

UNBREAKABLE

by

M. Night Shyamalan

INT. CLOTHING STORE - AFTERNOON

Women's casual wear department. J.C. Penny.

LEGEND "1961"

An African-American man carrying two J.C. Penny shopping bags is ushered past the department store managers and security guards on walkies that have gathered at the entrance to the woman's dressing rooms.

CUT TO:

INT. DRESSING ROOM - AFTERNOON

A bed has been formed by a chair and three benches.

A STRIKING AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN in her twenties lays across it. Her face and clothes are covered in sweat. Her skirt is stained.

She holds something wrapped in a soft sweatshirt on her chest. We can't see it, but WE HEAR THE BABY CRYING.

She's just given birth.

There are three frazzled saleswomen in the dressing room with her. They watch her with quiet smiles.

A fourth SALESWOMAN arrives ushering in the man with the shopping bags.

SALESWOMAN

This is Mr. Mathison. He's a doctor.

DR. MATHISON looks over the scene and then directly at the striking woman.

DR. MATHISON

You okay?

The woman nods, "Yes." Sweat trickles down her face. THE BABY'S PIERCING CRIES

ECHO IN THE SMALL ROOM.

SALESWOMAN

An ambulance is on the way.

Dr. Mathison puts down his shopping bags and moves to her. He kneels down and gestures for the bundle of sweatshirts in her arms.

DR. MATHISON

Is there a name yet?

Beat. The woman smiles for the first time.

WOMAN

Elijah.

She hands him the wrapped child. We can't see the baby, but
THE PIERCING CRIES SEEM TO GET LOUDER.

WOMAN

Is he supposed to be crying like
that?

The doctor lowers the baby to his lap and unwraps him.

The woman can't see her baby anymore. She watches Dr. Mathison
as he looks down and examines her child. Beat. Dr. Mathison
doesn't look up for the longest time.

WOMAN

Can I have him back?

THE BABY'S CRYING IS RELENTLESS. UNNERVING. Beat.

The doctor finally glances up. He looks shaken. He makes eye
contact with the woman for only a second. It's enough. A
chill goes through her body.

He looks to the three saleswomen who were in the room.

DR. MATHISON

What happened during the delivery?

His hard stare unsettles the women. The OLDER SALESWOMAN
speaks up.

OLDER SALESWOMAN

Nothing. It was very quick. The
baby just wanted to come right out.
There was no problems.

DR. MATHISON

Did you drop him?

Everyone becomes very still. The mother looks like she stopped
breathing. THE BABY'S SCREAMING ENGULFS THE ROOM.

DR. MATHISON

Did you drop this baby?

Beat.

OLDER SALESWOMAN

Jesus Christ, no.

The BABY SCREAMS.

The doctor whispers something to himself, we can't hear. He
looks up to the saleswoman who brought him in.

DR. MATHISON

Please inform the ambulance we have
a situation...

Dr. Mathison turns back to the mother. Beat.

DR. MATHISON

I've never seen this... It appears
your infant sustained some fractures
while in your uterus.

(beat)

His arms and legs are broken.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. TRAIN STATION NEW JERSEY - DAY -- MORNING

LEGEND "PRESENT DAY"

A fountain of humanity bubbles up from the escalators to the
train platform.

Businessmen take their last desperate drags of their
cigarettes... Women traveling with children herd their luggage
and offspring into tight shapes as they move... College
students with backpacks look around dazed at the various
track numbers.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Last call track three, Amtrak Clocker
making it's final stop at
Philadelphia's thirtieth street
station. First two passengers cars
only. First two cars only.

A face inside the train watches the stream of passengers
emerging from the escalators. DAVID DUNNE, a man in his early
forties, rest his temple against the glass and quietly
observes the movement outside.

The train starts to pull out.

CUT TO:

INT. PASSENGER CAR - DAY

David sits with his coat on his lap. He's wearing a tie. He
doesn't look very comfortable in it.

He feels a stare. He looks up to find a girl, six or seven
years old, peering at him from over the seat in front of
him. She just gazes at him blankly.

He gives her a small forced smile. She doesn't react. David
returns his head to the window.

His eyes begin to shut with the lulling movement of the train.

WOMAN (O.S.)

You alone?

David looks in the direction of THE VOICE. A WOMAN with dark hair and light blue eyes stands in the aisle with two bags over her shoulder. She's wearing a tight white t-shirt and jeans. She's beautiful.

David nods "yes."

The woman starts putting her bags on the shelf above the seats. She stretches to get them up. Her toned stomach is exposed. She has a silver ring pierced through her navel.

David has a gold ring on his hand. He fiddles with it. Beat. He gently slips off his wedding band. It goes into his coat pocket.

The woman takes the seat next to him.

Beat. A LOUD VIOLENT BURST OF SOUND. The passenger car shakes as a passing train barrels by two feet from David's window. It passes in a few seconds. The car returns to a QUIET HUM.

David pulls a magazine out from the seat pocket in front of him.

He holds the woman's fashion magazine out.

DAVID

Someone left these. You want one?

The woman looks over the one being offered and then points to the Sports Illustrated peeking out of the seat pocket.

David pulls the magazine out and gives it to her.

DAVID

You like sports?

WOMAN

It's my field. I represent athletes. I'm an agent.

DAVID

What a coincidence? I'm a male synchronized swimmer and I'm looking for representation.

WOMAN

(smiling)

Is that right?

DAVID

But I'm afraid of water, so that's been holding my career back a little bit.

The woman laughs.

DAVID

You represent someone in Philadelphia?

WOMAN

I'm meeting a player from Temple University. He's a cornerback. You like football?

Beat.

DAVID

Not really.

WOMAN

This kid is six foot two, two hundred and forty pounds. He runs the fifty in under six seconds. He's going to be a God.

Beat. David studies the excitement in her eyes.

ANOTHER LOUD VIOLENT BURST OF SOUND. David waits till the opposing train passes. The woman goes back to her magazine. Beat.

DAVID

I'm David Dunne.

The woman looks up.

WOMAN

Kelly.

She goes back to the magazine.

Beat.

DAVID

How long are you staying in Philly?

KELLY looks up from her Sports Illustrated. Her striking blue eyes gaze at David. Beat.

She holds up her hand. Taps the diamond ring on her finger.

KELLY

(soft)
I'm married.

DAVID

(fake excitement)
Great.

Beat.

KELLY

Sorry.

DAVID

(fake confusion)

What are you talking about?

An awkward silence.

DAVID

I think you got the wrong idea.

The woman stares at David. She looks down. Beat. Closes the magazine.

KELLY

I'm going to find another seat.

Kelly gets up. She balances herself against a headrest as the train rumbles. She starts to the back of the car.

David sits alone. He looks like he's drowning, but there's no water.

He feels a stare. He glances up. The little girl spies on him from between the seats.

David leans towards the window to avoid eye contact. His hand reaches into his coat and slides out his wedding band. He puts it back on.

His temple touches the glass. The vibration of the train begins to lull his eyes closed... Beat.

David's head bounces lightly against the window.

The shaking of the glass never allows David's eyes to completely close.

He sits up when he realizes the shaking is getting stronger.

He looks out the window. The scenery blurs as it flies by. Beat.

David turns. Some of the other passengers start to react as they realize the train is picking up speed.

The normal bumps of the tracks become amplified.

THE WORRIED VOICES OF THE TRAVELERS START FILL THE CABIN.

The train goes faster.

AND THEN THE HIGH PITCHED METAL ON METAL SCREECHING STARTS AS THE TRAIN BEGINS TO TAKE A CURVE.

David's eyes move to the seat in front of him. The little girl is no longer watching him.

DAVID LOOKS TO THE PASSENGERS ACROSS FROM HIM. He sees the ground slowly drop away in the windows behind them as THEIR SIDE OF THE TRAIN STARTS TO RISE...

THE PASSENGERS SCREAM AS THE AMTRAK PASSENGER TRAIN BEGINS TO TILT OFF THE TRACK...

CUT TO:

INT. FAMILY ROOM - AFTERNOON

A boy, age ten, sits on his head on the family couch and watches television upside down. His floppy brown hair spreads out in a circle in front of his red face. He changes channels with a remote control.

He moves past the upside down cartoons and the upside down talk shows. He stops on an upside down picture of a crashed train. Beat.

His knees come forward as he flips over. He tumbles slowly off the couch and onto the carpet. JEREMY DUNNE gazes at the television screen... A LIVE AERIAL VIEW OF A TRAIN WRECK SMOULDERING BELOW IS SEEN. Two trains are tangled like snakes.

Jeremy gets up and moves to a small table with a phone. Next to the phone is a notepad. On it is written...

"Dad - Amtrak 177 - 3:40pm."

Jeremy looks at the television. At the bottom of the screen in red block letters that move from right to left are words and numbers..."The 3:40 Amtrak 177 has derailed... Amtrak Emergency number is 1-800-777-4322... The 3:40 Amtrak 177 has derailed...Amtrak"

Jeremy doesn't take his eyes off the screen. He makes a small desperate noise that no one hears.

CUT TO:

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER - LATE AFTERNOON

An elderly woman can't hold back any longer and SCREAMS. An embarrassed, tortured helpless scream.

MEGAN DUNNE continues applying pressure to her arm which is being pushed back as far as it will go.

She counts to three and eases off. She lays her arm back in her lap.

WE ARE IN A PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER. About a dozen people are on specialized weight machines.

The elderly woman is seated on an exercise table and breathes slowly.

MEGAN
You okay, Virginia?

Beat. VIRGINIA shakes her head, "No."

MEGAN
I'll put something on the t.v. Maybe
we'll find some almost naked guys to
inspire you.

Megan reaches up to the t.v. monitor mounted on the wall. She turns it on and starts flipping channels. She stops on ESPN where a swimming meet is underway. Men in bikini swimsuits line the edges of the pool.

Virginia starts watching with great interest.

Megan's eyes move to the tiny print moving across the bottom of the screen. Her face goes still as she reads the train number... 177.

CUT TO:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - AFTERNOON

DAVID DUNNE'S EYES SLOWLY OPEN. THE DULL WHITE OF THE OVERHEAD TUBE LIGHTING BLINDS HIM AT FIRST.

He blinks his vision back. He realizes he's in a bed.

WE HEAR AGITATED VOICES, MOVEMENT.

David looks around. He's in an emergency room. There are a half dozen prep areas and beds next to him. They're all empty.

DAVID FOLLOWS THE URGENT SOUNDS OF ACTIVITY TO A PREP AREA DIRECTLY ACROSS FROM HIM.

He can only see glimpses of activity through the drawn curtain. A group of emergency room personnel are treating a man whose body is twitching violently on a gurney.

One of the group is a man who glances through the opening in the curtain. He notices David sitting up from across the room.

THE MAN IN SCRUBS leaves the group and walks over.

MAN IN SCRUBS
How are you feeling?

DAVID
Okay.

He FLASHES A LIGHT in David's eyes.

MAN IN SCRUBS

You are in the emergency room of the
University of Pennsylvania Hospital.
You were in a serious accident.

(beat)

How's your vision?

DAVID

Fine.

David stares across as the scene with the other patients
becomes more frantic and disturbing.

MAN IN SCRUBS

Where were you sitting on the train?

DAVID

Against a window.

MAN IN SCRUBS

In the passenger car?

DAVID

Yes. Where are the rest of the
passengers?

MAN IN SCRUBS

Was your family traveling with you?

DAVID

No.

MAN IN SCRUBS

Did you get up from your seat?

DAVID

No.

David watches the other patient.

MAN IN SCRUBS

You're certain you were in the
passenger car?

David turns to the man.

DAVID

Yes... Why are you looking at me
like that?

Beat.

MAN IN SCRUBS

Your train derailed... Some kind of malfunction... It took a curve way to fast. A second train collided with yours after it derailed. The debris is spread over one mile. It's unbelievable they said.

(beat)

They only found two people alive so far... You and him.

David looks to the other passenger now laying unnaturally still in the desperate whirlwind of activity around him.

MAN IN SCRUBS

The man's skull was cracked open and most of his left side was crushed.

Beat.

MAN IN SCRUBS

And to answer your question, there are two reasons why I'm looking at you like this.

David turns and stares at the man.

MAN IN SCRUBS

One, because it seems, in a few minutes, you will officially be the only survivor of this train wreck.

(beat)

And two, because you don't have a scratch on you. You didn't break one bone.

CUT TO:

INT. EMERGENCY RECEPTION AREA - EVENING

David moves through the depressing milky corridors of the hospital. He opens a set of double doors.

A room crammed with cameras and photographers explodes with movement.

A CHILD'S VOICE BREAKS THEIR NOISE.

JEREMY

I told you!

Jeremy Dunne pushes forward through the mob of people and cameras. He bursts out and runs to David. He wraps his arms around David's waist. David just stands there, aware that the cameras are catching it all. He's overwhelmed.

Hospital staff and a couple police officers push the media back.

Jeremy tugs David to lean down. He does.

JEREMY

They thought everybody on the train died.

David looks at his son's face. Wipes the tears on his cheek.

JEREMY

I told them they were wrong.

A woman moves to them. David stands up and faces Megan Dunne.

JEREMY

Mom even cried.

David looks at Megan's eyes.

JEREMY

A lot.

Megan looks away.

MEGAN

Not a lot.

They stand there for a moment. David looks shaken. Jeremy takes hold of his hand.

JEREMY

Let's go home.

Megan nods. They move to the exit. The pack of cameras and reporters burst to life as they leave the building. They jockey for position to get a last glimpse of David Dunne.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

David eats a bowl of pasta alone in a modest kitchen. He stares at his hand. Opens and closes it slowly. Beat.

He rises and puts the bowl away in the sink.

INT. FRONT HALL - NIGHT

David stops just before rising the stairs. He glances into a bedroom at the bottom of the stairs. The doorway is half open. He makes eye contact with his wife. Beat.

DAVID

I don't think I got the job in New York.

MEGAN
What does that mean?

DAVID
I'm still going to New York. Just
not this second.

MEGAN
I don't want to drag this out too
long for Jeremy.

DAVID
I know.

Beat.

DAVID
How about in the meantime, you don't
sleep in the guestroom anymore?
(beat)
You sleep in our room. I'll sleep
down here.

Beat.

MEGAN
It stopped being our room a long
time ago.
(beat)
You should go up and get some rest.

Beat. Megan slowly closes the door to the guest bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

David looks at his son asleep in his bed.

DAVID
Jeremy, why don't you go sleep with
your mom?

JEREMY
(eyes closed)
I want to sleep here tonight.

DAVID
I think it's be better if I was alone.

JEREMY
(eyes closed)
I won't make any noise.

DAVID
How about your room then?
(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

If you get scared like before, you
can come back in here?

Beat. Jeremy doesn't answer because he's asleep. David rubs his forehead and gets up. He turns on the t.v., low volume, as he moves into the bathroom.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Hot water rushes over David's face as he stands in the shower. His attention is drawn to the t.v. which is seen through the slightly open bathroom door.

He turns off the water to HEAR.

NEWS ANCHOR

(t.v.)

...Derailed approximately seven and half miles outside Philadelphia. It came to rest on its side on the northbound tracks. It is train officials belief that some if not most of the passengers were still alive at this time.

(beat)

The momentary peace lasted only a few seconds. A Boston bound freight train on the northbound tracks was seconds away from passing train 177 when it derailed. The impact happened at about three-fifteen p.m. The first of the two occupied passenger cars was severed in half and sent careening in two directions. The second of the passenger cars was crushed and dragged for four hundred feet. Six crew members were on the freight. One hundred and eighteen passengers and seven crew members were on the passenger train... There is one reported survivor.

(beat)

Rescue teams will be working for the next forty-eight hours removing bodies and debris.

David steps out of the shower. He sees a glimpse of Jeremy asleep in bed. David shuts the door. Locks it.

He gets back into the shower and turns the water back on.

He closes his eyes. His face tightens up. He slowly hunches down and takes a seat on the tiled floor of the shower. Water pours over him. Beat.

His muscular body begins to shake. Then we realize he's crying.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. FAIR - DAY

LEGEND "1969"

A hazy afternoon. A fair has come into town. They have set up in the vast parking lot of the local high school.

A line of women has formed in front of the portable bathrooms.

The striking African American woman we saw giving birth is now standing in line. She is older and somehow more beautiful.

She stands with a skinny, almost ethereal looking African American boy. The boy wears a metal brace on his leg. THE EIGHT YEAR OLD ELIJAH holds two oversized stuffed animals in his arms. He looks back over his shoulder as THE SOUND OF VOICES YELLING IN EXCITEMENT FILL THE AIR. His eyes dance over the many colorful rides in the parking lot.

The door opens to one of the portable bathrooms. A woman steps out.

Elijah's mother touches his head and enters the three foot square plastic bathroom. She turns back and gives him a look.

MOTHER

We'll play the water pistol game next.

Elijah nods, "Yes" happily.

The mother closes the cubicle door. Elijah is left alone amongst the line of women. They stare at him blankly. Their eyes moves over his leg brace. Elijah doesn't like it. He moves away from the line.

A CRESCENDO OF CHEERS RISES IN THE AIR FROM SOMEWHERE IN THE FAIR. Elijah follows the voices. He carries the stuffed animals through the crowds of people. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. His metal brace sounds as he walks.

For a moment, he sees nothing but bodies all around him.

He emerges amongst a huddle of teenagers who wait at a turnstile.

A man in a red and white striped coat takes their tickets and waves them in.

Elijah looks up and sees the sign above the turnstile...
"The Hurricane."

He watches the teenagers giggle as they each into a grey cup-like seat. They pull the metal bars down in front of them.

The man in the red and white stripes leaves the turnstile.

Elijah stares up at the multi-colored sign. Beat. He moves quickly. Ducks under the turnstile and climbs onto the platform.

Elijah finds an empty circular seat. He slips inside the gray metal compartment and sits. He pulls down the rusted metal bar in front of him.

He looks around at all the excited faces. His eyes fill with excitement too.

His small hands feel the cold metal of the interior of the compartment. His expression changes.

Elijah looks to the stuffed animals in his arms. He presses them to check their softness. He places the stuffed animals on either side of him on the seat. He's wedged in between them. Feels good.

He reaches out and touches the hard rusted metal bar in front of him. Elijah looks a little anxious. Beat.

He pulls off his sweater and wraps it around the bar. It goes around twice before he ties the arms together. He checks its softness.

Elijah looks around the customized cup-like compartment he sits in. He smiles an eight year old smile of pride.

AND THEN HE HEARS HIS MOTHER'S VOICE.

He searches around and finds her walking in the waves of people. He hears her calling.

MOTHER

Elijah...

She moves in his direction by chance. She finds herself at the entrance to The Hurricane ride. She looks up at the sign above the turnstile. Her worried eyes immediately start searching the young faces in the gray circular compartments.

Her eyes meet Elijah's. He waves. Her face goes very still.

A HUGE ROAR OF MACHINERY as the ride starts up.

Elijah yells to his mother as the platform starts running.

ELIJAH

I won't get hurt momma! I'm safe!

HIS WORDS GET EATEN UP BY THE CHEERS OF THE TEENAGERS AND THE GRIND OF MACHINERY.

The platform spins. He sees a glimpse of his mother and the red and white striped man. She's pointing at Elijah.

The platform turns... Elijah sees a flash of the red and white striped man's angered face as he yells at the frantic woman next to him.

And then the ride speeds up.

The gray circular seats start to spin on their own. The teenagers CHEER.

Elijah's eyes fill with joy as the wind plays against his face.

Suddenly the ride changes directions. The cup-like seats get jerked. Everyone grabs the metal bars to hold on.

Elijah laughs as he smashes into the stuffed animal on his right. It cushions him and then falls to the floor of the compartment along with the other stuffed animal.

Elijah's expression becomes tense as his compartment spins. His hands slide over the rusted metal bar as the sweater unravels.

Elijah looks around... a sudden panic enters his eyes.

THE BLURRING IMAGE OF HIS MOTHER NOW IN A GROUP OF RED AND WHITE STRIPED MEN.

THE SOUND OF MACHINERY GRINDING IS HEARD as the ride changes directions suddenly.

Elijah's hands rip away from the bar as he gets thrown to the side of the compartment. His shoulder and arm takes the brunt of the impact. WE HEAR SOMETHING CRACK.

TEENAGERS SCREAM IN EXCITEMENT. ELIJAH JOINS THEM WITH SCREAMS OF HIS OWN.

The ride spins its passengers. Elijah's small face looks up at the swirling clouds in a mixture of agony and terror.

The ride changes directions.

Elijah is thrust forward. He hits the rusted metal bar square against his chest. WE HEAR MORE CRACKS.

The world spins. Giggles and yells fill the air. Elijah slumps down onto the floor of the compartment.

And then finally, the grind of the machinery slows and then comes to a gradual stop.

THE TEENAGERS MOAN.

Elijah is facing directly up at the sky. The clouds now move slowly over him.

WE HEAR COMMOTION. AGITATED VOICES. HIS MOTHER'S DESPERATE VOICE.

MOTHER (O.S.)
His bones... He's not well...

HER VOICE GETS LOUDER AS SHE MOVES CLOSER TO THE PLATFORM.

MOTHER (O.S.)
Elijah baby...

Then her face appears as she finds the cup-like seat Elijah is in. She begins to scream.

Elijah lays on the bottom of the compartment. One arm is clutching his chest. The other is curved horrifically like an "s". His mouth is open. His eyes are bulging. The last thing we HERE ARE THE SHORT DESPERATE BREATHS of an eight year old child about to black out from the pain.

FADE TO BLACK:

PRESENT: EXT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON

WE EMERGE FROM BLACK to find news vans and reporters lining the street across from a church. They have been cordoned off by a handful of police. Mourners are recorded as they emerge from their cars and enter the church.

David is among the arriving crowd.

MAN (O.S.)
David Dunne!

At hearing his name, David turns back as he walks. He can't tell which reporter called his name because all of them seem to react. A storm of camera movement as the group jockeys for the best angle of his troubled face.

David passes a magnetic board as he enters the church. It reads, "Services for the families and friends of train 177."

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON

A PRIEST stands before a podium.

PRIEST
Sarah Elaston, social worker at Broad
and Locust Community Center. We pray
for your soul.
(MORE)

PRIEST (CONT'D)

(beat)

Kevin Elliott, business man, father of six. We pray for your soul.

(beat)

Glen Stevens, researcher in the area of Leukemia at Drexel University. We pray for your soul.

David sits amongst the mourners in the standing room only church. His eyes drift to a woman two rows ahead of him. She's turned around, looking at him. Her eyes are red from crying.

David looks away. His eyes stop on an old man far to his left just a few seats away. Father, mother and daughter stare silently.

David surveys the entire church... Desperate inconsolable eyes question his existence from every direction.

David has to look down.

PRIEST

...Jennifer Pennyman, third grade teacher at Jefferson Elementary.

(beat)

We pray for your soul.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK OF CHURCH - AFTERNOON

David and the priest who conducted the mass are alone in the mass preparation room. The priest looks in his fifties, eyes tired, blood shot.

DAVID

I used to play football in college. In my first year as quarterback, we went on this winning streak. It just went on and on. It didn't matter who we played... I'd always win.

(beat)

You get superstitious when something like that happens. You give things meanings. Like you wear the same color socks each game or you listen to the same B.B. King song before you leave the apartment. I wouldn't even untie the shoelaces on my cleats. I'd just slip them on and off so nothing would change... I gave things meaning that had no meaning.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

(beat)

I'm here to make sure I'm not making shoelaces into something they're not again.

(beat)

I was the only person to survive that accident. The only one... It feels like it means something.

Beat.

PRIEST

Are you a religious man, David?

David nods, "No."

The priest removes the sacred stoll from his around his neck and kisses it before folding it carefully.

PRIEST

Good. Because I'm going to talk to you as a man. Not as a man of the cloth.

DAVID

Okay.

Beat. The priest turns to David.

PRIEST

It was luck.

Beat.

DAVID

What do you mean?

PRIEST

Luck... Random... Without meaning.

David just sits awkwardly.

PRIEST

Three years ago, my cousin died on a plane that crashed on take off at Philadelphia International airport. Do you remember that crash?

David nods, "Yes."

PRIEST

I prayed and prayed and finally found some meaning in the event.

(MORE)

PRIEST (CONT'D)

It gave me peace... And then not quite a year later, an entire family from my parish burned to death in a hotel fire downtown...

(beat)

Again I prayed. Again I found meaning.

(beat)

Just two days ago, my nephew rode with you on that train back from New York. He was traveling alone for the first time.

(beat)

I'm sorry if I can't react to your survival with the appropriate 'It was the hand of God. It was a miracle.' kind of answer... I'm fresh out of those right now.

David is shaken. Beat.

DAVID

(soft)

The metal of the watch I was wearing was crushed like a sledge hammer hit it.

Beat. The priest's eyes fill with emotion.

PRIEST

My twelve year old nephew's neck was broken in four places... What's your point? You were chosen?

(beat)

I don't think so.

The priest turns and continues putting away artifacts from the mass. Silence fills the back room.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

No cameras greet his exit. No people anywhere.

David walks across the now empty parking lot. His car is the only one left.

He walks to the driver's side. Pulls out his keys. That's as far as he gets.

His eyes catch sight of the GRAY ENVELOPE tucked under the windshield wiper of his car.

David moves forward and gently pulls it out. His name is typed on the front. He turns it over.

Two embossed words on the back.

"Limited Edition"

He opens the envelope. One line, handwritten, gazes at him from the gray index card.

The line reads...

"How many days of your life have you been sick?"

Nothing else is written.

David Dunne looks around the empty parking lot quietly.

CUT TO:

INT. EMPLOYEE LOCKER ROOM - MORNING

A poorly lit changing room. A row of metallic lockers sits against one wall. A bench splits the room. A brown folding table with Dunkin Donuts boxes and bagels on it is crammed in the corner. A puke colored concrete floor sets the tone.

David and three other large men are changing out of their street clothes. They all put on the same yellow short sleeve shirts. The same two words are written on all their backs...

"Stadium Security"

This ritual goes on without a word.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN STADIUM CORRIDOR - MORNING

David walks along the massive curved wall around the outer rim of the stadium. As he passes the different walkways we get glimpses of the enormous and empty sixty-thousand seat football stadium on the inside.

David stops at a door marked "PERSONNEL".

CUT TO:

INT. PERSONNEL OFFICE - MORNING

David knocks on the door as he steps into the cramped reception room to the personnel office.

The SECRETARY, an ancient woman with thick flabby arms never stops typing and never looks up as she talks.

ANCIENT SECRETARY

Yes?

DAVID

Is Noel in?

ANCIENT SECRETARY

No sir he is not.

(beat)

I read about you in the paper.

DAVID

Oh.

ANCIENT SECRETARY

I was in an accident once too. A horse almost trampled me to death.

DAVID

Wow.

ANCIENT SECRETARY

I had to put him down.

Beat.

DAVID

That's a sad story.

(beat)

Do you think you could ask Noel something for me?

The ancient secretary's right hand immediately picks up a pen and positions it over a blank pad. Her left hand keeps typing. She never looks up.

ANCIENT SECRETARY

Proceed.

DAVID

Ask if he can check how many sick days I've taken since I've worked here?

Beat.

ANCIENT SECRETARY

Is that the entire message?

DAVID

Yes.

CUT TO:

EXT. STADIUM FIELD - AFTERNOON

Rain falls in sheets in the stadium.

David stands at the entrance to a tunnel that empties out onto the field.

He stands in an imposing dark green rain poncho and hood. The poncho almost touches the ground. The word 'security' on the back has almost faded away. We can barely see David's face under the hood.

There is a football game in progress on the enormous field. The players seem unusually small. There is no one in the stands. About four hundred people are on the sidelines of the field watching the players. A soggy limping banner stretched behind them declares, "The Pennsylvania Elementary School Championships."

David's eyes scan the tiny figures on the field. His eyes come rest on a surge of activity on the sidelines. Beat.

David steps out into the rain.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDELINES - AFTERNOON

A handful of red faced fathers are yelling at each other. They're in each other's rain soaked faces. The scene feels on the verge of physical violence.

David and another security guard jog over. David steps in the middle of the tight circle. The men stop yelling in the presence of stadium security. Everyone just stands in the rain glaring at each other. Beat.

DAVID

You know what I think about to calm down? I think about those big fat, hundred and twenty pound turtles that live in the islands. Those suckers never get angry, never get in fights and live longer than all of us and all they do all is sit on the beach and hump other turtles.

(beat)

Why don't we take a second and think about the turtles?

Nobody moves. Rain washes over the agitated faces. A father breaks the moment.

FATHER

Yeah Jerry why don't you think about the fat ass turtles... Like your fat ass son on the field jeopardizing the rest of our chances at a fucking championship.

David tenses. Everyone looks to JERRY. A bald man who stands just a foot away. Jerry nods to himself. Looks like he's going to say something. Instead he lunges forward and smashes a HEADBUTT to the man who spoke to him.

David tackles Jerry hard and fast. He drives him into the ground.

Blood starts rushing out of the nose of the dazed father who took the headbutt.

The other fathers start yelling and pushing each other. The remaining security guard calls on his walkie for assistance.

David keeps Jerry immobilized in a powerful arm and head lock that holds the man's enraged face hard into the wet surface of the field.

David's eyes are not on Jerry. They gaze out onto the field where twenty two elementary school boys have stopped playing and are standing frozen, helmets off, rain washing over their faces. They watch in horror as their parents attack each other on the sidelines.

CUT TO:

INT. EMPLOYEE LOCKER ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

David is the last one left. He's showered and back in his street clothes. He sits in the dimly lit room on the bench, lost in his thoughts when the door opens.

He turns to find a somewhat pregnant looking man with a tie step in. This is NOEL.

DAVID

Hey Noel.

Beat. He just stares.

NOEL

Forty dollars.

David turns on the bench.

DAVID

What?

NOEL

You're getting a forty dollar raise per week... that's it.

Silence.

NOEL

I checked. You were right. You've never taken a sick day.

(beat)

Five years, no sick days. I get it. You want a raise. You made your point.

The room is still. Beat.

NOEL

All right fifty dollars and that's
the god damn limit.

(beat)

Are we done here?

Beat. David nods, "Yes."

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

LIGHTS OUT.

David is wide awake in his bed. He glances over. Jeremy is
in deep sleep next to him.

CUT TO:

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

David knocks again quietly. The guest bedroom door opens.

Megan looks up at David. She's just woken up.

MEGAN

(low voice)

Is Jeremy okay?

DAVID

(low voice)

He's asleep.

MEGAN

(low voice)

Oh.

Beat. They both stand awkwardly for a moment.

DAVID

(low voice)

I wanted to ask you a question. It'll
sound strange, but just think about
it for a second.

Megan nods, "Yes."

DAVID

(low voice)

When's the last time I was sick? You
remember?

Megan tries to mask her reaction to the oddness of the
question. Beat.

MEGAN

(low voice)

I don't know. It's been a while.

DAVID

(low voice)

I haven't been sick this year. I know that.

MEGAN

(low voice)

Okay.

DAVID

(low voice)

Do you remember me getting sick?

MEGAN

(low voice)

Not a specific day. What's this about?

DAVID

(low voice)

Megan, do you ever remember me getting sick?

Beat.

DAVID

(low voice)

In the three years we've been in this house?... In the old apartment?... Before Jeremy was born?... Before we were married?

Beat.

MEGAN

(low voice)

...I can't remember.

DAVID

(low voice)

That's strange isn't it? Not remembering one fever... Or a cold... Or a sore throat. What do you think that means?

MEGAN

(low voice)

It means we're probably too tired to remember.

David becomes quiet as he thinks. Beat.

MEGAN

(low voice)

Is that what you wanted to ask me?

DAVID

(low voice)

Yes.

MEGAN

(low voice)

Is there anything else you wanted to ask me while I'm up?...

(beat)

...When was the last time you wore pink? When was the last time you drank soup standing up? Final call for strange questions at two in the morning.

DAVID

(low voice)

No that's it.

David seems lost in his thoughts.

MEGAN

(low voice)

Maybe you should go up. Jeremy might see you're gone and get frightened.

(beat)

The train thing, really shook him up. He's scared something's going to happen to you. He doesn't want to let you out of his sight.

David stares at Megan. Beat.

DAVID

(low voice)

Yeah. I know.

There's silence for a bit.

DAVID

(low voice)

When was the last time I wore pink?

MEGAN

(low voice)

The Mitchell barbecue three years ago.

DAVID

(realizing)

Oh shit...

MEGAN
 (low voice)
 Matching shirt and shorts. It was
 brutal.

David half-smiles as Megan turns and starts back into the
 guest room.

DAVID
 (low voice)
 Goodnight Megan.

Megan looks back at her husband. Just for a moment. Then she
 looks down.

MEGAN
 (low voice)
 Goodnight David.

Megan closes the door slowly shut.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

WE EMERGE in a cramped sparse bedroom.

LEGEND "1974"

A thirteen year old Elijah sits in a chair with his arm in a
 sling. He watches a small black and white television in the
 corner of the room.

WE HEAR FOOTSTEPS. Elijah's mother walks into the room. She
 looks around for a moment, and then moves to the television.
 Turns it off.

The room GOES SILENT.

ELIJAH'S MOTHER
 No more sitting in this room. I've
 let it go on long enough.

ELIJAH
 I'm not going out anymore. I'm not
 getting hurt again. This was the
 last time. I told you.

ELIJAH'S MOTHER
 You can't do anything about that.
 You might fall between that chair
 and this television. If that's what
 God has planned for you, that's what's
 going to happen. You can't hide from
 it in your room.

Elijah just sits staring at the dark television screen.

ELIJAH

They call me Mr. Glass at school.
Cause I break like glass.

Elijah's face is tense. Unyielding. Beat.

Elijah's mother says the next words in almost a whisper.

ELIJAH'S MOTHER

...You make this decision now to be
afraid...

(beat)

And you'll never turn back your whole
life. You'll always be afraid.

Elijah's eyes move from the television to his mother. He
sees the emotion in her face. Neither says anything for a
while. Beat.

ELIJAH'S MOTHER

...I got a present for you.

ELIJAH

Why?

ELIJAH'S MOTHER

Forget why. Do you want it or not?

Elijah thinks it over. He nods, "Yes."

ELIJAH'S MOTHER

Well, go get it then.

ELIJAH

Where is it?

ELIJAH'S MOTHER

On a bench, across the street.

Elijah looks at his mother with disbelief.

ELIJAH'S MOTHER

You calling me a liar?

She points to the window. Beat. Elijah gets up and moves to
the only window in the room.

The view from his room looks out over a narrow street. On
the other side of the street is a public playground. A handful
of children are playing on it.

There are three benches to one side of the swings. On one of
them is a THIN PACKAGE wrapped in brown paper with a bow on
it.

Elijah looks to his mom who has joined him at the window.

ELIJAH
Someone's gonna take it.

Beat.

ELIJAH'S MOTHER
Then you better get out there soon.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - AFTERNOON

Elijah walks across the playground. He's very wary of the other children running about him.

He walks towards the bench with the present on it. Takes a seat. Puts the package on his lap. It's flat. The edges of the bend down over his thin legs.

He undoes the white bow. He peels off the clear tape holding the brown paper together. He unfolds the paper. Beat.

Elijah stares down at the single comic book in his lap.

He feels the shadow of his mother. She takes a seat next to him.

ELIJAH'S MOTHER
I bought a whole bunch. They'll be one of these waiting for you, every time you want to come out here.

Beat.

ELIJAH'S MOTHER
They said this one has a surprise ending.

Elijah looks to his mother. His intelligent piercing eyes take her in for a moment.

He looks back down at his lap. He opens the first page...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STORE - DAY

The same intelligent piercing eyes, twenty-five years older. Elijah has grown into a handsome, regal looking man. He leans on a walking stick.

He's looking at an impressively framed charcoal sketch on a wall. Two figures are depicted on the top of a building locked in fierce battle. One figure is extremely muscular with a mask. The other is half human, half animal.

MAN

This is from Fritz Champion's own library. This is before the first issue of the comic book hit the stands in 1968.

Elijah glances at the BUSINESS MAN standing next to him and then back to the sketch.

ELIJAH

It's a classic depiction of good versus evil. Notice the square jaw of Slayer - common in most comic book heroes. And the slightly disproportionate size of Jaguaro's body to his head. This again is common, but only in villains... The thing to notice about this piece... The thing that makes it very, very special... is its realistic depiction of its figures. When the characters eventually made it into the magazine they were exaggerated... as always happens.

(beat)

This is vintage.

The business man rubs his face. Gazes at the sketch. Beat.

BUSINESS MAN

Wrap it up.

ELIJAH

You've made a considerably wise decision.

Elijah starts to the back of the store which we now see is some type of art gallery where all the framed pictures are images and sketches from comic books.

BUSINESS MAN

My kid's gonna go berserk.

Elijah jams his walking stick into the extra thick carpet and stops. He turns.

ELIJAH

Once again please?

BUSINESS MAN

My son Jeb. It's a gift for him.

ELIJAH

How old is Jeb?

BUSINESS MAN

Four.

ELIJAH

No.

Elijah starts back to the businessman shaking his head strongly.

ELIJAH

No, no, no, no no... You need to go now.

BUSINESS MAN

What did I say?

ELIJAH

Do you see any Teletubbies around here?... Do you see a slender plastic tag clipped to my shirt with my name printed on it?... Do you see a little Asian child with a blank expression sitting outside in a mechanical helicopter that shakes when you put a quarter in it?... No?... Well that's what you see at a toy store? Anyway you must think this is a toy store, cause you're in here shopping for an infant named Jeb. One of us has made a gross error and wasted the other person's valuable time...

Elijah's eyes pierce through the shaken man.

ELIJAH

This is an art gallery my friend. This is piece of art...

Elijah points at the sketch.

ELIJAH

This is one of seventeen original drawings by Fritz Champion remaining in the world. It's value will triple every year... This piece is to be treasured. To be cherished... To be coveted by every single one of your banker friends that think they're better than you.

The business man stares at the sketch with large eyes. Beat.

BUSINESS MAN

What if I kept it?

Beat.

ELIJAH

I'm listening.

BUSINESS MAN
I'll keep it in my office room.

ELIJAH
What about Jeb?

BUSINESS MAN
I have a lock on the door.

Elijah just stares.

ELIJAH
Will it be near a window?

BUSINESSMAN
No direct sunlight will fall on it.

Elijah eyes the man for many seconds. Beat.

ELIJAH
Come back in three days. I'll think
about it.

Elijah starts to the back. He passes the front door as two
customers walk in. Elijah talks over his shoulder to them.

ELIJAH
We're by appointment only.

MAN
I received a card from your store.

ELIJAH
Congratulations, you have a mailbox...
The sale isn't for two weeks.

MAN
This one was under the windshield of
my car.

Elijah turns and faces the customers for the first time.
David Dunne stands with Jeremy.

Elijah just stands staring for the longest time. Beat. He
walks closer to them. When Elijah speaks, his voice has a
whispery quality to it.

ELIJAH
You've never been sick?

DAVID
I don't know for sure.
(beat)
...I don't think so.

David and Elijah quietly look at each other. Beat.

ELIJAH

Well if this ain't a riddle worthy
of the Riddler?

CUT TO:

EXT. LIMITED EDITION - LATE AFTERNOON

Three chairs have been placed on the walkway in front of the bay window of the store. The words, "Limited Edition" are etched in the window.

David, Jeremy and Elijah are seated watching the people stroll by. Elijah's cane is on his lap.

Jeremy sips a drink in a paper cup.

ELIJAH

So let's get some of the usual questions out of the way. Why am I using a cane? Raise your hand if you were thinking that.

Jeremy raises his hand.

ELIJAH

I fractured my leg. It's the fifth time I've done that particular bone. It didn't really heal well this time.
(beat)
Raise your hand if you're wondering who the hell breaks the same bone five times?

Jeremy and David raise their hands.

ELIJAH

I have something called Osteogenesis Imperfecta. It's a genetic disorder. I don't make this particular type of protein very well and it makes my bones very low in density, very easy to break. I've had fifty-four breaks in my life. I have the tamest version of the disorder... Type one.

(beat)

There are type two, type three, and type four. Type four's don't make it very long...

(beat)

That ends our lecture on the medical anomaly known as Elijah Price.

Elijah stares at his two rapt listeners.

ELIJAH

How certain are you that you haven't been sick in your life?

DAVID

Seventy-five percent.

ELIJAH

Seventy-five percent? That's not nearly good enough for me. I'm extremely skeptical.

DAVID

Skeptical about what?

ELIJAH

Your answer to my question. It's one thing to have never been injured in your life, but to state that you've never taken ill, well that's a whole new level.

JEREMY

Dad's been injured.

Beat.

ELIJAH

What's he talking about?

DAVID

In college. A car accident.

ELIJAH

Was it serious?

David nods.

JEREMY

He couldn't play football anymore.

Beat. Elijah looks shaken.

ELIJAH

I assumed because of the train.

DAVID

You assumed wrong.

Elijah closes his eyes. When his eyes open, the life force in them has diminished. Beat.

ELIJAH

It's over.

(beat)

You can go now.

Elijah uses his cane to get up and walk back through the doors of the store.

INT. LIMITED EDITION - LATE AFTERNOON

David and Jeremy enter the store. Elijah leans on a walking stick before one of the framed sketches. He gazes at it quietly.

DAVID

I think you skipped a couple steps.

Elijah turns.

DAVID

You forgot the "Now I'm going to tell you what the hell is going on" step. See usually that comes before the, "It's over" Step. And it always, always comes before the "You can go" Step.

(beat)

What is over?

ELIJAH

The life of an idea that has lived too long in my head.

David stares at Elijah impatiently.

ELIJAH

There are probably only four or five individuals in the world who can claim more knowledge of comics than myself. I've spent a third of my life in a hospital bed with nothing else to do but read. I have studied the form intimately. I have seen the patterns in them... The references to social and cultural events and the atmosphere that surrounded them. I've come to believe that comics are our last link to the ancient way of passing on history.

(beat)

The Egyptians drew pictures on walls about battles, and events. Countries all around the world still pass on knowledge through pictorial forms.

(beat)

I believe that comics, just at their core now... have a truth. They are depicting what someone, somewhere felt or experienced.

(MORE)

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

Then of course that core got chewed up in the commercial machine and gets jazzed up, made titillating - cartooned for the sale rack.

Elijah gazes at David.

ELIJAH

This city has had its share of disasters. Well publicized ones. It was around the time of that plane crash, when it first entered my head. And there it stayed, as I waited and watched the news over the years...

(beat)

And then one day I see a news report on a train accident and its sole survivor who was miraculously unharmed.

(soft)

And just like that, an idea blossoms into the flower of possible reality.

DAVID

What was your idea Elijah?

Beat.

ELIJAH

(soft)

If there is someone like me in the world, and I'm at one end of the spectrum... Couldn't there be someone the opposite of me, at the other end?

(beat)

A person who can't be hurt like the rest of us. A kind of person they were talking about in those stories.

Elijah points at the framed comic sketches.

ELIJAH

(soft)

A person they believed was put here to protect the rest of us. Guard us.

JEREMY

You thought my dad was a real-

DAVID

Jeremy don't take another sip of that drink.

Jeremy looks down at the paper cup in his hands.

DAVID

Throw it in the trashcan near the door and wait for me outside. Do it now please.

David waits for Jeremy to exit the store. Beat.

DAVID

At the church... You were following me weren't you?

ELIJAH

Technically no. I gambled that you would attend the church service. I just waited for you.

David glares at Elijah.

DAVID

What's this about? This is obviously some scam. Is this where you tell me one of those pictures is like an investment?

ELIJAH

You've misunderstood.

DAVID

I see guys like you all the time in my work. You find someone you think is emotionally vulnerable and you tell them a fantastic story, utterly convincing... and somewhere in there, you slip it in... 'I just need your credit card number', 'I just need a small down payment.'

David shakes his head. He smiles out of frustration. Beat.

DAVID

Did you know that this morning was the first morning I can remember, that I didn't open my eyes and feel that sadness... Do you know what I'm talking about? That little bit of sadness?

(beat)

I thought the person that wrote that note had an answer for me. For why I survived that train. For why my life feels so out of balance...

(beat)

But I guess that's what you were counting on.

Elijah stares carefully at David. Beat. David glances over to the entrance. Jeremy watched through the window concerned.

DAVID
 I'm going to leave now.
 (beat)
 Good luck with your sale.

Elijah watches David walk towards the front door.

ELIJAH
 What type of job do you have David?

David opens the door. He looks back at Elijah.

ELIJAH
 You mentioned you've met 'guys like
 me' in your work.
 (beat)
 What type of job would that be?

Beat.

DAVID
 I work at the stadium as a security
 guard.

Beat. David closes the door behind him. Elijah watches through the window as Jeremy takes David's hand as they cross the street.

Elijah gazes out the window in a bit of a daze.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

ALL LIGHTS ARE OUT EXCEPT THE SMALL BEDSIDE LAMP ON DAVID'S SIDE.

David sits up in bed staring at a torn section of newspaper in his hands.

Jeremy is asleep horizontally with his legs over David's legs.

David doesn't blink as he gazes at the headline silently...

"TRAIN CRASH DEATH TOLL CONFIRMED AT 131 DEAD. 1 SURVIVOR"

Beat. David slides out from under his son's legs. Jeremy stirs but doesn't wake up.

David moves to the darkness of the corner of the room. He opens a closet door.

A NAKED HANGING BULB GOES ON as David yanks a chain. David steps inside the narrow closet and closes the door slightly so the LIGHT FROM THE BULB DOESN'T FALL ON JEREMY.

DAVID
 (whisper)
 Oh.

Beat.

MEGAN
 (whisper)
 Let me just ask you something okay?
 And you can be totally honest. I'm
 prepared for any answer. It won't
 affect me...

David nods, "yes."

MEGAN
 (whisper)
 Have you been with anyone? Since we
 started having problems? The answer
 won't affect me.

Beat. David stares at his wife.

MEGAN
 (whisper)
 It won't affect me either way.

Beat. David doesn't say anything. He just nods, "No."

Megan's face starts to tremble. She starts crying. Tears roll over her very affected face. She tries to wipe them away, but there's too many. Beat.

MEGAN
 (soft)
 ...My decision is... I'd like to
 start again. Pretend we're at the
 beginning.
 (beat)
 It's a big deal you walked away from
 that train. It's a second chance.
 (beat)
 If you want to ask me out sometime,
 that would be okay.

Megan nods and walks down the stairs as she wipes her face. David watches her disappear into the shadows.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VETERAN'S STADIUM - AFTERNOON

Sunday afternoon. The cavernous stadium opens up into a picture perfect blue sky. The Philadelphia Eagles pro football players are in uniform and doing stretches on the field. The opposing team warms up on the other end of the field.

The sixty thousand seats are already half filled as fans stream in on every level of the stadium.

CUT TO:

EXT. ENTRANCE GATE 27B - AFTERNOON

A line of ticket holders snakes towards two turnstiles where stadium crew are ripping tickets.

David Dunne stands to one side with two other security guards.

The fans moving through the turnstiles are clad in all types of Eagles paraphernalia. A group of girls carries a homemade banner that David reads as he tilts his head sideways. "We sleep with quarterbacks," is written in block letters.

David stares at a woman carrying a newborn infant in her arms. The baby is wearing an eagles uniform.

The WALKIE TALKIE on David's hip bursts to life. He pulls it off his hip and listens.

WALKIE

Dunne, it's Jenkins, we got a guy at gate 17C with a bogus ticket. Says he knows you. He won't tell me his name.

DAVID

(into walkie)
What's he look like?

WALKIE

He's got the most beautiful eyes...
The hell kind of question is that?
He's a guy.

DAVID

(into walkie)
Send him packing. I'm not walking all the way over there.

WALKIE

Consider him packed. I didn't like his attitude... Struttin around with a cane and shit.

Beat.

DAVID

(into walkie)
Hold up Jenkins...

CUT TO:

EXT. ENTRANCE GATE 17C - AFTERNOON

David finds Elijah waiting to the side as the crowds funnel through the gate. Elijah offers his hand as he walks up. David doesn't take it.

ELIJAH

They said I couldn't get in with my ticket.

Elijah offers him the ticket. David inspects it.

DAVID

It's for last week's game.

ELIJAH

I've come to understand that...

(beat)

An ill advised purchase in the parking lot.

David hands Elijah back the ticket.

DAVID

What do you want?

ELIJAH

Not money.

(beat)

But I appreciate your healthy cynicism in the manner. It will be wise for both of us to proceed with greatest caution.

DAVID

We're not proceeding anywhere together.

ELIJAH

We've already begun.

David looks around.

DAVID

One more time. What is it you want?

Beat.

ELIJAH

Why is it, do you think, that of all the professions in the world... you chose protection?

DAVID

Are you for real?

ELIJAH

You could have poured coffee in Starbucks, you could have learned to install track lighting in office buildings, you could have told people their horoscopes on the internet... You could have been one of ten thousand things... but in the end, you chose to protect people. You made that decision... and I find that very, very interesting.

(beat)

Now all I need is your credit card number.

Beat. Elijah smiles.

ELIJAH

That last part was a joke.

David fights it. But he smiles anyway. Beat.

DAVID

I got this job because my college coach called the guy who manages the stadium. There's no hidden meaning to it.

David's walkie makes NOISES on his hip.

DAVID

They need me at the gate.

David stares at Elijah leaning on his walking stick.

DAVID

Did you really want to see the game?
I can get you in.

CUT TO:

EXT. ENTRANCE GATE 27B - AFTERNOON

The line of fans outside the gate has tripled in size and intensity.

David and Elijah move along the line towards the turnstiles.

DAVID

It gets heaviest ten minutes before kickoff.

David bumps a guy in line wearing an army jacket. David looks backs at him and continues walking.

David moves to a security guard near the turnstiles.

DAVID
Why don't we pat down?

David walks to his post near the gate and faces the crowd. Elijah moves next to him.

DAVID
Just give me a minute.

ELIJAH
Is there a problem?

DAVID
That guy in green. Sometimes people carry weapons in here. Then they drink too much. They're team isn't doing so well, bad things happen... We do random pat downs of the crowd to discourage people from carrying.
(beat)
If he's carrying, he'll step out of line.

Elijah observes as a security team pats down random males as they move through the turnstiles.

The GREEN ARMY JACKETED MAN moves forward in the line. His face is blank as he watches the pat down ahead of him. He's twenty people from the turnstile.

David eyes him. Fifteen people away... Ten...

The man coughs and steps out of the line. Elijah watches the green army jacket melt into the thick part of the crowd and disappear as it moves away from the stadium.

CUT TO:

INT. STADIUM TUNNEL - AFTERNOON

AN UNLIT arched concrete passageway. The SUNLIGHT from the stadium streams in causing long shadows.

Elijah stands waiting in the ground tunnel by himself.

THE THUNDEROUS CHEERS OF THE SIXTY THOUSAND FANS IN THE STADIUM ECHOES FROM THE FIELD INTO THE TUNNEL.

David enters the tunnel and joins Elijah. He hands him a ticket.

DAVID
I got you a seat in the seven hundred level.
(points straight up)
It's nose-bleed territory, but at least you won't get spit on.

ELIJAH

How did you know that man you bumped
was carrying a weapon?

DAVID

Probably the army jacket. Those
guys carry hunting knives and stuff
for show.

ELIJAH

You thought he was carrying a knife?

Beat.

DAVID

I thought he was carrying something.

ELIJAH

But not a knife?

DAVID

I got this picture of a silver handled
gun tucked in his pants.

(beat)

Like on t.v.

Elijah stares at David. THE STADIUM CHEERS BOUNCE OFF THE
GRAY WALLS.

ELIJAH

You have good instincts when it comes
to things like that?

DAVID

Like what?

ELIJAH

Telling when people have done
something wrong?

Beat.

DAVID

Yes.

ELIJAH

Have you ever tried to develop it?

DAVID

I don't know what you're asking?

ELIJAH

Your skill.

Beat.

DAVID

Listen. I got to be on the sidelines during the game... You can get to your seat by taking the stairwell at-

ELIJAH

Characters in comic books are often attributed special powers. X-ray vision, things of that sort.

David exhales slowly as he stares at Elijah.

DAVID

Okay, I don't want to play this game anymore.

ELIJAH

It's an exaggeration of the truth. Maybe it's based on something as simple as instinct. Like being able to touch someone and tell whether they've done something wrong... Or the level of what they've done wrong.

DAVID

The guy might not have been carrying anything.

ELIJAH

Or he might have been carrying a silver handled gun tucked in his pants.

David's WALKIE ERUPTS WITH NOISE.

DAVID

I have to go now.

ELIJAH

One last question.

Beat.

DAVID

Quick.

ELIJAH

The car accident you were in... Was there anyone else involved?

The two men stand very still in the tunnel.

DAVID

Yes. My wife Megan. She was in the car with me.

David turns and starts down the hall. David talks back over his shoulder.

DAVID

Have a good life Elijah and try to buy your tickets at an authorized sales location.

Elijah watches as the silhouetted figure of David Dunne jogs down the darkness of the tunnel.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

We are inside a customized car. The dashboard is covered in some sort of thin foam padding. The steering wheel and gear shift have the same padding. Every corner and hard surface has been safe guarded. Elijah sits behind the wheel of his car in the parking lot of the stadium. He sits as thoughts crash at his head. Beat.

He finally reaches for the keys and starts up the car. He looks into the rearview mirror and sees the man in the GREEN ARMY JACKET pass behind his car.

Elijah quickly turns and sees the man moving through the parked cars heading out of the parking lot.

Elijah takes a deep breath and turns off the engine.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

Elijah's walking stick makes RHYTHMIC CLICKS on the concrete parking lot.

The figure in the army jacket seems to move farther away with every step.

Elijah starts breathing harder. He pushes himself to move faster. He avoids the hard chrome bumpers and tailpipes that jut out from the cars as he quickens his pace through the lot.

He gains on the army jacket.

ELIJAH

(calls out)

Hold up for a second!

The man in the army jacket turns as he reaches a subway entrance that marks the end of the parking lot. He looks back at Elijah for a beat. Doesn't like what he sees. He disappears into the subway entrance.

Elijah quickens into a jog now. He hasn't done this in a while and it's painful. He makes it with great strain to the subway.

He looks into the entrance...

A steep flight of stairs leads to the subway floor. The tail of the army jacket is glimpsed before it disappears.

Elijah breathes hard as he takes hold of the railing.

ELIJAH

(calls out)

I just want to ask you something!

Elijah's VOICE ECHOES down the stairs. No response.

Elijah starts his descent.

THE SOUND OF A SUBWAY PULLING IN ROARS UP THE STAIRS.

Elijah has to move fast. He takes the steps with less and less hesitation. He's moving with great agility... and then his foot catches on a step.

His hand slips away from the railing...

He falls down the remaining part of the stairs. The FIRST SICKENING CRACK is heard when his hand reaches out to stop his fall.

The SECOND CRACK IS MORE LIKE A CRUNCH AS HIS LEG LANDS AWKWARDLY ON THE METAL STAIRS.

He comes to a stop in a pile on the dirty gum stained floor of the subway landing. His jaw is locked in a HORRIFIC SCREAM THAT GETS EATEN BY THE ROAR OF THE SUBWAY TRAIN PULLING IN.

His contorted anguished face sees the turnstiles of the subway upside down. The green army jacketed man looks back at Elijah with a blank expression pushing through the turnstile.

The last thing Elijah sees before he blacks out, is the tail of the man's coat riding up as he moves through the turnstile. The SILVER HANDLE OF A GUN peeks out from the belt of his pants.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS STOP - DUSK

David's neighborhood turns crimson as the day comes to an end. The Septa bus pulls to a stop in front of a public high school. David steps off, still in his security clothes. The bus pulls away as he hears his SON'S VOICE.

David turns to the high school football field behind him. A group of children are having a touch football game. Jeremy runs out from the huddle across the field to David.

JEREMY
Was it sold out?

David nods, "No."

DAVID
You know how mad your mom would be
if she knew you were playing football?

Jeremy nods.

JEREMY
Are you going to tell?

David nods, "No."

JEREMY
You want to play the last downs? We
got a big guy like you. You can play
on opposite sides.

David looks to the fields to see a very muscular college age man in sweats who stands with the other children.

JEREMY
He's Potter's cousin. He's the
starting corner back for Temple
University.

David stares at his son.

JEREMY
He going pro in the draft. They say
he can run the fifty-

DAVID
In under six seconds.
(beat)
I've heard.

David watches the cornerback being surrounded by kids. He's letting a couple of the kids feel his flexed bicep.

DAVID
I'm going to go in.

JEREMY
Just play one set of downs. I told
them you were great.

DAVID
Why'd you do that?

JEREMY

Just one-

DAVID

Jeremy.

(beat)

I'm going in. I have to do some things.

JEREMY

What things?

DAVID

I'm going to work out.

JEREMY

I'll help you.

DAVID

There's nothing to do.

Jeremy turns back to the children and waves.

JEREMY

(yells)

I can't play! I'm working out with my dad!

Jeremy turns back to his father and takes his hand. David looks down at his son who waits patiently.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - EARLY EVENING

The basement is dominated by storage boxes and Christmas decorations. An old bench press and weights are in a cluttered corner.

David sits and turns at the end of the bench as Jeremy laboriously carries and places a fifteen pound weight on the bar. David talks over his shoulder.

DAVID

Why don't you rest now? I'll take it from here. You've been a big help.

Jeremy goes to the opposite side of the bar and starts to put on another weight.

JEREMY

You think you could beat up Mike Tyson? I mean before he started wiggin out and eating people's ears?

DAVID

No.

JEREMY

What if you worked out everyday for six months? You think you could beat him then?

DAVID

No.

JEREMY

What if you only ate foods that were good for you and you worked out everyday for a year?

Jeremy is breathing hard as he puts the safety collars on the barbell and comes around to David's end of the bench. David lays back.

DAVID

No.

David takes hold of the barbell. Beat. He takes a deep breath.

The weight comes off the armrests of the bench. David lowers it to his chest and pushes it back up. He does just one more rep with serious strain. He puts the weight back on the armrest and sits up.

DAVID

How much did you put on there?

David twists around and looks back at the barbell. He counts up the black metal circles. He turns back to Jeremy.

DAVID

You put too much. That's two hundred and fifty pounds.

JEREMY

How much can you lift?

David looks back at the weights.

DAVID

That's the most I've ever lifted.

(beat)

That could have been dangerous Jeremy. Why don't you go upstairs and let me finish up?

Jeremy starts back to the barbell.

JEREMY

I'll take it off. I'll help you right.

He slips off the safety collar.

JEREMY

You think you could have beaten up
Bruce Lee?

David hears the SOUND OF THE WEIGHTS SLIDING OFF THE BAR
BEHIND HIM.

DAVID

No.

JEREMY

I mean if you knew karate?

DAVID

No Jeremy.

JEREMY

What if he wasn't allowed to kick
and you were really mad at him?

Jeremy is breathing hard again as he finishes with the weights
and comes around to David.

David lays back.

DAVID

No.

David takes hold of the bar. Lifts it off the armrest. Brings
it down. His arms are straining hard again. He raises it and
lowers it two times; it takes a sizable effort. The weights
bang down onto the armrest.

David sits up.

DAVID

How much did you take off?

JEREMY

I lied.

Beat.

DAVID

You added?

Jeremy nods, "Yes" slowly.

David turns completely around and looks at the barbell. He
counts the black discs on the steel bar. Beat.

Nobody says anything for a long time.

JEREMY

(soft)
How much is it?

DAVID

(soft)

Two hundred and seventy.

David just stares at the black steel circles on the metal bar. Jeremy comes and sits on the bench next to his father. They both stare at the weight. Beat.

JEREMY

(dead serious)

Let's put more.

Beat.

DAVID

Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - EARLY EVENING

David's fingers wrap around the cold metal of the bar. He leans his head forward and looks to Jeremy.

DAVID

Why don't you move back a bit? Just to be safe.

Jeremy moves back to the bottom of the stairs leading up to the house. He waits.

Another deep breath as David heaves. The weight CLINKS as it comes off the arm rest. David is full out straining now as he lowers and raises it. His arms begin to tremble as he lifts it for the second time. BANG the weight lands back safely onto the rest.

David sits up. He looks at his son whose eyes are wide. Beat.

JEREMY

More?

Beat. David nods, "Yes."

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - EARLY EVENING

An enormous amount of black discs sits on the bar. David's hands are gripping the metal.

He talks to Jeremy who stands in his position at the bottom of the stairs without looking at him.

DAVID

You should never try anything like this. You know that right?

Jeremy nods, "Yes."

DAVID
What do you do if something happens?

JEREMY
(soft)
Get mom.

David nods, "yes" before starting his deep breathing. He takes one last breath. CLINK the weights comes off the rest. His arms are trembling immediately now. His face is locked in a grimace as he brings the bar down to his chest and back up again two times before dropping it onto the armrest.

He slowly sits up.

DAVID
How many did you put on that time?

JEREMY
(soft)
All of it.

DAVID
There's no more left?

Jeremy nods, "no" in a slight daze. Beat. David looks around his basement.

DAVID
What else can we use?

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - EARLY EVENING

A set of two unopened MAB satin finish paint cans are dangling by their metal handles on the outside of each side of the weights.

The four cans sway a little as the bar is heaved off of David's chest. His arms are shaking hard. He raises the weight to it's apex and brings it down again. It touches his chest and rises up again. David's red strained face exhales powerfully as he straightens his arms.

The bar lands on the armrest with A CRASH. The paint cans make METAL SQUEAKS as they swing to stillness, one at a time. Beat.

David sits up and turns back to the weights. His mouth moves as he calculates the discs and the cans.

His lips stop moving. Beat.

JEREMY

(soft)
How much is it?

David doesn't react.

JEREMY

(soft)
How much is it dad?

It takes a second for David to register the question. He looks to his son. Beat.

DAVID

(soft)
About three hundred and forty.

David turns and looks at his son. Jeremy's mouth is slightly open. He gazes at his dad. Awe in his tiny eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

David sits on the edge of the bathroom tub. He's just showered and wearing jeans and a t-shirt. He sits still with his elbows resting on his knees, staring at the white tiles of the floor.

THE PHONE RINGS.

David gets up and walks out of the bathroom. He picks up the phone and stands in the bathroom doorway.

DAVID

Yeah, hello.

WOMAN

(on phone)
Is David Dunne there?

Beat.

DAVID

Megan?

MEGAN

(on phone)
Yes. Is this David?

DAVID

Yeah? Megan where are you calling from?

MEGAN

(on phone)
My name is Megan Inverso. We went to college together.

David looks at the phone. The lights for line ONE and line TWO are glowing RED. David squints his eyes as he pieces together the situation. Beat.

He moves back into the bathroom. The cord stretches as he takes his seat on the edge of the bathtub.

DAVID
I remember you.

MEGAN
(on phone)
I was hoping you would call me, but...
Anyway I decided not to wait.
(beat)
I was thinking, it might be nice to
go to dinner together.

Beat.

MEGAN
(soft)
...Hello?

Beat.

DAVID
Yeah it might be nice.

We hear A SOUND ON THE OTHER END OF THE PHONE. A SOUND MUCH LIKE AN EXHALE.

CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - LATE EVENING

The local Chinese restaurant. Red and gold plastic dragons hang from the ceiling. A couple late-nighters are at the bar. Megan and David are two of a handful of people left dining in the restaurant. They're a little dressed up. Megan looks kind of stunning.

DAVID
...When you work with clients on machines, do they sometimes just jump up a level or two? Do something they didn't know they were capable of?

MEGAN
Not often, but it is possible. Most people get scared when they see the shadow of their limits. They don't know how long the shadow really is. They don't know how far away the real limits are standing... They stop out of fear.

David nods as he takes it in. Beat. He looks down at his plate and twirls his lo mein onto a fork. Megan watches him.

MEGAN

This is kind of strange isn't it?

David nods, "yes" before taking the bite.

MEGAN

We're not even acting like ourselves.

David touches his mouth with his napkin.

MEGAN

Like that. Your mouth's dirty. You tapped your napkin to your lips. You only do that when you're with someone you don't know.

David looks down at his napkin.

DAVID

What do I do when I'm around someone I know?

MEGAN

You use your sleeve.

They both smile at each other. Beat.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Megan?

David and Megan look over to the only other table of late night diners as they get up from their table. A woman about Megan's age walks over to her.

WOMAN

I thought it was you.

MEGAN

Hi.

(to David)

This is Claire. Her son is in Jeremy's class. Claire and I worked on the school food drive together.

DAVID

Hello.

CLAIRE smiles as she stares at David. She turns to Megan.

CLAIRE

(mouths)

He's cute.

Claire turns back to David.

CLAIRE

I'm very happy about this. Megan mentioned to me she was considering dating again.

Megan becomes still.

CLAIRE

(to David)

I'm sorry, what's your name?

Beat. David doesn't look up.

DAVID

David.

CLAIRE

David?

MEGAN

This is my husband.

Beat. All three people become frozen in silence.

Claire looks to Megan.

CLAIRE

(soft)

I am so sorry.

Megan nods.

Claire quietly walks away from the table and joins her group as they leave the restaurant. Beat.

Megan and David are the last one's left. They sit silently in their booth. Megan looks at David's face. He's shaken.

He slowly takes a sip of water and then taps his mouth with napkin.

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

It's late. NO LIGHTS ARE ON EXCEPT THE ONE IN THE HALL. The babysitter has black dyed hair and Buddy Holly glasses. David waits as she puts on her jacket.

DYED HAIR GIRL

He ate about six of those chocolate covered doughnut holes with his milk. He said he only had three, but I know he had six.

DAVID

Okay.

David is not paying attention to the girl. He watches as his wife takes off her coat and heads to the guest room. She turns before entering the room. David and his wife make eye contact.

MEGAN

(soft)
Goodnight.

David nods. Megan goes into her room. The guest door closes softly.

David finds the babysitter looking at him with an odd expression.

DYED HAIR GIRL

My parents sleep in separate beds.

David reaches into his wallet and hands the girl money.

DAVID

Thank you.

David opens the front door for her.

DYED HAIR GIRL

By the way, Jeremy went to sleep in his room tonight.

DAVID

His room?

The baby sitter nods with a smile as she walks out the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S BEDROOM

David walks into the darkened child's bedroom. The lump on the bed turns when he hears movement. He smiles when he sees David.

JEREMY

(whispered)
I'm sleeping in my room.

DAVID

(soft)
I see.

JEREMY

(whispered)
I'm not scared.

DAVID

(soft)
That's great.

JEREMY

(whispered)
Do you know why?

David nods, "No."

JEREMY

(whispered)
I know now.

DAVID

(soft)
Know what?

JEREMY

(whispered)
Your secret identity.
(beat)
That man was right.

Beat. David just stares at his son. Jeremy's eyes start to close.

DAVID

Jeremy.

Jeremy opens his eyes.

DAVID

(soft)
There are big guys in almost every
gym who can lift that much.

Beat. Jeremy's eyes start to shut.

JEREMY

(whispered)
You could have lifted more.
(his eyes close)
...Don't worry, I won't tell anyone.

Jeremy Dunne falls asleep. David Dunne stands in the darkness of his son's room. Posters of comic book heroes don the walls around him.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Elijah's cheek rests against two pristine white pillows. He looks exhausted. His eyes are fixed on some abstract point in the room. WE HEAR SOUNDS OF A HOSPITAL.

The torso of a PHYSICIAN can be seen on the other side of the bed. We hear him speak but never see his face.

PHYSICIAN (O.S.)
 ...fracture of the proximal phalanx of the little finger as well as multiple fractures of the sixth, seventh, and eighth ribs. The worst of the injury, however, was sustained to the left leg in the form of a spiral fracture. There were fourteen breaks. It simply shattered...

ELIJAH
 They call me Mr. Glass.

Beat.

PHYSICIAN (O.S.)
 Who does?

ELIJAH
 Kids.

Elijah just keeps staring.

PHYSICIAN (O.S.)
 Shall I continue?

Beat. Elijah's head nods the slightest bit up and down.

PHYSICIAN (O.S.)
 Pins were placed throughout the length of the leg. The use of a wheelchair will be needed for a two month period. The use of crutches will follow for twelve to fourteen months. Hospital stay will range from five to eight days followed by nine to twelve months of physical therapy. Prescribed medication for pain management will take the usual forms of...

The PHYSICIAN'S WORDS FADE AWAY as Elijah continues to gaze at an abstract point in the room.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER - LATE MORNING

WE EMERGE FROM DARKNESS TO FIND OURSELVES IN THE PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER.

A CO-WORKER finds Megan working with an elderly gentleman who's laboring on a stationary bike.

JANIS

Your ten o'clock is here. The hospital discharged him this morning.

MEGAN

Thanks.

The co-worker takes Megan's position by the elderly man.

Megan crosses the physical therapy center. A man in a wheel chair waits by her office. She walks up to him with a smile.

MEGAN

Elijah right?

Elijah's leg is immobilized by a metal brace and held straight. Under his shirt we see the wrappings around his ribs. His left pinky is in a splint. He smiles and nods, "yes" to Megan.

CUT TO:

INT. STADIUM LOCKER ROOM - LATE MORNING

David Dunne stands in security uniform by a set of double doors that leads into the players locker room.

Three walls of the locker room are lined with shiny lockers. One side of the room has benches and massage tables. The far end of the room has work out equipment.

About twenty players and trainers are scattered throughout the spacious room lost in their own pre-game rituals.

David watches as a massive muscular player takes a seat on the massage table and removes his dress shirt. His body is covered in old bruises. He lays down, wincing a bit from the pain. A trainer begins to massage him.

David just stares at the battered athlete. His gaze moves across the room. Beat.

David stares at something in the crowded room then he starts towards it.

He moves through the room of players and trainers. He moves to the one area of the large room not occupied by anyone.

David comes to a step at the foot of an Olympic bench press. Racks and racks of free weights sit behind the press.

David looks down at the thick silver bar. Three large black plates are on either side. Six in all.

David looks back and glances at the double doors where he should be standing. Beat. He looks to the twenty or so players and trainers in the room.

Some of the players have headphones on. Some are staring into space. A couple are on cell phones...

No one notices David Dunne as he reaches for a forty-five pound black plate off the weight rack.

The huge disc slides onto the bar with almost NO SOUND...

A matching forty-five pound disc goes on the other side...

And then David adds another. He matches it on the other side...

THE BENCH CREAKS just the slightest bit as David takes a seat.

No one notices the security guard lay back on the bench.

David's hands take hold of the shiny bar.

He closes his eyes...

David's arms become tense. He pushes against the weight. It doesn't move.

His face turns deep red. He opens his eyes and stares at the bar as he keeps training. His face and arms are shaking... He keeps staring... focusing.

And then, without any fanfare, the bar lifts off the arm rest.

The weight hovers over David. He lowers it to his chest for a second time. His arms aren't shaking anymore. He pushes the weights back up.

He carefully brings the bar back to the arm rest. It touches down with the smallest of CLINKS.

David's fingers uncurl from the bar.

David lets out two slow soft breaths as he counts the thick black discs.

DAVID

(whispers)

Four ten... four forty-five...

(beat)

Five hundred.

Beat. David sits up in a daze.

He finds the entire room of athletes and trainers staring at him. Some of the players have stood up. Everyone stares as David Dunne with the same quiet disbelief in their eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER - AFTERNOON

Megan and Elijah are in the far corner of the room. They're separated from the other clients. Megan is seated on an exercise machine. Elijah is in his wheel chair facing her.

MEGAN

We're going to prevent any substantial atrophy of your good leg with this.

(She taps the machine)

It works the quadriceps.

ELIJAH

How long have you been married?

Megan is taken off guard by the question. She stares at Elijah. Beat.

MEGAN

Twelve years.

ELIJAH

How did you get together?

Elijah smiles warmly. Megan smiles softly back.

MEGAN

A car accident.

Elijah smiles even bigger.

ELIJAH

Now you're going to have to tell me more.

MEGAN

...See my husband was a big football star in college and we were in an accident together. Our car flipped on an icy road. We were both injured. He couldn't play football anymore.

(beat)

If that hadn't happened, we wouldn't have been together.

ELIJAH

How so?

MEGAN

Football wasn't the kind of life I wanted... For ten years I'd be by the phone waiting for a call telling me he broke his neck in a practice game.

(MORE)

MEGAN (CONT'D)

And if it wasn't that call, it would be a call telling me he blew out his knee or suffered his third concussion. I've seen way too much of it in my job... I can barely take it when my clients are in pain.

(beat)

I don't hate the game. I admire the amount of skill it involved and, like everyone else, I was in awe of how he could play it, but I couldn't give him my heart and then have something happen to him. And it always does with that game.

(beat)

It's not a thing many people would understand.

ELIJAH

You and my mother would have a special connection.

MEGAN

Any way, fate stepped in and took football out of the equation.

ELIJAH

...And everyone lived happily ever after.

Beat.

MEGAN

Sort of.

Beat.

ELIJAH

What part of David's body was injured?

Beat. Megan's eyes become utterly still.

MEGAN

Who said my husband's name is David?

CUT TO:

INT. STADIUM - AFTERNOON

Eleven football players in white and green battle eleven football players in blue and gray on the field. A sold out stadium watches the event.

David stands at the lip of a tunnel that opens out onto the upper section of the second level.

Waves of people move from their seats through the tunnel to the bathrooms and concession stands and back again.

David stares to the side away from the movement, his shoulder leaned up against the wall. He looks over at the constant movement of spectators through the tunnel.

Beat. His shoulder leaves the wall. He STEPS OUT into the stream of people. Shoulders and arms bump into him and brush by him as they move.

David's eyes are looking down - his expression still - like he's listening.

He continues into the dead center of the tunnel. He's in the heaviest part of the movement now. Fans continue to brush against him as they pass.

And then it happens... A stocky woman bumps into him.

FLASH CUT: AN IMAGE OF THE STOCKY WOMAN IN A BATHROBE STANDING IN A KITCHEN. SHE'S HOLDING THE SHOULDER OF A FIVE YEAR OLD BOY STANDING NEXT TO HER. HE'S CRYING UNCONTROLLABLY.

THEY BOTH ARE LOOKING DOWN AT THE KITCHEN TABLE WHERE THREE THINGS ARE LAID OUT... A BELT, A HANGER, AND AN EXTENSION CORD.

STOCKY WOMAN

Choose.

SLAM CUT BACK TO PRESENT:

We're back with David in the crowd. He turns and watches the stocky woman walk down the tunnel. She's holding the wrist of her five year old son. She yanks it quickly and violently to keep the boy close at her side. She and the boy dissolve into the crowd.

CUT TO:

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER - AFTERNOON

Elijah and Megan sit very still.

ELIJAH

There have been three major disasters in this city over the last four years. I've followed each one of them... A Seven-three-seven crashes on take off. One hundred and seventy-two die. No survivors... A hotel fire downtown. Two hundred and eleven die. No survivors... And an Amtrak train derails seven and half miles outside of the city.

(MORE)

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

One hundred and thirty one die. One survivor. He is unharmed.

(beat)

I've spoken with your husband about his survival. I suggested a rather unbelievable explanation. Since then, I've come to believe, that my explanation, however unbelievable, is in fact, true.

MEGAN

And what was that explanation?

Beat.

ELIJAH

It's a mediocre time Mrs. Dunne. People are starting to lose hope. It's hard for many to believe that extraordinary things live inside themselves as well as others... I hope you can keep an open mind?

Beat.

MEGAN

(soft)

Is this a religious thing?

ELIJAH

I own a comic book museum. It's called the Limited Edition.

MEGAN

(smiles)

For a second there I thought you were a fanatic.

ELIJAH

I believe comic books are based loosely on reality - I believe there are real life equivalents of the heroes in those books that walk the earth - I believe your husband is one of those individuals.

Beat. Megan becomes utterly still.

ELIJAH

I'm glad you brought up fate Mrs. Dunne. I'm becoming a strong believer in it... See, David refuses to speak with me any longer... And when I saw your name on my insurance list of approved physical therapists... It was like fate had intervened...

(MORE)

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

(beat)

We were meant to speak to each other.

CUT TO:

INT. STADIUM - AFTERNOON

David lets the waves of people move by him in the tunnel.

A MAN WITH GRAY EYES and wearing a dark blue sweat shirt carries a cardboard tray of nachos and drinks. He brushes David's arm as he passes.

FLASH CUT: THE IMAGE OF THE GREY EYED MAN WEARING A BLOOD SPLATTERED T-SHIRT IN A MEN'S BATHROOM. HE'S VIOLENTLY KICKING ANOTHER MAN CURLED UP ON THE FLOOR OF A TOILET STALL.

HE STOPS KICKING. HE GLARES DOWN WITH POWERFUL GRAY EYES.

SWEAT SHIRT MAN

(whispers)

This is my house, bitch. These are my customers.

SLAM CUT BACK TO PRESENT:

The gray eyes man in the blue sweat shirt pauses with nachos in hand at the top of the stairs to locate his seats. Beat.

David walks the five feet between them and taps him on the shoulder. People continue to stream by as the man turns to face David. The man's GRAY EYES go from David's face to the security emblem on his shirt. The man's face becomes still.

GRAY EYED MAN

Yeah?

David stares hard at the man in front of him.

DAVID

We've had some problems with drug selling in this stadium.

(beat)

Would you mind if I checked the pockets of your sweatshirt?

The gray eyed man stands eerily still with his nachos and drinks. The two men just stare at each other, evaluating the situation. People move in both directions around them, unaware.

The gray eyes man holds his tray of food to the side and raises his arms slowly.

David steps forward and reaches into his pockets. Beat. David pulls his hands out from the pockets. They're empty.

The gray eyes man brings his arms down. Beat.

The walkie on David's hip COMES TO LIFE. David reaches down and pulls it off his belt without removing his eyes from the man in front of him. David brings the walkie to his mouth.

DAVID)
 (into talkie)
 Yeah?

WALKIE (O.S.)
 There's a message for you at the
 office. Your kid was hurt.

David's face changes.

DAVID
 (into walkie)
 When?

WALKIE (O.S.)
 Just now. They want you to come down
 to his school.

David lowers the walkie from his face. The gray eyed man has a slight smile on. Beat.

GRAY EYED MAN
 Why don't you go take care of your
 business?

The gray eyed man takes a bite of a nacho as he stares at David.

GRAY EYED MAN
 And dude, no one carries their
 merchandise on them any more. They
 got messengers for that shit now.
 (beat)
 That's what they tell me.

The gray eyed man in the blue sweat shirt turns and starts down the stairs to his seat. He raises his fist in the air as someone scores a touchdown on the field.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NURSE'S RECEPTION AREA - AFTERNOON

Jeremy is seated in a chair with abrasions and cuts on his face. He sits next to a smaller boy with a thermometer in his mouth.

They're both looking at the glass window of the nurse's private office. There are tow people inside talking. David and A WHITE HAIRED NURSE.

The THERMOMETER BOY pulls the thermometer out of his mouth.

THERMOMETER BOY
Is that your dad?

Jeremy nods "Yes."

THERMOMETER BOY
I bet my dad can beat up you dad.

Jeremy turns to the thermometer boy.

JEREMY
I don't think so.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

NURSE
...No, he insisted we only call you.
(beat)
Though it took us a while to track
down your number. It's not on file
here.

DAVID
Megan handles that type of stuff.

NURSE
What stuff is that?

DAVID
Jeremy's stuff.

David feels uncomfortable as the nurse just stares at him.
Beat. David rises from his seat.

DAVID
So do I need to put any smelly
ointments on him or anything?

The white haired nurse nods, "no."

NURSE
It's more emotional damage. It wasn't
very serious physically.

David nods.

NURSE
Nothing like when I sent you to the
hospital.

David stares at the white haired nurse.

DAVID

What was that?

NURSE

My office was on the other side of the building back then.

(beat)

You don't remember me do you?

David nods, "no."

NURSE

I had red hair.

David stares at the woman. He doesn't recognize her.

NURSE

I think you were a little younger than Jeremy when it happened.

(beat)

Did you know we changed the conduct rules of the pool because of you?

David nods, "no" slowly.

NURSE

The kids still talk about it like some ghost story..."Did you know there was a kid that almost drowned in the pool? He got pneumonia and almost died."

The nurse shakes her head.

NURSE

We let them tell it... It helps keep them safe.

Beat.

NURSE

Are you still phobic of water?

David seems lost in his thoughts. He looks up at the nurse.

DAVID

Yes I am.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS STOP - AFTERNOON

David and Jeremy are seated on a bench at a Septa bus stop. No one else is waiting with them.

Jeremy talks without making eye contact with his dad.

JEREMY

(soft)

It was Potter and another guy I play football with. They were messing with this Chinese girl. She's kind of fat. She doesn't talk to anybody.

(beat)

I tried to make them stop. They kept pushing me down and wouldn't let me get up.

Beat. Jeremy's VOICE STARTS TO TREMBLE SOFTLY.

JEREMY

(soft)

I thought maybe cause you were my dad, I thought I might be like you.

Jeremy finally looks up. Tears in his eyes.

JEREMY

(soft)

I'm not like you.

David moves closer to Jeremy on the bench.

DAVID

You are like me. We both can get hurt. I'm just an ordinary man.

(beat)

I'm not what you think I am.

Jeremy just stares at his father. Beat.

JEREMY

Why do you keep saying that?

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

David stares at his bowl of pasta. He sits alone in the kitchen. Beat.

He gets up, slides the pasta in the trash and moves to the sink.

David is rinsing out the bowl when Megan walks in. David turns off the water.

MEGAN

He's just laying in bed. He's pretty upset. He wont' talk.

DAVID

He's dealing with a lot of things.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

(beat)
I think he needs to find answers
himself.

Beat.

MEGAN

It's weird to hear you tell me about
Jeremy.

(beat)
A good weird.

David looks at Megan. They stand silently in an awkward pause.
Beat.

DAVID

Would you like to try going-

MEGAN

Yes.

DAVID

-out again.

Beat. David smiles.

DAVID

But if we see another mother from
Jeremy's school, me name is Juan. I
always wanted to be a Juan.

Megan smiles softly back. Beat.

MEGAN

Oh. Elijah Price came to visit me at
the center today.

DAVID

Jesus.

Megan sees David's shocked expression.

MEGAN

He didn't do anything. He just told
me his theory... It's sad when
patients get like that. They lose
reality.

DAVID

(whisper)
Jeremy what the hell are you doing?

Megan suddenly realizes David is looking over her shoulder.

Megan turns around. She SCREAMS.

Jeremy is standing in the doorway to the kitchen. He's crying hard. In his outstretched hands is the HAND GUN FROM DAVID'S CLOSET. It's pointed directly at David.

JEREMY

(crying)

You don't believe. I'll show you...
You can't get hurt.

MEGAN

(realizing)

-Oh my God.

DAVID

-Jeremy did you load that gun?

Jeremy nods, "Yes." Crying harder now.

JEREMY

(crying)

-You won't get hurt...

DAVID

-Elijah was wrong.

MEGAN

-Sometimes when people are sick or hurt for a long time, like Elijah, their mind gets hurt too.

David shoots a tense glance at Megan.

MEGAN

-They start to think things that aren't true. He told me what he thought about your father. It isn't true.

JEREMY

(crying)

-I'll show you.

David starts moving a little to his right. Jeremy follows him with the barrel of the handgun. David stops moving.

DAVID

-You know the story about the kid who almost drowned in the pool?

Jeremy stops moving.

DAVID

-That was me they were talking about. I almost died. That was me.

JEREMY

(crying)
-You're lying.

DAVID

-I'm not. I just didn't connect it.

MEGAN

-Jeremy, your father was injured in college - you know that. You know all about that.

Jeremy's small face tenses. Confusion mixes with the desperation on his face.

MEGAN

-Don't do it. He'll die Jeremy.

Beat. Jeremy looks up, tears streaming down his cheeks.

JEREMY

(crying)
-I'll just shoot him once.

DAVID

-Jeremy listen to what-

Jeremy starts pressing the trigger. The hammer clicks back.

JEREMY

-Don't be scared.

DAVID

-Jeremy if you pull that trigger I'm going to leave! I'm going to go to New York.

Jeremy freezes. David flashes a desperate glance at Megan then back to Jeremy.

DAVID

You're right... If you shoot me, that bullet is going to bounce off me and I won't get hurt... but then I'm going to go upstairs and pack. And then leave to New York.

Beat.

JEREMY

(crying)
-Why?

Jeremy's hands are trembling. He starts to close his eyes as he raises the gun level with David's chest.

DAVID

(loud)
Jeremy!

Jeremy's eyes open.

DAVID

(loud)
You're about to get into big trouble!
I'm your father and I'm telling you
to put that gun down right now God
damn it!

(beat)

One!...

(beat)

Two!...

Jeremy puts the gun down on the floor in front of him and stands up.

Megan leans against the refrigerator and slides down to a sitting position on the tiled floor.

David walks over and picks up the gun. He unloads the bullets in his hand. David bends down very slowly and takes a seat on the kitchen floor.

Jeremy is the last to sit down. He takes a seat in the doorway of the kitchen. Beat. He wipes his eyes with the back of his hand. Beat.

JEREMY

(soft)
...You didn't have to yell.

The Dunne family sits in silence on the floor of their kitchen.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIMITED EDITION - AFTERNOON

People move up and down the streets outside the storefronts. David is one of them. He waits to cross the street. He sees movement inside the Limited Edition window.

CUT TO:

INT. LIMITED EDITION - AFTERNOON

Elijah opens the door. It takes him a bit, because of the wheelchair.

David stares at Elijah's damaged condition. Beat.

ELIJAH

Joined a rugby league. Turned out
to be a bad idea.

(beat)

Come here I want to show you
something.

Elijah wheels over to one of the framed sketches on the wall. It's a charcoal drawing of a muscular figure shielding himself from a blow about to be delivered. A huge ominous shadow is covering him, as if something unspeakable and evil is just out of frame.

ELIJAH

Look at this. I just noticed this
today.

David steps in close and studies the drawing.

ELIJAH

This is from the Sentryman series.
A color version of this was actually
used in the second issue.

Elijah points up to the drawing's face.

ELIJAH

Look at his eyes. What do you see?

David looks right at the intense eyes of the drawing.

ELIJAH

It's fear.

(beat)

He was scared. They were being honest
in the beginning you see. They let
him be human.

(beat)

They turned him into a garden variety
hero later... Then he was brave all
the time.

Elijah turns to David.

ELIJAH

I followed the guy in the army jacket.

David becomes still as his words register.

ELIJAH

He had a silver handled gun tucked
in the back of his pants.

(beat)

Were you really injured in that car
accident in college?

David looks unsteady all of the sudden.

ELIJAH

Because I think you faked it. I think you took the opportunity to end your career - no questions asked.

(beat)

And I think you did it, of all things, for a woman...

(beat)

Not only do you have the physical traits of a hero, down somewhere in there, you have the moral code of one too. You were ready to sacrifice everything for what's right. Where can you find that these days?

(beat)

Only thing you didn't realize is that you were giving up a part of yourself when you gave up football. The physical part. And you need that part desperately to feel balance again...

(beat)

You can have it back now.

(beat)

This was all just make believe before. What if there was someone the opposite of me? What if?...

(beat)

I now believe you are the genuine article Mr. David Dunne. The kind of person we knew existed, from our history.

Elijah points to the room full of pictures.

ELIJAH

It's time for someone like you.

(beat)

Bad is winning. I can feel it.

Elijah looks at David with deep admiration. His voice cracked a little at the end of his words. Beat.

David doesn't take his hands out of his pockets.

DAVID

(rattled)

I must have felt some lump in his back when I bumped him. Most guns have a black or silver handle. I had a fifty-fifty shot at the color.

ELIJAH

That's not what I witnessed David.

DAVID

Stop messing with my life Elijah.
My son almost shot me last night. He
wanted to prove you were right.

ELIJAH

I never said you couldn't be killed.
I never said that.

DAVID

You have a problem, Elijah. My wife
is right. Somewhere along the line
one of your bones broke and your
mind just broke with it.

Beat.

ELIJAH

Are you finished?

DAVID

No. And I have been sick. I spent a
week in a hospital when I was a boy
recovering from pneumonia and almost
drowning.

(beat)

Two skinny eight year old kids were
playing around the pool. They were
dunking me.

I swallowed water. They didn't know
it and they almost killed me.

(beat)

Heroes don't get killed like that.
Normal people do.

Beat. Elijah seems shaken for the first time. David stares
at him coldly.

DAVID

I don't want to see you again okay.

(soft)

Now I'm finished.

David turns and starts for the entrance. The BELL OF THE
DOOR CLANGS as David Dunne leaves the store.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

David exits the Limited Edition and moves down the street
lost in this thoughts. He bumps a man in a jacket and tie
walking in the opposite direction.

FLASH CUT: THE SAME MAN STANDS IN A BAGGY SWEATER. AGAINST A
PARKED CAR HE'S HOLDING SOMETHING SHINY AND METALLIC IN HIS
HANDS.

HE INSERTS IT IN THE HALF INCH GAP BETWEEN THE GLASS OF THE DRIVER'S WINDOW AND THE DOOR. THE DOOR UNLOCKS.

THE MAN LOOKS AROUND QUIETLY BEFORE ENTERING THE CAR.

SLAM CUT BACK TO THE PRESENT:

David looks over his shoulder at the conservative looking man in a shirt and tie walking down the street.

David Dunne is shaken. He turns and keeps walking.

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

A superhero action figure and a plastic villain do battle on Jeremy's desk.

David sits dressed up in a white shirt and dress pants. He holds the villain. Jeremy holds the superhero.

Megan enters the room in a beautiful brown dress.

MEGAN

The sitter's here.

David nods, "yes." Megan studies his tense expression.

MEGAN

We can do this another time if you want? I'm fine with anything.

David looks from the action figures, to his son's face to the face of his wife. They both have the same quiet anxious expression. Beat.

DAVID

But I put cologne on.

Megan smiles.

MEGAN

Is that what that smell is?

Jeremy giggles.

CUT TO:

INT. DOWNTOWN COMIC BOOK STORE - NIGHT

An overweight man in sweats and a ponytail counts the cash in the register. We are in a low-end comic book store. The walls are lined with shelves of comic books. The more expensive issues are kept in a glass case.

THE PONYTAIL MAN looks at his watch and then to far back of the store where one head is visible behind a low rack.

PONYTAIL MAN
Hey man it's twenty after. It's
time to close. I gotta head.

The top of the man's head doesn't move. Beat.

PONYTAIL MAN
You better not be jacking off to the
Japanese comics. I swear to God.

No response. Ponytail man closes his register and walks towards the back.

As he gets closer to the customer, he realizes that the man is in a wheelchair. The Ponytail man walks ups to Elijah.

PONYTAIL MAN
Listen man, I didn't know you were
in-
(beat)
Just choose something all right?

Elijah doesn't react. He sits in his chair in a quiet daze. Ponytail man leans over.

PONYTAIL MAN
Hello. You understand English?

Ponytail man makes fake sign language gestures in front of Elijah's face.

PONYTAIL MAN
Look man, I'm just gonna wheel you
out. You can think about things
outside on the sidewalk. I gotta
get some chicken in me, you know
what I'm saying?

Beat. The Ponytail man shakes his head moves behind Elijah. He starts wheeling him towards the front of the store. They move down a narrow aisle of comics.

Elijah suddenly grabs the left wheel and turns the chair. His immobilized left leg hits a rack of comic books. A handful of comics tumbles to the ground.

PONYTAIL MAN
Shit.

The ponytail man straightens the wheelchair and starts down the aisle again. After a couple of feet, Elijah jerks and grabs the other wheel sending the wheelchair ramming violently into the opposite wall. Comics are knocked free and fall onto the wheel chair and the nearby ground.

PONYTAIL MAN

Dude, I don't care if you are in a wheelchair. If you do that again, I'm calling Five-0.

Beat. The Ponytail man takes Elijah's silence as a, "Yes." He straightens the chair.

They move down the aisle. All is quiet... and then Elijah jerks the wheelchair to the left again. His metal brace and the wheelchair crash into two racks. Elijah gets covered in comics.

PONYTAIL MAN

That's it crackerjack! You're going to sit your ass in jail now.

The Ponytail man moves to the front counter.

Elijah sits in a trance - slightly hunched over. His eyes stare at a comic book in his lap. His expression changes for the first time.

The Ponytail man finishes dialing. He looks over to Elijah as he waits for a voice on the other end. Elijah raises a single comic book in his hand.

ELIJAH

How much is this one?

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT BAR - NIGHT

LATE EVENING. A trendy restaurant. Not enough light to read the menus.

David and Megan are on stools at one end of the bar. They sip their drinks as they appear in deep thought.

DAVID

...I think rust.

MEGAN

Rust?

DAVID

As a color, not as rust. You know, a rust colored paint or wood?

Megan leans slightly closer.

MEGAN

I didn't know that. Mine's still brown.

DAVID

My turn. What's your favorite song?

MEGAN

Soft and Wet, by the Artist Formerly
Known as Prince.

DAVID

What was that?

MEGAN

We're supposed to be honest.

Beat. David brings his stool closer.

DAVID

Soft and Wet. That's very interesting.

MEGAN

My turn.

(beat)

When was the first time the thought
popped into your head that we might
not make it?

David's grin slowly fades.

DAVID

That's not the game.

Megan moves her stool closer. They're only a foot or so apart.

MEGAN

It's a second date. There aren't any
rules.

Beat. David sips his drink slowly.

DAVID

I'm not sure.

MEGAN

Think carefully?

DAVID

What about the game?

MEGAN

It's finished. I won.

Beat. David glances at Megan. She waits for his answer.

MEGAN

Maybe it wasn't a specific moment,
maybe it-

DAVID

I had a nightmare one night and I didn't wake you up so you could tell me it was okay.

(beat)

I think that was the first time.

(beat)

Does that count?

MEGAN

(soft)

That counts.

Beat. Megan takes her glass up to her lips. Doesn't take a sip. Brings it back down.

MEGAN

Do you knowingly keep Jeremy and me at a distance?

Beat.

DAVID

Yes.

Megan's face tenses. She's on the verge of getting upset.

MEGAN

Why?

DAVID

I don't know Megan.

MEGAN

It's like you resent us David. Resent the life you have.

Beat. David doesn't answer.

MEGAN

You know even if it meant we couldn't be together, I would never have wished that injury on you? What you could do physically was a gift. I would never have wished it to go away.

Megan's eyes glaze with water. Beat.

MEGAN

You know that right?

David takes a sip with a trembling hand. David's eyes look up and make eye contact with Megan's. He stares at her for the longest time.

DAVID

(soft)
I know.

Husband and wife sit close together in the corner of the bar on their second date.

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Megan stands next to David as he pulls out his wallet. The babysitter with the black dyed hair and Buddy Holly glasses stands ready to leave in the doorway.

DYED HAIR GIRL

You got two calls. One came through while I was on the line - I wasn't talking too long. There was an emergency with my sister. She tried to do her own perm and now she looks like-

DAVID

Who called through?

Megan tries to hide her smile.

DYED HAIR GIRL

Someone from New York.

The smile instantly fades.

DYED HAIR GIRL

About a security job at a museum. They want to hire you.

(beat)

I didn't know you guys were moving to New York. Thanks for telling me.

MEGAN

We're not moving.

DYED HAIR GIRL

Oh.

(beat)

I let the answering machine pick up the other call.

The babysitter fixes her Buddy Holly glasses as she looks at the two suddenly quiet faces.

David hands her the money. She opens the door. It's started to rain.

DYED HAIR GIRL

Great.

The babysitter covers her head with her jacket and runs down the walkway. David closes the door. Beat.

MEGAN

Look let's be honest here. We're just at the beginning. I don't expect you or I to change the course of where our lives were headed because of two dates.

(beat)

If you do go to New York, we can still develop this. We'll just be forced to take it slow. And in the end, that's definitely better.

(beat)

This is our second time around David. I don't expect us to get carried away.

(beat)

I guess congratulations is the right thing to say.

Megan takes off her coat as she moves to the guest bedroom. She disappears inside. The door closes behind her.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Only the COUNTER LIGHT is on in the kitchen. David stands by the phone.

ELIJAH'S VOICE IS HEARD ON THE ANSWERING MACHINE.

ELIJAH

(on tape)

...David. It's Elijah. It was so obvious. It's referred to over and over. That's the key you see. The repetition across time. That means at some point it was all based on common thought, a common event - a fact.

(beat)

It was this one issue that brought it back for me... Century Comics One-Seventeen. That's where this group, the Coalition of Evil, tried to ascertain the weakness of every superhero.

(beat)

...Because they all have one.

(beat)

Just like you.

(MORE)

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

(beat)

The cells that make up your muscles and your bones react to forces that act upon it, slightly different from than mine. That's clear... Your cells react to bacteria and viruses slightly differently than mine... That's also clear... But for some reason, you and I react the exact same way to water. We swallow it, we choke. We swallow too much of it, we drown. However unreal it may seem, we are connected, you and I, we are on the same curve... just on opposite ends.

(beat)

The point of all this is, we now know something we didn't... You have a weakness... Water. It's your kryptonite.

(beat)

You hearing me David? Call me back... I got rugby practice in an hour.

THE SOUND OF ELIJAH HANGING UP IS HEARD. THE ANSWERING MACHINE BEEPS AS IT TURNS OFF.

David hits a button on the answering machine. It makes a WHIRRING SOUND before ANNOUNCING.

MACHINE

Message erased.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The master bedroom is very narrow. A bathtub and toilet are at one end. Two identical sinks sit opposite each other.

David sits on the edge of the tub. His shirt is unbuttoned. He sits in a daze staring at the tiled floor.

His eyes slowly move to a small white and red box laying on its side under one of the sinks.

David rises and picks it up.

It's a BOX OF BAND AIDS. David looks up to Megan's sink. Perfume and lotions sit on its edge.

David opens her mirrored cabinet. He starts to put the band aid box back, he hesitates.

His eyes begin to roam the cabinet shelves. They stop on certain items... A CONTAINER OF TYLENOL... A LOTION FOR DRY

SKIN... A BOTTLE OF ALLERGY DROPS... COUGH SYRUP... A TUBE OF MUSCLE PAIN OINTMENT...

David just stands quietly for a beat before turning and looking across to his own identical mirrored medicine cabinet.

There are three things on the shelf... DISPOSABLE RAZORS. SHAVING CREAM. AND COLOGNE.

David's mouth opens just a little bit as he stares.

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT HALL - NIGHT

ALL THE LIGHTS ARE OUT.

David moves through the darkness down the stairs in jeans and a sweatshirt.

He moves to the coat closet. Pulls out the dark green rain poncho. The word "security" is almost faded away.

He opens and closes the front door with virtually NO SOUND.

CUT TO:

EXT. THIRTIETH STREET STATION - NIGHT

Rain falls like gunfire from the sky.

David's car pulls into the massive rain station parking lot.

David steps out and pulls the hood of the poncho over his head.

CUT TO:

EXT. METAL STAIRS - NIGHT

A steel fence leads to a set of stairs that travel down to the dozens of interconnected tracks below. David walks down about forty feet. A fenced gate with a lock stops his progress.

David looks through the fence down to the tracks. Just to the side is a construction site. Cranes and lifts and various equipment stand idle in the area next to the section of train wreckage that has been brought to the station grounds for dismantling and salvaging. The bent shapes of the train pieces can only be glimpsed in outlines as they sit in the darkness, hundreds of feet away from the immaculately lit train station.

Beat. A HUGE METALLIC CRACK ECHOES THROUGH THE TRAIN YARD as David kicks open the fence door that holds him back from going down.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN WRECKAGE - NIGHT

Frightening twisted pieces of metal glisten in the rain. David walks along the body of the caved-in passenger car.

The passenger car is split in two. Just before the tear, along the window line, the windows have been crushed in. A huge hole has been ripped below the windows exposing the ravaged interior.

David stands before this heavily damaged area of the car. He just stares at the wreckage. Water falls off the rim of his hood in front of his face.

His eyes drift over the ominous pieces of deformed metal. He takes a couple slow breaths as THE SOUNDS OF HARSH RAIN FADE AWAY TO SILENCE.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK: EXT. STREET - NIGHT

SILENCE. BLACK. OUR VISION CLEARS TO REVEAL the glazed icy top of a street.

THE SOUND OF DISTANT FIRE COMES INTO THE SILENCE.

A TWENTY YEAR OLD DAVID DUNNE rises to his feet from the ground where he was laying amongst the fragmented pieces of windshield. He looks down at himself. His football jacket is torn. So are his jeans... He's trembling slightly, but not bleeding.

HE LOOKS UP TOWARDS THE NOISES.

About thirty feet away is a Honda, upside down, wrapped around a telephone pole. It's front is on fire.

Through one of the crushed door windows, WE SEE A WOMAN'S HAND.

Young David heads toward his car. He slips a couple of times on the slick iced surface of the road.

He kneels down next to the inverted car. He looks in the crushed window frame.

THE FACE OF A TWENTY YEAR OLD MEGAN IS UPSIDE DOWN. She is unconscious.

DAVID

Megan...

She doesn't answer. Her body is twitching as it sits pinned behind the wheel.

David pulls at the handle of the mangled door. It's wedged tight. It won't move.

The heat from the fire is tremendous.

David's powerful arms keep pulling with all their strength.

WE HEAR THE CREAK OF METAL... THE DOOR BENDS UNNATURALLY AND THEN PRACTICALLY RIPS OPEN.

David leans into the car and unbuckles Megan. He works her out underneath the steering column. He slides out. Her leg is bleeding.

David picks her up and carries her to the grass next to the road. He lays her down gently.

DAVID

Megan?

He just stares at her. She doesn't respond.

A LIGHT WASHES OVER THEM. David turns to see a truck approaching up the road. David waves frantically. The truck slows.

David turns back to Megan. Her eyes are open.

Tears fall from David's face as he moves the hair out of her eyes. She looks at David.

MEGAN

(soft)

I thought I was dead.

Beat.

DAVID

Me too.

The driver of the truck slips and slides his way over to David.

DRIVER

Is she all right?

DAVID

I think her leg is fractured.

DRIVER

Are you injured?

Beat. David looks at Megan who lays shivering in the grass. He looks back at the driver.

DAVID
(soft)
My shoulder's hurt.

The driver nods.

DRIVER
Hold on. I got a C.B. in the truck.

The driver moves back to his truck.

David takes Megan's hand in his and waits in the grass by the sight of their car on fire.

CUT TO:

PRESENT: EXT. TRAIN WRECKAGE - NIGHT

David stands utterly still in the graveyard of train 177.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The wheels of Elijah's wheelchair move down the hall as he follows the SOUND OF THE PHONE RINGING.

He follows THE SOUND to a PHONE RINGING in the storage room of the store. There are shelves and shelves of comic books. Thousands of them filed away in neat piles.

Elijah picks up the phone a little out of breath.

ELIJAH
Hello.

DAVID'S VOICE
Elijah?

Beat.

ELIJAH
David?

Nothing is said on the other line for a couple of beats. WE HEAR THE ECHOED DIN OF A LARGE ROOM FILLED WITH PEOPLE AND MOVEMENT IN THE BACKGROUND.

DAVID'S VOICE
What am I supposed to do?

Elijah closes his eyes. His face fills with strength.

CUT TO:

INT. THIRTIETH STREET STATION PHILADELPHIA - NIGHT

The interior of the station is a mystical sight. One huge cavernous room, a football field in size, lined on both sides with giant pillars that rise into a misty hand painted ceiling.

ELIJAH (V.O.)

David, it's okay to be afraid. Because this part won't be like a comic book... Real life doesn't fit into little boxes that were drawn for it.

David stands in a quiet corner and watches the faces of passengers arriving and departing late night trains. Even at the late hour, there is heavy traffic throughout the station.

ELIJAH (V.O.)

Go to where people are... You won't have to look very long.

David stares out at the midnight travelers. Beat. He starts towards them.

He passed the towering black statue standing at the far end of the station. It watches over the whole building. It's in the form of an angel lifting a soldier to heaven.

David moves through the first group of people - a crisscross of arriving passengers from tracks one and two. They brush by him and lightly bump him as they move.

FLASH CUT: WE ARE NO LONGER IN THE TRAIN STATION. A BLOND WOMAN IN HER TWENTIES STANDS AT A COUNTER IN A CROWDED STORE.

SHE SLIDES THE SILVER BRACELET AND EARRINGS SHE WAS LOOKING AT OFF THE GLASS COUNTER AND INTO HER PURSE. NO ONE SEES.

SLAM CUT BACK TO PRESENT:

David turns and glances at the blonde woman as she walks away from him towards the exit of the train station. He doesn't stop moving.

David heads towards the densest part of the floor. The area near the information board. Sleepy friends and tired family members stand and wait. A steady spider-like web of movement flows as six tracks let out on either side.

David moves to the center. His rain poncho almost touches the marble floor. Lines of passengers emerging from trains below the main level move steadily on either side of him.

David looks down and gently turns the palms of his hands out as they at his side. His finger tops graze the jackets and clothes of the passengers walking by.

Dozens and dozens of people pass. Nothing happens. Then a man in a crumpled shirt and slicked back hair brushes by...

FLASH CUT: THE SLICKED BLACKED HAURED MAN LEANS OUT THE WINDOW OF A TRUCK. HE'S HOLDING A BOTTLE OF BEER.

SLICKED HAIR MAN

Go back to Africa!

THE SLICKED HAIR MAN THROWS THE BOTTLE WITH FORCE AS HE PASSES A CLACK FAMILY WALKING ON THE SIDEWALK. THE BOTTLE SHATTERS AS IT HITS A WOMAN IN THE GROUP.

SLAM CUT BACK TO PRESENT:

David's eyes dart up as the slicked haired man turns the corner at the information booth. He watches him for a beat.

FLASH CUT: WE ARE IN A BEDROOM. A YOUNG MAN IN HIS LATE TEENS LOOKS DOWN AT A GIRL LAYING IN A PILE OF OVERCOATS ON A BED. THERE IS LOUD MUSIC AND LAUGHTER COMING FROM SOMEWHERE DOWNSTAIRS.

TEENAGER

What's your name? I think you drank too much.

THE GIRL MOANS SOMETHING INAUDIBLE AS SHE ROLLS ON HER SIDE. HER SKIRT RIDES UP HER THIGH.

THE YOUNG MAN STARES AT HER AND THEN GETS UP. HE MAKES SURE NO ONE IS LOOKING BEFORE CLOSING THE DOOR. HE LOCKS IT FROM THE INSIDE.

SLAM CUT BACK TO PRESENT:

David watches the teenager with baggy jeans hanging off his hip. He walks and greets a group of identically dressed friends.

Beat. David turns his hands back in. He seems shaken. He takes a couple of deep breaths as he gathers himself.

Then David steps back to look around. HE BUMPS the shoulder of a man standing behind him.

David takes a sudden breath like someone punched him in the solar plexus.

FLASH CUT: AN ENORMOUS MAN WITH GLASSY EYES STANDS BEFORE A SCREEN SIDE DOOR. HE'S BALDING. THE HAIR HE DOES HAVE IS SHOULDER LENGTH. HIS ECLIPSING SHADOW FALLS ON THE CONSERVATIVE LOOKING MAN WHO STANDS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SCREEN DOOR INSIDE THE HOUSE.

GLASSY EYED MAN

Can I come in?

MAN IN HOUSE

Who are you?

GLASSY EYED MAN

I like your house. Can I come in?

MAN IN HOUSE

What is this?

(beat)

No you can't come in.

Beat.

GLASSY EYED MAN

Are you sure?

The enormous glassy eyed man takes hold of the screen door handle. He turns it. The man inside the house grabs the door handle on the inside to stop him.

MAN IN HOUSE

What are you doing?

The man inside the house uses all his strength to keep the door from opening... It opens slowly anyway.

SLAM CUT BACK TO PRESENT:

David stands frozen in the train station. His face is almost unreadable.

David is standing less than a foot away from the man he bumped. They're standing shoulder to shoulder. David's eyes slowly move from the ground over his right and then finally onto the man.

He's huge. At least three inches taller than David. His shoulders are massive. He's wearing a one piece ORANGE UNIFORM.

The man in the orange uniform leans over a trashcan next to him and removes the full trash bag within it. He replaces it with a fresh one. He throws the full trash bag into a gray plastic bin with wheels and starts pushing it.

David watches the man head across the floor towards a double door marked "Station Maintenance Staff Only".

Four identical gray bins sit outside the door. The huge man disappears with his bin inside.

David waits. He just stares hard at the double doors. Nothing happens for the longest time... No one comes out. David makes a decision. He starts towards the doors.

And then they open.

The huge glassy eyed man in orange emerges carrying a bag over his shoulder. He's wearing a baseball hat with his uniform now. He heads toward a back exit.

David lets him get about twenty feet away before deciding to follow him.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

The man in the orange uniform walks in the driving rain down a residential city block. Almost all the lights in the middle class homes he's passing are off at this late hour. No one is out walking except him and David Dunne fifty feet behind.

The orange figure turns the corner onto a block of modest stand alone homes. The uniformed man walks slower in this block. He looks around carefully as he moves.

He turns into a driveway of one of the homes. He stops and pulls a wad of mail out of the mailbox.

David stands with the hood of his security coat covering his head and face. He stands in the shadows and watches silently as the man in the orange uniform looks over his massive shoulder before turning a knob and entering the white paneled house through a familiar side door with a screen on it.

CUT TO:

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

The side door opens with almost no sound. The hooded figure of David Dunne steps into a narrow laundry room. THE SOUND OF A TELEVISION IS HEARD FROM ANOTHER ROOM.

A very large pile of unopened mail sits in a mound on the clothes dryer. Two or three days worth.

David shuts the door very slowly.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

THE SOUNDS OF CHEERING FROM THE TELEVISION IN THE NEXT ROOM SPILL INTO THE KITCHEN.

David stares out from under his hood at the mess.

Cabinets are left open. Empty cans of food sit on the counter with a handful of unwashed dishes. The breakfast table is the eeriest thing in the room. It sits frozen with a plate of half-eaten, now moldy eggs at one setting and two bowls of colorful cereal in another. The cereal has dissolved in the old milk. Two cockroaches are crawling in the bowl.

David moves slowly to a door in the kitchen. It's slightly open. As David gets closer, he shields his face from the strong smell. He pulls the door open quietly.

A SHAFT OF KITCHEN LIGHTS FALLS DOWN THE STAIRS INTO THE BASEMENT. At the bottom of the stairs is a MAN'S BODY. The same man who answered the door in the flashback lays partly in the shadow, partly in the light. His crumpled tie lies folded over itself on his still chest.

CUT TO:

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

A BOXING MATCH BLARES ON THE TELEVISION. Empty beer bottles and coke cans sit in a pyramid on the coffee table.

David steps into the unoccupied room. His movements are slow and tense.

THUDS OF HEAVY FOOTSTEPS COME FROM THE CEILING OF THE ROOM. David looks up and follows the SOUND AS IT MOVES AROUND ABOVE HIM.

David moves to the stairs as SOMEONE GETS KNOCKED OUT ON THE TELEVISION.

CUT TO:

INT. GIRL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Three closed doors converge on a landing. David opens the closest one.

It's a young girl's room. Posters of boy bands are on her wall. Clothes are everywhere. The room is empty.

A NOISE COMES FROM THE HALF OPEN BATHROOM DOOR ATTACHED TO THE BEDROOM.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

A slightly overweight girl, probably fourteen years old is tied by her wrists with a phone cord to the metal towel rack in her bathroom. She sits with her arms pointed upward over her head. Her knees tucked up to her chest.

Next to her is her younger brother. A skinny boy, maybe twelve. He's tied and seated in the same way.

Their heads are leaned back against their arms. They're completely listless. Eyes half mast. They watch as the door to the bathroom opens and the dark hooded figure of David Dunne steps in. His long dark slowing rain poncho still dripping water.

He stands in the doorway for a moment before moving towards them.

They don't react in anyway as David reaches for the phone cord and unties them. Their arms flop to their laps as they gaze up at the figure leaning over them. They boy blinks once slowly.

David takes a step back and stares at them from under his hood.

DAVID
You need to leave now.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

An exercise bike in the corner of the bedroom has been turned into a clothes hanger long ago. The t.v. across the bed has framed family photos displayed on top of it.

David's shadow passes over them as he moves towards the open bathroom on the other side of the bedroom.

A woman is tied to the bathroom door handle. She sits on the tiled floor slumped against the door. Her eyes stare blankly at the ground. She has considerable bruises on her face and arms.

David stands before her.

DAVID
(soft)
Where is he?

The woman doesn't answer, but a SOUND COMES FROM THE SCREEN DOOR nearby. The curtains draping the screen door move with the wind from outside.

David crosses the room and pushes aside the curtain. It leads to a small balcony. An empty lawn chair is the only thing on it.

David steps onto the balcony and looks down.

The rain still pours down unmercifully. It comes down on a black tarp that covers a pool in the backyard.

David turns to go back inside.

A BLURR OF ORANGE ATTACKS HIM.

The collision is sudden and explosive. The huge man drives his shoulder into David's chest and takes him off his feet. David's body flips over the railing.

The dark green rain poncho flaps in the wind as he falls two stories directly towards the black tarp.

CUT TO:

EXT. POOL - NIGHT

David lands on his stomach with a TREMENDOUS SLAP onto the nylon black tarp.

There's a thin layer of rain water on the tarp's surface. David is laying on his cheek. Half his face is covered in water.

Beat. David's exposed eye looks around in a daze. The surface of the tarp gets pounded by the rain.

David uses his hands to push his body off the tarp. His hands sink into the water as his pressure pushes the tarp down.

THE FIRST SOUNDS OF NYLON SLIDING AGAINST CONCRETE START.

David stops pushing. His vision catches the corner of the swimming pool as the tarp slides out from under the sand bags that hold it in place.

The tarp sags. David becomes utterly still. THE SOUND CONTINUES ANYWAY.

One by one the tarp starts sliding out from under the sand bags all around the edge of the pool.

And then without warning, the tarp caves in. It folds around David as he and the tarp get pulled UNDER THE COLD DARK WATER.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDER WATER - NIGHT

David's body is tangled in the pool cover. His legs and arms thrash against the constricting black tarp. He's drowning.

GLIMPSES OF LIGHT FROM THE HOUSE PIERCE THE DARKNESS UNDER WATER. THE BLURRED IMAGE OF A DISTANT FIGURE HIGH ABOVE ON A BALCONY FLICKERS AND DISAPPEARS.

The last of the tarp slides out from under the sandbags that hold it in place around the edge of the pool.

The rain keeps falling.

The tarp moves like it's alive underwater. It shifts and wraps David tighter with every movement.

GLIMPSES OF LIGHT AGAIN. TWO SMALL FIGURES NOW STAND IN A BLURRED SILHOUETTE NEAR THE EDGE OF THE POOL.

FLASHES OF SOMETHING SHINY THEY'RE HOLDING... A ROD OR POLE... IT'S SHAKY NEBULOUS IMAGE WAIVERS IN THE AIR ABOVE THE SURFACE.

David's only free hand reaches for the light. It catches the silver pole.

The tangled mass of David and the tarp are pulled slowly towards the edge of the pool. David's head and shoulders emerge from the darkness. He takes hold of the pool's edge.

Huge desperate breaths as he pulls his body out from the water and the grasp of the tarp. He hauls himself onto the ground.

He sits hunched over in a dark mass, his head down under his hood. The rain poncho covering him like a blanket. Beat.

He rises to his feet. The water rushes off of him. His breathing is slowing, calming.

He stands in a silhouette from the light of the house. He turns and looks to the two small figures standing near the edge of the pool.

The children from the bathroom stand still in the rain. They're holding an aluminum pole with a brush head for cleaning the pool. They stare up at the hooded figure.

No one says anything.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The man in the orange one-piece uniform stands over the woman tied to the door handle of the bathroom. His back is to us. He's drinking from a beer bottle as he looks down at her.

He doesn't notice the third presence come into the room. He doesn't hear him move closer. Right behind him.

The man in orange takes another sip of his beer, not realizing an arm is reaching over him... He doesn't get to swallow the sip in his mouth.

David Dunne's powerful arm wraps around the man's thick neck. David's hands clamp together like an iron vise. He squeezes.

The man's beer bottle crashes to the ground as his neck begins to get crushed.

David yanks back hard, pulls the man off balance. The man's legs push back violently, sending both of them backwards across the room. They come to a hard stop as David's back gets RAMMED INTO THE BEDROOM WALL.

The huge man in orange pulls away and then SLAMS DAVID harder against the wall. David's arm remains locked around his throat.

The man becomes frantic. His face turning dark red. He clutches at David's arm. He spins, taking David with him into another wall. The IMPACT IS TREMENDOUS. The room shakes. David holds on. His face bent low and hidden under his hood.

And then the man in orange throws a powerful elbow back. It lands hard right in David's side. David groans. The huge man delivers another one. Savage, desperate blows. WE HEAR THE IMPACT OF EACH ONE WITH DAVID'S BODY. And David never lets go.

The elbows slow and then stop. The legs of the man in orange start to buckle.

David pulls him back onto his heels. He turns him in a half circle. All of his tremendous weight is hanging from David's arm now. David LETS OUT A YELL AS HE APPLIES ALL HIS STRENGTH. The man's legs stop kicking.

David keeps turning him. The man's body goes completely limp. David's just dragging two hundred and seventy-five pounds of weight in a circle over the carpet now.

David slowly comes to a stop. He stands there with his arm wrapped around the man's neck....The man's limbs dangle down to the ground. Beat.

David's hands let go of each other. His arm slips out from under the man's jaw. The man in orange crumples to the ground like a rag doll. The only SOUND IN THE ROOM IS DAVID'S HEAVY BREATHING. Beat.

He moves to the woman slumped against the door. He starts to untie the phone cords that bind her wrists to the handle. He whispers to her.

DAVID

(soft)

It's over now.

(beat)

Your children are fine. They're getting help.

He unties her wrists. Her arms stay above her head where they were.

DAVID

(soft)

I'm going to go now.

He stares at the woman whose eyes stare blankly at him. She sits unnaturally still against the door with her arms above her head.

The mascara that has run down her face and dried, has tracks where countless tears have rolled down.

David moves his hand near her mouth and nose. He checks for the feeling of breath against his hand. Beat.

He rises up. Removes his hood. David Dunne stands silently in the master bedroom of someone's house and gazes at the dead woman frozen in a slumped position against her bathroom door.

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT HALL - NIGHT

The front door opens to SILENCE. The silhouetted figure of David steps into the darkness of his home.

CUT TO:

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

The dark green faded security poncho gets hung back on its hook in the closet next to the family winter coats.

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David enters the quiet of Jeremy's room. Jeremy lays sound asleep. David stares down at the shadowy figure of his son.

He pulls the blanket over the boy's small shoulder.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David sits on the edge of the empty bed in the darkness of his room.

He doesn't makes a sound. He doesn't move an inch. He is so still, he seems to disappear into the shadows of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Megan stirs in her sleep. She shifts her head on the pillow.

Then her body RISES INTO THE AIR.

She starts to wake as she floats across the room. She opens her eyes and sees David close by. He's carrying her in her arms. He moves up the stairs with her. No words are spoken.

CUT TO:

INT. THEIR BEDROOM - NIGHT

They enter their bedroom. David lays her down gently on her side of the bed.

She watches as he walks out of sight. He lays down right behind her.

He covers her with his arm... His hand is shaking. Beat. He speaks softly.

DAVID

(soft)

I had a bad dream.

David tucks his head in close to hers and closes his eyes.

Megan lays stunned in her husband's arms. Beat.

MEGAN

(soft)

It's over now.

She closes her eyes too as the tears start coming.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Downtown Philadelphia.

People move up and down the sidewalks in front of the storefronts. David Dunne is among them.

He crosses the street in front of The Limited Edition. The front doors of the store are open.

A banner over the door reads, "Annual Sale."

CUT TO:

INT. LIMITED EDITION - DAY

The compact store is crowded with customers.

David spots Elijah with a group of people before a framed painting of a comic hero.

David moves to a less crowded area of the store and waits. He turns and looks at a framed sketch.

Beat. An older woman walks over from a near by picture and joins David.

WOMAN

...See the villain's eyes.

(MORE)

WOMAN (CONT'D)

They're larger than the other characters'. They insinuate a slightly skewed perspective of how they see the world. Just off normal.

David stares at the drawing.

DAVID

He doesn't look very threatening.

WOMAN

That's what I said to my son. He said, there's always two kinds. The soldier villain who fights the hero with his hands, and then there's the real threat. The brilliant and evil arch enemy who fights the hero with his mind.

David turns and looks at the striking and beautiful African American woman in her sixties who stands next to him.

DAVID

Are you Elijah's mother?

The woman turns and looks at David for the first time.

ELIJAH'S MOTHER

I am. I'm helping him with the sale.

DAVID

It's a pleasure to meet you. I'm David Dunne.

ELIJAH'S MOTHER

He's spoken of you. He says you're becoming friends.

DAVID

We are.

David looks across the store at Elijah talking with the customers.

DAVID

He's doing well today.

ELIJAH'S MOTHER

I'm very proud of him.

(beat)

He's been through a lot in his life. A lot of ups and downs, a lot of bad spells. A couple I'd thought had broken him... I mean emotionallly.

(MORE)

ELIJAH'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

(beat)

They were bad... But he made it.
Yes he did.

DAVID

He's kind of a miracle.

ELIJAH'S MOTHER

Yes he is.

They both watch Elijah from across the room.

ELIJAH'S MOTHER

I'll tell him you're here.

David watches as Elijah's mother walks across the store and waits for Elijah to finish talking.

David turns back to the framed sketch. He looks at it with his hands in his pockets. Beat.

David's stare turns into a gaze. His gaze turns into stillness.

THE SKETCH is of a withered man with large tense eyes. He sits in the shadows. He's seated in some type of machine. There are lots of buttons and levers on the machine. The machine has wheels.

David turns from the sketch. He looks across the room to Elijah seated in his wheelchair. Elijah's large eyes stay focused on the customer's as he finishes negotiating.

David turns back to the sketch. He looks at it with growing confusion. The more you look at drawing, the more the machine the man is seated in looks like a wheelchair.

David looks back across the store. Elijah and his mother are talking. Elijah has spotted David.

Beat. Elijah starts across the crowded store towards David. He wheels up to him.

ELIJAH

Did you see this?

Elijah has a newspaper on his lap. He holds it up.

There's a drawing on the front page. It's a hooded figure shielding two huddled children behind him.

ELIJAH

(soft)

It has begun.

David stares quietly at the sketch of himself.

ELIJAH

When I saw it this morning. I felt
a part of the world again.

Elijah looks down at the newspaper.

David hesitates and then reaches forward.

He reaches past the paper... And TOUCHES ELIJAH'S ARM.

FLASHCUT: AN AIRPORT GATE. ELIJAH IS STANDING AT THE WINDOW
LOOKING OUT ONTO THE AIRFIELD. HE'S CRYING.

SIRENS START SOUNDING THROUGHOUT THE AIRPORT.

WAITING PASSENGERS START GETTING UP AND MOVING TO THE WINDOWS.

MAN

What's going on?

Elijah speaks to no one in particular as he stares out the
window with tortured eyes.

ELIJAH

A plane just crashed.

CUT TO:

FLASH CUT: ELIJAH AND AN ELDERLY MAN IN A UNIFORM ARE SEATED
IN A HOTEL BAR.

ELDERLY MAN

I've worked here twenty-five years.
I know all its secrets.

ELIJAH

Secrets?

ELDERLY MAN

(whispers)

Like if there was ever a fire on
floors one, two, or three... Everyone
in this hotel would be burned alive.

ELIJAH LOOKS UP FROM HIS DRINK.

CUT TO:

FLASHCUT: ELIJAH LEAVES THE ENGINEERING ROOM OF AN AMTRAK
TRAIN. HE PASSES THE ENGINEER WHO HAS JUST ARRIVED WITH
COFFEE.

ENGINEER

Passengers aren't allowed in there.

Elijah doesn't answer and doesn't turn around as he exits
train 177.

SLAM CUT BACK TO PRESENT:

David takes two unsteady steps back. Elijah has tears in his eyes as he gazes down at the newspaper. He looks up to David.

ELIJAH

(low voice)

I almost gave up hope. There were so many times I questioned myself. I've made so many sacrifices but it's all been worth it.

(beat)

There are millions and millions of mediocre people in the world David. Isn't it great that we aren't one of them?

David looks like he stopped breathing as he backs up in the store.

Customers step between him and Elijah. Elijah becomes obscured and then blocked from view.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

David emerges from the store slowly. He braces himself against a parked car and then keeps on walking in a nightmarish daze.

WE PULL BACK as David Dunne blends in with dozens and dozens of ordinary people, walking on an ordinary street, in an ordinary city.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END