

PRODIGAL SON

"Pilot"

Written by

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. TOWNHOUSE, FOYER - UPPER EAST SIDE - NIGHT

SUPER: **1998**. An exquisite home. A BOY stands in the entryway. This is MALCOLM (10). A mop of hair covers a face that'll be handsome someday. His eyes reveal intelligence and FEAR.

MARTIN (O.S.)
Malcolm? Malcolm, listen to me.

DR. MARTIN WHITLY (late 30s, charismatic, successful, and also *desperate*) kneels down. Lights flash outside. Radios crackle. He doesn't have long.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
I want you to remember something,
okay? You're my son. I love you. I
will always love you. Because *we're*
the same.

A HAND pulls Malcolm back. JESSICA WHITLY (30s, striking, elegant, and also *distraught*) glares at her husband, their DAUGHTER, AINSLEY (5), crying in her arms.

JESSICA
Get him out of here.

Martin -- already handcuffed -- is pulled to his feet by TWO POLICE DETECTIVES. They lead him outside.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE - UPPER EAST SIDE - CONTINUOUS

SIRENS wail. PEOPLE gawk. A TV REPORTER talks to camera:

TV REPORTER
Tonight the serial killer known as
"The Surgeon" may finally be behind
bars. The NYPD arrested Dr. Martin
Whitly in connection to at least
twenty-three murders...

Malcolm watches the police put his father in a cruiser. Off those big wide eyes we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

SUPER: **2019. SEVIERVILLE, TENNESSEE**. A TIGHT SHOT OF MALCOLM BRIGHT (30s, handsome as promised) with a new last name. The BLACK TOM FORD SUIT and FBI VEST make him the best dressed FBI agent ever seen on TV.

He skulks past trees, moving with a SWAT TEAM toward a moon-lit clearing. The incessant HUM of CICADAS mask their footsteps. They stop.

In the distance -- stands an ABANDONED SLAUGHTERHOUSE. The COUNTY SHERIFF (late 40s, with a lantern jaw) peers through a thermal scope.

SHERIFF

Truck engine is still hot. Our suspect's in there, Special Agent.
(looking around)
Special Agent?

Bright stands behind him looking straight up at the canopy of leaves. The sound of cicadas is overwhelming. He's in awe.

BRIGHT

They're amazing.
(off the Sheriff)
The cicadas. That noise protects them... it mimics a predator's own sounds. They think they're about to eat one of their own, which is generally frowned upon. Our killer feels safe when he hears it.

SHERIFF

(anxious)
Special Agent, Claude Springer's in there and he's got hostages. We need to bring in a negotiator.

BRIGHT

What? No. This isn't a hostage situation. He's killing those backpackers tonight. Using the cicadas to drown out his work.
(re: the slaughterhouse)
We go in now.

SHERIFF

What if your profile's wrong?

Bright's focus shoots to the Sheriff. *What if I'm wrong?* It's like he's suddenly holding up a psychological magnifying glass --

BRIGHT

I get it. You're scared. You've never had a case like this. A serial killer. They freak people out. Trust me, I know.

He takes out a HARD CANDY with a silver wrapper. Unwraps it.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
 What's worse is that election
 coming up. Bad timing for you.
 People in town are scared. You're
 gonna lose.

He pops the candy. His fingers quickly fold the wrapper.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
 But that's not why you're really
 afraid. It's what comes after. When
 you're done. After twenty years,
 you're scared of the question: Who
 are you without that badge?

Bright just hit a lot of nerves. The Sheriff is frozen.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
 Wanna keep it?
 (a beat)
 Do exactly what I say.

He hands the Sheriff the wrapper and walks off -- it's now
 folded into a tiny SILVER STAR.

INT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

It's out of a horror movie. Hooks line the vast walls. Bright
 follows THREE SWAT OFFICERS. Voices whisper over the radio.
"Northeast section clear." "Offices are clear."

Bright hears footsteps. He stops. Scans an old BREAK-ROOM.

INT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - BREAK-ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The floor's been stripped. Just SLATS. Bright moves across it
 to another door. Stops. There's a noise.

It's coming from BELOW. The BASEMENT. He looks down.

TWO BLOODSHOT EYES stare up. CLICK! They also aim a SHOTGUN.

BLAM! BLAM! Bright DIVES out of the way. Hits the slats full
 force and --

-- the FLOOR CAVES IN! He's FALLING. Twenty feet down.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

WHAM! He hits the floor. His gun shoots out of his hand like
 the wind from his lungs. Bright's vision tunnels and blurs
 into UNCONSCIOUSNESS.

INT. PRISON - CORRIDOR - FLASHBACK

YOUNG BRIGHT (now age 11) rubs his eyes under the harsh fluorescent lights. Heavy doors buzz. MISTER DAVID (a linebacker-sized guard) gently holds his hand as they walk.

MISTER DAVID
Now you remember the rule?

YOUNG BRIGHT
Yes, Mister David. No touching.

MISTER DAVID
He's your dad, but rules are rules.
So what are you gonna talk about?

INT. PRISON - MARTIN'S CELL - A LITTLE LATER - FLASHBACK

DR. MARTIN WHITLY, locked in restraints, stands against the far wall. Trying to act as if this were all completely normal. His son has just asked a difficult question --

MARTIN
Why'd I do it? Well, I'm not sure I
know the answer to that.
(manipulating his son)
But I have some time on my hands.
Maybe we can figure it out.
Together.

YOUNG BRIGHT
They call you a monster. On TV,
kids at school. Are you?

MARTIN
No, my boy. *There's no such thing
as monsters.*

INT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - BASEMENT WORKSHOP - PRESENT DAY

Bright's EYES SNAP OPEN. *Where is he?* A dark workshop. His gun is GONE. His earpiece hanging from his neck. He pushes himself off the ground --

TWO VICTIMS (early 20s, a guy and girl, Patagonia vest types) lie on the floor, trussed, unconscious. That jolts Bright awake. He grabs the earpiece. Clicks his radio:

BRIGHT
This is Bright. I'm in--

A DARK FIGURE stands in the shadows holding a SHOTGUN. Our killer, CLAUDE SPRINGER (late 40s) wears a leather apron. He's absolutely MASSIVE.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
 Hello, Claude. Sorry to drop in.
 (a nervous smile)
 Nothing? Okay. Should I tell you
 the police are here?
 (Claude COCKS the shotgun)
 Forget it. You know.

Bright takes in the room. THIRTEEN MASON JARS line the far wall. The glass is smoky. Still, there's a HEAD in each one.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
 Can I just say? This is incredible!
 An actual trophy room. Most
 profilers would die to see this.
 (catching himself)
 Kidding. Also, FYI, I have a
 deceptively large head. Impossible
 to fit into a standard baseball
 cap. Or Mason jar.

In the distance, doors CREAK and footsteps ECHO. It's the police, looking for them. Claude's frustration builds.

CLAUDE
 How'd you find me? **Tell me!**

His hand tenses on the shotgun, about to --

BRIGHT
 The short version? It was your
 victims... their skin. Smooth.
 Untouched. *Identical*. Then it hit
 me -- you chose them like a butcher
 would, someone who spent their life
 in a slaughterhouse.
 (looking around)
 They sent you here when you were
 eleven, right? A ward of the state?
 (Claude nods)
 This is where you were made, a
 psychotic paraphiliac. The only way
 you feel intimacy is by cutting
 people up. It's how you show love.

Claude steps into the light. His face doesn't match the monster. He looks almost gentle.

CLAUDE
 I was made?

BRIGHT
 Sure. We all are. People aren't
 born broken. Someone breaks us.

CLAUDE

How?

BRIGHT

Put the gun down and I'll tell you.
 (Claude hesitates)
 They're coming. I can't help you if
 you're dead.

They can hear the police closing in. Claude regards his
 shotgun. A broken soul. Slowly, he lays it down.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)

That's good. Thank you. Now--

BLAM! A bullet pierces Claude's chest. Bright spins. The
 SHERIFF stands behind him with his gun still aimed.

SHERIFF

I did it... I got him.

BRIGHT

He put it down!

SHERIFF

No, no... he didn't.

He grabs the shotgun, puts it in Claude's hand. Bright goes
 to the UNCONSCIOUS VICTIMS, cuts them free.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

You're scared, mixed-up. I killed a
 serial killer. I'm a damn hero.

BRIGHT

(appalled, edgy)
 Gonna win by double digits now.

SWAT arrives. The Sheriff grabs Bright, pulls him up:

SHERIFF

Don't get it twisted. *I saved your
 life, son.*

WHAM! Bright CLOCKS the Sheriff full in the face. *What the
 hell?* SWAT pulls him back. He looks down at the Sheriff.

BRIGHT

I. Am. Not. Your. Son.

INT. FBI CONFERENCE ROOM - DAYS LATER

Bright stands in front of a conference table with TWO FBI
 SUPERVISORS and the BAU's HEAD PROFILER on the other side.

BRIGHT

I get it. You don't punch a sheriff. If it's not an official rule, it's definitely unspoken.

SUPERVISOR ONE

It's both.

SUPERVISOR TWO

Special Agent Bright. This report is damning. You ignored protocol, intimidated anyone who said no to you, and pissed off every cop between here and Tennessee.

BRIGHT

But all in that's like four *good* cops.

SUPERVISOR ONE

We have sign off from DOJ. **You're fired.**

BRIGHT

What? I found Claude Springer, I saved those people.

The Head Profiler leans forward.

HEAD PROFILER

I'm sorry, Bright. This was my call. I worry you might suffer from certain psychotic tendencies, not unlike your father's.

BRIGHT

(a nerve struck)

What does he have to do with this?

HEAD PROFILER

He was The Surgeon. Your Complex PTSD, the narcissism. You practically ran into that slaughterhouse on your own.

SUPERVISOR ONE

(under his breath)

Talk about daddy issues.

BRIGHT

I am not my father! And, by the way, he's not psychotic. He's a predatory sociopath.

(MORE)

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
 Not that you should know the
 difference. It's only your job!

Furious, Bright slaps his BADGE and SIDEARM on the table.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
 Next time you call someone crazy,
 ask for their gun first.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET, MIDTOWN - NIGHT

A CAB pulls up and Bright gets out with all his luggage and a BIRDCAGE. A PORTLY DOORMAN sprints out to help.

INT. BRIGHT'S LOFT - MOMENTS LATER

Bright enters his impressive loft. Place must cost a fortune. The art on the walls? MURDER WEAPONS. From guns to knives to swords. It's cozy in a macabre kinda way. Bright puts down his birdcage. Takes off the cover to reveal his COCKATIEL.

BRIGHT
 Hello, Sunshine. Welcome home.

Bright goes to his closet. Puts away a bag. A HARVARD SWEATSHIRT hangs in back. It catches his eye.

INT. PRISON - MARTIN'S CELL - FLASHBACK

It's the same cell as before. Bright (now 21) wears the Harvard sweatshirt and takes meticulous notes in a journal. Martin -- still in restraints -- pontificates:

MARTIN
 A killer has to be precise. It's
 all about the details. That was
 Dahmer's mistake. Seven heads in a
 fridge? It boggles the mind!

BRIGHT
 Keeping heads in a fridge?

MARTIN
 No. Not locking them up! That's my
 point. You have to think like the
 predator and the prey.

BRIGHT
 Almost like a detective.

MARTIN
 Public servants in polyester suits?
 Please, we're nothing like them.

BRIGHT
 You mean you. *You're* nothing like
 them.

Bright shifts in his chair. *Troubled*. It's almost
 imperceptible, but Martin notes it --

MARTIN
 What is it?

BRIGHT
 Last semester... an FBI Profiler
 spoke in my Behavioral Sciences
 class. The work they do is
 fascinating. So...
 (carefully)
 I applied to Quantico.

Martin cocks his head. Angered. He was not expecting this.

MARTIN
 The FBI? You think they'll trust
 you? Your father's a serial killer.

BRIGHT
 ... who taught me everything there
 is to know about the criminal mind.
 I'm just putting it to good use.

MARTIN
 What? No. I forbid it!

His fist slams down on a table. Rattling his shackles.

BRIGHT
 Goodbye, Dr. Whitly.

Bright goes to the door. KNOCKS TWICE.

MARTIN
 That's it?! A triumphant *good-bye*.
 The Surgeon's son making good?

BRIGHT
 Something like that.

MARTIN
 You can't leave, Malcolm.

A **CHILL** comes over the room. Bright sees his BREATH. *Huh?* HE
 KNOCKS LOUDER.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
 Mister David isn't coming.

Martin stands. His arms fall to his sides. **Where did the shackles go?** It's suddenly freezing in here.

BRIGHT
(realizing)
This isn't real.

He can't move. His father reaches out --

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
Don't touch me.

-- and PUTS HIS HAND on his son's shoulder.

MARTIN
Remember: We're the same...

INT. BRIGHT'S LOFT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Bright WAKES UP SCREAMING! He's drenched in sweat and strapped to his bed. His arms are encased in SLEEVES and his body is zipped into a cocoon-like comforter. He wears a BLINDFOLD and MOUTH GUARD.

The terror subsides. He removes the mask, unzips himself. Stretches. SQUAWK!!! That's his COCKATIEL.

BRIGHT
Morning, Sunshine. Sleep well?

He presses PLAY on a remote. A familiar WHISTLING reverberates joyfully as Bobby McFerrin's "Don't Worry Be Happy" plays. You can't say Bright isn't trying.

INT. BRIGHT'S LOFT - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

QUICK SHOTS: A montage of pills. Bright takes two blues, three reds, and four white ovals. Then grabs a CARD from a small tray and looks in the mirror.

BRIGHT
(reading his affirmation)
I'm willing to let go and trust myself. I'm willing to let go and trust myself. Alright! Good one.

EXT. THE HIGH LINE - AFTERNOON

A beautiful day in New York. Bright strolls with his sister, AINSLEY WHITLY (20s). She's younger and more normal(ish). She's also an emotional spark-plug. They drink coffee.

AINSLEY

They fired you! Because of dad? The FBI are idiots!

People look over. Bright winces --

BRIGHT

Well, I did punch a sheriff in the face, which is frowned upon. But I'm over it. I'm fine. Honestly.

AINSLEY

Honestly? You look like crap. Have the nightmares come back?

BRIGHT

Don't worry. I found some extra-comfy restraints at a family-owned bondage boutique on St. Marks.

AINSLEY

Well now what am I going to get you for Christmas?

(she gets a TEXT, reads it)

Sorry, work. I gotta report on a thing.

BRIGHT

Ooh. An Ainsley Whitly exclusive?

(announcer voice)

The Surgeon's daughter dissects another murder? Tonight at 11!

AINSLEY

(clocking his excitement)

You wish. Just, um, white collar stuff. You know, Malcolm, maybe this is a good thing, taking some time off from murder. Hey, that should be your new affirmation!

BRIGHT

I'm taking a break from murder. You want me to go around saying that?

AINSLEY

Yep! Love you, mean it!

A peck on the cheek and she's gone. Bright's smile turns to concern. Something's wrong. He rubs his temple. Then WHOOSH--

IN HIS HEAD, he REPLAYS what Ainsley just said. But certain phrases JUMP OUT at him this time:

AINSLEY (CONT'D)

You wish. **(She looks away.)** Just, um... **(She hesitates, then takes a breath before)** You know, Malcolm, maybe this is a good thing.

Bright BLINKS and everything is back to normal.

EXT. 28TH STREET, CHELSEA - LATER

Bright walks down the steps from the park, lost in thought. SCREECH! A mean-looking PONTIAC GTO brakes an inch away.

A MAN'S VOICE

Bright!

NYPD DETECTIVE GIL MARTINEZ (60s, a recent widower, his fashion sense frozen in time with Steve McQueen in Bullet) is at the wheel. Yes, he's wearing a turtleneck.

BRIGHT

Gil? What are you doing here?

GIL

Me? I'm not the guy who snuck back to town and is ducking his friends.

BRIGHT

I have friends?

GIL

Missed you too, pal.

Gil sees the wheels in Bright's head turning.

GIL (CONT'D)

What's the matter? You got that spooked puppy look going on.

BRIGHT

My sister just lied to me. Her autonomic tells gave her away.

GIL

A reporter lying? Can't believe it.

BRIGHT

She didn't want me to know she's covering a murder.

(thinking)

And if she has a murder important enough to cover, that means...

GIL
 (with a grin)
 I got a murder important enough to
 track down your crazy ass.

BRIGHT
 You know the FBI fired me, right?

GIL
 Good thing I'm NYPD. Get in.

Bright gets in the car. He looks to Gil, self-conscious.

BRIGHT
 Oh. Let's not mention... You know--

GIL
 Your dad? Don't worry. My lip's are
 sealed.

VHROOOM! Gil hits the gas and they peel out.

EXT. ASTORIA TOWER - LATER

A brand new tower of glass and steel. NEWS CREWS occupy the
 front. Ainsley owns a plum spot. She talks to camera:

AINSLEY
 It's the third high-profile
 homicide this month. Sources in the
 NYPD fear the worst -- New York may
 have a new serial killer.

INT. ASTORIA TOWER - LOBBY/ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

DETECTIVE DANI COFFER (late 20s), a headstrong no-bullshit
 cop, smacks gum like she's mad at it. Gil and Bright enter.
 She nods and leads them to an awaiting elevator.

DANI
 Victim's name is Vanessa Hobbs.
 Mayor's office keeps calling. We
 got a V.I.B. on our hands.

BRIGHT
 V.I.B.?

GIL
 Very Important Body.

The ELEVATOR is crowded with COPS. Dani hands over a file.

DANI
 Medical Examiner's initial report.

BRIGHT
 (snagging it)
 Ooh. I'll take that, thank you.

GIL
 Dani Coffey, this is Malcolm
 Bright. Psychologist, forensic
 profiler, acquired taste.

BRIGHT
 (reading the report)
 No fluids or blood around the body?
 There's usually a psycho-sexual
 component. Are we sure there was no
 ejaculate *anywhere*?

The other cops look over. Dani just smacks her gum.

DANI
 Yeah, we're sure.

BRIGHT
 He's a neat boy!

GIL
 Easy, Bright.

INT. HOBBS SUITE - MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

THE BODY OF A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (VANESSA HOBBS, 40s) lies half-naked on the floor of a spacious bedroom. Her hair covers her face. DETECTIVE JT TARMEL (30s), a born and bred New Yorker, struts over in his black leather jacket.

JT
 Gil! Housekeeper found the body two
 hours ago. Forty-three, unmarried,
 rich. Just my type.

BRIGHT
 (sarcastic)
 So you're a necrophiliac?

JT
 What? No. Who's this guy?

GIL
 JT, this is Bright. Bright, JT.
 You're not gonna like each other.

BRIGHT
 Good to know! Excuse me.

AROUND THE CRIME SCENE

Bright effortlessly slips between TECHS and UNIS. Studying everything, in his element. He clocks the victim's LINGERIE. BRUISES on her wrists. IMPRESSIONS on the rug.

DANI
So you're a profiler?

BRIGHT
Mmm-hm.

JT
Looks like our victim already filled out *her* profile. She was looking to bang.

BRIGHT
Bang? Do you always associate intercourse with violence?

Bright wanders off, JT turns to Gil --

GIL
Let him work.

Bright notes the signs of a STRUGGLE. A broken CHAMPAGNE GLASS. A RIPPED ROBE. He takes it in, then WHOOSH--

He IMAGINES the room like it was last night. VANESSA enters in lingerie. She dances seductively, holding champagne. Bright watches from the door. This is the killer's POV.

DANI
What's the matter?

BRIGHT
(shaking it off)
Nothing. It's kind of my thing. I imagine the crime from the killer's point of view. Helps me understand their state of mind.

DANI
You think like the killer?

BRIGHT
It's a gift.

WHOOSH-- *Bright imagines the murder. He's moving toward Vanessa. She sees him. SCREAMS. He GRABS her. They fight.*

Bright plays it out in his mind, then turns to JT --

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
And you're right, Jeffy.

JT
It's JT.

BRIGHT
Our victim was expecting someone special. A lover. Unfortunately, the wrong man showed up.

Dani fiddles with something in her jacket pocket, a nervous tick. Bright notices and she stops.

DANI
Her lover could have done this.

BRIGHT
No. The broken glass. Torn robe. She was surprised. She wasn't expecting our killer.

A thought forming, Bright goes to Vanessa's body, gets down on his knees. Through her hair, he sees --

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
Her eyes are open. It wasn't poison. He used a paralytic drug.
(standing, pacing)
He trapped her in her own body. She had to feel everything. He's a Power-Control Killer. They prolong suffering for their own sadistic pleasure. He enjoys all of this.

EXT. ASTORIA TOWER - SAME

Ainsley chats with her CREW. IN THE SHADOWS, a MAN stares up at the Hobbs Suite. His face HIDDEN. This is OUR KILLER...

BRIGHT (O.S.)
He may be close. Watching.

INT. HOBBS SUITE - MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

BRIGHT
Feeling like he's still in control.

JT
You got all that from her eyes?

Bright gives a quick wink, which JT is not a fan of.

DANI

He sounds like a real monster.

BRIGHT

No. There's no such thing as monsters. Our killer isn't possessed by some evil force. He's flesh and blood. But broken. My job is to figure out why...

(playing it in his mind)

Inducing paralysis is a thousand times harder than knocking someone out. It takes practice, equipment... medical skills.

WHOOSH-- *Bright imagines this technique. Multiple syringes. Injections into Vanessa's arm and leg. Her eyes frozen open.*

He snaps out of it. Pure dread spreads across his face --

BRIGHT (CONT'D)

I've seen this before.

He charges to the BODY. A MEDICAL EXAMINER jumps up.

GIL

Bright, you can't do that!

Bright finds an INCISION behind her ear. His face goes pale.

BRIGHT

There will be an injection point near her heart and a third through her Achilles tendon.

JT

How the hell do you know that?

BRIGHT

This killer's a copycat. He's mimicking another serial killer... Dr. Martin Whitly. The Surgeon.

DANI

Yeah? You know all about this Surgeon guy?

Bright looks to Gil, SHAKEN. Haunted by his past.

BRIGHT

Almost like he's family.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. GIL'S GTO (MOVING) - NIGHT

Gil breezes down the West Side Highway. Bright stares at the raindrops on his window absentmindedly folding a candy wrapper. He's in a dark place.

GIL

Bright? You okay?

(nothing)

I worried about bringing you in.
Didn't want to wake any demons, but
I had to be certain he was copying
your dad.

BRIGHT

Don't worry. My demons don't sleep.
Tell me about the others.

GIL

The first hit three weeks ago. He
copied a technique your dad used on
a woman named Alexis Siegel. But we
didn't make the connection. Then
last week we found another body.
This time he copied--

BRIGHT

Sharice Baker.

GIL

That's right. How'd you know?

BRIGHT

My father killed her after Alexis.
Your suspect is copying The
Quartet, a series of four murders
he committed in '92.

GIL

We've only had three.

BRIGHT

Your killer's not finished.
(a beat)
Y'know, some might think it was me.

GIL

What?

BRIGHT

I'm a good suspect. Son of The Surgeon, emotionally scarred, recently fired. Makes sense.

GIL

Except I know you, I know your family. You're no psycho. You were just raised by one.

BRIGHT

And my dad's no picnic either.

The old friends smile as they pull up to Bright's building --

GIL

Have you spoken with him?

BRIGHT

No, not in ten years.
(vulnerable)
I can't go back there, Gil. It wasn't a... healthy relationship.

GIL

(he gets it)
I'm not asking you to. But I got a serial killer on my hands, and you're telling me he's not done. I need your help. Sleep on it, okay?

BRIGHT

I'll try.

INT. BRIGHT'S LOFT - NIGHT

Numerous locks click open and Bright enters. Sunshine RATTLES her cage. A *warning*.

BRIGHT

Hello?

A SCREAM from the kitchen. Bright tenses. A LEAN FEMININE FORM click-clacks to the stove in heels you could stab somebody with. If you thought his father was scary...

JESSICA

Your Boricuen doorman let me in. Although you probably figured as much from the stale cologne that still lingers like a rosé hangover.

BRIGHT

Hello, Mother.

Meet JESSICA WHITLY (late 50s, a WASPy New Yorker who wields sarcasm like a samurai sword). She lifts a "screaming" kettle off the heat.

JESSICA

I'm making tea. Come. Sit. Ainsley called, said you were fired. Hallelujah.

BRIGHT

Yes. I'll finally stop dragging our family's sterling name through the mud.

JESSICA

Oh stop it, *Bright*. What a ridiculous alias. At least I have the decency to drink through our family's ruin and not hide from it.

BRIGHT

Well, I'm unemployed now, so maybe I'll see you at the bar.

JESSICA

Problem is, you're not sleeping. Ainsley spilled. Chamomile should do the trick. And if it doesn't, I have some pills.

Bright's not getting rid of Jessica that easily. He sits.

BRIGHT

Of course you do.

JESSICA

Stop clutching your pearls. They're practically over-the-counter.

She takes out a LARGE NEIMAN MARCUS PILL CASE.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Just some anxiety medication. Mood stabilizers. I have a few Quaaludes stashed from the eighties but I'd rather not share those unless it's an emergency. Or a *very good* cocktail party.

BRIGHT

I applaud your maternal instincts, but pills alone won't fix what's wrong with us.

Bright notices as her hand SHAKES, almost imperceptibly.

JESSICA

If you take enough they will.

BRIGHT

How I've missed our talks.

JESSICA

(grabbing her coat)

Get used to it, bub. This is my island. Oh, I'm having your sister over tomorrow night for a *petite soirée*. Be a dear and join.

BRIGHT

I assume you don't break into Ainsley's place like this.

JESSICA

God no. She's perfect. You're my only concern.

(heading to the door)

Try the tea. It'll help.

BRIGHT

What's it laced with?

JESSICA

Love.

INT. BRIGHT'S LOFT, BATHROOM - LATER

Bright -- in his boxers -- brushes his teeth. Puts on his WRIST RESTRAINTS. Grabs his SLEEP MASK and mouth guard. And flips over an affirmation card.

BRIGHT

I am thankful for my journey and its lessons. I am thankful for my journey and its lessons.

Bright, unimpressed, RIPS UP the card and tosses it.

INT. BRIGHT'S LOFT - MOMENTS LATER

Bright stares at his bed. Hesitant. SCARED. Sleep is not his friend.

He goes to his OFFICE and finds FOUR BOXES labeled "THE SURGEON." Pulls them down. They're filled with BRIGHT'S OLD JOURNALS. He looks to Sunshine.

BRIGHT
 Maybe we'll just take a peak...

INT. THE PRECINCT, MEDICAL EXAMINER'S LAB - THE NEXT DAY

Gil, Dani, and JT enter a lab that was high-tech in the '70s.

JT
 Where's your boy Bright?

GIL
 This one might not be for him.
 (turning)
 Edrisa, thanks for hustling on
 this. I know these homicides were--

EDRISA (O.S.)
 Amazing!

Our slightly off-center coroner, EDRISA GUILFOYLE (30s),
 looks up from her work, fumbles with her glasses, and beams:

EDRISA (CONT'D)
 I've only read about The Surgeon's
 methods in textbooks. To see them
 carried out in person is a thrill.

VANESSA'S BODY lies with the TWO OTHER VICTIMS.

EDRISA (CONT'D)
 Three victims. Examination of the
 first two revealed hemorrhagic
 infiltration into the tissue of the
 neck. Victim Three is different. A
 series of paralytic drugs shut her
 body down. One organ at a time. It
 must have been agony.

BRIGHT (O.S.)
It was.

Enter Bright, looking great for a man who doesn't sleep.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
 I imagine. I've got a preliminary
 profile.

GIL
 Damn, Bright. You sleep at all last
 night?

BRIGHT
 I got six hours. Three nights ago.
 So I. Am. *Goooooood.*

JT
 (to Dani, quiet)
 He's the killer right? We agree?

Bright examines the cadavers as Edrisa examines Bright.

BRIGHT
 This stitch work is amazing. And
 these trunk incisions...
 (looking to Edrisa)
 You're like Picasso with
 formaldehyde.

EDRISA
 Thank you. And you're... very
 slender.

BRIGHT
 Thanks. Most food makes me sick.
 I'm Bright.

EDRISA
 (smitten)
 Yes you are. I'm Dr. Guilfoyle. *Ms.*
 Dr. Guilfoyle. Or just Edrisa. Call
 me that.
 (fuck it)
 I'm single.

GIL
 Oh-kay. Not to interrupt whatever
 this is, but do you have a profile
 for us?

BRIGHT
 I do. Our suspect is a serial
 killer super fan. Probably a white
 male -- big surprise. He blends in.
 Average size, average height. And
 smart. He's a high-functioning
 psychopath. He can pass for sane.

DANI
 Sounds like my ex.

BRIGHT
 He's also inadequate. He can't
 craft his own murders so he mimics
 another serial killer.

Bright lifts up Vanessa's wrist. It's BRUISED.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
 But this bruising... it doesn't
 match The Surgeon's methods.

GIL
 Maybe our guy handcuffed her?

DANI
 He didn't need to. He paralyzed
 her.

BRIGHT
 And these bruises aren't from
 metal...
 (studying)
 My guess is quarter-inch thick
 Japanese-style bondage rope.
 Simple, but effective.

EDRISA
 (invigorated)
 Exactly.

BRIGHT
 (noticing on her desk)
 Is that hard candy available?

EDRISA
 Help yourself. Please.

She holds up the bowl. He takes one. It's weirdly sensual.

DANI
 What's happening?

GIL
 Edrisa. *Edrisa.*

EDRISA
 (composing herself)
 Yes, the bruises are from earlier.
 These women were all restrained,
 but it wasn't on the night they
 were murdered.

JT
 Like a "Fifty Shades" thing? I got
 you.
 (off Dani's eyebrow raise)
 What? I'm a reader.

BRIGHT

So! We have three victims. All exhibiting bruises consistent with BDSM activities. Vanessa was waiting for someone the night she was murdered. What if it was a professional dom? What if he was seeing all three of them?

GIL

That's the connection we've been looking for.

Bright smiles to Edrisa as they exit. On her desk, she finds an ORIGAMI ROSE made from his candy wrapper. She smiles: *this could be fun!*

INT. HELL'S KITCHEN BUILDING, LOBBY - LATER

A luxury condo. Bright, JT, and Dani walk through the lobby.

DANI

Apartment 6H is owned by Nico Stavros. A high-end escort who specializes in BDSM. All of our victims sent him payments in the last three months.

JT

The guy *banging* 'em is the killer?
(re: Bright)
We needed him to figure that out?

BRIGHT

You gotta focus up, big guy. Our killer isn't a pleasure seeker. He's a sadist. He's unable to satisfy, so he kills instead.

JT

Yeah? And why are you so sure you know how a killer thinks?

BRIGHT

I learned from the best.

Dani and JT exchange looks. *What does that mean?*

INT. NICO'S BUILDING, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

They arrive at Nico's door. JT KNOCKS. Nothing.

JT

Lights are off.

DANI

Gil said to wait. He's pulling a warrant.

Bright holds up his hand. *Quiet.* He puts his ear to the door.

INT. NICO'S APARTMENT - SAME

It's SUPER CREEPY. Work lights shimmer. A BOUND HAND shakes. A MUFFLED VOICE pleads for help. SMACK! A BLOW silences him.

INT. NICO'S BUILDING, HALLWAY - SAME

Bright turns and whispers:

BRIGHT

I think he's home.

Dani pulls her gun out. JT follows her lead.

DANI

We go on three. One-two-

INT. NICO'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

BAM! THEY BUST DOWN the door. Jacked on adrenaline --

JT

NYPD!

The windows have been BLACKED OUT and everything is wrapped in CELLOPHANE. From the books on the shelves to the pots in the kitchen. Plastic-wrapped. It's fucking terrifying.

JT (CONT'D)

Look at this place.

DANI

What is this, Bright?

Bright scans the area. The only "unwrapped" part of the room is a WORK TABLE covered in SURGICAL EQUIPMENT, TOOLS, ELECTRONICS, and CHEMICALS.

BRIGHT

I don't know. He's building electronics, compounding his own drugs. He's more than a copycat. More than a fan. So much more.

There's another MUFFLED CRY. JT kicks down a bedroom door to find NICO STAVROS (30s, good-looking, and terrified). He's GAGGED and BOUND to a chair. He's in bad shape.

Dani rushes over. Nico's terrified.

DANI

Nico? Nico. Is anyone else here?

HE POINTS WITH HIS EYES to his left... BEHIND YOU!

The KILLER is behind them! Dani turns and yells --

DANI (CONT'D)

Freeze! NYPD!

A FIGURE in the shadows bolts across the room. The KILLER FIRES A GUN. The cops hit the floor. The Killer LEAPS through a blacked out window. SMASH! Sunshine floods the room.

They run to the window. The Killer SLIDES DOWN CONSTRUCTION INSULATION TO A DUMPSTER. Dani turns to JT.

DANI (CONT'D)

Help Bright. I got him. I think...

Dani takes a breath, CROSSES HERSELF, then LEAPS OUT THE WINDOW! She slides down the insulation like a badass.

JT (INTO HIS WALKIE)

I got a 10-13. Armed perp heading east on Fulton. Officer in pursuit.

Back with Nico, Bright peels off his GAG.

BRIGHT

Nico... my name's Bright. I'm here to help.

NICO

I didn't want to do it... he made me call clients. Set up dates. He's a psycho, man! He killed them.

JT

(cutting the restraints)
It's okay. We're here now.

NICO

You gotta get me out of this chair!

Nico starts to break down. Problem is... he's not going anywhere. A three-inch thick STEEL CUFF shackles his LEFT WRIST to the chair. Wires encircle it.

BRIGHT

Oh wow. JT. Little problem here.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - SAME

Dani races down the street, flies around a CORNER.

IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION

THE KILLER HIDES IN A DOORWAY. We can't see his face as he makes a call on an old FLIP-PHONE. It connects. He throws the phone into a trash can and heads into the SUBWAY.

INT. NICO'S APARTMENT - SAME

A flip-phone on the bottom of the chair RINGS and a RED LIGHT clicks on under the mass of wires on Nico's left wrist.

JT

Bright. You see that?

Bright locates the BOMB under Nico's chair. A TIMER counts down the seconds: 86, 85...

BRIGHT

It's a bomb. And he's welded to it.

NICO

What? No! NO!!

JT

Dude! He didn't need to hear that.

BRIGHT

I'm pretty sure he was going to find out in -- seventy-two seconds.

Bright races to the TABLE and looks at the TOOLS. He stops. There's an ALL STEEL AXE. *Well, fuck.*

BRIGHT (CONT'D)

JT. Kitchen. Get all the ice you can.

No time for questions. JT goes. Bright grabs the axe. He lowers Nico's chair so his back is on the floor.

NICO

What's happening?

BRIGHT

I'm going to chop off your hand.

NICO

WHAT!?!

Bright hesitates. *Can he really do this?*

BRIGHT

There's no other option. And reattachment surgery has really come a long way. Deep breaths!

Nico's manacled hand stretches away from his body. Bright lines up the axe with his wrist. JT runs in with an IGLOO COOLER. He does not like the look of this.

JT

Bright! Wait, don't!

36, 35, 34... Bright lifts the axe back. Nico SCREAMS!

BRIGHT

I'm willing to let go and trust myself.

VHHHHPT! HE SWINGS THE AXE DOWN!!! KA-CHUNK!

EXT. NICO'S APARTMENT/STREET - SECONDS LATER

SCREECH! Gil's GTO skids to a stop. Dani runs up.

DANI

I lost him. JT and Bright...

BOOOOM!! A fireball SHOOTs OUT of Nico's apartment. The bomb EXPLODED. Gil and Dani can't believe it. And then --

BRIGHT (O.S.)

Dani! Gil!

They made it! Bright and JT support NICO, his wrist in a bloody towel. Bright holds the COOLER. Gil takes his spot as an AMBULANCE rounds the corner. JT's white as a ghost.

JT

Hey Gil, your boy Bright is NUTS!

They rush to the AMBULANCE. Bright catches his breath.

DANI

You okay?

BRIGHT

(lying)

Yeah, totally.

(re: the cooler)

Oh. I gotta go give them a hand.

He rushes over. We go OFF DANI -- *what the hell?*

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. PRECINCT, MAJOR CASE ROOM - NIGHT

It's gritty, real. This is the NYPD. Dani's on her cell, smacking gum between words. Bright writes notes on a whiteboard. He catches his reflection in the window. A few drops of blood have dried on his neck. His hand SHAKES. He stares at it for a second. *What did I do?*

DANI

(hanging up)

That was JT. Nico just went into surgery. The docs were impressed. They said your axe cut was done with *surgical* precision.

BRIGHT

Yeah. Well... beginner's luck.

Bright quickly wipes the blood away. Dani stares, fiddling with something in her pocket. She's judging him.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)

Something on your mind, detective?

DANI

Nope. I mean, JT thinks you're a psycho. I'm still on the fence.

Bright, self-conscious, goes on the offensive.

BRIGHT

I get it. Your time in narcotics made you guarded, suspicious.

DANI

You read my file?

BRIGHT

Didn't have to. You're in recovery. You chew nicotine gum but you never smoked. Perfect teeth. And you fiddle with that AA chip in your pocket when you're thinking.

(she stops)

I think you'd do anything for the job. Even get hooked undercover.

She stares at him. *Two can play at that game...*

DANI

You know what I can't figure out:
Why are you The Surgeon expert?

(MORE)

DANI (CONT'D)

You just a big fan of serial killers or is it because he's a local boy? Maybe we should go talk Dr. Whitly himself. Why haven't we done that?

Bright doesn't respond. Which is impressive. Gil enters...

GIL

Whitly doesn't talk to cops. Let's focus on the killer not in jail. He has one more target.

BRIGHT

His masterpiece.
(explaining)
Some believe The Quartet was an experiment to find the most painful way to kill someone. It took The Surgeon four tries to perfect it.

DANI

Our guy's into pain, too.

GIL

I'm betting Victim Four is one of Nico's clients, just like the first three. Alright. Who wants to visit a sex dungeon?

BRIGHT

I'm in!

EXT. CORTLANDT ALLEY, CHINATOWN - DAY

Bright, Dani, and Gil head down the dilapidated alleyway that feels frozen in the 1800s. There's a RED LIGHTBULB and a dainty NEON SIGN that reads: BOUND & GAGGED.

GIL

Let's keep a low profile, alright? Lotta powerful people come in here. I mean... frequent this place.

DANI

Got it. Don't touch anything.
(to Bright)
You okay going in?

BRIGHT

Oh yeah, my pain threshold is extraordinary.
(suddenly bashful)
Not to brag or anything.

Jesus Christ. Our team descends into the basement...

INT. BOUND & GAGGED, LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

A high-end BDSM dungeon. It's tasteful. And SCARY.

DANI

They're watching us.

Dani nods to the security cameras. Bright goes to the WALL OF RESTRAINTS. Gags, Cuffs, Ticklers. If it's latex and/or painful, they have it. Along with --

BRIGHT

Oooh! A hanging leather strap cage.
I tried sleeping in one of these.

VIOLA (O.C.)

Can I interest you in one of our
group packages?

VIOLA SCHLESSAL (40s, a sexy dominatrix) enters. She could be a lawyer if lawyers wore shiny black latex.

GIL

I'm Detective Martinez, NYPD. Are
you Mistress Jessi?

VIOLA

Yes. But my real name's Viola
Schlessal.

BRIGHT

Viola was my grandmother's name.

GIL

(ignoring him)

Viola, we're here about one of your
employees. Nico Stavros.

VIOLA

(a hearty laugh)

Oh, god! What did that Greek freak
do? Is he in lock up?

GIL

No. Surgery.

VIOLA

Why? What happened?

BRIGHT

I chopped his hand off.

That gets her attention. Gil takes out CRIME SCENE photos.

GIL

Three of his regulars have turned up dead. We need his client list.

VIOLA

You know I can't do that. Nico's clients are *influential*. And scary.

BRIGHT

(re: the restraints)

Hm... three strand Japanese jute rope. The exact gauge our killer used. I'm impressed you have it.

VIOLA

What are you saying?

DANI

That we're about to arrest you on suspicion of murder. That scary enough for you?

GIL

So how about you give us that list?

Viola nods. She exits down a dark hallway. Gil follows --

-- SMACK! A heavy door slams in his face. Locks click!

GIL (CONT'D)

(to Dani)

Check the back!

Dani heads to one door as Gil runs out the front.

GIL (CONT'D)

(to Bright)

Stay here!

Bright looks around, fascinated with the weird. A CAMERA peers down at him. He traces the wire. *How can it run behind that BOOKCASE?* He PUSHES and it SLIDES back on rollers.

INT. BOUND & GAGGED, SECRET CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

It's dim, lined with peep holes. Bright enters. High heels click-clack. He turns. VIOLA stands before him.

BRIGHT

Viola. Mistress Jessi. Don't move.

VIOLA
Get out of my way.

Viola reaches for something -- FWAP! A WHIP cuts the air and COILS around BRIGHT'S NECK. His eyes BULGE. She TUGS and he falls to his knees, the whip wrapped around his throat.

VIOLA (CONT'D)
I didn't kill anyone!

BRIGHT
(fighting for air)
You have... the right to remain--

Click! DANI points her GUN at Viola's head.

DANI
Drop the whip, bitch.

EXT. CORTLANDT ALLEY, CHINATOWN - DAY

They exit the dungeon. Bright flips through a BLACK BOOK.

BRIGHT
(his voice raspy)
Well, that was pretty fun. Who do we call first?

GIL
(grabbing the book)
Nobody. The District Attorney's on this list. We gotta run these past Nico. Doctors say he'll be up soon.

DANI
(checking her phone)
FDNY just gave the "all clear" at his condo.

GIL
Do a sweep with JT.

Bright's phone rings. It's AINSLEY.

BRIGHT
I'll catch up -- Hey!

INT. CABLE NEWS EDITING BAY - INTERCUT

Ainsley's sits behind the Avid. Hair up, notes everywhere.

AINSLEY (INTO PHONE)
Sup, bro. I need you at mom's tonight.

BRIGHT (INTO PHONE)
The *petite soirée*, that's tonight?
Damn. I *just* made plans to gouge my
eyes out.

AINSLEY (INTO PHONE)
Eye-gouging. That's very Oedipal.

BRIGHT (INTO PHONE)
Wow. Let's leave Freud out of this.

AINSLEY (INTO PHONE)
(playing her card)
If you don't come, I'm reporting
that the son of The Surgeon is
assisting the NYPD with their new
serial killer investigation.

How does she know that? On one of the EDITING MONITORS is a
SHOT of Bright entering Astoria Tower with Gil.

BRIGHT (INTO PHONE)
Ainsley. Are you blackmailing me?

AINSLEY (INTO PHONE)
One hundred percent.

INT. THE WHITLY TOWNHOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

It's fantastically big. Built two hundred years ago. Bright
sits uncomfortably across from his sister. Mom is to his
left. It's silent but for the sound of fine-silver clinking
turn-of-the-century dinnerware.

JESSICA
Oh, Malcolm. I lunched with the
Egyptian Ambassador last week.
Mohamed Bin No-Fly-List or some
nonsense. He has a lovely daughter
who happens to be single. A bit
curvy but acceptable. You could ask
her out now that you have some free
time.

AINSLEY
Free time?

He subtly shakes his head. *Don't*. Jessica misses nothing.

JESSICA
Malcolm. I can spot a guilty glance
at a hundred yards. You can't keep
secrets from me. *Ainsley, give.*

AINSLEY
He's working for the NYPD.

BRIGHT
(off his mother's glare)
I didn't want to disturb you.

JESSICA
Disturb *me*? I'm the least disturbed
person you know.

BRIGHT
(he starts to LAUGH)
Oh, were you not kidding?

No, she was not. LUISA (50s, Russian, she's been with the family for years) enters. As she clears the soups, mother and son stare daggers at each other.

JESSICA
(firm, staring at Bright)
Thank you, Luisa. An adequate
bisque.

BRIGHT
(firm, staring at Jessica)
No, it was delicious.

AINSLEY
Okay. Everyone calm down. Take a
breath. Pop a pill. Malcolm's just
helping the NYPD find a serial
killer.

JESSICA
And why is that his concern?

BRIGHT
Because -- he's copying The
Surgeon.

LUISA
("Oh, shit")
Ay, yebat kopat!

Luisa tries to cross herself and almost loses the soups. Jessica goes to the bar cart. Pours herself a scotch. Her hand shaking ever so slightly. Ainsley goes for her phone.

AINSLEY
What? Is dad a person of interest?

BRIGHT

No. Maybe. Ains, you can't report this. It would cause a panic.

JESSICA

Good. People should panic. You should panic. Promise me you won't see him.

BRIGHT

I won't. I *can't*.

JESSICA

Are you sure?

(after a long sip)

Because he'd love that. You asking him for help. Don't let him back into your life. He's a cancer. Take it from me, he'll destroy you.

Off Jessica -- worried for her son.

INT. NICO'S BURNED-OUT APARTMENT - NIGHT

The place is in shambles, everything burnt to ash. JT searches with NYPD TECHS. Dani arrives...

JT

Over here. How's Dr. Death?

DANI

Bright? Weird. Super weird.

Her flashlight glints off something on the floor. Dani wipes away black soot, revealing a LACQUER BOX WITH A CRYSTAL DRAGON TOP. She rolls it in her hand and click! It OPENS.

JT

Yo, what is that?

Inside are THREE ROLLED-UP DRAWINGS. Beautiful, near-perfect anatomical renderings of The Surgeon's method. *What the hell?*

INT. PRECINCT, MAJOR CASE ROOM - NIGHT

It's late. Bright peers at his board filled with photos from all the crime scenes. He reaches for his coffee. It's all gone. He stands up.

INT. PRECINCT, THE BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Bright passes through the bullpen, not noticing at first. But then he does. *Where is everyone?* The place is EMPTY.

BRIGHT

Hello?

He walks around the corner and we SEAMLESSLY TRANSITION into--

INT. WHITLY TOWNHOUSE - DREAM SEQUENCE

We're with Young Bright (10). He's upstairs. Exploring. It's late. The wind screams. A STAIRCASE leads to...

... the FOYER. Another door is open. Darkness beyond it. Does he dare? Yes, he heads down the steps. They lead to...

... the BASEMENT. A BEAM of light outlines a door. Noises come from behind it. Young Bright stares with those wide, attentive eyes. The door opens. A backlit MARTIN appears:

MARTIN (O.S.)

Malcolm? You know you're not supposed to be down here.

INT. PRECINCT, MAJOR CASE ROOM - NIGHT

Back in reality, Bright's conked out. Behind him, COPS bustle about. His eyes dart behind his eyelids. He's in REM.

INT. WHITLY TOWNHOUSE, MARTIN'S HOBBY ROOM - DREAM SEQUENCE

Young Bright sits at his father's work-table with a mug of cocoa. He notices a METICULOUS DRAWING OF A DISSECTED BODY. It's similar to the one Dani found in Nico's apartment.

YOUNG BRIGHT

Is this a new procedure?

MARTIN

(rolling up the paper)
Something like that. Now finish the cocoa and back to bed.

He leaves. Young Bright marvels at all the tools. How the light glints off them.

Then he hears something. *Scratch... Scratch...* The sound is coming from inside a BIG METAL CASE against the wall.

INT. PRECINCT, MAJOR CASE ROOM - NIGHT

Bright is sweating. TREMBLING. Those bondage restraints he usually sleeps with? He needs them now.

INT. WHITLY TOWNHOUSE - DREAM SEQUENCE

Young Bright freezes. It gets louder. SCRATCH... SCRATCH...

YOUNG BRIGHT

Dad?

Nothing. He moves toward the case. **SCRATCH!!! SCRATCH!!!**

YOUNG BRIGHT (CONT'D)

Dad? What's in here?

Still nothing. The SOUND is deafening. **SCRATCH!!! SCRATCH!!!**

He reaches for the handle, turns it. We're on Young Bright's face as he sees inside the case. He WANTS TO SCREAM but --

INT. PRECINCT, MAJOR CASE ROOM - NIGHT

Adult Bright SCREAMS, still half-asleep. Literally battling his nightmares. Dani rushes in. *What the fuck is going on?*

BRIGHT

No! Don't look! Don't--!

Bright -- out of control -- PUSHES HER. She hits the floor.

DANI

Bright. Bright!

The COPS race to the door, drawing their GUNS.

COPS

Get on the floor! Get down!

Bright's surrounded. Dani realizes what's happening.

DANI

No, stop! He's asleep!

(moving closer)

Bright. It's okay. Relax.

She kneels down. Touches his shaking hand.

And he HUGS her. Not like an adult. More like that ten-year-old version of himself. Dani, hesitantly, hugs him back.

DANI (CONT'D)

You're alright. It was just a dream. Just a bad dream.

Off Bright's haunted eyes --

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. PRECINCT, GIL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Framed photos line the desk. Gil's high school sweetheart. Kids. Happier times. Bright sits. Gil leans on his desk.

BRIGHT

They're called pavor nocturnus.
Night terrors. They're not fun. But
on the bright side, they're
destroying my life.

Outside in the bullpen, Dani glances over from her desk.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)

I didn't hurt her, did I?

GIL

Don't flatter yourself. Dani's from
the Bronx. Tougher than both of us.

Bright smiles, looks at the photo of GIL'S WIFE.

BRIGHT

Like Jackie...

GIL

Yeah, a Bronx girl.

Gil rubs his wedding ring. He can't bear to take it off.

GIL (CONT'D)

She loved you like family. Worried
about you every time you went to go
see your father. She slept easier
after you left for Quantico. You
were far away from him.

BRIGHT

Don't worry, Gil. I'm fine, I got
it under control.

GIL

Under control? You chopped a man's
hand off. A killer's copying your
father's crimes. And six cops
nearly shot you *right over there*.
You are anything but in control.

BRIGHT

(defensive)

What does that mean? You agree with
the FBI?

GIL
I didn't say that.

BRIGHT
I'm not leaving! There's a fourth
victim out there. I can save her.
I'll do whatever it takes.

GIL
That's what I'm afraid of.

Conflicted, Gil takes a breath. Then hands him the SKETCHES.

GIL (CONT'D)
We found these at Nico's.

BRIGHT
(stunned)
These are The Surgeon's, the first
three methods from his Quartet. **My
father drew these.**

GIL
How'd our killer get them? Your
dad's locked up at Bellevue.

BRIGHT
(a beat, heavy)
I could ask him. He'll see me.

GIL
No, there's gotta be--

BRIGHT
It's okay, Gil. Just this once...

INT. TAXI/EXT. MANHATTAN STREETS - NIGHT

Lights reflect off the window. Bright stares at passing
signs. A giant building illuminates the street. Welcome to
BELLEVUE HOSPITAL.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL, SECURE WING - MOMENTS LATER

MISTER DAVID (older but still a gentle giant) leads Bright
down a modern high-tech hall. It's impressive.

MISTER DAVID
It's good to see you, Malcolm.
Lot's changed around here. Wait
until you see the new cell.

Mister David stops at a METAL DOOR. Bright grows nervous --

MISTER DAVID (CONT'D)
Remember, he's just your dad.

BRIGHT
(the one exception)
No, my father is a monster.

Mister David punches in a code and the METAL DOOR opens.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL, MARTIN WHITLY'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

It's new and big and amazing, with high windows. There's an antique desk. Classic bookcases line the walls. MARTIN stands up, his arms manacled. He sees his son. A tense beat, then --

MARTIN
Malcolm! My boy! It's been too long.

BRIGHT
Hello, Dr. Whitly.
(re: the room)
This is... nice.

MARTIN
You'd be amazed what our Saudi friends will pay a disgraced Cardiothoracic surgeon.

BRIGHT
Well, you did operate on two presidents.

MARTIN
And I saved Dick Cheney's life.
Twice. They should have me locked up for that alone!

Bright almost smiles. Martin looks concerned:

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Your eyes. You're exhausted.

BRIGHT
Yet you look fresh as a daisy.
Funny how that works.

MARTIN
Well, I'm vegan now and I haven't seen your mother in twenty years. So! What is new?

BRIGHT
You have a copycat.

MARTIN
Really? I'm flattered.
(off his look)
And deeply concerned. Troubled. All
those normal feelings.

BRIGHT
Save it. I know you're helping him.

Bright puts the SKETCHES on the desk.

MARTIN
My drawings! How did you get these?

BRIGHT
Our killer, he left them behind.

He notices his FATHER'S WATCH, how it faces inward. Bright
wears his the same way. Reflexively, he turns his outward.

MARTIN
He already completed these three?
Yikes. You've got a smart one on
your hands. What gauge syringe did
he use?

BRIGHT
I'm not here to discuss the finer
points of homicide.

MARTIN
I quite enjoyed a seven gauge.
Quicker delivery. And more painful
to boot. Tricky on victims with
smaller veins, but that was part of
the fun. The sport of it all.
(off Bright's disgust)
Oh, don't be a killjoy! Let's talk
murder. It's our thing.

BRIGHT
Who is he? Why are you helping him?

MARTIN
I'm not. I drew these for my own
collection.

Martin points to a huge bookshelf lined with JOURNALS.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
My study of murder. A personal
journey. Still debating the title.
I like *My Life as a Killer* but it
feels a little first-thought.
(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

These are from Book 19. On the second shelf.

Bright finds the journal. FOUR PAGES have been TORN OUT. He goes back to the DRAWINGS on the desk. The edges match.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

See. They were stolen. I was robbed. This is an outrage!

BRIGHT

Three women died.

MARTIN

Sure, yes. That's an outrage, too. There can be multiple outrages. But it wasn't me. I'm totally cut off.

Bright looks about. Mulling this. His mind working.

BRIGHT

But someone got in here. How new is this, the cell?

MARTIN

Ten months. What are you thinking?

BRIGHT

You had to leave when they built this.

MARTIN

That's good, smart! There were designers and architects.

BRIGHT

Who? Who built this?

MARTIN

Berkhead Construction. I consulted on Simon Berkhead's case after his heart attack.

BRIGHT

Simon Berkhead. Who owns half the city?

MARTIN

You're exaggerating. Your mother's family owns more than half.

BRIGHT

Wait. He came here? Simon Berkhead was here? With these journals?

(MORE)

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
 (Martin nods)
 Tell me. Did he strike you as
 someone who might commit murder?

MARTIN
 Oh yes. He struck a lot of people
 that way. He had his heart attack
 while whipping some poor submissive
 in a sex dungeon. Naughty boy.

BRIGHT
 (taking out his phone)
 Gil. Where are you?

INT. HOSPITAL, LOBBY - INTERCUT

DOCTORS lead JT and Gil through the hospital --

GIL (INTO PHONE)
 The hospital. Nico just woke up.

BRIGHT (INTO PHONE)
 I need you to check his client
 list. Is there a Simon Berkhead?

GIL (INTO PHONE)
 (checking it)
 Yeah, he's here. "S. Berkhead."

BRIGHT (INTO PHONE)
 Simon met The Surgeon. He saw his
 journals. **He's the killer.**

GIL (INTO PHONE)
 Okay. I want you to get out of
 there. Meet us at Berkhead Tower.

Bright hangs up. His father stares at him.

MARTIN
 How's my old friend Gil?

BRIGHT
 Goodbye, Dr. Whitly.

MARTIN
 It was good to see you.
 (as Bright exits)
 I love you.

BRIGHT
 No, you're a predatory sociopath.
 You're incapable of love.

INT. BERKHEAD TOWER, LOBBY - NIGHT

Bright enters the gilded lobby. Beyond the rope, the city's finest wear tuxedos and gowns. Dani's already here.

DANI

Bright. They won't let us in. Gil's on his way with a warrant.

An IMPOSING HOST judges them. Bright straightens his shoulders and walks up --

HOST

This is a Metropolitan Club event, Sir. Members only.

BRIGHT

Yes. Well, I'm a member. It's--
(sotto)
-- *under Whitly. Malcolm Whitly.*

A Receptionist nods to the Host, who waves them in...

DANI

How the hell did you swing that?

BRIGHT

It's nothing. My great-grandfather founded the club.

Dani half-laughs at Bright's "obvious" joke.

INT. BERKHEAD TOWER, BALLROOM - LATER

A classy affair. But PACKED. On her phone, Dani brings up a SOCIETY PAGE PHOTO of SIMON BERKHEAD and his WIFE.

DANI

That's Simon Berkhead.

BRIGHT

Let's find him.

They wade through the crowd. Scanning faces, slipping between partygoers. Then, Bright spots DISASTER.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)

We're in trouble.
(she touches her gun)
Not that kind. Behind me, do you see the woman in the blue dress?

Dani clocks JESSICA WHITLY hobnobbing. She nods.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
 She's my mother. Okay, maybe you
 should draw your gun.

DANI
 Your mom? Wait, your great-
 grandfather really was a member?

BRIGHT
Founder. We should split up.

Bright heads in the opposite direction. Dani turns and walks
 right past Jessica, who hands over an empty cocktail --

JESSICA
 Another Stinger, dear. Tell Jorge
 to put his back into it.

DANI
 (really? then--)
 Right away, Mrs. Bright.

Jessica shoots a curious look as Dani curls around a fountain
 and comes face-to-face with SOPHIA BERKHEAD (40s, stylish,
 regal). This is Simon's wife.

DANI (CONT'D)
 Mrs. Berkhead?

SOPHIA
 It's Sophia. And you are--

DANI
 Detective Coffey. NYPD. I'm looking
 for your husband.
 (off her look)
 It's regarding Nico Stavros.

SOPHIA
 (rattled)
 Let's talk upstairs.

BACK WITH BRIGHT

-- moving through the crowd. No sign of Simon. There across
 the room, he notices Dani and Sophia. He starts toward them --

But Jessica APPEARS, crossing to the BAR. Bright spins behind
 a pillar, dips behind the STRING QUARTET. His phone rings.

INT. GIL'S GTO (MOVING) - INTERCUT

Gil cuts through traffic. JT holds on for dear life.

GIL

Bright! Simon Berkhead wasn't one
of Nico's clients. It was his wife.
Sophia Berkhead. She hired him.

Bright looks across the ballroom. There's Dani getting into
an executive elevator with *Sophia*. The doors are closing...

BRIGHT

She was cheating on her husband
with another dom.
(realizing)
She's the fourth victim.

INT. BERKHEAD HOLDINGS, UPSTAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

The elevator doors open. Dani follows *Sophia* --

SOPHIA

This is my husband's office. We can
speak in confidence here.

DANI

Where is he?

SOPHIA

Out of the country. On safari.

INT. BERKHEAD HOLDINGS, CORNER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

It's empty. Hunting trophies cover the walls. All of Simon's
various adventures. *Sophia* heads to her desk. And FREEZES.

SOPHIA

What the hell?

Dani perks up. She checks the desk, finding...

A SET OF FIVE SYRINGES laying on a white cloth along with the
FINAL SURGEON SKETCH. Fuck! Dani grabs her gun and --

BAM! A fantastic blow to the head and she crumples to the
floor. *Sophia* spins. There's her husband -- SIMON BERKHEAD
(40s, strong, athletic, yet hollow-eyed) standing over Dani.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Simon! What are you doing? You said
you were hunting.

SIMON

I am.

(a beat)

Close the door and lock it.

Sophia is frozen by his hateful stare. She warily moves --

BRIGHT (O.S.)
I wouldn't do that, Sophia.

Bright stands in the doorway, looking dashing.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
He's going to kill you.
(to Simon)
Police are here, Simon. It's over.

Simon stands. Resignation setting in. Bright clocks that he's holding DANI'S GUN. *Oh fuck!* He AIMS it at his wife --

SIMON
Goodbye, Sophia.

BRIGHT
No!

BAM! Gil and JT bolt into the office. Guns drawn.

GIL
Freeze!

JT
Get down!

BLAM-BLAM! Simon shoots at Gil and JT. They dive for cover.

Bright pulls Sophia out of danger as JT and Gil RETURN FIRE.

Simon ducks down near Dani. She tries to slide away. He's too fast, too strong. He lifts her and backs up toward the FLOOR-TO-CEILING WINDOW with an epic view.

SIMON
Stay back! I'll--

JT aims for his arm. BLAM!!! BLAM!!!

SMASH! That amazing window behind Simon? It SHATTERS. The second bullet grazes his shoulder. He lets Dani go and she FALLS BACK THROUGH THE WINDOW!

Whap! Simon CATCHES her with his good arm.

OUT OVER THE EDGE -- **Dani looks down thirty fucking stories!**

Bright's closest to her. He yells to the others:

BRIGHT
Don't shoot! He'll drop her.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT./EXT. BERKHEAD OFFICE, CORNER SUITE - DIRECT PICK UP

It's a standoff. Simon eyes Gil and JT. He's holding Dani's life in his hands.

GIL
Pull her back in!

JT
Don't you drop her, man!

Bright takes a breath and whispers to himself:

BRIGHT
I'm willing to let go and trust myself.

Then he moves between them --

GIL
Bright! Get out of the way!

BRIGHT
Talk to me, Simon. I don't have a gun. You're still in control.

SIMON
You think this is about control?

BRIGHT
Yes. Controlling yourself.

That hits a nerve. Bright clocks Simon's RIFLE, his COMPOUND BOW, all THOSE HUNTING KNIVES. WHOOSH-- *he imagines Simon hunting, using all those weapons.*

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
It's always been there, that urge, that desire to inflict pain.

Sophia lies on the floor. Simon glares at her.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
What you desire, what you want... you have to cause it pain. Sophia was special, but no exception.

Bright clocks the MASSIVE PORTRAIT on the wall. Sophia and Simon in Africa. WHOOSH-- *images pop into Bright's head. Them standing for the portrait, her unease. The way his hand clutches her shoulder. He owns her.*

BRIGHT (CONT'D)
Still, you dominated her -- in bed, out in the world. She was yours.
(MORE)

BRIGHT (CONT'D)

Then came the heart attack. And at
your weakest moment--

Bright clocks BRUISES around Sophia's wrist. WHOOSH-- *he
imagines Simon in his hospital bed. He holds his wife's hand.
Sees the bruises. Evidence of her betrayal.*

BRIGHT (CONT'D)

She cheated on you.

SIMON

Nico.

BRIGHT

That jealousy unlocked your darkest
urges. You lost control. You had to
make Sophia feel the most pain
imaginable. The other victims were
practice, and Nico would take the
fall for everything.

SIMON

(straining to hold Dani)
You're good. I studied every kind
of murder. The Surgeon, his work
showed me the way. He was the best,
the ultimate hunter...

BRIGHT

The predator must know his prey.

SIMON

That's right! How do you know that?

BRIGHT

Simon. I have an offer for you. A
better trophy.

(re: Dani)

Take me instead.

SIMON

What? Why?

Bright's eyes go to Dani as he confesses...

BRIGHT

I'm The Surgeon's son.

She can't believe it. Neither can...

JT

Did that nut-job just say--?

GIL

Yeah. I was *not* going to tell you that.

Simon's eyes narrow. He judges Bright.

BRIGHT

My real name is Malcolm Whitly. I changed it because I wanted to get away from my father. I was afraid of him. Afraid of everything he taught me.

As Bright distracts Simon, Dani carefully reaches under her jacket with her FREE HAND.

BRIGHT (CONT'D)

But really, I was afraid of me. Some people still are. They think I'm crazy. That I'm like The Surgeon. Help me prove them wrong. I save her. And you get to kill...

Bright does something really crazy. HE HOLDS OUT HIS HAND!

BRIGHT (CONT'D)

... his prodigal son.

Dani gently draws her CUFFS from her belt as Simon REACHES for Bright's hand --

CLICK!!! Dani smacks her cuffs on an exposed railing, locking herself to the building. Simon sees what she's done.

BLAM! Gil shoots him in the arm. Simon jerks back. Frantically reaching for Bright's hand. He MISSES and --

SIMON

Noooooooooo!!!

-- FALLS THIRTY FLOORS!

Bright rushes to Dani, holds out his hand... she takes it.

BRIGHT

I got you! I got you!

EXT. BERKHEAD TOWER, STREET - LATER

The media has set up camp. It's buzzing. Ainsley waits with her CAMERAMAN and speaks to her producer through an earpiece.

AINSLEY

Nobody knows anything. NYPD says we
won't hear for hours...

A FIGURE approaches. It's Bright. He slips her camera guy a
NOTE and then HE'S GONE. Ainsley reads it.

AINSLEY (CONT'D)

(into earpiece)

Cindy, patch me in live. In 3, 2 -

(into camera, fierce)

Ken, I've just received breaking
news. A trusted source inside the
NYPD has confirmed that the
deceased, Simon Berkhead, is
actually the killer who has been
terrorizing the city...

Bright grins. He wanders toward the police line. There's Gil
arguing with JT and Dani. Maybe now's not a good time.

EXT. BERKHEAD TOWER, ACROSS THE POLICE LINE - SAME

Dani's in the back of an ambulance, her wrist bandaged. Gil's
there too. JT is mid rant.

JT

Gil, I love you. You know I love
you. But this is a bridge too far.
I'd rather work with a Red Sox fan.

GIL

Yeah. Sorry 'bout that.

DANI

(not angry, curious)
Who is he, Gil? Who is he to you?

Gil sits next to Dani, sips his coffee.

GIL

I worked the Upper East Side in
'98. Not far from here. One night,
we get a call. Some kid, a prank.
They send me to sort it out,
apologize to the owners and all
that.

EXT./INT. WHITLY TOWNHOUSE - FLASHBACK

YOUNG GIL, a uniform cop, walks down a street to a nice
TOWNHOUSE. He knocks on a door.

It opens to reveal DR. MARTIN WHITLY, a smile on his face.

GIL (V.O.)

The doctor who lived there couldn't figure out who called. Still, he invited me in, even offered me a cup of tea.

Whitly exits, leaving Gil standing there in the foyer.

GIL (V.O.)

That's how The Surgeon tranquilized his victims. Tea laced with Ketamine.

He hears footsteps behind him. Little feet on the tile floor. And there's Young Bright, 10 years old, in his pajamas.

GIL

What's up, kid?

Young Bright stares at him, then cocks his head to the side.

YOUNG BRIGHT

You should take out your gun.

Gil turns to the kitchen where Dr. Whitly makes him tea. *What the hell is going on?* Young Bright pulls on his jacket.

YOUNG BRIGHT (CONT'D)

My father. He's going to kill you.

INT./EXT. WHITLY TOWNHOUSE - LATER - FLASHBACK

We're in the same scene from the opening, now through Gil's POV. He spots Martin talking to his son.

MARTIN

... I will always love you. Because *we're the same.*

JESSICA

Get him out of here.

Young Bright looks after his father as the police take him away. Then Gil steps into frame, a gentle smile on his face.

GIL

Hey, kid. Thanks.

He takes out a hard candy and gives it to Bright.

GIL (CONT'D)

You saved that girl's life. You're a real hero. Don't ever forget it.

Gil leaves the boy folding up his wrapper, a tiny moment of calm in the shitstorm. That's how their friendship began.

EXT. BERKHEAD TOWER - BACK TO PRESENT

Gil's caught in the memory. Dani and JT can't believe it.

DANI

Bright called the cops on his dad?

GIL

Yep. He saved a lot of lives that night. Including mine.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET, JESSICA'S TOWN CAR - CONTINUOUS

Bright pops his hard candy, wanders down the street alone. He notices an idling MAYBACH. The back window lowers --

JESSICA

What is it with this family and murder? I feel cursed and I haven't a single Catholic bone in my body.

BRIGHT

I didn't think you saw me.

JESSICA

At a cocktail party? Please. I miss nothing. Is it true? Simon Berkhead's dead?

BRIGHT

Smooshed.

JESSICA

Well, that should take a little heat off of us. But poor Sophia. At every gala, they'll end up sitting her with Bernie Madoff's wife. That woman -- if I have to look at one more photo of her grandson's goddamn loom...

BRIGHT

Then why do you do it? The club? The galas? All of it?

JESSICA

Well, it's not like the Democratic Socialists are singing our praises.

(a beat)

Get in. I'll take you home.

BWARP-BWARP! An UNMARKED SUV rolls up.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
 (to her driver)
 Dolpho! Quick. Hide the cocaine.

Dani leans out. JT's at the wheel.

DANI
 Yo, Bright. We're gonna hit a bar,
 throw some darts. Get in.

JT
 The rich kid's payin'!

Jessica and Bright share a look --

JESSICA
 Making new friends?
 (he half smiles)
 Good for you, son.

Jessica rolls up her window. Bright gets into the UNMARKED SUV and they drive off.

We PULL BACK and see NEW YORK in all its nocturnal glory. The lights pixelate and SPEED UP. A second later, the sun rises on a NEW DAY.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL, MARTIN WHITLY'S CELL - DAY

Martin sits at his desk. Bright studies his father.

MARTIN
 You're quite the detective. I'm
 impressed. And a little proud. You
 caught the killer. Saved the girl.
 It was a tricky puzzle.

Bright doesn't share his father's jovial disposition.

BRIGHT
 Is that what this is? A game?
 (off Martin's confusion)
 I can't figure it out. How did
 Simon Berkhead know which pages to
 take from your journal?

MARTIN
 That's an excellent question.

BRIGHT
 Did you orchestrate all of this?
 Simon. The Quartet. The killings.

MARTIN
Now you're reaching...

BRIGHT
You wanted me to come back. And you knew what would bring me here. So you helped Simon. Didn't you? *Tell me the truth... Dad.*

MARTIN
(testy)
You're letting your imagination get the best of you. *Even I couldn't do that...*

Bright stares at Martin. The son wants to believe. The forensic psychologist knows better. He goes to EXIT. But --

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Wait! You can't leave.

Bright shudders. *Is this a nightmare?*

BRIGHT
What did you just say?

MARTIN
I mean, please don't go.
(conciliatory)
I should have supported you joining the FBI. I didn't and we lost ten years. I was wrong, Malcolm. I see that now and... I want to help you.
(off Bright's confusion)
Solve murders. *Together.*

Bright sees the emotion, the hurt. *Is it real?* IT FEELS REAL.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
I can't lose you again.

Bright walks to the door. He looks back just before it SHUTS. But we stay with Martin. *What does he really want?*

MARTIN (CONT'D)
My boy...

END OF PILOT