SIDE EFFECTS

A pilot

by

Talicia Raggs
OVER BLACKNESS

Paper rustles as two distinctive voices are heard.

    COMBS (O.S.)
    Any difficulty with skeletal or muscular movements?

    SOLOMON (O.S.)
    No.

    COMBS (O.S.)
    Any thoughts of overwhelming anger? Depression or suicide?

    SOLOMON (O.S.)
    No.

    COMBS (O.S.)
    Lastly, any changes to your body or bodily function we’ve neglected to ask about?

FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE

Reveal SOLOMON WALKER (35), Black, Original Gangster type inmate sitting in an office chair.

    SOLOMON
    I don’t know. Like what?

DR. PATRICK COMBS, young professional, sits across from Solomon taking notes.

    COMBS
    Could be something as simple as a runny nose or suddenly you think you’ve unlocked the mysteries of the universe.

    SOLOMON
    No. Nothin’ like that.

Using a syringe, Dr. Combs draws fluid from a label-free vial. CLOSE UP ON THE SYRINGE as Dr. Combs taps and expels the air.

TITLE CARD: SIDE EFFECTS

FADE IN:
EXT. COTTLEB CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - NIGHT

Concrete. Barbed Wires. Everything you’d expect.

INT. LETHAL INJECTION BAY - OBSERVATION - NIGHT

BILLIE BROOKS (37), crime and executions reporter, stands with notepad in hand, against the back wall, yawning and waiting. A glance over the small AUDIENCE reveals one person rubbing their eyes as another bobs their head in exhaustion.

Billie looks to the clock: 3:23AM

Warden RANDALL LOCHTE, Black and a bit of a sleaze, quietly enters and ambles over to Billie.

BILLIE
(yawning)
Pretty soon we’ll all need a gurney.

LOCHTE
Sorry. Rolling veins. Had to do an arterial line.

Lochte’s ASSISTANT opens the door.

LOCHTE (CONT’D)
They ready?

TIMECUT:

INT. LETHAL INJECTION BAY - OBSERVATION - NIGHT

Billie watches the lights dim and chamber curtain open. Lochte, NURSE YOUNG and two OFFICERS stand over IBRAHIM JIRAH, the Black prisoner strapped to the gurney.

INT. LETHAL INJECTION CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Warden Lochte reads the warrant into a mic.

LOCHTE
Whereas Ibrahim Jirah, on the 16th of May, 2006 murdered Correctional Officer Gary Fordham and was adjudicated guilty of one count of murder of a peace officer in the first degree and sentenced to death, I will now carry out said sentence. Mr. Jirah, do you now have any last words?
IBRAHIM
Radhitbu bil-lahi Rabban.
Wa bi Muhammadin, sal-lal-lahu ‘alayhi wa alihi, nabiyyan.

LOCHTE
At this time, Midazolam will be used to induce unconsciousness--

IBRAHIM
Brotha wait, I’m not ready!

LOCHTE
Pavulon will then be used to induce respiratory arrest--

IBRAHIM
You promised I could do my declaration!

LOCHTE
And potassium chloride will then be used to stop the heart. Ibrahim Jirah, may God have mercy on your soul.

IBRAHIM
It’s Allah, you dick! You lying Uncle Tom! I took those shots for you! You promised my ‘farah!’

Lochte nods to the nurse, who starts flow of the first drug.

NURSE YOUNG
Starting the Midozolam.

IBRAHIM
Wa bi’ Aliyyan waliyyan wa imaman...

Ibrahim watches the drug creep through tubing into his chest cavity. Violently, he struggles against his restraints.

IBRAHIM (CONT’D)
No, no, no, noooooooo! Get it out!

Lochte steps to the nurse.

LOCHTE
Why isn’t he sedating?

NURSE YOUNG
I don’t know.
LOCHTE
Try it again.

IBRAHIM
They’re using us as guinea pigs in here! We’re rats in a maze!

The nurse administers another dose of Midozolam. It reaches Ibrahim’s chest cavity, yet fails to calm him.

NURSE YOUNG
Now what?

LOCHTE
Keep going, I guess.

NURSE YOUNG
He’s not sedated. He’ll die in agony.

LOCHTE
What choice do we have?

IBRAHIM
They’re experimenting on us with needles! Injecting us with poison!

NURSE YOUNG
(reluctantly)
Starting the Pavulon and Potassium Chloride.

The drugs hit Ibrahim. He seizes against his leather and metal bindings in wretched pain.

IBRAHIM
Aaaahhhhhhhh!! Take it out!!! Ahh!

Leather restraints tear from Ibrahim’s forehead. The officers scramble to contain him, but not before Ibrahim uses his teeth to rip out the arterial line.

Blood sprays everywhere as Ibrahim convulses and screams.

IBRAHIM (CONT’D)
Aaaahhh! Aaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!!

IN THE OBSERVATION BAY
The audience recoils at the horror unfolding before them.

A shocked Billie locks eyes with Lochte as he reaches for and closes the curtains. What did I just see?
INT. LETHAL INJECTION CHAMBER - LATER

MAINTENANCE WORKERS clean the chamber of horrors.

Lochte nervously paces while Billie examines a metal cuff restraint on the gurney. IT IS BENT.

BILLIE
What do you think made him flip out like that?

LOCHTE
You and your liberal cohorts with your little supreme court challenges. THAT’S the real story here! We can’t get the right drugs!
(then)
Every time, we’re using a new cocktail. Every time! And it’s unproven! I’m surprised it hasn’t happened sooner.

Billie finds and surreptitiously pockets a piece of the torn leather restraints.

BILLIE
Still doesn’t explain how he tore the head guard or bent the metal. I mean, there any truth to what he said? Are there experiments?

LOCHTE
What?!

Billie stands her ground. You heard me. Lochte comes close.

LOCHTE (CONT’D)
Billie, you’ve been covering crime and executions here for years. You know me. You know I run a tight ship. The rumor of something like that could kill my career.

BILLIE
Wouldn’t be unprecedented. Tuskeegee... Holmesburg...

LOCHTE
So you’d cast aspersions on my character over the ramblings of a four time murderer? Whose side are you on?

BILLIE
I’m on the side of the truth.
LOCHTE
The truth. Truth is, the men in here are monsters. Monsters with minds for manipulation. Trust them at your own peril.

Billie’s eyes bore into Lochte. Can I trust him?

LOCHTE (CONT’D)
Don’t take my word for it. Feel free to look around. You’re not going to find me, or anyone else in this facility, experimenting on inmates.

Off Billie...

INT. PRISON CLINIC – OFFICE – DAY

An older, distinguished DR. IVAN ZDENEK looks on as Dr. Combs questions Solomon.

COMBS
Lastly, any changes to your body or bodily function that we’ve neglected to ask about?

SOLOMON
No.

ZDENEK
Listen to that question carefully, Mr. Walker. Any changes, no matter how small or you may think insignificant, we would like to hear.

SOLOMON
No. There’s nothing.

ZDENEK
Very well.

Dr. Zdenek nods to Dr. Combs, who then pulls out and opens a case full of label-free vials and syringes. Dr. Combs prepares and administers an injection to Solomon.

SOLOMON
We done?

ZDENEK
For now. Thank you for your participation.
EXT. PRISON - REC YARD - DAY

BLACK PRISONERS play basketball while LATINOS hang at the body bars and WHITES walk the track.

Solomon sits on the bleachers, watching the game and eating sunflower seeds. THE STRANGER, a book by Albert Camus, rests at his side.

CLINT TAYLOR, young Black buck, sidles up to Solomon.

CLINT
S-dub, what up tho?

Solomon pays him no mind.

CLINT (CONT’D)
I’m from your neck of Boogie-town.
They call me CT.

Solomon watches the Latinos across the yard. JULIO MARTINEZ does chin-ups as the others count off... 45, 46, 47...

CLINT (CONT’D)
Man, you know, you like legendary back there. Real O.G. Heard you and your crew used to go hard, robbin’ banks and shit. Runnin’ game and flexin’ muscle for Remmy-Rem. How many times you been shot? Like 4, 5?

Solomon side eyes Clint. What does this fool want?

CLINT (CONT’D)
Yeah, welp, since you left, ain’t nobody come up in the game like that. You was like, that one of a kind...

Back to the Latinos, Solomon watches... 72, 73, 74...

CLINT (CONT’D)
I tried a little somethin’ somethin’ myself. Got got. Now I’m down for a dime.

81, 82, 83... Martinez stops, allowing a friend to grab hold and hang off his waist. Martinez EASILY RESUMES CHIN-UPS WITH TWO... 84, 85, 86... Another friend jumps on as Martinez CONTINUES CHIN-UPS WITH THREE... 87, 88, 89... Solomon watches. DAMN!

CLINT (CONT’D)
Trying to settle in, you know. Make friends. But it’s hard.

(MORE)
Mad Dog let me hang around but told me not to get too close. A word from you, that O.G. S-dub, would do a brotha some good, ya feel me?

SOLOMON
Hey. Puppy.

CLINT
Yeah?

SOLOMON
You saying you wanna hang with the big dogs? Run with the wolves?

CLINT
Hellz yeah! Just tell me what I gotta do.

SOLOMON
Shut-the-fuck-up.

Solomon grabs his book and leaves.

INT. PRISON - VISITATION - DAY

A row of face to face booths separated by Plexiglas, connected by telephones.

Solomon talks to his prep school son, DAVID WALKER (15). CYNTHIA HOLLIS (55), Solomon’s mother, sits behind David occasionally coughing up phlegm.

DAVID
(defiant)
Man, that teacher was a sub trying to clown me in front of the class. We in physics and they didn’t even know the difference between balanced and unbalanced forces. So I set him straight.

SOLOMON
And got detention.

DAVID
Detention. Big deal.

SOLOMON
What about suspension? Was that a big deal?
DAVID
Look. Peter Connelly called me a monkey one too many times and I had to beat his ass.

SOLOMON
Boy, we don’t send you to that school to beat ass. We send you there to learn. You’re getting in fights, letting your grades slip. You’re out all night, stressing out your grandma and you know she’s sick. Boy, what’s going on with you?!

David breaks down.

DAVID
I can’t stay at that school, Dad. I hate it there. The kids leave bananas in my locker, shaving cream in my desk. They call me Affirmative-Action like I don’t belong.

SOLOMON
Your grades and your scholarship say you do.

DAVID
Everybody knows my dad’s in jail. You know how embarrassing it is when kids talk about what they parents do and somebody asks if mines makes license plates? I wanna go back to my old school.

SOLOMON
Absolutely not.

DAVID
But I fit in there.

SOLOMON
That’s the problem. That school don’t graduate nothing but baby felons and baby mamas. Your future’s bigger than that, Day!

DAVID
Trey and Kurt go there and they-

SOLOMON
I don’t care about them. I care about you.

(MORE)
David, you are the future of this family. You’re my future. You’re the only good seed I ever planted in this life. Everything I am—
(motions to mother)
Everything she is, is about making that seed grow. It’s all we are. It’s our everything.
(then)
So, you gonna mind your grandmother, go back to that school, and make your grades. I know it’s hard, but you gotta learn how to deal with these people, Day. Watch the popular ones. Do what they do.

DAVID
Wait. You want me to be more like them? What’s wrong with being me?

SOLOMON
(frustrated)
Look, bottom line is, you’re going back to that school. It’s the right thing for you.

DAVID
Man, you ain’t never done the right thing in your life and now you gonna tell me what the right thing is!?

SOLOMON
Boy!?

DAVID
Whatever, man. Go back to pressing plates at twenty cents an hour.

David drops the receiver and waits by the door. Cynthia takes his seat and the receiver.

SOLOMON
Oh my God, that boy. Was I that hard-headed and angry at his age?

CYNTHIA
(sad smile)
Yes. You were.

The gravity of that statement takes hold as Solomon realizes where it got him.

Cynthia coughs.
SOLOMON
Please tell me you went to the doctor.

CYNTHIA
I did. But the medicine they gave me is on backorder at the pharmacy.

SOLOMON
So go to another one.

CYNTHIA
Baby, by the time I get on the bus to cross town to another pharmacy, half the day is gone. When am I gonna work?

SOLOMON
Fine. I’ll deal with it if it’s not in by the time I get out. That, (nods to David) And that knucklehead over there.

Cynthia looks to David, who petulantly mean-mugs and listens to his Beats-by-Dre knockoffs.

CYNTHIA
Why don’t you let me tell him? It’ll do a world of good for him right now.

SOLOMON
No, Mama. You know how this place is. One slip and my date’s gone.

CYNTHIA
But, it’s only two weeks. It’ll give him something to look forward to.

SOLOMON
And if something happens? No. He can know I’m getting out, when I’m out. I just gotta make damn sure it happens, is all.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON – WARDEN LOCHTE’S OFFICE – DAY

Warden Lochte addresses Solomon, who stands at-ease.

LOCHTE
What about the burners?
SOLOMON
I don’t know. It’s not Whitey or any of his people. It’s gotta be a guard, sir.

LOCHTE
That’s what I thought. Anything else?

SOLOMON
Mad Dog’s bringing in a new batch of Soboxone through the mail. They’re putting it between the envelope flaps that glue together.

LOCHTE
Mad Dog? You mean Favion Rockman? He’s head of your gang. Aren’t you friends?

SOLOMON
Not when it stands between me and my parole date, sir.

Lochte reviews Solomon’s file.

LOCHTE
Two weeks I see. Have you told them you’re leaving?

SOLOMON
No, sir.

LOCHTE
Smart.

SOLOMON
I hope you’ll still sign my release, sir.

LOCHTE
I see you’ve been working with Dr. Zdenek’s inoculation testing. How’s that going?

SOLOMON
Fine, sir.

LOCHTE
Good. Good. Well, Solomon, you’ve been very helpful over the last year. I’m sad to see you go, but I’m very happy to return the favor. Keep your nose clean, though.

(MORE)
LOCHTE (CONT'D)
Any infraction between now and then
and there won’t be anything I can
do.

SOLOMON
Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

INT. BROOKS HOME - LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

GIL BROOKS (71) sits statuesque in a chair, staring ahead
toward the blank screen of an old, off, television.

Billie enters, box in hand, and is greeted by HELEN, the
leaving home-nurse.

BILLIE
Sorry, I’m late. How’s he doing?

HELEN
Good. No outbursts today.

BILLIE
Great job, Dad.

HELEN
And I hate to do this as I’m
leaving but I need you to check
with the benefits office. I haven’t
been paid. It’s been three weeks!

BILLIE
I will. I will.

HELEN
Alright. Gotta pick up the kids. Bye.

Billie drops her items, then turns her attention to Gil.

BILLIE
Hey, Pop. Anything interesting
happen today?

Gil stares ahead, maybe oblivious, maybe ignoring.

As Billie props up Gil’s pillow for him, he cranes his neck
to look past her.

BILLIE (CONT’D)
What are you looking at?

Billie turns to the television. On top is a framed picture of
a YOUNG MAN, smiling.
BILLIE (CONT’D)
You looking at Cricket?
(then)
Yeah. I miss him too.

INT. BROOKS HOME - DINING ROOM - LATER

Billie sits at the table. The box, “Ibrahim Jirah Personal Effects,” sits atop, it’s meager contents laid out before her.

Billie sifts through the items – magazines, drawings, sufi caps, hygiene items. Nothing of interests jumps out.

Billie flips through his books. Nothing. She picks up his Qur’an leafing through the pages. A card falls out...

MASJID AL ISLAMIC CENTER.

INT. MASJID AL ISLAMIC CENTER - IMAM OFFICE - DAY

IMAM AL HABIB searches his file cabinet, pulls out bundled letters and hands them over to Billie.

HABIB
He would write every other week, or so. We would send back lessons from the weekly readings.

BILLIE
Were you the one that prepared him for death?

HABIB
Not I. But a student from our center.

BILLIE
You mind me asking why not? When you’re the leader?

HABIB
Allah welcomes all comers, Ms. Brooks. But in the battle for American hearts and minds, which would you rather I comforted? Murderous converts using Islam to buttress their anger or little girls wearing hijabs pelleted by rocks?

(then)
I can do more good for my community by staying above reproach. Good day, Ms. Brooks.
Off Billie.

EXT. PRISON - REC YARD - DAY

Solomon occupies his regular spot on the bleachers flipping through THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X. Clint sits alone, close but not too close.

FAVION “MAD DOG” ROCKMAN (40), Black, thug-4-life, breaks off from the game, takes a seat next to Solomon.

    MAD DOG
    (to Clint)
    Hey. Young buck.

Clint looks around. Is he talking to me?

    MAD DOG (CONT’D)
    Yeah, you. Puppy. Take my place.

    CLINT
    Thanks, Mad Dog.

Clint happily takes Mad Dog’s place in the game.

    MAD DOG
    What do you think of CT?

    SOLOMON
    I don’t. Too young, too eager, too much lip flappin’.

    MAD DOG
    Exactly. I need you to shut him up. Permanently.

    SOLOMON
    What?

    MAD DOG
    Yesterday, they stopped our shit in the mail room. Knew exactly where to look.

    SOLOMON
    How do you know it’s him?

    MAD DOG
    ‘Cause. Shit’s been messin’ up for a year now. Right when that little nigga got here.

    SOLOMON
    He ain’t part of the business, though.
MAD DOG
Don’t matter. He overhears things. Besides, my peeps over in county say he’s a busta. Ain’t got it in him to do hard time, no way. Lookin’ to snitch his way out. I need my O.G. pitbull to teach him what happens to snitch bitches.

SOLOMON
Nah bruh, I’ll pass.

MAD DOG
I ain’t askin’...
(then, to the court)
Yo! Ball!

Mad Dog catches a pass and returns to the court.

Off Solomon.

INT. PRISON - QUAD D COMMON AREA - DAY

PRISONERS loiter about outside their cells. Some read, others watch television, others play cards.

Solomon quenches his thirst at a water fountain next to the guard booth when OFFICER DIETRIC hassles him.

DIETRIC
Don’t fall in. I heard your kind can’t swim.

SOLOMON
I backstroke in your wife’s pussy just fine.

DIETRIC
Knock that shit off, Walker.

SOLOMON
Why you mad, though? I ain’t the one stretch it out like that. Must be all that other Mandingo dick she’s getting.

DIETRIC
I’m warning you.

SOLOMON
Good. Now tape that warning to your wife’s pussy. “Enter at your own risk.” “Dicks go in, but they don’t come out.”
Dietric

That’s enough!

Dietric wrestles Solomon’s arm behind his back and forces him through the quad into...

INT. PRISON - SOLOMON’S CELL - DAY

Dietric forcibly props Solomon against the wall frisking him.

Dietric

You think I’m playing with you?!!

Solomon

(whispering)
I need you to transfer Clint Taylor to another unit. Mad Dog wants him dead.

Dietric

(whispering)
Mad Dog wants a lot of people dead. I can’t just transfer him out of the blue. I need proof.

Solomon

What’s wrong with you Nazi bitch asses can’t take a joke?!

Dietric

(whispering)
Do you know who’s performing the hit?

Solomon takes a moment to consider. Should I tell him?

Solomon

(whispering)
No.

Dietric

(whispering)
Then I can’t do it. (then) I better not find any contraband on you!

Solomon

(whispering)
Yeah. Okay.

Dietric

(whispering)
By the way, lay off the wife jokes. It really hurts my feelings.
Dietric releases Solomon and steps out of the cell.

   DIETRIC (CONT’D)
   I mean it! Next time, I’m tossing this whole cell!

Off a grinning Solomon.

FADE OUT:

BLACKNESS

A slitted circle comes into focus. It opens, then blinks, revealing itself to be an EYE. Pull back to reveal...

EXT. AFRICAN TUNDRA - DAY

The eye of a bull rhino, with columns for horns. Massive, majestic, magnificent, he proudly roams the open tundra... until he realizes his leg is being held by a chain. Pull as he might, the Rhino’s leg cannot snap the chain.

Suddenly, a HUNTER aims his high powered rifle, shoots. The Rhino is hit. Again. And again, but does not fall. With a running start, the Rhino breaks the chain. Additional chains materialize from the ground, each pick an area to bind. The Rhino breaks free of them all, then runs down the Hunter.

Gratified to stand atop the Hunter’s head, the Rhino slowly applies pressure, crushing his skull in satisfaction.

INT. PRISON - SOLOMON’S CELL - EARLY MORNING

From a cold sweat, Solomon’s eyes blink awake. He sits up to a cell in disarray. Items knocked off shelves, his bed twisted, the metal stool seat bent in half.

INT. PRISON - SOLOMON’S CELL - LATER

Solomon hurriedly cleans his cell. He fluffs his sheets to hide the bed, replaces good items to shelves, throws useless torn books and other ruined items away.

Finally, Solomon replaces David’s latest report card - C’s, D’s, and an F. Solomon tapes it to the wall next to the other report cards. They all show A’s.

Solomon looks to the stool. What the hell to do about that?

A little closer, Solomon notices a row of several round indentations. Curious, he makes a fist and uses his knuckles to fill the holes. NO WAY! THEY FIT!!
Solomon makes sure no one is watching. Then, using his bare hands, Solomon bends the stool upright. He looks at his hands and stool in amazement.

SOLOMON
Oh, shit!

INT. PRISON CLINIC – OFFICE – DAY

Dr. Zdenek watches Solomon as Dr. Combs questions him.

COMBS
Lastly, any changes to your body or bodily function that we’ve neglected to ask about?

SOLOMON
Uuh, no.

ZDENEK
Rashes? Lesions? Or other skin disorders?

SOLOMON
No.

ZDENEK
Excellent.

Dr. Zdenek nods to Dr. Combs, who prepares and administers Solomon’s injection.

INT. PRISON – WARDEN LOCHTE’S OFFICE – DAY

Billie, several letters in hand, confronts Warden Lochte.

BILLIE
(read)
They’ve just started giving us these shots. Says they’re ‘sposed to keep us healthy. Funny how I have to be healthy for them to kill me.

Billie slams the letter on his desk. Reads another.

BILLIE (CONT’D)
(read)
I hate the needles. It’s like they’re stabbing them right into my brain.

Billie slams the letter, reads another.

BILLIE (CONT’D)
(read)
New day, new shot. (MORE)
Billie slams that letter down.

BILLIE (CONT’D)
You lied to me. You said you weren’t giving these prisoners shots!

LOCHTE
What I said was that we weren’t experimenting on them!

BILLIE
(re: letters)
What do you call this, then!??

LOCHTE
An act of humanitarian benevolence!?
(then)
Billie, do you know what the number one threat facing inmates in the prison system is today?

BILLIE
Other inmates!?

LOCHTE
Be serious.

BILLIE
Other guards!?

LOCHTE
Billie.

BILLIE
You!?

LOCHTE
MRSA. It’s hard to diagnose. It’s fast acting, and deadly.

BILLIE
Then why are you giving it to them?

LOCHTE
We’re not giving it to them, we’re inoculating them from it. That and Meningitis, a new strain. And it’s completely voluntary. No one’s forced to take it. Not even Jirah. In fact, since we’ve started the program, we’ve all but eliminated it from our facility.
BILLIE
That still doesn’t explain bubbling skin.

LOCHTE
Jirah was probably seeing things.

BILLIE
He’s schizophrenic now?! Yeah. Okay. I wanna see his medical records.

LOCHTE
You know I can’t do that. But look, look... I’m going to give you what you want. Someone who knew Jirah before he converted and has also taken the inoculations. You’ll see. Everything’s on the up and up.

INT. PRISON – VISITATION – DAY
A distressed Solomon talks to his sickly and overwrought mother, Cynthia.

SOLOMON
What did the police say?

CYNTHIA
They won’t help. He’s a “voluntary missing” from a ghetto neighborhood. It was all I could do to get them to take the report.

SOLOMON
What about Kurt and Trey?

CYNTHIA
They say they haven’t seen him.

SOLOMON
Bullshit. Those boys are glued at the hip.

Cynthia coughs heavily, worse than before.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
Jesus Mama, you alright?

Cynthia nods, wiping the moisture from her mouth, then melting into tears.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
Mama, please don’t cry. I’ll be out in six days. Things are gonna get better. I promise you.
CYNTHIA
I tried my best. Solomon and David.
You were named after kings, you
know. But, I failed you both. I
couldn’t...

SOLOMON
Mama, stop putting this on
yourself! It’s NOT you. I should
have let you tell him I was getting
out. This is my fault, not yours.
Everything. You hear? It’s ALL my
fault.

Officer Dietric taps Solomon on the shoulder.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
(to Dietric)
What man!!??

DIETRIC
Sorry Walker, I need you to come
with me.

INT. PRISON - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY
Billie sits across from the handcuffed Solomon.

BILLIE
How long have you been in prison?

Mind elsewhere, Solomon stares off into space.

BILLIE (CONT’D)
Warden Lochte tells me you knew
Ibrahim Jirah. Did you meet him
here or back home?

Still nothing from Solomon.

BILLIE (CONT’D)
Am I boring you? Keeping you from
curing cancer or fighting hunger
maybe?

SOLOMON
Why don’t you quit ya bullshittin’ and
ask me what you really want to know?

BILLIE
Okay. Lochte said you volunteered
to take the Meningitis and MRSA
vaccines. But did you know there’s
no known vaccine for MRSA?
SOLOMON

So what?

BILLIE

So, they could be giving you something else. How do you even know it’s what they say it is?

SOLOMON

I don’t.

BILLIE

Then why would you take it?

SOLOMON

Because there’s more to catch in a prison shower than just a shiv and a dick. What are you getting at?

BILLIE

Something unseemly is happening to the prisoners here. It needs to be exposed.

SOLOMON

So you trying to help us? Is that it?

BILLIE

Yes.

SOLOMON

No, you ain’t. You trying to help yourself. I heard you’re an executions reporter. What are you even doing talking to me? You think you about to land on some big story? No, you ain’t. Cause nobody cares about prisoners. Nobody cares what happens to me or my family or my problems in here!

BILLIE

Trust me when I tell you, I care.

SOLOMON

Bullshit! You’re trying to make a name for yourself. Be some kind of star reporter. But let me tell you something, it ain’t gonna fill that hole you got going on inside you.

BILLIE

What?
SOLOMON
You desperate. A blind man can see that. This? This ain’t gonna fill it.

BILLIE
(recovering)
You’re foolish if you think whatever’s going on here is
typical. I can expose--

SOLOMON
Lady, there’s nothing to expose.
Last year, some prisoners got sick
and died. So this year, when Dr.
“DAN-nick” came around and asked if
we wanted a vaccine against it. I
said, yes. I took the shots. I’m
still alive. End of story.

Billie flips through the staff list.

BILLIE
Dannick? I don’t see him on the
medical staff.

SOLOMON
Starts with a Z.

BILLIE
A Z?

SOLOMON
Did I stutter? Yes, a Z, bitch. I
can spell.

Billie looks again.

BILLIE
Z-D-E-N-E-K?

SOLOMON
Yeah.

BILLIE
Not in here, either.
(them)
And I think it’s pronounced “Den-
NECK.”

Fed up, Solomon signals to the guard outside who comes in to
retrieve him.
SOLOMON

Off Billie, watching Solomon leave.

INT. BROOKS HOME - BILLIE’S OFFICE - NIGHT

Billie works at her desk, bags of exhaustion and desperation hang from her eyes.

BILLIE
I’ll be there in a minute, Dad.

On a pinboard wall next to Billie’s desk hang photos of Solomon Walker and the now dead, “X’ed” out, Ibrahim Jirah. Above those pictures hang the sign: COTTLIEB CORRECTIONAL FACILITY. Billie writes, then pins an index card reading “DR. ZDENEK” under the pictures.

Using yarn as connectors, Billie loops string from both Solomon’s and Ibrahim’s pictures to Dr. Zdenek’s index card.

Billie then loops string from Dr. Zdenek’s index card to another, as yet unseen card, and leaves.

A pull back on Dr. Zdenek’s original card reveals it connected to another index card reading “DR. ZDENEK.” This one pinned under MARSHALL FEDERAL PENITENTIARY and connected to six “X”ed out pictures. ONE OF WHICH BELONGS TO THE MAN IN THE EARLIER PICTURE, BILLIE’S BROTHER, “CRICKET.”

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION - MORNING

Dingy white walls. Flickering florescent lights. Basically, where hope goes to die. DOZENS stand in line awaiting their turn in the bureaucratic cog.

Billie, at the front of the line, talks to OPAL, a representative. Gil stands off to the side confused, rocking and moaning.

BILLIE
But the hospital was the one to send the home nurse. They said he qualified.

OPAL
For a limited time, yes. Permanent home care needs to be prescribed by a doctor. Otherwise, it’s out of pocket.
Gil begins to wander away.

BILLIE
Dad! Come back!
(to Opal)
No one told me that!

Opal checks the monitor.

OPAL
Late-stage, Medicare only pays thirty five hours a week. And only for home-bound. He doesn’t qualify.

Gil starts taking off his clothes.

GIL
I’m hot.

BILLIE
Dad! What are you...

GIL
Hot.

Billie grabs her dad and his clothes, struggling, trying to lead him away. Gil, fighting against it, trips hard and collapses. Billie panics.

BILLIE
Dad? DAD!?

A moment of clarity washes over Gil as he looks into Billie’s eyes, smiling. Gently, he caresses her face.

GIL
Hi.

Astonished, Billie gasps in elation.

BILLIE
(emotional)
Daddy?

GIL
Hey.

BILLIE
Oh my God! Daddy!

Billie leaps to hug him. Gil returns the embrace.

BILLIE (CONT’D)
I’ve missed you so much.
GIL
Aw, I missed you too, Cricket.

Billie drops, the sobering reality bringing her back to Earth.

BILLIE
Daddy? It’s me. It’s Billie.

GIL
Oh now, we don’t have to tell her, do we? Why don’t you get that last piece of lemon merengue from the fridge and you and me can enjoy it together.

BILLIE
Sure, Dad.

Billie leaves Gil sitting on the bench as she steps over and leans on the wall.

Too much to bear, Billie crumples to the floor in tears.

INT. PRISON - CAFETERIA - MORNING

Solomon waits in line as the CAFETERIA STAFF dispense trays. Mad Dog cuts behind him, sliding a shank under his arm.

MAD DOG
On my signal.

Solomon and the other BROTHAS (including Clint), carry their trays and follow Mad Dog to a table of seated LATINOS (including Martinez). Solomon clocks the officers.

MAD DOG (CONT’D)
Hey Hommes, vamonos out our new casa.

Martinez stands up to the challenge.

MARTINEZ
Yo bruh, go gorilla somewhere else.

SAL VASQUEZ, older, wiser, grabs his tray and intermediaries.

VASQUEZ
I was just saying how warm it is over here.

Vasquez moves away. The other Latinos follow his lead.

MAD DOG
Vasquez, you know what else is warm? The jiz I’ma drop in that pussy ass tonight.
A young LATINO throws a punch and a brawl ensues.

The LOCKDOWN siren alarms. Mad Dog looks to Solomon. NOW! Solomon sees the guards rushing in, grabs Clint.

SOLOMON
  (in his ear)
  Run kid.

Clint runs right into an officer who puts him down with a baton. Some prisoners prostrate themselves, others go down with the BRUTAL help of OFFICERS.

Solomon lies down, looks around. What do I do about this shank? He spots an open area of floor and quickly flicks the shank across it into the concrete blocked wall -- Its existence only evidenced by the slit opening left behind.

All PRISONERS lie face down save one, Martinez. Several officers beat him with their batons about the arms, back and legs, yet he pushes them away, refusing to go down.

MARTINEZ
  Fuck off me! Get the fuck off me!

OFFICER ADAMS gets on his radio.

ADAMS
  Activate C.E.R.T. to the cafeteria.

Adams signals the other officers to stop. He readies his baton, calls out...

ADAMS (CONT’D)
  Inmate! Assume the surrender position!

MARTINEZ
  We’re defending ourselves and y’all come in here beating on us!? That’s bullshit! I want to be treated like a human being!

VASQUEZ
  Martinez! Acostarse!

MARTINEZ
  No Papi! It’s not fair! I’m tired of this shit! I’m tired of being beat like an animal and I ain’t do nothing wrong!

ADAMS
  It’s your last warning, inmate. Lie down or I will crack your skull in two!
MARTINEZ
Make me, motha-fucker!

Adams swings. Martinez releases a punch so powerful it rips Adams’ jaw clean off his face.

Solomon watches Adams fall, twitching and bleeding, fleshy jaw on the floor, five feet away.

Martinez stands dazed. What did I just do?

The Correctional Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.) breaks out electrified batons and AN ELECTRIFIED SHIELD. They assume formation behind the shield and charge. Martinez punches again to no avail, the shield too powerful. C.E.R.T. easily takes down Martinez as he screams in agony.

VILLE, a White inmate near Solomon, gets his attention.

VILLE
We’re getting stronger.

SOLOMON
What?

VILLE
Library. Tomorrow at four.

Ville turns his head. Before Solomon turns his, he notices Mad Dog watching. He doesn’t look happy.

INT. PRISON CLINIC - INFIRMARY - DAY

Billie, dressed as a nurse, stands off to the side watching the goings on of the clinic. She sees an INMATE skip the check in and go straight into an “out-of-the-way” office.

At the same time, another INMATE exits that office with a trash can and dumps its contents into a larger rolling bin.

BILLIE
Excuse me!? I think I accidentally threw something important away. Do you mind?

The inmate allows Billie to rummage through. She finds clear vials among other empty, labeled ones and takes them.

BILLIE (CONT’D)
Got it! Thanks!

The inmate leaves. Billie turns and runs smack into Solomon.

SOLOMON
You!?
BILLIE
Shhh. I’m not supposed to be here.

SOLOMON
No kidding. What are you even doing?

BILLIE
I had to get creative since the last person I talked to wasn’t very helpful and was also quite mean.

SOLOMON
Yeah, well, I’m sorry about the “mean” part. I got some bad news before I saw you.

BILLIE
It’s okay. Like my nurses outfit? I’m here as a “temporary worker.”

SOLOMON
Get caught and you’ll end up in here with me.

BILLIE
I won’t get caught.

SOLOMON
That’s what we all say.

BILLIE
Tell me what you know. Because, I know you haven’t told me everything.

SOLOMON
With parole coming up, Jesus Christ himself couldn’t get me to talk.

Billie writes, then slips a piece of paper in his pocket.

BILLIE
My number. In case Jesus Christ changes your mind.

SOLOMON
(chuckles)
You want me to spill my guts on a tapped jail line? You ain’t that bright, are you?

Billie writes, slips him another piece of paper.

BILLIE
An address, for you to mail.
A CORRECTIONS OFFICER calls over to them.

OFFICER
Inmate!? Why are you loitering?

Solomon walks away.

BILLIE
We bumped into each other and he was just apologizing. No problem here.

INT. PRISON CLINIC - OFFICE - DAY

Solomon answers Dr. Combs’ questions.

COMBS
Lastly, any changes to your body or bodily function that we’ve neglected to ask?

SOLOMON
Naw.

COMBS
Great. Thank you, Mr. Walker. We’re done. No shot today.

SOLOMON
But I was told it was supposed to be seven shots. I’ve only had five.

COMBS
Our latest research shows exceptional efficacy using the shortened series. Trust me, you’re better off without them.

Off the confused Solomon.

EXT. PRISON - REC YARD - DAY

Solomon reads Kafka’s METAMORPHOSIS in his usual spot while Mad Dog, Clint and the others play basketball.

Mad Dog takes a break next to Solomon. They both watch Clint play.

SOLOMON
Give me a couple weeks to come up with another plan. Something a little quieter, that won’t come back on us.

MAD DOG
A couple weeks, huh?
SOLOMON
Three tops.

MAD DOG
Interesting. You think they’d let Day back into that fancy school in two or three weeks?

SOLOMON
WHAT!?

MAD DOG
Yeah, I had a feeling you'd bitch out. So, I took a little insurance policy.

SOLOMON
You’ve got my Day?

MAD DOG
Didn’t want have to do it, but sometimes a pitbull needs a little incentive to attack.

(then)
Oh, and I wouldn’t wait too long cause he get a little taste of the thug life, he might start to like it.

Mad Dog heads back to the game.

Off Solomon...

INT. PRISON – LOCHTE’S OFFICE BULLPEN – DAY

Solomon, escorted by Dietric, enters the bullpen. Every assistant is engaged in various stages of busy.

DIETRIC
(to Solomon)
Go on back. I’ve gotta drain the lizard.

Solomon walks the hall to Lochte’s office when he hears voices.

INT. PRISON – JUST OUTSIDE LOCHTE’S OFFICE – CONTINUOUS

Solomon presses his ear to the door, listens intently.

LOCHTE (O.C.)
This is way outside the scope of what you promised this would be!

INTERCUT WITH:
Lochte furiously paces the floor as he meets with Dr. Zdenek, GENERAL ED JOSEPHS, and a mysterious MAN IN BLACK.

ZDENEK
This is a surprise to us as well. We had no indication this could be a side effect of the inoculations. Until we know more, however, we have stemmed the program.

GEN. JOSEPHS
Hold your horses, now. This could be a good thing.

LOCHTE
Good thing?! Right. Because if it’s one thing this world needs, it’s murderous people with super-powers.

The Man in Black moves the superfluous Lochte out the way.

GEN. JOSEPHS
Let’s just think about this. We were looking for a vaccine against a biological weapon. But a stronger, faster, better soldier could BE the biological weapon.

LOCHTE
You can’t be serious.

GEN. JOSEPHS
Doc, how many in your program?

ZDENEK
Five-hundred twenty-five.

GEN. JOSEPHS
And how many like Martinez?

ZDENEK
We’ve had about thirty indicate some form of enhancement. But of those, how many are to the degree of Mr. Martinez? We’re not certain.

LOCHTE
Only thirty!? That’s assuming they’re all being truthful.

ZDENEK
They have no incentive to lie.
LOCHTE
They’re criminals. Lying is their job.

GEN. JOSEPHS
Never mind him, Doc. I want those thirty suited, booted and scooted to the research facility right now and in a hurry. I want to know everything there is to know about these men. Like - “Why do they have abilities when the others don’t?”

ZDENEK
You mean, what makes them different?

GEN. JOSEPHS
Indeed.

(then)
Kill ‘em, dissect them if you have to. I don’t care. At least they will have died serving their country.

LOCHTE
You’re just leaving the other five hundred? Great. And what happens when this ticking time bomb of a facility blows up? Do you realize I’m going to have to call out the National Guard?!

MAN IN BLACK
In that event, we’ll have a contingency plan in place.

LOCHTE
Oh! Well! Don’t tell me about it, I’m just the warden!

From outside the door, voices can be heard.

DIETRIC (O.S.)
What’s going on? Is he in there?

Everyone stills as Lochte goes to open the door.

INT. PRISON – JUST OUTSIDE LOCHTE’S OFFICE – CONTINUOUS
Solomon stands, caught between Lochte and Dietric.

LOCHTE
Walker?! What are you doing here?!
SOLOMON
Our appointment, sir.

From the hall, Solomon can see the Man in Black, General Josephs and Dr. Zdenek. Lochte covertly closes the door.

LOCHTE
Right, right. Look, no appointment today.

SOLOMON
Sir, it’s important.

LOCHTE
I know what you want, Solomon, and I’m signing off. Don’t worry.

SOLOMON
But, sir...

LOCHTE
Walker! An inmate from Zdenek’s program just knocked the jaw off a guard with one punch. Can you do that?

SOLOMON
No.

LOCHTE
Good. Because unless you’re here to tell me you can do that, I don’t have time. Understand?

SOLOMON
Yes, sir.

Off Solomon, up-against-it.

INT. PRISON – BARBERSHOP – DAY

MOZART cuts hair while TINY, big and Black, cleans clippers.

Solomon enters, nods to both, then sits in Tiny’s chair.

SOLOMON
Line me up, dawg.

Tiny grabs clean clippers and gets to work.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
Don’t I recognize you from Glen Park? I think I used to buy weed from you back in the day. Off Adams and 5th with the Rollin’ 20’s?
TINY
Sounds about right.

SOLOMON
Heard what happened to your boy
DeVaughn, man. That was real fucked
up, I’m sorry.

TINY
Yeah, that’s why I never used to work
with partners. They get scared, bounce,
leave you holding the bag. Next thing
you know, forty bullets in the back.

SOLOMON
Shit. I didn’t know he had a partner.

TINY
Yeah. Some kid named CT.

SOLOMON
You mean, Clint Taylor?

TINY
Know him? I heard he might be here
somewhere.

SOLOMON
He’s in our quad. Quad D.
(then)
Now this makes sense. He was
bragging about some robbery he did
where the dude bitched out in the
middle and got killed.

TINY
Naw, HE was the bitch!

SOLOMON
Man, I can’t believe he’s lying like
that. If DeVaughn was my little
homie, CT would not live to see the
end of the hour, let alone the day.

TINY
Shit, man. I wish.

SOLOMON
What!? Ain’t you Rollin’ 20’s!?

TINY
Yeah, but we can’t touch him.

SOLOMON
Why not?
His big brother is 10th street Crips. We in a truce with them. We touch his ass, and it’ll be OUR ass. Know what I mean?

Off the disappointed Solomon.

INT. PRISON – LIBRARY – DAY

Solomon moves through the empty library. Several inmates, including Ville, congregate in the rear, backs to him.

VILLE
Solomon. We’ve been waiting for you.

SOLOMON
You got eyes in back of your head?

EDDIE, White trash but smart and sweet as pie, and PEDRO, Latino welcome him.

VILLE
Kinda feels like it. That’s Eddie and Pedro, and these idiots are Tony and Keys.

TONY, the Italian Stallion, and KEYS, Black and charismatic, are locked in an arm wrestling match. Besides “abilities,” the other commonality they all share is being young, dumb, and full of cum.

VILLE (CONT’D)
(to Solomon)
We’re trying to decide what our options are.

Keys, in a burst of strength, forces Tony’s hand and body through the table to win.

KEYS
Game. Match. Keys!

EDDIE
Quiet, you guys. ‘Fore somebody come back here.

WITH SOLOMON AND VILLE...

VILLE
Some want to pool together and break out. Some want to ask for better food and more privileges. Others want to fly under the radar.

WITH THE BOYS...
Eddie vigorously rubs paper between his fingers producing smoke. He blows, producing fire. Everyone’s impressed.

EDDIE
This what happens when you think outside the trailer, boys!

TONY
Whoa! Let me try that!

WITH SOLOMON AND VILLE AND NOW PEDRO...

SOLOMON
Trust me. There’re a lot of reasons to keep it on the down low.

PEDRO
See. He agrees with me. This the only good thing this life ever give me. I don’t want them to take it back.

VILLE
What if it wears off though? We do nothing. We get nothing. I say we ask for better food and more privileges.

BERNIE “ROACH” BELFORT, White, bespectacled, easily overlooked twerp of a man reading his book, speaks up from two tables over.

ROACH
Asking? Why are you asking for anything? You should be telling.

KEYS
Well, if the little cockroach don’t speak. What you know about it Poindexter?

ROACH
Competitive exclusion. It means I never have to ask for anything ever again.

TONY
Competitive what?

ROACH
Why did Homo Erectus die out?

KEYS
He got shot?!
TONY
Wait. His homo stayed erectus for more than four hours.

PEDRO
No homo, bro!

The boys clown, but Solomon is drawn in.

SOLOMON
Why?

ROACH
Because Homo Sapiens came along. Stronger, smarter, better. They changed things. They monopolized the resources. Out did them at every turn. Homo Erectus never stood a chance.

KEYS
But that’s us. What that got to do with you, Roach?

ROACH
Would you care to see what I can do?

Roach pushes his chair back, walks to Keys and stands tall.

ROACH (CONT’D)
What do you think? Impressed?

Everyone bursts into fits of laughter. Solomon remains stoic however, not sure what to make of Roach.

Smiling, Roach returns to his seat.

KEYS
I still say we break out. I ain’t even supposed to be here no way.

PEDRO
Yeah, Ese. They meant to put you on the ladies bus.

KEYS
Shut-up. Naw. That asshole A.D.A. made shit up to get me convicted. That ain’t justice. That’s just us.

EDDIE
Dang brother, so you’re innocent?
No, I did it. But the point is, he cheated. And that ain’t justice. I ever get out of here, I’m visiting his ass first.

From behind them all, Tony screams.

TONY
Look! I’m doing it!

Whoosh! The carpeted floor is set ablaze. Panicked, the boys run out while Ville and Solomon stomp out the fire.

VILLE
Fuckin’ kids, man. We need some better recruits.

Ville leaves. As Solomon follows...

ROACH
Mr. Walker?

Solomon turns back...

ROACH (CONT’D)
Change is coming.

Solomon leaves.

Roach looks around, stands. From behind a bookcase, he grabs his wheelchair, sits and rolls out.

INT. PRISON – SOLOMON’S CELL – MORNING

A kite slides under the door. Solomon reads it: THINK LONG, THINK WRONG, THINK DAVID GONE BE GONE. Solomon angrily crumples the paper and throws it across the room.

Solomon takes a breath, looks to the bent edge of his bed. Breaking off a piece of metal, he sharpens the make-shift blade on the concrete floor.

INT. PRISON – SHOWER – MORNING

Solomon stands three men back, waiting to get in.

Freshly showered, Clint towel wraps himself to leave.

Solomon readies his shiv, prepared to pounce, when a Black INMATE jumps ahead, stabbing Clint first.

INMATE
DeVaughn fo’ life! Rollin’ Twenties, Nigga!
Other prisoners scatter and corrections officers intervene as Solomon stands watching.

INT. PRISON – QUAD D COMMON AREA – LATER

Mad Dog sits, surrounded by followers. Solomon approaches.

    SOLOMON
    You got what you wanted. Let my son go.

    MAD DOG
    Did I? Get what I wanted?

    SOLOMON
    Clint Taylor is dead.

    MAD DOG
    Yeah, but not by your hand.

Solomon stands confused.

    MAD DOG (CONT’D)
    What I wanted was my attack dog back. Not some wimpy bitch tucking tail to get early parole.

    SOLOMON
    You knew?

    MAD DOG
    Ain’t much I don’t know, tattle tale.

    SOLOMON
    Why didn’t you just come after me. Why kill Clint?

    MAD DOG
    Clint was a favor. You’re my O.G. Much more useful as my pitbull.

    SOLOMON
    Then let David go. I’ll give up my parole and do whatever you want.

    MAD DOG
    He’ll be fine, so long as you attack when I say.

    SOLOMON
    Mad Dog, don’t do this. Where is he?
MAD DOG
Naw see, if you want him to stay fine, that’s the wrong question to ask.

SOLOMON
Where is my son!?

Mad Dog chortles to his followers...

MAD DOG
‘Dis nigga...

The followers chuckle back. Mad Dog returns his attention to Solomon.

MAD DOG (CONT’D)
Dawg, I don’t think you understand the situation you’re in.

SOLOMON
No. I don’t think YOU understand the situation YOU’RE in.

Solomon picks up a heavy-duty plastic chair and crumples it to a ball like paper.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
Tell me where he is!

Mad Dog stares at the plastic ball. What the actual fuck?!

MAD DOG
He’s... he’s with Rico and Walla at the chop shop.

SOLOMON
The address!?

MAD DOG
Four thirty five north grand!

Solomon drops the ball of chair (CLUNK!) and is off.

INT. PRISON - PHONE BAY - DAY

Emotional, Solomon uses the phone in a row with other prisoners.

SOLOMON (ON PHONE)
I can’t go to her with this. She’s sick and she already blames herself. Knowing this will kill her.
BILLIE (V.O.)
What do you want me to do?

SOLOMON (ON PHONE)
Find him. Get him safe. You do, and I’ll tell you everything you want to know.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. CITYSCAPE – DAY
Billie sits in her car. She takes notes while on her cell.

BILLIE (ON CELL)
You know I’ll need to involve the police on this.

SOLOMON
Good. I want you to. They respect you. They’ll listen to you.

BILLIE
Alright.

SOLOMON
And Billie? That boy? He my every--

BILLIE
I know, Solomon. I know.

INT. PRISON – QUAD D COMMON AREA – DAY
Through a haze and oblivious to what’s around him, the anxious Solomon makes his way back to his cell.

ON THE AFRICAN TUNDRA
The Rhino stands in windblown grass, sun kissing his shoulders.

INT. PRISON – SOLOMON’S CELL – CONTINUOUS
Restless, Solomon paces back and forth not knowing what to do with himself. He looks at a clock: 10:23am

Solomon sits on the bed, then nods his head into his hand.

SOLOMON
God? I got no right to ask... But, save him... Please.

Solomon stands, pacing again. He tries PUSH-UPS.

Solomon starts slowly. Voices flicker through his mind.
CYNTHIA (V.O.)
Where you going? You got a baby to raise?

SOLOMON (V.O.)
I’m hangin’ out with Remmy. You got him, right Mama?

Solomon’s push-ups get faster.

THE RHINO WALKS THE TUNDRA.

SOLOMON (V.O.)
Twenty years to life, Mama?

CYNTHIA (V.O.)
Don’t worry, honey. I’ll bring David to see you every month.

--Faster.

DAVID (V.O.)
Why cain’t you come to my “Kemmagarden gad-jumation” Daddy?

THE RHINO TROTS.

Now faster, Solomon’s tears begin to come. It’s 12:17pm.

CYNTHIA (V.O.)
He’s got more ‘A’s than any other 8th grader in the city.

DAVID (V.O.)
They’re sending me to this uptown school, too. All thanks to Grandma.

THE RHINO RUNS.

The images and voices get faster, begin to blend together.

SOLOMON (V.O.)
You got a no good son.

CYNTHIA (V.O.)
I failed you.

SOLOMON (V.O.)
You’re my everything.

DAVID (V.O.)
Go back to pressing license plates at twenty cents an hour.

The clock reads 3:22pm.
The push-ups are faster. The voices come faster.

THE RHINO CHARGES FASTER.

    CYNTHIA (V.O.)
    I tried my best.

    SOLOMON (V.O.)
    He can know I’m out, when I’m out.

    DAVID (V.O.)
    What you know besides being behind bars?! You ain’t never done the right thing in your life!

Faster and faster and faster. Until...

    CUT TO:

EXT. INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - AFTERNOON

SWAT vans, police cars and ambulances litter a chaotic scene.

    SOLOMON (O.S.)
    Billie?

Pan to find Billie among the scene, on her cell.

    BILLIE
    Yeah, Solomon. We found the place.
    (collecting herself)
    Um... SWAT didn’t even get inside the building before they started shooting.

    INTERCUT WITH:

INT. PRISON - PHONE BAY - AFTERNOON

Solomon using the phone.

    SOLOMON
    Who is they?

    BILLIE
    The people inside. There was a shootout, Solomon. David didn’t make it. I’m so sorry...

    SOLOMON
    My Day? Wait, how do you know?!

    BILLIE
    Solomon... I know.
A wider shot reveals Billie standing over a body bag, holding David’s lifeless hand.

SOLOMON
My Day?!

Solomon, on the verge of losing it, tries to hold it together.

BILLIE
Please don’t do anything rash.

SOLOMON
My Day?!

Billie finds her car, hops inside.

BILLIE
Solomon, I’m on my way to you now. You’re a couple days from parole. You can start over. You can still have a life.

Calming shock overtakes Solomon who stands blank, all hope gone.

SOLOMON
(scoff)
A life.
(then)
Remember when we talked about that hole in you?

BILLIE
Yes. I do.

SOLOMON
Don’t make life much worth living, does it?

BILLIE
Solomon, I’m on my way. Just stay on the line with me, okay?

CLICK-CLICK

BILLIE (CONT’D)
Solomon?!
(nothing, then)
SHIT!!

Billie dials a number.

BILLIE (CONT’D)
Yes. I need Warden Randall Lochte’s office, immediately.
INT. PRISON - QUAD D COMMON AREA - AFTERNOON

Solomon saunters in, looks around until he finds Mad Dog, who while not hiding, is not in the open either.

MAD DOG
You think I’m scared of you?

SOLOMON
You should be.

Solomon loops his index finger around Mad Dog’s collar and easily drags the formidable prisoner across the floor.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
Owning an attack dog is nice, until it turns on you.

Solomon uses one hand to easily lift Mad Dog by the neck, off the floor, and against the wall.

Solomon squeezes ever so gently as Mad Dog claws at his neck.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
Say his name.

The other prisoners stand watching. Some in amazement, some in horror, and some in actual glee.

MAD DOG
(struggling)
Don’t y’all stand there. Do something!

SOLOMON
Say it. David.

Solomon squeezes and Mad Dog gasps for air.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
He was gonna be the somebody I could never be. And you took him away. Say it.

Solomon eases his grip on Mad Dog’s neck.

MAD DOG
Let me go!

SOLOMON
Say it!

MAD DOG
Da-, Da-vid.
SOLOMON
David! He was named after a king!
And it’s the last name your
worthless ass is ever gonna say!

Solomon goes in for the kill when Dietric, backed by other OFFICERS, calls him from behind.

DIETRIC
Solomon, let him go. Do the right thing here, man. Don’t stoop to his level.

SOLOMON
Stoop? Look where we are, man. I am at his level.

DIETRIC
No, you’re not. Not anymore. You’ve changed. It’s why you’re getting paroled. It’s why you’re getting out!

SOLOMON
You think I care about getting out now?! He killed my son!

DIETRIC
And he’ll get what he deserves!

SOLOMON
No, he won’t! He ain’t gettin’ a hot knife up his ass, is he? Cause that’s what he deserves!! We never get what we deserve! My son didn’t deserve to die! He was smart. He worked hard. He deserved a future. He deserved... He deserved a better father.

DIETRIC
I can’t help what happened to your son. But I can help what happens to your future. You can still have a life outside of this place. You can’t have another David, I know. But someday, you can have Isaiah’s, Abraham’s, Ruth’s. Forty thousand names in the Bible to choose from. Man, come on...

Dietric sees his pleas working as Solomon softens a bit.
DIETRIC (CONT’D)
And this time, you’ll be there to raise them and protect them. You’ll be that father they deserve.

MAD DOG
They’ll still be pussy ass bitches though.

SOLOMON
What did you say!?

MAD DOG
Like dick-ass father. Like dead-ass son.

DIETRIC
Solomon, don’t!

Dietric grabs Solomon’s shoulder. Solomon shrugs Dietric off, which sends him flying across the room. He lands against the edge of a table, neck first (CRACK!).

Another officer hits Solomon in the back with a stun baton.

SOLOMON
Aaaaaahhh!

Solomon falls to one knee, dropping Mad Dog, who slithers away. Solomon grabs the pulsating baton and stands.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
You want me!?

Solomon breaks it in two and throws it back at two of the four officers surrounding him.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
You’re gonna need more than that!

The prisoners cheer Solomon on.

IN THE GUARD BOOTH

An OFFICER hits the LOCKDOWN ALARM, gets on the radio.

OFFICER
Activate C.E.R.T. to Quad D.

BACK ON THE QUAD FLOOR

Obedient prisoners prostrate themselves while defiant ones impel Solomon’s rage, an operatic ballet of revenge.

Unarmed officers freeze in fear.
SOLOMON
Come on!!! You want me so bad?!
Come and get me!!

Solomon breaks off half a table, flinging it at the officers as if were a frisbee. It knocks them and several prisoners over in one fell swoop. He rips apart the metal and concrete stairs, hurling pieces at, and destroying the guard booth.

C.E.R.T arrives, tossing in smoke bombs. Solomon twists each, then launches them back at their feet, exploding on impact.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
That all you got?! What?! What?!

Electrical batons in hand, several C.E.R.T. members rush Solomon. He crouches as they pile on, then explodes upwards, taking out the entire pile.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
What else you got!?? COME ON!!!

Out comes the dreaded ELECTRIFIED SHIELD. The remaining C.E.R.T. members assume tank formation behind it and charge. Solomon fires a punch SHATTERING THE SHIELD, and sending the other inmates into an ecstatic frenzy of destruction.

More PRISONERS with “ABILITIES” are revealed as they tear plastic chairs with ease, rip metal doors off cells, and punch through concrete walls.

INT. PRISON - CAMERA ROOM - SAME TIME

Warden Lochte and other GUARDS watch the situation unfold on the monitors.

LOCHTE
(disappointed)
Solomon?

The Prison-wide loud-speaker barks...

LOUDSPEAKER
C.E.R.T. Team two report to Quad D.
C.E.R.T. Team two report to Quad D.

INT. PRISON - QUAD E COMMON AREA - SAME TIME

WHITE PRISONERS rush the windows in time to see C.E.R.T. TEAM TWO run formation down the outside hall.

Roach, who calmly sits in his wheelchair, smiles.
INT. PRISON - CAMERA ROOM - SAME TIME

Lochte watches the Quad D monitors when a GUARD speaks up.

GUARD
Sir, we have a disturbance in Quad E. What do you want us to do?

Lochte redirects his attention to the Quad E monitors where inmates easily dispatch the corrections officers on the floor.

Lochte picks up a phone and regrettably dials.

LOCHTE
Activate the contingency plan.

INT. PRISON CLINIC - OFFICE

Dr. Combs scrambles together all the files and vials he can.

INT. PRISON - QUAD D COMMON AREA - SAME TIME

The destruction continues. Team Two arrives to a slaughter as prisoners with “abilities” easily take them out.

Solomon zeros in on Mad Dog cowering across the room. Refocused, the Rhino charges but is then tripped up when he sees Dietric’s broken body on the ground.

DIETRIC
Help...

Immediately remorseful, Solomon kneels, gently scooping the dying Dietric into his arms.

SOLOMON
I did this?! Oh God! D!

DIETRIC
Help...

SOLOMON
What can I do? I’ll make it right. Just tell me, I’ll do anything.

DIETRIC
Help... Us.

Dietric collapses, dead.

SOLOMON
No, no, no, God. D. Oh God. Dietric, I’m sorry. I’m so sorry.
Solomon sobs embracing his friend, while chaos surrounds them.

**EXT. OPEN ROAD AMERICA – EARLY EVENING**

Billie barrels her beat-up Chevy down a desolate two-lane highway. On her cell, she passes the sign: COTTLEB CORRECTIONAL FACILITY: 3 MILES.

**BILLIE (ON CELL)**
I’ve left six messages, but sure, I’ll leave a seventh. Maybe then, he’ll think it’s important.

The phone falls silent.

**BILLIE (ON CELL) (CONT’D)**
Hello!?

**AUTOMATED RECORDING (O.S.)**
If you’d like to make a call, please hang up and dial again.

**BILLIE**
Did that... Son of a bitch just hang up on me!?

Billie hangs up as she closes in on what’s ahead--

A ROAD-BLOCK where our Man In Black stands with his other look-alike AGENTS against their ND vehicles carrying assault rifles.

They signal Billie to stop.

**MAN IN BLACK**
Road’s closed, ma’am. We need you to turn it around.

**BILLIE**
I’m Billie Brooks with the AP. I cover crime and executions here. I’m interviewing a prisoner care of Warden Randall Lochte.

**MAN IN BLACK**
Not at this time. Turn it around.

**BILLIE**
Wait. What part of Associated Press are you not understanding? This is my beat.

**MAN IN BLACK**
Not today. Turn it around.
EXT. PRISON - FRONT ENTRANCE - SAME TIME

Several AGENTS walk in as the relieved Warden Lochte is walking out. One agent stops...

    LOCHTE
    Thank God. Am I glad to see--

And shoots Lochte in the head.

EXT. OPEN ROAD AMERICA - EARLY EVENING - SAME TIME

Billie clocks the other agents, then their NDV’s, particularly their government plates.

    BILLIE
    And who are you exactly?

    MAN IN BLACK
    Ma’am, this is the last time I’m going to tell you... Turn. It. Around.

CLICK. CLICK. Billie takes note as the agents surreptitiously switch off their safeties. Reluctantly, Billie swings a U. But, before driving off...

    BILLIE
    For future reference, people might take you a little more seriously if you’d stop pretending we’re in the Matrix.

Billie peels out...

    BILLIE (CONT’D)
    Shit-bag.

WHEN BOOM! AN EXPLOSION PLUMES TWO MILES BEHIND HER. Then another. Then another.

Fire consumes the rear view and side view mirrors as Billie drives away shocked and horrified.

    CUT TO BLACK:
    FADE IN:

TV STATIC.

INT. LACEY RESIDENCE - KITCHEN/ BREAKFAST NOOK - MORNING

Click. Click. CARTOONS.
JENNY and KAREN, two adorable Catholic School girls, eat their cereal as they watch. Their mother, FRAN, makes herself a cup of coffee.

JEREMY, half in a suit, rushes in and devours a pastry as he buttons his shirt and knots his tie.

    JEREMY
    Oh Babe, can I have that coffee?

    FRAN
    Make your own.

    JEREMY
    But I’ve got closing arguments in thirty minutes! You know how cranky Judge White gets when I’m late.

    FRAN
    You do this every morning. Here.

Fran acquiesces. Jeremy downs it in three gulps.

The doorbell rings. Jeremy grabs his jacket and briefcase and heads toward the door.

    JEREMY
    Thanks, Babe! I’ll get it on my way out. Bye, girls.

INT. LACEY RESIDENCE – FOYER – CONTINUOUS

Jeremy slides on his jacket...

    FRAN (O.S.)
    Don’t forget I’m showing the Miller house later. You’ll need to pick them up.

    JEREMY
    Got it!

...and he opens the door when WHAM!! - a boot in the face sends him cowering against the wall.

    JEREMY (CONT’D)
    Aah! No, no! Wait! What are you...

GLOVED HANDS pick Jeremy up and force him to the...

INT. LACEY RESIDENCE – KITCHEN/ BREAKFAST NOOK – CONTINUOUS

Fran screams, and immediately shields her children.

Another punch sends the bleeding Jeremy to the ground.
Jeremy

Look, we have money, if money’s what you want. Just please don’t hurt my family.

The hand takes a butcher’s knife from the knife rack.

Arterial blood splatters the white walls as primal screams are silenced one by one.

Ext. Cottlieb Correctional Facility - Day


Watching from an inconspicuous area, Dr. Zdenek, General Josephs, and the Man in Black speak.

Zdenek

Unfortunately General, the remaining serum was destroyed alongside Doctor Combs in the fire.

Man in Black


General Josephs

I hope you ready to go whole hog, Doc. I got a mess of military volunteers coming your way.

Zdenek

Well, the next batch will be set for testing in two weeks time.

General Josephs

Hmmm. I’ll let the deputy director know. Just don’t piddle around, Doc. She don’t take too kindly to excuses.

Dr. Zdenek watches the General and Man in Black leave.

Int. Brooks Home - Living Room - Afternoon

Billie watches tv news as clips of the prison’s destruction and flaming rubble flash across the screen.

Newscaster

...and as yet, NO SURVIVORS. Stay tuned as we continue to bring you the latest updates on the devastating gas explosion at the Cottlieb Correctional prison facility.
The doorbell rings.

Billie opens the door stunned to find Solomon standing before her. He’s filthy and singed, but he’s alive.

Confused, Billie doesn’t know if she should react or run.

BILLIE
Oh my God. What are you doing here?

Solomon stands vulnerable and at Billie’s mercy.

BILLIE (CONT’D)
How did you find me?

Solomon takes the paper Billie wrote that address on, now grimy, out of his pocket. He hands it to her.

SOLOMON
Next time? Use your office address.
Lesson twenty-six in street smarts...

Solomon, attuned to Billie’s unease, backs up to leave.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
You know, forget I came.

Billie leaps onto Solomon, hugging him tightly. Surprised, he gently returns the hug, having missed feminine touch for fifteen years.

BILLIE
I thought you died.

SOLOMON
I did.

CUT TO:

INT. BROOKS HOME - DINING ROOM - LATER

The television plays on in the other room.

Solomon and Billie sit at the table drinking coffee.

SOLOMON
The fire washed over me, then there was nothin’. No pain. No anger. No light. No dark. Just nothin’.

BILLIE
So how’d you get here?
SOLOMON
Don’t really know. I was walking
the riverbed, my hands in my
pockets. I pulled out your address
and here I am.

Solomon takes a sip of coffee.

SOLOMON (CONT’D)
This is coffee?

BILLIE
Yeah. Why? What does it taste like?

SOLOMON
Like a liquid cream puff.

BILLIE
International Delights Vanilla
Carmel Latte. A Starbucks knock-off.

SOLOMON
(genuinely confused)
What’s a star buck?

BILLIE
Story for another time. I’ve got to
get you with my editor.

Billie goes for her phone, Solomon stops her.

SOLOMON
Billie, no.

BILLIE
He won’t bite, I promise.

SOLOMON
Billie, you don’t understand. I’m
not seeing nobody. I ain’t going to
my son’s funeral. I ain’t seeing my
mom. I’m leaving here tonight.

BILLIE
You can’t leave. You’re the whole
story!

SOLOMON
They killed the story! Those men I
saw were military and government.
They were testing something on us
that went wrong. Way wrong. To keep
it from getting out they ain’t just
kill us. They killed everybody!
BILLIE
But what if there’re more out there like you?

SOLOMON
There’re not.

BILLIE
But what if there were? You could get lost in the fray and not run. What would you do then?

SOLOMON
Billie...

BILLIE
What would you do!?

SOLOMON
I don’t know. I’d...
(gives serious thought)
I’d right my wrongs. Ya know? All of them.

BILLIE
You know what I would do?

CUT TO:

INT. BROOKS HOME - BILLIE’S OFFICE - NIGHT

Solomon stands before Billie’s desk and pinboard, the scale and enormity of the conspiracy now revealed in its entirety.

The clear vials and torn leather restraint sit on the desk among other things collected. And the pinboard reveals SEVERAL PRISONS with SEVERAL DEATHS ALL CROSSED CONNECTED TO EACH OTHER AND SINGULARLY CONNECTED TO DR. ZDENEK.

Billie points to the “x”ed out picture of Cricket.

BILLIE
I would expose what they did to my brother, what they did to you, and countless others at those prisons. You are the proof of that. He died because nobody spoke for him. Now I can. With your help.

Solomon cocks his head, hearing something from the next room.
BILLIE (CONT’D)

What is it?

CUT TO:

INT. BROOKS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Solomon watches news clips from the Lacey Residence’s crime scene.

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)
Assistant District Attorney, Jeremy Lacey, along with three other people, have been confirmed murdered this afternoon inside his Hollow Hills residence--

BILLIE
Did you know him?

SOLOMON
No.

BILLIE
Then what? What’s the problem?

SOLOMON
You’re right. There’s more.

BILLIE
More escaped prisoners?

Solomon nods.

CUT TO:

INT. BANK - NIGHT

A vault door is easily ripped off its hinges. BOOTED FEET step inside.

BACK TO:

INT. BROOKS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

BILLIE
With abilities?

Solomon nods.

CUT TO:
INT. STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

HANDS strangle a STRIPPER then throw her body against a wall, where she falls dead, atop three other dead STRIPPERS.

BACK TO:

INT. BROOKS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

BILLIE
Should we be worried?

Solomon nods.

SOLOMON
Yeah, we should.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTORCYCLE CLUB - NIGHT

A BIG BURLY GANG MEMBER backed by other GANG MEMBERS fires a shotgun towards the camera. ARMS reach for the shotgun, breaking it in two. The same arms reach for and break the gang member’s neck.

BACK TO:

INT. BROOKS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

BILLIE
Oh God. What happens now?

SOLOMON
Change.

EXT. BROOKS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Roach stands just outside Billie’s living room window having seen and heard Solomon and Billie. He cleans his spectacles, places them on his eyes, and walks away. Smiling.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW