

MONSTER

AN ANTHOLOGY SERIES

THE JEFFREY DAHMER STORY

"SILENCED"

OVER BLACK:

SILENCE. Hold a beat, until we FADE IN ON:

1

INT. HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM -- NIGHT

1

CHYRON: 1960. MILWAUKEE, WI.

The chaos of a delivery room as a young woman, SHIRLEY HUGHES (Black, 23), is in labor, surrounded by a BLACK DOCTOR and NURSE, and her MOTHER (50s), who's holding her daughter's hand, talking her through it. But despite the chaos we see, all we hear is total silence, which gives what we're watching a surreal, almost dream-like quality. *

JUMP CUTS as Shirley pushes, her face bleeding sweat. The Doctor sees the crown of the baby's head emerge. Tells Shirley to push HARDER. Shirley does, squeezing her mother's hand, the pain almost unbearable. Her mother comforts her (we read her lips): *"You can do this, baby. The Lord's got you."*

The Doctor sees more of the baby's body emerge. *"Come on, Shirley. One more big push."* Shirley PUSHES, screaming...

Suddenly the dream-like silence gives way to -- A BABY'S CRY.

SLO-MO over this single-track of audio as we watch the Doctor and Nurse pull the newborn out and pass him to Shirley. She's drenched in sweat but smiling. Her mother beams. (The proceeding dialogue is muffled, slightly distorted.)

SHIRLEY'S MOTHER

Look at him. He's perfect.

Shirley looks at her son with tears of joy, nods.

SHIRLEY

Yes, Tony. You're perfect.

CLOSE ON Shirley's newborn son, TONY HUGHES, so innocent and pure, his cries the only thing we hear.

SMASH TO:

2

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE WAITING ROOM -- 6 MONTHS LATER -- DAY 2

TONY'S POV. Silence. A world without sound. Shirley sits with baby Tony on her lap, her mother and her young daughter KIM (3) seated next to her. No one speaks. Shirley appears troubled, anxious, but tries to stay calm.

POV SHIFTS to the hearing person's world. The inner-office door opens and a PEDIARTIC NURSE (Black, 30s) steps out. *

(CONTINUED)

2

PEDIATRIC NURSE

Miss Hughes, Dr. Weeks will see you
now.

Shirley takes a breath, steeling herself, then passes Tony to
her mother and follows the nurse inside.

3

INT. PEDIATRICIAN'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

3

Shirley sits across from DR. LARRY WEEKS (Black, 50s).

*

DR. WEEKS

You were smart to bring him in,
based on his history.

SHIRLEY

I knew something was wrong. Last
couple weeks he hasn't been
respondin' right.

DR. WEEKS

(looking at Tony's chart)
So when Tony got treated for his
pneumonia, it appears your OBGYN
put him on a round of antibiotics.

SHIRLEY

Yes. Ampicillin and...I forget the
other one.

DR. WEEKS

Gentamicin.

SHIRLEY

That's it. *Gentamicin*. The doctor
said it was the most effective way
to treat it.

DR. WEEKS

In most cases, it is. But --
sometimes there are side-effects.
Recent studies have shown
Gentamicin to be potentially
ototoxic.

(off her confused look)
Harmful to a baby's hearing.

SHIRLEY

So...you think it might be an ear
infection?

DR. WEEKS

It's not an ear infection, Miss
Hughes.

(CONTINUED)

Anxiety clouds Shirley's face.

SHIRLEY

Then what is it, in your opinion?

DR. WEEKS

Due to the round of antibiotics he was on...I believe your son has suffered complete and most likely permanent hearing loss.

Shirley swallows hard, not yet willing to accept what Dr. Weeks is trying to tell her.

SHIRLEY

I... I don't --

DR. WEEKS

Your son is deaf, Miss Hughes.

ON SHIRLEY -- this unambiguous prognosis lands on her hard. WE HOLD on her face as Dr. Weeks continues --

DR. WEEKS (CONT'D)

Now, we can refer you to a few resources for parents in your situation. But I won't lie to you: your son is unfortunately going to have a very hard life...

WE PUSH IN on Shirley's face as Dr. Weeks's voice gradually fades out, the sounds going quieter and quieter, until all we hear is her BREATHING. A young mother in shock, devastated her son will have such a hard road ahead of him. SMASH TO:

TITLE SEQUENCE.

MONSTER: THE JEFFREY DAHMER STORY.

INT. MILWAUKEE, WI. -- CLUB 219 -- NIGHT

Disco lights flicker across TONY'S face in SLOW MOTION. His eyes are closed. PULL OUT to find Tony dancing with two friends, RUFUS (Black, gay and deaf) and FEDERICO aka RICO (working class Italian, gay and deaf).

CHYRON: 1990

We don't hear the music, just the VIBRATIONS of the BASS. Tony opens his eyes and sees MANNY, a Latino hunk, staring at him across the dance floor.

We hear "EVERYBODY EVERYBODY" by Black Box clearly as Manny dances toward Tony. A flush of excitement washes over Tony.

(CONTINUED)

4

They're face to face, close. Rufus and Rico gag as Tony and Manny GRIND and FEEL UP one another. There isn't a need for words. It's HOT! Manny unveils a mischievous grin and leans into Tony's ear. The music is drowned out; the vibrations of the bass remains.

MANNY
(distorted)
CAN I GET YOU A DRINK?!

Tony's confused. *Maybe the music is too loud?* Manny mimes swigging a cocktail and points to the bar. Tony nods. Manny heads to the bar. Tony looks at his friends.

Rufus shoos Tony to hurry up while Federico mimes a blowjob. Tony rolls his eyes. He dabs his face as he follows Manny.

At the bar, Manny puts up 2 fingers to the bartender as Tony sidles up to him. Awkward but cute. Manny extends his hand.

MANNY (CONT'D)
Hi, I'm Manny.

Tony watches his lips closely. He grabs a cocktail napkin and pen from his pocket. Manny watches him write: *I'm Tony.*

MANNY (CONT'D)
Aren't you cute?

Tony reads his lips. He smiles and SIGNS "*Thank you.*"

MANNY (CONT'D)
(a lightbulb)
Wait...you're deaf?

Tony gives an enthusiastic thumbs up as the BARTENDER slides their drinks. Manny goes to pay but Tony beats him. Tony hands Manny his drink and lifts his to CHEERS.

MANNY (CONT'D)
(drawing out syllables)
THANK YOU...BUT UHHHH...I'M GONNA
FIND MY FRIENDS. THANKS FOR THE
DRINK.

Manny rushes away. Tony puts on a brave face as he watches Manny get lost in the crowd. Off Tony, drinking, crushed, the room slowly growing silent --

5

INT. PIZZA PARLOR -- LATER

5

We find Tony sitting across from Rufus and Rico in a booth as they share a HALF-EATEN PEPPERONI PIE.

(CONTINUED)

Tony is picking at his slice. Rufus clocks this. We hear the sound of the space as usual; dialogue will be in SIGN LANGUAGE with SUBTITLES.

RICO

You should've just blown him. You don't need words for that.

RUFUS

Not all of us are sluts like you.

TONY

Sinking my knees onto a piss-stained bathroom floor ain't my idea of romance.

RICO

Who's said anything about romance? I'm getting mine when and where I can. Just because I'm deaf don't mean I'm dead, honey.

(opens his mouth wide)

This works!

RUFUS

You so nasty!

They both laugh as Tony sullenly picks at his food.

RUFUS (CONT'D)

Come on! Pick up your face. Hot Papi from the club ain't the only fish in the sea.

TONY

I'm tired of the disappointment, the rejection. Is it too much to ask for a decent guy to flirt with, to take out on a date? Just someone nice I can call my own?

RUFUS

It's hard to get some hearing person to see us as anything other than a project or charity case.

RICO

Speak for yourselves. I don't have issues finding a man.

TONY

But you can't keep one can you? I'm not giving my cookies to just anybody. He's gotta work for it.

(CONTINUED)

RUFUS

That cookie jar is sealed TIGHT!

They high-five.

TONY

I'm not studying no man anyway. I got dreams to make come true.

RICO

Is that why you're picking at that slice?

TONY

It's called discipline. If I'm gonna model, I need to keep it tight.

*

RUFUS

Here he go. Always with the plan.

TONY

I don't know about y'all but my days in Milwaukee are numbered. One of these days, I'm hitching a ride out of this town.

RUFUS

We can all go! Maybe to that deaf college in Madison -- your old stomping grounds. Find ourselves some cute deaf boys to date.

*
*
*
*
*

RICO

No, thank you. I'll stay put. Deaf men are too high maintenance.

RUFUS

No, you are high maintenance.

RICO

Whatever queen.

TONY

For real. I'm not gonna sit around here getting fat off pizza because some guy didn't pick me. If I'm gonna break into the modeling biz, I got shit to do.

*
*
*

RUFUS

And just how do you expect to break into that world, huh?

*
*
*

(MORE)

RUFUS (CONT'D)

When's the last time you saw a *
model in a fashion magazine that *
looked liked YOU? You got three *
strikes against you, babe: you're *
Black, you're gay AND you're deaf. *

TONY

I've been all those things my whole *
life. I haven't let them hold me *
back yet. And I won't now. *

(a beat)

My dreams are calling, and I'm *
going after what I want. You'll *
see. Everyone's gonna know my name. *

Rico and Rufus share a look.

RICO

Bitch are you gonna eat that or no?

Off the friends laughing and digging back in --

6 OMITTED 6 *

7 INT. HUGHES HOME -- EVENING 7

TONY'S POV. Tony sits around the table with his mother *
Shirley and his siblings in the middle of dinner. It's clear *
they're a close-knit family. (During the scene, Tony and his *
family all communicate using ASL. All dialogue is subtitled.)

Tony's sister KIM (early-20s) -- *

KIM

Tony, how's the new job?

TONY

It's okay. Pretty boring. Working *
on an assembly line isn't exactly *
my dream.

SHIRLEY

Hey, if you're getting a paycheck, *
that's a dream. You don't need to *
be rich 'n famous. Just keep on *
making me and the Lord proud.

Tony and Shirley share a smile. Her issues with his sexuality *
aside, Shirley's love for him is genuine.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Barbara, help me with these plates.

(CONTINUED)

7

Shirley and her daughter BARBARA (mid-20s) clear some of the dishes and exit into the kitchen. Stealing a moment when they can sign unobserved, Kim has a private exchange with Tony -- *

KIM
So, any hot dates?

Tony sighs.

TONY
Nope. I did write a love letter to Babyface. Still waiting for him to write back.

KIM
If he does, you better give me all the deets!

They laugh, a tender sibling moment. Suddenly, everyone except Tony reacts to a sound in the other room. Tony can't hear it but sees their reactions.

TONY
What's wrong? *

KIM
Front door.

Tony watches as Shirley exits the kitchen and goes to see who's at the door. Several seconds pass. For some reason, Tony's slightly anxious. Eventually, Shirley returns.

SHIRLEY
Tony, it's for you.

8

EXT. HUGHES HOME -- MOMENTS LATER

8

TONY'S POV. Tony comes to the door. It's Rufus, looking distraught. (The entire scene is in ASL and subtitled.)

RUFUS
I need to talk to you. Can you come out on the stoop?

TONY
What's wrong?

RUFUS
Just come out on the stoop.

Tony steps out to the porch.

TONY
You're scaring me. What is it?

(CONTINUED)

A beat. Finally --

RUFUS

Rico was murdered.

TONY

What...?! How? Was it a gay
bashing?

RUFUS

They don't know. Police found his
body last night, near Highway 45.
Mighta been there a few days.

(beat, breaking down)

Fucking Rico, man. It ain't right.

ON TONY -- He starts pacing, overcome with grief, confusion,
rage over the senseless death of his friend. Finally, unable
to contain himself or find the words, he lets out a LOUD
GUTTARAL SCREAM to the gloomy sky.

Rufus pulls Tony close, caressing him as he starts to cry.

PULL BACK to reveal Shirley, watching this exchange from the
front door. She feels sorry for her son's loss, but is also
uncomfortable at the sight of two men -- two *gay men* -- being
so intimate with each other. She turns away and heads inside,
a grief-stricken Tony still crying in Rufus's arms.

INT. HUGHES HOME -- TONY'S ROOM -- DAY

TONY'S POV. Tony is packing a large duffel bag, preparing to
move out. Shirley's there, trying to stop him (the entire
scene is in ASL and subtitled.)

SHIRLEY

Baby, I know you're upset over your
friend's death. But that's not a
reason to run away from family.

TONY

I appreciate you, Ma. But I'm not
running away. I'm running toward my
dream. Rico's death made me realize
life is short. None of us know how
long we got. And besides, I'm not
your little boy anymore. I'm a man.
It's about time I was on my own.

SHIRLEY

And why Madison?

*

(CONTINUED)

9

TONY

It's a college town. I'll meet
photographers. Get a portfolio.
Then when the time's right, maybe
I'll move to New York.

SHIRLEY

(pleading)

The world's a dangerous place,
Tony. You need to be close to
family. People who can protect you.

A beat. Tony knows his mother is worried about him for many
reasons.

*

TONY

I'll be careful, Ma. And I'll try
to always make you and the Lord
proud. I promise.

Tony kisses her on the forehead, then zips his bag shut,
grabs it and leaves.

10

EXT. MADISON STREET -- STORES -- DAY

10

*

Having just moved to Madison, a nervous but optimistic Tony
walks down the street and approaches some stores. He's
carrying a FOLDER. We're in a hearing person's world now. We
see a RECORD STORE ahead. There's a NOW HIRING SIGN in the
window. Tony struts into:

*

*

*

11

INT. RECORD STORE -- CONTINUOUS

11

*

He approaches the checkout counter where TWO EMPLOYEES stand.

MALE EMPLOYEE

How may I help you?

Tony smiles, opens his folder and hands him a completed
application. They both look it over, and take him in.

WOMAN EMPLOYEE

Hi Tony. I'm Margaret, the manager.

Tony pulls out his NOTEBOOK and PEN. He writes -- "Nice to
meet you Margaret." The employees share a look.

WOMAN EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

Oh, I'm sorry. We, uh, filled the
position this morning.

Tony signs THANK YOU, turns and leaves.

CUT TO:

12 INT. MOM & POP STORE -- LATER 12 *

Tony stands at the counter in front of the MANAGER. *

MANAGER *

Sorry. We're no longer hiring. *

Tony signs THANK YOU, turns and leaves. *

13 INT. THE BOTTOM HALF -- LATER 13 *

Tony enters a DENIM STORE and looks at a gigantic poster of a diverse group of models -- one resembles Tony. It gives him hope. An EMPLOYEE approaches. Tony reads his lips. *

EMPLOYEE #1 *

Welcome to The Bottom Half. We have an exciting promotion today. Buy 1 pair of jeans get a second pair half off. Let me know if you need any help. *

Tony nods, then heads to the counter. He steels himself as he watches MARCUS (mid-20s, the manager) helping a TRAINEE at checkout. *

MARCUS *

I'll be right with you, sir.

Tony nods and waits.

MARCUS (CONT'D) *

Thanks for shopping.

Marcus approaches Tony.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

How can we help you?

Tony pulls out his application, hands it to Marcus. He reviews it quickly, spots something then looks at Tony. Tony fears what's coming. The manager shocks Tony when he SIGNS.

MARCUS (ASL) (CONT'D)

So I see you went to Delavan?

TONY (ASL)

I did. How'd you learn how to sign?

MARCUS (ASL)

My little sister's deaf. She went to Delavan too. Our entire family signs. *

(CONTINUED)

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13 CONTINUED: 13

Tony smiles. *

14 INT./EXT. THE BOTTOM HALF -- LATER 14 *

Near the entrance, Tony shakes hands with Marcus and walks out slowly. As soon as he's outside, he does a dance. ABSOLUTE VICTORY. We can't help but root for him.

15 INT. TONY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT 15

A no frills, bare-bones one-room studio with a futon, coffee table, TV on a dresser, and family photos on the fireplace mantle. We find Tony in the bathroom. He's posing in the mirror with a BUTTON UP. He scrunches up his face, takes it off and puts on a POLO SHIRT. He looks in the mirror and shakes his head. He runs in the living room, puts on a TIGHT TANK that shows off his arms. He strikes a pose, takes himself in, and smiles. He reaches for COLOGNE, sprays it in the air, and walks through the mist.

16 EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS -- DAY 16

Students mill about a large lawn on a perfect fall day. Enter Tony, wearing his GAP finest, on a mission. He makes a beeline to a BULLETIN BOARD. He searches with determination, then sees a FLYER: "PHOTOGRAPHER SEEKING MODELS." He rips a TEAR-OFF TAB with a phone number and struts away.

17 INT. LOFT SPACE -- DAY 17

BRIGHT FLASH POP! We are in Tony's POV during a photo shoot in an industrial raw living/work space. His blurred vision slowly sharpens and we are close on DUANE, a photography student (geeky, awkward but sweet, 20s). Tony looks closely at his LIPS. (Duane's lines will be subtitled).

DUANE

Good! Now arch your back.

Tony pushes his butt out, smolders at the camera. FLASH! He keeps searching for Duane's lips.

DUANE (CONT'D)

Perfect! Chin down a bit.

Tony does it and smolders again. FLASH! He keeps lip-reading. Duane scans Tony's body with lust.

DUANE (CONT'D)

We got that. Why don't we try some with your shirt off.

Tony clutches the hem of his shirt. He's nervous and looks at Duane for approval. Duane smiles.

(CONTINUED)

DUANE (CONT'D)

I wouldn't have taken you for a shy
guy.

Tony flashes a mischievous grin and takes off his shirt. He
throws it toward Duane and his camera.

DUANE (CONT'D)

Aren't you cheeky? I love it.

Tony poses as Duane shoots. FLASH! POSE! FLASH! POSE! FLASH!

DUANE (CONT'D)

You really are something. Want a
Coke?

Tony nods and follows Duane to a pantry. He pulls out two
cans of COKE, hands one to Tony. They drink and Duane takes
Tony in, staring a beat too long. A thought --

DUANE (CONT'D)

If I talk really fast, would you
still be able to understand me?

Tony nods as he pulls out his notebook and pen. He writes
something, shows Duane: "Trust me, I can keep up... with your
mouth."

TONY'S POV. Sound drops out as Duane starts moving his mouth
really fast. Tony smiles, writes in his notebook, shows him:
"You said: 'You are sexy. I have never seen a man with such
beautiful brown skin. I'd do anything to lick it.'"

HEARING WORLD'S POV. Duane grins.

DUANE (CONT'D)

I sure would.

Duane moves in closer. Tony puts a finger up, wags it.

DUANE (CONT'D)

You're such a tease.

Tony shakes his head. Then writes something, shows him: "I'm
looking for LOVE. Does it live here?"

Duane steps back, respectfully, takes him in.

DUANE (CONT'D)

Why don't we get back to it, huh?

Tony smiles and nods. Off the two men, drinking their Cokes --

18

INT. HUGHES HOME -- NIGHT

18

Tony is visiting for the weekend, sitting around the table having dinner with his family. (The entire scene is in ASL and subtitled.) We notice that Tony's sister Barbara is noticeably pregnant. Shirley offers Tony a plate of mashed potatoes, Tony waves it off.

TONY

I'm fine, Ma.

SHIRLEY

No you're not. You're wasting away. Knew that city wouldn't treat you right. You need to put some meat on your bones.

TONY

Not if I want to be on the cover of GQ.

Shirley shoots a look of concerned disapproval to Kim, who doesn't bite.

*
*

KIM

It's gonna happen for you, T. I know it.

SHIRLEY

If he don't die of starvation first.

A beat.

TONY

So...why'd y'all want me to come visit this weekend? Not that I'm complaining. But what's with all the mystery?

Shirley, Kim, Barbara and the other siblings trade knowing looks around the table. Then --

BARBARA

I got my ultrasound back. I'm having a girl.

Tony smiles, so happy for her.

TONY

That's wonderful, Barbara. You know I can't wait to be an Uncle.

(CONTINUED)

18

BARBARA

And if I have your permission, I
want to name her after you. Tony.

Tony wasn't expecting this. He's deeply moved. Tears start to
well in his eyes. Overcome with emotion, he doesn't sign his
response, simply nods. Barbara throws her arms around him. *
Shirley smiles, grateful for this moment with her children.

19

INT. HUGHES HOME -- LATER THAT NIGHT

19

Shirley is by herself in the kitchen washing dishes, when
Tony exits his room (where he's staying for the weekend).
He's changed into a tight tank top, skinny jeans, and a
Halston cap. He ducks his head in the kitchen (all dialogue
is in ASL and subtitled).

TONY

I'll be home late, Ma. No need to
wait up.

Shirley notices his outfit.

SHIRLEY

Just be safe. *

Tony nods, leaves. A beat as Shirley is momentarily pained by
her fears and shame about her son's sexuality. She then
regains her composure, resumes washing the dishes.

PRE-LAP "GROOVE IS IN THE HEART" by Deee-light as we CUT TO:

20

INT. CLUB 219 -- NIGHT

20

Tony's with Rufus, back on his home turf, dancing wildly on
the crowded dance floor, moving to the vibrations of the
music. He feels totally free, no one staring at him like a
freak for his sexy, uninhibited dance moves.

SWITCH POV -- we now see Tony from the POV OF SOMEONE AT THE
BAR. It's a voyeuristic gaze, devouring Tony's every move.

Suddenly, Tony can feel that he's being watched. He turns
toward the bar, sees who's staring at him. Smiles.

REVEAL it's JEFF. Several drinks in. He shyly smiles back.

Rufus sees what's happening. He nudges Tony toward the bar.

RUFUS (ASL)

Go talk to him.

TONY (ASL)

It's okay.

(CONTINUED)

RUFUS (ASL)
Bitch, he's practically eye-fucking
you. *GO!*

Tony looks at Jeff again, definitely aroused by this handsome
boy-next-door. At last, he musters his nerve and makes his
way to the bar. Takes a seat next to Jeff.

JEFF
Can I buy you a drink?

Tony can read his lips, nods. Jeff flags down a bartender.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Two whiskey Cokes.
(back to Tony)
I like your dance moves.

Tony pulls out his notebook and pen. He writes: "Thank you."
Jeff reads it, puts two and two together.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Oh. So...you're deaf?

Tony nods. Then writes again: "Turnoff?" A beat, as Tony
awaits rejection. But instead, Jeff shakes his head no. He
then takes Tony's pen and writes: "I'm Jeff."

Relieved, Tony takes back the pen to respond: "Tony."

Jeff smiles, not going anywhere. Tony beams -- finally, he's
found someone willing to accept him as he is. JUMP CUT TO:

21 INT. CLUB 219 -- LATER

21

A TECHNO DANCE BEAT plays as Tony and Jeff dance on the
floor. We move in and out of TONY'S and the HEARING WORLD'S
POV as Tony shows off his amazing dance skills while watching
Jeff, drunk and sweaty, try to keep up. Jeff is an awkward
spaz, flailing his arms, not quite in sync with the beat.
Tony finds it cute, doesn't make fun of him. Finally, Jeff
takes off his shirt. Tony stares admiringly at Jeff's
GLISTENING TORSO. Rufus, who's nearby, does as well.

RUFUS
(mouths to Tony)
Damn! He's HOT!!

Tony chuckles. He then moves closer to Jeff, grinding him.
They lock eyes. Their sexual chemistry electric.

Jeff then mimes downing a drink. He's going to get another
from the bar. Does Tony want one? Tony hesitates. Jeff mimes:
Please, just one more? Finally, Tony relents. *Okay.*

(CONTINUED)

JEFF
(enunciates)
Be right back.

Jeff moves off to the bar, JUMP CUT TO:

22 INT. CLUB 219 -- LATER 22

At the bar, Jeff grabs two new drinks from the bartender.

JEFF
Thanks.

Jeff sets the drinks down, then digs into his pocket... and discreetly pulls out five Halcion pills. It's a scary moment, as he's about to put them in the drink intended for Tony...

...when just then, Jeff looks over at the dance floor and -- SLO-MO -- finds Tony, dancing, smiling, lit up by the lights, a joyful, care-free spirit who's not afraid of life.

PUSH IN ON JEFF. Seeing Tony in this moment, and feeling a tenderness he hasn't quite felt before, causes Jeff to have a change of heart. He slides the pills back into his pocket.

When the song/beat tempo changes, Tony joins Jeff at the bar, having no idea how close he came to being drugged. They trade seductive looks. Again, no words necessary. Jeff hands him one of the drinks, then grabs his. They clink glasses. Both clearly smitten. JUMP CUT TO:

23 INT. CLUB 219 -- LATER 23

The club's about to close, house lights on, patrons filing toward the exit. Thoroughly trashed, Jeff flags the bartender, tries to order another around. Tony signals for him to stop. *You've had enough. Time to go.*

JEFF
(enunciates)
Hey, Tony -- I like you. A lot.

Tony's flattered. Writes: "You're drunk." Jeff sloppily pulls Tony close --

JEFF (CONT'D)
Come home. With. Me.

Tony leans in closer, their lips nearly touching. He's tempted. But after a beat, he pulls away, writes something in his notebook, tears out the page, and hands it to Jeff.

Jeff reads it. Just two words: "Earn me."

(CONTINUED)

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23 CONTINUED: 23

Tony tenderly kisses Jeff...on the cheek. Then waves goodbye and walks off to join up with Rufus. They exit the club. Off Jeff, drunk and alone, taking in Tony's challenge, FADE OUT.

24 EXT. STREET/CLUB 219 -- ANOTHER NIGHT 24

Rufus and Tony are down the street from Club 219. Tony is on a mission, searching (all dialogue is in ASL and subtitled).

RUFUS

I can't believe I skipped "In Living Color" to help you chase this white boy.

TONY

He's not just any white boy.

RUFUS

Get a grip, girl. He is as basic as buttered bread.

TONY

And we ain't never seen you pass up a bread basket, have we?

RUFUS

Touche, bitch.

They round the corner, and leaning against the wall like the hottest thing Tony has ever seen, there's Jeff. He's put in real effort in his appearance. They lock eyes and "MORE THAN WORDS" by EXTREME BEGINS.

Rufus turns and waves as he walks away. Tony and Jeff rush toward one another. Tony links his arm into Jeff's and they enter the club. BEGIN MONTAGE:

25 EXT. STORE -- GLAMOUR SHOTS -- DAY (ESTABLISHING) 25

Jeff and Tony enter the store, smiling, smitten.

26 INT. STORE -- GLAMOUR SHOTS -- DAY (LATER) 26

Tony sits in a high-chair as a MAKEUP ARTIST and HAIR STYLIST fuss over Tony. They turn the chair around to show him off to Jeff who sits on a couch. They trade the widest smiles. *

CUT TO:

Jeff stands next to the hair stylist who now serves as the photographer shooting Tony as he works the camera, play-acting his dream of being a model. Jeff and Tony trade looks, Jeff looks like the proudest boyfriend. Tony then gestures for Jeff to take the camera. He wants Jeff to photograph him. *

(CONTINUED)

The hair stylist hands Jeff the camera and Jeff tentatively *
starts snapping photos of Tony. But gradually as he does, *
Jeff becomes more confident, giving directions to Tony, *
having fun with camera angles. He's playacting his dream too. *

27 INT. MILWAUKEE CLOTHING STORE -- LATER

27 *

In the dressing room area, Tony hands Jeff a pair of jeans. From below, we see Jeff slipping into them. He comes out, unsure. Tony signals to him to spin. Jeff looks around -- no one in sight. Jeff playfully twirls and strikes a cute pose. Tony laughs. He looks around, the coast is clear...he links his finger into Jeff's belt loop, pulls him in close. It's heated. Then a chipper EMPLOYEE enters with a rack of clothes. The guys pull apart. Jeff looks to Tony in his giggle fit, and feels a new sensation. *Is this love?* Off Jeff, confused by the flood of warmth, "More Than Words" ends and we END MONTAGE.

28 INT. DONUT SHOP -- LATER

28

Jeff and Tony stand at the counter. A TRAY of food between them. They trade looks as a CASHIER arrives with TWO DRINKS.

CASHIER

And here are your jumbo orange sodas. That'll be \$11.75.

Tony reaches for his wallet. Jeff stops him. Tony keeps his eye on Jeff as he watches him pay in SLO-MO: He clocks the way Jeff gently rolls out and fixes his bills, how tenderly he hands them to the cashier, and the way he smiles as he grabs the tray. Jeff leads him to a table.

Jeff hands Tony his food. Tony signs, THANK YOU. Jeff mirrors him. Tony wags his finger and shows him how to sign YOU'RE WELCOME. Jeff mimics Tony. Then pulls out his own notebook. There are dozens of scribbles on the pages. He flips to a clean page, writes something, shows Tony.

JEFF

You have to be the most interesting person I've ever met.

A bashful Tony signs THANK YOU. Jeff takes a beat and then remembers. He signs YOU'RE WELCOME. Tony smiles, impressed. He puts his hot dog down and pulls out his notebook. (All "dialogue" here is written/exchanged via their notebooks.)

TONY

You're a quick learner.

Jeff signs THANK YOU.

JEFF

And you could be a real model.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

That's my dream! I want to be a model. With everything in me.

JEFF

Well, you're a natural. The camera loves you. And I know. I do photography on the side.

TONY

We're the perfect couple! You = the genius photographer. Me = the model muse.

They laugh, then gaze into each other's eyes a beat. Suddenly, they notice a WHITE POLICE OFFICER sitting across the way, eyeing them with judgment. Disgusted at seeing not just a gay couple, but a gay interracial couple. (Though Jeff also wonders nervously: *is the cop somehow on to him?*) Jeff and Tony are momentarily unsettled, then try to ignore him.

*
*
*
*
*
*

Then, Jeff has a reflective thought.

*

JEFF

Is it exhausting? To have to work so hard to be understood.

*

TONY

Yeah. But if I don't make the effort, I'd have no one.

JEFF

But it must be tiring to have to always write everything down.

TONY

Doing it with you...feels OK.
(writes again, shows him)
You seem worth it.

Jeff smiles. A beat. Then writes --

JEFF

Will you...teach me to sign?

Tony flashes the brightest smile. Jeff feels all warm inside. Then Tony does the A, B, Cs. Jeff mirrors each letter. PULL OUT on the pair, signing --

CLOSE ON door 213. A hand enters frame and knocks. Reveal LIONEL DAHMER and SHARI DAHMER. They look worried. Shari has a casserole in hand. Jeff answers.

(CONTINUED)

A sense of relief washes over Lionel's face. His son looks good! Lionel and Shari trade looks, impressed.

JEFF
Hey dad. Shari. Come in.

Jeff closes the door. He takes the casserole from Shari.

SHARI
It just needs to be warmed up. Put it in the oven on 350 for 20 minutes.

JEFF
Gotcha. Dad, want anything to drink?

Shari takes a seat in the living room as Lionel follows his son to the kitchen. Lionel clocks a SMALL FREEZER nearby and furrows his brow. Jeff opens the fridge -- just soda, eggs, deli meat and bread in the fridge. No alcohol.

LIONEL
What're you having?

JEFF
A Coke.

LIONEL
That sounds good.

JEFF
Shari?

SHARI (O.S.)
Water's good for me.

Jeff pours water into a glass. Hands a Coke to his dad.

LIONEL
You look good son.

They return to the living room. Lionel takes the place in. It's spotless, organized. Lionel checks out a new AQUARIUM -- with African cichlids and tiger barbs, live plants; well-tended to. Jeff hands Shari her glass.

SHARI
You hire a housekeeper or something, hon?

JEFF

No. Just figured I should take pride in where I live. Take care of it -- like you taught me, Dad.

LIONEL

That's good son. Got you some new friends I see?

JEFF

Yeah. They keep me busy. I find myself sitting there watching them swim around for hours on my days off. I enjoy reading about how to keep the nitrate and ammonia down to safe levels. They're a good distraction.

LIONEL

Pets keep you honest, and out of trouble.

JEFF

For sure. You know, I haven't been drinking much.

SHARI

You quit?

JEFF

Quit drinking alone. That's for sure. It wasn't doing me no good. Don't drink on weekdays no more either. Don't get me wrong. I'll have a drink or two at the bar but that's it.

LIONEL

That's good son.

Lionel fights emotion; he never thought his son would be this stable, this normalized. A beat then --

JEFF

I wanna thank you Dad, you know. For sticking with me. I know I haven't always been easy. But I promise things are turning around for me. I got a promotion at work, a little more pay, a new friend in my life...I'm happy.

SHARI

Oh, Jeff!

(CONTINUED)

LIONEL

That's good son. Real good.
I don't know how to tell you how
happy it makes me to know my son is
OK.

(a beat, uncomfortable)

A friend?

JEFF

A good friend.

Off Jeff, confident --

INT. CLUB 219 -- NIGHT

SILENCE. Just throbbing lights. JEFF AND TONY, on the dance floor, sweatily dancing to the pulsing music, bodies close. Although they're surrounded by a sea of drunk partygoers, it's as if it's just the two of them. Almost kissing. But not quite there. Deep eye contact.

EXT. OXFORD APARTMENTS -- NIGHT

CRANE DOWN to find Jeff and Tony approaching Jeff's apartment building. This is the last scene of Episode 5, but replayed from TONY'S POV without sound. Jeff says something aloud -- "Here it is -- home sweet home" -- but because Jeff's back is facing Tony, Tony can't read his lips. Jeff turns around. Sees Tony's questioning look. Tries signing.

JEFF (ASL)

This was a building lived in.

Tony's utterly confused. Shakes his head, still not understanding, chuckling at how bad Jeff's signing is.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Sorry. I've been tryin' to learn it.

(taking his hand)

Here. *JUST READ MY LIPS*.

Jeff puts Tony's fingers up to his lips as he enunciates:

JEFF (CONT'D)

I live here.

Tony nods with a smile. This intimate moment holds, until finally they walk inside the building.

32

INT. OXFORD APARTMENTS -- APT 213 -- LATER

32

Tony sits on the couch in the living room. Jeff's in the kitchen. He grabs two Cokes from the fridge. Shows the cans to Tony: Does he want one? Tony gives him a thumbs up.

(CONTINUED)

Tony takes in Jeff's apartment, notices the aquarium. He watches the exotic fish swim around, captivated.

Meanwhile, Jeff pours the Cokes into two cups. Then, making sure Tony doesn't notice, he takes out five HALCION pills from his pocket. But just as he's about to drop them in Tony's drink, he stops. Looks over at Tony. Seeing him there, Jeff again feels a tenderness, a connection, he hasn't felt before. Decides he can't do it. He slips the pills back in his pocket, grabs the drinks, heads over to the couch.

Jeff hands a drink to Tony. They take sips, lock eyes for a moment. It's slightly awkward. Finally, Tony takes out his notebook. Scribbles. Shows Jeff: "What should we do now?"

Jeff thinks. Suddenly gets an idea.

33 INT. APARTMENT 213 -- BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER 33

FIND Jeff rummaging through a box in his closet, searching for something. At last he finds what's he's looking for: an old shoebox with the words "INFINITY LAND" Sharpie'd on top.

Over the following, we hear Jeff's V.O. --

JEFF (V.O.)
So there's this game I made up when
I was a kid. It's called Infinity
Land...

34 INT. APARTMENT 213 -- LIVING ROOM -- LATER 34

Jeff is setting up the "board" -- an old piece of cardboard that's been crayoned with an elaborate series of colorful concentric spirals, all leading to a large white circle in the middle (think a fucked-up version of Candyland).

JEFF (V.O.)
Your solider starts from that end.
Mine starts from there.

The "soldiers" are two small chicken wishbones, which Jeff places on opposite ends of the board. He then rolls a pair of dice.

JEFF (V.O.)
Each time we roll the dice, our
soldier travels along the spirals.

Demonstrating, Jeff rolls a five. Moves his solider five steps. Tony watches, trying his best to follow the rules.

(CONTINUED)

JEFF (V.O.)
And whoever reaches Infinity Land
first wins the game.

Jeff points to the large white circle in the middle.

JEFF (V.O.)
But -- there's a catch.

Jeff puts his soldier on a square near the white circle, then
moves Tony's piece to a square just adjacent to Jeff's.

JEFF (V.O.)
If your guy gets too close to mine,
he disappears into the vortex.

Jeff violently swipes Tony's soldier off the board.

ON TONY, trying to understand this unusual rule --

TONY (ASL)
Why?

JEFF
Because that's the game.

TONY (ASL)
(still confused)
But why?

Jeff snaps, getting frustrated --

JEFF
You just can't. If you get too
close to me, you can't make it to
Infinity Land.

This flash of anger from Jeff startles Tony. He senses that
the rules of this game reveal some of Jeff's own personal
fears and insecurities.

TONY (ASL)
Okay.

CUT TO:

LATER. Jeff and Tony are deep into playing an actual game,
both their soldiers just a few moves away from the center
white square. It's Tony's turn. He rolls a six. He moves his
soldier, which ends up aligning right next to Jeff's.

Jeff and Tony share a look -- they know what that means.

(CONTINUED)

Jeff's about to swipe Tony's soldier off the board, effectively ending the game...when Tony reaches for Jeff's hand and stops him.

Tony grabs his notebook, writes something down, shows Jeff: "We don't have to play that way anymore." Then writes down something else: "We can make our own rules."

Beat. Jeff takes that in. He'd never considered that before. The rules of the game have been so fixed in his mind, he never thought they could change. That he could change.

After some hesitation, Jeff puts Tony's soldier back on the board.

JEFF

Okay.

They lock eyes. It's a tender, silent moment, their defenses down, both of them completely vulnerable. Jeff smiles, filled with a newfound hope for the future...the hope that with Tony, he can change. He leans in to kiss Tony on the lips... but Tony stops him. Jeff's a bit thrown. Tony points to his cheek: *Earn me*. Jeff smiles. Realizes this is still a courtship. He sweetly kisses Tony on the cheek. *

And as they gaze into each other's eyes, we FADE OUT. *

FADE IN: After a night of romantic intimacy, Jeff and Tony are spooning and asleep under the sheets. Suddenly, Tony rouses, looks at his watch. Reacts. *Shit*. He pulls away from Jeff, gets up, starts dressing.

Jeff wakes up. Distressed to see that Tony's leaving.

JEFF (ASL)

Don't go. Stay.

TONY (ASL)

I can't. Work.

Jeff gets up, anxiety ramping, feeling he's not in control.

JEFF

When will I see you again?

Tony's tying his shoes and isn't able to read Jeff's lips. Jeff GRABS him by the shoulders, forcing him to look at him -- *

JEFF (CONT'D)

When will I see you again?

35 "Silenced"
CONTINUED:

Pink Revisions

6/15/21 26A.
35

TONY (ASL)
(startled by Jeff's grip)
I'll be back next week.

(CONTINUED)

JEFF

Next week? How do I know that?

A beat. Tony removes Jeff's hands from off his shoulders.

TONY (ASL)

Trust.

Tony steps out of the room. HOLD ON JEFF, his mind turning, wondering whether or not he should trust Tony to keep his word. All his fears and insecurities roiling... not to mention his compulsion.

He looks over to the bedside table. He races to open it, revealing suggestive POLAROIDs. And a blood-stained HAMMER.

Jeff stares at it, conflicted.

36 INT. OXFORD APARTMENTS -- APT 213 -- LIVING ROOM -- MORNING 36

Tony's gathering the rest of his things as Jeff steps out the bedroom. Tony approaches Jeff. *

TONY (ASL)

Next week. I promise.

He then writes something down on a page in his notebook, tears out the page, hands it to Jeff. Jeff reads it: "I won't disappear."

The moment holds. Tony leans in for a kiss.

NEW ANGLE. REVEAL that Jeff is holding the hammer behind him. A fraught beat as his hand grips it tighter...

NEW ANGLE. Tony pulls out of their kiss, then heads for the door. Jeff realizes he's about to lose his chance to stop him...but before he's able to act, Tony opens the door, waves one last goodbye to Jeff, striking a fun pose.

ON JEFF, as the door CLOSES. Beat. He looks over at the fish in the aquarium, his only other witnesses to this surprising act of restraint. Could he actually be learning to love someone and trust they'll come back? FADE TO BLACK.

37 INT. POLICE STATION -- DAY (THE NEXT DAY) 37

FADE IN: Camera finds OFFICER CLYDE REYNOLDS, 40s, as he plops down at his desk, coffee and donut in hand, preparing to take a statement from a woman seated across from him --

OFFICER REYNOLDS

Okay. What's your son's name again?

(CONTINUED)

REVERSE TO REVEAL Shirley Hughes, looking deeply distraught. Reynolds jots down her answers as she gives them.

SHIRLEY

Tony -- Anthony Hughes.

OFFICER REYNOLDS

Age?

SHIRLEY

Thirty-one.

OFFICER REYNOLDS

Last time you saw him?

SHIRLEY

Two days ago.

OFFICER REYNOLDS

(skeptical)

And what makes you think he's missing?

*

SHIRLEY

He was staying with me over the weekend, but he didn't come home yesterday. He hasn't contacted me or his sisters, which isn't like him. And I called his job in Madison and they said he didn't show up for work.

OFFICER REYNOLDS

Do you know the last place he went?

SHIRLEY

He said he was going to see a movie.

OFFICER REYNOLDS

By himself?

SHIRLEY

With a friend I think.

OFFICER REYNOLDS

Know the friend's name?

SHIRLEY

I didn't ask.

OFFICER REYNOLDS

Was this a lady friend?

(CONTINUED)

SHIRLEY

(gets what's implied)

I don't think so.

(then)

My son... he's --

She pauses. Reynolds waits.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

...deaf.

Reynolds adds that to his report.

OFFICER REYNOLDS

(still skeptical)

Is it possible maybe he left town
and just didn't tell you?

SHIRLEY

Tony wouldn't do that. He's a good
boy. A good son.

A beat. We begin to SLOWLY PUSH into Shirley.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

When I had him, I remember asking
God: Please, just make my baby
normal. Give him ten fingers, ten
toes. Well, God gave him that. But
he gave him another cross to bear.

(beat, her emotions
overwhelming her)

Life's always been hard for him.
You can't imagine what it's like
going through the world, not being
able...but Tony never let it bring
him down. Whereas most folks just
see the rain, he sees the rainbow.
That's who he is. And he's always
been true to his word, too. So if
he said he was gonna come 'n see me
before he went back to Madison,
ain't no way he'd break that
promise.

OFFICER REYNOLDS

(unmoved by her story; as
if interrogating her:)

Any history of drug abuse or gang
violence? Anything you're leaving
out?

Shirley is offended at the insinuation, and at his tone. A part of her wants to explode at Reynolds. Instead, she wipes away the tears in her eyes, answers calmly --

SHIRLEY

No. Like I said. He's a good boy.

38 EXT. DOWNTOWN MILWAUKEE -- VARIOUS -- THE NEXT DAY 38

CLOSE ON A MISSING PERSON'S FLYER being stapled to a telephone pole -- with a photo of Tony. PULL OUT to reveal Shirley stapling the flyer. She's holding a stack of them. Desperate to find her son.

QUICK CUTS of her and her daughter Barbara (several months pregnant) stapling the flyers all over downtown Milwaukee. Outside a church. A movie theater. A soul-food restaurant.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. CLUB 219 -- NIGHT 39

Shirley is outside. She's staring at the missing person's flyer for ERROL LINDSEY (which we first saw in Episode 1). She's about to staple Tony's flyer next to Errol's... when she sees TWO GAY GUYS (tight clothes, effeminate) exit the club, smoking, trading bitchy jokes.

Seeing the two men makes Shirley uncomfortable.

She leaves without posting the flyer.

40 EXT. PARK -- DUSK 40

Shirley, with her children behind her, addresses a modest crowd of people (most of them black, some of them gay, some deaf) who've come out to help look for Tony. She signs for the benefit of Tony's deaf friends who are there. *

SHIRLEY

I just want to thank y'all so much for your support. Whether you've put up flyers or donated money or brought food to the house, it means the world to us. The police aren't searching for Tony, so we have to take matters into our own hands. And we're not gonna stop until he's back home safe. Just keep on prayin' for him.

The crowd starts to disperse. Several people walk up to the front to put money into a large DONATION JAR.

(CONTINUED)

40

CLOSE ON A HAND as it puts a twenty dollar bill into the jar.

REVEAL it's Jeff. Looking distressed. On edge. He then eyes Shirley, who's thanking one of her church friends for coming. Jeff looks as if he wants to go up and say something to her, to tell her something that's weighing heavily on him. But he's torn. At last, he takes a nervous step toward her... when among the crowd he notices Rufus there, in a small circle with some of Tony's other gay and deaf friends.

Jeff turns away, hoping Rufus didn't see him.

He leaves the park.

41

INT. LIQUOR STORE -- EVENING (LATER)

41

*

JUMP CUTS as Jeff grabs a couple of items: a six pack of beer; cheap wine; two cans of beans. JUMP CUT to Jeff paying for them at the register, then briskly heading out.

42

INT. OXFORD APARTMENTS -- APT 213 -- EVENING (LATER)

42

*

Jeff enters with his liquor store bags. Visibly agitated. He sets them down on the kitchen table...retrieves the six pack. He quickly cracks open a can and downs the whole thing. JUMP CUTS as he downs another. Then another. Trying to obliterate whatever emotions he's feeling.

CUT TO: Jeff, quite drunk, sitting at the kitchen table, nearly a dozen ID's/DRIVERS' LICENSES laid out in front of him -- all belonging to Jeff's most recent string of victims. Jeff picks one up. It shows the photo of ERROL LINDSEY (the same photo that we saw on his missing persons' flyer). Unlike the other IDs, there's a phone number on it.

*
*
*
*

Jeff grabs the phone. Hesitates. Takes another chug of beer. Then dials the number on Errol's ID card. After a few rings, someone answers --

RITA ISBELL (ON PHONE)

Hello?

(silence)

Hello, is someone --

JEFF

Is this the family of Errol
Lindsey?

RITA ISBELL (ON PHONE)

Yes. I'm his sister. Who's this?

A beat, then --

(CONTINUED)

JEFF

You should stop looking for him.
He's gone for good. Into the
vortex.

RITA ISBELL (ON PHONE)

Into the what?. Who is this?!

Jeff doesn't speak.

*

RITA ISBELL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

HELLO?? Where's my brother? Who the
fuck is --

JEFF

-- I'm sorry.

*

Jeff HANGS UP. He may have just apologized, but his face
looks totally affectless. His emotions numb now. As if he's
lost the ability to feel...anything. As if he too has gone
into the vortex.

*

*

*

*

He takes another chug of beer, finishing the can, then throws
it to the floor. CAMERA PUSHES IN on his face, as we CUT TO:

*

INT. OXFORD APARTMENTS -- APT 213 -- **THREE DAYS EARLIER** 43

ON JEFF, where we last saw him after Tony left his apartment.
Marveling at his self-restraint, wondering if he made the
right decision. Suddenly -- there's a KNOCK on his door.

Jeff goes to open it...it's Tony. He smiles, embarrassed,
holds up a page in his notebook: "Left my keys."

Jeff looks at Tony for an uncertain beat. Blinks. Then
smiles. He opens the door wider, lets Tony inside. Tony heads
for Jeff's bedroom to look for his keys...

... but we STAY ON JEFF. PUSH IN CLOSE as we watch his prior
self-restraint give way to insecurity. Fear. Compulsion. The
darkness inside him taking over. He shuts the front door
ominously. Looks toward the bedroom, a dark sadness in his
eyes, as if he wishes he didn't have to do what he's about to
do. But feels he doesn't have a choice.

NEW ANGLE. Jeff raises the hammer he's still holding. And as
he clears frame to head into the bedroom, we SMASH TO:

44 INT. OXFORD APARTMENTS -- APT 213 -- BEDROOM -- **PRESENT** 44

JEFF, sinking down on the mattress, beer in hand. As he drinks it, CAMERA PULLS OUT WIDER...until at last we REVEAL Tony's dead body lying face down on the mattress (it's the same angle we saw of Tony's body in Episode 2, though back then we didn't know who he was -- we do now).

Jeff looks down at Tony. Starts caressing his head affectionately. Then moves down to his neck, then to his shoulder, then to his arm, eventually stopping at TONY'S BICEP. Jeff's fingers gently massaging the supple muscle.

ON JEFF. Staring at Tony's bicep with a mixture of sexual arousal and fascination and confusion. Longing for a deeper connection with this latest victim.

45 INT. HUGHES HOME -- NIGHT 45

CAMERA FINDS Barbara and Tony's other siblings clearing the table after dinner. DOLLY TO FIND Shirley there. She stands, starts to help. Barbara motions for her to sit back down.

BARBARA

It's okay, Mama. We got it.

Shirley sits. She looks drained. Exhausted with worry and fear. CAMERA PUSHES IN on her face, her mind thinking back to something, as we MATCH CUT TO:

46 INT. HUGHES HOME -- **FOUR NIGHTS EARLIER** 46 *

SHIRLEY, seated in her same chair, having dinner with Tony. Just the two of them. (All dialogue is in ASL and subtitled.)

SHIRLEY

So that new place you started working at? Is it really a...

TONY

A condom factory? Yep. Sure is. All they make is condoms.

SHIRLEY

Seems like they should manufacture something else.

TONY

Hey, a lot of people need condoms. Even them holly rollers you see at church every Sunday.

(CONTINUED)

SHIRLEY

(laughs)
Boy, you better quit.
(beat)
But you're getting along okay out there? Making friends?

TONY

A couple.

Beat.

SHIRLEY

I saw another story on TV about that AIDS crisis. It's really getting bad.

Tony slumps. Preparing for yet another diatribe about the evils of homosexuality.

TONY

I know.

SHIRLEY

I told the Pastor he needs to stop calling it God's punishment. I don't like him spewing all that hate.

Tony looks at his mom, surprised, touched. This is Shirley's way of saying she supports her son, and Tony knows it.

TONY

I'm glad you spoke up.
(looks at his watch)
I've gotta go. Meeting up with my friend.

SHIRLEY

Which movie you guys going to see?

TONY

That new one with Jodie Foster.

SHIRLEY

Oh, yeah. That looks good.

TONY

Want me to wash the plates?

SHIRLEY

I got 'em. Go on. But don't head back to Madison tomorrow without saying goodbye.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

You know I won't.

Tony gets up and starts off toward the front door. But before he leaves, he stops, turns back around...and holds up two fingers and one thumb, which in ASL means --

TONY (CONT'D)

I love you.

Shirley smiles, returns the sign. (This sign will reappear and have deeper significance in a later episode, when Shirley reads a moving poem about Tony during Jeff's trial.)

A beat, as this loving moment between mother and son holds. Tony walks out.

QUICK FLASH to young Shirley in the delivery room, having just given birth to Tony, holding him in her arms and beaming pure joy in these first moments with her son.

BACK ON SHIRLEY, smiling. As she watches Tony leave, proud of the man her son has become, MATCH CUT TO:

SHIRLEY, at the table, her eyes glassy as she recalls this recent moment with her son...praying it's not the last. PRE-LAP the competing sounds of a CAR ALARM (in the real world) and Bach's *Goldberg Variations* (score), as we CUT TO:

ANGLE ON THE AQUARIUM with a view to the kitchen -- through the glass and swimming fish we can see Jeff preparing dinner. We dolly out and over to get a better view. JUMP CUTS as we see him put a chunk of MEAT on a skillet over the stove -- open a can of beans -- put the beans in a pot to boil -- add some oil and salt to the meat -- drape a nice tablecloth over the table -- pop open the wine and pour a glass.

The aggravating sounds of the CAR ALARM and a YOUNG COUPLE having an argument bleed in from outside. Jeff looks irritated by all the noise, but tries to block it out.

CUT TO Jeff using a spatula to remove the well-cooked meat from the skillet. He places it on a plate next to the beans, then takes the plate to the table and sits down.

He looks at the meal he's prepared. Focuses in on the meat. Anxious, his heart firing like a piston. He grabs the fork and knife, then cuts a piece and hooks it onto the fork.

He hesitates. Finally, he closes his eyes and puts the piece in his mouth. And in that moment, as he eats, the sounds of the car alarm, the angry couple, and the rest of the outside world (as well as our score) get softer. Softer. Fading away.

Till at last...there's only SILENCE. Jeff opens his eyes. Savoring this deeper connection. A new phase in his killing has begun.

END EPISODE