into a large heap. Preest fixes Wormsnakes with his hard blank stare.

PREEST (cont'd)
I'll be back for you.

Preest turns tail and bolts for the back of the bar, leaving Wormsnakes cowering and whimpering in the booth.

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY - REAR OF FAITH LIFT BAR & GRILL - NIGHT

Preest runs out into the back alleyway and collides with two CLERICS who are charging in from the rear. Preest has the element of surprise and roundhouses one of them while disarming him at the same time. The other Cleric hasn't even time to raise his rifle before Preest throws his arm aside and decks him with a quick and effective punch. Preest walks away leaving the two unconscious Clerics groaning in a heap. A burst of radio static signals the presence of two more CLERICS approaching from the other end of the alleyway. Preest turns on his heels and runs. The Clerics pursue, chattering into their radios.

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Preest leaps up to a hanging fire escape ladder and expertly pulls himself up.

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

Preest jumps over the roof edge and sprints toward the stairwell door. Suddenly the roof is bathed in light.

Preest spins around. Two huge MINISTRY GUNSHIPS rise bat-like above the building behind him, the drone of their rotors deafening in the quiet night air. Preest throws himself to the roof as they swoop over him. Preest scrambles to his feet and makes a run for the door to the stairs.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Almost breaking the door down, Preest tears down the stairwell. The door has tripped an ALARM that begins to drone from the building below.

EXT. ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

One of the Gunships banks away while the other trains its searchlights on the swinging stairwell door.

INT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Preest sprinting down a corridor. He reaches a T-junction and pauses, listening for his pursuers. Suddenly he is illuminated by the probing beam of the Gunship's searchlight as it blazes through a window at the far end of the corridor.

Preest bolts the other way.

He reaches the central stairwell. He cautiously peers over the bannisters and sees the flickering shadows of ascending Clerics.

Preest looks up at the gloomy stairwell above, he realises there's no going back.

PREEST (V.O.)
A routine cult job. That's how it
had all started, a run of the mill
infiltrate and extract..

Preest moves quickly down a side corridor.

PREEST (V.O) (cont'd)
..and now the girl I was supposed
to save was dead, The Individual
had disappeared and my source had
given me up to the Ministry..

INT. BUILDING LOBBY - MEANWHILE CITY - NIGHT

Preest edges carefully into the main lobby. A huge Gothic fountain sits in the centre of the room, dark pillars surrounding it. Beyond the fountain lie the main doors to the street.

Preest runs for the doors, but suddenly from every side there are muzzle flashes, the roar of gunfire and Preest instinctively throws himself into the fountain.

PREEST (V.O.)
I'd been a wanted man for quite
some time..

Preest's POV as he sees the water distorted image of the gun play tearing away above the surface of the water.

The gunfire ceases and there is silence.

Preest raises his hands first above the surface in surrender and then carefully gets to his feet.

PREEST (V.O.) (cont'd)
..but even I hadn't expected that
much attention.

Preest stands soaking wet in the middle of the fountain and looks around.

(CONTINUED)

He is totally surrounded by Ministry Clerics, ten, fifteen deep on every side, all with their guns trained on him. We pull back from this tableau to see the sheer scale of man and firepower that has been sent after this one masked individual.

A MINISTRY CLERIC steps toward the restrained Preest.

CLERIC

Now let's see what all the fuss is about.

PREEST (V.O.)

Somebody upstairs wanted me brought in, and whoever they were..

The Cleric pulls off Preest's mask revealing a rugged and world weary face in his late twenties. Preest is scarred and battle worn, his furious stare boring deep into the eyes of the Cleric.

PREEST (V.O.) (cont'd)

..they were good.

The Cleric punches Preest in the face, knocking him unconscious.

BLACKOUT

INT. MEANWHILE CITY - CELL - NIGHT

We fade up on Preest sitting in the corner of the tiny featureless cell that we saw in the opening scene. His arms are chained to a metal bar that runs parallel to a flat and hard looking bed.

PREEST (V.O.)

That was four years ago now...and believe me, four years when you don't have any faith..well, it feels like an eternity.

We pull away from Preest's battered features, through the thin barred window and out into an aerial view of the city. We see that Preest's room is incredibly high up in a tall tower of the Ministry's main cathedral-like building. Pulling away, tilting up into the night sky and into the clouds as they swell heavily with rain and thunder.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONDON CITY STREET - EVENING

Moving across a street, traffic passing, pedestrians wiping frame with open umbrellas as the heavy rain attacks the pavement. We gradually move in on the doorway directly opposite.

(CONTINUED)

Further still, onto the bell-plate itself and settling onto one of the bell stickers that reads 'FRANKLYN' in messy, water damaged biro.

Now moving through the bell-plate and into a macro of the wiring behind, the water from the falling rain drips between the badly wired connectors.

As the water pours a resounding crescendo of static and interference reaches fever pitch until...

WHITE OUT

CUT TO:

TITLES OVER VARIOUS ANGLES OF LONDON STREETS

EXT. DR. BADENOCH'S OFFICE - LONDON - DAY

A plush Harley Street practice.

INT. DR. BADENOCH'S OFFICE - DAY

In an expansive and elegant oak panelled room, EMILIA, a kooky, untidy but beautiful girl in her twenties sits in a plush leather armchair. Emilia's clothes are a trendy Gothic Oxfam mismatch, her eyes illustrated with two day old mascara. Her mother, MARGARET BRYANT, a chic, well dressed woman in her early fifties, sits in an identical chair next to her.

MARGARET

Well... I think you make too many demands on me.

Emilia rolls her eyes and sits back in her seat. She lights up a cigarette and inhales deeply.

MARGARET (cont'd)

I feel that we don't connect..that you...sorry, that I hate you because of the divorce..I blame you for daddy leaving..

Margaret turns to Emilia, angry desperation in her eyes.

MARGARET (cont'd)

..even though I've helped you so much with everything..with your flat..your allowance..

DR. BADENOCH

(O.S, we never see him)
Margaret. Now remember, remember the rules.. Just what you feel Emilia thinks, not what you think..

(CONTINUED)

MARGARET
(frustrated)
I'm sorry..it's just that I don't
feel I'm getting through..that *is*
the purpose of this..

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Emilia will respond. When she feels
strong enough to do so..

Emilia winks seductively at Badenoch.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)(cont'd)
Building up trust takes time. You
and your daughter have a lot of
building to do, all structure must
start with foundation and
communication is the cornerstone of
foundation.

EMILIA
Amen.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Margaret. Continue.

MARGARET
Yes, sorry. Alright. You..you don't
understand me..I didn't want to
move again, leave my friends..but
you *made* me move anyway..and you
hate me for it..you..oh..I don't
know.

Margaret catches her breath.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Good Margaret. That's very good.
Emilia?

EMILIA
For fucking real?

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
As real as you feel you would
express yourself if you were in
your mother's shoes. Try.

She turns to her mother and fixes her with a stare.

EMILIA
Let's see..well..you look like
shit..

Margaret inhales sharply.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
 Go on Emilia. The sooner you engage
 in your mother's perception of
 yourself, the quicker you
 understand her pain and the sooner
 we all move on.

Emilia studies the Doctor for a beat and leans forward in her seat.

EMILIA
 So you're saying the sooner I
 indulge in this bullshit, the
 sooner it'll be over?

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
 If you want to put it like that,
 yes.

EMILIA
 Okay.

Emilia stands and stubs out her cigarette on what is obviously not an ashtray. She approaches her mother and stands in an aggressive stance in front of her.

EMILIA (cont'd)
 Right you little slut, the next
 time you come back from the
 hospital after another alcohol
 fuelled suicide attempt, I'll drag
 you home by the scruff of your
 Oxfam cast-offs and maybe I'll make
 you move to some other godforsaken
 city..any excuse to keep us as far
 away as possible from your dear old
 dad...

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
 Emilia..

EMILIA
 ..'cause unless you hadn't noticed,
 your old man's not been in contact
 for a while. Probably holed up in
 Europe with someone who hasn't got
 the mental family baggage, if you
 know what I mean...

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
 Emilia, that's enough..

EMILIA
 ..so in the absence of the family
 patriarch, I provide my psychotic,
 alcoholic, waste-of-fucking life-
 daughter with a hundred pound an
 hour psychiatrist..

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
 Emilia!

MARGARET
(sobbing)
How dare you speak..

EMILIA
..oh, and while you're at it, make
some new friends..hey, find
yourself a man..eat your fucking
greens..read a good book...

MARGARET
..do you see what I have to deal
with here..?

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Emilia! Will you be quiet!

Mrs Bryant is tearfully hyper-ventilating in the chair.
Emilia stands and curtseys to Badenoch.

EMILIA
Little too much?

There is an ugly pause.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Emilia. Please. Wait outside. I
need to speak to your mother.

EMILIA
See you next Tuesday.

Emilia exits.

EXT. DR. BADENOCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Emilia hurries out into Harley Street. A safe distance down
the pavement she stops and lights up a cigarette as tears
roll down her cheeks and mix with the pouring rain.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMBRIDGE CHURCH HALL - DAY

PETER ESSER, a quiet man in his sixties, is locking up, he
carries a couple of full rubbish bags. He moves down the path
toward the street and spots a passing elderly woman, MRS.
GAIL, plump and fussy. Esser sighs.

MRS. GAIL
Hello Mr. Esser! You are coming
back aren't you?

ESSER
Yes, yes, the meeting. I'm just off
for lunch now. I'll be back..

(CONTINUED)

MRS. GAIL
Because it *is* the parish meeting
this afternoon..

ESSER
I've got to lock up after the
wedding rehearsal, I'll be back
after that. See you then.

MRS. GAIL
Well as long as you're back then.
Bye bye for now.

ESSER
Yes, goodbye. Goodbye Mrs. Gail.

Esser loads the rubbish bags into a wheelie-bin at the bottom
of the path.

EXT. PETER ESSER'S HOUSE - CAMBRIDGE - AFTERNOON

A view of a simple suburban semi-detached. An unkempt garden
out front.

INT. ESSER'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Grey sunlight illuminates the bedroom revealing a woman's
touch in the decor, a man's in the clutter. Esser sits on the
bed, and picks up the phone. He looks nervous as he dials.

The phone is answered and we hear the voice of a woman. This
is ANNE ESSER, his ex wife.

As Esser talks we angle on a selection of family photographs
on the dressing table. Among them the image of a beaming
middle aged man with his wife, and two young kids, a teenage
boy and a four year old girl, smiling by sea front railings.
We recognise Esser as a much older version of the man in the
photograph. We move further and settle on an intricately
painted Catholic icon.

ESSER
Hello? Anne?...

ANNE (O.S.)
Peter...I thought we agreed..

ESSER
I know, please wait, I'm sorry to
call..

ANNE (O.S.)
Peter..

ESSER
It's David. They're letting him do
a day visit..

There is a pause at the end of the line.

ANNE (O.S.)

When?

ESSER

Next week. I'm going to pick him up on Wednesday. He can stay overnight as well..

ANNE (O.S.)

Peter...I...Martin will be home soon...

ESSER

Martin'll understand...will you come? Just for the day..he'll want to see his mother..I'd like to see you too..it's been so long..

ANNE (O.S.)

I don't know..

ESSER

Will you at least think about it..just think about it and call me over the weekend?

There is a beat.

ANNE (O.S.)

I'll think about it, Peter. I have to go now.

ESSER

Yes, okay. Thank you. I'll expect your call. Goodbye..

Esser hangs up, his demeanour brightened. He goes to the wardrobe and takes out a fresh folded towel.

INT. SPARE BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Esser opens the door and switches on the light. A tidy bedroom sits waiting for occupation - model aeroplanes adorn the window ledge, a football team's pennants and posters decorate one wall. A stack of comic books piled neatly on a bookshelf. A group photo of young soldiers in their fatigues sits on the dressing table.

Esser places the towel at the end of the bed. As a finishing touch he pulls down the corner of the bed cover. He thinks better of this detail and puts the cover back. Esser stands back and surveys the room. He seems satisfied.

Esser switches the lights out and closes the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALL SAINTS CHURCH CAMBRIDGE - AFTERNOON

The sun shines down on a picturesque churchyard. MILO, a tall, young man in his late twenties stands on the old steps, his eyes closed, his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his coat. Milo is attractive but quirky, a sense of maturity about his young features. A battered Saab pulls up into the car park at the end of the drive with a crunch of gravel. DAN AUSTERFIELD (30's), Milo's best friend, steps out of the car. He walks up to the waiting Milo. Milo takes a deep breath. Dan's smile fades the moment he sees his friend's demeanour.

MILO

Hey.

DAN

Hey..

Dan looks around at the empty churchyard.

DAN (cont'd)

What's going on? Where's Karen?

EXT. ALL SAINTS CHURCH - CAR PARK - AFTERNOON

As Milo and Dan climb into Dan's car, Peter Esser passes by with a bunch of keys and heads towards the church as the engine guns and the car pulls away. Esser mounts the steps and moves inside.

INT. ALL SAINTS CHURCH - DAY

Esser walks up the aisle toward the sanctuary. The vicar, is blowing out the candles.

ESSER

Hello Patrick...everything okay?

VICAR

Oh. Hello Peter. Yes. Bit of a mishap is all. Poor chap. I'll be done in a minute, leave the keys and I'll lock up.

INT. DAN'S CAR - MOTORWAY - DAY

Milo sits in silence, staring out of the window at the passing scenery.

DAN

She staying up there?

MILO

Yep. Parents.

(CONTINUED)

DAN
Oh. Well..where to?

MILO
The flat. Then I think I need to
start drinking heavily.

Dan puts a comforting hand on his friend's shoulder.

EXT. MOTORWAY - DAY

Dan's car heads toward London.

EXT. LONDON STREET - LATER

Milo staggers down the steps of an apartment block carrying three heavy dustbin liners.

Dan's car is parked on the corner. Dan gets out and opens the boot. Milo dumps the heavy bags into the car, one of them ripping immediately. A collection of CDs, clothes and various belongings spill out.

MILO
Shit.

Milo stuffs his belongings back into the remains of the bin liner, and slams the boot shut.

Milo looks sadly up at the building behind him. After a beat he climbs into the car.

EXT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - EVENING

The Saab, parked outside a West London restaurant.

INT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - EVENING

The restaurant is busy with evening diners. Milo and Dan are sitting opposite each other. Milo has recovered a little. Dan is toying with a bowl of pasta. Milo just drinking.

DAN
Just like that?

Milo looks at his friend.

MILO
Just like that.

DAN
Are you sure..I mean you guys have
been down this road before..

MILO
Well that's just it. Maybe I should have seen this coming.

DAN
You still have two weeks, maybe you could..

MILO
Does being jilted at the altar count if it's the rehearsal day?

DAN
I don't know.

MILO
Why is it always jilted?

DAN
Mate..

MILO
'Jilted at the altar'. Seems to be always only ever about weddings. Just a thought.

DAN
Milo...

Milo takes a deep breath.

MILO
God, I just don't know where to *start*. I mean, you get prepared your whole life for this, the big day...all the shit that surrounds it..what a mess..It's hard enough organising a wedding, how the fuck do you dismantle one? They don't tell you that do they?

DAN
That's the last thing you should be thinking about..

MILO
There's so many people to..do you suppose she's called anybody?

DAN
Relax, I'll take care of everything..I'm still your best man, okay? It's my duty right?

Dan suddenly looks concerned.

DAN (cont'd)
Hey, you don't think it was the stag? Maybe she's pissed off about the stag night? I said you shouldn't have told her about it..

Milo shoots him a look that turns into the first semblance of a smile.

MILO
I told you I didn't want a
stripper...

DAN
I was going to get three...

MILO
I'm sure it didn't help. But I'm
also sure it's not enough to call
the sodding wedding off.

Milo's smile fades. He looks out of the window at normal life going about its business.

MILO (cont'd)
It wasn't the stag.

EXT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - EVENING

Milo and Dan get back into the car.

DAN
Need to stay tonight?

MILO
I should head back to mine.

DAN
Thought you'd packed up?

MILO
There's still another month on the
lease.

DAN
Seriously, stay for a couple of
nights, Laura won't mind. In fact
I'd be glad of the company. Laura's
kind of pissed about the stripper
even if Karen isn't.

Dan looks a little guilty. Milo picks up on it.

MILO
Don't worry mate. Thing's haven't
really been right for a while. I
think I always knew heart of hearts
that she wasn't the one.

DAN
The one? Come on man. Real life
just isn't like that.

MILO
Yeah well, you know what? Just at
the moment reality isn't all it's
cracked up to be.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY MINISTRY HEADQUARTERS - DAY

An aerial view of a gargantuan building seemingly constructed from a giant cathedral intertwined with a monolithic totalitarian sculpture. Huge chimney stacks belch smoke into the sky as sky traffic thunders by in steady rush hour streams.

INT. MINISTRY CELL - MEANWHILE CITY - DAY

We move in on Preest, a little older, dressed in his simple grey prison clothes, his face heavily unshaven, his eyes sunken and hollow. Footsteps can be heard and get louder until the cell door opens with a clang. A CLERIC guard enters and trains a firearm on him.

CLERIC
Okay then. Slowly now. Get up.

Preest turns slowly to look at the guard.

INT. VARIOUS MINISTRY OFFICES - DAY

In close up we see a brown envelope handed to Preest - ID (masked), the photo of the young girl and a few Meanwhile credits are taken out of a brown envelope and pocketed.

In the reflection of the marble floor we see the distorted image of Preest and two flanking Ministry CLERICS as they walk.

Preest and the Clerics walking a long concrete tunnel.

Doors slide open to receive them. They enter a lift.

INT. ANTE-CHAMBER - DAY

The lift doors open into a marble clad space. Solid oak doors the only way forward. One of the guards approaches them and knocks.

VOICE
Come.

The guards gesture for Preest to proceed and they stand back. Preest grasps the door handle firmly and lets himself inside.

INT. TARRANT'S OFFICE - DAY

Preest steps into a large room, monolithic pillars stretch up into the dark ceiling. A huge oak desk flanks the far side of the room, a serious looking suited man, TARRANT (50's), sits behind it. The two Clerics stand back and guard the door.

Tarrant flips through a few papers in his file. Satisfied, he sits back and looks at Preest.

TARRANT

Nice to see you again John.

Preest is immobile, his face expressionless.

TARRANT (cont'd)

Yesterday we received word that one of our monitoring stations in the South City had been hit, a chemical attack of some kind. All operatives lost as well as any hope of monitoring the southern wall.

PREEST

(disinterested)

Wasn't me.

Tarrant smiles.

TARRANT

Quite. We do know who it was however..and consequently we have a little proposition for you.

Preest smiles.

PREEST

This is why I'm here? You lock me away for four years and now all of a sudden you want to..

TARRANT

..offer you a job. Interested?

PREEST

What could possibly interest me?

TARRANT

Freedom perhaps. And a chance to settle an old score.

Tarrant taps the file on his desk.

TARRANT (cont'd)

A few familiar faces have been turning up in Meanwhile City, John...Every one of them a fully fledged paid up member of Duplex Ride.

(CONTINUED)

Preest flinches slightly.

TARRANT (cont'd)
That's right. The dirty little
religion that murdered your last
client.

Tarrant reaches to a registry book on his desk, the size of
six telephone directories in one huge tome. He flicks through
the pages and finally finds what he is looking for.

TARRANT (cont'd)
Let's see..Discordianism..
Dyonysians..ah..here it is..The
11th Order of Duplex Ride.."All
universal life..the eye of the Sole
Beholder, to benefit him alone, the
world around him specifically
tailored and designed for the one
and only Individual"..everything in
this universe simply there to
support The Individual's solitary
existence.

Tarrant slams the book shut and smiles.

TARRANT (cont'd)
Silly sods never realised that if
any of this were to be believed
there would and indeed could, only
be one member of this religion..

Tarrant snorts with amusement.

TARRANT (cont'd)
One of the more ludicrous
registered doctrines..arrogant,
egocentric and above all extremely
dangerous.

Tarrant sits back and regards Preest.

TARRANT (cont'd)
We think we have a chance of
eliminating this nasty little faith
once and for all..

PREEST
How exactly?

TARRANT
Our intelligence tells us that this
presence of Ride seem to be a
forward party. The precursor to the
arrival of their glorious leader..

Preest is taken aback. Tarrant enjoys the reaction.

PREEST
The Individual?

TARRANT
That's right. It seems your old
nemesis is finally coming home to
roost.

Tarrant stands and moves to the window, the lights of the
city twinkling in the night.

TARRANT (cont'd)
Four long years inside, John. We
want to give you a chance to make
amends.

PREEST
For what?

TARRANT
You are a man without religion. A
man without direction. We want you
to make peace with your inner self.
Embrace a belief system..however
small.

PREEST
I believe that you're a prick.

Tarrant turns and smiles.

TARRANT
How old was she John? How old was
the girl you failed to save? Ten?
Eleven?

Preest glares at Tarrant.

TARRANT (cont'd)
The Individual is coming back to
Meanwhile City. Nobody has seen him
in four years, his disciples won't
give him away, after all they all
think that they're the most
important person in their universe
which makes interrogation a little
difficult...

PREEST
So.

TARRANT
You *know* him. We want you to track
him down and, well..you'd be doing
us all a service. You'd have the
Ministry's permission.. *sectarian*
permission to commit this sin.

PREEST
And then?

TARRANT

The Ministry is a faith system
subscribed to by over half the
population of this great city. We'd
welcome a lost soul such as
yourself with open arms.

Preest smiles.

PREEST

Faith system? Religion? Regarded by
the commoners as true, by the wise
as false and by the rulers as
useful..

Tarrant grins back at Preest.

TARRANT

No need to be melodramatic John.
Just count yourself lucky that
absolution is very much part of
this religion's dogma. I assume
you're going to cooperate?

Preest knows there's no choice. Tarrant gestures to the two
Ministry Clerics who step forward from the door.

PREEST

So what happens now?

TARRANT

Good! No time like the present.
(Tarrant addresses the
clerics))
Take him to the hospital and get
him field ready. And John?

Preest turns. Tarrant takes something out of his desk drawer.

TARRANT (cont'd)

You'll probably be needing this.

Tarrant tosses Preest's mask across the room. Preest catches
it easily, his reflexes still acute. The Clerics take him
away.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Emilia's street is a shabby mish-mash of shops and
restaurants, all with apartments above, most in disrepair.

Emilia passes the restaurant opposite her flat, as the
WAITERS set up for the evening sitting.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

She dumps her shopping in the kitchen and wanders around the flat turning on the lights. The flat suits Emilia's appearance, it is studio-like in layout and decorated in a completely ramshackle but comfortably bohemian style. Half completed but beautifully drawn sketches litter the living room, some are self-portraits. A video camera sits on a tripod in the corner.

Emilia stabs the play button on the answering machine and wanders into the kitchen.

ANSWER MACHINE

Message 1, Thursday 2:30: Emilia,
it's Gavin Clunes at St. Martins,
could you call me? We need to
discuss attendance again..I'm sure
you know your monthly course work's
got to be in by Thursday..please
call.(CLICK)

Emilia grabs an apple and a kitchen knife from the sink and begins to cut away at the apple in a detached state.

ANSWER MACHINE - MARGARET

Message 2, Thursday 6:36: Emilia?
Are you there? Pick up if you're
there, Mr. Clunes has called again
from St. Martins. Call me back this
evening..we do need to
discuss....(CLICK)

Emilia contemptuously looks at the answering machine.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

She changes out of her clothes into a slim black dress, ties her hair back and fixes her make-up.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Emilia walks into the bathroom and opens the bathroom cabinet. She removes a selection of pill bottles.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emilia opens the front door of her flat. She looks out for a moment at the empty stairwell. Grotty stairs lead up to a blocked up door. Emilia puts the door on the latch and lets it swing gently back into its frame.

EXT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Emilia opens the front door of the building. It is the same front door and doorbell that we saw previously, 'Franklyn' illuminated on the bell plate. Emilia puts the door on the latch and disappears back upstairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Emilia takes a fresh Mini-DV tape, unwraps it and slides it into the camera. She hits the record button.

Emilia backs away from the camera, sits back on the sofa and addresses the camera.

EMILIA

My name is Emilia Bryant and as you know I am now gone.

Emilia stops for a moment and catches her breath.

EMILIA (cont'd)

To explain. It seems I have been a bit of a disappointment. To my father who seemed to prefer my absence from his life and to my mother who makes me suffer for this very reason. Maybe she should have abandoned me as well..at least they might have had a chance at happiness together. I feel that I have missed out on love, both parental and passionate. I realise there is something inherent in me now that means I..will never experience it. And that..well, that simply doesn't bear thinking about..

Emilia wanders to the window and looks down at the restaurant. She seems to slip out of character slightly when away from the camera, less melodramatic. A WAITER is laying a table in the window opposite. Emilia walks back to the sofa and sits.

EMILIA (cont'd)

They say your mind is where you truly live. I have grown to hate my accommodation. It is confined, cramped, polluted and derelict. I wish to move on and find pastures new.

Emilia picks up the pills and the glass of water. She swallows the pills in a few quick gulps, places the pill bottle and the glass in a perfect line on the table. She picks up the phone and dials.

(CONTINUED)

VOICE (O.S.)
Emergency? Which service do you
need?

EMILIA
Ambulance. 174 Avedon Villas,
London W11. Flat 3.

VOICE
Okay, can you tell me what the
problem is there..

EMILIA
Suicide attempt. Please hurry..

Emilia looks at her watch then places the phone down on the table next to the pill bottle and the glass. She lies back as unconsciousness envelops her.

CUT TO:

INT. MILO'S FLAT HALLWAY - EVENING

Milo's flat, spartan and spacious. Packing crates line the floors, he was in the process of moving out. Milo crashes through the door struggling with his bin liners. They finally break and the floor is scattered noisily with his belongings.

MILO
Ah, shit.

INT. MILO'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

With a sigh Milo wanders into the kitchen. He opens the fridge door and takes a beer. He closes the door, pauses and then looks back at the fridge. We are suddenly in a different kitchen. The fridge door is totally different; covered in magnets, lists, notes and children's drawings. We are now in:

INT. KITCHEN - 1980'S - DAY

An early eighties kitchen. We hold on one of the fridge drawings and find a child-like crayon drawing of a little boy and a little girl playing in a garden. The little girl has long yellow hair tied with a green ribbon. We notice the picture has been signed 'Milo' in one corner. We pull back from the fridge across the kitchen. Toys cover the floor, the kitchen work-tops busy with culinary clutter.

INT. MILO'S APARTMENT - EVENING

We cut back to Milo, he snaps back from his memory and finds himself staring at his plain white fridge door. He takes a swig from his beer and wanders into the other room.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY VISTA - EVENING

A stormy magic hour - sunset. An incredible view of the City at sundown.

INT. MINISTRY HOSPITAL WING - MEANWHILE CITY - EVENING

Preest approaches the admissions desk, flanked by the two Ministry Clerics.

The NURSE behind the desk smiles warmly at Preest.

NURSE

Ah, Mr. Preest isn't it? We've been expecting you. 12th floor.

INT. SURGERY - EVENING

Preest is shown into a small operating theatre kitted out with a myriad of bizarre looking surgical equipment and machines. Cleric 1 follows him in, Cleric 2 waits outside. Laying out some instruments on a tray is a small ROTUND DOCTOR (65) in a white smock.

DOCTOR

Please, please, come in.

The Doctor switches on a small steam driven machine next to the table that begins to hum. Preest looks at a tray next to the table. On it are a selection of sinister stainless steel devices.

PREEST

What is this?

DOCTOR

Well, as Tarrant has probably explained, we want to fix you up with a small homing device. Don't want to lose track of you on the streets now do we?

PREEST

Funnily enough he didn't mention it. I thought this was just a medical.

The Doctor beams at Preest.

DOCTOR

Just a precaution. Now if you'd just like to pop yourself on the table, we can do this with a local..

Preest stands firm. Cleric 1 steps forward behind him, ready for a little persuasion.

(CONTINUED)

PREEST
I think you're mistaken.

DOCTOR
Oh no, no mistake. Regulation for
all Clerics working in the field.
Come now, not scared of a little
procedure are we?

EXT. SURGERY CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Cleric 1 is hurled out of the surgery into the corridor at full pelt and collides with Cleric 2. Cleric 2 falls under the weight but manages to pull out a radio.

CLERIC 2
(winded)
12th Floor, Code 9.

The radio crackles, a questioning voice.

CLERIC 2 (cont'd)
(shouting)
Code fucking 9!

Cleric 2, pulls out his gun and charges back into the surgery.

INT. SURGERY - NIGHT

Preest pulls on his mask, swings around, grabs the Cleric's arm as he enters. Preest cranks him around in an arm lock and kicks him back into a glass medical cabinet while the doctor cowers in the corner. The Cleric pulls out his gun and trains it on Preest. Preest leaps forward and throws his arm aside while shoving his hand straight up and hard against the Cleric's nose.

The Cleric falls to the floor in a stunned heap. The doctor whimpers in the corner at the sight of the groaning, injured Cleric.

Preest makes for the door but can hear running. He grabs a stainless steel bowl and slides it across the floor to the half open doorway. He sees the warped reflection of two more MINISTRY CLERICS accompanied by an officious looking man in a dark suit moving toward him down the corridor. The man in the suit is Ministry Official FRANK GRANT (40's). Preest turns for the window and hurls the chair at it with all his might. The frame splinters and the glass breaks into angry shards.

EXT. BUILDING LEDGE - NIGHT

Preest climbs out, edging his way across the ledge, the lights of Meanwhile City twinkling beneath him.

He sees the outcrop of one of the hospital wings a short jump away. He manages to grab the ducting attached to the wall and slides down to another ledge below. Grant and the Clerics appear at the window.

GRANT
Shit..you, get downstairs. (to other Cleric) You follow him..

CLERIC 2
You must be fucking joking..

GRANT
Oh Jesus..(pointing back at the dead Cleric) check on him..I'll make the call.

Preest slides out of view behind one of the hospital's monolithic struts as Grant ducks back inside.

INT. MEANWHILE CITY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Preest drops down into a basement corridor through a sky light. He pauses as he sees movement at one end. A JANITOR going about his business. The Janitor takes out a large bunch of keys and unlocks an emergency door. Preest sees him walk through, waits a beat then runs quietly down the corridor through the door and out into the night.

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Preest slips in and out of the shadows, making his way to the mouth of the alleyway where Meanwhile's colourful PEDESTRIANS wipe past in a constant stream. Preest joins them.

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY - STREET CORNER - NIGHT

He arrives at a 'comm point and picks up the phone. He deposits a couple of credits, punches the buttons and waits.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Hello, Ministry Northern, Mr. Tarrant's Office?

PREEST
Put me through to Tarrant.

There is a pause.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)
Very well sir, please hold.

Preest studies the streets, he has not been noticed.

TARRANT (V.O.)
Tarrant.

PREEST
After stealing four years of my
life, you think I'm going to roll
over for you, you sonofabitch?

TARRANT (V.O.)
John..where the hell are you..

PREEST
Listen very carefully. I've
considered your offer and I've
decided on a compromise. I'm going
to take care of our visitor as
discussed. And then it's over. You
don't ever come anywhere near me
ever again.

Preest hangs up the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

VIDEO CAM POV:

We watch Emilia's unconscious form in montage.

TIME DISSOLVE
TO:

Two PARAMEDICS enter frame.

2ND MEDIC
Hello? Anyone else here? Hello?

1ST MEDIC
Check the bedroom.

The 2nd Medic disappears from frame while the 1st medic
kneels over Emilia.

1ST MEDIC (cont'd)
Alright sweetheart, come on wake up
now..

He grabs her shoulders and shakes her. 2nd Medic has come
back into the room.

1ST MEDIC (cont'd)
How long since the call?

2ND MEDIC
Fourteen, fifteen minutes?

1ST MEDIC
Come on love! Wake up now..

END OF VIDEO CAM POV

(CONTINUED)

The 2nd Medic finds the pill bottle. He examines it with interest.

In extreme close up we watch as the 1st medic brushes his finger gently across one of Emilia's eyelashes. He waits for a blink.

1ST MEDIC (cont'd)
She's way gone. Get me some oxygen.

The 2nd Medic opens his bag and hands out the oxygen gear.

1ST MEDIC (cont'd)
Cheers.

The 1st Medic takes the cardiac monitor. He pulls down Emilia's dress and attaches it to her chest.

1ST MEDIC (cont'd)
Who is she?

The 2nd Medic absently picks up the sheet of paper on the table.

2ND MEDIC
(surprised)
Uh..well.. says here 'Emilia Bryant', next of kin Margaret Bryant, blood type 'O'..

The 1st Medic raises an eyebrow at the ease of this information being at hand.

1ST MEDIC
Emilia! Come on love, wake up..

He slaps her twice, then shakes her by the shoulders again. There is no response.

1ST MEDIC (cont'd)
Come on love..EMILIA! EMILIA CAN YOU HEAR ME.. Come back sweetheart..

The 1st Medic sits back. He checks his watch.

1ST MEDIC (cont'd)
..not happening. Let's move her.
(into radio)
Okay Steve, prep St. Mary's on the way, tell 'em we've got an OD. Okay let's lift her..ready..

The two Medics lift the limp form of Emilia up into their arms.

1ST MEDIC (cont'd)
What about the front door?

2ND MEDIC
Got the keys right here...

They exchange a glance.

1ST MEDIC
Convenient.

The Medics leave the room with the unconscious Emilia.

The red 'recording' light of the video camera blinks away in the darkness.

EXT. LONDON CITY STREETS - NIGHT

The ambulance screams through the night.

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

The Medics sit around the sleeping Emilia. Oxygen is pressed over her mouth.

EXT. A & E ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The ambulance screeches to a halt. The doors fly open to receive two PORTERS. Emilia's stretcher rolls out of the back of the ambulance, the wheels fold out and she is wheeled quickly into the hospital.

INT. A & E RECEPTION - NIGHT

As Emilia's stretcher is wheeled past the reception desk, we catch the NURSE at reception.

There is something familiar about her. This is the same staff Nurse who signed Jonathan Preest into the Ministry hospital in Meanwhile City.

She approaches one of the Medics.

NURSE
Put her in number six.

1ST MEDIC
Yep.

NURSE
The end of the shift is nigh..

The Medic signs the arrival forms on her clipboard.

2ND MEDIC
For you maybe..

A HOSPITAL JANITOR (40's) stands watching from the side. His name is PASTOR BONE. He looks familiar to us: He is the Janitor from Meanwhile City.

The Nurse hangs up the clipboard and returns to the ringing telephones at her station. Pastor approaches the clipboard quietly and scans it. He takes a small battered notebook out of his pocket and starts to write with a small stubby pencil.

CUT TO:

INT. ESSER'S KITCHEN - DAY

The radio is playing a discussion on Radio 4.

Esser making eggs in badly washed pans.

He turns to the kitchen pin-board and examines a religiously themed calendar that sits amongst a jumble of pin-board detritus. Esser changes the month. There's a big cross and the name 'David' written over one of the dates.

He sits at the kitchen table and toys with his breakfast.

INT. ESSER'S KITCHEN - LATER

Esser is shining his best shoes at the kitchen table.

The phone rings. Esser goes to the hallway and answers.

ESSER
Hello, yes. Oh yes..Oh my
god..but..yes I...where? No he
hasn't been here. You'll call me
back..you'll call me back
when..well of course. Thank
you..yes I will. Yes.

Esser hangs up and walks back into the kitchen looking very distressed. He takes a few deep breaths and regains his composure.

INT. SPARE ROOM - DAY

Esser stares at the vacant room, tears welling in his eyes.

INT. ESSER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

We track through the tatty ornaments and photographs on Esser's windowsill. We notice that a photo is now missing from its frame. We hear the front door slam and watch Esser as he makes his way down the front garden path and into a waiting mini-cab. He is carrying a small suitcase.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Milo walking down a busy thoroughfares amongst London's sea of commuters. He walks across a concourse that leads to a large glass office building. As he walks Milo senses something off to his left. He turns and focuses on the crowds of men and women on their way to work. He catches a glimpse of a YOUNG WOMAN with blonde hair tied with a green ribbon. She seems familiar to Milo. Then she is gone. Milo walks on.

INT. PARALLEL DESIGN LTD. - DAY

Milo enters a lift with a gaggle of other OFFICE STAFF. We catch Milo's depressed expression as the doors slide shut.

INT. MILO'S WORKSTATION - DAY

Milo at his drawing board. He is working on a half finished lattice work of complicated typography - hard and angular. The lines of the drawing dissolve into the framework of a garden greenhouse. We pull back from the greenhouse and find ourselves in:

FLASHBACK 1980's

A warm and sunny back garden. A six year old Milo runs around with a sprinkler gun chasing a LITTLE GIRL with blond hair. A green ribbon is tied through her pony-tail.

INT. MILO'S WORKSTATION - DAY

Milo clicks back from his memory. He taps away at his computer. We see one of the folders on the screen marked 'Wedding'. He drags the file down into the wastebasket. He selects 'empty wastebasket' and with a click the file is sent spinning off into the electronic hereafter. Milo turns back to his drawing board.

MARK

Milo?

Milo turns to find his boss, MARK HENRIK (35).

MILO

Hey, Mark.

MARK

Didn't think you'd be in this week.

MILO

Well, yeah, honeymoon for one didn't really appeal.

MARK

You alright?

(CONTINUED)

MILO
I'm fine. Honestly.

MARK
Anything you need.

MILO
Thanks.

Mark leaves Milo to it. Milo gets back to work but is distracted. He goes to the window that overlooks the concourse below. Milo studies the ant-like pedestrians below - no sign of the girl with the blonde hair.

CUT TO:

INT. A & E RECOVERY ROOM - MORNING

The bustle of the A & E can be heard from behind the screens that surround Emilia's bed.

Emilia lies with a drip in her arm. Her eyes flicker open and we see from her POV the room swim into focus. The 1st MEDIC from the night before is standing at the end of her bed.

1ST MEDIC
Good morning.

Emilia stares at the Medic. Her mouth is dry and she can't speak. She turns away from the Medic, his tone seems sarcastic. He stands and wanders over to the curtains. He pulls them open a little more.

1ST MEDIC (cont'd)
Beautiful day. I don't think you ever had any intention of missing it.

EMILIA
I'm sorry?

1ST MEDIC
I've been to a lot of cry-for help calls, but none done as well as this. Your medical details lying next to the bottle? The keys so we could lock your flat up after we carried you out?

Emilia turns away from the Medic.

EMILIA
You don't understand..

1ST MEDIC
Oh I understand plenty. I haven't been to bloody *bed* yet.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1ST MEDIC (cont'd)
I'm eating into my only bit of rest
time today because I wanted to let
you know that I know what you were
doing.

The 1st medic stands and heads for the door.

1ST MEDIC (cont'd)
Just make sure I never see your
face again. Understand?

A DOCTOR enters.

DOCTOR
Everything alright in here? Geoff?

1ST MEDIC
Yeah. *Fine*.

EMILIA
You don't understand.

1ST MEDIC
Whatever.

The 1st Medic leaves the room leaving Emilia alone with the
Doctor who makes ready to take her blood pressure..

EMILIA
(whispers)
I'm sorry..

DOCTOR
Hmm?

Emilia closes her eyes.

EMILIA
Did you call my mother?

The Doctor looks uneasy.

DOCTOR
Yes. The staff nurse spoke to her.

Emilia waits for more. Then the penny drops.

EMILIA
Let me guess..

DOCTOR
She wanted to know if you were
okay.

EMILIA
But not enough to come down here.
Right?

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Emilia sits on a bench smoking a cigarette. Pastor Bone watches her from a distance and then quietly approaches.

PASTOR
You're not allowed to smoke in here.

EMILIA
(without looking up)
Do you think?

Pastor stares at her. Emilia finally looks up at him.

PASTOR
I saw you come in last night.

EMILIA
So.

PASTOR
May I talk to you for a moment? I can buy you a hot drink..

Emilia looks at him suspiciously.

PASTOR (cont'd)
Please?

INT. HOSPITAL CANTEEN - LATER

Pastor and Emilia sit in the empty canteen. Emilia nurses a plastic cup of coffee.

PASTOR
We get many suicides in here.

EMILIA
(disinterested)
Uh huh.

PASTOR
All different kinds.

There is an uncomfortable pause.

PASTOR (cont'd)
I heard the paramedics talking..

EMILIA
So you know the whole story.

PASTOR
My name's Pastor, Pastor Bone.

EMILIA
Pastor Bone?

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR
It means 'bread of life'.

EMILIA
Okay..

PASTOR
Are you going to try it again?

Emilia studies Pastor for a beat.

EMILIA
I don't think that's any of your business.

PASTOR
Of course..please just listen to me..

EMILIA
Look, Mr.....whoever you are..I appreciate..

PASTOR
I knew somebody once...she did what you tried to do last night.

Emilia suddenly feels uncomfortable.

PASTOR (cont'd)
She was..successful.

EMILIA
I'm sorry, you know? But I really think I should get going..

PASTOR
Her death caused a lot of pain and suffering. She started a chain of events. Like..dominos..

Pastor looks intensely at Emilia.

PASTOR (cont'd)
I'm just saying that it isn't just about your family and friends.. the people you leave behind..

Emilia stubs out her cigarette.

PASTOR (cont'd)
It's more about the people you haven't met yet.

Emilia looks at Pastor. There's something about his eyes.

EMILIA
What do you want with me?

PASTOR
I want you to think.

EMILIA
About what?

PASTOR
About why you're doing this..I do understand you know. Some of the greatest works of art started out as little sketches.

Emilia looks up at Pastor, examining him suspiciously.

PASTOR (cont'd)
Sometimes hundreds were done before the artist could commit to the real thing..

Emilia looks at the Janitor suspiciously.

EMILIA
Who are you?

Pastor looks around at the empty canteen. He looks momentarily nervous.

PASTOR
I am just a cleaner here. I'm sorry..I didn't mean to interfere..

EMILIA
I think that's exactly what you meant to do. What exactly are you trying to say..?

Pastor pauses. He gathers his thoughts. Nervously he speaks again.

PASTOR
..If you stay inside yourself for too long..you can end up blind. Like not recognising your own voice on a tape, or not *really* looking at your own face in the mirror..

Emilia is entranced by his stare.

EMILIA
I'm not sure I'm too happy with what I'd see.

PASTOR
Sometimes your reflection...you can see more than you think. When you really see yourself..you tend to see this world in a different way and..you'll know what to do.

Emilia snaps out of his stare. She hardens.

EMILIA
It's an art project.

PASTOR
 I'm sorry, I..

EMILIA
 ..I get to piss off my mother and
 my tutors...I get to kill myself
 every month without dying...I'm
 having a ball, okay?

There is a beat.

PASTOR
 I understand.

Pastor sits back in his chair.

EMILIA
 You know what Mr. Bone? You should
 get yourself a job as a social
 worker here, y'know?

Emilia stubs out her cigarette.

EMILIA (cont'd)
 Anyway. Sometimes these great works
 of art...they just stay as
 sketches.

She rubs her eyes, they are red with fatigue and old tears.
 Emilia stands.

EMILIA (cont'd)
 Thanks for the coffee.

Emilia exits leaving Pastor in the empty canteen. He takes
 out his notebook.

CUT TO:

INT. TUBE PLATFORM - EVENING

Milo stands on the crowded platform. He looks around. A
 little way up the platform he notices the blonde with the
 green ribbon. She stands with her back to him, but there's no
 mistaking her. Milo begins to move slowly through the crowd.
 A train pulls in and as the crowd surges forward he finds it
 more difficult to reach his quarry.

Milo sees the girl squeeze onto the carriage. He forces his
 way up the platform but is too late. The doors slide shut and
 he is left standing with the other pissed off commuters. The
 train rumbles past. Through the filthy windows and crush of
 bodies, Milo sees the blurred image of the girl swathe by in
 a mess of colour.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY - ALLEYWAY - DAY

Preest moves quietly through the alleyway. He climbs up a fire escape and disappears over the top of the roof.

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY - ROOFTOP - DAY

Preest moves stealthily toward an attic window covered in newspaper. Expertly he jimmies it and slips inside.

INT. MEANWHILE CITY - EMPTY APARTMENT - DAY

Preest moves into the empty space. A few pieces of furniture scatter the floor. Preest moves to the window and tears a strip of newspaper away letting a shard of light into the gloom.

CUT TO:

EXT. KING'S CROSS STATION - DAY

Esser walks across the concourse and out into bustling London streets.

EXT. LONDON BACK STREETS - DAY

Esser makes his way down a terrace of identically shabby bed and breakfasts.

INT. BED AND BREAKFAST - DAY

An EASTERN EUROPEAN LANDLADY shows Esser down a tatty hallway.

LANDLADY
Bathroom is upstairs on next
landing.

The Landlady unlocks a door and ushers Esser inside.

INT. ESSER'S ROOM - DAY

As expected it's grim and chintzy. A view of London's rooftops is just visible through nicotine stained net curtains. Esser takes it all in.

LANDLADY (cont'd)
So?

Esser is distracted.

ESSER
Er, yes. Fine thank you.

(CONTINUED)

The Landlady turns and exits. The door shuts on Esser as he sits down on the bed and surveys his accommodation. He turns to the drawer by the bed. He opens it and finds it empty. Esser goes to his suitcase and takes out a small New English Bible. He places it on the bedside table by the telephone.

Esser picks up the phone and dials.

ESSER (cont'd)
Anne, hello..

ANNE
Peter, for God's sake, what happened? They called me this morning, where have you been..?

ESSER
I'm in London..

ANNE
What? What are you doing in..

ESSER
I'm going to find him Anne, trust me.

ANNE
Peter, you musn't...you can't do any good..

ESSER
Have faith Anne...

ANNE
Peter..

ESSER
If it's the Lord's will, he'll deliver David to me..

ANNE
For Christ's sake, I beg you, don't start this again..go home..

ESSER
I'll call you when I find him.

ANNE
Peter...where are you..?

ESSER
Goodbye.

Esser hangs up. He shuts his eyes and forces his hands together in a tight grip. It is not clear whether he is in prayer or pain.

CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

In a warm, friendly open plan kitchen, Dan is clearing away the dishes from what seems like a hearty three courser. LAURA his wife, a pretty woman in her mid thirties sips from her wine glass. She pours Milo some more.

MILO

Thanks.

LAURA

You want to stay over?

MILO

It's fine. I gotta be at work early.

DAN

How's it going? Mark know what happened?

MILO

He's fine. He knows.

LAURA

I spoke to Karen yesterday.

Milo is a little taken a back.

MILO

Oh?

DAN

Laura..

MILO

No, it's okay. What did she say?

LAURA

She's a bit confused. A bit angry.

MILO

Angry?

LAURA

Yeah. With herself..

MILO

I wasn't the one who..

LAURA

I know Milo..she's hurting too.. I think she knew how you felt. I think maybe she just acted first..?

DAN

Hey! Seriously let's just..

(CONTINUED)

MILO

It's okay..

Dan gives Laura a withering look. She returns it - 'let him finish'.

MILO (cont'd)

Listen..neither of us really wanted to do it. We got caught up. I could never give her what she wanted.

DAN

What did she want?

MILO

Everything. You know, the whole fairytale. She knew I wasn't into it. Not one hundred per cent. Karen wasn't stupid. You can't live a lie.

LAURA

Didn't you love her?

MILO

I don't know. No. No, I don't think I did. It wasn't true love..

DAN

Come on. We're not fifteen anymore..when you're an adult true love comes with..you know..you have to settle with what you've got..

LAURA

Well thank you very much..

DAN

Come on...

MILO

..seriously..it's different.. you two have something..I think I remember what it feels like to have the real thing and I guess once you've known it..I don't know...you recognise it. I didn't. Not with Karen.

DAN

Who with then?

There's a beat.

MILO

You're going to think this is stupid. I saw an old girlfriend the other day.

DAN

Oh? Who?

MILO

Someone from..way back. Not even really a..when I was a kid. Sally. We knew each other when we were six, seven.

DAN

What?

MILO

I'm sure it was her. Looked exactly like her, she really did. I followed her up the platform at Oxford Circus. Made me miss my bloody train.

LAURA

How can you be so sure?

MILO

Well..because she was 'first love' I guess.

There is a beat.

DAN

(laughing)

Oh please..

LAURA

Quiet philistine. I think that's lovely. See, romance is not dead.

Laura slaps Dan quite hard on the side of his head.

DAN

See what you're doing to me? Enough with the romantic bullshit, I've got a bad reputation to maintain.

MILO

I don't think you need any help from me.

Laura laughs, grabs the wine and refills their glasses.

LAURA

Have you spoken to Karen at all?

MILO

E-mailed her yesterday. Got a cold one back. I have to pick up the rest of my stuff on Thursday.

DAN

Want me to come with you? I could take the morning off.

MILO

Thanks, but I should probably do it alone.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MILO (cont'd)
 Anyway I think she'd probably try
 and castrate my 'best man' given
 half the chance..

Dan winces. Milo grins.

LAURA
 If I don't do it first. You boys,
 you boys..I don't know.

CUT TO:

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - SAME TIME

Emilia sits at the table sketching a self portrait. She studies her reflection in a mirror that leans against a pile of books. This depiction of herself is lighter, blonder, brighter - and is most notably smiling a little.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAN'S GARDEN - NIGHT - LATER

Dan and Milo are sitting in the back garden with a beer each.

DAN
 ..It will pass you know. No matter
 how bad you feel now.

MILO
 I'm not so sure.

Dan snorts.

DAN
 Everybody thinks..

MILO
 No. No, I think it's different. I
 can't explain it.

Dan can see that his friend is genuinely troubled.

DAN
 Well, try.

Milo looks hard at the night sky, his friend studies him, concerned.

MILO
 I heard this story once when I was
 a kid, or read it..I don't know..

DAN
 Go on.

(CONTINUED)

MILO

It was about a storyteller, one of those guys who would go from village to village telling tales of adventure, romance, 'Once upon a time', you know? Anyway, he gets so famous in the kingdom that the King asks him to come and entertain the court. So he turns up and tells this fantastic story. The whole court falls under his spell, especially the Princess, who gets so taken with him that..

DAN

He nails her.

Milo laughs.

MILO

Yep. She falls for him, he stays, lives in the castle and everything.

DAN

Very nice.

MILO

Yeah. But as time goes on, things begin to change for him. He suddenly feels suffocated, unfulfilled.

DAN

Why?

MILO

..this is stupid..

DAN

No, go on..I'm in.

Milo smiles at his friend.

MILO

He doesn't know. He's with a beautiful girl, idyllic surroundings, a full and happy life..but it's just not right.

DAN

History's first recorded commitment-phobe?

Milo laughs.

MILO

No..he thinks he loves her, wants to stay..he just..can't. He feels like he should be somewhere else...with someone else.

(MORE)

MILO (cont'd)
Anyway, one morning the princess
wakes up and he's gone.

DAN
And?

MILO
And that's it. I guess.

Dan looks a little cheated.

DAN
Well what the fuck does that mean?

MILO
It doesn't matter. The story just
kinda feels how I feel. Does that
make any sense?

Dan stands and puts a hand on his friend's shoulder.

DAN
Nope. I'm gonna get another beer.

Milo smiles. We tilt up to the night sky.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEANWHILE FAITH REGISTRATION CENTRE - MORNING

We tilt down from the thundering traffic tearing through the morning sky to the tangle of cylindrical drums and spires that make up the roof of Meanwhile City's hub of Religious Registration. Smoke belches from the extraction ducts, while a sickly green neon twists around the entrance to this vast building, casting a pallid glow on a huge queue of eclectic CROWD. A number of them are chanting or preaching.

A masked Preest moves confidently through the crowd and is swallowed up inside.

INT. MEANWHILE FAITH REGISTRATION CENTRE - MORNING

A large open plan space. Heavy air conditioning units pile into the ceiling from the floors, steam billowing from gaskets on either side. The Registration Centre has a chaotic queueing system, a myriad of badly organised snaking lines of citizens winding their way toward some small squat registration desks in the distance. A bazaar of market stalls selling food, trinkets and icons are set back against the centre's outer walls. Every other available bit of floor space is taken up with groups of bizarrely dressed Meanwhile City CITIZENS, some praying, some chanting, others just animatedly discussing some kind of personal doctrine.

A masked Preest moves through the packed room, he waves off a variety of different citizens, all trying to hassle him with their individual faiths. Refusing flowers and pamphlets all the way, he makes it to a shabby checkpoint desk.

(CONTINUED)

A pretty young desk clerk, TERI (20's) sits behind a monitor sorting through a wealth of paperwork, while talking to a group of BEARDED SUITS.

TERI
..this is technically a new faith.
You'll need a B720. All of you have
to sign...

BEARDED SUIT
But all we're changing is the
beard.

TERI
When you registered this three
years ago, the fundamental basis of
your faith was the sanctity of your
facial hair. You were never going
to shave again. You don't have
anything else..

BEARDED SUIT
We'd still wear the suits.

The bearded man's compatriots all nod in agreement.

TERI
The suits were not part of the
original dogma. It looks more like
a fashion thing.

BEARDED SUIT
Come on, you have no idea, this
hair's driving us fuckin' crazy...

The Bearded Suits nod furiously, some scratching their beards
to make the point.

TERI
I'd like to help, gents, but as I
said if you wanna shave you gotta
go get yourself a B720. Desk forty
six, upstairs.

The disgruntled Bearded Suits shuffle away from the desk.
Preest approaches Teri.

TERI (cont'd)
Hi! I'm Teri. How can I help?

Preest nods behind her at the area segregated from the
masses.

PREEST
I'm meeting somebody in the food
kitchens.

Teri pushes a large book toward Preest.

TERI
Oh. Okay. Need you to enter your
faith in the record.

PREEST
Why?

Teri glances around the room. Duh.

TERI
For the register..what's your
faith?

PREEST
What's yours?

Teri lightens.

TERI
Well, at the moment I'm with some
Seventh Day Manicurists..

Teri nods to a group of glamorous WOMEN are talking
animatedly and doing each others nails.

TERI (cont'd)
..but I'm thinkin' of changing. The
level of discussion 'aint great and
well, we've nearly run out of
colours..probably not your scene..

Preest scribbles in Teri's register. Teri points toward the
kitchen compound that stretches off behind her. The kitchens
are bathed in richly decorated religious iconography.

TERI (cont'd)
Help yourself.

PREEST
Thank you.

TERI
Don't mention it..y'god bless you!

Preest moves past the desk and into the guts of the
registration centre. Teri turns the book around and reads
Preest's scrawl, it reads 'Militant Atheist'.

Teri is interrupted by her next applicant.

TERI (cont'd)
..Hi! I'm Teri, how can I help?

INT. MEANWHILE CITY - FOOD KITCHENS - DAY

Preest makes his way through the labyrinthine kitchen area. A
variety of different food is being prepared for a million
different doctrines. Total chaos.

In the midst of the crowds we see Wormsnakes as he washes a tray of soup bowls with a steam powered octopus-like spray gun. Wormsnakes turns around, sees Preest and goes white as a sheet.

PREEST
Hello 'Snakes.

Wormsnakes drops the tray in panic, the bowls smashing on the floor. He turns to run but Preest grabs him deftly by the arm and spins him back into an arm lock.

PREEST (cont'd)
That's no way to treat an old friend.

WORMSNAKES
Mr. Preest...you know I didn't have a choice...they made me..

PREEST
We'll discuss your questionable loyalty in good time. Right now I'm going to give you a chance to make up for past indiscretions..

WORMSNAKES
..what..oh God what do you want?

PREEST
Information. Had any old faces in here over the last couple of days?

WORMSNAKES
What do you mean..

PREEST
Duplex Ride.

WORMSNAKES
There's been no Ride in town for years..I swear..not since..

Preest grabs him by his collar.

PREEST
Don't play games with me.

Two SECURITY GUARDS have seen their exchange, they push their way over to the desk.

WORMSNAKES
Get out of here John..seriously..

The security guards have arrived. They flank Preest as he lets go of Wormsnakes.

SECURITY GUARD 1
Problem here?

Preest lets go of the little man. Wormsnakes rubs his neck.

WORMSNAKES

This guy shouldn't be back here..he
'aint allowed...

SECURITY GUARD 2

Alright then. Calm down now..I'm
sure he didn't mean you any harm.
You should go off and be about your
business. Have a good day now.

Preest stares at the Security Guards for a beat.

PREEST

Well thank you. Snakes, we'll talk
later.

Preest moves back off into the crowd. Wormsnakes glares at
the security guards.

WORMSNAKES

Tell me somethin'...

Wormsnakes picks up the broken pieces of bowl and watches the
retreating Preest.

WORMSNAKES (cont'd)

..is there any point in you
dickheads coming to work if you
just end up forgiving everybody?

CUT TO:

INT. TUBE STATION - EVENING

Milo makes his way down the escalator amongst the rush hour
commuters. He suddenly notices a familiar flash of green
further down. It is 'Sally' again, with her back to him at
the bottom of the escalator. Milo struggles down the steps as
Sally walks off toward the platform and disappears from view.
Milo follows. At the end of the platform he sees her again
and pushes his way through the crowd. The train arrives and
Milo boards. Carefully he moves through the train. Finally he
reaches the carriage where he spots Sally standing. Milo
watches her in fascination as the train continues its
journey.

EXT. WILLESDEN JUNCTION STATION - NIGHT

Milo watches as Sally gets off. He follows.

EXT. HARLESDEN HIGH STREET - NIGHT

Milo has Sally in his sights, the street populace is busy,
the stalls and markets alive with the hum of ethnic
character. Milo loses her for a beat but then catches her
again as she takes a turn down a side street.

(CONTINUED)

Milo turns the corner and finds the street empty. He looks around in frustration.

Then he sees her once more, further up the road - how did she move so fast?

Milo breaks into a run. The streets get narrower, dingier. He spots her going into a door at the back of a building.

Milo follows and tries the door.

INT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Milo pulls the door open and makes his way up a steep flight of shabby stairs. At the top a corridor breaks off in two directions. Milo sees a door at the end of one of them.

INT. PRIVATE BAR - NIGHT

Milo finds himself in a busy pool room. A group of YOUTHS are scattered throughout, smoking, drinking and playing pool. Low deep jungle plays from a battered stereo behind the makeshift bar.

A group of men sit at a corner table playing Mah Jong. Among them we see Pastor Bone.

We watch in extreme detail as Pastor organises the bricks into a wall of perfect piles.

Pastor glances up at the flustered Milo.

PASTOR

Help you?

Milo glances down at Pastor.

MILO

Er, hi. Yes...I was...looking for..

PASTOR

She went out through the front.

There is an uncomfortable silence, all eyes are on Milo. Pastor points toward the far end of the room.

PASTOR (cont'd)

Down the stairs.

MILO

Thanks.

Uneasily Milo makes his way toward the stairs. Pastor takes out his notebook. For the first time we get a look at the yellowed pages. They are covered in a complex pattern of numbers and symbols that spiral across the page in a chaotic but rather beautiful symmetry.

Pastor watches Milo disappear down the stairs, he then takes his pencil and carefully adds another line to the page.

INT. ABANDONED DOWNSTAIRS SHOP - NIGHT

Milo finds himself in a dark store-room full of floor-to-ceiling shelves that make the room seem maze-like. Milo is now getting very spooked.

INT. PRIVATE BAR - NIGHT

Pastor's writing, we watch in ECU the words and images spill across the page of his notebook..

INT. ABANDONED DOWNSTAIRS SHOP - NIGHT

He hears a sound on the other side of the shelves..a flash of movement..Milo quickens his pace. Voices behind him? Milo doesn't bother to find out. He stumbles by accident on the exit, throws the door open and staggers out into the street. There is no sign of Sally.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY - VISTA - NIGHT

Moving across the rooftops of downtown, dark and dangerous.

EXT. LITTLE CHAPEL 'O' GUNZ - MEANWHILE CITY - NIGHT

The neon legend 'LITTLE CHAPEL'O' GUNZ' flickers in the night air and then fades out. A metal grill is clanged shut over the chapel door by a small dark skinned CHAPEL KEEPER. The CHAPEL KEEPER looks around at the empty street. The Chapel Keeper locks the gate and hurries off into the night. Preest steps out into the street from the shadow of a doorway.

INT. LITTLE CHAPEL 'O' GUNZ - NIGHT

The Chapel is a shrine to weapons. A few fluorescent tubes illuminate racks of bizarre looking rifles, shotguns, grenades, knives and flares. Two long black rifles form a rudimentary crucifix that hangs over the main altar. The altar itself is made from glass and has a variety of weapons encased within. There is a crash as Preest drops down through the sky light, fragments of glass raining around him. An alarm begins to peal from outside. With one swift move Preest smashes the glass altar with a gloved hand and wrenches out a telescopic rifle and a handful of rounds.

EXT. LITTLE CHAPEL 'O' GUNZ - NIGHT

A Ministry gunship roars into view and lands, lights blazing across the front of the chapel.

INT. LITTLE CHAPEL 'O' GUNZ - NIGHT

Preest ducks back from the searchlights.

EXT. LITTLE CHAPEL 'O' GUNZ - NIGHT

The doors of the Gunship slide open and four armed CLERICS run out. Three of them move in formation toward the Chapel doors, leaving a lone Cleric guarding the Gunship. Flanking the door, the two lead Clerics signal each other as the other moves in with a Pneumatic Ram. With a crash the metal grilles fold in on themselves and the Clerics swarm inside.

INT. LITTLE CHAPEL 'O' GUNZ - NIGHT

The Clerics move through the Chapel, infra-red sights sweeping the gloom. From behind there is a crash as Preest drops down from the ceiling and tosses two lit flares into their squad. There is a blinding flash followed by red smoke.

EXT. LITTLE CHAPEL 'O' GUNZ - NIGHT

Preest suddenly explodes out of the smoke-filled chapel, rifle in hand. The Cleric by the gunship ducks in terror and surprise as Preest bounds towards him, swiftly knocking him unconscious and disappears into the night.

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

A view on the chapel below. The gunship bathed in red smoke, the Clerics running around like headless chickens. Preest's silhouette moves across the rooftop. He pauses to take a look below and then moves off into the night.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. MARTIN'S SCHOOL OF ART - DAY

We move in on the huge grey building, traffic moves slowly through the rain sodden streets out front.

INT. ST. MARTIN'S SCHOOL OF ART - GALLERY - DAY

Emilia sits on a stool next to a TV/video combi. On the screen we watch the medics carry her out of her apartment.

CLUNES(O.S.)

I take it that's how it ends?

EMILIA

I think it ends when you want to stop watching it.

(CONTINUED)

CLUNES (O.S.)
Well that happens to be right now.

The TV shuts off.

We cut to Gavin Clunes (50's) who is standing in disbelief at what he has just watched.

CLUNES (cont'd)
That was real?

EMILIA
Define real.

CLUNES
You called the medics?

EMILIA
I had to. I would have died otherwise.

CLUNES
You really took the pills?

EMILIA
They wouldn't have taken me to hospital if I hadn't.

Clunes walks over to the window. Rain spatters the glass.

CLUNES
I can't let you submit this Emilia, you know that. This is way more extreme than the last one..

EMILIA
You're censoring me?

Clunes turns on her.

CLUNES
If I don't, Mr Phillips almost certainly will.

EMILIA
Mr...doesn't anybody have any balls around here?

CLUNES
I told you last time..didn't you listen to me at all? Now this...what were you thinking...

EMILIA
It's not finished..

Clunes gapes at her.

CLUNES
Oh, I think it is. This is self
indulgent shite. Through and
through.

EMILIA
I feel that critique should rest in
the eye of the beholder..

CLUNES
As your head of department the
beholder is me. Do you understand?
Your course work has been poor,
your attendance non existent. Your
mother..

EMILIA
Oh Christ..

CLUNES
..*your mother* is a hair's breadth
from pulling you out of here...and
you offer up this..this..

Clunes hits the eject button and grabs the tape. He hands it
back to Emilia.

CLUNES (cont'd)
..I suggest you stop wasting the
emergency service's time and come
up with something a little more
original..

EMILIA
More original?

CLUNES
Shock and bad taste doesn't
necessarily equate originality.

EMILIA
Well. Like I said, it's not
finished.

CLUNES
And how does it finish Emilia? With
you dead? The college sued?

EMILIA
I don't know. It almost feels like
I don't have any say in the matter
any more.

CLUNES
Well I bloody well do. Bin this
drivel and get back on track or
don't bother coming back.

Emilia looks genuinely upset. She grabs her things and
hurriedly leaves the studio. Clunes takes a breath. He
realises he has been a little hard.

EXT. CHARING CROSS ROAD - DAY

Emilia hurries down the steps of the college, she pulls her coat up around her against the rain. Clunes runs after her and opens an umbrella. He catches up with Emilia who is visibly annoyed by his perseverance.

CLUNES
Emilia, wait..wait up.

As they walk they pass a police cordon around a hardware and sporting goods shop. A police car and fire engine are parked opposite. The windows of the shop are smashed, a thin trail of smoke coming from within. A POLICEMAN is taking a statement from a small TURKISH SHOP OWNER while FIREMEN wander in and out. We notice that the shop owner is identical to the CHAPEL KEEPER back in Meanwhile. The shop's alarm is still clanging deafeningly. Clunes and Emilia cross the street away from the noise.

CLUNES (cont'd)
I spoke to your course director at Chelsea. She said that apart from a slight attitude problem, your work had great potential.

EMILIA
Yeah. Well that was Chelsea..and Paris was Paris..all the same really.

CLUNES
Your work has suffered a great deal..

EMILIA
Funnily enough I haven't really had a lot of choice in the matter.

They walk in silence for a beat. Clunes stops and takes her arm. Emilia turns to look at him.

CLUNES
Do you want to talk about it?

She fixes Clunes with a hard stare.

EMILIA
I already have a therapist Mr. Clunes.

Clunes looks embarrassed.

CLUNES
I didn't mean to..

EMILIA
(softly)
I know.

Emilia walks away from Clunes toward the tube station.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEANWHILE FAITH REGISTRATION CENTRE - NIGHT

From an alleyway across the street, Preest watches the last stragglers leaving the Registration Centre. Wormsnakes staggers out into the cold night air, pulling his overcoat tightly around him.

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Preest stealthily follows Wormsnakes through the labyrinthine back streets of Meanwhile's downtown.

EXT. WORMSNAKES'S APARTMENT BLOCK - MEANWHILE CITY - NIGHT.

Wormsnakes enters his building. Preest moves out of the shadows and quickly crosses the street.

INT. WORMSNAKES'S APARTMENT - MEANWHILE CITY - NIGHT

Wormsnakes wanders into the kitchen and is surprised to find the lights off. He reaches up to the fitting and twists the bulb. The light comes on and Wormsnakes starts as he finds Preest sitting impassively at the kitchen table.

WORMSNAKES

Jesus!

PREEST

Wormsnakes.

WORMSNAKES

You...get the fuck out of my apartment..

PREEST

Let's not make this difficult.

Preest moves menacingly toward Wormsnakes who backs into the living room, a look of abject terror on his face.

WORMSNAKES

Come on man, cut me a break..

PREEST

We'll see.

Wormsnakes makes a run for the door. Preest throws himself gracefully across the room and lands on the little man, his head now in a perfect half nelson. Wormsnakes splutters.

WORMSNAKES

What do you want man?

(CONTINUED)

Preest releases Wormsnakes and throws him into the corner of the room.

WORMSNAKES (cont'd)
You're crazy..

Preest lunges forward and pulls Wormsnakes to his feet. He throws a nasty right hook that punctures Wormsnakes' nose and sends him flying into the couch.

PREEST
Be polite. You owe me remember?

WORMSNAKES
Ahh...Jesus Chr..my nose..sonofa..

PREEST
Now then. Word on the street is that The Individual's coming to town. You wouldn't happen to know anything about that, now would you?

WORMSNAKES
What? No..no I swear..

PREEST
I don't think I believe you.

WORMSNAKES
Please..

PREEST
I need you to do a little favour for me.

Preest grabs Wormsnakes by the throat.

PREEST (cont'd)
I want you to tell The Individual where to find me.

Preest releases Wormsnakes who falls in a heap on the floor. Preest takes a scrap of paper from his pocket and hands it to him.

PREEST (CONT'D) (cont'd)
I am going to be at this address.

Wormsnakes takes the paper. He studies it.

WORMSNAKES
How do you know he's gonna come find me?

PREEST
I found you didn't I?

Preest cups Wormsnakes's head in his gloved hand.

PREEST (cont'd)
 Rest assured he'll find his way
 here. Just do your job. What little
 faith I have, I have it in you.

Preest releases Wormsnakes' bruised face.

PREEST (cont'd)
 You're a lucky man 'Snakes. You've
 had a stay of execution. I still
 owe you remember..for every single
 day of my four years. *Do you
 understand?*

WORMSNAKES
 Yes, I get that. Understand that,
 yeah.

PREEST
 Good. I'll be waiting. And
 watching. Nice to see you again.

Preest disappears from frame.

We pull back and find Wormsnakes alone in his apartment
 holding the scrap of paper.

WORMSNAKES
 Fuckin' likewise I'm sure.

CUT TO:

INT. MILO'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Milo sits at his own laptop. He is absently surfing the
 internet. We watch a montage of pop ups and banners for 'Find-
 A-Friend', 'People Search' and 'Your Old School'.

Milo looks up a few of them. He finds a list of School names
 and then settles on his own - '**Montpelier Primary School**'.
 Milo sits back and looks at the screen with interest.

INT. MILO'S APARTMENT - LATER

Milo is on the phone at his desk. He is sketching something
 on his telephone pad.

MILO
 Mum? Hi, yeah. Yeah fine. How are
 you? Good, good. Uh yeah. Yeah,
 they've been fine. No, I haven't.
 No. I know. Listen I was thinking
 of maybe popping around tomorrow
 to..yeah. I don't know, about tea
 time? Yeah, it would be nice. Okay.
 I'll call when I'm near. Okay. Lots
 of love. See you tomorrow. Bye.

(CONTINUED)

Milo puts down the phone and simply stands for a moment. He looks out at the pouring rain. We look at his pad - the outline of a girl's face is half-drawn, her hair and a ribbon but no features on her face.

CUT TO:

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Emilia paces the living room with a glass of red wine, she seems a little drunk. The sound of running water can be heard from the bathroom. Emilia sits on her stool and punches the video camera remote.

VIDEO FOOTAGE:

Emilia framed sitting on the stool, glass of red in one hand, razor blade in the other. She's ready for another performance. She toasts the camera.

EMILIA

In answer to your question..I'm looking for all the things that I know I'm not going to get. Can't be too specific..let's just call them the 'fairytale ending'. I'm just treading water here..waiting for something to happen to me. Maybe it's fate, you and I, talking like this. Like rolling the dice, I mean, if I keep doing these things, if I stay alive you get your course work. If I don't my mother gets me out of her life...maybe she could even hook up with Dad again. If something stops me..then it was meant to fail. I was meant to live.

Emilia lifts the phone and studies it.

EMILIA (cont'd)

I admit the dice are a little loaded in my favour...maybe next time I won't leave the door on the latch.

Emilia pauses.

EMILIA (cont'd)

I'm sorry Mr. Clunes. That's the best I can do.

Emilia moves to the camera and readjusts it so that it points into the open bathroom door. We focus on the blinking red light of the camera as Emilia pads into the bathroom and leans over the bath turning off the taps. She slips her dress off and gets into the bath.

CUT TO:

INT. ST MARY'S HOSPITAL - A & E - DAY

Esser is going through the admissions list with the STAFF NURSE. We realise he's had no joy. Behind the Staff Nurse we see the Medic from Emilia's first suicide attempt. He looks tired and is arguing with the same Doctor we saw with Emilia.

EXT. ST MARY'S HOSPITAL CHAPEL - DAY

Esser walks into the little chapel. Pastor Bone is mopping the floor. Esser goes to the altar, crosses himself and sits down on one of the pews.

PASTOR

I'm sorry...would you like me to..?

ESSER

Oh, no..I'm fine. Please carry on.

Pastor thanks him with a smile. Esser seems a little uncomfortable with the janitor present.

ESSER (cont'd)

I look after a place too..not as big as this..back in Cambridge.

Pastor nods.

ESSER (cont'd)

Never stops..does It?

Pastor gestures around himself.

PASTOR

It's the same.

Esser studies the Janitor for a beat. Esser has a thought.

ESSER

I'm here looking for somebody actually..my son.

He removes David's photo from his wallet.

ESSER (cont'd)

Would you..?

Pastor puts his mop down and comes over to look at the photo. He takes the photo and studies it.

PASTOR

I don't know. I see so many here every day.

Esser smiles sadly.

ESSER

I can imagine.

(CONTINUED)

ESSER (cont'd)
They told me that..well, chances
are he won't even recognise me.

PASTOR
Why?

ESSER
His mind. He....was In the Gulf.
The first one. You know?

From Pastor's expression, Esser realises he may not.

ESSER (cont'd)
It would be nice to know that he
knew who I was. God willing, if
I..when I find him..I'm sure he'll
know. He'll know me.

Pastor shrugs.

ESSER (cont'd)
What is it?

PASTOR
Sometimes God isn't so willing.

ESSER
I'm sorry?

PASTOR
He can be as willing as chance, or
as willing as an accident..

Esser glares at the Janitor.

ESSER
I think you'll find there's no such
thing as accident.

PASTOR
There may be nothing else but..

Esser is visibly affronted.

ESSER
Can I have my photograph back
please.

He takes back the photograph from Pastor.

PASTOR
I'm sorry. I haven't seen this
person.

ESSER
Thank you anyway.

PASTOR
I hope you find what you're looking
for.

Esser turns. Pastor has gone back to his mop and bucket.
Esser watches him for a beat and then leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. MILO'S CAR - DAY

Milo driving, deep in thought.

EXT. SOUTH LONDON - DAY

Milo pulls up and gets out of the car. He looks around at his surroundings. Savouring the familiarity he walks up the road.

EXT. MONTPELIER PRIMARY SCHOOL - DAY

Milo approaches the gates. A group of SCHOOL CHILDREN are running around the playground. In the middle of them stands a solitary figure, a beautiful girl in her mid twenties with blonde hair tied in a green ribbon. Her summer dress flows in the wind. She turns and looks over. Her smile brightens up the yard and Milo can't contain his beaming smile. There is something else notable about this girl:

She is identical in appearance to Emilia.

..but different, almost an inverted image, blonde, bright, healthy and alive. Her eyes sparkle. We realise that this is SALLY and we have never seen Milo look happier.

Recognition dawns on Sally. She looks apprehensive for a moment, but then cautiously makes her way over to Milo.

MILO
Hello.

SALLY
Hello.

MILO
Uh..I was just..

SALLY
Passing?

MILO
Sally, I know it's been..

SALLY
(smiling)
Twenty five years.

(CONTINUED)

MILO
Twenty five years. Yes. But, well I
saw you in the street the other
day..

SALLY
(doubtful)
Oh?

MILO
Yeah...well, at any rate I thought
it was you and I got to thinking
about you... a lot I guess.

Sally looks at Milo questioningly.

MILO (cont'd)
So I've been trying to find you.

SALLY
Well. You've found me.

MILO
(breaking into a grin)
Yeah. I guess I have. I was
actually coming to check the
records..I never thought you'd be
working here..

SALLY
Check the records?

MILO
Yeah, the..

Milo realises he sounds a little like a stalker.

MILO (cont'd)
Just for an address..to write to
you..or something.

Sally is clearly enjoying his discomfort. There is a beat.

In the corner of the playground an older male teacher is
looking over at Milo curiously.

MILO (cont'd)
Do you have a lunch hour? I mean,
can you spare a few minutes?

Sally looks back at the playground. The other teacher seems
to be in charge.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY HOMELESS REFUGE - RECEPTION - DAY

Esser makes his way through the shabby reception area. Pin
boards and posters adorn the walls.

(CONTINUED)

A row of shut doors span one wall. A young male CARE WORKER (20's) is sitting at the reception desk going through paperwork.

ESSER
Excuse me..

CARE WORKER
I'm sorry, we open again at 6..

ESSER
Yes, I know, but I was wondering if you can help me, I'm looking for someone.

The Care Worker looks up.

ESSER (cont'd)
It's my son you see. He used to come here, a few years ago..I thought maybe he'd been back..

CARE WORKER
Oh. Okay, do you have a picture? We can put it on the board.

Esser takes out the photo of David from his inside pocket.

ESSER
Er..I only have the one..

He hands him the photo. The Care Worker studies it.

CARE WORKER
I can do a copy.

ESSER
Thank you so much.

Esser gives the care Worker the photo. He leans back to a battered photocopier.

ESSER (cont'd)
Do you recognise him?

The Care Worker slides in the picture of David and copies it without closing the cover.

CARE WORKER
I couldn't say for sure, it's difficult, he probably doesn't look like this anymore, you know?

Esser hasn't thought of this, it saddens him. The Care Worker picks up on it.

CARE WORKER (cont'd)
Look, I'm only part time..

ESSER
I understand..

CARE WORKER
 You could ask Bill though. He's
 been here the longest, he'll be in
 tomorrow around four.

The care worker takes the photocopy and hands it to Esser.

CARE WORKER (cont'd)
 Put your contact number and address
 at the bottom.

ESSER
 Oh..yes..

Esser takes a pen from the Care Worker and writes David's
 name and details on the bottom of the photocopy:

ADDRESS (written):
 Contact Peter Esser, 24 Duplex Ride, Cambridge, T11 62R

The Care Worker takes it and walks over to the pin board.
 Esser looks disappointed, he sees that the pin-board is
 covered with dozens of other missing people, all ages, all
 lost.

ESSER (cont'd)
 Thank you. I'll be back tomorrow.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

Milo and Sally walk together. The sun streams down, the park
 is a perfect setting for how happy Milo seems.

MILO
 So when did you start teaching?

Sally looks back at the playground.

SALLY
 Pretty recently.

MILO
 It suits you.

SALLY
 Thank you.

MILO
 I mean, you look good with kids.
 You were good with me...I know we
 were *both* kids at the time..but you
 know what I mean.

SALLY
 (giggling)
 I think so.

(CONTINUED)

They stop and look at each other for a moment quietly. Sally breaks the silence.

SALLY (cont'd)
How's your mum?

MILO
Oh, okay. Still the same, off with the fairies.

Milo smiles, Sally doesn't return the warmth. There is a beat.

SALLY
When did you forget about me?

They stop by a bench and sit. Two CHILDREN, a little boy and girl, are playing in the distance. Milo watches them for a beat.

MILO
You know, when I was about twelve, my mum went to a medium. She came back and told me that my father had come through. The medium told her that he was in the 'library' and that he'd be along in a minute.

SALLY
Well, what did he say?

Milo turns to Sally.

MILO
It didn't matter what he said..what mattered to me was the library. Whichever way you cut it, it's a physical place. Whether it existed in the afterlife or not, it had a purpose as a space.

SALLY
What's your point?

MILO
A library is either up there quietly storing books - or it isn't.

SALLY
And what happened?

MILO
I guess I realised I had more of a rational brain than a romantically optimistic one.

SALLY
Meaning?

MILO
I went for the reality. There was
no library.

Sally looks sadly at Milo.

SALLY
So where does that leave me?

The two kids finish playing. The girl waves goodbye to the boy as their parents lead them away in opposite directions.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Milo and Sally stand by the gates.

SALLY
Well. I should get back..It's been
really nice..

MILO
Could I maybe..you know, see you
again? We could have a drink or..

SALLY
Milo. It's been so long. It's
bizarre luck that you can even..

MILO
(interrupting)
Yeah, but it's fate. Here you are,
here I am..

The teacher in the playground begins walking over to them.

SALLY
(laughing)
I thought you didn't believe in all
that stuff.

Sally glances at the approaching teacher.

MILO
I'm not leaving till you say yes.
Any time at all, any day this
week..

SALLY
(laughing)
Okay, okay. How about Friday?

MILO
Friday?

SALLY
Alright.

Milo can't believe his luck.

MILO

Great..there's a restaurant..
'Osteria'. It's on the corner of
Avedon Park Villas and Arundel
Road..

SALLY

Tomorrow night..

MILO

At eight..okay? I'll be there. Can
I get your number..I..

The teacher has arrived.

TEACHER

Everything okay here? Can I help?

MILO

No, it's fine thanks. We're fine.

Milo backs off, still gazing at Sally.

SALLY

Don't expect too much.

MILO

Hey! I won't! Tomorrow!

The teacher looks at Milo suspiciously as he walks down the street, a spring in his step. Sally and the teacher walk back into the middle of the playground.

CUT TO:

EXT. MINISTRY HEADQUARTERS - MEANWHILE CITY - DAY

Preest is across the street, watching the Ministry from the shadows of an alleyway. A Cleric Vehicle pulls up to the entrance bay and a group of six heavily armed CLERICS dismount. Preest steps back further into the shadows. Grant emerges from the Ministry entrance and approaches the Clerics. After an exchange the Clerics disperse and disappear into the Meanwhile City crowds and the Vehicle pulls away. Grant pauses, almost sensing he is being watched.

INT. MINISTRY HEADQUARTERS - MEANWHILE CITY - DAY

Grant walks back into the Ministry's reception area. Among the eclectic crowd are a group of SHAVEN HEADED MONKS floating a foot above the floor. Grant makes his way past them to the lifts as a figure steps into frame pushing a steam driven bucket and mop. It is Pastor Bone. Pastor watches Grant disappear into the lift and then looks out across to the street outside where Preest has just been. He smiles to himself and goes off about his business.

(CONTINUED)

As he leaves we see that the Shaven Headed Monks are actually floating due to individual jet packs that are tied shabbily to their waists.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. BADENOCH'S OFFICE - DAY

Emilia sits in one of the chairs, her sad demeanour a contrast to the feisty girl we saw in this office previously. As she smokes we see that both her wrists are bandaged. Emilia looks absently around the room. There is an uncomfortable silence. Finally..

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Does your mother know about this?

EMILIA
No.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Are you alright?

EMILIA
I didn't go for the arteries.
Cheated a bit really...

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Do I take it from this that you
want to continue with the sessions?

EMILIA
Is there a problem? She's still
paying right?

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Yes.

EMILIA
It doesn't really matter. This'll
probably be the last one anyway.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Why will it be the last one?

Emilia looks hard at Badenoch.

*

EMILIA
I don't know. It feels like
everything's nearly done. Like it's
all been moving toward this one
particular point in time. Do you
know what I mean? Of course you
don't. Let's hear it...

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
What do you think you mean?

Emilia studies the Psychiatrist.

(CONTINUED)

EMILIA
I've been remembering stories.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
What kind of stories?

EMILIA
Bedtime stories. My father used to tell me them when I was little. For some reason I've been thinking about them rather a lot recently. Fairytale. But bad ones...awful ones..

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Tell me one.

EMILIA
One I remember...starts with the usual kind of stuff. Some good looking stranger, a storyteller, minstrel type guy I think, turns up in the kingdom and the princess falls in love with him. It doesn't matter. All I remember is that the princess ends up alone and unloved. The guy leaves her, broken, damaged. Alone, basically.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Maybe you've remembered it wrong?

EMILIA
Why would I do that?

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
You tell me.

EMILIA
You know that's an annoying habit of yours?

Emilia drags hard on her cigarette.

EMILIA (cont'd)
I think maybe it was my father's way of warning me about how bad the world was. How cruel.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Why would he do that?

EMILIA
Because it *is* cruel. Cruel and so very, very sad. Sometimes I wonder if my life would have been a little different if the stories he told me had a happy ending. Maybe I'd know how to love. I feel like I've been cursed.

There is a beat.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S)
What do you remember from your
childhood Emilia..from Paris..

Badenoch's voice has changed a little. He sounds cautious.

EMILIA
All a bit of a blur really...I drew
a lot..I daydreamed. After daddy
left we kept starting again. New
places, new friends..new
everything. It didn't matter where
we went though. It still felt like
home was with him..somewhere very
far away. Unreachable.

Emilia leans forward in the chair. Her eyes wet.

EMILIA (cont'd)
Perhaps you can answer this Doc.
Why does my mother hate me so much?
I know that I'm probably to blame
somehow..I just can't remember what
I did..I can remember things...

DR. BADENOCH
What sort of things?

EMILIA
Things that couldn't have
possibly..

Emilia glares at Badenoch.

DR. BADENOCH
Go on.

EMILIA
Sounds like you already seem to
know all the facts.

DR. BADENOCH
It sounds to me like you do too.

Emilia wells up. She becomes agitated.

EMILIA
Maybe I need a little reminder.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Emilia, your mother is also
officially a patient of mine.
Therefore doctor patient
confidentiality precludes..

EMILIA
I think I should go...

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
You said before that you felt
cursed.

EMILIA
That's right.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Well, how do you think you could
lift this 'curse'?

Emilia sits back in her chair.

EMILIA
Traditionally it's a kiss. Isn't
that right?

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Yes...evil in fairytales is usually
vanquished by love, kindness...
goodness. It reflects in life to an
extent. An act of tenderness..
forgiveness maybe.

Emilia studies Badenoch for a beat. She smiles.

EMILIA
Did you just change the subject on
me, Doc?

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
No..we were talking about the
benefits of having an honest
exchange with your mother. That's
all.

EMILIA
Well, maybe I'll do just that.

DR. BADENOCH (O.S.)
Our time is up.

EMILIA
So it is.

CUT TO:

EXT. NAOMI'S HOUSE - DAY

Milo approaches his mother's house, NAOMI (50's) is half way
out of the front door holding a boisterous dog on a lead.

MILO
Hi mum.

NAOMI
Sweetheart..perfect timing.

They hug.

EXT. LANE - DAY

Milo and Naomi make their way down the lane, the dog running on ahead.

NAOMI
You could have come sooner, you know.

MILO
I think that might have seemed too much like running away.

NAOMI
Coming home is never running away. What's happening with the flat?

MILO
I'll probably hold on to it for a while longer. I stayed with Dan and Laura for a couple of nights.

NAOMI
Ah, how is young Dan?

MILO
A little sheepish at his abject failure as best man. Otherwise okay.

Naomi laughs.

NAOMI
Bless. It wasn't his fault. I think you've had a lucky escape.

Naomi smiles warmly at her son.

CUT TO:

INT. NAOMI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Milo is sitting in the conservatory as Naomi comes in with some wine. She sets it on the table.

MILO
Something kind of funny has happened though.

NAOMI
Oh?

MILO
Yeah, it's kind of weird. I bumped into an old flame..

NAOMI
Oh really, who?

(CONTINUED)

MILO
You remember Sally? Used to come
over sometimes after school. Stayed
over a few times.. Sally..
Remember?

Naomi puts her book down and takes her glasses off. A small
laugh escapes her as she stares at her son.

NAOMI
Sally.

MILO
Yeah. Sally.

NAOMI
Milo..

MILO
I saw her this afternoon, round the
corner at Montpelier. Weird huh?
She's teaching there now. We talked
and we're hooking up..

NAOMI
Milo!

MILO
What?

Naomi stands and approaches her son and smiles at him.

NAOMI
Karen must have hurt you so much.

MILO
What's this got to do with Karen?

Naomi stands and moves to the conservatory window.

NAOMI
How did it feel seeing Sally again?

MILO
Well..good actually. Nice. Kind of
put everything into perspective.

Naomi turns and looks at her son. She gets up and grabs a
photo album from the bookshelf.

MILO (cont'd)
What are you doing?

NAOMI
I want to show you something.

Naomi sits down next to Milo on the sofa.

Naomi flips slowly through the book. Family snaps show Milo running around the garden, Milo sitting at a mini picnic table, Milo laughing.

 NAOMI (cont'd)
There.

 MILO
What?

 NAOMI
Sally.

 MILO
Where?

Milo studies the photographs. He looks at his mother quizzically.

 NAOMI
Oh Milo..

 MILO
What?... I don't see her.

 NAOMI
When you were six, she was in every
photograph.

Milo looks at his mother for a beat.

 MILO
What? What do you mean?

Naomi stands and goes to the window. She opens the curtains and looks out on the garden.

 NAOMI
The garden always had so much life.
You didn't have many friends when
we moved here. Sally turned up and
kept you happy. After a while I
even went to the school and spoke
to your teacher. She said it was
perfectly normal for a child of
your age to have a friend like
Sally.

Realisation dawns on Milo.

 MILO
Whoa, hang on, *Sally wasn't..*

 NAOMI
She appeared in our lives right
after your father died and
disappeared just when you started
to forget him.

MILO

No...no way..

NAOMI

You played hide and seek with her back then. Seems like you're doing it again.

MILO

So..what are telling me..that I'm.. *hallucinating*?

NAOMI

Not necessarily. She's come back in your time of need. I think it's quite sweet..

Milo stands suddenly, jarring Naomi.

MILO

No,no,no...I'm not going to get involved in your spooky bullshit..you *always* throw this stuff at me.... all I ever get from you is a load of sodding half-arsed astrology and whenever anything bad happened a 'well it's meant to be'..well I can tell you I saw this girl and if she's not Sally then she's pretending to be Sally to....*screw with my head or something*....

Milo holds his hands to his head. It's all too much. He sits back down. Naomi sits down next to him.

MILO (cont'd)

Jesus..what's wrong with me..

NAOMI

There's nothing wrong with you. I think you just don't realise how unhappy you've been.

Naomi puts an arm around her son.

NAOMI (cont'd)

Whatever it was that Sally wants to say to you, you should listen. She loves you very much I think. Probably as much as your father does.

Milo doesn't know what to say.

MILO

..do you know what you're saying? Do you know what you're actually saying?

NAOMI

Milo..

MILO

No...Jesus...this isn't happening.
You're making this up..she was
real...she was real..

Milo stumbles around the living room. Tears well in his eyes.

MILO (cont'd)

What's *happening*?

Naomi gets up and hugs her son who breaks down in her arms and cries now for the first time. All of his emotions spilling into his Mother's embrace.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY HOMELESS REFUGE - MAIN HALL - DAY

Esser walks into the crowded hall. We recognise this space - in Meanwhile City it is the Faith Registration Centre. Esser makes his way through to the kitchen at the far end. A young man with his back to Esser is splashing through some major washing up.

ESSER

Bill Wasnik?

Bill Wasnik in Preest's world is Wormsnakes. Wasnik has an impressive black eye and a plaster over his broken nose.

WASNIK

Yeah?

INT. CITY HOMELESS REFUGE - MAIN HALL - LATER

Wasnik and Esser sit at one of the long tables in the refuge.

WASNIK

I didn't know he was out. Last time I saw him was four years ago when the law came here looking for 'im.

ESSER

You were a friend of David's?

WASNIK

Not close. Army days. We was in Riyadh, then met up again back here. Mostly at the centre. But I don't think Dave would exactly count me as a mate.. I'm not proud of it Mr. Esser but I led the filth straight to him. We was in the pub, he was freaking out, bangin' on about his dead sister..

(CONTINUED)

Wasnik realises his faux pas.

ESSER

It's all right..he told you about Sarah? What did he say?

WASNIK

I knew his sister was dead. But he kept asking *me* how she died, I didn't know...

ESSER

It was a car accident. Outside our home..I went inside for just a moment, while she was playing. It was just a moment.

WASNIK

Yeah, well, he got quite irate about it he did, luckily the old bill steamed in and nicked him. They told me it was for Dave's own good, that he was a danger to the public and needed help. Well, they was right..

Wasnik tentatively touches the mess that is his nose.

WASNIK (cont'd)

..he tipped up here a coupla' days ago acting all weird, security ask him to leave and then the creepy sod follows me home. I walk in and there he is sitting in my kitchen like fucking Batman. He breaks my nose, talks a load of rubbish at me and chips out the window.

Esser nods. Wasnik takes a deep breath.

ESSER

What did he say?

WASNIK

Gobbledygook. I dunno, kept going on about someone "coming to town", I don't know...that I'd know who it was and..

Wasnik looks at Esser suspiciously.

WASNIK (cont'd)

..said someone would want to look him up.

Wasnik studies the old man for a beat.

WASNIK (cont'd)

He gave me an address.

Esser's face brightens.

ESSER
An address?

Wasnik thinks again, confused. He looks the old man up and down.

WASNIK
He said someone was coming looking for him. Didn't say anything about it being his old man...

ESSER
Please.

Wasnik sighs. A young female volunteer approaches the table. We recognise her as Teri from the Faith Registration in Meanwhile City.

TERI
Mind if I give you the keys, Bill?

WASNIK
Yeah, that's fine. Night Teri.

TERI
Night.

She leaves the keys on the table and exits.

WASNIK
David said he'd come back and finish me off if I said anything. So whether it's you or the police that find him first you'd better just keep him the fuck away from me.

Wasnik takes Preest's scrap of paper from his wallet.

WASNIK (cont'd)
Here.

ESSER
Who's Franklyn?

WASNIK
Look, that's the address, okay. My job's done.

Esser studies the paper, the only link with his son.

ESSER
Thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. BRYANT HOME - EVENING

A drinks party is in progress. Moving through the well dressed GUESTS in their fifties, chatting drinking and settling on Margaret who is holding court.

INT. BRYANT HOME - HALLWAY - EVENING

Emilia lets herself into the house. She walks through the hallway toward the drawing room.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - EVENING

Margaret is talking animatedly with her guests, she has obviously had a few drinks. She suddenly sees the slightly bedraggled Emilia make her way through the room.

MARGARET

...Emilia?

Margaret is a little embarrassed at her daughter's appearance.

MARGARET (cont'd)

Emilia, are you alright? You didn't mention you were dropping by.. come and say hello to..

EMILIA

No thanks. I need to speak to you. It won't take long.

There is an awkward hush in the room.

MARGARET

Darling, I'm in the middle of...what is it sweetheart?

EMILIA

I'll be in the study.

Margaret nervously looks around at her guests as Emilia leaves the room.

MARGARET

(to the guests)

I'm so sorry, she's...please excuse me...

Margaret follows her daughter.

INT. BRYANT STUDY - EVENING

Emilia stands by the desk as Margaret nervously shuts the doors behind her, she still has a large glass of wine in her hand.

(CONTINUED)

MARGARET
Darling...this is so..

EMILIA
Please mother. Sit down.

Margaret seems a little intrigued. She sits.

MARGARET
I don't understand...

EMILIA
I want to know why daddy left us.

MARGARET
What..?

EMILIA
Don't you think it's about time I
knew? I want to hear it from you.

MARGARET
Emilia, please..

One of the FEMALE GUESTS pokes her head around the study
door.

GUEST
Margaret...are you alright?

MARGARET
It's fine Penny...I'll be back
in..please..

FEMALE GUEST
Of course..sorry I'll be..

The guest steps back out.

EMILIA
So. I'm waiting.

MARGARET
..for God's sake Emilia..what's
brought all this on...I've got
people here...I..what happened?

Margaret gestures at Emilia's bandages.

EMILIA
It doesn't matter.

MARGARET
Oh my God..what do you want from me
Emilia?

EMILIA
My freedom. I want to hear you say
what I already know.

Margaret glares at her daughter. There is a beat.

MARGARET

This is so bloody typical of you..

Margaret downs the glass.

MARGARET (cont'd)

Can't you see that I've done my
very best to protect you all this
time?

EMILIA

Protect me?

MARGARET

Yes protect you..and all I've been
repaid with is your scorn, your
depression, your bloody
weirdness...

EMILIA

How have you protected *me* exactly?
All you've done is blamed me...I
need to know for what..

Margaret is rattled now, her hackles raised.

MARGARET

..and there I was thinking that
you'd really forgotten. I thought
we could move on, not let that
bastard get in the way of my life,
our lives..but oh no..

EMILIA

Carry on mother..

Margaret gestures at Emilia's bandaged wrists.

MARGARET

Oh my dear girl..is this what it's
all been about? You think it was
your fault all of this?

EMILIA

Mother tell me what..

MARGARET

Oh Emilia...we left *him*. We ran away
from him..

Margaret becomes tearful. Her hardness dissipates and Emilia
is shocked at the sudden display of genuine emotion.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY OF LONDON PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - EVENING

Esser makes his way across a large marble hallway.

INT. CITY OF LONDON PSYCHITARIC HOSPITAL - EVENING

Esser in an old wrought iron lift. The lights of the various floors bathe him in swathes of light.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL RECEPTION - EVENING

Esser sits in a waiting room. The secretary picks up a ringing phone.

SECRETARY
Mr. Esser?

ESSER
Yes?

SECRETARY
You can go in now.

ESSER
Thank you.

Esser pulls himself up, the lack of sleep has taken its toll.

CUT TO:

EXT. METHODIST CHURCH - EVENING

Bill Wasnik stubs out a cigarette and tentatively climbs the steps to the brooding structure. He slips inside.

CUT TO:

INT. BRYANT STUDY - EVENING

Margaret sits forward in her chair, her hands clasped tightly around the glass.

MARGARET
..I didn't know for sure...not
until our third year in Paris. You
were only nine, maybe ten.

Emilia listens to her mother, her face pale.

Margaret (cont'd)
It was after a party..

Margaret pauses. The noise of the drinks party is still going on.

(CONTINUED)

MARGARET (cont'd)

..like this one I suppose. He'd gone up to tell you a bedtime story. Some of our guests started to leave and I wondered where he was. I went upstairs..into your room..and I saw him. I didn't really understand what I was seeing..at first anyway. He sensed me there, turned round and jumped. A little like he'd been electrocuted. And then..well. The party was over.

EMILIA

Bedtime stories.

MARGARET

He had a business trip the next day. Usually I hated him going away. This one was a godsend. The moment he was out of the door I packed everything up and we left. Just like that. Naturally he never tried to fight the divorce. So after a while, a few changes of scene, well...I assumed that you'd forget. Obviously I was wrong..

Margaret gathers herself. Hardens.

MARGARET (cont'd)

So. It wasn't your fault. It was never your fault you see..

Margaret examines her empty wine glass.

MARGARET (cont'd)

So. Happier with the truth darling? Maybe you should have a good think about that..

EMILIA

I always knew. I've been asleep.

Emilia approaches Margaret and tentatively strokes her hair.

EMILIA (cont'd)

I have to go now..I have a project to finish.

MARGARET

Emilia..

In ECU we watch as Emilia leans in and kisses her mother on the cheek. Margaret is taken aback. Emilia stands and moves to the desk. She retrieves her video camera from behind a pile of books and packs it into her bag. Emilia has recorded the whole confession. Margaret looks dumbly at the camera and then to her daughter.

MARGARET (cont'd)
Emilia..?

EMILIA
(genuinely)
Thank you.

Emilia lets herself out, leaving her mother sitting stunned and on her own in the study.

CUT TO:

INT. ST MARY'S HOSPITAL - CANTEEN - EVENING

Pastor sits at a table with a cup of coffee. He is playing with a pile of sugar cubes, organising them into symmetrical patterns on the table. As he does so he makes notes in his book. Something attracts his attention. Pastor looks up and smiles warmly. As we pull back we see that he has been joined by Sally at the table. She smiles back.

CUT TO:

INT. TARRANT'S OFFICE - LONDON - EVENING

Esser walks in to the large room. We find Tarrant sitting behind the desk, in this world a Psychiatrist in his office. Grant is also present and stands by the window. Tarrant stands and shakes Esser's hand.

TARRANT
Hello Peter.

ESSER
Mr. Tarrant.

Esser glances nervously at Grant.

TARRANT
This is Frank Grant, David's Military Welfare officer. I hope you don't mind if he joins us.

GRANT
Mr. Esser.

TARRANT
Please, have a seat.

Esser sits while Tarrant flips through his files.

TARRANT (cont'd)
Peter, why have you come here? On the whole we feel it might have been wiser if you'd stayed at home.

(CONTINUED)

ESSER
When you find him..what will
happen?

TARRANT
Obviously he'll be returned to the
institution immediately.

Tarrant takes out large file from his desk drawer.

ESSER
But he was so much better, the
letter you sent..

Tarrant looks at Grant.

TARRANT
David's home visit is a little
redundant now. As I told you on the
phone, David took advantage of his
evaluation hearing and used it to
escape. He was being fitted with a
tag when he went out of control.

Tarrant pauses. There is an uncomfortable beat.

ESSER
What? What is it?

GRANT
Mr. Esser, your son assaulted two
hospital orderlies, one of whom
died from his injuries two days
ago. We also think he was
responsible for a robbery in
Charing Cross leading us to believe
that he is now armed.

Esser is stunned into silence.

TARRANT
Are you ready to listen to us now
Peter?

INT. MEANWHILE CITY MINISTRY CATHEDRAL - EVENING

The Ministry Cathedral is like nothing we have ever seen -
it's like Westminster Abbey seen through the eyes of an ant.
The interior is enormous - ceilings that make your head swim,
a scale that simply defies belief. Wormsnakes slips from
shadow to shadow, avoiding the groups of WORSHIPPERS camped
in huddles around candle strewn sanctuaries.

TARRANT (V.O)
David left home and was missing
presumed homeless for three years
until he was apprehended and
sectioned under the mental health
act four years ago.

Wormsnakes moves into an emptier side chapel.

TARRANT (V.O.)(cont'd)
 ..his post traumatic stress
 disorder is still manifest. He is
 living through a prolonged
 schizophrenic episode, still
 existing in his own fantasy..

Wormsnakes turns to find Preest emerging from the shadows.
 Wormsnakes takes out a cigarette. Preest wags a finger at him
 and points heavenward. Wormsnakes puts the cigarette away.

From a distance we watch the two men in conversation.
 Wormsnakes suddenly becomes agitated, shaking his head and
 clasping his hands together in a pleading gesture. The little
 man kneels in front of Preest, sobbing.

TARRANT (V.O.)(cont'd)
 David's delusions have a constant
 theme, something that we both hoped
 you might be able to explain...

The tableau now has an air of 'communion' about it, Preest
 standing over the repentant Wormsnakes. Preest grabs Wasnik's
 head in both hands. For a moment we think that Preest is
 going to crush him but the gesture becomes delicate and with
 a turn Preest disappears gracefully into the shadows.
 Wormsnakes slumps to the floor in relief.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEANWHILE CITY - CATHEDRAL - EVENING

Preest descends the front steps of the cathedral pulling his
 coat around himself. He disappears into the night.

INT. TARRANT'S OFFICE - EVENING

Tarrant closes the file.

ESSER
 Why is it surprising to you that
 David has a vested religious
 interest? He was brought up
 surrounded by the Church..I think
 he found his faith to be a great
 comfort during his service in the
 Gulf..

TARRANT
 Maybe his view wasn't quite as rose-
 tinted as yours Peter. When one is
 constantly exposed to atrocity..I
 would imagine it could be a little
 difficult to maintain one's faith..

Esser looks a little affronted.

(CONTINUED)

ESSER

We've been heavily tested as a family Mr. Tarrant, but I have trust in God. If I talk to him, talk some sense into him..will you at least reconsider?

Tarrant and Grant glance at each other. Esser realises he has said too much.

TARRANT

Peter, if you have any idea where David is..you have to tell us..the police are involved now.

ESSER

I..I don't know where he is.

Esser is a bad liar.

TARRANT

The key theme in David's dementia seems to be religious in nature.

ESSER

He's a good Christian..we are a devout family.

GRANT

On the contrary Mr. Esser I would describe David's attitude to the Church as one of extreme rage and indignation. Let's talk about Sarah.

ESSER

I think I've heard enough.

Esser stands.

GRANT

Your daughter was eleven when she was killed playing in the street outside your house. Hardly two weeks before David came back from the Gulf..

Esser turns and faces Grant, his face crimson.

ESSER

What's Sarah got to do with it? Why are you talking about this..

GRANT

We think it's key to David's condition. The loss of his little sister obviously touched him very deeply - quite possibly the last straw for a man on the edge.

(MORE)

GRANT (cont'd)

It was clear from his evaluation the other morning that he holds an individual responsible for Sarah's death. You wouldn't happen to know who that might be? You? God maybe?

ESSER

It was God's will that Sarah was taken from us..

Tarrant sighs.

TARRANT

We spoke to Anne earlier today Peter. She seemed to think that you were fairly convinced of..God's hand in finding David..

GRANT

..your ex-wife seems to think that you're just as religiously deranged as your lad..

TARRANT

Frank..

Esser gapes at Grant.

ESSER

How dare you. My wife she..what are you saying? Why would she say that?

TARRANT

We're just trying to assemble the facts..

ESSER

..I came here to help..to help bring my boy home..

TARRANT

Peter, if he does, however wrongly, hold you responsible for Sarah's death, there's no telling what he might do if you approached him..

ESSER

I'm all he's got left..why would he blame me?

TARRANT

Maybe just that. You're all he has left.

GRANT

Mr. Esser, your son has killed a man. He is psychotic, dangerous, military trained and walking the streets of London. Now if you know *anything* at all I suggest you tell us right now.

(MORE)

GRANT (cont'd)
Otherwise so help me we'll have you
arrested for obstructing the course
of justice..

TARRANT
Frank. Please..

Grant steps back.

TARRANT (cont'd)
Peter you must see that we are only
trying to help David.

There is a beat.

ESSER
I'm going back to Cambridge. You
were right. I should wait for him
there.

TARRANT
Peter..

Esser shakily puts on his coat and scarf. He can't wait to
get out of the room.

ESSER
Thank you. Thank you, good evening.

Grant steps forward but Tarrant waves him back.

Esser leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. PARALLEL DESIGN - NIGHT

Milo at his drawing board, the only one left in the office.
Over the hard lines of his graphic design, Milo sketches a
line drawing of Sally. Milo looks at his watch, throws his
pencil down and grabs his coat.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT - MEANWHILE CITY - NIGHT

Preest cocks the rifle. It clicks pleasingly and hums to
life. Preest expertly shoulders it and peers down the barrel.
The laser sight dances around the room like a firefly. He
settles the laser sighting squarely on the door to the room.
He waits.

INT. TUBE TRAIN - NIGHT

Emilia gazes out of the window. The mirror image of her face
reflects back at us as dark shapes pass beyond in a blur. The
fluorescent tubes crackle and flicker casting dark shadows
across her face, she is numb with shock.

EXT. LONDON STREET - NIGHT

Esser makes his way down the busy street. We watch him pass the Washing Machine Street Preacher - in this world a man holding up a large fluorescent cardboard sign advertising a sale on electrical goods.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Emilia stands dumbly in the middle of her living room. She is holding a brand new DV cassette in her hand.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT - MEANWHILE CITY - NIGHT

Preest moves to the window. He peers out of the broken slats of the blind.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Emilia is storming around her apartment with a purpose. She centres the video camera in the room and adjusts the zoom. She approaches her gas fire and feels along the pipe that connects it for the valve. She twists the valve open, the gas hisses quietly into the room. Emilia sits back on her sofa.

EXT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Esser arrives at Emilia's door. Pulling out Wasnik's scrap of paper he studies the address. He looks up at the building, the windows illuminated, rain falling into his eyes.

He studies the bell plate.

We recognise it immediately. One of the bell stickers reads 'FRANKLYN' in messy, water damaged biro. Esser rings the bell marked 'Franklyn'.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT - MEANWHILE CITY - SAME TIME

Preest reacts to the sound of a buzzer sounding from somewhere below. He stands and shoulders the gun...listening.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Emilia starts at the buzzer. She ignores it for a beat. It buzzes again. Tentatively Emilia walks over to the intercom.

EMILIA

Hello?

There is no answer, just static.

EMILIA (cont'd)

Hello?...Hello?

(CONTINUED)

EXT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - SAME TIME

Esser is shouting into the intercom.

ESSER
Hello...is David there?

INT. EMILIA'S HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Emilia strains to hear the crackly voice.

EMILIA
No..who is this?

EXT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - SAME TIME

ESSER
Listen, if he's there..

Esser gives the intercom a frustrated punch.

INT. EMILIA'S HALLWAY - SAME TIME

EMILIA
There's no-one called David here..

EXT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - SAME TIME

ESSER
David if that's you..I'll be in the
restaurant across the street..
(Esser examines his watch)
Okay?

INT. EMILIA'S HALLWAY - SAME TIME

EMILIA
Hello? David doesn't..

ESSER
(Intercom)
David please. We need to talk, I've
got to see you. I don't care what
you've done. I'll be waiting across
the street, do you hear me? I'll be
in the restaurant..

EMILIA
For God's sake. Hello? Who?

Emilia hangs up the entry-phone, moves across to the living room window and shoves it open. She looks down into the street but can only see the shapes of umbrellas shuffling past against the wet pavement. There is nobody by the front door. Emilia moves back inside as we hold on the restaurant opposite as a cab pulls up outside.

EXT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Milo pays the cabby. He turns and looks at the restaurant. Milo has kept his date but it is clear that even he doesn't seem to know why.

INT. EMILIA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Emilia looks around at her living room. From outside there is a peal of thunder. She takes a swig of wine.

Emilia looks at her shelves of 'goodbye' video tapes then at the gas fire and the leaking pipe.

Emilia suddenly turns angry. She bolts from the sofa, turns the gas off and begins violently pulling her videotapes off the shelves - they crash around her in a messy pile. On top of the pile is her tape to Gavin Clunes. Emilia spots it.

Emilia runs out of steam, throws herself down on the sofa and begins to cry.

She stands up and approaches the video camera and switches it off.

EMILIA (CONT'D)
I don't need this.

INT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Milo is seated by the window. The rain pours steadily outside. A waiter puts down a carafe of wine and pours it. Milo doesn't even seem to notice. Behind him Esser walks in. He sits down at the table behind Milo.

INT. HALLWAY - MEANWHILE CITY - NIGHT

Preest tentatively makes his way down the stairwell. He approaches the landing below and approaches the door. He listens at the door.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

There is a knock at the door. Emilia looks suddenly embarrassed.

EMILIA
Shit..

She waits for a beat, then hears the knock again.

INT. EMILIA'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

EMILIA
Yes?

PREEST
(From behind the door)
Hi? I'm sorry to bother you,
I've..just moved in upstairs..

Emilia pauses and steals a look at the messy living room.

EMILIA
..hang on.

Emilia opens the door.

This is David Esser and it is the first time we have seen him as he really is - a skinnier version of his John Preest alter ego, paler, sickly but still the same person under the shabbiness, his long black coat covering a threadbare suit. He beams a friendly smile at her from the landing.

DAVID
..John Preest.
(He shakes Emilia by the
hand furiously)

Emilia is taken aback.

EMILIA
Upstairs?

DAVID
Hm?

EMILIA
You..you've moved in upstairs?

Emilia looks doubtful. David changes the subject.

DAVID
I'm sorry to introduce myself like
this, but it's as good a time as
any..

Emilia steps in front of him, blocking his view of her apartment.

EMILIA
Thanks but..listen I was just in
the middle of some work and I..

DAVID
You see my buzzer doesn't seem to
be working.

Emilia annoyed at his persistence.

DAVID (cont'd)
And I'm expecting someone. I heard
your buzzer go and..

EMILIA
Yeah, the intercom's wired up all
wrong in this building.

Emilia steals a look back into the apartment.

EMILIA (cont'd)
(reluctantly)
Someone did ring a minute ago.

DAVID
Ah...

EMILIA
..someone asking for David?

David's brow furrows. He looks a little confused.

EMILIA (cont'd)
Said they'd be across the street.
At the restaurant.

DAVID
At the restaurant.

EMILIA
Yeah.

DAVID
You're sure?

EMILIA
Yeah, at the restaurant. Now, if
you'll excuse me I..

DAVID
Thank you. Yes, thanks. Sorry to
bother you again.

EMILIA
It's okay. Good-night.

Emilia shuts the door on him.

INT. HALLWAY - MEANWHILE CITY - NIGHT

As soon as the door slams we cut to Preest in the hallway. He is masked once more and Emilia's hallway is now in the realm of Meanwhile City. Preest pauses on the landing for a moment. He consults his watch.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - LONDON - NIGHT

Emilia moves over to the window overlooking the restaurant. She shuts the window.

There is another knock at the door.

EMILIA

Jesus..

She strides up to the door.

DAVID

It's me, you're not going to believe this..

Emilia opens up and is thrown violently against the wall as David forces the door open with all his might. Emilia connects with the door hard and is knocked out. As she drops we see the dishevelled figure of David Esser move toward the window carrying his gun, *in this world a shabby old hunting rifle.*

BLACKOUT

CUT TO:

INT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Milo is toying with his glass.

MILO

(to himself)

...be careful what you wish for.

Esser has heard him and looks up over his glasses. Esser glances at Milo.

MILO (cont'd)

Just thinking out loud.

Esser turns back to his coffee.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gradually coming to, Emilia looks up in confusion at the living room. David is by the window loading his rifle.

He turns and looks at Emilia.

EMILIA

What..what are you doing...

David looks round at her. He points at the window.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
Sorry. You have a better view.

Emilia gathers her bearings. The same question is the only thing that comes to her.

EMILIA
What are you doing?

David walks over to Emilia and bends down in front of her.

DAVID
Please don't make a sound. It's better if you don't.

EMILIA
I think you've broken my nose.

DAVID
(Looking back towards the window)
Quiet. This will be over soon.

Emilia begins to sob. David grabs her and holds her steady.

DAVID (cont'd)
Don't be afraid. I have a simple job to do. It'll be over soon and then I'll let you go.

Emilia stares at him dumbly. David returns to the window, studying the restaurant across the street.

EMILIA
Who is it?

DAVID
What?

EMILIA
(nodding at window)
Who are you going to kill?

DAVID
Someone deserving.

EMILIA
Are you with the police?

DAVID
No.

EMILIA
Oh.

David regards Emilia for a beat.

DAVID
What's your faith?

EMILIA
What?

DAVID
Your religion.

EMILIA
I'm not religious.

David finds this interesting.

DAVID
How long have you been in Meanwhile
City?

EMILIA
Meanwhile..what?

David stares at Emilia for a beat then returns his attention
to the window.

INT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Milo sits sadly with his wine. He is distracted suddenly by a
familiar reflection in the window. Milo looks up and finds
Sally sitting quietly in front of him.

SALLY
Hello.

Milo sits back in his chair.

MILO
Well. Hello back.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - MEANWHILE CITY - NIGHT

Emilia's apartment through Preest's eyes. Bigger than before,
baroquely decorated and covered in bizarre steam-driven audio
visual equipment.

Meanwhile City architecture is apparent outside her windows.

Preest stares out of the window motionless.

EMILIA
My name's Emilia.

Preest turns and regards Emilia.

PREEST
Stay quiet.

EMILIA
I don't have any brothers or
sisters..

PREEST

What?

EMILIA

I don't have any friends...I'm alone..I just want to tell you about myself..

PREEST

Why?

EMILIA

Apparently if you know more about me you'll see me more as a human being and it'll make it harder for you to kill me..I saw it in a movie once.

PREEST

Oh.

Preest turns his attention back to the window. The restaurant downstairs looks different now, a Meanwhile City diner. The exterior is intricately decorated with functional piping while a green neon sign flickers over the shabby awning. We also see Preest's view of Peter Esser - now a dark and shadowy figure in black drinking his coffee, his face deeply lined, his eyes sunken, a picture of cold evil.

The Individual.

INT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Milo and Sally sit quietly at the table.

MILO

Guess I feel a little stupid now.

SALLY

Why?

Milo looks cautiously around the restaurant.

MILO

Why do you think?

SALLY

(brightly)

There's nothing to feel stupid about. You always knew really. How's the wine?

MILO

You want to make small talk now? If I'm going to have an imaginary conversation I'd like to think it might be a little more fucking interesting than this..

(CONTINUED)

Sally looks hurt at Milo's sarcasm.

MILO (cont'd)
I'm sorry.

SALLY
S'okay.

MILO
So my mother was right.

SALLY
Kind of..

Sally raises her finger and feigns an instructional tone.

SALLY (cont'd)
Believe in something strongly
enough..even if it's just in the
perception of one man...who's to
say what's real?

MILO
Amen.

SALLY
Thought you were an atheist?

MILO
Very funny.

Sally giggles.

MILO (cont'd)
So what happens now?

SALLY
Time to tie up loose ends I guess.

MILO
Loose ends?

SALLY
Sure.

MILO
Like what?

SALLY
(smugly)
Like it was me who told you that
story. The one about the
storyteller and the princess
remember? That's been bugging you
right?

Milo gapes at Sally.

MILO
Yes. Yes it has. But if it was you
that told me, then that means it
must have..

SALLY
Come from you. Sure.

MILO
If that's the case, why don't I
know what it means?

Sally smiles warmly at Milo.

SALLY
You know.

MILO
(Milo looks nervously
around the restaurant)
This is ridiculous.

Milo holds his head in his hands.

Esser has noticed Milo talking to himself and glances at him
casually from the other side of the room. Sally spots this.

SALLY
(whispering)
Go on. *Try*.

Milo fixes Sally with a hard stare. He takes a deep breath.

MILO
The storyteller was so used to his
fantasies, that no matter how good
his reality was, it was never
enough. Would *never* be enough.

SALLY
You see? First step to recovery is
understanding the problem..

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - LONDON - NIGHT

We see David's view through the cross-hairs, sweeping across
the diners in the restaurant below. David focuses the sight
in and out until the cross-hairs are perfectly sharp.

EMILIA
Meanwhile City?

DAVID
Yes.

EMILIA
Meanwhile City..where..is that
here?

DAVID

Shh.

EMILIA

Mr...Preest? This is
London...you're not in..

David is ignoring her. Realisation dawns on Emilia.

EMILIA (cont'd)

Where is it you think you are?

David spins around and aims his rifle squarely at Emilia.

DAVID

Will you shut up! Stay back
there..stay back..

Emilia pushes herself back against the wall in obedience.

EMILIA

I'm sorry...okay..

INT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - ESSER'S TABLE - NIGHT

Esser has finished his coffee now. He looks up at the dimmed windows across the street. He glances over at the strange young man by the window who is still talking to himself.

MILO

What's happening here..?

SALLY

I have to go now.

MILO

Why?

SALLY

Can't you feel it? It's nearly
time.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - MEANWHILE CITY - NIGHT

Preest is sizing up The Individual in his sights. Emilia slowly shuffles her way toward the hallway..

Preest sits and settles into the butt of the rifle. The infra red hums to life.

RIFLE SIGHT POV: The digital cross-hairs settle gently over The Individual's face.

Preest's finger slowly starts to squeeze the trigger.

RIFLE SIGHT POV: A waiter suddenly walks in front of The Individual obscuring him from the sight.

(CONTINUED)

Preest releases the pressure from the trigger.

Behind him Emilia slowly and quietly rises to her feet and takes hold of a chair.

The waiter leaves The Individual's table.

RIFLE SIGHT POV: The cross-hairs centre once again over The Individual's forehead.

Preest is about to pull the trigger when he senses movement behind him. Preest turns around to find Emilia swinging the chair in a vicious arc that connects harshly with his head.

Preest goes down, clutching his bleeding head and crawling across the floor in pain.

PREEST

Fuck...

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - LONDON - NIGHT

Emilia runs to the front door and pulls the handle. The door doesn't budge. David gets to his feet.

DAVID

Stop..

Emilia runs off into the bedroom. She pulls back the sliding french windows and stumbles out onto the rain soaked roof terrace.

EXT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - ROOF TERRACE - LONDON - NIGHT

Pigeons fly everywhere as Emilia staggers across the gravel, screaming at the top of her voice.

EMILIA

Help! Somebody help me, help..

David has followed her out onto the terrace and grabs her roughly by the waist. He clamps a hand over her mouth and drags her back into the apartment.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - LONDON - NIGHT

David pulls the struggling Emilia down the corridor and back into the living room. Emilia bites him hard on the hand and David retaliates with a huge slap that knocks her clean into the closed kitchen door.

INT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Milo is holding Sally's hand across the table.

SALLY
Life's too much of an adventure as
it is without making anything else
up. I just wanted to let you know
that. Before I go.

MILO
Please, please don't..

SALLY
You're such a romantic, Milo. Use
it for somebody else.

Sally stands and strokes Milo's hair. Milo looks up at her,
lost.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - LONDON - NIGHT

David staggers back to the window, in great pain he raises
the rifle and steadies it on Esser.

Emilia is slumped on the floor. She rubs her bleeding head.
She glances over at the fireplace.

The gas, and a chance.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - MEANWHILE CITY - NIGHT

Emilia reaches into her pocket.

RIFLE SIGHT POV: The view through the telescopic sights - The
Individual stirs a fresh cup of coffee.

Preest leans back and has to wipe the blood from his eyes.

RIFLE SIGHT POV: Preest's cross-hairs line up on his target
and a digital beep informs him his target is locked..

Preest takes a deep breath. He holds it and goes to squeeze
the trigger.

INT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The waiters move toward Milo, they look confused. Esser does
too.

MILO
Sally..we can..

SALLY
No we can't. Things are so very
thin now..almost transparent..

MILO
What? Listen..
(shaking his head)
I don't care, I don't care..

SALLY
 .it's for the best...

Milo suddenly grabs her, pulling her to him. He holds her face and tenderly kisses her on the mouth. Tears well up in Sally's eyes. She gives in to his passion and after a beat Milo lets her go. Sally steps back with a look of intense fear.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - LONDON - NIGHT

RIFLE SIGHT POV: The cross-hairs over Esser are suddenly filled with a shape rising into the viewfinder. David has already sent the impulses from his brain into his trigger finger and the rifle is fired.

INT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The window of the restaurant is penetrated by the bullet. A second later the whole pane shatters. Milo watches agape as the bullet passes through Sally. She immediately begins to fade in front of him, her whole body becoming transparent. She looks at Milo longingly as she disappears. He reaches out to her, his hands snatching thin air. Milo steps back in shock. Milo's shoulder is pierced by the slug. Milo rocks back on his heels and absently touches the wound, thick blood spills onto his hands. Milo looks down at himself in disbelief and then falls in a crumpled heap onto the table, scattering cutlery and food. The waiters crowd around him, Esser standing with the other diners in shock. Esser approaches the window of the restaurant and looks up at the dark apartment across the street.

ESSER
 David...

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - LONDON - NIGHT

David wipes blood out of his eyes and looks down at the pandemonium in the restaurant below. He raises his rifle again and aims back at Esser who is now looking up at David as if able to sense his son's view of him.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - LONDON - NIGHT

Emilia has crawled her way back to the fireplace, the valve is now open once more leaking gas into the room. She holds up the lighter.

EMILIA
 Mr. Preest?

David is staring down at the street..

EMILIA (cont'd)
 MR. PREEST..

David turns around and looks at the dishevelled figure of Emilia as she rips the gas pipe off the wall with all her might. Emilia coughs at the immediate rush of gas.

DAVID
What are you doing?

David starts coughing.

EMILIA
Get out of my flat you fucking
freak..

David moves toward her.

EMILIA (cont'd)
I'll do it, I swear to god I'll do
it...

David stops dead.

EMILIA (cont'd)
..look..see? See!

Emilia laughs a little hysterically at the irony of her situation. Absently she points the remote at the Video camera in the corner. The red light begins to pulse.

David looks back to the window. Sirens can be heard approaching in the distance. David looks down at the street. Esser is looking up at the apartment.

David looks down at Esser, seeing him for who he really is. He finally sees his Father.

EXT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Esser sees the recognition in his Son's eyes, tears well up and he raises his hand in return.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

David looks dumbly back at Emilia.

EMILIA
Drop it..drop the gun..

Suddenly he leaps across the room, grabbing her and forces the lighter out of her hand.

VIDEO: We watch David sit down calmly in front of her. Emilia pushes herself back against the wall.

DAVID
What was your name?

EMILIA
Emilia...

DAVID

...David.

Emilia gazes dumbly at David.

DAVID (cont'd)

In this world my name is David.

Emilia looks at him in confusion.

DAVID (CONT'D) (cont'd)

I think it's time you left.

David walks over to the camera and switches it off.

VIDEO: The video image of the room fizzles out to static.

David takes Emilia's keys out of his pocket and tosses them to her. Emilia doesn't need telling twice. She struggles to her feet, grabs the keys and makes for the door. She pauses and looks back at David.

David takes the Zippo and studies it for a beat.

As we pull back we see the living room undergo a final transformation as David morphs into Preest in all his Meanwhile City finery: mask on, suit immaculate. By Emilia's expression we realise that she sees this, or senses it. We see the shock in her eyes as she takes in her first glimpse of Meanwhile City.

Preest turns and looks at her with his blank stare. Emilia pulls herself out of her shock and bolts for the door. She struggles with the keys but manages to pull the door open.

INT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Esser picks his way through the glass and steps out of the smashed window frame into the street.

INT. EMILIA'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emilia staggers down the stairwell.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - MEANWHILE CITY - NIGHT

Preest holds up the Zippo.

ECU: The flint strikes and ignites.

EXT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The apartment explodes, the windows forced out of their frames by a rolling ball of explosion that illuminates the rain soaked night.

INT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The waiters and customers are thrown back in a tumble of bodies as Emilia's apartment rains down flame and debris. The remaining windows of the restaurant shatter with the force.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Emilia is thrown down the stairwell with the force of the blast.

INT. ST MARY'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Pastor Bone slowly mops the floor in a dimly lit hospital corridor. He stops cold. His head turns as if listening to something, sensing something happening..

EXT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Esser rubs his eyes from soot and dust.

ESSER
Oh God no..David..

Esser hangs his head. He looks up at the burning building unable to believe his eyes.

He looks back at the restaurant and remembers Milo. He struggles back past the diners who are slowly making their way out of the restaurant. Esser finds Milo.

ESSER (cont'd)
You okay..?

Milo groans, he's clutching his shoulder.

MILO
What the..yeah..I think..what the hell happened..

Esser looks up at the burning flat.

MILO (cont'd)
Unh...could you help me up..

ESSER
You sure?

MILO
Yeah..

Esser lifts Milo to his feet.

EXT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Esser helps Milo out onto the street. Milo gulps in the fresh air.

ESSER
I'm going to get some help..

MILO
Okay..thanks..

Milo stands, swaying slightly as Esser picks his way through the glass toward the end of the street.

Emilia staggers through the debris. She stares up in horror at the flames and smoke belching out of the windows of her ruined apartment. She looks across the street and spots a young man standing amongst the shattered glass. It's Milo.

A figure behind Milo catches her eye. She is blonde and bright, standing out amongst the smoke-heavy night air. The girl is smiling at her, a radiant beaming smile that cuts through the chaos:

Emilia finds herself looking at a bright reflection of herself in the last shards of glass left in the restaurant's window frame. An embodiment of the clarity of reflection described to her by Pastor Bone.

Emilia's reflection subtly shifts back into her own dark features. She blinks, and then for a beat she studies her reflection, standing next to and complementing this tall, wounded young man.

Milo blinks, rubs his eyes and focuses on her. He sees a dark, bloody and dishevelled spitting image of Sally.

Milo shakes his head, unsure of what he has seen. He shuts his eyes and opens them again. She's still there.

The two look at each other across the devastation, the burning flames illuminating their connection.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - SAME TIME

Esser reaches the end of the street. Two ambulances and a police van have cordoned off the street. Esser approaches one of the Medics running to the scene.

ESSER
Excuse me..please..

MEDIC
Sir, you okay? You hurt?

ESSER
No..I er..

MEDIC

Well hold on, we'll get around to..

ESSER

No, you don't understand..someone's been shot..

The Medic stops dead.

MEDIC

What? Where..?

Esser looks back at the restaurant and points out Milo.

ESSER

Him, in the..shoulder I think..

Esser trails off as he looks back at Milo. Emilia is next to him. The Medic heads toward the couple.

EXT. OSTERIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Milo and Emilia stand together. Milo still can't believe it.

MILO

I'm Milo.

Emilia slowly begins to smile. This is the first time we've ever seen her smile like this and even she seems surprised at the sensation.

EMILIA

You're hurt.

Milo looks down at his bleeding shoulder.

Emilia looks around at the devastation. She turns back to Milo and takes a long, deep hard look at him.

Milo smiles back at her. Lost for words.

INT. ST MARY'S HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR

Pastor's notebook. The stubby pencil writes away across the page. The strange numbers and symbols spiralling toward an end on the page. We watch Pastor from behind, his back hunched as he works in the gloom of the corridor.

INT. EMILIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In amongst the burning wreckage we see Emilia's tapes begin to melt and burn.

INT. ST MARY'S HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

In ECU the pencil comes to an abrupt and flourished halt at the bottom of a beautifully designed cryptogram.

A NURSE makes her way down the corridor. She pauses. Something has caught her eye. She peers into the gloom. A mop and bucket lean against the wall a little way down. No sign of human life.

She walks on.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Esser looks at the photograph of David, then places it carefully back in his wallet.

He looks back at Milo and Emilia standing together amongst the debris.

His eyes well with tears. He looks up into the dark sky, his eyes searching for some kind of explanation.

From Esser's tortured expression we sense that Pastor Bone's theory of accident over divine intervention is now horribly a new possibility in Peter Esser's life.

Esser looks at the smoking ruin of Emilia's apartment.

Following his gaze - we move up, above the apartment, spiralling away into the night sky, passing the buildings, their windows reflecting the burning debris in the street below.

We watch the brickwork twist and change, the windows morph and elongate into the familiar twisted architecture of Meanwhile City. We climb higher now, sweeping upwards past the spires, statues and chimney stacks, through a lane of thundering sky traffic and up into the inky blue darkness of the night sky.

FADE TO BLACK.