

CORPSE GARDEN

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FADE IN:

INT. DEMOLISHED BUILDING - 14TH FLOOR - DAY

Derelict brick facades. Concrete floors.

A gust of air wheezes dust from the open East wing through to the West.

SUPER: "Thirty Odd Years Ago"

Two KIDS run through the rubble. One big. One small.

Small NASH FOX, 9, reaches the end of the floor which cuts off his escape. Trapped. He whips his head side to side, desperate for a way out. No such luck.

Nash opens his trembling hand, stares at the Water Lily seedling crushed in an ounce of dark soil in his palm. He breathes over it.

With a sniff, he wipes his nose. Nash throws the Lily over the edge, it plummets to the bed of lush greens below.

At that moment, JOSH COLLINS, 13, an obese bully, snot hangs from his oversized nostril, staggers to a halt. He snorts like a pig, towers over Nash.

Nash turns, wipes tears.

JOSH

Hey, Nashy Nash Nash, ready to soil
your panties?

Josh steps closer, forces Nash into a corner.

Scared shitless, Nash's heels push dust over the edge of the floor. He's a wreck, balances to not fall back.

Josh scrapes up a broken brick, throws it at Nash. Misses, puts more force behind his throws.

Pieces of brick slam into Nash's chest, thud against his face, his head. Blood trickles from grazes. Nash cannot hold back the tears anymore, sobs...

Every hurl fuels Josh's wild enjoyment. He laughs out loud.

Nash's pathetic cry flips to a stomach churning scream. He launches himself forward, pushes Josh out of the way. Yes!

Josh fortifies his flabby stance, slips on a chunk of concrete. He topples, grabs at Nash, who runs, pushes, fights, and wrestles.

Josh hooks his fat finger on Nash's shirt collar.

Their eyes meet, for a second, all commotion pauses. Josh's eyes bulge, fill with terror.

Nash's eyes, dead like mud.

JOSH
Please, help... me...

The moment lulls...

Nash reaches out, grips his small hands around Josh's arm, Nash sees Josh's finger tear through his collar.

His nails sink into Josh's skin. Nash's balance fizzles.

It's a vicious struggle between Nash and earth's lethal gravity. Josh is too heavy.

Teeth clenched, Nash pulls with all the might his feeble frame can muster... they share a glance.

NASH
I'm... not... strong... enough...

Eyes dark, Josh snarls with an ugly lip.

JOSH
You will always be a pussy.

Muscles now depleted, Nash loses his grip.

In a blink of an eye, Josh disappears over the edge...

Time slows down as Josh falls, flails his arms.

Nash watches the big fat bully plummet to the soil beneath.

The crushed water lily just out of his reach.

INT. THIRSTY MONK - BAR - DAY

NASH, now 40, an expert landscaping architect with dark shadows around his bloodshot eyes, slumps over the counter, folds his green stained fingers around an empty glass. A feeble father. Zero responsibility sense.

His other hand flips and catches a bronze A.A. chip with a triangle, engraved with the words: "UNITY, SERVICE, RECOVERY"

FRANK, 40, a curly haired lawyer who loves searching for the hidden terms and conditions in any situation, glares at Nash.

FRANK

You're not hearing me, Nash. God - just like in High School!

NASH

Frank, if I find a gig that pays, a big one, Foxscape won't go bust.

FRANK

I just don't understand it. You are heavy in debt but we had time. Someone has called in all the markers and loans against your business. Someone leaked a false story that there's been some creative bookkeeping. To untangle is a nightmare. Now look, he's the fucking scapegoat.

Nash focuses on the flat screen television against the wall, feels at the bandage on his arm. Clearly a fresh injury.

ON TV: BILL FOX, 44, a bald, strong framed older brother, always ready to fend for Nash, rushes down a staircase, hides his face from the Press.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

The search continues as local police tries to solve the disappearance of Bill Fox, the Co-owner of Foxscape, Inc., an award winning, multi-million dollar architectural landscaping company. Mr Fox faces prison time on a series of financial misappropriation of assets and corruption frauds.

FRANK

I'll spell it out for you. Foxscape is gone. Accept it.

Nash runs his hands through his hair.

FRANK

Hang back until Bill's case has settled before you take on anything, especially independently.

NASH

Frank.

FRANK

Nash, you don't want additional charges on your name right now. Let me figure out who's behind the hostile take over and making these false claims. Get it? Lay off, lay low.

NASH

So, sit around, do nothing?

FRANK

Or, get your ring busted behind the slammer. Your choice. For gods sake, think of Claire.

NASH

She wants me to join her for a shitty interview.

FRANK

You're a shitty parent and a shitty brother, Nash.

NASH

Pillow in my fucking face much?

FRANK

All I'm saying is, don't do anything rash.

Frank swigs from his jug.

NASH

Why hasn't Bill called? That's not like him.

Frank looks around, nervous...

FRANK

Um, have you seen him? You know... like you did when Georgie died? Or... um Emily?

Nash shakes his head.

NASH

No, but he could be mad at me and not want to make an... appearance.

FRANK

Then maybe he's okay. Let's be real. If I had to work with a sad-sack like you everyday of my life then --

NASH

-- Frank! Something's not right. If the police would knuckle down and do their job they would've found Bill by now.

Frank throws his jacket on, checks his watch.

FRANK

My wife is going to kill me or leave me. It's a stretch enough to let them go to the beach without me. And I have two anklebiters I have to say goodbye to.

Nash taps the coin on the counter.

FRANK

You sign those docs I sent you.

Frank pats Nash's bandaged arm. Nash winces.

NASH

Aah! Fuck, Frank.

FRANK

At least, Claire's reaching out, don't screw that up.

MATHILDA IVY, 42, a pro-manipulator, consumed with bitterness at the unsatisfactory way her life turned out, places herself on the stool next to Nash. She slips, grabs Nash's injured arm, spills his drink in his lap.

Nash jumps up.

NASH

Aah! Fuck-sakes!

MATHILDA

I'm so sorry.

Nash breathes in deep, blows out the pain. Wipes his pants.

NASH

It's okay. Just an accident.

MATHILDA
I can be so clumsy.

Nash makes light of it.

NASH
It's okay, Miss butterfingers.

FRANK
(to Mathilda)
Forgive my friend he can be a real
softy sometimes.

Nash gives an embarrassed smile.

MATHILDA
I clearly overlooked the misfit
table over there.

Mathilda points at a MAN drooling into his beer. Man smiles,
showcasing his teeth like broken skittles.

FRANK
I'm off. Nash don't fall for her.

He nods at Mathilda, leans in close to Nash. Whispers.

FRANK
Nothing, Nash! Do nothing!

Frank runs out, shouts over the music.

FRANK (O.S.)
Sign those docs.

Watching Frank leave, Nash spots a small water lily tattoo on
Mathilda's shoulder.

MATHILDA
Can I get you an ice tea? To make
up for it?

Nash sighs a smile.

NASH
I'll get it.

Nods at the BARMAN, holds up two fingers.

Mathilda points at the flat screen television.

MATHILDA
You shouldn't let other people
blacken your name like that.

NASH
I believe in forgiveness.

Mathilda gives a bemused smile.

MATHILDA
A virtue of the weak and it serves
no useful need.

He fails to keep a straight face. Nash nods at the tattoo on her shoulder.

NASH
Lilies carry significant meaning.

MATHILDA
I'm listening.

NASH
Old wisdoms claim they were created
from the breast milk of Hera.

MATHILDA
Conversational U-turn.

NASH
Representative of those mothers-to-
be who are fertile and nurturing.

Mathilda's eyes tear up which throws Nash for a loop.

Nash gulps at the ice tea and rushes to the...

THIRSTY MONK BAR - TOILETS - SAME

Nash removes his jacket, tosses it next to the basin. The picture he took from the frame slips from the jacket pocket.

Nash stares at himself in the mirror then at the blood seeping through the bandage on his arm. He unwraps the cloth to reveal a deep gash on his lower arm.

NASH
How the hell did I do this anyway?

At that moment, Mathilda sneaks in, locks the door behind.

MATHILDA
I lost my boy.

Nash startles.

NASH

What the...

MATHILDA

Got the tattoo to remember him by.
What you said, is beautiful.

Mathilda spots the picture protruding from the jacket pocket.

Nash fails to hide his wound.

NASH

My daughter, Claire.

Mathilda points at the second woman in the image then takes the crimson drenched bandage, wraps it around Nash's wound.

MATHILDA

The older woman?

NASH

Was Emily.

MATHILDA

Divorced?

Nash pockets the picture.

NASH

Claire, wants to be an actress.

The door rattles. Someone on the other side is desperate to use the toilet.

MATHILDA

Recognize me?

Taking over the wound-wrapping, Nash unlocks the door.

An angry GUY shoots past them. Nash walks out. Mathilda follows.

THIRSTY MONK BAR - DAY

Nash and Mathilda sit on the barstools.

MATHILDA

The little freckle face who rescued her brother from an island and discovered their parents to be new world order scientists not knowing they were the lab rats. Remember?

Nash's eyes light up, stops in his tracks.

NASH
Mathilda Ivy? I hated that show.

MATHILDA
Don't be fooled.

NASH
You were great though.

MATHILDA
I gave up my childhood. I was always away from my home, my brother and my family. For what? To learn my craft. In the end, nobody watches, nobody gives a shit. Yet, you get back up and try again.

They search each other's eyes.

NASH
Maybe you should chat to Claire. Bring her to reason. She already thinks I am not supportive. Our talks never go well. After losing her mother... it could break her.

Nash gives a weak smile.

NASH
I didn't introduce myself properly. I'm Nash. I connect people with nature...

Mathilda blank at Nash.

NASH
... A landscaping architect.

MATHILDA
Mathilda Ivy. I'm making my own full feature film. Indie-style.

Mathilda points at the big screen on the wall.

MATHILDA
What's the buzz all about?

NASH
My company's fucked.

MATHILDA

Then you can't be any good, at
scaping land.

Nash flicks the A.A. chip.

NASH

With enough motivation, I'm
actually the best.

Mathilda scoffs, reaches out, catches the chip.

MATHILDA

I doubt you have any real talent
but, how would you approach a piece
of property, say, designing a
special garden location for a film?

Nash stares at Mathilda.

NASH

I shouldn't be --

Mathilda taunts Nash...

MATHILDA

I don't know. How good can you be
if your company is defunct?

Bristling...

NASH

I have a knack but it requires...

MATHILDA

Are you saying I should take a
chance on you?

NASH

A certain motivation.

Mathilda gives him a long look... smiles, nods.

MATHILDA

I like you. I'll take a chance.
Good help is hard to keep these
days. My producer has a rubber arm.
I'll get him to add an extra line
to the budget.

NASH

No thanks.

Mathilda smirks at Nash.

MATHILDA

Look, my parents left me this estate. You knock two birds with one stone. Generate creative solutions for my rural plot and elevate the quality of my production. What do you say? Save your sorry ass company.

Nash shakes his head.

NASH

Mathilda, I appreciate it but --

MATHILDA

-- Don't be hasty. I have reservations about you. But I supposed we can come to an agreement. I'll buy your company.

NASH

No-dice. Bill will never --

She nods at the big screen...

MATHILDA

-- Isn't he missing?

NASH

He is the mastermind behind Foxscape. The brother I have disappointed in so many ways.

Mathilda touches Nash's shoulder.

MATHILDA

Great! This will be a chance to redeem yourself and I'll talk to your daughter.

Mathilda cups Nash's chin in her hands, stares deep into his eyes, fingers back Nash's unkempt hair.

Nash enjoys Mathilda's touch, lingers for more.

NASH

Still can't believe I'm with my teenage celebrity girl crush.

TRRRRR! Mathilda grabs at her cell phone, answers.

MATHILDA

Yes? The police station? Sure.

Flustered, Mathilda hangs up.

NASH
Everything okay?

MATHILDA
Yeah. Yes. It was really nice
talking to you Nash.

NASH
You in trouble?

She shakes her head, slaps cash onto the counter, leaves.

NASH
Hey, I'll drive you!

EXT. PRECINCT - NASH'S VEHICLE - DAY

Mathilda steps out, dismisses Nash. He hesitates, looks at the needle marks on his arm, peels out.

INT. PRECINCT - DETECTIVE COOPER'S OFFICE - DAY

The wall's decorated with a huge collage of missing persons headshots. Divided into two sections - PEOPLE and CADAVERS.

Hands cuffed together, FEDERICO DELGADO, 26, an illegal immigrant with cheekbones so sharp, they look like they could cut diamonds, stares at the collage.

The names under the PEOPLE are familiar...

FEDERICO
Please, I love my wife.

Detective SYRETIA COOPER, 30, wearing tight jeans and a 'Rock of Ages' blouse, feeds a real life stick insect in a cage a green leaf.

There's a faint knock at the door.

SYRETIA
Enter.

Another couple of weak knocks.

SYRETIA
Please! Come in.

Hesitantly, the door opens and Mathilda enters.

FEDERICO

Lo siento. Sorry. It was accidente.

SYRETIA

And you are?

MATHILDA

Mathilda. Mathilda Ivy.

SYRETIA

I know you. You're that child actress, changed your name?

MATHILDA

This is a big misunderstanding.

SYRETIA

No, it's not. This Federico has no papers. He was on your property. Care to explain?

Silence hangs.

SYRETIA

Do you know each other?

Mathilda steps toward Federico, kisses him passionately. She retrieves a paper from her purse which reads, "MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE" and hands it to Syretia.

MATHILDA

The documents are still in transit.

SYRETIA

He is undocumented?

MATHILDA

I assure you, Detective, we are together. Federico is my husband.

SYRETIA

And, Bill Fox? Do you have any relation to him?

Mathilda swallows her nerves, glances at the collage.

MATHILDA

Vincent Shoals... Arnie Brett... a strange lot of wanted posters. Why ask about Bill Fox?

SYRETIA

Look again. Missing persons.

MATHILDA
I can't see how this relates.

SYRETIA
Strictly physical?

MATHILDA
Pardon?

SYRETIA
Miss Ivy, our 911 division received
a call from Bill last night. Today,
he is missing.

MATHILDA
I know, it's all over the news.

SYRETIA
His call was tracked to your
residence.

Mathilda glances at Federico and back at Syretia. The vein in
her neck twitches and becomes engorged.

Mathilda's nails bite into her palms.

MATHILDA
Look, detective Cooper. I don't
know a Bill Fox but I'll let you
know when I stumble upon such a
person. All I know is that you have
my husband cuffed. I don't mean to
snap but it's late and we need to
get home.

Syretia stands to confront Mathilda.

Patting her arm, Mathilda softens.

MATHILDA
I know it's late and you're tired
too. Let me take my husband and let
you focus on your more important
matters.

Mathilda nods to the board of missing persons.

MATHILDA
I can't imagine how their families
are coping. Please, let me put up a
reward for any information that
will give their families some peace
of mind.

Syretia nods, sits dumbfounded.

MATHILDA
Is a hundred thousand enough?

EXT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - LATER

Federico struggles to keep up with Mathilda, motoring away at top speed. She breaks out in laughter.

MATHILDA
As if I will ever pay a dime in
reward money. Losers.

EXT/INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - NASH'S VEHICLE - NIGHT

Plants frame the entrance like a neglected stubble on an old man's chin. Lush with shaggy greenery, a prodigious proximity to neighbors.

Nash stops in the massive driveway in wonderment at the majestic concrete fountain spewing green water.

NASH
You need a trim.

Federico darts a glare.

MATHILDA
I have a lovely bottle of red
waiting to be popped.

Nash glances at Federico on the back seat.

NASH
You live here too?

Federico rolls his eyes, extricates himself from the car.

FEDERICO
Estúpido!

Nash catches a glimpse of a garden behind the mansion.

MATHILDA
Upstairs serves for a more...
indigenous view.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - BEDROOM - DAY

Like a queen in her chamber, Mathilda slides the enormous curtains away from the windows to reveal a setting sun.

A huge garden stretches out with overgrown greens.

Pathways swirl out of control and are swallowed by thickets of vine. The dim glow of lanterns flare up against numerous tree trunks, circled by thousands of flickering fireflies.

Like a little boy, Nash's face lights up.

Mathilda slips away, opens the cupboard.

Nash leans against the big glass window, locks onto the garden below.

Awkward, he knocks over a pile of garden books. Absent minded he picks them up. Books on POISONOUS FLORA & FAUNA. He stacks them up quickly.

NASH

I'm not selling, but will accept a financial injection.

Nash waits for it.

Mathilda steps closer. She wears a slinky outfit barely covering her naked breasts, hands Nash a glass of wine.

MATHILDA (O.S.)

All investments have terms and conditions, Mr Fox.

Mathilda sips from her glass.

NASH

Get my daughter in the door. It's against my better judgement but it's her dream.

Mathilda rubs herself against Nash. He tries his best not to spill his drink.

MATHILDA

Deal.

Her fingers slide electrically all over Nash's body and slowly unbutton his shirt. Mathilda reaches for his belt, unhooks it from his waist. A game of tit for tat ensues...

Nash holds Mathilda's hands back. She stares into his eyes.

Nash swallows, tips the gown from her shoulders.

Undressing him, Mathilda runs her lips down to Nash's privates, he takes another sip.

Mathilda comes up for air, gulps down Nash's wine, leads him away from the open window to the bed.

Outside, from the garden below, Federico stares up at them.

Mathilda sits Nash down on the bed, crawls onto him.

Losing himself in her lips, Nash's hands explore Mathilda's body as she tilts her pelvis back and forth over his.

Nash pinches his eyes closed. He releases an irritated sigh.

Smiling, Mathilda stops. She respectfully slides off and slowly opens her legs facing Nash.

MATHILDA

What are you doing here, Nash?

NASH

I just met you.

MATHILDA

Then, forget about the terms and conditions... and do something about it.

Mathilda moves her hand down between her legs, caressing her private crevices... squirming.

Kissing him, Mathilda's autonomous pleasure hypnotizes Nash.

MATHILDA

Your wife would want this for you.

Nash pulls back, gazing at Mathilda's stare. Then, confidently goes in for a 'second bite of the apple'

Nash walks his lips down Mathilda's breasts, reaching the destination between her thighs.

Toying with his hair, Mathilda falls back and turns her head to the window. She ends in a victorious finish, grinning at Federico's stoical glare from the garden.

INT. CLAIRE'S DINGY APARTMENT - DAY

Dark smudges on the windows, newspapers piled up in the flaking corner.

Boxes scattered throughout.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

Dodging boxes, CLAIRE FOX, 20, ties her dark hair back. Skin soft, like she just stepped out of a night cream soak, rushes to the...

DOOR

Unlocks, opens it.

With a pot of soil, Nash stands in the frame. Smiles. A little bit of blood seeps through the bandage on his arm.

NASH
Happy house-warming.

CLAIRE
Dad... your arm.

NASH
Long days of reckless landscaping.

Claire kisses Nash on the cheek, leads him to the...

KITCHEN

Nash places the pot onto the counter, retrieves a sachet of flower seeds from his pocket.

CLAIRE
Great. Something else to take care of.

Claire switches on the kettle, pulls crumpled newspaper from a box in the corner, unwraps it to reveal a cup. She places it next to two other cups.

NASH
Very low maintenance. Water once a week. Just keep it near a window.

Claire tears the top of the sachet, shakes a couple of seeds onto her palm. Sighs.

Nash stares into the apartment, kisses Claire's head. He moves through the place.

NASH (O.S.)
Remember how we used to plant small trees together? I thought it might be nice to, you know...

Nash looks at her wistfully...

CLAIRE

Those were the better days. It was
a long time ago, dad.

Claire digs her finger into the soil, drops a seed in and
closes it up. Opens the tap over it.

NASH (O.S.)

Don't drown it.

CLAIRE

I'm not going to drown the seeds.

MODEST BEDROOM

There are TWO open suitcases against the wall. One carries
female fashion, the other displays clothes of male taste.

Nash examines the crumpled duvet and double mattress on the
floor.

Claire enters with a cup of coffee, hands it to Nash.

CLAIRE

I went for the audition at the
conservatory.

NASH

You didn't tell me you had a
boyfriend.

Claire shakes her head, smiles.

NASH

Claire.

CLAIRE

Dad. I'm not three anymore.

NASH

Are you being safe?

CLAIRE

Anyway, they arranged for me to
train with a local professional in
the meantime.

At that moment, MICHAEL KADE, 20s, chiseled and a physique to
die for, steps in from the adjacent bathroom. With a towel
around his waist and shiny, Michael smiles at Nash.

NASH
Let's have brunch.

Claire and Michael share a look. Oh, boy.

EXT/INT. NASH'S VEHICLE - DRIVE WAY - DAY

Nash swipes at his cell phone's screen, dials Bill's number as he turns into the drive way.

Nash clenches his jaw, glances up at the sky.

NASH
Common' Bill, where are you?

Nash spots a SUITED MAN at the house door holding a clipboard and pen.

Suited Man points at Nash's car.

Calm and collected, Nash gets out of his car, rests his hands on his hips and stares at his Camaro. Sighing, he circles the Camaro in admiration.

All of a sudden, Nash bursts into a fury of kicks and blows. He scrapes the keys with a deafening screech across the metal body of his Camaro.

He lifts a brick from the pavement, and brings it down hard on the side mirrors and windows, until the glistening shards of glass lie sprawled like diamonds on the driveway.

Again, Nash kicks at the car. This time he leans in with an all caps rage - a complete blow out. Nash kicks and kicks until there's nothing left in him.

Spit bubbles from his mouth.

NASH
Congratulations. It's all yours.

Nash puffs past the Suit through the front door, hands the brick, car keys to Suit on the porch. Slams the door shut with a smile.

INT. CLAIRE'S DINGY APARTMENT - LIVINGROOM - DAY

Cell phone in hand, Claire sits on a rugged couch, eyes pinballing back and forth as Michael paces from side to side.

Clenching his jaw, Michael brushes his hand through his hair.

CLAIRE
Michael say something.

MICHAEL
What do you want me to say? I
didn't intend for this --

CLAIRE
-- This?

MICHAEL
You usually bang it out this quick?

CLAIRE
You pig! You think I planned this?

Michael sighs, reaches for his phone. Dials.

MICHAEL
Hey buddy. Listen, I need a place
to crash tonight. Yeah, you were
right about her. Look, I'll talk to
you later. Thanks, cheers.

Kills the call.

MICHAEL
We're done. I'll get my things in
the morning.

Michael grabs his jacket, storms out.

CLAIRE
Michael?

BAM! The front door slams shut.

Claire stares into nothingness...

Claire connects her earphones, swipes at the display on her
phone and freezes at a video image. She taps the screen.

A video shows a young Claire and Nash joyously planting a
small tree.

Claire smiles at the video. She wipes a tear from her cheek.

INT. NASH'S HOUSE - EMPTY ROOM - NIGHT

Pruned flora in pots, a selection of 3D-landscaping models
lay on a shiny porcelain floor.

Mashing his hands against his cheeks, Nash stares at a shattered picture frame on the tiles and sucks on a lemon.

Landscaping art designs, legal documents before him on the floor.

Document reads: "ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED FRAUD EXAMINERS."

With a pencil in one hand, eraser in the other, Nash draws on a large piece of paper. As the design evolves, a heaviness sets in on his face.

Nash closes his eyes, frowns.

Tears brim, Nash tosses the pencil.

Nash runs his hands through his hair.

At the end of the dark corridor, Josh's creepy apparition appears like a mirage. Mouth twisted in a sneer, still the fat kid from the past, talks in a scathing tone.

JOSH

Deborah is close. You need to find her before she destroys you. Which she will you pussy!

Josh releases a throaty laughter.

NASH

Who the fuck is Deborah?

Nash slams the door shut, backs away in quick jerky steps. He trips over a clipboard and pen, and spots the signed, "CREDITOR'S RIGHT OF REPOSSESSION."

Wires hang, gutted from the wall where the television used to be mounted.

Nash lets out a huge breath, slumps to his knees. He pulls the picture of him with two smiling women by his side from his jacket pocket.

Nash touches the image, retrieves a sachet with white powder from his pants pocket.

Nash pours the cocaine onto the floor. He moves on to all fours, pauses...

In one quick motion, Nash dives his face down, snorts deep.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Dad? You in here? I saw the news...

Nash quickly rubs his tongue over his gums.

Claire steps in. Chin dips to her chest when she spots the residual white on his nose.

CLAIRE
You said you're clean.

NASH
Oh, bunny rabbit.

CLAIRE
You lied?

NASH
Lies are truths we wish to hear.

Smiling mirthlessly, Nash brushes past Claire heads to the...

GARDEN

A long pond with massive Khoi fish, a spread of lilies adorn the surface of the water.

Claire trails after him.

NASH
Lying is for pussies.

Nash plucks a weed from the ground, tosses it, continues down the yard.

He scoops up a pruner and flicks it around his fingers. Swift. Skilled. Snips at a bush.

CLAIRE
Your promises mean nothing.

Claire dabs the sweat on her forehead with a tissue.

CLAIRE
Mom died because of this.

NASH
Mom was sick. Depressed. It had nothing to do with me.

CLAIRE
Yet, you play victim, hiding in all your plants while your heart rots.

NASH

Don't be so dramatic. I'm fine.

CLAIRE

You're not fine. Look around. You have no furniture. You snort coke from the tiles after you promised you're done with that shit. You want to land up in prison? Don't tell me you're fine.

Her voice cracks.

CLAIRE

Nothing's fine!

Nash prunes away at the bush.

NASH

When will you stop judging me?

CLAIRE

When you become less selfish.

Nash scratches his arm. Steps back, admires his work on the plant. Picks the blossom from it, gives it to Claire.

Taking the flower, Claire changes gears.

CLAIRE

The conservatory called me back for an interview and I need you to be there. You think you can get yourself sober before then?

Laughing on the ridiculous, Nash shakes his head.

Claire dabs her forehead again.

NASH

Are you sure you want to do this? How many times are you going to hit your head against that wall?

CLAIRE

There's something seriously wrong with you. I wanted this evening to be special. There is something important I have to tell you. Yet again, you never fail to disappoint.

She scrolls her phone.

CLAIRE

I'm gonna be an actor whether you like it or not!

Claire speaks into the phone.

CLAIRE

Hi, yes. I would like to push out my reservation for tonight. Fox.

NASH

Anyway, most actors are broke and end as failures, and I don't want you to be a failure. I want to help you. I really do.

Claire lifts her eyes to Nash.

CLAIRE

Yeah, like you mean how you helped drive mom to kill herself?

Nash grits his teeth, turns away. In a low groveling voice...

NASH

Bunny Rabbit, I may be able to help, I know someone and she's famous... well was... and she said she can help.

CLAIRE

The conservatory has already appointed someone.

Claire storms out the door.

EXT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Nash picks up a gift box tied with a ribbon when Mathilda opens the door.

Kitted in training gear, Mathilda dabs herself with a towel, out of breath.

Nash retrieves a brown envelope from his back pack, hands it with a cardboard tube to Mathilda.

NASH

Our agreement and first designs. I need to assess the soil type and determine the shape of the land first, before I start.

Mathilda opens the envelope, thumbs through the entire handwritten document.

MATHILDA
Remind me to buy you a printer.

Nash shrugs his shoulders.

Mathilda searches her drive way as Federico, sneaks closer behind her.

MATHILDA
What about Bill?

NASH
I'll get him to sign off.

Nash gives a stilted smile.

MATHILDA
Why am I not convinced?

NASH
There is one more thing.

Mathilda searches his eyes, folds her arms.

NASH
I'm looking for someone.

MATHILDA
Okay.

NASH
Deborah...

Federico glances at Mathilda.

MATHILDA
Deborah?

Nash nods.

MATHILDA
Well, I'm sure if you tell me more,
I can help you find this Deborah...
whoever.

Mathilda kisses Nash, grabs the gift box.

Federico clenches his teeth.

FEDERICO
You like dead squirrels?

Nash gives a puzzled look.

NASH

Please, don't kill the innocent.
All lives matter.

MATHILDA

Yes, by all means, don't kill the
innocent.

Mathilda gives a benign smile at Nash.

EXT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - DECK - DAY

Birds chirp in the trees while a fountain gurgles behind an outdoor seating area.

Glasses and a jug of mojito mix beaded with condensation stand on a coffee table.

Enjoying a cocktail, Mathilda looks out over Nash working in the garden. Scheming, she writes in changes as she's reading through the agreement.

Federico walks closer, pours himself a drink.

FEDERICO

You sure know how to line them up.
Another stranger? We had a deal.

Mathilda plays with the ribbon tied around the gift box she took from Nash.

MATHILDA

Ugh! Fucking hieroglyphics.

Mathilda shoves the papers back into the envelope.

Federico adjusts the pants around his waist.

MATHILDA

Maybe you'll think twice the next
time you want to pay traffickers to
smuggle you in on the back of a
truck. You're employed by me, an
American. You'll be fine.

Red in the face, Federico storms off.

... Mathilda opens the gift box, her cheeks turn pale. Her eyes become glassy with tears of shock, gasping.

Glint of light off a camera lens hidden in the shrubs. The red light goes out when she calls...

MATHILDA

Cut!

Mathilda gives a satisfied smile.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - TOOL SHED - DAY

Nash finishes up, catches sight of a dart gun on a shelf.

Mathilda barges in, waving Nash's designs and envelope.

MATHILDA

You might be the wrong type of landscaper I had in mind.

NASH

Landscaping takes time.

MATHILDA

I think you need assistance. Inspiration.

NASH

I don't think so. I need to complete the site assessment. That's all.

MATHILDA

A trip to China town won't hurt.

NASH

Are you offering me drugs?

MATHILDA

It's a tough industry out there. Claire's going to need a pillar to lean on.

Mathilda plucks out the agreement and a pen. Writes on it.

NASH

That's exactly why I'm declining your offer.

MATHILDA

I'll supply the psychedelics. You enjoy it.

NASH
Mathilda, I'm done with that shit.
You know I made a promise.

Nash heads for the door.

MATHILDA
The cops are going to ask about us.

Nash stops dead in his tracks.

NASH
Our working relationship should be
on the down low.

MATHILDA
What do I say when they ask?

Nash glares at Mathilda.

NASH
Then you lie.

MATHILDA
Deceiving the police?

Nash sighs.

NASH
I agree to this and you give Claire
more than just a foot in the door.

Nash takes the agreement and pen from Mathilda. Writes on the document.

MATHILDA
I am the queen at haggling.

Nash holds out the papers. Mathilda signs then Nash.

Mathilda kisses him on the cheek, sashays out.

NASH
I was hoping to use the bicycle.
It's just hanging there.

No answer from Mathilda.

Nash unhooks the bicycle wheels, maneuvers it down.

Outside, Federico hovers at the window, points a video camera at Nash, records Nash's every move.

Unaware, Nash closes the locker. His NAME'S written at the bottom with a black marker. Class of 1996. The other names above his, VINCENT, ARNIE, others... BILL, are scratched out!

NASH
What's going on, Bill? Where are you hiding?

INT. OLIVE GARDEN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dim lights shimmer off the pristine crockery.

Nash and Claire sit opposite each other. Claire with her hands under the table, stares at her dish. It's only the two of them.

NASH
You haven't touched your food the entire evening.

Mathilda sneaks through the door, hovers at the entrance.

Nash with a mouth full of food.

NASH
Everything okay, bunny rabbit?

CLAIRE
I can't seem to unbutton my lips.

NASH
The suspense is killing me.

Mathilda moves past acting like she doesn't see Nash.

NASH
Mathilda?

Mathilda stops in her tracks. Acts surprised, aims to kiss an awkward Nash.

NASH
This is Claire.

Mathilda scoots in next to Claire, gives her a hug like they know each other.

MATHILDA
There's my actress.

NASH
You've met?

MATHILDA

What lovely candles. Haven't been here forever.

She turns toward Claire.

MATHILDA

Your father is an absolute genius.

Claire glances at Nash.

CLAIRE

How do you know each other?

MATHILDA

He hasn't mentioned me? That's not very nice of you, Nash.

NASH

Mathilda is a client.

MATHILDA

Client? My? Whatever keeps your pruning sharp.

Claire stares at Nash.

MATHILDA

I guess, if a client is someone you enjoy hot showers with, then yes. I'm definitely a client.

CLAIRE

Dad, Mathilda's my acting coach.

NASH

The local professional.

MATHILDA

I'd love to show you what incredible work your dad is doing.

NASH

You never told me about this.

MATHILDA

You have the pure glow of thespian about you, my dear. I dare say a lot like your mother. Head shots? Representation?

NASH

Hold on a second.

MATHILDA

I'll take you. Need to update my profile anyway.

Claire big-eyed at Nash.

NASH

No.

MATHILDA

I'll take care of it.

Nash digs into his meal.

Mathilda checks her watch.

MATHILDA

If we hurry, we can get a couple of hours in. I know a photographer. You'll love him.

CLAIRE

I need to visit the little girls room. Will you wait?

MATHILDA

But of course. I'll be outside.

Claire leaves the table.

NASH

Shouldn't we stick to what is stipulated in our agreement? What do you think?

MATHILDA

She's stunning.

NASH

A foot in the door?

MATHILDA

Yes, a foot in the door.

NASH

Listen, it says nothing about teaching her yourself.

MATHILDA

Nash, haven't you read the document? Besides, I love sharing my experiences and knowledge.

NASH

This is not what I wanted.

Mathilda's face drops.

MATHILDA

Touchy-touchy.

Nash wipes his face with a napkin. Stares at Mathilda.

MATHILDA

That's a very serious face.

Nash clears his throat.

NASH

Foxscape is bankrupt.

Mathilda goes quiet.

NASH

You lost your investment.

Mathilda breathes in deeply, exhales and leans forward.

MATHILDA

Do you know what happens with people who rip me off?

NASH

You knew the risks involved.

MATHILDA

You will work back every last cent even if I see your drying carcass snipping at my trees. What I put in you'll work back for free or I'll make your life a living hell.

NASH

Keep it down.

MATHILDA

Or what? You creepy pussy. Man up and grow some stones.

NASH

I'm having a peaceful dinner with my daughter.

MATHILDA

You're the worst landscaping architect I've come across.

NASH
Seriously, shut the fuck up.

MATHILDA
So perfectly fucking scared of
failure you need a hit to make you
feel better about yourself. I want
to see the numbers. Proof.

Mathilda gets up, tosses dollar bills at his face.

MATHILDA
That should cover the check.

Nash pushes food around in his plate then tosses his fork.

Mathilda turns to one of the WAITERS, slides a hundred dollar
bill down his shirt pocket. Loud enough for everyone to hear.

MATHILDA
He likes his balls on a platter.

INT. OLIVE GARDEN - LADIES ROOM - NIGHT

Claire draped over the toilet seat, fights to keep her hair
out of her face. She vomits. Sits back up, wipes her face
then holds her stomach like a mother calming her unborn baby.

EXT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

OFFICERS go in and out. Most ignore Nash who paces back and
forth in front of the precinct. He gets his nerve up.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DESK

Nash walks up to an OFFICER who's busy behind the desk.

NASH
Hello... Um, I am looking for
information about my brother.

Officer continues with his paperwork. Ignores Nash.

Nash fidgets, tries again.

NASH
Excuse me?

Officer is slow to respond or look up.

NASH

I mean. He's been missing for several days. I'm... I'm worried about him.

He BANGS his fist on the desk.

Officer looks up at Nash with his chin out. Not backing down.

NASH

God dammit. My brother is missing. All you can do is pound paper? What are you assholes doing about it?

Officer examines Nash, hands him a clipboard and papers.

OFFICER

Fill that out... name and last time your brother was seen and any important details. What he was wearing, cell phone... a number?

Nash slams the clipboard down.

NASH

Is this a joke? You already have this information.

The officer's demeanor changes, a hard look.

NASH

Bill Fox. Ring a bell?

Officer nods to a couple of other OFFICERS sitting behind him. They make a move to grab him when detective Syretia Cooper pulls Nash away.

SYRETIA

You idiots! Get your hands off him.

Nash fixes his shirt.

SYRETIA

Bill Fox is not a name we toss around for fun and games. So, if you know something of his whereabouts, now would be a good time to speak up.

Josh appears next to Syretia.

Bug-eyed, Nash runs his fingers through his hair. The air shimmies around Nash...

JOSH
You should ask Deborah. She knows.

NASH
Deborah?

Unable to see Josh's apparition, Syretia cocks her head - did she hear correctly?

SYRETIA
What did you say?

Josh laughs.

JOSH
Go back to the beginning you wuss!

Syretia pauses, watches Nash talk to himself.

PING! PING! Nash pulls out his cell...

Nash looks over his shoulder, runs from the station.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - LUSH GARDEN - DAY

Golden sun rays break through the leaves of the trees and glisten against the morning dew still fresh on the grass.

Mathilda leads Nash through the shrubbery. Federico paces back and forth behind them, he holds a folder.

NASH
Mathilda, I can't find Bill. I'm worried about him. And I still don't know who Deborah is or how to find her. Now is not a good time.

Mathilda hands Nash a syringe containing a BROWN LIQUID.

MATHILDA
I promised to help you... and I will. First things first.

Nash takes the syringe with a heavy hand - Should I do this?

MATHILDA
The trees need a human quality. They're metaphors for all the strong people in our lives.

Mathilda takes the folder from Federico, opens it.

MATHILDA

Fine. This is my memory garden.

Inside, are colorful sketches and designs of trees, shrubs and landscapes taking on HUMAN form.

Nash thumbs through it.

NASH

Are these real? I mean, the human elements.

MATHILDA

It's an art.

NASH

You're not serious.

MATHILDA

Don't take my glower for a grin.

Nash rushes away. Waves his arm.

NASH

You're fucking nuts.

Mathilda gestures at Federico. He passes a dart gun her way, she catches it, aims it at Nash fleeing haphazardly. Squeezes the trigger.

A dart wheezes through the air, hits Nash between the blades. He slowly comes to a standstill. Veins popping and red in the face, he turns around.

Mathilda tosses the dart gun to Federico, treads closer.

MATHILDA

Now, when I offered to help you. I didn't ask you if you were a drunk. I didn't ask if you were a fucking drug addict. No fucked up questions like that, now did I? No. All I did was propose a better way for you and Claire, and you agreed.

Nash fights the effects of the dart.

MATHILDA

A blend of Scopolamine and Mescaline is filling your blood as we speak. From now on you will be a good obedient dog. Whenever I want. Whatever I want, you'll do.

Federico giggles in the back.

NASH

This was not in the agreement.

MATHILDA

Nash, you should read your contracts better.

NASH

I'll go to the cops.

MATHILDA

You could but once they see you agreed to take full ownership of all and any materials used to design my garden. Putting your hands in cuffs will be high up on their checklist for the day.

NASH

You bitch.

MATHILDA

Ooh, it's working. They don't call it the truth serum for nothing.

Nash blinks, shaking his head.

MATHILDA

I know, sometimes the right thing can feel wrong. Just think about it, before the Police and old Bill can find out about your illegal gig on the sly, it'll be done.

Mathilda hands him a pair of gloves.

MATHILDA

Remember, out by sunset. Don't want you to fall asleep when it wears off and have the squirrels feed on your sexy ass. I'll do that. Now, pull those gloves on.

Nash pulls the gloves over his hands.

MATHILDA

I need all branches and plants to take on the human form. If you need any specific elements or gear, Federico is at your service.

Federico rolls his eyes.

MATHILDA

Oh, and Nash, whatever you do...
Stay clear of the prickly bushes.
You do not want to get scratched.

Mathilda points to a clump of bushes.

Nash tramples over to a lush bush and kneels down to work. He shakes his head, squints.

Between the long grass, Nash spots a BLOODSTAINED CELL PHONE... Takes it. He mumbles...

NASH

Maybe hock this for some cash.

LATER

Nash's eyes are red, watery, the arteries visible. Eyelids tremble, like a zombie.

He prunes and manipulates the twigs into a position.

Nash digs both hands deep into the soil, scrubs it closer, he digs a hole. His teeth clenched, Nash, aware of the SEVERED HUMAN ARM WITH A TATTOO he scrapes closer.

Bringing his hand up to cover his mouth, Nash fits the arm against the shrubbery, drives a thick needle with a wire attached through it.

With dead eyes, he secures it.

EXT. NASH'S HOUSE - GARDEN - NIGHT

Next to the bicycle, Nash sits on the steps with his cell to his ear. Stares at the picture of Claire and her mother, Emily. His eyes, red and teary. Nose full of white powder. He puts the photo back in his pocket.

CLAIRE (V.O.)

Hello? Dad? Can you hear me?

Next to him lies a handwritten document, the bloodstained cell phone he found and an empty sachet of cocaine.

Nash kills the call, pounds his fist against his forehead.

His phone vibrates, the screen lights up with the name of the caller: 'BUNNY RABBIT'

Nash hurls the phone into the Koi pond.

JOSH (O.S.)
Did Bill take a look at this?

Nash startles at Josh's apparition. So real the boy could've been there in the flesh.

Nash shakes his head.

JOSH
You could've typed it out.

NASH
It holds the same dominion in the court of law.

JOSH
And Frank?

NASH
Selling the company will fix this.

Josh throws his head back in laughter, shakes his head.

JOSH
Ooh, now Claire can follow her childhood dream.

NASH
Shut the fuck up.

JOSH
You've always loved playing the little victim.

NASH
Everyone makes mistakes.

Nash huffs into the garden.

Josh fades away and... Bill appears in his place.

BILL
Clearly, my accounting skills needed sharpening.

Nash stops, turns back. His eyes lock on his brother's apparition.

Realizing, sadness and shock set in. Nash falls to his knees, gives a gut wrenching howl.

NASH
What the fuck? No, no, no! Bill?

Bill smiles, hands back the document.

BILL

You remember when Claire nearly drowned? The first thing she said to you when she finally woke up was, Daddy...

NASH

... Was that a performance or what?

BILL

I should've added crack consumption to the budget.

NASH

A duchess in dangerous waters. Great character. Great plot.

BILL

The situation became too real.

Bill gives a half-hearted shrug.

NASH

When they rushed her through that clinic, I --

BILL

-- I cut off your balls and they never grew back.

NASH

I was convinced that would be the last time I'd see her.

BILL

I never should've buried that Collins kid.

Nash snaps a glare at Bill's ghost.

BILL

I said, I'll take care of it!

NASH

Hey, him and his buddies forced me to eat homemade biscuits with their juvenile masturbation on it!

Bill yawns.

BILL

Childhood secrets.

NASH

He was the size of a truck. What was I supposed to do?

BILL

Drugs wipe his face from your mind?

NASH

I see him every time I design, Bill. That is why. Now you know.

Nash takes out the picture of Claire and Emily.

Nostrils flare, Nash jabs the photo in Bill's face.

NASH

Emily had bruises! She never had bruises!

Bill is quiet. A sadness rests on his face.

BILL

Well, when your husband doesn't make you feel better his drugs will do the job.

NASH

Someone fed her those drugs and it wasn't me.

Jaw jutting, knuckles white, Nash attacks the plants. One by one, he pulls them out of the ground. SCREAMS.

BILL

Go after your bullies. Sell the company or whatever you do these days to feel strong.

NASH

Who did this to you?!

BILL

I don't care about your drug fixes, or that someone is trying to steal the business.

NASH

Who the fuck did this to you?

BILL

From now on you're on your own.

Bill's eyes brim with tears.

NASH
Bill! Please...

They stare at each other. Bill walks away.

BILL
The kid's right. Go back to the
start...

NASH
I can't let you go.

Bill's deaf to Nash's outcry.

Skin flushed, Nash makes a run at Bill, throws himself onto him. Bill fritters into thin air.

Nash flies through the air, slams into the porch, hard.

The pain snaps Nash back to reality. He rolls over, breathes heavy, groans.

EXT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - MAIN BEDROOM - NIGHT

Candles light up the space. BOOKS, memorabilia, and photos crowd the room.

Mathilda kisses a naked, PETE KENNEDY, 45, a big shot film producer, twisted in the bedding.

Mathilda disturbs his slumber, gives a naked, post shower performance and hums, 'WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE'.

She shakes a towel through her hair when her eye catches the golden photo frame next to the bed.

Remembering, Mathilda stares at the photo, then at herself naked in the mirror. She touches a small Water Lily tattoo on her shoulder.

Mathilda glances at the movie poster on the opposite wall.

ON POSTER: 'A REDHEAD GIRL WITH FRECKLES FOLDING HER ARMS'

Above her, the headline reads: "MATHILDA IVY SAVES THE WORLD."

Mathilda pulls gardening gloves from the drawer, steps close to a potted plant on the bedside table.

Pete stretches out, a loud yawn escapes his mouth, he adjusts his manhood, ogles Mathilda, releases his husky morning voice.

PETE

Hey, I needed this... But does he
have to watch? It's disconcerting.

Gloves now on, Mathilda kneads the dirt. She brings it close
to her nose, smells the fresh soil.

MATHILDA

I found our actress. She's green
but you'll love her.

A light reflects off a camera lens in the corner.

EXT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - LUSH GARDEN - DAY

A squirrel plummets to the ground, squirms with a feathery
dart in its tiny body.

Federico rushes close, stomps on the animal.

MATHILDA

This won't even put a tooth fairy
to sleep.

Mathilda plucks the feathery dart from the dead animal.

MATHILDA

What makes me more successful than
other actresses?

Federico puts the squirrel in a duffel bag.

MATHILDA

I accept the spotlight. Not as a
blinding piece of equipment, but as
a sun shining on me, bringing me to
life.

Intoxicated, Nash staggers from the shrubbery.

Federico brings Nash another plant - a prickly bush.

MATHILDA

Careful!

Mathilda tornados closer, grabs the plant from Federico. She
scratches herself with its prickly leaves by accident.

MATHILDA

Now look what you've done!

Mathilda aims the dart gun at Federico. He freezes.

FEDERICO

Lo siento. Lo siento. I'm sorry!

Mathilda doubles over, hands clamp over her stomach.

Federico runs away, frightened out of his mind.

In a daze, Nash gets the plant into the soil.

Mathilda crawls close, mumbles, foam spittles from her mouth.

MATHILDA

Help. Nash... the tea, help me.

Nash rushes close, scoops Mathilda up in his arms and stumbles into the open.

He notices the two tombstones and the massive tree with splints, like someone has busted from it, between them.

He shouts, speech slurred.

NASH

Fed... Federico!

Nash struggles through shrubbery toward the mansion, loads Mathilda into her...

CAR

After a false start, Nash gets the ignition started. The tires shoot gravel as he whirls the car out of the drive-way, side-swipes the gate.

INT. CLINIC - RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT

Inebriated, Nash carries Mathilda to the reception.

NURSES pull Mathilda from Nash's arms. Delirious...

NASH

Please help! She drowned. She's only three.

Heads tilting, the Nurses lift Mathilda onto a gurney.

Mathilda smiles at Nash as she's taken away to the emergency.

Nash staggers to the flustered receptionist. He waves Bill's phone wildly.

NASH

Phone charger... I need a phone
charger...

Receptionist hesitates, nod, hands him a charger.

Nash plugs in the bloodied phone he found in the garden. He
waits. It powers on.

NASH

Fuck!

Muttering to himself, Nash flicks at the device, scrolls
through Bill's photo gallery.

RECEPTIONIST

Everything all right?

Eyelids stiff at the cell phone screen, Nash freezes. A
sudden coldness that hits at the core.

NASH

You motherfucker.

A selfie picture of Bill and Mathilda, naked, side by side.

INT. CLINIC - EMERGENCY - NIGHT

The heart monitor flat lines.

The Nurse places the ventilator over Mathilda's mouth and
gives it a squeeze.

An INTERN continues with chest compressions. One, two, three.

The commotion stops. Everyone exhausted. Nurses stare at the
Intern. He does a sternal rub and assess Mathilda's pupils.

Intern exhales, shaking.

INTERN

Death verified at...

Gasping a lung full for air, Mathilda jumps awake.

The medics stare. Slack jawed.

INT. CLINIC - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Passed out in one of the chairs, Nash receives a tap on the
shoulder. He surfaces.

NASH
Is she okay?

INTERN
Miss Ivy is fine, sir. She left
last night and told us not to wake
you. She asked us to give you this.

Intern hands Nash a note.

Nash opens the paper and reads: 'THANKS, I OWE YOU'

Nash feels at his pockets.

INTERN
Miss Ivy took them.

NASH
The keys? She left me here?

Nash spots the clock on the wall.

INTERN
Sir. We found a substance in her
blood that caused a healing
reaction to the poison.

NASH
What poison?

INTERN
The scratch on her arm had elements
of steroid alkaloids. Toxic
extracts from veratrum, a poisonous
plant. Were you aware of this?

Nash shakes his head.

INTERN
The nurses informed me you
mentioned Miss Ivy drowned when you
brought her in yesterday? But there
were no traces of Pulmonary edema.

NASH
Pulmonary...

INTERN
No excess fluid on the lungs.

Nash swallows, suddenly legs it to the exit, leaves the
Intern aghast.

Nash stops at a noticeboard. It's filled with images of young people. The headline reads: 'STUDENTS MISSING'

Nash struggles to focus. He sees a TATOO, it looks familiar.

EXT. CLINIC - PARKING LOT - DAY

Nash searches through the parking bays - *no car!*

Nash kicks at the gravel.

INT. SECLUDED DEMOLISHED BUILDING - DAY

Foliage covers the once barren dilapidated walls. Lush.

Looking out over the horizon, Nash stands on the fourteenth floor at the very spot Josh tripped and fell.

Dropping his eye-line, Nash notices Josh's grave, between the lush bedding of greens. Coated in hundreds of Water Lilies growing through the wet soil.

SYRETIA (O.S.)

Do you know Vincent Shoals... Arnie
Brett... and...

Nash ignores her.

SYRETIA (O.S.)

Look at me. Do you know them? There
are others. They were classmates. I
think you and Frank could be in
danger. What I don't know is how
Bill fits into all this.

NASH

I don't know anything. I haven't
seen my mates in a long time.

Nash turns to look at her.

Frustrated...

SYRETIA (O.S.)

Is Mathilda running her own
swingers club?

Nash spins around.

SYRETIA

We never finished our conversation.

Syretia steps closer, real slow.

Nash glances down the fourteenth floor at the earth below.

SYRETIA
Enjoy long walks?

NASH
It gives perspective. Emancipation.

SYRETIA
You mind if I ask you a few
questions, Mr. Fox?

NASH
You followed me all this way, for a
couple of questions?

SYRETIA
You work for Mathilda Ivy?

NASH
No.

SYRETIA
Why did you take her to the clinic?

NASH
She's fine now.

SYRETIA
Do you know if your brother had any
relations with Mathilda? What about
your former classmates?

Nash thinks for a second, opens his mouth as if to say something but doesn't. He shrugs.

SYRETIA
Have you talked to Bill?

NASH
Not lately.

SYRETIA
You've been in her house?

NASH
Look we're just friends, Detective.
She fainted. And I drove her there.
She's better now. That's all.

SYRETIA
She left you at the clinic?

NASH
I wanted to walk.

SYRETIA
Anything out of the ordinary at
Mathilda's? Something that you
noticed? Strange? You seem to be in
the middle of things...

Nash scratches his arm.

SYRETIA
Let me give you a ride.

Nash goes for the staircase.

Syretia blocks his way.

SYRETIA
I can always use an inside eye.

NASH
I appreciate the chat, Detective.

SYRETIA
Keep your eyes open. Watch your
back. Mr. Fox. Something is wrong
at the Collins'.

Nash stops in his tracks, darts a look at Syretia.

NASH
What did you say?

SYRETIA
Something is sour at that mansion.
Are you sure you wanna walk?

Nash steps away when Bill's phone RINGS. The ring pierces through the conversation. Nash retrieves the cell phone from his pocket. Mathilda's name flashes on the display.

Nash spins, throws his chin over both shoulders checks the parameters.

SYRETIA
You're gonna get that?

NASH
No, I'm okay. Thanks.

SYRETIA
Does her husband like to watch?

RING.

NASH
I gotta go.

SYRETIA
You mind if I pop in at some point?

Nash shrugs.

Syretia reaches out, hands him her card.

SYRETIA
Three's always a crowd, Mr. Fox.

Syretia turns, descends down the concrete staircase.

RINGING.

Nash waits for Syretia to disappear down a couple of floors, he holds the phone to his ear.

NASH
Mathilda?

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - LOUNGE - DAY

Mathilda lies on the couch like she's keeping up with the Kardashians. Her underwear soft against her skin. Clutches at her chest.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

MATHILDA
Nash? Is that you?

NASH
Glad you're feeling better.

MATHILDA
How? Why do you have Bill's cell?

NASH
I thought you could tell me.

Nash swallows, glares down the staircase.

MATHILDA
Well, tell him to call me back, will you?

NASH
Was he working for you?

MATHILDA
I need to talk to him.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Nash walks in, police tape waves in the open doorway behind him.

The place is a mess, thoroughly tossed in the search.

NASH
Bill, where are you? What were you
working on?

Nash wanders around the place. He sees books on POISONOUS FLORA AND FAUNA, scattered on the floor from the police search. They are the same titles he saw at Mathilda's.

He stacks them up. Sees their school year book. Nash thumbs through it. Stops at a long forgotten photo of the high school horticultural group.

Standing proudly next to Nash is his brother and behind them are the missing high school mates Syretia mentioned. He slams the book down.

His foot slides on handouts scattered on the floor. He reads out loud...

NASH
Depression management. Group
sessions help to connect us to
ourselves so we know we aren't alone.

On the edge there is a scribbled name.

INSERT: EMILY!?!? MATHILDA?

NASH
What the hell is this all about
Bill?

There's a shimmer behind him but Bill refuses to be seen.

INT. NASH'S HOUSE - DINING AREA

Nash holds the depression pamphlet and dials.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - TOOL SHED - DAY

Nash towels his wet hair, eyes the opposite locker door and the shed entrance. He searches through Federico's belongings.

Nash discovers a KEY between the IMMIGRATION MANUALS at the bedside table.

Using the key, Nash unlocks the locker and opens it to scads of dollar bills and a picture collage of Mathilda and Federico getting married.

Nash notices a hard drive which is marked: 'M & B'

He checks his blind spot, he takes the drive.

Dried drops of blood on the wooden floor panels lead his eyes to a rope looping through a floorboard. It looks like a handle of some sorts!

Lips part slightly, Nash moves over to the floorboard, pulls at the rope. It's a trapdoor!

A gasp of wonder, about to descend, he hears FOOTSTEPS crunch closer outside.

A headache pierces Nash, forces his eyes to close. He drops the trapdoor and scoots back to the lockers. He locks the locker again, hides the key in the bed.

Federico steps in, quiet, with a duffle bag under his shoulder. Dumps it with a THUD.

Federico notices Nash on the bed, massaging the crown on his forehead. He preps a full glass of water with two tablets, hands it to Nash.

Nash covers the hard drive.

FEDERICO
Drink up. It'll help with the dome
dingers.

Nash swallows down the pills.

Federico empties the duffle bag on the floor. A bunch of dead squirrels heap up.

Nash spots a new gold necklace around Federico's neck.

NASH
Where did you get that?

FEDERICO
It's a gift from Mathilda.

NASH
And the watch on the bedside table?
Also a gift? And the *small pot of*
gold in your locker?

Federico gestures to the knife on the sideboard. Eyes Nash.

Nash catches on, hands the knife to Federico, spots
Federico's ring-less finger.

Federico guts open a squirrel.

NASH
You're married to Mathilda?

Federico glances over to the entrance, sits down next to
Nash, tears at the skin of the dead squirrel.

FEDERICO
Whatever my business with Mathilda,
doesn't concern you.

NASH
Did you know my brother?

FEDERICO
Brother?

NASH
Bill Fox.

Federico glares at Nash.

FEDERICO
Read about him online. The news.

Federico retrieves a handheld blow torch from his locker. He
grills one of the skinned squirrels, holds it by its tail.

NASH
Were there landscapers before me?

FEDERICO
You must leave. Salir. Go!

Federico in Nash's face with the torch, nibbles at the
grilled squirrel.

NASH
Federico, how many?

Federico jumps onto Nash, hand on his throat pins him down on the bed.

FEDERICO

Gringo! Stop digging, or I will go to the cops and tell them all about your shady business. Comrender?

Federico slowly releases his grip around Nash's neck.

NASH

You don't have papers, do you?

Nash's phone RINGS. He steps away.

NASH

Hello? Yes, thank you for calling me back. I wanted to talk to you about someone who attended your depression group therapy.

He waits.. nods...

NASH

Yes, I understand the confidentiality of your group. But you see it's about Emily Fox. She... she was my wife. I just need some closure.

Nash paces around the room.

NASH

What can you tell me? Anything? What do you mean she was being sponsored by a celebrity. Can you tell me the celebrity's name?

Nash looks over at Federico, who is busy with his squirrels.

Nash goes pale.

NASH

I'm sorry can you tell me that name again? Thank you.

Nash's hand falls to his side.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - LOUNGE - NIGHT

Nash sits on one of the chairs. Next to him, a perfectly dressed Pete adjusts his crotch.

Mathilda applauds at Claire in a stunning dress atop a makeshift stage on a large dining table taking a bow.

Outside, Federico lurks at the window. Unnoticed by the others inside. He lowers the video camera.

Nash helps Claire off the table.

MATHILDA

The time with me really helped.

Pete gives a click of his tongue.

PETE

(to Claire)

I must commend you on a solid delivery.

Pressing his lips tight, Nash eyes Pete.

NASH

You should go to school first.

MATHILDA

Those classes can ruin one's wallet.

Mathilda plucks out a screenplay while sipping at tea.

MATHILDA

I have the script. And the money.

PETE

I'm afraid she's not the right fit for our film.

MATHILDA

I want Claire. She will make a great villain.

Claire smiles from ear to ear. Her eyes sparkle at Nash.

NASH

Wait, I thought you said damsel in distress? I don't think so.

PETE

She's a great actress but she needs more experience.

NASH

Claire is more of a good character.

Mathilda holds both of Claire's hands.

MATHILDA

These days people throw a tantrum
in a bank and they're an actress.

NASH

(to Claire)

What about your interview at the
conservatory?

Claire whips a stare at him and Mathilda burns at him with a
silent confidence.

MATHILDA

Shouldn't you be sober to attend?

Nash holds his breath.

MATHILDA

Your cognitive capacity is way over
compromised. In plain terms, you're
an embarrassment. Do you want to
embarrass your daughter?

Nash sighs, notices something outside at the window.

Mathilda vices Nash's chin, steers his eyes back to her.

MATHILDA

I'll. Be. Her coach.

CLAIRE

Miss Ivy...

MATHILDA

Oh, please. Mathilda is fine.

CLAIRE

I appreciate all you've done, but I
want this interview.

Mathilda's face drops.

Nash smirks at Mathilda, glances at Claire.

MATHILDA

What? The boys bang their chests
again and you retreat to your hut?

NASH

Return the dress. We're leaving.

Claire exits the room.

Outside, Federico follows Claire into the other room and steadies the camera onto his shoulder.

Nash glares at Pete.

NASH
I'll be outside!

Pete waits for Nash to exit before moving to Mathilda.

PETE
She has potential, but it needs refining. Maybe next time, kid.

Pete leans in close to Mathilda, whispers.

PETE
I can come over tonight?

He kisses Mathilda on the cheek.

Emotionless, Mathilda whispers.

MATHILDA
You've ruined me, Pete.

PETE
You sunk your own ship.

Smirking, Pete turns and saunters out.

Mathilda's eyes shoot daggers into his back.

Claire moves closer with the dress, hands it to Mathilda.

MATHILDA
It's yours.

Claire stares at the floor as her demeanor sags. Quiet.

Mathilda examines Claire's troubled behavior.

MATHILDA
What's the matter? Talk to me.

Mathilda sits Claire down.

MATHILDA
You know you can talk to me.

Claire's eyes brim with tears.

MATHILDA
Whatever it is...

CLAIRE
I'm... I'm pregnant.

Mathilda's face drops. Then a warm smile colors her face. She leads Claire by the hand to her...

BEDROOM

She pulls a sonar picture of a fetus from her diary and shows it to Claire.

Mathilda rubs her stomach, takes a sip from the glass of tea on her bedside table. She hides the pain.

Claire notices a golden picture frame.

IN PHOTO: A plump Josh Collins, 13, piggybacking a FRECKLE-FACED GIRL, 16.

Claire stares at it.

MATHILDA
My brother, Josh.

CLAIRE
Cute.

MATHILDA
Come with me.

Hesitant, Claire follows Mathilda into the...

BATHROOM

Mathilda turns the hot water faucet in the shower. Disappears into the Walk-in-Closet and steps out bending a wire hanger.

She manipulates the hanger until it's long and forces it into Claire's hand.

MATHILDA
Stand under the shower. The heat will make it less painful.

Claire feels at the hanger between her fingers.

MATHILDA
You want a career. I understand and so will it. Your career can't be polluted by the rotten flesh of unwanted fruit. It's for the best.

Claire's entire body tremors.

MATHILDA

Nash will never know our secret.

Smiling, Mathilda opens the shower door. The steam escapes. She holds out her hand to Claire.

Shaking, Claire strips and takes Mathilda's hand and steps into the steaming shower.

Claire clutches the wire hanger in her fist.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Mathilda whips her head to the sound of the knocking.

MATHILDA

I'll get that.

Mathilda holds Claire's hands, kisses her forehead.

MATHILDA

There's no rush.

Mathilda disappears through the bathroom door, closes it.

BEDROOM

With her back to the wall, Mathilda flicks a light off.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

There is a glimmer of a light that shines through a crack in the wall before it goes out.

The door opens, Nash peeks in. He scans the room then enters.

Mathilda sashays out of the dark corner, holds a couple of prickly leaves with a pair of gloves.

MATHILDA

Stay the night.

Nash hesitates.

NASH

I'm not your first, am I?

Mathilda shoots him a glare.

NASH

How do you know Bill?

Mathilda throws her head back in a bray of laughter.

Snapping at Mathilda, Nash points to the garden below.

NASH

I don't know what you're up to. All
the shit you have me do down there.
But I'm done. Am I clear?

Mathilda holds out the plant.

MATHILDA

Veratrum... on steroids. Something
in my garden acts as the catalyst
for its poisonous density.

NASH

I know what that is.

MATHILDA

Good. Then you should also know
that this is what killed me. Well
sort of. Taste it.

She holds the leaf closer to Nash.

NASH

You poisoned yourself?

MATHILDA

I needed to be sure that what's out
there can be controlled. A true
artist suffers for their art.

Frowning, Nash glares at Mathilda.

MATHILDA

Nash, you need to be familiar with
the garden if you're going to
transform my --

NASH

-- I'm done Mathilda. I quit.

Nash reaches for the door.

Mathilda rams her hands into the door, slams it shut before
Nash can get out.

She storms over to a file cabinet, pulls out one folder then
the next, tosses them at Nash, one by one.

MATHILDA

I told you. I'm making a film.
These are all cadavers ineffective
for medical studies.

Nash gathers the papers from the floor. The documents are profiles of deceased people. A big red stamp of release from the University's medical faculty on all the papers.

MATHILDA

The university agreed to donate the
bodies if I mention each one of
them in the film credits.

Nash hands back the files, voice cracks...

NASH

This is all legal?

Mathilda wraps her arms around Nash, holds her chin tight to Nash's chest.

Mathilda sneaks the leaf into her mouth... chews on it.

MATHILDA

I know this might be outlandish but
I can't lose you now. You're the
best and the only one that can make
this work. The movie needs you.
Claire needs you. I, need you.

Nash squirms and sighs...

A moment of silence.

MATHILDA

Kiss me.

Mathilda gently releases her firm embrace, stares into Nash's eyes. Teasing, she bites her lip...

... Nash leans in, kisses Mathilda.

Suddenly, Nash's body tremors, drops to his knees while foam escapes the corners of his mouth. He wraps his arms around his stomach.

MATHILDA

Besides, as sole investor of
Foxscape and like the company
policy accentuates...

Mathilda kneels down next to him. Kisses him passionately, licks his mouth clean. Nash's veins swell from discomfort.

MATHILDA

I want my architects to be well
informed when working with
dangerous plants.

Stiffening, Nash convulses.

Mathilda patiently pours a glass from a canister, takes a
pair of scissors.

MATHILDA

I'm spending good money.

She kneels, loosens the bandage around the gash in his arm
and parts the scissor blades.

Cutting into Nash's wound, Mathilda pours the tea over it.
The reaction to the poisonous leaf subsides. Mathilda rubs
the juice on her lips, leans in kisses Nash.

He pushes away.

MATHILDA

And that, my sweet Nash, is how I
survived. Drink enough of my tea
beforehand and it's like a savings
account. An anti-venom... Now, will
you stay?

INT. BATHROOM

Claire wipes steam from the mirror and stares at her
reflection, tears stream down her face.

She looks at the hanger in her hand, throws it across the
room.

She picks up her clothes and rushes from the room.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - BEDROOM

Nash leans in, kisses Mathilda again when he sees Claire at
the door. Their eyes meet like a ton of bricks.

Claire storms out, SLAMS the door.

NASH

Claire!

Nash runs after her.

Mathilda laughs after Nash as he stumbles in pursuit.

EXT. NASH'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Nash rests the bicycle against the wall, pulls a NOTE from the door before he enters.

Uncomfortable, Nash rubs his stomach. Blood seeps through the bandage on his lower arm.

He takes a sip from a flask, pulls out his cell phone and dials... BUNNY RABBIT lights up, it rings and rings... goes to voice mail.

Nash runs his fingers through his hair... hangs up.

INT. NASH'S HOUSE - EMPTY ROOM - NIGHT

Nash rolls around grips his stomach, shivers.

He reaches for his laptop and connects it to the hard drive, 'M & B' Searching, Nash clicks on the latest file.

A VIDEO pops up: Mathilda and Bill in the throws of sex.

Nash spots a gold necklace around Bill's neck, like the one Federico wore earlier.

Nash gulps from the flask of ice tea.

Nash opens the note he found on the front door. It's from Claire, handwritten.

CLAIRE (V.O.)

Daddy, I'm worried about you. Can we meet up before we go to the conservatory? There is something important I have to tell you. Love you, Claire.

Three KNOCKS echo from the front door. Nash sits up. He waits. Did he hear it? It's quiet. Then a jiggle at the back door. He can feel his heart skipping a beat.

Out of no-where a series of TAPS against the window.

Nash stuffs Claire's note in his pocket.

Like a ghost, Frank cups his face against the glass.

FRANK

Hey! Nash! What the fuck? You're gonna open up or what?

INT. NASH'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Nash paces back and forth.

FRANK

You could've legally deleted your debts and kept your assets. Restart your financial life.

Holding a plastic cup, Frank hands Nash a letter.

FRANK

Why didn't you sign like I asked?

Frank's face drops.

FRANK

Oh no. You've taken another job.

Nash silent.

FRANK

You want the IRS adding to your mountain of debt when they find out? You know they will.

Frank sips from the ice tea, a lidded look of satisfaction.

NASH

This is a good gig, Frank.

FRANK

You're a real smart-aleck! You always color outside the lines.

NASH

Frank, you --

FRANK

-- You can still cancel, right? You have to cancel. You know what this means? It means, prison, Nash! You call the client and cancel, now.

NASH

I can't do that.

Frank pulls at his hair.

Nash holds his stomach, pretends the pain doesn't exist.

FRANK

You look like shit. Go to bed.

Tossing the cup at Nash, Frank kicks at the bicycle and leaves hurriedly.

NASH
Frank, wait!

Frank turns back.

NASH
I think... Bill is dead.

FRANK
You think? You think?

NASH
I found his phone, and I saw him.

FRANK
What do you mean you saw him?

A haunted look distorts Nash's face.

FRANK
Fuck me! You're serious. Have you told the police?

NASH
They cannot know about any of this, Frank. I need time to make sense of this. All of it.

FRANK
So who are you working for?

Sweating, Nash gives in with a cracking voice.

NASH
Mathilda Ivy.

Frank heads to the door, over his shoulder...

FRANK
Fuck me! You and your brother are both fucking cooked. Get out. Save yourself Nash.

Nash watches from the door as Frank rushes to his car, gets in, slams the door shut and drives off.

INT. FRANK'S COTTAGE - SUNROOM - NIGHT

Modest and cosy with a fireside chair as toddler toys, and Tupperware lie splashed around the room.

A line of Tudor style windows preserves the historic charm.

Framed, among the family photographs against the wall, a Juris Doctor degree certificate and a massive flat screen TV.

Frank types away at his keyboard, on a roll. The wind moans outside. He sips from a glass of red. CLACK!

A window slams shut. Frank SHRIEKS in fright, spills the wine all over the laptop.

FRANK

Fuck me!

He hurries the laptop to the...

KITCHEN

Grabs a dish towel and cleans the computer. Frank freezes. His legs ready to flee. Eyes fixed on the SHADOW that lurks in the door frame.

Three, two... ONE! Frank dashes out the kitchen, stumbles up the stairs and bashes the bedroom door closed behind him.

BEDROOM

Frank snatches a baseball bat from the corner, readies himself to hit a home run. He waits.

Breathes... Swallows. Ears perked, listen, all is quiet.

Blood trickles from Frank's nose onto the carpet. He feels at his nose, wipes it clean making even a bigger mess as fear sets in.

Frank feels at his neck, removes a dart, drops to his knees. Frank face plants and convulses.

Footsteps tromp closer. Two dirty, heavy duty boots stop next to Frank' face sinking away in a pool of crimson.

A hand wearing gardening gloves removes the small yellow feathery dart from Frank's palm. Garden shears appear...

EXT. FRANK'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Exhausted, Nash cycles up the driveway. He notices the front door ajar.

NASH

Frank!

INT. FRANK'S COTTAGE - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

A FIGURE drags Frank down the steps, peeks out the window.
Nash stumbles toward the front door.

INT. FRANK'S COTTAGE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Nash steps right in and examines the space. Quiet.

NASH

Frank? Let's talk about this.

Out of the dark, Frank's paralyzed body flies onto Nash takes him to the ground.

The figure jolts over them, escapes through the front door, runs into the night.

Nash rolls Frank over, gasps for air. There's blood everywhere, Frank's missing a finger.

Nash searches Frank's pockets.

NASH

Where's your cell phone?

Nash finds the phone, dials 9-1-1.

NASH

You're gonna be okay, Frank. It's gonna be okay.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - NIGHT

The doorbell RINGS.

FRONT DOOR

Mathilda opens it, but there's no-one. She notices a small gift wrapped box on the ground.

Mathilda picks up the box, slowly opens it, her eyes widen. She drops the package... Terror all over her face, replaced by hatred and anger.

MATHILDA

Federico, are you freelancing? That better not belong to Nash! I'm not done with him!

She steps back inside and SLAMS the door.

A SEVERED FINGER and a couple of laptop keys blotched with red wine, spill across the patio.

EXT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Nash presses the doorbell. No answer. He tries the handle. It's open! He slips in.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - LOUNGE - DAY

Nash catches Mathilda asleep on the couch like a hot online porn star. He gazes at her with a sultry indulgence.

Mathilda's underwear soft against her skin.

Nash glances at Mathilda's smooth legs.

He kneels next to Mathilda. The NOTE from Claire sticks from his pocket.

MATHILDA (O.S.)

Hey, Mr. Significant. You're significantly late.

Mathilda stretches and kicks off her slippers, wiggles her toes at him.

Nash moves to rub her feet but Mathilda snatches the NOTE from Nash's pocket, looks at it.

MATHILDA

Conservatory, nice. So she's going through with the interview.

Mathilda reaches for her car keys and tosses them to Nash, catching them.

MATHILDA

There's a couple of bucks in the glove compartment. It'll be enough to take her out for coffee before the interview.

NASH

Promise I won't smash it.

MATHILDA

Does Bill only do the books or does he like snipping shrubbery too?

NASH

You do watch the news, don't you? He ran. Don't know where he is.

MATHILDA

Having more hands on deck would --

Mathilda whips off the couch, strolls to the cupboard.

NASH

-- Would be more productive if I'm sober.

Nash notices Mathilda playing with a syringe in her hands. She holds it out to Nash.

MATHILDA

Your needle of endless creativity, Mr. Significant.

Nash has a gaze that flits around the room.

MATHILDA

Nash. Just take the syringe! Or do you want a dart in your ass?

NASH

Look, you explained to me what I need to do. It's okay. I'm good with whatever you arranged regarding the bodies and the University and...

Mathilda moves in real close to Nash, breathes in his neck, she gently places the syringe in his hand.

MATHILDA

It terrifies me that Claire might find out --

Nash jerks Mathilda's hand away.

MATHILDA

It's not okay to break the rules of the engagement. Let's not trick each other. Adhere to the agreement and this will all be worth it at the end.

Nash exhales, takes the syringe from her.

Staring at Mathilda, Nash inserts the needle into his own flesh, injects without a flinch.

EXT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - LUSH GARDEN - DAY

Nash's eyes are red and watery. Not all there. He pulls on a cable tie, secures a human head to a cavity in a trunk.

MATHILDA (O.S.)
Now, lift its arms and shape it.

Without wavering, Nash lifts chubby arms to take the shape of the branches.

MATHILDA (O.S.)
Wrap it.

Mathilda hands Nash a pick.

MATHILDA (O.S.)
Get the seeds in there.

He wraps it with mesh, holding pouches of soil against the dead cadaver's mounted arms. Nash pricks the pouches with the pick and works seedlings of flora into the dead flesh.

Holding a camera in the shrubbery behind him, Federico grins.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - TOOL SHED - DAY

Still dopey, Nash steps into the shower. The tap is high, the temperature, hot. He luxuriates in the steaming drizzle, unaware of Mathilda drifting in.

She touches his shoulder, which startles Nash.

MATHILDA
Relax. Think of Emily.

She massages his back, then his scalp. Nash gives in.

MATHILDA
How perfect she was.

Mathilda smears around Nash leaving no air between their bare bodies. She kisses him, brushes the inside of her leg up against his. The sheer amount of desire burns.

Mathilda peeks over Nash's shoulder at Federico with his video camera aimed at them. Federico steps inside, slips.

Nash whips around, makes eye contact with Federico who regains his balance.

MATHILDA
I'll be Emily for you.

Mathilda runs her hands over Nash's toned torso and guides back his chin to her, whispers.

MATHILDA
I'll tell the story the way I want.

And, closes Nash's eyes with her thumbs.

Nash swirls Mathilda around and pulls her into him with fierce passion.

Federico catches everything on camera.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Cheap benign prints of uplifting scenes don the magnolia colored walls.

Frank lies at an incline with dark circles under his eyes. He stares vacantly out the window. His voice cracks.

FRANK
Detective. If it wasn't for Nash
I'd be dead.

Detective Cooper stands at the foot of the bed, makes notes.

SYRETIA
You knew the consequences.

Frank swallows. His gaze scatters and bounces around.

SYRETIA
The court is firmly committed to
slam the hammer on both of them,
and this certainly won't --

FRANK
-- I'm a little run down,
detective. I need rest.

Frank sucks in his cheeks, blows out a noisy breath.

Making fists, Syretia speaks through her teeth.

SYRETIA
Where is Bill Fox?

FRANK

I know my rights, detective. Now, if you won't hand me the glass of water then I'm going to thank you for your time.

INT. NASH'S HOUSE - EMPTY ROOM - DAY

A loud BASH at the front door.

Bewildered, Nash jolts upright from the porcelain floor. Listens. Another BASH! Nash stumbles to the...

FRONT DOOR

And opens it.

A suited GUY thrusts a heavy document against Nash's chest.

GUY

You have twelve hours or we'll auction your ass with this place. Twelve hours!

NASH

You're really proud of your job.

GUY

Yeah. Sign right here.

Guy holds out a clipboard and pen.

Nash signs.

Guy hands Nash the document copy.

NASH

Kicking hardworking citizens when they're down? That's the line of work I want to be in.

With a vacant stare at Guy leaving, Nash lets out an uncontrolled moan.

EXT. NASH'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Nash snaps back to reality as Syretia shakes his shoulders.

SYRETIA

Nash! Wake up, Nash!

Pushing her back with rage-filled eyes, bouncing off the ground like a pinball, he lands on top of the detective.

Nash begins to release a series of punches at her face.

Covering herself, Syretia struggles for her taser-gun. Without hesitation, she jabs the nodes against Nash's neck.

ZZZZT!

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - HOLDING ROOM - DAY

Mathilda sits opposite Nash with Claire standing behind her.

NASH

What is she doing here?

Nash lifts his chin, straight at Claire's killer stare.

CLAIRE

You attacked a detective.

Mathilda moves in, rests her hand on Claire's shoulder.

CLAIRE

Where did you go last night? I waited for you at the conservatory. I wanted to talk to you.

Nash locks eyes with Mathilda.

MATHILDA

We have an agreement and I don't feel like I'm doing my part.

NASH

(to Mathilda)

I'll pay the debt I owe you.

CLAIRE

You always said there are consequences to our actions. What did you do?

NASH

(to Mathilda)

Leave her out of this.

Claire hides her warm sweaty hands.

MATHILDA

What's your story?

NASH

Not sure, you can handle my story.

CLAIRE

Why do you keep doing this to yourself?

Mathilda puts down a plastic folder, inside, the remains of a burnt document.

Nash studies the evidence, rolls his eyes.

NASH

Where did you get this?

Mathilda smiles at Claire.

Nash huffs at Claire.

NASH

How could you?

MATHILDA

Foxscape is in fact a signature away from bankruptcy.

Nash clenches his teeth.

MATHILDA

But what if the company is signed over to the main investor?

Claire places a new document before Nash.

CLAIRE

The detective dropped all charges.

MATHILDA

She had no right being on your property.

CLAIRE

You weren't coherent and you were only trying to defend yourself.

MATHILDA

All you need to do is sign on the dotted line.

NASH

Why?

MATHILDA
The dumb bitch had no search
warrant.

Nash sinks away in his chair.

CLAIRE
Dad, you're behind on work.

MATHILDA
Nash!

CLAIRE
Mathilda showed me the script.

MATHILDA
You're coming? Don't want you to
miss your daughter's audition.

NASH
What audition?

MATHILDA
For my film.

CLAIRE
The movie, it's great.

MATHILDA
She'd make a perfect damsel in --

NASH
-- Didn't you hear anything I said?

CLAIRE
It's written for me.

MATHILDA
I'm not losing my money.

NASH
Claire, you're not going back.
Surely, you can reschedule your
interview.

MATHILDA
You know, it's only a matter of
time before the truth comes out.

CLAIRE
You need to join a support group.

Nash's face drops.

CLAIRE
Dad, please, you're not coping.

MATHILDA
You know you have a seat reserved
in this mess and one signature can
clean the slate, so to speak.

Nash darts a stare at Claire, who wipes tears from her eyes.

MATHILDA
It's a win-win for everybody.

NASH
It's a lusty offer, but no.

CLAIRE
Mathilda could recover her losses.

Mathilda's face distorts with anger.

NASH
I will not put a foot in that shit
hole as long as I'm alive.

CLAIRE
What about your legacy?

NASH
Do you really think I'll sell out
my own company? Foxscape is
everything to me.

Mathilda smiles at Claire with the look of a fox.

MATHILDA
I'll grant you free living space
until you find your feet again.

NASH
Wait, what?

MATHILDA
Your mortgage consultant knows what
he's talking about.

NASH
You bought my house?

MATHILDA
It's a buyer's market. How could I
resist? It was a fair deal.

Claire's eyes brim with tears.

Nash stands, leaves Mathilda high and dry.

MATHILDA

You know Nash, they never did find that, what did you call him? Oh, yes, 'fat bully' who disappeared when you were kids.

Nash stops. Turns to Mathilda.

NASH

The Collins boy?

CLAIRE

Dad? What's going on? What boy?

NASH

(to Mathilda)

Who is he to you?

Mathilda rises from her chair.

MATHILDA

No one takes from me, Nash. Someone has to pay.

NASH

Deborah?

CLAIRE

Dad? What is she talking about?

Mathilda exits with a smirk.

MATHILDA

You have ten minutes to think it through Mr Fox. If you want freedom. You take it. But there's always a price. Finish my garden or rot in jail.

Claire gives Nash the stink-eye.

CLAIRE

What did you do?

NASH

(to Mathilda)

Who is he to you?!

Nash tosses the chair.

EXT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DETECTIVE COOPER'S OFFICE - DAY

Claire trails behind Mathilda.

CLAIRE
What did my father do?

MATHILDA
Men and their egos.

CLAIRE
You could've stopped him!

MATHILDA
I tried.

CLAIRE
Well, try again.

MATHILDA
Once his mind is set on something
there's no way getting that bull
back in its cage.

Claire pulls at Mathilda's arm which stops her in her tracks.

CLAIRE
He's an addict. Promise me, once
this job is complete you'll help
him.

Mathilda places her palm on Claire's chest.

MATHILDA
One day, these feelings will make a
big difference.

Claire's eyelids stiffen.

MATHILDA
Never forget, no matter what anyone
says, fathers are not replaceable.

Claire stone-faced, eyes tear up.

MATHILDA
He's doing this for you.

CLAIRE
And the Collins boy?

Mathilda's chin quivers.

MATHILDA
No need to dig up old hurts.

CAIRE
Did something happen?

MATHILDA
The terms and conditions of any partnership are between the parties involved.

CAIRE
I am involved!

MATHILDA
It's none of your fucking business!

CAIRE
It is my business, he's my father.

MATHILDA
You want to do something for him?

Claire nods.

MATHILDA
Then Act.

Mathilda smirks, straightens her jacket.

MATHILDA
You'll stay at my place tonight.

Mathilda takes Claire's arm, guides her back to her car.
Mathilda gives a triumphant smile at Claire's back.

EXT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - LUSH GARDEN - NIGHT

Nash stares as Pete gets in his car. Their eyes lock through the windshield, both stiffen. Pete waves to brake the awkwardness.

Nash checks his watch, scans the garden over his shoulder - did he hear something? He puts down his gear and heads in the direction of his curiosity.

Nash feels a grab at his shoulder, reacting with a backhand which sends Federico plummeting.

NASH
My god. You gave me a fright.

He helps Federico to his feet.

FEDERICO
Working hours are over.

Federico touches his bleeding lip.

NASH
May I ask you something?

FEDERICO
Whatever you're looking for, you
won't find it there.

NASH
Do you trust her?

FEDERICO
Not trusting only triples the time
it takes to get things done.

NASH
The other day at the clinic. There
was a board full of missing
persons. You wouldn't know anything
about that, now would you?

Federico shrugs.

NASH
Did you know my brother?

FEDERICO
Why would I know your brother?

NASH
Anything you can --

Federico lowers his voice.

FEDERICO
-- Get out while you can.

Nash grabs the flashlight from Federico's hand, rocketing
away into the garden. He runs fast.

Suddenly he throws his elbow over his face, breathing into
his elbow. Retching air.

Nash studies the plants and pokes against one. A dark jello
oozes from the stem. Nash grabs at his face pinching his
nose, heaving.

He notices a finger with a ring protruding from another stem.

Next to it, lies a decaying corpse of a fox entangled in the vines of a bush.

Footsteps rush closer.

FEDERICO (O.S.)

Nash! Nash! Hermano! That was a
tricky stunt you pulled back there.

Nash dashes to a thick tree and hides behind it. He switches off the flashlight, keeping his eyes vigilant.

Federico passes, clasping a dart gun, ready to take the shot.

Nash waits while Federico disappears in the shrubbery.

Nash steps away from the trunk, notices a glass bottle containing a dark rotten liquid in the fork of the tree.

Next to it a rusty wire hanger, crusted with dry blood.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Candles light up the entire room.

Mathilda sits on her bed, stares at the picture of the hefty boy and freckle face girl on her bedside table.

Mathilda reaches for a candle. She hovers her lower arm over it until the tip of the flame touches her skin.

MATHILDA

I will rise again, brother.

Mathilda's cheeks quake while tears stream down her face.

The water lily on her shoulder shudders with her tears.

EXT. CONSERVATORY - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Nash legs it and finds Claire waiting with other INTERVIEWEES, she's a wreck.

There's an urgency in Nash's voice.

NASH

Am I late?

Catching his breath.

NASH

Listen Claire, you need to get out.

CLAIRE
I'll be moving in with Mathilda.

Claire hands Nash a statement.

NASH
The conservatory?

CLAIRE
Mathilda paid for it.

Nash and Claire, oblivious to Federico lurking the corridor next door with his video camera locked on the two of them, recording.

NASH
Why do you let her plant shit in your mind?

CLAIRE
She has been nothing but kind.

Avoiding eye contact with other INTERVIEWEES, Claire stands.

NASH
I cooked the books, that way we looked good and I could pay for the drugs. I lied to everyone.

A LECTURER steps from the office and darts a glare at Claire.

LECTURER
This is not the time nor the place for domestics. Please leave.

Claire's chin dips to her chest, she rushes out.

Nash follows.

CORRIDOR

Nash blocks her way, holds her shoulders but Claire fights Nash's grip.

NASH
I lied to you.

CLAIRE
Let me go! You're hurting me!

Federico lowers the camera, hides behind a pot plant and gazes at the two.

NASH
I can be better. I can be who you
want me to be, for you.

CLAIRE
Lies are truths we wish to hear.

Claire pushes him out of her way.

Nash watches in dismay as Claire storms down the corridor.

EXT/INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - TOOL SHED - NIGHT

Nash knocks on the door. Knocks again, louder and harder.

Federico opens the door.

NASH
Tell me about Bill.

Nash grabs Federico. They wrestle in through the door.

Nash plunges his hands onto Federico's chest, plucks him upright, puffing in his face.

NASH
I found his phone. There are human
parts in the fucking trees and I as
hell, didn't put them there.

Nash pushes Federico back.

NASH
Son of a fuck! How many before me?

Federico grabs his laptop, opens it and shows Nash a video.

FEDERICO
Security footage.

VIDEO SHOWS: 'BILL MOUNTING VICTIMS INTO THE SOIL AND TREES'

Posture stiffening, Nash engrosses himself in the video.

Federico aims a dart gun at Nash.

FEDERICO
Press the enter button.

Nash does.

FEDERICO
Now, the number five.

The current video stops and a second video pops up. It's an edited scene...

BEGIN VIDEO - EXT. LUSH GARDEN - BONSAI CEMETARY - NIGHT

CHIRPING CRICKETS. Serenity. A home for squirrels. Branches RATTLE, they scatter.

Rushing footsteps. SHORT OF BREATH PANTING. Then... SILENCE.

Moonlight prisms onto two tombstones. Beside them, a tree trunk quivers with sharp splints sticking out like deadly giant thorns.

At once, Bill escapes from within the tree trunk, splintering it into a thousand pieces. His gold necklace snags and snaps loose from around his neck.

Blood sucking leeches lodge on to Bill's skin.

Bill searches every shadow, cowers, he huddles, dials Nash's number. It rings... then dead.

BILL

Nash, I swear I'll...

Then he taps 9-1-1. Dials.

Blood drips onto the keypad. More blood trickles from his nose, the flow escalates. He stumbles to his knees.

A feathery dart pierces Bill's neck. Eyelids flutter, he flops forward into the soil, dead.

It's a hidden camera focused on a human arm mounted into a plant. Dark fluid oozes from it and drips to the ground.

END VIDEO.

Nash's face turns a whiter shade of pale, stupefied with horror.

FEDERICO

You must stop your digging. I'll take that to the cops.

Federico watches the time, gun still aimed at Nash.

FEDERICO

I will keep your secret, if you keep secret about what she's doing.

NASH

Mathilda said the university
donates their cadavers.

Tossing his head, Federico laughs.

FEDERICO

Whatever you say, man.

Nash wipes his face, staring at Federico.

FEDERICO

Look, I have to get my papers.
Until then, it doesn't matter where
or how she gets her props.

Fidgety, he checks the time.

FEDERICO

If something happens to Mathilda --

Nash rams into Federico, grabs at the phone protruding from
his pocket, but misses.

In one motion, Federico grabs Nash in a headlock.

Nash raises his arms, fakes surrender, with a whip fast
motion, he jolts his head back onto Federico's nose.

Federico grabs at his face, bleeding all over while Nash
frisks his pocket, snatches the cell phone.

Nash retrieves Detective Cooper's business card, dials.

Nash flicks the card at Federico's blood soaked chest. It
lands on the ground. Federico's eyes lock on the card. He
lifts the dart gun, pulls the trigger.

Nash takes a dart in the chest, stumbles. He pulls at the
curtains but rips it apart. Nash drops to the floor.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - EDITING SUITE - NIGHT

A computer screen plays an interview, ZNN displays in the
corner of the screen. A young brush cut boy talks into a ZNN
media branded microphone.

YOUNG BILL

He was a fat bully and probably
deserved what happened to him.

The screen goes static... Mathilda's hand restarts it.

YOUNG BILL

He was a fat bully and probably
deserved what happened to him.

Glaring at the screen, Mathilda hunkers at an alloy desk,
drops a SEVERED TONGUE into a little gift box. She examines a
movie budget with line items crossed out in red.

She ties the box neatly with a ribbon. Precise. Then wipes
the dried blood from the alloy top with a wet cloth.

Federico barges in.

FEDERICO

It's okay. He's sleeping.

MATHILDA

What did you do?

Silent, Federico stares at her.

MATHILDA

What did you do?

FEDERICO

He was going to call the cops.

Mathilda cups his chin with her bloodstained hands.

MATHILDA

You better pray he wakes up.

They kiss passionately and she shows him the ribboned box.

Federico takes it.

MATHILDA

Please leave the ribbon. You can't
do ribbons for shit.

Federico nods.

MATHILDA

All set for the pick up later?

Nods again.

MATHILDA

Get your camera.

Mathilda grabs a canister of tea on her way out.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - TOOL SHED - NIGHT

Mathilda tornados in, slams the door shut behind. Nash's eyes jump open, struggles awake... squints.

Mathilda holds the canister to Nash's lips, he sips.

NASH

Claire...

MATHILDA

Get your ass ready there's a movie to be made.

Pale as a ghost, Nash's legs buckle as he steadies himself against the wall. He staggers to the...

SINK

Turns the faucet, gulps the water and splashes his face.

There's a shimmer behind Nash. Vincent Shoals appears... he points at his mouth. Nash closes his eyes. Shakes his head.

MATHILDA (O.S.)

You're on shit street. No car. No house. No wife. You need me.

Outside, a VEHICLE comes to a halt on the gravel.

SHED

Mathilda and Federico cut their eyes at each other.

Federico grabs his camera, films as Nash stumbles back in, drops to all fours. He crawls a couple of strokes and falls flat at Mathilda's feet, holds his chest.

Mathilda kneels beside Nash, holds him and cries.

MATHILDA

I'll be the water to Claire's seed.
I'll push her to grow and blossom.

Outside, footsteps crunch closer.

MATHILDA

She'll become an independent woman...

Mathilda spots a feathery dart on the carpet. She goes to pick it up when...

Nash's whole body moves like a jack hammer.

Just then, Syretia steps in, aghast at the scene.

Mathilda continues while Federico moves around them with camera on his shoulder.

MATHILDA
... I'll be her inspiration.

Syretia kneels down, attends to Nash.

MATHILDA
And... cut.
(to Syretia)
You mind?

Federico stops recording but Nash's convulsions don't.

MATHILDA
He was fine a moment ago.

Syretia notices the dart on the floor, picks it up and rolls it between her fingers.

SYRETIA
Let me guess, a prop?

MATHILDA
I've never seen that before.

Mathilda glares at Federico. He shrugs.

SYRETIA
He's going into shock.

Syretia slides the feathery dart into her pocket.

SYRETIA
We have to get him to a hospital.

Syretia pulls Nash's arm over her shoulder, helps him to his feet. Glares at Federico...

MATHILDA
He needs something to drink.

Hurried, Federico hands Syretia the canister of tea on the bedside table.

Nash gulps away, manages to stand on his own.

Syretia frowns, reaching for her radio transceiver, holds it close to her mouth.

SYRETIA

All units! This is Detective Cooper
calling for back up. Multiple
suspects --

Mathilda shoots a glare at Federico.

Panicked, Federico clobbers Syretia on the head. She stumbles
but remains upright... another blow to the head, she plummets
to the floor.

Nash dives onto Federico like a zombie, swings him onto
Mathilda.

Nash lifts Syretia over his shoulder, carries her out.

EXT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - LUSH GARDEN - NIGHT

Nash rushes through the shrubbery, lays Syretia down. He
checks the surroundings, it's clear.

NASH

Detective! Detective?

Nash pats Syretia on the cheek. Finally she wakes up.

Syretia feels the back of her head.

NASH

You okay?

Syretia strikes Nash in the throat. He flops back.

Syretia holds out her gun, zeros in on him.

Scrambling to his feet, Nash brings up his one hand.

NASH

Detective, you asked me if I saw
something strange.

Syretia's aim is straight.

NASH

I can answer all your questions --

Nash brings his hand down.

SYRETIA

Keep'em up!

NASH
Remember the clinic? I'm your
inside eye --

SYRETIA
I said, keep'em up!

In a panic, Syretia goes for her cuffs.

NASH
Come with me, I can show you.

Nash grabs at the gun. The fight erupts into a full blown physical struggle from hell.

Syretia wild, pushes them both against a prickly bush, it scrapes them all over. The gun flies into a bramble and Syretia dives in after it.

Nash notices the scratches on Syretia's arms and neck.

NASH
Fuck.

SYRETIA
I'm not going anywhere. Now stay
back or I will make you bleed.

NASH
Okay, okay, I have been working for
her. And that day on the fourteenth
floor, you wanted to know why I
took Mathilda in. Well, you see
those scratches? You will die if
you don't get medical --

SYRETIA
Clever Mr. Fox...

Syretia spots the scratches on Nash's arms.

SYRETIA
... Looks like we both have
reservations in the pit of hell.

Syretia staggers as her eyes roll back into her skull, knees fail, and she anxiously pulls the trigger. BANG!

The bullet wheezes through Nash's palm.

NASH
Aah! Fuck!

Syretia flops to the ground, unconscious.

Nash stumbles over to Syretia and with great care, loads her onto his shoulder.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - TOOL SHED - NIGHT

With Syretia lagging on his shoulder, Nash barges in. No sign of Mathilda or Federico.

He spots Claire flopped over on the floor. Her face bleeding. Next to her is a cell phone smashed to pieces.

NASH
Claire, honey.

Nash pulls Syretia to the locker, places her on the floor. He can barely use his one arm.

NASH
Today this ends.

Nash rushes over to Claire, slaps her face.

Stirring, Claire jolts up.

NASH
Shh. It's okay.

Nash cradles Claire to his chest then lays her down easy.

Claire rubs the back of her head.

Nash scours the lockers... nothing. He moves to Federico's bedside table, wiggles the drawer but it doesn't open.

Syretia curls with pain, holds her stomach, moaning.

With a powerful series of stomps, Nash destroys the bedside table.

There it is... The canister with a dark tea-like liquid - The antidote!

Nash grabs it, tips it onto Syretia's mouth and scars. She seems to settle.

Sweating, Nash tears at the bedding, rips off a piece of material and attempts to wrap his punctured hand. It's no use, the pain is just too much.

Claire crawls over to Nash, helps him to wrap his wound.

CLAIRE

Long day of reckless landscaping,
huh?

Nash grins.

The floorboard behind Nash CREEKS!

Nash turns and Federico clobbers him over the head.

Claire screams.

Grim as a motherfucker, Nash dashes after Federico who runs out. Nash trips, lands on all fours. Off-balanced by the blow, shakes his head.

Nash steadies himself as Claire helps him to his feet. He notices the trap door open.

Moving in, Nash retches and covers his nose with a towel.

HIDDEN BASEMENT UNDER THE SHED

Bags of compost rot around an old cabinet.

Nash digs through the rotten compost and cabinet drawers, discovers folders with documents accompanied with a couple of USB drives. Then, stumbles upon financial statements and contracts.

Nash finds Federico's Mexican passport, identity photos, a birth certificate and police clearance certificates.

The floor atop CREAKS. Nash is quiet. Listens. Another CREAK.

He whispers.

NASH

Claire?

Then, Nash finds a social security card with a photo of Mathilda but it reads "DEBORAH COLLINS" instead.

Nash freezes. His eye catches a 'PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME' stapled to a court order. A decree stating the *new name* - "MATHILDA IVY."

He steps backwards and trips over Bill's stiff, decomposing body. Dried blood flakes down Bill's carcass.

With aching eyes, Nash bends down over Bill. Wanting to touch him but doesn't. Sobs.

Dead in the corner, Pete's bloody mouth hangs open.

Slipping and falling down through the trap door. Syretia slumps next to the cabinets, Syretia brings her finger to her lips.

SYRETIA

Shhht.

She holds out a taser-gun, nods.

Tipping his chin back at Syretia, Nash grabs the paperwork, USB drives and the taser gun. He heads back up to...

TOOL SHED

Sitting on the bed, Mathilda glances at Nash approaching.

Mathilda gets up and hugs Nash. He pushes her back, tosses the documents to the floor.

NASH

Care to explain? Deborah Collins?

MATHILDA

I told you I'll help you find
Deborah... whoever.

Federico holds Claire in a head-lock. She holds a ribboned gift box.

CLAIRE

Dad?

FEDERICO

You have another parcel, ma'am.

MATHILDA

Well, don't make me wait dear. Are
you going to open it or what?

Federico loosens his grip on Claire.

Clair opens the box, jumps with fright. She hurls it, screams like an actress giving a helluva performance.

A severed tongue spills from the box.

NASH

Claire! Run!

She doesn't.

Nash flips out, pushes Mathilda over the bed. She knocks her head against the bedside table.

Federico dives onto Nash, takes him to the ground, both hands around his throat.

Nash reaches out to the severed tongue lying on the floor. He uses his finger to rake it closer. Got it! He shoves the tongue into Federico's mouth, defusing him.

Claire in hysterics.

Nash rolls over. Catches his breath and like lightning whacks Federico to the ground. Ignoring his injuries, Nash lands punches like bullets from a machine gun. His knuckles leave scars on Federico's cheeks.

Federico's voice trembles while hiding behind his arms.

Nash jumps up, goes for the half empty canister containing the tea, gulps it back.

CLAIRE

Dad!

Mathilda slams a garden fork into Nash's back.

CLAIRE

No!

Nash reverses hard into the wall, knocks Mathilda to the floor, stunned.

Nash removes the fork from his shoulder blade.

Federico leaps onto Nash, just then, a group of feathery darts needle into the Mexican's back.

Shaking and aimed at Nash, Claire has the dart gun stretched out before her.

Federico convulses, foams from the corners of his mouth.

Mathilda tackles Clair. Pulls at Claire's hair, Mathilda shoves her around, bashes her head against the wall.

NASH

Stop! Mathilda, stop!

Nash locks on the dart gun now in Mathilda's hand. She aims it at him.

Claire sobs as she's controlled by Mathilda.

Federico gives final contractions as life escapes his body.

Nash reaches for the canister.

MATHILDA

Oh, no! No! No!

NASH

Deborah! He doesn't have to die.

MATHILDA

I have a heart of providing housing
for the poor. If the Catholic
churches can do it, so can I.

Claire groans, Mathilda pulls at her hair.

NASH

Let her go, and I'm yours. Okay?

Nash freezes as Mathilda targets the dart gun at him.

MATHILDA

Time to get creative, Mr. Fox. One
more scene to film.

Mathilda releases Claire, throws a syringe over to Nash.

MATHILDA

One more design.

Mathilda pushes Claire forward.

MATHILDA

We'll make it exciting this time.
It'll be more fun if your human
element of the design is awake.
Like my brother.

NASH

What?

MATHILDA

Nash, you pushed my brother off
that building.

Nash's face drops with ultimate terror.

NASH

I was defending myself.

MATHILDA

You have a choice, help me complete
my movie, for your freedom.

No more debt. No more wannabe
actresses to take care of. Help me
rise again.

NASH

Who's baby was it?

Mathilda's eye's shoot daggers.

CLAIRE

Dad. I wanted to tell you.

Nash scratches his arm, confused.

MATHILDA

He wasn't talking to you, my dear.

Pursing her lips, Mathilda's voice becomes hard and cold.

MATHILDA

When you're a young woman with
ambition you'll do anything to stay
in the game. You'll fall in love
with your producer but won't tell
him you carry his child.

NASH

Pete?

MATHILDA

He told me I'll never work again.
He did present me with a choice. An
abortion or --

NASH

-- Or your career.

MATHILDA

Turns out a wire hanger has many
great uses.

NASH

Why Bill?

MATHILDA

Easy lay. And a fantastic source of
information. Initially it was to
get close to you. I never knew he
actually helped you bury my
brother.

NASH

How many others? What about Vincent Shoals or Arnie Brett? And the others?

Mathilda laughs.

MATHILDA

A means to an end. I knew it was one of Josh's classmates. Process of elimination. And I get a great movie out of it!

Mathilda hits Claire in the stomach.

NASH

Hey! Okay. Okay. I will do it.

Nash fakes inserting the needle into his thigh, empties the needle inside his pant leg.

CLAIRE

Dad! No. Don't!

MATHILDA

Take off your clothes.

Claire hesitates, glances at Nash.

NASH

That will not be necessary.

Mathilda gives an exaggerated sigh, shoots Claire with a dart.

NASH

What the fuck?

Instantly, Nash removes the dart from Claire's arm.

MATHILDA

Liquid insurance. Don't want her to improvise. You know, actors. Now get naked.

Sobbing, Claire stares at Nash, gives him a weak smile.

CLAIRE

It's okay daddy.

Becoming more inebriated, Claire begins to undress until she shivers in her underwear.

Mathilda puts down a bucket next to Claire. It's filled with dark prepping liquid.

MATHILDA
Get to work, daddy.

Nash dunks his hands into the bucket and rubs Claire's body with the dark mud-like liquid.

FLASHBACK - EXT. BROOK - DAY

A younger, frantic Nash struggles knee deep in mud, reaches out towards a small limb stretching out from the bog. It's tiny fingers spread out.

Nash sinks deeper, so does the tiny hand. It finally disappears under the mud.

Nash lets out a primal scream, reaches further when out of nowhere, a noose lands around his torso and pulls tight.

At the last moment, Nash dives to the spot where the tiny hand disappeared into the mud.

RESCUE PARAMEDICS pull hard on the rope. They manage to get Nash out of the mud... He gasps for air.

Nash clings to a small body. CLAIRE, 3, completely covered in marsh... lifeless.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. TRACTOR - CONTINUOUS

Finger on the trigger, Mathilda targets a gun at Nash's head as he steers the tractor further into the plot.

Covered in mud-like sludge, Claire stares down, while Mathilda grips her hair.

With a slumped posture and puffy eyes, Nash glares into the distance, accelerates.

On the verge of tears, Nash whispers.

NASH
I'll get you out, bunny rabbit.

The tractor pulls into a large lush Bonsai garden.

EXT. LUSH GARDEN - BONSAI CEMETARY

Mathilda switches on large lights, smacks her hands together before the cameras.

MATHILDA (O.S.)
Three, two, one, action!

Blinded by the light, Nash carries Claire to an open shrub, she moans.

Nash deadpan, fights to keep the tears from rolling, he whips a rope around her arms, secures them to the branches.

Whispering, Nash locks on Claire's terrified look.

NASH
Bunny rabbit. Look at me. Please...
It's me. I know you can hear me.
It's going to be okay.

Nash covers Claire's arm with mesh.

NASH
I'm going to get us out of here.

Weak, Claire struggles against his hold.

With a thick needle, Nash goes for a piercing, refusing to make eye contact with his daughter. Stonewalling his feelings but can't seem to find that cemented heart.

Nash blows a heavy breath...

Mathilda aims a camera at them. Walks closer and shoots a dart into Claire's arm.

Flinching, tears flow freely, Nash clenches his teeth.

Claire's timid tussle slows down even more.

NASH
No!

A CRACKLE in the bushes.

Nash whips out the taser gun, jams it at Mathilda's neck.

BZZAAP!

Mathilda goes stiff...

Like a flash, Syretia tackles Mathilda to the ground.

Nash cuts Claire loose.

EXT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - DECK - NIGHT

Sharp as a tack, Nash lugs Claire over his shoulder, sits her down on a deck chair. He removes his jacket, hangs it around Claire's naked shoulders.

Claire can hardly talk.

Nash bursts into a rage, tosses and kicks the chairs on the deck. Rage burned out, he calms, stares into Claire's eyes.

NASH

How can you ever forgive me?

Claire throws her arms around him, mumbles.

CLAIRE

I'm going to have a baby.

Nash's eyes sparkle with his smile.

There's a CRACKLE of branches behind them.

Vigilant, Nash searches the dark.

NASH

Let's get you out of here.

Nash helps Claire to her feet.

Claire spots the pebble pathway leading out.

NASH

Can you manage on your own?

Swaying, she shakes her head.

NASH

Nope. Okay, stay put. I'll be back.

Claire slurring.

CLAIRE

Where are you going?

NASH

She trusted me once driving her car. I know where she keeps the keys. Don't go.

Nash runs towards the mansion...

Oh no! And down the dark pebble path Claire staggers.

EXT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - PEBBLE PATHWAY - NIGHT

Claire stumbles as fast as her feet can carry her.

All at once, Mathilda jumps out, grips Claire's throat.

MATHILDA

It's not a wrap yet, sweetheart!

All bloodied and bruised, Mathilda plants her fist on Claire's chin, hard.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nash scrambles in, scans the place.

He notices the picture frame on the bedside table of the plump boy piggy backing a redheaded freckle face girl.

Nash rockets to the bedside table, opens the drawer and runs his fingers through the contents - nothing! He jumps over the bed and does the same on that side - CAR KEYS! Nash grabs them.

Nash detects a thin ray of light shining through a crack in the wall, halts.

Leans in to get a better view.

He releases a series of heated kicks into the wall, wrecks it until he's through to the other side.

INT. MATHILDA'S MANSION - SECRET EDITING SUITE - NIGHT

Computer screens dress the room. Two garden gloves atop a roll of ribbons and small gift boxes on an alloy table.

Nash spots more syringes full of liquid. He gets to a computer and leans closer to the screen. A working session on editing software is open - 'OFFLINE ROUGH'

Nash notices other people's folders. No wait, the folders are of qualified Landscaping Architects!

Nash lifts a file... VINCENT SHIELDS. He grabs another... BILL FOX... he looks around...

The letter head of the University's medical faculty, printed on a stack of blank papers.

He presses a button and Mathilda's entire movie, the ghastly murders of Pete and all the other victims, plays on a screen.

NASH
Medical faculty my ass.

Continuing, Mathilda acts all horrified as Nash himself plants bodies - everything Federico has been filming plays before him on a screen.

It pauses on the murder of Bill.

With a gut wrenching scream, Nash flips the table over and sends the equipment crashing. He wipes the computers from the adjacent table.

Exhausted, Nash's eyes lock on another screen. A live recording shows Mathilda assaulting Claire in the garden.

Nash boils with rage, bolts out.

EXT. LUSH GARDEN - BONSAI CEMETARY - NIGHT

Claire lies curled up on the ground, moaning.

MATHILDA
Life's a howling bitch. All she
ever does is take, or give you
people who take. Take your money.

Mathilda lands a kick in Claire's gut.

MATHILDA
Take your career and baby.

Claire takes another blow.

MATHILDA
My brother, Josh.

Then Mathilda lobs Claire toward the two tombstones and the thick, splintered tree trunk.

MATHILDA
Come on, Claire! Get up.

Mathilda breaks a splint from the trunk. She presses it against Claire's throat, sliding it down to her stomach.

Trembling, Claire grabs at Mathilda's hands and musters her strength to keep Mathilda from drilling the thorn into her.

MATHILDA

It's all right, Mommy. Without me
you can live your dream.

Mathilda slowly pierces the splint into Claire's stomach.

CLAIRE

Ah!

Claire caves to the ground.

Without warning, Nash rams Mathilda into the trunk with giant
thorns. It splints through both their bodies.

MATHILDA

Well, this wasn't scripted.

Pain bruises Nash's face as he tears his leg and shoulder
from the giant splints.

MATHILDA

I knew you had it in you. It was
only a matter of time until your
killer child sticks its head out
again.

Nash stares at Mathilda.

MATHILDA

I finally found you. What did you
think? Let's dig a hole in the
ground, throw him in it, and
consign him to oblivion?

NASH

I never forgot about that day.

MATHILDA

But, you expected Deborah to? Did
you expect me to forget? Two long
years Nash. Two long years I have
been setting you and your pathetic
family up.

Nash's face drops.

MATHILDA

A pity Deborah had to go through
your classmates before she stumbled
on Bill.

Nash takes a step towards her.

MATHILDA

I must admit, between you and
Bill... you're the bigger pussy.

Nash staggers back and sobs.

MATHILDA

Why did you come back here?

NASH

Forgiveness.

MATHILDA

Where did you bury Josh?

Mathilda ready to raise hell, chortles in her own blood.

MATHILDA

You're so weak! Was nice hugging
Emily's corpse, wasn't it? You are
all so pathetic. She was so easy...
tell her to end her miserable life.

Mathilda snickers.

MATHILDA

And she did.

Nash turns a whiter shade of pale.

MATHILDA

All this time you let guilt eat
away at your pathetic little life
thinking you killed Emily.

NASH

You knew Emily?

Smirking, Mathilda's smoky cat eyes become dark shadows of
hollow sunken ships.

MATHILDA

Unforgiven. Addiction. You had it
all and took it all from me. Emily
was only the start. I have nothing
because of you. It only seemed fair
I return the favor. It was like
taking a hit. I craved it. I needed
it. It elated me! Your company was
next, I took my time, I wanted to
see you suffer, to take everything
like you did from Deborah.

Claire groans with pain.

Nash cautiously removes the splint from Claire's stomach.

Claire clenches her teeth.

Nash helps Claire to her feet.

MATHILDA

I just love the smell of fresh
soil, don't you?

Claire gives a blood-curdling scream. Her inner thighs turn to crimson as blood flows down her legs from her miscarriage.

Nash, aghast, at Claire holding her stomach.

Terrified, Claire stares at her father. Her eyes fill with a lifetime of tears, trembling lips.

MATHILDA

Oops. Pack a way those tiny socks
and shoes, my dear.

Nash plucks the gun from the grass and raises the piece in front of Mathilda. Pulls the trigger... again... and again.

Three darts bull's eye Mathilda's forehead and force her eyes to summersault back into her skull. Blood streams from her nostrils.

Nash blinks his eyes, snaps out of it.

CLAIRE

I'm sorry, Daddy. I wanted to tell
you sooner.

Sobbing, Nash lifts Claire like a baby. He limps away and notices Syretia sprawled over the ground, neck twisted.

Still filming, a camera rests on a tripod in the bushes.

INT. CLINIC, EMERGENCY - NIGHT

Nash carries Claire to the first gurney he sees and jostles the PATIENT away.

NASH

Please, don't let my baby die.

NURSES hold him back.

Nash shoves the Nurse to the ground, then puts Claire down onto the gurney.

Staring at Claire, Nash's face drops, goes ballistic.

Nurse reaches over the desk, shouts into a microphone.

NURSE
Security! To the emergency room,
now! Security!

Nash fights a MALE NURSE trying to get to Claire.

Two SECURITY GUARDS manage to pin Nash to the ground. He glances at the notice board, spots a photo of Bill.

NASH
It was me! It's all my fault.

Nash points at the headshot of Bill on the board.

NASH
Bill. Bill, I'm sorry. It was an
accident. It was an accident!

SECURITY GUARD #1
What happened? What accident, sir?

Now completely delusional, Nash fights the guards to get to Claire, but finally collapses in their arms, exhausted.

Claire's body convulses and wildly spasms.

Nash grabs a folded document from his back pocket, holds it out to the NURSE with Frank's name and number written on it.

NASH
Make sure she gets this.

Nurse flinches at his approach.

NASH
Please, give this to her?

The papers fall to the floor.

Nash watches the medics take away his 'baby girl'.

Two COPS burst through the doors. One has his weapon pulled on Nash and the other shoves him flat onto the tiles, drives a knee into Nash's spine, cuffs him.

INT. PRISON - NASH'S CELL - DAY

A single bed under a barred window is lit by a lightbulb with a cage surrounding it.

The pitted cement walls have messages scratched into them. Each message addressed to Claire.

An INMATE coughs down the passage... Whistles and hums sounds resonate through the concrete prison building.

Clean shaven and hair razored, Nash bites into a lemon with a brightened countenance.

NASH

There are bullies in here. It keeps me tough.

Claire stares at Nash chewing on the lemon. She wears a summer dress and her hair long and free, smiling.

CLAIRE

I noticed the prison gardens.

NASH

Yeah, they're a talented bunch.

CLAIRE

The warden must like you.

NASH

Maybe, but it has me earning extra cash, teaching the others.

CLAIRE

What are you going to do now?

Nash shrugs.

CLAIRE

I made the audition.

Nash smiles.

CLAIRE

I'm proud of you, daddy.

Nash's voice has a soothing tone.

NASH

Bunny Rabbit, I never had the courage to tell you this but people come into your life and grow on you like wild flowers. They'll grow down, around your heart. You will always love these people...

CLAIRE

Why?

NASH

Because... To pull out these
flowers would rip your heart out of
your chest.

Nash glances at the scratched cement wall...

Outside, FOOTSTEPS echoes closer.

NASH

You have grown into and left your
roots in my heart.

Holding Nash's belongings, a GUARD stops at the barred door,
examining the cell.

The only person in there happens to be Nash...

Nash wipes the tears from his eyes.

GUARD

Talking to yourself again, Fox?

There is a shimmer as Claire smiles with love for the first
time at her father. She walks through the wall as...

Guard unlocks the door, slides it open, dropping Nash's
effects in front of him on the floor.

GUARD

Congratulations.

A slow smile grows on Nash's face as he picks up his things.

NASH

Yeah, the time spent in this place
will do things to you.

GUARD

Tell me Fox, who's gonna take care
of the gardens when you're gone?

Giving a half-shrug, Nash grins.

Guard slams the door closed, locks it and leaves.

Nash stares into the lightbulb atop in its cage.

NASH

Your flower may have withered but
your roots will remain forever.

And lets out a huge breath.

EXT. PRISON - GATE HOUSE - DAY

Nash walks through the two massive gates. Stops in his tracks. Turns and gives a last glance at the prison yard.

INMATES huddle close, digging into the ground, all wearing orange overalls. They shovel and trim.

A landscaping masterpiece.

Taking in the sun and breathing free air, Nash looks skyward.

HONK! HONK!

FRANK (O.S.)

Nash! What the fuck? You coming?

Nash spins around and grins.

Missing a finger, waiting in his truck, a happy Frank waves at Nash.

Nash rushes over to Frank.

NASH

I want to make a quick stop.

Frank nods. Nash gets in.

EXT. SECLUDED DEMOLISHED BUILDING - DAY

Nash kneels at Josh's grave, feels over the Lilies.

His eyelids stiff and throat scratchy.

NASH

I owe you an apology. I know it's too late but I'll always be sorry.

He retrieves the bedside table photograph of Josh piggy-backing Mathilda from his back pocket, places it onto the bed of Water Lilies.

His other hand flips a silver A.A. chip with a big triangle, engraved with the words: "UNITY, SERVICE, RECOVERY"

Nash plunges the coin deep into the soil.

FADE OUT.