

SHaCKLeS

created by
Angelo Shrine

PART ONE

Release

- 1x01..... The Poisoned**
- 1x02..... The Epoch Book**
- 1x03..... Repossession**
- 1x04..... Dreams or Dots**

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. CALIFORNIA MAXIMUM SECURITY PENITENTIARY (CALMAX) - DAY

SHACKLES CLINK loudly as two PRISON GUARDS escort their prisoner through the echoing corridors of the penitentiary.

The prisoner's hands and feet are chained together, so he can only take tiny steps at a time. A challenge in and of itself, considering just how massive this man is.

A bald head, thick muscles, sweaty features, bulging eyes, and wearing only the standard black prison jump suit, this is our hero, believe it or not. DUNCAN TRUANT (50).

He's silent as the guards escort him to his cell. In fact, the only sounds at all are the clinking of Duncan's SHACKLES.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. MILGATE EPOCH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bedroom is tiny, and conspicuously absent of clutter. There's no personal belongings at all, just a bed, a dresser, and a night stand. A bit typical for an old man who spends most of his life away from home.

There is one thing, though, that distinguishes this room: The dozens of GREEN PLANTS surrounding nearly every square inch of space. Big plants, small plants, hanging ivy, flowering buds... they're all here, and all thriving.

CLOSE ON: the four legs of a metal walker, which CLICK to the ground. We TILT UP the walker, seeing the naked, decrepit, shriveled body of MILGATE EPOCH (90s).

Epoch's hair exists as elegant long strands of white sparsely placed around his wrinkled head.

EPOCH

It's all over....

He walks to his bed and falls on top of the dirty sheets. The walker CRASHES to the ground. But he doesn't care.

WILLIAM (V.O.)

You must promise me....

Epoch MOANS in agony, willing away the voice from his past.

With a shaking arm, Epoch grabs a pen from the night stand and begins WRITING on a piece of paper. He looks up to the ceiling as he writes, his eyes expressing deep pain.

And utter disappointment.

WILLIAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You must promise me....

The hanging plants shine bright in his background, their growth and vigor a sheer contrast to the very essence of death emanating from Milgate Epoch.

EPOCH
(shakily)
I'm sorry! Just... sorry....

Epoch finally finishes writing, then drops the pen. His arm falls to his side, hanging off the bed, then stops moving.

His entire body stops moving.

WILLIAM (V.O.)
(fading away)
*You must promise me. You must
promise me. You must promise....*

CLOSE ON: Epoch's eyes, yellowed and crusted-over, as we slowly TILT UP and away.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - FLASHBACK

We're back in time now, apparently dozens of years, if not a half-century. Epoch (20), sits at the bedside of his ailing father, WILLIAM EPOCH (90s), giving a face to the voice.

William lies on the hospital bed, attached to all kinds of tubes and machines. He looks absolutely deathly, much like Epoch in the opening scene.

Epoch, by contrast, is full of life now, but currently at a moment of weakness as his father dies before his eyes. As he stares down at his father, he hesitates slightly.

EPOCH
Dad....

WILLIAM
(comforting)
Milgate... I'm fine. I feel... as
I'm supposed to.

Epoch grabs his father's wrinkled hand. He slowly brings it up to his face and kisses it lightly.

EPOCH

So.... How is this going to work?

WILLIAM

First, I need you to promise me something.

EPOCH

(a bit taken aback)

All right. Anything, Dad.

William tries desperately to sit up in bed, and eventually does. He stares deep into his son's eyes.

WILLIAM

Have a family.

EPOCH

(relieved)

That's it?! I was kind of planning on that already. So I guess --

WILLIAM

(incessantly)

Get married. Have a son. Have a daughter. It all matters so much in the end. Because love, son... love is what makes this work.

EPOCH

I know.

WILLIAM

Because you can't die with this in you. The results of that would be... nothing less than a human catastrophe.

On those chilling words, Epoch GULPS.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

You must promise me....

EPOCH

I do.

WILLIAM

You must promise me!

EPOCH

Dad! Look at me. I promise. Okay?

William lies back down. And as he does, several tears appear in Epoch's eyes. He quickly rubs them away.

WILLIAM

You were always a good son.

EPOCH

(RE: the machines)

You better hurry, Dad. We don't have much time.

WILLIAM

I love you. Now come... closer.

William grabs Epoch's neck and pulls him in closer.

PAN AWAY from the bed as William begins making horrible, inhuman-sounding GRUNTS and MOANS. Off the sounds.....

RETURN TO:

INT. MILGATE EPOCH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Milgate Epoch lies on the bed, not moving. He's died alone.

And then, all at once, as if by some magical touch, all of the dozens of plants around the room suddenly SHRIVEL UP.

The plants all turn an ugly brown color, as their leaves fall to the ground and big plants topple over in their bases. They're literally DYING before our eyes!

A strange SILENCE fills the room.

ANGLE: Milgate Epoch lies dead on his bed, his arm hanging down over the edge. Brown, crumpled plants adorn every wall.

A Room of Death.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

GO TO MAIN TITLES.

STARRING

Michael Clarke Duncan

Noah Wyle

Macy Gray

Omar Gooding

Raven Symone

John Heard

Tracy Middendorf

Donnie Keshawarz

and

Nichelle Nichols

GUEST STARRING

Bill Bolender DAVID ELROY

Joseph Gordon-Levitt JACQUE

Yearley Smith IMOGEN

Nick Tate WARDEN CROSS

with Kelly Rowan CLARISSA CARUS

and William B. Davis WILLIAM EPOCH

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

C.D. Howard

CREATIVE CONSULTANT

Robert L. Torres

1x01

"The Poisoned"

written and produced by

Angelo Shrine

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. DARKNESS - UNKNOWN TIME

SCREAMS of fear! YELPS of pain!

GUN SHOTS! BLOOD! KNIFE SLICES! BLOOD!

We're CUTTING IN and OUT of various dark locations around the world, never quite getting a feel for where we are before a VIOLENT IMAGE erupts on screen and we CUT AWAY.

EXPLOSIONS! BLOOD!

We see the faces of those responsible -- human faces, but strangely horrific at the same time. These people all have the same idea in mind. Destruction.

PULLING APART LIMBS! BLOOD!

In fact, "people" is too strong of a word for these ruthless killers. Let's call them THE POISONED.

As more blood, more darkness, more screams, and more horror fills the screen, we slowly:

FADE AWAY TO:

INT. CALMAX - SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - MONTHS LATER

CLOSE ON: the large, distant eyes of Duncan Truant, staring ahead at nothing in particular.

PULL OUT to reveal that he's in a confined cell. Four walls, a metal door, a rusty bed, an old toilet. That's it.

THREE MONTHS LATER

BUZZZZZ! The metal door opens.

Duncan looks over, shielding his eyes due to the brightness of the hallway lights.

DUNCAN

Did you warm it up this time? You know I hate cold milk.

WARDEN CROSS enters, an older man, with gray hair on the sides of his bald head. He's completely silent and projects a rather friendly demeanor.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
Warden? What is it?

WARDEN
I... don't know, really.

DUNCAN
Hurry up with it. I've got a busy
day in front of me.

The Warden sits next to the joking Duncan on the bench.

WARDEN
You're... being released.

Duncan LAUGHS loudly! He playfully slaps the warden on his back. Clearly, they have a special bond that's more than just warden/prisoner.

DUNCAN
That's a good one. I've got one for
you. What'd the bartender say to
the drunk ghost?

WARDEN
Duncan, I'm not joking. I just
received word from above. Your
sentence has been... revoked.

Duncan's too shocked at first to speak.

DUNCAN
No. No, no, no. What is this? What
are you doing to me?

The Warden stands, rubbing his legs where his pressed pants had made contact with the old rusty bench.

WARDEN
As of right now --
(checks his watch)
-- 10:13 a.m. on June 4, 2005,
you're a free man, Duncan Truant.
Congratulations.

He steps out of the cell and motions to the standing guard.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Bernie will take you to Collections
where you can pick up your things.
I'll arrange a cab if you'd like,
or should I call Pumpkin?

Duncan just stares ahead. He's completely silent.

DUNCAN
I... don't believe you.

WARDEN
(smiles warmly)
Get out of here. As of right now,
you're trespassing on state
property.

He walks away. Duncan stands slowly, oddly. He stares at BERNIE, the normal-looking prison guard.

BERNIE
What's wrong?

Duncan takes a moment to himself, looking over his tiny cell. Four walls, a metal door, a rusty bed, an old toilet.

DUNCAN
I'd imagine that most guys want to
leave....

With that, he CLEARS HIS THROAT... and steps out of his cell.

CUT TO:

INT. CALMAX - CORRIDOR - LATER

The mood is emotional, as Duncan is being escorted through the halls by the guard. He's wearing a hat and a brown leather coat -- his only materials from Collections.

He walks freely now, no longer wearing shackles.

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)
Are you feeling better?

PUMPKIN (V.O.)
I was.

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)
What happened?

PUMPKIN (V.O.)
He's been released....

The guard escorts Duncan past camera, and out of view.

CUT TO:

EXT. CALMAX - DAY

Duncan stands outside the prison walls, staring up at the huge structure, no longer held by its bars.

The guard opens the gate and drops his hold on the prisoner. For the first time in a long time, Duncan walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

The beautiful, exotic face of PUMPKIN TRUANT (47) fills the screen, putting a face to the voice. Her light-colored, crazy "afro"-like hair stands on end.

Sitting across from her is a FEMALE PSYCHIATRIST with a very comforting voice.

PSYCHIATRIST

And why is that a problem, Pumpkin?

PUMPKIN

(searching herself)

Because... we've all moved on.

PSYCHIATRIST

That's true. But now, this will be Duncan's chance to try to reunite with his family. To live again. Will you give him that chance?

Silence. Followed by Pumpkin grabbing her purse and walking out of the office without even so much as a goodbye.

CUT TO:

EXT. WINE COUNTRY RV PARK - DAY

Duncan steps out of a TAXICAB and looks out at the old TRAILER PARK before him, a wash of emotion on his face. He finds himself staring at an unexpected surprise:

DETECTIVE EDGAR RUNTZER (63), sits on the hood of his '03 Ford sedan. Runtzer has a crew cut, completely gray, which accentuates his tan skin. He's chewing on a long strand of grass, and positively exudes Texas hospitality.

DUNCAN

Detective Runtzer....

RUNTZER
 (thick TEXAN ACCENT)
 I'm lookin' at ya now, and I'm only
 thinking one thing: You get bigger?

Duncan looks himself over. About 250 pounds of thick muscle.

DUNCAN
 Don't know how. I never ate that
 CalMax slop.

RUNTZER
 Twenty-one years and you never got
 used to the food, eh?

DUNCAN
 What are you doing here, Runtz?

There's obviously some kind of animosity between the two men. But looking beyond that, Runtzer gives a huge smile, still chewing on the grass. He has a lighthearted way about him.

RUNTZER
 I'm yer welcome wagon.

DUNCAN
 Where's Pumpkin and Brett?

RUNTZER
 They don't live here no more.

Duncan sees the sign above the entrance to the trailer park: "Wine Country RV Park -- now leasing." He fears the worst.

DUNCAN
 Oh, no. They lose the trailer?

RUNTZER
 Ha! "Lose the trailer" -- that's a
 good one! Tell me, pardner, when's
 the last time you saw your wife?

DUNCAN
 You mean, when's the last time she
 bothered to come visit me? I don't
 know. Three years maybe? She just
 stopped coming....

RUNTZER
 Helluva lot's happened in those
 three years, Dunc. Hulluva lot.

Duncan holds his arms out, indicating he's waiting to hear.

DUNCAN
I've got time.

Runtzer spits out the grass, then slides off the hood of his car. He indicates for Duncan to step into the passenger seat.

Duncan, hesitantly, does so.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - FLASHBACK

BEEP BEEP BEEP!

Milgate Epoch (20) steps out of his father's hospital room, as NURSES rush in, screaming to each other, hearing the old man's heart monitors going crazy.

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)
He was a great man. How did you
know him?

Epoch turns his head to the side slightly.

EPOCH
Taught me everything I know....

Epoch steps away, a proud smile on his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAYS LATER

The sun burns brightly, as a handful of MOURNERS stand at the grave site of William Epoch, including Milgate Epoch.

The PRIEST quietly reads scripture from the Bible. We hear his sermon in the background.

PRIEST (V.O.)
... I know that my Vindicator
lives, and that he will at last
stand forth upon the dust, whom I
myself shall see. My own eyes, not
another's, shall behold him, and
from my flesh I shall see God....

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

The funeral is over. The casket is lowered into the ground, as the last mourners shake hands with Epoch as they exit.

Several yards away, two cemetery workers (a MAN wearing blue suspenders and a BLONDE WOMAN) are waiting to cover the hole with dirt. Epoch spots them, and starts on his way.

As he walks through the cemetery, we read the names on the three TOMBSTONES on either side of his father's: MARY EPOCH, ZACHARY EPOCH, and LILA EPOCH.

If it wasn't clear before, it's certainly clear now: Milgate Epoch is all alone in this world.

FADE TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - PRESENT DAY

Runtzer's Ford sedan is speeding down the road.

INT. RUNTZER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Duncan and Runtzer are inside. It's a fancy car, with a police radio and a DVD player built into the dashboard.

DUNCAN
Cars come with TVs now?

RUNTZER
Some. Here, hand me that sack.

Duncan grabs a plastic bag on the ground and hands it over. Still driving the wheel, Runtzer carefully pulls out a DVD. The text on the cover reads:

"Money Train -- Highlights of Season One!"

DUNCAN
"Money Train"?

He looks closer at the pictures on the cover. In a square box next to several other of the show's contestants is a very exciting-looking Pumpkin Truant.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
What the hell is this?

Runtzer puts the DVD into the player.

RUNTZER
Just an old game show. Well, new to you. Point is, Pumpkin was a contestant. And she won.

DUNCAN

She got on a game show? How much --
How much did she win?

An animated feature comes up on the screen, and Runtzer clicks on the "Big Winners" button.

RUNTZER

Before this show, the highest
amount of money ever won on
American television was 3.3 million
dollars.

DUNCAN

That's a lot of dough.

RUNTZER

It was.

He pushes PLAY, and then watches Duncan's reaction.

ON-SCREEN: A well-dressed host, TROY SWIDDLE, holds hands with a younger, less confident Pumpkin. All kinds of lights are flashing, confetti is falling, balloons rise up from the floor, the whole works. The audience is on their feet, screaming to high heaven.

Pumpkin falls to the ground crying, as two people from the audience run to her side, hugging her. It's BRETT (24) and GILLIAN (18), her supporters.

A title flashes on the screen "NEW GAME-SHOW RECORD!" and based on the reactions from everyone involved, it's big.

DUNCAN

My son.... He looks good. Who's the
girl? Brett's girlfriend?

Runtzer ignores him. Duncan looks back to the monitor.

ON-SCREEN, Troy is holding Pumpkin up, trying to keep her standing. Two SEXY LADIES emerge, holding a massive check.

TROY

(filtered)

America, you've just witnessed
television history! It's my honor
to present you, Pumpkin, with this
check... for 6.4 million dollars!

The crowd ERUPTS again! Pumpkin falls backward in shock, but Brett's there to catch her.

Runtzer leans over and shuts off the DVD.

DUNCAN
6.4... million?

He looks up in shock. It's been quite the day for Duncan, and it's not even noon.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
Where's my family, Runtz?

RUNTZER
They've moved on.
(long beat)
And they don't want nothing to do
with you....

Duncan stares ahead, as Runtzer continues to drive.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - DAY

SWOOP DOWN an elegant staircase, into the enormous FOYER. Expensive decorations furnish the room, filling it with all kinds of WARM COLORS (lots of oranges and reds and blacks).

We hear the sounds of HIGH HEELS on linoleum before we see them. From the side room, in walks KYLEE WILLARD (34), a beautiful blonde wearing an appropriate pantsuit.

She's the family lawyer, and judging by her tone as she speaks into her cell phone, she takes her job very seriously.

KYLEE
No, Maxwell! Because I speak for this family, and I'm telling you no. I'm hanging up now, and when I do, you're going to wonder why in God's name you even bothered to wake me up from my nap.

A woman of her word, she clicks off the phone angrily. On her way through the large foyer, she steps on a thin sheet of white paper, and almost slips onto the ground.

KYLEE (CONT'D)
Hey. Hey! Get over here!

A HISPANIC PAINTER enters the room, wearing brown clothes with splotches of orange paint on them.

KYLEE (CONT'D)

Clean this up, huh? She'll be home any minute.

PAINTER

Yes, Ms. Willard.

KYLEE

Good God in heaven.

She exits the foyer, on her way to her bedroom. The Painter gives an impolite motion with his hand, then goes to work.

CUT TO:

INT. RUNTZER'S CAR - DAY

There's an awkward silence, as Runtzer obviously doesn't want to interrupt Duncan's private thoughts.

DUNCAN

What about Brett? Surely, he --

RUNTZER

After what happened to you, he was destroyed. His own father, in prison. Brett took it upon himself to right the Truant name. To fix what you broke.

(beat)

He worked the beat for a couple years, then finally got the promotion earlier this year. He's a Detective now, Dunc. Working in your old precinct.

Duncan looks down, clearly surprised. A single tear wells in his eye, but he wipes it away, definitely not one for crying.

DUNCAN

This is all just so much. I still can't believe I'm even out.

RUNTZER

Listen. You're going to need to grow yourself a backbone, and fast.

DUNCAN

(caught off-guard)

What are you talking about, Runtz?

RUNTZER

The old, passive Duncan's not gonna work anymore.

Duncan, confused, removes his brown hat.

RUNTZER (CONT'D)

Might want to put that back on.

DUNCAN

What? Why?

RUNTZER

Cause we're here. And it looks like it's gonna rain.

Duncan looks outside at the gloomy weather, then begrudgingly puts the hat back on top of his round, bald head.

EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE - CONTINUOUS

The sedan pulls to a stop... in the middle of the DESERT.

Duncan steps out, staring off into the vast emptiness of desert. Then he turns around... and finds himself looking at a mysterious BLACK LIMOUSINE. It's parked all alone in the middle of the arid landscape.

DUNCAN

What's this?

RUNTZER

Let's just call it... your new life.

WHIRRRR -- the limo's driver's side window slowly rolls down. A GLOVED HAND reaches out and motions him over.

Curious, Duncan approaches the limousine. As he does, the back door opens and awaits for him to enter.

DUNCAN

Now what?

LOOKING INTO THE LIMO: we see that the back seat is huge, and save for one person, it's completely empty.

That one person is MATILDA TRUANT (79). Matilda has puffy white hair on the top of her head, and her face is wrinkled with time. All kinds of NECKLACES hang around her neck, and she's wearing a dark-colored outfit.

Duncan's mouth shoots open as he comes face to face with her.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
What the hell --

MATILDA
(scratchy voice)
How was prison?

DUNCAN
(deadpan)
Confining.

Matilda CHUCKLES, but not in a "laughter" kind of way -- more like she's demeaning him.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
What are you doing here... Mom.

Matilda flinches at the word. She glares out at him.

MATILDA
Are you going to get in the car, or
am I going to have to pull you in
by your teeth?

On the creepy greeting, Duncan looks all around for another option. All he sees is Runtzer's sedan, but that's driving away, zooming across the sand at high speed.

With nowhere else to go, Duncan slowly gets into the limo... and closes the door.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Duncan sits with his back to the windowed partition, staring across at his mother. Matilda has a long-stemmed cigarette in her gloved hand, which she only rarely takes a drag from.

DUNCAN
What is this? Huh?

MATILDA
I'm about to explain.

DUNCAN
What I mean is, how are you out of the hospital? How are you breathing on your own? Last I heard, you were comatose, after having a stroke.

Matilda takes a long drag, then blows the smoke into the air. She doesn't bother opening the windows.

MATILDA
I got better. That was ten years ago when I was sick, alone... dying. And at the hospital, I met a woman. A beautiful woman. She told me a story there. Quite, quite a story. Involving a man named Milgate James Epoch. Involving his gift. And now, his curse.

DUNCAN
(brushing her off)
I can't deal with this right now.

MATILDA
But you will.

DUNCAN
No! I want to see my son! My wife! My God, Mom, the last person I want to see right now is you.

MATILDA
It's up to you. You can step out right now, if you'd like.

Duncan looks out the tinted windows. The limousine sits all alone in the desert, colorless sand on all sides.

DUNCAN

Just... tell me what you want to
tell me, huh?

Matilda takes another long drag of the cigarette, then pushes a button on the ceiling. The separating partition lowers, making visible the back of the DRIVER'S HEAD.

MATILDA

(dictator-like)

We're ready for the photos.

The driver hands a manila FILE FOLDER through the partition. Duncan grabs it and opens it, revealing a PHOTO of Milgate Epoch's body from the Teaser, surrounded by the dead plants.

DUNCAN

What am I looking at?

MATILDA

That's Milgate Epoch. At least, it
was. You recognize him?

DUNCAN

I've never seen this man before.

MATILDA

You're sure?...

(beat)

The photo was taken in Long Beach
in March. It would appear he died
of old age. But a look at all the
dead plantlife around him suggests
something much more serious.

DUNCAN

A disease?

Matilda SCOFFS loudly, then slowly leans in.

MATILDA

What I am about to tell you... is
classified.

DUNCAN

It's what?

MATILDA

I retired from Congress in '93. Got
away. Saw the world. But I kept my
ties. And when I learned of Milgate
Epoch's gift, I used my power to
gain knowledge.

DUNCAN

So you're still, what, working for the government?

MATILDA

My dear boy, when you say it like that, it makes me sound absolutely sinister....

Matilda smiles creepily. She taps her cigarette, and lets the ashes fall down to the floor.

DUNCAN

Look. I haven't seen my family in years. And now Runtzer tells me that they want to move on. So I don't care if you're still working with Congress. I don't care about this dead man. All I care about is reuniting with my family!

Matilda doesn't waste a beat.

MATILDA

Go to the second photo.

Duncan rolls his eyes and flips to the other PHOTO. It's a CLOSE-UP of the NOTE from Epoch's night stand. For the first time, we see what Epoch wrote before he died:

DuNCaN TRuaNT KNøWS

Duncan mouths the strange words to himself.

DUNCAN

"Duncan Truant knows." What do I know? What is this?

MATILDA

You want to tell me again how you've never heard of him, son?

Matilda squints slightly, reading his face... studying him. SILENCE fills the limo. And then --

BANG! BANG-BANG-BANG!

A cascade of BULLETS fire toward the limo -- some of them actually making contact with the car!

DUNCAN

What the hell --

Duncan and Matilda quickly look out the window, where they see a nondescript BLACK CAR come barreling toward them, kicking up sand as it speeds across the desert!

Matilda takes one look to the driver, and SCREECHES loudly.

MATILDA

Go! Drive, dammit!

The driver turns on the ignition and the car comes to life. The limousine plummets ahead, through the desert!

CUT TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - FOYER - DAY

A much calmer scene. The enormous double-doors open into the foyer, and in walks Pumpkin, arriving home from the psychiatrist's. Her eyes are still puffy and red.

GILLIAN (O.S.)

Hey, I heard you got a flat tire?

Pumpkin gasps at GILLIAN, the girl from the DVD, now 21. She has long black hair and is wearing a colorful blue shirt. Gillian's demeanor is extremely pleasant, always smiling.

PUMPKIN

What are you doing here?

GILLIAN

I'm just --

PUMPKIN

I told you to stay away, dammit!
What are you doing here?!

Pumpkin's anger causes Gillian's smile to fade. She looks to the side and holds out her arm. A strapping young lad, JACQUE (19), walks over and holds her hand.

GILLIAN

(through gritted teeth)
Mom, this is Jacques. We've been dating for a few weeks now. Thought you'd want to meet him.
(to Jacques)
Jacques, my mom.

Pumpkin's face falls, clearly embarrassed.

The familiar sounds of HIGH HEELS click on the ground as Kylee enters the foyer, a welcoming smile on her face.

KYLEE

Pumpkin! Hi. I just got the chance to meet Jacques. You know, he's studying to be a teacher.

JACQUE

Nice to meet you, Mrs. Truant.

PUMPKIN

And... you. But you'll have to forgive me, because I'm going to kick both of you out of my house.

(beat)

Today is a very bad day to be here. And Gillian's been told this, so I'm a bit shocked to see her here.

GILLIAN

Hey! We both had the day off, so I just thought --

PUMPKIN

No! I gave you specific orders, young lady. What the hell, Gillian?

Kylee CLEARS HER THROAT and steps forward a bit, in the middle of the bickering mother/daughter.

KYLEE

So... the flat tire. How'd it go? Were you able to fix it?

Clearly, Kylee's not really talking about a flat tire.

PUMPKIN

Kylee, please escort them out.

With that, Pumpkin jogs up the staircase, out of view.

GILLIAN

Whatever. Let's go, Jacques.

JACQUE

Is she normally like this?

Gillian looks up the staircase. As they exit:

GILLIAN

(honestly)

No.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE - DAY

The limousine speeds ahead through the desert! It swerves quickly to avoid sand dunes and other obstacles.

The renegade black car keeps up speed. A gun sticks out the driver's side window, and FIRES again! BANG!

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Duncan and Matilda sit in the back seat, still fixated to the car outside. Duncan looks scared for his life, while Matilda grabs tight to her seat belt, her knuckles turning white.

DUNCAN

What have you gotten me into? Who the hell is that?!

MATILDA

Obviously, someone who doesn't want us to be speaking. They don't want you to know what I know!

Duncan breathes harder and harder, as the limo bounces along.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

We're running out of time....

DUNCAN

Well, get on with it! Tell me!

MATILDA

Milgate Epoch was born in 1964, to William and Mary Epoch.

DUNCAN

Wait, '64? The guy in that photo looks like he was in his 90s!

MATILDA

If I can continue?
(off his quick nod)
The Epoch family possessed a gift, which they passed on, generation to generation. The gift... of healing.

DUNCAN

What, like a medicine man?

MATILDA

No. By breathing into an injured person's lungs, giving them a part of his own life essence.

(MORE)

MATILDA (CONT'D)

(beat)

He received the gift from his father back in 1984. Coincidence?

DUNCAN

The year I was imprisoned? You don't actually think there's something to that?

MATILDA

Apparently they do.

Matilda grabs another long cigarette, but the limo bounces again, and she drops it. Duncan looks outside, just in time to see the black car FIRE another bullet!

This time, the bullet HITS the side window! CLINK.

Duncan winces, expecting the worst... but nothing happens. He stares at the window, at the TINY MARK the bullet made.

DUNCAN

Bulletproof....

MATILDA

Of course.

(beat)

Epoch had a son, but they didn't speak for most of the remainder of his life. And so, he died alone. And the gift died out with him.

DUNCAN

This is just hocus pocus!

MATILDA

It gets worse. What was described to Epoch by his father as a "human catastrophe," and what was told to me by this woman at the hospital... unfortunately, it's all come true.

She looks out the window and glimpses the black car, which swerves around sand dunes, always keeping up with the limo.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Because the gift died, so too has its influence on the people that were healed. They've all become poisoned with the gift's opposite.

(beat)

(MORE)

MATILDA (CONT'D)

These people -- The Poisoned is what we've been calling them -- they're bent on nothing more than the destruction of the world they once called home.

DUNCAN

(reading her)
You're not joking.

A single tear falls down his mother's face. A long beat.

MATILDA

Duncan --

CUT TO:

EXT. DARKNESS - UNKNOWN TIME

SCREAMS of fear! YELPS of pain! Again, we're CUTTING IN and OUT of the extremely VIOLENT IMAGES of destruction and loss.

MATILDA (V.O.)

The Poisoned are ruthless. They stop at nothing. Some are even believed to have inhuman powers.

GUN SHOTS! KNIFE SLICES! EXPLOSIONS! PULLING APART LIMBS!

MATILDA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And apparently, only you can stop it. If we're to believe Epoch's dying declaration.

RETURN TO:

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Matilda is pleading with her eyes. Duncan swallows roughly, becoming engulfed in her story.

DUNCAN

But I don't know anything!...

MATILDA

(threatening)
Then I'll have no other choice than to have my driver turn around and take you back to prison.

DUNCAN

This... is why I was released?!

He looks outside and BREATHEs a sigh of relief when he sees that the limo has finally broken away from the renegade car.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

How many people did he heal? How many of these "Poisoned" are out there?

MATILDA

The exact number is unknown. But we're not talking any more than a dozen here. It'll be over before it even starts.

She grabs his hands softly, the loving action startling him.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Look outside! Look at what we're facing! You must help us stop them.

Duncan stares back at her, and his response is absolutely genuine. He simply nods once -- up, then down.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

Good. You're seeing this how I did. A calling. From beyond the grave.

She pushes the button, and the partition rolls down again.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

How does it look, driver?

DRIVER (O.S.)

(Arabian accent)

They hit a sand dune. We're safe.

DUNCAN

Thank the Lord....

(rubbing his face)

So... how do you know if someone's been Poisoned by Epoch's curse?

MATILDA

Some can hide their evil -- blend in with their surroundings. But for the most part, you can tell. Ohhh, you can tell....

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A very OLD MAN (white hair, scrawny) runs down the middle of the street. He's wailing a LOW-PITCHED SCREAM at the top of his lungs -- his body completely COVERED IN BLOOD!

POISONED OLD MAN
Aaaahhhhhh!

As he screams, his eyes FLASH BLACK! Off the creepy image:

FADE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - FLASHBACK

Milgate Epoch carries a bouquet of yellow tulips, which he sets down on his father's tombstone. Epoch has a very humble way about him, and there's something wise about the way he speaks, as if his voice calms everything around him.

EPOCH
Hi, Dad. You've been gone a week,
though it feels... centuries. I
haven't used it yet. I haven't
needed to. There was a boy with a
broken arm at church, but he'll
heal. I miss you every day.
(to the other stones)
All of you.

Epoch turns to see the Blonde Woman -- one of the cemetery workers -- watching him from a nearby tree. She's wearing black jeans and a yellow coat.

EPOCH (CONT'D)
Hello, there. I recognize you.

The woman, CLARISSA CARUS, cautiously approaches. She bites her tongue inside her mouth, causing her lower jaw to stick out a bit.

CLARISSA
Yes. I work here. I helped bury
your f--f--father.

EPOCH
That's it.
(extending his hand)
I'm Milgate Epoch.

CLARISSA
Clarissa Carus.

EPOCH
Nice to meet you.

Clarissa bites her tongue again, trying not to smile. Obviously, she's just a bit socially awkward. Epoch's eyes immediately twinkle with a strong attraction.

EPOCH (CONT'D)
So, Clarissa, you have a rather... interesting job. Perhaps the exact opposite of mine.

CLARISSA
Oh? What do you do?

EPOCH
Currently, nothing. I just moved here from Washington.

CLARISSA
Did you come alone?

EPOCH
(awkwardly)
Yeah. To be with my father.

Clarissa realizes her mistake, and her head lowers. Epoch takes a friendly step forward.

EPOCH (CONT'D)
Clarissa, I've had this craving for a cinnamon roll all morning. Would you care to accompany me to that cafe across the street?

CLARISSA
I could... meet you after work.

EPOCH
It's a date then.

Epoch takes her hand like a gentleman and KISSES it ever-so-softly. In fact, his lips barely make contact with her skin.

Clarissa turns around, embarrassed, and jogs away.

EPOCH (CONT'D)
(to his father's grave)
Look at that, old man. Even in death you're making miracles.

Epoch CHUCKLES, then walks away. We STAY ON the gravestone.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - PRESENT DAY

Still on the grave of William Epoch, though now it's two decades older and worn down by the weather.

The serene silence is broken by the harsh sounds of GRUNTING and SCREAMING! The Poisoned Old Man arrives at the scene, his body still covered in blood.

POISONED OLD MAN

Aaaahhhhhh!

The Old Man stands at a grave and begins furiously ripping up the dirt! Handful after handful, he digs into the dirt at the Epoch plot, stopping briefly to SCREAM up to the sky.

CLOSE ON: the man's fingernails, several of which BREAK BACK due to the sheer force of his digging. Blood erupts from his fingers, but he doesn't care -- can he even feel it?

TILT UP to reveal that the grave he's unearthing is not William's, but it's a fresh grave next to it which reads:

Milgate James Epoch; 1964-2005; A Great Loss.

AERIAL VIEW: He continues unearthing Epoch's grave, as we:

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

AERIAL VIEW: It's the same view as before, only several hours have passed. Epoch's casket has been completely unearthed, with blood-streaked dirt in a pile off to the side.

Staring at the mess in front of him is Detective Runtzer.

RUNTZER

Good Lord, it really has begun....

We get a closer look down INTO THE HOLE. For the first time, it's abundantly clear that the Poisoned Old Man dug down and opened the casket. Milgate Epoch's body is gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - CAR PARK - DAY

The limousine parks outside the cemetery, next to Runtzer's sedan. Duncan and Matilda exit out the back doors. While Matilda struggles to walk around to her son's side, Duncan stares at the sedan he'd been in only hours earlier.

DUNCAN

Runtzer. Of course.

MATILDA

He's very useful. His ties to the city, his experience....

DUNCAN

His betrayals?

The limo's front door opens, and out steps the driver. He's a well-dressed ARABIAN man. Mysterious. A man of few words.

The Arabian examines the exterior of the limo, frowning at the dozen or so bullet marks in the paint.

MATILDA

Where's the other one?

ARABIAN

He's running late, ma'am.

MATILDA

Then let's go ahead. Come on. Help an old woman through this grass.

The Arabian cuts in front of Duncan. He escorts her through the cemetery, as Duncan follows sheepishly behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

Duncan, Matilda, and the Arabian approach the Epoch plot, where Runtzer is bent down, his back to them, picking through the dirt. There's a plastic baggie in his left hand.

Matilda CLEARS HER THROAT, and Runtzer instantly closes his eyes. He knows what's about to come. Slowly, he turns around. His face falls as he sees Duncan standing before him.

RUNTZER

Hello, again.

Duncan matches his uncomfortable demeanor.

DUNCAN

You couldn't have mentioned this?

RUNTZER

There's a lot you don't know, Dunc.

MATILDA

(icily)

Our limo was attacked, Detective. I told you not to be followed!

Runtzer lowers his head, embarrassed.

RUNTZER

I apologize. It won't happen again.

(beat; explains)

This grave was unearthed less than two hours ago by who the caretaker described was a very old man, covered in blood, screaming and grunting like a....

DUNCAN

Poisoned.

RUNTZER

Yes.

MATILDA

What did you find?

Runtzer holds up the plastic baggie. Inside are three brownish/reddish FINGERNAILS.

DUNCAN
Are those his fingernails?

RUNTZER
The guy was determined.

DUNCAN
So he used his hands? To dig up a
three-month-old grave?

MATILDA
And he was successful.

ARABIAN
(jumping in)
Where is the body?

MATILDA
Before we can find the body, we
have to find out who did this.

DUNCAN
The fingernails. Can't you send
them in? Have them tested?

Runtzer and Matilda exchange a quick glance.

RUNTZER
There is a science analyst on our
team.

DUNCAN
Well, call him. Let's get to the
bottom of this.

BRETT (O.S.)
(suddenly)
What's the hurry?

All eyes turn around to BRETT TRUANT (27), standing at
attention. Brett is well-built, with close-cropped black hair
and a hint of a goatee. His face resembles Duncan's.

MATILDA
Brett, welcome.

BRETT
Make it quick, huh? I've got to get
back to the office.

Duncan stares across at his son proudly. Unfortunately, Brett
doesn't return the look. In fact, he's completely ignoring
him, showing absolutely no emotion, no surprise, nothing.

RUNTZER
Fingernails from our digger.

As Brett walks toward Runtzer to see the baggie, Duncan quickly blocks him, extending his hand for Brett to shake.

DUNCAN
How -- How are you, son?

Brett looks his father in the eyes for the first time.

BRETT
You're no one's father.

Duncan slowly drops his hand. Brett turns to Matilda.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Did you tell him what we're doing?

MATILDA
Of course.

BRETT
Then he understands the urgency of this situation?
(off Matilda's nod)
So what's he doing wasting our time, trying to bond?

Silence fills the cemetery. Brett breaks it, by quickly grabbing his father's arm -- their first physical contact in 21 years -- and escorting him away from the others.

BRETT (CONT'D)
If this... partnership... is going to work, old man, you're going to have to get used to the fact that you're nobody now. Got that?

Duncan tries to pull away, but Brett won't let go. Duncan's chin quivers as he stares into his son's icy eyes.

DUNCAN
I just... want to finish this.
Okay? The quicker we stop these...
Poisoned... the quicker we can move on. Get to know each other.

BRETT
(coldly)
And what makes you think that's a priority for me?

Off his harsh words, Duncan breaks away from his son's grasp. Duncan looks down into the empty grave. The way he's staring at it, the casket almost looks inviting....

MATILDA

All of you. Listen. And I speak for her as well, who couldn't make it today. Duncan is joining us, and that's that.

(RE: the grave)

The Poisoned are out there. What was believed to be nothing more than irrational fear is actually... just look.

They all stare down at the grave. Duncan speaks up.

DUNCAN

I don't get it, why do you even want me? Of all people? Brett's right. I'm no one. I'm just a ja--

MATILDA

-- A nobody? No, Duncan. What you are is a ghost. The state has no record of you being released from CalMax. We were able to work with Congress behind the scenes, convincing them that your knowledge would help the greater good. And that in and of itself will allow you to go places we can't. Do things we won't.

DUNCAN

So I'm your Magnum, P.I.

RUNTZER

(beautiful beat)

You have been gone a while.

Off the shot of the "Team" standing around the grave -- Duncan, Brett, Runtzer, the Arabian, and Matilda -- we:

FADE TO:

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - FLASHBACK

Epoch sits alone at a table in the outdoor cafe, picking at his CINNAMON ROLL. Across from him, an empty chair.

Epoch looks out at the busy street, then behind him down the sidewalk. Has he been stood up?

EPOCH
Not sure what I expected....

He grabs the cinnamon roll and takes a big bite, as a WAITRESS approaches, looking a bit annoyed.

WAITRESS
Still waiting?

EPOCH
Not anymore. I'll take the check.
(beat)
Also, I find myself in need of a journal. Something that'll hold up over the years.

WAITRESS
Well, there's an old bookstore just a few blocks away.

EPOCH
(gazing)
Is that so?

CUT TO:

INT. OLD BOOKSTORE - LATER

Epoch steps into the old-style bookstore, and the little bell RINGS, signalling his entrance.

An odd-looking bookkeeper -- IMOGEN according to her name tag -- sits up front, a human biology book open on the desk. She's carefully twirling her emerald-colored RING around her finger. When Epoch steps up, she jumps to attention.

IMOGEN
Can I help you find something?

EPOCH
Hi, I'm looking for a journal.

IMOGEN
Like a diary?

EPOCH
(smiling)
Journal, please. My sister kept a diary.

IMOGEN
Gotcha. Right this way.

She escorts Epoch through the rows and rows of dusty books.

EPOCH

I couldn't help but notice. That's a beautiful ring. One would presume it to be accompanied by a beautiful smile, but....

Imogen stops walking. She stares down at her ring, sad again.

IMOGEN

My boyfriend proposed.

EPOCH

Congratulations! Haven't had much luck in that department myself.

IMOGEN

But I think I have to say no. My parents don't approve. They never have, and they never will.

EPOCH

(reading her name tag)
But Imogen, it is most definitely not their decision. You're your own person. Do you love him?

IMOGEN

Of course.

EPOCH

And does he love you?

IMOGEN

(honestly)
More than anything.

EPOCH

Then you need to do what's right for you. You hear me?

Finally, they arrive at the section marked "Diaries." Imogen is smiling now, no longer fiddling with the ring. Her green eyes sparkle brightly.

IMOGEN

Well, here we are. I apologize for the spelling of "journal," but this is what you're looking for, yes?

Epoch stares out at all the books in front of him.

EPOCH
Oh, yes. Thank you.

IMOGEN
No. Thank you.

Imogen walks away with a new bounce to her step.

Epoch studies all of the journals on the shelf, running his finger among all the spines. He pulls out an older-looking BOOK and examines the grooved cover.

Against a black background is an image of a single tall DANDELION. It's not the normal yellow, but instead the gray mature form, ready to be distributed by the wind.

EPOCH
Perfect....

FADE TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Nighttime now. The moon shines brightly in the sky.

CUT TO:

INT. DARK HOUSE - NIGHT

In an unknown dark house, with very little decorations, is the Poisoned Old Man. His appearance is just as disgusting as before, though now he's a lot dirtier.

ANGLE: the wall, where only one thing has been hung up. It's a DIPLOMA from the Chicago Medical Institute, awarded to its graduate, "David Elroy." So the Poisoned man has a name.

The face of DAVID ELROY comes into frame, his eyes dark black, his teeth yellow. He still GRUNTS and MOANS, but now, David speaks for the first time.

DAVID
Remember me? Huh? You son of a bitch.

On "bitch," his voice becomes exceptionally LOW-PITCHED.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Well, it's time. Time to repay the debt.... Milgate Epoch.

QUICK PAN AROUND to the dead body of Milgate Epoch! He's been propped into a chair, his head cocked to the side, his flesh gray and rotting.

David gets a SCALPEL from a nearby table and LICKS the sharp edge. His tongue begins to BLEED, the blood oozing over his lip, down his chin, then dripping to the ground.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Now let's see. Where was it? Where did it hurt?

David takes the scalpel and touches it to various parts of Epoch's rotting flesh. He touches it to Epoch's temple.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Was it here?

Then he touches the scalpel to Epoch's chin.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Or here?
(then his shoulder)
Here?
(then his crotch)
Not here....

Poisoned David LAUGHS loudly, the DEEP VOICE returning again.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You never should have cheated death, you self-righteous son of a bitch!

Off the creepy, demon-like VOICE from the Poisoned man, we PULL AWAY from the scene, as David holds up the scalpel --

-- And SLICES it into Epoch's rotting chest!

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREETS - FLASHBACK

Epoch walks along the sidewalk, carrying his yellow bag from the bookstore. He smiles at passersby, as all of a sudden --

-- CRASH! SMASH!

All eyes turn to the road, where a huge transit bus has just crashed into a tiny gold-colored car!

People begin SCREAMING at the scene, as smoke from the tiny car billows out of the engine.

MAN (O.S.)

Oh my God!

WOMAN (O.S.)

Someone call an ambulance!

Epoch rushes to attention, jumping down onto the road.

Inside the car, a gray-haired man is propped against the steering wheel. Blood covers the man's face -- it's even coming out of his ear. A truly horrific image.

EPOCH

Sir? Sir, can you hear me?

Epoch reaches into the car and grabs the man's hair. He pulls him away from the steering wheel, and we recognize him as:

David Elroy, the Poisoned Old Man!

Before he can do anything, Epoch is pulled aside by a BIGGER MAN, who, with the aid of other men, manages to get the door open and pull David out of the car.

ANGLE ON: Epoch, who stares at the bloody car crash victim. And an idea comes to his mind....

FADE TO:

INT. DARK LABORATORY - PRESENT NIGHT

CLOSE ON: the fingernails discovered at the cemetery. They're under a microscope, being examined by the science analyst.

PULL OUT to reveal the analyst to be: Gillian Truant!

Gillian looks up from the microscope, staring at her brother Brett, the only other person in the darkened lab.

BRETT

Well?

GILLIAN

Definitely disgusting.

BRETT

Can you tell me anything?

GILLIAN

Do you know how much force it takes to remove a fingernail? How painful that force is? Brett, no one would continue digging after one was ripped off. Let alone three.

BRETT

Right.

GILLIAN

Whoever did this, either they can't feel pain, or they don't care.

Brett puts the fingernails back into the plastic baggie.

GILLIAN (CONT'D)

So what is all this?

BRETT

What do you mean?

GILLIAN

You've been coming to me for like a month now with all these weird things. Ain't no way this is detective work.

BRETT

It is. And besides, I thought you'd like all the practice, you being a forensic science major.

GILLIAN

Whatever. But seriously, what's up with Mom today?

BRETT

How so?

GILLIAN
I brought my boyfriend home for her
to meet, and she totally freaked.

BRETT
She -- Wait, you have a boyfriend?

Gillian rolls her eyes, trying to hide a proud smile.

GILLIAN
Maybe.

BRETT
What's his name?

GILLIAN
Jacque.

BRETT
What, like Jacques Cousteau?

WIDE SHOT: She playfully hits him. He keeps chiding her,
revealing their close, caring relationship.

BRETT (CONT'D)
What, is he a diver? He likes
whales? Is that why he likes you?

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

We're staring at the University of California, Los Angeles, a
beautiful campus whose many lights make it look alive at
night. TILT DOWN to the parking lot, and to the limousine.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

The Arabian's in the front seat, with the partition down so
he can listen to the conversation spoken by Duncan, Detective
Runtzer, and Matilda.

DUNCAN
So who's our lab tech? Disgruntled
professor? Some janitor who's in
the wrong place at the wrong time?

There's a quiet RINGING up front. The Arabian answers the
phone, then turns back to Matilda.

ARABIAN
Ma'am? It's for you.

MATILDA
Who is it?

ARABIAN
Your daughter-in-law.

CLOSE ON: Duncan's face, which reveals mild shock.

MATILDA
I'll take it on my cell.

DUNCAN
No. I want to hear. Do it.

Matilda nods, not at all threatened.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - STUDY - NIGHT

The STUDY. There's a fireplace in the corner, and the walls are covered in all kinds of family photos (except for a conspicuously absent Duncan). There are fancy pots on side tables, old masks on the walls, and potted plants everywhere.

Pumpkin paces back and forth, SCREAMING into her cell phone.

PUMPKIN
What do you mean, you're with him?!

MATILDA (O.S.)
Calm down, dear.

PUMPKIN
(threatening)
Don't call me dear.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Matilda speaks into the speaker phone, not at all worried that Duncan's listening in on the conversation.

MATILDA
I'm merely taking the time to
reconnect with my son.

PUMPKIN
Please! You wanted nothing to do
with him!
(beat)
(MORE)

PUMPKIN (CONT'D)

You tell Runtzer that I won't forgive him for this. He was supposed to bring Duncan here. Gillian's away, and I have things I need to tell him.

MATILDA

I'll pass along the word.

Matilda quickly hangs up. All eyes turn to Duncan, whose eyebrows have lowered at the strange conversation.

DUNCAN

"Gillian"?

RUNTZER

(quickly)
Her cat.

DUNCAN

Pumpkin's allergic to cats.

RUNTZER

(even quicker)
Twenty-one years, Dunc. The allergy's been cured.

Duncan nods, having no reason not to believe him.

DUNCAN

I want to go.

MATILDA

You can't go.

DUNCAN

I want to go!

RUNTZER

We're on a mission now, pardner. Or have you forgotten?

DUNCAN

You know what I haven't forgotten? When you told me earlier that my family wanted nothing to do with me. Well apparently, that's not the case at all, is it?

(to Matilda)

Is it?

MATILDA

You agreed to it yourself. This is your calling.

DUNCAN
Then I'll have two.

Duncan opens the door and steps out into the parking lot.

EXT. UNIVERSITY - CONTINUOUS

Duncan begins walking away from the limo. To nowhere in particular. Just walking.

Suddenly, Brett comes BURSTING out of the side building, alone. He nearly runs into his father.

BRETT
Whoa! Hey. What are you doing?

DUNCAN
Just, get away.

Duncan pushes past his son. Brett lowers his eyebrows, clearly aware that his father is in pain.

BRETT
Hey. What's wrong?
(beat)
Dad?

And that does it. That word. Duncan turns around to face his son, and tears begin forming in his eyes.

DUNCAN
What's wrong? Everything! I just --
I just want it to go back, to how
it all was!

BRETT
(emotional beat)
You can't. What you did... killing
that boy... it's unforgiveable.

Duncan looks down, biting his tongue. He changes the subject.

DUNCAN
Your mother wants to see me. And
all of those people -- they're
keeping us apart for some reason.

BRETT
They're keeping you apart because
they need you. They think you're
the only one who can stop this
horrible catastrophe. They can't
afford any distractions.

DUNCAN

Since when is family distraction?
Besides, I could have died today!
This isn't the life I asked for!

BRETT

(taking it all in)
She really wants to see you?

DUNCAN

Yes.

Brett turns to the limo, where the Arabian is waiting for their return. And then, Brett's demeanor changes, revealing the trust he has for his mother.

BRETT

Here. We'll take my car.

Brett grabs his father's arm, but this time the physical contact has an entirely different feel.

Father and son walk through the parking lot.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - FLASHBACK

Epoch stands outside the door to the hospital room, peering through the window as doctors struggle to save the life of the car crash victim, David Elroy.

CLOSE ON: Epoch's eyes. He's watching... and waiting.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

The scene is calmer. There's no chaos, no screaming, no yelling... just the BEEP, BEEP, BEEP from the heart monitor.

The door SQUEAKS open and Epoch steps in. He carefully shuts the door behind him and walks to David's side.

David looks absolutely horrible, mangled to the point of almost no recognition. In particular, his temple, chin, shoulder, and ear look the worst.

EPOCH

Sir? Sir, can you hear me?

David slowly OPENS HIS EYES.

EPOCH (CONT'D)
You're not going to make it. Not
without me.

He checks the door to make sure no one's there. All clear.

Epoch CLEARS HIS THROAT, then stands over David's body.
David's eyes BULGE OUT in shock, as he wonders what's about
to happen.

Epoch hovers over his mouth. He touches his lips to the man's
lips. Slowly, softly, he begins exhaling into David's lungs.

A strange YELLOW/GRAY GLOW emerges from deep within Epoch's
body, going right into David's mouth.

The yellow light goes down David's esophagus and throat, and
then disappears as it reaches his chest.

Epoch pulls away, breathing roughly.

EPOCH (CONT'D)
You'll thank me later....

Epoch waits for something to happen. Anything....

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

EXT. TRUANT MANSION - NIGHT

Brett and Duncan exit Brett's car. Duncan stares up in amazement, at the sheer extravagance in front of him.

THE TRUANT MANSION is two, if not three, stories tall, with all kinds of windows, green ivy trailing up the walls, and several chimneys on the roof.

BRETT

You get used to it.

DUNCAN

Yeah, right. I mean, look....

He points to the water fountains out front, spraying water up into the air. There's also an immense GARDEN.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Fountains. Fountains! You probably don't remember, but back at the RV Park, we didn't even have our own bathroom. We had to drink out of a hose. And now... fountains.

BRETT

Some things you never forget....

He escorts his father up the front porch -- the stairs made of marble -- and they stop just outside the door.

BRETT (CONT'D)

You ready?

Duncan nods, and the mansion's double doors CREAK OPEN.

INT. TRUANT MANSION - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

They step inside, and there's Pumpkin, wearing a nightgown, standing in the middle of the entryway with her arms crossed. She's shivering intensely, acting like she's cold.

PUMPKIN

Duncan.

DUNCAN

Hi, Sweetness. How are you --
(motions around him)
-- Well, apparently just fine.

PUMPKIN
We're handling ourselves.

DUNCAN
That's good. I'm glad to hear that.
(looks around)
So where's the cat?

PUMPKIN
Cat?

DUNCAN
Gillian.

PUMPKIN
You've... heard about Gillian?

At that, Pumpkin suddenly stops shivering. She lowers her arms to her sides and stands silently.

DUNCAN
What is it?

Everything hinges on Pumpkin's next words.

PUMPKIN
I... never got the abortion.

That hits Duncan like a ton of bricks. He takes a step back.

DUNCAN
Wh -- What?

PUMPKIN
I'm so sorry.

DUNCAN
"Gillian"....

BRETT
She's your daughter, Dad.

PUMPKIN
She's 21. She goes to college. She has a boyfriend, I found out today.
(holding back tears)
And she was born five months after your incarceration.

DUNCAN
(smiling slightly)
I... have a daughter.

BRETT

Dad, you can't be mad. Mom did the right thing.

DUNCAN

What -- How?! I have a daughter?!

BRETT

Because you would have demanded to see her! And she was too young. Too young to hear the truth.

PUMPKIN

As far as she knows, you died in a plane crash before she was born.

Duncan's hand goes to his head. He appears slightly dizzy.

DUNCAN

Gillian....

And then -- BAM! -- he faints! He SMACKS his head on the wall, and the screen goes BLACK.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - FLASHBACK

Epoch continues to stand over David's mangled body. Then, it happens. Slowly but surely, David's wounds begin to HEAL. His face and neck, arms and shoulders, all of it.

Soon, he's back to normal again. He COUGHS, then slowly sits up in bed, a look of pure shock on his face.

DAVID

What... What the....

EPOCH

Welcome back.

DAVID

What happened?

EPOCH

You just had a bad dream.

(beat)

Oh, forgive me. I'm Milgate Epoch.

Epoch sticks out his hand, and David extends his as well.

DAVID

David. David Elroy.

EPOCH
Well, go on, get out of here,
David. Your whole life awaits.

Off Epoch's proud smile:

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - LATER

Epoch walks down the street, WHISTLING to himself. He pulls the journal out of the back pocket of his pants and opens it up. He WRITES on the first page:

-1-
DAVID ELROY
CAR CRASH
ST. FJORD HOSPITAL

And with that, Milgate Epoch smiles and walks away.

FADE TO:

INT. DARK HOUSE - PRESENT NIGHT

David Elroy, the Poisoned man, continues to HACK UP the rotting corpse of Milgate Epoch with the scalpel.

DAVID
You gave me something I never asked
for! You stole death from me! Now
look at me! Just look!

David grabs onto Epoch's withered white hair and YANKS up the man's head. David stares into Epoch's forever-open eyes... then SPITS in his face.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I would rather rot in hell than
become what I've become!...

David SCREAMS up to the ceiling, then raises the scalpel... and clips off Epoch's ear! The left ear, the same ear David bled from after the car accident.

CLOSE ON: Epoch's detached ear, grayish-green in color, which bounces peacefully on the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUANT MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

SPLASH! Water is thrown onto Duncan's face!

He quickly wakes up, looking around him to see that he's in a huge, elegant bedroom, lying atop a king-size bed.

DUNCAN

What the --

Kylee Willard, the water-thrower, quickly turns to the door.

KYLEE

Pumpkin! He's awake! Pumpkin!

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Duncan's sitting on the edge of the bed, his legs dangling over the edge. Pumpkin kneels on the ground, staring up into his big eyes. Kylee's standing awkwardly by the door.

PUMPKIN

Morning, Duncan.

DUNCAN

Oh.... It's morning?

PUMPKIN

Technically. It's past midnight.

DUNCAN

(motioning to Kylee)
Who's this?

PUMPKIN

Kylee Willard. She's the family lawyer and PR specialist.

DUNCAN

"PR specialist"?

KYLEE

(stepping up)
You think it was easy on this family after the public found out the husband of the woman who won 6.4 million dollars was spending his life at CalMax?

PUMPKIN

That'll be all, Kylee.

Kylee nods, then exits. Duncan rubs the back of his head.

DUNCAN

I feel hung over. I haven't felt
hung over in twenty-five years.

PUMPKIN

The Super Bowl -- Steelers/Rams.

DUNCAN

You remember.

PUMPKIN

I helped you to the toilet! If you
had hair, I'd have held it back.

They both CHUCKLE, remembering happier times. A long beat.

PUMPKIN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. About... everything.

DUNCAN

It's fine, Sweetness.

Pumpkin grabs his cheeks, cradling his face in her hands.

PUMPKIN

It's not fine. You lost 21 years.
And I stopped coming. So here I am,
looking you in the eyes, and
apologizing.

DUNCAN

Well then, consider it accepted.

PUMPKIN

So, you're really joining these
guys? Joining your mother?

DUNCAN

You know about it?

PUMPKIN

The Poisoned? Of course. Brett and
I... we're very close. As close as
you and I used to... well....

DUNCAN

I'd... like to be close to you.
Again. Not a day went by in there --

Silencing him, Pumpkin leans up and gives him a quick KISS on
the lips! Duncan pulls back in surprise.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
Whoa. What -- What was that for?

PUMPKIN
Just... another apology.

Duncan smiles. Pumpkin does too, her face turning red.

PUMPKIN (CONT'D)
Sorry. But seriously, when's the
last time you've even been kissed?

Duncan stops, thinking about it. Just then, his features turn immediately serious. A definite "eureka" moment. He jumps up.

PUMPKIN (CONT'D)
Duncan? What is it? Duncan?

DUNCAN
I need to borrow your car.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. INTERSTATE - NIGHT

Pumpkin's car, an orange Chrysler 300, speeds down the road.

INT. PUMPKIN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Pumpkin's driving, with Duncan sitting passenger.

DUNCAN
So... what's she like?

PUMPKIN
(smiling)
Breathtakingly beautiful. Looks
like her mother, of course.

Duncan smiles with her, at her false arrogance. The car passes by a sign reading "Long Beach - 10 miles."

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

The renegade black car from the desert SQUEALS to a stop in the dark parking garage. Two feet step out. Cowboy boots. The boots CLINK across the cold concrete, heading toward:

The Team's black limousine! The Arabian stands at attention, arms behind his back. He nods a hello, then opens the rear door for the cowboy approaching.

It's DETECTIVE RUNTZER!

ARABIAN
She's been waiting for you.

RUNTZER
She can keep waitin'. I don't care!

Runtzer SPITS on the ground and angrily lowers his head into the limo, where Matilda smokes calmly in the backseat.

RUNTZER (CONT'D)
What you made me do today, I'm
never going to forgive you for....

MATILDA
(exhaling smoke)
And yet you did it.

Runtzer stands back up, and glares angrily at the Arabian.

ARABIAN
You'll receive your payment later.

RUNTZER
I don't want payment! All I want is
for her to come clean to Duncan!

MATILDA
Accept the money and stop griping.
Buy your wife something special.

Matilda reaches her gloved hand out and SLAMS the door shut.
Runtzer HUFFS and storms away from the limousine.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - ROOFTOP - DEAD OF NIGHT

We're on the roof of this mysterious apartment complex. All kinds of plants adorn the rooftop -- hundreds of them, if not a thousand -- and they're all dead and brown.

The door BURSTS OPEN and Duncan and Pumpkin exit the stairway and step onto the roof. They survey the creepy scene.

PUMPKIN
Whoa. This can't be good. Someone
needs to learn how to water.

DUNCAN
They're not dead. They're Poisoned.

Pumpkin gives a curious look, as Duncan walks amongst all the dead plants, examining each of them, before moving on.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
You know flowers?

PUMPKIN
Uh, kind of, I guess.

DUNCAN
I'm looking for a dandelion.

PUMPKIN
A dandelion? What's all this coming from, Duncan?

DUNCAN
Just find it.

She goes to work looking, as Duncan reaches under his brown hat to rub his sweaty forehead.

PUMPKIN
It's kind of hard to find yellow in all this br--
(stops)
Hey. Hey! I think this is it!

Duncan rushes over. She's examining a single potted plant -- a yellow-turned-gray DANDELION that's standing straight up.

PUMPKIN (CONT'D)
That's it, right?

DUNCAN
I think that's it.

Duncan ferociously grabs the plant by its stem and PULLS it out of the pot!

PUMPKIN
Hey!

Duncan throws the plant aside and holds the pot upside-down, letting all the dirt fall to the rooftop.

The dirt cascades down, then -- THUD! It's Epoch's journal! It's wrapped inside a protective plastic bag.

PUMPKIN (CONT'D)
What the hell, Duncan? How'd you know that was there?

DUNCAN
 (strangely)
 "Duncan Truant knows."

Duncan takes the tattered Book out of the bag and begins thumbing through it. We don't see the pages, but from the look on Duncan's face, what he sees is absolutely tragic.

PUMPKIN
 What? What is it?

DUNCAN
 It's a detailed list. Names, locations... everyone he ever healed.

PUMPKIN
 The list of The Poisoned?...

Duncan nods. He continues to flip the pages. One after another. After another. After another.

DUNCAN
 My mother told me there wouldn't be more than a dozen. It'd be a quick mission. Over before it started.

PUMPKIN
 That's not a dozen names....

Finally, we PAN AROUND to see the CONTENTS of the pages of the Epoch Book. He continues to FLIP, and we see the numbers and names of The Poisoned go by in a flash:

~~4~~... ~~28~~... ~~57~~... ~~83~~...

With still many more pages to go.

DUNCAN
 My God....

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW

CUT AWAY TO:

SHaCKLeS