

FAULTS

by

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INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

It's 1986.

On ANSEL ROTH (40's), alone in a booth eating a club sandwich. He wears a blazer that's a depressing shade of brown and sports a mustache.

A WAITER approaches...

WAITER

Can I get you anything else?

He chews and swallows then shakes his head "no"...

WAITER (CONT'D)

In that case. Whenever you're ready.

Before the waiter can set the check on the table Ansel pulls a crumpled piece of paper from his pocket and hands it to the young man...

ANSEL

I have a voucher.

The waiter unfolds the paper. He inspects it, then...

WAITER

I'll be right back.

He walks away from the table. Ansel doesn't look up as he eats the remainder of the fries on his plate.

A moment later the waiter returns with his MANAGER. Ansel looks up...

ANSEL

That is a voucher from the hotel.

MANAGER

Well. Yes. It is. But this voucher has been used already.

ANSEL

No it hasn't.

The manager remains calm. He holds the paper out for Ansel to see...

MANAGER

You see here. These are my initials. I'm the manager. When the voucher has been used I mark it with my initials and then it's processed.

ANSEL

I was given that by the hotel.

MANAGER

I understand, but what I'm saying is that you used it last night. I remember you. It looks like you-like *someone* tried to erase the writing but it's pen ink. It's faded but still there.

Ansel sits up.

ANSEL

I am a guest of the hotel. I was promised one complimentary meal a day while I'm staying here.

MANAGER

That's fine but I don't know anything about that. You're going to want to talk with hotel management about that. But this is no good and I need you to pay for your food.

ANSEL

How much is it?

MANAGER

Four seventy five--

ANSEL

(cutting him off)

I don't have that.

MANAGER

How much do you have?

Ansel stuffs the remainder of his sandwich in his mouth. It's too big a piece and hard to chew.

ANSEL

(mouth full)

Nothing. I don't have anything.

He continues to stare and chew, antagonistic...

MANAGER

I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

ANSEL

I'd like to finish my meal.

MANAGER

And I'd like for you to leave. Plus, you've eaten your food.

Ansel's plate is clean. He scans the table. He casually reaches for the ketchup bottle, turns it upside down and gives it a few shakes onto his plate. He eats a bite of ketchup using his fork...

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Please, stop that.

He doesn't... The manager slides the plate away from him.

Ansel reaches for the syrup dispenser but the manager steps in and grabs him. A struggle ensues in the confines of the booth.

The young waiter stays back, unsure of what to do.

The manager forces Ansel out of the booth. DELAYED PAN as the manager pushes him towards the exit.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY/LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Ansel is shoved through the doors and out of the restaurant...

MANAGER

I want you to know that I saw you take that voucher out of the trash. I wasn't going to say anything because I didn't want to embarrass you but then all this happened...

(beat)

So I'm saying it.

Ansel straightens his jacket and walks into the lobby of the three star hotel as if nothing happened. People stare for a moment but quickly go back to their business.

Ansel spots a fallen poster and stand. He rights the stand and puts the poster back in its place.

On the poster is Ansel's somewhat sad smiling face holding a book called FOLLOWER: INSIDE THE MIND OF THE CONTROLLED by Ansel Roth, PhD.

A HOTEL GUEST stops as she's walking past. She looks at the poster, then at Ansel. Ansel stares back.

HOTEL GUEST
You look familiar.

ANSEL
(re: the poster)
That is me.

HOTEL GUEST
No, from somewhere else.

ANSEL
I don't know you so I don't know
how you would know me.

Confused, she walks away.

CONCIERGE (O.S.)
Mr. Roth.

The CONCIERGE approaches. He smiles professionally.

CONCIERGE (CONT'D)
Only a few more hours until your
presentation. Do you have
everything you need?

ANSEL
My sign was on the ground.

CONCIERGE
I'm sorry to hear that.
Housekeeping was wondering at what
point they might expect your things
to be gathered so they can turn
over the room.

ANSEL
Also, why was my dinner only comped
last night? I was under the
impression I would get one free
meal per day.
(beat)
What time is check out tomorrow
morning? I can be out by then.

CONCIERGE

I think there's been some sort of misunderstanding.

ANSEL

...

CONCIERGE

According to the agreed upon terms for your speaking arrangement you were entitled to a night's stay and one free meal at our restaurant. You used both last night.

ANSEL

Jerry is aware of this?

CONCIERGE

I don't know who Jerry is.

ANSEL

My manager. The man who made the deal.

CONCIERGE

Jerry agreed to the terms, yes. Checkout should have been at noon. Can you be out of the room in the next hour?

Ansel stares at his poster...

ANSEL

Can this wait until after the seminar?

CONCIERGE

No, I'm sorry. You can pay for another room tonight, though. I can give you a reduced employee rate. We accept Traveler's checks or you could always pay in cash.

ANSEL

(shaking his head)

Can I make a telephone call?

CONCIERGE

Is it a local number?

ANSEL
 (lying)
 Yes.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - GUEST CHECK IN - DAY

The concierge presses 9 on the large phone and passes it to Ansel who clearly dials enough digits to be a long distance number. The concierge shakes his head disappointingly but does nothing about it and instead helps another guest.

The phone rings. It rings again. And again before...

ANSEL
 Hello, Jerry? Pick up.
 (waits)
 It's me, Ansel.
 (waits)
 Roth-- Ansel Roth. Can you pick up,
 Jerry?

An NEWLYWED COUPLE steps up to the counter next to Ansel. The RECEPTIONIST congratulates the happy pair...

Ansel moves to the edge of the counter and turns his back to them.

ANSEL (CONT'D)
 Sorry, I'm still here. I guess
 you're not in the office right now.
 Jerry, I don't... This is... I'm at
 the seminar in...

He leans over and interrupts the receptionist helping the couple...

ANSEL (CONT'D)
 What town is this?

RECEPTIONIST
 I'll be right with you, sir. I'm
 assisting these guests.

She looks back at the couple and begins to speak.

ANSEL
 (interrupting; to the
 couple)
 What town is this?

YOUNG MARRIED MAN
 (annoyed)
 Shepardsville.

Ansel returns to the edge of the counter. The receptionist apologizes to the couple.

ANSEL
 (back into the phone)
 Shepardsville. I'm about to do the seminar and I need to talk to you, Jerry. It's about the deal and the remainder of the... the tour.
 (beat)
 Things are not good. They are not good. Okay, I'm hanging up now. I'm going to go.

He hangs up the phone.

INT. ANSEL'S HOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - DAY

Ansel pees into the toilet. He finishes and reaches for the lever to flush but decides not to. He also decides to leave the seat up.

He removes the toilet paper from the dispenser. He takes the shampoo and soap from the shower as well as a towel and a hand towel.

INT. ANSEL'S HOTEL ROOM - LIVING AREA - DAY

Ansel tosses the toiletries into his suitcase... Half the space is full of copies of his book.

He scans the room for other things to steal. He takes the 9 volt battery out of the bulky remote control and puts it in his coat pocket.

There's a knock at the door...

HOUSEKEEPING (O.S.)
 Housekeeping.

Ansel closes up his suitcase and carries it with him. He opens the door to see a nice OLDER WOMAN with an accent.

HOUSEKEEPING (CONT'D)
 It is okay?

ANSEL
Yes, it is okay.

She smiles. He starts to leave but...

ANSEL (CONT'D)
(feeling guilty)
Sorry. One second.

He goes into the bathroom and closes the lid and flushes the toilet...

He listens to the sound as he stares at himself in the mirror.

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

Ansel totes his suitcase to a used late 70's Chevy Chevette.

He pops open the trunk to the hatchback revealing stacks of boxes filled with copies of his book. He places the suitcase in the trunk and removes two of the boxes of books before slamming the door shut.

Ansel walks back towards the hotel with the boxes but struggles to carry them.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

The somewhat large space is brightly lit by the room's overhead fluorescents. A small stage has been set up at the head of the room flanked by the poster and stand from earlier on one side and a table full of books on the other. Very low budget.

Ansel stands on the stage in front of a hundred or so event chairs, though only a quarter of them are filled. Despite the small crowd and less than ideal setup he speaks with conviction. He he has every beat memorized...

ANSEL
I'm not talking about the
philosophical, metaphysical
meditation. This is the most basic
freedom: free will. Choice.
Decisions that are decided upon by
ourselves. So we're in control,
right? Yes? No? We make a plan but
life has other ideas, doesn't it?
(MORE)

ANSEL (CONT'D)

We choose a path we want to take but what does life do?— It puts barriers in our way. It makes changes. So do we accept this? Do we just give up? No, we take a detour. Every choice we make, every path we take is a detour to get us to where we want to be. Your life is your choice. Making a choice for yourself based on what life gives you— That is free will.

It's like a sermon. Ansel puts everything he has into it...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

But what if someone else is in control? What if they control your physical body? Your mind's every thought? Your emotional well being? Well, ladies and gentlemen, cults do this. They exploit the fact that inside every single one of us is the capacity to be captivated. To be manipulated. Controlled. They exploit your weaknesses. They hack our consciousness and remove you from those who care about you. They create physical and emotional barriers distancing you from everyone and everything you once knew... including yourself. They mold you. Conform you. Even with that voice in the back of your head screaming "Get out!" most give in.

A MOTHER in the audience gathers her young SON to leave. The child wears swim trunks and has a towel wrapped around his shoulders, having just been at the hotel pool.

Ansel stops speaking for a moment. He listens as the sound of wet flip-flops SMACK the soles of the boy's feet echoes through the room.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

When another human being makes decisions for you your free will ceases to be.

He watches as the kid follows his mother towards the door.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

You're a follower.

The son glances back at Ansel. Ansel stares him down. The boy exits.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

(back to business)

At that point you have become a follower. But you don't have to be. You may ask, "How do I escape this imprisonment?"

A MAN IN THE AUDIENCE laughs. Ansel is caught off guard but continues...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

Well I'm going to talk with you about that. At this point I encourage you to follow along in my book. For those who don't have a copy they can be purchased from me at this time for fifteen dollars.

The man makes a bigger fuss this time. Audience members look back at the man...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

(to the man)

Do you have a question?

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

No, I do not.

Ansel redirects his attention back to the seminar...

ANSEL

No one needs a book? I see a lot of you do not have the book--

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

(interrupting)

Fuck you.

ANSEL

Me?

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

You. I'm talking to you.

ANSEL

I'm not sure what you're trying to say.

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

Does it bother you that you cannot control me?

ANSEL

I encourage those with questions to save them until the end.

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

You're lying to these people. You stand there, pretending to have the answers.

ANSEL

No I do not. This, all of this, is based on my years of experience and research. I am offering people a path.

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

Who are you?

ANSEL

Who are you?

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

Who are you?

ANSEL

I'm Ansel Roth, one of the world's foremost authority on mind control and cult organizations--

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

You're a murderer.

The audience begins to rustle. Whispers can be heard. Ansel stands there silent and motionless, then...

ANSEL

(realizing)

Who are you?

The man walks towards the stage...

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

You brainwashed my family into thinking what they were doing was right.

ANSEL

It was.

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

You and people who claimed to care about her gang-raped her mind. You broke her. You destroyed her.

The man makes his way onto the stage and stands in front of Ansel.

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE (CONT'D)

Then you exploited her. You humiliated her for the world to see.

ANSEL

She would be dead if-- I know she's not alive now, but still, she'd be dead if she stayed with the group.

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

She wouldn't have died alone.

ANSEL

You're her brother aren't you?

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

I was.

ANSEL

Your family knew they were losing her. We tried to help her. You have to see that. Please, understand.

Ansel touches the man's arms. It seems as if he might have gotten through to the man.

The man takes a look around and smiles. He pulls away from Ansel...

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

It's good to see you've ruined your own life just as much as you've ruined the lives of others.

His words hang in the air a moment. The audience stares at Ansel, waiting for a response. He's tried to keep it together but it's clear he's given up...

ANSEL

You are right. Your sister was broken. But I had nothing to do with that.

(MORE)

ANSEL (CONT'D)

She had the choice of living with people who ignored her, controlled her, abused her... or dying alone in solidarity with a suicide cult. She made her choice, huh?

The entire hall is silent... Then the man punches Ansel HARD in the eye. Ansel falls to the ground. The man kicks him in the stomach several times then spits on him.

MAN IN THE AUDIENCE

Piece of shit. I hope you die.

(beat)

And I hope I broke one of your ribs.

The audience watches unfazed as if it were part of the show.

The man turns and walks away. Ansel lays there in the fetal position, moaning loudly and uncontrollably.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE HALL - LATER

Hotel staff stack up chairs and getting ready for their next event, a wedding.

Ansel is bloodied and bruised. He's got the beginnings of a black eye. He boxes up the unsold books (all of them) and tries to lift the box onto a dolly but immediately stops and clutches the right side of his rib cage.

An OLDER MARRIED COUPLE approaches from off screen...

HUSBAND (O.S.)

Do you need a hand with that?

Ansel almost ignores him but decides he needs the help.

ANSEL

Just stack it.

(beat)

Please.

The man stacks the boxes on the dolly. Ansel feels his eye socket.

HUSBAND

This is my wife Evelyn. My name is Paul.

Ansel doesn't respond...

PAUL
You need some ice.

ANSEL
No, thank you.

PAUL
No, I don't have any I was just
saying that would be good for you.
(beat)
We attended your seminar.

ANSEL
Did you buy a book?

EVELYN
We already have a copy. Big fans.

Evelyn pulls a copy from her purse. It's worn around the
edges...

EVELYN (CONT'D)
First edition.

ANSEL
There is only one edition. I can
sign it for five dollars.

Evelyn looks to Paul...

PAUL
That won't be necessary.

Ansel goes back about his business.

Evelyn whispers at Paul and hands the book to him...

PAUL (CONT'D)
Can you make it out to Claire?

Ansel stops and digs through a box to find a pen. Paul hands
him the book...

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry about your show.

ANSEL
This one just now?

PAUL
No, your television show. I thought
it was really something. It's a
shame...

ANSEL

I don't... Yeah- Claire you said?

PAUL

She's our daughter.

ANSEL

Are you sure she wouldn't like a newer copy?

EVELYN

This one has special meaning to us.

Ansel hasn't put pen to paper. They stand there a moment before Paul realizes...

PAUL

Oh, sorry.

He pulls out his wallet and hands Ansel five ones. Ansel counts the bills then signs the opening page.

PAUL (CONT'D)

That is why we came actually... She is why we are here.

EVELYN

We were wondering if we might be able to talk with you about our daughter.

ANSEL

It has been a long day. I just... I need to sleep.

(remembering)

In my hotel room. At this hotel.

EVELYN

We believe she is in a very dangerous situation. Nothing has been able to get through to her. We do not know who else to turn to--

ANSEL

People like you don't have ads Yellow Pages. That's why we came tonight, to see and speak with you. If we could just take a moment of your time.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

I'm flattered but to be perfectly honest, everything I would tell you is just going to be a version of something on a page in that book in your hand except it will be worded poorly because I just do not give a shit anymore. Good luck with everything.

He grabs the dolly of things and leaves...

PAUL

We just want our daughter back.

Ansel doesn't look back.

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

He wheels the dolly (labelled HOTEL PROPERTY) out to his car, parked in the same spot as before. There's a piece of paper under his windshield wiper. It appears to be a ticket...

ANSEL

Goddamnit.

Ansel grabs the paper opens it up and begins reading to himself. After a few seconds...

INTIMIDATING MAN (O.S.)

This is a notice.

ANSEL

What are you talking about? Is this a court document? Have I been served?

INTIMIDATING MAN

Not legally, but yes. This is a matter between two gentlemen: my boss and yourself. Putting it in writing ensures there's no confusion.

ANSEL

Who is your boss?

INTIMIDATING MAN

A mister Jerry.

ANSEL

Jerry? Jerry has been my manager for ten years. Have we met? If not why have I never seen you before?

INTIMIDATING MAN

I handle matters that require a special sort of attention.

The man pulls his coat jacket back revealing... nothing. There's nothing...

INTIMIDATING MAN (CONT'D)

I don't carry a gun. You want to know why? Because I don't need one.

ANSEL

Okay.

INTIMIDATING MAN

I have also been asked to tell you that Jerry has dropped you as a client. That is also in the document.

ANSEL

Is this about the book?

INTIMIDATING MAN

Everything is explained clearly and concisely on the page in your hand. But yes, this is about the book. You are to be back in the city in a week. Because of your relationship, Jerry would like for you to have that week to come up with the money. This is very considerate of him. It is strongly advised that you be able to pay what you owe.

ANSEL

Can I just give him the books back?

The man laughs as he pats Ansel firmly on the back...

INTIMIDATING MAN

One week.

INT. ANSEL'S CAR - HOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ansel sits in the driver's seat of his car. He stares straight ahead with his hands clutching the steering wheel.

He suddenly turns the key to the ignition. After sputtering a few times the vehicle comes to life.

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Ansel ducks behind his car and awkwardly lowers his face next to the exhaust pipe. He breathes in the exhaust fumes...

He takes deeper and deeper breaths. He coughs then takes some more breaths which makes him cough even more. After a while of this though his body can't take anymore...

Ansel rolls away from the car, gasping for air. He pulls himself to his hands and knees and throws up. It's sad.

INT. ANSEL'S CAR - HOTEL PARKING LOT - MORNING

His arms are crossed in an attempt to stay warm but he still shivers as he sleeps in the driver's seat of his Chevette.

There's a careful knock on the window. He wakes to see Paul and Evelyn smiling outside the vehicle...

PAUL
(muffled through the
glass)
Good morning Mr. Roth.

Ansel starts up the car and puts his seat upright...

ANSEL
I was just leaving.

EVELYN
(muffled)
Thank you for the book, again.

Ansel nods and half waves without making eye contact...

ANSEL
Okay, that's fine.

He puts the car into gear.

PAUL
(muffled)
Can we buy you breakfast?

Ansel puts the car back into park and turns off the engine. He rolls the window all the way down via hand crank, looks up at the couple and after all this simply says...

ANSEL

Yes.

INT. RESTROOM - DINER - MORNING

- Ansel takes his jacket off and rolls up his sleeves. He washes his face.

- He works up a lather in his hair using hand-soap then rinses in the sink.

- He dries his hair under the air dryer. The automatic shut off kicks in after several seconds so he punches the button again. It shuts off again. He pushes the button again...

INT. DINER - MORNING

Ansel's hair is still slightly damp. He eats with a ravenous appetite as Paul and Evelyn talk...

PAUL

Our daughter is not well. She has been poisoned. She's someone else. She doesn't listen to us anymore.

EVELYN

She's not around *to* listen to us. We haven't seen her in months. And we're not talking about her not obeying because she's an adult but--

PAUL

It's like she's shut off from the world.

ANSEL

What is the name of the group?

PAUL

They call themselves "Faults".

ANSEL

I haven't heard of that one. Who is the founder?

PAUL

We don't know. No one know's anything about them. We don't even know how Claire came to find them.

ANSEL

When was the last time you spoke to her?

EVELYN

(looking to Paul)
A week ago? On the phone.

ANSEL

What did she say?

PAUL

I told her that we missed her. That we were worried about her.

ANSEL

How did she react to that?

PAUL

She told us that she found God and that "it" made love to her the night before while others watched.

Ansel takes a huge bite of pancake while Evelyn and Paul wait for him to say something. He takes a drink...

ANSEL

That does sound troubling.

EVELYN

We've tried everything.

ANSEL

Are you still supporting her financially?

EVELYN

No, we cut her off last year.

ANSEL

Does she have a car?

PAUL

The group tried to sell it but it was in my name.

ANSEL

You are lucky. They usually sell off items of value to fund the group.

PAUL

A few days later Claire reported it stolen. The next day it turned up in our driveway.

ANSEL

That's good.

PAUL

It was on fire.

ANSEL

Have you tried a family intervention? Exit counseling?

EVELYN

We did. Thanksgiving day. The group discourages interaction with family and friends, especially on what they call "days of falsities". Holidays. We convinced her to come. That it would be okay.

Evelyn becomes choked up...

PAUL

When Claire arrived and saw what it was she immediately turned violent. There was an anger in her eyes. I don't know if this is going to make sense but... For how weak she looked, emotionally, physically, she had a strength that I have never seen in her before. I don't want to lose her, Mr. Roth.

Up to this point Ansel has treated this meeting as a free meal but he no longer can. He stops eating...

ANSEL

There is one other option you have here. Are you familiar with deprogramming?

This concerns the couple...

PAUL

Is that what you did with that man? The one from last night?

ANSEL

His sister. Yes, we attempted a deprogramming on her five years ago.

EVELYN

I don't... I don't know what that is.

ANSEL

A man named Ted Patrick developed the method fifteen years ago. We would forcibly take your daughter away from the group---

EVELYN

You're talking about kidnapping my Claire?

ANSEL

Under the legal definition, yes. But it's for her own good. We would take her far away to someplace where she would not know where she was but more importantly where no one else would be able to find her. I would begin the process of breaking her down- Making her question the group's beliefs and their innate contradictions.

PAUL

What are the chances of something like this working?

ANSEL

In the end there is a fifty percent chance you will have your daughter back.

EVELYN

And a fifty percent chance we will lose her forever.

PAUL

Evelyn.

ANSEL

No, no. She is absolutely right. I need to be honest with you, the chances of this working are even less than that.

(MORE)

ANSEL (CONT'D)

This is extremely dangerous for everyone involved, especially Claire. But if you believe in the deepest part of yourself that you have done everything you can to save her and yet she continues to fall away from you you have to ask yourself, "How far am I willing to go?"

Paul and Evelyn look at each other. It's tense.

A waitress pops up to the booth unexpectedly...

PERKY WAITRESS

Y'all save room for dessert?

ANSEL
No, thank you.

PAUL AND EVELYN
(shaking their heads
smiling)

No.

She scribbles on her pad and leaves the check on the table.

PERKY WAITRESS (CONT'D)

Alright, well it was a pleasure serving y'all today. Come back and see us again real soon.

Paul takes the check and studies the tab...

ANSEL

Thank you for breakfast, Paul, Evelyn. That brings up one more thing if you do decide to do what we just talked about doing. I do not know how to say this without sounding insensitive. It will not be cheap.

INT. TRANSPORT VAN - DAY

The entirety of this scene will take place from inside the van.

The van is in motion. There are three men inside all wearing ski masks. One man drives while the other two sit in the stripped out back of the vehicle.

DRIVER

(muffled shouting)
Jefferson and High Street.

The two masked men in the back, RAYMOND AND JAMES, black and white respectively, look at each other. One points to his ear and shakes his head.

RAYMOND

(muffled)

I don't know what you're trying to say.

JAMES

(muffled)

I can't hear shit through this.

RAYMOND

(shouting)

What?

The driver looks back and pulls up his mask revealing it's Ansel. The two men pull the mask away from their ears...

ANSEL

We are a block away. In and out.
And remember, no names.

He turns back around and they all put their masks back in place...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

(muffled)

Ready?!

He slams on his brakes. James falls into the front seat. Raymond slides open the side door and jumps out of the van leaving the door open...

We look out the opening as James exits via the passenger door. We see that we are at...

INT. TRANSPORT VAN - GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The two men sprint toward a young woman. She's late twenties, brunette, pretty. She wears a baggy dress with sandals and pushes a shopping cart. We realize this is CLAIRE.

Claire stands there a moment unsure of what is happening but as they get within a few dozen feet she begins to run, still pushing the cart.

Seconds later the men catch up to her and grab her from behind. She grips the cart with all her might and doesn't let go. They pull her towards the van...

The cart tips over onto the ground taking Claire and Raymond with it. She loses her sandals. James tries to wrangle her legs but instead he gets kicked in the face.

Raymond hurries to his feet and grabs one of her legs while James manages to take hold of the other. They drag her towards the van as she keeps hold of the cart. She's screaming at the top of her lungs over the sound of metal against asphalt.

A few people step into the background of the frame. Everyone looks concerned but no one does anything and cell phones don't really exist yet so...

The men manage to pry Claire's hands away from the shopping cart and throw her into the van through the side door. They jump in and slam the door shut. Ansel takes off sending all three of them sliding towards the back door.

They tie her wrists and ankles. Claire continues to scream until they manage to duct tape her mouth.

James squats in front of her, then, without warning slaps her HARD across the face. Ansel rips off his mask and looks back just as we...

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. TRANSPORT VAN - VARIOUS

Series of JUMP CUTS all from the same angle. The two men in back change position from time to time. Ansel is always the driver. Claire lays in the exact same position in each shot. Her eyes are open...

- They sway in unison as the van makes a turn.
- They drive on the freeway. The hum of the asphalt drones.
- They stop at a service station. Raymond stays inside the van with Claire while Ansel pumps gas.
- Magic hour Sun spills in through the windshield into the vehicle.
- It's dark. The van drives down a two lane road.

ANSEL
We're here.

EXT. PENNY PINCHER MOTEL - NIGHT

The van pulls into the quiet parking lot.

INT. TRANSPORT VAN - CONTINUOUS

Raymond sits in the passenger seat. The lot isn't full but every space near the building has been taken already. Ansel is annoyed...

ANSEL

I was going to back us in but there isn't a spot next to the building. We want to avoid being seen.

He slows down as he drives past a row of rooms.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

What number are we?

Raymond pulls a set of keys out of his pocket...

RAYMOND

221.

ANSEL

That's the second floor.

RAYMOND

They didn't have any non-smoking rooms left on the first floor.

ANSEL

Why does that matter?

RAYMOND

None of us smoke.

ANSEL

Go to the office and say you made a mistake and you would like something on the first floor.

Still holding the keys...

RAYMOND

But this is adjoining with the other one.

(leaning in, quieter)

They're already here.

Ansel thinks a beat... He accelerates into a spot in the middle of the lot and shuts off the van.

ANSEL

We have to be natural about this.
Do not drawn attention to
ourselves. I need one of you to go
to the room with my things and one
with her and me.

INT. TRANSPORT VAN - MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

James steps out of the van and slams the door shut...

Ansel crouches in front of Claire who's propped up against the wall. Raymond watches...

ANSEL

I know you are probably a little
confused about what is happening
right now. All you need to know is
that I am your friend.

(beat)

These two men with me are not your
friends.

Ansel carefully cuts the tape off from around her ankles...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

In a few moments we are going to
step out of this van and we are
going to walk across this parking
lot, up a flight of stairs, down a
walkway and into a room.

Ansel cuts the tape off from around her wrists.

Claire looks at him unsure if she can trust him. Ansel feigns trust in her...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

If you do anything stupid I will
still be your friend but these men
who are not your friends will hurt
you.

He gently tears the tape off of her face...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

Do not do anything stupid. I cannot
stress this enough.

(MORE)

ANSEL (CONT'D)
I promise everything will be okay.
Nod if you believe me.

She stays perfectly still. Ansel nods slightly...

ANSEL (CONT'D)
(to Raymond)
Open the door.

EXT. PENNY PINCHER MOTEL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Raymond steps out first followed by Ansel. He offers a hand to Claire who refuses...

She exits on her own and almost defiantly begins walking. Ansel calmly puts his hand on her shoulder to slow her down.

We track with them all the way from the van to the room.

It's late. Even though the lot is full the place is quiet. There's a person on the other side of the motel but they're too far away for Claire to risk signaling.

They pass between two cars parked near the building. Suddenly Claire grabs the handle to the driver's side door of one of the cars. It's unlocked. She gets her body halfway inside the vehicle before Raymond is able to grab her...

Raymond grasps her wrist firmly. She doesn't scream but there are tears in her eyes. Ansel closes the car door quietly and motions to Raymond who releases his grip...

They walk up the stairs. We see the bottoms of Claire's bare feet which are black.

As they make their way down the upstairs walkway we catch sight of James standing next to the open door of room 221. Almost there--

A door opens right in front of them and only two doors down from 221. A TEN YEAR OLD GIRL wearing pajamas steps outside holding an ice bucket. She stops in her tracks when she sees Claire with the two men.

Claire makes eye contact with the girl as they pass but she doesn't say anything. The young girl stares as they continue past her but eventually takes off towards the ice machine.

And with that they step inside the room and close the door.

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Ansel immediately shuts/locks the door and closes the blinds. It's obvious there's a sort of routine and he's done this before.

Claire, in a state of shock, sits on the edge of the bed. Tears fall down her face as she begins to cry.

Without hesitation Ansel flips on the television and turns up the volume.

He notices the queen size bed...

ANSEL

Why is there just the one bed?

Raymond looks at the bed...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

Nevermind. Where are my things?

James hands Ansel his suitcase.

Ansel removes a screw driver from a pouch inside...

He opens the door to the bathroom and reverses the knobs so that the lock is now on the outside instead of the inside. When he finishes...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

(to James)

You, come here.

James walks over...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

Is my car here?

JAMES

In the back row near the lamp post... Where's my money?

Ansel removes a copy of his book from the suitcase and opens it up to reveal an envelope. He takes the keys to the van out of his pant pocket and holds both in his hand...

ANSEL

You drive the van straight back to the lot. No stopping except for gas.

JAMES

Is there per diem for that?

ANSEL

Yes. There is an extra thirty to go along with your share which should take care of that. You are not to contact us. You do not speak of this to anyone. No one.

James takes the envelope and keys from Ansel's hand. Ansel stares him down...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

There is one last thing.

(quiet)

He vouched for you and I appreciate your help.

(beat, still quiet)

I told you, no one lays a hand on her. Never do that again.

The two men stare each other down. James cracks a smile...

JAMES

What the fuck are you going to do about it?

Ansel tries to stand strong but ends up looking down at the ground submissively.

James looks at Claire who's eye is swollen from the slap. She turns and stares James down only she doesn't give in like Ansel did...

James shifts his weight. The grin falls from his face. He opens the door and leaves. Ansel locks the dead-bolt behind him.

Claire stares blankly at the screen. Ansel steps between her and the television...

ANSEL

That was not a smart thing you did back there with the car.

She stares through him.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

I hope something like that does not happen again. Remember that I am here to help.

Claire's gaze focuses on Ansel...

CLAIRE
(tearing up)
Help?

ANSEL
I know right now that makes little
sense.

CLAIRE
What do you want with me?

ANSEL
I will explain things to you in the
morning.

CLAIRE
I just want to go home.

Ansel pauses for a moment.

ANSEL
You will. I promise.

Ansel walks over to Raymond who's standing in the corner of
the room. He talks so Claire can't hear him...

ANSEL (CONT'D)
Keep a close eye on her. Make sure
she doesn't sleep.

Raymond nods.

Ansel takes a pillow and blanket from the bed and lays down
on the floor in front of the door. The glow from the set
flickers on the walls of the room. He closes his eyes.

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - MORNING

Ansel wakes to the tinny sound of the TV's mono speaker. He
sits up and sees Claire sitting in the exact same spot in
front of the TV. Raymond stands against the wall, visibly
tired.

Ansel stands and peers through the blinds.

He grabs his suitcase and walks towards Raymond...

ANSEL
How did she do?

RAYMOND

She didn't move a muscle.

ANSEL

Good.

RAYMOND

This is going to sound bad. I probably shouldn't tell you this but I know I fell asleep a couple times last night. Cat naps or whatever.

ANSEL

Ok. You are right. That isn't good.

RAYMOND

The reason I'm telling you this is because... She could have done something and she didn't.

Ansel looks at Claire.

ANSEL

(to Raymond)

I need to get ready.

INT. BATHROOM - ROOM 221 - MOTEL - MORNING

- Ansel showers.
- He shaves, leaving his mustache intact.
- He gets dressed in his brown suit from before.

As he puts on his shoes a drop of blood falls next to his foot onto the tile. Another drop falls on the grout between another set of tiles...

Ansel's nose is bleeding. He tilts his head back and inspects himself in the mirror. He plugs the nostril with a rolled up piece of toilet paper.

He tries to wipe up the blood from the floor but the grout is stained...

He searches for something to clean the stain and spots a small ball of steel wool in the trash can. He takes it, pretreats the spot with a bar of soap and some water then scrubs the grout clean...

Ansel rinses the steel wool in the sink and shakes it dry.

There's a knock on the bathroom door...

RAYMOND (O.S.)

How much longer you gonna be? I need to take off.

ANSEL

Coming.

Without thinking, Ansel puts the steel wool in his jacket pocket and gathers his things...

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Ansel exits the bathroom to find Claire still watching TV.

RAYMOND

(re: Ansel's nose)

Are you okay?

ANSEL

Fine. Everything is fine.

Ansel retrieves another envelope from his suitcase and gives it to Raymond.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

On your way out I need you to go to the front desk and check on the second room. They will be arriving tonight and I don't want any problems.

RAYMOND

Will do. You're on your own now.

Raymond goes to leave but takes one last look at Claire before he exits the room.

Ansel locks the door behind him. He takes the toilet paper out of his nose and checks for blood. It's stopped. He tosses it in the trash.

He turns off the TV and pulls up a chair in front of Claire. Her eyes are dry and bloodshot...

ANSEL

How are you?

CLAIRE

They'll find me. You realize
there's no hiding from them...

ANSEL

He said you did not try to sleep.
Why not?

CLAIRE

I couldn't.

ANSEL

Aren't you tired?

CLAIRE

Yes.

ANSEL

Do you know why you are here?

She doesn't respond.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

You have a family. A mother and
father and they love you like crazy
but they feel like they have lost
you--

CLAIRE

They did this?

ANSEL

They are worried about you, Claire.

CLAIRE

Don't call me that. She was weak
and stupid.

ANSEL

What would you like me to call you?

CLAIRE

Just don't call me that.

ANSEL

We won't say that name.

CLAIRE

Why are you doing this?

ANSEL

My name is Ansel Roth. I am a counselor. I specialize in helping people who are lost and who may be under the control of others.

CLAIRE

I'm not lost. I found myself. And I choose to live my life the way I live because God wills it.

ANSEL

I am here because I want to learn. I want you to tell me about yourself. About your choices.

CLAIRE

Where are my parents?

ANSEL

That is not important. This is just you and me right now.

Claire is seething...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

Tell me what you are thinking right now.

CLAIRE

I'm thinking about how I want to rip your tongue out of your throat so you'll shut up. That you're close enough that I could reach out and strangle you with my bare hands and that I'd like to. I'm just waiting for a sign from God.

ANSEL

That is understandable.
(beat)

Just so you know, I am probably going to move back a little now.

Ansel stands up and moves his chair a couple feet back. He stays standing...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

I was not being facetious when I said I was here to learn.

SMOKE suddenly begins to permeate from Ansel's jacket pocket...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

I know it does not seem like it now but this will be a positive experience. At least try not to kill me until you have had a chance to hear me out, signs from God be damned.

Ansel's pocket full on catches fire.

CLAIRE

I need to go to the bathroom.

Ansel realizes he's on fire...

ANSEL

Ahhh!

He tears off his jacket and throws it on the ground. He quickly stomps out the fire then stares at the jacket in disbelief.

Ansel picks up the burnt jacket and reaches into the pocket. He pulls out the now charred 9 volt battery he took from the hotel room. He "hot potatoes" it several times before inspecting it. A small piece of steel wool clings to it.

He looks up at Claire. Neither says anything.

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Ansel tests the lock to the bathroom door demonstrating that it can no longer be locked from the inside. Claire looks at him like he's crazy...

ANSEL

I have to be sure you won't hurt yourself.

She steps into the bathroom and turns back at him...

CLAIRE

Like that would stop me. You might as well take the door of the hinges. You can just watch me, then. You'd like that, wouldn't you?

Claire pulls her dress up and starts to pull down her underwear but Ansel turns his head and closes the door.

Ansel stands by the door for a moment but decides to give her some privacy.

He notices the mini bar and begins looking through its contents...

ANSEL
(shouting to Claire)
You can have a pop if you like.

There's no response. Ansel skims the laminated price list on the door of the fridge...

ANSEL (CONT'D)
Also, the chocolate isn't too expensive.

He straightens up sensing the quiet. He walks to the bathroom door which is open a crack. We hear Claire crying softly. He knocks lightly then opens the door...

Claire sits on the floor against the bathtub with her knees to her chest.

ANSEL (CONT'D)
You need to come out.

Claire begins to yell though it's at conversational volume. Ansel doesn't say anything at first but eventually...

ANSEL (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

Claire continues to yell only slightly louder now.

ANSEL (CONT'D)
Come on. Let's sit back down and talk.

She gets louder.

ANSEL (CONT'D)
You need to stop.

Louder still. This is now a problem...

Ansel stands there for a moment. She stops abruptly... then SCREAMS AT THE TOP OF HER LUNGS. Ansel charges her and wrestles his hand over her mouth...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

Calm down. Listen to me. Just listen. Five days. That's all this is. Five days.

Claire begins to calm...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

After those five days you can do whatever it is you are going to do. You can go wherever you want to go and no one will stop you. All you need to do is talk to me.

(beat)

Do you want me to take my hand off your mouth?

She nods. He lets go and gives her some space.

CLAIRE

Five days?

ANSEL

I promise.

CLAIRE

Then I can go home?

ANSEL

After that wherever you consider home to be you can go there, yes. Just promise me you will listen. Not just to me. To yourself.

CLAIRE

Okay.

She notices something...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Your nose is bleeding again. I hit you?

He checks it. Yep, it's bleeding. He goes to the sink and turns on the water...

ANSEL

I don't think you did. I don't know why this keeps happening.

CLAIRE

Here, let me.

She hops to her feet and wipes her eyes. She grabs some toilet paper and places her hand behind his head...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Tilt your head back.

She holds the wad of paper to his nose. Neither talks, they just stand there for a while.

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - EVENING

Claire with legs crossed in the middle of the bed facing Ansel who's sitting in a chair nearby.

ANSEL
Do you mind me asking how old you are?

CLAIRE
Age doesn't mean anything.

ANSEL
You mean in the group?

CLAIRE
The time it takes for our Earth to circle the Sun? Why? Why does that matter? It's an abstraction. Why is Earth so special? Time means nothing in eternity.

ANSEL
Your parents told me you were twenty eight.

CLAIRE
You shouldn't ask questions you know the answers to.

ANSEL
You're right. I'm sorry.
(beat)
Can you tell me about The Faults?

CLAIRE
Faults. No "the" just Faults.

ANSEL
Faults.

CLAIRE

From a fault comes a change.
Destruction leads to something new.

ANSEL

Do you believe a change is on the way?

CLAIRE

I don't want to talk about that.

ANSEL

(smiling)

How about this? Who is your favorite band? You like music?

CLAIRE

We don't listen to music.

ANSEL

I mean, before.

She thinks.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

Rock and roll? Pop?

CLAIRE

(unsure)

Pop.

ANSEL

Did you like Duran Duran?

(no response)

Mr. Mister?

(nothing)

Go-Gos?

CLAIRE

Why are you saying them twice?

ANSEL

Has it been that long?

She's almost embarrassed/confused by her lack of memory.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

Any pets back home?

CLAIRE

A dog.

ANSEL
What was its name?

CLAIRE
I know what you're trying to do.
The past means nothing.

Ansel leans forward in his seat...

ANSEL
How did they find you?

CLAIRE
I found them. I was searching for
them my whole life.

ANSEL
But did someone hand you a pamphlet
or did you have a friend who--

CLAIRE
No. You don't understand. I was
meant to find them. I had to. One
day I stepped outside and I walked.
I walked until I reached a house. I
had never been to this place before
but I knew it. I had seen it.
Something told me to walk in and I
did.

ANSEL
And they took you in.

CLAIRE
I had been with them my whole life
but at that moment my physical self
was home.

ANSEL
Can you describe the group?

CLAIRE
In what context?

ANSEL
Who are they? Gender, race, age...
I know these things don't mean
anything to you but it helps me
understand.

CLAIRE

Men and women. Mostly men. No young ones but everyone else.

ANSEL

No children?

CLAIRE

Parasites. We don't have time to wait for them to grow autonomous.

ANSEL

So something is going to happen soon?

CLAIRE

I told you, I don't want to talk about that.

ANSEL

Right.

(beat)

How many people make up the group?

CLAIRE

Thirty. But it keeps changing.

ANSEL

Tell me what role you play, Claire--

She winces...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

Sorry. That was an accident. Who are you in Faults?

CLAIRE

We are all students, every one of us.

ANSEL

So there is a teacher?

CLAIRE

We teach each other.

ANSEL

There must be someone in charge. The person who came first.

CLAIRE

(smiling)

God.

ANSEL
Who is God?

CLAIRE
You have to answer that yourself.

ANSEL
You're probably very tired. When
we're tired we think less and feel
more. Today I wanted you to feel.
Do you understand?
(beat)
We should stop there. You did very
well.

Claire smiles ever so slightly...

CLAIRE
Thank you.

Ansel thinks to himself. He reaches out and touches her hand.

ANSEL
I was not planning on doing this so
soon. I want to show you something.
Is that okay?

An air of concern comes across Claire's face...

Ansel stands up and walks over to a door next to the
television stand. He unlocks the knob on his side and opens
the door. There's another door that is locked from the other
side...

ANSEL (CONT'D)
I know this is going to be hard for
you but I feel like you are ready.

He knocks on the door several times. We hear the door unlock
from the other side. It opens to reveal Claire's parents and
a mirrored version of room 221. This new adjoining room is
room number 222.

Claire is unsure of how to respond.

Evelyn is smiling though it's clear she's holding back tears.
Paul breaks the silence...

PAUL
Hi, sweetie.

Claire stays on the bed. Silence.

ANSEL

This is a lot, I know. I just wanted you to see them and know they were here. I don't want to keep secrets from you.

Nothing from Claire.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

Paul, Evelyn, I think that's enough for tonight. Let's give her a chance to process everything.

CLAIRE

(bursting into tears)
Mommy. Daddy.

Claire walks over to her father, cautiously, and puts her arms around him. Her mother, now crying too, hugs both of them.

Ansel is at a loss for words. Not what he was expecting at all...

PAUL

Our baby. Our Claire.

Claire pulls away suddenly. The parents are unsure of what happened...

ANSEL

(quiet to the parents)
That's alright. She's not associating with that identity right now but that's alright.

EVELYN

What is that supposed to mean?
Claire?

Claire gets back on the bed and hugs herself.

ANSEL

(quiet)
This is absolutely normal. There are two identities in a case such as hers. The before identity... before the cult and the cult identity.

PAUL

She's still our girl.

ANSEL

Yes and no. There is even a third identity that we will come to know when this is all over, the post identity. It will be a combination of the first two only the percentage of each will be determined by how successful we are over the next few days. We cannot force her to become Claire. That will come but it has to be at her speed.

EVELYN

What do we call her?

ANSEL

You don't. She doesn't want that. Names of affection are fine. Baby, sweetie, honey. Whatever you called her back when things were normal.

PAUL

We never called her honey.

ANSEL

Don't call her that then.

Ansel looks back at Claire. She's watching the blinds which move with the flow of the air conditioner.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

She needs to sleep. Today was good. Tonight we should keep the doors closed.

PAUL

Can't we talk to her a little more?

ANSEL

In the morning. I want to do a session with her in the morning but after that I want to bring you both in. Is that alright?

They nod, take one last look at their daughter then close and lock their door. Ansel closes and locks his too.

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - NIGHT

Ansel comes out of the bathroom to find Claire in the bed under the covers. She isn't in the middle of the queen size bed, instead she lays towards one side. He watches her for a moment...

CLAIRE
I'm not asleep.

ANSEL
I was... Sorry.

CLAIRE
I left space for you.

He hesitates ever so slightly before...

ANSEL
I'll sleep on the floor.

Ansel picks up the blanket and pillow he used the night before and remakes his pallet in front of the front door.

Claire notices this and sits up...

CLAIRE
I'm not going to leave.

ANSEL
I trust you... but...

CLAIRE
I understand.

Ansel lays down. He takes off his pants under the blanket.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
You want to know why I'm not going to leave? I feel like this is an opportunity. God is giving me a chance to save them.

ANSEL
Your parents?

CLAIRE
I can teach them.

Beat.

ANSEL
Can you turn off the light?

Claire twists the knob on the lamp. CLICK- Darkness.

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - MORNING

Ansel wakes shivering. He's lays on the floor in his underwear and a t-shirt, blanket off to the side.

We reveal Claire is standing above him. She's wearing a man's button-up shirt that covers her just enough.

Ansel's eyes open. At first he's unsure of where he is until he sees her. He realizes he's half naked and quickly covers up...

CLAIRE
Good morning.

ANSEL
What time is it?

CLAIRE
It's light out.

ANSEL
(embarrassed)
Can you hand me my pants- to me?

She picks them up and hands them to him.

He awkwardly puts them on under the blanket...

ANSEL (CONT'D)
Is that my shirt?

CLAIRE
I need a change of clothes.

ANSEL
Your parents brought some from home. We will see them in a couple of hours.

CLAIRE
Okay.

ANSEL
Can you put your dress back on in the meantime?

She's slightly annoyed by this. She grabs her dress from the bed and goes into the bathroom. She leaves the door open but we can't see from our angle.

Ansel folds the blanket and puts it and the pillow away.

Claire comes out and tosses the shirt towards Ansel. He puts it on as she makes her bed...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

You don't have to do that. We can get housekeeping--

CLAIRE

I don't want to see anyone else right now.

ANSEL

(re: shirt)

Did you spray this with something?

CLAIRE

No. With what?

ANSEL

It just smells like... It's so faint.

CLAIRE

I don't have anything.

Ansel shakes his head...

ANSEL

Sorry, I know.

(beat)

Would you be okay talking with me this morning?

CLAIRE

Will my parents be there?

ANSEL

Just us first. Is that okay with you?

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - MORNING

Claire sits on the floor this time. Ansel starts off in the chair...

ANSEL

I want to talk with you some more about Faults.

CLAIRE

What do you want to know?

ANSEL

Sometimes if you don't know much about something you cannot ask the right questions. What would you like for me to know?

Claire thinks...

CLAIRE

I've learned a lot about myself since I found them.

(beat)

Are you familiar with meditation?

ANSEL

I am, yes. I do not, myself, but I am familiar with the process.

CLAIRE

I had never meditated before. I can't picture my current life now without it. I have goals.

ANSEL

What kind of goals?

CLAIRE

There are levels. The levels are goals one can achieve if they put their mind to it. Anyone can do this they just haven't been taught.

ANSEL

What level are you at?

CLAIRE

Moving from level to level takes will. I've grown so much but I don't know if I'm strong enough. At least not in time.

ANSEL

In time for what? What is going to happen?

CLAIRE

I cannot say.

ANSEL

Why not?

CLAIRE

Because I don't know. Ira tells...

ANSEL

What's wrong? Who is Ira?

CLAIRE

I... I shouldn't have said...

ANSEL

The leader?

CLAIRE

Ira is the connection between us
and what happens next.

ANSEL

Is he the one who brought you all
together?

CLAIRE

Ira is not a man.

ANSEL

So Ira is a woman?

CLAIRE

No. Ira has moved past the human
form.

ANSEL

You will have to forgive me but I'm
not sure I understand what you are
saying.

CLAIRE

We are all weighed down by our
physical form. The levels are the
steps we take towards freeing
ourselves.

ANSEL

What does that mean, though?

CLAIRE

Each level means a piece of
control.

ANSEL

But that doesn't really mean
anything.

(MORE)

ANSEL (CONT'D)

You have to see that they are teaching you in these vague terms and unprovable ideas.

CLAIRE

(defensive)

You don't know. Control means all matter loses meaning. Control of oneself means control of others. It even changes the way others perceive our light.

ANSEL

Our light? Are you talking about invisibility?

(smirk)

Have you witnessed this?

CLAIRE

(dead serious)

I have.

ANSEL

Can you tell me... what happens when you reach the final level? When you become free?

CLAIRE

One moves on.

ANSEL

Where do the people who move on go?

INT. ROOM 222 - MOTEL - DAY

Claire's mom opens a duffle bag full of clothes and dumps the contents onto one of the twin beds in the room. Claire picks through the garments, hesitantly...

ANSEL

(to Paul)

I see they put you in a room with two beds.

PAUL

Yes.

ANSEL

Perhaps you and Evelyn would be more comfortable with the queen?

PAUL
We're comfortable.

ANSEL
It's just I gave her the bed.

PAUL
Good.

ANSEL
It's one bed so I'm on the floor.

For the first time we see a slightly different side to Paul...

PAUL
(intimidating)
We are not moving.

ANSEL
Sure.

PAUL
What is that smell on you?

ANSEL
I...

Paul quickly focuses in on what the women are doing...

CLAIRE
I don't want to wear any of these.

EVELYN
Sweetie, these are your clothes.

CLAIRE
I don't wear stuff like this anymore.

PAUL
I like this one.

Paul holds up a slightly revealing top.

CLAIRE
I'm not wearing that.

PAUL
I like this one.

CLAIRE
Yes, daddy.

Ansel looks on.

Paul picks up a pair of shorts...

PAUL

And this. Go put these on.

Claire takes the clothes to the bathroom.

ANSEL

Wait. Your mother should go with you.

CLAIRE

I'm fine.

Ansel motions to Evelyn. She joins Claire. They close the door.

PAUL

She would have taken all day if we let her.

ANSEL

When did she last wear these?

PAUL

She was a teenager. Sixteen maybe.

ANSEL

Don't you think they might be a bit... young?

PAUL

What are you trying to say?

ANSEL

Nothing.

PAUL

My daughter looks beautiful in these.

(beat)

When she comes out you're going to tell her she looks beautiful.

ANSEL

I'm not going to say that.

PAUL

Remember who's paying you.

Claire and Evelyn exit the bathroom. The clothes are a size too small and all around more revealing than Claire obviously feels comfortable with.

ANSEL
(looking to Paul)
You look beautiful.

Claire smiles slightly.

ANSEL (CONT'D)
Okay. Let's begin.

INT. ROOM 222 - MOTEL - DAY

Ansel and the family sit in a sort of circle in the room. Claire on a bed, the mother on the other bed, Ansel in a chair and the father standing over them all. They're in the middle of a session...

EVELYN
But I still don't understand what
it is we did.

CLAIRE
You didn't do anything. That's the
point.

PAUL
Your mother and I fed you. We put a
roof over your head.

CLAIRE
You make it sound like an
obligation.

PAUL
Maybe that's because it was.

ANSEL
We are not here to pass blame.

PAUL
But we're all here because of her.

ANSEL
We are here for her.

PAUL
(to Claire)
I can't wait for this all to be over with. Just give me back my baby.

CLAIRE
I'm not going back with you.

PAUL
Yes you are.

CLAIRE
I'm not.

PAUL
Just slit your wrists now then because that's where you're going to end up if all this doesn't stop.

CLAIRE
And you'll have yourselves to blame.

For some reason she glances at Ansel after she says this. Odd...

ANSEL
Everyone take a deep breath.

CLAIRE
(crying)
I'm here because I thought you'd see that I'm happy. I've never been this happy in all my life.

EVELYN
We need you home with us.

Claire sobs through the words...

CLAIRE
I'm afraid of you.

These words sting Claire's father. He calms, turning off the anger as if he flipped a switch. He walks over to Claire...

ANSEL
I don't think that's a good idea--

But Paul is already sitting next to his daughter. He holds her tightly. She lets herself be held. She goes to a certain place, almost as if she were a child who's been punished and seeks forgiveness. Evelyn watches silently. Distant...

ON ANSEL AS

The phone in room 221 rings... Ansel lets it ring a few times unsure if he should leave the room. Finally he gets up and walks through the shared door into...

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Ansel grabs the phone...

We might hear bits and pieces of Intimidating Man's dialogue from Ansel's receiver but it is here primarily for timing purposes.

ANSEL

Sorry, we'll keep it down. It won't happen again.

~~Intimidating MAN~~

~~Good, I'd hate to have to come up there, Ansel.~~

Ansel's reaction tells us this isn't motel management...

~~Intimidating MAN (CONT'D)~~

~~Do you know who this is?~~

ANSEL

Yes, I remember you. The older gentleman from the parking lot.

~~Intimidating MAN~~

~~Older?~~

ANSEL

I mean... Older than me, I meant.

~~Intimidating MAN~~

~~How are you, Ansel?~~

ANSEL

How did you know where I was?

~~Intimidating MAN~~

~~You're not trying to disappear on us, are you?~~

ANSEL

Disappear. No, of course not. I'm just... I'm working... It's a job and I'm going to pay Jerry back. So that's good news- So I'm glad you called so I could tell that to you.

~~Intimidating MAN~~

~~Word is you have the money, Ansel.
Word is you're shitting envelopes
of cash.~~

ANSEL

No, no. The envelopes... That was per diem- That was seperate. I don't get paid in full until the job is completed.

~~Intimidating MAN~~

~~I believe you, Ansel. Thing is
Jerry doesn't believe you and he
signs my checks.~~

ANSEL

I swear.

~~Intimidating MAN~~

~~I'm coming out there.~~

ANSEL

Wait. What if I could get you half now? Would that work?- I could get half for you now and the other half when this job finishes up. In three days. Would that work?

There's a moment of silence, as if Intimidating Man is conferring with someone nearby...

~~Intimidating MAN~~

~~Jerry's office. Be here by seven.
Come alone.~~

ANSEL

But... I'm working.

CLICK. Ansel still holds the phone despite the fact we hear a faint dial tone...

Ansel gently sets the phone back in its place. We follow him as he walks back into...

INT. ROOM 222 - MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Everyone is in the same spot as when Ansel left the room only now Claire's resting her head in her father's lap as he strokes her hair.

ANSEL

Paul, can I have a word with you?

Paul stares right at Ansel, still petting Claire...

PAUL
I'm right here.

ANSEL
Alone. I would really prefer it if
we could speak privately.

Paul slowly stands and follows Ansel back into...

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Ansel stops in the middle of the room. He speaks quietly...

ANSEL
This is going to sound... I promise
you nothing funny is going on--

PAUL
Nothing better be going on.

ANSEL
There isn't.
(beat)
I need half of the money now.

PAUL
We're not even halfway through the
process.

ANSEL
I know. I would not be asking if it
were not an extraordinary
circumstance.

PAUL
So something is going on.

ANSEL
Yes-- I mean, no. Not here. No.

PAUL
Why do you need the money? Who was
on the phone.

ANSEL
No one. My manager. I have an
investment with him that needs my
attention. The money is for that.

Paul exhales deeply...

PAUL
I can do a wire transfer--

ANSEL
I need cash.

PAUL
Fifteen thousand dollars in cash?

ANSEL
And I need to go back to the city.

PAUL
So you want me to give you fifteen grand and let you drive off? Do you think I'm stupid?

ANSEL
I am asking you this favor. I want to help your daughter but to do that I have to take care of this.

PAUL
When will you be back?

ANSEL
Tomorrow by sunrise.
(beat)
You have my word.

PAUL
This from the man who told me he, "didn't give a shit anymore."

Paul turns towards room 222...

PAUL (CONT'D)
Evelyn. Come here.

Evelyn enters the room.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Go to the office. In the safe there are three bundles. Take one of the bundles and half of another. Bring them back here.

EVELYN
Yes, dear.

Evelyn goes in for a hug but he rejects her...

PAUL
Now.

She leaves the room.

ANSEL

I know we already talked about this but it would be easier if maybe Evelyn slept in here with her tonight.

PAUL

We're comfortable.

ANSEL

(leaning in)

I don't trust where she is at yet.

PAUL

Then I don't trust her to be alone with my wife. I'll stay with her.

Ansel blurts out...

ANSEL

No. Sorry...

(beat)

Would it make you feel better if she slept in there?

He motions to the bathroom...

PAUL

You mean lock my daughter in the bathroom?--

ANSEL

It would just be for the night.

PAUL

I'm staying with her.

ANSEL

No, she just... I want to avoid confrontation of any sort while I am away. You two have already butted heads and...

(beat)

Both of you should stay with her. You *and* Evelyn. Just... keep her in there, please. That way nothing will happen... It's the safest place for her, I promise. We cannot let her leave.

Paul looks at the bathroom and back to Ansel, and nods...

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - DAY

Claire sits in the center of the bed. Paul and Evelyn's stuff is on the floor against the wall.

Ansel paces back and forth.

CLAIRE
Where are you going?

ANSEL
Nowhere. It's just for tonight.

CLAIRE
(under her breath)
Don't.

There's a knock at the door. Ansel checks the peephole and opens the door. Evelyn enters holding a manila envelope...

Ansel reaches for it but she takes it over to Paul who slides the two bundles out and flips through them. He then hands the money to Ansel.

ANSEL
See you in the morning.
(motioning to the bathroom)
Remember.

INT. ROOM 222 - MOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

We're looking into the other room. We see Claire sitting in the middle of the bed until Ansel closes the door and locks it. He walks to the front door and exits the room...

EXT. PENNY PINCHER MOTEL - DAY

Various shots of Ansel walking. Along the upstairs balcony, down the stairs, through the lot and getting into his car.

INT. ANSEL'S CAR - VARIOUS

Various shots of Ansel driving, all from the same angle, as it goes from daylight to magic hour to night.

EXT. STRIP MALL - NIGHT

The Chevette pulls into a handicapped parking space.

A flash of light from one of the windows illuminates the parking lot for a split second.

INT. FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO - NIGHT

Ansel opens the door and a bell dings. He enters the waiting room area and finds Intimidating Man reading a magazine in one of the chairs.

INTIMIDATING MAN
You're early. Take a seat.

The waiting room has a clear view of the work space. We see a photographer, JERRY, taking a family portrait for a MOTHER and FATHER and their TWO CHILDREN. All are dressed up but none look particularly good. They're smiles are forced...

JERRY
One, two annnnnnnnnnd three.

SNAP. Light flashes throughout the room.

JERRY (CONT'D)
And let's do one with the mommy and daddy looking down at their precious darlings.

The parents look down at their children. This picture is going to be terrible...

JERRY (CONT'D)
That's great. One, two annnnnnnnnnd three.

FLASH.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Okay, y'all, I think we got it.

Jerry walks over to the front desk and grabs a sheet of paper. The family steps into the waiting room.

JERRY (CONT'D)
So we talked about doing the 40x60 on canvas- Is that still what y'all wanna do?

The young son stands a few feet in front of Ansel and stares directly at him. Ansel stares right back.

The parents confer with each other and nod to Jerry.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Okay, that's great. That's gonna look so nice in y'all's house. Is this gonna be in the study or somethin'?

MOTHER

The living room.

JERRY

The living room- Oh my gosh, that's gonna look so nice.

(beat)

Okay, so we just need a signature right here so I can get these developed for y'all. You can come by anytime tomorrow and you can see which one you like best from the bunch but I have to say I think that last one is gonna turn out real nice.

The father signs the paper.

The son and Ansel still stare each other down even as the parents shuffle him and his sister out the door. When the door shuts Ansel's gaze is broken.

Intimidating Man locks the door behind them...

JERRY (CONT'D)

Let's take this into my office.
Wait out here, Michael.

INT. JERRY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The walls are covered with actors headshots, some color but mostly black and white. Jerry's desk has a name plate on it that says "Jerry Hobbs - Talent Manager".

JERRY

He hates when I call him Michael. He goes by Mike but I'm just not okay with the whole nickname or shortened this way or that way deal. It's so darned informal.

Ansel walks along one of the walls of headshots, each as bad as the last. He stops at one in particular...

JERRY (CONT'D)

Look at how handsome you were.

In a larger frame (the only frame on the wall) are two pictures of Ansel side by side...

The first: A headshot. He's a bit younger than he is now but he seems much younger. He's happy.

The second: A publicity still for a television show called UNDERSTANDING THE UNKNOWN WITH ANSEL ROTH. In it, Ansel stands on a talk show set similar to The Geraldo Rivera Show's with flourishes of Unsolved Mysteries. He's holding a microphone and talking to a guest. It's signed...

"To Jerry, I couldn't have done it without you. Ansel Roth"

ANGLE ON present day Ansel. Older, tired.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I still can't believe there were only twenty tapings.

ANSEL

Twenty three.

JERRY

Twenty three... Please, have a seat.

Ansel sits down. Jerry stays standing.

JERRY (CONT'D)

What happened to you, Ansel? You let life walk all over you.

(beat)

How's Caren?

ANSEL

I don't know. I haven't spoken to her in months.

JERRY

Did the papers go through?

ANSEL

Last month.

JERRY

I'm so sorry to hear that. Really, I am. Once you beat the charges I was sure things were going to work out. That's too bad.

Jerry walks out from behind the desk.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I've given you more than enough time. Why do you do this to me? Why do you make me the bad guy?

There's stacks of boxes in the corner of the room. He tears open one of them and pulls out a copy of Ansel's book...

JERRY (CONT'D)

I still care about you and that's why I'm severing our relationship. If you love something let it go.

Jerry stands beside Ansel with the book in hand. Out of nowhere he grabs the book with the other hand too and SMASHES Ansel in the face with it...

Ansel lays on the ground, momentarily dazed. His nose is bleeding again and his cheek is split open.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Give me the darned money, Ansel. I'm sick to death of askin'.

Ansel slowly reaches into his pocket and retrieves the cash.

JERRY (CONT'D)

You've got two days to get the rest to me or I'll sever more than our relationship.

ANSEL

I need more time.

JERRY

Two days. Get the heck out of my office.

Mike comes in and drags Ansel out...

INT. BATHROOM - GAS STATION - NIGHT

Ansel washes his face in the sink. He spits. There's some blood in it.

He wipes the blood away from his nose and gently dabs his cheek.

INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Ansel pours himself a cup of coffee then goes to the cash register.

ANSEL

Five on number three. And this is a
refill.

The STATION ATTENDANT knows it isn't a refill but doesn't
care enough to argue...

STATION ATTENDANT

Five twenty five, sir.

INT. ANSEL'S CAR - VARIOUS

Various shots of Ansel driving through the night back to the
motel all from the same angle. In an effort to stay awake he
drinks coffee, blasts music and opens the window.

The Sun is just beginning to rise as Ansel pulls into the
Penny Pincher parking lot.

EXT. PENNY PINCHER MOTEL - MORNING

We track with Ansel as he walks to the stairs, up the stairs
and down the upstairs walkway. From a distance we see a mass
outside of one of the motel rooms.

Ansel stops at first, then realizing it's a body he begins
running towards it...

It's Claire. She's laying unconscious outside of room 221 in
her underwear and socks. Her nose is bloody..

Ansel reaches her and tries desperately to wake her but she's
out cold. He bangs on the door to the room. He feels for a
pulse then bangs on the door again.

There's a sound of locks being undone before door opens to
reveal Paul...

PAUL

Ansel what--

He sees his daughter...

PAUL (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

Ansel picks her up and carries her through the door into...

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

He sets her on the bed, which Evelyn hasn't even had a chance to get up from yet. Ansel pulls back the sheets and puts a pillow under her head...

ANSEL

Claire. Claire sweetie, wake up.
You gotta wake up, Claire.

He lightly slaps her face a few times. No response...

EVELYN

What happened? Is she alive?

ANSEL

She's breathing. Get me some water-
Cold water.

Evelyn goes to the bathroom door. It's locked from the outside...

EVELYN

(panicked)
The door's locked.

ANSEL

It locks from the outside. Just
turn the lock.

(realizing)

Wait, why is it locked?

PAUL

You told us to lock her in the
bathroom.

ANSEL

You mean you locked her in there
last night? How did she end up
outside?

PAUL

How the hell should I know?

ANSEL

You didn't see anything?

PAUL

We were asleep.

Evelyn comes back with an ice bucket full of water. Ansel takes it from her and pours it over Claire...

Claire's eyes spring open from the shock of cold. She struggles to catch her breath...

ANSEL

There you go. It's okay. You're okay. Just breathe. Breathe. There you go.

Claire is shivering uncontrollably...

ANSEL (CONT'D)

Let's get her a towel. And some blankets.

CLAIRE

What happened?

Ansel looks to Paul. What did happen?

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - DAY

The door to 222 is closed. Claire and Ansel are alone...

Claire sits in the middle of the bed. She seems back to normal. Ansel is in a chair beside the bed. He has a small bandage over the cut on his cheek...

ANSEL

I wanted to talk to you about what happened yesterday.

CLAIRE

I don't remember anything.
(beat)
Why did you have them lock me up?

ANSEL

It was in everyone's best interest.

CLAIRE

Not mine.

ANSEL

Especially yours.

She looks down and traces the floral print of the comforter with her finger.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

How did you get out of the bathroom?

(waits)

(MORE)

ANSEL (CONT'D)
Claire, how did you get out of the
bathroom.

It's a calculated risk on his part. The name elicits a slight
twitch from Claire but there's no outburst this time.

CLAIRE
Come sit next to me.

ANSEL
I can't.

CLAIRE
Please.

He sees something in her eyes. Something trying to get out.

Ansel gets up from the chair and sits on the bed with her.
She scoots towards him a little.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I was scared. The second you left
he...

ANSEL
What?

CLAIRE
Nothing. When it got dark out they
put me in there and locked the
door. I felt like you had abandoned
me.

This hurts Ansel...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I've been good. I have been seeing
things from a set of eyes other
than my own. I haven't thought much
about the group.

ANSEL
That's good to hear.

CLAIRE
But when you left I didn't know
what to do and I- I started to
pray. I started praying in there
and prayer turned to meditation and
I... I don't know.

ANSEL
You can tell me.

CLAIRE

I imagined myself. I imagined stepping out of Claire's body and being able to see in a way I've never seen before. I don't know what but something inside me told me to walk through the bathroom door... so I did.

ANSEL

It opened?

CLAIRE

I walked through the door. And I was in the room. I could see my parents sleeping but I knew that even if they woke up they wouldn't be able to see me. I knew I was beyond being seen.

Ansel listens intently...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I stayed there for a moment watching them but something didn't feel right. I felt like I was being pulled back towards Claire. I reached the front door and stepped through it as well but it didn't feel the same. It hurt. I fell to the ground on the other side...

ANSEL

Where I found you in the morning.

CLAIRE

I've moved up a level, Ansel. Claire is a part of me, I accept that, but I am not her. I'm changing.

ANSEL

The other day you told me that Faults teaches you... That through their teachings... I don't believe you walked through walls. I want to believe you but I can't.

CLAIRE

Believing is the first step.

ANSEL

Towards what?

CLAIRE
Becoming.

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - DAY

Claire watches television while she sits on the edge of the bed.

Ansel opens the door to room 222. He finds Paul and Evelyn sitting on the edge of each of their beds. It's dark. They are silent and still...

INT. ROOM 222 - MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Ansel stands where he can still see Claire. He turns his head every few seconds to make sure she's still there.

The parents haven't moved...

ANSEL
(quiet)
She can't be alone.

Paul turns to look at Ansel.

ANSEL (CONT'D)
Did you hear me? From now on she is not to be left alone. Someone always has to be with her.

PAUL
Is something wrong?

ANSEL
Yes- I mean no. I'm not sure. I just feel the best thing to do right now... We need to make sure we don't lose her. We're so close.

Ansel looks down as he says...

ANSEL (CONT'D)
And I need the rest of my payment.

Paul stands up slowly. He approaches Ansel...

PAUL
What did you just ask me?

ANSEL
I need the money, Paul.

PAUL
Not until she's Claire again.

Ansel takes a step back...

ANSEL
I--

PAUL
I hired you to fix her.

ANSEL
I can't guarantee she will- Paul,
you know that.

PAUL
Why?

ANSEL
It isn't all up to me in this.
There are other factors at play.

Ansel takes a step forward...

ANSEL (CONT'D)
I want the money now. I don't trust
you. I don't trust any of this.
Everything is fucked and I have to
look out for myself.

Paul explodes forward and grabs him by the neck. He backs
Ansel up and slams him against the wall...

PAUL
Fuck yourself- This is about my
daughter! Give her back to us. She
needs to come home.

Paul tightens his grip. Ansel can't breathe at all now.

Evelyn hasn't moved an inch. She continues to stare forward.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Daddy! Stop!

PAUL
Don't think I don't know what goes
on behind that door. Do you think
I'm stupid?

CLAIRE
No. I promise. He hasn't done
anything. Please.

Ansel tries to say something but all that comes out is a gurgling sound and a little spit...

Just as his eyes begin to roll back into his head Paul releases him. Ansel falls to the ground trying to catch his breath.

Paul begins crying loudly but with no actual tears.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
 (to her father)
 Go to bed.

He stops crying almost immediately...

PAUL
 Okay sweetheart.

He brushes her hair behind her ear. She pulls away.

Claire stands by Ansel who's still on the ground.

Paul and Evelyn each get into their beds fully clothed and get under the covers.

Claire helps Ansel to his feet. They walk through the door into...

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Claire closes the door but does not lock it.

Ansel sits on the edge of the bed. He rubs his neck which is visibly red from the altercation...

CLAIRE
 He does stuff like that because he loves me.

ANSEL
 He could have killed me.

CLAIRE
 If he wanted to he would have.

ANSEL
 I... I... What is... I don't need this.

CLAIRE
 I'm tired. Are you tired? We should go to sleep.

ANSEL

I'm done. This is... I am leaving.

He begins grabbing his things scattered about the room.

CLAIRE

(matter of fact)

But you can't.

ANSEL

I have free will.

CLAIRE

What about the money? That's what this is for you, isn't it?

ANSEL

I... That is what this was. I have no idea what any of this is anymore.

(to himself)

You have free will. You have free will. You have free will--

He stuffs his things into his suitcase...

CLAIRE

But you need the money. I know you do. It has a power over you. I can see that. You can't leave.

ANSEL

I know. Fuck. I know- I know.

He stops packing...

CLAIRE

And I need you here. I feel like I'm close to something, but... I don't know what's happening.

ANSEL

What do you mean?

CLAIRE

I don't know. I think Faults knows what's happening. It's like Ira is calling me home...

ANSEL

Do you think it's going to happen? Are you are going to step outside of yourself again?

CLAIRE
You believe don't you?

Ansel waits what seems like an eternity...

ANSEL
You should sleep.

CLAIRE
What about you?

ANSEL
I don't think I can.

CLAIRE
Why not?

ANSEL
I'm not sure you will be here when
I wake up.

INT. ROOM 221 - BATHROOM - MOTEL - NIGHT

The room is dark except for the light that leaks out of the partially opened bathroom door.

Claire is asleep in the bed. Ansel sits on the motel room floor against the front door watching her sleep between moments of nodding off. Claire begins to stir...

She gets up from the bed and walks to the bathroom. Light pours into the room and briefly illuminates Ansel when she opens the door. She closes it partially...

She's quiet at first. Ansel gets to his feet and walks slowly towards the bathroom door. Still no sign of her presence. What is she doing?

As Ansel is about to reach the door he hears the sound of her peeing. He relaxes. Ansel props himself against the wall outside the bathroom, his back towards its door. He begins to nod off once again...

The sound stops. The toilet flushes. The door cracks opens illuminating the room. Claire approaches Ansel from behind. She's naked from the waist down...

She softly wraps her arms around him. His eyes open slowly and when he realizes what's happening he pulls himself away from her. He sees that she's nude...

Claire isn't deterred. She walks towards him and puts her arms on his waist. Ansel stands there motionless, as if in a trance.

Claire stands on the balls of her feet and kisses him on the lips. At first he doesn't reciprocate but after a moment he kisses her back. He keeps his eyes wide open for all of this...

They stand there for a moment until Ansel shoves her away from him but she immediately goes back in and kisses him again, this time more forcefully. She is in charge...

CLAIRE
Lick my lips.

ANSEL
What?

CLAIRE
(demanding)
Lick them.

Ansel licks her lips. It's awkward and not sexy at all. In fact none of this is the least bit sexy...

Claire pushes Ansel into a chair. He falls into it and she immediately climbs onto his lap. She grabs his face and continues to dominate the interaction...

Claire's nose begins to bleed. Ansel notices and has to force himself away from her lips to tell her...

ANSEL
(out of breath)
Your nose.

CLAIRE
Shut up.

She goes right back in. His eyes focus on her nose for a second but his eyes begin to close. They spring back open then droop again. He's kissing her back less and less and more just being kissed. She notices this...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I need you to sleep now, Ansel.

He's fighting the urge. His eyes are crossing. His speech begins to slur...

ANSEL
What are you doing to me?

CLAIRE
I'm in control.

CUT TO BLACK:

OVER BLACK: AUDIENCE APPLAUSE THEN ANSEL'S VOICE

FADE IN:

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - NIGHT

The room slowly comes into view but it never fully fades in and the image never fully comes into focus...

Ansel wakes, still in the chair. The television sits on another chair in front of him, illuminating him.

ON THE TV SCREEN

a slightly younger Ansel looks into the lens of a broadcast camera as it slowly zooms in on him...

ANSEL
And we're back. If you're just joining us we're talking with the sole surviving member of the Universal Concurrence after Sunday's terrible tragedy.

Ansel stands over a YOUNG WOMAN who looks like she's been crying.

ANSEL (CONT'D)
We were talking about the Concurrence- Or, your "family" as you called them.
(beat)
I guess my question is how could a person let this happen to their family. Do you feel a sense of responsibility for what happened?

She looks silently into the studio audience, embarrassed and scared. The audience is eating it up. It's as if she isn't human...

We watch the footage, along with Ansel, until we hear barely audible MOANING under the sound of the show. With everything he has Ansel forces his head to turn...

It's too blurry to make out any detail but it's clear that there, in front of Ansel, is Claire laying on her back on the bed with her father on top of her. Her mother is sitting on the edge of the bed beside them both, watching it all.

Ansel straightens his head and squints in an effort to focus. It doesn't help...

Blurry Claire sees that Ansel is awake. She looks right at him as he falls back asleep.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ANSEL'S CAR - MOTEL PARKING LOT - MORNING

Ansel startles awake. "How the fuck did I get out here?"...

He notices the key is in the ignition. He sits there for a moment then reaches for it... But he can't bring himself to turn it. He takes the key with him as he exits the vehicle.

EXT. PENNY PINCHER MOTEL - MORNING

We follow him as he climbs the stairs and walks down the upstairs walkway until he reaches room 221.

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

He opens the door with the room key and enters to find the room empty...

He looks around, nothing out of the ordinary. The door to the other room is locked.

He hears a sound from the bathroom. Ansel walks towards the door which is slightly ajar. He opens it to find Claire in tears on the floor.

INT. BATHROOM - ROOM 221 - MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

She's absolutely shocked/relieved to see him. She jumps up and throws her arms around him...

CLAIRE

I thought you left me.

ANSEL

What happened last night?

CLAIRE
I woke up and you weren't there.

ANSEL
I was in my car. Why was I in my car?

CLAIRE
My parents are gone.

ANSEL
What do you mean your parents are gone?

CLAIRE
They left me a note. They said that I'd given up and so they gave up on me.

ANSEL
I saw them.

CLAIRE
Where were they going?

ANSEL
In here. In the room with us last night.
(beat)
With you.

CLAIRE
That's impossible. The doors were locked. Both doors.

ANSEL
I saw them.

CLAIRE
(emphatic)
You're wrong.

ANSEL
Where did you get that tape?

CLAIRE
Tape?

ANSEL
The show. My show!

CLAIRE
Your show? Ansel, I don't--

ANSEL
You're lying to me. Why are you
lying to me?

CLAIRE
I'm not--

Ansel grabs her arms and shakes her...

ANSEL
What the fuck is going on?!

The door to the bathroom slowly begins to shut behind them.
Neither notices...

ANSEL (CONT'D)
We... You made me lick you.

CLAIRE
You're scaring me, Ansel.

ANSEL
How did you--

CLICK. The door closes shut. Ansel turns around and tries to
open it. It's locked...

CLAIRE
Open it.

ANSEL
It's locked.

CLAIRE
Why is it locked?

ANSEL
I didn't lock it- Why would I lock
it? Why is it locked!?

Ansel throws his body into the door. Nothing. He does it
again. Nothing. He takes a step back and really throws his
weight into it. Still nothing...

ANSEL (CONT'D)
There's something blocking it on
the other side.

CLAIRE
That doesn't make any sense. Why
are you doing this?

Ansel SCREAMS.

The phone begins to ring in the other room...

ANSEL
(realizing)
Fuck. That's Jerry. Jerry is
calling. I have to answer that.
Fuck!

CLAIRE
Let me out. I want to get out of
here.

ANSEL
Stop. Just stop.

He throws himself into the door with everything he has this
time but injures his shoulder in the process...

CLAIRE
Are you okay?

ANSEL
NO I'M NOT FUCKING OKAY- OKAY?

He slides down the door to the floor and begins to cry. He's
completely lost it...

The phone stops ringing.

ANSEL (CONT'D)
What is happening to me?

Claire steps towards Ansel and holds his head against her
thighs, comforting him. She begins to hum but not a song or
melody. It's more of a droning sound. It calms Ansel.

She finishes humming and sits down in front of him...

CLAIRE
They left your money. Is that who
Jerry is in this? Is he why you
need the money?

Ansel wipes away tears. He's like a child post tantrum. He
nods...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Why do you let him control you?

ANSEL
I owe him.

CLAIRE
Is he your God?

ANSEL

No.

CLAIRE

Then how could you possibly owe him?

ANSEL

He helped me when I needed help.

CLAIRE

He took advantage of you.

ANSEL

No.

CLAIRE

Yes.

ANSEL

Nothing happens the way it should with me. Everything fails.

CLAIRE

What are your failures.

ANSEL

My marriage failed.

CLAIRE

Why?

ANSEL

Because of money.

CLAIRE

That's an excuse. Why did your marriage fail?

ANSEL

I don't know.

CLAIRE

Why did your marriage fail?

He tears up...

ANSEL

Because I'm a failure.

CLAIRE

And she saw that.

ANSEL
She already knew. She just
acknowledged it.

CLAIRE
Why are you a failure?

ANSEL
Because I've only ever been good at
one thing and... All of this is her
fault.

CLAIRE
Your wife?

ANSEL
No. A girl. You know the Universal
Concurrence?

CLAIRE
What was her name?

ANSEL
Jennifer.

CLAIRE
What was her name?

The repeat question throws Ansel, off...

ANSEL
Jennifer.

CLAIRE
Who was Jennifer?

ANSEL
We did one of these... exactly like
this... with her. But...

CLAIRE
What?

ANSEL
Nothing. It doesn't matter.

CLAIRE
What happened?

ANSEL
I did my job. She questioned her
choices and went home with her
family... but the family didn't put
in the work.

CLAIRE

She was the one on your show.

ANSEL

How did you know about that?

CLAIRE

You had her on two days after the group suicide. No one had access to her but you.

He's on the defensive, mind spinning, rationalizing...

ANSEL

We flew her out. It was all expenses paid! It was supposed to be a nice vacation for her.

CLAIRE

You exploited your relationship with her.

ANSEL

No.

CLAIRE

You did it for ratings.

ANSEL

No!

CLAIRE

You knew she was fragile and yet you put her out there for the world to judge.

He's losing it again...

ANSEL

She agreed to it all. How could I have known that she still felt a connection to the Concurrence?

CLAIRE

How could you not have know? You pressed her. You opened the wound. You gave her the knife and she slit her wrists with it.

ANSEL

She chose to be with them. She had free will!

CLAIRE
Did she really?

Ansel's looks to the ground...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Look me in my eyes and tell me you
don't blame yourself.

ANSEL
Everyone does.

She SLAPS him. He's in shock...

CLAIRE
No- Look at me. Listen to my words.
Feel them. Are you to blame for
Jennifer's death?

He looks into her eyes and finds salvation in them. He begins
to cry. After some time...

ANSEL
I was in control. I failed her.
(he releases)
I could have helped her but I chose
not to. I used her. I made the
choice.

CLAIRE
And that choice cost you
everything.

ANSEL
Everything. Yes.

CLAIRE
Tell me what you lost. I want to
hear it.

ANSEL
My show. Money. My house. My wife--

CLAIRE
NO!
(composing herself)
Those are things. What did you
lose?

ANSEL
Every kind of respect.

CLAIRE
Are you happy with who you are?

Ansel shakes his head, "No."

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Do you owe Jerry your happiness?

ANSEL
No.

CLAIRE
What do you owe him?

He's mesmerized by her...

ANSEL
Nothing.

CLAIRE
Do you owe him your money?

ANSEL
No.

CLAIRE
The only person you owe is
yourself. Do you see that?

ANSEL
I see it.

CLAIRE
Does what I say make sense to you?

ANSEL
It makes more sense than anything I
have ever heard.

CLAIRE
How do you feel?

ANSEL
Clear. Free.

CLAIRE
Close your eyes.

Ansel closes them...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Push everything out of your mind.
Picture yourself where you are
right at this very moment.

He shifts a little...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Don't move. Be still. Imagine you are composed of two parts. Two "yous". One lives inside the other. This you has lived inside the other its entire existence because it did not know any other way. Do you see the other you?

ANSEL

I see him.

CLAIRE

I want you to pull him out of you. Rip him from inside you and look at yourself from outside yourself.

Ansel's face turns red and his nose begins to bleed...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Do you see?

ANSEL

I see.

CLAIRE

You are seeing yourself from a view you have never seen. This is how others see you. What do you see?

ANSEL

Loneliness. Sadness. Weakness.

CLAIRE

I want you to walk through the door, Ansel. I want you to picture yourself walking through the door as if it isn't even there.

(waiting)

Are you through?

ANSEL

I am on the other side.

CLAIRE

I want you to unlock the door.

He exhales slightly...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Pull the other you back, Ansel. Bring it back to you. Let your two selves become one again. Open your eyes.

He opens his eyes. He wipes the blood away from his nostril.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Open the door.

Ansel stands up and turns the knob. The door opens...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Do you trust me?

ANSEL
Unquestionably.

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - NIGHT

ANGLE ON the front door. There's a loud BANGING...

MIKE (O.S.)
Roth, open up. I know you're in
there. Front desk says you haven't
checked out.

We hear the sounds of Mike picking the lock. A CLICK is heard. The door swings open. Mike takes a peak in. The room is empty...

He checks the bathroom, no one.

He begins walking back towards the front door but stops when he sees Ansel's suitcase. He begins picking through it as...

The door to room 222 slowly and silently creeps open. Ansel appears brandishing the screwdriver from earlier. He walks up behind Mike who's still squatting down and drives it into the back of Mike's head...

EXT. PENNY PINCHER MOTEL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jerry waits in the car in the passenger seat. He looks up at the open door to room 221.

JERRY
(to himself)
Come on, Michael.

Jerry keeps his eyes trained on the door. Nothing...

JERRY (CONT'D)
Jeez-louise. What is taking so
long.

He pushes his way out the car and shuts the door.

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry peeks his head from around the corner into the room. Mike's body is gone. The room is empty but the water in the bathroom is running...

JERRY

Michael.

(waits)

I'm not playing around, Michael.

He carefully enters the room. He's pretty scared.

JERRY (CONT'D)

What are you doing in there?

The front door begins to close, revealing Claire behind it. When it closes he locks it immediately.

Jerry jumps and turns around...

JERRY (CONT'D)

Good Lord- You sure startled me.
Sorry, young lady. I must have the
wrong room.

ANSEL (O.S.)

Hi, Jerry.

Ansel is standing near the bathroom. He's holding a copy of his book.

JERRY

Ansel.

JERRY (CONT'D)

You didn't answer our call earlier today. I told you to have the money for me today and here you are screening my phone calls- and I'm sorry but that's just plain rude. I'm sick of playin' these games with you- Makin' me drive out all this way.

Ansel takes a couple steps towards Jerry.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Where's my money, Ansel?

(beat)

And where's Michael?

ANSEL

He has moved on.

JERRY

What is that supposed to mean?

ANSEL

I put a screwdriver through his skull.

(laughing)

I don't know why to be honest.

Ansel motions to the open door to room 222. Jerry takes a step forward and looks in to see Mike lying face down with the handle of a phillips head sticking out of his head...

JERRY

(crying)

Michael, no!

(to Ansel)

What have you done?! I wanted to scare you, that's it. Oh, God- Why did you have to go and take it this far?

Ansel kicks the door closed.

ANSEL

Do you know what a fault is, Jerry?

JERRY

This is your fault..

ANSEL

A fault. A fault.

JERRY

What the heck are you talkin' about?

ANSEL

A fault is a fracture. It's a place where pressure builds and builds until it releases--

JERRY

Please, just let me go. I won't tell nobody about this- I swear.

Ansel is in his own world. The words are almost coming from someplace else other than himself...

ANSEL

But slowly after hundreds of thousands and millions of years something begins to grow from these faults. From these faults grow mountains.

JERRY

Why are you doing this? This isn't like you. It's like you're a different person.

It all makes sense to Ansel. Everything makes sense now.

ANSEL

Someday I will be a mountain but for now I am a Fault.

Ansel rushes towards Jerry and strikes him across the face with his book. Blood flies from Jerry's mouth. Ansel bashes him with the book again, knocking him to his knees. He hits him again, and again, and again. Jerry falls the ground...

ANGLE ON Claire, as she watches blankly...

OFF SCREEN Ansel hammers Jerry's face in with the book. We don't see any of this but it sounds horrible. Ansel loses all control.

He reaches a point where he can't do it anymore, completely out of breath. Every square inch of the book is stained with blood. He drops it on the ground and walks towards Claire who takes him into her arms...

CLAIRE

You did so good. You did so good. Doesn't it feel right? To just listen? Isn't it easier than thinking?

They stand there in each other's arms amongst the death and destruction for a moment.

CLOSE UP

on the book that Ansel used to bludgeon Jerry to death. It has fallen open to the one of the first pages. There, signed in black ink is...

"To Claire, I hope you find this book useful in some way. Cordially yours, Ansel Roth"

EXT. PENNY PINCHER MOTEL - MORNING

Ansel throws all the boxes filled with his books into the motel's dumpster.

EXT. PENNY PINCHER MOTEL - PARKING LOT - MORNING

Ansel loads his suitcase and Claire's things into his car. He gets in and starts it up. Claire motions for him to roll down the window. He cranks it down...

CLAIRE

I've forgotten something in the room. I don't know how long I'll be but I want you to wait for me. Are you going to wait for me?

ANSEL

(laughing)

What else am I going to do?

We walk with Claire to the stairs, up the stairs and down the walkway to room 221. She opens the door letting light spill into the room...

INT. ROOM 221 - MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

There's a sheet on the floor over Jerry's body. Claire closes the door and walks past it and on her way to the bathroom...

She comes out holding a tooth brush. She walks towards us but instead of going to the front door she goes to the door to room 222. She opens her side but the door to room 222 is closed. She knocks...

It opens revealing Paul and Evelyn. She walks into the room.

INT. ROOM 222 - MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Claire hugs Paul then Evelyn...

PAUL

How were we?

CLAIRE

You both were amazing.

Evelyn and Paul smile at each other. They're beaming.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Did you take care of it?

EVELYN

Now this was the white one,
correct? Not the colored man.

CLAIRE

The white one. The one who struck
me.

PAUL

He's finished. We ended him

CLAIRE

God willed it.

Evelyn and Paul nod in agreement.

EVELYN

(re: Ansel)
And is he..?

CLAIRE

He's in the car. We're about to
leave.

EVELYN

Oh, that's just wonderful. I could
cry.

CLAIRE

Out of everyone I chose you. You
understand how special you are,
don't you? Both of you. I couldn't
have done this without you.

She grabs two cups from the table nearby and pours some water
from the sink into each of them...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You've both reached the final
level. How does it feel knowing
you're about to move on?

PAUL

I feel...
(tearing up)
... happy.

EVELYN

Yes. It's special. I've never felt
this way before.

Claire takes two pills out of her pocket and puts one in each
of their hands...

CLAIRE

You have always been and will
always be with us. We will see you
on the other side.

Claire kisses Paul on the lips. It's like a boyfriend and girlfriend saying goodbye at the airport knowing they won't see each other for a long time...

Claire then kisses Evelyn in exactly the same way. We see it in Claire's eyes that she is in fact quite sad.

Both place the pill into their mouths. Claire hands them their water and they drink.

EVELYN

With his knowledge your teachings
will grow beyond anything we ever
could have imagined.

PAUL

Ira... We love you.

Claire/Ira takes a step back and lets them lay down in their respective beds...

She waits until their eyes close then leaves the room.

INT. ANSEL'S CAR - HOTEL PARKING LOT - MORNING

Claire approaches the car. She goes to open the door but it's locked. She knocks on the window. Ansel leans over and unlocks the door. She gets in...

ANSEL

Sorry.

CLAIRE

No more apologies. We won't dwell
on what's happened only what is
happening now. We don't feel sorry
for ourselves. We have each other.
We are strong.

Ansel puts the car into reverse but keeps his foot on the brake...

ANSEL

Where am I going?

Home . CLAIRe

CUT TO BLACK:

F A U L T S