

# PROOF

"Pilot"

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2nd REVISED NETWORK DRAFT

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*"Though this be madness, yet there is method in't."*  
- William Shakespeare

*"Rationality is overrated. Particularly if you're a Cubs fan."*  
- Dr. Geoffrey Pierce, M.D., Ph.D.

ACT ONE

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CAMPUS - DAY

A crisp fall day. Ivied walls. Students hustling to class.

PIERCE (V.O.)  
*What is reality?*

INT. CLASSROOM - UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO - DAY

A few dozen college STUDENTS listen to an O.S. lecture.

PIERCE (V.O.)  
It's not a rhetorical question,  
people.

No slouching here, no doodling, no texting. Whoever this guy is, these kids are into him, big time.

PIERCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I'm looking for answers. Trust me.

Smiles, followed by A FEW HANDS shooting up.

PIERCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
John Lennon.

A kid in John Lennon glasses responds:

JOHN LENNON  
The observable universe?

PIERCE (V.O.)  
Yeah, maybe that answer will fly in  
the physics department. But this  
is neuroscience. Anybody have the  
brains to give me an answer that  
relates to the brain?

Hands shoot up again.

PIERCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Ironic t-shirt.

A girl in the front row, in a tight t-shirt with the words "STIMULUS PACKAGE" printed over her ample chest, realizes Pierce is calling on her. She smiles.

STIMULUS PACKAGE  
Reality is exactly what we see and  
hear... instead of what we  
fantasize about... or dream... or  
you know, maybe hallucinate...

PIERCE (V.O.)  
Ahhhh. *Hallucination.* Now that's  
an answer I would have expected  
from Mr. Lennon.

A few LAUGHS... and Pierce starts to SING:

PIERCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 PICTURE YOURSELF IN A BOAT ON A  
 RIVER...WITH TANGERINE TREES AND  
 MARMALADE SKIES...

As the students start to laugh, we get our first look at GEOFFREY PIERCE -- M.D., Ph.D., 40s. He's certainly not dressed like a rock star. In rumpled sport jacket and nylon Nike runners circa 1982, he's handsome but dishevelled, endearingly and authentically off-kilter, and right now he's having a great time. And hey, he's not a bad singer.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
 SOMEBODY CALLS YOU, YOU ANSWER  
 QUITE SLOWLY...  
 (to Stimulus Package)  
 A GIRL WITH KALEIDOSCOPE EYES...

The girl laughs, blushes.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
 CELLOPHANE FLOWERS OF YELLOW AND  
 GREEN... TOWERING OVER YOUR HEAD...  
 LOOK FOR THE GIRL WITH THE SUN IN  
 HER EYES... AND SHE'S GONE...

In his own world now, Pierce slaps a drum solo on his podium and kicks into the chorus with gusto.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
 LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS,  
 LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS,

CAMERA SPOTS MAX LEWICKI seated behind Pierce. 20's, nine years of college, sixteen different majors, not a single degree. Lewicki is a perpetual student, Pierce's T.A., and, as we'll discover his *major d'omo*. He CLEARS HIS THROAT.

LEWICKI  
 Professor...

PIERCE  
 LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS!  
 LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS!

He rises, puts a hand on Pierce's shoulder.

LEWICKI  
Professor.

This time Pierce snaps out of it. His eyes focus on Lewicki for a brief moment, then back on the class... who spontaneously burst into good natured APPLAUSE and WHISTLING. A few of the kids even laughingly hold up their cell phones, calling for an encore. Pierce finds a smile.

PIERCE  
 Where were we?

LEWICKI  
 Reality.

PIERCE  
Right. Reality. Here's the thing,  
people.  
(a long beat)  
Reality is a figment of our  
imagination.

Reactions from the class. Is this guy serious?

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
Is there anyone here who hasn't  
woken up breathless from a  
nightmare and thought, "Thank God,  
it was just a dream?" That's  
because sometimes the neuroelectric  
impulses fired when we're  
dreaming... or fantasizing... or  
even hallucinating... are  
*indistinguishable* from the ones  
banging around inside our skull  
when we actually experience those  
events.

A beat as he lets that hang there.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
So. Since what we perceive is  
often wrong... *how can we ever know  
what's real and what isn't?*

OFF that big question --

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CAMPUS - DAY

Pierce moves across the quad at a clip, oblivious to the path  
ahead. Lewicki, with an armful of textbooks and newspapers,  
tries to keep up. Lewicki makes Pierce nuts... or keeps him  
from *going* nuts. Whichever it is, Pierce couldn't live  
without Lewicki. But he'd never admit it.

LEWICKI  
Faculty meeting's at noon, book  
signing at two, so I'll pick you up  
one of those veggie wraps you like.  
You can scarf it down in between.  
You know how you get when you don't  
eat --

PIERCE  
Lewicki.

LEWICKI  
Yeah?

PIERCE  
Room and board in exchange for some  
light housekeeping does not make  
you my mother.

LEWICKI  
Just trying to look out for you,  
Doc.

PIERCE  
Do you have my puzzles?

As Lewicki fumbles with his stack of materials --

LEWICKI  
Trib, Chronicle, Daily Mail --

STIMULUS PACKAGE (O.S.)  
Professor Pierce?

They turn to see Stimulus Package and a FEMALE CLASSMATE catching up. Stimulus Package smiles, flirty.

STIMULUS PACKAGE (CONT'D)  
I was wondering if I could buy you  
a latte.

And now we may notice something else about Pierce. Unlike when he's in his classroom element, he's a little uncomfortable around people one-on-one and avoids making direct eye contact.

PIERCE  
I don't drink coffee.

STIMULUS PACKAGE  
Oh. Well, it doesn't have to be  
coffee. I just want to, you  
know... pick your brain... about my  
thesis topic.

A beat. Pierce forces himself to glance up at her.

PIERCE  
Here's the thing, Miss...?

STIMULUS PACKAGE  
Karyn.

Pierce looks down again, takes a deep breath. Though he is compulsively, brutally blunt, he's *trying*, without much success, to *sound* polite.

PIERCE  
"Discussing your thesis topic" is  
obviously code for sex. And while  
we might both enjoy that very  
much... it could also get me fired.  
So I'm going to regretfully decline  
your invitation.

And with that, Pierce walks away.

FEMALE CLASSMATE  
Fig.

CLASSICAL MUSIC takes us...

CLOSE ON A NEWSPAPER

Folded open to a half-finished CROSSWORD PUZZLE. A pen flies across the page, filling in squares as fast as a human hand can write. We are...

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CAMPUS - FOUNTAIN - DAY

...where Pierce sits on a bench, his right hand filling in the puzzle while his left "conducts" the symphony he's listening to through old school headphones... attached to a WALKMAN, that cassette-playing relic of the Reagan era. Pierce fills in the last square, slides another puzzle into his lap and goes to work on it without missing a beat.

ROSSI (O.S.)  
Geoffrey.

But he can't hear the voice. A HAND taps Pierce on the shoulder. Slightly startled, he looks up to see

KATE ROSSI,

early 30s, sexy without trying, sharp-tongued, street smarts backed up by a first rate education. Pierce recognizes her, takes off his headphones, says simply:

PIERCE  
Kate Rossi.

ROSSI  
You'd be a lot easier to find if you carried a cell phone.

PIERCE  
If I carried a cell phone, the government could track me.

ROSSI  
I am the government.

PIERCE  
My point exactly.

She smiles, but he's not really joking. As we'll come to learn, Pierce is also something of a conspiracy theorist.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
I thought you were at Quantico.

ROSSI  
Got my old desk back.

PIERCE  
Isn't that a demotion?

Kate knows him well enough to understand he's not trying to be rude, just genuinely curious. But she doesn't answer.

ROSSI  
Do you have a few minutes?

CLOSE ON A PHOTOGRAPH

of a DEAD MAN, 40s, eyes open, lying in a pool of BLOOD.

ROSSI (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
His name is Bob Weilmann...

INT. PIERCE'S OFFICE - DAY

A half-dozen CRIME SCENE PHOTOS are arranged on Pierce's desk. The victim was apparently murdered in a posh study.

ROSSI  
He is... was... the general counsel  
of Santech Pharmaceuticals.

Pierce picks up a photo of a large, heavy GOLD GOLF TROPHY spattered with blood and gray matter.

ROSSI (CONT'D)  
His skull was fractured in six  
places. His wife confessed to  
detectives from Chicago homicide.

PIERCE  
If the police have a confession,  
why am I looking at these pretty  
pictures?

ROSSI  
The wife makes Nicole Richie look  
fat.

PIERCE  
Who?

Pierce looks up at her. References to pop culture more recent than the 80s are lost on him. Rossi explains:

ROSSI  
I think the wife may be anorexic,  
or bulimic. She probably couldn't  
lift that trophy, never mind bash  
her husband over the head with it  
six times.

PIERCE  
You think her confession was  
coerced.

ROSSI  
(nods)  
She has a vacant affect, and if she  
does have an eating disorder, it  
could be a symptom of a more  
serious mental illness.

PIERCE  
You always were one of my best  
students.

Rossi smiles. Then:

ROSSI  
S.A.I.C. says you gave up the  
consulting gig. Any particular  
reason?

A beat. Pierce shrugs.

PIERCE  
When you left, the fun went out of  
it.

ROSSI  
Well I'm back.

Another beat as they eye each other. A spark between them?  
If so, Pierce quickly deflects it.

PIERCE  
New semester, book coming out, it's  
really not a good time.

ROSSI  
Just talk to the wife. One hour.

PIERCE  
Why is the FBI involved in this  
case anyway?

ROSSI  
A few months ago, Santech informed  
the Bureau that their top  
executives were receiving death  
threats calling the pharmaceutical  
industry part of a "vast public-  
private conspiracy to poison the  
American people."

PIERCE  
Can't argue with that.

Rossi smiles to herself. He hasn't changed.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
So if the Bureau knew about the  
threats...

ROSSI  
It was considered low priority.  
Resources are limited.

A beat as Pierce considers.

PIERCE  
Not too limited, I hope. Because I  
don't work cheap.

OFF Rossi's smile, PRELAP --

PIERCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Why did you kill your husband, Mrs.  
Weilman?

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - CHICAGO PD - DAY

PAMELA WEILMAN, early 40's, her thin face made even more gaunt by the harsh florescent lights, eyes red from crying, sits across from Pierce.

PAMELA WEILMAN  
I don't know...

That's odd. Pierce glances at a police file in front of him, then forces himself to look Pamela in the eye, empathetic:

PIERCE  
You told the police you wanted the  
insurance money.

PAMELA WEILMAN  
Yes, that's right. The insurance  
money...

INTERCUT:

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rossi and city homicide DETECTIVE WALTER HAMMOND, another kind of Chicago bull, watch through the one-way glass.

DETECTIVE HAMMOND  
What is the point of this?

Rossi puts up a hand: just listen. Hammond stews. Pierce gently prods Pamela.

PIERCE  
If you wanted to collect on the  
insurance, you would've had to  
cover up your crime, maybe make it  
look as though someone else killed  
your husband. Why didn't you?

She looks at him, confused, unsure.

PAMELA WEILMAN  
I guess I didn't think it  
through...

Pierce studies her demeanor.

PIERCE  
When did you and your husband buy  
this policy?

PAMELA WEILMAN  
I don't remember.

PIERCE  
Was it last Thursday? You met your  
husband for lunch, then you both  
went to the insurance company  
offices, signed the papers?

She considers for a beat. Then:

PAMELA WEILMAN  
Yes. That's right.

Behind the glass, Hammond and Rossi exchange a glance: what  
the hell is he up to?

PIERCE  
Two days ago, when you went out for  
a walk, did you find a stray  
kitten? You took her home, and  
named her Millie?

A beat, and then Pamela brightens suddenly.

PAMELA WEILMAN  
How did you know about Millie...?

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Pierce strides in from the interrogation room.

PIERCE  
She's innocent.

DETECTIVE HAMMOND  
What the hell are you talking  
about? She signed a confession.

PIERCE  
Because she's suffering from  
Korsakoff's Syndrome.

DETECTIVE HAMMOND  
Korsa-what?

PIERCE  
A neurological disorder  
characterized by anterograde  
amnesia, extreme susceptibility to  
suggestion, and confabulation. I  
tell her she has a cat named  
Millie, she remembers having a cat  
named Millie. You tell her she  
bashed her husband over the head  
with a golf trophy, and she  
remembers that. But there's no cat  
-- I made that up -- just like you  
made up a story about a murder plot  
to collect life insurance. That's  
a bit of a cliché, isn't it,  
Detective?

With that, Pierce exits into --

INT. PRECINCT BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Hammond catches up, followed by Rossi.

DETECTIVE HAMMOND

Now hold on just a goddamn second. We ran a background, found out about the policy, and asked her about it. You act like I beat it out of her with a rubber tube.

PIERCE

Either way, it's a false confession. She doesn't belong in jail, she belongs in a hospital.

DETECTIVE HAMMOND

This is crazy!

But Pierce is done. And he doesn't like being in a noisy police station. So he turns to Rossi.

PIERCE

Can we go now?

ROSSI

Give me a minute?

Pierce sighs, nods, moves off.

ROSSI (CONT'D)

I'm going to recommend that Mrs. Weilman be released and transferred to a psychiatric unit for further evaluation.

Hammond eyes her, fuming.

DETECTIVE HAMMOND

My lieutenant warned me about you. Said you used to come in here flashing your FBI badge, jacking our cases. And now you're screwing with mine just because this nutjob makes a five minute diagnosis?

ROSSI

He's not a nutjob, Detective Hammond. He literally wrote the book on forensic neuropsychiatry. Four of them actually.

But something has caught Hammond's attention.

DETECTIVE HAMMOND

Not a nutjob, huh?

Rossi follows Hammond's gaze to see

PIERCE, STANDING ON TOP OF A CHAIR,

headphones on, passionately "conducting" with a pen.

ROSSI  
Okay, so he's a little eccentric.

EXT. SANTECH HEADQUARTERS - DAY

The glass and steel nerve center of Big Pharma.

INT. SANTECH HEADQUARTERS - CEO'S OFFICE - DAY

Kate sits across from Santech CEO ARTHUR KLANE -- 40's, fit, confident -- and a less affable company attorney, ALAN DIRK, 40's, who eyes Rossi with poorly concealed contempt.

DIRK  
It takes one of us turning up dead to get the FBI's interest?

KLANE  
You'll have to forgive Alan, Agent Rossi. He and Bob were very close.

ROSSI  
(to Dirk)  
Mr. Weilman was your boss in the legal department.

DIRK  
And my friend.

ROSSI  
And now that he's gone, you'll be getting his job?

DIRK  
What are you implying?

ROSSI  
Nothing at all. I just need access to any litigation against Santech over the past five years.

DIRK  
Do you have any idea how many frivolous claims a company like ours has to deal with?

ROSSI  
I can imagine. But often death threats are an escalation, after someone's tried other means of getting satisfaction. We may be able to connect the threats to someone who brought a suit against the company.  
(to Klane)  
I'd also like a list of Mr. Weilman's current and former colleagues, subordinates. Anybody he came in contact with.



PIERCE (CONT'D)  
That can happen when somebody  
drinks too much.  
(pointed)  
Or throws up a lot.

JOLIE WEILMAN  
(cynical)  
Oh, right. Because anyone as thin  
as me or my mom must be puking up  
dinner. I get that all the time.

Jolie lifts her troubled gaze to an INTERIOR WINDOW where  
they see Pamela Weilman in her room, hooked to IVs.

JOLIE WEILMAN (CONT'D)  
But some bitches are just skinny.

A beat as Pierce contemplates that mystery -- if it's not  
bulimia, then what else could it be? Jolie eyes her mother.

JOLIE WEILMAN (CONT'D)  
You're sure she didn't kill my  
father?

PIERCE  
Aren't you?

JOLIE WEILMAN  
(shrugs)  
He walked all over her. Maybe she  
finally, you know, snapped.

PIERCE  
(intrigued)  
Did you ever see her "snap?"

JOLIE WEILMAN  
She just took it. Wouldn't even  
stand up to him when he hassled me.

PIERCE  
What did he hassle you about?

JOLIE WEILMAN  
Whatever. My grades. My friends.  
He grounded me for a month because  
he thought I dented his precious T-  
bird. Of course he assumes right  
away it's me, and she lies and  
tells him he's right, even though  
it was her that drove the car.

Pierce registers this a beat.

PIERCE  
Your mother didn't lie on purpose.

JOLIE WEILMAN  
What are you talking about?

PIERCE

Her condition makes her very suggestible. If she heard your father accuse you of crashing the car, then her brain would do what we call confabulate... and she'd remember that as what actually happened.

Jolie processes this, looks in at her mom, hooked to all those tubes and is struck by something. A pang of guilt?

JOLIE WEILMAN

I got so mad... I told her I hated her as much as I hated him...

As Pierce tries to get a read on Jolie, Rossi APPROACHES with another FBI AGENT -- ROGER PROBERT, 30s -- the kind of guy who probably has his underwear starched.

ROSSI

Got a few more minutes?

INT. PIERCE'S OFFICE - DAY

A dozen or so EMAIL PRINTOUTS are being examined by Pierce, standing over his desk. Kate and Agent Probert are here.

PIERCE

Don't you have experts to trace these?

AGENT PROBERT

We're trying. But the messages were routed through servers all over the world. Whoever sent them knows how to cover his tracks.

ROSSI

Anything you could tell us about the psychology of the letter writer would help.

PIERCE

(reading)

"You scum need a hearty reminder..." Not very poetic. "The pharmaceutical industry and the FDA are conspiring to keep the American people sick..." Well, that part's certainly true.

AGENT PROBERT

(to Rossi)

Is he serious?

PIERCE

Restless leg syndrome? You don't think that's an invention of the drug companies to sell more pills?

Rossi and Probert exchange a glance as Pierce intently looks from one printout to another.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
"Scum need a hearty reminder," it's  
repeated in each of the emails.

ROSSI  
You think it means something?

But Pierce is too absorbed in his reading to respond. And as he concentrates, CAMERA PUSHES INTO AN ECU of his eyes.

PIERCE'S POV

The letters of the phrase "scum need a hearty reminder" LIFT OFF THE PAGE and begin to SWIRL, ORDERING and REORDERING themselves. This is not a superpower, just a stylized visualization of how Pierce's mind works, how he solves puzzles by searching for patterns and connections. Without taking his eyes off the page --

PIERCE  
I need a pen.

Probert hands him one... and Pierce begins to write a new phrase formed by the same letters contained in the original:

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
"Santech... murdered... Irene...  
May."

ROSSI  
It's an anagram...

She looks from the words to Pierce, amazed. But Probert remains skeptical.

AGENT PROBERT  
Some domestic terrorist goes to all  
this trouble to disguise the source  
of his emails, then gives us a  
name? Why would he do that?

Rossi is already typing on her laptop.

ROSSI  
Some paranoids seesaw between  
extreme self-loathing and delusions  
of grandeur. He's trying to prove  
he's smarter than we are.

PIERCE  
Very good, Agent Rossi.

ROSSI  
(off computer)  
May v. Santech. Dismissed in  
summary judgement...

Probert eyes Pierce. Holy shit. Pierce just shrugs.

ROSSI (CONT'D)  
...filed by a Timothy May on behalf  
of his mother Irene. I've got an  
address.  
(looking up to Pierce)  
Want to take a ride?

PIERCE  
Yesterday you said this was going  
to take an hour.

ROSSI  
Come on, Professor. You know you  
can't resist a puzzle. And this  
one is way more interesting than a  
word jumble.

OFF Pierce, getting sucked in --

EXT. RUN-DOWN APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

An N.D. GOVERNMENT SEDAN pulls up to the curb.

INT. N.D. GOVERNMENT SEDAN - SAME

Probert drives, Rossi turns to Pierce who's in the back seat.

ROSSI  
Stay here. Once it's clear, you  
can come up and take a look around.

Pierce gazes out at the sketchy neighborhood, HONKING horns,  
a distant CAR ALARM. He puts his headphones on. As he takes  
out a book of Sudoku puzzles, PRELAP:

ROSSI (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Mr. May...

INT. RUN-DOWN APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Flanked by Probert and the BUILDING MANAGER, Rossi knocks on  
the DOOR of a second-story unit.

ROSSI  
...FBI. We'd like to talk to you.

No answer. She flashes a WARRANT at the manager.

ROSSI (CONT'D)  
Open it.

INT. RUN-DOWN APARTMENT - DAY

Kate and Probert cautiously enter.

ROSSI  
Mr. May?

But there's no one here. Shabby furniture, empty Chinese  
food containers. Probert picks up a book -- Dance with the  
Devil: The AIDS Conspiracy, shows it to Rossi.

AGENT PROBERT  
Belongs to the same book club as  
your buddy Pierce.

Kate gives him a look, pushes open the door to the  
BATHROOM...just in time to see a shabbily-dressed man, 30s,  
crawling out the window onto the FIRE ESCAPE. This is  
TIMOTHY MAY. Kate aims her SIDEARM.

ROSSI  
FBI! Stop!

But May pulls himself out onto --

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - SECOND STORY - DAY

He grabs onto the telescoping LADDER, SLAMS the latch, hangs  
on as it RATCHETS DOWN, drops the last foot, stumbles, falls.

ABOVE HIM

Kate is now out on the landing and sees May scrambling to his  
feet, getting ready to run. And she realizes there's only  
one way to close the distance -- she LEAPS off the balcony!

IN THE N.D SEDAN

Pierce sees Kate hurtle out of the sky and SLAM Timothy hard  
to the ground. What the fuck? He scrambles out of the car,  
hurries over to where Kate is now cuffing her suspect, pulls  
off his headphones.

PIERCE  
Are you alright?

ROSSI  
Fine.

PIERCE  
If you want my professional  
diagnosis, jumping off a second  
story fire escape is what we  
commonly call "crazy."

Kate hauls the suspect to his feet, smiles at Pierce.

ROSSI  
I guess that makes two of us.

OFF Pierce --

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. FBI CHICAGO FIELD OFFICE - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Rossi sits across from a frightened Timothy May, some files on the table between them. Pierce keeps his distance, standing in the corner, observing.

TIMOTHY

It's not against the law to send emails.

ROSSI

It's against the law to make terrorist threats. And murder is kind of a no-no too.

TIMOTHY

I didn't kill anyone.

ROSSI

Then I'll ask you again, where were you the night Bob Weilman died?

Timothy tries to put up a tough front.

TIMOTHY

You think I'm going to cooperate with the Beast better known as the United States federal government?

Pierce abruptly chimes in. He does this sometimes.

PIERCE

Herbal tea.

ROSSI

What?

PIERCE

No milk. No sugar.

A beat. Rossi realizes he wants a shot alone with the suspect. As she exits, Pierce explains to Timothy:

PIERCE (CONT'D)

Processed sugar is an addictive drug peddled by Big Agribusiness, in order to promote an epidemic in type-two diabetes. Then their cohorts in Big Pharma reap billions marketing treatments. Don't even get me started on why they put the hormones in the milk.

May eyes Pierce. Is this guy putting him on... or is he a kindred spirit?

INTERCUT:

INT. FBI CFO - OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Agent Probert is watching the interrogation on a closed circuit MONITOR. Kate ENTERS.

PIERCE (ON MONITOR)  
Just so you know, I'm not a Fed.

TIMOTHY (ON MONITOR)  
Then what are you doing here?

PIERCE  
(shrugs)  
I'm a college professor. Teaching doesn't pay very well. In exchange for my "expert opinion", I bill the Beast for my time and get some material for my research. I admit it's kind of a deal with the devil. But, hey, if they're going to bleed me with taxes anyway, I might as well get a little of it back.

Seeing that Timothy is softening, Pierce picks up a file.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
Your mother had type-two diabetes, didn't she?

TIMOTHY  
She was always sending me out to pick her up soda, candy, ice cream.  
(racked with guilt)  
I shoulda told her no...

PIERCE  
She was your mother. You wanted to make her happy. And you tried to get her help. That's why you signed her up for a drug trial.

TIMOTHY  
Santech's new wonder pill.  
*Insulprin*. They said it would cure her. Instead, she dropped dead of a heart attack.

PIERCE  
You think the drug killed her.

TIMOTHY  
It's *poison*...

Pierce takes a seat across from Timothy, forces himself to look the agitated man in the eye, sympathetic.

PIERCE  
But the big lawyers at Santech got your suit thrown out.

TIMOTHY  
Said it was "frivolous." Bastards  
wouldn't even pay for her funeral.

PIERCE  
That must've made you pretty  
angry...

TIMOTHY  
You got no idea.

PIERCE  
(gently)  
Angry enough to kill Bob Weilman?

Timothy looks up at Pierce, tears in his eyes.

TIMOTHY  
Look at me, Mister. You really  
think I got it in me to cave some  
guy's head in?

OFF this, PRELAP:

ROSSI (V.O.)  
I'll drop you back at campus.

INT. FBI CFO - BULLPEN - LATER

Pierce, Rossi, and Probert on the move.

PIERCE  
What about the case?

ROSSI  
You helped us solve it. Thank you.

PIERCE  
You don't actually believe Timothy  
May killed anyone.

ROSSI  
No. Paranoid, not violent, I  
agree. And we have no physical  
evidence connecting him to the  
crime scene.

PIERCE  
I'm told I can be a little absent-  
minded, so maybe I'm missing  
something here.

ROSSI  
We were assigned to investigate  
terrorist threats. We have the man  
who made those threats in custody.

PIERCE  
But there was a murder.

AGENT PROBERT  
Local police matter.

As Probert moves off, Pierce gets in front of Rossi.

PIERCE  
You dangle a puzzle in front me,  
goad me into helping you solve it,  
and now you expect me to just drop  
it before all the squares are  
filled in?

A beat. Rossi looks around, keeps her voice low, explains:

ROSSI  
You were right. My transfer back  
to Chicago was a demotion.

PIERCE  
What did you do? Leap off one too  
many tall buildings in pursuit of  
fleeing suspects?

ROSSI  
The Deputy Director said I had a  
tendency to "go beyond the scope of  
my assigned investigations."

Another beat. Pierce eyes her.

PIERCE  
I remember I once assigned you a  
five page psychiatric eval. You  
turned in an exhaustive thirty page  
life history of the test subject.  
(beat)  
You can try to be a good little  
bureaucrat, deny your impulses, but  
you know you're as incapable of  
letting this go as I am.

OFF Rossi, realizing Pierce is right. She can't drop it --

ROSSI (V.O.)  
Thank you for seeing us, Dr.  
Bryant.

INT. SANTECH HEADQUARTERS - LAB - INNER OFFICE - DAY

Pierce and Rossi are seated across from DR. GILES BRYANT,  
50s, distinguished, Santech's head of product development.  
Dirk, the company lawyer is also here, keeping tabs. Through  
an INTERIOR WINDOW is a view of RESEARCHERS working in a lab.

BRYANT  
I'm not sure I'll be much help. I  
didn't know Bob well. Lab rats  
don't mix much with the lawyers.

ROSSI  
We've been talking to everyone Mr. Weilman had contact with -- friends, associates here at Santech. I understand he'd occasionally ask for your input on litigation against the company.

BRYANT  
Sure. He'd want me or one of my people to review briefs and such, for scientific accuracy.

Pierce does that thing again -- he abruptly chimes in:

PIERCE  
Does your new blockbuster drug Insulprin cause heart attacks?

DIRK  
How is this relevant?

Rossi eyes Pierce: what the hell is he up to?

ROSSI  
*It isn't.*

BRYANT  
That's okay. I'm happy to answer. Insulprin has been rigorously tested for over five years. Side effects are minimal and subjects taking the drug were certainly no more likely to have heart attacks than the control group. We're very proud of Insulprin here. It's going to save a lot of lives.

PIERCE  
And earn billions of dollars.

DIRK  
What does any of this have to do with Bob Weilman's murder?

PIERCE  
There was a lawsuit filed against the company by a man claiming his mother's coronary was caused by Insulprin. May v. Santech?

DIRK  
I remember that suit. It was dismissed in summary judgement.

Bryant chuckles.

PIERCE  
Something funny?

BRYANT  
Sad actually. I remember it too  
because it turned out this May  
woman was in the placebo group.  
She wasn't even taking the drug.

But Pierce doesn't respond... because he has momentarily lost  
focus. Through the window, he's noticed

A DARK-HAIRED MAN,

a lab researcher staring at him. Realizing Pierce has  
spotted him, the man quickly looks away.

ROSSI  
Geoffrey?

PIERCE  
Yes...?

DIRK  
(annoyed)  
Are we done here?

OFF Pierce, PRELAP:

ROSSI (V.O.)  
What was that all about?

INT. SANTECH HEADQUARTERS - LAB - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Pierce and Rossi are heading for the exit.

PIERCE  
I'm a concerned consumer.

ROSSI  
Geoffrey, I appreciate your maybe  
not-so-healthy distrust of large  
institutions, but how about we put  
aside your conspiracy theories and  
focus on finding the killer.

Before he can respond, she notices something:

ROSSI (CONT'D)  
Hammond...

And indeed Hammond -- the Chicago PD cop we met earlier -- is  
approaching with his PARTNER. But he doesn't acknowledge  
Rossi. Instead, he calls out:

DETECTIVE HAMMOND  
I'm looking for a Miss Valerie  
Nelson.

A PRETTY BRUNETTE, 20s, steps forward from a work station.

VALERIE NELSON  
I'm... I'm Valerie Nelson.

DETECTIVE HAMMOND  
(badging her)  
I'd like to have a word with you.

ROSSI  
(to Hammond)  
What's this about?

DETECTIVE HAMMOND  
Seems Pamela Weilman had another  
motive for killing her husband.  
According to his phone records, he  
was making a lot of late night  
calls...  
(smiles, re: Valerie)  
...to a pretty young co-worker.

OFF Rossi --

CLOSE ON A TV MONITOR

a tearful Valerie Nelson in a police interrogation room.

VALERIE NELSON (ON TV)  
*We met at the Christmas party...*

INT. PIERCE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Pierce and Kate are watching Valerie's recorded interview.

VALERIE NELSON (ON TV, CONT'D)  
*...one thing led to another.... We  
started spending a lot of time  
together. I knew it was wrong...  
but I fell in love with him...*

DETECTIVE HAMMOND (V.O.)  
*Where you were the night of  
September third?*

VALERIE NELSON (ON TV)  
*Home, waiting for Bob to call... it  
was the night he was going to tell  
Pamela he was leaving.  
(breaking down)  
I guess she didn't take it so  
well...*

Kate STOPS the recording.

ROSSI  
Maybe the wife is guilty.

PIERCE  
She only confessed because she's  
neurologically impaired.

ROSSI  
Neurological impairment and murder  
aren't mutually exclusive.

(MORE)

ROSSI (CONT'D)

One of her symptoms is anterograde amnesia, right?

(off his nod)

So her husband comes home, tells her he's leaving her for a hottie from the office, she goes into an adrenaline-fueled rage and kills him. But because of the Korsakoff's, by the time the police get there, she's *forgotten* why she killed the guy.

Pierce picks up the thread, enjoying the back and forth.

PIERCE

And when the detective suggests she did it for the insurance money, that's how she remembers it.

(beat)

Impressive theory...

Rossi can't resist a small smile. Part of her is still the student seeking the approbation of her professor.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

...but wrong. Pamela Weilman isn't a killer. She's a victim. First she's bullied by a philandering husband... and now an overzealous cop is trying to put her in jail. Typical of how the mentally ill are treated by our so-called "justice" system.

Rossi sighs, stretches.

ROSSI

Well, I'm stuck. And there's only one thing I know of that's going to get me unstuck. Burger grease.

PIERCE

Cholesterol is a silent killer.

ROSSI

What are you going to tell me now? That the fry cooks at the Billy Goat are in league with the drug companies to sell more heart medicine?

PIERCE

It's your funeral.

ROSSI

You'll have the garden burger. I'm buying. Let's go.

A beat. Pierce realizes she's inviting him to dinner. And it makes him uncomfortable.

PIERCE  
Oh, no... I... I can't... I have an appointment.

OFF Rossi, maybe a little disappointed, PRELAP --

NATALIE (V.O.)  
Why didn't you say yes?

INT. PIERCE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Pierce is sitting on the couch with NATALIE VINCENT -- late 30s, beautiful, witty, Pierce's best friend and intellectual equal. But at the moment, they're not discussing Jungian theory... they're watching the CUBS GAME.

PIERCE  
Because I had a date with you.

She smiles. This is something they enjoy bantering about.

NATALIE  
Geoffrey, you haven't had a date with me since grad school.

She pats him on the knee with mock sympathy.

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
I think it's time to move on.

PIERCE  
Admit it: I'm wearing you down.

Natalie laughs. A beat as they watch the game.

NATALIE  
How are you feeling?

PIERCE  
Fine. Why?

NATALIE  
This consulting work, it can disrupt your routine. And we both know how you get when you don't stick to your routine.

PIERCE  
That's what I have Lewicki for. He keeps me organized.

NATALIE  
What are you going to do when he graduates?

PIERCE  
Do you know have any idea how often Lewicki changes majors? I don't think there's much danger of graduation.

Pierce CHEERS as the Cubs score a run.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
You see that? This is the year.

NATALIE  
Believing the Cubs will win the pennant is the symptom of a delusional mind.

PIERCE  
Rationality is overrated.  
Particularly if you're a Cubs fan.

NATALIE  
(smiles, rises)  
I have to go. I have a class in the morning and so do you.

PIERCE  
What about the game?

She kisses him on the cheek, heads for the door.

NATALIE  
I think we both know how that's going to turn out.

And as she exits, PRELAP:

TV ANNOUNCER'S VOICE  
*Our final score: Phillies seven,  
Cubs six.*

INT. PIERCE'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

TV ANNOUNCER  
*We'll be right back with our post-  
game wrap up --*

Exasperated, Pierce turns off the TV.

PIERCE  
Sadists.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
Lewicki!

No response. The bell RINGS again. Pierce sighs, annoyed.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Pierce cautiously opens the door as far as the chain will allow. On the porch is

THE DARK-HAIRED MAN

from the Santech lab. He looks nervous and scared.

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
Doctor Pierce... I'm so sorry to  
bother you at home.

Pierce is wary of strangers, but he recognizes this man.

PIERCE  
You work at Santech.

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
(nods)  
I couldn't talk to you in front of  
everyone. My name is Gerard  
Permut.

PIERCE  
What can I do for you, Mr. Permut?

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
I have information... about Bob  
Weilman's murder.

That gets Pierce's attention. But still, he's careful.

PIERCE  
You should go to the FBI --

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
No, I can't trust them. But I've  
read your books, I know that you  
understand... people like me.  
(tears in his eyes)  
Please... I don't know who else to  
turn to...

A beat. And that pang of empathy kicks in. Pierce closes  
the door, and undoes the chain, lets the man in.

PIERCE  
Would you like to sit down?

But the Dark-Haired man can't stay still.

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
I didn't mean to do it...

PIERCE  
Do what?

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
But the voices kept telling me I  
had to...

Pierce reacts to that, starting to see where this is going.

PIERCE  
What did the voices tell you?

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
I'm in love with Valerie Nelson...  
but I found out she was sleeping  
with Bob Weilman...

The Dark-Haired Man eyes Pierce, anguished.

DARK-HAIRED MAN (CONT'D)  
*The voices told me the pain would  
go away... if I killed him...*

He breaks down sobbing, sinks to his knees against the wall,  
head in his hands. Pierce puts a sympathetic hand on the  
man's shoulder.

PIERCE  
It's all right. I'm going to get  
you some help --

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
She told me we had a future  
together.... But I never should  
have trusted her...

The man looks up, tears streaking his face, devastated,  
betrayed.

DARK-HAIRED MAN (CONT'D)  
*She's a liar...*

Seeing how much pain the man is in, Pierce wants to reassure  
him... but he also knows he needs help dealing with this.

PIERCE  
Lewicki! Can you come down here  
please?

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
(nervous)  
Who are you calling?

PIERCE  
It's all right. He works for me.  
We're going to help you, okay?

Seeing that Pierce is sincere, the Man nods through his tears  
as Lewicki comes trotting down the stairs holding a glowing  
WII LIGHT SABER CONTROL.

LEWICKI  
You need something, Doc? I'm right  
in the middle of kicking Obi-Wan's  
Jedi ass.

Annoyed at Lewicki's attitude, Pierce crosses to him, keeping  
his voice low and dry.

LEWICKI (CONT'D)  
Sorry to call you away from  
something so urgent. But as you  
can see, I've got a situation here.

Lewicki looks past Pierce to see what he's talking about. And something in Lewicki's reaction gives Pierce a realization. A long beat. And then:

PIERCE  
There's nobody else in this room,  
is there?

Lewicki eyes Pierce with empathy. He gets it. This sort of thing happens.

LEWICKI  
No, Doc. It's just you and me.

As that sinks in,

WIDER TO REVEAL

that Pierce and Lewicki are indeed completely alone in the cavernous hallway. And now we realize what Pierce himself has just deduced:

THE DARK-HAIRED MAN IS AN HALLUCINATION.

But even now that Pierce knows it's not real, when he looks back, the Man is still there. Only now, the tears are gone. Instead, he's smiling mischievously:

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
Almost had you.

OFF Pierce --

SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. PIERCE'S HOUSE - MORNING

CLASSICAL MUSIC OVER A SERIES OF CUTS as Lewicki puts Pierce's life in order: he picks up RUMPLED CLOTHES discarded absently the night before, shoves them in a hamper; collects SCATTERED NEWSPAPERS; closes OPEN TEXTBOOKS, puts them back on a shelf; lays out NEATLY FOLDED CLOTHES on Pierce's bed; squeezes A PERFECT LINE OF TOOTHPASTE onto a toothbrush, sets it on a washcloth; slices fruit into SYMMETRICAL WEDGES; carefully folds a newspaper to the CROSSWORD, and as he sets it down with a PEN next to the PLATE OF FRUIT, WIDER:

INT. PIERCE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Pierce sits, headphones on, one hand flying across the puzzle, the other "conducting" the music we've been hearing. The slices of fruit sit untouched in front of him.

LEWICKI (O.S.)

Doc.

No response. Lewicki gently shakes his shoulder.

LEWICKI (CONT'D)

Doc. You have to eat.

Pierce comes out of his reverie, CLICKS STOP on the Walkman, holds it up to Lewicki, annoyed:

PIERCE

This is the Von Karajan recording.  
I asked you for the Solti.

LEWICKI

Do you know how hard it is to find  
cassette tapes? If you just let me  
buy you an iPod, we can download  
any recording you want.

VOICE (O.S.)

That's a good idea.

Pierce looks to see the Dark-Haired Man sitting across from him, leaning back in a chair, feet up on the table.

DARK-HAIRED MAN

You need to get with the program.

PIERCE

Stay out of this.

Looking from Pierce to the empty chair across from him, Lewicki gets excited.

LEWICKI

He's here?

Pierce doesn't answer. But Lewicki has a theory:

LEWICKI (CONT'D)  
You know, Doc. Maybe this guy  
isn't just a hallucination.

Pierce rolls his eyes: *Here we go again.*

LEWICKI (CONT'D)  
Maybe he's some kind of *psychic*  
*vision*. There have been studies --

PIERCE  
No, Lewicki, there have been no  
studies. There have been frauds  
and scams and entertainments --

The phone RINGS, but Lewicki ignores it.

LEWICKI  
You said this vision told you he  
was jealous of the dead guy. Maybe  
there really is some kind of  
twisted love triangle...

PIERCE  
(exasperated)  
How long have you been working for  
me?

LEWICKI  
Four most interesting years of my  
life.

PIERCE  
And you think you're suddenly going  
to convince me my disease is some  
sort of supernatural gift?

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
Why do you keep this idiot around  
anyway?

PIERCE  
Because when jerks like you show  
up, I need somebody to tell me  
they're not real.

LEWICKI  
(fascinated)  
What's he saying?

But Pierce is done. And the ringing phone is getting to him.

PIERCE  
Answer that!

Lewicki sighs, picks up the phone.

LEWICKI  
Doctor Pierce's residence.  
(listens a beat)  
Yes, I'll tell him.

Lewicki hangs up the phone.

LEWICKI (CONT'D)  
Dean Harper wants to see you.

OFF Pierce, PRELAP:

HARPER (V.O.)  
What in God's name were you  
thinking, Geoffrey?

INT. DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON Dean of the Faculty, PAUL HARPER, 40s, African-American, artful and affable, but at the moment, not happy.

PIERCE  
I'll tell you exactly what I was  
thinking, Paul. I was thinking,  
this pheromone-spewing twenty-year  
old has been making eyes at me from  
the front row of my class three  
semesters running, now she's  
inviting me for "a latte," and, oh  
by the way, she's sticking a skin-  
tight t-shirt in my face that  
advertises herself as a "Stimulus  
Package."

HARPER  
You can't just go around accusing  
students of wanting to have sex  
with you. Especially not in front  
of witnesses.

PIERCE  
What witnesses?

HARPER  
Are you really that oblivious? She  
was with a friend when she  
approached you on the quad. That's  
who made the complaint.

PIERCE  
This is a joke, right?

HARPER  
Geoffrey, I put up with your  
eccentricities because you're a  
brilliant scholar, a popular  
teacher, and my friend. But do you  
have any idea what kind of hit our  
endowment has taken? We can't  
afford a lawsuit.

PIERCE  
What are you asking me to do?

OFF the question --

INT. PIERCE'S OFFICE - DAY

Pierce is pacing, furious, venting to Natalie.

PIERCE  
He wants me to apologize. To both  
girls. It's outrageous.  
(off Natalie's laugh)  
You think this is funny?

NATALIE  
You know what I think? I think you  
deflected the offer from this  
student for the same reason you  
turned down Kate Rossi's dinner  
invitation. You're scared of  
anything remotely resembling an  
intimate connection with another  
human being.

PIERCE  
Spare me the psychobabble.

NATALIE  
Tell me I'm wrong.

But Pierce can't. A long beat. Finally, he gives her a  
resigned smile, matter-of-fact:

PIERCE  
Look at me, Natalie. I hear  
voices. See things that aren't  
there. Talk to the walls. How  
could I ever have "an intimate  
connection" with anybody?

Natalie intuitively gets it:

NATALIE  
You had an incident.

He nods. She eyes him.

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
But you got it under control.

Again he nods. She studies him, curious.

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
This is nothing new. It happens  
sometimes, you deal with it, and  
you move on. So why do I get the  
feeling you're more worried about  
it than usual?

A beat.

PIERCE  
What if next time it happens in  
front of Kate?

NATALIE  
You told her about your condition a long time ago.

PIERCE  
Knowing and seeing are two different things.

NATALIE  
And if she did see? What's the worst thing that could happen?

PIERCE  
She'd start to pity me. I couldn't take that.

NATALIE  
So how do you plan to avoid it?

PIERCE  
Maybe I need to get off the case.

But Natalie knows him too well.

NATALIE  
Quit without solving it? Then you'll really go crazy.

Pierce can't help but smile.

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
Have you talked to Blumenthal about going back on the meds?

PIERCE  
For some people they're a miracle. Not for me.

NATALIE  
You did have fewer symptoms.

PIERCE  
And I couldn't concentrate long enough to finish a damn Sudoku, couldn't work, couldn't write. No, I can handle it. I keep up my talk therapy with Blumenthal... stick to my routine... watch my diet... keep my mind focused and occupied...

NATALIE  
Which you could do, say, by working on a criminal investigation.

Pierce smiles, shakes his head.

PIERCE  
Oh, that's very subtle, Natalie.

NATALIE  
(smiles)  
Tell me about the incident.

PIERCE  
What's to tell? It was a  
schizophrenic hallucination. The  
product of randomly firing neurons.

NATALIE  
Geoffrey, you know how your mind  
works. Sometimes your  
hallucinations tell you things your  
conscious mind can't make sense of.

PIERCE  
You're worse than Lewicki.

NATALIE  
Tell me what you saw.

PIERCE  
A man. First at Santech. Then he  
came to my house. He claimed he  
was the killer.

NATALIE  
What else did he say?

PIERCE  
That Valerie Nelson is a liar.

NATALIE  
Who's she?

PIERCE  
She was having an affair with the  
victim. She claims she didn't have  
anything to do with the crime, and  
the police believe her.

NATALIE  
But maybe you intuited that she's  
dishonest, and that's what your  
subconscious is trying to tell you.

A beat as Pierce considers that possibility.

NATALIE (CONT'D)  
If this woman were lying ... how  
could you prove it?

OFF the question --

CLOSE ON PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

making his infamous address to Congress.

BUSH (ON TV)  
*Almost three months ago...*

INT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO HOSPITAL - PSYCH WARD - NIGHT

JIMMY, 20s, a patient, sits in front of the the TV, eyes glued to the set. Kate and Pierce watch Jimmy watching Bush.

BUSH (CONT'D, ON TV)  
*...the United Nations Security Council gave Saddam Hussein his final chance to disarm. He has shown instead utter contempt for the opinion of the world...*

ROSSI  
(re: Bush, dry)  
Why are you forcing me to relive this nightmare?

PIERCE  
Just watch.

BUSH (ON TV)  
*The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.*

Jimmy LAUGHS at this. Pierce ejects the disk from the player. Makes eye contact with Jimmy.

PIERCE  
Thanks, Jimmy.

Jimmy returns Pierce's smile. Pierce takes Rossi aside.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
Jimmy is an aphasiac. He's lost the ability to comprehend speech. As a coping mechanism, many aphasiacs become highly sensitive to vocal nuance... subtle inflections in speech. When we lie, these inflections become more pronounced. Most people don't notice them. But aphasiacs do. And for some reason, these nuances sound funny to them. So when Jimmy hears them, he laughs.

Rossi glances at Jimmy, then back to Pierce, amazed.

ROSSI  
He's a human lie detector.

PIERCE  
(nods)  
Now watch this.

Pierce pops in another disk. An image of Valerie Nelson from her police interview APPEARS on the TV.

DETECTIVE HAMMOND (V.O.)  
*Where were you the night of  
September third?*

VALERIE NELSON (ON TV)  
*Home, alone, waiting for Bob to  
call...*

At this Jimmy LAUGHS HEARTILY -- Valerie is lying.

INT. VALERIE'S APARTMENT - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

When Kate KNOCKS... she realizes the door is already slightly ajar. She exchanges a curious look with Pierce.

ROSSI  
Ms. Nelson? Agent Rossi. FBI.

No response. She signals to Pierce: wait here. Then she draws her sidearm and cautiously enters --

INT. VALERIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

She sees an overturned floor lamp... signs of a struggle... moves stealthily down the hall until she sees

VALERIE NELSON

lying face-down in a pool of blood. Kate rushes to her side, checks for a pulse. Valerie stirs slightly -- she's alive, but near death. Kate whips out her cell, hits speed-dial.

ROSSI  
I need an ambulance!

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. VALERIE NELSON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Police lights FLASH. Valerie Nelson, hooked to oxygen and an IV, is loaded into the back of an AMBULANCE. Agent Probert exchanges a few quick words with a PARAMEDIC, who then pulls the ambulance doors closed as Rossi and Pierce approach.

PROBERT  
Vicious blow like that to the back  
of the head. She might not even  
have seen her attacker.

ROSSI  
They think she's going to make it?

PROBERT  
Too early to say.  
(rankled)  
Why are we still on this case?  
Chicago PD should be handling it.

Rossi ignores that, hands him a plastic evidence bag containing a CELL PHONE.

ROSSI  
Find out who's she been talking to.

INT. FBI CFO - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON Santech CEO Arthur Klane.

ROSSI (O.S.)  
Why is the CEO of a Fortune 500  
company playing phone tag on his  
personal cell with a lab tech?

WIDER TO REVEAL Rossi, grilling Klane who is here along with company lawyer Alan Dirk.

KLANE  
Ms. Nelson was the one who started  
calling me. Why don't you ask her?

ROSSI  
That might be a little difficult...  
she's in surgery. Someone tried to  
kill her last night.

KLANE  
Oh, god...

ROSSI  
What was the nature of your  
relationship with Ms. Nelson?

INTERCUT:

INT. FBI CFO - OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pierce watches the questioning on the closed circuit.

KLANE

I couldn't have picked her out of  
the crowd at the company picnic.

As they continue, agent Probert enters with a coffee for himself and another cardboard cup which he hands to Pierce.

PROBERT

Chamomile. No milk no sugar.

ROSSI (ON MONITOR)

Then why the calls?

Pierce takes the cup but doesn't even manage a thank you as he keeps his eyes glued on the interrogation. Probert shakes his head, takes a seat, watches the show.

DIRK

We came down here voluntarily. Mr.  
Klane isn't under any obligation to  
answer these questions.

But Rossi presses, trying to get a reaction.

ROSSI

Were you aware that Valerie Nelson  
was having an affair with your dead  
general counsel?

KLANE

What does that have to do with me?

ROSSI

Maybe Bob Weilman wasn't the only  
one getting executive perks from  
Valerie. Maybe you got jealous.  
Killed Bob, then tried to do the  
same to Valerie.

KLANE

*What?*

DIRK

We're done here.

Dirk stands, but Rossi's not letting it go.

ROSSI (CONT'D)

We've got her hard drive, her  
emails, even if she doesn't survive  
surgery, we're going to find out  
what the two of you were up to.

DIRK

Arthur, let's go.

KLANE

No, you know what? It's okay. I  
don't have anything to hide.

(to Rossi)

After Bob was killed, I got an  
email from this Valerie, saying it  
was urgent I call her. So I did.

(MORE)

KLANE (CONT'D)  
She said she had information that  
could be damaging to the company.

ROSSI  
What kind of information?

KLANE  
Something about falsified study  
results for one of our products.

In the Observation room, Pierce's ears perk up.

KLANE (CONT'D)  
She said she didn't want to talk  
about it over the phone. So we  
agreed to meet... last night...  
(beat)  
Now I know why she didn't show up.

CLOSE ON PIERCE,

eyes glued to the monitor. He absently goes to sip his tea.

DARK-HAIRED MAN (O.S.)  
Don't drink that.

Pierce turns... to see the Dark-Haired Man, sitting next to  
Probert... who of course doesn't see anyone.

DARK-HAIRED MAN (CONT'D)  
It might kill you.

Pierce looks down at the tea and from HIS POV SEES A DARK,  
BUBBLING BREW. Pierce recoils. Looks to Probert.

PIERCE  
Are you trying to poison me?

Probert shoots Pierce a look: huh? But Probert quickly  
assumes the eccentric professor is speaking figuratively,  
turns his attention back to the monitor.

AGENT PROBERT  
I told you. No milk, no sugar.

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
That's the murder weapon.

PIERCE  
*Tea?*

AGENT PROBERT  
Yes it's tea.

But it's the Dark-Haired man Pierce is listening to now.

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
Not tea, *poison*. Remember Timothy  
May said his mother was poisoned?  
I poisoned her. And killed Bob  
Wellman.



DARK-HAIRED MAN  
So I know how much you like  
puzzles.

A beat. And suddenly it dawns on Pierce --

PIERCE  
It's another anagram...

Pierce grabs a SHARPIE off the table, and as the Dark-Haired Man spells it out, Pierce scrawls the letters... right on the standard-issue puke green dry-wall.

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
G...E...R... A... R... D... P...  
E... R... M... U... T.

And as Pierce stares at the letters he has written down, once again, CAMERA PUSHES INTO AN ECU of his eyes,

PIERCE'S POV

The letters LIFT OFF THE WALL, SWIRL and REORDER THEMSELVES in various combinations until he sees it:

PIERCE  
*"Drug tamperer..."*

And Pierce quickly writes the new word underneath.

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
Couldn't you have figured that out  
without defacing government  
property?

But Pierce has had an epiphany, and he's already on the move, striding right into --

INT. FBI CFO - INTERROGATION ROOM

-- where Rossi is still in the middle of her interrogation.

PIERCE  
I think I solved it.

OFF Rossi, nonplussed, PRELAP:

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
Someone tampered with the results  
of the drug study...

INT. FBI CFO - OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Pierce is laying out his theory to Rossi and Probert, who has tea stains on his pants.

PIERCE  
...making it seem like Insulprin  
was perfectly safe. That must've  
been why Valerie was calling the  
CEO...

ROSSI  
(nodding)  
...to blow the whistle. But what  
makes you think it had anything to  
do with Insulprin?

A beat. Of course Pierce doesn't want to say that it was a  
hallucination that put him onto this track.

PIERCE  
A gut feeling. Timothy May  
believed his mother was poisoned...  
that her heart attack was caused by  
the medication.

AGENT PROBERT  
Timothy May is paranoid.

PIERCE  
That doesn't make him wrong.

A beat as Rossi and Probert digest that... which is when  
Probert spots the letters Pierce scrawled. Appalled:

AGENT PROBERT  
*Did you write on the wall?*

But Rossi's mind is racing too fast now to care.

ROSSI  
But May's mother was taking the  
placebo.

PIERCE  
According to the data reported by  
the company...

ROSSI  
(catching on)  
...which you think was tampered  
with.

And now even Probert is considering that possibility.

AGENT PROBERT  
The company will lose billions if  
the drug is pulled from the market.  
The CEO would certainly have a  
motive to cover that up.

PIERCE  
Maybe. But who had direct access  
to the study results?

OFF the question --

INT. SANTECH HEADQUARTERS - LAB - DAY

Rossi strides through the maze of work stations. Pierce  
follows, but hangs back as Rossi does her thing.

ROSSI  
Dr. Bryant.

A man bent over a microscope stands, and we see that he is indeed Giles Bryant, head of product development, whom Pierce questioned earlier about the Insulprin study.

BRYANT  
Agent Rossi. Dr. Pierce. What can I do for you?

ROSSI  
We're trying to find out who tried to kill Valerie Nelson.

BRYANT  
It's awful. Do her doctors think she'll recover?

ROSSI  
They're not sure.

Rossi holds up some computer printouts.

ROSSI (CONT'D)  
We found these files on her hard drive. We were hoping maybe you could tell us what they are.

Bryant takes the files, peruses them a beat -- lots of columns and numbers.

BRYANT  
They look like study results, morbidity rates...

ROSSI  
From your Insulprin trial. That's what Dr. Pierce thought. Except they show an unusually high incidence of heart attacks among women participating in the study.

A beat. Bryant screws up his brow, starts paging through the printouts, trying to hide his growing nervousness.

BRYANT  
That must be a mistake...

Rossi hands him another printout.

ROSSI  
Can you take a look at this one?

Bryant takes it, peruses it, nods.

BRYANT

Yes, these are the correct results. You see here, the incidence of heart attacks is approximately the same for those taking the placebo as for those on the real drug.

ROSSI

But only because somebody *moved* patient results from one group into the other.

A beat as Bryant digests that, anxiety clearly growing.

BRYANT

Valerie worked on this study. You don't think she -- ?

ROSSI

We considered that. But she's just a lab tech. She didn't really have anything to gain personally from the drug being approved. And she called your CEO, told him she had information that could be damaging to the company.

Under Rossi's withering gaze, Bryant is starting to sweat. But still, he tries to cover.

BRYANT

Who would do something like this?

ROSSI

Dr. Pierce tells me pharmacologists of your stature get pretty sweet deals, shared patents on the drugs they develop.

Bryant glances nervously from Rossi to Pierce.

BRYANT

What are you...? That is --

ROSSI

Maybe Valerie found out you were falsifying the study. She went to her boyfriend, Santech's top lawyer. They were going to ruin everything you'd worked for... so you had to stop them.

BRYANT

No... that's not --

ROSSI

Cole Hahn, size ten?

BRYANT

What?

ROSSI  
Your shoes. You left a bloody  
footprint in Valerie's kitchen.

A long beat... and Bryant crumbles... eyes welling.

BRYANT  
Every drug has side-effects... I'd  
figured out why it was causing  
heart attacks... we could've worked  
out the kinks...

Rossi and Pierce exchange a glance.

ROSSI  
But Valerie threatened your  
livelihood.

Pierce finally joins the conversation, taking an empathetic  
tone with Bryant:

PIERCE  
No, this wasn't about money for  
you, was it? It was about science.

Bryant looks to Pierce... and sees someone who understands.

BRYANT  
You spend your whole career looking  
for that one "miracle cure," you  
know?

PIERCE  
Valerie should've understood how  
important your work was.

Bryant shakes his head through bitter tears.

BRYANT  
Instead, she starts collecting  
evidence against me, like I'm a  
criminal...?

ROSSI  
You mean the study results?

BRYANT  
Yes... and then I saw her stealing  
pills...

FLASH TO:

INT. SANTECH HEADQUARTERS - LAB - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

It's late. Valerie is filling a ZIPLOCK with Insulprin  
tablets. Bryant watches discreetly from the shadows.

BRYANT (V.O.)  
*So I followed her...*

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Valerie greets Bob Weilman with a passionate kiss, slips him the tablets. Bryant watches from his car down the street.

BRYANT (V.O.)  
*...she brought them to Bob. She goes to a lawyer, instead of me?*

INT. SANTECH HEADQUARTERS - LAB - PRESENT

Rossi presses the increasingly distraught Bryant.

ROSSI  
You figured they were going to get the pills tested, prove they weren't placebos?

BRYANT  
(nods)  
I thought, I just need to make him understand...

INT. BOB WEILMAN'S STUDY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Weilman and Bryant are having a heated exchange.

BRYANT  
Bob, I don't know what Valerie's been telling you... but I can fix this --

BOB WEILMAN  
Do you have any idea what kind of liability you've exposed this company to?

BRYANT  
And what's going to happen to the company if this goes public? We're on the same team.

BOB WEILMAN  
You don't just show up at my house like this, Giles.

BRYANT  
(desperate)  
What are you going to do?

BOB WEILMAN  
I haven't decided yet --

BRYANT  
Bob, please...

Bryant grabs Bob's shirt.

BOB WEILMAN  
Get out of here, Giles. Before I call the police.

Weilman starts to physically usher Bryant out of the room... which is when Bryant suddenly grabs the GOLF TROPHY from a shelf and SLAMS Weilman in the head with it. The lawyer goes down. Bryant hits the off-camera Weilman again... and again.

INT. SANTECH LAB - DAY - PRESENT

Bryant is distraught.

BRYANT (CONT'D)  
I guess... I guess I just went  
crazy...

And as Bryant sobs at the memory, OFF Pierce and Rossi --

INT. SANTECH HEADQUARTERS - CORRIDOR - DAY

Rossi and Pierce observe as Bryant is led out in handcuffs by Hammond and uniformed OFFICERS. Wryly, to Hammond --

PIERCE  
Nice work, Detective.

Hammond glares at them, hustles Bryant out. Rossi suppresses a smile.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
You didn't tell me you found a  
footprint in Valerie's apartment.

ROSSI  
I didn't.

Pierce turns back to her, eyes her with mock outrage.

PIERCE  
Agent Rossi, I am shocked that you  
would so blatantly manipulate an  
obviously troubled individual.

As she shrugs, smiles, Pierce suddenly feels a tap on his shoulder. He turns and sees the Dark-Haired Man, grinning.

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
What's up, Doc?

Pierce reacts, surprised to see him. And from Rossi's POV, he seems suddenly distracted. And she's a bit concerned.

ROSSI  
Geoffrey, what is it? Are you  
feeling okay?

But Pierce doesn't want her to now he's actively hallucinating and manages to cover.

PIERCE  
I'm fine. It's nothing.

DARK-HAIRED MAN  
Oh, it's not nothing. You caught  
the killer... so what the hell am  
I still doing here?

A beat. And then suddenly, Pierce gets it:

PIERCE  
*The case isn't over yet...*

ROSSI  
What are you talking about?

But Pierce doesn't answer. Instead, he hurries for the exit.

ROSSI (CONT'D)  
Geoffrey?

But he's already gone.

EXT. SANTECH HEADQUARTERS - PARKING LOT - DAY

As Hammond helps the handcuffed Bryant into the back of a  
SQUAD CAR --

PIERCE (O.S.)  
Doctor Bryant!

Bryant turns. Hammond is exasperated --

DETECTIVE HAMMOND  
What now?

But Pierce ignores him, eyes Bryant.

PIERCE  
You said you figured out why  
Insulprin was causing heart  
attacks. What was it?

Bryant looks at him a beat. Why's he asking this?

BRYANT  
The drug depleted patients'  
thiamine levels...

As the light bulb goes on for Pierce, Rossi catches up.

ROSSI  
Geoffrey, what's going on?

He turns to her, and says simply:

PIERCE  
There's another victim.

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO HOSPITAL - PSYCH WARD - DAY

Kapoor shows a BLOOD ANALYSIS to Pierce as Rossi looks on.

DOCTOR KAPOOR  
I ran the second tox screen you  
asked for. We found significant  
levels of Concanavalin A.

PIERCE  
The primary sugar-binding molecule  
in Insulprin.

As Rossi digests that, Pierce, mind working, blurts out --

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
"Some bitches are just skinny."

ROSSI  
I beg your pardon?

PIERCE  
The daughter was right. Pamela  
Weilman is just thin... not  
bulimic. It was Insulprin that  
depleted her thiamine...

DOCTOR KAPOOR  
Mrs. Weilman isn't diabetic. Why  
would she be on a diabetes drug?

PIERCE  
I don't think she knew she was  
taking it. I think she was being  
poisoned. Someone must have been  
grinding it up, putting it in her  
food, trying to induce a heart  
attack...

A beat as Rossi tries to make sense of that.

ROSSI  
But she didn't have a heart  
attack...

PIERCE  
Because side-effects manifest  
differently in different patients.  
Low thiamine levels can cause  
cardiac failure. But in rare  
instances, they can also cause --

KAPOOR  
Korsakoff's Syndrome.

As Rossi digests that --

KAPOOR (CONT'D)  
So who was poisoning her?

OFF the question, PRELAP:

ROSSI (V.O.)  
Ms. Nelson?

INT. UNIV. OF CHICAGO HOSPITAL - VALERIE NELSON'S ROOM - DAY

While Pierce again hangs back, Rossi approaches Valerie Nelson, sitting up in bed.

ROSSI  
I'm Agent Rossi, FBI. This is  
Doctor Pierce.

VALERIE NELSON  
Agent Rossi. They told me you  
saved my life...

ROSSI  
Would you mind if we ask you a few  
questions? For our case against  
Dr. Bryant.

VALERIE NELSON  
I still can't believe he tried to  
kill me...

ROSSI  
You found out he was tampering with  
the Insulprin study...

A beat. Valerie nods.

ROSSI (CONT'D)  
So you told Bob Weilman about your  
suspicions.

VALERIE NELSON  
I knew that drug was going to hurt  
a lot of people when it hit the  
market. Bob was a lawyer. I  
figured he'd know what to do.

ROSSI  
He told you you needed more  
evidence? That's why you took the  
pills.

VALERIE NELSON  
Bob didn't want to expose the  
company to any liability unless he  
knew for sure Dr. Bryant had done  
something wrong.

Pierce abruptly LAUGHS. Startled, Valerie looks to him.

VALERIE NELSON (CONT'D)  
What?

PIERCE  
It's just funny that you didn't  
tell the police any of this.

Unnerved, Valerie looks back to Rossi, explains:

VALERIE NELSON  
They wanted to know about my  
relationship with Bob... I didn't  
think the drug had anything to do  
with it...

PIERCE  
You weren't trying to blow the  
whistle. You gave the pills to Bob  
so he could poison his wife...

VALERIE NELSON  
Are you out of your mind?

PIERCE  
Well, that's not the clinical  
description, but yes, actually.

Rossi can't help but smile.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
Poor Dr. Bryant, he was out of his  
mind too. He was feeling so guilty  
about what he'd done, so nervous  
that he was going to be caught,  
that he became paranoid. And he  
made the same mistake we did.

VALERIE NELSON  
What mistake...?

PIERCE  
Bryant assumed you'd stolen the  
pills as evidence, to prove he was  
manipulating the study. But the  
truth is, you were supplying Bob  
Weilman with the perfect murder  
weapon.

VALERIE NELSON  
What are you talking about -- ?

ROSSI  
The drug wasn't on the market yet,  
so it was virtually untraceable.

PIERCE  
You must have been dosing Pamela  
for weeks, just waiting for her  
heart to give out.

A beat as Valerie reacts to that, seemingly horrified.

VALERIE NELSON

If... if Bob was poisoning his wife with those pills... I didn't know anything about it...

PIERCE

You're the scientist. You're the one that knew in high enough doses, Insulprin would kill Pamela.

VALERIE NELSON

I was trying to do the right thing! Why else would I call the CEO of the company and tell him about the falsified results?

ROSSI

You were worried that Pamela found out her husband was poisoning her. If she told the police that, you'd need a cover story to explain why you'd given him the pills. So you pretended to be a whistle-blower.

VALERIE NELSON

No, that's not right -- !

PIERCE

What's not right is that Pamela Weilman was accused of killing her husband, when the *reality* is... you and your boyfriend were trying to kill *her*.

A beat. Valerie's eyes turn cold.

VALERIE NELSON

I want a lawyer.

ROSSI

You're going to need a good one.

As Valerie reacts to that, Pierce sees the Dark-Haired Man across the room. He smiles.

DARK-HAIRED MAN

Nice working with you, Doc.

And as Pierce watches him exit --

INT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - DAY

Pierce and Jolie Weilman are watching through the glass as her mother undergoes an MRI.

JOLIE WEILMAN

Does she know what my Dad tried to do to her?

PIERCE  
We can tell her what happened, but  
anything new that she learns will  
fade in just a few hours...

JOLIE WEILMAN  
I still don't get it.

Pierce notes the music player strapped to Jolie's arm.

PIERCE  
That's one of those iPods, right?  
I hear they can store thousands of  
songs.

JOLIE WEILMAN  
What century are you from?

PIERCE  
Your mother's brain is like a  
broken iPod. She can't add any new  
songs... but she can listen to the  
old ones.

Jolie registers this. Then:

JOLIE WEILMAN  
Maybe she's lucky. I wish I could  
forget a lot of things...

PIERCE  
(after beat)  
Your mom's going to need someone to  
take care of her.

JOLIE WEILMAN  
How am I supposed to do that on my  
own?

Pierce puts his hand on hers, reassuring.

PIERCE  
You won't be on on your own.

OFF Jolie, PRELAP --

STIMULUS PACKAGE (V.O.)  
You wanted to see me?

INT. PIERCE'S OFFICE - DAY

Pierce is behind his desk. Stimulus Package is at the door.

PIERCE  
Karyn. Thank you for coming.

Pierce hesitates. This is difficult for him.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
I want to... apologize. What I  
said to you on the quad, it was...  
highly inappropriate...

Stimulus Package turns and LOCKS THE DOOR behind her.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
... and unjustified...

She starts to unbutton her blouse. Pierce reacts, nervous.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
...offensive...

STIMULUS PACKAGE  
...and very perceptive.

Her blouse drops to the floor.

STIMULUS PACKAGE (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry my friend was such a  
bitch. I told her not to file that  
complaint.

Flustered, Pierce moves past her.

PIERCE  
Would you excuse me for a moment?

Pierce unlocks the door, makes a hasty EXIT.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Pierce spies Lewicki approaching.

PIERCE  
*Lewicki!*

Lewicki senses the alarm in Pierce's voice.

LEWICKI  
What is it, Doc?

PIERCE  
I need you to tell me if there's  
someone in my office.

Lewicki reacts, realizing Pierce may be experiencing another hallucinatory episode. Lewicki quickly EXITS into Pierce's office. A moment later, a SCREAM. Stimulus Package hastily EXITS, clutching her blouse, covering herself. After a beat, Lewicki appears.

LEWICKI  
That one was definitely real.

OFF this, PRELAP --

PIERCE (V.O.)  
Last week I asked, "What is  
reality?"

INT. PIERCE'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Pierce is in his element, lecturing to his admiring class.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
This week... I want to talk about  
normalcy. When we're trying to  
understand the brain... we have to  
ask, what is normal? If you feel  
sad, do you just have a case of the  
blues... or do you have a  
neurochemical imbalance?

In the back of the class, Natalie ENTERS. Pierce sees her,  
she smiles, waves discreetly. Pierce continues:

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
The vast majority of the case  
studies we'll look at this semester  
involve patients whose brains are  
anything but normal. And there's  
no question they suffer. But is it  
all bad?

INT. UNIV. OF CHICAGO HOSPITAL - PAMELA WEILMAN'S ROOM - DAY

Jolie sits with her mother, holding her hand.

PIERCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*For some, their neurological states  
may actually protect them from  
painful truths no one would ever  
want to think about...*

Jolie says something. Pamela smiles.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO HOSPITAL - PSYCH WARD - DAY

Jimmy sits, watching GEORGE W. BUSH on TV.

PIERCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Others develop a cheerful  
disposition that may help them cope  
with situations the rest of us find  
disturbing...*

Jimmy LAUGHS.

INT. PIERCE'S CLASSROOM - DAY

The lecture continues.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
And if we're going to establish a  
base-line, don't we also have to  
ask ourselves...

INT. ROSSI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rossi on a couch, eating take-out.

PIERCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*...how the brains of even so-called  
normal people respond to certain  
stimuli?*

Rossi takes a bite from her burger and a look comes over face -- it's heaven. She breaks a little piece off the burger and feeds it to her CAT. CAMERA PULLS BACK WIDE to see that she's all alone in the sparsely furnished apartment...

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CAMPUS - FOUNTAIN - DAY

A gorgeous afternoon. Pierce and Natalie sit in on the bench talking and laughing.

PIERCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*And if we're able to treat the  
people who suffer from these  
neurological disorders...*

Consumed by his conversation with Natalie, Pierce doesn't notice Lewicki approaching. At the sight of Pierce, Lewicki stops, smiles to himself, shakes his head.

PIERCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*...restore them to quote normalcy,  
are we only doing them good?*

And now from LEWICKI'S POV we see that in actuality,

PIERCE IS SITTING ALONE,

animatedly talking to himself... because **NATALIE IS NOT REAL.**

PIERCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Or might we sometimes also be  
stripping away what makes them  
unique...*

As students pass by, paying no mind to the idiosyncratic professor, Lewicki approaches, sits in THE EMPTY SPOT next to Pierce. As Pierce reacts to that, Lewicki reaches into his satchel, hands Pierce a cassette. And as they exchange a few words --

PIERCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*...robbing them of an essential  
part of who they are?*

Pierce puts the cassette in his Walkman. And as Lewicki gets up and walks away, CAMERA CRANES UP on Pierce, alone, listening to his music --

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT