

CANDYMAN

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Current Revisions by
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FADE IN:

EXT. CHICAGO AERIAL AT NIGHT

Arteries of traffic bulging along the coast of Lake Michigan run horizontal across our field of view. We fly overhead, following the road and just outpacing the cars below.

The strains of Phillip Glass' iconic score lend an air of dread to what is about to unfold. As the music swells...

THE TITLE FLIES IN:

CANDYMAN

EXT. HONEYCOMB

An empty HONEYCOMB fills the screen, honey lugubriously dripping slowly towards the camera and out of frame. We hear an all-encompassing whisper, off-screen.

VOICE (V.O.)

Sweets to the sweet.....

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO SKYLINE. DAY

This time we're looking up at it - the buildings loom menacingly, choking out the sky. The faintest buzzing sound swells. Could it be a police scanner? *Bees?* Both?

DISSOLVE TO:

ANTHONY, a 35-year-old African-American man in closeup. He's handsome, but tired.

INT. DIVE BAR. DAY

We stay on Anthony as he listens intently to a story told by a woman off-screen.

LORRAINE (O.S.)

Everybody around here knows about Helen.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

It happened a few years back,
before they tore the projects down
and this neighborhood got all
bougie...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY, CABRINI GREEN 30 YEARS AGO

This is the worst of government housing. Cinderblocks and bloodspots. We are at the end of a long hallway, a row of graffiti-splattered apartments on the left side and chain-link fences on the right. Slowly, the camera pushes towards a door at the end of the hallway. Lorraine continues spinning her tale as we creep towards the door:

LORRAINE (V.O.)

They say she was going around
Cabrini green cuttin' the heads
off dogs 'till they brought her
into the mental institution.
That's when she killed her
Psychiatrist and escaped. Crazy
white bitch didn't go on the run
either. Nah, she came right here
to the neighborhood. She wanted to
terrorize us.

We hear the sounds of a RAUCOUS CROWD in the background and the unmistakable SCREAMS OF A TERRIFIED BABY.

LORRAINE (V.O.)

She kidnapped a baby.

The door at the end of the hall flies open, to reveal HELEN, a fantasy version, lissome and hunched over. Her dirty long hair mingles with the shadows, obscuring her features. She's holding the CRYING BABY.

LORRAINE (V.O.)

That little boy had been missing
for weeks. Lord knows what she
was doing to it during that time.
But the neighborhood all came
together to look for it. Although
at that point, I'm not gonna lie --
most of us had given up hope.

Close up on the baby, we see its cherubic cheeks,
streaked with tears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORRAINE (V.O.)

But his mama ain't give up. No funeral, nothing. Even though it was weeks, she wasn't finna grieve.

EXT. CABRINI GREEN COURTYARD. NIGHT

More dirt than grass, the courtyard is littered with broken bottles and wayward plastic bags. Something is happening here. A security door slams open, and Helen approaches the camera with the vacant determination of a ghost. Her face, and the face of the infant in her arm are lit up by flickering of a MASSIVE BONFIRE.

LORRAINE (V.O.)

She walked that little boy down to the bonfire as casual as a walk in the park. She was going to roast that baby like a turkey.

As the fire rages, Helen's silhouette cuts through the flames. We see a close up on the baby, flames dancing across his wet eyes. Slowly, the crowd gathers in the courtyard, gradually becoming aware of what's about to happen.

LORRAINE (V.O.)

People ain't fuck around in those days.

The crowd rushes Helen, who with a small controlled movement of her left arm, slaps three grown men across the courtyard. But the residents of Cabrini Green overwhelm her, burying her in a dog-pile.

LORRAINE (V.O.)

They say it took ten dudes to get that baby free, and not a second too soon.

The baby is back in the arms of safety, still crying. Several men have Helen pinned down, but her eyes are cold and emotionless. She does not struggle. At the last instant, she stands up, tossing a few men aside quite easily. She turns towards the fire, and WALKS RIGHT IN.

LORRAINE (V.O.)

She burnt herself to death. Just walked right in and went up like match stick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Close up on the crackling flames, the din of the crowd fades.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DIVE BAR

Anthony in close-up, hanging on her words and recording video with his phone. He's sucking blithely on a piece of hard candy.

ANTHONY

Why would anybody do that?

We see LORRAINE, 20 now for the first time. She's dressed in a hoodie, blithely contemplating some cheese fries and gravy.

LORRAINE

Shit I don't know. Bitch crazy. They say she was on some Candyman shit.

ANTHONY

"Candyman." Come on.

The camera goes from a close to medium shot revealing that BRIANNA, 33, Anthony's girlfriend, has been seated next to him the whole time. She clearly doesn't have time for any of this shit

BRIANNA

What's that? Some kind of drug?

LORRAINE

Damn Brianna. You sure you're from Chicago? It was a Cabrini thing; Legend went that if you say "Candyman" in a mirror five times, this giant nigga with a hook hand comes and kills you. It doesn't work. I used to try it with my friends on Halloween, but Helen took that shit seriously. She was obsessed. That's why she took that baby. She was trying to sacrifice it for him.

She eats a fry. Anthony ponders the grim tale.

.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIANNA

Ok, well thanks for your time,
Lorrie.

LORRAINE

I mean, there's more to the story.

BRIANNA

I'm sure there is, girl, but we
gotta go.

Anthony doesn't budge. Instead, he reaches into his
inside pocket and produces A PHOTOGRAPH.

ANTHONY

Have you ever seen a painting like
this?

The photograph is of a mural, painted in a traditional
classical style, in which a depiction of Helen stands
saintly in the center, hands in the air, eyes towards
heaven.

Lorraine shakes her head no.

LORRAINE

Who made that?

ANTHONY

I don't know but I think it's her.

LORRAINE

Her who? Helen? Nah. That looks
way too nice to be her.

Anthony smiles undeterred.

LORRAINE

Why do you care so much about all
this?

ANTHONY

I'm an artist. My work deals with
the influence of classical
modernism on urban street art.
Found this photo at the library.
Thought it had to be old at first.
They don't make 'em like that
anymore, for real. But look...

Anthony turns the picture over revealing a scribbled
date.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANTHONY

...The date. "May 12th, 1995..."

Lorraine reads along with him.

LORRAINE

"...Cabrini Green."

ANTHONY

That was the day after Helen
Lyle's death.

LORRAINE

Oh snap. For real?

ANTHONY

I think it was painted on one of
the walls there.

LORRAINE

I never saw that, but I was s a
till a kid when it got torn down,
so...

ANTHONY

You got any other friends from the
Cabrini days who you think would
talk to me?

Brianna gets up - she's had enough. Snarky:

BRIANNA

Maybe we can get a mirror and ask
Mr. Candyman where this painting
was. Again, great to meet you,
Lorraine.

EXT. DIVE BAR. DAY

Brianna's car sits at the curb. Around them is a
neighborhood in transition. Upscale chain stores and
upper middle class people with smart phones talking about
parties and galleries are intermingled with cigarette
stores. The dingy bar must have been the last one of its
kind on the block.

INT. BRIANNA'S CAR. DAY

She's at the wheel. Both Anthony and Brianna sit
silently with the engine off. His eyes drift towards the
rear view mirror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He's tempted to say "Candyman" but Brianna looks at him. The two of them burst out laughing at Anthony's embarrassment of getting caught considering trying to summon a demon.

ANTHONY

I thought you didn't believe in
shit like this?

BRIANNA

(being funny)

Let me tell you something. If you
ever try to summon a ghost, demon
alien, whatever in my presence, I
will dump your ass so hard.

Anthony laughs.

ANTHONY

Alright, alright. Let's go.

As Brianna starts the engine, Anthony unwraps and pops a piece of hard candy into his mouth.

INT. BRIANNA'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

It's a nice place, not lavish by any means, but it's clear that Brianna has some resources.

She lays in bed in his shirt from earlier scrolling through Instagram and calls out to the bathroom.

BRIANNA

I have a meeting tomorrow at 8:00
at the gallery, so I should get up
at 6.

Silence.

BRIANNA

Anthony...

Anthony leans out of the bathroom suddenly. He brushes his teeth.

ANTHONY

Aiight. That's early. Why do you
schedule those meetings so early?

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CONTINUED:

BRIANNA

It's my gallery, and we gotta get ready for the show on wednesday.

ANTHONY

You sure you're ok with me showing a couple of pieces? Even if it's the old shit.

BRIANNA

Of course. I think your work really resonates today, baby. You know that...

ANTHONY

...But?

BRIANNA

You need to get painting again, Anthony. When you gonna write that proposal?

Anthony goes back to looking in the bathroom mirror.

ANTHONY

For the grant?

BRIANNA

Yeah.

ANTHONY

It's not written. They want video proposals.

BRIANNA

That's good. Maybe you'll actually get around to it.

ANTHONY

You're hilarious. Yeah, I'm gonna do it soon. I may head back to the north side tomorrow and ask around about Candyman though.

BRIANNA

There's a point when you gotta stop seeking inspiration and just start creating.

ANTHONY

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRIANNA

I just don't want you to use this as an excuse to procrastinate any more.

ANTHONY

Procrastinate? You don't think this is fascinating? Nobody was making art like that in Chicago in the nineties. Crazy that it even existed. And that story...

BRIANNA

(skeptical)

Mmmm hmmm... That girl was high as shit.

Anthony steps out of the bathroom again.

ANTHONY

So what? Does that make her unreliable?

Brianna shrugs.

ANTHONY

See, you're like a cop. Makin' judgments on people, 'n shit...

She looks at him.

ANTHONY

Fine. I'll shoot the video tomorrow.

He goes back to the bathroom. She picks up the picture of "Helen" on his end table and looks at it.

INT. BRIANNA'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM. NIGHT

Brianna is speaking loudly from the other room.

BRIANNA (O.S.)

By the way, should I be jealous that the only thing that's gonna get you painting again is some picture of some "Becky?"

This snaps him out of it. He returns playfully to the bedroom.

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CONTINUED:

ANTHONY

How'd I end up with the one girl
who's gonna get jealous of a woman
who died in a fire thirty years
ago.

BRIANNA

Crazy finds crazy, I guess.

Anthony pulls her close.

We follow Anthony's hands as they caress the contours of
Brianna's body.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BRIANNA'S APARTMENT. DAY

Anthony wakes up. Brianna's side of the bed is disrupted.
She's gone. He gets up.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIANNA'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY. DAY

Anthony roots around in the closet. He finds his old
cans of spray paint, bringing him back to a time when he
used to tag the Southside. He sees photographs of
himself as a child, clinging to the pant leg of his
mother outside a bodega. He sees photographs of his
early, groundbreaking street art: *Grim, minimalist nooses
spray-painted on walls in different locations throughout
Chicago. The nooses look like they are hanging from
shadows cast by trees, but the pictures must've been
taken at the perfect time of for the shadows to align.*

CUT TO:

INT. BRIANNA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM. DAY

Anthony's holding a sketchbook, sucking on candy. He
stares at it blankly as he doodles a grim series of
nooses.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIANNA'S APARTMENT, ANTHONY'S STUDIO. DAY

A small extra bedroom, crammed with art supplies, an overstuffed desk with a small mirror and a small blank canvas. Through the window the black membrane of the Chicago night strains to hold the morning sky from punching through. A small camcorder is set on a tripod. Anthony checks his hair and teeth in the mirror and presses record.

ANTHONY

Hello, my name is Anthony McCoy,
and please accept this grant
proposal as a bid for ...ya money
bitches!

He amuses himself somewhat. Back to seriousness...

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Hello, I'm Anthony McCoy and my
work is concerned with outlier
artworks created in low-income
Chicago neighborhoods in the
1990's. While I realize that up
to now my previous paintings have
dealt more directly with the
problematics of systemic racism,
I'm changing it up a bit. I...

Anthony slumps back in his chair. Unable to feign
enthusiasm any longer, he picks up the photo of Helen and
stares at it, lovingly.

DISSOLVE TO:

CUT TO:

EXT. MARGARET HIE DING LIN PARK, BASKETBALL COURT. DAY

This place is a mecca for street basketball pick-up
games. Underneath the L, the courts are caged-off and
packed with folks rocking number twenty-three and the
occasional 45 on their jerseys. Crowds swell around the
sidelines, hoping for a peek at the next Derrick Rose.
Anthony, deep into a five-on-five, pulls down a
contentious rebound, passes and makes his way cross-
court.

He sets a pick, gets jostled hard, but stands his ground.
Rolling off, he cuts to the basket and calls for the
ball.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANTHONY

Yo!

He catches the pass, turns, shoots and get REJECTED to the floor by a man that towers over him.

JIM TRASK

Foul! That's a foul! Damn!.

Anthony's friend JIM TRASK (33) helps him up as the other team quickly and dominantly wins the game. Jim continues to appeal to the players. It wasn't a foul

JIM

How is that not a foul?! How is that not a foul?!

MOMENTS LATER...

Anthony and Jim walk lean against the chain link fence as the next game is played.

JIM

People cheating out here, man.
Niggas out here committing capital murder 'n shit, and no one's calling shit? Meanwhile this Clyde Drexler looking motherfucker exclusively throwing hooks!

Jim, trying hard to be heard heckling from the sidelines, lights a cigarette. The flame jets out high which makes Anthony weirdly jump.

JIM (CONT'D)

Whoa, you good?

ANTHONY

Yeah, I'm good.

IM

You still eat that old-lady candy, man?

ANTHONY

I like 'em.

JIM

Nobody wanna hear you crunching on that shit. Eat Twizzlers like a normal person.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANTHONY

How's work?

JIM

Tough market. Lots of new construction, but it's taking time filling up.

ANTHONY

Should be boom times, no? I mean since the ghetto moved south?

JIM

Why? I mean sure, but this area still isn't really fully appealing to the affluent yet. Shit don't change overnight. Still some crime too.

ANTHONY

Really? Feels like there are so many police these days, though.

JIM

They're part of the problem. Police brutality doesn't help shit. Fewer people call the cops; more crime. It's a damn cycle.

ANTHONY

Yeah, that's the oldest story in America.

JIM

Deadass. How about you? How's Brianna? You gonna put a ring on it? Because you are not going to do better.

ANTHONY

I gotta come correct if I'm gonna pop the question. I got no job, not in school and straight-up uninspired.

JIM

Good point. What does she see in you, dude?

ANTHONY

She showed my work in her gallery before anyone else would give me a chance.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

I made my first sale there. Made my last sale there too.

JIM

No shit? When was that?

ANTHONY

It's been a while, man.

JIM

You know why? You take part in a boring, sad-as-hell art form. Know what you should do? One of those 'dogs playing poker' joints.

ANTHONY

You want me to put that on an airbrushed R.I.P. Biggie bomber jacket?

JIM

Yeah, I'm basic. I probably would like that. So what?

ANTHONY

I gotta go.

He starts walking away.

JIM

Where you goin'? Aaight. End the conversation on a cryptic note then.

INT. BRIANNA'S ART GALLERY, EVENING.

It's a small group art show where various paintings from different artists line the walls. Three photos of Anthony's Nooses Series hang in a row on the wall. Some nooses appear to hang shadows cast by statues.

- **Cows in the Cow Parade**
- **The Miro outside the Chicago Temple Building**
- **The Godness of Industry outside the trade building**

The event itself is sparsely attended, but Brianna and Anthony are dressed for success. She circulates with a drink in one hand and a brochure in another. WILCOTT (50,) a stuffy old bastard who prides himself in knowing what's what with urban art approaches Anthony.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILCOTT

Ah the nooses.

ANTHONY

I think they remain relevant.

WILCOTT

I still quite admire the visceral,
abject quality of this series...

ANTHONY

But...

WILCOTT

One must beware of the rut, no? I
always felt like the...nooses...
were the beginning of something,
but I'm unclear on what you want
to say with them now.

Brianna appears.

BRIANNA

Welcome.

Wilcott hands her his empty drink.

WILCOTT

Here you are dear.

She doesn't take it.

BRIANNA

I'm Brianna Wilson. I own this
gallery. The trash is over there.

WILCOTT

How embarrassing. My mistake. I
Mr. McCoy and I were just
discussing his work. So Anthony-
What's next?

ANTHONY

Oils, I think. Classical
portraits.

WILCOTT

Ah, the obligatory sophomoric
stylistic imitation passed off as
originality.

ANTHONY

Maybe originality isn't the point.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILCOTT

Then it sounds like you're on the right track.

Brianna is a little drunk on wine.

BRIANNA

Maybe you're not seeing what he's seeing.

ANTHONY

Bri..

WILCOTT

Wilcott James, pleasure to meet you.

BRIANNA

Brianna. I'm Anthony's girlfriend

WILCOTT

Ah, well. How... sassy. Anthony used to be my student. Until he decided to take this seemingly endless sabbatical.

BRIANNA

Genius takes time.

WILCOTT

That's the thing about 'true genius'. It doesn't.

BRIANNA

Very generous of you to be such a successful artist, and still find the time to stand around and judge other people's work.

WILCOTT

Well, have a nice night. I hope to see you back in class someday, Anthony.

Mr. Wilcott leaves.

BRIANNA

I couldn't...

ANTHONY

You're good... With your sassy ass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She play hits him.

INT. BRIANNA'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

Through the bathroom mirror we see Anthony kissing Brianna. They are both drunk. She starts getting undressed. HE goes to the bathroom. He gets a crazy idea. He takes his phone out and starts recording his reflection.

ANTHONY
Candyman... Candyman...

BRIANNA
What?

ANTHONY
...Candyman...

Brianna enters.

ANTHONY
...Candyman..

BRIANNA
Oh, Hell no!

Anthony laughs.

ANTHONY
Got you.

BRIANNA
Got me? You're too chicken to do it anyway.

ANTHONY
Yeah?

BRIANNA
Yeah.

ANTHONY
Watch me.

Brianna takes that bet. Anthony leans in and... he can't. He is chicken shit.

BRIANNA
Thought so.

Brianna leaves the bathroom in victory.

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CONTINUED:

BRIANNA

Now get that cute ass out here.

ANTHONY

I'll be right out.

Anthony looks deeper into the mirror after she leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROSE ESTATES, DAY

Anthony, hungover from a lack of sleep, slouches into The Rose Estates, a few small poorly-maintained buildings clustered together at the end of a lonely, in-transition block. Once low-income housing, they've been converted to a home for senior citizens.

INT. ROSE ESTATES, LOBBY. DAY

It's a modest alcove with an unmanned makeshift security desk. The walls decorated with cheery inspirational posters and empty vases. Anthony walks through to the elevator.

INT. ROSE ESTATES, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY. DAY

The elevator creaks open, and Anthony makes his way down the hall. Every room in the hallway is adorned with a small white board. On each one, the name of the occupant is cheerily printed in temporary, washable magic marker. Anthony stops at the one marked "Anne" and takes a deep breath.

INT. ROSE ESTATES, ANNE MCCOY'S ROOM. DAY

Not great in here either, folks. The room is neat, but sparsely decorated with a combination of framed photographs and little stuffed animals - mostly dogs. ANNE MCCOY, 65, is perched precariously on a creaky cafeteria chair holding a broom, poking at a small air vent when the door clicks open.

ANTHONY

Jesus Mom, get the hell down from there. What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNE

Anthony! I haven't seen you in months!

Anthony helps his mother down and they make their way over to something sofa-shaped, but covered in quilts.

ANTHONY

If something is broken you gotta call them. What if you fell? Nobody would even know.

ANNE

I've survived too many things to get killed by a chair, baby. Do you want some water?

ANTHONY

No thanks, I'm good. Where's Bernard? Ain't nobody at the desk right now.

ANNE

Ah, he's around somewhere. Nice man, that Bernard.

ANTHONY

We pay good money for him to be on duty.

ANNE

When am I gonna meet this girlfriend of yours.

ANTHONY

I don't know... Soon.

She's distracted. He catches her looking back up at that vent.

ANTHONY

What's up there?

ANNE

No, no, no. You're gonna tell me I'm losing my mind, and I had enough of that from you.

That's all he needs to hear. Anthony gets up and starts examining the grate.

INT. ANNE'S ROOM, FROM INSIDE THE VENT

The vents has a LOW MACHINE HUM. Through the metal slits we see Anthony trying to angle himself for a better look. The camera slowly retreats back into the darkness.

INT. ANNE'S ROOM

Anthony is on the chair looking in.

ANTHONY

Is it broken or something, mom?

ANNE

There's a hornets nest in there. Seen 'em pop out from time to time. I hear 'em right through the walls.

ANTHONY

Hornets?

He looks over at the prodigious collection of prescription bottles clustered on her night table.

ANNE

I was dealing with them when you came.

ANTHONY

I don't see anything.

ANNE

I don't think they like me. Haven't been stung once yet. Come on honey, sit down so we can talk. I miss you. I don't know what you're doing; what you're workin' on. You don't show me any of your art.

Putting his mother's potential dementia aside, Anthony sits down.

ANTHONY

Yeah. About that. I need to ask you something. Do you remember something called Candyman?

Anne sighs.

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CONTINUED:

ANNE

That old tale...

ANTHONY

Yeah I know, but tell me about it.

ANNE

He's a ghost. A phantom. Hood mumbo jumbo. That's who they blamed for the murders. If someone died..? Candyman did it. That's how the community would neglect taking responsibility.

ANTHONY

Okay, so what was his deal?

ANNE

Why are we talking about such unpleasant things. I thought you were stopping by to bring me some shit.

ANTHONY

Come on, mom.

ANNE

Supposedly, he was an artist back in the olden days, just like you. His name was Daniel... Daniel Robitille. His daddy was a slave, but he was a free man. He was hired to paint a portrait of a rich white man's daughter, but he fell for her; knocked her up. Him being a free man didn't mean much in those days, and when the girl's father heard what he had done he hired some men.

ANTHONY

Uh oh.

ANNE

Yes, uh oh. They cut off his hand, stripped him naked, poured honey on him and let bees sting him half to death. Then they lit him up, burnt him ...the fire took care of the other half.

ANTHONY

Sounds like some Emmitt Till shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNE

Yes. Only the white woman in this situation wasn't a lying bitch. Excuse me. I think she really did love him.

ANTHONY

Do you remember if anyone back in the day was painting anything like this?

Anthony shows her the picture of "Helen". Anne's face goes dark.

ANNE

I haven't been back to Cabrini for a long-ass time. It's a bad place. A murder a day when we lived there.

ANTHONY

It's barely the same neighborhood. Unrecognizable. Gentrified now.

ANNE

That's not how 'bad places' work. You can put a mask on a monster, that doesn't make it stop being a monster. It's all the same underneath.

ANTHONY

Underneath...

Anthony ponders this and looks out the window.

EXT. CHICAGO'S NEAR NORTH SIDE, DUSK

The Old Town chic had crept considerably northwards since Anne's day. The coffee shops and retail stores make it clear that gentrification hasn't quite overwhelmed the area that once housed the towers of Cabrini, but the outcome is inevitable. ANTHONY walks purposefully down the street, arriving at a small antique store.

INT. PURCELL'S CONSIGNMENT. NIGHT

Purcell's is a perfect metaphor for the neighborhood within which it resides. Artworks and anvils, tea-kettles and golf clubs.

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Surely there are treasures among the stacks and shelves of bric-a-brac, but finding them poses a challenge. LEONARD (50), is listening to NPR/WBEZ as he takes stock.

NPR CORRESPONDENT (O.S.)

Violent crime on the South Side has reached what the mayor is calling "epidemic proportions." But a new study from the University of Chicago points to a dangerous cycle of violence between law enforcement and local gangs...

ANTHONY approaches the desk and clears his throat to get Leonard's attention. Attention not granted.

ANTHONY

Excuse me, man.

LEONARD

How may I help you sir?

ANTHONY

Is Jake here?

Leonard turns off the radio.

LEONARD

You a friend of his?

ANTHONY

We grew up around here together. Heard he was working here a few years back. Been meaning to come in, but you know how it goes.

The Gold Coast Code switch goes into effect.

LEONARD

I'm sorry, young blood. Jake passed in November. Good brother though.

ANTHONY

Damn. He got killed?

Leonard nods. Doesn't want to talk about it, and frankly, neither does Anthony. He knows how that story goes.

ANTHONY

The stuff you have here, where's it from?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEONARD

From all over, man. I've got fur coats from Paris, although fur doesn't move the way it used to. I got video games from Japan that you can't get here in the states. A little bit of everything.

A Chicago Bears pennant is pinned above the doorway.

ANTHONY

But some of this is from the hood too, no? Consignments or whatever.

LEONARD

Yeah man, of course. Most of it, matter of fact. Estate sales, you know.

ANTHONY

You got a downstairs?

LEONARD

Yeah why?

ANTHONY

I'm doing a project about Cabrini Green.

LEONARD

Oh.

ANTHONY

See I think the basement level of Cabrini would've extended been right up to the wall of your basement. I was wondering if I could check it out down there; see if there's any way to... I don't know. Maybe I'm just being stupid.

LEONARD

You can go down there and take a look if you want. Long as you buy some shit.

Anthony pops a candy into his mouth.

INT. PURCELL'S, BACK OF STORE

Leonard walks Anthony to a small padlocked door next to an out-of-order water fountain. He patiently picks through an incredibly massive key ring.

LEONARD

Tell you the truth, Jake was a junk man's junk man. Sentimental as hell though. I guess that's why he got into this business. Shit probably me too.

ANTHONY

Not much to be sentimental about anymore.

LEONARD

I suspect that's why business stays good for me though. Butcher just sells meat, and you can get that at Whole Foods. Hardware store sells hammers, and you can get better ones at Home Depot. But all this shit? These are stories. Without stories, what was never was, we all pretty much lost. Can't sell that at Whole Foods.

ANTHONY

You drunk, man?

LEONARD

Hell yeah. Here it is.

The lock clicks open, and Leonard opens the door revealing a narrow staircase into the dark basement below.

INT. PURCELL'S BASEMENT

The view from the bottom of the stairs. Anthony and Leonard look down into the darkness. We hear Anthony crunch his candy.

LEONARD

Go ahead, man.

He flips on the light and a few feeble uncovered lightbulbs pop on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEONARD

Take your time, I'm at my desk.
Don't break yo ass.

Anthony makes his way down the stairs alone. Despite its low ceiling, the basement itself is seemingly larger than the cramped quarters above. The contents of the makeshift shelves are not afforded the same dignity of presentation as their upstairs neighbors. The bulk of the items, a random assortment of bureaus, breakfronts, armoires and coffee tables are rested at odd angles. Dropcloths are deployed with no clear logic. It's a labyrinth designed for convenience of access, not curb appeal. At the center of the room are FOUR FULL-LENGTH MIRRORS, each set into wooden frames boasting styles from classical to contemporary. Against the walls, canvases lean into one another in uneven stacks. Anthony peruses the largest among them:

- **A badly water-stained, framed poster of Sam Cooke**
- **A framed, hand-painted map of the Celtic Brittany region**
- **A photograph of a pale woman looking at herself in a mirror**
- **A painting of a fisherman on a riverbank, the hook at the end of his line without a fish.**

While Anthony takes a moment to absorb this last one, he hears something. The buzzing. He turns his attention to the back of the room, where the bulbs have all gone out. He makes his way through the stacks, and notices something beneath his feet. He bends down to pick it up.

It's a **scrap of canvas** torn from a painting. The hues are red and gold. He picks it up and ventures deeper into the darkness. He finds another. And another. The buzzing intensifies. He follows the sound to the edge of the room, and a doorless doorway revealing a utility closet.

INT. PURCELL'S BASEMENT, UTILITY CLOSET

In here, the poured concrete floors have given way to filthy, water-logged tile. The only notable features of the cramped room are a giant workman's sink and a dingy metallic silver trap door on the floor. He looks at it and sees a corrupted hazy reflection.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He searches for a handle and finds one, where there was once a padlock. He opens the door...

CUT TO:

INT. A DARK TUNNEL. NIGHT

Anthony pops his head in upside-down. It takes a second for his inverted vision to adjust to the dark. Below him is a large dank corridor.

ANTHONY

Holy Hell.

Anthony takes out his phone and turns on the flashlight and explores, the long-abandoned space with it. Laundry machines line one room, and the walls are covered with art. Not standard graffiti either. Curious, Anthony leans in to get a better angle, when a large cockroach scurries around his hand.

ANTHONY

Oh shit!

Anthony slips and falls. He lands on his back. He gets up.

ANTHONY

Fuck! Hey! Yo!

Anthony looks though the portal above. Nothing. He picks up his phone, the light illuminates the walls.

They look like they were painted by a master of classical oil painting, depicting an angry mob of white men in 19th century garb running down its length with torches.

ANTHONY

Yo.

He takes video as he goes.

ANTHONY

I'm in what I believe to be the laundry level floor of the Cabrini Green projects. Don't let anyone tell you graffiti ain't art.

He's pulled down the hallway by his own fascination.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

You can tear down the walls, but as long as something survives, so will the story. It's... it's beautiful.

Before he knows it he's a ways down the dark hall. All of a sudden, his phone BUZZES loud. He drops it sending him once again into the black.

ANTHONY

Shit.

He picks it up in time to see it's Brianna who's calling, but the phone stops ringing.

He shines the light in front of him and realizes he's at the end of the tunnel before him on the wall is the painting he's been looking for. It's Helen in all her glory, looking beautiful and pure of intention. It's now clear the portrait is of Helen engulfed in flames.

Anthony documents every corner of the wall before turning around. At the other end of the hallway a figure stands. Anthony's breath quickens.

ANTHONY

Hello?

The figure is still. Anthony slowly makes his way towards the trap door on the ceiling in the middle of the hallway, keeping an eye on the figure the whole time. As he gets there he squints and leans in to see the figure appears to be a painted silhouette of a man with a hook for a hand. The words "Sweets to the Sweet" are scrawled above in more chaotic lettering than is anywhere else in the hallway. Anthony, petrified looks up again.

ANTHONY

Hey--

Leonard pops out!

LEONARD

Look, what you want and did. Hold tight. I got a ladder somewhere.

Anthony doesn't realize it, but he's dropped his wallet in the initial fall.

INT. PURCELL'S, NIGHT

LEONARD

Now, you ain't gonna sue, right?
That was your idea; I didn't want
you to go down there.

ANTHONY

Nah. I'm good.

Anthony and Leonard walk from the back of the store when

A LOUD CRASH from the front jolts them..

Leonard into a run towards the front window, now smashed
away.

LEONARD

Fuck you! Come back you cowards!

ANTHONY

What happened?

LEONARD

Goddamned Hitler youth shitbags
threw a car battery through my
window. Motherfuckers.

EXT. PURCELL'S. NIGHT

Anthony opens the door cautiously and looks out into the
night. Feigning a modicum of courage, he steps out into
the street and addresses Leonard through the now non-
existent front-store window.

ANTHONY

Call the police!

LEONARD

The police? You trying to die
tonight?

ANTHONY

I bet they headed over to
Division.

LEONARD

Respect to you for that, but chill
out. You go after them, then what?
Huh? What are you gonna do? Go
home, man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANTHONY

It ain't right.

LEONARD

Happened before; it'll happen again.

Anthony starts to walk away. He's still worked up.

LEONARD

You're not calling an Uber?

ANTHONY

Nah, it's only a few blocks to the L.

Leonard is still behind the desk, but we see him from a new angle. This reveals a shelf with weapons.

LEONARD

Here, take this. Just in case.

It's a meat cleaver. Anthony waves it off.

ANTHONY

I'm good.

EXT. CHICAGO'S NEAR NORTH SIDE, NIGHT

Anthony walks away the store. The streets are mostly silent, interrupted only by the scattered punctuations of a drunken yell and barking dog. For a place that's supposed to be gentrified, the old neighborhood looks pretty fucking rough at night. Anthony finds himself conscious of his clothes, his haircut. He never felt softer in his life.

The bright lights of a STARBUCKS cut through the windows forming geometric squares on the sidewalk. Like a moth to flame...

INT. STARBUCKS, NIGHT

Green and white. Fluorescent and smooth. Exposed bourgeoisie brick. There are only a handful of customers gathered, but business is brisk here compared to Purcell's. Anthony approaches the counter. He's dirty and scuffed up from the fall. The BARISTA (23) is plenty plucky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARISTA

What can I get you?

ANTHONY

Let me get a large tea please.

BARISTA

What kind?

ANTHONY

Just normal.

Anthony notices two loud LARGE WHITE DRUNK DUDES acting more rowdy than the atmosphere calls for. They distract and unsettle Anthony for a second. One of them is holding a hammer, like he's doing a bit. Are these the vandals?

BARISTA

Ok, one small black tea.

ANTHONY

With honey.

BARISTA

Ok, honey is over there. That will be \$4.23 please.

The Dudes are looming behind him. Anthony checks his pockets. The wallet.

ANTHONY

Fuck.

BARISTA

Sir?

ANTHONY

I lost my wallet. Sorry.

BARISTA

Ok sir. Can you step aside, there are other customers behind you.

ANTHONY

Yeah, I'm sorry. Can I just get a key to the bathroom?

BARISTA

The bathroom is for paying customers. Store policy.

DUDE ONE

Let's go man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANTHONY

Just hang on a second. Can I use the bathroom please? Really sorry about it.

DUDE ONE

Pinch it. Get out of the way.

ANTHONY

Hang on.

BARISTA

Sir. Please leave or I'm going to have to report you.

A THIRD DUDE walks out of the bathroom. Anthony jumps out of line and catches it before the door swings shut.

INT. STARBUCKS, BATHROOM. NIGHT

Anthony goes to the urinal. There's an arrow drawn on the wall pointing down to it. Anthony looks. On the spot in the urinal where the little fly decal is usually placed is a living bee.

ANTHONY

What the fuck?

INT. STARBUCKS, NIGHT

Anthony exits and the situation has blossomed into a full-blown scene with every eye in the place on Anthony. The other Dudes walk over, ready to throw down.

DUDE ONE

The fuck you lookin' at?.

Anthony turns towards the Barista who is on the phone trying to make it look like he's not calling the cops on Anthony.

DUDE ONE (CONT'D)

Come at me then.

ANTHONY

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUDE TWO

You heard him. You wanna go, we'll
light you up, bitch.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. STARBUCKS, NIGHT

Anthony comes crashing through the door into the street.
The three dudes are in tow. Dude 3 lands a very off-
balance straight right hook to Anthony's jaw.

DUDE THREE

Yeah!

Anthony is reeling from the punch while a sound from his
pocket cuts through the night: BUZZ BUZZ BUZZ. Brianna
is trying to Facetime.

Anthony immediately takes it.

ANTHONY

What's up babe?

He's fully surrounded by bloodthirsty dudes.

BRIANNA (ON FACETIME)

Hey baby-- whoa. Are you bleeding?
What the fuck?

The three fuck-head dudes are momentarily astounded at
the audacity of taking a facetime call while they're
trying to kick your ass.

ANTHONY

Hang on one sec.

Anthony takes off in a full sprint in the opposite
direction. The dudes give chase. Anthony ducks around a
corner, and then another one. He slips behind a dumpster
and the pursuers fly by. Anthony catches his breath in
the parking lot of a closed chain restaurant. Brianna
still on Facetime.

BRIANNA

Where are you?

ANTHONY

I'm comin'. I'm comin' home.

BRIANNA

Who are you fighting?

EXT. CHAIN RESTAURANT PARKING LOT

He's breathing heavy, but trying to play it cool, we see her face, over his shoulder, in the smartphone screen:

ANTHONY

That was crazy. That was--

CRACK!

A HAMMER smashes Anthony's hand, knocking the phone out of the frame. But the frame does not change. Another more violent blow descends upon Anthony's arm, and a bone in his right arm becomes clearly dislodged. Anthony screams.

DUDE ONE

This neighborhood isn't yours anymore.

Dude Three cackles.

ANTHONY

I was just....

More heavy blows come down on him.

DUDE TWO

It's a new world order around here, bitch.

He kicks Anthony in the side.

DUDE THREE

Didn't you get the memo, this place in't for you anymore. Get down to the Southside where you belong, nigger.

Dude Three viciously wails on Anthony..

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTHONY'S POV, CHAIN RESTAURANT PARKING LOT. NIGHT

Dude One cracks Anthony right over the head. A brief flash of blurry, and then black. Back to blurry.

EXT. CHAIN RESTAURANT PARKING LOT. NIGHT

A shadowy hook-wielding figure stands in the reflection of a restaurant window across the street from the parking lot. If the reflection is accurate, This figure would be standing behind Anthony. Anthony's beaten body is crumpled on the pavement.

Brianna squints on the screen - she glimpses the figure before Anthony does.

BRIANNA

Is there someone else there? Who the hell is that?

EXT. ANTHONY'S POV, CHAIN RESTAURANT PARKING LOT

Very blurry.

DUDE ONE

Yo man, you fucked with the wrong--

A hook tears Dude One's face off.

EXT. CHAIN RESTAURANT PARKING LOT

Candyman, shrouded in shadows, floats towards Dude Two, hook sharp as hell, extended and slick with blood.

EXT. ANTHONY'S POV, CHAIN RESTAURANT PARKING LOT

We hear the dull grunting of Dude Two and Dude Three as they are disemboweled off screen. The corpse of Dude Three tumbles lifelessly across Anthony's legs. Candyman, face cloaked in shadow, strides into frame, the voice is distorted:

CANDYMAN

I won't harm you. I'm to be *your* victim.

CUT TO BLACK

The Buzzing crescendos in the darkness.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, NIGHT

Fade up under the fluorescents. The buzzing gives way to the melodic beeping of machines and carts being pushed down the hallway. We pan over from the Helen photo, which is suddenly flipped face down by a hand with a banging manicure. Brianna hates that photo. She is sitting at the side of Anthony's bed. He's cleaned up, but bandaged and bruised. His right arm is bound together by a fresh white cast.

Anthony comes to. Brianna fights tears.

BRIANNA

Baby.

ANTHONY

Yeah, I'm just thirsty. What happened?

Brianna brings a styrofoam cup of water to his dry lips.

BRIANNA

I was hoping you could tell us.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE

Anthony and Brianna are seated across from HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR COLLINS (45) and DETECTIVE LIPEZ (35.) Collins is a worried-looking woman who has seen some shit in her day. Lipez, pounding an iced-coffee, is probably too handsome for his own good.

COLLINS

When we brought you in, you were unconscious. You had sustained a concussion and multiple fractures on the back of your head and spine. While not superficial, we don't expect any lasting side effects once they heal. But most critically, your right arm and hand were broken pretty badly. We've done multiple surgeries to reconnect the nerves.

ANTHONY

What does that mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLLINS

We have to wait and see.

Anthony takes this news hard. It's his painting hand.

LIPEZ

This can't wait.

Lipez drops a manilla folder on the desk in front of Anthony. The contents are a one-page crime report and grizzly crime scene photos of the three dead guys, mostly impaled.

ANTHONY

Jesus.

LIPEZ

You're Anthony McCoy?

ANTHONY

Yes.

LIPEZ

Three men murdered on the Gold Coast. Puncture wounds are highly atypical, and we still haven't determined the weapon used.

ANTHONY

I think it was a hook.

Collins and Lipez share a worried look. Brianna takes it in with a pokerface.

LIPEZ

Let me guess, that must make you Peter Pan and this is Wendy?

BRIANNA

I'm sorry?

Ignoring her:

LIPEZ

For some reason the killers left you alive, so I'm trying to figure out why.

ANTHONY

He fucking saved my life, man.

LIPEZ

He? Who is he?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANTHONY

I don't know. I didn't see his face.

Brianna holds her tongue. She saw him too. Or thinks she did...

LIPEZ

You seem like a nice guy, a smart guy. You don't have to go down for him.

ANTHONY

"Go down" for him. I just told you, they were going to kill me. Dude came outta no where....

LIPEZ

But, why were they? You expect me to believe these guys just picked you out for no reason, and targeted you for a murder? These were good kids; college kids.

ANTHONY

I didn't do shit to them.

Leans in.

LIPEZ (CONT'D)

Who was he?

Anthony shuts down.

Lipez stands up, pissed.

LIPEZ

I got three dead men who are never going to see their families again, and somehow you live to see another day. Meanwhile, my officers scrape you off the pavement still drawing breath? You need to stop protecting your boy and give him up. Otherwise you might be the guy in trouble. You understand what I'm telling you?

Anthony can't really explain any of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BRIANNA

OK, OK, OK. What's your name again?

LIPEZ

Detective Lipez.

BRIANNA

I'm gonna call you asshole. Asshole, I saw the goddamn thing on video. I'm a witness. Anthony was beaten by some white boys.

LIPEZ

Did you see anything else, lady?

BRIANNA

What does it matter, asshole? I've filled out an affidavit. But for some reason none of it makes it into your shitty little report, right?

Lipez is stunned.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL, DAY

It's raining. Anthony tries to keep up with a fuming Brianna as he limps along towards the car with the help of a crutch. His casted right arm is drawn up in a sling. Brianna is holding a formidable umbrella.

BRIANNA

(Yelling back at the cops)
Asshole!

INT. BRIANNA'S CAR

Knowing better than to drive angry, Brianna steadies her breathing before starting the engine. Once again, their eyes meet in the rearview mirror. This time it isn't funny.

BRIANNA

What were you doing there in the first place?

ANTHONY

I was at Starbucks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIANNA

Why didn't you answer my call?

ANTHONY

I did.

BRIANNA

You answered my facetime, but not my call before that.

ANTHONY

Are you serious right now?

BRIANNA

Yes. Were you with somebody?

ANTHONY

I found the painting.

BRIANNA

What painting?

ANTHONY

The one of the woman. Helen. It's in a tunnel underneath a pawn shop.

BRIANNA

A tunnel? Anthony, what's wrong with you--?

Anthony has no answer. Brianna's face goes dark. She's over it. She drives them home. Close-up on Anthony's face in the rearview.

DISSOLVE TO:

Anthony's face, less swollen.

BRIANNA'S APARTMENT, ANTHONY'S STUDIO, A WEEK LATER.

He's in his studio, deep in concentration, painting furiously on a small canvas with his casted hand and sucking on a candy. Chance the Rapper's BLESSINGS is playing in the background. Brianna enters the front door, and throws her keys on the table. She's got a pizza. He breaks focus for a second and they share a kiss. She squints at the canvas.

BRIANNA

Are you painting?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He abruptly turns the canvas around.

ANTHONY

It's not done!

BRIANNA

Your hand.

ANTHONY

You know working with my left hand is kind of liberating. I have none of the muscle memory, so it's all new. Nothing to fall back on.

BRIANNA

I wanna see.

ANTHONY

Hell no.

Brianna concedes. She's happy he's happy.

BRIANNA

Okay... Well good.

ANTHONY

I'm just glad to be working again. I think I'm ready...

BRIANNA

Yeah?

ANTHONY

I'm gonna send in the tape; get back to school.

BRIANNA

Baby, that's amazing.

ANTHONY

I was stuck on the wrong things. Worried about my work being important, when I should have been worried about being happy. I sent myself on that wild goose chase for that stupid painting like it was going to solve all my problems. But I just had to get back to basics. Do what's in my heart, you know?

Brianna's getting turned on by his new sense of purpose.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRIANNA

You didn't need the ruby slippers after all, Dorothy. It was in you the whole time.

Anthony getting turned on by her playfulness.

ANTHONY

You the good witch of the east?

BRIANNA

If I don't eat something now, you'll see which witch I am.

ANTHONY

Which Witch.

Brianna sits down, happy but a little serious.

BRIANNA

I got good news, A. Just spoke to the attorney's office and it looks like they aren't going to file any charges.

ANTHONY

Well that's good because I didn't do shit.

BRIANNA

I know, but now they know too.

ANTHONY

Excuse me if I don't applaud for the fucking police not sending me to jail for getting my ass beat.

BRIANNA

I'm just glad that's behind us baby. Lets eat this Rosati's, I am starving. You wanna watch a movie?

He doesn't share her enthusiasm.

ANTHONY

Did they find him?

BRIANNA

Who?

ANTHONY

Hook-guy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BRIANNA

I don't know babe. We just don't have any hard evidence. No foot prints, no signs that anyone else was there.

Anthony's face drops.

ANTHONY

Seemed like he was floating.

BRIANNA

I'm going to pretend you didn't say that.

ANTHONY

I'm sorry about all this. I just want everything to go back to normal.

BRIANNA

Don't be sorry, Anthony. I love you.

They share a smile. Brianna takes out a slice of pizza and flips it upside down and takes a bite.

ANTHONY

Oh lord.

BRIANNA

I know you love how I eat pizza. Gotta flip that shit over to get that cheese working on the taste buds.

ANTHONY

Now *that* looks crazy.

CUT TO:

BRIANNA'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN, HOURS LATER.

The pizza box is flipped open and empty on the table beside a few open bottles of wine, a bottle of hot sauce and a bear-shaped honey container. Anthony and Brianna are passed out on the couch in the background. The camera creeps slowly across this tableau and down the hallway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The light in the bathroom at the end of the hall flickers on, revealing SOMETHING...A SHADOWY FACE?...for a split second in the mirror.

HARD CUT TO:

THE BATHROOM, BRIANNA'S APARTMENT

Anthony is standing in front of the mirror, breathing hard. Anthony tries to scream, but no sound comes out. He's paralyzed in place. We hear a distorted, all-encompassing whispering voice:

VOICE

Anthony.... Anthony...

Anthony's expression turns to fear. Suddenly face contorts with pain, as he watches a hook pierces through his abdomen. Bees begin to swarm out of his wound and into the bathroom. His eyes roll into the back of his head as he's enveloped by the swarm.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIANNA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM, MORNING.

Cheerful morning sun soaks the room in the daylight. Brianna is passed out in the same position from the night before, Anthony is nowhere to be found. His cellphone rings. Eventually, it wakes her, and she picks it up.

BRIANNA

Hello...? No this is his girlfriend.... What?

MOMENTS LATER...

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

Anthony! Anthony????!!

She walks down the hall, the bathroom looks quite normal, she turns into the bedroom and Anthony is face down on the bed.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

Wake up! Wake up!

He doesn't move.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

Anthony wake up!!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Is he...?

ANTHONY

Jesus, what's happening?

BRIANNA

It's your mom. Something's wrong.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSE ESTATES, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Three EXTERMINATORS in full beekeeper's outfits carry canisters of insecticide down the hall. We follow behind them until they stop at Anne's open door. They look inside, in horror.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSE ESTATES, ANNE'S APARTMENT

It's swarming with bees. Seemingly every surface is crawling with them. There is blood visible on the white fabrics. The three men enter the room and examine the scene.

EXTERMINATOR #1

Dispatch wasn't joking. Fuck I've never seen anything like this around here.

EXTERMINATOR #2

Right there.

He points up to the vent near the ceiling.

EXTERMINATOR #1

OK, let's do this.

The three men spray the grate with thick plumes of insecticide, and the room fills with fog. The camera dollies to the window and tilts down to the street below. An exterminator's truck is flanked by three police cars and two ambulances. Several first responders try to mollify a worried gaggle of bath-robed elderly residents. Brianna's car pulls into frame.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROSE ESTATES, STREET (CONTINUOUS)

It's raining hard. Brianna pops open her formidable umbrella again. She exits the car with Anthony and the two run over to an idling ambulance, where two EMT's intercept them before they can get too close.

ANTHONY

Where is she?

EMT #1

Ma'am, I'm sorry I need you to stand back. This area needs to remain clear at this time.

BRIANNA

He's the son...

As Brianna gets into it with the EMT, Anthony approaches the back of the ambulance where he sees a bodybag being zipped up and loaded into an ambulance.

ANTHONY

No...

He's about to lose it when he notices other first responders working on a motionless woman. It's Anne. She's so badly stung that her entire body is swollen nearly beyond recognition. The EMTs tense up defensively until they hear...

ANTHONY

Mom?

The EMTs give them a little space. Anne's voice is garbled and fluid, she's barely breathing.

ANNE

Anthony.

ANTHONY

You're going to be ok.

ANNE

He finally came back for me.

ANTHONY

Who did? Who did this to you, mom?

ANNE

The Candyman.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMT #2

Sir, we need to attend to her.
Please stand back.

ANTHONY

Mom!

The EMT turns to the other medical professionals.

EMT #2 (CONT'D)

I need another cortisone shot down
here. We need to move people!

Anthony staggers backwards as his mother is loaded into
the ambulance. Brianna puts her arm around him.

BRIANNA

It's going to be OK.

She notices something on his arm...she whispers...

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

Are those bee stings?

Before he can answer, Detective Lipez steps into frame.
Brianna's blood boils, but Anthony is nearly catatonic.

LIPEZ

Mister McCoy, you're under arrest.

BRIANN

What the fuck...?

Two other officers surround Anthony and handcuff him.

LIPEZ

You have the right to remain
silent...

BRIANNA

What's the charge?

LIPEZ

The fuck you think...? Time to go
home.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION, DUSK

The street is cold and windy. The sky has faded from the pale bright blue of the morning to a merciless dark flat grey.

LIPEZ (O.S.)

At approximately 2:45 AM, somebody forced open the front door to the retirement community known as the Rose Estates. The perpetrator then appears to have punctured the on-duty guard, a Mister Bernard Foster, through the back with a large sharp object. That's the beginning of the blood trail.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, INTERROGATION ROOM, CONTINUOUS

LIPEZ (CONT'D)

As Foster was bleeding out, the assailant entered the elevator and took it up to the fourth floor.

Lipez takes a long sip of coffee. Another officer, SGT. TURNER, is leaning against the corner behind him. Anthony sits across from Lipez, handcuffed to the chair. His look is enigmatic - almost defiant.

LIPEZ (CONT'D)

He stopped at apartment 407.

He waits for a reaction. Doesn't get one.

LIPEZ (CONT'D)

That's your mother's apartment, Anthony. The assailant ...SOMEHOW... had access to the key for that apartment. Only three of those keys as far as I can tell. One was on the keychain of a man who was just murdered, another was inside the apartment. We'll get back to that third key. The perpetrator then entered the apartment while Anne Marie McCoy slept. She's a deep-sleeper too, huh, Anthony? And with the amount of pills she had at her bedside.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIPEZ (CONT'D)

Damn. I wouldn't let *my* mom get that far in the bag at her age.

He waits again for a reaction. Did Anthony's lip quiver a little that time?

LIPEZ (CONT'D)

Using that same, now blood-soaked, instrument from before...The hook, remember? The perpetrator then jimmys out a ventilation panel on the wall. And what do you think was inside? It was a bees nest of extraordinary size.

TURNER

The species of bees isn't even indigenous to this area.

LIPEZ

Nope. These were killer bees, Anthony. *Africanized* You don't see them in Chicago very often do you? What do you think, Turner?

TURNER

I think some psychopath brought them there.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIANNA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM

Brianna attempts to distract herself with the television. Tonight *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* isn't holding her interest, and she turns it off right in middle of the Child Chaser scene. Brianna eyes the shut door to Anthony's studio. It pains her to open it, but she does anyway.

INT. BRIANNA'S APARTMENT, ANTHONY'S STUDIO

Brianna mournfully peruses the belongings of her boyfriend. He was always tidy, but not exactly organized. She finds sketches of nooses, of course. She breaks her gaze and it lands on Anthony's computer. She flips it on, and sees he 's been editing a video. She presses play. It's Anthony's application.

On the camera monitor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANTHONY (ON TAPE)

Hello, my name is Anthony McCoy,
and please accept this grant
proposal as a bid for ...ya money
bitches!

Brianna almost smiles. It was fun to see him smile.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

Lipez continues...

LIPEZ

Then, the assailant proceeded to
destroy the hive which released a
swarm of very pissed off bees,
very fucking deadly bees, into the
room.

ANTHONY

OK, I get it.

LIPEZ

I know you do, but I'm not done.
At that time the assailant
produced a ...a ...I'm sorry this
next part is so fucking sick I
almost want to laugh. The
assailant produced a squirt bottle
of honey and proceeded to douse
Mrs. McCoy's prone body with it's
contents amid that cloud of
africanized killer bees. And
then? He left. Just walked out,
and closed the door behind him.

ANTHONY

It wasn't me.

LIPEZ

But you left ...and me and the
boys debated it ...and we all
agreed: You left the biggest no-
doubter of all time.

Turner tosses Lipez an evidence bag. It's THE BLOODY
HOOK. Lipez slams it on the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIPEZ (CONT'D)

Look familiar? Matches the weapon used on the three guys you hacked apart last time we saw each other. Fuck you even told me it was hook then.

The door to the room slams open, and in walks attorney JAKE TARVER (35).

TARVER

Don't say another word to them, Anthony. What's the charge, Lipez?

LIPEZ

One counts of murder in the first degree and one count of attempted murder in the first degree. And we've matched the same weapon to three other murders at which Mr. McCoy was found at the scene of the crime. Hell we might end up rounding it up to an even five for murder one if Mrs. McCoy doesn't pull through.

TARVER

Can I consult with my client?

LIPEZ

Of course. Come on, Turner.

They leave. Tarver takes Lipez's seat across the table from Anthony.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIANNA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT

Briana continues to watch the video.

ANTHONY (ON TAPE CONT'D)

...While I realize that up to now my previous paintings have dealt more directly with the problematics of systemic racism, I'm changing it up a bit. I... Fuck it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The clip changes to a new video. It's Anthony and Brianna the other night, when she caught him saying "Candyman" in the bathroom.

ANTHONY (ON TAPE)
Candyman... Candyman...

BRIANNA (ON TAPE)

What?

As the video plays Brianna, in the present, looks around the room.

ANTHONY (ON TAPE)
...Candyman...

ANTHONY (ON TAPE)
...Candyman..

BRIANNA (ON TAPE)
Oh, Hell no!

On the tape Anthony laughs.

Brianna continues to turns the room upside down looking for something. She says out loud, trying to convince herself...

BRIANNA
I told you that shit was fake.
Candyman.

ANTHONY (ON TAPE)
Got you.

BRIANNA (ON TAPE)
Got me? You're too chicken to do
it anyway.

ANTHONY (ON TAPE)
Yeah?

BRIANNA (ON TAPE)
Yeah.

ANTHONY (ON TAPE)
Watch me.

BRIANNA (ON TAPE)
Thought so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRIANNA (ON TAPE)

Now get that cute ass out here.

ANTHONY (ON TAPE)

I'll be right out.

On the video Anthony looks deeper into the mirror after she leaves.

Silence on the tape.

In the real world, Brianna finally finds what she's been looking for. The canvas covered with a sheet.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. NIGHT

Tarver has opened a briefcase, and is sweatily shuffling through reams of documents. He notices the

TARVER

OK. So the good news is the forensic evidence only tangentially links you to the murder at this point, but we don't know if they have surveillance footage. But based on the circumstantial evidence alone they have cause enough to hold you here.

ANTHONY

I didn't do it.

TARVER

I see. Mister McCoy, I need you to be honest with me for your own good. Have you ever been treated for any psychological problems?

ANTHONY

No. Yes. When I was a kid, I was afraid of fire. Matches, stovetop burners made me cry. My mom put me in counseling for that.

TARVER

We may need to put in for an insanity defense, Anthony. I need to know what happened.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TARVER (CONT'D)

You have to tell me what you know
for your own sake.

Anthony grows distant. He's being sold down the river.

ANTHONY

You wanna know what I think?

TARVER

Hey. I'm here to help you.
Understand? If you wanna play
games, I'll let 'em do what
they're gonna do.

ANTHONY

Can I have one of those?

He gestures to a small sucking candy on the desk. Tarver
unwraps it and Anthony pops it into his mouth with his
uncuffed, uncasted hand. He relaxes.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Here's what I think. There's a
demon named Candyman...

INT. BRIANNA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT

Brianna stands in front of the covered canvas. She pulls
the sheet off to find... The canvas is bare. She's
puzzled. What the fuck?

Just as she resigns. Anthony's voice starts back on the
tape.

ANTHONY (ON TAPE)

Helen...

Brianna, confused, goes to the computer. Anthony is still
close to the mirror. He whispers.

ANTHONY (ON TAPE)

...Helen...

Brianna in horror looks up. Another sheet hangs on the
studio wall.

ANTHONY (ON TAPE)

...Helen...

She approaches the hanging sheet afraid of what's
underneath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANTHONY

...Helen...

Brianna reaches up...

ANTHONY

.....Helen.

Brianna pulls the sheet down revealing Anthony's masterpiece. It's a crazy mural recreating the portrait of Helen!

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. NIGHT

Tarver opens his mouth to speak and his eyes go wide. The lights flicker again. Tarver grunts. **Behind him, Helen appears draped in Candyman's trademark fur lined coat, unseaming him from the back. She is burnt from head to toe; hair barely there.** Blood pours out of Tarver's mouth. Anthony screams.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE THE INTERROGATION ROOM. NIGHT

Nothing audible through the soundproof door. The lights continue to flicker.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. NIGHT

The lights are out. The room is illuminated solely by the red glow of exit signs, and their reflection off the blood covering the floor. The husk formerly known as Tarver is slumped over in his chair.

Helen stands beside her victim, head slightly cocked. Anthony is in a daze now. His piss meets and mingles the blood around his white and red Jordan V's. He is abjection personified.

Helen reaches out slowly with a cold white hand, and removes the candy from Anthony's mouth.

HELEN

Anthony.... Anthony....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She places it in her mouth, mimicking some macabre version of seduction.

ANTHONY

What the fuck?

HELEN

I'll try to not let that hurt my feelings.

ANTHONY

Candyman....

HELEN

You didn't call him. You called me, Anthony.

ANTHONY

I didn't... mean to.

HELEN

It's my turn, Anthony. He's gone now, but he will return. Until then, let me be your victim.

A loud, blaring alarm pierces the quiet.

ANTHONY

What do you mean? No. No.

Helen raises the hook high above her head and brings it down fast. At the moment of impact...

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE THE INTERROGATION ROOM

Still a dark, long hallway. The alarm blares on. Turner approaches, puts his key in the lock and turns the knob. The door slams open, knocking him unconscious to the floor. Helen drags an equally unconscious Anthony out into the hall. The sounds of scrambling police cut through the siren, echoing through the building. Helen, holding Anthony, HIS HAND CUT OFF AT THE FOREARM, turns toward camera, and then abruptly ROCKETS BACKWARDS THROUGH THE AIR WITH HIM IN TOW. They crash through a window to the outside at the end of the hallway. The moment they've left the building, the lights click back on. Turner staggers to his feet and looks into the interrogation room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TURNER

Jesus Christ.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO AT NIGHT

Black clouds of bees swirl above the city like the murmurations of starlings.

CUT TO:

EXT. PURCELL'S, NIGHT

The street is quiet. The camera slowly dollies in through the tarp draped over the now-shattered window. It glides past Leonard's desk and to the back of the store. The door to the basement is ajar, and we float down the stairs and into the furniture graveyard of a room below. We pass the full-length mirrors, now shattered, and the stacks of artworks. The sounds of ANTHONY SCREAMING IN PAIN echo faintly in the background. Into the dank bathroom, and down through the trap door into the impossible darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DIVE BAR

Lorraine is eating cheese fries again that same booth. Across from her are Brianna and Jim.

BRIANNA

Thanks for meeting us.

LORRAINE

No worries. That's your new man?

Awkward.

BRIANNA

It's not like that. He's Anthony's friend.

JIM

One hundred percent single.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORRAINE

Ok, whatever. So where's the last dude?

BRIANNA

That's kind of what we're trying to figure out. He disappeared from the police station a few days ago.

Brianna leans in to whisper, embarrassed:

BRIANNA

Last time we met, you were telling us about Helen.

LORRAINE

Yeah. That's right.

BRIANNA

I was wondering if...

Brianna realizes she sounds crazy. She tries to remain hush.

BRIANNA

If you heard of anybody summoning her like you would summon Candyman.

JIM

Wait, what?

Lorraine thinks.

LORRAINE

Yeah, I heard something like that. I think her husband got it shortly after she died. I think he was fuckin' around on her or something. Cut his dick off and shit.

JIM

Oh shit!

LORRAINE

Kinda cool actually. The girl he was fuckin' got thrown away for it I think, but there is that double dutch song.

BRIANNA

What song?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LORRAINE

"1-2-3-4-5, Helen's back but not alive. 6-7-8-9-10, You'll get hooked by her again. She burnt; she sick..."

JIM

"Cheat on her she'll cut your dick." Hey I know that one!

BRIANNA

Great. Got it. So that's it? She kills unfaithful dudes?

LORRAINE

I don't know.

BRIANNA

I swear to God, if Anthony was cheating on me, he better hope I don't find him.

JIM

Relax, Brianna. There's no way. Trust me. He loves you.

BRIANNA

Alright.

JIM

I just don't understand how a guy gets kidnapped from a police station.

LORRAINE

Wait. What happened?

BRIANNA

Nothing. Look, if Helen was back, Or someone who believed she was Helen, where would do you find her?

LORRAINE

In the mirror.

BRIANNA

Besides the mirror.

LORRAINE

I don't know. Wait, are y'all writing a book or something?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

'Cause if so, I want a piece...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO. DAY

Brianna and Jim are walking, slightly dazed.

JIM

Yo. Where's this going?

BRIANNA

What do you mean?

JIM

We're out here doing the Chicago ghost tour, and what? You think we gonna do some seance and find Anthony?

BRIANNA

No. I don't know. Look, I think if we follow the pieces, we might be able to figure out where he went.

JIM

I lost it, Bri. He could've thrown himself off into the lake or ran to Indiana.

BRIANNA

I can't give up.

JIM

So what? You find him, then what? What do you do?

BRIANNA

Look, I know what your saying. I need closure at least, okay?

JIM

What if..? What if he did murder those people.

BRIANNA

No. It didn't happen that way. Anthony is gentle. He is a good person.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM
OK, so who did it?

No response.

JIM (CONT'D)
Come on, Bri. You can't really
think that.

BRIANNA
We're here.

Briana stops in front of the hospital.

JIM
What? What are we doing here?

BRIANNA
One more stop.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. INT

Brianna and Jim sit there. Anna is in the bed all kinds of swollen and bandaged. She wheezes looking straight up. Catatonic.

BRIANNA
I'm sorry Anthony never introduced
us. I asked him to many times.

Anna just wheezes.

BRIANNA
I was curious if you knew where he
might've gone. An uncle, a
friend's house... I've been
racking my brain. All I know is he
was obsessed with this woman named
Helen...

Nothing. Anna just wheezes.

JIM
Should probably let her rest.

Brianna quietly agrees. Brianna gets up to leave. Anna eyes open wide.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HELEN'S BASEMENT

A dank cavern beneath the city, Helen's lair is now adorned with the glass of a thousand shattered mirrors. Some hang from the ceiling dangled by rope, others lean against the slick stone walls. This is HELEN'S TRAIL OF BROKEN MIRRORS, and it bends around corners and into the distance, somehow bouncing sunlight around from a spot of daylight far out of sight. The furnishings in this area are few. A table and chairs pilfered from the streets. Some rugs cover the floor, overlapping at odd angles.

Anthony sits unconscious in a PLASTIC-COVERED LOVESEAT, across from him Helen sits smoking a cigarette in a DETACHED BATHTUB.

She wears a roughly torn piece of canvas with a face painted on it. The same face from the painting, now crudely-fashioned into a mask. The canvas "mask" is tied to her head with a bright red ribbon. Her hair has been burnt away and her head is covered in scars. This is HELEN. She smiles.

HELEN

Anthony... Wake.

Anthony jolts awake, gasping abruptly like a man who hadn't taken a breath in far too long. His eyes strain to adjust to the darkness and disorientation.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Hi.

ANTHONY

What do you want?

HELEN

I want to dance, my love.

ANTHONY

Let me go. I wanna go home.

Anthony tries to push himself to his feet. He crumples in pain. He makes a terrifying revelation...

ANTHONY

My hand! Oh god, my fucking hand.

It's a stump, wrapped crudely in crimson-soaked bandages.

HELEN

A small price to pay for your life, Anthony.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANTHONY

I... need a doctor.

HELEN

You should know by now that I'd never let you die before your time.

ANTHONY

What you're talking about?

HELEN

I saved you from the men on the street.

HARD CUT TO:

FLASHBACK: EXT. CHICAGO STREET

The scene outside the coffee shop. We get another look at who we thought was Candyman.

We see now that it was Helen, dressed like him. Holding his hook. The coat drags as her feet hover a foot off the ground.

PRESENT DAY...

HARD CUT TO:

INT. HELEN'S BASEMENT. NIGHT

Helen gets closer to Anthony.

ANTHONY

That was you? I thought...

HELEN

I wear his coat, Anthony.

ANTHONY

Ok. So... thank you.

HELEN

I saved you from the station. They would've killed you for what we did.

FLASH BACK...

INT. POLICE STATION WAITING AREA. NIGHT

As officers run down the hall past a window, Helen pulls an unconscious Anthony up and out of it.

ANTHONY

And the third...? What was the third time you saved my life?

Somehow he kind of knows...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY

Brianna is about to leave. She turns.

BRIANNA

Anyway, I just wanted you to know someone is looking for him...

Before she can exit, Anna speaks.

ANNA

Did Anthony ever tell you we used to live in Cabrini Green when he was a baby...?

INT. HELEN'S BASEMENT. DAY

Helen and Anthony face each other.

HELEN

Do you remember?

HARD CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY

Brianna approaches Anna in her bed.

ANNA

...For a while, after he was kidnapped, they tried to tell me he was dead. But I knew better. I knew my Baby was still alive.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. HELEN'S BASEMENT

Anthony's tear-streaked face, remembering something.

HELEN

You do you remember the flames?
You and I in the bonfire. So
young then.

ANTHONY

I ...you tried to burn me to
death.

HELEN

Memories are just stories. The
truth is the version you believe.

HARD CUT TO:

FLASHBACK EXT. CABRINI GREEN COURTYARD, NIGHT

We cut wide from the crying baby, to see that he's being held by **Candyman** (Tony Todd) who walks him through to the center of a giant pile of courtyard debris. It's to be a bonfire, but it hasn't been lit yet. They sit surrounded by junk on all sides. Candyman leans in close and speaks to the child.

CANDYMAN

Innocent blood must be spilled.
But it need not be yours. She
will come for you and take your
place. Tonight we will write a
new story, so that I may live
forever.

We see the bonfire-pile from the courtyard. Slowly residents are gathering around. A few approach slowly.

CABRINI RESIDENT #1

Yo man, this kid says he seen
Candyman in there.

CABRINI RESIDENT #2

Says he seen the hook rooting
around.

CABRINI RESIDENT #3

I don't see shit man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CABRINI RESIDENT #1

If this kid says he seen it, he
fucking seen it.

CABRINI RESIDENT #2

What the hell you wanna do about
it?

Back inside the bonfire pile, Candyman looks up, alerted by the sound of someone else in the pile. He speaks in a whisper, this time not to the baby, but to someone else who isn't quite there yet...

CANDYMAN

Helen. Helleeeennn. Come to me.

The baby is crying hysterically. Candyman is gone.

Outside the bonfire pile, residents are dousing it in gasoline. Others are approaching with lit torches.

Inside the bonfire, the baby cries as TWO HANDS appear from offscreen, cradling it gently, lifting it from the detritus and out of frame.

Back to the wide shot, we see the bonfire begin to go up in flames.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY

Brianna sits again with Anna.

ANNA

I thought it was her who did it.
Helen Lyle she had done it but it
wasn't her. It was him who kept
him in an abandoned room of
Cabrini. It was a shrine to
Candyman. Until the day of the
Bonfire...

BRIANNA

A shrine...

This jogs Brianna's memory.

ANNA

She died saving my son. The story
change over time, They said she
was crazy, but I've known the
truth. I was there. It was
Candyman that did it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Brianna's suspicions, however impossible, feel justified in a way that she hadn't allowed until now.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HELEN'S BASEMENT

Anthony frantically puts together the fragments of a memory he never knew he had.

ANTHONY

What do you plan to do to me?

HELEN

Candyman exists only if we believe he's real. Thirty years ago I tried to erase him, tried to explain him away.

ANTHONY

To stop him?

HELEN

I'm an academic, Anthony. I thought I was exposing a lie, a legend. I treated him like a chapter in a book of Fairy Tales. From where I was sitting, it was simple. The legend of Candyman was something to be cataloged, studied, put into cultural context. I'd say that he was a symptom of a violent world ...not the cause.

ANTHONY

You were researching him, like I was researching you.

HELEN

Yes, but.

Anthony sees what they have in common...

ANTHONY

You took risks. People got hurt. You were too obsessed for it to be explained away by simple academic curiosity.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HELEN

We'd met before. We were destined to be together through many lives.

ANTHONY

And now he's gone...

HELEN (CONT'D)

Not for long, Anthony.

She stands brandishing the hook.

ANTHONY

What are you doing...

Something with the blunt side of the hook?

HELEN

Yours is a blessed condition.

She approaches (*what is she doing?*) Tight on Helen's face as Anthony screams.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PURCELL'S. NIGHT

Brianna stands outside.

INT. PURCELL'S. NIGHT

Brianna is browsing the store nervously. She's here for some answers. Unbothered by the lookie-loo, Leonard sits at his usual perch behind the desk listening to NPR.

BRIANNA

Hey, hey.

LEONARD

Can I help you?

BRIANNA

This is a long shot, but I'm wondering if you can help me.

LEONARD

Got just about anything you could want here; in some fashion or another.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIANNA

I'm looking for my boyfriend. I think he came here last week.

LEONARD

Oh? Okay.

Brianna holds up a picture of Anthony on her phone.

LEONARD

Yeah. He was here alright.

BRIANNA

He told me he found a tunnel underneath the shop that had some art in it? Kind of a shrine.

LEONARD

A shrine..? No, we don't have no shrines under here.

BRIANNA

Really?

LEONARD

I'd know. Replaced a bunch of piping last winter.

Brianna is confused.

BRIANNA

Damn... Would you mind if I look around?

LEONARD

Sure. Closing up in a few minutes.

Brianna starts browsing.

BRIANNA

A guy named Jake used to work here right?

LEONARD

Yeah that's right. Jake was a special dude, an old soul in a young man's body.

BRIANNA

I heard he passed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEONARD

Yeah. Sad day. But Jake wasn't too much for the way things were changing around here.

BRIANNA

How so?

LEONARD

This used to be a community. When Cabrini Green, the Robert Taylor homes come down, nothing else was ever the same. And you know, some people adjust and some people don't. Lord knows Jake fought that every step of the way. He seen some shit, that's for sure. And he tried to keep the old traditions alive best he could. But it wasn't so easy anymore. BBQ's in the park catch you a summons these days. Can't play your music too loud because of ordinances and what not. No bonfires. Didn't fit the new image. Jake tried to keep the old ways alive, probably why he wanted to work here. He believed in the legends. The stories that made us who we were. The stories that don't get told anymore.

BRIANNA

Motherfuckers...

LEONARD

Killed by the police right outside this store. He was a little lit up no doubt. Mouthed off, harmless shit. Can't do that anymore for damn sure. Was reaching for ID, and cops took his wallet for a nine. Six shots, bled out on the pavement.

BRIANNA

That's sad.

LEONARD

Wish it wasn't a common occurrence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BRIANNA

Well. Thanks.

LEONARD

I hope you find him.

EXT. PURCELL'S. NIGHT

Brianna walks out and takes out her phone. She calls Jim.

JIM (O.S.)

Hello...

BRIANNA

Hey. I just tried Purcell's. The place is weird, but I think..

A hand with chloroform comes around from Brianna's back and held to her face. She struggles and screams but fall asleep in a man's arms.

JIM (O.S.)

Brianna...? Brianna...!!

CUT TO:

INT. ACCESS TUNNEL SYSTEM. NIGHT

Brianna lies motionless on the ground. After a beat, she catches her breath and rolls over onto her back. Leonard is down there with her. There are now shards of mirror hanging everywhere from strings at different heights. Leonard holds the kitchen knife and threatens her to move forward.

LEONARD

I hear you lookin' for Candyman, bitch.

BRIANNA

What the fuck did you do?

LEONARD

I can't tell you how many times I tried to summon him, but he never came. They built little memorials for him... shrines I guess, hidden all around the neighborhood, just like this. I made this one for her. See, it's like a dance.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEONARD (CONT'D)

It's her turn right now, when that's over, he'll be back. He always comes back.

BRIANNA

You're fucking crazy.

Leonard is wielding a GIANT KITCHEN KNIFE. He slowly backs Brianna into the fetid bathroom.

LEONARD

Still don't believe? The history is real, my sister.

BRIANNA

Fuck you.

She turns and kicks Leonard in the crotch. HE WALLS buying her a moment to break from his grasp. She runs through THE HANGING TRAIL OF BROKEN MIRRORS at all heights which stretch in both directions.

Leonard YELPS a taunting YELP as he follows her.

Brianna examines her surroundings trying to gauge which way is out. She makes her way down the corridor, but the shattered mirrors hanging from the ceiling increase in density, cutting her and slowing her down significantly. She winces. As the sounds of Leonard moving through the mirrors behind her TINKLES closer she changes plan. She moves up against a wall. She tries to silence her quick breath as the TINKLE of Leonard pushes near. But instead of going past, he stops. He can't see her through them, but somehow he knows she's near. He speaks into the space.

LEONARD

See, Candyman kept this community together. When he was out there, you'd hold your man tighter. You'd go to bed earlier. When the city forgets us, it's Candyman that reminds us that we were human. But in order for that to happen, innocent blood must be spilled in his name.

Brianna thinks hard as he gets closer she looks down and sees an old rusty bike wheel laying against the wall. She quickly grabs it and just as Leonard approaches she rolls it back down the hallway TINKLING GLASS as it goes. Leonard takes the bait.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Left without viable options, Brianna sets off, deeper into the tunnel, delicately navigating the inverted forest of sharp edges. Despite her best efforts the cuts still come. And worse, it seems like the density of broken mirrors is increasing in this direction as well. All of a sudden she's face to face with...

ANTHONY (O.C.)

Brianna.

BRIANNA

AAAGGHHH!!!!

Dressed in a long, thick coat, Anthony is standing right in front her, smiling warmly. Brianna breaks down.

ANTHONY

Damn baby chill.

BRIANNA

Anthony! Where have you been?

ANTHONY

Taking some time, I guess; to get my head together.

Brianna breaks down.

BRIANNA

That man. He attacked me.

ANTHONY

What man?

Leonard is gone.

BRIANNA

That man from the damn shop.
Parnell... Parvell... Par...

ANTHONY

Mr. Purcell?

BRIANNA

Yes, that mutherfucker! He
tryin'... Let me catch my breath.
This mutherfucker is tryin to kill
me.

ANTHONY

Why would he do that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BRIANNA

I don't know.

Puzzled...

ANTHONY

That's okay...

With that, he turns around and walks through the forest of glass shards. It tinkles as he passes through it like a giant, pleasant, wind chime.

BRIANNA

Anthony! Nope. Nope. You gonna have to come over here and part these damn shards of glass. I'm serious. I'm cut the fuck up, and I'm not playin'. Let's go.

Anthony continues. Brianna pulls her hoodie tight over her head for extra protection, and moves a little bit faster. The broken shards catch and rend the fabric with ease. Through the light, Brianna catches only glimpses of a long dark coat refracted across the pieces of a thousand mirrors. The aggregation of tiny lacerations begins to take its toll.

BRIANNA

This mutherfucker got me walking through shards of glass.

She suddenly emerges into a larger space. Behind her, the dense thicket of sharp edges looms ominously. What's ahead of her shakes her to her core. The wall ahead is a huge mural Of Candyman and HELEN in a fiery embrace. Anthony stands before it, in glorious reverence. He raises his arm brandishing THE BLOODY HOOK, now crudely attached to the stump where his hand once was. Briana breaks down.

ANTHONY

Come, Brianna.

BRIANNA

What did you do to yourself?

ANTHONY

It was time for a better paintbrush.

Anthony is truly gone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BRIANNA

Anthony - This is fucked up.

ANTHONY

I found it. I found my
inspiration. Can you see my work?

Anthony caresses the hanging glass moving towards her. She grabs a shard of glass off a string and brandishes it.

BRIANNA

How do I get out of here..?!!
How...? Tell me!!!

ANTHONY

Up.

Suddenly, a knife stabs Brianna's back she screams in pain and doubles over on the floor. Leonard stands behind her. Anthony looks over to him enraged.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

What did you do?

LEONARD

Helping you, Candyman. Innocent
blood must be spilled. We need
you.

ANTHONY

I'm not Candyman.

Hook raised, Anthony strides purposefully and threateningly towards Leonard. Leonard drops the knife and kneels.

LEONARD

Yes. Do it. Take me. That's how
the legend lives on. You know it
as well as I do.

Helen is standing in front of the wall behind Anthony.

HELEN

To be whispered about at street
corners; to live in other people's
dreams....

Anthony's face is welling with the tears and rage of a man who has already left something behind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

HELEN (CONT'D)

It is a blessed condition.

In one fell swoop, Anthony swings upwards, gravely impaling Leonard between the legs. He grunts with effort as he roughly drags the hook upwards through Leonard's torso. The blood spills across the floor of nooses. Candy torn from some inner pockets of Leonard's suit tumble across the wet ground.

Close up on Anthony, as he contemplates his new appendage, the freshly-bloody hook. He stands stunned, seemingly lost in grief and disorientation for a long beat. When we cut back wide, the nooses are gone, but the two bodies flanking him remain. He turns towards Brianna and kneels down in front of her weeping.

ANTHONY

I'm confused. I don't know what's going on. I'm so sorry about all of this. Helen, where are you? Help me.

He gets up and approaches the wall painting searching for Helen. Brianna seizes the moment, picks up the knife from the floor and levels it at Anthony. Calmly:

BRIANNA

Stay away from me.

Something moves behind the painting.

Anthony, mutilated and disoriented, bloody and broken, looks decrepit in his oversized fur coat.

ANTHONY

She saved me, Bri.

BRIANNA

Who? Who saved you? Do you look fucking saved, nigga?

The shadow of Helen emerges in the distance, next to her portrait.

Brianna runs back towards the exit.

ANTHONY

Wait, Brianna!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Anthony makes the tough decision. He leaves Helen and runs after Brianna.

CUT TO:

EXT. PURCELL'S, STREET LEVEL, NIGHT

Brianna crawls up the ladder and into the back of the store. She looks down as Anthony arrives at the base.

ANTHONY

Brianna!

She tries to pull the ladder up, but Anthony grabs the other end.

ANTHONY

Wait! Why are you leaving me!

Brianna runs again.

DISSOLVE TO:

HARD CUT TO:

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEYWAY NEAR PURCELL'S, NIGHT

Brianna bursts out the back door into an alleyway. Just then she's shot in the side. She falls again.

Two police officers, Smith (45) and Jones (45) stand there looking caught off guard. They rush her and kick the knife away.

JONES

Oh shit!

SMITH

Dispatch this is 78. We have shots fired, suspect down and in custody...

Sudden feedback hard into his ear, he drops the handset.

JONES

Jesus.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anthony steps into the light.

ANTHONY

No!

Jones fires his gun four times, riddling Anthony with bullets.

INT. PURCELL'S UTILITY CLOSET

The buzzing begins. Close up on the NOW-OPEN trap door. The bees are down there here.

EXT. PURCELL'S ALLEYWAY. NIGHT

Officer Smith takes Anthony

Brianna, still alive, screams as Jones cuffs her.

JONES

Shut up! Don't move!!

Smith approaches Anthony's body and tries to kick the hook which remains attached.

JONES (CONT'D)

What the fuck?

BRIANNA

What did you do!

SMITH

I said shut up!
(to Jones)
Jones what?!

INT. PURCELL'S UTILITY CLOSET. INT

They swarm enters through the trap door and flows out of the utility closet into the maze of furniture. The basement slowly fills.

EXT. PURCELL'S. NIGHT

Jones looks closer at the hook. Brianna cries.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SMITH

Jones, what?

JONES

This guy is jacked the fuck up.

SMITH

What is that?

JONES

Some kind of hook.

Smith tries his radio again, but it instantly feeds back.

Brianna catches her reflection off a rearview mirror of a parked car.

CUT TO:

INT. PURCELL'S BASEMENT, NIGHT

Clouds of bees swarm up the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. PURCELL'S, BACK OF STORE

The bees pour through the store.

CUT TO:

EXT. PURCELL'S. NIGHT

The swarm floods out the back door of the shop. The cops panic, as it envelops Anthony.

SMITH/JONES

Ahhhhhhhh!

The bees begin to disperse. Anthony's body is gone.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. PURCELL'S NIGHT. NIGHT

Two cop cars and a detective vehicle are now parked outside the shop. An Ambulance is there too. Six police officers case the scene.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SMITH

I'm telling you if I knew, I'd know, but I don't have any idea. The guy fuckin' vanished.

INT. AMBULANCE. NIGHT

Close on Brianna in back of an ambulance cuffed to the gurney. She's all fucked up, from being stabbed, cut and shot. She's distant; completely traumatized. An EMT comes around to close the door, when LIPEZ appears in the doorway.

LIPEZ

What's this? What are we doing?

EMT #1

Taking her to the hospital.

LIPEZ

Why?

EMT #1

Why? She's been shot. Stabbed to I think.

LIPEZ

Stabbed? Stabbed by who? Who shot her?

EMT #1

I just fix people; how am I supposed to know.

Jones walks over.

BRIANNA

Your officers shot me.

JONES

You came at us.

BRIANNA

No, I didn't.

JONES

We'll see.

Lipez considers what to do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIPEZ

(to EMT 1)

You know what? Get her out of here.

EMT #1

We gotta take her to the hospital.

LIPEZ

Is she going to die?

EMT #1

No, but...

LIPEZ

Look, kiss my ass. She's coming with me. She could be a threat, and I'm making the call.

Cops start pulling Brianna's gurney out of the back of the ambulance.

EMT #1

It's yours to make.

Jim arrives.

JIM

Hey! Hey!! What happened.

COP ONE

Stay back!!

COP TWO

Don't move.

Jim throws his hands up.

JIM

What happened to her?

COP ONE

I'm not gonna tell you to back away again, sir.

JIM

I'm the one who called you guys; where are you taking her?

EXT. POLICE CAR. NIGHT

Brianna is shoved in the back seat of Lipez' car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lipez gets in the driver's seat. Brianna is zoned out.
.Lipez looks at her through the mirror

LIPEZ

Where's your boyfriend...? Huh...?
Where'd he go?

Brianna just looks out the window. Jim continues to try to reason with the cops outside the car.

LIPEZ

Right to remain silent huh? Suit yourself, but know this. Your boyfriend is a murderer.

Brianna watches as Jim gets taken down. Three police men start kicking his ass.

LIPEZ

We're gonna find him with or without you, but if you help us, we'll take it easy on you. If not, you're going down for a long long time. So please, I'll ask you one more time. Where the fuck is your boyfriend?

BRIANNA

We broke up.

Lipez laughs long and hard.

LIPEZ

Ah, alright. Let me tell you a story. Once there was a couple of thugs. They were an item too. Like a couple of black Bonnie and Clyde wannabees you know? He'd hold em down, she slashed. Anyway, they went on a murder spree. Killed three guys on the street, killed a guy that worked at the home his mother lived in, killed his mother, and even the poor attorney that tried to defend him. The best part is the end. You wanna hear the end of the story? Huh?

Brianna grits her teeth. Jim outside the car is beat up and bloody. He rises long enough to look through the window at Brianna before the cops take him back down and continue the relentless beating. Tears of anger stream down Brianna's face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LIPEZ

...They both spend the rest of
their lives in jail. The End.

Lipez laughs again. He lights a cigarette.

Brianna looks up at him. A calm has come over her.

BRIANNA

Mr. Lipez?

LIPEZ

What?

BRIANNA

Can I see myself?

LIPEZ

What? You look like shit.

BRIANNA

I'd like to see.

Lipez is confused, but realizing whatever mental break
he's witnessing is pathetic. He loves it. He turns the
rear view mirror so she's looking at herself.

LIPEZ

There...

Brianna stare turns dark. She whispers something.

LIPEZ

What?

Brianna mumbles something unintelligible.

LIPEZ

Are you sayin' something?

BRIANNA

(softly)
Candyman.

LIPEZ

Candyman? What's that?

BRIANNA

(louder)
Candyman.

LIPEZ

Hey, keep that crazy shit down.

EXT. POLICE CAR. NIGHT

As the cops wail on Jim, we see Brianna inside the car scream it one more time.

BRIANNA
CANDYMAN!!!!!!

The word is muffled by the glass, but still loud enough to stop the police from their beating.

There is a strange calm in the air.

CUE: PHILLIP GLASS CANDYMAN SCORE

INT. CAR. NIGHT

Lipez turns the mirror back.

LIPEZ
Ah, Jesus Christ. That hurt my ear
you bitch.

Suddenly the car doors lock.

LIPEZ
What the--

He turns to Brianna.

LIPEZ
Did you do that?

Outside the car window, one of the cops gets pulled straight up. Lipez misses it. The other Cops look up at something we can't see. They draw their guns and starts shooting.

Lipez turns. He tries to get out, but he can't. The missing cop's legs flop across the hood with his top half still out of sight. He's dragged across the hood with some tremendous force. Then seconds later hits the wall across the street like he was thrown out of a car.

A second cop is pulled up and moments later his head falls on the windshield.

Lipez starts turning the ignition but the car won't start. Brianna just looks forward; at piece.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A third cop takes off running behind the car towards the ambulance parked laterally from the car. As the cop passes, he's snagged by a hooked arm and brought into the Ambulance. The ambulance shakes and SCREAMING ensues. Blood sprays out of the back of the Ambulance.

The fourth cop is now at Lipez' passenger door. He's panicking.

COP FOUR

Let me in!

LIPEZ

I can't!

COP FOUR

I said let me in damn it!

LIPEZ

It's locked. I don't know how to--

The fourth cop's throat is slowly slit by a hooked hand spraying blood on the passenger's side window. He falls. Behind him the coat of Candyman.

Lipez shakes in fear. He holds his gun on the man who's face he can't see. All is quiet. The man outside begins to slowly walk back and around the car.

LIPEZ

Who are you?

CANDYMAN

I am the writing on the walls... I
am the whisper in the alleyways...
I am the razor blade in the
halloween sweets...

Lipez watches Candyman circle till he come around to the driver's side window. Lipez is terrified. Candyman lowers. He stares at Lipez with wild and angry glee.

LIPEZ

Please, don't kill me.

Lipez shuts his pathetic eyes.

CANDYMAN

They will say I shed innocent
blood. You are far from innocent,
but they'll say you were. That's
all that matters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Lipez opens his eyes. Candyman is gone. Lipez looks around frantically. Carnage everywhere. He catches his breath. Candyman is gone.

Then, the SOUND OF RIPPED FLESH ERUPTS from the front seat followed by LIPEZ' BLOODCURDLING SCREAM. Lipez looks down to his groin. Raising from the floor of the car from the pedal area is Candyman's face looking up from between Lipez' legs. Candyman Raises in front of Lipez in his own seat tearing his belly open as he does. Blood bursts from the cavity as Candyman rips passed the ribcage. Candyman spills onto the front seat facing Brianna in the back through the divider. Lipez is dead.

CANDYMAN

Tell everyone.

Brianna nods. She blinks and he's gone.

The cars locks raise. Brianna gets out. She pulls Jim to his feet and the two hobble away.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROSE ESTATES, MORNING

Anne-Marie sits outside in a lawn chair, talking to Brianna.

ANNE

So I heard you're thinking of quitting your job.

BRIANNA

Yeah, I'm selling the gallery. I'm thinking I might try to open a recreation center here in the neighborhood. Get these kids painting and sculpting. Bored of all the old shit.

ANNE

Lord knows these children have plenty to say, huh? Fresh start does a soul good.

BRIANNA

I suppose so, Anne. How are you holding up?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNE

Finally got back into my apartment. Probably get a little spring cleaning in before it gets too hot.

BRIANNA

That's not exactly what I meant. Are you ok?

ANNE

I know what you meant. But you know dear...as long as I remember the stories that made me who I am, I may get sad, I may get scared, but I'll never be alone. Keep telling them stories and we all will live forever.

SLOW MOTION SCENES OF CHICAGO

- a few kids in a playground scaring each other, miming the hook with their hands
- Two teenagers making out in a bedroom. On the night table sits a a drawing of Candyman
- An old man in a church, whispering to a child and creeping him out
- A group of teenagers, one wearing a cheap version of the Candyman frock
- Anne-Marie and Brianna sitting outside the Rose Estates, taking in the fresh air

CUT TO:

CUT TO BLACK

(CONTINUED)

7/7/18

88.

CONTINUED: