



UNIVERSAL CABLE PRODUCTIONS

THE THIN LINE

Pilot

“Past, Present, and Future”

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The Thin Line "Past, Present, and Future"

OVER BLACK:

"Study the past if you would define the future." - Confucius

FADE IN:

INT. BROWNSTONE - LIVING ROOM - NEW YORK - EARLY MORNING

Mid-century furniture. Exposed brick. Paintings of cityscapes on the walls. A loneliness to the images. Chrome and metal detailing fill out the unexpectedly warm space.

RAFE WOODS (40s, Black) feeds A CAGEFUL OF PARAKEETS. His pensive stare contrasts the birds's MELODIC CHIRPS and the soft morning light spilling in from a window.

A pair of arms wrap around Rafe. The arms belong to NORA WOODS (40s, White), Rafe's wife.

NORA
(making light)
We can always not go.

RAFE
That's a very bad idea.

NORA
You absolutely positively 100%
"swear-on-your-signed-Steve-Young-
jersey-sure" sure?

RAFE
I'm one hundred, babe.

NORA
Uh-huh.

RAFE
I hear that tone, woman.

NORA
I do not know of this tone which
you speak of.

They look at the birds in comfortable silence.

RAFE
Is it too late to lock 'em up in a
cage?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA
We could cancel our flight.

RAFE
Too late now.

NORA
This is for the kids to know their history. *Your history.*

RAFE
Remind me to not have any more ideas about family reunions, ever since Zachariah found out, he's dead set on giving me a heart attack one of these days.

NORA
(re: their code)
One hundred?

RAFE
(unconvincing)
Sure. One hundred.

She sees that he's overwhelmed. She gives him space and heads down the stairs. As her FOOTSTEPS echo, Rafe notices a bird lying on the floor of the cage.

ON THE BIRD, injured with a broken wing, and struggling to breathe with a FAINT CHIRP.

With a heavy heart, Rafe scoops up the bird, cooing in pain. Rafe holds the bird. He hesitates, then finally a SNAP to REVEAL the dead bird in Rafe's hands. Puts it down. Resigned.

INT. BROWNSTONE - HALLWAY - LATER

With his luggage, Rafe stops at a display of photos. One of him and Nora, him in Army fatigues; her in a doctor's coat, somewhere foreign. Nora pregnant in another. Another of their biracial kids (boy and girl) growing up. Soccer games. School plays. Family vacations. The height of normalcy.

Rafe drinks this all in, savoring his own moveable feast.

INT. BROWNSTONE - FOYER / EXT. STREET - EARLY MORNING

CHRYON: The Integrated North, New York City, New York

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nora loads luggage into a taxi van. Her two kids, ZACHARIAH "ZACH" (17) and RACHEL (15) approach with their luggage. Rachel's more light-skinned, brown hair with pink streaks, braces, and glasses. Zach, scrawny, lags behind, annoyed.

RACHEL

(whispers to Zach)

We'll get to try real beignets for the first time? See a real live alligator? Someone might flash you for beads on Bourbon Street?

ZACHARIAH

What?

RACHEL

Just naming some cool things about New Orleans.

ZACHARIAH

That's all you, sis, except the flashing part. Look atchu, cracking funnies.

Nora catches the last part of that.

NORA

We'll need more of that humor for your dad, which by the way, where in the world is he?

On cue, Rafe walks out of the brownstone with his bags. He has a forced smile.

INT. TAXI VAN - MOVING - MORNING

Nora sits next to Rafe in the front of a SELF-DRIVING TAXI. She waves her hand in front of a distracted Rafe. He takes her hand and kisses it. From the back of the van:

ZACHARIAH (O.S.)

If family is important, shouldn't we have been told 'bout this family sooner?

Nora looks back to the kids. Zach and Rachel sit in the way back. Rachel's sketching while Zach's absorbed with his iPad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

Your grandmother just passed away,
whom your sister was named after
her. Show some respect.

Her tone firm and steady. It gets Zach to calm. Just a bit.

ZACHARIAH

Still. You and Dad spoke to
Grandma all these years without us.

RAFE

We're sorry if you feel betrayed.
But we're...?

Zach shrugs.

RAFE (CONT'D)

(answers, to himself)
One hundred.

RACHEL

I can't wait to have the food.

ZACHARIAH

The buildings Uncle Michael built
seem dope.

RAFE

The South isn't just a tourist
attraction.

ZACHARIAH

You always gotta be cutting things
down.

RAFE

It's not that. We'll be a tourist
attraction when we get down there.
People see a family like ours and
assume things.

ZACHARIAH

I get it, Dad. But things can't be
that bad if Uncle Michael has done
that well for himself.

Rafe has no words. Nora puts a hand on his. Zach docks his
iPad on a console and puts on headphones.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ON ZACH'S IPAD: an online clip of a town hall debate between a charismatic REVEREND MICHAEL WOODS (late 30s, Black, subtle scar on his cheek) and an equally poised PETER KING (30s, biracial, Black/White). A MODERATOR stands between them.

MODERATOR

Peter, Reverend Wood says you spend more time making movies than you do taking action.

PETER

Some say I am an actor doing this for publicity, but I do care. I formed Citizen's Committee to protect my parents's legacy, like them, I want change through peace--

MICHAEL

--You call it peace. I call it passivity. I'm about action--

PETER

--Or violence--

MICHAEL

--Same ideology, better methodology--

Back to Zach, taken with the video. Next to him, Rachel finishes up a SKETCH, similar in style to the paintings in the Woods home earlier. It's of the New York City landscape.

Through the car window, find the matching cityscape with familiar landmarks: Empire, Chrysler, The World Trade Center (pre-9/11). There's a sense of a pristineness to the city, glass and steel reflecting sunlight, akin to Singapore meeting a modern day Atlantis.

INT. AIRPORT - BOARDING AREA - MORNING

The Woods wait to board their flight with other PASSENGERS. On some of the AIRPORT MONITORS, find FOOTAGE of VIOLENT RIOTS down South. A CHYRON reads: "Riots Simmer For Now in Depressed South." Rafe tries not to watch the news.

ZACHARIAH

Do you have any voucher creds left?

Nora takes out a CARD (looks like a credit card) and taps it on her phone, checking something. Sees a balance on it.

RAFE

He's never gonna learn anything with handouts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nora hands her voucher card to Zach anyway.

NORA

If you wanted to have made your own decisions, you shouldn't have gotten married.

Rafe grins and kisses his wife. Point, wife.

INT. AIRPORT - STORE - MORNING

Zach pays for his banana with the voucher card.

He sees a STOCKBOY clear out last week's TIME MAGAZINES in a trash can. It is a split image on the cover.

On the left: "The Black Eagles, Hope Through Action", with an image of TWO MALE HANDS embracing in a BLUE/RED color scheme (like Obama's 2008 campaign poster).

On the right: "Citizens Committee and its promise of peace", and underneath an image of a white/black outlined image of a dove holding an olive branch.

Zach recovers one of the trashed magazines.

SMASH TO A TITLE SEQUENCE:

A remixed "Freedom Highway" by The Staple Singers plays as:

A map of America divided by the Mason-Dixon line with the caption "The Integrated North" over the Northeast and Western coast and "The Segregated South" over the South and Midwest. PUSH IN on Georgia, to FOOTAGE of Martin Luther King's funeral. DISSOLVE to a magazine cover with the headline "Washington March canceled". SUPERIMPOSE to JFK giving his State of the Union from a wheelchair. MORPH to Norman Rockwell's 1964 painting "The Problem That We Live With" where the National Guard and Ruby Bridges are SHOT AT.

END TITLE SEQUENCE:

INT. DARK SPACE - DAY - FLASHBACK, 1985

YOUNG MICHAEL WOODS (5) and his older brother YOUNG RAFAE WOODS (8) crouch down in an enclosed space. They're in 80s clothing. We can't tell where they are. SHOUTS of their PARENTS can be heard offscreen throughout.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELIAS (O.S.)
Who the hell was that guy at the
carwash yesterday?

RACHELINE (O.S.)
He's from church.

YOUNG MICHAEL
Rafe, they're so loud.

ELIAS (O.S.)
That is bullshit.

RAFE
I know, I know. Remember our game?

Michael nods and begins to count glow-in-the-dark spaceships
stickies on the ceiling.

YOUNG MICHAEL
One, two, three...

RACHELINE (O.S.)
You're one to start.

YOUNG MICHAEL
Six, seven, eight...

A CRASH sound occurs offscreen. The fighting stops.

RAFE
Keep countin', Mikey, someday, I'm
gonna get one of 'em spaceships and
we'll fly outta here.

A SHAFT OF DAYLIGHT pours in. RACHELINE (30s), their mother,
opens the door to the space. It's a storage closet
underneath the stairs. Racheline has a fresh bruise on her
face. She has a heavily-medicated daze about her.

RACHELINE
My babies.

A timid Michael reaches for his mother as Rafe hangs back,
fixated intently on his mother's bruise. END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO PRESENT:

EXT. / INT. WOODS HOTEL - LOBBY - AFTERNOON - RESUME PRESENT

CHYRON: The Segregated South, New Orleans, Louisiana

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rafe stares off into space, lost in the memory.

RACHEL

Dad? Dad?

Rafe comes to, standing with his family. They face a CLERK (Asian female, 20s). It's an Asian themed hotel bordering on the kitschy side, all the employees are Asian while the clientele is upscale black. A MUSICIAN plays a song on the traditional pipa (guitar).

CLERK

How long are you staying with us, sir?

RAFE

We're staying the one night.

CLERK

Great. For you two--
(to Nora and Rachel)
Would you like me to call a cab for your hotel?

She gets ready to make a call.

ZACHARIAH

Uh, lady. My sister's actually colored.

Rafe gives Zach a look, *don't mind her*. Zach shrugs.

CLERK

I apologize, I didn't think you'd want to stay--

RAFE

No, you weren't thinking.

NORA

It's okay. We're all staying here together.

CLERK

Of course. Here are your keys.

The Clerk hands them their room keys. Rafe looks to Nora, annoyed.

RAFE

I'll be back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NORA
 (knowingly)
 Spray some cologne on yourself
 before you come in?

EXT. STREET/HOTEL - AFTERNOON

Rafe smokes a cigarette outside with a sense of dread and unease, emotions that have since amplified since leaving New York. He sees:

TWO LINES snake towards a building. Blacks in one line. Whites in another. The queue of White people twice as long. Signage indicates an EMPLOYMENT AGENCY.

A BUSBOY (Black, 70s) steps out. They exchange nods. Beat.

BUSBOY
 (to Rafe)
 Mind if I bum one?

RAFE
 Sure.

Rafe gives him a cigarette and lighter.

BUSBOY
 (sees the lines)
 This ain't nothing. Wait till you
 get out of the city.

The Busboy hands Rafe his lighter back.

RAFE
 I'm from New York. Even with the
 rationing, things are bad, too.

BUSBOY
 I feel ya. Shit, I didn't believe
 I'd see the day when the white man
 be fighting us to clean toilets and
 shit, too.

Busboy chuckles and stubs out his cigarette. Busboy heads to an outdoor restroom area with THREE DIFFERENT STALLS for the men's rooms, each with a colored RHOMBUS symbol: black, brown, and yellow (like the colored triangles on bands worn during 1930s Nazi Germany). Busboy goes in the black stall.

Rafe finishes his cigarette, about to head in but--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFICER (O.S.)

You got your passcard, sir?

Find an OFFICER (20s) in all-black riot gear (like the Taiwanese Special Forces uniform). Rafe hands the Officer his PASSCARD, a passport-like I.D. (like Apartheid Africa).

A helmet with a shaded visor conceals the Officer's face. He presses a button on his helmet and the visor adjusts, revealing the bluest eyes ever. The Officer holds the passcard up to the fading daylight. Rafe waits for what seems like an eternity. Finally, Rafe gets his I.D. back.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

How long did'ja serve for?

RAFE

Two tours.

OFFICER

Right. Don't forget curfew.

Officer walks off. For the first time, Rafe's mood darkens. In his eyes, a hint of something complicated...

EXT. WOODS HOTEL - DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

Rafe meets up with Nora. She kisses him on the cheek, smells him. Rachel and Zach trail further behind.

NORA

You need more cologne.

(off his smile)

You okay?

RAFE

It's just an estranged brotherly reunion after nearly twenty-ish something years, no biggie, right?

She can tell from the weight on his shoulders, it is.

NORA

You did what you had to do. Your dad was dangerous and you tried to get your brother to leave with you. He was old enough to understand.

(sees his look)

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAFE

I forget how clinical you get, Dr. Woods.

NORA

He's your brother, he loves you, and he'll forgive you.

RAFE

Spoken like an only child.

Nevertheless, Rafe gives his wife an appreciative nod. A TOWNCAR pulls up. Everyone piles in.

INT. TOWNCAR - DRIVING - DAY

Rafe reads the paper while Zach looks out the window, taking everything in. Rachel and Nora have fallen asleep.

Through the window: mostly countryside. Lots of countryside.

The car stops at a toll booth at a road near a GAS STATION where an COLORED ATTENDANT helps a WHITE PATRON fill up gas. Business as usual kinda vibe.

Rafe gives his and everyone's passcards to the TAXI DRIVER to give to a ATTENDANT at a TOLL BOOTH.

In the near distance, a sign says: "STAY ON YOUR SIDE." On a post behind the sign--

Three LYNCHED CHILDREN of color hang parallel--

Other nooses along the post have been cut down, reminders of bodies long since gone, the dangling rope pieces left swaying hauntingly.

On the three young children, something is painted on each of their foreheads to spell out--

ZACHARIAH

#14.

Zach turns to his dad, horrified and whispers:

ZACHARIAH (CONT'D)

Hashtag, fourteen, that's the--?

RAFE

The Alt-Right Identitarian Party chant.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAFE (CONT'D)

"We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children."

Zach processes that. This stirs something in Rafe, taking him to a memory.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - FLASHBACK, 1990

Establishing. A sweeping field on a lovely day.

Piss streams down SOMEONE'S pants.

ELIAS (late 20s) taps a stool where the same someone above stands. This person's feet stand on the stool, squirming.

Michael looks away. Rafe can't help but stare.

Elias walks around, lecturing Preteens, including Michael, Rafe, and ZHON (family friend). The kids salute Elias. Everyone stands by a chainlink fence enclosing a compound of some kind O.S.

ELIAS

My newest Eagles. This man hanging in our tree defiled one of our sisters. Did the police do anything about it? No siree. Damn hell if we won't. Have no doubt. There is no justice in this world. Our brothers and sisters will be rounded up for just a look. I marched with Dr. King back the day, shot before me, before he could even get to D.C. Saw JKF break promise after promise for eight years, sitting in that damn wheelchair of his. I'm done waiting around for a savior.

Elias then KNOCKS the stool over. The feet dangle more.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

No, learn this today, the only justice in the world is the justice you fuckin' grab with your own hands.

A SICK CRACK of a neck offscreen punctuates his point.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Back on the swaying legs of the person lynched, move up to find a face of a gagged WHITE MALE TEENAGER, who's swinging from a tree. Limp and dead.

As everyone starts to walk off, Rafe looks to Michael, the latter looking sick. Michael goes behind a tree to throw up. Rafe comes to his side. Michael wipes his mouth with his sleeve.

RAFE

We're gonna leave here someday.
Get on that spaceship of ours.

MICHAEL

Promise you'll take me with you?

RAFE

Somewhere among the stars, Mikey.

Michael gathers his courage and walks off. Rafe watches Michael join the others; Michael's figure getting smaller against the sprawling countryside. END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO PRESENT:

EXT. NEW ORLEANS BAYOU - DAY - RESUME PRESENT

Michael approaches, his figure getting larger against the bayou scenery. The scrawny young kid became a man. He walks with a confident swagger.

Michael comes to meet Rafe with Nora, Zach, and Rachel on a pier. Rafe and Michael lock eyes, as if they're the only ones there. There's a stilted awkwardness to the reunion.

RAFE

(dry)
Been a while.

MICHAEL

Just a bit.
(to Zach)
I'm guessing this handsome fella is
my nephew, Zachariah. Come here,
my man.

Michael breaks into a grin. They fist bump.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(to Rachel)
This pretty young thing here, you
got your grandma's eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rachel blushes. Michael gives Nora a warm smile.

RAFE
This is Nora.

MICHAEL
(playful)
Heard a lot about you.

RAFE
What's that supposed to mean?

NORA
Hun, it's a joke.

MICHAEL
You never could just have some fun,
big bro.
(moving on, to Rafe)
Shall we?

Rafe nods for his family to follow but Michael stops them.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Mama was direct. Family only. The
kids can come but not her.

That stings for Nora.

ZACHARIAH
I'm not going without my mom.

NORA
It's okay.

ZACHARIAH
Fine. We'll stay here with mom.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS BAYOU - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Rafe and Michael sit side by side on a boat, each have an oar, in the middle of rowing the boat out to the waters. It takes a second or so for them to sync up and get a rhythm.

They stop. Michael holds up an URN. The water is serene.

Michael takes a PIN from his pocket. It's The Black Eagles symbol (like on the Time Magazine cover earlier). Michael holds the pin out for Rafe. Michael wears a matching pin.

MICHAEL
It's what she wanted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rafe reluctantly takes the pin and puts it on his shirt. They both stand. Michael empties the urn, the ashes drift gently into the wind and disperse into the water.

Rafe and Michael both stand up and hold their right hand over their hearts, as if reciting the pledge of allegiance silently. They hold this pose for a bit, then sit down.

RAFE

Mama told me you've been doing well over the years. You being famous and all.

MICHAEL

She said you still take photos?

RAFE

Yeah...

MICHAEL

Nice.

There's a heaviness in the air. The silence speaking volumes -- pain and love between these two that they can't quite say.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Glad you're here.
(off Rafe, sincere)
I really am.

RAFE

Me, too.

A nod of gratitude from Rafe. The brothers row their boat back towards the pier in the far distance in silence.

INT. FBI - CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

CHYRON:

New Orleans, FBI Office, Civil Liberties and Securities Division

SPECIAL AGENT DANIEL MILLER (50s) leads a briefing in a room with SIX MALE AGENTS (20s, White) and one woman, AGENT JOANIE GRAY "JAG" (20s, biracial, Mexican/White, passes as White).

Behind Miller, find a BOARD with photos of MICHAEL WOODS, ZHON (30s, in flashback earlier), and PETER KING (on Zach's iPad earlier).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Also see photos of AK-47s, Glock 19s, AR-15s, alongside photos of Michael posing with Black Vets, donating checks, preaching, etc.

Gray takes diligent notes. Next to her, AGENT JAMISON checks out her cleavage and elbows his colleague, AGENT RICHARDS, annoyed, tries to focus on the briefing.

AGENT RICHARDS

We think there's something to Peter King. He's flying in.

SA MILLER

Think or know?

AGENT RICHARDS

Well, I *know* that Peter is flying in for the Woods funeral.

SA MILLER

Which CNN reported. Anyone have intel that wasn't on the news?

(off everyone's silence)

How many of you fucking went to Harvard?

A majority of the room shoots their hands up.

SA MILLER (CONT'D)

Put your hands down. Tell me one of you has something I can jerk off to?

AGENT GRAY

I might have something, sir.

Miller gestures for Gray to take the floor.

Gray gathers herself, shy. The men don't take her seriously.

AGENT GRAY (CONT'D)

Coming after The Eagles and their supposed gun running...

The men talk over her. Not paying attention. Miller notices.

SA MILLER

Guys, hey--

In the midst of all this, Gray grabs a LARGE FILE she had ready and puts it down on the desk. It lands with an audible THUD -- *accidentally knocking over Jamison's coffee mug.* This gets everyone's attention.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AGENT JAMISON

Damn Gray, don't have to get all dramatic 'bout it.

AGENT GRAY

I didn't mean--

Gray starts to clean up as Richards takes over and finishes.

SA MILLER

--Now that you got everyone's attention, proceed...

AGENT GRAY

When you least expect it, that's the next attack on American soil.

Everyone listens. Miller gives Gray a reassuring nod. Gray gathers herself, confidence building.

AGENT GRAY (CONT'D)

The Eagles are unloading a cache of ordnance for quick cash. They plan to sell to The Alliance.

Gray goes to the board and pins a photo of HUNG "BURNER" WU (30s) with other images of ASIAN MEN (suits and ex-cons).

AGENT JAMISON

Those chinky bastards?

AGENT RICHARDS

I believe they call 'emselves Asian Americans.

SA MILLER

Who'd you soap for this info?

Gray pins up a photo of KARLA (30s, Black), another person we'll meet soon, too.

AGENT RICHARDS

We ruled out the girlfriend.

AGENT GRAY

Who happens to be the face of the organization's charity work.

AGENT JAMISON

She doesn't know anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

AGENT GRAY

At first yes, but everyone's got a pressure point. I found hers. Her brother is doing twenty-five to life.

AGENT JAMISON

Damn, Gray. That's kinda hot.

AGENT GRAY

The fact is she can get more secrets out of Michael in bed than half these men on the board.

AGENT JAMISON

If The Eagles are unloading their shit, we'd just be chasing a different animal.

AGENT RICHARDS

Alliance is a buncha Asian businessmen who care about protecting their money and casinos. Affirmation action and integration is a joke for their kids. They don't care about rioting and burning down buildings to integrate.

AGENT GRAY

Thank you. What Michael Woods plans to do with all that cash is the question. Woods rebuilt everything from the ground up after Katrina with his own two hands. The man's a hero. He owns half the river. But with laws on spending limits for coloreds, he can't move enough of his legit money to do something big.

AGENT JAMISON

Lady Agent's got a point.

Miller nods for Gray to ignore him, *as you were saying?*

AGENT GRAY

We should recruit the brother to help follow the money. He's former Army intelligence. He's in town for the funeral. We got a small window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SA MILLER

There's an interesting thought.
But I don't like the fact that you
recruited Karla without running it
up the chain.

AGENT GRAY

I had to make sure what Karla had
was real. *It is.*

Miller considers everything he just heard. Then, finally:

SA MILLER

Richards and Jamison, brick out
with Jag.

AGENT RICHARDS

King is off the board?

SA MILLER

That was yesterday's news. We're
focusing on tomorrow's news.

Richards deflates. He throws a loaded look at Gray.

MILLER

Jag, meet me in my office.

INT. FBI - MILLER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Gray faces Miller, mid-stream.

SA MILLER

Don't matter if the Gray name got
you a chair at the table. Or if
your other half is Alvarez. You
got two more PhDs above those guys.
Don't be shy.

AGENT GRAY

Thank you.

SA MILLER

Then you know, everything you do,
you gotta do clean. C.L.S. is
about protecting the peace with
civil rights.

AGENT GRAY

I'm sor--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SA MILLER
Don't apologize.

Miller brusquely slides a RING BOX across the desk.

SA MILLER (CONT'D)
I didn't have time to wrap it.

AGENT GRAY
It's not--

SA MILLER
It's from your dad for your first
field assignment.

She sees an FBI CLASS ACADEMY RING in the box.

SA MILLER (CONT'D)
It's his Academy ring.

AGENT GRAY
He tried to get me to withdraw my
application when I applied here. I
didn't think he--

SA MILLER
Cared? He did. I usually tell
young agents to not be afraid of
their own shadows. For you, Jag?
Don't be afraid of his.

Gray takes that in. Touched. Emboldened.

INT. WOODS HOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

Rachel looks on disapprovingly, at Zach doing the classic
"pillows as a sleeping body on the bed" ploy.

RACHEL
Where are you going this time?

ZACHARIAH
It's just something I read on
Twitter.

RACHEL
I heard the protests down here are
dangerous.

ZACHARIAH
It's not a protest. Just a
meeting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL
What kind of meeting?

Zach doesn't wanna say.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
The Eagles?

ZACHARIAH
I'll be back in the morning. Cover
for me?

She hesitates. Sees her brother's determination. *Ugh.*

RACHEL
You so owe me for this.

A KNOCK at the door. Zachariah quickly undoes his "ploy".

ZACHARIAH
Coming.

Zach opens the door. Rafe enters. He sits at Rachel's bed as Zach and Rachel gather. Rafe chooses his words carefully.

RAFE
Things down here are different. I
want you guys to be careful.

ZACHARIAH
Dad, we're not five.

RAFE
When you've got kids someday,
you're gonna be the same way.

ZACHARIAH
Freakin' out all the time? No way.

RAFE
Better to freak out and have you
two safe. I was hoping you'd
understand more, son, especially
having seen all you seen here
already.

Rachel notices a look pass between father and son. The subtle reference to the lynched children earlier.

RACHEL
What're you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ZACHARIAH

Nothing.

RAFE

Point is, carry your passcard on you at all times. Whenever you see a cop, watch out for each other.

RACHEL

(light)

We know that.

RAFE

I know you know that, it's your knuckle-headed brother I worry about.

Zach shakes his head.

RAFE (CONT'D)

There are parts of this town, it's different when you see it in person. I wanna prepare you two, especially when we go over to the freehold.

Rachel registers his gravitas; so does Zach.

RACHEL

(looking to Zach)

I promise, we'll be extra careful.

INT. WOODS HOTEL - MASTER SUITE - NIGHT

A distracted Rafe climbs into bed with Nora, who's typing on her laptop.

NORA

I swear I spend more time landing helicopter parents than I do treating the kids. Ms. Reynolds wants the anterior craniotomy for her son, who is only seven. But the last thing I wanna prescribe is conversion therapy.

RAFE

Uh-huh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

Since the surgery's gotten covered
on more insurance plans, everyone's
trying to lobotomize their kids.
It's a nightmare.

RAFE

Sure.

She closes her laptop, noticing that he's zoned out.

NORA

I'm joining the circus.

RAFE

Sure.

NORA

Rafe!

RAFE

Sorry.

NORA

Something on your mind? Something
perhaps sibling related?

RAFE

I expected him to be angry. But
it's been cordial. Awkward but
cordial.

NORA

He probably feels the same way.

RAFE

And I'm sorry about what happened
at the bayou.

NORA

(gallows humor)

Even in death, your mom would still
find a way to show her disapproval.

RAFE

She had... expectations... of...

NORA

What kind of daughter-in-law she'd
get? You know I don't like it when
people sugarcoat things. From one
mother to another, I guess I can
understand her concerns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A beat.

NORA (CONT'D)

I can't imagine you and Michael that young. What were you guys like then?

RAFE

I was athletic. Boxing. Swimming. What not. Michael was always sick. He was a scrawny little thing. He'd do this funny thing where he'd beg my mom to make her famous blueberry pie. He hated blueberries. Me on the other hand? I could eat that pie every day.

NORA

You talk about things here and there, but not really your brother.

RAFE

Honestly, I don't really feel like doing any more talking right now...

He kisses her. A beat. Another kiss that builds, as they reach for each other, slowly undressing...

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK, 1992

Outside a row of houses on a secluded plot of countryside. A chainlink fence encloses the land.

A wooden sign plants in the earth at the entrance: Whitney Freehold, estab. 1968.

A TEENAGE RAFE and TEENAGE KARLA make out in the back seat of Rafe's car. Karla pulls away.

KARLA

Do you hear that?

RAFE

I don't hear anything.

They go back to kissing but Karla stops again.

RAFE (CONT'D)

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rafe follows her eyeline to see TEENAGE MICHAEL (14) emerge from the house. He's spinning emotionally.

Rafe gets out of the car to meet his brother.

MICHAEL

Didn't mean to interrupt.

Karla joins them. Rafe sees a bruise on Michael's arm. Michael looks away, aware, tries to move past it.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Rafe, don't...

But Rafe's on a mission, heading into the house.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - FLASHBACK, 1992

Michael and Karla follow in after Rafe, full of steam. Elias clutches a brand new football, passes it between his hands.

ELIAS

Wanna test out the new ball?

RAFE

It's dark out. I don't want either one of us to get hurt.

A challenge to his father. Elias doesn't miss a beat.

ELIAS

You're right. We should stay in, watch your mama, she takes too many of those damn pills. She'll wake up and not remember things right. Always blamin' me for shit.

MICHAEL

Rafe...

Rafe loses it, sees red and lunges for his father, beating up on him. Michael jumps in the fray trying to stop this. Karla helplessly tries to intervene, too.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Rafe, no. Rafe!

KARLA

Stop. Don't do this!

Rafe's lost in a blind rage. Accidentally, Rafe backhands Michael. Michael hits the corner of a coffee table, opening a GASH on his cheek (where Michael's scar is today).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rafe stops. Goes to Michael, who flinches. Scared of his older brother. END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO PRESENT:

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET - NIGHT - RESUME PRESENT

Several BLACK MEN head into a building. TWO BLACK EAGLE GUARDS (20s, Black, black fatigues, The Black Eagles tattoos visible, the male hands image earlier) stand sentry. Zach approaches.

BLACK EAGLES GUARD #1
What's the password?

ZACHARIAH
I didn't realize...

BLACK EAGLES GUARD #1
Stand down. We messing with ya.

BLACK EAGLES GUARD #2
You interested in the revolution?

ZACHARIAH
Yes.

BLACK EAGLES GUARD #2
Then come right in, boy.

They start to head in the building as most of the line makes its way in. Then TWO DRUNK TEENS (White) come by.

DRUNK TEEN #1
Hey, Aryan lives forever, man.

DRUNK TEEN #2
Hell yeah motherfuckers! Whoop.

BLACK EAGLES GUARD #1
Ignore them.

DRUNK TEEN #1
Let's hose them down.

The Drunk Teens unzip their pants and start to pee on the people in line, including Zach. A fight breaks out. Zach's caught in the middle of it. The Guards try to stop the fight. The sound of a WHISTLE gets everyone to stop.

BLACK EAGLES GUARD #2
Five-oh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Recognizing that, everyone disperses except for Zach who tends to Drunk Teen #2, who's injured; along with the first Guard, and the Drunk Teen #1 who are left standing.

A BEAT COP on patrol arrives, in the familiar riot gear. Everyone left puts their hands up. Drunk Teen #1 steps forward.

DRUNK TEEN #1
These niggas started this shit.

BLACK EAGLES GUARD #1
That ain't true.

BEAT COP #1
That so?

DRUNK TEEN #1
You know what, nevermind. Five words.

ZACHARIAH
It was all a misunderstanding.

Drunk Teen #2 gives Zach a surprised look.

BEAT COP #1
I oughta write you guys up for a curfew violation.

BLACK EAGLES GUARD #1
It's not curfew for another two hours.

BEAT COP #1
You calling me a liar?

ZACHARIAH
No, sir. Here I have my passcard and a flyer for our meeting--

BEAT COP #1
(gun aimed)
Keep your hands--

ZACHARIAH
(nods down)
It's in my pocket--

BEAT COP #1
Stay where you are--!

ZACHARIAH
I'm not gonna do--!

Zach KEEPS HIS HANDS UP, but the smallest fidget makes the Cop antsy and he tackles Zach out of nowhere--

ZACHARIAH (CONT'D)
What the hell?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BAM. Zach gets slammed against the wall of the building as cuffs get slapped on him.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - FRENCH QUARTER - MORNING/ESTABLISHING

A busy day. A carriage carries TOURISTS down a street, annoying the cars behind it.

INT. WOODS HOTEL - MASTER SUITE - MORNING

Rachel enters the suite. Anxiety permeates every cell in her body. Rafe and Nora greet her with pleasant surprise.

RAFE

Look at you, ready to go.

NORA

Where's your brother?

RACHEL

Zach snuck out last night. He isn't here.

NORA

What? Where is he?

INT. DETENTION FACILITY - MORNING

Rafe fills out paperwork and hands it to a CLERK. Rafe sees Zach come in with two UNIS. The sight of this is like a pinprick to Rafe's heart. One of the Unis takes a call.

ZACHARIAH

Dad...

RAFE

Don't say anything.

There's a sudden and unfamiliar intensity that silences Zach.

RAFE (CONT'D)

(to the Unis)

Thank you, I'll take him now.

UNI

Sir, you can't take him home. The other party is pressing charges.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZACHARIAH

I didn't do anything. I didn't touch anyone. I swear to God.

RAFE

I know, son. We're gonna figure something out. Just keep your head about you, okay? What do mom and I always say?

ZACHARIAH

One hundred.

RAFE

One hundred.

A FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Maybe I can help.

Rafe turns to see Agent Gray there.

Off Rafe, confused as hell, but desperate as ever.

INT. DETENTION FACILITY - INTERROGATION ROOM - MORNING

Gray comes in to face an impatient Rafe.

AGENT GRAY

Sorry for the delay. You wouldn't believe all the red tape I had to go through just to talk to you.

RAFE

Who are you exactly?

AGENT GRAY

Joanie Gray, you can call me Jag. I work C.R.S.

RAFE

(realizing)
F.B.I.

Rafe says nothing further, forcing Gray to talk.

AGENT GRAY

Two young men were accosted last night.

RAFE

The underage teenagers who were drinking, you mean.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAFE (CONT'D)

I sincerely wish no harm on those young men but unfortunately they've made false accusations against my boy, who claims he never touched them. I believe him.

AGENT GRAY

They're still pressing charges. Louisiana can try your son as an adult. It's a minimum ten year sentence for assault.

RAFE

You said you can help. No offense, I'm having a hard time seeing how.

Gray slides over a file. Rafe reviews it.

AGENT GRAY

(re: files)

Lynchings of purported white rapists throughout the nineties.

(a photo)

The Boston Bombing on JFK Day 2002. Thirteen injured, five dead.

(another photo)

The Alt-Right Identitarian Party bombing in DC in 2004. Fifteen injured, twelve dead.

(her point)

All these crimes were linked to your old man, leader of The Black Eagles till he went to the pen. Then your brother took over.

RAFE

(wry)

I'm aware.

AGENT GRAY

Just when the C.R.S. here tried to link The Black Eagles to the above crimes, your brother took the group underground, turned a public image doing charity work, while rumored to be running guns, to fund said charity work. Your family's organization has had more facelifts than a Hollywood actress.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAFE

If the Eagles did all this, it was long after I had left home. I had never been exposed to this.

AGENT GRAY

That so?

He remains poker-faced.

RAFE

Honest to God, if half what you have here is true, I agree, that shit is bad. But honestly, what's it got to do with me, really?

AGENT GRAY

You were a Communications Officer back in the Army.

RAFE

More like a glorified paper pusher.

AGENT GRAY

Who intercepted foreign intelligence and deciphered coded messages.

(off Rafe's surprise)

Red tape, remember? You have the highest G.T. score I've ever seen. As S.F., you recruited four assets. Looks like you saw some action. It also sounds like someone skilled enough to get us a line on your brother.

RAFE

(but)

That ain't me anymore.

AGENT GRAY

Okay, fine. But 'round here, juries like to give young men like Zachariah an all day and a night type of sentence. We're mighty tough on crime here. Sympathy is the last thing he'll get.

Rafe takes that in. A decision to be made.

INT./EXT. DETENTION FACILITY - MORNING

Rafe passes by Zach, who's still with the unis, handcuffed.

ZACHARIAH

Dad...?

Rafe holds his hand up, *not now*. Zach watches his dad go, practically shitting his pants.

Rafe steps outside and makes a call.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. EAMES-STYLED LOS ANGELES OFFICE - MORNING

A male hand reaches past an old-fashioned drink resting on a black leather ottoman for a cell. Widen to reveal Peter, in a bespoke suit, in an Eames Lounge Chair. He answers his cell, resting his feet on the footrest of the chair. The very definition of *Je Ne Sais Quoi*.

PETER

Hello?

Cheesy action movie posters starring Peter hang behind him.

RAFE

Peter, it's me Rafe. Rafe Woods.

PETER

Rafe "Littlefoot" Woods.

RAFE

I haven't heard that name in a while. I'm sorry but I gotta cut to the chase here.

PETER

By all means, cut.

RAFE

My son and I, we're down here in New Orleans. He got himself into a situation. Honestly, I don't even know where to begin. But he's being held. They're charging him. I need a lawyer.

PETER

Is he okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAFE

For now, yeah...

PETER

I would talk to someone on
Citizen's Committee, but the
organization is shifting things
around a bit.

RAFE

Oh.

PETER

I can't get into it now, but I'm
gonna be in town, let's talk to
your brother.

RAFE

(still processing)

You've been talking to Michael?

PETER

He invited me to the memorial.
It's all over the news. Maybe I
should fire my publicist.

RAFE

I haven't been -- I've been
distracted here -- that's um -- you
guys been talking a lot?

PETER

Something like that.

RAFE

I didn't realize that.

PETER

I meant to tell you. I've just
been so busy with things here.

RAFE

Thanks, I'll figure it out.

PETER

You sure?

RAFE

Yeah, yeah.

Peter sees Rafe has hung up. *That was weird.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Reveal Peter's office is inside a tricked out private jet, think Gulfstream 650. A STEWARDESS refills his drink. He takes off his WEDDING RING and places it on the ottomon.

She unzips his pants and bends down, her face buried in his nether regions. He leans back, enjoying every bit of it. END INTERCUT.

EXT. DETENTION FACILITY - SAME

Back on Rafe. He punches the wall behind him. A raw anger that rarely comes out. Tries to keep his temper in check.

He looks inside to see Gray through the glass doors. She steps out and gives him her card.

AGENT GRAY

You make your decision yet?

RAFE

Could you gimme a minute?

AGENT GRAY

Actually, they're gonna transfer your son to central booking, something about overcrowding, unless you know what you wanna do now, then I'll see what I can do. Once they process him in the system, it's a whole other ball game.

RAFE

I cooperate with you and my son is free?

AGENT GRAY

Pretty much. I got some conditions, too. But it really is that simple.

RAFE

Where do I sign?

Gray grins. On Rafe, caught between the shittier of two stools.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS OUTSKIRTS - DAY

Rafe and Zach ride a taxi in silence. Zach's now in funeral black, agitated. Rafe preemptively answers his question.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAFE

I took care of it.

There's that intensity again. Zach doesn't bother pressing.

EXT. FREEHOLD - DAY - RESUME PRESENT

A former plantation with endless rural countryside and a chainlink fence all around. Bare before in the flashbacks, but now padlocks line one side of this fence, like Paris love locks. The same Whitney Freehold sign but more weathered.

Deeper inside, REMODELED PLANTATION BUILDINGS... barns, storehouses, trailers, and small homes make up the community.

A nearby mural depicts violent rebellion: bloody fists, black angels holding guns, etc.

EXT. MAIN HOUSE - DAY

MICHAEL WOODS links arms with KARLA (late 30s), exiting an old, but well-kept ANTEBELLUM MAIN HOUSE. There's something worn down but defiant and antagonistic in every edge of this house's architecture.

Michael's in an amazingly tailored suit and tie. Karla's style is a throwback to 1960s silhouettes, fascinator and all. She brushes a piece of lint off of Michael's suit. See The Black Eagles tattoo on her wrist.

They lead a traditional main line PARADE down the freehold, brass band, and all.

Not included in the parade procession, Nora and Rachel hold hands, looking on at the passing parade. Nora feels people's stares, like she's some kind of leper. Nora shakes it off.

Everyone regards Michael and Karla, like celebrities. Mostly Michael though, he's definitely got his Stans.

INT. CHURCH - DAY - RESUME PRESENT

Michael's in the middle of his eulogy to a packed house of a hundred GUESTS. A photo of an older RACHELINE WOODS (from the flashbacks) stands on an easel.

MICHAEL

I was born here, as was my dad, in this freehold.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

As we come together today to celebrate the life of Racheline Woods. I remember how much she cherished and valued family. Believed that the Eagles, what we did here to uplift each other, no matter the cost was worthy...

Nora sits near the front with Rachel. She looks at her watch. Mother and daughter whisper.

RACHEL

Where's dad and Zach?

NORA

Your dad said he was on his way back from the station.

Nora covertly checks her phone. Someone SHUSHES them nearby. Nora holds her tongue with Rachel. Find others who stare at Nora, more hostile this time. Nora keeps her head up high.

Back on Michael.

MICHAEL

...Death is something that can bring about change. Remind you of what's important. Death is a catalytic event.

EXT. FREEHOLD - DAY

In a taxi, Zach and Rafe arrive at the guarded entrance. The sight of his childhood home gives Rafe pause. He's overcome.

FLASH TO:

INT. HOUSE - HALL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK, 1994

Rafe has a suitcase in one hand. He slips an envelope under the door. He stares at the door and finally leaves.

EXT. FREEHOLD / HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Rafe takes in the freehold from the completed mural to the chainlink fence, which has started to have locks on it. With a finality, Rafe turns and walks away from this life.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

Michael sleeps in bed. Near his door, find an envelope labeled "Michael." END FLASHBACK.

BACK TO PRESENT:

EXT. CHURCH - SAME - RESUME PRESENT

Michael mingles with CHURCHGOERS leaving. ZHON (30s, from the flashback and FBI briefing earlier) comes up to Michael and whispers in his ear. Michael's eyes darken.

EXT. FREEHOLD - GATED ENTRANCE - DAY

Rafe and Zach wait at the entrance. ARMED MEN stand sentry at the gates. The gates open to reveal a JEEP approaching.

Michael emerges from the jeep.

Rafe and Michael lock eyes. An ocean between them.

Michael slowly comes over. Rafe meets his brother cautiously. Zach looks on. Michael's disappointed.

MICHAEL
(cold)
You're here.

RAFE
Look--

MICHAEL
Don't make excuses.

RAFE
I'm not. Hear me out.

MICHAEL
Stop talking.

RAFE
It's all a--

WAM! Michael punches Rafe. Rafe takes it. Gripping his jaw.

MICHAEL
I said stop!

Zach watches this, frighten, feet planted in the ground, like he got locked in a cage with these two wild animals.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAFE

I was wondering when that was coming.

MICHAEL

Missed your own mom's funeral.

ZACHARIAH

It's my fault.

RAFE

That's okay, Zach.

MICHAEL

Fuck you.

Rafe scoffs, his patience has given way to annoyance now.

RAFE

No fuck you. I'm not proud of how I left things here but at this point you're being petty.

That riles Michael up. Michael shoves Rafe. Rafe pushes back then--

AN EXPLOSION of fists fly between them.

It's almost like they're little boys again, fighting over a toy. Except it's *violently angry*. Love and hate rolled up into one fucked up mess. Anguish and terror and rage unleashed between the brothers all at once.

Michael comes after Rafe. Rafe sidesteps, weaves in a slick defensive move, his military training on display. That only pisses Michael off more. Rafe starts to get the upper hand, holding his brother in a headlock. One of the GUARDS sucker punches Rafe from the back. Rafe falls to one knee, like a man seeking absolution.

Zach finally unfreezes himself, moving to his dad. Shock painted all over his face. Rafe's getting up slowly. Rafe's anger suddenly gone; now shame has taken over.

RAFE (CONT'D)

My son was arrested last night. That's why we're late. I didn't mean no disrespect. I don't wanna fight.

Michael considers that, calmer now. Wipes blood off his jaw.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAFE (CONT'D)

Do you think maybe we can do that?
For mom, at least? I got no right
asking, but maybe a family dinner
before we leave. Have Karla come.
Our family should be whole.

Rafe waits on a blank Michael...

RAFE (CONT'D)

What do ya say...?

The pain and desperation in Rafe's voice don't seem to register with Michael, who remains inscrutable.

EXT. CHURCH - LATER

A CROWD. A jeep drops Rafe and Zach off near outside the church. Michael gets off, addresses Rafe, all business.

MICHAEL

Eight p.m. tonight. I'll have one
of my lieutenants send you the
address.

RAFE

What about curfew?

MICHAEL

You don't gotta worry about that
with me.

Michael heads off.

Rafe cleaned himself off slightly, but he still looks like shit. Nora and Rachel approach.

NORA

What the hell happened to you?

RACHEL

Oh my God, dad...

Nora's in immediate doctor mode, checking him out.

NORA

How many fingers am I holding up?
Does it hurt here? Can you sit?

RAFE

I'm okay, I'm okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Zach, who's been quiet this whole time chimes in.

ZACHARIAH

Dad got into something with Uncle Michael.

NORA

I see that.

RAFE

Actually we're grabbing dinner with Michael tonight.

Off Nora's surprise.

EXT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

Outside a buzzing jazz club on Frenchman. BOUNCERS check IDs outside. Note two lines, one with three COLORED RHOMBUSES, Yellow, Brown, and Black, combined into one symbol. Another line with a WHITE RHOMBUS, the White line. Anyone not White, gets their passcards checked.

This part of town shows a more gritty side -- neon signs, bad traffic, rudeass people -- yet there's still an attractiveness to this part of town, like a bad lover you keep returning to despite knowing better.

Michael arrives in a stretch limo with Karla and Peter. Rafe, Nora, and their kids stand there. They have the weariness of people who have been waiting awhile.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - LATER

AT THE TABLES. Michael, Karla, and Peter sit in the WHITE section, enjoying a BAND playing onstage. All the wait staff is Black.

AT THE BAR. Rafe, Nora, Zach, and Rachel stand nearby, not seated yet.

ZACHARIAH

I thought we were having a family dinner.

RAFE

Me too, son.

ONSTAGE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MUSICIAN

I'd like to give a shout out to the owner of this fine establishment, Michael Woods. I'm told he had a few words.

AT THE TABLES. The crowd cheers. PRESS in the audience hold notebooks and recorders.

AT THE BAR. Rafe takes this in with Nora, not sure what to make of this. Husband and wife whisper.

NORA

Zach told me he was supposed to stay in jail.

RAFE

He did nothing. So they had to let him go. Don't worry. I took care of it.

Nora's skeptical but doesn't press.

ONSTAGE. Michael's at the dais.

MICHAEL

In memory of my mother, a woman who always taught me to say my prayers and thank you and "yes ma'ams" and "yes sirs". In that spirit, I wanna shout out to a supporter of our establishment. The mayor.

Everyone looks to the MAYOR (50s, White) at the table where Michael was sitting.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

We also have another special guest, Peter King.

Michael indicates Peter at the tables, in the COLORED section. A few people take photos of Peter, starstruck.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

As some of you know, Peter is the embodiment of change... his father, the late Dr. King and his mother, the esteemed Senator Nevins.

Peter fake smiles, not liking this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Over the years Peter and I have disagreed a little.

(the audience laughs)

So Peter and I have decided to put aside our differences. We both want equality for our brothers and sisters. This is why The Black Eagles and Citizen's Committee plan to join together for change, which I will be overseeing.

The crowd reacts. SHOCKED. Hands fly up from the press scrum.

REPORTER #1
What do you mean?

REPORTER #2
Does this mean a new organization will form?

REPORTER #3
What will Peter do?

REPORTER #1
How long will this take?

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'll issue an official press release soon. Thank you.

Michael steps off the stage with that proverbial mic drop.

AT THE BAR. Stay on Rafe waiting nearby with Nora and the kids, as Michael approaches them, all smiles.

NORA

You believe this?

Rafe looks to Nora skeptically.

A FEMALE VOICE (PRELAP)

I don't believe it.

EXT. STREET / INT. VAN - SAME

On a GAS COMPANY VAN outside the jazz club.

Inside the van, Agent Gray, Agent Richards, and Agent Jamison listen in to the above. Gray wears her father's ring as a pendant on a necklace.

AGENT GRAY

He's up to something.

Jamison bobs his head to the music. He is the epitome of "this boy's got no rhythm". Richards smacks his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGENT JAMISON
What the fuck?

AGENT RICHARDS
Pay attention. What now, boss?

AGENT GRAY
This family get together is getting boring. Keep the overwatch. I'm going in.

She starts to wire herself up. Richards grabs her hand. The touch oddly intimate. She flinches. He lets go, covering.

AGENT RICHARDS
Don't screw up.

AGENT GRAY
You were a complete ass during the briefing, by the way.

The way she says that hints at a romantic history. Richards, with an eye on Jamison, speaks proudly.

AGENT RICHARDS
I was only returning the favor, Jag. You had Miller switch the assignment from Peter to the brothers.

AGENT GRAY
Deal with it.

She opens the van doors, as JAZZ MUSIC pours in, grumbles to herself:

AGENT GRAY (CONT'D)
I fucking hate jazz.

Gray exits the van.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Karla slides a martini back to Gray at the bar.

KARLA
I fucking hate martinis.

AGENT GRAY
It's already paid for. Might as well not waste it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Karla smirks and "spills" the drink on Gray. PRELAP STATIC.

KARLA
I'm a wasteful person.

INT. VAN - SAME

Richards and Jamison hear the same STATIC.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - A PRIVATE DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rafe and his family dine with Michael. Karla comes in late.

KARLA
Sorry to keep y'all waiting. Was finishing up at the bar.

MICHAEL
They know you got a tab down here with me.

RAFE
That was a nice speech you had back there.

ZACHARIAH
I've read that The Black Eagles has helped reduced homelessness among Black men by 30% over the last five years.

MICHAEL
It's a community effort. Karla here deals with charity work at the organization.

ZACHARIAH
Why didn't you want to run that part?

MICHAEL
For as long as Karla and I have been together, Karla always wanted to give back to the community. So it was natural for her to be the face of our charity work. She's put a decade into it.

NORA
It would be nice to hear from Karla herself about this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Everyone chuckles.

KARLA
(to Nora)
Girl, I like you.

Rafe and Michael exchange amused looks.

KARLA (CONT'D)
Actually, I hear you're a doctor,
Nora. Something I've wanted to
look into was opening up a clinic
for reproductive health here in New
Orleans. Get STD testing, prostate
check ups, mammograms, birth
control, that sort of thing.

NORA
Something like Planned Parenthood?

KARLA
I haven't heard that name in a
while. Yes, like Planned
Parenthood but for colored folks.

ZACHARIAH
The Black Eagles has two general
health clinics here in Louisiana.
One in New Orleans and the other in
Shreveport.

MICHAEL
Damn, son, looks like someone's
done his research.

RACHEL
Zach's like your biggest fan ever.
Like ever.

ZACHARIAH
Rach...

MICHAEL
I appreciate that. What about you
Rachel? What are you into?

NORA
Rachel's a talented artist.

MICHAEL
Really? I might have a hook up or
two in the artist community here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Rachel lights up at that.

RACHEL
There is this exhibit at the Ogden
that's sold out.

MICHAEL
(winks)
Consider it done.
(to Rafe and Nora)
Maybe I can show both you kids
around town, see what the South is
about.

RAFE
We appreciate that but--

ZACHARIAH
Dad--

NORA
Let's table this for now, okay?

Zach sulks. Michael turns to Karla, changing topics.

MICHAEL
Babe, you know you'll never get
funding for a clinic like that.
Pro-life groups are gonna shut you
down in a second.

NORA
Unfortunately he's right. Ever
since Roe v. Wade has been
overturned, nobody's approached
these type of clinics.

KARLA
Maybe you can help find a loophole.

NORA
I'm a pediatric surgeon. I don't
know how much help I'll be.

KARLA
You'll certainly be a lot more help
then the two gentlemen sitting here
who aren't doctors.

Nora raises a brow, cracks up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NORA

(to Rafe, a callback)

I like her.

(to Michael)

I'd love to help. Count me in?

RAFE

I don't know if I should be worried
or excited about this partnership.

MICHAEL

Definitely worried.

(to Nora, sincere)

I think you and Karla working
together would be a great thing.

On this nice turn of events, a small bridge built between the brothers. Then Michael glances at his watch.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(to everyone)

I have a little business to take
care of. I'll be back for dessert.

Michael exits. On Rafe, fighting his suspicion of Michael.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - BACKROOM - SAME

MUSIC CUE: "Bury" by Unions plays throughout below:

Michael, Zhon, and Peter enter with THREE BLACK EAGLE MEMBERS, placing their phones in a bin by the door as they get wanded. They meet up with Hung (The Alliance leader in FBI briefing earlier) and six ripped ALLIANCE MEMBERS.

Michael nods for one of his guys to come over who opens up a case. Michael holds up a bullet (5.56 mm rounds/.223-caliber) with a distinctive green tip.

Hung has one of his men bring over a briefcase with cash.

Michael picks up a stack of hundreds (note JFK's face).

The men shake hands.

Peter looks on approvingly, flashing a million dollar smile.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - PRIVATE DINING ROOM - SAME

"Bury" still plays over: Rafe laughing and eating with his family and Karla. The song carries us to--

INT. JAZZ CLUB - BACKROOM - LATER

Peter slaps Michael on the back, flashing a movie star smile. The briefcase is nearby. See CAMPAIGN SIGNS of Peter for California governor in the b.g.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

"Bury" finishes as Michael returns and enjoys dessert with the family. Michael calls for a toast. All smiles.

EXT. JAZZ CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Michael and Rafe smoke cigars, post dinner.

RAFE

Maybe we can do that again.

(off Michael)

Not for me. My son. Your nephew.
You saw him at the dinner. It
ain't just teen angst with that
boy. He needs direction. From me
and you. Let's have this family
stand on the same side for once?
We'll stay in town for a few days?

MICHAEL

Your wife okay with that?

INT. WOODS HOTEL - MASTER SUITE - LATE THAT NIGHT

Nora and Rafe get ready for bed.

NORA

I am not okay with this.

RAFE

Zach could benefit from staying
here a bit longer is all.

NORA

I assume this has something to do
with his arrest.

(off Rafe)

You've been acting strange since.

RAFE

You and Rachel can head home, if
you don't wanna stay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

We're not leaving you down here.
Have you seen the news? One day
it's a riot. The next is a
lynching. Have you seen the way
the girls look at Rachel here? And
what about Zach? He's just gonna
join the Eagles?

RAFE

There's nothing to worry about.
Please you have to trust me.

NORA

Trust comes with telling me what
the hell is going on.

RAFE

Really? You're giving me this
lecture?

He immediately regrets what he said while Nora's face is
instantly filled with hurt. An old scab being picked at.

NORA

That's not fair...

RAFE

I'm sorry.

NORA

You can't throw this in my
face every--

RAFE

I know, I know--

He reaches for her but she waves him off, staying on task.

NORA

Fine, I'll accept that you'll tell
me in time but it doesn't mean I
have to like it. This isn't us.
You don't "not get into it with
me." We aren't those people.
You've been here a few days and
it's like -- you're not you.

RAFE

You wouldn't understand.

NORA

Oh.

RAFE

That's not what I mean.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NORA

Why?

(off his silence)

'Cause I never had to wait in the same lines as you?

That unbearable truth laid bare. It's ugly and hurtful.

Just then, an ENVELOPE slips under their door. Saved by the distraction. Rafe gets it. Opens it. Nora comes to see it.

NORA (CONT'D)

It's that art exhibit your brother promised to get tickets for.

RAFE

So you'll stay.

NORA

I can't leave my practice.

RAFE

What happened to consulting with Karla?

NORA

I thought it'd be a few emails and calls once we were back in New York.

A long moment. She can tell how important this is to Rafe.

NORA (CONT'D)

Rachel really wanted to see this exhibit.

RAFE

A few days tops. This is gonna work. I love you?

He reaches for her and this time, she lets him. They hug each other. So much love and history between these two.

EXT. COLORED HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

Rafe and Zach meet Michael. He's flanked by two Black Eagle guards in their fatigues. Michael's in a polished suit, taking photos with a Black VET. Michael greets Zach.

Michael puts an arm around Zach. On Rafe, uneasy.

INT. SANTA MONICA BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Peter holds an interview with a REPORTER inside the swanky living room of his beach house, which has been converted into a semi-studio. He sits with his very pregnant wife, LILY KING (40s, Black). She smiles politely for the camera. Michelle and Jackie-O rolled up into one.

PETER

Slowly in the next few months, C.C. will begin to merge with the Eagles. In fact, today I want to announce a very exciting event.

Peter puts a hand on his wife.

PETER (CONT'D)

A million man march on D.C. to celebrate our union.

LILY

Million person march.

PETER

Of course.

Reporter laughs.

PETER (CONT'D)

Lily keeps me in line. Michael and I have decided to have a unity parade next spring.

REPORTER

This is quite exciting news.

The Reporter eats this up like catnip.

INT. OGDEN MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN ART - DAY

Nora and Rachel take a tour. A GUIDE leads their group of color except Nora. Nora and Rachel get more stares and a few WHISPERS. A BLACK PATRON smirks at Nora.

GUIDE

Inspired by the lush landscape, these oil paintings celebrate the geography of the artists in the American South...

BLACK PATRON

Down with the swirl, for sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rachel overhears that with her mom.

RACHEL
What's that mean?

Nora's patience is barely hanging by a thread. She smiles at Rachel, trying to stay focused. Mouths "nothing".

GUIDE
And that takes us to our lunch break. For those of you taking the self-guided tour in town for the evening, please remember to carry your passcard on you.

INT. CAFE NEAR MUSEUM - DAY

Holding trays of food, Rachel walks with Nora, in the "mixed colored" section, indicated by a COMBINED RHOMBUSES sign. A BLACK PASSERBY "bumps" into Rachel, knocking her food over and utters:

PASSERBY
High yellow trash.

A flustered Rachel picks up her food but Nora loses it when another BLACK MOTHER comes to help Rachel.

BLACK MOTHER
You need help?

NORA
(tense)
We're okay here.

BLACK MOTHER
Okay, I just saw what happened--

NORA
We're fine!

RACHEL
Mom!

The outburst causes a SECURITY GUARD to come over.

SECURITY GUARD
Everything okay here?

Rachel pleads with her mother with her eyes, *please don't*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA
We're fine here.

BLACK MOTHER
I was just helping her pick up her
food.

Nora gives the Mother an nod. On Nora, hating this.

INT. COLORED HOMELESS SHELTER - PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

In front of Michael, Zhon rolls out a MAP of the Washington
Mall with ROUTES indicated. Zhon points to a schedule.

ZHON
This is this week's secret service
schedule. This changes up all the
time though. We'll need to bribe
someone again day of.

MICHAEL
That's what The Alliance cash is
for.

Michael taps a spot on the map.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Interesting.

ZHON
What?

MICHAEL
That's where Peter's dad wanted to
start his march. Elias used to
tell me Martin had this great
speech prepared, about this
nation's dreams, his own dream.
Nobody ever got to hear it.

A momentary weariness we've never seen from Michael.

ZHON
You rethinking things?

MICHAEL
You ever hear of the story of Zeus
and the Jar of Good Things.
(off Zhon's "no")
It was something I read as a kid.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Zeus had gathered every good and useful thing in a jar and put a lid on it. He then left the jar in human hands, but man had no self-control. It's human nature to open that damn jar and let all the good things fly away. Escape. But one thing was left in the jar. You know what that was?

(off Zhon's shrug)

Hope. Motherfucking hope.

Eventually, the man realized what he had done and put the lid back on that jar. He kept that hope locked up tight, that despite all the good things that mighta gone away, hope was still left.

(his thesis)

Sometimes, Zhon, you gotta maybe leave that jar open, let us destroy ourselves, because maybe then do we rebuild. And that, my friend, is when you can have hope again.

Off Michael, his eyes filled with twisted ambition.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS PORT - NIGHT

Michael, Zhon, SIX BLACK EAGLE LIEUTENANTS face HUNG and six ALLIANCE MEMBERS. An ARMORED TRUCK rolls up, its back gate opening to reveal CRATES. Michael checks one crate. It's filled with CASH. Michael signals to his men. They unlock a PELICAN CASE of the green-tip bullets for Hung.

The men shake. Then one of Hung's men comes over, whispers something to Hung. Hung reacts by raising a gun.

Michael holds his hand up. Michael indicates his men have guns aimed, too. Making a quick mental calculation, Michael signals for his men to back down. Zhon lowers his gun last.

MICHAEL

I thought we were still going steady.

HUNG

Someone tipped off the blues.

MICHAEL

It's not anyone on my end.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HUNG
You sure about that?

That gives Michael pause.

Hung directs the armored truck to drive off. Michael watches all his cash leave. On Michael, cursing to himself.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS PORT - MOMENTS LATER

Michael speaks on his phone while getting into his car.

MICHAEL
There's a snitch.

INT. SANTA MONICA BEACH HOUSE - INTERCUT

Gehry-styled. Peter pours himself sparkly water.

PETER
Take care of it.

MICHAEL
Gee, that didn't occur to me.

PETER
How am I supposed to be tough on crime when these guns are still out on the street?

MICHAEL
You're not governor yet. Don't run your campaign on me.

Michael hands up. END INTERCUT.

INT. WOODS HOTEL - MASTER SUITE - THE NEXT DAY

Rafe's asleep. Nora rummages around. She finds a burner phone among his things. She stares at it. Hurt.

INT. MAIN HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Michael has his head resting on Karla's lap.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KARLA

Everyone's loyal, Mikey. But if you think someone's sour, maybe you oughta find out. Get some peace of mind.

MICHAEL

Maybe.

(a complete 180)

Rafe being home is all types of messed up. I can't tell what his deal is.

KARLA

He's your brother. You were close once, maybe you can be again?

Michael doesn't have anything to say to that idea.

KARLA (CONT'D)

Give him a chance. You only got one brother.

Michael thinks hard on that.

INT. WOODS HOTEL - HALL - CONTINUOUS

Nora sees there's only one number on the cell. It looks like she's been sitting there for a bit. Finally, she dials the number on the cell.

GRAY'S VOICE

Hello? Hello?

Nora listens. She's not sure what to think.

GRAY'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Hello? You there?

Nora hangs up. She's confused. Then the cell rings. It's that same number. Nora silences the phone. Now curious.

INT./EXT. FREEHOLD - DAY

People wait outside their homes, as Michael and his men go through searching every place. Michael comes out of Zhon's place, holding up a BURNER PHONE. Zhon holds up his hand in protest.

MICHAEL

You've been talking to C.R.S?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZHON

What? No... that ain't mine,
Mikey.

Pained, Michael nods to his men, who take Zhon away. He signals for his men to finish their searches.

Reveal Karla from a remove, watching all this go down, her trademark steel armor cracking.

INT. WOODS HOTEL - ROOM - AFTERNOON

Rachel's sketching as Zach sits up in bed.

ZACHARIAH

You should have seen Uncle Michael. Everything just feels so real down here, you know? Everyone back home just feels... like we talk about doing stuff, but then they aren't really doing stuff.

Zach sees that his sister is noticeably quieter than usual.

ZACHARIAH (CONT'D)

What's up?

RACHEL

Nothing.

ZACHARIAH

Something's up.

RACHEL

When I was at the museum with mom, mom kinda lost her marbles.

ZACHARIAH

Yeah right.

RACHEL

Someone called me "high yellow" which I didn't know what that meant 'til I googled it and that's when Mom kinda went all... aggro.

ZACHARIAH

Oh snap.

(beat)

I saw some dead kids hanging on a post, all lynched and stuff.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RACHEL

For real? But you still like it here? After seeing that? After getting arrested even?

ZACHARIAH

(shrugs)

I dunno. It just feels real here. Like I got a reason to be here, you know? Despite everything, too.

Rachel suddenly grins.

RACHEL

You cray, bro.

They laugh. Such a palpable sense of love between the siblings.

EXT. JACKSON SQUARE - AFTERNOON

Karla slides onto a bench. Next to her sits Gray. TOURISTS and BUSKERS near them. Karla tries to light a cigarette but fails in this simple task. She's visibly nervous.

AGENT GRAY

Need some help?

KARLA

(screw you)

I'm fine.

AGENT GRAY

You're the one who called this meet.

KARLA

(blurting out)

Zhon's a friend. The person Michael is looking for is me.

The guilt of what Karla's doing sinks in for her. She finally gets her cigarette lit. Starts smoking. She's a mess. She takes a moment. A quiet fear in her voice.

KARLA (CONT'D)

What if Michael doesn't fall for it?

AGENT GRAY

He will. Everybody's got a pressure point.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGENT GRAY (CONT'D)

Michael thinks anyone getting close to him, will flip on him, like Rafe did.

KARLA

(building panic)

I can't fucking do this anymore.

AGENT GRAY

I told you, we'll get Zhon out before anything happens to him.

KARLA

What if it's too late?

AGENT GRAY

Relax.

KARLA

(exploding again)

I can't!

AGENT GRAY

You're gonna have to.

KARLA

You're a piece of work, you know that? You say you're doing this to keep everyone safe. A real hashpipe of good intentions saving the world. But people like me? We're just sacrificial lamb. I keep telling myself to believe in humanity, but fuckers like you make it really damn hard.

Karla puts out her cigarette on the bench and tosses it.

AGENT GRAY

Least you can do is not litter.

KARLA

Screw you.

AGENT GRAY

If you wanna leave then by all means -- go. Your brother will stay where he is. I can always find someone else.

KARLA

Who the hell are you gonna find?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Gray doesn't answer.

INT. MAIN HOUSE - BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Rafe and Michael walk in the darkly lit basement.

RAFE
I appreciate the phone call.

MICHAEL
You said you want this family
whole.

They turn on a light to see a GAGGED and TIED UP Zhon.

RAFE
What the hell?

MICHAEL
Zhon's a rat.

Michael hands Rafe a gun.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Help me take care of him.

RAFE
What? No...

MICHAEL
Don't tell me this is your first
dance, soldier.

RAFE
War's different. This is
different.

Rafe sees Zhon struggling to say something. Rafe puts his
gun down.

MICHAEL
What're you doing?

Rafe reaches for Zhon's gag anyway.

RAFE
I wanna hear the man's last words.
It's the least we can do.

Rafe's talking to Michael, as if he were about to jump off a
cliff. Like a hostage negotiator.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAFE (CONT'D)
 What's it matter if he'll be dead
 soon anyway?

MICHAEL
 'Kay.

Rafe takes off Zhon's gag. Zhon panics.

ZHON
 You have to stop him! He's gonna
 kill--

BANG! Zhon's shot point blank in the forehead. His brains
 blown out. He faceplants to the floor.

Rafe catches his breath. SPLATTERED BLOOD on his face. He
 looks to Michael in disbelief. Michael holds the gun.

MICHAEL
 I get impatient sometimes.

INT. PARKED SUV - NIGHT

A shaken Rafe meets with Gray.

RAFE
 I got intel that Michael is
 targeting someone. Killing
 someone.

AGENT GRAY
 This is good. Any clue whom?

RAFE
 Knowing my brother. Whoever this
 is. This person's gotta be big.

Her initial excitement is shortcut when she notices Rafe's
 somber mood.

AGENT GRAY
 Why'd you call me last night?

RAFE
 I didn't.

AGENT GRAY
 Huh. Okay, okay. How'd you get
 this info?

Rafe decides for a moment on how to answer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAFE
Zhon. He told me.

AGENT GRAY
Good. Maybe we can keep using him.

RAFE
(spins a lie)
Right. I'll keep that in mind.

Rafe thinks for a moment.

RAFE (CONT'D)
You know Franz Ferninand?

AGENT GRAY
Sounds familiar.

RAFE
His death started World War I.

AGENT GRAY
My world history is fuzzy, but
yeah...

RAFE
Think about it. The march on D.C.
All those politicians coming out.
It could be any one of them. One
of them is Michael's Duke.

AGENT GRAY
(to herself more)
Why the hell would Michael wanna
start a war? Or The Black Eagles
for that matter?

RAFE
Why does humanity do any of this
shit? Money, power, social change.
Who the hell knows?

AGENT GRAY
This Duke theory. I dunno. This
country has had its fair share of
political assassinations, but not
one of them in recent years has
ever come to fruition. Nixon,
Reagan, both Bushes, the second
once, twice...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAFE
 'Cept Dr. King.
 (to himself more)
 To think one man's death led to a
 war.

AGENT GRAY
 It's more complicated than that.

RAFE
 You think if Dr. King lived, we
 wouldn't be in this world today?

AGENT GRAY
 I don't like to dwell on the past
 but something tells me you do.

RAFE
 You got a psych degree or
 something?

AGENT GRAY
 PhD actually.

He smirks but turns serious.

RAFE
 Whatever my brother's got up his
 sleeve, he's not the type to rock
 the boat, he'd tip the whole damn
 thing over.

As Michael's words "Death is a catalytic event" ring
 prophetic...

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET - NIGHT

Rafe sees a wedding parade. A brass band playing an UPBEAT
 TUNE. The young couple holding their parasols. Confetti
 flying. Handkerchiefs waving. The ignorance. The joy --
all of it a freaking absurdity to Rafe right now.

He looks at it, more gobsmacked, like what the fucking hell
 has he gotten himself into--

SMASH TO END CREDITS:

As Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changin'" PLAYS...

END OF PILOT