



BLOODLIST 2009



BLOODLIST 2010



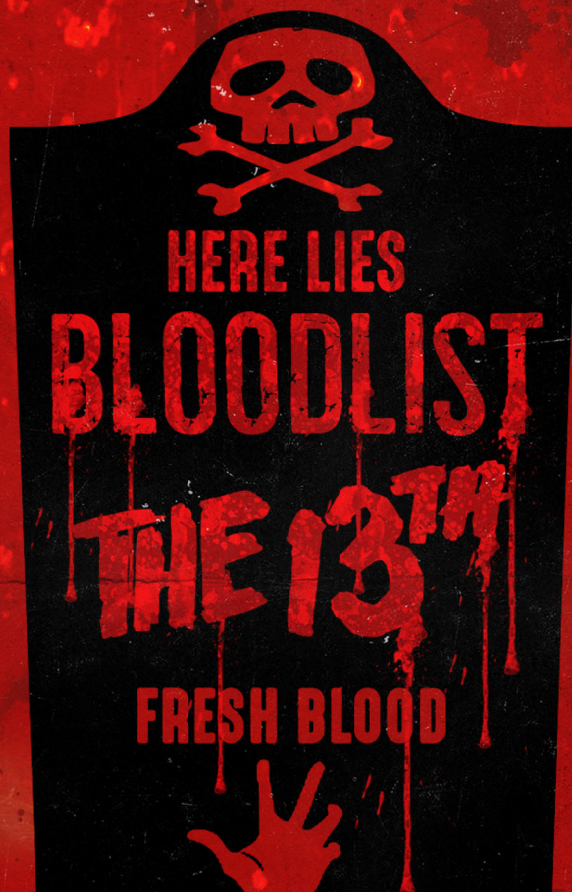
BLOODLIST 2011



BLOODLIST 2012



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BLOODLIST 2018



BLOODLIST 2019



BLOODLIST 2020

LIABILITY

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. TOWNES ENERGY PLANT - PLATFORM - DAY

A maze of steel pipes and aluminum beams. Two men walk along a grated platform wearing hard hats and zip-up uniforms with stitched-in name tags: GARY and ZEKE.

GARY

Two birthday parties and a soccer game? Your kid has too many friends, man.

ZEKE

Nah, that's what it's about. What else am I gonna do? Sit at home with wifey and watch football all day?

GARY

That's what I did.

ZEKE

Can't do that forever. That's an empty life, bro. You know what I'm saying?

GARY

Yeah, whatever. Chelsea's been talking 'bout it.

Zeke pats Gary on the back.

ZEKE

That's how it starts...

GARY

Yeah, yeah.

They come to a fork in the platform.

ZEKE

Catch you at lunch?

GARY

For sure.

A quick bro hug and they head their separate ways.

Gary's path is dimly lit. He straightens out his hard hat as he descends into the darkness.

He turns a corner RIGHT INTO A DISLODGED PIPE HANGING FROM THE CEILING - HOT STEAM BURSTS INTO HIS FACE!

Gary releases a BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM, holding his face. As he pulls his hands away, HIS MELTED SKIN REMAINS STUCK TO HIS GLOVES, STRETCHING AND TEARING OFF OF HIS SKULL.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dark and quiet, only outlines are discernible. A cellphone BUZZES and lights up on a bedside table.

ANDREW NORWOOD (40s) shifts in bed. He's a silhouette, partially visible as he grabs the phone. Voice scratchy and hoarse.

ANDREW

Hello?

(beat)

Fuck, okay. I'll be on the next flight.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Andrew brushes his teeth in front of an expansive mirror. His brown hair is disheveled and he sports more graying facial stubble than he probably should.

His cellphone rests on the sink and RINGS REPEATEDLY. The line picks up - Andrew speaks with a mouth full of toothpaste.

ANDREW

Hey, Clair?

CLAIR (V.O.)

(groggy)

Do you know what time it is?

Andrew spits toothpaste in the sink.

ANDREW

Yeah, that's why I called and didn't text. Steam pipe just burst at Townes Energy. Catch the next flight to Chicago, you're meeting me there.

Andrew kills the call. He looks down in the sink and notices blood mixed in with toothpaste. Turns on the faucet to wash it down the drain.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Andrew sits on a bench in a dapper suit, reviewing a THICK DOCUMENT in his lap. A cigarette dangles from his mouth, smoke rising through a crisp morning.

BEEP-BEEP.

Andrew looks up to find a black car with tinted windows has pulled up to the bench. He stands and heads to the car.

EXT. TOWNES ENERGY PLANT - DAY

A massive industrial building looms over an empty parking lot. The area is a ghost town, cordoned off with yellow police tape while a TOWNES SECURITY GUARD mans the front door.

CLAIR MARNIG (23) waits just outside the yellow tape. She wears a button-down shirt tucked into khakis and has a backpack slung over her shoulder. She checks her watch as Andrew's black car pulls up to the lot.

The back door opens and Andrew emerges.

CLAIR
You're late.

ANDREW
Sorry, took a shit at the hotel on the way over.

CLAIR
Pleasant.

Andrew waves the Townes Security Guard over. He holds up the thick document to Clair - THE INSURANCE POLICY.

ANDREW
Jackhole named Talby wrote the policy for these guys. Totally fucked 'em. This thing ain't worth the paper it's written on, so if you find so much as a sniff of a maintenance issue, nothing's covered and we're off the hook.

CLAIR
Got it.

Townes Security Guard arrives and Andrew hands him his ID, already out. Clair fumbles with her wallet as she searches for hers.

ANDREW

(to Townes Security Guard)
Andrew Norwood, I'm the liability
guy with ACN. This is my
investigative engineer, Clair
Marnig. We're gonna need a tour of
the facility and access to the site
and equipment. Additionally, I'll
want interviews with any Senior
Management folks you have on
premises and any witnesses to the
incident.

TOWNES SECURITY GUARD

Good luck with that.

INT. TOWNES ENERGY PLANT - GROUND FLOOR - DAY

BUILDING MANAGER sits on the floor and weeps into his hands.

Andrew and Clair stand over the man. Clair looks empathetic,
but Andrew is emotionless. Seen this type before.

ANDREW

Rough day, huh?

Building Manager releases a muffled sob.

ANDREW

Right. So is there anyone else here
who might be a bit more helpful
regarding that tour?

TRIPP (O.S.)

Hey!

Andrew and Clair turn to find TRIPP, friendly face in a
company-issued zip-up uniform and hard hat.

TRIPP

You the insurance folks?

ANDREW

Yup.

Tripp motions for them to follow.

TRIPP

I gotcha.

INT. TOWNES ENERGY PLANT - INNER HALLWAYS - DAY

Andrew and Clair follow Tripp down a winding pathway.

TRIPP

I thought the hard part was over
when emergency personnel left, but
I've seen more of you insurance
mother-fuckers in the last six
hours than any of the fire or
police folks.

ANDREW

We're better funded.
(beat)
Anyone else you given the walk-
through to here?

TRIPP

Ahhh, there was another guy. Looked
kinda like you, but older. White
hair, real thin, lotta jokes.

ANDREW

That's Jim, on the property side.
Good guy.

Tripp points to a metallic ladder staircase.

TRIPP

We're heading up here. Watch your
step.

Tripp climbs up and Andrew follows. Clair lags behind,
fastening her backpack to her waist.

ANDREW

Did you know the deceased?

Tripp gets real quiet as he emerges onto

THE PLATFORM

Watches Andrew struggle to pull himself up. Doesn't offer a
helping hand.

TRIPP

Everyone on day shift knew Gary.

ANDREW

(breathing heavy)
Who found him?

TRIPP

One of the ops guys. He's in an office 'round back. Can take you there later.

As Clair approaches the top, Tripp reaches out and helps her climb onto the platform.

TRIPP

Alright, follow me this way.

Tripp leads the way, following Gary's dimly lit route.

A STENCH fills the air - Andrew pulls a handkerchief from his pocket and holds it over his face. Clair covers her mouth with her shirt collar. Coughs, it's inadequate.

Andrew hands her a spare handkerchief.

CLAIR

Thanks.

They arrive at the SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT:

The steel pipe hangs from the ceiling while a WHITE SHEET COVERS GARY'S CORPSE. Blood stains the linen where his face was torched.

TRIPP

Sorry 'bout the body. Biohazard won't be out 'til tomorrow.

Clair tries to ignore the body in front of her, stepping around it to examine condensation on the pipe.

CLAIR

What's the temperature on the pipe?

TRIPP

It's cooled down, but I'd still be careful.

Clair unzips her backpack and pulls out thick work gloves, a tool belt, and a hard hat. Andrew just watches.

ANDREW

You gonna be alright here?

Clair nods as she straps on the hard hat.

CLAIR

I'll give you a shout when I'm done.

ANDREW
Good luck, kid.

Andrew taps Clair's hard hat and heads out with Tripp. Clair fastens the tool belt to her waist and slides her gloves on.

Looks up at the dislodged pipe - Game face on.

INT. TOWNES ENERGY PLANT - OFFICE - DAY

MONTAGE: Andrew meets with a series of Townes Energy employees.

Andrew sits at the end of a large oak table, legal notepad open in front of him. He wears a cold smile like a uniform.

ANDREW
Please describe the scene as you
found it.

Across from Andrew sits Zeke, still wearing his uniform, only now Gary's blood is splattered over his name tag.

He opens his mouth to speak, but pauses. Can't find any words...

CUT TO:

Andrew reviews his legal pad.

ANDREW
Can you give me some background on,
um... Gary Lannett?

Across from Andrew is HR MANAGER - Slicked back hair, nice suit.

HR MANAGER
Sure, what do you need to know?

ANDREW
I'm gonna need the basics: age,
average yearly salary, all
historical performance reviews.
Also gonna need personals on his
health history, family, significant
other, children, et cetera.

HR Manager falters, trying to track all that in his head.

HR MANAGER

We can, uh, have someone follow up with all that.

CUT TO:

Andrew reviews the insurance policy as he speaks.

ANDREW

Can you tell me when maintenance was last done on the faulty pipe?

Building Manager sits across from Andrew. He's pulled himself together, but his voice still cracks when he speaks.

BUILDING MANAGER

We, uh, we do yearly reviews on all of the steam pipes and valves. For, you know, safety...

ANDREW

Right. That doesn't answer my question. I'm gonna need documentation with the exact date and proof of signature for all reviews.

BUILDING MANAGER

O-Of course. We'll have someone dig that up for you.

CUT TO:

Andrew leans forward in his seat.

ANDREW

Gary's wife will need to take a pregnancy test for us in the next seventy-two hours.

HR Manager sits across from Andrew. Looks perplexed.

HR MANAGER

I'm sorry, why is that?

ANDREW

Well, if she's pregnant, that will impact the size of the claim. But, you know, we need to be sure she was pregnant before the incident.

CUT TO:

Zeke can't make eye contact, looks at his shoes.

ZEKE

His face was... gone, man. Like, nothing there. Just this mass of skin and muscle, all fused together and shit. It wasn't Gary anymore, you know? Didn't look human.

Andrew nods, totally devoid of emotion.

ANDREW

Right. And how are you feeling?

ZEKE

I'm, uh, I'm fine. I'll be fine.

Suddenly, Zeke runs to the trash can - Doesn't make it, VOMITING on the floor.

CUT TO:

Andrew jots down notes in his legal pad.

BUILDING MANAGER (O.S.)

S-So what happens now?

Andrew looks up at Building Manager. Puts the legal pad down and takes a deep breath - Given this speech before.

ANDREW

Well, I'll spend the next week sizing the claim and my engineer will determine the cause of the incident. If she finds that the incident is covered under the policy...

Andrew taps the insurance policy.

ANDREW

... then we'll provide Townes with a sum to cover the following items:

Andrew counts the items off on his fingers.

ANDREW

Loss of future earnings for Mister Lannett, compensation for emotional suffering, compensation for intangible losses, and funeral expenses. All of which Townes will be expected to pay to his beneficiary.

(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

There will also be potential pay for grief counseling or mental care for any witnesses to the accident. Again, Townes will be expected to pay that to said witnesses. And, of course, payment directly to Townes for the loss of business that may result from the need to find, hire, and train replacement employees.

Building Manager looks disgusted and quizzical all at once.

BUILDING MANAGER

How do you size stuff like that?

ANDREW

Very carefully.

END OF MONTAGE.

INT. HOTEL - ANDREW'S ROOM - NIGHT

A standard three-star room - Single bed, TV on the dresser, and shitty 80's beach art on the walls.

Andrew is splayed out on a couch, tie relegated to the floor next to empty beer cans. He puffs on a cigarette while reviewing a stack of notes from his legal pad.

KNOCK-KNOCK. Andrew doesn't look up.

ANDREW

It's unlocked!

Clair opens the door, she's changed into a Northwestern sweater and black jeans.

CLAIR

Are you allowed to smoke in here?

ANDREW

Sure. Until someone calls up and tells me to stop

Andrew holds up his legal pad.

ANDREW

We're looking at a one-to-two million dollar claim here. This guy's got maybe eight-hundred in future earnings. Wife, but no kids, so I'd cap incidentals at two-fifty.

CLAIR
What about the witness?

ANDREW
That's the wild card. Could add up
quick depending on how messed up he
is and how long he's out.

Clair nods. She taps on the door frame, hesitant to share.

CLAIR
Got some bad news on the cause. No
signs of clogging or corrosion and
rust was minimal. No pinhole leaks
or anything obvious, so I'm
thinking this has to go down as
inconclusive.

Andrew groans and sits up. Puts out his cigarette on the
table.

ANDREW
Mold issues?

CLAIR
Not in these types of pipes.

ANDREW
Could there be a pressure problem
in one of the feeder valves?

CLAIR
Already checked it. Would have
blown out like six different pipes
across the facility.

Andrew raps the table with his knuckle, thinking.

CLAIR
Obviously I'm going back tomorrow
to do my due diligence, but unless
the guy unhooked the damn thing
himself, there's no reason it
should have unhinged like that.

ANDREW
Fuck, okay.

Clair motions outside the room.

CLAIR
Wanna get a drink? Hotel bar looks
decent.

ANDREW
Nah, I'm already buzzed.

CLAIR
Come on, if I go down there alone,
there's gonna be a bunch of weirdos
hitting on me.

Andrew sighs and gets up.

ANDREW
Well we can't have that. God forbid
you have some fun.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

A key rattles in the lock and the front door opens. Andrew enters, wheeling his luggage in behind him.

He flips on the light, revealing a featureless apartment. Corporate and cold from the blank walls to the empty tables and cabinets.

A large, flat-screen TV is fastened to the wall. The black, empty screen serves as a dark mirror for the rest of the room.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - SHOWER - NIGHT

Andrew washes himself under the shower-head.

He stops - Feeling the underside of his arm. Notices a RASH in his armpit. It's discolored, dark red and splotchy.

He scrubs it with soap. Extra hard.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Andrew exits the bathroom, wrapped in a towel. He peers into the living room and pauses...

Light from the TV illuminates an otherwise dark room.

Confusion paints Andrew's face. He walks into

THE LIVING ROOM

Approaches the television. It's muted with a business news program on-screen. Men in suits speak while a stock ticker scrolls.

Andrew grabs the remote and turns it off.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Andrew sits in bed, back against the headboard. His laptop is open with an excel spreadsheet on-screen - Numbers and formulas aplenty.

Andrew stifles a yawn and closes out excel, revealing a photo application behind it. A hi-res photo of the exterior of Townes Energy fills the screen.

Andrew clicks past it, scrolls through various photographs:

- A close-up of the dislodged pipe
- Another pipe close-up, from the opposite angle
- An overhead view of the pipe
- GARY'S CORPSE, covered by the bloody sheet

Andrew holds on this photo, finger hovering over the mouse. Can't look away...

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Andrew sits on the couch in his underpants, watching TV in relative darkness.

He sips a beer and rubs his eyes.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Framed degrees line the walls and trophies sit atop a desk, but there isn't a family picture in sight.

Andrew ignores the decor, instead attempting to cover a yawn as he sinks in his seat.

SAM (O.S.)

So, I don't get it. You want more money or something?

SAM KENDRICK (50s) short, stout, and balding with a thin grey mustache, sits behind a large desk.

ANDREW

No, it's more than that. I wanna get out of the field.

SAM
I thought you liked the field?
That's where the action is.

ANDREW
Yeah, when I was in my twenties.
The travel is killer.

Sam distracts himself with whatever is on his desktop monitor.

ANDREW
Look, I've been doing this forever,
I know how the business works. I'm
just asking to use that experience
to manage a team. I don't think
it's that crazy.

SAM
You're not exactly making a great
argument for it with another one of
these fucking claims coming back
inconclusive. That's three this
quarter.

ANDREW
I don't dictate what happens, I
just go and assess it. You haven't
had litigation on any of my shit in
years. Got nothing to complain
about.

SAM
So you're telling me that just my
accounts are having accidents left-
and-right? If we can't deny
coverage on some of this stuff,
we're gonna be in the red.

Andrew sighs and rubs his temple.

ANDREW
What do you want me to do?

SAM
You're smart. Figure something out.
Then maybe I can help you.

ANDREW
Good talk, Sam.

Andrew stands and shows himself out.

INT. IRISH TAVERN - DAY

The type of joint with zero interior lighting and shitty Joyce poems framed on the walls. Clair occupies a corner booth and picks at a salad. A beer sits in front of her.

Andrew approaches and slides into the seat across from her.

CLAIR

I got you a burger. Medium well, no tomatoes.

ANDREW

Thanks, kid.

Andrew pauses - Noticing the beer.

ANDREW

You know we're going back to the office after this, right?

CLAIR

You're drunk from one beer?

ANDREW

Fine.

Andrew unbuttons his cufflinks and rolls up his sleeves.

CLAIR

How's Sam?

ANDREW

He hears, he doesn't listen.

Clair nods in agreement.

ANDREW

Have you finished your report on the Townes claim?

CLAIR

Dude, I got back at midnight last night.

ANDREW

Do you at least have your notes together?

CLAIR

Of course.

ANDREW

E-Mail me what you've got so far. I
wanna review before you file
anything.

Clair pauses, tough facade fades a bit.

CLAIR

Y-You want to check my work?

ANDREW

Not that. Just a lot of eyes on
this one, so wanna make sure
everything's buttoned up.

Clair doesn't respond - Trying to read Andrew's face. He
notices the worry.

ANDREW

Look, your father was the best
investigator I ever met, but he
still had a string of inconclusives
for a few years there in the 80s.
Working with me, and Sam, and this
underwriter Talby. Everyone goes
through a rough spell.

CLAIR

What happened?

ANDREW

Well, all these assholes in
financial trouble were committing
arson to liquidate bad assets and
get a lump sum payment. It was
sketchy as hell and impossible to
prove. So your dad was stuck
putzing around these fucking fire
scenes just looking for accelerant.
If he couldn't find anything, we
kinda had to chalk it up as an
accident and pay out.

WAITER brings by a plate with a burger and fries on it.

ANDREW

Thanks.

Andrew grabs a fry and chews on it as he re-focuses on Clair.

ANDREW

Eventually, we figured out what was going on, but for a few years there it was fucking pandemonium where it seemed like everyone's failing businesses were magically going up in flames.

(beat)

Sam's worried about a bunch of inconclusives on his claims, so I just wanna see if there's something we're missing. Maybe get ahead of it. Ain't your work, it's everyone's.

Clair relaxes. Takes a sip of her beer.

CLAIR

What did you do about the arson cases? Once you knew what was happening?

ANDREW

They stopped on their own actually.

CLAIR

Really?

ANDREW

Laws changed. Became easier for folks to just declare bankruptcy.

Andrew takes a huge bite of his burger and grins.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - HALLWAY - DAY

Andrew holds an insurance policy as he walks down a line of offices, periodically checking the names on the door labels.

He stops - Found what he was looking for. A closed office door labeled Brian Talby.

He shows himself into

TALBY'S OFFICE

TALBY (50s) is engrossed in a storage cabinet in the corner of the room, pouring through hundreds of files. He faces away from Andrew and wears latex gloves to protect from paper cuts.

His voice is monotone, has a bit of a flat effect.

TALBY

I suppose knocking would be asking too much.

Andrew holds up the policy as he speaks.

ANDREW

I've read your policy on Townes Energy at least a dozen times and it's egregious.

TALBY

I'm aware. I believe, in a larger business sense, folks here would argue that's kinda the point.

ANDREW

Totally hear you, but there's a line we're trying to walk here, right? I don't wanna end up in court as part of a bad faith lawsuit.

TALBY

Andrew, if you don't like my work, you're free to bring it up to Sam. He signs off on every policy.

ANDREW

Look, it didn't matter on Townes so I'm not trying to pick a fight with ya. I just wanted to give the heads up that shit like this seems to be increasingly common around here and it goes a bit too far.

TALBY

Again, you can either take your concerns about the underwriting department to Sam or you can find another way to reconcile your feelings and your job. I'm making my peace. You're an adult and can do the same.

Andrew glares at Talby. Watching as Talby continues to methodically flip through file after file, totally unfazed.

ANDREW

You haven't changed one bit, man. I'm standing right here. You can't show me the basic respect of putting the damn sheets down and talking to me like a human being?

TALBY
I'm very busy. Is there anything
else you wanna waste my time with?

ANDREW
Fuck off.

TALBY
You're a ten-cent man using five-
cent words.

Andrew exits, SLAMMING the door behind him.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Andrew sits on the couch, cigarette butt hanging from his mouth.

Dozens of documents are spread out in front of him on a coffee table, but he's focused on an equipment sketch of the dislodged Townes Energy pipe - Parts near the nozzle have been circled in red pen.

Andrew sighs and puts out the cigarette in an ash tray. He stands and walks to

THE KITCHEN

He opens the refrigerator and grabs a beer. Takes a moment to enjoy the first sip.

Andrew scratches his shoulder. Absent-minded at first, but he feels something is off. He unbuttons the top of his dress shirt and pulls it down, revealing the rash in his armpit HAS EXPANDED TO HIS SHOULDER.

Concern paints Andrew's face, but a STRONG SCENT quickly distracts...

Andrew sniffs the air. Concerned, he follows the scent to

THE LIVING ROOM

THE EQUIPMENT SKETCHES ON THE COFFEE TABLE ARE LIT AFLAME!

INT. WERNER CORPORATE OFFICE - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Elevator doors open with a pleasant DING, revealing HARRIS, a young man in a business suit, waiting in the elevator bank. He steps inside and presses a button.

The doors begin to close...

JENNY (O.S.)

Wait!

Harris holds the door as JENNY, a young woman in a pencil skirt, jogs over and slides inside. Out of breath, but smiling.

JENNY

Thanks so much.

HARRIS

Of course.

Harris lets the doors shut. The elevator descends.

JENNY

Any big weekend plans?

HARRIS

Nah, just catching up on sleep.

JENNY

Jealous.

They share a polite smile, just as the ELEVATOR RATTLES and JERKS TO A STOP - Both Harris and Jenny tumble to the ground.

JENNY

What the fuck was that?

HARRIS

I, uh, I dunno.

Jenny nurses a bruise on her head as Harris reaches out and presses the red emergency button. Nothing happens.

He presses it again. Again. And again.

A few more times in quick succession.

JENNY

Why is nothing happening? Something should be happening, right?

HARRIS

Conceivably.

JENNY

Help! HELP!

HARRIS

Okay, no need to panic. This is a nice building. It'll move eventually.

JENNY

Yeah, that's what concerns me. It's gonna move really, really fast in a downward trajectory.

HARRIS

Right.

Harris digs into his pocket and pulls out a switchblade. Flicks it open.

JENNY

Woah, you bring that to the office?

HARRIS

Shut up and help me.

Harris sticks the knife into the barrier between the elevator doors and pushes it to the side. The doors separate, ever so slightly.

HARRIS

Come on, grab it! Grab it!

Jenny grabs on one of the doors and tugs on it. Harris grabs the other end and together they slowly pull the doors apart with a disconcerting SCRATCHING of metal against metal.

The open doors reveal the elevator is in-between floors. An elevator bank is visible above them, just within reach.

HARRIS

We can make it.

JENNY

Absolutely not.

HARRIS

I'll go first and pull myself out. Then I'll help you.

Jenny hugs her arms to her chest.

HARRIS

What's the other option? Nobody's coming.

JENNY

Fine.

Harris walks to the edge of the platform and gets on his tip-toes. Reaches out...

INT. WERNER CORPORATE OFFICE - ELEVATOR BANK - SAME

Harris's hands emerge from inside the elevator. They grab a hold of the floor.

INT. WERNER CORPORATE OFFICE - ELEVATOR - SAME

Harris exhales and... THE ELEVATOR SHIFTS. Harris turns - Terrified look on Jenny's face, just as--

THE ELEVATOR DROPS! HARRIS'S HANDS ARE BROKEN OFF WITH A *CRUNCHING* SOUND. He falls backward and SCREAMS as blood sprays throughout the elevator.

THE ELEVATOR FALLS RAPIDLY DOWN THE SHAFT - DING! DING! DING! Quickly ringing as it blows past each floor.

Jenny sits in the corner of the elevator sobbing. She releases a PRIMAL SCREAM AND--

Darkness.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Andrew beats the flames on his coffee table with a large blanket, suppressing them.

ANDREW

Shit!

He pats the blanket down, stifling the fire. It's out. Ashes float in the air.

Andrew tosses the burnt blanket aside, revealing that the equipment sketches are now crisped, black ash. The cigarette butt in the ash tray still smokes.

ANDREW

Fuck.

Andrew's phone BUZZES. He digs it out of his pocket and answers.

ANDREW

Hey...

His shoulders slump with disappointment as he listens to the message conveyed over the line.

ANDREW

Yeah, I'll be there first thing in the morning.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - BOILER ROOM - DAY

A dark, empty space - Concrete walls and flooring with steel beam reinforcements scattered throughout.

Andrew stands in the darkness and smokes as he reviews a thick insurance policy.

KNOCK-KNOCK - Andrew looks up to find Clair in the doorway.

CLAIR

Van's ready.

ANDREW

How'd you find me down here? Nobody knows about this.

CLAIR

Everyone knows you do this.

ANDREW

That's impossible.

CLAIR

It's dangerous as hell, why don't you smoke outside like a normal human being?

ANDREW

Two reasons: One, there are people outside. Two, it's 36 degrees today. I'm not freezing my ass off.

CLAIR

Oh, so you're better than everyone?

ANDREW

Yes.

INT. LUXURY VAN - DAY

Andrew and Clair sit in the backseat. Andrew rubs his temple as he continues to study the policy. Beside him, Clair's foot nervously taps against the floor.

He reaches out and holds her knee down.

CLAIR

Sorry.

ANDREW

It's fine. I didn't sleep much either.

Andrew turns a few pages of the policy, shakes his head.

ANDREW

This policy is a piece of shit too. You'd think these guys would have someone review the coverage before they sign off on it.

But Clair isn't paying attention. She stares out the window with bloodshot eyes.

CLAIR

Did you find anything wrong with my work last night?

ANDREW

No. Didn't really get a good chance to review though. Just be sure to find something with this one. Part malfunction, lack of maintenance, degradation, whatever.

Andrew notices that Clair's hand is clenched, white with strain.

ANDREW

Hey, you okay?

CLAIR

Yeah, I'm fine.

ANDREW

Don't look fine.

CLAIR

Really, it's not a problem.

Clair forces a smile. Doesn't quite sell it.

INT. WERNER CORPORATE OFFICE - STAIRCASE - DAY

OLDER LIAISON leads Andrew and Clair up a dimly lit staircase. Clair has a huge backpack slung over her shoulder, but she keeps pace.

INT. WERNER CORPORATE OFFICE - ELEVATOR BANK - DAY

Yellow police tape cordons off the elevator bank. A small blanket has been placed over Harris's severed hands, although blood spray stains the floor.

The fire exit opens and Older Liaison leads Andrew and Clair onto the scene.

OLDER LIAISON

We'd just ask you use caution.

ANDREW

Of course.

Clair and Andrew approach the open elevator shaft, stepping around the blanket that covers Harris's hands. Clair can't help but give it a distressed glance as they pass.

The elevator doors are propped open, revealing a cavernous, musty space inside. Clair digs into her backpack and pulls out a small flashlight.

She leans into the elevator shaft and shines the light up-and-down. Turns back to Older Liaison.

CLAIR

I'd like to get a closer look at the cable. Can I hook in somewhere?

OLDER LIAISON

Yeah, should be a ladder.

Older Liaison wields a flashlight of his own and peeks inside.

Clair goes back to her bag and pulls out gloves, climbing rope, carabiners, and a hard hat. She puts on the hard hat and fastens the chin-strap - Notices Andrew watching her with concern.

CLAIR

Hey, I'm fine. I promise.

OLDER LIAISON (O.S.)

Miss?

Clair turns to find Older Liaison illuminating a rusted ladder staircase with his flashlight.

OLDER LIAISON

You can hook in here.

Clair gives Andrew a reassuring pat on the back and walks toward the elevator shaft.

CLAIR

Meet you in a few hours, old man.

INT. WERNER CORPORATE OFFICE - MEETING ROOM - DAY

PRESTON'S blue janitorial overalls are caked in dust and grime. Andrew sits across from him and jots down a few notes in his legal pad.

ANDREW

Be ready in just a minute.

PRESTON

Boy, I ride that elevator a dozen times a day, every day, for almost a decade now. Ain't never been so much as a scent of an issue.

Andrew looks up - Plastic smile.

ANDREW

I understand.

PRESTON

Nah, man. Ya don't. You know those old ones? Move real slow, shakin' a bit like they strugglin' against gravity? You damn near pray every time you walk in 'em?

ANDREW

Yeah, I'm aware. I used to live in Queens. Before it was, you know, what it is today.

PRESTON

The ones in this building? They ain't like that. Glide like escalades. Run like a well-tuned clock.

ANDREW

Alright. Why don't you tell me what happened then? From your perspective.

Preston scratches at patchy facial hair on his chin.

PRESTON

I was on the first floor, doing my
final restock on the bathrooms.
Heard a sound, was deafening.
Thought it was a bomb at first.
Probably should have run out but...
I ran toward it.

ANDREW

That's very brave of you.

PRESTON

Don't tell my wife that.

Preston laughs, but it quickly turns into a smoker's hack. He
recovers, clears his throat.

PRESTON

Sorry.

ANDREW

It's fine.

PRESTON

Realized it was the elevator pretty
quickly. Was smoke coming through
the doors on the first floor. So I
went down to the pit and it was...
bad. I served two years, Gulf War.
Ain't never seen bodies like this
before.

Preston leans in. Drops his voice to a whisper, like he's
imparting a secret.

PRESTON

While, uh, while I was down there.
Something didn't feel right. You
know?

ANDREW

It was probably a very challenging
situation.

PRESTON

Nah, not like that. You ever feel
like you bein' watched?

Andrew tilts his head, confused.

ANDREW

What do you mean?

INT. WERNER CORPORATE OFFICE - ELEVATOR SHAFT - SAME

Clair hangs in the empty elevator shaft, hooked in with her climbing rope and carabiners.

PRESTON (V.O.)
I wasn't alone. Felt like there was
something else. Or someone else.
Right there beside me. Just
watching...

She shines her flashlight on the broken elevator cable,
revealing...

IT'S A CLEAN BREAK. No frayed ends.

INT. WERNER CORPORATE OFFICE - MEETING ROOM - DAY

Andrew studies Preston, trying to read him.

ANDREW
If you're having trouble processing
all this, there are psychologists
available. No shame in talking to
someone.

PRESTON
This wasn't in my head. I know my
head. This was different.

Andrew nods, emotionless.

ANDREW
Fair enough.

INT. WERNER CORPORATE OFFICE - ELEVATOR - DAY

Absolutely decimated - The bodies have been removed, but the
area is still DRENCHED IN BLOOD. Crumpled walls complement a
shattered, uprooted floor.

Andrew holds a handkerchief over his face and looks up at the
ceiling.

ANDREW
(muffled)
You almost done?

A panel on the elevator ceiling detaches and Clair's legs
descend.

ANDREW
Sorry, janitor was giving me the
heebie-jeebies.

Clair drops into the elevator - She's pale. Spooked.

CLAIR
We need to talk. Somewhere private.

INT. WERNER CORPORATE OFFICE - STAIRWELL - DAY

Clair sits against the wall, Andrew stands over her. They speak in hushed tones.

CLAIR
The elevator cable had zero
fraying.

ANDREW
Okay.

CLAIR
In an accident, they don't break
like that. Normally, wear-and-tear
builds over time, the cable frays,
and then it SNAPS. Or you'll have a
clamp holding the cable that gets
dislodged or something. But you
never see a broken cable that's cut
clean like this.

ANDREW
So what are you trying to say?
(whispering)
Someone... cut it?

Clair nods.

ANDREW
Okay. We'll get security camera
footage of the elevator bank. If
someone cut the cable, they would
have gotten in the elevator and
been gone an extended period of
time, right?

Clair's foot taps against the ground, nervous. Andrew notices.

ANDREW
If you're right, this is gonna be a
big fucking deal. We're talking a
criminal investigation.
(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

I don't even know if the police are
looking at this right now.

CLAIR

I know. I know. It's just... it's
what happened.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Soft jazz provides the facade of luxury. Andrew stands in an elevator, eyes are glued to the digital floor indicator as it rises: 7-8-9-10-11

He shakes out his hands, a bit nervous: 12-13-14-15--

DING. The elevator stops and the doors open. Andrew exhales and exits into

THE APARTMENT COMPLEX HALLWAY

Andrew reaches into his pocket and pulls out a set of keys as he approaches his apartment door. Puts them in the lock, but...

THE DOOR OPENS ON ITS OWN.

Andrew pauses, concerned. He pushes open the door and pokes his head inside. Is cautious as he steps into

ANDREW'S APARTMENT - ENTRY WAY

Andrew eases the door shut behind him, careful not to make a sound. Quietly slips off his shoes, looking around in all directions for an intruder.

Andrew creeps into

THE LIVING ROOM

Shadows from furniture and trinkets are cast against the wall. Easy for someone to blend into the darkness.

Andrew turns himself around, looking in all directions for a trespasser. But the room seems empty.

He inches into

THE HALLWAY

The bedroom door is closed at the end of the hall, but Andrew is focused on the bathroom.

He takes a few careful steps on the hardwood and peaks into the room. Vacant.

But the shower curtain is closed.

Andrew enters

THE BATHROOM

A moment of hesitation and... he tosses open the shower curtain.

Nothing there.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door is eased open and Andrew peeks inside. His eyes dart through the room as he enters, falling on THE SHADOW OF A MAN, cast against the wall.

Andrew looks at the source of the shadow - A walk-in closet. The sliding door is partially open, too dark to see anything inside.

He slowly approaches. Breaths intensify. Hands clench into fists. He reaches out... grasps the door-handle... and THROWS OPEN THE DOOR TO REVEAL--

A COAT RACK. A jacket and hat sit atop the stand, partially forming the shape of a man.

Andrew breathes a sigh of relief. SLAMS the door shut.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A small potted plant sits on the windowsill. Andrew nestles a mini camera into the dirt, hiding it between leaves. He flips a switch in the back of the camera and a small green light blinks on.

Andrew pulls out his cell phone and plays with it for a moment. Furrowed concentration gives way to... success.

On his phone is a feed from the camera, providing a direct view into the room. Andrew turns to the mini camera and grins.

Captured on the feed.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Post-shower steam - Andrew wipes condensation off a fogged mirror. He's shirtless with a towel around his waist.

The rash has expanded beyond his armpit and shoulder, to NOW PARTIALLY COVER HIS CHEST. Andrew lifts his arm, revealing BLACK-AND-BROWN SCABBING at the epicenter in his armpit.

Andrew leans in for a closer look. Picks at the scab, winces. Digs harder and peels a chunk of it back - BLACK FLUID LEAKS OUT.

Andrew jumps back with a GASP. Eyes wide. Freaked out.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Sunlight brightens the room through open shades, but Andrew is already awake. Seated on the edge of the bed, looking out the window with a blank stare.

Never slept.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - EXAM ROOM - DAY

White and sterile. From the floor to the ceiling. The overhead lights are almost blinding.

Andrew sits on an exam table in a hospital gown while DOCTOR STOWE stands over him in a white lab coat.

DOCTOR STOWE
When did you first notice it?

ANDREW
Ah... maybe Monday?

DOCTOR STOWE
Have you switched to a new soap or deodorant recently? Perhaps a new fabric softener?

ANDREW
No.

DOCTOR STOWE
Have you taken any international trips in the last two months?

ANDREW

Nope.

Doctor Stowe grabs a fresh package of medical instruments from a drawer and pulls out a tweezer.

DOCTOR STOWE

Alright. Let's take a look. Gown off.

Andrew pulls down the top of his hospital gown, revealing the rash on his chest and shoulder. Doctor Stowe examines it.

DOCTOR STOWE

It started in the armpit?

Andrew nods and raises his arm, revealing the BLACK SCABBING underneath. Even Stowe has to suppress a reaction.

DOCTOR STOWE

Okay, hold that.

Doctor Stowe pokes into the infected area with his tweezer, grasping at a small piece of black, hardened skin. The tweezer tugs, but it doesn't come off.

DOCTOR STOWE

This is going to sting a bit. Is that okay?

ANDREW

Yeah, it's fine.

The tweezer pulls with more force. The scab loosens, but pulls with it a larger chunk of skin - A GIANT MASS OF BLACKENED, CRUSTED MATERIAL RIPS OUT OF ANDREW'S ARMPIT.

ANDREW

Fuck!

Andrew winces as Stowe grabs gauze and dabs the spot.

DOCTOR STOWE

You're alright, settle down. Hold that for me.

Andrew holds the gauze as Doctor Stowe drops the giant chunk of skin into a vial.

DOCTOR STOWE

I'm gonna send this out for a quick test. Let's have you back in a few days, once I get results.

(MORE)

DOCTOR STOWE (CONT'D)

In the meantime, I want you to pick up hydrocortisone ointment. Can find it at any local pharmacy. Should help with pain management.

ANDREW

What do you think it is?

DOCTOR STOWE

Hard to know without more information.

ANDREW

Best guess?

Doctor Stowe gives Andrew the most condescending look humanly possible.

DOCTOR STOWE

I'm a doctor, Mister Norwood. I try not to guess.

... and with that, he's out the door. Andrew is left all alone, gauze held against his oozing armpit.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - EMERGENCY STAIRCASE - DAY

Andrew yawns as he trudges down the dark stairwell, pharmacy bag in hand.

He comes to the bottom of the staircase and pulls a pack of cigarettes from his pocket as he opens the door to

THE BOILER ROOM

Andrew goes to light a cigarette, but stops as he sees...

Clair. Looking nervous.

ANDREW

Fuck, kiddo. The point of having a spot like this is solitude, you know?

Andrew notices the concern on Clair's face.

ANDREW

What's wrong?

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - CLAIR'S CUBICLE - DAY

Not a stray staple or speck of dust in sight. Featured prominently is a framed picture of Clair as a child, alongside a younger Andrew and an older man.

Clair sits at her desk and speeds through black-and-white security camera playback projected onto a desktop monitor. It features elevator bank footage across a split screen.

Andrew stands behind her and watches.

CLAIR

I've looked at eleven hours worth of footage here and no one is on the elevator more than a couple minutes.

ANDREW

Can't cut a cable in a few minutes?

CLAIR

No, you'd need to literally remove the ceiling panel, climb out of the elevator, and cut the cable - which is a real challenge just on its own. And that doesn't include the time it takes to get back inside and fix the panel. It's a whole operation.

Clair points to one of the camera angles on the split screen - A woman exits the elevator onto the ground floor.

CLAIR

See her?

Andrew nods.

CLAIR

She's the last one to use the elevator before the incident. Was only in there for thirty seconds.

ANDREW

Have you looked at the service entrance?

CLAIR

Shit, no.

Clair frantically types and pulls up a different camera angle - A back door in a grungy staircase.

Clair fast-forwards through the footage. Hours pass on the time code, but the door never moves. No one heading in or out.

Clair tenses.

CLAIR
This is a fucking nightmare.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Sam reviews a file from behind his desk. Clair and Andrew sit across from him.

SAM
So your conclusion is that someone cut the cable. Yet, no person was in the elevator long enough to have possibly cut said cable?

Sam puts down the file and glares at Clair.

SAM
Sounds like you're a fucking idiot.

ANDREW
Sam--

SAM
Shut up.

Clair avoids Sam's gaze.

SAM
So what are you going to file in your report?

She doesn't respond. Focused on her hands, folded in her lap.

SAM
I asked you a fucking question.

CLAIR
(softly)
That the cause is inconclusive.

SAM
Look, kid. If there truly is an accident or an act of God event or something, I get it. But I'm having a hard time believing that every fucking claim coming through here is a damn accident.

Andrew clears his throat to jump in.

ANDREW

There's other ways we can cheat the claim, Sam. I can shrink the size - Argue the future earnings of the deceased would have remained stagnant over time, deny psychiatric coverage for the janitor. Guy seemed gung-ho about going back to work anyway.

CLAIR

(softly)

He needs coverage.

Andrew and Sam both turn to Clair, surprised. She's flush with embarrassment.

CLAIR

He was talking about seeing things that weren't there.

ANDREW

Well, so are you.

Clair stiffens as Andrew turns back to Sam - Tone is cold, ruthless.

ANDREW

The guy served. We can argue any trauma he claims pre-dates the accident.

Sam SNAPS his fingers, points at Clair.

SAM

You can go. Close the door on your way out.

She complies - Sam and Andrew wait until the door is shut to continue.

SAM

You gotta lose the engineer.

ANDREW

Can't do it.

SAM

Wasn't a request, bud.

Andrew grimaces.

ANDREW
Remember Eli?

SAM
Yeah, so what?

ANDREW
That's his daughter. Eli held my hand through this shit when I first started. I didn't exactly have a wealth of guidance growing up, so that guy was my fucking hero. I promised him I'd look after his kid.

Sam furrows his brow.

ANDREW
When he had the stroke, I'm the one that called her. I'm the one that flew her in for the funeral. And I'm the one she rings up when she's confused or hurt or fucked up or whatever.
(beat)
Eli did that shit for me. I'm gonna do it for her.

SAM
That's a really fascinating story, Drew. I mean it.
(beat)
Doesn't change the fact that she sucks at her job.

Andrew snatches Clair's report off of Sam's desk.

ANDREW
Did you actually read her report? Look, I know we're in a bad stretch right now, but we're not alone. The guys on the property side came back with inconclusives on the last two as well. Ain't just her.

Sam glares at Andrew a moment, considering his case. An extended silence.

Andrew tenses...

SAM
Fine. But she's standing atop an earthquake.

Sam motions for Andrew to leave. As Andrew exits, Sam calls after him.

SAM

Oh, hey!

Andrew turns.

SAM

Shave the claim and we'll see about pulling you off the traveling circus.

ANDREW

Yes, sir.

And he's out.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - CLAIR'S CUBICLE - DAY

Andrew maneuvers through a cubicle jungle to get to Clair's cube. She's not there.

ANDREW

Crap.

He notices the picture of Young Clair with he and Eli. Andrew grabs a pen from Clair's desk and scribbles **Sorry, friend** on a sticky-note. Places it over his face in the photo.

Andrew opens a drawer to toss the sticky-note tab in, but DOZENS OF MINI LIQUOR BOTTLES RATTLE AROUND INSIDE.

Immediate surprise. Andrew looks around the make sure no one else noticed.

Slams the drawer shut.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Andrew sits on his couch with his laptop open as he works in an excel spreadsheet.

A **bolded** figure at the bottom of the sheet reads **\$10.6**. He adjusts another cell and a formula re-calculates the figure to **\$9.8**.

Andrew stares at the number a moment, conflicted... Screw it. He leaves the number and closes excel out.

He grabs a manila folder off the coffee table and flips through the pages inside. Comes across a number of pictures of the elevator shaft.

He stops at a picture of the elevator cable. The cut is CLEAN, not a jagged edge to be found.

His brow furrows. We CLOSE IN on the clean cut...

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Watching himself in a dresser mirror, Andrew rubs ointment into the rash that has now SPREAD ACROSS HIS ENTIRE CHEST. The black and brown scabbing has expanded beyond his armpit to his shoulder.

He squirts more ointment into his hand and carefully applies it to the black scabbing. The ointment blotches, isn't soaking in.

He rubs harder. The skin CRACKS - Andrew yelps in pain.

Thick, black fluid leaks out of the scab and slowly runs down his arm.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Andrew lies asleep in bed. Elastic bandage wrap covers the leaking scab on his shoulder.

A CRASH - In the distance. Andrew shoots up. Wide awake.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Andrew enters to find his laptop and the manila folder have fallen off the coffee table to the floor. The folder is splayed open, with sheets and pictures strewn across the hardwood.

ANDREW

Shit.

Andrew grabs the laptop and opens it - The screen lights up, still works. Quick sigh of relief.

He gets on one knee and gathers the loose sheets, shoving them into the manila folder.

A CREAK, from behind Andrew - He whips around. No one is there. Or are shadows more than just shadows?

Andrew breathes heavy. Just stares into the darkness. His eyes dart to the mini camera in the potted plant.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

A lit cigarette dangles from Andrew's mouth as he sits in relative darkness, watching camera footage cast onto his TV.

In the footage, the manila folder and laptop sit at the edge of the coffee table. A quiet stillness fills the room.

Suddenly, the top flap of the manila folder flutters open, as if lightly blown by a passing breeze.

Andrew leans forward as the footage shows the breeze grow stronger. The top flap flies open with force and sheets spill out of the folder and scatter across the floor... eventually joined by the laptop, which topples off the table with a CRASH.

Andrew pauses the footage. He turns to the window. It's closed.

There's no breeze here.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - EXAM ROOM - DAY

Andrew is slumped forward on an exam table, eyes closed.

DOCTOR STOWE (O.S.)
(softly)
Mister Norwood?

He doesn't move. Fast asleep.

DOCTOR STOWE (O.S.)
Mister Norwood?

Doctor Stowe SNAPS his fingers in Andrew's face - He quickly awakens, clears his throat.

ANDREW
Sorry.

DOCTOR STOWE
It's alright. I'm glad you're with us. Are you feeling okay?

ANDREW
Yeah, I'm fine. Just need to catch up on sleep is all.

DOCTOR STOWE
Well, please do that.

Doctor Stowe holds up a tablet device.

DOCTOR STOWE
Got your lab results. Initial findings aren't one-hundred percent clear. That's not a bad thing, we just haven't seen anything like this before. I'm sending the sample out for additional testing, but wanted to ask you a few questions.

ANDREW
Uh, okay?

DOCTOR STOWE
Outside of your normal routine: home, work, errands... Where have you visited recently? Maybe the last seven-to-ten days?

ANDREW
Um, I was at Townes Energy Plant in Chicago. Steam pipe explosion. And was at the Werner Building downtown for an elevator accident. It's part of my job.

DOCTOR STOWE
Got it. So your exposure levels are high.

ANDREW
What do you mean?

DOCTOR STOWE
Well, in a steam pipe explosion, you've got decades of gunk built up in that pipe that get released in the explosion event. Just floating around in the air for days. For the elevator accident, were you in the elevator shaft?

ANDREW
Uh, adjacent to it.

DOCTOR STOWE
Right. My guess is that this is environmental.

(MORE)

DOCTOR STOWE (CONT'D)
You got exposed to something really
nasty and had a reaction to it or
got some form of infection.

Doctor Stowe taps his tablet device as he speaks.

DOCTOR STOWE
I'm gonna write you a prescription
for penicillamine, which should
help with any sort of deep
infection. And I want you to keep
using the ointment so your skin
doesn't get too dried out.

Stowe pulls a business card from his lab coat, hands it to
Andrew.

DOCTOR STOWE
Also, I want you to call these
guys. They do biohazard cleanup
services. Have them do a full sweep
of your home. I want to make sure
that if you brought something back,
it's not constantly re-infecting
you.

ANDREW
Should, uh, I be worried?

Doctor Stowe chuckles, pats Andrew on the shoulder.

DOCTOR STOWE
Not at all. We'll figure this out.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - BOILER ROOM - DAY

A lit cigarette dangles from Andrew's mouth as he reviews a
manila folder, flipping through pictures of the elevator
shaft.

He stops, confused. Turns back to the previous page.
Something isn't right. He scrolls through all of the sheets.
The picture of the cut elevator cable is nowhere to be found.

Andrew quickly flips through the right-hand corner of each
page, looking at page numbers...

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12--

Andrew shuts the folder.

ANDREW
What the fuck...?

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Andrew sits on the couch with his cellphone pressed between his shoulder and ear. His laptop is open to an excel spreadsheet.

His finger grazes the **\$9.8** figure on the spreadsheet while he scratches his chest through his dress shirt.

ANDREW

Of course.

(beat)

No, I totally understand where you're coming from. I just disagree.

Behind Andrew, a MAN IN A HAZMAT SUIT cleans the ceiling with a giant industrial vacuum hose.

ANDREW

Look, I've been doing this for over twenty years and this claim is worth nine-eight. I can be a gentleman and round that up to ten, but I'm not going any higher than that.

Andrew pulls a prescription bottle from his pocket and pops a pill in his mouth as INDISTINCT YELLING emanates from the phone.

ANDREW

Uh-huh. Even if I shifted the future earning potential for those kids, you're still only looking at ten-six max. We're offering you ten. Are you gonna drag this through the court system for six-hundred grand? How much does your law firm charge? Even a basic arbitration is gonna take months.

MORE YELLING, louder. But Andrew just nods along.

ANDREW

Yep, of course. Fuck me. I'm a cunt and an asshole. Love you too, Jeff.

EXT. DURBIN MANUFACTURING - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

DEBRA (40s) walks through a dark parking lot in her Durbin Manufacturing issued polo shirt and jeans. She speaks into an outdated cellphone as she approaches the front entrance.

DEBRA

Well you don't have to like his cooking to eat it. He's trying his best. I know he really wants you to like him.

(beat)

What do you want Mommy to do? I gotta work, honey.

(beat)

I'll make you something real nice before my shift tomorrow, alright? Now I need to you listen to Frank and go to bed. I promise I'll be home when you wake up, okay?

(beat)

I love you.

Debra hangs up as she enters the building.

INT. DURBIN MANUFACTURING - PROCESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Dozens of metallic vats and wall-sized fans fill an expansive space. Metal sheets cover the back of the fans as they blow cool air towards the tanks, producing a loud WHIRRING noise.

Debra enters, noise-cancelling headphones around her neck. She looks up at an elevated platform to find SIMMS at a switchboard, headphones on. He nods to her and she returns a half-hearted salute.

Debra looks at the fans - Something gives her pause. Beyond the WHIRRING, a slight WHISTLING is barely audible. Debra turns back to Simms. Shouts to be heard over the racket.

DEBRA

YOU HEARING THIS!?

Simms looks confused. Debra motions for him to take off his headphones. He complies.

DEBRA

HEY! DO YOU HEAR A WHISTLING SOUND!?

Simms listens a moment. Shakes his head.

DEBRA

ALRIGHT THEN, CRANK 'EM UP! CAN'T RISK THE VATS OVERHEATING!

Simms nods and adjusts the switchboard.

The wall-sized fans ROTATE FASTER. The WHISTLING SOUND grows louder, UNMISTAKABLE.

Debra turns to the sound, just as the metal sheet covering the back of one of the fans CRACKS AND PULLS INWARD! A LOUD CRUNCHING SOUND AS THE METAL PLATE FOLDS INTO ITSELF!

Debra's eyes go wide - We PUSH IN on her face...

IN SLOW-MOTION:

BLOOD DROPLETS ARE SUCKED FROM DEBRA'S EYES TOWARD THE PULL OF THE FAN.

SHE OPENS HER MOUTH TO SCREAM, BUT HER THROAT FOLDS INTO ITSELF, TEARING AND RIPPING OUT OF HER SHRIEKING MOUTH!

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Andrew lies in bed, drenched in sweat. Stares up at the ceiling. Can't sleep.

KNOCK-KNOCK.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Andrew trudges to the front door and looks through the peephole. An immediate tonal shift as he quickly unlocks the door and opens it, revealing...

Clair - A drunk mess. Head drooped forward, leaning awkwardly on the door frame for support.

CLAIR
Hey, friend.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Clair sits at the kitchen table, head buried in her arms. Andrew places a glass of water in front of her and takes a seat.

ANDREW
I'm sorry about yesterday. That was a rough meeting.

Clair doesn't move. Andrew nudges her.

ANDREW
Why don't you try some water?

She sits up and takes a sip from the glass.

CLAIR

What was the, uh, the janitor's name?

ANDREW

We don't wanna go down this road. I know his name so that you don't have to.

CLAIR

What's gonna happen to him? If he can't, you know, see a shrink or something?

Andrew sits up, shifts gears a bit.

ANDREW

Hey, listen here. In a car, do you know why the windshield is bigger than the rearview mirror?

(off Clair's confused reaction)

It encourages you to look forward. Not backward.

CLAIR

You been reading a lot of self-help books?

ANDREW

Yeah, your dad wouldn't have liked that one either.

Andrew pulls out a cigarette and lights it. Clair takes another sip of water, contemplating her next question...

CLAIR

Do you ever feel bad? Doing what we do?

ANDREW

I try not to think about it.

CLAIR

I'll get home from a trip and, like, my mind will build this visual of what the bodies must have looked like. And then they just follow me. From room to room. Watching me unpack, eat, shower, sleep...

Clair looks up at Andrew with pleading eyes...

CLAIR
Is that normal?

ANDREW
Happened to me a bit when I first started. Before I got used to... whatever this whole thing is.

CLAIR
What did you do?

ANDREW
Well, I'm Irish. So I just pack that shit in with all my other feelings, fears, and anxieties and shove them in a box, right next to my liver. Then, if I drink enough, my liver expands and I can't see them anymore.

Clair chuckles, but Andrew doesn't laugh. Watches her, concerned.

ANDREW
Clearly you've been running a similar strategy. How you doing with the drinking?

CLAIR
I'm fine.

ANDREW
If you ever feel like it's out of control, I want you to talk to me, okay?

Clair appears miffed.

CLAIR
You told me everyone in this industry has a drinking problem.

ANDREW
No, I said everyone in this industry is managing a drinking problem.

Andrew puts out his cigarette in an ashtray. He stands and pats Clair on the shoulder.

ANDREW
Kill that water and let's get you
to bed.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Clair lies on the couch, half-asleep. Andrew approaches with a blanket and drapes it over her.

Gets on one knee so he's at face-level.

ANDREW
You gonna be alright?

Clair nods. Her eyes are drooping and she speaks slowly.
Motions behind Andrew to the barren room surrounding them.

CLAIR
You have no stuff in here.

ANDREW
Buying things takes time, energy,
effort...

CLAIR
Do you ever wish you had a house?
Or a wife or kids or something?

ANDREW
(sarcastic)
Those take time, energy, effort...

Clair chuckles.

CLAIR
You don't get lonely?

ANDREW
I've got you, kiddo.

Andrew rubs the top of Clair's head as he stands. She smiles and closes her eyes.

ANDREW
Goodnight.

Andrew kills the lights as he exits the room.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Andrew trudges to his nightstand. Opens the bottom drawer and pulls out a bottle of codeine. Guzzles what's left of it and tosses the empty bottle into the trash.

Andrew slides into bed. He looks up at the ceiling. A brief smile as he dozes off.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Andrew sleeps, peaceful smile on his face. He awakens with a gentle yawn. His eyes open, slow and gradual.

He sits up to see the sun shining out the window. It's a beautiful day.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Andrew lumbers in, still in his pajamas.

ANDREW

Hey, not sure if you're hungry but
there's a place downtown that...

Clair is gone. The couch is empty, blanket folded neatly in the corner.

Andrew's cellphone BUZZES on the counter. He grabs it and scrolls. Immediate panic.

ANDREW

Holy shit.

He taps a few buttons. A voicemail plays on speaker.

SAM (V.O.)

Hey, I don't know where the fuck
you are, but we had a huge claim at
Durbin last night. Call the kid and
get your ass on a plane to Detroit.
Give me a shout when you get this
so I know you're on your way and
GET YOUR FUCKING SHIT TOGETHER!
When I call, YOU PICK UP THE MOTHER-
FUCKING PHO--

Andrew kills the voicemail.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Andrew's rocking a full suit as he reviews a giant policy in the aisle seat. He scratches his chest, winces in pain.

Pulls out the prescription bottle. Opens it and pops a pill into his mouth.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Andrew wheels his luggage onto the sidewalk and peers around for--

CLAIR (O.S.)

Yo!

Clair waves him over to the taxi lane. She wears sunglasses despite an overcast sky and has band-aids covering some of her fingernails.

ANDREW

Jesus, kid. You look like shit.

CLAIR

Thanks.

Clair hails a cab.

ANDREW

What the hell happened?

CLAIR

Don't wanna talk about it.

INT. DURBIN MANUFACTURING - PROCESSING ROOM - DAY

The metal sheet covering the back of the wall-sized fan is bent and twisted inward, accompanied by DEBRA'S BROKEN BODY.

HER FLESH HAS BEEN TORN OFF AND IS WRAPPED AROUND THE BLADES LIKE A TARP, WHILE HER PULPY MUSCULATURE IS PRESSED INTO THE METAL WIRING.

BLOOD SPRAY coats the giant metallic vats and back wall.

Andrew and Clair take in the scene. Andrew is totally emotionless, but Clair is bent over, hands on her knees. Coughing as she chokes down bile in her throat.

SHIFT LEADER enters.

SHIFT LEADER

Sorry about the mess. Biohazard team can't start cleanup until the property guys decide if the vats are salvageable or not.

Clair tugs on Andrew's arm, continues to fight her own stomach juices as she chances a look up at the ghastly scene before them.

CLAIR

Drew, that was a person...

ANDREW

I know.

CLAIR

Bodies aren't supposed to look like that.

Andrew turns to Shift Leader.

ANDREW

How did the property folks do their eval given the, uh, extenuating circumstances?

SHIFT LEADER

I dunno. Guy just figured it out.

Andrew turns back to Clair. She's still bent over, the mayor of struggle city.

ANDREW

Do you think you can handle this? You're allowed to tap out if you want. No shame in it.

Clair clears her throat and spits bile onto the floor.

CLAIR

I'm fine. Just get me a trash can.

ANDREW

(to Shift Leader)

Do you have a wastebasket we can borrow?

INT. DURBIN MANUFACTURING - MEETING ROOM - DAY

Simms enters, wringing out a trucker hat in clenched hands. His eyes are red, was crying earlier.

Andrew sits at a small desk and motions to a chair.

ANDREW

Simms, right? Take a seat.

Simms complies. Rubs his palms against his jeans, nervous.

ANDREW

Can you tell me what happened?

Simms takes a deep breath, trying to stave off more tears.

SIMMS

Debra and I work night shift. We switch back-and-forth on operator and floor duties. Last night she was on the floor, coulda just as easily...

Simms stops himself, clears his throat.

SIMMS

She wanted to up the fan speed. Gotta do that this time of year cause it's getting warmer outside. I remember her saying she'd heard a whistling sound or something. She asked if I'd heard it, but...

Simms wipes a tear from his cheek. For the first time, empathy lines Andrew's face.

Simms voice cracks as he re-starts.

SIMMS

I didn't hear nothing. I swear I didn't, man. On my mother's grave I swear. It's just... it's so fucking loud in there, pardon my French.

(beat)

So I upped the fan speed and, like, immediately, something was wrong. The seal cracked and... took Debra right along with it.

Andrew looks down at his legal pad, but he hasn't written a single note.

ANDREW

Um, you noted that you and Debra switch positions. So were you on the floor two nights ago?

SIMMS

Yes, sir.

ANDREW

Did anything seem wrong with the fans then?

SIMMS

No, sir. They ran smooth. Don't make no sense.

ANDREW

What do you mean by that? The *not making sense*?

SIMMS

These are big industrial machines. They don't just fail like...

Simms SNAPS his fingers.

SIMMS

They degrade. Over time. You get small stuff going wrong. Metal rusts, parts get replaced. You don't just up and have the darn thing fold unto itself without a lotta warnings. But those suckers never had an issue till last night.

Andrew jots down a few notes. He looks up at Simms.

ANDREW

And how do you feel, Mister Simms? Obviously this is a tragic situation, but--

SIMMS

I wanna die. I wanna clear you and all your little friends outta this damn building. Then go to the processing floor, turn that fan back on, and stand right in front of it. Take Debra's place in the infinite darkness.

Simms is terrifyingly calm.

SIMMS

I worked with that woman twenty years. She's a saint. Never done a damn thing wrong in her life. I drink too much. Lose my temper.

(MORE)

SIMMS (CONT'D)

I don't go to church as much as I should. So I should be the one caught up in them blades.

Andrew nods, shaken.

ANDREW

Understood. We're, um, we're gonna have someone pick you up after we wrap here. It's not good to be alone at a time like this.

INT. DURBIN MANUFACTURING - HALLWAY - DAY

Andrew exits the meeting room, looking unsettled. He walks down the hall, glancing in other rooms as he passes. Suddenly, he stops...

YOUNG BOY is alone in a meeting room, seated in an oversized chair. He just stares at the ground, clutching a toy car in his tiny hands. He looks JUST like Debra, featuring her darker skin tone and facial structure.

Andrew can't look away.

SHIFT LEADER (O.S.)

Mister Norwood?

Shift Leader waves Andrew over.

SHIFT LEADER

Processing floor is right this way.

ANDREW

Of course. Thanks.

INT. DURBIN MANUFACTURING - PROCESSING ROOM - DAY

Andrew enters to find Clair vomiting into a wastebasket.

ANDREW

How we doing in here?

She coughs and spits into the trash can. Gives Andrew a quick shake of the head - Not great.

She pulls herself out and goes back to inspecting the bent and twisted metal sheet.

CLAIR

I'll meet you back at the hotel.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Andrew and Clair huddle in a corner booth with a number of equipment sketches and diagrams spread out across the table.

Andrew works through a half-eaten burger and fries while Clair drinks a beer, sans food. She's pale and covered in sweat, voice RASPY.

CLAIR

They cut the seal to be a perfect fit over the back of the fan to prevent this exact situation. If there's any sort of air pocket, the force of the blades will pull the air in so fast that it'll bend the metal into the wiring.

Clair coughs - wet and thick. Takes a moment to gather herself and circles the metal sheet in an equipment diagram.

CLAIR

There wasn't an issue with the original cut, otherwise this woulda happened the first time it was turned on.

ANDREW

So it's a degradation issue?

Clair shakes her head.

CLAIR

That's the problem. I looked at this fucker up-and-down and there's no signs pointing to issues with the seal or any rust damage on the metal. In fact...

Clair draws a small circle in the middle of the metal sheet.

CLAIR

The epicenter of the incident originated from the center of the sheet.

Clair coughs again. Takes a sip of her beer. Andrew looks concerned.

ANDREW

You doin' alright?

CLAIR

Fine.

ANDREW

Want some food?

He pushes his plate toward Clair but she refuses, taps the equipment diagram to re-direct attention.

CLAIR

Now I can't tell how large the air pocket would have been in the middle of the fan, but it couldn't have been noticeable to the naked eye. Otherwise someone woulda caught it. So we're looking at a tiny, minuscule hole.

ANDREW

Okay...

Clair scratches her neck. Dried blood has seeped through the band-aid on her finger.

CLAIR

Here's the problem. The hole showed up sometime between day shift and night shift. Because they had that fan cranked up to similar levels during the day and there were no issues. A tiny slit in a metal sheet doesn't just magically appear on it's own.

Andrew sighs.

ANDREW

You think someone made it?

CLAIR

I know... I know what you're thinking. *We just went through this.* But this time I'm right. I've got the folks at Durbin pulling the footage now.

ANDREW

Are you sure there's no other way this could have happened?

CLAIR

(sharp)

Who has the fucking engineering degree, Drew?

An uncomfortable pause.

CLAIR

Sorry.

ANDREW

Are you okay? If you need to talk,
we can talk.

Clair kills her beer and grabs her sheets off the bar.

ANDREW

Woah, woah, what's going on?

CLAIR

I should go. I, uh, still have some
work I need to do.

Clair walks away quickly with her head down, heap of
equipment sketches cradled in her arms.

ANDREW

Clair?
(beat)
Clair!

She stops and turns - Her face is pained, clearly holding in
tears.

CLAIR

T-That woman... Did she have a
family?

Andrew says nothing, but his face gives Clair all the answers
she needs. She turns and disappears around the corner, out of
sight.

Andrew is frozen in his seat. Thousand yard gaze. All alone.

INT. HOTEL - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Andrew stands shirtless in front of a wall mirror, rubbing
ointment into his shoulder to no avail. The splotchy, red
rash HAS SPREAD DOWN HIS BICEP while the blackened scabbing
has moved beyond his shoulder to his chest.

He raises his arm to inspect his armpit - Practically a black
hole of hardened, dead skin. He leans in and picks at it.
Tries to dig his finger into the scales and--

CRACK! He pulls back with a wince, shaking out his hand.

Looks at his fingernail - It's broken, with a FISSURE RIGHT
DOWN THE MIDDLE OF THE NAIL.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Blurry security footage of the Durbin Manufacturing processing floor runs at *triple-speed*. Nothing happens. It's just an empty floor.

Eventually Debra enters and the footage PAUSES.

SAM (V.O.)
The kid has to go.

Sam reclines behind his desk, monitor turned so both he and Andrew can watch. Andrew is disheveled, eyes bloodshot while he scratches his bicep through his dress shirt.

ANDREW
She's not a dumb kid, Sam. Maybe she got the "how" wrong, but the "why" right.

SAM
Do you trust her? Enough to send her ass back out there for another crack at it?

Andrew hesitates - That's all Sam needs.

SAM
Exactly. She's not writing the report on this one. We're moving Max over to your accounts, he'll handle it.

ANDREW
No, wait, Sam. We need to start looking across these claims. See if we can find similarities. That's gonna be harder for Max to do since he wasn't on any of 'em.

SAM
Then you do it. I'm done with the fucking little girl.

An uncomfortable silence.

ANDREW
In terms of, uh, Clair. Let me re-assign her. I can find a spot with a bit less pressure.

SAM

Sure, whatever. I don't give a shit, so long as I don't have to see her again.

Andrew nods as Sam turns his monitor back around.

SAM

You're gonna work with Max to build a case for fatuity. Durbin should have known the fans would malfunction. We're looking at industrial machines that were sixteen years old with spotty maintenance.

ANDREW

Fatuity doesn't cover claims that are inconclusive.

SAM

That's why the cause won't be inconclusive.

Sam focuses on his computer, typing while Andrew speaks.

ANDREW

Sam, this one was ugly. That lady... it was bad. I don't think this is the kind of claim we wanna be fucking around with.

SAM

Not my problem. People die everyday.

ANDREW

You didn't see her kid.

Sam turns to Andrew, annoyed.

SAM

Get off your fucking cross, we need the wood.

He looks Andrew up-and-down with a sneer.

SAM

You want out of the field?

ANDREW

Yeah.

SAM

Then you're gonna do what I tell
ya. Understood?

ANDREW

Yes, sir.

SAM

Good. Now get the fuck out of my
office.

Andrew stands and straightens himself out. As he heads for
the door:

SAM

Hopefully you're better at managing
adjusters than you were with that
shitty engineer.

INT. CLAIR'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Hipster central from the steel apartment doors to the retro
designs on the carpet. Andrew is totally out of place in his
suit as he knocks on a steel door. Waits a moment.

Clair opens the door, wearing a ratty ball-cap and sunglasses
despite the darkness inside. Her hand is in a cast.

ANDREW

Oh my god, what happened?

CLAIR

Got into a fight with the wall.
Wall won.

INT. CLAIR'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

More frat house than apartment - Clothes line the floor,
takeout cartons cover the counters, and empty whiskey bottles
litter the place like an infestation.

Clair appears gaunt and sickly, slouched at the kitchen table
with a generous pour of whiskey. Andrew sits across from her,
taking in the grime around them.

ANDREW

Heard you weren't in the office
today.

CLAIR

Worked from home. Jet lag.

Dubious excuse and Andrew's face doesn't hide his reaction. He watches as Clair takes a sip of whiskey.

ANDREW

Look, I'm here because I wanted to tell you in person. They're moving you off my accounts.

Clair doesn't react. Andrew leans forward, trying to engage.

ANDREW

You still have a job. We're just moving you to Lorenzo's stuff. Smaller claims, less pressure. It'll give you a chance to slow down. Get yourself straight.

Clair won't look at him. She plays with her cast.

ANDREW

Are you okay? Something's wrong. I need you to talk to me.

CLAIR

You know some engineers build things.

ANDREW

I'm sorry?

CLAIR

I went to school with a girl who builds rockets. For NASA.

(beat)

What do I build?

ANDREW

Uh, well investigative engineering is different.

CLAIR

I know I don't look like the kind of person who can read and understand a policy. But I am. The underwriting is deceptive, purposely designed to deny coverage.

Clair finally looks up.

CLAIR

My dad used to tell me that his job was to figure out what happened so that good folks could get closure and relief.

(beat)

But that's a lie. We don't give closure. We don't provide relief.

She takes a massive sip of whiskey.

CLAIR

I wake up every morning surrounded by the corpses of people I've cheated. And they weigh really fucking heavy. I deserve bad things. We deserve bad things.

ANDREW

Look, Lorenzo is a good guy. You won't have to do anything that's ethically compromising working with him, I promise. If a situation like that comes up, you can always talk to--

CLAIR

You?

Clair releases a mean-spirited chortle. She takes her sunglasses off to wipe her eyes, revealing DARK RED CIRCLES AROUND BLOODSHOT EYES.

ANDREW

My god...

CLAIR

Please leave.

ANDREW

No, hey. Clair. Look, I'm here for you. And just because you and I won't be working together, that doesn't mean I'm no longer a resource. I will always be one phone call away.

CLAIR

You're not my father.

Andrew stifles the emotional gut punch, tries to hide the hurt on his face.

ANDREW
I-I'm not trying to be.

CLAIR
Get out. I'm asking you nicely.

ANDREW
Clair, please. I'm worried about you.

CLAIR
GET OUT!

Clair is red with rage. Tears streak down her face.

Andrew pulls out a pen and grabs a nearby napkin. He scribbles an address on it.

ANDREW
Wednesday night. Seven o'clock. I want you to go here. They do weekly meetings. I used to go with your father.

Andrew slides the napkin across the table. Clair doesn't acknowledge it.

CLAIR
I'm not an alcoholic.

ANDREW
(sarcastic)
Right. Of course you're not.

Andrew stands and walks to the door--

A GLASS FLIES PAST HIS HEAD AND SHATTERS AGAINST THE WALL WITH A CRASH!

Andrew turns to find Clair glaring at him from the kitchen table - Furious.

He says nothing. Just opens the door and exits.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Andrew sits on the couch, surrounded by empty beer bottles, flipping through an old photo book. Polaroids are tucked into laminated pages.

- A picture of Andrew in his 20s with Eli at a black tie event.

Beside Eli is a middle-aged woman holding a portable oxygen tank. She looks far too thin, but that doesn't keep the smile off her face

- A picture of Andrew in his 30s smoking cigars with Eli at a barbecue. The two men wear Hawaiian shirts while Clair (early teens) smirks next to her father, wearing dorky tourist garb

- Another picture from that same barbecue. Andrew and Clair sit across from each other at a picnic table. Andrew holds a number of blackjack cards just out of Clair's reach. She wears a huge smile.

We PUSH IN on Clair in the photo. Focusing in on her smile.

Andrew SLAMS the book shut. Tears stream down his face.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Andrew sits up in bed, typing away at a laptop propped up on his knees. He filters through a database, isolating line items for Townes, Werner, and Durbin.

He stops typing and winces. Takes a closer look at his broken fingernail - The fissure down the center of the nail has gotten deeper and is festering.

Andrew grabs the broken ends of the nail. Steadies himself... and pulls.

THE FINGERNAIL SLIDES RIGHT OFF.

He holds it up and inspects it. Eyes wide.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Andrew looks at himself in the mirror. He's shirtless, revealing that the rash has spread across HIS ENTIRE CHEST.

The black scabbing has expanded as well, now running down his bicep. He runs his finger across the black scales, troubled.

Andrew empties his prescription bottle, dumping the three remaining pills into his hand. He pops them all in his mouth and turns on the sink.

Bends over to wash them down.

INT. PHARMACY - NIGHT

Bright overhead lights give the space a washed out appearance as Andrew waits at the counter. He's slumming it in a large overcoat and sweatpants.

PHARMACIST approaches from behind the counter.

PHARMACIST
How can I help you?

ANDREW
I'm looking to refill a
prescription. Penicillamine. For
Andrew Norwood.

Pharmacist gives him a polite smile as she pulls him up on the register computer.

PHARMACIST
Of course. You're still a patient
of Doctor Stowe?

ANDREW
Yeah.

She taps at the keyboard, but stops. Concerned.

PHARMACIST
I'm sorry, but this prescription
wasn't intended to be refilled.

ANDREW
Yeah, but I need more help. I'm
still sick. Maybe a refill or a
higher dose or something?

Pharmacist takes a slight step back, distancing herself from Andrew.

PHARMACIST
This is probably something you need
to discuss with Doctor Stowe. We
can call the office to see if he
wants to change the refill status,
but that's at his discretion.
(beat)
I can't just... give you drugs.

ANDREW
Okay, yeah. Please call him. As
soon as possible. It's, uh, it's
serious.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Andrew trudges through the empty hall. As he approaches his apartment, he notices THE FRONT DOOR IS WIDE OPEN.

Immediate panic - Andrew runs to the door and BURSTS INSIDE...

ANDREW'S APARTMENT - ENTRY WAY

Everything is in shambles:

- Furniture is overturned
- Trinkets and pictures are smashed
- Shelves and cabinets have been ransacked, items tossed to the floor
- On the floor, right at Andrew's feet, is the mini camera, SHATTERED

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Uniformed police officers peruse Andrew's apartment, nonchalantly snapping pictures of broken items and checking various rooms and closets.

Andrew is slumped on the couch in the midst of this chaos. He stares straight ahead at his TV, which is crooked with a crack in the middle of the screen.

DETECTIVE stands over Andrew, inspecting the broken mini camera.

DETECTIVE

How long you been noticing oddities around here?

ANDREW

Maybe a week or two.

DETECTIVE

Well, clearly they got enough of a beat on you to find this. We downloaded the footage. Didn't seem to capture much before going offline, but we'll do another run-through at the station.

Detective hands the mini camera to Andrew and refers to scribbled notes on a notepad.

DETECTIVE

Still finishing the inventory, but it seems the only item missing is your laptop. Any reason someone would want that?

ANDREW

I'm sure there's plenty of lawyers who'd love to review some documents on there. But it's a work device. You'd need a VPN to access it. So... who knows?

Andrew sighs and runs his hands over his face. Detective clocks his missing fingernail.

DETECTIVE

You sure there's no other reason someone would want to be in here? Maybe send a message? Gambling debts? Perhaps an affair?

Andrew tilts his head, confused. He catches Detective staring at his finger and immediately hides it.

ANDREW

(curt)

No, Officer. Thanks for checking.

Detective shrugs, refers back to his notepad.

DETECTIVE

Who besides you has an apartment key?

ANDREW

Just me. I mean, I guess the maintenance guys have a master or whatever. But that's it.

DETECTIVE

Well there's no sign of forced entry. So this individual either unlocked your door with a key... or they were already in the apartment before you left.

Andrew's face goes white - INSTANT CONCERN.

DETECTIVE

Do you have any reason to believe that someone else may have been in your apartment with you tonight?

Andrew can't immediately come up with the words to respond. His hand shakes slightly as he pulls a cigarette from his pocket. Lights it.

ANDREW

I, uh, I don't know.

Detective nods, makes a note in his pad.

DETECTIVE

I'll make sure we do a full sweep
of the premises before we leave.
Think about changing your locks.

Andrew nods, but he's mentally absent. Clearly shaken.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Every conceivable light is on.

Andrew stands in the center of the room. He looks out past the bedroom door into the hall and living room, where broken glass still litters the floor.

He sits down on the bed and grabs a tablet device, hooked into his cellphone. He plays with it a moment until static from the camera footage is displayed on-screen.

He runs his finger across the tablet to rewind the footage and plays it back.

The feed from the recording shows an empty apartment. Still and calm... until an off-screen chair FLIES INTO FRAME and SPLINTERS against the wall. A picture frame scatters across the floor, leaving broken glass in its wake.

The perpetrator isn't visible, seemingly just outside the camera's view.

Andrew leans in for a better look right as the feed CUTS OUT. Back to the static.

He sighs and looks up, taking in the destruction around him. Drawers have been ripped out of his dresser. The closet door is torn off its hinges.

Andrew looks back down at the tablet and notices a droplet of BLOOD on the screen. Another droplet falls next to it. And another. DRIPPING FROM HIS HAND.

THE ROOTS OF HIS FINGERNAILS ARE BLEEDING.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Andrew takes deep, fractured breaths as he scrubs his hands in the sink.

He finishes and inspects his fingers - The nail folds are clean... but only for a moment. Blood pools at the roots under the nail.

ANDREW

Fuck.

Andrew turns the sink on, but stops... noticing his pointer finger doesn't bleed. No nail, no blood. He turns the sink off.

Andrew looks at his bleeding fingers. A moment of consideration.

He grasps the nail on his middle finger and twists it back-and-forth with a grimace, ignoring the pooling blood. Loosening the nail.

He tugs and the nail SLIDES RIGHT OFF.

He holds it up to the light. Both curious and disgusted all at once. Forehead caked in flop sweat.

Andrew places it on the sink and grabs the fingernail on his bleeding ring finger. A slight tug and IT DETACHES. A clear, mucous-like material is left in its wake. He tosses the nail on the sink.

WE STAY ON THE SINK: Focused on the two discarded fingernails. A grunt, just off-screen.

A third nail joins them... and a fourth... and a fifth.

INT. KEARNY GAS - TANK TRANSFER STATION - DAY

Over darkness:

SPORTSCASTER (V.O.)

Men on first and second now for the
Braves with one out and Jefferson
at the plate.

A large steel room - Massive arsine tanks line one end of the space, with transfer hoses and circulation valves leading into corresponding container units.

SPORTSCASTER (V.O.)
He's gonna take a fastball outside.
Ball one.

JALEN walks from tank-to-tank with a clipboard in hand and a small radio tucked into his tool belt, tuned to the ballgame.

Outside of the broadcast he's all business, with a Kearny-issued jumpsuit and his pants tucked into high socks.

SPORTSCASTER (V.O.)
And Jefferson is going to check his
swing on a low curveball... He
didn't go. Two-and-oh.

Jalen checks the pressure indicator and makes a mark on the clipboard. Checks the fill gauge and makes another mark.

Next tank...

SPORTSCASTER (V.O.)
The delivery from Martin and
Jefferson takes a big cut - DRIVES
IT! That is DEEP... and foul.

Jalen groans as he runs his routine on the second tank. He makes a few marks on his clipboard and... next tank.

SPORTSCASTER (V.O.)
Jefferson is going to... hold on
this one. Off-speed and inside for
ball three. A walk would load the
bases here.

Jalen checks the pressure indicator, but this time seems confused. Taps it a few times. Still not satisfied. He walks to the fill gauge, but that doesn't clear anything up.

SPORTSCASTER (V.O.)
And the delivery... a big swing
from Jefferson! Line drive that is
SNAGGED at--

Jalen kills the broadcast - All business now. He moves quickly as he checks a circulation valve. Not the problem.

He slides in between tanks to investigate further, but stops. Instant concern paints his face.

A sound clear as day - A SHARP HISSING.

INT. KEARNY GAS - PRODUCTION ROOM - DAY

A maze of tanks and valves with dozens of employees scurrying around in hard hats, construction masks, and jumpsuits.

Suddenly, AN ALARM SOUNDS. Red lights on the ceiling BLINK on-and-off. Employees look up in confusion.

The entry door BURSTS OPEN and Jalen stumbles in - HIS SKIN BUBBLES, WHILE BLOOD LEAKS FROM HIS EYES AND EARS. He can barely speak, voice just above a whisper.

JALEN

R-Run.

He falls to his knees, leans over, AND VOMITS BLOOD.

Instant pandemonium - SCREAMS of terror fill the room as employees scatter for the exits. In conjunction with the blinking lights and blasting alarm, it feels like a symphony of chaos.

A SMALL WOMAN straps a mask to her face as she weaves in between tanks. There's a focus and determination. No panic.

She sprints to a ladder staircase and climbs up. Surprisingly quick, hands-and-legs moving in unison. Almost mechanical.

As she pulls herself up to the grated platform she notices OLDER MAN lying on his side. Motionless, with blistered skin. Blood leaks from his eyes and his breaths are pained.

She climbs over him.

EXT. KEARNY GAS - PARKING LOT - DAY

The front door to the facility opens and Small Woman stumbles outside with MUSTACHED MAN. Both appear to be struggling.

Mustached Man coughs and falls to the ground. He grasps his chest and WHEEZES, unable to pull in any air. Blood pools around his lips as he rolls over and watches Small Woman climb into her car.

The car starts and backs out, but it's slow and off-kilter. Something is wrong. The car veers off sideways and CRUNCHES into another parked car.

THE HORN BLARES.

Mustached Man watches as the car door opens and Small Woman's blistered body slides out onto the pavement.

She turns over - They stare at each other. Unable to move.
Unable to speak.

Small Woman closes her eyes. And takes her last breath.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - BOILER ROOM - DAY

Andrew smokes in relative darkness - The solitude is palpable.

He wears leather gloves and has deep bags under his eyes as he listens to his phone dialing out on speaker.

RING-RING. RING-RING. RING- Voicemail picks up.

CLAIR (V.O.)

Hi, this is Clair and I can't make it to the phone right now, but if you leave a message I might, *just maybe*, call you back.

And extended BEEP.

ANDREW

Hey, kiddo. It's me. Just thinking about you. Hope you're doing okay.
(beat)
Also, I got a, uh, weird question for ya. Have you... been coming to my place? It's fine if you have. Just gotta let me know.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - ANDREW'S OFFICE - DAY

A space completely barren of personal effects. Likely a product of Andrew never actually being there.

Andrew watches as IT WOMAN hooks up a new laptop at his desk.

ANDREW

Is this a common thing? Laptops getting stolen?

IT WOMAN

Not really. We wipe them remotely, so there's not a ton someone can do with it. Other than, you know, add some frustration to your life. Keep you from getting work done, which is a bit of a two-sided gift.

Andrew and IT Woman share a wry smirk.

IT WOMAN

The actual devices have some value though, so let us know if you hear anything about a recovery--

Andrew's phone BUZZES - He excitedly holds up a hand for IT Woman to pause

ANDREW

Hold on just a second, please?

Andrew answers the call... instant disappointment.

ANDREW

Oh, hey Sam.

(beat)

Kearny Gas in Atlanta? Fuck, okay.

I'll call Max and head out now.

Andrew kills the call and gives IT Woman an apologetic smile.

ANDREW

Sorry, where were we?

INT. AIRPORT - BOARDING GATE - DAY

Andrew sits beside his luggage and flips through the policy.

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)

Flight twenty-one ninety-three now boarding.

Andrew tucks the policy under his arm and heads toward the gate.

EXT. CAR RENTAL LOT - DAY

Andrew rolls his luggage through a sun-drenched car lot.

MAX (O.S.)

Andrew!

Andrew spots MAX BARNES (30s) waving him over. Max appears to have popped directly out of a shitty cologne ad, with a square jaw and tight dress shirt that seems solely designed to show off one's muscles.

Andrew sighs. He changes course and heads toward Max.

MAX

Max Barnes. Investigative engineer.

ANDREW
Yeah, I know who you are.

MAX
Follow me. I already took care of everything.

Max leads Andrew through the lot.

MAX
How was your flight?

ANDREW
Long.

Max laughs. It's forced. He stops at a sleek red Camaro and raises his eyebrows.

MAX
You like it?

ANDREW
Sure. It's a car.

MAX
It's cool, right? I figure if corporate is paying, we oughta ride in fucking style, you know?

Andrew ignores him and opens the backseat to store his luggage.

MAX
I'm gonna want to drive this baby, if that's cool with you?

ANDREW
Not a problem.

Andrew opens the passenger side door and slides inside.

INT. CAMARO - DAY

Max drums on the steering wheel as he drives. Andrew ignores the annoyance, opting instead to study the policy.

MAX
Anything interesting in there?

ANDREW
This policy is dogshit.

MAX
Not your problem, man.

ANDREW
Right.

Max surveys the landscape, bored of Andrew. The surrounding area is older and forgotten. Dilapidated homes. Abandoned small businesses. Rundown factories.

MAX
Which of these fucking places had
the claim, am I right?

Max laughs at his own joke. Andrew glares at him for a moment... and back to the policy.

MAX
When you get old and shit, do you
just, like, automatically lose your
sense of humor?

ANDREW
That must be it.

EXT. KEARNY GAS - PARKING LOT - DAY

Unfettered disorder. The area is cordoned off with police tape, while Officers reason with family members and on-lookers trying to get in.

Andrew and Max approach the scene. Max tosses a tool belt over his shoulder and nods toward the family members - Some of whom yell at officers with indignant fury.

MAX
Fuckin' white trash carnival.

ANDREW
Shut up, kid.

Andrew pulls out his ID and shows it to KEARNY SECURITY GUARD.

ANDREW
With ACN. Liability insurance.
Andrew Norwood.

Kearny Security Guard reviews Andrew's license and refers to a checklist on his clipboard. He waves Andrew through, but stops Max.

KEARNY SECURITY GUARD

ID?

MAX

C'mon, man. Seriously?

Their disagreement *fades into the background* as Andrew steps over the police tape and absorbs the chaos around him...

- Various corporate suits speak with emotional Kearny employees
- Family members point at Andrew and others behind the police tape, pushing against the Officers who hold them back
- A young child huddles under a tree and sobs
- Two corpses lie out in the open, covered with white sheets
- Crows circle overhead, loudly CAWING over the madness

Andrew raises his hand to his mouth. Overwhelmed.

INT. KEARNY GAS - PRODUCTION ROOM - DAY

Giant double doors open and DAVIS, middle management with a clip-on tie and khakis, leads Andrew and Max inside. All three men wear gas masks that slightly muffle their voices.

Amidst the maze of tanks and valves are dozens of white sheets covering dead bodies. Andrew is visibly shaken.

DAVIS

Yeah, it's a bit much, huh?

ANDREW

What are the air levels at now?

DAVIS

Oh they're down significantly,
probably don't even need the masks.
But worth it to be cautious,
especially with y'all. Need the
insurance folks alive if we wanna
get paid, right?

Davis chuckles and pats Andrew on the shoulder as he walks through the sea of machinery.

ANDREW

How many, uh...

DAVIS
Fatalities? Twenty-three. Although
we got another eight at the
hospital, so could go up.

Davis points at a number of sheet-covered bodies as they
pass.

DAVIS
This here is Bobby, was a temp. Not
sure if contractor status changes
any of your calculations at all.
James is down this way. Was a QA
technician. Looks like he suffered.

Andrew adjusts his gas mask, uncomfortable. He notes a BLOODY
HANDPRINT on a tank as they pass.

DAVIS
Over here is what's left of Zach.
He was shift supervisor.

ANDREW
You know, I can just take a list of
names after the tour if that's
alright?

DAVIS
Suit yourself.

INT. KEARNY GAS - TANK TRANSFER STATION - DAY

Davis leads Andrew and Max inside and Max immediately gets to
work inspecting the massive arsine tanks and transfer hoses.

DAVIS
Apparently it started in here, then
worked its way to the production
room.

Max checks the pressure indicators on each of the arsine
tanks, quickly moving down the line.

ANDREW
What do you think, Max?

MAX
Need a minute, boss.

Max stops - Something on one of the indicators caught his
attention.

MAX

Yup. This is the one. Problem started here.

Max plays with his tool belt a moment. Fastens it to his waist.

MAX

Peace out, old dog. I'll give you a call when I'm done.

INT. MOBILE TRAILER - DAY

A mobile office trailer - An old AC unit in the window RATTLES as it blows cool air into the musty space.

Andrew and Davis sweat at a cramped table. Andrew scribbles notes on a legal pad as Davis speaks.

DAVIS

I can fax you the maintenance records on all the equipment, should be up to code.

ANDREW

Perfect.

Andrew scratches his stomach as he reviews his legal pad.

ANDREW

Are there any witnesses I should speak with today?

DAVIS

No. All witnesses are either deceased or in the ICU.

Andrew stops, confused.

ANDREW

Wait. Then who stopped the leak?

DAVIS

No one. Tank eventually emptied out.

ANDREW

(disbelief)

An entire arsine tank emptied out into your facility? How many rooms in the building were impacted?

DAVIS

All.

Andrew looks shocked.

ANDREW

So... everyone on shift....

DAVIS

Yup.

A KNOCK on the door - TYSON pops his head in. Eyes bugging out of his skull. Struggling to hold his shit together.

TYSON

Hey boss. You, uh, wanted to see me?

DAVIS

Yes! Tyson. Can you sort out who was on shift this morning? We'll need to get employee profiles over to this gentleman today.

Tyson nods.

TYSON

I'll, um, gather a meeting with the full staff. Should be able to figure it out through process of elimination.

Tyson snuffles, but holds a strong face.

TYSON

Need anything else?

DAVIS

Nah, you're good.

Tyson exits and closes the door. Andrew is shaken - Can't look away from the door as Davis continues onward.

DAVIS

Now I know I told you the death toll was twenty-three, but I want to be sure you've got the most up-to-date figure...

Davis pulls out his cellphone. Scrolls for a moment. Andrew looks down at his legal pad, turns the page. Can't look at his own notes.

DAVIS
... looks like twenty-six now.

ANDREW
Can I get a minute, actually?

EXT. TRAILER - DAY

Andrew stumbles around the backside of the trailer and steadies himself against the vehicle as he VOMITS.

Intermittent coughing. He spits out bile. Andrew takes a moment to compose himself. His face is white, looks fatigued.

A deep breath and he heads back to the trailer door. Climbs up the stairs and disappears inside.

ANDREW (O.S.)
Where were we?

INT. KEARNY GAS - TANK TRANSFER STATION - DAY

Max examines the transfer hose - It's Teflon and reinforced with braided metal. He focuses in on a single spot, forcing his fingers between the braids.

He squeezes the Teflon and... a tiny bit of light shines through. There's a THIN SLIT IN THE HOSE.

MAX
What the fuck...?

ANDREW (O.S.)
Max?

Max turns to find Andrew waiting for him.

ANDREW
What's the verdict?

The concern washed over Max's face says it all.

INT. HOTEL - ANDREW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Andrew and Max are huddled around the room's landline phone, centralized on a small, wooden table. A cigarette hangs from Andrew's mouth and he adjusts his leather gloves as Sam SCREAMS on speaker.

SAM (V.O.)
You MOTHER-FUCKERS! Listen here you
FUCKING CUNTS. This CANNOT be the
answer you give me! Not again! You
call my fucking HOUSE phone at ten
o'clock for this GOD-DAMN BULLSHIT!

Sam's tirade *slowly fades* as Andrew leans back in his seat.
Just stares at the phone, exhausted.

INT. HOTEL - ANDREW'S ROOM - LATER

Andrew sits on the edge of the bed, finally alone. He cradles
a cellphone to his ear while he inspects the exposed skin
where his fingernails used to be.

ANDREW
Hey, Clair. I know you're probably
still mad at me. But I'm calling...
gonna just keep calling ya.

Andrew takes a peek at a number of equipment sketches of
hoses spread across the bed.

ANDREW
Had another claim. Max did the
investigation. Looks like it's
coming back inconclusive. Had a lot
of the same shit you'd been noting
in your reports. So you might be
off the hook a bit. We'll see.

Andrew rubs his face and sighs.

ANDREW
I, uh, I'd really like to hear from
you. I wanted to take you to a Mets
game for your birthday. But, you
know, you gotta call me back. Let
me know what games you wanna see.
Got a series with the Yankees
coming up. Nationals are on the
schedule. Just... just call me.
Please.
(beat)
Stay safe, kid.

Andrew ends the call.

INT. HOTEL - ANDREW'S ROOM - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Andrew stands in front of the bathroom mirror, shirtless. His rash is now ENTIRELY BLACK SCABBING. It has expanded beyond his chest, shoulder, and arm, to now COVER HIS STOMACH AS WELL.

He picks up the ointment off the sink and regards it a moment... throws it out.

INT. HOTEL - ANDREW'S ROOM - BATHROOM - LATER

Andrew is in the shower under a stream of hot water, frantically scrubbing the rash on his stomach with soap.

Black fluid leaks from the scab down his thighs...

INT. AIRPORT - BOARDING GATE - DAY

Andrew faces a wall, shielding himself from other travelers. He whispers into his cellphone.

ANDREW

(whispered)

Right, I know Doctor Stowe is a busy man, but the prescription he gave me didn't work or wasn't strong enough, I dunno. My, uh, *situation* is getting worse.

(beat)

Yeah, I don't fucking care what you have to do. Tell him to call me back!

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Andrew lies in bed, on his side. The lights are out. All is quiet.

But his eyes are wide open. Can't sleep.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Andrew sits on the floor with dozens of documents spread out across the carpet. He grabs one labeled *Kearny Gas Employment List*. Dozens of names and ages run down the sheet.

He flips through subsequent pages - A file for each employee. ID photos are located in the upper left-hand corner of each page, but Andrew's eyes are drawn to other line items:

- Age: 31... another is Age: 25... and another is Age: 19
- Status: Married
- Children: 2... another is Children: 5

Andrew drops the pages. He breathes heavy, can't look any longer.

He reaches into another pile and grabs the policy, but something gives him pause...

SMALL, RECTANGULAR HOLES HAVE BEEN CUT OUT OF THE PAGES.

Information is missing. Has been removed.

ANDREW
How is this happening...?

INT. CAB - NIGHT

City lights cast a glow over Andrew in the backseat of a speeding cab.

He wears a rumpled suit as he watches old footage from the mini camera on his tablet device. The recording rapidly rewinds, going from day-to-night-to-day in seconds.

CABBIE (O.S.)
Bit late to be heading in, eh?

Andrew looks up and gives a polite smile.

ANDREW
Well, you're working. Figured I should be too.

Andrew looks back down at the tablet screen and something gives him pause. An immediate shift in demeanor as he taps the tablet screen and hits play:

The footage shows an empty living room in the middle of the day. Nothing out of the ordinary...

Until the front door OPENS AND CLOSES ON ITS OWN.

The screen goes black as Andrew turns off the tablet. His eyes are wide, properly freaked out.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - ANDREW'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A small lamp atop Andrew's desk provides the only light. The rest of the building is dark and empty.

Andrew is seated at his desk, reading his desktop monitor. He rubs his eyes - Exhausted.

On the monitor, Andrew filters a database. Four claims are visible: Townes, Werner, Durbin, and Kearny.

He runs his finger across different columns: Date / Client / Size / Underwriter...

He stops - Each Underwriter entry has the same value.

Talby, B.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Andrew speed-walks down an empty hallway, until he arrives at Talby's office. He looks around, making sure he's alone. Opens the door to reveal...

The office is completely empty. Stark, white walls. Cleared out.

The only item in the room is a RUBBER, FLESHY MASK that sits atop the desk.

Andrew enters

TALBY'S OFFICE

He grabs the mask. It's thin and stretchy, with no real art to it.

Andrew looks around the empty office, deep in thought...

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - HALLWAY - DAY

A bustling office. Busy employees make phone calls, type frantically, and engage inter-cubicle gossip.

Sam whistles as he strolls through the madness, leather bag over his shoulder and coffee in hand. He comes to his office door and opens it to find...

Andrew - Seated across from Sam's desk.

ANDREW
You really oughta lock your office
at night.

SAM
Didn't think that was necessary you
fucking psychopath.

Sam sighs and enters

SAM'S OFFICE

Closes the door behind him and takes a seat at his desk.

SAM
This better be good.

Andrew holds up a printout of the claims database. The Underwriter column with Talby's name has been highlighted. He places it on Sam's desk.

ANDREW
Where's Brian Talby?

SAM
I'm sorry?

ANDREW
Brian Talby. He's the underwriter
on my last four claims. Ain't here.
Dude's office is a tomb, aside from
a BDSM mask he left in there.

SAM
Don't be gross.

Sam grabs the printout and reviews it.

ANDREW
Have you actually read any of his
policies?

SAM
Of course I have.

ANDREW
Then you'd know they're horribly
written. Any client with an
internal insurance department would
flag it as unacceptable. But that
shit goes unnoticed at smaller
companies like Kearny or Durbin.

Sam puts the printout down, frustrated.

SAM

I'd argue these policies are stellar if the client is willing to sign them.

ANDREW

Let me rephrase: the only way Talby's shitty policies pay out is if the cause is inconclusive. On the last four claims, the cause was...

SAM

Inconclusive.

ANDREW

You remember the arson shit in the eighties? We looked across claims and found common threads...

Andrew lists items on his fingers.

ANDREW

Small businesses. In financial trouble. That needed a way to start over.

(beat)

You wanna know what's going on with this latest string of claims?

Andrew points to the sheet on Sam's desk.

ANDREW

Help me, help you. Where the fuck is Talby?

A long silence. Sam just stares at Andrew, considering how to proceed. He leans forward, speaks slowly and precisely. Carefully choosing each word.

SAM

What I am about to tell you does not leave this room. I have been instructed not to talk about it. Everyone on the leadership team has been instructed not to talk about it.

ANDREW

Fine.

SAM

I do not know where Brian Talby is.
No one does. He stopped showing up
to work about three weeks ago.
Wouldn't return e-mails, phone
calls, texts. Eventually, we
notified his family, some ex-wife
Barb or whomever. I don't know what
happened after that.

Andrew considers this for a moment.

ANDREW

Is he still in the internal
directory?

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - PRINTER ROOM - DAY

A page slowly rolls out of a massive industrial printer,
featuring a black-and-white corporate ID photo of Brian
Talby. He has short curly hair and glasses.

Below the picture are personal details, including age,
gender, and... HOME ADDRESS.

The page is snatched off the printer by a hand in a leather
glove.

INT. FANCY APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY

The kind of place that leaks opulence: Chandeliers, gold
trim, and marble floors. Andrew adjusts his tie as he enters.
Walks through the lobby like he owns the place, exuding
confidence.

FRONT DESK MANAGER (O.S.)

Excuse me?

Andrew turns - FRONT DESK MANAGER watches him, confused.

ANDREW

I'm new. Two-sixteen. You got the e-
mail, right?

Front Desk Manager checks his e-mail as Andrew disappears
into the elevator bank.

INT. FANCY APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Andrew makes his way down the hall, ignoring the golden light fixtures on the walls. He keeps an eye on the apartment numbers as he passes until he arrives at...

#216.

Andrew checks to ensure he's alone - Coast is clear. He pulls a HAMMER from his suit jacket, winds up, and brings it down on the doorknob with a CRACK!

ONCE! TWICE! Third time's the charm, as the doorknob BREAKS OFF ITS HINGES - Pieces scatter along the floor. Andrew pulls apart the rest of the door handle and pushes open the door.

He sweeps the broken pieces of the doorknob into the apartment as he enters and eases the door shut behind him.

INT. TALBY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Grandiosity meets destruction:

- Oak tables overturned
- Fine glass shattered
- Holes in the walls
- Stuffing torn from leather furniture
- Empty top-shelf vodka bottles litter the room.

Andrew takes it all in as he enters. Notices a bloody handprint on a painting as he passes. He catches his reflection in a giant, cracked mirror that hangs crooked from the wall.

His image is distorted by the broken glass.

INT. TALBY'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - DAY

Andrew ignores bloody footprints as he creeps through the hall. He notices the bathroom door is ajar as he approaches.

Peeks inside...

TALBY'S BATHROOM

Written in GIANT, BLOODY LETTERS on the mirror is the phrase:

WHEN I LOOK IN THE MIRROR, I NO LONGER STARE BACK.

Andrew breathes heavy, understandably freaked out.

A CRUNCH as he enters, accidentally stepped on broken glass from a shattered shower door.

As he angles for a closer look at the mirror, he notices a smattering of BLOODY HUMAN TEETH fill the sink.

INT. TALBY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Andrew enters, cautious - A penthouse suite where the windows overlook a beautiful cityscape outside. But inside is pure carnage.

A massive TV on the wall has a chair shoved through the screen. The device SPARKS and FISSURES in-and-out as a Newscaster's warped voice plays through garbled speakers.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
*Stocks rallied again on Friday, the
 last trading day of the week. The
 S&P 500's one-point-four-five
 percent jump on Friday came after--*

... and the sound cuts out.

Andrew approaches a giant bed in the center of the room. The sheets are crusted, stained in BLOOD and BLACK BILE. He notices FLAKED SCALES at the foot of the bed, like a discarded snake skin.

Andrew looks around the room, double-checking he's alone. He eases open the bedside table drawer, revealing...

DOZENS OF HARDENED, ROTTED FINGERNAILS.

Andrew looks down at the leather gloves covering his hands, as--

BUZZING - Andrew's cellphone. He digs it out and answers, emotion is absent from his voice. Out of it.

DOCTOR STOWE (V.O.)
 Hi, Andrew, this is Doctor Stowe
 with Mercy Regional Medical.

ANDREW
 Hi.

DOCTOR STOWE (V.O.)
We just got the results from some additional testing of your sample, which revealed the presence of chromatophore cells.

ANDREW
Uh-huh.

DOCTOR STOWE (V.O.)
To be fully transparent, it's incredibly puzzling. There's a few other samples in the area that have turned up similar results and we're concerned about an outbreak. It's imperative that we have you in for further testing and overnight evaluation--

ANDREW
No, thanks.

Andrew kills the call.

His eyes dart back down to the gloves. He slowly pulls them off and inspects his nail-less fingers...

EXT. FANCY APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Andrew speed-walks out the front door, grabbing a pack of cigarettes from his pocket.

He pulls one out and lights it. Takes a drag, calming.

He winces and runs his tongue over his front teeth.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Andrew enters and takes off his suit jacket, discarding it to the floor. He watches himself in the mirror as he unbuttons his dress shirt, revealing the BLACK HARDENED SCABBING HAS SPREAD TO HIS NECK.

As he unbuttons further and removes the shirt, it reveals the CRUSTED SCABBING NOW COVERS HIS ENTIRE UPPER BODY - Stomach, chest, and arms all the way down to the wrist.

Andrew breathes heavy as he takes it all in. Feels his scabbed neck with a mixture of interest and concern.

He leans toward the mirror and opens his mouth to investigate his teeth. He reaches in and grabs a molar. Wiggles it.

He gets a firm grasp of the tooth and CRACK - Pulls a bloody molar from his mouth. Way too easy.

Andrew holds the tooth up for examination, curiously considering it.

His eyes dart from the tooth to his reflection in the mirror.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Andrew lies in bed, eyes wide. Staring straight forward at nothing in particular.

A distant CRASH gets Andrew to sit up. ANOTHER CRASH RINGS OUT. This one far louder.

Panic mode - Andrew hops out of bed.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Andrew sneaks through, careful not to make a sound. His shadow looms on the wall behind him like a monster.

Andrew comes out to

THE LIVING ROOM

He flips on the light to find...

I CAN FIND YOU TOO is written in MASSIVE BLOODY letters on the back wall. Andrew stares at it, in shock.

TALBY'S VOICE RAINS DOWN, seemingly from nowhere. It remains flat and monotone, despite the circumstances. Completely emotionless.

TALBY (V.O.)
Hey, Andrew. I've never been a fan
of visitors. But I guess you
haven't appreciated my presence
either.

Andrew looks around for Talby, but can't see him.

ANDREW
T-Talby? Where are you?

TALBY (V.O.)
Settle down. I'll show you where I
am, but you gotta listen to me
first. You ready to listen?

Andrew continues to search, opening a closet door - Empty.
His eyes dart around the room.

TALBY (V.O.)
I want you to look at your arm,
Andrew.

Andrew stops. He looks down at the CRUSTED BLACK SCABBING
that covers his forearm.

TALBY (V.O.)
Now pull at it. Rip it.

ANDREW
W-What?

TALBY (V.O.)
Don't think of it as tearing off
your skin. Picture, instead,
pulling off a band-aid. It won't
hurt. Trust me.

Andrew considers it, his breathing becomes more panicked.
Frantic.

TALBY (V.O.)
Pull it, Andrew. Just rip it off.
It's not complicated.

Andrew's hesitance wanes under pressure. He reaches out for
his arm with a shaking hand and pulls at the black, crusted
scabbing, RIPPING OFF HIS SKIN. He tears a strip ALL THE WAY
AROUND HIS FOREARM.

Thick black fluid leaks from the wound.

TALBY (V.O.)
Good. Now let it bleed.

Andrew frantically wipes the thick black fluid from his arm,
clearing it away to find...

HE CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH THE STRIP IN HIS FOREARM - IT'S
TRANSPARENT.

Andrew SHOUTS and jumps back. Talby's cruel LAUGHTER rings
throughout the apartment as Andrew scurries to

THE KITCHEN

He wraps a hand towel around his forearm. Drenched in sweat.

ANDREW
This can't be real.

TALBY
I really like your wallpaper,
Andrew. Have you ever stopped to
notice it? Really look at it? Or do
you pass it so often that it no
longer registers?

Andrew's eyes dart all through the apartment, like a scared
animal. But Talby is invisible, cannot be seen.

TALBY (V.O.)
Just think. You do the same thing
day after day. Going to these
sites. Seeing these bodies.
Factoring people down into numbers
and figures. Making them invisible.
(beat)
We do it so much... it no longer
registers.

Andrew backs himself against the wall. Inching toward the
cutlery.

TALBY (V.O.)
So yeah. This is real. Ironic even.
Because soon people will walk past
you without a second glance.
Because you'll no longer
register...

Andrew carefully reaches into a knife block and pulls out a
giant CARVING KNIFE.

TALBY (V.O.)
.. and when I'm done with my work,
neither will ACN.

Andrew follows the sound of Talby's voice - Knife trembling
in his hand.

ANDREW
W-What do you mean "your work,"
Talby? What did you do?

TALBY (V.O.)
I caused some accidents. Accidents
I used to ignore. Just another task
in the day-to-day. I'm making
everyone at ACN literally pay for
their indifference.

Andrew hesitates, stunned by the admission... and is immediately KICKED IN THE GUT! He doubles over with a grunt as the carving knife SCATTERS across the hardwood floor.

Andrew bolts for the knife, but is GRABBED BY THE NECK AND LIFTED OFF THE GROUND. Seemingly by no one. He flails in the air, CHOKING.

He is TOSSED BACKWARD and SLAMS INTO THE FRIDGE. Head whips back against the metallic door with a CRACK!

Andrew slides down the fridge, a trail of blood following him as he ends up in a heap on the floor.

He breathes heavy. Struggles to speak.

ANDREW

You've... got it all... wrong.
Sending... the wrong message.

TALBY (V.O.)

How so?

ANDREW

Killing innocent people... they
don't deserve to die for you to
make your point.

TALBY (V.O.)

Oh, so now you care about the
sanctity of life?

Andrew's carving knife is picked up off the floor -
LEVITATING IN THE AIR. Slowly approaching.

Andrew is too weak to stand. Blinking repeatedly, just trying to stay conscious. The back of his head features a NASTY GASH.

TALBY (V.O.)

When did we first meet, Andrew?

Andrew shakes his head. Doesn't want to go down this road.

TALBY (V.O.)

I think it was the Giovanni claim.
Small Italian bakery. Suffered a
boiler explosion.

ANDREW

Please, Talby. I-I don't want to
talk about this.

TALBY (V.O.)
I do. Owner had tossed a lit match
in the combustion chamber. Died in
the blast.

Tears well in Andrew's eyes as the levitating knife gets
closer like an inevitable force.

ANDREW
I know... I know...

TALBY (V.O.)
But his mistake wasn't dying. It
was leaving a trace. A trace for
Eli to prove arson. For my policy
to caveat. For you to deny the
claim. Just another day at the
office.
(beat)
That man had a wife and children.

ANDREW
Christ, Talby! That was the job! I
care! I swear to god, I care! I'm
not... not like that anymore.

The levitating knife stops RIGHT IN FRONT OF ANDREW'S CHEST.
A moment of silent tension.

TALBY (V.O.)
Your actions are so goddamn loud, I
can't hear a word you say.

THE CARVING KNIFE IS SHOVED INTO ANDREW'S CHEST! He groans
and doubles over as Talby digs it in deeper, TWISTING THE
KNIFE INTO ANDREW'S RIB CAGE WITH A CRACK!

Andrew GASPS and keels over. Blood pools on the floor in
front of his wound as he drifts in-and-out of consciousness.

TALBY (V.O.)
Good talk, Andrew. I have one more
visit to make. After that...

Talby's voice grows more distant as he walks away.

TALBY (V.O.)
I don't believe in hell. But if one
exists, I look forward to seeing
you there.

Andrew can't move. Just watches blood continue to pool on the
floor in front of him.

His periphery slowly grows fuzzy and black. Line of vision fades, eventually blanketing everything in...

DARKNESS.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Andrew awakens with a GASP - Not dead yet.

He COUGHS and holds his chest through fractured breaths. The pool of blood in front of him has dried.

Andrew pulls himself up, BELLOWING in pain as he moves. He looks down at the knife handle protruding from his rib cage. Grasps it with a shaking hand.

Andrew takes a few deep breaths. Psyching himself up and...

HE PULLS IT OUT WITH A SCREAM!

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Andrew frantically wraps a compression bandage around his mid-section. Blood seeps through the first few layers. He continues to encase himself until he gets a few clean rows and fastens the bandage.

Andrew is shirtless, revealing his entire upper body is covered in crusted black scabbing, save for the kitchen towel wrapped around his forearm.

Andrew pulls back the towel to reveal that his forearm is, in fact, see-through. He has a visible reaction, horrified.

He peers back into the mirror. Digs his hand into the black crust on his shoulder and tears at it, wincing in pain. He PEELS THE SKIN BACK and wipes away black viscous fluid to reveal...

THERE IS NOTHING THERE. He can see right through his shoulder to the wall behind him.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Andrew sits at the kitchen table, laptop open while he pops painkillers in his mouth. He ignores his own spilt blood on the floor.

A database fills the laptop screen, filtered on the Underwriter column - Talby, B.

Andrew runs his finger down the CLAIM column. All of the values in this column are "YES," except for one "NO."

Andrew's eyes go wide as he sees the "NO" entry: ACN Insurance.

The laptop is SLAMMED SHUT.

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - DAY

Andrew shimmies into a suit jacket as he stumbles down the hall, clearly in pain. His cellphone is tucked between his shoulder and ear.

CLAIR (V.O.)
Hi, this is Clair and I can't make
it to the phone right now, but if
you leave--

Andrew kills the call.

ANDREW
Shit!

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - CUBICLES - DAY

Just another day - Phones ring, fingers clack away at keyboards, and employees scurry from cube-to-cube.

But Andrew doesn't quite fit in. Blood seeps through his white dress shirt and he limps as quickly as he can, wincing with each step.

RANDOM EMPLOYEE notices as he passes.

RANDOM EMPLOYEE
Woah, hey, Drew. Are you okay?

Andrew follows his gaze to find the blood on his shirt. He quickly brushes past the man and breaks into a pained jog, disappearing around the corner.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - CLAIR'S CUBICLE - DAY

Andrew approaches, his suit jacket is now buttoned up to cover the dress shirt.

He peeks his head into Clair's cube - She's not there. The framed picture of Clair, Andrew, and Eli is gone from her desk.

Andrew peers over the cubicle walls - Trying to find Clair amongst the masses. He pokes his head into the next cube where YOUNG EMPLOYEE fritters away at her computer.

ANDREW
Have you seen Clair?

She turns and is immediately horrified at Andrew's appearance. Shakes her head.

YOUNG EMPLOYEE
A-Are you okay?

She points to Andrew's neck.

YOUNG EMPLOYEE
That looks... really gross.

Andrew feels his neck - The BLACK SCABBING is visible above his collar.

ALSO FORGOT HIS GLOVES.

YOUNG EMPLOYEE
Oh my god, what happened to your fingernails?

ANDREW
Oh fuck off.

Andrew runs to

THE HALLWAY

He storms to the fire alarm and SMASHES THE GLASS CASE. He reaches inside and pulls the alarm.

BLARING ALARMS and FLASHING LIGHTS fill the space. Dozens of employees calmly stand and file toward the exits like trained animals.

Andrew watches the procession, looking for Clair amongst the masses. Can't find her.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - ANDREW'S OFFICE - LATER

Andrew watches out the window as employees slowly gather outside, ignoring the ALARMS and LIGHTS in the background.

He turns and limps from his office into

THE HALLWAY

It's completely empty. Eerily dark. Andrew looks around a moment.

ANDREW
Where are you, Talby?

He pulls a cigarette from his pocket and lights it as he surveys the area.

SUDDENLY STOPS...

Pulls the cigarette from his mouth and looks at it. Eyes wide. A realization.

He flicks the cigarette away and takes off for the fire exit.

SOMEONE WATCHES HIM GO. Partially obscured in the darkness.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - EMERGENCY STAIRCASE - DAY

BLARING ALARMS continue while FLASHING LIGHTS periodically illuminate the otherwise dark stairwell.

Andrew descends the stairs as quickly as his failing body can muster.

He comes to the bottom of the staircase and slides into...

THE BOILER ROOM

Seemingly empty.

Andrew clocks the boiler in the corner. The combustion chamber is open.

ANDREW
Fuck...

He heads toward it and - CRACK!

Andrew's head jerks backward from a sucker punch as he crashes to the ground! Blood drips from his nose onto the concrete. He groans, in pain.

ANDREW
Show yourself, you coward!

No response.

Andrew looks around the room for Talby, but there's nothing visible. However, Andrew notices a fire sprinkler on the ceiling... an idea.

Andrew stands and pulls out his lighter. He flicks it on and holds it up to the sprinkler...

The SPRINKLERS TURN ON, spraying water throughout the room.

The steady stream reveals TALBY'S OUTLINE WALKING TO THE BOILER. He stops and looks up at the water.

ANDREW

Gotcha.

Talby turns to find Andrew RUSHING TOWARD HIM!

Andrew TACKLES HIM INTO THE BOILER! The old machine RATTLES upon contact as the two men wrestle on the ground beside it.

Andrew sits atop Talby's water-soaked outline. He grabs Talby's head and SLAMS IT INTO THE GROUND AS HARD AS HE CAN.

He raises his fist, but SCREAMS in agony - An outline of Talby's hand reveals his fingers SHOVED INTO ANDREW'S STAB WOUND, leaking blood through his suit jacket and onto the floor.

Andrew grabs Talby's hand and pulls it from his wound. Grasps Talby's wrist with both hands and exerts all the force he can muster into SNAPPING IT.

CRACK - Talby cries out in pain as the raining sprinkler water reveals an outline of a HAND BARELY DANGLING FROM A SHATTERED WRIST.

Andrew breathes heavy, ignoring Talby's screams. He winds up and sucker punches him - Talby's skull RICOCHETS off the concrete. Another punch elicits a THICK, CRUNCHING sound.

Talby groans, messed up. The sprinkler water reveals the outline of a shattered nose and broken jaw.

Andrew grabs Talby by the ears - Speaks through fractured breaths.

ANDREW

Look at my face. LOOK AT IT!

Talby coughs up blood. Wheezes. His eyes dart up at Andrew.

ANDREW

This face will be the last thing
you fucking see.

(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

But I want you to study it. And know that because you see it, I am not you. I have not become the monster you are.

TALBY

If you don't see a monster when you look in the mirror... then you're not looking very carefully.

Fury paints Andrew's face as he SHOVES HIS THUMBS INTO TALBY'S EYES! Talby SCREAMS in anguish. His trembling arm grasps up at Andrew, but Andrew ignores it.

Pushes deeper. Through the eye socket and INTO TALBY'S BRAIN.

Blood seeps from Talby's outline onto the concrete. He releases a guttural moan and his hand goes limp, dropping to the floor.

Dead.

Andrew slides off of Talby's corpse. He's drenched in water, but notices a steady DRIP-DRIP-DRIP of blood from his stab wound collecting on the concrete floor.

CLAIR (O.S.)

Drew?

Andrew's eyes go wide. He turns to find Clair watching him from the doorway. Only her entire body is COVERED IN BLACK SCABBING, INCLUDING HER FACE.

Pieces of her flesh are missing, rendering parts of her completely see-through.

ANDREW

Oh my God, Clair...

Andrew tries to stand, but he can't. Body is failing. Blood stains his lips. Clair approaches him.

ANDREW

How much of that did you see?

CLAIR

All of it.

Andrew takes Clair's hand and looks up at her.

ANDREW

I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry for all of this.

CLAIR

I'm not. Everything's more in focus now.

Clair leans in for a hug, but eschews Andrew's embrace, instead pulling away WITH HIS LIGHTER.

ANDREW

Uh, Clair?

Clair looks down at Andrew. Up at the boiler. Back to Andrew. She smiles.

CLAIR

Combustion explosion. Not a bad idea. Won't need accelerant. It'll be hard to prove.

Andrew tries to pull himself up, but is too weak. More frantic now.

ANDREW

No, Clair. Stop. You were right all along.

Andrew points to the outline of Talby's corpse.

ANDREW

It was him! He was setting you up! Setting us up. We're not... we're not him. Not yet anyway.

Clair STEPS OVER ANDREW, avoiding his grasp on her way to the boiler.

ANDREW

Don't do this. Please don't do this. Don't let him win.

CLAIR

It's too late for that. We already lost. We've been lost.

Clair beholds her half-scabbed, half-invisible arm.

CLAIR

I sit at home. Every day. Thinking about the people. About Debra's musculature, forced through the metallic wickets of that massive fan. Thinking about her son. I lost a mother too, you know...

ANDREW

Please, Clair. It's not worth it! Y-
You're young. You can fix this.
There's plenty of time to do good.
You have a long life ahead of you.

CLAIR

Do I?

Clair places her hand over the lighter to protect it from the sprinklers overhead and FLICKS IT ON. Beholds the flame.

CLAIR

Because I feel it could end any
minute now. Tell me, how much is
each second worth? A dollar? Maybe
a few quarters? You could calculate
it if I gave you enough time,
couldn't you?

ANDREW

It's not... it's not like that.
What we do for a living does not
define us.

CLAIR

People only say that when they
spend forty hours a week doing
terrible shit.

Clair grasps the black crusted skin on her face and TEARS IT
OFF - The sprinklers wash away the black fluid, REVEALING
NOTHING UNDERNEATH.

ANDREW

FUCK CLAIR! PLEASE!

Andrew can scream all he wants, but he can't move. Is forced
to watch as Clair leans into the combustion chamber.

She turns back to Andrew.

CLAIR

All the karmic debt we've built...
these seconds aren't worth a
fucking nickel.

Clair flicks on the lighter and drops it in.

ANDREW

NO!

Andrew reaches out for Clair, but to no avail.

FIRE BLASTS FROM THE COMBUSTION CHAMBER AND EXPLODES THROUGH THE ROOM.

It eats Andrew's scream alive.

INT. ACN INSURANCE OFFICES - BOILER ROOM - LATER (DAY)

Industrial spotlights reveal a completely smoked room:

Cracks line the walls, the concrete floor is unearthed, and holes ravage the ceiling. A thick, black dust still floats through the space.

Max holds a handkerchief over his nose and mouth as he inspects a CHARRED HAND by flashlight. It's outstretched, as if asking for mercy.

It's Andrew's. Max turns away and coughs, looks like he's going to be physically ill.

SAM (O.S.)

Hey.

Max turns to find Sam wearing a ventilated construction mask. He hands Max a spare.

MAX

Thanks, boss.

Max puts on the mask and turns back to Andrew's scorched corpse. Can't not look at it. He lingers on it for a beat longer than comfortable and moves on to the boiler.

The boiler is half torn apart. What's left of it is seared entirely black from the explosion.

Max shines his flashlight inside the remnants of the combustion chamber. Sam watches from behind.

SAM

What do you think?

MAX

I got no fucking clue.

SAM

I'll ask again tomorrow. Have a better answer by then.

Sam exits, leaving Max all alone. He bends down for a better look at the boiler, but stops. Wincing in pain.

He reaches back and scratches his shoulder.

BLOOD SEEPS THROUGH THE BAND-AIDS THAT COVER HIS FINGERNAILS.

FADE OUT.