

ON BLACK

Police SIRENS wail in the distance. Fast heavy BREATHING.
Hard soled shoes WHIPPING the asphalt.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

A pair of legs. Someone in smart shoes. Running.

The man in full, dressed in heavily bloodied shirt and formal pants. This is MARCUS GRAY, 35-years-old. Marcus clutches his shoulder as he flees along the deserted street.

He turns sharply and heads into an alleyway.

EXT. DARK ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Marcus slumps to the ground. He undoes the top few buttons of his shirt. Blood oozes from a bullet wound.

The SIRENS get nearer. He applies a handkerchief to the wound. Grimace. He peers back around the corner.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - CONTINUOUS

A tall SHADOW FIGURE stands motionless, at the far end of the street. Looking directly at Marcus. Its features indistinguishable, but clearly male in build.

EXT. DARK ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Marcus is bewildered. He continues along the alley. Reaching the other end, he glances back. The Shadow Figure is stood at the entrance.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Marcus slows to a jog as he crosses the bridge. The SIRENS are close. He looks back. Just over the horizon, the flashing glow of police lights.

He continues forward then stops dead in his tracks. The Shadow Figure is facing him at the far end of the bridge.

Marcus glances over his shoulder. Police cars come into view. He looks to the river below, climbs onto the ledge of the bridge. He leaps into the water.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Marcus plunges into the river. Blood seeps from his wound,

turning the water a cloudy red. He breaks the surface with a huge intake of breath.

EXT. RIVER BANK - NIGHT

Marcus crawls onto the bank directly under the bridge. The SIRENS are right on top of him. He collapses onto his back. Exhausted. In pain.

Flashlights scour the river's surface. Marcus clasps his shoulder tightly, closing his eyes. He opens them. The Shadow figure is hovering above him. Watching.

INT. MARCUS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marcus wakes with a start, he GASPS for air. He looks over to an alarm clock, it reads "4.20 am". GROAN. He rolls onto his side.

INT. MARCUS'S BEDROOM - DAY

The alarm BUZZES. It's "6.30 am". Marcus hits the off button. He stares blankly into nothingness.

INT. MARCUS'S BATHROOM - DAY

Marcus washes his face. He pulls a bottle of antidepressants from a cabinet. The label reads "Mr. Marcus Gray". He downs a couple of pills.

EXT. AVERY SECURITY LODGE - DAY

CHARLIE GOMEZ, a portly 40-year-old Security Guard scrubs bird droppings off a car. In a Mexican twang, he rants to nobody in particular.

CHARLIE

Son of a bitch... Stupid ass Pigeon...

(looking to the sky)

How about I take a crap on you, huh?

See how you like it!

Marcus pulls up in a rust-bucket car, opens the window.

MARCUS

Hey Charlie.

Charlie perks up.

CHARLIE

Hey man. What's up?

MARCUS
Your feathered friend back I see.

CHARLIE
That bird got a vendetta against me
man. Fifty cars in this lot and he
always gets mine.
(looking up)
Motherfucker!

Marcus can't help but smirk.

MARCUS
You did throw your shoe at him.

CHARLIE
He started it!

Marcus holds his hands up, not getting involved. Charlie
pipes down.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Yo, I got that carry-on bag for you in
the Lodge.

MARCUS
Ah sorry man, don't need it now.
Conference got canned.
(checks watch)
I'm ten minutes late. I'll catch you
at lunch.

Marcus drives on. Charlie returns to cleaning. A fat PIGEON
lands on a fence nearby, watching him.

Charlie spots it. He shakes his head, seething.

INT. COMMUNAL OFFICE AREA - DAY

A document reads "Avery Defense Technologies". People in lab
coats and smart suits busy around the open office.

Looking out of place, Marcus slumps at a disorganized
workspace. His hair scruffy, stubble unkempt. He spills
coffee on his lab coat and casually rubs it away.

LUCY PALMER (34), an attractive Lead Engineer, converses with
a co-worker. Marcus watches her from across the office,
engrossed. She glances in his direction. Marcus averts his
gaze. Starts typing.

He risks another look, receives a shove in the back.
Obnoxious Salesman BRAD STEVENS (32) grins behind him.

BRAD
Hey, Mucus!

MARCUS
Jesus, Brad. What do you want? I'm
busy.

Brad perches on Marcus's desk, shoving a stack of papers out
of the way. Marcus raises his eyebrows.

BRAD
Nothing really. Just thought I'd come
and annoy you.

Brad grabs a stress ball from the desk, starts bouncing and
catching it.

MARCUS
Yeah? Well, mission accomplished.
(gestures at the computer)
Now if you don't mind...

Lucy heads in their direction.

BRAD
(to Lucy)
Hey. How's it going?

Lucy returns a polite smile as she passes by.

LUCY
Good morning.

Marcus and Brad watch her intently as she leaves the room.

BRAD
Mm mm mmm! Man, what I'd give to hit
that ass.

Brad lingers in a trance. Marcus gets impatient.

MARCUS
Brad!

Brad snaps out of it.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Can I get back to work please?

BRAD

My bad.

Marcus holds out his hand. Brad feigns to give the ball back, then hurls it over his shoulder.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Yoink!

Brad saunters away laughing.

MARCUS

Asshole!

INT. MARCUS'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tinned cat food slops into a bowl. A cat rubs against Marcus's leg, PURRING. He sets the food down.

MARCUS

There you go Sammy.

He ruffles Sammy's fur. A microwave BEEPS.

INT. MARCUS'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

ON TELEVISION

A black and white war movie plays. BOMBS pepper a battlefield, Soldiers charge across, FIRING GUNS.

BACK TO SCENE

Marcus sprawls on the couch in his scruffy apartment, eating a microwave dinner from the carton. Sammy lays on his lap.

Muffled SHOUTING off-screen followed by a THUMP. Marcus looks to the wall of the apartment, then back to the TV.

INT. MARCUS'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Marcus and Sammy are fast asleep on the couch. The TV plays an INFOMERCIAL.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

Large computer units and high-tech equipment emanate a pulsing HUM in the clinical room.

Marcus picks up a futuristic helmet wired up to a dentist-style chair.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Gray!

Marcus turns, the scenery transforms into a tasteful office.

INT. ELENA'S OFFICE - DAY

Sleep Therapist DR. ELENA BREAKMAN (46) sits in a grand brown leather chair. She speaks with a slight French accent.

ELENA

You need to maintain control. These
Alternate Echoes are taking over.

Elena's face morphs into Brad's as the background falls away.

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - NIGHT

Brad is intoxicated, swaying with a glass of Champagne.

BRAD

You know your problem? You're so damn
negative! I mean come on, lighten up a
little.

Marcus fumes. Brad sits on the balcony rail.

BRAD (CONT'D)

You know everyone thinks you're a
weirdo, right?

Marcus charges at Brad, pushing him backwards. Brad grasps onto Marcus's collar, taking them both over the edge of the balcony. As Marcus hits the bushes, the scenery switches.

EXT. GRAND HOUSE - NIGHT

Marcus creeps through dense bushes, holding a Pistol. He peers around the corner of a house. All clear.

Marcus continues across a lawn. Behind him, the Shadow Figure appears in the bushes.

CLICK. Bright spotlights illuminate the grounds. BARKING dogs charge out of a kennel. Marcus turns and runs. The dogs catch up, one lunges at him, the scene switches again.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Marcus is still running. Hundreds of people run with him. Buildings on fire. Huge EXPLOSIONS going off.

Ahead, a SCARED WOMAN struggles with two crying CHILDREN. Marcus stops to help. He picks up one of the children.

A WHISTLING noise. Marcus looks upward, a missile hits him.

INT. MARCUS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marcus jumps awake. A COMMERCIAL plays on the TV. He lays back his head. Frustrated.

INT. WORK CAFETERIA - DAY

Marcus and Charlie tuck into lunch. Charlie shows Marcus a glamour model magazine.

CHARLIE

You see, now that's perfect. That's a ten right there!

Marcus checks out the picture of a skinny Latina model with a huge butt.

MARCUS

Ass is too big. Got to be implants.

CHARLIE

No such thing as an ass too big. Or titties too big. The bigger the better man.

MARCUS

Oh yeah, what about Susie in HR?

CHARLIE

Super-size Susie? That don't count.

MARCUS

Why not?

CHARLIE

Having big tits 'cos you're fat, is like having a fast car cos it's falling off a cliff.

MARCUS

That's rich!

Charlie rubs his man boobs, feeling a little self-conscious.

CHARLIE

Damn man, that was mean.

Immature LAUGHTER echoes from across the room. Marcus looks over to see Brad horsing around. He recalls something.

MARCUS

Huh.

CHARLIE

What?

MARCUS

Ah nothing. Just remembered I had another of those weird dreams last night. Really starting to fuck me up man, can't remember the last good night's sleep I had.

CHARLIE

You thought about seeing a therapist?

MARCUS

A shrink?

CHARLIE

Naw, you can get these specialist sleep therapists. My cousin Rodrigo saw one for his apnea. You want, I'll get you his number.

MARCUS

Might look into it. Need something.

(pause)

It's just really strange. They don't feel like normal dreams. They feel almost like...

Marcus ponders. Charlie chews his food like a cow.

CHARLIE

Like what?

MARCUS

Memories. As if these things have already happened to me before. You know what I mean?

Charlie gormlessly nods along. Marcus recognizes Charlie has no idea what he's talking about. Gives up.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

(tapping magazine)

Six, at best. Give me the natural look

any day.

CHARLIE

No way, man! You're crazy.

Charlie turns the page, incredulous.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Ah, the magnifique Monique.

INT. COMMUNAL OFFICE AREA - DAY

Marcus scans the room. Nobody around. He types at a computer.

ON COMPUTER

A browser search for "sleep therapists near me" displays with a list of results underneath.

Marcus clicks on a website. He scrolls down the page.

He stops at a picture. It's the woman from the dream, Elena.

BACK TO SCENE

Marcus gets up close to the screen, disbelieving.

MARCUS

What the...?

Marcus looks around again. Goes back to the computer.

ON COMPUTER

Underneath the picture it states "Dr. Elena Breakman". Further down the page, the words "Specializing in Oneirology, the scientific study of dreams".

BACK TO SCENE

Marcus sits back, staring at the screen with fascination.

INT. ELENA'S WAITING ROOM - DAY

A large print of "The Garden of Earthly Delights" by Hieronymus Bosch hangs on the wall.

Marcus contemplates the picture. He focuses on various nude figures around the painting. He spots a man-shaped bird, eating a man, while birds fly out of the man's anus. Weird.

Doctor Elena Breakman emerges from an office. She speaks with a soft French accent.

ELENA

Marcus?

Marcus returns an awkward smile.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Please, come through.

INT. ELENA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Marcus enters the room. Elena closes the door behind them.

ELENA

Take a seat.

Marcus sits. Elena takes her position opposite on a grand brown leather chair.

ELENA (CONT'D)

So, you said on the phone you were experiencing disturbed sleep. Correct?

Marcus's attention is elsewhere. He stares at Elena's chair.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Everything ok?

MARCUS

Huh? Yeah. Sorry. It's um... just had a little Deja vu there.

ELENA

Oh?

MARCUS

Actually, that's kinda why I'm here.

ELENA

Sorry, I thought the issue was to do with disrupted sleep patterns?

MARCUS

Well it is but... see basically I keep having these strange dreams. Not nightmares exactly but... distressing. Well anyway, couple of nights ago I had this dream about... well, you. In this office actually. On that chair.

Elena shifts uncomfortably in her seat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Okay, I just heard how creepy that sounded. It wasn't that kind of dream, I swear! See, I didn't know it was you at the time, wasn't until I saw your picture on the website yesterday. I mean, I've never met you before, so I was like... how is that even possible?

Elena speaks matter-of-factly.

ELENA

Deja Reve.

MARCUS

Sorry?

ELENA

Earlier, you said Deja vu. What you are describing, is Deja Reve. It means "already dreamed". Deja vu means "already seen".

MARCUS

Alright... Deja Reve then. But how does that work exactly? How can I dream about a real person, a real place, that I didn't even know existed?

ELENA

Deja Reve describes the sensation of seeing something in the real world that we believe we have already dreamed about. Do you suffer with epilepsy?

Marcus shakes his head.

ELENA

It's more common among those who are epileptic. The visions are actually sensorimotor hallucinations. They effectively trick the brain into believing that they have seen an event take place in a prior dream.

MARCUS

So, what are you saying? I didn't

really dream about you? I only thought I did, after seeing your picture?

ELENA

It's a possibility, yes.

MARCUS

That's not what happened! What about the chair? The office?

ELENA

But how can you be sure that is exactly what you saw, and not just what you think that you saw, having now seen it?

MARCUS

(baffled)

What?

ELENA

So. In this dream, you say we were in this office, correct?

MARCUS

Yes.

ELENA

Close your eyes for a moment.

Marcus skeptically closes his eyes.

ELENA (CONT'D)

No peeking. Picture that scene from your dream. Hold it in your mind. Have you got it?

MARCUS

Yeah.

ELENA

What color were the blinds behind me?

MARCUS

(struggling)

Brown?

Marcus opens his eyes. There are no blinds.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Alright, so I don't remember every

detail. But it was definitely you! In that chair!

ELENA

Well another possibility is that you have actually seen me before somewhere. A YouTube video perhaps. And although you don't recall it, that memory has been stored within your subconscious, and then recalled in this dream. It's quite common.

MARCUS

It's possible I suppose. I do watch a lot of crap. No offense. Look, I just want some help to make these dreams stop. I need to sleep!

ELENA

Describe these dreams to me. What are they like?

MARCUS

Real... everything feels real. Like memories, as if these things have actually happened.

ELENA

I could prescribe something to help curtail your REM cycles but, I fear that won't address the underlying issue here. I'd like you to start a dream journal. Through dream interpretation, we can try to pinpoint any stresses in your waking life that are contributing to these visions.

MARCUS

(despondent)

You're the expert, I guess. Just doesn't feel like that's what this is.

ELENA

Look, if you're open to try some alternative treatments, there may be another option. Are you familiar with the concept of lucid dreaming?

MARCUS

Like when you realize you're in a dream?

ELENA

I have an acquaintance who specializes in it. He has developed a system where he is able to induce lucid dreaming in a subject with a very high success rate. It may help if you can train your conscious mind to take greater control over these dreams.

INT. ELENA'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Marcus is in the passenger seat, Elena drives.

ELENA

So, what is it you do for work? I forgot to ask.

MARCUS

Lab Technician. Well, data analyst really. I work for a Defense company. We design and manufacture military equipment; GPS systems, missiles. Stuff like that.

ELENA

Sounds interesting.

MARCUS

It's not... I watch numbers on a screen all day, flag up if they don't look right. If monkeys could talk, I'd be picking up a welfare check. Hate my job.

(awkward pause)

So anyway, who's this guy we're going to see?

ELENA

An old friend of mine, Angelo. He has a... sort of facility, where people can go to experience their dreams more fully. With a little practice, many of his clients find they are able to invoke lucid dreaming at will. Not only that, they can choose exactly what to dream about and, to a degree, control what happens in that dream.

(pause)

I should warn you, Angelo's a bit of a... temperamental character, but he's amazing at what he does.

Elena pulls up outside a grubby industrial unit. Marcus examines the building, doubtful.

INT. ANGELO'S UNIT - DAY

Elena enters the unit. Marcus follows, eyeing up the dank interior. Unimpressed.

A metal box, little bigger than a coffin, lies in the middle of the large open space. A computer connected up to it.

ELENA
(calling out)
Hello?

A young woman sits up from behind a counter, chewing gum. BRENDA (23) casually unplugs an earphone.

BRENDA
Can I help you?

ELENA
Uh, yes Hi. I'm looking for Angelo.
It's Elena Breakman. He should be
expecting us.

BRENDA
Wait here.

Brenda slothfully walks over to the box and BASHES her fist hard on it. The lid flies open. ANGELO (45) sticks his head out. He launches into a rage.

ANGELO
Goddammit Brenda! I said no calls!

Brenda doesn't flinch. She blows a bubble, it pops.

BRENDA
You got visitors.

Angelo turns to see Marcus and Elena at the entrance. His tone lowers dramatically.

ANGELO
Oh. Hi Elena! I'll be right with you.

Angelo fumbles his way out of the box.

ANGELO
(to Brenda)
Look at this place, it's filthy!
Thought I told you to clean up!

BRENDA
No, you didn't.

ANGELO
I told you yesterday.

BRENDA
No, you didn't! Taking too much of
that crap again. Going for my break.

Brenda strides away, Angelo's eye twitches. He heads over to Elena and Marcus.

ANGELO
Elena! Amazing to see you, it's been
too long.

Angelo embraces Elena.

ELENA
Hi Angelo. Great to see you too, how
are you?

ANGELO
Ah, you know.
(noticing Marcus)
And you must be Marcus!

MARCUS
How do you do?

They shake hands. Angelo misunderstands.

ANGELO
How do I do what?

MARCUS
Hmm? No. I just meant, how are you?

ANGELO
Oh... Didn't I just answer that?

MARCUS
Uh...

Elena diffuses the slight tension.

ELENA

So, Angelo. I explained our issue over the phone. Think you can help us out?

Angelo comes around with a big smile.

ANGELO

Sure. Let's get to it. Follow me.

Angelo leads the way. Marcus looks dubiously to Elena. She offers a smile and a little shrug. They head over to the box.

Angelo stands proudly in front of the box, searching for approval. Inside is a basic mattress and pillow.

ANGELO

So, this is my pod... It's totally soundproofed, keeps any external noises from interfering with the dream. Speakers right here.

(pointing)

They sound an intermittent clicking noise. Listen.

Angelo presses a button on the computer. A CLICK CLICK noise comes through the speakers.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Remember that noise. If you hear it, it means you're dreaming! Biggest problem people have once they get lucid, is forgetting they're in a dream. Your conscious and subconscious need to be in perfect balance, at all times. The subconscious generates random images and events, so that the experience feels real. It decides how the things you interact with respond to you. Let the subconscious take over too much though, the dream will take you in. That's what the clicks are for, to bring you back to lucidity. There's also flashing lights.

(points to lights on the lid)

Same thing. You see a double flash, you're in a dream! Back to lucidity. Got it?

MARCUS

Sure. Double click, double flash. Dreaming.

ANGELO

Right. The second problem people have, is losing the dream. As I said, it's all about balance. If you try to take too much control, you will become wholly conscious, no longer in a dream state. Same thing with over-stimulation, get too excited, you'll wake up. It's important to keep calm. Holding that line between the conscious and subconscious state is the key. That's where this comes in.

Angelo holds up a vial of liquid.

MARCUS

What's that?

ANGELO

My own personal formula. A concoction I developed over many years, perfectly balanced for the ultimate lucid experience.

MARCUS

Is it legal?

ANGELO

Sure... probably.

Marcus looks to Elena for some reassurance.

ELENA

Is it safe?

ANGELO

Of course. Why do you think my clients come here? It initiates REM sleep like that!

(snaps fingers)

Trust me, I've done this thousands of times.

Marcus is wary. He inspects the pod over, notices something inside.

MARCUS

What's this bit for?

Marcus innocently retrieves a fleshlight sex toy from the pod. Angelo is flustered. Elena doesn't know where to look.

ANGELO
That's uh... That's for...

Angelo snatches the contraption from Marcus.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Never mind what that is.

Angelo tosses the flashlight behind the computer unit.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
It's not important.
(beat)
So, shall we start?

INT. DREAM POD - DAY

Marcus is laid out inside the pod, looking up at a small window in the lid. He BREATHEs deep and slow. Angelo's face appears in the window, startling Marcus.

MARCUS
Jesus!

Angelo opens the lid, peers in.

ANGELO
All good? No claustrophobia?

MARCUS
No. It's fine.

ANGELO
Good. Now. Once I inject the formula, it's going to take effect really fast, ok? You're going to feel very sleepy, but try to keep focused on one thing while you're still awake.

MARCUS
Like what?

ANGELO
A place, or a person. That's what I find best. Ideally, this image will then transfer into the dream and make you aware you are lucid. You will start to see other random images appear though; these are called hypnagogic hallucinations. It's the first sign of losing consciousness.

Try and keep the image of the person,
or place, in the back of your mind at
the same time though. It's not easy.
Usually takes a bit of practice. Ready
to give it a go?

Marcus nods. Elena peers into the pod.

ELENA

Remember what we discussed. Try to get
as much information as possible from
the dreams. It will help with the
interpretation sessions.

Angelo takes a syringe of formula from the vial.

ANGELO

Wait. You're not on any other
medication, are you?

MARCUS

Uh... No.

Angelo injects into Marcus's arm. The lid of the pod closes.

Marcus reaches up and slides a shutter across the lid window.
Everything goes dark. He takes slow deep BREATHS.

CLICK CLICK.

EXT. LUSH GREEN FIELDS - DAY

It's a glorious sunny day. Lush undulating fields in every
direction. Azure pools of water complete the surreal scenery.

Marcus wanders around. Deer graze in a meadow, rabbits hop
across the grass, birds of all colors swarm in formation.

Two large flashes of white from the sky. Marcus comprehends
something.

MARCUS

Double flash.

Marcus looks around at the scenery with intrigue.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I'm dreaming!

He levitates off the ground, then flies away. Laughing.

Marcus soars along, looking down at the epic landscape. Stood on a hillside is Lucy, donning a pretty red dress. Marcus swoops down, coming to a landing in front of her. She smiles.

LUCY

Hey.

MARCUS

You look beautiful.

Marcus moves in confidently, embracing her with a passionate kiss. He pauses, gazing into her eyes with intense lust. She smiles back. He bundles her to the ground, unzips his fly--

INT. DREAM POD - DAY

Marcus wakes up.

MARCUS

Shit!

Angelo opens the lid.

ANGELO

What? What happened?

MARCUS

I don't know. I was lucid and then I just woke back up.

ANGELO

(smirking)

You tried to fuck someone, didn't you?

MARCUS

(defensive)

What? no!

ANGELO

Hmm...

ELENA

(diplomatic)

Do you think we perhaps need to increase the dosage?

ANGELO

I can give him a little top up I suppose. You can't mess around with this stuff though!

Angelo injects Marcus again. The lid closes.

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT - NIGHT

Marcus sits among a plane full of people, reading a magazine. CLICK CLICK. A moment of realization from Marcus.

He lowers the magazine, surveying the setting. Along the aisle, Marcus sees DEONTAY MICHAELS (23), a professional NBA player, posing for selfies with other passengers. Marcus nudges the PASSENGER next to him.

MARCUS

Hey, is that Deontay Michaels?

The passenger doesn't react, continues to read a book. Marcus waves his hand in front of the passenger's face. Nothing.

An AIR HOSTESS, approaches with a drinks trolley.

AIR HOSTESS

Would you like anything from the cart
Sir?

MARCUS

(distracted)

Uh, no. Thank you.

Marcus peers back down the plane, Deontay goes through a curtain. The Air Hostess puts a miniature bottle of whiskey in front of Marcus.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

No, I said--

An EXPLOSION rocks the plane. An engine blows up, taking half the wing off. Panicked passengers SCREAM.

The plane takes a steep spiraling descent. Marcus grips his chair tightly, looking out of the window as the plane hurtles to the ground.

INT. BAR - DAY

Marcus is suddenly stood in a crowded bar. Everyone's attention is on a TV playing a News feed.

ON TELEVISION

News presenter ANGELA GAYLE speaks from the news desk.

ANGELA GAYLE

Following months of escalating tension between the US and the Far East, backlash from the deadly Genome virus sweeping through Asia reached boiling point today, as China officially declared war on the US. It comes after last week's accusations from whistleblower Patrick Chan, that the virus was created in the level five US Laboratory where he worked. A claim the White House has strenuously denied. Chan also alleged that the scope of the project was dictated by Government official Raymond Winters, and that samples of the virus mysteriously disappeared shortly before the outbreak in China. The man-made virus, which only affects those with an Asian genetic make-up, is so far believed to have killed over six million people across the globe. There has been mounting criticism of the US administration for refusing to implement lock-down measures in order to protect its Asian citizens. Chinese President Xiao Lung repeated earlier accusations that the virus attack was a deliberate attempt to cripple China's economy, in order for the US to cement its position as the world's leading Superpower. US Secretary of Defense, General Raymond Winters, spoke at a Press conference a few moments ago.

The feed cuts to a Press Conference. GENERAL WINTERS (58), is dressed in military regalia.

BACK TO SCENE

PATRONS in the bar HECKLE the General.

PATRON #1

Fucking asshole!

PATRON #2

Crazy bastard gonna get us all killed!

Marcus is intrigued by the response. CLICK CLICK.

ON TELEVISION

The General addresses the conference.

GENERAL WINTERS

President Lung is fully aware that any attack on US soil would be met with brutal retribution. I deny vehemently, the baseless accusations that I was somehow involved in the development of the Genome virus. If Mister Chan's claims that he was involved in its development are true, then he was doing so without the knowledge of the Laboratory or anyone in the US administration.

BACK TO SCENE

A Patron hurls a bottle at the TV. The SMASH coincides with an EXPLOSION as the scene switches.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

EXPLOSIONS erupt. Marcus crouches under a store front as fighter planes zoom overhead.

He watches down the street. Hundreds of people swarm in his direction. In the distance, a Scared Woman struggles to flee with her two crying Children. He recognizes the scene.

Nothing he can do but watch as the missile EXPLODES upon them. Huge chunks of debris race toward him.

INT. DREAM POD - DAY

Marcus opens his eyes, panicked. Elena and Angelo peer down into the pod.

ANGELO

You alright?

INT. ELENA'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Marcus stares out of the passenger window as Elena drives.

ELENA

They're not premonitions, Marcus.
We'll get to the bottom of this.

MARCUS

I don't want to talk about it anymore.
Just want to forget about it.

ELENA

Look. I understand these visions are disturbing, but it's important we explore their meaning. If you don't want to talk to me about how you're feeling, that's fine. But you should confide in somebody. Do you have any family you can talk to?

Marcus shakes his head despondently.

ELENA

What about friends? Anybody that you're close to?

MARCUS

(shrugs)

There's Charlie I suppose. He works security at the Lab. We hang out sometimes.

ELENA

Ok, good. Well, I think it would be a good idea to talk to Charlie. Explain to him what you're going through.

MARCUS

Yeah right. He'll probably laugh his ass off.

ELENA

No. Not if he understands how much this is affecting you. If he's a good friend, I'm sure he'll be supportive.

INT. MEXICAN CAFE - NIGHT

Charlie roars with laughter. Marcus looks on, irritated.

MARCUS

Have you finished?

Marcus notices a man eyeing them, STEELE (60). Strong-faced. Serious. Steele quickly looks away.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry... I'm sorry. I just...

Charlie erupts into laughter once again. Marcus snaps at him.

MARCUS

Charlie! I'm trying to be fucking serious here.

Charlie regains his composure.

CHARLIE

Alright, you're right. I'm sorry. Come on. You don't really believe you can see the future, do you? Mystic Marcus.

Charlie stifles a snort laugh. Marcus shoots him a dirty look.

MARCUS

I don't know what to think. I mean, I guess not, but how do you explain the Doctor?

Charlie shrugs dismissively, munching on a burrito.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

There's something strange going on, I'm telling you. These dreams...

Marcus shakes his head, toying with his food.

CHARLIE

Probably just stress or some shit. I wouldn't worry about it. Besides, think about it, how can it be the future? You can't die in a plane crash and then get blown up by a missile. Don't make sense.

Marcus ponders Charlie's point.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Though, if you do get pick one, go for the plane. At least you'll get to meet Deontay Michaels before you go, hey?

Charlie chuckles as he bites off another big chunk of burrito. He gestures to Marcus's plate.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You gonna eat that?

INT. MARCUS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marcus lies on the sofa with Sammy. Tired. A movie plays on the TV. He switches the channel. A game show. Switches again, it's the News.

ON TELEVISION

News reporter JILL APPLETON reports from a field. Smoke billows in the distance.

JILL APPLETON

Thanks Karen, you join us here, 6 miles west of Providence, where flight DL nine-nine-sixty has crash landed mid-way through its journey from JFK to Boston.

BACK TO SCENE

Marcus's attention spikes. He rummages through a drawer as the report continues.

JILL APPLETON

(through TV)

The cause of the crash is still unclear, but early indications are that the pilot reported an issue with one of the engines shortly before the plane crash-landed at nine thirty this evening.

Marcus pulls a plane ticket from the drawer. On the ticket, it states departure location as "JFK" airport, destination "Boston". The flight number is "DL 9960". Marcus stares in horror at the ticket.

JILL APPLETON

(through TV)

Authorities say it's too early to determine whether there were any survivors, but subsequent to rumors circulating online, it has been confirmed in the last few minutes that NBA star Deontay Michaels of the Boston Celtics, was indeed on board the flight.

Marcus's attention shoots back to the TV.

JILL APPLETON (CONT'D)

(through TV)

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all the passenger's families at this tragic time. This is Jill Appleton reporting from Providence, Rhode Island. Back to you in the studio.

INT. ELENA'S OFFICE - DAY

Marcus sits with head in hands, clutching his hair. Elena sits opposite, concerned.

MARCUS

This is so messed up. If it wasn't for that conference getting cancelled, I would have been on that flight.

(looks up at Elena)

You still think it's my mind playing tricks? I told you about the crash! And about Deontay! How the fuck could I have known about that?

Elena's usual assurance has diminished.

ELENA

I don't know.

Marcus gets worked up, paces around the room.

ELENA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I've never seen anything like this before.

(pause)

Well...

MARCUS

What?

ELENA

Back in 2001, I was asked to review a case. A young girl called Eloise claimed she could see the future in her dreams. Some of her premonitions did indeed come true. One of them was the 9/11 attacks. The government looked very closely at her, fearing she was somehow involved. They ran polygraphs, the lot but...

(shakes head)

she was telling the truth. She'd seen

the events happen in a series of dreams. They kept her locked up in a care facility, they wanted to know how she could possibly predict the attacks before they'd happened. I was asked to counsel her, explore her mind. To see if I could pinpoint what was going on.

Marcus sits, interested.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Anyhow, she continued to have these so-called premonitions but now, none of them were coming true. She'd be adamant certain things were about to happen, but...

(shaking head)

nothing. A few weeks later, she committed suicide. She was tormented by the visions. It drove her insane. I tried to teach her how to maintain control over them.

A moment of recollection from Marcus.

ELENA (CONT'D)

We had some limited success but ultimately, the visions took over her, consumed her life--

MARCUS

--What's the Alternate Echo?

Elena is taken aback.

ELENA

What...? Where did you hear that term?

MARCUS

You. You said it me. In my dream. The one I told you about in this office, remember? You said something about maintaining control and then...

(recalling)

"these Alternate Echoes are taking over"... What does that mean?

Elena is stunned.

ELENA

Oh my god!

MARCUS

What?

ELENA

The Alternate Echo was a theory I came up with to explain the mystery of Eloise. But I didn't honestly think...
(contemplates)
It can't be, surely?

MARCUS

What? What the hell is it? You're freaking me out.

Elena composes herself.

ELENA

Are you familiar with the Multi-Dimension concept?

MARCUS

(wryly)
Not especially.

ELENA

There are several ideas put forward by Quantum, and String theory. One of which, is that there are multiple dimensions out there, just like our own. And that these dimensions continue to multiply, exponentially. Branching from existing dimensions, where each possible outcome, of every situation, results in a new dimension forming.

MARCUS

You've lost me.

ELENA

Ok, so for example, there might be a dimension where the dinosaurs weren't killed off by a meteor. Say it missed. And that dimension is running parallel to our own, but playing out a very different sequence of events. That world would be vastly different to the one that exists here. Conversely, there could be a dimension where something completely insignificant happened to cause the branch off. Say,

I don't know...

Elena spots a small bug crawling across the floor.

ELENA (CONT'D)

This bug. Imagine it dies in our dimension, but then a branch off dimension forms where the bug lives. In that instance, our alternate lives would probably play out identically in both worlds. The effect of this one tiny bug living or dying is unlikely to have any bearing on our futures.

Marcus rubs his face, exasperated.

MARCUS

I'm sorry, what exactly has this got to do an echo?

ELENA

Well, in closely related dimensions, like in the bug example, you effectively have the same person living an almost identical life. I theorized that since they come from a singularity, perhaps there is still an unconscious link between them, between their minds. My theory was simply that what some people see as premonitions, are in fact Echoes from an alternative dimension. And that what they are actually seeing, are things experienced by their alternate self. Alternate Echoes. It would explain why Eloise's future premonitions failed to come to pass. Most of them involved scenarios within her own personal life, but since in this dimension she was confined to a care facility, those scenarios could not unfold in the same manner.

MARCUS

You're kidding me, right?

ELENA

I'm sorry?

MARCUS

I mean, come on. You don't really

think that's what this is, do you?
Alternate dimensions and shit?

ELENA

I've never spoken to anyone about the Alternate Echo before, Marcus. It was just a... vague idea I came up with, in my own head. To try and explain Eloise's case. The phenomenon of people who have accurate premonitions about the future. I would have been laughed out of the profession if I suggested it as a serious hypothesis. There's no way on this earth you could have known about that phrase.

(beat)

I think this is real Marcus.

Marcus reels.