

ON BLACK

Distant POLICE SIRENS whirring. We hear FAST HEAVY BREATHING. Hard soled shoes WHIPPING the asphalt.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET. NIGHT

We see a pair of legs. Someone in smart shoes, running.

We see 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 spots an alleyway; heads into it.

EXT. DARK ALLEYWAY. CONTINUOUS

Marcus CATCHES HIS BREATH, slumping to the ground. He undoes the top few buttons of his shirt. We see blood oozing from a bullet wound.

POLICE SIRENS are getting closer.

He applies a handkerchief to the wound. Grimace. Looks back around the corner of the alleyway.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET. CONTINUOUS

At the far end of the street we see a tall SHADOW FIGURE. Its features indistinguishable but clearly that of a male figure. He stands completely still. Looking directly at Marcus.

EXT. DARK ALLEYWAY. CONTINUOUS

Marcus is bewildered. He continues along the alleyway.

Reaching the other end, he glances back. The Shadow Figure is stood at the entrance to the alleyway.

EXT. BRIDGE. NIGHT

Marcus's run slows to a jog as he crosses the bridge. The SIRENS are close. He looks back. In the distance, the flashing glow of police lights approaching.

He continues forward. Stops dead in his tracks. The Shadow Figure is facing him at the far end of the bridge. Marcus looks back. Police cars approach. He looks to the river below, climbs onto the ledge of the bridge, leaps into the water.

EXT. RIVER. CONTINUOUS

Marcus is underwater. Blood seeps from his wound, turning the water a cloudy red.

He breaks the surface with a huge intake of breath. Starts swimming.

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, closes his eyes.

He opens his eyes. The Shadow figure is hovering above him. Watching.

INT. MARCUS'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Marcus's eyes open with a start, he GASPS for air. He's in bed. Looks over to an alarm clock, it reads "4.20 am". GROANS, rolls onto his side.

INT. MARCUS'S BEDROOM. DAY

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

INT. MARCUS'S BATHROOM. DAY

Marcus washes his face. Opens a bathroom cabinet, we see a bottle of antidepressants, 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. He mutters to himself in his Mexican twang.

CHARLIE

Son of a bitch. Stupid ass Pigeon... How about I take a shit on you? See how you like it huh!

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

MARCUS

Hey Charlie.

Charlie perks up.

CHARLIE  
Hey buddy. What's up?

MARCUS  
Your feathered friend back I see.

CHARLIE  
That motherfucker got a vendetta against me man.

Marcus can't help but smirk.

MARCUS  
I'm telling you, it's that day you threw your shoe  
at him. Dude's holding a grudge.

CHARLIE  
Well 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. Speaker fallen ill or something.  
(checks watch)  
I'm ten minutes late. I'll catch you later, alright?

CHARLIE  
Yeah, see you man.

Marcus drives on. Charlie returns to cleaning. A fat PIGEON  
lands on a fence nearby, watches. Charlie looks up. Shakes his  
head, seething.

INT. COMMUNAL OFFICE AREA. DAY

A stack of documents, the top one reads "Avery Defense  
Technologies". People in lab coats and smart suits busy  
around. Marcus slumps at a disorganised workspace. Lazily  
typing. Unenthused.

Marcus looks out of place in the professional office. His hair  
scruffy, stubble unkempt. He takes a sip of coffee, spills  
some on his white lab coat, casually rubs it away.

LUCY PALMER, 34, an attractive Lead Engineer enters the area. Marcus watches Lucy from afar as she engages in conversation with a co-worker. She looks in his direction, Marcus averts his gaze, continues typing.

Marcus takes another look, receives a shove in the back. Obnoxious Salesman BRAD STEVENS, 32 is stood behind him.

BRAD  
Hey, Mucus!

Brad grins like an idiot.

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

Brad perches himself 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 over and annoy you.

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

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

Lucy heads in Marcus and Brad's direction. Brad smiles lecherously.

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

Lucy returns a polite smile as she passes.

LUCY  
Good morning.

Lucy continues on, 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 stares in a trance for several moments. Marcus gets impatient.

MARCUS  
Brad?

Brad snaps out of it.

MARCUS (cont'd)  
Can I get back to work please?

BRAD  
Sure. 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, eating a microwave dinner from the carton. Sammy lays on his lap, Marcus strokes him lovingly.

Offscreen, we hear muffled SHOUTING followed by a THUMP. Marcus looks to the wall of the apartment and rolls his eyes.

INT. MARCUS'S LIVING ROOM. LATER

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

INT. COMMUNICATION ROOM. NIGHT

An official room contains large computer units and high-tech equipment. Marcus eyes up a futuristic helmet connected to the computers. A PULSING HUM emanates from the equipment.

Offscreen, we hear a WOMAN'S VOICE.

WOMAN (O.S)  
Gray!

Marcus turns around, the scenery changes.

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.

MARCUS  
What?

Elena's face morphs into Brad's. The scenery changes.

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY. NIGHT

Brad is intoxicated, sways around with a glass of Champagne, berating Marcus.

BRAD  
You know your problem? You're so fucking boring! 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. Falling backwards, Brad grasps onto Marcus's collar, taking them both over the edge of the balcony. As they fall into the bushes, the scenery changes.

EXT. GRAND HOUSE. NIGHT

Marcus creeps through dense undergrowth holding a Pistol.

Marcus reaches the edge of a building, peers around the corner. All clear. He continues around the building. Behind him, we see the Shadow Figure stood in the bushes.

Marcus slinks across a lawn. Bright spotlights click on. BARKING dogs charge at Marcus. He turns and runs.

A dog lunges at him when the scenery changes.

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY

Marcus is still running. Everyone is running. Hundreds of people. Terrified. Smoke billows from buildings. Huge EXPLOSIONS going off. Ahead, Marcus sees a SCARED WOMAN struggling with two crying CHILDREN. Marcus stops to help, picks up one of the children.

A WHISTLING noise, getting louder. Marcus looks up to the sky, a missile heads straight at him.

INT. MARCUS'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Marcus jumps awake. He looks down at Sammy asleep on the blanket. Turns off the TV with the remote, lays back his head. Frustrated.

INT. WORK CAFETERIA. DAY

Marcus and Charlie sit in the bustling cafeteria, tucking into lunch. Charlie shows Marcus a magazine of bikini models.

CHARLIE

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

Marcus looks at the picture of a curvaceous Latina model with a huge butt.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Oh mama!

MARCUS

Ass is too big.

CHARLIE

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

MARCUS

Oh yeah, what about Suzie in HR?

CHARLIE  
Super-size Suzie? 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. Naw man, it's all got to be in proportion.

MARCUS  
Exactly, that's what I've been saying, proportions are more important than size. I don't get this obsession with women wanting their ass to look like a pair of bowling balls.

Immature LAUGHTER from across the room. Marcus looks over, sees Brad horsing around. He focusses in on Brad's face, recalling something.

MARCUS  
Huh.

CHARLIE  
What?

MARCUS  
Nothing. Just remembered I had another of those weird dreams last night. It's really starting to fuck me up man, can't remember the last good night's sleep I had.

CHARLIE  
Why don't you go see a therapist?

MARCUS  
A shrink?

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

MARCUS  
Can't hurt I suppose.  
(pause)  
It's just odd, you know. They don't feel like normal dreams. They feel almost like...



Marcus is deep in thought.

CHARLIE  
Like what?

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

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

MARCUS (cont'd)  
She's a six at best.  
(taps magazine)

CHARLIE  
You're crazy.

MARCUS  
Taking three marks off for the ridiculous ass. It's  
unnatural. Six! Next.

Charlie turns the page, incredulous.

CHARLIE  
Ah, the lovely Monique.

Marcus glances back over to Brad, now flirting with a young  
lady.

INT. COMMUNAL OFFICE AREA. DAY

Marcus scans the room. Everybody is preoccupied.

ON COMPUTER

A Browser search for "Sleep Therapists near me". A list of  
results underneath.

BACK TO SCENE

Marcus takes another look around.

ON COMPUTER

Marcus clicks on a sleep clinic website. A list comes up of  
the various Doctors working at the clinic along with their  
picture.

He stops at one. It's Elena, the woman from his dream!

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". Looking further down the page, we focus on the words "Specialising in Oneirology, the scientific study of dreams".

BACK TO SCENE

Marcus sits back in his chair, staring at the screen with a look of confused fascination.