

Canker

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DITCH - SUNRISE

We look west to see cottonwood trees silhouetted against a deep-blue sky, just before the sun breaks the horizon. The smooth flow of ditch water can be heard as it flows between an elongated swath cut deep into the ground.

Yet once the sunlight strikes, it highlights a plume of dust down the embankment which grows as a great cloud from whence, suddenly, an old beater car bursts through the brown fog. It's drives like a *Chiroptera* out of Hades and makes for the ditch crossing ahead--

EXT. DITCH CROSSING - CONTINUOUS

--and immediately brakes at said destination. Here, the water filters through an underground culvert, paved over by an old road, and spits out the other end, maybe twenty feet away.

The driver falls out the vehicle -- sort of a Doc Brown type. If you profiled him as a scientist, you get the artichoke heart. This is Gerold, our "good" man of science. For that, let's call him G. SCIENTIST. He pops on a pair of glasses left in the drivers seat before he fumbles with the handle to the back door.

Asleep in the backseat is a little girl, BRAI. He checks her vitals: pulse, breathing -- even her pupils, in which he taps her eyeballs with his finger. Good to go. Then, in frantic search, he checks his pockets until he finds a computer chip.

He inserts the chip into a slot in the back of her neck -- there's an electronic ping we hear, courtesy of our sound designer. It's then that the girl rouses from her coma.

G. SCIENTIST

Brai. Brai, it's time to wake up.

Though she's not fully coherent yet, he sits her up.

G. SCIENTIST

Listen to me. It's time to do what we talked about. Remember? It's time for you to go now. Here...

He hands her a gun.

G. SCIENTIST

But only if you need it.
Understand?

He guides her out of the car. Across the way, he points to the cottonwood trees.

G. SCIENTIST

In there. You run to those trees
and you don't stop. You keep
running.

The girl is maybe ten or eleven -- a pretty little dollop with black hair and eyes that could pierce the sea. But right now, those eyes are lost within an internal void. The scientist is forced to slap her hard across the face.

G. SCIENTIST

Brai, do you understand?

Yep, that got her attention. She nods.

G. SCIENTIST

Then go. Hurry!

Brai obeys. She runs for the tree-line, way off yonder. But then a fresh rumble of noise adverts the scientist's attention: *Vroom-Vroom!* And somewhere along the same path he traversed, dust rises again. He pops the trunk open to reveal a large grey case.

It's made of hard plastics and metals -- cool lights flicker and blink over it, too. It's big enough to fit a large dog inside, or maybe a small child (a not-too-subtle hint). With exhaustive effort, he pulls it out the trunk and drags it down into the ditch with him. There, he hides it inside the culvert.

The *VROOM!* claps like thunder once more. He climbs his way out, to the opposite side of the embankment, and scurries toward an open field.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - MORNING, MOMENTS LATER

The sun is in full bloom as the scientist runs toward it in a false hope -- as if he could somehow hide himself within its light. A motorcycle chases him down and on it rides an ominous figure, as if he were the headless horseman come to claim his next Ichabod Crane.

But unlike the legend, he retains his own and boasts a contraption upon his face that protrudes from his mouth and nose. Details to come -- for now, the RIDER gains on the scientist and brandishes a futuristic weapon; a kind of gun. He fires it -- *Ve-a-ra-braummm!*

It belches a blast of blue-white lights that wraps around the scientist's ankles and flings him high into the air before he crashes down again. The Rider steps off his bike, approaches, and is backlit by the sun. It's all rather badass...

G. SCIENTIST

It's done. It's done. You won't
find her.

The sun blots out any facial description of the Rider -- except for the eyes. Purple, ill-boding eyes. This tells us he ain't no fucking Sant E. Clause. He breaks out another weapon -- it's like an ice-pick.

G. SCIENTIST

(pleading)

You shouldn't do this. You
shouldn't help them. If you've seen
the grave, you'd understand --
hundreds of bodies!

(swallows)

Your people will be next. And --
and I have new information... not
just the Clergy but, but--

In one fell swoop, the Rider heaves the ice-pick. The spike rips into the scientist's temple. We hear the crack of skull and bone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Bird's-eye-view of the brown and murky water. We hear the buzz of insects as what appears to be a rowboat enters frame. It breaks its course, pulled taught by a rope tied off to its bow. Splayed inside, in a star-shape, lays a man. Passed out.

He is undergoing scaphism, a form of torture. Give it a read on Wikipedia. And this nameless bastard, who we will learn is a hunter by trade, is sandwiched between the tight interior of this contraption which is made from two narrow rowboats, one cupped atop the other, that leave only his bare head, arms, and legs exposed.

It's these areas of sensitive appendages that the insects pick at, and the sun boils and blisters to a lobster-red. He's covered in a sticky substance, honey, that also clumps to his long and shaggy hair.

This is H/NT/R (the best name I can give him, for he does not own one of his own. It'll make sense later).

Then there's the sound of a whistle, like someone were hollering for a dog.

REGAL

Hey there, boy! C'mon, get back ov'r here.

REGAL -- some hillbilly shit-head in overalls, but decked out in some twisted "Road Warrior" sort of way, with knives that hang off his belt, and plenty more weapons to spare -- pulls H/nt/r back toward the shore by rope.

EXT. RIVER - SHORE - CONTINUOUS

Regal is rather burly and boasts some wicked scars -- he probably saw combat once or twice in his day. There are even deep scratches made to areas of his body where the skin stops and metal fills in the gaps. TROLLY helps him push the scaph further out of the mud and muck.

Oh, have I not mentioned Trolly yet? Put it this way: she's the kind of woman you'd want to piss off, if only to find out how close to death she'd bring you before her knife released your manhood from your shameful existence -- all in some sort of perverted sexual euphoria you might fantasize about.

Don't piss her off.

REGAL

Jesus, that's a fine stink. How long's it been?

One other thing, Regal's a bit of a stutterer -- like a bad computer program.

TROLLY

Eight days. The record stands at seventeen.

REGAL

Damn. Really thought we'd make some money on this one. Shame to take him out so early. He could have made it to twenty-two. Twenty, easily.

(beat)

Hell, better wake him. Douse him with some fresh sauce.

Trolly fetches a half gallon of milk from the cab of their pickup truck. She splashes a generous amount over H/nt/r's face. It does the trick -- wakes him up all right.

REGAL
 (to H/nt/r)
 Mornin', sunshine.

Sunshine can barely get an eye open. He's a putrid mess.

REGAL
 Hate cuttin' the game early, but
 word up riv'r is that the local
stench has a play at somethin' new.
 He don't think we can handle it and
 wants us to cut his favorite cock-
 birthed spunk free.

TROLLY
 And who are we to argue with our
 beloved sheriff?

REGAL
 It's your lucky day, purple.
 (beat, to Trolly)
 Let's pry him out, Trol. Grab the
 crowbar.

Trolly breaks the seams of the scaph apart with a crowbar. Her and Regal remove the lid to reveal the portal to Hell itself: a meltdown and mash of fecal, bile, and petulance. A cornucopia of brown and yellowed cream that seeps and oozes through H/nt/r's clothes. Flies buzz and the maggots pester -- it's a perfect shot to invent Smell-O-Vision.

TROLLY
 The milk's been workin'.

REGAL
 Worth ev'ry drop we made him
 swallow. Shittin' himself fine.
 (beat)
 Help me roll him.

They tip the boat and H/nt/r dives into the river. Together, the siblings drag his ass from the river to the truck bed.

REGAL
 (to H/nt/r)
 No hard feelins'. If anythin', let
 this be a lesson for ya: best leave
 me an' my sister be -- no matter
 what the bounty on our heads fetch.

He slams the tailgate shut.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

We follow the pickup as it bounces along an empty wasteland of gnawed earth and tumbleweeds. The tailgate drops open and Trolly grabs H/nt/r's body and heaves him out -- *WHAP!* -- he bounces across the desert like a Mexican jumping bean on Molly, until he settles on his stomach.

TROLLY

In case you get thirsty!

She chucks the jug of milk at him and waves farewell.

H/nt/r is clothed in tattered cargo pants, boots, and a dirty green sweater. He's a man in ruin, slim pickings if vultures are anywhere near.

His finger finally gives a twitch. He rolls himself over, and chokes on his own breath from such exhaustive work. Over time, he stands himself up -- the man deserves a medal! It's bright out but he forces his eyes open -- and gadzooks! -- his eyes are purple, too. His pupils compensate for the light, and bear witness to a shit-show of desolate nothing.

He spots the milk jug. The three-foot journey with which he embarks on to rescue it could easily fill the rest of this movie's runtime. He pours out the chalky liquid, the sight off which makes him gag, and unzips his pants to remove his, um, desert-snake. He positions the jug between his legs and then... *Psssssssssss...*

He fills it quickly. When the tap runs dry, he lifts the warm golden refreshment to the edge of his lips. Then... it's down the ol' hatch -- *Gulp! Gulp! Gulp!*

He takes his fill, but keeps plenty on reserve. H/nt/r caps it and ties the handle to the hip of his pants (if not a milk jug, then maybe a paint can).

SERIES OF SHOTS - H/NT/R WANDERS DESERT:

- H/nt/r wanders the desert.
- Desert vistas and one lone wanderer.
- Night sets in. H/nt/r finds shelter and sleeps.
- Morning. A swallow of piss, then a good wander.

EXT. DESERT - VOLCANIC ROCK - DAY

A small mouse: tiny head, long whiskers, plump body, and camouflaged to its environment. But like that creepy Peeping Tom, the kind who surfaces over the top of a bathroom stall to spy on your business, likewise H/nt/r stalks this critter. It picks at something near the camera lens before we rack focus to H/nt/r's eyes, where he idles in the background.

Suddenly, like a goddamn puma, H/nt/r -- arm outstretched -- snags the rodent in one fell swoop! Quickly, he twists the tiny neck -- *Snap!* -- breaks the rib-cage -- *Crackle!* -- and bites off the head -- *Pop!*

He devours Fievel -- fur, blood, bone, and papa's violin. At the end of his feast, H/nt/r wipes the blood from his lips with the back of his hand and continues his pilgrimage.

He makes for those cottonwood trees, far into the distance.

EXT. DITCH - BRIDGE - DAY

H/nt/r crosses the bridge and quickly notices tire tracks. He's close to the crossing we were at earlier, only a couple of dozen yards away, and notices the tracks lead to that old beater car. He's curious of it, but only for a second, until he hears a whistle -- this time in the tune of a song by a sudden passerby who approaches from behind. This is PAPPY.

PAPPY
headed ta town?

He's an old fellow, seems friendly enough. But he's filthy, like the 80-year-old Iranian man who hasn't taken a bath in over sixty years. Google it.

H/NT/R
Yeah.

PAPPY
care ta join, clergy friend? on my
way ta the saloon.

H/NT/R
Another time, old man.

PAPPY
suit yerself.

The gaffer continues on his merry and H/nt/r heads towards the trees.

EXT. BOSQUE - DAY

H/nt/r weaves through the elder cottonwoods, both in memory and in haste. Though he pays no mind, he is not alone: a pair of eyes watch him, hidden in the leafage.

EXT. BOSQUE - H/NT/R'S SPOT - MOMENTS LATER

H/nt/r picks a spot on the ground and begins to dig. The result of this excavation reveals the burial of a large metal box that hides a treasure trove of goodies when he removes the top.

First, he grabs a respirator mask and secures it over his mouth and nose. It looks as if it were plucked from World War II. A hose runs from the mask to a cannister he clips on -- *Pa-shhhhh*... and he inhales the fresh gas. As if by sorcery, his sunburns and boils begin to heal, rejuvenate. Also, the mask closely resembles the same shapely contraption the Rider had worn.

Next out of the box he removes a homemade crossbow made from an actual rifle. He checks the sights and trigger. Only one arrow though. Damn. Finally, he pockets a Gandalf pipe and Longbottom Leaf.

BRAI (O.C.)

Is there water in there?

It's the small girl the scientist released into the wild, and the same eyes that spied on him in the last short scene. She has the gun, points it to the back of H/nt/r's head. Like the honey badger, though, H/nt/r don't give a shit.

BRAI

Hey! Do you have water?

He undoes the jug that hangs from his waist, pitches it back to her. There's maybe a swallow or two of piss left.

H/NT/R

Best I got, kid.

BRAI

(disgusted)

What's in the box?

H/NT/R

Rations.

He stuffs a few old bottles of water into his cargo pants.

H/NT/R
 And careful with that piece. Could
 drop it -- shame to stub your toe.

BRAI
 (nervous)
 I -- I could kill you.

H/nt/r stands and inches toward her, slowly. The girl's anxiety grows and he nabs the gun from her quicker than me in the sack. He checks the clip.

H/NT/R
 Only one bullet. Might even be the
 last there is in this county. Best
 to save it for something a little
 more dangerous than me.

He hands the piece back. Brai looks disappointed.

BRAI
 Relax, kid. Ancient technology.

He hoists the crossbow over his shoulder. But just then, however, an echo penetrates through the tree tops: *Vroom!* It galvanizes H/nt/r's interest. He leaves the girl.

H/NT/R
 Have whatever's left in the box,
 kid. Then scram. Not safe out here.

He disappears through the trees. Brai approaches the box -- and inside, an extra bottle of water and some food rations.

EXT. ROCK BLUFF, OVERLOOKS DIRT ROAD - DAY

Hidden atop the bluff, H/nt/r peers toward the road. He sees a trail of dust. At its forefront, a man rides a motorcycle.

H/nt/r watches as the Rider, equipped with a gas mask over his face, pulls back on the throttle -- *Va-roooooommm!* -- and blasts away.

H/NT/R
 (sotto)
 Simon.

SIMON. The Rider's name is Simon.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - MOTORCYCLE (MOVING) - DAY

Simon's gas mask is far more high-tech than H/nt/r's ratty old one. But the purple in his eyes are identical.

Brrr-ing. Brrr-ing.

Simon taps a device inserted into his ear.

OCKLEY (V.O.)
(filtered)
It's been twenty-four hours. Is it done?

SIMON
I pursued the scientist until he abandoned his vehicle. I've neutralized him as a threat.

OCKLEY (V.O.)
And the girl?

SIMON
Tracks lead from the car to the woods, after which the trail runs cold. I'm patrolling the perimeter. If she breaks for town, I'll spot her.

INT. INSTITUTE - OFFICE - DAY

RICHARD OCKLEY abandons the plush leather chair. He's an older fellow -- all business and business fitted. He snarls into the portable communication device strapped to his ear.

OCKLEY
You're not being paid for breaks. I'm paying you for dead. Got it?

SIMON (V.O.)
(filtered)
Sir, she doesn't read on my instruments or tracking guides. No prints, no heat signature...

OCKLEY
Flush her out. Get it done.

SIMON (V.O.)
Copy.

Bleep.

He chucks the device at the wall. His assistant MS. > approaches, rubs his shoulders to cool him down.

OCKLEY

Maybe he's not cut out for this particular job.

She's a bombshell, by the way. And a tiny little thing, which somehow makes her more appealing. Short skirt, top -- the works. Long brunette hair and brown contacts -- I mean eyes!

MS. >

Always more options, of course.

OCKLEY

(recants)

Simon can handle it.

MS. >

Let's not forget who he is, where he comes from. A young child as a target -- he might hesitate.

OCKLEY

He's a hunter, as far as I'm concerned. And if anything, he's loyal to money.

He checks his time-keeping gadget.

OCKLEY

So if we want to keep him loyal, best we shift the market to our favor.

He slips out the office. Ms. > follows.

INT. INSTITUTE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

At the pace with which Ockley walks, it's like he were late to a bidding war to option this very screenplay. Ms. > scurries to keep up, and yes, it's adorable.

MS. >

So you mean to continue with testing?

OCKLEY

I do. And Edwin is every bit as capable of synthesizing a reliable strain. Maybe more so than our former doctor. In light of recent events, however, it wouldn't surprise me to learn if Gerold sabotaged 732.

MS. >

Sir, 731 has shown promise. I think if we postpone testing, only for a another week, we cou--

Ockley shoves her against the wall. This ain't no bullshit.

OCKLEY

Testing continues.

(beat)

I want Jax. You're aware of which unit?

She nods -- but only because she dare not anger him further.

OCKLEY

Prep him. Tomorrow.

He strokes her face, kisses her cheek, and pushes past another door. Ms. > monitors him through a window. Inside this new room, a group of children beam at the sight of Ockley, and race against one another to shower him with hugs.

OCKLEY

(through window)

Kids! Miss me?

Ms. > watches as Ockley is buried under a horde of kids, ages nine through twelve, all excited to wrestle with him. All except one. A boy, actually, who stands near the corner.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN - DAY

The setting: something out of the Old West, except there's an odd fusion of modern day (hell, even future day!) amenities. Horses, electric cars, satellite dishes... a really bizarre blend of everything.

We sense a definite post-apocalyptic vibe -- and certainly lawlessness abounds. Common folk and rascallions alike who intertwine in a decayed web of villainy and survival.

Enter H/nt/r as he's treated to an unsavory barrage of "stink-eye" batted his way from most of the townsfolk.

An out of work circus troupe sneers at him, the vagabond trio look away, and the Good For Nothing Lazy Assholes Motorcycle Club spit in his direction. Purple eyes make for multiple enemies.

But there's one thing you don't see any of... children.

EXT. TOWN - VETERANS HANGOUT - CONTINUOUS

H/nt/r cuts through an area of town infested by beer-guzzlin', meat-scorchin', wannabe "Road Warrior" hicks that party down like it were a Matanza, and jest at each other in their own orc-ish tongue. No surprise, then, to see Regal glazing a hog over a fire-pit at this bastardized barbecue.

REGAL

(hollers to H/nt/r)

Ain't that somethin'. Look who crawled his way out of the hellfire. Hey there, sexy!

Regal nudges Trolly. She swallows a shot of liquor from the bottle, then hoots at him. H/nt/r pays no mind, like a boss.

REGAL

Hungry? Why don't you come ov'r and have a bite of hog.

He grabs his crotch.

REGAL

Got some fresh, right here for ya.

Laughter erupts around the camp.

H/nt/r lifts his crossbow, fires the arrow. Its point penetrates Regal, just below his shoulder blade. Blood spatters as he crashes atop the pig. The spit breaks and he falls into the fire, like a dumb-fuck.

And as smooth as this screenwriter's poetic style is, so too is H/nt/r's collective swagger as he carries on his way, with no stop to his stride, like that boss again.

Regal is still alive when rolled out from the flames. A few gang members head after H/nt/r.

TROLLY

Back off! He's going to see the sheriff. We'll take him when he comes out.

She cradles her brother.

REGAL

Son of a bitch -- where is that purple-eyed fuck? I'll shank him. I'll make a hat out of his useless foreskin!

TROLLY

Easy, sweets. I'll save a blade for his throat.

We were warned not to piss her off. You have to wonder if the scowl that rips across Trolly's face is any indication of the demon yet to come?

EXT. TOWN - SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

A few deputies lounge about the porch when H/nt/r arrives, still followed by a some of them hillbillies. Sure as shit, they don't mess with the law, and H/nt/r is free to enter the building unmolested.

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, FRONT - CONTINUOUS

SHERIFF CHONG fights with LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY. The former: fit, mid-forties, and with a bit of an Irish accent. The latter: skinny, early-twenties, and an incoherent mess.

SHERIFF CHONG

Dammit, Jackson! Put down the vacuum.

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY

Ain't nothin' to it, pa. I found it! It's mine!

They fight, physically, over the rights to a vacuum cleaner.

SHERIFF CHONG

I told you, boy -- I warned you. In the cage, now!

Sheriff Chong pushes and locks Lord Jackson von Krazy into one of the cells. The boy tears into the cleaner bag.

H/NT/R
Family trouble?

SHERIFF CHONG
Hey there, old chap. Wondering when I could expect ya. How far into the desert were you let go this time?

H/NT/R
Never matters. Wherever I am, it's all in walking distance to where I need to go.

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY
Who's at the door, pa?

Lord Jackson shovels a handful of vacuum dirt into his mouth.

SHERIFF CHONG
Ain't no concern of yours.
(to H/nt/r)
Every day with that boy. Maybe I ought to get him married off. Let some dame take him off my hands. Hoping I just need to get him laid though.

H/NT/R
Him and half your town.

SHERIFF CHONG
Long as nobody's shootin' and shittin' in the streets, the town and I have a peace-keep.

Out the window, Chong notices Regal's cronies nearby.

SHERIFF CHONG
Or maybe not. What's this about?

H/NT/R
Shootin' the shit.

Ah. The crossbow. Of course.

SHERIFF CHONG
You mind taking that off for a sec?
I barely understand a word you say.

It ain't the crossbow, but the gas mask he points at. Reluctantly, H/nt/r abides.

SHERIFF CHONG

World's gone to shit three times over -- must be nice to juice yourself when you catch a canker sore kissing your member.

H/NT/R

I find I'm more paranoid than most.

SHERIFF CHONG

Sometimes I think I envy the Clergy-born. Then I look at my boy over there and realize it's better to pick up strays straight off the street. Cheaper.

Lord Jackson wails inside his cage.

H/NT/R

Safer.

(beat)

My river cruise was cut short, just as I began to relax. Why am I here?

Chong flashes a wink and a smile. He escorts H/nt/r to the back office, past Lord Jackson.

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

At his desk, Chong tosses H/nt/r a file, or a refurbished iPad or something similar.

SHERIFF CHONG

Take a look.

The contents contain a mug shot -- a little girl. It's Brai.

H/NT/R

What is this?

SHERIFF CHONG

A bounty. If you're up for it.

H/NT/R

The girl, what'd she do?

SHERIFF CHONG

A runaway. Somehow she escaped that Institute -- you know the one. That facility with all them kids.

H/NT/R
 (suspicious)
 Who's hosting this bounty? And
 what's the price?

SHERIFF CHONG
 The price -- it ain't nothing I can
 make worthwhile. This comes from
 the Clergy. Cardinal Eleanore.

H/nt/r hands the file back to Sheriff Chong.

H/NT/R
 Forget it. I won't do it.

SHERIFF CHONG
 Bullshit. I'm doing you a favor
 here. You're telling me I got you
 off that lagoon, saved you from
 pooper-hole eating maggots, only so
 you could say no?

H/NT/R
 If the Clergy want her, that means
 the Institute's out for her too.

SHERIFF CHONG
 It's a chance to get what you want.
 What else matters?

H/NT/R
 Simon.

SHERIFF CHONG
 Your brother?

H/NT/R
 He's good with the Institute.
 They'll put him on this.

SHERIFF CHONG
 Then get to her first. Alive this
 time. Very important, that point.

H/NT/R
 (pause)
 I'll need an advance. Deduct it
 from a future bounty. I need
 supplies.

SHERIFF CHONG
 No can do.

Sheriff Chong leads H/nt/r back toward the front. On their way, he kicks the cell bars to startle Lord Jackson. The boy is now, uh, at pleasure with himself... near climax.

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, FRONT - CONTINUOUS

Chong nods at the riff-raff who still bum around in front of his building, warded off by his deputies.

SHERIFF CHONG

Used what was left in the budget to pay off Regal and that slice of sister he's got... for your hide.

(beat)

Appears you already crashed their B.B.Q. celebration.

(beat, smile)

'Course, they both got a bounty on each of their heads. Dead or alive.

"Oh, I get it," says H/nt/r, as he imitates Peregrin Took whilst he taps his nose, "don't be hasty."

EXT. TOWN - SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

H/nt/r exits, and blows past the deputies who polish their guns (similar to Simon's). The orcs follow.

SHERIFF CHONG

(to his deputies)

Make sure there ain't any trouble.

The deputies maintain order and stay between them and H/nt/r. Tensions rise.

EXT. TOWN - VETERANS HANGOUT - DAY

A red-hot poker is drawn from the coals of the now destroyed grill-pit. It's presented to Regal who sits in a chair, shirt removed, and the arrow embedded into his flesh. It sticks straight up, like his erection whenever he dreams of his sister naked. Speaking of his sis' -- Trolly pours whisky over his wound. Regal squeals.

TROLLY

Easy now. Arrow didn't go all the way through. I have to push it out your back, cut it--

She flashes a pair of wire cutters at him.

TROLLY

--then pull it though again. We'll
have to cauterize both wounds.

That's the poker's job. A hillbilly holds it on stand-by.

REGAL

Had it worse in the last two
Scourges I fought in. Get it over
with.

Trolly pushes the arrow through. Regal screams in pain, but
the arrow-tip penetrates the back of his shoulder.

TROLLY

Hard part's over. Almost done.

H/NT/R (O.C.)

Let me help finish up.

H/nt/r rips Trolly away and pulls the arrow out from Regal's
flesh. He then sticks it back into him, this time through the
neck, and out of the back spine. A spray of red. Choking.
Next, death.

Trolly kicks the back of H/nt/r's knee out. He's swarmed by
orcs. There's punches, jabs, and kicks. The poker swings at
him -- but he catches it and reintroduces the fiery end into
the hillbilly's stomach. The deputies join the fight.

When the fight draws neigh, H/nt/r yields under the clutches
of a headlock and a good wranglin'. Trolly pulls the poker
from the gut of her fallen comrade and teases H/nt/r with it.
She waves it from purple eye to purple eye. Sweat pours.

BANG!

That was a shotgun blast, and Chong brandishes his piece with
superior confidence. The barrel still coughs smoke.

SHERIFF CHONG

(to his deputies)

Dammit, I said make sure there
ain't no trouble.

(to Trolly)

Problem here?

No bueno for Trolly -- she can tell he isn't on her side.

TROLLY

No, sheriff. Everythins' fine. Lil'
disagreement, is all.

SHERIFF CHONG

Glad it was squared away.

(to H/nt/r)

I was hoping you'd be a little more discreet.

(looks at Regal)

Shit. But I guess that'll do. You can collect his bounty at the bank.

(to Trolly)

You. Better be on your best behavior, ya hear?

Sheriff Chong's about to head out, then remembers something:

SHERIFF CHONG

(to H/nt/r)

If you haven't heard, town's getting a new Clergy -- a Bishop. Your father's been recalled. Give her a visit before she heads out. Misses ya.

We see a church up the hill.

Sheriff Chong eyeballs the crowd and leaves. They know the rules, otherwise it's the noose for all of them.

H/nt/r finds his ground, but Trolly has something to say:

TROLLY

I'll be coming for ya, purple. I'll keep an open spot on the river. There's a seventeen day record I want ya to break.

"Honey badger still don't give a shit." Signed, H/nt/n.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOSQUE - DAY

Simon investigates the forest. He tracks. He hunts. Swabs of snowy cotton wisp around his body as he navigates from brush to bramble, from seepwillow to wolfberry.

He finds an empty water bottle. He pulls off his gas mask and sniffs it. Then sniffs the air, *Sniff-sniff*. He coughs. It's not much of one, but he forces his mask back on.

He picks up his feet and disappears into the trees. But up high in that wolfberry, tiny piercing eyes spy on him.

EXT. BOSQUE - H/NT/R'S SPOT - MOMENTS LATER

Simon approaches the unearthed box; its lid open, but contents empty. There's just a little bit of left over Longbottom Leaf, however.

He kicks it closed.

SIMON

(sotto)

Brethren hunter. What takes you off the water?

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN - CHURCH, PORCH - SUNSET

Storm clouds brew out yonder. Splinters of lightning spark. H/nt/r, gas mask propped atop his head, stabs the bowl of his pipe with a match stick, churns over the fiery tobacco. He sucks at the stem, then blows out a thick cloud of cancer.

At his feet he has a bag of fresh supplies. There's a rope, new arrows, etc.

His face is bruised after his ass whooping. He puffs the last of his pipe, empties it, and enters the church.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Not since the screening of my last movie have you seen a room more empty. If it were the rapture that left the outside world so forsaken, it made sure to leave this place of worship even more miserable. At the entrance, H/nt/r is greeted by someone who wears both a cloak and hood, all violet garb with gold trim, whose face is invisible by the thick cloth that cloaks everything; even the brow.

H/NT/R

You the Bishop?

The BISHOP bows, silent.

H/NT/R

I'm here to see Father Mary.

The Bishop points him to the altar, down the isle.

FATHER MARY (O.C.)

What troubles you, child?

FATHER MARY enters from some door to the side. Unlike the Bishop, however, she dons a plain and simple cassock. She is twice the age of H/nt/r, kind eyes, and a warm smile.

H/NT/R

Tired.

FATHER MARY

We must work the works of those that have sent us, while it is day; the night comes, when no man can work.

H/NT/R

Bible versus, father?

FATHER MARY

Advice. From a father to her son.

H/NT/R

My work comes at all hours.

FATHER MARY

And your health suffers for it.

They meet at the front podium, and behind it she retrieves a fresh cannister for his gas mask. They sit, there, together.

FATHER MARY

People will never fully understand us. The good we do. The people we help. It's a shame they punish what they do not understand.

H/NT/R

They understand me. They understand that people like me come at a price. Few to none can bare children of their own, and less, still, can afford one. It all comes at a price, father -- which is why people feel resentment toward me.

FATHER MARY

You did not come at a price.

H/NT/R

No one pitched a few bucks to birth me, sure. Not like my brother, anyway. Still, Simon has the very thing I will never have, and still I can't escape his hate.

FATHER MARY
 (sympathetic)
 Only because I've shown you favor.
 You are my true born, after all.
 But I love you both.

They sit silently for a moment. Distant thunder rumbles.

FATHER MARY
 You are aware that I've been
 recalled to the Vatican?

H/NT/R
 I am.

FATHER MARY
 I leave first thing. I'll spend the
 rest of my years serving the
 Clergy, helping new priests who are
 called to the Faith with their own
 transformations -- through
 pregnancy and birth.

H/NT/R
 This town will lose a good priest.

FATHER MARY
 I don't know about that.

H/NT/R
 (from left-field)
 Simon's after her, too -- the
 escaped girl from the Institute, I
 mean. Did you know?

FATHER MARY
 I cannot protect you from him
 anymore, now that I'll be gone. The
 two of you must follow your own
 paths. Maybe, someday, they will
 bring you together.
 (beat)
 But it's important you find her
 first.

She pulls the gas mask on back over his face, clicks in the
 fresh canister -- *Pa-shhhhh*. His bruises begin to heal.

H/NT/R
 Why? The girl... who is she?

FATHER MARY

(smiles)

Hope.

(beat)

I should see where the new Bishop
has gone to. I haven't filled her
in on everything yet.

After a moment, Father Mary stands.

FATHER MARY

Time to go, child.

(beat)

You're being watched.

Father Mary kisses her son and exits.

There's a figure, who's cast in silhouette, that's in the last pew. En route to make his exit, H/nt/r sees that it's Trolly. In her lap, she strokes Regal's hair. His dead body lays on the pew -- the arrow is still stuck in his neck. In silence, she watches him.

H/nt/r abandons the church to a crack of lightening and rain.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOSQUE - NIGHT

The rain begins to pour. Brai is huddled against a tree for shelter, but it has little effect on keeping her dry. Across the way, through an open patch of leaves, she can see the car near the ditch. Lightening and thunder erupt to frighten her.

EXT. DITCH CROSSING - MOMENTS LATER

Brai runs toward the car. There's another flash of white and a loud boom. She pops the trunk open and dives in, then closes herself inside.

INT. CAR, TRUNK - CONTINUOUS

Deep breaths... deep breaths... deep breaths... the girl pants, scared. She can hear the thick rain batter the outside of the car. At least in here she's dry and safe--

KA-BOOM! -- a loud crash of thunder. She screams-- !

CUT TO:

INT. INSTITUTE - CHILDREN'S BUNK - NIGHT

JAX jumps back, startled. He grips the back of his neck.

JAX

Brai!

MS. > (O.C.)

Jax? You okay?

Jax is a young boy, around Brai's age. He's in a room filled with other children, in pajamas, but we're blind to most of their faces. Also present, rows of bunk beds, military style. Atop of each pillow are gas masks connected to hoses which disappear into the floor or walls.

Ms. > approaches him.

MS. >

Jax. What's wrong?

He's the same kid that was huddled near the corner in the classroom earlier.

JAX

(embarrassed)

Um, just wondering when Brai was coming home. Haven't seen her in a while.

There's a bit of sympathy tucked away in that rainbow smile of hers as Ms. > pats him on the head.

MS. >

Bedtime, Jax.

(to the children)

Bedtime for everyone. Come on! You all must be starving.

The children jump into their assigned bunks. Like trained dogs, they place the masks over their noses and mouths. At the entrance, a valve connects to a maze of pipes, levers, and other shit. Ms. > twists it on: *Pa-shhhhh...*

Seconds later, the children fall into a bizarre and controlled slumber. Ms. > turns out the light and closes the door behind her. The sound of vapor funneled through hoses is all we're left with.

CUT TO:

EXT. DITCH CROSSING - MORNING

The aftermath of last night's storm has made a muddy mess of the former dry ground. We watch the car as the trunk pops open and little eyes from inside survey a open coast that is greater than or equal to clear. Brai hops out and scurries towards the trees. Sounds of early morning critters permeates the air. She has more than one startle as she navigates these lands more trecherous than the Plateau of Gorgoroth.

Step, step, step... the girl prattles on. With any luck, she's truly alone. And with any more luck she can -- *Ve-a-ra-braummm!*

A blast of blue-white light, from out the trees, snatches Brai by the ankles and kicks her in the air. She lands in a puddle. Simon dives out the forest like the T-1000. He taps an electronic interface stitched into the sleeve of his jacket, his motorcycle appears nearby -- uncloaked! Brai's back on her feet and runs.

Our S-1000 hops his bike and closes in on the girl. He fires his weapon but misses. Another round. Miss. Fire. Miss. Debris explodes around Brai. Up ahead, the crossing bridge -- then, *Ve-a-ra-braummm!* Direct hit as the girl soars like an eagle. But it's a violent landing when gravity pulls her back toward earth. This time she's out for the count.

EXT. DITCH - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Simon rockets past Brai, past the bridge. He spins a quick one-eighty, and upgrades his weapon: switches to the ice-pick. He pulls back on the throttle, blazes down the ditch bank -- but shit goes sour when someone appears on the bridge to meet him. This new addition lassos a rope that lands around the S-1000's neck, then -- *YOINK!*

Simon is ripped from his motorcycle. He hits the ground and rolls. The bike flips and wrecks without its rider. Immediately, I know you're asking, "*Where's the budget to pull this off? You can either have a movie or this one shot, not both.*"

Budgetary concerns aside, H/nt/r's on the move and drags Simon away from Brai with the other end of the rope, tosses it over a tree branch, and hoists him up in it.

He ties Simon off, leaves his brother in the tree, and runs back toward Brai. He picks the girl up, now conscious, and dashes for the car. Suddenly -- *Ve-a-ra-braummm!* Though in a noose, Simon fires at them with deadly accuracy.

H/nt/r dodges a few blasts, but the last one catches him and he and Brai go flippin' and a' tumblin'.

Back at the tree, Simon brandishes a knife and cuts the rope. He lands on his feet -- like a rabid, pissed off feline.

Further down the ditch, H/nt/r rolls himself over -- when, what to his wondering eyes should appear, but a beast at full charge, with all kinds of weapons and gear. H/nt/r cocks his crossbow... fires off a direct hit!

But Simon continues to stampede. The S-1000 snatches the ice-pick again (dropped after the motorcycle crash) and barrels down on his brother. H/nt/r grabs Brai -- as if she were a sack of potatoes -- and chucks the girl hard into Simon's knees. Her body collides with the him and forces the tackle.

H/nt/r intercepts the ice-pick and stakes the tip through Simon's hand, nails it to the earth. He picks Brai off her feet--

H/NT/R
Hold your breath.

--and tosses her into the ditch -- *SPLASH!* The current sweeps her away, toward the culvert. Simon continues to shoot at H/nt/r. Our hero jumps over the water, onto the opposite embankment, and chases after Brai.

EXT. DITCH CROSSING - CONTINUOUS

The water's current is faster than H/nt/r can keep up with. Brai screams as she's sucked under the culvert (are you rolling your eyes on how we'll pull this stunt off as well?). H/nt/r hightails it to the opposite end and waits at the mouth of the pipe. He reaches out... and -- "Got'cha!" -- snags Brai. She coughs up black water.

To the car: H/nt/r shoves Brai inside the backseat. Black boots crash atop the vehicle. It's Simon! He picks off H/nt/r by his shoulders and unleashes a Hulk Hogan-sized body slam, right there on the hood of the car. H/nt/r's face is pressed against the glass of the windshield as Simon tightens his bloody fist, then barrels down with it like a freight train.

SMACK! -- H/nt/r's face is crushed between knuckles and window. Another punch comes down -- *CRUNCH!* -- the window cracks. The fist resets and -- *WHAP!* -- glass explodes!

I/E. CAR/DITCH - CROSSING - CONTINUOUS

H/nt/r collapses over the dashboard. He looks to the backseat -- Brai has a gun pointed at him. She pulls the trigger... but next, in probably what's the smartest choice ever made by any human being in the world, H/nt/r ducks his head down. A maneuver, that, fortunately for him, leaves Simon exposed--

BANG! -- A spurt of blood out the eyeball. Simon falls backwards off the car. H/nt/r looks back at Brai, gun still in his face.

H/NT/R

Nice shot.

The girl shrugs.

H/NT/R

Put that down, will ya?

H/nt/r crawls inside the car. The keys are in the ignition. He starts it up. He and Brai drive off--

EXT. DITCH CROSSING - CONTINUOUS

--and abandon Simon. Could this be his end? We hear a beep, a few automated sounds and clicks -- there's a red light that blinks on his gas mask -- and then *Pa-shhhhh...*

Fingers twitch. His wounded hand fidgets. Life, uh, uh, finds a way...

INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Brai stares out the window, dead-pan. H/nt/r watches her through the rear-view mirror. She cradles the gun.

BRAI

Did I kill him?

No answer.

BRAI

I thought I'd miss.

H/NT/R

You didn't.

BRAI

I wanted to miss.

H/NT/R
Then we'd both regret it.

BRAI
He'll be okay?

H/NT/R
(almost disappointed)
Barely a scratch.

Their eyes meet, through the mirror.

BRAI
He wanted to kill me?

H/NT/R
You dead?

Silly question; she shakes her head "no."

H/NT/R
Can't promise for how long.
(pause)
You from that Institute? How'd you
get out here?

BRAI
Where are we going?

H/NT/R
The Vatican.

His response bounces over her head.

H/NT/R
People there are looking for you.
I'm taking you to see them.

BRAI
People like you? The place with the
purple-eyed monsters?

H/NT/R
Yeah, something like that.

BRAI
Neat.

H/NT/R
If you say so, kid.

BRAI
 Brai. My name is Brai.
 (pause)
 What's yours?

This is now a touchy subject for him. H/nt/r's uncomfortable.

H/NT/R
 My brother... his name is Simon.

BRAI
 Oh. Who's that?

H/NT/R
 You shot him in the eye.

Oh...

BRAI
 But what's yours?

H/NT/R
 My brother has a name. It's Simon.

Silence.

BRAI
 I'm hungry.

Of course you are Brai...

CUT TO:

INT. INSTITUTE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jax prattles alongside Ms. > in order to keep up while she bites at some invisible conversation through the portable communication device. He wears white scrubs. Her, a short dress.

MS. >
 (to phone)
 I see... well, that's very disappointing. No. I'll tell him.
 Best if it comes from me.

She peers down at Jax -- busts him checking her out.

MS. >
 (to phone)
 Just make sure it gets done. Hate
 to hire someone else.

Bleep -- she hangs up. Somehow, she seems relieved.

MS. >

(to Jax)

Help these days. So many excuses. A bit of advice: be a forward thinker. Timely competent anticipation. Understand?

He nods "yes" but what he really meant was "no."

MS. >

Just means to be good on your word. Take action, be vigilant, and always stay honest.

She stops him, looks him in the eye.

MS. >

You're precious to me, you know that? You. Brai. The rest of the children.

Tears swell in her eyes.

JAX

Are you okay?

MS. >

I want you to be strong. Okay? When you go in that room, know that this is all for your brothers and sisters. To make you stronger. To make them stronger.

She then leads him through a door--

INT. INSTITUTE - LAB - CONTINUOUS

--into this large room decorated with some hella' impressive medical shit and other weird objects of science (I'll reveal more in bit). In the middle of the room is a chair with straps bolted to the arm and feet rests. Ockley waits there.

MS. >

(composed, but lying)

Good news, Mr. Ockley -- our problem has been taken care of.

OCKLEY

(distracted)

Yes, good. That's a relief.

Ockley works alongside another scientist, Edwin, but unlike Gerold he's "evil." Therefore, let's call him E. SCIENTIST. Ockley signs a few things, then greets the newcomers.

OCKLEY

(to Ms. >)

I knew Simon would come through.
Let's make sure we do the same.

(to Jax, excited)

And there's my boy!

He braces the child.

OCKLEY

Today's a big day, son.

Jax is almost petrified. He backs away from Ockley.

JAX

What is this place?

MS. >

It's where you'll be able to help
your brothers and sisters, Jax.
Like we talked about.

OCKLEY

The doctor, here, he's been working
on... on a kind of medicine.

JAX

What medicine?

OCKLEY

One that will help you see the
outside of these walls. Meet new
children. Grow strong. Would you
like that?

Ockley lifts Jax into the chair. The scientist straps him in.

MS. >

We'll be in the next room. Be
brave.

JAX

Wait -- you're leaving?

For a split second, Ms. > hesitates. But with a single look, Ockley scolds her and she follows him to an observation room.

EXT. INSTITUTE - OBSERVATION ROOM (TO LAB) - CONTINUOUS

Ockley and Ms. > watch the scientist fit a gas mask over Jax's face. Hoses connect to it, then run up the ceiling, and to a bright area to one corner of the room, in which we see a clear chamber, protected by glass. Think "mini-warp core."

MS. >

If this works? The boy survives?

OCKLEY

We make plans to deliver.

MS. >

And if doesn't?

OCKLEY

Try, try, and try again. The Clergy will still be there.

(beat)

You good with this?

She nods to assure him -- but we know she lies. Anyway, back inside the lab the scientist sets himself up at the control station.

OCKLEY

Will the bounty hunter bring Brai's body back to the Institute?

MS. >

If you like.

OCKLEY

No. I don't want to risk exposing it to the children. Tell him to burn it.

The scientist is ready. The experiment begins.

E. SCIENTIST

(over intercom)

Now administering virus seven thirty -- uh, er, two? Yes, seven thirty two -- into the test subject. It has been synthesized with an enhancing agent to speed infection time. This will cause momentary pain in the subject, but should result in relaxation after the virus has been accepted into the host cells.

At first, nothing. We wait, we wait, we wait... But then... Jax begins to convulse. Is the virus working?

White foam explodes from his mouth. He spasms harder and harder. Then, nothing. He settles. The scientist checks for vital signs. After a moment, he's forced to deliver the news through the glass. He shakes his head -- they've lost him.

OCKLEY

Try, try, try again. We'll need a new test subject.

He exits. Alone, Ms. > looks through the glass at Jax. She could very well cry...

CUT TO:

INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Brai flinches. She spits up -- hugs the back of her neck (this happens when Jax convulses and dies).

H/NT/R

You okay, kid?

Her eyes gloss over as they well-up with tears.

BRAI

(confused)

I -- I don't know. I thought I felt something?

H/NT/R

What?

BRAI

Just... hurt.

EXT. SHIT-HOLE CAFE - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

"Shit-hole" is an understatement. You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villainy. H/nt/r parks and escorts Brai. They're careful to navigate clear of the peripatetic assholes littered in the parking lot who hound for handouts.

H/nt/r makes sure to bring his crossbow.

INT. SHIT-HOLE CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Rotted meat boils and bubbles in the fryers. The patrons are almost all exclusively men. Except for the waitstaff -- they happen to be young women, very sad, with purple eyes.

There's an open table, near a window, which H/nt/r and Brai sit at. The foul and lustful eyes of the customers follow the girl. The WAITRESS greets them -- though not very jovial.

H/NT/R

We'll both have the stew.

BRAI

And orange juice.

The Waitress calls out the order to some fat sac of pus who works the grill. In turn, he throws down two bowls.

BRAI

She looks like you.

H/NT/R

Think I'm the only one, kid? I'm taking you to see the purple-eyed monsters, remember?

The Waitress hands them back the stew and two empty glasses.

WAITRESS

Your stew.

(to Brai)

You want oh jay? Piss in these.

The stew looks somewhere between vomit or chili con carne. Brai scoops a sticky mountain onto her spoon.

H/NT/R

Not something you probably eat, but it'll keep your stomach fu--

Brai wolfs it down. Looks like she might even enjoy it.

BRAI

Not bad. Tastes good.

H/NT/R

Trust me, your piss tastes better.

She shrugs, continues to eat. Meanwhile, the patrons watch, mesmerized by her.

It's pretty gross -- since we can guess the thoughts that swim through their decrepid minds. Brai takes notice, though she's green to such behavior.

BRAI

This place is nice.

(beat)

What's everybody looking at?

H/NT/R

Dessert.

Another shrug. She inhales her food.

BRAI

You don't want to keep me?

H/NT/R

S'cuse me?

BRAI

Why can't I stay with you?

H/NT/R

Because you have a bounty.

BRAI

What's that?

H/NT/R

A reward.

BRAI

You should just keep me.

H/NT/R

Then I wouldn't get my reward.

SCOOMA BAGGARD (O.C.)

I'll keep ya, lil' one...

He sits at the counter, just an ear-shot away from H/nt/r and his young bounty. SCOOMA BAGGARD is his name -- the scummiest of slime, and owner of this here establishment.

SCOOMA BAGGARD

(to H/nt/r)

What's the bounty? I'll double it.

H/NT/R

Eyes back on your plate, old man.

SCOOMA BAGGARD

This would be a "reward." Like you said, a simple reward for this--

Scooma slides his ass off the stool -- leaves behind a wet streak of stool on the seat that bleeds through his pants.

SCOOMA BAGGARD

--this feral lil' kitten.

(to Brai)

Would ya like that, kitten? I'll keep ya real nice. Real warm. Just like my other kittens -- the ones with them pretty eyes. See 'em? All strays. Strays I keep nice and warm.

Sad creatures they are, the ones with the "pretty eyes." They continue to work, and dare not speak against Scooma.

H/NT/R

Back to your seat. Finish your plate.

Instead, Scooma nudges toward Brai -- puts his stubby, cracked fingers through her hair. He drools over her, his eyes hardened -- a look that defiles her tiny body.

SCOOMA BAGGARD

Name your reward, hunter. I'll oblige it to ya. I ain't neva' see one so pure an' young before. She'd do good at my restaurant.

H/NT/R

Bad business manners, old man.

SCOOMA BAGGARD

Mmm... whatever you say, hunter. Yes, manners on this one.

Scooma's thumb presses into the girl's lips. He wipes off the leftover pieces of stew from the corner of her mouth and transfers the goods onto his own rotted tongue.

SCOOMA BAGGARD

She's right, I do serve up some tasty food here.

H/NT/R

Try the stew.

H/nt/r's boot crushes Scooma's toes -- he then smashes his fist into the villian's tiny erect sapling. As Scooma grabs for his sensitive area, H/nt/r breaks the bowl of putrid stew over his head. The slim falls to his knees and, just before any of the customers can retaliate, H/nt/r retrieves his crossbow and jabs the arrow into the back of Jabba's neck. Scooma's many chins fold over the edge of the table top, his large body slumped underneath.

SCOOMA BAGGARD
(gagging)
Kill him. Kill him!

Diner scum surround H/nt/r and Brai.

H/NT/R
(to Brai)
Terrible at picking restaurants.

They close in on him.

SCOOMA BAGGARD
You had your chance. Now I'm gonna
keep the both of ya. Both of ya
gonna be my kittens!

Just then, however, a reflection, off the glass of the window, catches H/nt/r's attention. Everybody takes notice.

I/E. SHIT-HOLE CAFE (THRU WINDOW) - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

A pickup truck pulls in front and Trolly steps out the cab, "Road Warrior" as fuck -- her getup made up of nothing but blades and death. In her hand, a beer bottle with a rag that sticks out of the top. She lights it and throws it inside H/nt/r's former ride. The interior explodes with a great fireball as she snags another beer bottle and walks to the window where H/nt/r's at.

H/NT/R
(to a customer)
You want the kid?
(to another)
Want the kid?!
(nods to Trolly)
Keep me away from her.

Sweet deal. 'Course, they wouldn't think it so sweet if they heeded my advice: never piss Trolly off. And here's why...

She sets flame to cloth, then catapults the bottle at the window. Glass shatters, the bottle breaks, and fire strikes.

Scooma's pudgy face stands in its way -- and is scorched in flame and hell. The bastard screams and we love it!

H/nt/r release him, his whole body erupts into a fiery mess of awesome. Scooma crashes atop the table, rolls, and falls out the window.

EXT. SHIT-HOLE CAFE - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Scooma runs at Trolly, ablaze. But with a quick draw of her sword (she has a sword), she puts down the mountain of flame. Scooma is left for dead and burns like a heap of dog shit.

INT. SHIT-HOLE CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Bamboozled: every one of them dickheads left inside.

H/NT/R
 (calls attention)
 The girl, goddammit!

H/nt/r pulls Brai by the collar, shows her off.

H/NT/R
 Still want her? You keep that bitch
 the fuck away from me.

Easily, the patrons could walk from this deal and production would save money. But I'd rather pu\$h more dollar \$ign\$ to write the next \$equence of event\$:

They attack, and filter out through the window. Some of the slightly more clever ones go out the door--

EXT. SHIT-HOLE CAFE - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

--as each make their play to fight Trolly. Plenty have their own makeshift weapons when they go at her. She sticks one, slices another -- cuts through them easier than a Jedi sparring with one of those stupid soldier droids.

INT. SHIT-HOLE CAFE - CONTINUOUS

The young waitstaff have scattered, and only one patron has stayed behind: Lord Jackson von Krazy.

H/NT/R
 Daddy let you out of your cage?

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY
 I go as I please.
 (beat)
 She's very pretty.

H/NT/R
 And not for keeps.

H/nt/r grabs Brai. Pulls her around the counter toward the back exit.

EXT. SHIT-HOLE CAFE, VARIOUS - CONTINUOUS

ONE-SHOT (STEADICAM):

-- Trolly kills cafe customers. Camera floats through action.
 -- We join H/nt/r and Brai in back. They make their escape.
 -- Camera circles around to rejoin Trolly. Kills last baddie.
 -- Trolly hops in pickup. Leaves behind fire and bodies.
 -- As she drives, she chases down H/nt/r and Brai.
 -- Through window, we watch them run as she gains on them.
 -- H/nt/r grabs Brai and they dive out the way of the truck.
 -- Trolly cuts a one-eighty. Nothing but dust out the window.
 -- Dust settles. Trolly sees H/nt/r aim the crossbow at her.
 -- She hits the gas. Camera pans to action, H/nt/r fires--
 -- The arrow misses. Trolly plows into him.
 -- H/nt/r's body bounces over the hood, windshield cracks.
 -- Trolly brakes and Camera follows her out the cab.
 -- Camera finds Brai, follows her to H/nt/r's body.
 -- Trolly opens tailgate. Inside is another body, wrapped.
 -- She joins Brai with H/nt/r.

BRAI
 (worried)
 Is he dead?

-- Camera follows Trolly, checks H/nt/r's pulse.

TROLLY

No such luck. Let's put him in the pickup.

-- Camera pans off...

CUT TO:

INT. INSTITUTE - AUTOPSY ROOM, INNER CHAMBER - DAY

An eye, glossed over and icy. We crane back to reveal another eye, the face, then the body... it's Jax -- naked and splayed open on an examination table.

The inner chamber is enclosed by glass. Ockley and Ms. > observe the body from the outside--

INT. INSTITUTE - AUTOPSY ROOM, OUTER CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

--and await the results. Enter E. Scientist. He checks data on his portable computer pad.

OCKLEY

What's this mean for us?

E. SCIENTIST

Without significant alterations to their makeup, I don't see how we can push the children past adolescence. If we introduce them to the virus at this stage in their development, the results could turn from our favor.

OCKLEY

That's not news. We've never had the upper hand here.

Ms. > glances at Ockley. It's quick, as if she already has something up her sleeve... but in secret.

OCKLEY

These children... they represent everything we've lost. They're a reminder of our past. Proof we can get back to a more natural state.

(to Ms. >)

Keep the children on the same feeding regimen. Somehow, we need to buy ourselves more time.

E. SCIENTIST

Might I say something, sir? There was a reason my, uh, former colleague, um, focused on the girl. Brai, I believe her name is.

This is the last thing Ockley wants to hear.

E. SCIENTIST

I researched a bit of data -- both her body and cells were aging normally, without any signs of degradation. In fact, it's quite possible the girl who was abducted has probably already reached puberty before taken offline. I never had access to her, myself, but if I was permitted to examine the--

OCKLEY

--out of the question. Her, her unit, has been compromised. The girl has been disposed of. Understand?

The scientist bows out of the argument.

Chirp, Chirp -- Ms. > checks her portable communication device. She frowns.

MS. >

Excuse me, please. Something I need to take care of.

OCKLEY

Everything all right?

MS. >

(smiles politely)
Nothing of concern.

Ms. > exits.

E. SCIENTIST

Perhaps we're going about this all wrong, sir.

(beat)

The design of the virus is to serve one purpose -- but we can't infect the children without certain... setbacks. Their limited shelf life has always been the problem.

(MORE)

E. SCIENTIST (cont'd)
 And if we don't solve that, then
 there's no reason to introduce them
 inside the Vatican.

OCKLEY
 What are you saying, doc? We allow
 the Clergy to maintain their
 monopoly on the market? Might as
 well board up the windows now.

E. SCIENTIST
 I suggest a more traditional plan
 of attack.

OCKLEY
 In what way?

E. SCIENTIST
 It's like you said: a return to our
 roots. To our natural state. These
 children, they are not weapons.

OCKLEY
 Then what are they?

E. SCIENTIST
 What they were always designed to
 be:
 (beat)
 Soldiers.

Ockley's not totally turned off, but still hesitant.

E. SCIENTIST
 We allow nature to take its course,
 wean the units off the medication.
 Allow the children to... evolve.

OCKLEY
 You know the dangers in that.

E. SCIENTIST
 I do. And there will always be a
 certain level of danger. But as
 soldiers they'll persevere. The
 data alone we could collect in our
 research -- death, compensation,
 survival -- it could prove
 invaluable. It could put this
 company on track again.

OCKLEY
 And in what sort of time frame?
 Three years? Ten years? Twenty?
 (MORE)

OCKLEY (cont'd)
 We don't have that kind of luxury.
 (dead-fucking serious)
 We stick to the plan.

Exit Ockley.

INT. INSTITUTE - LOBBY - DAY

The SECRETARY (the roll played by someone who woke up yesterday and decided to be an actor) sits at a desk in the middle of the room. Enter Ms. >, her heels bite the marble floor. The secretary motions to the fern by the window -- to the person seated in a chair behind said fern.

MS. >
 And to what do I owe the pleasure
 of your visit... sheriff?

We're sucker-punched in the face by a polished white smile.

SHERIFF CHONG
 In the neighborhood. Thought I'd
 say hello.

MS. >
 We don't have neighbors. Makes one
 suspicious. You know, I read in the
 archives that before the Scourges,
 citizens could request protection
 from the courts of the day.
 Something called "restraining
 orders."

SHERIFF CHONG
 Now why would you wanna order or
 restrain me from anything, darlin'?
 Who'd keep you safe from all them
 rapsCALLIONS of the world?

MS. >
 (annoyed)
 Is there a reason for your... ill-
 advised visit, sheriff?

SHERIFF CHONG
 (smile, beat)
 Virus 731.

Wow -- somehow that comment echoed louder than it ought to have. If capable of such dramatic range, the secretary will give them a quizzical look. Ms. > dismisses it with a nod.

MS. >
(through teeth, sotto)
Might you join me for a walk?

Compliance.

EXT. INSTITUTE - CAMPUS - MOMENTS LATER

Over yonder, children are at play. Ms. > walks with Sheriff Chong along a pathway with trees lined on either side.

MS. >
You shouldn't be here.

SHERIFF CHONG
I miss you.

MS. >
Don't be vulgar.

SHERIFF CHONG
A thousand pardons, madame.
Wouldn't want innocent ears to
partake in my vulgarity. You'd get
the wrong idea that there were
secrets run amuck.

MS. >
Secrets that some would find it in
their best interest to keep.

SHERIFF CHONG
As far as secrets go, my lips are
shut tighter than those between
them legs of yours. My concern is
safety. Namely, for myself.

MS. >
What makes you think you can't
trust me?

SHERIFF CHONG
Priorities.

MS. >
Oh?

SHERIFF CHONG
I put your plan into motion, sent
my hound off to sniff out your lost
puppy.

(MORE)

SHERIFF CHONG (cont'd)
 He'll find her, if he hasn't
 already. And he'll put her inside
 the Vatican.

MS. >
 If that's true, then you have
 nothing more to worry about.

SHERIFF CHONG
 I'm worried about catching a cold.

MS. >
 I told you, the virus will only
 infect--

He swings her 'round to face him, puts an Alan Grant finger
 at her nose because he's super serious now.

SHERIFF CHONG
 --yes, I know. But I also know
 you're smart. You're ruthless and
 cunning...

MS. >
 I'm only trying to do what's best
 for my children.

SHERIFF CHONG
 I know you love your children.
 That's abundantly clear. And you'd
 do anything to protect them. But I
 also know, that like me, you'd do
 anything to protect yourself -- if
 only so you can see them in action.
 To... oversee their progress, bear
 witness to their growth.
 (beat)
 Hey, I know the feeling. I'm a
 parent too, remember?

A kickball bounces between them. One of the children dives in
 after it. We never see his face, but the child could be
 played by the same young actor who plays Jax.

CHILD
 (to Ms. >)
 Sorry! Kicked it too hard.

MS. >
 It's all right, dear. Go play.

The boy runs off, and the showdown continues:

SHERIFF CHONG

(sotto)

If this virus does what you say it does, that means you're vulnerable. So I'm thinking... you got a trick up your sleeve. Something that protects you. An anti-virus, maybe?

MS. >

Don't be ridiculous.

SHERIFF CHONG

Come on -- I know you despise me, but in that brief time we went together I did a few things right. I knew how to move ya. How to make ya squirm. Not only could I get ya to open up under the sheets, but I found one or two ways to make ya squawk as well.

(beat)

Your hate doesn't simply stop at the Vatican.

MS. >

How dare you make assumptions. You know nothing about me.

Chong's infamous smile... followed by a backhand he gives her across the face. He's on top of her, retrieves a syringe from his pocket that's filled with a white gooey substance. He lifts her skirt and wrestles her into a position that makes it easy for him to stick the needle into her flesh -- in that area just above the panty-line. He injects its contents. Soon it's all over. He gets to his feet, wipes his brow.

MS. >

Bastard! What was that?

SHERIFF CHONG

I think you're lying. I think you've always been lying. That will prove it.

MS. >

Lying about what?

SHERIFF CHONG

Children. How you can't have any.

MS. >

You injected me with your filth?

SHERIFF CHONG

That's stupid. I've survived three Scourges -- my boys is fried. No, what I put into you, there, I got from out there.

He points from her stomach to the children at play.

SHERIFF CHONG

I'd like to survive one more, if it comes to that. If there is an anti-virus, you're going to give it to me. If you don't, I'll introduce Ockley to the father-to-be. I know, as much as you do, if that were to happen, you won't ever see them kids' graduation day.

The wind whistles. Leaves flutter in the trees.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OLD BARN - NIGHT

Huddled to one corner of the barn, H/nt/r bandages his busted leg with old cloth, where he was hit most by the truck. He increases the flow of gas to his face mask. Brai picks at a campfire, and Trolly enters with Regal's corpse slung over her shoulder. She lays him next to the fire.

H/NT/R

That really need to be in here?

TROLLY

He ain't sleeping in the cold.

H/NT/R

Bastard is cold. And he stinks.

She pulls a knife on him -- puts it near his throat.

TROLLY

Talk like that, and you join him.

H/NT/R

Then who'd you put back on the river?

Her cold eyes cut deep into his tragic ones. An even colder smile is already enough to slit him from ear-to-ear.

TROLLY

The water's gonna take ya. Me and Reg's will see to that. No, purple. I'm ain't gonna slit ya. You'd find that to be too much of a welcomed ease, I'd reckon.

H/NT/R

You're both pussies. Stinkin' pussies.

She puts away the knife.

TROLLY

Enjoy it, love. Might be the last whiff of pussy you get in a while.

Brai's chuckles crash the absurdity of their conversation.

BRAI

Is pussy something you can eat? I'm hungry still.

TROLLY

When you're older, sweets.
(to H/nt/r, sotto)
For now, we keep ya alive.

H/NT/R

(to Brai)
Can't get rid of you, can I?

BRAI

Nope. Nope.

Trolly busies herself, works the campfire and tosses more old logs into it.

TROLLY

(to H/nt/r)
Where ya passin' her to?

He debates his response. But if Trolly must know:

H/NT/R

Clergy.

TROLLY

No shit? Yer kin?
(beat)
What's the bounty?

No response -- only the crackle of a camp fire...

TROLLY

Big number. How 'bout we split it.

H/NT/R

Ain't that big.

TROLLY

And I ain't a fool. This ain't a negotiation. If there's a bounty on her, we take a cut. Split it three ways?

H/NT/R

What goods do you think the Clergy barter in? Money or gold, or some shit? That's not where their wealth comes from. Not like the old days, before the ruin of war. They deal in flesh. Trade in blood and bone. It's a corporation which buids a very delicate product. So high in demand, is it, that any reward they could offer would be found as an insult if divvied as printed bills.

TROLLY

So I've been told, purple-ranger.

(beat)

Ya mean to say yerself, I take it?

H/NT/R

(weak)

No me.

TROLLY

It's no secret, purple. Why do ya think people look at ya so? It ain't only them fancy eyes. It's that time ya spend in church, with that creature turned inside-out. Everyone knows ya call it daddy.

H/NT/R

My mother is my father.

TROLLY

A donor is all that priest of yers is. Ya must have come out the wrong end of that thing if no one wanted to take ya in. Yer whole life, raised in shame. Stripped from the right to bear a name.

H/NT/R

My brother has a name. It's Si--

TROLLY

--it's bullshit. That's what it is.

(beat)

My brother has a name.

She strokes Regal's hair...

TROLLY

Even in death, Regal has a name.

But you -- as ya shit and breathe --
have nothing.

(beat)

I've heard them stories 'bout the
Clergy -- what goes on with them.
Babies born from priests need
families to take 'em in. That's the
deal, ain't it? They're like
machines, yeah? Not people. Can't
be parents -- otherwise you're the
result. You was raised by a machine
-- and without a parent to give and
call ya by name, yer silent. An
anonymous bastard.

Ruthless, that one is. But Brai comes to comfort H/nt/r.

BRAI

I can hear you. You just talk
quiet. We'll give you a name.

TROLLY

(wicked)

That's it, ain't it? Yer price for
the girl? What're ya hoping for:
"Hector?" "Joseph?" "Miranda,"
maybe? Or "Bob?"

H/NT/R

Fuck off.

TROLLY

(considers)

That be yer first name, or last?

She puts out her hand to shake his...

TROLLY

Put her there, Fucker. Name's
Trolly.

H/nt/r doesn't return the courtesy.

TROLLY

It'll take some gettin' used to.

(beat, looks at fire)

Shit. Need more wood.

(to Brai)

You and Mr. Fuck Off, here, get some sleep. We have a reward to collect in the mornin'.

(to H/nt/r)

Split three ways.

Hate to see Trolly go, but love to watch her leave. Brai nuzzles under H/nt/r's arm. Cute, but makes him uneasy.

H/NT/R

What're doing?

BRAI

Ms. Trolly said to get some sleep.

H/NT/R

So? Sleep. Don't hang on me.

BRAI

I'm cold.

H/NT/R

There's a fire.

BRAI

This is better.

(pause)

She's a funny lady.

H/NT/R

Yeah, barrel of laughs.

BRAI

She likes you.

H/NT/R

Get some sleep, kid.

Tender moment. Let's rejoin them in the morning...

CUT TO:

INT. INSTITUTE - HALLWAY, CHILDREN'S BUNK - NIGHT

Through the doorway, we watch Ms. > tuck in the children, twist the valve, and close the door behind her. She stands in place -- feels the spot where she was pricked by that prick. After a moment, she walks off screen.

CUT TO:

INT. OLD BARN - MORNING

H/nt/r's the first to rouse. The wound on his leg is healed. The camp fire is reduced to ashes. Trolly's asleep still -- cuddled next to her brother (the woman has issues). However, there's no sign of Brai.

EXT. OLD BARN, VARIOUS - MOMENTS LATER

Crossbow in hand, H/nt/r excavates the perimeter. 'Round back, the landscape filters into a wide debris field that's littered with old farm equipment, tires, broken glass, sharp pieces of metal -- the works. But no sign of Brai. However, there are footprints to follow. They lead to an old tree, then go cold.

But just a few yard away there's an ond refrigerator--

EXT. DEBRIS FIELD - CONTINUOUS

--sunk into a hill, and almost buried in its own parts. Like a naughty whisper caught on a shy breeze, H/nt/r makes a sharp stroll toward the spot, crossbow at his ready. He hears a *clank* from inside -- a *boom, boom!* He grabs the handle... and in one... two... three -- rips the door open!

Wel'p, he found Brai. She sits atop a food storage compartment, her britches to her ankles. She beams at H/nt/r.

BRAI

Hi'ya!

H/NT/R

What are you doing?

BRAI

Poopin'.

H/NT/R

Finish up. Time to go.

BRAI
A little privacy?

H/nt/r shuts the door. A few moments later, Brai pops out the refriga-potty and heads toward the barn.

H/NT/R
Where ya going?

BRAI
Ms. Trolly and Mr. Regal. They're coming with, aren't they?

H/NT/R
We go this way...

...the opposite direction.

TROLLY (O.C.)
Get there faster in the pickup.

Trolly appears around the front of the barn, next to the pickup, brother in her arms.

TROLLY
Brai, you can ride in the front.

H/NT/R
The kid comes with me.

TROLLY
Nope. Deal is we all take her.

H/NT/R
There is no deal.
(to Brai)
Kid, let's go.

TROLLY
Come, Brai.

H/NT/R
This way.

TROLLY
With me.

H/NT/R
Me.

The girl wants to scream, "YOU'RE TEARING ME APART, LISA!" but by that time H/nt/r's had it and swings her in his arms.

H/NT/R
 You're coming with me, kid.

FFFF-WHHHIIT! -- the hell was that?

On Trolly: she drops Regal, focused on a new threat, unseen.

Cut to H/nt/r: he holds the child. Her mouth is agape, eyes rolled into the back of her head. Then -- *SNAP!* -- Brai is yanked from his arms. Face-up, her body is dragged across the ground. We tilt up to reveal -- *gasp!* -- Simon! He reels her in by a line, like she were a fish -- this feat made possible by the ice-pick, it's sharp tip embedded into her skull.

H/nt/r makes chase. He fires an arrow -- *SHHH-EEWF!* -- but Simon whips the girl's body up -- it catches the arrow.

Back to Trolly: she makes a dash at Simon, unleashes a few deadly blades his way. Again, he shields himself with Brai -- the knives penetrate and stick into her soft flesh. *Ve-a-ra-braummm!* -- the blast knocks Trolly off her feet.

Back to H/nt/r: He darts at the Simon again. Now, imagine the Hammer-Throw event during the Summer Olympics. Imagine Simon as the Olympian and Brai as the hammer. He spins, flings her body at H/nt/r. The limp corpse hurls through the air, crashes down atop of him. He sees dead arctic eyes.

H/nt/r rolls Brai off of himself -- attacks Simon: it's hand-to-gut-to-face-to-groin combat all up in this bitch, y'all. Simon defends himself with calculated precision and sticks H/nt/r in the leg with the ice-pick. He loosens the line, mounts his motorcycle, and rockets into the debris field with his brother in tow. H/nt/r is dragged through glass, rock, metal, and suck, which thrash and tear his body a new one.

EXT. OLD BARN, VARIOUS - TREE - CONTINUOUS

Simon then returns the favor, strings H/nt/r up into the tree. He approaches his bloodline-nemesis and rips apart H/nt/r's gas mask. H/nt/r stares into a milk-blue bulb in the eye-socket Brai shot out.

SIMON
 Tell me, brother, why I shouldn't
 kill you?

H/NT/R
 (immeasurable pain)
 I'm father's favorite.

SIMON

Then by all means, live. And suffer
for it. As you always have.

Simon leaves the bloody piñata hung in the tree, and saddles his bike. Across the field, he acknowledges Trolly, sword drawn, near Brai's body in defiance, as if to say "If you want her, come and claim her!" He doesn't. Instead, he rides off, a lone member of Sam Crow.

Trolly's not impressed by H/nt/r. He probably won't get laid after this fiasco. What a shit-morning it's been...

CUT TO:

INT. INSTITUTE - LAB - DAY

Nocturnal lights illuminate the room as if the D.P. lit the set through a fish tank. Ms. > is at a computer terminal, near the warp core, and scrolls through data charts. Enter E. Scientists. Ms. > quickly closes out her windows.

E. SCIENTIST

My dear. What brings you by the lab
this early?

MS. >

I was -- was monitoring the
children's supplement intake. Some
showed signs of low, uh, potassium
and I wanted to make sure they were
getting their proper dosage.

E. SCIENTIST

I see...

MS. >

How's progress, with the virus?

E. SCIENTIST

Oh, well, programming the strain is
proving difficult. Particularly,
administering its RNA into healthy
cells without causing permanent
damage. The result, as we've seen,
is less than desirable. However,
I'm more concerned with infection.

MS. >

How so?

E. SCIENTIST

This is something Gerold and I struggled with -- designing virus 731 to attack only Clergy. Not an easy problem to overcome when put against the Clergy's own proprietary gene sequencing and synthetic security parameters. Specifically, those which cause, well, Alexandria Genesis.

MS. >

Purple eyes.

E. SCIENTIST

With a few other built-in modifications -- such as their ability to rejuvenate cells. The Clergy purposely administer the gene into all their offspring. We haven't been able to exclusively assault it. As we stand, now, virus 731 is our prime source. But it bears no discrimination -- it's a killer.

MS. >

And virus 732? A failure?

E. SCIENTIST

As you saw with the Jax-test. Gerold might have made progress on his strain. Unfortunately, he destroyed all his research.

(pause, suspicious)

You're relieved?

MS. >

I... feel it's in our best interest to bide our time.

E. SCIENTIST

They're a means to an end; the children. Always were.

MS. >

Of course.

The scientist moves past her, observes the chamber behind the glass. The warp core which harbors the virus.

E. SCIENTIST

But you're right, you know. Ockley is growing impatient. If cornered, he could authorize me to administer the virus right now, even before the children wake in their beds.

(beat)

Years of tests, more experiments than I can count, have gone through this chamber. Hundreds of units -- none with the knowledge of the chemicals we put into their bodies as they sleep.

MS. >

With just a flick of the switch.

(marvels at the chamber)

May I ask you a personal question? Off the record.

(beat)

You're aware of my background?

E. SCIENTIST

Personal background?

(beat)

I'm aware, I suppose, that you came to this institution as a small child, correct? Ockley took you in.

MS. >

But do you know where I came from? Why he took me in?

She removes contacts from her eyes. We see they're purple.

MS. >

I was a miraculous birth, as they call it. Means someone paid to have me conceived. I lived in a good home. My suitors treated me well.

(beat)

I can't remember exactly when I realized it, but I knew I was different. And not in a good way. The best I can describe it is, that after I ran away, when I faced starvation and rape daily, it was still a relief to know I didn't have to be some contrived piece of merchandise.

(beat)

I met Mr. Ockley in a failed attempt to pick his pocket.

(MORE)

MS. > (cont'd)

I must have been ten or eleven at the time. He had every right to lash me. Instead, he brought me here. Gave me food and shelter, a place to learn.

(beat)

Years later, he came to me -- forced me to talk about my past, where I came from, and the anger and shame that grew from it. The more I discussed it, the more he helped me realize the immoral injustice of the Clergy. He helped me see their world for what it really is.

(beat)

It's why I believe in this cause. More importantly, it's why I believe in the success of our children here. They're the true gifts, ready to lead this world on their own. They're how we restore order, set things proper.

E. SCIENTIST

(pause)

My sympathies. I didn't know.

MS. >

I'm going to protect my children, doctor. When you're ready for the next test, the virus better work. No more mistakes.

She leaves him there -- with his proverbial dick-in-his-hand.

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - DAY

At a table, Sheriff Chong hits the hootch early and feels underneath the dress of ABIGAIL, a local harlot, seated on his lap. She sports a few of them canker sores decorated on her lips, and under her nose, either healing or splitting.

SIMON (O.C.)

A word?

Simon's sudden appearance in never a welcome sight...

SHERIFF CHONG

Jesus, what is it with ya guys?

SIMON

The girl has been neutralized.

Sheriff Chong only heard, "Blah, blah, blah, blah."

SHERIFF CHONG

Do me a favor, take that off.
 Seriously, how do ya have a normal
 conversation wearing that damn
 thing?

ABIGAIL

I think he looks badass with it on.

Simon removes the gas mask, sits at the table.

SIMON

It serves a purpose.

SHERIFF CHONG

Right. One of the perks of being,
 ya know, whatever the hell ya are.
 Bet that magic healing juice comes
 in handy. Hell is that shit you
 pump into your lungs anyway?

SIMON

It's a synthetic bio-reconstructive
 agent, biopolymer 61-H. It works
 with my explicit cell design to--

SHERIFF CHONG

--know what? Second thought, I
 don't care.

ABIGAIL

Does it get ya high? Can I get a
 hit?

BTW, Abigail is really, really, really annoying.

SHERIFF CHONG

Tell me what ya want, hunter?

SIMON

A hit on my brother -- payout only
 if he's dead. Or send your deputies
 after him. Hang him afterwards.

SHERIFF CHONG

Shit, I don't make those kinds of
 decisions. He's got to break the
 law first.

(MORE)

SHERIFF CHONG (cont'd)
 If ya haven't noticed, there ain't
 no laws 'round here. So, so much
 for breaking them.

SIMON
 As I made mention, the girl's been
 exterminated.

SHERIFF CHONG
 (surprised)
 Shit, you got the kid first? Banked
 your brother would snag her. What'd
 the Institute pay ya on that?

ABIGAIL
 He sayin' he killed a lil' girl?
 She didn't put out, or somethin'?

SIMON
 My brother's under Clergy-
 protection. I want him flushed out,
 put away. Sail him back on the
 river if that suits you better.

SHERIFF CHONG
 Why?

SIMON
 Family business.

Sheriff Chong beams his famous smile. Riddle solved:

SHERIFF CHONG
 I get it... ya got baggage.

Simon bites his tongue, leans back into his chair.

SHERIFF CHONG
 Yeah, that's it, isn't it? Church-
 daddy, well, she always gave him
 more attention -- even though you
 was the miraculous birth. Ya got to
 go home with a new shiny set of
 parents who gave ya a fancy name
 and everything. But ya never got
her love -- our town's beloved
 Father Mary -- because your brother
 came along and took the spotlight.
 If I were ya, I'd be more curious
 about who your father broke her
 vows with.

(beat, cold)

(MORE)

SHERIFF CHONG (cont'd)
 Here's a name I'd expose upon ya,
 more appropriate in respect: pussy.
 You're a purple... eyed... pussy.

Silence. The testosterone-temptles stare one another down.

ABIGAIL

Goddamn if he ain't no pussy. Who
 kills a kid jus' 'cause he don't
 like his brother. I gots a sis'er
 myself, an' whenev'r we's argue
 'bout which ugly fool we gotta fuck
 we flip a coin. And the los'r, no
 matter what -- no matter what! --
 has gots to fuck that fat son of a
 bi--!

Simon's ice-pick: he swings it -- it cuts into Abigail's
 mouth, pulls her forward, and nails her jaw to the tabletop.
 That shut her up. Sort of... she still squeals and mutters.
 Meanwhile, the knuckleheads boost their asses out from their
 seats and square off again -- with poor Abby between them.

SHERIFF CHONG

That's going to get ya in a lot of
 trouble.

SIMON

No laws, sheriff.

SHERIFF CHONG

Ya ain't got no soul, purple. None
 of your kind do.

SIMON

Don't ever question how I do
 business or what I'm capable of
 again. That little girl... ? I
 never even so much as flinched.
 These eyes stayed wide open.

He pulls the ice-pick out of Abigail's jaw, she falls to the
 floor, screams in pain.

SIMON

The purple has you marked.

Exit Simon.

CUT TO:

EXT. VATICAN - FRONT YARD - DAY

Past the gates, near the front entrance to this "churchy" complex, Trolly parks the pickup. H/nt/r's in the passenger seat, and a battered mess. They exit the pickup. A priest, followed by a few other Clergy members, come down the steps of the building to greet the newcomers. The priest we know -- it's Father Mary.

FATHER MARY

My son, it is good to see you.

(to Trolly)

You too, my dear. Those outside the Clergy community are always welcome here. Trolly, if I'm not mistaken.

(peeks inside the truck bed)

And your brother Regal, yes?

Appears his condition has worsened since last I saw the two of you in church.

(beat)

Only time I've seen you in church.

(to Brai, saddened)

Such a shame. The cardinal was hoping to speak with the girl in person.

(to the Clergy)

Bring both bodies inside.

The Clergy nod and begin their work. Father Mary observes H/nt/r's battle wounds.

FATHER MARY

Let's get you fixed up.

(sighs)

This was your brother, no doubt.

Father Mary leads the way as H/nt/r limps behind. Trolly lingers for a moment. Curious... there's a lit-prompt under the patch which hides her wrist communication device. She covertly reads the code, then covers it up, and follows.

INT. VATICAN, BIRTHING WARD - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

It's an open hallway -- that is to say Father Mary leads the guests through a corridor where patient rooms are visible on either side and easily accessible. Many of the rooms are filled by pregnant mothers -- er, fathers -- and other Clergy who operate by their bedsides as nurses.

Behind Trolly, her brother and Brai are wheeled by travel of stretchers. She absorbs her surroundings, almost fascinated.

TROLLY

This is where ya breed them?

FATHER MARY

This is where we facilitate our miracles, yes.

TROLLY

What happens to these miracles after they're born?

FATHER MARY

They go to families who have reserved them. Often, adoptive parents need to meet strict requirements after they submit an application.

TROLLY

Ya mean they need ta be rich?

FATHER MARY

It's more complicated then that. Our embryo stock is limited, so it makes sense to work with clients who have a record of financial stability.

TROLLY

How many can a priest have?

Father Mary and H/nt/r share a secret look.

FATHER MARY

There's an intense strain on our bodies when we undergo pregnancy. Generally, only one.

(beat, sotto)

Though that isn't always the case.

TROLLY

Why only one?

FATHER MARY

The male immune system proved more resilient to fallout and chemicals used in weapons during the First and Second Scourges.

(MORE)

FATHER MARY (cont'd)

As you know, radiation has left most women unable to conceive healthy offspring. The Clergy spent years perfecting a process of, well, sex transformation.

(beat)

This involves ectopic implantation of a fertilized egg into the abdomen of a male. Here at the Vatican, we guide them through a series of medical treatments in order to build the necessary female organs into the surrogate. This helps carry the fetus all the way to term.

(beat)

Naturally, the process is quite invasive and causes permanent damage. Surrogates can easily tear all the way to their, uh, assholes before we're ready to perform a C-section. Quite a mess to clean -- often it's no longer viable, or possible, to carry again.

We'll shoot some amazing B-Roll to cover Father Mary's explanation... I'm sure.

TROLLY

So what's with the purple eyes?

FATHER MARY

Branding, of course.

TROLLY

Who'd do this shit?

FATHER MARY

Those that are called to a higher power, my dear. Those that are called to a higher power.

Trolly and H/nt/r follow Father Mary through a door at the end of the "Twilight Zone" hallway. The stretches that carry Regal and Brai are not far behind.

INT. VATICAN - LAB - CONTINUOUS

Another lab filled with plenty of other nifty tech-toys, fused with religious artifacts of one thing or another.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

Come in, children. Come, come!

CARDINAL ELEANORE bounces away from a holographic monitor to greet the newcomers. She's a bigger woman, a bit brash, but filled with cheer and spunk.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

(to H/nt/r)

Look at you, boy. Hot and battered like a tasty ol' fish stick fightin' its way out my ass on Good Friday.

(beat)

You've grown since last I seen you. Wouldn't mind takin' you on for a shag or two.

H/NT/R

Very kind, Cardinal. Young as ever.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

We need to get you fixed up. You look worse than I do after a night at the brothel.

H/NT/R

Yes, Cardinal.

Father Mary tends to her son, provides him with a gas mask. The Cardinal bumps between the stretchers.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

(to Regal)

And this? Why is this here? Ew...

She removes the cover from his face. What a mess.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

Ripe, isn't he?

(to Trolly)

He with you? Your name?

TROLLY

Trolly. This my brother, Regal.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

How fun. And what happened to him?

TROLLY

(points to H/nt/r)

Your science experiment.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

(shrugs)

Maybe for the best.

(MORE)

CARDINAL ELEANORE (cont'd)

(beat)

He's seen combat. He's been implemented with an endoskeleton.

TROLLY

Second and Third Scourges.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

(to H/nt/r)

How'd you kill him?

H/NT/R

Crossbow.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

Fascinating. Ah well, these skeletons were built on the foundation of some rather shitty technology.

I'd imagine Trolly feels a bit insulted right about now.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

I'll assume by the tags around his neck that they're his and not trophies of fallen soldiers he's killed.

(beat)

In which case, we can provide him with a soldier's burial. Satisfactory?

Trolly teeters -- she ain't sure.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

If you'd rather have a cash reward--
(looks to Brai)
--for her recovery, there won't be one. A decent burial is the best I can give you.

Reluctantly, Trolly shakes on it. Then the Cardinal moves to Brai, brushes her fingers through the delicate hair.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

And while on the subject of dead soldiers, this one's a heartbreaker.

(beat)

A beauty, isn't she? Hard to believe anything so delicate retains so much lethal force.

She puts on a pair of glasses, examines the body.

CARDINAL ELEANORE
 So much information. Let's pray
 it's not all together lost.
 (to H/nt/r)
 We'll need to renegotiate our deal.

H/NT/R
 Yes, Cardinal.

TROLLY
 What's so special about her?

Cardinal Eleanore already has her big grabby hands inside
 Brai's head -- in the open wounded area.

CARDINAL ELEANORE
 Little fire-sprout, we're about to
 find out.

She picks away at the red goo, then -- *CLICK!* -- pulls out
 the same little computer chip the scientist inserted into the
 back of her neck from the teaser.

H/NT/R
 The hell is that?

CARDINAL ELEANORE
 They all have them. Sort of an
 operating system which helps them
 function better. Makes them more
 precise soldiers.

TROLLY
 What's it used for?

CARDINAL ELEANORE
 A multitude of functions. Recording
 and storing data. Contains ethics
 programs, gender relations, you
 name it. Even communication tech to
 interact with other units.

TROLLY
 Units? How do you know all this?

CARDINAL ELEANORE
 My dear, before I found my faith I
 helped build these things.

Cardinal Eleanore inserts the chip into a slot at her
 computer station.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

The chip's been damaged by head trauma. Hopefully, most of its information is still intact.

Nothing new here -- just good ol' fashioned hacker crap. The Cardinal over and under writes code until -- *Shhh-tic-tic! Shhh!* -- an image appears on the monitor. It's Gerold, the good scientist. Hold onto your butts...

G. SCIENTIST

(on monitor, unsettled)
--great danger. Managed to falsify their inventory to buy time. I can't predict how long this discrepancy will go unnoticed.

Gerold looks over his shoulder for a brief second.

G. SCIENTIST

If you're watching this, Eleanore, the information I've shared with you over the years is now in practice. The virus is complete -- but I've forged its bio-signature to cover its progress.

(beat)

My lab partner has become suspicious of me, and I'm afraid I can't stall Ockley any further.

More looks behind his shoulder. He's nervous, agitated.

G. SCIENTIST

As you know, the initial concept for the children failed. The soldier program has been shut down. But the company's bankrupt, and there's a surplus of units Ockley's unable to sell in the marketplace. That's the purpose of the virus: to remove the Clergy from the equation and boost profits.

(catches his breath)

Ockley means to release several units into the population. The children released are perfect incubators for virus 732. It's an airborne strain designed to lay dormant until it comes into contact with the synthetic cell-structure developed into Clergy bio-technology.

(MORE)

G. SCIENTIST (cont'd)

(beat)

There's a reason I chose Brai, the girl. She's been through a major trauma, but I think it'll work to your advantage. If the virus is indeed released, she carries with her a cure. An anti-virus.

Muffled shouting somewhere off monitor. Gerold pours sweat.

G. SCIENTIST

The unit you have -- if you even have her -- is a diversion. She's not the prime source. That's why I falsified the inventory. The real unit... I'll find a place to hide her. At the end of this recording you will be prompted to a location. Once the unit is activated, she'll give further instruction. In addition to the virus, the new information she contains is, to say the least, horrifying. But people need to know. This is the best I can offer.

(furious swallow)

One more thing: Brai -- the second unit -- she's pregnant. Again, she'll brief you.

(beat)

Please, keep her safe.

The image of the Scientist flickers, morphs into a dot on a map. H/nt/r moves toward the monitor. He's healed fairly well since his time under the gas mask.

H/NT/R

This Ockley... he means to wipe out the Clergy?

FATHER MARY

And rid the world of all our kind.

H/NT/R

How can this be done with a virus?

CARDINAL ELEANORE

By having it attack the specialized cells the Clergy have developed to transform us into women -- the same cells which help you rejuvenate.

TROLLY

Does this mean I'm in the clear?

CARDINAL ELEANORE

I'd say so. Of course, what affects
one affects us all.

(to H/nt/r)

So what will it be?

She squeezes her large breasts against him. This is serious.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

How much does identity mean to you?
When you're lowered into the ground
after whichever fate ultimately
takes you, how important is it that
your tombstone read the letters of
your name?

H/NT/R

(pause)

It means everything.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

Then go get that girl. Save our
people.

H/nt/r looks back at the monitor, watches the blinking dot.

H/NT/R

I know exactly where to find her.

H/nt/r collects the arrow stuck in Regal's neck, exits.

CUT TO:

INT. INSTITUTE - STOCK ROOM - DAY

The Stock room is filled with large grey cases stacked atop one another -- identical to the case Gerold dragged out of the beater car at the start of this picture. Edward, our evil scientist, inspects them and punches data into his Steampunk iPod.

Soon he comes across a case that seems out of place. He runs a diagnostic -- and whatever that diagnostic looks like, it doesn't look good. He opens the case. We don't see inside, but it turns his face white.

INT. INSTITUTE - CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ockley reads "Jurassic Park" out loud to the children. They sit on the floor and listen, with their backs turned towards us. Ms. > stands nearby and watches.

The story doesn't get past, "Mr. DNA! Where did you come from?" before E. Scientist barges in and interrupts--

E. SCIENTIST
Sir. A word, please?

Here's a key scene: the children all look back at him. We see a mix of faces to be sure, but then again, we see those faces repeated -- over and over again. And look, there's Jax! Wasn't he dead? Not so much apparently. And there's Jax again over there, and over there, and over there...

Clones! However, one face we don't see: Brai.

OCKLEY
(stern, stone-cold)
I'm reading to the children.
Whatever it is, it can wait.

E. SCIENTIST
Sir, I really must insist you take
a look at--

MS. >
(to Ockley)
--I'll handle it.

Ms. > escorts the scientist back outside the classroom--

INT. INSTITUTE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

--and they walk together through the hallway.

E. SCIENTIST
My apologies. I felt this warranted
immediate attention.
(catching his breath)
I was manually cataloging our units
-- everything we own, currently
inactive.

MS. >
Why? We're not yet mid-quarter.

E. SCIENTIST
Virus 731. I found an
inconsistency.

MS. >
Lower your voice, doctor.
(beat)
(MORE)

MS. > (cont'd)

The 731 strain has be shelved, your mandate. 732 -- a failure. Is this not what you said?

E. SCIENTIST

I thought so too. Until I ran an inventory on our stock -- bracketed what we would need synthesized in order to compensate for our present units on hand.

(beat)

But when I compared the results to a previous report I noticed a... glitch, I suppose.

MS. >

Meaning?

E. SCIENTIST

Well, I ran two more cycles and the glitch kept popping up. It looked as if someone had tampered with the inventory report. And then there was this.

He slips her the iPod. It's a photo of the open case, empty.

MS. >

What am I looking at?

E. SCIENTIST

The storage cases monitor any sort of internal or external activity. She was infected with the virus -- the 732 strain -- separate from the one I designed. But the strain Gerold completed, it works. And the only production of it was planted on one of the two Brai-units. The one designated to this storage case. But a second unit, and her storage chamber, are completely missing from the stock. What I can't figure out is, why he would steal a second unit?

MS. >

(pause)

Thank you, doctor. I'll bring this to Mr. Ockley's attention. If there's more than one missing unit, we'll find her.

(beat)

(MORE)

MS. > (cont'd)

In the meantime, dig up whatever information you can about the this strain Gerold synthesized.

E. SCIENTIST

Of course.

He scurries off. Ms. > opens a transmission through her portable communication device. She almost hesitates when making the call.

MS. >

(distaste in voice)

Hello, sheriff. Time to send Simon to the Clergy, allow him to see the situation for himself.

(beat)

And the second unit -- contact me as soon as your bounty hunter finds her. I want the child alive, safe.

Transmission over.

CUT TO:

EXT. DITCH CROSSING - DAY

Trolly and H/nt/r arrive in the pickup. H/nt/r's the first out, floats the perimeter and hunts for clues.

TROLLY

Don't see another kid here.

H/nt/r spots blood -- which, of course, would be Simon's.

TROLLY

This is bullshit. Waste of time.

H/NT/R

You've been compensated. No reason for you to stick around.

H/nt/r coughs. Hardly noticeable, but there.

TROLLY

Ain't been compensated in the least. Still got business with you to put away.

H/NT/R

If you'd prefer, sail me on the ditch.

He tracks near the ditch-slope, water's not as high today.

TROLLY

I keep my promises. Ain't about to
hide ya in a ditch.

SPLASH! -- H/nt/r jumps into the water.

H/NT/R

Plenty of other things to hide.

For a few moments, H/nt/r disappears inside the culvert. He drags out the large grey case hidden within. Trolly helps as the two of them pull it out from the ditch.

TROLLY

(grunts)

What's with yer family, anyway? No
secret yer branded. Not sure I ever
knew the rules -- why ya ain't got
no name, other than you jus' don't?

H/NT/R

(manly grunts)

To be Clergy-born is both an honor
and a privilege. However, actions
they tolerate from their members
and miracles are... limited.

TROLLY

How so?

H/NT/R

Runaways. If caught they could be
sold into slavery. Or... priests
caught breaking their vows.

TROLLY

I take it you was the red hand to
the latter.

It's exhausting business, but they manage to drag the case onto dry land. They stare at it -- admit the same question:

H/NT/R

How does it open?

TROLLY

How does it open?

H/nt/r pushes the biggest blinking light it sports. The seal breaks around the edges. Cool sci-fi cryogenic exhaust blows out its crevices. H/nt/r swings open the lid and inside... fetal position... is Brai. Or, I should say, the initial Brai: BRAINITIAL, we'll call her.

Beep. Beep. Beep. Beep...

The sound is wired to another blinking light, next to the back of her head. H/nt/r pushes it -- *BURR-URP!* -- and initiates this blue fluid stuff to pipe through a hose, attached to the case, and into a spot in the back of her head. Afterwards, the hose ejects. Seconds pass. BraInitial slowly opens them peepers, looks up...

BRAININITIAL

(smiles)

My hunter. You found me.

H/NT/R

Easy, kid. Let's get you out.

He eases her out of the case, but something's changed...

TROLLY

How far along are you?

The girl is pregnant, and it shows.

BRAININITIAL

Almost six months. I think.

TROLLY

You remember us?

BRAININITIAL

I do. Trolly. I like your name.

H/nt/r spits out a few more unexpected coughs.

BRAININITIAL

(curious)

You well?

H/NT/R

The other girl -- the one who looks like you -- you know she's dead?

BRAININITIAL

I do. I have been downloaded with some of her memories... before -- your brother.

This Brai is different -- like innocence lost. She steps past her rescuers and observes the limited world around her.

BRAININITIAL

Come, I need to show you something.

The girl backtracks the other way, toward the pickup now.

TROLLY
 (to H/nt/r)
 Do you trust her?

H/NT/R
 The Clergy do. That's a sign for
 caution.

He follows BraInitial. Trolly lingers, lifts the patch to her wrist communication device. She taps a few buttons on the screen, then follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN - CHURCH, PORCH - DAY

Beep. Beep.

Sheriff Chong bows to the Bishop -- the one cloaked in violet and gold with his/her face hidden.

SHERIFF CHONG
 Thank ya, Bishop. I'll see ya this evening at the ceremony. And might I say, it's an honor to have your presence grace our town.

The Bishop bows as well, then disappears into the church. Sheriff Chong steps off the porch and checks his portable communication device (which made the beep we just heard). A deputy approaches, armed and ready.

SHERIFF CHONG
 It's time. Round up the others. And make a call to locate my son. It's going to be a big night for him.

The deputy nods and scurries away.

CUT TO:

EXT. MASS BURIAL SITE (NOT REVEALED) - DAY

With the pickup left behind, BraInitial leads H/nt/r and Trolly on a trek to an unknown destination.

TROLLY
 Where ya takin' us, Brai?

BRAININITIAL

A place where bad boys and girls go to stay. I've never seen it before.

H/NT/R

How do you know about it then?

BRAININITIAL

Because I almost stayed here once.

They've come to journey's end--

EXT. MASS BURIAL SITE (REVEALED) - CONTINUOUS

--and bear witness to a pit of despair. Large, deep. Yet filled almost to the brim. Unholy. Rotten, petulant, and sickening. Corpses. Children. All children. Dead and decaying flesh. We've seen them before. There's Jax -- and numerous more copies, each in their own state of decomposition.

It's more than just him. Indeed, there are stacks and stacks of the nameless bodies -- the ones we've seen and met so often at the Institute, or in the classrooms with Ockley. It's unending, unnerving. Ungodly. H/nt/r and Trolly could easily vomit themselves.

BRAININITIAL

Most of them I never even met. But somehow, though, I remember them.

H/NT/R

Because of your chip. You can access their memories? Thoughts?

BRAININITIAL

Bits and pieces. Not like I can Brai though.

(beat)

Thoughts between the same units are sometimes stronger. Brai was my only sister -- so I was able to hear her better.

H/NT/R

The scientist from the Institute tell you about this place?

She touches the back of her head where the computer chip is.

BRAININITIAL

I... I just knew.

She spots a Jax-unit inside the pit. It's fresh. BraInitial climbs inside the grave -- crawls over multiple clone bodies to get to the one she's pinpointed. H/nt/r and Trolly follow. She kneels over Jax. The boy is ghost-white, stiff.

H/NT/R

How'd this one die?

BRAINITIAL

He was my friend. I could talk to him. I... I--

(tearing up)

--didn't know he was dead.

H/nt/r gently places a fatherly hand over her shoulder.

BRAINITIAL

Jax was the only one who knew. He -- he saw...

H/NT/R

(hesitant)

Saw what, kid?

BRAINITIAL

Mr. Ockley...

H/NT/R

Where was Mr. Ockley?

BRAINITIAL

He had me take my clothes off. And then he... it would always hurt. I just -- it just felt like hurt.

H/nt/r and Trolly share a big ol' WT-fuckin'-F.

BRAINITIAL

And one night -- Jax came looking for me. He saw. Then... then he hit Mr. Ockley. Jax pushed him and hit him over and over again. I wanted him to kill Mr. Ockley.

(pause)

Jax is a bad boy.

H/NT/R

No, kid. He ain't.

(to Trolly)

We need to tell the Clergy about this place. The sheriff should know, too.

SHERIFF CHONG (O.C.)
The sheriff already knows.

Sheriff Chong, accompanied by his shotgun and a team of uniforms from his department, surround the burial site.

SHERIFF CHONG
I've known about it for a while,
unfortunately.

H/NT/R
(suspicious)
What brings you out here, sheriff?

SHERIFF CHONG
A slice.
(to Trolly)
Much obliged, darlin'.

H/nt/r is faced with that moment when the person you thought you could trust, Trolly, ain't someone you can trust no more.

TROLLY
There's a bounty on ya. I had to
call it in. Make up for the loss
that woulda been Regal's share.
Sorry, ol' purple.

She kisses him. He goes with it, but then remembers what the hell she just did -- and pushes her the frak away.

H/NT/R
Regal's dead, for Christ's sake!
(to Sheriff Chong)
The hell she talking about?

SHERIFF CHONG
Don't know about any bounty.

Shit! Trolly hits him with a WTF now.

SHERIFF CHONG
I might have mentioned a little
reward, for anybody willing to tail
ya. But as you both know, the
bank's busted. Comes down to civil
duty.

TROLLY
You son of a bitch.

SHERIFF CHONG
Call it as you see it, babe.

H/NT/R

What do you want with me?

SHERIFF CHONG

Not a goddamn thing. I'm here for the girl.

(to Trolly)

Appreciate the heads-up.

(to his deputies)

Bag 'em.

Deputies move in. H/nt/r brandishes his crossbow. BraInitial makes a run for it and skedaddles over many a' corpse.

SHERIFF CHONG

No one hurt the girl!

She's flanked by a deputy. H/nt/r fires his crossbow -- hits him in the chest. BraInitial recoils, trips, and tumbles down a mound of bodies.

SHERIFF CHONG

Take down the bounty hunter!

Another deputy raises steel -- looks a lot like the gun Simon uses, only bigger. He fires it at H/nt/r -- the blast-radius is huge -- and *WHOO-APP!* -- a plasma charge knocks the fuck out of him. Smoke steams from his mouth, eyelids, and ears.

Trolly makes her own break for it.

SHERIFF CHONG

The outlaw, too.

She slings knives at the deputies -- makes fine cutlets out of them bastards. She's fired upon -- *WHOO-APP!* -- but saves herself and jumps down into the bodies. Entire corpses spray, explode, and rain down when the charge hits them. The gun is fired a few more times -- bodies fly -- as Trolly narrowly misses each and every blast.

BRAININITIAL

Ms. Trolly!

Trolly finds BraInitial -- but deputies already snag the girl. She's force to backtrack -- the gun fires at her -- and heaps of dead bodies are blasted every which way. She fights her way out of the pit.

SHERIFF CHONG

Goddammit. Somebody net her!

A new deputy uses a weapon we haven't seen before. He fires it at Trolly -- a large net is shot out. And since she's now in the open, the net catches her easily within its weaves. The deputy reels her in like a prized catfish catch.

A moment later she has a shotgun pointed at her face. Wouldn't hurt to get a POV from her perspective: with Chong's smile way the hell up there and all.

SHERIFF CHONG
Apologies for this. Just tryin' to
make my boy happy, ya know?

He flips the shotgun over. The butt comes down, cracks her hard in the face. G'night.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - PICKUP, BED (MOVING) - DAY

We're in the back of Trolly's pickup, as it bounces along a deserted wasteland... again. We hit a bump -- it's enough to wake H/nt/r. Disoriented and battle-scarred, he groans.

SHERIFF CHONG (O.C.)
Gotta wonder what happened to this
world. How we fucked it up so bad.
And when was it we lost our way in
the first place.

Sheriff Chong sits atop of the wheel well, scouts the lands.

SHERIFF CHONG
Ya ask me, I'd point my finger at
science. Progress, some would call
it. We built some heavy duty shit
to wipe each other out.

H/nt/r coughs. It's more violent than it has been.

SHERIFF CHONG
I'm jealous of ya, purple. I think
the Church was the only sound
fixture in all that chaos to
realize the shit we caused
ourselves. Did what they could to
prepare.
(beat)
We always want to do right by our
children. Now... there's so very
few of those to go 'round. Not
enough for everyone.
(MORE)

SHERIFF CHONG (cont'd)

(reminiscing)

The Clergy do their best, I suppose. Maybe that's why I fell in love with a child of one. Shame she stumbled so far from God's path -- positioned herself inside that filthy petri-dish: the Institute. She could have been one of God's chosen -- instead she succumbed to make a mockery of the Divine. Left her soul dead -- so close to my heart. People lost their goddamn way, forgot who made this world.

H/nt/r's at it again, coughs -- this time he spits up blood. Sheriff Chong, however, acknowledges the setting sun.

SHERIFF CHONG

If God didn't exist, how do ya explain that? The beauty of that?

(beat, to H/nt/r)

Your brother wants me to kill ya. He don't know that you're already dead. So is he.

(beat)

But, for now, I'd rather celebrate what little life we do have left and make an effort to do right by my son. Embrace him in God's love. You're cordially invited to a wedding this evening. Hope ya can make it, purple.

Sheriff Chong kicks the tailgate open. He grabs H/nt/r's body and heaves him out the bed -- *WHAP!* Upon impact, H/nt/r bounces across the desert like a Mexican jumping bean on molly. He settles, finally, to a familiar circumstance. The coughing continues...

CUT TO:

INT. INSTITUTE - LAB - DAY

The lab is lit through a fish tank, again. A mouth enters frame, whispers into an ear:

OCKLEY

Were they infected?

(beat)

Did the virus penetrate the Vatican?

We dolly out where we find Trolly, still wrapped in the net, seated in the restraining chair.

OCKLEY
Did the child infect the Clergy?

TROLLY
(disoriented)
Where am I? Who are you?

OCKLEY
Were the Clergy exposed to the goddamn virus? Don't play stupid with me, bitch.

TROLLY
N -- no. Scientist -- destroyed it.

OCKLEY
(relieved)
Good. No, that's good. We weren't ready.

MS. > (O.C.)
I believe the outlaw is misinformed.

Enter Ms. >. There's a boost of confidence in her voice -- and her skirt is particularly shorter come this hour.

MS. >
Her being here is evidence of that.

OCKLEY
How do you mean?

MS. >
I learned of Gerold's progress with the virus. It was remarkable. I had him under surveillance for months. But in that time he began to question himself -- question the operation. He intended to destroy the strain. I had to act quickly.

OCKLEY
Meaning?

TROLLY
Meanin' she infected the girl, fat shit.

OCKLEY

(to Ms. >, heated, angry)
You acted in secrecy? Against my
authority?

MS. >

I did. For the good of this
Institute, and for the children.
(beat)
I'm prepared to accept the
consequences.

Ockley approaches Ms. >, slowly, deadened -- she feels his
fire-breath on her like he were a great dragon of old.

OCKLEY

And the presence of this whore,
dropped on my doorstep... how is
she evidence of that?

She keeps eye contact, but the question is for Trolly:

MS. >

Did you find the child? The second
one, six or so months pregnant?

TROLLY

The girl yer boss, here, defiled --
we did.

MS. >

(to Ockley)
I had the sheriff pick her up after
she was located. He purposely gave
us back this creature. I wanted
Brai returned. He's playing us for
fools.

He slaps Ms. > hard across the face. Daddy's home...

OCKLEY

Clergy-filth! For fools? Do you
have any idea what I'm trying to do
here? There was a time frame in
place. The children aren't ready.

MS. >

When? If not now then when? They
can't stay here forever. They need
to grow an--

OCKLEY

--enough!

He tosses her ass across the room.

OCKLEY

They're not soldiers anymore.
They're a product. My product! And
I can't sell them if we haven't
first fixed their defect.

TROLLY

How many of them defects ya gotta
go through before ya get it right?
The hundreds I saw -- each of 'em
have a defect, too?

MS. >

(to Ockley)

The hell is she talking about?

TROLLY

What? You don't know... about the
grave? Dead children -- like the
ones here, buried deep in a hole.

MS. >

Is this true?

He grabs Ms. > by the throat -- smashes her against the wall.

MS. >

(gasping)

You said you buried them. Proper.

OCKLEY

What I do with my property is my
own business. And right now, I can
barely keep it afloat. You
destroyed the Institute and you
destroyed the children.

MS. >

I'm setting them free.

OCKLEY

I would have you suffer their
fate... the same as your kind,
nameless foul. So low are you that
when I bury you in that grave, God
Himself won't be able to tell you
from woman or abomination.

Awkward moment at the dinner table after daddy slaps mommy in
front of the kids...

MS. >
Like I said, I'll accept the
consequences put upon me.

OCKLEY
Then don't let me stop you.

He releases her. Ms. > gags to catch her breath. She looks at Trolly, back to Ockley, then gets the fuck out of there.

OCKLEY
Now, my vicious outlaw...
(turns to face Trolly)
...what do we do with you?

This might be the only time I've seen Trolly even slightly worried.

CUT TO:

EXT. VATICAN - FRONT YARD - SUNSET

Simon unsaddles his motorcycle, his gas mask is securely tightened over his face. He maneuvers through members of the Clergy who scurry this way and that, panicked and sickly.

INT. VATICAN, BIRTHING WARD - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Inside is an even more gruesome clusterfuck: infected priests, nurses, and assistants cough or vomit -- or blood oozes out the pores of their skin. The few who wear gas masks are safe, at least for the moment. Simon breaks past all of them and pushes through the door to the lab--

INT. VATICAN - LAB - CONTINUOUS

--where he finds Cardinal Eleanore and Father Mary digging their hands into the chest and guts of Mr. Regal, whose body is splayed open. Neither one of them saved from the virus.

FATHER MARY
(surprised)
Simon, what are you doing here?

SIMON
What has happened?

FATHER MARY

The girl carried a virus --
engineered to attack Clergy. Are
you breathing synthetic air?

SIMON

Yes.

FATHER MARY

Don't remove it. Virus is airborne.
We've notified other districts
about the pandemic -- but we can't
be certain how far it's spread.

SIMON

I've missed you, father.

FATHER MARY

(genuine)

I've missed you, too, my son.

Inside the red intestinal goop, the Cardinal reroutes wires
to network boxes and other technical do-dads implanted inside
Regal's chest cavity. Weird stuff...

CARDINAL ELEANORE

Father, if you wouldn't mind... ?

Together, her and Father Mary hook an external electrical
cord to what appears to be a power box laden in the rib cage.

SIMON

What are you doing?

CARDINAL ELEANORE

We need more information. The chip
contained in the girl has been
damaged some.

(caustic)

I'm not pointing fingers, sweetie.

(beat)

If I can access it through its bio-
circuitry, this delightful
gentleman might be able to give us
a few more answers. His
endoskeleton is crude technology at
best, but the software these
Dreadgen-Soldiers operated on was
some of the best for its day. All
stolen, of course. Anything to make
a better soldier.

SIMON

You mean to bring him back to life?

CARDINAL ELEANORE

His body is dead. No salvation there. But the machine -- that I might be able to re-boot...

She activates the power switch and we steal the rest of this sequence from any Frankenstein movie you want until we get "IT'S ALIVE!" The Monster's head moves, and the jaw opens and closes. The Cardinal inserts Brai's computer chip into an open slot inside his chest. A hack or two and a bypass later, the chip syncs with Regal's operating system. Science, bitch!

CARDINAL ELEANORE

What is your name?

Regal tries to answer -- but his voice is inaudible. If you remember why this would be, it's due to the hole in his neck. The Cardinal stuffs it with cotton or Duct Tape.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

Tell me your name.

REGAL

(scratchy voice)

Gerold Williams. I am the head of research and development at the Institute.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

There's been an outbreak, at the Vatican. You warned us about a virus, but we were too late to stop it. It was stored inside the child.

REGAL

Yes, the first clone to accept virus 731 and 732 without damage to her system, as well as harbor and administer it. However, I did not infect her -- someone else at the Institute did. Unfortunately, I came across the information too late. My plan to safely smuggle the girl from the compound was sabotaged.

(beat)

Apologies. I had so little time.

FATHER MARY

The girl. The one you told us was pregnant, you said her baby housed a cure should anything happen.

REGAL

(accesses, remembers)

That's right... yes. I developed an anti-virus. If you access the fetus you can extract a cure. But it needs to be administered in the first twenty hours of contact. Otherwise, your chance of survival is significantly diminished.

Regal stutters, his speech stretches into a drawl...

REGAL

I never wanted this -- tried to do good. I was forced against my will... I -- I love you Eleanore...

Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

SIMON

I will find this child. Bring home the cure.

FATHER MARY

Simon, your brother will make this right. Both of you bring her here safe.

SIMON

I love you, father. But this chaos is because of him. I had not the courage to stop him before -- but you cannot protect him from me anymore. I mean to destroy him.

Exit Mr. Badass... Mr. Out-For-Revenge.

CARDINAL ELEANORE

They will find peace with one another before the end. They will save us.

Cardinal Eleanore and Father Mary cough, hack, and wheeze.

CUT TO:

EXT. MASS BURIAL SITE - NIGHT

Our evil scientist, Edward, leads Ms. > to this gruesome spot for her first time. She fights back the tears.

MS. >

Ockley will pay for this.

E. SCIENTIST

Maybe you should not make mention of what you've seen.

MS. >

We lost so many children to our own madness -- I lied to myself, said it was for the greater good. Ockley swore he treated their bodies with respect. Now I see he's done no such thing.

E. SCIENTIST

Small wonder he never told you.

MS. >

My eyes are open. I know I've made the right choice -- to release the virus.

E. SCIENTIST

The plan, to take down the Vatican... for Mr. Ockley it's personal gain; a financial strategy to remove his competition.

(beat)

What is it for you? They are, after all, your own people.

She turns, walks close to him -- her demeanor like ice.

MS. >

Because of how they made me -- so selfishly as they did. I'm constructed with the inability to bear children of my own. They do not get to dictate that.

(beat)

The Clergy do not get to decide that for me.

E. SCIENTIST

In response you facilitate the annihilation of an entire people?

MS. >
 We're not people.
 (beat)
 If you wouldn't mind, I need to
 return. I should see the children
 to their beds.

She walks away -- offers him the chance to follow. Instead:

E. SCIENTIST
 I've searched the logs. An anti-
 virus was made. You've taken it.

Ms. > stops, turns, and makes her way back...

MS. >
 That's a big maybe, Edward.

E. SCIENTIST
 You also filtered it through their
 nightly nutrient supply. That's why
 you were in the lab this morning.
 The units were never low on
 potassium -- they were administered
 a vaccine. Which makes me
 curious...

MS. >
 How so?

E. SCIENTIST
 If virus 732 was made to destroy
 the Clergy, why you would feel the
 need to treat the children against
 it? It's as if you were preventing
 them from a virus 731 outbreak.

She really gets close to him now -- as if to indulge him with
 a naughty secret. He listens intently.

MS. >
 (sotto)
 Because my children don't need to
 live in a world like this.

Then -- WITHOUT A GODDAMN WARNING! -- Ms. > sticks the
 scientist in the neck with a needle. She injects--

MS. >
 The test strain -- the one you gave
 Jax. Killed him instantly,
 remember?

E. SCIENTIST

Rash! You dirty, fucking plague!

He stomps about, pouts, and acts out in a childish discretion.

E. SCIENTIST

You'll never get away with this.
You -- you're mad! Inhuman!

MS. >

So I've been told.

She pushes him into the pit. After a few moments, she leaves him there to toil and die in ravaged despair amongst the lifeless children he's helped massacre for all these years.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

H/nt/r returns to this ol' one-hat town and its night life -- devoured by bandits and debauchery. At a fork-in-the-road he has the choice to make for the church (lit up with activity somewhere inside), or the saloon. Guess where he picks?

But unseen in the shadows is our true nightmare. Our Rider. Simon, in full regalia, as he watches as his brother enters the saloon.

INT. SALOON, BAR - CONTINUOUS

It's a rowdy night. On his way to the bar, H/nt/r passes Abigail, mouth wrapped in cloth. He coughs and she quickly steps aside -- but he manages to find a spot to order from. He spits up blood on the counter before the bartender throws him down a shot. He's about to shoot it, but hesitates.

PAPPY (O.C.)

c'mon there, ye ol' clergy rascal.
it ain't gonna drink it'self.

It's ol' Pappy! He's a' lookin' crustier than ever, too.

H/NT/R

What good is it, old man?

PAPPY

what good is it? ain't nothin'
bett'r ta clear the mind wit'.

(MORE)

PAPPY (cont'd)
 yers, i bet'cha, be a batter'd
 bunk'r of bust'd bull balls.

H/NT/R
 Sums it up.

PAPPY
 i ain't no clergy, but i can tell
 ye there ain't no liquor out there
 could be consider'd a sin. does
 nuthin' but put life back inta ye.

H/nt/r throws down a rotten mess of a cough -- his eyes drip
 black goo, the sweat on him comes out yellow.

PAPPY
 there's talk, clergy. sickness
 goin' 'bouts. vatican folk they
 say. like ye, i reckon. it true? ye
 got the sickness?

H/nt/r muses over his shot -- buried in a private fantasy
 deep inside the liquid in the glass...

H/NT/R
 Couldn't tell you what sick is.
 Never felt it, old man. This I
 know: been shit on more times than
 I've pushed out; felt fist, iron,
 and lead; bones broken, face
 busted. None of it I put much
 thought toward. Didn't have to --
 always could fix myself up. Pain
 didn't matter, and without it
 neither did the fear. So what's
sickness to me?
 (beat)
 In that case, what's death?
 (twirls the shot glass)
 It's this shine, old man. Never had
 a sip. Looking to be my last.

PAPPY
 ye at least live the way ye want'd?

H/nt/r shrugs. Maybe he did, maybe he didn't...

PAPPY
 yer luckier than most, i s'pose. ye
 did it all fer good reas'n?

H/NT/R
 Never had much use for it.

PAPPY
we all got reas'ns fer doin'
things, good or bad.

H/NT/R
You got a reason for not bathing?

Touché!

PAPPY
(laughs)
never had much use for it.
(beat)
what's yer name proper, anyway?

H/NT/R
Haven't had the honor.

PAPPY
shit. well, what'da people call ya?

Again, H/nt/r shrugs. Last he was named it was "Fucker."

PAPPY
seems ye ain't much use if ye can't
claim own'rship ov'r yerself, boy.
maybe there's that fear ye was
lookin' fer.
(beat)
ye ain't doin' nobody no fav'rs
'cause ye can't do one fer yerself.
that teaches ye somethin'. teaches
ye that reas'n we was discussin' --
an' hows ta go 'bout it.

H/NT/R
How's that?

PAPPY
ain't 'bout doin' shit fer yerself
when ya know who ye are. jus' 'bout
doin' somethin' 'cause ye know it's
the right thang ta do.
(hold up his drink)
that, clergy friend, is life.

Bottoms up! Pappy shoots the shine leftover in his glass, then beams a very large, very toothless smile. If we could read H/nt/r's mind we would hear, "Well, if I'm going down might as well yell, 'TIMBER!'" as he shoots back his own.

CUT TO:

INT. INSTITUTE - LAB - NIGHT

Ockley and Trolly -- practically in a staring contest. Trolly's still bound by the net, seated in the chair.

TROLLY

Ya gonna stare at me all night, or
ya gonna make the first move? Maybe
I'm just too old for ya?

He grips the arm rests, pulls himself close to her, almost gets between her legs if it weren't for the net.

OCKLEY

You think you're a clever girl, but
you have no clue the moves I have.

TROLLY

Corporate greed. Rape. Murder.
Genocide. I forget anything?
Suppose ya got a big dick, too? But
maybe to a ten-year-old anything
could look impressive.

OCKLEY

You have no comprehension how much
I care for my children. The lengths
I've gone through to ensure what
they are. What they were to become:
to be the best. Best at everything.
War would have proved that -- would
have shown the world their majesty
on the battlefield.

TROLLY

Instead the canons stopped firing.

OCKLEY

And funding ran out. No one wanted
soldiers anymore -- no matter how
perfect they were. But there's one
commodity that won't ever go out of
style.

TROLLY

Little bundles of joy. Ones with a
proper count of appendages, I
reckon.

OCKLEY

Maybe you are clever, outlaw.

TROLLY

Turn ya on?

He brushes his cheek against her's -- gets kind of awkward on her in the sexual sense.

OCKLEY

What the Clergy offer with their product, at best, is nothing more than smegma. Dead cells that fester and pollute an already unclean environment. You only need to pull back the foreskin to see it.

Meanwhile, while Ockley smooth talks her, Trolly stealthily moves her fingers under her shorts, toward her groin...

TROLLY

(explicit)

Done my share of pullin'.

...and, unaware of what Trolly's reaching at, Ockley enhances his own physical creepiness with gentle licks and kisses.

OCKLEY

I only want the chance to offer people a quality product -- without the competition. Remove the perversion.

Eventually, what Trolly, er, pulls out from herself is a thin, pointed object. Something like a sharp screwdriver.

TROLLY

So why not have fun with your toys beforehand...

OCKLEY

I call that product testing.

TROLLY

Bet I can guess the defect--

She jams the pick into Ockley's groin -- yeah, where his member would be. He screams and falls to his ass.

TROLLY

--a bad marketing strategy.

OCKLEY

I'm going to kill you!

He pulls the pick out -- "member" blood all over his hands.
He's in pain. Whatever... it's Trolly's turn to get fu--

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

--door swings open. In steps H/nt/r.

SHERIFF CHONG

Ah! Our final guest has arrived.
Worried you wouldn't make it.

Sheriff Chong is near the altar. Someone stands next to him, dressed in an old and ratty tux. His deputies, a good six or seven of them, are present in the pews. The kicker, BraInitial is up there, too, and wears an off-white wedding dress just a little too big for her.

SHERIFF CHONG

Maybe I shouldn't have dropped ya
in the desert. Forgive me, I was
trying to be poetic.

H/NT/R

The hell is this?

SHERIFF CHONG

A wedding -- soon as our Bishop
arrives.

(to mystery person)

Don't be rude, son, greet our
guest.

The gentleman in the tux, when he spins around, turns out to be none other than Lord Jackson von Krazy.

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY

I do greet thee, good sir. Have you
met me bride to be?

H/NT/R

Once or twice.

(beat)

This the part when I can object?

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY

(to Sheriff Chong)

What's he mean, pa?

SHERIFF CHONG
Means he don't feel you're
qualified to marry the girl.

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY
(to H/nt/r)
Hey! That ain't no business of
yers. I said to ya she was pretty.

H/NT/R
And I told you she wasn't for
keeps.

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY
Pa!

SHERIFF CHONG
Goddammit.

The sheriff hustles down the isle to meet with H/nt/r.

SHERIFF CHONG
He's a sensitive boy. Can't talk
down to him. Riles him up.
(beat)
Might surprise ya to know that when
I found him as a boy he was as calm
and collected as anyone could get.
Bright, too. Sharper than them tits
on ol' Trolly's chest.
(disparaged)
But puberty -- that did a number on
him. Mother Nature wasn't so kind.

H/NT/R
Maybe it was bad design.

Say again? Did H/nt/r guess what the sheriff thought he did?

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY
Pa. Bishop's here. Let's get goin'!

The Bishop enters -- cloaked, hooded.

Sheriff Chong puts an arm around the sickly bastard, helps
H/nt/r down the isle, and shares a private conversation.

SHERIFF CHONG
How'd ya know?

H/NT/R
Said you found him as a boy. Not
much of them these days.
(MORE)

H/NT/R (cont'd)

Makes sense if he were a clone. I'd say that's how you also knew of the grave site.

SHERIFF CHONG

They left him there for dead. Don't know for how long or how many bodies he was buried under before escaping. Came across him naked and starving on the side of the road.

(beat)

Ya curious why ya only saw bodies of children in that pit? Because he's what ya get when one of them Neverland kids grow up. Institute couldn't keep them stable past puberty. Always went crazy -- could never figure out why. Some defect. In the long run, they were always gonna make for lousy soldiers. But between you and me, they make for even worse pets. But ya love them regardless.

H/NT/R

That what this bullshit is about?

The sheriff leads H/nt/r to the front pew, seats him there with one of his deputies as company.

SHERIFF CHONG

I recognize and accept my child's flaws. But instead of criticizing them, I'm gonna try my best as a parent to make the best of it.

(sotto)

And, if I can piss off that frigid bitch at the Institute while I'm at it, all the better.

(to the Congregation)

Now, let's have ourselves a wedding!

He cues the Bishop. BraInitial keeps her eye on H/nt/r the whole time, even when Lord Jackson grabs her by the hand.

BISHOP

Let us pray.

All bow their heads -- all except for H/nt/r and BraInitial.

At this moment, the Bishop pulls back his hood -- and good God, it's frakkin' Simon!

From under the sleeve of his cloak, he unsheathes his firearm, aims it directly at Sheriff Chong's head -- *Ve-a-ra-braummm!* -- to which that melon bursts like it were smashed by Gallagher. Globes of brain matter spatter the audience, and stain BraInitial's white dress. Simon holds the smoking gun.

Lord Jackson rushes to aid his headless pa, shouts his name. Deputies take action, but Bishop Simon unleashes hell unto them as they duck and cover behind the pews. One meets a bloody blast, and certain death. H/nt/r sticks an arrow (the one he collected from Regal's throat) through the neck of the deputy next to him, then takes cover. Simon makes after him.

Since this sequence will all come out of my credit card, I don't mind if the deputies and Simon continue to shoot at one another and cause mayhem and debris -- then the sudden spark of a church fire to which the stunt team would choreograph a cat and mouse game between Simon and H/nt/r, and where the two drop deputies like Puff Daddy drops platinum records, even though they're trying to kill each other simultaneously.

BraInitial has taken to hiding under a pew. Lord Jackson whimpers and cries in despair -- the body of Sheriff Chong cradled tightly in his arms.

Simon harpoons the ice-pick across the room -- then propels himself forward like he were bowling ball, and that deputy up there were the pin. Strike! H/nt/r lassoes a censer left at the altar -- bops a deputy on the head with the bowl, wraps the chain around his legs, and yanks the deputy's feet out from under him. He steals a candlestick and puts it through the deputy's chest.

Finally, with the last deputy thrown through a stained glass window, H/nt/r and Simon have at it with one another.

SIMON

I will make you pay for the death
you've caused.

Since H/nt/r's under the weather, it's not long before Simon fights him into a grip-lock, ice-pick at full salute. However, Lord Jackson doesn't exclude himself:

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY

(sotto)

You killed him. My pa...

(to Simon)

You killed my pa!

The instant Simon unleashes the ice-pick's fury, Lord Jackson strikes with a swift and precise execution. He's calculated, ruthless, perfect... superhuman.

He dominates Simon -- even steals the ice-pick away, which never stood a chance to pierce H/nt/r. Instead, Simon feels the sting of his own death tool as Lord Jackson puts it through his already dead eye, then throws his large body over the altar where the pick sticks straight up. Simon is defeated.

Lord Jackson turns his aggression onto H/nt/r. He body-slams our purple friend, punches, and pulverizes him. Within a head-lock, H/nt/r's neck is about to be snapped in three... two...

BRAINITIAL

Enough!

BraInitial only barely has saved H/nt/r's life. Lord Jackson looks to her, doughy-eyed.

BRAINITIAL

Jax. Do you remember me?

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY

Pa says you is to be my wife.

BRAINITIAL

No, do you remember who I am? We're friends.

She approaches him, slowly. H/nt/r gags and coughs.

BRAINITIAL

You don't have to do this. We're friends -- and I say you let my hunter go.

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY

How is we friends? Huh?
(obstreperous)
HOW?!

BraInitial reaches to the back of her neck, removes the chip.

H/NT/R

No, kid...

BRAINITIAL

I can help you, Jax. You have to trust me.

Cautiously, the pregnant girl makes her way around Lord Jackson, still ready to snap H/nt/r's neck. Carefully, she slips the chip into the hidden slot underneath the boy's hair. At first... nothing. Nothing at all.

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY
 You -- you lied to me. Liar!

But then -- ZAP! Lord Jackson's eyes dilate. He releases H/nt/r, then falls over backward. He convulses, twitches, shakes, then--

SERIES OF SHOTS (MEMORIES):

- Jackson as a boy. Military training, weapons, etc.
- Interacts with children at Institute. Laughter.
- Bedtime, gas masks, and Ms. > who tucks him in.
- Restrained in chair. Experiments performed on him.
- Dumped in mass burial site, left for dead.
- Jackson crawls out of pit, stumbles onto highway.
- Bright lights. Sheriff Chong.
- FLASH. Memories of Jax-unit. Meets Brai for first time.
- He and Brai share secret kiss.
- Hears voices. Wanders hallways.
- Enters private room. Ockley, pants down, on top of Brai.
- Jax physically hurts Ockley. Beats him senseless.
- Jax, at bedtime, looks at Ms. >:

JAX

...wondering when Brai was coming
 home. Haven't seen her in a while.

- Medical chair, gas mask, inhales virus. Convulsions.
- BLACK. Then cut back to:

A scream, performed by Lord Jackson von Krazy. He grabs BraInitial. H/nt/r intervenes but Lord Jackson throws the man into the pews. Suddenly, the chip in the back of his neck sparks. He flinches, then phantasms into a deep silence, buried within BraInitial's eyes -- like a Vulcan mind meld.

INT. INSTITUTE - CHILDREN'S BUNK - SAME

Same ol' routine: Ms. > tucks away the kids into their beds. Presently, she's with a Jax-unit.

MS. >
Sleep well, angel.

She's about to place the gas mask over his face -- but the boy thrusts out his arm, grabs her tightly by the neck.

JAX
Where is he?

INTERCUT - CHURCH/INSTITUTE

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY
Where is he?

Lord Jackson mimics the same death-grip as Jax -- though he squeezes only air. H/nt/r and BraInitial standby and observe.

Ms. > chokes. She struggles to pry herself free from Jax, but to no avail.

JAX
(deadpan)
Where is Ockley?

MS. >
La -- lab. The lab.

He throws her aside. The rest of the children look on, confused but not afraid. Lord Jackson stands, and Jax simulates the same stance.

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY
Father has hurt Brai. He's hurt us--

JAX
--all. We'll make him pay.

The clones look to each other for reassurance -- authenticating their willingness to join in Jax's revolt. They nod and agree. He leads his army. Ms. > watches.

H/nt/r huddles near BraInitial, mesmerized by Lord Jackson.

H/NT/R
What's he doing?

BRAINITIAL

Leading them.

H/NT/R

Who?

BRAINITIAL

The kids. He's helping them.

Jax marches the clone warriors through the hallways of the Institute. If there are guards about, they instantly kill and/or dispose of them with cunning accuracy. They break down the door to the lab, and find Ockley and Trolly in their own grudge match. Trolly's still wrapped in the net, but both are bruised and abused. She kicks him in the gut -- he jams the pick into her shoulder, and is relieved to see the children.

OCKLEY

My babies. Help your old man, would you? Look what this creature has done to your father. Look!

He shows them his blood-stained pants where Trolly had castrated him.

OCKLEY

Kill her. That's an order!

Jax steps forth. He signals his army: attack of the clones! Ms. > peers around the corner just in time to watch a circle of children disembowel and dismember every joint, limb, and appendage Ockley possess. Blood and flesh spray like a fountain from the center.

Ms. > rushes in and drags the outlaw away from the butchery. She pulls out the pick from Trolly's shoulder and uses it to slice open the net. Trolly then siezes her -- ready to rip out Ms. >'s throat with nothing more than her fingernails.

MS. >

Let go. I'm trying to help you.

Jax leaves the "ravage party" to tend to this new matter.

TROLLY

(to Jax)

This one -- she's mine. Understand me? I ain't walkin' away empty handed again. I'm takin' her.

JAX

You going to kill her?

TROLLY

No. I guarantee you that. I'll keep her alive as long as she's willing to stay so.

JAX

You can take her then. But treat her kindly. Pa tells me--

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY

--she carries my baby in her. I'd like to see that someday. Name it after him: Bill.

TROLLY

Sure. Sure thing, boy.

Lord Jackson winks, returns to his pantomiming -- which looks something like the ripping of intestines out of a stomach.

MS. >

(to Trolly)

Wh -- what do you want with me?

TROLLY

Ain't gonna spoil the surprise, sweets.

Meanwhile, H/nt/r and BraInitial band together to calm Lord Jackson. He beats the ground until his energy is spent.

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY

It's done. Ockley's dead.

(to BraInitial)

The children -- they're free now. You're free.

BRAININITIAL

(gently)

So are you.

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY

Thank you, Brai. Thank you for showing me what we had. What I had.

H/nt/r collapses to his knees, spits up blood.

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY

Take care of your friend. He needs you now.

BRAININITIAL

What about you?

LORD JACKSON VON KRAZY
 My pa needs me.
 (tears swell)
 I gotta find him a place to rest.

Lord Jackson scoops Sheriff Chong's body into his arms, carries him down the isle and out the church doors. At last, it is just H/nt/r and the girl.

BRAININITIAL
 What can I do for you, my hunter?

H/NT/R
 I'm tired, Brai. I'm so tired.

BRAININITIAL
 Kid.
 (pause)
 I like it when you call me "kid."

He coughs -- then swings his arm over her shoulder.

H/NT/R
 Take me home, kid.

BraInitial carries the bulk of his weight -- and escorts the man who, in some respects, or in some odd twisted fate, is like her father. They leave the church...

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Bird's-eye-view of the brown and murky water below, which flows gently from bottom of screen to top.

MS. > (O.C.)
 You can't do this. Please don't
 leave me like this. Don't leave me
 like this!

The scaph follows the current as it enters frame -- pulled taught at the end of its rope. Only Ms. >'s head, arms, and legs protrude -- skin exposed. Trolly enters, and ties off an object to her wrist that floats next to her in the river.

TROLLY
 In case you get thirsty.

It's a jug full of milk.

MS. >
You're a wicked woman.

TROLLY
No denying that.

Ms. > rejects her new home. She shows her objection with, at first, a twitch. Her breathing, soft and rhythmic at first, begins to crescendo -- it gets heavier and heavier until, at last, she howls. Her scream sounds like a Wraith on Wings.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOSQUE - H/NT/R'S SPOT - DAY

At first we only see the tip of an arrowhead scrape into the bark of a tree. Tiny hands help it carve out large grooves into the cottonwood. When finished, BraInitial steps back to examine her work. Below sits H/nt/r -- back against the tree. He's a few breaths shy of glorious death.

H/NT/R
You've got to take care of yourself now. That baby gets to the Vatican.

BRAININITIAL
I will. I'll get him there. Promise.

H/NT/R
That's a good girl.

BRAININITIAL
I love you.

H/NT/R
(touched)
You're all right, kid.

BRAININITIAL
Sorry you didn't get your reward.

H/NT/R
Didn't need it. Although, I think I'll keep ya. Reward enough for me.

H/nt/r smiles -- then his eyes slowly shut. BraInitial kisses him on the forehead. She sets off on her own -- and only then do we see what she carved into the tree. It's text... and it reads, "MY NAME IS HUNTER."

CUT TO:

INT. VATICAN - LAB - DAY

An intense, unexpected jolt! Some sort of reactivation boot -- like he were hit with a defibrillator. Regal kicks back on--

REGAL

Relocating backup file. Accessing.
Accessing. Accessing... File found.

Father Mary, close to death, tends to Cardinal Eleanore who, presently, suffers these severe ailments even more so.

REGAL

File found...

She makes her way to Regal, blurts out a command:

FATHER MARY

Open file.

Regal's eyes jerk back and forth -- real hacker shit here.

REGAL

I -- I made a grave error in judgement.

FATHER MARY

Is this Gerold?

REGAL

Yes.

(accessing)

The woman -- she tampered with my research. The vaccine, it's -- it's no longer contained within the Brai-unit's child. It's... been replaced.

FATHER MARY

Replaced with what?

REGAL

Virus 731. The strain is not exclusive to Clergy. Ninety nine-point-nine percent fatality rate is expected.

FATHER MARY

Expected of what?

REGAL

To infect current population.

Father Mary vomits. She buries herself in anguish. But something more wretched pierces our ears, and the sound of laughter fades in--

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER - SAME

--laughter that morphs into a maniacal cackle. The scaph can't suppress Ms. >'s verve. Her lament is one of malevolence -- a sinister concoction festered by a unique perspective in her victory; an even more disturbing version of Walter White's laugh when he was down in the crawl space.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK BLUFF - DAY

BraInitial stands near the bluff's edge, full bellied, where she gazes out toward the endless miles of sand and rock, only to hear, maybe, ever so faintly, the brainsick laughter which floats on a breeze, and completely unaware of the deadly cargo she carries in her womb.

FADE OUT.

POST-CREDITS SCENE:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

We hear a few automated sounds and clicks. There's a red light that blinks on Simon's gas mask as we dolly in on his wrecked body. The ice-pick still sticks out of his eye-socket, fully erect -- and then *Pa-shhhhh*...

Fingers twitch...

CUT TO BLACK.