

THE NINES

Written by
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SCRIPT

FINAL

2006

November

READER NOTE

One thing that will be obvious to viewers, but not to readers, is that the nine principal parts in this film are played by only three actors:

- 1) Gary, Gavin, Gabriel
- 2) Sarah, Susan, Sierra
- 3) Margaret, Melissa, Mary

It'll make more sense in context. Promise.

100
100

A MAN'S HAND

unwinds a short length of green string. We're extremely close, with a shallow, blurry focus. It's like the first moments after a dream -- just fragments.

Scissors cut the string. The man wraps it around his left wrist. A loop. A bracelet.

We see the man's teeth, the edge of his chin as he pulls the knot tight.

His fingers pull against the string. Solid. It won't break easily.

FADE OUT.

101
101

PITCH BLACK

There's no music. No sound at all, really, except for some distant birds CHIRPING.

Then a SQUEAK. A SQUEAL as rusty springs engage.

A GARAGE DOOR LIFTS,

revealing GARY BANKS in silhouette. He's 30, effortlessly fit, with movie-star good looks. (Although for now, he's merely a TV star.)

Like most Laurel Canyon garages, this one has never held a car. Instead, it's the resting place for all the detritus of bachelordom: shitty Ikea furniture, a drum set, a styrofoam snowman, and the Harley he always meant to get running.

Gary spots what he was looking for.

CUT TO:

102
102

EXT. BACK PATIO / LAUREL CANYON HOUSE - MAGIC HOUR (DAWN)

Gary drags a beaten Weber kettle. One of its wheels is broken, SCRAPING against the deck.

WIDER, we see Gary's house has an incredible view of the city. He couldn't fucking care less.

He yanks the circular grill out of the Weber and throws it down the canyon.

2.

He empties a garbage bag into the barbecue: mostly women's clothes, but also some stuffed animals and photos still in their frames. There's too much to fit, so he tries stomping it down with a flip-flopped foot.

He cracks open a container of lighter fluid and begins

drenching everything inside. He sprays until the container is WHEEZING air. He shakes it, making sure it's really empty.

Then he cracks open a new container and keeps spraying. And spraying.

We follow the dripping fluid as it runs across a photo of Gary and a BLONDE WOMAN. Her eyes are scratched out, making her unrecognizable.

Under the grill, lighter fluid is dripping in a stream, soaking into the wooden deck.

Finally satisfied, Gary throws the lighter fluid aside. He takes five steps back and pulls a box of matches from his pocket.

103

103

EXTREMELY CLOSE as the match SCRAPES, erupting in flames.

On Gary's left wrist, we see a green string bracelet.

MUSIC STARTS: a pounding, hypnotic track that will carry us through these MAIN TITLES.

In EPIC SLOW-MOTION, we follow the burning match as it sails through the air, tumbling end-over-end.

Just as it's about to reach its target, we...

CUT TO:

104

104

A DIGITAL METER

shoots to 100 miles per gallon. It's the display of Gary's Prius. We are...

105

105

INT. THE PRIUS - DAY

Gary's at the wheel, driving, as he finishes a fifth of bourbon. JUMP CUTS take us out of Hollywood, heading downtown. Our TRAVELLING MUSIC is serving us well.

Gary stops at a light. He looks left and sees himself on the

side of a bus. It's an ad for CRIME LAB ("This fall, Mondays are killer.") Gary watches himself drive away.

CUT TO:

3.

106 Further along, Gary spots two THUGGY TEENAGERS sitting on a 106 low wall. He calls out to them:

GARY

Hey! Do you sell crack?

The boys look wary.

GARY (CONT'D)

It's cool. I'm only a cop on TV.

QUICK CUTS:

Money changes hands.

Gary holds a small ziplock bag -- and has no idea what to do with its lumpy beige contents.

CUT TO:

107
107

HOLLYWOOD.

Gary pulls up to a curb. He's now on Sunset Blvd. A matronly black streetwalker (OCTAVIA, 35) approaches the passenger window.

Gary holds up the little bag.

GARY

Is this crack?

She takes a closer look.

GARY (CONT'D)

Do you know how to do it?

CUT TO:

108
108

INT. SHITTY MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Gary and Octavia jump up and down on the bed, each trying to bounce higher than the other, LAUGHING all the while.

Gary bounces so high that he THUNKS his head against the ceiling. He crumples, falling off the bed. But he's still laughing.

CUT TO:

109
109

LATER, Octavia is sleeping.

4.

110
110

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Gary takes a shower with his jeans on.

111
111

INT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Towelings off, Gary looks at his body in the mirror. He notices something odd. He tries to wake Octavia up, but she's down for the count.

Looking around, he finds his cell phone. Dials 911. Pacing, he tries to sober up while it rings. The far side answers.

GARY

Yes, hello. I'm having a medical situation. Yes. Okay. I don't have a belly button.

(explaining carefully)

I do not have a belly button where I should, on my belly. And I'm concerned, because I don't know if that's...

He sits down on the edge of the bed.

GARY (CONT'D)

Can a person live without a belly button? Because if you think about

it, you're born with one. So if
you don't have one, you're unborn
and it's really hazy whether you're
alive or not. I guess I'm
wondering: am I alive?
 (a sudden thought)
Or what if I'm God?

A beat.

GARY (CONT'D)

No, no. I'm totally sober.

A beat.

GARY (CONT'D)

No, I don't think I need an
ambulance. I don't seem to be
dying any faster than usual. But I
should probably go to the hospital,
don't you think? Yeah, I should.

He hangs up.

CUT TO:

5.

112
112

INT. THE PRIUS - DAY

He's driving again, but most of his attention is focused on
trying to locate his missing navel.

He looks up in the rear-view mirror, where he sees two

A113
A113

VERSIONS OF HIMSELF

sitting in the back seat. All three Garys give each other
thumbs-up.

Driver-Gary looks out the driver-side window, where he sees
shoes and asphalt. Only now do we ROTATE to reveal we're

B113
B113

UPSIDE-DOWN.

Gary has rolled the car.

The music suddenly STOPS. We hear SIRENS approaching.

CUT TO BLACK.

113
113

TITLE OVER:

Part One:
THE PRISONER

FADE IN:

114
114

INT. COURTHOUSE PROCESSING AREA - DAY

MARGARET O'REILLY, 34, is speaking to herself.

MARGARET

La la la la la. Like you've never
done worse.

From a NEW ANGLE, we see she's using a cell phone earpiece.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Okay, yes. He totalled a car. But
it was an environmentally friendly
car. Why doesn't that get
reported?

A beat.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Please! He was heartbroken,
betrayed. You say you understand
but you don't. You can't. You're
like a big giant Vulcan.

6.

Noticing something to her right...

MARGARET (CONT'D)

He's coming. I'll call you later.

She hangs up, wrapping the earpiece around her phone. We
reveal

GARY

being escorted through glass doors by a polo-shirted PAROLE OFFICER. Margaret moves to intercept them, offering a hand.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Hi. Margaret. I work for Lola.

GARY

Gary.

MARGARET

I know.

(to the Parole Officer)

We need to go out the back.

CUT TO:

115

115

INT. BACK HALLWAY - DAY

Margaret leads the way. She's been here before.

GARY

Are there reporters out front?

MARGARET

A few. Not Hugh Grant level. More like Robert Downey, Jr. when he broke into that family's house and slept in the kid's bed like Goldilocks. "This bed is just right." I handled episodes two through four for Robert. This sort of thing is my specialty.

GARY

What is?

MARGARET

Famous fuck-ups. Don't worry. Mama's gonna take good care of you.

A phone RINGS.

CUT TO:

116

116

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A designer kitchen in Hancock Park -- spacious and kosher-ready. The phone on the counter is RINGING.

PAROLE OFFICER

Answer it.

Gary picks it up.

GARY

Hello? Yes. Yes.

He looks to Margaret while the other end of the call talks at length. Then, very deliberately...

GARY (CONT'D)

The weather in Toledo is rainy.

He says this like a sleeper agent repeating his trigger phrase.

PAROLE OFFICER

Use your normal voice.

GARY

(to the phone)

Nine dogs ran through the field.

The koala sits in the tree.

The Parole Officer takes the phone from him, punching in a series of numbers and jotting notes on his work sheet.

MARGARET

It's computer voice recognition.
The system can call you any time
day or night. If you don't answer
within five rings, the police come
and haul your ass off.

GARY

What if I'm not here?

Catching the officer's concerned look...

MARGARET

That's why it's called house
arrest. You stay inside your
house.

(to the officer)

He can take direction, I promise.

CUT TO:

8.

117
117

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Margaret pulls open curtains, flooding the room with light.
Gary wanders, checking it all out.

MARGARET

Okay, just so it's said, this house
is flammable.

GARY

I didn't mean to burn down my
house.

MARGARET

Yeah, I didn't mean to eat my way
into a ten-year shame spiral, but I
did, and it's healthier to
acknowledge it.

(moving on)

This flammable house belongs to one
of Lola's other fabulous clients,
who is currently shooting a pilot
in Toronto.

GARY

Actor?

MARGARET

Writer. So for the next six weeks,
su casa es su casa. I say, feel
free to wear his clothes. He'll
probably get a sick thrill of out
it. The gays.

Noticing two crates...

GARY

He has dogs?

MARGARET

They're away at summer camp. Now,
try the bed.

He lies back on it, feeling it out.

GARY

It's fine.

MARGARET

Comfortable?

GARY

Sure.

She massages his besocked feet.

9.

MARGARET

Look, Gary, I know this has been crazy and stressful. I want you to feel safe. And comfortable.

GARY

I do.

MARGARET

I'm a fan of yours, you know. Your number-one fan.

Gary looks over his toes at Margaret. From this angle, she looks a bit like Kathy Bates from Misery.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

But if you fuck this up, I will smash your ankles with a sledge hammer.

A long beat.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

That wouldn't be comfortable for either of us.

CUT TO:

118

118

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Margaret boxes up the alcohol while Gary bounces a lime on the island.

MARGARET

I'll be coming by twice a day to

check up on you. I'm the only person who should be coming by. No buddies, no pals, no heroin dealers...

GARY

I don't do heroin.

MARGARET

Yeah, crack is classy. And I'm not buying you porn. There's spray-per-view on cable.

GARY

Good. I really wasn't concerned about my career, my family or my future. I just wanted to jack off.

Margaret is a little impressed by this show of backbone.

10.

MARGARET

Let me see your phone.

He hands over his cell phone. She drops it in the contraband box.

GARY

C'mon! All my numbers are in that.

MARGARET

Dial ten digits at random. Whoever answers will be better than the people on this phone.

She picks up the liquor box, ready to go.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

You have my cell number. You have delivery menus. You're fine. Right?

GARY

I guess.

As she leaves, Margaret notices a long butane lighter by the stove. She adds it to the box, just to be sure.

TIME CUT TO:

119
119

INT. HOUSE / VARIOUS - DAY

Gary paces around his new home, trying to get a feel for it.

He plays a few NOTES on the piano.

He looks up at the painting over the staircase: a cliff near the ocean.

He opens random drawers in a Chinese herb cabinet, wondering if there's anything hidden in one of the 46 slots. There isn't.

He takes a long beat to consider three paintings in the dining room, which show the same thing in three different ways.

120
120

EXT. BACKYARD - SUMMER NIGHT

Gary swims laps, trying to exhaust himself.

He stands in the shallow end, listening to the quiet.

11.

121
121

INT. KITCHEN - SUMMER NIGHT

Wearing a fluffy white robe, he looks through the delivery menus.

122
122

INT. FOYER / FRONT DOOR - SUMMER NIGHT

He takes a bag of food from a college-age DELIVERY GUY, who seems to recognize him. Gary pays him, shuts the door.

As he's walking to the kitchen with the food, Gary looks back and sees the Delivery Guy watching him from the front walk. The guy is a little embarrassed, but Gary is pretty used to being stared at.

123
123

INT. KITCHEN - SUMMER NIGHT

Gary unwraps the Thai food. Makes himself a plate.

He watches CRIME LAB on the plasma screen while eating dinner.

GARY (O.S. TV DIALOGUE)

Once we get these samples back to the Crime Lab, we'll know who the real killer is.

124
124

INT. LIBRARY / TV ROOM - NIGHT

Gary scans the shelves, looking for something to read. There are five times more books here than Gary has opened in his lifetime.

He settles on a paperback of Voltaire's Candide.

He lies back on the couch, reading it.

He flips a few pages ahead to see if it gets more interesting. A beat.

CUT TO:

125
125

GARY JACKING OFF

to soft-core pay-per-view. We're CLOSE ON Gary's straining face, but we can hear the pleased MOANS of the actresses as they go down on each other.

Nearing climax, he looks for something to come on. He can't find anything.

12.

126
126

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

His left hand cupped to hold the semen, he pads barefoot from the TV room to the downstairs bathroom. We hear WATER

RUNNING as he washes his hands. Then it shuts off.

We hear a THUNK. Something hard was dropped on the wood floor.

Gary hears it too.

He steps out of the bathroom, looks around. He takes a few silent paces back in our direction, stopping just before he reaches the two-story section of the foyer.

That's when he hears it: CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK on the wooden floor. A JINGLE of metal.

We follow Gary's eyes up to the second-floor walkway. We can hear the little FOOTSTEPS, toe nails CLICKING. Faint PANTING. But there's no dog.

BACK ON Gary, increasingly unsettled. He's directly below the walkway, and can't see up into it.

GARY

Is somebody there? Hello?

He CLAPS his hands twice. Listens.

Nothing.

He's about to venture a step forward when suddenly

THE PHONE RINGS.

He nearly jumps out of his skin. It RINGS two more times before he ducks into the TV room to answer it.

GARY (CONT'D)

Hello?!

(relieved)

Yes. Yes.

He turns his back to the foyer, listening to the instructions on the phone.

GARY (CONT'D)

Nine leopards run through the
jungle.

(listening)

I bought two cakes at the store.

His identity evidently confirmed, he hangs up. He looks back into the foyer.

GARY (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)

The house is haunted. There's a zeitgeist, or something.

127

127

EXT. UPSTAIRS DECK - DAY

Margaret's brought coffee and pastries from Susina.

MARGARET

Poltergeist, and no. Maybe they were rats. L.A. is teaming with rats. They live in the palm trees.

GARY

Sure. Maybe.

He's obviously not convinced.

MARGARET

Okay. You know I'm a licensed psychotherapist.

GARY

Really?

MARGARET

No. I'm a publicist. My job is what other people think of you, not what you think of yourself. So pull your shit together. I am thisclose to getting Christine Walsh to do your piece in Parade.

GARY

Parade? I fucking hate Parade.

MARGARET

Everyone hates Parade. But the people who watch "Crime Lab," they love their Marilyn Vos Savant. Give them a woman of indeterminate age who solves riddles and they are in hee-haw heaven.

GARY

Okay.

MARGARET

One heartfelt act of contrition and maybe the showrunner won't kill off your character between seasons.

He nods. He gets it.

14.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I swear to God, if you go batshit on me...

GARY

I'm not crazy.

MARGARET

Exactly. Exactly.

CUT TO:

128

128

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Gary is lying in the sun, eyes shut. Suddenly, a golf ball hits him on the head.

He sits up, perplexed. For a long moment, he has no idea where the ball came from, until he hears a voice from beyond the wall that separates the properties.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Sorry! Really sorry.

(A practiced ear notices a Canadian accent.)

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Over here. To your left.

(correcting)

Right. Sorry. Right.

He follows the voice to a gap in the hedges at the far corner of the yard, finding SARAH GLEASON. Late 30's, fresh-scrubbed and girlish, she looks more fragile than she really is.

SARAH

I'm working on my putting, if you can believe it.

Indeed, she's holding a putter.

GARY

Not really.

SARAH

Okay. Maybe I was just looking for a way to meet my infamous neighbor. You see, I'm under house arrest, too.

GARY

What did you do?

15.

SARAH

I had sex with my husband.

GARY

That's awful.

SARAH

Nine months later, I had Jaden. That's her over there.

She points to a small portable baby monitor.

GARY

She's cute.

SARAH

She's sleeping for another...
(checks watch)
...seventeen minutes. She keeps to a schedule.

GARY

She sounds really boring.

SARAH

(whispers)
She is.

A beat. A smile between them.

GARY

You're rich. Shouldn't you have a nanny from Ecuador?

SARAH

I'm Canadian.

GARY

(as if that explains it)
Ohhh...

SARAH

I can't work in the U.S. Plus, I want to maintain this air of moral superiority by doing everything myself.

GARY

Very Canadian.

SARAH

Thanks.

Another pregnant pause.

16.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Listen, Jaden goes down again at 2:30. Maybe I could stop by.

GARY

I'm pretty sure I'll be here.

SARAH

It's a date.

GARY

Is it?

She picks up the baby monitor, heading back into her house. Suddenly, she realizes...

SARAH

Oh. I'm Sarah, by the way.

GARY

Gary.

SARAH

Yeah. I know.

CUT TO:

129

129

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Gary brushes his teeth and tongue.

130-131

130-131

OMIT

132

132

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Gary neatens up, tossing out newspapers and delivery boxes.
He plumps pillows.

He looks up at the clock: 2:30.

He sits, trying to read Candide again. He fidgets.

He looks at the clock again: 2:49.

133

133

EXT. BACK PATIO - DAY

Under the pretense of sweeping up leaves, he peers over the wall, looking directly into Sarah's kitchen. But there's no one in there.

134

134

OMIT

17.

135

135

INT. UPSTAIRS WALKWAY - DAY

Gary carefully sets rat traps, staggering them every few feet.

He pokes one with a pencil. The metal arm SNAPS back,
breaking the pencil in two.

136

136

INT. FOYER - DAY

Gary notices that the piano has an electronic device attached

to it. He turns it on.

He opens the piano bench, finding computer disks. A red disk is labelled "Knowing." He puts it in. Hits play.

The piano begins playing by itself, a sensuous but melancholy **CLASSICAL PIECE.**

Gary lies on the floor, listening to it. He stares up at the elaborate chandelier.

137-141

137-

141

OMIT

142

142

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

Gary is sitting on a bench by the front walk, trying to read more of his book. He looks over to see Sarah coming up the steps, carrying the baby monitor and a bottle of chardonnay.

She stops beside him.

SARAH

The best of all possible worlds.

GARY

(confused)

Okay.

SARAH

(pointing to his book)

Voltaire. Candide.

(off his reaction)

Are you actually reading it?

GARY

I thought I was.

He gets up.

SARAH

Sorry I bailed. Jaden had a fever.

18.

GARY

Ah! How boring of her.

She hands him the wine.

SARAH

Housewarming gift.

GARY

Demon liquor.

SARAH

The best part is, I can drink it.
I pumped before I came.

GARY

So did I.

143-144

OMIT

143-144

145

145

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sarah tops off Gary's wine glass. They're both on the couch.
The baby monitor is sitting on the table behind them.

GARY

... so it's kind of hard to prove
that I only meant to burn my ex-
girlfriend's stuff, and not the
entire house.

SARAH

Yeah. Fire's tricky that way.

GARY

How about you? Any history of
arson?

SARAH

Strangely enough...

GARY

I knew it! I could see that little
spark.

SARAH

It wasn't arson. Probably.

A long beat while she decides whether she wants to tell him

the story.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Okay. When I was a little girl,
our house caught on fire.

19.

GARY

Oh shit.

MUSIC begins, providing backing to her monologue.

SARAH

I'll never forget the look on my
father's face as he gathered me up
in his arms and raced through the
burning building, out onto the
pavement.

ON GARY, feeling bad he brought this up, but fascinated at
the same time.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I stood there shivering in my
pajamas and watched the whole world
go up in flames. And when it was
all over, I said to myself, "Is
that all there is to a fire?" Is
that all there is?

As she starts to SING, Gary realizes the story isn't hers at
all. It's Peggy Lee's "Is That All There Is."

SARAH (CONT'D)

Is that all there is, is that all there is?
If that's all there is my friends, then let's
keep dancing.

She leans closer.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Let's break out the booze and have a ball.
If that's all there is.

Standing up, Sarah takes Gary's hands, pulling him off the
couch. She leads him to an open area -- more space for
dancing.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Is that all there is, is that all there is?

If that's all there is my friends, then let's
keep dancing.
Let's break out the booze and have a ball,
If that's all there is.

CUT TO:

146-149
146-149

OMIT

20.

150
150

INT. SARAH'S BATHROOM - DAY [MONOLOGUE]

Sarah leans up to the mirror, trying to get her contacts in.
It's not going well. Her eyes are tearing up.

SARAH

Then I fell in love with the most
wonderful boy in the world. We
would take long walks by the river
or just sit for hours gazing into
each other's eyes. We were so very
much in love. Then one day he went
away and I thought I'd die. But I
didn't. And when I didn't, I said
to myself, "Is that all there is to
love?"

151
151

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sarah and Gary start to dance.

SARAH

Is that all there is?
Is that all there is?
If that's all there is my friends, then let's
keep...

152
152

INT. ANTIQUE HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Deep in the bowels of the store, Sarah is surrounded by vintage lighting fixtures. She's (futilely) trying to match a specific light switch plate.

TO CAMERA:

SARAH

I know what you're thinking.
If that's the way she feels about
it why doesn't she just end it all?
I'm in no hurry for that final
disappointment. I know just as
well as I'm standing here talking
to you, when that final moment
comes and I'm breathing my last
breath, I'll be saying to myself...

153

153

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sarah and Gary become more intimately acquainted on the couch. They still haven't kissed, but hands are running up and down over clothing. Sarah isn't singing anymore, though her voice continues.

21.

SARAH'S VOICE

Is that all there is, is that all there is?
If that's all there is my friends, then let's
keep dancing.
Let's break out the booze and have a ball,
If that's all there...

Just as they're about to kiss,

A BABY HOWLS.

It's the monitor, HISSING and POPPING as Jaden wakes up from her nap, cranky and hungry. Sarah pushes back. Gary tries to close the gap, but she's already standing up.

SARAH

I need to...

GARY

Just...

SARAH

My shoes. Are here. Okay.

As she reaches for one, she knocks over a wine glass.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Crap!

GARY

Don't worry about it. Just...

SARAH

I'm going. Bye.

Carrying both her shoes, she's across the room and out the front door before he can say anything more.

CUT TO:

154

154

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Gary washes the wine glasses, being sure to wash off any trace of lipstick. He dries them and puts them back in the cabinet.

Faced with the remainder of the wine, he considers dumping it down the sink. Instead, he chugs it from the bottle.

He wraps the empty bottle in newspaper and tucks it in the recycling.

155

155

OMIT

22.

156

156

INT. OFFICE / GYM - SUMMER NIGHT

Gary works out hard on the elliptical trainer. He has his iPod cranked with a POUNDING TUNE.

He does abs on a stability ball. He's spent.

157

157

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gary enters from the driveway door, gulping from a water bottle. He starts to look through the delivery menus when he notices an orange Post-It note by the telephone. It reads:

Look for the Nines.

He picks it up, looks at the back. Nothing. Sticks it back down on the counter.

CUT TO:

158

158

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gary sits on the couch with his water bottle, listening to the baby monitor: Sarah is singing a LULLABY. He takes off his shoes and socks. When she's finished...

SARAH (ON MONITOR)

Goodnight, sweetheart.

GARY

Goodnight.

For a long beat, it's quiet. Then we hear RUSTLING.

A crib toy plays a short MELODY. Then a slightly-digital voice speaks:

VOICE

The cat says meow!
The pig says oink!

Gary smiles to himself.

VOICE (CONT'D)

The cow says moo!
The cow says moo!
The cow says moo!

Evidently, Jaden loves the cow.

VOICE (CONT'D)

The dog says, nine. Nine. Nine.
Nine.

Gary looks back. Did he just hear that?

The phone RINGS.

159

159

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Gary answers it on the third ring.

GARY

Hello.

It's the parole system.

GARY (CONT'D)

Yes. Yes. Two trains run through
the forest.

Music STRIKES. We see a sudden change in Gary's expression.
He nearly drops the phone.

Forcing himself not to panic, he pushes the button for
speakerphone. He wants to make sure he's hearing it right.

MALE COMPUTER VOICE

Nine. Nine. Nine. Nine.

Gary backs away from the phone like it might sprout legs and
jump on him. Suddenly, he backs into

SOMEONE ELSE.

He spins around, startled. He only catches a glimpse of THE
MAN -- same height, same build, same everything. The Man is
gone in half an instant, vanished into thin air.

Gary bolts for the door.

Reaching the foyer, Gary steps on a

RAT TRAP,

which SNAPS down on his toes. He SCREAMS, pulling it off.
He looks around to find all eight traps are now on the main
floor, rather than the second-floor walkway.

Limping, he hops out the door. We stay behind, looking out
through the open door.

A160
A160

EXT. WILSHIRE BLVD. - NIGHT

HEADLIGHTS FLARE as cars travel down Miracle Mile, bringing us to a Metro Bus stop -- a semi-enclosed bench with backlit signage.

24.

The far side of the shelter has a one-sheet for Crime Lab. ("This fall, Mondays are murder.") The bench side is a promo poster for a show called Knowing. ("Some fates are chosen for you.")

It's here we find Gary taking a seat, gingerly checking his toes where the rat trap snapped. He's hobbled his way here from the house, which is probably a block away.

There's only a little blood, but his toes really hurt.

Over Gary's shoulder, we see a blonde 8-year old girl (Noelle) watching him with concern. She BANGS on the shelter to get his attention. Gary nearly jumps out of his skin.

GARY

Jesus! You scared the shit out of...

She signs "What's wrong?"

GARY (CONT'D)

(confused)
What?

NOELLE

(signed, subtitled)
You're hurt.

GARY

I don't speak that. Sorry. I don't...

She points to his toes. Getting what she must mean...

GARY (CONT'D)

I'm fine. I'll be fine.

Looking around, he realizes that the little girl is out here by herself.

GARY (CONT'D)

Where are your parents?

She looks at him oddly, not really getting the question.

GARY (CONT'D)

Your mom, your dad. Where are they?

NOELLE

(signed, subtitled)

Mom is at the car. Where you left her.

Again, Gary has no idea what she's saying.

25.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

(signed, subtitled)

You're lost.

GARY

Look, you need to go back, okay? You shouldn't be out here. It's not safe.

Noelle glances to her left.

We hear BWOOP BWOOP as a police cruiser pulls over to the curb.

GARY (CONT'D)

Shit.

We go to a WIDER ANGLE as TWO OFFICERS get out of the car. Gary looks back.

Noelle is gone, though there's really nowhere she could have disappeared.

Putting on his best face for the police...

GARY (CONT'D)

Evening, officers.

CUT TO:

B160

B160

INT./EXT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Handcuffed, Gary is placed in back. He's reserving the right to remain silent.

MARGARET (PRE-LAP)

Once again, the idea of house arrest is you stay inside your house.

160

160

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The same parole officer from earlier attaches a black anklet to Gary's left leg. We see that Gary's left foot also features bandaged toes.

MARGARET

Think of it like an electronic leash. Basically, if you ever go more than 100 feet from the base station...

She points to an electronic device by the wall.

26.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

...the cops come, they throw your ass in jail. If you ever try to take it off, the cops come and throw your ass in jail. And if they ever detect drugs or alcohol in your system...

GARY

...the cops come and throw my ass in jail.

MARGARET

No. I kick your ass. Then the cops come and throw your ass in jail.

The parole officer smiles.

GARY

Do I still have to answer the phone?

MARGARET

No, I'll be doing that from now on. I'm moving into the guest room.

GARY

I don't need a babysitter.

MARGARET

Despite all evidence to the contrary. Don't worry, I'm a cool roomie. Who do you think taught Affleck how to gamble?

The parole officer hits a test button on the anklet, which lets out a PIERCING ALARM.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Let's never hear that again.

CUT TO:

161

161

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

Margaret walks heel-to-toe, counting her steps.

MARGARET

97. 98. 99.

With a piece of chalk, she draws a line on the concrete. She looks back to Gary, who's waiting by the front door.

27.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Behold! The edge of your world.

In the world.

(jumps over the line)

Out of the world. In the world.

Out of the world. Look at me, I'm dancin'!

She starts doing the running man over the line. Even Gary's dark mood is broken.

162

162

OMIT

163

163

EXT. BACK PATIO - NIGHT

Margaret and Gary roast marshmallows over the propane grill to make s'mores. They're giggling.

GARY

So the guy was like, "Do you know fencing?" And I say, of course. That's what it says on my headshot.

MARGARET

Lies!

GARY

Always. So he says, "Foil or epi?"

MARGARET

Epée.

GARY

I say, I'm about equal in both.

MARGARET

Which is true.

GARY

So he tosses me this fucking Conan sword and goes after me. I'm just swinging, trying to stay alive. But I end up cutting his ear.

MARGARET

You cut his ear off?

GARY

Just a little. But I got the job.

Margaret is confused.

28.

MARGARET

Wait. You were in Pirates of the Caribbean?

GARY

Yes. No. Not the movie, the ride. I was like, "Gar! Keep both hands inside the boat!"

Margaret laughs so hard she coughs.

CUT TO:

164
164

INT. UPSTAIRS WALKWAY - NIGHT

Ready for bed, Margaret leans out the guest bedroom door.

MARGARET

Goodnight, fuckface.

Gary looks out his door.

GARY

Goodnight, you filthy whore.

Both doors shut.

CUT TO:

165
165

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Establishing.

MARGARET (PRE-LAP)

It's incredible.

166
166

EXT. BACK PATIO - DAY

Margaret and Gary sip their morning beverages, looking at something spectacular in the yard.

MARGARET

It's incredible.

GARY

I know. Whenever I see them, and I always feel like, damn...

MARGARET

...I was born at the wrong time.

GARY

Exactly.

We REVERSE to see the object of their awe: a giant inflatable jump-o-rama in the shape of a castle.

CUT TO:

167

167

INT. THE CASTLE - DAY

VARIOUS SHOTS: Gary and Margaret jump with all their might, bouncing off the walls, SCREAMING all the time.

When both finally collapse, it becomes strangely tranquil. They're safe inside an inflatable paradise.

Gary scoots over beside Margaret. She puts her head on his arms. It's nice.

Prelap: A doorbell RINGS.

CUT TO:

168

168

INT. FOYER - DAY

Gary opens the door to find Sarah.

SARAH

Where's the warden?

GARY

Groceries.

SARAH

Quite the little missus.

She walks past him, into the house.

169

169

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Sarah crosses to the couch, picking up the baby monitor.

GARY

How's Jaden?

SARAH

Boring. We haven't had nearly the grand old time you two have been having.

There's an edge to her voice.

GARY

You've been watching.

30.

SARAH

Well. I don't want to meddle in your affairs.

GARY

My affairs?

SARAH

Everyone needs affection. I get it.

She's headed back for the door.

GARY

I don't. Are you seriously jealous?

SARAH

The opposite. I just want to protect her.

GARY

From what?

SARAH

From you. Look at you. You date models. Actresses. Tennis players.

GARY

Yeah.

SARAH

On a scale of one to ten, you belong with the Nines. We both know you won't settle for less.

With that, she's gone.

CUT TO:

170
170

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Gary is trying to load dishes into the dishwasher, but has a hard time getting one bowl to fit.

MARGARET

What are "the Nines?"

GARY

What?

He looks over. Margaret holds up the orange sticky note by the phone.

31.

MARGARET

"Look for the Nines."

GARY

It's not mine.

MARGARET

It's your handwriting.

GARY

I didn't write it.

MARGARET

Okay.

She puts it back down. But she doesn't believe him.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

All-ee-all-ee-all-come-free.

GARY

(perplexed)

What?

MARGARET

Nothing.

GARY

Seriously, what?

MARGARET

Nothing. I thought you

were...forget it. Done. Sorry.

171

171

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

At the far edge of the property, Margaret and Gary play backgammon. Their mood is significantly more subdued.

Margaret answers her RINGING cell phone.

MARGARET

Yhello? Hi. What?!

(to Gary)

I have to take this.

He nods. Margaret starts walking back to the house.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Well, who thought it was a good idea letting Courtney into a pottery shop?

32.

Left alone, Gary rolls the dice idly. He gets a 4 and a 5. Rolls again. 4,5. 3,6. 4,5. 3,6. 3,6. 3,6. 4,5.

He keeps rolling, the wheels in his head starting to turn.

172

172

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

Sarah is looking in through the living room windows, trying to spot Gary. Giving up, she turns back to the main steps, only to find...

MARGARET,

who doesn't look pleased.

MARGARET

I know who you are.

SARAH

Really.

MARGARET

I know what you are. And if you
come near him again...

SARAH

You'll what?

Margaret lets that go unanswered. There's obviously
something big we're not privy to.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What are you going to do, M...

She's forgotten Margaret's name -- if she ever knew it.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Sorry, what's he calling you?

MARGARET

Margaret.

SARAH

I like that. "Margaret." Classic.

MARGARET

Why can't you just leave him alone?

SARAH

Alone? He's an actor. If nobody's
watching him, he doesn't really
exist.

(approaching)

And for the record, I'm not the one
deceiving him.

(MORE)

33.

SARAH (CONT'D)

He's going to figure it out
eventually. And when he does, who
do you think he's gonna blame?

Sarah lets her warning land, then walks past Margaret,
heading back down the stairs.

REVEAL Gary watching through the hole in the door.

A173

A173

INT. FOYER - DAY

Gary heard the whole conversation. Or at least enough of it

to be deeply freaked out.

173
173

OMIT

174
174

INT. UPSTAIRS WALKWAY - NIGHT

Margaret leans out her doorway:

MARGARET

Goodnight, ratface.

GARY

Goodnight.

175
175

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gary sits in one of the upholstered chairs, staring at his still-made bed. It's impossible to know what he's thinking, but the wheels are turning.

176
176

EXT. SIDE PATIO - MORNING

Gary opens the newspaper to a page at random. He starts circling things with a red Sharpie.

MACRO CLOSE UP. His pen circles the number nine every time it appears.

As he flips the page, he spots Sarah looking in through the rounded trellis, just a few feet away. She's holding her own newspaper, still in the wrapper.

SARAH

Hey neighbor.

GARY

Hi.

SARAH

Sorry for the psychotic episode.
I'll blame it on hormones.

GARY

Okay.

SARAH

Are you alright? You look a little
Beautiful Mind-ish.

He almost deflects it, but decides to trust her:

GARY

How many times should the number
nine come up? Probablistically?

SARAH

Probablistically?

GARY

(annoyed)
You know what I mean.

SARAH

One time out of ten.

GARY

How about every time?

He hands her the paper through the bars.

GARY (CONT'D)

But they only show up when you look
for them. Looking for them changes
things.

Trying to find an explanation...

SARAH

Some of these are prices. There's
going to be a lot of nines when...

GARY

There is something wrong with the
world.

Sarah looks up slowly. She smiles for an uncomfortably long
beat. She's stalling, thinking.

SARAH

You have an eyelash on your...

here...

She steps forward, and motions for him to lean closer to the bars. Brushing off the non-existent eyelash, she WHISPERS:

35.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I can get you out of here. But you
have to trust me.

MARGARET [O.S.]

Morning.

MARGARET

enters, carrying her tea. She sees Gary by himself, leaning near the bars of the trellis.

MARGARET

Everything okay?

GARY

Peachy.

MARGARET

Peachy's good. I like peaches.

WIDER,

we see that Sarah is flush back against the wall, out of Margaret's line of sight.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

You want coffee?

GARY

Sure.

She turns and heads back into the house. Once she's out of earshot...

GARY (CONT'D)

What do I do?

SARAH

You have to trust me.

177
177

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY [A FEW MINUTES LATER]

CLOSE ON a white plastic device mounted in the corner of the room, about ten feet up. It might be a smoke detector.

Gary stares up at it, intently. He steps forward.

A little red light flicks on inside the unit. After a few seconds it turns off. It's some sort of motion detector.

Gary tests it again, trying to move his arm slowly enough that the light never engages.

36.

Margaret enters, carrying two mugs. She watches him warily.

MARGARET

You okay?

GARY

No.

MARGARET

Oh.

GARY

Tell me about the Nines.

MARGARET

The Nines?

GARY

The Nines.

MARGARET

Sort of hard to start there...

GARY

Try. And don't tell me I'm imagining it. They're showing up everywhere, and I want to know why.

Trying to formulate the simplest truthful explanation:

MARGARET

Best guess? They're your subconscious trying to remind you who you are.

GARY

I'm a Nine?

MARGARET

Yes. It doesn't make a lot of sense of out context.

(offering)

Coffee?

He takes the mug, then reconsiders. Maybe it's laced with something.

GARY

Why don't you drink coffee? You're always drinking tea.

Frustrated, she takes his coffee back and drinks it. She'd really like to drink the whole thing to prove her point, but it's just too hot.

37.

MARGARET

Happy?

She gestures for him to sit down. Reluctantly, he does. She sits across from him.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

You're not going to understand this yet, but we've known each other for like 25 years. One day when I was 12, you called me out of the blue. And we've been talking ever since.

GARY

Talking.

MARGARET

On the phone. Usually.

GARY

I never met you before I came here.

MARGARET

You, Gary, never met me. But you're not always...

(lacking the words)

I can understand why you're a little confused.

GARY

No. I'm a lot confused.

MARGARET

Theories?

GARY

This is all a dream.

MARGARET

No.

GARY

I'm in a coma.

MARGARET

(amused)

No.

GARY

Then I'm dead. This is Hell, or Purgatorium or something.

MARGARET

Okay, a purgatorium is where Romans vomited. But no. This is as real as anything can be.

38.

GARY

(suspicious)

What does that mean?

She sits forward in her chair. By instinct, he sits back.

MARGARET

Everything is what it is. But you're not who you think you are.

178

178

NEW ANGLE (TIME JUMP)

Gary gets up, headed for the front door.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

God, no! Please, Gary, don't.

But he's already outside.

180
180

EXT. FRONT WALKWAY - DAY

He's walking towards the blue chalk perimeter line, headed for Sarah's house.

Leaves fall lazily from the trees, counter-point to the tension.

Margaret calls out from the arched windows.

MARGARET

You don't know what you're doing.

She's almost at tears. He stops at the edge of the chalk line.

GARY

What happens if I cross this line?

The tear in her eye falls.

MARGARET

I don't know. But it's not good.

He very deliberately steps over the line. We hear a thin BEEPING from the house-arrest anklet. He shoots her a look to say, is that all there is?

But the BEEPING grows louder, deeper. It starts to come from all sides, booming, a nuclear-meltdown/self-destruct-sequence-activated DRONE.

Gary suddenly realizes something very, very terrible is about to happen.

39.

GARY

Oh shit.

The world ignites in white-hot atomic flames.

We see the blinding glare erupt behind Margaret, illuminating through her skin, right to the bone.

The same flash catches a leaf in mid-air, sizzling through it like an etched x-ray.

As the light hits Gary, we...

CUT TO BLACK.

40.

READER NOTE: Part 2 is a half-hour episode of a Project Greenlight-style documentary series called "Behind the Screen," which tracks the progress of a one-hour TV drama pilot from conception through delivery. In keeping with the genre, it's very fast and cutty.

INTERVIEW sequences are done to an off-camera interviewer.

Some scenes are unscripted. The gist of these scenes is summarized in italics.

41.

200
200

TITLES OVER:

Part Two:
REALITY TELEVISION

CUT TO:

201
201

ANIMATED TITLES

We RUSH IN on a television set, which spins around revealing a blinding constellation of pixels.

MELISSA (V.O.)
Previously, on "Behind the Screen."

CUT TO:

202
202

EXT. STUDIO LOT - DAY

GAVIN TAYLOR (30) walks to a meeting, with his laptop bag

over his shoulder. He has a tidy, Banana Republic sensibility and an easy smile that belies his manic schedule.

SUSAN (V.O.)

Gavin Taylor's one of the best TV writers out there.

203
203

INT. SUSAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Cluttered and corporate, with stacks of scripts and a few touches of arbitrary quirk. SUSAN HOWARD (35) and Gavin kiss hello.

SUSAN (V.O.)

Every network would kill to work with him.

204
204

INT. GAVIN'S OFFICE / GUESTHOUSE - DAY

INTERVIEW.

GAVIN

"Knowing" is a one-hour drama about a woman whose husband disappears. She starts to believe that her daughter is the key to a dark conspiracy.

42.

205
205

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Gavin pitches his show to the NETWORK BOSSES.

GAVIN

Basically, it's like "Rosemary's Toddler."

206
206

EXT. STUDIO LOT - DAY

Impromptu INTERVIEW. Gavin is beaming.

GAVIN

We sold it in the room.

207

207

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Gavin leans into the speakerphone.

GAVIN

Just tell me Roger liked the script.

208

208

INT. SUSAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Susan is on her speakerphone.

SUSAN

You're shooting a pilot.

209

209

INT. SUSINA COFFEESHOP - DAY

Gavin has coffee with actress MELISSA MCCARTHY (34), his best friend. He's pitching her the idea.

GAVIN (V.O.)

Melissa McCarthy is my first and only choice for the lead.

MELISSA

I love it. I'll do it.

210

210

EXT. FOREST - DAY

An EPK-style INTERVIEW, on the set of the pilot.

MELISSA

Gavin and I have been friends for forever.

211
211

EXT. WARNER BROS. LOT - DAY

Melissa hangs out with her "Gilmore Girls" CAST and CREW.

MELISSA (V.O.)

It's really hard to leave a show
like "Gilmore Girls," but I really
believe in Gavin.

212
212

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Gavin, Susan and a LINE PRODUCER go over the figures.

GAVIN (V.O.)

The only way we can afford to shoot
the pilot is in Canada.

213
213

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Gavin stacks up clothes on his bed, preparing to pack.

GAVIN

It's really hard to think about
leaving for six weeks.

214
214

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

Gavin YELLS:

GAVIN

Action!

A STEADICAM follows Melissa as she gets out the passenger
door of a Toyota Prius, an alarmed look on her face.

215
215

OMIT

216
216

TITLE OVER:

EPISODE 6: POST

CUT TO:

217
217

INT. LAX / BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

A DRIVER holds up a sign for "TAYLOR." Gavin approaches, waves to him. He has a laptop bag over his shoulder.

TITLES identify him as:

44.

Gavin Taylor
Creator / Showrunner

218
218

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM / KITCHEN - DAY

Gavin unlocks the door, entering from the driveway. He's hauling a massive wheeled duffle bag. (Note: This is the same house from Part One.)

We hear the CLATTER of toenails on hardwood floors. Gavin kneels down to greet...

GAVIN

Puggies!

Gavin's PUGS pounce all over him.

219
219

INT. KITCHEN - DAY [MINUTES LATER]

Gavin is on the cordless phone, talking with a friend as he sorts through massive piles of mail.

On his left wrist, we notice the same green string bracelet Gary wore in Part One.

GAVIN (ON PHONE)

It's weird being back. It doesn't
feel like my house anymore.

A220
A220

INT. FOYER - DAY

Gavin sits at the piano, pecking out a haunting melody he's
been fiddling with. He grabs a red diskette and a Sharpie.

GAVIN (V.O.)

At this stage, you have the script
you wrote, and the film you shot,
but you don't know how it's all
going to come together. You just
know how you want it to feel.

He writes "Knowing" on the diskette, and pops it into the
Disclavier unit.

220
220

INT. EDITING SUITE - DAY

Susan, Gavin and the EDITOR watch the cut. Susan is taking
notes on a legal pad.

JUMP CUT TO:

Susan flips to her next note. TITLES list her position as:

45.

Susan Howard
VP, Drama Development

SUSAN

I just don't know if you need the
cold open. People want to get
right to the story.

ANGLE ON the Editor, bristling a bit.

221
221

INT. HALLWAY - DAY [LATER]

Impromptu INTERVIEW.

GAVIN

I invited Susan to see a rough cut because I trust her taste.

INTERCUT editing suite.

SUSAN

Could we be more clear why Mary is so freaked out at that moment?

GAVIN

Wow. I thought it was pretty obvious. And dramatic.

GAVIN [INTERVIEW]

More importantly, I trust her as a barometer of Roger's taste.

SUSAN

I know. But that's Roger's big thing this season. Never let the audience be confused.

CUT TO:

222

222

INT. EDITING SUITE - [LATER THAT] DAY

The Editor hands Melissa a microphone. TITLES list her simply as:

Melissa McCarthy
"Mary"

GAVIN

So we're trying to squeeze in a wild line over this shot of Noelle.

The monitor shows a three-second clip. It's Melissa and a eight year-old actress ("Noelle") in a car.

46.

Melissa's character looks alarmed by something the girl has just done or said.

MELISSA

What's the line?

GAVIN

(quickly)
How could you...

MELISSA

Howkajew?

GAVIN

Yeah.

MELISSA

Howkajew. It sounds like kosher
drug paraphernalia. Like, come on
Shmuley! Have a toke on the
Howkajew.

GAVIN

I know. It's just for the test
screening.

MELISSA

They really think people won't get
it?

GAVIN

The dumb people might not.

MELISSA

I didn't think we were making the
show for dumb people.

A beat.

JUMP CUT TO:

Melissa holds a microphone.

As video footage plays back, we hear three evenly-spaced
LOOPING BEEPS. Where the fourth one would be, Melissa says
the line.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Howkajew...

(again)

How could you...

(again)

How couldjew...

Finished, she hands the mic back to Gavin.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

I feel so dirty.

GAVIN

That's how I like ya.

Melissa giggles.

223-226

223-226

OMIT

227

227

INT. TESTING SERVICE THEATRE - DAY

A MODERATOR explains how it all works to the RECRUITED AUDIENCE.

The test begins.

ANGLE ON a monitor. We see a scene of Melissa (as "Mary") on a forest road.

228

228

INT. TESTING SERVICE / FOCUS GROUP ROOM - DAY

Through a one-way mirror, Gavin and Susan watch as the Moderator asks a group of twelve MALE VIEWERS about the pilot they just watched.

Their comments are mostly positive. Gavin and Susan share relieved looks. She has a notepad, as always.

One AGITATED MAN keeps staring at the mirror, right at Gavin. (We recognize him as the Parole Officer from Part One.)

GAVIN

That guy's looking at me.

SUSAN

He can't see you.

As a test, Gavin waves his arm. The Agitated Man's expression changes slightly, but it's not clear whether it's in reaction or not.

The Moderator directs her next question to the Agitated Man.

MODERATOR

How about you? Did you feel it was...

AGITATED MAN

It's not real.

MODERATOR

And what do you mean by that?

48.

AGITATED MAN

The show's not real. Why can't you see that? Jesus! Are you fucking blind?

(looking at the mirror)

You think you're above it all, don't you? You are trapped here with the rest of them, brother.

He stands up, pushing past the other people to come right up to the one-way glass. He stares directly at Gavin, even though he shouldn't be able to see him.

He SHOUTS:

AGITATED MAN (CONT'D)

Get out. Get out! Oblivio accebit!

Gavin backs away from the glass, freaked out.

CUT TO:

229

229

EXT. STREET - [LATER THAT] DAY

Impromptu INTERVIEW with Gavin, standing beside his Prius. He's clearly still shaken by the experience.

GAVIN

The guy was crazy. Obviously. The show is kinda twisted, and it just flipped something in him.

Gavin sounds like he's trying to convince himself.

PRODUCER'S VOICE (O.C.)

What did he say?

GAVIN

Oblivio accebit. It's Latin.
"Oblivion approaches."

PRODUCER'S VOICE (O.C.)

What do you think it means?

GAVIN

Other than the world is coming to
an end? "Oblivio" also means
forgetting, forgetfulness.

(jump cut)

I think that's what I'm going to
do. Forget it.

CUT TO:

49.

230

230

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gavin hosts a game night: good friends and lots of
cocktails. The guests include Melissa and Susan, along with
SAM, TOM, BRUCE, DANA, JON, KEVIN, JEFF, DAN, and CARL. (We
don't show anyone's names.)

They're playing Celebrity. We go several rounds, keeping the
best of what's said.

CUT TO:

231

231

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Between rounds of Celebrity, party-goers mingle. Gavin is
making a new batch of cocktails -- he obviously has a knack
for it.

Susan pours herself another glass of chardonnay.

SUSAN

Did you have a chance to look at
the cards yet?

GAVIN

They just want it to be even better.

Melissa YELLS from the living room:

MELISSA

Round two is starting without you!

SUSAN

So you'll look at the cards?

GAVIN

Absolutely.

Making his way back to the living room, he stops by the phone. Pulls out an orange Post-It and makes a note.

As he leaves, we go in CLOSE to read it:

LOOK FOR THE NINES

CUT TO:

232

232

INT. SUSAN'S OFFICE - DAY

INTERVIEW.

SUSAN

Sometimes the numbers point things out that you don't want to admit to yourself. In this case, Melissa.

INSERT: Comment cards.

51.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Her overall scores were okay. But if you look at the people who scored the show highest, the one consistent dip was Melissa.

CUT TO:

233

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

233

Susan and Gavin are having lunch.

GAVIN

She doesn't have a ton to do in the pilot. There's so much to set up, you don't get a lot of Melissa-time.

SUSAN

True. That's one of the challenges with a premise pilot.

GAVIN

But the network still likes the show?

SUSAN

Of course. Roger is your biggest cheerleader.

GAVIN

How about above Roger?

SUSAN

Roger calls the shots.

GAVIN

After he consults with the Higher Powers.

SUSAN

True.

GAVIN

Do they like the show?

SUSAN

They haven't seen it. They're watching all the pilots on Friday.

A beat.

GAVIN

Why are you focusing on Melissa?

52.

SUSAN

Because she's the biggest concern.

GAVIN

She's also the biggest star in the show.

SUSAN

No, you're the biggest star. Roger made a huge deal with you, and he went along with casting Melissa when that wasn't his instinct.

GAVIN

Well, hooray for Roger. I don't understand what you want me to do.

SUSAN

Meet with someone.

GAVIN

Who?

SUSAN

Dahlia Salem.

Gavin drops his fork so that it will CLATTER on his plate.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

The network has a holding deal with her.

GAVIN

Yes. And you put her in Gavin's pilot.

SUSAN

It's dead. It's dying. But the network loves Dahlia. So if she could jump over to your show...

GAVIN

Replace Melissa and reshoot the pilot.

SUSAN

Roger would pay for it.

Gavin is nauseous. He has to take a drink to be able to speak.

GAVIN

So is this even about Melissa?

53.

SUSAN

It's about getting your show on the air. That's all that matters in the end.

CUT TO:

234

234

EXT. SUSINA COFFEESHOP - DAY

Establishing.

235

235

INT. SUSINA COFFEESHOP - DAY

Gavin meets with Dahlia Salem. She's pretty, funny, and very cool.

They talk about the other pilot (Gatin's), the role, and how fucked up it is to be having these double-top-secret conversations. It goes well. They seem to genuinely like each other.

236

236

INT. SUSINA - DAY [LATER]

Dahlia is gone.

INTERVIEW with Gavin.

GAVIN

I see why the network loves her. It's just, I wrote the part for Melissa. She's one of my best friends. And in my head, I only see Melissa for the role.

(jump cut)

Could Dahlia do it? Absolutely. It could work. I just don't know if I want it to work.

237

237

OMIT

238
238

INT. PC BANG - NIGHT

A empty storefront in Koreatown, both walls lined with computers for the CUSTOMERS playing high-end videogames.

We

see Gavin playing.

His INTERVIEW is intercut with his intense focus on the screen as he plays "Bad Day L.A."

GAVIN

When I get stressed out, I play videogames. It's my therapy. I can't have them on my own computer, because then I'd never write. So I come down to Koreatown.

(jump cut)

(MORE)

54.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Videogames are better than real life. When you get stuck, you can always hit `reset.' Life needs a reset button.

239
239

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Gavin's on the phone.

GAVIN

If we're really going to replace Melissa, I want to hear it from Roger.

240
240

INT. SUSAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Susan talks to the speakerphone.

INTERCUT GAVIN

SUSAN

Roger's on a flight to London. But I talked with him before he left.

He said yes on Dahlia.

GAVIN

What does that mean?

SUSAN

It means yes.

GAVIN

Yes, replace Melissa?

SUSAN

He wants your show on the air, starring Dahlia. I just got off the phone with her agents. They love it. She loves you.

GAVIN

What about Melissa?

SUSAN

You want me to call her agents?

GAVIN

God no. I'll tell her.

Gavin hangs up. We stay on his side of the conversation.

In the background, we see the door to the driveway swing open by itself.

55.

A beat later, it SLAMS shut.

Gavin is understandably startled.

CUT TO:

241

241

OMIT

242

242

INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

Melissa, wearing a nun's habit, sings "As Long As He Needs Me." A PIANIST is rehearsing with her.

MELISSA

As long as he needs me, I know where I must be...

INTERCUT with on-camera INTERVIEW:

MELISSA (CONT'D)

In-between the pilot and the series, I'm trying to squeeze in a one-woman show.

(edit)

I've always been obsessed with nuns. They're sort of like God's fag-hags.

Melissa spots Gavin entering and sings the rest of the song to him.

CUT TO:

243

243

EXT. WEST HOLLYWOOD BAR - NIGHT

Gavin and Melissa have martinis.

GAVIN

I think my house is haunted.

MELISSA

Your house is really old.

GAVIN

1926. Ever since I got back, I feel like there's someone else there. And then last night, I thought I heard something. A woman singing.

MELISSA

Shit. Like a ghost?

56.

GAVIN

I guess. And then I saw something. I ran into someone.

MELISSA

The woman?

GAVIN

It was a man. I think it was me.

A beat while Melissa processes.

MELISSA

Your house is haunted by yourself?

GAVIN

Yeah.

MELISSA

Gavin, are you alright?

GAVIN

No. No.

He takes a long beat, psyching himself up. What spills out
is heartfelt but clearly rehearsed.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

The network wants to replace you.

MELISSA

Oh my God.

GAVIN

And I'm letting them, because I really want the show on the air. I have all these characters inside my head, and they want to live. I'm the only way they can. This is the only way they can. I have five seasons mapped out, and though it sucks, either you go away, or the show goes. I had to make a decision, and that's the decision I made. I'm sorry.

By the end of it, we can hear the emotion in his voice.
Melissa takes a beat to process.

MELISSA

So it's done. Finished. Decided.

GAVIN

Yes.

57.

MELISSA

I understand. It's not your fault.

You're morally incapable of doing the right thing.

Gavin doesn't rise to the challenge.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Don't get me wrong. I think you do feel bad for me. But that's all you feel for me. You still see me as the fat girl you call on Friday night when a date falls through. Let's go to a movie! Let's go to Fubar! And if you meet a hot piece of ass, don't worry about Melissa, you can apologize tomorrow. Or don't! Same difference. It's not like we're actually friends.

GAVIN

I don't want to do this on camera.

MELISSA

No, because you can't control it. Your little puppets are off their strings, running around. Saying things you didn't write. Reality terrifies you.

GAVIN

Reality.

MELISSA

Yes.

GAVIN

The reality is, you would not be here without me. I gave you your first few roles. And your career is a result of that.

With exaggerated relief...

MELISSA

God, thank you. Thank you for finally playing that card. I always knew you were holding onto it, the "I invented Melissa McCarthy card." Congratulations, you win. The game is over.

She gets up to go, then decides she has one more thing to say:

GAVIN

But hey! At least you're in New
York!

CUT TO:

247

247

INT. TOWNCAR / NEW YORK / DRIVING - DAY

Gavin watches Manhattan roll by out the windows.

59.

248

248

EXT. MANHATTAN HOTEL - DAY

Gavin tips the DRIVER and wheels his luggage into a
skyscraper hotel.

249

249

INT. MANHATTAN HOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

Gavin opens the door to room 1909.

250

250

INT. MANHATTAN HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Gavin checks out the view. We go CLOSE ON a card which
reads:

Congrats!
Love Roger, Susan, and everyone at the network

It came with a fruit tray.

251

251

INT. MANHATTAN HOTEL ELEVATOR - DAY

Gavin, alone, is headed down to the lobby. Impromptu
INTERVIEW continues:

GAVIN

It's surreal being here. None of

this is how I planned it.

The elevator stops at another floor. CAMERA doesn't look as the doors open, but Gavin spots someone he knows.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Hey you!

WOMAN'S VOICE

God. Hi. Gavin.

TURN to find Dahlia Salem. She's hesitant to get on the elevator.

DAHLIA

You're doing your...show.

She means the camera filming them.

GAVIN

Get on. Come join reality television.

She steps on. Hits the button for "Lobby."

GAVIN (CONT'D)

When did you get in?

60.

DAHLIA

Just now. This whole last 24 hours has been surreal.

GAVIN

I just said surreal.

DAHLIA

You're good? I wanted to call you.

GAVIN

Please. Call anytime. I don't sleep.

DAHLIA

I just felt weird about what happened.

Not sure he's following...

GAVIN

Did something happen?

CUT TO:

252
252

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - DAY

Near the hotel, Gavin is on his cell phone.

GAVIN

So I just bumped into Dahlia Salem,
star of my show...

TITLES indicate Gavin's on the phone with his agents.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

... who tells me Gavin's show got
picked up, so no, she won't be in
my show, which makes me wonder,
does my show even exist?

As he listens to the other side, we hear a distant BOOM, and
then a RUSH, like autumn leaves blowing down a street.

Gavin reacts, though none of the PASSERSBY seem to hear it.

Back to the conversation...

GAVIN (CONT'D)

No, I've left word with Roger.
I've left word with Susan. It's
like they've dropped off the face
of the Earth.

61.

253
253

INT. MANHATTAN HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Susan is on her phone. At the same time, she's plowing
through email on her Blackberry.

SUSAN (PRE-LAP)

Right now, the whole schedule's in
flux. You get these missives from
Roger and the Higher Powers...

JUMP CUT

INTERVIEW:

SUSAN (CONT'D)

...but you're not sure what they add up to. Right now, I can't say for certain whether Knowing will end up on the schedule at all.

CUT TO:

254

254

INT. HOTEL GYM - DAY

Gavin talks with JOHN GATINS (34), who's doing abs on an exercise ball.

John Gatins
Creator/Showrunner "Paradise Fields"

GATINS

Look, I'm sorry. But I'm kind of not. I want my show on the air. And I think it was shitty for you to go after Dahlia behind my back.

GAVIN

I heard your show was gone.

GATINS

I "heard" you fired Melissa McCarthy without having a backup. Why would they pick up your show when you don't have a star?

GAVIN

The network wanted Dahlia.

GATINS

Yeah, in my show. We tested right before you. Our numbers were through the roof.

GAVIN

Really.

62.

GATINS

Really. Who's your exec?

GAVIN

Susan Howard.

GATINS

She would know. She was there.
Ask her.

CUT TO:

255

INT. CONFERENCE HALLWAY - DAY

255

Susan is on her cell phone. A cocktail party is in full swing nearby. We can hear the DIN and MUSIC, and see the occasional GUEST looking for the restrooms.

SUSAN

(on phone)

I'm at the UTA party. Yeah. Did you hear about Ricky's assistant? She literally shat herself. No, I saw it.

In the background, we see Gavin approaching. Susan spots him and seizes up a bit. She holds up a one-sec finger to him as she continues her conversation.

GAVIN

I will break your fucking finger.

SUSAN

(to phone)

I'll call you back.

She hangs up. They look each other in the eye, daring each other to go first.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Roger wanted to talk to you personally.

GAVIN

Bullshit.

SUSAN

They're only picking up two dramas.

GAVIN

The rest is, what, reality?

SUSAN

You can go mid-season.

GAVIN

You can go to Hell.

SUSAN

Wow.

She takes a beat, trying to size him up.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

You think I deliberately sabotaged
your show.

GAVIN

Didn't you?

SUSAN

G., I'm on your side. Trust me,
I'm the only one who is trying to
protect you.

GAVIN

Protect me from what? You?
You are psychotic.

SUSAN

There is so much more going
on than you...

GAVIN

All I want to know is why.

SUSAN

You want a motive?

GAVIN

Yes.

SUSAN

This isn't "Crime Lab." No one got
murdered.

GAVIN

My show did. So tell me why.

SUSAN

I had to get you away from her.
She was holding you back.

GAVIN

Melissa.

SUSAN

You had to give her up.

(beat)
C'mon, G. If she really mattered,
you couldn't have betrayed her so
easily.

GAVIN

I didn't.

64.

SUSAN

What, you're the victim? The big
Creator can't stand up to one
little d-girl? It was your choice.
I didn't make you do anything. I
mean, do you have any principles?
Do you believe in anything but your
own ego?

GAVIN

Fuck you.

SUSAN

Your dialogue used to be sharper.
Maybe Gatins could do a polish.

He suddenly punches her, one hit to the face. She drops
hard.

Gavin takes a step back.

Tasting blood, Susan gets to her knees. A wry smile.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Is that all there is?

In the background, we see partygoers responding to the blow.
Susan gets to her feet. She approaches Gavin, hands open.
She's not going to hit him.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Do you feel like a man? Because
I'll tell you a secret.

She leans in very close to his ear. There's a strange
intimacy between them.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

(whisper)
You're not.

She walks away. CLOSE ON Gavin.

256
256

EXT. MANHATTAN SIDEWALK - DAY

We move with Gavin as he walks. He's trying to get away from the camera, but it keeps following him.

He reaches a crosswalk. He has to wait for the light. Finally, he looks INTO CAMERA:

GAVIN

Look, I don't want to do this anymore. My show's not going to happen, so this show is over.

(MORE)

65.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Done. Gone. I'm not going to be your fucking puppet.

OFF-SCREEN VOICE

Are you alright?

Gavin looks left, where an African-American woman is waiting for the same crosswalk. (We recognize her as Octavia, the streetwalker from Part One.)

GAVIN

I'm fine.

OCTAVIA

Who were you talking to?

Gavin looks back towards camera, a strange expression.

MUCH WIDER

We see Gavin and the woman on the corner. There's no camera Gavin could have been talking to. He's understandably perplexed: Where did the documentary crew go?

Was there ever anyone there?

Our CAMERA style has changed: instead of handheld and jerky, we're smooth and slow.

The MUSIC has completely changed, underscoring a sense of creeping dread.

We HOLD for a long beat. The light changes. Still a little unnerved, Octavia begins to cross the street.

Only then do we notice something unusual floating above her head:

A SPHERE OF BLUE LIGHT.

WIDER, we see that everyone on the street has the same kind of sphere floating a foot above their heads. No one seems to see the lights other than Gavin.

Gavin looks around in uneasy fascination, as if he's just landed on an alien world.

A beat, then he has an unsettling thought.

He slowly looks up. Above his own head, he sees the same sphere of light -- only his is bright white. Pulsing. Blinding.

GAVIN

Oh God.

66.

We PULL BACK, RISING UP to a perspective above and behind Gavin. As we do, the edges of the frame creep in, revealing ICONS and unintelligible STATISTICS, changing moment by moment.

A dialog box appears in the center of the screen, reading...

Exit Now?
Unsaved changes will be lost.

[Cancel] [Exit]

An arrow slides back and forth between to the two options. Finally it lands on `Exit.'

A CLICK.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

x177
x177

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY [PART ONE]

We're continuing an earlier scene from the end of Part One.

MARGARET

I can understand why you're a little confused.

GARY

No. I'm a lot confused.

MARGARET

Theories?

GARY

This is all a dream.

MARGARET

No.

GARY

I'm in a coma.

MARGARET

(amused)

No.

GARY

Then I'm dead. This is Hell, or Purgatorium or something.

67.

MARGARET

Okay, a purgatorium is where Romans vomited. But no. This is as real as anything can be.

GARY

(suspicious)

What does that mean?

She sits forward in her chair. By instinct, he sits back.

MARGARET

Everything is what it is. But you're not who you think you are.

GARY

Okay, then. Who am I?

With practiced calm...

MARGARET

You're a multi-dimensional being of vast, almost infinite power. You created this world on a whim, and decided to stick around to see how it turned out. You, this body you're in, is just one of your incarnations. Avatars. Call you what you will.

Not sure he follows...

GARY

Are you saying I'm God?

MARGARET

Technically, no. If God is a ten -- a theoretical ultimate, that-which-no-greater-can-be-imagined -- you're more of a nine.

GARY

So what are you?

MARGARET

Humans are sevens. Monkeys are sixes.

GARY

What are the eights?

MARGARET

Koalas. They're telepathic. Plus, they control the weather.

She didn't mean to get on that tangent...

68.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

What's important is that you, you're the big cheese. El Supremo. You could destroy the world with a single thought.

(suddenly)

Don't, incidentally. Just file that away. But the truth is, you hold all the cards: every church, every candle, every sacrifice -- that's for you. When people pray, they're not praying because they want this thing or that thing. They just don't want to be

forgotten.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

So you understand, I would have
told you earlier, but I didn't...

GARY

Yeah.

MARGARET

Okay.

GARY

I understand. But I don't believe
you.

He gets up to exit. (This is where we jump-cut time earlier.)

FREEZE FRAME.

FADE TO BLACK.

69.

300

300

TITLE OVER BLACK:

Part Three:
KNOWING

FADE IN:

301

301

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

In a WIDE SHOT, we see a vast field, bordered by green
mountains. Unseen BIRDS call out from the trees, while
insects CLICK and WHIRR.

In the distance, we spot swatches of bright colors moving our
way. It's a family: father GABRIEL (34), wife MARY (33) and
daughter NOELLE (8). They're returning from a short day
hike. Mary carries a small videocamera.

Seeing that Noelle is already a ways down the path...

GABRIEL

Noelle! Don't get too far ahead.

Noelle turns around. Instead of speaking, she moves her hands in sign language. (She's mute, not deaf.)

MARY

No. You had ice cream at lunch.

Noelle begs to differ. More signing.

GABRIEL

(to Mary)

Apparently frozen yogurt doesn't count.

MARY

I'll make note.

302

302

EXT. SMALL GRAVEL ROAD - DAY

The family walks up to their car, a blue Toyota Prius. Gabriel sheds his daypack, trying to open the hatchback. It won't lift.

Mary goes to open the passenger door. Locked.

MARY

Did you hit it?

GABRIEL

Shouldn't have to.

70.

He fishes the keys out of his pocket. Presses the remote entry button repeatedly.

Gabriel tries to open the driver's side door. Locked. Even Noelle knows something's wrong.

Gabriel pulls the small mechanical key out of the fob. Unlocks the door and climbs in. Opens the door for Mary and Noelle.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I think we left the overhead light on.

He taps it. Moves the switch.

MARY

Shit.

Noelle signs her made-up representation of "shit."

MARY (CONT'D)

Noelle.

Gabriel slides the key into the slot. Hits "START."
Nothing.

GABRIEL

Battery is dead. Least the starter
is.

Noelle leans forward, aware that this is something serious.

MARY

How do we...?

GABRIEL

We call the service. That's all we
can do.

MARY

It's just the little battery that's
dead, right? The big one is
probably fine.

GABRIEL

I guess.

MARY

We can't jump it from one battery
to the other? Cross-over somehow?

GABRIEL

Who did you marry? MacGyver?

71.

He gets out of the car, retrieving his cell phone. Mary
follows him out. Noticing that he's not dialing...

MARY

Are you getting a signal?

GABRIEL

No. Do you?

She checks her phone. A long beat.

MARY

Yes! One bar.

They're both relieved. Finding the AAA card in his wallet, Gabriel takes the phone and dials.

It's at this moment we notice the familiar green string bracelet around Gabriel's wrist.

In the back seat, Noelle KNOCKS on the window. She signs, asking if everything is okay.

MARY (CONT'D)

We're okay. Daddy's calling people to help us.

Gabriel pulls the phone from his ear. Looks at the screen. Hits redial. Fuck.

GABRIEL

The minute you try to place a call, the bar goes away.

MARY

Keep trying.

GABRIEL

Okay, I'll keep trying, Mary. But it will keep happening.

MARY

Well, what do you want to do?

GABRIEL

I don't know.

He tries redial.

MARY

Maybe if you hold it up higher.

Humoring her, he holds it at arm's length. No good.

72.

GABRIEL

The problem is we're boxed in. It's a canyon.

A beat.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Where we turned off the main road,

it was more open. And higher, too.

MARY

That's at least a mile.

GABRIEL

I can run that.

MARY

So...we stay here?

GABRIEL

You okay with that?

MARY

I don't think we have a choice, so,
yeah. Go.

Half a beat, while each waits for the other to think of a better plan. Neither does.

Gabriel leans down next to Noelle's window.

GABRIEL

Daddy's going to get a truck to
help us out. You take care of your
mom, okay?

Noelle nods.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I'll be right back.

Gabriel gives Mary a quick peck and starts running down the road.

We MOVE IN on Noelle, who smiles a little.

CUT TO:

303

303

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - DAY

Gravel CRUNCHES under Gabriel's shoes as he runs. He keeps an easy pace.

In VARIOUS SHOTS, we get a sense of the distance he's travelling. He passes gulches, meadows and boulder fields.

He finally arrives at the junction of the dirt road and a larger...

304

304

EXT. PAVED ROAD - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Pulling out Mary's cell phone, Gabriel tries to get a signal. By his reaction, it's still iffy.

He dials, but the call drops. Tries again. Just the same.

He looks left. Looks right. Looks back down the dirt road.

He decides to head off to the right, downhill.

305

305

EXT. FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD - DAY

We catch up to Gabriel as he's walking in the middle of the road, still trying unsuccessfully to get a signal.

In the distance, he spots a patch of moving color: a female hiker. A moment's hesitation, then he YELLS out to her:

GABRIEL

Excuse me! Hi! Hello?

She stops, turns.

Gabriel jogs to close the distance. As we approach, we reveal SIERRA, 38. In the past 10 years, she's "made a fresh start" 12 times. In this incarnation, she's a wilderness-loving, Bush-hating, wildly-overeducated clerk at Trader Joe's in Venice.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Excuse me. Do you have a cell phone?

SIERRA

No, I don't. There's no service up here.

GABRIEL

(re: his phone)

Yeah, I'm finding that out.

SIERRA

You can usually get a signal up at
the ranger station.

GABRIEL

Okay...

She points in the opposite direction -- back the way he came.

74.

SIERRA

You follow the road. It's
probably... I don't know. You have
a car?

GABRIEL

It's dead. That's why I need...

SIERRA

Oh...

She pulls a stray hair back from her mouth. Notices him
noticing her.

GABRIEL

Yeah.

A beat. She takes a subtle step closer to the center of the
road.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Are you headed back to your car
now? If you could give me a ride
to a gas station, wherever...

She doesn't leap to extend an invitation. It takes a beat
for Gabriel to figure out why.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Oh. Hey. Look, I'm not some crazy
Ted Bundy guy. I'm not going to
rape you or kill you or anything.

She doesn't seem reassured.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Of course, that's what Ted Bundy
would say. Look, I'm a videogame
designer.
(fishing through wallet)
My wife is an editor. My daughter

is four.

He offers her a family photo. She looks at it, but doesn't take it.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

They're waiting back at the car,
and I want to get some help before
it gets dark.

SIERRA

I can call somebody when I get to
town.

Trying to temper his frustration...

75.

GABRIEL

I believe you. I do. But you
don't know where the car is. And
the guy might not come. We can't
be up here all night.

Sierra backs away.

SIERRA

I'm sorry.

GABRIEL

Don't be sorry. Just help me out
here.

SIERRA

No. I can't. I'm sorry.

Once she feels she's reached a good distance, she turns and
keeps walking.

GABRIEL

Why won't you trust me?

She doesn't turn back, heading down the road.

TRANSITION TO:

306

306

EXT. ROAD / INT. PRIUS - DAY

Mary is sitting in the back seat of the Prius with Noelle,

who's getting tired of her coloring book.

Noelle signs something to Mary, who considers the request.

MARY

Okay, but you have to be careful,
understand? You have to use Big
Girl hands.

Noelle nods. Mary hands her the small video camera. Noelle has some trouble folding out the little screen, but eventually gets it open without any help from her mom.

MARY (CONT'D)

Do you want to see where we were
today?

Noelle nods.

Mary takes the camera back for a second, flipping it to playback mode and rewinding. The blocky video footage zips past.

76.

MARY (CONT'D)

Okay, now hit play. This button.

Noelle does. On the tiny screen, we see Noelle and her father eating lunch by a waterfall. (Mary is filming.)

MARY (CONT'D)

There's you. And there's Daddy.
You're a little movie star, huh?

Noelle smiles. Signs something.

MARY (CONT'D)

He'll be back soon. Don't you
worry.

CUT TO:

307
307

EXT. PAVED ROAD - DAY

Gabriel continues walking, headed back in the direction he came. From behind him...

SIERRA (O.S.)

Hey!

He turns, finding her a ways back. She approaches.

GABRIEL

Were you following me?

SIERRA

Once I was sure you weren't following me. I'm sorry, it's just...

GABRIEL

You thought I was Ted Bundy.

SIERRA

Kinda.

GABRIEL

My name's Gabriel. Bundy.

She smiles.

SIERRA

Sierra.

They shake.

SIERRA (CONT'D)

Weird that there's no cars. At all.

77.

GABRIEL

Yeah.

SIERRA

So, listen. I'm parked that way.

She points off the road, through the forest.

SIERRA (CONT'D)

It's not that far. If you want, I'll give you a ride to town.

GABRIEL

Really?

SIERRA

Yeah. Make up some karma.

GABRIEL

Lead the way.

She does. They cross off the pavement, descending into a dark forest.

TRANSITION TO:

308

308

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Gabriel walks with Sierra. The trees here are taller, creating a cathedral-like ceiling above them.

SIERRA

Okay, confession. I kind of recognized you.

GABRIEL

Really?

SIERRA

I wasn't sure, but I think I saw a picture of you in some videogame magazine my boyfriend had. You're, like, the shit.

GABRIEL

No.

SIERRA

You're like the Quentin Tarantino of that world. A videogame God.

GABRIEL

Not really.

78.

SIERRA

Fine.

GABRIEL

You seriously recognized me off of one photo?

SIERRA

I thought you were kinda hot. Considering.

GABRIEL

Considering..?

SIERRA

Within the subset of videogame people.

GABRIEL

Okay.

SIERRA

I wasn't masturbating to your picture or anything.

GABRIEL

Well, I guess I'm flattered.

SIERRA

You should be. I'm stingy with compliments.

GABRIEL

So your boyfriend plays videogames?

SIERRA

Ex-boyfriend. And yes. Way too many. He used to play Evercrack back in the day, but yours, well, that was like...what's worse than crack?

GABRIEL

Super-crack?

SIERRA

Sure. He was this orc witch doctor guy.

GABRIEL

Shaman?

SIERRA

Yeah. At one point he was spending like, 40 hours a week gathering "thunderleaf" or whatever.

(MORE)

79.

SIERRA (CONT'D)

Then I was his mule, hauling it around because he ran out of space.

GABRIEL

You had an account?

SIERRA

I was part of your world, and you didn't even know it.

GABRIEL

Sorry.

SIERRA

You can make it up to me.

309

309

EXT. ROAD NEAR PRIUS - DAY

Mary is pacing -- but trying not to look like she's pacing. She holds the other cell phone (Gabriel's), which she turns on and off, hoping that somehow she'll get a signal.

Each time she turns it on, we hear the CHIMES.

IN THE PRIUS

Noelle is still playing with the video camera, watching footage of the hike. She decides to wind back further.

CLOSE ON the blocky pixels rushing past.

Noelle hits "play." For now, we just hear the audio.

MAN'S VOICE

...I have five seasons mapped out, and though it sucks, either you go away, or the show goes. I had to make a decision, and that's the decision I made. I'm sorry.

We reveal the screen. We're watching the argument between Gavin and Melissa from Part 2.

MELISSA (ON TAPE)

So it's done. Finished. Decided.

GAVIN (ON TAPE)

Yeah.

Confused, Noelle looks out at her mother, Mary, who is still pacing with the cell phone.

MELISSA (ON TAPE)

I understand.

80.

GAVIN (ON TAPE)

You do?

MELISSA (ON TAPE)

I understand. It's not your fault.
You're morally incapable of doing
the right thing.

Noelle REWINDS further. Blocky pixels RUSH PAST as we...

CUT TO:

310

310

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Sierra continues to lead the way. She seems confident where she's headed, even though there's no real path.

During the conversation, we notice a small tattoo on her right shoulder blade: IX.

SIERRA

So you play a lot of characters at once?

GABRIEL

A couple. Most people do.

SIERRA

You're not most people. You created the world. You know all the secret codes.

GABRIEL

What, like 'God mode'?

SIERRA

That's what you call it?

GABRIEL

That's when you have all the powers, and you can't be killed. It's fine when you're designing, but it's really boring to play. A game isn't fun unless there are

rules.

SIERRA

And you make the rules.

GABRIEL

Yes I do. I mean, you want to give everyone freedom, but they can't handle it. Half your players are teenage boys, and it's like they're programmed to be destructive.

(MORE)

81.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

They deliberately crash the world servers. They'd ruin everything just to prove they could.

A311

A311

INT. FOREST VALE - DAY

Sarah offers Gary her water bottle, which he gladly takes.

Out of nowhere...

SIERRA

Do you think I'm pretty?

She stops, turning to face him.

GABRIEL

What?

SIERRA

Do you think I'm hot? On a purely physical level.

GABRIEL

Sure.

He drinks.

SIERRA

That's a rave.

GABRIEL

Well, I don't know why you're asking.

SIERRA

My ex-boyfriend, the orc, he says,
"What I like about you is that
you're not so hot that I'm afraid
of losing you."

GABRIEL

So where's the orc now?

SIERRA

He's dead. I spiked his water
bottle with a massive quantity of
GHB. He hallucinated, went into
convulsions and died.

He screws the cap back on the water bottle and hands it back.

GABRIEL

Remind me not to piss you off,
Sarah.

82.

SIERRA

Sierra.

He's surprised. He could have sworn her name was Sarah.

GABRIEL

Sorry.

SIERRA

And what makes you think you
haven't pissed me off already?

She smiles, keeps walking.

311

311

EXT. ROAD / INT. PRIUS - DAY

Mary sits down in the front passenger seat of the car.
Noelle is still in back, watching footage on the video
camera.

MARY

How are you doing, kiddo?

Noelle doesn't look up.

MARY (CONT'D)

I was thinking we could all go to
El Cholo for dinner. How would you
feel about some blue corn
enchiladas? Should we ask Daddy
when he gets back?

Without looking up...

NOELLE

He's not coming back.

Mary is stunned. For her part, Noelle seems to have no idea
she just spoke her first words.

We hear three evenly-spaced BEEPS. After the third one, Mary
says:

MARY

How could you...

Mary flinches. It's like someone walked over her grave.

Noelle hands her the camera. The footage is cued to earlier
in Part 2, where Gavin is having Melissa loop in a wild line:

MELISSA (ON TAPE)

Howkajew. How could you. How
could you.

(MORE)

83.

MELISSA (ON TAPE) (CONT'D)

(beat)

I feel so dirty.

GAVIN (ON TAPE)

That's how I like ya.

Mary backs out of the car, as if trying to get away from the
video camera. But she's still holding it.

She hits STOP. Tries to collect herself.

Noelle gets out of the car, but doesn't approach. She
signs,
"Mommy?"

Mary backs away.

CUT TO:

312
312

EXT. FOREST VALE - DAY

Gabriel and Sierra stop for a moment, so he can pull off his outer shirt. For the first time, we see that Gabriel has a large tattoo on his back which looks like this:

IX

He's sweating a lot.

GABRIEL

Am I crazy, or is it getting hotter?

SIERRA

Oh, you're crazy.

She hands him back the water bottle. He gladly drinks.

When she takes the bottle back, she steps forward. The motion leaves them face-to-face. She pauses for a moment, just long enough for him to turn away.

He doesn't.

She kisses him. He doesn't really kiss back -- but he doesn't fight it, either.

She puts a hand on his thigh, sliding up the inside. Only when she reaches his crotch does he pull back.

GABRIEL

I have a wife. And a daughter. They're waiting for me.

SIERRA

Where are they?

84.

GABRIEL

Back at the car.

SIERRA

I mean, which direction?

GABRIEL

They're back...

Gabriel turns, trying to get his bearing. The trees BLUR. He nearly falls over.

He manages to steady himself.

SIERRA

Face it, G.: You don't know where they are. You don't know where you are. We've been walking in circles for an hour.

GABRIEL

Where's your car?

SIERRA

There is no car. That was all a...
(what's the word)
"pretense," I guess. An excuse to get you alone.

Wobbling, Gabriel sits down on a stump. Sierra kneels down in front of him.

SIERRA (CONT'D)

Dizzy, huh? It's probably just the GHB. In the water.

She holds up the water bottle.

FLASH TO:

QUICK FLASHBACKS FROM PARTS ONE AND TWO

313

313

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Gabriel experienced the flashbacks. He felt time move.

GABRIEL

What's happening?

SIERRA

I'm sorry it had to come this, G.
But it'll all be over soon.

85.

GABRIEL

You're trying to kill me.

SIERRA

No! No. This isn't a murder.
It's an intervention.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE.

Images to accompany previous dialogue...

SUSAN

I had to get you away from her. She
was holding you back. You had to
give her up.

GAVIN

Melissa?

SARAH

I can you out of here. But you
have to trust me.

SUSAN

Do you feel like a man? You're
not.

315

EXT. FOREST - DAY

315

Gabriel dry-heaves. Sierra rubs his shoulders.

SIERRA

That's right. Just let it go. Let
it go.

She's genuinely empathetic -- she doesn't enjoy his
suffering.

GABRIEL

Why are you doing this?

SIERRA

You did it to yourself. Admitting
that is the first step.

She comes around to face him. And now we see they're not
alone. Two other familiar faces approach:

THE PAROLE OFFICER/AGITATED MAN, and

OCTAVIA.

They're Nines as well.

SIERRA (CONT'D)

You're a crack-head, G. The thing is, this planet, these people, they're your drug of choice.

CUT TO:

99

99

INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY

[The next sequence bridges multiple earlier scenes from Parts One and Two. Gary/Gavin/Gabriel has one conversation with Sarah/Susan/Sierra, but it's broken up among previous scenes and locations, sometimes for just a line.]

S.

It's not that hard to make a universe. At first, you just checked in every once in a while. See how the Neanderthals were doing. Move some continents around. But then you got more into it. Starting playing a couple of characters of your own. Kings. Slaves. Messiahs. Pretty soon, you were playing 24/7.

G.

How long have I..?

S.

You've been gone for four thousand years. Not that time means the same for us, but...

G.

You came looking for me.

S.

That's what a girl does.

G.

Why now?

x107

x107

EXT. STREET - DAY [PART ONE]

Streetwalker Octavia leans in Gary's car window.

OCTAVIA

Because you forgot who you were.

87.

x228

x228

INT. TESTING ROOM - DAY [PART TWO]

The Agitated Man leans up to the one-way glass.

AGITATED MAN

You forgot this wasn't real.

99

99

INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY

S.

We couldn't just storm in on a fiery chariot. It's your universe. We had to play by your rules. We had to make you see how limited and corrupt your little world was. Don't get me wrong, this world is nice. It's cozy. But do you remember where you came from?

A few beats while it comes back to him. Tears start to build in his eyes. What he's picturing is unspeakably beautiful.

G.

It was warm. And white. Like...

x160

x160

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY [PART ONE]

The Agitated Man/Parole Officer attaches Gary's anklet.

AGITATED MAN

You can't describe it with human words.

x108
x108

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY [PART ONE]

Octavia leans over Gary, who has fallen off the bed.

OCTAVIA

You can't think it with human
thoughts.

99
99

INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY

S.

That's why you have to come back.
Come back with us. With me.

x256
x256

OMIT

88.

316
316

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD / NEAR THE PRIUS - DAY

Mary is sitting on the road. Noelle has her chin on her
mother's shoulder, watching the videotape with her.

ON SCREEN, with tinny audio: (from scene 177)

MARGARET

You could destroy the world with a
single thought.

(suddenly)

Don't, incidentally. Just file
that away. But the truth is, you
hold all the cards: every church,
every candle, every sacrifice --
that's for you. When people pray,
they're not praying because they
want this thing or that thing.
They just don't want to be
forgotten.

BACK TO:

A317
A317

EXT. ROAD / PRIUS - DAY

Mary is still watching the tape. She realizes Noelle isn't watching over her shoulder anymore.

Mary looks around. Her daughter is nowhere to be seen.

MARY

Noelle? Noelle!

CUT TO:

317
317

EXT. FOREST CROSSROADS - DAY

Gabriel and Sierra are back at the junction where the paved road meets the gravel road.

GABRIEL

Maybe if I just cut back, didn't get so involved...

SIERRA

We both know that'll never work. Next week, you'll be back here redesigning the pinecones. You have to quit cold-turkey.

GABRIEL

I can't.

89.

SIERRA

You can. But I can't force you to leave. You have to want it.

She takes his hand, running a finger through the green string bracelet around his wrist.

She kisses him. And then she's gone.

Gabriel stands there for a long beat, considering his decision.

x103
x103

OMIT

318

318

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD / NEAR THE PRIUS - DAY

Panicking, Mary calls out for --

MARY

Noelle! Noelle!

She's nowhere to be found. Then, from behind her...

GABRIEL

She's here.

Gabriel is walking up the gravel road, with Noelle holding his hand.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

I didn't forget you guys.

Mary regards him as a familiar stranger, a beloved imposter.

MARY

Everything okay?

GABRIEL

Absolutely. Let's go home.

MUSIC BEGINS, a song that will carry us through the next sequence.

319

319

INT. PRIUS - DAY

Gabriel climbs into the driver's seat. Both Mary and Noelle watch with interest as he pushes the "START" button. The car BEEPS and engages without any problem.

Everyone fastens their seatbelts.

90.

320

320

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

The Prius drives down the gravel road. Mary tries to keep

her eyes on the scenery, but they keep drifting over to Gabriel, trying to read what he's thinking.

321
321

EXT. CROSSROADS - DAY

The Prius turns on to the paved road. Headlights switch on.

322
322

OMIT

323
323

OMIT

324
324

OMIT

325
325

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The metal gate at the top of the driveway swings open, SQUEALING on its rusty hinges.

326
326

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Gabriel lifts the sleeping Noelle out of the car. Carries her into the house. Mary shuts the door behind them.

327
327

INT. NOELLE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Taking off her shoes, Gabriel tucks Noelle into bed. Turns on a nightlight for her.

328
328

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Gabriel brushes his teeth with an electric toothbrush while Mary reads a magazine on the toilet.

329
329

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gabriel switches off the light. He spoons Mary, who kisses his hand. On both Mary and Gabriel's faces, we see anxiety. Things left unsaid.

330
330

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT [LATER]

Gabriel lies awake, staring at the ceiling.

91.

331
331

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Gabriel's bare feet walk down the carpeted stairs.

332
332

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Gabriel stares at the three paintings on the wall.

333
333

INT. KITCHEN / EXT. BACK YARD - DAWN

Gabriel stands in the doorway, looking out at the inky-blue sky. His eyes are red, tired. He hasn't slept at all.

It's very quiet, except for the occasional precocious BIRD CALL.

Mary enters from the living room, still in her pajamas. He knows she's there. Neither wants to speak.

MARY

You need to go, don't you?

GABRIEL

No. I can stay.

MARY

How long? Forever? Every day,
you'd know what you were missing.

He smiles, a little.

MARY (CONT'D)

What happens? If you go.

GABRIEL

Worst-case scenario? Spontaneous
disintegration into a fiery void.
Oblivio accebit. The end of
everything.

MARY

That's all?

Both smile.

GABRIEL

That probably wouldn't happen. The
basic structure of the universe
should hold. I guess I'm just
worried about the human factor.
You guys kill each other a lot.

92.

MARY

In fairness, that's usually in your
name. Plus we've gotten much more
efficient at it.

A beat.

GABRIEL

I like this world. I like my life,
here, with you and Noelle...

MARY

But it's not real. I'm not really
your wife, you're not really my
husband. On some level, it's all
pretend.

GABRIEL

It's not pretend. There's a reason

you were there, in every version.
You were my sister, my wife, my
best friend...

MARY

That's a little creepy.

GABRIEL

I wanted you close. In one
version, I even told you. I warned
you that some day they might come
for me, and...

MARY

...You'd have to leave. How many
versions were there?

GABRIEL

Ninety. This is the last one.

MARY

Wow.

GABRIEL

I've destroyed billions of people
with a thought. Obliterated them.
And you'd like to think it's
painless...

MARY

Stop. You don't have to explain, or
apologize. Everything that is, is
because of you. If that's all,
that's enough.

With that, there's really nothing more to say.

93.

MARY (CONT'D)

So.

GABRIEL

So.

MARY

Guess you don't really need to pack
anything.

GABRIEL

I'm good.

MARY

You're great. It's been a pleasure.

GABRIEL

Likewise. I love you.

MARY

Love you, too. Ya big lug.

He kisses her. It's not a big, passionate, movie-ending kiss, but rather a fond kiss farewell. At the end of it, he WHISPERS into her ear:

GABRIEL

You're my favorite.

She smiles.

With two fingers, Gabriel BREAKS the green string bracelet around his left wrist.

And in that moment, a film passes over him, like the boundary between water and air.

He's stepped out of this dimension.

Mary is frozen with the same smile on her face, but we notice that she and the kitchen around her have flattened out to two-dimensional images.

She and everything around her has become like wallpaper, slowly curling away, revealing emptiness beneath.

Gabriel collapses into a single, spiky sphere of light.

The light moves through the kitchen, creating waves that ripple through the tissue-thin walls.

Picking up speed, the sphere rushes through the window, heading west.

94.

334

334

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY

As the light flies out over Hancock Park, the mansions and skyscrapers seem unreal, like models.

Reaching Santa Monica, we pass over the ferris wheel at the

end of the pier.

We dive into the blue ocean beneath us, which becomes only a swirling gray fog with a viscous thickness.

We see three lights in the distance. We join them, moving with them.

Further ahead, more lights, circling. It's a loose spiral made of stars, resembling nothing so much as the number 9.

As we get closer and closer, we...

MATCH CUT TO:

A PALE EYE,

opening. We are...

335

335

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Hands reach up, expecting to find glasses, but there are none.

As we PULL OUT, we reveal it's not Mary, Melissa or Margaret, but a fourth person -- just slightly different from any of them. We'll call her M.

She looks first to the spot where Gabriel was standing.

Empty.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Honey, do we have nutmeg?

M looks over at husband Ben, who is busy making pancakes, reading from a recipe.

M

We should.

Coming around from behind Ben, Noelle checks through the spice drawer. M watches her with cautious fascination.

BEN

Cinnamon, too.

M catches her reflection in the toaster. Notices she looks different than she expected.

NOELLE

(to Ben)

If I had a horse...

Noelle turns back with the spices, handing them to Ben one at a time.

NOELLE (CONT'D)

I would name her Cinnamon.

BEN

Really.

NOELLE

And if I had another horse...

BEN

Nutmeg?

NOELLE

No, Flash.

M

Sweetie?

She beckons Noelle over. Tucks back the little girl's hair. Keeping her voice low enough so Ben can't hear:

M (CONT'D)

This is going to sound really strange, but...what's my name?

Noelle only gives her a half-crazy look.

NOELLE

Mmmmmmmmmmm-Mommy.

Noelle smiles. M smiles too, a little embarrassed.

M

Right. Exactly.

Noelle looks her right in the eye.

NOELLE

He's not coming back. But it's gonna be okay. He put the pieces together, it's like...

M

The best of all possible worlds.

Noelle taps her nose.

96.

BEN

Honey? Is it supposed to stick
like this?

Sharing a look...

M

We should help him.

Noelle agrees. They head over to assist.

We MOVE ACROSS the family as they work on the pancakes,
Noelle directing how big the ears on hers should be.

We leave them in the middle of a messy kitchen, gooey
pancakes, and a good life.

FADE OUT.

THE END

97.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

The following scene (Scene 99) is the conversation between S
and G that plays near the end of Part Three. The plan is to
shoot this scene in almost every setup of the film that
involves both characters -- be it in Part One, Two or Three.

So we'll be shooting this scene a lot. We'll then be
intercutting the best of all these moments to create one
sequence.

99

99

INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS

S.

It's not that hard to make a universe. At first, you just checked in every once in a while. See how the Neanderthals were doing. Move some continents around. But then you got more into it. Starting playing a couple of characters of your own. Kings. Slaves. Messiahs. Pretty soon, you were playing 24/7.

G.

How long have I..?

S.

You've been gone for four thousand years. Not that time means the same for us, but...

G.

You came looking for me.

S.

That's what a girl does.

G.

Why now?

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We couldn't just storm in on a fiery chariot. It's your universe. We had to play by your rules. We had to make you see how limited and corrupt your little world was. Don't get me wrong, this world is nice. It's cozy. But do you remember where you came from?

A few beats while it comes back to him. Tears start to build in his eyes. What he's picturing is unspeakably beautiful.

98.

G.

It was warm. And white. Like...

S.

You can't describe it with human words. You can't think it with human thoughts.

(beat)

That's why you have to come back.
Come back with us. With me.