

HOTEL HOTEL
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WME
GRANDVIEW

OVER BLACK

Breathing. Extremely close like we're inside an astronaut's helmet. With each breath comes the crinkle of plastic...

THUD!! As something heavy tumbles to the ground, patches of light flicker into frame. The foggy light shimmers through a glossy surface because we're trapped--

INSIDE A PLASTIC BAG

Fluorescent tubes BUZZ to life from outside, revealing A MAN'S HEAD cramped in here with us. He coughs and splutters as his eyes lazily blink open-- *Where the hell am I?*

*Why can't I see? Why can't I move--
Why can't I BREATHE?!*

Beads of condensation dot the plastic which expands and contracts with each strained breath. He's SEALED in!

PANIC-- He thrashes from side to side, trying to escape but it's no use! These will be his last breaths, unless--

Suddenly, the light from outside WHIPS ACROSS the dappled surface and SLAMS to a halt-- In his struggle, he has TIPPED and CRASHED TO THE GROUND!

His desperate *blue-ing* face GNASHES towards the plastic, now pressed against the floor. BITING and TEARING until--

PSFHFFFH-- Air flows through a freshly torn hole in the bag. Finally HE CAN BREATHE, and we leave the inside of the bag--

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PLASTIC BAGS smother a man's face, duct-taped around his neck. Bound to a TOPPLED OVER WOODEN CHAIR, he hungrily gasps through a rip in the plastic.

He jerks his head, but there's no way the bag is coming off.

MAN IN BAG

Hello?

(clears throat)

Hello?

No response. He is ALONE in a HOTEL ROOM: Generic art hangs on vaguely yellowish walls, his plastic mask shields his view from the garish carpet he's pressed against.

MAN IN BAG (cont'd)

(calling out)

Hell--

He cuts himself off: *Maybe it isn't safe to call out...*
Dressed in only an undershirt and briefs, his hands CABLE-TIED behind him, he can barely move with these restraints.

He begins to HOP HIS CHAIR AGAINST THE FLOOR, bouncing like a fish struggling back to water! Eventually he finds the edge of a BED-FRAME. Using his feet, he turns his horizontal self across the floor until--

THUNK!-- A CHAIR LEG has become stuck, WEDGED BETWEEN THE BED-LEG AND THE WALL. He draws a steely breath: A PLAN...

He plants his feet and PUSHES with all his might! Wedged in place, THE CHAIR STRAINS AND CREAKS as pressure mounts and--

CRACK!-- The wooden CHAIR LEG SNAPS AT THE JOIN!

RUB, RUB, RUB-- His wrists slide up and down, grating against the splintered wood until the CABLE-TIE SPLITS.

His hands are FREE! They TEAR THROUGH THE PLASTIC and with a ravenous breath we finally see **BEN**: Middle-aged, handsome, but weathered-- *This probably isn't the first time he's woken up with a headache in an unfamiliar place.*

He clutches his stomach and barrels for the KITCHENETTE, just in time for the sink to catch his vomit. He dabs a finger at a FOAMY RESIDUE on his lips-- *Have I been drugged?*

He turns from the small kitchenette, scared eyes flit across the space: *Shitty Hotel Room, a FROSTED WINDOW, THE DOOR!*

Ben beelines to the DOOR: It's LOCKED-- From the OUTSIDE? **BANG BANG BANG!** His fist booms against the door. He checks--

THE PEEPHOLE: A hotel corridor. Empty.

BEN
(banging on the door)
Hello?! Hello?! Uh... Help! I think
somebody's locked me in here?!

Ben turns to his WRIST and seems surprised to find it bare. He rubs where a WATCH should be: *STOLEN...*

BEN (cont'd)
Bastards...

He sighs and turns from the door, clocking a WARDROBE in the corner of the room. He hurries over and opens the doors:

A single outfit hangs inside. Ben knowingly reaches into a jacket pocket, finding a WALLET. To his surprise, his ID, Credit Cards and Cash HAVEN'T been stolen.

BEN (cont'd)
Just the watch then...

He spies something on the floor of the wardrobe: A CORDED PHONE! He dials three digits-- *Emergency*-- But it doesn't go through. He reads a note on the phone: "*Internal calls only*"

Ben guesses A number for reception: *NOTHING*. He tries again: *NOTHING*. He blasts in three numbers and IT RINGS! Ben's eyes widen as-- *CLICK!* Someone answers...

VOICE ON THE PHONE
(scratchy, thin)
Hello?

BEN
Hello?! Hi, I'm in Room--

(pauses: *Which room?*)
I'm in a room-- I don't how I got here and the door's locked from outside... Please, get help I-- I think someone's put me here.

In response, nothing but BREATHING from the other end.

BEN (cont'd)
Hello? Who is this?

The BREATHING becomes LAUGHTER: A sinister, knowing CACKLING from the other end of the phone! Ben's eyes widen: Scared--

BEN (cont'd)
You're watching me aren't you--
Did you put me here?

The CACKLING stops.

VOICE ON THE PHONE
Of course--

CLICK!-- The line goes dead. Ben slams the wardrobe and reels back to the room; suspiciously scanning every surface: *Is that a CAMERA? Could that be a MICROPHONE?*

Hyperventilating, he storms back to the DOOR and-- BANG!! He rams into it. He slams again and again, but it won't budge.

He turns to THE FROSTED WINDOW on the opposite wall-- Housed in an inlet about a foot behind thick IRON BARS. Ben grabs a GLASS TUMBLER from the kitchenette and marches towards it.

He HURLS the glass at the frosted white window and--

SMASH!-- The window immediately TURNS BLACK: He didn't smash a window, but an LCD screen designed to look like one.

Ben stares, dumbfounded-- *If that isn't a real window...
Then maybe this isn't a real hotel room...*

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SOME TIME LATER

We find Ben investigating every nook and cranny of the ROOM, now DRESSED in the clothes from the wardrobe.

He's quick to find a MINI-BAR FRIDGE in the kitchenette. He opens it and looks for something out of place, some kind of CLUE: Nothing.

Oh well-- He takes a mini LIQUOR-BOTTLE and sarcastically toasts any would-be surveillance cameras.

BEN
(dry)
Cheers.

He throws his head back, downing the liquor like it's water, when something catches his eye: The DROP PANEL CEILING...

A CROOKED PANEL-- In the center of the ceiling, suspiciously off-tilt, revealing a dark space above the room.

Ben narrows his eyes at it: *Something is stashed there...*

He drags the chair underneath the CROOKED PANEL, but with the leg broken it won't stay upright. He tries to balance the chair back on the leg, but it topples under his weight.

He swings the chair leg towards the panel: OUT OF REACH.

BEN (cont'd)
Shit...

Ben turns to the bed. He grabs the frame and pulls with all his might, but it doesn't budge: It's bolted to the floor.

He stands below the unreachable PANEL, staring...

BEN (cont'd)
(scheming)
I just need a plan...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Gulp, gulp, gulp- Another BEER downed as the CEILING PANEL remains just as *out-of-reach*. He reaches into the fridge and withdraws a BLUE-LABELLED SCOTCH, which he...

Puts back inside...

Ben is slumped against the front door. Besides the SCOTCH, the MINIBAR is EMPTIED-- Bottles strewn across the floor: *So much for his plan...*

Monotonously, he pounds his fist on the door: DRUNK, TIRED--

BEN
 (muttering)
 Remember... How did I get here?
 What's the last thing you remember?

Ben rubs his eyes as he continues to bang on the door, but each knock is growing softer, and softer.

His eyes lilt shut and he SLIPS INTO SLEEP...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

With boozy lethargy, Ben's eyes asymmetrically open and dart around the room-- *Still here.*

He raises his wrist to his eyes only to be reminded he ISN'T WEARING A WATCH-- He once again looks a little embarrassed. He slides his way up the door against which he slept.

BEN
 (to anyone watching)
 If you're hoping to get money, I'm sorry you got the wrong guy. Hell, just ask the debt collectors who probably hired you goons. Even that watch--

BEN'S POV - THE PEEPHOLE: Still just an EMPTY CORRIDOR.

BEN (cont'd)
 You think I wouldn't have already pawned it? Turns out, the only thing Dad left me was a counterfeit-- But please: Take the five bucks from selling it and tell your boss that's all they'll get from me.

He turns and stares at the wall opposite the door. He immediately sharpens: SOMETHING HAS CHANGED.

The "WINDOW" he smashed yesterday is still there, still behind bars-- But it's NO LONGER BROKEN. Once again, it's a BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT-- An LCD screen that looks like frosted glass. *This doesn't make any sense...*

Ben rushes over to the other side of the room. The CHAIR is still broken - the CROOKED CEILING PANEL is still there.

He regards the mess of EMPTY MINIBAR BOTTLES in the corner and a thought strikes him...

INSIDE THE MINIBAR-- The door swings open to reveal Ben staring inside: Confused. It's FULL. The fridge he had EMPTIED last night is once again lined with booze--

SLAM!-- He closes the fridge door. CREAK!-- A moment later, the door opens and he casually takes a beer-- *Why not?*

BEN
 (to the room)
 How'd you do that? How'd you refill
 it unless--

His eyes dart suspiciously to the DOOR.

BEN
 Someone's been in here?

He races to the door and tries again to open it: STILL LOCKED. He drags the three-legged-CHAIR and BRACES it against the door, preventing any would-be intruders.

BEN (cont'd)
 Is anyone else even here?

Once again, he presses his eye against--

THE PEEPHOLE: An EYEBALL! A gaping, bloodshot eye! Pressed against the peephole STARING RIGHT BACK AT HIM!

BEN
 (shriek)
 Jesus!

Ben jolts backwards, knocking the LIGHT-SWITCH as he careens to the floor: Bathing the room in DARKNESS. Then a sound from the door: KA-CHLICK... The LOCK IS TURNING.

THE DOOR OPENS! Only a crack, just enough for a HAND to creep inside: Crusted with dark, dried blood with SPLIT KNUCKLES. Clutched in its grip: A KNIFE!

An assailant? Ben acts on instinct, he KICKS the door which CRUSHES AGAINST THE ASSAILANT'S FOREARM! The hand still holds the knife and Ben grabs it, trying to WRENCH it free!

In the ensuing tussle, Ben manages to PULL THE KNIFE to his own hand, SLASHING THE ASSAILANT'S FOREARM AS HE GOES!

The Assailant pulls his injured arm back through the door and slams it shut: KA-CHLICK-- They lock the door.

BEN
 What the fuck?

There are drops of blood on the tip of the FILLETING KNIFE in his hand. With disgust he throws it to the ground.

Ben stares, terrified. With the lights off, the shadows of FEET cut through the band of light beneath the door. After a moment, the shadows step away. Ben springs back up--

THE PEEPHOLE: Empty corridor. They've left.

Ben leans against the wall, catching his breath. Now, with the LIGHTS OFF, *something catches his eye...*

He rushes to stand on the BED, fixating on the join where the wall meets the ceiling. Through a TINY CRACK, he sees LIGHT: THE NEXT ROOM!

His eyes widen. In an instant, he's against the wall, rapping his knuckles. KNOCK -- KNOCK -- **KNOCK!**

His eyes narrow - that last knock sounded different. He knocks again in the same place: It sounds HOLLOW!

Ben scans for a tool and settles on the snapped CHAIR LEG. He grips it like a baseball bat and-- SMACK! Drywall PLUMES as he WHACKS the wood into the wall.

Pulling the MAKESHIFT-BAT back he sees MORE LIGHT streaming in from this HOLE TO THE NEXT ROOM: *It worked!*

BEN
(hopeful)
Yes!

INT. SECOND HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Through a hole in the wall, Ben's eye comes into frame, peering into this FAMILIAR looking space. He scans the room:

A BED--
A barred, frosted 'WINDOW'--
A PERSON!

A PERSON, seated in a WOODEN CHAIR, HANDS BOUND behind their back, head WRAPPED IN PLASTIC.

BEN
(excitedly)
Oh shit!

Another CAPTIVE.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben smacks his fist against the wall triumphantly-- staring at his fellow inmate. The CAPTIVE is not moving.

BEN
(hissing)
Psst-- Hey!
Hey, you!

No response. Ben raises the chair leg and smashes the wall a couple times, widening the hole to the size of his face.

BEN

Hey! Wake up, wake up--
Come on buddy, please don't be
dead...

Still NOTHING: *Maybe they are dead.* He scrambles for something helpful and picks up an empty BEER CAN. He steps back from the wall and STEADIES HIS AIM...

BEN

Hey!

He HURLS the can towards the hole and--

It misses. The can bounces off the wall, back towards Ben.

BEN (cont'd)

(embarrassed)

Kinda glad you didn't see that...

Suddenly, from the next room: COUGHING, STRUGGLING...

Ben leaps back and presses his face against the hole--

The CAPTIVE is squirming: They're ALIVE! *For now...*

INTERCUT HOTEL ROOM/SECOND HOTEL ROOM

Like Ben, the Captive is STRUGGLING TO BREATHE from beneath their SEALED, PLASTIC MASK.

BEN

(ecstatic)

Hey! Shit, man-- I thought I was
alone in this! Uh-- don't panic,
it's gonna be okay.

Ben doesn't look confident in that statement-- If he can't step in, it looks like the CAPTIVE might ASPHYXIATE.

BEN (cont'd)

Tear through it with your teeth.
Bite it! Try not to fall--

THUD!-- Too late. The CAPTIVE loses their balance and the CHAIR TOPPLES TO THE FLOOR-- Just like it did for Ben...

BEN (cont'd)

That's okay -- Use the floor to
push the plastic into your mouth
and *bite it!*

Helpless, Ben can only stare with wide eyes, unable to help this apparently SUFFOCATING man.

BEN

Come on, come on, come on...

PSFFFHhh-- Air flows through a freshly chewed hole in the plastic: *The Captive can breathe!*

BEN (cont'd)
(relief)
Good, okay just try not to panic-

CAPTIVE (O.S.)
Hello-
(clears throat)
Hello?!

BEN
What's your name?

The CAPTIVE is struggling with his CABLE-TIED HANDS.

CAPTIVE
Hell--

He cuts himself off: *Maybe it isn't safe to call out...*

BEN
My name's Ben; I didn't put you
here, okay?
I think we've got to help each
other and everything will be okay.

Restrained, the Captive begins to *HOP* his chair against the floor -- bouncing like a fish struggling to water.

BEN (cont'd)
Don't freak out, see if you can
wedge the chair behind the bed-leg
and kind of *snap it-*

Seemingly following his instructions PERFECTLY, the Captive indeed WEDGES HIS CHAIR, though it hardly looks intentional.

BEN
Wow-- Yes!
Now just push!

The Captive PUSHES and the CHAIR STRAINS under the pressure.

BEN (cont'd)
Push!

The CHAIR LEG SNAPS! Ben is ecstatic.

BEN (cont'd)
Yes! I'm coming through, give me a
minute.

Ben grabs his own snapped CHAIR LEG and STRIKES the wall.

SLAM!.. SLAM!.. SLAM!-- Drywall crumbles, the HOLE WIDENS.

Ben's view rocks back and forth with each strike. At the end of each *SLAM!* he gets a clear view through the hole:

BEN'S POV-- THE HOLE TO THE NEXT ROOM

SLAM!-- The Captive tears through the binds on his hands...

SLAM!-- The Captive gets to his feet...

SLAM!-- The Captive *TEARS THE PLASTIC FROM HIS HEAD* and--

Ben *COLLAPSES* to the floor! He is ghost-white, wearing a frozen bewildered stare: *No, it can't be...*

After a *LONG BEAT*, Ben slowly rises. He approaches the hole, seemingly using every ounce of will to take another look...

Trembling, Ben stares with *HORROR* at the *CAPTIVE'S FACE*. A familiar face, an *IDENTICAL* face--

The *CAPTIVE* looks EXACTLY LIKE BEN.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SOME TIME LATER

Ben's slumped against the *OPPOSITE WALL*, as far as possible from *THE HOLE*. A fresh beer in hand, he sits so low that only the next room's ceiling is visible: *Self-censoring*.

BEN
(deep breath)
Fuck it.

He *SKULLS* the remaining *BEER* and stands up.

INT. SECOND HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben's nervous face comes up to the *HOLE*, peering into this *IDENTICAL ROOM*. He stares: *Dumbfounded*.

BEN
Uh... Hello?

This *OTHER BEN* is desperately investigating his own room.

BEN (cont'd)
Can you--
(swallows)
Can you see me? Or hear me?

This *OTHER BEN* ignores him as he open this room's *WARDROBE*. From an identical *JACKET POCKET* he finds an identical *WALLET*, seemingly unaware an identical Ben is watching.

This *OTHER BEN* finds the *PHONE* and dials until--

OTHER BEN
Hello?! Hi, I'm in Room--

(pauses: *Which room?*)
I'm in a room-- I don't how I got
here and the door's locked from
outside... Please, get help I--
I think someone's put me here.

OUR BEN stares-- A realization dawning on his face:
This is EXACTLY what I did yesterday...

Stunned, he stares at this OTHER BEN before he closes his
eyes to focus: *Remembering--*

BEN
(recalling)
"Hello? Who is this?"
"Did you put me here?"

His eyes open, locked on the OTHER BEN with anticipation--

OTHER BEN
Hello? Who is this?

(beat: listening to phone)
You're watching me aren't you--
Did you put me here?

EXACTLY the same as yesterday. Like this OTHER BEN is some
sort of LIVING RECORDING!

BEN
No fucking way...

Ben snaps into action! He grabs the CHAIR-LEG and again
holds it like a BAT and STRIKES it against the wall--

He's coming through...

CUT TO:

INT. SECOND HOTEL ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

EXACTLY LIKE OUR BEN YESTERDAY, this OTHER BEN (Who will now
be referred to as **BEN -1**) looks through his door's PEEPHOLE.

Behind him, a final PLUME OF DRYWALL as BEN widens the hole
and squeezes through from HIS ROOM.

Ben advances towards BEN -1, mesmerized.

BEN
(shouting)
Hey-- Oi!

No response. He waves his hand in front of BEN -1 to no reaction. BEN -1 simply continues to REPEAT BEN'S ACTIONS.

Ben watches as-- *BANG!* He RAMS HIS SHOULDER into the door.

BEN (cont'd)
Yeah, good luck with that, pal.

Oblivious, BEN -1 charges again, but the door doesn't budge.

BEN (cont'd)
Now you'll break the window...

BEN -1 turns to the WINDOW-- *He's about to throw the GLASS TUMBLER.* Ben SNATCHES THE GLASS before BEN -1 can grab it.

As though nothing has changed, BEN -1 picks up a glass THAT ISN'T THERE-- Like a MIME-- Before he HURLS the contents of his EMPTY HAND towards the WINDOW: Reacting like it smashed.

Our Ben stares at the TUMBLER in his hand. Both the TUMBLER and WINDOW remain UNBROKEN-- *A perfect recording of Ben, but NOT THE OBJECTS in the room.*

BEN
(apologetic)
Just testing a theory--

SMACK!-- Ben punches BEN -1 in the face! No reaction. The DUPLICATE'S face DOESN'T EVEN BUDGE, so Ben's fist bears the full brunt of the punch! He shakes his hand out in pain...

BEN
Jesus...

He gingerly extends his finger towards BEN -1's face until it RUBS AGAINST HIS NAKED EYEBALL. No reaction, or blink, NOTHING: Completely VACANT.

BEN (cont'd)
Wow, that's fucking gross...

CUT TO:

INT. SECOND HOTEL ROOM - LATER

A familiar sight: Slumped in the corner is BEN -1, working through the MINIBAR as BEN did yesterday.

BEN (O.S.)
You really shouldn't drink alone.

BEN enters, clambering through the hole. Using his shirt as a makeshift bag, he carries over booze from his room. He sits across from his oblivious doppelganger, and TOASTS him.

BEN
 (sarcastically)
 Cheers.

He downs a MINI-BOTTLE of LIQUOR and tosses it at BEN -1, who fails to react as it bounces off his head. Ben scowls.

BEN (cont'd)
 You idiot. Bad news-- I don't think
 I can get us out of here.

He opens up another bottle.

BEN (cont'd)
 And I think you're about to lose
 your fucking mind.

He throws the drink back and--

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Ben's eyes lilt open. He wakes, surrounded by empty bottles. He is alone in the room, BEN -1 is gone. His STOMACH GROWLS WITH HUNGER-- He's had nothing but liquid for two days.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A small CUBICLE SIZED BATHROOM within the Hotel Room. Ben stands before the toilet, we can hear him emptying all the liquid he drained from the minibar yesterday.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ben returns, taking in the room: The HOLE he beat into the wall is GONE. Like the room again REPAIRED ITSELF.

BEN
 Either that didn't happen and I'm
maybe losing my mind, or it did
 happen and I've already lost it.

(here we go)
How exciting--

CHAIR LEG in hand, he STRIKES the wall!

A LITTLE LATER:

INT. HOTEL ROOM -1

Through a freshly beaten hole, Ben climbs into the next room (**HOTEL ROOM -1**). He shakes his head-- *It wasn't a dream.*

Once again, ANOTHER BEN performs a PHYSICAL RECITAL--
Perfectly mimicking his actions from the previous day.

We've entered just as BEN -1 has smashed his first hole
through the wall, discovering the 'CAPTIVE' next door.

BEN -1
(to 'CAPTIVE')
Hey! Wake up, wake up--
Come on buddy, please don't be
dead...

Ben is TRANSFIXED. He watches as BEN -1 aims the BEER CAN
and hurls it towards the hole in the wall. Inevitably, it
misses and bounces back towards the TWO BENS.

BEN -1 (cont'd)
Kinda glad you didn't see that...

BEN
Don't worry, he will...

Moments later, BEN -1 leaps to the hole, responding to the
struggling 'CAPTIVE'--

BEN -1
Hey! Shit, man-- I thought I was
alone in this! Uh-- Don't panic,
it's gonna be okay.

BEN
(watching BEN -1)
I am not a good liar...

Ben stands alongside his duplicate so he too can peer into
the next room: Standing next to BEN -1 in HOTEL ROOM -1,
watching the 'CAPTIVE' struggling in **HOTEL ROOM -2**.

BEN -1
Tear through it with your teeth.
Bite it! Try not to fall--

THUD!-- Too late. The bound and gagged 'CAPTIVE' repeats
every move Ben made TWO DAYS ago. This is **BEN -2**.

BEN -1 (cont'd)
(to Ben -2)
What's your name?

BEN -2 is still struggling with his cable-tied hands.

BEN -2
(face still covered)
Hell--

Our Ben has seen enough. Bewildered, he slides down the wall
to the bed, lost as the OTHER BENS run their routines.

Before long, BEN -1 has seen the reveal of the CAPTIVE's face and he slumps down in shock, next to Our Ben.

BEN
 (to BEN -1)
 I know, right?

Side by side, their faces read like a thesaurus turned to "CONFOUNDED". Suddenly, on Ben's face: *An IDEA!*

Ben turns from BEN -1 to the CEILING-- The suspiciously CROOKED PANEL in the ceiling he *couldn't reach...*

MOMENTS LATER:

INT. HOTEL ROOM (THE ROOM BEN WOKE UP IN TODAY)

Back in his room, Ben stands near the center of the floor, directly beneath the CROOKED PANEL in the ceiling.

BEN
 (deep breath)
 Let's do this.

He picks up the BROKEN CHAIR with one leg missing, and drags it underneath his goal in the ceiling. Unable to stand on its own, Ben BRACES THE CHAIR WITH HIS BODY AND HE--

Just stays there. Awkwardly. He props the chair up in an empty room. He looks a little silly--

BEN
 (to the empty room)
 It's going to be so embarrassing to see this tomorrow...

He stays still, holding the chair upright. Waiting... He holds and HOLDS the pose, looking frustrated--

BEN (cont'd)
 What am I doing?
 This is ridiculous...

He THROWS the chair to the side and takes a deep breath. He stares up at the CROOKED PANEL.

BEN
 (to the empty room)
 There. Did it work?

He GESTURES TOWARDS IT WITH HIS HAND--

BEN (cont'd)
 Tell me it worked.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Ben's eyes open, it's a NEW MORNING.

-- He slurps down a liquid breakfast. His STOMACH RUMBLES...

-- Ben SMASHING the wall. With a new sense of purpose, he creates today's hole to the next room...

INT. HOTEL ROOM -1 - SOON AFTER

Ben slinks into HOTEL ROOM -1 where BEN -1 is busy grabbing the BROKEN CHAIR and dragging it beneath the CEILING PANEL.

Unable to stand on its own, BEN -1 BRACES THE CHAIR WITH HIS BODY, slightly squat, propping the chair against himself.

With intense eyes, Ben approaches his duplicate.

BEN -1

It's going to be so embarrassing to see this tomorrow...

BEN

You're right about that-- Six years of University to become a human chair-leg...

Ben steps forward and CLIMBS ONTO THE CHAIR! With BEN -1 holding it up, he's able to stand on it! He strains to FINALLY grab whatever is stashed in the ceiling panel but--

He's still too short.

BEN (cont'd)

Shit!

Ben stretches and strains, but IT'S NOT ENOUGH! Ben JUMPS and his finger-tips JUST make contact with the panel. If he can just JUMP A LITTLE HIGHER, he'll make it! He crouches to launch himself, PREPARING TO JUMP WHEN--

BEN -1

What am I doing?
This is ridiculous...

BEN -1 THROWS the chair to the side, and in-turn sends Ben TOPPLING TO THE GROUND! He skids across the floor--

BEN

(desperate)
No, no, no--

He stares, horrified at his actions from yesterday. BEN -1 stands, staring up at the CROOKED PANEL.

BEN -1
There. Did it work?

Ben's eyes widen: BEN -1 is RIGHT UNDERNEATH the panel: *This still COULD work--*

Our Ben jumps to his feet and sprints towards BEN -1, just as he GESTURES TOWARDS THE PANEL WITH HIS HAND.

No time to lose, Ben HURLS HIMSELF at BEN -1: Using BEN -1's hand to BOOST HIMSELF, Ben reaches above as he LAUNCHES off HIS OWN BODY into the air--

With this much height, he manages to PLOW HIS HAND into the CROOKED PANEL. There's SOMETHING STASHED INSIDE THE CEILING!

Ben manages to snatch it before he TUMBLES to the floor. Meanwhile, BEN -1 obliviously goes through his routine--

BEN -1 (cont'd)
Tell me it worked.

BEN
(giddy)
Yes it worked, you idiot--

His hands clutch the treasure from the ceiling. He unfurls his fingers to reveal-- A GOLDEN WRISTWATCH. The HANDS AREN'T MOVING, like it's run out of battery.

Ben recognizes this apparent antique. He turns it over--

ON THE WATCH-- An engraving on the backplate:
"Take care of yourself-- Dad"

BEN (cont'd)
"Take care of yourself".
Great advice Dad...

(to himself)
Whoever put this up there wanted me to find it. Someone wants me to get out of here...

Ben stares: From where he stands, the HOLES IN THE WALL line up so THREE VERSIONS of himself are visible-- Each in varying degrees of distress and confusion.

BEN (cont'd)
"Take care of yourself"...

(beat: a plan)
I don't think I can get us out of here--

Ben slips the WATCH over his wrist.

BEN (cont'd)
But maybe we can.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Eyes open. Ben awakens on a NEW MORNING.

-- No hole in the wall, the room is once again REPAIRED.

-- Ben's STOMACH RUMBLES.

FRONT DOOR

Clutching his STARVING stomach, Ben approaches his Hotel Room's DOOR with determination. A deep breath: *Here we go.*

SLAM!-- He RAMS his shoulder into the door!

BEN
(*keeping Tempo*)
...Two...Three...Four--

SLAM!-- Ben RAMS the door again.

BEN (cont'd)
...Two...Three...Four--

SLAM!-- He repeats this action OVER AND OVER, slamming against the door again and again before stopping.

Exhausted, he collapses onto the bed, clutching his sore shoulder-- That effort took a lot out of him.

Weak, he turns his eye back to the KITCHENETTE.

BEN
There's got to be something, they
can't just let me starve.

MOMENTS LATER:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - KITCHENETTE

Cupboard after cupboard are THROWN OPEN. Ben DESPERATELY fossicks for something, ANYTHING edible from the kitchenette.

BEN
Come on, come on, come on...

Frenzied hands feel their way around the cupboards searching for even a crumb-- But there's NOTHING.

Once again, the MINIBAR FRIDGE is no use. Only BOOZE and BOTTLED WATER.

BEN

Dammit!

He kicks the minibar in anger, when something catches his eye. Perched atop a high cabinet: A POT PLANT!

Boosting off the kitchen bench, Ben reaches up and manages to pull it down. He immediately TEARS A LEAF from the GREEN PLANT and sticks it into his mouth.

After a moment of chewing, he spits it out: It's PLASTIC. He HURLS the pot-plant in anger and it SLAMS AGAINST A WALL!

Weak, he slumps down on the floor near the minibar.

BEN

Okay, stay focused--

(swallows)

Just don't go insane.

He gently rocks back and forth, a distraction from the HUNGER. From the fridge, he takes a BOTTLE OF BEER.

BEN

How did I get here, what do I remember?--

(to himself)

My name is Ben, Ben Thompson.

He opens the BEER and takes a swig.

BEN (cont'd)

I was born in Melbourne to Nick and Mary Thompson.

No brothers or sisters-- I think Mum always wanted more, but as Dad turned out to be the same sort of monster as his own father...

So I was all she had.

Another swig of beer.

BEN

I'm a structural engineer: I create spaces and structures and make sure they don't fall apart.

(MORE)

BEN (cont'd)

At least, I did until the dream project turned out to be a massive investment swindle: Leaving me with a half-finished build, millions in costs, and an insurance policy I'm still paying for, that wouldn't cover a dime because the "crime wasn't on-site"...

(scoffs)

Mum always insisted, I had to get a degree even though we couldn't afford it.

I'm the first in my family to go to university: Be the one man in her life that wouldn't disappoint her.

He regards the now EMPTY beer bottle in his hand and sighs.

BEN (cont'd)

(to himself)

Are you sure about that?

Ben shakes the thought from his head and turns to the ceiling, calling towards anyone who might be watching--

BEN

I guess room service isn't an option? I'd prefer vegetarian but I'll eat a goddamn raw steak if it's all you got...

He closes his eyes and draws a deep, HUNGRY breath:
How long can I keep this up?

THE NEXT
MORNING:

INT. HOTEL ROOM

SERIES OF SHOTS-- Ben's Morning Routine

-- Eyes open.

-- Alone in Hotel Room.

-- Stomach GROWLS.

-- SMACK! SMACK! Drywall plumes from the wall as Ben beats a hole through to YESTERDAY'S ROOM...

INT. HOTEL ROOM -1 - SOON AFTER

Dog-tired, Ben enters through YET ANOTHER hole he's beaten.

He closes his eyes and places it IN HIS MOUTH! Just a small piece. He SLOWLY starts to CHEW. His jaw grinds up and down, joylessly CRUNCHING through the plaster.

After an excruciating few seconds, we hear the crunching stop and Ben reluctantly SWALLOWS.

He opens his watering eyes. He got it down.

BEN (cont'd)
(weak breath)
Hhhough.

MOMENTS LATER:

INT. HOTEL ROOM -1

Ben collapses next to the MINIBAR, in his arm a PILE of crumbled DRYWALL.

From off screen we can hear cupboards and such angrily being thrown open-- BEN -1 still hard at yesterday's tasks.

Ben throws open the MINIBAR and grabs some BOTTLED WATER. He winces as he takes MOUTHFUL OF DRYWALL and unhappily chews as fast as he can-- Guzzling the water to wash it down.

As he swallows, he casts a disdainful eye to BEN-1 who just retrieved the POT-PLANT.

BEN
(to Ben-1)
You're trying to eat plastic, you idiot.

THUNK!-- The pot-plant is HURLED TO THE WALL, like Ben did before he weakly slumped to the floor near the minibar...

Unsurprisingly, BEN -1 weakly slumps to the floor near the minibar...

The TWO BENS now sit SIDE BY SIDE--

BEN -1
Okay, stay focused--
(swallows)
Just don't go insane.

Ben realizes he's EATING DRYWALL: He is acting insane.

BEN
(whoops)
Ah, shit.

BEN -1
 How did I get here, what do I
 remember?--

From the fridge, BEN -1 takes a BOTTLE OF BEER.

BEN
 Do you remember your name?

BEN -1
 My name is Ben, Ben Thompson.

BEN
 (sarcastic)
 That's fucking crazy-- Me too!

BEN -1 opens his beer bottle, but Our Ben SWIPES IT FOR
 HIMSELF. BEN -1 mimes drinking from a non-existent bottle.

BEN (cont'd)
 Tell me about yourself, Benny boy.

BEN -1
 I was born in Melbourne to Nick and
 Mary Thompson--

BEN
 Got any family?

BEN -1
 No brothers or sisters-- I think
 Mum always wanted more, but as Dad
 turned out to be the same sort of
 monster as his own father...

BEN
 Why risk bringing another Thompson
 male into the world...

BEN -1
 ...So I was all she had.

BEN
 I bet she was all you had too...

(beat: sips beer)
 What about work, Benny--
How'd you put food on the table?

BEN -1
 I'm a structural engineer: I create
 spaces and structures and make sure
 they don't fall apart--

BEN
 Unlike your marriage, career,
 finances...

BEN -1

Leaving me with a half-finished build, millions in costs, and an insurance policy I'm still paying for, that wouldn't cover a dime because the "crime wasn't on-site"...

BEN

Like property theft or murder-- I might've turned a profit if they killed me instead of robbed me...

BEN -1

Mum always insisted, I had to get a degree even though we couldn't afford it.

BEN

Maybe she saw it as the best chance to break the chain of bastards you come from...

BEN -1

I'm the first in my family to go to university.

BEN

(speaking over BEN -1)

I can top that: I'm the first man in my family not to end up in prison--

BEN -1

Are you sure about that?

Ben perks up at these words: *Has he ended up in prison?*

BEN -1 (cont'd)

I guess room service isn't an option? I'd prefer vegetarian but I'll eat a goddamn raw steak if it's all you got...

BEN

You'll eat worse than that, believe me.

Ben looks down to the pile of DRYWALL in his hands. He continues to put it in his mouth, chasing it down with beer.

He closes his eyes, wishing he was anywhere else--

CUT TO:

INT. FAMILY HOME - BEFORE

We see a MOTHER AND SON-- Footage that is DREAMY, SOFT-FOCUS like a warm FLASHBACK: There's smiling and laughter as she plays with her son-- They're BUILDING.

Using BLOCKS, LEGO, RUBBER-BANDS and the like, MOTHER proudly watches her young son as he completes an impressively complex structure--

BACK TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM -1 - NOW

Back to Ben, staring wistfully: *Thinking of a better time...*

BEN

Mum always said I had a knack for building and structure since even before I can remember. She thought I inherited her love of puzzles, because, to me, that's all engineering is: You're presented a problem with rules, requirements and I just have to solve it.

He takes another unhappy CRUNCH of drywall: His speech clearly a distraction from the current task--

BEN (cont'd)

Say you want to build a big tower: You need to solve the problems of budget, schedule, materials-- A million little pieces in a million exact places: Every box ticked or; catastrophe.

Crunch. Swallow. Chaser...

BEN (cont'd)

It has to made of the right stuff: Maximum strength, but not too rigid--

INT. FAMILY HOME - BEFORE

As Ben reminisces about his childhood ability to build, MOTHER watches warmly as her son builds a complex space.

BEN (V.O.)

You've gotta bear the heaviest load while being as light as possible--

SLAM!! MOTHER suddenly turns as the FRONT DOOR SLAMS. She looks worried: FATHER is home--

The YOUNG BOY puts something in the wrong place, and suddenly the structure COLLAPSES--

BACK TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM -1 - NOW

Ben still sits, heaving and sickly next to a vacant BEN -1.

BEN

I was good because I could always picture the designs so clearly: Then the problem is just taking what I see in my head, and making it reality.

Crunch. Swallow. Chaser...

BEN (cont'd)

And now this is the puzzle: This place, the door, this hunger? They're just problems to be solved-- And that's what we do.

He defiantly places another piece of DRYWALL in his mouth, SWALLOWS and EMPTIES his beer bottle as chaser. A deep breath: "I've done it".

He turns disdainfully to BEN -1.

BEN (cont'd)

You're gonna have a shitty day tomorrow.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Ben lies on the floor back in the room he woke up in. He looks particularly unwell, drawing deep, NAUSEOUS BREATHS. In the next room, BEN -1 continues along his preset path.

SUDDENLY-- Ben rises and storms across the room, his hand CLUTCHING HIS GUT--

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben plummets into the bathroom, his head JUST making it to the toilet bowl in time for us to hear LOUD VOMITING.

He coughs, a PAINFUL GURGLING as all the drywall is expelled from his unhappy stomach.

Ben pulls back, wiping the edges of his mouth. He ANGRILY KICKS the handle to flush the contents of the bowl away.

SLAM!-- The previous TWO BENS slam, but today's Ben rams the door with the strength of a well cooked piece of spaghetti and COLLAPSES to the floor-- He's got nothing in the tank.

Ben SLIDES down the door and becomes a human puddle on the ground as BEN -1 and BEN -2 continue slamming next to him.

BEN (cont'd)
(dazed)
I'm sorry, I can't...

He looks up, guiltily as his TWO OTHER SELVES that are giving it all they've got. Ben looks, and feels, like death.

His eyelids start to sink, passing out...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM -2 - LATER

Ben is DOZING, on the floor by the door. He is abruptly woken when a hurdled POT PLANT SMASHES HIM IN THE FACE.

BEN
(with a start)
Jesus--

His sickly eyes open to see BEN -2 slump beside the minibar: Upset after trying to eat the plastic plant.

BEN -1 is watching this happen, offering commentary--

BEN -1
You're trying to eat plastic, you idiot.

BEN -2
Okay, stay focused--

(swallows)
Just don't go insane.

BEN -1 realizes he's EATING DRYWALL: He is acting insane.

BEN -1
(whoops)
Ah, shit.

They continue the staggered conversation we saw yesterday, as today's frail and feeble Ben watches on.

BEN
(weak)
What are you guys talking about?

They, obviously, ignore him: After all, TO THEM HE DOESN'T EXIST YET. Ben, too sick to move, has to watch this scene for yet a third time--

BEN -2
How did I get here, what do I remember?--

BEN -2 takes a beer from the fridge.

BEN -1
Do you remember your name?

BEN -2
My name is Ben, Ben Thompson.

BEN -1 swipes the beer from BEN -2 as he did yesterday.

BEN -1
That's fucking crazy-- Me too!

BEN
(today's Ben)
Guys; this is going to blow your minds--

Ben now SWIPES THE BEER from BEN -1; passing down the chain.

BEN (cont'd)
--But guess what my fucking name is?

He sips the beer, joylessly: He needs FOOD! Ben's STOMACH RUMBLES as the OTHER TWO BENS continue reciting...

BEN -1
...I bet she was all you had too.

(sips non-existent beer)
What about work, Benny--
How'd you put food on the table?

BEN
Food? Don't talk about food!

SMASH!-- Ben slams the bottle of beer to the floor, which SHATTERS in his hand! He looks to his hand to see a small SHARD OF GLASS embedded in his hand.

He gingerly pulls it out and a tiny amount of blood drips from the wound. Ben regards this TINY KNIFE-LIFE GLASS, just as we catch the tail-end of the OTHER BENS' conversation--

BEN -2
(other side of room)
...I'll eat a goddamn raw steak if it's all you got.

Starving, Ben's eye turns from the shard of glass to the FILLETING KNIFE-- The knife he procured from the wild arm of the ASSAILANT through the door: "RAW STEAK..."

INT. HOTEL ROOM -1

One room over, we hear A TOILET FLUSHING. BEN -1 has finished spewing, and stumbles out from the BATHROOM.

As he collapses on the bed, we realize he is NOT ALONE-- Our Ben stands menacingly at the foot of the bed; eyes locked on his recorded counterpart.

Weak from vomiting, BEN -1 closes his eyes and almost immediately falls asleep-- Completely unaware of his future self that LOOMS over him, holding the FILLETING KNIFE.

BEN
(to himself)
Just problems to be solved--

His SLEEPING DOUBLE rolls onto his side and Ben lifts his shirt, exposing BEN -1's hip. Ben takes a grim breath and--

SHNKKT!-- He STABS THE KNIFE into BEN -1's HIP! Just a shallow wound, he withdraws the blade instantly and stares, terrified, as a SINGLE DROP OF BLOOD spills from the wound.

Ben quickly lifts HIS OWN SHIRT. He checks his OWN hip and rubs it plaintively with his thumb--

He has NO SCAR-- Wounding his iterations DOESN'T WOUND HIM.

BEN (cont'd)
I'm so sorry-- But I'm pretty sure
you won't feel this...

He kneels next to BEN -1. Holding the KNIFE, ready to SLICE.

BEN (cont'd)
Besides, I guarantee you'd do the
same thing-- Just give it a day.

BEN -1 has no reaction, he just sleeps.

Ben gulps and PLUNGES THE BLADE INTO HIS SIDE-- Thankfully BEN -1 has no reaction, but our Ben reacts QUITE A BIT: Wincing, gritting his teeth, watching through squinted eyes!

He reluctantly CARVES from the hip: Pulling the blade up BEN -1's body, FILLETING him. He's making slow progress, deeply disturbed by what he's doing, when SUDDENLY--

BEN -1 UNEXPECTEDLY TURNS in his sleep!

BEN (cont'd)
(oh shit!)
 Woah--

His slow, UNEASY SLICING uncontrollably SPEEDS UP as BEN -1 rolls to his BACK-- The movement CARVES his oblivious body AGAINST THE BLADE: Shearing a much larger hunk than planned.

Ben rushes to catch the CUT OF MEAT that falls from the sleeping body-- It lands with a horrible, wet SLAP.

BEN (cont'd)
 Jesus Christ!

Ben looks from the FRESH MEAT in his hands (his own BACK-STRAP) to the body of BEN -1: Despite the hefty chunk missing from his bloody side, it looks like a comfy snooze.

It's pretty fucking weird.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM -1 - LATER

Slouched against the KITCHENETTE, Ben's so pale it's like there's more blood on his shirt than there is in his face-- *Then again, there's quite a lot of blood on his shirt...*

TIGHT ON BEN-- An extreme close up on his dead, staring EYES. Off camera, he puts SOMETHING FLESHY in his mouth:

He takes a BITE...

His haggard, watering eyes don't look at what he's eating. We don't get a good look either, but we HEAR IT--

Every BITE. Every RIP. Every GULP, SWALLOW and GURGLE...

HARD CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM -1 - AFTER THE MEAL

Ben is in the SAME POSITION, still slouched against the kitchenette. He has the same steely, dead-eyed expression and has FINISHED EATING.

There is blood running down his chin.

BEN
*That's how I put food on the
 fucking table.*

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

SERIES OF SHOTS:

-- Ben's eyes open.

-- Alone in his HOTEL ROOM.

-- Tight on Ben's STOMACH. It is SILENT, no more GROWLING.

Ben is up, looking much LIVELIER than we've seen him in DAYS. He stands and faces the bedside wall-- Determined.

He grabs the chair leg...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM -3

Through the hole in the wall, Ben enters to find THREE DAYS OF BENS are already in here. He looks noticeably different-- Blood-stained clothes, haggard stare, but STRONGER.

Behind him, the much weaker BEN -1 slithers into the room and joins BEN -2 and BEN -3 who are already at the DOOR--

SLAM!-- The last three days of Bens RAM THE DOOR in unison.

BEN -2
...Two...Three...Four--

BEN -3
...Two...Three...Four--

BEN -1
(incredibly weak)
..two..three..four--

SLAM!-- Full force from BEN -2 and BEN -3, but yesterday's BEN -1 slinks against it, too weak. He is stepped over by--

TODAY'S BEN marches forward-- His resolve braced by the intake of calories and trauma.

Focused, he readies up next to his previous iterations.

ALL TOGETHER
...TWO...THREE...FOUR!

SLAM!-- The door CREAKS against the force of the THREE MEN. The trio of Ben's ready for another lunge--

ALL TOGETHER (cont'd)
...TWO...THREE...FOUR!

SLAM!-- The HINGES STRAIN on impact. *So close...*

BEN
Come on...

Ben braces himself: Prepared to give all he's got--

ALL TOGETHER
...TWO...THREE...FOUR!

CRAAACK!!-- The trio of Ben COLLIDE against the wood and THE DOOR GIVES! It SNAPS off its frame and COLLAPSES outwards, beyond the threshold of the Hotel Room.

Ben's face: He can't believe it--

BEN
(involuntary grunt)
PHuhvfh!

He stares at the OPEN DOORWAY--
He is FREE!

Nervous, he makes sure to tuck the FILLETING KNIFE into his pants, before he steps through the door...

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Previously glimpsed only through the PEEPHOLE, Ben steps into the CORRIDOR. He's finally outside the HOTEL ROOM.

Behind him, BEN -2 and BEN -3 are STILL RAMMING their shoulders forwards into the EMPTY DOORFRAME: For them the door hasn't broken yet.

Ben looks right: A LONG corridor lined with identical doors to presumably identical HOTEL ROOMS. "DO NOT DISTURB" signs hang on each handle, including the door he just broke down.

Close on BEN-- Staring in this direction, he doesn't notice the shape OVER HIS SHOULDER--

A PERSON!-- OUT OF FOCUS over Ben's shoulder, the unmistakably human shape steps into the corridor and FREEZES upon seeing Ben out of his room.

Ben hears them and WHIRS around-- They're about fifteen rooms up.

BEN
Hey! You there--

The person IMMEDIATELY skulks out of sight, retreating into a room. Ben SPRINTS to catch them--

BEN (cont'd)
(running)
Hey-- Wait!

SLAM-- Ben reaches the door just as it closes in his face. With a CLICK it is locked before he can try the handle.

BEN (cont'd)
(knocking on the door)
Open up-- come on!

He booms on the door, again and again.

BEN (cont'd)
 I'm not-- I'm one of the good
 guys-- Please, maybe we can help
 each other! Where are we?!

He waits for a response that never comes. Ben looks
 panicked: *Maybe I'll try another tactic...*

He puffs his chest out, trying on a TOUGH GUY pose.

BEN (cont'd)
 Goddammit--
 Open up or I'll kick this goddamn
 door down-- *You hear me?*
 (beat)
I'll goddamn do it, goddammit--

Ben WINCES: *That was at least one too many "goddammit"s...*

BEN (cont'd)
 (still posturing)
 Alright, you've left me no choice,
 I'm gonna break this door down!

A thin SCRAPING sound draws Ben's eye to the floor. A small
 SQUARE OF PAPER is fed under the door. Ben stoops and picks
 up this HANDWRITTEN NOTE--

BEN (cont'd)
 (reading)
"I thought that took three of you".

Ben looks from the note the door. There's a PEEPHOLE, but
 he's on the wrong side, he can only be watched.

BEN (cont'd)
 How did-- You've been watching me?
 Who are you?! What is this--

He angrily BEATS AGAINST THE DOOR but there's no answer. Ben
 has the thought to turn the note over, there's MORE WRITING:

NOTE
 I'm here to kill you.
 You're here to kill me.

Ben's eyes grow wide with TERROR. He begins to back away
 from the door when he hears a VOICE from the other side.

Not words, but CACKLING-- A mad, taunting CACKLE Like a
 sound pulled from a nightmare. Ben backs away faster and
 faster from the MADMAN in the room.

INT. VARIOUS CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

Ben rounds a corner, then another. Twisting and turning through various, identikit HIGH-CEILINGED CORRIDORS-- It's more than a little labyrinthine.

He studies the HANDWRITTEN NOTE-- The paper is old and worn. At the edge are some TYPEWRITTEN CHARACTERS: **MPO 60**

BEN
(reading)
M P O sixty...

Meaningless. He DISCARDS the note as he walks by identical locked ROOM DOORS, until he turns a corner to see a pair of doors up ahead. Ben SWINGS THEM OPEN and enters--

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A GRAND HOTEL LOBBY with ornate, massively HIGH CEILINGS-- Like a BALLROOM.

The place seems UNDER CONSTRUCTION. There's SCAFFOLDING and BUILDING MATERIALS around, but no people.

Ben's steps cautiously into the cavernous space. It doesn't feel abandoned so much as EMPTY-- Frozen in the liminal time between use and disuse.

BEN
Hello?

His voice bounces off the walls, echoing his voice back at him-- Something he's heard enough of recently. To his right, Ben sees the CHECK-IN COUNTER, with a CONCIERGE DESK and some DOUBLE DOORS just beyond it.

To Ben's left he spies something that makes him GASP-- An EXIT sign! The letters glow above a grand DOUBLE DOOR of frosted glass-- A WAY OUT!

He hurries across the lobby floor, and plows into the "EXIT" DOUBLE DOORS which swing open-- They're unlocked!

Ben LEAVES the hotel lobby and steps into--

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A GRAND HOTEL LOBBY, with ornate massively HIGH CEILINGS-- Like a BALLROOM...

It appears IDENTICAL to the room he just exited, entering through a pair of DOUBLE DOORS just beyond a CONCIERGE DESK.

BEN
What the--

CLUNK!-- Before he can take this in, a sound distracts Ben's attention: On the OPPOSITE wall a pair of DOUBLE DOORS swing CLOSED, obscuring a FOGGY HUMAN SHAPE on the other side--

Ben takes off in a sprint: SOMEONE IS THERE!

BEN (cont'd)
Hey, wait!

He plows through the identical DOUBLE DOORS, leaving the hotel lobby and stepping into--

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A GRAND HOTEL LOBBY, with ornate massively HIGH CEILINGS-- Like a BALLROOM...

Ben pauses. As the doors close BEHIND HIM, a set of double doors close on the FAR-SIDE of the lobby.

He TURNS and STEPS BACK through the doors and watches a PAIR OF DOORS close on the far-side of the lobby behind him-- At the PRECISE moment his own doors close.

BEN
(seriously?)
Come on...

He approaches the 'EXIT' door, and crouches down-- He withdraws the KNIFE from his pants hilt, and presses it into the tiled floor.

He moves forward, carving the KNIFE along the floor, leaving a WHITE POWDERY LINE behind him. Knife pressed into the tiled floor, Ben continues THROUGH THE EXIT DOORS.

He leaves the hotel lobby and steps into--

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A GRAND HOTEL LOBBY, with ornate massively HIGH CEILINGS-- Like a BALLROOM...

Ben continues, moving in a straight line across the room. CLOSE ON the knife, dragging a longer and longer line behind him until--

It CONNECTS to an IDENTICAL LINE on the floor. Ben stops and backs up, getting a WIDE VIEW of the room--

Across the floor a SINGLE, UNINTERRUPTED LINE connects one set of DOUBLE DOORS to an identical set on an opposite wall.

It's the SAME ROOM: By EXITING ONE SIDE of the room, you just ENTER THE OTHER SIDE.

BEN
Great-- It's like fucking Pac-Man.

He smirks-- He might be impressed if he weren't still trapped.

BEN (cont'd)
What else you got...

MOMENTS LATER:

HOTEL LOBBY - CONCIERGE STATION

Ben approaches the CHECK-IN DESK where the CONCIERGE would normally be. He stares at the counter, fixating on a CONCIERGE'S BELL in the middle of the desk.

An ABSTRACT, ECHOING CHIME-- Almost like a reversed BELL: Reverby and dark, like a MEMORY CALLING TO HIM. Ben steps closer and closer, the sound growing louder until--

DING!-- Ben rings the bell. He stops, eyes narrowed: Like he's REMEMBERING SOMETHING.

Knowingly, he REACHES OVER the desk and FIDGETS on the underside. Moments later, he pulls his arm back to reveal:

A KEY!-- A classic Hotel key, coiled to a large pendant.

He stares at it, pleased before POCKETING THE KEY.

BEN
That'll save some time...

SUDDENLY-- MUSIC erupts from a nearby room! A busy piece of RAGTIME PIANO echoes through the lobby, making Ben jump.

He looks for the source of the sound, and spies an opening to a "DINING HALL". He cautiously follows the sound...

INT. DINING HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Ben steps DOWN to a large, sunken DINING HALL. DINNER TABLES are dotted below a ceiling just as high as the lobby. The centerpiece is a LARGE GAS FIREPLACE which steadily BURNS.

A BAR borders one wall near A GRAND PIANO: The source of the RAGTIME MUSIC. Nobody is playing, but the keys move as though played by a ghost.

Stepping over a velvet rope, Ben approaches the instrument. On the piano, he knowingly slides a small wooden door revealing a MUSIC ROLL spinning inside: It's a PLAYER PIANO.

BEN
 (to himself)
 Just like at home...

A small motor turns the MUSIC ROLL, a winding scroll of punctured paper. Each puncture instructs the instrument which key to press to perform the song: Musical clockwork.

As it unspools, the FINAL PUNCTURE corresponds with the FINAL NOTE and the music stops: The Hotel falls silent.

Ben smirks and turns his attention to FROSTED WINDOWS that line one wall of the DINING HALL. He approaches, picks up a chair and THROWS IT INTO A WINDOW!

Just as in his room, the window smashes and TURNS BLACK: Another false window: No escape here.

BEN (cont'd)
 Engineering *one-oh-one*: Every space
 you can get into you can get out
 of. You can escape anything except
 yourself.

CRACK!!-- Suddenly, a sound from above. Ben's eyes crane up to the high ceiling to see a FOOT?! A leg has plummeted through the ceiling, sending a cloud of dust below.

Ben gasps-- THERE'S SOMEBODY ON THE FLOOR ABOVE!

BEN (cont'd)
 (yelling)
 Hey!

The leg rises back above the unreachable ceiling, and muffled footsteps trace across the roof towards a CORRIDOR.

Ben SPRINTS for the corridor in hot pursuit--

INT. CORRIDORS PART TWO - MOMENTS LATER

Back to the HIGH-CEILINGED CORRIDORS. Ben hurtles along, his eyes locked following the sounds of FOOTSTEPS from above.

BEN
 (shouting towards the roof)
 Wait!

He reaches an intersection and the footsteps seem to turn left: Ben follows, barreling along underneath to keep up.

Chasing this person only by sound, he twists and turns through corridors, tracking underneath the footsteps when he passes a sign that makes his heart leap: STAIRS.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Ben bursts into the stairwell to find a CEMENT SWITCHBACK STAIRCASE that rises to the floors above. He races up the first flight of stairs, but turns the corner and STOPS--

Halfway up, the second chute of stairs abruptly ENDS-- Cut off by a PLASTIC SHEETING-- The type that might cordon off a construction site.

Ben rushes towards it. He touches the smooth, plastic sheeting and TEARS through it, revealing a solid, featureless barrier-- Smooth like perfectly rendered CEMENT.

BEN

No, no, no, no...

A STAIRCASE TO NOWHERE, abruptly swallowed up by an impenetrable wall. Ben shakes his head in disbelief.

BEN (cont'd)

Shit!

He turns and sprints away from the DEAD END.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDORS PART TWO - MOMENTS LATER

Ben storms from the stairwell back to the corridor. He races along the corridors, eyes locked on the ceiling when--

FOOTSTEPS, he hears them again! Back on the case, he charts the movement of his unseen target. He briefly enters a CONFERENCE ROOM, but finds it another dead end.

Back to the corridors. Chasing just behind the sounds, down one corridor, then another, then another...

BEN

There's got to be a way up there.

He races under the footsteps, hurtling through a set of double doors and back out into--

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Still staring above, he sprints into the lobby until he slows to a STOP, fixating on the CENTER OF THE CEILING:

BEN'S POV: On the ceiling, several storeys above in the high-ceilinged-lobby, there's a hatch: AN ACCESS HATCH!

He sways from side to side, revealing LIGHT coming through the edges of the HATCH-- Light from the other side: ESCAPE!

Ben scans the space: There's no access-way, no stairs, no ladders-- Just the hatch in the very CENTER of the ceiling.

BEN
 (scheming)
 A problem to be solved-- They don't
 make it easy, do they...

Ben strides to the edge of the room and stands SNUG AGAINST THE WALL. He holds his rigid palm atop his head, like a salute that missed his forehead--

He's MEASURING HIMSELF, like a child marking their growth!

WE DOLLY BACK, revealing a separate Ben watching him. Therefore, we are now in...

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - THE NEXT DAY

Today's Ben watches BEN -1 measuring himself against the wall. Our Ben closes an eye--

BEN'S POV-- He lines his forefinger and thumb over BEN -1 so they are ONE BEN HEIGHT APART.

He keeps this distance between his fingers, and starts measuring them up the wall: "One, two, three..." Until his fingers line up with the ceiling.

Satisfied, he drops to his knees and, with the knife, begins to CARVE A DIAGRAM on a FLOOR TILE--

A CRUDE DRAWING OF THE LOBBY: Up top is the hatch, and down the bottom is him. He separates the height into fifteen segments: FIFTEEN STICK FIGURES stacked on top one another.

A HUMAN LADDER: Fifteen Bens should be enough to reach it.

BEN
 Fifteen, maybe sixteen days...
 Get to the top, get out of here.

(deep breath)
 I can do this.

He CHECKS HIS WRISTWATCH, and tuts as he's reminded it isn't working. He pauses, before marching to the concierge desk--

DING-DING--DING!-- Ben RINGS THE BELL on the desk which echoes around the empty lobby.

BEN (cont'd)
 (to the room)
 Okay, listen up every... me.
 I don't know about you, but my
 watch is broken. But, when you hear
this bell it's time to work-- We
 cannot afford to be late.

He moves from the bell and stands beneath the CEILING HATCH:
 It's high up, but the edges clearly reveal light from above.

BEN (cont'd)
 Simple engineering-- You can't
 build without a strong foundation
 so I'm going to stand here for a
 half hour, or as long as I can--
 (beat)
 Half-an-hour, each day when you
 hear the bell. And here we go!

He takes a deep breath and adopts a SLIGHTLY SQUAT POSE, his
 arms outstretched: Creating the foothold he'll use tomorrow.

He holds the pose: *Still*.

He holds it.

And holds it.

WIDE SHOT-- Tiny in this cavernous room, Ben stands alone
 holding this pretty odd looking pose.

BEN (cont'd)
 This is going to be a lot more
 boring than I anticipated.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - HALF-AN-HOUR LATER

Exhausted, Ben collapses to sit against a wall: He's
 squatted the first rung of the ladder for as long as he can.

He fixates on the HATCH in the ceiling-- His way out.

BEN
 (to himself)
 Same time tomorrow: Just twenty-
 three hours to kill.

(beat)
 Piece of cake.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL - LATER

We find Ben at the BAR of the DINING HALL, downing the dregs of his wine glass. He clumsily upturns the bottle for a refill, but unsurprisingly he's already finished it.

He discards the bottle to the floor, joining a litter of other empties. Ben's fingers thirstily feel over the bar and find a LIQUOR BOTTLE. He pulls it over--

And SUDDENLY STOPS as he sees the BLUE LABEL: *BRASSINGTON SCOTCH* (The same label he avoided in the mini-bar). Ben grimly stares at the bottle like it might stare back.

BEN

Alright.

He scoops up the bottle and an empty GLASS TUMBLER.

SUDDENLY MUSIC-- The same RAGTIME MUSIC blares from the PLAYER PIANO. Scotch in hand, Ben storms towards it.

BEN (cont'd)

Shut up!

He RIPS THE MUSIC ROLL from the PLAYER PIANO, TEARING A SECTION OF PAPER from the music roll in the process: He dabs his mouth with it, before POCKETING THE PAPER.

Standing before the now silent piano, Ben GRIMLY pops the cork on the SCOTCH, fills his glass but DOESN'T DRINK.

He places the bottle on TOP OF THE PIANO and retreats to a chair a few feet back. The GAS FIREPLACE burns nearby.

Ben stares at the glass of scotch: Somber. He raises it but DOESN'T DRINK. He holds it below his nose and BREATHES DEEPLY: The scent taking him back--

INT. CHILDHOOD LIVING ROOM - BEFORE

The YOUNG BOY from an earlier flashback sits at a PIANO. The shots are again floaty, blurry, foggy like memories...

An OLDER MAN sits beside him, skillfully playing but not too seriously: He's having fun, playing with his son-- YOUNG BEN.

THE FATHER plays, sipping from his WHISKEY GLASS--

BACK TO:

INT. DINING HALL

With closed eyes, Ben inhales the SCOTCH'S scent. He takes another deep breath and his expression changes.

A wry smile, like he's in the company of an old friend--
Or enemy.

BEN

There you are...

(inhales the scent)
They say time-travel's
impossible, but one whiff of
this brand and I'm ten years
old, we're sharing a piano stool
and you're teaching me the
difference between the harmonic
and melodic minor scale...

(beat: unwelcome)

Here's to you, Dad.

He looks up, addressing the SCOTCH BOTTLE on top of the
piano as though its a person in the room with him.

BEN (cont'd)

You'd place your hands on mine,
guiding my fingers to the right
keys.

(breathes the smell)

I can still feel your hands
around mine, guiding them--

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. FAMILY HOME - BEFORE

Dreamy, blurry FLASHBACK footage of a family home. The
hands of a YOUNG BOY *plink-and-plonk* along PIANO-KEYS.

FATHER-LIKE hands of an older man guide the boy's hands
to the correct note. It's paternal, warm, loving.

BACK TO:

INT. DINING HALL

Ben is back, staring down at the glass.

BEN

I don't know if it was ever
"good", but I remember that was
before it went really bad.
I never thought too much about
why you bought a 'Player Piano':
Did you always know you were
going to get so fucked-up that
you'd need it to play itself?

He looks up to the bottle, but it doesn't chime in.

BEN (cont'd)
Worked for me, I was more into the
mechanics of it all--

CUT TO:

INT. FAMILY HOME - BEFORE

YOUNG BEN sits alone at the piano, with a SHARPENED PENCIL he pokes and cuts into the MUSIC ROLL with it's spiked tip.

BEN (V.O.)
Punching holes to change the tune,
watching it all unspool...

As YOUNG BEN stares fascinated, we hear sounds of PARENTS ARGUING. Shots of FATHER'S fist PUNCHING HOLES in the wall--

BACK TO:

INT. DINING HALL

Ben inhales from the scotch again.

BEN
You made me think this was what a
man's breath was supposed to smell
like. I mean, there was always the
drinking, but eventually you
crossed that line and-- Once you
cross that line there's no coming
back, is there?

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. FAMILY HOME - BEFORE

The dreamy flashback visuals of THE PAST.

POV -- BEN'S DAD: Looking down at YOUNG BEN, cowering afraid of his Father.

POV -- YOUNG BEN: Staring up at a raised FIST-- Ready to strike: *Crossing the line...*

The YOUNG BOY cries, cowering in fear...

BACK TO:

INT. DINING HALL

BEN

Now look where you've guided my hands.

BEN'S POV - His hand, wrapped around the glass of whiskey. He still hasn't taken a sip.

BEN (cont'd)

Oscar Wilde said women's tragedy is that they all become their mothers. Men's tragedy is that they don't...

Ben again addresses the SCOTCH BOTTLE ON THE PIANO as though it's a person-- As though it's HIS FATHER.

BEN (cont'd)

You made no bones about what a piece of work Granddad was, how you were only dishing out what you were taught-- That you had no choice but to walk the path he laid for you? So if you're doomed to follow his footsteps, then I'm doomed to follow your footsteps...

He smiles grimly at the anthropomorphized BOTTLE.

BEN (cont'd)

Happy to say you're wrong. Because the only thing I got of yours, is an iron liver and a cheap watch.

He toasts and POURS THE SCOTCH OUT. It tips to the floor.

BEN (cont'd)

So if you really believed that, and if you had any love for me at all-- You should've just left and made sure you never came back: Make sure you leave no fucking footsteps to follow.

Ben unclasps the GOLDEN WRISTWATCH, stands and walks to the GAS FIREPLACE, staring as it burns. He TOSSES THE WATCH into the FLAMES.

It DROPS under a steel grate to depths below-- GONE FOREVER.

He walks from the bar to leave the dining space, but stops to once more address his "FATHER" sitting on the piano.

BEN

I'm not staying trapped. I'm getting out.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Eyes Open

-- Ben SPRINGS out of bed, IGNORING the broken chair-leg on the floor.

-- CLICK! The lock turns on the Hotel Door and it swings open to the corridor. Ben proudly holds his NEW KEY.

BEN

Let's build that big tower...

Ben heads out the door with PURPOSE--

Uptempo PERCUSSIVE MUSIC in the SCORE: A driving rhythm with a SEQUENCED feel (*think: T.Reznor & A.Ross/Dawn of Midi*)

MONTAGE BEGINS:

INT. LOBBY - LATER

DING-DING--DING!-- BEN -1 rings the concierge's bell.

Ben enters the lobby, watching BEN -1 outlining the plan.

BEN -1

(to the room)

Half-an-hour, each day when you hear the bell. And here we go!

As BEN -1 adopts a slightly squat pose, TODAY'S BEN approaches, using the human footholds provided to climb BEN -1's body-- There's no reaction as Ben clambers aboard.

BEN

(to BEN-1)

Alright mate?

He stands atop BEN -1's hands. He's a little wobbly, but finds his balance after a moment-- *This is working!*

Ben looks to THE EMPTY SPACE above him--

BEN (cont'd)

And hello, *Tomorrow-Me*, how are you going?

(beat)

Glad to hear it!

BEN -1

(down below)

This is going to be a lot more boring than I anticipated.

BEN
You got that right...

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - HALF-AN-HOUR LATER

DOLLY BACK along a wall as BEN -1 collapses against it.

BEN -1
Same time tomorrow: Just twenty-
three hours to kill.

(beat)
Piece of cake.

Ben, also exhausted, collapses beside BEN -1.

BEN
Don't mention cake...

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - THE NEXT DAY

DING-DING--DING!-- The bell is rung by BEN -2.

BEN -2
(to the room)
...And here we go!

He adopts his squat pose and BEN -1 climbs BEN -2.

BEN -1
(to Ben -2)
Alright, mate?

He stands, balancing atop BEN -2's hands.

BEN -1 (cont'd)
And hello, *Tomorrow-Me*, how are you
going?

Today's Ben CLIMBS INTO FRAME, up BEN -1's body.

BEN
Pretty shit, thanks.

BEN -1
Glad to hear it!

Today's Ben settles, on the top of the TOWER-- He stares up
at the ceiling--

BEN
 (shouting up)
 Keep it down up there!

(beat)
 That might be amusing in a few
 days...

BEN -2
 (bottom of tower)
 This is going to be a lot more
 boring than I anticipated.

BEN -1
 You got that right...

Today's Ben nods his head-- An idea forming.

BEN
 We need an activity, stimulation.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE HALLWAY - LATER

The PERCUSSIVE MONTAGE music continues as Ben marches towards a DISTINCT DOOR-- One we glimpsed earlier when he chased the footsteps from above.

He enters and CLOSES THE DOOR behind him, revealing a plaque: *CONFERENCE ROOM*

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A banal corporate, meeting space. In front of a WHITEBOARD, Ben approaches a CONFERENCE TABLE, surrounded by chairs.

He pulls up a seat at the table and takes a deep breath--

BEN
 What's the problem? We're trapped,
 but we have a plan to get out:
 Half an hour of climbing each day
 will get us through that hatch, and
 to an exit, okay?
 But that's not the only problem...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM

The familiar HOTEL ROOM--

BEN (V.O.)
 ...We also have the problem of not
starving to death--

As BEN from the conference room narrates, another BEN sits on the bed. He lifts his shirt, offering his flesh to THE NEXT DAY'S BEN who leans over, knife in hand.

BEN (V.O.) (cont'd)
 And we have the problem of not
losing our minds...

This BEN doesn't react as his flesh is carved by the blade.

BEN (V.O.) (cont'd)
 But the solution to the starving
 problem-- Enacting daily
 mutilations-- Is rather
 exacerbating the "*not-losing-my-*
fucking-mind" problem.

THE NEXT DAY'S BEN winces sickeningly as he draws the separated, saggy HUNK OF HUMAN MEAT into his hand--

BACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Ben addressing the conference room.

BEN
 So: For the purposes of our mental
 health, can we streamline this?
 Could we bypass the hunt, and go
 straight to the feast?

CUT TO:

INT. BUFFET STATION

In a pocket near the DINING HALL, Ben stands before steel serving tables where a sign reads "BUFFET STATION".

He has found a STEEL SERVING TRAY on which he presents the HUNK OF FLESH in his hand as though he's a MAÎTRE 'D.

BEN [MAÎTRE 'D]
 Dinner service, people. Tonight is
 the Dahmer rump special. It's not
 free-range as such, but this *long-*
pork has brined for years in our
 house blend of wine, salt and
 shame--

(MORE)

BEN [MAÎTRE 'D] (cont'd)
 (beat)
 If everyone waits for their number
 then there should be enough to go
 around-- Okay?

Ben takes the empty room's silence as agreement.

BEN [MAÎTRE 'D] (cont'd)
 Good-- *Fourteen...*
Thirteen...
Twelve...

He holds the MEAT out as though OFFERING it AS HE COUNTS...

BACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

CONFERENCE ROOM BEN is focused-- Thinking through a plan.

BEN [CONFERENCE ROOM]
 Give a man a fish; he'll eat for a
 day. Program a man to fish for
you...

CUT TO:

INT. BUFFET STATION

BEN the MAÎTRE 'D is still counting down, still offering out
 the HUNK OF MEAT to the empty BUFFET STATION room.

BEN [MAÎTRE 'D]
 Three...
 Two...
 One...

With the countdown finished, he TAKES THE MEAT and DROPS the
 tray to the floor.

BEN [MAÎTRE 'D] (cont'd)
 (holding the meat)
 That leaves this one for me, then.

Cryptic, he just COUNTED DOWN then left with the meat:
What's he planning?...

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY

DING-DING--DING!-- The bell rings: Another day's climb!

LATER:

DOLLY BACK along a wall as BEN -3 collapses against it.

BEN -2
Same time tomorrow: Just twenty-
three hours to kill.

Piece of cake.

BEN -2 collapses next to him, then BEN -1...

BEN -1
Don't mention cake...

BEN
No, not before dinner.

CUT TO:

INT. BUFFET STATION - LATER

At the buffet station, BEN -1 is offering the tray of meat, as today's Ben hovers nearby: Waiting his turn.

BEN -1/[MAÎTRE 'D]
Three...
Two...
One--

AS SOON AS "ONE" is called, Ben HURRIES FORWARD and SNATCHES the meat from the tray--

BEN
Compliments to the chef.

BEN -1 mimes TAKING the MEAT that Ben has ALREADY TAKEN, and DROPS the tray to the floor. With the meat ACTUALLY in his hand, today's Ben exits-- Watching BEN -1 as he goes.

BEN -1 stares at the non-existent meat in his empty hand--

BEN -1/[MAÎTRE 'D]
That leaves this one for me, then.

BACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

BEN [CONFERENCE ROOM]
I read once that solitary can drive a prisoner insane in a matter of days. You can escape any place but you can't escape your own head--

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE HALLWAY

BEN -1 marches towards the CONFERENCE ROOM as Ben did yesterday. TODAY'S BEN follows closely behind--

BEN (V.O.)
 The problem?
Our brain is going to turn to mush.
 The solution?
 Somehow, we need to start talking.

Oblivious to his presence, BEN -1 closes the door on him, smacking TODAY'S BEN in the face.

BEN
 (to any future Bens)
 Hey-- Guys, let's keep the door
 open, okay?

Other BENS head into the conference room as days tick by...

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

BEN [CONFERENCE ROOM]
 Every day we climb--

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY

The TOWER OF BENS is forming, stacking on top of themselves.

BEN -2
 And hello, *Tomorrow-Me*, how are you
 going?

BEN -1
 Pretty shit thanks.

BEN -2
 Glad to hear it!

BEN -1
 (shouting up)
 Keep it down up there!

That might be amusing in a few
 days...

As he says that, today's Ben climbs up him: *Not amused.*

BEN
 (shaking his head)
 Well I was wrong about that.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

BEN [CONFERENCE ROOM]
Every day we eat--

CUT TO:

INT. BUFFET STATION

The TRAY OF MEAT is offered by BEN -2, counting down.

BEN -2/[MAÎTRE 'D]
(counting down)
Four...
Three...
Two--

"TWO"-- TODAY'S BEN steps forward and takes the meat.

BEN
I'm sick of this paleo shit...

BEN -2/[MAÎTRE 'D]
(counting down)
One--

As "ONE" is called, BEN-1 hurries forward and SNATCHES non-existent meat from the EMPTY TRAY:

BEN -1
(to his empty hand)
Compliments to the chef.

BEN -2 stares at the non-existent meat in his empty hand--

BEN -2/[MAÎTRE 'D]
That leaves this one for me, then.

As long as Ben takes the meat BEFORE the PREVIOUS DAY'S BEN, there will always be a FRESH CUT OF MEAT for him here. His plan is WORKING!

BEN (V.O.)
And every day, we have a
conversation--

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Back in the conference room, Ben slumps down-- Out of ideas.

BEN
(thinking)
Simulated conversation: Still
thinking on how to do that one...

Another BEN enters the room behind him. This is THE NEXT BEN, signaling another day has passed. He walks to the WHITEBOARD behind the Ben who just spoke (now BEN -1).

BEN (cont'd)
 (the new Ben)
 It took a day, but I've got an idea: This isn't the ideal situation for a bit of back and forth-- Remember back at school? One student talks at a time, the class listens. We just need an agenda: Topics.

Ben scrawls a list of DISCUSSION TOPICS on the WHITEBOARD, after which he POCKETS the WHITEBOARD MARKER.

BEN (cont'd)
 Ms. Sutherland's class: Monday morning we'd go round the class and share our "ROSE", "THORN" and "BANANA" from the weekend: A good thing, a bad thing and a "BANANA": Something silly.

He takes a seat; the second around the conference table.

BEN (cont'd)
I'll go first. Today my "ROSE" is coming up with this great idea. My "THORN" is that I want to die, and my "BANANA"-- *Something silly*-- Is that I'm playing a children's game with a bunch of imaginary friends: That's pretty fucking silly isn't it?

Ben turns towards the EMPTY CHAIR next to him.

BEN (cont'd)
 Okay, now you go.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY

DING-DING--DING!!-- The bell is rung.

BEN (V.O)
"Climbing"

A swarm of BENS ready to climb the tower-- It's approaching TEN BENS HIGH!

INT. BUFFET STATION - LATER

BEN (V.O.)

"Eating"

BEN -14, playing the MAÎTRE 'D role, is offering the tray of meat: Counting down numbers like he's a service at a deli.

BEN -14/[MAÎTRE 'D]

(counting down)

Thirteen...

Ben, gray-faced, snatches the MEAT from the serving tray and skulks out of frame.

BEN -14/[MAÎTRE 'D] (cont'd)

Twelve...

Eleven...

Ten...

We DOLLY down A LINE OF BENS, from BEN -1 all the way to BEN -13. At each number the previous day's Ben steps up to grab the meat from the now-empty tray.

VARIOUS BENS

(upon receiving food)

Compliments to the chef/Yummy
yummy/Bon appetite/Fuck you/etc.

BEN (V.O.)

"Conversation"

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

At the CONFERENCE TABLE--

BEN

...my "ROSE" is coming up with this great idea. My "THORN" is that I want to die, and my "BANANA"-- *Something silly*-- Is that I'm playing a children's game with a bunch of imaginary friends: That's pretty fucking silly isn't it?

As he talks, THE NEXT BEN walks behind and sits in the next seat: Another day has passed. The previous Ben turns to the NOT-EMPTY CHAIR next to him--

BEN (cont'd)

Okay, now you go.

THE NEXT BEN

Today my "ROSE" was not falling off the tower, my "THORN" was still being alive, and my "BANANA" was going back to watch us get smacked in the head by that pot plant because I thought it would be a laugh: And I was right. Now you go.

WE PAN from THE NEXT BEN to reveal the next chair has ANOTHER BEN sitting in it--

ANOTHER BEN

Today my "ROSE" was just feeling a bit more myself, you know?

WE KEEP PANNING-- An uninterrupted shot revealing YET ANOTHER BEN in the next chair and so on:
The days are ticking by...

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - AN HOUR LATER

DING-DING--DING!!-- The CLIMBING BELL.

BEN (V.O.)

Climbing.

In the lobby, BEN -2 (the Ben on the BOTTOM of the tower) addresses the room.

BEN -2

Everybody needs to climb down before the level below or the whole tower collapses. Without a clock we need to keep time--

Still in his slightly-squat pose, he begins to TAP HIS FOOT:

DHA--DaDUMPH... DHA--DaDUMPH... It's a BEAT.

BEN -2 (cont'd)

Everybody needs to be down before the end of this song.

DHA--DaDUMPH... DHA--DaDUMPH... The beat of his tapping foot syncs up with the SCORE playing over the montage.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL - LATER

Another day bloodied and dirtied, Ben sits before the GAS FIREPLACE in the DINING HALL.

BEN (V.O.)

Eating.

Ben stares into the flame, arm stretched over the heat like he's TOASTING A MARSHMALLOW, but it's not a marshmallow on the tip of his knife-- It's a hunk of flesh: He's COOKING.

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

Conversation.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

We resume PANNING AROUND the CONFERENCE TABLE, revealing each chair is filled with a new day's Ben--

ONE FURTHER BEN

... and my "THORN" is that every day; every fucking day, it's a little harder to think of a "BANANA". But--

BEN

(cutting off)

Okay: I'm going to assume that's long enough so let's go to the next topic.

YET ANOTHER BEN

I wasn't finished...

As we PAN, we have completed a FULL ROTATION around the table, and are back on Ben who started this "TOPICS" game--

BEN

What is this place? How did we get here? We get out by climbing to that exit...

We are now in our second revolution around the table, the PAN continuing for the rest of the scene.

READER NOTE-- From *THE NEXT BEN* onward, assume each Ben is *ONE DAY FURTHER ALONG* than the previous.

THE NEXT BEN

If it even is an exit.

ANOTHER BEN

It has to be an exit...

YET ANOTHER BEN

You don't know that. How could you possibly know that?!

ONE FURTHER BEN
 Because every place that you can
 get into you can get out of-- It's
 an engineering certainty.
You can escape anything, except
your genetics and yourself.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY

The BEN ON THE BOTTOM of the HUMAN LADDER taps his foot:
 DHA--DaDUMPH... DHA--DaDUMPH...

He sheepishly begins to SING to the beat--

BEN ON THE BOTTOM
 (singing)
*I hear the drums echoing tonight,
 But she hears only whispers of some
 quiet conversation...*

CRANE UP to THE BEN ABOVE, who stands on top of him. He
 CRINGES as the Ben beneath him starts singing.

THE BEN ABOVE
 (embarrassed)
 Oh god...

BACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

WE PAN ACROSS the start of the table, Ben is pondering.

BEN
 I mean could this be some... Some
 kind of government experiment? A
 military experiment?

THE NEXT BEN
 The military is the government. Am
 I really this fucking stupid?

YET ANOTHER BEN
 What if we're a Human in an Alien
 zoo?

ONE FURTHER BEN
This. This conversation is my
 "THORN".

(beat)
 Unless that breaks the rules?

BEN
 Next topic: What's your current,
 honest opinion on how we taste?

BACK TO:

INT. LOBBY

The MONTAGE continues, back to the lobby where the HUMAN TOWER is being built: Framed on the two lowest BENS.

BEN ON THE BOTTOM
 (Singing)
...He turns to me as if to say--

THE BEN ABOVE
 (cringing)
 Why did I do this?

BEN ON THE BOTTOM
 (Singing)
*"Hurry boy she's waiting there for
 you..."*

THE BEN ABOVE looks like he might die from embarrassment.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL - LATER

After multiple days, MULTIPLE BENS sit around the fireplace: TOASTING THEIR MEAT-MALLOWS.

The ring of Bens cook their dinner, each a day dirtier than the last. A recent Ben looks up with an UNEASY expression--

BEN
 (new thought)
 Hey-- Are... Are we cannibals?

BACK TO:

INT. LOBBY

At the tower, THE BEN ABOVE the BEN ON THE BOTTOM has his eyes closed from shame, as the singing continues--

BEN ON THE BOTTOM
 (Singing)
*It's gonna take a lot to drag me
 away from you...*

THE BEN ABOVE suddenly opens his eyes-- An idea strikes and he can't help but JOIN IN--

BEN ON THE BOTTOM
 (singing)
*There's nothing that a
hundred men or more could
 ever do...*

THE BEN ABOVE
 (harmonizing)
*There's nothing that a
hundred men or more could
 ever do...*

He HARMONIZES pretty well with his recorded self. He looks pleasantly surprised-- *Wow, that doesn't sound too bad.*

HARD CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - THE NEXT DAY

The NEXT BEN UP enthusiastically takes the third harmony.

THREE BENS
 (three part harmony)
*I bless the raaains
 Down in Aaaaafrika--*

HARD CUT TO:

A SLIGHTLY HIGHER ANGLE where ANOTHER BEN stands above--

ANOTHER BEN
 (chiming in)
I bless the rains!

THE BEN ABOVE
 (to himself)
 It's weird that, like, six white
 guys wrote this song.

The PERCUSSIVE MUSIC CRESCENDOS in the soundtrack as the MONTAGE approaches a CLIMAX--

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - THE THIRTEENTH DAY

We CRANE UP THE HUMAN LADDER as the THIRTEENTH BEN climbs to the top. As he rises, we hear little murmurs from previous days chatter through the group:

-- "Keep it down up there!"
 -- "Without a clock we need to keep time--"etc.
 -- "ACH-CHOO!" The current highest Ben SNEEZES.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

There's a BEN in EVERY SEAT. FROM ABOVE, we see the conference room bustling with SIMULATED "CONVERSATION".

INT. CONFERENCE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Outside in the hall, Ben has **CROSSED OUT** "CONFERENCE ROOM" and written new names across the days:

- ~~CONFERENCE ROOM~~
- ~~CHAT ROOM~~
- ~~THERAPY~~
- KINDERGARTEN

INT. LOBBY

In the lobby, the **TOWER OF BENS** is **ALMOST AT THE CEILING!**
Halfway up, a Ben **DINGS** the **CONCIERGE'S BELL** for percussion.

TOWER OF BENS
(choir-like)
Gonna take some time to do the--

Today's Ben is on top of the tower. He joins in the chorus--

BEN
(with the choir)
Things we never haaaaaaaad!

Stacked **FOURTEEN MEN TALL**, the **ALL-BEN CHOIR** sing together--
Sounding almost angelic in the reverb of the large lobby.

TOWER OF BENS
(singing)
Ooh-- Hoo...

Glassy eyed, a **RARE SMILE** wraps across Ben's face. He shakes his head at this insane spectacle.

From the **BOTTOM RUNG** of the **TOWER**, **BEN -14** calls out--

BEN -14
(shouting up)
Listen up-- End of the next chorus
the top needs to climb down. Then a
lower level every **TWO BARS...**

CUT TO:

SHORTLY AFTER

Ben's feet hit the ground. He's the first down, and turns back to watch his efforts: The **TOWER OF BENS** disassembles, climbing down one-by-one as the song finishes.

For the first time he wears an expression of **PRIDE**.

BEN
(can you believe it?)
"I can't get us out, but we can"

He looks at the ceiling hatch above him: It's SO CLOSE now.

BEN (cont'd)
We're going to do it.

END OF MONTAGE:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Ben's eyes open, waking in the familiar Hotel room. He takes a breath:

BEN
Today's the day.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

A more determined looking Ben enters the lobby, taking in the sight before him: FOURTEEN BENS stacked atop each other.

Ben looks nervous, it's DANGEROUSLY HIGH: A crooked, slanted climb. The highest BEN is just out of reach of the hatch--

BEN
Come on, you can do this...

He approaches the BEN ON THE BOTTOM, the lowest 'RUNG' of the human ladder, and draws a DEEP BREATH to steel himself.

BEN (cont'd)
Just get up.
Just get up.

His hands are trembling.

BEN (cont'd)
(psyching himself up)
Come on-- Do you even want to get out of here?

Ben looks to the HATCH, focused-- He BEGINS TO CLIMB!

There is murmuring from across the days as he ascends:
"How are you, tomorrow me?", "Keep it down up there!" Etc...

His hands and feet clamber over his previous iterations: His FOOT BOUNDS OFF A FACE, his fingers GRIP ONTO HAIR-- He claws and grasps these bodies like a ROCK-FACE!

As he approaches the midpoint, a voice calls from below--

BEN ON THE BOTTOM
Everybody needs to climb down before the level below or the whole tower collapses. Without a clock we need to keep time--

The TAPPING FOOT from below: *DHA--DaDUMPH... DHA--DaDUMPH--*
Ben hears the drums echoing tonight.

BEN

*Forgive me Toto, but I hope I never
hear these drums echoing again...*

The TOWER OF BENS begin singing as he continues the climb.
Despite all his practice, it's an arduous physical task.

Getting higher, the time-keeping song is up to the chorus--

TOWER OF BENS

(choir-like singing)

*Gonna take a lot to drag me away
from you...*

He's ALMOST AT THE TOP-- At least TEN BENS high!
Close up on his face-- *I've got this.*

TOWER OF BENS (cont'd)

(singing)

*There's nothing that a hundred me
or more could ever do...*

POV-- THE HATCH

Getting CLOSER AND CLOSER with each new step higher--

TOWER OF BENS (cont'd)

(singing)

I bless the rains down in Africa...

BEN -4

(chiming in)

I bless the rains!

Ben's practically there-- A few more feet should do it!

TOWER OF BENS

Gonna take some time to do the...

The diegetic sound FADES AWAY, Ben's focused: TRANCE-LIKE.

Just ONE MORE STEP and--

BEN -3

ACH-CHOO!

SUDDENLY-- A raw SNEEZE cuts through the trance-like
silence. Ben is STARTLED and HIS FOOT SLIPS!

In SLOW MOTION, we see his hand GRASPS FOR A HOLD but finds
NOTHING-- Ben FALLS! He PLUMMETS towards the hard TILED
FLOOR from a deadly height--

Mid-fall, Ben desperately reaches out and-- STOPS FALLING!
He has caught something: A single, errant FINGER jutting out
halfway down the tower.

He clutches for DEAR-LIFE-- Hanging from an oblivious Ben's digit! Struggling, Ben swings to a more stable position. He lies, collecting his breath-- He almost fell to his DEATH!

A voice calls from below--

BEN ON THE BOTTOM

*There's about one chorus left, so
I'd start climbing down if you're
up top--*

Heart still racing, Ben looks up to BEN -1 at the top of the tower: He's getting ready to climb down. He has to act fast.

BEN

I'm not waiting one more goddamn
day!

He props up and RESUMES THE CLIMB! *He's gonna do it!*

As the song is wrapping up, BEN -1 (the Ben up top) definitely starts to shift pose-- But Ben isn't hesitating.

With EXTREME focus, he LAUNCHES across his previous day's efforts-- Climbing at almost double the speed.

In only MOMENTS, he's standing on top of BEN -1 before he climbs down-- He's ON TOP OF THE TOWER!

Cautious, but excited, Ben presses his hands against the hatch and begins to slowly push-- It's NOT LOCKED! He looks down at the view, and smiles.

He STANDS-- Opening the HATCH and rising through it. Ben cranes up, finally leaving the lobby to find...

INT. AREA ABOVE ESCAPE HATCH - CONTINUOUS

THE HATCH SWINGS OPEN WITH EASE-- Ben's hands emerge from underneath, followed by his face peering through. Right in front of him, he sees a FLOOR TILE at opening's edge.

Ben's expression: A slow, dawning HORROR. Right in front of him, on the floor of this new area, is a floor tile with a FAMILIAR DIAGRAM CARVED into it:

A crude diagram of FIFTEEN STICK FIGURES scrawled on top of each other. His eyes crane slowly upward, charting a course up FIFTEEN BENS STACKED ON TOP OF EACH OTHER...

BEN

(disbelief)
No, no, no, no--

A WIDE ANGLE: We get a good view of where Ben has emerged--

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A GRAND HOTEL LOBBY, with ornate massively HIGH CEILINGS--
Like a BALLROOM...

The HATCH was just the underside of A TILE ON THE FLOOR. The same "Pac-Man" logic that looped Ben through the "EXIT" DOOR also seems to apply to the room vertically.

He's BACK TO WHERE HE STARTED: *All those days were a WASTE.*

Ben lies back on the tiled floor and--

BEN
(guttural)
AAAAAARRRRRGHH!

As he screams, a DEEP RUMBLING quakes the Hotel, lights flicker before settling back to normal as he stops.

The TOWER OF BENS disassembles, climbing down one by one. BEN -1 is the first to reach the ground.

BEN -1
(can you believe it?)
"I can't get us out, but we can..."

Our Ben hears this as he gets to his feet. He turns, trembling with frustration; sneering at BEN -3.

BEN
(goaded)
What was that?

BEN -1 keeps smiling, still full of hope, still excited.

BEN -1
(proud)
We're going to do it.

Ben stands, facing this duplicate, rage in his eyes.

BEN
You're going to do nothing, okay?

BEN -1 continues to smile, eyes glazed and oblivious.

BEN (cont'd)
(fury)
You useless, pathetic, fucking
waste--

Ben LOSES IT: PUMMELING his fists into BEN -1's identical face! He SMACKS him again and again until his KNUCKLES ARE SPLIT AND BLOODY.

Ben stops, seething with ANGRY breaths. Trembling, he looks up at BEN -1 and, of course, there's no reaction--

He's only hurting himself.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Key in hand, Ben swings open the door to the familiar HOTEL ROOM, closing it behind him.

He crashes onto the bed, KNUCKLES SPLIT and SPATTERED WITH BLOOD. He stares at the ceiling: Vacant and defeated.

Ben looks inconsolable: *All those days wasted...*

INT. CROSS SECTION OF ROOMS - MULTIPLE DAYS

We stare into a CROSS-SECTION of FIVE HOTEL ROOMS, side by side-- Like SETS built on a theater-stage, we can see into each room through an invisible "fourth wall":

An abstract view of BEN'S MOVEMENTS across SEVERAL DAYS.

There's a BEN in each room and in TIME-LAPSE we see them all get out of bed, leave their rooms and ultimately return to sleep at night. That's in all the rooms EXCEPT FOR ONE.

The room on FRAME RIGHT shows today's Ben: Lying in bed, NOT MOVING for the whole day.

We DOLLY RIGHT: Revealing rooms from THE NEXT DAY, and THE NEXT DAY, etc... As we pass over these new rooms, Ben still stays in bed. Day after day, inconsolably STILL IN HIS BED.

He has GIVEN UP.

THE DOLLYING STOPS: Showing multiple days of Ben's inactivity across multiple rooms. Ben stands from the most recent room (THE ROOM ON FRAME RIGHT).

He looks like he's at the bottom of the pit-- Sad, pathetic and most of all: Lonely. He walks out of his room and, using the key, ENTERS the room NEXT TO HIS.

We DOLLY IN until we have filled the frame with this SINGLE ROOM (HOTEL ROOM -1).

Sadly, Ben approaches and CLIMBS into the bed in this room, the SAME BED as BEN -1 who lies ON HIS SIDE.

We DOLLY IN closer and closer, as Ben climbs up the bed, nestling himself underneath the arm of BEN -1. We PUSH CLOSER until we're framed up in an intimate TWO SHOT:

Ben lies under BEN -1's arm, CRADLED like a child in the arms of a parent: Ben allows himself to be HELD--

The first physical warmth since he woke up in this nightmare: He's embracing himself.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Ben's eyes open on a new morning. He is ALONE in the room again, but there is a SOUND. Something that woke him up--

PHONE

B-RIIIIIIING-- B-RIIIIIIING!

The shrill, blistering bell cuts through the room, cutting through the empty repetition.

Ben JOLTS up-- A *phone call*? It's coming from the CLOSET...

CLOSET DOORS OPEN-- Ben stares down at the RINGING PHONE. Cautiously, he takes the receiver and holds it to his ear.

BEN

(scratchy, thin)

Hello?

VOICE ON THE PHONE

Hello?! Hi, I'm in Room--

(pauses: *Which room?*)

I'm in a room-- I don't how I got here and the door's locked from outside... Please, get help I-- I think someone's put me here.

BEN'S FACE-- What the hell? *I know this voice...*

Ben's eyes widen: Some great truth is being revealed... He doesn't talk, we can only hear him BREATHING.

Ben's breathing becomes LAUGHTER: A mad, knowing CACKLING! Breathing, and laughing, and cackling that is TRANSMITTED THROUGH THE PHONE LINE--

He cackles uncontrollably: Ben recognizes this call because, HE MADE THIS CALL the first day he woke up here!

VOICE ON THE PHONE/BEN -25

Hello? Who is this?

(beat: listening to phone)

You're watching me aren't you--
Did you put me here?

Ben's stops laughing: He's put it together--

BEN

(I should've known)

Of course--

CLICK!-- Ben HANGS UP, stunned: When he made the call on the first day he was hearing HIS OWN VOICE from the FUTURE!

His head shakes from side to side, wrestling with this revelation: *What does this mean?*

BEN (cont'd)
(to himself)
Hold on...

He stands and backs away from the phone. Still puzzling it out, Ben opens the door and steps out into the CORRIDOR--

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Ben, dizzied in thought, stumbles from the HOTEL ROOM. His head is shaking, puzzling: *What does that mean?*

VOICE (O.S.)
Hey! You there--

A voice from DOWN THE HALL. Ben turns to face it. It seems to be an earlier version of him, but something seems different.

Ben freezes. Even from this distance, it feels like this previous iteration is AWARE OF HIM. That isn't how this usually works...

This previous Ben starts to SPRINT to catch him--

BEN -18
(running)
Hey-- Wait!

Ben immediately SKULKS back into the room and--

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SLAM-- Ben shuts the door in the face of this sprinting iteration. He immediately locks the door with a CLICK.

The HANDLE WIGGLES, as BEN -18 tries to enter.

BEN -18
(knocking on the door)
Open up-- come on!

BEN -18 booms on the door, again and again.

BEN -18 (cont'd)
I'm not-- I'm one of the good guys.
Please--

Inside the room, Ben closes his eyes: Remembering--

BEN
 (reciting)
 "Maybe we can help each other..."

BEN -18
 Maybe we can help each other!
 Where are we?!

Ben is remembering this interaction from when HE was on the other side of the door. He pats his pockets and pulls something out: The TORN SHEET from the PIANO'S MUSIC ROLL.

BEN
 (realization)
 It's a sequence!

He looks at the PUNCH-HOLES on the music roll: A SEQUENCE.

BEN (cont'd)
 This is the part of the sequence
 where I say *goddammit* too many
 times...

BEN -18
 (muffled through door)
 Goddammit-- Open up or I'll kick
 this goddamn door down-- *You hear
 me? I'll goddamn do it...*

Ben strains, eyes closed REMEMBERING--

BEN
There was a note--

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAYS EARLIER

Footage from earlier as Ben studied this sinister note.
 Typed in the corner in a vintage font: **MPO 60**

BEN
 (reading)
 M P O sixty...

BACK TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Ben OPENS his eyes from the memory and looks at the sheet of MUSIC ROLL in front of him. Above the PUNCH-HOLES is some typed words: The title, genre and the TEMPO: **TEMPO 60**

BEN
 (reading)
 M P O sixty...

He tears a SCRAP from the sheet and by chance or by fate, it rips EXACTLY to the shape of the note. In the corner: **MPO 60**

From another pocket, Ben pulls the WHITEBOARD MARKER and begins to HAND-WRITE A NOTE!

BEN -18
 (through the door)
 Alright, you've left me no choice,
 I'm gonna break this door down!

Ben FOLDS THE NOTE, bends down, and SLIDES IT UNDER THE DOOR. Ben rises up and stares through the peephole.

BEN'S POV-- THE PEEPHOLE: The iteration of BEN -18 bends and picks up the NOTE.

BEN -18 (cont'd)
 (reading)
"I thought that took three of you".

BEN -18 looks alarmed as he stares towards the PEEPHOLE.

BEN -18 (cont'd)
 How did-- You've been watching me?
 Who are you?! What is this--

BANG! BANG!-- The door shakes as BEN -18 angrily beats it.

BEN'S POV-- THE PEEPHOLE: BEN -18 turns and reads the other side of the note. His eyes grow wide with TERROR and--

Our Ben breaks into LAUGHTER! A mad, taunting CACKLE at the sight of his own TERRIFIED FACE as BEN -18 retreats away.

BEN
 Trust me, it'll seem a whole lot
 funnier in-- say-- About eighteen
 days!

Ben turns away from the peephole, resting against the door.

BEN (cont'd)
 It's just me. It's always just
 me...

(beat)
That's why I couldn't escape!

His eyes light up. He's figured something out!

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - A LITTLE LATER

With MANIC energy, Ben strides across the Lobby, ignoring any previous iterations that move along their preset paths.

He passes the construction of the HUMAN LADDER and goes straight to the EXIT. He BURSTS THROUGH THE DOORS through the doors and, as expected, he emerges in the same lobby--

The established Pac-Man logic. He stands under the "EXIT".

BEN
(to himself)
The "EXIT" is here: Just not now--

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Back into the CONFERENCE room. Previous days' iterations of Ben surround the table as a familiar "conversation" plays out--

THE NEXT BEN
...If it even is an exit.

ANOTHER BEN
...It has to be an exit.

YET ANOTHER BEN
You don't know that.

Through the open door, OUR BEN, barges in bursting to have his voice 'heard'.

YET ANOTHER BEN (cont'd)
How could you possibly know that?!

ONE FURTHER BEN
Because every pl--

This talking Ben's mouth is suddenly MUFFLED! Today's Ben silences him with his hand: HE is taking the floor--

BEN
(muffling previous Ben)
"Because every place you can get into you can get out"--
That's engineering, sure, but that's only thinking in three-dimensions: Height, width, depth--
But there's obviously another dimension at play here; the fourth-dimension: Time!

THE NEXT BEN
That should be enough time; Next topic--

THE NEXT BEN around the table begins to speak, so today's Ben steps over to MUFFLE THIS BEN'S MOUTH instead.

BEN

We know where the "EXIT" is-- It's got a big sign above it-- But we haven't reached when the exit is!

YET ANOTHER BEN begins to speak, so Ben steps and muffles him too.

BEN (cont'd)

That's why I couldn't escape: Because there are things that I do here that I hadn't done yet. Nobody sitting around this table can hear me, or see me, or react if I do something like this--

He slaps a different Ben in the face. As said: No reaction.

BEN (cont'd)

That's because you're just recordings, repeating my actions: So you can't leave until you've at least done what I'm doing now!

(beat: checking the math)
I've assumed I'm the original because I can't see anyone ahead of me, but you can't see anyone ahead of you: So what if I'm also just a recording, repeating the actions of a "me" from further along?

He steps to MUFFLE a speaking Ben as the circle continues.

BEN (cont'd)

I was handed a note under the door before I first tried the exit: So I couldn't exit then, because then no-one would write the note that I'd already been given-- No-one would answer the phone-call I had already made:

The sequence wasn't finished!

(beat)

It's like a piece of music: It doesn't matter if I know the final note is a "G SHARP"; playing that "G SHARP" in the middle of the song doesn't make it the ending, it's just another note--

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DINING HALL - DAYS AGO

Days ago, Ben stares at the PLAYER PIANO. The MUSIC ROLL unspools, dictating its SEQUENCE OF NOTES to the piano.

BEN (V.O.)
 There's all these notes in the
 middle that have to come first...

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Back in the conference room.

BEN
 That "G SHARP" is always in the
 same place along the keyboard, but
 only when you play it at that
 specific time--

INT. DINING HALL - DAYS AGO

The FINAL NOTE rings out on the piano.

BEN (V.O.)
Then the "G SHARP" becomes the
 ending.

The MUSIC ROLL stops spinning with a satisfying, mechanical
 CLICK!-- A musical clockwork wound to its ending: The
 sequence is complete.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Around the table, it is the next Bens' time to speak--

YET ANOTHER BEN
 (addressing different Ben)
 What are you talking about--

BEN
 Shut up--

Ben quickly muffles YET ANOTHER BEN with his hand.

BEN (cont'd)
 Not every action is sent back down
 the line, or when I was sitting in
 this chair I would've tasted my own
 hand, or when I woke up on the
 first day, I would've seen
 tomorrow's me breaking through the
 wall--

The conversation around the table moves faster than Ben can
 muffle--

AN EVEN FURTHER BEN
This. This conversation is my
 "THORN".

(MORE)

AN EVEN FURTHER BEN (cont'd)
 (beat)
 Unless that breaks the rules?

Ben pauses at this line, thinking: "*Breaks the rules...*"

BEN
Rules-- Every structure has a set
 of rules and restrictions:
 Only certain things from later in
 the sequence are sent the other
 way: So what are the rules?

(beat)
 There's the note under the door,
 the voice over the phone line...

He moves to muffle the next Ben.

BEN (cont'd)
 (putting it together)
 Only things in the rooms are sent
 back, and never through the broken
 walls. Maybe breaking the walls is
breaking the rules--
 Maybe that's why the walls repair
 themselves every day:
 It has to be through the door!

The next Ben pipes up, some dialogue from a prior day--

YET ANOTHER BEN
 See, I don't really mind the taste.
 What does that mean--

Ben muffles him.

BEN
 (manic, excited)
 It means I've received payoffs that
 need to be set up-- I've had the
 reaction before the action--
 So until I make those actions that
cause my reactions I'm trapped in a
 paradox.

(beat: what the fuck?)
 Put everything in its right place,
tick every box:
Then I can use the exit.

Ben focuses. Tapping his fingers against the table, lost in
 thought--

BEN (cont'd)
 What else must have been me?
 What other boxes do I need to tick?

As he taps his fingers, his eyes settle on HIS HAND--
Crusted with dark, DRIED BLOOD, his knuckles SPLIT from his
angry outburst: He's seen this hand before!

BEN (cont'd)

Wait...

He reaches to the hilt of his pants and slowly withdraws THE
FILLETING KNIFE. He stares at it, clutched in his worn,
bloodied hand: He's DEFINITELY seen this before.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - LATER

We race down a corridor lined with identical HOTEL ROOM
doors.

Ben marches along the corridor, KNIFE in hand. He strides
with purpose, scanning the doors of the different rooms--
Lost in ubiquity.

BEN

Which one, which one...

His fingers count along the doors, he's trying to remember.

BEN (cont'd)

It's gotta be one of these ones...

A thought strikes him. Ben rushes to a door and presses his
eye AGAINST THE PEEPHOLE: Nothing.

He moves to the next door, again he presses his eye against
the peephole. He pauses: Nothing.

Ben steps to the next door and for the third time SWOOPS his
face towards the door: Plugging his EYE against the
exterior side of the PEEPHOLE--

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM -24 - CONTINUOUS (BUT ALSO 24 DAYS AGO)

BEN -24'S POV - THE PEEPHOLE: An EYEBALL! A gaping,
bloodshot EYE! Ben's gaping, bloodshot EYE! Pressed against
the peephole STARING RIGHT BACK AT HIM!

BACK TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS (BUT ALSO 24 DAYS LATER)

With his eye pressed against the outside of the PEEPHOLE,
Ben can hear from inside the room--

BEN -24
 (muffled through the door)
 Jesus!

Through the door, Ben hears BEN -24 tumble to the floor in fright, just as he did so many days ago: THIS IS THE ROOM!

KA-CHLINK!-- Ben inserts the key into the door and unlocks it. He opens the door JUST ENOUGH for his gaunt, dirtied hand to go through the gap, clenching the KNIFE.

As his arm pushes the knife further through the door, a thought hits him: Like he's only just remembered a detail--

(A detail from when we saw the other side on PAGE 6)

BEN
 (panic)
 Oh, shit! Wait--

SLAM!-- From inside the room, BEN -24 kicks the door which CRUSHES AGAINST BEN'S FOREARM. He yelps in pain as his earlier self wrestles the knife from his hand!

Ben rips his arm back through the door, but not before BEN -24 takes the knife and SLICES A GASH ALONG HIS FOREARM!

Ben recoils and SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT! Quickly locking it with the key.

BANG!-- He angrily kicks the door, dealing with his pain.

BEN (cont'd)
 (screaming)
 Yaaaaargh!!

Ben winces, CLUTCHING his slashed forearm, rocking back and forth in pain--

BEN (cont'd)
 (pain)
Shit! Stupid! Stupid!

(beat: takes a breath)
 No-- It had to happen. If I hadn't done that, I wouldn't have hit the light-switch and I wouldn't have seen the light from the next room-- And if I didn't have the knife I would've starved...

Ben steps away, calling back in the direction of his scared self.

BEN (cont'd)
 Besides, he'll get his...

INT. LOBBY - LATER

Ben is back in the lobby, with great anticipation he heads towards the EXIT door and opens it--

It still gives way back to the same room: Not an exit YET.

BEN

Then there's still a box that needs ticking...

He pauses, thinking--

BEN (cont'd)

If I'm right; it's something future me did in one of the rooms, but I never saw myself come in... Which means I sneak in when I'm asleep, or--

(beat:idea)

Or when I can't see...

Ben snaps to attention: He knows where he has to go!

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE FIRST ROOM - LATER

Darting down the corridor, Ben continues on and on until he comes to a halt at the corridor's END.

He stands in front of the door at the end of the hallway.

BEN

This must be the place.

The door in front of him: ROOM 001-- The first room, the first day.

BEN (cont'd)

I must have done something in here, I just gotta make sure I do the exact same thing...

He UNLOCKS THE DOOR and, LEAVING THE KEY in the lock, gently swings it open...

INT. (THE FIRST) HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Light spills in from the corridor as the door swings open to a familiar but DARK Hotel Room-- The lights are yet to switch on.

In the center of the room, a CAPTIVE-- Strapped to a chair with PLASTIC wrapped tightly around his head: Ben as he was on the first day, yet to wake up in the strange place.

Our Ben closes the door behind him and COUGHS-- His breathing a little labored like the air is becoming STALE.

Ben scans the room-- Looking for something out of place, some box he needs to tick...

BEN
(muttering)
Come on...

He approaches the CAPTIVE and holds his ear to his chest. No sound of breathing: Like the sequence hasn't STARTED yet.

Ben investigates. He checks the FRIDGE, CLOSET, the BED-- Everything seems as it was when he woke up here.

BEN (cont'd)
Something out of place, it has to
be here...

A thought strikes him. Ben looks upwards: To the ceiling--

BEN (cont'd)
(bingo!)
A box left un-ticked...

The drop panel ceiling-- There is no CROOKED PANEL!

BEN (cont'd)
(all coming together)
I put it there so I had a goal!
That's gotta be the last one...

He rushes forward and clambers atop the CAPTIVE. Standing with one foot on the man's thigh and his other atop his shoulder, he can JUST reach the ceiling.

Outstretched at maximum, his hand presses against the panel and LIFTS IT just enough to reveal the dark space above.

He feels around for the WATCH. Ben looks confused-- It isn't there!

BEN (cont'd)
It has to be here or I don't get of
this room...

He checks his wrist-- He's not wearing the watch. He pats down his pockets: NOTHING. He starts to panic--

BEN (cont'd)
(think dammit!)
Where did I leave it?

A horrible MEMORY strikes Ben...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DINING HALL - FLASHBACK

Ben unclasps the GOLDEN WRISTWATCH, stands and walks to the GAS FIREPLACE, staring as it burns.

He TOSSES THE WATCH into the FLAMES.

It DROPS under a steel grate to depths below-- GONE FOREVER.

BACK TO:

INT. (THE FIRST) HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben clasps his bare wrist-- GONE FOREVER...

BEN
 (shit!)
 No, no, no--
 I need it or the sequence can't...

Ben starts to panic but then STOPS: Something has caught his eye-- A small glint of GOLD beneath him. Wrapped around the wrist of the CAPTIVE BEN: The WATCH.

BEN (cont'd)
 (to himself)
 Bastard...

Ben stoops down, and UNCLASPS THE WATCH from his own unconscious wrist.

EXTREME CLOSE UP-- Bens' Father's watch, the SECOND HAND was TICKING until it FREEZES the moment Our Ben steals it--

Suddenly, the lights SWITCH ON. The man in the chair jerks to life beneath Ben's feet. Plastic CRINKLES as the seated, CAPTIVE BEN takes a breath-- He has WOKEN UP.

Ben whips his hand skyward, and JUST manages to stuff the WATCH ABOVE THE PANEL where he first found it: He did it!

Readers note: Back on PAGE 1 we didn't see today's Ben as we were in the bag with BEN as he woke. We did, however, HEAR--

"THUD!! As something heavy tumbles to the ground..."

THUD!! Ben loses his balance, TUMBLING to the ground! He stares at the FIRST BEN who heaves for air in the plastic--

He's BETWEEN Ben's and the door-- His tumble landing him so the FIRST BEN blocks his direct path to the exit.

Ben SCRAMBLES and skids UNDERNEATH THE BED: He's HIDING.
After a moment suddenly--

THUD!!-- The FIRST BEN tips over to the ground, thrashing.

PSFFFHhh-- Air flows through a freshly torn hole in the plastic. He tries but fails to whip the bag from his head...

MAN IN BAG/FIRST BEN

(hoarse)

Hello?

(clears throat)

Hello?

Ben watches, still hidden UNDER THE BED. They are both lying on the floor, and Ben is really only inches from FIRST BEN.

BEN

(whispering to himself)

I didn't see me, so he can't see me-- *Just stay hidden...*

MAN IN BAG/FIRST BEN

Hell--

FIRST BEN freezes-- *Maybe it isn't safe to call out...*

This scene plays with both NEW FOOTAGE and OLD FOOTAGE:

OLD FOOTAGE-- As we've seen this scene from multiple perspectives, we show this moment using the EXACT SAME FOOTAGE from the VERY FIRST SCENE of the film.

This time, we know where to look, but if you paid CLOSE ATTENTION, you could've seen Ben HIDING in the shadows under the bed from the VERY BEGINNING.

NEW FOOTAGE-- Back to Our Ben, watching from under the bed.

The CHAIR LEG skirts past Ben's face, scraping along the floor as the FIRST BEN hops his chair along the ground.

The CHAIR LEG is inches from Ben's face: This is when he WEDGED the CHAIR LEG between the BED and the WALL.

Ben stares: CONFUSED--

BEN

How did I--

OLD FOOTAGE-- From earlier in the film (PAGE 9), SECOND DAY BEN has just beat his first, small hole in the wall. He is watching the "CAPTIVE" next door, trying to offer help--

SECOND DAY BEN

Don't freak out, see if you can wedge the chair behind the bed-leg and kind of snap it--

NEW FOOTAGE-- Back to Ben hiding under the bed. Upon closer look, there's NO BED-LEG on this side against the wall-- The frame is bolted against the wall itself.

BEN
(to himself)
What did I wedge this against?

The CHAIR LEG is inches from Ben's widening eyes: *Of course!*

SUDDENLY, he reaches out with both hands: Still hidden under the bed, he PRESSES THE CHAIR LEG AGAINST THE WALL! Trembling, he holds the chair in place with ALL HIS MIGHT!

OLD FOOTAGE-- From earlier, THE SECOND BEN watches, tense:

THE SECOND BEN
Wow-- Yes!
Now just push!

NEW FOOTAGE-- Ben, under the bed, pushes the chair against the wall with ALL HIS MIGHT! Meanwhile, THE FIRST BEN, pushes against this fulcrum with all HIS might!

The CHAIR LEG STRAINS as the pressure grows and grows, wedged against the wall and BEN'S OWN GRIP until finally--

CRACK!-- The wooden CHAIR LEG SNAPS AT THE JOIN: There was always a Ben under the bed, helping him!

Ben watches, nervous as THE FIRST BEN starts to break through his binds. In only moments, HE WILL REMOVE THE BAG FROM HIS FACE, making hiding much more difficult--

BEN
(psyching himself up)
Get up, Ben, just get up--
Get up!

He LAUNCHES into action, swiftly ROLLING from under the bed and silently racing TOWARDS THE DOOR--

OLD FOOTAGE-- From earlier in the film (PAGE 10), SECOND DAY BEN is beating a hole to come through for the first time.

His view rocks back and forth with each strike. At the end of each SLAM! He gets a clear view through the hole:

SECOND DAY BEN'S POV-- THE HOLE TO THE NEXT ROOM

SLAM!-- The Captive tears through the binds on his hands...
SLAM!-- The Captive gets to his feet--

THIS TIME AROUND we don't cut from this angle as SECOND DAY BEN rocks back. Staying on the hole, we see Ben ROLL FROM UNDER THE BED and silently race towards the door!

SLAM!-- On the third slam, if you were watching closely, you could've seen OUR BEN skulking out the VERY EDGE OF FRAME--

NEW FOOTAGE-- Back to OUR BEN.

WIDE SHOT: He's made it to the door and JUST as THE FIRST BEN grabs the bag on his face he OPENS the door and QUIETLY SLIPS OUT. We HOLD THE WIDE SHOT as it becomes--

OLD FOOTAGE-- A wide shot from the OPENING where Ben tears the plastic from his face: The first time we saw this shot, we cut into it the instant after LATER BEN closed the door.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE FIRST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben has just CLOSED THE DOOR and stepped out into the corridor.

His heart races as he collects his breath-- He almost got caught...

MEANWHILE:

INT. (THE FIRST) HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

On the other side of the door, FIRST BEN is getting his bearings-- He heads to the door.

SLOW MOTION: FIRST BEN is reaching towards the door. His fingers WRAP around the door handle--

BACK TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE FIRST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SLOW MOTION: Ben's eyes grow wide as the DOOR HANDLE starts to TURN--

He stares, horrified: The keys are still in the door-- It's UNLOCKED! The FIRST BEN is about to escape, shattering the entire sequence!

SLOW MOTION: Ben races his hand to the KEY IN THE LOCK as the door-handle begins to twist--

CLICK!-- Ben turns the key, locking the door JUST before the handle can fully open. *That was a close one!*

The handle jerks back and forth, but it's no use-- The FIRST BEN can't get through. Ben takes a sigh of relief.

BANG, BANG, BANG! A fist booms from the other side of the door as Ben notices the PINPRICK OF LIGHT in the PEEPHOLE go DARK-- *The FIRST BEN is about to look through it!*

No doors run off the hallway, the hallway leads only one way, to a distant STAIRCASE that rises towards a source of light-- Daylight.

Ben moves straight for the staircase, hardly containing his excitement. He climbs the steps, squinting towards the bright light at the top.

He reaches the top step and stops DEAD.

BEN

What the...

A BARRIER; a GLOSSY SQUARE of CEILING that abruptly cuts the stairs off, preventing Ben from going any higher.

It's a membrane-like surface, thick and foggy. We can make out diffuse impressions of bright light from the other side.

The surface looks JUST like the very opening scene, like we're once again staring through layers of thick PLASTIC.

Ben presses his hand against the membranous ceiling-- It's moving! Heaving in and out like it's BREATHING.

Ben pierces his hands through the thick plastic, TEARING a wide hole which he CLIMBS through into...

PLASTIC HORIZON - CONTINUOUS

Ben squeezes above the torn hole like he's climbing out of a manhole. He struggles forward, crawling on his belly along the plastic, sheeted floor.

He's unable to stand, CONSTRICTED by heavier SHEET OF PLASTIC above him-- Like he's crawled under the covers of a PLASTIC BED. Sound is DULL and DRY here, like in a vacuum.

Below Ben, the floor is a TRANSLUCENT PLASTIC, through which we see into the Hotel below-- Like a one-way GLASS CEILING.

Ben struggles forward, bewildered but DETERMINED! When--

AH-WHOOOM!!-- The plastic constricting down on Ben RISES A MILE TO THE SKY-- Or is it the sky itself? The sheet of plastic EXPANDS to the heavens, spanning to the HORIZON!

It hovers for a long beat, then falls-- The sky CRINKLES and CONTRACTS back to the ground, SQUEEZING Ben to the floor.

AH-WHOOOM!!-- The sky rises and Ben can see for MILES. Spanning in all directions around him, an ENDLESS SPRAWL of structures-- More HOTEL ROOMS. More BENS trapped inside.

Ben can see EVERYTHING: A boundless KALEIDOSCOPIC horizon-- An inescapably infinite incarceration-- A GODS-EYE VIEW.

PPFSHHHHH!!-- The sky falls with a howling wind, pinning Ben to the ground.

This repeats: The PLASTIC SKY RISES and FALLS like a game of parachute. Almost like this whole universe is inside a giant balloon, INFLATING and CONSTRICTING at regular intervals.

The SKY RISES. Ben crawls above the hotel, looking below to other rooms where other Bens continue their chaos.

It's overwhelming-- Like standing at the periphery of time and space: Nothing beyond. There is no escape from here.

The PLASTIC SKY continues to rise and fall, pressing him against the floor for longer with each CONTRACTION. Ben strains for breath--

BEN

I- I can't breathe...
I can't breathe...

Pressed against the floor, he stares through the transparent floor to a HOTEL ROOM BELOW HIM where A BEN is tied to the chair: PLASTIC BAG still over his head.

BEN'S EYES-- Focusing on something:

THE ROOM BELOW-- With each breath, the PLASTIC BAG tightens around his mouth: As the plastic bag CONSTRICTS below, the plastic sky CONSTRICTS ABOVE!

The Horizon around him, EXPANDS and CONTRACTS in perfect sync with THE BEN BELOW's breathing--

Like Our Ben NEVER escaped the plastic bag, like he and all of this hotel are trapped in the bag, running out of air...

BEN (cont'd)

He can't breathe--
He can't breathe--
I can't breathe...

He crawls, desperately seeking an escape, desperately seeking some air! He crawls above other rooms from the Hotel. He peers down from above--

A ROOM BELOW -- A Ben locks the door to the FIRST ROOM.

BEN BELOW

I locked myself in here.

BEN

(repeating)
I locked myself in here...

Ben struggles forward, gasping down the stale air. He crawls over a new room and looks below to see the DINING HALL.

IN THE DINING HALL BELOW -- BEN -16 picks up a chair and throws it at a "window", revealing it to be another fake.

BEN BELOW

Engineering *one-oh-one*: Every space you can get into you can get out of. You can escape anything except yourself.

Ben stares from above and stumbles forward until--

PFSHHHH!!-- The PLASTIC SKY thunders down on him again, compressing him like a bug trapped under a window tint. The pressure is so great HIS FOOT PIERCES THROUGH THE FLOOR--

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL - CONTINUOUS AND DAYS EARLIER

BEN -16 smashes a fake window in the dining hall when--

CRACK!!-- Suddenly, a sound from above: A leg PLUMMETS through the ceiling, sending a cloud of dust below.

BEN -16 gasps-- THERE'S SOMEBODY ON THE FLOOR ABOVE!

BEN -16
(yelling)
Hey!

BACK TO:

PLASTIC HORIZON - CONTINUOUS

PFSHHHH!!-- The PLASTIC SKY expands back to the heavens and Ben PULLS HIS LEG back up top. He's STRUGGLING FOR AIR and he begins to sprint back towards the exit (BEN -16 below, chasing after the sounds of his footsteps above).

PFSHHHH!!-- Shortly, the sky squeezes him back down!

Ben desperately crawls-- further and further back until he finally sees the hole he climbed up from!

He wriggles as fast as he can, running out of air--

INT. DARK HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ben squeezes through the split in the plastic, slipping down onto the STAIRCASE below.

The sound has come back into the world, and Ben gasps for air as he tumbles down the hallway as quick as he can.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

He bursts back through the Lobby "EXIT" doors.

Ben gasps for air, overwhelmed as several Bens construct the giant human ladder-- An ode to futility.

BEN
 (what does it all mean?)
 There's no escape, there's nothing.
I locked the door, I put myself
 here...

The voices of the earlier BENS throughout the room become more apparent; an unwelcome, ambient murmur growing louder.

BEN (cont'd)
 (to the others)
Shut up...

Close to our collapsed Ben, an earlier recording (BEN -1) is psyching himself up before attempting to climb the human ladder.

BEN -1
 Come on, you can do this...

BEN
Shut up, shut up!

Ben storms from the room, away from these voices.

INT. DINING HALL - CONTINUOUS

Ben barges into the DINING HALL, maddened by his previous selves: Surrounded by their muttering and yammering...

He collapses onto a seat-- the PIANO STOOL. Deep in thought, trying to piece it all together.

He is pulled from his thoughts by a voice BEHIND him.

BEN -19
 Oscar Wilde said women's tragedy is
 that they all become their mothers.
 Men's tragedy is that they don't...

Ben slowly turns to face this iteration.

BEN -19 (cont'd)
 You made no bones about what a
 piece of work Granddad was, how you
 were only dishing out what you were
 taught-- That you had no choice but
 to walk the path he laid for you?

BEN
That's right.

BEN -19 was addressing a SCOTCH BOTTLE, but Ben has sat in front of it so it seems BEN -19 addresses him. Ben has unwittingly taken the role of HIS FATHER.

BEN -19
So if you're doomed to follow his footsteps, then I'm doomed to follow your footsteps...
Happy to say you're wrong--

BEN
Bullshit--

BEN -19
Because the only thing I got of yours, is an iron liver and a cheap watch--

BEN
(brimstone)
Bullshit: You're exactly like him! You're a loser, like him! You're a drunk like him-- You're trying to drown yourself in booze before you drown in the debt from betting our savings on this fucking build!

Ben gestures to the space around them: "*This build.*"

BEN (cont'd)
You can't provide; like him, and worst of all you can't love; like him. Because he only spoke in anger--

CUT TO:

INT. FAMILY HOME - FLASHBACK

The dreamy flashback visuals of THE PAST.

POV -- BEN'S DAD:

Looking down at YOUNG BEN, cowering afraid of his Father.

POV -- YOUNG BEN:

Staring up at a raised FIST-- Ready to strike.

It's the image we've seen before, but now, the SHOT PULLS FOCUS. In the shallow, blurry focus of the FLASHBACKS, we finally pull so the Father's face is sharp.

However, coming out of the blur isn't BEN'S FATHER'S face, but a more familiar one--

BEN (V.O.)
So you speak it too.

It's BEN. At his home, fist raised as though to strike. We realize that in these flashbacks we inferred to be YOUNG BEN and BEN'S DAD, it was actually BEN looking down at his son--

BEN'S SON. Ben's Son stares up, scared at his father who looks back at him, TEARS in his eyes. Ben is shaken, horrified.

He immediately releases his fist, dropping his hand to his side and EMBRACING the young boy in a loving hug.

BACK TO:

INT. DINING HALL

Ben stares, eyes watering at this memory.

BEN
(breaking up)
And I know you've tried every day of your life to keep that anger inside: And you've done it this far; but I can't trust that you'll keep doing it because you're weak.
(beat)
You're weak, and you're sinking and dragging everyone down with you. And you blame yourself for that now, but just like him, you're weak-- And one day you'll slip, and like him you'll find it's easier to blame them.

He stares into his own eyes: BEN -19 staring back at him.

BEN (cont'd)
I look at you, and I just see the next copy of him, and I'll be damned before I let my son become a copy of you.

BEN -19
So if you really believed that, and if you had any love for me at all-- You should've just left--

BEN
(Muttering)
Just laying out tracks, keeping the cycles going--

BEN -19
 ...and made sure you never came
 back--

BEN
 I know!

BEN -19
 Make sure you leave no fucking
 footsteps to follow.

BEN
 (fury)
 Why else do you think I came here?
I came here to die!

He is right up in the face of this previous iteration. Ben looks frazzled, surprised by what he said.

BEN (cont'd)
 (realization)
 I came here to die...

BEN -19
 "I came here to die."

Ben looks up, complete shock on his face. *He's conscious?*

BEN
 What did you just say?

BEN -19
 "I came here to die"

BEN
 What-- How--
 Are you responding to me?

BEN -19's face returns to a blank, stupor like expression:
Has the consciousness gone?

BEN (cont'd)
 Hey-- Hey!

He starts SLAPPING the cheek of BEN -19: Waving his hands in front of his face but there's no reaction.

Ben COUGHS-- Like the air is growing STALER.

BEN (cont'd)
 What's happening? Hey?!

With wide eyes, he stares at the face of his recorded self:

From BEN -19's mouth, thick WHITE FOAM begins to billow. His vacant eyes turn BLOODSHOT and he STOPS BREATHING: His face turning PURPLE!

BEN (cont'd)
 No-- I didn't mean it, hey! Hey!

Ben stares into this horrific sight-- His own SUFFOCATING REFLECTION. Terrified, Ben launches up and storm for the exit--

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Ben tears back into the lobby to see more horror--

ALL his previous iterations are FROZEN: Their faces turning PURPLE, foam spewing from their mouths! They all share the same vacant expression: A bloated death mask.

BEN
 Wha-- What is happening?

He pulls at his own collar. His breathing is getting more labored. Short breaths like he's RUNNING OUT OF OXYGEN.

BEN (cont'd)
 No, no, no...

He barrels past check-in and slams against the DOORS to the corridor. He stares into his reflection in the GLASS PANE on the doors--

Bloodshot eyes, purpling skin-- Just like the other Bens.

BEN (cont'd)
 No, no, no...

CRASH!-- Ben whirs around at the sound of a huge impact. His eyes crane upwards-- The TOWER OF BENS!

They're FROZEN STILL, the topmost BEN lalts backwards before careening through the air and--

BEN (cont'd)
 No!

CRASH!-- From the top down the whole tower starts to collapse, dozens of Ben's torpedoing to the ground!

BEN (cont'd)
 (to the heavens)
 Stop it! Stop it!!

BEN'S POV-- Ben watches but his vision flashes as BLURRY-- Blurry as though obscured through a SHEET OF THICK PLASTIC: Like he's STILL WEARING THE PLASTIC BAG.

He shakes his head, steadying himself as he stumbles by a suffocating BEN ON THE BOTTOM of the tower--

BEN ON THE BOTTOM
 (endless)
 "I came here to die..."
 "I came here to die..."
 "I came here to die..."

BEN ON THE BOTTOM repeats this line as one by one the BENS ABOVE come crashing to the ground!

BEN
 No-- I want to get out of here.

BEN ON THE BOTTOM
 I came here to die...
 I came here to die...

Ben grabs him but is overcome by weakness, DESPERATELY struggling to breath. He whirs to look over his shoulder--

He sees ALL OTHER BENS have PLASTIC BAGS wrapped tightly around their heads. He turns back only a MOMENT later to see that BEN ON THE BOTTOM is also being SMOTHERED by plastic--

BEN
 (horror)
 How do I get out?!

BEN ON THE BOTTOM
 (endless)
 "I locked myself in here..."
 "I locked myself in here..."
 "I locked myself in here..."

As he repeats this utterance, the plastic bag around his face grows TIGHTER AND TIGHTER-- Sealing him in!

Ben is HOPELESS. He turns to the EXIT doors and hurtles towards them in desperation! As he reaches the doors, his dirtied, BLOODIED hand presses into the door and--

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED LOBBY - THEN

A MUCH CLEANER HAND, presses into a SHEET OF PLASTIC cordoning off an abandoned CONSTRUCTION SITE. The hand tears through and enters a familiar DOORWAY, revealing--

What could have been a GRAND HOTEL LOBBY, with ornate massively HIGH CEILINGS like a ballroom-- But instead, it's a SHELL of a structure.

BEN (V.O.)
 (from days earlier)
 ...I could always picture the designs so clearly--

A CEMENT SKELETON of the familiar HOTEL LOBBY. Some of the internals have been fitted, but despite the SCAFFOLDING and BUILDING EQUIPMENT it's clearly abandoned.

Ben walks in: He looks far less dirty and beat-up as we're used to seeing, but perhaps more vacant.

He stands in the center of this space, craning his eyes around the hollow, failed structure--

BEN (V.O.) (cont'd)
 ...Then the problem is just taking
 what see in my head, and making it
 reality.

BACK TO:

INT. LOBBY - NOW

Ben stands in the lobby as we know it. It's the SAME SPACE only exactly how it should've looked: How Ben saw the space in his head.

The SCAFFOLDS and CONSTRUCTION equipment is the only remnant from its incomplete state. Ben stares, terrified when--

SUDDENLY-- Music! Ragtime piano bellows from the bar--

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED DINING HALL - THEN

In the before, Ben steps DOWN to a large, sunken DINING HALL. It's dressed a lot more than the lobby was, but it's still a funereal site.

BEN (V.O.)
 (days earlier)
 ...I create spaces and structures
 and make sure they don't fall
 apart.

Patches of walls lie unfinished, dinner tables are still stacked from delivery-- Warped by water that LEAKS THROUGH A HOLE IN THE CEILING: The spot we saw Ben's LEG come through.

Most heartbreaking, the PIANO has been delivered. Ben sits at the PLAYER PIANO but it lies moldering, abandoned.

Using his hands, he plays a few bars of music himself, but the rusted piano springs are HONKY-TONKED into oblivion.

BACK TO:

INT. LOBBY - NOW

The de-tuned PIANO MUSIC stops as Ben struggles for breath in the lobby, still filled with his suffocating selves.

He turns towards the CONCIERGE'S DESK, like he's remembering something--

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED LOBBY - THEN

Ben approaches the shell of an abandoned CONCIERGE'S DESK. He fixates on a rusting CONCIERGE BELL, optimistically sitting in the ruin.

DING! He rings it joylessly as he reaches over the desk, knowingly fidgets on the underside and FINDS A KEY!

BEN (V.O.)
 (from days earlier)
 ...Leaving me with a half-finished
 build, millions in costs--

Sadly, Ben sweeping across the abandoned space. He turns towards the entrance to the corridors. It's also cordoned off with PLASTIC SHEETING.

With his hand out, he presses against the plastic--

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - NOW

With his hand out, Ben SLAMS against the doors. The swing open and he stumbles through--

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Ben stumbles through into the corridor, struggling to breath as he works his way past REAMS of identical HOTEL ROOM DOORS--

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED CORRIDOR - THEN

An identical, but DERELICT corridor.

Ben drifts through the half-constructed corridor, working his way past REAMS of what SHOULD BE identical HOTEL ROOM DOORS--

BEN (V.O.)
 (from days earlier)
 ...and an insurance policy I'm
still paying for--

Instead, any standing doors are covered with graffiti and bloated by rain damage. Most are MISSING altogether, torn off their hinges or never installed: Taped off by plastic...

BACK TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - NOW

Ben stumbles through the corridor, following the footsteps of this Ben from BEFORE: Like he's chasing his own ghost--

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED CORRIDOR OUTSIDE FIRST ROOM - THEN

We winds through the abandoned space towards a room at the END OF A CORRIDOR. A door is again CORDONED OFF BY PLASTIC, which Ben TEARS through revealing--

A HOTEL ROOM DOOR-- It's in the best condition of any door we've seen in this abandoned place. It seems to even still be LOCKED.

BEN (V.O.)
 (days earlier)
 that wouldn't cover a dime because
 the "incident wasn't on-site"...

He inserts the KEY and turns the lock--

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THEN - CONTINUOUS

The door opens revealing, the FAMILIAR HOTEL ROOM. The same space Ben has been waking up in each day.

What's strange is within this "ABANDONED" this room looks identical. Like it was the first room built, perhaps a showroom: The SINGLE completed room in the whole HOTEL.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - NOW

Our Ben charges down the corridor: He still FIGHTS for air, as he seems to chase himself from his MEMORIES.

Each time we've cut back, more and more parts of the building are WRAPPED WITH PLASTIC-- By now, the ENTIRE CORRIDOR is gripped by the shimmering, heaving plastic:

Like the very building is being SUFFOCATED.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THEN

FLASHBACK BEN stares, glassy eyed as he pulls a WOODEN CHAIR into the center of the room: He takes in this COMPLETED room, but still looks more sad than proud as he sits--

Sits in THE CHAIR that Ben woke up BOUND to.

BACK TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - NOW

Ben chokes, stumbling through the PLASTIC WRAPPED CORRIDOR. The walls heave and squeeze TIGHTER--

BACK TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THEN

FLASHBACK BEN sits on the chair-- He looks resigned and miserable. He swallows a HANDFUL OF PILLS, chased with a mini-liquor bottle: BRASSINGTON SCOTCH.

BACK TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - NOW

Ben races up the corridor towards a SINGLE, FAMILIAR DOOR. SUDDENLY, all at once, the PLASTIC CONSTRICTS! Tighter than ever--

BACK TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THEN

Ben sits, wearing a SHIMMERING COWL OF PLASTIC on his head. It's a sheet of plastic torn from the room's entrance--

RIP!-- He YANKS the bags over his head. Without a second thought, his hands rise to his head, revealing DUCT TAPE.

He runs the duct tape around his neck-- sealing him in. His neck muscles TENSE-- Running out of air...

He forces his hands down to the sides of the chair through two LOOPED CABLE TIES.

BEN (V.O.)
 (from days earlier)
 ...like property theft or murder--

I might've turned a profit if they
 killed me instead of robbed me...

Inelegantly, he manages to pull the cable ties tight-- He
 has LOCKED HIMSELF IN HIS BINDS!

BACK TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE FIRST ROOM - NOW

Ben finally reaches the end of the corridor, and SMASHES
 AGAINST THE DOOR. It violently swings open into--

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THEN AND NOW

Ben rushes into the room and finds FLASHBACK BEN, gasping
 his final gasps in the chair he's bound himself in!

The TWO TIMELINES have joined up IN THIS MOMENT!

BEN
 (shouting)
 No!

Ben rushes into the room towards his confined counterpart.

BEN (cont'd)
 Don't give in, come on-- Come back!

Ben grasps the sides of the PLASTIC BAG around the seated
 Ben's face and PULLS-- Straining as hard as he can to rip
 the bag from his own head--

INT. DINING HALL - NOW

We see the DINING HALL: Plastic sheeting COVERS and
 CONSTRICTS the space as the lights start going dark.

They get dimmer and dimmer until there's NOTHING there--

BACK TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THEN AND NOW

Ben grabs the SEATED BEN in the chair-- Shaking him wildly!
 The SEATED BEN twitches, but with less and less energy.

His breaths grow shorter, almost SILENT.

Obscured by the PLASTIC, we can't see his expression but his head seems to LOLL BACKWARDS: As though he's losing consciousness--

Like this WHOLE JOURNEY is both beginning AND ending in this moment!

Our Ben grips the plastic around SEATED BEN's head, but no matter how hard he pulls NOTHING HAPPENS: Like he has no physical purchase here at all--

BEN

Please-- You don't want to do this,
believe me!
This isn't breaking the cycle--
That's giving into it!

Ben stares, pleading with his BAG-FACED self.

BEN (cont'd)

You think all Dad left us was that watch? He left us his hatred-- He couldn't love us, not because he hated us but because he hated himself.
His Dad couldn't love him because he hated himself, so he couldn't love us because he hated himself and that's why we're here, because that's the cycle we can't break!

INT. HOTEL - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - CONCURRENT

FAMILIAR SPACES from across the hotel--

- THE LOBBY
- HOTEL ROOMS
- BUFFET STATION
- CONFERENCE ROOM etc...

We cut across them, finding them ENCASED in constricting sheets of plastic. The lights dim and the spaces grow dark.

PLASTIC HORIZON

From above, we see the GOD'S EYE VIEW perspective of the infinite array of HOTEL ROOMS from above.

DARKNESS encircles the rooms across this surreal horizon. Swallowed in darkness like when a power grid goes down, wiping out city blocks one by one.

Like they're BLINKING OUT OF EXISTENCE, swallowed towards a SINGLE HOTEL ROOM-- The room at the center of this universe:

The ROOM where we find Ben pleading with his SEATED SELF--

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THEN AND NOW

The plastic bag across SEATED BEN's face grows FOGGIER with condensation.

A RUMBLING-- A low sound that grows as the room begins to QUIVER. A PLASTIC FOGGINESS begins to dawn in the room, encircling from the edges of the room towards Ben...

Ben is desperate: Crouching in front of his seated, non-responsive counterpart--

BEN

We came here because we feel stuck on that same path-- So let's ensure we're the last to walk it. It's a cycle of hatred and you're doing this because you hate yourself? That's not breaking the cycle, it's perpetuating it.

Ben STILL grips the plastic bag and STILL can't tear it. It stays impossibly intact against his strongest pulls.

BEN (cont'd)

But, this is our chance, right now! Because if we work together we are unstoppable! We can break down doors and build towers and make music! We make each other laugh, and cry, we are strong, we take care of each other! This is how we break the cycle, because unlike you, I don't hate the guy who walked in here--

The walls of the room are fully plastic-- Everything swallowed away.

BEN (cont'd)

You're the warden of this prison-- You locked up someone you hate, now be strong enough to release someone you can love!

He TEARS fruitlessly at the plastic: He strains and strains to no avail. Ben stops, gasping for air: It's HOPELESS.

BEN (cont'd)

(giving up)
I can't do it.
I can't get us out of here.

He stares into the face of his seated counterpart-- The bag so constricted you can see every outline of Ben's face.

Ben's face: His eyes wide, his resolve STEELED--

BEN (cont'd)
I can't get us out of here...

The RUMBLING GROWS-- The room TREMBLES and QUAKES, the plastic SQUEEZES the life from every surface: Like a CLENCHING, plastic fist--

BEN (cont'd)
 But maybe we can!

Ben looks down-- SEATED BEN's hands are tensing up-- *Like he's coming back into consciousness! Is it WORKING?!*

INT. HOTEL - VARIOUS LOCATIONS

SERIES OF SHOTS

Around the Hotel, we see the different iterations of BEN in their variety of positions, but they ALL wear PLASTIC, squeezing their heads: SUFFOCATING.

UNTIL-- One by one, they begin to RAISE THEIR ARMS, their hands GRABBING THE PLASTIC THAT SMOTHERS THEM!

They clutch their shimmer, plastic masks and ALL OF THEM TOGETHER: They GRASP, PULL, STRAIN--

They're FIGHTING to free themselves!

BACK TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THEN AND NOW

Ben's eyes LIGHT UP: He stares at SEATED BEN's hands--

His hands TENSE UP! They hands start pulling upwards; white knuckles STRAIN against his restraints!

BEN
 (trembling)
 Yes!

Ben's eyes SHIMMER, desperate but hopeful. SEATED BEN's hands continue to FLEX against their braces-- But they're not strong enough!

SEATED BEN'S POV -- Looking straight through the foggy, tight plastic, we can JUST make out the form of our Ben pleading from the other side.

BEN (cont'd)
 Come on, take care of yourself!

INT. HOTEL - VARIOUS LOCATIONS

ALTOGETHER, the Ben's across the HOTEL continue to strain and strain to rip themselves free from the their fates.

The plastic STRAINS, it might just TEAR--

BACK TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THEN AND NOW

RUMBLING! SHAKING! Plastic CONSTRICTS and the light DIMS-- As Ben begins to be swallowed up himself! Starting with his feet, then his legs...

His entire body is being constricted, tighter and tighter -- the suffocating plastic pushing against his face.

BEN

We can do this--

Ben makes one more effort. He puts his hands OVER the hands of his seated self and SCREAMS as WRENCHES SEATED BEN'S PLASTIC MASK WITH ALL OF HIS STRENGTH!

As this universe ekes out of existence, in CLOSE-UP we see Ben's hands still gripping the bag as they--

INVISIBLE CUT
TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM

They PULL and STRAIN and-- TEAR THE BAG RIGHT OFF HIS HEAD!

DOLLY WIDER-- We pull back from the close up, revealing the HANDS we thought belonged to (non-seated) Ben, belonged to the Ben IN THE CHAIR--

Now the ONLY BEN in the room.

With the BIGGEST GASP for air you've ever heard, his chest HEAVES up and down-- Drawing long, hungry breaths. From beneath the bag, the blue fades from his face-- He is ALIVE.

WIDE SHOT: His hands are untied and the room is no longer gripped by plastic: It looks the same as it always did.

Ben bursts off the chair and throws his head into the sink-- Removing the toxic contents of his stomach.

After a short expulsion, he slides down the wall, collapsing into a heap: Savoring each enriching pull of air. He sits for a moment, looking more than anything: Relieved.

The small smile on his face suddenly vanishes: He looks UNEASY. His eyes are TENSELY focused on a single point--

BEN'S POV-- A FAMILIAR WINDOW: A pure white, FROSTED window. Set in an inlet several inches behind steel bars.

Ben swallows: A grim, dry swallow as he slowly rises to his feet. He reaches and picks up a GLASS TUMBLER.

Tumbler in hand, he slowly steps towards the window and stops.

FRAME ON BEN: A shot that frames Ben as though from the WINDOWS' POV. He stares TOWARDS US, takes a deep breath, cocks his arm back and HURLS the GLASS FORWARDS!

SMASH!-- Staring back at Ben, we hear the glass break but don't see it.

He stares back towards us.

We hear the SOUND OF WIND.

THE END