

CONSENSUS

by

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TEASER

FADE IN

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

FEET SLAPPING PAVEMENT. HEAVY BREATHING.

A man RUNS down a quiet, tree-lined street, gasping for air. He is not dressed for running -- he's wearing a BUSINESS SUIT.

More footfalls. TWO COPS in uniform CHASE him.

The BUSINESSMAN turns a corner, still running, realizing too late he's arrived in a --

CUL-DE-SAC.

Fenced yards on every side. Nowhere to go. He frantically looks for an unlocked gate.

The two cops catch up with him. An OLDER COP and a YOUNG COP.

OLDER COP

We don't want to hurt you.

Businessman looks at the suit he's wearing and pats it as if it's unfamiliar. As if his own body is strange to him.

BUSINESSMAN

(muttering)

What am I doing here? What am I doing?

He turns his pockets inside out one by one. Distracted. This guy is out of it.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

This is a test. This is only a test.

Older Cop nods to Young Cop. They close in, just as --

Businessman finds an inside jacket pocket. And something in it. He yanks at the object, turns, and --

SHOOTS!

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

Terence Flowers!

Older Cop GOES DOWN. BLOOD runs onto the pavement.

No one has noticed a YOUNG WOMAN on the sidewalk. She's wearing pajama pants, has her dog on a leash.

She stares at the scene with wide-eyes, stunned.

ACT 1

EXT. STREET - DAY

Evening commute time. The weather is a perfect 73 degrees. The traffic is flowing -- small, shiny cars. Futuristic.

Which is in contrast to the "Mad-Men" era vibe of the suits and dresses worn by the PEDESTRIANS walking on the sidewalks.

And then there are the --

ROBOTS. Short and round, moving on casters they mingle with the pedestrians barely noticed, carrying groceries or vacuuming a scrap of paper from a gutter.

The world is like a 50s-era vision of a future utopia.

The architecture is attractive. A few aesthetically pleasing billboards advertise an upcoming event:
"Anniversary X," "Commemorating 10 Years."

Gradually we focus on one pedestrian in particular. We recognize her as the WOMAN FROM THE SIDEWALK.

This is ALEXANDRA "ALEX" HAMMOND, early 30s, she's wearing a flattering skirt suit. And has an old-fashioned film camera on a strap around her neck.

She ascends a covered stairway to:

EXT. ELEVATED METRO PLATFORM - DAY

Alex joins the small crowd of commuters waiting for the next train. The platform bridges the street below.

Alex regards the SKYLINE: buildings at golden hour reflecting the evening sun. Alex chooses an angle, snaps a picture.

The shapes of the buildings could be Beverly Hills, Century City maybe. Someplace we know. Except for:

A TOWER.

With outstretched arms. As if Frank Gehry designed a building shaped like a tree. Or -- a HUGE FLOWER.

Panning the horizon, we come to a familiar set of "hills." But instead of a Hollywood sign:

Another TOWER.

Alex gazes at this tower for an extra moment, the way you might look at the Eiffel Tower if you lived in Paris.

Alex turns her attention to the street running perpendicular to the platform. The traffic moves at an even pace, straight and orderly.

Suddenly, near the center divider --

-- a MAN suddenly LURCHES into the street. Dressed in dirty, TATTERED clothes, he is SHOCKING and out-of-place.

Tattered Man flails his arms at the cars. Crazy, or drug-addled, he yells at the drivers:

TATTERED MAN

Thieves! You stole this! You don't deserve this!

The cars continue to roll by. DRIVERS seem unfazed -- even unaware -- of the man lunging toward them. PEDESTRIANS laugh and chat crossing the street.

No one notices the man.

Except Alex.

Tattered Man looks up. STRAIGHT AT HER.

TATTERED MAN (CONT'D)

You don't belong here!

Shocked, she steps back from the platform's edge. Then she recovers. She scrambles for her CAMERA, quickly focuses -- CLICKS the shutter.

Too late. As she lowers the camera. Tattered Man is GONE.

Alex scans the street and sidewalk: the world is pristine, free of litter or indigence.

RUMBLING. The futuristic, bullet-shaped TRAIN arrives.

INT. TRAIN CAR - DAY

Alex steps onto a clean and well-maintained train car. A fresh-faced mix of business and casual PASSENGERS.

The train travels UNDERGROUND with Alex lost in thought.

Outside her window, we see POSTERS mounted on the tunnel walls.

The IMAGES show people dressed in light colors, standing in green fields or against city skylines, reminiscent of ads for meditation, or anti-anxiety meds. In every case, a TOWER is prominent in the background.

Slogans like:

Everyone Doing Their Part: CONSENSUS

Right Thinking Keeps Us All Right: CONSENSUS.

The world is what we make it: CONSENSUS

EXT. HAMMOND HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

A wealthy-looking suburb stocked with large houses and well-maintained lawns.

Alex's SHINY CAR pulls into the driveway and she gets out.

GIGGLES and SHRIEKS of playing children drift from the backyard.

EXT. HAMMOND BACKYARD - DAY

As Alex comes through the gate, two adorable kids, CINDY, 9 and JONAH, 7, run to give her hugs.

KIDS

Mommy! We're barbecuing!

ALEX

I see that!

TED, late 30s, clean-cut and wearing an apron that says "Kiss the Chef," mans the grill. Alex complies with the apron's command and gives him a kiss.

TED

Hope it's okay -- I invited the boss over for dinner.

ALEX

You did, huh?

TED

Well... he kind of invited himself.

ALEX
 (good natured)
 That sounds more like it.

JAMES, 60s, comes through the gate looking like the best white-haired GRANDPA ever. Which, in fact, he is.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Speak of the devil.

KIDS
 Grandpa!

James swings them in the air.

JAMES
 (to Alex)
 What about the devil?

ALEX
 Ted just told me the boss was coming for dinner.

JAMES
 Oh -- *she* is.

MARLA, 60s, comes through the back door.

MARLA
 I put the melon in the fridge. That contraption wanted to cut it for me, but I did it myself.
 (seeing Alex)
 Oh, there you are!

She beelines and hugs Alex.

MARLA (CONT'D)
 How was your day? I hope you're not working too hard.

ALEX
 I'm not, Mom. I'm just going to run up and change.

INT. BEDROOM - DUSK

Alex, now in jeans and casual shirt, lets down her hair in front of the mirror.

She looks out the window at the idyllic view of her family: kids playing with Marla, and DAX, the dog, jumping, excited. James and Ted joking around.

It's all perfect. A smile plays on Alex's lips.

TED

Ready for some plates here!

That's Alex's cue. She goes to join them.

EXT. BACK YARD - DUSK

After dinner, James and Marla sit watching Cindy and Jonah catch fireflies. A few feet away Alex grabs some shots of the kids with her camera.

JAMES

You kids could put in a pool back here.
There's plenty of room.

Alex intent on her shooting, replies without turning.

ALEX

The one at the park is so close. And it
seems like a waste of water.

James and Marla exchange a glance -- that was a weird thing to say! James chuckles, making it a joke.

JAMES

Is there a shortage of water we haven't
heard about?

Alex, lowers the camera, chuckles too.

ALEX

Sorry. I guess I'm a little distracted.

Ted joins them, hands a beer to James.

TED

She's been distracted for days! She has a
meeting with Adlon Company next week!

JAMES

They're big. Weren't they up for the
Tourism Board campaign?

Ted nods, knowingly.

TED

Not that it's been announced, of course.

JAMES

That'd be quite an adventure, getting to
take the first pictures of new territory.

MARLA

I'm sure they wouldn't send a wife and mother on one of those trips. Alex can let them know she's not available for that at the interview.

Marla waits for Alex to agree but Alex focuses on changing a roll of film.

MARLA (CONT'D)

Well, you know you can always use our pool. Do you want to drop the kids off tomorrow before your sessions?

ALEX

That's okay. They like to see their friends. And we're taking them to the markets afterwards.

INT. HAMMOND HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alex takes her suit jacket from a chair and hangs it in the closet. Ted watches her, gauging.

TED

Sleepy?

She grins.

ALEX

I could stay awake for a few minutes.

She climbs into bed, half on top of him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hey Teddy, do you ever see...

She thinks how to say it

ALEX (CONT'D)

... things that *surprise* you?

TED

That surprise me?

He thinks. But doesn't really understand the question.

ALEX

Never mind.

TED

Maybe I can *do* something to surprise you!

He's a good guy. She grins as he pulls her down and they kiss, rolling in the sheets.

EXT. CENTRAL COMPLEX PLAZA - DAY

Ted and Alex, along with Jonah and Cindy, cross a beautifully landscaped central plaza to a majestic complex of large, modern buildings.

Around them, hundreds of people are doing the same -- heading into or out of the building.

We might or might not have noticed yet -- but none of the people milling around them have smart phones.

INT. CENTRAL COMPLEX - DAY

An enormous atrium with a high glass ceiling. As soon as the family enters, Jonah and Cindy begin running, weaving through people, to the

PLAY AREA with climbing structures, a pool of foam balls and a jumping castle.

Jonah and Cindy race past the sign-in, manned by NANCY. Ted and Alex arrive in their kids' wake.

TED

(dry)

Jonah and Cindy Hammond.

Nancy grins. This is routine.

NANCY

We've got them. Have a good session.

Alex and Ted head toward a bank of elevators.

INT. CENTRAL COMPLEX - ELEVATOR - DAY

Ted and Alex ride an elevator comfortably full of people, as well as one of those rolling robots.

Ted and several others debark at a lower floor.

Alex and a couple others debark at the next stop.

INT. CENTRAL COMPLEX - HALL - DAY

Alex walks a wide hallway. The outside wall is lined with windows, with a view to the plaza.

The inside wall is one office door after another, and an occasional framed poster similar to the ones we've seen:

"Thanks for Doing Your Part. Consensus." "Beautiful Thoughts Make a Beautiful World. Consensus."

Alex opens one of the doors and goes inside.

INT. CENTRAL COMPLEX - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Alex sits in a very small waiting area adjacent to a reception desk with a RECEPTIONIST.

A LIGHT blinks on a small console on the Receptionist's desk and she smiles brightly at Alex.

RECEPTIONIST

The technician is ready for you!

INT. CENTRAL COMPLEX - TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

BRIAN, 20s, greets Alex as she enters.

BRIAN

Welcome. My name is Brian. I'll be your technician today.

ALEX

Hi, Brian.

Alex sits in a chair in the center of the room. It has a HOOP attached to its back, a "HALO."

LATER

Brian interviews Alex.

BRIAN

And this was Friday afternoon?

ALEX

Around five o'clock.

BRIAN

Did anyone else see the man?

She shakes her head.

ALEX

No.

BRIAN

Did you speak of the incident to anyone?

ALEX

No.

BRIAN

Okay.

(beat)

Are you ready?

Alex nods. She reaches and lowers the hoop from vertical to horizontal so that it forms a HALO around her head.

Brian pushes a button: BEAMS of LIGHT SCAN around Alex's head.

Brian's MONITOR shows a schematic of her brain. He spots a pin-prick area of color, zooms in on it.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I see it.

He makes a keystroke and one of the light beams shining toward Alex's skull momentarily FLASHES BRIGHTER.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

That's it.

She smiles at him, a little blank.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

What can you tell me about yesterday afternoon??

ALEX

Yesterday? I delivered some work to clients downtown. Came home.

BRIAN

You take the metro home?

ALEX

(vaguely surprised he knows)

Yes.

BRIAN

Anything unusual?

She searches, comes up blank.

ALEX

No.

He smiles.

BRIAN

Great, we'll see you next week!

INT. CENTRAL COMPLEX - WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Receptionist smiles and waves as Alex exits into the hallway.

Then Receptionist stands and goes into

INT. TREATMENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brian is at his workstation.

RECEPTIONIST

That's the end of your shift.

Brian nods. He goes to sit in the halo chair and lets the halo lower.

BRIAN

I've set the parameters.

Receptionist hits a button. The schematic of his brain lights up. The numbers show the hours he's just worked.

The halo shoots beams at his head, ERASING his memory of the testimonials he's heard.

RECEPTIONIST

How was your shift?

BRIAN

I have to say, it's all a blur.

He grins, unperturbed by this.

END ACT 1

ACT 2

INT. TREATMENT CENTER - LOBBY

Alex joins Ted at the edge of the play area. The kids play with a little boy and girl, CAM and CHRISSEY.

ALEX

(to Ted)

Hi. How'd it go?

TED

No treatment required. Again.
How was yours?

ALEX

(lying)

Same.

(calls to kids)

Jonah, Cindy -- you guys ready?

Cam and Chrissy's mother, ROSALIE, a Hispanic woman with soulful eyes, has also arrived.

ROSALIE

(calling)

Cam and Chrissy, you guys too.

Alex raises her camera, making sure it's okay with Rosalie before grabbing quick shots as the kids clamber out of the foam pit and careen toward them.

EXT. FARMERS MARKET - DAY

Alex, Ted and the kids wander through an upscale farmers market, with beautiful fruits and vegetables, gourmet cheese, wine. Cindy and Jonah have ice cream cones.

CINDY

You guys don't have bad dreams, do you?

TED

(emphatic)

No.

ALEX

(gently clarifying)

Not usually. Why?

CINDY

Chrissy's mom has bad dreams, so she has to do extra treatments. If I have bad dreams, will I go to treatments?

ALEX

Oh, no, honey. That's only for specific kinds of bad dreams.

CINDY

About the war?

Alex and Ted exchange a look, surprised to hear Cindy talk about the war. Alex glances at Jonah. He's walking ahead, but could be listening.

ALEX

Yes. People who were in the war sometimes dream things, or see things...

CINDY

Like flashbacks.

She looks meaningfully at Alex as she says this -- as if she might be referring to something specific. Alex keeps her voice neutral as she responds.

ALEX

Yes. But those flashbacks are all from the past, from before you were alive, so you won't have them.

CINDY

Plus I have a strong mind. Grandpa says if you keep your mind strong, you don't need treatments all the time. Chrissy's mom probably doesn't keep her mind strong.

Somehow, this feels like a test.

TED

Honey, the war affected lots of people in different ways. That's why everyone has a session once a week. And some people -- like Chrissy's mom -- might need more sometimes, temporarily, to help them feel better. It doesn't mean they aren't strong. Hopefully over time, everyone will need fewer sessions.

The market area turns into:

EXT. BOARDWALK - CONTINUOUS

A pristine walkway borders the clean sand and blue water of the beach.

ALEX

It's good that Chrissy has you to talk to, but her mom probably wouldn't like it if all Chrissy's friends at school were talking about her.

CINDY

I know.

(turning the topic, not wanting to be lectured)

The enemy during the war did really bad things, didn't they? Like really bad. That's why no one's allowed to remember.

Jonah has slowed down, he is definitely listening in.

ALEX

Who wants to go on the Ferris wheel?

KIDS

Yay!

TED

Let's race! Head start, go!

The kids run in the direction of the Ferris Wheel. Ted grabs Alex's hand and takes off after them.

IMAGES:

CLOUDS in a blue sky.

SUNSET over the water with boats, focused, then blurry.

Kids on a FERRIS WHEEL, laughing in delight: Jonah and Cindy.

REVEAL we are:

Looking at PHOTOGRAPHS. Hanging on a wall, in --

INT. SHED - ALEX'S DARKROOM - NIGHT

Yes, a darkroom. Another reminder that we haven't yet seen any devices that convey digital information.

Alex stoops over a counter with a MAGNIFYING LOOP, looking at a CONTACT SHEET of photographs.

One by one, she looks at photos of the kids catching fireflies at dusk. And then:

The STREET SCENE. The TATTERED MAN, arms waving, fluttering like a crow in traffic.

Alex stares at it. She doesn't remember taking this.

INT. HAMMOND HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family sits at the table. ROLEY, their robot, rolls out carrying a pan of lasagna.

Alex takes the lasagna from Roley's tray-like arms and sets it on the table.

TED

Wow. That smells delicious.

ALEX

Cindy's favorite. Did you know she moved up a level in gymnastics this week!

TED

(to Cindy)

Nice job, kiddo.

Alex serves Cindy lasagna. Cindy looks at it disapprovingly.

CINDY

It's not homemade.

TED

Cin, It's homemade. You were with us when we bought the ingredients. It's your mom's special recipe.

CINDY

That she programmed into Roley.

TED

Because she had work to do for an important meeting tomorrow. It doesn't matter who chops the tomatoes and puts the pan in the oven.

CINDY

Grandma says you can tell whether a meal has been made with love or not.

Alex drops her fork on her plate. It CLATTERS loudly.

Jonah's eyes get big. Cindy flinches. Both seem overly worried about what could happen next. Alex sees this and feels regret.

ALEX

How about after dinner, we all make chocolate chip cookies? With love. Roley can do the dishes.

JONAH

(over-enthusiastic, wanting things to be okay)

Yay!

Cindy nods slowly, buying in.

Alex smiles brightly and picks up her fork.

EXT. HAMMOND BACKYARD - NIGHT

Eating a cookie, Alex crosses the backyard to the shed and goes inside.

INT. SHED - ALEX'S DARKROOM - NIGHT

Alex collects enlarged photos from the line where they've been drying, adding a couple to the display pages of a PORTFOLIO.

She pauses, looking at the TATTERED MAN picture. She tucks it in a pocket of the portfolio.

INT. HAMMOND HOUSE - CINDY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Alex looks in. Cindy sleeps, illuminated by a night light.

INT. HAMMOND HOUSE - JONAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Alex looks in. A bedspread with sailing ships. The lamp is on. He's not in the bed.

EXT. BACK BALCONY - NIGHT

A wooden deck with a couple of lounge chairs.

ALEX

Jonah, what are you doing up?

Jonah, wrapped in a blanket, sits in one of the chairs, looking out at their suburban skyline. Homes, A few taller buildings, and, in the distance --

A TOWER. Lights twinkle at the end of each of its arms.

Jonah is DRAWING the tower, in pastels on dark paper.

JONAH

Homework. We're making posters for the anniversary.

ALEX

It's late.

JONAH

I forgot.

(beat)

Mommy, I don't want there to be another war.

ALEX

There won't be sweetie. There's not going to be any more wars.

JONAH

Because of the towers?

ALEX

Because of all of us working together. The towers amplify what we think, but we're responsible for having good thoughts.

JONAH

The towers have flower power!

ALEX

Is that what they say at school?

JONAH

Yeah. Because they look kind of like flowers. And because Terence Flowers is the man who built them.

ALEX

He *designed* them.

JONAH

To keep us all safe.

He nestles in to her. She looks at the distant tower, not as free of doubt as he is.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alex and Ted in bed, asleep.

A CLANGING -- as if someone is crashing into trash cans.

Alex bolts awake. She looks over at Ted. He's softly snoring.

Dax wakes because Alex is up. He perks his ears, THUMPS his tail on the floor and looks hopeful.

ALEX

Okay, fine.

She pulls herself out of bed. Dax happily runs from the room.

INT. FRONT HALL - NIGHT

Alex shoves her feet into shoes and puts the leash on Dax.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Alex ambles on the tree-lined sidewalk, letting Dax stop, sniff and pee where he likes. The night is quiet. Until -

FEET SLAPPING PAVEMENT.

A FIGURE RUNS down the street. He's wearing a business suit. We'll call him BUSINESSMAN.

More footfalls. TWO COPS in uniform CHASE AFTER HIM.

The men turn a corner, moving from sight.

Alex decides:

ALEX

Come on, Dax.

Jogging, she follows the figures, staying on the sidewalk, obscured from street view by the trees.

Dax runs, excited to be running, but not reacting to the figures.

They make a turn into a

CUL-DE-SAC

Alex, hidden by dark and trees, watches as --

BUSINESSMAN reaches the end of the road. Fenced yards on every side. Nowhere to go. He runs at a fence, agitated. Looks back at the cops.

OLDER COP

We don't want to hurt you.

Businessman looks down at the suit he's wearing. He pats it as if it's unfamiliar.

He turns in circles, patting, as if his body is strange to him.

BUSINESSMAN

(muttering)

What am I doing here? What am I doing?

The cops wait, weirdly unperturbed by the fact that Businessman is reaching into his pockets. He turns them inside out.

Alex sees SOMETHING -- a scrap of paper maybe -- fluttering to the ground, unnoticed by the Businessman or the cops.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

This is a test. This is only a test.

The guy is really out of it. Older Cop nods to YOUNG COP. They close in. Older Cop readies his handcuffs and takes Businessman's arm, just as --

Businessman finds an inside jacket pocket. And something in it. He yanks, turns--

For a brief flash Alex sees, a GUN IN HIS HAND.

Before anyone can react --

He SHOOTS!

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

Terence Flowers!

Older Cop GOES DOWN.

Alex is stunned, not understanding.

Younger Cop also STARES at the GUN in Businessman's hand in disbelief, backing away.

Now we notice, both on the ground next to Older Cop and in Young Cop's raised hand --

NIGHT STICKS.

They don't carry guns.

The Businessman has his gun pointed at Young Cop.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

This is a test. This is only a test. Pull the trigger.

Alex's expression CHANGES. A bystander no more.

BLOOD spills from the Older Cop. Businessman looks at it, upset -- as if he didn't expect it.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

It's only a TEST! It's only a --

Alex silently unhooks the leash on Dax, who seems oddly unaffected, snuffling in a bush.

She THROWS the tennis ball at the Businessman.

ALEX

Dax. *Fetch!*

The ball HITS Businessman and bounces off him.

Dax STREAKS toward the ball.

Businessman, surprised, turns and shoots wildly at Dax. He misses. Alex uses this moment of distraction to --

SPRINT toward the Businessman. She comes from behind him, CHOPS down on his wrist and sends the gun to the ground.

She scrambles for the gun and points it at the Businessman.

ALEX (CONT'D)

(to Young Cop)

Cuffs!

For a moment Young Cop is frozen. Alex notices his NAME TAG: SGT. THOMPSON.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Sgt. Thompson! Cuffs.

Thompson comes to life. With shaking hands he snaps the cuffs on Businessman's wrists.

She nods to Thompson's walkie.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Get him in the car and call for back up.

He nods and complies as Alex crouches down next to the Older Cop. His name tag, smeared with blood, says "Gage." Alex tries to staunch the blood.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Captain Gage. Stay with me. Help is coming. Just stay here.

She cups his cheek and looks into his eyes, willing him to survive.

For a moment he's there with her, then he's gone.

Alex pulls her hand away, stricken.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A slow night at the station. A couple of teens holding skateboards getting lectured by a cop at a desk. Until:

OFFICERS enter with Sgt. Thompson and Alex, both wrapped in metallic blankets, as if for shock. The desk cops look at them,, but before they can approach --

-- a man swoops in. He has on plain clothes, no name tag, though later we'll learn he is MIKE SANDERS.

Wordlessly Sanders herds the group out a BACK DOOR of the station and into an adjacent building:

INT. ANNEX - NIGHT

A central administrative bullpen surrounded by offices.

Sanders calls to men in the offices.

SANDERS

Debrief!

A few men come out of their offices to join Sanders as he guides Thompson to an elevator. Alex starts to follow.

SANDERS (CONT'D)

Actually, ma'am, why don't you go ahead and sit here. We'll get someone for you to talk to in just a moment.

He motions to a chair next to a closed office door.

ALEX

But --

Sanders addresses one of the staff, TERESA.

SANDERS

(to one of the staff)

Terry, can you order Mrs...

ALEX

Hammond.

SANDERS

... Mrs. Hammond a hot drink?

(sotto to Teresa)

Call Vincent in. Have him call me if he thinks there's anything I need to know.

Alex takes a step toward Sanders to ask a question, but he joins the group on the elevator. The doors close and they are gone.

Alex sits in the recommended chair.

She cracks the door of the office next to her and looks inside: a monitor, and a TREATMENT CHAIR, with a halo headpiece.

Theresa smiles from her desk.

TERESA

It won't take him long to get here.

A robot rolls up to Alex with coffee. Alex takes it. She closes her eyes for a moment, exhausted.

FLASH TO:

DREAMSCAPE

--The Business man raising his gun

--CLOSE on his hand, on the gun -- they MORPH into --

--ANOTHER HAND, holding ANOTHER GUN, in --

ANOTHER PLACE and TIME

--the TRIGGER is pulled -- a SHOT rings out --

--a young, BIRACIAL MAN winces as he is hit, falling

--a SHOOTER runs away -- down an alley

Frenzied, moving POV shots:

DUMPSTERS in the ALLEY

STREET LIGHTS overhead

POV -- looking down at a WOMAN'S HAND -- she pulls it
from her body -- covered in BLOOD

POV -- BIRACIAL MAN on the ground, bleeding --
(extend this moment -- this man is important)

POV -- FALLING -- a sidewalk rising up --

FLASH BACK TO:

INT. ANNEX - NIGHT

Alex's eyes POP OPEN with a STARTLED GASP.

COFFEE SLOSHES on her pants and the floor.

Teresa looks over, takes in Alex's stunned look.

TERESA

Are you okay?

Alex gathers her wits.

ALEX

Yes. I'm just going to... clean up.

Teresa nods sympathetically and points to the rest rooms.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Thanks.

The robot rolls over and mops the coffee from the floor.

Alex walks toward the rest room, then, with a quick
glance to insure no one is noticing --

-- walks past the rest rooms and out the exit door.

END ACT 2

ACT 3

INT. HAMMOND HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Alex, wearing a belted dressing gown over Hepburn-style pajamas, serves pancakes to Jonah and Cindy.

Ted enters, kisses her neck.

TED

Mmmm. Pancakes in the middle of the week.
What's up?

ALEX

Me. I didn't sleep that well.

Ted takes in her tired eyes, but keeps things light in front of the kids.

TED

Who can sleep if they're walking the dog in the middle of the night! Dax is going to get spoiled, thinking he can go for walks whenever he wants.

(to Dax)

Won't you boy?

He sneaks Dax a piece of pancake.

Alex rallies, teasing in return.

ALEX

He's already spoiled thinking he can eat people food whenever he wants.

Jonah laughs at their banter.

JONAH

Mommy and Daddy both spoil Dax!

TED

Mommy and Daddy both spoil everyone around here. Did I see your PJs on the floor?

JONAH

I forgot. Roley can pick them up.

TED

Your mother and I would like you to pick them up. So can you do that while you're up brushing your teeth, please. Ten minutes 'til bus!

Jonah and Cindy run upstairs.

With the kids gone, Ted looks at Alex concerned.

TED (CONT'D)

You doing okay? Is it the interview?

ALEX

(distracted)

Yeah. Nerves.

TED

You'll knock 'em dead.

Alex flinches at the word "dead." Then forces a smile.

ALEX

Oh, right. Yes. I'm ready.

Ted takes her by the shoulders.

TED

If you want this, I want you to have it.
But if it ever gets too stressful -- you
know that money's not a problem, that it
doesn't matter what --

She kisses him, putting a stop to his talking.

ALEX

Thank you.

The kids run back into the kitchen and pick up their lunches.

EXT. HAMMOND HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

The kids run to the bus at the corner, and Ted backs his car out of the driveway. Alex waves from the step.

Alex glances down the street. A line of women on their front steps, waving to their families. Like a perfect suburb in the 50s.

Alex searches their faces: peaceful and content. No sign that anything happened last night.

Alex pulls her dressing gown tighter around herself. She manages to wave and smile at one of her neighbors before stepping back inside.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Alex, in jogging clothes, with Dax, arrives at the CUL-DE-SAC from the night before.

The area is empty. Quiet.

She walks the area. No blood stains on the concrete, no sign of the night before.

She notices a tiny RED SCRAP wedged under the fence. Her eyes widen, but before she can retrieve it --

SANDERS (O.S.)

Out for a walk?

Alex turns to see Sanders, from the station.

SANDERS (CONT'D)

I don't know if I introduced myself last night.

ALEX

You didn't.

SANDERS

Sorry about that. Mike Sanders.

ALEX

I'm surprised you don't have this whole area cordoned off after last night.

SANDERS

Why would we do that?

Alex stops short, suddenly cautious.

ALEX

You were at the station. You KNOW.

SANDERS

I'm afraid I don't.

ALEX

There was a man here. And --
 (drops her voice low)
 -- a gun.

Sanders, too, looks to make sure no one is around.

SANDERS

I'm afraid you have the wrong impression. One of our officers, Sergeant Thompson, found you last night in a particularly agitated state. He suspected a traumatic flashback so he brought you in.

ALEX

No. I saw -- something else happened.

SANDERS

(gentle)

No... It didn't.

Realization hits her. Shame.

ALEX

Christ.

SANDERS

It's not a big deal. But it's probably best not to delay treatment. We can take care of it now if you want. We can drop off your dog and --

ALEX

- No. Not...

(looks at her clothes)

... like this. I can't have you at the house. This neighborhood is --people will talk. And I have a meeting today I can't miss. I won't be able to explain if I miss it... I'll come after the meeting.

Sanders nods reluctantly.

SANDERS

It's important that you do.

ALEX

I'll be there.

Alex heads back toward her house.

Sanders' car drives past her, leaving the cul-de-sac. Alex watches the car move out of sight.

She thinks for a moment, then jogs back to the fence.

She stoops and grabs the RED SCRAP, wriggling it until it comes free.

She stares at the object in her hand: It's a MATCHBOOK with the picture of a WAGON WHEEL on the front.

INT. HAMMOND HOUSE - DAY

Alex enters. Dax whimpers and lets out a couple sharp barks.

ALEX

Geez. Okay.

She unhooks his leash. He immediately darts into the next room. Strange. Alex follows him to

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Marla sits at the table flipping through Alex's photography portfolio. She points to a photo of the kids chasing fireflies.

MARLA

This one is adorable. You could give me a copy for my birthday!

ALEX

Mom, that portfolio was on my desk. And that extra key is for emergencies.

MARLA

Your car was here, so I knew you'd be back.

Marla looks at a photo: Jonah and Cindy with their friends Cam and Chrissy, running out of the foam pit, like soldiers rushing from the trenches. Foam blocks fly through the air behind them.

MARLA (CONT'D)

I hope you're not letting Cindy and Jonah get too close to these children. They live in that apartment complex, don't they? The mother is a nanny.

(sotto)

And I hear she's having some issues.

ALEX

I need to get ready for my meeting. What are you doing here?

MARLA

I just -- I don't want you to try to do too much.

ALEX

It's just a freelance client. Like the others.

MARLA

Is it? I'm afraid it's not. Your father says they're almost assured to be the first company to represent the new territories. Which --

She raises her voice to overpower Alex's incipient protest.

MARLA (CONT'D)

- even if they are as safe as everyone insists they will be, will take a lot of time. That kind of thing involves travel, time away from your family.

ALEX

We can manage.

MARLA

Can you? You don't seem to notice, but-- other mothers at the school, and other wives of Teddy's co-workers, work full time on their families. You working -- on top of your past --

She won't say it, so Alex does, flinging the word:

ALEX

-issues?

Marla changes tactics, her voice gentles.

MARLA

People can be judgemental.

ALEX

(at Marla)

I've noticed.

Alex walks by her to get to the hallway.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You can put the portfolio back on my desk on your way out. I need to get ready.

Frustrated, Marla slaps the portfolio closed. The PHOTO of the Tattered Man flutters from the portfolio pocket.

Seeing this, Alex freezes as Marla grabs the photo and looks at it.

MARLA

Are you keeping this for a reason?

Alex is surprised -- Marla isn't reacting to the image.

ALEX
(cautious)
What does that look like to you?

MARLA
Just an overexposed blur. Is it some kind
of experiment?

ALEX
No. You can toss it.

Alex heads for her bedroom.

INT. HAMMOND OFFICE - DEN - DAY

Alex examines the MATCHBOOK she picked up from the
ground.

On the front is a picture of a WAGON WHEEL and an
address: **5250 Sunset Blvd.**

She pulls a PHONE BOOK from the shelf -- confirming our
suspicions that the internet doesn't exist here.

She opens the YELLOW PAGES to "W." Her attention hovers
between WACKY WATER TOYS and WALLY'S WALL TREATMENTS.

Coming up blank, she closes the book, and pulls out at a
thick MAP book -- reminiscent of an old THOMAS GUIDE.

She checks the INDEX, hovers her finger over SUNRISE
ROAD. The next entry is SUNSHINE LANE.

Finding no SUNSET BLVD., she closes that book as well.
Mind racing.

INT. AD AGENCY - DAY

Alex sits at a low, modern table with well-attired
advertising execs. RON SIDNEY pages through her portfolio
as BETH looks over his shoulder.

They're looking at photos of the pier: Kids on the Ferris
wheel. Boats on the water, a stunning sunset.

ALEX
Those are coming out in City Mag next
week. A story about the pier.

RON

Impressive work. Can we keep this for a few days? I'd like to show it to my boss.

ALEX

Of course.

(beat)

Also... I just wanted to let you know, I'm not opposed to traveling for work...

Ron regards her, appraising.

ALEX (CONT'D)

...if there happened to be opportunities in the new territories.

RON

You know that nothing's been announced, officially.

ALEX

Of course.

RON

Although, I'd say whomever ends up on those expeditions would be subject to a stringent NDA. How does your family feel about it all?

ALEX

They're very supportive.

She gives him a winning smile.

RON

We'll be in touch.

They shake hands.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Sanders, holding a paper bag, stands on the sidewalk watching school kids play soccer on the grassy field.

In particular, his eyes follow JIMMY, 14, who is moving the ball across the field. Sanders grins as Jimmy makes a goal and pumps a fist.

PEGGY SANDERS, 40, appears at Sander's shoulder.

PEGGY

Glad to see all that practice when he should be doing homework pays off.

SANDERS
 (pleased)
 You made it.

He gives her a kiss. Sees inside her tote.

SANDERS (CONT'D)
 And you brought the blanket.

They cross the street to

EXT. PARK - DAY

The park is grassy and inviting. Sanders and Peggy sit on the blanket under a tree, and Sanders takes sandwiches out of the paper bag.

SANDERS
 These sandwiches are from the deli down the street from the precinct. They're everyone's favorite, and I realized you've never had one.

PEGGY
 Thanks. This is really nice.
 (beat)
 Is everything okay?

SANDERS
 Fine. Everything's fine. Why?

PEGGY
 Just -- in ten years, you've never suggested a picnic.

SANDERS
 We live in this beautiful place. It's safe, it's clean, Jimmy's getting a great education, I just thought, we should appreciate it all more. Take advantage.

Peggy suspects there's something more, but goes along with it.

PEGGY
 That's a lovely sentiment. You're right.

SANDERS
 And I may have to work some extra hours over the next few days.

PEGGY

(tolerant)

Ah hah.

(beat)

It is a very good sandwich.

Surveying the scene, a new thought occurs to her.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

This feels familiar. Do you think maybe we used to do this... before the war?

Sanders smiles, covering an underlying sadness.

SANDERS

Yeah. I think maybe we did.

INT. CAR / EXT. STATION - DAY

Parking across from the police station, Alex sees Sgt. Thompson, coming out.

She moves quickly to catch him.

ALEX

Sergeant Thompson!

He turns.

THOMPSON

Can I help you?

ALEX

I just wanted to thank you.

He smiles politely, blank.

ALEX (CONT'D)

For your help last night.

THOMPSON

I had a pretty quiet night last night. You might have me confused with Officer Thomas.

She stares at him for a moment, processing.

ALEX

Oh. I think you're right. Sorry.

THOMPSON

No problem. Happens all the time. It's the uniforms.

She turns and enters the building.

INT. ANNEX - TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

Alex sits in a halo-chair. The technician, VINCENT, sits at the monitor. They are mid-conversation.

VINCENT

You say the man with the gun seemed confused?

ALEX

Yes.

VINCENT

Can you recall what he said?

ALEX

Yes.

Silence.

VINCENT

Could you tell me what he said?

Vincent's eyes dart toward the one-way glass on the wall. Alex clocks it.

ALEX

I could.

VINCENT

Okay?

ALEX

But it doesn't really matter does it? Since it's all my imagination, or just some garbled flashback? And since we're both going to forget it anyway?

VINCENT

(nervous)

Well. Our methods here might differ from a typical session experience --

Alex pulls the MATCHBOOK from her pocket, holds it in view of the glass.

ALEX

This matchbook probably doesn't matter either. I guess I've just imagined that the guy dropped this, and that I picked it up.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Then I imagined that the name and the address on it don't exist on any map of our world.

Vincent looks confused and alarmed as she says this.

ALEX (CONT'D)

And now I'm imagining that I'm about to set it on fire.

She STRIKES one of the matches and holds the flame under the matchbook, threatening to light it up.

END ACT 3

ACT 4

INT. ANNEX - TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

As Vincent looks on, Alex lets the flame from the match in her hand graze the matchbook.

Sanders enters into the room.

SANDERS

Please, don't.

Alex and Sanders lock eyes. She lets the match burn down to the nub and drops it.

SANDERS (CONT'D)

Vincent, it's okay, I'll take this from here. Have Theresa help erase this session for you.

Vincent nods, relieved.

Sanders turns to Alex.

SANDERS (CONT'D)

We should have a conversation.

INT. ANNEX - ELEVATOR - DAY

ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSE on Sanders and Alex. Sanders inserts and turns a KEY for a level that says "B."

The elevator goes down.

Alex looks at Sanders, suspicious.

SANDERS

I'm sorry. I couldn't say anything until I was certain what you remembered. A lot of people might have shaped their memory into something that felt more rational.

ALEX

(accusing)

Is that why Officer Thompson doesn't remember last night?

SANDERS

(somber)

No, we erased the memory. At his own request. He found the experience... too difficult.

(MORE)

SANDERS (CONT'D)

(beat)

However, he did debrief us first, and he told us about your quick response and how you tried to save our officer. I'm grateful.

Alex nods.

This whole time, the elevator has been going down. And they still are.

ALEX

Are you going to show me the center of the earth?

The elevator stops. The doors open, revealing.

A HALLWAY. More like a TUNNEL. Long, curved and plated entirely with metal. It does feel vaguely like something you'd build at the center of the earth

SANDERS

Welcome to the Consensus Security Division. CSD.

INT. ANNEX BASEMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Alex follows Sanders into the hallway.

SANDERS

We're the agency tasked with protecting the integrity of the city's consensual reality.

She runs a hand down the curving metal wall.

SANDERS (CONT'D)

The area is designed to protect subjective thoughts so they don't get picked up and amplified by the towers.

ALEX

What kind of thoughts need an all-metal bunker a hundred feet underground?

SANDERS

It's standard practice to minimize any impact at all, but these walls are built for more extreme circumstances than we usually experience. Consensus is actually strong enough to withstand a certain percentage of subjectivities.

ALEX
Subjectivities?

SANDERS
You know, odd incidents that don't align
with the Consensus reality -- and
thoughts that arise from them. Last night
is an example.
(beat)
We need to know what the shooter said.

ALEX
First I want to know about this.

She pulls a paper from her bag and unfolds it -- handing
him the picture of the Tattered Man.

He looks at it.

ALEX (CONT'D)
You can see it?

Sanders nods.

SANDERS
You remember seeing this man?

ALEX
No. I'm a good citizen, I don't hoard my
memories. I found it on a roll I shot on
Friday.

They arrive at:

INT. ANNEX BASEMENT - SANDER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

In contrast to the futuristic hallway, his office is
simple: a desk and chair, a kettle and mini-fridge. A
sofa, and a change of clothing.

They sit at the desk.

ALEX
My mother doesn't see it. She only sees a
blur.

SANDERS
It's not within her paradigm.
(off her questioning look)
There's a story from the old world about
pioneers who traveled to a new land on
huge ships.

(MORE)

SANDERS (CONT'D)

When they arrived, the natives on the shore couldn't see them, because such big ships were outside the realm of their conception.

ALEX

No one could see the ships?

SANDERS

No one who made it into the story, but I'd guess there might have been someone who did, maybe a child too young to have preconceptions. Maybe someone with a different way of thinking about things

A moment as Alex thinks about this, looking at the photo of the Tattered Man.

ALEX

So this guy exists? He... doesn't look like... he belongs.

SANDERS

No. I'd say he's an incursion.

ALEX

(gut-punched)

But... That's not possible. Consensus makes a shell the enemy can't break through. Everyone says...

SANDERS

It's rare, but recently there've been sightings. Momentary flashes.

(re: the picture)

Like this one. It's possible they aren't even intentional. Someone mentally unstable could have a break from their own reality and stumble into ours. There's never been a violent action until last night.

ALEX

The shooter was... an incursion?

SANDERS

His DNA doesn't match any of our citizens. He has to be from the outside.

ALEX

He's still here?

Sanders nods.

SANDERS

So you understand why it's important to figure out who he is, and how he got here. I need your help to do that.

Alex nods. She puts the MATCHBOOK in front of him.

SANDERS (CONT'D)

You say you checked for the name of the establishment and the address and they weren't listed?

Alex nods.

ALEX

You asked me what he said --

The INTERCOM on Sander's desk erupts.

VOICE ON INTERCOM

He's unstable. We may be losing him.

SANDERS

Shit.

He presses on the intercom button.

SANDERS (CONT'D)

On my way.

He jumps up and runs out.

After a brief hesitation, Alex follows.

INT. ANNEX BASEMENT - HALLWAY

Alex follows Sanders as he runs down the long, tunnel-like hallway to the elevator. They get on.

INT. ANNEX SUB-BASEMENT - HALLWAY

The science and medical level. Sanders and Alex, running, complete their journey.

A GUARD stands outside a door as they arrive. Seeing Sanders, the guard steps aside.

INT. ANNEX SUB-BASEMENT - OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Entering, Sanders and Alex have a view through a glass OBSERVATION WINDOW to a HOLDING ROOM.

INT. ANNEX SUB-BASEMENT - HOLDING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A scientist, RACHEL, leans over Businessman, who is strapped to hospital-style bed. Rachel frantically adjusts settings on machines and IVs as Businessman --

PHASES IN AND OUT OF EXISTENCE.

For a moment he's substantial, the next moment he's translucent, ghostlike.

Rachel makes another adjustment.

Businessman becomes corporeal... and stays.

Rachel breathes a sigh of relief. She looks at Sanders, who has entered the room, flanked by Alex.

RACHEL

We got him. I can't say for how much longer though.

SANDERS

Why not?

RACHEL

When we got him, his system was full of a pharmaceutical cocktail we've never seen. My theory is that's what's allowed him to breach, and to stay this long. As it moves out of his bloodstream though...

SANDERS

How long?

Rachel shrugs.

RACHEL

Days? Hours.

SANDERS

We need to try to talk to him again.

RACHEL

I'll dial back the sedation. But you know what to expect.

She adjusts the sedative drip.

Suddenly, Businessman's eyes pop open and dart, frantic. Noticing his restraints, he pushes against them.

BUSINESSMAN

Where am I? What is this place! Karen!
Where's Karen?

ALEX (O.S.)

Sir, it's okay. You're safe.

Rachel and Sanders are surprised to see Alex next to the
Businessman's bed.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm Alex. Can you tell me your name?

Businessman looks around, eyes wild.

BUSINESSMAN

Where am I? A hospital? Where's Karen?

Alex takes hold of his hand. Rachel wants to pull Alex
away, but Sanders holds her back.

ALEX

We can help you look for Karen. But I
need you to help me first. I have a
question, okay?

Alex waits for his buy in: a nod.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What can you tell me about Terence
Flowers?

Sanders' eyes widen.

The name seems to focus the Businessman.

BUSINESSMAN

Terence Flowers.

ALEX

Terence Flowers. Do you know him?

Businessman pulls Alex to him, and whispers intensely:

BUSINESSMAN

Tell him his old friend is coming.

ALEX

Who --

But Businessman's head falls back on the pillow. He's
gone again, flailing.

BUSINESSMAN

This is a test. This is only a test. Pull the trigger! Bang! BANG!

He lunging harder against his straps. Sanders sighs and nods for Rachel to increase the sedative.

Businessman's shouts subside.

INT. BASEMENT - SANDERS' OFFICE

Sanders shuts the door. Then turns to Alex, angry.

SANDERS

You should have told us immediately that he mentioned Flowers! What were you thinking?

Alex isn't having it.

ALEX

If I recall correctly, I was thinking, "what the hell is this place" followed by "shit, you mean the whole thing wasn't just my imagination?" Then "so the safe, perfectly protected world that I sacrificed my past for, that we've all believed in for the last decade, isn't that safe at all?" Sorry I didn't follow CDS standard protocol!

SANDERS

CSD.

ALEX

Whatever.

SANDERS

You're right. I'm sorry.

They're both calmer now.

ALEX

So... what happens now? Is Vincent waiting upstairs to erase this whole thing?

Sanders thinks for a long moment.

SANDERS

Is it possible for you to stay for a little while longer?

Alex nods.

ALEX

The kids are at my parents'.

SANDERS

Good. Why don't you make yourself a cup of tea? I'll be back as soon as I can.

He leaves, pulling the door closed behind him.

Alex wanders into the kitchen area and heats up the kettle.

MOMENTS LATER

Cup of hot tea in hand, Alex stands on Sanders' side of his desk. She inspects a couple of PHOTOGRAPHS in frames:

Sanders with his family, Peggy and Jimmy -- a few years younger than we just saw on the soccer field -- and a daughter, about nine years old. All happy and smiling.

Another photo: Sanders standing over a barbecue grill, shoulder-to-shoulder with an older man. Casually dressed and grinning, it takes a Alex moment to recognize:

MEMORY FLASH

Captain Gage -- in uniform the night of the shooting. Falling after Businessman's bullet hits him.

SANDERS' OFFICE

In the photo, Captain Gage is still alive, happy -- and he and Sanders were clearly close friends. Alex respectfully sets the photo back down.

Her eyes land on a typed REPORT lying in a folder.

She rests her fingers on it, considering whether to look inside.

INT. ANNEX BASEMENT - HALLWAY

Sander's steps echo in the lonely hallway as he comes to a door and opens it.

INT. ANNEX BASEMENT - ARCHIVES - CONTINUOUS

The room is cavernous. A warehouse, housing dozens of rows of tall FILING CABINETS that reach to the distant ceiling.

A ROBOT rolls into Sanders' path. This is RAA, a Robotic Archival Assistant.

RAA
(synthetic voice)
Please provide your clearance.

Mike stretches out his hand and allows RAA to scan it.

RAA (CONT'D)
Thank you. What file would you like to access?

SANDERS
Professional profile for Alexandria Hammond, please.

RAA digests this, then glides away from Sanders, turning down an aisle so long that RAA grows small with distance.

From this distance we see RAA roll onto a PLATFORM that then rises twenty feet. A high drawer opens for the robot.

A SHORT TIME LATER

The robot glides back to Sanders with a file and hands it to Sanders.

Sanders opens it. A few forms. We glimpse a PHOTOGRAPH of a younger Alex, wearing what looks like a police uniform.

INT. ANNEX BASEMENT - SANDERS' OFFICE

Once again, Sanders sits across from Alex.

SANDERS
How much do you know about what you did during the war?

ALEX
Nothing. Same as everyone.

Sanders nods.

SANDERS

Nothing's ever happened to make you suspect one thing or another?

Alex regards him, reluctant to discuss this.

ALEX

I've had two episodes that were... bad. One was soon after the war. The other one was just a couple years ago. It happened at a school picnic. I guess... I had some intense flashbacks. I was so agitated, I couldn't tell them when they had started, so they erased three days before it happened. One of those was my daughter's birthday... Anyway, I think my husband and parents would assume I was a civilian -- high-strung, not good with stress...
(a sardonic grin)
...weak minded.

SANDERS

But you don't believe that?

She shrugs.

ALEX

I don't know. Someone told me that, at the picnic, right before my episode, some of the kids were playing with fire crackers, and just the way I -- *feel* about things sometimes. I've wondered.

SANDERS

You weren't a civilian.

ALEX

Was I a soldier?

SANDERS

I don't want to tell you too much. But I want to talk to you about your... skill. You've been seeing through Consensus. We call it "true sight." It's a rare ability. I have it. Captain Gage was a natural. Officer Thompson wasn't a natural but Gage was training him.

ALEX

But now Gage is gone, and Thompson has opted out, and you've got a shortage in this quadrant.

Sanders looks at the report on the desk.

SANDERS
You looked at my report?

ALEX
Sorry.

SANDERS
We need someone curious. And observant.

ALEX
What are you asking?

SANDERS
The decennial celebration is in two days. Leader Flowers live on stage televised in front of three million people. I could use another pair of eyes in the crowd.

ALEX
(sinking realization)
You think there could be a second shooter at the celebration?

SANDERS
If there is, most of our population won't be able to see him. But most of our three million viewers will see Leader Flowers go down, even if they don't know why. A lot of upset people with differing opinions isn't great for Consensus

ALEX
You think it would be enough to weaken the shell?

SANDERS
If not worse. I can talk to someone in PR about shaping the story as soon as it happens...

He shakes his head at the enormity of it.

SANDERS (CONT'D)
But better if we can prevent anything from happening in the first place.

He looks at her, waiting.

She nods. She'll help.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

A BIG auditorium. Mega-church big. Packed with people. All gazing at the man on stage: Terence Flowers.

He speaks with a preacher's sing-song confidence.

FLOWERS

Reification. To make something real, to bring it into being, to make it concrete. This, friends, is how we will construct and maintain this world. Our enemies have sought to bring us down. They filled our lives with pain and violence. They have grasped at our lives with greed, but now the war is over. We have risen to the occasion. We refuse to let them bring their evil into our world. We choose to combine our efforts, as pioneers, to create a new world, a better world, that is ours alone.

Behind him, the large glowing backdrop CHANGES, to a HUGE REPRESENTATION of a stem rising up -- arms outreaching. An abstract flower. A TOWER, like the ones we've seen.

As the image forms fully, there's a RUMBLING as the audience stomps their feet in approval. Hands CLAPPING. CHEERS rise up like a tidal wave.

The response is unanimous and overwhelming. The people in the audience are euphoric.

Terence Flowers stands. Humble. Taking in his due.

END VIDEO

Because this has been a video.

A title card appears on the screen: **Celebrating 10 Years: Consensus.**

REVEAL the screen is HUGE, and we are:

EXT. TOWN PLAZA - DAY

Thousands of people gaze up at the stage backed by the SCREEN.

A POV pans the crowd and we see some faces more closely. There's the CLICK of a camera, a STILL FRAME of the faces.

REVEAL: Alex, is watching the crowd through her camera lens. She's on an elevated platform with other members of the press.

Scanning again, her POV lingers on Ted, Jonah and Cindy and Alex's parents.

James nudges the group into a better position and picks up Jonah and puts him on his shoulders so he can see.

Alex has a trace of a smile seeing this -- her father's face framed by the arms of her little boy.

CLICK. STILL FRAME.

ON STAGE:

A beautiful woman walks center-stage, in a fitted skirt-suit, she has the sleek look of a politician's wife -- which she is. This is SERENA FLOWERS.

The crowd cheers for her, she smiles for them.

SERENA

We have lived through dark days. Only ten years ago we had been brought low by our enemy, subject to continual attacks to our bodies, our spirits and our very reality. We lived in a world beleaguered by poverty and violence we cannot even imagine today. Today, we not only survive, we thrive. All because ten years ago, Leader Flowers gave us the gift of his Consensus technology. Leader Flowers ended the long war and delivered us to this promised land, this better reality that we have enjoyed for the last decade. It is my honor to introduce my love, my husband, and our leader: TERENCE FLOWERS.

Alex's CAMERA POV: A MAN in a PLAID JACKET reaches into his breast pocket. Is he reaching for a gun?

Alex speaks into a hidden microphone. We see she's wearing a discreet earpiece.

ALEX

Plaid blazer, third row, center by the stage.

BACKSTAGE: Sanders has a view of the stage and the crowd. He clocks the various policemen, armed with nightsticks.

Sanders finds the Plaid Jacket Man in the crowd -- it's hard to see him among the other bodies.

Alex's voice comes through his earpiece:

ALEX (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Nothing. He was reaching for his glasses.

CAMERA POV: Plaid Jacket Man finishes adjusting his spectacles. He gazes at the stage, enamored, like the people around him. CLICK. STILL IMAGE.

ON STAGE:

TERENCE FLOWERS walks to the podium, kisses his wife as she exits, leaving him alone on the stage.

The crowd goes wild.

FLOWERS

Thank you. Thank you so much for your generosity. But I want to emphasize this is not only *my* work, but *yours*. From the beginning we knew that making this transition would require a critical mass of people. *All of us*. And it continues to require that, every day. Every day, you are maintaining your way of life, for yourselves, your families, your neighbors. And every day, they are doing that for you. I can't think of anything more beautiful. THANK YOU!

IN THE AUDIENCE

Marla looks up to James with tears swimming in her eyes, he embraces her.

The Hammond children jumping up and down, cheering, caught up in the enthusiasm of the crowd. They look toward Alex, waving furiously. Alex waves back.

Flowers departs the stage.

Alex moves to follow Flowers, ducking through the

BACKSTAGE

And emerges out the back in time to see

Sanders escorting Flowers to his HELICOPTER.

Out of Alex's earshot, Sanders says something to Flowers. Flowers seems to ask *are you sure?*

They exchange a few more words, then -- cognizant of being seen, Sanders slips away, and --

Flowers turns and waves a last time before ducking into his transport.

The HELICOPTER rises into the sky.

Sanders' eyes finds Alex among a few other photographers. They exchange a look: No crisis. For the moment.

INT. ANNEX SUB-BASEMENT - HALLWAY

The guard stands outside Businessman's holding room.

INT. ANNEX SUB-BASEMENT - HOLDING ROOM

Businessman wakes. He's alone, still strapped to the bed. He groans, strains against the restraints...

He PHASES, disappearing, reappearing, disappearing.

Appearing. Still struggling, but all the sudden, his ARM FLIES UP. He looks: His arms are OUTSIDE his straps.

Quickly he unbuckles the remaining straps across his body and legs. Sits up and rips the needle from his arm, setting off a BEEPING ALARM as --

He jumps out of the bed.

END ACT 4

ACT 5

INT. ANNEX SUB-BASEMENT - HOLDING ROOM

An ALARM on the medical monitor BLARES as the Businessman stands in his hospital gown, swaying unsteadily.

He tries the door to the hallway. Locked.

FOOTFALLS in the hallway. He crouches behind the door.

A JANGLING of keys. The knob of the door turns, Rachel runs in.

She sees the empty bed, just as --

-- the Businessman LUNGES past her, into --

INT. HALLWAY

The Guard sees Businessman too late to fully react. Guard moves into his path. Businessman's momentum KNOCKS Guard into the wall.

Businessman's eyes light up as he sees the KEYS still in the Guard's hand. He GRABS the keys and RUNS.

From his sedated POV, the curved, metallic hallway seems particularly long and surreal.

Rachel and the Guard, chase after him.

Businessman moves quickly, LURCHING from side to side as he goes. Again he is PHASING in and out. Ghostlike, solid, ghostlike, solid.

He rounds a bend in the hall -- out of sight of Rachel and the Guard.

They come around the bend after him to find:

EMPTY HALLWAY.

The RING OF KEYS lies on the floor.

The Businessman is gone.

CUT TO:

INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM

CLOSE on Businessman's FACE -- now sporting several days of beard growth. He's dozing, head falling to his chest, but now he:

JOLTS AWAKE.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Mr. Del Amo! You're back!

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Vitals are steady.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

And it seems you are going to live. You are the first. I can't tell you how excited I am for you.

Businessman looks blearily at the owner of the voice.

PULL TO REVEAL:

He's STRAPPED into a CHAIR.

Hooked up to an IV once again. There's a catheter bag taped to his chair leg. He's wearing the suit we first saw him in, but it's rumpled and worn.

It seems like he's been here for days

Businessman's voice sounds raspy, unused:

BUSINESSMAN

Karen?

VOICE (O.S.)

In good time, Mr. Del Amo. First I want to hear all about your trip. Sherry can get you a glass of water, and we can have a good, long chat.

Businessman closes his eyes, exhausted, but resigned.

INT. HAMMOND HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alex and Ted sit side by side, on the couch watching television. A show that could have been made in the 50s or 60s.

They both laugh along with the traditional LAUGH TRACK.

The PHONE RINGS.

Alex goes to the phone -- a land line -- and picks up.

ALEX
Hammond residence.
(surprised)
Mr. Sidney. Hello.

Ted catches this and turns to look.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Oh! Really. Well, thank you. That's
wonderful news.
(listens)
Tomorrow. It won't be a problem. Thanks
again.

She hangs up. Ted looks at her, expectant.

ALEX (CONT'D)
The Adlon Company. They liked my work and
want to use me on some upcoming projects.
I'm supposed to go in tomorrow to sign
some paperwork and get on the roster.

TED
Congratulations! That's amazing!

He comes and embraces her. After a moment she pulls back
to look at him. She speaks quietly.

ALEX
There may be some travel involved.

He nods.

TED
And you might not be able to talk about
it, I know. I can't say I love that. But
I love you.

Now she embraces him.

CLOSE on them as they kiss.

Her hand presses the back of his neck -- but it's NOT his
neck: The skin is darker. As she kisses him, we realize:

She's kissing the BIRACIAL MAN from her DREAMSCAPE.
Passionately.

She looks up at his face and --

It's Ted.

TED (CONT'D)

Are we celebrating?

Her look, for an instant, is blank. Then she recovers.

ALEX

Yes.

She takes his hand and lets him lead her to the stairs, keeping her growing number of secrets to herself.

INT. ANNEX SUB-BASEMENT - SCIENCE LAB

Rachel works with a microscope and test tubes of blood. Sanders enters.

SANDERS

Well?

RACHEL

We're still analyzing the serum in his bloodstream Dimethyltryptamine, which we expected, but also some psychoactives we've never seen. And he ended up in this reality, not some other one. It's possible the compound initially contained some nanites that acted as guides, then self-destructed once he arrived.

SANDERS

I love it when you talk science. How long until we can reverse engineer it? Send someone through the other way?

RACHEL

A *while*. Maybe. The state that guy was in, though, nobody's going to want to volunteer to test it.

(beat)

How's the new girl?

SANDERS

I think she's going to stick. I put in a call to make sure she got the job at Adlon. It'll buy her some wiggle room with her family.

RACHEL

Girls with families like hers don't usually up and decide to join the force. Do you know something above my pay grade?

SANDERS

I do.

RACHEL

I'll take your word for it then. Are you going to make it home to your wife tonight?

Sanders nods.

SANDERS

Soon. You?

RACHEL

Same.

They meet eyes.

Then come together, embracing and kissing.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Cars driving in the drizzling rain. Not the futuristic cars we've been seeing in Alex's world, but clunkier, more traditional cars like we see in our world.

In fact --

This is our world.

Cigarette butts and food wrappers vibrate in the gutter in the wake of each passing car. No robots come to sweep them up.

A shiny BLACK CAR pulls up to the curb. The back door opens. HANDS push a BODY from the car onto the sidewalk. The door shuts. The car drives away, leaving --

Businessman.

Lying fetal on the sidewalk, looking like a drunk sleeping off a week-long bender.

Cars drive past, splashing him.

A pedestrian steps over him without pausing.

Nearby a door opens and two men exit. Two pairs of work boots move toward Businessman, then stop.

RUBEN'S VOICE

Shit.

CHARLIE'S VOICE

Marty?

The Businessman is a guy named MARTY DEL AMO.

As the two men lean over him, we see their faces: A Latino guy, RUBEN, and a black guy, CHARLIE. Charlie wears a doo-rag printed with the AMERICAN FLAG.

RUBEN

Is he breathing?

Charlie nods.

They pull Marty up, drape his arms over their shoulders, and drag him to the door they came from.

As they enter, we see it's a storefront BAR, its name spelled out in neon:

THE WAGON WHEEL

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL COMPLEX PLAZA - DAY

Ted and Alex cross the grass lawn and stone walkways to the Central Complex.

INT. CENTRAL COMPLEX - ELEVATOR - DAY

As before, Ted and Alex ride an elevator with other people. Ted debarks at one floor, Alex another.

INT. CENTRAL COMPLEX - TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

Brian, the same technician as before, greets Alex as she enters.

BRIAN

Hi, I'm Brian. I'll be your technician today.

ALEX

Hi, Brian.

Alex sits in the halo chair.

BRIAN

How was your week?

Alex replies smoothly.

ALEX
Nothing to report.

BRIAN
That's great.

Brian makes a notation.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
We're done. Enjoy your day.

ALEX
(smiling)
You too.

Alex gets up and leaves.

INT. CENTRAL COMPLEX - HALLWAY - DAY

Alex walks down the hall, just like all the other citizens. Some go in the offices, others leave.

All of them are walking past the bank of windows, through which we see the plaza: Trees, grass, blue skies. Towers.

PULLING OUT -- now we have an aerial view of:

EXT. CENTRAL COMPLEX PLAZA - DAY

Happy people walking, trees, buildings, TOWERS.

All growing smaller as we PULL FURTHER OUT, to

EXT. CITY - DAY

Streets and buildings, hills, the ocean, TOWERS.

PULLING OUT MORE, we see the WHOLE CITY.

And we see how it FADES at its boundaries. At a certain point the water of the ocean in one direction, the land extending in the other, just... end.

As if the city were housed in an invisible snow globe, and everything outside the globe were dark and diffuse.

Don't worry about it yet, just let the camera movements give the impression that this city comprises the whole of the world. The whole, beautiful world.

END