

ZERO DAY

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OVER BLACK

We HEAR hurried FOOTSTEPS, a door OPENING and SLAMMING shut, and the labored BREATHING of a man in trouble.

FADE IN:

INT. COTTAGE - BANNER ESTATE - HUDSON, NY - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A series of images intermittently illuminated by a blue strobe-light which rhythmically flashes every second, accompanied by a mechanical CLICK with each burst.

A SAFE'S DIAL SPINNING, the NUMBERS a blur. They slow, coming into focus - and STOP on "79".

OFFSCREEN - THE BREATHING CONTINUES

A HAND PULLS the SAFE'S HANDLE. It doesn't budge.

A DEEPER BREATH.

The DIAL. SPINNING AGAIN. "4". "16". "72".

The HANDLE. Another pull. No luck.

Quick cuts as over and over the DIAL spins, three more numbers, and each time a hand pulls - and fails to open it. That BREATH QUICKENS, until...

We REVERSE to find that the hands, and the breathing, belong to FORMER PRESIDENT GEORGE BANNER, his world famous face is instantly familiar. Reliably Stoic. Determined. Strong.

But not today - his hair is out of place. On his brow - a sheen of glistening sweat. Behind those famous eyes - panic.

He stares at the safe, desperately hoping that what he needs to remember will come to him.

And then - the cottage door RATTLES as someone tries to open the door. Banner looks warily at the door. Not good. But before he can react...

Another troubling development - OUTSIDE the cottage WINDOW - the SWEEP of FLASHLIGHTS in the night, approaching fast.

Banner moves quickly to the windows and slams closed a pair of heavy steel security doors which resemble storm shutters.

Banner clicks on a small desk-light, surveys the room. Half office, half private museum -- a collection of honors from a lifetime of service. We learn that the blue strobe and its metronome rhythm emanate from a small alarm in the upper corner of the room.

His glance frantically darts around the room. We catch only glimpses --

BOOKSHELVES, filled with works of HISTORY, LAW, and ECONOMICS. TROPHIES and MEDALS from governments and philanthropies. On every wall, PHOTOGRAPHS -- BANNER with fellow dignitaries and heads of state. He rummages through them, looking for something, but not seemingly sure what.

His DESK - a LEGAL PAD, face down. All around it -- piles of BLACK MOLESKIN NOTEBOOKS. Dozens of them, stacked.

The cottage door RATTLES AGAIN. Harder this time. No longer someone trying to open it. Someone trying to break it down.

Banner uses all his strength to push a heavy wooden console in front of the door. It won't stop whoever is coming, but it will slow them down.

And now -- Banner ransacks the place. He takes BOOKS off the shelf, fanning their pages, hoping to shake something loose. He lifts trophies, looking for something underneath.

The door SLAMS again. A shoulder, maybe two. Clearly a more concerted effort on the outside to get in.

Banner opens his desk drawers, rummaging through them until -- a POST-IT note, three NUMBERS scribbled: "11". "19". "78".

And BOOM! Something else slams into the door. Something heavy. They are getting organized.

Banner moves back to the safe. Spins the dial. "11". "19". "78". Tries the handle. That's not it.

BOOM! The door takes another violent hit. It's gonna break.

Banner focuses on a console, a single framed PHOTO on top: THE STREETS OF SAIGON. Banner and two other MEN in COMBAT FATIGUES, arms around each other in a fraternal embrace.

Banner pushes the table in front of the door, just as --

BOOM! - Another HIT - blocked by the CONSOLE - sends the PHOTO and many others CRASHING to the FLOOR. As GLASS SHATTERS everywhere...

Banner is at a loss. But then he looks down, at the shattered detritus of a long and storied career, at the back of the one of the pictures. There is a date there: April 29, 1975

He looks down at it and something clicks for him.

CLOSE ON: His hands as he enters the first digit: 4

BOOM. The Door begins to splinter.

ON his hands as he turns the dial to 29...

BOOM. We can now here muffled voices through the battered door.

ONE MORE TIME around to the number 75, and CLICK... the tumblers engage and the safe opens, just as --

BOOM - the DOOR EXPLODES OFF ITS HINGES.

SLAM CUT TO
BLACK.

SUPER: **3 DAYS EARLIER.** An iPhone ALARM BLARES...

INT. BANNER BEDROOM - BANNER ESTATE - MORNING

Banner bolts awake. He slowly rolls over, turns off the alarm and sits up. He glances at the other side of the bed, empty and still made.

INT. BANNER BATHROOM - BANNER ESTATE

A mirrored medicine cabinet swings open from the inside, revealing Banner. In the reverse we see: shaving cream. Floss. Toothpaste. All neatly lined, up labels out. He takes: One Lipitor. One baby Aspirin. One swig of water from a paper Dixie cup. He tosses the cup in the trash and -

INT. INDOOR POOL - BANNER ESTATE

- dives with a splash, sound echoing in the glass-domed room. He swims slowly, but steady as a metronome. Kick. Breathe. Stroke. Lap after lap. Until he stops his watch and pulls up his goggles. Locks eyes with **DEL**, his black lab, sitting on the pool's edge. Then checks his time on the watch. Shakes his head, annoyed.

EXT. HUDSON RIVER BANK - BANNER ESTATE

Del bounds along a dirt path. Banner -- in an old track suit, Presidential Seal on the chest -- follows close behind. To their left, down a rocky bank, the majestic Hudson. To their right, a massive lawn, scattered with, Maples, Lindens, Oaks and MOTION SENSORS, leading up to a white Colonial house.

It's quiet, isolated. Not a sound or another soul in sight.

Del stops and waits where he always does - at a fork where the path snakes in one direction to the woods and to the other, back to the house.

A BIRD FEEDER marks the spot. Banner catches up and approaches the feeder. Studies it, perplexed.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - BANNER ESTATE

Banner steps into his kitchen, Del close behind. **OSCAR FRANKLIN (63)**, Banner's longtime steward, stands over the stove. An easy familiarity --

OSCAR
Morning, sir.

Banner picks up the coffee already on the counter, and sits.

BANNER
Feeder by the main path's empty again.

OSCAR
That right?

BANNER
I could swear I refilled it yesterday. Full bag of the stuff from the garage. The expensive stuff the blue jays like.

OSCAR
Well I'll take care of it.

BANNER
No. I got it. I will.
(a beat)
Squirrels maybe?

OSCAR
 (chuckling)
 Some hungry squirrels.

Oscar puts a plate in front of Banner. As Banner picks up his fork --

OSCAR (CONT'D)
 I've been thinking...What do you
 say I start adding some hash browns
 to the mix? Lose the bacon maybe?

Banner ignores the suggestion and Oscar makes note. Got it.

BANNER
 Maybe a fox?

Oscar turns back.

OSCAR
 What's that?

BANNER
 You're right. No way squirrels
 could eat that much in a day. Maybe
 a fox got into it?

Before Oscar can answer, a man enters from the adjoining room, a digital tablet under his arm, labeled "PDB".

CIA BRIEFING OFFICER
 Today's briefing, Mr. President.

Banner is still lost in thought. We notice yesterday's tablet sits on a table, unopened, exactly where he left it 24hrs before. Without a word he removes the preceding one, replacing it with a new one. Banner never looks up.

BANNER
 Thanks, John.

CIA BRIEFING OFFICER/JOHN
 Oh course, sir. Have a good day.

The Officer, John, exits. Something occurs to Banner --

BANNER
 When does my wife land?

OSCAR
 I'm told 'it's fluid'. A few final
 meetings this morning on the Hill.
 (beat, delicate)
 (MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)

We owe the caterer a final count
for Saturday. Have you heard from
Alex?

Banner shakes his head no.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Well. I'll just assume she's
coming.

Oscar moves to clear his plate and Banner rises.

BANNER

Send this morning's visitor back to
the cottage.

CUT TO:

EXT. BANNER ESTATE - DAY - OVERHEAD

The full expanse of the Banner Compound as a CAR winds down
the snaking drive leading to its FRONT GATE. Five, mostly
wooded acres, backed onto the river, surrounded by a SECURITY
FENCE. Four structures: the MAIN HOUSE, the COTTAGE, the
INDOOR POOL/GYM, and a GUARD HOUSE. From this vantage, it's
not unlike a small rural resort.

PUSH IN ON - the CAR...

I/E. TOWN CAR - BANNER DRIVEWAY - DAY

...as a DRIVER at the wheel glances back in the mirror.

TOWN CAR DRIVER

I just drive right up to the gate?

In the backseat -- **ANNA SINDLER (31)**, elegant pant suit
purchased just for today, takes a deep calming breath.

ANNA

I think? My first time.

She nervously fingers the string of PEARLS around her neck.

TOWN CAR DRIVER

He was the last grown-up, you know.
Not my team, but I voted for him
anyway. I would have again.
(beat, playful)
Get me an autograph?

Anna forces a nervous smile.

EXT. FRONT GATE - BANNER ESTATE

An imposing white wall, CAMERAS mounted every few feet. The car stops, but the gate remains closed and there's no one in sight. Anna and the Driver share a look, unsure what to do.

Finally Anna steps out of the car into an empty cul de sac. It's completely silent.

A quiet WHIR -- as one of the cameras adjusts it's focus on her. Anna peers back. Still nothing from behind the gates.

Anna tentatively approaches a GUARD HOUSE, windows tinted black.

ANNA

Hello? I have an appointment?

A beat. Then a metal tray slides out. Over a speaker--

VOICE (O.S.)

Put your ID in the drawer. And take a step back.

CUT TO:

INT. COTTAGE - BANNER ESTATE - HUDSON, NY

Anna steps into Owen's office, an unseen escort closing the door behind her. It's empty, quiet, everything neatly in place. The safe concealed behind a cabinet.

She takes it all in. To anyone one with an interest in American politics this is hallowed ground.

ANNA

Wow.

Track her gaze, slowly -- to the iconic pictures on the walls: the awards, the souvenirs from foreign trips, on a desk is a small black notebook, open to a page, neat penmanship visible but not quite legible from a distance. On Anna, tempted, if she could read it from 8 feet away she would. She notices nearby several shelves lined with similar small black journals, some more battered and weathered than others. As she gets closer, we see, the spine of each is labeled: 'Infrastructure Act'. 'Nuclear Deal'. 'Harper Commission'. She scans through them all. One of them reads, 'Campaign 2004'. Should she? Probably not. But she reaches for it anyway.

BANNER (O.S.)

Adalai Stevenson once told me...

Anna is as surprised as we are as she turns to find that Banner, showered and coiffed, has entered the room.

BANNER (CONT'D)

...that the key to his political success was learning to read upside down.

ANNA

Mr. President. Hello. I'm sorry I didn't see you there.

BANNER

Invisibility is the super-power all of us ex-President's have to master.

He smiles, practiced but effective, and it's like a spotlight has turned on. A new energy. He extends his hand.

ANNA

Sir, it's an honor.

Gesturing back to the books --

BANNER

Go ahead.

Really, her look asks? Yes, he motions back. Anna is giddy as she grabs the volume marked 'Election 2004'

ANNA

You really do this.

Banner nods as she leafs through it, revealing every line of every page, filled with notes, many of which we can see over her shoulder. Notes to himself, basically. Some stand out, underlined, things like *'Mannerly says we can't win without him.'* Somewhere else it reads, *'Don't know if they can be trusted'*. And still somewhere else in that even hand, *'You are the right person for this job'*. He watches her as she reads.

BANNER

It started with cases. Picked up the habit in law school. I found that I could look at the same information, hours or even days later, and see something I had missed. Or in a way that hadn't occurred to me.

Anna places the notebook she's holding back on the shelf.

ANNA

Must make the whole process easier.
To have records like this.

Goodnatured --

BANNER

That your way of asking why it's
taking me so long to write this
book?

Banner sits behind his desk, Anna takes that as her cue to sit across from him. Now down to business.

ANNA

Ben said you were reluctant to meet me.

BANNER

I'm happy to meet you. I'm just not sure how someone else can help me write *my* memoir.

ANNA

If you ask around, you'll find I've worked with some significant figures. Not as significant as you, of course.

BANNER

My 'significance' peaked before you were born.

ANNA

I disagree, sir. You're the last President in modern memory who was able to consistently rally bipartisan support. Your legislative achievements were historic. Your memoir has the potential to make a real difference.

(and into pitch mode)

And I think you will find me an unobtrusive but highly contributive collaborator. Uncredited of course.

He smiles, amused.

BANNER

Ben told me you were good. You went to Yale? American Studies?

ANNA

Guilty.

BANNER

And you lived in Saybrook?

ANNA

You're good too, Mr. President.

BANNER

Do you know who that is?

He points to a picture of the Vietnam era trio we will remember from the opening.

ANNA

John O'Neill. You grew up together. Served together in the Marines. Made it through two tours, only to get killed in Greenpoint picking up a carton of milk. It's what inspired you to become a prosecutor. I don't know who the other man is.

BANNER

Nguyen. Our interpreter. And friend. He was killed during the evacuation.

ANNA

I'm sorry.

BANNER

John had this thing he used to say. Bullshit, dime-store inspiration. 'Greatness requires greatness.' I never really knew what it meant. Now I think it was simple. You have to *earn* your reputation. With what you *do*. In those moments.

ANNA

You have so many of those moments.

BANNER

People know all those stories.

ANNA

Some. But not all.

BANNER

Like?

ANNA

Like why, with victory almost certain, you inexplicably chose not to run for re-election?

A long beat, as Banner studies her. On some level appreciates her just saying it.

BANNER

Inexplicably? You know the answer. Everyone does. We'd lost our son.

ANNA

There are those who say that there were other reasons.

The temperature in the room drops 5 degrees.

BANNER

Are you one of them?

ANNA

No. But gossip not refuted becomes fact.

BANNER

I guess I was too busy burying Jack to read the tabloids.

An awkward beat as Banner simmers. But one last try --

ANNA

Mr. President, I can't imagine how painful that must have been. But you haven't spoken about it since, and some people just can't accept that anyone would give up power and walk away like that. Unless there was more to it. This book is your chance to finally put the speculation to rest. Even if just to say more about your son and what his loss meant to you. If nothing, else, think about how many other families you could help by talking about it.

A glimpse of the steel underneath the polish --

BANNER

My son's not a parable.

An awkward beat. She knows she's gone too far.

ANNA
Of course not.

The room's gone cold. Banner rises.

BANNER
I know how long it's been since the
deadline passed. And that I owe
your boss either a book, or his
money back. Tell him the draft's
coming soon. You're kind to have
made the trip out here.

CUT TO:

I/E. TOWN CAR - ROAD FROM THE BANNER ESTATE - DAY

Approaching an intersection, the Driver glances back at Anna in the mirror -- not noticing the TRAFFIC LIGHTS overhead suddenly GO DARK.

ANNA (INTO PHONE)
It's not that easy. The man was
President of the United States. And
when I mentioned his son he
basically threw me out.
(a beat)
But Ben, I think you have a bigger
problem...

Another WHISTLE -- louder now.

They pass a GAS STATION, and the Driver notices -- a CUSTOMER stares at a malfunctioning pump, GAS pouring out.

ANNA (CONT'D)
I don't believe he has it in him to
finish. Ghostwriter or not.
Whatever really happened back then,
I don't think he wants to think
about it.

Ahead -- there's a train track. The crossing gates up.
Warning lights off.

The Driver glances back to his iPhone mounted on the dash, which now says: "Lost Signal". He taps it, trying to refresh.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Ben? You still there?

The Driver looks back again in the mirror. Anna is redialing her phone.

DRIVER
Must be some kind of dead zone.
(beat)
Hey, did you get me that autograph?

And now the WHISTLE is DEAFENING. Anna finally looks up --

ANNA
What's tha--?

As BOOM! -- a FREIGHT TRAIN collides with the CAR and it **EXPLODES IN A FIREBALL.**

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER BANK - BANNER ESTATE

Banner stands casting a fly rod into a small stream off the Hudson, Del pacing at his side.

CRANE UP, REVEALING -- a SECRET SERVICE CAT TEAM racing through the woods, MP5s drawn, emerging from the tree-line.

Banner reels in his line, oblivious, until --

USSS CAT TEAM LEADER (O.S.)
Mr. President?

Banner turns to find himself surrounded.

USSS CAT TEAM LEADER (CONT'D)
We need to get you inside.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BANNER ESTATE

ON THE TELEVISION: Absolute chaos. A cacophony of sights and sounds that scream DISASTER.

Banner stands, transfixed. As he flips from channel to channel, we see and hear snippets --

NEWS ANCHOR #1

...reports of a widespread outage, impacting not only multiple regional power grids, but the computer systems that control transportation, communications, and other infrastructure...

SMOKE pours from a NYC SUBWAY ENTRANCE.

NEWS ANCHOR #2

...early estimates suggest a significant but unknown number of casualties...

An AIRPLANE in FLAMES, skidded off the end of a runway.

CORRESPONDENT

...Aircraft on their final approach losing all contact...

Two AMTRAK trains, now a WRECK of TWISTED METAL.

NEWS ANCHOR #1

...for exactly sixty seconds...Across the country, one *minute* of absolute terror, as computer systems of all kinds simply crashed, only for those systems to come back online, just as mysteriously.

Oscar enters and Banner turns.

BANNER

Did you find them?

OSCAR

Judge Banner was on a flight back from Washington.

Banner looks like he was hit by a sledgehammer. Assuring him--

OSCAR (CONT'D)

FAA says there are only three planes down. None originating from National.

BANNER

And Alex?

OSCAR

Still trying.

And Banner turns back to the TV --

NEWS ANCHOR #2

...fears growing that beyond the physical impact, confidence is now shattered in the financial markets and supply chains. Banks and grocery stores bracing for runs - *if* they reopen - while the White House is still without comment, a source close to the National Security Council telling us, authorities don't yet know how the attack was carried out, or who was behind it.

CUT TO:

INT. RUSSIAN CONSULATE - NEW YORK

A buzz of RINGING and RUSSIAN voices. WORKERS manning the phones, rebooting computers, and shouting.

ALEXI LEBEDEVA (53) -- veteran FSB officer -- stands apart at a window overlooking the East River, absolutely calm amidst the chaos. BLACK SMOKE rises in the direction of Laguardia Airport in the distance. He answers his phone.

LEBEDEVA (INTO PHONE)

Not on the phone.

But whoever is on the line replies in inaudible Russian.

LEBEDEVA (CONT'D)

Just turn on a television. Exactly one minute. Every system. And then back on.

More Russian. Lebedeva rubs his brow, exasperated.

LEBEDEVA (CONT'D)

Yes. I'll take care of it.

Lebedeva hangs up and leaves the window. He stops at his desk, removes a PISTOL from the drawer, and heads to the elevator.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BANNER ESTATE

Banner has settled on the couch.

ON TELEVISION: **HOUSE SPEAKER RICHARD DREYER (45)** -- slicked back hair, bright red tie, 20lbs overweight -- addresses a scrum of REPORTERS in the CAPITOL ROTUNDA.

SPEAKER DREYER

I've called the House back for a Special Session because this White House has consistently ignored the threat from militant socialists and other progressive agitators who hate America. Whoever was responsible for today's 'act of war' -- and that's what it is -- will be held responsible...

Banner changes the channel in disgust, only to find --

ON TELEVISION: **EVAN GREEN** -- tortoise rim glasses, peering from his camera into his viewer's souls -- speculates.

GREEN

It is, of course, too early to place blame. But it is never too early to ask questions. Who stands to benefit from this chaos? And by benefit, I mean *profit*?

Oscar appears beside him.

OSCAR

She's finally on the ground and in the car. Should be here shortly.

Banner breathes a visible sigh of relief.

CUT TO:

I/E. SECRET SERVICE TOWN CAR/ROAD TO BANNER ESTATE - EVENING

JUDGE SHEILA BANNER (68) -- elegant, always poised, but in this moment, unable to hide her deep exhaustion -- gazes from the back of her Secret Service-driven SUV, deep in thought.

As the car passes the RAILROAD CROSSING, TIME SLOWS, as she tracks -- the BURNT WRECKAGE of a CAR. EMTs loading a BODY BAG into the back of an AMBULANCE.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BANNER ESTATE

Banner remains transfixed by the rolling NEWS COVERAGE.

SHEILA (O.S)
Do they actually know anything yet?

Banner turns toward Sheila as she enters, relief washing over him. They embrace for a long, silent beat. Off the concern in his eyes --

SHEILA (CONT'D)
I'm fine, George. Didn't know a plane could abort a landing that close to the ground. But once we were back up again, it was just a long wait circling.

BANNER
Did you talk to her?

Sheila nods.

SHEILA
As soon as I landed. She's fine. Getting ready for the Special Session.

Sheila gestures to the TV --

SHEILA (CONT'D)
How bad is it?

BANNER
Bad. They haven't said, but the casualties must be in the thousands. For this many different systems to go down at the same time -it's beyond any capability even we have. At least that I know of.

SHEILA
The Russians?

Banner weighs it.

BANNER
Maybe. Mitchell's supposed to speak from the Oval soon. She'd better have something.

ON THE TV - House Speaker Dreyer is back on low volume...

SPEAKER DREYER (ON TV)
...if this White House isn't up to the task of keeping our country safe, Congress will do what's necessary...

BANNER

Meantime all these clowns can do is
pour gasoline on the fire.

SHEILA

I saw a body.

Banner turns to Sheila. A shell-shocked look on her face as
it finally sinks in --

SHEILA (CONT'D)

At the railroad crossing.

(beat)

You think it was one of the
neighbors?

Banner tentatively takes her hand. Squeezes it. As they turn
back to the TV, PUSH IN on the SCREEN, VOLUME RISING...

NEWS ANCHOR #1

...with bitter accusations flying,
search and recovery efforts
ongoing, and very few answers we
are now waiting for the President
to make her address to the nation
which I am told is imminent...

We go out on a live feed of the empty Presidential podium.

CUT TO:

EXT. BANNER ESTATE - MORNING

The sun rises over the Hudson.

INT. BANNER BEDROOM - BANNER ESTATE - MORNING

The iPhone Alarm. Banner bolts awake again. The other side
of the bed is still empty.

INT. HALLWAY - BANNER ESTATE

Through an ajar door across the hall, Banner clocks Sheila
still sleeping in her apparently separate bedroom.

INT. BANNER BATHROOM - BANNER ESTATE

That medicine cabinet swings open again. Shaving cream.
Floss. Toothpaste. He takes: One Lipitor. One baby Aspirin.
One swig of water from a paper Dixie cup.

INT. INDOOR POOL - BANNER ESTATE

Kick. Breathe. Stroke. Lap after lap. But this morning - noticeably *faster*. And when he stops, checking his time on his watch, pleasant surprise is his reaction.

EXT. HUDSON RIVER BANK - BANNER ESTATE

Banner, new urgency in his step, keeps pace with Del along the dirt path. As they approach the Bird Feeder --

Del suddenly STOPS, bares his teeth, GROWLS.

Banner stops short with, nearly tripping. Tracks Del's gaze to -- a violent RUSTLING in the BUSHES behind the Feeder, which is still empty.

Banner takes a careful step toward the rustling. Then another. Off Del now WHIMPERING...

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - BANNER ESTATE

Oscar stands at the counter, iPhone in hand, transfixed by endless post-catastrophe coverage.

NEWS ANCHOR #2

...search and rescue efforts continued overnight at the scene of dozens of major rail and traffic accidents across the country. Financial markets will remain closed and air travel suspended, while lines form coast-to-coast outside banks and supermarkets as people fear another outage...

He's startled by --

BANNER (O.S.)

There's something out there.

Oscar pockets his phone, turns to Banner in the doorway.

BANNER (CONT'D)

Fox. Raccoon. Maybe a coyote. I didn't get a look at it. But I heard it and Del got a whiff of it.

OSCAR
We'll lay out some traps. When
things settle.

And now the CIA Briefing Officer enters, new PDB in hand. But
before he can place it on its usual spot on the table --

BANNER
Bring it here.

Banner-- still standing -- immediately flips it open and
begins scrolling through pages of US intelligence data. Oscar
places Banner' breakfast -- eggs, bacon, toast -- on the
table. Oscar takes a quick call on a nearby walkie talkie.

OSCAR
Copy that.
(and then to Banner)
Sir, Roger Carlson is here to see
you?

Banner ignores him, keeps scrolling. Thinking out loud--

BANNER
They got nothing.

OSCAR
Sir. Roger's here.

Banner looks up.

BANNER
Here? At the house?

OSCAR
Kevin said he's been parked across
the street since just before 5am.

BANNER
Jesus. Let him in then.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BANNER ESTATE

ROGER CARLSON(40)-- former Banner body man, current
"consultant", fixer and hustler -- stands in the living room.
Banner enters, arms outstretched to embrace him.

BANNER
What the hell are you doing here?

They hug, genuine warmth. But then Banner steps back. Looks hard into Roger's face, his eyes --

BANNER (CONT'D)

You OK?

It's loaded. As is Roger's reply.

ROGER

No. I mean yes. I'm good. I'm fine, boss. All things considered of course.

BANNER

Of course. This is..really something.

ROGER

There are *soldiers*. Everywhere. I went through three roadblocks just leaving the city.

There is a certain awkwardness to their familiarity. Some weighted history we will learn more about later.

BANNER

So, you just checking in? Long trip for that.

ROGER

Yes. But also, no. I got a call from the White House.

BANNER

You watch her speech? They got nothing. I felt for her.

ROGER

Yeah. Which is I think why they called.

Roger is anxious. And Banner clocks it. And?

ROGER (CONT'D)

They thought it would be helpful if you visited some of the rescue sites in the city. Rallied the troops. Shook hands with the first responders.

Banner is shocked --

BANNER

The White House is asking? C'mon -
I don't do that anymore.

The hint of a sales pitch --

ROGER

Someone needs to. You said it
yourself. They got nothing. Five
minutes reading platitudes off a
prompter. They don't have a fucking
clue what happened and have no idea
if it'll happen again. Now she's
hiding in the Situation Room,
'managing the response' while
Homeland Security takes all the
incoming.

Banner is listening. Closely. Not arguing.

ROGER (CONT'D)

People are scared. They need to
know the country is going to be
okay. That they shouldn't panic.
They need leadership.

(beat, pushing)

We show up, you thank a few
firemen. Let them know they're not
alone and someone's got their back.

A long beat as he makes a decision.

EXT. FRONT GATE - BANNER ESTATE - DAY

SECRET SERVICE SUVs, POLICE CARS & MOTORCYCLES, assemble
outside in preparation for Banner' departure.

Roger barely suppresses a grin as he proudly stands by the
open car door as Banner approaches, now dressed in patented
Presidential disaster wear: windbreaker, slacks, boots -- He
enters the car and they roll out in force.

EXT. STREETS OF MANHATTAN - MISC. - DAY

We move past some of the most recognizable landmarks in the
world; Central Park, Columbus Circle, Times Square. But we
haven't seen them like this before. Not in a long time at
least. It's a city under-siege. NATIONAL GUARD in full battle
fatigues run checkpoints. They stand beside TROOP CARRIERS.
Even TANKS. COPS, FEMA, CON ED workers. The only CIVILIANS
stand terrified outside closed grocery stores and banks,
nothing open.

EXT. BANNER MOTORCADE - FDR HIGHWAY - DAY

LIGHTS FLASHING, the MOTORCADE races down the empty road -- hardly any other cars on the usually packed thoroughfare.

It turns onto the eerily empty streets of the Upper East Side, stopping as it approaches a massive ARMY ROAD BLOCK.

EXT. 92ND STREET & LEXINGTON AVENUE - CONTINUOUS

On all four corners, enormous CROWDS of PEOPLE press up against the STEEL BARRICADES that have blocked off the intersection. A steady flow of FIREMEN enter the Subway Station with SEARCH DOGS and RESCUE GEAR while others emerge exhausted in soot.

The head of Banner' Secret Service detail, **AGENT TOM MCCARTHY (45)**, opens the SUV and Banner steps into the street.

BANNER POV: He scans the CROWD -- a mix of GRIEF and CHAOS. Some onlookers looked shattered. Hold PHOTOS of MISSING LOVED ONES. But others look enraged. They hold SIGNS already demanding "Bomb Moscow!" and "Inside Job!" A pen of TV CAMERAS captures it all.

As the Crowd slowly notice him, a ripple of recognition passes, word-to-mouth, slowly rising in volume, until -

ONLOOKER

That's George Banner!!

Flanked by Agent McCarthy and his Detail, Banner walks into the intersection where he's greeted warmly by an FDNY COMMANDER.

FDNY COMMANDER

Mr. President, thanks for coming.
I'm Lieutenant Commander Sweeney,
my guys have been working the site
since the incident.

BANNER

I don't want to get in the way.

FDNY COMMANDER

Not at all, sir. Means a lot to
have you here.

And now the Crowd is in full frenzy and many begin to CHEER --

CROWD

George! George! George!

The PRESS, confined to their pen, turn their cameras and strain to get a shot of him.

Roger, standing nearby, smiles with satisfaction.

The FDNY Commander waves over several of his Firemen and Banner is immediately in his element, shaking hands with one Firemen --

BANNER

How you boys holding up?

FIREMAN #1

Pretty brutal down there but doing ok, sir.

-- arms around another...

BANNER

You need anything? Food? Water?

FIREMAN #2

We're okay. Could use more backhoe loaders. There's just so much heavy steel.

Banner waves over Roger --

BANNER

You still have that contact at Fort Drum? They oughta see what the Corp of Engineers can send down.

ROGER

You got it, boss. We'll make a call.

IN THE BACKGROUND -- the CROWD NOISE is shifting, more ANGRY SHOUTS than cheers, a slowly darkening tenor. Banner Secret Service Detail clocks it. And they don't like it.

AGENT MCCARTHY

Sir, I think we'd better wrap up.

But Banner ignores him, continues to hold court --

BANNER

You know, I happen to know your local Congresswoman.

The Firemen all smile, humoring his lame joke.

FDNY COMMANDER
We're all big fans of your
daughter, sir.

FIREMAN #3
Any idea who did this to us, sir?

BANNER
President Mitchell and her team are
on it. They're on it...

And now -- rising above the din --

ANGRY BYSTANDER #1
Fucking Socialist traitors!!

The heat turns up. The Firemen all turn now, parting, and
Banner watches with them -

ANGRY BYSTANDER #2
Wake up man! This is all an
insurance scam! Cooked up and
carried out by the same assholes
who took down the housing market
and planned 9/11!

-- as the CROWD on the nearest corner now splits, factions
SHOVING each other and HEAVING toward the BARRICADE.

The FDNY Commander reaches for his radio.

FDNY COMMANDER
We need more cops down here!

Banner is still a ways from the unrest, but it's spreading,
an absolute cacophony of recriminations. The small detachment
of cops have lost control and the crowd surges to within feet
of the rescue site.

ANGRY BYSTANDER #3
Mitchell's bought and paid
for!

ANGRY BYSTANDER #4
Crisis actors paid for by
Wall Street speculators!

The FDNY Commander tries to shout them down--

FDNY COMMANDER
You people need to let us do our
jobs! There are people trapped in
there! And you're all up here
running your mouths!

ANGRY BYSTANDER #1
I bet there's nobody under there!

Now Agent McCarthy tries to pull Banner away -

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
We need get back to the vehicle.

- but Banner shakes him off, shouting at the Crowd --

BANNER
Hey! C'mon now!

The Crowd and the Firemen, square off, jostling--

BANNER (CONT'D)
I said, stop that, goddamnit!

--Banner right in the middle of it, McCarthy and his guys doing their best to surround him in a protective circle.

BANNER (CONT'D)
What the hell do you think you're doing?!

Angry Bystander #1 directly confronts him.

ANGRY BYSTANDER #1
Just calling out the Fifth Column that hates this country. Same assholes that probably called you a baby killer!

Banner shakes his head in disgust and distress -- and he snaps -- pushing right into middle of the crowd.

A shot of a panicked McCarthy losing his boss' sleeve as he disappears from view, into the heart of the mob. A Fireman is on the ground --

BANNER
No, no, no... God damn it, let go of that man. Right now!

ANGRY BYSTANDER #3
We gotta wake up! A lotta people are *happy* about yesterday!

It really pains Banner --

BANNER
No, no. This what they want us to do...

ANGRY BYSTANDER #1
Who's 'they' Banner?! You don't know who 'they' are man!

Banner looks him right in the eye. Calm but firm --

BANNER

You're right. I have no idea who did this. Or how. Or why. And neither do any of you. And if you keep shouting at each other, we're never going to find out.

For a beat, his honesty disarms the man.

BANNER (CONT'D)

(anger rising)

You think you're a patriot?

The Bystander says nothing, intimidated. In the crowd, iPhones have come out, people filming, a moment emerging.

BANNER (CONT'D)

You're not a patriot. You're scared. And you think if you get worked up over some fantasy, get angry about some made-up horseshit you won't feel so afraid. But you're wrong. You're no patriot. Not right now anyway.

Audible gasps, followed by --

ANGRY BYSTANDER #3

You tell him, George!

ANGRY BYSTANDER #5

That's right, Mr. President. They're too dumb to know they're eating bullshit.

Banner turns to see a "Fire Bomb Wall Street" sign.

BANNER

You're here standing up for the little guy? The working man?

ANGRY BYSTANDER #3

Someone has to!

BANNER

There are working men and women, right now, buried underneath your feet.

The man, and others like him, now shamed into silence, lowers his sign. It's now absolutely quiet. Banner softens a bit.

BANNER (CONT'D)

You don't trust the government, huh? Well, I get it. It hasn't always come through for you. For us. But this isn't about the government. Or the one percent. Or the 'socialists'...

(beat)

Someone out there hates us. Someone who stands against everything that makes us great, and they found a way to hurt us. It's that simple. It's not a movie. This is real life. And right now these guys need to get back to work. And you need to let them.

The Firemen disentangle themselves from the mob. The Chief nods at Banner. A thanks.

FDNY COMMANDER

Alright, back to it!

BANNER

(to the crowd)

You want to stand by and offer your support and your prayers? Do it from the other side of the barricade.

And now we...

CUT TO:

LIVING ROOMS. HOSPITALS. OFFICES. BARS. HOTEL ROOMS. All across the country ...

FAMILIES, CO-WORKERS, STRANGERS -- watching on **TVs, iPads, iPhones** -- *comforted*, as Banner continues ...

BANNER (CONT'D)

You want to keep talking nonsense? Go home.

(beat)

Whoever's responsible for this attack...they're dangerous. And they could hit us again. You don't want that to happen? Get serious and grow up.

The Crowd erupts in CHEERS. Banner steps back, surprised at the intensity of the reaction. And notices the DOZENS of CELL PHONE CAMERAS FOCUSED ON HIM.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - BRIGHTON BEACH, NY - DAY

Alexi Lebedeva waits alone in a booth watching coverage of Banner on a muted TV behind the counter.

URI (19) -- a scrawny white kid with dreadlocks -- enters and sits across from him. A water glass is waiting.

LEBEDEVA
(Russian)
You're late.

URI
English. Please. You know I fucking hate that.

The kid's jumpy, leg bouncing up and down like he's hopped up on something. Lebedeva just glares at him.

URI (CONT'D)
C'mon man. Subway's closed. No Ubers. I had to walk here.

LEBEDEVA
Where's Felix?

URI
He closed up shop a week ago. Went totally dark. But I'm working on it.

LEBEDEVA
I thought you were 'family'.

URI
We are man! He just does this sometimes. Finds a new pad to set up the servers. Then sends the rest of us the address.

LEBEDEVA
I don't like -- how do you say it in your English -- 'tall tales', Uri.

URI

I swear man! Another day or two
and I promise I'll hear from him.
I wouldn't lie to you.

Lebedeva studies him.

LEBEDEVA

Ok. Relax.

Gesturing to the water glass that's been waiting --

LEBEDEVA (CONT'D)

Have a drink then.

Uri stares at it.

URI

Yeah, right. Shit's probably
radioactive. I read the papers.

LEBEDEVA

You said you walked all the way
here. If you really walked that
far, you must be thirsty.

Uri studies the glass again. Reluctantly lifts it to his
lips. And swallows.

CUT TO:

INT. BANNER MOTORCADE - WEST SIDE HIGHWAY - DAY

Inside the car there's a palpable charge. Roger is buzzing.
Banner looks out the widow quietly, but it's clear he knows
he nailed it. And it felt good. The guys in the car, the
DRIVER and SECRET SERVICE sit straighter in their seats.

The Driver glances back at Banner in the rearview.

DRIVER

If I can say it, sir. That was
great.

BANNER

Thanks, Terry.

Roger's phone rings. He looks down. Smiles. And answers.

ROGER

Hello.

INTERCUT --

EXT. CAPITOL STEPS - DAY - INTERCUT AS NEEDED

REP. ALEXANDRA BANNER (37) stands on the Capitol steps, other members passing as they enter the building, massive police presence guarding the cordon.

ALEXANDRA (INTO PHONE)
Are you serious right now? In my fucking district?

ROGER (INTO PHONE)
It's where the biggest recovery operation is happening. They still think there could be dozens of people trapped in the tunnel.

ALEXANDRA (INTO PHONE)
Yeah. I know. I've been talking to the site commander every hour.

ROGER (INTO PHONE)
Have you seen the coverage? You're taking care of the response in Washington, he's taking care of the people here at home. It's a good look for both of you.

ALEXANDRA (INTO PHONE)
I don't need help with my fucking look, Roger. I assume this was your idea?

ROGER (INTO PHONE)
The White House approved it.

ALEXANDRA (INTO PHONE)
Yeah. But whose idea was it?

He doesn't answer.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)
That's what I thought.
(disgusted)
I always say - don't count out Roger. He'll find his way back to the big dance. Even it takes a national catastrophe. You can't help yourself.

On Roger. It's true and it hurts. But he covers.

ROGER (INTO PHONE)
I'm with your dad right now. Want to talk to him?

But she hangs up in disgust.

CUT TO:

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - BANNER ESTATE - NIGHT

Sheila lies in bed, reading. Banner knocks, freshly showered, back in a track suit. She looks up, warmly.

SHEILA

Every network ran it. Even the death star.

He smiles, sheepish.

BANNER

I got carried away. Shouldn't have gone down there. Should have definitely kept my mouth shut.

Sheila gestures for him to come sit on the bed. Takes his hand.

SHEILA

You were great, George. Someone needed to say it.

He shakes his head, still unsure. And then --

BANNER

Mitchell just called. She wants me in DC tomorrow.

SHEILA

For what?

Banner shrugs, unsure.

BANNER

Didn't really say. Photo opp in the Oval? Probably a stunt some kid in the press office thought up to show 'unity'.

A beat, as Sheila digests this.

BANNER (CONT'D)

I promise I'll be back for tonight. Chief Judge of the Second Circuit...we're going to celebrate. Even if it's just us and Oscar.

But that's not why Sheila looks skeptical.

SHEILA

I don't care about tonight. But don't be so sure what Mitchell wants is that simple.

BANNER

It's simple for me. Yesterday was the beginning and end of my political comeback. You're running with the ball now. It's your time. We stick to the deal.

SHEILA

I can take care of myself.

She takes his hand. A new intensity --

SHEILA (CONT'D)

You got out clean. No matter what anyone else said then or since...we know how big a win that was. Don't forget what it's like under that spotlight.

He takes her hand, trying to assure her.

BANNER

I know. I'm just a struggling author now. With a deadline. I've got nothing left to prove.

SHEILA

Whatever happens tomorrow, don't let them tell you otherwise.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON, DC - MORNING - ESTABLISHING

I/E. BANNER MOTORCADE - CONSTITUTION AVE - WASHINGTON, DC

Banner stares out the window, deep in thought. Roger, next to him, holds a briefcase.

Banner sits up, taking notice, as they pass --

SOLDIERS on every corner. SURFACE TO AIR MISSILES next to monuments.

A LONG LINE of PEOPLE extending an entire city block. FEAR and ANXIETY in their faces. SLEEPING BAGS, FOLDING CHAIRS -- many have camped overnight -- outside a WELLS FARGO.

I/E. BANNER MOTORCADE - 15TH STREET - CONTINUOUS

They turn onto 15th street, but as the heavily fortified White House Gates approach they don't slow down, and Roger leans forward --

ROGER

Tom, where we going?

AGENT MCCARTHY

Around to Eisenhower. Underground garage.

Roger's about to object, but Banner is amused.

BANNER

The *guest* entrance...

CUT TO:

INT. WEST WING LOBBY - WHITE HOUSE

An ornate sitting room. Oil paintings on the wall, Marine Guard just outside the door. Banner and Roger sit on the plush chairs. Banner studies a PORTRAIT OF WASHINGTON.

BANNER

Lived here eight years and I don't think I've ever been in this room.

(beat)

Some nice artwork.

Roger checks the time every 5 seconds. Finally --

AIDE

President Banner? President Mitchell will see you now.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE

The door to the Oval Office swings open. **PRESIDENT EVELYN MITCHELL (51)** -- normally youthful and elegant, Texas politico in the Anne Richards style, but now looks like she has gotten her ass kicked -- rises from behind her desk. But The weight in her voice belies her appearance...

PRESIDENT MITCHELL

President Banner, thanks for coming. We're just wrapping up here, give us the room, boys.

She's surrounded by her SECRETARY OF DEFENSE and HOMELAND SECURITY and their AIDES, who now all turn to face Banner -- their clothes wrinkled, exhaustion in their eyes, shell-shocked expressions otherwise inscrutable. The panic in the room is palpable.

They all exit past him. He greets many by first name, and they respond with nods of recognition and warm handshakes. As the door closes behind them --

PRESIDENT MITCHELL (CONT'D)

They need to sleep. But there's no time for sleep. How'd you manage that?

President Mitchell gestures for Banner to join her on the couches.

BANNER

White House doctor used to hand out amphetamines.

President Mitchell smiles.

PRESIDENT MITCHELL

Right.

BANNER

How are you holding up?

PRESIDENT MITCHELL

What, my press conference didn't project strength and certainty?

Banner smiles.

BANNER

Well, it so happens I'm one of only three people alive who understand.

PRESIDENT MITCHELL

Holy fucking shit, George. That's how I'm holding up.

She takes a cigarette from a coffee table case and lights one.

PRESIDENT MITCHELL (CONT'D)

And we got Jack shit.

BANNER

CIA was always slow on cyber. But the team at Fort Meade. Especially the TAO guys--

PRESIDENT MITCHELL
--are still the best. But their
heads are spinning.

(beat)

Usually a Zero Day vulnerability
exists on a single operating
system. Your iPhone, say. This
thing exploited unknown
vulnerabilities across *dozens* of
systems. It shut those systems off
for exactly one minute. And then
turned them back on again.

BANNER
So that wasn't us?

PRESIDENT MITCHELL
No. We had barely gotten our people
into it when everything came back
online.

BANNER
That means they can do it again. We
get a ransom demand?

PRESIDENT MITCHELL
No. Nothing. And NSA says these
guys are good. Maybe the best
they've ever seen. We're running
shifts at Meade trying to sort
through a digital trail that's
basically the Gordian fucking knot.
We're weeks away from having a
defense against it.

BANNER
And until then, they can do it
again.

PRESIDENT MITCHELL
Yes. And maybe next time, leave
everything shut down for a lot
longer.

As the gravity sinks in --

PRESIDENT MITCHELL (CONT'D)
You're now one of five people in
the world who know that.

Banner is floored --

BANNER

One minute took us to the brink of
chaos. If it's a day. Or a week.

She can clearly imagine it. She takes another drag.

PRESIDENT MITCHELL

Total collapse.

(beat)

Meantime, we're trying to minimize
our exposure. Keeping non-essential
infrastructure closed, defaulting
to back-ups that are off-line or
analog. I've got FAA tracking down
the few air traffic controllers
still alive who remember the old
days. Maybe we can get a few hubs
open for essential travel. Banks
are trying to stand up paper
records again so trading can
resume. But we can't limp along
like this for long. The fact that
there hasn't been a nationwide run
is a miracle.

BANNER

How do we find them?

PRESIDENT MITCHELL

We've been talking to Speaker
Dreyer since yesterday. His caucus
is prepared to authorize a Special
Investigatory Commission. And to
endow it with extraordinary powers,
commensurate with the scale of this
emergency.

(beat)

Powers of surveillance...

As she lays those powers out --

PRESIDENT MITCHELL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Both physical....

CUT TO - A SURVEILLANCE TEAM in a VAN parked across from a
SUBURBAN HOUSE, observes and listens to the FAMILY INSIDE.

PRESIDENT MITCHELL (CONT'D)

And Digital...

CUT TO - A MILLION PHONE CALLS, overlapping, MONITORED by
TECHNICIANS and TRANSCRIBED on hundreds of COMPUTERS.

PRESIDENT MITCHELL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Powers of Search and Seizure.

CUT TO - FEDERAL AGENTS break down the door of an APARTMENT and RANSACK it.

PRESIDENT MITCHELL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And, if necessary, even the
suspension of Habeas Corpus.

CUT TO - A BLACK VAN screeches to a stop next to a BUSINESSMAN who's pulled into the back of it.

And **BACK TO** -

PRESIDENT MITCHELL (CONT'D)
In short, the powers of every law
enforcement and intelligence agency
put together, permitted for the
first time to operate on American
soil.

Banner is ashen, overwhelmed by what she's saying.

BANNER
You're going to grab people off the
street without warrants?

PRESIDENT MITCHELL
Actually...
(beat)
You are. But only if you have to.

Off Banner look of dawning understanding --

PRESIDENT MITCHELL (CONT'D)
Dreyer wanted to lead the
Commission himself. I wasn't going
to object -- he's a bastard and a
lunatic but an effective one.
Unfortunately, the Senate wouldn't
go for it.

BANNER
You're the President.

PRESIDENT MITCHELL
A President who was already
cruising to a double-digit loss in
November -- and that was before
this fiasco. I don't have the
capital and we've already wasted
too much time.

(beat)

(MORE)

PRESIDENT MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Turns out the one name everyone can still agree on is *former* President George Banner.

BANNER

Jesus, Evelyn. Yesterday was a mistake. An accident. I've retired from public life--

PRESIDENT MITCHELL

--Yesterday proved you've still got it. Sharp as ever. And that crowd was just a preview of where this is going if we don't get a handle on it. The longer we can't identify the enemy, the more people will see the enemy wherever they choose to. You and I both know this country's been coming apart for years. This could break us.

(beat)

The only thing more important than a *quick* result is a result that everyone can *trust*. And they trust *you*.

Off Banner, the reality of the moment sinking in on him --

PRESIDENT MITCHELL (CONT'D)

If the country is going to give this kind of power to any one person George, it has to be someone that doesn't want it.

CUT TO:

I/E. BANNER MOTORCADE - 17TH STREET - DAY

The motorcade pulls away from the White House -- Banner quiet, Roger digesting what he's just told him.

ROGER

What's there to *think* about?

Banner ignores him. Makes a decision --

BANNER

Tom?

Agent McCarthy turns around from the front seat.

BANNER (CONT'D)
 Take a left up here. We're not
 going to the airport.

Tom looks to Roger who shrugs, no idea. Banner dials his
 phone. **CIA DIRECTOR JEREMY LASCH** answers.

DIRECTOR LASCH (OVER PHONE)
 I had a feeling you'd call.

BANNER (INTO PHONE)
 How are you, Jeremy? Got a minute?

CUT TO:

EXT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - LANGLEY, VA - DAY

Banner motorcade pulls to a stop outside CIA Headquarters.
 AGENCY SECURITY waits outside.

CIA SECURITY OFFICER
 Welcome to Langley, President
 Banner.

Gesturing to Roger who's joined Banner at the curb.

CIA SECURITY OFFICER (CONT'D)
 Everyone else waits outside.

Roger is a bit taken aback, but he nods, understanding. And
 now to Agent McCarthy--

CIA SECURITY OFFICER (CONT'D)
 Him also.

AGENT MCCARTHY
 No. That's not how this works--

But Banner turns to him.

BANNER
 It's fine, Tom.

CIA SECURITY OFFICER
 You'll want to leave your phone
 with them also.

INT. DIRECTOR'S SCIF - 7TH FLOOR - CIA HEADQUARTERS

Elevator doors open. Director Lasch -- thick head of hair,
 smooth southern accent - flanked by two more SECURITY
 OFFICERS, stands waiting. More than a hint of sarcasm --

DIRECTOR LASCH
Our knight in shining armor.

Banner shakes Lasch's hand with no affection.

BANNER
How wide is this circle?

DIRECTOR LASCH
I'm surprised Axios didn't have it
in their morning newsletter. If I
were you, I would have turned her
down cold before I left the Oval.

Not bothering to conceal his contempt --

BANNER
Well, you were always better at
reading the angles.

Director Lasch forces a smile.

DIRECTOR LASCH
'Banner doesn't spook easily'.
That's what the guys around here
said. The few who still remember
you.
(beat)
What I'm about to tell you, I sure
hope that's still the case. Let's
get this over with.

A Security Officer steps forward with a WAND and TRAY.

SECURITY OFFICER
You know the drill, sir.

Banner empties his pockets into the tray. As the Security
Officer begins to wand him,

PULL BACK to REVEAL --

They're standing in a cavernous room. Inside it, there's a
room-within-the-room. A free-standing GLASS CUBE with a
stainless steel CONFERENCE TABLE and no other objects: a
Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF).

The Security Officer indicates Banner is clear.

Lasch nods and the outer room suddenly fills with near-
deafening WHITE NOISE. (From this point on, we can't hear
what's being said, but Lasch and Banner are still talking.)

Lasch leads Banner into the SCIF. The Security Officers close the door and take up position outside it.

Banner and Lasch sit down at the Conference Table.

And the glass suddenly turns OPAQUE, frosting over.

CUT TO BLACK.

A beat, and then --

BLINDING BRIGHT LIGHT. **BLINKING.** THE WORLD COMING INTO FOCUS, as...

EXT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - LANGLEY, VA - LATER

...Banner steps back outside headquarters. His Motorcade waits at the curb. Agent McCarthy holds the SUV door open.

Banner pauses, looks around, seemingly getting his bearings.

AGENT MCCARTHY
Everything ok, sir?

BANNER
Fine. Let's get going.

Banner gets in the car...

I/E. BANNER MOTORCADE - LANGLEY/ROAD TO AIRPORT

...where Roger sits waiting. Gruff, distracted --

BANNER
My phone.

Roger hands it over, knowing better than to ask any questions. Banner scrolls through his contacts, dials. After a single ring --

AUTOMATED VOICE (OVER PHONE)
You have reached NuWay Drycleaners,
please leave a message.

BANNER (INTO PHONE)
Hi. I need to schedule a pick-up.
Tonight, if possible.

Banner hangs up.

BANNER (CONT'D)
Did you bring--

Roger holds out a new BLACK MOLESKIN NOTEBOOK.

ROGER

Grabbed one from your office before we left this morning. In case it wasn't just a photo opp.

Banner nods, appreciative. Peels off the shrink wrap, opens it to the first page, and starts furiously writing.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT - NYC

A tiny studio apartment. Bare walls, single bed. A dresser - drawers open and empty.

Lebedeva places a final item of clothing on top of his packed suitcase. Checks and pockets his DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT. His phone rings and he answers.

URI (OVER PHONE)

We're back up and running. Just dropped you a pin. I fucking told yo--

Lebedeva hangs up. Watches his phone until the PIN appears. Then turns to a stack of PAPERS next to his suitcase. Carries them to a TRASH CAN by an open window, and dumps them in the FIRE already burning.

PUSH IN on the FIRE and...

MATCH CUT TO:

SPARKS, floating down against a PITCH BLACK SKY, to **FLAMES**, dancing and crackling. PULL BACK TO REVEAL...

EXT. BACK PATIO - BANNER ESTATE - NIGHT

A small backyard BONFIRE. String lights. 70s soft-rock. A somber, dream-like vibe.

Sheila, Roger, and a dozen GUESTS stand in small, subdued clusters, but the yard is mostly empty.

Banner steps out the back door.

BANNER POV as he moves through the yard, overhearing snippets of conversation, all on one topic and one topic only -- the attack, the Commission, the men with guns in the streets and the fear that is everywhere.

The few Guests somberly nod to him as he passes, finally arriving at a long serving table. And finds --

ALEXANDRA

Very on brand. Cocktails and canapes for the one percent while the world burns down.

Alexandra, stands next to him. It's obvious that in spite of the dig, he's happy to see her.

BANNER

Beer and pizza was the only thing we could get a hold of. But yeah. Your mother deserves this. And we thought it was important to show people we aren't afraid.

Gesturing to the guests --

BANNER (CONT'D)

People wanted a place to go. To be with friends.

ALEXANDRA

They wanted to be with you. These aren't mom's 'friends'. They're ass-kissing moths to a flame, all swarming around the man of the hour.

Banner sighs. No use arguing. Besides --

BANNER

I was hoping I'd have more time before it leaked.

ALEXANDRA

Well, the press cycle has sped up a bit since you were last in it.

He takes the jab.

BANNER

Roger tells me you're gonna vote against the Commission.

ALEXANDRA

Won't matter, but of course I will. It's fucking fascist. I hope you're not thinking of actually doing it?

BANNER
I haven't decided.

ALEXANDRA
What's there to decide? They're basically lighting the Constitution on fire.

BANNER
It's temporary. Until we get a handle on what the threat is.

ALEXANDRA
Said every would-be dictator who ever grabbed power.
(beat)
I'm as freaked out as anyone. But I know Dreyer... his side of the aisle... These aren't the guys you served with. You know Dreyer's biggest donor shorted the market two days before the attack?

BANNER
You saying he knew about it?

ALEXANDRA
Robert Mercer. Runs a hedge fund. I'm saying it looks suspicious.

BANNER
You sound like these nuts on television. Conspiracies everywhere...

Genuinely trying to reason with him --

ALEXANDRA
Dad. You have to listen to me.

That gets his attention. From the way he looks at her, it's clear -- she hasn't called him that in a long while.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)
Maybe this all turns out to be simple. That the world's still as black and white as you remember. It was Moscow or the Revolutionary Guard or even a bunch of neo-Nazis who figured out how to use a computer.
(beat)
It almost doesn't matter. Not everyone *wants* an answer.
(MORE)

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)

I know it's hard for you to wrap your head around, but some people see a crisis like this and they don't want to resolve it. They want to weaponize it. And by getting you to lead this Commission they're asking you to point the gun and pull the trigger.

Banner can see how much this means to her. Takes it seriously.

BANNER

I hear you. And I *am* listening.

She can see he really is. A long beat -- long-repressed emotions welling up between them.

BANNER (CONT'D)

I'm glad you're here. It means a lot to both me and your mother.

Before she can respond --

ROGER (O.S.)

Sir?

Roger's come up beside them. Alexandra locks eyes with him.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Sorry. It's important.

Alexandra nods -- she's used to this, but there's something more. Banner clocks the odd energy between them.

Then Roger leans in and whispers something to Banner.

BANNER

(to Alexandra)

I'll be right back. I wanna finish talking.

Alexandra watches Banner and Roger walk away from her.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERVICE ENTRANCE - BANNER ESTATE - NIGHT

A BLACK TOWN CAR idles next to trash and recycling cans in a dark alley, just outside the compound, surrounded by forest.

A FIGURE leans against the hood, his face barely illuminated by the cigarette he's smoking.

A nearby gate swings opens -- Agent McCarthy holds it -- and Banner emerges.

The Figure puts out the cigarette, the car's parking lights the only dim light remaining.

NATAN
Laundry pick-up.

NATAN (76) looks like he should be playing chess in a park. (You'd have to be a pro to identify his accent as Israeli.)

Banner approaches and the two men embrace warmly. Agent McCarthy remains at the gate, out of earshot.

BANNER
Thanks for coming.

NATAN
This is what friends do.

BANNER
What are you hearing?

NATAN
Mitchell's in over her head and Dreyer's a crackpot, but you already know that. All the Agencies gutted. Filled with political appointees not professionals. And if you don't say yes and take over this investigation, it's game over. Time to pack up, finally retire to that flat in Cyprus.

A beat as Banner digests it.

BANNER
And if I do say yes, you got anything that can actually help me?

NATAN
Depends. Am I sharing intelligence gathered by my country with the United States Government? Or am I just gossiping with a fellow pensioner?

Off Banner' look of irritation --

NATAN (CONT'D)

I know, I'm sorry. So much for allies. But this one's too hot. We have enough of our own troubles.

Resigned --

BANNER

It stays with me.

That's enough for Natan.

NATAN

The past six months, the FSB has been funneling money to a group of hackers based in New York. A loose collective of the usual punks -- they run ransomware schemes, crack crypto wallets, kick some of the money back to the Consulate. Their leader goes by 'Felix'. Not sure if it's his name or one of these online handles people make up. We figure it's a nice way to finance other ops and stir up the garden variety mayhem the Kremlin likes so much to foment.

(beat)

A couple weeks ago we start hearing someone's putting together a server farm in the Bronx. Serious processing power like the kind you'd need to mine massive quantities of Bitcoin. Or deploy a massive cyber-attack.

(beat)

Again, that name 'Felix' pops up.

BANNER

Sounds like a hard link to the Russians.

NATAN

Maybe. Or maybe the Chinese want you to think so. Or maybe there are two Felix's. Or maybe he doesn't exist at all.

BANNER

Can you run it down?

NATAN

We're trying. Lot of fingers
pointed a lot of directions. Toward
names you can't imagine.

BANNER

What does that mean? Who?

A beat, Natan considering it. A new intensity --

NATAN

George, take it from an old man in
a profession where most die young.
I hear hoof-steps. The Four
Horsemen. With this one...if you
call again, I won't answer. After
all these years, better to be
honest with each other. No?

Banner takes out his Black Notebook, and uncaps his pen.

BANNER

What names?

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK PATIO - BANNER ESTATE - NIGHT

Banner re-enters the yard and makes his way toward Sheila
who's now standing with **VALERIE WHITESELL (73)** -- best
friend, five-foot-tall powerhouse.

SHEILA

George! Where'd you run off to?

Banner leans and kisses Sheila on the cheek, ignoring the
question.

BANNER

Valerie, you made it.

SHEILA

With all the roadblocks, took her
four hours from the city.

VALERIE

Needed to be with my best friend.
And to stop constantly checking the
casualty lists, waiting to see
another familiar name show up.

A somber beat.

BANNER

How's Isabel? She still working up
in Boston?

At the mention of the name, both women shift uncomfortably.
An awkward beat, a sip of her drink, and --

VALERIE

That's right. Same job since last
year.

(beat)

C'mon Sheila. Let's get you
another glass of chardonnay.

The two women link arms and head into the crowd.

A beat as Banner stands alone, taking in the party. Then he
notices -- a song is playing. And for the first time, we can
hear every note and every word, above the din of the party:

Who Killed Bambi by The Sex Pistols

Banner looks around, scanning for the source of the music:

*Gentle pretty thing
Who only had one spring
You bravely faced the world
Ready for anything*

As Banner spins, the song gets louder and louder:

*Murder murder murder
Someone should be angry
The crime of the century
Who shot little Bambi*

The song's now DEAFENING:

*Who Killed Bambi?!
Who Killed Bambi?!*

Finally, he spots Oscar, grabs him --

BANNER

Change this music.

But Oscar doesn't appear to be hearing it.

OSCAR

Sir? What--

He snaps --

BANNER

Just change it!

Suddenly - the music is at normal volume. And it's Van Morrison. A quiet beat. Banner gives Oscar an apologetic look and steps away from him.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BANNER ESTATE

Alexandra, checks she's alone, opens the encrypted messaging app, Signal:

From: *Unknown*

Body: *We need to talk.*

Roger enters from the kitchen. She doesn't hear him approaching behind her. He steps closer.

ROGER

Alex?

And she startles.

ALEXANDRA

Jesus.

She closes the app and pockets the phone.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)

Did you *follow* me?

ROGER

No. I mean, I saw you come inside.

(beat)

What did you say to him out there?
About the Commission?

ALEXANDRA

That's why you're stalking me? You
really *are* pathetic.

ROGER

I need to know Alex.

ALEXANDRA

So you can start raising your
hourly rates again? I know
business had dried up, but you're
in over your head. Even more than
usual.

ROGER

He needs to do this.

ALEXANDRA

No. You need him to do this. He needs to go back to hiding in that cottage. He thinks the world's the same as it was when he left office. Back then, he had his whole party swearing fealty. 'The legendary George Banner'. He comes back now, he'll be all on his own. And they're gonna bury him.

Roger can see real fear in her eyes.

ROGER

I'm not gonna lie. Obviously it's good for me if he's back in the spotlight. But that's not why he should say yes.

(beat)

I don't care how much things have changed. You and I both know...he's still the only one who will do the right thing, no matter how unpopular. Who won't be afraid to get to the bottom of this.

Outside, they can hear glasses clinking, the Crowd being called to attention.

ALEXANDRA

You don't know anything.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK PATIO - BANNER ESTATE - NIGHT

Banner and Sheila stand on the patio, the Guests assembled, toast in full swing.

BANNER

Since the day my wife and I met, she's put the needs of others before her own. I'll never forget seeing her for the first time. It was one of those dreary days in Boston and she lit up the room.

Sheila turns to him, eyebrow raised--

SHEILA

Boston?

Off his look, good-natured --

SHEILA (CONT'D)
 Pretty sure we met in law school,
 George, not undergrad. What other
 woman are you talking about?

The guests all laugh. Covering, embarrassed...

BANNER
 Of course. Of course we did. I
 guess I've just always wished our
 life together could have started
 earlier!

The guest laugh again. Banner turns to her --

BANNER (CONT'D)
 Anyway, you're the only reason I've
 managed to do anything. This next
 chapter is *your* chapter. I love
 you.

As Banner and Sheila embrace, Alexandra's heard enough. She
 turns and exits. Banner, arm around Sheila, raises his glass-

BANNER (CONT'D)
 To the newly confirmed, Chief Judge
 Banner!

The Guests cheer, and raise their glasses.

CUT TO:

INT. BANNER BEDROOM - BANNER ESTATE

Banner sits at the edge of his bed, exhausted.

SHEILA
 Sorry I got held up.

Sheila stands in the doorway.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
 I think that's the last of the
 stragglers.

Banner looks up with a smile.

BANNER
 You deserved more. We'll make up
 for it when it's Chief *Justice*.

SHEILA

It was fine, George. You must be exhausted.

She sits down next to him.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

So...?

He looks at her, knows exactly what she's asking.

BANNER

No question it's a trap, politically. Everyone says they want the truth, but the election's less than a year off. Better for both sides if the blame can't be pinned on anyone. That way they can keep spinning their conspiracies, blaming each other.

Sheila raises any eyebrow --

SHEILA

That *your* analysis?

BANNER

Our daughter's.

Sheila smiles.

SHEILA

She's right of course. Left, Right...you do this, they'll come after you from every direction. And forget anything else you think your life's been about. However this all turns out -- triumph or disaster, it's the lede of your obituary.

Banner seems to be losing his will--

BANNER

She says they're 'weaponizing' the crisis and now they're asking me to point the gun.

Sheila laughs --

SHEILA

Well, you and I both know she can be prone to hyperbole.

(MORE)

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Though in this case, I don't think that gets close to capturing it.

(beat)

This Commission is the single greatest affront to civil liberties anyone's ever attempted. Makes Jim Crow and Japanese Internment look like nothing. And whoever leads it will be not only the most powerful person in America, but the most powerful person in American *history*.

Resigned --

BANNER

So, that's it then. I tell Mitchell no. That I won't do it.

Sheila shakes her head, turns to him. Takes his hand.

SHEILA

That's why you *have* to do it.

(beat)

They've *already* weaponized it. Who else do you want with their finger on the trigger?

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY - BANNER ESTATE - DAY

Dozens of TV CAMERAS, SATELLITE TRUCKS and PHOTOGRAPHERS fill the cul de sac. An overlapping din of chatter, CORRESPONDENTS from all the networks -

CORRESPONDENT #1

...after passage late last night, President Mitchell signed the law authorizing the Commission...

CORRESPONDENT #2

...Owens now expected to announce his decision...

CORRESPONDENT #3

...in a hastily arranged press conference called earlier this morning...

Roger waits, checking the time.

Finally, the front gate slowly swings open, revealing Banner.

Shutters snap and Correspondents quiet as he approaches a bank of microphones.

BANNER

This morning, thousands of our fellow citizens are still laying their loved ones to rest -- victims of a vicious and cowardly assault. An assault on not only our lives and property, but our very sense of security.

(beat)

Late last night, the United State Congress voted overwhelmingly, with bi-partisan support, to authorize the so-called Zero Day Commission, a body imbued with extraordinary powers to identify the perpetrators of that attack and bring them to justice.

(beat)

It is with great humility, and a ferocious sense of purpose, that I have accepted President Mitchell's request to lead the Commission.

As he continues...

CUT TO:

LIVING ROOMS. HOSPITALS. OFFICES. BARS. HOTEL ROOMS.
People watching all across the WORLD.

BANNER (CONT'D)

I did not seek out this responsibility, but nor will I evade it.

(beat)

I do not render judgement on the extent of the powers I have been granted. They are unprecedented, as is this danger. But I do offer you my solemn vow ... we will only employ them insofar as they are absolutely necessary.

Banner pauses. Studies the faces of the Correspondents and Cameramen looking back at him.

And then, mixed among them, he sees -- ANNA. He stops. She stares right at him. Smiles.

Banner blinks -- and she *vanishes*. Did he imagine it? What just happened? A beat of awkward silence.

Roger looks over at him. Banner gathers himself. Seems to go off script now -

BANNER (CONT'D)

I had a friend. John O'Neill..
 you're all probably sick of hearing
 about him. He taught me a lot of
 things. Among them - we don't get
 to decide when our time is up. I
 thought my life of public service
 was over. My legacy written.

(beat)

I'll find out who did this. And
 I'll make them pay for it.

An ERUPTION of SHOUTED QUESTIONS, as we again...

CUT TO:

...TELEVISIONS, TABLETS, iPhones, streaming the coverage:

TV ANCHOR #1

...a former prosecutor, Banner was
 known in his day as fearless and
 tireless...

TV ANALYST #1

...it's safe to say many around the
 globe, especially in world
 capitals, are breathing a sigh of
 relief right now...

TV ANALYST #2

...a perfect choice, and in many
 ways, the only choice. Non-
 partisan, a legendarily brilliant
 investigator...

TV ANCHOR #2

...uniquely suited to navigate both
 the political minefield and work
 the case, getting to the bottom of
 who's responsible...

BACK TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY - BANNER ESTATE - DAY

Banner waves off the questions, Roger shouting --

ROGER

We'll have more when we get to
 Washington tonight!

As the Secret Service push back the Press...

CUT TO:

INT. BULLPEN - COMMISSION HQ - WASHINGTON, DC

A frenzy of activity as TEAMS of FBI AGENTS, NSA TECHS, CIA and DIA ANALYSTS, move into a massive floor of cubicles.

They plug-in laptops, unpack files, turn on CCTV feeds.

In one corner, a dozen muscled, UNSHAVEN MEN in t-shirts and jeans stand apart. They unzip one of several duffels. Inside -- TACTICAL GEAR and WEAPONS.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - BANNER ESTATE - DUSK

A MARINE HELICOPTER lands on the back lawn, the sun now setting over the Hudson.

On the back porch, Banner hugs Sheila. A long, embrace. Then he joins Agent McCarthy and Roger.

As they get closer to the waiting Helicopter, the ROAR of the rotors grows louder and louder, the GUSTS stronger, until suddenly -- Banner stops in his tracks.

Shouting over the ROAR --

ROGER

Sir?

PUSH IN ON Banner, who stands frozen. And then -- he reaches into his pocket. His phone is buzzing. "Unknown Number." Banner answers.

NATAN (OVER PHONE)

George?

The connection is broken, Natan's voice distant --

BANNER (INTO PHONE)

Where are you? What's the matter?

NATAN (OVER PHONE)

Those names you wrote down last night. That I gave you. We were right--

More static --

NATAN (OVER PHONE) (CONT'D)
That's the key to all of it...

BANNER (INTO PHONE)
Who is? Which name?!

NATAN
It's not one of them. It's *all* of
them. You have to--

The line abruptly goes dead.

BANNER
Natan?!

Banner stands there holding the phone, stunned.

ROGER
Sir?!

Banner blinks, snaps out of it. Roger and Agent McCarthy
stare at him, concerned. Shouting over the ROAR --

BANNER
I need my notebook from the safe!

Agent McCarthy starts to follow but --

BANNER (CONT'D)
No! You wait here! I'll be right
back!

Banner walks away and enters the Cottage...

INT. COTTAGE - BANNER ESTATE - HUDSON, NY - CONTINUOUS

...closing the door behind him, muffling the sound of the
Helicopter rotors. He takes a breath, then moves
purposefully toward the safe. He kneels, like he has a
thousand times before. Grips the combination dial.

CLOSE ON -- his hand, slightly trembling.

CLOSE ON -- his eyes, panic blossoming.

He can't remember the combination.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE - RED HOOK, BROOKLYN - DUSK

A converted warehouse on the Red Hook waterfront -- CBD Shop and Art Gallery on the ground floor. Boarded up windows on the second and third.

Lebedeva crosses the street and enters the service entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - RED HOOK, BROOKLYN

Lebedeva exits a service elevator, approaches a large steel door. Behind it -- the THUMP-THUMP of EDM at high volume.

Lebedeva smiles at the small camera mounted in the ceiling. A beat, and as the door swings open...

REVERSE ANGLE -- Lebedeva's warm smile -- perfectly unaccented English --

LEBEDEVA
I love the new digs!

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - BANNER ESTATE - HUDSON, NY - NIGHT

The Marine Helicopter idles in the backyard. Agent McCarthy confers with Roger, but they can't be heard over the rotors.

Agent McCarthy gestures dramatically and finally makes his way to the Cottage. He tries the door, and finds it locked. Knocks --

AGENT MCCARTHY
Sir?

There's no reply. Another KNOCK. He tries the door again, harder now.

AGENT MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
Sir? You okay in there? You gotta open up!

No response.

AGENT MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
Goddamnit.

CUT TO:

INT. COTTAGE - BANNER ESTATE - HUDSON, NY - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A series of images intermittently illuminated by a blue strobe-light which rhythmically flashes every second, accompanied by a mechanical click with each burst.

A SAFE'S DIAL SPINNING, the NUMBERS a blur. They slow, coming into focus - and STOP on "79".

A HAND PULLS the SAFE'S HANDLE. It doesn't budge.

A DEEPER BREATH.

The DIAL. SPINNING AGAIN. "4". "16". "72".

The HANDLE. Another pull. No luck.

Quick cuts as Over and over the DIAL spins, three more numbers, each time a hand pulls, and fails to open it. That BREATH QUICKENS, until...

We REVERSE to find -- that full blown panic in Banner' eyes.

WE'RE CAUGHT UP TO THE COLD OPEN.

OUTSIDE - the SWEEP of FLASHLIGHTS in the night.

Banner moves quickly to the windows and slams closed a pair of heavy steel security doors which resemble storm shutters.

The blue strobe and its metronome rhythm emanate from a small alarm in the upper corner of the room.

Banner glance frantically darts around the room.

The cottage door RATTLES AGAIN. Harder this time. No longer someone trying to open it. Someone trying to break it down.

Banner uses all his strength to push a heavy wooden console in front of the door.

And now -- Banner ransacks the place. He takes BOOKS off the shelf, fanning their pages, hoping to shake something loose. He lifts trophies, looking for something underneath.

The door SLAMS again. A shoulder, maybe two. Clearly a more concerted effort on the outside to get in.

Banner opens his desk drawers, rummaging through them until -- a POST-IT note, three NUMBERS scribbled: "11". "19". "78".

And BOOM! Something else slams into the door. Something heavy. They are getting organized.

Banner moves back to the safe. Spins the dial. "11". "19".
"78". Tries the handle. That's not it.

BOOM! The door takes another violent hit. It's gonna break.

Banner focuses on a console, that PHOTO of him, O'Neill, and
his Interpreter in Saigon

Banner pushes the table in front of the door, just as --

BOOM! - Another HIT - blocked by the CONSOLE - sends the
PHOTO and many others CRASHING to the FLOOR.

A beat, and Banner looks down at the shattered glass. On the
back of that photo from Saigon -- a date there: April 29,
1975

And it clicks.

CLOSE ON: His hands as he enters the first digit: 4

BOOM. The Door begins to splinter.

ON his hands as he turns the dial to 29...

BOOM. We can now here muffled voices through the door.

ONE MORE TIME around to the number 75, and CLICK... the
tumblers engage and the safe opens, just as --

BOOM - the DOOR EXPLODES OFF ITS HINGES.

And Banner takes the Black Notebook from the safe.

A still beat. Agent McCarthy and the Agents in the broken
doorway. Banner holding the notebook.

Agent McCarthy surveys the ransacked room in disbelief,
catching his breath.

Banner opens the Notebook. His face falls --

BANNER

No...

CLOSE ON PAGE ONE:

*Gentle pretty thing
Who only had one spring
You bravely faced the world
Ready for anything*

Banner turns the page, horrified.

CLOSE ON PAGE TWO:

*Murder murder murder
Someone should be angry
The crime of the century
Who shot little Bambi*

Banner frantically leafs through the Notebook, only to find -- column after column, of one phrase, over and over again:

*Who Killed Bambi?!
Who Killed Bambi?!
Who Killed Bambi?!*

Banner looks up at Agent McCarthy --

BANNER (CONT'D)
Someone broke into this safe.
Replaced this book!

AGENT MCCARTHY
Sir, that's not possible --

Banner stands up and storms past him --

EXT. BACKYARD - BANNER ESTATE

-- across the backyard, past the helicopter, toward the house, storming inside --

INT. KITCHEN - BANNER ESTATE

--where Sheila now sits at the table, looking concerned. She looks up.

SHEILA
George? What's the matter? They
said you locked yourself in the
office?

At the counter, a **YOUNG MAN (28)** we've never seen before, turns around holding a plate.

YOUNG MAN
You had us worried, sir.

Owen stands frozen, his panic peaking --

BANNER
Who the hell are you?
(to Sheila)
Who the hell is this?

Sheila stands up, alarmed --

SHEILA
Who's who? I'm calling for a
doctor...

Pointing at the Young Man --

BANNER
I said, who the hell is this?!
Where's Oscar, goddamnit?

Sheila stops, stunned.

SHEILA
George - Oscar retired *five* years
ago.

As *Who Killed Bambi?*, once again beings to play --

SLAM CUT TO
BLACK.