

Apocalypse Slough

Episode 1

by

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1

OPENING SEQUENCE

1

Space. The Hubble Telescope floats in orbit. Silence. Suddenly an asteroid hurtles past, plunging towards earth.

JAMIE (V.O.)
See that? That's what's going to
kill everyone. Any second now.

WHOOSH. The camera starts flying even quicker, overtaking the asteroid, plunging down to earth. Zooming in first to an arid desert town. We fly over thousands of Muslims on their knees, all frantically praying in the same direction-

JAMIE (V.O.)
Doesn't matter who you are, who you
pray to...

WHOOSH- we zoom back in the air, hurtling across desert & oceans to Thailand. Thousands of people on a beach, partying like there's no tomorrow. Hedonistic carnage.

JAMIE (V.O.)
Black or white, straight or gay,
rich or poor.

WHOOSH- we fly back out over the ocean, down to Antarctica: two scientists alone in the icy vastness, on the top of a cliff. One smiles, nods, takes the other's hand. They walk to the cliff edge and then leap together:

JAMIE (V.O.)
Yep. It's judgment day. The actual
apocalypse. And where am I?

WHOOSH. Away. Over the ocean. Up to Britain. Zooming in west of London, the suburbs of suburbia.

JAMIE (V.O.)
I'm here, in Slough. Or rather-

We hit the ground and keep going. Burrowing down through the earth till we emerge into:

2

INT. SLOUGH. BUNKER. IMPACT DAY

2

JAMIE (V.O.)
Under Slough. Watching it on telly.

We're in a subterranean nuclear bunker. JAMIE slouches in a chair, completely freaked out. He's 30-ish, a likable everyman, dishevelled, wearing only a grubby t-shirt & boxers. As we pull out, we realise his chair is made of cash. Millions of pounds, now worthless. His frazzled mood isn't helped by the fact that someone offscreen is repeatedly smacking his chair. It's incredibly annoying.

(CONTINUED)

1

Meanwhile on the TV, the newsreader grips the desk, trying not to look scared. In the bottom corner a clock counts down.

NEWSREADER

One minute now, one minute. These pictures coming live from Hubble-

The Mona Lisa leans against the chair. Not a poster. Not a print. The actual Mona Lisa. JAMIE picks it up, looks at it-

JAMIE (V.O.)

I know what you're thinking. Cheer up. You're one of the lucky ones. My question is- am I? I mean, have you seen who else is in here?

JAMIE looks around at his companions. A blood-spattered woman (RHONDA) weeps profusely. She wears orange prison fatigues. Sparks fly: someone offscreen is angle grinding shackles off her. The shackles fall off, and as she turns away we see the words **DEATH ROW** on the back of her fatigues.

JAMIE (V.O.)

Who are these people? How the hell did this happen? An hour ago, I was a dead man. Now suddenly I've got a future.

We cut to a nun laughing. *Really* laughing. Way too happy in the circumstances. She's crossing herself repeatedly as she stares down at something in her hands. It's a home pregnancy test. And it's positive.

NEWSREADER (O.S.)

-live feeds here from Times Square. Beijing. Jerusalem, there.

Next to the TV a large chest jiggles around: from inside-

MUFFLED VOICE (O.S.)

Help! Let me out!

We finish back on JAMIE, who takes one last look round the room at the bizarre scene. He looks troubled.

JAMIE (V.O.)

You know that valley in Africa everyone's DNA can be traced back to? In millions of years, will they say the same thing about Slough?

NEWSREADER

The human race united as never before. It's time to brace ourselves, to say goodbye.

(CONTINUED)

JAMIE (V.O.)
Are we the future of mankind? I
mean, seriously???

NEWSREADER
And may god have mercy on us all.

Everyone in the room braces themselves. The clock ticks
down... oh shit...oh shit... As the clock hits zero we:

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. SLOUGH. JAMIE'S BEDROOM. DAWN 1

Caption: **34 Days Earlier.** Fade in. The room is immaculately
tidy. JAMIE's in bed, wide awake, staring at a photo on his
bedside table: JAMIE on his wedding day, young, happy,
carefree. His bride, LAYLA, looks equally besotted.

The bedside clock flips to 6.30. The alarm goes. JAMIE snaps
out of his reverie, sighs.

Now we cut quickly as JAMIE gets ready. Hair: shampooed.
Chin: shaved. Teeth: flossed. Sink: wiped. Shower: wiped.
Sink: wiped again, just to make sure.

Shoes: polished. Shirt: ironed. Hair: combed. Wardrobe: flung
open. 5 suits, hangers labelled Mon-Fri. He picks Tuesday.

Finish on JAMIE looking in the mirror. He clips a badge onto
his jacket. It reads **Jamie Wilson - Branch Manager**. Overall
impression- unlike the scruffy JAMIE we saw in the opening,
this version is immaculately neat, tidy, precise. Anal.

He sees something on the mirror, wipes it with his hankie.

JUMP CUT TO:

A webcam shot. JAMIE in his bedroom recording a message.

JAMIE
Hey lovely. Message two thousand
four hundred and ten... it's my
birthday.
(unenthusiastic)
Yay. Seventh one without you. And
it's not getting any easier.
Thought it would but...nothing
changes. I miss you just as much as
I did on day one. So... usual
stuff. If you're out there, give me
a sign. Anything. Just a little
birthday present...

4

INT. SLOUGH. JAMIE'S KITCHEN. DAY 1

4

Sand running through an egg timer. JAMIE is boiling eggs. His best mate DAVE wanders in. The polar opposite of JAMIE—overweight, scruffy, a slob. He belches loudly, JAMIE sighs.

JAMIE

Why are you up this early?

DAVE

Haven't been to bed yet.

(adopts nerdy nasal whine)

Ah, having the usual, are we? Every morning I go to work on an egg. The egg is a protein gold-mine.

JAMIE

Why are you doing that voice?

DAVE

(nasal)

Why are you doing that voice?

(JAMIE sighs)

Following extensive experimentation, I've found three minutes and forty seconds gives me precisely the degree of runniness I like. Consistency of consistency, that's the key.

He grabs the egg timer and childishly turns it over. Smiles triumphantly. JAMIE pretends not to be bothered.

JAMIE

I'm also timing it on my watch. So there. I'm the winner. By the way, it's Tuesday. No, don't sigh. Just pay the rent.

The camera drifts away from them towards the window. Through it we see a transit van parked across the street—

DAVE

I spend a disproportionate amount of my life having this conversation.

5

INT. SLOUGH. VAN. CONTINUOUS

5

A blacked-out surveillance van packed with equipment. Two people listening intently on headphones. HIGGS (female, 20s, reasonable) and ARDEN (male, 40s, overly macho). Coffee cups, food wrappers etc. Overall effect: slightly sinister.

JAMIE (O.S.)

So set up a direct debit. Then we never have to speak again.

(CONTINUED)

4

DAVE (O.S.)
Yeah. But then I'd be on the grid.

JAMIE (O.S.)
(exasperated)
What grid?

INT. SLOUGH. JAMIE'S KITCHEN. DAY 1

JAMIE now sits at the breakfast bar eating, trying not to let his frustration show that DAVE is nicking soldiers and talking with his mouth full, spraying crumbs.

DAVE
So I was thinking. Saturday. Me and you should go clubbing. You know, like we used to in days of yore?

JAMIE
Why would I want to do that?

DAVE
Cos... it'll be fun?

JAMIE
Will it though? Or will we spend most of the night queuing? And then find whatever shoes I'm wearing are wrong?

DAVE
You might meet a girl.

JAMIE
(neatly wiping crumbs away)
I don't want to meet a girl.

DAVE
Alright, a boy...
(JAMIE rolls his eyes)
Seriously. It'll do you good. Too many routines, Jamie, not enough chaos. You need some *life* back in your life.

INT. ITALY. CONVENT CHAPEL. DAY 1

An elderly nun, dead, lying in her coffin. Caption: **Santa Teresa di Beneficenza Convent, Umbria.** Next to the coffin a nun (FRANCOISE) prays loudly, face raised to God, a look of jubilant exultation on her face. She's annoying.

FRANCOIS

Ave Maria, gratia plena; Dominus
tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui
Iesus.

An assortment of nuns are scattered around (in contrast to FRANCOISE they all pray in silence).

We push in on CELINE, late 20s, attractive, struggling to concentrate on her prayer. She shoots an irritated look at FRANCOISE showing off, tries to re-concentrate on her prayer.

Now an elderly nun behind her starts coughing. Trying to dislodge phlegm stuck in her throat. It's horrible. CELINE, chews her lip, tries to block it out.

Now the nun in front puts her little finger in her ear and wiggles it furiously, creating a horrible squelching sound. CELINE sighs, looks to heaven. Give me strength.

8

INT. ITALY. CONVENT CORRIDOR/ CELINE'S ROOM. DAY 1

8

CELINE walks back to her room. As she enters she stops short, surprised. MOTHER SUPERIOR (elderly, kind) is in there.

CELINE (SUBTITLE)

Mother Superior? I'd no idea you
were- My room isn't normally such a
mess.

The room is a tip. Embarrassed, CELINE starts clearing a space for them to sit. MOTHER SUPERIOR looks at her, amused.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (SUBTITLE)

Yes it is, Celine... I was looking
at your books.

MOTHER SUPERIOR runs a finger along the spines- a Bible, loads of travel guides & foreign language dictionaries.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (SUBTITLE) (cont'd)

Have you been to any of these
places?

(CELINE shakes her head)

And how many languages have you
learned since being here?

CELINE (SUBTITLE)

Five.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (SUBTITLE)

Yet you never leave these walls...
How are you feeling today?

CELINE (SUBTITLE)

Relieved? Sounds awful, doesn't it?

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER SUPERIOR (SUBTITLE)

No. Sister Sophia was in great pain by the end. You nursed her with patience and compassion... She worried about you, you know. Worried that you weren't cut out for this life.

(off CELINE's look)

Come. Don't act surprised. She was the only person you liked here. The others annoy you, don't they?

Beat. CELINE weighing up whether to deny it. She sighs, nods-

CELINE (SUBTITLE)

They talk so much of the love of Christ. And then do nothing... What do we achieve here, shut away like this?

MOTHER SUPERIOR (SUBTITLE)

(smiles, nods)

God loves you, Celine. He has a plan for you. But I don't think this is it. And neither did Sophia. She asked me to help you. So, here-

(hands her piece of paper)

I saw this. They need someone with languages. You'd get to travel, see the world.

(off CELINE's doubtful look)

Your interview's at three.

CELINE suddenly looks terrified...

EXT. ITALY. STATION. DAY 1

A quiet country station. CELINE, stressed, trots down the platform after MOTHER SUPERIOR.

CELINE (SUBTITLE)

But I haven't had time to prepare!

MOTHER SUPERIOR (SUBTITLE)

Good. You'd only have fretted.

JUMP CUT TO:

The train pulling away. CELINE hangs out of the window.

CELINE (SUBTITLE)

I've never had an interview before. What do I say?

MOTHER SUPERIOR (SUBTITLE)
No idea. I've never had one either.
Just enjoy yourself. If nothing
else, it's a day out!

10 INT. ITALY. TRAIN. DAY 1

10

A crowded commuter train. Every seat taken, people standing.
CELINE naïvely trying to walk down the train, irritating
everyone one by one by treading on toes/ barging newspapers etc.

CELINE (SUBTITLE)
Sorry! Sorry! I'm so sorry!

She halts, unable to move further, next to a HANDSOME MAN
(who's sitting down). He stands, making sure to make eye
contact. Because of the crowding, their faces are just inches
apart. He gestures for her to take his seat. She blushes
furiously.

CELINE (SUBTITLE)
I'm fine. Thank you.

HANDSOME MAN (SUBTITLE)
I insist.

She smiles. They now have to shuffle awkwardly round each
other. He keeps eye contact the whole time, smiling. She
doesn't know where to look. Finally she sits- only to find
that she's at his crotch level. She has no idea where to
look, blushing furiously. But can't help smiling to herself.

PRISON GUARD (O.S.)
Be careful where you look, yeah?
Don't look 'em in the eye...

And we match cut from CELINE's face to:

11 INT. TEXAS. PRISON. MAIN AREA / CELLS. DAY 1

11

RHONDA's face behind bars. She looks terrified.

PRISON GUARD
...in here, it's a sign of
aggression.

Caption: Fort Bellfield Correctional Facility, Texas.
Offscreen, we hear taunts from the other inmates, laughing.

PRISON CHORUS (O.S.)
Noob! Noob! Noob!

PRISONER 1 (O.S.)
-the minute that door opens, we
gonna fuck you up, noob.

(CONTINUED)

RHONDA is late 30s, mild-mannered, nerdy. Completely out of place here. Behind her a bored PRISON GUARD chews gum, completely deadpan. RHONDA whispers to herself.

RHONDA
Deep breaths. Deep breaths...
(to GUARD)
This is temporary.

PRISON GUARD
(heard it all before)
Uh-huh. Yeah.

RHONDA
See, I'm getting bailed out any minute. My lawyer's on it. You'll come get me, won't you? When it's posted?

Klaxon sounds, the door in front of RHONDA slides back. Gulp. The noise intensifies...

GUARD
Ignore 'em. Just walk.

They start walking down the corridor past cells on both sides, each containing an incredibly intimidating female prisoner: doing push-ups, pull-ups, self-tattooing etc.

PRISONER 1
Welcome to paradise, noob!

PRISONER 2
Ooo, she's fine! Got me dibs on that!

PRISONER 3
Gonna rope it, soap it and grope it.

RHONDA looks terrified. They reach an empty cell.

PRISON GUARD
I put a mint on the pillow. Enjoy.

RHONDA walks in, looks around. Bed. Toilet. That's it. The door clangs shut. RHONDA whispers to herself, nervously-

RHONDA
OK, don't panic... no need to panic.

The cell has brick walls so RHONDA can't see her next door neighbour. But the door is just bars, so she can see the person in the cell opposite. This is ROSITA: a heavily tattooed member of a Latino Gang.

ROSITA

Hey noob. Over here.

(RHONDA turns slowly, wary)
It's OK. Don't be scared. What's
your name, noob?

RHONDA

...Rhonda?

ROSITA

Rhonda. That's a nice name... Fuck
you, Rhonda. Where's my money?

(RHONDA's face falls)
See, this wing's for the Hispanic
community. You pay rent, bitch.

Howls of amusement from the other prisoners. RHONDA just
stares, no idea how to respond. Now a voice pipes up-

LEANNE (O.S.)

Hey, why don't you leave her be?

This new voice is a perky, courteous Southern drawl. It
apparently came from the cell to RHONDA's right (NB. RHONDA
can't see who's speaking, and neither do we...)

ROSITA

This don't concern you. It's
between me and the noob.

LEANNE (O.S.)

I said- leave her alone. Or else me
'n you gonna have a problem,
sweetheart.

ROSITA stares for a long beat. Then slowly she withdraws away
from the bars to lie on her bed. RHONDA looks relieved.

LEANNE (O.S.) (cont'd)

Hey, Rhonda. I'm Leanne. I seen you
on the TV. You're quite the
celebrity... You OK in there, hun?

RHONDA

...not really.

LEANNE (O.S.)

Now don't you worry 'bout them
girls. You're gonna be jus' fine.
You're wit' me now, and I ain't
gonna let nuttin' bad happen to ya.

We track across so we now see LEANNE on the other side of the
wall. She looks like Dolly Parton-

-apart from the swastika tattoo on her forehead.

(CONTINUED)

RHONDA
(relieved whisper)
Thank you.

LEANNE
My pleasure hun. What are friends
for?

END OF PART 1

12 **INT. SLOUGH. BANK FLOOR. DAY 1**

12

A quiet suburban bank. A clock ticks. A customer fills in a form. A cashier sprays window cleaner on her window, wipes it. It's the most boring place on earth. Time drags.

JAMIE surveys his domain. An employee (DEBBIE) approaches with a surly 16 year old (GAVIN): all acne & attitude.

DEBBIE
Jamie, this is Gavin. He's doing
work experience with us. Jamie's
our boss.

Behind GAVIN's back DEBBIE mimes slapping him round the head. She's clearly not impressed. JAMIE smiles.

JAMIE
Welcome aboard. Nice to have you
here.
(no response, GAVIN just chews)
So... interested in banking, are
we?

GAVIN
Nah. Sent the form back late. All
the good stuff had gone.

JAMIE
Oh. I see.

Awkward beat. A CCTV camera pans towards them and-

13 **INT. SLOUGH. VAN. CONTINUOUS**

13

We cut to the scene on the CCTV. The mysterious watchers are still watching, taking notes... ARDEN now looks bored.

JAMIE
Well, any questions, ask away.
Don't be shy.

GAVIN
...so you one of them fat cats
then?
(JAMIE raises an eyebrow)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GAVIN (cont'd)
One of them wankers that screwed
us?

INT. SLOUGH. BANK FLOOR. CONTINUOUS

JAMIE
Well, what do you think?

GAVIN
(chews, thinking)
Nah. You'd be better dressed.

JAMIE
Good... any other questions?

GAVIN
(thinks for a beat)
What did you wanna be when you were
my age?

JAMIE
I, uh... actually that is a good
question. I wanted to buy a boat.
And sail it round the world.

GAVIN
Yeah?... what went wrong?

PAULA (O.S.)
Another good question.

JAMIE turns, surprised, to see PAULA (50s). JAMIE sighs.

JAMIE
Gavin, this is my mum. Mum, Gavin.

GAVIN
(fake cough)
Loser.

INT. SLOUGH. JAMIE'S OFFICE. DAY 1

They've retreated to JAMIE's office. It's very neat: there are no personal touches except for another copy of the wedding photo we saw earlier. PAULA pulls out a bottle of champagne and 2 plastic cups from her handbag.

JAMIE
Mum, I'm at work. I can't drink.

PAULA
(opening bottle)
Nonsense. I only have one child.
And I am going to celebrate his
birthday with him. Cheers.
(she drinks, he doesn't)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAULA (cont'd)

So what presents did you get?

(no response)

Oh, they didn't all forget again
did they? Even Dave? God, I don't
know what you see in him.

JAMIE

You do know we're not a couple,
right?

PAULA

I just think you can do better,
that's all. He drags you down,
always has, ever since school.
Anyway, at least I remembered...
here. Happy birthday.

She hands him an envelope.

JAMIE

Thanks, mum...

(opens it, sighs)

A subscription to an online dating
site. Mum, we've been through this-

PAULA

You need to move on.

JAMIE

I don't want to move on.

PAULA

You're like the woman from the
book.

JAMIE

(beat, baffled)

What woman? What book?

PAULA

You know the one. The cobwebby one.

JAMIE

...Spiderwoman?

PAULA

No. From the olden days...thingy.

JAMIE

Yeah, I've actually got work to do
so-

PAULA

(clicks fingers)

Haversham. Miss Haversham. 'Great
Expectations'. Jilted at the altar-

(CONTINUED)

JAMIE
-I wasn't jilted at the altar.

PAULA
-then she mopes round the house in
her wedding dress for years. Cake
on the table, all the clocks-

16 **INT. SLOUGH. VAN. CONTINUOUS**

16

PAULA (CONT'D ON CCTV)
-stopped. Frozen in time.

ARDEN
(yawns)
Christ. I'm losing the will to
live.
(checks watch)
Fuck it. We're not learning
anything. Let's do it.

HIGGS sighs. Whatever 'do it' entails, she's not as keen.

17 **INT. SLOUGH. JAMIE'S OFFICE. CONTINUOUS**

17

JAMIE also losing the will to live as the lecture continues.

PAULA (ON CCTV)
You're still young, Jamie, but you
act like your best days are behind
you. And it's not healthy.

JAMIE's phone rings. He answers it as PAULA continues-

PAULA	JAMIE
Life throws stuff at you. And sometimes, yes, it's bad. But sometimes it's <u>really</u> good. Seven years Jamie. Time to let go.	Yep?... who?... well what do they want?... fine, I'll be out in a second.

18 **INT. SLOUGH. BANK FLOOR. CONTINUOUS**

18

JAMIE emerges from his office. PAULA follows, still lecturing-

PAULA
I'm not gonna stop, Jamie. Not till
you get yourself out of this rut.

JAMIE
And did it ever occur to you that
maybe I *like* my rut? That maybe I
like having a routine? I don't want
any more surprises in my life.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JAMIE (cont'd)

I like knowing exactly what's gonna happen nex-

SMACK! JAMIE is slammed against the wall in an unnecessarily macho fashion by ARDEN. PAULA screams.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Ow! What the-

ARDEN

Shut it, shitmouth. Jamie Wilson, I am arresting you on four hundred and eighty four separate charges of bank robbery, identity theft and international cyber terrorism.

Beat. JAMIE stunned. The bank's suddenly gone quiet... ARDEN starts cuffing him.

JAMIE

Whuh?

PAULA

Jamie? What the hell's going on?

ARDEN

You do not have to say anything but it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court.

JAMIE

No, there's been a mistake!

ARDEN

Yeah yeah, that's what they all say.

And they march him out. DEBBIE, stunned, becomes aware of GAVIN beside her grinning, taking a picture on his phone.

GAVIN

This is way better than I thought it was gonna be.

Cinematic establishing shots of St Peters, the Swiss guard, tourists etc. Caption: **The Vatican.**

PRIEST (O.S, SUBTITLE)

Hurry up, Sister Celine, please don't dawdle. I am a very busy man.

20 INT. VATICAN. GALLERY ROOM. DAY 1

20

CELINE trots after an officious, patronising PRIEST who strides at breakneck pace through a vast, beautiful room covered in paintings. CELINE lags behind: she can't help staring with awe at her beautiful surroundings.

CELINE (SUBTITLE)
Sorry. It's just, I've done the whole touristy bit but I've never been behind the scenes before.

21 INT. VATICAN CORRIDOR. DAY 1

21

The PRIEST strides down a long corridor.

CELINE (SUBTITLE)
I feel like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz. When she peeps behind the curtain.

PRIEST (SUBTITLE)
A somewhat inappropriate analogy.

She rolls her eyes. He comes to a halt beside a door. On it a sign in Latin: **Promotor Fidei**. Under it: '**The Devil's Advocate**'. CELINE looks at it, astonished.

CELINE (SUBTITLE)
There's an actual devil's advocate?

PRIEST (SUBTITLE)
You did read the job description before applying, didn't you?

He throws the door open.

22 INT. VATICAN. FATHER JUDE'S OFFICE. CONTINUOUS

22

PRIEST (SUBTITLE)
Take a seat. Father Jude will be with you in due course... and good luck.

He smirks and exits. The only free seat is in the corner behind the door. She sits. Waits. A clock ticks. She looks round.

A mess. Ancient tomes on canon law. Framed portraits of long-dead cardinals. Engravings depicting arcane rituals, heresy trials etc. And then, incongruously, a poster for **Meaty, Beaty, Big & Bouncy** by The Who. CELINE looks at it, puzzled.

23

INT. TEXAS. PRISON. MAIN AREA. DAY 1

23

RHONDA, lost in thought, sat alone toying with her crappy food (but not eating). ROSITA walks up with two of her gang. They surround RHONDA. Beat. RHONDA looks up, afraid.

ROSITA

Is it me, or did she just look me
in the eye?

PRISONER 1

Oh, she looked. Bitch all up in
your grill.

ROSITA

Damn, girl. We was jus' comin to
say hello. Why you gotta be so
aggressive?

RHONDA

(terrified)

I wasn't, I swear...look, I don't
have any money. I can't pay you.

ROSITA produces an evil-looking nail file, sharpened in to a shiv, and starts doing her nails...

ROSITA

No money. And an attitude. Puts us
in an awkward position, don't it?

Beat. RHONDA stares at the blade.

LEANNE (O.S.)

Thought I told you to leave her
alone?

Same voice as earlier. RHONDA turns, relieved. But the smile vanishes as she sees LEANNE for the first time. Behind her, 2 members of LEANNE's gang, both showing white power ink.

LEANNE (CONT'D) (cont'd)

These ladies bothering you, hun?

RHONDA

(horrified whisper)

Oh jesus...

LEANNE

Please don't take the lord's name
in vain, sweetpea.

(to ROSITA)

Now. Like I said. Rhonda's with me.

ROSITA

That true, noob? You klanning up?

Beat. RHONDA goldfishes, no idea what to say.

(CONTINUED)

LEANNE

Don't be shy now, Rhonda. Thought we was friends?

(turns to ROSITA)

Now watch my lips, cos I know English ain't your strong point. Why don't you. And the rest. Of the donkey fuckers. Go take a siesta. Si?

A beat. LEANNE & ROSITA just staring each other down. Then ROSITA turns to RHONDA.

ROSITA

You think that's acceptable, noob? That kind of racial slurring?

Beat. RHONDA gives a meek little shake of her head.

LEANNE

Hell, ain't no slurrin' occurrin'. I'm jus' stating the facts.

ROSITA

Rather fuck a donkey than fuck my own brother.

LEANNE

Ah now, see, that is racial. Startin' with the inbreedin' jibes. How come you ain't chastisin' her?

(RHONDA sighs, looks away)

Honey, she was tryin' to cut you cos of the color of your skin... So what, you're on their side?

ROSITA

We don't want you on our side. Leanne, have a word wit' your girl huh?

LEANNE

Ain't like outside hun. In here you're white. End of. You ain't with us, you ain't with no-one. Time to choose.

Beat. RHONDA looks between them. Then, a shout-

PRISON GUARD

McNeil! Your lawyer's here!

And suddenly a huge weight's been lifted off. RHONDA blows out her cheeks, relieved, laughs, suddenly full of life.

RHONDA

Well that's a shame. Looks like I'm outta here. But, for the record?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RHONDA (cont'd)

My choice would be this for you-
(shoots finger at ROSITA)
And oh look, got one for you too.

She shoots the other at LEANNE. Grinning, she walks off after the GUARD. LEANNE & ROSITA are left staring at each other.

ROSITA

You're losing your touch, Leanne.

ROSITA and her gang walk away chuckling.

INT. SLOUGH. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM. DAY 1

JAMIE looks panicky. A duty SOLICITOR sits beside him. HIGGS & ARDEN sit opposite: HIGGS calmly asking the questions, ARDEN just staring JAMIE down.

HIGGS

-and what do you know about the group calling themselves Deus Ex Machina?

JAMIE

Nothing. Just what's been on the news. They're hackers. Or anarchists or... I dunno. They seem to hate everything.

HIGGS

And what's your connection to them?

JAMIE

(sighs, exasperated)
I told you, I don't have one.

HIGGS slides a tablet across the table. On it an animated GIF: the Mona Lisa laughing, the words DEUS EX MACHINA emerging from her mouth. Underneath is the word REVVIII. She circles it with her finger...

HIGGS

I want you to look at their logo... what does this word mean to you?

JAMIE

Nothing. It's gibberish.

HIGGS

What about if I do this?

She adds punctuation so it now reads REV.VI.I-II.

JAMIE

Nope. Still nothing.

ARDEN

Revelation, chapter six. Verse one to two.

(JAMIE looks blank)

I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come and see!" I looked, and there before me was a white horse. Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

SOLICITOR

And how's this relevant to my client?

HIGGS

No-one knows the real identity of the leader of Deus Ex. But online, he goes by the username The White Horse...

(leans forward slowly)

Would you like to see a photo of him?

Without breaking JAMIE's gaze, he pushes a photo across the table. JAMIE looks at the photo, and swallows nervously.

The photo shows a man who's the spitting image of JAMIE (but with a different haircut/ clothes).

ARDEN (CONT'D)

Remind you of anyone?

Hold on JAMIE's face, really starting to panic now...

INT. VATICAN. FATHER JUDE'S OFFICE. DAY 1

CELINE watching the clock. Bored. Suddenly the door flies open. A priest strides in. He slams the door, in a foul mood.

FATHER JUDE

Pricks!

He hasn't noticed CELINE. He strides to the window, lights a cigarette (he will chain them throughout this scene). CELINE gently clears her throat. He turns, surprised.

FATHER JUDE (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Jesus! Who the fuck are you?

CELINE is taken aback. (NB. This entire scene is in English- CELINE speaks with an Italian accent)

(CONTINUED)

CELINE

Uh...Sister Celine?
(he looks blank)
I'm here for the interview?

FATHER JUDE

Oh... right. The researcher job.
Yeah. Um, bear with me.
(goes to huge pile of files,
starts flicking through)
Sister Celine, Sister Celine...
sorry about my language, by the
way.

CELINE

Oh, it's fine. I speak English.

FATHER JUDE

No, I meant my potty mouth.
(she looks confused)
My swearing? Did it offend you?

CELINE

Oh! No. It surprises me a little,
but no. It does not offend.

FATHER JUDE

(looks up, smiles)
Good... tell me, do you find the
phrase 'Christ on a bike'
offensive? Cos I just used it in a
meeting and, jeez, you'd think I'd
performed an abortion on the table
or something.

CELINE

(wary- is this a test?)
Uh...well, I suppose the image of
Christ riding a bicycle may be
considered a little disrespectful?

FATHER JUDE

You think? See, I reckon he'd be
quite likely to ride a bike. Seems
like that kind of a guy to me. I
mean, he turns back up in a stretch
Hummer? Jeez, I've got it all
wrong... You think about the Second
Coming much, Celine?

CELINE

No. Not really.

FATHER JUDE

Me neither. Always felt a little
bit CGI to me, know what I mean?...
Nope, it's not here.
(presses intercom)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FATHER JUDE (cont'd)

Father Alfonse, could you find Sister Celine's file for me-
(releases button)
-ya big fuckin' prick. Right. What do you know about the devil's advocate?

CELINE

Honestly? Nothing. I thought it was just a figure of speech. Until I saw your door...
(off his look)
Maybe I shouldn't have admitted that? I never had a job interview before.

FATHER JUDE

Riiiiight...in that case I'll treat you to the full spiel.
(leans back, puts feet on desk)
OK. When they wanna make someone a saint, they have to prove that person led a good life. And that two miracles can be attributed to them since they died. Them's the rules. You with me?
(she nods)
Well my job's the opposite. My job's to prove they touched up kids and parked in disabled bays. And that the miracles are bullshit.

CELINE

Ah.

FATHER JUDE

It's basically quality control. Worked fine for four hundred years, then JP two abolished it in the eighties. And what happened?

CELINE

Uh...we made more saints?

FATHER JUDE

Exactly. In the last five years, we've canonised more people than we did in the *whole nineteenth century*. Which is ridiculous. So they re-instated the office, and here I am. The party-pooper general. The ecclesiastical turd in the swimming pool. If there's a statue weeping, I'm the one points out the roof needs fixing. And I need help. I need someone tenacious, with a cool head and a thick skin.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FATHER JUDE (cont'd)

Cos make no mistake, we will not be popular... Do you have doubts Celine? About your faith?

CELINE

(beat, unsure if a trap)
Yes.

FATHER JUDE

Good. There's no faith without doubt. I distrust anyone who's absolutely sure of anything. Now. Next question. Do you smoke?

(she shakes her head)

Have you ever tried?

(she shakes her head)

So how do you know you won't like it?

He leans forward, offering a cigarette from his pack. Beat. Then she reaches forward, takes it. He smiles...

RHONDA (O.S.)

It's so good to see a friendly face.

26

INT. TEXAS. PRISON VISITING ROOM. DAY 1

26

RHONDA (CONT'D)

You have no idea...

RHONDA beams hopefully at her lawyer NAOMI (smartly dressed, slightly nervous) on the other side of the glass. They're talking through phones.

NAOMI

Uh, yeah... here's the thing. We may have a slight problem.

RHONDA

(beat, smile fading)

But I'm making bail, right? You said if I co-operated, I'd make bail.

(NAOMI winces)

But... you said you could keep me out of jail. You said community service. Picking up trash on the side of the road. I'm a librarian. I can't survive in here! There's gangs. *Murderers*. There's a woman who ate someone.

NAOMI

Rhonda, I am doing all I can. But I just met with the prosecutor. And he's playing hardball.

(CONTINUED)

23

RHONDA

I don't understand.

NAOMI

It's election year. No-one wants to be seen as weak on homeland security. So they're refusing to plea bargain. They're making an example of you to deter others. The charge stands at treason. He's seeking five to ten.

RHONDA

(goldfishes)
Months, right?

NAOMI

Years.

RHONDA

But nothing was stolen! Nothing leaked. Nothing-

NAOMI

They don't care, Rhonda... Look at me. What's a black hat?

(RHONDA looks blank)

What's VPN pivoting? SQL injecting? What's a rootkit?... Rhonda, what's Powerpoint?

(RHONDA blank, confused)

Yet you really expect me to believe you hacked the NSA? That you got past the toughest cyber security on earth?

RHONDA

Uh...yeah?

NAOMI

Christ. Help me help you. *Please.*

(whispers)

I know you're covering for your son. And that's noble, but very misguided. They're throwing the book at you, they can't throw it as hard at a fourteen year old... I know it was Spike.

Beat. RHONDA agonised, weighing up options. Then weakly-

RHONDA

It was me. All me.

NAOMI

(sighs, exasperated)

One more thing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NAOMI (cont'd)

In your absence, the court awarded custody of Spike to his father. His biological father.

RHONDA

(suddenly panicked)

No. No, they can't do that.

NAOMI

They can. And they have.

RHONDA

That man's done nothing for my son his whole life. My husband's Spike's dad.

NAOMI

But your husband is very ill, and in no state to look after a minor. And you're in here.

A klaxon sounds. A GUARD approaches. RHONDA now panicking-

GUARD

That's time.

RHONDA

No! Please. You have got to get me out of here. Please.

NAOMI

I'm trying... you stay safe, huh? Don't do anything dumb. Don't antagonise anyone.

She hangs up, and the guard ushers her out. RHONDA doesn't move, phone still in hand, frozen.

END OF PART 2

INT. SLOUGH. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM. DAY 1

JAMIE panicky, looking at the photo. ARDEN just stares, trying to make him uncomfortable. (NB. HIGGS has gone)

JAMIE

It's not me. I mean- the hair, the clothes... it's just not. When was this taken? Where? Cos I'll have witnesses to say I was here. There'll be CCTV from the bank, there'll be-

ARDEN

Don't tell me how to do my job, Jamie. It just pisses me off...

(JAMIE sighs)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ARDEN (cont'd)

You hear about that poor cow in the States? The librarian? Somehow she hacks the NSA, right? Twenty minutes she's in the system. Stole nothing, leaked nothing, faces five to ten years *on principle*.

SOLICITOR

Where are you going with this?

ARDEN

Deus Ex hacked the White House. And the Pentagon. They leaked thousands of files. Just think what the Americans will do to you when you're extradited.

JAMIE

But it's not me!

ARDEN

Except it is. And I can prove it.

SOLICITOR

How?

ARDEN

Six weeks ago Interpol learnt the White Horse was in Moscow. They just missed him. But they managed to get some DNA off a wine glass he'd used. And guess who came up as a match?

Beat. JAMIE goldfishes, gob-smacked.

JAMIE

I've never been to Moscow.

ARDEN

Yet your DNA has... now how do you explain that?

JAMIE goldfishes, horrified. He looks to his SOLICITOR for help. But the SOLICITOR looks equally stumped. He leans across to talk in a whisper to JAMIE:

SOLICITOR

Don't suppose there's any chance you've got a twin?

JAMIE

No.

SOLICITOR

Bugger. That would have helped.

ARDEN grins. We hold on JAMIE, really starting to panic...

28 INT. TEXAS. PRISON. MAIN AREA. DAY 1

28

RHONDA's on a pay phone. She looks round nervously, like a deer checking for predators. We hear ringing, then a teenage voice answers. He sounds upset:

SPIKE (PHONE)
Hello?

RHONDA
Spike? Honey, it's me.

29 INTERCUT. INT. TEXAS. PRISON. MAIN AREA/DC COURTHOUSE. DAY 1

29

SPIKE is 14, a gawky pubescent know-it-all. He's on his cellphone, sitting in a waiting room at a courthouse.

SPIKE
Mom? You OK?

RHONDA
(lying)
I'm fine, it's all... fine. Don't you worry. The people here are... lovely.

SPIKE
Should be me in there, not y-

RHONDA
Honey, remember that talk we had?

SPIKE
But it's all gone to shit anyway, mom! They're taking me away.

RHONDA
Yeah, I heard. But listen, it's only temporary. I'm getting out soon, I promise. It's gonna be OK. I know you don't know your real dad, but he's...
(forcing herself to lie)
-he's not so bad.

SPIKE
You always said he was an asshole.

RHONDA
Well, yeah. But people change, y'know? They tell you where he's living now?

SPIKE (PHONE)
These dicks don't tell me anything.

(CONTINUED)

27

RHONDA

It's gonna be fine. My lawyer's on it-

(pips)

OK my money's running out. I'm coming home, I promise. I love you so much.

BRRR. The phone cuts out. RHONDA just stares, heartbroken. Far and away the worst call of her life. Beat. Then she fishes in her bra, pulls out another coin, dials.

RHONDA

Hi. It's Rhonda McNeil. Can I speak to my husband please?

30 **INT. WASHINGTON DC. HOSPITAL. DAY 1**

30

A tough, no-nonsense NURSE has answered the phone. In the bed asleep is RAJESH, RHONDA's husband. He looks very ill.

NURSE

I'm afraid he's asleep right now. The doctor wants him to rest. He had chemo this morning.

RHONDA

I understand, but I really need-

NURSE

I'm sorry. It's not a good time. You can try him tonight.

RHONDA

Yeah, but this is my last coin, see-

NURSE

About eight, OK? Thank you.
(hangs up)

31 **INT. TEXAS. PRISON. MAIN AREA. DAY 1**

31

RHONDA forlorn. She hangs up, takes a moment to collect herself, walks off down the corridor. As she passes a doorway another prisoner slips out to follow her (we only see her back). She has something heavy in a sock. She raises it and-

SMACK. RHONDA crumples to the floor. The woman walks away. Over the top we start to hear FATHER JUDE:

FATHER JUDE (O.S)

Are you gonna throw up? Cos you look like you're gonna puke?

32

INT. VATICAN. FATHER JUDE'S OFFICE. DAY 1

32

CELINE looks pale, but shakes her head. A half-smoked cigarette in the ashtray. FATHER JUDE grins, enjoying this.

CELINE
I'm fine. Really.

The patronising PRIEST from earlier scurries in with a file. FATHER JUDE takes it without even looking at him. The PRIEST leaves. FATHER JUDE proffers a sweet.

FATHER JUDE
No shame in it. I threw up first time. Mind you, I was nine. Mint?
(she takes one, he opens folder)
So. Let's find out about Sister Celine... entered the convent straight from school. Been there ever since.
(turns page over)
And that's it.

Beat. He's unimpressed. She sucks the mint, unsure what to say. He turns the page, finds a photo, breaks into a grin.

FATHER JUDE (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Is this you? Wow! You were really fat!
(she looks confused, he's getting up steam now, enjoying himself)
Now it makes sense. Bullied at school right? Desperately wanted the boys to look at you, but they didn't. So you turned to a man who could love you as you were... Yeah, that's it. Easy for a fat girl to take vows. Not like you were giving up anything, was it?

The atmosphere has shifted. Increasingly Lecter/ Claricey. She's now feeling uncomfortable, no idea what to do. He's staring at her to see how she'll react when provoked.

FATHER JUDE (CONT'D)
Now look at you. A decade of austere convent living under your belt. And my, how that belt's tightened... The boys look at you now, don't they? And there's a voice in your head saying- have I made a mistake? Is life passing me by? I could have had someone. Been loved. *Made* love... Feel free to jump in at any point if I'm wrong.
(she says nothing)
But there's another voice saying don't be silly, this is your life.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FATHER JUDE (CONT'D)

Out there you've got nothing. But both those voices are yours, aren't they? Neither belong to God. Is it faith that keeps you with us? Or cowardice?

(She looks away, welling up, unable to meet his gaze)
And here come the waterworks. How predictable.

CELINE

I'm just tired. I've had a long week.

FATHER JUDE

Too tired to stick up for herself. Tenacity, Celine. A thick skin.

(gentler)
You've never done anything, have you? Never lived. So how can you have any insight into human nature? The desperation people feel, the lies they tell as a result? You've never been hungry, addicted, broke-

CELINE

What? And you have?

FATHER JUDE

Yes. I've made mistakes, and I've learnt from them. But you? You know nothing...I'm sorry, but this is a waste of time for us both, isn't it?

CELINE

(beat, then nods sadly)
I guess so. Thank you for your time.

She gets up and leaves, defeated. The patronising PRIEST is outside (he's clearly been listening at the door). As she leaves, he slips into the office, 100% smarm.

PRIEST

Another one bites the dust? I'm not surprised. I can't really see how a woman could possibly -

FATHER JUDE

Shut the fuck up.

JUDE isn't even looking at him. He's staring at the clock on the wall. The seconds tick by. JUDE mutters-

FATHER JUDE (CONT'D)

C'mon... c'mon...

(CONTINUED)

And suddenly the door flies open. CELINE glowers in the doorway. Beat. She just stares. FATHER JUDE smiles.

FATHER JUDE (CONT'D)
Something you want to add, Celine?

CELINE looks round, spots a vase, decants the flowers, and hurls the water in FATHER JUDE's face. The PRIEST gasps.

Beat. FATHER JUDE just stares at her, takes a drag on his cigarette, water dripping off his face.

CELINE
I'd have been good at this job.

She walks out.

33 **INT. VATICAN CORRIDOR. CONTINUOUS**

33

CELINE is walking away down the corridor, which bustles with priests, nuns etc. FATHER JUDE exits his office and calls after her. The PRIEST follows him out.

FATHER JUDE
Seriously? That's all you've got?

CELINE
(turns on him)
You think you can just rip me apart to amuse yourself? Because I'm an easy target? My English isn't perfect, but I know the word for that. Asshole.

The PRIEST gasps again. CELINE turns on him-

CELINE
Oh, get back in your closet.
(back to JUDE)
As for you- the smoking, the swearing? All such a pose! Like a child who wants attention. "Look at me. Aren't I different?" But you're not. You think you're a rebel, but you're just another sad little man who touches his penis too much.

The entire corridor stops to look round. FATHER JUDE stares at her. Has she gone too far? Finally, he breaks into a grin.

FATHER JUDE
That's more like it, Celine. Little bit of a spunk. When can you start?
(she shakes her head, walks away)
So you're just going back, huh? You don't want to see the world?

(CONTINUED)

CELINE
(not stopping)
Not with you, no.

FATHER JUDE
Yeah you do. You've just backed
yourself into a corner, haven't
you? Tell you what- pray on it. See
what the big guy wants?

He smiles as she disappears. Over the top, laughing:

DAVE (O.S.)
Oh jesus. Oh sweet, sweet jesus...

34

INT. SLOUGH. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM. DAY 1

34

DAVE pissing himself with laughter. HIGGS looks nonplussed.

HIGGS
Finished?

DAVE
(wiping away tears)
Almost. Deary me. You *have* met him,
right? Does he seem like a criminal
mastermind? I mean, *really*?

HIGGS
Can we just go through the dates?
Thursday the ninth, evening.

DAVE
Thursday's bowling. We're in a
league.
(checking phone)
And the ninth was...ah yes. Our
famous victory over The Bowling
Stones. I have a ball by ball tweet
commentary, with photos. Look.
There's our boy-

He shows her the phone. She takes it, scrolls.

HIGGS
So you'll vouch he was with you?

DAVE
Don't just take my word for it. Ask
the boys. Miami Tony, Cumface Alan-

HIGGS
Alright, I get the gist.

DAVE
By the way- did you do a mug shot
of him? If so, could I get a copy?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DAVE (cont'd)
Cos I'd love to get some t-shirts
made.

35 **EXT. TEXAS. PRISON YARD. DAY 1**

35

RHONDA alone on a bench, black eye, split lip, trying not to let anyone see she's crying. The other prisoners do weights, shoot hoops etc. Now LEANNE sits down next to RHONDA, who stiffens. LEANNE offers a tissue. RHONDA doesn't take it.

LEANNE
You shouldn't sit here, hun.

RHONDA
Don't tell me. This is your special
white power bench.

LEANNE
No, actually. Look- I don't
recommend you doin' this alone. But
if that's how you want it, jus'
keep your back covered OK? Sit by
the fence, or by the wall...why
don't you like me, hun?
(no answer)
It's the swastika, ain't it?

LEANNE nods to the other side of the yard, the rest of the white power gang are staring at them, not looking happy.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
See, it's all about front. They
smell weakness a mile off. You act
like a victim, you gonna be a
victim. You act like a crazy bitch,
people back off. Why you think I
got this?
(points to tattoo)

RHONDA
...so you're not a white
supremacist?

LEANNE
No, I am. I just ain't dumb enough
to think this is a good look.
(RHONDA sighs)
OK. I'm gonna give you some advice.
You need to get yourself in there.
(nods to another building)
The V.I.F. Vulnerable Inmate
Facility. A less intense kinda
experience.

RHONDA
...and how do I get in there?

(CONTINUED)

LEANNE

With my help. Two most popular ways
is getting stabbed or getting
pregnant.

RHONDA

(scared)

I don't want you to stab me.

LEANNE

(leans in close)

I ain't offerin' to stab you...I
can get you pregnant though. That's
nine months in there for starters.
Plus- eighteen more for tit feeding
and infant bonding purposes. That's
over two years of safety, Rhonda.

RHONDA

And how am I going to get pregnant?

LEANNE

Oh, I can get you semen. For the
right price, I can get you good
strong semen. I got this
arrangement, see? For the
importation of goods. My grammy
comes visits once a week. They
search her, but they don't go up
her ass on account of respect for
the elderly. We jus' wrap it in a
rubber, pop it on up there. Snug
as...

RHONDA stares- WTF? Now she shakes her head, penny dropping.

RHONDA

Oh, I get it. That's the scam, huh?
You beat people up, then offer them
safety for a price?

LEANNE

(confused)

Hun, I didn't order that hit.

(RHONDA walks off)

Where you goin'? I'm tryin' to
help!

HIGGS & ARDEN watch through a two-way mirror. JAMIE paces
nervously in the interrogation room next door.

HIGGS

His alibi's solid. There's CCTV
from the bank and multiple
witnesses.

(CONTINUED)

ARDEN

(sighs)

It's never easy is it? I don't get it. He's involved somehow. He *has* to be.

HIGGS

How? He wasn't in Moscow. He was in Slough. So the DNA's not worth shit. And without that we've got nothing... We have to let him go.

ARDEN

No, not yet. Let's toss the grenade in, see what happens...

He picks up a brown envelope. HIGGS sighs.

37

INT. SLOUGH. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM. DAY 1

37

HIGGS & ARDEN are back in the room. ARDEN back in confident interrogator mode, not letting on his private doubts.

ARDEN

Tell me about your wife. Tell me about Layla.

JAMIE

Why?

ARDEN

Cos this is an interrogation. And I'm asking... she disappeared, right?

JAMIE

(sighs, reluctant)

We were at Heathrow. We'd just flown back from our honeymoon. We'd been married two weeks. I went to get the car, she went to get coffee.

(struggling)

I drove round to pick her up and... she wasn't there. And I never found her. She just disappeared.

ARDEN

Christ...gone, just like that. Into thin air. Is she alive, is she dead? Seven years, and no answers. I mean, how do you move on from that?

JAMIE

(quietly)

You don't.

(CONTINUED)

ARDEN

Right... I saw those videos you made. I mean, not all of them. There's what, two thousand? Got to hand it to you- I dunno why you're doing it but as cover stories go, you're thorough.

JAMIE

...I don't understand.

ARDEN

Neither do I. I mean, what kind of person pretends his wife's missing for seven years?

JAMIE just staring, completely confused. ARDEN reaches for the envelope, opens it, pulls out a photo...

ARDEN (CONT'D)

And the Oscar goes to...Jamie Wilson.

He flips the photo over. A grainy long lens pic of the woman from JAMIE's wedding photo. And she's with Jamie's lookalike.

He's reaching out to her, his hand twisting her hair. An ambiguous moment frozen in time- either they're about to share a passionate kiss, or he's yanking her hair.

ARDEN (CONT'D)

There she is. Alive and well. Oh, and look who's with her. So how do you explain that?

On JAMIE, absolutely gobsmacked...

END OF PART 3

HIGGS & ARDEN look worried. They are watching JAMIE through the mirror. He is genuinely distraught, banging on the mirror and trying to see in.

JAMIE

I know you're in there! Come out!

SOLICITOR

Jamie, calm down.

JAMIE

How? They stick a photo under my nose, claim my wife's alive and then don't tell me anything!

(hammers on glass)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JAMIE (cont'd)

She's my wife! I have a right to know!

HIGGS

Well, you broke him. Didn't learn much though, did we? Except a) he's not acting and b) we still can't make the charges stick.

ARDEN sighs. He nods reluctantly.

39

INT. SLOUGH. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM. NIGHT 1

39

HIGGS enters, the peace maker.

HIGGS

OK, good news. We're dropping the charges. You're free to go.

SOLICITOR

About time too... Jamie, come on.

The SOLICITOR starts packing up but JAMIE doesn't move.

JAMIE

I'm not leaving. I want the picture. I wanna know who took it, where, when. And I wanna know everything you know about who she's with. *Cos it isn't me.* Give me the photo.

HIGGS

(softly, but firmly)
I'm sorry, but it's evidence in an ongoing investigation. I'm not at liberty to discuss it with you.

JAMIE

She's my wife. I've been looking for seven years... I have a right to know.

HIGGS

I'm sorry Jamie. Really, I am.

Beat. JAMIE shakes his head, crestfallen. His SOLICITOR steers him out.

SOLICITOR

Come on. Let's get you home.

They leave. HIGGS, feeling shit, turns to glare at the mirror. And we start to hear an American newsreader-

(CONTINUED)

NEWSREADER (O.S.)
-attorney general provoked
controversy-

40 **INT. TEXAS. PRISON. MAIN AREA. DAY 1**

40

Prisoners talking in corners, playing cards etc. Some watch the news on a TV mounted high up, covered by a grille.

NEWSREADER (CONT'D)
-today by confirming he would seek
the maximum sentence for Rhonda
McNeil. Civil liberties groups have
criticised the decision, arguing
the punishment's disproportionate
to McNeil's crime.

An ironic cheer goes up as a picture of RHONDA (looking rough) appears on screen. RHONDA squirms in her seat.

PRISONER 1
Girl, you need to sack that
stylist!

Two GUARDS are in a plexiglass booth, monitoring the prisoners. ROSITA bangs on the window.

ROSITA
Hey, change channel, huh? I don't
wanna watch this shit!

GUARD
Siddown!

Two prisoners plonk themselves down on either side of RHONDA. Way too close for comfort. We recognise them as LEANNE's sidekicks from earlier.

WHITE POWER SIDEKICK
You're a traitor to your country.
And to your skin. Don't think
you're safe just cos Leanne likes
you.

RHONDA nervously looks over at LEANNE playing cards, unaware.

WHITE POWER SIDEKICK (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Leanne's finished. You made her
look weak. She shoulda slapped you
down... from now on it's me you
gotta worry about, understand? That
beat down earlier? Tip of the
iceberg.

On the TV, the newsreader has a finger in her ear, confused.

(CONTINUED)

NEWSREADER (ON TV)
Uh, we're interrupting this item to go live to the White House for an emergency statement from the President-

The TV cuts to the PRESIDENT grim-faced in the Oval Office.

PRESIDENT (ON TV)
My fellow Americans. Three days ago the Hubble Space Telescope detected an unusually large comet in our solar system. Since then-

41 **EXT. ROME. TV SHOP. NIGHT 1**

41

An assortment of TVs in the window of an electrical shop. All showing the same press conference...

PRESIDENT (ON TV)
-scientists have been working round the clock to plot its trajectory.

A handful of people watch the TVs, concerned & confused. We pan off them to CELINE, totally oblivious, walking past. We hear her praying in her head.

CELINE (V.O.)
Is this some kind of test, lord?

She takes a seat on a bench, starts fiddling with her rosary beads. Behind, the crowd around the TVs grows bigger...

CELINE (V.O.)
If you want me to do the job, why make me work with *him*? Or is that the point? Why'd you have to make this so difficult? Just tell me. Please. My train leaves in ten minutes. Do I get on it? Or go back to him? My gut says train. Unless you tell me otherwise.

42 **INT. SLOUGH. JAMIE'S HOUSE. HALL / LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 1**

42

A frazzled JAMIE opens the door. PAULA is waiting for him.

PAULA
Oh thank god. I was worried sick.
(hugs him. He doesn't hug back)
What the hell was all that about?

JAMIE
Honestly? I wish I knew.

He extricates himself from the hug. He's being off with her.

(CONTINUED)

PAULA
So did they drop the charges?
(no answer)
Jamie, what is it? Are you alright?

JAMIE
...Layla's alive.

PAULA
Layla? What's Layla got to do with
it?

JAMIE
Also... it seems there's another
me.

PAULA
What are you talking about?

JAMIE
He looks just like me. And we've
got the same DNA... Mum, what
aren't you telling me?

Beat. She blinks for slightly too long. And just as she's
about to answer-

BANG. The door bursts open. They jump. It's DAVE, breathless.

DAVE
Jesus! Here you are! Have you
heard?

JAMIE
Not now, Dave.

DAVE
No, now. You need to see this.

He turns the TV on. The PRESIDENT appears-

PRESIDENT (ON TV)
-great sadness that I must tell you
that the comet is on a direct
collision course-

INT. TEXAS. PRISON. MAIN AREA. DAY 1

Total silence. The inmates just staring at the TV.

PRESIDENT (ON TV)
- with earth. It will strike us in
just thirty four days time.

Beat. Then uproar in the jail.

44

EXT. ROME. TV SHOP/ STREET. NIGHT 1

44

CELINE, still deep in prayer...

CELINE (V.O)
Just give me a sign lord. Like you
used to do with burning bushes.
Something clear and unambig--

SMASH! A taxi ploughs into the tree beside her.

CELINE leaps up, shocked. The TAXI DRIVER gets out, dazed.
Blood streaming down his face.

CELINE (SUBTITLE) (cont'd)
Are you OK? Sir?... sir?

He just looks blankly at her, and stumbles away across the street. And now CELINE becomes aware of the eerie silence. All the traffic has stopped. Everyone stares at the TVs in the window. Now a woman slumps down in the road, weeping.

Confused, CELINE goes over to join the crowd.

PRESIDENT (ON TV)
All the data points to the same
conclusion. That this will be an
ELE... An extinction level event.

CELINE (SUBTITLE)
(stunned, whispers)
A burning bush...

She backs away, turns, starts running off down the street...

SMASH- a looter hurls a brick through the window and grabs the TV as the PRESIDENT implores-

PRESIDENT (ON TV)
I would like to appeal for calm.
This situation will not get easier
if we panic-

45

INT. TEXAS. PRISON. MAIN AREA. DAY 1

45

Too late. The prison's in chaos. PRISONERS are pounding on the plexiglass, behind which the two GUARDS cower.

ROSITA
Are you watching this?! Let us out!

GUARD
Sit down! Sit back down!

ROSITA
Open the goddamn door! I'm not
gonna die in this prison!

(CONTINUED)

GUARD
Godammit, turn that TV off!

GUARD 2
(frantically pressing buttons)
I'm trying! It's not working!

BANG! A chair is hurled at the glass and bounces off.

46 INT. SLOUGH. JAMIE'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 1

46

They're still watching the TV, gobsmacked. The TV graphic says **34 Days Till Armageddon** in huge letters. The newsreader is desperately trying to maintain a sense of calm dignity.

NEWSREADER
-so, to repeat. This is genuine,
this is not a hoax.

We push in on JAMIE, thinking, staring hard at the photo above the telly. Another wedding photo. JAMIE & LAYLA.

NEWSREADER (CONT'D) (cont'd)
We have just thirty four days
left... Usually I'd go to the
weather here but- where's Jane? Has
Jane gone?

PAULA hasn't taken her eyes off the screen. She's terrified.

PAULA
My god...what do we do now?

DAVE
Well, I dunno about you. But I'm
gonna get absolutely shit-faced.

He leaves. Horrible tense silence between JAMIE & PAULA.

JAMIE
You didn't answer my question...
Mum, have I got a twin?

Beat. Then she sighs. She's been dreading this-

PAULA
I don't know... maybe.

JAMIE
...what do you mean, *maybe*?

PAULA
Jamie, you're adopted. You were
found in a shoe box in a car park.
You were tiny, just hours old. And
I adopted you. And I always meant
to tell you, I promise.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAULA (cont'd)

But the older you got... I don't know. There was just never a good time.

JAMIE

And this? *This* is a good time?

She tries to take his hand. He pulls it away. Stares at her for a beat, gets up, walks out.

PAULA

Jamie? I'm sorry. Jamie!

The door slams. PAULA's left with just the TV.

47

EXT. VATICAN. ST PETER'S SQUARE. NIGHT 1

47

A priest reads from the Bible into a megaphone. A crowd listen on their knees, whispering and crossing themselves.

PRIEST 2 (SUBTITLE)

...sun shall be turned into
darkness, And the moon into blood,
before the coming of the great and
awesome day—

Suddenly - a flock of startled pigeons burst up into the air. CELINE is sprinting across the square.

48

INT. VATICAN. CORRIDOR/ FATHER JUDE'S OFFICE. NIGHT 1

48

CELINE runs down the corridor, out of breath. The PRIEST from earlier grabs her, his eyes wide with religious fervour.

PRIEST (SUBTITLE)

Isn't it wonderful? He's coming,
sister! He's actually coming!

She shakes him off, staggers on down the corridor. She throws the door to JUDE's office open. JUDE looks up ashen-faced.

FATHER JUDE

Every crackpot on earth's about to
crawl out of the woodwork, preying
on the weak and the scared. Fake
prophets, bullshit miracles. The
world needs sceptics, now more than
ever... are you in or out?

CELINE

(terrified)
...In.

He reaches for her hand. She takes it, clasps it. Out in the corridor, the PRIEST is shouting at the top of his voice, face raised to heaven.

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST (SUBTITLE)
I love you Jesus! I love you!

49 INT. SLOUGH. POLICE STATION. RECEPTION. NIGHT 1

49

JAMIE walks into reception. It's empty.

JAMIE
Hello?... Hello?

No-one answers. He climbs over the reception desk, starts wandering round the interior of the police station. It's like a ghost ship. Eerily deserted.

50 INT. TEXAS. PRISON. MAIN AREA. DAY 1

50

Chaos. A full on prison riot. Pitched battles between gangs. Anything not screwed down is being thrown: bedding, chairs, tables etc. RHONDA, terrified, retreats into a corner.

Suddenly, music starts over the tannoy system. 'Rapture' by Blondie. Totally incongruous. For a beat, the prisoners look around, distracted. In their booth, the GUARDS are panicking.

GUARD
Where's the music coming from?!

GUARD 2
I don't know! Not from in here!
What the-?

One by one the CCTV monitors are going blank. Now suddenly the same image appears on them all: the Mona Lisa, laughing. The words "**That Deus Ex Machina Feeling**" in a speech bubble.

GUARD 2 (cont'd)
Call for back up! Now!

GUARD
(on phone)
I can't! The line's dead!

The GUARDS look at each other.

GUARD
OK, fuck this!

And they abandon their posts.

In the TV room the music continues. An inmate sets a mattress on fire. Through the flames, RHONDA sees the WHITE POWER women advancing on her menacingly. She retreats away.

51

INT. SLOUGH. POLICE OBSERVATION ROOM. NIGHT 1

51

The door is open. ARDEN's passed out in a chair. HIGGS is drunk, swigging from a bottle. She looks up surprised as JAMIE walks in.

JAMIE

I just found out I'm adopted.

HIGGS

(looks at him in disbelief)
OK. And?

JAMIE

So- it's possible I have a twin I don't know about.

(no response)

Maybe I could lead you to him? I could pretend I want to meet and wear a wire or something. You finding him is my best chance of finding her. Please. Let me help with your investigation.

HIGGS

Jamie, turn the TV on. There's not gonna be an investigation. Who gives a shit about cyber-crime? It's over. What the hell- here. Have it.

(gives him the brown envelope)

Moscow. Six weeks ago. Thursday the ninth. That's all I know. You want answers? You're gonna have to find them yourself.

(she raises the bottle)

Good luck. And god help us all.

She swigs. He stares at the photo.

52

INT. TEXAS. PRISON. MAIN AREA. DAY 1

52

The riot continues. A door bursts open and some GUARDS in full riot gear enter. They immediately fall into a pitched battle with some of the inmates, including LEANNE.

One of the GUARDS trips over, and LEANNE grabs a pair of handcuffs off the GUARD's belt.

Meanwhile, across the room RHONDA backs off terrified, as the WHITE POWER girls stalk her, armed with chair legs. And just as RHONDA runs out of places to retreat:

TANNOY

Attention passengers. Emergency exits are located to the front and rear of the cabin...

(CONTINUED)

A siren sounds- BLAAA- all the doors start sliding open...
The entire prison comes to a momentary halt. Stunned.

TANNOY (cont'd)
Please take a moment to locate your
nearest exit, keeping in mind that
it may be behind you.

ROSITA
Run!

Everyone runs for the door.

53 **INT. TEXAS. PRISON. CORRIDOR. DAY 1**

53

The prisoners stampede down the corridor...

TANNOY
Please make sure your seatbelt's
fastened.

BLAAAAA - the door at the end of the corridor opens...

54 **EXT. TEXAS. PRISON YARD. CONTINUOUS**

54

Alarms going off. Guards in watchtowers opening fire. The
PRISONERS sprint across the yard, bullets peppering the dust.
A prisoner gets hit in the leg, falls to the floor.

TANNOY
-your seat back and tray tables are
in the upright position-

BLAAAA- the exterior gate is clanking open.

55 **EXT. TEXAS. PRISON. PARKING LOT. CONTINUOUS**

55

PRISONERS pour out of the gate, running in every direction.

TANNOY
-and all carry on items are stored
properly in the overhead lockers.

RHONDA looks left, right, unsure which way to go. Suddenly an
ambulance screeches up beside her, blue lights flashing.

The back door swings open & a man offers a latex-gloved hand.
Shit- it's JAMIE! Except it isn't: it's THE WHITE HORSE.

WHITE HORSE
Rhonda! Get in.

RHONDA
Who the hell are you?

(CONTINUED)

WHITE HORSE

A big fan of your work. Get in,
now.

RHONDA looks round her at the chaos. A bullet whizzes past, scarily close. She takes his hand. He starts pulling her up onto the ambulance. But suddenly a hand grabs RHONDA's leg.

LEANNE

I'm coming too!

RHONDA

No she's not! Drive, just drive!

CLICK! SNAP! LEANNE has handcuffed herself to RHONDA's leg. She smiles. RHONDA sighs.

56

INT./EXT. TEXAS. AMBULANCE / ROADS. CONTINUOUS

56

RHONDA & LEANNE tumble awkwardly into the ambulance. Inside there's a bank of monitors along one side showing CCTV from the prison. In the drivers seat is MAX (young, enthusiastic, but very nerdy). He looks round, concerned.

MAX

Hey, what's with the Nazi? This wasn't the plan.

WHITE HORSE

The plan just changed. Drive!

MAX steps on it. The WHITE HORSE presses a button, leans into a microphone...

WHITE HORSE (CONT'D)

Thank you for flying Deus Ex Machin-air. We wish you a pleasant onward journey, wherever your final destination may be...

(releases button)

OK. Who wants birthday cake?

RHONDA & LEANNE (still handcuffed) swap a bewildered look. Music starts playing and we hear JAMIE's voice...

JAMIE (V.O.)

And that was how it started.

57

EXT. TEXAS. PRISON. PARKING LOT. DAY 1

57

The music continues as the ambulance speeds off, blue lights flashing, weaving in and out of escapees.

JAMIE (V.O.)

That was the day our old lives ended-

58

EXT. VATICAN. NIGHT 1

58

The music continues. CELINE & JUDE walk across the square, through the crowd. They're the only ones not on their knees.

JAMIE (V.O.)
-and our new lives began. Thirty
four days ago. Feels like a
lifetime.

59

EXT. SLOUGH. TOWN CENTRE. NIGHT 1

59

The music continues. JAMIE wanders through a town centre in chaos. Fist fights, cars on fire, people having sex in the street etc. But JAMIE's completely oblivious. He just stares at the photo of LAYLA and the WHITE HORSE.

JAMIE (V.O.)
Back then we were hurtling through
the universe on our separate paths.
And then, boom. Somehow we all
collided.

We push in on JAMIE's eyes and we match cut to:

60

INT. SLOUGH BUNKER. IMPACT DAY

60

JAMIE's eyes. As we pull out we realise we're back to our opening sequence.

JAMIE (V.O.)
There's thirteen of us in here. But
why us? I mean, we're hardly the A
team, are we? So is this just luck
or something bigger?

RHONDA's weeping, blood-spattered, in DEATH ROW fatigues. CELINE's laughing, looking at her pregnancy test. The crate-with-the-unknown-man-in-it jiggles around.

JAMIE (V.O.)
Fate, destiny, whatever. Are we the
chosen ones? God, I sound like such
a cock for saying that. But still,
after everything that's happened-

We finish back on JAMIE, looking straight down the camera...

JAMIE (V.O.)
How else do you explain it?

A muffled thump. Cut to black.

END OF EPISODE 1