

"Autocrat"

Written by

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Mine Not Yours

FADE IN:

EXT. ATHLETIC CLUB - DAY

A towering modern facade with floor to ceiling windows stretches across a vast expanse. The building's nestled on the fringe where quiet residential and commercial neighborhoods meet.

Tonal pings... Each "vibraphonic" PING leaves an unharmonious texture lending unto itself.

DIVERSE, OLD, YOUNG WELL-TO-DOERS lumbering in and out the door with workout bags in tow at an ordinary pace.

A PING.

A lighter PING.

A lighter PING builds onto another PING and another...

A CAB drives toward a roundabout near the front door, it stops by the entrance.

The driver, MUHAMMAD, fifties, exits; he casually walks to the front door, he enters the building.

Another PING,

PINGS gradually give rise to a quickened pace.

Faintly, a lone SIREN RESONATES FROM AFAR.

Another, PING, another SIREN.

Another PING, More SIRENS COMPETE for sonic supremacy when...

SILENCE.

Oddly, an ominous bird call BELLOWS. Suddenly...

CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! BULLET HOLES CRACK through the massive panes of glass leaving massive SPIDER WEBS!

A FEMALE CLUB MEMBER, late twenties, SCREAMS as she SPRINTS through the front door pulling her SON, eight, along.

SHARDS OF GLASS SHOWER the sidewalk!

A CLUB PATRON, eighteen, hysterical finds refuge by Muhammad's cab. More window shards FALL and SHATTER without prejudice.

PEOPLE too afraid to move, FREEZE; easy prey for...

TWO MEN WEARING MASKS OF "THE KOCH BROTHERS" dressed in camouflage jackets, they hold an arsenal of weapons standing sentry, they seem to discriminately stalk would-be fleers.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB MEZZANINE - DAY (FLASHBACK - DAY BEFORE)

CRITTER, late forties, holds one thing true, integrity. He's a family man who holds his tongue, conservative, he jogs at a steady pace on a treadmill wearing headphones to distract from the reality above on the television.

ON TELEVISION MONITOR:

INT. ANCHOR DESK - CONTINUOUS

NINA GRAYSON, thirties, a tenacious bulldog like FAYE DUNAWAY in "Network" about to become part of a calamity much larger than the local news she covers.

She INAUDIBLY reads the news as the familiar CAPTIONED NEWS CRAWLS across the bottom of the screen...

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB MEZZANINE - DAY (FLASHBACK - DAY BEFORE)

The treadmill motor WHIRS in rhythmic harmony with stomps from Critter's feet hitting: THUMP, WHIR-WHIR; THUMP, WHIR-WHIR; THUMP, WHIR-WHIR; rhythmic, almost hypnotizing.

Critter's eyes grow larger and larger. Suddenly, he blinks his EYES SHUT...

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB MEZZANINE - DAY

Critter's EYES OPEN; a deadpan glare, shows he's the cause of the chaotic scene.

PATRONS SCREAM AND SCATTER in chaos across the club's expanse.

MEGAN, thirty, a young ASIAN MOTHER sprints past arms outstretched toward an exit.

Suddenly, her shirt STRETCHES from being held by Critter, she SLAMS to the ground.

Critter aims his gun at her head; he turns to see who she was chasing; AMY, eleven, an innocent child seemingly Megan's Daughter watches from a few feet away. She doesn't cry.

MEGAN

No! Not again!

Critter returns to Megan.

CRITTER

What?

MEGAN

This can't be happening again!?

Critter releases her, stunned.

Megan to her knees, she pines for Amy.

Amy walks past Critter, a surreal stare down.

Megan embraces Amy, she doesn't know what else to do.

From a large cache, Critter throws her plastic handcuffs.

CRITTER

Put them on.

Megan hesitates, but fear of doing something wrong is strong.

Hesitant, she moves her hands toward the cuffs, but stops.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

Move through there!

Critter points his weapon toward a locker room.

Megan doesn't move, her stare says she's had enough.

MEGAN

No! We die now! Do it here!

Megan closes Amy's eyes with her hand, she keeps a tight grip of despair around her daughter.

A stalemate.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Your minute of terror lasts a lifetime! Don't you know that?!

Amy stares at Critter, the innocent eyes. Yet, Amy is a stoic figure in all this. Critter's baffled, this is normal?

Critter's grip on the gun softens, his eyes still fixed on Amy. Megan's overcome; her eyes, blank. Suddenly, she FAINTS!

CRITTER

Shit.

Critter sees two teenagers hiding nearby, JONAH and MORGAN, sixteen and seventeen, a couple of well-engineered, dimwitted jock friends wearing faded football jerseys.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

You two, get over here, now!

They hesitate.

Critter FIRES a bullet through the television above them.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

Come here!

They submit in fear, their chin's duck as they cautiously approach Critter and Megan, they hold their hands in the air.

Critter THROWS them a pair of cuffs.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

Cuff yourselves to her.

They cuff their hands.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

Go now!

JONAH

What?

CRITTER

Pick her up and take her
(points)
To the locker room.

MORGAN

What about her?

Amy stares with big beautiful eyes at Critter.

CRITTER

Her too!

Jonah and Morgan LIFT Megan.

Critter cuffs Amy to Megan, he wipes his hand across her hair to assure her safety, but she's not afraid of this man.

Then, she moves her hand to her mouth, she SUCKS HER THUMB as the group saunters off to the locker room.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK - DAY BEFORE)

Critter puts his sweaty clothes in a gym bag, now wearing a suit and tie to go with his seemingly conservative view.

MIKE and LEOPOLD, forties, two old high school chums who kept in touch since high school arrive to their lockers.

LEOPOLD

What do you think of this shit?

MIKE

What?

LEOPOLD

Another shooting.

MIKE

If I had my gun. Man...

LEOPOLD

Better have a chance than nothing.

MIKE

Anyone even attempts that on any of my kids, I'll be there to pop a cap in their ass!

Jonah sets his gym bag next to Mike.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Right Jonah?

JONAH

(sarcastically)

Yeah, right dad.

Critter smirks.

MIKE

Hurry up son, we're late for school.

LEOPOLD

Not that you'll need it...

They CHUCKLE, Mike runs his hand over Jonah's head with a simple bonding gesture.

Critter taken aback with this father-son relationship.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Leopold and Mike dress, Suddenly, the locker room door BURSTS OPEN! Jonah, Morgan, Amy and a lifeless Megan hustle inside.

MIKE
What the hell Jonah?

JONAH
(nervous)
There's men, with guns!

Leopold and Mike RUSH to help.

LEOPOLD
Where are they?

Mike and Leopold fidget with their cuffs momentarily.

MORGAN
Out there! I don't know! They're shooting!

MIKE
(to Leopold)
You got yours?

Mike looks to Leopold.

LEOPOLD
It's in the car.

MIKE
Shit! Mine too. Now what?

JONAH
Shelter in place.

MIKE
What?

JONAH
Block doors and wait for help.

Mike and Leopold sprint toward the door when it VIOLENTLY SWINGS OPEN; it SMACKS Leopold in the nose, BLOOD Oozes from his face.

As Mike audits Leopold, the butt-end of a gun STRIKES him in the chest, it KNOCKS HIM OUT, he FALLS to the ground.

The other Gunman, Carl FORCEFULLY PULLS in three hand cuffed men in the locker room , CHUCK, sixties, BARRY, thirties and Muhammad.

CARL
 (pointing gun)
 Get the fuck over there now!

Carl leads his group to Jonah, Morgan, Amy and Megan in the middle of the locker room. He couples the human train to one another.

CARL (CONT'D)
 Get comfy. We gonna be here a spell.

Carl drags Mike and Leopold to the group, he cuffs them too.

INT. NEWS ROOM OFFICE - DAY

Nina snoops around a loose stack of papers on a coworker's desk as a NEWS INTERN, twenties, returns to her desk.

NEWS INTERN
 Can I help you?

NINA
 I'm pretty sure you won't come
 anywhere close to helping me, but...

A police band RADIO SQUAWKS.

DISPATCH OPERATOR (V.O.)
 We have shots fired and a one seventy
 one in progress at three-hundred
 Barry Lane, Health Time Minnesota.

NINA
 (piqued)
 Then Again.

Nina's curious, she's never heard this code before.

NEWS INTERN
 What's a one-seventy-one?

NINA
 We'll know soon enough.

Nina rushes off like she won the lottery. The news intern hastily gives her "the finger."

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - SHOWER AREA - DAY

Carl searches systematically, he inches toward a shower area.

Suddenly, TERRELL AND KAMAL, eighteen and seventeen, athletic BLACK MALES exit the showers, they STARTLE Carl.

CARL

Put 'em up!

Kamal hesitates, he's afraid to lose the towel at his waist.

TERRELL

What the fuck?

Terrell RAISES his hands in the air.

KAMAL

Shit! Do it man.

Kamal RAISES his hands.

Carl extends his hands with cuffs.

CARL

Better Get used to these, cuff yourselves.

Carl leads them through the shower area, he fastens cuffs adding them to the group.

Carl squeezes a radio handset.

CARL (CONT'D)

Locker room secure.

Carl UNLOCKS and OPENS lockers, he retrieves duffel bags TOSSES them on the floor; Bags unzip, PULLS OUT steel cables, fasteners, explosives and a pneumatic anchoring tool. From a camera bag; he finds a corded MONITOR/CAMERA, places it outside an exit door.

ON MONITOR:

INT. POOL AREA - CONTINUOUS

The camera springs to life, the monitor reveals a massive pool area outside enclosed by floor to ceiling glass.

Outside the windows, a few POLICEMEN surround the pool area they get closer to the entrance when...

BOOM!

The whole wall of glass SHATTERS, it SPILLS DEBRIS across the pool creating a fantastic spectacle.

Carl throws a remote firing device to the ground. He picks up and FIRES ANCHORS into fasteners then strings a cable across the doors, FIRES AGAIN on the other fastener connecting the other end of the cable making a barricade when...

PIEDMONT (O.S.)

(calmly)

What the fuck are you doing?!

PIEDMONT, fifty, slowly ROLLS his mechanized wheelchair out of the shower room.

Carl FIRES where Piedmont's head should be.

Carl stumbles against the wall.

Piedmont not phased by the bullet.

PIEDMONT (CONT'D)

Missed mother fucker!

CARL

Christ!

He catches his breath.

CARL (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

PIEDMONT

Running a ten minute mile.

Carl cautiously approaches.

CARL (O.S.)

Don't move!

PIEDMONT

Where the fuck I gonna go?!

Carl finds a MOP and takes the handle and jams it through the spokes of the wheelchair.

He looks down the shower stalls, he clears each stall.

CARL (O.S.)

Why are you here?

PIEDMONT
 Rehabilitation. On my spine.
 (curiously)
 Christ?
 (pause)
 You said Christ, what do you mean by
 "Christ?"

Carl returns from inspecting the stalls.

CARL
 What about it?

PIEDMONT
 How you using it?

Carl looks at the full assist wheelchair with a joystick.

He doesn't know where to hide this bandit, he thinks.

PIEDMONT (CONT'D)
 Are you using Christ in a good way?
 Like He going to help or like, 'Fuck'
 as in "I'm fucked?"

Carl removes the mop UNLOCKS Piedmont's wheelchair.

CARL
 Wheel your ass over there.

Carl points his gun toward the group. He follows behind with the mop and a bag with an assault rifle over his back.

INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY (FLASHBACK - DAY BEFORE)

Critter, wet hair, suit and tie, drives along; distraught. He flips through a myriad of talk radio shows, but one catches his ear.

ON RADIO:

RADIO GUEST (V.O.)
 We rely on corruptness--

RADIO HOST (V.O.)
 --It doesn't matter, no one on the
 hill will step up!

Critter's car comes to a RED STOPLIGHT at an intersection.

RADIO GUEST (V.O.)

--Government and special interest groups engineering, creating then funding ways to perpetuate the unfathomable industrial growth, for what?

On the side of the road, CARL, 60's, wears a familiar DESERT CAMOUFLAGE JACKET, disheveled hair and unshaven look like he crawled out of an Afghan desert, he holds a sign, "HOMELESS DISABLED VET NEED MONEY" piques Critter.

Critter thinks he knows Carl and that's just fine because he doesn't seem to recognize Critter.

RADIO GUEST (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Now they're influencing how and who we vote for. All in an orchestrated attempt to gain what, more power? Or is it control?

RADIO HOST (V.O.)

That's ludicrous! What about deranged individuals traumatized by war? They deserve help.

Critter makes eye contact with Carl.

RADIO GUEST (V.O.)

Yes and congress is not doing enough to help. Especially for the guys they do put in harm's way. What they did count was not having enough professionals to help the sufferers.

RADIO HOST (V.O.)

So you're saying they pump pills into these guys so they don't suffer from P.T.S.D.? They world suffers from post traumatic stress or maybe fear's in control?

Critter and Carl intently study each other.

RADIO GUEST (V.O.)

As long as people pick at scabs that'll never heal, we'll see even more war and even more drugs hitting the market to pacify the masses.

RADIO HOST (V.O.)

Fear creates demand--

RADIO GUEST (V.O.)

--Once demand hits a fever pitch--

RADIO HOST (V.O.)

These companies lock down pills--

RADIO GUEST (V.O.)

--And charge a premium, I get it.

RADIO HOST (V.O.)

Plus no one can turn it off because
who knows what'll happen! We gotta
take a break. Next up, cooking with
Grape seed oil.

Critter has a sullen moment; he TURNS OFF the radio, chokes
back tears, then... A direct look at Carl's face.

(Beat)

Critter has a teary-eyed epiphany.

The light turns GREEN. A horn BLARES from somewhere, Critter
looks to the rear view mirror sees an angry FEMALE MOTORIST,
forties, behind the wheel.

Critter drives his car around the corner from Carl; the car
STOPS, he rolls down the passenger window.

Carl approaches the passenger door.

INT. NEWS ROOM OFFICE - DAY

Nina walks through a litany of equipment in a garage full of
broadcast vehicles walking and talking on her cell phone.

NINA

I'm taking the fucking S.A.T. link.

Nina sees a CAMERAMAN, twenties, snot-nosed, seemingly a
savvy technology whiz with dark horn-rimmed glasses.

NINA (CONT'D)

Yo, sizzle dick, let's hop.

CAMERAMAN

What you got?

Nina's smile glistens; the anticipation of fame is her drug.

NINA

Wisdom.

The cameraman rolls his eyes.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB MEZZANINE - SIGN IN DESK AREA - DAY

OFFICER LYLE DIXON, thirties, the aggressive, less-seasoned cop, cautiously enters the fallen glass area.

He switches ON his BODY CAMERA.

He sees a desk and looks behind it, he spies TAFFY, twenty-five, a spitfire trendy loveable creature holding her backpack, she RECORDS with a video camera.

OFFICER DIXON

Hands up!

Taffy sets down the camera, making sure she has Dixon in frame.

TAFFY

Gunmen went in both locker rooms.

OFFICER DIXON

Get on the floor now!

He flips her on her stomach, puts his knee in her back and attempts to cuff; but unable to do so when--

Critter STORMS out of the women's locker room pulling LAUREN, forty, a gorgeous trophy wife with augmented breasts and daughter ELISA, seventeen, chip off the block SOB in their adorable, sexy workout attire, cuffed together.

Officer Dixon points his gun at the group.

OFFICER DIXON (CONT'D)

Stop!

Critter's stunned.

Lauren DROPS her purse.

He momentarily loses his grip on Lauren, but hangs onto Elisa.

LAUREN

Please God no!

She manages to LURCH for and grab her purse.

ELISA

(shrieks)

No!

Critter hides behind Elisa with her pink, jewel-incrusted cell phone clutched in hand.

Officer Dixon shields Taffy, they take cover by a desk.

Critter retrieves Lauren, he uses them as a shield.

OFFICER DIXON

Release them! Put your weapon down!

CRITTER

This ain't what you want today!

OFFICER DIXON

We both don't! Now put down your weapon!

Suddenly, the hammer on a gun, CLICKS!

Carl arrives behind Officer Dixon.

CARL

No... You do that.

Taffy PICKS UP THE CAMERA, she pans the situation. Carl points his gun at her.

CARL (CONT'D)

(to Taffy)

What the fuck are you doing?

TAFFY

Filming.

CRITTER

Ain't this your lucky day.

Officer Dixon takes the opportunity and LUNGES at Carl, a STRUGGLE ensues...

Critter pulls Elisa and Lauren into the locker room.

Carl and Officer Dixon continue to struggle as Critter places Officer Dixon in a choke hold, this STOPS his struggle.

Carl cuffs him.

Carl pulls off his gun belt and radio; he sees a body camera, investigates it.

CARL

What's this?

CRITTER
His body camera.

CARL
Is it on?

OFFICER DIXON
(comes to)
Yes.

CRITTER
Good.

The rubber Koch Brothers masks force crooked smiles. When...

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB MEZZANINE - SIGN IN DESK AREA - DAY

THREE POLICEMEN, thirties, enter; they take offensive positions to pin down the gunmen with an opportunity to shoot like fish in a barrel.

Critter uses Officer Dixon as a shield, he points toward the arriving officers on the ledge.

A gun shot FIRES! A good-size digital clock SHATTERS above.

CRITTER
Go! Go! GO!!!

Carl yanks on the door, he spills into the locker room.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB MEZZANINE - CONTINUOUS

OFFICER ONE, waif, but bulky with protection.

OFFICER ONE
Don't do this!

CRITTER
This isn't what you think!

OFFICER ONE
Lower your weapon now!

Taffy reaches back and grabs her backpack...

Officer One takes aim at Taffy, BOOM! A gunshot screams past, it SHATTERS tiles above her head!

CRITTER
Jesus! She's not part of this!

Taffy and Critter quickly lock eyes.

TAFFY

I am now.

She slips inside through the open locker room door.

Carl ROLLS OUT three stun grenades.

Critter pulls Officer Dixon toward the door using him as a shield.

OFFICER DIXON

Take the shot! Take it!

CRITTER

No! Back OFF! I will not hurt hi--

SHOTS RING OUT!!

OFFICERS ON THE LEDGE FIRE AT BOTH CRITTER AND OFFICER DIXON!

BULLETS HIT OFFICER DIXON'S VEST, He GASPS with each hit, but Critter manages to pull himself and Officer Dixon inside the locker room.

The stun grenades explode BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The door CLOSES.

Critter disables the door handle.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

We have explosives, do not breach!

Do not breach! We have explosives!

Taffy films Officer Dixon, he writhes in PAIN.

OFFICER DIXON

Let these people go man!

Critter FIRES the pneumatic tool, he attaches fasteners.

Carl strings the cables and draws them taught; he slides another MONITOR/CAMERA snaking the lens through a crack to see outside the door.

Taffy diligently films.

Critter turns to her.

CARL
Who are you?

CRITTER
What are you doing?

TAFFY
Getting this.

CRITTER
Why?

Critter drags Officer Dixon and cuffs him to Lauren and Elisa.

TAFFY
Good b-roll.

CRITTER
Aren't you afraid?

TAFFY
Terrified.

OFFICER DIXON
Let them go! I'll do what you need.

Critter REACHES into his pocket.

CRITTER (O.S.)
That's nice, but I have Carl for
that.

Critter leans over Carl's back, he PLUNGES a syringe into
his shoulder releases its contents.

CARL
What the fuck are you doing
(fades)
Ma...

Carl falls to the ground; he collapses, passes out.

EXT. ATHLETIC CLUB - DAY

POLICE VEHICLES flock to the area. SERGEANT RICHARDSON,
late thirties, an astute observer arrives on the scene; he
tries to comfort Female Club Member and her son.

An unmarked squad car arrives. Police LIEUTENANT KEVIN
LARSON, fifties, he's a real commanding son of a bitch like
TOM SIZEMORE in toughness, demeanor; yet a humanitarian doing
what he can in a developing situation.

Richardson brings Larson the Female Club member and son.

SERGEANT RICHARDSON
These two were just inside the door.

LIEUTENANT LARSON
What can you tell me?

FEMALE CLUB MEMBER
(hysterical)
There were two of them... maybe more,
I don't know! It happened so fast!

LIEUTENANT LARSON
Okay, stay behind that squad car and
let him know if you remember anything.

Larson can't get anything from this frazzled witness, he
nods to Sergeant Richardson to take her away.

Richardson hands her off to OFFICER ONE.

SERGEANT RICHARDSON
Take this woman to site holding.

Richardson arrives to Larson's side.

LIEUTENANT LARSON
Get command set up over there.
(points)
Shut a five block perimeter, hack
surveillance. Get me eyeballs inside.
I need it yesterday!

A garish MOBILE COMMAND CENTER arrives, an OFFICER marshall's
it to Larson's predetermined spot.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Critter takes a duffel bag, unzips it; he retrieves BOMB
NECKLACES adorning them around the hostages' necks.

CRITTER
So what are you afraid of?

TAFFY
What'll happen next?

CRITTER
Yeah... Well, me too.

He adorns Taffy with a necklace.

EXT. ATHLETIC CLUB - DAY

A handful of MEDIA REPORTERS find a spot for setting up, Nina is already placing makeup, preparing for the deluge.

RON CLEMENT, forties, an aggressive burgeoning producer on the cell phone.

RON

Damn it Louise! We're going fucking live! Get me affiliates now! I wanna take Nina national, hell international!

Nina looks on with an err of optimism. This is "the break" to go worldwide. The immensity of broadcasting live details of a hostage situation.

EXT./INT. CAR (MOVING) CRITTER'S HOUSE - DAY (FLASHBACK - ONE MONTH)

A nice house nestled in urban Americana. Critter's car arrives in the driveway, it lazily backs up toward the garage. Carl sits shotgun gumming a toothpick with nervousness.

CRITTER

You can't leave it to rookies.

CARL

We were rookies.

CRITTER

Once. Basic seems like forever ago.

CARL

Hell, I don't even remember basic.

Critter studies Carl suspiciously.

CRITTER

You remember it. It was hell.

CARL

Hell? It was routine I couldn't see any further than the front of me.

Carl has a curious look of bullshit smeared across his face.

CRITTER

(curiously)

You were special forces?

CARL
I'm special alright.

CRITTER
Yeah,
(pause)
I bet you were.

Carl stands dumbfounded at the site of ARMAMENTS in front of him on the garage floor. Critter stands in behind Carl.

CRITTER (CONT'D)
This is for real.

Carl shrugs.

CARL
I got nothing to loose.

CRITTER
That's the spirit.
(pause)
Neither do I.

The men LOAD the familiar TACTICAL ITEMS in duffel bags.

INT. BAR - DAY

Crashed cop-car corner panels riddled with bullet holes and dents line the interior of this dingy broken down old dive bar. A PATRON, eighties, he's near the threshold of death, he COUGHS with a smoker's hack.

SKIP, sixties, NATIVE AMERICAN, whose seen the worst and best in people tends the bar with a few PATRONS intent on hearing BILL ANDERSON, sixties, crotchety old man thrice divorced trying to come to grips with retirement in mid-story.

BILL
His mother was smoking drain cleaner
staring through the blinds all methed
out of her mind when I came to the
house.

SKIP
Were you alone?

BILL
I was alone coming into this world,
at that time and certainly when I
die. You can't trust anyone. You
and your people should know that.

SKIP

So should wife number three! And I
wasn't there at the onset of all
that crap numb nuts.

Patron sips beer at the existential thought.

BILL

(gleans)

Can I finish the story?

(pause)

Her son, cuffed to a radiator, locked
in his bedroom, lying on the floor
in his own filth, yet he's able to
give out this masculine scream for a
four year old. I'll never forget
the way he said "Mommy!"

SKIP

Jesus... And on a lighter note.

Skip TURNS ON the television to breaking news.

ON TELEVISION CAPTION: "SHOOTING - HEALTH TIME MN."

PATRON ONE

Whoa... What the hell is that?

BILL

What? They want you back on the
rez?

SKIP

Ha Ha. Fuck you.

Skip hands Bill a beer, he points to the television.

SKIP (CONT'D)

Shouldn't you be doing something?

BILL

Ain't my job.

Skip scoffs.

SKIP

You draw a pension?

BILL

Now what the fuck does that mean?

SKIP

I'm still paying you, get to work.

BILL

And you're an Indian, I'm still paying you.

PATRON ONE

Hell, you're both lucky to be this side of the dirt.

They toast with a CHEERS. Skip rolls his eyes.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Critter finds a nice chair from the locker room lounge, he PUSHES it to face the scared hostages.

Critter LIFTS Carl onto the chair.

He opens another locker door and reveals a rope.

The hostages are thoroughly confused.

Critter TIES Carl to the chair.

CRITTER

Sometimes we just feel compelled.

(pause)

We scratch and even when we're told to stop scratching, we do it anyway. We scratch until we draw blood.

Critter PULLS OUT a machete, he leans it against the wall.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

I spent my whole life defending a nation of ball-scratchers.

Hostages are scared shit-less.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

(to Amy)

You like popcorn?

Amy raises her head up and down, yes.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

You plant a seed in good soil give it clean water sunshine watch it grow and with any luck the process

(MORE)

CRITTER (CONT'D)
 yields results. But what's in the
 soil? The water? Or light? More
 importantly, was that seed bad?
 (pause)
 Dictators; you take out one, two
 more pop up. War winds down, another
 two pop up. I think we forgot to
 engineer the weed killer in these
 bad seeds! Better tell Monsanto.

Critter UNFURLS THE AMERICAN FLAG behind Carl.

Women WHIMPER, the men despondent.

Critter saunters around.

CRITTER (CONT'D)
 I'm planting seeds right now.

He approaches Chuck, he's incredibly fit, calm, this is
 clearly not his first rodeo.

CRITTER (CONT'D)
 (to Chuck)
 Why are you here?

CHUCK
 Gets me away from my wife for a while.

CRITTER
 I buy that. How about you?

Critter approaches KAMAL and TERRELL, they're visibly nervous.

CRITTER (CONT'D)
 You coming here to check out some
 ass? You crawling up that "hoochy"
 or whatever you kids call it today.

KAMAL
 What?

CRITTER
 You riding some bee-atch?

TERRELL
 Fo Real?

CRITTER
 Fo Real?
 (MORE)

CRITTER (CONT'D)

What the fuck does-- "Fo Real." Of course this is for real! Do you know the difference?

PIEDMONT

Lay off the kid.

CRITTER

Why? Is he yours?

PIEDMONT

Man, you think I can fuck?

CRITTER

Technology's come a long way, especially pills for piss pumps plus she could do all the work you know.

PIEDMONT

He don't need that shit on top of what you already doing--

CRITTER

--Bullshit! This is what's wrong! This is reality.
 (to Terrell)
 This, my friend, is "fo real!"
 (to Barry)
 How about you?

Critter approaches Barry, an unworldly accountant with a bad suit and loose tie.

BARRY

What?

CRITTER

Why are you here?

BARRY

(hesitates)
 Get healthy?

CRITTER

Sure.

PIEDMONT

What are you after?

Critter points to Megan.

CRITTER

We have alumni here, they've been through this before.

Piedmont wheels over to Critter.

PIEDMONT

Yeah, me too. I ain't afraid of you chicken shit.

CRITTER

You gonna make a stand tough guy?

Critter sees the mop handle and walks toward it.

TAFFY

He has a different agenda.

CRITTER

Oh yeah? Why is that?

MEGAN

We'd be dead by now.

CRITTER

True.

BARRY

Then, why are you doing this?

CRITTER

I find it funny, we knowingly kill ourselves just by eating the food we eat. Yet, nobody does anything until the problem gets bigger and... Oh how we love being a reactionary society; we do nothing until its too late.

(Beat)

PIEDMONT

Well?

Critter looks at Piedmont.

CRITTER

"Well," What?

Critter uses the mop handle to lock Piedmont's wheelchair.

PIEDMONT

So you going to fix it? Huh? You
going to stop "the Man" Mr Big man?
And why ain't I cuffed?

Piedmont holds his hands up to be cuffed.

PIEDMONT (CONT'D)

You segregating me? I fought that
war a while ago.

CRITTER

Really? You're the first person I
heard say that in past-tense.

PIEDMONT

Say what?

CRITTER

Segregation was, "a while ago," Answer
me this; why does everyone pick at a
wound that never healed? Kids get
shot for no reason, unarmed people
get shot walking on the sidewalk.

PIEDMONT

You don't even have to leave the
house to get shot. It just doesn't
matter anymore.

CRITTER

Of course it does! We're culturally
insane! It will keep happening over
and over and over until we're extinct
or become some fantastical neutral
gender colorless mutated species
that can process carbon dioxide!

Critter cuffs Piedmont to Kamal.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

(to Kamal)

You will die.

PIEDMONT

Hey, come on man.

BARRY

They're just kids.

CRITTER

Are they?

PIEDMONT

Look at him.

Kamal about to cry.

PIEDMONT (CONT'D)

What did these kids do to deserve--

CRITTER

Segregation, discrimination, racism
it'll never go away. It's how you
perceive. It's your perception pal.
A clique will always be a clique
just like stupid will continue to
breed.

MIKE

You need to stop this now!

CRITTER

Here's a good example.
(to Terrell)
Where is this guy from, huh?
(points to Muhammad)

TERRELL

I don't know.

CRITTER

You don't know? He's black, like
you. You should know, right? Better
yet, what are you? Where are you
from?

TERRELL

I don't know.

CRITTER

Guess.

Critter asks Muhammad.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

What are you?

MUHAMMAD

Muslim.

CRITTER

(to Terrell)
Which kind?

TERRELL
Is there a difference?

CRITTER
No, he pees the same as you do, but
I'm sure he belongs to some religious
sect that's been around for thousands
of years, right?

Muhammad nods his head up and down, timidly.

CRITTER (CONT'D)
Like Christianity, Catholicism,
vigilantes, Jews, Episcopalian, The
Indie Rock Scene, Devil Worshipping,
Spaceship Men all milling around
down here on Earth.

(Beat)

CRITTER (CONT'D)
So I ask you... Who cares?

MEGAN
I do.
(to Amy)
For her.

People look spellbound.

EXT. MEDIA VAN - DAY

Nina prepares some notes on a tablet.

NINA
Do we have hostage estimates?

RON
I don't know, let's tell them at
least fifty.

NINA
Do you know?

RON
No. But go with it anyway.

Nina's surprised.

NINA
No!

RON

Look, we have a large police presence
unknown assailants in a health club
people will believe anything you
tell them.

NINA

(scoffs)

You expect me to go with that?

RON

Yeah. It's a good teaser.

Nina STANDS from her chair, she hustles past Ron.

RON (CONT'D)

Where're you going? We're going to
tape the promo!

NINA

I'm not going on without something
tangible--

CAMERAMAN

(mumbles)

--That'll be a first.

NINA

This is really loose, Ron.

Nina tries to flag down an officer, Ron approaches an OFFICER
who walks by.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Critter works his way around the room.

CRITTER

God protects these kids, yet there
is no God, God is dead!

(to Amy)

There is no Easter bunny.

Mike can't hold his tongue.

MIKE

I cannot stand your blasphemy any
longer! There is a God and he will
punish you for this!

CRITTER

Good! He's punishing me by you trying to convince me He exists!

MIKE

How dare you!

CRITTER

How many times have you hung out with Him, shook his hand, made out with Him?

MIKE

Everyday.

CRITTER

What do you do for a living?

LAUREN

He's a town council member.

CRITTER

Thanks, but I was talking to him before you so rudely interrupted, but... I should expect this from you.

LAUREN

What does that mean? Huh?

CRITTER

You're a bitch.

LAUREN

Excuse me!

CRITTER

Excuse you.

MIKE

I accept you into our fold.

(stammers)

God can help you! God helps people like you.

CRITTER

Does he? Bullshit. Quit lying!

(to Officer Dixon)

Isn't this someone you would lock up if he starts saying that shit to you?

OFFICER DIXON
I'm not qualified.

PIEDMONT
Right, you just pull the trigger.

OFFICER DIXON
Come on man, give it a rest.

PIEDMONT
Did you're co-workers shoot at you?
Doesn't that tell you how they feel
about you? They just shoot to kill.

OFFICER DIXON
What if you were on the other end of
that gun barrel? Have to make a
choice who lives or dies. What if
you gave up your life for someone
else to live... everyday?

PIEDMONT
You're nuts.

MEGAN
How can you say that?

CRITTER
It's all bullshit!
(to Morgan)
Do you respect your dad? I saw you
guys talking the other day. If he
told you to jump, would you say "how
high," or just do it?

Morgan looks to Mike.

CRITTER (CONT'D)
Well?

MIKE
How dare you talk to my son like
that! God will judge you!

CRITTER
Are you a child molester?

BARRY
Come on?

CRITTER

(to Barry)

Maybe you are. Perhaps you are and
its lurking about in your head,
thinking dastardly deeds to do to a
child. I digress, politicians don't
do that... They have a moral compass.

LAUREN

You can't make accusations like that?

CRITTER

Sorry sister. This is my pulpit,
and you are my flock.

(stammers)

And I accuse you of being a Nazi
racist because you probably are.
That's what I perceive. Is it wrong?
Am I right?

MIKE

I pray for you.

(to everyone)

This man's soul will rot in hell!
Our father, who art in heaven--
hallowed be thy name...

Critter moves around.

CRITTER

No one cares about you, no one cares
about God. God doesn't care about
you. We're an idiot-filled cesspool
with a couple clowns stirring the
pot.

MIKE

Damn you to hell!

Critter approaches Mike.

CRITTER

This is hell my friend! We live in
hell, and if you believe that death
takes us to Heaven. Good for you.
When has He showed up to tell us?

MIKE

Read the book!

CRITTER

Which version? Or should I say perception? God allows people to suffer while you prey on them for money? Answers like this aren't in the Good Book.

MIKE

Don't look for them in the book, seek the way in you! You are the one. You have the answers!

CRITTER

(sarcastically)

Do I?

MEGAN

Dig deep inside, understand what you're doing.

LAUREN

Think about the families.

CRITTER

Oh I have.

(beat)

A few bad apples in the church preyed on the innocent and that's P.R.E.Y. It's neither's fault or your fault. It's the individual who fucked it up for everyone.

TAFFY

It's the Church's fault, their accountable!

CRITTER

(pause)

The church did what any other "corruption" does. They cover up like anyone else would like Enron trying to prevent a stock skid. They aren't any different and that is the issue.

(mocking)

It was Enron who raped the little boy your honor.

(pause)

We have problems. Corporations don't.

(pause)

Soulless entities have scared men running their agendas and they have

(MORE)

CRITTER (CONT'D)
a book they answer to... And why i'm
here today. We're writing a new
"good book," an update for today's
lying and cheating ways.

LAUREN
And you're writing one... for them?

CHUCK
Yeah, right. Good luck

Critter looks around the room.

CRITTER
(to Muhammad)
What's your name?

MUHAMMAD
Muhammad.

CRITTER
Imagine that, I'm surrounded by holy
people! Holy shit! How'd you get
here?

MUHAMMAD
(broken English)
I arrived here to work.

Critter approaches.

CRITTER
You're not from around these parts.

MUHAMMAD
No.

Critter points the gun to Muhammad's head.

Hostages GAFF.

Muhammad begins a PRAYER.

Critter pauses for a moment.

MIKE
This is a living, breathing man!

CRITTER
Who cares.

Muhammad PUSHES his forehead TOWARD the muzzle.

The muzzle and forehead MEET.

Muhammad's willing to die.

Taffy pushes in with the camera.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

Perception!

(to Muhammad)

You praying?

MUHAMMAD

(in Arabic)

Allah the Great and Wonderful.

BARRY

Shit, I'm a recovering Catholic.

MIKE

Stop this! Stop it now!

CRITTER

(to Muhammad)

Why are you here?

MUHAMMAD

Survival.

CRITTER

Finally! Someone with the right answer. They teach that to you in school or did your mom tell you that?

MUHAMMAD

My mom was raped and murdered by infidels.

Critter releases the gun from Muhammad's head.

CRITTER

I hope it wasn't Carl. I wish he'd wake up soon.

(pause)

Unlike these people hanging out at "the club," What did you do for a living back home?

MUHAMMAD

I was... Am... a doctor.

CRITTER
What do you do now?

MUHAMMAD
Drive cab.

LAUREN
Why is a doctor driving cab?

MUHAMMAD
Testing, I must test again.

CRITTER
So you don't want to take the test
or? You're just so good you don't
need to pass our medical exam?

MUHAMMAD
Learning English.

CRITTER
So you're working to learn the
language and take the test.

MUHAMMAD
It take time. And money.

TAFFY
Do you know love?

Critter's demeanor turns south.

CRITTER
What kind of question is that?

TAFFY
What it means. Love?

Critter turns his attention to Taffy.

CRITTER
Give me that camera.

TAFFY
What?

Critter GRABS the camera, he FORCEFULLY WALTZES Taffy around;
he corners her against a wall, he points the gun to her head.

Taffy is not afraid.

CRITTER

You have five minutes to deliver the last message you will ever leave on Earth--

OFFICER DIXON (O.S.)

--You said you weren't going to kill--

CRITTER

--I lied. This is your last will and testament, last words you utter.

A tenseness builds across the locker room.

OFFICER DIXON

Kill me!

Critter turns to Officer Dixon.

CRITTER

How noble. Just like Jesus laying down his life for all of you.

LAUREN

What are you trying to prove?

CRITTER

How vacant you are. Even kids know this, yet you pamper them. They take advantage of you because they are smarter and more in control because you can't control yourself! You say "no" then give them everything--

LAUREN

Who the hell are you!?

MEGAN

What gives you the right to say this?

LEOPOLD

Who the hell put you in charge!?

CRITTER

I am God. He's in all of us,
(to Mike)

Right reverend? I drank the blood, ate the body, I'm a fucking cannibal; yet no one questions this?

(MORE)

CRITTER (CONT'D)

(to Officer Dixon)

A man sees God and we send him for evaluation? What is his perception? His vision? Oh apparition God are you really there? Don't get me wrong. We perpetuated the existence of apparitions long enough. Face it. God can't help you, because you are the problem.

Critter looks around the room.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

Does anyone get this? Am I the only one who thinks like this?

The room looks stunned.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

I can't believe I defended ideals for a nation of idiots to breed more idiots?

MEGAN

Do you have children?

LAUREN

Obviously no.

Critter leans up against a counter top, he sets down the camera, he turns violent toward Lauren.

CRITTER

Shut your fucking mouth!

MEGAN

What happened?

CRITTER

(sobs)

You know for a bunch of people about to die, yawl are very chatty.

OFFICER DIXON

Please don't hurt anyone.

BARRY

If I'm gonna die, I want answers. Why in the hell are you wearing a mask? Are you afraid?

Critter pauses, he wipes away a tear.

CRITTER

If you're dead, it doesn't matter.

(to Barry)

What do you do for a living?

Taffy PICKS UP the camera, she POINTS to Barry.

BARRY

I'm an accountant.

CRITTER

How many kids?

BARRY

Three.

(starts to cry)

I love my kids.

CRITTER

You write them off... on your taxes?

BARRY

What? Yeah.

CRITTER

Three "line items?" What if you treated them like a liability? When they mess up, you just write them off? Discharge them? Or are you the guy who takes out a life insurance policy on them then pushes them in front of a train?

BARRY

That's asinine! Who the hell are you to judge me!

CRITTER

You've been judged. Who you are. Carefully compiled over years and years with files upon files upon files about you! You've been data-mined by governments, corporations just slap an algorithm on it paste some bullshit and presto. We know what you do, what you drink, what you like, dislike, unlike... Even the porn you prefer. You are a demographic -a mere statistic!

BARRY

So are you! You're scared! Afraid
little man of living life!

MEGAN

You're this creature with a mask who
can't face his victims!

Critter EYES Chuck, he seems too quiet, he approaches.

CRITTER

You haven't said much.

CHUCK

Is anything I say going to make you
change what you're doing?

BARRY

People can't keep doing this shit.
It's a losing battle!

CHUCK

They do and they will; tell me, who
got in the way?

LAUREN

You hear voices? They telling you
what to do?

CRITTER

Voices? Yes. Voices of the dead.
I assure you I am lucid. We neglect
our communities, our families, our
races, our cultures or lack thereof
because the culture of the United
States is the almighty fucking dollar
and nobody thinks for the common
good, it's all about me!

CHUCK

Is this about money? Is that it?

LAUREN

I don't understand?

CRITTER

We walk around like zombies feed a
diet of pills that have warnings
that you can die if you ingest. I
understand why no one is going to
fix anything.

MEGAN

And you're going to fix it?

LEOPOLD

This will do it?

CRITTER

Its the first chapter in the new book of order.

PIEDMONT

Ha! Shit, good luck.

CHUCK

You seem like a very reasonable man. Why here, why now?

TAFFY

Seems futile.

Critter approaches Taffy GRABS the camera from her hand, he points the camera back at her! Critter firmly switches from pointing the camera, he replaces it by pointing the gun to her nose.

CRITTER

What are your last words?
(sternly)

What are you going to say?!

Taffy takes a BREATH IN and EXHALES.

TAFFY

Amanda, I love you. You make my life in a fucked up world worth living. If not for you, I would be dead. I'd accept that I might die by a hand of a tyrant, not like the one who tried to kill me.

(pause)

However, this man will not succeed. He doesn't have will. He doesn't have courage.

CLICK! He lowers the gun's hammer.

CRITTER

Really, why?

TAFFY

Why would anyone take an athletic club hostage?

Critter stops in his tracks, he lowers the gun.

CRITTER
See. You do care.
(points to Terrell)
Is that your kid?

TAFFY
No. Piedmont is my child.

CRITTER
Piedmont?

Taffy picks up the camera and stands behind Piedmont.

BARRY
(to Terrell)
That's not your kid?

LAUREN
Hello. She was talking to Amanda?

CRITTER
(to Taffy)
What's your name?

TAFFY
Taffy.

BARRY
Taffy? Your mom name you that?

TAFFY
Yeah, she said I have all the gooey
goodness mixed together.

LEOPOLD
What the hell is that?

PIEDMONT
Yeah, what the hell is that?

TAFFY
I used to think it was just a sticky
thing, but I learned it means no
label or inhibitions on anything. I
love everyone intimately no matter
what. I'm an infectious confection.

Jonah and Morgan are intrigued almost emphatically happy.

MIKE

(scoffs)

Ha! Listen to you...

TAFFY

Oh yeah?

Taffy aggressively attacks Mike, she forces the camera in his face.

TAFFY (CONT'D)

Do you have a problem with love?
You think because I love a woman I'm
immoral? Fuck you. Love is love!

Mike takes offense.

TAFFY (CONT'D)

Accept it and move on, there is so
much more to do then spend time trying
to tell someone how to live.

MIKE

(scoffs)

Men and woman. There is nothing
else. Where is your morality ma'am?

Critter looks at Mike.

CRITTER

Morality? Who says you're the judge
of morality?

TAFFY

Who are you to judge me?!

CRITTER

(to Mike)

I've had enough of you both!

Critter points the gun at Mike.

Suddenly, an obnoxious cell phone tune RINGS.

The phone incessantly RINGS while Critter studies the fear on Mike's face.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

Table that.

Critter finds the cell phone; it reads: LISA.

CRITTER (CONT'D)
 Lisa? Who knows Lisa?

MORGAN
 (hesitates)
 Girl I'm seeing.

Critter answers the call.

CRITTER
 You know I hate interruptions?
 (to Phone)
 I'm gonna put you on speaker phone.

LISA (V.O.)
 What the hell? Who is this? Morgan?
 What are you doing?

CRITTER
 He's unavoidably detained.

LISA (V.O.)
 Who are you?

CRITTER
 Don't worry about that--

LISA (V.O.)
 (demands)
 --Put him on face time! I want to
 see him! Let me talk to him!

Critter refrains, he better do what she says.

CRITTER
 Say "Hello" Morgan.

Critter INITIATES FACE TIME and points the camera at Morgan.

LISA (V.O.)
 Oh my God.

CRITTER
 Yes!!!

He pans to show all the hostages. LISA, seventeen, high school prom queen, provides a universal look for teenagers in shock.

CRITTER (CONT'D)
 What's gonna happen next?

LISA (V.O.)
Why are you doing this?

CRITTER
Hopefully we'll go "Viral."

LAUREN
What will that do?

CRITTER
Get peoples' attention maybe piss
off a ton of people, like you.

LAUREN
Why me?

TAFFY
(to Lauren)
Your self image squanders love. You
like attention. Can't get enough.

CRITTER
Bingo! There's thousands of ways to
get attention, farting, killing,
shooting, raping, screaming, blowing
whistles, saving lives, we can all
get someone's attention, be heard,
but who really listens?
(pause)
Nobody. We all have something to
say, but nobody listens because people
like you have a twenty-four hour
self image public relations problem!
If you're halo is tarnished, you
think the world is going to end. It
doesn't. Because nobody cares.

LAUREN
If you cared so much why did you
tell me?

CRITTER
How old are you?

LAUREN
I'm not telling you that.

Critter looks across the room.

CRITTER
(labored)
Does anyone here care?

RUMBLINGS of NO and head shakes.

LAUREN

You're the only one that does.

Critter continues around the room.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Lieutenant Larson stands over the shoulder of Sergeant Richardson staring at a video feed from the robot camera. Monitors survey inside the club; no people and closed doors.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

What you got?

SERGEANT RICHARDSON

Their barricaded in a locker room, they got Officer Lyle Dixon in there. Arriving officers gave fire and he may be hit. Judging by the blast, a breach is going to be difficult.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

Why is that?

SERGEANT RICHARDSON

They may have rigged the entrances with composition four just like the explosion out back.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

How'd they get hands on that? I want floor plans. Send a dog down to check it out.

(to Sergeant Richardson)

Get the bobcat.

Sergeant Richardson on the phone.

Sergeant Richardson approaches Lieutenant Larson.

SERGEANT RICHARDSON

It's a relay, some mother calling saying her daughter's boyfriend is tied up and she's streaming it live.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

How? Phone? Laptop? Ipad?

SERGEANT RICHARDSON

Ma'am is it her cell phone?

(MORE)

SERGEANT RICHARDSON (CONT'D)

(pause)

Off a mobile phone.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

Hack into it now!

SERGEANT RICHARDSON

Ma'am I need that phone number.

Sergeant Richardson writes down the number.

Lieutenant Larson directs an OFFICER TWO.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

This just went sideways, contact
N.S.A. with her number and pull the
data, run a voice match for this
guy. And keep that link!

OFFICER TWO starts applications on the computer.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Critter still speaks into the phone's camera, Taffy approaches curiously with her camera.

CRITTER

Just like a blogger, radio host,
television anchor, all the other
self-absorbed, pointless figureheads.
But you... You all are an exceptional
panel of experts! Perhaps, today I
would be so obliged to hear and maybe
even want your opinion. If we step
out of this today what will you think
of? How will you change?

MIKE

(whispers to self)

Please forgive my sins, have mercy
on me. Am I worthy to enter your
kingdom? I am ready to meet you.

CRITTER

What are you saying? Huh? You should
be strong for your son. Like the
other day when you were going to put
a cap in the ass of a guy like me?
Remember that? Well?

MEGAN
(hysterical)
Guns! Guns! Guns! Damn them!
Just shoot us and get it over with.

CRITTER
I can see you have a problem with
guns, we're way too late for gun
control strategy. Open your fucking
eyes people! You can't control it!
You can buy one anywhere! Or maybe
your self empowerment will drive you
with a pair of balls or silicon
breasts to do something good about--

MIKE
He will judge you.

CRITTER
(sarcastically)
And who might He be again?

MIKE
God.

Critter points the phone and gun at Mike.

CRITTER
(whimpers)
Please God save me from your people!

MEGAN
Oh God no!

BARRY
Think of what you're doing?

LAUREN
Why him, why not someone else?

Critter addresses Lauren.

CRITTER
Who deserves to die?

He points the gun and phone at Lauren's head.

OFFICER DIXON
No! No! I will be the one. I will!

CRITTER
(to Officer Dixon)
Enough chivalry!

Critter points the gun back at Mike's head.

CRITTER (CONT'D)
What are you gonna say?

MIKE
I'm a simple man.

CRITTER
Good for you. How nice. Now...
What are your last words?

Mike appears nervous.

MIKE
I am a man of God, I am being held
hostage by a deranged man who decided
to play judge, jury and executioner
with me. I don't know why. I pledge
my undying love to my family, friends
and God will strike down this man--

CRITTER
You mention me more than your family.
Do better, there's got to be someone
that you love more than me!

MIKE
I love my family my children
(looks to Jonah)
I love you Jonah.

JONAH
(whimpers)
I love you dad.

This strikes Critter hard.

He takes a moment to let that sink in, this moment of
compassion has him flustered.

The camera GOES DEAD...

Critter looks at the phone confused as to why its not working.
Taffy looks at Critter, he to her.

TAFFY
What's this?

CRITTER
The phone. It's not working.

TAFFY
You okay?

CRITTER
I don't know.

Critter moves away from the group.

Taffy follows.

Critter leans against the wall, he takes off his mask.

CRITTER (CONT'D)
What kind of movies you make?

TAFFY
I make documentaries.

CRITTER
You go to school for that?

TAFFY
Yeah.

CRITTER
They teach you how to cover a hostage
situation?

TAFFY
No.

Taffy feels alienated.

CRITTER
It's okay, me too. I'm sure we got
a phone with a camera around here.

TAFFY
Tell me why this is happening.

A cell phone message indicator BEEPS near Lauren.

CRITTER
I would, but I should check this...
(sarcastically)
It could be important.

Critter approaches Lauren and Elisa.

LAUREN

Don't you dare. Don't you dare hurt my angel!

CRITTER

I'm not going to hurt your little angel. We need raw beauty in the world, not your synthetic kind.

He reaches for the gaudy, pink, rock-incrusted cell phone.

LAUREN

Excuse me?

CRITTER

You heard me.

LAUREN

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

Critter scrolls through Elisa's phone.

CRITTER

You spend so much time on vanity and appearance when you should be keeping an eye on your daughter...

(to Elisa)

Who's Tommy?

Lauren SCOWLS.

LAUREN

What? Who is it? What does it say?

CRITTER

It's between them chopper parent.

Critter gives a friendly wink. Elisa forces a smile.

LAUREN

Who the hell is Tommy?

CRITTER

Who cares?

LAUREN

When did this come about? I haven't even met this boy!

TAFFY

God forbid, you might control it.

LAUREN

(to TAFFY)

Like you should speak. She's my daughter. I will not have a--

TAFFY

--Have a what? Have a person offer a perspective?

LAUREN

It was wrong to let you people marry.

PIEDMONT

Oh, you did not just go--

TAFFY

--You don't make choices, they do. Who cares what anyone is or does anymore. You are the persecutor! You are what you are, I am what I am; together, we're still human!

Critter sees Taffy in a new light.

Suddenly, Elisa's phone RINGS.

CRITTER

In a quest for meaningful discourse, we are interrupted yet again.

Critter approaches. He sees the phone number.

Critter walks away from the group down a hallway.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

Who are you unknown caller?

Critter approaches the Sauna area on the phone.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Lieutenant Larson addresses a microphone in the truck.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

Who am I talking to?

CRITTER (V.O.)

Does it matter?

LIEUTENANT LARSON

Not really. Eventually we'll find out. What do I call you?

CRITTER (V.O.)

I'm just critter on this Earth.
Call me "Critter"

LIEUTENANT LARSON

Okay, "Critter," what can we do
resolve this thing peacefully?

CRITTER (V.O.)

That's a loaded question. We need
sweeping change... other than that,
not much you can really do.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

What are you doing?

CRITTER

Wishful thinking.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

About what?

CRITTER (V.O.)

How long you been in law enforcement?

LIEUTENANT LARSON

(thinks)
Well coming up on twenty-three years.

CRITTER (V.O.)

Haven't you had enough?

LIEUTENANT LARSON

Helping people? Never.

CRITTER (V.O.)

Yeah, I guess that's rewarding, but
how about this... Maybe you won't
come home one day.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

We're all gonna die so I don't get
too hung up on it. I... We risk our
own safety for yours.

CRITTER (V.O.)

Why do that for me? I mean, everyday
it seems we're just out fishing.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

What does that mean?

CRITTER

We're fishing, we cast out a line,
spend some time bobbing and eventually
sent reeling after something.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

I can't tell you what to think.
Reflection is a way of life man.
Look, others more equipped are coming
in to deal with this. You know what
that means?

CRITTER (V.O.)

Yeah, I've got a good charge on this
phone and your number. I know what
this means -publicity, a whole bunch
of pub--

The connection on the phone goes dead.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

Hello?
(pause)
Damn it!

SERGEANT RICHARDSON

Want me to try and get him back?

Suddenly, the door of the command center OPENS; hard asses
AGENT MILTON, sixties, and AGENT CLARK, thirties, alpha males
with nothing but results on their mind, enter.

AGENT MILTON

What you got?

AGENT CLARK

Is he talking yet?

Lieutenant Larson points to the camera on the switchboard,
the hostages GLOW VISIBLE on an INFRARED CAM from the robot.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

How can we? You just shut him down.

AGENT CLARK

No we didn't. What you got?

LIEUTENANT LARSON

We got two. One calls himself
"Crittter," no word on the other one.

(MORE)

LIEUTENANT LARSON (CONT'D)
We sent a robot down and picked up
explosives at both entrances of the
men's locker room. They have cameras
watching us and got one of our men
hostage.

Larson points to Officer Dixon on the monitor.

AGENT MILTON
Fatalities?

LIEUTENANT LARSON
None. That we can tell.

AGENT CLARK
(shocked)
Really?

LIEUTENANT LARSON
Should there be?

AGENT MILTON
What's this hub-bub about then?

LIEUTENANT LARSON
He said, "publicity" then the line
went dead.

AGENT MILTON
It probably crashed, its that social
media.

Agent Milton takes control of the command center.

AGENT MILTON (CONT'D)
Does your officer wear a body camera?

SERGEANT RICHARDSON
Doesn't matter it only records, it
doesn't transmit.

AGENT MILTON
(to Agent Clark)
Hop in the chair.

Larson NODS gives approval to release the officer from the
command module in front of the monitors.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Critter attaches a cable to a sturdy pipe on the benches, he unfurls the cable toward the bathroom stall. He pulls it taught and BOOM! The fastener anchors the cable, He wheels out a large cart of CLEAN TOWELS, he hands them to hostages and opens a case of water.

CRITTER

Use these to sit on. No matter what, we're bound together... under the big dome... But! I cannot control what goes on outside these walls.

The hostages place the towels under their butts.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

I am not some heartless bastard. If you gotta pee, I'll get you a fresh towel. If you gotta dump, I'll hook you up to the zip line and send you off to drop anchor.

CHUCK

Thanks.

CRITTER

You can tell I encourage dialogue. I want everyone to think. This is your chance to maybe reach someone.

Taffy stands proud.

TAFFY

I'm ready.

CRITTER

Ready? For what?

LAUREN

Oh great, this ought to be good.

BARRY

Why do you interrupt?

CRITTER

It's her nature.

LAUREN

Oh, is it?

CRITTER

Speaking of tits. Were those from your first or second husband?

LAUREN

What the?

CRITTER

Let me guess... The first one bought you tits and then you left him?

ELISA

How do you--?

CRITTER

You care more about yourself. Don't worry, we all do.

(to Taffy)

Please continue after we were so rudely interrupted.

LAUREN

As a matter of fact I had a mastectomy to prevent breast cancer and yes it was my husband's gift to me after surgery. What we don't need to hear are words from your fruitless loins and the great wonder-slut!

TAFFY

I could drop to your level, believe me there is so much to work with, but here's the thing. I stay positive.

CRITTER

You think you could change her?

TAFFY

Eventually she'll die and her bitchy way will too. Acceptance is on the horizon, it just takes time.

LAUREN

That's a good one. But who can stop a lunatic with a gun?

LEOPOLD

Especially without a gun?

Lauren points at Critter like she has a gun, fake fires.

LAUREN

Pew!

Critter leers her way. Mike's intrigued.

MIKE

You a gun owner?

LAUREN

Proudly.

CRITTER

Do you remember the first time you
fired it?

LAUREN

Yes.

CRITTER

What was it like... for you?

Lauren gives it a moment.

LAUREN

Power. Immense power.

MEGAN

Killing is powerful.

Piedmont in his wheelchair; a look to Amy.

CRITTER

We're infected with power!

MIKE

Not everyone wants to kill.

MEGAN

Then don't!

LAUREN

And do what? What should we do?
(sarcastically)
Build a fucking school?!

MEGAN

Take every damn gun and melt 'em
down! Save a life, save a family.
I almost lost my daughter, I lost my
husband and moved out here after the
shooting to live a better life.

CRITTER

Why even do that? Kids walk through metal detectors now, they're not learning. That disappeared.

PIEDMONT

If there's a way in, a kid will find it anyhow. They're smart.

MEGAN

Yes they are.

MIKE

(scoffs)
You'll never get rid of guns.

MEGAN

Why? Why can't we do that?

BARRY

Supply and Demand.

PIEDMONT

And demand is at an all time high.

Barry nods in agreement.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

AGENT LEITNER, fifties, along with AGENT FORD, forties, two guys determined to get it done their way enter command and attempt to assume control.

AGENT LEITNER

I'm Agent Leitner and this is Agent Ford, we're in charge now.

(to Ford)

I need breach scenarios from all angles. This ain't gonna turn out good.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

Why not?

AGENT LEITNER

They never do.

AGENT CLARK

I got a hit from D.O.D. speech recognition. Ninety-eight percent.

AGENT MILTON
And what form does this Devil take?

AGENT LEITNER
--What do we have son?

AGENT CLARK
Classified.

Agent Leitner asserts his attempt at command of the situation.

AGENT LEITNER
Well, un classify!

AGENT MILTON
Easy chief. Its gonna take time.

AGENT LEITNER
We don't have time. Agent Ford will
take it from here.

Ford takes a seat at an open command module.

AGENT FORD
Check local databases first. I'll
scrub the rest.

Clark and Ford work away at the computer.

Milton's upset.

AGENT MILTON
So what do you need from the FBI?

AGENT LEITNER
Well, to be honest. Nothing. As a
matter of fact, let's clear all non-
essential personnel from here. Big
government is now in control.

Agent Milton rolls his eyes.

INT. MEDIA VAN - DAY

Nina, Ron and cameraman click through different web sites on
smart phones and lap tops.

NINA
Have you found anything?

RON
C.N.N. doesn't have anything.

NINA
(to cameraman)
How about you?

CAMERAMAN
Nothing on The Times, M.S.N.B.C. or
Fox News.

NINA
(irritated)
How am I supposed to report news if
nobody reports any?

Ron and the cameraman look at each other confused.

RON
(dumbfounded)
You're a reporter, you get the news!

NINA
I don't need this shit from you Ron.

Nina leaves the truck in huff.

RON
(to Cameraman)
Why don't you head out and get some
b-roll. Maybe you'll find something.

Cameraman grabs a camera. Ron places a call.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Taffy points the camera at Critter, he approaches Megan.

CRITTER
(to Megan)
You lived through an attack.

MEGAN
My daughter did.

Critter slings his gun to the back and lowers to Amy's level.

CRITTER
This is your daughter?

Megan's tearing up.

MEGAN
Yes.

CRITTER
(to Amy)
What's your name?

Amy stares at Critter, silent.

CRITTER (CONT'D)
I'm not sorry what happened to you.

OFFICER DIXON
I know you're cold; but Jesus, don't
bring her into it!

CRITTER
Too late. We are all in this well-
trained media circus. They're setting
up for this one like any other one.
(to Amy)
Can you tell me what's different?

AMY
Nobody's hurt.

CRITTER
You're right. You get a gold star.

Critter looks at Carl.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Lieutenant Larson stands his ground.

LIEUTENANT LARSON
I ain't leaving, I got a patrolman
in there.

AGENT LEITNER
Really?
(pause)
He's got a body camera?

Lieutenant Larson taken aback.

LIEUTENANT LARSON
Yes. But they don't transmit.

Agent Ford manages to hack the body cam.

AGENT LEITNER
(to Agent Ford)
Let's get on it.

AGENT FORD
And we're inside.

LIEUTENANT LARSON
What the hell is this?

Agent Leitner approaches the monitor.

LIEUTENANT LARSON (CONT'D)
How are you able to do this? Body
cameras don't transmit!

AGENT LEITNER
Stand down. You and your team have
done well, I've got it from here.
(to Agent Ford)
Record this.

LIEUTENANT LARSON
What the hell is this?

They see the group of hostages on the monitors.

AGENT LEITNER
(to Agent Milton)
There is something you can do, escort
the lieutenant out, and locate a
negotiator.

Larson appears to resist.

LIEUTENANT LARSON
But I've got a--

AGENT MILTON
Look, we don't need another Dorner
situation.

Agent Clark stands up, he's strapping.

Lieutenant Larson backs off in a huff, heads out.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Taffy motions Critter to get closer behind Carl in the frame,
she gives him a thumbs up. He takes Elisa's phone.

CRITTER
I don't want to leave anyone out. I
don't want to piss off any
organization that feels oppressed by
this situation.

Taffy pans the hostages.

Critter leans down to Officer Dixon's body camera lens, it appears to be FOCUSING.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Agent Milton examines Officer Dixon's camera feed on the monitor.

AGENT LEITNER

Okay, this is our guy. I want to know if he drove, walked, sky-dived. Scrub surveillance. Also, who's on those masks?

AGENT CLARK

The Koch Brothers.

AGENT LEITNER

Who are they?

AGENT CLARK

Some guys who influence elections and court system.

AGENT FORD

Uber Lobbyists.

AGENT LEITNER

Ah, okay.
(beat)
What's an Uber?

Not sure Leitner knows much of anything.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Critter takes Elisa's phone and dials the number.

Critter paces around the hostages formed in a semicircle.

CRITTER

We have lost sight. Like miss fake tits over here, PTA momma and steroid giblet over there, pretentious douche bag over here, the self-conscious lesbian, abandoned home maker, jock kids with no future, the cock leering pederasts, the cripple, and you, jihadist... Sorry, its just easier
(MORE)

CRITTER (CONT'D)
to label all of you. We are labeled,
so embrace your label.
(pause)
My son had an opportunity to say
goodbye before he died. Most never
get that chance.

Taffy turns her camera on the group again.

CRITTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
People hurt. Some Physically some
emotionally, but all financially.

Agent Leitner leers at the screen.

AGENT LEITNER
I don't like where this is heading.
(to Agent Ford)
Figure a way to shut this down.

AGENT FORD
Shut down the transmission? Why?

AGENT LEITNER
Before someone else finds this one.

Critter continues his rant.

CRITTER (V.O.)
Some maintain our status quo.
(beat)
Now... it's our turn.

Agent Clark views video surveillance of the parking lot.

CRITTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Carl cost me a hundred dollar bill,
we talked and got to know each other
again, he's helping me, but he's
still in debt, to me. In my power,
under my control. I can do whatever
I want to him and you people because
we paid for his service--

Suddenly, the images on the camera bank GO DARK.

AGENT CLARK
Looks like someone found the site,
it crashed sir.

AGENT LEITNER

Shit!
(to Agent Ford)
Any info?

AGENT FORD

Not yet.

AGENT LEITNER

I want to know everything about everyone we saw in there! Keep fishing for phones in there. I need intel!

Agent Ford places a call.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - EVENING

Agent Clark studies surveillance footage and locates something of interest.

ON MONITOR: SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE locates Critter and Carl putting on their masks and assembling their gear, walking away from Critter's S.U.V..

Agent Clark REWINDS and...

AGENT CLARK

(silently)
Got 'em.

Lieutenant Larson re-enters the Command center, he sees the images being PLAYED BACK.

Agent Clark feels a presence.

AGENT CLARK (CONT'D)

I told you stay out.

LIEUTENANT LARSON

I forgot my phone.

Agent Ford rewinds Critter and Carl with gear, walking away from Critter's S.U.V..

Larson, grabs his phone off a desk, he exits command.

EXT. COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Lieutenant Larson locates Richardson, he approaches masking his lips.

LIEUTENANT LARSON
I found the truck.

SERGEANT RICHARDSON
What, Where?

Suddenly, the HUM of a DRONE appears above Larson.

LIEUTENANT LARSON
What the fuck is this?

SERGEANT RICHARDSON
It ain't ours.

LIEUTENANT LARSON
Damn reporters.

Larson scans the lot, he locates Critter's S.U.V..

Larson and Richardson cautiously approach it.

Channel 7 News Cameraman TRAINS HIS CAMERA on Larson and Richardson. Behind him, the Channel 7 News Van.

Larson squeezes on his radio.

LIEUTENANT LARSON (CONT'D)
Run a plate... Henry Alpha Frank one-niner-six.

Lieutenant Larson sees TWO MORE DRONES HOVER overhead.

EXT. MEDIA VAN - EVENING

Cameraman EAVES DROPS in Lieutenant Larson's direction.

DISPATCH OPERATOR (V.O.)
Registered to Fourteen Sixty Three
Bryant Avenue, South Minneapolis.

The Cameraman holds the headphones to his ear, he can hear them clear as day.

LIEUTENANT LARSON (V.O.)
Anyone registered?

DISPATCH OPERATOR (O.S.)
Registered to a Roland Henry Anderson.

Lieutenant Larson is taken aback.

LIEUTENANT LARSON (V.O.)
Holy shit. Bill Anderson's kid,
Roland.

Both men shocked.

Cameraman stops recording, he sprints back to the van.

Suddenly, the DRONES DROP FROM THE SKY crashing to the ground.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Elisa looks at her phone.

ON PHONE: UNDELIVERABLE MESSAGE FAILED.

ELISA
(to Lauren)
Mom, it didn't go through.

LAUREN
You got a signal?

Lauren cautiously looks at her phone too, she shakes her head no.

Suddenly, one of the cell phone's RING.

Critter locates the ringing phone.

He studies it.

He shows it to Taffy.

CRITTER
We don't have reception.

TAFFY
How can this be?

CRITTER
Who owns this phone?

Critter circles the hostages.

The phone RINGS incessantly.

CRITTER (CONT'D)
Does anyone else have reception? I
know I don't.

He looks around the room.

LAUREN
Maybe you need a better carrier?

LEOPOLD
You would think that.

CRITTER
Why is this phone working?

ELISA
Why don't you answer it?

Critter gives Elisa a stare, realizes kids are smart.

Critter answers the phone.

Chuck leers at the phone, we know it's his.

Critter hits the speaker option.

ANONYMOUS (V.O.)
(digital Voice)
You don't know what you are doing do
you?

CRITTER
Who is this?

ANONYMOUS (V.O.)
Do you know Kanye West?

Critter nods his head up and down.

CRITTER
The rapper? I don't know him.

ANONYMOUS
He's a piece of shit. You... however,
are not.

CRITTER
Is there something I can do for you?

ANONYMOUS (V.O.)
That depends.

CRITTER
On what?

ANONYMOUS (V.O.)
What are your intentions?

CRITTER

How did you get through?

ANONYMOUS

This phone belongs to someone special.

CRITTER

Like who?

ANONYMOUS (V.O.)

I can be your very best friend or your ultimate nightmare. Choose.

CRITTER

(laughs)

I'm doing everything wrong in the book. Why would anyone help me?

ANONYMOUS (V.O.)

You're in a game, that's why. They will not allow you to broadcast, however, we will.

CRITTER

How? Who is this?

Critter looks up and scans the group for a possible connection to this elusive cell phone owner.

ANONYMOUS (V.O.)

The playing field is level. As it should be.

Suddenly, ALL CELL PHONES RING.

TAFFY

Something's happening.

CRITTER

Yeah, but what?

TAFFY

I don't know.

BARRY

We're done for.

Mike starts praying.

MIKE

Lord please keep us safe.

CRITTER

That's exactly what I want too, padre.

Critter panics a bit.

INT. BAR - DAY

Skip and Bill finish conversation.

SKIP

In a way... He's right, what if?

BILL

If we didn't get involved? The kid's dead, he had nothing to live for except bad memories.

Suddenly, Bill's phone RINGS.

BILL (CONT'D)

(to phone)

This can't be good.

Bill answers the call.

BILL (CONT'D)

I'm retired Lieut--.

(Beat)

Bill INHALES sharply, his brow furrows with an emotion he's never experienced before, it washes over him.

BILL (CONT'D)

I'll be right there.

Bill takes a moment.

SKIP

What is it?

He points up to the monitor where Nina REPORTS as a CAPTION SCROLLS.

ON CAPTION: SHOOTER IDENTIFIED ROLAND HENRY ANDERSON.

BILL

My boy.

(pause)

Whiskey, double.

SKIP reacts in shock, pours a stiff drink for Bill and himself.

Bill looks up at the television, he shakes his head.

Skip slides the shot over to Bill.

BILL (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Bill and Skip SLAM the shots.

Bill shakes his head in disgust, he leaves the bar.

EXT. MEDIA VAN - DAY

Cameraman, Nina and Ron review the footage and information.

RON

We got a name and address... What else do we have?

NINA

Who's his father?

Cameraman locates the information on Bill Anderson.

CAMERAMAN

His dad was a cop, a negotiator as a matter of fact.

RON

Send a crew to his house.

NINA

(to Ron)

Do we have enough?

RON

You tell me princess.

NINA

Let's work the shaft.

Ron PLACES a call on the phone.

Nina's super excited, its as though she may pee her pants.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

On the monitors a STATIC AND HISS, monitors SHUT DOWN all on the Government feeds.

AGENT LEITNER
What the fuck?

AGENT FORD
This can't be, we got hacked?

AGENT LEITNER
How? Who the hell can do that?

ON MONITORS: ANIMATED GUY WEARING A GUY FAWKES MASK appears.

ANONYMOUS (V.O.)
Greetings Humans. Our communiqué.
You will try, but not succeed in
stopping his transmission. You are
not in control. You cannot Control.
You will never Control. The world
will subvert you.

AGENT LEITNER
We don't negotiate with terrorists!

ANONYMOUS (V.O.)
You're a hypocrite; you are a
terrorist and you negotiate!

Lieutenant Larson returns to the command center.

ANONYMOUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Communication resolves differences.
Your media broadcasts violence, your
culture entombs it and children learn
it. Therefore we are doomed.

AGENT LEITNER
Not from where I stand.

The feed turns to a picture of KANYE WEST HOLDING HIS DAUGHTER
OVER A NAKED KIM KARDASHIAN'S ASS from a photo shoot.

All monitors SNAP to their previous images.

Leitner's pissed.

AGENT MILTON
What the hell do we do now?

AGENT LEITNER
Breach.

AGENT MILTON
How?

AGENT LEITNER

That's why you get paid!

Leitner looks around the room, people searching for answers, this one is not in the protocol manual.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Critter looks at Carl.

CRITTER

What happened to Carl?

TAFFY

What?

CRITTER

He trained me to be a soldier and he doesn't even remember me.

TAFFY

Yeah, so what.

CRITTER

So what happened? Why was he a heap on the side of the road?

TAFFY

Life happens to people. They get beat up and tossed around pretty good sometimes.

Critter looks at the phone.

CRITTER

They jammed all the phones except this one?

(to Carl)

Is it his?

Taffy grabs at the phone and looks at the adapters.

TAFFY

I don't know, but I might be able to use it to communicate with those people who called.

TAFFY finds her backpack.

Critter points his gun at her.

CRITTER
I can't trust you.

TAFFY
Yes you can... I'm not a cop.

CRITTER
But you are human.

Taffy retrieves the odd Cell phone. She takes out a cable and PLUGS it into her camera.

TAFFY
What was his name?

CRITTER
Who?

TAFFY
Your son.

CRITTER
Anthony.

TAFFY
How old?

CRITTER
Seven.

TAFFY
Was he a good boy?

CRITTER
He was my Boy.

Taffy smiles, she looks at the connection on her computer.

TAFFY
We'll see if these guys will help us.

CRITTER
Why are you helping me?

TAFFY
Maybe you're right and it takes a gun for us to listen.

Critter swells with emotion.

Taffy plays with the phone menu.

TAFFY (CONT'D)

I'll send out the images through the frequency on this phone and see if it catches anyone's attention.

She sends a link through the phone.

EXT. RIVER - MAGIC HOUR

A quiet little river with a modest House boat anchored off to the bank.

INT. HOUSE BOAT - MAGIC HOUR

A MAN with a bank of computer screens and high tech gadgetry sits in the forward cabin. On the monitor, images of the LOCKER ROOM HOSTAGES!

EXT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Larson greets Bill at the command center door.

BILL

What the fuck Kevin?

LIEUTENANT LARSON

You tell me.

BILL

I didn't think he'd jump off the deep end like this?

LIEUTENANT LARSON

Well, he's in one helluva swan dive.

BILL

Anyone talking to him yet?

SERGEANT RICHARDSON

Not fully, they shut him down.

BILL

What?

LIEUTENANT LARSON

On a cell and a video camera link from an officer's body cam.

Richardson steps out.

SERGEANT RICHARDSON
Someone leaked the camera's link and
crashed the system. Twice.

LIEUTENANT LARSON
How did it get back up?

SERGEANT RICHARDSON
That Anonymous Group.

BILL
So you got nothing?

Richardson and Larson look perplexed.

Bill stares them both down, displeased.

BILL (CONT'D)
Homeland in charge?

LIEUTENANT LARSON
And FBI.

SERGEANT RICHARDSON
I think the postmaster general is in
there too.

BILL
(confused)
What the hell for?

LIEUTENANT LARSON
A US mail truck's out back and a
Post Office employee is missing.

SERGEANT RICHARDSON
Yeah, they do have authority over
everyone in this.

BILL
I wonder how that will play out?

Bill looks around, he's had a shot of booze.

THRONGS OF EMERGENCY PERSONNEL now an enormous presence.
The spectacle of tactical and firepower grew in enormity.

Bill looks at the front door of the club,

Suddenly, Bill briskly walks toward the entrance.

LIEUTENANT LARSON
Whoa, Bill! Where are you going?

BILL
Jesus Christ if we can't talk to him
How can we work this thing out?

SERGEANT RICHARDSON
Hey! Hey! Hey! Wait!

LIEUTENANT LARSON
Shit!

Bill hustles away from the men...

Suddenly, TWO TACTICAL OFFICERS TACKLE Bill to the ground.

BILL
You asshole's! I'm a negotiator!

Larson hustles close behind.

LIEUTENANT LARSON (O.S.)
Yeah, he hasn't been cleared yet.

Larson and Richardson approach to take Bill into custody.

SERGEANT RICHARDSON
Who clears him?

LIEUTENANT LARSON
This'll be kind of tricky Bill.

BILL
Come on Kevin, this is messed up and
you know it!

LIEUTENANT LARSON
Protocol or my job?
(pause)
You made that choice... once.

BILL
(regretful)
Yes. Yes I did.

Larson sees this is bigger than their differences.

LIEUTENANT LARSON
Let's go introduce you to the gang.
Get these cuffs off.

As they walk along...

LIEUTENANT LARSON (CONT'D)

Don't you go running. We're both
too old for that shit.

Richardson removes the cuffs.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Suddenly, Elisa starts into an EPILEPTIC SEIZURE. Everyone
watches her agony.

LAUREN

Oh God no!

CRITTER

What's happening?

PIEDMONT

A seizure.

LAUREN

She hasn't had one in days! It's
going to be big.

BARRY

What do we do?

LAUREN

Stop her from floundering.

OFFICER DIXON

Hold her head.

Critter swings his weapon behind his back and holds Elisa's
head, it shakes violently.

Officer Dixon has a chance to be a hero, but Elisa's safety
comes first.

OFFICER DIXON (CONT'D)

Let's get her to the floor.

Barry and Lauren bring her to the floor.

Critter grabs some towels.

Lauren places them under her head.

MEGAN

Look at her!

LAUREN
I need her purse!

CRITTER
Where is it?

LAUREN
Still in the locker room, because
some asshole dragged us out!

Lauren frustrates a WAIL.

PIEDMONT
What's she take?

LAUREN
(sobs)
She usually takes her Cannabanoids
after a workout.

PIEDMONT
(to Taffy)
Taffy.

Taffy sets down the camera setup, she reaches into the bag
on Piedmont's wheelchair.

She retrieves a dropper of medical cannabis oil.

OFFICER DIXON
What is that? What are you giving
her?

LAUREN
Don't you poison my girl with your
drugs!

TAFFY
I'm not going to poison her!

OFFICER DIXON
That's not her medicine!

PIEDMONT
It's from the same weed. I have the
same thing, been doing this for years.

OFFICER DIXON
What are you doing?
(firm)
You can't do that!

CHUCK
Why don't you cuff her?

TAFFY
I'm a registered nurse.

PIEDMONT
And she's my nurse.

CRITTER
You said you made films.

TAFFY
He's also my film subject. I was
waiting outside the locker room before
you interrupted me!

Taffy takes the dropper and dispenses a few drops into Elisa's
mouth.

TAFFY (CONT'D)
Come on baby, here you go.

LAUREN
That's it baby.

Elisa tosses and turns a little more, her actions cease a
little and a little more.

Suddenly, she rests comfortably, exhausted.

OFFICER DIXON
What the hell did you do to her!

LAUREN
Haven't they taught you anything?

OFFICER DIXON
Yes, try to locate the subject's
medicine.

TAFFY
That's what we did. Seriously, yawl
still treat weed as a bad drug?

OFFICER DIXON
You can't give a drug from someone
to someone else.

PIEDMONT
We just did.

Elisa opens her eyes a little bit.

Taffy gives her a quick look.

TAFFY

Hey now.

Elisa wakes.

LAUREN

You okay baby?

ELISA

(exhales)

Yes.

PIEDMONT

Imagine if we could research this
shit without any--

Suddenly, over the LOUD SPEAKER SYSTEM.

BILL (O.S.)

--Roland, what the hell are you doing?

PIEDMONT

Interruptions.

Critter looks up, shakes his head.

CRITTER

You've got to be shitting me!

BARRY

(baffled)

Roland?

BILL (O.S.)

I don't know what the hell is going
on in there son, but you're atop a
fragile mountain and someone's going
to smash it to smithereens unless
you talk to me. Now. A robot is
gonna bring you a cable. Talk to me
so we can figure this shit out.

CRITTER

How in the fuck?!

Critter is pissed, he knows who it is.

Lauren shares a thankful look with Taffy.

Taffy helped her daughter, she's a good human.

Taffy grabs the camera setup, she brings up Bill sitting at a computer.

BILL (V.O.)

What's going on son? How is everyone?
Are they okay?

CRITTER

Yeah.

BILL (V.O.)

I know everything's been tough on
you.

CRITTER

It doesn't matter. No one cares.

BILL

I do.

CRITTER

Do you? You really think this is
something that I can walk away from?

BILL (V.O.)

Come on, what do those people in
there have to do with this?

CRITTER

Maybe they do.

BILL

Are they hungry or need anything?

CRITTER

(to the group)

Does anyone need anything?

MEGAN

My daughter could use her anxiety
medicine.

LEOPOLD

Me too.

Barry turns his water bottle upside down, shows its empty.

BARRY

Water would be good.

Muhammad watches Barry turn the bottle upside down like it was a luxury.

MORGAN

Some food.

CRITTER

You hungry? What do you want?

KAMAL

Pizza.

CRITTER

Pizza?

ELISA

Pizza.

LAUREN

The kids want pizza.

CRITTER

Pizza. The culturally American food.
(to the kids)

Have you guys tried any other foods?
Like fruits and vegetables?

LAUREN

It's not even fruit anymore.

MEGAN

It's a mutation.

LAUREN

You have no idea what's in the food.

CRITTER

See, we're in agreement on something.
Anyone eaten food from a food truck?

BARRY

All the time. Great food.

CRITTER

So you roll the dice every time?
What's your favorite one?

BARRY

THAI FOOD WAGON.

CRITTER

Who likes Thai food?
(MORE)

CRITTER (CONT'D)

(Looks to Megan)

You like Thai?

MEGAN

Just because I look Asian you thought
I like Thai?

TAFFY

How typical.

PIEDMONT

I'm actually a Jewish Puerto Rican.

CRITTER

I'm sorry I'm not a cultural guru
like all of you and don't know
ethnicities.

TAFFY

You made an assumption. That's worse.

CRITTER

I'm trying real hard to give a shit.

LEOPOLD

Don't you think I should have an
opinion?

BILL

I hate to interrupt, but--

Critter's irate.

CRITTER

Of Course! Why not?! Yes. You
know maybe Hitler was right about
purity.

Critter struck a nerve.

PIEDMONT

What the fuck--
(overlapping)
You son of a bitch.

TAFFY

Excuse me?!

BARRY

Come on man.

MIKE

What are you talking about?

CRITTER

Wow. I feel like a Duke Lacrosse player right now.

Even Anonymous was upset, they SHUT DOWN the video feed.

Muhammad takes a moment.

MUHAMMAD

I use bathroom?

CRITTER

You can't hold it?

MUHAMMAD

What does this?

CRITTER

Forget it.

Critter meanders over to Muhammad, he cuts off the cuff, then fastens a new one to him and the cable.

Muhammad walks off.

Critter isn't concerned.

INT. BATHROOM STALL - CONTINUOUS

Muhammad presumably enters to do his business. Gets inside the stall, he retrieves a discarded extra plastic cuff from his back pocket.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

The bank of televisions goes STATIC with a deafening TONE.

BILL

Now what the fuck is this?

The control room scatters to understand it.

ON SCREEN: KAYNE KIM BABY KARDASHIAN ASS PHOTO on the bank of monitors.

AGENT MILTON

Whoever these people are, I like their humor.

The control room CHUCKLES adding levity to the situation.

BILL

Let's get that Thai food truck here.

Sergeant Richardson looks up the food truck on his phone.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Suddenly, the odd phone RINGS, Taffy grabs the camera and begins broadcasting.

TAFFY

We're back up.

On the monitor, the Guy Fawkes mask APPEARS.

ANONYMOUS (O.S.)

You walk a razor thin line.

CRITTER

How do you do this?

ANONYMOUS (O.S.)

It is important that you all come out alive. You talk with children's lips. Talk like a man who hurts.

CRITTER

Yeah, I do that. Everyday. Everyday a family picks up pieces of a broken dream. We're still picking up pieces from Hitler's regime but there's always a new one...

Muhammad returns from the bathroom.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

I'll ask you. A man of Muslim faith.
(to Muhammad)
Why are we hated so much?

MUHAMMAD

Fresh water, food, sanitation, safety, army, police, fire departments. You have all things.

CRITTER

Then you come here and this is overwhelming to you? A government? It isn't too much to ask, right?

MUHAMMAD

It is.

(Beat)

CRITTER

What's that mean?

MUHAMMAD

My country don't have strong government.

CRITTER

We take ours for granted. But what are they doing to help you?

LEOPOLD

That's a stupid question.

CRITTER

Isn't it? Some have taken advantage to the point we have no say in our freedom or in common sense.

(to Muhammad)

How old are you?

MUHAMMAD

Fifty.

CRITTER

What's it like here?

MUHAMMAD

How you mean?

CRITTER

When I grew up, we learned tornado drills. Now kids learn active shooter drills? Is it the same in your country?

MUHAMMAD

No. We have gangs, rebels, bombs shootings and infidels raping and helping but make it worse.

CRITTER

We fuck it up for everybody! And the world is caught in the middle. Like a nasty custody battle!

(pause)

We lost sight of what's important.

(MORE)

CRITTER (CONT'D)

(softly)
How can we change this?

MUHAMMAD

God Willing, He will--

CRITTER

Stop right there.
(determined)
There we are.

(Beat)

CRITTER (CONT'D)

Do you know what perception is?

MUHAMMAD

No.

CRITTER

It's what you think something is.

He holds up a glass of water.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

What is this?

MUHAMMAD

Water.

CRITTER

What if I told you this was from the
Prophet Muhammad?

MUHAMMAD

(in Arabic)

That's blasphemy! Why are you talking
this way!

CRITTER

I don't understand what you said and
that is the problem! Is it His will?
I mean, how do you know? Just because
artifacts, temples, books, and peers
say so?

MUHAMMAD

Yes.

CRITTER

Ever thought, "What if they're wrong?"

MUHAMMAD

Tradition is not wrong!

CRITTER

I don't know much about religion
only that it spawns war. And those
traditions will never die. Our
tradition here is to screw the other
guy. So get used to it.

(to Kamal)

You listen to music?

KAMAL

Me or him?

CRITTER

Both.

KAMAL

I do, how about you?

CRITTER

Yes.

(to Terrell)

And you?

TERRELL

Yeah. I listen to jams and stuff.
Helps me forget about things.

CRITTER

It helps, doesn't it?

(to Muhammad)

What do you do to relax?

MUHAMMAD

I work.

CRITTER

It seems you are always on the phone.
Who do you talk to?

MUHAMMAD

Family and friends just like you.

CRITTER

I know you came here to survive, do
that. Don't be like us, we're out
of control. I don't know your
struggle--

MUHAMMAD

--Struggle? What do you know
struggle? You have everything!

CRITTER

There, you're wrong! You see me?
I've got nothing to lose. I lost
everything. Just like a suicide
bomber. The one that will show up
in another city some day soon.
Someone will blame it on an
organization that pledges allegiance
to whatever they have a beef with
and they'll be the one who actually
pulls the trigger. But, hey, they'll
have to do it to nine billion people!
Think of that. Nine billion people
and counting.

(beat)

Have we lost sight of the value of
life? Life doesn't matter to anyone
anywhere anymore.

MUHAMMAD

We meet in the afterlife!

BARRY

Bullshit! I want my children to
live in a peaceful world.

CRITTER

Then why the fuck are we letting
them down like this?

PIEDMONT

Politicians.

Critter has an issue, a breakdown.

CRITTER

No, it's us. Kids today feel
entitled, because the parents taught
them, "I'm special." When children
raise children we perpetually do it
in the same way! Always trying to
reinvent the wheel instead of making
a better one. But imagine if someone
has that invincible type of rubber
that never fails and... They won't
let you have it. What do you do?

(MORE)

CRITTER (CONT'D)

(pause)

That's what I thought. I wish everyone would come here and see this through with me. But it won't happen.

Critter shakes his head in disgust, he walks away from the group.

Taffy races after him.

EXT. ATHLETIC CLUB - NIGHT

A few officers stand by their cars, PEOPLE begin to SWARM toward the barricade around the Athletic club staring at their phones.

Officer One sits in his squad, he grabs the radio mic.

OFFICER ONE

Sergeant. We have a situation developing on the perimeter.

HUNDREDS of PEOPLE gathering.

Further away cars are creating a traffic jam.

Some people parked on the side of the road. PEOPLE carrying blankets and chairs and even brought their kids.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

The men in the truck show concern.

AGENT MILTON

(to Larson)

Should we call in Mutual Aid?

AGENT LEITNER

What for? Stir the pot some more?
I think we have enough people here.

BILL

Where's that food truck?

AGENT CLARK

(on Radio)

What's the twenty on that food truck?

OFFICER ONE (O.S.)

Stuck in traffic ETA 10 minutes.

Leitner looks around to Bill.

AGENT LEITNER
You wanna talk him down with food?

BILL
That's the plan.

AGENT LEITNER
What do you have after that.

BILL
Let's see if he bites, then we'll go
from there.

AGENT LEITNER
I need a contingency plan!

BILL
Damn it! We both know what that
plan is, don't we?!
(pause)
Do you understand that?

AGENT LEITNER
I get it.

BILL
(upset)
Well so do I.

Agent Leitner knows its tough, he PATS Bill on the shoulder.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - SAUNA AREA - DAY

Taffy walks in with the camera, she sets it down on a
countertop facing Critter, its still broadcasting.

TAFFY
You okay?

CRITTER
Real distant from okay.

TAFFY
What happened? How'd you're son
die?

CRITTER
What do you care?

TAFFY
I'm trying to understand.

CRITTER
Why?

TAFFY
For the "better good."

CRITTER
I can't figure it out.

TAFFY
You can't, its not a puzzle.

CRITTER
What is it then?

TAFFY
You said it was... is... reality.

CRITTER
Reality is fucking cold.

TAFFY
It doesn't have to be.

Taffy moves in for a kiss; Critter refuses, he takes a hug.

The long tearful hug is interrupted.

Suddenly, Carl WAKES from his sedated slumber, he realizes he's constrained, struggles.

CARL (O.S.)
(groaning)
Oh. Oh. Man... Wha-- What the
fuck is this shit!?

CRITTER
Damn it! This is what I mean!

Taffy smirks.

EXT. MEDIA VAN - NIGHT

Nina and Ron review some information.

NINA
Look at this. His wife died a month
ago.

RON

How?

NINA

She drown.

RON

So his kid and wife died back to back? Holy shit.

Cameraman looks at JEAN ANDERSON'S FACE BOOK PAGE.

CAMERAMAN

Found her time line, read it.

Nina and Ron approach the cameraman's computer. There is a LONG MANIFESTO on the page that has all three glued to the monitor, reading.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Carl awakens from the daze. His eyes open and head moves around trying to shake off the affects.

Taffy and Critter return to the locker room.

CRITTER

Morning Carl.

CARL

What the fuck are you doing man?

CRITTER

We're networking Carl. You're my revolution liaison, my contact, inside man, my icon, my symbol, marketing tool, product, item, inventory, goal, plot. What I plan to achieve with this? I do not know. Soldier, we're on an unnamed mission. I do know your life doesn't matter. I tricked you Carl just like how the lunatics have taken over the asylum. Hell broke loose. This is nothing new right pal. Others used and abuse us. We are puppets for each and every one of those in control. Carl trained me to defend the constitution from enemies foreign and domestic.

(MORE)

CRITTER (CONT'D)

Well, we are in a global war and Carl here, he is our Lamb of God, Allah, Prophet, Alien or whatever mythical spirit herds the cattle in your universe.

(beat)

Make no mistake, he's still honoring his duty.

Taffy's in shock. She keeps filming.

CARL

What the hell?

CRITTER

You served your country well. You're a noble hero Carl. We both fought to protect laws that strip away "freedoms" which no longer exist. How fucked up is that? What have WE become, Carl? What happened to you? How did you end up on the side of the road?

CARL

I don't know, what the hell do you want from me?

Critter points the gun to his head.

CRITTER

What's your story Carl? Tell me the one that repeats over and over and over in your head Carl.

(Beat)

CRITTER (CONT'D)

Tell us!

Carl hesitates for a moment.

CARL

We were on patrol.

EXT. DESERT - DAY (FLASHBACK - TEN YEARS)

SOLDIER ONE emerges from the passenger door of the lead Humvee; he loads the chamber of his weapon, he cautiously approaches an abandoned car on a desert road.

SOLDIER TWO and SOLDIER THREE from the rear doors; they ready their weapons covering soldier one's flank. Carl seated in the driver's seat.

CARL

Double time! I want out of here
before that sandstorm hits!

Soldier one investigates, something startles him.

Soldier one retreats, he squeezes the call button on his vest.

SOLDIER ONE (V.O.)

(On radio)

Cappy! Call this in to tactical
comm--

A subsonic BOOM! A massive FIREBALL EXPLODES skyward; the concussion blast sends a yard sale of shrapnel, glass, metal, and Soldiers one, two and three HURTLING through the air.

Soldier one SLAMS hard into the hood, tangled and contorted in the steel and barbed wire of the Humvee.

Carl tosses around the cab, he smashes his head against the door's bulletproof glass; the impact knocks him out cold...

A DEAFENING HIGH-PITCH SQUEAL slowly resonates drowning out the horrifying SCREAMS of the men from his truck.

Carl wakes, he's dazed; holds his ears, moves his jaw staring at a jagged metal shard inches from his nose.

CARL (V.O.)

Not me. Not that day, then... And
then... There's the cleanup.

Carl stumbles out the door tripping over Soldier Two's detached arm lying on the ground.

Carl rushes to Soldier Two to keep him from reaching for it.

Carl rips open a quick clot compression kit, applies it to Soldier Two's nub; he affixes the pack with a makeshift strap. He pushes his radio inaudibly screaming for help.

Carl leans Soldier Two against the humvee alongside Soldier One's body whose held in place on the grill with a piece of metal jammed in his back.

Carl grabs Soldier One's quick clot from his gear.

Soldier Two sees Soldier One's contorted body.

Carl clasps his hand around Soldier Two's chin with his bloody hand. He knows Soldier One's gone.

Soldier Two tries to look; Carl prevents him.

FOUR MARINES, twenties, from the other Humvee rush to assist Critter, they fan out looking for insurgents.

Carl moves to Soldier Three's side, he tries to wake him. Critter thinks this is the end of another friend.

Soldier Three's necklace lays on the ground, Carl reaches to pick it up when...

Suddenly, Soldier Three GASPS! HE EXPIRES.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Critter looks down at the necklace around Carl's throat.

The tension in the room is palpable.

CRITTER

The insanity.

BARRY

There's no excuse for that.

MIKE

How do you come back from that?

CRITTER

You don't.

Critter SHOOTS Carl in the leg!

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Agent Leitner sees Carl get shot.

AGENT LEITNER

Okay, looks like he turned hostile.
Find that link and shut it down,
we're going to have an angry mob out
there!

BILL

Fuck.

AGENT LEITNER
Send down the bobcat breach area
one.

Agent Clark scrambles.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Carl writhes in pain, Taffy sets the camera down to help.

CARL
(screams)
Mother fucker!

For the first time, the hostages are really frightened.

TAFFY
Why?

PIEDMONT
What the fuck is your problem?

Taffy makes a tourniquet from a towel.

LEOPOLD
Why in the hell?

CRITTER
You know the acronym for C.R.S.P.R.?

LAUREN
I know this.

CRITTER
Is a kit you can get to genetically
edit anything. ANYTHING! Imagine a
mosquito with no stinger.

MEGAN
Me too.

LEOPOLD
What is it?

CRITTER
If we don't have air we die. If she
doesn't stop his bleeding, Carl dies.
And nobody cares.

Megan has a tough time with this, she starts to tear up.

MEGAN

It might help people with mental
issues so they don't shoot people!
(to Piedmont)
And he could even walk again.

Piedmont's overcome.

PIEDMONT

Fuck.

CRITTER

And make evil clones too!
(beat)
Scary, huh?

This group looks a little confused. Suddenly, Taffy's laptop
SPRINGS TO LIFE.

The face of Anonymous appears.

ANONYMOUS

This is not tolerated.

CRITTER

What is? Huh? What is tolerated?
You seem to be a good judge. Cutting
off the feed when I'm starting to
get a point across.

ANONYMOUS

You control the fate of many lives.
We're no different.

CRITTER

Under the hood, we're no different.

ANONYMOUS

Why are you here?

CRITTER

To do good things. Set differences
aside.

CHUCK

Then what matters?

ANONYMOUS

Global unity is paramount.
(pause)

Now... what happened to you? The
world is watching.

Critter feels mounting pressure, he walks away from the group.
He has a good long stare into a mirror.

INT./EXT. MONTAGE VARIOUS WORLD WIDE LOCATIONS - DAY

THE HOSTAGES ARE ON MONITORS EVERYWHERE: at a PACKED SOCCER STADIUM, ATTENTION of the fans suddenly turns to the HACKED VIDEO MONITORS, repeat on trains, cars, buses, planes, in Ireland, Russia, Dubai, Ukraine etc.

EXT. MEDIA VAN - DAY

Nina delivers the news confidently and compassionately, she's done her homework.

NINA

The issue stems from PHarmaCorp who had a patent on a Gene-four modified Iodide Split Attacker treatment which turns healthy cells into an attacker of mutated blood cells to correct or stabilize blood infections. Young Anthony's disease was incurable but treatable until an executive decided to sue Mr. Anderson to stop the treatment from being carried out on his son.

INT. CRITTER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (FLASHBACK - ONE MONTH)

Critter and his wife JEAN, thirties and A WOMAN, forties, with a briefcase seated with them at the kitchen table.

The woman opens the briefcase and hands a letter to Critter, She takes this better than him. He reads the letter.

It's bad news, Critter's in shock. He shakes his head then storms away from the table, he moves up stairs.

The attorney tries to console Critter's wife. She's a stalwart, handling this much better than Critter.

INT. CRITTER HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK - ONE MONTH)

Critter takes his time in front of the mirror, plotting wearing a familiar camouflaged flack jacket.

Critter looks out the window.

Critter watches Jean lead the attorney toward her car.

The attorney gives her an awkward condolences hug.

Critter returns to the mirror.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK - ONE MONTH)

Critter and Jean embrace their son ANTHONY, twelve, he's moments from death.

NINA (O.S.)

That moment the legal injunction was placed, the treatment stopped.

They TEAR UP.

Suddenly, the EKG machine goes FLAT LINE.

Critter and Jean SOB, they embrace as Anthony EXPIRES.

EXT. MEDIA VAN - NIGHT

Nina delivers a broadcast on television.

NINA (O.S.)

And Anthony died soon thereafter.
However, his mother soon followed.

EXT. RIVERSIDE PARK - DAY (FLASHBACK - TWO WEEKS)

A peaceful sunny day. Jean and Critter sit on a park bench.

CRITTER

I'll be right back.
(returns)
I love you.

Critter walks toward a public outdoor satellite toilet.

Critter kisses Jean on the forehead.

JEAN

Me too.

Jean stands up, she grabs her rather large purse and walks toward the river's edge.

She arrives and begins to put rocks in her purse.

She hooks the purse's straps around her neck and twists it.

The pain and tears are almost too much.

She enters the river.

Critter exits the satellite toilet and returns to the bench.

He looks around for Jean only to catch her chest deep in the water.

Slowly, she disappears into the water.

He gives chase.

INT. ATHLETIC CLUB LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Suddenly, Critter retrieves the machete, he SLICES CARL'S THROAT!

CRITTER

If your so called God is present,
let Him make his presence known or
suffer the fate of living in Hell!

Taffy cannot hold the camera anymore, it drops limp.

She backs away in shock, petrified.

(Beat)

Critter picks up the camera.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

Is this what you want? Blood?

MIKE

Jesus Christ! You killed a man! He
has a God given right to live!

CRITTER

Yes, Jesus Christ! He refused to
let a pharmaceutical company use an
ingredient they owned to save my
son's life!

A terrified look across the room. People bear witness to the stuff they only see or hear about on television. This awakens the weary-eyed.

(Beat)

The young boys are almost mystified by the gory details. Critter emotionally worked up, he breaks down.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

Right now you have the opportunity
to tell one person you love something
before you die. I'm sorry, but Carl
was bullshit. I'm bullshit. All
this... It's all bullshit!

(Beat)

The hostages taken back by the story, the agony, the kids
cry and the women too.

Suddenly, A tactical police vehicle BOBCAT WITH A BATTERING
RAM PLOWS THROUGH THE WALL! It hits Critter in the head
sending him to the ground. The cable SNAPS setting Muhammad
free!

The vehicle is STUCK, it cannot move it just spins its wheels.

Critter on the floor KNOCKED OUT.

Muhammad tends to the cut on the side of Critter's head.

Taffy sets the camera down to help free the hostages.

Each person doing their part to help the other get free.
Unity...

A strange thing occurs; the hostages don't leave.

Chuck bends down on his knee in front of Critter.

Critter comes around with some light SLAPS from Chuck.

CRITTER (CONT'D)

(dazed)

What... man..

CHUCK

(coaching)

Come on, we'll walk you out together.

Mike and Leopold approach to help gather him up.

LAUREN

Yes.

MEGAN

Out safely.

The group looks around in agreement with head nods.

CHUCK

Agreed.

Chuck leans a broken Critter up to his seat. Muhammad takes a towel and creates a bandage and affixes it to Critter's head.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Hey man. I don't blame you. Help comes from where you least expect it.

CRITTER

That was your phone?

CHUCK

I do cyber security. Don't tell anyone.

Critter stops his CHUCKLE because of pain in his head.

Taffy comes to give him a hug.

TAFFY

Loved ones live even when they are gone. You can let them go.

Taffy grabs the camera holding it to Critter's face.

The hostages form a circle surrounding him.

Chuck, Mike and Leopold flank Critter, The boys PUSH to make a way to get through the open wall, prying cement blocks loose.

Critter in the middle the kids all support and hug closely.

CHUCK

We're coming out. Don't do anything!
He is disarmed!

OFFICER ONE

How do we know that?

CHUCK

Aren't you watching this?

The group makes their way through the giant HOLE IN THE WALL toward the front door...

INT./EXT. ATHLETIC CLUB - DAY

A slow pull from the front door, pans to a tenuously slow push on Bill running through an open area between acting as a buffer between the police presence and the hostages.

The group makes its way up to an open mezzanine where throngs of people have gathered.

Suddenly, BOOM!

A SNIPER BULLET FAST... THEN SLOWLY SLIPS THROUGH THE AIR.

Bill holds his arms in the air to stop the madness, but its too late, or is it?

The bullet stops at the front of... MUHAMMAD'S FOREHEAD!

Everything FREEZES! All actions, motions screams, everything stops.

Peoples' reactions FROZEN IN TIME.

Circling around, we identify all the faces in the crowd.

The diversity of humanity especially everyone on monitors across the world who watched this happen.

Their emotions STUCK in the same position and all who protect us Policemen, SWAT, ATF., Homeland Security, Army Units...

Circling above, An enormous crowd surrounds the perimeter of the club catching emotions of a society that's had enough and about to react to one man's horrible error.

Rising higher and higher in a circular pattern, we reveal the throngs, upon throngs, upon throngs of people who came to support a man doing the right thing.

The longest crane shot in history, rising past news and police helicopters, eventually through some clouds and off to space.

The depth of the universe through the lens of the Hubbell telescope, it explores the vast expanse of the universe as beyond as far as we can see into the galaxies, way beyond.

TITLE CARD:

"We must change the way we live or perish" - Futurist Jacque Fresco.

FADE OUT: