

HEREAFTER

by
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FADE IN:

We're high up. All around us, soft, white clouds. Somewhere distinctly ethereal. Heavenly, in fact.

OVER THIS: an incongruous, restless, clicking sound.

Presently, our camera swoops, shaking us out of our reverie, sobering us up, bringing us down to earth, as it were..

We swoop down, lured by the continuing clicking sound...

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - THAILAND - DAYBREAK

..into a luxury hotel suite. Curtains blow in balmy wind. Palm trees outside. The sound of distant waves lapping gently.

A beautiful French woman in her mid 30's, sun-kissed, sits in bed, writing emails on her Blackberry, papers and work spread out on her bed.

She looks at her watch, 8.00 am.

She rolls over in bed, and gently shakes the sleeping figure next to her, that of her boyfriend. When she speaks, it's in her native French, (we see subtitles).

MARIE (IN FRENCH)

C'mon. You need to get up.

A reluctant groan..

DIDIER (IN FRENCH)

(still asleep)

Why?

MARIE

You need to buy presents for your children before we leave.

Another reluctant groan.

DIDIER

I'll pick up something at the airport.

MARIE

No, no. Not good enough. Airport gifts are rubbish.

DIDIER

Please? Let me sleep.

DIDIER turns over, buries his head under a pillow..

DIDIER (cont'd)

Just another half hour?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIE

Fine.

MARIE pulls back her sheets. Throws on a sarong.

MARIE (cont'd)

If you won't buy presents for your children, I will.

'Bzzzz' - her Blackberry rings with another message. MARIE turns, and has a look. She reads, and smiles. Begins to reply..

DIDIER

What's going ON?

MARIE

(typing message)

It seems the posters have gone up. Are all over Paris.

DIDIER rolls his eyes. MARIE finishes the e-mail.

MARIE (cont'd)

Apparently you can't move for them.

DIDIER

If you're going, ask them to prepare the bill, will you? And get them to send up some breakfast.

'Rrrriinnngg', MARIE's phone starts ringing...

DIDIER (cont'd)

And take this bloody thing with you.

DIDIER throws MARIE's ringing phone. She catches it, and answers it as she goes..

MARIE

Hello?

INT. HOTEL - RECEPTION - DAY

MARIE steps out of the elevator, speaking into her telephone.

MARIE

So how many have you seen? Really?
Where have they put them?

She walks through the lobby to reception. She reaches reception, puts her hand over the receiver, and speaks in near-perfect English..

MARIE (cont'd)

Good morning. Could you prepare the bill?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIE thinks, then..

MARIE (cont'd)
And could you send up some breakfast?
Coffee..and fruit?

MARIE rolls her eyes, "I must be mad", then walks out of the hotel doors, continuing her conversation in French on the phone..

MARIE (cont'd)
The agency said there'd be 120 across the city. How embarrassing. It's one reason we wanted to be away.

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

MARIE is hit by noise and heat. Bustling streets, teeming with life. She walks out into the streets, and towards the markets, still speaking on the phone..

MARIE
Listen, quickly go through today's front pages with me..I won't be able to go online before we leave...

MARIE drifts through different market stalls and traders. Fruits, vegetables, household items, leather goods and wood carvings..

MARIE smiles, enjoying the activity. Up ahead, she sees a stall with masks. Wouldn't one of those be perfect for the little boy? She turns to the TRADER, points to the mask..

MARIE (cont'd)
How much?

MARIE pays for the mask, then takes it. She drifts off, continuing to talk on the phone..walking through more stalls looking for another present.

Animals in cages. Blaring music. Cheap roadside hairdressers.

MARIE (cont'd)
What about the local elections? How did Laponte do?

Presently, she finds a jewellers' stall. MARIE stops. Sees the stall owner has a DAUGHTER, (8), who's wearing a brightly-coloured bracelet.

MARIE smiles, points to the LITTLE GIRL's bracelet..

MARIE (cont'd)
You have more? Like this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The STALL OWNER sees the bracelet. Smiles. Reaches into her bag and produces a number of bracelets in different colours...

MARIE picks one identical to little GIRL's.

MARIE (cont'd)
I'll take this one.

MARIE continues into the phone..

MARIE (cont'd)
Well, he's got no one to blame for that but himself. You reap what you sow..

The GIRL smiles. MARIE takes out her purse, pulls out some money..

MARIE (cont'd)
How much?

But the STALL OWNER does not reply. Simply stares. Transfixed. MARIE continues on the phone..

MARIE (cont'd)
Go on the record about immigration like that you can't expect the Algerian vote..

The STALL OWNER's lips begin to tremble. And points. MARIE turns to see what the fuss is about..

Only then do we catch the oncoming roar, and notice the ground is shaking..

MARIE's eyes instinctively meet those of the little girl..

The GIRL's eyes..

MARIE's eyes..

The GIRL's eyes..

MARIE's eyes..

'WWWHHHHAAAAAAMMMMMMMMM', the 30 ft high Tsunami wave strikes them with the force of a hydrogen bomb, destroying everything in it's path.

MARIE is hurled fifty feet by the impact, sucked under water, along with bits of market stalls, cars, other PEOPLE..

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The sound of screaming. Pandemonium breaking out. DIDIER sits up in bed. He rushes over to the window..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Horrified, he looks out to see sheer devastation as the Tsunami sweeps all in it's path. Bodies bobbing helplessly in the water. People screaming. Buildings crumbling. Cars, boats, deckchairs in splinters. DIDIER's face falls..

DIDIER

Marie..!

IN THE TSUNAMI

MARIE thrashes under water, her eyes bulging, desperate for air. Her mouth opens, her thrashing becomes frantic..

'Hhuurggh', she sticks her head above water, gasping urgently.

She reaches out, tries to hold onto a passing branch, but the branch is ripped out of her hand, and she is pulled under again by the force of the wave..

'Hhuuurghh', MARIE sticks her head above water again, gasping desperately. It's critical now..

But she's sucked under again.

MARIE's struggle continues, but it's in vain. Soon her movements become weaker, her eyes stare wildly as..

MARIE begins to black out, her brain starved of oxygen..

Her struggle subsides as her head lolls to one side.

MARIE's eyes roll. Her mouth gapes open.

And as she drowns, as her body ceases to struggle, as the last flicker of life leaves her..

We CLOSE in on MARIE's face..

MARIE'S P.O.V:

All sound goes silent. We're in darkness. A light in the distance. The sound of a gentle wind.

It appears we're in a large garden. Overhanging branches, or foliage. Colours gradually becoming visible.

The light in the distance becomes closer, and closer..

Then suddenly..

EXT. STREETS - DAY

'Wwhoosh', MARIE is pulled from the water. The sound of shouting voices. Several pairs of hands tend to her..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her eyes flicker open, barely conscious...

Her RESCUERS frantically perform resuscitation on MARIE. A cacophony of noise. Voices shouting instructions.

But to no avail. MARIE slips back into unconsciousness. Her head lolls lifelessly.

We CLOSE in again on MARIE's face..

MARIE'S P.O.V:

The sound of a gentle wind. We're back in the beautiful gardens. The light has grown closer.

For the first time we can make out amorphous shapes. Moving towards us. And colours.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

"Wwhoosshh", MARIE comes round again, as RESCUERS frantically pump her chest. Slap her cheeks.

Voices shouting in different languages, imploring her to "Stay with us", "Don't go", "C'mon"..

But it's no use. MARIE is beyond help. Her head flops. Dead.

Slowly, with sadness, the RESCUERS give up, get to their feet. They did their best, but there are countless others crying out. They start tending to other cases..

When suddenly..

"Hhhurrrggh", MARIE bolts awake, and violently vomits the water in her lungs, coughing and spluttering..

Her RESCUERS turn, seeing MARIE is still alive, and rush to her assistance.

MARIE is bewildered, shell-shocked, cannot understand what has happened. Overwhelmed, she begins to weep as people wrap her in towels, give her water to drink..

EXT. STREETS - DAY

An hour later: MARIE has found the strength to get to her feet. She walks unsteadily through flooded streets.

A landscape of horror and devastation. There is nothing left of the market but debris.

The air is filled with eerie sounds of suffering. People wailing in grief and shock, or suffering pain..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIE stops and stares at where the jewellery stall was, where she bought the bracelet. Splintered wood and the occasional scattered bead are all that remain.

No sign of the LITTLE GIRL.

MARIE walks back towards the hotel, which appears to have suffered little or no damage. She crosses the street, when suddenly a voice calls out..

DIDIER

Marie!

MARIE turns to see DIDIER, running through the streets towards her.

DIDIER (cont'd)

Thank God!

MARIE and DIDIER fall into an embrace, hugging tightly.

DIDIER (cont'd)

Thank God! Thank God!

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CHICAGO - NIGHT

A brownstone building, in a working-class suburb of Chicago. Snow covered streets.

CAPTION: "CHICAGO, USA"

We climb up the walls, and reach an apartment on the fourth floor.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Inside: we're in a modest apartment. Simple furnishings. Clean. Tidy. But masculine. No woman's touch here.

A Greek man in his 50's, (CHRISTOS), sits on his own in the sitting-room.

He's wearing black. Mourning. He checks his watch.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the corridor outside, two silhouettes are arguing in urgent whispers..

SILHOUETTE #1

How could you DO this? You know I don't do this anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SILHOUETTE #2

Please. As a favor to me. He's a good client.

SILHOUETTE #1

A good *client*? Jesus, Billy.

GEORGE LONEGAN, (40), (handsome, shy, soft-spoken, something about him that sets him apart), walks into the room, shaking his head..

GEORGE stares at the GREEK MAN, then takes a seat opposite him..

In the doorway, GEORGE's elder brother, BILLY appears. Less handsome than GEORGE, but one of life's natural hustlers..

GEORGE

OK..

CHRISTOS

...Christos.

GEORGE

...Christos, give me your hands - I'm going to hold them just until I get a connection. For the purposes of the reading, I'd like you to confine your answers to 'yes' or 'no'.

GEORGE takes his hands. Takes a deep breath.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Just so you know, I'm not going to be going into a trance, I'm going to be alert and conscious at all times..

GEORGE stares at the GREEK MAN. A flicker of pain behind the eyes, then GEORGE lets the GREEK MAN's hands go. Then..

GEORGE (cont'd)

A woman close to you has passed.

CHRISTOS

Yes.

GEORGE

Middle-aged. In her fifties.

CHRISTOS

Yes.

CHRISTOS (cont'd)

Was this woman your wife?

CHRISTOS (cont'd)

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGE
I'm picking up you were together a
long time.

CHRISTOS
Yes.

GEORGE
But it was not always easy.

CHRISTOS
No.

GEORGE
I'm picking up that she was sick?

CHRISTOS
Yes.

GEORGE
Sick for a long time. Did she have
difficulty moving?

CHRISTOS
Yes.

GEORGE
Was she bed-ridden?

CHRISTOS
Yes.

A beat.

CHRISTOS (cont'd)
She had multiple-sclerosis.

GEORGE looks up..

GEORGE
I'm sorry.

He continues the reading..

GEORGE (cont'd)
She says she feels bad. She wants to
apologise to you. For ruining the
marriage.

CHRISTOS
It's not true.

GEORGE
She feels bad that you had to care for
her. Even when you were a young man.
(a beat)
And wishes you would find someone now.
Before it's too late.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

A beat.

GEORGE (cont'd)
Because you're not getting any
younger.

CHRISTOS
No.

GEORGE
Or slimmer.

GEORGE looks up..

GEORGE (cont'd)
She has quite a sense of humour.

CHRISTOS
Yes.

GEORGE
Now she's telling me to pay attention.

GEORGE's smile fades..

GEORGE (cont'd)
She has something important to say.

GEORGE listens..

GEORGE (cont'd)
She's giving me some kind of date?

GEORGE listens..

GEORGE (cont'd)
June? In June.

CHRISTOS looks up. Suddenly serious.

GEORGE (cont'd)
Does that mean anything to you? Was
that when you got married?

Something in CHRISTOS's manner has changed..

CHRISTOS
(soft)
No.

GEORGE
Or when she passed?

CHRISTOS
No.

GEORGE
Because she's being quite specific
about the month of June.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

GEORGE looks at CHRISTOS. No reaction.

GEORGE (cont'd)
Maybe I'm wrong.

GEORGE shoots a look at the OTHER MAN..

GEORGE (cont'd)
It's been a while.
(a beat)
Guess I'm a little rusty.

EXT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Afterwards: the reading has finished. GEORGE says goodbye to CHRISTOS as he gets into the elevator.

CHRISTOS
(shaking hands)
Thank you. Thank you so much.

The other MAN, (BILLY), and GEORGE hug..

BILLY
Thanks, kiddo. I owe you.

GEORGE nods..

BILLY and CHRISTOS get into the elevator. Close the doors.
GEORGE goes back into his flat.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

BILLY hits the button for the 'ground floor'. CHRISTOS shakes his head in disbelief, blown away..

CHRISTOS
That was incredible. Your brother. I tell you, that guy's for real.

BILLY
I know.

CHRISTOS
No. I mean he's really for real.
(a beat)
Let me tell you, I was pretty skeptical before I came. All that psychic stuff is mumbo jumbo as far as I'm concerned.
(a beat)
But that...I mean..
(a low whistle)
...no one in the world knows about June Mendoza. I've told no one. No one! It's unbelievable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The elevator doors open. They walk out..

CHRISTOS (cont'd)
He could make money doing that.

BILLY
He did. For a while. Good money.
(a beat)
Had an office, his own website. Had
newspaper articles, even a book
written about him.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

BILLY and CHRISTOS walk out of the building. Breath steaming
in the cold..

CHRISTOS
So what happened?

BILLY
He couldn't cope. Turned his back on
the whole thing. Said "...a life
that's all about death is no life at
all."
(a beat)
Now he works shifts in a factory.
Takes home two thousand a month.
(taps head, 'insane')
But he says he's happy.

They cross to their cars..

BILLY (cont'd)
He wasn't going to do another reading
again, ever. But I persuaded him to
make an exception in your case.

CHRISTOS
Thank you. And I won't forget.
(a beat)
I'll call you Monday about that deal.

CHRISTOS is about to get into his car.

BILLY
So who's June? If you don't mind me
asking.

CHRISTOS looks up..

CHRISTOS
June Mendoza was my wife's nurse.
(a beat)
Looked after her for fifteen years.

CHRISTOS stares..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRISTOS (cont'd)

And for ten of those fifteen years I was madly in love with her. But felt too guilty to tell anyone.

(a beat)

Least of all June herself.

BILLY stares..

BILLY

Right.

CHRISTOS is visibly thrown, then he and BILLY get into their cars. Drive away. As they go, we reverse angle to reveal..

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

GEORGE has been watching them from his window. He lets the curtain drop.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. LONDON SKYLINE - DAY

The craggy skyline of London. Chimney-stacks and TV aerials stretching into the horizon..

CAPTION: "LONDON, ENGLAND".

Over this: the sound of a voice..

VOICE

All right..hold that, that's good! Now don't move! Three, two, one...

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER'S STUDIO - DAY

"Flash", a flashlight goes off.

Two 12 year old TWINS are having their photographs taken.

We're in a photographer's studio. In a run-down part of town. Nothing fancy. Distinctly the low-end of the market.

Cheap and cheerful wedding-photos. Cheesy backdrops..

PHOTOGRAPHER

So, which one of you two is elder?

One TWIN puts up his hand. JASON. The confident one. The natural leader.

JASON

Twelve minutes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHOTOGRAPHER

You know, I think I could tell.

"Flash", a photo catches the boys' laughter.

PHOTOGRAPHER (cont'd)

And you're Marcus..?

JASON

No, he's Marcus.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Right.

JASON

The quiet one.

PHOTOGRAPHER

I was going to say the handsome one.

"Flash", another photograph catches the BOYS' laughter.

JASON

I'm Jason.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Got it. Jason the elder.

('flash')

The chatter-box.

('flash')

The smart-arse.

~~The boys laugh again. "Flash" another photo.~~

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER'S STUDIO - OFFICE - DAY

The two boys meticulously count out their money from their savings boxes.

The PHOTOGRAPHER hands over a large, wrapped print..

EXT. COUNCIL ESTATE - NIGHT

A tough, run-down, inner city council estate in central London. Once a beacon of hope. Now a ghetto of social exclusion.

Tower blocks. Labyrinthine walkways. Vandalized amenities. Grafitti on walls.

JASON and MARCUS arrive. Walk to their elevator. We notice they now carry plastic BAGS. They have done the shopping.

INT. TOWER BLOCK - APARTMENT - NIGHT

The PHOTO of the two boys sits in prime position. Propped up on the kitchen table. Along with a small cheap cake. And a candle.

JASON sits at the table, doing his homework. MARCUS stares at the TV.

JASON

What's the matter?

MARCUS

I don't understand it. Can I copy yours?

JASON

No.

MARCUS

Please? It has to be in tomorrow.

JASON

Tough bananas.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The TWINS clean their teeth. In silence.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The TWINS tuck themselves up. Put themselves to bed.

At that moment, the door opens..

...and the silhouette of the twins' MOTHER staggers in.

The BOYS sit up. Excited. They go to the door, to enjoy the surprise of the MOTHER finding their present..

They peer through the door, and watch as...

INT. FLAT - SAME TIME

The MOTHER walks in, visibly worse for wear. Almost senseless. Intoxicated.

She walks straight past the table with the photographs. Goes to the fridge, rattles around for a drink..

INT. TWINS' BEDROOM - SAME TIME

The TWINS watch their MOTHER stagger around the apartment, absorbed in her oblivion..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The pain etched in their eyes.

INT. FLAT - SAME TIME

The MOTHER goes into her bedroom. Closes the door.

INT. TWINS' BEDROOM - SAME TIME

The TWINS look at one another. Trying to hide their disappointment.

JASON

She'll see it tomorrow.

MARCUS nods. The TWINS go back to bed.

JASON (cont'd)

Good night.

MARCUS

Good night.

'Click', JASON turns the light out.

EXT. COUNCIL ESTATE - THE FOLLOWING DAY

"Bang", "bang", "bang"..

A MAN, a WOMAN and a uniformed POLICE OFFICER stand outside the twins' flat, knocking on the door.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

"Bang, bang", JASON bolts upright in his bedroom. Waking rapidly.

His face still creased with sleep, he goes to the window, looks through a crack in the curtains, and peers out.

Seeing who it is, JASON' face falls..

JASON

Shit..

JASON hurriedly shakes MARCUS awake.

JASON (cont'd)

Wake up!

JASON rushes out of the room. MARCUS wakes..

JASON (cont'd)

Social services.

EXT. DOORSTEP - APARTMENT - DAY

The MAN and a WOMAN from SOCIAL SERVICES stand outside the TWINS' flat. "Knock, knock", the MAN knocks again at the door.

The WOMAN crouches down, and peers through the letter-box..

WOMAN

Jackie! Are you in there? C'mon, open up!

INT. TWINS' APARTMENT - SAME TIME

JASON, pulling on his school uniform, opens the door to his mother's bedroom. He stares inside, then his face falls.

His mother, (JACKIE), lies on the bed, passed out. Fully clothed.

An empty, used syringe on her bed.

The room is a disgrace. Ashtray on the bed. Filthy sheets, unwashed in weeks. Clothes and food strewn on the floor.

JASON stares. Becoming emotional. But he swallows it. No time for that now.

"Knock, knock", the SOCIAL SERVICES bang at the door.

-----WOMAN-----

Open up, please!

MARCUS appears in the doorway. Half asleep. Also pulling on his school uniform.

JASON

Wake her up. Make her look better.

JASON rushes out, (past the kitchen table where the photograph and cake remain untouched), and goes to the front door..

MARCUS stares at his mother. He touches her hand, which is scarred by needle track-marks.

The WOMAN from the SOCIAL SERVICES speaks through the letter-box. A warm smile..

JASON (cont'd)

She's not here. She's gone to the shops.

'Slam', he closes the letter-box. Sticks a chair in the way.

EXT. DOORSTEP - APARTMENT - DAY

The WOMAN straightens, shoots a look at her COLLEAGUE..

WOMAN

"Gone to the shops."

MAN

Fine. We'll wait.

In neighbouring flats. People peer out. What's going on?

INT. TWINS' APARTMENT - DAY

Inside the flat, JASON empties all the contents of the fridge back into the plastic bags.

In another room: MARCUS puts make-up on his mother's face. Straightens her clothes.

EXT. DOORSTEP - SAME TIME

A SOCIAL WORKER calls through the door..

MAN

Boys, it's no use. We know you're covering for her.

The two BOYS bundle their mother out of the bathroom window at the back of the flat.

A final warning from the SOCIAL WORKER comes through the door..

MAN (cont'd)

If she's not here in five minutes, we're going to have to call the police child protection unit.

'Snap', the door opens. JASON stares out..

JASON

You can come in and wait for her, if you want.

The SOCIAL WORKERS look at one another, then go inside.

INT. TWINS' APARTMENT - DAY

The SOCIAL WORKERS enter the flat, and look around it. The WOMAN looks inside all the bedrooms.

We notice the mother's bedroom has been tidied up. Presently, the sound of a voice, from behind them..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACKIE

Oh, hello? What brings you here? I hope the boys have offered you some tea. I bought some Jaffa cakes. Who wants some?

The MOTHER walks in, carrying the shopping bags. The SOCIAL WORKERS stare at one another.

INT. TWINS' APARTMENT - LATER

An hour later: the SOCIAL WORKERS have gone. JACKIE sits at the table, hugging her boys..

JACKIE

Marcus, do something for me, will you? Go to the cupboard. There's a red box. At the back.

MARCUS gets up, and goes to a cupboard. From the back of the cupboard, he pulls a BOX, which he gives to his mother.

JACKIE takes a small key from a chain around her neck, and opens the red box. She takes out an envelope.

JACKIE stares at it.

JACKIE (cont'd)

Take this to the chemist. He'll know what to do.

MARCUS takes the prescription. JASON watches, then..

JASON

I'll do it. Marcus hasn't done his homework, yet.

JASON picks up his mother's mobile telephone..

JASON (cont'd)

Call me on this. I'll talk you through it.

JASON shoots a meaningful look at MARCUS, "Just do it", takes the prescription, and goes.

JACKIE

But keep it short. It's expensive.

MARCUS takes a seat at the table, opens his notebook, and dials a number on the phone..

EXT. COUNCIL ESTATE - DAY

'Ring', the phone rings. JASON answers it, and speaks while he walks through the council estate..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JASON

It's OK, forget the homework, you can copy mine.

JASON opens the envelope, pulls out a prescription..

JASON (cont'd)

I want you to look up 'Naltrexone'.

INT. TWINS' APARTMENT - SAME TIME

MARCUS types the words into the computer, pretending to do his homework. (We intercut between the two as necessary).

MARCUS

(reading/hushed tones)

"Naltrexone blocks the effects of heroin and other opiates such as Morphine, and Dihydrocodeine. Detoxification can take between a week and one month."

(a beat)

Does that mean she's stopping?

JASON

Yeah. I think that's exactly what it means.

INT. CHEMIST - DAY

JASON speaks into the telephone as he gets the drugs from the pharmacist.

JASON

This is great.

(kisses medicine bottle)

She's never done this before. Up to now it's just been promises..

JASON pays, then goes..

EXT. STREETS OUTSIDE CHEMIST - DAY

JASON walks out of the chemist shop, onto the street..

JASON

Just think - it'll be like living in a normal family for once.

Up ahead, three OLDER TEENAGERS, tough, lean against a wall. JASON attempts to walk by. But one of the OLDER KIDS steps out, blocking his path..

JASON tries to walk past, but the ELDER BOY lunges aggressively, tries to snatch the phone..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JASON (cont'd)

Hey! Fuck you..!

JASON tries to snatch it back, but one of the other BOYS throws a punch, which JASON skillfully ducks..

JASON throws a punch back at the ELDER BOY, grabs back his phone, then runs as fast as he can..

The ELDER BOYS give chase, one takes a desperate swing, trying to hit JASON. JASON swerves out of the way, his foot hits the side of the kerb.

BYSTANDERS cover their mouths in concern, the traffic on the street is fast-travelling..

JASON regains his footing, but one remaining ELDER TEENAGER is still ahead. JASON tries to run past him..

But the TEENAGER blocks his path, lunging at JASON as he runs past.

JASON slips, losing his footing..

He stumbles - falling into the street..

An approaching CAR tries to avoid JASON.

The ELDER TEENAGERS watch in horror..

JASON's face, realising the terrible danger...

Screeching brakes..but it's too late.

"CCCCRRRUUUUNNNNNNCCCHHHHHH" - the CAR hits JASON with devastating force.

JASON's eyes widen in horror..

A BYSTANDER screams..

JASON flies through the air, his tiny, vulnerable body already lifeless..

The sound of pandemonium breaking out..

INT. APARTMENT - COUNCIL ESTATE - DAY

MARCUS is still on the phone. The unmistakable sound of a commotion. Raised voices.

MARCUS

Jason..!

The sound of screaming. The phone goes dead.

MARCUS (cont'd)

Jason?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

No answer. MARCUS drops the phone, runs out of the apartment.

EXT. ESTATE - DAY

MARCUS runs across the estate.

EXT. ESTATE - DAY

MARCUS takes the short-cut which JASON had taken. Then he hears it..

The sound of screaming.

MARCUS turns a corner, drawn by the sound, then sees what any twin most dreads.

His brother on the floor, in the middle of the street, in a pool of blood.

PEOPLE stands over JASON's body. MARCUS pushes through the CROWDS, falls to his knees, and holds his brother.

JASON is shaking. An eleven year old boy. His eyes open in fear. He squeezes his brother's hand..

MARCUS

Who? Don't...don't go. You can't..

But JASON dies in his arms.

MARCUS (cont'd)

Nooooo!!!!

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. BANGKOK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

An AIR FRANCE 747 roars down the runway..

INT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

We're in the first class cabin.

MARIE stares out of the window. Her food untouched. Lost in thought.

DIDIER sits beside her, reading newspapers which carry stories about the Tsunami. As before, when they speak, it's in French. We see sub-titles.

DIDIER lowers the paper..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIDIER

The office called before we left.
Apparently the press have picked up on
what happened to you.

MARIE does not reply. Stares out of the window.

DIDIER (cont'd)

They seem to think there will be
journalists waiting at the airport.

MARIE continues to stare.

DIDIER (cont'd)

I told them to liaise with the airport
authorities, arrange an exit at the
back, so no one sees you.

No response.

DIDIER (cont'd)

Marie?

MARIE

Hmmm? Thank you.

DIDIER reaches over. Gives her hand a squeeze. But MARIE does
not respond. She continues to stare out of window. As the
plane rises through clouds.

White clouds. Sunshine. Somewhere distinctly like heaven.

EXT/INT. PARIS AIRPORT - NIGHT

A pack of waiting JOURNALISTS and TV CREWS.

INT. PARIS AIRPORT - NIGHT

MARIE and DIDIER are rushed - (by AIRPORT OFFICIALS and
uniformed POLICE) - through the back exit of the airport.

They are bundled into a car.

The car speeds away, into the night.

The pack of waiting JOURNALISTS and TV CREWS continue to
wait. None the wiser.

EXT. MARIE'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

The car pulls up outside MARIE's apartment block. A smart,
fashionable address.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

DIDIER looks at MARIE..

DIDIER

You want me to come in with you..?

MARIE

No. I'm tired.

DIDIER leans over, kisses her tenderly.

DIDIER

You OK?

MARIE

Yeah. Fine.

Their hands hold for a beat, a last squeeze, then let go.

EXT. MARIE'S FLAT - DAY

DIDIER's car drives off. MARIE is about to turn, and go into her apartment, when she stops..

Across the street is a vast POSTER of MARIE, endorsing a mobile telephone, (or Amex card, or broadband connection, some other symbol of 24/7, metropolitan, workaholic life).

MARIE stares at the poster, then turns and goes inside.

INT. MARIE'S FLAT - NIGHT

MARIE enters her flat. Turns on the lights.

INT. MARIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

MARIE soaks in the bath.

INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

MARIE opens her mail. Invitations. More invitations. Work engagements.

On the wall: photographs of MARIE with famous people. Various broadcasting and journalistic awards.

She's evidently a respected and well-known celebrity.

A TV plays in the corner. Using CGI computer imagery, SCIENTISTS explain how and why the Tsunami happened. Why it caused such devastation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIE stares at the screen. Images of villages under water. Buildings destroyed. Bodies awaiting identification.

We CLOSE on MARIE's face as she watches..

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

MARIE sits in her bed. Tries to read. Tries to work. A pile of books and articles by her bedside.

But she cannot concentrate. She takes a bottle of pills from a drawer. Takes one.

Then turns, and hits the light.

EXT. TELEVISION STUDIOS - PARIS - THE FOLLOWING DAY

A complex of buildings. Major television studios in the heart of Paris.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - MAKE-UP - DAY

MARIE is being made-up. A MAKE-UP ARTIST puts the finishing touches to MARIE's hair. We notice bouquets of flowers everywhere in MARIE's room.

MARIE stares at her reflection in the mirror. She checks whether there is any sign of the turmoil within.

None.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

MARIE walks out onto the floor. The studio falls silent, then gradually, a round of applause from everyone watching.

MARIE

Thank you.

Greetings from well-wishing TECHNICIANS and CAMERAMEN. MARIE kisses several 'hello'.

MARIE takes her seat. TECHNICIANS fix sound-mikes and cables.

INT. PRODUCTION GALLERY - DAY

MARIE's face on TV monitors. DIDIER sits in the production gallery, watching her. He's the show's producer.

DIDIER scrutinizes her face on TV monitors in close-up. He speaks into a microphone. (As before, all dialogue is in French. We see sub-titles).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIDIER

You OK?

In the studio, MARIE nods.

MARIE

Fine.

DIDIER

OK, good luck everyone.

DIDIER speaks into the microphone..

DIDIER (cont'd)

Places everyone. On air in
five..four..three..two..

Urgent signature tune music, current affairs-style. MARIE shuffles the papers on her desk. Takes a swig of water. Waits for her cue.

DIDIER (cont'd)

And cue Marie...

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

MARIE looks straight into the camera, reads from an autocue.

MARIE

Good evening. In tonight's show, the Foreign Minister Guillaume Berni defends his position after suggesting that Romania had not yet done enough to improve its human rights record..

LATER: the talk show is in full swing. We pick up MARIE and the FOREIGN MINISTER mid-combat..

MINISTER

..let me remind you, I did what I did on the advice of the Attorney General. The High Courts themselves ruled it was in the interest of national security..

MARIE, however, is unable to concentrate..

Suddenly around MARIE, in the TV studio, all sound goes silent.

The FOREIGN MINISTER continues to talk, but we hear nothing..

MARIE's P.O.V:

We're in darkness. A light in the distance. The sound of a gentle wind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As before: it appears we're in a large garden. Overhanging branches, or foliage.

Colours gradually becoming visible.

The light in the distance becomes closer, and closer..

Then suddenly..

"WHOOOSH"

MARIE emerges again into the television studio, as the FOREIGN MINISTER continues to protest his innocence..

MINISTER (cont'd)

..I did not accuse and have never accused the Romanian Government of failing in their Human Rights obligations..

In the production gallery: DIDIER leans forward, speaks into the microphone..

DIDIER

OK, cut him off. Let him have it, Marie!

But rather than cut the MINISTER off, MARIE appears to be distracted, has difficulty concentrating..

MARIE'S P.O.V:

~~The sound of a gentle wind. We're back in the beautiful gardens. The light has grown closer.~~

For the first time we can make out amorphous shapes. Moving towards us. And colours.

We CLOSE in again on MARIE's face, then suddenly..

"WHOOOSSHH", she is brought around by the sound of DIDIER's shouting voice in her earpiece..

DIDIER (cont'd)

Marie, did you hear me? Cut him off!!

In the studio: camera TECHNICIANS flinch hearing DIDIER's shouting in their earpieces..

Even the MINISTER appears bemused.

Then, suddenly MARIE shakes herself out of it...

MARIE

..but surely, if you are in possession of the facts and you deliberately withhold information that constitutes a lie, and a serious breach of public trust..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Nervous looks around the studio.

INT. STUDIO - DRESSING-ROOM - AFTERWARDS

MARIE stares at her reflection in her dressing-room. Removing her make-up. DIDIER appears in the doorway..

MARIE

I'm sorry. That was a disaster.

DIDIER

It's all right. No one will notice. An angry Finance Minister was a tough welcome back..

(a beat)

You want to go out? Get something to eat?

MARIE

I'm not hungry.

DIDIER manages a polite smile.

DIDIER

I'll see you tomorrow.

He smiles, is about to go, when..

MARIE

Didier...

DIDIER turns..

MARIE (cont'd)

I think something happened to me when that wave hit me.

DIDIER

Yes. You had a close escape.

MARIE

No, I mean something really happened to me.

MARIE hesitates, then..

MARIE (cont'd)

Didier, what I'm about to say - I want you to keep it between us..

DIDIER

OK.

MARIE looks up...

MARIE

But do you think it's possible that..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIDIER

That what?

MARIE

...that I might actually have died
down there?

DIDIER

DIED?

MARIE

And came back again?

DIDIER

What?

MARIE

Only because I had this.. 'vision'.
When I went under. When I blacked out.
I went to this 'place'.

DIDIER

What did it look like? Please don't
tell me there was a bright light. Or
some kind of garden.

MARIE looks up, thrown..

MARIE

Why?

DIDIER

Because isn't that the cliché? And
being greeted by people we know.

(a beat)

See? That's the bit that never rings
true to me. I mean, where's the cut
off? Close family? Or friends? And if
we're not in our physical form any
more, how do we recognise one another?

DIDIER smiles..

DIDIER (cont'd)

No, much more likely is that these
'visions' or 'hallucinations' will
have been a lack of oxygen to the
brain.

DIDIER shrugs..

DIDIER (cont'd)

Or some kind of concussion. That wave
will have hit you with some force. You
hit your head.

DIDIER looks at MARIE, shrugs..

CONTINUED: (2)

DIDIER (cont'd)

All that near-death stuff is just...
When we go..

(snaps fingers)

..we go. And any version of the
afterlife we create for ourselves is
just a pathetic denial of the
fragility of life or a Christian
instrument of social control.

DIDIER looks at MARIE...

DIDIER (cont'd)

You banged your head.

MARIE is about to protest, then smiles..

MARIE

You're right. Thanks.

She kisses DIDIER good night..

MARIE (cont'd)

I'll see you tomorrow.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIOS - DAY

The following day:

A large production meeting is in progress; PRODUCERS,
EDITORS, RESEARCHERS - some two dozen people sitting around a
large office.

Production issues are being discussed, topics for forthcoming
shows..

PRODUCER

..OK, was there or was there not civil
unrest in the Sikh community after the
High Courts ruled that Sikhs are to be
forced to remove their turbans for
driving license photos?

(producing newspapers)

Two of the right wing newspapers claim
Sikhs were out in the streets burning
cars, looting shops..

(other newspapers)

...other newspapers say the unrest was
deliberately created by elements
within nationalist parties in order to
cast negative suspicion on the Sikhs..

As the debates continue, DIDIER looks over the room at
MARIE..

She is sitting, staring out of the window. Lost in thought.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A flicker of concern on DIDIER's face. She would normally be leading these discussions.

This is not the normal MARIE. Not by a long way.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. CHICAGO - FACTORY - DAY

We're high over a large, automobile factory on the outskirts of Chicago.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

GEORGE, in blue work clothes and hard-hat, is driving a fork-lift truck in a huge factory.

He is lost in his work.

INT. SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE

Elsewhere: a meeting is taking place in the SUPERVISOR's office. Heated discussion. People in disagreement.

The SUPERVISOR looks out on the factory floor. His eyes come to rest on GEORGE.

The SUPERVISOR discusses GEORGE with the other people in the room..

GEORGE continues to work. Unaware.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

GEORGE has finished his shift. He walks past a group of other WORKERS..

WORKER

Hey, George. You heard anything?

GEORGE

What about?

WORKER

That they're letting 30% of the workforce go?

GEORGE

No. I hadn't heard that.

WORKER

Maybe it's just a rumor. See you tomorrow.

GEORGE closes his locker, walks away.

INT. GEORGE'S FACTORY - DAY

GEORGE showers. Steam billows.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - DAY

GEORGE dresses. Thinks long and hard. Cannot decide which shirt.

EXT. ADULT EDUCATION CENTER - NIGHT

To establish: a local college. Sprawling buildings.

INT. ADULT EDUCATION CENTER - NIGHT

A number of adult education classes are in progress. Cookery. Foreign languages. Car maintenance. Pottery.

Dozens of ADULTS are enrolling for classes. Today is the first day of the new semester.

Among the many rooms, we pick out one..

INT. DANCE CLASS - NIGHT

An indoor basket-ball court. Which has become a dance studio for the evening.

A TEACHER checks the time, then claps his hands. Thirty PUPILS of all ages and sizes turn to face him. Among them, GEORGE.

TEACHER

Right, as you know, this is a ten week course. We'll be working in pairs throughout the course, so one of the first things we have to do today is pair you all up..

Nervous laughter. Eyes dart anxiously in the room. Sizing one another up. GEORGE scans his fellow PUPILS. Looking hopefully for a suitable partner..

TEACHER (cont'd)

I notice some of you have come in twos already. Others have worked together before..

GEORGE watches as PAIRS fall into place, a natural process of selection. The oldest PAIR, the youngest PAIR, two redheads..

TEACHER (cont'd)

Now, who's left?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Just when it looks like GEORGE is to be paired with a rather uninteresting looking WOMAN..

'Crash', the doors to the basketball hall burst noisily open, and a latecomer comes through.

MELANIE

God, I'm sorry! I'm so sorry I'm late!

It's an attractive WOMAN in her mid to late 30's.

MELANIE (cont'd)

..roads were closed because of the snow...plus that jerk in registration took an age processing my application..

(tailing off)

Am I too late?

TEACHER

No. Not at all. What's your name?

MELANIE

Melanie.

TEACHER

Ok, Melanie, we were just pairing people off. Why don't we put you with..?

His eyes come to rest on a MEDITERRANEAN looking man. He's about to choose him, then he sees GEORGE..

TEACHER (cont'd)

What's your name?

GEORGE

George.

TEACHER

Melanie with George. Alice, you're with..?

MEDITERRANEAN MAN

Tony.

The LARGE WOMAN teams up with the MEDITERRANEAN MAN. Evidently delighted. Everyone is paired up. The TEACHER flicks on music..

TEACHER

Right, let's just warm up, get the cold out of our limbs..

MELANIE removes her coat, comes over to GEORGE, watching as all the couples start dancing to a Salsa rhythm...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MELANIE

God, some of them are really good.
(a beat)
Is this your first time?

GEORGE

Yes.

MELANIE

Mine, too. I read in the brochure,
that the course builds to a
competition.

GEORGE

I saw that. To be judged by
professionals.

MELANIE

I don't think we should get our hopes
up?

GEORGE

Why not? We still have ten weeks.

MELANIE

That's true.

GEORGE

And we haven't fallen over yet.

MELANIE

That's a good attitude.

They continue dancing.

EXT. ADULT EDUCATION COLLEGE - NIGHT

Afterwards: the class is finished. GEORGE watches MELANIE
walk to her car.

She turns, waves at GEORGE.

MELANIE

See you next week!

GEORGE smiles. Waves back.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

GEORGE gets off the bus, walks back towards his apartment,
shuffling in the samba step. Humming Latin music. Smiles to
himself. A spring in his step.

It's clear he liked MELANIE. Liked her a lot.

INT. APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Elevator doors open. GEORGE gets out. He walks towards his apartment, then stops in his tracks..

Sitting on the steps outside his door, is an AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN in her 50's. Seeing GEORGE, she gets to her feet..

CANDACE

George Lonagan?

GEORGE

Yes.

CANDACE

I'm sorry to bother you..I'm Mr. Andreou's neighbour.

(from GEORGE's look,
'Who?')

The Greek gentleman? Who lost his wife?

(a beat)

I believe you recently did a reading for him..

GEORGE

I'm sorry, Miss..?

CANDACE

Williams...

GEORGE

Miss Williams, let me stop you right there. I don't do readings any more..

CANDACE

But you did one just last week. For Mr Andreou..

GEORGE

He's an associate of my brother's. It was an exception. Apart from him I haven't done one in years..

CANDACE

Please? I give you my word I won't tell anyone.

GEORGE

I'm sorry.

CANDACE

I brought money. Everything I have.

GEORGE stares, as the WOMAN breaks down, opens her bag, producing all her savings..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

Don't you understand? I don't WANT
your money. I don't DO this anymore..

GEORGE unlocks his door, goes inside..

GEORGE (cont'd)

Now leave me alone.

'Slam', he closes the door.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

GEORGE breathes out, shocked by his anger. From outside, he
can hear the sound of CANDACE's tears..

GEORGE's face: haunted by the sound of her crying..

GEORGE

Goddammit.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

GEORGE is sitting in the spectator's seats with his brother
BILLY, while BILLY's children play in the pool..

It's a Sunday afternoon. Families with children everywhere.

GEORGE and BILLY shout encouragement at two little GIRLS,
BILLY's children, (aged 8 and 6)..

GEORGE

So, another person came to see me. For
a "reading".

(a beat)

Thanks to your good friend Mr.
Andreou.

BILLY

What? I told that Greek jerk to keep
his big mouth shut.

(calling out)

Go girls!

GEORGE

Well, he obviously didn't.

BILLY

I'll have another word with him. Make
sure it doesn't happen again.

A silence. Then..

BILLY (cont'd)

And?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

And what?

BILLY

Did you do it?

GEORGE

What?

BILLY

The reading?

GEORGE

No, Billy. I did not.

GEORGE stares..

GEORGE (cont'd)

You don't get it, do you? You think
because it pays money...

(searches for words)

..because I CAN...I should just do it.

BILLY

(shrugs)

Yeah.

A silence.

BILLY (cont'd)

Also, I think you have a GIFT, and
therefore have a DUTY to do it..

GEORGE

It's not a gift, Billy. It's a curse.

GEORGE gets to his feet..

GEORGE (cont'd)

You have no idea what it's like,
dealing with the bereaved people day
in day out - speaking to dead people..

(a beat)

It ruins any chance of a normal life.
You feel like a freak.

GEORGE walks away..

BILLY

Freak or no freak..

(calling after him)

It's who you are. What you are.

(a beat)

You can't keep running away from that.

But GEORGE has gone.

INT. GEORGE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

GEORGE gets into bed. Beside him, on a table, is a small CD/radio player. GEORGE lies down, makes himself comfortable, then presses, 'Play'.

Presently we hear: the deep, resonant voice of a British actor. Deep, velvety, mellifluous tones..

ACTOR

"..we might have gone about half a mile, when looking out, to my amazement I saw Peggotty burst from a hedge. She jumped up onto the carriage. Not a single word did she speak, but tears were in her eyes. She squeezed me until the pressure on my nose was extremely painful, crammed some pieces of cake into my pockets and a purse which she put in my hand, then she got down and ran away. Presently, I noticed one of her buttons rolling around on the floor. I picked it up and treasured it as a keepsake for a long time..."

GEORGE listens, as the CD plays. Soon his eyes become heavy, and he falls asleep..

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

An inner-city cemetery, in the middle of London. In the middle, a small, plain church.

The sound of piped organ music and a small number of singing voices can be heard from inside.

A large number of brightly-dressed SIKH MOURNERS arrive for their ceremony, which is obviously next up.

They greet one another, breath steaming in the cold, and wait their turn outside the church. They shiver in the icy rain.

Stamp their feet. Check their watches.

INT. CHURCH - SAME TIME

Inside an almost empty, non-denominational church: the piped music and singing comes to an end.

Standing in the front row, MARCUS holds the hymn book, but is unable to sing. He stares ahead. Rigid.

Raised on a stand, is his brother's COFFIN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A PRIEST steps up. From his manner it's clear, the PRIEST has never met JASON, or his mother. Standard text. No frills.

In and out in less than twenty minutes.

The PRIEST can see the shivering SIKHS huddled in doorways, waiting outside. An elderly SIKH who will conduct the next service, is waiting in the wings.

The PRIEST puts his foot on the gas.

PRIEST

Death is not final, it is merely the beginning, gateway to an afterlife that reflects our conduct here on earth. God in his infinite generosity created heaven, which is where Jason is now. Surrounded by all the angels and saints. Looking down at us.

Among the congregation, a few rows back, we pick out the SOCIAL WORKERS.

Their eyes are on JACKIE, the mother, who's head lolls. She sways from side to side, supported by two equally stoned, fellow ADDICTS.

MARCUS stands alone. Neglected.

PRIEST (cont'd)

And so we commend Jason's body to dust, his soul already in God's care..

The PRIEST discreetly presses a hidden button. With a great, grinding noise, sliding doors open, and an old, worn-out conveyor belt starts.

JASON's coffin starts with a jolt, and slowly disappears through the doors and into the furnace beyond.

MARCUS stares. Rooted to the spot.

PRIEST (cont'd)

Jason's ashes will be made available at the back of the church. In the meantime, if you wouldn't mind, I'd like you to leave through the front door..

The MOURNERS begin to filter out, as in the back of the church, the SIKH GROUP begins to filter in, grateful to get out of the cold.

SIKH WOMEN carry in a large picture of the deceased, a smiling, elderly bearded MAN, and prop it up on the altar.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Waiting for the ashes, MARCUS shivers in the cold. The SOCIAL WORKERS come up to him..

SOCIAL WORKER

We're so sorry.

MARCUS stares. Unable to speak. The SOCIAL WORKER opens her mouth, is about to say something, then decides against it.

Now's not the time.

MARCUS turns to see the urn containing JASON's ashes is brought out. Unclaimed.

All heads turn and watch as MARCUS steps forward. Takes the ashes.

Voices fall silent. It's a heartbreaking sight. One twin holding the ashes of the other.

INT. MARCUS'S FLAT - NIGHT

The urn containing JASON's ashes stands on a mantle-piece.

MARCUS stares at it through a crack in the doorway.

INT. MARCUS'S FLAT - NIGHT

MARCUS lies in bed. Alone. He stares at his brother's empty bed beside him.

MARCUS

Good night, Jase.

'Click', he turns out the light.

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICES - DAY

Busy social services offices. Phones ringing. Strip lighting.

In the far corner, a conference room, inside which we can make out MARCUS and his MOTHER in a meeting.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A conference room, where one of the SOCIAL WORKERS is talking. All eyes are on MARCUS..

SOCIAL WORKER

It won't be for long. It's what we call a "short-term placement".

(a beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOCIAL WORKER(cont'd)

In a safe, loving environment. Just
until your mother feels better.

MARCUS stares at his mother. Who averts her eyes.

SOCIAL WORKER (cont'd)

The couple we have in mind have a lot
of experience. And live close to where
you live now.

(a beat)

Of course you'll stay at the same
school.

MARCUS turns. Stares imploringly at his MOTHER. But she
continues to avoid his eyes.

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES - OFFICE - DAY

MARCUS watches from a distance as his mother signs the
consent forms in another room.

EXT. SOCIAL SERVICES - DAY

The SOCIAL WORKERS watch, as..

MARCUS and his MOTHER say goodbye on the steps outside the
social workers offices.

They separate. MARCUS's mother walks off towards a waiting
CAR.

MARCUS watches her, hoping she'll turn around. Change her
mind. Come back to get him.

But she doesn't. MARCUS stares. His heart cracks.

The SOCIAL WORKERS go to get him.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. PARIS SKYLINE - DAY

The unmistakable Parisian skyline.

EXT/INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE - DAY

A modern, fashionable, prestigious, up-market political
publishing house. Posters on the wall, publishing awards..

High-brow, political, cultural, cutting-edge.

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE - DAY

In a conference room: MARIE is pitching her 'take' on her
Chirac book.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIE explains how she sees the basic structure of the book. The political-biographical split.

Half-a-dozen EDITORS and EXECUTIVES listen intently..asking questions.

Nods of approval. The meeting is going well.

MARIE turns, looks out of the window as she speaks.

She notices her POSTER hangs in a conspicuous place across the street.

MARIE allows herself a private smile of satisfaction as she continues to pitch.

Presently, the meeting wraps up. Everyone gets to their feet, shaking of hands.

It's evidently gone very well..

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

MARIE packs a suitcase. She surveys her apartment, then goes.

EXT. STREET - DAY

MARIE puts the bags into her car. Along with several boxes with books and research materials.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

MARIE drives past the television studios on her way. A stab of vulnerability.

What has happened?

EXT. AUTOROUTE - DAY

MARIE drives out of Paris. The city's skyline fades into the distance..

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

MARIE heads south. The countryside changing in character..

EXT. MOTORWAY - DAY

MARIE shakes her hair loose. Her mood improving. She continues to drive.

EXT. HOUSE - DUSK

MARIE's car pulls up outside a beautiful house in the country. Miles from anywhere.

MARIE gets out. Exhausted from the journey. But immediately charmed by the house.

High up in the mountains. The sound of birdsong.

INT. HOUSE - FOLLOWING MORNING

MARIE wakes up. Disoriented.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

MARIE walks through the house. Opens shutters. Investigates her new surroundings.

EXT. LOCAL VILLAGE - DAY

A local mountain village. MARIE shops for fruit and vegetables in the market.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

MARIE gets out of her car carrying shopping bags filled with provisions.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

MARIE eats lunch in the beautiful garden.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

MARIE turns on her computer. Plugs in the internet cable.

She opens a few books. Spreads out her work, and begins to write.

But presently, she stops..

MARIE's thoughts wander. Her concentration drifts. She has an idea..

Then she shakes her head, 'No'.

MARIE returns to her writing and compiling notes, but before long..

Her concentration drifts again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She goes online.

MARIE goes to 'Google', is about to type something in, but stops.

She must be mad.

But then she decides to do it anyway.

And types in two words.

"NEAR DEATH"

MARIE thinks for a beat..

Then hits 'Enter'.

In 0.67 seconds, the search yields 78,000,000 results.

MARIE looks surprised. She puts on her glasses, scrolls down the hits..

Dipping her toe in..

"Near-death. Experiences and the afterlife..."

"3,000 genuine adult Near Death experiences.."

"The Near-Death Experience Research Institute, (NDRI), Geneva, Switzerland.."

MARIE takes a closer look.

She clicks on Near Death Research Institute, and starts reading...

"...part of the internationally-renowned Elizabeth Rousseau Foundation..."

A photograph appears of an elder French Doctor. Elizabeth Rousseau MD.

"...Dr Rousseau is a psychiatrist and the author of the ground-breaking "On Death and Dying..."

MARIE continues reading..

"...having worked with the dying in a hospice for twenty-five years, Dr. Rousseau is recognised as a leading authority on death..."

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. ADULT EDUCATION COLLEGE - NIGHT

The sound of an American voice:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOICE (O.S.)

OK, three, two, three, and ONE, two
three..

INT. ADULT EDUCATION COLLEGE - DANCE CLASS - NIGHT

GEORGE and MELANIE stiffly, amateurishly, but with touching
commitment, are going through their routine in front of the
rest of the class..

It's the mid-term competition. Other PAIRS watch keenly from
the sidelines.

GEORGE smiles a fixed smile, counting under his breath..

GEORGE

One, two, three. One, two, three..

They finish their routine. Applause from the CLASS.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

GEORGE and MELANIE whoop in excitement, walking through the
streets.

MELANIE

Wasn't that great?

GEORGE

It was fun.

MELANIE

That was the most fun I've had in
years.

They reach their cars..

MELANIE (cont'd)

You want to get something to eat?

GEORGE shrugs, delighted..

GEORGE

Sure. There's a place nearby everyone
says is good.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

A crowded restaurant. MELANIE and GEORGE reach it..

MELANIE

Looks great. Dinner is on me tonight.

GEORGE

Oh, no..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MELANIE

I insist, twinkletoes.

They get to the restaurant, but there's a sign outside, (or a DOORMAN), who tells them the restaurant is closed to the public for that night. It's been booked for a private party.

MELANIE (cont'd)

It's closed.

MELANIE looks at GEORGE..

MELANIE (cont'd)

Where shall we go?

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

GEORGE and MELANIE enter his apartment, both carrying shopping bags..

GEORGE

You make yourself comfortable, I'll get this ready as quick as I can.

MELANIE walks into the sitting-room, looks around..

MELANIE

Nice place.

GEORGE disappears into the kitchen, starts preparing supper. MELANIE takes off her coat, walks round the apartment, looks at all the books. Row after row of Charles Dickens.

MELANIE (cont'd)

So, how are we going to do this? We could make up a whole load of crap, or we could cut to the chase, and be honest with one another.

GEORGE

What about?

MELANIE

About why we're both doing night school dance classes.

MELANIE stares at GEORGE..

MELANIE (cont'd)

You're not going to tell me it's just because you want to learn to samba.

MELANIE smiles..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MELANIE (cont'd)

OK, I'll jump in. I'm doing this because I'm new to Chicago, because I'm looking to make some new friends, and who knows, if I'm lucky, maybe even meet the man of my dreams.

GEORGE

Wow. That's certainly cutting to the chase.

(chopping vegetables)

Why did you move to Chicago?

MELANIE

Because I got dumped by someone in Pittsburgh.

GEORGE looks up..

GEORGE

I'm sorry.

MELANIE

Not quite at the aisle. But pretty close. Down-payments on the wedding dress, that kind of thing.

(gestures)

It's OK. I'm over it. I think.

MELANIE shrugs..

MELANIE (cont'd)

How about you?

GEORGE

Well, like you, I recently made a big change to my life. I wanted to re-evaluate things...

(a beat)

Change my priorities.

MELANIE

What was the change? Divorce?

GEORGE

No, no. Nothing like that. No..

(a beat)

..a job.

A flicker behind GEORGE's eyes..

GEORGE (cont'd)

One which was so intense and all-consuming, it made having any kind of life impossible.

MELANIE

You're not going to tell me what it was?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGE

Would you mind if I didn't?

(a beat)

Don't worry. I'm not a criminal or anything.

'Rrrringg', the phone rings. GEORGE gestures..

GEORGE (cont'd)

Leave it. Let it ring.

GEORGE goes to the kitchen. The answer-machine picks up the phone. MELANIE continues to look at the books by DICKENS on the shelf.

MELANIE

Wow. You certainly like Charles Dickens.

GEORGE

Couple of first editions there, too.

Presently, a VOICE comes out on the answer-machine..

BILLY (O.S.)

Hey, George. Just to say I finally caught up with our Greek friend, and told him to keep his mouth shut.

IN THE KITCHEN:

GEORGE hears BILLY's voice, and looks up..

BILLY (O/S) (cont'd)

So you can relax, there shouldn't be any more freaks knocking on your door asking for readings.

GEORGE drops everything, comes out of the kitchen..

BILLY (O/S) (cont'd)

I have to say, though, he did make a point of saying again how brilliant he thought you were, how talented. And that with so many fakers out there, someone who had a proper gift...

GEORGE walks briskly across the living-room..

BILLY (O/S) (cont'd)

Funny, he said he looked up your old website, too. Said it was still there, 'Georgelonegan.com'..

'Click', GEORGE turns off the machine, cutting off BILLY's voice..

GEORGE

Sorry about that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GEORGE smiles, avoiding her eyes. Then goes..

MELANIE

W-wait a minute.

GEORGE turns..

MELANIE (cont'd)

What "proper gift"?

GEORGE

Hmmm? Oh, nothing.

MELANIE

No, I'm interested. What proper gift?

GEORGE stares at MELANIE, wondering whether he can trust her. Then..

GEORGE

The job I had was as a medium. A psychic medium.

MELANIE

What?

GEORGE sees her incredulous look..

GEORGE

I know..in your shoes I'd think the same. But it's true.

(a beat)

I had an illness. As a child. A bad fever which turned into inflammation of the brain, and spinal chord. Encephalomyelitis.

(a beat)

And they had to operate. On the brain.

(a beat)

It was a complicated procedure. Eight hours. And they nearly lost me. On a number of occasions.

(a beat)

Anyway they fixed the illness but they must have messed up something else, because not long afterwards I started getting these migraines.

(a beat)

Then nightmares.

(a beat)

Then, one day, I was with a friend, and I had this vision...of a woman. A crystal clear vision.

(a beat)

I described her to him, and it turns out the person I described was the exact description of his mother.

(a beat)

Someone I'd never met.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4) GEORGE(cont'd)

 (a beat)
 Who'd died the previous week.

GEORGE looks up at MELANIE..

 GEORGE (cont'd)
 You're not laughing yet?

 MELANIE
 No, I'm not.

 GEORGE
 Of course I dismissed it as a
 coincidence. But as time went on, I
 had more and more of
 these...'visions'.

 (a beat)
 Seeing people. Hearing things.

 (a beat)
 It seemed like the operation had
 affected my brain frequency in some
 way.

 (a beat)
 The doctors ran a few tests, told my
 parents I'd developed 'passive
 schizophrenia', and gave me some
 pills. Which stopped the visions, but
 which pretty much stopped everything
 else, too.

 (a beat)
 So I was faced with a choice. I would
 either live the rest of my life with
 these hallucinations...with no
 apparent way of switching it off..

 (a beat)
 Or have no life at all.

 MELANIE
 Oh my God.

GEORGE turns, goes into the kitchen. His face falls..

 GEORGE
 Look, now the food has overcooked.

 MELANIE
 Can I ask you a question?

GEORGE rushes to the cooker, deals with the food..

 GEORGE
 We're in luck. I think it's still OK.

 MELANIE
 George..?

GEORGE does not need to look. Knows already what the question
is..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

GEORGE

Would you mind if I said the answer is
'no'.

MELANIE

You don't even know what I was going
to ask.

GEORGE

Yes, I do.

GEORGE turns..

GEORGE (cont'd)

You were about to ask the same
question everyone asks..

(a beat)

You were going to ask me to do a
reading for you?

MELANIE stares..

GEORGE (cont'd)

Look, Melanie, I like you. A lot.
Really a lot. Enough for me to ask you
if there's any way we could go back in
time? Pretend the phone never rang?

(a beat)

Or that we could pretend you never
heard my brother's message? And we
never had this conversation?

MELANIE

Why?

GEORGE

Because once we open that door, and go
down that road...any chance we stood
of building something..will just be
gone. It just will.

(a beat)

Believe me. I have enough experience
of that now.

(a beat)

It overturns too many rules for
anything normal to survive.

GEORGE shrugs, trying to explain..

GEORGE (cont'd)

Sometimes in life knowing everything
about one another is good.

(a beat)

But mostly it's better to hold some
things back.

MELANIE

I hear you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

MELANIE stares at GEORGE..

MELANIE (cont'd)

But you can understand I'm curious.

GEORGE

Yes, I can.

GEORGE starts to serve up the food. Then notices MELANIE is staring expectantly at him..

MELANIE

Can you at least give me a clue? What you know?

GEORGE stares at her. A flicker of sadness, then..

GEORGE

OK, first time I met you, at the dance class, I saw a lady, tall...thin....brown hair.

MELANIE

My mother.

GEORGE

And I felt a slight pain in my chest.

MELANIE

That's how she died. Of a heart attack.

GEORGE averts his eyes. Goes into the kitchen.

MELANIE (cont'd)

Wait...there's something else.

GEORGE

No, there's not. C'mon, let's eat.

MELANIE

Please, there is. I can tell.

GEORGE walks out, carrying dishes of hot food..

MELANIE (cont'd)

What's the matter..?

MELANIE becomes flirtatious. Sexual.

MELANIE (cont'd)

Don't you think I could handle it?

Their lips are almost touching. GEORGE stares, then..

GEORGE

All right. Last time I saw a man. Dark hair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

MELANIE

My father.

GEORGE

Passed away not long ago?

MELANIE

Last year.

GEORGE

And all he kept saying, all I kept hearing was..

MELANIE

Was what..?

GEORGE

How sorry he was.

MELANIE

What for?

GEORGE

For what he did to you.

MELANIE's face changes.

GEORGE (cont'd)

All that time ago.

MELANIE backs off..

~~GEORGE (cont'd)~~

And he hoped you could one day forgive him.

MELANIE stares.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I'm sorry.

A silence. MELANIE feels sick..

MELANIE

No, I'm sorry. For pressing you like that.

MELANIE moves away from GEORGE. Suddenly the whole atmosphere has changed..

MELANIE (cont'd)

Maybe we shouldn't have gone there.

MELANIE smiles awkwardly..

MELANIE (cont'd)

I don't know what to say.

(a beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

MELANIE(cont'd)

Except, if I go now, if we draw a line
under this..

(a beat)

Pretend it never happened..

(a beat)

We'll be OK, I'm sure.

GEORGE

Good.

MELANIE

We still have a dancing competition to
win, right?

GEORGE

Right.

MELANIE puts on her coat.

MELANIE

I should've listened to you. Too much
knowledge, and all that..

MELANIE kisses GEORGE on the cheek..

GEORGE

See you next week?

MELANIE

Of course.

MELANIE manages a brave smile..

MELANIE (cont'd)

Rumba, rumba.

Then goes. Closes the door behind her.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

MELANIE walks to the elevator. Presses the button. She waits
for the elevator to arrive.

She gets into the elevator, waits a moment - tries to fight
it - but cannot. She bursts into tears.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

GEORGE watches from a window as MELANIE walks to her car.

GEORGE hopes she will look up. Smile. Offer some signal that
all is well.

But she doesn't. Her car's engine starts. She drives away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And from the look on GEORGE's face we can tell: he knows he's never going to see her again.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. FOSTER PARENT'S HOUSE - DAY

A car pulls up outside a small, tidy house in a small, tidy street.

The doors open. The SOCIAL WORKERS get out. Followed by MARCUS. Who carries bags. His entire worldly possessions.

Including the framed PHOTOGRAPH of him and his brother.

EXT. FOSTER PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

The SOCIAL WORKERS watch as..

MARCUS is introduced to his FOSTER PARENTS..

FOSTER MOTHER

Hello Marcus. I'm Angela. And this is David.

INT. FOSTER PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

The SOCIAL WORKERS watch as..

~~The FOSTER PARENTS ask MARCUS countless questions.....~~

FOSTER MOTHER

What do you like to eat in the mornings?

Silence.

FOSTER MOTHER (cont'd)

We're porridge eaters here. Do you like porridge, Marcus?

Silence.

INT. FOSTER PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

MARCUS is shown his room for the first time.

FOSTER FATHER

This is your room.

Inside: signs of a previous occupant. Posters on the wall, etc.

FOSTER FATHER (cont'd)

Ricky moved out about a months ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The FOSTER FATHER smiles, visibly proud..

FOSTER FATHER (cont'd)
Turned 18. Got his first job. As a
security guard.

MARCUS looks into the room..

FOSTER FATHER (cont'd)
Go on. It's all yours.

But MARCUS remains in the doorway. As if paralysed. Staring.
Apparently unable or unwilling to enter..

The FOSTER PARENTS exchange looks. Not understanding.

The SOCIAL WORKER watches MARCUS closely. Sees MARCUS is
staring at the bed.

The SOCIAL WORKER thinks, then takes the FOSTER FATHER to one
side, and whispers into his ear..

INT. MARCUS'S ROOM - DAY

The SOCIAL WORKER and FOSTER FATHER struggle to move a second
bed into MARCUS's bedroom.

INT. MARCUS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

MARCUS lies in bed, staring at the empty bed across the room.
His "brother's" empty bed.

MARCUS stretches out his hand. Hoping to touch something.
Feel something.

MARCUS
Good night, Jase.

INT. FOSTER PARENTS' HOUSE - SAME TIME

Standing in the corridor outside, we reveal the FOSTER MOTHER
and FOSTER FATHER are listening.

They look at one another. Visibly concerned.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The following day: MARCUS is in a classroom.

Lost in thought.

A TEACHER asks a question. A sea of hands go up. MARCUS,
however, is miles away. Distracted.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

SCHOOLKIDS play in the yard. Raucous laughter. One CHILD is not taking part. Stands to one side.

It's MARCUS. Standing alone. Lost in thought.

The same TEACHER stares. Concerned.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

MARCUS stands in a corridor alone. In the classroom, his TEACHER is talking to the SOCIAL WORKERS.

Concerned looks. Lowered voices.

INT. CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY

MARCUS sits in a chair, opposite a female child psychologist in her 40's.

PSYCHOLOGIST

.So - thanks for coming to see me,
MARCUS..

(surreptitiously checks
her file)

Your care worker referred you to me.

Silence.

PSYCHOLOGIST (cont'd)

She said you might have been feeling a little sad. Is that right? About your brother?

Silence.

PSYCHOLOGIST (cont'd)

Well, it's OK to feel sad. We all feel sad when we lose someone.

(a beat)

What was his name?

Silence.

PSYCHOLOGIST (cont'd)

I've got "Jason" down here. Is that right? Is it Jason?

Silence.

PSYCHOLOGIST (cont'd)

You know I say this to all my boys and girls, it really helps if we can manage to talk. It makes things a whole lot better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Silence.

PSYCHOLOGIST (cont'd)

All right. I tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to shut up. And not say a word. And leave it up to you.

(a beat)

And if you want to sit here in silence, that's fine.

(a beat)

And if there's something you want to say to me..anything at all. That's fine, too.

(a beat)

Or ask me.

(a beat)

Anything at all.

Silence.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Bells ring. It's lunchtime. Everyone heads for the canteen. One TEACHER calls out to MARCUS..

TEACHER

Lunchtime, Marcus. Coming?

MARCUS shakes his head.

Without offering an explanation, MARCUS heads down the corridor in the opposite direction.

The TEACHER watches him go.

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - SCHOOL - DAY

MARCUS sits in the computer room.

MARCUS stares at the computer screen. Presently, he types into the computer.

"TALK TO THE DEAD."

Then hits, 'Enter'.

4,140,000 replies in 0.36 seconds.

Among the results, we pick out..

"HOW TO TALK TO THE DEAD"

"CAN THE LIVING TALK TO THE DEAD?"

"12 WAYS TO TALK TO THE DEAD"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARCUS stares at the findings. He looks left and right, makes sure no one is watching, then..

MARCUS scrolls through the websites. Starts reading.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

"Whoosh", a high-speed TGV train roars through the french countryside.

INT. TGV TRAIN - DAY

MARIE sits in the train. Several books, (in French), are spread out on the table in front of her.

We see their titles: "On Life after Death", "Questions and Answers on Death and Dying", "The Five stages of Dying"..

EXT. GENEVA CENTRAL STATION - DAY

MARIE disembarks the train. Walks to the taxi rank.

EXT. HOSPICE/FOUNDATION - GENEVA - DAY

MARIE's taxi pulls up outside a modern building on the outskirts of town.

MARIE pays. Gets out.

INT. HOSPICE/FOUNDATION - DAY

MARIE enters a bright, modern building, with a clinical but benign atmosphere.

She walks to a desk.

MARIE

Marie Lelay. To see Dr. Rousseau.

The RECEPTIONIST asks MARIE to take a seat, then picks up a phone, dials.

MARIE walks over to a seating area, then notices a door leading to the 'Hospice'. The door is slightly ajar.

MARIE goes through the door.

INT. HOSPICE - CORRIDOR - DAY

MARIE walks down a corridor. On either side, private wards. The decor is tasteful. Mountains in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIE walks past the wards, then stops. Something has caught her attention.

A family - FATHER, MOTHER, HUSBAND - is gathered around the bedside of a DYING WOMAN, not much older than MARIE.

Hospital STAFF have tactfully, discreetly given the FAMILY space and privacy.

The DYING WOMAN is pale, her breathing shallow and irregular, evidently moments away from the end.

The family hold the DYING WOMAN, and each other, as her final journey begins.

Presently, the WOMAN's breathing stops. The struggle goes. A look of peace comes over her face.

The FAMILY bursts into tears.

But MARIE stares at the DEAD WOMAN. Profoundly curious. Almost an envy, (if it's possible), in her face.

Then, from behind MARIE, a voice..

ROUSSEAU

What wouldn't we give to know exactly where she's gone.

MARIE turns, DR. ROUSSEAU offers her hand, smiling..

ROUSSEAU (cont'd)

Though from what you wrote in your letter, perhaps you know already.

DR. ROUSSEAU extends her hand..

ROUSSEAU (cont'd)

Elizabeth Rousseau.

MARIE

Marie Lelay.

EXT. GARDENS - INSTITUTE - DAY

MARIE and DR. ROUSSEAU sit in an office. Through the window, we see well-kept gardens where several dying PATIENTS are being visited by their relatives..

MARIE

..a garden....tranquil...flowers...a feeling of weightlessness...and of course, the light..

ROUSSEAU

How was your sight? Do you remember?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIE

..I could see with what seemed like
360 perspective...

ROUSSEAU

And time?

MARIE

...there was no sense of linear
time...or motion...

ROUSSEAU

Yes. Quite typical.

MARIE stares at ROUSSEAU..

MARIE

You've heard descriptions like this
before?

ROUSSEAU

Oh, yes. Many times.

ROUSSEAU gets up, walks towards a filing cabinet..

ROUSSEAU (cont'd)

Of course at first, my mind was closed
to such things. Like everyone else, I
thought people saw bright lights, Eden-
like gardens and so forth because they
were culturally conditioned to do so..

(a beat)

But twenty-five years in a hospice,
working with people many of whom were
pronounced dead, then miraculously
survived..

(a beat)

..the accounts of what they actually
experienced were so strikingly
similar..it couldn't just be
coincidence.

(a beat)

Add to that the fact that when they
had these experiences they were almost
all UNconscious - a state in which
even my enemies agree the brain cannot
create fresh images..

(a beat)

I've kept a number of the cases on
file. I can let you have some copies..

ROUSSEAU pulls files out of the drawer..

MARIE

But if you've monitored this yourself,
why won't anyone listen to you?

CONTINUED: (2)

ROUSSEAU

Because in the end, it's not proof.
It's merely testimony from people,
many of whom, my detractors argue, are
in highly emotional states or on
powerful drugs..

(a beat)

You have no IDEA how mocked I am by my
peers. Ridiculed. Discredited.

(a beat)

And I haven't MENTIONED the religious
lobby. God forbid, you offer up a view
of the afterlife which conflicts with
their doctrine. Where the good aren't
rewarded or the evil punished? They
become quite irrational.

(a beat)

Do you know last month I was called a
'witch'! In 2005!

MARIE's face: shocked.

EXT. HOSPICE/FOUNDATION - DAY

ROUSSEAU walks MARIE out, to her waiting TAXI. We notice
MARIE is now carrying several files..

ROUSSEAU

I'm afraid if your journey is anything
like mine, it won't be an easy one.
It's a lonely furrow to plough.

MARIE turns, and shakes hands with DR ROUSSEAU.

ROUSSEAU (cont'd)

People become quite irrational around
this subject. Quite hostile, even.

(a beat)

You'd have thought experiences like
yours or those I've recorded would
give people hope in uncertain times.
And they'd want to know more.

(a beat)

But the opposite is true.

ROUSSEAU looks at MARIE..

ROUSSEAU (cont'd)

Maybe someone in your position, with
your influence can change that.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

MARIE sits at her desk, staring at her computer. Scattered
all over the desk are..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On one side of her desk are political books, and notes for her commissioned book...

On the other, the files of DR. ROUSSEAU's research.

MARIE stares at one. Deep in thought. Then the other..

In the corner, a TV plays. Presently, the familiar sound of a programme's theme music.

MARIE freezes, stops typing, and looks up.

ON TV: the title sequence to MARIE's current affairs programme. As the titles fade, MARIE's replacement, an attractive FEMALE PRESENTER addresses the camera..

FEMALE PRESENTER

Good evening. With the media group Vivendi joining electrical giants VFM in announcing higher than expected quarterly profits, we ask is talk of economic downturn in France premature?

MARIE gets up from her chair, walks closer, stares at the screen.

MARIE watches the TV for a beat.

A stab of emotion.

The new PRESENTER is anything but a disaster. In fact, she's confident and authoritative. A natural.

MARIE reaches for the telephone, picks it up. Dials a number.

INT. PRODUCTION GALLERY - SAME TIME

'Rrrriing', the phone rings. DIDIER is busy, producing the show. An ASSISTANT picks it up - passes DIDIER the phone.

MARIE

Who is she?

DIDIER

Marie, this is not a good time.

MARIE

You said there would be no replacement.

DIDIER

I said there would be a 'stand-in'. That's who she is.

MARIE

For God's sake, she even has blonde hair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIDIER
(gives directions to
vision-mixer)
I don't think we can hold that against
her.

MARIE
And glasses. It's sabotage.
Personality theft.

DIDIER
Look, I can't talk now. I'll call you
later.

MARIE
Promise?

DIDIER
Of course. I'll call you later.

MARIE hangs up.

INT. HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

MARIE sits watching television. Pouring herself another glass
of wine.

She stares at the phone. The phone that doesn't ring. She
knocks back the glass of wine.

Finally, MARIE picks up the phone. She dials a number.

MARIE listens to the phone. It rings. And rings. Finally
DIDIER's voice clicks in on his answer-machine...

MARIE listens to the message - then..

MARIE
..it's me...you said you'd call...I'm
here, in the middle of nowhere...on
YOUR advice...wondering...how can it
have come to this...? What's happened?
(a nervous laugh)
...I'm confused...and frightened..can
you call me..? Please..?

'Click', MARIE hangs up.

She Stares at the phone. Then curses herself for having left
it. Having shown 'weakness'.

MARIE (cont'd)
Dammit...!

MARIE knocks back another glass. Then..

MARIE looks at the research material on her desk. She looks
first at the material for her commissioned book..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

...then at the material from DR ROUSSEAU.

MARIE thinks for a beat, then...

She turns on her computer. And begins writing..

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. FACTORY - CHICAGO - DAY

High up over the sprawling automobile factory. A mass of chimney stacks, the abstract beauty of heavy industry..

INT. FACTORY - DAY

GEORGE is hard at work. Driving his forklift truck.

INT. LOCKER-ROOM - FACTORY - DAY

LATER: GEORGE is showered and changed. He's finished for the day.

He is on his way out of the factory, when he is called back by the SUPERVISOR.

SUPERVISOR

George? Have you got a second?

INT. SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The SUPERVISOR shows GEORGE into his office...

SUPERVISOR

Listen, you're probably aware there's been a lot of talk flying around recently about cutbacks here at the factory.

GEORGE

Yeah, I heard.

SUPERVISOR

Anyway, it seems the high-ups have decided to lay a few people off. They got together with the Unions, and have come up with some packages for anyone who'd consider voluntary redundancy..

GEORGE

Voluntary redundancy..?

SUPERVISOR

Anyway, if you ask me, the deal is pretty good.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUPERVISOR(cont'd)

You'd get a year's salary in your pocket, with continued health insurance for five years..

GEORGE laughs nervously..

GEORGE

Wait a minute..I don't understand. Why are you telling me this?

EXT. ICE RINK - NIGHT

GEORGE and his brother BILLY sit in the bleachers, watching a local ice-hockey game..

BILLY

It's a fucking scandal.
(gestures angrily)
You've worked there three years. Never taken a day off sick, never caused trouble, always on time. What do you get..?

GEORGE

They said it was nothing personal.

BILLY

Bullshit.

GEORGE

That they're just trying to protect the guys with wives and children.

BILLY

You should go see a lawyer.

GEORGE

I can't afford a lawyer.

A silence. BILLY chooses his moment, then..

BILLY

Look, if you want me to help find you another job, I will. Just say the word.

(a beat)

But you know what I think you should do.

GEORGE rolls his eyes..

GEORGE

I know.

BILLY

It would be different this time.

(a beat)

We could control it. Just one or two appointments a day.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BILLY(cont'd)

We wouldn't give out your phone number. Wouldn't expose you to any media.

(a beat)

We learned the lessons last time.

BILLY passes GEORGE a beer..

BILLY (cont'd)

At least THINK about it?

GEORGE stares ahead. Granite-faced.

INT. ADULT EDUCATION COLLEGE - NIGHT

GEORGE continues to stare ahead. He watches from the side as other COUPLES are on the dance-floor.

As expected, no sign of MELANIE.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

GEORGE lies in bed. The rich, mellifluous tones of the Shakespearean actor come from the CD player..

ACTOR

"..to divert his thoughts from this melancholy subject, I informed Mr Micawber that I relied on him for a bowl of punch, and led him to the lemons. His recent despondency, not to say-despair, was gone-in-a-moment. I never saw a man so thoroughly enjoy himself amid the fragrance of lemon-peel and sugar, and the smell of burning rum, as he stirred, and mixed, and tasted..."

Suddenly GEORGE sits up, cries out in primal anger and frustration..

GEORGE

AAAARRRRGGGGGHHHHH!!!!

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE - LONDON - DAY

A modest, red-brick Government building in London - a tough, inner city neighbourhood..

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES - OFFICE - LONDON - DAY

'Rrrriinnng,' the phone rings. The SOCIAL WORKER answers:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOCIAL WORKER

Hello?

FOSTER FATHER

Clare? It's Dennis...I think you should come over...

INT. FOSTER PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

The SOCIAL WORKER examines an empty biscuit tin.

SOCIAL WORKER

How much was there?

FOSTER FATHER

About two hundred pounds.

FOSTER MOTHER

We've tried calling the school. He never got there.

SOCIAL WORKER

Okay, let me know if he comes back. I don't want to involve the police at this stage, that's really a last resort...And you've no idea where he might have gone?

Both shake their heads.

~~EXT. A SQUARE IN CENTRAL LONDON - DAY~~

MARCUS stands outside a grand, nineteenth-century building in central London.

A plaque beside the door announces: COLLEGE OF PSYCHIC STUDIES. MARCUS pushes open the door and enters.

INT. RECEPTION - COLLEGE OF PSYCHIC STUDIES - DAY

A RECEPTIONIST is talking to a VISITOR.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm afraid our Senior Sensitive, Mrs Joyce, is fully booked until the eighth of July. You can have an appointment with our Junior Sensitive, Mr Sharp, but the earliest he could see you is six weeks time.

MARCUS stands nearby, pretending to look at a row of leaflets and flyers for various mediums and psychics. He notices one with the words "TALK TO THE DEAD" writ large.

VISITOR

Oh dear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RECEPTIONIST

Mrs. Joyce is doing a public reading here tonight if you're interested, in the lecture theatre. Seven o'clock...Though of course you may not get picked.

VISITOR

Alright, I'll try my luck.

The VISITOR goes. The RECEPTIONIST notices Marcus.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you?

MARCUS shakes his head. He grabs a pile of leaflets, and goes.

CUT TO:

INT. TERRACED HOUSE - NORTH LONDON - DAY

A MAN in his late 40's, bearded, knit sweater, is seated in a chair, eyes closed.

CHANNELLER

Okay, what I'm doing now, I'm closing my eyes and opening my channels to the spirit world. And as I go into a trance, my spirit guide will speak to you through me..

We pull back to reveal MARCUS, sitting opposite. The CHANNELLER starts to sway, then speaks in a deep voice:

CHANNELLER (cont'd)

Who summons me from the spirit world?

A long pause. The MAN opens one eye.

CHANNELLER (cont'd)

Say your name.

MARCUS

Marcus.

The CHANNELLER closes his eye again.

YOUNG MAN

Welcome Marcus, my name is Yoshi...

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

We are in what looks like a doctor's surgery, spotless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A MAN with greying hair is tinkering with a sophisticated looking tape recorder sitting on a desk, and a microphone that hangs from the ceiling. MARCUS watches, fascinated.

MAN

What I'm doing is I'm adjusting the levels on the microphone. Do you do physics at school?

MARCUS nods.

MAN (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Then you'll know that all matter vibrates at various speeds. But the spirit world operates at levels far higher, hence we cannot hear them with normal hearing.

The MAN makes some final adjustments.

MAN (cont'd)

Was he quite outgoing? Your brother. Talkative?

MARCUS nods.

MAN (cont'd)

Well, that should help.
(makes final adjustment)
Right, we're ready.

He dramatically presses "record" on the machine. The wheels begin turning.

MAN (cont'd)

Are you there..?
(checks notes)
...Jason? Your brother is here...Is there a message for him?

A long silence. MARCUS strains to listen.

Nothing but silence.

MARCUS begins to look disconcerted. But the MAN's eyes widen in excitement. He nods his head eagerly..

MAN (cont'd)

There! Did you hear him?

Finally, he presses stop on the tape machine.

MAN (cont'd)

There! There again.

The MAN rewinds to find it..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAN (cont'd)

He said your name. Listen...I'll play
it back at half speed.

He rewinds the tape. Hits 'play'. MARCUS leans forward.
Straining to listen. Willing with all his heart.

But hears nothing but tape hiss.

CUT TO:

INT. LECTURE THEATRE - COLLEGE OF PSYCHIC STUDIES - EVENING

Warm applause from the audience as MRS JOYCE walks on stage.
She is a plump, middle-aged woman. Cheap, sensible shoes.

MRS JOYCE

Thank you for that warm welcome, I'm
Ellen Joyce, and I'm the Senior
Sensitive here at the college of
Psychic Studies.

We see MARCUS in the audience.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER: the session is well underway.

MRS JOYCE (cont'd)

...she says he was there when you
graduated...she was very proud.

The MAN's eyes fill with tears.

MRS JOYCE (cont'd)

Because she never had the chance to go
to college herself?

WOMAN

No.

MRS JOYCE

She wishes she'd had the chance like
you. She wants you to keep it up.

MAN

I will, thank you.

There's a round of applause.

MRS JOYCE takes a deep breath, closes her eyes. After a
moment she opens her eyes, looks round the room..

MRS JOYCE

I'm getting a strong feeling over this
side of the room. Someone whose name
starts with "J".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's a flash of recognition in MARCUS's face.

MRS JOYCE (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Does the letter "J" mean anything to
anyone?...Anyone?

Hesitantly, MARCUS raises his hand.

MRS JOYCE (cont'd)
Don't be shy. Tell us your name,
please?

MARCUS
Marcus.

MRS JOYCE
Marcus...Stand up so we can see you.

MARCUS stands.

MRS JOYCE (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Marcus you've lost someone recently.
Was it someone close to you?

MARCUS nods.

MRS JOYCE (CONT'D) (cont'd)
He's telling me his name. It's Joe, or
Jack.

MARCUS
Jason.

MRS JOYCE
Jason. That's right. He was very
close to you, wasn't he?

MARCUS nods.

MRS JOYCE (cont'd)
Part of the family?

MARCUS nods.

MRS JOYCE (cont'd)
Is it your father, Marcus?

Father? MARCUS freezes. Doesn't know what to say.

MRS JOYCE (cont'd)
Was it your father passed on?

MARCUS is aware all eyes are on him. He nods.

MRS JOYCE (cont'd)
It was your father.

She closes her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MRS JOYCE (cont'd)

I'm getting a feeling, all over my body. In my bones. An illness...Like cancer. Did your father die of cancer, Marcus?

MARCUS still can't speak.

MRS JOYCE (cont'd)

Poor child, you probably don't know what cancer is. Well your daddy says please don't be sad, and to look after mummy for him, will you do that for him?

(before MARCUS can answer)

Give him a round of applause ladies and gentlemen.

The audience applauds. MARCUS remains standing, confused.

EXT. STREET IN CENTRAL LONDON - DAY

MARCUS wanders through streets in central London.

INT. INTERNET CAFE - DAY

MARCUS pays a small fee. Sits down at a computer. He opens a search engine, then types..

"GENUINE ABILITY TO TALK TO THE DEAD."

He hits enter.

A host of sites pop up. MARCUS begins to sift through. Then one catches his eye..

'GEORGE LONEGAN'.

He hits enter. Up comes GEORGE's website advertising his unique talent, along with dozens of 'astonished' and 'awestruck' testimonials.

MARCUS scrolls down the page.

"LIVE FAR AWAY? OR WORRIED ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY? GEORGE HAS EQUAL SUCCESS DOING READINGS OVER THE TELEPHONE."

MARCUS's eyes widen. He sees a phone number....

MARCUS takes a pen. Writes the number on his hand. Then he goes to the cashier. Changes the twenty for one pound coins.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

MARCUS is in a call-box, dials the number on his hand. We hear a long distance tone, then an automated voice cuts in..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOICE

This number is no longer in service.
Please check the number you have
dialled and try again.

MARCUS checks, then redials..

VOICE (cont'd)

This number is no longer in service.
Please check the number you have
dialled and try again.

MARCUS stares. Visibly disappointed. Then hangs up.

INT. FOSTER PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

The FOSTER FATHER is on the phone to the social worker, the
FOSTER MOTHER by his side.

FOSTER FATHER

No, still no sign...I think we're
going to have to call the police...

The FOSTER MOTHER tugs at his sleeve: MARCUS is approaching
the front door.

FOSTER FATHER (cont'd)

(into the phone)

Hold on, he's here...I'll call you
right back.

He hangs up the phone. MARCUS opens the door and walks in.
Looks at them both. Then takes the twenty pound coins from
his pocket and piles them on the coffee table.

MARCUS

Sorry.

And without another word he turns and leaves the room. The
FOSTER FATHER is about to go after him but the FOSTER MOTHER
catches his arm.

FOSTER MOTHER

Leave him be...

INT. MARCUS'S BEDROOM - FOSTER HOME - NIGHT

MARCUS enters. Sits on the bed. Stares at the empty bed
opposite.

MARCUS

Talk to me, Jase.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. PARIS SKYLINE - DAY

High over the unmistakable skyline of Paris.

CAPTION: 'SIX MONTHS LATER'

EXT. PUBLISHING HOUSE - DAY

The same smart publishing house as before.

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE - DAY

MARIE waits in the reception area. Through a glass wall, in a neighbouring office, MARIE notices...

Half-a-dozen STAFF members huddled around a television. Talking in hushed, concerned voices..

ON TV: it's rolling-news footage from London, as the British capital is apparently under siege - four terrorist bombs having gone off in an apparently co-ordinated attack..

A SECRETARY emerges. Visibly shaken..

SECRETARY

Sorry, we're running a little late.
Everyone's been distracted by this..

The SECRETARY indicates the office

SECRETARY (cont'd)

Would you like to come in?

She leads MARIE into the conference room.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Sitting round the table: the same group of EXECUTIVES and EDITORS, visibly shaken by events in London..

MARIE sits in the vacant chair at the end of the table.

EXECUTIVE

Can I be frank?

MARIE

Please.

EXECUTIVE

I'm a little confused by the manuscript you've sent me. I was under the impression I'd commissioned a book based on your experiences as a political interviewer, and instead I get the first three chapters of..

(MORE)

75

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXECUTIVE(cont'd)

(reading the manuscript
title)

.. "Death: Whatever Next?"

MARIE

It's just a working title.

A silence.

EXECUTIVE

(an uneasy smile)

..I'm not sure where to begin.

MARIE

Did you at least think it was
INTERESTING?

EXECUTIVE

To be honest, once I realised it
wasn't the book I had commissioned, I
stopped reading.

MARIE

Why? Was that denial?

EXECUTIVE

Oh, please..

MARIE

I'm serious. Why does no one want to
deal with this subject?

PEOPLE avert their eyes, look away..

MARIE (cont'd)

What is everyone so afraid of?

EXECUTIVE

Marie, this is a political publishing
house with a very specific readership.
This kind of 'new age' material,
however fascinating...is another
market entirely..

MARIE

'New age?' I have hard facts, based on
thousands of interviews; first-hand
experience. That science.

(a beat)

Besides, doesn't the fact that it's ME
making the case for it count for
something?

Silence.

MARIE (cont'd)

It doesn't?

Silence. People avert their eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARIE (cont'd)

Look, I realise I've been off the screen for a couple of months, but in case you've forgotten...

MARIE turns, and indicates..

MARIE (cont'd)

...big companies are still prepared to pay for my endorsement..

MARIE tails off. Stares out of the window.

Where her poster had hung, now a poster hangs with a completely different celebrity endorsing the same product.

MARIE (cont'd)

I see.

Silence. People in the room clear their throats..

EXECUTIVE

Marie, everyone understands you had a terrible experience. And that a trauma like that coupled with losing your job..

MARIE's smile fades..

MARIE

Losing my job...?

MARIE stares, incredulous....

MARIE (cont'd)

What's going on...?

Silence. Awkward clearing of throats. People avert their eyes in embarrassment.

INT. CAFE - AFTERNOON

A television plays high above the bar relaying footage from LONDON. News ANCHORS give us the rising casualty figures. The attack is much worse than initially thought. All mobile phone networks have been shut down. London has been totally shut down.

Everyone is watching. Among them, DIDIER..

MARIE enters the cafe and joins him.

DIDIER

Isn't it terrible?

He indicates the television..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIDIER (cont'd)

One minute you're going to work, the next...boom.

He shudders privately.

DIDIER (cont'd)

I tell you. It'll be us next.

Scenes of pandemonium on London streets. DIDIER lights a cigarette. MARIE looks at him.

Notices his hands are shaking.

INT. CAFE - LATER

MARIE and DIDIER sit opposite one another..

MARIE

It was so humiliating. Their faces. You should have seen them. The scorn. The contempt.

(shaking head)

These are the same people that six months ago were on their knees, wanting anything...ANYTHING by the great Marie Lelay.

DIDIER

Well, ignore them. There are always other publishers. Pay back the money and take it somewhere else.

MARIE

You've changed your tune.

DIDIER

It's an important subject. The MOST important subject.

(a beat)

You should take as much time as you need.

MARIE searches his face. This is a new turn of events..

MARIE

Well, it's nice of you to say so.

(a beat)

It's not because you want me out of the way, is it?

DIDIER

What? Don't be silly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIE

Because much as I've appreciated the time off, I must admit, it has been a LITTLE hurtful that there haven't been more phone calls begging me to come back.

DIDIER

Only because everyone wanted to respect your privacy.

MARIE

Or because my replacement has turned out to be so....capable.

DIDIER looks up. Realises MARIE knows.

MARIE (cont'd)

It's OK. You don't even have to break it to me. They blurted it out at the publishing house.

MARIE manages a brave smile..

MARIE (cont'd)

Are you sleeping with her, too?

DIDIER

What? How can you say such a thing?

MARIE

You always told me to ask the difficult questions.

DIDIER falls silent. Avoids her eyes.

MARIE (cont'd)

You know...one imagines one is so...indispensable...irreplacable...
(shaking head)
Inside a year, and it's as though I never existed.

MARIE suddenly feels more lost than she's ever been.

MARIE (cont'd)

You know all this only came about because you couldn't be bothered to buy your children's presents?

DIDIER looks up..

DIDIER

I don't understand.

MARIE

(stubbing cigarette)
Doesn't matter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARIE looks up, gestures to the WAITER. Asks for the bill.
OVER THIS: the sound of a ringing phone..

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

MARIE comes back into her apartment, to find the telephone ringing. She goes over to it, answers it..

MARIE

Hello?

At the other end, the same publishing EXECUTIVE from the earlier scene, (we intercut as necessary)..

EXECUTIVE

Marie? It's Michel. Listen, I feel terrible about our meeting earlier today.

MARIE

Don't worry..

EXECUTIVE

No, it was unforgivable.

(a beat)

Anyway, I made a few calls, and I've got the name of a couple of publishers that I think might be able to help you. One American, one English...

(a beat)

Have you got a pen?

MARIE scrambles to find pen and paper..

MARIE

Yes. Go ahead..

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

MARIE stands at a post office counter with two wrapped parcels, (containing copies of her book)..

She hands them over the COUNTER. Then watches as the parcels are put into large sacks, and disappear..

EXT. RUNWAY - AIRPORT - DAY

An aeroplane roars down the runway. Takes off into the sky.

INT. AEROPLANE - NIGHT

MARIE sits in the window seat of an aeroplane. Staring out of the window. Lost in thought.

EXT. HOTEL - THAILAND - DAY

A taxi pulls up outside the same hotel in which MARIE stayed with DIDIER when the Tsunami struck.

MARIE steps out.

MARIE turns 360 degrees, surveying the scene. The hustle and bustle has returned. But much has been rebuilt.

MARIE's face: her eyes taking it in. Feelings coming back.

INT. HOTEL - THAILAND - DAY

MARIE checks into the same room. She unpacks her bags.

Stares at the double bed.

INT. HOTEL - RECEPTION - DAY

MARIE steps out of the elevator. Walks through the lobby, out of the hotel doors.

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

MARIE is hit by the noise and heat. Bustling streets. Teeming with life. She notices a wall of commemoration.

1000's of PHOTOGRAPHS of victims of the Tsunami. Candles burn.

EXT. MARKETS - DAY

MARIE drifts through the markets. Fruit, vegetables, household items, leather goods and wood carvings..

Much is as it was again. The circle of life.

Up ahead where the jewellery stall once was...

An electrical stall is in it's place. Two teenage BOYS selling counterfeit MP3 players, ipods..

MARIE stands alone. People brush past her. Getting on with their business. With life.

OVER THIS: the sound of a beautiful singing...

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

A teenage Thai GIRL sings hauntingly, magically. A vast CROWD is gathered, of LOCALS, TOURISTS, SURVIVORS, RELATIVES..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's exactly ONE YEAR since the Tsunami.

The singing is unbearably beautiful. A heart-tearing lament.

Pictures of the dead hang from trees. A sea of candles burning. Incense. PEOPLE everywhere hold hands. Embrace.

Among them, we pick out MARIE.

Presently, the teenage THAI GIRL takes a lantern, and lights it. And lets it go.

The lantern rises up, up into the sky..

All along the beach, thousands of PEOPLE take it as their cue to light their own lanterns..

Among the MARIE. She lights her lantern, and lets it go, along with the hundreds, the thousands of others.

MARIE cranes her neck, watches as it goes up, up...

Applause breaks out along the beach. People stare up at a perfect, dark, velvety sky, dotted with a thousand stars..

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The sound of a ringing phone. MARIE's hand gropes in the dark, and answers her mobile phone.

At the other end, an AMERICAN voice..

EXECUTIVE

Marie Lelay?

MARIE

(still fast asleep)

Yes..?

EXECUTIVE

This is Richard Aronson of Aquarius books in Sante Fe California.

MARIE

Excuse me?

EXECUTIVE

Aquarius books in Sante Fe California. A few months ago you sent us your book.

(a beat)

I'm just ringing to say how much we liked it.

MARIE sits up, bleary-eyed..

MARIE

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXECUTIVE

Yes. I'm sorry its taken so long. We had to get it translated. But we loved it. And would like to publish it.

MARIE

Really?

EXECUTIVE

In fact, we'd like to print it in time for a Book Fair that takes place in London in the Spring. You're based in Paris?

MARIE

Yes.

EXECUTIVE

So if we were to ask you, coming to London wouldn't be inconvenient?

MARIE

No. Not at all.

EXECUTIVE

Because it occurs to me that would be a good opportunity to do some publicity. Maybe a reading. It's an incredible story...

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. OFFICES - CHICAGO - DAY

A low-rise office building in a Chicago suburb. OVER THIS: the sound of a voice..

BILLY (V/O)

Anyway, I thought we could use this as a group reading room..

INT. OFFICES - CHICAGO - DAY

BILLY shows GEORGE through the offices of "GEORGE LONEGAN inc". He shows him an empty room with chairs in it..

GEORGE

I don't understand. What 'groups?'

BILLY

...where I thought you could go larger groups, up to twenty people at a time. It'd mean they could pay lower rates.
(gestures)

Whatever. It's just an idea..

BILLY leads GEORGE down a corridor...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BILLY (cont'd)

Anyway, this would be your own private consulting room..

GEORGE peers inside..

BILLY (cont'd)

And right next door, would be my room. From where I'd take care of everything.

(a beat)

Make sure you have nothing to worry about.

GEORGE

I don't understand. What about the rest of your business?

BILLY

Oh, I give that up. Not right away, of course. But if things took off...

GEORGE stares. Like a man condemned.

BILLY (cont'd)

Now let's get you home, and get you some rest. First day tomorrow, and you have three appointments already.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

GEORGE paces his living room. A video tape lies on the coffee table. He stops, stares at it, a pained expression on his face.

Eventually, he picks it up, sticks it in the VCR and hits 'play'.

ON TV: the intro music to "Larry King Live." LARRY appears on screen. We see GEORGE behind him in the TV studio..

LARRY KING

On tonight's show: "Are psychics for real?" To help us investigate we have journalist Tom Delaney, whose spent his career examining paranormal phenomena..

(we see hard-boiled
journalist DELANEY)

In Boston we have Bishop Rodney Witherspoon, who described psychics as parasites, feeding on people's faith.

(we see BISHOP
WITHERSPOON)

And in the studio we have psychic George Lonegan. Let's start with you George.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARRY KING(cont'd)

(a beat)

Are you a phoney?

GEORGE

Well, er..I guess ultimately I can't really prove to anyone I'm not a phoney...

GEORGE spools forward..

DELANEY

...what George Lonagan is doing is the worst kind of exploitation. Making money from other people's grief..

The image fast-forwards as GEORGE spools..

CLAVEL

...Larry, I've researched psychic phenomena, mediums, clairvoyants, call them what you will for over twenty years now. People like Mr Lonagan are skilled, cynical operators, using a technique called 'cold reading'...

The image fast-forwards as GEORGE spools..

LARRY KING

Bishop, is what George does evil?

BISHOP

...Larry, I'd go further, I think it's blasphemous. Who does Mr Lonagan think he is? Claiming to have some kind of hotline to the hereafter? There's only one way to communicate with the spirit world and that's through prayer..

'SNAP', GEORGE zaps the TV. The screen goes blank.

GEORGE's face: lost in thought.

EXT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

BILLY's car pulls up. BILLY gets out, in a sharp suit, whistling. He crosses to the door and rings GEORGE's buzzer. He waits. No reply. Presses it again. Still no reply.

George's NEIGHBOR opens her window.

NEIGHBOR

'You Billy Lonagan?

BILLY

Yes.

NEIGHBOR

Before he went, your brother asked me to give you this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She hands BILLY a letter. BILLY stares quizzically...

BILLY

'Went?' Went where..?

...then he opens the letter. Starts reading. Over this: we hear GEORGE's voice...

GEORGE (V/O)

Dear Billy...

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

A taxi passes under a sign for the 'Airport'..

GEORGE (V/O)

I'm sorry..I guess there's nothing
I'll ever be able to say to persuade
you...

INT. TAXI - DAY

Inside the taxi: GEORGE is the passenger, staring out of the window..

GEORGE (V/O)

...that what I have isn't a gift, but
a curse...

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

A packed airport terminal. GEORGE walks through, carrying his bags..

GEORGE (V/O)

I know you feel what I have comes with
a duty to help others...

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

GEORGE stands in line to check in..

GEORGE (V/O)

But right now the person I most need
to help is myself...

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

A 747 roars down the runway. Pulls up into the sky..

GEORGE (V/O)

So I've decided to take some time out.

INT. AEROPLANE - DAY

GEORGE is cramped in an aisle seat. But comfort is no matter. There's a contentment to him we've not seen before..

GEORGE (V/O)

I don't know what the future will bring, or when I'll be back. So, don't wait up, so to speak.

GEORGE puts his book down. Starts sleeping.

GEORGE (V/O) (cont'd)

Love to Jenni and the kids.

(a beat)

Your baby brother, George.

EXT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT BLOCK - SAME TIME

BILLY finishes reading the letter. His smile fades.

BILLY

Sonofabitch..

'Crash', BILLY kicks his car. The alarm goes off.

EXT. LONDON - DAY

London's skyline, sprawling into the horizon.

INT. MARCUS'S BEDROOM - FOSTER PARENTS HOME - DAY

The FOSTER MOTHER is getting MARCUS dressed.

FOSTER MOTHER

I'm sure you'll like Ricky. He was about your age when he first came to us, and just as shy. Now he's all grown up, with a job and his own flat..

EXT. DOUGHTY STREET - LONDON - DAY

A Georgian terraced house in central London. A TOUR GROUP comes to rest outside..

TOUR GUIDE (V/O)

...and here we are, 48 Doughty street, Charles Dickens' home in London where he lived with his wife Catherine and their children..

(looks up)

Anyone know how many children?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Among the TOUR GROUP we pick out GEORGE, who stares up at the house in wonder. He speaks under his breath speaks, (no one hears)..

GEORGE

Ten.

TOUR GUIDE

Ten! Isn't that incredible? He had ten children!

INT. 48 DOUGHTY STREET - LONDON - DAY

The TOUR GROUP enters the house..

TOUR GUIDE

Right, here we are in the main hallway. This is the view that would have greeted the author as he walked in each time. Everything has been preserved exactly as it was in his time...

GEORGE enters, wide-eyed..

INT. 48 DOUGHTY STREET - LONDON - DAY

The TOUR GROUP enters the study..

TOUR GUIDE

...here we are in the study. And there the thing I expect most of you have come to see. Dickens's desk, where he wrote most of his books.

GEORGE's face, as if in a trance, he walks towards the desk..

TOUR GUIDE (cont'd)

Beside the desk are several illustrations for 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood', the novel Dickens was writing at the time of his death.

GEORGE moves closer, stretches out, almost touches the desk..

TOUR GUIDE (cont'd)

Beside them, a painting loved by Dickens's fans. Anyone know it's name?

GEORGE quietly, under his breath. No one hears.

GEORGE

"Dickens' Dream".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOUR GUIDE

It's called "Dickens' Dream". It shows the author asleep at his desk with characters from his novels floating in the air around him...

GEORGE looks at the picture of DICKENS - then stops.

ON CANVASS: a painting of a MAN asleep, surrounded (haunted?) by floating, mysterious characters that inhabit his consciousness..

GEORGE allows himself a private smile.

A moment of connection between them.

INT. 48 DOUGHTY STREET - LONDON - DAY

The TOUR is over. GEORGE is on his way out.

On his way, GEORGE notices a poster on the wall with the SHAKESPEAREAN ACTOR advertising a forthcoming reading to publicise the AUDIO CD for "LITTLE DORRITT".

GEORGE takes a closer look...

GEORGE

May I?

The TOUR GUIDE nods..

TOUR GUIDE

Of course. Help yourself.

GEORGE looks at the date...

GEORGE

When's the date today?

TOUR GUIDE

14th.

GEORGE looks at the date on the poster. "14th".

INT. TUBE STATION - LONDON - DAY

MARCUS stands on the platform with his FOSTER PARENTS. With a deafening roar, the TRAIN emerges from the darkness and enters the station..

MARCUS and his FOSTER PARENTS board the train.

EXT. TUBE STATION - DAY

MARCUS and his FOSTER PARENTS cross the road towards a large convention centre, passing under a billboard: "45th LONDON INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR, MARCH 12th - 21st".

A young, uniformed SECURITY GUARD approaches them. This is RICKY. He embraces the FOSTER PARENTS confidently..

FOSTER MOTHER

Well, look at you! I wouldn't have recognized you!

FOSTER FATHER

Not going to arrest us, are you?

RICKY

Not if you behave yourself.

MARCUS watches their easy, intimate, loving banter..

FOSTER MOTHER

Marcus, this is Ricky.

RICKY

All right.

He offers his hand. MARCUS shakes it. RICKY and the FOSTER FATHER spar playfully as they go inside.

MARCUS lags behind. Awkward.

INT. EXHIBITION CENTRE - DAY

RICKY leads them towards a cafe stall..

RICKY

Fancy a coffee?

FOSTER FATHER

That's a good idea...Marcus?

MARCUS shrugs..

MARCUS

Can't I just look around?

The FOSTER PARENTS exchange looks. The FOSTER MOTHER gives a little nod to her husband.

FOSTER FATHER

All right, but meet us back here in an hour.

MARCUS nods. He wanders off into the crowds. The FOSTER MUM stares after MARCUS, concerned..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FOSTER MOTHER

It's been nearly a year and he hardly talks to us.

RICKY

Neither did I, remember?

RICKY smiles, puts his arm round her in encouragement, then leads her to a cafe..

RICKY (cont'd)

C'mon, let's get that coffee.

INT. EXHIBITION CENTRE - ELSEWHERE - DAY

MARCUS, meanwhile, skulks along past one stall after another.

Authors and sales people selling books of all shapes and sizes on every subject under the sun - fly-fishing, weight loss, political thrillers, children's books, biographies.

MARCUS drifts through the stalls, finding nothing of particular interest. He passes a stall where a well-known Shakespearean ACTOR, a knight of stage and screen..

...is doing a reading to promote an audio CD.

ACTOR

"...Little Dorrit received a call that same evening from Mr Plornish who, having intimated he wished to speak to her privately through a series of noticeable coughs..."

MARCUS walks past the stall. But our CAMERA stays.

INT. EXHIBITION CENTRE - ELSEWHERE - DAY

The ACTOR is reading to a rapt audience..

ACTOR

"..obtained an audience with her on the common staircase outside the door.."

His voice is soothing and seductive. And immediately familiar to us. It's the same actor who's readings GEORGE listened to..

ACTOR (cont'd)

"There's been a lady at our place today, Miss Dorrit, wishing to know whether you could visit her tomorrow morning..."

The reading finishes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And there, among the CROWDS applauding, is GEORGE himself. Staring in awe. A child in the presence of his hero.

The ACTOR begins signing copies of the CD. Among the waiting CROWDS, is GEORGE, who reaches the front of the queue and hands his copy of the CD to the ACTOR to be signed..

ACTOR (cont'd)

To..?

GEORGE

George. George Loneyan.

The ACTOR obliges.

GEORGE (cont'd)

It's really..a great honour. You have no idea..

The ACTOR hears George's accent.

ACTOR

You're a long way from home.

GEORGE

Yes. I came especially to London for the Dickens Tour.

ACTOR

The what?

GEORGE

The official Dickens Tour which you endorse on the back of the CD's..

ACTOR

Oh, really..?

The ACTOR has no idea what GEORGE is talking about, and is distracted by other FANS, and before long..

GEORGE is gently pushed aside..

GEORGE smiles, 'Oh, well', and moves on. He got what he wanted. What he came for. The signed CD.

GEORGE wanders through the stalls, still smiling to himself, staring at his CD..

He drifts down one aisle, then another. He passes a stall where a reading is taking place. He hears a WOMAN's voice..

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

"...wether what I saw was a genuine glimpse of the afterlife or just a concussed fantasy, I'll never know.."

GEORGE freezes, and turns..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARIE

"..I arrive at the end of my journey
with as many questions as I started
with.."

On a podium for AQUARIUS PUBLISHERS, he sees a beautiful
FRENCH WOMAN (40), on stage, reading from her book in
English.

As she continues reading, GEORGE moves closer through the
crowd, intrigued.

MARIE (cont'd)

"..the only thing I know for certain
is that we still have a long way to go
before we will be able to deal with
death in anything approaching a
sensible fashion...."

GEORGE moves closer. Riveted by what he's hearing, but also,
quite obviously entranced by MARIE..

When suddenly, from behind him, a VOICE..

VOICE

Wait a minute...

GEORGE stops, turns. And finds himself confronted by a twelve-
year-old boy with intense, staring eyes...MARCUS.

MARCUS

I recognise you...

GEORGE stares...

MARCUS (cont'd)

You're that psychic.

GEORGE

I'm sorry, you're mistaken.

GEORGE tries to give MARCUS the slip, but he follows..

MARCUS

Yes, you are..

GEORGE smiles uncomfortably, pushes through CROWDS..

MARCUS (cont'd)

You're George Lonigan..

GEORGE

Excuse me.

GEORGE tries to lose MARCUS, irritated to be missing MARIE,
who is wrapping up her reading..

INT. EXHIBITION CENTRE - DAY

GEORGE weaves between the stalls, lengthening his stride, trying to lose MARCUS. But a determined twelve year old is hard to shrug off..

MARCUS keeps GEORGE in his sights.

INT. EXHIBITION CENTRE - DAY

GEORGE weaves through CROWDS, removes his jacket so not to be so easily recognisable.

SHOOTING FROM ABOVE: GEORGE performs an elaborate figure of eight through the exhibition centre, bobbing through CROWDS..

Finally, he finds his way back to the stall where the FRENCH WOMAN was reading. The woman who had made such an impression on him..

But by the time GEORGE pushes through the CROWDS to reach her..

MARIE has gone. In her place: a bearded MAN is reading from his book about the power of Healing Hands..

GEORGE's heart sinks. Frustrated. He turns to some people who are listening..

GEORGE

The woman that was reading here? The French woman? You have any idea where she went?

But the PEOPLE shrug, 'No.' GEORGE stands on tiptoe, cranes his neck, looking for MARIE in the crowds..

But no sign.

GEORGE curses, "Damn", visibly frustrated, then goes up to the stall, and buys one of MARIE's books..

GEORGE looks up to see MARCUS has found him again, and is heading towards him..

GEORGE's eyes close. He takes the book, then goes right up to the BOY..

GEORGE (cont'd)

What is it? What do you want from me?

MARCUS opens his mouth, is about to reply..

GEORGE (cont'd)

If it's a reading...I've got bad news.
I don't DO that anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE stares at MARCUS..

GEORGE (cont'd)
Now leave me alone.

GEORGE turns, and walks off. MARCUS watches him go.

EXT. EXHIBITION CENTRE - DAY

GEORGE emerges from the exhibition centre, onto the street.
He looks behind.

No sign MARCUS.

GEORGE breathes out, 'Thank God'. That did it. That shook him
off. GEORGE heads off down the street.

But our camera remains still. And presently, weaving through
the CROWDS, at a distance..

...we see MARCUS.

INT. CAB - DAY

GEORGE hails a cab. Gets in.

GEORGE
Lancaster Hotel, please.

The cab moves off. GEORGE climbs in. Relaxes. But soon the
cab stops moving.

It's a traffic jam.

GEORGE (cont'd)
It's all right, I'll walk.

He hands the DRIVER some money and gets out.

GEORGE gets out, then stops in his tracks. In the distance,
he sees MARCUS is walking along the pavement. Catching up
fast..

GEORGE starts walking. Trying to lose MARCUS.

EXT. STREETS OF LONDON - DAY

MARCUS walks down street after street. GEORGE quickens his
stride. MARCUS starts to run, catching him up..

Eventually, GEORGE reaches his hotel and runs inside.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

GEORGE enters an anonymous 'Holiday Inn' type affair. Tour groups and low-grade businessmen.

GEORGE hastens through the lobby. Jumps into the elevator. The doors close.

MARCUS enters through revolving doors. Walks through the lobby. He searches for GEORGE, sees him disappear into the elevators.

MARCUS follows. He attempts to go into the elevators, but without a room key the elevator won't work.

MARCUS is forced to give up. Frustrated.

INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

GEORGE enters his room. Locks the door. Safe. He crosses to the window, pulls back the curtain and looks:

Way down below: MARCUS is waiting across the street. GEORGE thinks for a moment, then changes his mind.

GEORGE lets the curtain drop.

INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER

GEORGE has a shower. He emerges from the bathroom, drying his hair. He orders room service.

GEORGE crosses to the window. Looks out. MARCUS is still there. Shivering.

INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER

GEORGE sits in his room, eating his lunch. Channel-flicking on TV. Watching the news.

GEORGE finishes eating.

GEORGE goes to the window. Pulls back the curtain. MARCUS is still there.

GEORGE sighs, a long, deep sigh.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HOTEL - EVENING

MARCUS waits, shivering. GEORGE emerges from the hotel, crosses the road to him. They look at each other in silence.

GEORGE
We'd better get you inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE heads back across the road. MARCUS follows.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - EVENING

MARCUS eats hungrily. GEORGE watches him.

GEORGE
How did you recognize me? From the
website?

MARCUS nods. Carries on eating.

GEORGE (cont'd)
(under his breath)
Great.

INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

GEORGE enters, followed by MARCUS.

GEORGE
You'd better sit down..

MARCUS sits on the couch. Then notices MARIE'S book on the
table..

GEORGE takes a seat opposite him, takes a deep breath, then..

GEORGE (cont'd)
OK, a few ground rules before we
start..

MARCUS
I'm sorry about the woman.

GEORGE
What woman?

MARCUS
The woman at the book fair.

MARCUS indicates the book..

MARCUS (cont'd)
I could tell, you liked her.

GEORGE looks at the book..

GEORGE
No, I didn't.

MARCUS
Yes, you did.
(a beat)
So I'm sorry. For taking you away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

I don't know WHAT you're talking about.

GEORGE's face: a flicker behind the eyes..

GEORGE (cont'd)

Now..let's get on with it.

GEORGE sits in a chair opposite MARCUS..

GEORGE (cont'd)

OK, I'm going to hold your hands for a minute, it seems to help, then I'll let go. Don't worry...I won't be closing me eyes, or going into any trance..

GEORGE takes MARCUS's hands. Holds them. He concentrates. A flicker of discomfort, then...

GEORGE lets go of MARCUS's hands.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Someone close you has passed?

MARCUS

Yes.

GEORGE

A male.

MARCUS

Yes.

GEORGE

I'm getting a pain. Bad pain.

(a beat)

This person died a violent death?

MARCUS

Yes.

GEORGE

He was young when he died.

MARCUS

Yes.

GEORGE

Was this person your brother?

MARCUS nods..

MARCUS

Yes.

GEORGE

Your older brother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARCUS

Yes.

GEORGE

But not by much, he says..

GEORGE looks up. Tailing off..

GEORGE (cont'd)

...by just a few minutes.

GEORGE looks at MARCUS.

MARCUS averts his eyes.

GEORGE suddenly realizes what he's dealing with.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Your twin? Oh, God..

GEORGE's eyes fill with compassion..

GEORGE (cont'd)

Kid, I'm so sorry.

GEORGE instinctively stretches out his hand. Then GEORGE stops himself, withdraws his hand..

He closes his eyes for a second..

GEORGE (cont'd)

I need to concentrate. This guy talks
a lot.. And fast.

MARCUS smiles, recognising Jason. Nods.

GEORGE (cont'd)

He says there's so much he wants to
tell you. He's saying you wouldn't
believe how it is.

(a beat)

How you can be all things.

(a beat)

And all at once.

(a beat)

And the weightlessness.

(a beat)

He says it's cool.

Tears appear on MARCUS's cheeks..

GEORGE (cont'd)

He's laughing now. He has a funny
laugh.

MARCUS nods. Wipes his cheeks with his sleeve..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GEORGE (cont'd)

He says how you always looked up to him, relied on him to make the decisions. And how you sometimes you used that as an excuse?

MARCUS nods.

GEORGE (cont'd)

He says you can't do that any more. Now you're on your own.

MARCUS suddenly looks bereft. Then GEORGE continues..

...and in the way he says it, the look on his face, we realise it's GEORGE speaking here, not Jason..

GEORGE (cont'd)

Except you're never really on your own. Because he is you.

(a beat)

And you are him.

(a beat)

One cell.

(a beat)

One person.

(a beat)

One soul.

MARCUS's face swells with emotion. GEORGE's, too - then he goes back into the reading...

GEORGE (cont'd)

He says you have to do it all for both of you.

(a beat)

So "tough bananas"?

MARCUS looks up..

GEORGE (cont'd)

(a quizzical look)

"Tough bananas?" It's what he said.

MARCUS stares at GEORGE for a moment. Then bursts into tears of recognition..

GEORGE's eyes flicker.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I'm afraid he's gone now.

MARCUS

No, Jase. Don't go..!

MARCUS's shoulders shake violently. GEORGE watches for a beat, visibly choked..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MARCUS (cont'd)
(through tears)
I miss you...I miss you Jase...I miss
you so badly...

GEORGE stares. We close on his face. The reading has clearly
had a profound affect on him. Humbled, shaken.

MARCUS looks up..

MARCUS (cont'd)
Where's he gone?

GEORGE shrugs..

GEORGE
Sorry, kid. I don't know. I lost him.

MARCUS
You don't know?

MARCUS stares, not understanding..

MARCUS (cont'd)
You don't know where he's gone? Or
what it's like there? For him?

GEORGE
No.

MARCUS
But if you've done all those readings?

GEORGE shrugs..

GEORGE
Sorry.

A beat.

GEORGE (cont'd)
C'mon. Let's get you home.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOSTER PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Several hours later. It's dusk now.

MARCUS stands opposite the foster parents' house. There's a
police car in the driveway.

MARCUS takes a deep breath. His tears are gone. And looking
at him, we realise something has changed in his appearance.

He appears taller, somehow. More confident. His head up. He
takes a deep breath, then crosses the road.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He reaches the door. And rings the doorbell.

SHOOTING FROM ACROSS THE STREET WE WATCH AS:

The door opens, and the FOSTER MOTHER appears. Then the FOSTER FATHER. Then the POLICEWOMAN..

They are about to begin admonishing MARCUS, when..

MARCUS opens his arms and walks towards the FOSTER MOTHER. He embraces her. Holds her tight. The FOSTER MOTHER freezes..

The FOSTER FATHER watches, choked..

MARCUS continues to hold tight. Eventually, the FOSTER MOTHER returns the embrace..

The FOSTER FATHER holds the door open..

FOSTER FATHER

Let's get you something to eat.

MARCUS looks up..

MARCUS

Can I use the phone first?

The FOSTER FATHER nods, 'of course'. Closes the door.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

To establish: GEORGE's hotel in central London.

INT. HOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

GEORGE sits. He stares at the chair where MARCUS had sat the night before.

GEORGE thinks. Then picks up the phone. Dials a number.

The sound of a US ringtone the other end, then a male voice picks it up, 'Hello'..

GEORGE

Billy? It's me.

BILLY

George?

GEORGE

I'm in London.

BILLY

London?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

Yeah. But I'll be home soon.

GEORGE takes a breath, and..

GEORGE (cont'd)

And ready for work.

A silence. Then..

BILLY

Are you sure?

GEORGE

I'm sure. But Billy..?

BILLY

Yeah?

GEORGE

We'll do it my way this time.

BILLY

OK.

GEORGE

So...you can start by getting rid of that office.

BILLY

Hey, it's gone.

GEORGE

I'll do one reading a day.

BILLY

Sounds good.

A silence. Then..

GEORGE

But you were right. I don't have a choice.

BILLY

No, you don't.

A beat, then..

BILLY (cont'd)

When can I expect you?

GEORGE

Gimme a couple of days. I've come all this way. Might as well see a few sights.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BILLY

Hey, it's your life. Take as long as you want.

A silence, then..

BILLY (cont'd)

I love you.

GEORGE

Yeah.

GEORGE can't help smiling..

GEORGE (cont'd)

Love you, too.

'Click', GEORGE hangs up. Goes over to his bed. Climbs in.

We notice MARIE's book is by his bedside. He picks it up, and starts reading.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

'RRrrrrringgg', the phone rings. GEORGE wakes slowly, his face creased with sleep.

GEORGE stretches out his hand. Picks up the receiver.

GEORGE

(bleary, half-asleep)

Hello?

A voice the other end.

HOTEL RECEPTION

Mr Lonagan? You have a guest waiting for you in reception.

GEORGE looks quizzical, 'OK'.

GEORGE

I'll be right down.

He hangs up.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

'Ping', elevator doors open, GEORGE steps out, his hair still standing on end. Still half-asleep.

GEORGE walks over to the hotel reception, speaks to one of the EMPLOYEES.

They point in a certain direction. GEORGE turns and looks...

Then GEORGE stops in his tracks. His expression changes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REVERSE ANGLE:

GEORGE'S POV: a familiar-looking WOMAN sitting in the corner..

It's MARIE.

GEORGE double-takes. What's she doing here? He walks over.

GEORGE
Hi. Can I help you?

MARIE looks up.

MARIE
Mr. Lonegan?

GEORGE
Yes.

MARIE stares..

MARIE
I'm Marie LeLay.

A beat.

MARIE (cont'd)
I was told to come here. By my publishers.

A beat.

MARIE (cont'd)
For the interview.

From GEORGE'S blank look..

MARIE (cont'd)
You're not from the Sunday Times Magazine.

GEORGE
No.

MARIE
You're not a journalist at all?

GEORGE
No.

A beat.

MARIE
I see.

GEORGE
Who told you to come here?

CONTINUED: (2)

MARIE

A lady. For my publishing house.

GEORGE

Did she sound very young?

MARIE

Why?

GEORGE

I...er..think you'll find it might
have been a twelve year old boy.

MARIE stares..

MARIE

I don't understand.

GEORGE

It's a long story.

MARIE turns, is about to go..

GEORGE (cont'd)

But for what it's worth, I have read
your book.

MARIE stops.

GEORGE (cont'd)

And liked it. Liked it a lot.

MARIE is thrown..

MARIE

Really?

GEORGE looks at MARIE...

GEORGE

You want to get a coffee?

MARIE thinks, then..

MARIE

Sure. I leave for the airport at
twelve. So we don't have long...

MARIE checks her watch..

MARIE (cont'd)

It's what I told the person on the
phone.

GEORGE

Boy. Called Marcus.

GEORGE gestures, 'Forget it'..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GEORGE (cont'd)

C'mon, there'll be somewhere nearby..

He leads MARIE out of the hotel, through various TOUR GROUPS milling in the foyer..

EXT. STREETS - DAY

GEORGE opens the umbrella, and holds it, as he and MARIE walk out into the streets, continuing their conversation. As they go..

Our CAMERA pulls up, up into the sky, until GEORGE and MARIE are two dots in the distance..

..an umbrella among hundreds, disappearing into glistening pavements, shimmering rain, and London streets..

FADE TO BLACK