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REV. STUDIO DRAFT

THE IRRATIONAL

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TEASER

A JET AIRPLANE SOARS THROUGH THE SKY...

ALEC (V.O.)
People are irrational. But
predictably so.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

A moment of TURBULENCE as the plane comes in for a landing. A few FIRST CLASS passengers react, anxious...

ALEC (V.O.)
Most people feel safer in cars than
on airplanes, even though cars are
actually far more dangerous.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. MCDONALD'S DRIVE THRU - DAY

A LONG LINE of cars blocks a lane of traffic.

ALEC (V.O.)
We know we should eat healthy food,
but then we order a Big Mac.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

MOVERS deliver a huge TREADMILL as a heavy-set MAN observes.

ALEC (V.O.)
We buy things we'll never, ever use.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A MIATA speeds down the freeway, cutting between lanes...

ALEC (V.O.)
We drive expensive cars twice the
price of practical ones --

Stuck in traffic, the antsy DRIVER looks at his phone...

ALEC (V.O.)
And then we text while driving.

We hear a CRASH! And we

TRANSITION TO:

A SERIES OF IMAGES:

A WOMAN SCREAMS on a ROLLER COASTER... A MAN walks a stroller with a dog in it... In a BOWLING ALLEY, a child watches his ball meander down the lane, WAVING DESPERATELY for it to move.

ALEC (V.O.)

We assume people are making *rational decisions*, weighing the pros and cons -- when most of the time, we're not.

EXT. BUSY CITY STREET

A BUSINESSMAN impatiently waits at a corner for a light to change and crosses the street, nearly getting hit by a car rounding the corner. The driver HONKS -- after the fact.

ALEC (V.O.)

And so we rely on instincts, which are almost always wrong.

(beat)

Sometimes dangerously wrong.

CUT TO:

INT. RUN-DOWN APARTMENT - DAY

...where we find RUBEN, 20s, strung out, at the end of his rope, a GUN in his hand, and improbably, a baby in his arms, oblivious, being used as a shield for the gunman...

ALEC (V.O.)

One error in judgment leads to another.

Nearby, a WOMAN cowers in the corner, terrified. The apartment is nothing special, but the crib, a dangling mobile, a bouncer on the floor, the relatively peaceful surroundings juxtapose the danger of the situation, as does the reflection of POLICE LIGHTS circling below...

A PHONE, in speaker mode, sits on the table so Ruben can listen to the HOSTAGE NEGOTIATOR as we FOLLOW his furtive glance to:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - PARKING LOT - DAY

The parking lot is abuzz with POLICE ACTIVITY. Police cruisers, unmarked sedans, and a SWAT team with guns raised, looking for a clean shot at Ruben... but he's got that baby.

ALEC (V.O.)
Which is why eventually, someone
ends up calling me.

Everyone's tense but one man -- ALEC BAKER (40s, black) -- isn't nervous. We see him in profile, from the left side. He's good-looking, confident but self-effacing, an easy smile, neat stubble beard, incredibly focused. He leans against a car, scribbling notes like he's solving a complex math equation.

LEAD FBI AGENT MARISA SANCHEZ (40s, on point, Kamala Harris vibes), approaches Alec.

MARISA
Any ideas?

... And that's when we reveal Alec from the other side - the right side of his face and neck bear distinctive scars, beard noticeably ABSENT on this side, lending him a curiously asymmetrical appearance, but he's charismatic enough to carry off the unusual look. Alec nods, he's ready, as they approach Frank, who reluctantly turns the phone over to Alec.

As the police and FBI agents watch, wary, Alec takes on a conspiratorial tone, propping Ruben up...

ALEC
Hi Ruben. My name is Alec.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. RUN-DOWN APARTMENT - DAY

ON Ruben, guarded, as he stares at the phone on the table.

RUBEN
You another negotiator?

ALEC
No, I would never work in law enforcement. It pays crap -- and that's saying something coming from a college professor.

ON Ruben, a little confused.

ALEC (CONT'D)
Congratulations, by the way. The FBI only brings me in when they're really screwed.

Alec's saying this mostly to bond with Ruben, but the law enforcement pros surrounding him aren't exactly enjoying it.

ALEC (CONT'D)

I have to say, I'm impressed.
Most people who try things like this
end up getting arrested or killed.
(then)
But you were really smart about it.
With the baby and all.

Flattery will get you everywhere as Ruben nods, confident.
The Woman hovers, fearful, as Ruben points his gun at her.

OUTSIDE -- A SWAT TEAM SHARPSHOOTER trains his sites on
Ruben, *almost* a clean shot before Ruben shifts the baby,
almost tired of holding her.

ALEC (CONT'D)

I've spoken to the higher ups.
They've agreed to your demands.

Frank tries to yank the phone back, but Marisa stops him.

ALEC (CONT'D)

We're authorizing a helicopter.

MARISA

(sotto, to Alec)
We're not authorizing a helicopter.

ALEC

(waving her off)
All I need to know is what *kind* of
helicopter you want.

RUBEN

What...*kind*?

Alec takes out the notes he was scribbling earlier.

ALEC

I've been doing some research. It
looks like the Sikorsky is faster,
but the Airbus has a longer range.
Do you have a preference?

ON Frank, looking at Marisa: *you really trust this guy?*
Marisa nods, a little wary. Ruben hesitates, then:

RUBEN

Sikorsky.

MARISA

(whispers, to Alec)
I hope you know what you're doing.

ALEC

That's a good choice.

(then)

Now, the Sikorsky will get you a couple hundred miles, so wherever you're going, of course you don't have to tell us, but, you'll have to kill the pilot when you land, right?

ON Ruben, who hadn't considered this...

ALEC (CONT'D)

I mean, you could try swearing him to secrecy, but in all likelihood, you're going to have to kill the pilot. Do you have a plan for how you'll dispose of the body?

Ruben pauses, uncertain, not knowing what to make of this.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Never mind, I'm sure you'll figure it out. But you will need a plan for the baby. Is she on breast milk or formula?

Ruben glances at the mother, who glances down at her chest.

ALEC (CONT'D)

You know how to prepare formula, right? You mix it with distilled water, distilled is important. And you can't leave it out for more than an hour, it could make her sick.

ON Ruben, uneasy, staring at the baby in his arms...

ALEC (CONT'D)

Of course that's if you're planning to hold onto her. You can leave her in a dumpster, maybe, babies can survive 24, maybe 48 hours depending how cold it gets.

Hearing this, the baby's mother starts to cry.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Might be easier if you just leave the baby here, of course. But without her, I'll be honest, you won't have very much leverage.

(then)

Now, should we land the helicopter on the roof or in the parking lot?

Tension fills the silence as Ruben considers his choices. As he holds tight to the gun, he looks to --

THE WOMAN -- she's terrified.

ON RUBEN, looking at the Baby, relentlessly crying now... Will he kill one of them? Himself?

IN THE PARKING LOT --

A SWAT OFFICER AIMS for Ruben, turns to Marisa, quietly --

SWAT OFFICER
Got a clean shot.

Alec holds his hand up, indicating for them to wait. Marisa hesitates -- she's got seconds to decide when --

Ruben drops his gun out the window. As he hands the baby back to the relieved Mother...

ALEC
Good choice.

As Alec half-smiles, half exhales...

MAIN TITLES: THE IRRATIONAL

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - PARKING LOT - LATER

As Ruben is led away in handcuffs, an EMT hands the baby back to her grateful mother as a few COPS pat Alec on the back. Alec's feeling pretty good when Marisa approaches.

MARISA
What was it you did back there?

ALEC
Paradoxical persuasion. I overly embraced his idea so I could force him to think it through enough to realize it was a terrible idea.

MARISA
How'd you know he wasn't going to pull the trigger?

ALEC
It works about 95% of the time.

MARISA
And the other 5%?

ALEC
There are always outliers.

MARISA
And what if he had been an outlier?

ALEC
(shrugs)
He probably would have shot someone.
If it helps, statistically speaking,
more likely the cops than the baby --

MARISA
That ability you have to completely
divorce emotions from reason is both
why I married you and why --

ALEC
You're no longer married to me?

She softens, seeing his vulnerability.

MARISA
Why we split up.
(then)
You'll pick up the kids on Friday?

Alec's half-smile tells us all we need to know: Marisa is his
ex-wife, and that was her decision, not his.

ALEC
I'll be there.

She moves off as her partner BARRY GUILFOYLE approaches Alec.

ALEC (CONT'D)
I take it calling me in wasn't her
idea?

BARRY
(shrugs, then:)
The divorce final?

ALEC
As of Monday.

BARRY
Sorry to hear it.

ALEC
(tries to shrug it off)
Women are less happy being married
than men are, statistically speaking.

A reminder pops up on Alec's phone: *Freshman seminar starts in 15 minutes.* Alec looks down, he's a bit ruffled, having been here all night, but nothing he can do about it now. As Alec heads over to his brand new Porsche 911, Barry notices.

BARRY

Hey, Marisa told me about the mid-life crisis car. Step up from the Volkswagen. How do you like it?

ALEC

The seat's too low and too small.

BARRY

Bet it helps with the mid-life crisis though, right?

ALEC

Not as much as you'd think.

As he gets in his car, Barry looks on with envy as...

INT. PORSCHE 911 - DAY

Alec sits in a seat that feels decidedly too small. He's not comfortable in it. He stares at the high tech dashboard in front of him, pushes the button that starts the ignition...

EXT. WYLTON UNIVERSITY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A charming, elite, private University. This is Alec's *real* job. He parks the Porsche in his assigned parking space in front of the Psychology Department as he heads for --

INT. WYLTON UNIVERSITY - PSYCH DEPT - HALLWAY - DAY

... where he's immediately approached by his eager-to-please (and a bit competitive with one another) RESEARCH ASSISTANTS -- PRIYA and RIZWAN (early 20s). Priya is studious with an air of confidence -- a grown-up Hermione Granger. Rizwan suffers from imposter syndrome, always trying to prove himself --

RIZWAN

Good morning, Professor. I just want to say what a privilege it is to join your Research Assistant team.

ALEC

Rizwan, I assume Priya's showing you the ropes?

PRIYA

He's up to speed...Mostly.

As Alec heads for his office --

PRIYA (CONT'D)

Your intro class starts in two minutes, I have the surveys ready. The Post wants a quote about the mafia guy you flipped --

ALEC

I'll call them back.

PRIYA

You have a doctor's appointment at 11 tomorrow.

Alec touches the rough skin on the back of his neck, then:

ALEC

Reschedule it. Anything else?

RIZWAN

My roommate wants to know if you really helped the Dallas Mavericks win the playoffs.

ALEC

It was an experiment. But it worked out for them.

Rizwan reacts, impressed. As Alec heads into the--

INT. UNIVERSITY - LECTURE HALL - DAY

The lecture hall is packed, a few students sitting on the stairs. Alec's classes are popular ones. The SMARTBOARD reads: "INTRODUCTION TO BEHAVIORAL PSYCHOLOGY."

ALEC

Hello, hello. I'm Alec Baker, welcome to Behavioral Psych 101.

(beat)

And if you're wondering why I only have half a beard, no, I did not lose a bet.

Some chuckles. An expert at keeping an audience engaged, in another lifetime, Alec could've done stand-up.

ALEC (CONT'D)

I was burned many years ago on over 70% of my body.

The chuckles stop as he pulls up a picture of himself on the Smartboard, covered in bandages.

ALEC (CONT'D)

I spent the better part of the next three years in the hospital with my body covered in bandages, which were changed daily... It was, as you can imagine, very painful.

(then, zooming in)

The nurses believed that ripping them off quickly was better than doing it slowly. I disagreed, but they didn't listen.

The image flips to one of PIE CHARTS and GRAPHS.

ALEC (CONT'D)

After leaving the hospital, I started doing experiments. I found out the nurses were wrong. Quick was actually more painful than slow.

(beat, then)

So I went back and I told them. And they told me, slow is more painful for you. For the nurses, *inflicting* that pain slowly was worse.

(then)

I had never considered *their* pain. There are great lessons to be learned from this, lessons that apply to business, to criminal justice, to our personal lives... but if you learn one thing in this class, it is to *never confuse assumptions with facts.*

Alec notices a few students whispering to each other.

ALEC (CONT'D)

You have a question?

Two FRAT GUYS look at each other, one finally blurts out --

FRAT GUY

How'd it happen, man? The burns?

CLOSE on Alec as for a moment, we SEE --

EXT. METHODIST CHURCH - DAY - FLASHBACK

A disorienting scene in the aftermath of something terrible. EMTs, FBI, POLICE, and 10-15 victims in varied shape, some SMOLDERING wreckage nearby... and YOUNG ALEC (20s) on a gurney in excruciating pain as we quickly cut BACK TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY - LECTURE HALL - DAY

Just a hint of a pause, then Alec answers, lying --

ALEC
Drag racing. Ran right off the road,
gas tank exploded.
(then)
All right, let's get started...

INT. UNIVERSITY - HALLWAY - DAY

As class lets out, he turns to Priya and Rizwan. Priya looks at him skeptically --

PRIYA
Drag racing?

ALEC
I was going to go with tiki dancing.
Hawaiian luau that got out of hand.

PRIYA
You could go with the truth.

ALEC
That's no fun.

His phone buzzes. He moves into-

INT. UNIVERSITY - ALEC'S OFFICE - DAY

As he half-closes the door behind him, answering on speaker --

ALEC
This is Alec.

VOICE (V.O.)
Please hold for the Mayor.

He takes the phone off speaker, puts it to his ear --

ALEC
Madam Mayor! Let me guess. You heard
I was single again.

But as he listens to the Mayor, his expression changes.

ALEC (CONT'D)
I'll be right there.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Alec walks towards the front steps with MAYOR JEANINE SHEPHERD (50s, smart, serious, efficient).

MAYOR SHEPHERD

A young woman named Haley Martin was murdered last night. Suspect is her ex-boyfriend, Dylan Keane, son of Senator Laura Keane.

(then)

Laura's a friend and a political ally. Swears her kid didn't do it. So I'm in a tight spot. She's up for reelection. Even the allegations could blow up her campaign... But any delays charging him will smack of preferential treatment.

ALEC

So why get involved?

MAYOR SHEPHERD

I know Dylan. I've known him since he was little. Good kid, no criminal record, he's a damn war hero.

This gets Alec's attention.

ALEC

He's military?

MAYOR SHEPHERD

Served in the Marines.

ALEC

Any history of PTSD?

MAYOR SHEPHERD

I don't know, maybe. He had a drinking problem, but Laura said it was under control, he's been going to AA. He's never been violent.

ALEC

You've got plenty of resources at your disposal. Why call me?

MAYOR SHEPHERD

I need to know if he's guilty faster than the wheels of justice can turn.

(then)

Spend five minutes with him, will you?

(MORE)

MAYOR SHEPHERD (CONT'D)

Do your mind magic stuff -- like you do with the mob guys and all. If he didn't do it, I'll do everything I can to keep his name out of the press.

ALEC

And if he did?

MAYOR SHEPHERD

I'll tell the DA to move ahead full force.

(beat)

I've instructed the department to give you all the access you need. They're waiting for you inside.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY/INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Alec passes four high-powered ATTORNEYS on their way out the door. Through the one-way mirror glass, Alec sees DYLAN (20s, looks hung over), in cuffs, head down. Alec's about to enter when DET. BRYAN CHOU stops him.

DET. CHOU

You the guy the Mayor sent?

ALEC

Yeah, I'm here to speak to Dylan.

DET. CHOU

You're too late. He just confessed.

(off Alec's surprise)

I'm just as surprised as you are. Senator's kid, high-end lawyers up the wazoo, just fired all of them. Crazy, right?

Alec can't help but be a little intrigued.

ALEC

It's definitely not *rational*...

DET. CHOU

See for yourself. We're gonna get his statement now.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Det. Chou, Det. JAZMIN CORTEZ and Alec sit across from Dylan, who is visibly upset.

DYLAN

I did it. I shot Haley. I take responsibility.

Alec scrutinizes Dylan, trying to get a read on him.

DET. CORTEZ

Start at the beginning.

DYLAN

I was having a rough night. I found out a buddy of mine was killed overseas... I felt like I needed a drink. So I called my sponsor, Ray. We met up at Luigi's on First Street. We talked over Cokes and pizza. I told Ray I was okay and he went home.

(beat)

But... I wasn't okay. After he left, I ordered a beer... and another. I realized I was near Haley's place so I walked over.

DET. CORTEZ

Haley was your ex-girlfriend.

(off his nod)

What happened next?

DYLAN

We talked. One thing led to another. We had sex.

The Detectives nod as Alec interjects --

ALEC

Did you wear a condom?

All eyes turn to Alec, whom we'll learn, is not a mere observer of human nature, but an active manipulator of it... there's a method to his curious line of questioning.

DYLAN

I -- yeah... I think so.

The answer seems to surprise Alec.

ALEC

In what position did you have sex?
Traditional missionary or --?

DET. CHOU

You don't have to answer that.

Chou gives Alec an annoyed glare. He takes the interview back as Alec watches Dylan's responses closely.

DET. CHOU (CONT'D)

Do you own a gun?
(off his nod)
You have it with you last night?

DYLAN

No. The gun was Haley's. For protection. She had a stalker once.
(then, unraveling)
I should've been the one protecting her -- not the one she needed protection *from*. I should be the one who's dead right now, not her --

Dylan's so broken it's hard not to feel sorry for him.

DET. CHOU

So what happened? You get in a fight?

DYLAN

One thing led to another, I guess.

Alec notices the repeat phrase.

ALEC

You said that before.

DYLAN

The gun just... went off.

ALEC

Was it a Glock? Sig Sauer?

DYLAN

I just remember pulling the trigger.

Alec's eyes narrow as he scrutinizes Dylan.

DET. CORTEZ

What'd you do with the gun? It wasn't at the scene.

DYLAN

I don't know. I woke up in my car. There was all this blood and I was scared -- I went back to Haley's apartment, and I found her...

He's shaking, devastated by the memory. Alec watches him with concern, empathy, curiosity...

DYLAN (CONT'D)

I called Ray. He said to call the cops and tell the truth. That's all I'm trying to do.

A beat, as Alec considers this, then:

ALEC

How did it feel? When you shot her? Did you feel *scared* or *angry* or... *empowered* by it? Try to recall.

DYLAN

I... don't know. I don't remember.

ON Alec, taking that in as his PHONE STARTS RINGING...

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - DAY

Alec steps into the hallway. It's impossible not to feel Dylan's pain. He picks it up.

ALEC

Madam Mayor.

MAYOR SHEPHERD (V.O.)

Well I guess that's that. I heard he confessed.

ALEC

He did. But I think he's mistaken.

MAYOR SHEPHERD (V.O.)

I don't understand.

ALEC

I don't think he killed anyone.

(beat)

The real question is, *why would someone confess to a murder he didn't commit?*

And off this intriguing question, we --

END TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. UPSCALE APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Press and police, as well as flocks of curious onlookers, many of them YOUNG WOMEN in trendy outfits with a particular prominent BRAND LOGO on their clothes and accessories... they hover outside as Alec casts a curious glance at them as Marisa approaches and falls into step with Alec.

MARISA

I got your text. Why am I here?

ALEC

I convinced the Mayor to give me 48 hours to prove Dylan Keane is innocent. She told me the FBI was involved, so I called the FBI.

MARISA

You didn't call "the FBI," you called me.

ALEC

You called me for the hostage thing.

MARISA

Barry called you, not me.

ALEC

You want me to call Barry?

MARISA

You wanna fill me in?

ALEC

I'll explain on the way up.

INT. HALEY'S APARTMENT - CRIME SCENE - DAY

CLOSE on a WOMAN (20s), very pretty and also very dead, under what looks like puffy white clouds, tinged pink by the blood from the bullet hole in her chest. This is -- was -- HALEY.

POLICE and CSI TEAMS work the scene, taking samples and snapping crime scene photos of Haley's body as Alec and Marisa enter. They're met by DISTRICT ATTORNEY ANNA COLE (30s, on point), who greets Marisa with a friendly smile --

ANNA

Marisa. Good to see you again.

MARISA

Anna Cole, District Attorney, this is... Alec Baker.

ANNA

The Mayor told me about you. You're the science guy --

ALEC

That's Bill Nye. I'm actually the "behavioral science" guy.

ANNA

Less of a ring to it.

(then)

I heard about the hostage crisis. You're the talk of the town.

(smiles)

In law enforcement circles, anyway.

She's flirting a little, which Alec doesn't pick up on... though Marisa can't help but clock it.

ALEC

That's good because I'm usually the talk of the disciplinary committee in academic circles.

As they turn their attention to the case --

MARISA

Can you tell us what happened?

ANNA

She was shot in the chest at close range. No forced entry, probably knew her attacker or wasn't afraid of him at any rate.

ALEC

And the... uh...

ANNA

The bullet went through her chest into a bag full of pressurized hair mousse and a couple cans exploded.

Marisa notices an Alcoholics Anonymous SOBRIETY CHIP on the desk, studies it curiously.

ANNA (CONT'D)

It's an AA sobriety chip.

MARISA

So, she was in recovery?

ALEC

That's how Dylan and Haley met.

Alec takes note of a high end WEBCAM on her computer.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Porn star?

ANNA

"Influencer." Makeup and hair products mostly.

She sees the CORONER wheeling in a gurney with a body bag.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Anyway, we're just about wrapped up, this case is pretty cut and dried.

ALEC

You think so?

ANNA

The guy confessed.

ALEC

Let me ask you this. If Dylan said he was *innocent*, would you take his word for it?

ANNA

Well, no, but --

MARISA

(aside, to Anna)

He's always like this.

ALEC

I witnessed his confession. From a psychological point of view, it was very strange.

ANNA

How so?

ALEC

In memory, our thoughts aren't organized like a five paragraph essay. It's images. Details. He met his sponsor at *Luigi's*, ordered a *Coke*, ate *pepperoni* pizza -- he recalled those details easily.

(MORE)

ALEC (CONT'D)

(then)

But when it came to what happened *inside the apartment*, it was a different story. He repeated phrases like "one thing led to another." Didn't remember if he wore a condom when they had sex -- a former Marine didn't remember what kind of gun he fired. It doesn't add up.

ANNA

I can ask for a polygraph.

ALEC

That's useless in this case. He obviously *thinks* he killed her.

ANNA

Why would he remember doing something he didn't do?

ALEC

(beat, then:)

Last month, a two-year-old in Texas died after being left in a hot car all day. The father was certain he'd dropped her off at daycare. He *remembered* doing it.

ANNA

That's awful, but how does that --

ALEC

Memory is fallible. We make mistakes. Sometimes tragic, life-altering mistakes -- if we rely on it when we shouldn't.

Marisa glances at Alec, suspecting there's something bigger than this case on Alec's mind, but she keeps this to herself.

ANNA

So what's your take? If Dylan didn't kill Haley, what do you think happened here?

His eyes rest on the webcam.

ALEC

I don't know the answer to that yet, but I know where I'd start...

And OFF Alec, determined not to give up on this case yet...

CLOSE ON A COMPUTER SCREEN...

Where we SEE Haley, alive and well, talking to the camera --

HALEY (ON SCREEN)
What's so great about this lip gloss
is it goes with anything. Date night
or girl's night or even the beach...

WIDEN to reveal we are...

INT. KYLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A study in controlled chaos. Eclectic, colorful walls, artsy clutter everywhere. This is Alec's sister KYLIE'S (35 but still thinks she's 25) apartment, and where he lives post-divorce. Kylie is staring at the screen with interest while Alec flips through a book about memory.

KYLIE
She's right about the lip gloss.

ALEC
She's an influencer. You're being
influenced.

KYLIE
(shrugs)
Okay.

ALEC
How popular is she?

KYLIE
She's got over 250,000 followers,
not bad for someone who's not
already a celebrity.

ALEC
Any of them possible stalkers?

KYLIE
Pretty much all of them.

Alec goes back to his book as Kylie stays on the computer.
He considers something --

ALEC
Remember when you were seven and you
got lost in the mall? Mom looked
everywhere for you and finally found
you by the frozen yogurt stand?

KYLIE
(thinks a minute)
Mmm. Vaguely. Was Mom wearing a yellow dress?

ALEC
(a bit surprised)
I don't know. It never happened.

KYLIE
Then why did you say --

ALEC
There was an experiment done in the 1990s. They convinced scores of adults they were lost in the mall as children to prove it was possible to trick our minds into remembering things. I just didn't realize it would be this easy.

Kylie goes to the kitchen and takes out a can of Spaghettios.

KYLIE
Want some dinner?

ALEC
(cringing)
That is not dinner. It's barely even food. Why are you eating processed pasta designed for toddlers?

KYLIE
You study behavior, you tell me.

ALEC
You are outside my field of study.

KYLIE
You could've gotten your own place, but you chose to move in with your little sister, so you get what you get.

ALEC
This... living arrangement... is temporary.

KYLIE
Until what? Until Marisa takes you back?
(then, thinking:)
Are you sure I wasn't lost in a mall?

Alec goes back to his book... suddenly thinks of something.

ALEC

There's no consequence to accepting
that you were lost in a mall, no
associated guilt, no penalty...

Alec looks at the can of Spaghettios, an idea forming...

ALEC (CONT'D)

Do you have a few more of those?

Off this...

INT. UNIVERSITY - LAB - DAY

A ROW OF CARTS lines the room as Alec's Research Assistant team - Rizwan and Priya plus about 8 "volunteers" -- stand at the ready. Alec hands them each ten dollars.

ALEC

In this experiment, we are going to
look at how we spend money.

Rizwan turns to Priya, sotto.

RIZWAN

Bets on what he's *really* testing?

PRIYA

How well we follow instructions?

In a MONTAGE we see...

INT. UNIVERSITY - PSYCH DEPARTMENT - HALLWAY

QUICK CUTS of Rizwan, Priya, and the volunteers moving down the HALLWAY, passing a rolling table full of lab equipment, none of them paying any attention to it as they head to --

INT. PSYCH DEPARTMENT - CLASSROOM - DAY

In the room is a scaled down version of a grocery store. Items feature signs like "Buy 2 get one FREE," and "3 for \$1," as well as "10% Off."

-Priya picking up a can of Spaghettios, considering, instead moving on to some fresh vegetables.

-Rizwan happily taking the Spaghettios.

-A VOLUNTEER considering taking an extra item, looking up at the cameras, reconsidering...

INT. UNIVERSITY - ALEC'S OFFICE - DAY

Alec faces Priya, who's got a notebook in front of her.

PRIYA

Based on your previous experiments, people overvalue free items. So I'm guessing the buy two get one free deal was more popular...

ALEC

Yes -- but I didn't call you in here about the results of the experiment.

PRIYA

You didn't?

ALEC

No. Do you remember when you were pushing the shopping cart through the hallway, there was a table full of lab equipment nearby?

Priya stares at him, not sure where he's going.

ALEC (CONT'D)

That was very expensive equipment. And when you walked by with the shopping cart, you scratched it.

PRIYA

I did?

ALEC

I'm afraid so. We have it on video.

PRIYA

I am so, so sorry...

As Alec sees how quickly Priya folds, we see a series of QUICK CUTS of other students in the same chair --

ON RIZWAN

RIZWAN

I'll pay for it. I promise!

ON A FEMALE STUDENT

FEMALE STUDENT

Is this going to affect my grade?

ON A MALE STUDENT, looking down, embarrassed.

MALE STUDENT

I take full responsibility for this.

ON A FEMALE STUDENT

FEMALE STUDENT

Okay, yeah, I did it. But honestly, like, who leaves expensive lab equipment in a hallway anyway?

ON Alec, reflecting on the experiment, we --

INT. MARISA'S OFFICE - DAY

Alec LANDS a DATA REPORT on Marisa's desk --

ALEC

I started with the old "lost in the mall" experiment and took it one step further -- instead of getting people to admit something *happened* to them, I asked them to admit they'd done something wrong. Actionable, even.

(then)

They all confessed. Every single one!

MARISA

Not exactly apples to apples. They didn't confess to *murder*.

ALEC

Anyone could confess to anything under the right circumstances.

MARISA

Come on, Alec. You know nine times out of ten it's the boyfriend. So why are you looking for outliers?

ALEC

Because *voluntary confessions* from men with limitless financial and legal resources are outliers.

MARISA

(a beat, then:)

Fine. Let's say Dylan *accidentally* fell into a pool of blood at his ex-girlfriend's place. Who killed her?

ALEC

As you know, Haley is an influencer --

MARISA

We're combing through her followers.

ALEC

So is my sister. She noted that --
(thumbing through pages)
-- "HayHay#1Fan" claims to have
followed Haley to her AA meetings.

MARISA

Okay. We'll look into it. We've got
this, Alec.

ALEC

You have less than 24 hours before
the DA files charges and turns
Dylan's and the Senator's lives into
a circus.

MARISA

You hate politics, and you don't
even know this kid. Don't you have a
behavior seminar to teach or
something?

Momentarily, Alec doesn't have an answer, but he finds one.

ALEC

I do, on behavior and criminal
justice. This case is an excellent
research subject. You and the DA are
assuming Dylan's guilty, so you're
dismissing any evidence that
contradicts that version of events --
it's called *confirmation bias* --

MARISA

I *know* what confirmation bias is,
Alec. We are looking at *all* the
evidence as it comes in. But we
can't move any faster than we
already are.

A beat, as Alec considers, gets up, heads out...

ALEC

Fortunately, I can.

Off Alec's determination, we --

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. ST. MEL'S - NIGHT

Alec stands out front, where a sign reads: "AA Meeting today 4 pm." He steels himself a bit, struggling with something as he REMEMBERS --

EXT. METHODIST CHURCH - DAY - FLASHBACK (2004)

A busy morning as a crowd lines up. YOUNGER ALEC (24) -- notably, WITH NO SCARS ON HIS FACE -- is with a friend, HARRISON (20s, Black); they both have grad student vibes.

ALEC

I'm not waiting in line to get into a damn church.

HARRISON

Don't you want to hear what he has to say?

ALEC

Don't you think it's patronizing? White politicians coming to Black churches like they read in a text book that that's where we all get our information or something?

HARRISON

...And this is why you're studying psychology. 'Cause you like to overthink things. C'mon.

We SEE them both enter the church as the flashback is interrupted by --

RIZWAN (V.O.)

Professor?

EXT. ST. MEL'S - NIGHT

Alec snaps out of it, realizing Rizwan has arrived.

ALEC

Oh, good. You're here.

RIZWAN

Where's Priya?

ALEC

She's still a bit peeved with me about the shopping cart experiment.

(MORE)

ALEC (CONT'D)

I've put her in charge of the lab tonight to make it up to her. You're new so I thought you might enjoy some teachable moments.

Rizwan looks at the church with some reluctance.

RIZWAN

Do I have to pretend to be Christian? Because I'm Muslim and that feels unethical --

ALEC

You don't have to pretend to be Christian. Just pretend to be an alcoholic.

RIZWAN

(beat)
Also unethical.

As they enter...

INT. ST. MEL'S - MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Requisite coffee and donuts are in evidence as about 20 people in folding chairs go around the room.

KATYA

My name is Katya, and I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP

Hi, Katya.

As group members introduce themselves, Rizwan whispers --

RIZWAN

Why exactly are we here?

ALEC

One of Haley's "top fans" claimed to attend her AA meetings.

RIZWAN

You know, my uncle's been sober ten years because of AA. This is supposed to be a safe space --

ALEC

A woman was murdered in her apartment, Rizwan. What about *her* safe space?

Rizwan sighs as Katya sits down. RAY (30s, heavysset) approaches the front of the room.

RAY
My name is Ray and I'm an alcoholic.

Alec's ears perk up.

ALEC
(to Rizwan, sotto)
That's Dylan's sponsor.

RIZWAN
Are you going to talk to him?

ALEC
No. He's going to talk to us.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT - LATER

AA members mingle by the donuts. Rizwan turns to Alec --

ALEC
It's called the *cocktail party effect*. You're in a crowd, talking to one person. Everything else is just background noise until someone says your name, or the word "fire" or the word "sex," and then you hear it.
(off Rizwan's look)
It's true, everyone hears the word "sex."

As if to prove Alec's point, a few people glance their way.

ALEC (CONT'D)
But in this case, we're going to say the name "Dylan" a few times.

RIZWAN
Dylan?

ALEC
Excellent job. If Dylan's friends are around, they'll start talking to us and we can gather some clues.

But as they're talking, Ray is making his way over.

ALEC (CONT'D)
Stale donuts and we're supposed to stay sober?

RAY
The crullers are usually good.
(then)
Heard you guys talking about Dylan.

Alec shoots Rizwan a look... *he was right.*

ALEC
You're his sponsor, right?

RAY
Yeah, how do you know him?

ALEC
We were in the Marines together.

Rizwan nearly chokes on his donut.

RAY
That how you got the --

He gestures towards Alec's face.

ALEC
Oh, this? No, I got drunk and tried
to fix the oil burner. Burned down
my house along with 70% of my body.
This was the result.

RAY
Talk about hitting bottom.

ALEC
(quiet)
Listen, I know about what happened
the other night.

Ray shakes his head, regretful.

RAY
I shoulda stayed with him longer. The
whole night if I had to.

ALEC
So you believe he did it?

RAY
Who'd make a thing like that up?

ALEC
Maybe he's remembering wrong.

RAY
Guess anything's possible.

ALEC
Did you know Haley?

RAY
Personally? Not really. Saw her here a few times. She stopped coming when that girl showed up.

ALEC
What girl?

RAY
Lila, I think her name was. Kind of an obsessed fan. Haley got spooked, started going to meetings somewhere else, I guess.

As Alec takes that in, his phone rings. It's Marisa.

ALEC
(answering; staged)
Hi, honey, I'm just in a meeting.

MARISA (O.S.)
You might want to swing by Haley's apartment.

ALEC
Why? What's going on?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. HALEY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Police approach the apartment, guns drawn...

MARISA (O.S.)
A break-in. That fan you were looking for? I think we found her...

Off this we --

INT. HALEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the middle of the floor, LILA (20s, fashionable dress) -- an unlikely criminal -- sits, cuffed, with tears cascading down her cheeks. Detectives Cortez and Chou are present, as are a few UNIFORMED POLICE, Alec and Marisa.

LILA
I would never hurt Haley. She taught me so much. She inspired me. She's the reason I got into the program.

ALEC

But you stopped going to meetings at
St. Mel's after Haley left.

Lila averts her eyes, nervously struggling to explain.

LILA

It was hard to be there without her.
I felt like they were staring at me.

MARISA

Why'd you break in?

LILA

I wanted to have something of hers.
To keep forever. To remember her by.
I'm sorry, it was stupid.

Alec notices something sticking out of Lila's purse. He
inspects it.

ALEC

It's the wrong lip gloss.

MARISA

What?

ALEC

The product that Haley endorses is a
different brand.

(off Lila's half-shrug)

A real fan would wear Haley's
favorite lip gloss brand, no?

Lila doesn't know what to say.

ALEC (CONT'D)

I think I can get the good police
officers here to forget the last 20
minutes ever happened if you'll tell
us now why you're really here.

Exhausted and scared, Lila changes her tone, blurts out:

LILA

Because of my brother, Matthew. That
bitch ruined his life.

Marisa and Alec exchange surprised glances as we --

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

CLOSE ON A MONITOR

One of Haley's videos -- but it's a decidedly different tone from the others. She's wearing loungewear, no makeup.

HALEY (ON SCREEN)

I'm a person who values second chances. If no one had given me one, I might never have gotten sober eight months ago. But Matthew Sutton is a sexual predator. He should have been fired from his job, but he wasn't... Matthew destroyed the lives of the women he victimized. They never got a second chance, so neither will he.

REVEAL we are...

INT. DA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ON Alec and Anna, watching the video.

ALEC

So when she's not hawking lip gloss she's... exposing sexual predators?

ANNA

Turns out Matthew Sutton wrote Haley some pretty threatening notes. That's why Lila broke in -- to keep the cops from finding them.

(beat)

Sutton's got a felony record. Assault with a deadly weapon.

ALEC

I'd like to be in the interrogation.

ANNA

Sure -- when we find him. He was involved in a hit and run last week. No one's seen him since. We put out a BOLO.

ALEC

What about Lila?

ANNA

Says she was at a friend's house, but we're checking.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

(then)

The techs at the FBI have Haley's laptop. They're looking for any other correspondence.

ALEC

So what about the charges against Dylan?

Anna turns to Alec, sensing his angle here.

ANNA

We'll be filing in the morning.

ALEC

But you have two new suspects. One of whom is a criminal on the lam.

ANNA

...Which would be relevant if we didn't *already have a suspect who already confessed.*

ALEC

They knew where she lived. Knew where her AA meetings were.

ANNA

Like I said, we're investigating.

Alec nods, suddenly thinking of something.

ALEC

Was Matthew in AA?

ANNA

Not that I know of... why?

ALEC

There was a sobriety chip in Haley's apartment the day she was killed. Did any prints turn up on it?

ANNA

I'd have to ask the FBI. Why?

ALEC

Haley said she'd been sober *eight months*. It was a *five year* chip.

ANNA

Maybe it was Dylan's.

ALEC

Yeah. Maybe.

ANNA

Why are you so sure he's innocent?

ALEC

I'm not "sure" of anything. But I don't think you should be either.

Anna wants to talk more but Alec's out the door as we --

EXT. MARISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Alec approaches the doorstep, almost instinctively reaches for his keys when he remembers -- he doesn't live here anymore. Instead, he rings the doorbell. Marisa answers.

ALEC

Can I talk to you?

MARISA

Alec... it's late.

ALEC

It's about the case.

Marisa hesitates, then...

INT. MARISA'S HOUSE - HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Alec sits on the guest chair. He touches the back of his neck, his scars bugging him. But he's focused on the case.

ALEC

Where are the kids?

MARISA

Harper's sleeping over at Simone's house. Liam's at a movie with Ben.

Alec looks around. He notices a particular nail on the wall where something used to hang.

ALEC

I like what you've done in here.

MARISA

You don't have to say that.

ALEC

No, I do. It looks better without the clutter.

MARISA

I never said it was clutter.

(then)

You know, you could have just called me -- about the laptop.

ALEC

It was on my way.

(beat)

I can go.

MARISA

Alec. What's up?

ALEC

I'm wondering if any prints turned up on that sobriety chip from Haley's apartment.

ON Marisa... is this why he's really here?

MARISA

I can check with the techs. They've been going through her laptop.

(then)

Alec... what's got you so invested in this case?

ALEC

I know what it's like to have your world shattered in an instant by a trauma you don't even remember.

Marisa nods, gently, hearing this, then --

MARISA

I'll ask about the chip.

As Marisa gets her phone and steps out, Alec opens a drawer to see Alec and Marisa's WEDDING PHOTO. As Marisa re-enters, he closes it, touches the back of his neck, uncomfortable.

MARISA (CONT'D)

You been putting the lotion on?

ALEC

The back of my neck, I can't --

She opens a drawer and takes out some lotion.

ALEC (CONT'D)

It's fine. You don't have to --

MARISA

It's going to get worse if you don't take care of it.

ALEC

Most things do.

Marisa's phone rings; she freezes, uncomfortable, hesitates, then answers. Alec immediately picks up on her body language.

MARISA

Hi. Yeah, it's not a good time. Can I talk to you later? Okay, bye.

Alec picks up on the energy of the call.

ALEC

Who was that?
(off her look)
You're seeing someone.

Alec tries to manage his emotions.

MARISA

It's new.

ALEC

That's good considering our divorce was only final last week.

MARISA

I don't know if it's going anywhere, but yes. I'm trying to move on.

Marisa hands him his shirt. He puts it back on --

ALEC

Statistically speaking, women are unhappier in marriages than men.

MARISA

Quoting statistics to try to understand what went wrong with our marriage might be part of it.

ALEC

When we met, you said my ability to detach from a painful situation was part of my appeal. I haven't changed.

MARISA

I know. Maybe that's the problem.

ALEC

You make it sound easy.

MARISA

I never said it was easy. But I'm trying. You could try, too. Anna obviously likes you.

ALEC

(surprised)

The DA?

MARISA

World's leading expert on human behavior and you didn't catch that?

ALEC

Well, if she did I'm not sure she does anymore. I'm just the guy who's poking holes in her case.

That's when Marisa's phone buzzes with a TEXT.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Did they find something on the chip?

MARISA

No... They found something on Haley's laptop.

CUT TO:

INT. MARISA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

ON MARISA'S LAPTOP -- Haley's look matches the last video.

HALEY (ON SCREEN)

...I know anonymity is sacred. Lives can be ruined when I name names, but what about my life? I told you we weren't right for each other. But you couldn't take no for an answer.

(then)

AA saved me. And because of you, it wasn't safe anymore. I had to stop going to meetings --

There's a knock on her door.

HALEY (ON SCREEN) (CONT'D)

I guess I'll tell you about it tomorrow.

The camera turns off.

MARISA

It was on her hard drive. She never got a chance to upload it because she was killed shortly after.

ALEC

...Which is when Dylan arrived.

MARISA

Like I said... it's always the boyfriend.

And off Alec, unable to argue, we...

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Pre-lap over a CROWD and PRESS outside --

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
Charges have been filed today
against Dylan Keane, son of Senator
Laura Keane...

We FIND the NEWSCASTER, her image in a nearby monitor...

NEWSCASTER
... in the murder of his ex-
girlfriend, social media influencer
Haley Martin...

FIND Alec, making his way through the crowd. He's waved in by
SECURITY...

INT. COUNTY JAIL - VISITING AREA - DAY

Alec faces Dylan, worse for wear since last we saw him. He's
tired, scared, and very stressed.

DYLAN
If that video was about me, I didn't
know anything about it.

ALEC
Do you think it's about you?

DYLAN
No! We were *friends*. I never
pressured her to do anything. I
hadn't even seen her in weeks.

Alec takes a beat, changes tacks.

ALEC
How long have you been sober?

DYLAN
Before the other night? Eleven
months... would've been a year...

Alec reacts, realizing he might still be right...

ALEC
So you don't have a "five year"
sobriety chip?

DYLAN

No. Why?

ALEC

Dylan, this is important. Was there anyone else in AA that might have had something against Haley?

DYLAN

I don't know. She stopped going to St. Mel's...

ALEC

Was there someone there who made her feel uncomfortable? Lila, Maybe?

DYLAN

(shakes his head)

I don't know. If there was, she didn't tell me.

OFF Alec, his mind whirring, as we...

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

As Alec gets in his car, phone to his ear, on a mission --

ALEC

Hey, Anna. Did they find any prints on that sobriety chip?

ANNA (V.O.)

Nothing readable --

ALEC

Any chance I can borrow it?

ANNA

Alec -- you know that's a chain of custody issue.

ALEC

Never mind. I know where to find one.

EXT. ST. MEL'S - DAY

Alec and Rizwan approach the Church. Rizwan eyes the "5 year" chip in Alec's hand.

RIZWAN

My Uncle's gonna want that chip back.

ALEC
He won't even know it's gone.

RIZWAN
So, what's the plan? More cocktail party effect?

ALEC
Not exactly.
(then)
Reciprocity is a very strong instinct. If somebody shares something intimate or private with you, you really feel a rather surprisingly strong obligation to share something with them. Programs like AA depend on this principle, whether they understand it or not.

INT. ST. MEL'S - MEETING ROOM

PAN through the seated group as the camera FINDS Ray. Alec stands in front of the room at the podium.

ALEC
Hi. My name is Alec and I'm an alcoholic.

EVERYONE
Hi, Alec.

He starts to do his usual schtick --

ALEC
And if you're wondering about my beard. No, I didn't lose a bet.

A few CHUCKLES, then, a beat as Alec considers...

ALEC (CONT'D)
I don't talk about it much because the truth is, I don't remember it. Not all of it anyway.

EXT. METHODIST CHURCH - DAY - FLASHBACK (2004)

Alec and Harrison have just left the building, Harrison inspired, Alec begrudgingly impressed.

HARRISON
Admit it, you were impressed.

ALEC
Well, maybe not "impressed" exactly.

HARRISON

Yeah, right--
(realizing)
I left my wallet inside, I'll be
right back --

Harrison goes back inside the Church when suddenly there's an EXPLOSION -- a bomb has been detonated inside the church, igniting it... and it explodes in a ball of fire.

Younger Alec looks around -- and it's like he's suddenly in a war zone -- people, old and young, are screaming, racing away from the building in the chaos. But Alec, thinking of his friend, looks towards it...

ALEC (V.O.)

I don't know what made me think I
could save him. Probably I'd seen
too many movies.

We SEE Alec, steeling himself, suddenly RUSH towards the building... As he gets closer and closer, smoke envelops him, and the screen goes BLACK.

INT. ST. MEL'S - MEETING ROOM - DAY

ALEC

I wish I could say I saved him... or
anyone. Ended up in a hospital for
three years. I don't remember what
procedures I had. I remember the
sounds of the monitors. How bright
the lights were. And an incredible
amount of pain.

(a beat, then:)

Usually I make up stories about how
I got the scars. Car accident,
cooking accident, saving a kitten.
But it's just a way to avoid talking
about -- or thinking about what
really happened. Because I didn't
save anyone. And if I had known then
what the rest of my life would look
like, I probably wouldn't have run
back in.

As he steps down...

INT. ST. MEL'S - MEETING ROOM - LATER

As the group mingles, Alec approaches Ray.

ALEC

Cruller?

Ray takes it with a smile.

RAY

Thanks, man. That's an incredible story.

ALEC

I'm surprised at how cathartic it was to share it. Haley once told me that there was no place she felt safer than at a meeting.

RAY

I'm glad you found the program.

ALEC

Me too. I read that they're going to release some of Haley's unpublished videos this week. Some things that were found on her laptop I guess.

Ray starts to get a little uncomfortable. Alec notices.

RAY

Oh yeah? What kind of things?

ALEC

Your guess is as good as mine.

RAY

I should get going.

ALEC

Would you like to get a drink? A non-alcoholic one, I mean.

RAY

Can't. I'm heading out of town.

This is news to Alec and something of a confirmation...

ALEC

Oh, yeah? For how long?

RAY

Not sure. It's a little open-ended. Work-related.

Alec nods, as Ray walks away, Alec tries something.

ALEC

Oh -- I think you dropped this.

Alec produces a 5 year chip from his pocket.

RAY

Oh, thanks. I was looking for that.

Ray puts it in his pocket. And in that instant, Alec knows the truth. As Ray heads out the door, Alec considers a beat, then turns to Rizwan, with urgency --

RIZWAN

Did he reciprocate?

ALEC

(shakes his head)

Killers tend to be outliers.

(Off Rizwan's surprise)

When Dylan woke up with Haley's blood on his hands, he said he called Ray.

(off Rizwan's nod)

I don't think *Dylan* told *Ray* what happened... I think *Ray* told *Dylan*.

RIZWAN

Okay, what do we do?

ALEC

Call Marisa and tell her to get here as soon as she can.

Off this --

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Alec chases Ray to the parking lot. Ray walks to his car -- it's packed with suitcases, which Alec clocks. Alec unlocks the Porsche from his remote. Ray notices.

RAY

That's an amazing ride. You like it?

ALEC

Not as much as I thought I would. I thought it would help me get over my divorce.

RAY

It didn't work?

ALEC

Not so far.

RAY

Give it time.

Ray's about to leave when Alec tries to stall him with the only thing he can think of to stop him in his tracks --

ALEC

I went to see Dylan.

(then)

He told me he doesn't even actually remember shooting Haley. Made me think how crazy memory is. Does your memory ever play tricks on you?

RAY

Not that I know of.

ALEC

Mine does. For years I remembered the day I was burned being a Sunday. I found out a few years ago it was on a Saturday. I don't know why it matters, really. But the moment you realize that everything you were certain of was a lie...

Alec's vamping a bit, part trying to get Ray to reciprocate, part just trying to keep him from leaving.

RAY

I don't know much about all that.

He tries to open the car door, but Alec keeps going.

ALEC

I wonder how Dylan feels -- about to probably go to jail for -- maybe the rest of his life for a thing he doesn't even remember...

As Ray opens his car door --

ALEC (CONT'D)

You know, they never found the murder weapon.

Suddenly, Ray pulls a gun on Alec, points it to his head:

ALEC (CONT'D)

Oh... that's where it went.

Off Alec, trying not to look as terrified as he is...

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Alec's driving. Ray has the gun in his lap, pointed in Alec's direction. Alec glances sidelong at the gun, nervous now, but trying not to show it...

ALEC

Do you have a plan for how you'll dispose of my body?

RAY

Don't start that shrink crap with me. I know who you are. I saw you on the news with that hostage crisis the other day. You working with the cops?

ALEC

If I say yes, do you kill me?

Ray says nothing, looks ahead, holding the gun in his hand, finger on the trigger. Alec isn't reassured. Considers, then:

ALEC (CONT'D)

I don't really mind dying very much. But I've never had an opportunity to do a study like this, so I have to ask. Are you considering the pros and cons right now?

It's a Hail Mary, and Alec knows it. But it's all he has.

RAY

What the hell are you talking about?

ALEC

The benefit of killing me is I can't tell the police about you. But if you're caught, you're facing more charges. Does that change your calculation at all? The increased sentence? I mean we can talk it through, if it helps --

RAY

How about you just be quiet?

ALEC

But what does it hurt to ask yourself if you're making the best choice here?

Off Alec, not sure which direction he's moving the needle with Ray as --

INT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Anna's leaving work when her phone rings.

ANNA

Marisa, hi. What's going on?

We don't hear the other side of the call --

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'll be right there.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Alec continues talking, the pressure mounting on Ray.

ALEC

Pro: You can have the Porsche. Con:
If you're caught that's another five
years on top of the murder charges.

RAY

Or I put you and this car into the
Bay.

ALEC

Drowning is a particularly brutal
form of murder. Juries don't tend to
go easy on people who drown their
victims.

Ray lifts the gun, points it straight at Alec, not playing.

RAY

I swear to God I'll shoot you right
now if you don't shut up.

A tense beat, then, Alec considers:

ALEC

But I'm going into the Bay if I do.
To tell you the truth, I'd prefer
you shoot me. Of course that's not
such a good idea while I'm driving.

Ray's tempted, but frustrated.

ALEC (CONT'D)

If you shoot me, I stop talking.
Which, if you ask my ex-wife, is a
definite Pro.

(MORE)

ALEC (CONT'D)

Cons, when the police surround your car, which let's face it, will happen before you get to the Bay, there's a dead body in it.

(beat)

At least with Haley, you could call that a crime of passion --

Ray is starting to weaken, reality starting to sink in.

RAY

I wasn't planning to kill Haley. I liked her! I just... wanted her to go out with me. She kept saying no.

ALEC

Probably an indicator she didn't want to go out with you.

RAY

I never *forced myself* on her!

ALEC

Congratulations. Give the man another chip.

Ray raises the gun at Alec.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Sorry.

RAY

I might've tried to kiss her -- once. She said she was gonna go online and tell everyone --

(breaking down)

Before AA, I was a worthless drunk. I stole things just to pay for more whiskey. Now I'm getting certified to be a substance abuse counselor. Things were finally going right. She was going to *ruin my life*.

ALEC

You didn't want Haley to ruin your life, so you did it all on your own.

(then, thinking)

You couldn't have killed her *after* you left Dylan because the FBI checked your alibi. So you must have killed her *before*.

As Alec talks, we see QUICK SHOTS of what he describes...

INT. HALEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (MOS) - FLASHBACK

Haley opens the door to see Ray. He just wants to talk.

ALEC (V.O.)

I'm guessing you stopped by her place. You were only planning to threaten her, but she got scared.

Haley opens her drawer, takes out a gun, pointing it at Ray.

ALEC (V.O.)

She got her gun, told you to go, but like many people who buy guns, she didn't actually know how to use it -- but you did.

Ray and Haley struggle over the gun...

ALEC (V.O.)

You managed to get it away from her...the gun went off.

Ray steps back, startled, thrown, checks for Haley's pulse, realizes she's dead, starts to panic, wiping off surfaces...

ALEC (V.O.)

You realized what you did. You didn't know you'd get out of it.

Ray's phone buzzes, a TEXT MESSAGE pops up from Dylan. "Want a drink so badly, can we meet?"

ALEC (V.O.)

But then Dylan texted. You remembered Dylan had a fling with Haley, and you realized you might have one last get out of jail free card...

Dylan looks out Haley's window and sees "Luigi's" - a neighborhood pizzeria. He replies to the text message: "Meet me at Luigi's."

ALEC

You knew how easy it would be to convince a vulnerable alcoholic he's a killer -- and how it would be even easier to convince the police the ex-boyfriend did it.

Ray rummages through Haley's bathroom cabinet and grabs a bottle of VALIUM. Grabs her keys and her blood soaked sweatshirt from her body.

INT. PIZZERIA - NIGHT

Ray waits for Dylan, puts something in his drink...

ALEC (V.O.)
You met Dylan and drugged his drink.

Dylan arrives, grateful to see Ray...

ALEC (V.O.)
When he passed out in his car, you
left the evidence behind.

INT. DYLAN'S CAR - MORNING

Dylan starts to wake up, sees the blood on his hands...

ALEC (V.O.)
When he called you the next morning,
you "helped" him piece it together.
I'm guessing as a substance abuse
counselor in training you've taken a
few psych classes. You helped him
"remember" what happened...

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Back with Alec and Ray.

ALEC
Everything Dylan told the police you
planted in his head. Dylan never had
a beer, did he? He never even set
foot in Haley's apartment.

Ray grips the gun, his silence something of an admission.

ALEC (CONT'D)
You're either going to kill me or go
to jail, probably both, so you may
as well tell me if I got it right.

RAY
Yeah, all except one thing.
(then)
I'm not going back to jail.

And just they hear SIRENS approaching, Ray fires out the back
of the Porsche. Fearing for the lives of others, Alec makes a
quick decisions and abruptly --

STEERS THE CAR OFF THE ROAD.

It SPINS and crashes into a TREE LINE as we are TIGHT ON ALEC as everything GOES BLACK.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

The lights are too bright. Younger Alec winces in pain as the nurse RIPS the bandage off.

ALEC
Please. Not so fast.

NURSE
It's better this way.

ALEC
How do you know that? Are you the one in pain?

NURSE
It will all be over soon.

She RIPS another bandage off, causing Alec to howl in agony...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Alec awakens in his hospital bed to see YOUNGER MARISA (25) wearing a freshly minted FBI badge. She looks at him with empathy, not fear.

YOUNGER MARISA
Hi. I'm Agent Sanchez.

Beside her is a more SENIOR AGENT, JAY WINSTON (60s).

AGENT WINSTON
Agent Sanchez just finished her training. What happened to you, we're investigating it as a hate crime. We were hoping you could remember what you saw.

ON ALEC HEARING his own screams of agony in his head...

YOUNGER ALEC
I don't remember anything.

YOUNGER MARISA
(gentle)
Just... let us know if you do.

As Agent Winston turns to go, Younger Marisa lingers a bit, wants to stay longer as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - PRESENT DAY

Present-day Marisa, by his bedside, along with KYLIE. It's Marisa he sees first as he wakes up...

ALEC
Did you get him alive?
(off her nod)
The Porsche?

MARISA
Totaled.

ALEC
I liked the VW better anyway.

ALEC (CONT'D)
Do the kids know?

MARISA
I told them you've been through worse.

That lands a moment as Anna enters.

ANNA
Hey there. Just wanted to see how you're feeling.

Marisa's phone rings. As she steps out --

MARISA
I'll be right back.

ANNA
I just wanted to thank you -- and let you know Dylan's been released. All the charges have been dropped.

ALEC
That's good. I'm glad.

Anna smiles, searching Alec to see if he's interested...

ANNA
Would you ever consider doing some work for our department?

Alec's heart is elsewhere, but he makes an effort.

ALEC

You have my number.

And as she leaves, ANGLE on Kylie, who's made herself at home, reading a magazine, picking up on the energy.

KYLIE

You are a magnet for powerful women in law enforcement.

ALEC

What are you talking about?

(off her look)

I'm not interested in Anna.

KYLIE

Because you're still in love with your ex-wife. And no car or hot D.A. is going to change that.

ALEC

You think she's hot?

KYLIE

Little bit, yeah.

(then)

But she's got nothing on the OG.

ALEC

Marisa's "moving on."

KYLIE

For now, maybe. But endgame? I'm still shipping you two.

Off Alec, a lot to consider as we...

EXT. UNIVERSITY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A few days later, Alec is carefully going through a pile of papers. He looks up to see Dylan.

ALEC

Dylan! You're a pleasant distraction from grading my exams.

DYLAN

(smiles)

That bad?

ALEC

The exam itself was just a ruse, I wanted to see which students would cheat if given an opportunity.

DYLAN

And?

ALEC

About 96% cheated a little bit. And the other 4% cheated a lot.

DYLAN

I just wanted to thank you.

ALEC

I'm sorry for what happened to you, Dylan. You were betrayed by someone you trusted.

DYLAN

But I thought I'd betrayed myself. For eight months, I wasn't that guy anymore. The monster I'd let in was gone, banished... and then...

ALEC

You thought you'd let the monster back in.

DYLAN

Can I ask you a question?

ALEC

Of course.

DYLAN

I still remember doing it. How can that be?

ALEC

Because memory is the great con man of human nature, Dylan. It lies to you. It's lied to me.

(beat)

Memory and imagination work the same way. Once Ray planted those ideas in your mind, the brain could no longer distinguish between the two.

DYLAN

So how do I make it go away?

Alec takes a beat, considers, empathetic.

ALEC

You may never remember what really happened. The best you can do is imagine something else.

(MORE)

ALEC (CONT'D)

(a beat, then:)

Think about it every day for... a hundred days. Eventually, maybe the bad memories will fade and be replaced by the better ones.

DYLAN

Will I ever remember what *really* happened?

ALEC

You were drugged, so, honestly, probably not. I'm sorry. We don't always get the closure we crave.

Dylan nods, accepts that. As he gets up to leave.

ALEC (CONT'D)

You know, it works for the other memories, too. The ones you tried to drown with alcohol. Having been through a war, I'm guessing you have a lot of trauma you'd rather forget.

DYLAN

(re Alec's scars)

You probably do too.

(beat)

Is that why you helped me?

ALEC

Maybe. Nobody chooses to go through a trauma. But you can learn from it. You can own it.

DYLAN

Is that what you did?

A long beat as Alec struggles with the truth here.

ALEC

It's what I try to do anyway. Good luck, Dylan.

And as Dylan smiles, relieved, hopeful, we land on Alec, something on his mind as...

EXT. METHODIST CHURCH - DAY

Alec stands at the site of the Church where he was burned. A new church has replaced it by now, but a PLAQUE memorializes those who died there, including Alec's friend Harrison Moss.

Marisa approaches behind him, with a gentle empathy. This is not a place to take their personal conflict.

ALEC

Hey. Thanks for coming.

MARISA

I've known you 20 years, was married to you for over 15 of them. You've never asked me to come here before. Figured it was important.

ALEC

Twenty years ago you told me to let you know if I remembered anything.

MARISA

And?

ALEC

I remember something. I need to know if it's real. If you'll help me.

Marisa nods, understanding the weight of this for him. And off Alec, opening a door to his own past, we...

END PILOT